

Council for American Private Education

CAPE outlook

Voice of America's private schools

New Report Examines Teacher Attrition and Mobility

Hiring a teacher is a huge investment for a school administrator, with time and resources spent acclimating the new recruit to the school's culture, conveying policies and practices, supervising instruction, and overseeing professional development. How reassuring it would be to know at the start that the investment is sound and long-term and that the teacher will not be heading out the door after a one-year tenure.

A new report from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) provides some insights on why teachers stay in—or leave—particular schools or, for that matter, the profession as a whole. Using data from the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), which tracked the career moves of 7,429 public and private school teachers between 2003-04 and 2004-05, the report provides a comprehensive picture of teacher mobility and attrition in elementary and secondary schools.

The study looks at the number and percentage of teachers who remained in the same school between the base year and the next year (stayers), those who remained in teaching but moved to another school (movers), and those who left the teaching profession altogether (leavers). By matching movement with demographic data and also with information on attitudes, job satisfaction, and the reasons behind any career change, researchers were able to determine not only how many teachers stayed, moved, or left, but also what categories of people made each choice and what circumstances surrounded the decision.

First, the overall picture: Within the private school community, 81 percent of the 465,300 elementary and secondary teachers in 2003-04 remained teaching in the same school in 2004-05; 6 percent moved to a different school, and 14 percent left the profession entirely.

Not surprisingly, the stayers tended to be teachers who were older, more expe-

rienced, and better paid. Among private school teachers who were 50 years of age or older, the stay rate was 84.7 percent, compared to 68.1 percent for their under-30 colleagues.

A similar pattern is seen with years of teaching experience, with teachers logging 20 years or more in the profession having a stay rate of 89.7 percent while those with just one to three years experience having a stay rate of 71.0 percent. Probably related to age and tenure, 93.1 percent of private school teachers earning \$40,000 or more annually remained in the same school between the base year and follow-up year, while only 72.6 percent of teachers making less than \$30,000 did so. Indeed, nearly 20 percent (19.4, to be exact) of the under-\$30,000 group left the profession entirely.

Gender made no difference in whether a teacher stayed in his/her school. Both men and women had the exact same stay rate: 80.5 percent. On the other hand, race and ethnicity seemed to play a role in who stayed and who didn't. For white teachers, the stay rate was 81.3 percent; for black teachers it was 67.8 percent, and for Hispanic teachers it was 70.3 percent.

Other Factors

Other factors were also associated with staying, moving, and leaving. Teachers in schools located in central cities had slightly higher stay rates (82.1 percent) than those working in urban fringe areas or large towns (80.2 percent) and than those working in rural areas or small towns (76.0 percent). Secondary schools enjoyed higher stay rates for their teachers (87.4 percent)

than elementary schools (79.0 percent). And schools with 750 or more students had a higher stay rate (92.2 percent) than schools with less than 200 students (72.9 percent).

The 6 percent of private school teachers who remained in teaching but moved to another school between the base year and follow-up year were asked to rate various



possible reasons for their move. Nearly half (46.4 percent) of private school movers rated "better salary or benefits" as a very important or extremely important reason for their move. In fact, salary and benefits motivated more movers than any other factor. In second place was "higher job security," with 33.4 percent of movers saying it was very or extremely important in their decision. A close third was "opportunity for a better teaching assignment" (33.1 percent), followed by "dissatisfaction with base-year school for other reasons" (29.7 percent), "dissatisfaction with support from administrators at previous school" (27.0 percent), "new school is closer to home" (22.8 percent), "dissatisfaction with workplace conditions at previous school" (21.4 percent), "dissatisfaction with opportunities for professional development at previous school" (19.7 percent), "laid off or involuntarily transferred" (19.2 percent), and "dissatisfaction with changes in job description or responsibilities" (17.5 percent). Of course, in reviewing these data it is important to keep in mind that private school movers accounted for only 6 percent of all private school teachers to begin with.

continued on page 2

CAPE member organizations:

- Agudath Israel of America
- American Montessori Society
- Association Montessori International—USA
- Association of Christian Schools International
- Association of Waldorf Schools of N.A.
- Christian Schools International
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Friends Council on Education
- Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
- National Association of Episcopal Schools
- National Association of Independent Schools
- National Catholic Educational Association
- National Christian School Association
- Oral Roberts University Educational Fellowship
- Seventh-day Adventist Board of Education
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- 28 Affiliated State Organizations

a coalition of national associations serving private schools K-12
Executive Director: Joe McTighe

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New National Orthodox Jewish Board Convenes

Agudath Israel of America, a member of CAPE, held the inaugural meeting March 28 of its newly formed national board of directors for its Office of Government Affairs. According to an Agudath Israel news release, the meeting provided an opportunity for members of the new board “to hear from key government officials—and to be heard by them—on various issues of importance to the nation’s Orthodox Jewish community.”

Rabbi Yehiel Kaulish, national director of government affairs for Agudath Israel, said the new board’s purpose is to promote greater grassroots involvement in public policy issues. “Through the board...we will be able to optimize communication and interaction with our political leaders,” he said.

The board’s initial meeting in Washington, DC, included presentations by former Senator Rick Santorum; Dan Murphy, senior counsel at Barbour Griffith & Rogers; and Joe McTighe, executive director of CAPE. McTighe focused

on the need to strengthen provisions relating to equitable services for private school students in the reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act* and on efforts to resist proposed cuts in funding for Titles II-D, IV-A, and V-A, three popular programs that serve students in public and private schools.

An afternoon meeting in the Indian Treaty Room of the White House included an address by Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and sessions with Jeremy Katz, special assistant to the president for policy, and Jay Hein,



Agudath Israel’s board for government affairs meets with Karl Rove March 28 at the White House. (Photo: Hamodia)

director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

Rabbi Abba Cohen, director of Agudath Israel’s Washington office, expects the new group to bear much fruit. “I believe the active involvement of our lay leaders will bring a new dimension to our government affairs work,” he said. “This important first step has already shown their commitment to advocating on behalf of our communities around the country.”

continued from page 1

Among the base-year private school teachers who had moved to a different school by the second year and who had accumulated less than three years of experience, 62.7 percent moved from a private school to a public school and 37.3 percent moved from one private school to another private school. For those private school movers who had three or more years of experience, 48.5 percent moved from a private school to a public school and 51.5 percent moved between private schools.

The survey also asked leavers (that is, those teachers who left the profession entirely after the base year) to rate the importance of various reasons behind their decision to leave teaching. “Other family or personal reasons” received the highest share (30.6 percent) of respondents

rating the reason very important or extremely important. Other top reasons in rank order were: “to pursue a position other than that of a K-12 teacher” (29.5 percent), “pregnancy or child rearing” (24.6 percent), and “better salary or benefits” (21.8 percent). Again, to provide perspective, leavers accounted for only 13.6 percent of private school teachers during the base and follow-up years. The teaching force in private schools during the survey period included fewer stayers (80.5 percent) than public schools (83.5 percent), fewer movers (5.9 percent vs. 8.1 percent), and more leavers (13.6 percent vs. 8.4 percent).

The report, *Teacher Attrition and Mobility*, is available on the NCES Web site at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007307>.

Number and percentage distribution of private school teacher stayers, movers, and leavers between 2003-04 and 2004-05

	Number	Percent
Teachers (2003-04)	465,300	100.0
Stayers	374,600	80.5
Movers	27,600	5.9
Leavers	63,100	13.6

Bush Meets with Catholic School Leaders

On an otherwise ordinary Friday afternoon in April, a group of Catholic school educators had the kind of meeting that most people only experience second hand through accounts in the morning paper or the evening news: a face-to-face meeting with President Bush.

Mr. Bush and Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings met with about a dozen school parents and leaders, including Dr. Karen Ristau, president of the National Catholic Educational Association, a CAPE member organization.

In comments following the meeting, which took place

in the historic Roosevelt Room, the president called Catholic schools “one of the great assets in the United States” and said they do a “spectacular” job of educating disadvantaged children. He said his proposal for opportunity scholarships would be one way the federal government could help Catholic schools continue.

Citing the success of the federally funded scholarship initiative in the District of Columbia, the president called on Congress to fully fund the program. He said the DC measure allows parents with children in public schools that are not meeting their needs to “make another choice.” Calling parent choice “a very important part of educational excellence,” the president urged Congress to extend the DC program to other cities across the country.

Educational Excellence

At the close of his remarks, Mr. Bush said, “One thing is for certain, if you’re interested in educational excellence, you can look at the Catholic schools in the United States of America, because they provide it. And for that, this country is very grateful.”

According to the Catholic News Service, Catholic school representatives used the meeting as an opportunity to describe for the president some of the challenges facing Catholic schools across the country, including the difficulty at times in getting equitable services for students under some federal programs.

Earlier in the day, President Bush spoke at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, where he also praised Catholic schools, saying

they “play a vital role in our nation.” Catholic schools, he said, “have given millions of Americans the knowledge and character they need to succeed in life.” He went on to express appreciation for “the tremendous sacrifices that many



President George W. Bush meets with Catholic school leaders and parents April 13, 2007, in the Roosevelt Room. (White House photo by Shealah Craighead)

dioceses are making to keep their inner-city schools going.” At the same time, however, the president acknowledged that “too many of these schools are closing” and added, “our nation needs to do something about it.”

Mr. Bush told the story of Pam Battle, a resident of the District of Columbia whose two children, Carlos and Calvin, attended public

schools that were not meeting her expectations. Thanks to the DC scholarship program, Ms. Battle was able to enroll her boys in Assumption School, where Carlos “became an A-student and president of his 8th grade class” (he currently attends Georgetown Day School), and Calvin is running for “student of the month.” The president said, “Pam has a big smile on her face when she comes to talk about the education her boys are receiving.” He said she cites as the program’s main benefit the “peace of mind” she has in knowing her sons are safe and “working up to their level.” Reflecting on the experience, the president said, “I believe every parent in America should have that same peace of mind—and every school in America should ensure its students are working to their fullest of potentials.” He said he will continue to “work to help these schools reach more children in need, so that our children have the skills they need to realize the full promise of the United States of America.”

A news release issued by the National Catholic Educational Association indicated that both NCEA President Karen Ristau and Archbishop Donald Wuerl, who heads the Archdiocese of Washington and serves as NCEA’s chairman, were grateful for President Bush’s “recognition of the outstanding contribution of urban Catholic schools” and would welcome “widespread and increased support for those schools.”

For more information from the White House on the meeting between President Bush and Catholic school leaders, visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/04/20070413-4.html>.

Choice Meeting

Religious school leaders from across the country came together April 25 in Phoenix, Arizona, to discuss issues and strategies surrounding school choice. At a conference hosted by the Alliance for School Choice, representatives from a variety of faith groups shared ideas on the role that religious organizations have played in promoting school choice and on what they can do to advance the movement even more effectively in the future.

After welcoming remarks by Clint Bolick, the immediate past president of the Alliance, and Charles Hokanson, the current president, the group was treated to an upbeat overview of recent successes in the school choice movement in a host of states, including Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, and Wisconsin. Alliance staff estimate that the number of disadvantaged children enrolled in targeted choice programs across the country is now more than 100,000.

Several pastors serving African American communities spoke passionately about the particular importance of providing poor parents in urban areas the same freedom that wealthier families have—and take for granted—namely, the freedom to choose a quality education for their children.

Extending the freedom theme, Dr. Vernard Gant, director of the Urban School Services Department at the Association of Christian Schools International, a member organization of CAPE, likened the school choice campaign to the historic movements to abolish slavery and to extend civil rights. He said the only people who had a problem extending freedom to those who weren’t free were people who already had their freedom and would never think of giving it up. Similarly, many of the people who today oppose school choice for others already exercise such choice for themselves.

Return service requested

CAPE notes

★ **Fast Fact About Private Schools:** In 2003-04, 12.6 percent of all K-12 teachers in the United States taught in private schools. That translates into 465,300 private school teachers out of a total 3,680,200. Between 1987 and 2003, the number of private school teachers in the nation grew nearly 50 percent from 311,900 to 465,300. (Source: *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results from the 2004-05 Teacher Follow-up Survey*, National Center for Education Statistics)

★ The U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit issued a ruling April 11 in the academic freedom case involving the Asociación de Educación Privada de Puerto Rico, the CAPE affiliate in Puerto Rico. CAPE had co-filed an amicus brief in the case with the National Association of Independent Schools.

The circuit court found that two provisions in laws and regulations of the Commonwealth relating to textbook selection violate the free speech and academic freedom of private schools. In other action, the court upheld a regulation providing parents access to certain information about textbooks for the coming year. The decision is available for download at <<http://www.ca1.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/getopn.pl?OPINION=06-1146.01A>>.

★ The school choice movement scored another victory last month when the Georgia legislature approved a bill to provide scholarships to special needs students, al-

lowing them to attend either a public or private school.

The *Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Act* would provide scholarships to students who have spent the previous year in a Georgia public school and who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Scholarships would be in an amount equal to tuition and fees in the receiving school up to the costs of the educational program that would have been provided for the student in his/her public school.

The legislation recognizes that “students with disabilities have special needs that merit educational alternatives” and that parents “are best equipped to make decisions for their children, including the educational setting that will best serve the interests and educational needs of their children.”

To be eligible to participate in the program, a private school must: demonstrate fiscal soundness; comply with the antidiscrimination provisions of 42 U.S.C. Section 2000d; comply with all health and safety laws, and any other state laws, that apply to private schools; regularly report to parents and state education department officials on the academic progress of participating students in accordance with department guidelines; employ teachers who meet certain criteria; and let parents know on an annual basis “the relevant credentials of the teachers who will be teaching their students.”

Another important provision states, “The creation of the program shall not be

construed to expand the regulatory authority of the state, its officers, or any public school system to impose any additional regulation of nonpublic schools beyond those reasonably necessary to enforce the requirements of this article.”

★ Almost every state has a constitution that would allow a correctly designed school choice bill to be found constitutional, according to a new report from the Institute for Justice and the American Legislative Exchange Council. A news release from the two organizations states that the report, *School Choice and State Constitutions: A Guide to Designing School Choice Programs*, “documents the relevant state constitutional provisions and case law in each state and makes specific recommendations for designing programs most likely to withstand legal challenges from school choice opponents.”

“A well-designed school choice program should pass constitutional muster nearly everywhere,” said Clark Neily, an IJ senior attorney who co-authored the report with IJ Senior Litigation Attorney Richard D. Komer.

“With the information available in this guide, state legislators will be more prepared than ever before to champion educational opportunities in their states,” said Matt Warner, ALEC Education Task Force Director.

School Choice and State Constitutions is available at <<http://www.IJ.org>> and <<http://www.ALEC.org>>.