

High Teacher Turnover Hurting Students, Carnegie Study Finds

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High turnover among new teachers in public school classrooms undermines school stability, serves as an impediment to educational reform, and hurts student achievement, a study by the [Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching](#) finds. The report, *Beginners in the Classroom: What the Changing Demographics of Teaching Mean for Schools, Students, and Society* (36 pages, PDF), found that new teachers quit in large numbers largely due to the fact that they receive inadequate professional development opportunities, insufficient emotional backing, and inadequate feedback with respect to their performance. Indeed, the report found that between 1988 and 2008, rates of teacher attrition rose some 41 percent, and in many urban school districts more than half the new teachers hired leave within five years. The report also found that teachers at public charter schools are 40 percent more likely than teachers in district-run schools to transfer to another school and 52 percent more likely to leave the teaching profession altogether.

As a result, the profession as a whole is younger and less experienced than it was a generation ago, and that, according to the report, is putting a strain on district budgets, serving to undermine school cultures, and lowering student achievement. Teacher attrition not only costs school districts more than \$7 billion a year in recruitment and induction expenses, the report notes, it also impedes the implementation of educational reforms, disrupts relationships among teachers and between teachers and students, and negatively affects students, especially in high-minority and low-achieving schools.

The report notes that while rarely provided, comprehensive support for new teachers — including quality mentoring, common planning time, and standards-based evaluation — can improve retention and performance. According to the study, a model California school district's two-year induction program cost \$13,000 and returned \$21,500 in benefits over five years, in part because first- and second-year teachers who had gone through the program were as effective as better paid fourth-year teachers who had not. If the low morale of many new public school teachers is largely a human capital challenge, the report concludes, it is also an opportunity to build a more effective foundation for public school teaching that can substantially improve student achievement.

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Complete Carnegie Foundation Report:

http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/new_teachers_carnegie_report.pdf