Teacher trends

Question: What are the current trends in the teaching profession?

Response: A projected 3.6 million full-time-equivalent (FTE) elementary and secondary school teachers were engaged in classroom instruction in fall 2016. This number was 1 percent lower than in fall 2008. The 2016 number of FTE teachers includes 3.2 million public school teachers and 0.4 million private school teachers.

Salary
- The average salary for public school teachers in 2015–16 was $58,064 in current dollars (i.e., dollars that are not adjusted for inflation). In constant (i.e., inflation-adjusted) dollars, the average salary for teachers was 1 percent lower in 2015–16 than in 1990–91.

Demographics
- In 2011–12, some 76 percent of public school teachers were female, 44 percent were under age 40, and 56 percent had a master's or higher degree. Compared with public school teachers, a lower percentage of private school teachers had a master's or higher degree (43 percent).

Pupil/Teacher Ratio
- During the 1970s and early 1980s, public school enrollment decreased, while the number of teachers generally increased. For public schools, the number of pupils per teacher—that is, the pupil/teacher ratio—declined from 22.3 in 1970 to 17.9 in 1985. After enrollment started increasing in 1985, the public school pupil/teacher ratio continued to decline, reaching 17.2 in 1989. After a period of relative stability from the late 1980s through the mid-1990s, the ratio declined from 17.3 in 1995 to 15.3 in 2008. After 2008, the public school pupil/teacher ratio increased, reaching 16.1 in 2014. By comparison, the pupil/teacher ratio for private schools was 12.2 in 2014. The average class size in 2011–12 was 21.2 pupils for public elementary schools and 26.8 pupils for public secondary schools.


Mobility
- Of the 3,377,900 public school teachers who were teaching during the 2011–12 school year, 84 percent remained at the same school (“stayers”), 8 percent moved to a different school (“movers”), and 8 percent left the profession (“leavers”) during the following year.
- Among public school teachers with 1–3 years of experience, 80 percent stayed in their base-year school, 13 percent moved to another school, and 7 percent left teaching in 2012–13.
- Among public school teacher movers, 59 percent moved from one public school to another public school in the same district, 38 percent moved from one public school district to another public school district, and 3 percent moved from a public school to a private school between 2011–12 and 2012–13.
- About 51 percent of public school teachers who left teaching in 2012–13 reported that the manageability of their work load was better in their current position than in teaching. Additionally, 53 percent of public school leavers reported that their general work conditions were better in their current position than in teaching.


Related Tables and Figures: (Listed by Release Date)

Other Resources: (Listed by Release Date)
- 2018. Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS): This survey collects extensive data on American public and private elementary and secondary schools. Teachers, principals, schools, school districts, and library media centers are components of the SASS system.
- 2018. The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) is a system of related questionnaires that provide descriptive data on the context of elementary and secondary education. This survey is based on the former Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS).
- 2017. Characteristics of Public Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States; Results From the 2015–16 National Teacher and Principal Survey.
• 2015. Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility in the First Five Years: Results From the First Through Fifth Waves of the 2007–08 Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study.