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California Outpaces Nation in Teacher Retention

SACRAMENTO – A new study released by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) reveals that California schools retain their teachers at a significantly higher rate than the national average. After four years, 84% of California teachers remain in the classroom as compared to 67% of U.S. teachers.

The study also found that the majority of teachers (over 27%) who left public education often remained in the field in private schools. The next most popular industry for former public school teachers was the government, federal, state or local (12%), followed by business services (10%).

The study findings are based on a data comparison between the CCTC and the California Employment Development Department (EDD), which matched teachers' credential information with wage employment data over a four-year period. An analysis of the data shows that California surpassed the national average in teacher retention (employed in public education) by 17%. Of the 14,643 individuals earning new California teaching credentials during 1995-96, over 13,000 became employed in the California public school system their first year. Of these first year teachers, 94% were still employed in public education after their first year on the job, compared to 89% nationally. The data showed that 84% of the 1995-96 new teachers were still active in education after four years, compared to 67% nationally.

MORE

The CCTC/EDD study reinforces findings from a recent California State University (CSU) evaluation of teacher preparation programs. The evaluation found that 96% of the graduates of CSU teaching credential programs were teaching in K-12 schools one year later. Similarly, the CCTC/EDD study showed that statewide 94% of credential holders were still employed in public education after their first year on the job.

While the CCTC/EDD study revealed important statewide information on teacher retention in California, a more in-depth study on teacher mobility is currently underway.

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), in cooperation with the CCTC and EDD, will examine the dynamics of public school employee and teacher turnover in California. In light of persistent teacher shortages, particularly in large urban school districts, the analysis will focus on employment paths chosen by teachers when they leave a school district's employment. The study should be concluded sometime in 2003.

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