

# Preliminary Report on Teacher Retention in California

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## Summary

As California strives to retain trained teachers, there has been no reliable data on teacher attrition to make public policy decisions. This preliminary report is the first statistical examination of teacher retention rates among new teachers in California. This report also compares those findings with national teacher retention data. Preliminary data show that California has significantly lower teacher attrition rates than the national average.

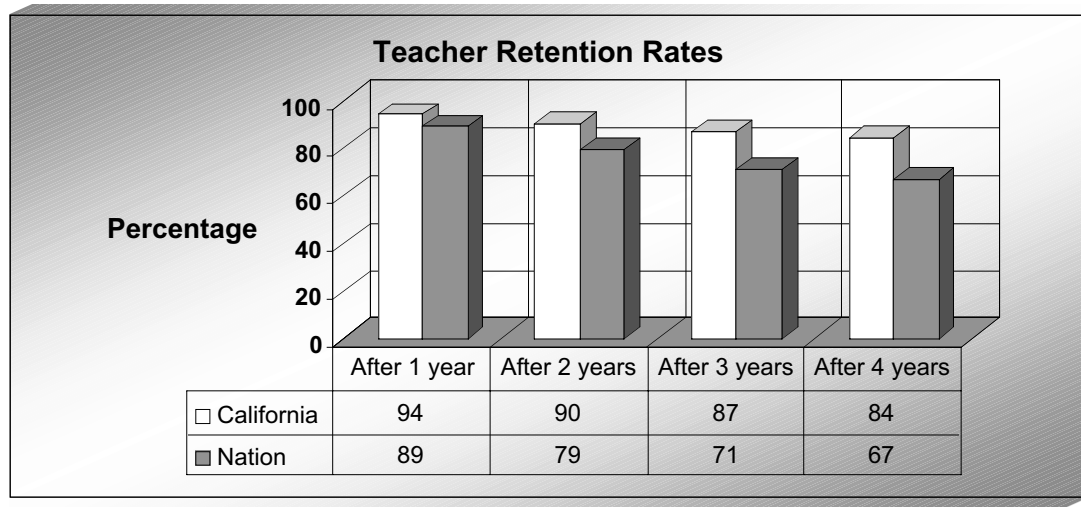
## Fiscal Impact

This research was conducted at no extra cost to the Commission.

## Background

The findings in this report are based on a comparison of data between the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the 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.

The following chart shows California's teacher retention rates over the four-year period, as compared to nationally reported numbers<sup>1</sup>.



Teachers who left public education often remained in the field in private schools. The second most popular industry for former public school teachers was the government,

federal, state or local. Business was the third industry that teachers left education in which to work. The chart below displays the top seven industries in which teachers were employed after leaving education during the four-year period studied.

Professions Where Teachers Were Employed After Four-Years in Public Education	%
Educational Services (Private Ownership)	27%
Federal, State or Local Government, Other than Elementary and Secondary Schools	12%
Business Services	10%
Social Services	8%
Membership Organizations	7%
Engineering, accounting, research and management services	4%
Health Services	2%

In order to meet the anticipated needs of the state, Governor Gray Davis and the Legislature have enacted several measures designed to retain teachers, such as teacher tax credits based on years of service, grants to teachers who earn National Board Certification and teacher bonuses to teachers in low-performing schools that significantly improved their schools' performance.

Reinforcing the findings above is a study the CSU initiated in 2001, the first system-wide Evaluation of Teacher Preparation Programs in order to assess the progress of the campuses commitment to prepare high quality teachers. The participants in the evaluation were graduates who completed CSU programs of professional teacher preparation during the 1999-2000 academic year. The evaluation included a series of questions regarding the quality and effectiveness of the graduate's preparation to teach in California, as well as questions about their employment status. A total of 3,107 members of this cohort were randomly selected to participate in the evaluation. With a 50% return rate, the evaluation revealed that 96% of the graduates of CSU teaching credential programs were teaching in K-12 schools one year later.

While this preliminary retention report suggests that California is able to retain a higher percentage of teachers than the national average, the state has struggled to project teacher supply and demand with any degree of accuracy due to the lack of reliable data. SRI International attempted a similar study with CCTC and State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) data, however the STRS data was not compatible with the study. Several agencies within the state, including the CCTC, STRS, EDD, the California Department of Education, and Institutions of Higher Education, collect data on teachers or potential teachers that would be beneficial in projecting future needs. The major barrier is the lack of a common identifier, and the absence of a policy directive to bring the systems

together. A cohesive system to collect and analyze data on teacher supply, demand, and distribution, is the necessary foundation for developing strategies to counter teacher shortages in the state.

### **Data Sources for this Report**

California data was based on individuals earning their first-time, or new-type teaching credential during fiscal year 1995-96. An agreement was entered into between the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) and the Employment Development Department (EDD) to match the individual's credential information with their wage employment data over a four-year period.

The Primary source for the national data was a report entitled *The Teacher Shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription*, by Richard Ingersoll in the Bulletin (June, 2002) of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The report uses data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and its supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). SASS is the largest and most comprehensive data source available on the staffing, occupational, and organizational aspects of schools. To date, four independent cycles of SASS have been completed: 1987-88; 1990-91; 1993-94; and 1999-00. In each cycle, NCES administers survey questionnaires to a random sample of approximately 55,000 teachers from all types of schools and all 50 states.

### **Further Studies**

A more in-depth study on teacher mobility is currently underway. The CCTC has a data sharing agreement with the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) for the purpose of examining the dynamics of public school employee and teacher turnover in California. In light of growing 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.

### **References**

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(1) Ingersoll, R. (2002). The Teacher Shortage: A Case of Wrong Diagnosis and Wrong Prescription. *National Association of Secondary Schools Principals: Bulletin*, vol. 86 no. 631.