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The Jacksonville Public Education Fund is an independent nonprofit organization that works to connect research with civic voice to bring about unified action in support of universally high-quality public schools for all children in Duval County. We believe that an informed and active citizenry, together with attentive and aligned community and district leadership, will move our schools forward to prepare students with the skills they need for future success.

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PATCHING THE PIPELINE:

Addressing Teacher Satisfaction and Retention in Duval County

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January of 2013, the Jacksonville Public Education Fund's ONE by ONE initiative convened representatives from all throughout Duval County to establish the community's top priorities for public education. Drawing on input from over 150 conversations with nearly 1,600 participants over the past year, the representatives identified four top priority areas, including "Great Teachers and Leaders." Recently, Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) has similarly incorporated "Great Educators and Leaders" as a top goal area in their strategic plan for the district moving forward. Clearly, identifying strategies for keeping the best teachers in our schools has emerged as a top priority from all levels of the community. The question this begs then is, what exactly do we know about what's happening with the teachers we have now?

In this report, we take a closer look at what is happening in Duval County by examining placement, movement and retention patterns of over 2,000 new teachers over the past ten years. We found that Duval County is losing on average about one of every two new teachers hired within the first five years of their employment. Only about 34% of new teachers hired since 2003 were still in the same school they started at five years later, while another 15% were still in the district but at a different school. This type of turnover has a real impact on both the academic and financial well-being of the district. Research has shown the largest gains in teacher effectiveness tend to occur in the first 3-5 years of teaching experience,¹ and the recruitment, induction and training costs of replacing departing teachers typically runs in the millions of dollars per year for urban districts.²

To learn more about the motivations driving teachers' decisions to stay in or leave the district, we also surveyed nearly 600 current DCPS teachers on their career intentions, job satisfaction levels and a number of specific influences and incentive ideas that might influence their decision to stay in or leave DCPS. We found that teachers were generally satisfied with the environment and administration of their own schools and were least satisfied with the amount of input they have on decisions made at the state and district levels affecting their classroom, and their overall compensation and benefits. Teachers rated improvements in compensation and benefits, working conditions, and autonomy and influence as the changes that would most influence them to remain in the classroom longer.

Duval County is losing about one of every two new teachers hired within the first five years of their employment. Only about 34% of new teachers hired since 2003 were still in the same school they started at five years later.

Recommendations include finding ways to improve teacher pay relative to surrounding districts, reducing teachers' non-instructional responsibilities, identifying new models of teacher career advancement that include increased autonomy, responsibility and input on administrative decisions at all levels, and improving integration of data systems for better incorporating teacher quality as a factor in future promotion and retention initiatives.

TEACHER SATISFACTION AND RETENTION

NATIONAL AND STATEWIDE TRENDS

Teacher satisfaction levels and retention rates are fundamentally interconnected and interest in both areas has grown simultaneously in recent years. Studies estimate the number of teachers leaving the profession has grown increasingly higher than the number of people entering the teaching profession to replace them since the early 1990s.³ According to recent results from the “MetLife Survey of the American Teacher,” it may not be difficult to figure out why. The most recent findings from the annual nationwide survey of K-12 teachers showed that teacher satisfaction levels have declined to their lowest point in 25 years.⁴ A number of other studies support this connection between teacher dissatisfaction with specific areas of their job and higher teacher attrition rates.

The financial cost of this turnover to school systems nationwide has been severe. It has been estimated that the United States spends over two billion dollars each year replacing teachers who

leave the profession,⁵ not to mention the immeasurable costs to students that this type of instability can foster. Multiple studies have found that teachers tend to improve the most early in their careers, making tremendous strides in teacher effectiveness as measured by student performance within their first 3-5 years.^{6,7} High attrition rates means continuing to lose the best young teachers just as they begin to “hit their stride” and replacing them with new teachers at the beginning of that learning curve. Even before considering overall teacher quality, a 2006 study by the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research reported that the quality of relationships between teachers, and between teachers and students, as well as “patterned norms” of interaction among colleagues all predicted student achievement. Staff cohesion and community and school instructional program cohesion were also reported to be related to student achievement and were negatively disrupted by staff turnover.⁸

Public reports from the Florida Department of Education estimate that the state of Florida loses about 40% of new teachers within the first five years of teaching, and that in Duval County it’s closer to 50%.⁹ Over the next few sections we’ll take a closer look at exactly what is happening in those first five years to cause us to lose 50% of our new teachers, and what we might be able to do to address it.

TABLE 1 EMPLOYMENT DATA AND TEACHER SURVEY SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

| | DCPS NEW TEACHER HIRES 2003-2007 | DCPS TEACHER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESPONDENTS |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| TOTAL SAMPLE | 2041 | 588 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 77.7% | 85% |
| Male | 22.3% | 15% |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Asian/P.I., A.I., or A.N. | 2.3% | 2.4% |
| African-American | 16.2% | 16.3% |
| Hispanic | 3.7% | *a |
| White | 70.7% | 77.4% |
| Multiracial/Other | 7.1% | 2.7% |
| Age | | |
| 21-29 | 63.5% | 3.2% |
| 30-39 | 21.4% | 19% |
| 40-49 | 10% | 24.5% |
| 50-59 | 4.6% | 40.5% |
| 60+ | 0.6% | 12.8% |
| Highest Education¹⁰ | | |
| Bachelor’s | 78.2% | 36.3% |
| Some Graduate School | -- | 18.1% |
| Master’s | 19.8% | 41% |
| Specialist | *b | 2.1% |
| Doctorate | 0.9% | 2.5% |
| Certification Route^b | | |
| Traditional | -- | 73.9% |
| Alternative Entry | -- | 26.1% |
| Primary Teaching Placement^c | | |
| K-5 | 53.6% | 53.5% |
| 6-8 | 21.4% | 15.5% |
| 9-12 | 25.1% | 31% |

^a Subgroups with fewer than 10 members not reported. ^b Data not available in dataset.

^c Teachers in survey were allowed to select more than one grade level they work with regularly, so total numbers in this area add up to more than total number of teachers in survey.

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN DUVAL COUNTY?

We began with a dataset of nearly 15,000 teachers employed in the district between 2003 and 2011. For the purposes of this report, we focused on five cohorts of new teachers¹⁰ hired for the first time by DCPS in each of the years between 2003 and 2007—the most recent five cohorts for which we would then have at least five years of subsequent data.

The first column of *Table 1* shows the overall demographics of these cohorts combined. Just over three-quarters of the new teachers hired by DCPS during this time were female, and just under three-quarters were white. Because we specifically looked only at first-time teachers (as opposed to all teachers in the district during the same time), it is not surprising that this sample is predominantly under age thirty and holding a bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education at their time of hire.

Over the next few sections, we’ll use the findings about what happened with this group to frame what is happening with teacher retention and loss in the first five years in terms of a simplified cohort of 100 new teachers entering DCPS.

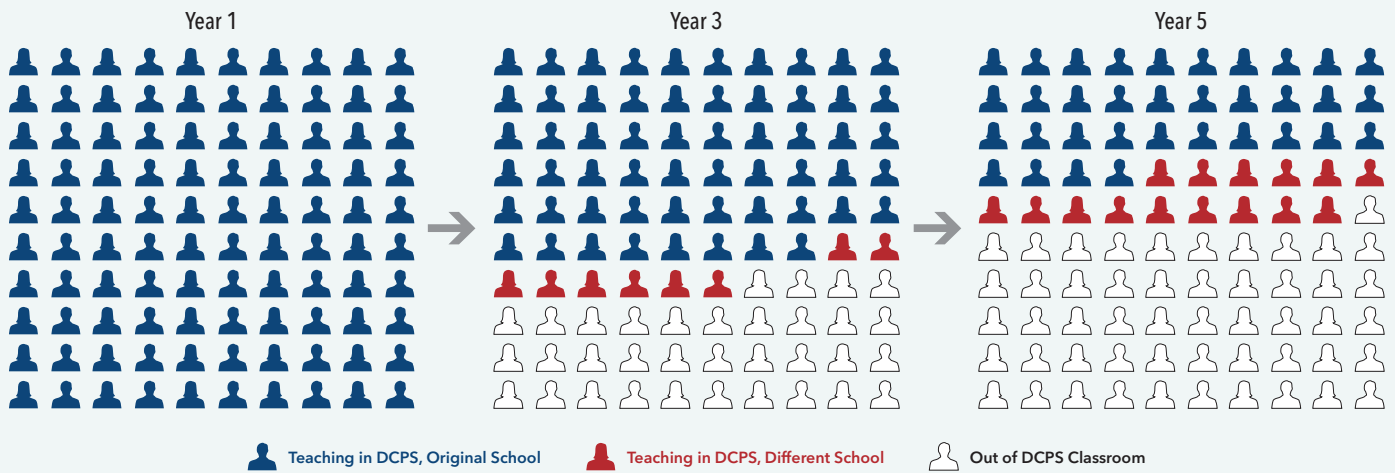
STABILITY AND MOVEMENT: THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Figure 1 shows the typical rates of retention and movement for a group of 100 new teachers in DCPS over their first five years of employment. On average, about 72 of them will return to the same school they started in for their second year of teaching. About 5 will move to another school within the district for their second year, and about 24 will already leave the district after just one year.

By year three, about 58 of them will still be teaching in the same school they started in, and another 8 will still be in the district at a different school. About 35 will now be either out of the district or out of teaching entirely.

By year five, only 34 of the original 100 teachers will still be teaching in the same schools they were originally hired. Another 15 will be teaching somewhere else within

FIG 1 DCPS NEW TEACHER RETENTION: FIRST FIVE YEARS

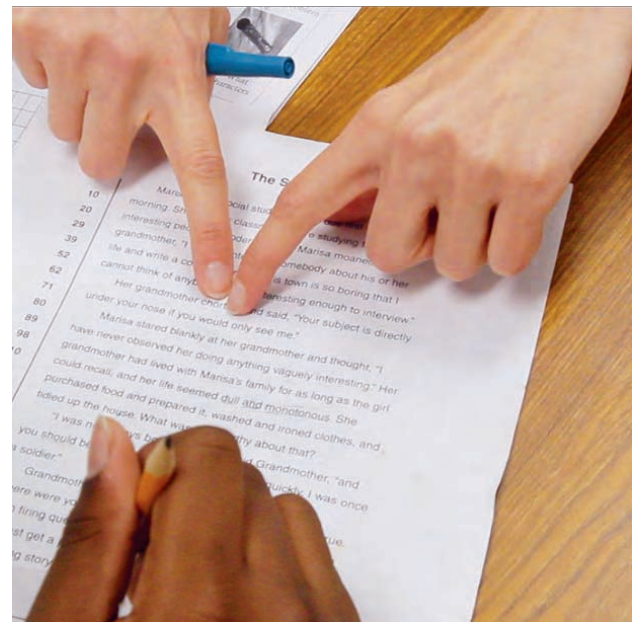


Source: Jacksonville Public Education Fund

TABLE 2 FIVE YEAR NEW TEACHER OUTCOMES BY SUBGROUP

| | BY YEAR 5, THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC OR PLACEMENT CHARACTERISTICS WERE ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHERS BEING SIGNIFICANTLY MORE (↑) OR LESS (↓) LIKELY TO BE... | | |
|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| | IN SAME SCHOOL IN DCPS | IN DIFFERENT SCHOOL IN DCPS | OUT OF DCPS CLASSROOM |
| Demographics | | | |
| Gender | | | Male (↑) |
| Race | African American (↓) | White (↓) African American (↑) | White (↑) |
| Student Population, Year 1 | | | |
| School Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible Population | Low FRL (↑) Significant FRL (↓) | Low FRL (↓) Moderate FRL (↓) High FRL (↑) | Significant FRL (↑) High FRL (↓) |

FRL Key: Low=0-25% FRL students, Moderate=25-50% FRL students, Significant=50-75% FRL students, High=75-100% FRL students



the district, and over half of the entire starting group will be out of the district or out of teaching entirely by this time.

We looked further by demographic and placement subgroups to try to identify more specific patterns around which some teachers were leaving their schools at higher rates than others.

As the top half of *Table 2* indicates, some significant correlations existed between certain demographic subgroups and their likely outcome after five years, including:

- **Male teachers** were more likely to leave the district within five years than female teachers.
- **African-American** teachers were slightly less likely to remain in the same school for five years and more likely to move to another school within the district than non-African-American teachers.
- **White teachers** were less likely to move between schools within the district but more likely to leave the district altogether than non-White teachers.

We also looked at subgroups based on the student population of the schools that teachers started out in. Some research indicates that schools with more challenging student populations (in terms of higher poverty or at-risk student concentrations) tend to

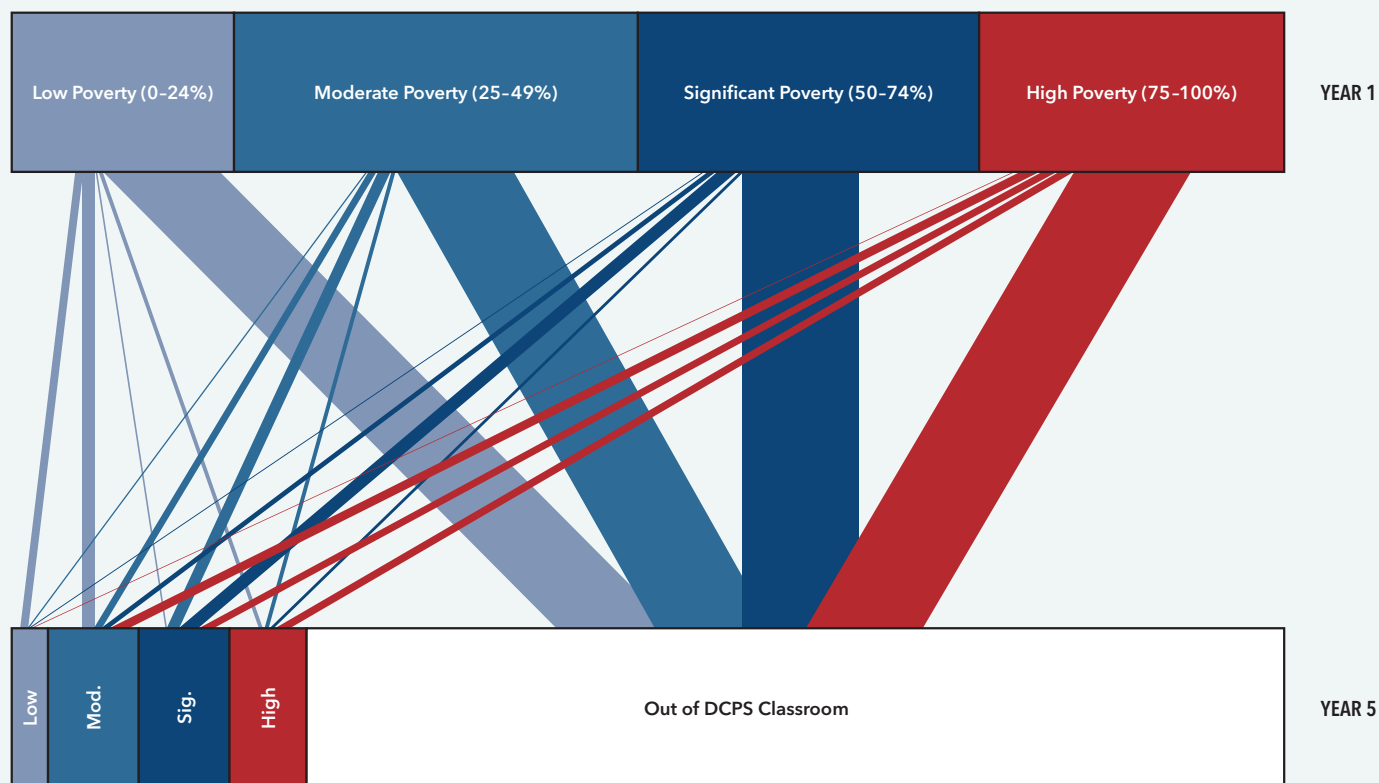
experience higher turnover rates as a result of teachers leaving or transferring after a few years to wealthier or what may otherwise be viewed as less challenging schools in other parts of town.¹¹

To find out whether this is happening in DCPS, we also looked at teacher outcomes based on what percentage of students qualified for free or reduced price lunch (FRL) benefits in the schools they started out in.

As *Table 2* also indicates, there were some additional significant correlations between certain initial teacher placements and their likely outcome five years later, including:

- Teachers who started at schools with the lowest levels of student poverty were more likely to remain at their school for at least five years and less likely to transfer to another school within the district.
- Teachers initially hired at schools with medium-to high-levels of student poverty were more likely to leave their initial school and the district altogether within the first five years.
- Teachers initially hired at schools with the highest rates of poverty were more likely to move to another school within the district but less likely to leave the district altogether within five years.

FIG 2 MOVEMENT AMONG DCPS NEW TEACHERS OUTSIDE ORIGINAL SCHOOLS: FIVE YEARS



Source: Jacksonville Public Education Fund

Of only the teachers who moved between schools within the district during their first five years, there was some evidence of mobility between high poverty and low poverty schools, but few statistically significant patterns.

- Teachers who started off in low poverty schools were more likely to move to other low or moderate poverty schools, and less likely to move to high poverty schools.
- Teachers who started off in the highest poverty schools were most likely to move to other, equally high poverty schools but moved at nearly equal rates to moderate or significant poverty level schools.
- Fewer than one in ten teachers who moved within the district from significant or high poverty schools moved into the lowest poverty schools in the district.

However, that does not mean that this smaller amount of movement may not still be important to address. In follow up research, we need to be able to also factor in teacher quality measurements to make sure that this type of “flight” movement, while not widespread, is not skimming the very best teachers out of the highest needs schools and moving them away.

Figure 2 shows movement overall by school poverty level among teachers who did not remain in their same school over the five years. The clear pattern is that—across all types of schools—about half the new teachers hired over the years studied here were gone entirely from the district within five years. To find out why so many of our teachers are leaving the classroom or district altogether, we asked the teachers of Duval County directly.

WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

To learn more about what issues pertaining to satisfaction and career intentions are most important to teachers in Duval County, we created an original survey based on components of multiple nationally validated instruments.¹² The survey contained over 100 questions about teachers’ background demographics, career intentions, job satisfaction in a number of specific areas, and opinions on a number of specific reform or incentive ideas for keeping teachers in the classroom longer-term.

In partnership with Duval Teachers United, the survey was sent out to all teachers in DCPS and completed by nearly 600 teachers from over 130 different schools throughout the district. This strong response particularly considering the length of the survey, indicated how eager teachers in Duval County are to have their voices heard in conversations about their profession.¹³

BACKGROUND

Teacher respondents’ basic demographics are shown in the last column of Table 1. In addition to the general background information presented here, we asked teachers to tell us some specifics about their education, experience and placement.

About three-quarters of respondents came to teaching through a traditional, 4-year college of education preparation program,

Less than 50% of all the teachers that participated in the survey said that five years from now they intend to be teaching in the same school they are currently in. Of those who did though, nearly all said they intend to remain in teaching until they are eligible to retire or beyond.



with the rest entering teaching through an alternate entry certification program. Within the traditional preparation route teachers, about 37% came through the University of North Florida (UNF)—by far the most of any single university among teachers in this sample. The next largest group came from Jacksonville University, representing 8%. Among the alternate entry teachers, 29% came through the DCPS Alternative Certification Program, followed by another 19% who went through UNF’s Educator Preparation Institute.

CAREER INTENTIONS

About 41% of the teachers surveyed said that five years from now they intend to still be teaching in the same school they are currently in. On the other hand, over 43% said they plan to be out of classroom teaching completely by that time—including nearly 23% planning to be out of the classroom but still working in education in some capacity (administration, higher education, non-profit work) and another 21% planning to be out of education altogether. Fewer than one in ten intend to be teaching at another school within DCPS or to be teaching outside DCPS in another district or state.

Nearly all of the teachers planning to remain at their current school at least five more years said they also intend to remain in teaching until they are eligible to retire or beyond (or about a third of all teachers in the sample). The majority of teachers intending to remain in teaching for at least five years in this sample appear to be the same ones intending to spend their entire career in the classroom.

JOB SATISFACTION

The survey asked teachers to rate how satisfied they felt with 48 specific aspects of their job, reflecting 10 broader areas of concern, on a scale from 1-5 (1=Very Dissatisfied,

| TABLE 3 DCPS TEACHER MEAN SATISFACTION LEVELS | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| ALL TEACHERS | | | |
| Satisfaction with: | Scale (1-5) | | |
| Relationships with peers | 3.74 | | |
| School-level Administration Support | 3.18 | | |
| Building Facilities, Supplies & Maintenance | 3.17 | | |
| Personal Satisfaction with Job | 2.99 | | |
| Student Responsibility & Discipline | 2.98 | | |
| Parent and Community Support | 2.78 | | |
| Opportunities for Career Advancement | 2.61 | | |
| Compensation and Benefits | 2.49 | | |
| District-level Administration Support | 2.45 | | |
| State-level Administration Support | 1.90 | | |
| TEACHERS WITH LESS THAN 10 YEARS EXPERIENCE, PLANNING TO: | STAY 5 YEARS OR MORE | LEAVE W/IN 5 YEARS | |
| Satisfaction with: | Scale (1-5) | | Difference |
| Personal Satisfaction with Job | 3.23 | 2.75 | 0.48* |
| Student Responsibility & Discipline | 3.09 | 2.71 | 0.38* |
| Opportunities for Career Advancement | 2.77 | 2.39 | 0.38* |
| Parent and Community Support | 2.78 | 2.41 | 0.37* |
| Relationships with peers | 3.91 | 3.63 | 0.28* |
| District-level Administration Support | 2.48 | 2.20 | 0.28 |
| School-level Administration Support | 3.32 | 3.06 | 0.26 |
| Building Facilities, Supplies & Maintenance | 3.10 | 2.92 | 0.18 |
| Compensation and Benefits | 2.27 | 2.31 | 0.04 |
| State-level Administration Support | 1.99 | 2.01 | 0.02 |
| *Statistically significant differences | | | |

5=Very Satisfied). The top half of Table 3 shows the mean levels of satisfaction teachers felt overall across the 10 broader areas, listed in order from what they were most satisfied in to least.

Teachers were most satisfied with the professional and physical environment of their own schools—including co-workers, school-level administration, and facilities. They tended to be least satisfied with their relationships with state and district administration and their overall compensation.

Some of the specific areas where teachers reported feeling the lowest levels of satisfaction were:

- The amount of input they have on decisions made at both the district and state levels that affect their classroom.
- The degree to which both district and state level requirements impact their daily classroom activities.
- How appreciated they feel by state level education administrators and officials.
- Overall satisfaction with pay and compensation.

To get a better idea of how these satisfaction levels might be related to teachers' career intentions, in the bottom half of Table 3 responses are compared between teachers who plan to remain teaching in DCPS for another five years or more and teachers who plan to leave either the district or teaching altogether in that time. For this comparison, we only included teachers with ten years total teaching experience or less in order to avoid confusing the satisfaction levels of teachers planning to stay because they want to with teachers who may also feel externally compelled to stay because they are close to qualifying for retirement benefits.

Teachers indicated that financial concerns may have the biggest influence on whether or not they remain in the profession, followed closely by issues with the amount of autonomy they are allowed to have over their own classroom.

The biggest difference between young teachers planning to stay and those planning to leave was the level of personal satisfaction they felt from teaching. There were also significant differences between these two groups in how satisfied they were with the behavior and motivation of their students, opportunities for career advancement, and their relationships with parents, community members and peers. This could suggest that young teachers who enter teaching for reasons other than internal reward are more sensitive to the external pressures and opportunity costs of remaining in teaching.

Both groups reported lowest overall satisfaction levels with compensation levels and district and state level support, with no significant difference between their ratings of those areas.

INFLUENCES AND INCENTIVES

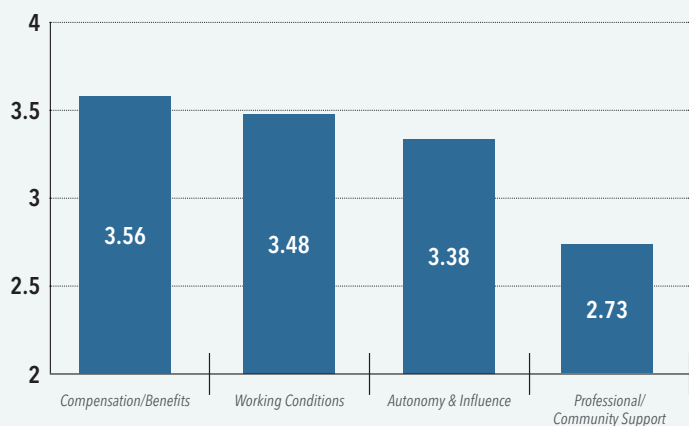
The survey asked teachers directly about what specific issues with their job will most influence their intentions to remain in or

TABLE 4 IMPORTANCE OF INFLUENCES AND INCENTIVE IDEAS TO DCPS TEACHERS

| How much influence will each of the following have on your decision to leave or remain in teaching over the next several years? | Scale (1-5) | | How much incentive would each of the following be to encourage you to remain in teaching longer? | Scale (1-5) | |
|---|-------------|--|--|---|------|
| Salary issues | 3.54 | MORE IMPORTANT TO TEACHERS → | Higher pay (overall) | 4.28 | |
| Benefits (insurance, retirement, leave, etc.) issues | 3.45 | | More time for in-schedule lesson and class planning | 3.76 | |
| Issues with autonomy or control over daily classroom activities | 3.31 | | Improved benefits (insurance, retirement, leave) | 3.71 | |
| Issues with administrative support at SCHOOL-level | 3.30 | | More classroom-based decision making (teacher-level) | 3.65 | |
| Issues with administrative/official support at STATE-level | 3.19 | | Less administrative paperwork/responsibilities | 3.57 | |
| Issues with administrative/official support at DISTRICT-level | 3.12 | | Reduced time/emphasis on standardized testing | 3.54 | |
| Number of administrative (non-instructional, non-testing related) forms and procedures | 3.12 | | Increased ability to influence or advise important decisions at my school | 3.34 | |
| Time/energy devoted to standardized test preparation or administration | 3.07 | | Increased ability to influence or advise STATE-level policy decisions | 3.34 | |
| Issues with student behavior | 3.03 | | Increased ability to influence or advise DISTRICT-level policy decisions | 3.33 | |
| Issues with student academics (motivation & achievement) | 3.01 | | ← LESS IMPORTANT TO TEACHERS | Better articulated, supported or enforced student behavior management protocols | 3.24 |
| Unreimbursed/out-of-pocket expenses | 3.01 | | | Smaller class size | 3.12 |
| Issues with status and respect for profession in general | 3.00 | | | More site-based decision making (SCHOOL-level) | 3.07 |
| Quality/availability of instructional materials or equipment | 2.75 | | | More parental involvement or support | 3.00 |
| Safety issues | 2.40 | More or better pathways for career advancement within teaching | | 2.86 | |
| Issues with parental involvement/support with students' education outside of school (homework help, meetings, etc.) | 2.37 | Increased or improved ongoing professional development | | 2.70 | |
| Issues with parental involvement/support with in-school or in-class activities | 2.25 | Merit pay opportunities based on performance | | 2.69 | |
| Issues with peers or school staff | 2.05 | Safer schools | | 2.69 | |
| | | Teacher discounts from local business community (reduced car loan rates, discounted mortgages, etc.) | | 2.62 | |
| | | More training in classroom management | | 2.03 | |

FIG 3 MAJOR FACTORS IN INCENTIVE AREAS FOR DCPS TEACHERS

Source: Jacksonville Public Education Fund



leave teaching in the near future. The left side of *Table 4* shows the results of those influences among all teachers. The teachers in this sample indicated that ultimately financial concerns may have the biggest influence on whether or not they remain in the profession, followed closely by issues with the amount of autonomy they are allowed to have over their own classroom, and administrative support at all levels. This is consistent with a number of existing studies that have found both compensation levels and providing teachers with more autonomy and administrative support to be associated with lower levels of teacher loss.¹⁴

The survey also asked teachers directly about what types of reforms would provide them the strongest incentives to remain in the classroom longer than they may otherwise currently be planning to stay. These responses, in the right side of *Table 4* are generally consistent with addressing the influences that teachers said might affect their decision to leave the most. Specifically, improved pay and benefits overall, more time for in-schedule planning and grading/reduced administrative paperwork, and more autonomy and influence over decisions made at all levels effecting their classroom were among the reforms teachers said would provide the strongest incentive to keeping them in the classroom longer.

MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN

Using additional pattern analysis to establish a better overall sense of the underlying issues that were most important to teachers in deciding about the future of their career in teaching, four major areas of concern that teachers would most like to see came to light:

- Compensation and Benefits
- Working Conditions
- Autonomy and Influence
- Professional and Community Support

Teachers are generally satisfied with the environment and administration of their own schools. They are least satisfied with the amount of input they have on decisions made at the state and district levels affecting their classroom and their overall compensation and benefits.



One initiative working to redesign the traditional teacher career path to offer teachers more flexibility, opportunities for advancement and pay within the district's existing budget is Project L.I.F.T. in Charlotte, North Carolina. Working in nine schools, Project L.I.F.T. offers teachers multiple models for teaching and pursuing advancement based on their own strengths, including:

- Leading a team that includes one or more teachers while staying in the classroom as a "Multi-Classroom Teacher"
- Teaching more students by learning to integrate technology for basic skills development as a "Blended-Learning Teacher"
- Lead planning and delivery of instruction efforts for multiple classes with the help of paraprofessionals as an "Extended Impact Teacher"
- Teaching only their strongest content areas as a "Specialized Elementary Teacher"

Whether the model is ultimately sustainable within budget will be worth watching for Duval County in the coming years. At least in terms of meeting the career needs of teachers it seems to be promising so far, as Project L.I.F.T. reports they have already received over 700 applications for 26 new positions at their schools this year.

Additional research conducted recently by Educational Resource Strategies outlines some other specific ideas about what a new teacher career advancement model in Duval County might look like. For more information, visit www.JaxPEF.org.

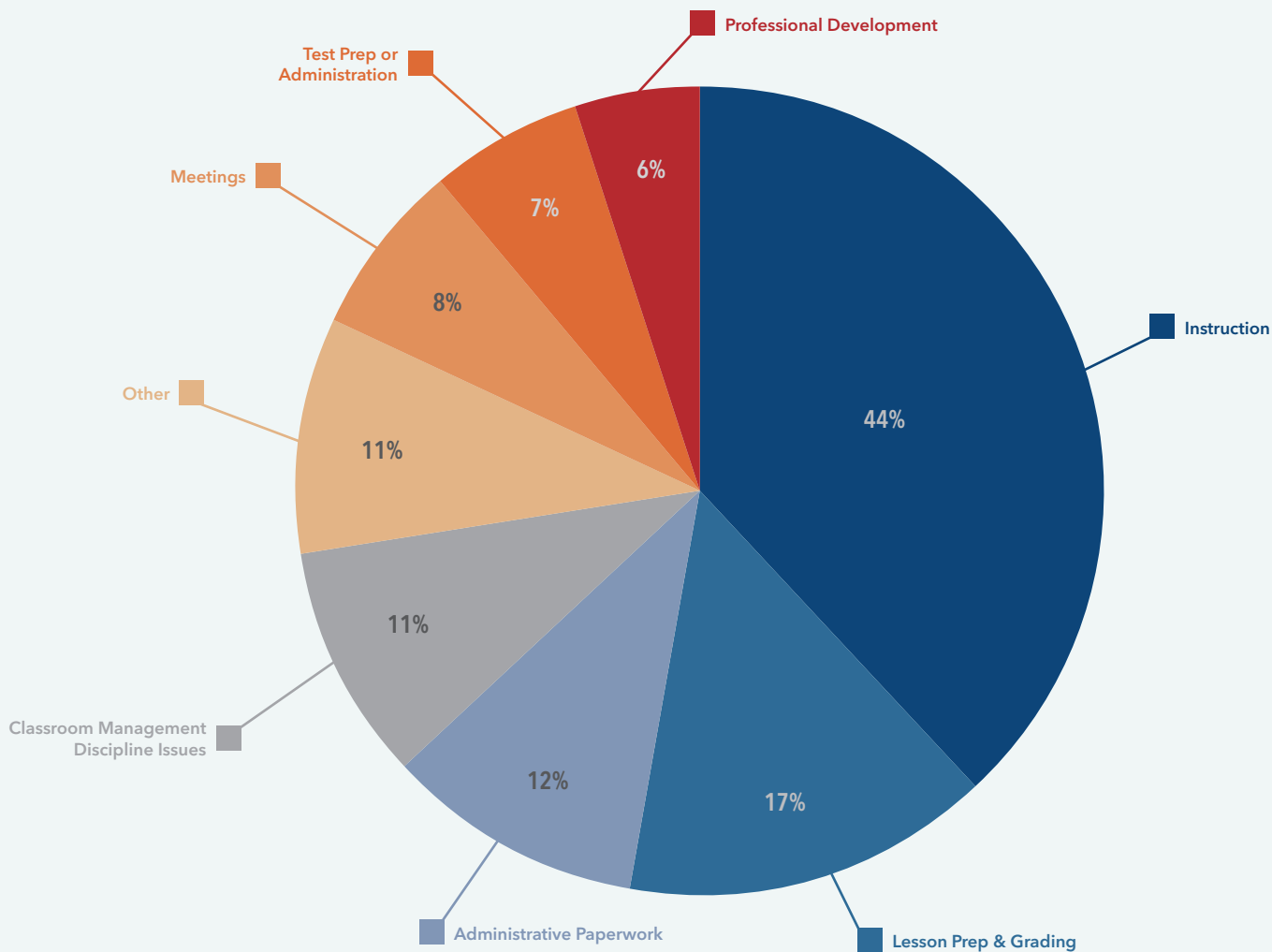
Of these, teachers clearly indicated that improvements in the areas *Compensation and Benefits*, *Working Conditions* and *Autonomy and Influence* were more important to them to address first than issues of *Professional and Community Support* (see *Figure 3*).

Within the area of *Compensation and Benefits*, it is worth noting that teachers in this sample considered improved overall pay and benefits to be the among the strongest incentives for keeping them in teaching but rated merit pay opportunities as very little incentive at all.

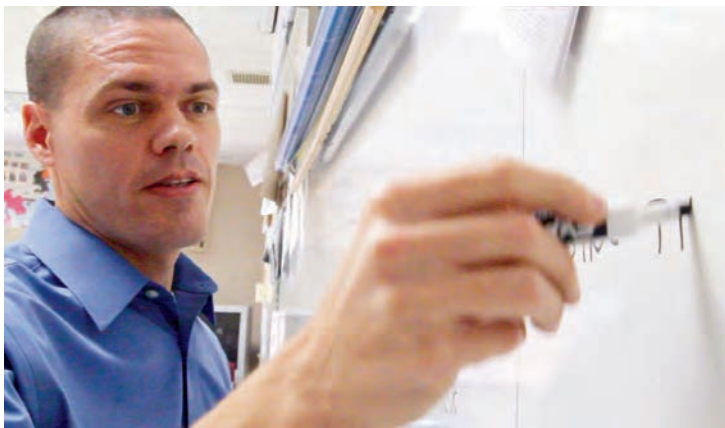
Within the area of *Working Conditions*, teachers specifically rated relief from extra administrative (non-instruction related) paperwork and responsibilities, manageable class sizes, and more time for in-schedule planning as top areas they would like to see addressed that would make them want to stay in the classroom longer.

As part of the survey, teachers were asked to estimate how much time during a typical work week they spend on a number of different responsibilities. The results in *Figure 4* show that teachers estimated they spend about 12% of their time in a typical week on administrative paperwork and responsibilities, and another 11% of their time dealing with classroom management and discipline issues. Innovative efforts to streamline the time spent on these two areas could help reclaim as much as a quarter of an average teacher's work week that could be recaptured for planning or more time spent on instruction.

FIG 4 DCPS TEACHERS' ESTIMATED WEEKLY TIME USE



Source: Jacksonville Public Education Fund



"Let teachers TEACH!"—DCPS teacher

"I teach because I feel called to do so. However, being an instructor in this day and age seems to have disappeared. We are more like quantifiable data collectors/coaches."—DCPS teacher

"It has been a long time since anyone asked a career teacher for advice about educating children."—DCPS teacher

To see the full results of the teacher survey and hear more from the teachers in Duval County, in their own words, visit www.JaxPEF.org and click on the School Facts Jax tab.

High rates of new teacher turnover can be disruptive to staff and school instructional program cohesion related to student achievement.

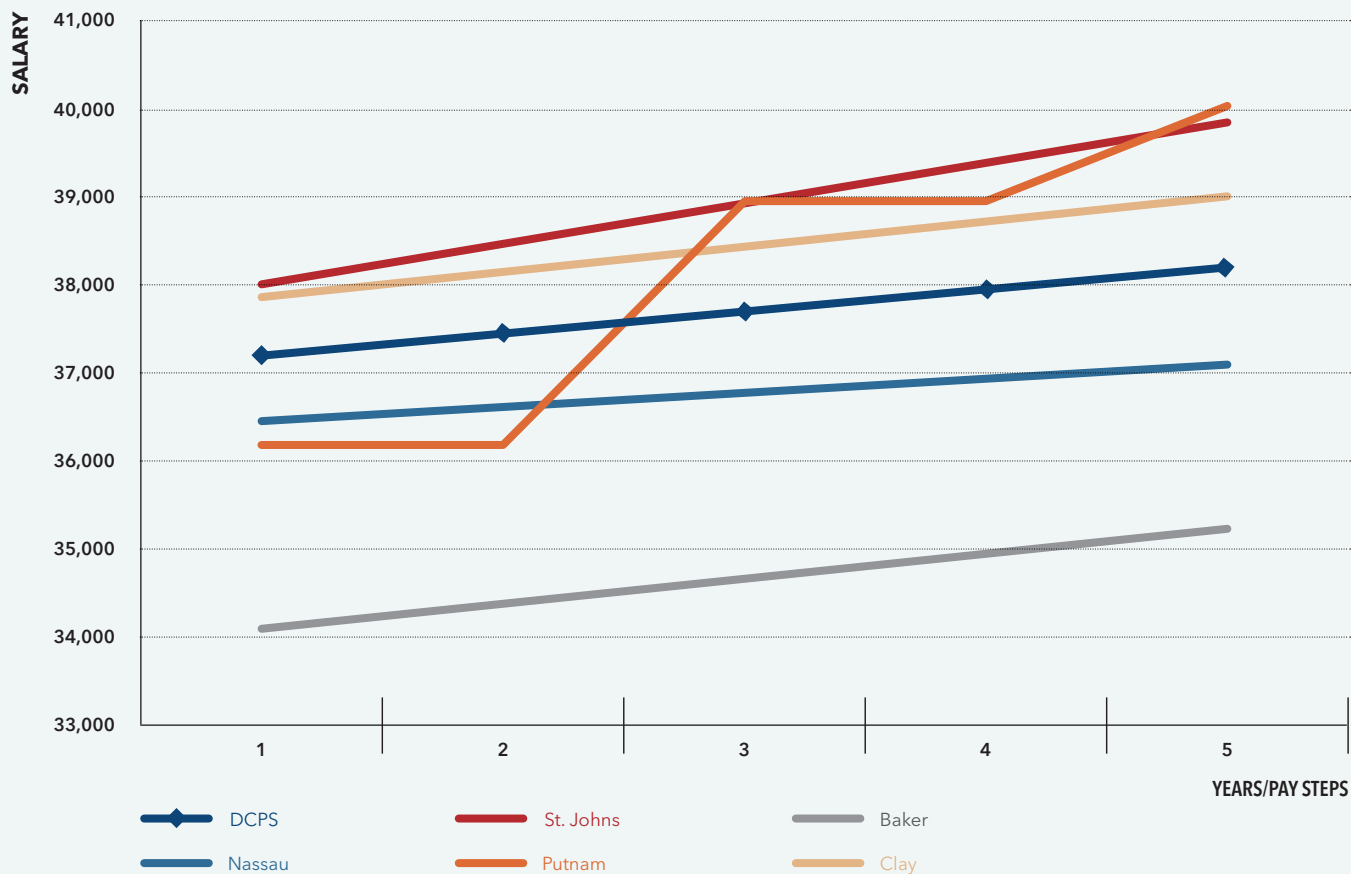
RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the past 10 years, Duval County has lost about one out of every two new teachers hired within their first five years. In some cases, they are leaving the classroom to move into administrative positions, in many other cases they are taking the experience and training paid for by Duval County and either moving to another district or leaving the profession altogether to pursue other opportunities.

In any case, this degree of turnover among new teachers comes with real costs and implications for the district. Financially, it means continuing to spend more money on new teacher training and development rather than being able to leverage more stable, school-based teacher teams through peer learning or collaboration models that require a certain level of team-stability. Academically, the research indicates that turnover can be disruptive to staff and school instructional program cohesion related to student achievement.

FIG 5 NORTHEAST FLORIDA DISTRICT SALARY COMPARISONS: FIRST FIVE YEARS

Source: Jacksonville Public Education Fund



The data here along with national best practice perspectives indicate a number of areas that could be addressed including:

- Identify opportunities to raise or supplement teacher pay locally:** Concerns about pay are not unique to Duval County teachers. There are a number of well-established studies identifying low pay as a major barrier to entry into teaching and retention of teachers in the classroom throughout the country. Increasing pay has been linked to increases in both high quality applicants and teacher retention rates in school districts.

Budget proposals currently pending in the state legislature may help begin to address these concerns for teachers statewide, but how they are implemented at the district level will determine their relative impact locally. Some studies have found that establishing salary levels just above surrounding districts and/or other local professional fields can significantly reduce teacher loss by eliminating the opportunity cost of entering or remaining in a particular district.¹⁵ The starting salary for a new teacher with a bachelor’s degree in Duval County is currently lower than that of St. Johns and Clay County, and by year three is also below Putnam County (see Figure 5).

Superintendent Vitti has already committed to making sure all DCPS teachers receive a step in pay next year. In years beyond that, restructuring non-instructional staff roles and identifying alternative use plans for small, underutilized schools are additional local options that have been identified in previous research as ways the

district could redirect additional funds towards teachers and instructional support within the current budget.

While across the board pay increases alone would likely increase the retention of all teachers without regard to quality at first, merit pay models as currently designed do not appear to be valued by teachers as a motivation to remain in the classroom.

- Streamline teacher’s non-instructional responsibilities:** One of the top issues that teachers said would encourage them to remain in the district longer if improved was working conditions around the areas of administrative paperwork and responsibilities, manageable class sizes, and more time for in-schedule planning. The district has already undertaken a number of initiatives to reduce the non-instructional burden on teachers, including eliminating a number of non-essential standardized tests and beginning to research new ways to improve internal data and records management systems for teachers to make information easier to find and track. Bringing professional development into the schools, creating common planning time, and reducing paperwork and administrative compliance requirements of teachers to allow them to shift more of their focus back to instructional problem-solving are all goals the district has also indicated they are committed to implementing next year in this area.
- Build new opportunities for career advancement within teaching:** Nearly 23% of the DCPS teachers we surveyed said they planned to be out of teaching within five years but still working in education in some capacity such as



The reforms DCPS teachers said would provide them the strongest incentive to remain in the classroom are: improved pay and benefits overall, more time for in-schedule planning and grading/reduced administrative paperwork, and more autonomy and influence over decisions made at all levels.

administration, higher education, or non-profit work. In other words, nearly a quarter of the teachers in this sample wanted to remain working in education but felt that they needed to leave the classroom in order to advance their career. This should not have to be the case. Developing new career pathway models for teachers that allow opportunities to move up in both responsibility and compensation while remaining actively working at the classroom level could help Duval County not only begin to retain more top teachers that we have already invested heavily in developing as teachers and leaders, but to leverage that investment by putting those teachers in charge of developing and supporting newer teachers entering the system. Providing these types of school and classroom-based advancement opportunities would also help address teachers' concerns about salary limits at the classroom level.

- **Strengthen teacher “autonomy with accountability” models:** Teachers in this survey strongly indicated the desire to maintain more autonomy over their daily classroom activities, and to be more involved with decisions at all levels (school, district, state) that will affect their classrooms. New district initiatives such as the Curriculum Writing Teams have begun taking important steps towards institutionalizing teacher input in these types of district decisions. New career advancement models should also allow proven teachers to earn escalating levels of autonomy, responsibility, and involvement with administrative decisions at the school, district and state levels.



- Improve integration of data systems tracking teacher pipeline and quality:** In thinking about a number of the other recommendations to address identified here, strategic integration of several of them will be key for the success in any of them. One of the main limitations of this first look at the teacher pipeline in DCPS is that we were not able to incorporate teacher quality as a variable to help evaluate pipeline issues from a performance perspective, due to both the private nature of that data and the fact that there is not a consistent, distinguishing teacher quality measure going back far enough in time for the data considered here. Moving forward however, multiple systems tracking specific information about where teachers are coming from, where they are placed and how they are performing and when and why they leave must be all integrated to better identify candidates most likely to perform well and remain in the district longer.

The information presented here is just the tip of the iceberg in what we can learn in order to become more sophisticated about supporting and retaining our top teachers in Duval County classrooms for as long as possible. Over the coming months, Jacksonville Public Education Fund will continue to explore the data in partnership with the district and community to learn about strategic opportunities to support and retain top teachers.

For more information including detailed results and opinions direct from DCPS teachers in their own words, or to find out how you can get involved with supporting education in Duval County, visit www.JaxPEF.org.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

There are a number of community organizations and district partners working in areas both directly and indirectly around keeping top teachers in the classroom in Duval County. United Way's Empowering Effective Teachers initiative, for example, has identified nearly a dozen specific recommendations around the key areas of "Delivering Effective Teachers," "Measuring to Retain Effective Teachers," and "Exiting Ineffective Teachers" that align directly with many of the need areas identified in this study.

The key to realizing the full potential of any efforts in Duval County will be getting everyone involved—students, parents, current teachers and principals, district officials, local organizations, community leaders, and other community members—organized around a common language and unified set of goals and actions designed to support the district's strategic plan goals for supporting and retaining great educators and leaders throughout the district.

¹ The New Teacher Project. (2012). *Teacher experience: What does the research say?* (http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_FactSheet_TeacherExperience_2012.pdf).

² Synar, E.A. (2010). *Examination of the financial costs of teacher turnover in mid-sized urban school districts.* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK.

³ Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). *Keeping good teachers. Why it matters, what leaders can do.* *Educational Leadership*, 60 (8), 6-13.

⁴ MetLife Inc. (2013). *The MetLife of the American Teacher. Challenges for school leadership.* (<https://www.metlife.com/assets/cao/foundation/MetLife-Teacher-Survey-2012.pdf>).

⁵ Schaefer, L., Long, J. S., & Clandinin, D. J. (2012). *Questioning the research on early career teacher attrition and retention.* *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 58 (1), 106-121.

⁶ The New Teacher Project. (2012). *Teacher experience: What does the research say?* (http://tntp.org/assets/documents/TNTP_FactSheet_TeacherExperience_2012.pdf).

⁷ Chingos, M.M. & Peterson, P.E. (2010). *It's easier to pick a good teacher than to train one: Familiar and new results on the correlates of teacher effectiveness.* *Economics of Education Review*, Elsevier, 30(3), 449-465.

⁸ Ronfeldt, M., Loed, S., Wyckoff, J. (2012). *How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement.* *CALDER Working Paper No. 70.* National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research.

⁹ Florida Department of Education (<http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/pubstaff.asp>).

¹⁰ New teacher cohorts included only first-time teachers, hired with a start date listed as the beginning of a school year between 2003 and 2007, and who had no other previous teaching experience anywhere on record in the data.

¹¹ Guarino, C.M., Santibanez, L. Daley, G.A. (2006). *Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature.* *Review of Educational Research*. 76(2), 173-208.

¹² See www.JaxPEF.org for more information on survey.

¹³ Typical response rates for online surveys have been estimated to commonly be as low as 1-2%, even lower for surveys with over 15 questions. The minimum sample size required to establish a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval in responses for an estimated population of 8,500 teachers is 368.

¹⁴ Guarino, C.M., Santibanez, L. Daley, G.A. (2006).

¹⁵ *Ibid*

In this Spring 2013 issue of inBRIEF, we examine the state of the new teacher pipeline in Duval County. We found that half of all new teachers leave the district's classrooms within the first five years, and just one in three remained in their original school for that long. Inside, we examine the placement, movement and retention of new teachers over the past ten years — and we ask the teachers themselves what issues are most important to their future career development.



IN BRIEF

A POLICY BRIEF OF THE JACKSONVILLE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUND

PATCHING THE PIPELINE:

Addressing Teacher Satisfaction and Retention in Duval County



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