



Teacher and Principal Retention Report Fact Sheet¹

- **DCPS system-level turnover:** Annual teacher turnover at the DCPS system level over the last ten years has ranged from 15–22 percent, with an overall *average of 18 percent*. Across the nation, studies have found annual teacher turnover rates of 8–11 percent. For large urban districts, a recent study found an average annual departure rate of 13 percent.
- **Annual turnover rates:** Average annual teacher turnover at the school level in both DCPS and charter schools is—and has consistently been—*about 25 percent*. Nationally the rate is about 16 percent.
- **Three- and five-year turnover rates:** At the DCPS system level, *54 percent of teachers leave after three years and 70 percent leave after five years*. For other large urban districts, three-year rates are reported at 43 percent and five-year rates at 58 percent.
- **Turnover rates by ward:** Teacher turnover in DCPS neighborhood schools is *highest in Wards 5 and 8*—a little over 30 percent—and lowest in Wards 1 and 3—about 20 percent. Charter school rates do not match up with wards in any particular way.
- **Turnover rates by grade level:** DCPS *middle schools lose a higher percentage* of teachers each year—32 percent—than elementary or high schools, which are closer to 25 percent.
- **Turnover rates and at-risk students:** In both DCPS and charter schools, the rate of annual teacher departure rises with the percentage of students considered at-risk.² DC teachers leave schools where fewer than 20 percent of students are designated at-risk at an annual rate of 18–20 percent while *schools with the highest percentages lose almost a third of their teachers* each year.
- **IMPACT rating:** Teacher *departures in DCPS is largely correlated with their IMPACT rating*. Almost all DCPS teachers rated as “Ineffective” and a little over half of teachers rates as “Minimally Effective” leave DCPS, compared with 10 percent of teachers rated as “Highly Effective”.
- **Principal turnover:** Annual principal turnover levels in both DCPS and charter schools are generally similar—*about 25 percent*. National and urban principal turnover run at similar levels.

¹ The following facts were compiled from findings in a September 28, 2018 report commissioned by the DC State Board of Education, titled *Teacher and Principal Retention in Public Schools in the District of Columbia* and an October 24, 2018 follow-up piece, titled *School-Level Turnover of DCPS ET-15 Staff Over Three- and Five-Year Periods*. A copy of the commissioned report is accessible at: <https://sboe.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/sboe/publication/attachments/SBOE%20Teacher%20Turnover%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

² At-risk is defined by students who are homeless, in foster care, recipients of welfare and/or food stamps, and overage for grade level in high school.

