



CASS

College of
Alberta School
Superintendents



EDUCATION WORKFORCE STUDY

Teacher and Leader Recruitment and Retention in Alberta

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AUGUST 2024

This executive summary is based upon the *Education Workforce: Teacher and Leader Recruitment and Retention in Alberta 2024* full study. All figures and graphs are found in the study. Please refer to the full study for more detailed information.

This is a joint study of the College of Alberta Superintendents and Alberta Education.

THE STUDY

Purposes of the Education Workforce Study

- To determine and anticipate current and future K-12 teacher and school-based educational leaders workforce needs and trends throughout Alberta.

Research Questions

- What are the current and future K-12 teacher workforce needs and trends in Alberta?
- What are the recruitment and retention strategies used by school authorities to address teaching and leadership workforce needs? How effective are these strategies according to system leaders?

Methods

A survey approach was most appropriate for gathering information from a wide range of school authorities in a relatively short period of time. The results were collected and prepared for analysis. Identifying school authority information was removed and replaced with numbers as pseudonyms.

The analytic methods included a quantitative analysis of respondent input, in the form of descriptive statistics. Qualitative analysis of the text-based responses was thematized and aggregated into grand themes.

Limitations

The research study represents only what respondents reported through the survey. The aggregation of statistical data and analysis of text responses reflect that of the respondents. Some questions were not responded to, and it was not possible to determine why this was the case. Some questions have a greater number of responses than others. Any considerations for reflection or practice that emerge from the findings are tentative and are not generalizable across school authorities in Alberta. The local social, political, geographical, and economic contexts impact the application of any policies or practices that emerge from the reading of this report.

KEY FINDINGS

Study Participation

63%

In total, 54 of 86 (or 63%), of the invited school authorities across Alberta participated in the survey. All CASS Zones were represented, as were all school authority types (Charter, Francophone, Public, Separate).

72%

The total student population represented by responding school authorities is 527,381 out of 732,203, which is 72% of the total student population of invited survey participants.

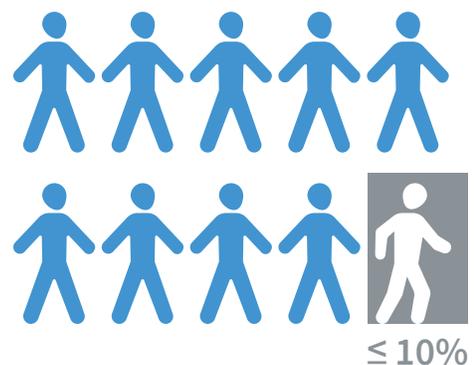
Trends for Leaving School Authorities

TEACHERS



A cross-comparison analysis of several survey questions shows that trends from 2019 to 2023 indicate that it is more common for **10% or less of teachers** to annually leave a school authority. If 10% or less of teachers annually leave, the corollary is that 90% or more teachers stay at a school authority.

SCHOOL LEADERS

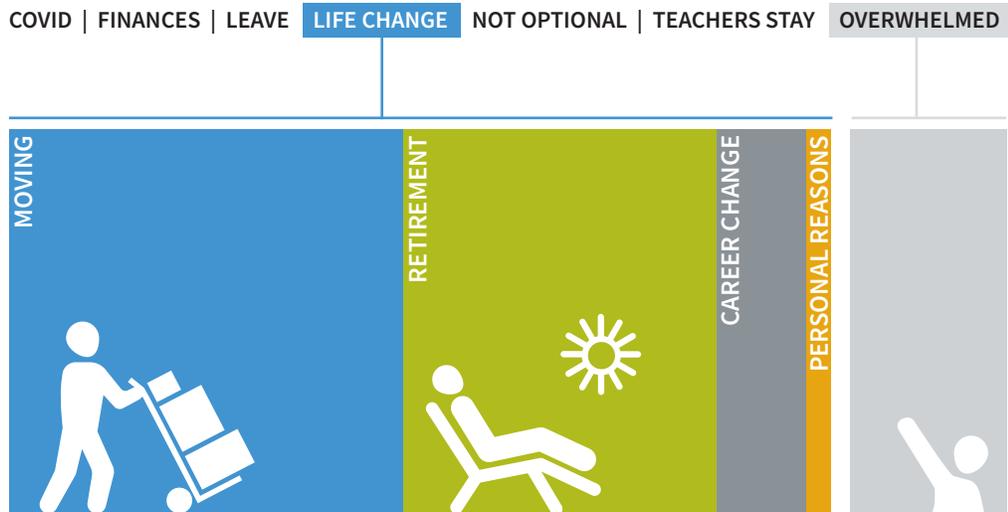


The five-year trend of school leaders leaving shows a stable rate with very little change within percentage categories. Like the teachers, it was more common for **10% or less of school leaders** to leave on an annual basis.

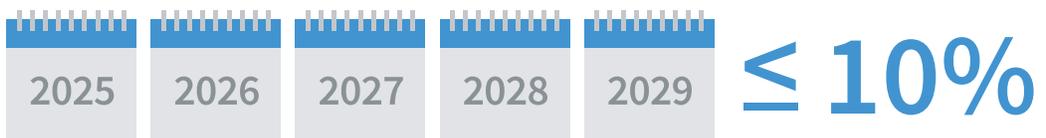
Reasons for Leaving School Authorities



The most frequently occurring theme for reasons to leave a school authority was **life change**. Life change is comprised of four sub-themes: moving, retirement, career change, and personal reasons. From those sub-themes, the top two are moving and retirement. As moving or retiring is a personal choice, there is no actual “fix” by a school authority if a teacher chooses to move or retire, other than individual persuasion.

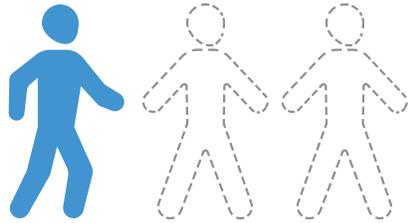


To add context, a cross-comparison analysis of questions was carried out. The retirement theme was compared to the percentage of teachers within five years of retirement age. Results indicate that it is more common that **0-10% of teachers are within five years of retirement age**.



Although retirement was the second most common theme for teachers leaving a school authority, this does not appear to be a high concern since 0-10% of classroom teachers are within five years of retirement age. Similarly, it is more common that **0-10% of school-based administration are within five years of retirement age**, which also seems to indicate a small concern.

Anticipated Teacher Needs for September 2024



974 to 2139

Respondents were asked to consider their hiring needs for classroom teachers in relation to 2024-2025 school year. The respondents indicated that the **anticipated need for teachers ranged from 974 to 2139 positions**. The actual number of teachers hired depends upon confirmed teacher vacancies, the education funds provided through the provincial budget process, and internal allocation processes.

The number of people who **completed their bachelor programs** in Education at Alberta post-secondary institutions was **2180** in 2023. This indicates that there are slightly more people graduating with Bachelor of Education degrees than there are anticipated positions, however not all graduates may have the appropriate background to fill school authority vacancies.



2180

Teachers and School Leaders Recruitment

Most Effective Recruitment Actions

TEACHERS



Advertising (e.g., career fairs, general education recruitment websites, local school division websites) and **benefits** (e.g., bursaries or awards for those committing to stay in the division, mileage incentives, family/ partner supports) were the most common and effective actions responding school authorities took to recruit teachers.

SCHOOL LEADERS



Benefits (e.g., actions related to professional learning, participation in a local aspiring leadership pool, and opportunities to take educational leadership courses from post-secondary institutions or other related organizations) and **advertising** (e.g., school authority websites and weekly staffing bulletins) were most effective for recruiting school leaders.

Least Effective Recruitment Actions

TEACHERS

The least effective recruiting action was **advertising**. Interestingly, advertising was both the most and least effective recruiting strategy for teachers. For example, actions such as participating in job-fairs or using education career websites were successful for some school authorities and not effective for others.

SCHOOL LEADERS

Like teacher recruitment actions, **advertising** was one of the least effective strategies for recruitment. School authorities tended to hire leaders within their districts and in some cases very few, if any, external candidates applied. Leadership certification was not seen as critical to recruitment of leaders.

Teacher and School Leaders Retention

Most Effective Retention Actions

The pattern of frequency for effective retention actions was similar for both teachers and leaders: **PD supports, division culture, benefits, and wellbeing**. PD supports includes actions such as professional learning, classroom supports such as educational assistants or learning coaches. The top two retention actions of PD supports and division culture account for most survey responses. That indicates that school authorities emphasize supports for professional development and the culture of the division in their efforts to retain school staff.



PD Supports



Division Culture



Benefits



Wellbeing

Least Effective Retention Actions

Patterns of frequency for least effective retention actions were similar for the top four themes for both teachers and school leaders: **none (no retention action), PD supports, benefits, and division culture**. Many school authorities responded that they did not engage in any retention action. Some school authorities indicated that PD supports were not effective in retaining teachers and leaders because they were no different than



None



PD Supports



Benefits

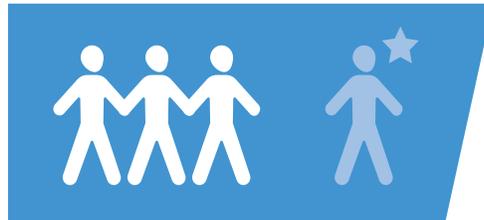


Division Culture

what other school authorities offered, meaning that such actions did not provide a competitive advantage.

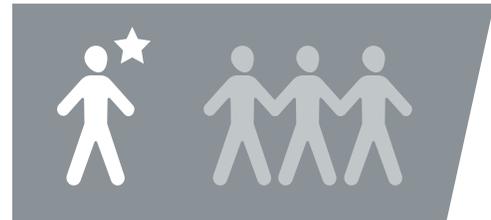
Rationale for Retention Actions

TEACHERS



The predominant rationale for retention actions is to **increase staff**. The second most common rationale for retaining teachers is to develop **successful teachers**. School authorities appear to believe that investing in teacher success also helps to retain them.

SCHOOL LEADERS



The predominant rationale for retention actions is **teacher success**. School authorities identify school leaders as critical to teacher success. School authorities also see school leaders as important for **increasing staff**. School authorities' favoured teacher success and increasing staff numbers as their top rationale actions for teachers and school leaders.

Correlation Results

Relationships between select questions were analyzed and several significant to moderate correlations emerged. One such correlation was between CASS zones and the rationale for the recruitment of teachers. The needs of the CASS Zone shaped the qualities of the teachers sought. For example: in Zone 1, teachers are mostly recruited for the subjects needed; in Zone 2/3, recruiting teachers for the purposes of marketing the school division; and in Zones 4 to 6, their rationale for recruiting teachers is to resolve staff shortages. The correlation implies that the relationship reflects a genuine pattern, and not a random variation.

CONSIDERATIONS

This research study provides significant data related to teacher and school leader recruitment and retention in Alberta. School authority leaders shared their time, knowledge and experience in answering the survey that would be helpful to all school authorities for recruiting and retaining teachers and school leaders. The research study provides data that can be used to support interpretations and insights to the challenges of teacher and school leader recruitment and retention. This section offers six considerations.



1 Current and future K-12 teacher workforce needs and trends: The data show that the patterns of leaving have been relatively stable since 2018 at around 10% per year. However, some school authorities have seen an increase in the number of teachers leaving in 2023. That increase may have implications for hiring replacement teachers for the current and upcoming school years.



2 Currently, most cited vacancies are in the following subjects: French language and immersion, high school math and science, and secondary CTS across multiple studies. These positions are difficult to fill due to the specific educational background and knowledge required. Music and inclusive education teacher vacancies were identified, but at a slightly lower rate than those previously mentioned.



3 School authority characteristics: Some school authorities identify their locations as having a possible impact on the recruitment and retention of teachers and school leaders. Some of the rural school authorities expressed challenges in recruiting teachers. However, several school authorities expressed success in retaining teachers through a sense of community and belonging nurtured at the school and division level.



4 School authority culture: A potential distinguishing feature may be the division’s work culture. The division’s work culture could be enhanced through the development and application of robust recruitment and retention strategies that highlight lifestyle benefits of the school authority. Another possible recruitment tactic is for a school division to highlight its unique and favourable characteristics, beyond lifestyle. Such distinguishing features may contribute to the effectiveness of specific recruitment and retention actions.



5 Effectiveness of specific recruitment and retention actions: Specific recruitment and retention actions may not have the same effectiveness for all school authorities. As an example, discrepancies between what was considered most effective and least effective actions for recruitment and retention are likely contextual and rooted in the immediate needs of the authority. That is, if an authority is looking for teachers with specific knowledge and skills and they are not found through specific job or career fairs, the respondent may not see those fairs as effective, yet the same job fairs may be effective for other authorities and/or in other situations.



6 Implications for students: The impact on students is directly related to education workforce recruitment and retention because the availability of qualified and experienced teachers impacts the success of student programs and student educational experiences.

This education workforce study describes the current CASS context of teacher and school leader recruitment and retention. The process of filling vacant positions and recognizing a shortage of teachers with specific skills or knowledge is contextual and complicated. Authorities may need to consider more targeted strategic actions towards increasing the number of applicants for teacher and school leadership positions.



Suite 1300, First Edmonton Place
10665 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5J 3S9
admin@cass.ab.ca | www.cass.ab.ca