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Trends in Texas Teacher Retention 2013-2023:

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

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Education Equals Economics

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Introduction

Most teacher shortages happen because teachers leave the profession, not because they retire. About 90% of the yearly shortage is due to teachers leaving, with only one-third of the departures attributed to retirement (Sutcher et al., 2019).

Across the U.S., schools have struggled with teacher attrition for decades (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019). Hiring new teachers is essential, but keeping good teachers is just as critical. By studying teacher retention and attrition, we can learn why some teachers remain in the profession while others leave and how schools can better support them.

When schools keep strong teachers, students benefit. Students feel more connected, attend more often, and do better in class. Skilled teachers help students learn and grow, giving them a better chance to succeed (Commissioner, 2018).

Teacher retention also helps schools financially. In Texas, school funding depends on student attendance. Strong teachers lead to higher attendance, allowing schools to close budget gaps and provide more resources.

COVID-19

When COVID-19 spread across the U.S. in 2020, teachers had to make big changes to how they taught students. They faced new challenges overnight, like switching to online learning, managing student needs remotely, and dealing with their own health concerns and stress. Many felt overworked and under-appreciated, pushing more teachers to leave.

Before the pandemic, one in six teachers said they might leave the teaching profession. In 2020, almost one out of every four said they might leave. (Steiner & Woo, 2021).

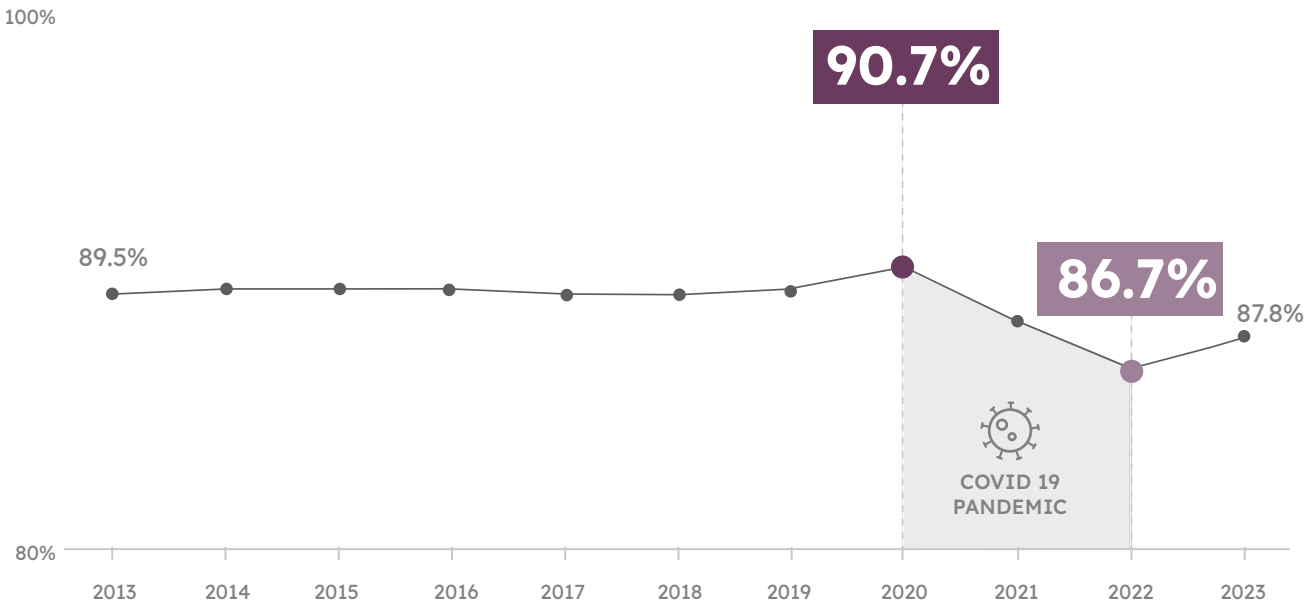
This report examines longitudinal trends in teacher retention in Texas over the past decade, spanning the periods before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic. It explores how frequently teachers remain in the profession and how retention rates have evolved.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Texas Teacher Retention	When a Texas teacher continues teaching in Texas year after year.
Texas Teacher Attrition	When a Texas teacher leaves the teaching profession or leaves the state of Texas to teach elsewhere.

Patterns in Texas Teacher Retention

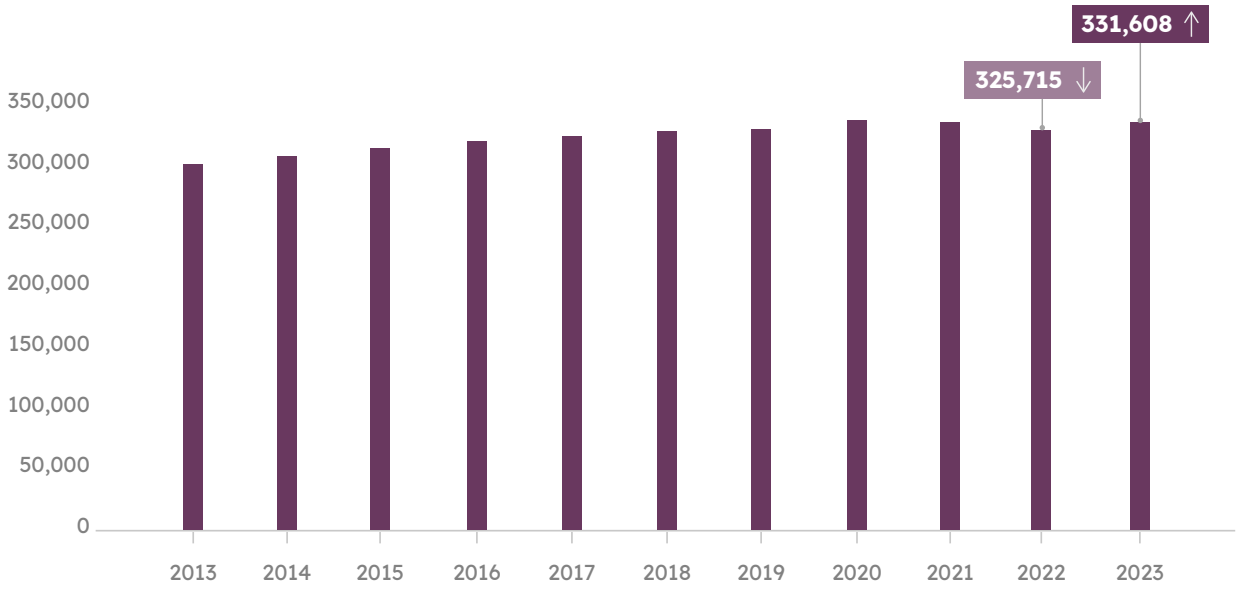
AVERAGE YEARLY PERCENT OF TEXAS TEACHER RETENTION



Texas teacher retention patterns were stable from 2013 to 2020, with just under 90% returning the following year. When COVID-19 hit the U.S. in March of 2020, classroom teachers stayed through at least October of the 2020-21 school year; retention slightly increased by 0.9%.

However, as the pandemic continued, retention declined: only 88.6% of teachers from the 2020-21 school year remained through the fall of 2021, marking a 2.1% drop. The following year saw another 1.9% decrease. In 2022-23, retention showed a modest rebound, increasing by 1.1%.

NUMBER OF TEXAS TEACHERS STAYING IN SUBSEQUENT YEAR, 2013-2023



From 2013 to 2020, the Texas teacher retention rate held steady, but because the overall teacher workforce grew, the number of teachers staying each year also grew. In 2020–21, that number dropped for the first time since before 2013.

This decline continued in 2022. Even though there were more teachers in 2021 and 2022 than in past years, a higher number of teachers left. This resulted in a 4% decline in the retention rate. In 2022-23, the retention rate improved slightly, with a 1.8% increase in the number of teachers continuing to teach in Texas classrooms.

Teacher Retention by Race/Ethnicity

Non-White teachers in Texas are more likely to continue teaching in Texas compared to their White peers[1].

In 2023, the majority of Texas teachers were White (56%), while most students were Hispanic (55%). In contrast, only 30% of teachers were Hispanic.

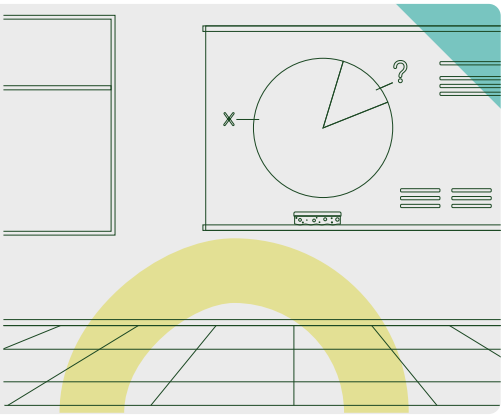
The retention rate for Hispanic teachers in Texas remains highest at 91%. In fact, Hispanic teachers are 39% more likely to remain in the profession than White teachers.

Black teachers are 8% more likely to stay, and Asian teachers are 7% more likely to remain compared to their White peers.

WHICH TEACHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN THE CLASSROOM?

Average[2] odds of Texas teachers staying in the classroom compared to White teachers[1]

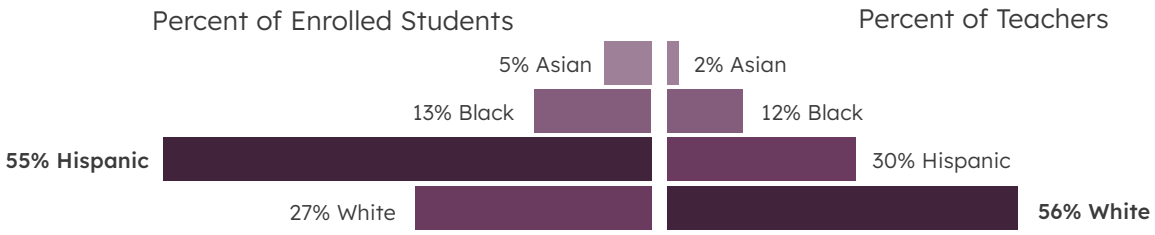
Hispanic	Black	Asian
39%	**8%**	**7%**
more likely to stay	more likely to stay	more likely to stay



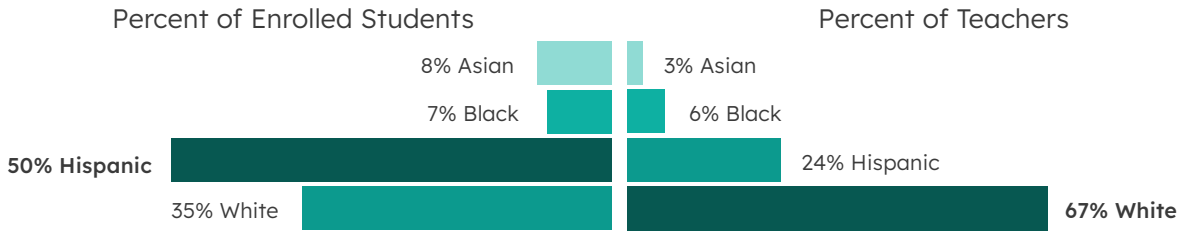
1. White teachers are the reference group as they represent the largest demographic among Texas teachers.
2. Average of odds each year from 2013-2023

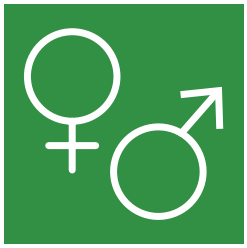
COMPARING RACE/ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN TEXAS AND CENTRAL TEXAS, 2023

TEXAS



CENTRAL TEXAS



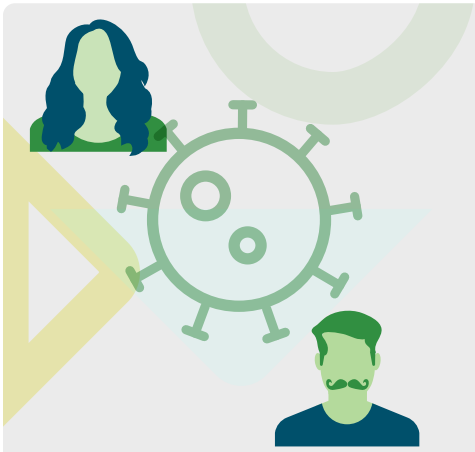


Teacher Retention by Gender

Male teachers are, on average, more likely to continue teaching in Texas classrooms compared to their female peers[3]. Before the pandemic (2013-2019), male teachers were 5% more likely to stay. During the pandemic (2021–2022), that number grew, with male teachers 14% more likely to stay. In a post-pandemic world (2023), male teachers are still, on average, 11% more likely to continue teaching in Texas classrooms compared to female teachers.

Female educators make up 75% of the Texas teaching workforce, a percentage that has remained relatively unchanged from 2013 to 2023.

WHICH TEACHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN THE CLASSROOM?



Average[4] Odds of Male Texas Teachers Staying in the Classroom Compared to Female[3] Teachers

Before the pandemic (2013-2020)	During the pandemic (2021-2023)
Male Teachers	**Male Teachers**
5%	**13%**
more likely to stay	more likely to stay

3. Female teachers are the reference group as they represent the largest demographic among Texas teachers.
4. Average of each odds ratio over each respective time period.

Teacher Retention by Certification Pathways

Teachers with no known certification were 70% less likely to continue teaching in Texas compared to their peers who had earned a standard certification. In 2013, the number of teachers without a known certification made up less than 1% of the teaching workforce. By 2023, that number had risen to 6.1%.

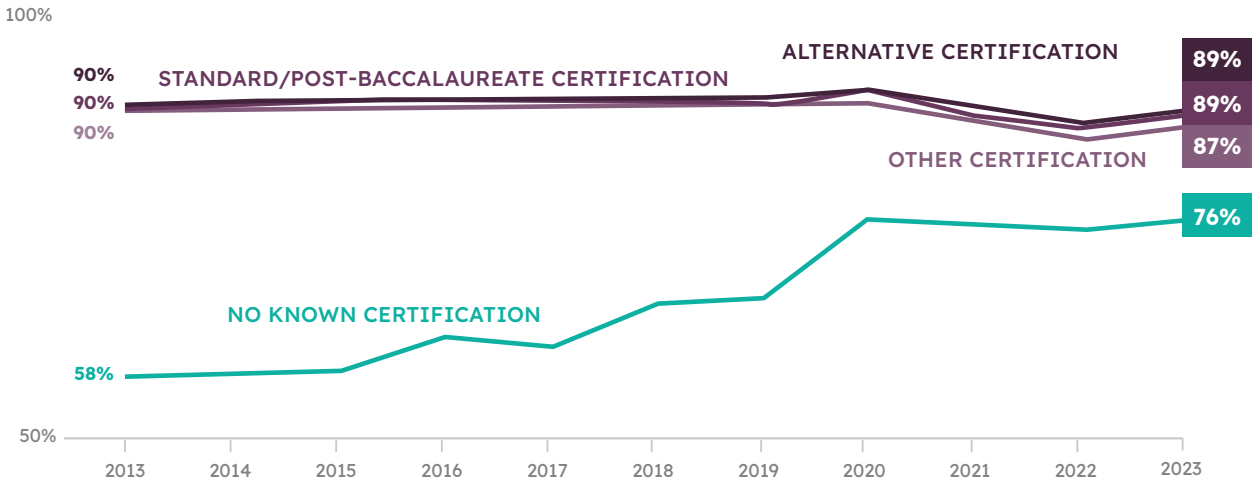
Teachers with no known certification remain in teaching at lower rates, but these rates increased dramatically between 2013 and 2023 from 58% to 76%.

Teachers with “other” certifications were 12% less likely, and alternative-certified teachers were 4% less likely to continue teaching compared to their peers with a standard certification.

DEFINITIONS OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION TYPES USED IN THIS ANALYSIS

Standard/ Postbaccalaureate	Teachers who complete a program that includes student teaching.
Alternative	Teachers who complete a program that does not include student teaching.
Other	Teachers from out-of-state or those who hold emergency, one-year, or other special certifications.
No Known Certification	Teachers who either do not appear in the state certification records or have a paraprofessional certificate.

AVERAGE YEARLY PERCENT OF TEXAS TEACHERS RETAINED SUBSEQUENT YEAR BY CERTIFICATION PATHWAY



Most Texas teachers earned their certificates through the standard pathway, with an average of about 45% each year between 2013 and 2023. In 2013, 30% of teachers used the alternative route to certification. By 2023, 38% earned alternate certificates. About 15% of teachers hold “other” certifications.

Between 2013 and 2023, teachers with standard, alternative, or other certifications stay in the classroom at similar rates—on average around 90% of teachers continue teaching in the classroom.

WHICH TEACHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN THE CLASSROOM?

Average[5] Odds of Texas Teachers Staying in the Classroom Compared to Standard Certified Teachers[6]

Teachers with alternative certification	Teachers with other certifications	Teachers with no known certification
4%	**12%**	**70%**
less likely to stay	less likely to stay	less likely to stay

5. Average of odds each year from 2013-2023
6. Standard Certified Teachers are the reference group as they represent the largest demographic among Texas teachers.

Teacher Certifications by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Of the 45,557 new educator certificates issued in 2023-24, the Texas Education Agency issued 56% to White educators, 28% to Hispanic educators, 10% to Black educators, and 5% to educators of other racial or ethnic backgrounds (Texas, 2025).

Furthermore, of the new educator certificates issued in Texas, 19% went to male educators, whereas 81% went to female educators (Texas, 2025).

Teacher Retention by Subject Area

Educators who teach multiple subjects are more likely to continue teaching than teachers in any other subject area. In 2023, they represented 40% of Texas teachers, the largest group in Texas. About 60% of these teachers work in elementary schools.

English Language Arts teachers were, on average, 18% less likely to continue teaching in Texas than teachers who taught multiple subjects[7].

Science teachers are 13% less likely to continue teaching in Texas schools, and math teachers are 11% less likely compared to teachers who teach multiple subjects.

The challenges of recruiting for hard-to-staff subjects, like STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), are longstanding, indicating that existing policies and practices have failed to address them effectively. (Carothers et al., 2019; Cowan et al., 2016; T. S. Dee & Goldhaber, 2017).

WHICH TEACHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO STAY IN THE CLASSROOM?

Average[8] odds of Texas Teacher Retention by subject Compared to Teachers Teaching Multiple Subjects[7]

English/Language Arts Teachers	Science Teachers	Math Teachers	Social Studies Teachers
18%	**13%**	**11%**	**7%**
less likely to stay	less likely to stay	less likely to stay	less likely to stay

7. Multiple Subjects Taught Teachers are the reference group as they represent the largest demographic among Texas teachers.
8. Average of odds each year from 2013-2023

Conclusion

In total, teacher retention in Texas declined during the pandemic. However, certain groups experienced higher retention rates before, during, and after the onset of the pandemic regardless.

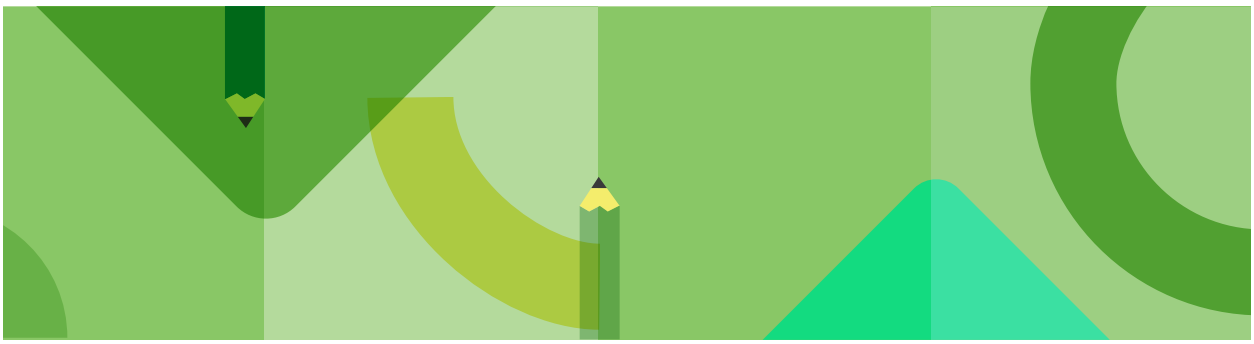
Hispanic, Black, and Asian educators were all more likely to continue teaching in Texas compared to their White peers.

Male educators were also more likely to stay in Texas classrooms compared to their female counterparts.

While the population of educators with no known certification continues to rise in Texas, this population of educators is less likely to continue teaching in Texas in subsequent years.

Teachers who taught English, math, and science were more likely to leave their positions than those who taught other subjects.

Recruiting high-quality educators is an important challenge, but Texas leaders must also look at teacher retention to solve educator shortages in our schools.



Methodology

Researchers used student and teacher data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC), analyzing them at the Texas Educational Research Center (ERC). They also gathered additional campus- and district-level data from public Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) data sets.

Each year in the study refers to an academic year, so 2012 represents the 2011–2012 school year. The study uses TEA data from a fall semester snapshot, capturing teachers assigned to classes in October of that school year. This study used the TEA's definition for a "teacher of record.. It excluded all other employees, including substitute teachers, from this category.

Because the analysis relies on Texas public education data, it does not capture teachers who moved out of state or transitioned to private schools. As a result, the study defines a “stayer” as a teacher who remained in public school teaching in Texas and continued as a teacher of record through the fall of the following school year.

To calculate the odds of a teacher staying, researchers constructed logistic regression models using a binary outcome variable (leaving vs. staying). Each model controlled for multiple factors that could influence whether a teacher stayed or left the profession, as outlined in the following section. Researchers used a hierarchical model structure, nesting each teacher within their campus. They examined each school year independently, running a separate model for each year to compare odds ratios over time. For categorical variables, they selected the largest subgroup as the comparison group.

Variables studied in this report include:

- Teacher race and ethnicity
- Teacher gender
- Years of experience
- Subjects taught
- Types of certifications
- Grade levels at the campus
- Type of district
- Percentage of students from low-income households at the campus
- Percentage of emergent bilingual students at the campus
- Student-to-teacher ratio at the campus
- Teacher quality score

Acknowledgments

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Rhodes, A. (2023). *The teachers Texas needs: factors affecting recruitment, retention, and quality* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin).

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Transforming education systems through data and collaboration so ALL students succeed.

About E3 Alliance

E3 Alliance is a nationally recognized, data-driven education collaborative based in Central Texas. We work across the state to transform education systems through data and collaboration so all students succeed. We also work to increase economic mobility and the overall quality of life for our community by aligning our education system from pre-K to the workforce.

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