



**D.C. POLICY CENTER**

Education Policy Initiative

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Teacher and Principal Retention**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026

Hearing Room 412 (Track B)

John A. Wilson Building

Testimony of Hannah Mason

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D.C. Policy Center



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**Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee of the Whole.**

My name is Hannah Mason, and I am the Senior Education Research Analyst of the Education Policy Initiative at the [D.C. Policy Center](#), an independent think tank focused on advancing policies for a strong, competitive, and vibrant economy in the District of Columbia.

Today, my testimony will focus on D.C.'s continued increases in teacher retention rates, with particular attention to differences by race/ethnicity and years of experience. I will also highlight common factors that lead teachers to leave the profession and offer recommendations for improving retention.

**In school year 2024-25, 84 percent of teachers were retained in D.C., and 76 percent remained in the same school they taught in during the previous school year.<sup>i</sup>**

The same-school, same-role retention rate is 2 percentage points higher than the previous year—the second year of improvement—and the overall retention rate is 8 percentage points higher than pre-pandemic in school year 2018-19. Nationally, the latest data show that in school year 2021-22, 84 percent of public school teachers remained in the same school they taught in the previous year, and 82 percent of teachers in public school in cities did so—making D.C.'s teacher retention 6 percentage points lower in the same year.<sup>ii</sup>

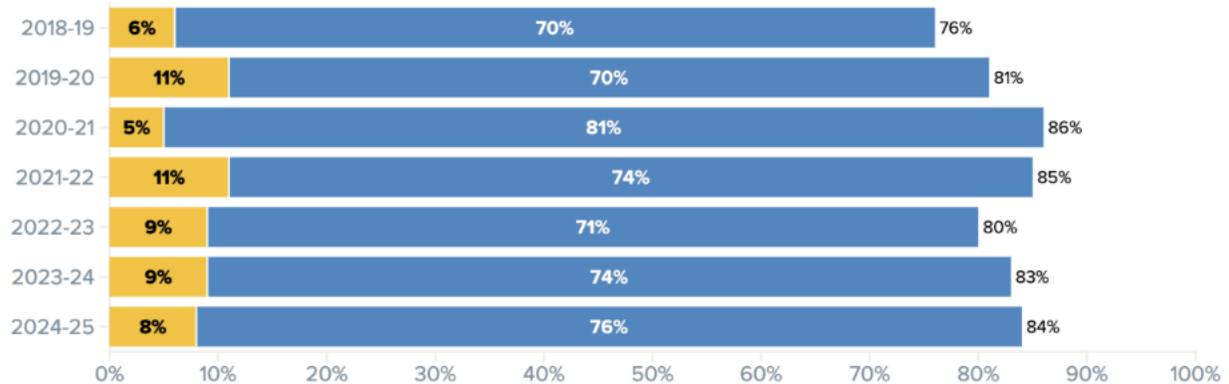


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### D.C. educator retention data, over time

■ New school, retained in D.C. ■ Same role, same school



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. "District of Columbia Educator Retention data from school year 2018-19 to 2024-25."



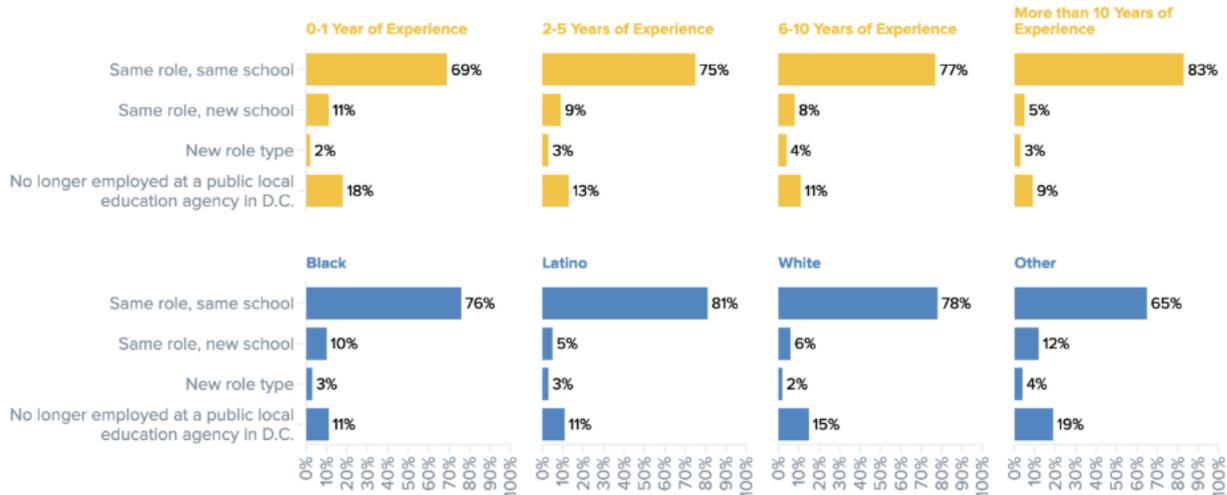
**D.C.'s teachers with more than 10 years of experience are more likely to stay, with 83 percent retained, compared to 69 percent of teachers with less than a year of experience in school year 2024-25.**<sup>iii</sup> By race and ethnicity, Latino teachers had the highest same-role, same-school retention rate at 81 percent and represent 11 percent of the workforce. Black teachers, who represent the largest subgroup of the educator workforce (55 percent), had a 76 percent same-school retention rate.<sup>iv</sup>



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### D.C. educator retention data, by years of experience and race and ethnicity, school year 2024-25



Source: Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. "2024-25 District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief." OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf)



**The D.C. Policy Center reached out to teachers to hear more about better management of absences, a topic that has emerged from previous listening sessions as one strategy to improve retention.** Some teachers mentioned burdensome processes for requesting time off, or that taking time off meant a lot of time dedicated to detailed plans for their classes or increased workload when returning from work. To make it easier to take time off, teachers suggested professional development for substitutes, stronger coordination systems, feedback loops to share lessons learned, more institutional and technological support, and a larger, more reliable substitute pool (including peer substitutes or familiar staff, which were generally more effective than external substitutes).

**If the conditions in schools are right, teacher retention in D.C. has the potential to keep improving, given other trends in the economy.** In general, in D.C., employer and



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worker demand remains weak—as of 2024, the number of jobs in D.C. had not recovered to pre-pandemic levels, even before the disruption to federal employment in 2025 and the initial estimate that 40,000 federal jobs may be lost in the District over the next four years as a result.<sup>vi</sup> Yet, in school year 2024-25, there were 8,989 total teacher full time equivalents (FTEs) in D.C.’s public schools, a 1 percent increase over the previous year.<sup>vii</sup> In addition, a D.C. Policy Center report found that housing is more affordable for teachers than other essential workers: for example, secondary school teachers can afford to rent a one-bedroom apartment in 7 out of 8 wards of the city.<sup>viii</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions you have.

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<sup>i</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. “2024-25 District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief.” OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). 2024. “Teacher Turnover: Stayers, Movers, and Leavers.” NCES. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/slc/teacher-turnover>



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- <sup>iii</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. "2024-25 District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief." OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf)
- <sup>iv</sup> Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). 2025. "2024-25 District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief." OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf)
- <sup>v</sup> Office of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). 2025. "02.28.25 February 2025 Revised Revenue Estimates for FY 2025-2029." CFO. Retrieved from <https://ora-cfo.dc.gov/publication/022825-february-2025-revenue-estimates-fy-2025-2029>
- <sup>vi</sup> Burge, D., & Sayin, Y. 2025. *Is the District of Columbia still competitive?* D.C. Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/is-the-district-of-columbia-still-competitive/>
- <sup>vii</sup> Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE). 2025. "2024-25 District of Columbia Educator Retention Brief." OSSE. Retrieved from [https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page\\_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf](https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/page_content/attachments/Education%20Retention%20Brief%202024-2025.pdf)
- <sup>viii</sup> Calma, E., & Sayin, Y. 2024. *Where can D.C.'s essential workers afford to live?* D.C. Policy Center. Retrieved from <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/priced-out-where-can-d-c-s-essential-workers-afford-to-live/>