

# Employment Trends for NC Public School Educators

State of the Teaching Profession and School Administrator Report (2024-2025)  
North Carolina General Statutes 115C-299.5, 115C-12(22), and 115C-289.2

March 2026 State Board of Education Meeting



North Carolina Department of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

# Definitions

- School district – a public-school unit that is governed by a local board of education. Pursuant to law, attrition and mobility are only measured for school districts. Synonymous with “LEA” in this presentation.
- Attrition – separation of employment from a school district with no subsequent employment in any North Carolina public-school unit.
- Mobility – separation from employment from a school district with subsequent employment in a different North Carolina public-school unit. Mobility does not contribute to the State’s attrition rate.
- Local Education Agency (LEA or district) attrition – the combined effect of attrition and mobility measured at the district level.
- Vacancy – a teaching position that is not filled by an educator with a qualifying license.
- Teacher – an educator who holds a North Carolina educator license and is coded as a “teacher” in the State’s payroll system.

# Methodology and Considerations

- NC General Statute 115C-299.5 (b) requires the State Board of Education to collect information on teacher attrition and vacancies from “each local board of education”. Charter, laboratory, and residential schools are not included in this data collection as they are not governed by a local board of education.
- NCDPI uses the March 2024 payroll file to determine the base population of teachers. We compare that payroll record to the March 2025 payroll record and flag (as attrition) those teachers who were present in the base file but do not appear in the March 2025 record. NCDPI further checks September 2025 payroll records to ensure that a teacher did not return to service the following school year (if so, recoded to mobility). NCDPI captures all funding sources in the analysis (e.g., state, federal, local).
- To avoid capturing rehired retirees and interim teachers, NCDPI restricts the base population to those who have a full-time equivalency (FTE) of 0.7 or greater.
- Changes in position (e.g., teacher to administrator) are not counted as state attrition. If the change in position occurs within the same school district, it is considered neither attrition from teaching nor mobility. If the change in position includes employment in a different public-school unit, then it is coded as mobility.

# Methodology and Considerations

- NCDPI leverages a “near census” approach to measuring teacher attrition and mobility. NCDPI’s methodology captures only changes in employment from March payroll records of one year to March payroll of the following year.
- Hiring and separation of employment between these two time periods are not captured in the report.
- Extended leaves of absences (greater than 18 months) are counted as attrition.
- This extended data view allows NCDPI to use a very large representative sample without requiring onerous reporting efforts from the LEAs.

# Methodology and Considerations

- State attrition and state mobility both result in attrition from an LEA. LEA Attrition (as measured in the report) is the combined effect of state attrition and mobility for each school district.
- Vacancy is strictly defined by statute (see slide 17) and may differ from an intuitive understanding of the term. NCDPI disaggregates vacancies to provide more nuanced information to the reader.
- Per statute, vacancies are reported on the 40<sup>th</sup> instructional day. NCDPI also collects information on vacancies on the 1<sup>st</sup> instructional day to provide a better understanding of the constant change in measuring this variable. Vacancies, and the associated grades and subjects in which they occur, are reported by the school districts.
- Attrition data are reported based on March 2024 to March 2025 payroll records.
- Vacancies are measured in the current (2025-2026) school year.

# Methodology – Attrition and Vacancy

Attrition and  
Mobility\*



Vacancy\*\*



\* Identification of attrition/mobility derived solely from payroll records

\*\* Identification of vacancy is derived from LEA HR Department

# Summary of Key Findings - Attrition

- The North Carolina teacher attrition rate for the 2024-2025 report has increased slightly this year to 10.11%. This is a 0.23 percentage point increase over the previous reporting period.
- Consistent with reporting from prior years, teacher attrition (and mobility) rate is not uniform across all LEAs.
- Teacher attrition is not uniform across years of experience. Early- and late-career teachers show higher rates of attrition relative to mid-career teachers. This trend continues to align with reporting from prior years.

# Summary of Key Findings - Vacancy

- Vacancy rates for 2024-2025 report in North Carolina's LEAs show a slight decrease over the prior reporting year, 7.6% vs. 7.4%.
- As demonstrated in the prior year's report, how teachers enter the profession, in terms of license and pathway, has shifted over the years.
- Disaggregation of vacancy rates continues to provide important context to understanding how many NC classrooms are vacant, filled by long-term substitutes, or temporarily licensed educators.

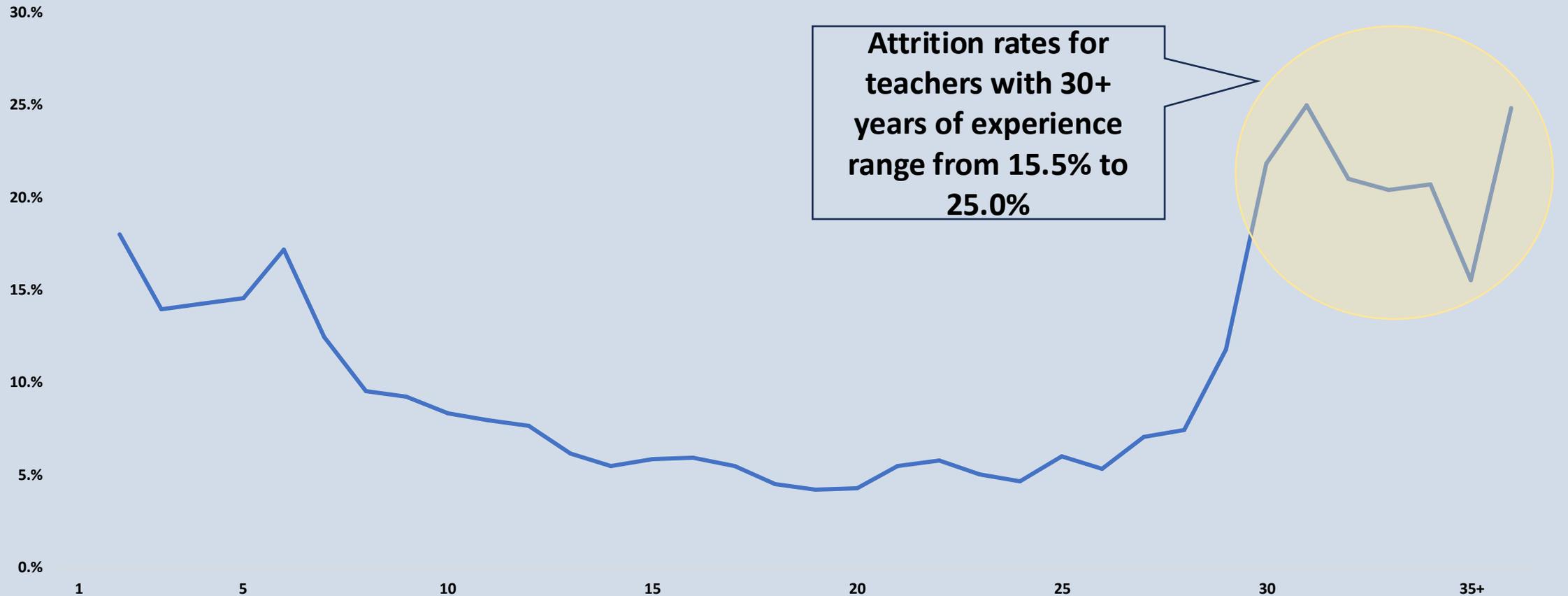
# Employment Trends for Teachers 2024-2025

# Summary of Key Measures

Reporting Year	State Attrition Number	State Attrition Rate	State Mobility Rate
2017-2018	7,674	8.1%	4.4%
2018-2019	7,115	7.5%	4.5%
2019-2020	7,111	7.5%	4.9%
2020-2021	7,735	8.2%	3.2%
2021-2022	7,280	7.8%	3.3%
2022-2023	10,373	11.5%	5.3%
2023-2024	8,886	9.88%	4.9%
2024-2025	9,107	10.11%	4.4%
<b>Average</b>			

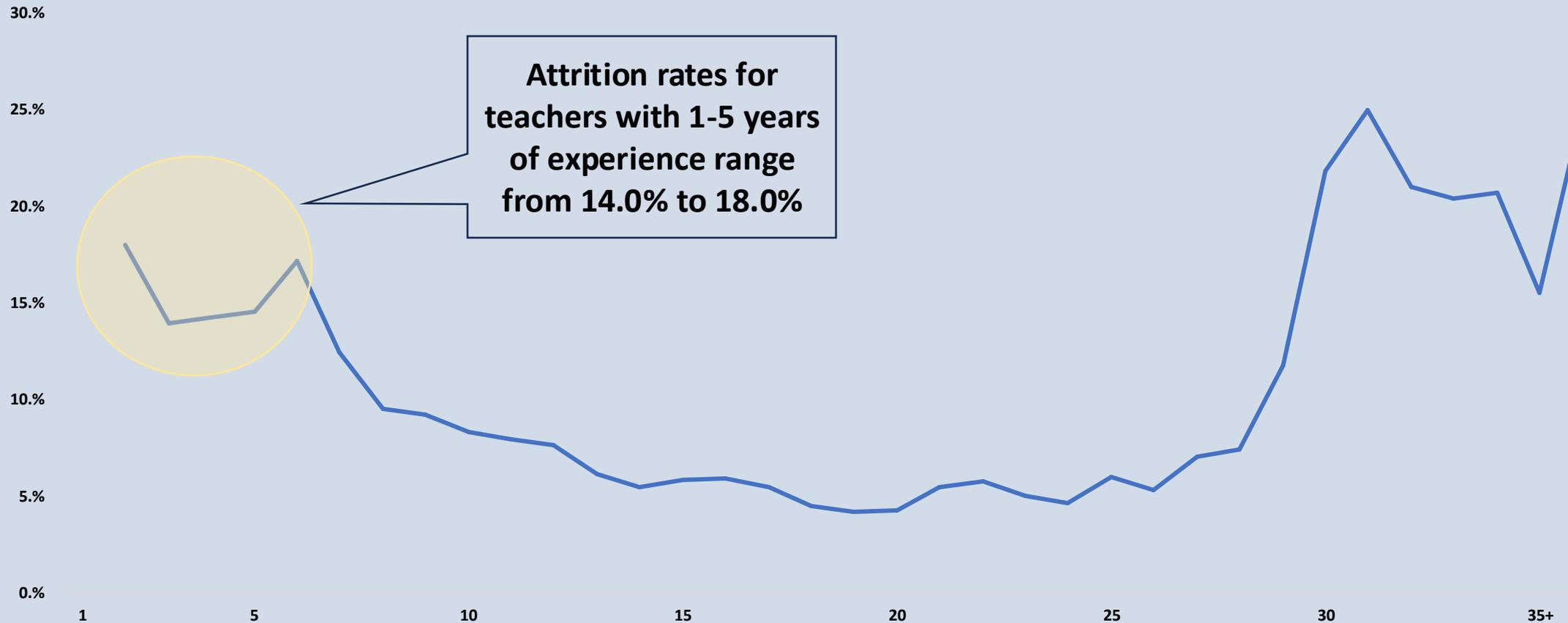
Source: NCDPI Payroll Records

# NC Teacher Attrition by Teaching Experience



Source: NCDPI Licensure and Payroll Data

# NC Teacher Attrition by Teaching Experience



Source: NCDPI Licensure and Payroll Data

# License Routes of NC Newly Hired Teachers

License Route						
Year	NC EPP Traditional Pathway	NC EPP Residency Pathway	Out-of-State	CTE	International	Other
2017-18	33.11%	33.31%	25.79%	2.05%	5.08%	0.66%
2018-19	30.84%	35.74%	25.75%	1.97%	5.08%	0.63%
2019-20	32.73%	31.6%	26.98%	2.04%	6.18%	0.46%
2020-21	37.22%	29.44%	28.77%	2.23%	2.02%	0.33%
2021-22	33.82%	31.83%	26.92%	1.89%	5.11%	0.44%
2022-23	29.66%	34.57%	23.70%	2.06%	9.72%	0.30%
2023-24	29.34%	34.69%	24.28%	2.44%	8.96%	0.30%
2024-25	27.23%	32.42%	23.99%	2.54%	13.44%	0.39%

# License Types\* for Newly Hired Educators

School Year	Continuing Professional License	Initial Professional License	Total Alternative	Licenses That Comprise the Alternate Route		
				Permit to Teach	Emergency	Residency
2017-18	21.12%	41.94%	1.29%	0.99%	0.30%	0%
2018-19	20.37%	40.52%	3.40%	1.21%	0.56%	0.34%
2019-20	21.08%	42.82%	19.31%	3.75%	4.46%	11.1%
2020-21	21.25%	48.93%	25.38%	3.27%	5.97%	16.14%
2021-22	20.63%	44.34%	27.74%	7.63%	6.40%	13.71%
2022-23	18.65%	38.05%	24.67%	12.07%	6.75%	12.23%
2023-24	17.81%	39.13%	31.05%	15.05%	5.69%	10.48%
2024-25	21.38%	33.63%	28.33%	12.92%	4.65%	10.76%

\*These license types do not include CTE-restricted licenses or International Faculty licenses.

# Teacher Vacancy Information

# NC GS 115C-299.5

Teacher Vacancy - A teaching position that a local board of education is unable to fill with a teacher licensed in that subject area, including a position that meets any of the following criteria:

- a. Is not filled by a teacher licensed in that subject area, including a position that meets any of the following criteria:
  1. Continuing Professional License
  2. Initial Professional License
  3. Lifetime License
  4. Limited License
  5. Residency License
- b. Is not filled by a licensed teacher in a permanent assignment.
- c. Is filled by a substitute teacher or interim teacher
- d. Is filled by a teacher with (i) and emergency license or (ii) another permit or license not included in sub-subdivision a. of this subdivision.

# Vacancy Rates Over Time

Reporting Year	State Vacancy Rate
2021-2022	5.9%
2022-2023	6.4%
2023-2024	7.6%
2024-2025	7.4%
Average	6.8%

# Disaggregated Vacancy Data

Employee Description	Percentage* of All Positions	Number
Temporary or Provisionally Licensed	5.0%	4,566
Rehired Retirees	0.2%	160
Long-Term Substitutes	1.0%	905
Unfilled Positions	1.2%	1,090
Total Vacant Positions	7.4%	6,721

\*The percentages are based on the total number of LEA reported positions in the State (n=91,112).

# Employment Trends for School Principals 2024-2025

# Key Questions in Legislation

- The number of principals who left the profession without remaining in the field of education.
- The number of principals who left their position for employment as a principal in another school in the State, including principals who left for employment within another local school administrative unit, a nonpublic school, or a charter school.
- The number of principals who left their position for another type of educational position and the type of educational position to which the principals moved.
- The number of principals who left their position in low-performing schools as defined in G.S. 115C-105.37.
- The number of principals who left their position in order to move to a low-performing school, as defined in G.S. 115C-105.37, and the impact of the principal recruitment supplement authorized in G.S. 115C-285.1 on the principal's decision to accept the position at the low-performing school.

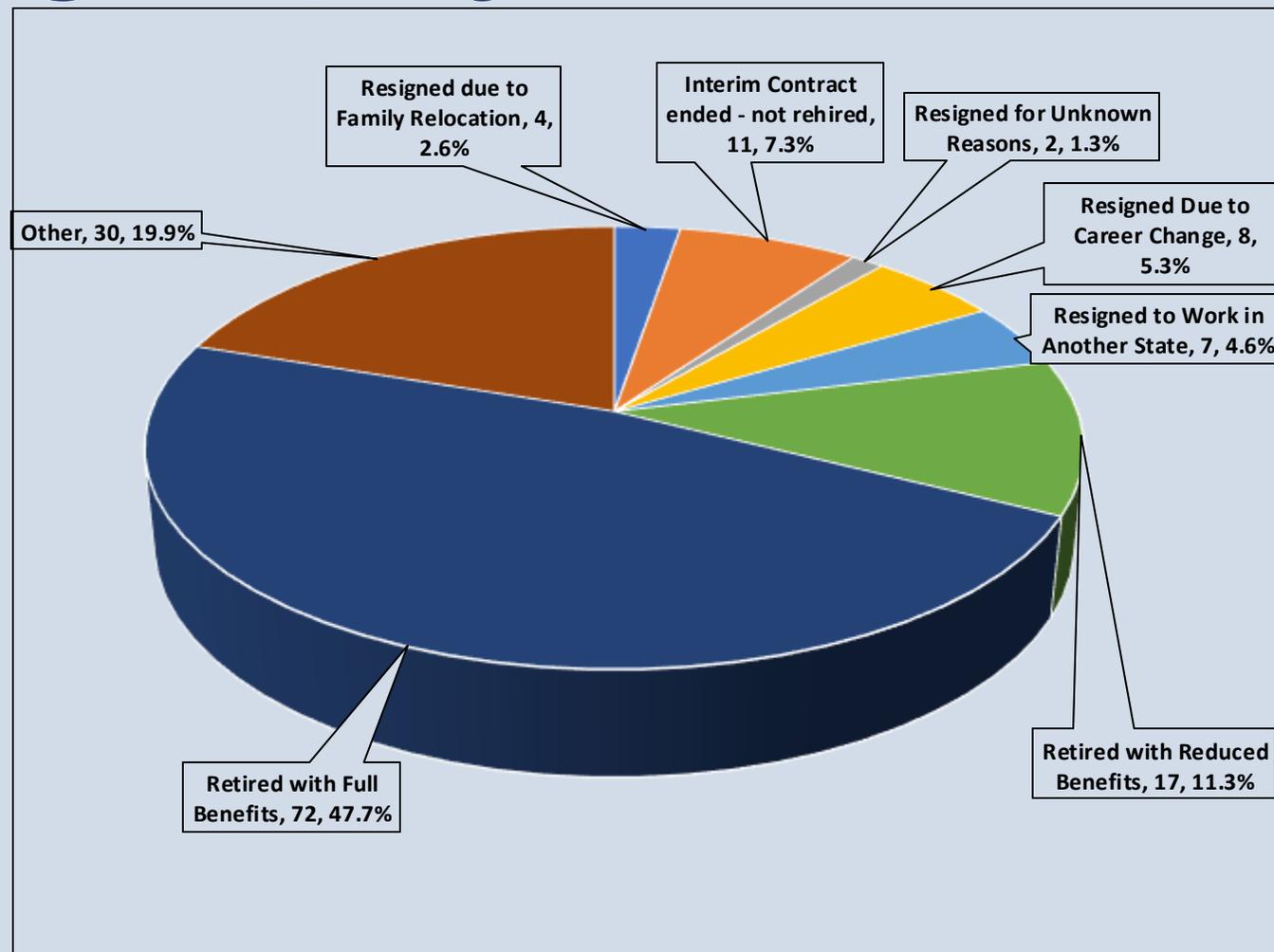
# Summary of Key Findings

- The attrition rate for principals is 6.1% and almost three out of five (59%) of those who leave employment are retiring.
- Principal mobility is 4.2% across the state with three out of four (75.0%) remaining in the same local education agency.
- The vast majority (92.4%) of principals remained employed as principals from 2024 to 2025. Assignment to the LEA's Central Office constitutes 4.3% of principals leaving the role.
- More than three out of four principals (75.2%) in low-performing schools remained at the same school. There were 48 principals that moved to a low-performing school in 2024-2025. More than one-third of these principals were in a low-performing school the prior school year.

# Principals Leaving Employment

- At the end of the 2023-24 school year, there were 2,482 principals employed in our 115 LEAs.
- Of those 2,482 principals, 151 did not return to employment in North Carolina LEAs.
- This equates to a 6.1% attrition rate for school principals.

Source: NCDPI Payroll and LEA Reported Data



# Principal Mobility

- There were 360 principals who left their schools at the end of the 2023-24 school year and remained employed in the State in the following school year.
- There were 228 (9.2%) principals who left their schools at the end of the 2023-24 school year and gained employment as a principal in a different school in the following school year.
- Of those 228, 169 (74.1%) remained employed as a principal in the same LEA.
- The remaining 59 (25.9%) remained employed as a principal but in a different public-school unit (PSU).
- Of those 59 moving to a different PSU, 4 (6.8%) moved to a charter school.

# Remained Employed and Current Position

Roles		
Remained as a Principal	2,153	92.4%
Assistant Principal	53	2.3%
Central Office	100	4.3%
Instructional Support	13	0.6%
Teacher	12	0.5%
Total	2,331*	
<p>*2,331 represents the 2,482 principals in the State less the 151 who left employment with NC public schools.</p>		<p>Source: NCDPI Payroll Records</p>

# Where Principals of Low-Performing Schools Were the Following Year

Principals at Low-Performing Schools (n=772)	Number of Principals Who Left the Low-Performing School	Rate
No longer employed in NC public schools	54	8.2%
Left the LEA, but remained employed in the State	33*	5.0%
Left the School, but remained in the same LEA	76*	11.6%
Remained at the Low-Performing School	495	75.2%

\*Of the 109 Principals who left the low-performing school but remained employed, 60 (55.0%) remained in the role of principal.

Source: NCDPI Licensure and Payroll Data

# Principal Movement to Low-Performing Schools

Movement to Low-Performing School	Number of Principals	Percentage
Total Movement	48	100%
Moved from Non-Low-Performing School	30	62.5%
Moved from a Different Low-Performing School	18	37.5%

