

## Question:

You asked: 1) if any studies exist that show that increased teacher pay successfully attracts teachers to hard to staff schools, 2) if any research shows that teachers of color are choosing to teach in schools with a higher level of minority students and whether this improves minority students' achievement, and 3) if any large school districts (or other organizations) have surveyed teachers to see why they choose to teach in their current school.

## Our Response:

### 1. Increased Teacher Pay as a Strategy to Attract Teachers to Hard to Staff Schools

While a number of districts have experimented with financial incentives to attract teachers to high-need or hard-to-staff schools, few studies have tracked the effectiveness of these programs, and research into their effectiveness is mixed. However, a few highlights include:

- The [Talent Transfer Initiative](#) (TTI), used in districts across the country, offered \$20,000, paid in installments over a two-year period, to the highest-performing teachers if they transferred into and remained in designated schools that had low average test scores. This program successfully attracted high-quality teachers to low-performing schools, had a positive impact on elementary student tests scores and on teacher retention rates during the payout period, according to a [2013 study](#).
- [Denver Public Schools](#)'s ProComp system provides a bonus to teachers in hard-to-serve schools, which are defined by the percentage of free and reduced-price lunches served. However, a [recent study](#) suggested that these bonuses were not sufficient and could be improved with greater dollar amounts in a tiered system.
- The Charlotte-Mecklenburg district provided a number of financial incentives to teachers choosing to teach at high-needs schools, including: 1) a signing bonus of \$1,000 to \$3,000 to teachers choosing to teach at high-needs schools, 2) a "master teacher bonus" to particularly well-qualified teachers choosing to work in high-need schools, and 3) a one-time signing bonuses of \$10,000 and retention bonuses of \$5,000 to high-quality teachers choosing to teach at particular high-needs schools. These bonuses were part of a larger experiment with performance-based compensation that has been [profiled](#) in [research](#) and has shown overall [positive results](#).
  - D.C. implemented a [similar program](#) in 2012 that includes not only a one-time bonus of \$10,000 but also homebuyer and other housing assistance, up to \$5,000 to be expended on tuition assistance, and up to \$3,000 to be used as income tax credits.
- More recently, Colorado S.B. 260 (2013) established the [Quality Teacher Recruitment Program](#). The program authorizes the Department of Education to award grants to organizations working in concert with school districts or board of cooperative educational services to recruit, select, train, and retain highly qualified teachers in areas that have had historic difficulty in attracting and keeping quality teachers. In December 2013, the Public

#### Additional ECS Resources

[State Policy Database](#) pages on [Teaching Quality](#), [Certification and Licensure](#), [Alternative Certification](#), [Recruitment and Retention](#), [Recruitment and Retention for At-Risk Schools](#), and [Recruitment and Retention for High Needs Subjects](#)

Research Studies Database page on [recruiting and retaining good teachers](#)

Education Business Coalition (PEBC) and Teach for America (TFA) were selected as grant recipients. Each organization received \$1,470,000 for the two-year grant period and were expected to place teachers in partner districts by the start of the 2014-15 school year. The analysis for the program's outcomes over the first year can be accessed [here](#).

### **Additional Resources on Financial Incentives & High-Needs Schools**

- A Center for American Progress [report](#) emphasizes that while “compensation alone is generally not a sufficient motivator to get new candidates in the door or to encourage them to stay... salary and other financial incentives are likely to be necessary to recruit and keep good teachers.” The report explores types of financial incentives and how they can best be used to improve recruitment and retention.
- According to [this report](#) from the Duke University Center for Child and Family Policy, bonuses to attract teachers to high-need schools are “generally effective” but “must be part of a larger strategy to have maximum impact.”
- High-need schools often see higher teacher turnover rates. The National Council on Teacher Quality has made [recommendations](#) for improving retention in high-needs schools, including:
  - Develop a different job description for teaching in high-minority, high low-income schools
  - Monitor teacher churn in high-need schools to reduce transfer of effective teachers out of these schools
- This [2006 study](#) of three southern states demonstrated that “teacher salary had a significant and positive effect on fourth-grade math achievement scores.” However, the study cautions that teacher education, teacher certification, median household income, student poverty, and parent education also had significant effects on achievement.

## **2. Teachers of Color in Schools with Large Minority Populations**

### **Impact on Achievement**

Minority teachers are two to three times more likely than white teachers to work in high-poverty, high-minority, and urban schools. Some research supports the idea that teachers of color can have a positive impact on minority student populations. For example, a [2010 study](#) summarizes a body of research suggesting that “students of color accrue academic benefits when taught by a same-race teacher or when exposed to a teaching force (at the school or district level) that is racially/ethnically representative of the student population.” Additionally, [this study](#) on the effect of own-race/ethnicity matching between teachers and students shows positive effects on achievement.

A [report](#) from the Albert Shanker Institute highlights research demonstrating:

- Teachers of color, especially Black teachers, are particularly motivated to work with students of color to improve their academic achievement;
- Teachers of color may be less likely to leave teaching than white teachers;
- Minority students may benefit academically from having access to demographically similar teachers;
- Teachers of color may hold minority students to higher expectations than their white counterparts.

### **Minority Teacher Recruitment**

Given the potential for positive effects of minority teachers on minority students, strategies for better recruitment of teachers of color should be considered. A number of reports highlight minority teacher recruitment strategies:

- [Closing Gaps: Diversifying Minnesota’s Teacher Workforce](#) (2015)
- [Keeping Up with the Kids: Increasing Minority Teacher Representation in Colorado](#) (see p. 31 et seq) (2014)
- [The Student Has Become the Teacher: Tracking the Racial Diversity and Academic Composition of the Teacher Supply Pipeline](#) (2013)

- [Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce](#) (2011)
- [Teacher Diversity Matters: A State-by-State Analysis of Teachers of Color](#) (2011)

### Minority Teacher Retention

Teacher turnover has a negative effect on all students. Minority teachers are more likely to migrate between schools or leave the profession, according to [2011 research](#), and “while the demographic characteristics of schools appear to be highly important to minority teachers’ initial employment decisions, this doesn’t appear to be the case for their later decisions about whether to depart.”

[Research](#) from 2010 indicates that a handful of innovative preparation programs that explicitly prepare and support teachers of color to work in urban schools have contributed to retention rates that are significantly higher than those for the overall teacher workforce. However, more research is needed to verify the impact of these programs and to specify the programs characteristics that contribute to the retention of teachers of color. Other [research](#) indicates that working conditions, especially “the level of collective faculty decision-making influence in the school and the degree of individual instructional autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms,” may be strong factors influencing minority teachers’ choice to remain at a school.

### 3. Teacher School Selection Surveys

While we are unable to locate much research into why teachers selected their current school, other research has delved into why teachers chose the location of their first teaching position and why teachers leave their schools.

2005 [research](#) from the Stanford School of Education found that teachers seeking their first jobs overwhelmingly choose school districts near where they grew up, which has an effect on hard-to-staff schools. From the study:

The importance of distance in teachers’ preferences particularly challenges urban districts, which are net importers of teachers. The number of teacher recruits whose hometown is in an urban area falls short of the number of positions being filled in urban districts, requiring that these districts attract teachers from other regions. **Teacher candidates coming from suburban or rural hometowns strongly prefer to remain in those areas, rather than teach in the urban districts** -- both because of the importance of distance and because teachers have preferences with respect to urbanicity. **Thus urban districts must overcome these preferences in addition to addressing the considerations typically identified with recruiting teachers to difficult-to-staff urban schools, such as salary, working conditions and the characteristics of the student population.** In general, urban schools must have salaries, working conditions or student populations that are more attractive than those of the surrounding suburban districts to induce sufficiently qualified candidates whose hometowns are in suburban regions to take jobs further from home and in a different type of region. To the extent that they do not, teachers with suburban hometowns who take jobs in urban areas are likely to be less qualified than those who teach in the suburbs. **Moreover, urban districts face a second disadvantage. If, historically, the graduates of urban high schools have not received adequate education, then the cities face a less qualified pool of potential teachers even if they are not net importers.** Preferences for proximity lead to the perpetuation of inequities in the qualifications of teachers. Inadequate education is a cycle that is difficult to break.

NCES has [data](#) from a 2005 survey about why teachers leave their current school. The surveyed teachers reported being “strongly” or “somewhat” dissatisfied with particular features of the school they left. The top reported sources of dissatisfaction were:

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|--|------------|
| • Not enough time for planning/preparation | 65 percent |
| • Teaching workload too heavy              | 60 percent |

- Salary 54 percent
- Student behavior was a problem 53 percent
- Not enough influence over school’s policies and practices 52 percent
- Classes too large 49 percent
- School facilities in need of significant repair 48 percent
- Computer resources 44 percent
- Little support from parents 41 percent
- Required professional development activities did not match career goals 40 percent

Notably, out-of-field teachers most often reported that they were dissatisfied with salary, while highly qualified teachers most often reported dissatisfaction with lack of planning/preparation time.

2013 [research](#) from the Harvard Graduate School of Education that suggests teachers who leave high-poverty schools are doing so because of working conditions. The abstract:

What fuels high rates of teacher turnover in schools that serve large numbers of low-income students of color? Teachers who choose to leave such schools usually transfer to schools serving wealthier, whiter student populations, leading some researchers to conclude that teachers are dissatisfied working with poor, minority students. Here we present an alternative explanation— one grounded in organizational theory. We review evidence from six recent studies, which collectively suggest that teachers who leave high-poverty schools are not fleeing their students, but rather the poor working conditions that make it difficult for them to teach and their students to learn. Together, these studies find that the working conditions teachers prize most—and those that best predict their satisfaction and retention—are social in nature. They include school leadership, collegial relationships, and elements of school culture. We discuss what is known about these factors and how each supports teachers’ work. We conclude with recommendations for those who seek to stabilize the staffing in these schools.