



# What Does One Do to Get Fired Around Here? An Analysis of Teacher Dismissals in Georgia

Andrew Saultz

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## Key Points

- A majority of teacher dismissal cases in Atlanta from 2011 to 2017 were related to issues of professionalism, including not showing up for work, not following a directive from a supervisor, or not completing tasks (i.e., grading).
- Only 4 percent of these teacher dismissal cases mentioned teacher effectiveness, teacher quality, instruction, or student learning.
- Teacher dismissal cases were more likely to feature illegal undertakings, including sexual activity, physical abuse, or financial irresponsibility, than to reference an employee's ability to teach.

In recent decades, teacher policy has been central to education policy. During the Obama administration, federal efforts incentivized states to adopt teacher-evaluation reforms through No Child Left Behind waivers and Race to the Top (RTTT) grants. Embedded in these reforms was the belief that teacher evaluations historically have not been good at improving teaching performance or identifying and dismissing low-performing teachers.<sup>1</sup> State and federal policy, then, has tried to refocus efforts on determining which teachers are effectively improving student achievement and which teachers are not.<sup>2</sup> Forty-three states have altered teacher-evaluation criteria since 2010 to include some component of student performance (i.e., test scores) into teacher evaluations.<sup>3</sup> This is a stark departure from traditional teacher evaluations in public schools, which have relied exclusively on a limited number of principal observations to assess teacher quality.

Georgia reflects many of the national trends in teacher policy. The state was awarded \$400 million in RTTT funds in 2010. Its application was lauded as having a plan that “will use teacher and principal evaluation data to inform the full range of personnel decisions.”<sup>4</sup> After being awarded this RTTT grant, the state’s teacher-quality rating by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) advanced from a C– in 2009 to a C in 2011 to a B– in 2013, 2015, and 2017, placing Georgia in the top 20 percent of states.

NCTQ has credited Georgia with strong alternative teacher-preparation program options, teacher and principal evaluations, and data systems for evaluation, as well as linking evaluation to professional growth. In terms of areas for improvement, NCTQ suggested “ensuring objective evidence of student growth as a determinant factor in teacher evaluations” and “report[ing] school-level data about teacher performance to help support the equitable distribution of teacher talent.”<sup>5</sup> This means that RTTT was

designed to alter teacher evaluations to be more responsive to teacher quality, not just unprofessional behavior. If Georgia improved in this area following RTTT, then there should be an increase in teacher dismissals relating to teacher quality.

## Report Purpose and Methodology

To further explore teacher dismissal practices in Georgia, this report analyzes teacher dismissal data in the Fulton County School System from 2012 to 2017, the DeKalb County School District from 2011 to 2016, and Atlanta Public Schools from 2011 to 2013. The goal is to understand (1) what teacher dismissal practices in Georgia look like, (2) who was dismissed from these districts, (3) why they were dismissed, and (4) what patterns exist across and within districts—with a specific focus on dismissals related to teacher quality. I hope the report will be used to inform teacher policy in the future and encourage further work analyzing teacher dismissals in other contexts.

Data were gathered through a Freedom of Information Act request to each of the districts.<sup>6</sup> The Fulton County School System returned 20 cases, DeKalb County Public Schools returned 24, and Atlanta Public Schools returned 92. In total, 136 cases were analyzed across the three districts. The Fulton County records consist of tribunal recommendations that are later acted upon by the State Board of Education, which makes a final decision. The Atlanta Public Schools records include the final board decisions, without the prior tribunal recommendations. The DeKalb County records included a mixture of final board decisions and tribunal recommendations. While the decision information for the dismissal cases varies, this report focuses primarily on the charges listed against each teacher.

The data were organized around the first-listed reason for dismissal in the teacher’s case file, including incompetence, failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training, willful neglect of duties, staff reduction based on the loss of students or cancellation of programs, insubordination, and any other good and sufficient cause. While many of the cases listed multiple categories, the descriptions of the cases typically focused on things relating to the first-listed reason for dismissal. For example, on cases in which willful neglect of duties was listed first, the file often mentioned not showing up to work on time or at

all or failing to attend required meetings. Therefore, the first-listed reason for dismissal is henceforth referred to as the “primary reason for dismissal.”

Some of the dismissal categories have similar descriptions, and there is no specific guidance in the Fair Dismissal Act (described below) about how a district should use these categories relative to one another. A few of the cases include descriptions beyond the broad categories, which are used to analyze the scope of the case. However, the majority did not include any narrative description. After each of the districts was analyzed, the data were combined to analyze patterns across districts.

Each case was also scrutinized around issues of teacher quality, teacher performance, and classroom instruction by searching for those terms throughout each file. The goal was to understand the degree to which actual teaching affected whether a district would move toward termination or nonrenewal. This was crucial to our analysis since teacher quality was such a central part of RTTT and other teacher policy reforms in Georgia at this time.

## Teacher Evaluation in Georgia

Georgia has a Professional Standards Commission that oversees teacher certification. Teachers must first apply for an “induction” certificate and may apply for a professional certificate once they have at least three years of teaching experience, a passing score on the teacher certification exam, and a proficient rating on at least two evaluations in the past five years under the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES).<sup>7</sup> The TKES was a key component of Georgia’s RTTT plan, in which an educator evaluation system was piloted in participating districts during the 2012–13 academic year. The system shifted away from traditional principal observation as the sole indicator of educator effectiveness. This pilot allowed the state to start altering teacher evaluations before the full implementation of the RTTT statewide plan.

In May 2013, the Georgia legislature continued teacher-evaluation reforms by passing House Bill 244, which required that by the 2014–15 school year, teacher evaluations had to use multiple measures and prioritize growth on student achievement. The new evaluation system mandated that student achievement growth must count for at least 50 percent of teacher evaluations.<sup>8</sup> The other 50 percent was based

on the traditional teacher-evaluation method: principal observation. A rating of ineffective on the combined score counted as evidence of incompetency, which is grounds for dismissal. Full implementation of the new teacher-evaluation system went into effect, including incorporating these into personnel decisions, in the 2016–17 school year.

## Teacher Dismissal in Georgia

The Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) governs the dismissal, demotion, and suspension of school district employees in the state. OCGA 20-2-940, also known as the Fair Dismissal Act, specifies suspension and termination criterion of in-place contracts in the State of Georgia and applies to both certified and classified employees, including teachers.<sup>9</sup> It outlines eight grounds for suspension or termination.

- **Incompetence.** Incompetency may include “deficient record keeping of student grades and attendance, high failure rate of students, and failure to improve teaching performance.”<sup>10</sup> These cases typically involve teachers who are not meeting the expectations of the job, specifically relating to record keeping or teaching performance.
- **Insubordination.** Insubordination may include a “refusal to submit to a drug test, failure to complete lesson plans and grades, failure to obey instructions to avoid confrontations, and refusal to submit lesson plans as instructed.”<sup>11</sup> These typically involve a specific directive that is ignored by the employee.
- **Willful Neglect of Duties.** This is a broad category that can include the failure to supervise students, complete lesson plans and grades, or report to work. Previous cases involving willful neglect have involved teachers choosing not to return to work after doctors medically cleared them, failing to allow students to make up exams, or violating specific grading rules.
- **Immorality.** Immorality cases typically involve illegal activity, including sexual maleficence, theft, or other morally reprehensible endeavors.
- **Inciting, Encouraging, or Counseling Students to Violate Any Valid State Law,**

**Municipal Ordinance, or Policy or Rule of the Local Board of Education.** Grounds for termination under this component are self-evident. Employees cannot encourage students to violate state law or board policy. This is rarely used in termination cases.

- **To Reduce Staff Due to the Loss of Students or Cancellation of Programs.** This clause is used during reorganization and budget cuts. The employee does not have to be directly involved in the program reduction but may be part of a budget reduction. Loss of students in a school, program, or district may also lead to terminating some employees.
- **Failure to Secure and Maintain Necessary Educational Training.** This ground for termination specifies that employees must meet certification requirements. This means that teachers may be terminated or non-renewed if they do not maintain current certification through the State of Georgia.
- **Any Other Good and Sufficient Cause.** This is a catchall category that is rarely used as the sole reason for termination. Many of the cases that have used this term are unique and do not necessarily fit clearly into another category. For example, one case involved a teacher placing a video camera in the girls’ locker room, another involved a teacher failing to pay cell phone charges, and a third involved making false statements to the newspaper.<sup>12</sup>

Once an employee has been charged with one or more of these eight grounds for dismissal, according to the Fair Dismissal Act, a hearing must occur before the suspension or termination. The employee must receive written notice of the hearing at least 10 days prior and must be notified of the cause(s) for the discharge, suspension, or demotion; the names of witnesses and a summary of the evidence against them; the time and location of the hearing; and the option for the employee to legally require the attendance of witnesses. The school system needs to show proof that the employee violated one or more of the specific grounds for termination listed above. If the district wins the hearing, the case is automatically referred to the State Board of Education for an appeal on the employee’s behalf. If the employee loses that appeal, there is an automatic right to appeal to the Superior Court.

## Teacher Dismissal Patterns in Districts

This report examines three large school districts in Georgia to gain clearer insight into dismissal practices in the state. Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County School System, and DeKalb County Public Schools are all located in central Georgia in the greater Atlanta area. These three districts are each large in size and enrollment and are adjacent to one another. In the following sections, the report provides an overview and analysis of the teacher dismissal data for each district.

### Atlanta Public Schools

Atlanta Public Schools is a large urban district with approximately 55,000 students across 100 schools. Atlanta Public Schools drew much attention following a cheating scandal in which at least 178 teachers and administrators across 44 schools were accused, and ultimately found guilty, of changing student test scores on standardized tests in the 2008–09 school year. These alterations changed the perception of school quality, as many leaders were lauded for large, and quick, gains in student achievement. Following the scandal, the district saw higher than average leadership and teacher turnover.<sup>13</sup> The cheating scandal was the largest of its kind in American history and defined the district for many years while the courts settled who ultimately was involved. Since 2011, the district has seen significant senior leadership change. Atlanta Public Schools had more cases than the other two districts in this report, and this may be related to the scandal. However, despite the larger number of total cases, few cases directly mentioned teaching.

**Incompetence.** Thirty-two cases (35 percent) listed incompetence as the primary reason for dismissal. Mentor Mentor, an Atlanta Public Schools teacher, was dismissed due to incompetence, insubordination, willful neglect of duties, and any other good and sufficient cause, with a “failure to report to work during pre-planning days from July 28, 2015 to August 4, 2015.” Each year, Atlanta Public Schools requires professional development days in the summer before students arrive for the first day of school. This case was primarily described as incompetence because the teacher did not show up for any of

the preplanning days as required by the teacher contract. The case ended in termination.

Incompetence was also the primary label used in cases that involved the use of force with students. For example, Juanita Tillman’s file states, “Teacher used undue physical force with students (hitting, pinching, grabbing) with the intention of producing discomfort.” The case ended in termination.

In another case involving accusations of undue force with students, there were two files. The first, from December 15, 2015, found insufficient evidence that Stevie Pollock used undue force with students. The file states that the teacher would receive a 60-day suspension for the “unintentional action of lightly tapping student on shoulder to get his attention.” On February 1, 2016, there is a second file on Pollock. This time, the file reads, “Teacher charged with using undue physical force with students (punching in the stomach, grabbing shirt, slamming against wall, grabbing jacket, choking and hitting).” However, in the end, Pollock was reinstated as the board found that the teacher did not violate the Fair Dismissal Act.

Incompetence was used as the primary reason for dismissal in Atlanta Public Schools in cases in which teachers did not meet expectations of the job relating to direct interactions with students. While the incompetence category could include reasons such as teaching effectiveness, this is present in few cases in Atlanta Public Schools. Instead, the category is used when teachers have physical altercations with students, do not show up for work regularly, or miss required professional development activities.

**Insubordination.** Four cases (4 percent) cited insubordination as the primary reason for dismissal. Insubordination was used when referencing individuals who had financial malfeasance or did not communicate adequately. For example, the case involving Akisha Graham reads “submission of questionable receipts and requests for reimbursement related to athletic expenses in conjunction with coaching position.” This was the only detail provided. The board voted for reinstatement, finding that the evidence was insufficient to prove undue physical force.

Another case of insubordination emphasized communication issues. The dismissal case of Jena Rainey reads “unprofessional in communications

with faculty, staff, administration and students” and “unprofessional communications to Atlanta Public Schools personnel with unfounded accusations.” The case also reads “conducted professional workshop without approval.” The scope of the workshop and the participants are unclear. This case ended in termination.

**Failure to Secure and Maintain Necessary Educational Training.** There were 11 files (12 percent) that listed this as the primary reason for dismissal. These individuals did not maintain a current teaching license in the state. These files did not provide further description. In all 11, the final decision resulted in termination.

**Willful Neglect of Duties.** Used in 41 cases (45 percent), willful neglect of duties was the most commonly cited primary reason for dismissal. However, few include details about the cases. Two of these cases do reference “policy GARH-R,” which is a policy about attendance and tardiness. In this regard, we can assume that these teachers were either repeatedly late or absent from their jobs. In another case, the file lists “policy GAGC,” which pertains to professional ethics. No description is included, but 39 out of 41 teachers involved in cases with willful neglect of duties listed as the first charge were terminated or non-renewed.

**Any Other Good and Sufficient Cause.** Only two cases (2 percent) in this set of files listed this as the first charge. Neither had any other details, and both teachers were terminated.

**Summary.** As shown in Table 1, only three of the 92 cases (3 percent) directly mentioned teaching or evaluations specifically. Two of these cases were labeled as incompetence, and the third was labeled as willful negligence.

In one of the incompetence cases, the district documented that Lucy Truitt had a “failure to

use effective classroom strategies, failure to use research-based instructional techniques, failure to properly assess students’ mastery of lessons, failure to maximize instructional time, ignored individual needs of students and teaching schedule, and failure to manage students’ behavior.” This case stands out as the only one of the 92 that mentioned ignoring the individual needs of students or classroom management strategies. The case ended in nonrenewal.

The second direct reference to teaching practice in the incompetence category focused on communication. In the Cheryl Patterson case, the district noted a “failure to timely submit grades and lesson plans, failure to update her webpage for students and parents, failure to adhere to lesson plans in classroom, ineffective teaching strategies.” Two key takeaways from this case are that the district lists the communication, and even the webpage, before ineffective teaching strategies and that this is the only case from Atlanta Public Schools that mentions ineffective teaching as a reason for dismissal. The case ended in nonrenewal.

Lastly, the Vera Yates case, which listed willful neglect of duties as the primary reason for dismissal, is the only case that mentions “poor ratings on observations and evaluations” as a reason for dismissal. The file also includes that Yates “willfully neglected duties, exceeded reasonable level of tardies, failed to comply with attendance policies, failed to attend mandatory meetings, failed to demonstrate professional conduct, failed to comply with directives, failed to keep classroom neat and orderly, failed to improve

**Table 1. Primary Reason for Dismissal in Atlanta Public Schools**

Primary Reason for Dismissal	Total Number	Percentage of Total	Cases That Mention Teaching
Incompetence	32	35	3
Failure to Secure and Maintain Necessary Educational Training	11	12	0
Willful Neglect of Duties	41	45	0
Staff Reduction Based on Loss of Students or Cancellation of Programs	2	2	0
Any Other Good and Sufficient Cause	2	2	0
Insubordination	4	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Author’s calculations based on information returned by Atlanta Public Schools through a Freedom of Information Act request.

art program.” The poor ratings on observations were the last thing listed in the file. The case ended in nonrenewal.

The 92 cases from Atlanta Public Schools provide evidence for what some policymakers and researchers have been saying for years about teacher dismissals: Teachers are largely dismissed due to professional obligations, not teacher evaluations. Only three of the 92 cases mentioned teaching or teaching evaluations specifically, and more than three times as many teachers were dismissed due to a failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training than were dismissed for poor evaluations or teaching practice. Atlanta Public Schools provides clear support for the claims that if teachers keep their heads down and do not upset anyone, they will likely continue in their jobs.

### DeKalb County School District

DeKalb County School District is the third-largest school system in Georgia. The district serves approximately 100,000 students across 137 schools and centers. DeKalb County is due east of Atlanta.

Only three of the 24 cases in DeKalb County included a description beyond the generic coding for the charges shown in Table 2. The first indicated that the teacher did not have tenure and therefore was not entitled to a hearing. The teacher, Jamillah Scott-Goza, was recommended for nonrenewal by the board of education. The second case, listed as Bateman et al., recommended a demotion due to staff reduction based on the loss of students or cancellation of programs. The last case involved Quentin Wright and reads that he “facilitated sex between minor

students on school grounds.” No other information was included, other than the listing of charges including immorality, willful neglect of duties, and any other good and sufficient cause. The teacher was recommended for termination.

The DeKalb County files are difficult to analyze due to the lack of detail. Most cases list only the charges and the action taken. All 24 cases ended with termination or nonrenewal. As noted in Table 2, zero cases mention teaching, teacher evaluation, or student learning.

### Fulton County Schools

The Fulton County School System serves the county outside the Atlanta city limits. It is the fourth-largest school system in Georgia and covers a geographic area of more than 70 miles.<sup>14</sup> Fulton County Schools has approximately 7,500 teachers and 97,000 students across 96 schools.

**Incompetence.** Seven cases (35 percent) listed incompetence as the primary charge. In one case, Lori Boissiere was charged with incompetence for “failure to provide adequate planning and instruction to students; classroom performance.” The tribunal recommended termination. Lora Powell was charged with the same thing and was likewise recommended for termination.

The personnel file for Kim Holley also lists incompetence as the primary ground for dismissal and reads “failure to report consistently to school during work hours; classroom performance; unprofessional behavior to school administration; violation of testing protocol.” No further details were

**Table 2. Primary Reason for Dismissal in DeKalb County Schools**

Primary Reason for Dismissal	Total Number	Percentage of Total	Cases That Mention Teaching
Insubordination	10	42	0
Willful Neglect of Duties	4	17	0
Staff Reduction Based on Loss of Students or Cancellation of Programs	8	33	0
No Reason Listed	2	8	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: Author’s calculations based on information returned by DeKalb County Schools through a Freedom of Information Act request.

included to describe the nature of these charges, but the employee was recommended for nonrenewal.

These three cases were the only cases in Fulton to mention classroom performance or allude to teacher quality relating to instruction. While small in number, this represents 15 percent of all the dismissal case files from Fulton County.

Other cases of incompetence involved physical interactions with students. Xavier Anderson, for example, was charged with incompetence for “us[ing] excessive force when restraining a special education student.” The tribunal recommended termination.

**Insubordination.** Six cases (30 percent) listed insubordination as the primary reason for dismissal. Many of these cases specifically referenced teachers not following an order or procedure. For example, Marthe Valcin “met with talent officer to discuss personnel issues and advised of suspension for unprofessional conduct; the teacher [was] directed to return to class duties and failed to comply.” Similarly, Leigh Williams was charged with insubordination due to a “failure to comply with policy and complete collection, evaluation and reporting of student data.” In both cases, the tribunal recommended termination.

Other insubordination cases involved the failure to fulfill a particular role. For example, Tricia Rock was charged with insubordination, including a “failure to complete evaluation process for employees as required, failure to fulfill supervisory responsibility to monitor staff, failure to report alleged abuse, failure to respect employee confidentiality, and allowed unsupervised access to her automobile by students.” The tribunal recommended termination.

Insubordination was also used for issues around the manipulation of data. Sherry Maddox-Adams was charged with insubordination because she “falsified grades, failed to accurately report grades, and deliberately misrepresented grades.” Nonrenewal was recommended. The case involving Laurie Lepley, recommending termination, reads “failure to administer ACCESS test to two students; knowingly ignored testing protocol.”

**Failure to Secure and Maintain Necessary Educational Training.** All six of the cases in this category read, “Certificate expired on [date], teacher did not have necessary certification to teach.” In all six cases, the tribunal recommended termination.

**Willful Neglect of Duties.** The only case that lists this as the first charge involves a teacher who was absent for an extended period of time. The personnel file for Cynthia Watterson reads, “Teacher absent from October 27, 2009 through June 30, 2010; failure to return to work constituted willful, intentional, and ongoing failure to comply with policy.” She was recommended for nonrenewal.

**Summary.** As shown in Table 3, only three of the 20 cases (15 percent) in Fulton County specifically referenced the teacher’s duties relating to instruction, classroom performance, or planning. All three were labeled first as cases of incompetence. Two other cases referenced counselors failing to meet their job obligations in helping students plan for classes and graduate on time. One case was an administrator who did not fulfill her job duties of evaluating teacher performance. Together, these six cases directly reference job performance. The other 14 cases

**Table 3. Primary Reason for Dismissal in Fulton County Schools**

Primary Reason for Dismissal	Total Number	Percentage of Total	Cases That Mention Teaching
Incompetence	7	35	2
Insubordination	6	30	0
Failure to Secure and Maintain Necessary Educational Training	6	30	0
Willful Neglect of Duties	1	5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3</b>

Source: Author’s calculations based on information returned by Fulton County Schools through a Freedom of Information Act request.

involved not following a directive or order, using force against students, not showing up to work, or failing to maintain certification. In sum, few educators were terminated due to teacher quality in Fulton County.

## Teacher Dismissal Patterns Across Districts

Table 4 combines the data across all three districts to present a comprehensive overview of teacher dismissals. Fifty-one (38 percent) of the 136 cases list willful neglect of duties as the primary charge against the teacher, making this the most common primary reason for dismissal. Many of these cases across districts specifically referenced teachers missing an extended amount of work time.

Incompetence was listed as the primary charge in 39 cases (29 percent). This charge was used differently across districts. In Atlanta Public Schools, incompetence was listed as the primary charge in numerous cases involving the use of force against students. Conversely, incompetence in Fulton County sometimes involved the use of force, but other cases involved the failure to maintain a classroom-learning environment. DeKalb County never listed incompetence as the primary charge.

Insubordination was listed first in 20 cases (15 percent) across districts. In Fulton County Schools, insubordination cases usually referred to a teacher not following a direct order or a job duty. In Atlanta Public Schools, however, insubordination was typically around communication or financial matters.

Nine percent of the cases listed failure to secure and maintain necessary educational training as the primary reason for dismissal. DeKalb County had no such cases. In both Atlanta Public Schools and Fulton County, these cases had no further information provided. Although the data do not indicate how many years of experience the teachers who failed to secure and maintain certification had, it is likely, due to the length of the initial (induction) certification, these teachers did not make the upgrade from the induction to the professional certificate in a timely manner. This may explain how they could teach in the district initially but were not able to continue to do so.

As shown in Table 4, only six of the 136 cases directly mention teacher effectiveness, quality, or instruction.

## Conclusion

These 136 cases illustrate several important points. Most teachers are terminated or non-renewed because they violated terms of their contract relating to communication, the use of force, or not following a specific directive. On the whole, these cases demonstrate a commonly held belief about teacher dismissal: Teachers are not usually dismissed based on actual teaching practice. Instead, teachers tend to be dismissed for not going through the mechanics of being an employee. This could mean that they did not use finances appropriately or they failed to report for work. Other employees repeatedly showed up late or did not grade student work on time. To be clear, this is not to suggest that teachers should not

**Table 4. Three Districts' Combined Results: Primary Reason for Dismissal**

Primary Reason for Dismissal	Total Number	Percentage of Total	Cases That Mention Teaching
Willful Neglect of Duties	51	38	1
Incompetence	39	29	5
Insubordination	20	15	0
Failure to Secure and Maintain Necessary Educational Training	12	9	0
Staff Reduction Based on Loss of Students or Cancellation of Programs	10	7	0
Any Other Good and Sufficient Cause	2	1	0
No Reason Listed	2	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6</b>

Source: Author's calculations based on information returned through a Freedom of Information Act request.



be fired for these nonteaching-related offenses. Rather, teachers' ability to teach should also affect their ability to maintain employment.

Additionally, there were no cases in which a teacher was charged with not implementing recommended strategies to improve teaching. In other words, even the six cases referencing teaching specifically did not document what evaluators had suggested to do previously to enhance student learning. One is left wondering if teachers always incorporate feedback, which is unlikely, or if they do not receive the type of feedback that is helpful. Surprisingly, no cases reference the failure to improve practice. Taken together, the cases do not provide evidence of formative assessment in these districts.

Five of the six cases involving teacher quality (two of the three cases in Atlanta Public Schools and all three in Fulton County) happened after H.B. 244 was passed. This suggests that H.B. 244 may have

altered teacher dismissals in the district, albeit in a minor way. H.B. 244 attempted to reform teacher evaluation in Georgia by placing greater emphasis on achievement growth and was a good start in reforming the state's teacher evaluations. However, the low number of total cases post-H.B. 244 suggests that policymakers still have work to do to ensure that teacher quality is a demonstrable requirement for remaining in the profession.

This is not a comprehensive list of teacher dismissal cases in these three districts and should not be seen as an analysis that is generalizable to these districts or to teacher dismissal more broadly. These cases do, however, provide further evidence that teacher dismissals typically involve unprofessional or illegal activity and usually do not relate directly to a teacher's ability to teach. To that end, policymakers and educational leaders should think through how to evaluate teachers more effectively.

## About the Author

**Andrew Saultz** is an assistant professor of educational leadership at Miami University. He earned his Ph.D. in educational policy from Michigan State University and an M.A.T. in social studies from Lewis and Clark College.

## Notes

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