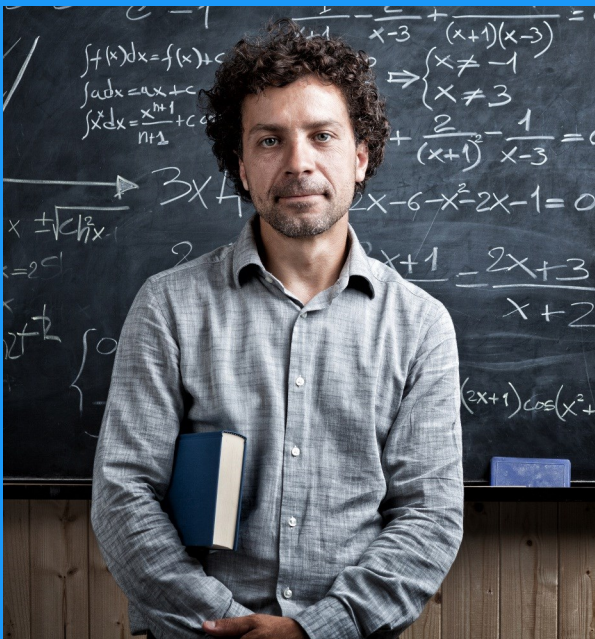


# Sustaining a System for High-Quality Teachers

## Report 1: Key Characteristics of Austin Independent School District Teacher Leavers and Transfers





## Executive Summary

After the 2013–2014 school year, 77% of the 5,757 Austin Independent School District (AISD) teachers who were assigned to only one school remained at the same school for the following year. Approximately 8% changed schools or jobs in AISD, and 15% left the district. To better understand the teacher turnover in AISD, this study examined additional data for the subset of 2013–2014 teachers who were not eligible to retire. The turnover pattern was nearly identical for the study sample of teachers. Results from the study suggest the following key findings.

**Leavers and stayers had different qualifications prior to entering AISD.** Results of this study showed teachers who left had a little more experience outside AISD and less experience inside AISD than did those who remained at their schools or changed schools. Additionally, they were more likely to have been alternatively certified and were somewhat less effective than those who remained at their schools. Teachers who left the district were similar to those who transferred to other AISD schools.

**Leavers were dissatisfied with the working conditions at their schools, and this was evident up to 3 years before they left.** Results from annual survey data also showed teachers who remained at their schools rated their school’s collaborative leadership higher than did those who left their schools, were less attached to their schools, and were less likely to agree their school was a good place to work and learn. Importantly, data for teachers who had been at their schools for at least 3 years indicate this pattern was evident up to 3 years before teachers left or moved. Their dissatisfaction was evident through more frequent absences. Teachers who left AISD after 2013–2014 missed about 5 more days in 2013–2014 than did those who remained at their schools, suggesting the cost of turnover began well before teachers actually left.

**School leadership was an important predictor of turnover at high poverty schools in AISD.** In general, AISD schools serving more economically disadvantaged students (i.e., high-poverty schools) retained fewer teachers than did other schools. However, some high-poverty schools also had very high retention rates. These high-poverty/high-retention schools differed from high-poverty/low-retention schools on measures of school leadership. For example, teachers at high-poverty/high-retention schools were more likely than those at high-poverty/low-retention schools to agree their principal involved faculty in decisions that had a directly impact on the operations of the school, teachers trusted the principal to make sound professional decisions about instruction, and teachers felt comfortable raising issues and concerns that were important to them. Results provided further evidence supporting the critical role of school leadership.

**Teachers were more likely to stay if they were a good “fit” for their school.** However, some teachers still chose to leave even the schools with seemingly the most desirable qualities. Results highlighted the importance of the “fit” between teachers and their school environment. Teachers who left their schools began providing lower ratings than their schools’ average ratings for collaborative leadership items and the item, “Overall, my school is a good place to work” 3 years or more prior to leaving.

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# Sustaining a System for High-Quality Teachers

AISD Department of Research and Evaluation Report Series



Teachers are central to the success of any school system, and human capital systems must support high-quality teachers. Teacher turnover costs school districts the time and money associated with recruiting, hiring, and inducting new teachers, and also the collegial relationships and rapport with students that are lost when a teacher leaves.

This research series addresses the *recruitment, development, evaluation, professional career pathways, and retention of high-quality teachers*. The focus is on identifying critical factors that may be addressed through policy and practice.

The following list describes some of the questions to be addressed through this series.

**Recruiting and hiring** What practices support attracting, selecting, and placing teachers? How competitive is compensation for teachers compared with compensation in the local market? How does teacher preparation influence initial teacher quality?

**Professional development and support** What resources are available that differentiate teacher development opportunities to meet the needs of all teachers? What role do supportive teaching and learning conditions play in teachers' success?

**Evaluation and feedback** What policies and practices support the use of high-quality feedback? Which aspects of teacher evaluations are most critical to teachers' success?

**Professional pathways** What is the impact of differentiated compensation on teachers' effectiveness and retention? What professional opportunities contribute to teachers' development? What pathways offer advancement for teachers who wish to remain in the classroom?

**Retention** What are the most common, actionable reasons teachers leave AISD? What are the characteristics of typical teachers who leave AISD? Where are teachers employed after they leave AISD? What are the characteristics of schools with high retention rates?

For more information and to read additional reports in this series, please visit <http://www.austinisd.org/dre>.



## Purpose

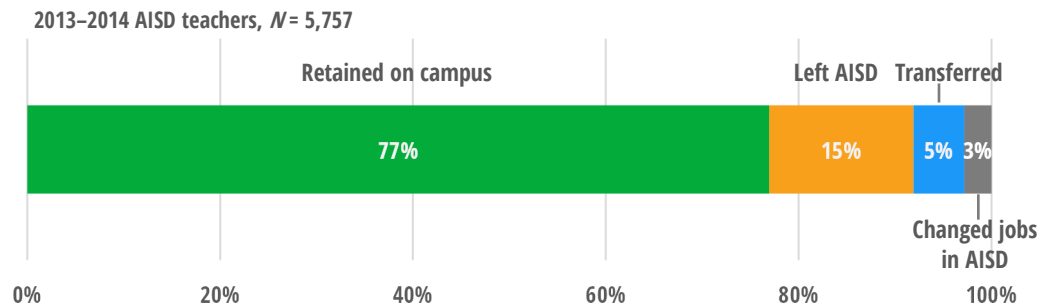
This report addresses the most basic questions related to teacher turnover in AISD. Specifically, we describe how many teachers changed schools, changed jobs in AISD, or left the school district after the 2013–2014 school year. Then we describe the characteristics of teachers in each group, followed by what we know about the reasons teachers left. We also describe characteristics of the schools from which teachers were most likely to leave, and factors that further distinguished teachers who left even the schools with favorable teacher retention rates. The factors identified in this report may be used to develop an early warning system for teachers at risk of departure from their schools or the district.



## What percentage of teachers left AISD after 2013–2014?

AISD, like other school systems, faces the challenge of teacher turnover. After the 2013–2014 school year, approximately 77% of AISD teachers remained at the same school (Figure 1). AISD teacher turnover resembled the pattern nationwide. A recent study from the National Center for Education Statistics showed 84% of public school teachers who were teaching during the 2011–2012 school year remained at the same school the following year, while 8% left the profession and 8% moved to a different school either inside or outside the same district.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1.**  
**Although 85% of all 2013–2014 AISD teachers remained in the district the following school year, 15% left AISD.**



*Source.* PEIMS 90 records

*Note.* Data include employees coded as teachers in 2013–2014 who were not assigned to more than one work location either year.

Our attempt to compare AISD turnover data with data from the national study highlighted two key differences in the outcomes examined. First, the national study considered teachers who changed jobs within the same school district to be teacher leavers. Although technically those teachers left the teaching role, we did not consider them in the same category as teachers who left AISD. Second, the national study was able to identify teachers who left the teaching profession after leaving the school district. This report does not distinguish whether AISD teacher leavers remained in the teaching profession after leaving AISD. However, Report 2 of this series examines the employment location and wages earned by teachers who left AISD.

The national study also was not limited to teachers who made career choices without the option of retirement. To better understand the teacher turnover in AISD, we examined a variety of data for the 4,958 teachers in 2013–2014 who were not eligible to retire.<sup>2</sup> This allowed us to describe the teachers who chose to leave their schools for reasons other than retirement, compared with those who chose to remain at their schools. The turnover pattern was nearly identical to the pattern for all teachers. The following sections describe the characteristics of stayers, leavers, and movers along with the characteristics of their schools.

<sup>1</sup>Goldring, R., Tale, S., Riddles, M., & Owens, C. (2014). *Teacher attrition and mobility: Results from the 2012–13 teacher follow-up survey*

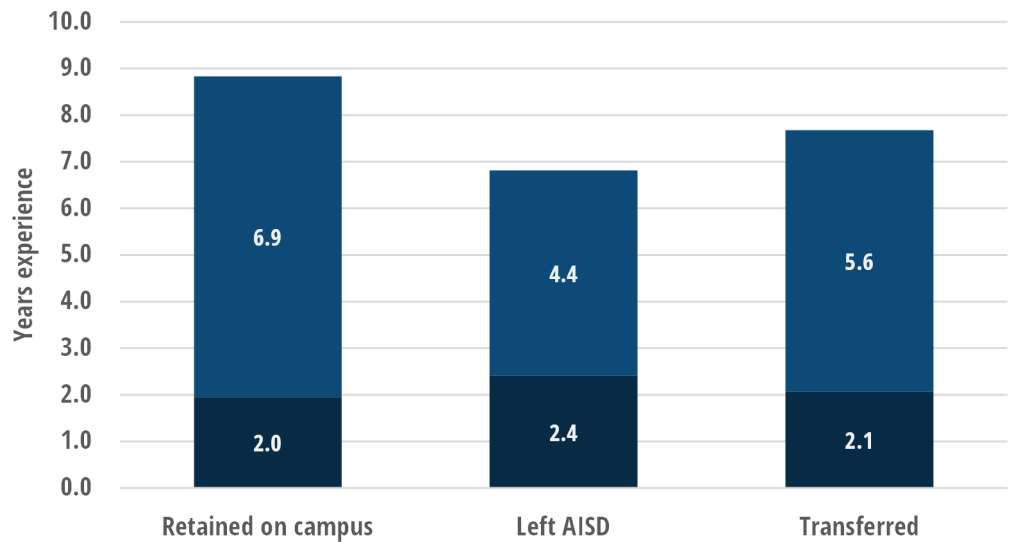
<sup>2</sup>For more information about the teachers included in this study, see Appendix A.



## Which teachers stayed, left, or changed schools in AISD?

Teachers who left AISD and those who transferred to another school in AISD looked similar to each other in many ways. Additionally, both groups differed on key characteristics from teachers who remained at their schools. For example, leavers and transfers had less teaching experience both overall and within AISD than did those who were retained (Figure 2).

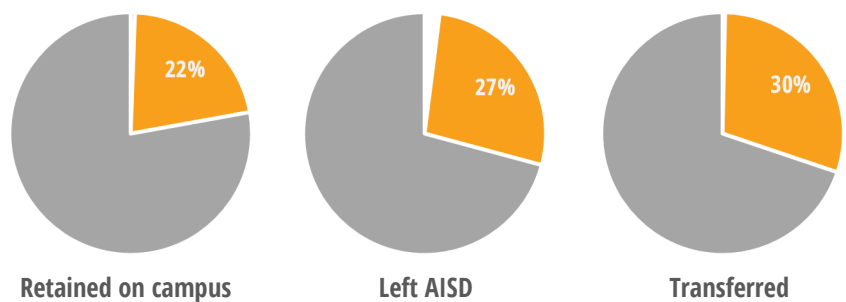
Figure 2. Teachers who left AISD after 2013–2014 had a little more **experience outside AISD** and less **experience inside AISD** than did those who remained at their schools or changed schools.



Source. PEIMS 40 records

Leavers and transfers also were slightly more likely to have been alternatively certified as teachers than were those who remained at their schools (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Teachers who left AISD or changed schools after 2013–2014 were a little more likely to have been **alternatively certified** than were those who remained at their schools.



Source. District HR records

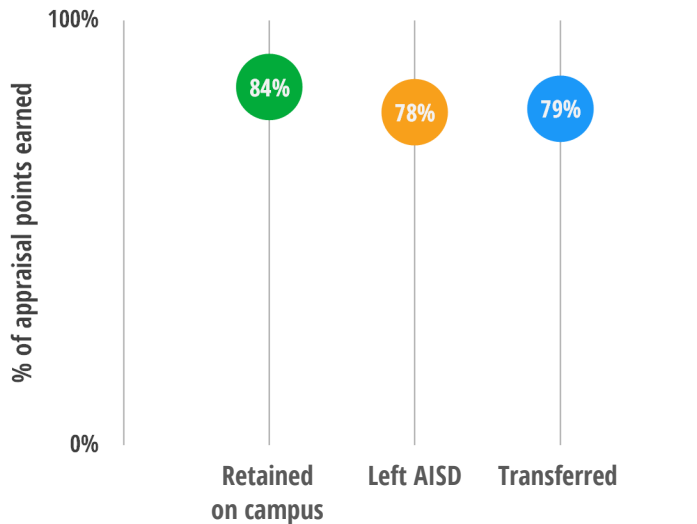
Note. White shading indicates teachers whose certification route was unknown.



## Leading Indicator: Appraisal Scores

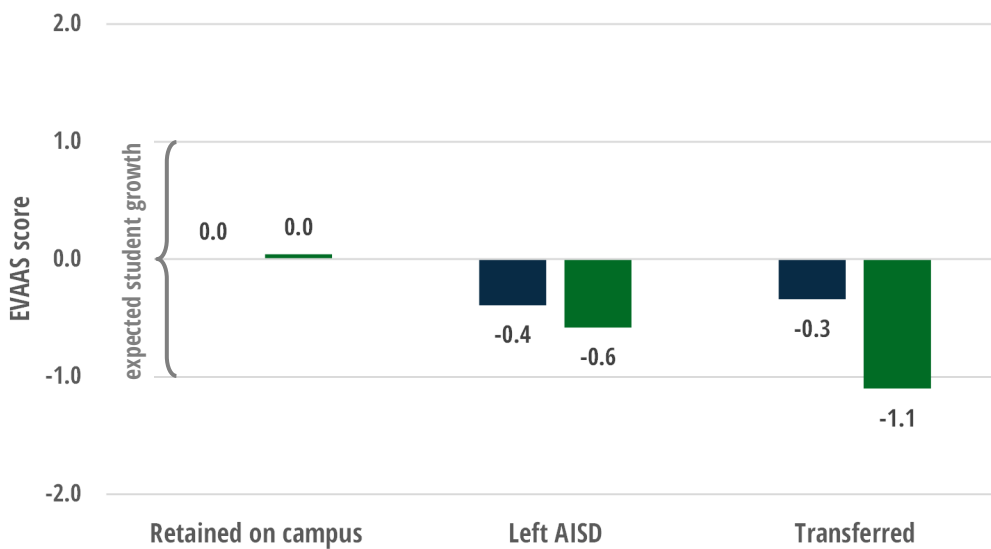
Additionally, the teachers who remained at their schools were somewhat more effective than were those who left the district or transferred to other AISD schools, according to teacher appraisal scores and teacher value-added growth scores (Figures 4 and 5, respectively).

Figure 4. Teachers who **left AISD** or **transferred** in AISD after 2013–2014 earned slightly lower appraisal scores in Spring 2014 than did those who **remained at their schools**.



Source. 2014 PDAS and AISD teacher appraisal results

Figure 5. Teachers who left AISD or changed schools after 2013–2014 received slightly lower student growth scores in **reading** and **math** than did those who remained at their schools.

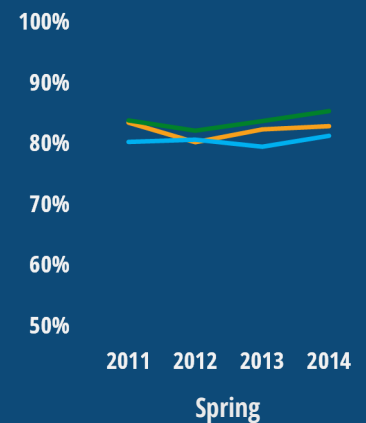


Source. 2014 EVAAS

Figure 4 shows **teachers who left AISD** or **transferred to other AISD schools** after 2013–2014 earned slightly lower appraisal scores in Spring 2014 than did those who **remained at their schools**.

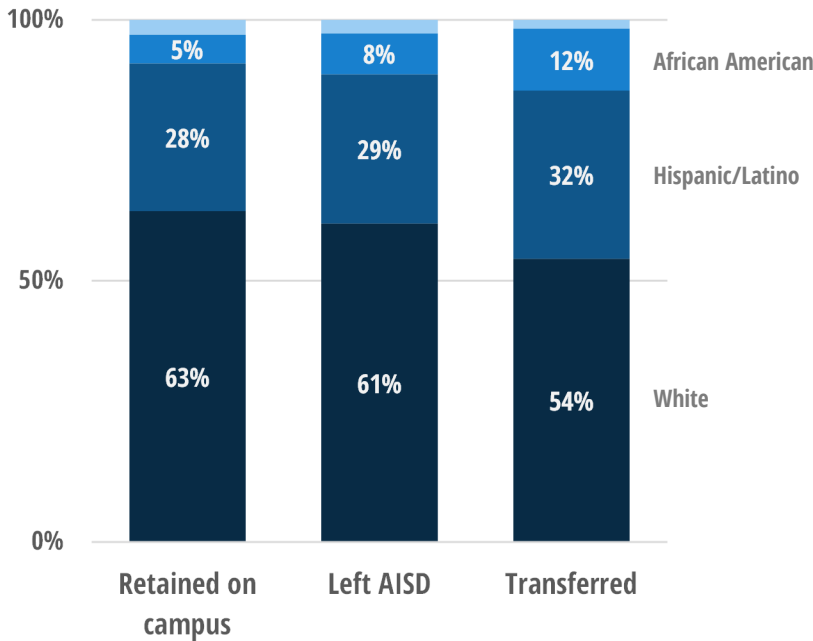
Longitudinal data for teachers who had been at their schools for at least 3 years suggest the pattern was evident up to 3 years before teachers who left decided to leave.

### Appraisal Points Earned



Not all characteristics differentiated leavers or transfers from teachers retained at their schools. For example, teachers who transferred were somewhat less likely than were those retained or leavers to have been White and were more likely to have been Hispanic or African American (Figure 6). The race/ethnicity distribution of leavers was similar to that of those who remained at their schools.

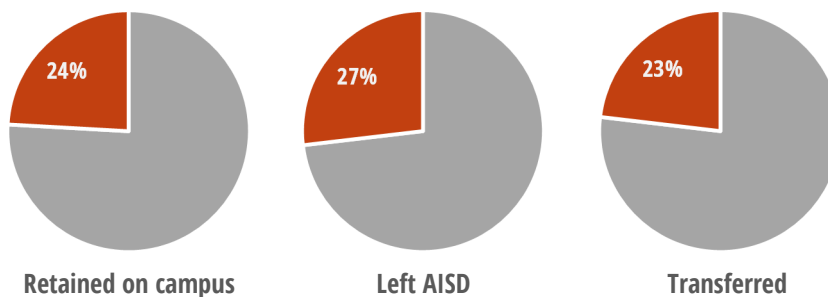
**Figure 6.**  
**The race/ethnicity of teachers who left AISD after 2013–2014 was similar to that of those who remained at their schools.**



Source. PEIMS 43 records

The gender distribution was similar for leavers, transfers, and teachers retained at their schools. However, the likelihood of being a male was slightly greater among leavers than among those retained or transferred (Figure 7). Thus, gender and race/ethnicity did not differ much for leavers and stayers, but experience, certification type, appraisal, and value-added scores did. However, these differences alone do not explain why certain teachers were more likely to leave their schools.

**Figure 7.**  
**Teachers who left AISD after 2013–2014 were slightly more likely to have been male than were those who remained at their schools or transferred in AISD.**



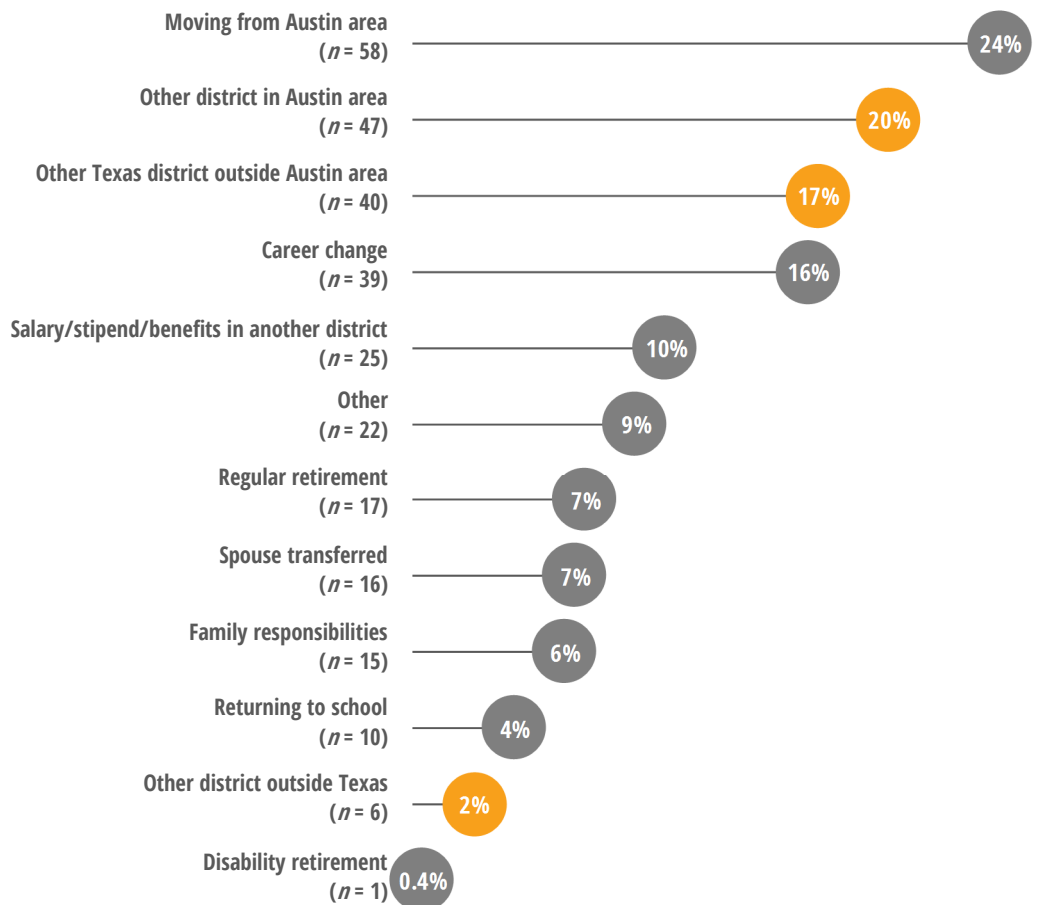
Source. PEIMS 40 records



## Why did teachers leave their schools?

To better understand teachers' reasons for leaving, AISD administered a voluntary online exit survey to all professional and administrative employees leaving the district. The survey asked 34 questions, including one about reasons for leaving (Figure 8). Of the AISD teacher leavers in the 2014–2015 school year, 183 responded to this item (28% response rate). Moving (24%) was the most common response; however, more than a third of teachers reported leaving to work in another district either in Austin, outside Austin but in Texas, or outside Texas. Results were similar to those for high-performing teachers in other urban districts.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 8.  
Approximately 39% of teacher leavers reported leaving to **work in another district**.



Source. AISD staff records; Human Resources Exit Survey for teachers with a last day of work between August 1, 2014 and July 31, 2015.

Note. Survey respondents could select multiple reasons for leaving; therefore, total responses sum to >100%.

Unfortunately, these responses did not provide much insight about teachers' true reasons for leaving. A small percentage of teachers reported leaving for family reasons (e.g., spouse transferred, family responsibilities) or for better compensation (e.g., salary/stipend/benefits in another district), but additional factors not addressed on the survey also likely contributed to their decision to leave.

<sup>5</sup> TNTP (2012). *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools*.

Previous research in AISD identified a few key factors not addressed on the Human Resources Exit Survey. In 2010, AISD commissioned a grant-funded study of teachers who had left the district or transferred to other AISD schools. Researchers interviewed 30 teachers who had left AISD and 30 who had transferred to another AISD school in 2008–2009. The two most common reasons teachers cited for leaving were lack of administrative support (26.7%) and lack of autonomy (16.7%). Teachers who left AISD described differences in management styles, lack of support with difficult discipline and classroom management issues, and perceived mistrust in teachers’ abilities and professional judgment. Teachers who chose to transfer often indicated they left due to the proximity of school to home (28.5%) or student discipline problems (23.8%). Overall, about one quarter of the participating teachers who left or transferred said they did not feel valued. Teachers suggested three strategies principals could have used to induce them to stay: (a) establish a more positive and supportive school atmosphere, (b) give teachers more responsibility, and (c) be more effective in enforcing discipline.

It is not surprising that teachers who left their schools were dissatisfied with certain aspects of their work environment. Educators have consistently noted the importance of working conditions, particularly a supportive school leadership and an atmosphere of trust and respect.<sup>4</sup> In fact, many studies over the last decade have established a relationship between working conditions and teacher retention.<sup>5</sup> Results from the AISD interview study and similar such studies are supported with survey responses collected on the annual AISD Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey. In general, survey data from 2013–2014 indicated slightly lower job satisfaction<sup>6</sup> among teachers who left AISD or changed schools than among teachers who remained at their schools. (Figure 9).

**Figure 9.** Teachers who left AISD or changed schools after 2013–2014 reported slightly lower job satisfaction in 2013–2014 than did those who remained at their schools.



Source. 2014 TELL AISD Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey

<sup>4</sup>Exstrom, M. (2009). What teachers need.

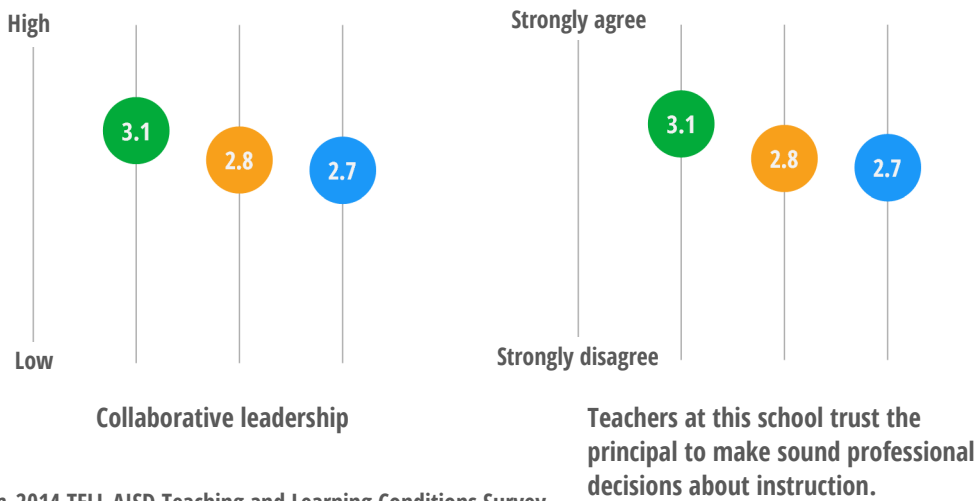
<sup>5</sup>Johnson, S., Kraft, M., & Papay, J. (2012). How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers’ working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students’ achievement.

<sup>6</sup>Job satisfaction items and items from other survey scales are listed in Appendix B.

## Leading Indicator: Attachment to School

A closer look at teachers' TELL survey responses suggests two key areas in which teachers who left AISD or changed schools differed from those who remained at their schools (Figure 10). Teachers who remained at their schools rated their school's collaborative leadership higher than did those who left their schools. These results are consistent with teachers' reports of frustration with administrators' support and an atmosphere of mistrust between principals and teachers as reasons for their departure.

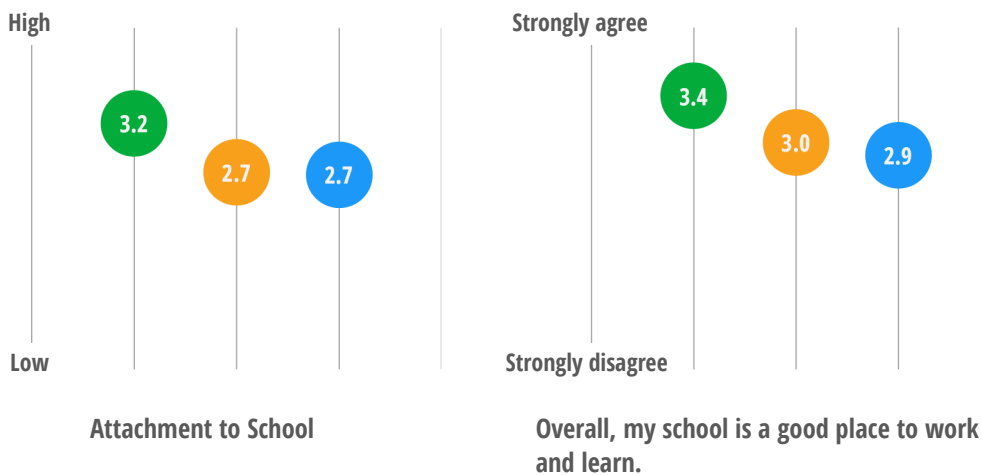
Figure 10. Teachers who left AISD or changed schools after 2013–2014 reported lower collaborative leadership at their schools and rated trust in their principals lower in 2013–2014 than did those who remained at their schools.



Source. 2014 TELL AISD Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey

Data also suggest teachers who left or transferred to other schools were less attached to their schools than those who stayed, and were less likely to agree their school was a good place to work and learn (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Teachers who left AISD or changed schools after 2013–2014 reported lower attachment to their schools and rated their school lower in 2013–2014 than did those who remained at their schools.

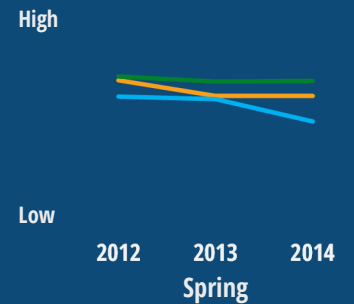


Source. 2014 TELL AISD Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey

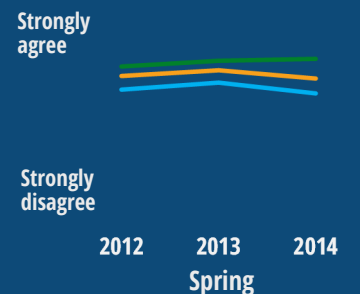
Figure 11 shows teachers who left AISD or changed AISD schools reported lower attachment to their schools and rated their schools lower than did those who remained at their schools after 2013–2014.

Data for teachers who had been at their schools for at least 3 years suggest the pattern was evident up to 3 years before teachers left or moved.

### Attachment to School

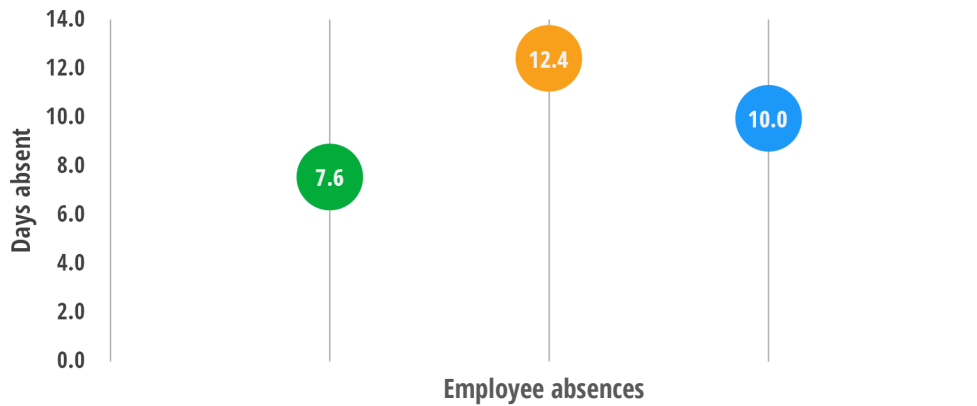


Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.



Not only did teachers who left or transferred differ from other teachers with respect to reported job satisfaction, attachment, and satisfaction with aspects of their working conditions, they also were more likely to be absent from work than were those who remained at their schools (Figure 12). At a cost of \$100 per day for a substitute teacher, each teacher leaver cost about \$500 more during the school year than did each teacher retained. Thus, the financial cost of turnover began well before teachers actually left.

Figure 12.  
Teachers who **left AISD** after 2013–2014 missed about 5 more days in 2013–2014 than did those who **remained at their schools**.



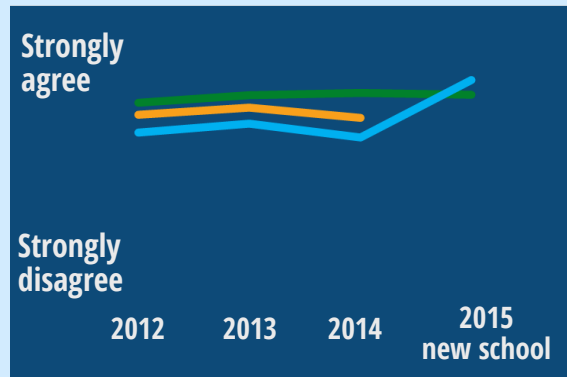
Source. District HR records

Of course, the cost of teacher turnover also includes the monetary aspects of recruiting, hiring, on-boarding, and induction. Additionally, teacher turnover affects the relationships between students and teachers and among campus faculty as a whole. Unfortunately, evidence suggests teacher turnover had a disproportionate impact on schools with certain characteristics. The following section describes the school factors most related to teacher turnover.

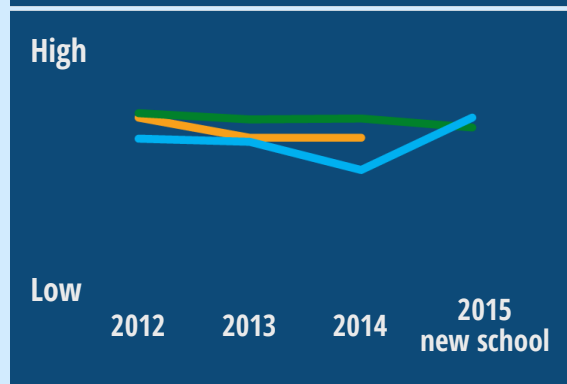
## When teachers transferred...

In a study of teachers who either left AISD or changed schools after 2008–2009, about half expressed having some initial doubts about their decision to leave. However, approximately 90% of teachers who chose to leave their school reported, in retrospect, that it was the right decision. Similarly, survey results for a subset of teachers who had been at their schools for at least 3 years before switching to other AISD schools suggest teachers who transferred were more satisfied in the spring of the following school year and were less likely to miss work in the school year after they made a change. Their appraisal scores also slightly improved.

Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.



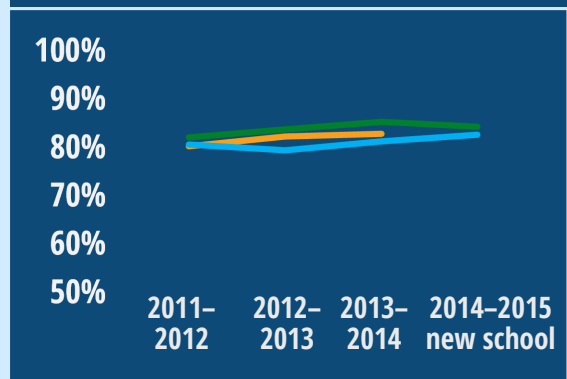
Attachment to school



Days absent



Appraisal scores

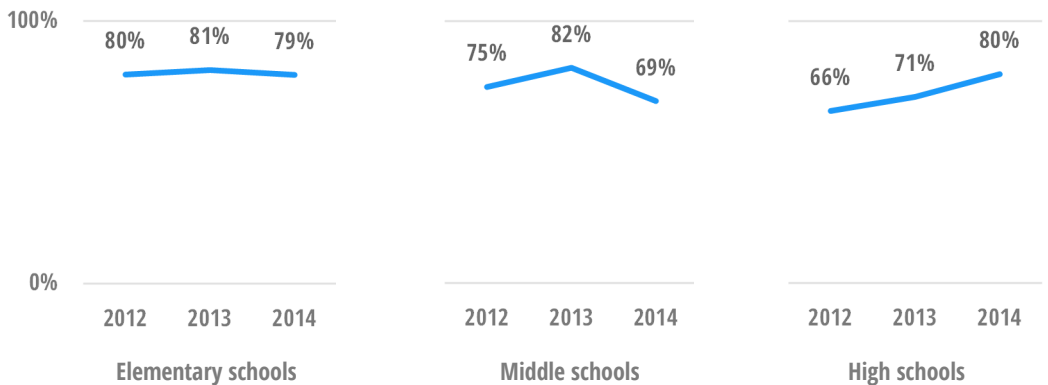




## What characterizes the schools teachers left?

In AISD, school level teacher retention rates can vary a great deal. Between 2012 and 2014, the average school teacher retention rate ranged from 76% to 80%. However, the range in actual school level teacher retention rates during that time was 0% to 100%. Some of the variation in teacher retention rates in AISD can be explained by school characteristics. For example, teacher retention rates varied by school grade level. From 2012–2014, elementary schools tended to have higher retention rates than secondary schools, and middle school retention rates were more volatile (Figure 13).

**Figure 13.**  
**Teacher retention rates for high schools have improved since 2012.**  
**Rates for middle schools declined in 2014.**



*Source.* District HR records

In addition to school grade level, many school demographic and working conditions factors influenced teacher retention rates in AISD. Figure 14 displays factors found to be related to teacher attrition rates in AISD.

**Figure 14.**  
**Schools with lower teacher retention differed from those with higher teacher retention in important ways.**

### Schools with **lower** teacher retention rates had...

#### Different school characteristics

- Higher % economically disadvantaged students
- Shorter principal tenure at school
- Lower average teacher experience
- Shorter average teacher tenure at school
- Higher % novice teachers
- Lower TAKS/STAAR performance
- Higher total discipline rate



#### Different teaching and learning conditions

- Less collaborative leadership
- Less community support and engagement
- Less favorable general school climate
- Less desirable management of student conduct
- Lower achievement press

*Sources.* District HR records; District TAKS/STAAR records; PEIMS; TELL AISD Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey (2012-2014)

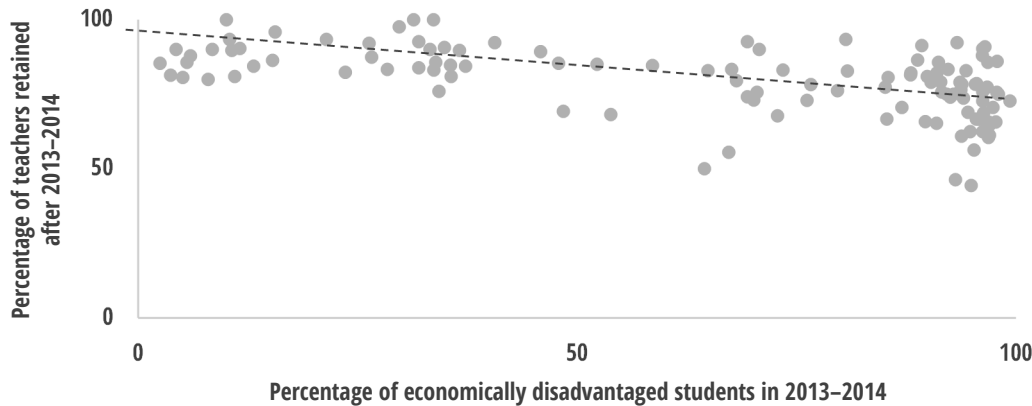
*Note.* Variables were included in this list when (a) they were correlated with school retention rate for at least 2 years between 2012 and 2014, and (b) when the relationship was significant after controlling for school-level economic disadvantage.



## School Poverty and Teacher Retention Rates

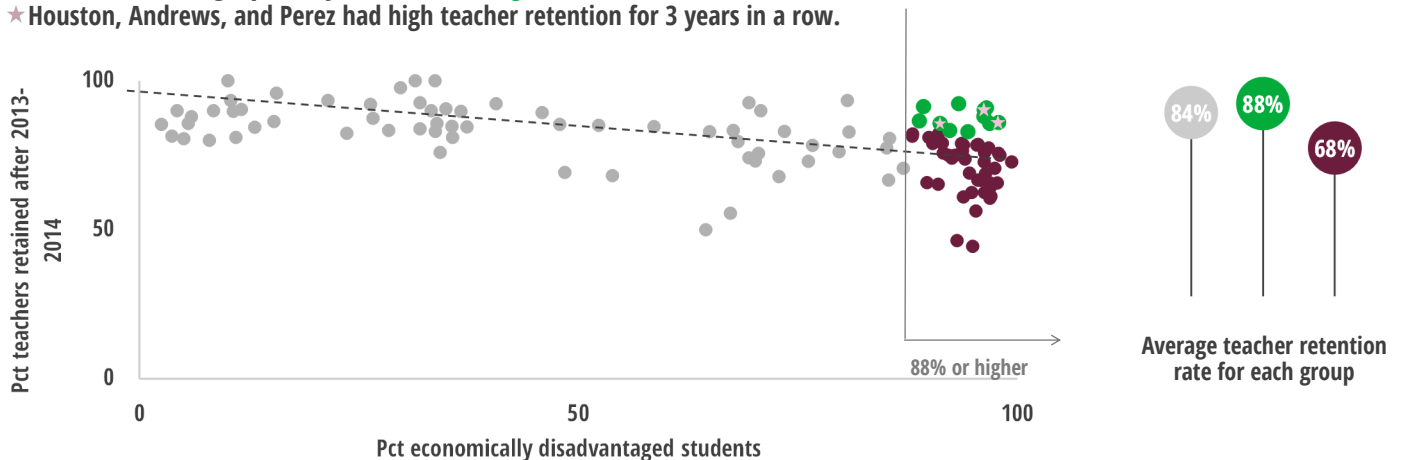
In general, AISD schools that served more economically disadvantaged students retained fewer teachers than did schools serving fewer economically disadvantaged students (Figure 15). However, some schools with a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students also had high teacher retention rates.

Figure 15.  
School economic disadvantage is one of the strongest predictors of school-level retention rate.



As shown in Figure 16, the relationship between poverty and teacher retention rates was fairly consistent for schools with fewer than 88% economically disadvantaged students. The average teacher retention rate for the lower-poverty group of schools was 84%. However, for schools with more than 88% economically disadvantaged students, the relationship between school poverty and teacher retention was less consistent. Most high-poverty schools followed the expected trend (shown in purple). The average teacher retention rate for these high-poverty schools was 68%. However, some high-poverty schools also had very high retention rates (shown in green). The average teacher retention rate for these schools after 2013–2014 was 88%.

Figure 16.  
Most high-poverty schools had **lower teacher retention** than did lower-poverty schools. However, some high-poverty schools had **high teacher retention**.  
★ Houston, Andrews, and Perez had high teacher retention for 3 years in a row.



Source. PEIMS 110 records

Note. The schools with over 88% economically disadvantaged students and high teacher retention after 2013–2014 were: Houston, Andrews, Perez, Blackshear, International, Zavala, Allison, Dawson, Govalle, Langford, and Graham.

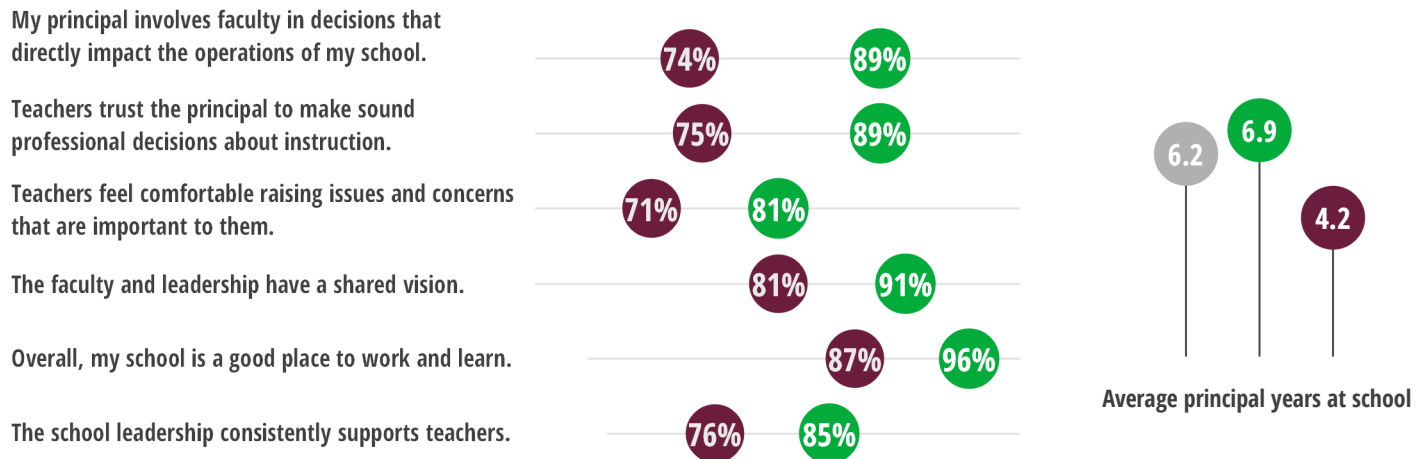
## School Leadership and Teacher Retention Rates

Some important school leadership differences were found between high-poverty schools with low retention and those with high retention. The higher teacher retention schools had principals with longer tenure; principals had been in these schools for an average of about 7 years, compared with 4 in the schools with lower teacher retention. This difference is consistent with national trends<sup>7</sup>. Not surprisingly, many studies have found schools with poor cultures and working conditions drive away great teachers, and principals are a key component of the school environment.<sup>8</sup> In fact, one recent study found the apparent relationship between student demographics and teacher turnover was not driven by teachers' responses to their students, but rather by the working conditions in their schools. The most critical of these factors were collegial relationships, the principal's leadership, and a school culture of respect and commitment to achievement.<sup>9</sup> Results in AISD support these findings.

Using AISD working conditions survey data, we observed large differences in the TELL survey results for high-poverty/high-retention and high-poverty/low-retention schools, particularly for items related to school leadership (Figure 17).

Figure 17.

**High-poverty/high-retention schools** differed from **high-poverty/low-retention schools** on measures of school leadership in 2013–2014.



Source. 2014 TELL AISD Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey

Note. Percentage of staff who agreed/strongly agreed.

Thus, the critical working conditions identified elsewhere also distinguished the high-poverty AISD schools with high and low turnover. Some schools simply had better environments, and retention rates reflected these conditions. However, even schools where most teachers reported favorable working conditions experienced some teacher turnover. The following section examines the importance of fit between teachers and their schools.

<sup>7</sup>Hull, J. (2012, April). The principal perspective.

<sup>8</sup>TNTP (2012). The Irreplaceables: Understanding the real retention crisis in America's urban schools.

<sup>9</sup>Johnson, S., Kraft, M., & Papay, J. (2012). How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement.

## How can we describe the fit between teachers and schools?

Although teacher turnover was higher at schools with certain characteristics, some teachers still chose to leave even the schools with the most seemingly desirable qualities (Figure 18). Thus, we wanted to examine factors that distinguished teachers who chose to leave a school, regardless of school characteristics.

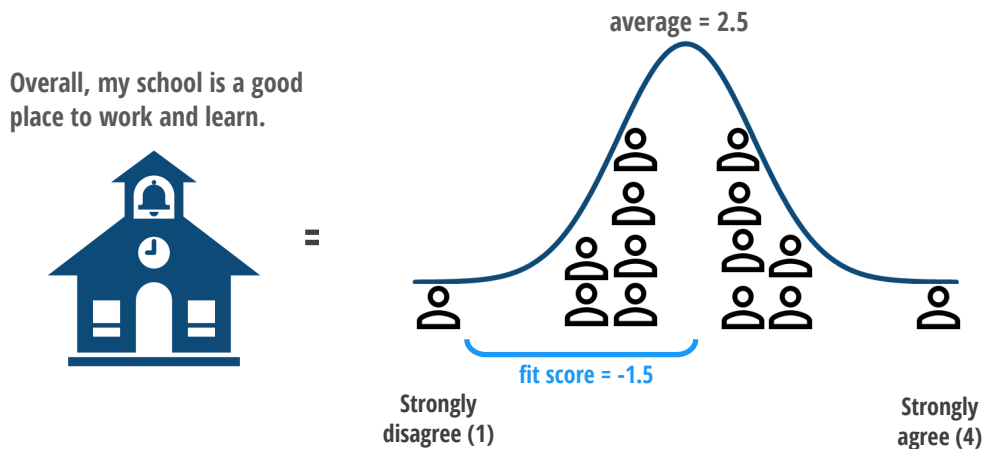
Figure 18.  
Some teachers still **chose to leave** even the schools that had **high teacher retention**.



A recent study of celebrated high-quality teachers found working in a school with a philosophy they believed in and/or colleagues they respected was a critical factor in their decision to remain in teaching up to that point.<sup>10</sup> As another study noted, although teachers' ratings generally reflect those of their peers, ratings vary substantially across teachers in the same school.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, we examined the extent of the match (or mismatch) between teachers' individual ratings of their school and the average ratings all teachers provided about the same school.

Using TELL survey responses for teachers who had been at their schools at least 3 years, we found two key factors that identified teachers who ultimately left the district or changed schools. The opinions of some teachers simply did not fit with the opinions of other teachers at their school (Figure 19).

Figure 19.  
"Fit" can be measured as the difference between an individual and the average for all teachers at the same school.

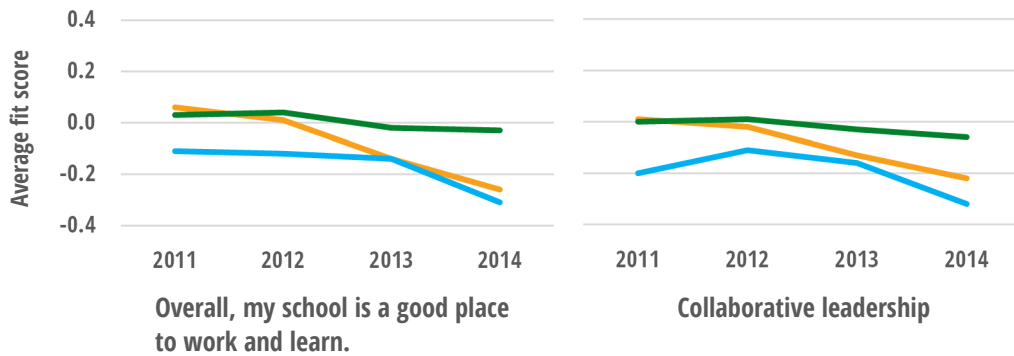


<sup>10</sup>TNTP (2013). Perspectives of irreplaceable teachers: What America's best teachers think about teaching.

<sup>11</sup>Johnson, S., Kraft, M., & Papay, J. (2012). How context matters in high-need schools: the effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement.

Figure 20 describes the fit, or differential, between the school average and the ratings provided by teachers who remained, left AISD, or transferred to other AISD schools after Spring 2014. Teachers who left AISD began providing lower ratings than their schools' average ratings (i.e., less than a difference of 0) for collaborative leadership items and the item "Overall, my school is a good place to work" up to 3 years prior to leaving. Teachers who transferred in AISD had provided lower-than-average ratings of their schools all 4 years prior to leaving. Thus, it is apparent from TELL survey results these teachers had not fit the school environment for quite some time.

Figure 20.  
**Teachers who left AISD or changed schools provided lower-than-average ratings overall and for collaborative leadership than did teachers retained at the school after Spring 2014.**



Source. 2012–2014 TELL AISD Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey



## What do we know about teachers who left AISD, and what else do we need to know about teachers who might leave?

After the 2013-2014 school year, 23% of AISD teachers left the district, transferred, or changed jobs in AISD. After excluding the teachers who were eligible for retirement, results from this study showed teachers who left had a little more experience outside AISD and less experience inside AISD than did those who remained at their schools or changed schools. Additionally, they were more likely to have been alternatively certified and were somewhat less effective than those who remained at their schools. Teachers who left were similar to those who transferred to other AISD schools.

Building upon previous AISD research and other studies suggesting the critical role of working conditions, this study examined teacher survey responses to identify key characteristics that distinguished teachers who left, transferred, or remained at their schools. Results showed teachers who remained at their schools rated their school's collaborative leadership higher than did those who left their schools, were less attached to their schools, and were less likely to agree their school was a good place to work and learn. Importantly, data for teachers who had been at their schools for at least 3 years indicate this pattern was evident up to 3 years before teachers left or moved. Their dissatisfaction was evident through more frequent absences, suggesting the cost of turnover began well before teachers actually left.

In general, AISD schools serving more economically disadvantaged students (i.e., high-poverty schools) retained fewer teachers than did other schools. However, some high-poverty schools also had very high retention rates. These high-poverty/high-retention schools differed from high-poverty/low-retention schools on measures of school leadership, providing further evidence supporting the critical role of school leadership. However, some teachers still chose to leave even schools with seemingly the most desirable qualities. Results highlight the importance of the fit between teachers and their school environment. Teachers who left their schools began providing lower ratings than their schools' average ratings for collaborative leadership items and the item "Overall, my school is a good place to work" three years or more prior to leaving.

To better understand the importance of the match between teachers and schools, it would be useful to know what information teachers and hiring administrators consider during the recruitment and interview process. What information is available to teachers before deciding to accept a position? Are some potential fit characteristics more crucial than others? Data from this study suggest teachers who transferred reported more satisfaction with and attachment to their schools, and were absent less in the year following a transfer. Follow-up studies should examine whether teacher transfers remain satisfied beyond the first year at a new location. Future research also should address the potential similarities and differences with respect to why teachers leave a particular school and why they choose a new location. The evidence is clear that working conditions, particularly school leadership, are critical to teacher retention. However, much is left to discover about the importance of finding a good fit. Future studies should examine the factors related to fit, particularly for high quality teachers.

## Appendix

### Appendix A. Description of Teachers Included in This Study

Teacher Group	<i>n</i>	% of AISD teachers
All AISD teachers, 2013–2014	6,090	100.0%
Teachers assigned to only one school location in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 (i.e., teachers with only one possible retention status)	5,757	94.5%
Teachers not eligible for retirement	4,958	81.4%

*Source.* PEIMS data submission to the Texas Education Agency

*Note.* Data include employees coded as teachers in Fall 2013 with role ID code = 087.

Retention rates in Figure 1 were computed using teachers assigned to only one school location in both years. Remaining analyses were conducted with the subset of those teachers who were not eligible for retirement according to their years of experience and age.

### Appendix B. Survey Items Included in This Study

Survey item	Response options
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	
How satisfied are you with your...	very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, unsure/NA
salary?	
ability to influence the school's policies and practices?	
amount of autonomy and control over your classroom?	
opportunities for collaboration with other teachers?	
opportunities for professional advancement (promotion) offered to teachers at this school?	
opportunity to make a difference and contribute to the overall success of your school?	
school's system for rewarding and recognizing outstanding teachers?	
<b>Collaborative leadership</b>	
The school leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about...	strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know
general school climate.	
instructional practices and support.	
school leadership.	
teacher leadership.	
the use of time in my school.	
(continued)	

*Source.* Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) AISD survey

Appendix B.

Survey items included in this study (continued)

Survey item	Response options
<b>Collaborative leadership (continued)</b>	
In this school we take steps to solve problems.	strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know
Teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles.	
Teachers are recognized as educational experts.	
Teachers are relied upon to make decisions about instruction.	
Teachers have an appropriate level of influence on decision making in this school.	
The faculty has an effective process for making group decisions to solve problems.	
School leadership effectively communicates policy.	
Teacher performance is assessed objectively.	
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	
Teachers receive feedback that can help them improve teaching.	
The faculty and leadership have a shared vision.	
The faculty are recognized for accomplishments.	
The procedures for teacher evaluation are consistent.	
The school leadership consistently supports teachers.	
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.	
<b>Attachment to school</b>	strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know
I feel very little loyalty to my school.	
I find my values and the values of my school are very similar.	
I feel connected to my school.	
I would like to remain at this school for as long as possible.	
I have thought seriously about leaving my school.	
I would prefer a teaching job other than the one I now have.	
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know
Teachers at this school trust the principal to make sound professional decisions about instruction.	

Source. Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) AISD survey

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