



The key findings include:

- Teacher mobility rates at schools with low teacher commitment are abysmal—67 percent in elementary schools leave within five years, and 76 percent turn over in the high schools. These are schools where teachers do not feel loyal to their schools, would not recommend their school to parents, and do not look forward to teaching every day.
- In the schools with the best workplace conditions, teacher turnover averages about 10 percent each year.
- Many of the teachers who leave their school each year go to other CPS schools; however, the percentage of teachers remaining in CPS has declined in recent years.
- Teachers of all races are most likely to leave predominantly African-American schools than mixed-minority, predominantly Latino or integrated schools -- although white and Latino teachers leave these schools at slightly higher rates. Systemwide, the mobility rates of white teachers have been increasing in recent years.
- In elementary schools, teachers' perceptions of parents as partners in students' education are strongly tied to stability; in high schools, teachers tend to leave schools with the highest rates of student misbehavior.
- First-year teachers are far more likely to leave their CPS schools after one year, especially in elementary schools, than their more experienced colleagues -- 33 percent of new teachers leave in one year, compared to 18 percent among those teaching two years or more. These one-year retention rates did not improve during the five years analyzed.
- Small schools have higher mobility than large schools, even when controlling for enrollment declines.
- Teachers are more likely to stay in schools where they shared with their colleagues a strong sense of collective responsibility and innovation, and in schools where they trust their principals and view them as strong instructional leaders.

While the average CPS school does not lose many more teachers each year than the typical school in Illinois or across the nation, these losses add up over time and create obstacles for sustaining new initiatives and staff training, the study reveals. Moreover, the vast differences in teacher mobility across schools perpetuate inequities in hard-to-staff schools. High turnover forces principals to constantly devote vast amounts of time and energy for recruiting, hiring and mentoring staff – and this diverts attention from other vital school improvements.

“Many schools are likely stuck in a cycle of teacher loss that is hard to break – teachers leave because of poor school climate and low achievement, but these are hard to improve when there is a constant turnover of teachers each year,” the authors wrote.

Founded in 1990, the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago conducts research of high technical quality that influences policy and practice in Chicago and nationwide.