

MNSPIRE TEACHER SURVEY: SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared for the Professional Educator Licensing Standards Board (PELSB)

June 2022





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Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the individuals who provided their feedback for the MNSPIRE survey.

Your responses helped provide insight into understanding how various aspects of the teaching career impact teacher retention and attrition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GOALS OF THE SURVEY

The Minnesota Survey of Preparation, Insight, and Retention (MNSPIRE) provided teachers with the opportunity to contribute feedback and gain insight from licensed teachers in Minnesota. Funded by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), the state agency that oversees new and renewing teacher licenses in Minnesota, MNSPIRE was the first comprehensive survey of licensed teachers in the state. The MNSPIRE survey specifically measured both preparation and retention, with the goal of developing a better understanding of how various aspects of the teaching career impact teacher retention and attrition.

METHODS

PELSB and ACET worked together to draft the MNSPIRE survey tool, focusing on teacher preparation and retention and utilized the total population of current licensed teachers in Minnesota. This gave all individuals in the licensure database the opportunity to participate in the survey and provide their input. The licensure database included a list of 109,615 unduplicated individuals with a current active teaching license in Minnesota. Of the 109,615 licensed teachers, 115 email addresses were either missing or invalid, bringing the total number of survey invitations sent to 109,500. At the close of the survey, 15,766 surveys were submitted, for a response rate of **14% (15,766 out of 109,615)**. ACET completed both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the survey data; cleaning, coding, and weighting the quantitative data, and employing a thematic analysis approach for the qualitative data. Detailed findings are presented below, starting on page 10.

KEY FINDINGS

- The majority of respondents (**62%**) reported that they had been teaching for 10 or more years. The majority also identified as women (**78%**) and reported their race as white (**85%**); **40%** of respondents were between the ages of 45-64.
- **Preparation:** The preparation section of the survey focused on teacher preparation programs. Of those that completed a teacher preparation program (13,974 respondents), nearly all of them completed a program through a college or university (**99%**; **13,769 out of 13,956**) for their original license.
- Nearly all respondents (**91%**) agreed that the programs prepared them to develop effective lesson plans and engage students in content, but did not prepare them as much to work with racially and ethnically diverse students, students with special needs, and multilingual learners.
- **Retention:** The second section of the survey focused on teacher retention and whether licensed teachers are currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota. **73%** of respondents currently teach in a traditional public school or charter school in Minnesota; of those, more than half are teaching in a traditional public school. The top choice for what keeps respondents in the teaching profession was students (**76%**; **7,987 out of 10,535**), including positive interactions with students, engaged students, and classroom size.

- Of those who are currently working in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota, **81%** of respondents plan to continue teaching, with **90%** of those respondents (**7,628 out of 8,453**) planning to continue teaching at their current school.
- **25%** of respondents who are not currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota reported that they changed their careers. **50%** of respondents continue to work in an educational capacity, indicating that they work in a private school or as a teacher in a different state, as an administrator, or in education policy.
- **30%** of respondents reported school climate as one of the top reasons they left the teaching career, followed by **16%** choosing the lack of academic freedom, economic reasons, and standardized testing as a reason for leaving.
- Of the 15,766 survey respondents, 957 responded to the question: “*What do you think would help with teacher retention?*” The top themes included reducing teacher burden, increasing pay and benefits, examining administrative and system changes, improving charter school structures, and COVID-19 concerns. Across the five themes, pay was the top coded response, followed by hours, and administration. Five of the top seven categories fell under the category of reducing teacher burden to increase retention of teachers. Detailed findings for this question are presented below, starting on page 25.

INTRODUCTION

GOALS OF THE SURVEY

The Minnesota Survey of Preparation, Insight, and Retention (MNSPIRE) was the first comprehensive survey of licensed teachers in Minnesota, developed in collaboration between the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) and ACET, Inc. The MNSPIRE survey was a voluntary, confidential online survey that offered every teacher in Minnesota with an unexpired teaching license the opportunity to provide valuable data and insight to help shape policy and practice with the hope of retaining committed and effective teachers throughout the state. Additionally, as stated by PELSB, “[We have] sought to be reflective about [our] duty to increase equity and access to educator preparation and high standards in Minnesota.”¹ Additionally, the survey was designed with the goal of developing a better understanding of how the following impact teacher retention and attrition: students, parents, administrators, colleagues, economic reasons, professional development opportunities, academic freedom, leadership opportunities, school climate, standardized testing, and administrative support.



ABOUT PELSB

¹ Retrieved from: [We Must, We Will PELSB Statement Regarding Racial Justice](#).

PELSB is the state agency that oversees new and renewing teacher licenses in Minnesota with the mission of “[e]nsuring all Minnesota students have high quality educators in their schools.”² Further, PELSB’s vision is to “ensure equitable education practices through high licensure standards, quality educator preparation programs, and stakeholder engagement.”³ In addition, the Board is responsible for collecting and reporting data on the number of licensed teachers in the state and also approving teacher preparation licensure programs in Minnesota, “designed for preparing candidates for their initial professional license (Tier 3 or Tier 4).”⁴

SCOPE OF WORK

The MNSPIRE survey specifically measures both preparation and retention, asking respondents whether they completed a teacher preparation program and whether they are currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota. In addition, they were asked what challenges they currently face, or faced, in the classroom that may affect teacher retention and also their opinion on how to improve teacher retention. Demographic information was requested to use these indicators as measures of comparison in future years.

Preparation	
Did respondents complete a teacher preparation program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, what type of program was completed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Did the preparation program prepare respondents for the classroom?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no, are respondents currently enrolled in a preparation program?
Retention	
Are respondents currently teaching in a public or charter school in Minnesota?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If yes, what region of the state are respondents currently teaching? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What keeps them in the classroom? ○ What challenges do they face that could lead them to leave the teaching profession? ○ What are their immediate professional plans?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no, why are respondents not currently teaching in a public or charter school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What issues influenced them to leave teaching in a public or charter school? ○ Do they plan to return to teaching?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think would help with teacher retention?

METHODS

² Retrieved from: [PELSB Board About Page](#).

³ Retrieved from: [PELSB Board About Page](#).

⁴ Retrieved from: [Approved Preparation Programs in Minnesota](#).

In order to ensure that the MNSPIRE survey results can be used to inform policy-makers and other stakeholders about both the preparation and retention of licensed teachers in Minnesota, the survey was drafted with previous research in mind. This previous research includes the biannual Minnesota supply and demand of teachers, teacher preparation provider summary data, and the Educators of Color Recruitment and Retention Survey. ACET also reviewed educator surveys conducted in other states. These surveys included: The 5Essentials System from UChicago Impact, the Launch Michigan educator survey, Georgia Department of Education survey, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Oregon survey, and the Wisconsin Educator Development Support and Retention (WEDSR) survey. Reviewing the mentioned educator surveys in addition to previous research in Minnesota helped provide a starting point for drafting the MNSPIRE survey by providing insight into what might be helpful information to gather from licensed teachers in Minnesota.

Using the background information and previous research, PELSB and ACET worked together to draft the MNSPIRE survey tool, focusing on teacher preparation and retention through planning meetings and utilizing a previous PELSB sample survey. As part of the development of the survey tool, ACET created a dedicated website for the MNSPIRE survey. The website served to provide information about the survey, FAQ, how to take the survey, and future survey results.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The decision to use the census population of licensed current teachers in Minnesota rather than utilizing a sampling strategy was made in collaboration between PELSB and ACET. Considering the “completeness” of the database, sampling was not necessary in this instance. Using a census strategy allows all people in the licensure database to get the opportunity to participate in the survey and provide their input. While sampling plans can be beneficial when trying to account for various items important to a research study (such as targeting specific populations or areas of need), because ACET had access to the full database of current licensed teachers, this eliminated the need to utilize a sampling plan and avoided teachers feeling left out of the process if they were not selected to provide feedback. Additionally, the statistical confidence of the survey responses was increased due to the high number of responses ($n=15,766$). Because of the decision to employ the census method, the inclusion criteria to complete the survey was determined to be anyone who held an unexpired Minnesota teaching license at the time of survey dissemination.

TEACHER DATABASE FREQUENCIES

In order to disseminate the survey invitation to an unduplicated list of current licensed teachers in Minnesota, as of October 2021, ACET used a database of active teacher licenses provided by PELSB. The database contained duplicate entries for some teachers with multiple licenses. After removing duplicate and invalid entries, ACET finalized a list of 109,615 unduplicated individuals with a current active teaching license through SPSS, a statistical software platform.⁵ Frequency variables included gender, race, licensure area, license type, license scope, grade level, and

⁵ This value represents the number of unduplicated individuals, *not* the number of active licenses, as individuals can hold multiple licenses.

whether their license was current. Following this, each individual was assigned a randomized individual ID number. An email list was then created from the email addresses in the provided database and prepared for survey invitation dissemination.

SURVEY DISSEMINATION

All individuals who hold an unexpired Minnesota teaching license received an email invitation to complete the MNSPIRE survey. Upon completion of the survey, respondents received a certificate for two clock hours towards license renewal. In Minnesota, clock hours are defined as “an hour of actual instruction, or planned group or individual professional development activity as approved by the local continuing education/relicensure committee.”⁶ The period for earning clock hours includes the following: “An applicant requesting renewal of a license to teach must earn a minimum of 75 clock hours during each three-year period preceding application for a Tier 3 licensure renewal and 125 clock hours during each five-year period preceding application for a Tier 4 licensure renewal.”⁷



In order to verify that only individuals with an unexpired teaching license completed the survey, individuals were asked to enter an individualized ID number that was sent to them in the survey invitation. Respondents were informed that only survey responses would be shared with PELSB, though ID numbers and individual identifiers would be removed. Additionally, survey questions did not inquire about specific subject areas, grade levels, or ask them to identify their position, school, or district.

Survey invitations were sent via email and the survey opened for responses beginning on December 10, 2021, and closed on January 21, 2022. Using Zoho Campaigns, an email service provider to help send bulk emails, 105,014 survey invitations were delivered on December 10, 2021. Reminder emails were sent on December 21, 2021 by ACET and January 7, 2022 by PELSB. Respondent data is presented below starting on page 7.

DATA ANALYSIS

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: WEIGHTING THE SURVEY DATA

Following data collection, the process of weighting the data began by cleaning and coding the survey response data in SPSS and choosing a variable to compare against the teacher database values. ACET used a process of elimination to evaluate which variable would work best to produce the most complete weighted dataset to use for analysis. Weighting the data produces reliable estimates of population parameters. Weighting also compensates for practical limitations of a sample survey, such as differential nonresponse and under-coverage. By taking advantage of demographic information about the target population, weighting can reduce the variability of survey estimates.

⁶ Retrieved from: [Minnesota Legislature - Minnesota Administrative Rules.](#)

⁷ Retrieved from: [Minnesota Legislature - Minnesota Administrative Rules.](#)

In order to complete the weighting of the data based on the age variable, ages 18-21 were grouped with the ages 22-34 category due to a low count. The teacher database ages were grouped to match the survey data age groupings by using individual birthdates.⁸ Missing and undisclosed ages in the survey data were imputed for weighting purposes, utilizing the relation between existing ages and the years-as-a-teacher variable for 50 iterations. In order to do this, multiple imputation, a missing value analysis (MVA), was used to impute missing data values with plausible estimates in order to weight the dataset.⁹ The specific multiple imputation option that was utilized was predictive mean matching (PMM) to help ensure that the imputed values were plausible.¹⁰ The survey data was then weighted in SPSS to be representative of the teacher database frequencies. As detailed by IBM, the WEIGHT command “gives cases different weights for statistical analysis.”¹¹ Additionally, weighting data helps “make sure that the sample of data [we] have for analysis reflects the population from which it was drawn. If the sample of data is not representative of the larger population, the ability to make inferences about the population based on analysis of the sample data is reduced.”¹²

The age variable was used for weighting because weighting other variables was not possible. For example, the race options presented in the survey and the teacher database race options did not align and were not easily categorized to match and therefore did not allow for weighing based on race (this was similar for the gender question as well).¹³

When looking at the breakdown of respondent tiers versus the teacher database, we noticed that Tier 1 teachers were greatly oversampled. Tier 1's made up around 15% of the respondents while only accounting for ~.5% of the teacher population. Because the tiered system was created in 2018, our assumption is that there was confusion responding to this question, and thus this was not a reliable variable to use. Additionally, the original teacher data file had duplicate rows for individuals if they had more than one license area. These duplicate license rows were pared down to the file with 109,500 unique individuals (*not* license areas). ACET looked to weight the data using the licensure areas, but the options in the survey did not align with those in the teacher database.

Responses

⁸ Age categories for the survey used for weighting were: 18-34, 35-44, 45-64, and 65 and older. For the teacher database birthdates, four were removed from the weighting process due to invalid birthdates, therefore 109,611 unduplicated individuals were used for weighting.

⁹ Retrieved from: [IBM SPSS Statistics - Multiple Imputation](#).

¹⁰ Retrieved from: [IBM SPSS Statistics - Method \(Multiple Imputation\)](#).

¹¹ Retrieved from: [IBM SPSS Statistics - Overview \(WEIGHT command\)](#).

¹² Retrieved from: [SAGE Guide for Weighting in SPSS](#).

¹³ Race options in the teacher database included the following: American Indian/Alaskan Native; Asian; Black; Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; Hispanic; Multi-race; Unknown; and White. Race categories for the MNSPIRE survey are presented on page 8 of this report. Gender options in the teacher database included the following: Female; Male; and Undeclared. Gender categories for the MNSPIRE survey are presented on page 7 of this report.

SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

Survey invitations sent on 12/10/21	109,500 ¹⁴
Delivered survey invitations on 12/10/21	105,014
Submitted surveys	15,766
Response rate (submitted/sent)	14%

	Number of responses n=14,458	Percent of responses
HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS SURVEY?		
Email invitation	13,495	93%
Heard about it from an organization that I'm a member of	295	2%
Word-of-mouth (colleague to colleague)	436	3%
MNSPIRE website	121	1%
PELSB website	112	1%

	Responses
SURVEY RESPONSES USED FOR WEIGHTING	
Total number of submitted responses	15,766 ¹⁵
Number of excluded responses	1,199
<i>Number of blank responses</i>	695
<i>Number of responses with no demographics</i>	484
<i>Number of responses with demographics but no age</i>	20
Total number of responses used for weighting	14,567

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

¹⁴ Of the 109,615 licensed teachers, 115 email addresses were either missing or invalid, bringing the total number of survey invitations sent on December 10, 2021 to 109,500. Of the 109,500 sent, 105,014 were delivered (4,482 invitations bounced and 4 of the invitations were to survey administrators at ACET). Of the 105,014 invitations that were delivered, 16,447 were opened for a unique open rate of 16%.

¹⁵ There may be a small number of duplicate respondents, but we suspect this number to be small.

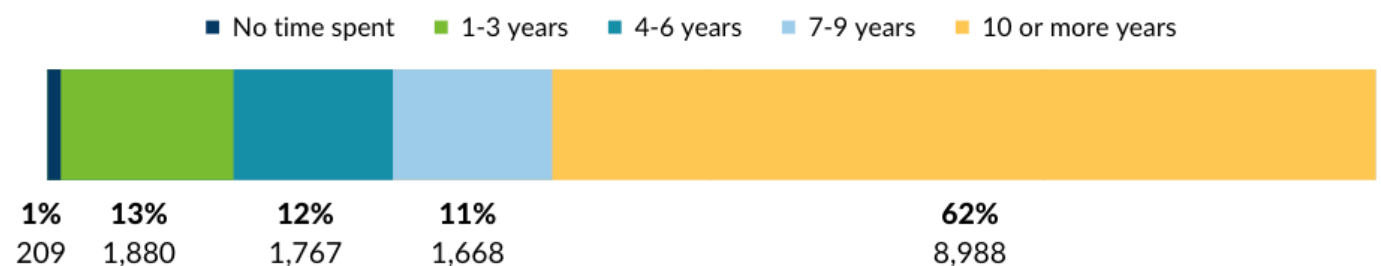
Of the 15,766 survey respondents, 957 responded to the question: “What do you think would help with teacher retention?” This question was included in the survey as a way for PELSB to learn more about respondents’ views, opinions, and experiences. For this question, respondents were given up to 20,000 characters to provide their individual response. Answers ranged in length from multiple paragraphs to bulleted lists, to one-word answers. Of the 957 responses, five responses were excluded for not answering the question; the remaining 952 responses totaled approximately 34,000 words.

Using a thematic analysis approach, specifically a semantic approach, ACET analyzed the qualitative responses to the above question in order to examine the data and identify common themes.¹⁶ ACET coded the responses in R based on a set of keywords and phrases that occurred in multiple responses. For example, the code “testing” was indicated whenever any of the following keywords or phrases were present in a response: “test”, “standardize”, “scores”, “standard”, “mandate”, “MCA”. If a response included key phrases from two codes, both codes were recorded. Using this method, ACET identified 25 unique codes and assigned simple descriptive counts to each code to help pull statistical data from qualitative data. Following this, ACET looked for patterns to generate overall themes and the unique codes were organized into four overall themes: 1) Increase Pay and Benefits, 2) Reduce Teacher Burden, 3) Examine Administrative and System Changes, and 4) COVID-19.¹⁷ The coding and theming exercises were performed by two individuals to ensure uniformity and code confirmation. Detailed findings from respondents regarding teacher retention are presented below starting on page 22.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN OR WERE YOU A TEACHER?

n=14,513

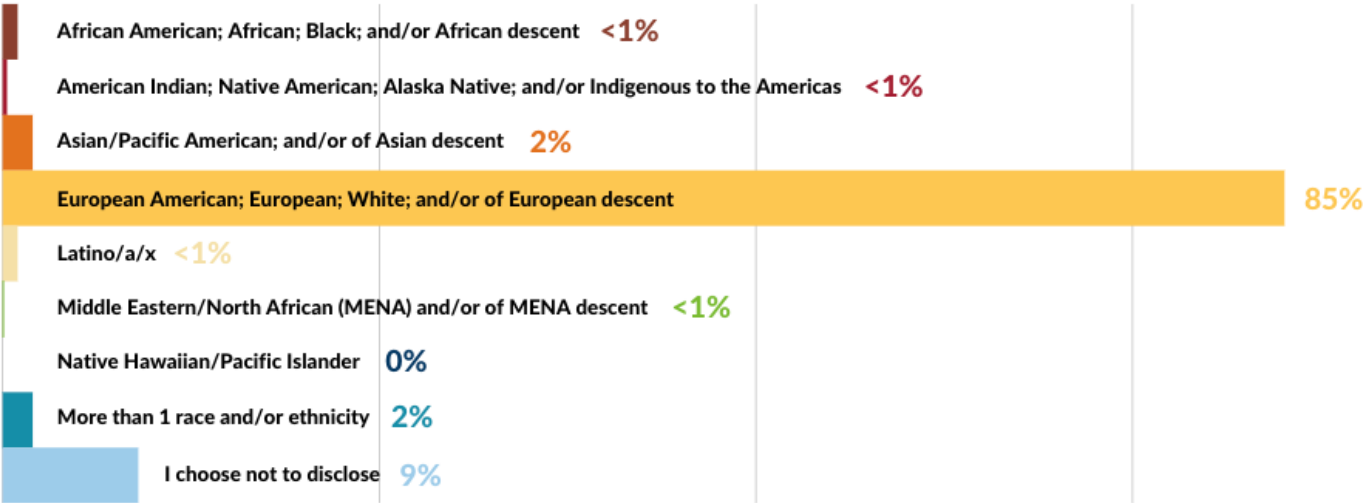


¹⁶ Thematic analysis is used to analyze qualitative data and identify common themes among responses. The semantic approach to thematic analysis analyzes the actual content of the data, as opposed to examining possible underlying or implicit assumptions within the responses.

¹⁷ Responses with stated uncertainty and no key phrases from the determined codes were coded as “Unsure.”

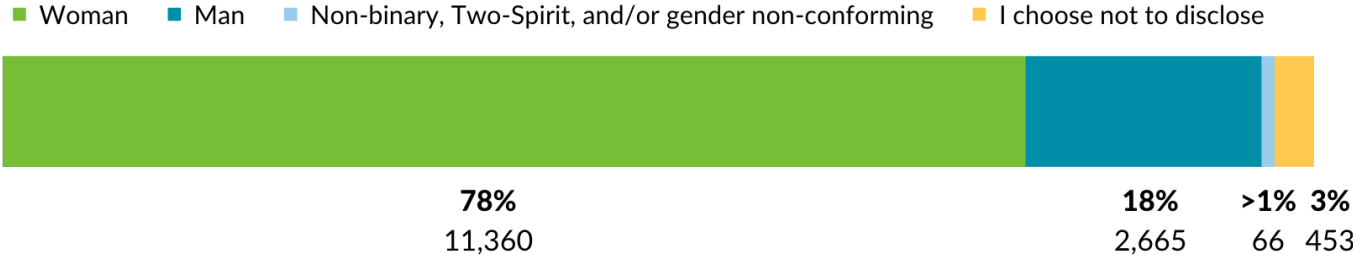
WHAT IS YOUR RACE AND/OR ETHNICITY?

n=14,522



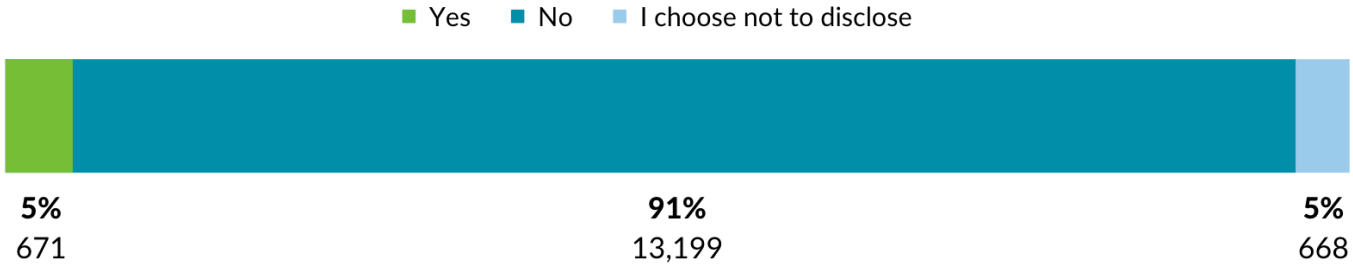
WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?

n=14,543



DO YOU IDENTIFY AS A MEMBER OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY?

n=14,538



KEY FINDINGS FOR RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:

- The majority of respondents indicated that they had been teaching for 10 or more years (62%; 8,988 out of 14,513); 209 respondents had spent no time as a teacher (209 out of 14,513).
- 40% of respondents identified their ages as 45-64 (5,857 out of 14,548); the second highest age range was 22-34 (27%; 3,910 out of 14,548).
- 78% of respondents identified as women (11,360 out of 14,543).
- Over 80% of respondents identified as white (85%; 12,359 out of 14,522); 9% of respondents did not disclose their race/ethnicity (1,295 out of 14,522).
- 91% of respondents did not identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community (13,199 out of 14,538).

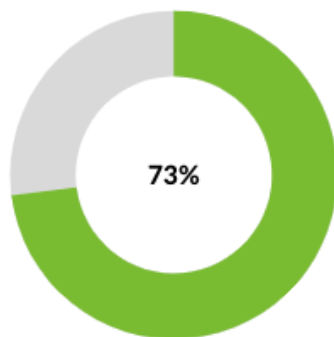
FINDINGS

PREPARATION

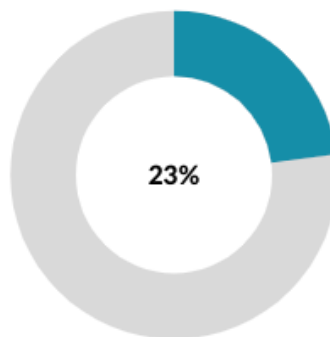
The first section of the survey focused on teacher preparation programs and their effectiveness in preparing teachers for their initial Tier 3 or Tier 4 professional license and being in the classroom.

DID YOU COMPLETE A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM?

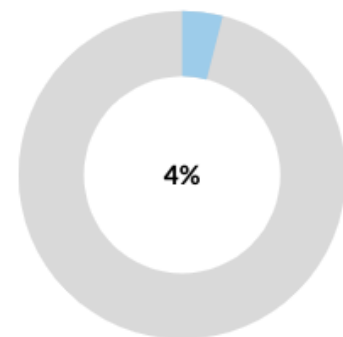
n=14,553



Yes, in Minnesota
10,600



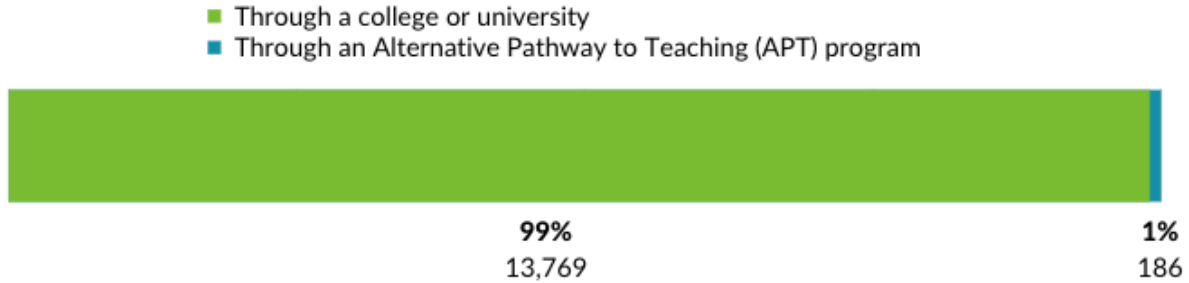
Yes, in another state
3,374



No
579

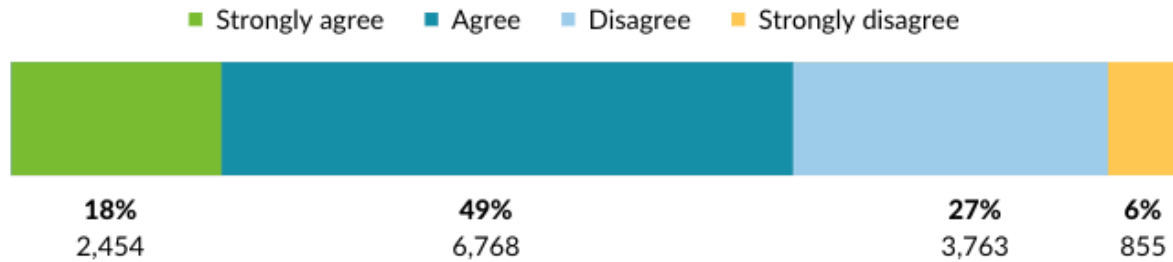
WHAT TYPE OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM DID YOU COMPLETE (FOR YOUR ORIGINAL LICENSE)?

n=13,956



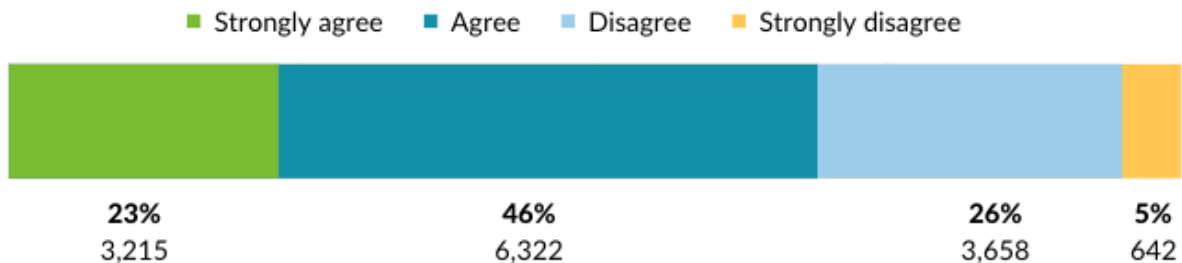
THE PREPARATION PROGRAM PREPARED ME TO WORK WITH RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS.

n=13,840



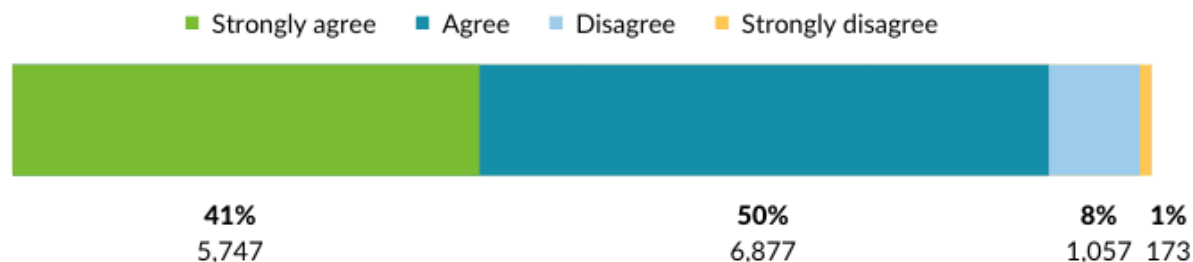
THE PREPARATION PROGRAM PREPARED ME TO WORK WITH STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

n=13,838



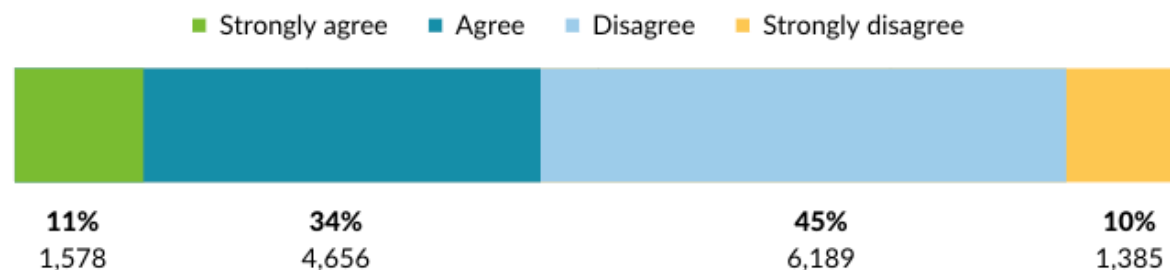
THE PREPARATION PROGRAM PREPARED ME TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE LESSON PLANS.

n=13,855



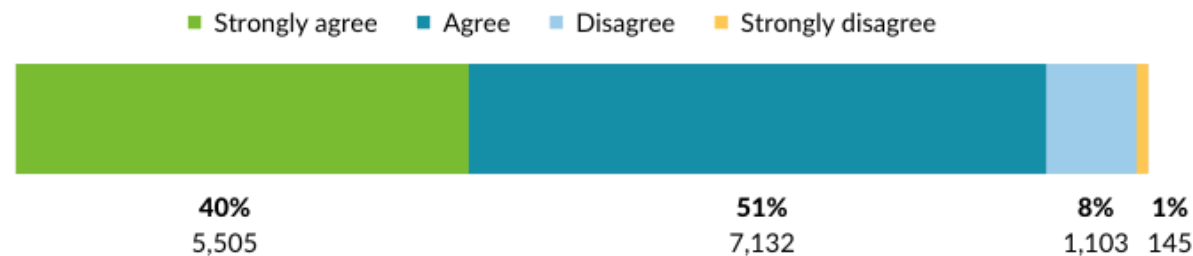
THE PREPARATION PROGRAM PREPARED ME TO WORK WITH MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS.

n=13,807



THE PREPARATION PROGRAM PREPARED ME TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN CONTENT.

n=13,885

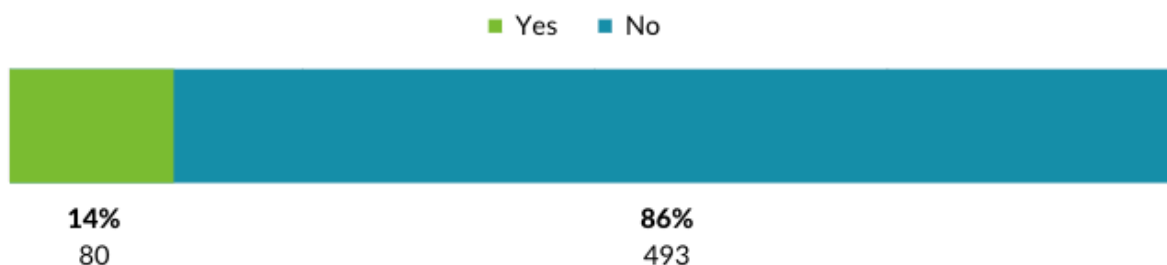


KEY FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS WHO COMPLETED A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM:

- Of those that completed a teacher preparation program (13,974 respondents), 3 out of 4 individuals completed a preparation program in Minnesota (**10,600 out of 13,974**), with a quarter of respondents (**3,374 out of 13,974**) completing a preparation program in another state.
- Only **4%** of respondents (**579 out of 14,553**) did not complete a teacher preparation program at all.
- Of those that completed a teacher preparation program, nearly all of them completed a program through a college or university (**99%; 13,769 out of 13,956**) for their original license; **1%** of respondents completed an Alternative Pathway to Teaching (APT) program (**186 out of 13,956**).
- Of those who completed a teacher preparation program (13,974 respondents), they provided the following information regarding the preparation program and whether it prepared them to complete the following:
 - **Work with racially and ethnically diverse students:**
67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the preparation program prepared them to work with racially and ethnically diverse students.
 - **Work with students with special needs:**
69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the preparation program prepared them to work with students with special needs.
 - **Work with multilingual learners:**
Less than half of respondents (**45%**) agreed or strongly agreed that the preparation program prepared them to work with multilingual learners; **55%** disagreed or strongly disagreed.
 - **Develop effective lesson plans:**
Nearly all respondents (**91%**) agreed or strongly agreed that the preparation program prepared them to develop effective lesson plans.
 - **Engage students in content:**
91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the preparation program prepared them to engage students in content.

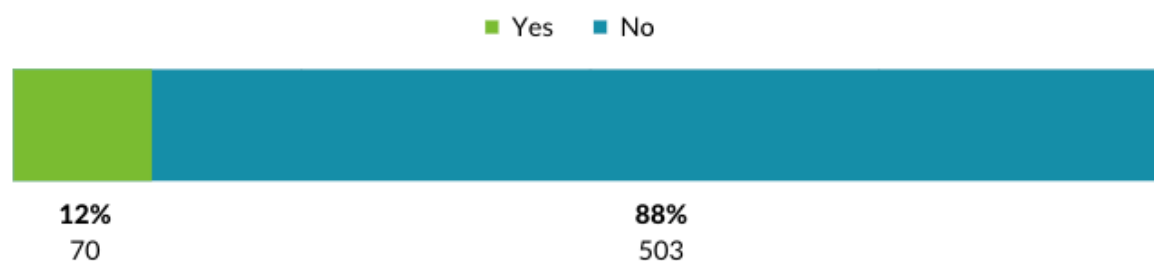
ARE YOU CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM?

n=573



DID YOU RECEIVE YOUR INITIAL LICENSE VIA PORTFOLIO?

n=573



KEY FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS WHO DID NOT COMPLETE A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM:

- As stated above, only 4% of respondents (579 out of 14,553) did not complete a teacher preparation program at all.
- 14% of respondents who did not complete a teacher preparation are currently enrolled in one; 86% of respondents are not currently enrolled in a teacher preparation program.
- Of those that did not complete a teacher preparation program, 12% of respondents received their initial license via Portfolio, an alternative process “to assess the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals seeking a license who may not have completed an approved teacher preparation program in the licensure field being sought.”¹⁸

RETENTION

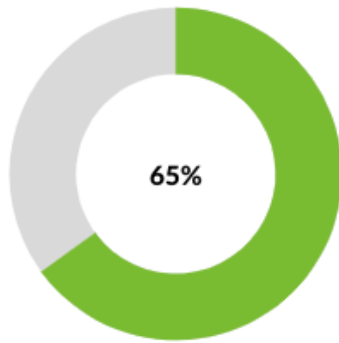
The second section of the survey focused on teacher retention and whether licensed teachers are currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota. Depending on their response, respondents were asked what keeps them in the teaching profession or what challenges

¹⁸ Retrieved from: [Minnesota Licensure via Portfolio](#).

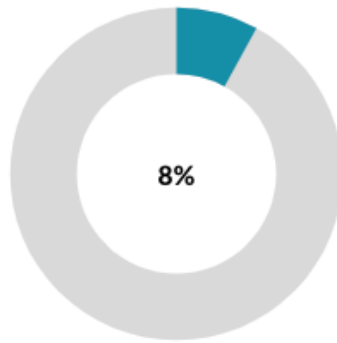
they encountered that caused them to leave the teaching profession. Respondents were also asked what they thought could help with teacher retention. The themes from their responses begin on page 22.

ARE YOU CURRENTLY TEACHING IN A PUBLIC OR CHARTER SCHOOL IN MINNESOTA?

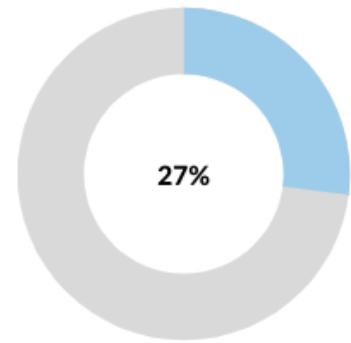
n=14,536



Yes, in a public school district
9,408



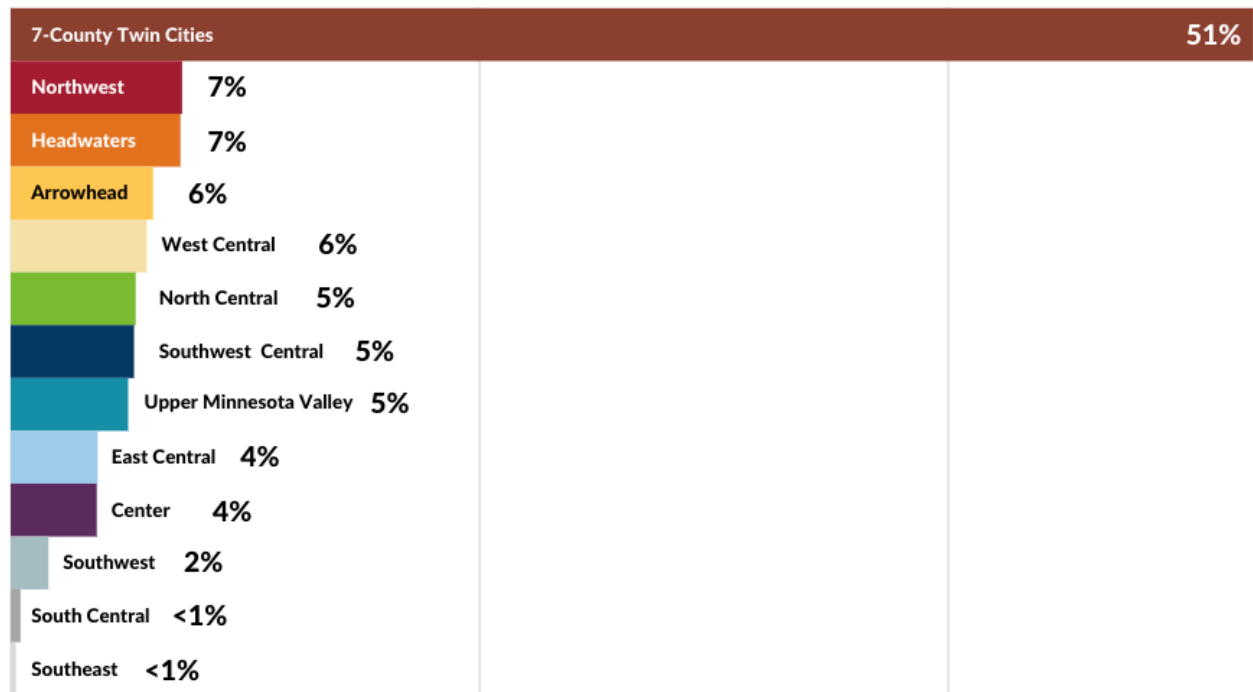
Yes, in a charter school
1,127



No
4,001

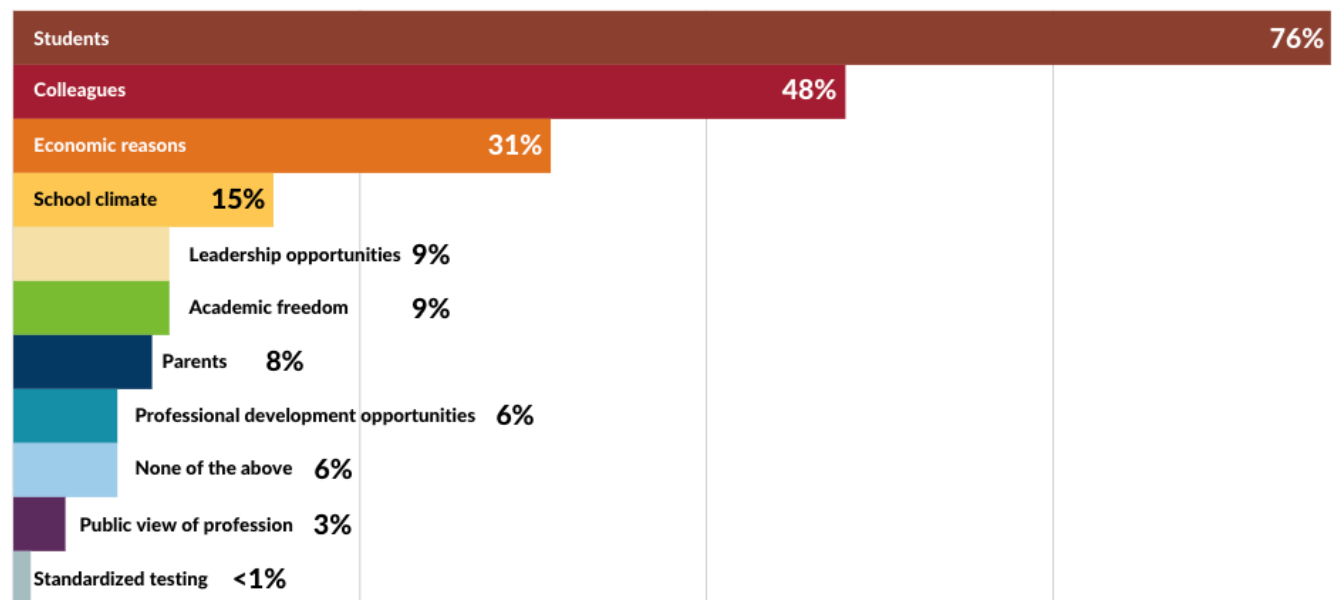
WHAT REGION IS YOUR CURRENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENT LOCATED?

n=10,465



WHAT KEEPS YOU IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION?

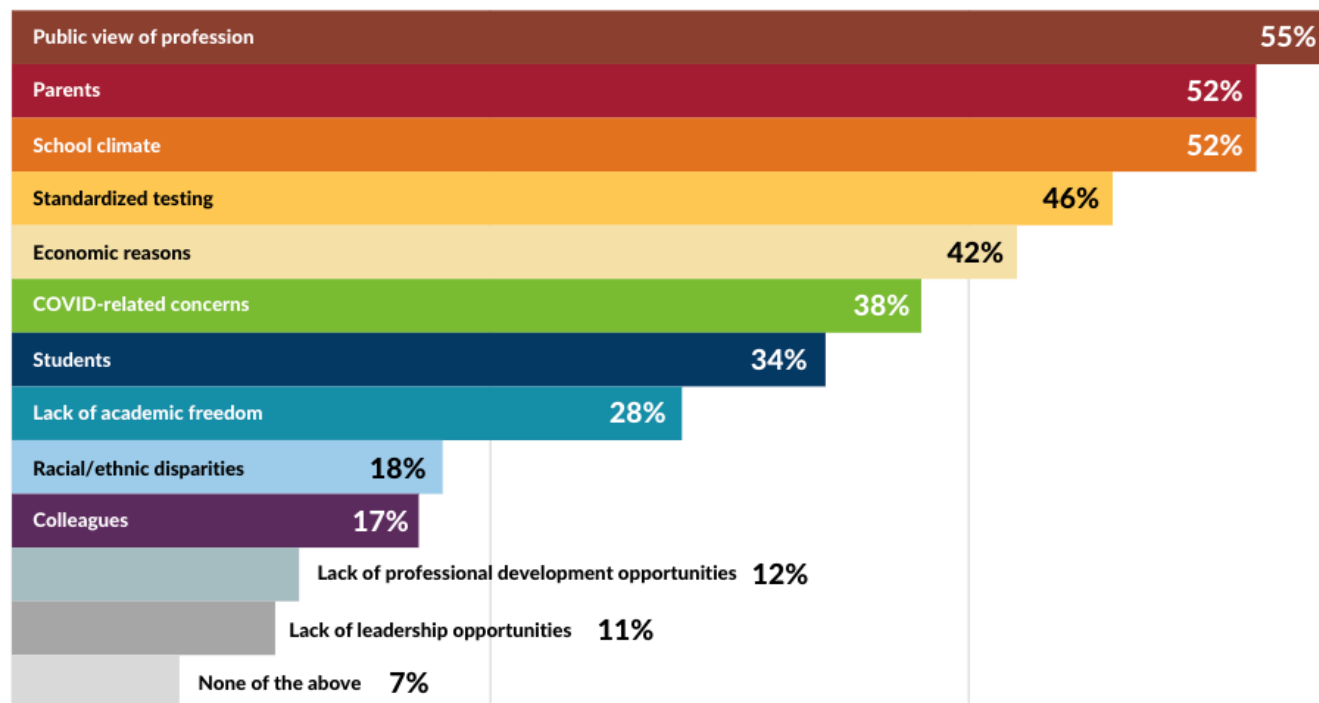
n=9,396



What keeps you in the teaching profession? (Detailed responses; select all that apply)	Number of responses n=9,396	Percent of responses
Students	7,987	76%
<i>Positive interactions with students</i>	7,764	74%
<i>Engaged students</i>	4,246	53%
<i>Classroom size</i>	1,214	15%
Colleagues	5,030	48%
<i>Positive interactions with colleagues</i>	4,655	93%
<i>Supportive colleagues</i>	4,624	92%
<i>Engaged colleagues</i>	3,172	63%
Economic reasons	3,266	31%
<i>High pay</i>	1,287	39%
<i>Financial supportive PTA</i>	398	12%
School climate	1,610	15%
<i>Positive school climate</i>	1,485	92%
<i>Supportive administration</i>	1,321	82%
Leadership opportunities	913	9%
Academic freedom	906	9%
Parents	865	8%
<i>Positive interactions with parents</i>	821	95%
<i>Appropriately engaged parents</i>	492	57%
<i>Supportive parent groups</i>	464	54%
Professional development opportunities	658	6%
None of the above	635	6%
Public view of profession	309	3%
Standardized testing	15	<1%

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE THAT COULD LEAD YOU TO LEAVE THE TEACHING PROFESSION?

n=10,516



What challenges do you have that could lead you to leave the teaching profession? (Detailed responses; select all that apply)	Number of responses n=10,516	Percent of responses
Public view of profession	5,775	55%
Parents	5,526	53%
<i>Negative interactions with parents</i>	4,265	77%
<i>Disengaged parents</i>	4,017	38%
<i>Overly engaged parents</i>	2,179	21%
School climate	5,520	52%
<i>Unsupportive administration</i>	4,090	74%
<i>Negative climate</i>	4,590	44%
Standardized testing	4,805	46%

Economic reasons	4,382	42%
<i>Low pay</i>	3,337	32%
<i>Higher pay in another field</i>	3,348	32%
<i>Out-of-pocket expenses</i>	2,475	23%
COVID-related concerns	3,990	38%
Students	3,610	34%
<i>Disengaged students</i>	2,845	79%
<i>Classroom size</i>	2,146	59%
<i>Negative interactions with students</i>	2,531	70%
Lack of academic freedom	2,979	28%
Racial/ethnic disparities	1,918	18%
Colleagues	1,774	17%
<i>A lack of support</i>	1,230	69%
<i>Negative interactions with colleagues</i>	1,201	68%
<i>Disengaged colleagues</i>	1,018	57%
Lack of professional development opportunities	1,258	12%
Lack of leadership opportunities	1,150	11%
None of the above	708	7%

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR IMMEDIATE PROFESSIONAL PLANS?

n=10,479

■ Continue teaching
 ■ Continue working in education but leave teaching
 ■ Leave education entirely



Which of the following best describes your immediate professional plans? (Detailed responses)	Number of responses n=10,479	Percent of responses
Continue teaching	8,453	81%
<i>At my current school</i>	7,638	90%
<i>In this state but leave this district</i>	523	6%
<i>In this district but leave this school</i>	292	3%
Continue working in education but	976	9%
<i>Pursue a position outside of PreK-12</i>	414	42%
<i>Pursue an administrative position</i>	357	37%
<i>Pursue a non-administrative position in a PreK-12 setting; e.g., teacher preparation</i>	205	21%
Leave education entirely	1,050	10%

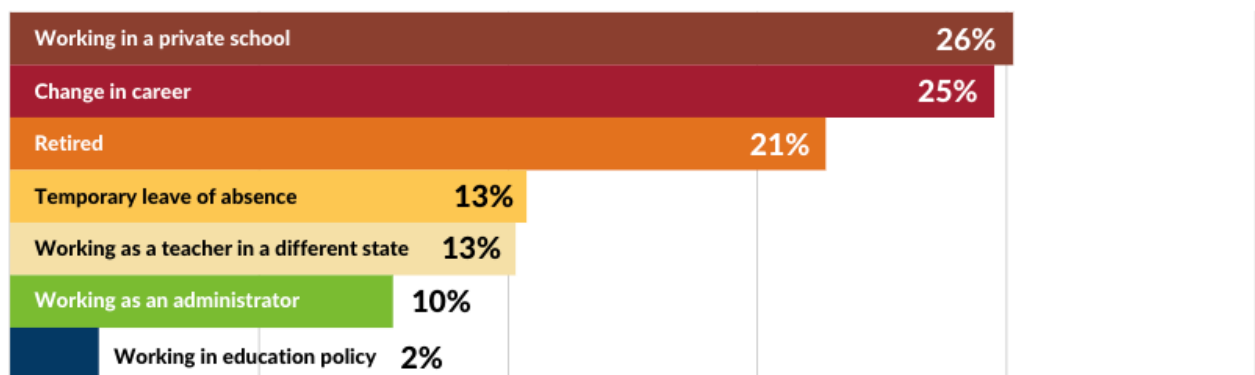
KEY FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY TEACHING IN A PUBLIC OR CHARTER SCHOOL IN MINNESOTA:

- 73% of respondents currently teach in a traditional public school or charter school in Minnesota; of those, more than half are teaching in a traditional public school.
- 27% are not currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota.
- The top choice for what keeps respondents in the teaching profession was students (76%; 7,987 out of 10,535), including positive interactions with students, engaged students, and classroom size.
- The second-highest choice was colleagues (48%; 5,030 out of 10,535), including positive interactions with colleagues, supportive colleagues, and engaged colleagues.
- The lowest choice for what keeps teachers in the profession was standardized testing (15 out of 10,535; <1%).
- Economic reasons were the outlier for why respondents left the teaching profession, continue to stay, and also why they may leave in the future.
- 55% of teachers chose the public view of the profession as the top challenge that could lead them to leave the profession (5,775 out of 10,535), followed by parents (52%; 5,526 out of 10,535), including negative interactions with parents, and school climate (5,520 out of 10,535; 52%), including unsupportive administration.

- For both those who have already left teaching and those still teaching, one of the top challenges was school climate and economic reasons.
 - **School climate:** Unsupportive administration
 - **Economic reasons:** Low pay; higher pay in another field
- For those that have not left the teaching profession, COVID-related concerns were a challenge for **38%** of respondents, as opposed to **12%** of those who had already left the profession.
- The lack of professional development opportunities and the lack of leadership opportunities were the lowest choices for both those who have already left teaching and those who are currently still teaching (outside of “none of the above”).
- School climate was listed as a top reason why teachers left the profession and could lead them to leave in the future. Others included standardized testing and economic reasons.
- COVID-related reasons were one of the challenges that respondents listed as a reason for why they *may* leave the teaching profession, versus *not* being a top reason for why teachers left (**38% vs. 12%**).
- Of those who are currently working in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota, **81%** of respondents plan to continue teaching, with **90%** of those respondents (**7,628 out of 8,453**) planning to continue teaching at their current school. Of those who do not plan to continue teaching, **10%** of respondents (**1,050 out of 10,479**) indicated their immediate plans to leave education entirely, followed by continuing to work in education outside of a teaching capacity (**9%; 976 out of 10,479**); **79%** of those who want to continue working in education want to pursue a position outside of PreK-12 or an administrative position (**771 out of 976**).

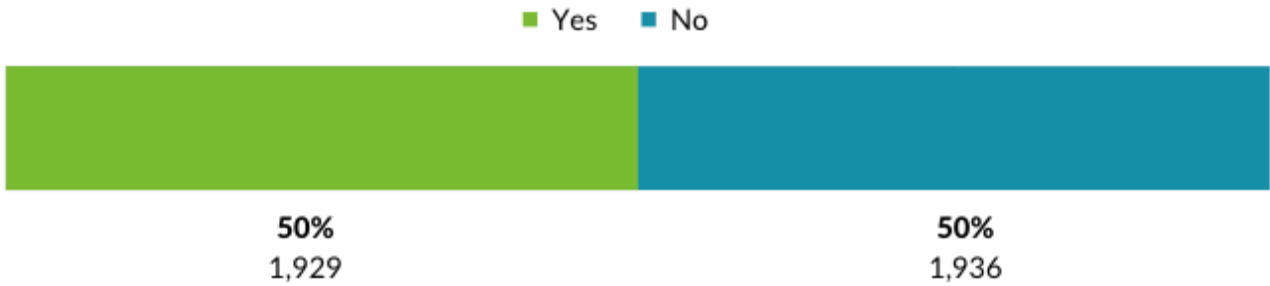
WHY ARE YOU NOT CURRENTLY TEACHING IN A PUBLIC OR CHARTER SCHOOL IN MINNESOTA?

n=3,939



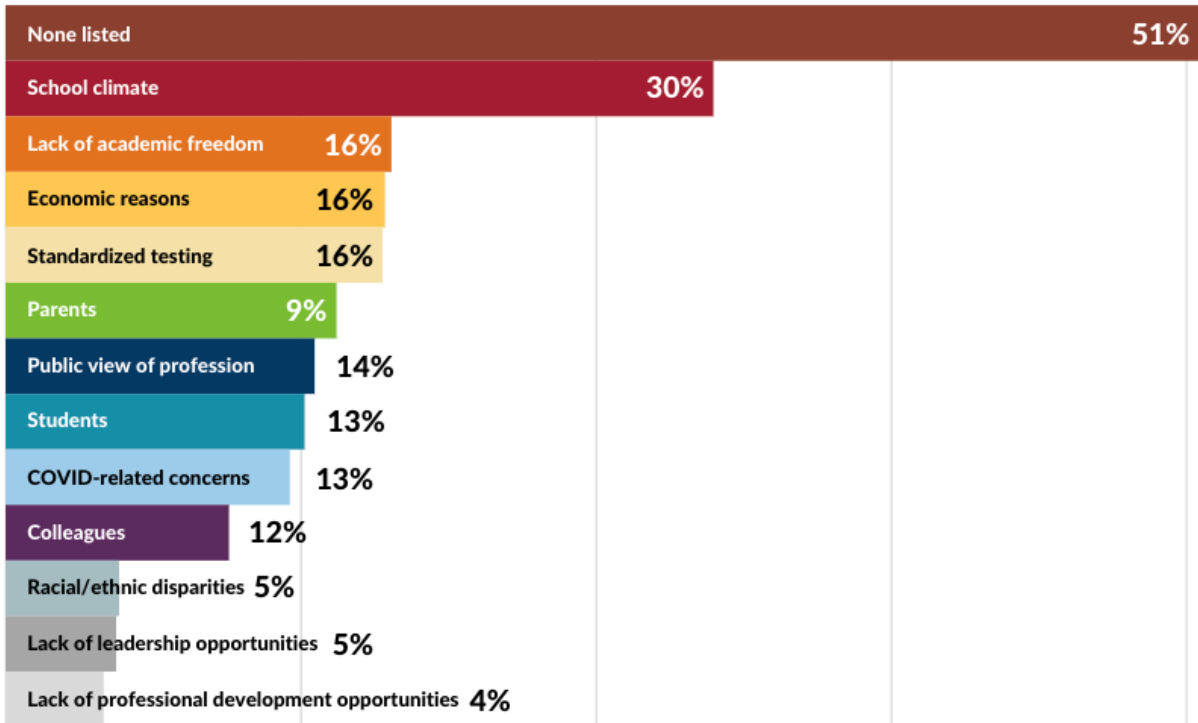
DO YOU PLAN TO RETURN TO TEACHING?

n=3,865



WHAT ISSUES INFLUENCED YOU TO LEAVE TEACHING IN A PUBLIC OR CHARTER SCHOOL?

n=3,972



What issues influenced you to leave teaching in a public or charter school? (Detailed responses; select all that apply)	Number of responses n=3,972	Percent of responses
None listed	2,023	51%

School climate	1,198	30%
<i>Unsupportive administration</i>	846	71%
<i>Negative climate</i>	833	70%
Lack of academic freedom	653	16%
Economic reasons	642	16%
<i>Low pay</i>	398	62%
<i>Higher pay in another field</i>	351	55%
<i>Out-of-pocket expenses</i>	238	37%
Standardized testing	638	16%
Parents	560	14%
<i>Negative interactions with parents</i>	384	69%
<i>Disengaged parents</i>	356	64%
<i>Overly engaged parents</i>	194	35%
Public view of profession	523	13%
Students	506	13%
<i>Disengaged students</i>	325	64%
<i>Classroom size</i>	318	63%
<i>Negative interactions with students</i>	309	61%
COVID-related concerns	481	12%
Colleagues	378	9%
<i>A lack of support</i>	281	74%
<i>Negative interactions with colleagues</i>	245	65%
<i>Disengaged colleagues</i>	186	49%
Racial/ethnic disparities	192	5%
Lack of leadership opportunities	187	5%
Lack of professional development opportunities	166	4%

KEY FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS WHO ARE NOT CURRENTLY TEACHING IN A PUBLIC OR CHARTER SCHOOL IN MINNESOTA:

- 25% of respondents who are not currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota reported that they had a change in careers.
- 50% of respondents continue to work in an educational capacity, indicating that they work in a private school or as a teacher in a different state, as an administrator, or in education policy.
- Of those that are not currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota, 33% of respondents have either retired or have taken a temporary leave of absence.
- Of the respondents not currently teaching in a traditional public or charter school in Minnesota, 50% reported that they *do not* intend to return to teaching, while 50% *do* plan to return to teaching.
- 50% of respondents reported that none of the listed issues influenced their decision to leave teaching in a traditional public or charter school.
- 30% of respondents selected school climate as one of the top reasons they left teaching, followed by 16% choosing the lack of academic freedom, economic reasons, and standardized testing.
- The lowest choice for why respondents left teaching in a traditional public or charter school was the lack of professional development opportunities (4%; 166 out of 4001).
- 5% of respondents indicated that racial/ethnic disparities caused them to leave the teaching profession as opposed to 18% of respondents who continue to teach and reported that racial/ethnic disparities were a challenge that could lead them to leave the teaching profession.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HELP WITH TEACHER RETENTION?

n=952



What do you think would help with teacher retention? (Detailed responses) ¹⁹	Number of responses n=952
REDUCE TEACHER BURDEN	879
Hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Overhaul of the school structure; kids can't handle long hours of a school day, and teachers can't have much semblance of a work-life balance with the tasks we're expected to do and the time we have at our job, meaning it's unpaid labor outside school hours.” “I work 10-30 hours beyond my duty day to complete necessary tasks and be ready for my students with engaging lessons. That is not sustainable. Burnout is real.” 	234
Planning time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Provide planning time to implement the new programs we're expected to use throughout the year. Every year there's new expectations but never enough time to understand it all.” “Actual prep time that isn't taken away to cover other things.” 	129
Testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “To stop needing to teach to standardized tests. To understand that most of these students are years behind and we need to teach to that, not to where we think they should be.” “Reduce federally or state required mandates such as standardized testing...” 	115
Counseling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I think that mental health and trauma need to be addressed in students more. This comes with more professional development with teachers on trauma and how it appears in the classroom. We also have teachers that are experiencing secondary trauma and are in need of mental health resources.” “Teaching during COVID has taken a huge toll on teachers, and [the] administration needs to recognize that and support the teachers who are struggling. There also needs to be more focus on supporting students whose emotions aren't developed to their age.” 	115
Support for students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Provide more trained classroom assistants to help students with special needs, whether those needs are behavioral, emotional, learning related, or language related.” “Kids need to be significantly behind before they qualify for help. We need to be much more proactive in providing assistance for students.” 	104

¹⁹ Selected quotes for each code were chosen to capture the main ideas posed by respondents.

REDUCE TEACHER BURDEN	
<p>Extra duties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The state and schools need to stop adding expectations to the staff. It continues to build until we have nothing left. Our first job isn't with students, it's paperwork, meetings, emails, etc.” “If new requirements are added to job description/expectation, then other requirements need to be removed.” 	72
<p>Class sizes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Smaller class sizes.” “Smaller class sizes; under 20 students in the classroom. .” 	70
<p>Teaching load</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Teacher workload. I see and grade 180 students daily. No way I can ever keep up with grading.” “In special education, reduce [the] workload of non-essential job duties. We are asking too much of special education teachers so that the focus is less on teaching and more on paperwork.” 	40
INCREASE PAY AND BENEFITS	
863	
<p>Pay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I believe teachers should get paid for the work that [they] do. I work nearly 55 hours a week to create engaging lessons, give feedback to students, and to provide fun activities. I also work over weekends and in the summer I am often getting ready for the next school year. Additionally, I spend a lot of my own money on my students. I have constant discussions with teachers that may leave based only on the poor compensation we receive.” “I believe teachers should be provided with extra pay for all of the extra duties they provide beyond teaching, especially when teachers expect work-life balance to weigh heavily on work, even when they leave school.” 	568
<p>Resources and supplies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We spend our own money on supplies since schools are underfunded and we do not receive enough materials for our classroom.” “Better... resources for teachers. I shouldn't have to pay hundreds of dollars from my already low pay to pay for student materials. That should be provided by the school or by the state.” 	75
<p>Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Health insurance for all would be a reason to stay in the profession.” “...Better health benefits (covered health insurance) and better retirement plans.” 	68

INCREASE PAY AND BENEFITS

Professional opportunities

- “More free [professional development] opportunities to earn CEUs... Too expensive and hard to find if you are an independent charter school teacher. I work with many schools but don't get many opportunities for PD.”
- “Make sure teachers are adequately supported in the classroom with the professional development that they need. Make sure teachers are given opportunities to grow as leaders and are given opportunities to collaborate with others.”

67

Support and coaching

- “Better new teacher mentorship opportunities. My first two years, even this year, my mentorship is a joke. The teacher who's supposed to mentor me is sooo busy, I often feel bad asking questions. The paperwork load of [Special Education] makes the position not worth it.”
- “The state should provide more support for educators of color to join and remain in the field so that our educators are representative of our students and communities.”

53

Flexibility

- “Flexibility in teaching curriculum (teach passions that extend beyond benchmarks)...”
- “[T]he state should make it easier for working educators to get additional licenses (like providing more flexibility for practicum hours).”

16

Debt

- “Help with student loans.”
- “Respecting education and the teachers would help with teacher retention. The ability as a young teacher to be able to afford living expenses and license renewal credentials without having to take out loans or a second job.”

16

EXAMINE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SYSTEM CHANGES

598

Administration

- “I would say that a supportive administration and team atmosphere within the school are directly correlated to teacher attitude.”
- “[T]eachers are told what is expected of them with very little support given by admin and very few opportunities to have their voices heard.”

203

Bureaucratic hurdles and hoops

- “I have an out-of-state license. Despite my license & over 20 years of teaching, my experience & licensure doesn't properly transfer to Minnesota. Because of this, I need to study for [two] tests necessary for a Tier 3 license, all while doing what's necessary to teach & run a classroom.”
- “As a teacher with a non-standard license, the bureaucratic hurdles of getting a Tier 3 license are substantial... After the stress of the last two years, I have no energy for jumping through the hoops of re-licensure or getting a Tier 3 license.”

96

EXAMINE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SYSTEM CHANGES

Respect

- *"I believe that the biggest hurdles that teachers face [is] a lack of professional respect and a lack of support, both within their schools and in society in general."*
- *"Providing a safe learning environment where teachers are valued and respected would go a long way."*

86

Staffing

- *"Increase funding to the point that all [schools] can hire more teachers and support staff."*
- *"[A]dditional stress also means that [the] administration is busy doing things that other staff could be doing if we were fully staffed. Because of this, they are not as available and are not able to be as attentive, supporting, or responsive as they should be. Staff morale over the past two years especially has been really low, but we do not have the energy or resources to boost morale."*

85

Funding

- *"Significant education funding increases, leading to higher pay, better benefits, and improved working conditions."*
- *"Public [education] needs more funding as a whole. Teachers should be paid more, but also schools need to fund support services so that teachers can clearly focus on content delivery."*

69

Diversity, equity, and inclusion

- *"...More effort to recruit teachers of color..."*
- *"There...needs to be a revamp in the way things are taught. There is a ton of diversity in our schools and our programs don't show that."*

31

Power

- *"I think the number one thing is trusting teachers as professionals. Trusting them to know their students and make appropriate choices in terms of curriculum, time management, and dealing with behaviors. It seems that every year, more and more gets dictated to teachers - they have to do this and they can't do that, and their autonomy gets taken away."*
- *"Of course, everyone wants more money, but I think retention goes a lot deeper. It can be so frustrating to feel like you have all of the responsibility but none of the decision making power."*

28

IMPROVE CHARTER SCHOOL STRUCTURES

45

Better and comparable pay

- *"Better pay. I teach at a Minnesota charter school making far less than my colleagues in typical public schools."*
- *"At our school, being able to pay teachers at charter schools more equally to public schools in the area."*

28

IMPROVE CHARTER SCHOOL STRUCTURES	
Funding structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I work for a small charter school and the funding is considerably lower than other schools; it would be nice to have a better formula for school funding...” “Charter schools get less money than regular districts. Charter schools pay their teachers 20% less because we are on a tight budget. Even though I work for one of the best [charter] schools in the state and we perform better than the districts.” 	9
Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “[B]etter insurance at the charter level.” “Currently, I am working at a charter school, with absolutely no benefits... no health, no dental, no disability, no life.” 	5
Protections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Teaching in a small charter school without having a union, we are under the thumb of our administration who knows that when we have complaints, they are aware that those complaints, no matter who they go to, will not be seriously addressed.” “It would be tremendously helpful for charter school teachers to have some avenue to air their concerns and grievances.” 	3
COVID-19	45
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “...Return [to] distance learning, improve ventilation, paid isolation and quarantine outside of sick and safe time, free and required testing for all students and staff multiple times per week, required masks and full vaccination for students and staff.” “COVID has definitely made it difficult for teachers in the classroom... It [additional support] would take some pressure off of teachers and their families as many are losing sick days and pay due to circumstances surrounding COVID that are out of their control.” 	45
UNSURE	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I’m not sure.” 	3

KEY FINDINGS FROM RESPONDENTS ON WHAT WOULD HELP WITH TEACHER RETENTION:

- Across the six themes listed above, **pay** was the top coded response (n=568), followed by **hours** (n=234), and **administration** (n=203). Other top responses include **planning time** (n=129), **testing** (n=115), **counseling** (n=115), and **support for students** (n=104). Of the top seven categories listed above, five fell under the category of reducing teacher burden.
- Reduce teacher burden:** The top theme from respondents surrounded reducing teacher burden. These burdens included long hours, a large teaching load, and overwhelming class sizes. Because of these burdens, teachers expressed feeling unprepared due to a lack of planning time and having to take on extra duties, such as covering classes when substitutes

were not available. An additional burden was identified as standardized testing requirements when students were not academically prepared. Lastly, respondents pointed to additional mental health support for both teachers and students, such as counseling and more help for students who need it; many responses pointed to the fact that both teachers and students are struggling, especially over the past two years.

- **Increase pay and benefits:** As stated above, increasing wages was the top coded response across the six themes. Pay was overwhelmingly mentioned in relation to the hours that teachers were expected to work to be prepared for teaching, including creating lesson plans, grading, and providing feedback. Other responses included the frustration of having to spend their own money on their classrooms and also their students, from basic needs to other resources and supplies. Identified benefits that respondents mentioned included health benefits but also professional development opportunities and help with student loans or other costs associated with being a teacher, including licensure renewal. Benefits also included support and coaching opportunities, such as mentorship and more support for teachers of color.
- **Examine administrative and system changes:** Those who responded to the survey expressed an overall lack of support from administration and feeling a lack of respect from administrators and the public. Respondents also pointed to bureaucratic hurdles that make it difficult to advance within the teaching career. A lack of staffing, funding for schools, and power were described as further burdens to teachers and retention. Additionally, diversity, equity, and inclusion were mentioned but were not among the top responses from teachers (85% of respondents identified as white; see page 7 for respondent demographics).
- **Improve charter school structures:** Charter schools were a unique theme that emerged throughout the responses. Respondents identified the need for better and comparable pay scales for teachers within charter schools (comparable to traditional public schools) and increasing the funding structures allocated to charter schools from the state. In addition to pay and funding, benefits and protections for teachers were mentioned and included more accessible health and dental benefits, as well as protections similar to teacher unions as an avenue for addressing concerns without fear of retaliation.
- **COVID-19:** COVID-19 was mentioned by respondents as a unique barrier to teacher retention. Teachers had mixed feelings about their school or district's response to the pandemic and whether too many or not enough mitigation measures were in place. Respondents expressed that teaching is now less enjoyable, especially due to the increased stress around distance learning, using their sick days or other PTO for quarantines, and losing pay due to having to take time off.

DEFINITIONS

ACTIVE LICENSE: An individual holding an unexpired license, not including the following license types: substitute, administrative, supervisor, or director. The following assignments are not included in this definition: non-instructional assignments, including administrative positions, coaches, or paraprofessionals.

UNDUPLICATED: In the context of this report, unduplicated refers to the actual, unique number of licensed teachers in Minnesota. For example, an individual may have more than one active teaching license, but were only counted once for purposes of taking the survey. ACET finalized a list of 109,615 unduplicated individuals with a current active teaching license in Minnesota.

TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: An initial teacher preparation program is “designed for preparing candidates for their initial professional (Tier 3 or 4) license.”²⁰ Additional licensure programs are “designed for preparing candidates, who have completed state-approved teacher preparation or licensure via Portfolio to obtain additional licensure.”²¹

LICENSE TIER: On July 1, 2018, the state of Minnesota introduced a tiered licensure system, with various requirements for each of the four tiers. The type of license issued is based on the qualifications of the licensee. Tier 1 and Tier 2 require a standing job offer and have limited renewals. Tier 3 and Tier 4 licenses can be utilized at any public school and can be renewed indefinitely.

LICENSURE AREA, or “licensure field” means the content taught for which standards have been adopted in Minnesota Rules.

²⁰ Retrieved from: [Approved Preparation Programs in Minnesota.](#)

²¹ Retrieved from: [Approved Preparation Programs in Minnesota.](#)