MINNESOTA
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR
LICENSING AND STANDARDS BOARD

The 2026 Supply & Demand of Teachers in Minnesota *A PELSB Biennial Report*

SUPPLY

- Supply of Teachers in Minnesota
- Minnesota's Teacher Workforce
- Pathways to Professional License
- Pathway: Tier 1 & 2 Progressions
- Pathway: Teacher Preparation
- Teacher Employment Trends
- Teacher Recruitment
- Teacher Retention
- Teacher Attrition
- Teachers on Retention
- Licensed, Not Teaching

DEMAND

- Demand of Teachers in Minnesota
- Shortage Areas
- Shortages by Geography
- Shortages by Demographics
- Related Services Shortages
- Substitutes
- Short-Call Substitutes
- Long-Term Substitutes
- Vacancies
- Leaves of Absence
- Terminations, Resignations,...
- Comparing 25-26 and 24-25
- The Next Five Years
- Conclusions

Mission: Ensuring all Minnesota students have high quality educators in their schools.

Vision: To ensure equitable education practices through high licensure standards, quality educator preparation programs, and community partner engagement.

In Minnesota, a teacher providing instruction in a public school or charter school must hold a license aligned to the field and grade levels taught. The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) is responsible for issuing licenses and for collecting and reporting data on the number of licensed teachers in Minnesota as well as their assignments.

Minnesota Statute 122A.091 requires the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) to provide information to the Minnesota Legislature about the supply and demand of licensed teachers in Minnesota public school districts and charter schools every two years. The *2026 Teacher Supply and Demand Report* shows the ongoing trend of retention issues.

As required by Minnesota Statutes 3.197, this report cost approximately $16,593.20 to prepare.

Key Report Findings

Supply

- There are currently around 110,000 licensed teachers in Minnesota, but only 68% of those teachers were reported as working in a Minnesota public school last year.
- The overwhelming majority of Minnesota's teachers hold a full professional license.
- Approximately 90% of all teaching assignments are filled by teachers who hold the appropriate full professional license for that assignment.
- Candidates completing teacher preparation in Minnesota are more diverse than Minnesota's existing teacher workforce. Teacher candidates of color or American Indian candidates comprised 16.5% candidates who completed teacher preparation in Minnesota.
- Districts report the Special Education Teacher Pathway Program as the most utilized and effective ways to support non-licensed staff pursuing full licensure. Licensure via portfolio is reported as the second most effective way.
- Across the state, 79% of educators entering employment in 2020-2021 remained employed after 5 years teaching in Minnesota, with 78% in the Twin Cities Metro. Same-school retention was higher in Greater Minnesota (59% versus 54%).

Demand

- 36% of Minnesota's teachers who hold a Tier 3 or Tier 4 License are not currently teaching in a public school classroom.
- Despite increases in the number of Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers, Minnesota's teacher workforce does not proportionally reflect the diversity of the student population.
- Nearly a third (32%) of new teachers leave teaching within the first five years in the profession.
- The demand for teachers is evenly distributed among economic development regions within the state.
- The licensure areas filled with the highest number of teachers holding a Tier 1 license, Tier 2 license, or Out-of-Field Permission (OFP) for their assignment remain in special education and elementary education.
- A high proportion of career and technical teaching assignments are held by teachers holding a Tier 1 license, Tier 2 license, or Out-of-Field Permission (OFP).

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

In Minnesota, we define supply as the number of professionally licensed teachers who can serve Minnesota's public school students.

While the educator workforce includes teachers with Tier 1 and Tier 2 licenses, as well as teachers with permission to teach out of field, their licenses and/or permissions may only be used for a set period of time in a specific public school district. As such, they represent an important part of the educator workforce but not permanent teacher supply.

As we consider the future needs of Minnesota's students and the Board's mission to ensure all Minnesota students have high quality educators in their schools, there is a strong need to support innovative pathways to professional licensure.

As a standards-based state, Minnesota has several pathways to obtain full professional licensure. These pathways include traditional higher education programs, as well as alternative and work-based programs.

Supply Pathways

- MN-Approved Preparation Programs
  - Higher Education Institutions
  - Alternative Providers
- Licensure via Portfolio
  - Experienced-based
  - Includes heritage language cohorts
- Alternative Pathways
  - American Indian History, Language, and Culture License
  - Tier 2 to Tier 3 Experience
- Non-MN Approved Preparation Programs
  - Out-of-state and/or out-of-county teacher preparation programs



The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Minnesota's Teacher Workforce

License Counts
License Area Details
Assignment Details

110,279	74,869	67.89%
Total Number of Educators	Working Total	Working % of Educators

Please note: this banner changes based on filters selected on this page.

Minnesota's educator workforce is predominantly composed of Tier 4 licensed teachers, who account for nearly three-quarters of working educators. Tier 3 educators represent the second-largest group, while Tier 1 and Tier 2 educators make up comparatively smaller shares. Together, these figures provide insight into the composition of Minnesota's licensed workforce and how employment patterns vary by licensure tier, demographic characteristics, and geographic location. Minnesota's Department for Employment and Economic Development (DEED) maintains an interactive map of the state's economic development regions (EDR).

Figure 1. Licensed vs. Working Educators by License Tier

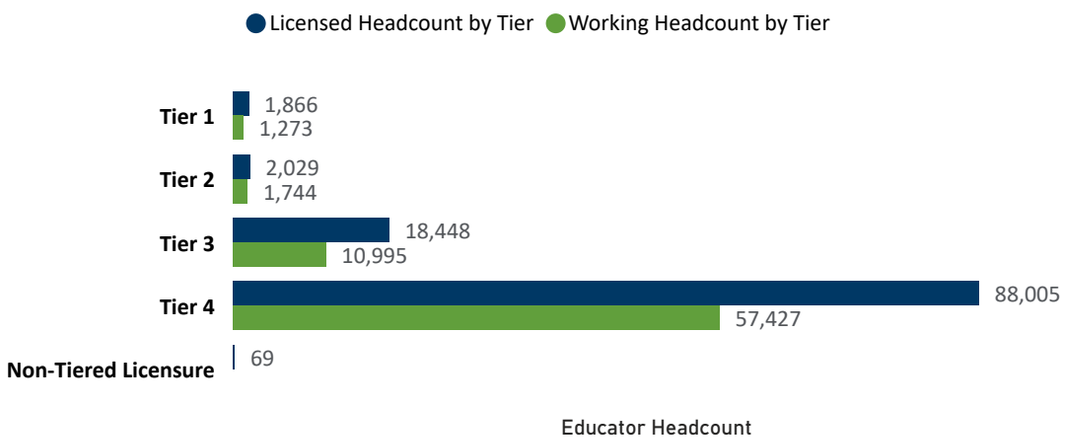


Table Filters

School Year: 2025-2026

Race: All

Figure 1. Comparison of licensed and working educator headcounts across Minnesota's licensure tiers. These numbers do not include administration or substitute licenses, only teacher or related services. Results are presented as percentages within each tier, highlighting differences between the licensed educator population and those actively working. Users can filter results by school year and race to examine workforce patterns across demographic groups and reporting periods. ***Note: the banner at the top of the page changes based on filter selections.***

Table Filters

EDR Display: All

PELSB District Grouping: All

Figure 2. Distribution of Working Educators by License Tier

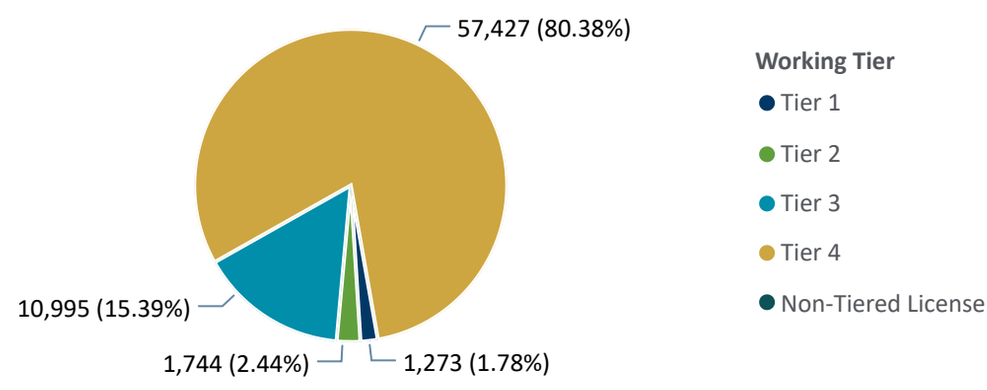


Figure 2. Distribution of Minnesota's working educators by licensure tier. Users can filter results by Economic Development Region (EDR) and PELSB District Grouping to explore geographic differences in workforce composition. ***Note: the banner at the top of the page changes based on filter selections.***

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Pathways to a Professional License

Pathway Details
Pathway Definitions

106,454	71,371	67.04%
Full Professional License Holders	Full Professional License Holders Working	% Full Professional License Holders Working

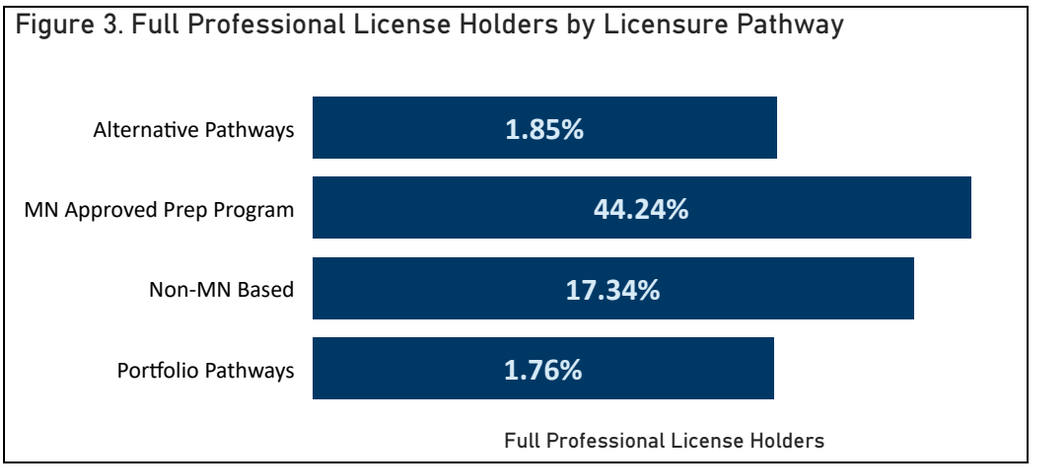


Figure 3. Distribution of Minnesota's full professional license holders across licensure pathways. Licenses without pathways due to no prior Digital Storage are not included.

School Year

2025-2026

Pathway to Licensure Groups

- Select all
- Alternative Pathways
- MN Approved Prep Progra...
- Non-MN Based
- Portfolio Pathways

For 2025-26, Minnesota-approved preparation programs, which include both higher education and alternative programs, account for 44.2% of license holders, while 45% have pathways that predate digital recordkeeping (Figure 3). Non-Minnesota pathways account for 17%, followed by licensure via portfolio (1.8%) and alternative pathways (1.8%).

Licensure pathways contribute differently to Minnesota's educator workforce. While Minnesota approved preparation programs represent a substantial share of full professional license holders, employment rates vary across pathways (Figure 4). Portfolio license holders demonstrate the highest workforce participation (79%), likely due to licensure via portfolio being an experience-based pathway. Educators prepared outside Minnesota have the lowest employment rate among the groups shown (64%), which may reflect the transient nature of out-of-state teachers. Alternative pathways represented the greatest positive change in retention patterns, increasing from 70.9% in 2024-25 to 74.4% in 2025-26.

Note: Educators may hold multiple licenses from multiple pathways.

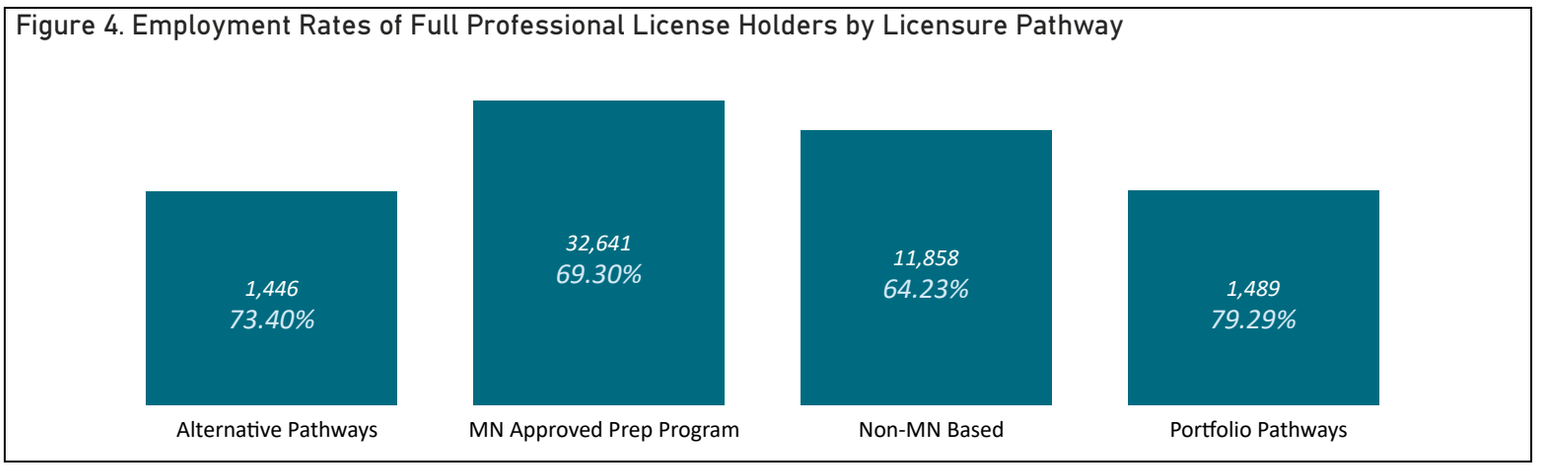


Figure 4. Number and percentage of full professional license holders working in Minnesota by licensure pathway.

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Tier 1 and Tier 2 Progressions

Pathway Details
Pathway Definitions

Tier 1 and Tier 2 License Holders that Progressed to a Tier 3 or Tier 4 License

4,322	786
Year 1	Year 2

Of the 4,322 educators holding Tier 1 or Tier 2 licenses in 2024–25, 786 (18.19%) progressed to Tier 3 or Tier 4 licensure the following year (Figure 5). Progression varied by preparation pathway, with Minnesota-approved preparation programs accounting for the largest number of educators advancing (399), followed by non-MN pathways (201), and alternative pathways (167).

Among educators who progressed, Minnesota-approved preparation programs accounted for 50.76% of transitions, while non-Minnesota-based and alternative pathways accounted for 25.57% and 21.25%, respectively (Table 1). These findings highlight the role of multiple preparation pathways in supporting advancement to professional licensure.

Figure 5. Progression from Tier 1 or Tier 2 to Tier 3 or Tier 4 Licensure

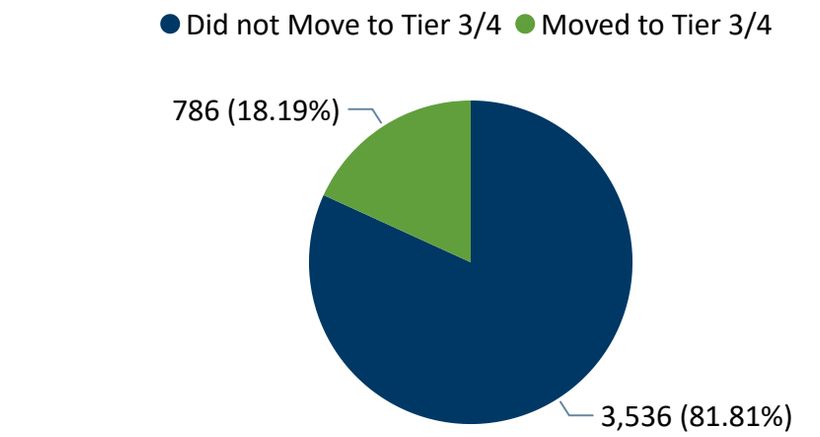


Figure 5. This figure illustrates the proportion of Tier 1 and Tier 2 licensed educators who progressed to Tier 3 or Tier 4 licensure between the selected school year and the following year. ***Note: Year 2 data for 2026-27 has not yet been reported.***

Table 1. Licensure Progression by Preparation Pathway and Starting Tier

Starting Tier	Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 1 & Tier 2 Combined	
Pathway Group	Year 2 Progression by Pathway	Year 2 Progression Pathway %	Year 2 Progression by Pathway	Year 2 Progression Pathway %	Year 2 Progression by Pathway	Year 2 Progression Pathway %
⊞ Portfolio Pathways	15	10.71%	1	0.15%	16	2.04%
⊞ Non-MN Based	70	50.00%	131	20.28%	201	25.57%
⊞ No Data or Prior to Digital Storage	15	10.71%	44	6.81%	59	7.51%
⊞ MN Approved Prep Program	51	36.43%	348	53.87%	399	50.76%
⊞ Alternative Pathways	5	3.57%	162	25.08%	167	21.25%

Table 1. This interactive table presents the number and percentage of Tier 1 and Tier 2 educators progressing to Tier 3 or Tier 4 licensure, disaggregated by preparation pathway and starting license tier. Click the + sign beside each Pathway Group category to see further breakdown of pathways.

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Pathways to a Professional License

Pathway Details
Pathway Definitions

Teacher Preparation and Candidate Data

Minnesota teacher preparation programs contribute the largest number of teachers to the State's educator workforce. There are nearly 600 programs across the state and these programs are administered by higher education institutions and alternative providers. Our most recent data shows Minnesota's teacher preparation programs varied substantially in enrollment and completion during 2024–25 (Table 2). Among the institutions displayed, St. Cloud State University offered the most licensure programs (101), while Winona State University reported the highest enrollment (1,930) and number of completers (642).

Academic Year

All

During the 2024–25 academic year, white candidates accounted for the largest share of both licensed (2,094) and hired (1,094) teacher preparation candidates. Among licensed candidates of color and American Indian candidates, Hispanic (113), Black (95), and Asian (89) candidates represented the largest groups. A similar pattern was observed among hired candidates, with Hispanic (68), Black (67), and multiracial (64) candidates accounting for the largest groups (Figure 6).

Table 2. License Programs, Enrollment and Completer Headcount

Unit Name	Total Programs	Total Enrollment	Total Completed
Augsburg University	93	1,714	352
Bemidji State University	105	4,876	1,214
Bethany Lutheran College	75	488	108
Bethel University	132	2,590	892
Capella University	12	44	20
College of Saint Benedict's and St. John's University	66	1,286	318
College of St. Scholastica	53	1,356	374
Concordia College - Moorhead	80	1,508	432
Concordia University - St. Paul	65	1,756	506
Crown College	36	362	94
Fond du Lac Tribal and	47	34	10

Table 2. This interactive table displays the number of teacher preparation programs (TPPs), enrolled candidates, and program completers by institution. Results can be filtered by academic year.

Figure 6. Teacher Preparation Program Candidates

Unduplicated Headcount by Race/Ethnicity

Career Phase

All



Figure 6. Unduplicated headcount of teacher preparation program candidates in Minnesota by race and ethnicity. Data highlight the racial and ethnic composition of the state's educator preparation pipeline. Results can be filtered by academic year and career phase. Note: Additional teacher preparation data are available in PELSB's Teacher Preparation Summary Data Report.

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Teacher Employment Trends within Districts

Educator employment patterns varied by district type and geographic region during the 2024–25 school year. Traditional public school districts employed the largest number of educators, while charter schools reported proportionally more transfers and newly licensed educators relative to returning staff (Table 3). Across Economic Development Regions, the 7-County Twin Cities accounted for the largest number of returning educators, transfers, and newly licensed Minnesota graduates. However, Upper Minnesota Valley and East Central reported comparatively higher numbers of newly licensed graduates relative to returning staff. When comparing the Twin Cities Metro with Greater Minnesota, differences were relatively modest after accounting for workforce size, although the Metro reported slightly higher levels of educator mobility between Minnesota public schools.

Note: Employment status reflects classifications reported through PELSB's Staff Automated Reporting (STAR) system and should not be interpreted as a direct measure of educator retention.

Table 3. Minnesota Teacher Workforce by Employment Status

Employment Status Description	Employee Headcount
Transferred from Non-Licensed to Licensed Position (staff type transfer)	592
Transferred from Non-Licensed to Licensed Position	477
Transferred from another public Minnesota school	8,239
Transferred from a school in another state, country or non-public school	1,427
Staff returning after a break in service	1,034
Returning Staff	77,088
Newly licensed staff that is an out-of-state or out-of-country graduate	768
Newly Licensed staff that is a Minnesota graduate/ Not reported on STAR previously	2,681
Newly Licensed staff (Minnesota graduate)/ Not reported on STAR previously	2,911
Missed Employment on Previous Report (returning staff)	1,879
Missed Employment on Previous Report	1,144
Long-Term Substitute	612

Filter Options

School Year: All

PELSB District Grouping: All

EDR Display: All

Location: All

Table 3. This interactive table displays educator headcounts by School Year and employment status, including: returning staff, newly licensed educators, transfers, and other employment classifications. Users can filter results by school year, PELSB District Grouping, Economic Development Region (EDR), and location to examine workforce patterns across Minnesota.

- The Upper Minnesota Valley region had the highest ratio of newly licensed Minnesota graduates to returning staff (6.9 per 100), followed by East Central (5.6) and Southwest (4.9). Northwest (2.7) and Arrowhead (3.0) had the lowest ratios. These differences may reflect variation in educator preparation pipelines, recruitment practices, or workforce needs.

- Transfers from other Minnesota public schools were particularly prominent in East Central, Southeast, North Central, and the Twin Cities. For example, East Central reported approximately 8.4 transfers per 100 returning staff, compared with 4.9 in Northwest. The Twin Cities accounted for the largest absolute number of transfers (2,896), consistent with its substantially larger educator workforce.

Retired Teachers Returning

206

On the 2025-2026 District Survey, 168 districts indicated that they invited retired teachers to return to fill vacant positions.

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Addressing Supply Through Recruitment and Retention

PELSB's *2026 Supply & Demand District Survey* asked districts to identify which programs administered by Minnesota Department of Education's Educator Workforce and Development Center helped them recruit and support non-licensed personnel to obtain full, professional licensure. Approximately half of district respondents indicated they did not utilize any programs. Of the remaining half, 42% reported using the Special Education Teacher Pathway Program, and 19% used Grow Your Own (GYO) pathways. Between 1% to 5% reported using other programs (Figure 7).

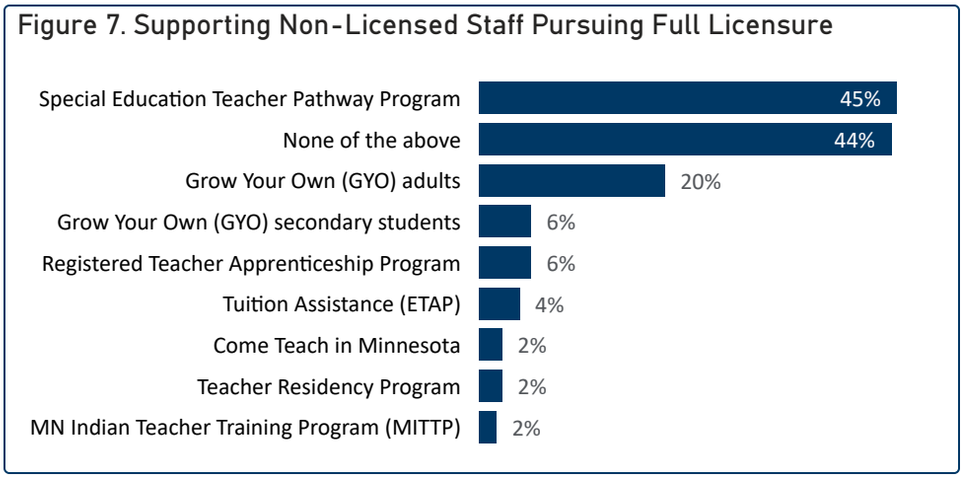


Figure 7. Percentage of responding districts reporting strategies or programs used to support non-licensed staff pursuing educator licensure.

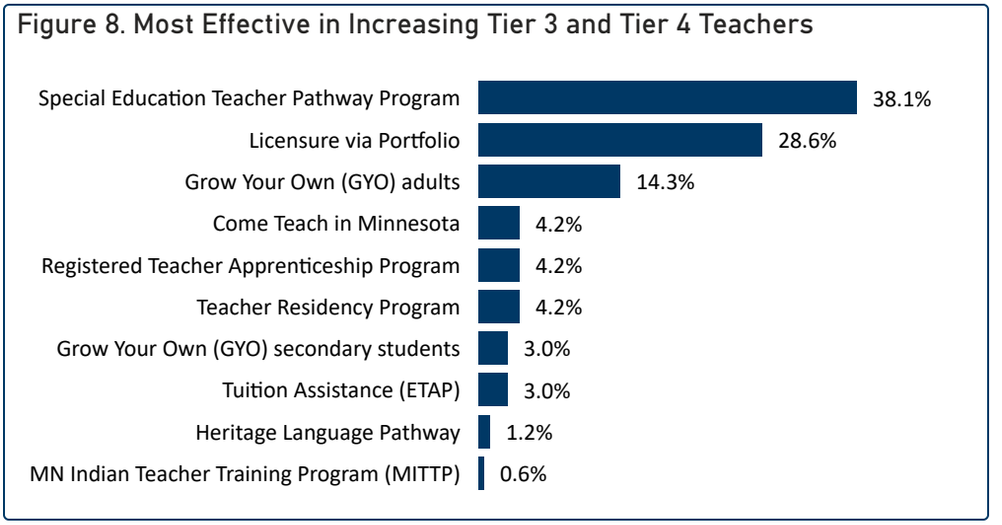


Figure 8. Percentage of responding districts identifying strategies as effective in increasing the number of Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed teachers.

When evaluating strategies to increase Tier 3 and Tier 4 licensed teachers, districts most frequently identified Special Education Teacher Pathway programs (38%) and licensure through portfolio (29%) as effective (Figure 8).

Districts reported varying levels of effectiveness and utilization of recruitment incentives for non-licensed staff pursuing educator licensure. State grants for student teaching, loan forgiveness programs, and tuition grants were among the least utilized incentives. Increased pay and work-based licensure programs received the highest shares of "Very Effective" ratings (Figure 9).

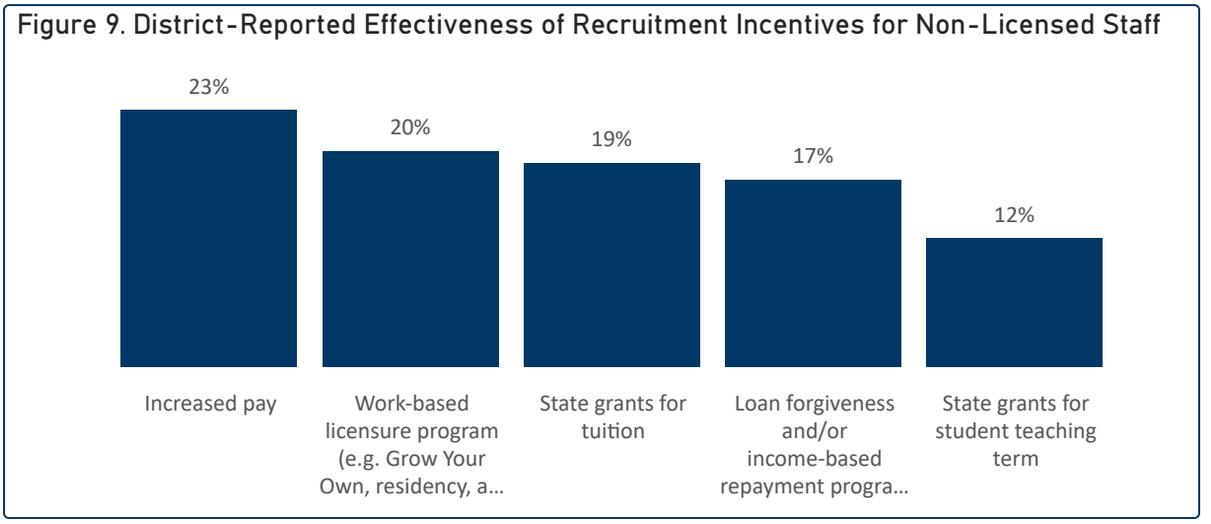


Figure 9. Percentage of responding districts rating selected incentives as not effective, slightly effective, very effective, or not used.

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Addressing Supply Through Recruitment and Retention

Five-year educator retention varied by district type and geographic region in 2025–26. On average, 79% of educators remained employed in Minnesota statewide, while 67% remained in the same district and 57% in the same school. Charter schools reported substantially lower retention than traditional public school districts, particularly at the school level (39% versus 58%). Statewide retention was similar in Greater Minnesota (79%) and the Twin Cities Metro (78%), although same-school retention was higher in Greater Minnesota (59% versus 54%). Across Economic Development Regions, same-school retention ranged from 53% in Upper Minnesota Valley to 64% in Northwest, highlighting regional differences in workforce stability (Figure 10).

Retention also varied considerably by educator preparation pathway. When filtered by Pathway Group, Portfolio Pathways demonstrated the highest five-year retention, with 91% of educators remaining employed in Minnesota, followed by Alternative Pathways (77%), Minnesota-approved preparation programs (74%), and non-Minnesota-based pathways (59%). Portfolio Pathways also reported the highest same-district retention (76%), compared with 61% for Alternative Pathways, 58% for Minnesota-approved programs, and 47% for non-Minnesota-based pathways.

These findings suggest that preparation pathways may be associated with differences in long-term workforce participation and mobility, although additional analysis is needed to determine whether these differences reflect program characteristics, educator demographics, or prior professional experience.

Note: Percentages displayed in Figure 10 while filter options are set to 'All' are the average of all possible categories for that filter.

Figure 10. Detailed Retention Count by Retention Level

Educators who held a full, professional license in Year 5 and were was also reported as working in Year 1.

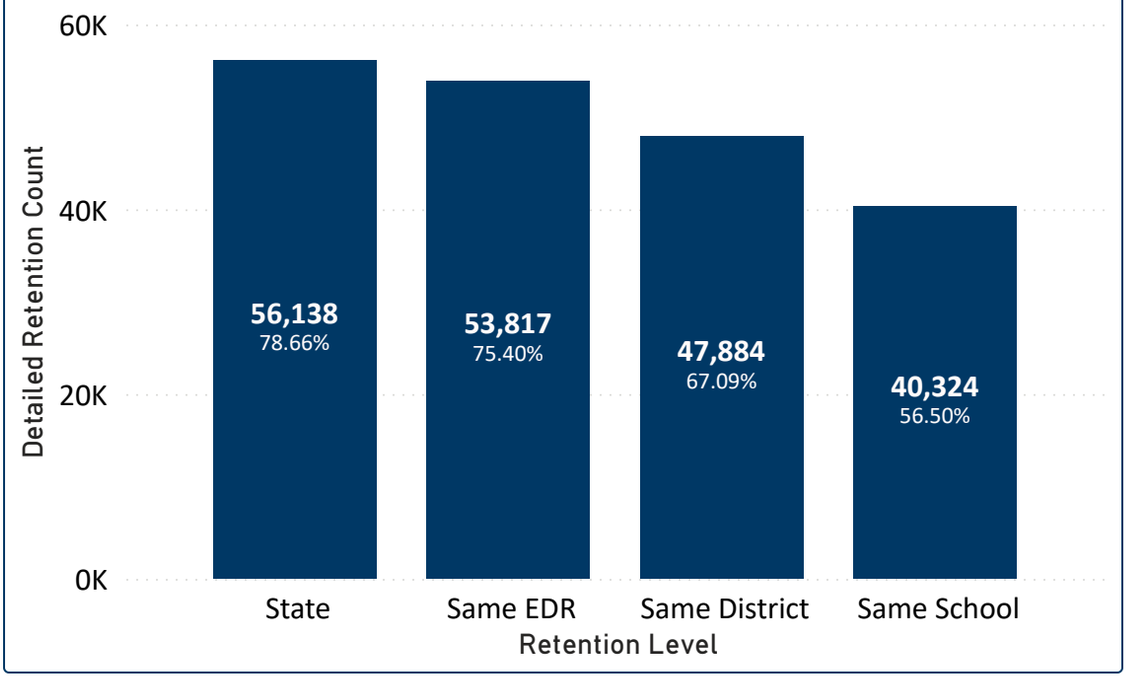


Figure 10. Educator retention levels at the State, Economic Development Region, District, and School Level. Users may further filter it by School Year, filtered by Assignment, Race, Licensure Pathway, and District measures.

Educator Filter Options

Race
All

Assignment
All

Pathway Group
All

District Filter Options

EDR
All

District Group
All

State Location
All

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Addressing Supply Through Recruitment and Retention

Teacher Attrition Rates

PELSB defines teacher attrition as the percentage of school teachers who taught in the state during one school year but did not return to teach in Minnesota schools the following school year. State data show that attrition rates are highest for teachers in their first five years of teaching. Figure 11 illustrates changes in the number of Minnesota teachers remaining employed during their first five years, based on the selected cohort year. For the 2020–21 cohort, the number of returning teachers declined from 1,736 in Year 1 to 1,180 in Year 5, representing a cumulative decrease of 32% (highlighted in red at the Year 5 marker). Percentages indicate the cumulative reduction in returning teachers relative to Year 1.

Cohort Year indicates the number of staff reported as newly licensed employment status for the first time. Following years indicates how many in the selected cohort returned. The Cohort Year number includes all license types and tier levels.

Cohort Year

2021-2022

Figure 11. Teacher Retention and Attrition Over Five Years by Employment Cohort

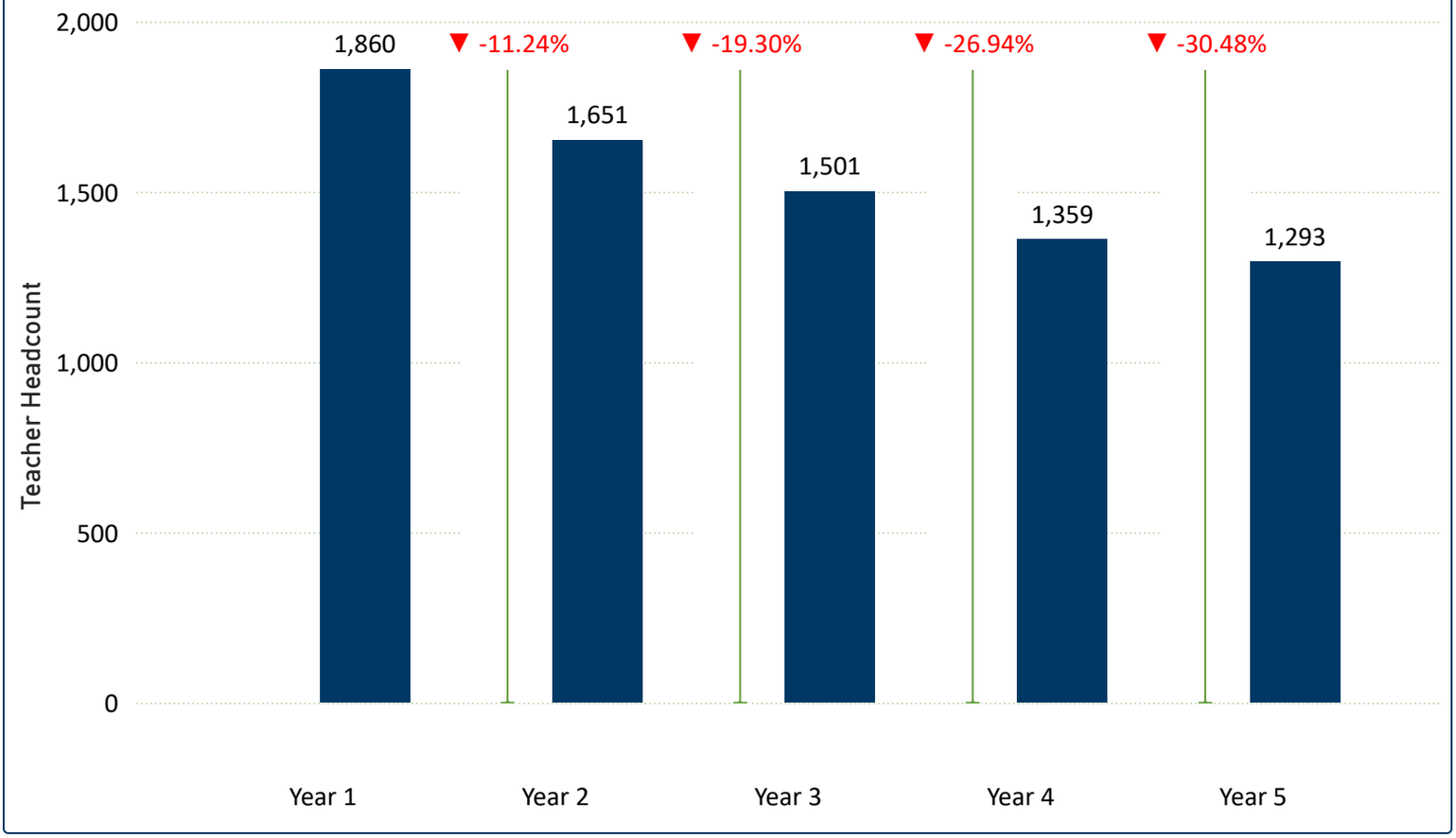


Figure 11. Number of teachers returning in each of the first five years following initial employment, by selected cohort. Percentages indicate cumulative attrition relative to Year 1.

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Addressing Supply Through Recruitment and Retention

To better understand the teacher workforce, PELSB launched an annual Classroom Teacher Survey to gather data from teachers working in Minnesota public schools. The survey asked what factors effect working teachers' likelihood of staying in the profession.

6.1 / 10
Average Job Satisfaction

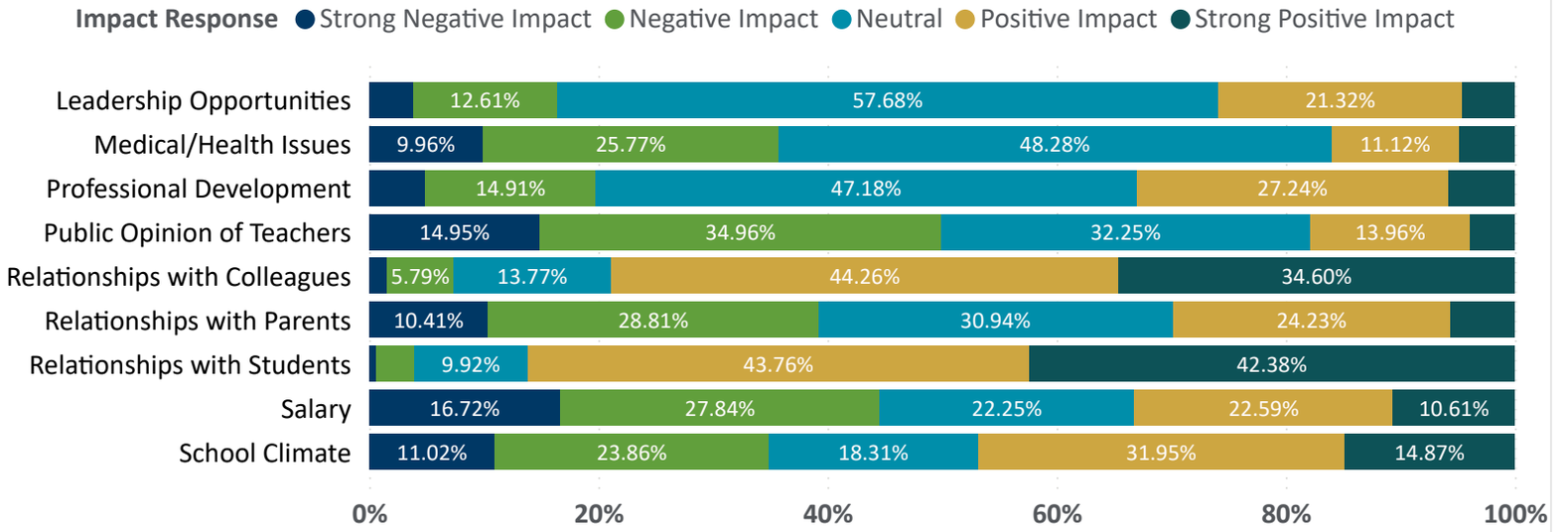
64%
Satisfied With Job

78%
Staying At Current School

Age: All | Gender: All | Race/Ethnicity: All | Location: All

Figure 12. Factors Influencing Teachers' Likelihood of Remaining in the Profession. Note: Percentages represent respondents' ratings of each factor as having a strong negative, negative, neutral, positive, or strong positive impact on their likelihood of remaining in the teaching profession.

Figure 12. What teachers report impacts their likelihood of staying in their current role.



Of those factors, respondents indicated that relationships with their students had the strongest impact on their likelihood of staying (Figure 12). Survey responses suggest that financial concerns are an important consideration for Minnesota teachers. Approximately 59% disagreed that they were satisfied with their teaching salary, while 58% disagreed that their pay reflected their qualifications. Nearly half (49%) disagreed that teaching provided financial security. Additionally, 53% agreed that their income limited their lifestyle, highlighting the financial pressures experienced by educators (Table 4).

Table 4. Pay and Financial Wellbeing

Teachers' perceptions of compensation, financial security, and financial constraints

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Income Covers Normal Expenses	21%	33%	17%	27%	3%
Income Limits Lifestyle	5%	20%	22%	34%	19%
Pay Reflects My Qualifications	22%	36%	16%	22%	3%
Satisfied with Teaching Salary	24%	35%	19%	19%	2%
Student Debt Limits Career Choices	29%	21%	23%	13%	14%
Teaching Provides Financial Security	18%	31%	25%	24%	2%

The Supply of Teachers in Minnesota

Addressing Supply Through Recruitment and Retention

While The Classroom Teacher Survey provides valuable insights into our current educator workforce, it does not reflect the view of teachers who are licensed but not reported as teaching this past school year. To better understand the latter group, PELSB launched an annual Teacher Retention Survey this year which surveys licensed teachers not working in a public school setting.

Age: All

Workplace EDR: All

Gender: All

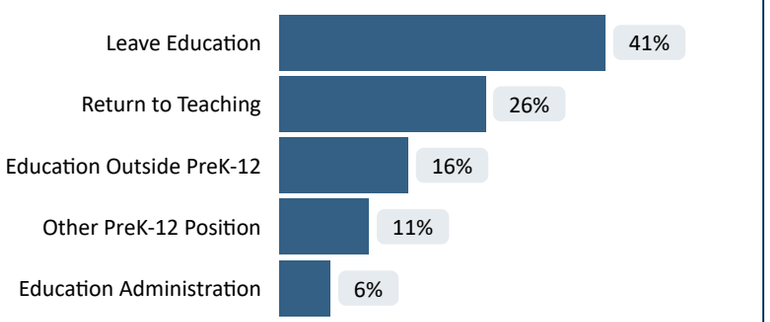
Race/Ethnicity: All

Licensure Area: All

Retention Group (for Figure 15 below): Not in Classroom Teaching | Staying in Teaching

Note: Some respondents may not have a Work EDR because they were no longer employed in education. Keep that in mind when interpreting regional comparisons.

Figure 13. Future Employment Plans of Survey Respondents



Among respondents who remained in teaching, relationships with students, school climate, and collegial relationships were important positive influences, while salary, leadership opportunities, and professional development received more mixed assessments (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Employment Status of Survey Respondents, SY 2025–26.

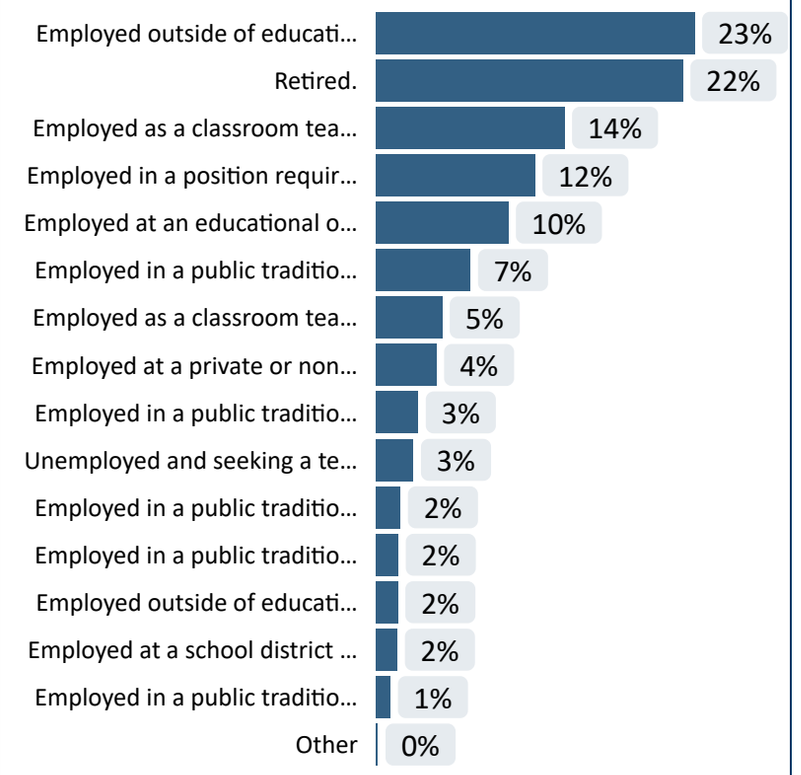
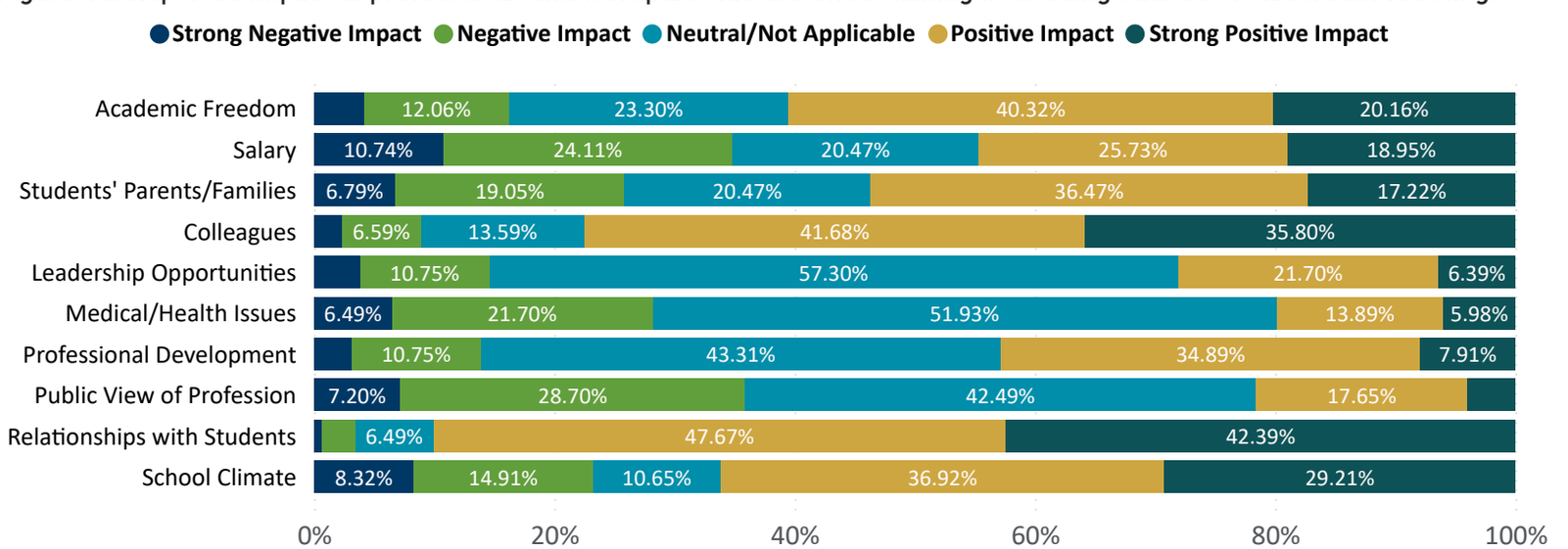


Figure 15. Reported impact of professional and workplace factors on remaining in or being outside of classroom teaching.



The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Shortage areas reported by PELSB are licensure fields where at least 5% of educators working in that area do not hold a full professional license. This definition helps us understand the long-term needs of schools. Because teachers with Tier 1 licenses, Tier 2 licenses, or a permission to teach out of field are only able to work in a licensure area for a set period of time in a specific public school district, they do not represent a permanent teacher supply. As such, the State must find ways to support these teachers in obtaining full licensure in the relevant areas to address teacher demand.

In addition to the above definition, PELSB collects vacancy information through the annual District Survey. PELSB continues to advocate for the means to systemize the collection of vacancy data to aid in the State's understanding of teacher shortages.

Teacher Shortages

Minnesota Statutes 122A.06, subd. 6 defines teacher shortages as:

- licensure fields and economic development regions (EDRs) reported by PELSB as experiencing a teacher shortage; and
- EDRs where the aggregate percentage of American Indian teachers and teachers of color in the region is lower than the aggregate percentage of American Indian students and students of color in that region.



The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Shortage Areas

Assignment Details
License Area Details
Teacher Prep Enrollment

Consistent with previous years, the teaching areas with the highest number of teachers using a Tier 1 license, Tier 2 license , or a special permission are in special education and elementary education. Career and Technical Education (CTE) fields demonstrated particularly high concentrations, including Medical Careers (78%), Transportation Careers (74%), Manufacturing (69%), and Construction Careers (66%). Academic and Behavioral Strategist also had a notably high proportion (46%), reflecting continued staffing pressures in specialized education settings.

Core academic areas, including Mathematics (767 assignments), English as a Second Language (663), and Science (574), also relied substantially on Tier 1, Tier 2, and special permissions. Together, these findings suggest that educator supply challenges extend beyond traditional shortage areas, affecting specialized instruction, career and technical education, and core academic subjects.

School Year: 2025-2026

Table 5 lists teaching assignments and the number of teachers working in that assignment area using a Tier 1 license, Tier 2 license, or permission. This table can be sorted to show the areas with the highest number of teachers working in a teaching assignment without a full professional license.

Table 6 lists teacher preparation enrollment and completion numbers by licensure program, providing some insight as to how current teacher preparation program enrollment might address these shortage areas.

Key Takeaways:

- Emotional Behavior Disorders reported 380 Tier 1, Tier 2, and special permission assignments, compared with just 24 program completers, representing a 98.6% shortage.
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (285 assignments) and Learning Disabilities (268 assignments) also demonstrated substantial reliance on these assignments relative to teacher preparation- with an 82% and and 90% shortage, respectively.
- Similar patterns were observed in English as a Second Language (275 assignments) and Mathematics (191 assignments), with 69% and 61% shortage, respectively.

Table 5. Tier 1, Tier 2, Permissions, Out of Compliance Headcount by Assignment Content Area

Assignment Content Area	Tier 1, Tier 2, Permissions, Out of Compliance Headcount	Assignment Total Headcount	Percent of Tier 1, Tier 2, Permissions, Out of Compliance
Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS)	765	2193	34.88%
Adult Basic Educations (ABE)	20	321	6.23%
Agriculture Education (AFNR)	51	317	16.09%
Agriculture Education (non-CTE)	24	137	17.52%
American Sign Language	15	43	34.88%
ARABIC	18	24	75.00%
Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	352	1855	18.98%
Bilingual Education		6	

Table 5. This table presents the headcount of instructional assignments filled by educators holding Tier 1 or Tier 2 licenses, serving under special permissions, or working out of compliance, organized by assignment content area.

Table 6. Enrollment and Completion Headcount for Preparation Programs

License Program	Total Enrollment	Total Completed
Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS)	1,512	351
Adult Basic Education	16	7
Agriculture Education	32	10
Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	211	52
Bilingual Bicultural	7	0
Business Education	23	4
Career Pathways: Cosmetology	2	0
Chemistry	56	16

Table 6. This table lists the number of individuals enrolled in and completing preparation programs associated with each licensure program areas, providing context for the educator preparation pipeline relative to staffing needs.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Shortage Areas: Location

License Area Details
Assignment Details

While teacher shortages are relatively similar across economic development regions, they tend to vary across Minnesota's district types. Public charter schools continued to have the highest proportion of Tier 1, Tier 2, and special permission assignments in 2025–2026 (23.21%), followed by other public educational institutions (16.71%) and traditional public school districts (7.11%). Compared with 2024–25, these proportions remained relatively stable, with slight declines among traditional public schools and other public educational institutions and a marginal increase among charter schools (Table 7).

Although traditional public school districts accounted for the largest number of these assignments (4,792), charter schools continued to rely on these licensure categories at a substantially higher rate relative to their educator headcount. This disparity may reflect unique recruitment and staffing challenges faced by charter schools, including smaller staffing pools, limited recruitment capacity, and competition for fully licensed educators. These findings highlight the importance of considering district-specific circumstances when developing strategies to strengthen Minnesota's teacher workforce.

A high percentage is not evidence of a severe shortage. Some specialized licensure areas have relatively small educator headcounts, which can produce high percentages even when the number of assignments is modest.

School Year: All | District Type: All | EDR Display: All | Location: All

Table 7. Tier 1, Tier 2, and Special Permission Assignments by Content Area

Assignment Content Area	Tier 1	Tier 2	Out-of-Field Permission	Cross-Curricular Delivery Permission	Out of Compliance	Tier 1, Tier 2, Permissions, Out of Compliance Total	Total Headcount	Percentage
Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS)	409	547	725		51	1,661	3,616	45.93%
Adult Basic Educations (ABE)	13	22	5		7	45	524	8.59%
Agriculture Education (AFNR)	36	49	39		7	121	475	25.47%
Agriculture Education (non-CTE)	20	21	17		6	61	254	24.02%
American Indian Studies			1		5	6	115	5.22%
American Sign Language	17	16	18		3	47	68	69.12%
ARABIC	27	7	4		6	37	43	86.05%
Autism Spectrum	149	321	479		34	942	3,230	29.16%
Total	**2,874**	**4,875**	**6,816**	**733**	**1,266**	**14,931**	**83,098**	**17.97%**

Table 7. This table presents the number and percentage of teaching assignments filled by educators holding Tier 1 or Tier 2 licenses or serving under special permissions, including out-of-field, cross-curricular delivery, and out-of-compliance permissions. Results are organized by assignment content area, with percentages reflecting the proportion of total assignments within each content area that fall into these categories.

Notes:

- *"Other Instructional Assignments" include Adult Basic Education and Life Skills, which are assignments that do not fall under a specific licensure area. Those areas are not listed in this table.*
- *The Dakota and Ojibwe language assignment content areas are classified as World Language and Cultures licenses, not as American Indian History, Language, and Culture licenses.*

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Teacher and Student Demographics

Minnesota's teacher workforce remains considerably less racially and ethnically diverse than its student population, although modest improvements occurred between 2024–25 and 2025–26 (Table 8). As a result, all regions fit within the definition of a teacher shortage in Minn. Statutes 122A.06, subd. 6.

The proportion of white teachers declined from 92.1% to 91.4%, while representation increased among Asian (2.44% to 2.78%), Hispanic (2.37% to 2.55%), and Black educators (1.81% to 1.93%). Despite these gains, disparities persist. In 2025–2026, Black and Hispanic students accounted for 12.6% and 12.1% of enrollment, respectively, compared with 1.9% and 2.6% of teachers (Figure 17).

These findings highlight incremental progress alongside continued opportunities to strengthen workforce diversity.

EDR: All

School Year: 2025-2026

Table 8. Racial and Ethnic Composition of Minnesota Students and Teachers

Race/Ethnicity	Student Race Headcount	Student Race Percentage	Teacher Race Headcount	Teacher Race Percentage
White	518,783	59.41%	52,565	91.43%
Multiracial	59,516	6.82%	545	0.95%
Hispanic	105,538	12.09%	1,464	2.55%
Hawai'ian Native or Pacific Islander	1,116	0.13%	12	0.02%
Asian	62,538	7.16%	1,599	2.78%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	15,372	1.76%	200	0.35%
African American or Black	110,312	12.63%	1,110	1.93%
Total	**873,175**	**100.00%**	**57,495**	**100.00%**

Table 8. This table compares the racial and ethnic composition of Minnesota's student population and classroom teacher workforce by headcount and percentage. Results can be filtered by school year and Economic Development Region (EDR) to examine differences in representation across the state.

Figure 16. Changes in Teacher Racial and Ethnic Representation, 2024–2026

Excludes white teachers from display

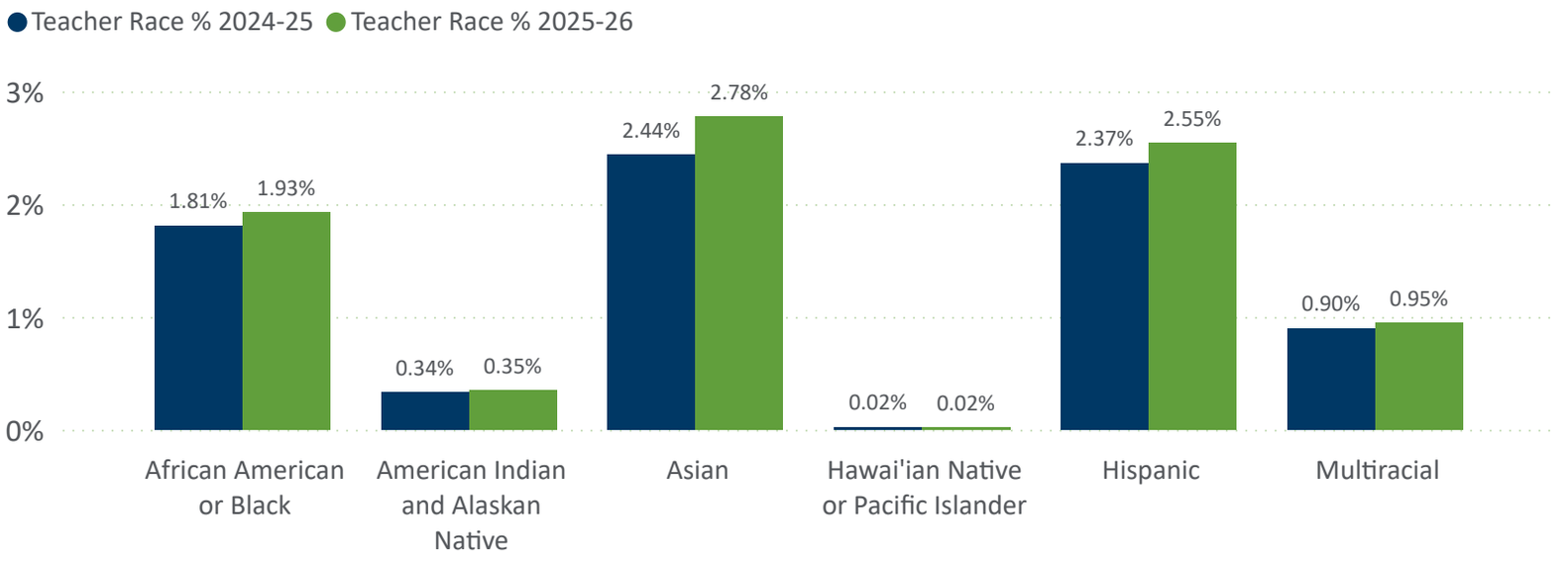


Figure 16. This figure compares the racial and ethnic composition of Minnesota's teacher workforce between the 2024–25 and 2025–26 school years. White teachers are excluded from the display to highlight changes among teachers of color but remain included in the percentage calculations. Results indicate modest increases in representation across most racial and ethnic groups.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Related Services Shortages

During the 2025–26 school year, Tier 4 licenses accounted for the largest share of assignments across the related service categories shown. However, Tier 2 licenses and out-of-field permissions were also used, particularly in school counseling and school psychology (Table 9). Illustrated in Figure 17, Tier 4 licenses account for the largest share of assignments in each related service category. School psychologists appear to have a comparatively higher proportion of assignments filled through Tier 2 licenses, while school social workers have a relatively higher proportion of Tier 3 and Tier 4 licenses.

School Year: 2025-2026 | EDR: All | Location: All | District Type: All | Related Service Assignments: All

Table 9. Related Service Assignments by Licensure Tier and Permission Type

Related Service Assignment	Expired License	Out-of-Field Permission	Tier 2 License	Tier 3 License	Tier 4 License	Wrong License
School Counselor		8	21	313	1,350	1
School Nurse				270	390	
School Psychologist		6	80	151	686	
School Social Worker	1			532	1,037	
Speech Language Pathologist	1	1	35	454	1,484	

Table 9. This table presents the number of related service assignments by licensure tier and permission type, including Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 4, expired licenses, out-of-field permissions, and assignments held under an incorrect license.

Figure 17. Distribution of Related Service Assignments by Licensure Status

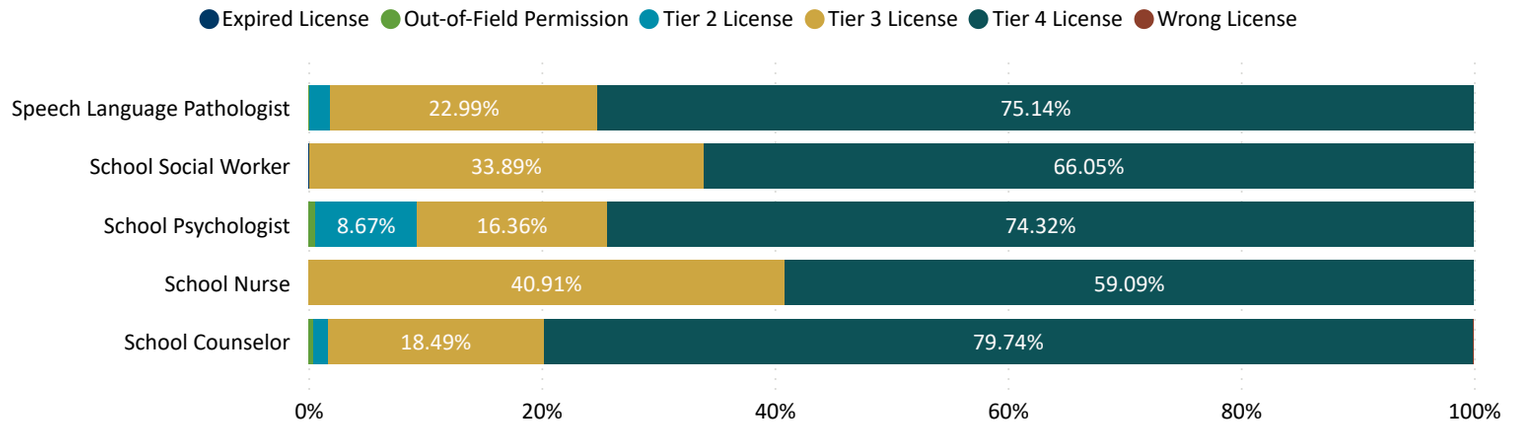


Figure 17. Percentage distribution of related service assignments by licensure tier and permission type. The figure highlights differences in the proportion of assignments filled by professionally licensed educators and those serving under Tier 2 licenses or special permissions.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Substitute Teachers

In addition to a shortage of permanent, professionally licensed educators, Minnesota public school districts also struggle to fill substitute teaching positions. These positions fall into one of the following categories:

Long-Term Substitute: An educator who may replace the same teacher of record, or to fill a vacancy, for more than 20 consecutive school days. To serve as a long-term substitute, the individual must hold one of the following licenses:

- A Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, Tier 4, or permission aligned to the assignment
- Lifetime substitute teaching license

Note: The individual's expired license must be aligned to the assignment and the individual must be filling in for a teacher on an approved leave of absence.

Short-Call Substitute: An educator who may replace the same teacher of record, or to fill a vacancy, for no more than 20 consecutive school days. CTE/Career Pathways Short-Call Substitute is only able to work in CTE or career pathway courses. To serve as a short-call substitute, the individual must hold one of the following licenses:

- Short-call substitute teaching license
- Lifetime substitute teaching license
- A Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 license

Emergency Short-Call Substitute: An educator who may replace the same teacher of record, or fill a vacancy, for up to 10 consecutive days. Established in July 2025, this license does not require a BA.

Lifetime Short-Call Substitute: An educator who held a full, professional educator license and has retired may work as a short-call substitute in any content area, or a long-term substitute within the content area of their previous license.

Changes in Short-Call Substitute Licensure, 2024–2026

Standard short-call substitute teaching licenses continued to represent the largest share of Minnesota's short-call substitute licenses, accounting for 95.3% in 2024–25 and 94.4% in 2025–26. During the same period, lifetime short-call substitute licenses increased from approximately 2.1% to 3.1%, while CTE/Career Pathways licenses remained a small share of the total.

The 2025–26 school year also marked the introduction of the Emergency Short-Call Substitute license, which accounted for approximately 2.0% of short-call substitute licenses. Together, these findings indicate that standard short-call substitute licenses remain the primary licensure category, while newer and specialized pathways provide additional staffing options for districts experiencing substitute shortages (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Short-Call Substitute Licenses by License Type

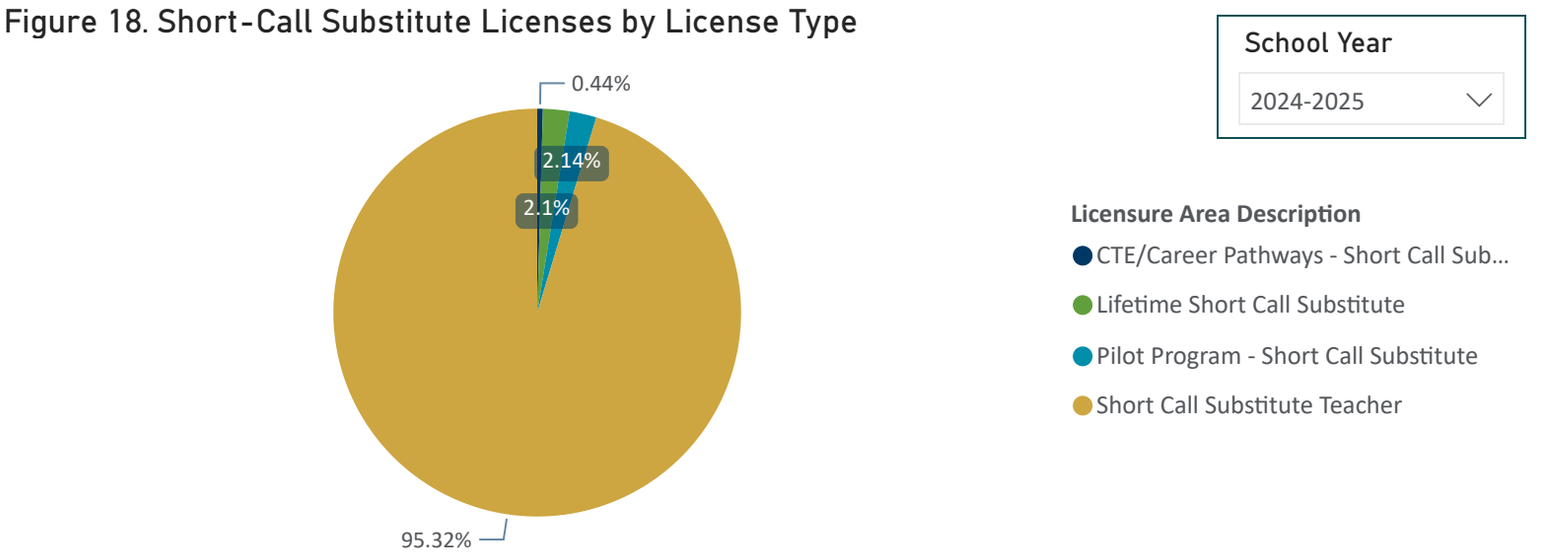


Figure 18. Distribution of short-call substitute licenses in Minnesota as of June 30, 2026 by license type. Figure may be filtered by school year.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

District Survey: Short-Call Substitutes

An estimated 6,880 short-call substitutes were used during the 2025-2026 school year.

Table 10. Factors Contributing to Difficulty Filling Short-Call Substitute Positions

Reasons for Staffing Difficulties	Percentage of Districts
Length/Days of the Position	1%
Financial or Cost	5%
Length (Hours) of the Position	8%
No Difficulties Filling Substitute Positions	17%
Length (Days) of the Position	18%
Location	18%
Grade Level	26%
Number and Availability of Substitutes	31%
Content or Licensure Area	32%

Table 10. Percentage of responding Minnesota school districts identifying factors that make short-call substitute positions difficult to fill during the 2025–26 school year.

During the 2025–26 school year, Minnesota school districts identified several challenges in filling short-call substitute positions. The most frequently reported barriers were content or licensure area (32%), the number and availability of substitutes (31%), and grade level (26%). Position length and location were also identified as contributing factors, while financial considerations were reported less frequently (5%). Notably, 17% of responding districts reported no difficulties filling substitute positions. These findings suggest that substitute staffing challenges vary by assignment requirements and the availability of qualified personnel (Table 10).

Districts reported that other factors contributing to short-call substitute shortages are last minute absences, nature of the school setting or classroom pedagogical models, needing multiple short-call substitutes due to the inability of finding a long-term substitute, the start time of the school, and specialized training needed for the position.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of districts surveyed indicated alternative staffing options were the most frequently utilized approached. Alternative staffing options include combining classes, or having staff fill in during their classroom preparation hour (Figure 19).

These options were followed by district substitute pools (58%) and retired teachers (48%).

Figure 19. How Districts Fill Short-Call Substitute Positions

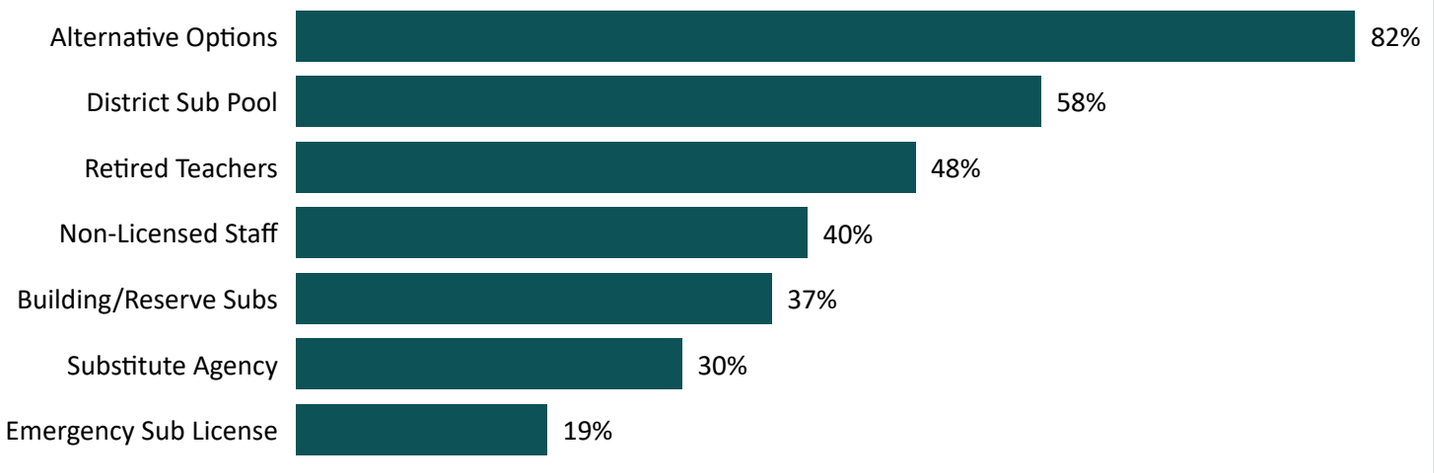


Figure 19. Percentage of responding districts reporting strategies used to fill short-call substitute positions, including alternative staffing arrangements, substitute pools, and retired teachers. Multiple responses were permitted, therefore, percentages in Figure 19 do not total 100%.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

District Survey: Long-Term Substitutes

An estimated 1,077 long-term substitutes were used during the 2025-2026 school year.

Table 11. Challenges in Filling Long-Term Substitute Positions

Reasons Filling Positions is Difficult	Percentage of Districts
No difficulties filling long term substitute positions	16%
Location	16%
Length (Days) of the position	25%
Grade Level	27%
Content or Licensure Area	61%
availability of appropriately licensed individuals	17%

Table 11. Percentage of responding districts identifying factors that make long-term substitute positions difficult to fill.

Across the state, districts report financial costs, classroom pedagogical models, lack of training, and lack of willingness to commit as reasons long-term substitute positions are difficult to fill.

Content or licensure area was the most frequently reported challenge (61%). Eighty percent (80%) of districts completing the survey identified Special Education as the hardest positions to fill. Fifty-three (53%) of the districts identified Career and Technical Education, followed by mathematics (48%), and science (47%) as the next hardest to fill positions (Table 11).

Grade level was the second most frequently cited challenge in filling long-term substitute positions (27%). On average, early childhood, kindergarten, and elementary positions collectively accounted for over 34% of reported grade-level challenges. Eighty-four percent (84%) of districts reported difficulty staffing middle school positions, and 62% reported difficulty with high school grade levels.

One district stated that filling a long-term substitute position "depends on the position - we try to contain costs and choose what is best for the kids."

Figure 20. Strategies for Filling Long-Term Substitute Positions

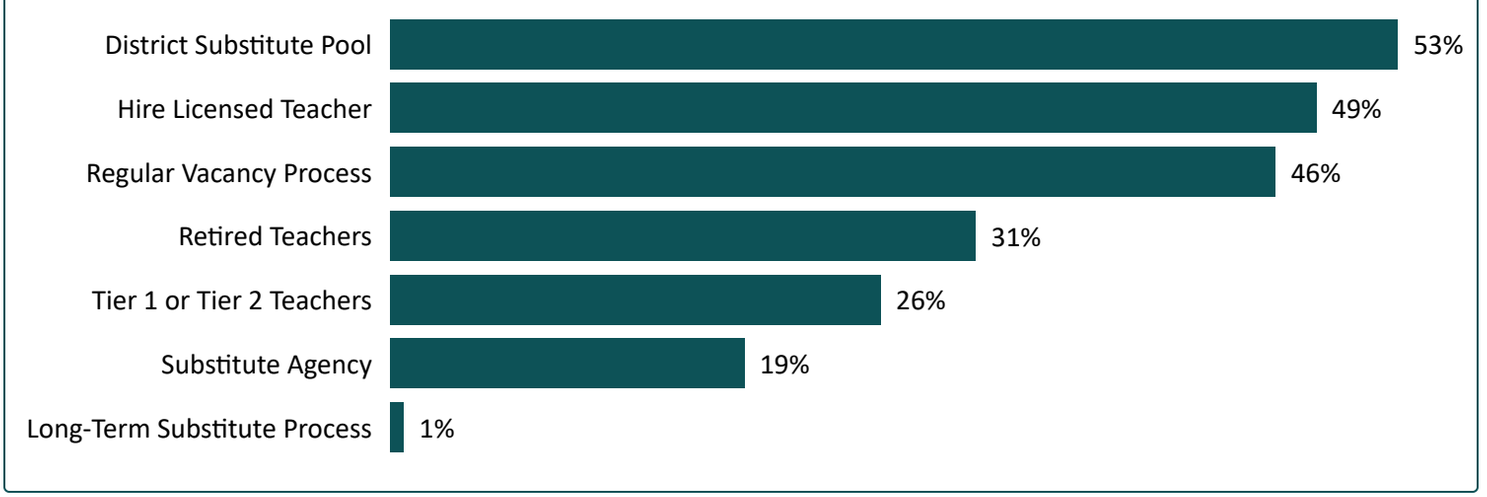


Figure 20. Percentage of responding districts reporting the use of various strategies to fill short-term substitute positions. Multiple responses were permitted, therefore, percentages in Figure 20 do not total 100%.

The most commonly reported strategies to fill positions were utilizing district substitute pools (53%), hiring fully licensed teachers (49%), and following the same procedures used to fill regular vacancies (46%).

Other options not shown below included contracting through a third-party business for related service positions, combining classes, community connections, or cover internally (Figure 20). Several districts indicated they have had trouble filling long-term substitute positions. 139 of 163 districts completed this portion of the *2026 Supply & Demand District Survey*.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

District Survey: Vacancies

Of the districts that responded to questions about unfilled positions, about 10% reported at least one unfilled position during the 2025–26 school year (Figure 21), where unfilled positions are defined as those that remained vacant or were canceled due to a lack of appropriately licensed candidates. The majority of these unfilled positions were in related services, CTE, and special education. The data collected via survey reflects reports from the field that there remains a great, unfilled demand in these areas.

Figure 21. Unfilled Teaching Positions by Content Area, 2025–26

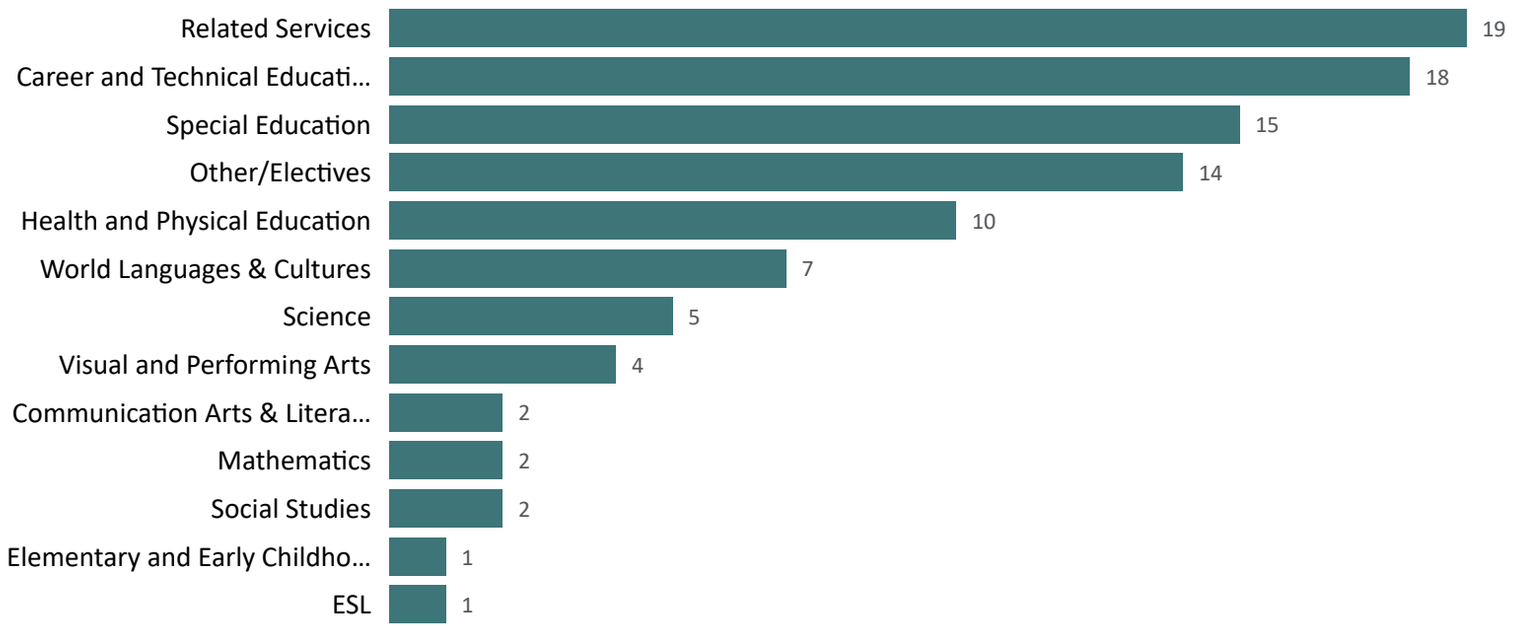


Figure 21. Number of unfilled positions reported by school districts, categorized by content area. Districts could report unfilled positions in multiple content areas.

While advertised positions do not necessarily represent unfilled vacancies, they provide an important measure of district recruitment activity and potential staffing pressures.

During the 2025–26 school year, responding districts reported advertising 2,730 teaching positions, reflecting continued demand for educators across multiple content areas. Special Education accounted for the largest number of advertised positions (973), representing approximately 35% of all reported openings, followed by Elementary and Early Childhood Education (576, or 21%). Together, these two areas accounted for approximately 56% of advertised teaching positions (Table 12).

Recruitment needs also extended to Related Services (252 positions), Other/Electives (206), Communication Arts and Literature (97), and Science (91). Additional openings were reported in Career and Technical Education (89), Health and Physical Education (87), English as a Second Language (87), and Mathematics (83).

Table 12. Advertised Teaching Positions by Content Area, 2025–26

Position Content Area	Number of Positions Posted
Career and Technical Education	89
Communication Arts & Literature	97
Elementary and Early Childhood	576
ESL	87
Health and Physical Education	87
Mathematics	83
Other/Electives	206
Related Services	252
Science	91

Table 12. Number of teaching positions advertised by responding school districts during the 2025–26 school year, categorized by content area.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Leaves of Absence

Educator leaves of absence can contribute to staffing challenges by creating temporary vacancies that districts must fill to maintain instructional continuity. This section examines reported reasons for educator leave during the 2025–26 school year and provides comparisons with the 2024–25 school year. Results can be filtered by district grouping, Economic Development Region (EDR), and location.

Reported educator leaves of absence declined across most categories between 2024–25 and 2025–26 (Figure 22). The largest decrease occurred among educators reporting personal obligations or other reasons, while extended leave, alternative career exploration, or sabbatical remained one of the most common categories. These findings suggest fewer reported educator absences across several categories, although temporary staffing needs remain an ongoing consideration for districts.

School Year: All | PELSB District Grouping: All | EDR Display: All | Location: All

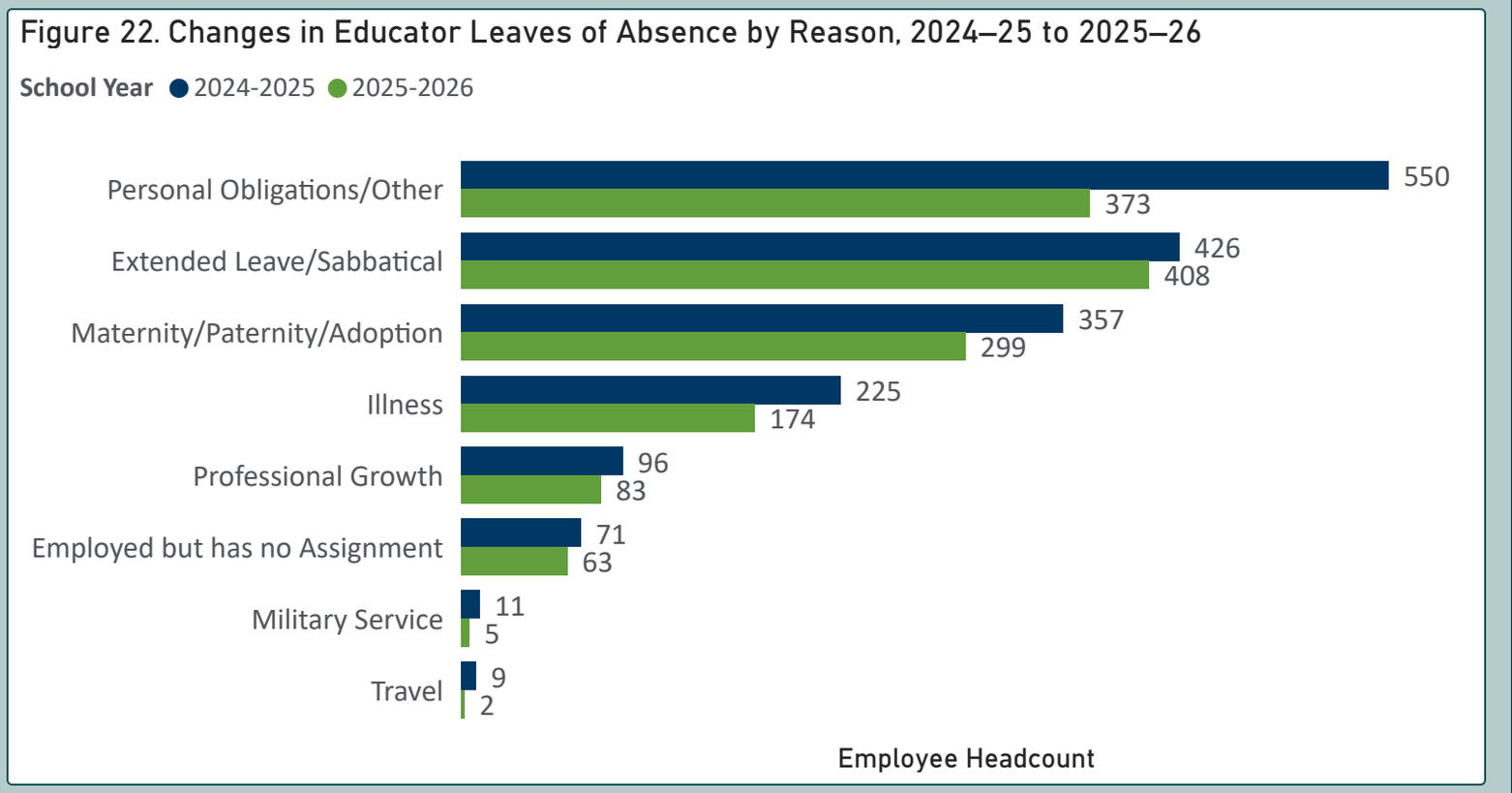


Figure 22. Comparison of unduplicated educator headcounts by reported leave or employment-status category for the 2024–25 and 2025–26 school years. Results can be filtered by district grouping, Economic Development Region (EDR), and location. Note: These figures represent reported counts rather than rates relative to workforce size. Consequently, differences between district types and geographic regions should not necessarily be interpreted as differences in the likelihood of educators taking leave.

Patterns of educator leaves of absence varied by district type and geographic location. Traditional public school districts accounted for the largest number of reported leaves, with declines across all categories between 2024–25 and 2025–26. Charter schools reported fewer leaves overall, although illness-related leaves increased from 4 to 12 and personal obligations increased from 33 to 39. Geographic differences were also evident. Greater Minnesota experienced notable declines in leaves for personal obligations (184 to 86) and extended leave or sabbatical (133 to 87). In contrast, the Twin Cities Metro experienced an increase in extended leaves or sabbaticals (293 to 321), despite declines in most other categories. These findings suggest that educator absence patterns vary across district types and regions, highlighting the importance of considering local staffing needs when addressing temporary vacancies.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Terminations, Resignations, Transfers

Educator departures contribute to workforce turnover and create staffing needs across Minnesota school districts. This section examines reported reasons for leaving a district during the 2025–26 school year and compares departure patterns with the 2024–25 school year. Results can be filtered by district grouping, Economic Development Region (EDR), and location.

School Year	District Type	EDR Display	Location
All	All	All	All

Figure 23. Educator Departures by Reason, 2024–25 and 2025–26

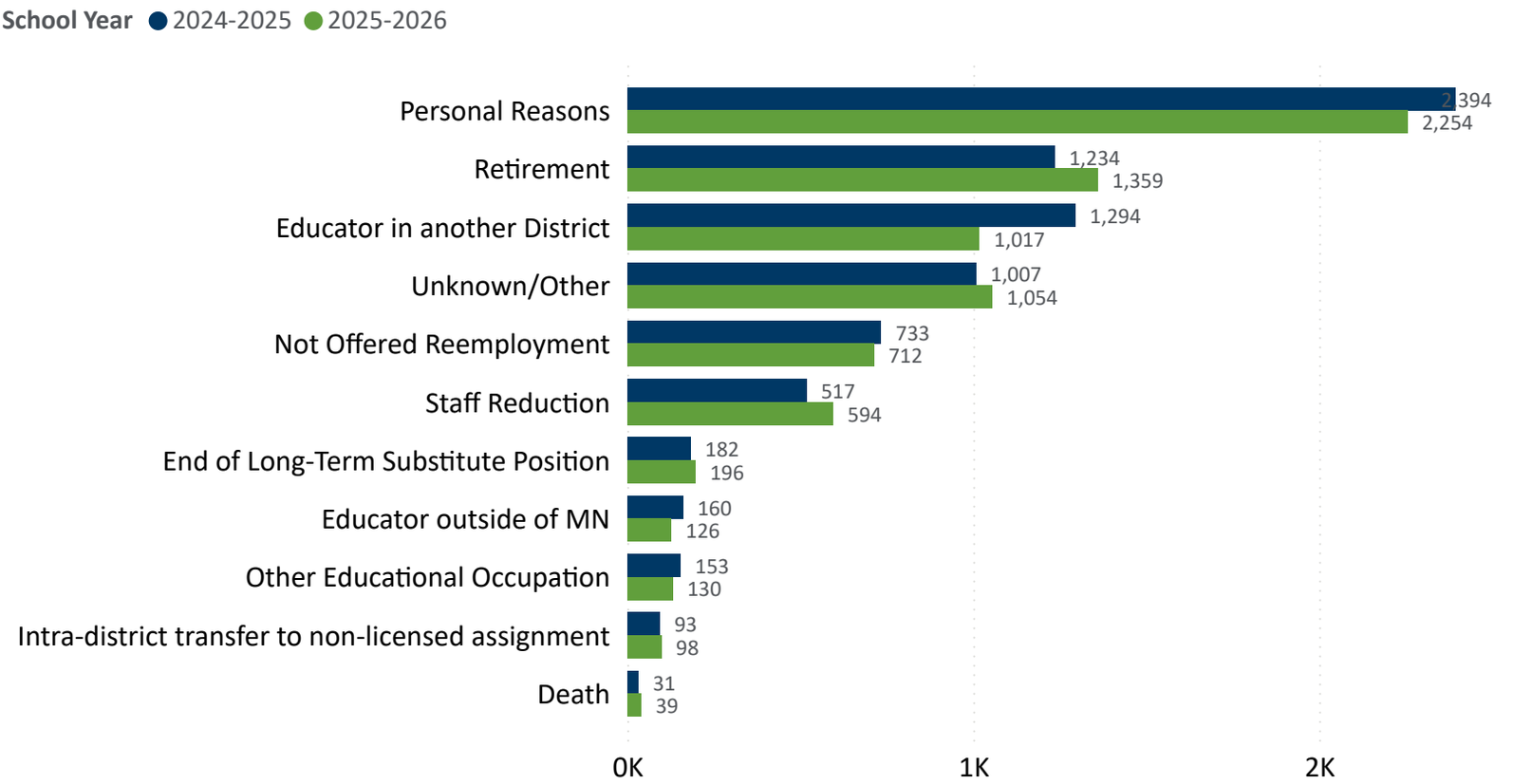


Figure 23. Comparison of unduplicated educator headcounts by reported reason for leaving a district during the 2024–25 and 2025–26 school years. Results can be filtered by district grouping, Economic Development Region (EDR), and location.

Traditional public school districts reported declines in departures for personal reasons (2,001 to 1,850) and transfers to other districts (940 to 675), while retirements increased from 1,155 to 1,271 (Figure 23). Charter schools experienced modest increases in departures for personal reasons (364 to 380), transfers to other districts (303 to 310), and staff reductions (39 to 60).

Geographic comparisons revealed similar patterns of declining transfers and increasing retirements. In Greater Minnesota, transfers to other districts declined from 631 to 478, while retirements increased from 589 to 604. The Twin Cities Metro experienced a decline in personal-reason departures (1,605 to 1,518), alongside increases in retirements (646 to 755) and staff reductions (313 to 352).

These findings suggest that while some forms of educator mobility declined, retirements and staffing reductions continued to present workforce challenges across Minnesota.

Note: An important distinction to consider is that intra-district transfers do not necessarily represent departures from district employment.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

District Survey: Comparing School Years 24-25 and 25-26

PELSB asked districts to compare staffing patterns in school years 2025-26 and 2024-25. The table below can be sorted by type of change (increase or decrease), as well as reporting factor (retention, absences, etc.). As we consider large-scale measures to increase teacher retention, it is worth noting that the districts that reported decreased retention, listed salary and benefits as a primary cause. Unsurprisingly, districts with increased retention rates refenced salary, benefits, and school climate as key factors (Table 13).

Approximately 35% of districts reported decreased availability of short- and long-term substitutes, while 51% reported increased reliance on alternative staffing arrangements (Figure 24). Although teacher retention and turnover remained relatively stable for most districts, 34% reported decreased teacher availability. Districts experiencing staffing challenges frequently identified shortages of adequately licensed teachers, fewer individuals entering the profession, and compensation as contributing factors. Conversely, districts reporting improvements in teacher availability and retention emphasized school culture and climate, compensation, and retention practices. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening the educator pipeline while supporting workplace conditions that promote recruitment and retention.

Staffing Change Reported: All

Type of Change: All

Table 13. District-Reported Factors Contributing to Changes in Teacher Staffing and Workforce Conditions

Reason Selected by District	District Percentage
Salary, benefits, or compensation	45.86%
Decrease in adequately licensed teachers	44.36%
Fewer teachers entering the profession	41.35%
District budget changes	30.83%
Family needs or obligations	30.83%
District geographic location	29.32%
School culture and climate	29.32%
More teachers leaving the profession	28.57%
Physical/mental health of teacher	28.57%
Decrease in funding (this could be federal, state, or other funding losses)	26.32%
Economy, salary changes, other financial considerations	26.32%
MN Paid Leave and/or Earned Sick and Safe Time	24.81%
Career opportunities outside of education/district	21.80%
Unknown	21.05%
Public view of the profession	20.30%
Increase in adequately licensed teachers	14.29%
District practices that have increased teacher retention	11.28%
Fewer teachers leaving the profession	9.77%

Table 13. Percentage of responding Minnesota school districts identifying factors contributing to changes in teacher staffing and workforce conditions. Results can be filtered by workforce indicator and direction of change (increased or decreased).

Response: Increased

Figure 24. District-Reported Changes in Teacher Workforce and Substitute Availability

Comparing changes between the 2024-25 and 2025-26 school years

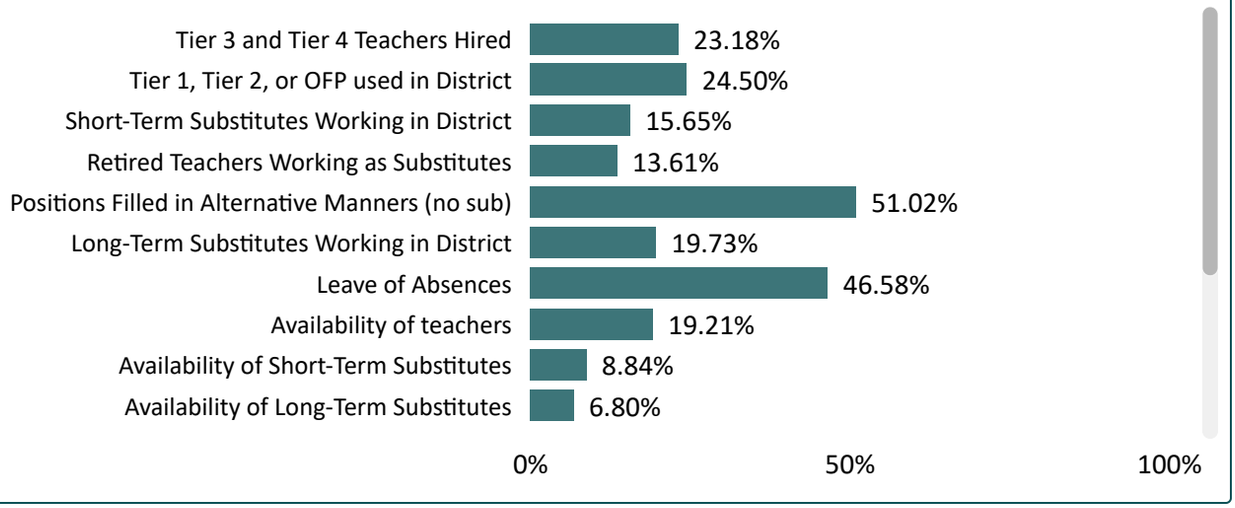


Figure 24. Percentage of responding Minnesota school districts reporting changes in teacher staffing, retention, and substitute availability between the 2024–25 and 2025–26 school years. Results are filtered by response category, allowing comparisons across workforce indicators.

The Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

District Survey: Perceived Licensure Needs In the Next Five Years

PELSB asked districts to report the licensure areas with the perceived largest growing need over the next five years. Because district leaders are in the field working on recruitment and retention, their responses provide meaningful insight into the possible future needs of Minnesota's students.

Unsurprisingly, filling special education teaching positions remains a growing concern and signals the need for increased support for licensure and retention in this area (Table 14).

Table 14. District-Reported Licensure Areas with the Greatest Anticipated Need Over the Next Five Years

License Area	Percentage of Districts
Special Education	80.95%
Science	50.34%
Math	49.66%
Career and Technical Education	39.46%
Elementary and Early Childhood	36.73%
ESL	23.13%
Related Services	19.05%
Communication Arts & Literature	17.69%
World Languages & Cultures	12.93%
Health and Physical Education	10.88%
Social Studies	9.52%
Visual and Performing Arts	7.48%
Other: Ability to Teach Concurrent Enrollment	0.68%
Other: CIS Qualified Teachers	0.68%
Other: Enrichments	0.68%
Other: Immersion Programs	0.68%
Other: Montessori Pedagogy	0.68%

Table 14. Percentage of responding Minnesota school districts identifying licensure areas with the greatest anticipated staffing needs over the next five years.

Conclusions on the 2026 Supply and Demand of Teachers in Minnesota

Like every other state in the country, Minnesota faces a growing teacher shortage. This national crisis is felt by students, teachers, and administrators in tangible ways every day. While The Learning Policy Institute reports that about 1 in 8 teaching positions is not filled by a professionally licensed teacher nationally, that number is lower in Minnesota (about 1 in 10). This may be due to the number of innovative pathways Minnesota offers, such as alternative teacher preparation programs, apprenticeships and residencies, or licensure via portfolio.

Still, despite the growth in pathways over the past several years, Minnesota continues to struggle with teacher retention. Both district and teacher surveys convey teacher compensation (salary and benefits), relationships with colleagues and students, and school climate are key to teacher retention. As the State considers long-term solutions to the teacher shortage, more resources should be devoted to addressing these factors.

Acknowledgments

PELSB would like to express gratitude to all involved in providing data for this report. Without the feedback of teachers, teacher educators, and school leaders, this report would not be possible.

For More Information

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Tables

Table 1. Licensure Progression by Preparation Pathway and Starting Tier (pg. 5)
Table 2. License Programs, Enrollment, and Completer Headcount (pg. 6)
Table 3. Minnesota Teacher Workforce by Employment Status (pg. 7)
Table 4. Pay and Financial Wellbeing (pg. 11).
Table 5. Tier 1, Tier 2, Permissions, Out of Compliance Headcount by Assignment Content Area (pg. 14)
Table 6. Enrollment and Completion Headcount for Preparation Programs (pg. 14)
Table 7. Tier 1, Tier 2, and Special Permission Assignments by Content Area (pg. 15)
Table 8. Racial and Ethnic Composition of Minnesota Students and Teachers (pg. 16)
Table 9. Related Service Assignments by Licensure Tier and Permission Type (pg. 17)
Table 10. Factors Contributing to Difficulty Filling Short-Call Substitute Positions (pg.19)
Table 11. Challenges in Filling Long-Term Substitute Positions (pg. 20)
Table 12. Advertised Teaching Positions by Content Area, 2025-26 (pg. 21)
Table 13. District-Reported Factors Contributing to Changes in Teacher Staffing and Workforce Conditions (pg. 24)
Table 14. District-Reported Licensure Areas with the Greatest Anticipated Need Over the Next Five Years (pg. 25)

Figures

Figure 1. Licensed vs. Working Educators by License Tier (pg. 3)
Figure 2. Distribution of Working Educators by License Tier (pg. 3)
Figure 3. Full Professional License Holders by Licensure Pathway (pg. 4)
Figure 4. Employment Rates of Full Professional License Holders by Licensure Pathway (pg. 4)
Figure 5. Progression from Tier 1 or Tier 2 to Tier 3 or Tier 4 Licensure (pg. 5)
Figure 6. Teacher Preparation Program Candidates (pg. 6)
Figure 7. Supporting Non-Licensed Staff Pursuing Full Licensure (pg. 8)
Figure 8. Most Effective in Increasing Tier 3 and Tier 4 Teachers (pg. 8)
Figure 9. District-Reported Effectiveness of Recruitment Incentives for Non-Licensed Staff (pg. 8)
Figure 10. Detailed Retention Count by Retention Level (pg. 9)
Figure 11. Teacher Retention and Attrition Over Five Years by Employment Cohort (pg. 10)
Figure 12. What teachers report impacts their likelihood of staying in their current role. (pg. 11)
Figure 13. Future Employment Plans of Survey Respondents (pg. 12)
Figure 14. Employment Status of Survey Respondents, SY2025-26 (pg. 12)
Figure 15. Reported impact of professional and workplace factors on remaining in or being outside of classroom teaching (pg. 12)
Figure 16. Changes in Teacher Racial and Ethnic Representation, 2024-2026 (pg. 16)
Figure 17. Distribution of Related Service Assignments by Licensure Status (pg. 17)
Figure 18. Short-Call Substitute Licenses by License Type (pg. 18)
Figure 19. How Districts Fill Short-Call Substitute Positions (pg. 19)
Figure 20. Strategies for Filling Long-Term Substitute Positions (pg. 20)
Figure 21. Unfilled Teachings Positions by Content Area, 2025-26. (pg. 21)
Figure 22. Changes in Educator Leaves of Absence by Reason, 2024-25 to 2025-26 (pg. 22)
Figure 23. Educator Departures by Reason, 2024-25 and 2025-26 (pg. 23)
Figure 24. District-Reported Changes in Teacher Workforce and Substitute Availability (pg. 24)