



Leaving Schools or Leaving the Profession: Setting Illinois' Record Straight on New Teacher Attrition

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Purpose of the Study

- Do 50 percent of new teachers in Illinois flee the profession within five years?
- To what extent does new teacher attrition differ across schools?



Data

- **TSR data from 1971 to 2006**
- **Population of New Teacher Cohorts – 1st year teachers, full- and part-time**
 - = 160,000 new teachers in 35 years
- **Attrition at Two Levels**
 - From Profession (IPS)
 - From Schools
- **Focus primarily on attrition through the first five years following entry into profession**
- **Track cohorts for up to 35 years**



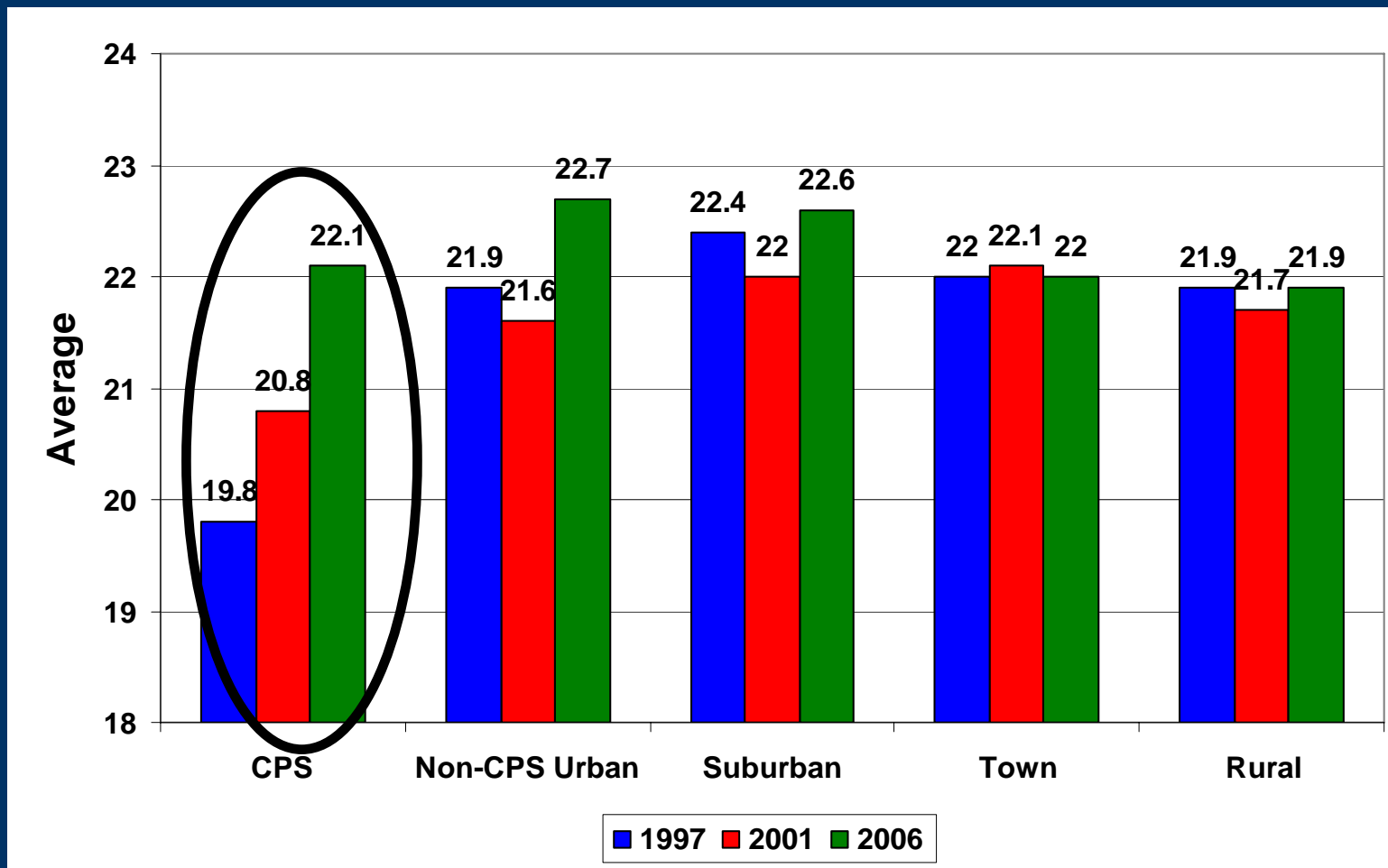
Defining Attrition

- **Profession:** departure of new teachers from teaching in Illinois public schools (IPS)
 - **Five-Year Attrition Rate** (a gap in teaching of at least one year by year 6)
 - **Return-Adjusted Attrition Rate** (return to teaching in IPS after at least a one-year gap during their first five years after entering IPS as a teacher). We can track new teachers for 36 years for the 1971 cohort and for six years for the 2001 cohort.
- **School:** departure of new teachers from teaching in their initial school (includes those who leave teaching in IPS, move to another IPS school to teach, and change to a non-teaching position in IPS). It is not return-adjusted.



About Illinois' new teachers:

Average ACT composite scores of CPS new teachers now on par with all IPS new teachers across the state

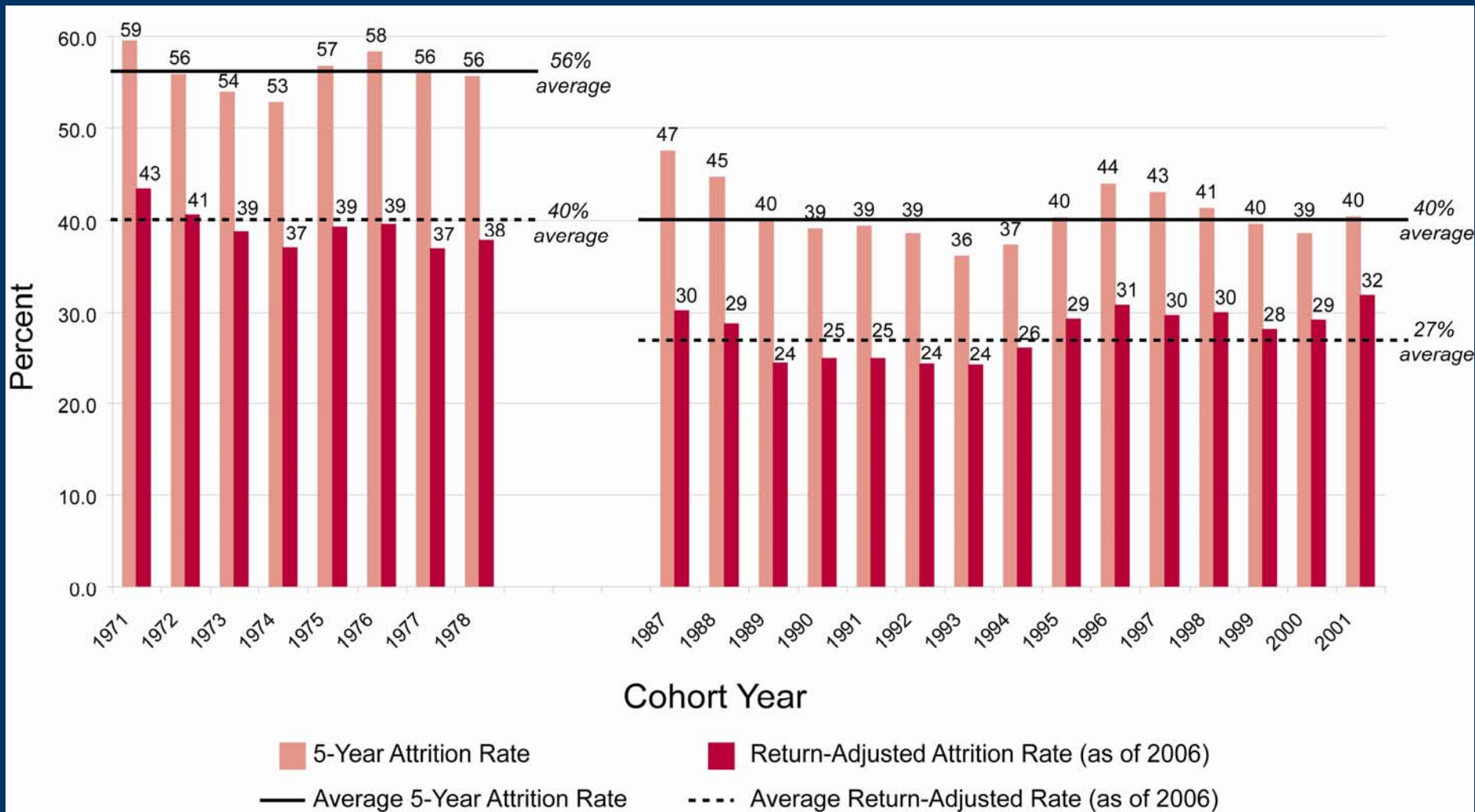




Attrition from the Profession

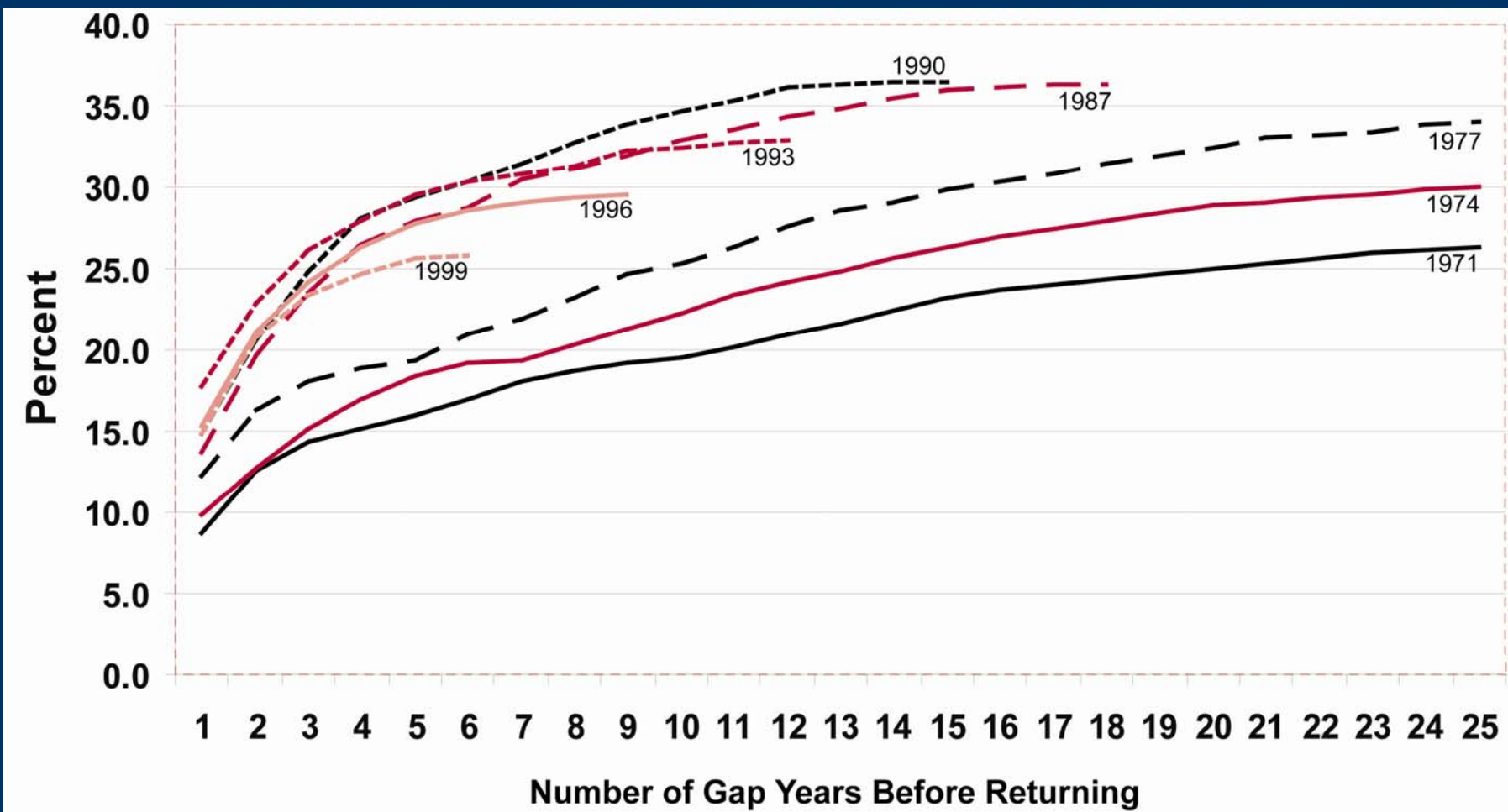


Five-year and return-adjusted attrition rates down since 1970s – now about 40%/27%





1990s leavers are returning sooner than teachers of the 1970s





There are few differences in attrition from the profession based on the characteristics of teachers' initial school.

- For example, there is almost no difference by LL/HH minority/low-income schools.
- Starting region matters most.

Initial School Characteristics	Five-year attrition	Return-adjusted attrition (excluding returning to different school type)
Low minority/ low low income	40%	28% (33%)
High minority/ high low income	41%	26% (34%)

Region in Illinois	Five-year attrition	Return-adjusted attrition (excluding returning to different region)
East Central	45%	30% (36%)
Southern Regions	35%	23% (27%)
CPS	40%	26% (28%)



There are more differences in attrition from the profession of teaching based on teachers' characteristics.

	Five-year attrition	Return adjusted attrition
Asian	43%	29%
Hispanic	36%	24%
<=25 at entry	42%	28%
26-34 at entry	43%	30%
>=35 at entry	35%	23%

- And teacher academic capital matters most.

	Five-year attrition	Return adjusted attrition
ACT 25 or more	48%	32%
ACT 18 or less	36%	22%
High college selectivity	48%	34%
Low college selectivity	35%	22%



Review of Key Findings: Attrition from the Profession

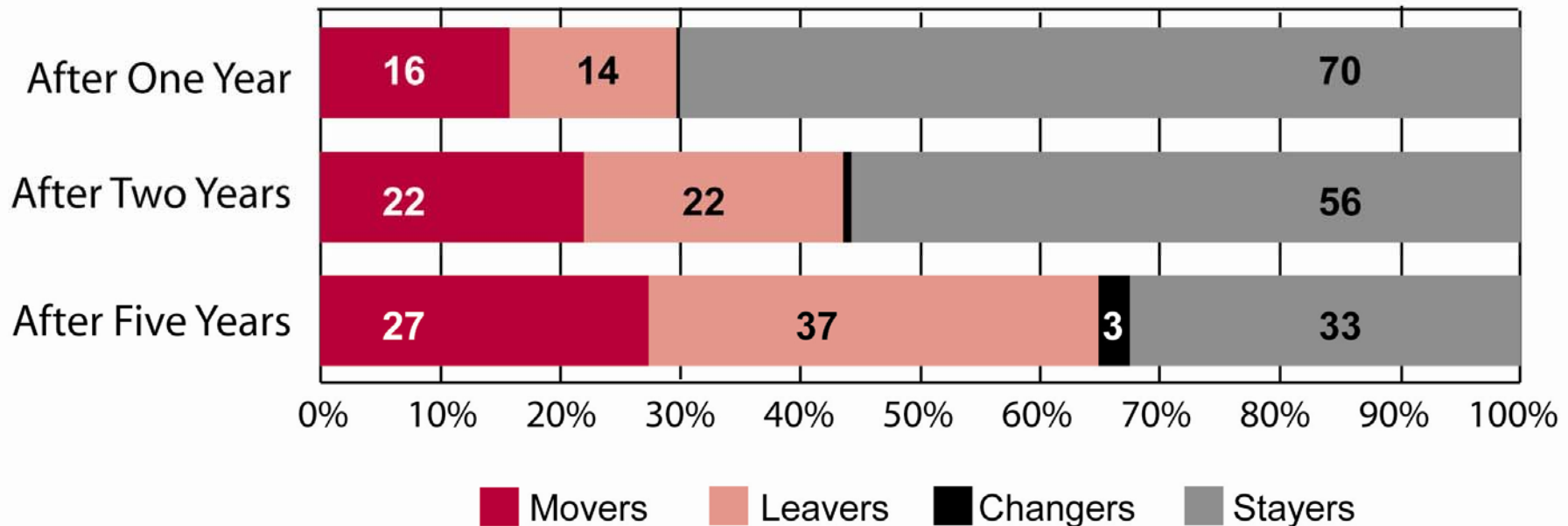
- New teachers' commitment to the profession in Illinois has improved since the 1970s, and is stronger than conventional wisdom would suggest.
 - For 1970s cohorts, 56% left within five years, with a net attrition of 40%.
 - For the 1987-2001 cohorts, about 40% leave within five years, but a third return, for a net attrition of 27%.
- So, about one quarter of new teachers in Illinois public schools leave during their first five years and do not return, not the 50% commonly identified as “fleeing the profession.” Furthermore, recent cohorts return sooner than cohorts of the 1970s.
- There is little difference in new teacher attrition rates from the profession by initial school type (i.e. student characteristics). There is most variation across regions. However, CPS is very similar to the state average, and keeps most of its teachers who return.
- There are somewhat more differences in attrition rates from the profession by teacher characteristics. Strong teacher academic capital is most related to higher attrition rates, although 2/3 of even the top quartile of teachers by ACT score or college selectivity remain or return.
- Other research shows that entrants to the teaching profession (along with health occupations) are more stable than entrants to other occupations with similar education requirements.



Attrition from Initial School



Status of New Teachers in Their Initial Schools After One, Two, and Five Years Following Entry



Remember that these data do NOT include returners



There are few differences in initial school stay rates by initial school characteristics

- There is little difference in initial stay rates by **school type or locale**.

Type of School	One year stay rate	Five year stay rate
<=50% minority	71%	35%
>=99% minority	71%	29%
Low Minority/ Low Low-Income	73%	37%
High Minority/ High Low-Income	73%	30%
CPS	73%	34%
Non-CPS Urban	68%	32%
Rural	69%	30%
Northwest Illinois	66%	29%
Southwest Illinois	72%	38%
Southeast Illinois	71%	38%

- School performance matters most.

	One year stay rate	Five year stay rate
Less than 25% meet standards (bottom 5%)	68%	22%
77% or more meet standards (top quartile)	75%	36%



There are few differences in initial school stay rates by teacher characteristics

Selected teacher characteristics	One year stay rate	Five Year stay rate
Hispanic	74%	36%
Native American	74%	30%
African American	71%	32%
White	70%	33%
Asian	69%	30%
<=25 at entry	70%	30%
26-34 at entry	70%	32%
>=35 at entry	70%	39%
Elem/Middle School	71%	33%
High School	70%	35%
Special Education	65%	24%
Self-Contained Elementary	74%	37%
Social Science	73%	41%
ACT 25 or more	71%	30%
ACT 18 or less	72%	33%
High college selectivity	70%	29%
Low college selectivity	72%	37%



Major differences show up when we combine school characteristics and teacher characteristics

	Five Year stay rate in Initial HH Schools	Five Year stay rate in Initial LL Schools
Hispanic	36%	↓ 29%
African American	33%	↓ 31%
White	26%	↑ 37%
Asian	25%	↑ 29%
ACT 25 or more	21%	↑ 36%
ACT 18 or less	34%	↑ 37%
High college selectivity	24%	↑ 35%
Low college selectivity	37%	↑ 39%



New teacher turnover rates vary greatly within school types after *(two, not shown)* and five years

		Percent of New Teachers Retained After Five Years		
		Lower Retention: 10 th Percentile School	Median School	Higher Retention: 90 th Percentile School
	Overall	8%	32%	57%
Selected Locales	CPS	15%	33%	56%
	Rural	6%	30%	56%
Selected Family Income	LT 10%	13%	36%	60%
	=>90%	12%	31%	54%
Low Minority/Low Low-Income		13%	36%	60%
High Minority/High Low-Income		12%	29%	50%
Selected School Performance on ISAT	< 25%	0%	19%	43%
	46-64%	0%	31%	60%
	=>77%	11%	38%	64%



Key Findings: Attrition from Initial School

- Overall stay rates are 70% after one year, 56% after two years, and 33% after five years.
- We see very little difference in initial school stay rates by school characteristics
 - But school performance makes a consistent difference.
- There is very little difference in five-year initial school stay rates by teacher characteristics
 - Except when we combine teacher and school characteristics. Then Hispanic and African American teachers are more likely to stay in HH schools, while high academic capital teachers are less likely to stay in HH schools.
- There is much more variation in new teacher turnover within school types.
- The historical sorting process of teachers with different academic capital into schools with different student characteristics explains the overall similarity of initial school stay rates.
- Is 67% leaving their first job high? Although there are no directly comparable statistics for other occupations, there is some evidence to suggest that new teachers stay in their initial job longer than the typical post-baccalaureate entrant to other professions.



Implications of Study

- New teachers in Illinois are not ‘fleeing the profession’ as is implied from a national study.
- It may be difficult to reduce overall new teacher attrition. It is much lower than in the 1970s (and even lower than in the 1960s) and has fluctuated little over the years since then. Attrition is a localized school issue, not a general issue of the profession.
- Conditions in disadvantaged schools will have to change if they are to keep the more academically skilled new teachers that are now being recruited into CPS and other urban locales.
- School conditions other than those considered in this study appear to strongly influence new teachers’ decisions to stay in a school.