

# Mississippi Educator Workforce Shortages and Strategies

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DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

December 18, 2025



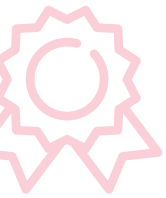
## VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens



## MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community



1

**ALL** Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas



2

**EVERY** Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career



3

**EVERY** Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program

**EVERY** School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders

4



**EVERY** Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes

5

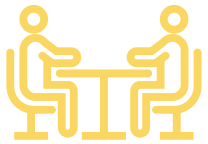


**EVERY** School and District is Rated “C” or Higher

6



RECRUIT



LICENSE



SUPPORT



RETAIN



PREPARE



HIRE



EMPOWER



RETIRE

# Educator Workforce Updates

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MDE began administering the Teacher Retention Survey during the 2021-2022 school year. The name was adjusted in 2023-2024 in recognition of recruitment factors.

The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey launched on April 23, 2025, and closed on June 17, 2025.

4,010 Mississippi teachers completed the survey for the 2024-2025 school year.

Non-baseline surveys are shorter to dive deeper into the previous year's results on topics such as school leadership and safety. The MDE anticipates administering its full baseline survey next year to analyze progress and gaps over the last five years.

The Office of Teaching and Leading launched the Educator Shortage Survey on August 13, 2025.

The Educator Shortage Survey closed on November 1, 2025.

100% of Mississippi's traditional public school districts completed the survey.

Districts reported "actual" rather than "anticipated" vacancies even as the survey results remain a snapshot that is reflective only as of the date reported.

# Educator Shortage Classifications

8

Teacher Vacancies	K-12 Licensed Educator Vacancies	Administrator Vacancies	K-12 Support Staff Vacancies
Elementary Teachers: <b>1378</b>	Library/Media: <b>56</b>	Assistant Principal: <b>127</b>	Teacher Assistant: <b>917</b>
Middle School Teachers: <b>529</b>	Counselor: <b>103</b>	Principal: <b>99</b>	Nurse: <b>46</b>
High School Teachers: <b>955</b>	Speech/Language: <b>125</b>	<b>226 (+109 since 21-22) (+128 since 24-25)</b>	Custodian: <b>238</b>
K-12 Teachers (i.e., Music): <b>953</b>	<b>284 (+52 since 21-22) (+56 since 24-25)</b>		Bus Driver: <b>750</b>
<b>3,815 (+779 since 21-22) (+851 since 24-25)</b>			Food Service Staff: <b>459</b>
			Administrative Assistant: <b>172</b>
			<b>2,582 (+464 since 21-22) (+712 since 24-25)</b>

**\*Snapshot data reflective only of the date reported**



Grade Level/Subject	2021-2022 Vacancies	2022-2023 Vacancies	2023-2024 Vacancies	2024-2025 Vacancies	2025-2026 Vacancies	5-Year Change	1-Year Change
Pre-Kindergarten	52	66	66	82	108	+56	+26
Lower Elementary K-3	466	388	400	420	703	+237	+283
Upper Elementary 4-6	440	368	349	345	567	+127	+222

**\*Snapshot data reflective only of the date reported**

# K-12 Teacher Vacancies

10

Role	2021-2022 Vacancies	2022-2023 Vacancies	2023-2024 Vacancies	2024-2025 Vacancies	2025-2026 Vacancies	5-Year Change	1-Year Change
Special Education	394	335	369	466	599	<b>+205</b>	<b>+133</b>
Art Education	52	50	49	63	61	<b>+9</b>	<b>-2</b>
Health/ Physical Education	51	55	54	64	85	<b>+34</b>	<b>+21</b>
Music Education	57	45	60	55	76	<b>+19</b>	<b>+21</b>
Gifted	43.5	50	42	52	42	<b>-1.5</b>	<b>-10</b>
World Languages	56	49	72	56	48	<b>-8</b>	<b>-8</b>
English Language**	-	-	-	47	42	-	<b>-5</b>

\*Snapshot data reflective only of the date reported

\*\*24-25 served as the baseline year for EL Teacher vacancy data

# K-12 Support Staff Vacancies

11

Role	2021-2022 Vacancies	2022-2023 Vacancies	2023-2024 Vacancies	2024-2025 Vacancies	2025-2026 Vacancies	5-Year Change	1-Year Change
Teacher Assistant	532	564	529	530	917	<b>+385</b>	<b>+387</b>
Nurse	58	50	52	56	46	<b>-12</b>	<b>-10</b>
Custodian	268	267	271	233	238	<b>-30</b>	<b>+5</b>
Bus Driver	595	653	528	533	750	<b>+155</b>	<b>+217</b>
Food Service Staff	522	430	416	403	459	<b>-63</b>	<b>+56</b>
Administrative Assistant	143	147	123	115	172	<b>+29</b>	<b>+57</b>

**\*Snapshot data reflective only of the date reported**

1.00%

Average percent  
decrease in  
student enrollment  
from 2021-2025

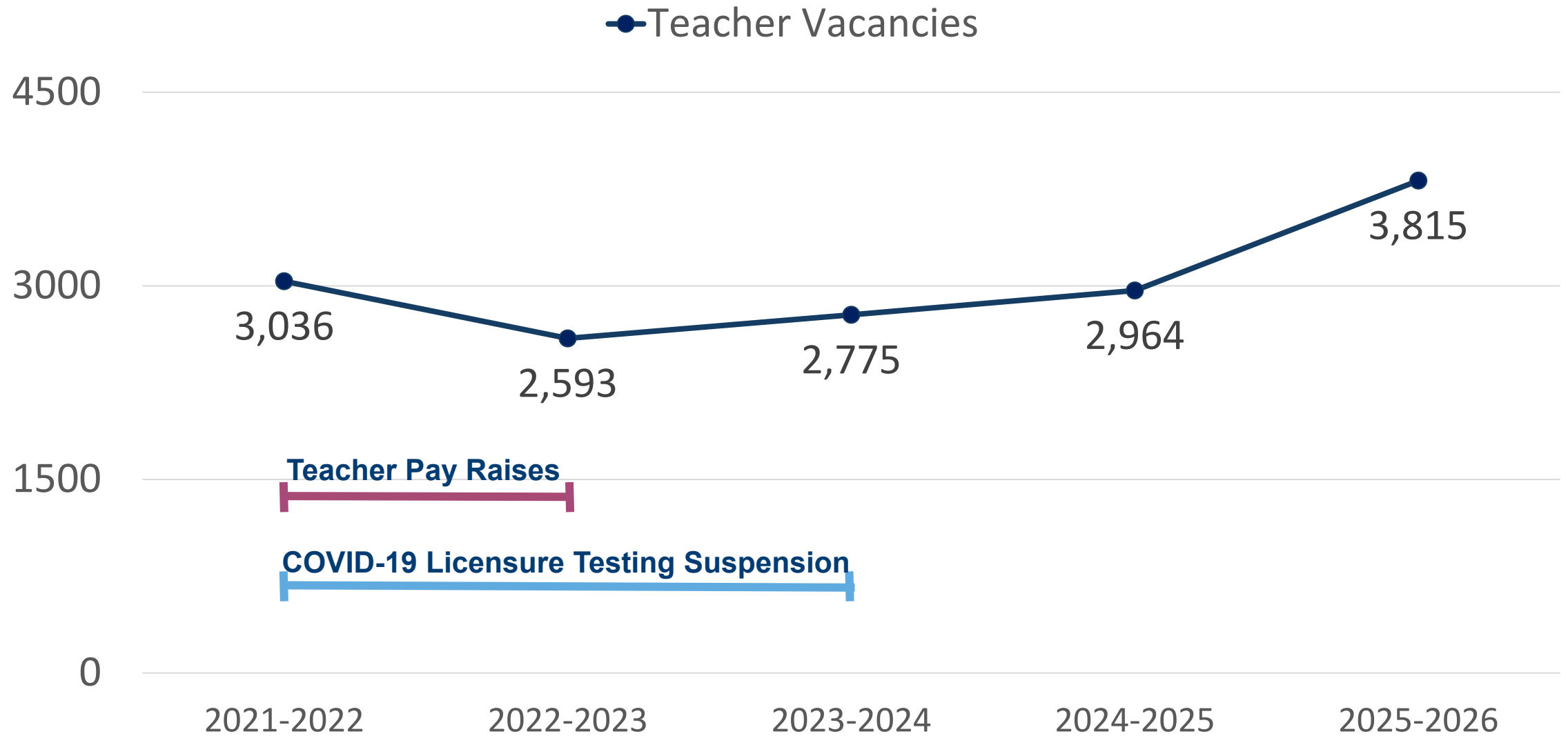
6.99%

Average percent  
increase in  
teacher vacancies  
from 2021-2025

8.72%

Average percent  
of total classroom  
teacher vacancies  
from 2021-2025

**\*Snapshot data reflective only of the date reported**



# Educator Workforce Strategies



**Challenge:**  
**Policy**  
**Barriers**

**Strategy:** Conduct a comprehensive review of current educator licensure guidelines and associated policies within key shortage areas.

**Challenge:**  
**Outdated**  
**Programs**

**Strategy:** Reinvent the Mississippi Department of Education's TeachMS.org and Orientation for School Leaders series.

**Challenge:**  
**Teacher**  
**Pay**

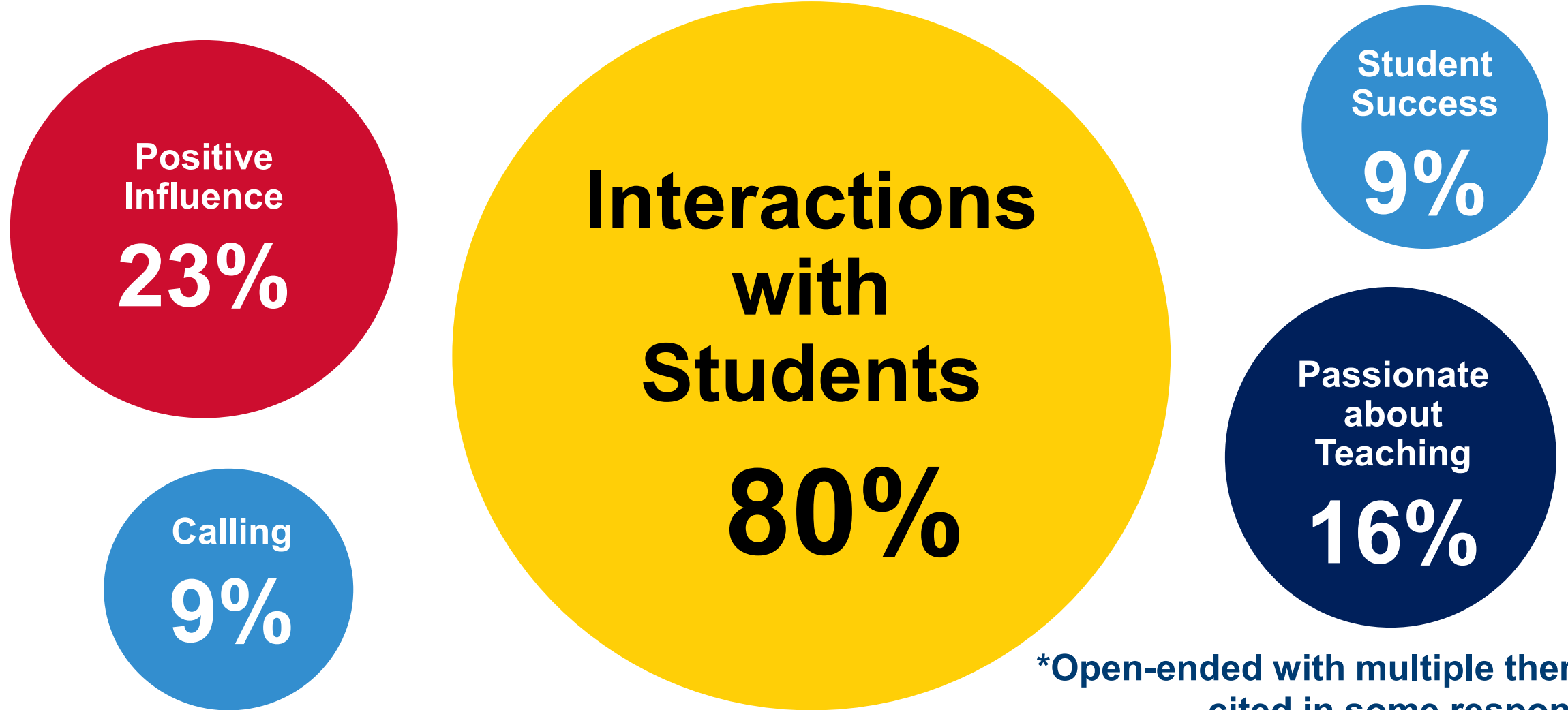
**Strategy:** Share information regarding Mississippi teacher pay from national and local perspectives.

Key results of the Office of Teaching and Leading's comprehensive policy review since December 2024:

- **Approved:** Amendment to the Foundations of Reading licensure criterion for elementary education and special education
- **Approved:** Establish the criteria for a two-year provisional license via reciprocity
- **Ongoing:** Review the criteria for secondary mathematics education supplemental endorsements







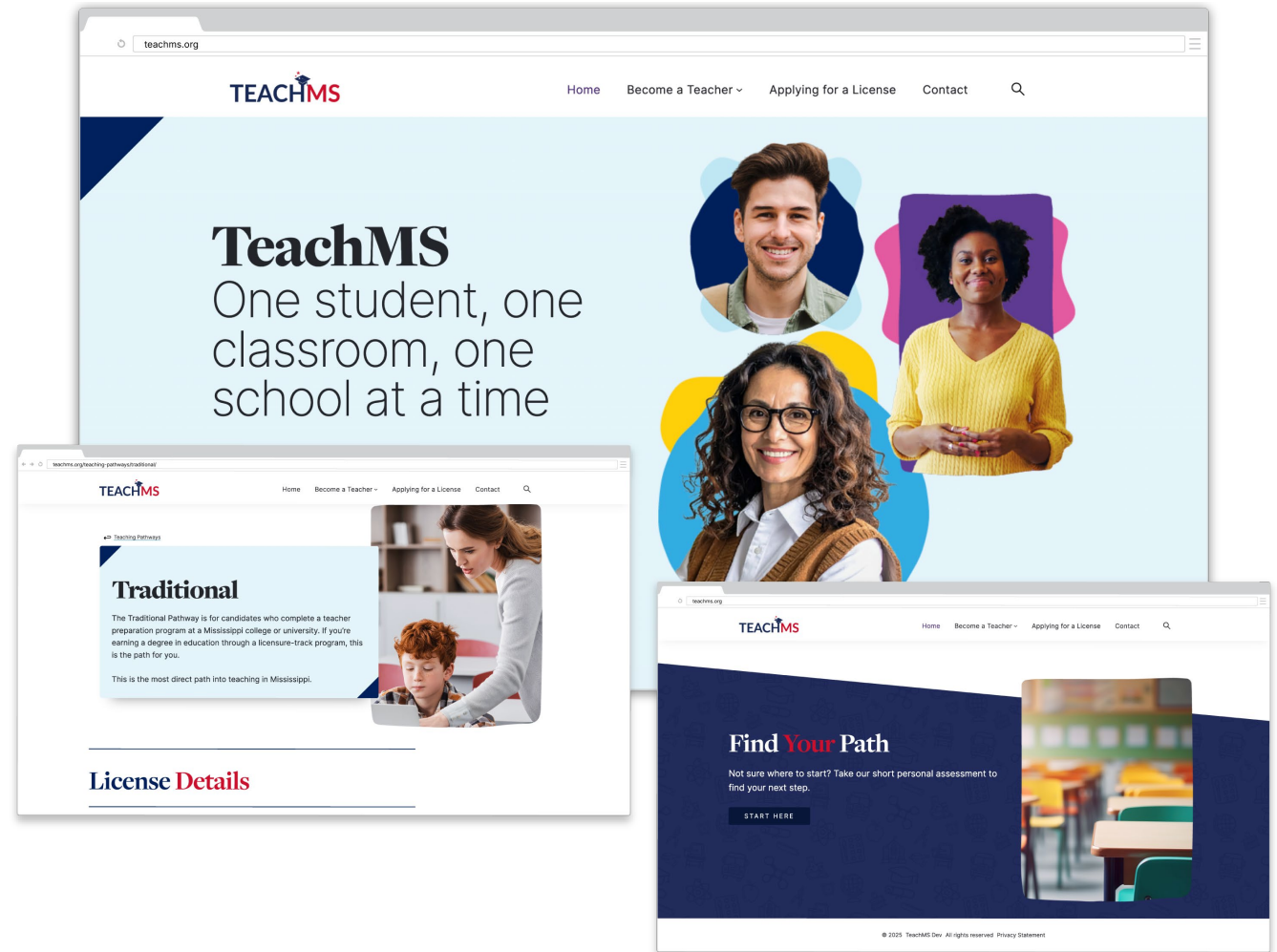
\*Open-ended with multiple themes cited in some responses

## TeachMS features:

- Inspiring content for districts and universities to share with prospective educators
- An interactive licensure tool for prospective educators to find their path to the classroom



[teachms.org](https://teachms.org)

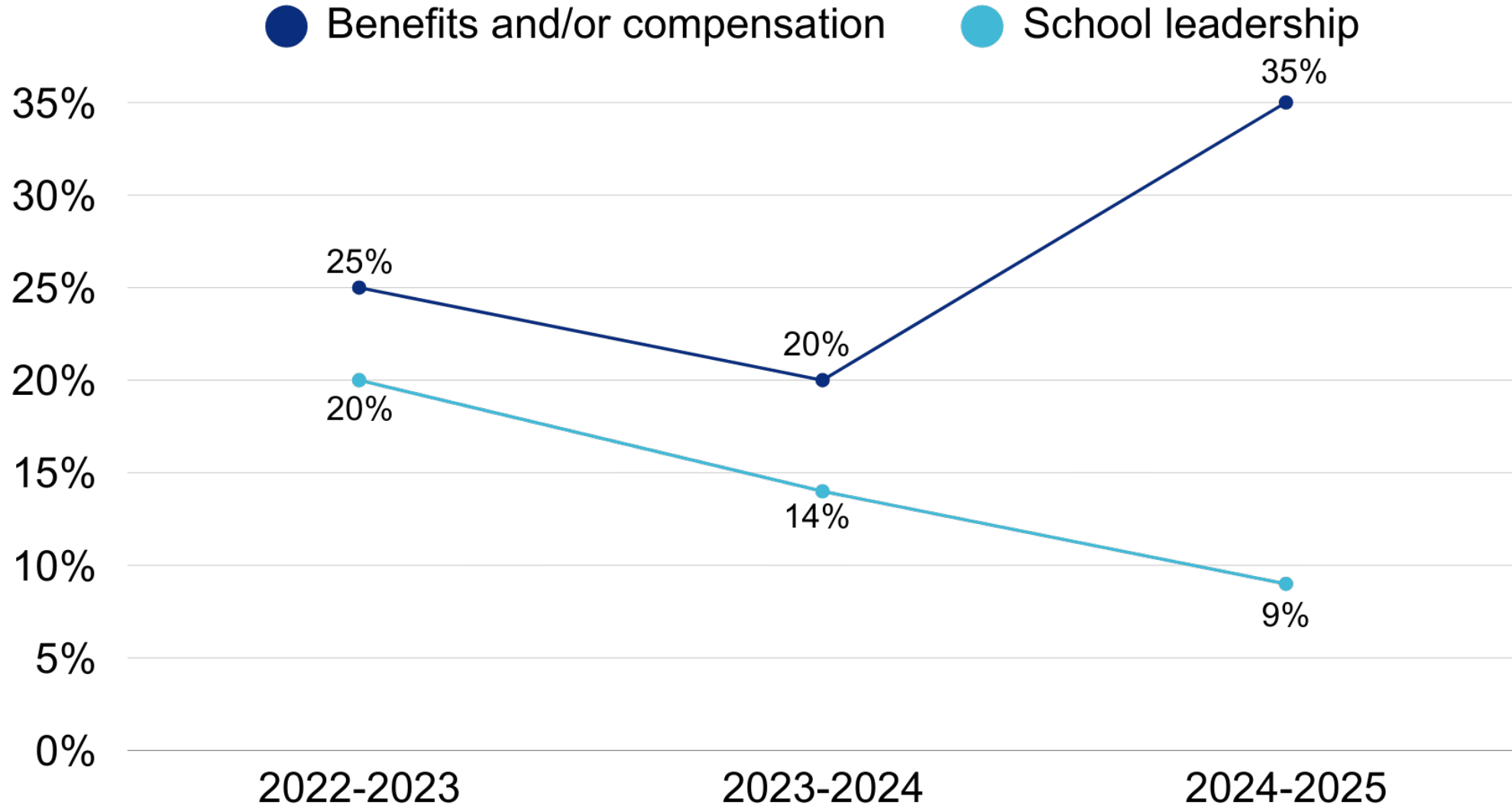


	Attendees	Pre-Test %	Post-Test %	Growth
Day 1	483	63.6%	84.3%	20.7%
Day 2	476	61.3%	83.2%	21.9%

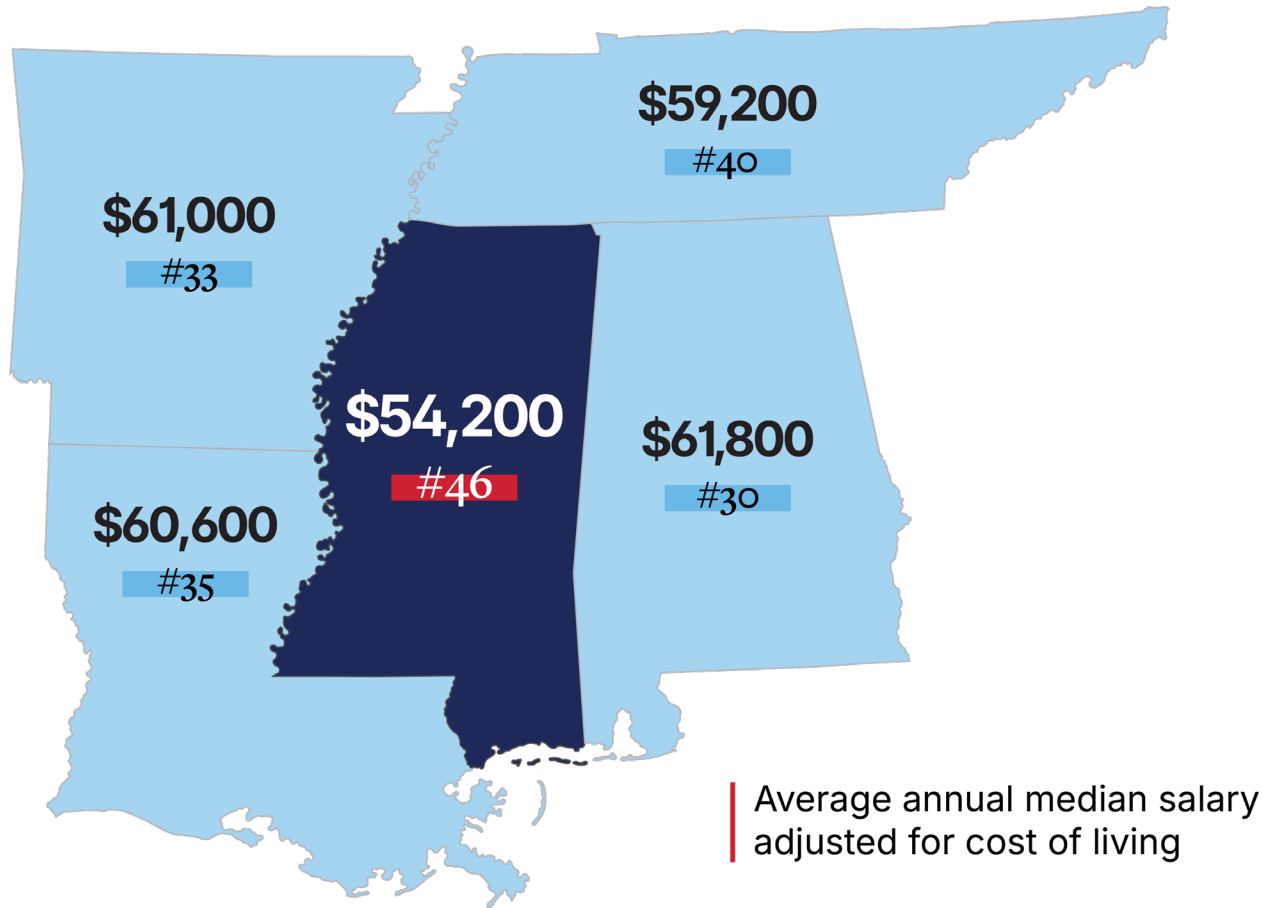
MISSISSIPPI  
LEADS

# Which aspect most affects your desire to leave teaching?

20



# Teacher Pay in Mississippi and Neighboring States



MISSISSIPPI RANKED

46<sup>th</sup>

Out of 49 states reporting  
when adjusted for cost of  
living as of May 2024

Sources: USAFacts, U.S. Bureau of Labor  
Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

I live modestly and still **struggle to maintain** a decent quality of life. I have little debt and still **live paycheck to paycheck** even though I have an *advanced degree*.

Teacher Recruitment & Retention Survey



# Questions?

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# Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results





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4,010 Mississippi teachers completed the survey for the 2024-2025 school year.

Non-baseline surveys are shorter to dive deeper into the previous year's results on topics such as school leadership and safety. The MDE anticipates administering its full baseline survey next year to analyze progress and gaps over the last five years.

MDE's survey software reports percentages to the nearest whole number, so results may be within 1-2% of 100% due to rounding.

Results should not be interpreted to reflect all Mississippi teachers. The term "Mississippi Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey respondents" is more appropriate for reporting.

Questions that are new or modified based on stakeholder feedback will only include the 2024-2025 results and include an asterisk in the title.

# Background Information



Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results

2

661

1

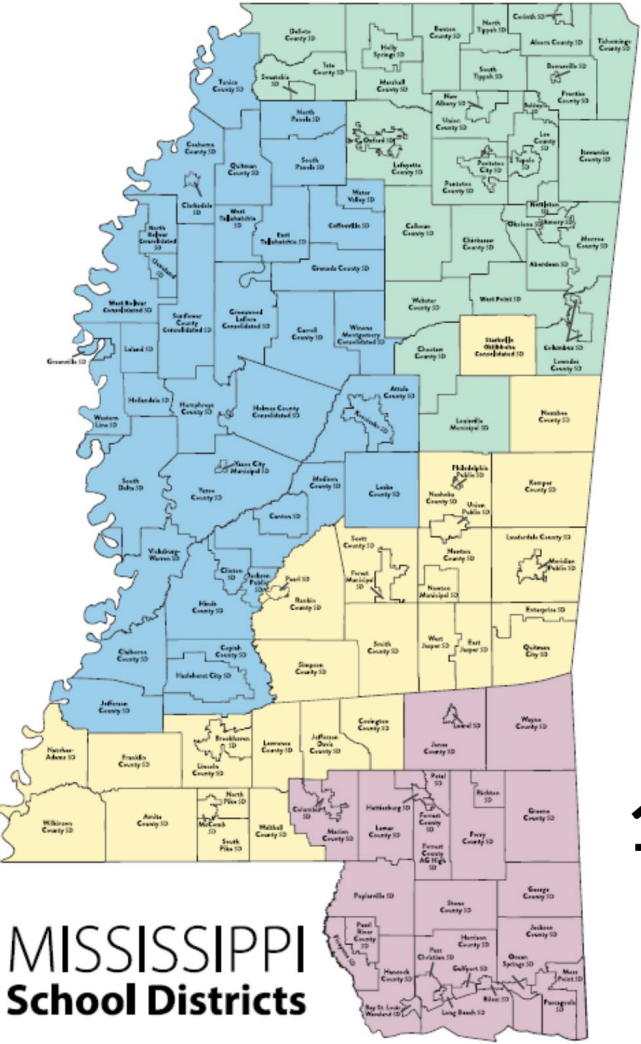
1356

3

758

4

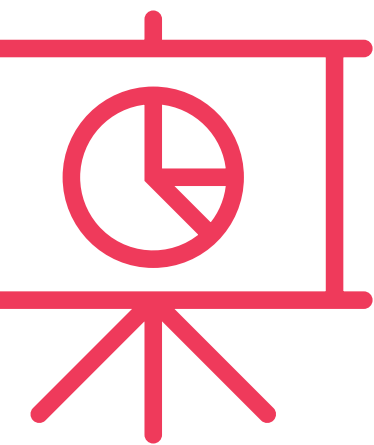
1182



\*Did not identify a  
Congressional District: 53

Survey total responses by each  
Congressional District

# Background Information: In which Congressional District do you currently teach?

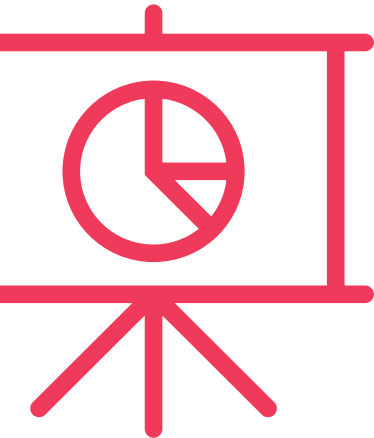


	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
Congressional District 1	14%	34%
Congressional District 2	12%	17%
Congressional District 3	11%	19%
Congressional District 4	20%	29%
Unsure	43%	1%

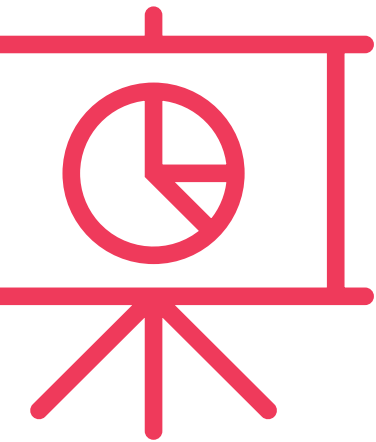
Background Information: What was your teaching assignment during 2024-2025?

30

	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
Pre-Kindergarten	2%	1%
Elementary (K-6)	26%	26%
Middle School (6-8)	10%	10%
High School (9-12)	16%	16%
Gifted Teacher	2%	3%
Special Education	14%	14%
Career and Technical	5%	6%

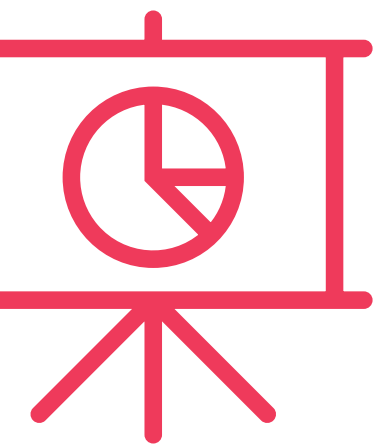


	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
Counselor	3%	3%
Special Support Services (ex. Speech)	3%	3%
Music	2%	2%
Librarian	2%	3%
Art	1%	1%
World Languages	1%	1%
Computer Science	2%	1%
Health/Physical Education	2%	1%
Other	10%	9%



Background Information: How many total years have you been employed as an educator?

32



	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
1 Year	4%	2%
2-3 Years	8%	6%
4-5 Years	7%	6%
6-10 Years	16%	15%
11-15 Years	16%	19%
16-20 Years	18%	19%
21-25 Years	16%	18%
25+ Years	15%	14%



# Teacher Support

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Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results

A formally assigned mentor with



5 or more years of experience than the mentee



In the same subject area



Who provides observation and coaching support

\* **Teacher Support: Does your school or district have a mentoring and induction program to support new hires?**



	2024-2025 Results
Yes, my district has a mentoring and induction program to support new teachers.	71%
No, my district does not have a mentoring and induction program to support new teachers.	14%
Unsure	15%

## \* Teacher Support: What training would be MOST beneficial for mentor teachers to provide observation and coaching support?

36

	2024-2025 Results
Classroom management and procedures training	42%
Best practices for supporting learners from a variety of backgrounds	12%
Content area specific training	12%
General instructional best practice training	9%
Grade level specific training	8%
Assessments and data analysis training	7%
Lesson planning and preparation training	6%
District policies and professional task training	5%



\* Teacher Support: Which collaborative activity has been MOST beneficial to your teaching experience?

	2024-2025 Results
Observation of another teacher’s instructional methods	20%
Subject area support	18%
Grade level support	17%
Conferences and networking	16%
Professional learning communities	14%
Lesson planning/preparation support	9%
Data analysis support	6%



# Professional Learning and Development

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Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results

## Four-Year Survey Review – Effective Professional Learning and Development Needs To:

39

Have sufficient time and resources



Be aligned with areas of growth



Be data-driven and deepen content knowledge



Utilize instructional technology



Reflect and refine teaching practices



Meet diverse student learning needs



Use assessment data to impact instructional practices

## \* Which of the following would MOST improve your experience with professional development?

40

	2024-2025 Results
Ensure it aligns with my curriculum	44%
Ensure it aligns with my assessments and data	17%
Ensure it aligns with classroom management strategies	15%
Ensure it aligns with my growth areas from Professional Growth System observations	10%
Ensure it aligns with social emotional learning strategies	9%
Ensure it aligns with parent and community engagement strategies	4%





# Working Conditions

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Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results

## Four-Year Survey Review – Teachers Note the Following with Working Conditions:

42

Consistent upticks in classroom interruptions



Fair non-instructional time for collaboration



Challenging amount of paperwork



Sufficient instructional time



Satisfactory efforts to reduce responsibilities



Satisfactory facilities and resources



Campus security factors of highest concern

Working Conditions: Which of the following interruptions has the greatest impact on instruction?



	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
Student behavior issues	N/A	46%
Classroom interruptions (e.g. messages, meetings, pull-outs, attendance, etc.)	11%	21%
Students' personal devices	36%	17%
Scheduling changes (e.g. holding classes, weather, testing times, etc.)	N/A	9%
School assemblies and/or team events, games, etc.	12%	4%
Office announcements and/or calls	14%	3%

## \* Working Conditions: Which of the following is most important for ensuring a safe school environment?

44



	2024-2025 Results
Access to school resource officers or school safety officers	27%
Secured/monitored building access points	25%
Access to programs that promote positive behavior	19%
Alert badge system/alarm system for efficient emergency communication	10%
Surveillance technology	9%
Use of an anonymous tip reporting tool for student safety concerns	5%
Required visibility of student and staff ID badges	4%

**\* Working Conditions: In a typical week, how much time do you spend on school-related activities outside of school hours?**

45



	2024-2025 Results
1-3 hours	31%
4-7 hours	32%
8-11 hours	16%
12-15 hours	8%
More than 15 hours	9%
No additional hours	5%

# School Leadership

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Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results



Student discipline support of greatest concern



Trust and autonomy are the greatest retention factors



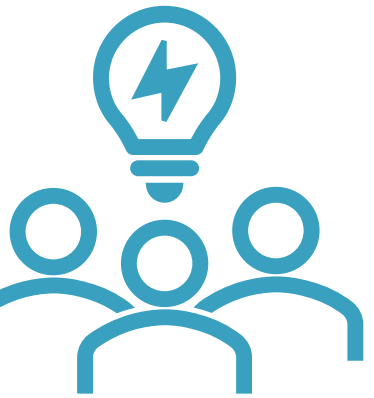
Observation/coaching feedback is found helpful



Satisfactory teacher leadership opportunities

## \* School Leadership: Which action would be BEST for administrators to build trust, increase teacher autonomy, and improve morale in your school? 48

	2024-2025 Results
More/better support for student discipline-related issues	24%
I am satisfied with my school's leadership and changing it would not improve morale	20%
Commitment to treating teachers fairly and consistently	16%
Less micro-management	15%
More acknowledgement of hard work/successes	12%
More/better advocacy for teachers' needs	8%
More content knowledge expertise/instructional leadership	2%
More/better support in the face of parent requests	1%





# Recruit and Retain



Teacher Recruitment and Retention Survey Results

## Four-Year Survey Review – Teachers Note the Following on Recruitment and Retention:

50

Dissatisfaction with salary and benefits



Additional pay raises are most important



Teachers are gaining longevity at current schools



Interactions with students are most impactful



Modified calendars are not impacting retention



School leadership is improving but remains a key driver in teachers leaving

\*Recruit and Retain: How many total years have you been employed in your current district?

51

	2024-2025 Results
1 Year	7%
2-3 Years	10%
4-5 Years	10%
6-10 Years	24%
11-15 Years	18%
16-20 Years	14%
21-25 Years	10%
25+ Years	6%



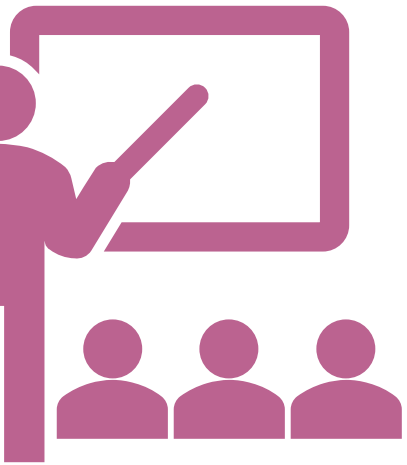
# Recruit and Retain: How do you think modified calendars impact teacher retention?



	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
Having a modified calendar does not or would not impact teacher retention.	41%	42%
My district does not have a modified calendar, but it would help teacher retention if it did.	20%	20%
My district does not have a modified calendar, but it would push teachers to leave.	19%	17%
My district has a modified calendar, and it helps teacher retention.	15%	16%
My district has a modified calendar, and it pushes teachers to leave.	5%	6%

# Recruit and Retain: Which of the following best describes your immediate professional plans?

53



	2023-2024 Results	2024-2025 Results
Continue teaching at my current school	69%	71%
Retire from education	7%	7%
Continue working in education but pursue an administrative position	6%	7%
Continue teaching in the district but leave this school	3%	3%
Continue teaching in this state but leave this district	5%	4%
Continue working in education but pursue a non-administrative position	2%	3%
Leave education entirely	5%	3%
Continue teaching in a state other than Mississippi	2%	2%

# Recruit and Retain: Which aspect MOST affects your desire to keep teaching?

54



	2024-2025 Results
Interactions with students	26%
Benefits and/or salary	19%
Overall school climate and culture	13%
Broader economic or scheduling considerations	11%
Interactions with colleagues	4%
Location or commute to school	4%
School leadership	3%
Career advancement opportunities	2%

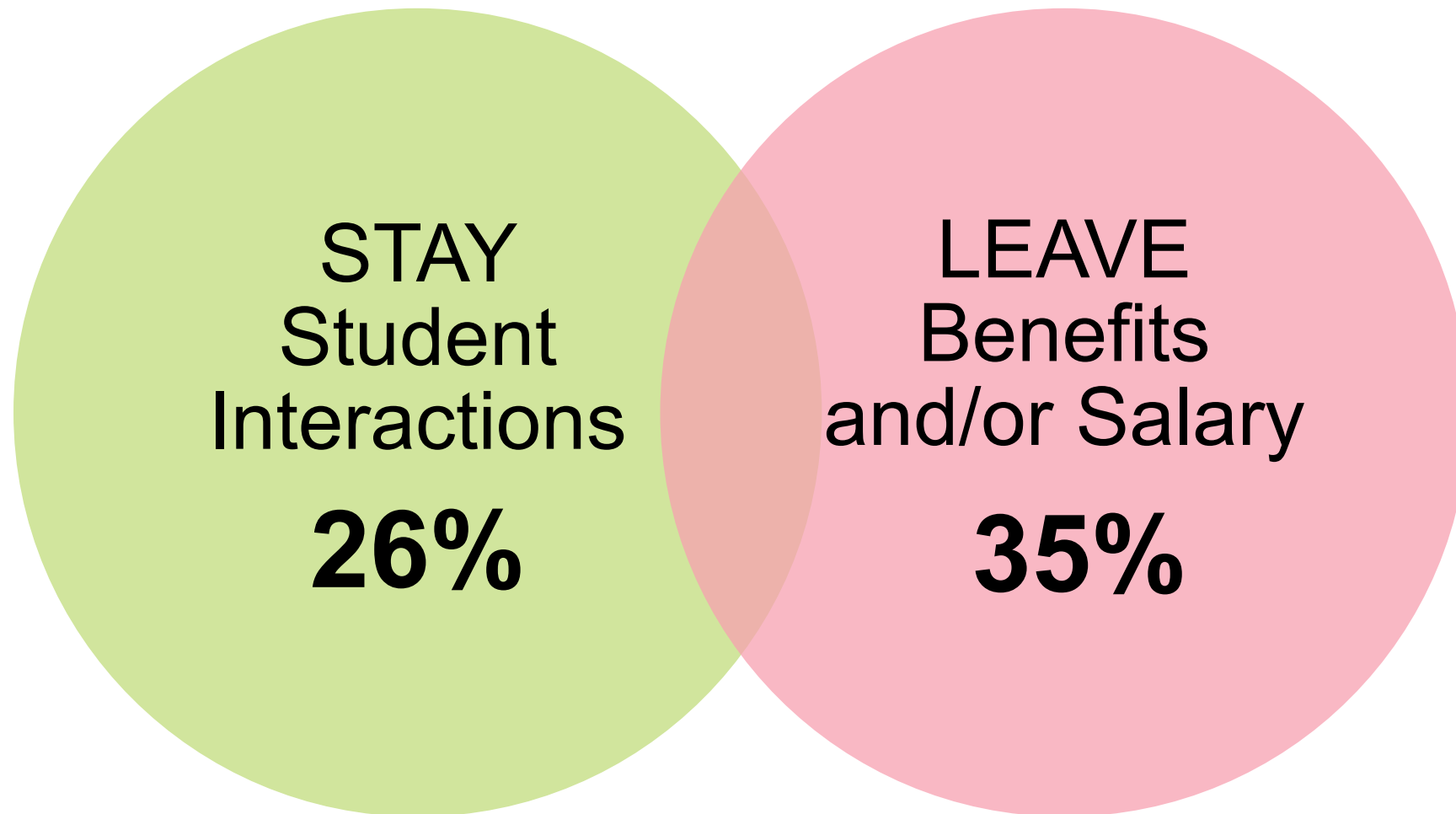
\* Percentages calculated from a subset of responses; excluded categories may prevent totals from reaching 100%.

# Recruit and Retain: Which aspect MOST affects your desire to leave teaching?

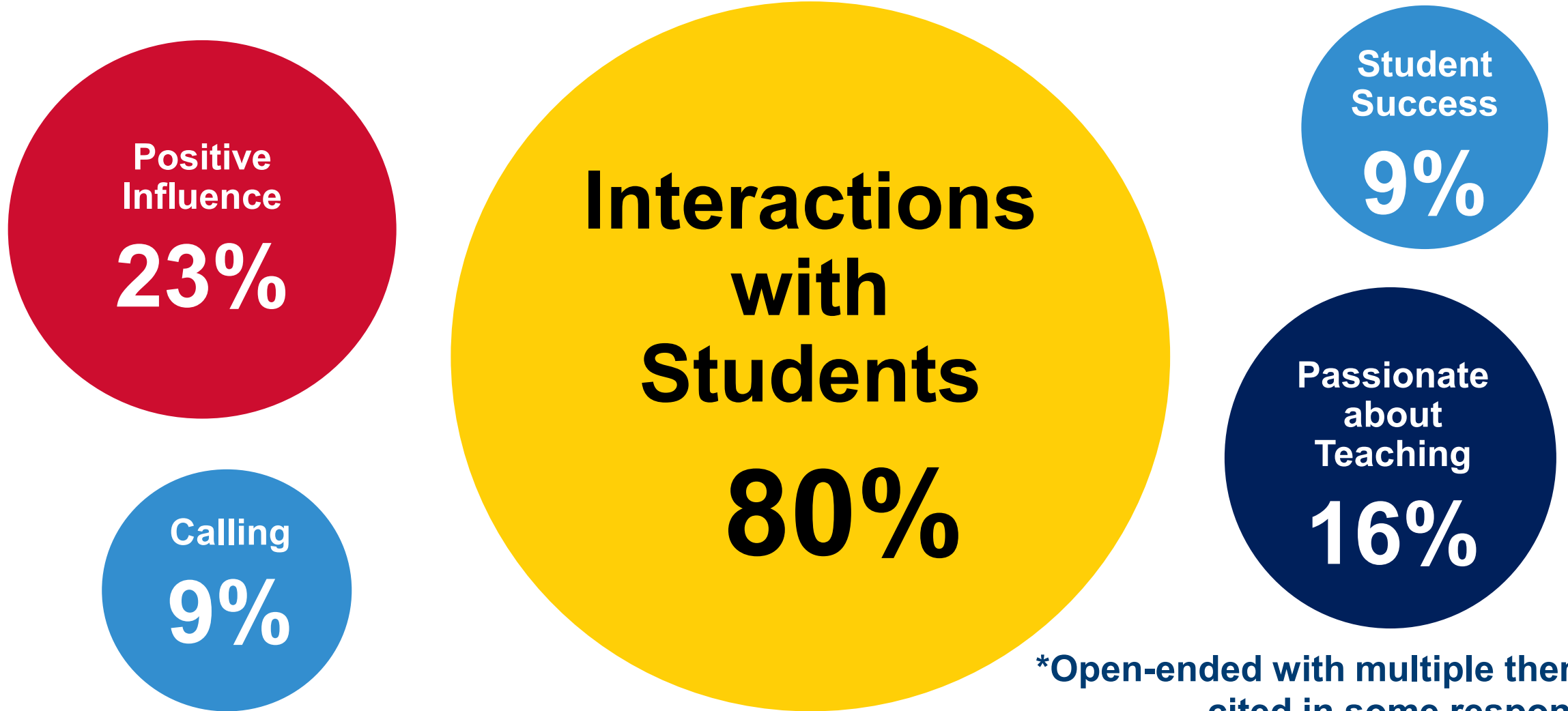


	2024-2025 Results
Benefits and/or salary	35%
Overall school climate and culture	12%
School leadership	9%
Interactions with students	5%
Career advancement opportunities	3%
Broader economic or scheduling considerations	2%
Interactions with colleagues	1%
Location or commute to school	1%

\* Percentages calculated from a subset of responses; excluded categories may prevent totals from reaching 100%.







\*Open-ended with multiple themes cited in some responses



# Office of Educator Continuum

Division of Educator Talent Acquisition

[mdek12.org](https://mdek12.org)



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