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The Texas Teacher Workforce

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Section 1: Introduction

The mission of the Texas public education system is to prepare every child for success in college, a career, or the military (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2022). As classroom teachers are a well-documented key factor in supporting student success (Chetty et al., 2014; Goldhaber et al., 2015), fulfilling the mission of the Texas public education system requires that a high-quality classroom teacher population be sustained. However, Texas, like most states across the nation, struggles to attract and retain teachers.

Over the past decade, the sustainability of the teacher workforce has faced many challenges (Audrain et al., 2022; Podolsky et al., 2016). Reports of teacher shortages nationwide have pointed to issues of stressful or unsupportive working conditions, increased expectations and accountability, noncompetitive pay, few opportunities for upward mobility, and a declining reputation of the profession as contributing factors (Audrain et al., 2022; García & Weiss, 2019; Ingersoll & Collins, 2018; Podolsky et al., 2016). Most recently, as schools recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, teacher attrition has increased and recruitment into the teaching profession has declined (Devers et al., 2024).

In Texas, challenges with recruitment and retention prompted Governor Greg Abbott to form the Teacher Vacancy Task Force in March 2022 to investigate teacher workforce issues and provide recommendations for improvement (TEA, 2023a). The task force acknowledged that amid decreasing student enrollment, traditional public schools were increasingly hiring uncertified teachers, offering salaries that failed to keep up with inflation, and experiencing increased teacher attrition. To improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers, the task force recommended improving compensation packages, providing training and support, and improving working conditions for teachers (TEA, 2023a). In response to the needs identified by the task force, in 2025 Texas passed House Bill (HB) 2, which included the Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnerships (PREP) allotment to improve the quality of the teacher workforce through enhanced pathways for preparation and retention (TEA, 2025b).

The purpose of this report is to detail the ways in which the Texas traditional public school teacher workforce has changed over the past decade. Using the data repository housed at the University of Houston Education Research Center (UH ERC), this report demonstrates the changes in teacher demographics, preparation and certification, retention and mobility, and salaries over the past decade. To provide important evidence to further equity-based solutions for Texas public schools, this report disaggregates trends for schools serving the highest and lowest concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. The figures, tables, and findings from this report provide evidence to support investment in the recruitment, preparation, and development of the future Texas teacher workforce.

This comprehensive review is organized into six sections. **Section 2** summarizes key policy developments that have shaped teacher preparation in Texas. **Section 3** provides the definitions of key terms used in the report and information regarding the data and methods deployed. **Section 4** details Texas teacher workforce data for traditional public schools. **Section 5** discusses the findings, and **Section 6** provides a concluding overview, implications for policy and practice, and recommendations for the field.

Section 2: Texas Teacher Policy Review

Over the past few decades, Texas has developed and implemented a number of policies to strengthen the teacher workforce and regulate the teacher certification process to maintain workforce quality (Templeton et al., 2020a; Templeton et al., 2020b). These policies include the creation of a state agency to regulate teacher preparation and certification; the development and regulation of different types of teacher preparation and certification pathways (e.g., alternative certification program (ACP), teacher residency program); the creation of rules governing baccalaureate degree offerings at community colleges; and the creation and expansion of different types of allotments to attract, prepare, and retain teachers (e.g., Teacher Incentive Allotment, PREP allotment). This section provides an overview of key Texas policies that have shaped the state’s teacher certification landscape and are particularly relevant to this report.

The first five policies focus on establishing a supportive regulatory infrastructure to maintain the quality of the teacher workforce. The final three policies focus on the financial investment of the state to improve teacher recruitment and retention.

State Board for Educator Certification

In 1995, Senate Bill (SB) 1 (74th Legislative Session) established the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to support the delivery of high-quality teachers and address shortages in certain areas and subjects within an increasingly diverse student population across the state. This initiative recognized public school teachers as professionals and authorized the SBEC to regulate the profession by establishing rules governing teacher preparation and certification, conduct standards, and training requirements for all types of teacher certification programs in Texas (TEC §21.031). The board’s responsibilities include creating and certifying standards for teachers and managing various pathways to teacher certification. The SBEC defined and established two pathways for teacher certification: pre-baccalaureate (i.e., the traditional four-year route) and post-baccalaureate (i.e., ACPs), both of which are offered at colleges and universities. All candidates in both the pre-baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate programs must pass two certification exams: the content certification exam and the content pedagogy exam, offered through the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) program (Templeton et al., 2020b).

Alternative Certification Programs

At the same time the SBEC was created, the passage of HB 714 (74th Legislative Session, 1995) introduced an alternative pathway to teacher certification for individuals already holding a bachelor’s degree. Alternative certification programs (ACPs) provide a clear pathway for individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter the profession and become teachers, and they are commonly offered by nonprofit education service centers, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, school districts, and for-profit providers (Templeton et al., 2020b). After candidates enroll in an ACP provided by an approved educator preparation program (EPP), they typically secure a teaching internship, pass the required state content and pedagogy exams, and obtain a probationary teaching certificate for their initial year. After completing all of these requirements, ACP participants are then granted a standard teaching certificate (TEC § 21.049). Research indicates that ACPs have become increasingly popular and are now the main

certification route for Texas public school teachers (Van Overschelde & Wiggins, 2017). From 2012 to 2018, 56% of all future Texas teachers enrolled in an ACP, consistent with prior research on ACP popularity (Templeton et al., 2020a).

Texas Teacher Residency Program

Another route for teacher preparation, the Texas Teacher Residency Program, was created in 2014 through HB 1752 (83rd Legislative Session, 2013). This program allows higher education institutions, through a competitive process, to partner with school districts or open-enrollment charter schools to provide employment to those in teacher residency programs (TEC § 21.801). In 2021, this program expanded through the Texas COVID Learning Acceleration Supports (TCLAS) initiative, which provided grants to school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and EPP partnerships to develop and operate teacher residency programs. The residency model offers paid, full-year clinical training along with co-teaching in K–12 classrooms, pairing each resident with an experienced mentor. As of 2023–24, there were approximately 37 vetted teacher residency programs across Texas EPPs (TEA, 2023b). Additionally, to support the sustainability of the paid residency model, the TCLAS initiative provided technical support to participating districts to implement strategic staffing models.

In April 2024, the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted rules requiring EPPs to establish a teacher residency program route that combines a rigorous full-year classroom experience for pre-service teachers while they complete an SBEC-approved EPP (TEC §228.65). To recognize the additional work a teacher candidate completes in the residency program route, the candidate will earn a different type of teacher certification: the enhanced standard teacher certification (TEC §230.31). To be able to offer the aforementioned route, EPPs must apply to and be approved by the SBEC. Once approved, the TEA will conduct a visit at the end of the first academic year, when the program reports to the TEA the residency program completers (TEC §228.15). As of September 2025, there were approximately 48 Texas teacher residency preparation route providers across the state (TEA, 2025b).

Districts of Innovation

In 2015, HB 1842 (84th Legislative Session) introduced a District of Innovation (DOI) designation, which provides school districts with flexibility by exempting them from certain provisions that do not apply to charter schools (Anglin, 2021). These DOI designations enable schools to develop innovative solutions to serve students more effectively and, in doing so, be exempt from certain provisions, including educator certification requirements, first and last days of school, length of the school day, class size, and certain purchasing and contract requirements. Schools with an acceptable accountability rating of C or above are eligible for DOI status and must develop a local innovation plan that details their innovations and any exemption requests to obtain the DOI designation. By the 2017–18 school year, 178 school districts had adopted DOI education plans and designations, with an additional 509 districts adopting them in the 2018–19 school year (Anglin, 2021). By 2022, nearly 90% of traditional school districts in Texas had obtained DOI status, and 87% of these districts had exempted teacher certification requirements (Anglin, 2024). Research found that the flexibility of the DOI designation was associated with an increase in the employment of uncertified and out-of-field teachers from 2016 to 2021 (Anglin, 2024).

In response to the increased employment of uncertified teachers, the 89th Texas Legislature in 2025 passed HB 2, which introduced a new rule that prevents DOI

districts from being exempted from all teacher certification requirements. It amended TEC § 12A.004 and added a new statute, TEC § 21.0032, which specifically prohibits school districts from hiring uncertified teachers for core subjects such as English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. During the transition period, districts that adopted the DOI designation with certain certification exemptions may continue to hire uncertified teachers for subjects other than reading and mathematics in grades above fifth through the 2026–27 school year. However, beginning that year, all K–5 reading and mathematics teachers will be required to be fully certified. By the 2027–28 school year, certification will become mandatory for K–12 teachers in reading, mathematics, science, and social studies, though districts can request extensions through the 2029–30 academic year (TEA, 2025b). Under the new policy, districts must develop a realistic strategic plan to comply with the updated statutory teacher certification guidelines. This plan must include identifying the number of uncertified educators teaching foundation courses in 2025–26, outlining the district’s strategies to reduce the number of uncertified teachers each year, describing ways to support uncertified teachers in completing certification and recruit future certified teachers, and selecting one EPP partner to support all of these efforts (TEA, 2025b). The plan must be approved by the district’s board of trustees and then publicly posted on the district’s website in a visible, accessible location.

Community College Baccalaureate

In 2017, SB 2118 (85th Legislative Session) amended TEC § 130.303 to allow public community colleges to offer up to five baccalaureate degree programs in applied science, applied technology, and nursing at a junior college. Among these programs is a degree in applied science with an emphasis on early childhood education. The primary goal of this policy is to address ongoing workforce shortages, improve access to affordable four-year degrees in the local area, and meet local labor needs. This initiative is especially important for teacher certification because it supports the training and certification of more teachers to meet local workforce needs. However, eligibility is limited to community colleges that received a positive financial health assessment from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and had a taxable property valuation of at least \$6 billion in the previous year (TEC § 130.307). As of 2024, 17 community colleges offered bachelor’s degrees, including four that offered a degree in early childhood education (Love et al., 2024).

Teacher Incentive Allotment

To reward and encourage teachers to serve in high-needs and rural districts, HB 3 (86th Legislative Session, 2019) established a Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) program (TEC § 21.3521; TEC § 48.112). The initiative was initially designed to increase teacher salaries for the most effective teachers, especially for the most effective teachers in rural school districts serving the largest proportions of economically disadvantaged students. Teachers could earn designations of *recognized*, *exemplary*, or *master* through the optional, locally developed performance-based funding systems developed under the TIA program. Teacher allotments ranged from \$3,000 to \$32,000 per year, with the smallest allotments awarded to teachers with *recognized* designations teaching in urban school districts serving the smallest proportions of economically disadvantaged students and the largest allotments awarded to teachers with *master* designations teaching in rural school districts serving the largest proportions of economically disadvantaged students (TEA, 2025a).

In 2025, HB 2 (89th Legislative Session) expanded TIA by introducing a new designation: *acknowledged*. Beginning in the 2026–27 school year, districts with local

evaluation systems may designate teachers at the new *acknowledged* level based on their performance during the 2025–26 school year. To help districts assess and assign these TIA designations, TEA developed performance standards based on statewide teacher data: the top 50% are designated as *acknowledged*, the top 33% as *recognized*, the top 20% as *exemplary*, and the top 5% as *master*. All teachers, including uncertified teachers, may participate in TIA as long as they meet their district’s performance criteria. Under this expansion, a district could generate up to \$36,000 per designated teacher (TEA, n.d.-a).

Teacher Retention Allotment

In 2025, HB 2 (89th Legislative Session) also created the Teacher Retention Allotment (TRA). Unlike TIA, which is performance-based, TRA is an annual allotment for school districts based on the experience of teachers in the district. The allotment is intended to assist school districts with adjusting their salary schedules to increase salaries for more experienced teachers. For school districts with 5,000 or fewer enrolled students, the TRA allocates \$4,000 per teacher with three or four years of teaching experience and \$8,000 for each teacher with five or more years of teaching experience. For districts with more than 5,000 students, the TRA allocates \$2,500 for each teacher with three or four years of teaching experience and \$5,000 for each teacher with five or more years of teaching experience (TEA, 2025c).

Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnerships Allotment

To enhance pathways for teacher preparation, HB 2 (89th Legislative Session, 2025) also created the Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnerships (PREP) allotment (TEC § 48.157). Funds for this allotment are distributed through the foundation school program formula and are available to any school district that meets the requirements and applies for funding. The PREP allotment supports district partnerships that promote teacher certification and professionalism through five programs: pre-service residency, Grow Your Own (GYO), mentoring, traditional pre-service, and alternative certification.

To qualify for the PREP allotment, school districts and partner organizations have specific requirements. PREP GYO programs may support up to 40 candidates per district annually, with each district receiving an allotment that increases from \$8,000 to \$12,000 per candidate as the candidate progresses through the program. PREP residency pre-service programs are funded to support districts and EPPs in training prospective teachers through a paid yearlong clinical teaching experience in a classroom under the supervision of an experienced teacher. This program funds up to 40 paid residents per district per year (each district receiving \$24,000 to \$39,500 per employee) and up to 80 paid traditional student teachers per district per year (each district receiving \$10,000 to \$21,500 per resident). Additionally, the PREP allotment funds mentorship programs that provide structured assistance for new teachers. It supports up to 40 new teachers per district per year, with each district receiving \$3,000 per employee and an additional \$1,000 for the mentor teacher. However, each of these PREP funding awards is success-based and usually given in two installments: an initial payment (when the employee begins the program), followed by a second installment that is contingent on success (after the employee earns their degree and enrolls in an EPP or earns their enhanced certification).

Section 3: Data, Methods, and Key Terms

This section is provided as a reference for readers. First, the data and methods used in the report are explained. Then definitions are provided for key terms used throughout.

Data and Methods

This report was created using data accessed through the UH ERC. The education center is a repository that houses individual-level administrative data from the TEA, THECB, and Texas Workforce Commission. This study combined certification data from the SBEC as well as data submitted by schools to TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS)—a statewide administrative data repository—to describe the Texas traditional public school classroom teacher workforce. Campus and school district data for students and staff were available from the 2014–15 through 2024–25 school years. The SBEC certification data were available through February 28, 2025.

Throughout this study, descriptive statistics of counts, percentages, and averages are presented. For campus- and school district-level statistics, counts are aggregated to the appropriate level, and percentages are reported as a percentage of the entire population.

The following section describes key terms used throughout the report and the methods used to define or calculate each term.

Key Terms

Attrition

The attrition rate is calculated by dividing the number of teachers who attrited (left the field) by the total number of teachers. Teachers are considered attrited if they were not assigned a teaching role in the following school year. Teacher attrition is defined as leaving the field of teaching and is reported in two ways: as having moved to a non-teacher role and as having left the public school system.

Certification

Teacher certification information was provided by the SBEC, and any teaching certificates or permits issued by the SBEC were considered valid. At the time this report was written, teacher certification data through February 28, 2025, was available. Classification of teacher certifications are provided below:

- **Intern or Probationary Certificate:** These certificates are one-year teaching permits awarded to individuals enrolled in an EPP recognized by the SBEC.
- **School District Teaching Permit:** School districts award these one-year teaching permits that are not transferrable outside of the school district in which they were awarded.
- **Standard Teaching Certificate:** The standard teaching certificate is a five-year teaching permit awarded after the successful completion of an EPP or for approved, valid out-of-state teaching certificates. Teachers awarded lifetime teaching certificates are also included in this category.

- **Uncertified Teacher:** This is a teacher who has been issued no teaching certificate or permit issued by SBEC.

Community Type

The National Center for Education Statistics classifies the geographic locations of schools into city, suburban, town, and rural classifications, with additional context for size and proximity to more populated areas (Gevert & Maselli, 2024). The subcategories are as follows:

- **City: Large:** A territory inside an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more and inside a principal city with a population of 250,000 or more.
- **City: Midsize:** A territory inside an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more and inside a principal city with a population of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
- **City: Small:** A territory inside an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more and inside a principal city with a population of less than 100,000.
- **Suburban: Large:** A territory outside a principal city and inside an urban area with a population of 250,000 or more.
- **Suburban: Midsize:** A territory outside a principal city and inside an urban area with a population of less than 250,000 and greater than or equal to 100,000.
- **Suburban: Small:** A territory outside a principal city and inside an urban area with a population of less than 100,000 and greater than or equal to 50,000.
- **Town: Fringe:** A territory inside an urban area with a population of less than 50,000 that is less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more.
- **Town: Distant:** A territory inside an urban area with a population of less than 50,000 that is more than 10 miles and less than or equal to 35 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more.
- **Town: Remote:** A territory inside an urban area with a population of less than 50,000 that is more than 35 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more.
- **Rural: Fringe:** A territory outside an urban area that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more, as well as a territory outside an urban area that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban area with a population of less than 50,000.
- **Rural: Distant:** A territory outside an urban area that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more, as well as a territory outside an urban area that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban area with a population of less than 50,000.
- **Rural: Remote:** A territory outside an urban area that is more than 25 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more and is also more than 10 miles from an urban area with a population of less than 50,000.

Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

Refers to a pathway to teacher certification taken by an individual. EPPs are defined as “an entity that must be approved by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to recommend candidates in one or more educator certification classes” (Texas

Administrative Code [TAC] § 228).

- **Alternative Certification Program (ACP):** These EPPs are defined as “An approved educator preparation program, delivered by entities specifically designed as an alternative to a traditional undergraduate certification program, for individuals already holding at least a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution of higher education” (TAC § 228.2). EPPs were identified in the SBEC data and classified as ACPs based on certification route codes.
- **University-Based Program:** This is an SBEC-approved EPP operated by Texas institutions of higher education. For the purposes of this report, data from ACPs provided by university-based preparation programs are included and grouped with university results. EPPs were identified in the SBEC data and classified as university-based programs based on certification route codes.
- **Other:** Other includes vocational teachers who were awarded teaching certificates based upon vocational experience (no EPP) and those awarded a teacher certification with no listed preparation organization.
- **Out-of-State Certification:** Texas recognizes certifications issued by other state education agencies and allows teachers to transfer certifications earned outside of the state into Texas. Teachers with certification awarded out of state and transferred into Texas are labeled as having an out-of-state certification in this report because the pathway of certification outside of Texas is unknown.
- **School District:** The SBEC allows approved school districts to award these one-year teaching permits that are not transferrable outside of the school district in which they were awarded. Educator preparation provided through this pathway is provided by the local school district.

Experience

Classroom teacher experience is calculated by counting the academic years between 1999–2000 and 2024–25 in which an individual was assigned a teacher role indicated by a role ID code of 025, 029, or 087 (PEIMS Code Table C021). Teacher experience calculations include assignments across all grade levels submitted during the fall of each academic year. Only years in which individuals had at least one role ID assignment for a teacher were counted in experience, and the years of assignment were not required to be consecutive.

Mobility

To determine teacher mobility, the teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers were considered to be mobile if they remained in a teaching role but moved to a different campus. Teacher mobility is reported in three ways: 1) teachers who moved to a new campus in the same district, 2) teachers who moved to a new district in the same region, and 3) teachers who moved to a new region.

Retention

To determine teacher retention, the teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role at the same campus in the following school year were considered retained. Teacher retention rates were calculated by dividing the total number of retained teachers by the total number of teachers for a school year.

Teacher

A teacher is defined by the role assigned to an individual in PEIMS. Over the years, role code ID numbers 025, 029, and 087 have been used to define the teaching position and

are included in this study. Teachers in the data set represent both part-time and full-time teachers, as each data observation represents one individual.

Traditional Public School

For the purposes of this report, a traditional public school is synonymous with Independent School District.

Limitations

An important limitation is that the UH ERC data are ultimately derived from the PEIMS and SBEC. Therefore, any data integrity issues (e.g., keystroke error on entry) would be included in this report unless otherwise corrected. Similarly, other data cannot be independently verified. Given the large amount of data—and that these are the most comprehensive data available—we do not expect this to substantively bias our findings. Data analyzed for this report include PEIMS data through the 2024–25 school year and SBEC teacher certification data through October 31, 2025. Given the nature of public education, we also recognize that the trends reflected in this report are influenced by numerous policies at both the state and local levels. While we address some of the large policy shifts, there are countless other contextual features that relate to the data. This does not undermine the integrity of the findings but should be considered when interpreting the report.

Section 4: Texas Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers

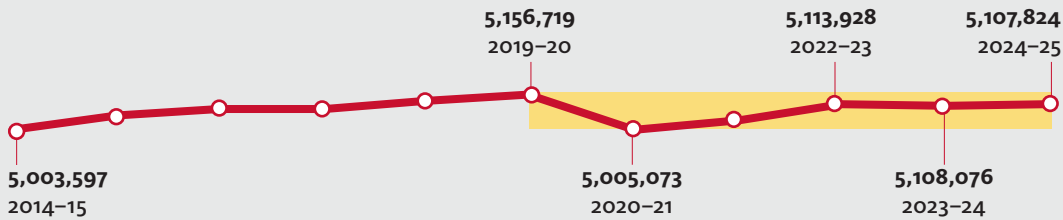
This section describes the population of traditional public school classroom teachers in Texas and is organized by teacher demographics, certification, experience, the characteristics of first-year teachers, assignment, subject area, student population served, mobility, retention, attrition, and teacher pay.

AT A GLANCE

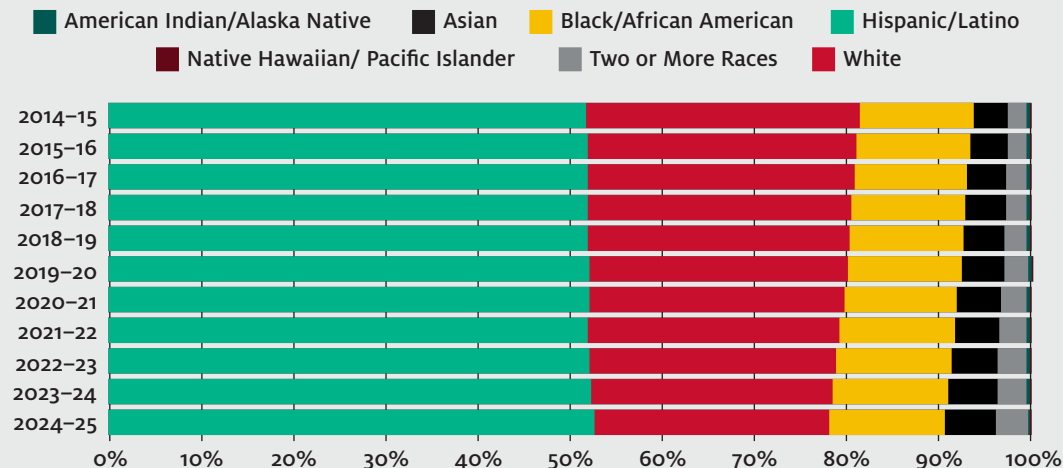
Traditional Public School Student Population, 2014–15 through 2024–25

The Texas traditional public school student population has recently decreased in enrollment and increased in students receiving special education and those in need of English-language supports.

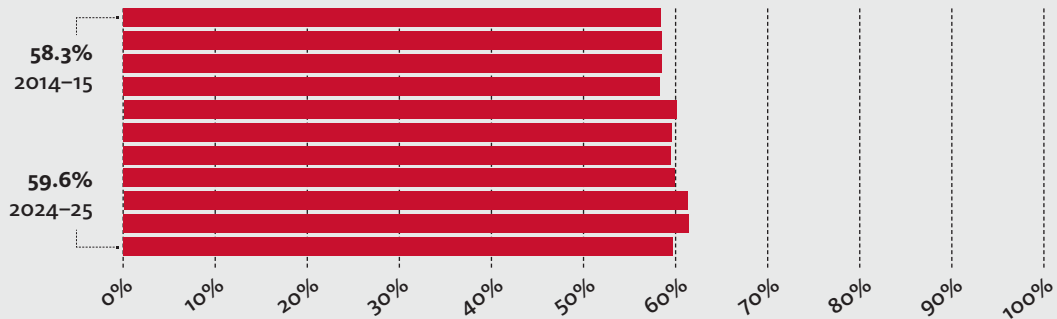
Traditional public school student enrollment decreased after the pandemic and has not recovered to pre-pandemic enrollment levels. Enrollment in Texas traditional public schools peaked at 5,156,719 students in 2019–20 and then declined by more than 150,000 students in 2020–21. While enrollment began to recover somewhat starting in 2021–22, it has not returned to pre-pandemic numbers and continues to fluctuate. In 2022–23, enrollment increased to 5,113,928 students but then decreased in 2023–24 to 5,108,076 students and to 5,107,824 students in 2024–25.



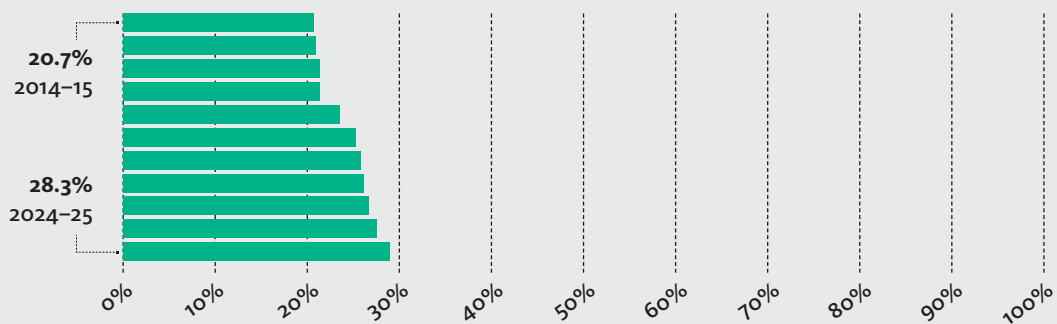
The ethnic and racial composition of traditional public school student enrollment is majority Hispanic and has become less White in the past decade. Students identifying as Hispanic comprise the majority of Texas students and have increased in representation—up from 51.8% in 2014–15 to 52.7% in 2024–25. The proportion of students identifying as White decreased from 29.6% in 2014–15 to 25.5% in 2024–25, and the percentage of students identifying as African American fluctuated slightly between 12.3% and 12.5% of the student population. The proportion of students identifying as Asian increased from 3.8% in 2014–15 to 5.5% in 2024–25, and the percentage of students identifying as two or more races increased from 2.0% in 2014–15 to 3.4% in 2024–25.



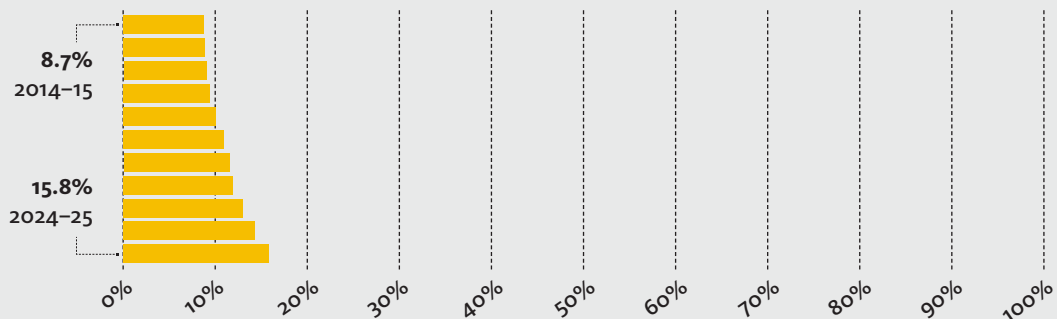
A majority of students enrolled in traditional public schools are economically disadvantaged. From 2014–2015 through 2024–25, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students has been consistently around 60% with slight variations by year.



A growing number of students enrolled in traditional public schools are identified as emergent bilingual students. The number of students identified as emergent bilingual has increased each year over the past decade—from 20.7% of students in 2014–15 to 28.3% in 2024–25.



A growing number of students enrolled in traditional public schools are receiving special education services. The number of students receiving special education services has increased over the past decade—from 8.7% in 2014–15 to 15.8% in 2024–25. Notably, the percentage of students receiving special education services accelerated after 2018–19. This aligns with changes to Texas’s special education program that resulted from corrective action sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs in 2018 (Gibson, 2022).



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

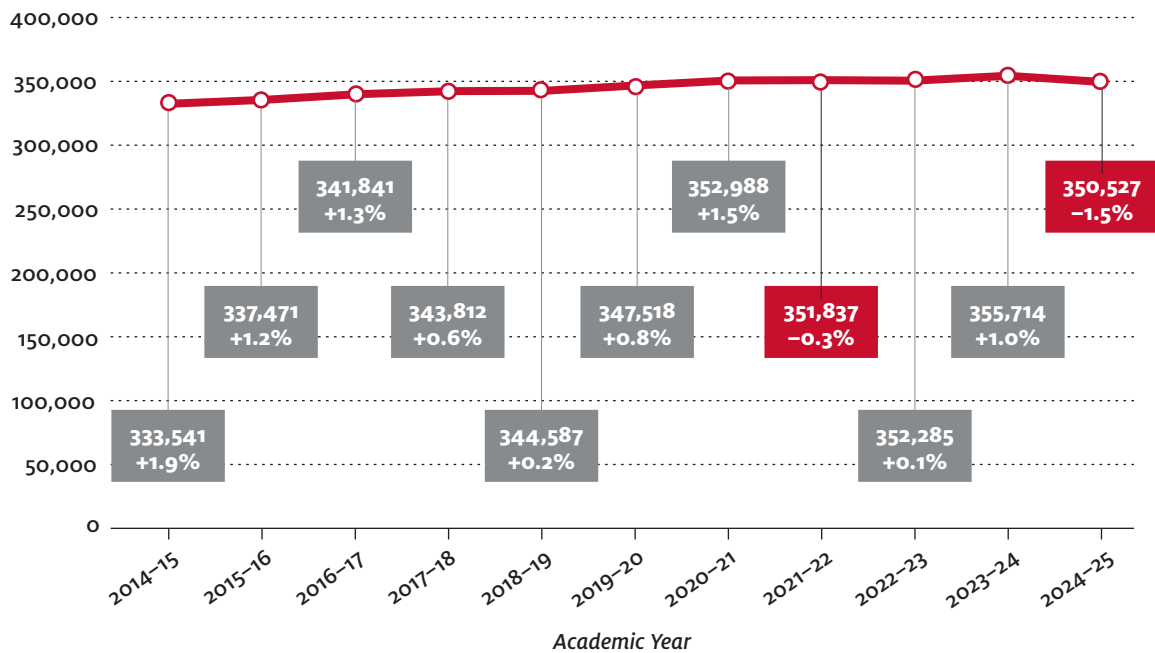
Note. Traditional public schools refer to all public schools that are not open-enrollment charter schools. Student enrollment and program participation were reported as of the fall snapshot date (the last Friday in October) through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Percentage growth from the previous year is calculated as a proportion of total students each year. Race and ethnicity categories are those reported through PEIMS. Economically disadvantaged refers to students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or other public assistance. Emergent bilingual refers to students whose primary language is other than English and who are learning English. Special education refers to students served in special education programs as determined by the admission, review, and dismissal committee.

TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM TEACHERS

For Texas to achieve its goal of providing a quality education for all—including students from marginalized racial and ethnic groups and students living with economic disadvantage—the state must place increasing effort into recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse group of professional teachers (TEA, 2018).

FIGURE 4.1

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percent growth from the previous year is calculated as a proportion of total teachers each year.

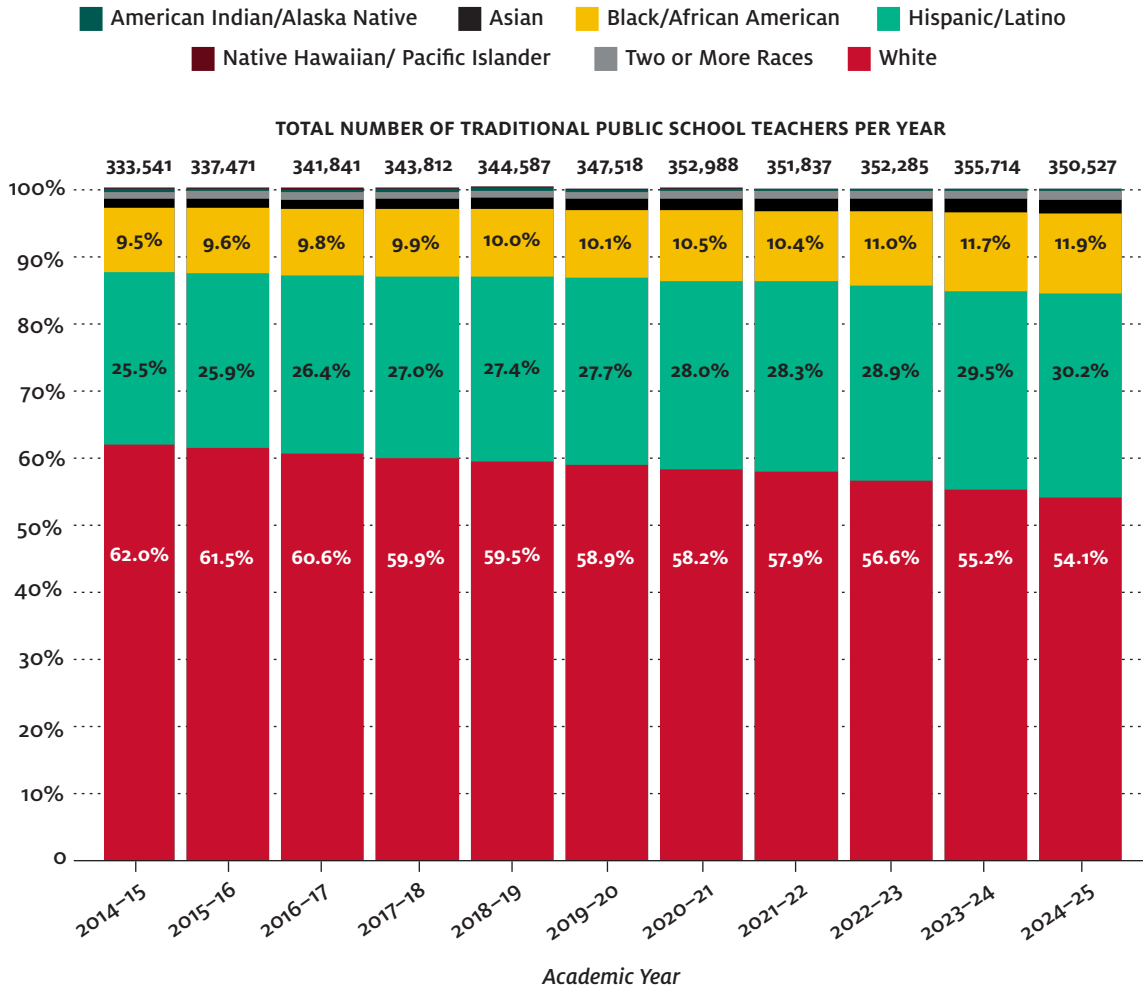
DATA BREAKDOWN

- While the number of traditional public school classroom teachers has traditionally increased with growing student enrollment, the 2024–25 school year showed a decrease in the number of teachers to the lowest number since 2019–20. As shown in Figure 4.1, the number of classroom teachers decreased from 355,714 teachers in 2023–24 to 350,527 teachers in 2024–25: a decrease of 1.5% and a loss of 5,187 teachers.
- Proportionally, the decrease in the number of traditional public school teachers from 2023–24 to 2024–25 (minus 1.5%) is much larger than the decrease in student enrollment over the same time period (minus less than 0.1%). The total number of teachers decreased by 5,187 teachers from 2023–24 to 2024–25, while the number of students decreased by 252 students over the same time period (see page 14 for student enrollment).

TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

FIGURE 4.2

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. Race and ethnicity groups reported are as defined by PEIMS.

DATA BREAKDOWN

RACE

- **The racial and ethnic composition of the traditional public school classroom teacher population does not match that of traditional public school students.** Comparing the racial and ethnic composition of teachers displayed in Figure 4.2 to the descriptions of traditional public school students on page 14, the differences in racial and ethnic makeup are stark. Over the past decade, the traditional public school student population has changed little, with more than 70% of students identifying as a race or ethnicity other than White while the traditional public school teacher population has remained majority White.
- **The proportion of traditional public school classroom teachers who identify as White is on the decline.** While more than half of teachers still identify as White over this time period, this percentage has been slowly declining and aligning slightly more with the student population.
- **The proportions of traditional public school classroom teachers identifying as Hispanic and African American have increased over the past decade.** Since 2014–15, the percentage of teachers identifying as Hispanic/Latino increased from 25.5% to 30.2% in 2024–25, and the percentage of teachers identifying as Black/African American increased from 9.5% to 11.9% over the same time period.

GENDER

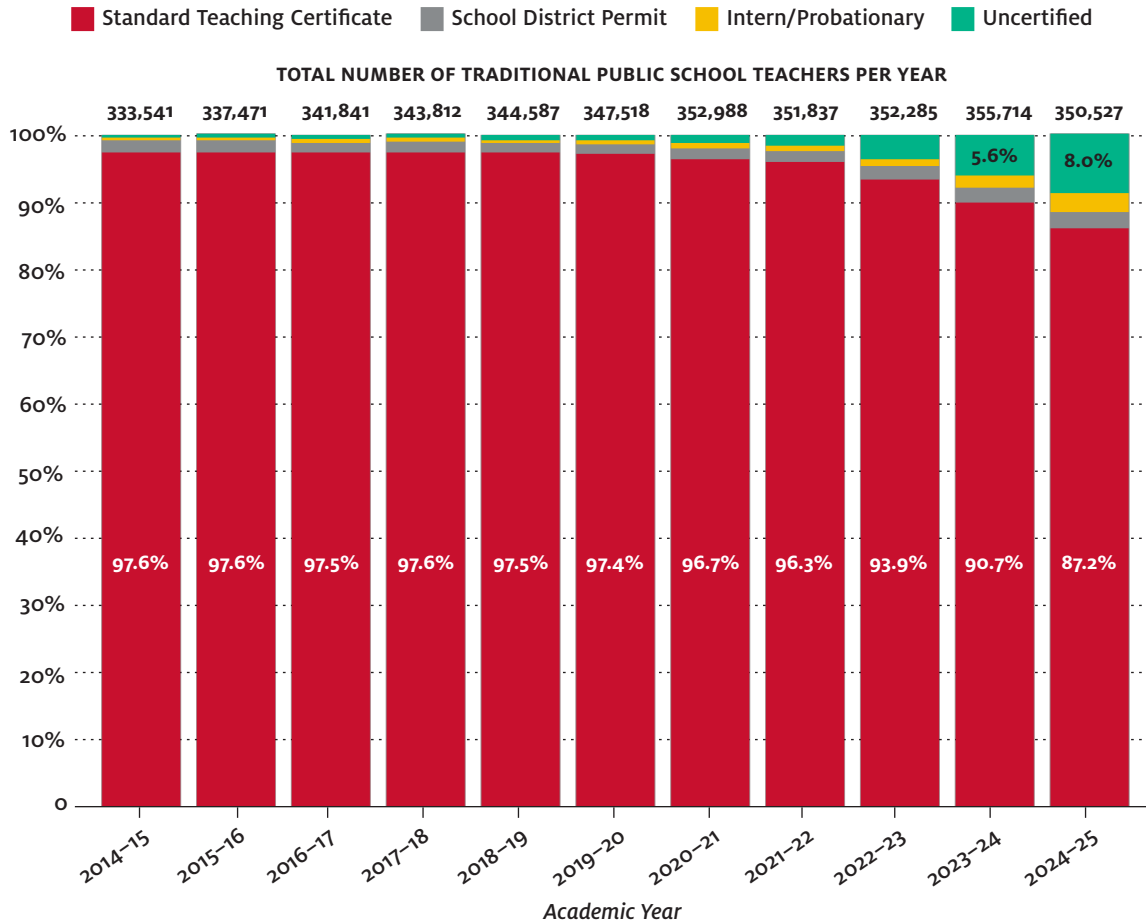
- **The traditional public school classroom teacher population is majority female.** In 2014–15, 76.7% of teachers identified as women. By 2024–25, that decreased slightly to 75.4%.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Texas teacher certification policy over the past decade has changed in two major ways. First, the state has increased the number of pathways that prospective teachers can take to get certified. Second, beginning in 2015–16, the state allowed changes in teacher certification requirements, namely through the DOI designation. While HB 2 (89th Legislative Session) curbed the DOI exemption in 2025, school districts for many years were able to waive teacher certification requirements in an effort to relieve teacher shortages. The combination of these changes has resulted in a teacher population increasingly made up of uncertified teachers and certified teachers with a wide variety of preparation experiences prior to entering the classroom. See Section 2 for a history of Texas teacher certification policy.

FIGURE 4.3

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Certification Status, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

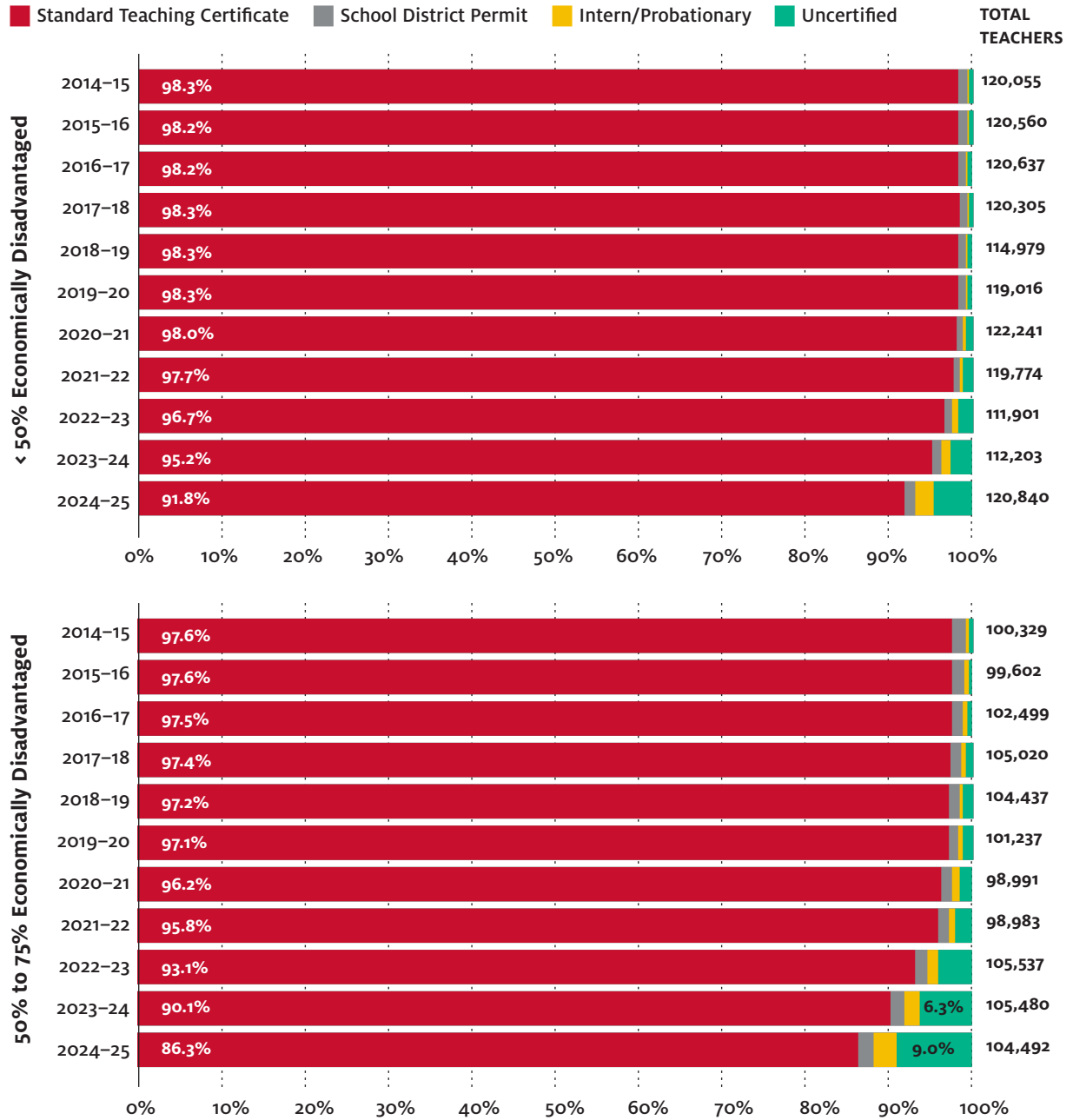
Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. Teacher certification data was available through February 2025 at the time of this report. An intern or probationary certificate is a one-year teaching permit awarded to individuals enrolled in an educator preparation program (EPP); school district permits are one-year teaching permits awarded by the school district and are not transferrable outside of the school district in which they were awarded; standard teaching certificates are typically five-year teaching permits awarded after the successful completion of an EPP or for approved, valid out-of-state teaching certificates; and uncertified teachers are defined as teachers with no teaching certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification.

DATA BREAKDOWN

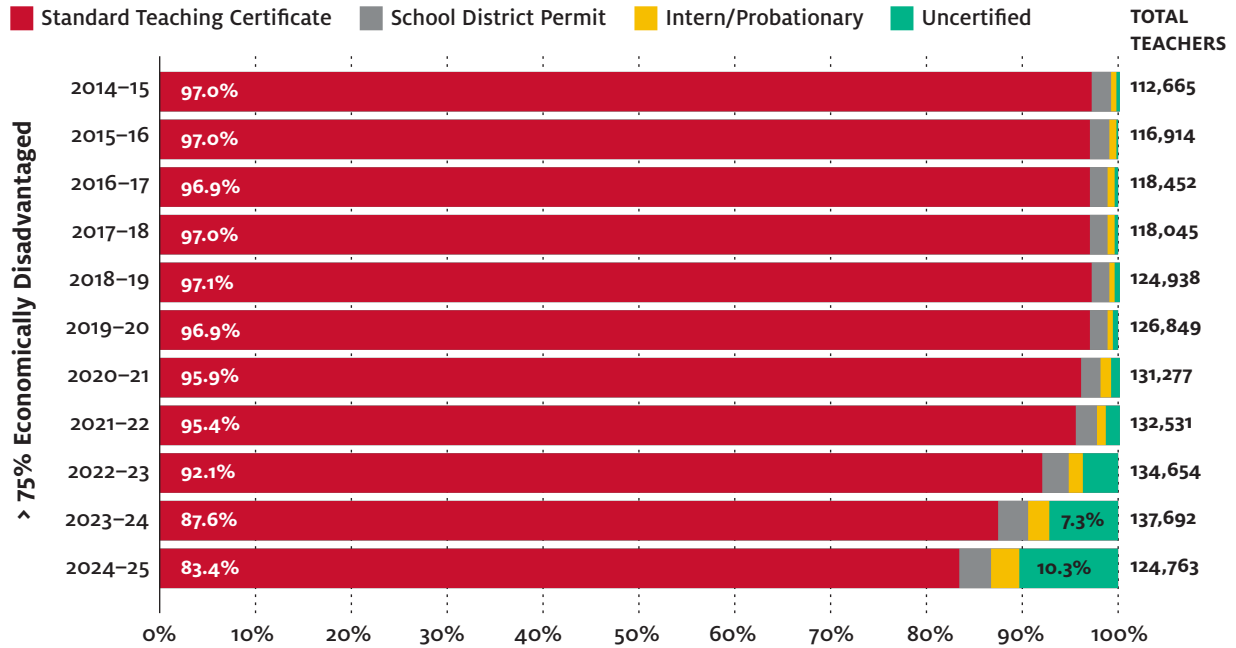
- **A large majority of traditional public school classroom teachers hold standard teaching certificates.** From 2014–15 through 2019–20, more than 97% of traditional public school classroom teachers held standard teaching certificates. Since then, the proportion of teachers with standard teaching certificates has declined, reaching a low of 87.2% in 2024–25.
- **Over the past decade, the number and proportion of uncertified traditional public school classroom teachers have increased.** Through 2019–20, this proportion was under 1%, but it has increased each year since then to 8.0% as of 2024–25.
- **The number of traditional public school classroom teachers with school district teaching permits and intern/probationary permits has increased over the past decade.** As with uncertified teachers, this increase has been sharper since 2019–20.

FIGURE 4.4

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Certification Status and the Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students Served, 2014–15 through 2024–25



The Texas Teacher Workforce



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

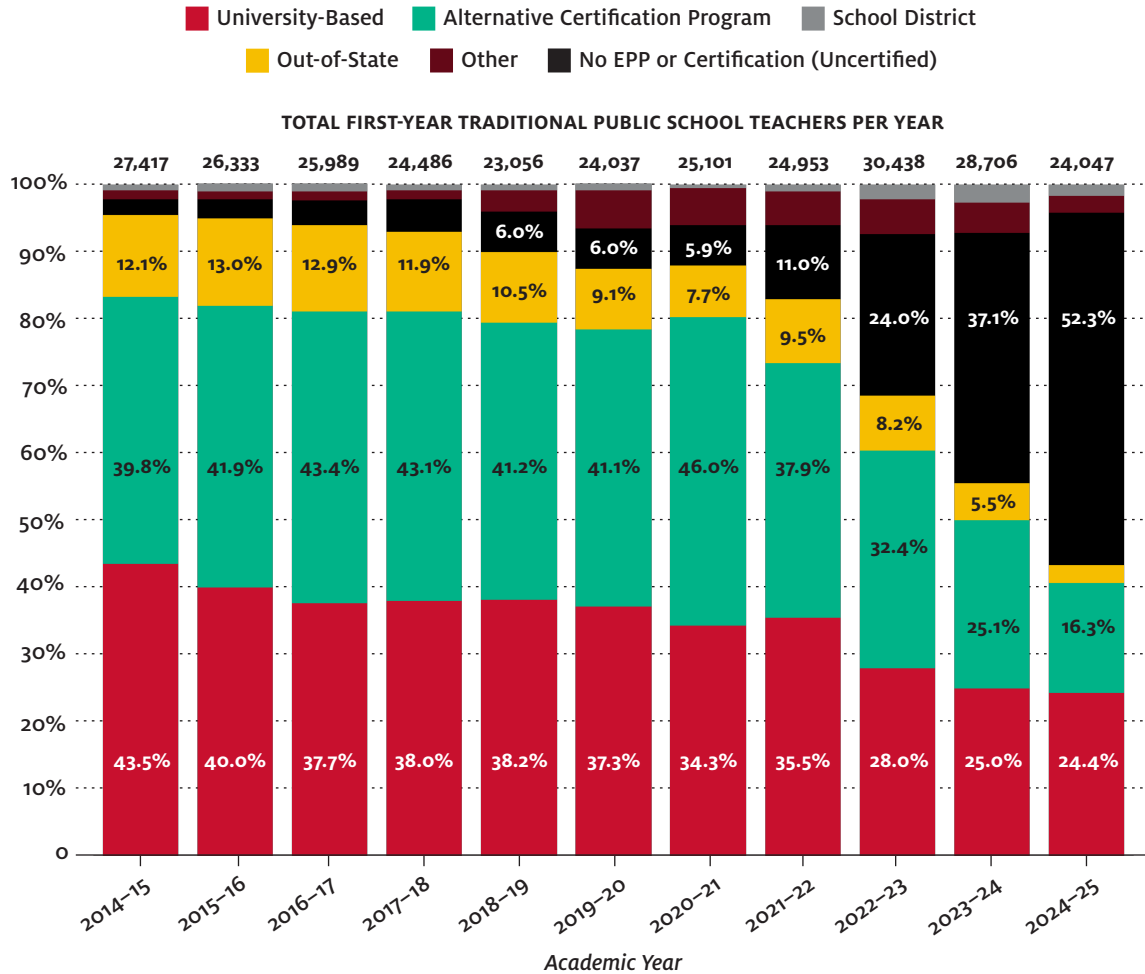
Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Teachers assigned to campuses serving students are included. On average, approximately 320 teachers each year are assigned to campuses with no students enrolled. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. Teacher certification data was available through February 2025 at the time of this report. An intern or probationary certificate is a one-year teaching permit awarded to individuals enrolled in an educator preparation program (EPP); school district permits are one-year teaching permits awarded by the school district and are not transferrable outside of the school district in which they were awarded; standard teaching certificates are typically five-year teaching permits awarded after the successful completion of an EPP or for approved, valid out-of-state teaching certificates; and uncertified teachers are defined as teachers with no teaching certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- Over the past decade, campuses serving the largest proportions of economically disadvantaged students have had a less-certified teacher population.** Campuses serving a student population of more than 75% economically disadvantaged students have had a teacher population with a smaller proportion of standard teaching certificates, a larger proportion of teachers with intern or probationary certificates, a larger proportion of teachers with school district teaching permits, and a larger proportion of uncertified teachers compared with campuses that serve smaller proportions of economically disadvantaged students.
- The proportion of teachers with standard teaching certificates has decreased most among campuses serving larger proportions of economically disadvantaged students.** At campuses serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students, 83.4% of teachers had standard teaching certificates in 2024-25, down from 97.0% in 2014-15. Campuses serving between 50% and 75% economically disadvantaged students also experienced a decrease in the percentage of teachers with standard teaching certificates, from 97.6% in 2014-15 to 86.3% in 2024-25. By comparison, schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students experienced a smaller decrease in the proportion of teachers with standard teaching certificates, decreasing from 98.3% in 2014-15 to 91.8% in 2024-25.

FIGURE 4.5

First-Year Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Educator Preparation Program Type, 2014–15 through 2024–25 Cohorts



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

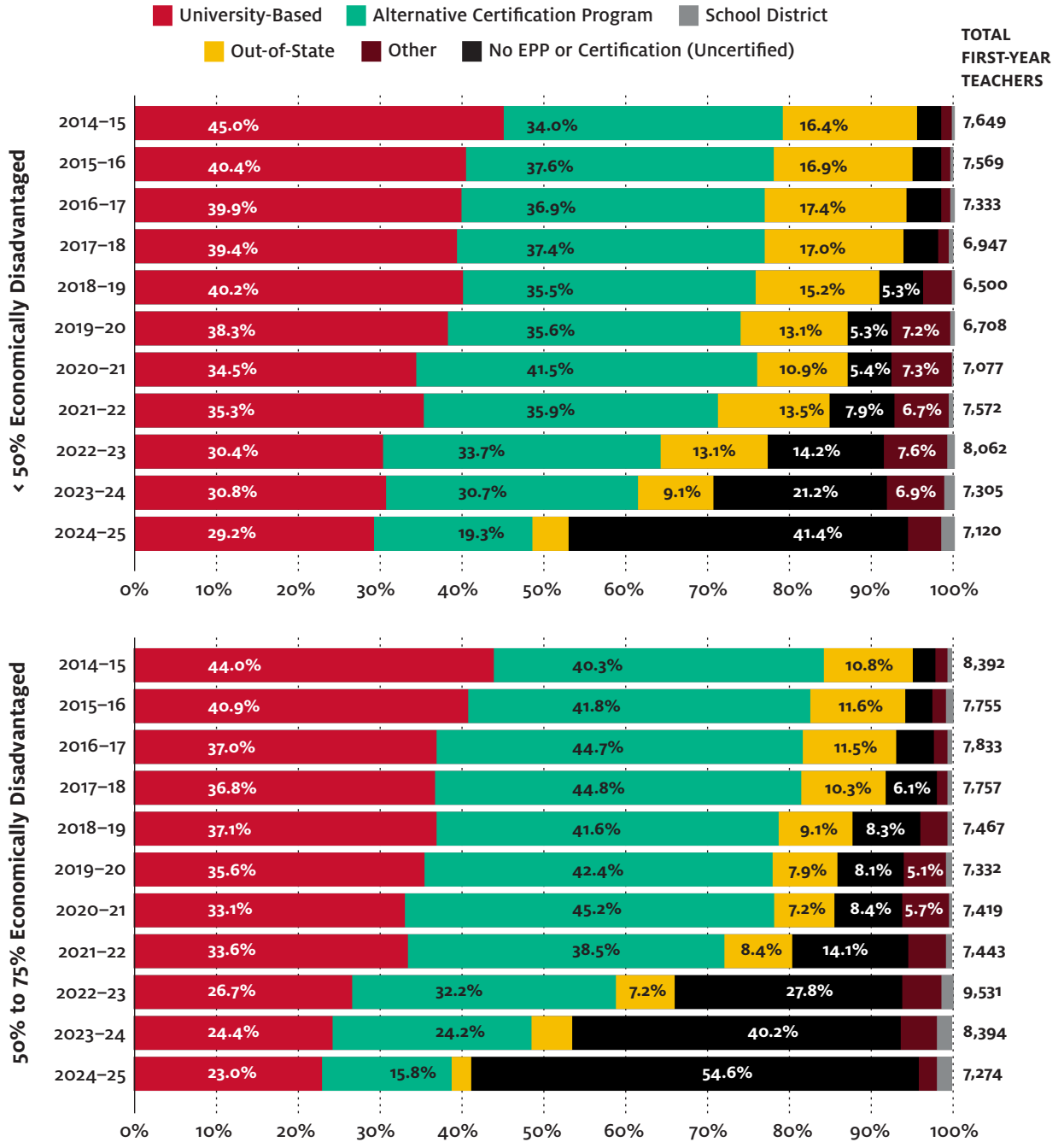
Note. First-year teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System and with no prior teaching experience. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total first-year teachers each year. Teacher certification data was available through February 2025 at the time of this report. University-based refers to educator preparation programs (EPPs) based in a four-year university; alternative certification programs are those approved by the State Board for Educator Certification for individuals already holding at least a bachelor’s degree; school district programs are teacher certification programs provided by specific school districts, which then award school district teacher permits; out-of-state are programs from outside Texas in which the pathway of certification is unknown; other refers to teachers who were awarded teaching certificates based upon vocational experience (no EPP) and certified teachers with no EPP listed; uncertified refers to teachers with no EPP or teacher certification.

DATA BREAKDOWN

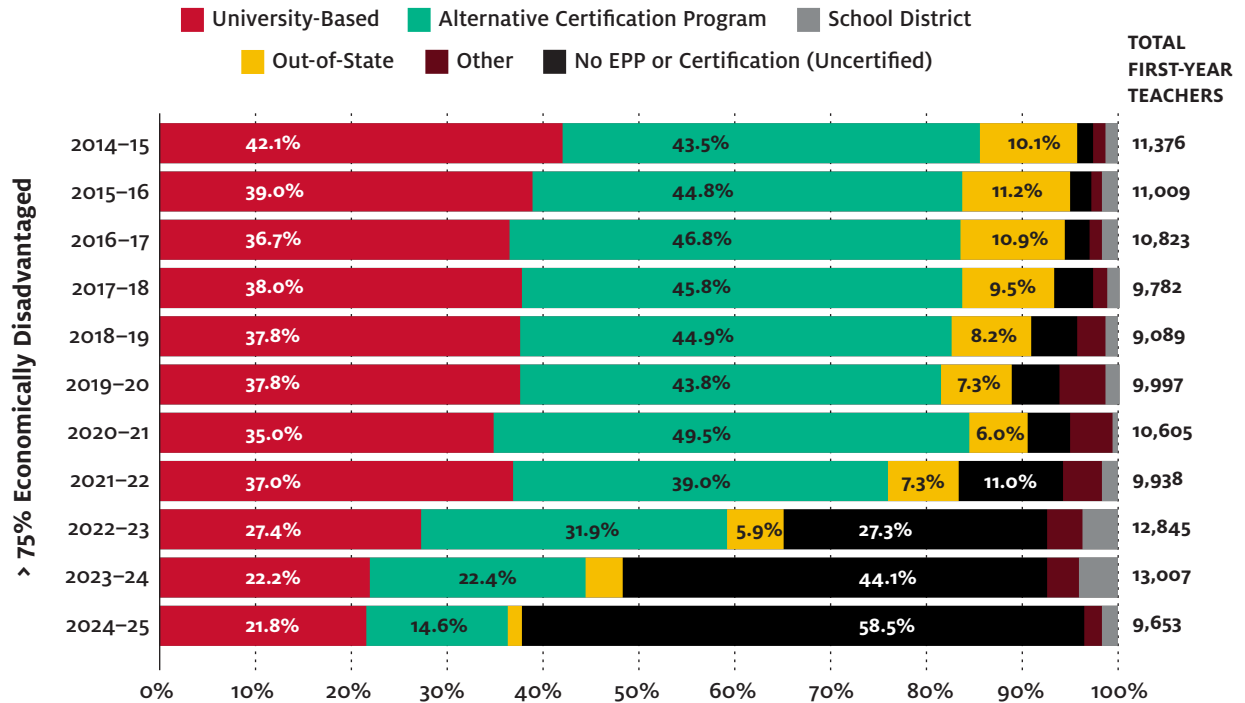
- **Over the past decade, the percentage of first-year Texas-certified traditional public school classroom teachers prepared through university-based EPPs has decreased substantially.** In 2014–15, 43.5% of all first-year traditional public school classroom teachers were prepared through university-based EPPs. Since then, this percentage has declined, reaching a low of 24.4% in 2024–25.
- **The number of first-year traditional public school classroom teachers who are not prepared through any EPP increased substantially over the past decade, with a particularly high increase over the past three years.** In 2014–15, 2.3% of first-year teachers were not prepared through any EPP. By 2021–22, the percentage of teachers with no EPP had increased to 11.0% and then continued to increase rapidly. In 2024–25, 52.3% of first-year teachers did not have a formal EPP geared toward Texas teaching.

FIGURE 4.6

First-Year Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Educator Preparation Program Type and the Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students Served, 2014–15 through 2024–25 Cohorts



The Texas Teacher Workforce



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. First-year teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System and with no prior teaching experience. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total first-year teachers each year. Teacher certification data was available through February 2025 at the time of this report. University-based refers to educator preparation programs (EPPs) based in a four-year university; alternative certification programs are those approved by the State Board for Educator Certification for individuals already holding at least a bachelor's degree; school district programs are teacher certification programs provided by specific school districts, which then award school district teacher permits; out-of-state are programs from outside Texas in which the pathway of certification is unknown; other refers to teachers who were awarded teaching certificates based upon vocational experience (no EPP) and certified teachers with no EPP listed; uncertified refers to teachers with no EPP or teacher certification.

DATA BREAKDOWN

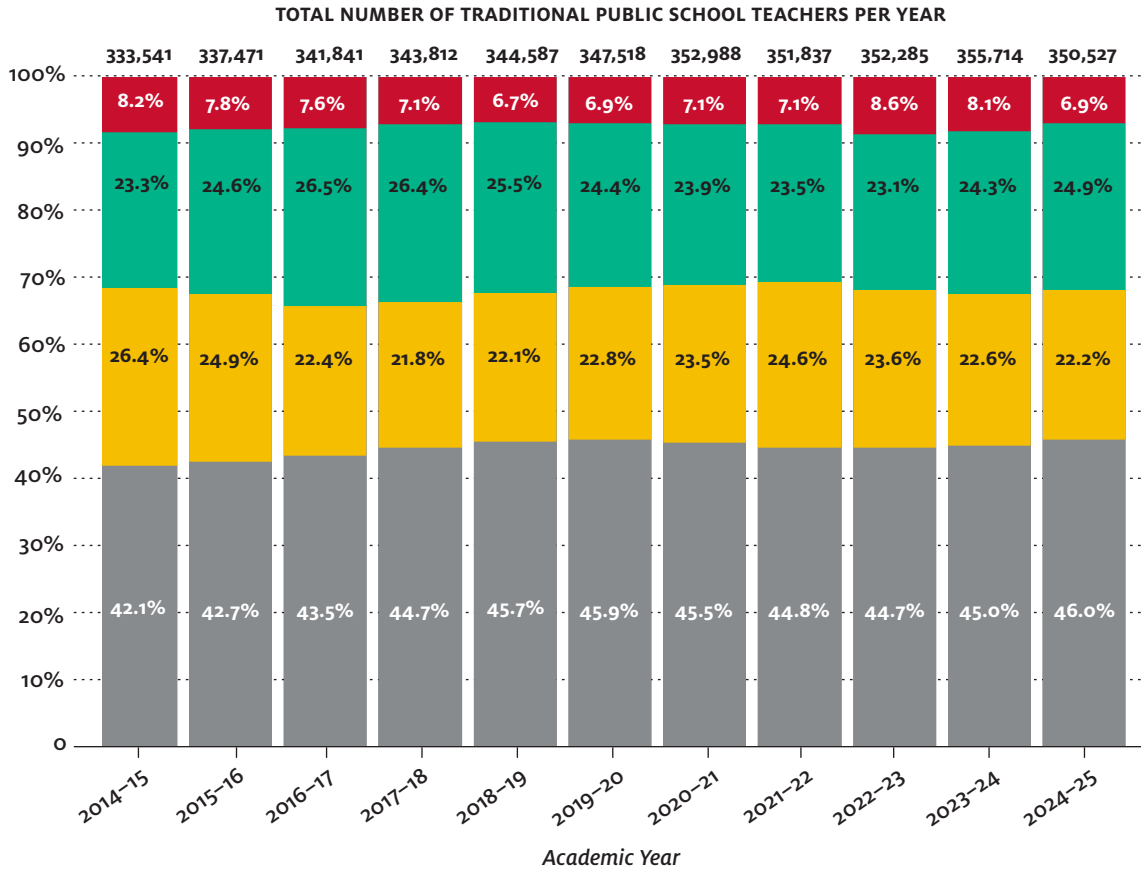
- Over the past decade, traditional public schools serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students have had the largest number of first-year teachers.** In 2014-15, traditional public schools serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students had 11,376 first-year teachers, compared with 8,392 in traditional public schools serving between 50% and 75% economically disadvantaged students and 7,649 in traditional public schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students. As of 2024-25, the trend continued—there were 9,653 first-year classroom teachers in traditional public schools serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students, 7,274 first-year classroom teachers in traditional public schools serving between 50% and 75% economically disadvantaged students, and 7,120 first-year classroom teachers in traditional public schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students.
- Traditional public schools serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students have had the highest proportion of uncertified first-year teachers.** The proportion of uncertified first-year classroom teachers has increased substantially in recent years. The increase over the past year was particularly dramatic for traditional public schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students. However, schools with the highest percentages of economically disadvantaged students still had the highest proportion of uncertified teachers—58.5% in 2024-25 compared with 41.4% at the schools serving the lowest proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

TEACHER EXPERIENCE

FIGURE 4.7

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Years of Teaching Experience and School Year, 2014–15 through 2024–25

■ First-Year Teachers ■ 2–5 Years of Experience ■ 6–10 Years of Experience ■ 11+ Years of Experience



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. First-year teachers have no prior teaching experience. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year.

DATA BREAKDOWN

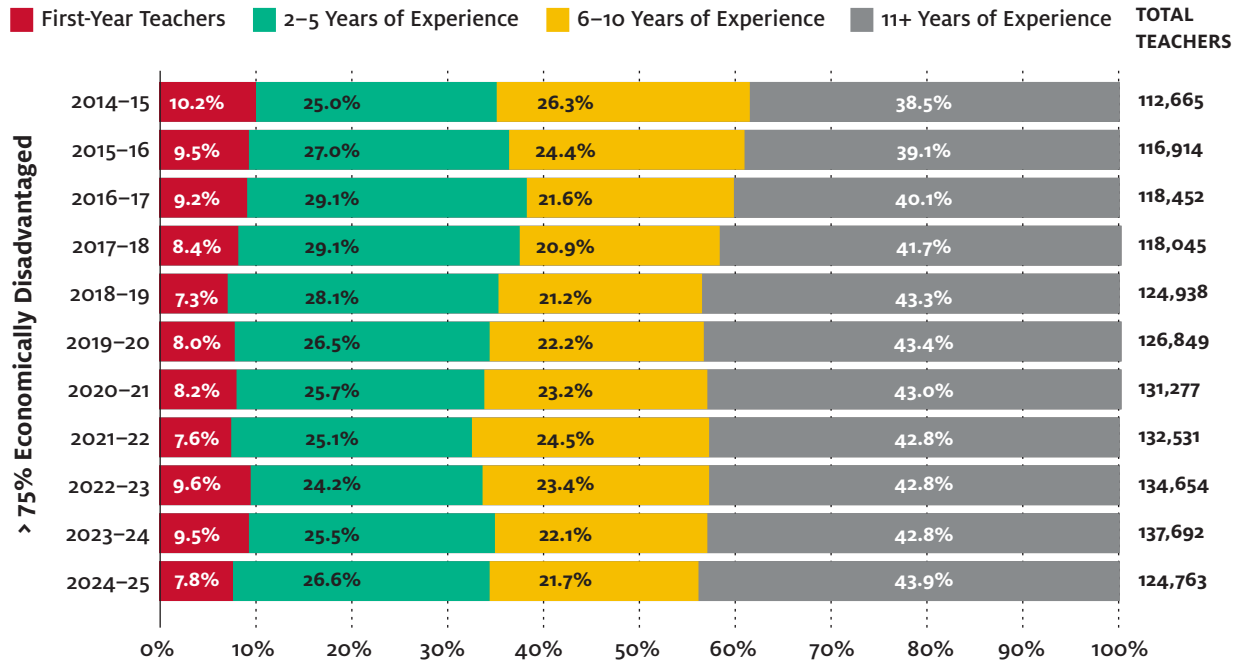
- **In 2024–25, the percentage of first-year teachers in traditional public school classrooms was low—6.9% compared with 8.1% the prior year.** This lower replenishment rate in 2024–25 may partially explain the dip in the overall number of traditional public school teachers in 2024–25.
- **The proportion of traditional public school classroom teachers with six to 10 years of experience has decreased slightly in recent years.** The proportion of teachers with six to 10 years of experience decreased from 24.6% of teachers in 2021–22 to 22.2% of teachers in 2024–25.
- **Teachers with 11 or more years of teaching experience have comprised approximately 45% of the traditional public school teacher population over the past decade.** Since 2014–15, the proportion of teachers with 11 or more years of teaching experience has ranged from 42.1% in 2014–15 to 46.0% in 2024–25.

FIGURE 4.8

Traditional Public School Teacher Experience by Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students Served, 2014–15 through 2024–25



The Texas Teacher Workforce



Source: University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note: Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. First-year teachers have no prior teaching experience. Teachers assigned to campuses serving students are included. On average, approximately 320 teachers each year are assigned to campuses with no students enrolled. Percentages are calculated as proportion of total first-year teachers each year.

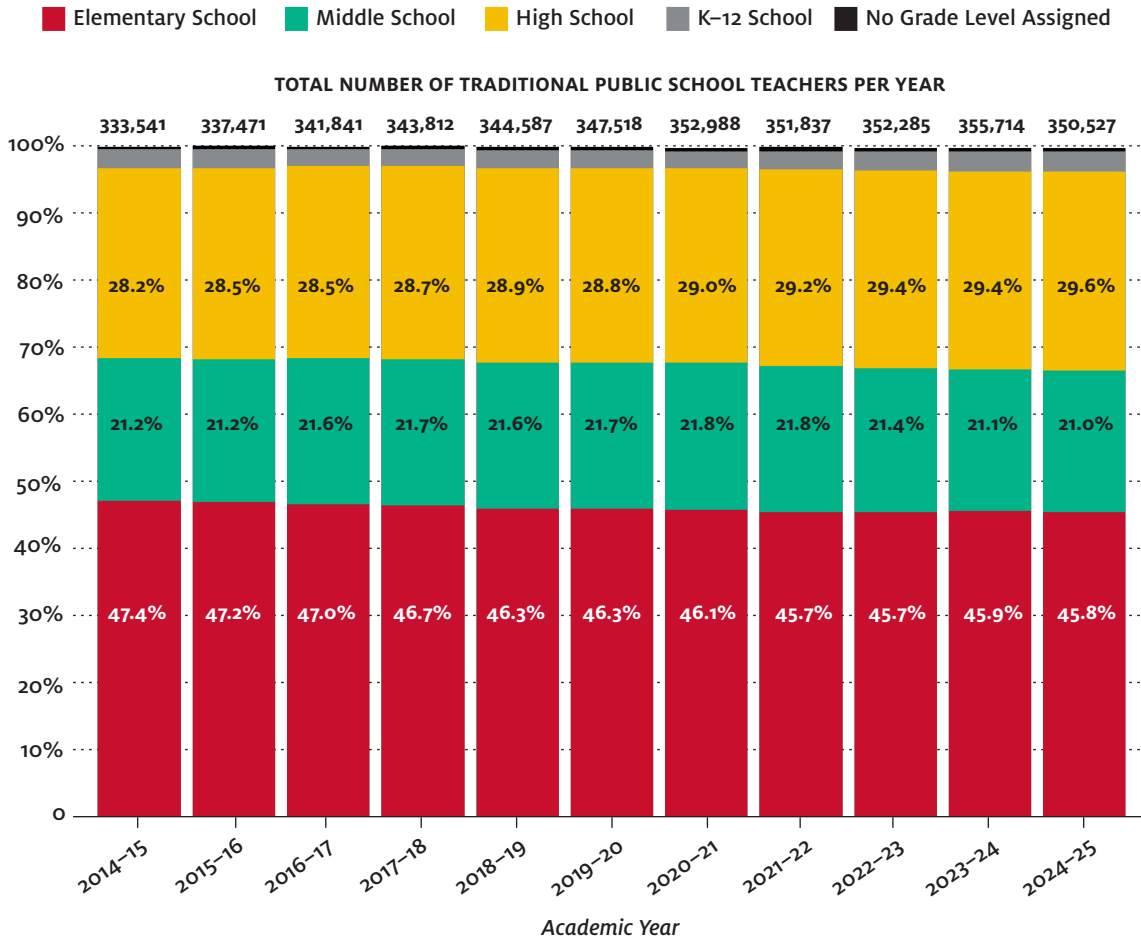
DATA BREAKDOWN

- Traditional public schools serving larger proportions of economically disadvantaged students have the most inexperienced teachers.** In 2024-25, in traditional public schools serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students, 7.8% of teachers were first-year teachers. In the same year, traditional public schools that served less than 50% economically disadvantaged students had 5.9% first-year teachers.
- Traditional public schools serving larger proportions of economically disadvantaged students have the fewest teachers with 11 or more years of experience.** In 2024-25, 43.9% of teachers in traditional public schools serving more than 75% economically disadvantaged students had 11 or more years of experience. In the same year, 48.5% of teachers in traditional public schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students had 11 or more years of experience. This trend has been consistent across the past decade.

TEACHER ASSIGNMENT

FIGURE 4.9

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers per Grade Level, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. Teachers assigned to more than one school are reported for the school with the highest full-time equivalent. K-12 represents mixed grade-level schools.

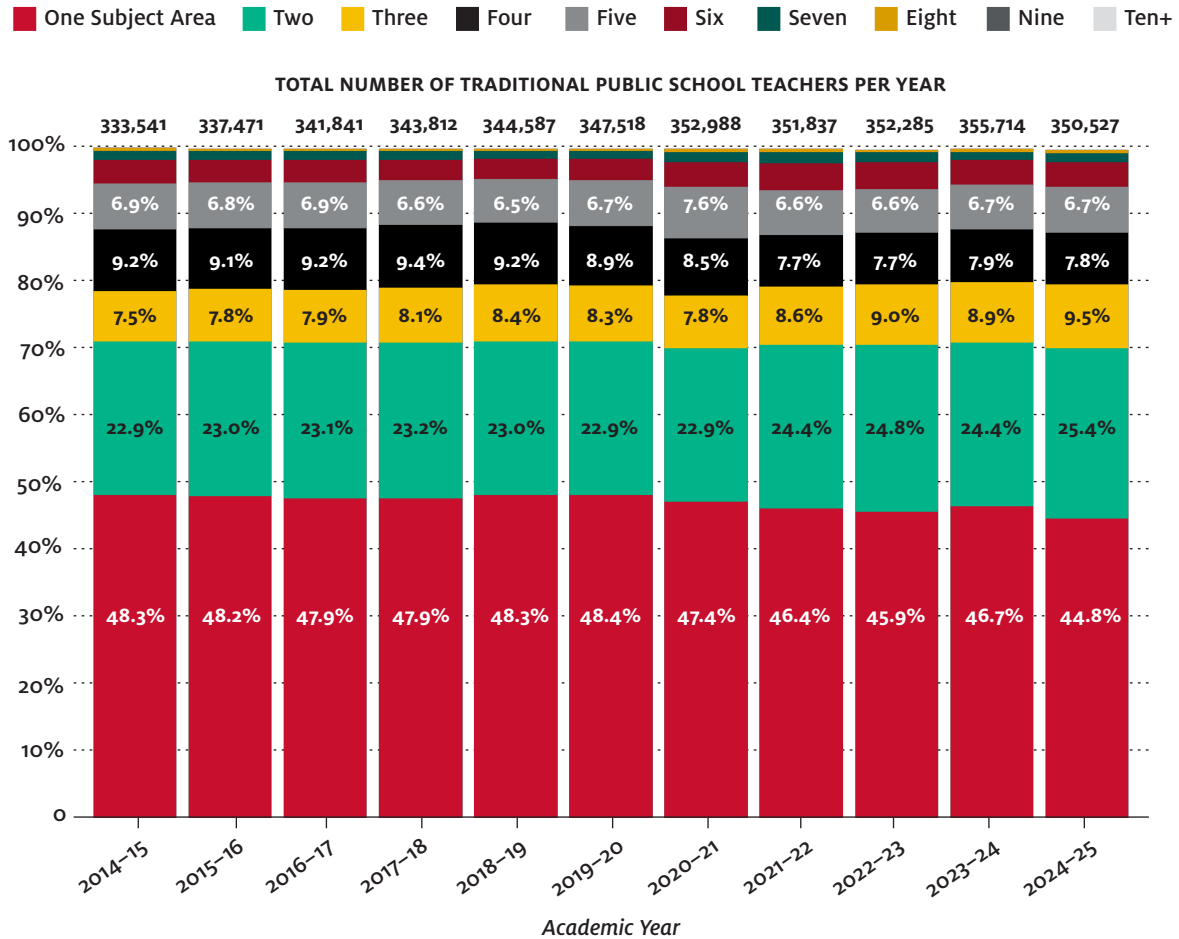
DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Among traditional public schools, elementary schools employ the largest proportion of teachers, followed by high schools, then middle schools.** Between 2014–15 and 2024–25, an average of 46.4% of traditional public school classroom teachers taught in elementary schools, 21.5% taught in middle schools, and 28.9% taught in high schools.
- **Since 2014–15, the proportion of total traditional public school classroom teachers assigned to elementary schools has declined, while the proportions assigned to high schools have grown.** In 2014–15, traditional public elementary school classroom teachers comprised 47.4% of total traditional public school classroom teachers. Since then, the proportion of traditional public school teachers assigned to elementary schools has decreased to 45.8% in 2024–25. Conversely, the proportion of traditional public high school classroom teachers has increased nearly every year since 2014–15, from 28.2% in 2014–15 to 29.6% in 2024–25.

SUBJECT AREA

FIGURE 4.10

Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by the Number of Subject Areas Assigned, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. Classes assigned to teachers are categorized into subject areas using the Texas Education Agency class Service ID and Subject Area.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Continuing a trend that started during the pandemic in the 2019–20 school year, the number of traditional public school classroom teachers teaching classes in just one subject area has decreased.** In 2014–15, 48.3% of total traditional public school classroom teachers taught classes in just one subject area. In 2024–25, this declined to 44.8% of total traditional public school classroom teachers.

TABLE 4.1

Traditional Public School Full-Time Equivalent Classroom Teachers by Subject Area Assigned, 2014–15 through 2024–25

Subject Area	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Career and Technology	8.7%	8.8%	8.9%	9.2%	9.4%	9.5%	9.7%	9.7%	9.9%	10.1%	11.2%
English Language Arts	21.2%	21.5%	21.7%	21.8%	21.7%	21.3%	20.9%	19.1%	18.5%	18.5%	18.1%
Fine Arts	6.4%	6.4%	6.5%	6.6%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.8%	6.8%
Foreign Language	2.4%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.4%	2.4%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%
Mathematics	15.0%	15.0%	15.2%	15.1%	15.1%	15.0%	14.9%	14.8%	14.8%	14.7%	14.6%
Other	2.8%	2.8%	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	3.1%	3.2%	3.5%	3.7%	3.7%	5.5%
Physical Education/Health	7.1%	7.1%	7.2%	7.1%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.3%	7.4%	7.4%	7.5%
Science	10.6%	10.7%	10.7%	10.7%	10.6%	10.4%	10.5%	10.2%	10.2%	10.2%	10.1%
Social Studies	10.0%	10.0%	10.1%	10.0%	10.0%	9.9%	10.0%	9.9%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Special Education	15.9%	15.4%	14.9%	14.5%	14.3%	14.7%	14.6%	16.3%	16.4%	16.1%	13.9%
Total FTEs	328,166	332,081	336,433	338,378	338,831	341,952	347,304	344,712	344,720	346,862	342,750

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

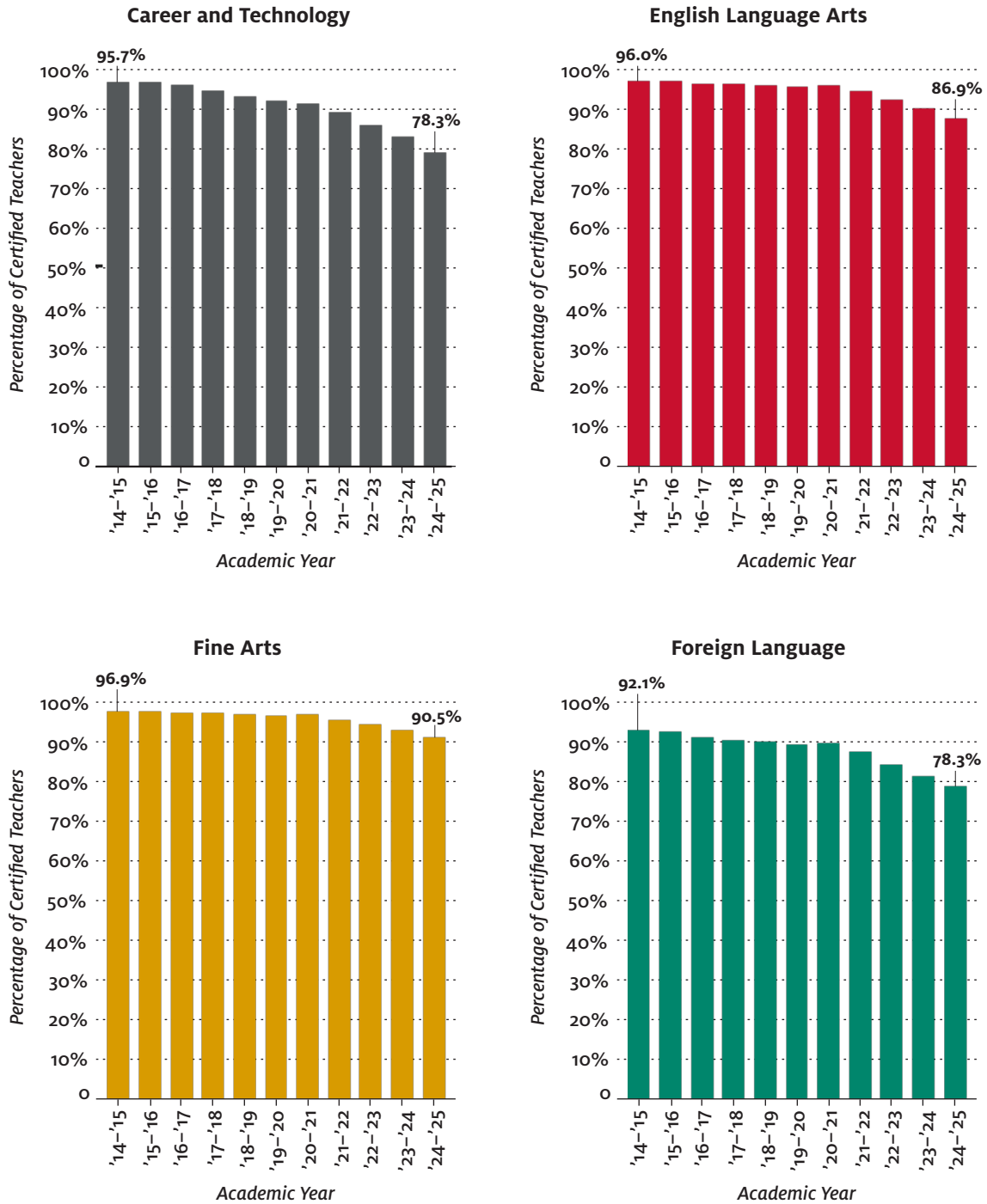
Note. Full-time equivalent (FTE) is defined as a measurement that represents the sum of proportional full-time workloads attributed to the position. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total traditional public school FTE classroom teachers each year. Classes assigned to FTEs are categorized into subject areas using the Texas Education Agency class Service ID and Subject Area.

DATA BREAKDOWN

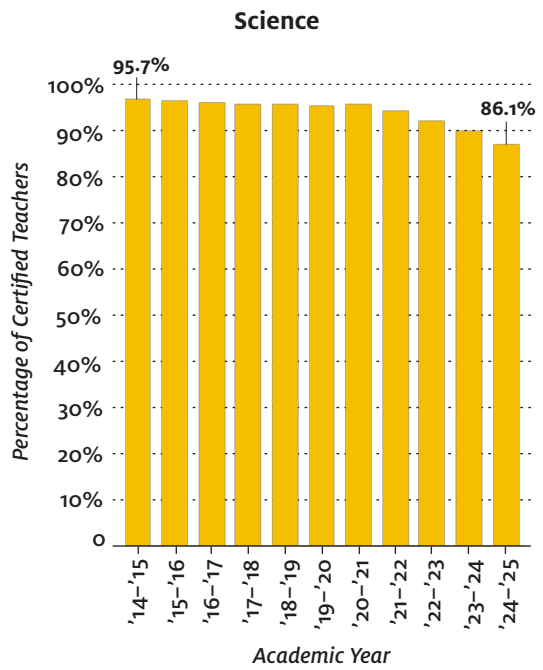
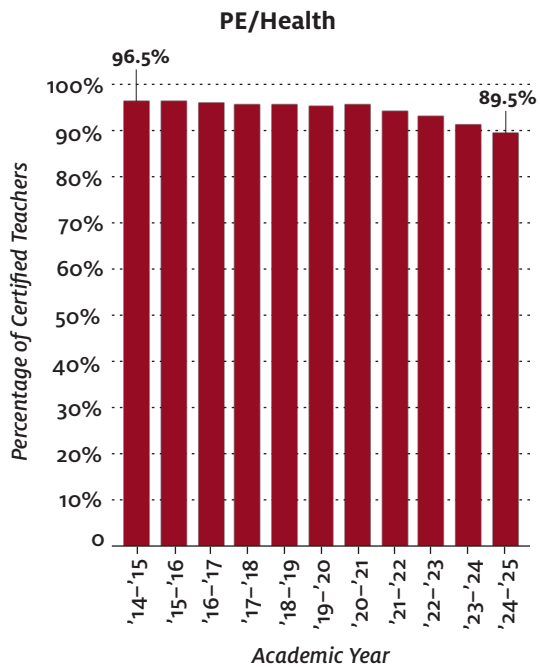
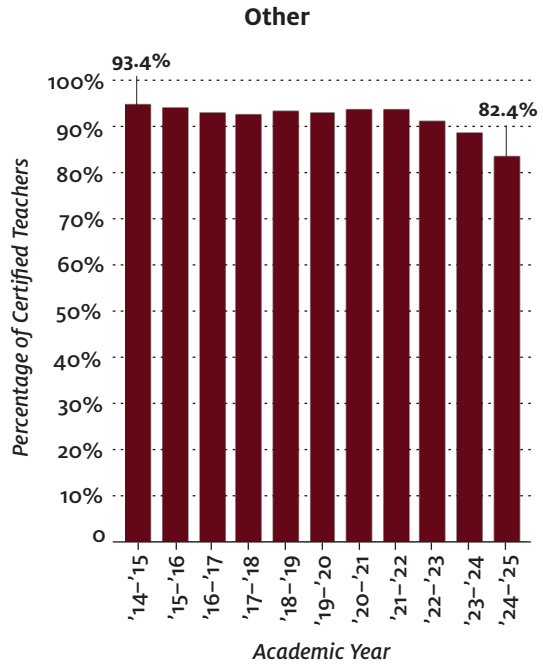
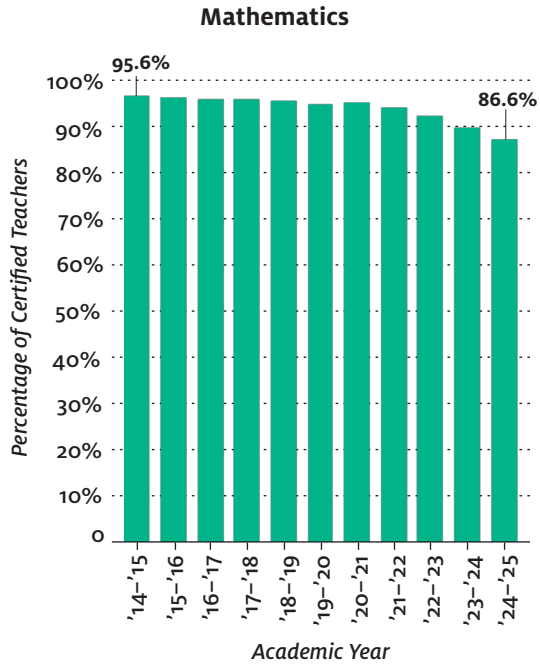
- **Over the past decade, the distribution of teacher assignments across subject areas has remained largely unchanged.** ELA, mathematics, and special education are the most common subject assignments.
- **Since 2014–15, the number of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers assigned to ELA has decreased.** In 2014–15, the proportion of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers assigned to ELA was 21.2%. By 2024–25, the proportion had decreased to 18.1% of total traditional public school FTE classroom teachers.
- **The proportion of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers assigned to career and technology has increased.** The proportion of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers assigned to career and technology increased every year since 2014–15: from 8.7% to 11.2% in 2024–25.

FIGURE 4.11

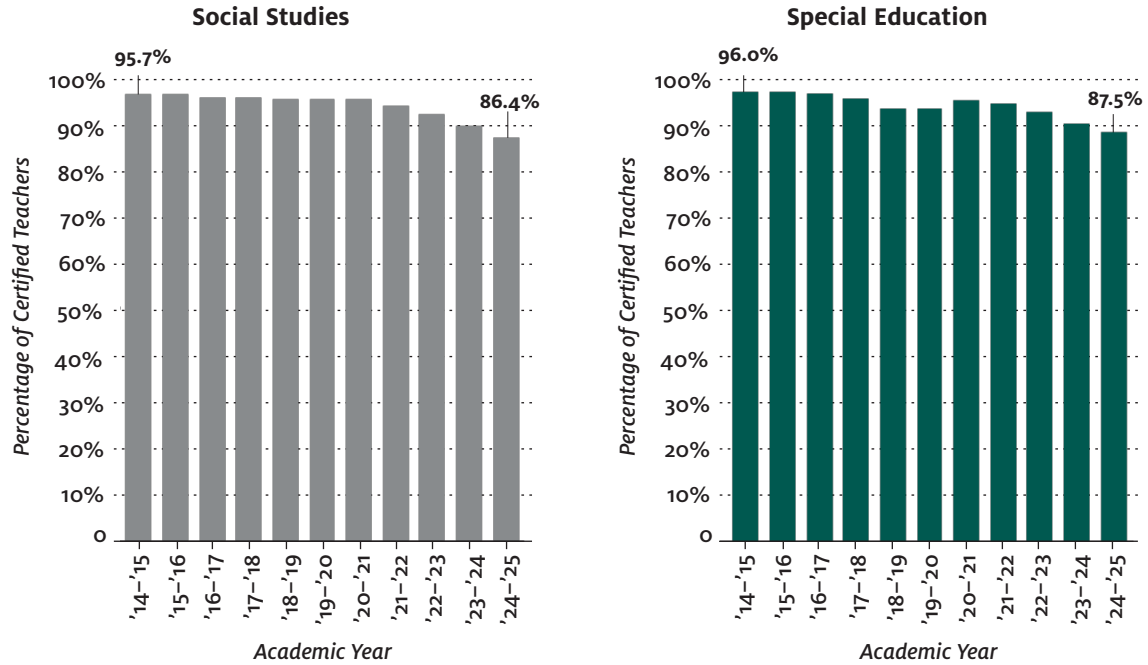
Courses Taught by Certified Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers by Subject Area, 2014–15 through 2024–25



The Texas Teacher Workforce



The Texas Teacher Workforce



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total classes per subject area. Certified teachers refer to teachers with intern, probationary, or standard teacher certifications valid throughout the school year.

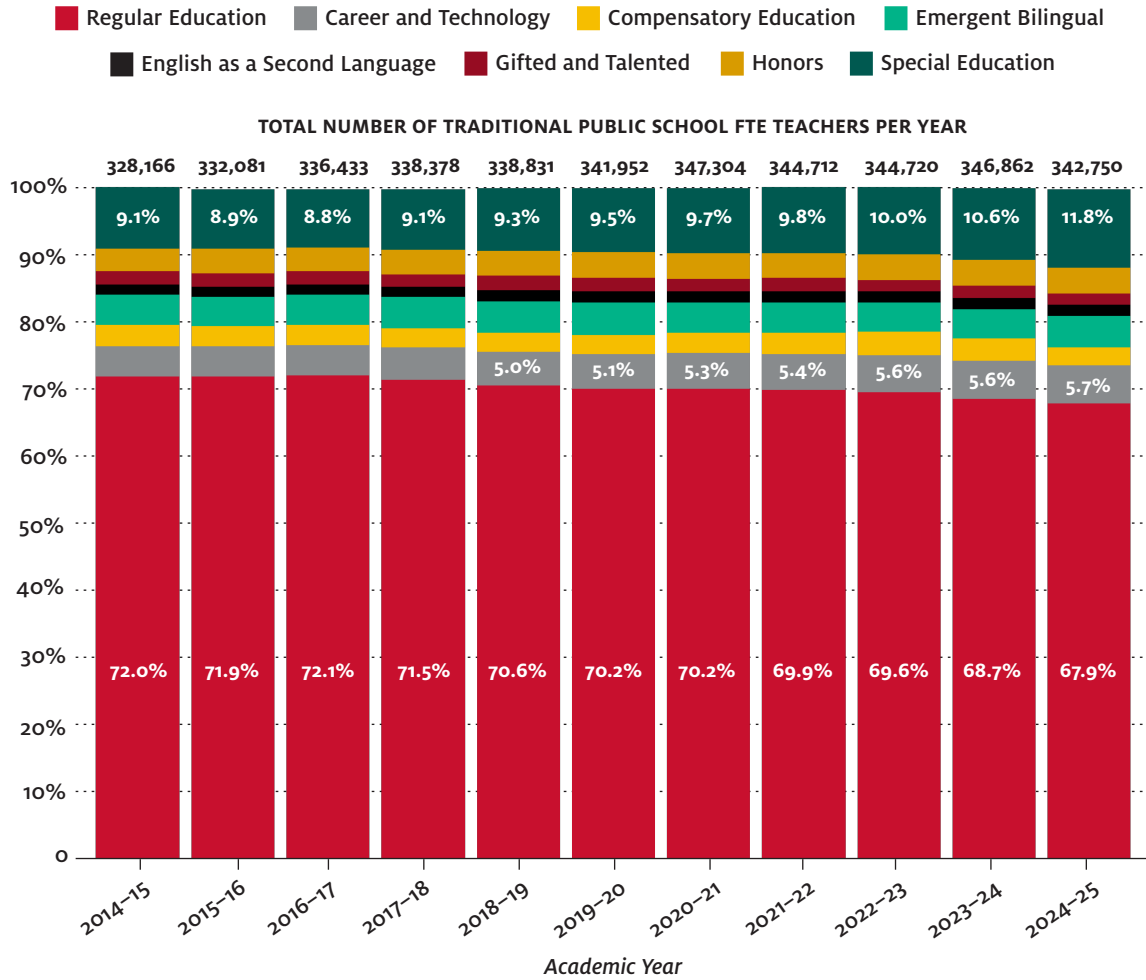
DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Over the past decade, on average, the courses most likely to be taught by certified teachers in traditional public schools were fine arts, physical education/health, and ELA.** In 2014–15, certification rates were high in all subjects and were above 95% for all except other (93.4%) and foreign language (92.1%).
- **The subjects least likely to be taught by certified teachers in traditional public schools over the past decade were career and technology and foreign language.** Over the past decade, an average of 87.3% of foreign language courses and 89.7% of career and technology courses in traditional public schools were taught by certified teachers.
- **In recent years, the percentages of core subject area courses taught by certified teachers in traditional public schools have decreased.** The decreases from 2014–15 levels in career and technology (a 17.4 percentage point decrease as of 2024–25) and foreign language (a 13.8 percentage point decrease as of 2024–25) were the steepest.
- **As of 2024–25, the courses most likely to be taught by certified teachers in traditional public schools were fine arts, physical education/health, and special education.** In this most recent year available, 90.5% of fine arts teachers, 89.5% of physical education/health teachers, and 87.5% of special education teachers in traditional public schools were certified.

STUDENT POPULATION SERVED

FIGURE 4.12

Traditional Public School Full-Time Equivalent Classroom Teacher Assignments by Student Population Served, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Full-time equivalent (FTE) is defined as a measurement that represents the sum of proportional full-time workloads attributed to the position. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total classes per subject area. Population served are assigned to teachers using the Texas Education Agency class Service ID and Population Served variables.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Over the past decade, the proportion of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers serving the regular education population has decreased.** In 2014–15, 72.0% of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers served the regular education population. In 2024–25, the proportion decreased to 67.9% of the total traditional public school FTE classroom teachers.
- **Since 2016–17, the proportion of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers serving students receiving special education services has increased.** From 2014–15 to 2016–17, the proportion of traditional public school FTE classroom teachers who served the population of students receiving special education services decreased from 9.1% to 8.8%, but it then rebounded, steadily increasing each year through 2024–25, when the proportion increased to 11.8% of total traditional public school FTE classroom teachers.

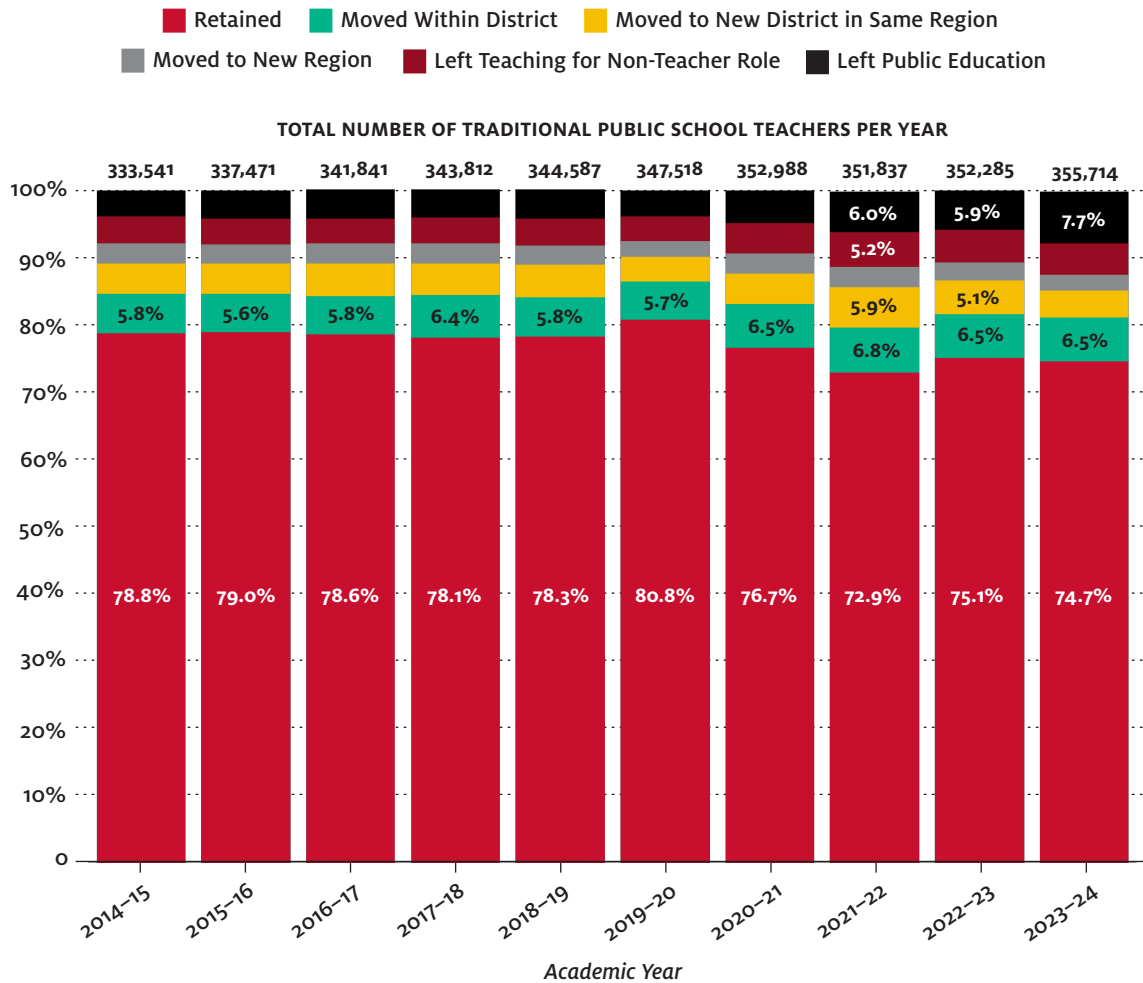
TEACHER MOBILITY, ATTRITION, AND RETENTION

To determine teacher mobility, attrition, and retention, teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role in the following school year were considered retained. Teacher retention rates were calculated by dividing the total number of retained teachers by the total number of teachers for a school year.

Teachers were considered to be mobile if they remained in a teaching role but moved to a different campus. Teacher mobility is reported in three ways: 1) teachers who moved to a new campus in the same district, 2) teachers who moved to a new district in the same region, and 3) teachers who moved to a new region. Teacher attrition is defined as leaving the field of teaching and is reported in two ways: 1) attrited: non-teacher role and 2) attrited: left the public school system.

FIGURE 4.13

Traditional Public School Classroom Teacher Retention, Mobility, and Attrition, 2014–15 through 2023–24



Source: University of Houston Education Research Center.

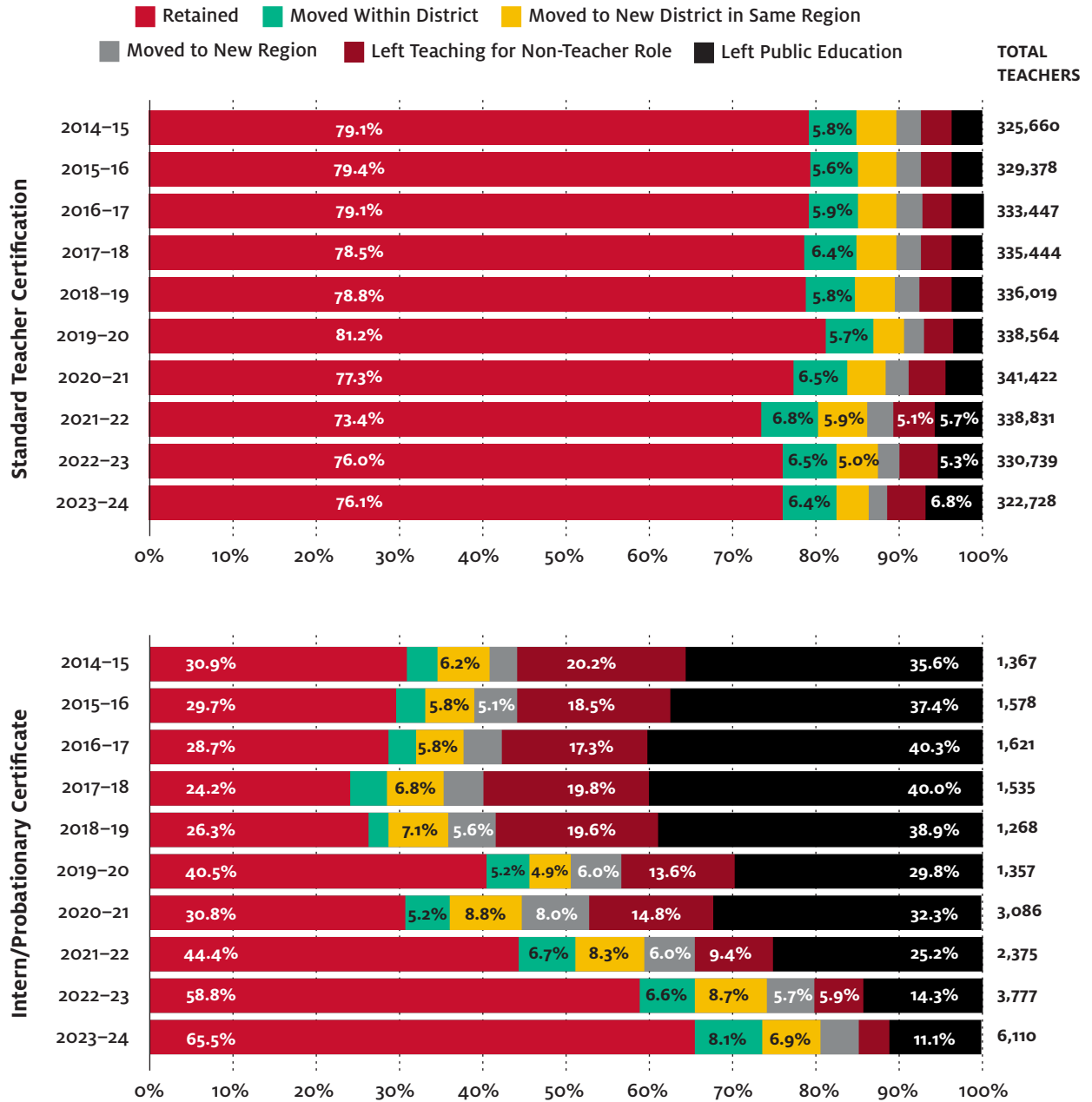
Note: Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. To determine teacher mobility, attrition, and retention, teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role at the same campus in the following school year were considered retained. Teachers were considered to be mobile if they remained in a teaching role but moved to a different campus. Non-teacher role refers to a role within the public education system other than teacher. Teacher attrition is defined as leaving the field of teaching.

DATA BREAKDOWN

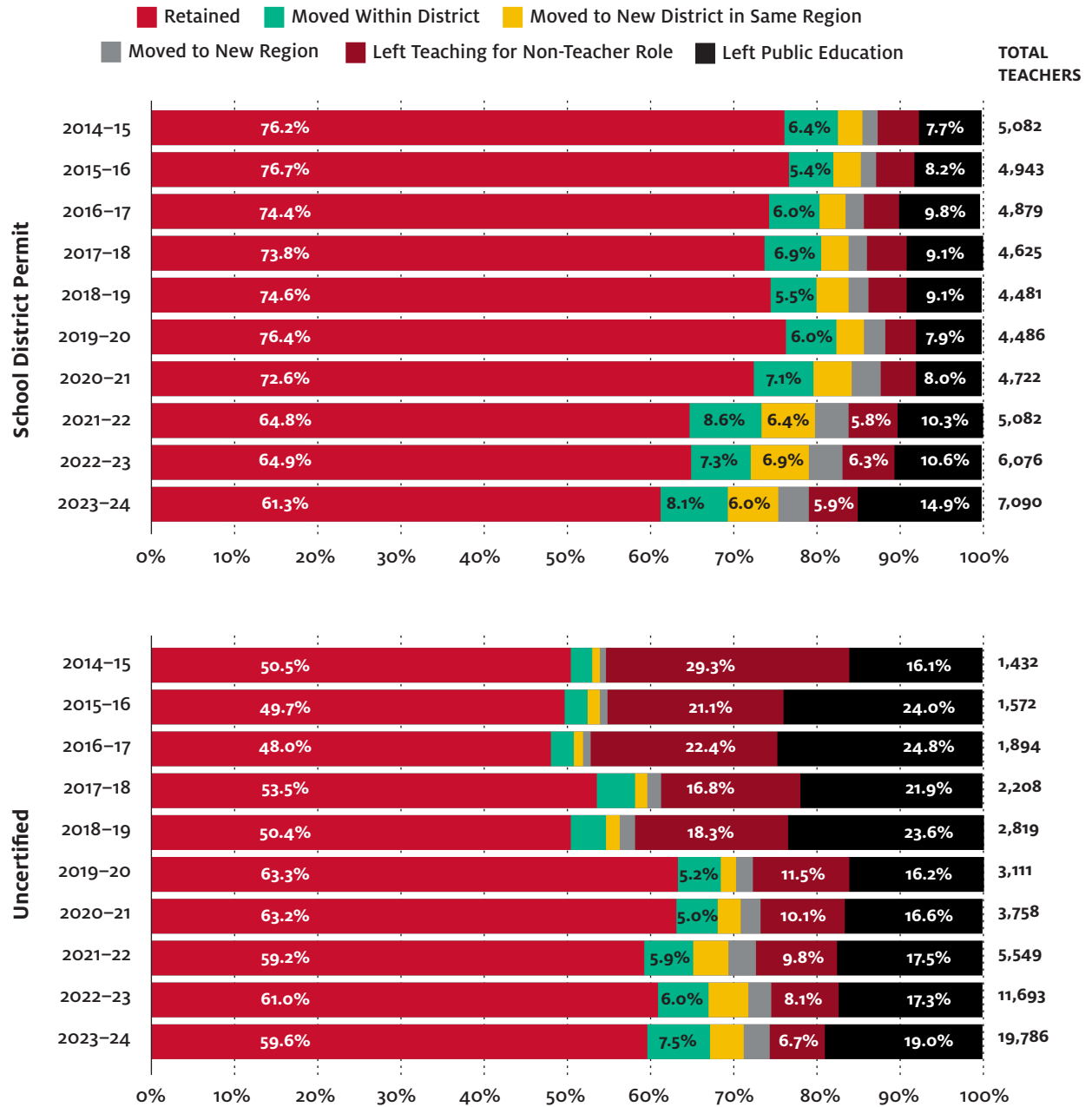
- **Historically, the proportion of traditional public school classroom teachers who were retained at the same campus was both consistent and high.** Between 2014–15 and 2019–20, an average of 78.9% of all traditional public school classroom teachers remained teaching at the same campus.
- **In recent years, traditional public school classroom teacher retention has decreased.** In 2020–21, the percentage of traditional public school classroom teachers retained at the same campus decreased to 76.7% and decreased again to a low of 72.6% in 2021–22. Most recently, as of 2023–24, it was 74.7%.
- **Within-district mobility of traditional public school classroom teachers has remained stable over the past decade.** Over the past 10 years, the percentage of traditional public school teachers who moved to a new campus within their previous district has been consistently around 6%.
- **Over the past decade, the proportion of traditional public school classroom teachers who left teaching for a non-teacher role in the public education system has remained stable.** From 2014–15 to 2023–24, an average of 4.2% of traditional public school classroom teachers left teaching for a non-teacher role in public education each year.
- **The proportion of traditional public school classroom teachers who left public education entirely has increased in recent years.** Between 2014–15 and 2019–20, the proportion of traditional public school teachers who left public education entirely remained steady at an average of 4.0% of all traditional public school classroom teachers. That increased to 7.7% as of 2023–24.

FIGURE 4.14

Traditional Public School Teacher Retention, Mobility, and Attrition by Teacher Certification Status, 2014–15 through 2023–24



The Texas Teacher Workforce



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

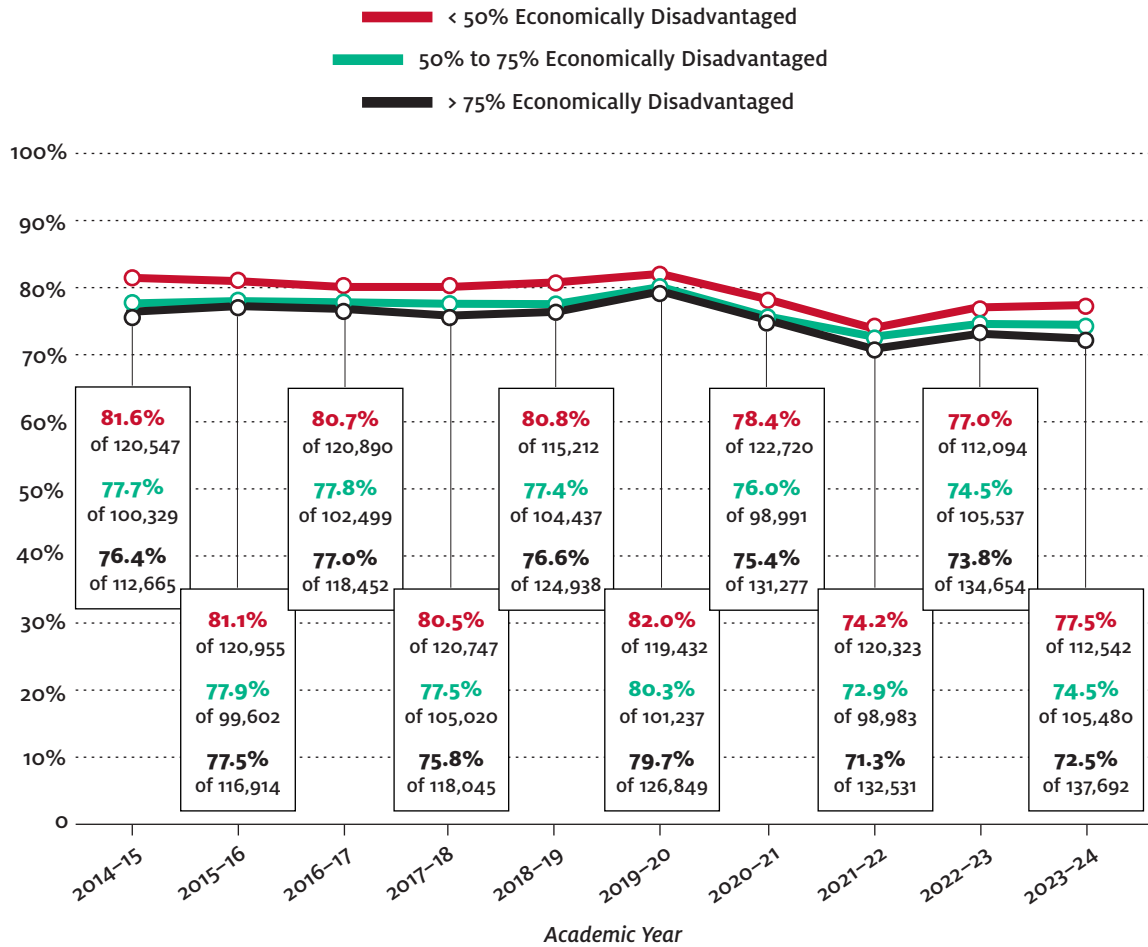
Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. To determine teacher mobility, attrition, and retention, teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role at the same campus were considered retained. Teachers were considered to be mobile if they remained in a teaching role but moved to a different campus. Teacher attrition is defined as leaving the field of teaching. Non-teacher role refers to a role within the public education system other than teacher. Teacher certification data was available through February 2025 at the time of this report. An intern or probationary certificate is a one-year teaching permit awarded to individuals enrolled in an educator preparation program (EPP); school district permits are one-year teaching permits awarded by the school district and are not transferrable outside of the school district in which they were awarded; standard teaching certificates are typically five-year teaching permits awarded after the successful completion of an EPP or for approved, valid out-of-state teaching certificates; and uncertified teachers are defined as teachers with no teaching certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Traditional public school classroom teachers with a standard certification are retained at the highest rates.** Over the past decade, the retention of teachers with standard certifications has averaged 77.9%.
- **Traditional public school classroom teachers without certifications have the high attrition rates and most often leave the field of education entirely.** Since 2014–15, an average of 19.7% of uncertified teachers leave public school employment each year.
- **Retention of uncertified traditional public school classroom teachers has increased since 2019–2020.** Prior to the 2019–20 school year, retention of uncertified teachers averaged 50.4%. Since then, this average has been 61.3%.

FIGURE 4.15

Traditional Public School Teacher Retention at the Same Campus by Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students Served, 2014–15 through 2023–24



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

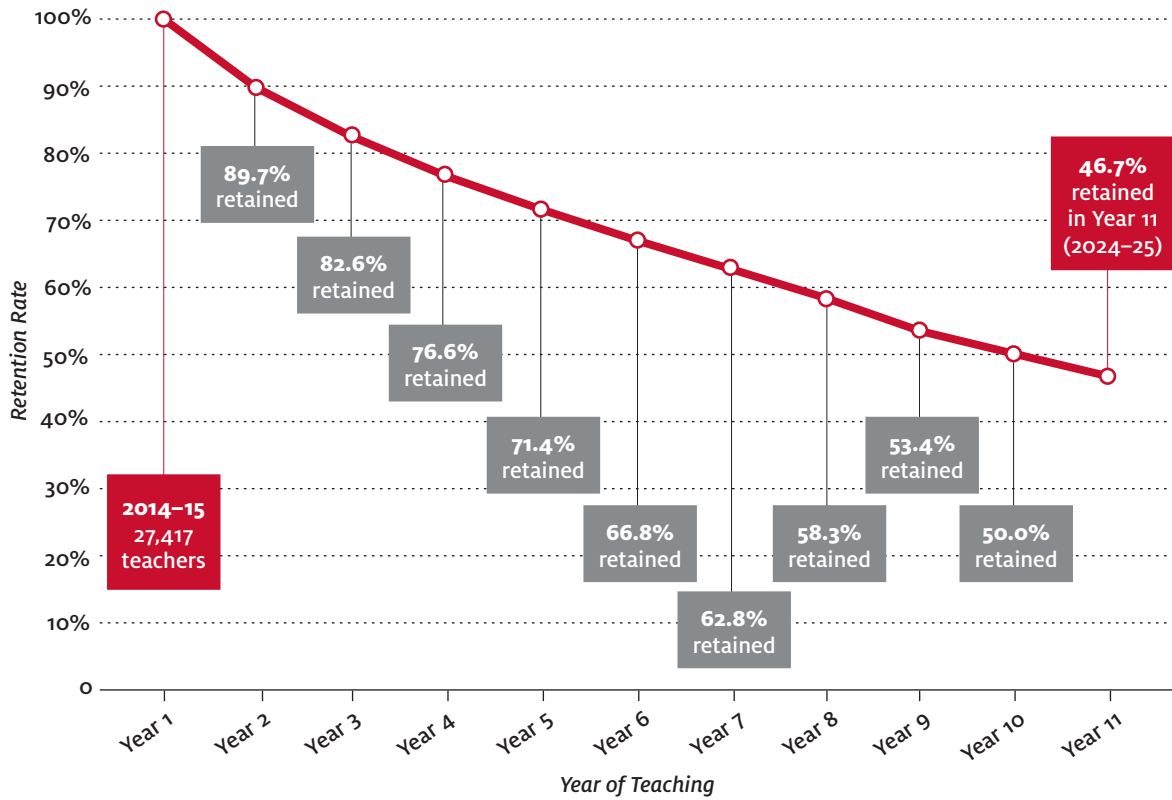
Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. To determine teacher retention, teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role at the same campus in the following school year were considered retained.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- Average teacher retention is highest among campuses that serve a smaller proportion of economically disadvantaged students.** Teacher retention among campuses that serve less than 50% economically disadvantaged students averaged 79.4% over the past decade, compared with an average of 76.7% at campuses that serve between 50% and 75% economically disadvantaged students and an average of 75.6% at campuses that serve more than 75% economically disadvantaged students.

FIGURE 4.16

Teacher Retention Patterns of First-Year Teaching Cohorts by Years of Experience, 2014–15 Cohort



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. To determine teacher retention, teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role at the same campus in the following school year were considered retained.

TABLE 4.2

Teacher Retention Patterns of First-Year Teaching Cohorts by Years of Experience, 2014–15 through 2023–24 Cohorts

Cohort	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
2014–15	89.7%	82.6%	76.6%	71.4%	66.8%	62.8%	58.3%	53.4%	50.0%	46.7%
2015–16	89.7%	82.5%	76.6%	71.5%	67.1%	62.1%	56.9%	53.2%	49.7%	–
2016–17	89.6%	82.5%	76.6%	71.8%	66.3%	60.5%	56.5%	52.7%	–	–
2017–18	89.6%	82.6%	77.2%	71.0%	64.6%	60.1%	56.0%	–	–	–
2018–19	89.8%	83.4%	76.4%	69.2%	64.2%	59.7%	–	–	–	–
2019–20	90.7%	82.5%	74.3%	68.7%	63.6%	–	–	–	–	–
2020–21	88.6%	79.2%	73.0%	67.5%	–	–	–	–	–	–
2021–22	86.7%	79.1%	72.8%	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2022–23	87.8%	79.9%	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
2023–24	87.6%	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers each year. To determine teacher retention, teachers in one school year were compared with teachers in the following year. Teachers who remained in a teaching role at the same campus in the following school year were considered retained.

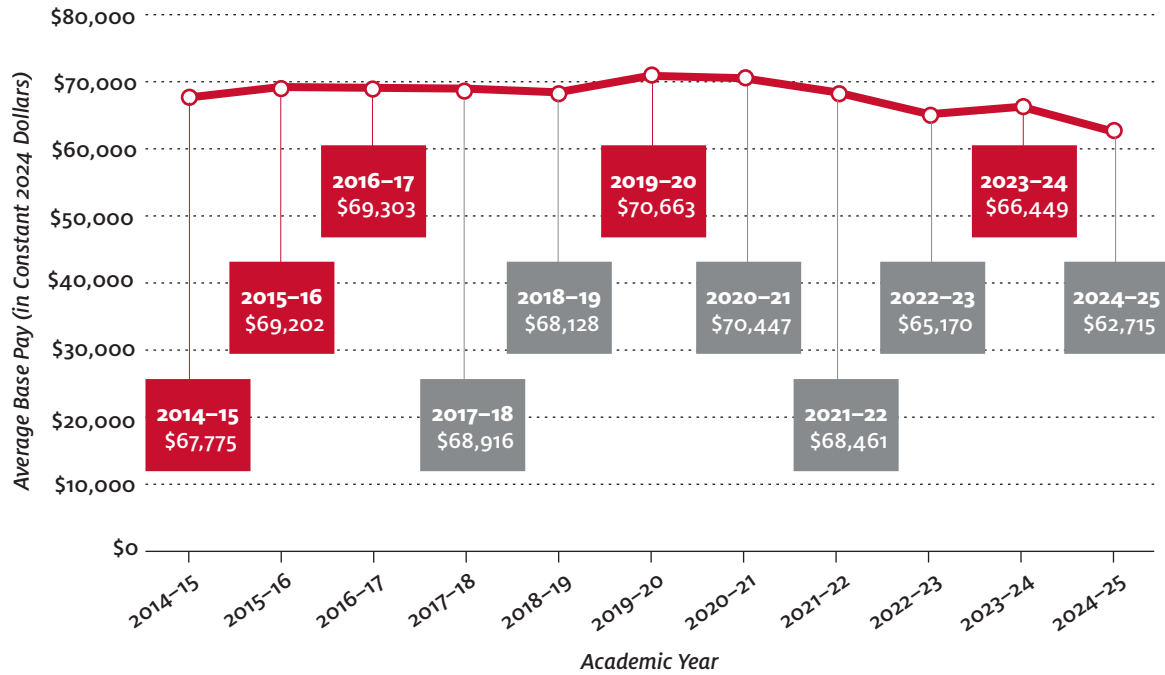
DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Since 2019–20, retention of first-year traditional public school classroom teachers into their second year of teaching has decreased slightly.** Through 2019–20, the retention of first-year teachers into their second year was consistently around 90%. By 2023–24, this rate slipped to 87.6%.
- **Traditional public school classroom teacher retention decreases the most between the first and second year of teaching.** After the first year of teaching, approximately 9% to 13% of teachers are not retained by the same campus. After another decrease of about 6% to 8% from year two to year three, decreases in subsequent years level out at around 3% to 6% per year.

TEACHER PAY

FIGURE 4.17

Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers (in Constant 2024 Dollars), 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

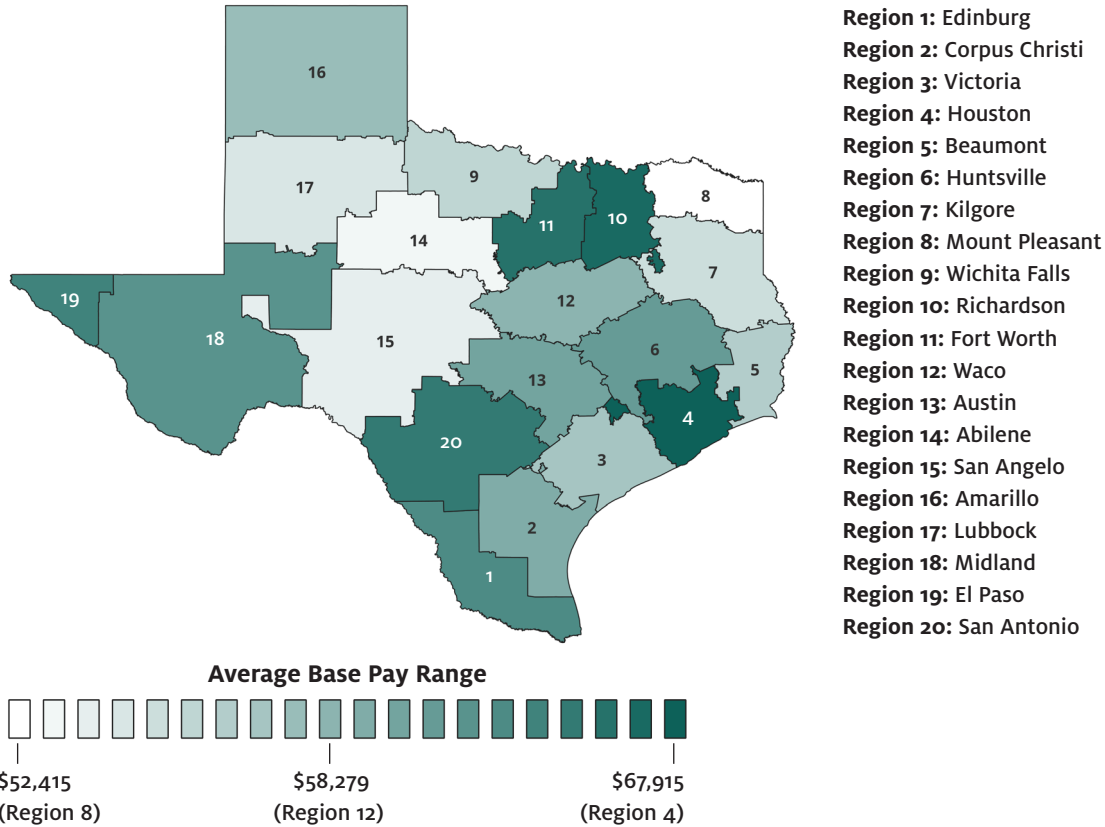
Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- The average base pay for classroom teachers in traditional public schools has changed little in recent years and is considerably lower in terms of constant dollars than five years ago. From 2014–15 through 2020–21, teacher base pay averaged \$69,205. Since then, it has averaged \$65,699.

FIGURE 4.18

Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers (in Constant 2024 Dollars) by Region, 2024–25



Source: University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note: Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars. Region refers to the Education Service Center region.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Regional differences in average traditional public school teacher base pay exceed \$15,000.** Average traditional public school classroom teacher salaries in Region 4 (Houston) were \$67,915 in 2024–25, more than \$15,000 higher than the \$52,415 average base pay in Region 8 (Mount Pleasant).
- **Region 4 (Houston) and Region 11 (West of Fort Worth) consistently have had higher base pay over the past decade.** In constant 2024 dollars, the pay in these districts has averaged more than \$70,000. This is substantially higher than the five districts with the lowest average pay of less than \$60,000 (see Table 4.3 on next page).

TABLE 4.3

Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers (in Constant 2024 Dollars) by Region, 2014–15 through 2024–25

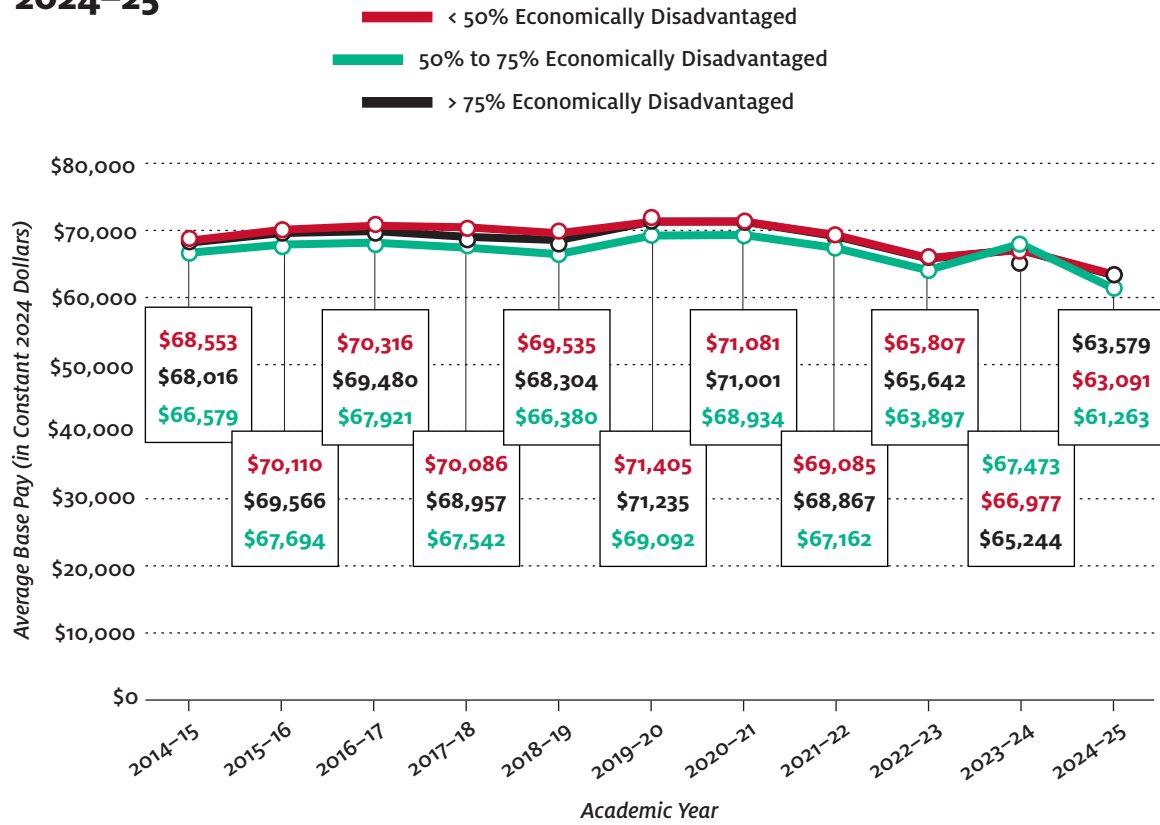
Region	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
1	\$68,003	\$69,114	\$69,482	\$68,943	\$69,202	\$73,122	\$70,835	\$69,086	\$65,825	\$63,428	\$61,629
2	\$63,853	\$64,993	\$66,590	\$65,710	\$64,644	\$67,272	\$66,997	\$65,831	\$62,002	\$61,205	\$58,798
3	\$62,004	\$62,926	\$62,385	\$62,412	\$61,674	\$64,375	\$63,830	\$62,273	\$59,360	\$57,327	\$56,043
4	\$72,791	\$74,578	\$74,247	\$73,721	\$72,500	\$74,680	\$74,389	\$72,798	\$69,595	\$77,096	\$67,915
5	\$60,842	\$61,526	\$61,499	\$61,295	\$60,342	\$64,131	\$63,655	\$61,787	\$57,806	\$57,167	\$55,626
6	\$65,351	\$66,725	\$67,368	\$67,091	\$66,622	\$68,927	\$69,293	\$67,362	\$63,584	\$62,711	\$61,147
7	\$58,822	\$59,490	\$59,614	\$58,903	\$57,816	\$62,547	\$62,244	\$60,061	\$57,810	\$57,343	\$54,497
8	\$57,822	\$58,658	\$58,375	\$57,170	\$56,073	\$62,305	\$61,731	\$59,057	\$55,899	\$55,062	\$52,415
9	\$59,732	\$61,159	\$61,824	\$60,551	\$58,135	\$65,934	\$65,007	\$63,234	\$57,412	\$57,640	\$54,905
10	\$69,266	\$70,778	\$71,611	\$71,249	\$70,935	\$72,436	\$73,342	\$70,486	\$67,316	\$66,976	\$65,383
11	\$70,915	\$72,226	\$72,640	\$72,631	\$71,738	\$73,664	\$73,874	\$71,561	\$67,845	\$67,137	\$64,633
12	\$62,263	\$63,480	\$63,641	\$62,880	\$61,975	\$67,155	\$65,265	\$63,124	\$61,387	\$61,067	\$58,279
13	\$64,775	\$67,286	\$66,198	\$66,109	\$65,081	\$67,046	\$67,617	\$65,336	\$63,080	\$62,209	\$60,680
14	\$59,113	\$59,470	\$59,209	\$59,082	\$62,951	\$62,834	\$62,668	\$59,922	\$56,502	\$55,788	\$52,691
15	\$58,478	\$59,172	\$59,020	\$58,141	\$57,512	\$62,460	\$62,440	\$60,019	\$56,483	\$56,489	\$52,798
16	\$63,760	\$64,821	\$64,684	\$64,572	\$63,617	\$66,195	\$66,252	\$63,591	\$59,746	\$58,445	\$56,120
17	\$60,154	\$60,877	\$60,621	\$59,762	\$58,717	\$62,126	\$61,975	\$59,402	\$56,426	\$54,859	\$52,904
18	\$66,630	\$66,978	\$66,105	\$65,535	\$65,680	\$68,347	\$71,070	\$69,317	\$64,436	\$64,087	\$61,468
19	\$67,763	\$68,265	\$67,985	\$67,865	\$66,343	\$68,530	\$68,761	\$66,945	\$65,297	\$71,347	\$62,406
20	\$69,725	\$71,129	\$71,353	\$70,744	\$69,522	\$70,961	\$69,608	\$68,619	\$63,602	\$63,893	\$62,468
Average	\$67,775	\$69,202	\$69,303	\$68,916	\$68,128	\$70,663	\$70,447	\$68,461	\$65,170	\$66,449	\$62,715

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars. Region refers to the Education Service Center region.

FIGURE 4.19

Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers (in Constant 2024 Dollars) by Campus Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged Students Served, 2014–15 through 2024–25



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

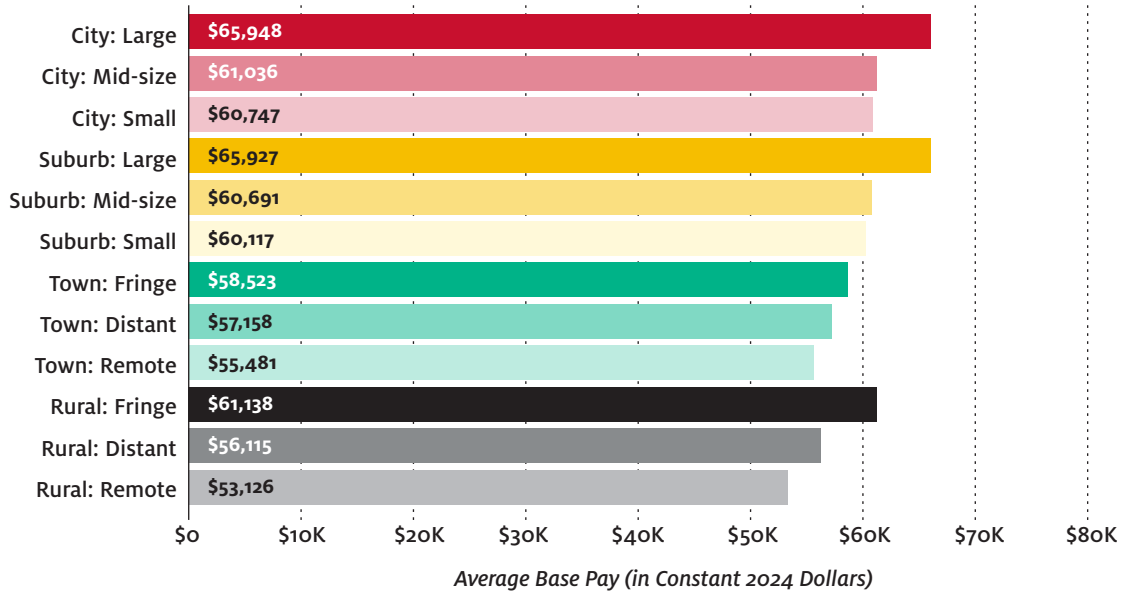
Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- Historically, teachers in traditional public schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students have had the highest average base pay.** With the exception of the 2023–24 and 2024–25 school years, teachers in traditional public schools serving less than 50% economically disadvantaged students had higher average pay than teachers at campuses serving larger proportions of economically disadvantaged students.

FIGURE 4.20

**Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers
(in Constant 2024 Dollars) by Community Type, 2024–25**



Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars. Community type refers to the National Center for Education Statistics school district locale categorization based on factors such as location, enrollment, and proximity to urban areas (see Section 3 for definitions).

TABLE 4.4

Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers (in Constant 2024 Dollars) by Community Type, 2014–15 through 2024–25

Type	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
City: Large	\$70,574	\$72,456	\$71,810	\$71,500	\$70,294	\$72,018	\$71,945	\$70,245	\$67,279	\$67,678	\$65,948
City: Mid-size	\$67,495	\$67,119	\$67,318	\$67,007	\$67,158	\$69,622	\$70,055	\$68,601	\$64,941	\$63,111	\$61,036
City: Small	\$66,269	\$67,808	\$68,192	\$68,080	\$67,095	\$69,828	\$69,305	\$65,295	\$61,926	\$62,286	\$60,747
Suburb: Large	\$71,069	\$72,440	\$73,328	\$72,748	\$71,817	\$74,087	\$73,870	\$71,756	\$68,172	\$73,265	\$65,927
Suburb: Mid-size	\$64,675	\$66,374	\$66,977	\$66,283	\$67,031	\$68,354	\$68,394	\$66,306	\$63,304	\$62,341	\$60,691
Suburb: Small	\$65,387	\$66,745	\$67,677	\$67,022	\$66,962	\$69,616	\$68,857	\$67,230	\$63,577	\$62,251	\$60,117
Town: Fringe	\$62,828	\$63,955	\$64,252	\$63,743	\$62,852	\$66,325	\$66,007	\$64,449	\$61,222	\$61,213	\$58,523
Town: Distant	\$61,452	\$62,130	\$62,016	\$61,719	\$60,997	\$66,363	\$64,320	\$62,376	\$59,336	\$60,043	\$57,158
Town: Remote	\$61,744	\$62,306	\$62,216	\$61,507	\$60,859	\$64,480	\$64,145	\$61,534	\$58,324	\$57,992	\$55,481
Rural: Fringe	\$65,282	\$68,037	\$67,190	\$66,791	\$66,344	\$68,820	\$68,702	\$67,699	\$64,387	\$63,712	\$61,138
Rural: Distant	\$59,819	\$60,710	\$60,672	\$60,409	\$59,672	\$64,090	\$64,309	\$61,503	\$59,020	\$58,710	\$56,115
Rural: Remote	\$58,508	\$59,585	\$59,391	\$58,758	\$58,081	\$63,325	\$62,987	\$60,728	\$57,462	\$57,231	\$53,126

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars. Community type refers to the National Center for Education Statistics school district locale categorization based on factors such as location, enrollment, and proximity to urban areas (see Section 3 for definitions).

DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Classroom teachers in distant and remote towns and rural areas have had the lowest average base pay across the past decade.** Adjusting for inflation, average teacher base pay in these areas has been less than \$62,000 over the past decade. By comparison, teachers in large cities and large suburbs have had an average base pay of more than \$70,000.

TABLE 4.5

Average Base Pay of Traditional Public School Classroom Teachers (in Constant 2024 Dollars) by Years of Teaching Experience, 2014–15 through 2024–25

Years of Experience	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
1	\$60,891	\$62,853	\$62,023	\$61,331	\$60,263	\$62,621	\$62,961	\$60,534	\$57,263	\$57,325	\$54,136
2	\$61,660	\$63,235	\$63,323	\$63,063	\$61,969	\$64,048	\$64,916	\$62,119	\$59,308	\$59,398	\$57,333
3	\$62,204	\$64,072	\$64,762	\$64,033	\$63,517	\$65,162	\$64,835	\$63,611	\$60,436	\$63,233	\$58,563
4	\$62,878	\$64,487	\$65,316	\$64,744	\$64,801	\$65,989	\$65,677	\$63,854	\$61,130	\$62,342	\$59,382
5	\$63,622	\$65,234	\$65,965	\$65,539	\$64,722	\$66,879	\$66,682	\$64,814	\$62,134	\$64,284	\$60,207
6	\$65,355	\$65,971	\$66,248	\$66,022	\$65,459	\$67,765	\$67,584	\$65,683	\$62,896	\$64,667	\$60,733
7	\$65,169	\$66,742	\$66,989	\$66,756	\$65,888	\$68,643	\$68,461	\$66,558	\$63,525	\$63,938	\$61,125
8	\$66,067	\$67,386	\$67,741	\$67,335	\$66,631	\$69,148	\$69,008	\$67,142	\$64,308	\$66,143	\$61,692
9	\$66,773	\$68,114	\$68,212	\$68,337	\$67,152	\$69,820	\$69,479	\$67,961	\$64,574	\$66,886	\$62,362
10	\$67,452	\$68,901	\$68,830	\$69,005	\$67,888	\$70,469	\$70,106	\$68,370	\$65,319	\$68,898	\$62,825
11+	\$73,089	\$74,323	\$74,164	\$73,564	\$72,540	\$75,450	\$75,083	\$73,058	\$69,611	\$70,657	\$66,633

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center.

Note. Teachers are defined as individuals assigned the role code of teacher in the Public Education Information Management System. Average base pay was adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index and is displayed in constant 2024 dollars.

DATA BREAKDOWN

- **Over the past decade, traditional public school classroom teacher average base pay has increased with years of experience.** This finding is expected because many districts’ teacher pay scales are based mostly or entirely on years of experience. But in constant dollars, average base pay in 2024–25 was less than average base pay in 2020–21 for all experience levels.

Section 5: Discussion

Intended to infuse policymaking with data, information, and evidence, this report details the ways in which the Texas traditional public school teacher workforce has changed over the past decade. Data presented in this report reflects holdings of the UH ERC and details the changes in teacher demographics, preparation and certification, retention and mobility, and salaries over the past decade. The major findings of this report are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Finding: *Compared with the teacher population of a decade ago, the Texas traditional public school classroom teacher population has less pre-classroom preparation and fewer standard teacher certifications, teaches courses across more subjects, earns less, and is more likely to leave the classroom for a career outside of public education.*

Less pre-classroom preparation. As demonstrated in Figure 4.5 the proportion of first-year teachers prepared through a traditional undergraduate university-based EPP has decreased by about 19 percentage points over the past decade. The rise in popularity of alternative certification programs—where individuals with bachelor’s degrees are provided little to no pedagogical instruction prior to entering the classroom—peaked in 2020–21 with 46.0 of first-year traditional public school teachers prepared through those programs. Since 2021, the proportion of first-year traditional public school classroom teachers prepared through alternative certification programs has decreased, largely due to the increasing number of first-year traditional public school classroom teachers without any EPP and the increasing number prepared by school districts. In 2024–25, only 24.4% of first-year traditional public school classroom teachers were prepared through a traditional university-based EPP. Educator preparation is key to teacher success and retention (Ingersoll et al., 2019). The preparation, clinical practice, and field experience of traditional university-based programs have been associated with better outcomes for teachers (Reyes et al., 2022; Sutchter et al., 2019; Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

Fewer standard teacher certifications. In 2014–15, 97.6% of traditional public school classroom teachers held valid standard teaching certificates, and by 2024–25, that proportion decreased to 87.2% (see Figure 4.3). In 2024–25, more traditional public school classroom teachers held school district permits, intern/probationary permits, or were uncertified than at any point in the prior decade. The decreasing number of certified traditional public school classroom teachers is concerning as teachers with standard teaching certificates have been found to have lower attrition rates and higher student performance (Reyes et al., 2022).

More subjects. Figure 4.10 in this report shows how the percentage of traditional public school classroom teachers assigned courses in one subject area increased in the two years leading up to the pandemic. During and after the pandemic, the trend reversed, and the percentage of teachers assigned only one subject area declined from 48.4% in 2019–20 to 44.8% in 2024–25. Being assigned an increasing number of courses in different subjects could be a contributing factor to stressful or unsupportive working conditions often attributed to increased teacher attrition (Audrain et al., 2022; García & Weiss, 2019; Ingersoll & Collins, 2018; Podolsky et al., 2016). Additionally, misassigning teachers to subjects for which they are uncertified is related to negative student academic performance (Van Overschelde, 2022; Van Overschelde & Piatt, 2020).

Earns less. Across the nation, teacher salaries have not remained on par with salaries earned by other college graduates (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019), and this report shows that average Texas traditional public school teacher salaries have failed to even keep up with inflation (see Figure 4.18). The value of these comparatively low salaries is further decreased by the high stress, heavy workload, and low levels of support reported by teachers (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019).

Higher attrition. In 2014–15, 7.9% of teachers left the classroom—4.0% left to another nonteacher role in public education, and 3.9% left public education entirely (see Figure 4-13). Attrition was consistently around this rate of 8% through 2019–20. It increased to 9.4% in 2020–21 and has been above 10% since then, with the latest rate from 2023–24 at 12.4%. Increasing classroom teacher attrition is problematic for schools and students. Teacher attrition contributes to the teacher shortage problem, often forcing schools to replace teachers with uncertified or inexperienced teachers, increase class sizes, and offset the high cost of replacing teachers by cutting program offerings or extracurricular programming (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Madigan & Kim, 2021).

Finding: These trends in the traditional public school classroom teacher population compound the long-standing concerns of racial and ethnic representation, as well as socioeconomic inequality in the Texas public school system.

Racial and ethnic representation. The population of traditional public school classroom teachers has made minimal progress in diversifying to be more representative of the student population. Historically, the Texas traditional public school classroom teacher population has been largely composed of White women. The teacher demographics section of this report (see page 17) shows that the traditional public school classroom teacher population remains majority White (54.1% in 2024–25) and female (75.4% in 2024–25). As the Texas student population continues to diversify (see page 14), the teaching population should follow in order to support student success, as literature continues to link the racial and ethnic identities of teachers and administrators to student achievement (Dee, 2005; Egalite et al., 2015; Joshi et al., 2018).

Socioeconomic inequality. Schools serving the largest proportions of students from low socio-economic backgrounds continue to have the least experienced (see Figure 4.8) and least certified (Figure 4.4) teachers, offer lower base teacher salaries (Figure 4.19), and have lower teacher retention (Figure 4.15) than schools serving lower proportions of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, school district teacher salaries are largely controlled by the property wealth of the school district. In schools located in low-property wealth districts, the equalization mechanisms in Texas’s school finance system are not enough to offset differences in property tax revenue (Templeton et al., 2023), thus widening the gaps across teacher salaries in neighboring school districts and across the state (Figure 4.18 and 4.20). These trends are similar to those demonstrated in academic literature (Bettini et al., 2022; García & Weiss, 2019; Nguyen & Redding, 2018).

Section 6: Policy Recommendations

Synthesizing the findings of this report within the context of Texas education policy and academic literature, this section offers policy recommendations for the public school sector.

Teachers are one of the most influential factors related to student success (Chetty et al., 2014; Goldhaber et al., 2015). As such, a sustainable supply of well-prepared, effective, tenured teachers is critical to a thriving public education system. In Texas, the state has struggled to maintain an ample supply of well-prepared teachers for the traditional public school system. Over the past decade, the traditional public school teacher workforce has less pre-classroom preparation (see Figure 4.5) and fewer certifications (Figure 4.3), teaches across more subjects (Figure 4.10), earns less (Figure 4.17), and has increased attrition (Figure 4.13), especially in schools serving the largest proportions of economically disadvantaged students (Figures 4.4, 4.6, 4.8, 4.15, and 4.19). This less-prepared and less-stable workforce faces students who have not yet recovered from the learning lost during the pandemic (National Assessment of Educational Progress, n.d.). Moreover, Texas policy efforts to provide a reprieve to schools facing teacher shortages and inadequate funding have instead hastened the decline of the workforce.

Teacher Certification Policy

As one mechanism to reduce teacher shortages, the Texas Legislature provided additional flexibility to traditional public schools by reducing teacher certification requirements (see Section 2). Passage of the District of Innovation distinction in 2015, in particular, aligns with decreases in the number of teachers prepared through university-based programs (Figure 4.5) and the number of teachers with standard teaching certificates (Figure 4.3). These reductions are concerning because Texas students taught by teachers prepared through traditional university-based settings have higher standardized test performance (Reyes et al., 2022). Teachers prepared through university-based EPPs also report feeling more prepared for the classroom because of the in-service and pedagogical training provided in traditional programs (Kee, 2012). And teachers prepared through traditional university-based preparation programs have lower attrition rates than teachers prepared through alternative certification pathways (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Reyes et al., 2022; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). A workforce composed of fewer university-prepared teachers will have lower student performance, feel less prepared for the classroom, and have higher attrition rates.

Additionally, reducing requirements for teacher certification will likely negatively impact the supply of future teachers from university-based EPPs. Without certification requirements in school districts, university students are not compelled to enroll in teacher certification programs, and those who do enroll have no incentive to complete certification. Policy efforts to mitigate teacher shortages by reducing certification requirements were short-term solutions that could have long-term negative impacts.

Policy Recommendations: Continue to support the restoration of teacher certification requirements and increase university-based EPP participation and completion.

- **Continue to restore teacher certification requirements.** The Texas Legislature took the first step in restoring teacher certification requirements with the passage

of HB 2 in 2025 (see Section 2). Restoring teacher certification requirements works in several ways to increase the number of certified teachers in the classroom. First, literature has consistently shown that certified teachers have lower attrition rates (Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Reyes et al., 2022; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012; Van Overschelde & Wiggins, 2019; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Second, certification requirements contribute to the prestige of the teaching profession, thus potentially increasing interest in the field (Kraft & Lyon, 2024). Continued support of teacher certification requirement restoration will support both the short- and long-term supply of high-quality teachers in the state.

- **Increase university-based EPP participation and completion.** Though university-based EPP participation and completion will likely improve with the restoration of teacher certification requirements and the PREP allotment in HB 2, other opportunities to redesign traditional university-based programs should be explored. Several programs built in Texas to offer teaching certificates to students outside of the College of Education could be expanded, and wide opportunity exists to create new university-based models that connect with popular grow-your-own programs (Bland et al., 2023). Additionally, the PREP allotment could be tailored to prioritize or incentivize partnerships with university-based EPPs.

School Finance Policy

In 2019, the Texas Legislature restructured the school finance system with the intention of providing property tax relief to residents, reducing the amount of recapture that wealthy school districts pay to the state, and redirecting funding to key programs. Unfortunately, the new formulas have not resulted in increases in per-pupil funding. Additionally, the restructuring has increased inequities within the traditional public school system, failing to provide additional support to school districts with the least property wealth or school districts serving the highest proportions of economically disadvantaged students, students with limited English proficiency, students receiving special education services, or students participating in career and technical education classes (Templeton et al., 2023).

Rather than infusing dollars to support schools most in need, many of the school finance restructuring policy changes involved performance pay or bonus structures such as the Teacher Incentive Allotment and bonuses provided for college, career, and military ready graduates, which benefit those with greater access to resources and higher performance in wealthier school districts (Templeton et al., 2023). The results of the school finance restructure have likely contributed to the statewide stagnation of teacher salaries and the large regional and demographic differences in teacher salaries observed across the state (see Figures 4.18, 4.19, and 4.20).

Policy Recommendations: *Invest in public school finance equalization, reform teacher pay scales, and oppose policies that direct tax-payer dollars outside of the public school system.*

- **Invest in public school finance equalization.** School finance literature has repeatedly shown the connection between school spending and short- and long-term student outcomes (Biasi, 2023; Rothstein, 2019) and demonstrated how school funding can influence resources that consistently improve educational outcomes, including quality teachers (Rolle, 2004; Verstegen, 1998).
- **Reform teacher pay scales.** The pandemic served as a catalyst for teacher pay

reform, and a multitude of alternatives to the traditional step-wise, tenure-based pay scales have been implemented across the country (Aldeman & Silberstein, 2021). This creates the opportunity to learn from successful reforms as well as cautionary tales of well-intentioned but ineffective stipends (Theobald et al., 2023). The Teacher Retention Allotment in HB 2—passed in 2025—added allotments for school districts to restructure teacher pay. Future analysis should be conducted to determine the degree to which these funds increased teacher salaries.

- **Oppose policies that direct tax-payer dollars away from the public school system.** With the passage of SB 2 (89th Legislative Session) in 2025, Texas created the Texas Education Freedom Accounts, an Education Savings Account program. The program is set to begin in the 2026–27 school year and has a budget of \$1 billion for the first year (Texas Education Freedom Accounts, n.d.). Education Savings Accounts, often referred to as vouchers, allow parents to opt out of the public school system and redirect per-pupil funding into a savings account managed by the government that can be used to offset the costs of private school tuition, tutoring, and online learning (Ronco, 2024). While academic research has yet to find positive effects of voucher programs (DeAngelis et al., 2021), future research should be conducted to evaluate the effects of the Texas voucher program.

Conclusion

Classroom teachers lie at the heart of the public education system. In order to support the education of our children, the state of the teaching profession—which in recent years has faced a downward trajectory—must be restored. State and national policy efforts to reduce barriers to entry into the classroom may have contributed to a waterfall effect of declining prestige in the teaching profession. The prestige of an occupation, or the respect and standing of an occupation, is elevated or depressed by the influence and power of the profession, the attributes of individuals in the profession, and the amount of resources society allocates to the profession (Hodge et al., 1964; Kraft & Lyon, 2024). Reestablishing the prestige of the teaching profession is an evidence-based approach to buttressing the public education system and begins with strong teacher preparation and certification pathways advocated in this report.

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