

# 2024 Arkansas Teacher Workforce Report

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DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY  
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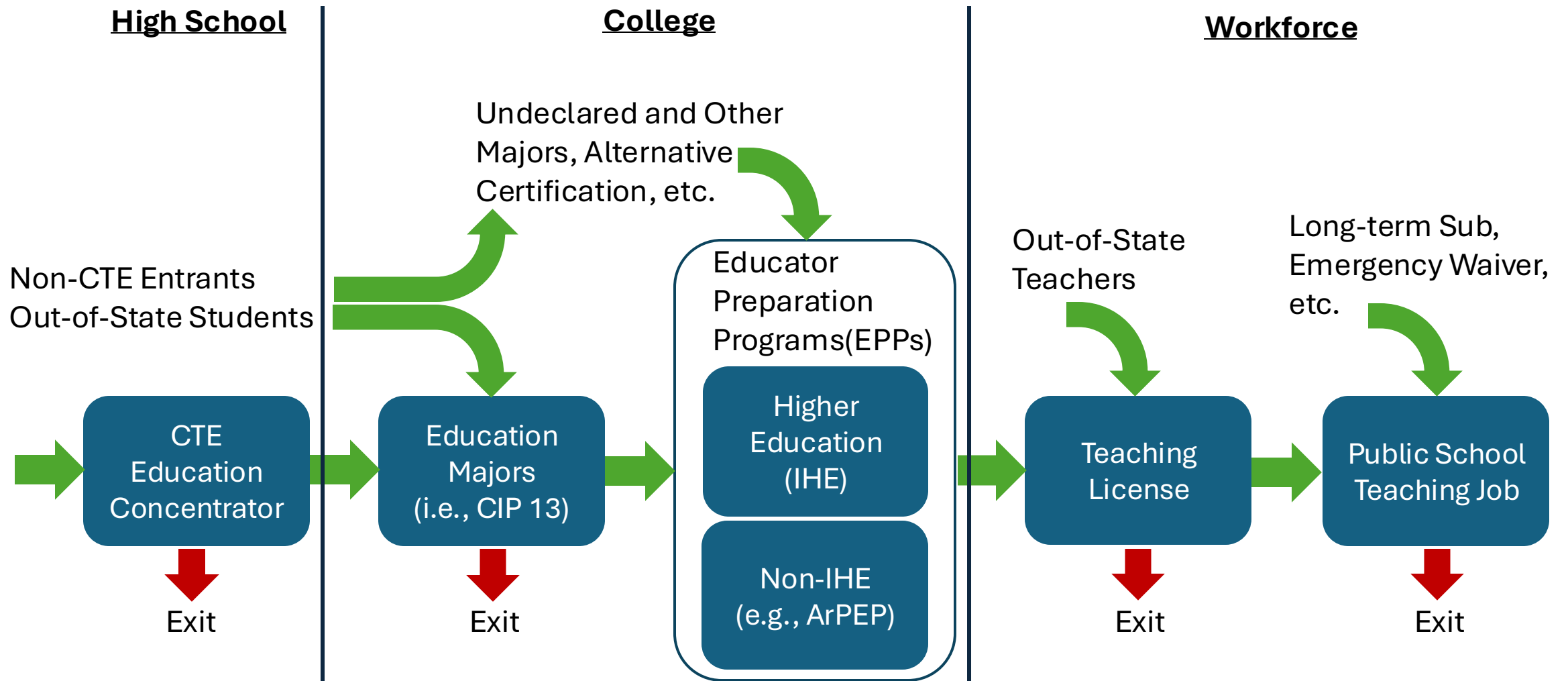


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ARKANSAS

College of Education  
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*Education Reform*

Office for  
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Policy

# The teacher pipeline is a complex system with many on- and off-ramps.



# Research-Practice Partnership

- We need to use data and evidence to understand this complex system and make positive improvements for students and teachers.
- For three years, DESE has partnered with the U of A Department of Education Reform Office for Education Policy to access no-cost data and research support.
- Researchers investigate policy-relevant questions using high-quality data and provide advice on policy design and implementation.
- You can find our teacher workforce reports and data resources at the links below:
  - [DESE Educator Workforce Data](#)
  - [OEP Teacher Pipeline](#)

# Our goal is to help Arkansas use data and evidence to strengthen the teacher workforce.

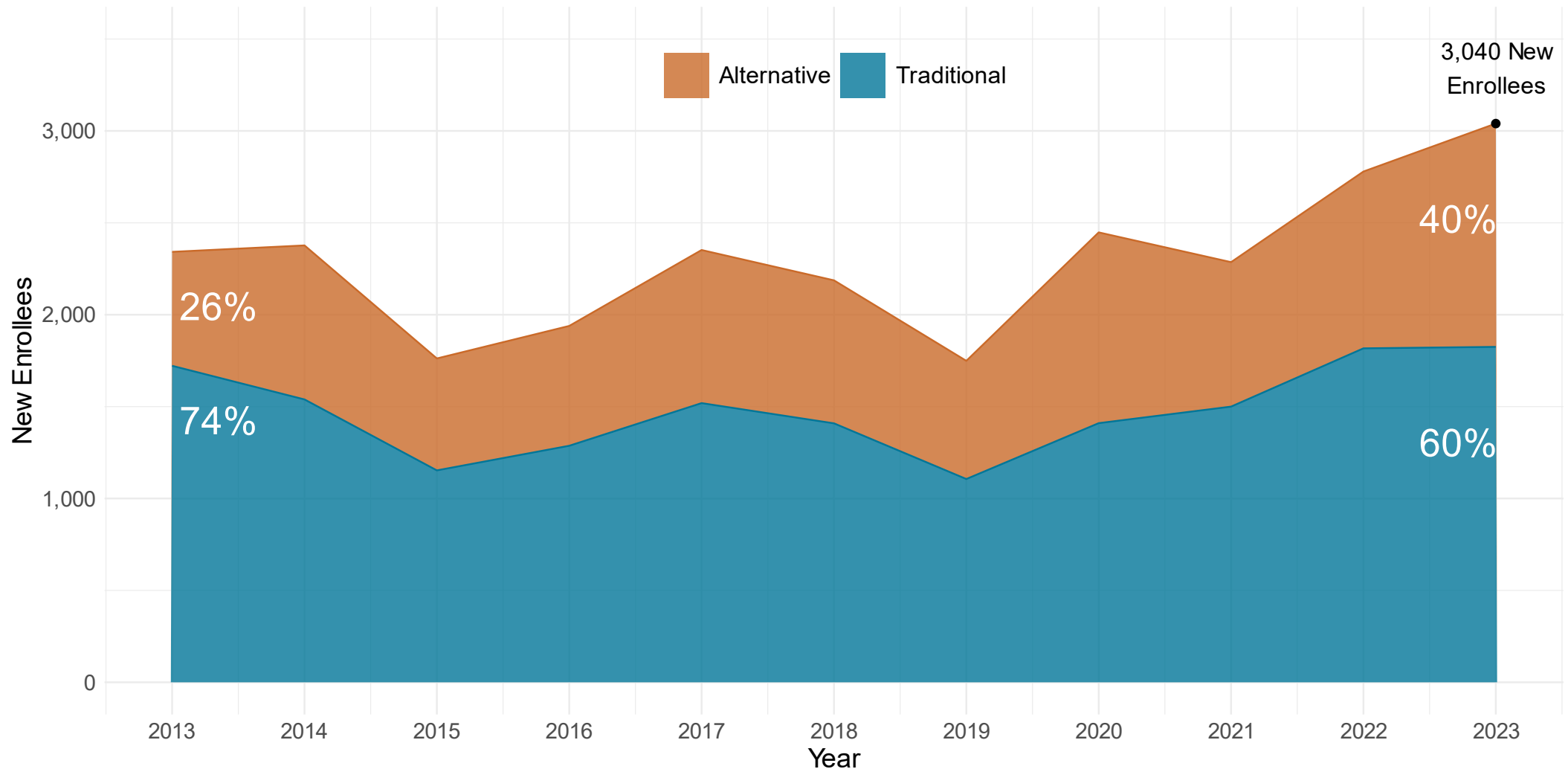
- Describe the teacher pipeline from high school through higher education and into the classroom;
- Explain how the pipeline has changed over time;
- Investigate how licensure policies influence teacher supply;
- Highlight the leaks and potential barriers in the pipeline;
- Offer recommendations to strengthen the teacher workforce; and
- Help Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) set goals and monitor progress.

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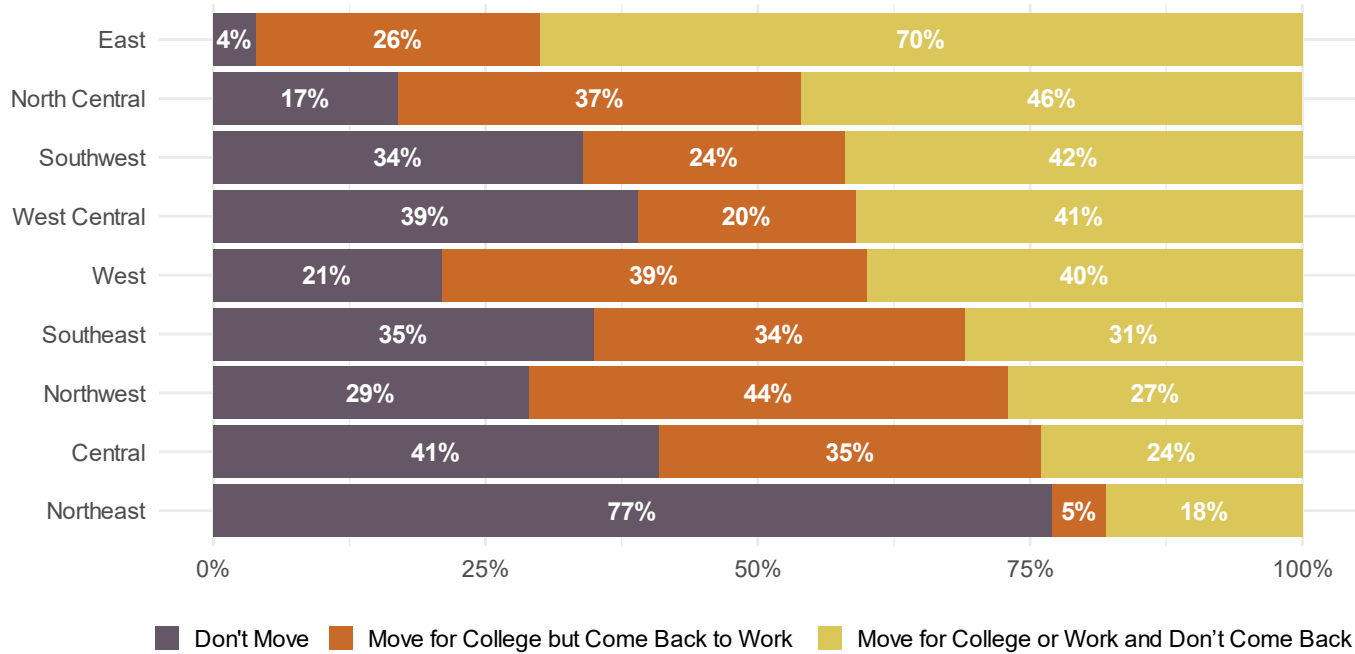
# Early Pipeline

# Alternative Educator Preparation Programs (EPP) are enrolling an increasing share of new EPP entrants.

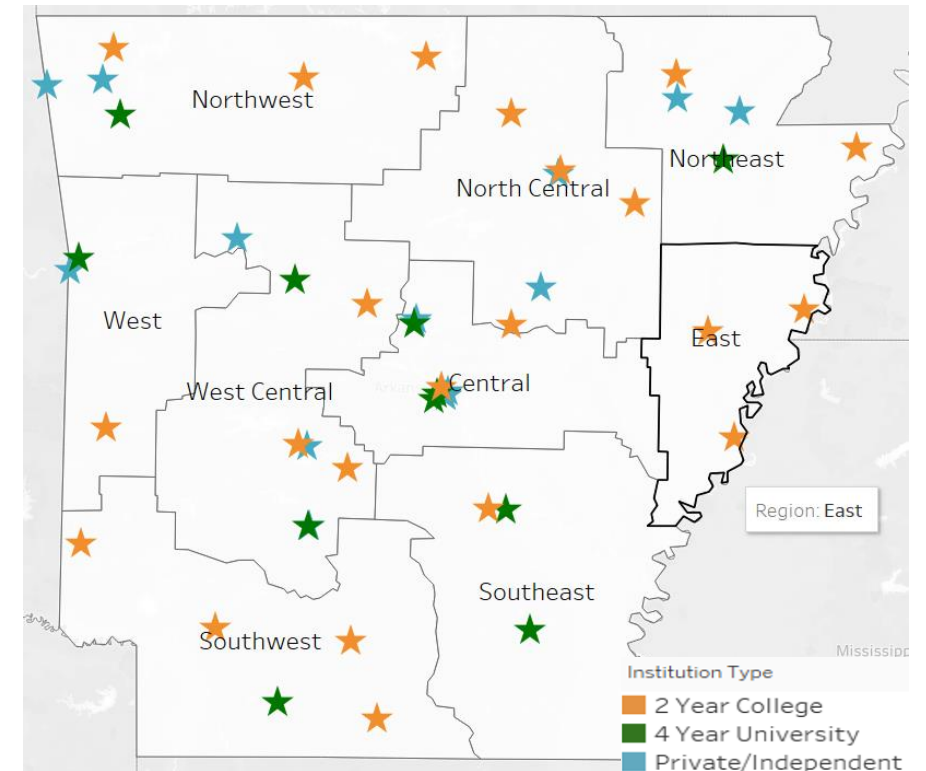


# Future educators often migrate from the eastern Arkansas for college and do not return.

Migration from High School to College and Employment for those Working in Education Services



There are no 4-Year Postsecondary Institutions in the East Region





# Despite high completion and licensure rates, many EPP enrollees don't become teachers within six years.



77% of enrollees complete within three years



66% of enrollees pass the licensure exam on their first attempt



79% of completers are licensed within one year



68% of completers are employed as a teacher within three years

While 84% of traditional EPP enrollees complete within 3 years, only 65% of alternative EPP enrollees do so.

Approximately 40% of those who initially enroll in an Arkansas EPP are not licensed and employed as a teacher 6 years later.

# EPP State Review will facilitate data-driven continuous improvement.

- The EPP State Review will:
  - Elevate key pieces of data and program experiences that align with Arkansas’s vision for high quality preparation.
  - Provide EPPs with performance reports containing multiple years of data related to recruitment, completion, and supporting workforce needs.
  - Publish a public facing EPP State Review Data Dashboard
- Check out the [EPP State Review website](#) to learn more!



# Retention

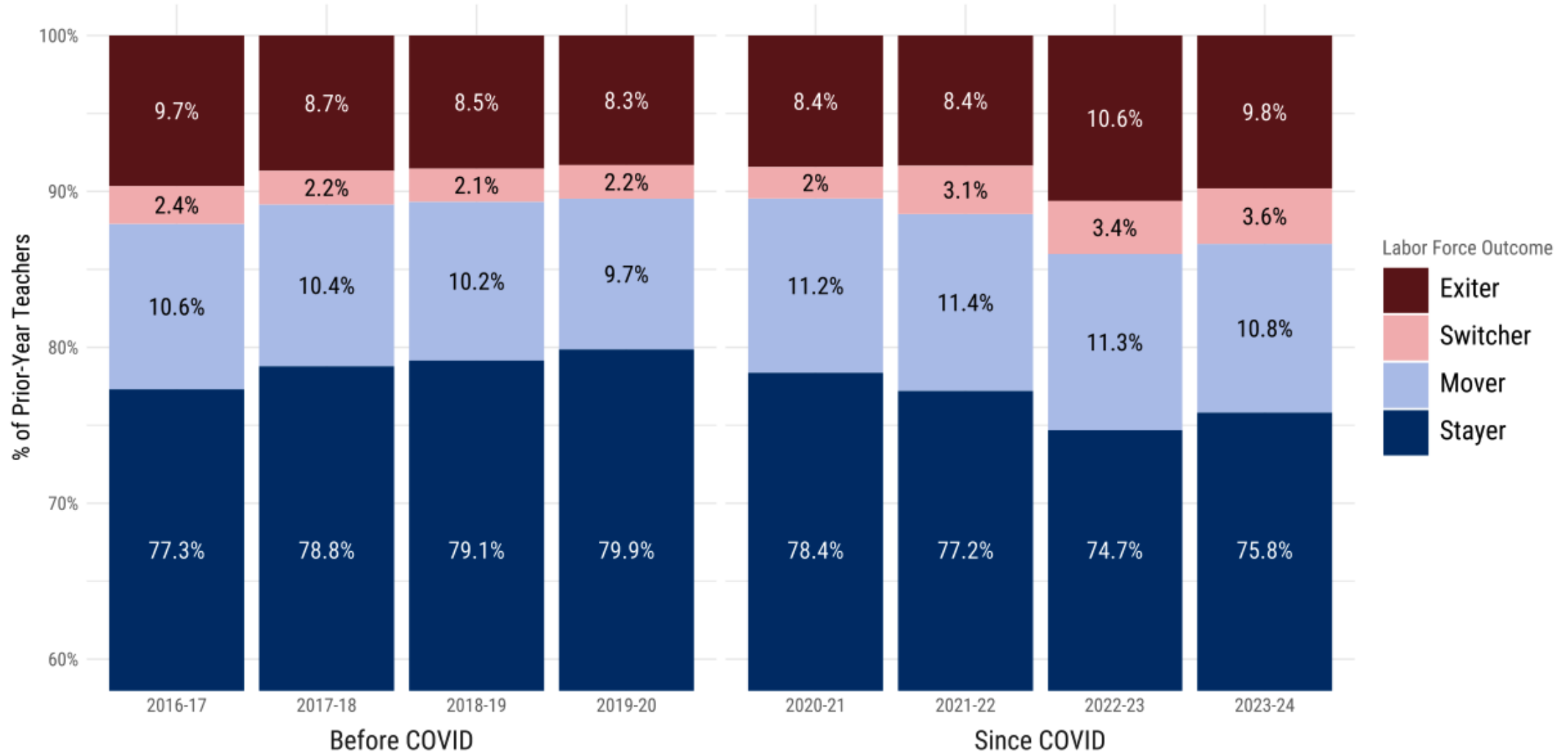
# Arkansas teacher retention is still below pre-pandemic rates.

- Click the links below to read about Arkansas Teacher Retention for the 2023-24 School Year:
  - [Research Brief](#)
  - [Blog Post](#)
- In 2022-23, turnover increased by 5 percentage points (20%) above pre-pandemic levels.
- Teacher retention improved slightly, rising by nearly 1.1 percentage points from 2022-23 to 2023-24, but remains below pre-pandemic rates.
- Retention rates vary across districts and subject areas, with the southern and eastern regions experiencing the lowest retention, mirroring geographic shortage areas.
- Middle school teachers notably show decreased retention rates across subject areas.

To distinguish between different types of turnover, we use the following four terms:

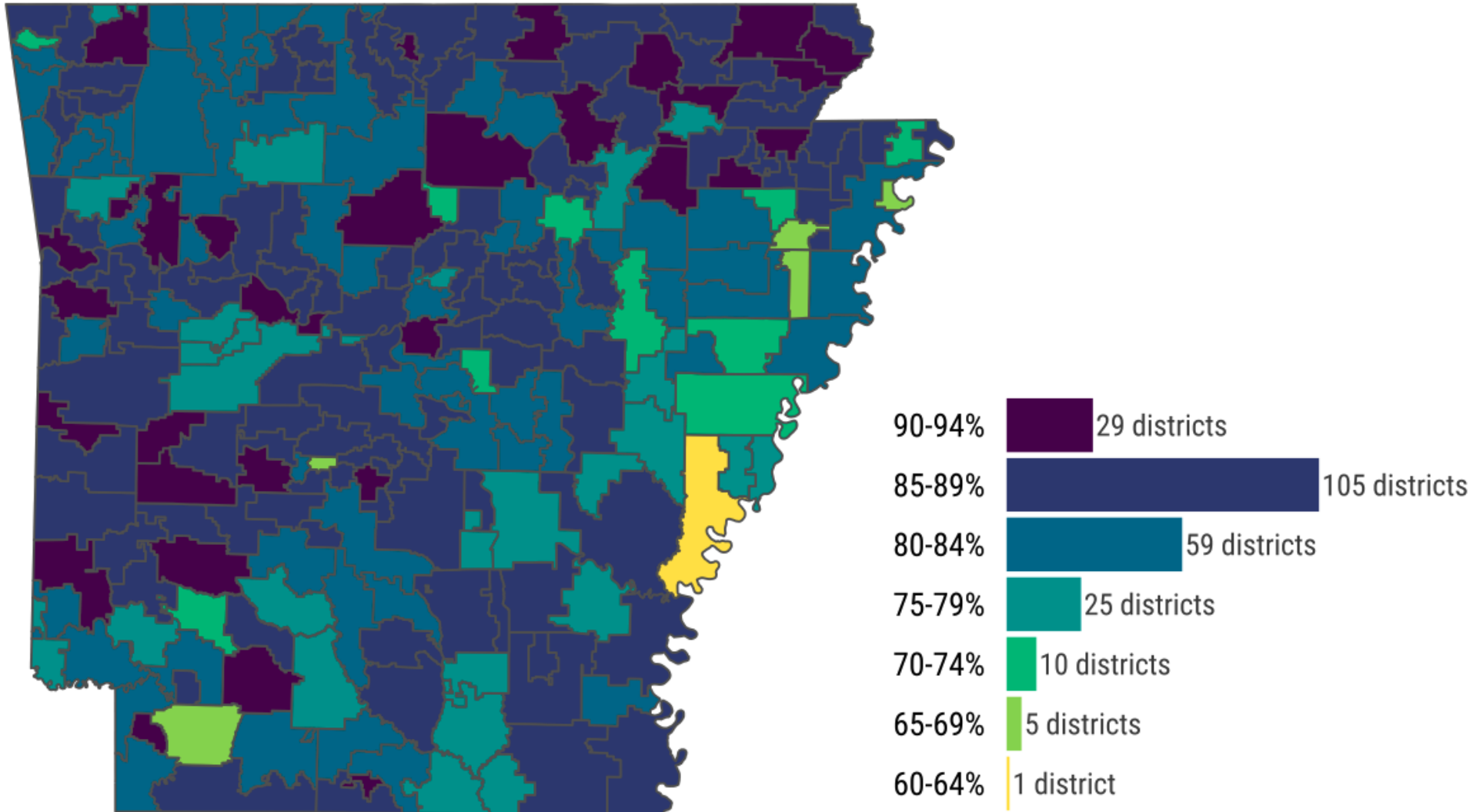
- **Stayers** are teachers who remain teaching in the same school(s) from one year to the next.
- **Movers** leave their current school(s) to teach in another school or district.
- **Switchers** change from a teaching to a non-teaching role in the Arkansas education workforce from one year to the next.
- **Exiters** are teachers who leave the Arkansas education workforce entirely.

# Teacher Retention by Year and Outcome



# Average Teacher Retention by District

(Averaged over the 2021 to 2024 school years)



Middle school subjects have experienced the largest declines in retention.

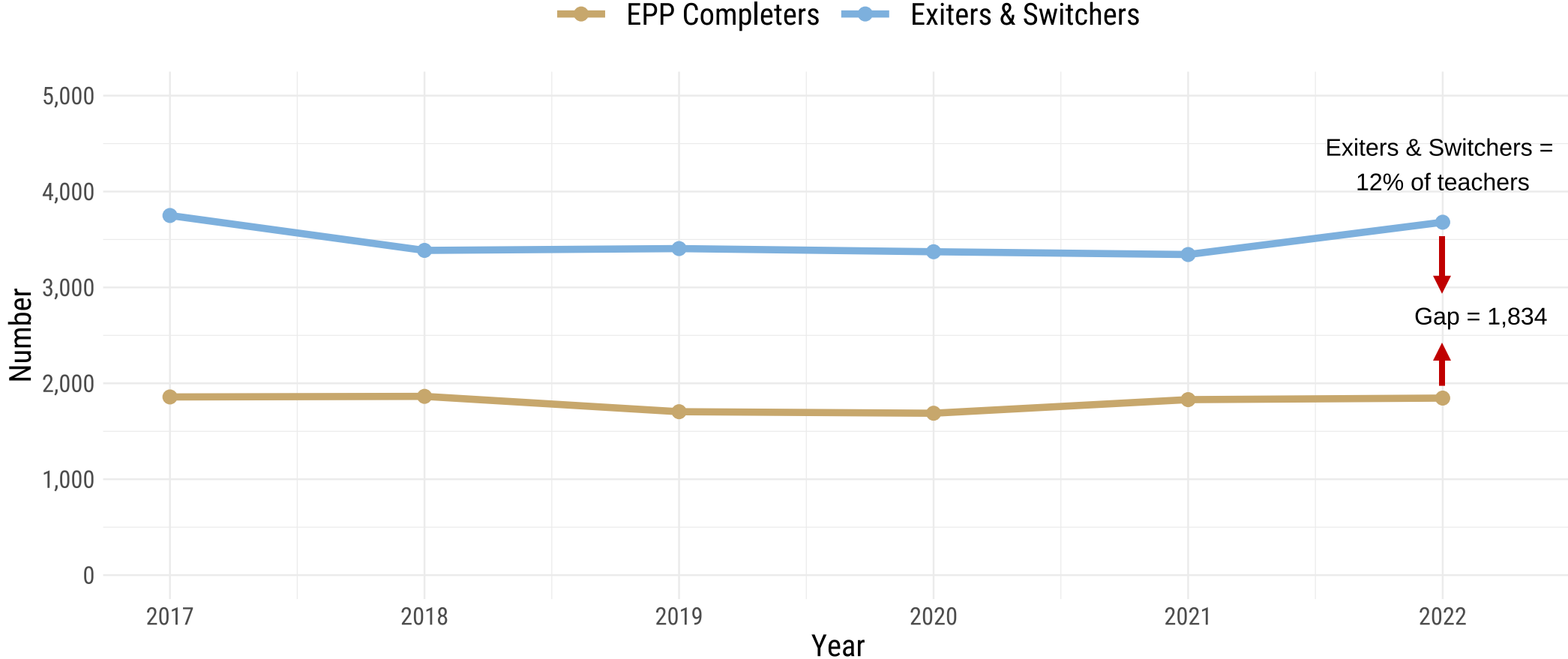
Change in Retention Rate by Subject  
(four years before COVID vs four years since COVID)





# Arkansas EPPs produce about 1,800 fewer teachers than the number who leave the classroom.

EPP Completers vs. Exiters & Switchers  
2017 through 2022 School Years



# Shortage Areas

# Arkansas's teacher shortage area lists are data-driven and based on need.

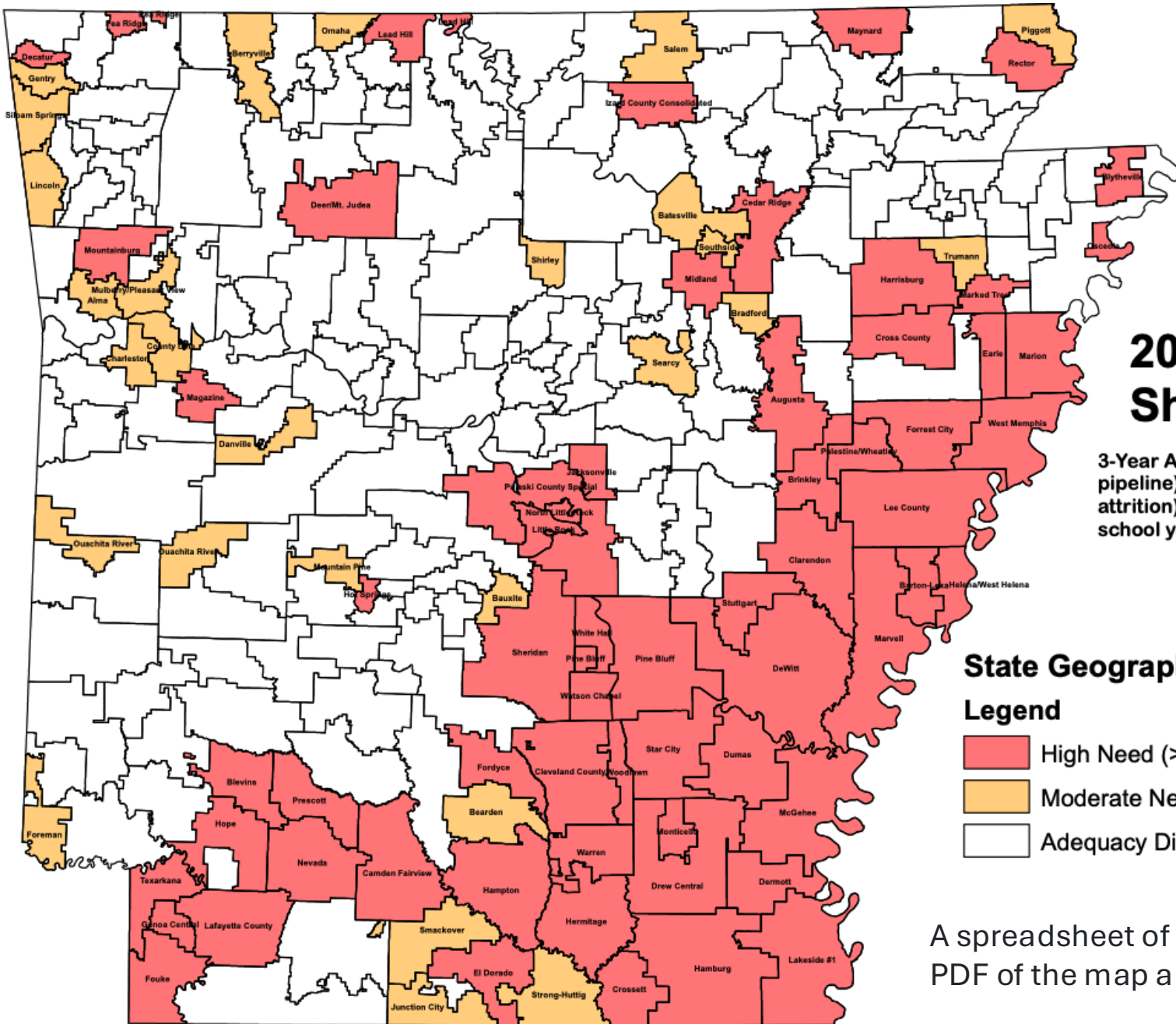
- ADE collaborates with the University of Arkansas Office for Education Policy to create annual shortage area lists.
- The most recent shortage area lists are based on data from the 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 school years.
- For each subject area, we count:
  - **Total Teachers**,
  - **Demand** – sum of unlicensed teachers, attrition, and deceased teachers, and
  - **Supply** – educator preparation program pipeline.

We calculate percentage need and place subjects in need-based categories to determine shortage areas.

- Percentage Need =  $\frac{\textit{Demand} - \textit{Supply}}{\textit{Total Teachers}}$
- Federal shortage areas are the subjects with the most need up to the point where the cumulative number of needed positions equals 5% of total teaching positions.
- State shortage areas are based on the following thresholds for percentage need:
  - High ( $\geq 20\%$ )
  - Moderate ( $\geq 15\%$ )
  - Low ( $< 15\%$ )

# Below is the 2024-2025 subject area list.

High	Moderate	Low
Computer Science	Career & Technical	Early Childhood Education
Secondary Science	Fine Arts	Elementary
Foreign Language	Middle School English Language Arts	Physical Education and Health
Secondary Mathematics	Middle School Mathematics	Secondary Social Studies
	Middle School Science	
	Middle School Social Studies	
	Secondary English Language Arts	
	Special Education	



## 2024-2025 Geographic Shortage Districts

3-Year Averages based on supply (educator preparation pipeline) and demand (unlicensed teachers and teacher attrition) during the 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23 school years.

### State Geographic Shortage Areas

#### Legend

- High Need ( $\geq 20\%$  of teachers) or in a High Need Coop
- Moderate Need ( $\geq 15\%$  Need)
- Adequacy Districts ( $< 15\%$  Need)

A spreadsheet of districts can be found [here](#). A PDF of the map above can be found [here](#).

School District and County Boundaries provided by the Arkansas GIS Office.

# State Efforts to Enhance Recruitment and Retention



- High school to teacher pathways:
  - [Pre-Educator Program of Study](#)
  - [Certified Teaching Assistant](#) credential
  - Work-based options, such as [Arkansas Teacher Registered Apprenticeship](#),
  - [Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship](#)
- [Aspiring Teacher Permit](#)
- Additional supports for employed alternative route enrollees ([Mentoring Handbook](#))
  - Support Plans
  - Assignment to a EPP clinical supervisor and district representative
- Licensure assessment flexibility



# Addressing Shortage Areas



- Subject and geographic shortage areas are used for the following programs:
  - EPP State Review-recruitment and employment targets
  - [Licensure Assessment Test Fee Reimbursements](#)
  - State and Federal financial aid programs
    - [State Teacher Education Program \(STEP\)](#)
    - [TEACH grant](#)
  - Licensure assessment preparation opportunities
  - [Merit Teacher Incentive Fund](#)

# Keeping Effective Educators in the Classroom



- Arkansas is providing opportunities for increased compensation and extended reach without leaving the classroom, including:
  - Educator Career Continuum: Lead or Master Designation
    - Working with districts to:
      - Include quality points for Lead or Master designation when applying for employment
      - Revise salary schedule to reflect Lead or Master designations
        - Mentoring
        - Student assignment
      - Offer apprenticeship opportunities
  - Merit Teacher Incentive Fund



- Quality preparation and early career support
  - EPP State Review and Science of Reading Audit
  - One-year supervised residency alongside an experienced mentor teacher
  - Novice Teacher Mentoring Program enhancements
    - Mentor practice standards, mentoring scope and sequence, teaching practices, topics, and mentoring activities
    - DESE began overseeing mentoring for charter schools, LRSD, and PCSSD in 24-25.
- Educator Leadership Preparation Redesign

# LEARNS Salary Increases

# We are studying how the LEARNS salary increases affect teacher recruitment and retention.

- LEARNS made the following teachers' compensation changes:
  - increased the state's minimum teacher salary from \$36,000 to \$50,000,
  - guaranteed all teachers a minimum raise of \$2,000,
  - removed the minimum teacher salary schedule,
  - and relaxed other salary schedule requirements in state law.
- The state provided new funds for the required salary increases, resulting in nearly **\$183 million in new state education funding, a ~6.5% increase from 2022-23.**
- The LEARNS salary increases provided more resources to rural and higher-poverty districts and reduced starting pay differences across the state, which has the potential to improve teacher recruitment and retention in shortage areas.

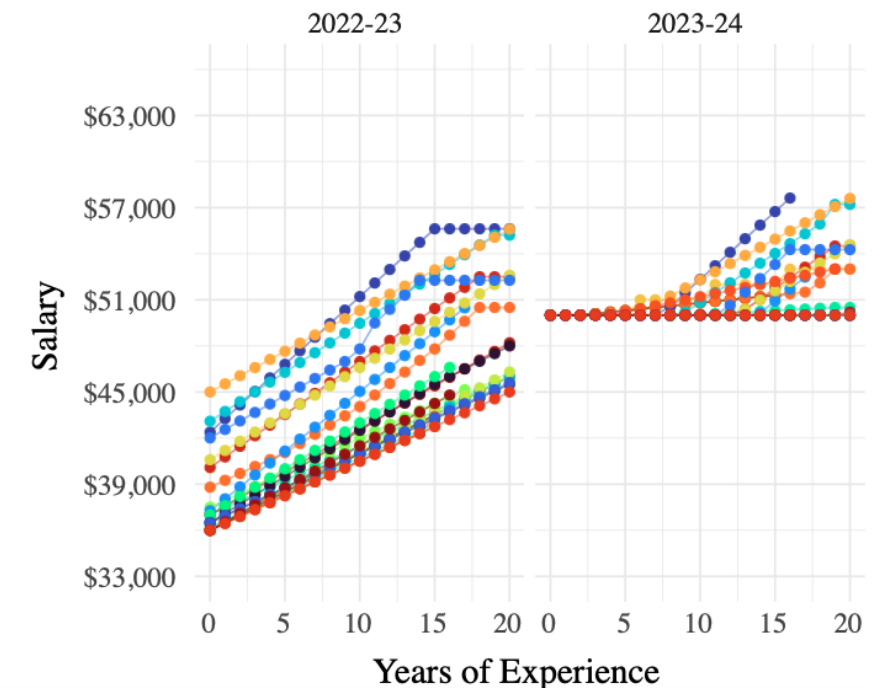
# We are collecting data to better understand how districts are changing pay and how teachers respond.

- Districts now have additional flexibility to continue with traditional salary schedules or to implement more creative approaches.
- Click the links below to learn about Teacher Salaries Under the Arkansas LEARNS Act:
  - [Research Brief](#)
  - [Blog Post](#)
- Click the link below to learn about Administrators' Views of Teacher Salary Changes Under the Arkansas LEARNS Act:
  - [Research Brief](#)

District Salary Schedule Scatter Plots

Degree:  
 Bachelor's  
 Master's

Educational Service  
Cooperative:  
Arch Ford ▾



# Merit Pay

# LEARNS established the merit pay program to recognize and reward Arkansas's outstanding educators.

- The primary goals of the program are to:
  - ***retain high-performing teachers*** in classrooms across Arkansas and
  - ***enhance teacher recruitment and retention*** in priority and critical shortage areas.
- Research supports the idea that merit pay can have a positive impact on student outcomes by changing who enters and stays in teaching.
- In 2024, the merit pay program awarded bonuses to nearly 3,000 teachers, with an average bonus of approximately \$3,300.
- Check out our blog post explaining how merit pay was implemented:
  - [Explaining the Arkansas Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Program](#)








# The Merit Pay program provides annual bonuses of up to \$10,000 across multiple categories.

- For 2024, the legislature set aside \$10 million for the program.
- The eligibility categories include those who:
  - Demonstrate outstanding growth in student performance;
  - Teach in subject, geographic, and other critical shortage areas; and
  - Serve as a mentor to aspiring teachers participating in yearlong residencies.
- All K-12 classroom teachers, special education teachers, library media specialists, and school counselors were eligible.
- Districts confirmed all recipients met the eligibility requirements before funds were distributed.

# 2023-24 Merit Pay Criteria and Bonus Levels

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Bonus</b>
<b>Demonstrate outstanding growth in student performance.</b>	
Top 0.5% 3-Year Average Student Growth Score Across Subjects	\$10,000
Top 1% 3-Year Average Student Growth Score Across Subjects	\$9,000
Top 5% 3-Year Average Student Growth Score Across Subjects	\$6,000
Top 25% 3-Year Average Student Growth Score in ELA, Math, or Science	\$3,000
<b>Teach in subject, geographic, and other shortage areas.</b>	
Subject Shortage Area	\$2,500
Geographic Shortage Area	\$1,500
Lead or Master Designation Shortage Area	\$1,500
<b>Serve as a mentor to aspiring teachers participating in yearlong residencies.</b>	
Mentor for a Yearlong Resident	\$3,000

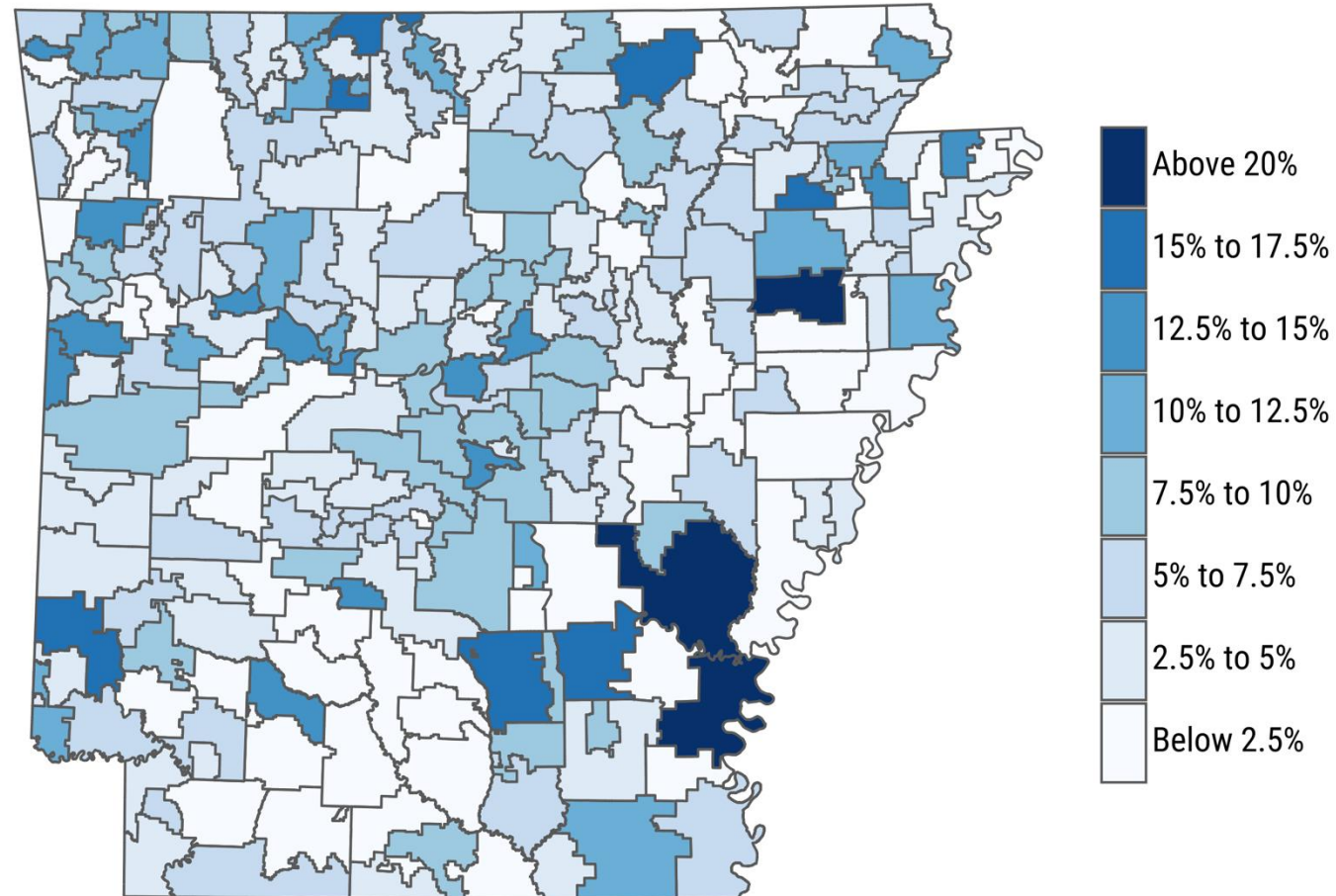
# Teachers could receive bonuses in multiple categories.

	Student Growth Bonus	Subject Shortage Bonus	Geographic Shortage Bonus	Lead/Master Designation Bonus	Total Bonus
 <p><b>Ms. Ozark</b> Secondary math teacher in a subject and geographic shortage area, top 25% in student growth in math</p>	✓ \$3,000	✓ \$2,500	✓ \$1,500		<b>\$7,000</b>
 <p><b>Coach Buffalo</b> Secondary science teacher in a subject shortage area with a Lead/Master designation</p>		✓ \$2,500		✓ \$1,500	<b>\$4,000</b>
 <p><b>Mrs. Delta</b> Special education teacher in a geographic and subject shortage area</p>		✓ \$2,500	✓ \$1,500		<b>\$4,000</b>
 <p><b>Ms. Mockingbird</b> Secondary math teacher in a geographic and subject shortage area, top 5% in student growth</p>	✓ \$6,000	✓ \$2,500	✓ \$1,500		<b>\$10,000</b>
 <p><b>Mr. Diamond</b> Foreign language teacher in a geographic and subject shortage area, Lead/Master designation</p>		✓ \$2,500	✓ \$1,500	✓ \$1,500	<b>\$5,500</b>

# Bonus recipients were widely distributed, with higher concentrations in geographic shortage areas.

[\(Click here for an interactive version of this map.\)](#)

## Percentage of Teachers Receiving a Bonus

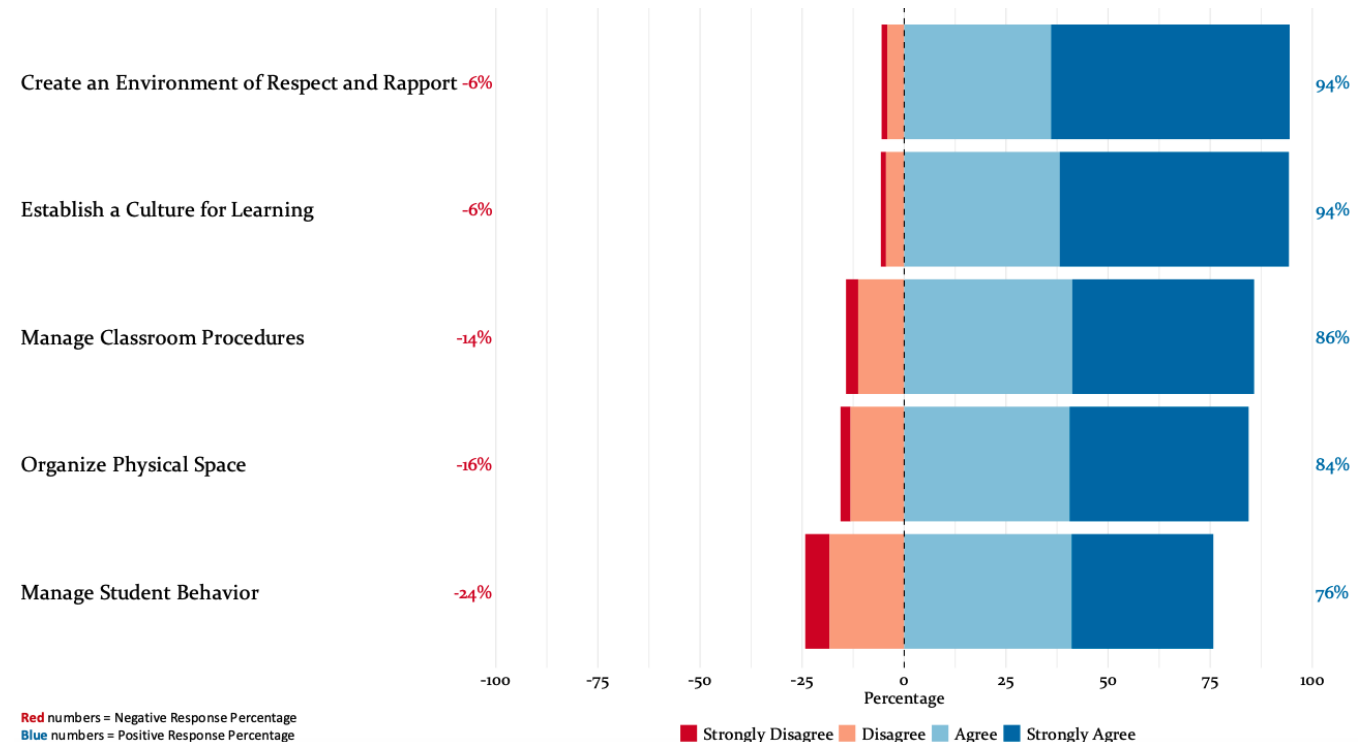


# Surveys

# We administer several surveys to recent EPP completers, classroom teachers, and their supervisors.

- The goal of these surveys is to better understand how prepared and supported teachers feel, and to monitor teacher wellbeing and working conditions.
- Click on the links below to read our survey reports:
  - [Educator Preparation Program \(EPP\) Completer Survey Report](#)
  - [Educator Preparation Program \(EPP\) Completer Supervisor Survey Report](#)
  - [Novice Teacher Survey Report](#)
  - [Wellbeing and Working Conditions in the Arkansas Teacher Workforce](#)

My EPP prepared me to:



Follow our ongoing work!

# Follow our work on the Arkansas teacher workforce using the links below!

- We will continue to use data and evidence to understand and support Arkansas’s teaching workforce.
- We release reports, blog posts, data visualizations, and dashboards throughout the year.
- Many of the products linked in this report are updated annually.
- You can find our teacher workforce reports and data resources at the links below:
  - [DESE Educator Workforce Data](#)
  - [OEP Teacher Pipeline](#)
- Sign up for the OEP newsletter and blog.
  - [Newsletter](#)
  - [Blog](#) – scroll down until you see “Subscribe to Blog via Email”





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