



Do NAATE Teacher Fellows Stay in Classroom Teaching?

– Retention Data Among NAATE Program Graduates

One of the core objectives of the NAATE program for experienced, high performing classroom teachers along with deepened instructional practices and expanded leadership capacity is retention in the profession, defined as remaining in student-facing roles in school buildings. Since 2011 NAATE has tracked NAATE graduate teacher retention through a range of methods (e.g., surveys, email, school data, and direct correspondence). Ninety five percent of NAATE graduates through mid-2015 remain in school buildings, with 82% retained as classroom teachers in student-facing roles. These rates exceed the expected value based on national surveys of teacher attrition/retention in high need schools by 32%.

National surveys of teacher attrition/retention vary considerably in their reported rates. Economic conditions, school location, working conditions, and Title I status all have a bearing on the rate of retention experienced by NAATE partner school districts and networks. Nationally, teacher attrition experienced a slow down that paralleled the aftermath of the severe economic downturn of 2007 – 2009. More teachers remained in their positions during those years. In more recent years (2012 – 2014) teacher attrition has climbed significantly. Charter networks, with which NAATE partners, report attrition rates of more than 20% and as high as 30% annually across the full range of teacher experience and quality. Urban districts, with which NAATE partners, report attrition rates from 10% to in excess of 20% annually. A percentage of those leaving the profession are not deemed high performing teachers, while a percentage of those leaving are considered experienced and high performing. The cost of losing experienced and high performing teachers has been well documented in state level studies in Texas and North Carolina (Texas Study; Barnes, Crowe, Schaefer). Estimated costs per teacher lost range from \$8,000 to \$20,000 and include recruitment, selection, onboarding, and associated training expenses. These estimates do not account for the reduced teacher effectiveness when replacing a high

performing teacher with a new entrant to the profession, which is commonly the case. Recent publications from the US DOE peg the annual cost of teacher turnover nationally at more than \$2.2 Billion (Goldring).

Suggested approaches to increasing the rate of retention of high quality teachers in high need schools have been widely reported and include

95% of NAATE graduates remain in school buildings in teaching and formal leadership roles.

heightened attentiveness to their needs and interests (TNTP: *The Irreplaceables*); clearer career pathways and increased responsibility; added compensation and reward; and improved working conditions and inclusive school leadership (Johnson, Kraft, Papay; Kraft, Papay). Few published reports focus explicitly on the role of differentiated professional learning programs as mechanisms for teacher retention. Adopting principles and practices that are commonplace in other sectors and as part of our theory of change, NAATE contends that by delivering advanced programs of learning tailored to the needs of experienced and high performing classroom teachers, increased levels of retention will result, maintaining stability in school buildings, reducing the cost of turnover and delivering higher quality teaching and learning to students.

The data presented here represents graduates of NAATE Cohorts I - V (2011-2015). An additional 165 NAATE Teacher Fellows are still actively completing the NAATE program of learning. Based on recent national surveys of public school



Retention Among NAATE Teacher Fellows	
NAATE Cohorts I - V Graduates (N = 144)	
In the classroom	82%
In formal school leadership	13%
Network Office/Other job in Education	4%
Medical/Personal leave	1%
No longer in Education	1%
Thru mid-year 2015	

teachers, approximately 16-22% leave their schools or classroom teaching each year, with higher rates of attrition in high-poverty schools (Goldring). NAATE's partner school organizations consistently report rates of teacher turnover in excess of 20%.

While the expected percentage of NAATE graduates who remain in classroom teaching based on national statistics is 62%, the actual figure is 32% higher as 82% of NAATE graduates through mid-2015 remain in their classrooms.

Also according to national research reports, only 30% of those who leave the classroom are working in school buildings, while 73% of NAATE graduates who have left the classroom remain in school buildings in more formal leadership roles (adult facing). Today, of all NAATE graduates in the first five cohorts, 82% are classroom teachers, an additional 13% serve in formal leadership roles in school buildings and another 3.5% remain in the field of education. Ninety-five percent still remain in school buildings holding student facing or more formal leadership roles and 98.5% are still in the field of education.

These results are promising and suggest that the approach that NAATE employs: advanced learning programs, in residence, selective admissions, based on peer-to-peer learning methods tailored to the needs of experienced, high performing professionals, can serve as a retention tool for high quality teaching professionals serving in high need schools.

Determining whether a higher concentration of such teachers within specific schools leads to higher retention, and whether similar programs targeting

formal school leaders can also contribute to retention and stability within the staff of high need schools is worthy of additional research efforts.

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