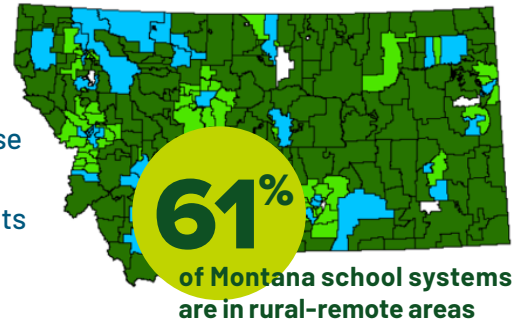


Educator mobility and shortages in Montana

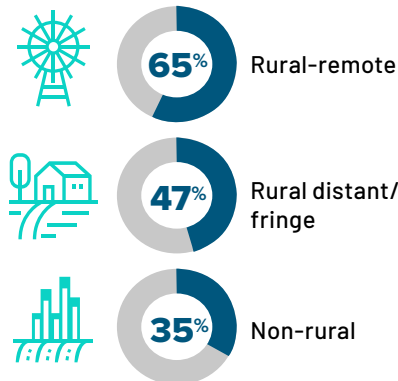
Montana policymakers are concerned about educator shortages in the state and requested a study to examine the issue. Based on an analysis of their state administrative data, we confirmed that Montana is experiencing educator shortages. However, unlike other states, these shortages are not primarily due to educators leaving their positions. Instead, districts cannot find a sufficient number of qualified applicants for open positions, especially in rural areas.



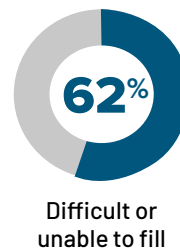
EDUCATOR SHORTAGES

Montana schools reported that 45 percent of all vacancies were difficult to fill or unable to be filled in 2017/18.

The more rural the schools, the more they had difficulty filling vacancies



Regardless of locale, vacancies in shortage subject areas were more difficult to fill

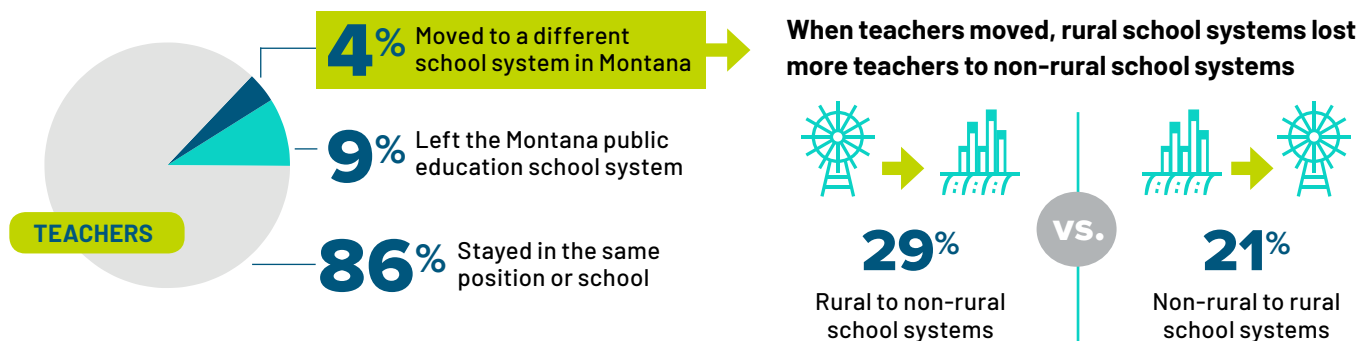


Shortage subject areas in Montana (2017/18)

- Art
- Career and technical education
- English
- Math
- Music
- School counselor
- School librarian
- School psychologist
- Science
- Social studies
- Special education
- World languages

MOBILITY AND RETENTION

Overall, 86 percent of teachers and 87 percent of principals stayed in the same school system and position from 2016/17 to 2017/18. However, rural school systems lost teachers to non-rural school systems over the same period.

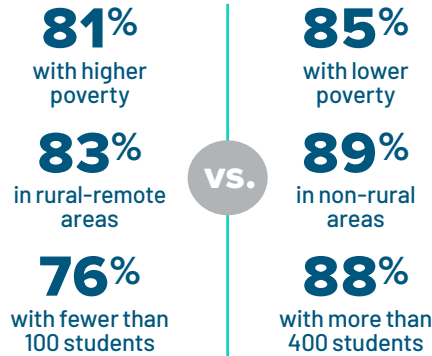


Teacher movement from non-rural to non-rural school systems: 17%; from rural to rural school systems: 33%

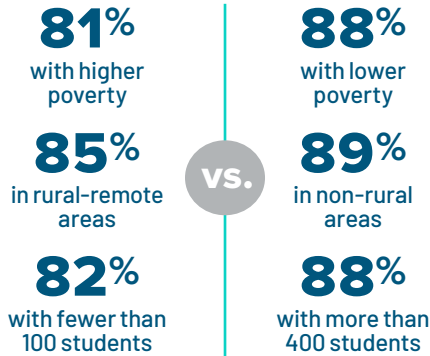
RETENTION RATES BY SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

from 2016/17 to 2017/18

TEACHERS



PRINCIPALS

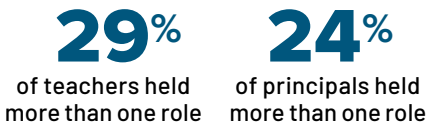


Educator retention in school systems with a high percentage of American Indian students

In school systems with more than 50 percent American Indian students, 78 percent of teachers and 73 percent of principals stayed in the same position and school system.

HOLDING MULTIPLE ROLES

About a quarter of Montana teachers and principals served in more than one position in 2016/17.



The more rural the school system, the more educators held more than one role



Rural-remote

TEACHERS
36%

PRINCIPALS
40%



Rural distant/fringe

27%

18%



Non-rural

26%

14%

Given the high percentage of educators in the state who held multiple roles, Montana educator shortages may be underreported.

IMPLICATIONS

Given the high percentage of educator positions that were difficult to fill or unable to be filled in Montana in 2017/18, state policymakers may want to consider new ways to increase the supply of qualified teachers. In addition, they may want to focus on providing resources and supports to rural school systems and school systems with a high percentage of American Indian students. Potential strategies include:

- Creating and/or supporting multiple teacher preparation pathways, including career and technical education teacher programs
- Promoting local community- and relationship-based preparation programs, such as grow-your-own teacher initiatives
- Reducing possible barriers to obtaining a teaching certification in Montana, such as certification testing, teaching certification requirements, and teacher license reciprocity
- Increasing supports (such as mentoring programs) and incentives (such as housing subsidies and loan-forgiveness programs) for educators