



Alabama
Commission on
the Evaluation of
Services

Teacher Workforce

Follow-up Evaluation

ALABAMA COMMISSION ON THE EVALUATION OF SERVICES



evidence.alabama.gov

October 5, 2023

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Members of the Commission,

I am pleased to transmit this report, A Follow-up Evaluation of the Teacher Workforce, to the Commission. The evaluation examined **1) Why teachers leave the profession** and **2) What can be done to improve the teacher workforce**.

The evaluation officially concluded on September 18, 2023. The two primary stakeholders in this evaluation were the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. Upon concluding the work, we solicited and incorporated their feedback in the final report.

Report findings are both qualitative and quantitative in nature and are presented in relevance to 1) teachers leaving the profession, 2) the perception of the teaching profession, and 3) preparing prospective teachers for the profession.

I believe this report accurately reflects the current state of the teaching profession in Alabama with recommendations for the Governor, Legislature, Alabama State Department of Education, local education agencies, and teacher preparation programs to consider in order to better prepare prospective teachers for the classroom and to address workforce retention issues.

We sincerely appreciate the cooperation and assistance of the agencies listed in the reports acknowledgments as well as their staff. I respectfully request that they be given an opportunity to respond during the public presentation of the report.

Sincerely,

Marcus Morgan
Director





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services would like to express our sincere gratitude to the researchers, practitioners, and professionals that assisted in this evaluation. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the following organizations that contributed significantly to this report.

State Agencies

Alabama Commission on Higher Education
Alabama Department of Labor
Alabama State Department of Education
Retirement Systems of Alabama

Organizations

Alabama Education Association
School Superintendents of Alabama

Teacher Preparation Programs

Athens State University	Faulkner University	Troy University	University of North Alabama
Auburn University	Jacksonville State University	Tuskegee University	University of South Alabama
Auburn University Montgomery	Spring Hill College	University of Alabama	

Local Education Agencies

Acceleration Day and Evening Academy	Henry County	LEAD Academy	Oneonta City
Andalusia City	Choctaw County	Lanett City	Oxford City
Arab City	Clarke County	Linden City	Perry County
Auburn City	Conecuh County	Lowndes County	Phenix City
Baldwin County	Cullman City	Macon County	Piedmont City
Barbour County	Dallas County	Madison City	Pike County
Bessemer City	Elba City	Madison County	Pike Road City
Birmingham City	Enterprise City	Marengo County	Roanoke City
Blount County	Etowah County	Marion County	Saraland City
Boaz City	Fairfield City	Midfield City	Scottsboro City
Brewton City	Fort Payne City	Montgomery County	Talladega City
Butler County	Geneva City	Mountain Brook City	Thomasville City



Chickasaw City

Greene County

Muscle Shoals City

Tuscaloosa City

Haleyville City

Hale County

Vestavia Hills City

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CONCLUSION: The teaching profession is met with unique challenges that cannot be resolved by policies or legislation alone. The negative perception imposed by both the current workforce and the public is inherently harmful to the profession. Even when the work environment is supportive, teachers might still feel undervalued and unsupported by parents and politicians. While some efforts can be made at the state level to address teacher compensation, resources, and burnout, more will need to be done within the profession and in the communities they serve if long-term gains are going to be realized. None of this can be accomplished effectively without better, more consistent data directly related to the issues within education.

Recommendations

- **Perform** an annual teacher workforce study which examines teacher turnover, leavers, and labor force participation.
- **Target** future salary increases to retain teachers in subjects, disciplines, and other areas of need based on data.
- **Pilot** a program to hire students enrolled in traditional teacher preparation programs for summer learning programs and camps.
- **Expand** classroom observations and student internship opportunities to cover all aspects of teaching, including starting a school year.
- **Create** policies to lessen the burden of individual teacher workload.
- **Grandfather** teacher preparation program students under the cut scores in place when they began their college or program.



Key Findings



Over 90% of teachers still participating in Alabama’s labor force after leaving the profession are entering professions that earn at or below the average salary of a full-time teacher.



Math, Science, and Computer Science teachers follow trends of other teachers leaving the classroom.



Analysis of ten years of Praxis exam results reveals that while passage rates in key subjects have declined, the biggest declines are due to changes in passing scores and exams.



Student interns beginning their first experiences in the classroom are often met with instances of cooperating teachers discouraging them from becoming a teacher while in their student internship.

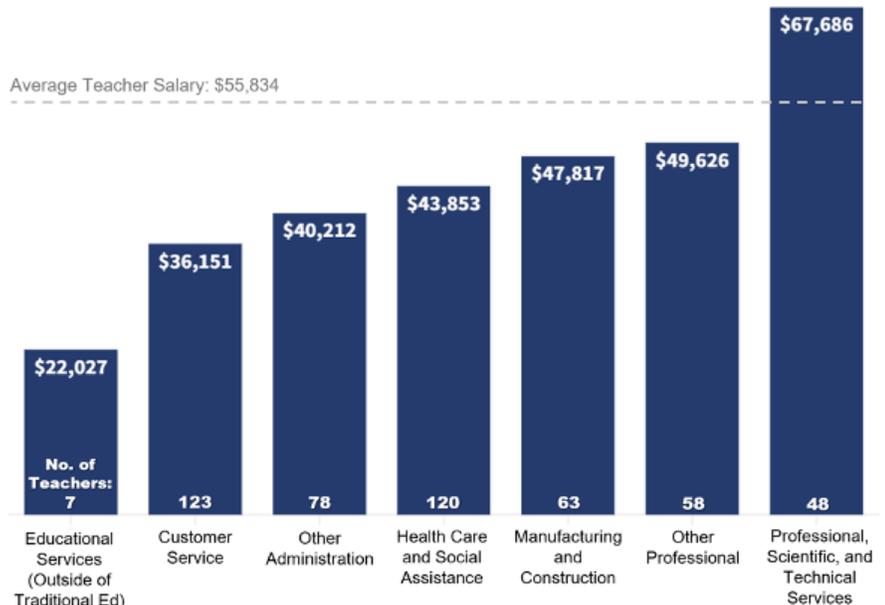


Administrators noted that recent college graduates are underprepared to deal with classroom management and student behavior upon entering the classroom.



Although salary is not one of the leading factors for leaving the profession, salary increases may provide enough incentive to stay.

FIGURE 1 | The average annual salary of teachers still participating in Alabama’s labor force after leaving education is less than the 2022 average salary of a full-time teacher.



Scan or click to view the interactive data visual.





TEACHER WORKFORCE IN ALABAMA: WHY ARE THEY LEAVING AND HOW TO IMPROVE THE PROFESSION

In Alabama and across the nation there persists a narrative that cannot be verified by existing data.ⁱ There are numerous reports surrounding education that talk about teacher shortages,ⁱⁱ high numbers of teachers leaving the profession early,ⁱⁱⁱ and low teacher pay.^{iv} The underlying data and responses from teachers suggest that the narrative does not match reality. These prevailing misconceptions highlight the need for better, more consistent data that will equip policymakers with more accurate and timely information when addressing issues within education. Quantitative analysis from the underlying data reveals:

- Over 90% of teachers still participating in Alabama's labor force after leaving the profession are entering professions that earn at or below the average salary of a full-time teacher.
- Math, Science, and Computer Science teachers follow trends of other teachers leaving the classroom.
- Analysis of ten years of Praxis exam results reveals that while passage rates in key subjects have declined, the biggest declines are due to changes in passing scores and exams.

The teaching profession is met with unique challenges that cannot be resolved by policies or legislation alone. The negative perception imposed by both the current workforce and the public is inherently harmful to the profession. Even when the work environment is supportive, teachers might still feel undervalued and unsupported by parents and politicians. While some efforts can be made at the state level to address teacher compensation, resources, and burnout, more will need to be done within the profession and in the communities they serve if long-term gains are going to be realized. Key findings from interviews and surveys reveal:

- Student interns beginning their first experiences in the classroom are often met with instances of cooperating teachers discouraging them from becoming a teacher while in their student internship.
- Administrators noted that recent college graduates are underprepared to deal with classroom management and student behavior upon entering the classroom.
- Although salary is not one of the leading factors for leaving the profession, salary increases may provide enough incentive to stay.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to begin addressing these misalignments of expectation and reality, the Governor and the legislature should consider:

- Performing an annual teacher workforce study which examines teacher turnover, leavers, and labor force participation.
- Targeting future salary increases to retain teachers in subjects, disciplines, and other areas of need based on data.
- Piloting a program to hire students enrolled in traditional teacher preparation programs for summer learning programs and camps.

The State Department of Education should work with LEAs and teacher preparation programs to:

- Expand classroom observations and student internship opportunities to cover all aspects of teaching, including the beginning of the school year.
- Create policies to lessen the burden of individual teacher workload.
- Grandfather teacher preparation program students under the cut scores in place when they began their college or program.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation of the teacher workforce in Alabama was conducted as a follow up to a 2022 ACES evaluation and [a series of ACES reports](#) that identified certain trends among the teaching profession in Alabama. Those evaluations produced three main findings:

1. Alabama does not have a statewide teacher shortage; rather, shortages are specific to certain locations, subjects, and disciplines.
2. Alabama has a high turnover rate among teachers in their first three years.
3. Despite a growing number of teachers overall, Alabama's Colleges of Education are producing fewer teachers.

As a follow-up, this evaluation examines **1) Why teachers leave the profession**, and **2) What can be done to improve the teacher workforce**. Objective findings are both quantitative and qualitative and presented in relevance to teachers [Leaving the Profession](#), the [Perception of the Profession](#), and [Preparing for the Profession](#).

The evaluation was conducted using various methods, including the use of focus groups, stakeholder interviews, surveys, and data analysis. For the purposes of this report, references to the following terms are defined as:

- **Labor Data/Labor Force** – Teachers with ten or fewer years of teaching experience in public P-12 schools who exited the education system between 2015 and 2021 and did not subsequently return. Their employment status was determined by cross-referencing this

Labor Force Participation

It should be noted that this evaluation does not attempt to explain or identify the reasons why former teachers are no longer participating in the labor force. As an example, if an individual is working out of state or as an independent contractor they will not appear in this labor force data.



information with Alabama Department of Labor Unemployment Compensation Tax data.

- **Prospective teachers** – College students who are currently in a teacher preparation program with the intent to become a teacher.
- **College students** – All students who were interviewed and surveyed at colleges or universities that are not in or planning to enter the teacher preparation program.
- **Faculty** – Faculty and staff within a college or university that teach or work within the teacher preparation program.
- **Cohort LEAs** – ACES interviewed a representative cohort of 55 LEAs online and in-person. References to the cohort indicate that evidence was gathered through these interviews.
- **Current Teachers** – In collaboration with the Alabama Education Association, ACES conducted a statewide survey of teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals.

See [Data and Methodologies](#) for more information and details of the analysis.

LEAVING THE PROFESSION

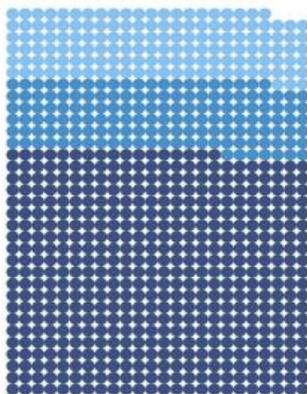
Why teachers leave the profession and what they pursue outside of the classroom can vary widely. The paths these professionals take after leaving shows that there is not one answer to where they are going, but the data does refute some common misconceptions that shape the workforce narrative.

Scan or click to view the interactive data visual.

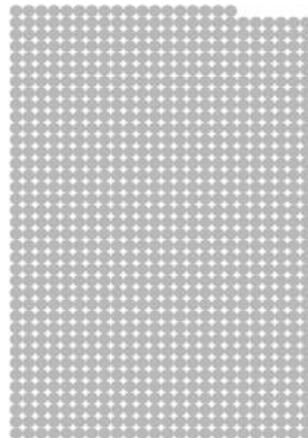


FIGURE 2 | When new teachers leave public education, they are most likely leaving the Alabama labor force altogether.

■ Different Industry ■ Public PreK-12 ■ Other Education ■ Not in Labor Pool



In Labor Pool



Not in Labor Pool

Over half of the teachers studied¹ have not returned to the labor force in a meaningful way within the last year.² An examination of 2,151 Alabama teachers that left the classroom between 2015 and 2021 shows the majority (63%) of teachers did not return to the labor force over the last 12 months. While the labor force study was limited to teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience, this analysis shows that early career teachers are not just leaving public education; they are leaving the Alabama labor force altogether. **See Figure 1.**

Another important finding is that *traditional*, bachelor’s degreed teachers are the least likely to return to the labor force among those teachers studied. While these teachers make up about 50% of the total leavers in the labor

¹ See [Data and Methodologies, Labor Participation of Teachers](#)

² June 2022 – July 2023

study, they only represent slightly more than 40% of the teachers in the labor force during the last year – a nearly 20% decline.³ See **Figure 2**.

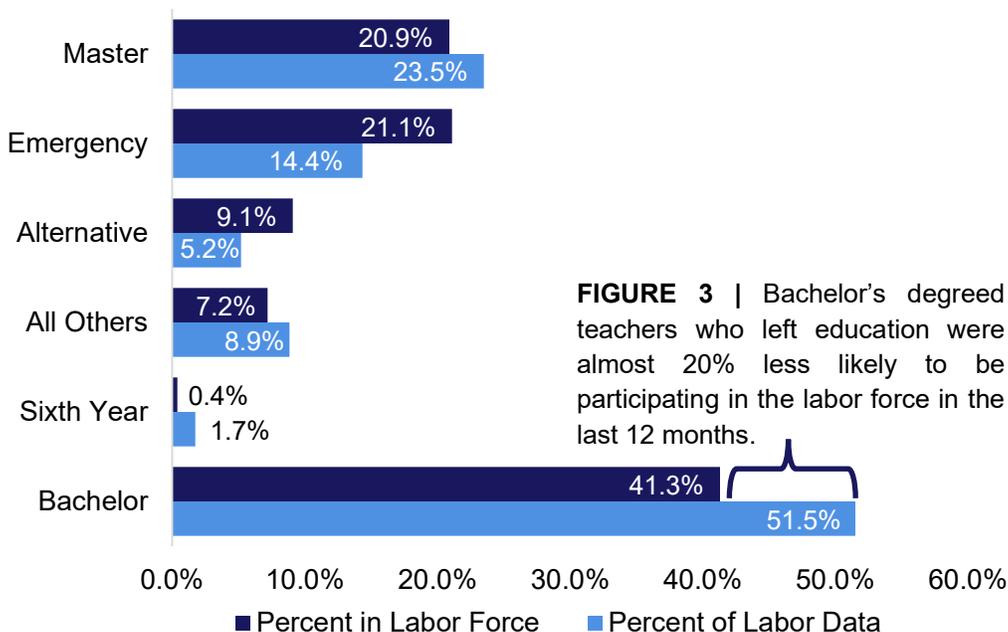
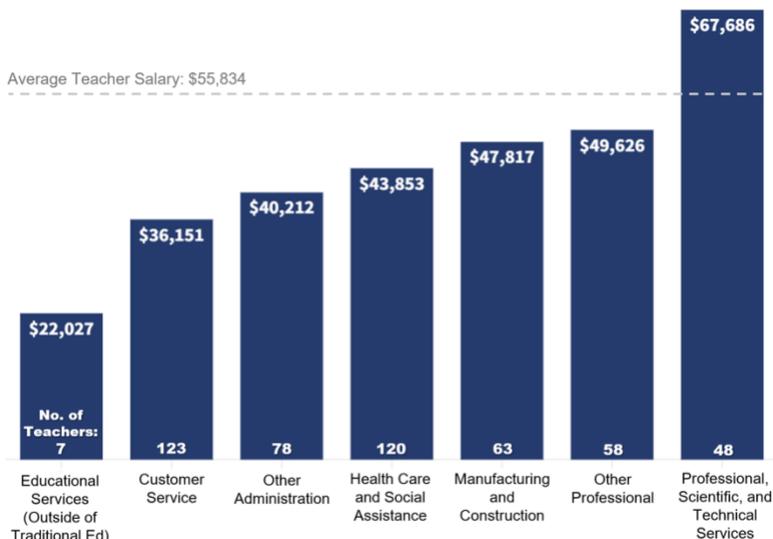


FIGURE 3 | Bachelor's degree teachers who left education were almost 20% less likely to be participating in the labor force in the last 12 months.

Teachers leaving the profession are not leaving for higher compensation. Over 90% of teachers still participating in Alabama's labor force after leaving the profession are entering professions with an average annual income below the average salary of a full-time teacher. See **Figure 3**.

FIGURE 4 | The average annual salary of teachers still participating in Alabama's labor force after leaving education is less than the 2022 average salary of a full-time teacher.



Teacher Retention

As [previously reported by ACES](#), traditionally prepared teachers stay in P-12 education at higher rates than non-traditionally prepared teachers.

This examination of teachers by certification type examined only those teachers that left the profession between 2015 and 2021 and does not speak to overall retention in the profession.

According to the [2022 Employment Outcomes Report](#) from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, roughly 50% of bachelor's degree earners were employed in Alabama five years post graduation.

³ Statistically significant at $p < .03$.



In demand math, science, and computer science teachers are going into similar industries as other teachers. ACES analysis shows math, science, and computer science teachers⁴ who leave the profession follow a similar trend as the entire teacher workforce. Looking specifically at these teachers in Alabama’s labor study, we found:

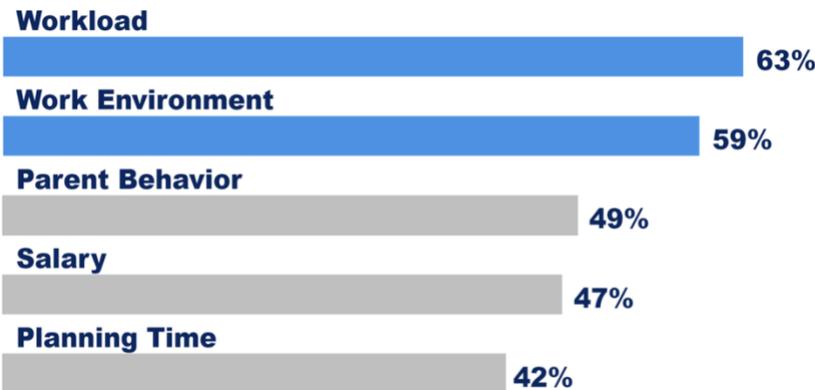
- Only 51 of the 297 math, science, and computer science teachers that left the classroom are still in education.
- 138 were **not** participating in Alabama’s labor force in the last 12 months.
- 87% of the remaining 108 are in fields with an average annual income less than the average income of an Alabama teacher. **See Table 1.**

TABLE 1 | Math, science, and computer science teachers who leave education averaged lower salaries in other professions than average teachers.

Current Industry ⁵	No. of Teachers	Average Reported Wages	2022 Average Teacher Salary
Customer Service	24	\$46,503	\$55,834
Manufacturing and Construction	23	\$54,473	
Other Administration	17	\$45,752	
Health Care and Social Assistance	15	\$55,133	
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	14	\$66,972	
Other Professional*	15	\$48,337	
Grand Total	108	\$51,058	

*Includes Education Services (Outside of Traditional Education)

FIGURE 5 | Workload and the **work environment** are the two biggest factors for teachers considering leaving the profession.



Teachers feel underappreciated and overworked. A survey of 3,000 Alabama teachers found 63% of current teachers have actively looked for another job in the last three years. The top three factors that contributed to their consideration of leaving the profession were workload, work environment, and parent behavior. **See Figure 4.** Further analysis shows increased workload is contributing to teacher burnout. These teachers also cited the requirement to take on extra duties, paperwork, and interference with planning time. **See Figure 5.**⁶

⁴ The analysis of math, science, and computer science teachers is based on the certificate held by the teacher and not whether the teacher was actually teaching in a STEM related course.

⁵ For a complete breakdown of current industry groupings, see [Data and Methodologies](#).

⁶ See [Data and Methodologies, Survey Questions \(Figures 4, 5, 6\)](#)

Low salary is commonly associated with why teachers leave the profession. Though salary was not in the top three **major** factors contributing to consideration of leaving the profession, nearly half of current teachers, with seven or more years of experience, reported that recent pay increases were the **number one factor** that encouraged them to stay in the classroom. In 2022, the legislature passed targeted salary increases for teachers with ten or more years of service varying from 9-21% increases.^v

Outside of annual cost of living adjustments (which are not guaranteed), teachers with six or less years of experience will only receive one pay increase in their first six years of teaching. With only 30% reporting recent salary increases as a motivating factor, these teachers were less likely to stay in the profession due to salary increases. This suggests that although salary is not one of the leading factors for leaving the profession, targeted salary increases provide enough incentive to overcome the leading factors for teachers leaving the classroom. **See Figure 6.**

Although the state can implement policies to improve salary and workload, the other major factors within the top five reasons for considering leaving are societal issues. Statewide policies or legislation will not be able to directly affect these factors. All groups studied suggest increasing support from policymakers, parents, and administration would improve the work environment and overall experience of being a teacher. Teachers want increased support to aid in student and parent behaviors, assist with non-teaching duties, and provide autonomy to run their classroom.

PERCEPTION OF THE PROFESSION

The teaching profession suffers from perception issues on multiple fronts.^{vi} There is a misinformed perception on teacher salaries that contributes to a lack of desirability. There is also a general negative perception that is particularly eminent from within the profession itself. While these factors may not prevent prospective teachers from entering the classroom, they may be contributing to the overall declining trend in teacher preparation program enrollments.^{vii}

FIGURE 6 | Increased workload is contributing to teacher burnout.

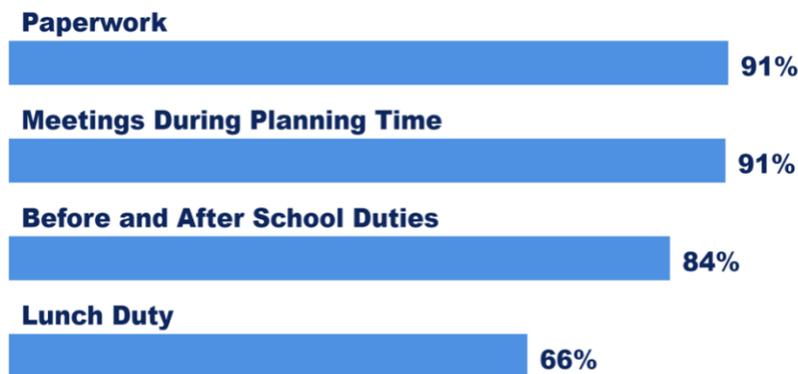
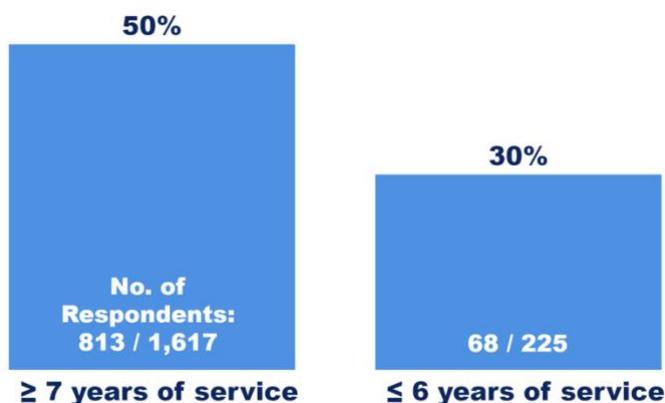


FIGURE 7 | Teachers with 7 or more years of experience were more likely to stay in their current job because of recent salary increases.





A Passion for Teaching

Collectively, over 83% of prospective, current, and retired teachers cited a passion or calling for making a difference in the lives of students as the reason they joined the profession.

With passion being the key driver for this career, it is important that the schools and communities work to change the negative and misperceptions associated with the profession.

Current teachers and administrators contribute to a poor perception of the teaching profession among perspective teachers. Prospective teachers and faculty found this issue particularly difficult. Student interns beginning their first experiences in the classroom are often met with instances of cooperating teachers⁷ discouraging them from becoming a teacher while in their student internship. Faculty already have limited options for student placements close to their campuses, and this negativity further restricts the available options.

The current perception contributes to the lack of respect seen within the teaching profession. Prospective and current teachers cited they feel as though the public does not have respect for the profession, providing examples such as: “the teaching profession is easy”, “teachers are just glorified babysitters”, and “those who can’t do... teach” as statements demonstrating the lack of respect. The negative perception that is fueled by multiple sources has lasting impacts on the passion that caused them to become teachers in the first place.

While it is difficult to determine which source is driving the negative perception, it is clear, even prospective teachers who are still considering the profession grow weary of a career with so much negativity surrounding it. To begin changing this established culture, it will be incumbent upon the schools and systems themselves to work with their communities to drive change.

Prospective teachers have misperceptions of Alabama teacher salaries. Largely, students interviewed for this evaluation were either misinformed or uninformed about teacher salaries, despite salary information being readily available. Many quoted family members, friends, and even current teachers discouraging them from joining the profession due to the perceived low salary. The misperception and continued promotion of the false idea teachers are not able to earn a livable wage deters potential teacher candidates from considering teaching as a profession.

Starting teacher salary in Alabama is competitive with other occupations that require a four-year degree. Analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows that teaching salaries for early career teachers are higher than 91% of twelve other high-demand occupations requiring a four-year-degree in the fields of business, education, healthcare, and media.^{viii, ix} **See Table 2.**

⁷ Teachers who supervise interns in classes in the interns’ area(s) of specialization.

Occupation	Annual Lowest Wage Earners ¹
Registered Nurses	\$ 48,820
Teachers	\$ 46,260
Accountants and Auditors	\$ 44,340
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	\$ 38,200
Human Resources Specialists	\$ 36,780
Editors	\$ 33,320
Public Relations Specialists	\$ 32,090
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$ 31,590
Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors	\$ 30,120
Graphic Designers	\$ 29,430
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	\$ 29,420
Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians	\$ 29,060
Interior Designers	\$ 17,590

Table 2 | The lowest starting salary for a first year teacher under the Education Trust Fund’s Foundation Program in 2021-2022 of \$41,690 would still rank 3rd among these occupations.



For more information on how Alabama teacher salaries compare to the other states, see [Comparison of Alabama Teacher Salaries](#).

PREPARING FOR THE PROFESSION

As previously mentioned, some teachers are leaving the profession due to the misalignment of expectations and the realities experienced in the classroom. Prospective teachers in traditional teacher preparation programs spend at least two years preparing to enter the classroom, only to discover their classroom expectations are vastly different from reality. College faculty and Cohort LEAs also cited this disconnect.

There is a disconnect between teacher preparation programs and the reality of teaching in an Alabama classroom. Administrators from Cohort LEAs noted that recent college graduates are underprepared to deal with classroom management and student behavior upon entering the classroom. This concern was echoed by prospective teachers, indicating teacher preparation programs do not adequately prepare them for key functions of daily life in the classroom.^x Faculty and staff at the teacher preparation programs stated that their hands are tied when addressing these issues due to the various restrictive requirements on the ability to discipline in Alabama schools and on curriculum established by the Alabama State Department of Education.^{xi}

Prospective teachers' expectations are another area demonstrating the disconnect between colleges of education and the reality of teaching. While they were excited about classroom autonomy, faculty reported a "lack of classroom autonomy" as a key issue for teachers. Classroom autonomy goes



beyond curriculum differences, as faculty cited some Alabama school systems require blanket lesson plans and scripts. This disconnect between preparation and reality needs to be addressed within teacher preparation programs to reduce the risk of a continued rise in teachers leaving the profession early. Some recommendations *made by prospective teachers and faculty* to provide more classroom opportunities are:

- Hire students enrolled in traditional teacher preparation programs in summer learning programs and camps.
- Expand classroom observations and student internship opportunities to cover all aspects of teaching, including beginning of the school year.

Praxis passage rates reflect the disconnect even further but from a different lens. ACES [previously reported](#) on low, first-time pass rates of Elementary Multi-Subject Praxis exams among Alabama’s Public Colleges of Education. Analysis of ten years of exam results reveals that while passage rates in key subjects have declined, the biggest declines are due to changes in passing scores and exams.^{xii} When the passing cut score changes, the overall percentage of passers significantly changes. In 2018, the passing scores for the Elementary Education: Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science subtests⁸ all increased by more than one standard error. This resulted in a decline of passing scores by 14% compared to 2017 for undergraduate programs.

Conversely, the elementary multi-subject exam was changed in 2015. Along with the change, cut scores were lowered by more than 10 points for math and reading and language arts. The effect was a double-digit increase in pass rates for prospective elementary teachers between 2013 and 2016. One potential solution to these dramatic swings in pass rates is to **grandfather teacher preparation program students under the cut scores in place when they began their college or program.** This would provide teacher preparation programs with enough time to adjust to the new standards.

TABLE 3 | Elementary Multi-Subject Praxis exam pass rates are heavily influenced by cut score changes. **Traditional bachelor’s degree program pass rates declined 14%** when cut scores were increased in 2018.

Teacher Preparation Program	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Undergraduate (Traditional)	90%	75%	82%	83%	85%	85%	71%	76%	73%	67%
Alternate Route Program	46%	57%	39%	64%	51%	66%	54%	59%	53%	57%
Sixth-year	31%	43%	34%	42%	43%	31%	52%	34%	38%	52%
Master’s Degree	75%	58%	61%	73%	67%	69%	64%	57%	52%	46%
Other	24%	30%		18%	27%	22%	20%	21%	27%	19%
Grand Total	83%	69%	75%	78%	79%	80%	67%	70%	67%	62%

⁸ Praxis Exams 5003, 5004, and 5005



DATA & METHODOLOGIES

LABOR PARTICIPATION OF TEACHERS

This study examines the types of jobs and income levels attained by teachers who exited public P-12 education in Alabama. Data for this research was sourced from two primary databases: the Alabama Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and the Alabama Department of Labor Unemployment Compensation Tax data (Labor Data). The TRS data was employed to identify teachers classified as "inactive" upon exiting the education system, and their subsequent employment status was determined by cross-referencing this information with the Labor Data. Data acquisition was conducted as part of the routine operations of both the Alabama Teacher Retirement System and the Alabama Department of Labor.

The study focused on a specific time frame, encompassing teachers who left public P-12 education between 2015 and 2021, while labor participation data spanned from 2016 to 2023. A total of 2,151 individual teachers who left public education were analyzed, with 1,671 of these teachers being identified within the labor data.

The study's cohort definition included all teachers from [ACES's previous analysis](#) with ten or fewer years of teaching experience in public P-12 schools who exited the education system and did not subsequently return. Key variables examined were wages, employment status, employment sector, gender, race, age, location, and teacher certification area, with a specific emphasis on teachers certified in STEM subjects. Data preprocessing steps involved removing individuals not present in the labor data and eliminating wage outliers, which facilitated the calculation of statistical mean salaries for different subgroups.

Descriptive statistical methods were predominantly employed in this analysis, enabling the generation of percentages, averages, and the identification of outliers across various subgroups. These subgroups were then compared to the overall population to ascertain the presence of any disparities. Ethical considerations were diligently observed, with the study adhering to data sharing agreements that ensured the protection of personally identifying information. The presentation of data was carefully structured to prevent the identification of individuals. Advanced statistical analyses, such as regressions or hypothesis testing, were not deemed necessary for the objectives of this study.

Labor Industries

Current industries in Figure 3 and Table 1 were grouped using North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Titles and Codes. A full list of each title and code and its corresponding *Current Industry* is provided in the table below.

ACES Groupings of NAICS Codes	NAICS Title and Code
Customer Service	Retail Trade (441120)
	Wholesale Trade (425120)
	Accommodation and Food Services (722511)
	Other Services (except Public Administration) (813319)
	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (713940)
Manufacturing and Construction	Manufacturing (321212)
	Construction (238222)
	Transportation and Warehousing (492110)
	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting (112340)
	Utilities (221112)
Other Administration	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (561320)
	Public Administration (923130)
Other Professional	Finance and Insurance (522291)
	Information (511210)
	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (531210)
	Management of Companies and Enterprises (551114)
Educational Services	Educational Services (611110)
Health Care and Social Assistance	Health Care and Social Assistance (621910)
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (541611)



TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

ACES visited 11 colleges across the state that house teacher preparation programs. During college visits, various focus groups were conducted with students currently in the teacher preparation programs, students outside of the teacher preparation programs, and faculty and staff within the teacher preparation programs. Each focus group also responded to a corresponding survey before participating in the focus groups.

COHORT LEAs

ACES completed interviews with a cohort of LEAs regarding the state of the teacher workforce and recruitment and retention efforts. Overall, 55 LEAs participated in this portion of information gathering.

CURRENT TEACHERS

A statewide survey was conducted with the assistance of the Alabama Education Association (AEA). The survey was sent out to all current members of AEA which includes current and retired teachers, current and retired administration, and current and retired education support staff. Each subcategory of education employees was routed to their own survey after identifying their current role. There were 4,782 total respondents with 3,000 respondents identified as current teachers.

Survey Questions (Figures 4, 5, 6)

Current teacher survey respondents were asked “Have you considered leaving the profession in the last three years?” and subsequently “Have you actively looked for a job outside of the teaching profession in the last year?” if they responded yes.

Among the teachers that responded “Yes” to having actively looked for a job, they were then asked “Using the categories below, please indicate whether each item was a major, moderate, or minor factor in your consideration of leaving the profession.” (A Not Applicable option was also provided)

- Workload
- Work Environment
- Parent Behavior
- Salary
- Planning Time
- Class Size
- Flexible Hours
- School Safety
- Principal
- Classroom/Assignment Autonomy
- Position Outside of the P-12 Profession
- Resources
- Benefits
- Superintendent
- Teaching Position Placement
- Family/Personal Reasons
- Evaluation Procedures
- Position in Another LEA or State P-12 System
- Ineffective Training/Mentoring
- Continuing Education

Those same respondents were then asked “From the list below, please select up to THREE factors that have encouraged you to stay in the classroom.”

- Pay Increase
- Different School Administrator
- Different Teacher Assignment
- None of the above
- Opportunities for Collaboration with Colleagues
- Fewer Students Discipline Problems
- Smaller Classes
- More Time to Plan or Prepare
- More Autonomy in Instruction and/or Discipline
- Opportunities for Advancement (While Still Being in the Classroom)
- More Recognition
- Safer School Environment
- Better Facilities
- Better Mentoring/Coaching Programs



All current teacher respondents were asked to identify "What non-teaching duties are you required to do?"

- *Required Paperwork (Federal, State, and Local)*
- *Meetings During Planning Time*
- *Before and After School Duties (Car & Bus)*
- *Lunch Duty*
- *Club Sponsor*
- *Other (please specify)*
- *Coaching*
- *None of the above*



COMPARISON OF ALABAMA TEACHER SALARIES

Alabama teachers fair well when compared to surrounding states and within the Southeast. Starting teacher salaries in the 2021-2022 school year rank as high as first in the Southeast and eighth nationally when adjusted for price parity.^{9, xiii, xiv}

Table of Starting Teacher Salaries in the Southeast U.S. (2021-2022)						
State	Averages & Ranks			Adjusted for Parity		
	Wage	National Rank	Southeast Rank	Wage	National Rank	Southeast Rank
Alabama	\$ 41,974	25	5	\$ 47,644	8	1
Louisiana	\$ 43,270	20	4	\$ 47,393	9	2
Texas	\$ 45,493	15	1	\$ 46,186	13	3
Florida	\$ 45,337	16.5	2	\$ 44,711	18	4
Tennessee	\$ 40,280	33	6	\$ 44,312	21	5
Mississippi	\$ 37,729	46	12	\$ 43,567	28	6
Virginia	\$ 43,845	19	3	\$ 42,859	31	7
Kentucky	\$ 38,010	45	11	\$ 42,660	33	8
Oklahoma	\$ 38,154	43	9	\$ 42,252	35	9
West Virginia	\$ 38,052	44	10	\$ 41,907	37	10
Arkansas	\$ 37,168	49	14	\$ 41,575	39	11
South Carolina	\$ 38,929	41	7	\$ 41,546	40	12
Georgia	\$ 38,926	42	8	\$ 40,633	42	13
North Carolina	\$ 37,676	47	13	\$ 40,166	45	14
Missouri	\$ 34,052	51	15	\$ 37,013	48	15

The average teacher salary for the 2021-2022 school year ranked as high as 23rd in the nation and second among surrounding and southeastern states when adjusted for price parity.^{xv} These averages do not account for recent changes to the teacher pay scale associated with TEAMS contracts and foundation increases for teachers with nine or more years of experience. Future rankings will likely improve once these changes are considered.

Table of Average Teacher Salaries in the Southeast U.S. (2021-2022)						
State	Averages & Ranks			Adjusted for Parity		
	Wage	National Rank	Southeast Rank	Wage	National Rank	Southeast Rank
Georgia	\$ 61,249	21	1	\$ 63,934	21	1
Alabama	\$ 55,834	32	4	\$ 63,376	23	2
Kentucky	\$ 54,574	37	6	\$ 61,250	27	3
Oklahoma	\$ 54,804	35	5	\$ 60,691	29	4
Texas	\$ 58,887	26	3	\$ 59,784	34	5
Tennessee	\$ 53,619	43	8	\$ 58,987	37	6
Arkansas	\$ 52,486	45	10	\$ 58,709	38	7
Virginia	\$ 59,965	24	2	\$ 58,617	39	8
Louisiana	\$ 52,376	47	12	\$ 57,367	42	9
North Carolina	\$ 53,644	41	7	\$ 57,190	43	10
Missouri	\$ 52,481	46	11	\$ 57,045	44	11
South Carolina	\$ 53,393	44	9	\$ 56,983	45	12
West Virginia	\$ 50,315	49	14	\$ 55,413	48	13
Mississippi	\$ 47,162	51	15	\$ 54,460	50	14
Florida	\$ 51,230	48	13	\$ 50,523	51	15

⁹ Alabama teachers were given a 4% cost of living adjustment in the 2022-2023 school year and a 2% cost of living adjustment for the 2023-2024 school year.



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