Teacher turnover rates, and reasons, vary

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ASHEBORO — The overall teacher turnover rate in North Carolina for 2017-2018 was 13.9 percent, according to the N.C. Department of Public Instruction’s “2017-2018 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina” report to the N.C. General Assembly.

The rate for Asheboro City Schools (ACS) for the reporting period of March 2017-February 2018 was 15.9 percent. The Randolph County School System (RCSS) teacher turnover percentage for the 2017-2018 school year was 12.99 percent.

The reasons vary, with some teachers deciding to leave the profession to pursue graduate school, become stay-at-home parents or go into a different field.

RCSS

The RCSS’ 12.99 percent is up from the 11.96 percentage reported for the 2016-2017 school year.

CALL ON ME — John Strickland works with his third graders at Ramseur Elementary. ‘Getting to know students and their families and being able to build that connection with the community’ is what he enjoys most about being an educator.

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Teachers

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According to Amy Walker, assistant superintendent for Human Resources, many factors weigh into the overall rate. Educators may leave the profession to pursue graduate school, become stay-at-home parents or pursue a different field.

Other factors include educators who have been promoted or now work in an administrative role. Others may have retired or relocated, or their contracts may have expired and there were no available educator positions available.

RCSS is working to alleviate the turnover through programs such as “Grow your own” where the RCSS District Office reaches out to RCSS high school students who have expressed an interest in teaching.

The school system is also pushing for growth and retention within the profession through “Future Teachers of NC,” a Career Technical Education course currently offered at Trinity High School; the district has plans to expand the program to Southwestern Randolph High School.

RCSS is also collaborating with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to provide teaching coaches who work with beginning teachers one-on-one, through observations, as well as hands-on work, and who also help in areas in which educators may be experiencing difficulties.

The support program is geared towards assisting beginning teachers; one teacher from each school with RCSS has been selected to participate. Teaching coaches work with beginning teachers at various schools, including Southeastern Randolph Middle School, Randolph Early College High School, New Market Elementary School and Franklinville Elementary.

Walker said RCSS has also recently sent out an internal survey to all staff members regarding anything that can be done to help with teacher retention.

“The survey (encompassed) a lot of different areas, (such as) school environment, leadership, professional development opportunities and resources that teachers have,” Walker said.

John Strickland, a third grade teacher at Ramseur Elementary School, gave his take on his teaching experience thus far.

“Teaching can have a lot involved,” he said, such as juggling multiple tasks, analyzing student data, creating lesson plans and sometimes having to spend one-on-one instructional time with a student, as well as having to “meet the students where they are at.”

Strickland described his teaching experience as an enjoyable one.

“Getting to know students and their families and being able to build that connection with the community” is one of the things he enjoys most about being an educator.

ACS

At ACS, reasons for teachers leaving the school system included retirement, death, moving to a non-teaching position within the school district, teaching in a charter school or a non-public/private school, changing careers or familial obligations.

Documentation from the October 2018 Asheboro City Board of Education meeting noted teacher turnover rates differed by school. ACS did not provide any reasons why there was such a variance.

- Balfour Elementary School — 9.88 percent.
- Charles W. McCrary Elementary School — 7.58 percent.
- Donna Lee Loflin Elementary School — 29.09 percent.
- Guy B. Teache Elementary School — 13.92 percent.
- Lindley Park Elementary School — 0.0 percent.
- North Asheboro Middle School — 13.51 percent.
- South Asheboro Middle School — 22.50 percent.
- Asheboro High School — 22.36 percent.

North Carolina

According to www.ncpublicschools.org, there were 94,909 teachers employed between March 2017 and March 2018.

Of those, 7,674 are no longer employed in public schools. The figure does not take into account teachers in public charter schools.

The report noted that 53.9 percent of teachers who left employment in public schools cited “personal reasons” for their decisions. “Retirement with full benefits and family relocation” were the largest individual reasons (21.5 percent and 12.3 percent, respectively) for leaving.