



PHILADELPHIA CITYWIDE TALENT COALITION & ELEVATE 215

November 2023

METHODOLOGY

This survey was designed to understand the current challenges and opportunities teachers in Philadelphia face, what inspired them to pursue teaching, and what policies motivate them to continue teaching in the city.



Survey n=734 district and charter school teachers in Philadelphia



Respondents were recruited via email invitation by Elevate 215 and [Philadelphia Citywide Talent Coalition](#) partners from September 27 - October 9, 2023



The modeled margin of error is 3.6%

SAMPLE OVERVIEW



79% Women
18% Men
2% Non-binary
0% Other



64% White
23% Black
6% Hispanic
4% AAPI
2% Other



30% 18-34
44% 35-49
24% 50-64
2% 65+



82% District Schools
18% Charter Schools



50% K-5th grade
32% 6th-8th grade
32% 9th-12th grade



22% 0-5 years
20% 6-10 years
20% 11-15 years
39% 16 years or more

KEY FINDINGS

Overview

Many Philadelphia teachers are passionate about their work and their students, but struggle with overwhelming workloads and insufficient salaries. Despite this common experience, effective retention strategies vary depending on a teacher's race/ethnicity and length of time in the profession.

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- 1 | Many teachers believe the school they teach at is on the right track, but that schools in Philadelphia are headed in the wrong direction.
- 2 | A strong majority of teachers feel they are respected by peers, parents, and school administration, and most teachers report a passion for what they do.

KEY FINDINGS CONT.

3

Despite this passion, more than half of all teachers are frustrated with their current salary, workload, and the lack of access to adequate facilities and resources.

4

While there were many similar responses across all teacher groups, projected rates of retention and top incentive policies differed significantly between teachers of color and white teachers, and between new and experienced teachers.

5

Newer teachers are more diverse than the overall teacher workforce, and teachers of color are more likely to live in Philadelphia, have a significant amount of student loan debt, and have an emergency permit or be non-certified.

STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES AMONG
TEACHERS



While many see their own schools in a positive light, a majority of teachers say that schools in Philadelphia are on the wrong track.

Direction of Philadelphia Schools

● Right direction ● Wrong track



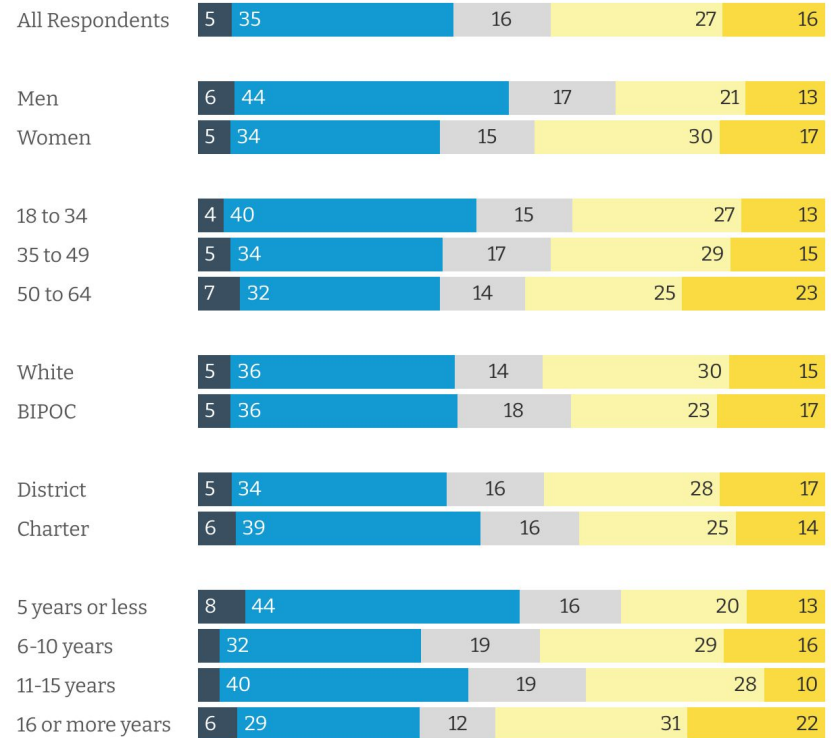
Q: In general, how would you say schools in Philadelphia are doing? Are they going in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?



Teachers are split on whether Philadelphia provides opportunities for a rewarding career in teaching, with newer teachers more likely to look at their career prospects more favorably.

Opportunities for Rewarding Teaching Career in Philadelphia

● Strongly agree ● Somewhat agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Somewhat disagree ● Strongly disagree



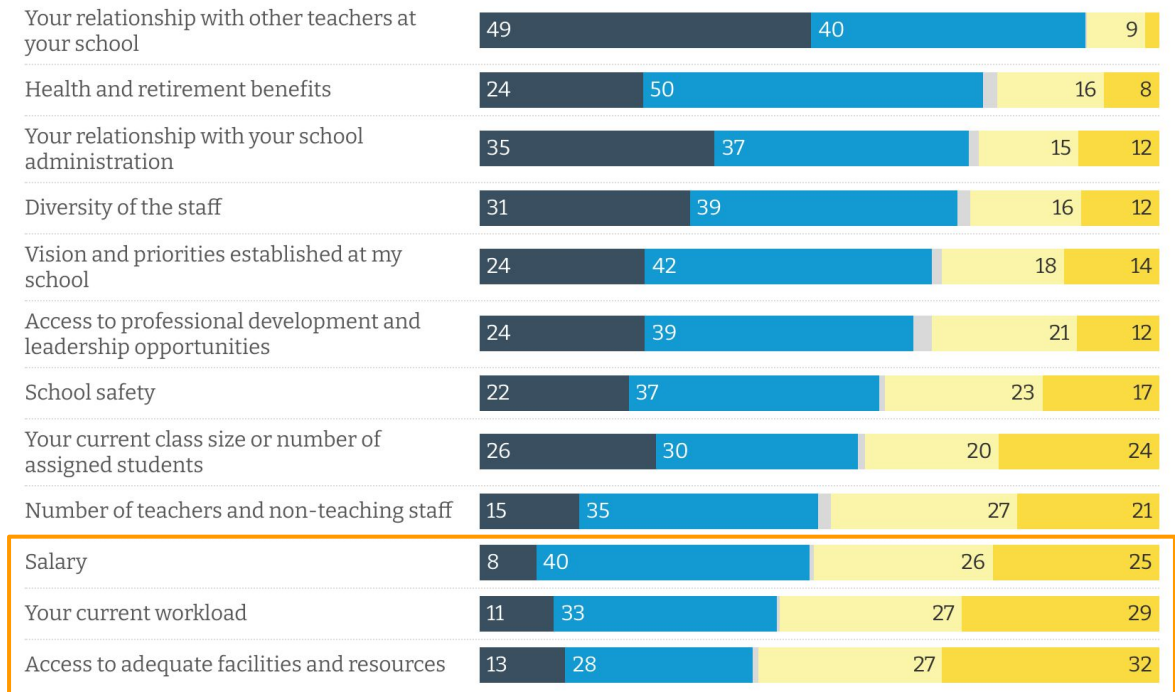
Q: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"Philadelphia provides opportunities for teachers to have a rewarding career."



Teachers are most satisfied with their relationships with other teachers and school administration, but show frustration toward their current workload, salary, and access to resources.

Teacher Work Satisfaction

● Very satisfied ● Somewhat satisfied ● Not sure ● Somewhat unsatisfied ● Very unsatisfied



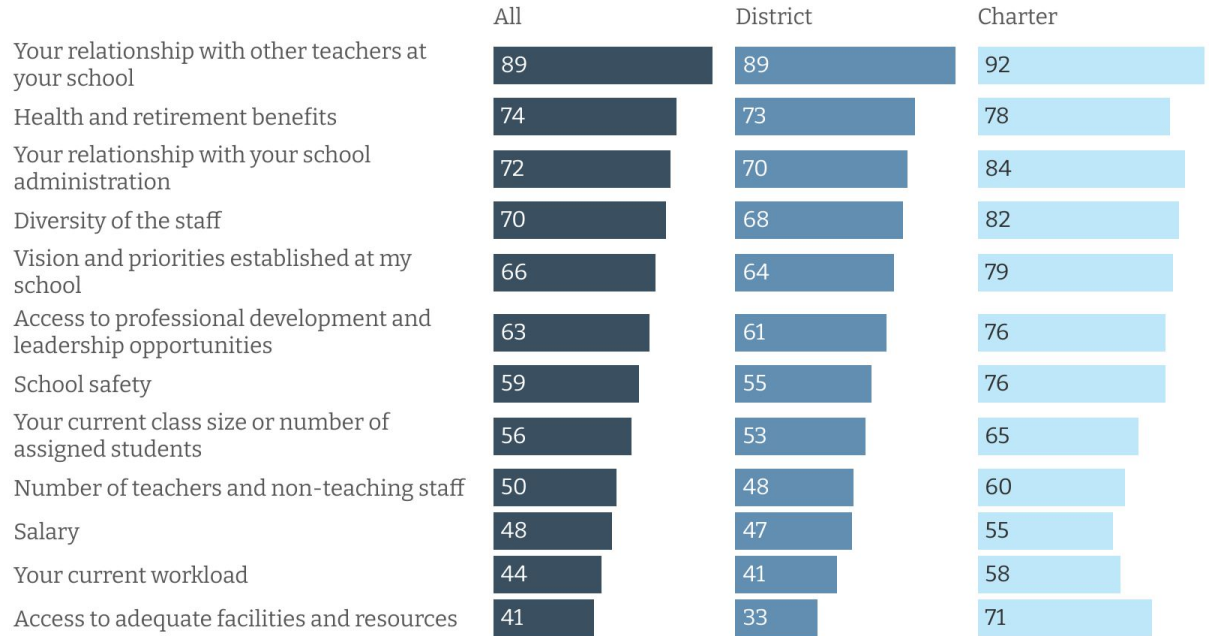
Q: How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your current teaching position?



However, there are stark differences between responses by school type, with charter school teachers being much more satisfied with their work environment than district school teachers.

Work Satisfaction by School Type

Combined total of *very satisfied* and *somewhat satisfied*



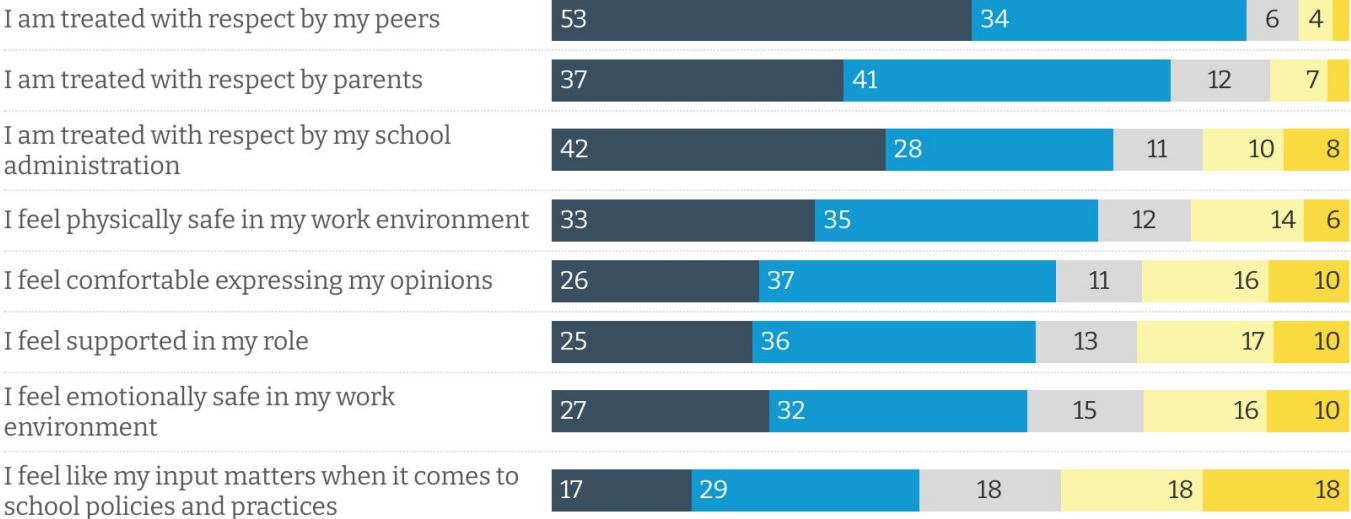
Q: How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your current teaching position?



A strong majority of teachers feel that they are respected by peers, parents, and school administration.

Perceptions of Respect and Safety

● Strongly agree
 ● Somewhat agree
 ● Neither agree nor disagree
 ● Somewhat disagree
 ● Strongly disagree



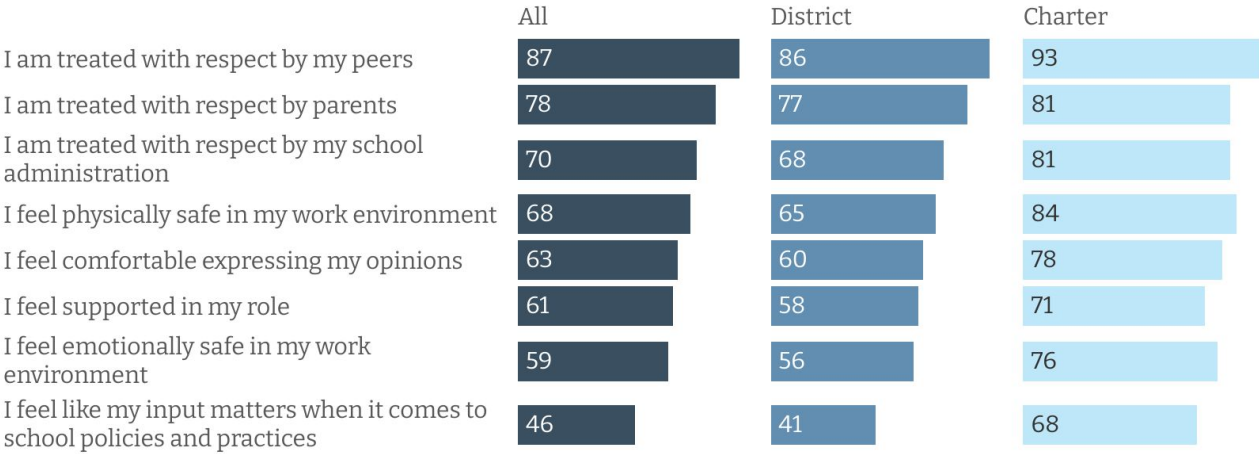
Q: In my current teaching position...



Differences between charter and district teachers are again represented in their responses, with charter teachers having a more positive teaching experience than district teachers.

Perceptions of Respect and Safety by School Type

Combined total of *strongly agree* and *somewhat agree*

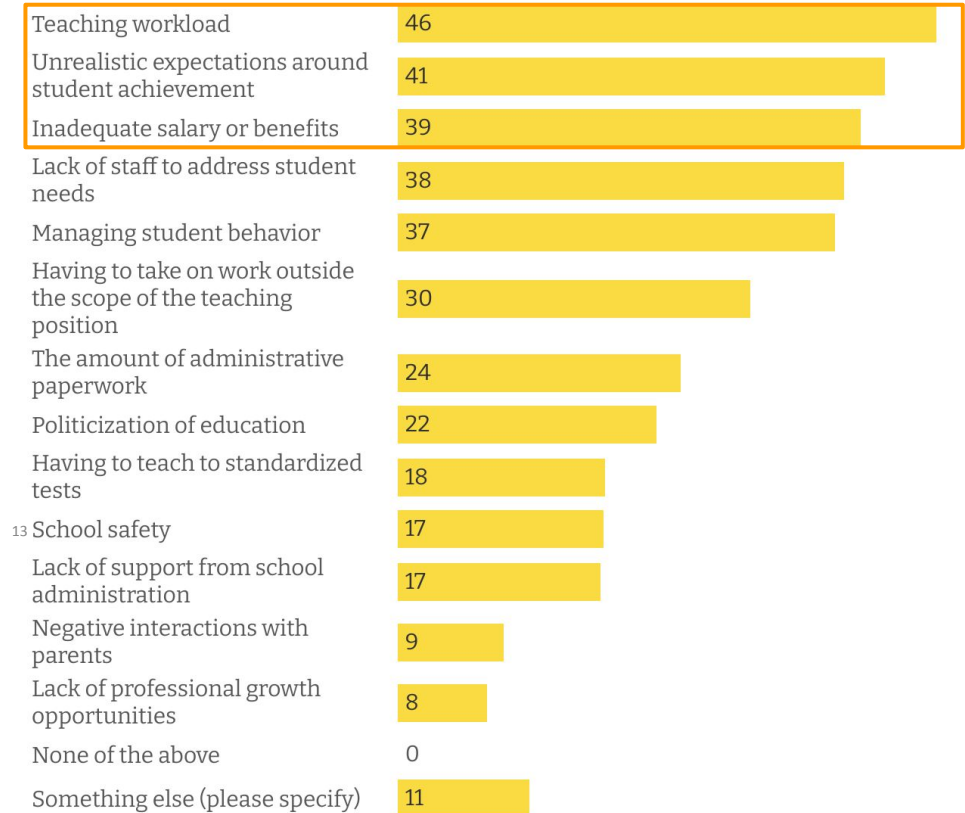


Q: In my current teaching position...



Teachers are most concerned about unreasonable workloads and unrealistic expectations around student achievement.

Top Teaching Concerns



Q: What are your top concerns when it comes to teaching? Please select up to three.



When asked about the biggest obstacles they face, a majority of teachers point to overwhelming workloads, exacerbated by large class sizes and a lack of resources.

Q: What are one or two of the biggest challenges you face as a teacher?

This can be a central challenge...

“There is too much expected of me in regards to planning, grading and paperwork with not enough support. I do not feel like I can help the students achieve as much as I need to with the class time, resources and large classes that I have.”

“Not enough time to plan, grade, and complete other required tasks during the school day.”

...or part of a larger web of obstacles

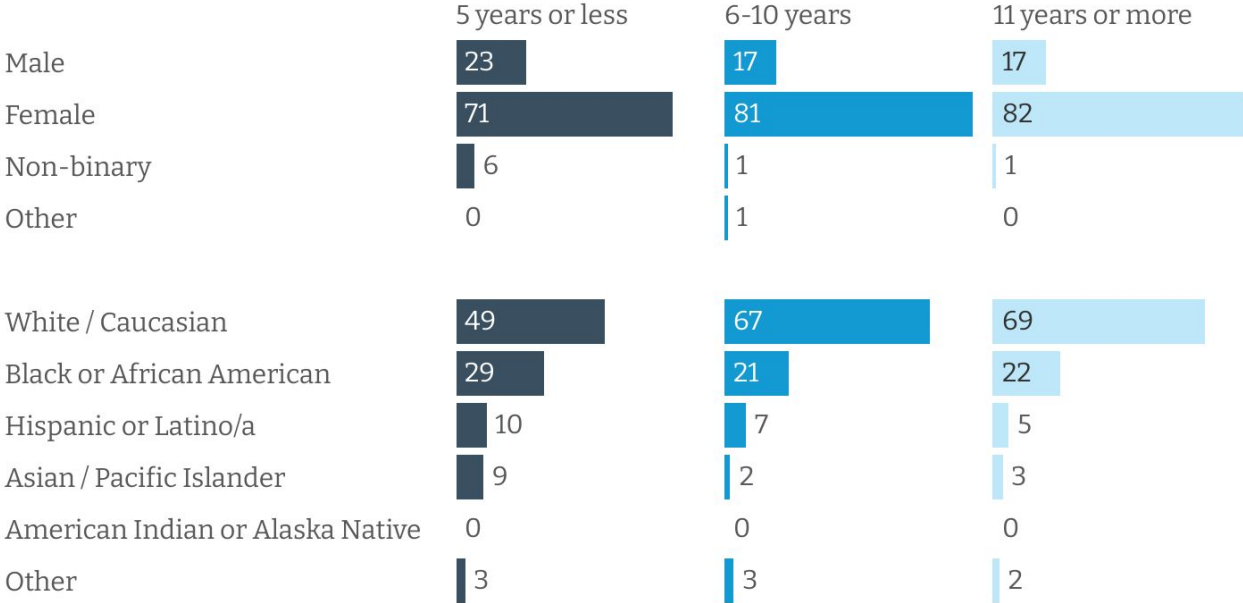
“Current special education policies and expectations (are we supposed to push students through, or provide remedial skills - there's not enough time to do both and not enough support to teach us to do the ladder.) [sic]”

“Making ends meet financially and meeting students needs.”



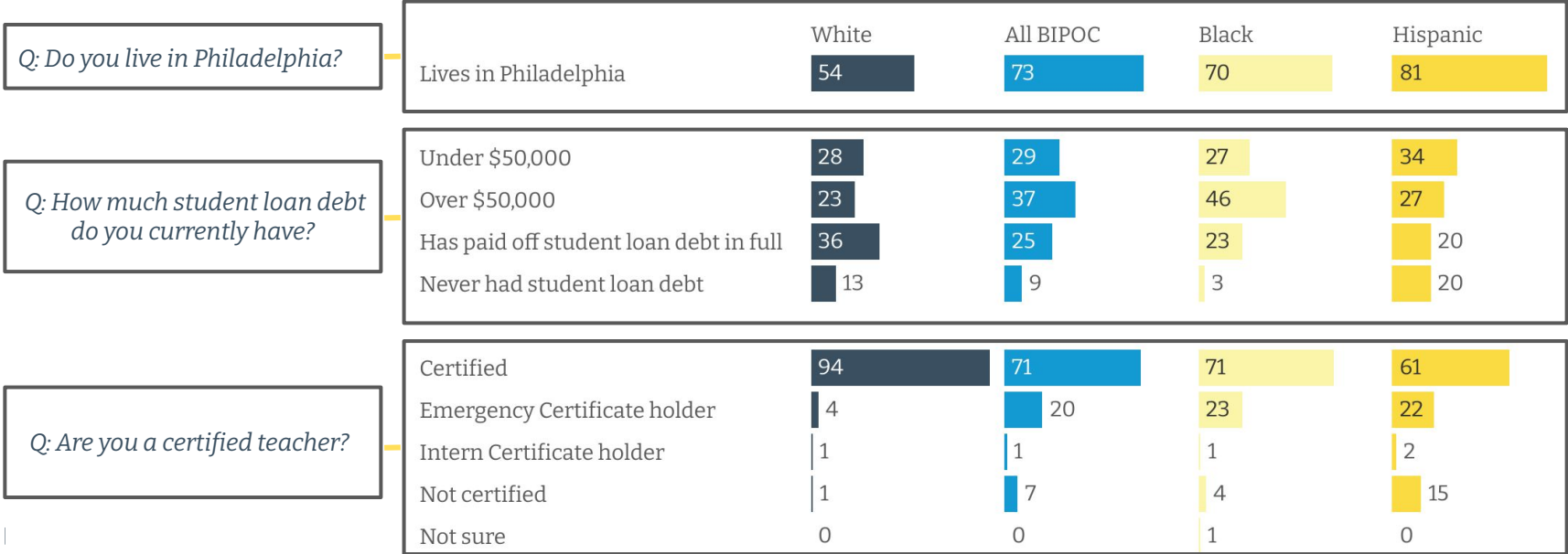
Newer teachers are more diverse than the overall teacher workforce.

Diversity of the Workforce by Years of Experience



Teachers of color are more likely to live in Philadelphia, have a significant amount of student loan debt, and have an emergency permit or be non-certified.

Teacher Experience by Race/Ethnicity

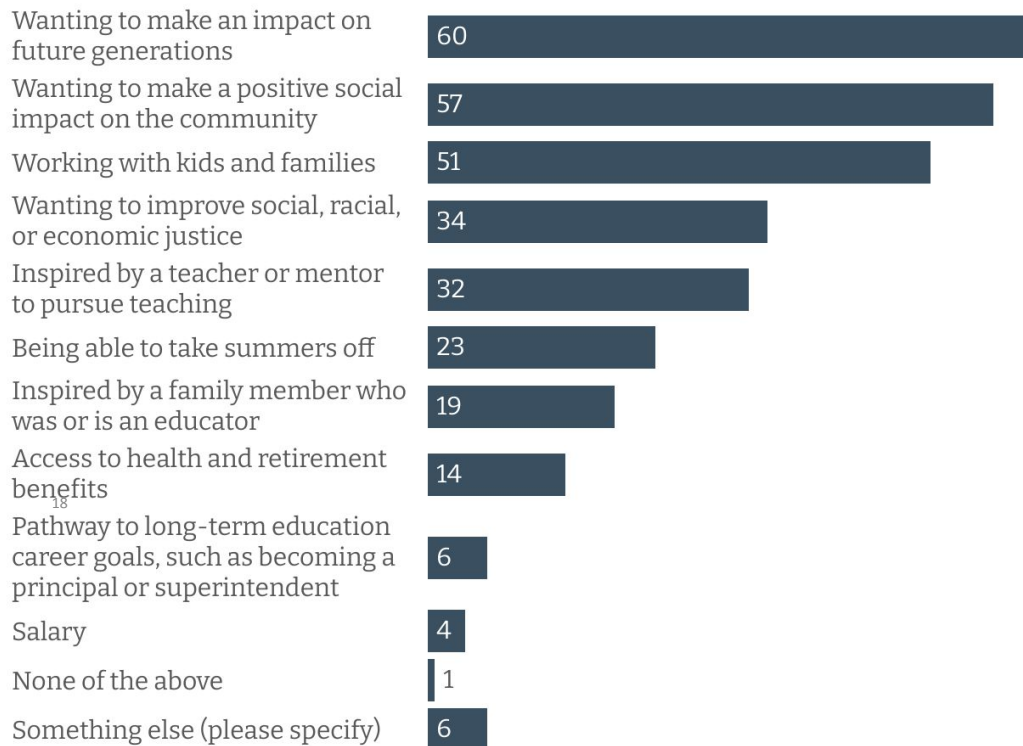


MOTIVATION TO
TEACH



Teachers are most likely to join the profession in order to make an impact on future generations and the community.

Top Reasons to Become a Teacher



Q: Here is a list of potential reasons why people may decide to pursue teaching. Of the following, which are the top THREE reasons you decided to pursue teaching?



Teachers are most motivated by their love for their students and their ability to make a difference.

Q: What are one or two things that motivate you to stay in the teaching profession?

“The students! They need teachers who are willing to show up everyday”

“My students are awesome. I enjoy teaching them. It is the only thing that has kept me here.”

“Seeing the continued success of my students. This job is not about me, its [sic] about the students and families I serve.”

“Knowing that I do make an impact in the students' lives every day. That's it.”

“Making a positive impact in the lives of teenagers who otherwise may have a lot of burdens at home and in their communities.”

“If I can save a few children from becoming casualties of their circumstances, by giving them a role model that looks like them, that shows them that there is a gift in being educated and a way to a better future....that makes me stay”

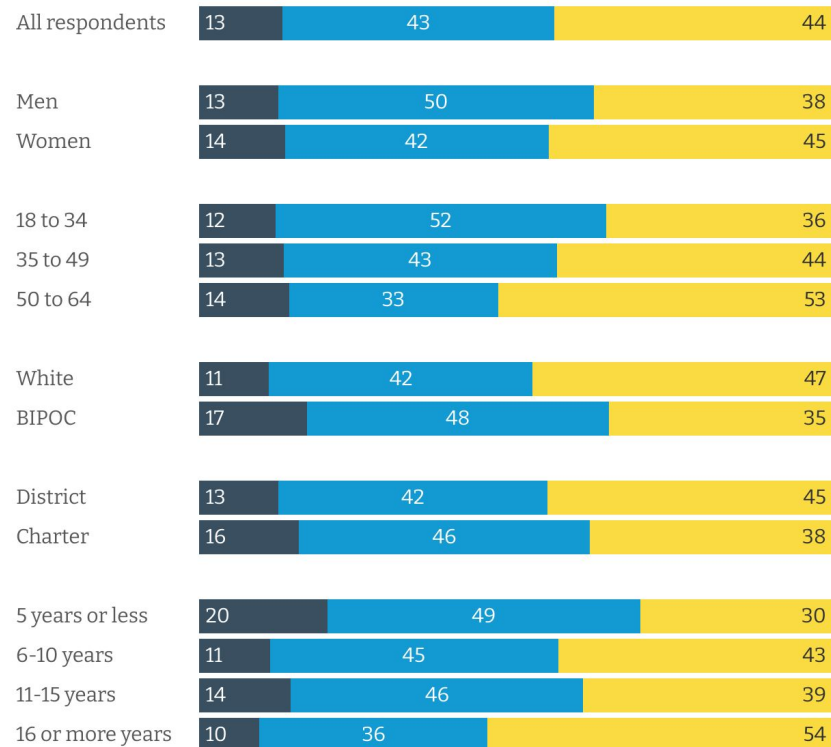
TEACHER
RETENTION



While the majority of teachers are unlikely to recommend teaching in Philadelphia to someone they know, teachers of color and newer teachers are more likely to recommend.

Likelihood to Recommend Teaching in Philadelphia

● Total 8-10 ● Total 5-7 ● Total 0-4

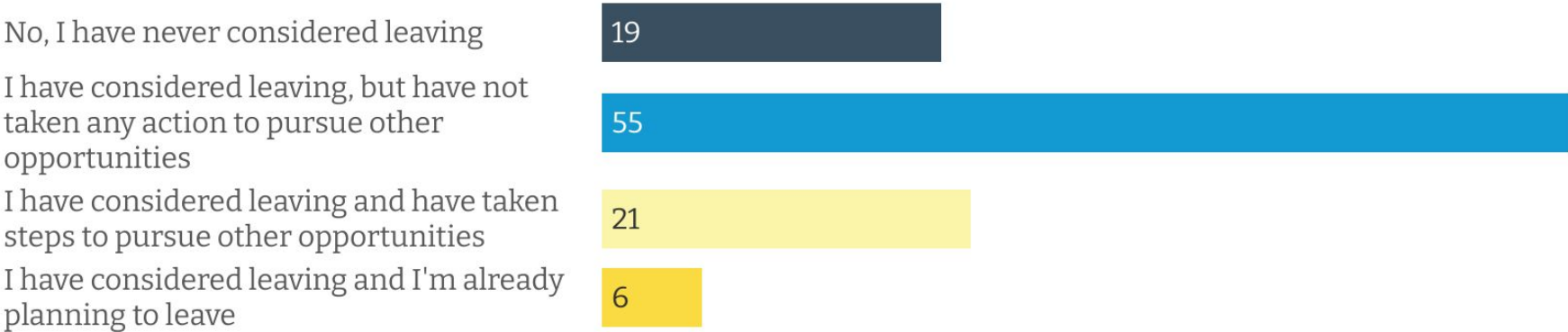


Q: How likely are you to recommend teaching in Philadelphia to someone you know on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means you are not at all likely to recommend teaching in Philadelphia and 10 means that you are extremely likely to recommend it?



Despite the strengths of the Philadelphia school system, 8 in 10 teachers have considered leaving.

Desire to Leave Teaching



Q: Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession in Philadelphia?



While many teachers plan to stay more than 5 years or are unsure about their plans, more than a quarter of teachers say they may leave in the next 2 years.

Timeline for Departure

Among Teachers who have considered leaving



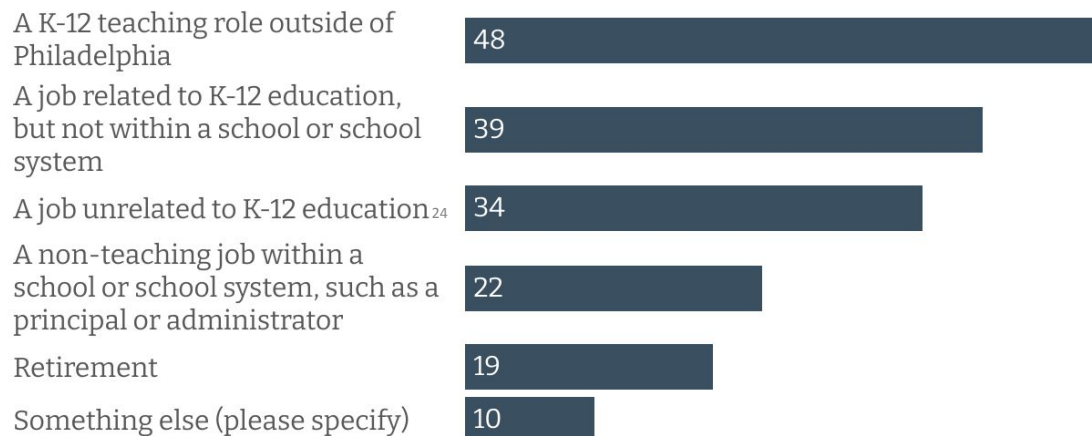
Q: How long do you think you will continue teaching in Philadelphia?



For the teachers who considered leaving, many said they would continue teaching but outside of Philadelphia or the school system in general.

Opportunities beyond Teaching

Among teachers who have considered leaving



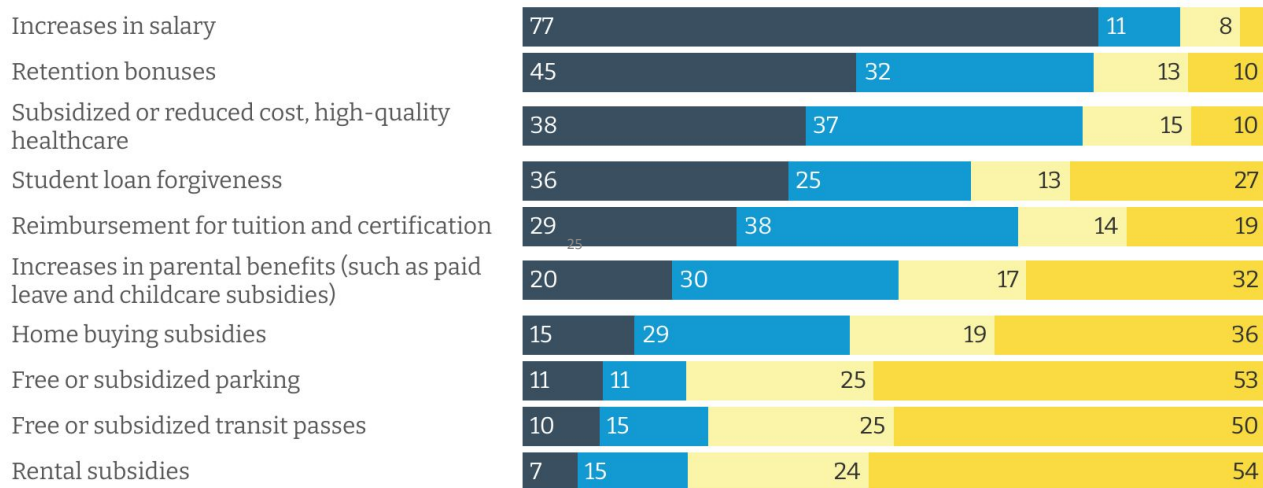
Q: Which of the following would you consider pursuing if you decide to leave teaching in Philadelphia? Select all that apply.



Increases in salary is overwhelmingly the top financial incentive policy among teachers.

Top Financial Incentive Policies

● Top 3 ● 4-6 ● 7-10 ● Not a motivating factor



Q: Here is a list of financial incentive policies to assist teachers. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rank how much each policy motivates you to continue teaching as a Philadelphia school teacher, where 1 is the most motivating and 10 is the least motivating.

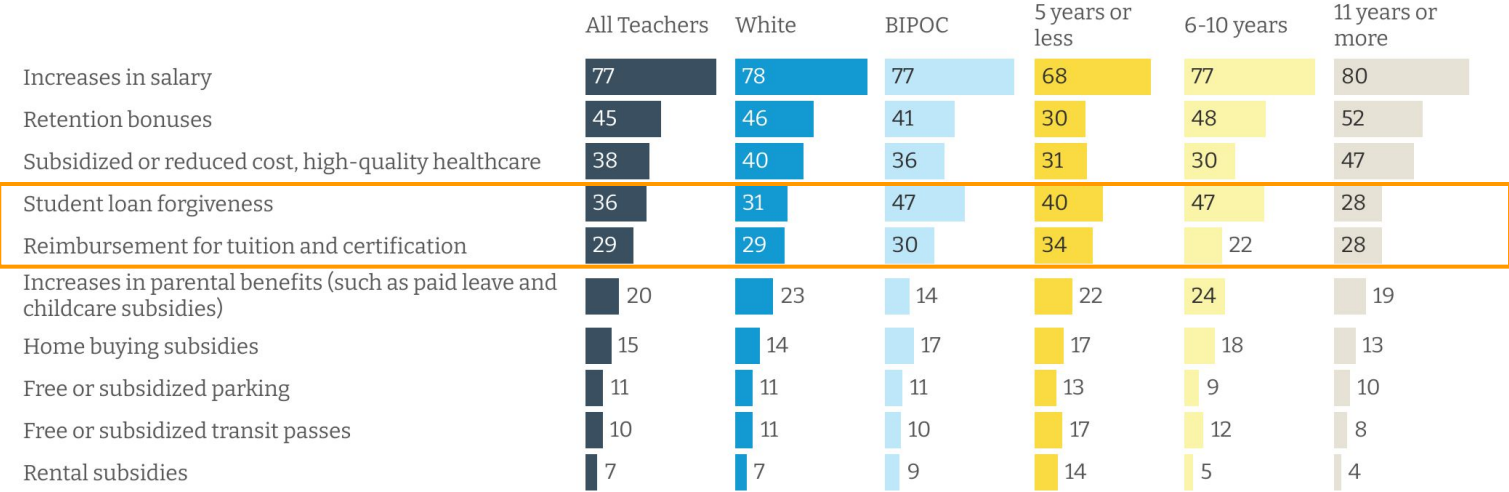


Student Loan forgiveness and tuition/certification reimbursement are more likely to be top motivating factors among teachers of color and newer teachers.

Top Financial Incentives by Key Teacher Groups

Total top three motivating policy

Total years teaching



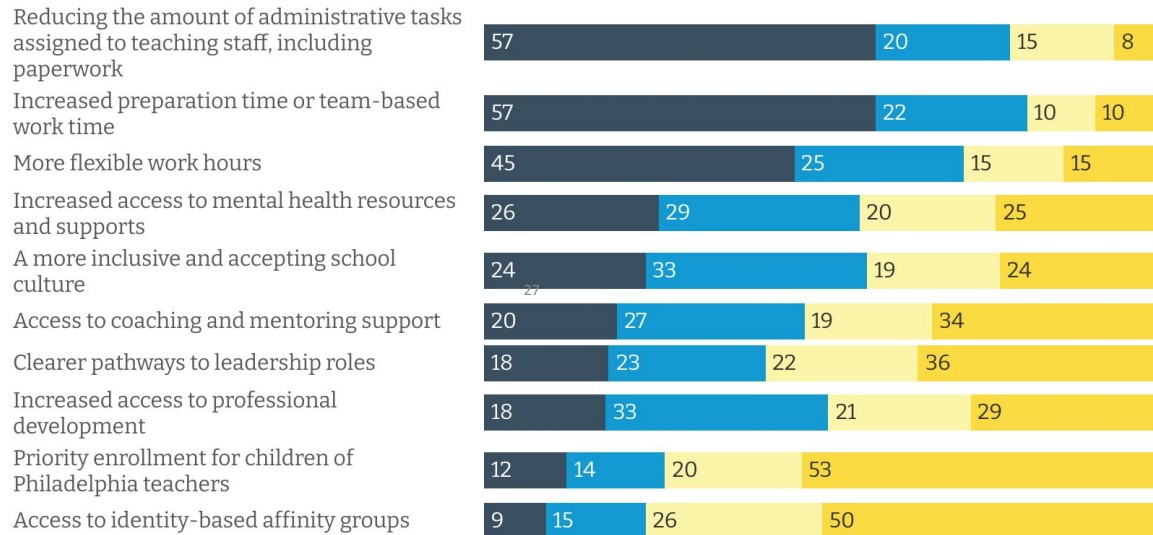
Q: Here is a list of financial incentive policies to assist teachers. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rank how much each policy motivates you to continue teaching as a Philadelphia school teacher, where 1 is the most motivating and 10 is the least motivating.



Reduction of administrative tasks and an increase in prep time are the most motivating non-financial policies.

Top Professional Incentive Policies

● Top 3 ● 4-6 ● 7-10 ● Not a motivating factor



Q: Here is a list of professional incentive policies to assist teachers. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rank how much each policy motivates you to continue teaching as a Philadelphia school teacher, where 1 is the most motivating and 10 is the least motivating.

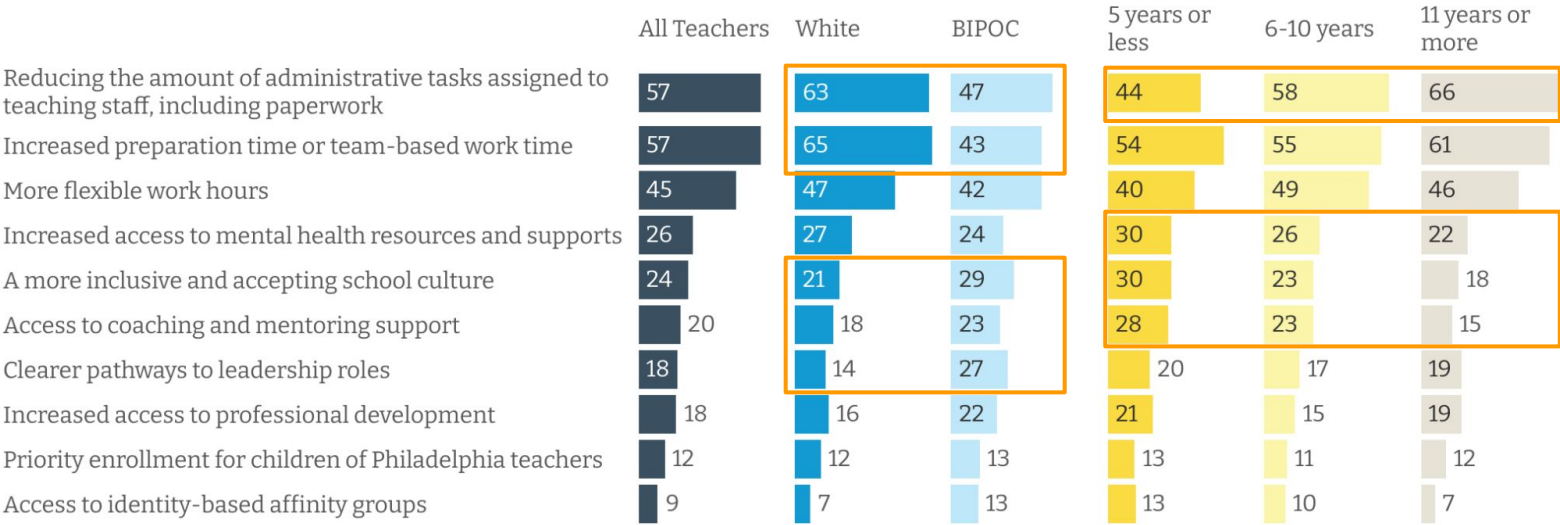


The length of a teachers' tenure, as well as their race and ethnicity, inform their priorities in professional retention incentives.

Top Professional Incentives by Key Teacher Groups

Total top three motivating policy

Total years teaching



Q: Here is a list of professional incentive policies to assist teachers. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rank how much each policy motivates you to continue teaching as a Philadelphia school teacher, where 1 is the most motivating and 10 is the least motivating.



Increased financial support for public education and including teachers in the decision-making process are the most common pieces of advice from educators.

Q: What is one piece of advice you have for policymakers who want to attract, support, and retain high-quality teachers in Philadelphia?

Teachers want to be heard...

“Respect us. We don't need to be micromanaged. We are professionals. You don't see doctors being observed, doing professional development plans, doing SPMs, buying their own supplies”

“Listen to what we have to say when we say it. We are the education professionals, use us and not overpriced consultants!”

...and be valued for their work

“Philadelphia teachers are undervalued and underpaid. They need support.”

“Make sure that teachers are being paid a competitive salary, while also making sure that there are ways to not burden them with excess work.”

“Teachers need more recognition for what they endure everyday to teach in an inequitable school system.”



Conclusions

Despite a strong majority of teachers feeling they are respected by peers, parents, and school administration, most teachers are frustrated with their current salary and workload, as well as the lack of access to adequate facilities and resources—and this frustration appears to grow the more they teach in Philadelphia.

There are encouraging trends, in particular, younger and newer teachers tend to believe Philadelphia provides opportunities for a rewarding career, and teachers of color and teachers with 5 years or less of experience would more likely recommend teaching in Philadelphia.

This survey demonstrates targeted financial and professional incentives that could lead to a more diverse teacher workforce and help better retain early career teachers.