



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

**UTAH EDUCATION
POLICY CENTER**

Press Release

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The Utah Education Policy Center @ The University of Utah

Deciding to Stay or Go:
Making a Difference Matters

Salt Lake City, January 25, 2018: A study by the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) found that choosing to make a difference isn't just a reason for becoming a teacher. As it turns out, teachers report that making a difference in the lives of children and young adults, and contributing to the greater social good are among the top factors in their decisions to remain a teacher. The convenience of the work schedule doesn't hurt either. Today, the UEPC released its initial findings on the Educator Career and Pathway Survey (ECAPS) for Teachers. See <http://uepc.live/ecaps2018> to review the full report.

Diana Suddreth, the USBE Director of Teaching and Learning, explained "It thrilled us to learn that the desire to make a difference for children and contribute to the greater societal good were top reasons for entering and remaining in teaching. This gives us concrete evidence of the commitment of our teachers to children and to our society."

Dr. Andrea Rorrer, UEPC Director, and Dr. Yongmei Ni, an Assistant Director at the UEPC, were the lead investigators for this study. They report that the initial analyses suggest that there is much to learn about the "reality behind the rhetoric" of teacher mobility and retention. As Rorrer explained, "There are many reasons that teachers decide to stay, move, or even leave teaching. The Survey by the UEPC offered a unique opportunity to collect data directly from teachers about their experiences in schools."

The ECAPS was available to all Utah public school teachers in the Fall 2017. Over 2,000 completed responses were received from teachers who stayed, moved, and left Utah's public school classrooms. The findings thus far indicate that there are many aspects of the work experience of teachers that can be enhanced to nurture their already high sense of personal and professional commitment, increase their job satisfaction, and better ensure retention.

As Diana Suddreth noted, the findings have immediate applicability. "The data we now have on why teachers decide to remain in teaching will give us direction as we plan initiatives focused on teacher retention." In part, this refers to the factors that teachers indicated were tipping points for their decisions to stay or go.

The ECAPS data will be analyzed further to understand the nuances of experiences among those who participated. Specifically, Professors Ni and Rorrer will be addressing questions about which teachers are staying, moving, and leaving and for what reasons. This analysis will provide information regarding conditions that may prompt teachers to remain in the profession and be highly satisfied.

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