

Hiring Picks Up, But More Veterans Quit

UFT Research Department, January 2014

Teacher hiring has picked up in New York City. But close to ten percent of brand new teachers still bailed out in the course of 2012-13, putting first-year attrition back near pre-recession levels. Attrition of second-year teachers also ticked up last year. Teachers in their 3rd through 5th years were more likely to stay. But the city still loses more than one-third of teachers within five years.

Attrition of teachers and other pedagogues at all levels of experience also increased in the 2012-13 school year, to more than 5,300, or 6.4 percent of the workforce, mainly through resignations and retirements. Teachers and other pedagogues with 6-15 years of experience--those in their prime teaching years--are leaving at increased rates. Overall, the workforce is becoming more veteran, due to high degrees of churn at the entry level, and increasing resignations of experienced staffers.

Absent improved working conditions and salaries, the pace of attrition is likely to build. Unemployment is finally dropping, job creation has picked up, and economic growth is running at an annualized 3.6%. So teachers have more options. Angered by the overemphasis on testing and punitive accountability, their loyalty to the city is strained.

Starting Teacher Attrition

Attrition of first-year teachers rose to 9.4 percent for 2012-13, from 8.2 percent the previous years. **(Table 1)**. With the hiring freeze lifted, hiring increased by almost one thousand to 4,705 new teachers last year from a low of 2,396 in 2009-10. The percentage of teachers who leave within their first five years stands at 36.1 percent, down considerably from a decade ago.

Table 1: Attrition of New Teachers NYC 2006-2013
Cumulative Percentages of Teachers Who Left

Year Hired/ Totals	% quit by year one	% quit by year two	% quit by year three	% quit by year four	% quit by year five
2005-06 7,505	10.8	23.8	33.0	37.1	40.6
2006-07 6857	11.3	22.8	29.2	34.0	37.9
2007-08 7,058	10.8	19.0	26.1	31.7	36.1
2008-09 5,242	10.2	19.9	28.1	34.4	
2009-10 2,396	7.1	17.2	24.3	31.1	
2010-11 3,296	7.2	15.1	20.8		
2011-12 3,885	8.2	16.1			
2012-13 4,705	9.4				

Source: UFT analysis of BOE payroll data. Hiring counts run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.

NOTE: Previous year data on this table may change as teachers' status is resolved or adjusted

(In the first three months of 2013-14, 4,048 new teachers were hired. This suggests that by the end of this school year the number of new hires will at least match that of 2012-13.)

Departures at All Experience Levels

For all pedagogues—some 84,000 teachers plus guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, lab specialists and school secretaries at all levels of seniority—attrition was up for 2012-13 (**Table 2A**). A total of 5,358 pedagogues left the system in the 12 months between Oct. 1, 2012 and Sept. 30, 2013, or 6.4 percent of the active workforce.

Retirements and “resignation of regulars” are the two top reasons for termination, accounting for 83 percent of terminations in 2013. Probationary discontinuance of new hires remains below its 2008-09 peak, as the Dept. of Education has moved to extend probation for almost half of teachers up for tenure while terminating only 3 percent.

Retirements remained over 2,000 for a fourth year, the highest since 2003, and are growing percentage of terminations—43 percent in 2012-13 versus 28 percent in 2007-08. Resignations of “regulars,”-- regularly appointed pedagogues who simply quit rather than retire, fall ill, or have licensing or certification issues—remains at about the same level as last year.

Table 2A: Numbers of New York City Pedagogues Terminated, By Reason School Years 2006-07 through 2012-13

Terminations by Reason	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Substitute terminations	94	153	18	27	43	32
Trial on charges	38	42	34	59	32	39
Retirement	1,652	1,866	2,014	2,514	2,288	2,316
Resignation of Regulars	3,233	1,965	1,901	1,999	2,163	2,144
Probationary discontinuance	285	329	324	240	241	257
Failure to return from leave	135	159	211	184	37	153
Disability	104	117	97	159	129	111
Deceased	95	99	75	76	66	76
Absent without notice	63	33	27	17	14	39
Failure to meet state requirements	197	177	188	113	100	52
Other	51	81	52	124	151	139
Total	5,947	5,021	4,941	5,512	5,264	5,358

Source: UFT analysis of BOE payroll data. The ‘year’ is all terminations between Oct. 1 and the following Sept. 30.

Most resignations of regulars still occur in the first five years, but there has been a notable move towards more veteran resignations over the last five years (**Table 2B**). In 2007-08, teachers with zero to five years experience made up 84 percent of resignations (and this would not count teachers who were dismissed or not granted tenure). But by 2013 newer teachers accounted for much less—55 percent of resignations. The group that increased their resignation rate were

teachers in their 6th to 15th years, those in their teaching prime. This group went from 15 percent of all resignations in 2007-08 to 43 percent by 2013.. Pedagogues (and 90 percent of all pedagogues are teachers) show a continuing pattern of churning at the entry levels even when overall attrition goes down. However, it is also evident from the numbers that greater proportions of experienced pedagogues are quitting.

Table 2B: Resignation of “Regulars” by Experience Level—Shifts over Time

Years of Experience	2008	As % of Total	2011	As % of Total	2012	As % of Total	2013	As % of total
0-5 years	2,698	84%	1,278	64%	1,225	57%	1,168	55%
6-15 years	496	15%	665	33%	886	41%	907	43%
16 + years	39	1%	50	3%	45	2%	55	3%*
TOTAL Resignations	3,233	100%	1,993	100%	2,156	100%	2,130	100%*

*does not add to 100% due to rounding

Teacher Experience

About 21 percent of teachers in the system currently have five or fewer years' experience. That is far less than a peak of 44 percent in 2003, and 30 percent going into the recession. **(Table 3)**. The total teacher workforce has been inching higher since the hiring freeze was lifted, but there are still 5,000 fewer active teachers than there were in 2008.

Today, 14.6 percent, or 10,880 out of 74,497 active classroom teachers have zero to three years experience. The proportion of new teachers has been cut by more than half since the recession, when more than 30 percent of the teacher workforce was new teachers with three or fewer years of experience.

Table 3: Teacher Experience Levels by Salary Step Counts, 2008-13

	November 2008	November 2009	November 2010	November 2011	November 2012	November 2013
Total Teachers	79,371	76,937	75,211	73,982	74,380	74,497
Zero to Three Years	14,875	10,889	8,171	7,523	9,638	10,880
Four to Five Years	9,201	8,943	8,822	7,778	5,563	4,658
Total 0-5 Yrs.	24,076	19,832	16,993	15,301	15,201	15,538
More than 5 Years	55,295	57,105	58,218	58,681	59,179	58,959
0-5 Yrs as % of Total	30.3	25.8	22.6	20.7	20.4	20.9
0-3 Yrs as % of Total	18.7	14.2	10.9	10.2	13.0	14.6

Source: UFT analysis of salary step counts