



For Immediate Release

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**Governor's Office of Student Achievement Releases Georgia Teacher Attrition Study**  
*Teacher Retention in Georgia Higher than Previously Reported*

ATLANTA – The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) today released the results of a study that analyzed the attrition trends of Georgia's public school teachers. GOSA commissioned Dr. Ben Scafidi, an associate professor of Economics at Georgia College and State University, to examine teacher retention using Georgia public school employment data from 1998-2009.

The study provides a comprehensive picture of teacher retention in Georgia by assessing the extent to which new teachers leave public education altogether, leave teaching but later return, or move into other professional public education roles.

Traditional accounts of teacher attrition often label educators who teach one year but not the next as having left the profession, which grossly misrepresents the overall stability and staffing projections of the teaching workforce.

"This analysis is important because its findings clearly refute the long-held notion that half of Georgia's teachers leave the profession within five years," said Executive Director Kathleen Mathers. "Instead, by appropriately broadening the definition of retention, we've learned that nearly 75 percent of Georgia's new teachers remain in public education after five years."

The study also reveals that of those who began teaching when they were less than 26 years old, nonwhite teachers and male teachers had higher retention rates than white and female teachers. In fact, nonwhite teachers who left teaching were more than twice as likely to return to a professional role in public education as white teachers.

In addition, nearly 73 percent of teachers in Georgia's rural school districts remained in public education after ten years, while teachers in urban and suburban districts outside of metro Atlanta persisted in teaching at a rate of nearly 66 percent, and teachers in the 20-county metro Atlanta area persisted at nearly 59 percent.

Finally, while there is great concern nationwide about the recruitment and retention of mathematics and science teachers, there is good news to share in Georgia. Approximately 72 percent of new math and science teachers remained in public education after five years, compared with the nearly 75 percent of all new Georgia teachers.

"This analysis, which used actual Georgia employment data, suggests that Georgia teachers are staying in our schools for longer and in greater numbers than many people commonly assume," said Dr. Eric Wearne, GOSA's Deputy Director. "Also, many teachers are returning to our schools after brief stints away, possibly at home with small children or in graduate school. Both of these results indicate that Georgia is an attractive place to work in education."

The report can be found in its entirety on GOSA's homepage: <http://www.gaosa.org>.

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