

IES Launches Online Database of Teacher Retention Programs

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The [Institute of Education Sciences](#) recently announced the launch of a searchable [database](#) on policies and programs aimed at curbing teacher turnover in several New England states.

The database includes profiles of 33 state and district retention programs implemented in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont -- states that are part of IES' [Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands](#) region.

The IES database focuses on regional efforts to address teacher turnover implemented at the district level, unlike a similar [database](#) covering state-level efforts available from the [National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality](#), said Abigail Jurist Levy, a senior scientist and researcher with the IES project and coauthor of an accompanying report, ["Developing the Compendium of Strategies to Reduce Teacher Turnover in the Northeast and Islands Region": a companion to the database.](#)

The New England states' efforts to address high teacher turnover had not been previously compiled into a single reference because of a lack of data systems to track and analyze workforce and teacher retention trends, according to the study.

Administrators in the four states are concerned about keeping teachers in urban and rural districts. Nationally, a third of all teachers leave the profession within the first three years, the study said.

"Urban and rural districts have a more difficult time recruiting and holding on to teachers," Levy said. "This is a tool that decision-makers can use to see what others are doing."

Retention strategies sampler

The database is not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, it samples financial incentives, preservice programs, in-service programs, and central systems and supports implemented in the four states.

It provides descriptions of programs' goals, costs and designs, and it includes contact information for users to get additional information about programs' challenges and successes, Levy said.

Inclusion in the database does not mean endorsement, according to the study. Levy said programs were not evaluated on their quality.

"This was not designed to ascertain effectiveness," she said. "The degree to which states measure the success and impact of programs and polices has varied."

Regional trends

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont each spend as much as \$3 million annually on programs to reduce teacher turnover, according to the report. Although the most common funding source for the programs comes from the federal [Improving Teacher Quality State Grants](#), the study found that the majority of the programs did not have long-term funding streams. Nonetheless, all four states have mandates for induction and mentoring programs.

Financial incentives -- including scholarships, loan forgiveness, stipends to become board-certified and mortgage assistance -- were also common retention strategies.