ABOUT THE ORIGINAL STUDY

Teacher Attrition and Retention in Kansas: A Case Study of Geographically Rural States with Persistent Teacher Shortages

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Why It Matters

State-level evidence can reveal staffing patterns hidden by national averages. This study examines how Kansas teacher characteristics and turnover differ from national patterns and from nearby rural states.

Data and Sample

The study uses seven Schools and Staffing Survey waves from 1987–1988 through 2011–2012 and four teacher follow-up waves. Descriptive analyses include 5,100 teacher-year observations; turnover analyses include 2,910 Kansas observations.

Key Findings

- Kansas teachers remained overwhelmingly White while the schools in which they worked became more economically and racially diverse.
- Kansas teachers were more likely to turn over than peers in nearby Midwestern states, with school switching accounting for much of the difference.
- Younger teachers and special educators showed elevated turnover in statewide models; administrative support and union membership were associated with lower turnover.

Policy Implications

- Use state-specific evidence to target staffing policy rather than assuming nearby rural states face identical conditions.
- Consider workforce diversification and supports for vulnerable teacher groups in Kansas recruitment and retention planning.
- Evaluate improvements in working conditions and administrative support; this study does not establish causal effects of particular retention policies.

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