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Demographics and Work Experience:

A Statistical Portrait of New York City's Public School Teachers

Summary

In recent years, the role of kindergarten through 12th grade teachers in improving student performance and closing the achievement gap between students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds has been a prime topic of discussion and study. While the state continues to develop a system to assess individual teachers' contributions to meeting these goals, it is important to have a basic picture of the teacher workforce in terms of demographics and work experience.

In this report, IBO examines New York City's Department of Education human resources data for public school teachers for school years 2000-2001 through 2011-2012 (the data does not include charter school teachers because they are not city employees). Over this 12-year period, the report looks at data on teachers' age, gender, self-reported race or ethnicity, and experience working in the city's public schools—how long teachers continue teaching at their first school and whether they transfer to another school or leave the public school system entirely.

The data is presented in terms of the city's public school system as a whole as well as categorized by instruction level (elementary, middle, and high schools) and concentration of poverty (low-, medium-, or high-poverty schools) based on student eligibility for free- or reduced-price lunch. Among our findings:

- The share of the city's public school teachers who are female has gradually increased from 73 percent in school year 2000-2001 to 76 percent in 2011-2012. Over the same period the share of teachers who are white has gradually declined from nearly 63 percent to about 59 percent while the share of teachers who are black has slipped from about 21 percent to just below 20 percent.
- When schools are subdivided in terms of poverty, the percentage of white teachers is considerably lower and the percentage of black and Hispanic teachers higher, in high-poverty schools compared with low-poverty schools.
- Teachers in low-poverty high schools were more likely to be older and more experienced than teachers in medium- and high-poverty high schools.

Additionally, the share of teachers quitting the school system soon after their start has been declining. Of the nearly 9,000 teachers hired in 2000-2001, 41 percent had quit the school system within three years. Of the 6,000 teachers hired in 2008-2009, the share that left within three years dropped to 30 percent.

The total number of teachers in the city's public schools has declined over the period studied, from 77,088 to 73,373. While the number of general education teachers fell by more than 9,100 to 54,778 over the 12-year period, the number of special education teachers grew by more than 5,400 to 18,595.



