

Understanding Retention and Attrition of Special Education Teachers in Nevada Through a Longitudinal Study: A Model for Other States

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Each fall 100s of new special
education teachers enter
Nevada schools
but by June,
19% have given up being a teacher.

- This session will explore the large exodus of special education teachers through a longitudinal study.
- The first part will be a discussion of findings, some solutions, and implications for policy changes.
- The second part will explain how Nevada repurposed existing data creating a database for studying teacher attrition that can be replicated in other states.

Large Numbers of Special Ed Teachers Give up the Classroom

- Only 60% of Nevada special education teachers remain teaching after the first three years
- Explore reasons behind the high attrition
- Many of these findings have implications for policy changes
 - At the state level
 - At the federal level

Similar Attrition of Special Ed Teachers in Other States

	after 1 year	after 2 years	after 3 years
Alabama		33%	
Arkansas		64%	67%
Georgia		89%	
Iowa	92%	86%	88%
Nevada	81%	75%	60%
USA (All Teachers)	86%	76%	67%

Large Problem of Teachers Leaving the Classroom after They:

- earned degrees in chosen field
- Invested several years in college
- Spent tens of thousands of dollars
- Only to find that they did not want to teach in special education

Longitudinal Study of Special Education Teachers

- Taught from 1997 through 2010
- Identify trends over time
- Answered many questions
- But created a whole new set of questions as we came to understand attrition of special education teachers

Movement back & forth between special & regular education

- 40,330 different individuals taught in Nevada schools.
- 12% of assignments were exclusively in special education
- 1% assignments included both regular and special education
- Teachers with just special education had a three year attrition rate of 39%
- Teachers who moved between regular and special education had a three year attrition rate of only 8%
- Why such a big difference in attrition rate?
- Clearly, something is very different in the experiences of these two groups

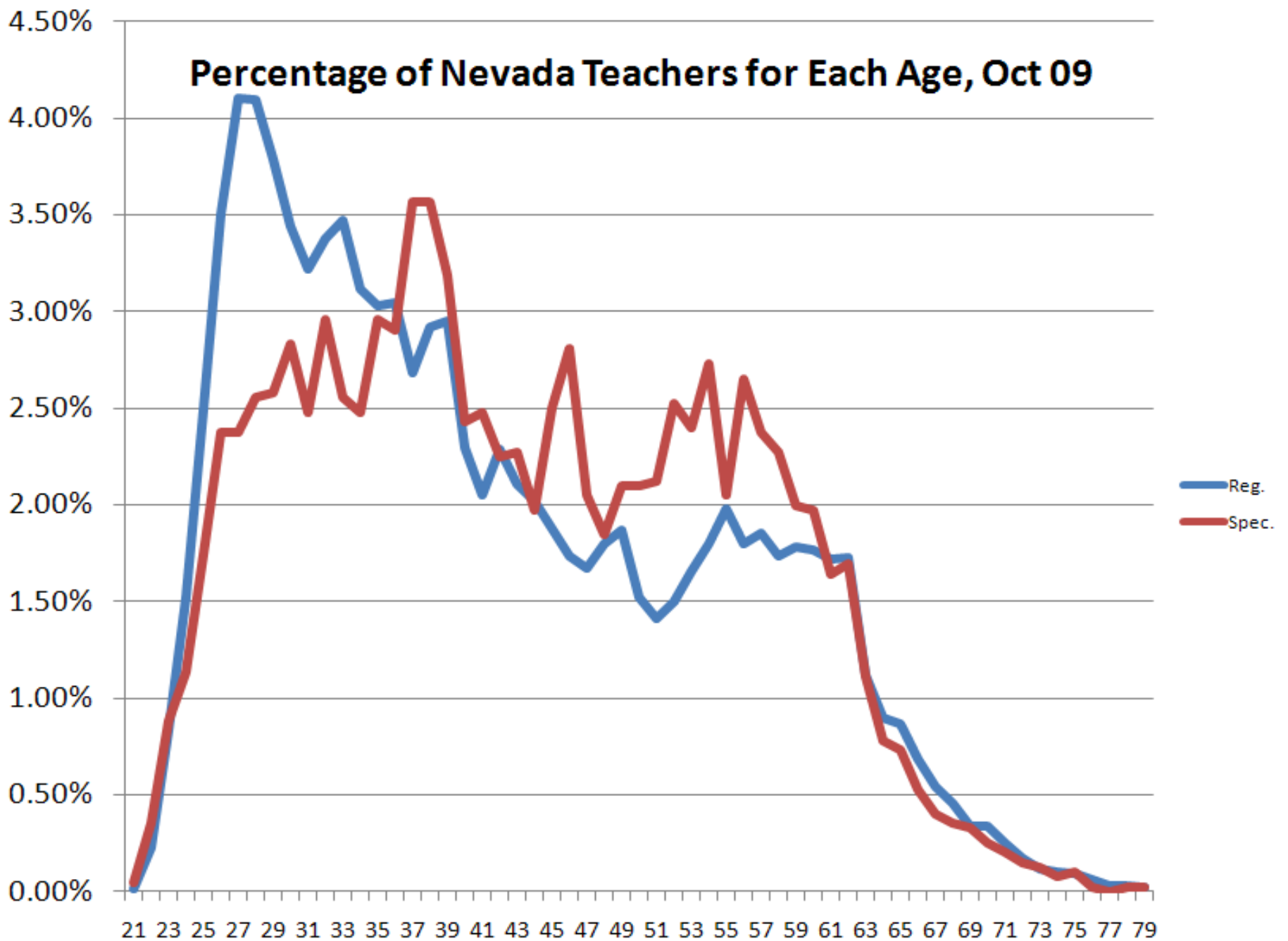
Percentage of NV Teachers by Assignment 1997-2009

	Number	% of Total	% of Sp Ed
All service regular	35321	83.41%	
All service special	5390	12.73%	76.72%
Reg Ed changed to Sp Ed	572	1.35%	8.14%
Reg Ed to Sp Ed & back to Reg	173	0.41%	2.46%
Sp Ed changed to Reg Ed	658	1.55%	9.37%
Sp Ed to Reg & back to Sp Ed	152	0.36%	2.16%
Other changing assignment	81	0.19%	1.15%
TOTAL	42347		
TOTAL any special education	7026		
TOTAL mixed	1636		

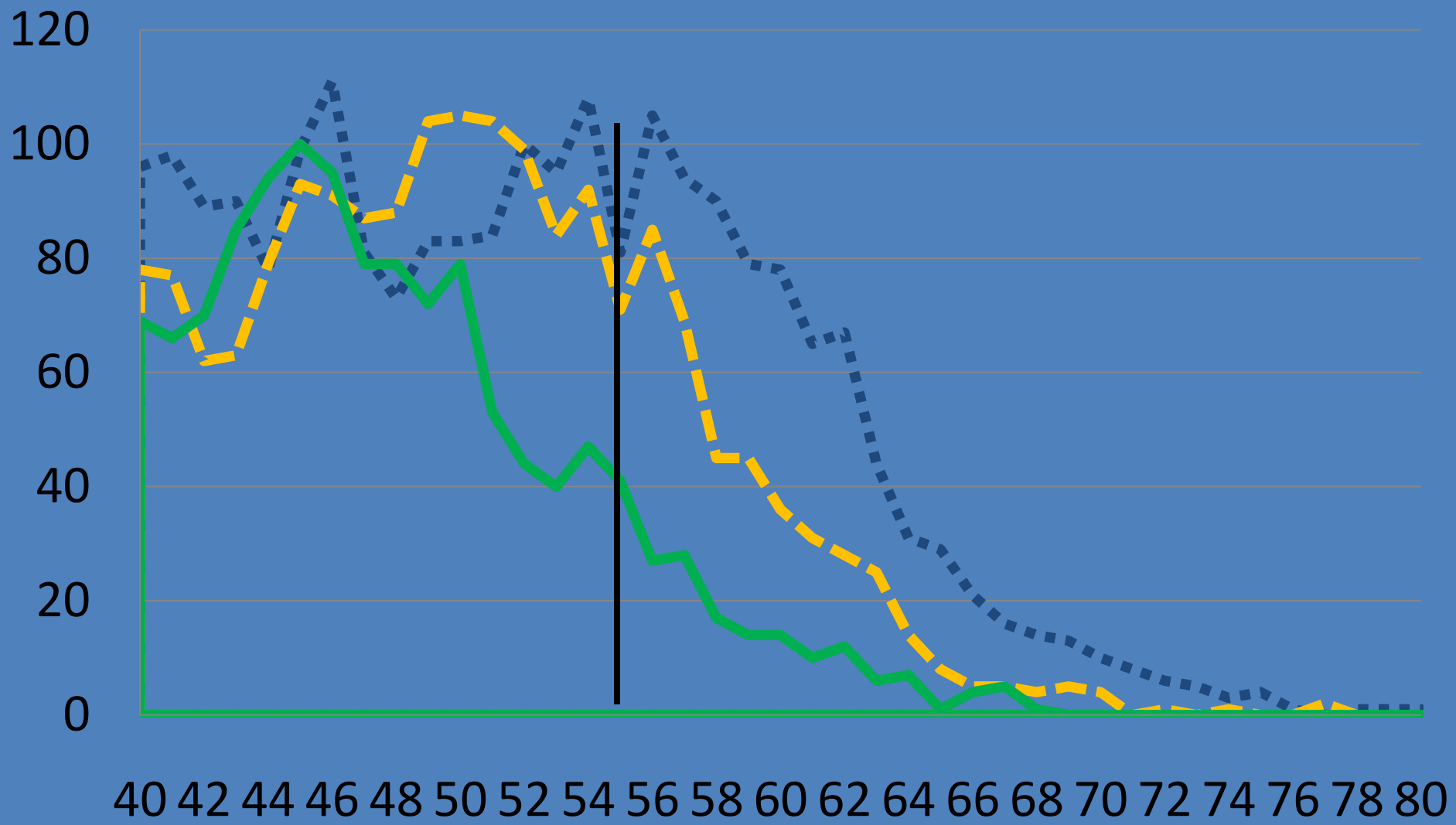
Movement of Teachers Among Districts and Schools, 1997-2010

- 40,330 different teachers in NV
- 51.7% still teaching
- Of those continuing to teach
- 99.4% remained in same district year to year (YtY)
- 87.2% remained in same school (YtY)
- 79.5% remained in same assignment (YtY)
- May vary for other states because of unique Nevada geography

Percentage of Nevada Teachers for Each Age, Oct 09



Age of State of Nevada Special Education Teachers Currently Close to Retirement on Oct. 1, 1997 (green solid), 2003 (yellow dash), & 2009 (blue dot)



Breaks in Teaching 1997-2010

(e.g., child rearing leaves)

- 1.13% for 1 year
- 0.42% for 2 years
- 0.72% for over 2 years

Retention Rates by Teaching Areas

<i>After X Years</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>10</i>
Emotionally Disturbed	81%	44%	22%
Learning Disabilities	89%	47%	39%
Autism	84%	50%	47%
Mental Retardation	82%	51%	41%
Speech & Language	83%	53%	31%
Generalist	85%	53%	38%
Multiple/Diversely	84%	55%	10%
Early Childhood	81%	55%	41%
Gifted and Talented	88%	59%	36%
Visually Impaired	86%	66%	33%
Hearing Impaired	81%	69%	65%
Adapted Physical Ed	91%	84%	83%

Teacher Stayers, Movers, and Leavers, by Selected Teacher Characteristics: 2004–05

	Total	Stayers	Movers	Leavers
All	3,214,900	83.5%	8.1%	8.4%
Special Ed	412,700	78.9%	11.1%	10.0%
Math	238,000	84.6%	8.6%	6.8%
Sciences	214,000	88.5%	5.6%	5.9%

U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *Teacher Attrition and Mobility*

Teacher Follow-Up Surveys (TFS)

- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducts a periodic national-level Teacher Follow-Up Surveys (TFS).
- TFS is a high-quality survey that defines attrition and migration behaviorally by tracking changes in an individual teacher's employment status from one year to the next.
- The data for next survey was collected in 2008-2009 and the summary should be released in 2011.

Reasons for Moving

Better teaching assignment (subject or grade)	38.1%
Dissatisfaction with administrator's support	37.2%
Dissatisfaction with workplace conditions	32.7%
New school is closer to home	26.2%
Higher job security	19.1%
Laid off or involuntarily transferred	18.7%
Changes in job description or responsibilities	18.3%
Better salary or benefits	16.5%
Dissatisfaction with professional development	12.8%
Did not have enough classroom autonomy	10.4%
Dissatisfaction for other reasons	31.2%

Reasons for Leaving

Retirement	31.4%
To pursue position other than a K-12 teacher	25.3%
Pregnancy or child rearing	18.7%
Dissatisfied with school or teaching assignment	16.0%
Dissatisfied with teaching as a career	14.6%
School staffing action (e.g., RIF, school closing)	14.6%
Better salary or benefits	14.2%
Health	11.8%
Changed residence	11.2%
To take courses in education	8.9%
To take courses in career outside of education	5.3%
Other family or personal reasons	20.4%

The second part of the presentation will deal with the process used to collect and analyze the data.

- Although each state will be different, the basic process used in Nevada can be generalized to other states.

NCLB

- Data pulled directly from the NV teacher assignment database
- Used for NCLB reporting purposes
- Highly Qualified Teachers: To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have:
 - 1) a bachelor's degree
 - 2) full state certification
 - 3) prove that they know each subject they teach

Highly Qualified Teachers

- Since every state must file these reports, there should be a similar database within each state.
- The original Nevada database is organized on a year-by-year basis showing:
 - Classes/courses taught by each teacher
 - demographic information such as
 - Age
 - Certifications held
 - Class information such as
 - school,
 - grade
 - district
 - Assignments collected in October

ED85EVA1

Licensee Evaluation Form

05/10/2007

SSN: 111-11-1111

License #: 0000069352

Date Added: 12/09/2005

Name:

JOHN

Q

PUBLIC

First

Middle

Last

Modifier

Personnel

Degrees

Experience

License

Lic Provs

Endorsements

End Provisions

Name:

JOHN

Q

PUBLIC

First

Middle

Last

Modifier

Previous Name:

First

Last

Street:

111 PALO VERDE DR

City:

CARSON CITY

State:

NV

Zip Code:

89701

Phone:

(775)888-8888

Sex:

M

Date of Birth:

08/21/1910

Ethnic Code:

Licensee Status:

L

Years of Experience:

09.00

Loc:

C

Tech:

DB

County:

Commit

Print

Delete

Exit

For Analysis of Retention and Attrition

- Data were repurposed
- Show each teacher's career
 - From 1997 through 2010
 - Classes taught each year
 - Started Teaching
 - When they left Teaching.
- The data also show a variety of other factors such as
 - Teacher movement between districts and schools,
 - Extended absences or leaves (e.g., child rearing),
 - Changing assignments particularly between special and regular education.

NV Special Education Teachers

Started in fall of	Total Hired	Left after 1 year	Left after 2 years	Left after 3 years	Left after 4 years	Left after 5 years	Left after 11 years	Still Teaching Fall 2009
1998	188	21%	9%	11%	9%	4%	3%	47
1999	220	20%	8%	10%	6%	7%		74
2000	245	22%	9%	7%	11%	7%		87
2001	242	21%	12%	10%	7%	7%		77
2002	349	15%	12%	11%	5%	5%		147
2003	274	16%	17%	10%	5%	5%		120
2004	316	17%	13%	6%	4%	7%		165
2005	314	15%	8%	18%	4%			172
2006	381	17%	9%	6%				258
2007	332	14%	8%					258
2008	373	16%						312
2009	537							537

Cumulative % NV Spec. Ed. Teachers	Started		Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Left	Still
	in	Total	after	after	after	after	after	after	Teaching
	fall	Hired	1	2	3	4	5	11	Fall
	of		year	years	years	years	years	years	2009
	1998	188	21%	30%	40%	49%	53%	75%	47
	1999	220	20%	28%	39%	45%	52%		74
	2000	245	22%	32%	38%	49%	56%		87
	2001	242	21%	33%	43%	50%	57%		77
	2002	349	15%	27%	38%	43%	48%		147
	2003	274	16%	32%	43%	48%	53%		120
	2004	316	17%	30%	37%	41%	48%		165
	2005	314	15%	23%	41%	45%			172
	2006	381	17%	27%	32%				258
	2007	332	14%	22%					258
	2008	373	16%						312
	2009	537							537

Cumulative Percentage of Nevada Teachers Remaining Teaching by Years of Service

After X Years	1	2	3	4	5	11
Regular Only	86%	76%	67%	62%	56%	36%
Special Only	83%	72%	61%	54%	48%	25%
Mixed	100%	96%	92%	88%	82%	63%
All Teachers	86%	76%	68%	62%	56%	36%
USA Total*	86%	76%	67%	60%	54%	

*from National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2003). *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*. Washington, DC: NCTAF.

System Development Considerations

- Use actual data
- Full Population
- Sp Ed trends get buried in overall data
- Mixed assignments = high retention rates
- Losing large numbers of new teachers
- Losing more special education teachers than regular education teachers
- Large number of special education teachers at retirement age

References

- National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2003). *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children*. Washington, DC: NCTAF
- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences. (2007). *Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results from the 2004-05 Teacher Follow-up Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.