

**Where do *your* teachers go when they leave *your* classroom? Can *you* keep more of them?**

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Teacher turnover is of great concern to schools and school systems for obvious reasons. These reasons include the enormous cost of replacing teachers that leave which, for Georgia, has been estimated at \$81 million annually (Alliance for Educational Excellence (2005) and the more subtle cost in student learning. In Georgia, teacher attrition is defined in terms of the number of teachers who taught in one year and were not in the classroom the following year. Between FY01 and FY05, teacher attrition remained between 8.7 in FY02 to 9.2 in FY04. However, as shown in Table 1, system level teacher attrition far outstrips statewide attrition figures. For example, in FY01, only Buford City at 8.6%, had a lower attrition rate than the statewide attrition rate of 8.8%. Some school systems, Atlanta city, Clayton, Decatur City and Forsyth, had attrition rates above 17%, almost double the state attrition rate. While some systems' attrition rates fluctuate from year to year, those of Atlanta City and Clayton County have remained consistently high across the years of interest: FY01-FY05.

Table 1 also shows that the system attrition can be distributed into two components corresponding to why teachers leave and where they go when they leave. This is important because depending on which component is more critical to the system's attrition, it may help the system devise strategies to keep more of their teachers. Specifically, some teachers leave the classroom to retire from the profession, take an administrative position or to move out of state. In these cases, the system they leave from may not be able to influence that decision. Some other teachers leave from one system to teach in another system. This is regarded as attrition due to mobility. Systems that lose a considerable proportion of their teachers to other systems need to investigate the factors that make their teachers want to leave and what factors attract them to the systems to which they go.

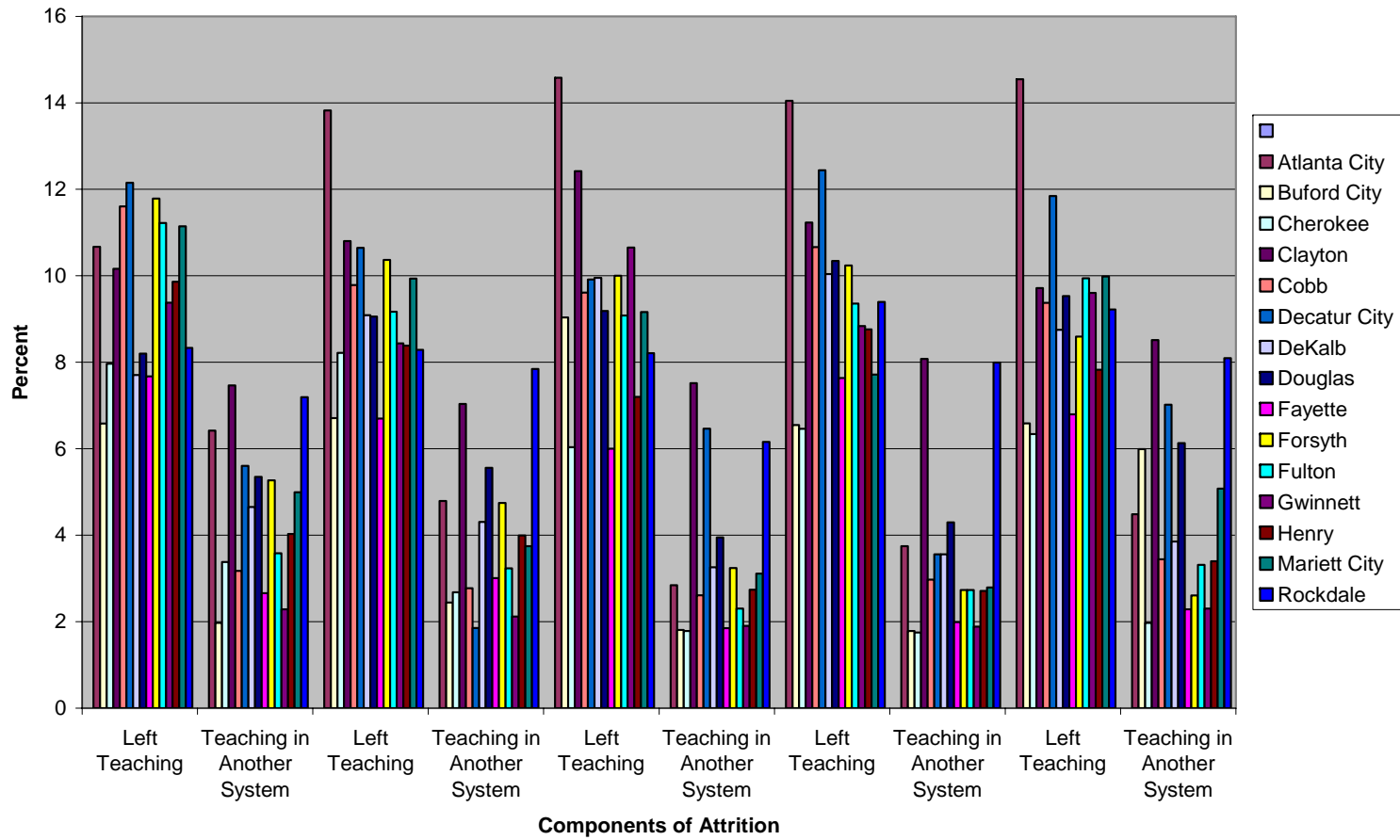
**Table 1. Components of System Level Teacher Attrition in Metro RESA, FY01-FY06**

School Systems	FY01			FY02			FY03			FY04			FY05		
	Left Teaching	Teaching in Another System	Total Teacher Attrition to System (%)	Left Teaching	Teaching in Another System	Total Teacher Attrition to System (%)	Left Teaching	Teaching in Another System	Total Teacher Attrition to System (%)	Left Teaching	Teaching in Another System	Total Teacher Attrition to System (%)	Left Teaching	Teaching in Another System	Total Teacher Attrition to System (%)
Atlanta City	10.7	6.4	17.1	13.8	4.8	18.6	14.6	2.8	17.4	14.0	3.7	17.8	14.5	4.5	19.0
Buford City	6.6	2.0	8.6	6.7	2.4	9.1	9.0	1.8	10.8	6.5	1.8	8.3	6.6	6.0	12.6
Cherokee	8.0	3.4	11.3	8.2	2.7	10.9	6.0	1.8	7.8	6.5	1.8	8.2	6.3	2.0	8.3
Clayton	10.2	7.5	17.6	10.8	7.0	17.8	12.4	7.5	19.9	11.2	8.1	19.3	9.7	8.5	18.2
Cobb	11.6	3.2	14.8	9.8	2.8	12.6	9.6	2.6	12.2	10.7	3.0	13.6	9.4	3.4	12.8
Decatur City	12.1	5.6	17.8	10.6	1.9	12.5	9.9	6.5	16.4	12.4	3.6	16.0	11.8	7.0	18.9
DeKalb	7.7	4.7	12.4	9.1	4.3	13.4	10.0	3.3	13.2	10.0	3.6	13.6	8.8	3.9	12.6
Douglas	8.2	5.3	13.5	9.1	5.6	14.6	9.2	3.9	13.1	10.3	4.3	14.6	9.5	6.1	15.7
Fayette	7.7	2.7	10.3	6.7	3.0	9.7	6.0	1.8	7.8	7.6	2.0	9.6	6.8	2.3	9.1
Forsyth	11.8	5.3	17.1	10.4	4.7	15.1	10.0	3.2	13.2	10.2	2.7	13.0	8.6	2.6	11.2
Fulton	11.2	3.6	14.8	9.2	3.2	12.4	9.1	2.3	11.4	9.4	2.7	12.1	9.9	3.3	13.3
Gwinnett	9.4	2.3	11.7	8.4	2.1	10.6	10.7	1.9	12.6	8.8	1.9	10.7	9.6	2.3	11.9
Henry	9.9	4.0	13.9	8.4	4.0	12.4	7.2	2.7	9.9	8.8	2.7	11.5	7.8	3.4	11.2
Marietta City	11.1	5.0	16.1	9.9	3.7	13.7	9.2	3.1	12.3	7.7	2.8	10.5	10.0	5.1	15.1
Rockdale	8.3	7.2	15.5	8.3	7.8	16.1	8.2	6.2	14.4	9.4	8.0	17.4	9.2	8.1	17.3
Total	9.8	4.2		9.5	3.7		10.0	3.0		9.9	3.3		9.5	3.8	

This phenomenon of leaving to teach in other systems is well exemplified in Rockdale, Douglas, Decatur city and Clayton county school systems. On the other hand, systems such as Cobb, Buford City, Cherokee, Fayette and Gwinnett tend to have

very small proportion of teachers leaving to go to other Georgia systems. See Figure 1. Their approach to reducing overall teacher attrition would focus on a different set of issues compared to systems losing many teachers to more attractive systems.

**Figure 1. Two Components of Attrition by System, FY01-FY05**



## Reference

Alliance for Educational Excellence (2005). Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to states. Retrieved May 3, 2007, from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/TeacherAttrition.pdf>