

EDUCATION

FINANCE

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## EFP Takeaways

Effects of Teacher Turnover

### Background

Teacher turnover can negatively influence students in three main ways: 1) classroom disruption, 2) staff instability, and 3) differences in quality of replacement and replaced teacher. There is substantial research that demonstrates negative effects of teacher turnover on students. However, less attention has been paid to mid-year teacher turnover. A new study by Gary Henry and Christopher Redding in vol. 15, issue 2 of *EFP* assesses effects of teacher turnover, with particular focus on the time-point when teachers leave the school.

### The Study

The authors aimed to estimate the effects of teacher turnover on student achievement. Particularly, they sought to separate the effects of turnover during and at the end of the year. Utilizing administrative data from North Carolina, Henry and Redding analyze a six-year panel of data from 2008 – 2014 of fourth through eighth students who took end-of-year standardized assessments in English/language arts and mathematics.

### Findings

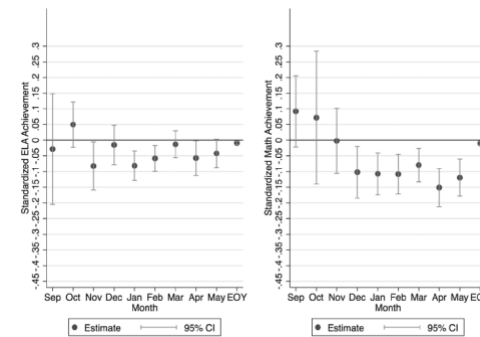
Students who lose their teacher during the school-year have significantly lower test score gains when compared to students who teachers stay. The turnover of other teachers during the year also lowers achievement gains, whereas end-of-year teacher turnover has no effect on achievement.

The harmful effects of within-year teacher turnover is not explained by the quality of the departing teacher. Strikingly, the negative effects of teacher turnover are larger when teachers depart in the second half of the school year. These results suggest that the negative effects of mid-year teacher turnover likely stem from the disruption students experience in the classroom and from replacement teachers struggling to maintain continuity of instruction.

### Findings continued

Students in the classroom with the teacher turnover are most harmed the change. But there are also large spillover effects from losing a teacher mid-year for other students in that grade. Below is an example of findings of the effects of teacher turnover on elementary school students.

(a) Elementary School Students



Many of the personal factors that drive teacher turnover (ie. parental leave, retirement, poor fit), are likely not very easy to change. Therefore, school leaders should focus on minimizing effects of disruption from losing a teacher mid-year. Planned leaves could allow for implementation of interventions targeted to minimizing disruptions for students, in order to help mitigate some of those negative effects.

#### For more details:

- View the [full issue](#).
- See the [full article in Education Finance and Policy](#).
- [Sign up here to receive future EFP Takeaways](#).
- Summary of:  
Henry, G. T., & Redding, C. (2020). The consequences of leaving school early: The effects of within-year and end-of-year teacher turnover. *Education Finance and Policy*, 15(2), 332-356.