

Introduction and Goals

One of the primary challenges in education for Wisconsin and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is the growing teacher shortage. State Superintendent Tony Evers has labeled it one of the “most critical public policy issues” confronting the state and is dedicating significant resources towards addressing it (<https://dpi.wi.gov/news/dpi-connected/teacher-shortage-announcement>). Work on this issue is also being guided by the Professional Standards Council—a statutorily constructed group that assists the state superintendent with improvement in the areas of teacher preparation, licensure, and regulation (<http://dpi.wi.gov/news/releases/2016/evers-announces-efforts-address-school-staffing-shortages>).

The issue of educator shortages is directly linked to the ability of schools and districts to recruit, retain, support and develop staff members. When schools suffer high turnover and attrition rates, students’ education and learning environments are disrupted. This situation works against efforts to improve student educational outcomes and hinders efforts to reduce the achievement gap throughout the state. High levels of turnover and attrition would also work against efforts at improving equity throughout Wisconsin schools (<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/esea/pdf/WisconsinEdEquityPlan.pdf>).

This brief will only cover educational staff that are licensed through DPI and it will focus specifically on pupil services personnel, which includes school social workers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists. It presents data on both turnover and attrition in pupil services personnel throughout the state that occurred between the 2012-13(SY2013) and 2013-14(SY2014) school years.

For the purposes of this study, “turnover” is defined as the situation when an individual left a position at a school, but kept working within the Wisconsin Public School system the subsequent year either by finding a position at another school, or by retaining at least one other position within the school system. “Attrition” is defined as the situation when an individual left all of their positions within the Wisconsin public school system and did not return the next year.

Pupil Service Turnover and Attrition

Analysis shows that during the 2012-13 school year, 3471 licensed pupil services personnel were employed in Wisconsin Public Schools filling 4658 positions. The analysis distinguished between the number of positions and the number of distinct people in the pupil services category, because one person might hold multiple positions in a district (or even in multiple districts), and therefore the number of people in the school system was less than the number of positions held by them. Additionally, data on the assignment workload percentages—full-time equivalency (FTE)—that these positions entailed is presented.

Of these 3471 licensed pupil services personnel, 2673 individuals remained in 3285 positions into the next year. 631 individuals left positions while remaining within the system (turnover) and 348 left the system

entirely (attrition). One district did not submit data on pupil services for the 2013-14 school year, and they could thusly not be fit into these categories. These statistics are displayed in table 1 along with FTE totals.

Table 1—Pupil Services Personnel SY2013-14—Remaining, Turnover, & Attrition Numbers

	Positions	% of total	Individuals	% of Total	FTE	% of Total
Total PS	4658	100.00%	3471	100.00%	3235.23	100.00%
Remaining	3285	70.52%	2673	77.01%	2424.97	74.96%
Turnover	856	18.38%	631	18.18%	470.66	14.55%
Attrition	460	9.88%	348	10.03%	308.9	9.55%
No data	57	1.22%	32	0.92%	30.7	0.95%

It is important to note that the percentages for individuals adds up to more than 100%. This occurs because individuals with multiple positions may have kept some of them (and were thus counted in the Remaining group), while also leaving others (thus being counted in the Turnover group).

Within the pupil services category, there are three main positions—namely school social worker, guidance counselor and school psychologist. Altogether, these positions constituted all 3268.37 FTEs within the pupil services category. Table 2 displays the turnover and attrition numbers for each of these three positions in terms of FTE.

Table 2—Pupil Service Positions SY2013-14—Turnover and Attrition Numbers

Positions	Total FTE	Turnover FTE	% Turnover	Attrition FTE	% attrition
Social Workers	498.83	120.97	24.25%	50.53	10.13%
Counselors	1879.74	171.34	9.12%	169.63	9.02%
Psychologists	856.66	178.35	20.82%	88.74	10.36%

One important aspect of the educator staffing challenge is knowing whether those leaving the profession are newly engaged educators, moderately experienced educators, or are long-term education professionals nearing retirement. By analyzing staffing data, this brief examines how long pupil service personnel had been working in Wisconsin public schools. The time period categories used in this analysis are noted in Table 3. These categories were chosen to highlight the critical nature of early years of employment within the Wisconsin Public School system as well as the different stages within an educator’s professional development. One caveat to this data is that it measures the total years of experience as an educator overall rather than measuring only the total experience in a particular position or subject area. Thus, an educator who worked as a sub for one year, then as math teacher for 7 years, and finally as a guidance counselor for 7 years would have a sum of 15 years of total experience for this measure.

Table 3--Work History Categories used in Analysis

1 year or less of experience
2 years or less of experience
3 years or less of experience
3-5 years of experience
5-10 years of experience
10-20 years of experience
20+ years of experience

Table 4 presents a summary of the turnover and attrition groups within pupil services, and there are a couple of important inferences to make. With regards to turnover, one can note that there is significant turnover of newly licensed pupil service personnel with over 17% of all turnover is for individuals with less than 3 years of experience. Additionally, these 109 individuals represent 26% of all personnel with 3 years or less of work experience. This turnover rate remains relatively steady through five years of experience, after which it declines. This fact would seem to emphasize that there is a need for greater support or mentorship during this period.

Table 4—Pupil Service Turnover and Attrition compared to Years of Experience.

Years Exp.	Turnover		Attrition	
	# of individuals	% of total Turnover	# of individuals	% of total Attrition
0-1 years	46	7.28%	10	2.63%
0-2 years	74	11.71%	25	6.58%
0-3 years	109	17.25%	34	8.95%
3.1-5 years	80	12.66%	17	4.47%
5-10 years	145	22.94%	58	15.26%
10-15 years	119	18.83%	64	16.84%
15+ years	179	28.32%	207	54.47%

Regarding attrition, the information in Table 4 provides two important inferences. The first takeaway is that a bit less than 10% of those who left these positions entirely were still in that initial three year period. The second takeaway is that over 54% of those leaving the profession are extremely experienced educators, many of whom might be considering retirement. To confirm this last point, further analysis of the data showed that according to FTE percentages, over 45% of those leaving were 55 years old or older. However, according to the same analysis, 22% of those leaving were between 40-54 years old, which could be a concern for the retention of pupil service professionals in prime career years.

Maps of Educator Turnover Rates

The statewide analyses of educator turnover and attrition above do not, however, display the distribution or concentration of educator losses throughout the state. To accomplish this, this brief presents three separate maps that show turnover, attrition, and combined (turnover+attrition) rates for each of the 378 unified school districts in the state. Accompanying these maps are three tables that present related information. Table 5 shows the number of districts that fall within the different percentage-based categories for turnover and attrition.

Table 5—Number of Districts in Mapping Categories of Turnover and Attrition Rates

	Turnover	Attrition	Turnover+Attrition
0%	195	224	128
0-5%	23	10	10
5-10%	25	36	23
10-15%	21	23	25
15-20%	28	19	27
20-33.3%	53	32	71
33.3%+	33	33	93
no data	0	1	1

Tables 6 and 7 show the breakdown the data from Table 5 further using National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Locale Codes. These codes are “a measure of geographic status on an urban continuum that ranges from ‘large city’ to ‘rural.’” (<https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/commonfiles/localedescription.asp>) The four main categories in these codes are “city,” “suburb,” “town,” and “rural.” Table 6 shows the

breakdown of districts related to turnover percentages, while table 7 shows the same breakdown for attrition percentages.

Table 6—District Breakdown by NCES Locale Code for Turnover Percentages

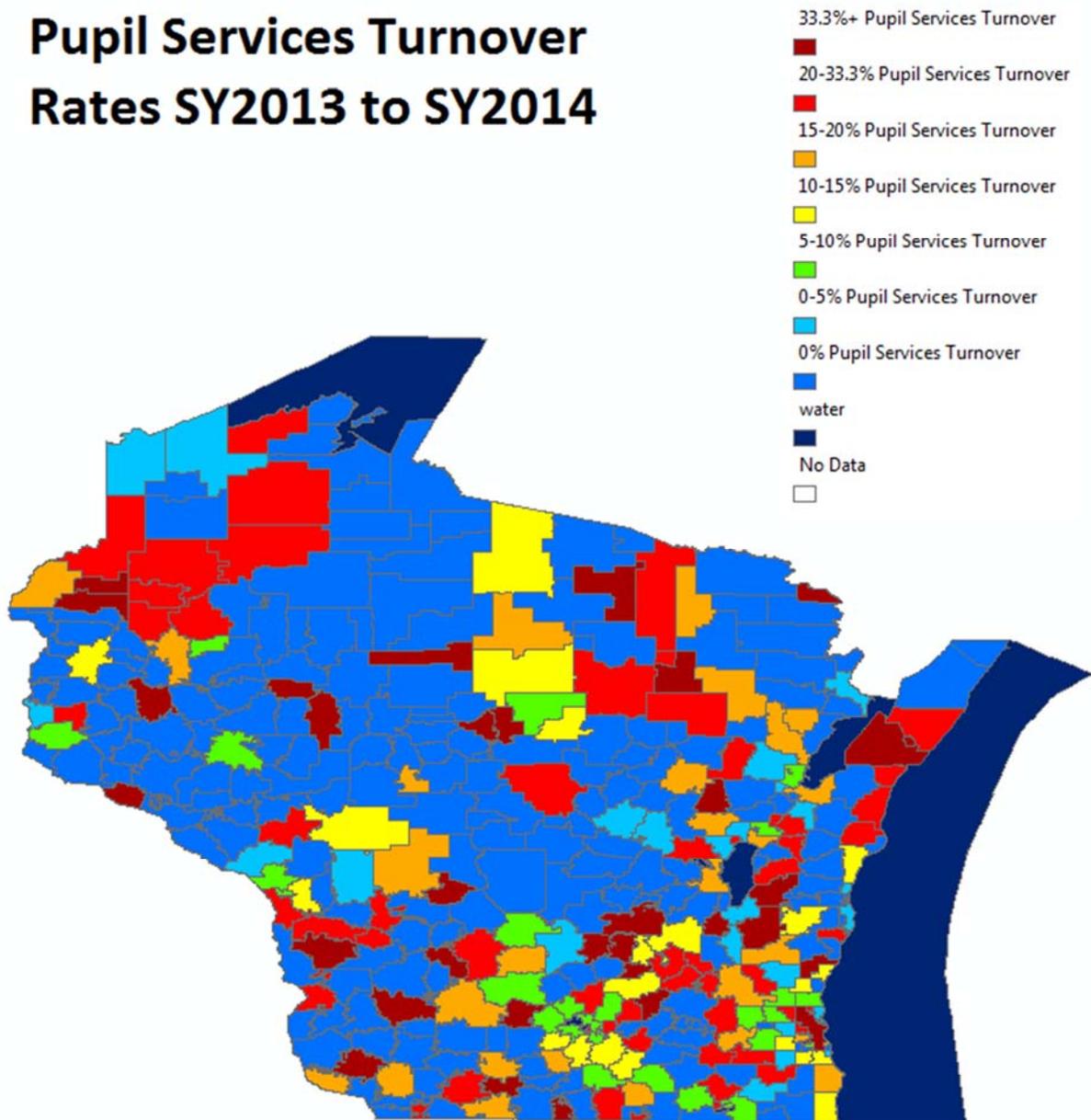
% Turnover	Rural	Town	Suburb	City	Total # of Districts
0%	136	42	17	0	195
0-5%	3	7	9	4	23
5-10%	1	6	13	5	25
10-15%	4	8	9	0	21
15-20%	12	6	5	5	28
20-33.3%	26	17	8	2	53
33.3%+	26	6	0	1	33
Total # of Districts	208	92	61	17	378

Table 7—District Breakdown by NCES Locale Code for Attrition Percentages

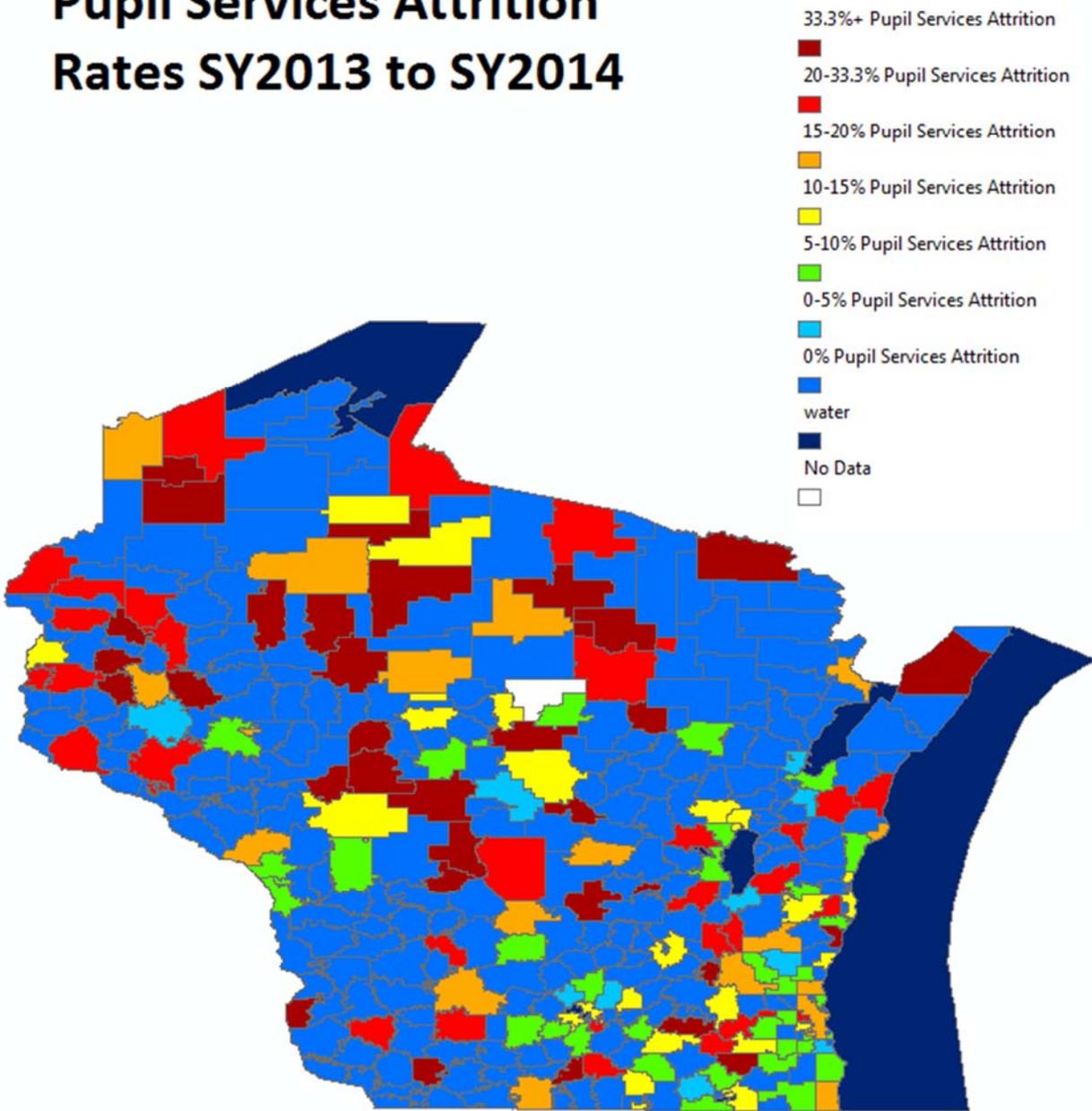
% Attrition	Rural	Town	Suburb	City	Total # of Districts
0%	148	52	24	0	224
0-5%	1	2	6	1	10
5-10%	4	10	14	8	36
10-15%	4	10	3	6	23
15-20%	4	7	7	1	19
20-33.3%	17	9	6	0	32
33.3%+	30	2	1	0	33
No data	0	0	0	1	1
Total # of Districts	208	92	61	17	378

Maps will be shown on separate pages for easier visibility

Pupil Services Turnover Rates SY2013 to SY2014



Pupil Services Attrition Rates SY2013 to SY2014



Pupil Services Turnover + Attrition Rates SY2013 to SY2014

