

### Teacher Separation – Fiscal Years 2018-2021

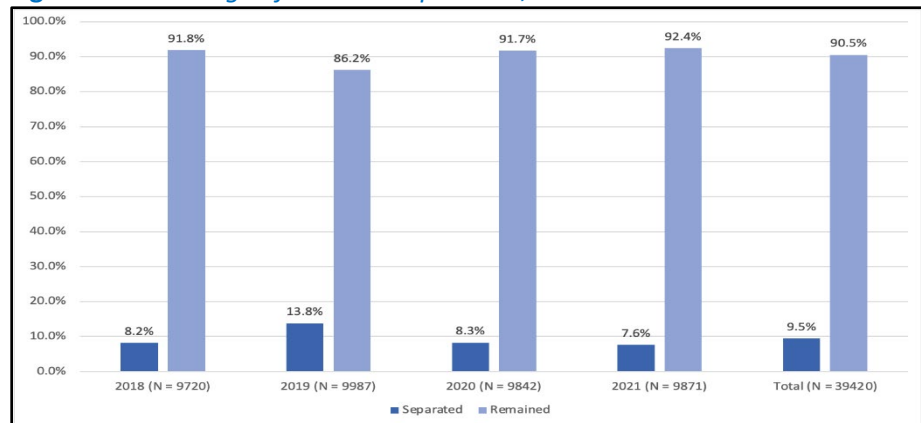
This data brief describes the frequency and rate at which teachers separated from Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) beginning in fiscal year (FY) 2018 through FY 2021. Teacher separation is the permanent or temporary discontinuation of service from a teaching position (Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), 2022). Areas explored and included are percentages of teacher separations, causes of teacher separation, and differences between teacher groups as they relate to these percentages and causes.

#### Key Findings

- From FY 2018-2021, 9.5% of PGCPS teachers separated from their positions.
- Voluntary resignations accounted for the majority of teacher separations.
- Most voluntarily resignations occurred for either education-related employment or other reasons.
- Male teachers resigned more frequently for education-related and non-education-related reasons than female teachers.
- White teachers resigned more frequently for education-related employment than teachers of other racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- Teachers with the least amount of experience resigned more frequently than their more experienced counterparts.
- Teachers in state-designated, low-performing schools separated from PGCPS at a higher rate than teachers at other schools between FY 2018 and FY 2021, but it is due to a large difference in FY 2019 only.

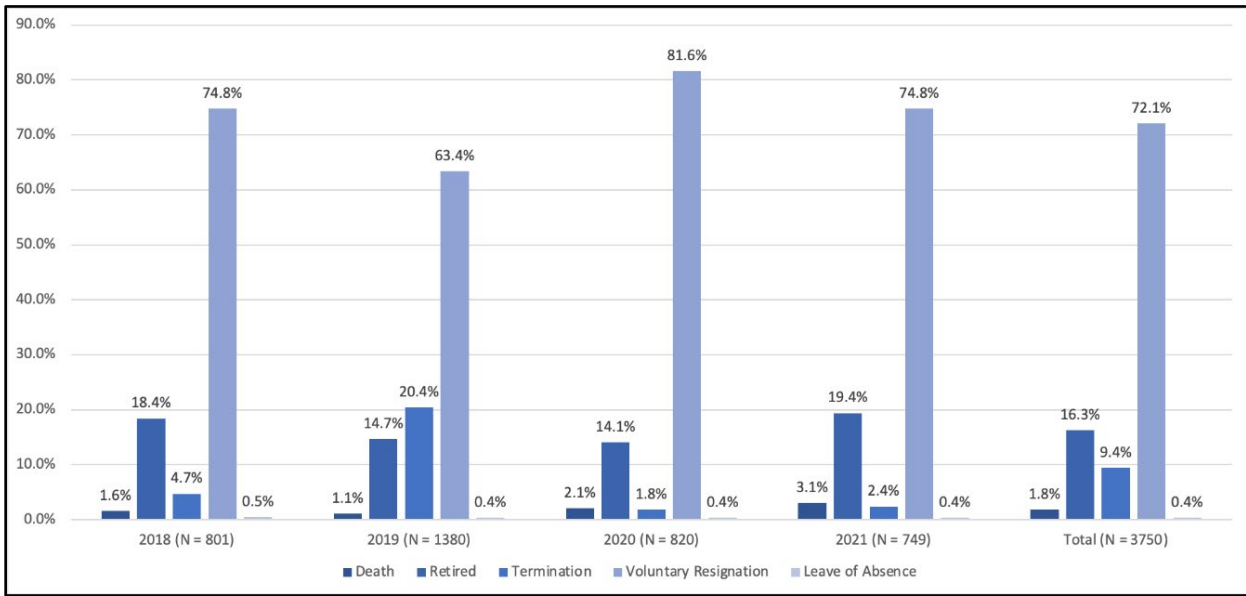
**Overall Teacher Separations:** From FY 2018-2021, 9.5% of PGCPS teachers separated from their positions. The highest rate of teacher separation occurred during FY 2019, when 13.8% of teachers separated from their positions. Driving the higher than average separations in FY 2019 were separations due to provisional or substandard certificates and voluntary resignations among teachers leaving to teach in another country. The lowest rate was in FY 2021 with 7.6% of the teaching staff separating. During FYs 2018 and 2020, the teacher separation rates were 8.2% and 8.3% respectively. See Figure 1.

Figure 1. Percentage of Teacher Separation, FY 2018-2021



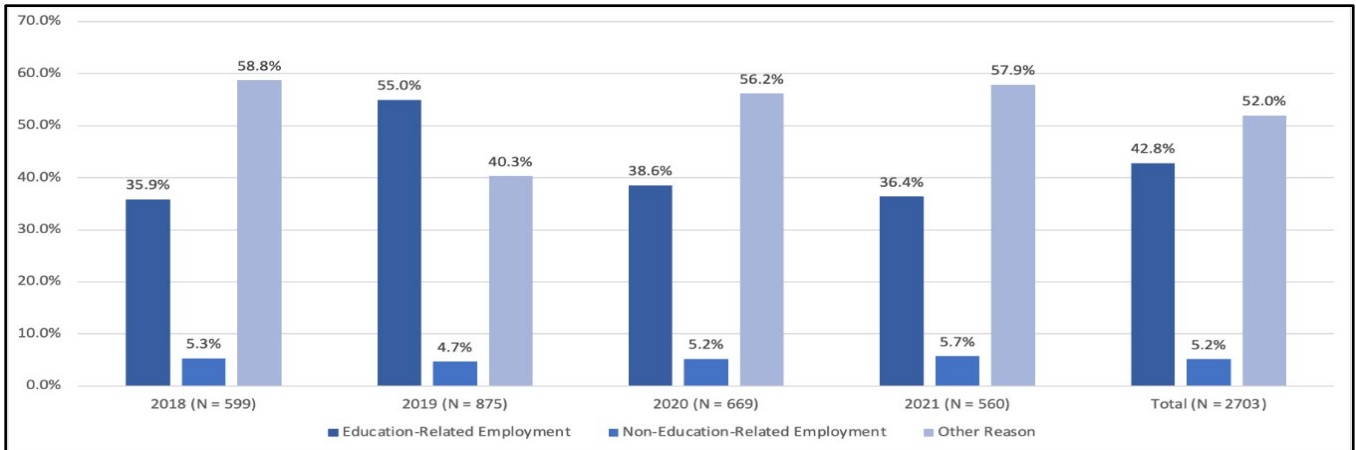
**Types of teacher separations:** Voluntary resignations accounted for the majority of teacher separations in FY 2018 (74.8%), 2019 (63.4%), 2020 (81.6%), and 2021 (74.8%). Retirement was the second highest cause of teacher separations in FY 2018 (18.4%), 2020 (14.1%), and 2021 (19.4%); however, termination accounted for the second highest percentage of separations in FY 2019 (20.4%) due to certification issues. Death and leave of absence made up less than 4% of teacher separations annually and less than 2% of separations overall.

**Figure 2. Causes of Teacher Separation, FY 2018-2021**



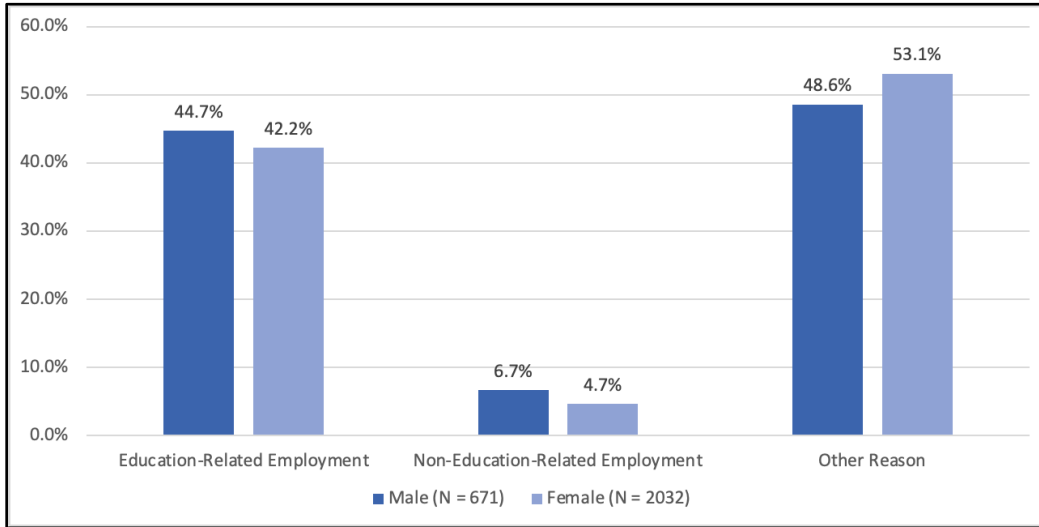
**Reasons for voluntary resignations:** Among teachers who voluntarily resigned from their positions, a significant proportion remained working in the field of education—either in a different capacity within PGCPs or, more often, teaching in another district, state or country, moving to a non-public school, to a position with MSDE or an institution of higher education. Of the 2,703 voluntary resignations between FY 2018 through FY 2021, 40 or 1.5% remained working within PGCPs; 1,118 or 41.4% left the district to teach somewhere else. Only 5.2% of teachers who left their position indicated that they would be employed in a field other than education. More than half, however, indicated some other reason for resigning their teaching position. These other reasons include, but are not limited to, moving (13.6%), home responsibility (9.5%), personal illness (6.4%), maternity leave (1.2%) and marriage (0.5%). There were 106 teachers who voluntarily resigned due to ‘dissatisfaction with teaching’, which accounts for 3.9% of all voluntary resignations from FY 2018 to FY 2021. See Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Causes of Voluntary Resignations, FY 2018-2021**



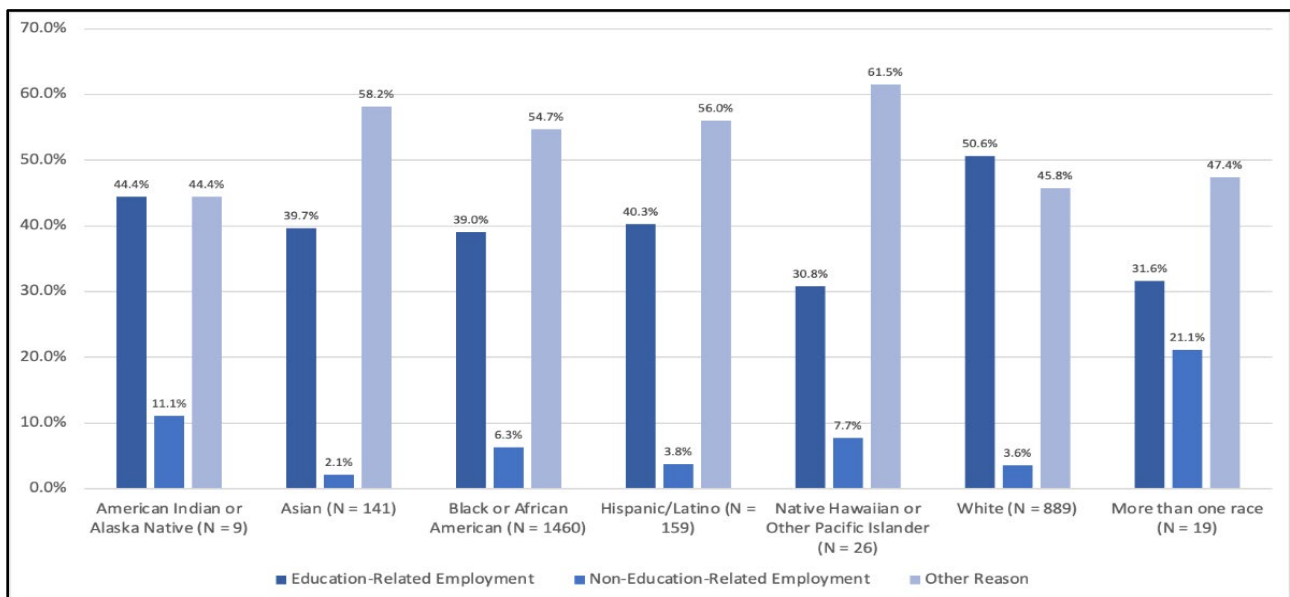
**Differences in Voluntary Resignations by Gender:** Male teachers resigned more frequently than female teachers for education-related (44.7%, 42.2%) and non-education-related (6.7%, 4.7%) employment. Female teachers, however, resigned for other reasons (53.1%) more frequently than their male counterparts (48.6%).

Figure 4. Voluntary Resignations by Gender, FY 2018-2021



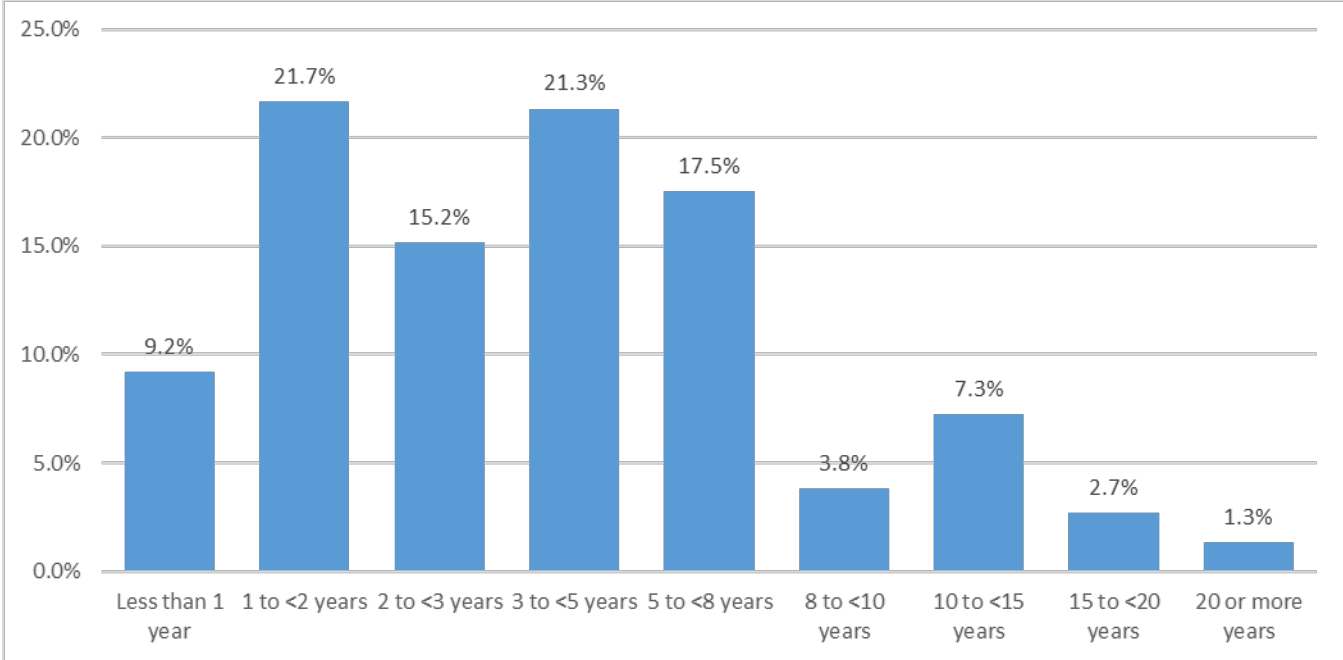
**Differences in Voluntary Resignations by Race/Ethnicity:** Most teachers, regardless of race or ethnicity, resigned for reasons other than accepting new employment. White teachers, on the other hand, more frequently indicated their resignation was due to accepting a new position related to education (50.6%), which primarily means teaching somewhere other than PGCPs. See Figure 5.

Figure 5. Voluntary Resignations by Race/Ethnicity, FY 2018-2021



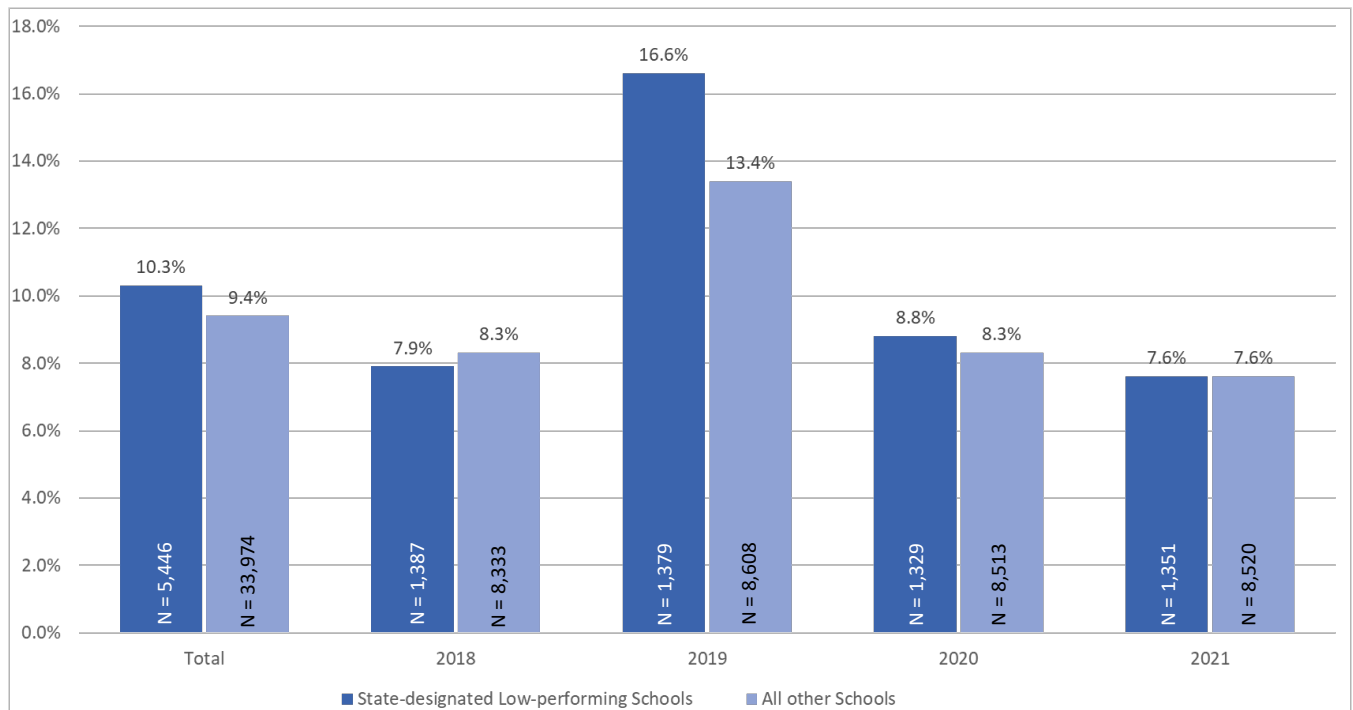
**Differences in Voluntary Resignations by Years of Experience:** Between FYs 2018 and 2021, the least experienced teachers resigned at higher rates than their more experienced colleagues. More than 46% of voluntary resignations were by teachers with less than three years of experience. An additional 38.8% of voluntary resignations were by teachers who had three to less than eight years of experience. Teachers with eight or more years of experience accounted for only 15.1% of voluntary resignations from FY 2018 through FY 2021. See Figure 6.

**Figure 6. Voluntary Resignations by Years of Experience, FY 2018-2021 (N = 2,703)**



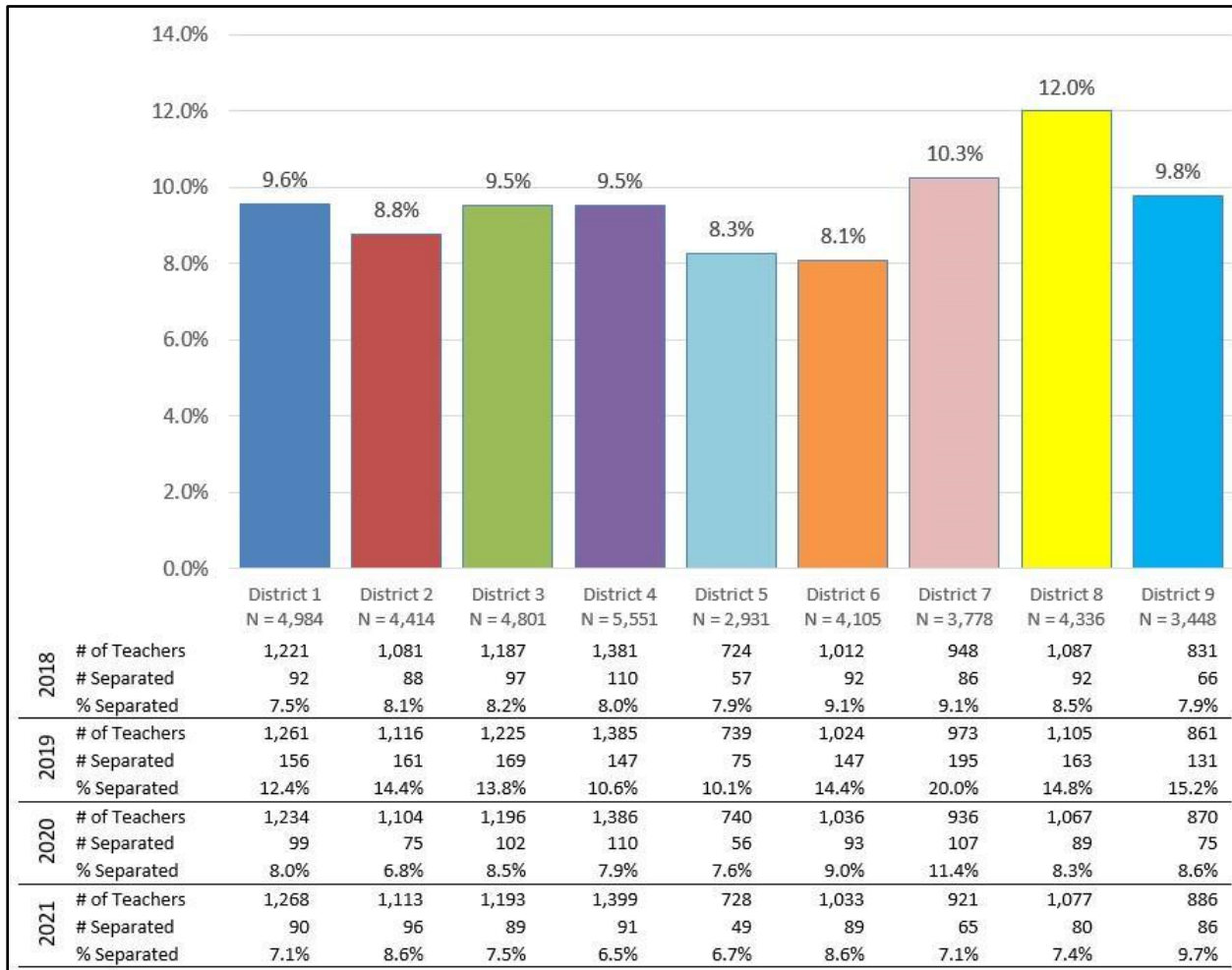
**Differences in Teacher Separations by School Performance Level:** Overall, teachers separated from PGCPs at a higher rate between FY 2018 and FY 2021 if the school in which they were teaching was designated by the MSDE as ‘low-performing’. During the four-year period under consideration, 10.3 % of teachers in state-designated low-performing schools separated from the district, compared with 9.4% of teachers in all other schools. If each individual year is considered separately, however, we find that the difference in the four-year teacher separation rate is driven by one year’s data—FY 2019. During that year, 16.6% of teachers in state-designated low-performing schools separated from PGCPs, while the percentage at all other schools was 13.4%. In FY 2018, teacher separations were slightly higher among teachers at higher-performing schools (8.3%) compared with 7.9% among teachers in state-designated low-performing schools. The opposite occurred in FY 2020 when teachers in state-designated low-performing separated at a higher rate than teachers in other schools – 8.8% and 8.3%, respectively. In FY 2021 there was no difference in the teacher separation rates between the two groups of schools. See Figure 7.

**Figure 7. Teacher Separations by School Performance Level, FY 2018-2021**



**Differences in Teacher Separations by Board District:** Throughout the four-year period from FY 2018 through FY 2021, the rate of teacher separation varies from a low of 8.1% in District 6, which is located in the central western region of the Prince George’s County to a high of 12% in District 8 located in the county’s southwest region. When the data are disaggregated by fiscal year, no consistent pattern of higher or lower than average separation in any particular district was found. While District 7, located in the southwest region of the county had the highest rate of teacher separation from FY 2018 through FY 2020, its separation rate was amongst the four lowest in FY2021. See Figure 8.

**Figure 8. Teacher Separations by Board District, FY 2018-2021**



**Conclusion:** Over the four-year period from FY 2018 through FY 2021, teachers separating from PGCPs peaked in FY 2019, which was primarily due to issues with certifications and a higher than usual percentage leaving to teach outside of the United States. Since then, the percentage of teachers separating from the district declined for two consecutive years. While data in this brief provide insight into PGCPs’ teacher separation, they do not comprehensively capture the interconnectedness of separation causes. For example, a teacher who retired (a separation cause) may have done so because he or she was dissatisfied with teaching (a different separation cause). Or, a teacher who sought education-related employment in another school district (a separation cause) may have done so because he or she moved (a different separation cause). This overlap indicates that the reasons teachers provided for separation could have fallen under multiple categories. Thus, the data reported could look differently if a data-collecting instrument was used that took this overlap into account.

Despite this limitation, however, the findings reported within this brief are corroborated by findings at the state level. In its presentation on teacher workforce, the MSDE reported that voluntary

resignations, whether for education-related employment or other reasons, accounted for the greatest number of teacher separations from a school district ([MSDE, 2022](#)). This finding is consistent with teacher separation in PGCPs, as both of these categories of voluntary resignation accounted for more than 90% of separations as shown in Figure 3. In addition, the state reported that “new teachers in Maryland cite voluntary resignation (55.4%) as the most common reason for exiting” ([MSDE, 2022, p. 11](#)). This finding is also consistent with data reported in this brief. Teachers in PGCPs with the least amount of experience report higher rates of separation than those with the most experience, as shown in Figure 6. In summation, while much can be learned from the data presented in this brief, continued analysis and additional data would allow for further insight into the particular reasons for teacher separation, which is necessary to develop policies to address this persistent problem.