

## Retention in Utah 2024

Teacher retention in Utah has always been a highly political topic and numerous incentive programs have been created to encourage higher teacher retention. Utah has had very consistent retention over the last 10 years. This is partly reflective of the high percentage of professionally licensed educators, who tend to be retained longer. However, the percentage of professionally licensed educators has decreased from 10 years ago. The trend seems to have reversed itself, but Utah needs to continue to attract and retain professionally licensed educators. This report demonstrates retention trends for both new and retained educators with emphasis on license levels and preparation program.

### Definitions

**Teachers:** This report focuses only on educators that are teachers. Teachers includes those assigned in Special Education, Pre-school Special Education, and regular education in grades K-12. It does not include educators assigned to school specialist positions, librarians, administration, counselors, or other student support positions. The cohorts examined below are based on educators in these positions.

**Retention:** The teachers continue to stay in the cohort are retained if they continue to work in public education. They may change to one of the non-teaching assignments. Educators who take a year off but return the following year would not be included in the cohort retention the year they missed but would be included in the cohort in the year they returned.

**Professional licenses:** These are educators with either a level 1, 2 or 3 license in school years prior to 2020-21 or a professional license after 2019-20. A professional licensed educator has completed a preparatory program.

**Associate licenses:** These are licenses granted to educators who are in a preparatory program either through a university, a Local Education Agency (LEA Alternate Pathway to Professional License (APPEL) program or the USBE Special Education preparatory program. These programs have minimum qualifications that the educator must meet before being granted the associate license. This license was not created until school year 2020-21 limiting the ability to review long term impacts.

**LEA-Specific:** These licenses are granted by the local education board allowing the educator to teach in the classroom without any mandatory requirements. The educator must only have a background check and complete the ethics review to be granted this license. These licenses are nontransferable and are like an emergency hire in other states. This level did not exist prior to school year 2020-21.

**Non-Professional licenses:** These include licenses except levels 1, 2 or 3 in school years prior to 2020-21. This category includes Level 1 APT, 1-Conditional, District, Level 1,2 and 3 LEA Specific, Alternative Route to Licensure, 1 -Returning, Student, Temporary and International Guest Teacher.

**Licensing Fault line:** Beginning in school year 2020-21, licensing went from 13 license types to 3 license types. This change makes comparisons of retention by license type prior to and after July 1, 2020 difficult. Prior to school year 2020-21, all licenses besides levels 1, 2 and 3 were combined together as non-professional. Caution should be taken in comparison of the non-professional prior to school year 2020-21 and the associate and LEA Specific licenses awarded starting that year.

**First Year teachers:** These are educators in the first year an they worked in the public system in a teaching position and the license reflects the license level held at the end of that school year.

### Retention in Utah

Utah’s Retention rate has remained almost constant for over 10 years with on average 91% of educators returning to public education each year. On average, the state can expect 73% of its educators to still be in public education after 5 years. More than half of public teachers employed are still working 10 years later.

	Average Percentage of teachers retained in a single year (2013-2023)	Average Percentage Retention at Year 5	Average Retention at Year 10
All Teachers	91%	73%	54%
Professional	92%	75%	55%
Associate Years 2021 and on	87%		
LEA Specific Years 2021 and on	78%		
Non-Professional Prior to 2021	78%	54%	39%

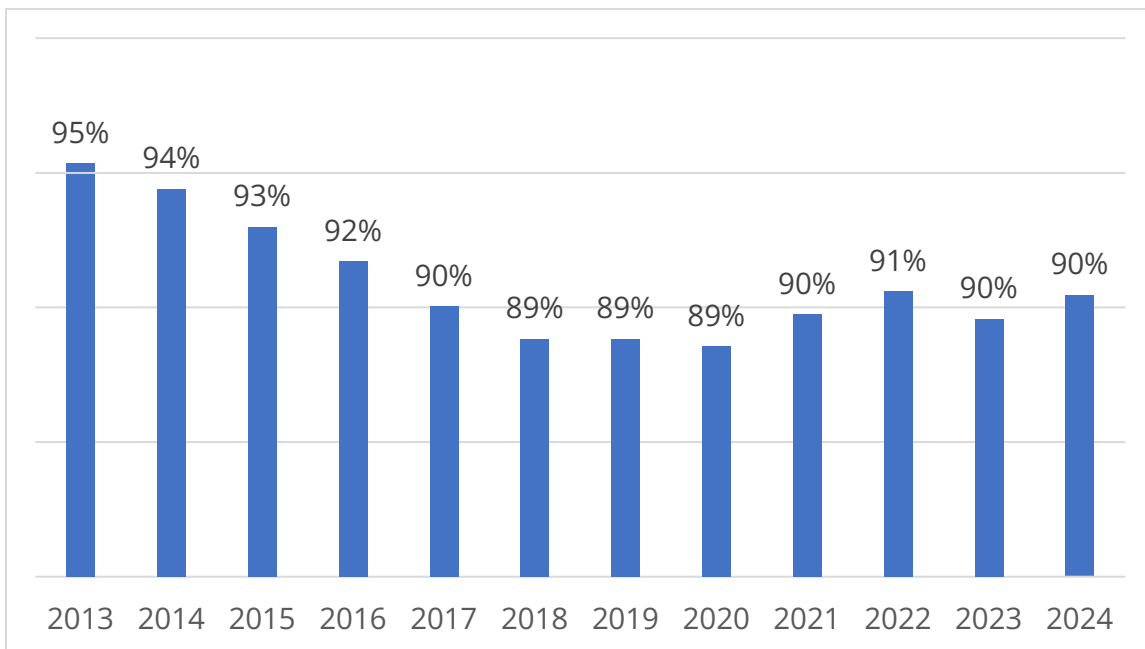
Professionally licensed educators continue to have better retention than educators who do not have a professional license. On average 92% of professionally licensed

educators return every year for the last 10 years while only 78% of educators who are non-professional return. At five years, on average 75% of professional educators are still working, while only 53% of non-professionally licensed educators are.

The percentage of professionally licensed educators has changed over the last ten years. In school year 2012-13, more than 95% of teachers had a professional license. This dropped to a low of 88.6% in school year 2019-20. It has improved since then, although it remains 5% percentage points less than 2012-13.

State Ten Year Retention can be found here: [10-year Retention information for the state.](#)

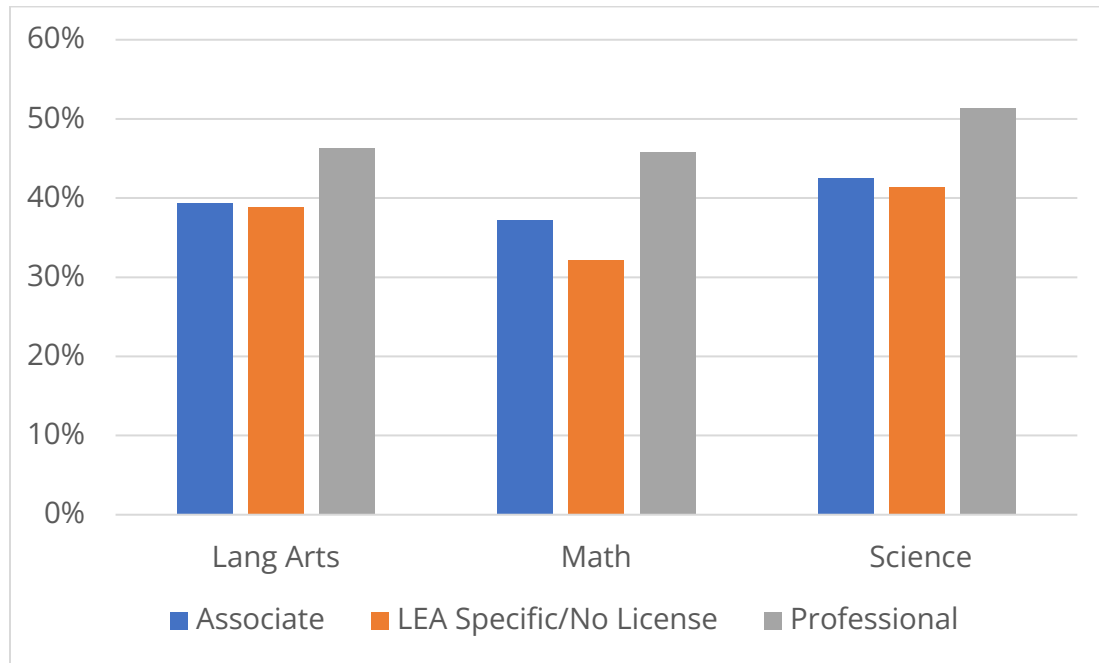
**Figure 1: Percentage of Professionally Licensed Educators**



Another way to visualize the impact of non-professionally licensed educators is to understand the effect on students. The number of students potentially impacted by a non-professionally licensed educator in 2012-13 was 28,516. In 2023-24 over 64,000 students could have been impacted.

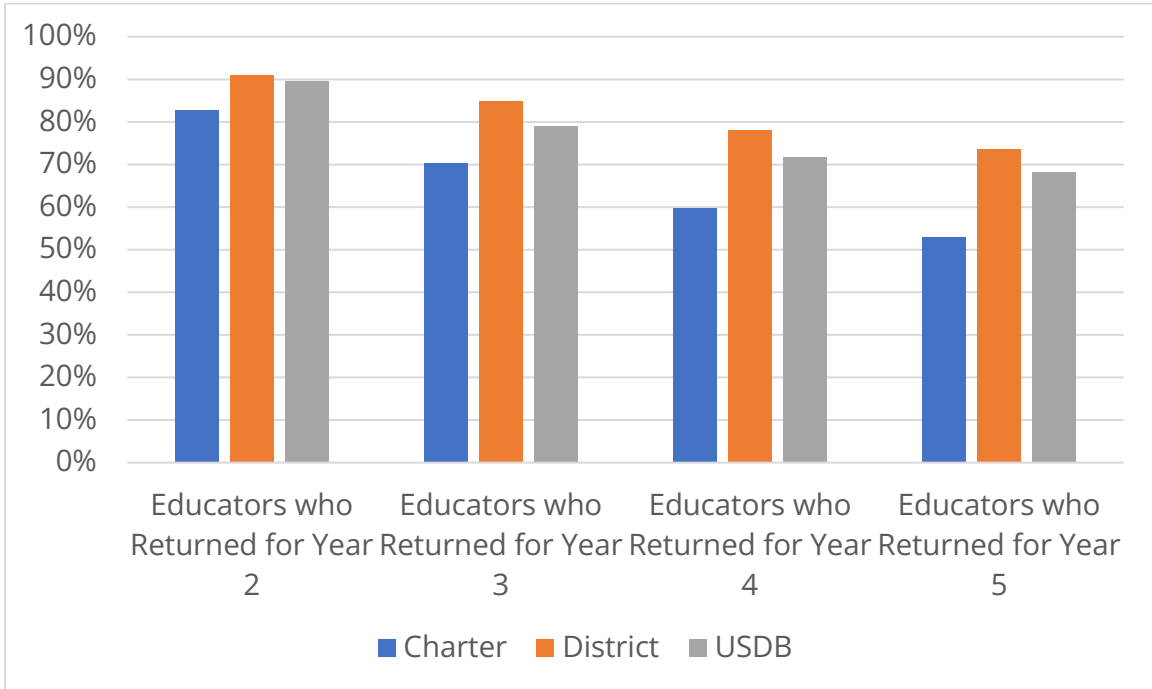
Students who have a fully qualified professional licensed educator have better student outcomes than students with less qualified educators. Students eligible for free and reduced lunch or multi language learners are more negatively impacted by an unqualified educator and more likely to be assigned one.

Figure 2: Percentage Students Proficient by Subject and License Level SY 2022-23



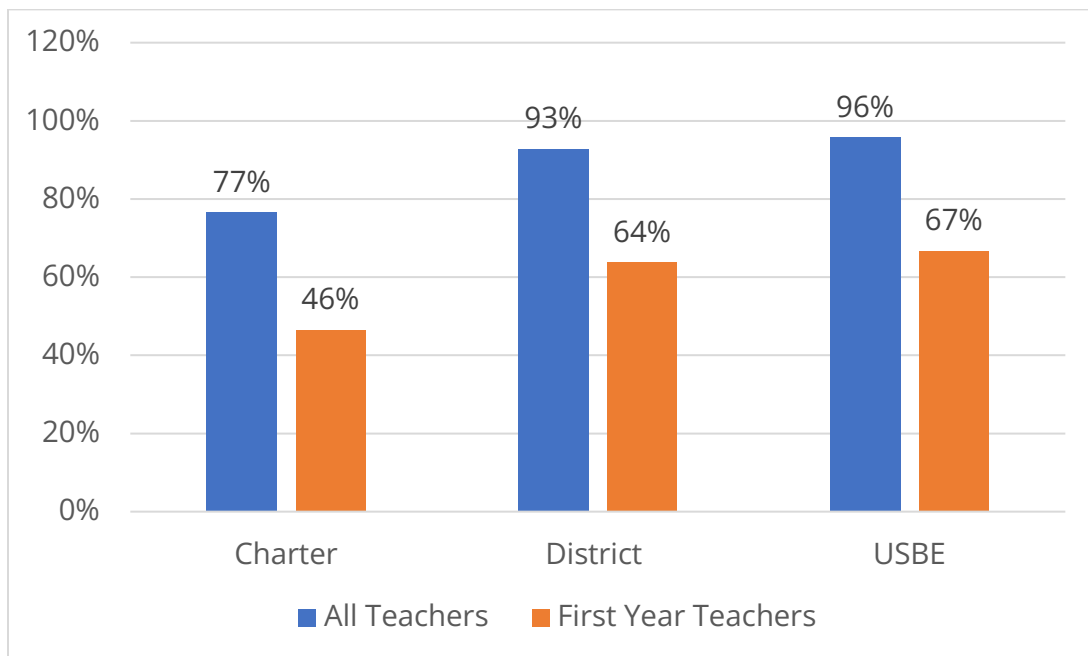
Although retention of educators continues to be high, some districts and charter schools continue to have retention challenges. Individual district and Charter level retention can be found here: [5-year Retention by LEA document](#).

**Figure 3: Retention by Agency Type 2019-20 cohort**



Many charter schools have struggled with finding and retaining professionally licensed educators.

**Figure 4: Percentages of Professional Licensed Educators (SY 2023-24)**



Charter schools are not required to have a licensed administrator with a leadership license area.

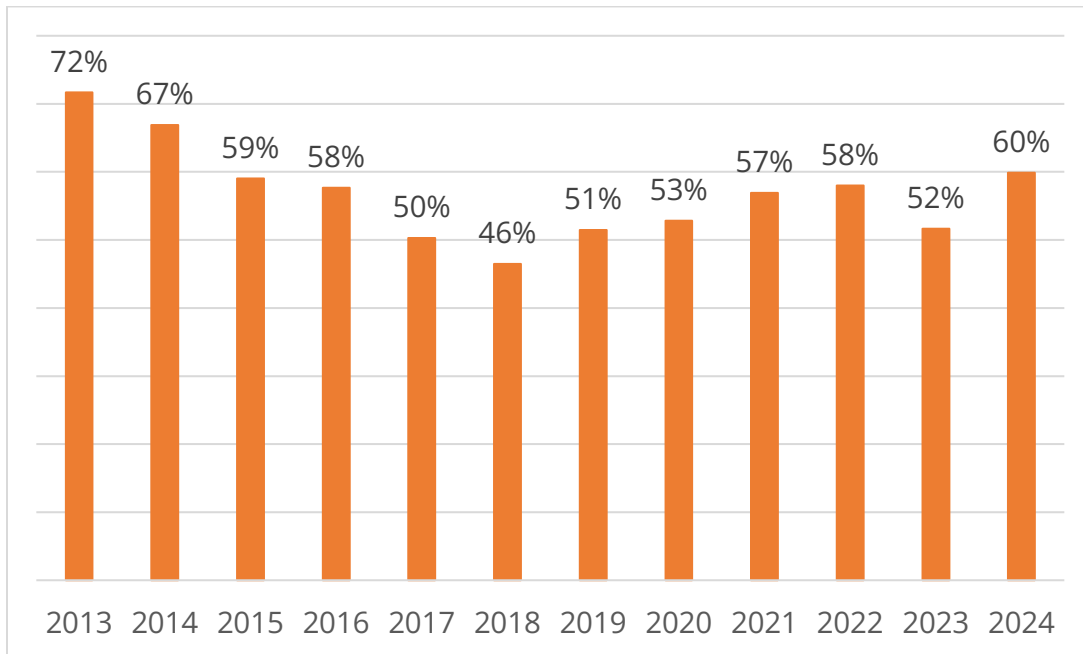
### First Year Educators

Although Utah’s teacher retention for all teachers is high, first year teachers continue to show significant attrition rates. Like all teachers the rates have remained almost constant for the last 10 years.

	Average Percentage of teachers retained in a single year (2014-2024)	Average Retention Year 5	Average Retention Year 10
First Year Teachers			
All Teachers	84%	61%	46%
Professional	89%	67%	51%
Associate Year 2021 and on	86%	N/A	N/A
LEA Specific Years 2021 and on	76%	N/A	N/A
Non-Professional Prior to 2021)	77%	51%	36%

First year educators who have a professional license are only a few percentage points below all professional educators. The percentage of first year professionally licensed educators has declined since 2013. School year 2017-18 had the lowest percentage with less than half of new teachers having a professional license. Although there was a drop in 2023, the percentage has been slowly increasing since a low of 46% in 2017-18.

**Figure 5: Percentage of First Year Teachers with a Professional License**



### Retention and Preparatory Programs for Teaching Licenses

Utah has 9 universities with approved teacher programs. The universities combined have recommended 2,817 teacher licenses in school year 2022-23. In general, educators prepared in Utah university programs have higher retention rates.

In the table below, the green signifies that the university has a retention rate higher or equal to all professionally license teachers. The pink signifies that the retention rate is equal or higher than new professionally licensed educators. Except for Brigham Young University and Westminster College, retention of the university programs is generally higher than the state average for all professionally licensed educators or higher than first year professionally licensed educators. Two of the universities had more than 80% of the educators being retained for 5 years. The lower retention rates at BYU may a result of the large student population coming from out of the state of Utah and choosing not to stay in Utah. Westminster has a very small program with only 32 teachers working in 2019-20.

University of Utah	2019-20 count	2nd Year Retention Rate	3rd Year Retention Rate	4th Year Retention Rate	5th Year Retention Rate
Brigham Young University	259	82%	65%	51%	44%
Utah Tech University	60	93%	82%	77%	62%
Utah Valley University	67	99%	91%	81%	73%

Utah State University	243	89%	82%	72%	66%
University of Utah	52	96%	94%	89%	83%
Western Governors University	176	93%	81%	75%	68%
Weber State University	101	93%	90%	81%	70%
Southern Utah University	148	97%	94%	90%	89%
Westminster College	32	84%	78%	69%	69%
<b>ALL TEACHERS</b>					
State Prof	28661	92%	86%	80%	75%
<b>First Year Teachers</b>					
State Prof	1533	90%	81%	71%	65%

Although most of the Universities licensed educators have high retention rates, many of the educators who graduate and are recommended for a license fail to work in Utah after that.

University	Teachers Recommended in SY 2022-23	Working in SY 2023-24	Percentage Working
Brigham Young University	369	182	49%
Southern Utah University	121	78	64%
University of Utah	105	75	71%
Utah State University	377	257	68%
Utah Tech University	70	49	70%
Utah Valley University	271	193	71%
Weber State University	179	134	75%
Western Governors University	1024	239	23%
Westminster College	23	16	70%
State	2539	1223	48%

These percentages have declined slightly over the last 10 years from 53% of teachers being recommended working in 2013-14 to 48% this year. This is likely due to the expansion of the Western Governor's online program which attracts a majority of students from outside the state.



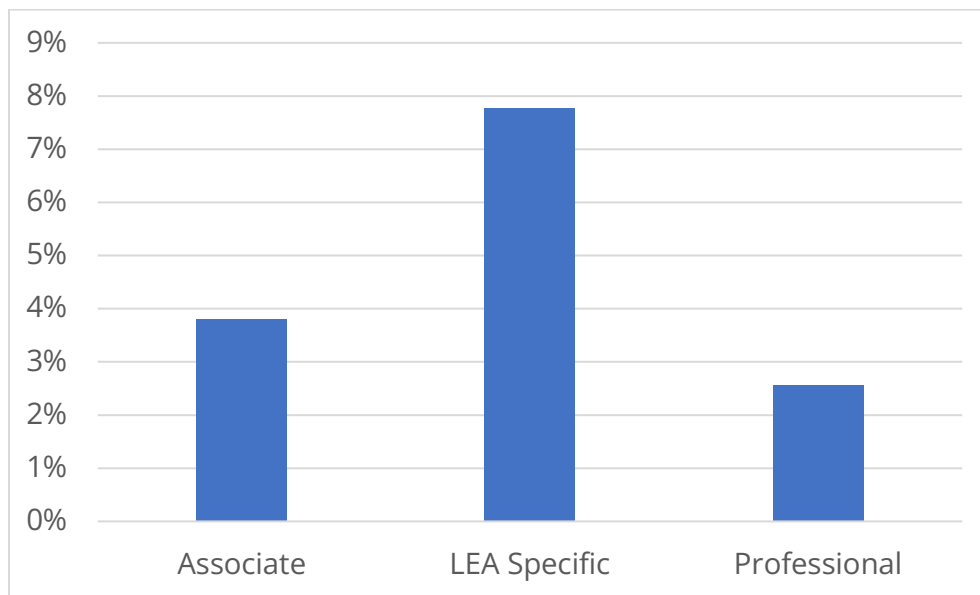
## Licensing Changes and Retention

In school year 2020-21, licensing had a major change and the number of licenses levels went from 13 to 3: Professional, Associate and LEA-Specific.

Professional licenses are the only licenses that had minimal impacts from this change. The exception to this is International Guest Teachers went from their own licensing level to professional. There are about 75-90 new Internal Guest Teachers each year making up about 4-5% of the new professional licensed educators. As these educators typically stay for 3 years, there may be a small impact on the new professional licensed educator's retention rates. School year 2023-24 will be the first year that 3-year retention can be calculated with the International Guest teachers being included.

LEA Specific licenses are approved by the local school board and have few state level requirements. These licenses are not allowed in special education and preschool special education. These licenses are renewable with 60 hours of professional development. In general, they make up a small percentage of all teachers 5% however a larger percentage of first year teachers 25%. On average, 25% of these new educators with an LEA Specific license do not return for year two. In addition, more LEA Specific educators leave before the end of year.

**Figure 6: Percentage of First Year Educators who left before EOY: 2023-24**



Leaving during the school year creates additional burden for the LEAs and they must find either a long-term substitute or a new educator.

Associate Licenses are a new license level that was created for educators in a preparation program who are teaching in the classroom. These licenses are also available at the license area and endorsement level although this report will limit analysis to those with the license level. They are available either through one of the university programs or through the LEA APPEL program or state special ed program. They make up about 4% of all educators and 18% of new educators. For retention analysis the license level at the end of the school is used for license level. Some educators will have been on an associate (or LEA Specific for part of a year and then were recommended for the professional. These are more typically university program students.

Associate license holders have a slightly lower retention rate than professionals. This lower retention rate is likely a result of people getting into education and not finding it satisfactory. Among first year teachers the retention rate is only a few percentage points below professional and 10% higher than LEA Specific. There are not enough years of data to see if educators who go through an APPEL program will have a high retention like universities. The APPEL program is like WGU which tends to attract older students making a career change. The retention of WGU students who work in Utah is high at 83% in year 5.

In school year 2022-23, 1,208 educators received a new associate level license with a license area in teaching. This count was limited to educators with an address in Utah to remove educators who got an associate license to use for student teaching in another state. 1,045 of these educators either worked in school year 2022-23 or 2023-24. The counts by how the educator qualified for an associate license are below:

Qualification Reason	Associate Licenses	Worked During SY 2022-23 and/or SY 2023-24	Percentage
University Program	270	260	96%
APPEL Program	859	688	80%
Others: mostly educators moving to Utah who do not meet all the requirements for the professional license	79	73	92%

First year associate level license holders are often paid less than first year professional or LEA Specific license holders in the same LEA. It is too early in the program to see if it significantly impacts longer term retention.

LEA Specific License holders have the lowest retention rates with almost a quarter of the educators not returning after a first year of teaching. Again, the newness of the license makes it difficult to predict long term retention rates. It can be noted that another 11% do not return for a third year of teaching. (See table XXX . If non-professional licenses are used as proxy, we would expect the retention rate after 5 years to be well below educators with a professional license. These educators have worse outcomes with students particularly highly impacted student groups.

#### Conclusions:

Retention in Utah has been remarkably stable. Ninety-one percent of educators in the classroom are professionally licensed. Professionally licensed educators continue to return to education at high rates. And new professionally licensed educators from most Utah university programs have equally or higher retention rates. Utah is providing a stipend for student teaching in school year 2024-25. It is hoped that this might encourage educators to remain in Utah and teaching. Professional licensed educators have better student outcomes and are less likely to leave during the first-year teaching. Programs to increase student enrollment in university programs should be encouraged. Although the trend has reversed the percentage of new professionally licensed educators is 14% lower than it was in 2012-13. Among all teachers, this trend has also reversed with 4% fewer professionally licensed educators.

The impacts of the APPEL programs are difficult to measure due to the newness of the programs. However initial outcomes show promising results. Increasing exposure to the availability of the license could increase availability of educators for hire. As the application requires some time and effort by the applicant, the educators are more prepared and demonstrating more motivation.

LEA Specific license make up about 5% of all educators. Almost a quarter of LEA Specific License holders do not return to teaching after the first year. As many of these people have had no experience to education, this might be reflection of the person being unaware of the job requirements.