Arizona Graduate Talent Briefing: Education

PSEO Data Brief | 2026

Talent Stickiness Index (TSI) | Bachelor's Degree Graduates, 2004–2019 Cohorts

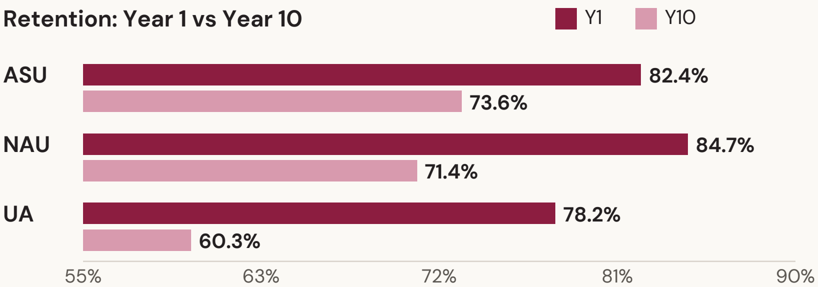
KEY FINDING

Education is the stickiest industry in the panel — Arizona retains 78–85% of its education graduates one year post-graduation. But high geographic retention doesn't solve the deeper workforce challenge: a profession that is losing its workforce to burnout and attrition.

Graduate Retention by Institution

Institution	Y1	Y5	Y10	Decline
ASU	82.4%	75.0%	73.6%	-8.8 pp
NAU	84.7%	75.7%	71.4%	-13.3 pp
UA	78.2%	66.6%	60.3%	-17.9 pp

Retention: Year 1 vs Year 10



Arizona Context

- Teachers not fully certified for their assignments up 60% between 2020-21 and 2023-24 (reaching 8,229)
- 14% of AZ educators left the profession in 2024-25 (burnout, lack of respect, student behavior)
- OEO projects only +8,278 education jobs through 2034 (0.3%/yr growth — one of slowest rates)
- Challenge is replacement, not expansion: AZ retains education grads, but the profession is losing them

Source: Arizona Department of Education, 2026; Learning Policy Institute, 2025; Arizona OEO, 2025

Where Graduates Work — One Year After Graduation

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Education graduates are the most geographically rooted in the panel: 82% are employed in Arizona one year after graduation, 84% in the broader Mountain region, 6% in the Pacific region, and 10% elsewhere. This near-total Mountain-region concentration reflects how teacher-licensure and district hiring pipelines tie educators to the state in which they trained.

WHERE DEPARTING EDUCATORS GO

The small share of education graduates who leave the Mountain region most often relocate to the Pacific region (≈6% at Y1) — a regional outflow worth watching as a signal of compensation and working-conditions pressure. Further investigation could quantify whether AZ's certification and retention challenges are accelerating this flow.

What This Means for Employers

Arizona's public universities produce education graduates at high retention rates, but those rates mask a workforce losing teachers to burnout, compensation gaps, and working conditions. UA's 18 percentage-point decline from Y1 to Y10 warrants particular attention in Tucson-area school districts. Strategic investments in early-career mentorship, competitive compensation packages, housing supports, and leadership pathways — alongside continued investment in the Arizona Teachers Academy to lower the cost barriers to entering the profession — could help convert high initial retention into sustained profession-long careers.

Alignment with Workforce Demand

REPLACEMENT DEMAND

Education workforce turnover
ADE 2026

YEAR 1: ALIGNED

Graduates stay in-state
78–85% retention

PROFESSION AT RISK

In-state but leaving teaching
14% annual exit

Engagement Opportunities for School District Partners

1 Mentor Early Careers

Partner on induction programs and new-teacher coaching to reduce first-5-year attrition

2 Invest in Retention

Support housing stipends, loan forgiveness, and leadership pathways for mid-career teachers

3 Diversify Pipelines

Partner through the Arizona Teachers Academy, paraprofessional-to-teacher pathways, and Grow-Your-Own programs to broaden entry into the profession

ABOUT PSEO DATA & LIMITATIONS

PSEO (U.S. Census Bureau Postsecondary Employment Outcomes) captures only graduates with covered employment under state unemployment insurance — excluding self-employed individuals, independent contractors, federal workers, and those working outside the U.S. Industries are reported at the 2-digit NAICS level, small cells are suppressed to protect privacy, and 10-year retention is only observable for the 2004, 2007, and 2010 cohorts.

Learn more about the PSEO data ecosystem: census.gov/programs-surveys/ces/data/public-use-data/pseo.html

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO)

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