

# To Teach or Not to Teach?

Two other stories in this issue address the issue of retaining science and math teachers. In July 2007 the Institute of Education Sciences of the National Center for Education Statistics published a study, *To Teach or Not to Teach?* based on the 2003 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study to examine the role of teaching at all levels and in all fields in the careers of students who received their bachelor's degrees in 1993, as reflected in the subtitle of the study, *Teaching Experience and Preparation Among 1992-93 Bachelor's Degree Recipients 10 Years After College*.

When these 1992-1993 bachelor's degree recipients were contacted ten years after their graduation, it was found that a fifth of them had taught at some time during those ten years and that a little more than half (11%) were still teaching. A smaller percentage of male graduates had taught than female graduates, and the percentage of Asian and Pacific Islander graduates having taught (only 7%) was smaller than that for other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 71% of education majors among the 1992-1993 graduates had taught, and 43% were still teaching ten years later.

A greater number of those still teaching ranked in the lowest quartile on their SAT or ACT scores, but they were also likely to have a higher college cumulative grade point average (greater than 2.75). Ninety-one percent of those still teaching were doing so in a public school, with 64% of them in an elementary school. Ninety-three percent of these teachers were satisfied with their jobs, although only 48% of them were satisfied with their pay, support from parents, and student motivation to learn.

Of the graduates who had left teaching by the time they were interviewed in 2003, family reasons were most cited by females, while the need for greater pay was most cited by males. While about two thirds of those still teaching in 2003 expect to make a lifetime career of it, the attractors for the other third to leave are much the same for the two genders as they were for those who had already left teaching by 2003. When the percentages expecting to make a lifetime career of teaching are broken down by racial/ethnic background, though, the percentage for African-American (only 37%) is little more than half of that for whites (70%) and Hispanics (65%).

Complete copies of the report are available on-line at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007163.pdf>.