

# Student Mobility and Stability in Wichita Public Schools

## Definitions

**Student mobility rate:** the number of students who leave or enter a school (or district) in one academic year as a percentage of the total official enrollment for that academic year. This is also known as the “joiners plus leavers” (JPL) formula.

$$\frac{(\text{Enters}_t + \text{Exits}_t)}{\text{Total Official Enrollment}_t} \times 100$$

t = academic year

**Student stability rate:** the number of students who are enrolled at a school for an entire academic year as a percentage of the total official enrollment for that academic year.

$$\frac{\text{Total Official Enrollment} - \text{Exits}_t}{\text{Total Official Enrollment}_t} \times 100$$

Schools can have a high stability rate and a high mobility rate. For instance, a school with a total enrollment of 100 students has 90 students stay enrolled in the school for the entire year. The stability rate for that school is 90% (90/100 x 100). During the course of the school year there were 10 spaces that at some time became vacant. Ten spaces means there were 10 exits, and if those spaces were filled again that would be 10 new entries. The mobility rate would be 20% [(10 enters + 10 exits)/100 x 100]. If those 10 seats were vacated again and then filled again, the mobility rate would be 40% [(20 enters + 20 exits)/100 x 100].

Data to support these calculations comes from the Synergy report ATD 412 using the date range from the official enrollment date to the last day school is in session.

The official enrollment count occurs on September 20, or the next business day when the 20<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend.

## Why Mobility Matters

Studies exploring the effect of mobility on student achievement have found that highly transient students tend to do worse in school, have a higher likelihood to be retained in a grade and are more likely to not graduate.

Rumberger and Russell’s, and the General Accounting Office’s studies (as cited in Lovell & Isaacs, 2008) found that students who had transferred schools at least twice were “half as likely to be proficient in reading as their stable peers...[M]obile third grade students [were] nearly twice as likely to perform below grade level in math [in comparison with their stable peers].” (p.1)

Rumberger’s study (as cited in Lovell & Isaacs, 2008) found that students who change elementary schools several times are 20% more likely to exhibit violent behavior in high school. (p.1)

Mobility impacts stable students, too. Valuable lesson time is lost when teachers must integrate new students. Kerbow’s study (as cited in Rhodes, 2005) found that in highly mobile schools “...lessons often do not progress beyond elemental levels of knowledge or skill...even stable students in highly mobile elementary schools are the equivalent of one entire year behind their peers in more stable schools by the end of the sixth grade.” (p.3)

## References

Mwaturura, C., Partnership for Strong Communities (2011). *Student mobility and stability in CT*. Retrieved from [http://www.psychousing.org/files/imagecache/132x114/lyceum\\_report\\_student\\_mobility.pdf](http://www.psychousing.org/files/imagecache/132x114/lyceum_report_student_mobility.pdf)

Rhodes, V. (2005). Kids on the move: The effects of student mobility on NCLB school accountability ratings. *Penn Graduate School of Education Perspective in Urban Education*, 3(3), 1-3.