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Public-School Jobs Are Approaching Their Pre-Pandemic Peak.

- **Local education added 12,000 jobs in March to 7.93 million**
- **Latest increase in payrolls was smallest since September**

US local-government education payrolls inched closer to their pre-pandemic peak in March, extending a rebound that's trailed the broader economy's recovery.

Localities added education jobs for a sixth straight month, with a gain of 12,000 to around 7.93 million, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data released Friday. While the latest jump was the smallest since September, it brings employment to within about 1.6% of February 2020 levels. Meanwhile, private-sector payrolls have surpassed their pre-pandemic mark by 2.7%.

The pandemic dealt an abrupt and brutal hit to the education workforce, amounting to hundreds of thousands of positions. Cities and towns have struggled to lure back educators tempted by higher pay in the private sector, or by jobs offering the option of working from home. A silver lining may be that the gradual pace of the rebound, at a time when many municipalities are fiscally healthy, could cushion against job losses should a recession hit.

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