

To: Interested Parties
From: GBAO
Date: January 31, 2022

Poll Results: Stress And Burnout Pose Threat Of Educator Shortages

A new survey of National Education Association members reveals a startling level of stress and burnout among educators and a large increase in the percentage who say the pandemic has made them more likely to retire or leave the profession earlier than planned. While much of recent public debate has centered around school closures, the reality is that 94% of educators report their schools are fully open for in-person learning. For the small number working at schools that are not fully in-person, the cause is primarily staff shortages, rather than concern about COVID-19 rates. For educators, burnout and shortages are the biggest issues that require attention.

NEA members support several proposals to address burnout, including increasing pay, hiring more staff, and providing more mental health support for students.

While schools remain open for in-person learning, absences among teachers and staff have exacerbated concerns about staff shortages. Educators cite improved ventilation systems as the safety measure they most want to see in schools, but few members say their schools have this in place, and an increasing number feel their school's ventilation does not provide them enough protection, especially in high-poverty schools.

The following are key findings from a nationwide poll of 3,621 educators who are members of the National Education Association.

Key Findings

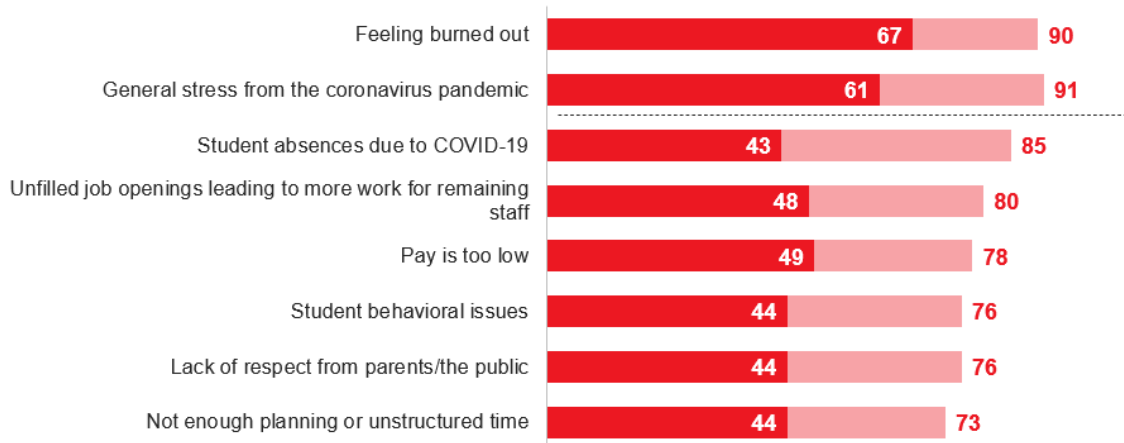
- **Educator burnout is a very serious issue.** The top issue facing educators right now is burnout, with 67% reporting it as a very serious issue and 90% a very serious or somewhat serious issue. General stress from the pandemic is also a very serious concern, and student absences and unfilled job openings leading to more work for remaining staff are also key stressors.



Issues Facing Educators

Below is a list of issues or problems some school employees have experienced during the coronavirus pandemic. For each one, please indicate how serious of a problem this is for you

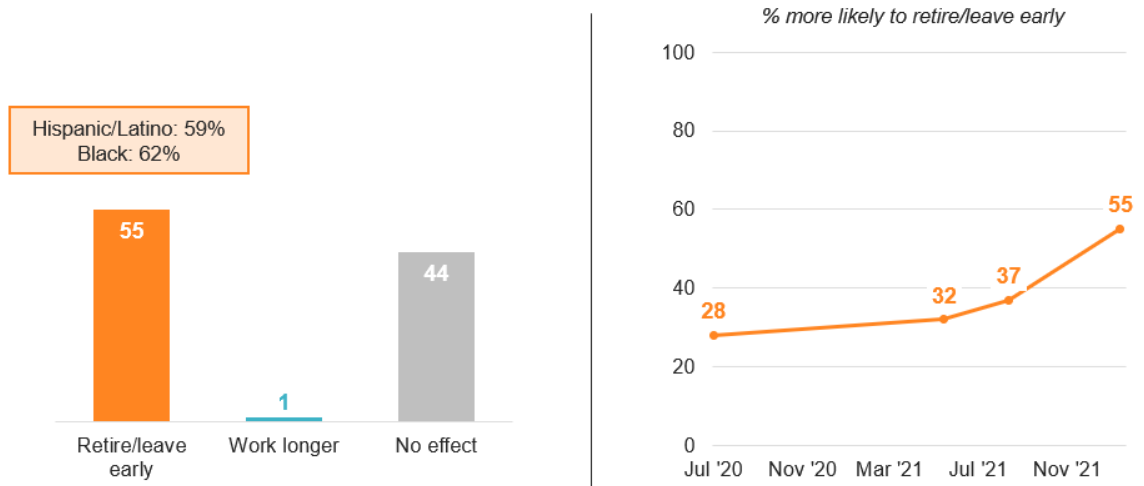
● Very Serious ● Total Serious



- **More than half (55%) of members say they are more likely to leave or retire from education sooner than planned because of the pandemic, almost double the number saying the same in July 2020.** Black and Hispanic educators are more likely to say they are more likely to retire or leave early, which could leave the teaching profession less diverse.

Retirement/Leaving Plans

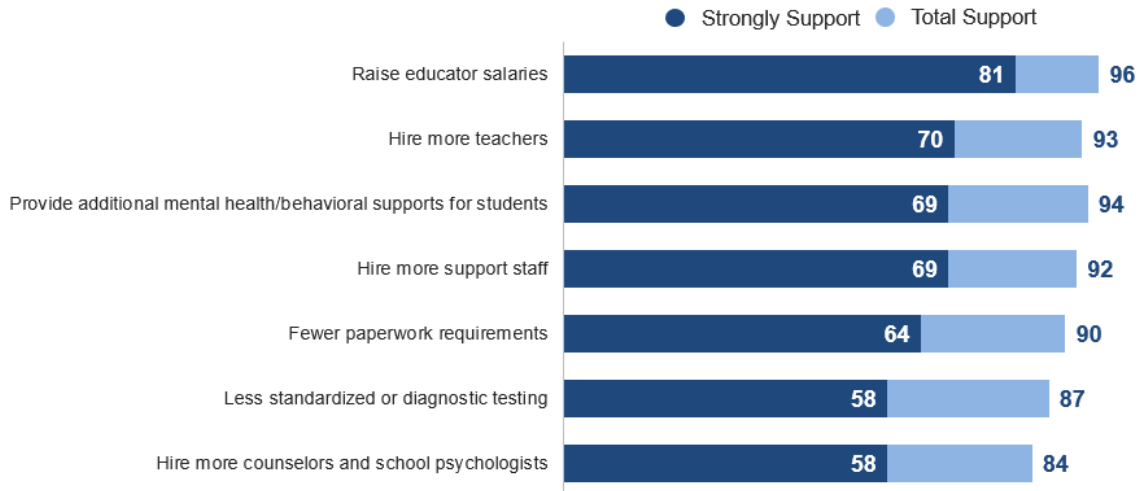
Has the COVID-19 pandemic made you more likely to retire or leave education earlier than you'd planned, more likely to work longer than you'd planned, or made no difference in your plans?



- **Educators support several proposals to address educator burnout.** NEA members strongly support raising educator salaries, providing additional mental health support for students, hiring more teachers, hiring more support staff, and reducing paperwork load.

Addressing Burnout

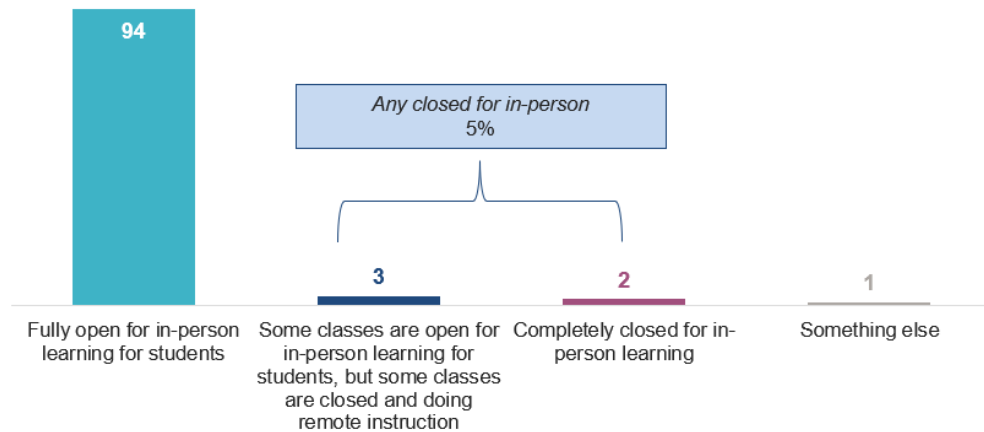
Below is a list of different proposals to address educator burnout. For each one, please indicate whether you support or oppose the proposal.



- Nearly all members' schools are currently fully open for in-person instruction.** The vast majority of members (94%) report that their schools are fully open for in-person learning. And among the small percentage of members in schools that are not fully in-person, 62% say the reason is teacher and substitute shortages due to COVID-19 exposures, meaning that the schools lack sufficient staff to function in-person.

Instruction Type

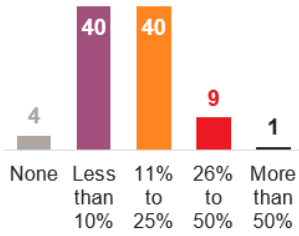
Which of the following best describes the current status of your school?



Half of NEA members estimate that more than 10% of teachers at their school are currently absent due to COVID-19 exposure, and 69% of members report more than 10% of students at their school are currently absent for the same reason. Additionally, nearly three-fourths members have had to fill in for a colleague due to staff shortages.

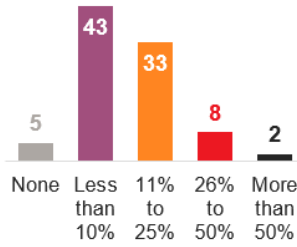
% Of Teachers Out

About what percentage of teachers at your school would you estimate are out right now because of COVID-19 exposures?



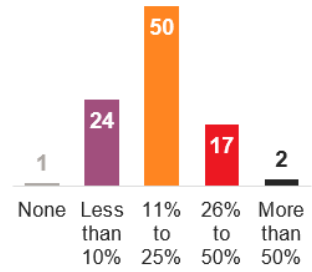
% Of Support Staff Out

About what percentage of support staff at your school would you estimate are out right now because of COVID-19 exposures?



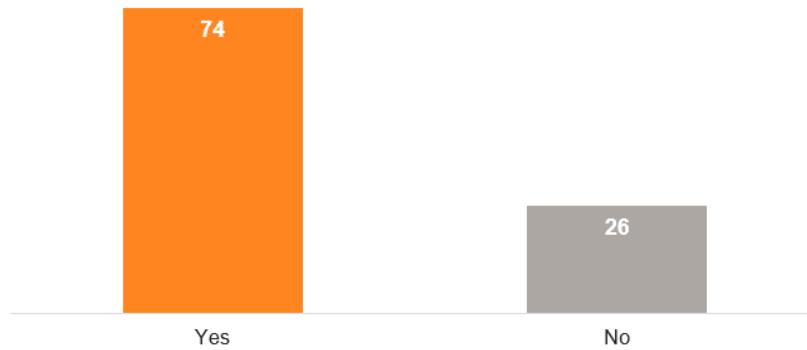
% Of Students Out

About what percentage of students at your school would you estimate are out right now because of COVID-19 exposures?

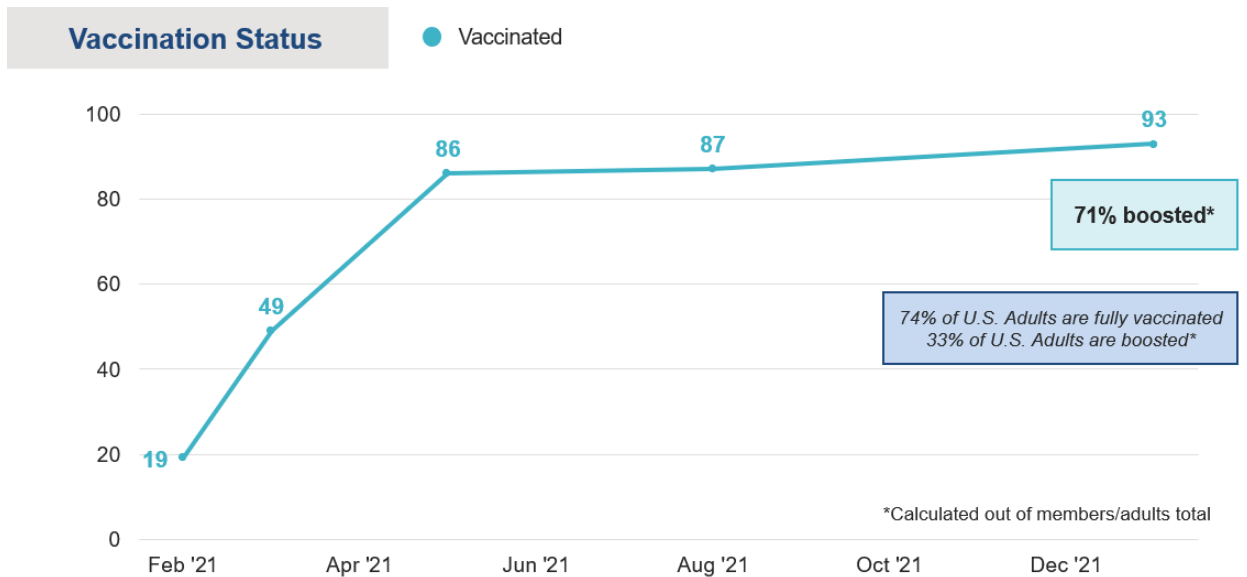


Fill-In

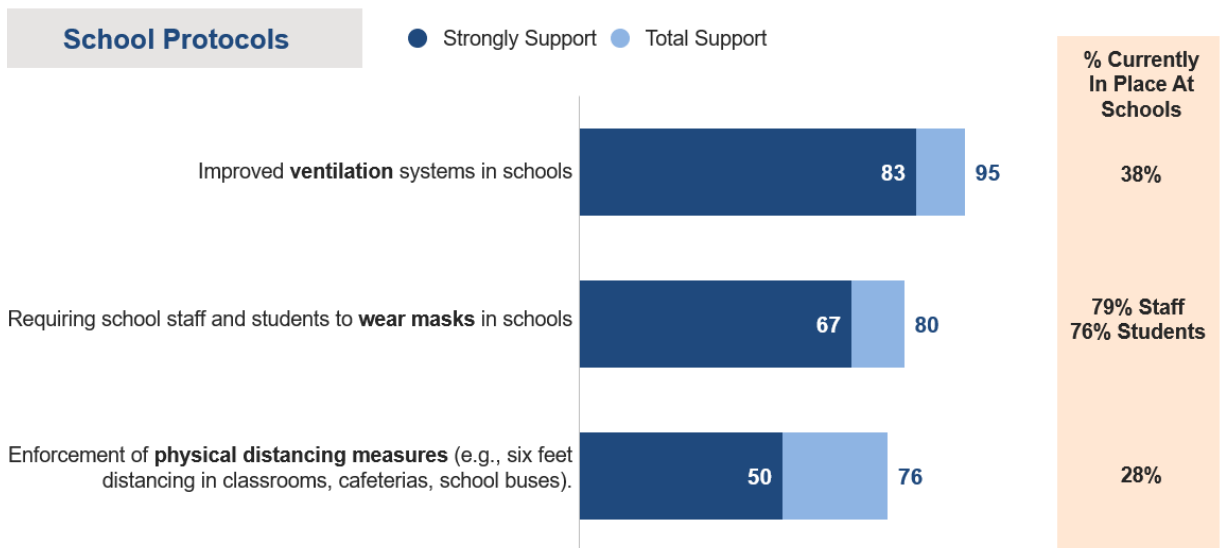
Have you had to fill in for colleagues or take on other duties at your school or in your district due to staff shortages?



- The vast majority of NEA members have been vaccinated, and most are boosted.



- **Ventilation remains a key area to address.** Improved ventilation systems in schools is the safety measure with the highest support, but only 38% currently have it in their schools.

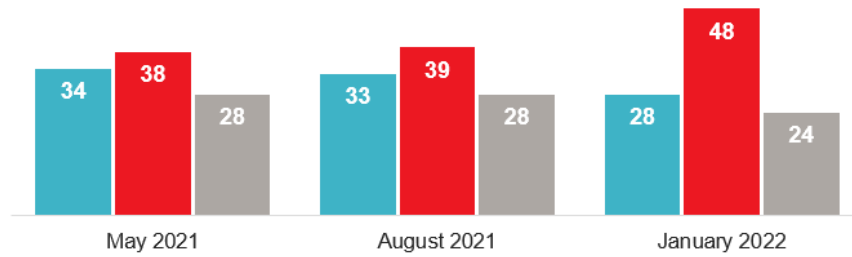


When asked whether they think their school’s ventilation system is providing them enough protection from COVID-19 to feel safe working in-person, only 28% say yes, 48% say no, and 24% aren’t sure. Members in high-poverty schools are less likely to report having enough protection from their school’s ventilation system.

Safe School Ventilation

In your opinion, is your school's ventilation system providing you enough protection from COVID-19 for you to feel safe working in-person?

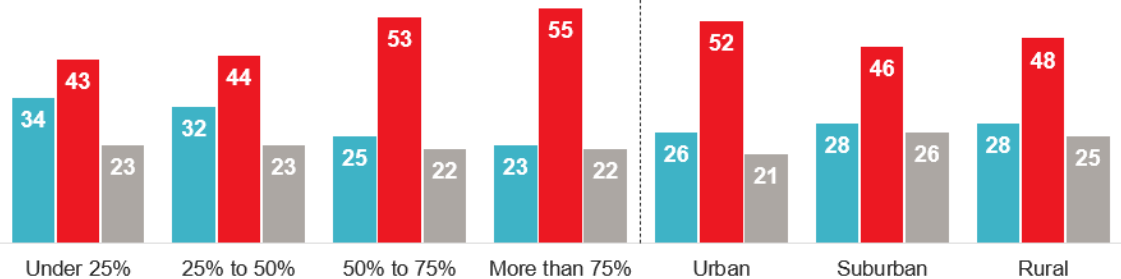
● Yes ● No ● Not sure



Safe School Ventilation

● Yes ● No ● Not sure

% Of Students Eligible for Free And Reduced Lunch



Methodology

On behalf of the National Education Association, GBAO conducted the nationally representative online survey of 3,621 non-retired NEA members January 14-24, 2022. The sample is subject to a +/- 1.6 percentage point margin of error at the 95% confidence level.