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.
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.

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.
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.

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?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Less than 10%</th>
<th>11% to 25%</th>
<th>26% to 50%</th>
<th>More than 50%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % 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?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Less than 10%</th>
<th>11% to 25%</th>
<th>26% to 50%</th>
<th>More than 50%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### % Of Students Out

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None</th>
<th>Less than 10%</th>
<th>11% to 25%</th>
<th>26% to 50%</th>
<th>More than 50%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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?**

- **Yes**: 74
- **No**: 26
• The vast majority of NEA members have been vaccinated, and most are boosted.

![Vaccination Status Graph](image)

74% of U.S. Adults are fully vaccinated
33% of U.S. Adults are boosted*

*Calculated out of members/adults total

• 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.

![School Protocols Graph](image)

Improved ventilation systems in schools
83% Strongly Support
95% Total Support

38% Currently In Place At Schools

Requiring school staff and students to wear masks in schools
67% Strongly Support
80% Total Support

79% Staff
76% Students

Enforcement of physical distancing measures (e.g., six feet distancing in classrooms, cafeterias, school buses)
50% Strongly Support
76% Total Support

28%

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.
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.