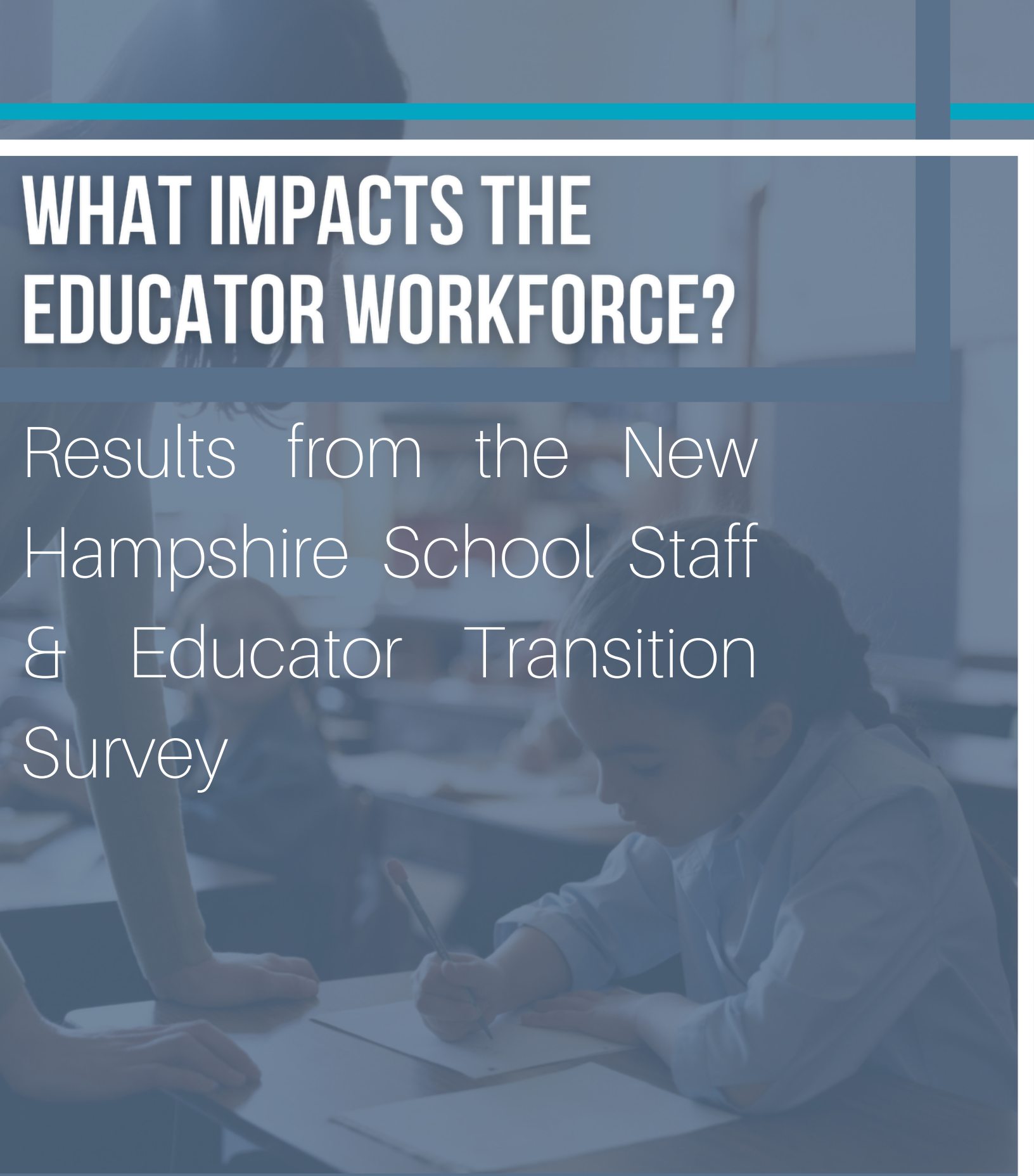


WHAT IMPACTS THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE?

Results from the New Hampshire School Staff & Educator Transition Survey

Spring 2023

Administered by Reaching Higher NH &
Women Educators Leading Learning (WELL)

REACHING HIGHER NH

A Note From RHNH

All children deserve a rich, engaging, and high-quality public education that gives them the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare them for whatever future they choose, regardless of their background, family income, or ZIP code. And our collective future depends on that promise: the students of today will drive the future vitality of our state. We must ensure that our public schools, which educate the vast majority of our young people, have the resources and investments necessary to meet the needs of every student. Every child deserves to be taught by professional, well-qualified teachers who are supported by strong and inclusive leadership. But in New Hampshire, public schools have faced severe workforce shortages, disproportionately impacting students experiencing poverty, students of color, and students in rural school districts. Reaching Higher NH and Women Educators Leading Learning (WELL) set out to investigate what's behind the teacher workforce shortage: why are teachers and school leaders leaving their schools, or the profession altogether? We found that educators feel that the teaching profession has been devalued. Teachers and paraeducators leave because they will make more money elsewhere, whether by working for another district, in another state, or in another field. They also leave because of the growing demands on them, combined with concerns about school culture and climate. School leaders and staff are concerned about the direction of public education in New Hampshire, citing concerns with the state's inequitable school funding system, school safety, and divisiveness. And at all levels, teachers and school staff highlighted increasing student needs and the COVID-19 pandemic as factors in their decisions to leave their schools. This report serves as a launching point for critical statewide discussions about what we can do to make sure that all of our teachers and school staff feel valued and supported by their peers, their leadership, their communities, and the state as a whole. It includes the next steps for what we can do statewide and locally to ensure that teachers and staff -- both current and future -- thrive. Granite Staters value our public schools and believe them to be the backbone of our democracy and the future of our state, and we recognize the critical role that teachers play in the success and growth of our students. Let's start that conversation. NICOLE HEIMARCK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important investments that our state can make in supporting our public schools is establishing and maintaining a strong, diverse, and supported teaching and learning profession. Fully prepared teachers make sure students excel in critical subjects like math, science, and reading, and teach them the skills they'll need to learn and understand the world around them. Empowered school leadership, including school principals, create strong and inclusive learning environments that support the whole child and deeper learning. And school staff like paraprofessionals, school counselors, and school nurses support young people by fostering student learning and well-being. Reaching Higher NH and Women Educators Leading Learning (WELL) administered a survey in Spring 2022 to learn more about why teachers and school staff are leaving, or are considering leaving, their schools, the state, or the profession. The survey data affirms what we at Reaching Higher NH have been hearing in the field: New Hampshire teachers and school staff are feeling increased pressure and demands and aren't being financially compensated for their professional expertise like in other fields. Teachers in particular feel the weight of growing political divisiveness and a shifting school climate, where increasing pressures, expectations, and demands have impacted the field. Many teachers directly cited political rhetoric, attacks from lawmakers, and a lack of support from state leaders as reasons for leaving the state or profession, and legislation like the "divisive concepts" law has heightened fears of consequences for teachers and school leaders. And at all levels, inadequate pay has driven them out of the profession altogether. New Hampshire must better support our teachers and school staff. We can start by:

- **Ensuring that teachers and school staff, regardless of where they teach, receive fair and competitive pay.** New Hampshire must ensure that its school funding formula provides school districts with the resources they need to pay teachers and school staff fairly.
- **Investing in effective retention strategies,** like mentoring, professional learning and growth, and establishing collaborative leadership structures and practices.
- **Strengthening and diversifying the teaching profession.** All students benefit when teachers and school staff represent the rich diversity of our communities. Preparation programs like teacher residencies and Grow Your Own (GYO) programs create opportunities to recruit local educators and strengthen long-term retention. According to research, nearly half of the new teachers in residency programs across the country are people of color.
- **Improving recruitment strategies.** Eliminating barriers for future teachers to pursue pathways to education is critical to making sure that New Hampshire has a strong, well-qualified teacher workforce now and in the future. Scholarships, grants, loan forgiveness, and other incentive programs can lessen the financial burden of pursuing a career in education and encourage teachers to stay in the state.
- **Respecting teaching as a profession.** Well-qualified teachers and school leaders are highly trained and experts in their field. The public overwhelmingly supports public schools and teachers, and trusts them more than almost any other profession. We must ensure that our schools are well-supported and are affirming places for our students, teachers, and staff, and that they are valued in our communities and in our state as a whole.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Survey 1

Key Findings 2

Summary of Responses 3

Overview of Results

- Classroom Teachers 4
- Administrators 8
- Paraeducators 12
- Other School Staff 16

Overall Summary 19

- Top Concerns From All Respondents 20
- Responses from the Field 22
- Next Steps 23



ABOUT THE SURVEY

Outreach was conducted through social media, communications, and email, between May 2022 and June 2022.

- 590 respondents
- 24% from Upper Valley; 20% from Monadnock Region; 15% from the Southeastern Region 14% from Greater Concord
- Even mix between elementary, middle, and high school
- 58% have been in education for 15+ years; 31% between 5-14 years; 10% 1-4 years
- 34% of respondents were not leaving their role, district, or profession but have concerns over the direction of public education

Our survey sample was not randomized, and results should not be interpreted as reflecting the broader New Hampshire public. However, the data serve as a starting point for discussion and further research.



KEY FINDINGS: TOP CONCERNS

SCHOOL CLIMATE

39% of teachers and school staff identified school climate as a top concern in their current or future role.

ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

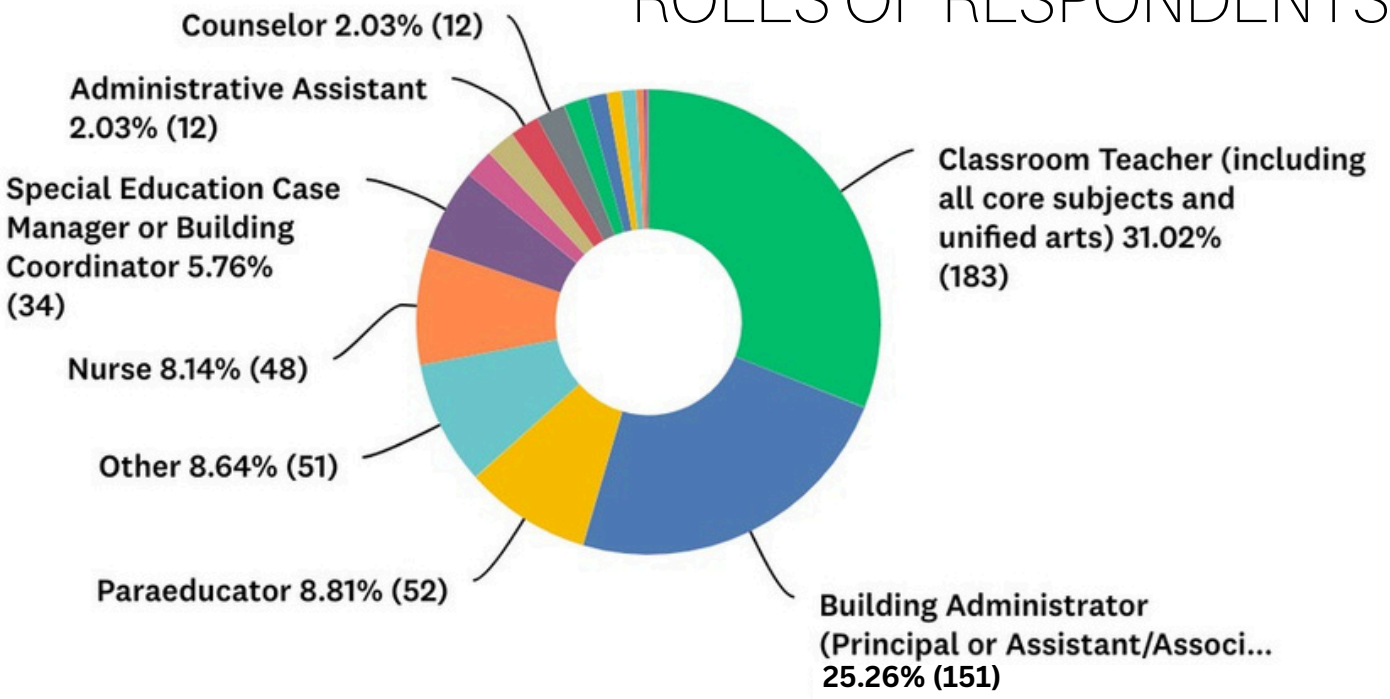
32% of teachers and school staff identified the level of support from the administration/ school board as a top concern in their current or future role.

SALARY

28% of teachers and school staff identified salary as a top concern in their current or future role.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

ROLES OF RESPONDENTS



The three roles with the most participants in this survey are Classroom Teachers, Administrators, and Paraeducators. Classroom Teachers, which included all core subjects and unified arts, made up 31.02% (183) of the respondents in this survey. The other top two roles identified were Building Administrators/ Superintendents, which represented 25.26% (151) of the respondents, and Paraeducators, who made up 8.81% (52). In this brief, each of these three roles has its own section with highlighted top concerns and analysis of the data. At the end of this brief, there is an overview of the rest of the roles represented in this survey and their responses.

WHERE ARE TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF GOING?

34% not leaving their position or district

14% moving districts, but staying in NH

13% actively looking for new roles, changing to another job in education

12% leaving the profession

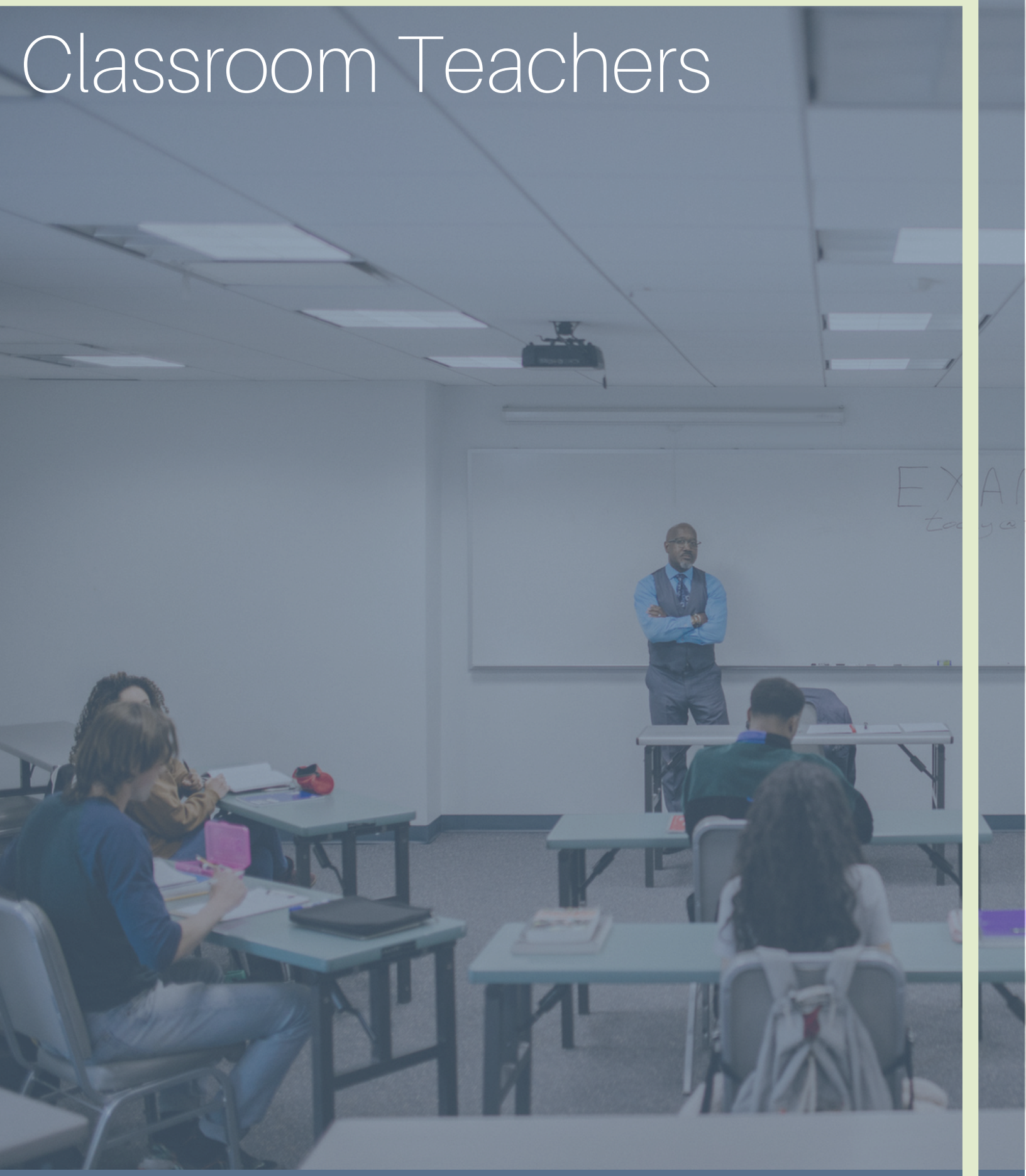
12% changing roles in their district

10% retiring

3% leaving New Hampshire

1% going to a private school

Classroom Teachers



CLASSROOM TEACHERS

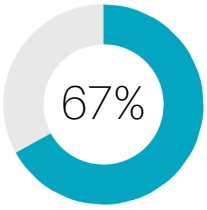
This section includes individuals who identified themselves as a Classroom Teacher (including all core subjects and unified arts).

- 183 respondents
- 30% from Upper Valley; 20% from Monadnock Region; 15% from Greater Concord; 11% from Southeastern Region
- Even mix between elementary, middle, and high school
- 49% have been in education for 15+ years; 35% between 5 and14 years; 13% 1 and 4 years
- 31% of respondents were not leaving their role, district, or profession but have concerns over the direction of public education

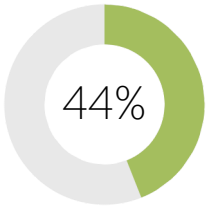


SCHOOL CLIMATE & SALARY TOP CONCERNS

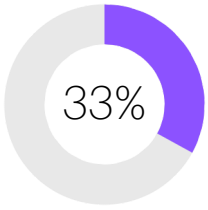
Of those who are **leaving New Hampshire**, 67% listed school climate as a top reason for leaving



Climate of school/district/board

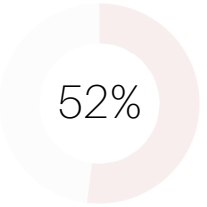


Concerns about consequences for teachers

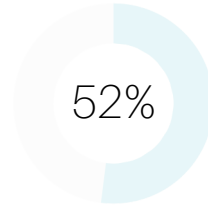


Level of support from administration/board

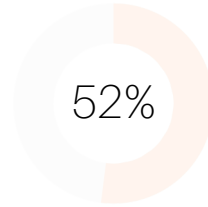
Of those who are **leaving the education profession,** 52% listed salary-related concerns as a top reason for leaving



Will make more money elsewhere

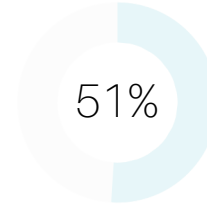


Climate of school/district/board

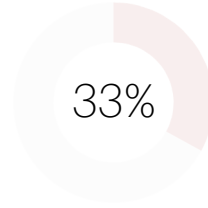


Increasing demands on teachers

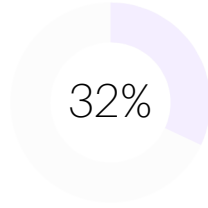
Of those who are **changing positions or districts but staying in New Hampshire,** 51% listed school climate as a top reason for leaving.



Climate of school/district/board



Will make more money elsewhere



Level of support from administration/board

"Too many demands/ pressure/ expectations and not enough support (monetary or otherwise). It is a broken system, and it's taking a toll on the physical and mental health of teachers in our state."

-Teacher leaving the profession

CHALLENGES CURRENTLY FACING CLASSROOM TEACHERS

"Increased demands on students' academic and other schedules are impacting student engagement and administrative support to strengthen arts offerings. Unified Arts, Integrated arts need to be more highly valued, not just covering others' preps!"

-Teacher leaving New Hampshire

"If it's like this now, I can't imagine what this profession will look like in 25/30 years when I expect to retire. I would say entitlement and behavior of families and students is the biggest factor and the reason why many of the teachers I know are very unhappy."

-Teacher leaving the profession

WHERE ARE SURVEYED CLASSROOM TEACHERS GOING?

31% not leaving their position or district

20 moving districts, but staying in NH

% leaving the profession

15% changing roles in their district

12% retiring

8% leaving New Hampshire

4% going to a private school

2%

TEACHERS FEEL A LACK OF SUPPORT FROM DISTRICT & SCHOOL BOARD

Teachers who feel like they're trusted, respected, and have a sense of openness and academic freedom tend to stay in the profession and in their schools longer than those who don't. School leaders, local decision-makers, and the state have a critical role to play in ensuring that schools cultivate these open, trusting working and learning environments. Classroom teachers felt most supported and respected by their schools (47%) but felt less supported by their districts (28%) and communities (31%). Classroom teachers who are leaving the teaching profession tend to feel less supported by their schools (30%), school boards (22%), and communities (26%), and those who are leaving the state tended to feel supported by their school (55%), but less supported by their school boards (11%) and communities (33%). Those who are staying in New Hampshire also felt supported by their schools (51%), but less supported by their school boards (26%) and communities (32%). Survey respondents pointed to challenging school environments and shifting political and school climates as reasons for leaving their schools, the state, or the profession altogether.

Administrators

REACHING HIGHER NH

ADMINISTRATORS

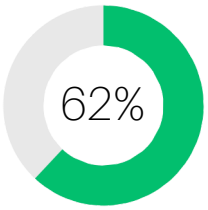
This section includes individuals who identified themselves as building-level administrators, such as school principals, associate principals, and assistant principals, as well as school-level curriculum leaders and district-level administrators, which includes superintendents, assistant superintendents, curriculum administrators, directors of special education, human resources, finance, and business administrators.

- 151 respondents
- 25% from Southeastern Region; 15% from Monadnock Region; 13% from Greater Concord; 12% from the Lakes Region
- 83% have been in education for 15+ years; 16% between 5-14 years; 1% 1-4 years
- 51% of respondents were not leaving their role, district, or profession but have concerns over the direction of public education

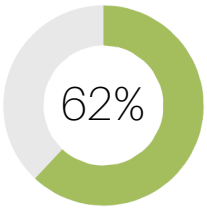


THE DIRECTION OF NH PUBLIC EDUCATION & SCHOOL CLIMATE TOP CONCERNS

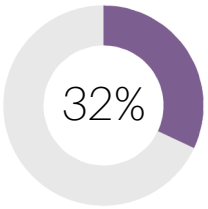
Of those who are **leaving the education profession**, 62% listed the direction of NH public education as a top reason for leaving.



Concerns about the direction of NH public education



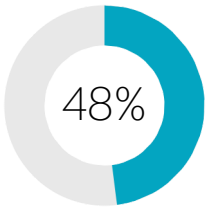
Concerns about consequences for teachers



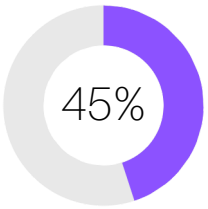
Social-emotional and academic needs of students in my school/district

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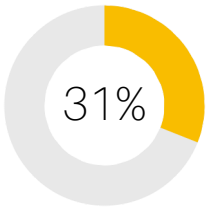
Of those who are **changing positions or districts but staying in New Hampshire,** 48% indicated that their top reasons for leaving were related to school climate.



Climate of school/district/board

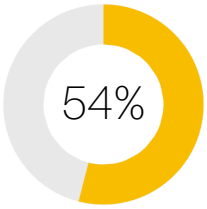


Level of support from administration/board

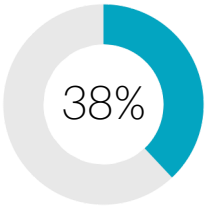


Opportunity for advancment

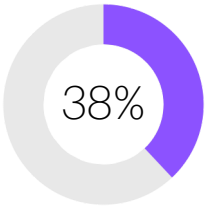
Of those who are **changing roles but staying in the same district,** 54% indicated that their top reasons for leaving were related to limited opportunities for advancement.



Opportunity for advancment



Climate of school/district/board



Level of support from administration/board

"I know there are some very obvious challenges - school safety, divisiveness, funding...but I think a significant upcoming challenge that will truly need to be addressed is the need for flexibility in the teaching profession. I don't believe the model we have used for generations will withstand the changing needs of the educator workforce, students, and families post-pandemic."

-Administrator changing roles

CHALLENGES CURRENTLY FACING ADMINISTRATORS

WHERE ARE SURVEYED ADMINISTRATORS GOING?

51% not leaving their position or district

14% Other (actively applying elsewhere, waiting on other job responses)

13% moving districts, but staying in NH

12% changing roles in their district

6% leaving the profession

4% retiring

1% going to a private school

"It is the increase in demands of the position as well as the demands as a result of the needs of the individual students. Both are increasing, and I can't find the time in my day to do it all well.."

-Administrator staying in current role

"Year in and year out, we continue to lose quality educators to other districts that will pay $10K more to do the exact same job. No one can blame our young educators in wanting to improve their economic status, but it puts our district and others in a similar situation at a distinct disadvantage in this already extremely competitive labor market."

-Administrator retiring

ADMINISTRATORS TEND TO FEEL SUPPORTED AND RESPECTED BY SCHOOL BOARD AND COMMUNITY

School administrators, which include school leaders like principals and curriculum leaders as well as district leaders like superintendents, special education directors, and other district-level administrators, felt supported by their schools (85%) and communities (73%). Respondents typically felt less supported by their school boards (56%), especially those staying in New Hampshire (55%). Administrators were more likely to feel supported by their school boards (56%) than classroom teachers (24%).

Though school administrators felt a sense of support and respect from their schools and communities, they repeatedly indicated that state-level pressures, like an inequitable school funding system, as well as increased demands are putting pressure on school leaders.

Paraeducators



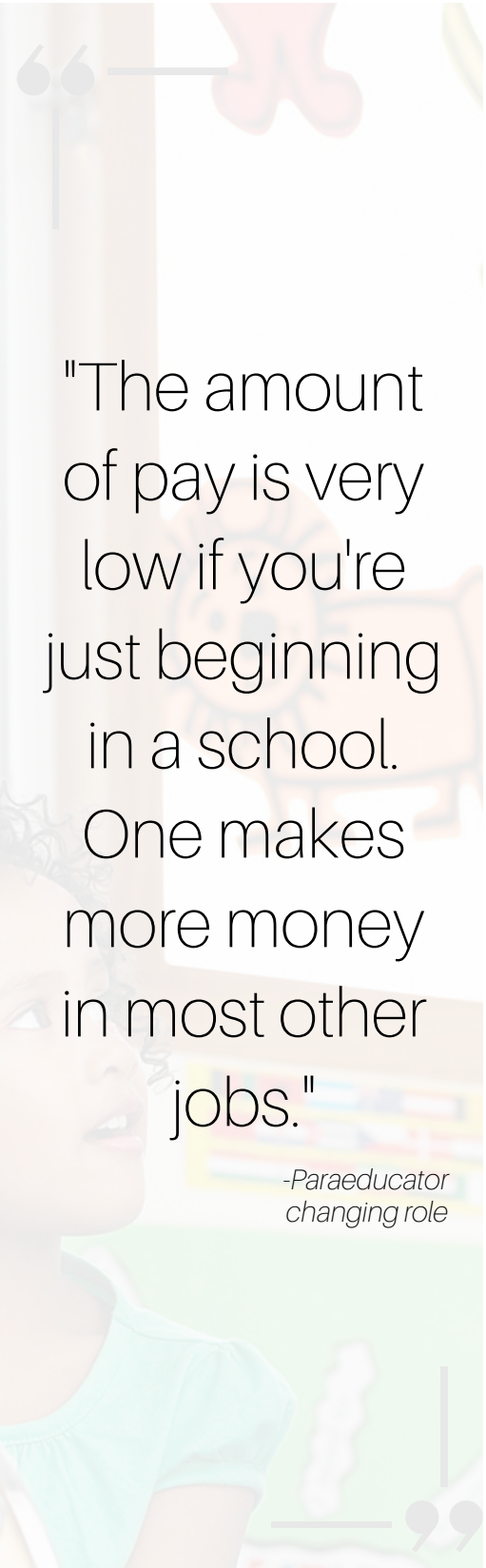
PARAEDUCATORS

This section includes individuals who identified themselves as "Paraeducators."

- 52 respondents
- 41% from Upper Valley Region; 22% from Greater Concord Region; 16% from Monadnock Region
- 44% have been in education for 15+ years; 40% between 5 and14 years; 16% between 1 and 4 years
- 73% of respondents work at the elementary level
- 52% of respondents were not leaving their role, district, or profession but had concerns over the direction of public education



SALARY & PERSONAL HEALTH TOP CONCERNS



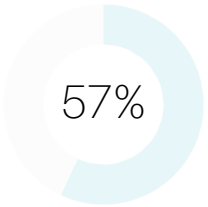
"The amount of pay is very low if you're just beginning in a school. One makes more money in most other jobs."

-Paraeducator changing role

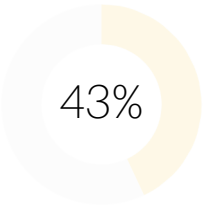
Of those who are **leaving the education profession,** 100% indicated that salary was a top reason for leaving.



Will make more money elsewhere



Climate of school/district/board

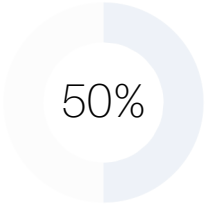


Opportunity for advancment

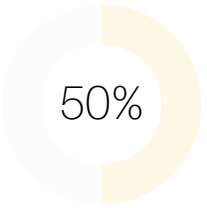
Of those who are **leaving New Hampshire,** 100% indicated that their top reasons for leaving were salary-related.



Will make more money elsewhere

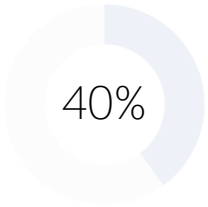


Personal health

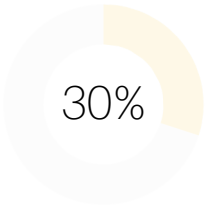


Opportunity for advancment

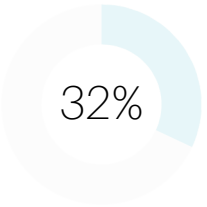
Of those who are **changing positions or districts but staying in New Hampshire,** 40% indicated that their top reasons for leaving were related to personal health.



Personal health



Opportunity for advancment



Climate of school/district/board

CHALLENGES CURRENTLY FACING PARAEDUCATORS

"Too much paperwork, standardized testing, meetings, and not enough time to teach or plan."
-Paraeducator changing roles

"There are so many things for a school to juggle and take care of."
-Paraeducator moving to a different state

WHERE ARE SURVEYED PARAEDUCATORS GOING?

29% not leaving their position or district

23% changing roles in their district

17% retiring

16% leaving the profession

13% Other (Student Teaching, advancing education to become a classroom teacher, etc.)

4% leaving New Hampshire

PARAEDUCATORS FEEL SUPPORTED BY THEIR SCHOOLS, CITE SALARY CONCERNS AS REASONS FOR LEAVING

About half of paraeducators feel supported by their school (55%), but felt less supported by their district (39%), school board (20%), and community (32%). Those who are leaving the profession tended to feel more supported across the board, but respondents indicated that their reasons for leaving were largely due to a lack of pay and a challenging workload.



Other School Staff



OTHER (TITLE 1, SPECIALISTS, COACHES, ETC)

- 51 respondents
- Most of the respondents are located in the Upper Valley Region of NH
- 70% of the respondents have been in education for 15+ years

Top Concerns:

- School Climate
- Administration Support

NURSE

- 48 respondents
- The respondents were evenly split around the state
- 45% of the respondents have been in education for 5-14 years

Top Concerns:

- Increasing Demands of Role
- Administration Support

SPECIAL EDUCATION CASE MANAGER OR BUILDING COORDINATOR

- 34 respondents
- Most of the respondents are located in the Upper Valley Region of NH
- 52% of the respondents have been in education for 1-4 years

Top Concerns:

- Salary
- Increasing Demands of Role

SPECIALIST (SPEECH, OT, PT, OTHER RELATED SERVICES)

- 12 respondents
- Most respondents are located in the Upper Valley and Greater Concord Area
- 50% of respondents have been in education for 15+ years

Top Concerns:

- Increasing Demands of Role
- Other (streamlining of services)

COUNSELOR

- 12 respondents
- 45% of respondents are not leaving the profession but have concerns

Top Concern:
- Salary

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

- 12 respondents
- 80% of respondents have been in education for 15+ years

Top Concern:
- Salary

LIBRARY/MEDIA SPECIALIST

- 10 respondents
- 88% of respondents are from the elementary level

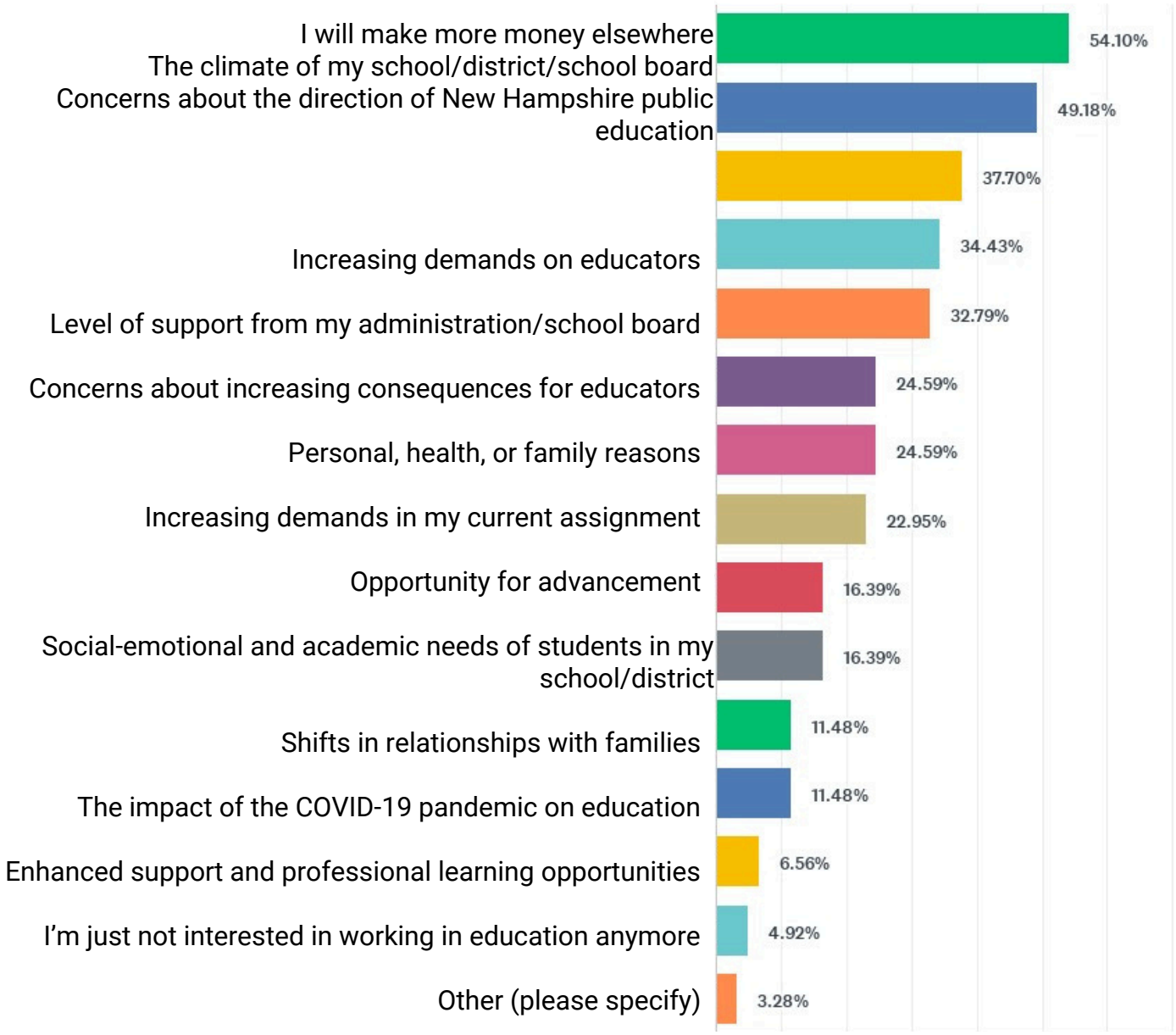
Top Concern:
- Increasing Demands of Role



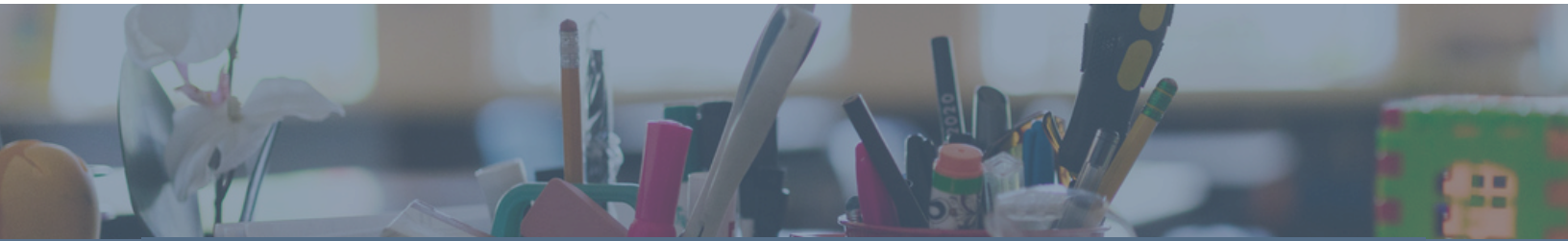
Overall Summary



TOP CONCERNS FROM ALL RESPONDENTS



Respondents listed salary (54%), school climate (49%), and the direction of public education in the state (38%) as their top concerns. Some other concerns included increasing demands (34%) and the level of support from the administration (33%).

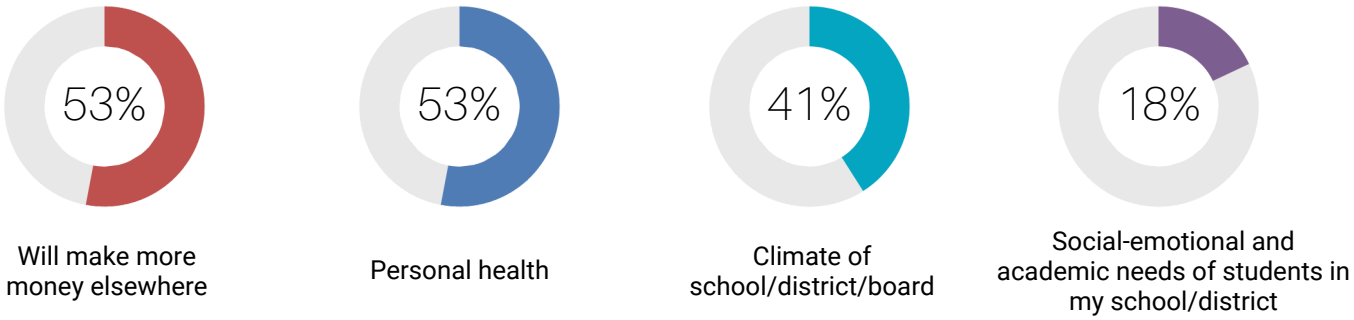


SALARY & SCHOOL CLIMATE TOP CONCERNS

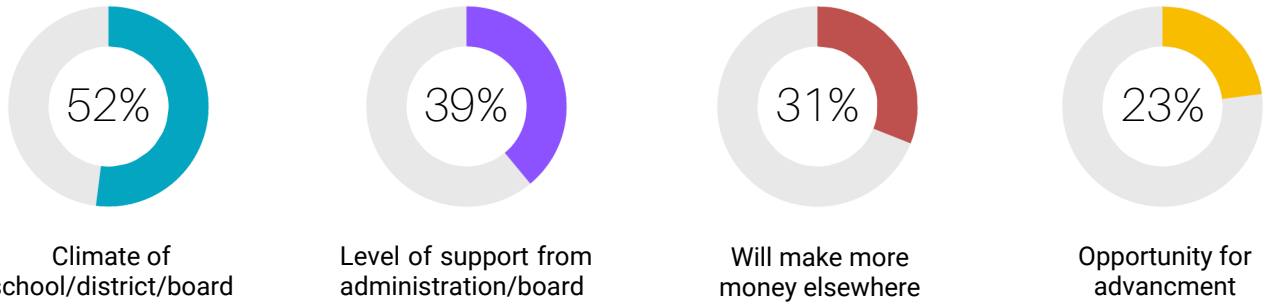
Of those who are **leaving the education profession,** 54% indicated that salary was a top reason for leaving.



Of those who are **leaving New Hampshire,** 53% indicated that their top reasons for leaving were salary-related.



Of those who are **changing positions or districts but staying in New Hampshire,** 52% indicated that their top reasons for leaving were related to school climate.



RESPONSES FROM THE FIELD

"The district I work in overloads responsibilities of many of its positions (faculty, administration, and support staff) by combining 2-3 positions into one. This has been done to cut costs to keep a level funded budget, or even cut a million dollars from past budgets. After many years of squeezing blood from a stone, it is evident that this town will not adequately support the many needs of the schools. They have taken advantage of teachers, support staff, and administrators making do with what is given to them, because they want to make a difference for its students."

-Teacher leaving New Hampshire

"The students in my school do not have the support that they need for their social-emotional or special education needs. On a daily basis, I am doing what I can to help some very needy students and this is a disservice to them and their peers. We need paraeducators, locations where students struggling with emotional needs can get the support that they deserve and an age-appropriate social emotional program."

-Teacher leaving New Hampshire

"The lack of trust that educators experience."

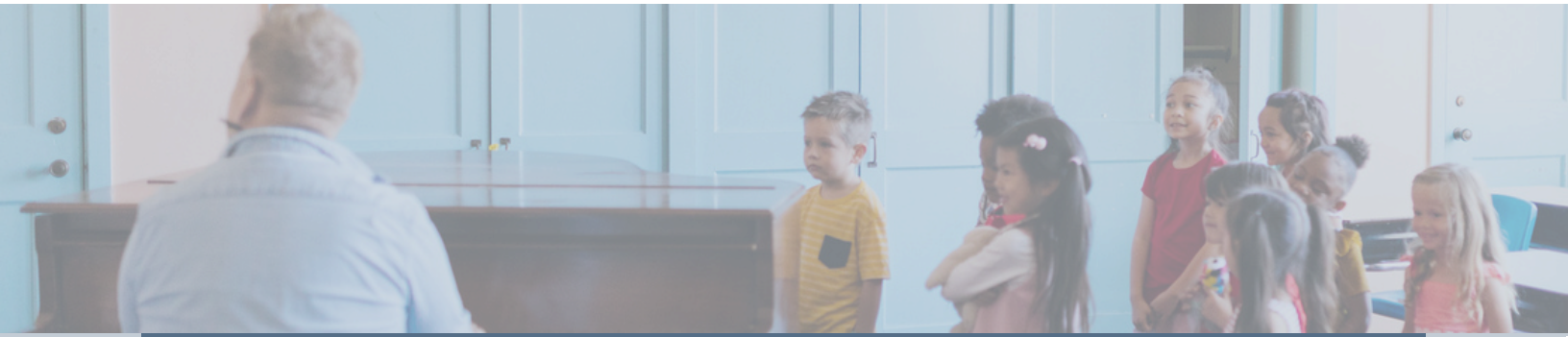
-Teacher moving in New Hampshire

"There is a serious lack of respect for teachers from our school board and public."

-Teacher moving in New Hampshire

"The salary between districts are not comparable. Salaries need to be addressed in districts that are not comparable to the others around them."

-Teacher moving in New Hampshire



NEXT STEPS

Based on the survey results, several policy recommendations can be implemented to better support educators and staff in New Hampshire public schools.

OFFER FAIR AND COMPETITIVE PAY

Fair and competitive teacher compensation is key to a strong teaching workforce. This includes paying teachers a fair and competitive wage that is comparable to the salaries of **other local professionals** with a similar level of education. New Hampshire must ensure that its school funding formula provides school districts with the resources they need to compensate teachers and school staff fairly.

INVEST IN EFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGIES

Investing in the state's current teaching workforce supports the onboarding of new teachers and promotes teacher retention. Some examples include providing new teachers with sustained mentoring, creating opportunities for ongoing professional learning and growth, and establishing collaborative leadership structures and practices. Each of these strategies contributes to a culture that values teachers and contributes to retention.

Newmarket and Nashua as Exemplars

Both Nashua and Newmarket school districts have been leading efforts on new staff mentoring and induction, which encourage growth, support, and networking for new teachers and teacher-leaders.

PROVIDE TEACHERS A SEAT AT THE TABLE

To involve educators in the decision-making process, policymakers should prioritize the voices of **youth, educators, and parents.** They should develop consistent opportunities for these stakeholders to participate in the creation of policies and procedures. In education, when there is more of a focus on bottom-up strategies, there is success in raising different and diverse voices.

Jaffery-Rindge School District

Jaffrey-Rindge's new "Innovative Ecosystem Model" has restructured the decision-making process to involve and empower educators and staff.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the survey results, several policy recommendations can be implemented to better support educators and staff in New Hampshire public schools.

STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Preparation programs like **teacher residencies** and **Grow Your Own (GYO)** programs could create opportunities to recruit local educators. These programs allow for direct investment in teachers and the communities at large while providing financial incentives for teachers. Not only has research found these programs effective, but they are culturally responsive pathways to teaching.

Littleton School District

The Littleton School District has partnered with Plymouth State University to offer a residency program to educators who work within the school district and are pursuing a Master's Degree in Special Education.

IMPROVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Improving **recruitment incentives** for teachers can greatly impact retention. As costs for teacher preparation programs increase, creating scholarships, grants, and loan forgiveness to lessen the financial burden can significantly reduce the barriers to becoming a teacher. In New Hampshire, the Committee to Study New Hampshire Teacher Shortages and Recruitment Incentives proposed policy recommendations that included incentive grants for school districts to experiment with recruitment and incentive strategies, to support racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse students, and to create stipends to incentivize new teachers to stay in the state.

Concord School District

Concord School District has partnered with Granite State College to offer a new program called "2+2+2." This program will allow high school students a pathway to enter the education profession.



Sources & Further Reading

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About Reaching Higher NH

Reaching Higher NH is a nonpartisan 501(c)3. Our mission is to provide all New Hampshire children with the opportunity to prepare for college, for immediate careers, and for the challenges and opportunities of life in 21st century NH, by serving as a public education policy and community engagement resource for New Hampshire families, educators, and elected officials.

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Any comments relating to the material contained in this document may be sent to:
Reaching Higher NH, Inc.
www.ReachingHigherNH.org
Email: christina@reachinghighernh.org
Mail: 40 N Main Street, Suite 204 | Concord, NH 03301

