



DC Educator Survey



DC Educator Survey Results Show Plummeting Morale and Risk for High Teacher Turnover

Context: The demands on educators are through the roof, and our teachers are in distress. EmpowerEd and WTU conducted a survey with over 640 DCPS and DC public charter school teacher responses across all wards, which shows that a staggering 81 % of educators say morale has worsened from previous years. 14 % say they are considering leaving their posts before the end of the school year, with another 18 % seriously considering leaving at the end of the year and 14 % saying they are somewhat seriously considering leaving. Only 23 % say they would definitely stay. We also asked educators what policies and ideas would be the most impactful in keeping them in the classroom. A summary of results is below. You can see an Op-Ed with more from WTU President Jacqueline Pogue-Lyons and EmpowerEd Executive Director Scott Goldstein [here](#).

Contents

Page 2: Staff Morale

Page 3: Are You Considering Leaving?

Page 4: If You Were to Leave, What Would be the Top Factor?

Page 5: Solutions: What Would Keep You?

Page 6: Has the Pandemic Changed your View of Teaching as a Profession?

Page 7-8: Survey Demographic Breakdown

Pages 8-12: Educator Comments

"I have a child and for most of her life I have been exhausted mentally, physically and emotionally because I typically work 65-75 hours a week (often giving up one to two full weekends days a month). She deserves better." - Ward 4 Teacher

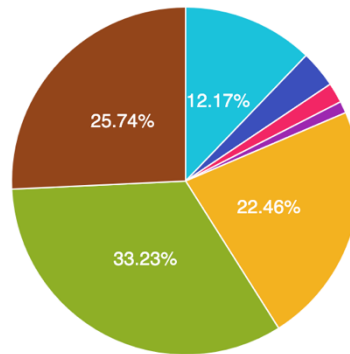


DC Educator Survey



How would you describe staff morale at your school?

Answered: 641 Skipped: 0



- About the same as in previous years
- Somewhat better than in previous year
- Better than in previous years
- Much better than in previous years
- Somewhat worse than in previous years
- Worse than in previous years
- Much worse than in previous years

A few teacher quotes:

“There seems to be a lack of empathy, authenticity and compassion in the school system as it relates to adults. Teachers are supposed to be authentic, show empathy and compassion toward their students, however leadership does not show to their teachers.”

“School feels heavy this year. There are so many gaps in learning, so much more testing, and little support or appreciation. I feel like I am working overtime and going above and beyond. I always have to test or am pulled to cover, and this takes away from my ability to serve my ELL students who are behind academically and need regular support. It's mentally and emotionally exhausting.”

“I'm not happy. I'm drained every day after work. I work 1 day every weekend. I feel alone while at work - I don't feel like I have mentors or friends.”

“I love my school. Staff morale is low because we have no substitutes and people are covering classes literally daily.”

“There is an unreasonable and unsustainable lack of work and personal life balance. I feel overworked and under supported in my role as a classroom teacher. New expectations and initiatives are constantly thrown at the staff, who are barely hanging on as it is. There seems to be a compulsory façade that administrators care about our mental well-being, yet expectations and demands are unrelenting. I also do not feel that there is a strong relationship between administration and staff.”

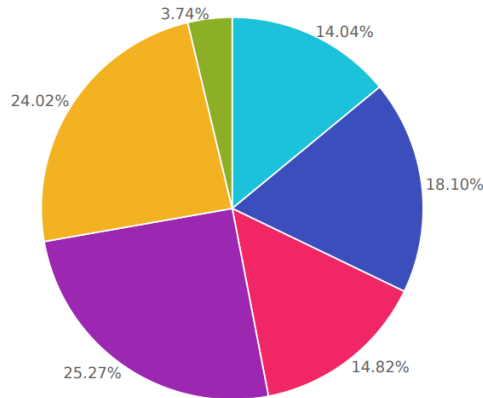


DC Educator Survey



At this time are you considering leaving your role?

Answered: 641 Skipped: 0



- Yes, I am seriously considering leaving my role BEFORE the end of the school year
- Yes, I am seriously considering leaving my role AT THE END of the school.
- I am somewhat seriously considering leaving my role at the end of the year
- There is some chance I will leave my role, but I will most likely stay
- No, I will definitely stay
- Other (Please specify)

A few teacher quotes:

“I don't feel valued and seen as a leader. I'm a great teacher but am ready to share my skills with fellow staff to have a greater impact on students and families, but I when leadership opportunities are available, I'm not considered..” Black educator in a Ward 4 DCPS school

“I will be staying because I believe in our school. However, there are many administrative issues that make me feel unsupported and replaceable.”

“Being a new teacher is difficult enough, but this feels harder than it should be. I feel like I can never get sick or take a day off because there aren't enough subs, and the ones that do show up leave me deeply concerned for the safety and well-being of my students. To paraphrase a rather famous professor and author: I feel like butter scraped over too much bread.”

Lots of "initiatives" coming from leadership (both school leadership and DCPS leadership) that take a lot of our time and effort but don't do anything to help kids. I love teaching, but all of the other non-teaching demands on our time take a lot of the joy out of it.

“As a paraprofessional I interact with students more than the teachers. I am working with a starvation salary and medical insurance doesn't cover much.”



DC Educator Survey



If you were to leave teaching, what would be the top factors (rank from top to bottom)?

Choices	1	2	3	4	Score	Rank	Response count
Challenges working with students	13.61% (83)	20.98% (128)	28.52% (174)	36.89% (225)	2.1131148	3	610
Challenges working with my colleagues	3.77% (23)	11.80% (72)	41.97% (256)	42.46% (259)	1.7688525	4	610
My school's / school administrations' policies	23.77% (145)	43.28% (264)	19.84% (121)	13.11% (80)	2.777049	2	610
City-wide Policies (DCPS or DC city-wide policies)	58.85% (359)	23.93% (146)	9.67% (59)	7.54% (46)	3.3409836	1	610
Any additional comments?							114

A few teacher quotes:

"I feel micromanaged. I don't feel valued or trusted."

"DCPS is constantly adding additional curricula, assessments, and online platforms. The job is already so overwhelming and every single year they add more and more. I don't know how much more I can take."

"I am asked to do the impossible with an ever-decreasing amount of time to do it...most frustrating of all, is the unending unnecessary testing!!! WHY do we need so many standardized tests? I have lost SO MANY class periods...that I quite literally am scrambling to do my job."

"I wish mayoral control was a (listed) reason. This is my biggest frustration and I feel like my frustrations with teaching all stem from a non-educator making important decisions for educators and students."

"I would most likely try another district before leaving teaching all together. And for reference, I'm a highly effective educator according to IMPACT."

"DCPS is placing more and more requirements on teachers. The RCTs are a huge additional burden. The amount of standardized testing is completely unreasonable."

"Challenges working with students really are due to city-wide policies. The students will step up with leaders actually believe they CAN and not just give the motto "every student can learn" lip service. The district's policies is a race to the bottom; keep lowering the bar so students pass."

"Central office does not listen to the suggestions of people who are still working in a classroom. ...Their priorities are also not aligned with what schools actually need."



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SOLUTIONS:

What Teachers Say Would Keep Them in The Classroom!

Question: Please rank the following ideas in order of which would make the biggest difference in keeping you in your role at your school- #1 = MOST impactful.

Explanation: All of the highlighted top seven responses received a rank score of 12 and above- or “very high support”, all highlighted in blue received a rank score of 8 or above or “moderately high support”. There was a steep drop off after “housing cost incentives”

Action to Prevent Turnover	Ranking (#1= most impactful)
Flexible Scheduling Options	1
Higher Pay	2
More Classroom Support	3
Less Focus/ Time on Standardized Tests	4
More Professional Autonomy to Do Your Job	5
Major Reforms to the Teacher Evaluation System	6
“Release Time” from Teaching Load to Take on Other Interests	7
Fewer New Initiatives	8
Better Benefits	9
Better Wrap Around Supports for your Students	10
Better Relationship with your School Leader	11
More Teacher/ Staff-Led PD	12
Housing Cost Incentives	13
More Teacher Mentorship/ Support	14
Student Loan Forgiveness	15
More Support for your own Professional Learning	16
Money & Support to Pursue Career Advancement/ Training	17
A “sabbatical” to Pursue Professional Interests	18



DC Educator Survey



Did the pandemic, and the response to the pandemic, change your perception of the job of teaching and whether this is the right career for you? If so, please explain how.

“Yes. I watched healthy and strong neighbors and family die. This made me realize how quickly and easily life can change. I have a child and for most of her life I have been exhausted mentally, physically, and emotionally because I typically work 65 - 75 hours a week (often giving up one to two full weekend days a month). She deserves better.”

“Completely- I became aware that not all jobs require everything from a person in order to do their jobs. I realized you can make more money working in slower pace roles that do not require extensive work outside of school and do not carry anywhere near the amount of responsibilities and expectations that we have as teachers.”

“The pandemic has shown me that I am not valued or appreciated in my role as a teacher. While I did not enjoy distance learning, I did appreciate that I could take a walk during my lunch break when the day was particularly hard. It made me realize that I should pursue a profession where I am able to have flexibility to take care of myself mentally when the day is particularly challenging.”

“Yes. Prior to becoming a parent I poured myself, my time, and my money into teaching. I became a parent myself not long before the pandemic began. Parenting in general, let alone during a pandemic, has me constantly wondering if I can continue this much longer.”

“Yes, the pandemic increased the burdens that teachers face on a daily basis. Teachers have been regularly asked to rise above and beyond to provide for the education of their students, regardless of the circumstances we are in. There has been a complete lack of appreciation for the toll this has taken on educators and no adjustments have been made...The pandemic has called into question for me why I should continue to work as an educator when I am not appreciated or supported, but instead continue to have additional burdens and work placed upon me, without being shown any grace whatsoever.”

“No. I have always loved teaching. I still do love it. The problem is all of the crap outside of the classroom door. The stupid, little, things that can make or break a teacher's day. Here are some examples:

- at our school, teachers must bring copy paper to the copier to make copies. Can you imagine walking to the copier on a Monday morning and realizing you forgot to bring copy paper. Like why is this even a thing? Do we not trust adults to use their fair share of copy paper??
- Some teachers have 8 meetings a week. Why? Is this really necessary?
- Finding out the morning of what the logistics for picture day are. I guess it doesn't matter that I had a very engaging lesson ready to teach.
- Sometimes toilet paper in our adult bathrooms runs out.
- Sticking multiple classes of SPED students in one room, with two teachers teaching different contents in different languages, at the same time. Yep, the students that need the most here, don't get the most.

This list could go on and on.”



DC Educator Survey



Demographic Breakdown of Educator Responses

Ward	Percent of Respondents
1	10 %
2	7 %
3	17 %
4	19 %
5	10 %
6	15 %
7	10 %
8	12 %

Racial Identity	Percent of Respondents
African-American/Black	40 %
Asian-American/ Pacific-Islander	5 %
Caucasian/ White	50 %
Hispanic/ Latino	10 %
Native American or Alaska Native	2 %
Other	4 %

What grade level does your school serve? (choose all that apply)	Percent
ECE- Prek3 and 4	39 %
Elementary	57 %
Middle	25 %
High	22 %
Adult	1 %
Other	2 %

Demographics Continued...





DC Educator Survey



How long have you been teaching at your school?	Percent
First Year	14 %
Second Year	12 %
3-5 Years	38 %
6-9 Years	21 %
10 + Years	51 %

What subject(s) do you teach?	Percent
PreK	10.5 %
Primary- All Subjects	21 %
English	24 %
Math	20 %
Science	12 %
Art	2 %
Music	2 %
World Language	3 %

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