



K12 Coalition™

TEACHER SENTIMENT REPORT

Combined Findings, Year-Over-Year Observations,
& Actionable Insights



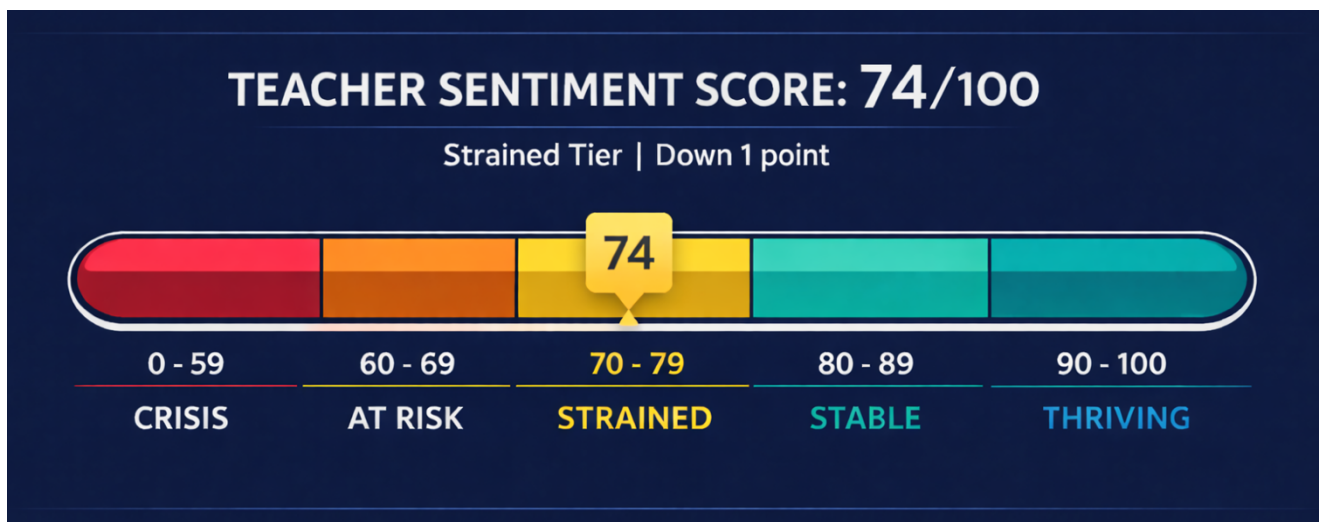
Strained Tier | Down 1 point from 75 last year

April 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a comprehensive year-over-year assessment of educator sentiment across the PK-12 landscape, drawn from the K12 Coalition Teacher Sentiment Report. The current-year survey, taken in March, captured 815 responses compared to 542 in June last year — a 50% increase in participation that strengthens the statistical foundation of these findings. The analysis integrates quantitative trend data, demographic deep dives, correlation-based insights, and the direct voice of educators through hundreds of open-ended responses.

The K12 Coalition Teacher Sentiment Score is a purpose-built composite index that translates complex educator survey data into a single, actionable benchmark. Scored on a 0-100 scale with five named performance tiers, the Score enables longitudinal tracking of educator wellbeing, retention risk, and systemic stress.



Key Headline Findings:

- Cracking System:** While the one-point decline may appear modest in isolation, there are significant negative shifts in underlying sentiment, a directional signal that the conditions driving educator stress are not improving.
- Deteriorating Outlook:** The share of educators saying conditions are worse than last year rose from 35.8% to 40.0% (+4.2pp), with no meaningful relief at either end of the scale.
- Retention Risk Escalating:** Those considering leaving ("Yes" or "Maybe") grew from 46.4% to 51.0%.
- Career Satisfaction Erosion:** "Very satisfied" educators fell sharply from 17.8% to 12.6% (-5.2pp), while "Very dissatisfied" rose from 6.7% to 8.3% (+1.6pp). The South region recorded the

steepest overall satisfaction decline, dropping 12.3pp, the largest single-dimension decline of any region.

- **Student Mental Health Crisis:** 49.5% say mental health and trauma-informed practices are among the trends influencing their teaching. This is a challenge in every region.
- **AI Disruption Surging:** AI in education jumped from 30.9% to 41.2% (+10.3pp) and is now the fastest-growing trend affecting teaching practice.
- **Workload Pressure Increasing:** "Somewhat overwhelming" workloads grew from 22.2% to 26.9% (+4.7pp).
- **Gender Gap Persists:** Female educators report significantly higher workload stress (43.8% overwhelming vs. 25.7% for males) and lower "Very satisfied" rates (9.9% vs. 20.3%) as it relates to career satisfaction.
- **Limited Positive Momentum:** New England is the only region showing broad positive directional movement: reduced negative outlook, improved satisfaction, and declining attrition risk year-over-year.

1. THE TEACHER SENTIMENT SCORE: YEAR-OVER-YEAR BENCHMARK

The K12 Coalition Teacher Sentiment Score is a purpose-built composite index that translates complex educator survey data into a single, actionable benchmark. Scored on a 0-100 scale with five named performance tiers, the Score enables longitudinal tracking of educator wellbeing, retention risk, and systemic stress.



Both scores fall within the Strained tier (70-79). While the one-point decline may appear modest in isolation, it reflects sentiment that is not improving and a sustained educator stress in the industry. A majority of surveyed educators are actively considering or uncertain about leaving the profession.

Understanding the Score Tiers

Tier	Range	What It Means
Thriving	90-100	Educators feel valued and energized. Attrition risk is low; instructional cultures support innovation.
Stable	80-89	Generally positive sentiment with manageable stress. Early warning signs may exist but can be addressed proactively.
Strained	70-79	Conditions become challenging with rising stress and workload, and declining job satisfaction.
At Risk	60-69	Widespread distress. Attrition accelerates. Morale has deteriorated meaningfully. Instructional consistency suffers.
Crisis	Below 60	Educators leaving or disengaged at scale. Systemic conditions have overwhelmed the workforce. Urgent structural intervention required.

Bottom line: Teachers are asking for time, staffing, behavioral support, fair compensation, practical AI guidance, and the professional trust to do their work well.

2. OVERALL STATE OF EDUCATION SENTIMENT

Educators were asked to describe the overall state of public education in their state. The distribution shifted to higher "Poor" and "Very Poor" sentiment year over year, suggesting a growing negative sentiment.

Rating	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Excellent	2.8%	3.1%	-0.3pp / -9.7%
Good	23.9%	23.2%	+0.7pp / +3.0%
Fair	42.9%	46.7%	-3.8pp / -8.1%

Rating	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Poor	23.6%	21.4%	+2.2pp / +10.3%
Very Poor	6.7%	5.5%	+1.2pp / +21.8%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The combined negative sentiment (Poor + Very Poor) increased from 26.9% to 30.3% (+3.4pp), indicating a measurable deterioration in how educators perceive the public education system. Meanwhile, the combined positive sentiment (Excellent + Good) held relatively steady at 26.7% TY vs. 26.3% LY.

Year-Over-Year Directional View

The net "worse" sentiment (Worse + Much worse minus Better + Much better) widened from 28.8% to 34.5%.

Compared to One Year Ago	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Much Better	1.0%	1.5%	-0.5pp / -33.3%
Better	4.5%	5.5%	-1.0pp / -18.2%
About the Same	54.5%	57.2%	-2.7pp / -4.7%
Worse	36.4%	30.8%	+5.6pp / +18.2%
Much Worse	3.6%	5.0%	-1.4pp / -28.0%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The percentage reporting "Worse" jumped by 5.6pp. This suggests that while extreme pessimism ("Much worse") eased slightly, the broader base of educators is feeling a deepening malaise.

3. CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

Respondents selected all challenges currently facing their school or district. While most categories saw modest declines, mental health and school funding rose. Although a smaller percentage of teachers indicated that student behavior/discipline was a challenge than last year, it remains the dominant challenge at 73.7%.

Challenge (Select All)	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Student Behavior / Discipline	73.7%	76.8%	-3.1pp / -4.0%
Student Mental Health & Wellness	54.1%	52.6%	+1.5pp / +2.9%
Staffing Shortages	49.9%	55.2%	-5.3pp / -9.6%
School Funding	46.3%	45.6%	+0.7pp / +1.5%
Parent / Family Engagement	45.2%	48.7%	-3.5pp / -7.2%
Salary	42.7%	45.2%	-2.5pp / -5.5%
Standardized Testing Pressure	41.3%	47.6%	-6.3pp / -13.2%
Political / Legislative Interference	29.7%	39.3%	-9.6pp / -24.4%
Curriculum Changes / Restrictions	30.9%	34.3%	-3.4pp / -9.9%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: Political/legislative interference saw the most dramatic decline (-9.6pp), suggesting either reduced political activity in education or desensitization. Standardized testing pressure also dropped significantly (-6.3pp). "Mental Health and Wellness" is now the #2 challenge, overtaking staffing shortages. The persistence of student behavior/discipline as the top challenge by a wide margin underscores an ongoing crisis in classroom management.

4. WORKPLACE CONDITIONS & SUPPORT

Confidence in Public Education

Educators continue to express lukewarm confidence in the system's ability to meet student needs, with negligible change year over year.

Confidence in Education System	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Extremely Confident	5.0%	5.9%	-0.9pp / -15.3%
Somewhat Confident	51.0%	49.1%	+1.9pp / +3.9%
Not Very Confident	34.1%	35.8%	-1.7pp / -4.7%
Not at All Confident	9.8%	9.2%	+0.6pp / +6.5%

Key Insight: The confidence picture is essentially flat year over year with 43.9% of educators "Not Very Confident" or "Not at All Confident" in public education.

Leadership Support

Support from School Leadership	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Very Supported	36.0%	34.3%	+1.7pp / +5.0%
Somewhat Supported	41.3%	41.0%	+0.3pp / +0.7%
Not Very Supported	16.3%	17.2%	-0.9pp / -5.2%
Not at All Supported	6.3%	7.5%	-1.2pp / -16.0%

Key Insight: Leadership support shows modest improvement, with "Very supported" rising 1.7pp and "Not at all supported" declining 1.2pp. Combined support (Very +

Somewhat) grew from 75.3% to 77.3%. This is one of the few clearly positive trends in the data.

Workload Manageability

Workload Assessment	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Very Manageable	19.5%	20.7%	-1.2pp / -5.8%
Somewhat Manageable	40.3%	44.4%	-4.1pp / -9.2%
Somewhat Overwhelming	26.9%	22.2%	+4.7pp / +21.2%
Very Overwhelming	13.3%	12.6%	+0.7pp / +5.6%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: Workload stress is intensifying. The combined "overwhelming" share grew from 34.8% to 40.2% (+5.4pp). The shift from "Somewhat manageable" to "Somewhat overwhelming" (-4.1pp and +4.7pp respectively) represents a meaningful deterioration in daily work conditions.

Key Verbatims:

What Message Would You Want Education Leaders to Hear?

"I love teaching, but being a teacher, the actual teaching, is about 40% of what we are actually required to do." — Elementary School Educator

"We are overworked and underpaid. Admin and leaders wonder why there is a teacher shortage and it's simple: we no longer teach — all we do is manage behavior — and we have to work multiple jobs to afford living." — Middle School Educator

“Take extra duties and paperwork off of teachers’ plates! More gets added every month, but nothing ever gets removed.” — High School Educator

“I am one person doing the job of a dozen people, while differentiating and supporting students with extremely different needs and managing behaviors. Somehow, I’m still doing it well. Trust me to do my job and pay me like the professional that I am.” — Middle School Educator

*“Teachers are expected to teach curriculum, manage behavior, complete interventions, check in with individual students, provide supports for speech, OT, SEL and academic needs. There is not enough time in the day or manpower to do all of these every day.”
— Elementary School Educator*

Duty Expansion

Roughly four in five educators report that their duties have expanded beyond classroom instruction, similar year over year (78.4% TY vs 79.5% LY).

Duties Expanded	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Yes	78.4%	79.5%	-1.1pp / -1.4%
No	15.5%	14.9%	+0.6pp / +4.0%
Not Sure	6.1%	5.6%	+0.5pp / +8.9%

5. CAREER SATISFACTION & RETENTION RISK

Career Satisfaction

Satisfaction Level	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Very Satisfied	12.6%	17.8%	-5.2pp / -29.2%
Satisfied	52.7%	50.9%	+1.8pp / +3.5%
Dissatisfied	26.3%	24.5%	+1.8pp / +7.3%
Very Dissatisfied	8.3%	6.7%	+1.6pp / +23.9%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: "Very satisfied" educators dropped by 29.2%. Combined dissatisfaction (Dissatisfied + Very Dissatisfied) grew from 31.2% to 34.6%. Over a third of educators are now dissatisfied with their career. While "Satisfied" only grew 3.5%, the hollowing out of the "Very satisfied" tier signals greater dissatisfaction and potential educator exits.

Considering Leaving the Profession

More than half of surveyed educators are now at least considering leaving the profession within two years.

Leave Within 2 Years?	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Yes	21.6%	19.4%	+2.2pp / +11.3%
Maybe	29.4%	27.0%	+2.4pp / +8.9%
No	48.9%	53.6%	-4.7pp / -8.8%

Key Insight: The attrition risk pool (Yes + Maybe) expanded from 46.4% to 51.0% (+4.6pp). The committed "No" base shrank by 4.7pp, and the "Maybe" pool's growth (2.4pp) is particularly concerning as this group represents the swing voters of retention.

Top Reasons for Considering Leaving

Reason (Select All That Apply)	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Workload Too Much	50.0%	50.5%	-0.5pp / -1.0%
Difficult Student Population	48.6%	45.3%	+3.3pp / +7.3%
Insufficient Salary	46.9%	52.3%	-5.4pp / -10.3%
Lack of Admin Support	40.5%	50.0%	-9.5pp / -19.0%
Retirement	27.7%	29.4%	-1.7pp / -5.8%
Low Confidence Making Difference	25.1%	29.9%	-4.8pp / -16.0%

Key Insight: "Difficult student population" showed the only increase (3.3pp) among the reasons listed, rising from #4 to #2 among the reasons for leaving. Workload is now the #1 reason for considering leaving, while salary dipped to 46.9% vs. 52.3% last year.

Key Verbatims:

What Keeps You from Leaving?

"I feel so exhausted I don't have the time and energy to look for another job. I feel stuck since I have to be able to pay my mortgage." — Elementary School Educator

"I stay because I have a strong desire to positively impact the lives of young people, and because I have so many years of teaching experience, I would take a pay cut to work in another industry."

— Elementary School Educator

"It is a calling, and I am not ready to quit — but may be forced out if some things do not change."

— Elementary School Educator

"At this point, nothing. It's a paycheck guiding me to retirement and a second career." — High School Educator

"I need an income and am only 12 years from retirement. Even though I am also trained and certified in another degreed profession, I have invested too much into my classroom and education to be able to start over at this stage of life." — Elementary School Educator

"I really love teaching and working with the students. If we had better pay and schools were funded better, I would feel much better about being a teacher." — High School Educator

"We are burnt out but fighting through because we believe in the importance of education. Why would anyone put up with what we do multiple times a day — school safety, low pay, blatant lack of respect unless we believed in what we were doing?" — High School Educator

6. TRENDS AFFECTING TEACHING PRACTICE

Respondents selected up to three trends most affecting their teaching. AI in education emerged as the dominant growth trend.

Trend (Select Up to 3)	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Student Mental Health / Trauma-Informed	49.5%	45.1%	+4.4pp / +9.8%
Technology Integration	41.8%	40.5%	+1.3pp / +1.7%
AI in Education	41.2%	30.9%	+10.3pp / +33.3%
School Safety Concerns	31.6%	34.5%	-2.9pp / -8.4%
Legislation Affecting Curriculum	25.1%	27.6%	-2.5pp / -9.1%

Key Insight: AI in education as a trend surged by 33.3%. This is the largest single-trend movement in the survey and is now nearly tied with technology integration. This signals that AI has moved from a peripheral concern to a front-of-mind reality for over a third of educators. Student mental health/trauma-informed practices also grew significantly (9.8%), cementing its position as the #1 trend affecting classroom practice.

Key Verbatims

(What is Your Perspective on the Increasing Use of Technology in the Classroom?)

"Students are cheating using AI, so it's more of a problem than a positive thing in education." — High School Educator

"It's gone much too far. Students are on screens far too much, particularly elementary students. They do not yet have the self-regulation skills." — Elementary School Educator

"Technology should be used to enhance learning and teaching, not replace. The human connection is vitally important to student success and developing complete beings."

— Elementary School Educator

"I see tools like these as assistants to teachers, not replacements. The best classrooms will likely use technology strategically — where it genuinely helps — while keeping the human element central." — Elementary School Educator

"AI is a great tool for educators and students. We all need to be trained on the proper way to use it and its many benefits." — High School Educator

Policy Preparedness

Preparedness for Policy Changes	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Very Prepared	12.4%	13.8%	-1.4pp / -10.1%
Somewhat Prepared	61.9%	59.8%	+2.1pp / +3.5%
Unprepared	22.6%	23.2%	-0.6pp / -2.6%
Very Unprepared	3.1%	3.3%	-0.2pp / -6.1%

Key Insight: Preparedness levels are essentially stable. Roughly one in four educators (25.7%) still feel unprepared or very unprepared for major policy shifts.

7. WORKPLACE: AUTONOMY UP, OBLIGATION DOWN

Seven Likert-scale statements measured workplace autonomy, belonging, competence, and obligation. Below, the "Agree + Strongly Agree" combined percentages are compared.

Statement (Select All That Apply)	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
I have choices in things I undertake	40.5%	33.6%	+6.9pp / +20.5%
I feel confident doing well on my job	82.3%	82.2%	+0.1pp / +0.1%
Coworkers care about me	72.1%	69.7%	+2.4pp / +3.4%
I can make decisions about my job	37.8%	34.1%	+3.7pp / +10.9%
Most things feel like "I have to"	57.6%	67.6%	-10.0pp / -14.8%
I sometimes feel excluded	49.8%	53.7%	-3.9pp / -7.3%
Serious doubts about doing well	21.2%	21.9%	-0.7pp / -3.2%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: Several positive signals emerge here. Perceived choice at work jumped 6.9pp, and decision-making autonomy grew 3.7pp. The obligation metric ("Most things feel like I have to") dropped a dramatic 10.0pp. Coworker care improved 2.4pp. However, feelings of exclusion remain high at 49.8%, and more than one in five educators still harbors serious doubts about their effectiveness.

Verbatim:

What Elements Might Change in Your Work Environment That Would Improve Your Commitment to Staying in Your Current Position?

"Less micromanaging from administration and more freedom to be the professional that I am. Let me do the job I've been trained to do." — High School Educator

"A better work environment with adequate staffing, stronger support for student behavior, improved funding, and fair salaries would strengthen teachers' commitment to staying. Additional support for mental health and reduced pressure for standardized testing would also help teachers focus more on effective teaching." — Elementary School Educator

Investment in Educator Growth and Retention

If your district invested more in your growth, would you be more likely to remain in your current position?

Investment in Growth Leading to Greater Retention?	This Year (TY)	Last Year (LY)	% Change
Yes	40.2%	39.7%	+0.5pp / +1.3%
Unsure	45.5%	38.8%	+6.7pp / +17.3%
No	14.3%	21.5%	-7.2pp / -33.5%

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Key Insight: The "No" response decreased significantly (33.5%) suggesting that investing in teachers could drive higher retention. This creates an opportunity: targeted professional development investments could convert educators into committed stayers.

8. WHO IS MOST AT RISK: DEMOGRAPHIC DEEP DIVES

By Gender

Career Satisfaction by Gender

	Very satisfied			Satisfied			Dissatisfied			Very dissatisfied		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
Female	9.9%	15.6%	-36.5%	54.5%	52.8%	+3.2%	27.1%	24.7%	+9.7%	8.5%	6.8%	+25.0%
Male	20.3%	25.0%	-18.8%	46.0%	46.7%	-0.9%	26.9%	21.7%	+23.9%	6.7%	6.5%	+3.1%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The gender satisfaction profile is largely stable, with both female and male educators holding similar overall distributions.

Workload by Gender

	Very manageable			Somewhat manageable			Somewhat overwhelming			Very overwhelming		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
Female	16.7%	19.9%	-16.1%	39.5%	42.9%	-7.9%	27.7%	23.6%	+17.4%	16.1%	13.6%	+18.4%
Male	26.4%	25.0%	+5.6%	48%	50.0%	-4.0%	20.3%	18.5%	+9.7%	5.4%	6.5%	-16.9%

Key Insight: The gender workload gap is stark and widening. Female educators reporting "Somewhat overwhelming" workloads rose from 23.6% to 27.7% (+17%), with "Very overwhelming" climbing from 13.6% to 16.1% (+18%). Combined, 43.8% of female educators describe their workload as overwhelming, nearly double the 25.7% rate among males. Male workload perceptions held essentially flat year over year, with no significant changes in either direction.

Intent to Leave by Gender

Gender	Yes — leaving			Maybe			No — staying		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
Female	20.7%	19.0%	+8.9%	28.8%	26.4%	+9.1%	50.5%	54.5%	-7.3%
Male	26.4%	20.7%	+27.5%	28.4%	23.9%	+18.8%	45.2%	55.4%	-18.4%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insights: Male educators are now more likely to say "Yes" to leaving (26.4%) than female educators (20.7%). The male "No - staying" rate dropped from 55.4% to 45.2% (-18.4%), an unfavorable shift that underscores rapidly escalating retention risk among men. Female attrition also worsened, with "Yes" rising from 19.0% to 20.7% and "No" declining from 54.5% to 50.5%. Neither gender is trending toward stability.

By Age Group

Career Satisfaction by Age

Age	Very satisfied			Satisfied			Dissatisfied			Very dissatisfied		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
22-30	20.0%	10.3%	+94.2%	51.4%	65.5%	-21.5%	17.1%	17.2%	-0.6%	11.4%	6.9%	+65.2%
31-40	5.1%	13.3%	-61.7%	56.6%	48%	+17.9%	30.3%	30.7%	-1.3%	8.1%	8.0%	+1.2%
41-50	8.4%	13%	-35.4%	48.5%	55.3%	-12.3%	29.7%	26.8%	+10.8%	13.4%	4.9%	+173.5%
51-60	12.8%	17.8%	-28.1%	56.8%	50.3%	+12.9%	25.2%	25.2%	+0.0%	5.1%	6.7%	-23.9%
61+	25.9%	31.8%	-18.6%	47.1%	42.4%	+11.1%	24.7%	18.2%	+35.7%	2.4%	7.6%	-68.4%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: Educators, aged 31 to 60, are driving the most significant year-over-year deterioration. The 41-50 age group saw "Very dissatisfied" surge from 4.9% to 13.4%

(+174%), the largest relative increase of any cell in this table. The 31-40 cohort's "Very satisfied" rate collapsed from 13.3% to 5.1% (-62%), signaling deep erosion in the professional enthusiasm of educators who represent the pipeline to school leadership. The 61+ cohort remains the most satisfied overall.

Intent to Leave by Age

Age	Yes — leaving			Maybe			No — staying		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
22-30	20.0%	17.2%	+16.3%	20.0%	37.9%	-47.2%	60%	44.8%	+33.9%
31-40	16.2%	17.3%	-6.4%	39.4%	37.3%	+5.6%	44.4%	45.3%	-2.0%
41-50	16.3%	13.8%	+18.1%	30.5%	21.1%	+44.5%	53.1%	65%	-18.3%
51-60	22.2%	19.0%	+16.8%	28.6%	21.5%	+33.0%	49.1%	59.5%	-17.5%
61+	45.9%	33.3%	+37.8%	18.8%	33.3%	-43.5%	35.3%	33.3%	+6.0%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The 61+ cohort's "Yes" rate of 45.9% (up from 33.3%, +38%) reflects expected retirement patterns but warrants monitoring for earlier-than-expected departures. More strategically urgent is the 41-50 group, whose "No — staying" rate collapsed from 65.0% to 53.1% (-18%) — previously the most stable cohort, now showing acute wavering. The 31-40 cohort holds the highest "Maybe" rate at 39.4%, making it the largest pool of persuadable educators. The 22-30 group showed a rare positive signal: "No — staying" rose from 44.8% to 60.0% (+34%), suggesting early-career stability has improved this year.

At the age group level, satisfaction and intent to leave are strongly linked where dissatisfied educators are far more likely to consider departure. The 31-50 mid-career group sits at the lowest satisfaction levels in the survey, and more than half are weighing whether to leave. This is the cohort where dissatisfaction is actively converting into attrition risk and where intervention would have the highest return on retention.

Workload by Age

Age	Very manageable			Somewhat manageable			Somewhat overwhelming			Very overwhelming		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
22-30	20.0%	20.7%	-3.4%	34.3%	41.4%	-17.1%	31.4%	20.7%	+51.7%	14.3%	17.2%	-16.9%
31-40	15.2%	17.3%	-12.1%	39.4%	37.3%	+5.6%	27.3%	28.0%	-2.5%	18.2%	17.3%	+5.2%
41-50	14.6%	22.0%	-33.6%	42.7%	43.9%	-2.7%	28.9%	25.2%	+14.7%	13.8%	8.9%	+55.1%
51-60	20.5%	17.8%	+15.2%	43.2%	46.6%	-7.3%	21.8%	21.5%	+1.4%	14.5%	14.1%	+2.8%
61+	32.9%	28.8%	+14.2%	35.3%	50.0%	-29.4%	24.7%	13.6%	+81.6%	7.1%	7.6%	-6.6%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The 41-50 age group saw "Very overwhelming" rise from 8.9% to 13.8% (+55%), an unfavorable shift among a cohort already showing the deepest satisfaction erosion. The 22-30 group saw "Somewhat overwhelming" surge from 20.7% to 31.4% (+52%), indicating that early-career educators are rapidly accumulating workload stress. The 61+ group saw "Somewhat manageable" drop from 50.0% to 35.3% (-29%), a shift suggesting that even the most senior educators are feeling increased pressure. Conversely, the 61+ "Very manageable" rate rose from 28.8% to 32.9% (+14%), reflecting some resilience among those closest to retirement.

By Tenure

Intent to Leave by Tenure

Tenure	Yes — leaving			Maybe			No — staying		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
0-4 yrs.	13.0%	14.2%	-8.5%	28.3%	23.6%	+19.9%	58.7%	62.3%	-5.8%
5-9 yrs.	18.8%	17.3%	+8.7%	35.4%	28.0%	+26.4%	45.8%	54.7%	-16.3%

Tenure	Yes — leaving			Maybe			No — staying		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
10-19 yrs.	19.9%	15.0%	+32.7%	32.3%	33.8%	-4.4%	47.8%	51.2%	-6.6%
20+ yrs.	27.4%	24.6%	+11.4%	25.4%	25.1%	+1.2%	47.2%	50.3%	-6.2%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The 0-4 year group retains the strongest commitment base (58.7% "No — staying"), though this softened from 62.3% LY. The 5-9 year group's "Maybe" rate surged from 28.0% to 35.4% (+26.4%). The 10-19 year group saw the sharpest rise in active attrition intent, with "Yes" climbing from 15.0% to 19.9% (+33%). The 20+ year group continues to lead outright attrition at 27.4%, partially reflecting retirement acceleration.

Satisfaction by Tenure

Tenure	Very satisfied			Satisfied			Dissatisfied			Very dissatisfied		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
0-4 yrs.	15.2%	25.5%	-40.4%	56.5%	52.8%	+7.0%	18.5%	14.2%	+30.3%	9.8%	7.5%	+30.7%
5-9 yrs.	6.2%	13.3%	-53.4%	56.2%	58.7%	-4.3%	29.2%	22.7%	+28.6%	8.3%	5.3%	+56.6%
10-19 yrs.	12.4%	13.8%	-10.1%	50.2%	48.8%	+2.9%	26.4%	32.5%	-18.8%	10.9%	5%	+118.0%
20+ yrs.	12.9%	15.9%	-18.9%	51.5%	48.2%	+6.8%	29.4%	28.7%	+2.4%	6.3%	7.2%	-12.5%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The combined 0-4 year group reveals a striking erosion of early-career enthusiasm: "Very satisfied" dropped from 25.5% to 15.2% (-40.4%), while both "Dissatisfied" (+30.3%) and "Very dissatisfied" (+30.7%) rose sharply. Combined dissatisfaction for this group climbed from 21.7% to 28.3% (+30.4%). The 5-9 year group continues to show the lowest "Very satisfied" rate at just 6.2%, and the 10-19 year group's "Very dissatisfied" rate more than doubled from 5.0% to 10.9% (+118%),

representing a deepening issue among mid-career veterans critical to institutional continuity.

Workload by Tenure

Tenure	Very manageable			Somewhat manageable			Somewhat overwhelming			Very overwhelming		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
0-4 yrs.	22.8%	26.4%	-13.6%	37.0%	39.6%	-6.6%	28.3%	20.8%	+36.1%	12.0%	13.2%	-9.1%
5-9 yrs.	13.5%	10.7%	+26.2%	39.6%	52.0%	-23.8%	27.1%	21.3%	+27.2%	19.8%	16%	+23.8%
10-19 yrs.	19.9%	23.8%	-16.4%	39.3%	40.0%	-1.8%	28.4%	26.2%	+8.4%	12.4%	10.0%	+24.0%
20+ yrs.	19.5%	20.0%	-2.5%	43.9%	46.2%	-5.0%	23.1%	22.1%	+4.5%	13.5%	11.8%	+14.4%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The 5-9 year tenure group shows the most severe workload deterioration. "Somewhat manageable" dropped from 52.0% to 39.6% (-23.8%) while "Somewhat overwhelming" rose from 21.3% to 27.1% (+27.2%). Combined overwhelming workload for this group increased from 37.3% to 46.9% (+25.7%). The 0-4 year group's "Somewhat overwhelming" also rose sharply from 20.8% to 28.3% (+36.1%).

By Grade Level

Satisfaction by Grade Level

	Very satisfied			Satisfied			Dissatisfied			Very dissatisfied		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
Elementary (K-5)	11.2%	16.4%	-31.7%	46.6%	56.8%	-18.0%	31.7%	22.6%	+40.3%	10.4%	4.1%	+153.7%
Middle (6-8)	8.9%	16.0%	-44.4%	57.5%	48.7%	+18.1%	26.0%	29.4%	-11.6%	7.5%	5.9%	+27.1%

	Very satisfied			Satisfied			Dissatisfied			Very dissatisfied		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
High School (9-12)	13.6%	17.1%	-20.5%	55.8%	48.8%	+14.3%	23.3%	24.0%	-2.9%	7.3%	10.1%	-27.7%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: Elementary teachers show the steepest satisfaction decline across grade levels. Their combined dissatisfaction (Dissatisfied + Very dissatisfied) rose from 26.7% to 42.1%, driven by a +6.3pp surge in "Very dissatisfied". The "Very satisfied" rate dropped from 16.4% to 11.2% (-32%). Middle school teachers saw modest improvement in "Satisfied" (+18%) but remain under pressure. High school teachers are relatively stable.

Intent to Leave by Grade Level

	Yes — leaving			Maybe			No — staying		
	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg	TY	LY	% chg
Elementary (K-5)	23.7%	16.4%	+44.5%	32.1%	21.2%	+51.4%	44.2%	62.3%	-29.1%
Middle (6-8)	24.7%	16.8%	+47.0%	27.4%	34.5%	-20.6%	47.9%	48.7%	-1.6%
High School (9-12)	20.4%	20.2%	+1.0%	24.3%	26.4%	-8.0%	55.3%	53.5%	+3.4%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

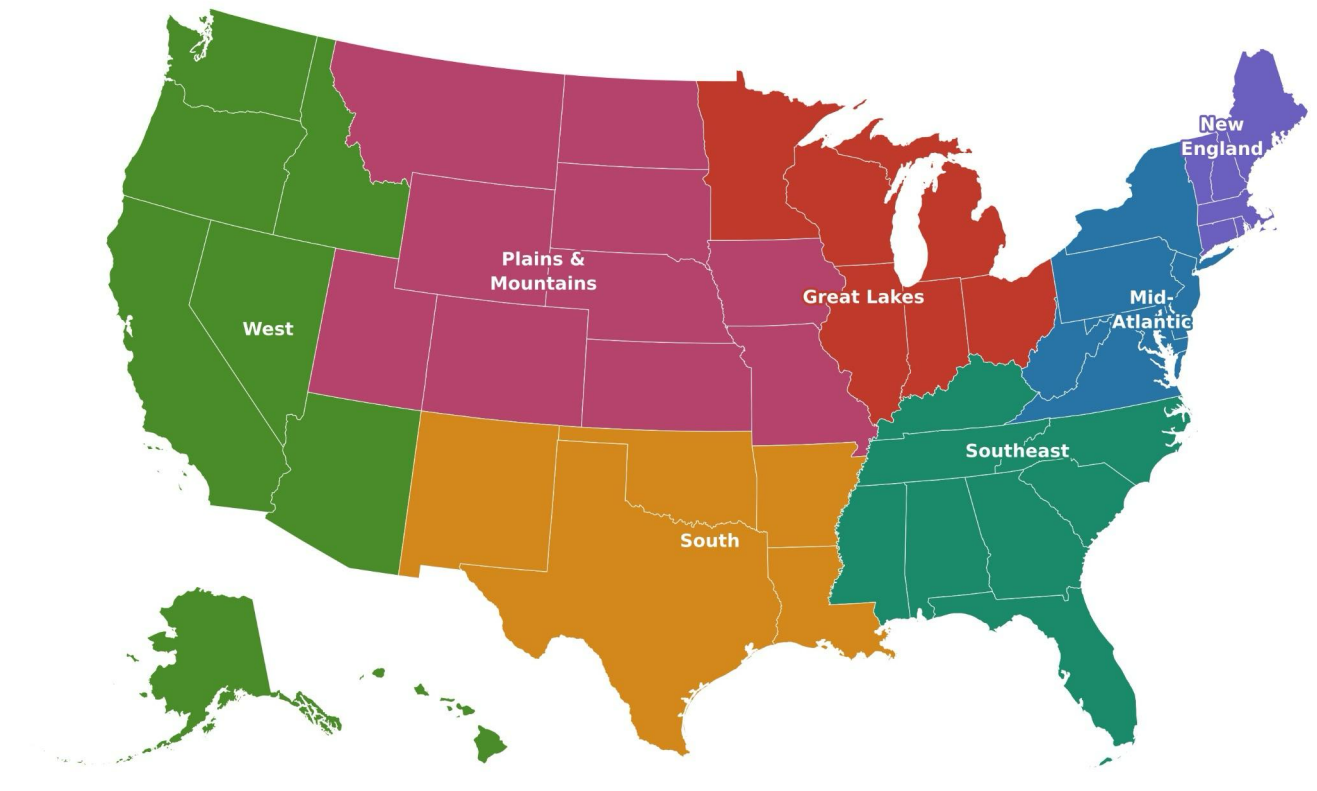
Key Insights: Elementary educators experienced the most severe attrition increase of any grade-level segment. Their "No — staying" rate plummeted from 62.3% to 44.2% (-29%), the largest retention decline in the dataset. "Yes — leaving" jumped from 16.4% to 23.7% (+45%) and "Maybe" surged from 21.2% to 32.1% (+51%). Combined attrition risk (Yes + Maybe) for elementary teachers is now 55.8%, meaning more than half of surveyed K-5 educators are uncertain about staying. Middle school "Yes" also rose

sharply from 16.8% to 24.7% (+47%). High school teachers remain the most stable, with minimal year-over-year movement.

By Region

National headlines mask significant regional divergence. While overall sentiment is trending negatively across most dimensions, the pace, severity, and drivers of that decline vary meaningfully by region. New England and West showed relative stabilization or improvement in several key measures. In contrast, South exhibited real signs of strain and risk.

This assessment breaks down the teacher sentiment by region based on the classifications showcased below.



Region	Associated States
New England	Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

Mid-Atlantic	Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, New York
Southeast	Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
Great Lakes	Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
South	Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Plains & Mountains	Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming
West	Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

Key Teacher Sentiment Findings

The regional snapshot provides a single-frame view of how educator sentiment is distributed geographically. No region is thriving. This table highlights the regions where deterioration is fastest, where pockets of stability exist, and which metric combinations signal the highest urgency.

Region	Metric	This Year	Last Year	% Change
Great Lakes	State of Education Positive %	27.8%	17.6%	+10.2pp / +58.0%
	State of Education Negative %	28.3%	25.2%	+3.1pp / +12.3%
	View of Education Worse Than Last Year %	39.1%	31.1%	+8.0pp / +25.7%
	Over-Worked %	38.2%	31.9%	+6.3pp / +19.7%

	Satisfied with Career %	65.6%	71.4%	-5.8pp / -8.1%
	Considering Leaving %	47.6%	42.9%	+4.7pp / +11.0%
South	State of Education Positive %	17.8%	23.3%	-5.5pp / -23.6%
	State of Education Negative %	42.6%	38.8%	+3.8pp / +9.8%
	View of Education Worse Than Last Year %	45.5%	34.0%	+11.5pp / +33.8%
	Over-Worked %	48.5%	37.9%	+10.6pp / +28.0%
	Satisfied with Career %	64.4%	76.7%	-12.3pp / -16.0%
	Considering Leaving %	58.4%	44.7%	+13.7pp / +30.6%
New England	State of Education Positive %	44.6%	32.8%	+11.8pp / +36.0%
	State of Education Negative %	10.8%	12.5%	-1.7pp / -13.6%
	View of Education Worse Than Last Year %	30.1%	42.2%	-12.1pp / -28.7%
	Over-Worked %	33.8%	40.6%	-6.8pp / -16.7%
	Satisfied with Career %	72.3%	57.8%	+14.5pp / +25.1%
	Considering Leaving %	41.0%	43.8%	-2.8pp / -6.4%
Mid-Atlantic	State of Education Positive %	29.9%	34.9%	-5.0pp / -14.3%

	State of Education Negative %	29.1%	19.3%	+9.8pp / +50.8%
	View of Education Worse Than Last Year %	35.8%	41.0%	-5.2pp / -12.7%
	Over-Worked %	32.8%	30.1%	+2.7pp / +9.0%
	Satisfied with Career %	67.9%	63.9%	+4.0pp / +6.3%
	Considering Leaving %	47.0%	41.0%	+6.0pp / +14.6%
West	State of Education Positive %	13.9%	16.2%	-2.3pp / -14.2%
	State of Education Negative %	39.2%	43.2%	-4.0pp / -9.3%
	View of Education Worse Than Last Year %	40.5%	51.4%	-10.9pp / -21.2%
	Over-Worked %	50.6%	40.5%	+10.1pp / +24.9%
	Satisfied with Career %	53.2%	59.5%	-6.3pp / -10.6%
	Considering Leaving %	57.0%	59.5%	-2.5pp / -4.2%
Plains & Mountains	State of Education Positive %	25.0%	22.2%	+2.8pp / +12.6%
	State of Education Negative %	29.4%	11.1%	+18.3pp / +164.9%
	View of Education Worse Than Last Year %	61.8%	37.0%	+24.8pp / +67.0%
	Over-Worked %	38.2%	22.2%	+16.0pp / +72.1%

Satisfied with Career %	58.8%	81.5%	-22.7pp / -27.9%
Considering Leaving %	66.2%	55.6%	+10.6pp / +19.1%

% change in red indicates significant negative change > 20%. Green indicates significant positive change > 20%

Key Insight: The Plains and Mountains region stands out as the most alarming finding in this framework, with worsening-outlook surging 24.8pp to 61.8%, satisfaction collapsing 22.7 points to just 58.8%, and attrition risk climbing to 66.2%. South posted the steepest multi-dimensional decline of any large-sample region, losing 12.3 points of career satisfaction, cutting the highly satisfied educator tier roughly in half, while attrition risk crossed the majority threshold.

New England remains the clear outlier in both years of data. It is the only region where attrition risk declined year-over-year, where worsening-outlook fell rather than rose, and where positive State of Education Positive ratings (44.6%) outpace every other region by a wide margin. The prior-year data makes the divergence even starker: in the year prior, New England's 42.2% worsening-outlook rate was one of its worst readings, yet that figure would rank as a relative bright spot against what the Plains and Mountains (37.0% → 61.8%) and South (34.0% → 45.5%) posted this cycle.

9. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS & MICRO-PATTERNS

Workload-Satisfaction Intersection

The data reveals a strong correlation between workload perception and attrition intent. Among educators reporting "Very overwhelming" workloads in TY, attrition risk (Yes + Maybe) is substantially higher than the overall average, underscoring that workload is both a symptom and a driver of the retention crisis.

The Shrinking "Passionate Core"

The "Very satisfied" tier shrank from 17.8% to 12.6% across the board, but the decline is even more pronounced in specific segments: females (-5.7pp), ages 41-50 (-4.6pp), 5-9 year tenure (-7.1pp), and elementary teachers (-5.2pp). The passionate core of educators, those most likely

to recruit peers, mentor new teachers, and advocate for the profession, is eroding fastest among the groups most critical to the workforce pipeline.

The "Unsure" Opportunity

The growth investment question revealed a significant shift: "No" responses dropped -7.3pp while "Unsure" grew +6.7pp. This means a substantial pool of previously resistant educators is now open to being convinced. Combined with the retention crisis, this represents arguably the highest-leverage opportunity in the data: strategic investment in meaningful professional growth experiences could convert fence-sitters into committed teachers.

Elementary Education Warning

Elementary educators consistently emerged as the most stressed, least satisfied, and highest attrition-risk segment across multiple measures. Their "No" (not leaving) base collapsed by -18.1pp year over year. This is the single largest retention shift among any demographic group. Given that elementary education forms the foundational layer of the entire system, this warrants urgent, targeted intervention.

10. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above, the following strategic priorities emerge for education leaders and policymakers:

- **Prioritize Elementary Educator Support:** Deploy targeted retention strategies for elementary teachers, including workload relief, behavioral support systems, and dedicated mental health resources for both educators and students.
- **Build AI Readiness Infrastructure:** Close the AI readiness gap with practical training, clear guidelines, and pilot programs that give teachers agency over how AI is integrated into their practice rather than having it imposed.
- **Invest in Meaningful Growth:** Capitalize on the "Unsure" opportunity by designing professional development that is teacher-directed, practically applicable, and clearly linked to career advancement rather than compliance-driven mandates.

- **Address the Workload Crisis:** With 40.2% of educators reporting overwhelming workloads, reduce non-instructional burdens, provide adequate support staff, and audit the scope of duties that have expanded beyond the classroom.
- **Re-Engage Mid-Career Educators (5-19 Years):** This group shows the steepest satisfaction declines. Create leadership pathways, mentoring roles, and recognition programs that renew their sense of purpose and professional growth.
- **Tackle Student Behavior Systemically:** With behavior/discipline remaining the #1 challenge (73.7%) and "Difficult student population" as the fastest-growing leaving reason (+3.3pp), districts need comprehensive behavioral support frameworks, not just classroom-level interventions.

APPENDIX. METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE PROFILE

Both surveys used identical instrumentation distributed to PK-12 educators across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The current year survey was fielded in March 2026 and the prior year survey was fielded in June 2025. Moving forward, this survey will be distributed quarterly.

Sample Composition	This Year	Last Year
Total Responses	815	542
Public School	90.6%	87.9%
Female	76.2%	77.5%
Male	21.4%	20.3%
Non-Binary	.1%	.4%
20+ Years Tenure	43.8%	42.8%
10-19 Years Tenure	29.0%	17.5%
5-9 Years Tenure	13.9%	16.4%
2-4 Years Tenure	12.3%	20.6%

Age 41-50	34.5%	27.0%
Age 51-60	33.8%	35.7%
Age 31-40	14.3%	16.4%
Elementary (K-5)	36.0%	32.0%
Middle (6-8)	21.1%	26.1%
High School (9-12)	29.8%	28.3%

Note: This year's sample is notably more experienced, with a larger share of 10-19 year veterans (29.0% vs. 17.5%) and a smaller share of early-career (2-4 years) teachers (12.3% vs. 20.6%). This shift toward more experienced respondents may partially influence sentiment trends and should be considered when interpreting year-over-year changes.

Responding Regions

Region	This Year	Last Year
Great Lakes	212	119
South	101	103
New England	83	64
Mid-Atlantic	134	83
West	79	37
Plains & Mountains	68	27
Southeast	15	14

Note: Some respondents did not self-report location.