

Education Minnesota

Survey of educators finds nearly one-third are considering leaving the profession due to stress, overwhelming workload

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ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct. 12, 2020 – A new survey of members of Education Minnesota found high levels of stress and anxiety that may not be sustainable over the rest of the school year, especially for educators who are now simultaneously teaching online and in-person.

- [Survey executive summary](#)

“Educators are saying they’re stressed, overwhelmed, frustrated and worried about their mental health,” said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota. “Nearly 30 percent say they’re thinking about quitting or retiring. There’s already a teacher shortage in Minnesota. Our public schools won’t function if thousands of educators burn out and leave. It’s time to adjust.”

Information provided to the union by the Teachers Retirement Association of Minnesota shows applications for retirement benefits increased by 35 percent in August and September 2020 compared to the same period last year.

“The goal remains to safely reopen school buildings and resume in-person learning, but this pandemic has taught everyone to be flexible,” Specht said. “This isn’t the time for finger pointing, but it is time to adapt. Districts need to remove all unnecessary tasks from educators’ plates, open negotiations on building-specific issues and generally abandon plans that ask a single teacher to manage half a class online and a half in-person at the same time. That arrangement may have seemed like a good idea in August, but it’s not working in October and it may drive out hundreds of teachers by May.”

More than 9,700 educators responded to the online survey between Sept. 23 and Oct. 5. The majority were working in the hybrid model of education delivery. The highest levels of stress and anxiety were reported by teachers with multimodal assignments, meaning they are working in different education modes at the same time. More details are in the [two-page executive summary](#) accompanying this release.

About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota’s members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota’s public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota’s community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota

campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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