

gradient learning poll

2023

The Great Teacher Resignation



'This is not what I signed up for.'

Schools in the United States are on the verge of a massive teacher shortage, national survey finds.





Data from the Gradient Learning Poll shows the majority of teachers are considering leaving the profession.

Only
27%

of teachers say it is very likely that they will still teach five years from now.¹

“It is so hard to hear the disparaging remarks of politicians, parents, and media about schools and teachers—especially when I know how hard I work at my job and how much I invest in my students and their future. I would like to see our profession given the respect we deserve.”

Middle School Teacher
Oregon

New data indicate that the country is possibly on the verge of a massive teacher shortage.

The Gradient Learning Poll, a survey of 639 teachers and school leaders from across the nation, found that many teachers are dissatisfied with their profession, are considering leaving the field altogether, and perceive a lack of public respect as a major contributing factor.

The current state of teacher dissatisfaction may lead to a future exodus, as only 27% of teachers who responded to the survey said it is very likely that they will still teach five years from now.

¹ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

Only 9% of teachers report being very satisfied with their teaching career.²

According to the 2023 Gradient Learning Poll, which surveyed 639 educators across the country³:

74%

wouldn't recommend a career in teaching or education to a family member or friend.

64%

are less satisfied with teaching today compared to before the pandemic.

It is important to note that the trend of teachers planning to quit is shared by teachers across experience levels. Only 57% of teachers who currently have 4-10 years of experience in teaching see themselves still in the profession in 5 years; only one-third of respondents say the same for 10 years

from now.⁴ Such a large number of young educators considering leaving the field of education raises concerns about the future of the profession. This cohort should be entering the prime of their teaching careers, instead many are considering leaving.



² Gradient Learning Poll 2023

³ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

⁴ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

The lack of respect for teachers and the politicization of education are key factors in why educators consider leaving the profession.



95%

of teachers and school leaders

say that lack of public respect is a highly important or moderately important aspect of an educator's decision-making process for staying or leaving the profession.⁵

80%

of teachers

87%

of school leaders

report that national politicization is a highly important or moderately important aspect of an educator's decision-making process for staying or leaving the profession.⁶

The Gradient Learning Poll asked teachers and school leaders to specifically note the importance (high, moderate, low, not sure) of various factors impacting their decision to stay in or leave the profession. Both teachers (74%) and school leaders (79%) report that one of the most important factors was the lack of public respect for the teaching profession. Comparatively, that factor ranked almost as highly for teachers as additional workload and compensation.⁷ Only 2% of teachers say that public respect is of low importance in a teacher's decision to leave the profession.⁸

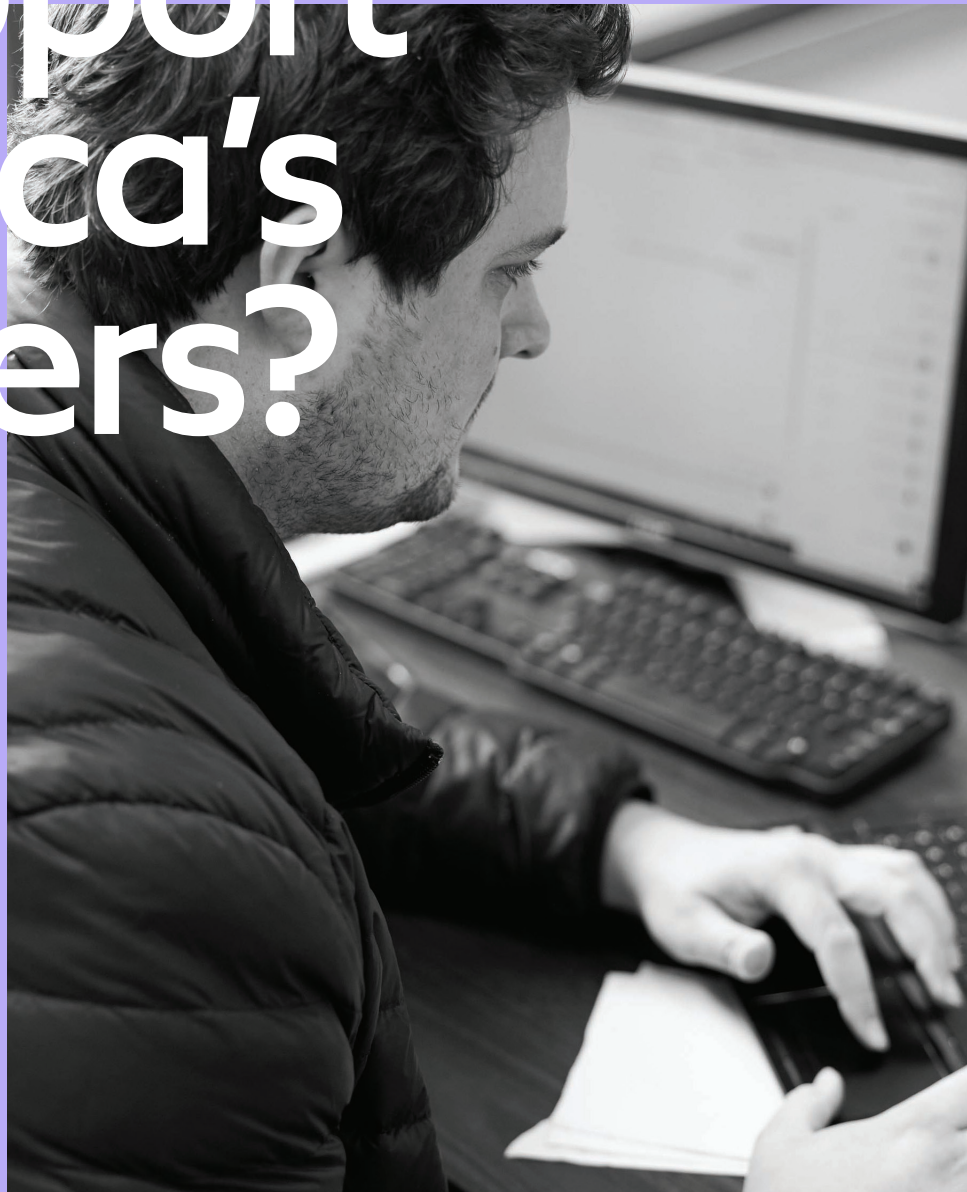
⁵ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

⁶ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

⁷ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

⁸ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

How can we begin to support America's teachers?



"To retain teachers I would look at having open and honest conversations about how to improve morale."

High School Teacher
Kentucky



The national survey asked teachers and school leaders to consider possible solutions to help sustain the teaching profession. Both teachers and school leaders agreed that increasing educator salaries is crucial, as is having greater recognition in the community about the importance of teaching.

Educators also expressed the joys of teaching in this survey. Teachers highlighted that the primary reason they became educators was the desire to make a positive difference for their students and their community.

The top three reasons people wanted to be teachers are⁹:

49% to make a difference in the world.

48% to work with children.

46% were inspired by a teacher in their own life.

"It's disheartening to see teachers feeling so tired and unsupported. Educators are asking for help, and we must answer their call by treating them with the respect they deserve. There is no back-up plan to teach our children."

Monica Milligan
Chief Program Officer, Gradient Learning

Solutions

73%

of teachers

believe a culture of positivity and collaboration would help.

80%

of teachers

feel the most job satisfaction when they're supporting students beyond academic development.

A majority of teachers (73%) and school leaders (80%) believe that fostering a school culture of positivity and collaboration is a "very valuable" potential solution to address the teacher retention crisis.¹⁰

Additionally, the vast majority (80%) of teachers claim they feel more job satisfaction when they are supporting students beyond academic development. This includes helping students grow as whole people by supporting them academically, emotionally, and cognitively.¹¹

All of the data from the Gradient Learning Poll reinforce that educators crave and deserve learning environments that are rooted in respect and designed to help teachers and students do their best work. This means providing school leaders and teachers with the necessary coaching and professional support they need to do what they love most: helping students thrive academically and develop the skills and values they will need to succeed beyond the classroom.

⁹ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

¹⁰ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

¹¹ Gradient Learning Poll 2023

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About the Gradient Learning Poll

The Gradient Learning Poll is conducted in partnership with [Project Tomorrow](#), a nationally recognized, education nonprofit organization with a focus on understanding the impact of new learning models and interventions on student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. In Spring 2023, the Gradient Learning Poll conducted an online survey of 428 teachers and 211 school leaders across the country—including respondents from 45 states, plus the District of Columbia—to better understand their views on the state of education. The poll includes educators at schools that are not a part of the Gradient Learning program.

639 educators surveyed

Types of educators

- Teachers: 67%
- School leaders: 33%

Grade level/school assignment

- Elementary school (PreK - Grade 5): 41%
- Middle school (Grades 6-8): 23%
- High school (Grades 9-12): 23%
- Other: 11%

Years of teaching experience

- 1st year: 3%
- 1 - 3 years: 5%
- 4 - 10 years: 23%
- 11 - 15 years: 16%
- 16+ years: 54%

Years of school leadership experience

- 1st year: 6%
- 1 - 3 years: 10%
- 4 - 10 years: 31%
- 11 - 15 years: 11%
- 16+ years: 41%

Ages of teachers not expecting to be in the profession in 5 years

- 26 or younger (Gen Z): 25%
- 27 - 42 years of age (Millennial): 40%
- 43 - 58 years of age (Gen X): 44%
- 59 or older (Baby Boomer): 68%