

# Job-related stress threatens the teacher supply: RAND survey

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Nearly one in four teachers may leave their job by the end of the current (2020-'21) school year, compared with one in six who were likely to leave prior to the pandemic, according to a new RAND Corporation

survey. Teachers who identified as Black or African American were particularly likely to consider leaving.

U.S. public-school teachers surveyed in January and February 2021 reported they are almost twice as likely to experience frequent job-related stress as the general employed adult population and almost three times as likely to experience [depressive symptoms](#) as the general adult population.

These results suggest potential immediate and long-term threats to the teacher supply.

"Teacher stress was a concern prior to the pandemic and may have only become worse. The experiences of teachers who were considering leaving at the time of our survey were similar in many ways to those of teachers who left the profession because of the pandemic," said Elizabeth Steiner, lead author of the report and a policy researcher at RAND, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization. "This raises the concern that more teachers may decide to quit this year than in past years if nothing is done to address challenging working conditions and support teacher well-being."

Stressful working conditions included a mismatch between actual and preferred mode of instruction, lack of administrator and technical support, frequent technical issues with remote teaching, and lack of implementation of COVID-19 safety measures. Stressors relating to mode of instruction and health were ranked most highly by teachers surveyed.

About a third of teachers were responsible for the care and learning support of their own children while teaching. These stressful working conditions were even more prevalent among teachers who were likely to quit after the onset of the pandemic, but not before.

"Given that some pandemic-era stressors, such as remote teaching, might be here to stay, we think district and school leaders can support teachers' well-being by understanding current working conditions and their need for a more supportive and flexible work environment," said Ashley Woo, coauthor and an assistant policy researcher at RAND.

The report recommends schools implement COVID-19 mitigation measures in a way that allows teachers to focus on instruction and offset worries about their health. Schools and districts should consider systematically collecting data about the mental health and well-being needs of teachers to understand the sources of teacher distress in their [school](#) communities while also working together to design and implement mental health and wellness supports. Helping teachers access childcare could go a long way to alleviating stress and promoting [teacher](#) retention, as would developing clear policies for remote teaching and adopting technology standards for remote [teaching](#) equipment.

**More information:** Survey: "Job-Related Stress Threatens the Teacher Supply: Key Findings from the 2021 State of the U.S. Teacher Survey"

Provided by RAND Corporation

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