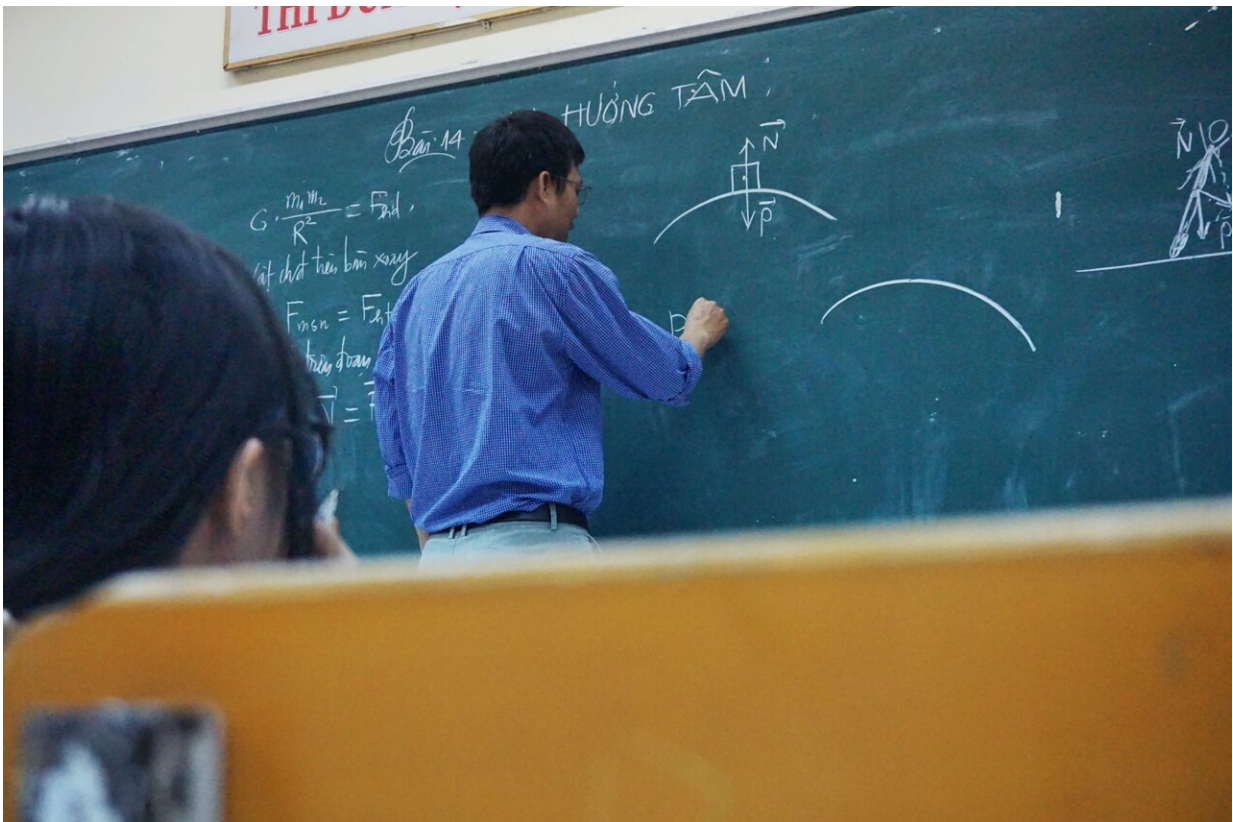


# Teacher and principal stress running at twice the rate of general working public, hindering pandemic recovery

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U.S. teachers and principals are experiencing frequent job-related stress at a rate about twice that of the general population of working adults,

according to a new RAND Corporation survey. Well-being is reported as especially poor among Hispanic/Latinx teachers, mid-career teachers and female teachers and principals.

Researchers conducted surveys in January of public school teachers, principals and working adults, asking about five aspects of well-being: frequent job-related [stress](#), ability to cope with job-related stress, burnout, symptoms of depression, and resilience to stressful events.

Nearly half of the teachers said supporting students' academic learning was one of their main sources of job-related stress. Staffing was a top source of stress for principals. Teachers of color and principals of color were also more likely to experience racial discrimination.

"Two-thirds of the teachers we interviewed reported taking on extra responsibilities during the pandemic like covering classes or taking additional students in their own classrooms as the result of staff shortages," said Elizabeth D. Steiner, lead author of the report and a policy researcher at RAND, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization. "Teachers told us that their dedication to working with students kept them in their jobs, even though pandemic conditions have made teaching more challenging. Teaching conditions—not the work of teaching itself—are what they find to be stressful."

The survey findings suggest that access to employer-provided mental health supports is linked to lower levels of job-related stress and higher levels of resilience for both principals and teachers. About 20% of principals and 35% of teachers reported that they did not have access to employer-provided mental health supports or did not know whether they had such access.

"For many principals and teachers, available mental health supports were not helpful or convenient or were too limited to address their needs,"

said Sy Doan, coauthor and an associate policy researcher at RAND. "District leaders should avoid the appearance of treating wellness as a superficial or short-term problem and offer [mental health](#) and well-being supports tailored to educators' needs."

Despite the prevalence of reported job-related stress and concerning signals about educator well-being, the survey data show many educators are managing their stress and find joy in their work. District and [school leaders](#) who have not made adult relationships within schools a priority could consider transferring the strategies they use to build positive student-staff relationships to focus on adults, researchers suggest. District leaders could take a burden off pandemic-weary principals' sources of stress with system-level efforts to focus teachers and [principals](#) on their core responsibilities of instructing students and instructional leadership.

**More information:** Report:  
[www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1108-3.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-3.html)

Provided by RAND Corporation

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