

ATA Research
2020

Reporting on Well-Being, Workplace Safety and COVID-19 Information Reliability

ATA Pandemic Research Study

Pulse Survey #3 (October 2 to October 5, 2020)

Fall 2020



The Alberta Teachers' Association

www.teachers.ab.ca

Overview

As Alberta school communities entered the month of October 2020, with students learning in both face-to-face classes and online learning environments, the Association continued to gather data through its longitudinal pandemic research activities. What follows is a report on teacher and school leader well-being, along with new questions related to workplace safety and COVID-19 information reliability, and comment on growing work intensification for Alberta teachers and school leaders.

This third ATA pandemic pulse survey was conducted in the first week of October, when 9 per cent of all schools in Alberta were reporting a case of the disease, and 273 Alberta schools had confirmed at least one positive case of the disease on their campus (as a cumulative count) since August 30, 2020. Of these, 88 Alberta schools had declared outbreaks (2 to 4 cases), 21 of which were placed on watch status (5+ or more cases), with 53 reports of in-school transmission and 15 school closures.

Of note is that across Canada when this survey was conducted, the country was just beginning to enter into a second wave of the disease, with an upward trend in both hospitalizations and deaths. During the week of this ATA pandemic pulse survey, 644 individuals across Canada with COVID-19 required hospital care and 18 deaths were being reported daily. The national average was 2,052 new daily cases, a 40 per cent increase over the previous week.

To measure the extent of the impact of the current Alberta school re-entry scenario 1 on Alberta teachers, this survey instrument employed an anxiety and depression disorder measurement scale designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹ To explore information reliability, items in this survey used guidance from the health literacy scale of a World Health Organization COVID-19 insight research survey tool.²

Future pandemic research activities will continue to give attention to the prevention, infection and control measures in K–12 schools, alongside the well-being and mental health developments of teachers, students and members of the school community. This research will focus on how the pandemic has accelerated and amplified issues of inequity, poverty, stress, isolation and student vulnerabilities in Alberta schools.

The Association is committed to monitoring and reporting on COVID-19 developments across Alberta in support of students, teachers and school leaders and the interests of public education.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm>

² https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/436705/COVID-19-survey-tool-and-guidance.pdf



4 Key Findings (October 2 to 5, 2020)

Well-Being, Health/Safety, COVID-19 Information Reliability Reporting from 2,700+ Alberta Teachers and School Leaders



1. Well-Being—Pandemic Spikes in Fatigue, Stress, Anxiety and Depression

While **45 per cent** of teachers are **more comfortable with new school routines** related to COVID-19, **87 per cent** are **stressed** and **92 per cent** report being **exhausted** at the end of each day.

These findings on stress and exhaustion have remained at extreme levels since the first pulse survey on August 28, 2020.

A significant indicator of the state of teacher and school leader mental well-being was revealed using a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) scale measuring anxiety and depression.

Using the CDC scale, this survey found that **45 per cent** of respondents are **feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge** more than **half the days a week and/or nearly every day**. Twenty-nine per cent (**29%**) are **feeling depressed or hopeless** more than **half the days a week and/or nearly every day**.

The 1,400+ qualitative comments captured in this survey provide numerous indications that while teachers and school leaders are more resigned to shifting conditions during the pandemic, they are operating at unsustainable levels of stress.

“ I have never in my 16 years of teaching seen so many staff members breaking down to the point of tears. We are stressed, overwhelmed and scared. – Alberta classroom teacher

“ This is my 25th year of teaching. I have less preps, more classes, more supervision, and dealing with COVID cleaning. I love teaching; however, I am deeply disappointed in the lack of concern for our well being. – Alberta classroom teacher

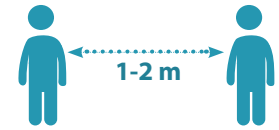
“ Mental health concerns are way up for students, families, and some staff. As a counsellor, I've never seen a September like this for students and family needs. – Alberta classroom teacher

“ As a teacher and psychologist and I am extremely concerned about the mental health of teachers due to the dissonance created by comparing safety protocols for teachers vs other professions. The same safety precautions provided to other professions (distancing, work from home, proper ventilation, small groups, etc) are ignored in the teaching environment. – Alberta teacher and psychologist

The need to protect students and staff from transmission of COVID-19 has added a layer of complexity to the professional conditions of practice for teachers and school leaders.

This survey showed that for Alberta teachers and school leaders **71 per cent** are **moderately to extremely concerned with bringing the virus home** with them from school, and **72 per cent** with **contracting the virus over this winter**.

2. Health and Safety—Concerns with Physical Distancing and Sanitization



Physical distancing remains a challenge with **3 in 4** of respondents are **moderately/extremely concerned with physical distancing in classroom(s) and hallways**.

Class sizes continue to grow with **1 in 4** Alberta teachers having **more than 30 students** in their largest classes.

- “ *It is near impossible to control physical distancing requirements for young children during unstructured times (recess).*
– Alberta classroom teacher
- “ *I think it's a problem that I got excited when my Math 30-1 class went down to 38 students. The class sizes are absolutely ridiculous and there is no way to physically distance.* – Alberta classroom teacher

Overall, eighty-six per cent (**86%**) of all teachers and school leaders are **taking on cleaning and/or sanitization tasks** in their classroom(s)/school.

Sixty-eight per cent (**68%**) of all respondents are being **directed to clean and/or sanitize** their classroom(s)/school during the pandemic. Of this group, less than half (**44 per cent**) **know what chemicals are being used** when they are cleaning and sanitizing.

- “ *I am most concerned about the cleaning protocols in my school. We do not have extra cleaning staff.*
– Alberta school leader
- “ *What chemical is being fogged in our schools? Health effects? Long and short term?* – Alberta classroom teacher
- “ *I have brought up my concerns in my school regarding the sanitization / cleaning log required at our school. We are directed to spray bleach, even while students may be in the room. I'm VERY uncomfortable with this directive.*
– Alberta classroom teacher
- “ *More and more of the cleaning is falling on teachers in an already stressful and nearly unmanageable situation created by this pandemic.* – Alberta classroom teacher

3. COVID-19 Information Reliability and Transparency of Government Decision Making



Eighty-one per cent (**81%**) of Alberta teachers in this study are **concerned with the transparency of government decision making** during the pandemic.

Sixty-four per cent (**64%**) state that it is **difficult to judge the reliability of information provided by the Government of Alberta** on COVID-19 in schools.

Further, **1 in 2** respondents note that it is **difficult to understand Alberta Health Services (AHS) recommendations** on how to **protect students and themselves** from COVID-19 in schools.

- “ *Nothing feels clear coming from the government or the school boards. It's hard to know what to do.*
– Alberta classroom teacher
- “ *The work load as a principal is beyond anything I could have imagined. My experience with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in my school and AHS was not assuring. It took them 20+ hours to contact me from they knew about the case to the time they phoned me. The case worker was brand new and this was the first case of COVID-19 in a school that she had done. I knew more than her! I am also concerned about the work of AHS being downloaded to school leaders. This is unfair, unreasonable.* – Alberta school leader
- “ *I have received different information and protocols from different [Alberta Health Services] AHS employees. Division protocols are different than AHS protocols.* – Alberta school leader



4. Growing Work Intensification for Alberta Teachers and School Leaders

The qualitative comments shed more light on how the work of teachers has intensified due to the conditions of Alberta school re-entry, in both face-to-face and online settings.

There is evidence of growing work intensification related to teachers cleaning and sanitizing their classroom(s)/school with **6 in 10** teachers spending between **20 minutes and one hour each day to clean and/or sanitize** their classroom(s)/school.

- “ *Supervision is a huge concern. Due to the amount of students in the school we have to have multiple recesses. Two days a week I get no break. None. – Alberta classroom teacher*
- “ *Work load has increased. Cleaning that I should not be doing has increased. Teaching multiple grades, programming for more needs with NO support. Assignable times increased - physical distancing is NOT HAPPENING. – Alberta school leader*
- “ *Online instruction requirements are far heavier than in the spring in time online and number of subjects. Preparing materials for online takes much longer. It is the general consensus among my online grade level learning community that the number of hours we are working to get everything done is unsustainable. – Alberta online teacher*
- “ *I am extremely concerned about teacher workload this year. We are being asked to prepare to live stream our classes and get all material online for when a student just stays home sick. We have not been given any materials or time to make this happen. – Alberta classroom teacher*

With the extraordinary pressures on public education caused by the return to school buildings during a pandemic, respondents noted that there is a need to focus on teaching and learning without the added burden of standardized testing regimes.

Of note is that only **10 per cent** of respondents believe that the Government of Alberta should maintain Provincial Achievement Testing (PATs), with **18 per cent** of teachers for maintaining diploma exams for the 2020/21 school year. The following qualitative comments illustrate these concerns.

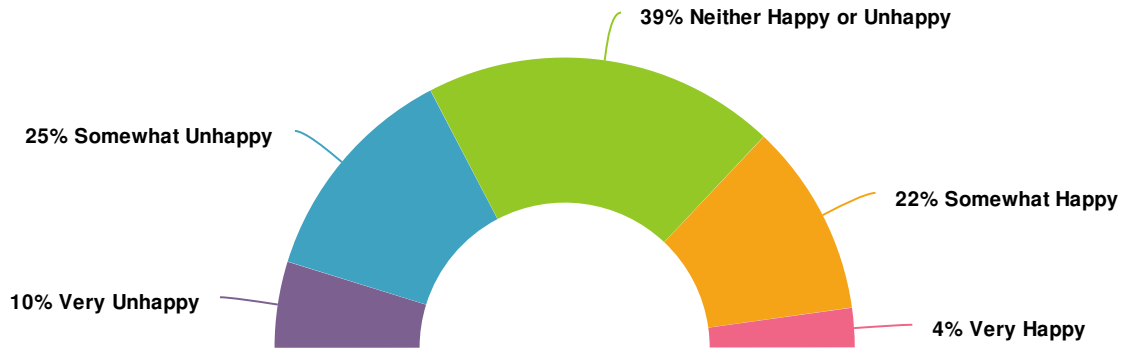
- “ *I do teach a diploma course...the students were passed through by getting their March 15 marks. For some of us that was less than half of a course that builds on concepts. My students are incredibly stressed about a diploma as they are trying to learn the 20 and 30 level material. – Alberta classroom teacher*
- “ *I have concerns with the continuation of diploma exams. I am not generally opposed to the exams themselves; in this environment, however, they make no sense. I am at a school that has not (yet) had any cases; despite that, about 30% of my grade 12s have missed classes for illness and then awaited their results. – Alberta classroom teacher*
- “ *It is imperative for diploma exams to be cancelled, there is massive inequity in student access to instruction as a result of the pandemic. Overall, I am very concerned about the well-being of my colleagues - teachers are exhausted. – Alberta school leader*

From this third pandemic pulse survey, the following actions (among others) were repeatedly noted as considerations to reduce the work intensification and stress on teachers and school leaders:

- Reduce class sizes to allow 1–2 meters of physical distancing.
- Reduce the cleaning and sanitization tasks taken on by teachers and school leaders.
- Reduce teachers' supervision duties.
- Reduce the burden of bureaucratic tasks hindering school leaders from being effective instructional leaders.
- Cancel high-stakes and standardized testing during the pandemic.

Full Data Set (October 2 to 5, 2020)

1. How are you feeling?



Value	Percent	Responses
Very Unhappy	9.6%	266
Somewhat Unhappy	25.1%	699
Neither Happy or Unhappy	39.4%	1,098
Somewhat Happy	21.5%	599
Very Happy	4.4%	123

Totals: 2,785

2. Thinking about this past week, please identify your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Responses
I feel comfortable with new school routines related to COVID-19 prevention. Count Row %	219 7.9%	719 25.8%	589 21.1%	1,095 39.3%	163 5.9%	2,785
I feel isolated. Count Row %	196 7.0%	753 27.0%	221 7.9%	1,115 40.0%	501 18.0%	2,786
I feel hopeful. Count Row %	240 8.6%	812 29.2%	758 27.2%	859 30.9%	113 4.1%	2,782
I feel stressed. Count Row %	59 2.1%	211 7.6%	97 3.5%	1,092 39.2%	1,330 47.7%	2,789
I feel exhausted by the end of the day. Count Row %	44 1.6%	134 4.8%	47 1.7%	679 24.4%	1,880 67.5%	2,784
Totals Total Responses						2789

Representative Qualitative Comment(s) on Well-Being and Mental Health:

"I continue to be worried about the mental health of myself and my colleagues... Not enough resources are available to help with this increased mental fatigue - burnout is a real threat - especially for myself and my high school colleagues reorganizing into quarters and trying desperately to enforce an impossible cohort model."

10/02/2020 Response id: 31

"I have never in my 16 years of teaching seen so many staff members breaking down to the point of tears. We are stressed, overwhelmed and scared."

10/02/2020 Response id: 179

"We need to take action. My students are stressed. I am stressed. My colleagues are stressed. I have had to calm down several students in panic attacks because of anxieties around Covid. We are not doing enough. This group of kids are being collectively traumatized and we are pretending it is business as usual. I try to be positive as much as possible and to be my best, but I can't keep this up."

10/02/2020 Response id: 211

"Online instruction requirements are far heavier than in the spring in time online and number of subjects. Preparing materials for online takes much longer. It is the general consensus among my online grade level learning community that the number of hours we are working to get everything done is unsustainable."

10/03/2020 Response id: 247

"Mental health concerns are way up for students, families, and some staff. As a counsellor, I've never seen a September like this for students and family needs."

10/03/2020 Response id: 340

3. Over the last 7 days, how often have you been bothered by...

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Measurement of Depression (PHQ-2) and Anxiety (GAD-2)

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day	Responses
...having little interest or pleasure in doing things? Count Row %	777 27.9%	957 34.3%	592 21.2%	461 16.5%	2,787
...feeling down, depressed, or hopeless? Count Row %	998 35.8%	994 35.7%	462 16.6%	331 11.9%	2,785
...feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge? Count Row %	519 18.6%	1,041 37.4%	534 19.2%	693 24.9%	2,787
...not being able to stop or control worrying? Count Row %	827 29.7%	959 34.4%	475 17.1%	524 18.8%	2,785
Totals Total Responses					2787

Anxiety and Depression in the Teaching Profession During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The items in question #3 on depression and anxiety are drawn directly from a **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** mental health pandemic survey.

The first two questions (*interest or pleasure in doing things / feeling down, depressed, or hopeless*) utilize the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) scale and measures depression.

The last two questions (*feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge / not being able to stop or control worrying*) utilize the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale and measures anxiety.

Technical Notes:

For each scale, the answers are assigned a numerical value: not at all = 0, several days = 1, more than half the days = 2, and nearly every day = 3. The two responses for each scale are added together. A sum equal to three or greater on the PHQ-2 has been shown to be associated with diagnoses of major depressive disorder. A sum equal to three or greater on the GAD-2 has been shown to be associated with diagnoses of generalized anxiety disorder. For adults with scores of 3 or greater, further evaluation by a clinician or other health professional is generally recommended.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm>

4. Please identify your level of concern with the following:

	Extremely concerned	Moderately concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned	Responses
Bringing the virus home from work/school. Count Row %	1,226 44.0%	741 26.6%	363 13.0%	304 10.9%	151 5.4%	2,785
Contracting the virus during the winter months. Count Row %	1,172 42.0%	834 29.9%	400 14.3%	272 9.7%	112 4.0%	2,790
Frequently changing school protocols and policies regarding COVID-19. Count Row %	862 30.9%	898 32.2%	519 18.6%	324 11.6%	183 6.6%	2,786
Transparency of government decision making during the pandemic. Count Row %	1,614 57.8%	627 22.5%	292 10.5%	153 5.5%	104 3.7%	2,790
Physical distancing (1 to 2 metres) in classroom(s) and hallways. Count Row %	1,320 47.4%	718 25.8%	338 12.1%	258 9.3%	153 5.5%	2,787

	Extremely concerned	Moderately concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned	Responses
My school's capacity to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 upon identification of a positive case(s). Count Row %	724 26.0%	851 30.6%	567 20.4%	428 15.4%	215 7.7%	2,785
Totals						
Total Responses						2790

5. Online Instruction - Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Responses
Adequate resources have been provided to support English Language Learners (ELL) & Individual Program Planning (IPP) in online learning environment(s). Count Row %	124 27.5%	140 31.0%	66 14.6%	69 15.3%	20 4.4%	32 7.1%	451
Adequate professional development has been provided for teachers to feel successful in implementing online learning. Count Row %	115 25.5%	144 31.9%	65 14.4%	78 17.3%	24 5.3%	25 5.5%	451
Teachers have been provided the appropriate technology necessary to teach effectively in an online environment. Count Row %	65 14.4%	105 23.3%	47 10.4%	147 32.6%	60 13.3%	27 6.0%	451

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Responses
Teaching both online classes and face to face classes has dramatically increased teachers' work.	13 2.9%	20 4.4%	23 5.1%	81 18.0%	218 48.3%	96 21.3%	451
Count							
Row %							
Totals							
Total Responses							451

Representative Qualitative Comment(s) Online Instruction:

"Online instruction requirements are far heavier than in the spring in time online and number of subjects. Preparing materials for online takes much longer. It is the general consensus among my online grade level learning community that the number of hours we are working to get everything done is unsustainable."
10/03/2020 Response id: 247

6. Please identify your level of agreement with the following statement:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Responses
The Government of Alberta should maintain diploma exams for the 2020/2021 school year? Count Row %	1,261 45.2%	436 15.6%	470 16.8%	297 10.6%	198 7.1%	128 4.6%	2,790
The Government of Alberta should maintain Provincial Achievement Testing (PATs) for the 2020/2021 school year? Count Row %	1,692 60.6%	478 17.1%	250 9.0%	187 6.7%	104 3.7%	81 2.9%	2,792
Totals Total Responses							2792

7. Identify your level of agreement with the following statements related to Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) in Alberta schools:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Responses
I am aware of the hazards in my worksite. Count Row %	51 1.9%	175 6.4%	245 8.9%	1,666 60.5%	618 22.4%	2,755
I know how to access health and safety information at work. Count Row %	61 2.2%	193 7.0%	339 12.3%	1,559 56.6%	603 21.9%	2,755
I have participated in the hazard assessment process, and in other discussions and decision making on matters that affect my health and safety at work. Count Row %	189 6.9%	438 15.9%	322 11.7%	1,262 45.9%	541 19.7%	2,752
I am satisfied with the measures in place to ensure that the hazards in my worksite are controlled to the lowest level possible. Count Row %	273 9.9%	624 22.7%	520 18.9%	1,043 37.9%	294 10.7%	2,754
I am familiar with the OH&S legislation in Alberta. Count Row %	78 2.8%	294 10.7%	481 17.5%	1,482 53.8%	420 15.2%	2,755
I am aware of the requirements of the OH&S legislation for both employees and employers. Count Row %	81 2.9%	312 11.3%	551 20.0%	1,399 50.9%	406 14.8%	2,749

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Responses
I am aware of my school district OH&S policy and procedures.	66 2.4%	243 8.9%	389 14.2%	1,620 59.0%	427 15.6%	2,745
Count						
Row %						
Totals						
Total Responses						2755

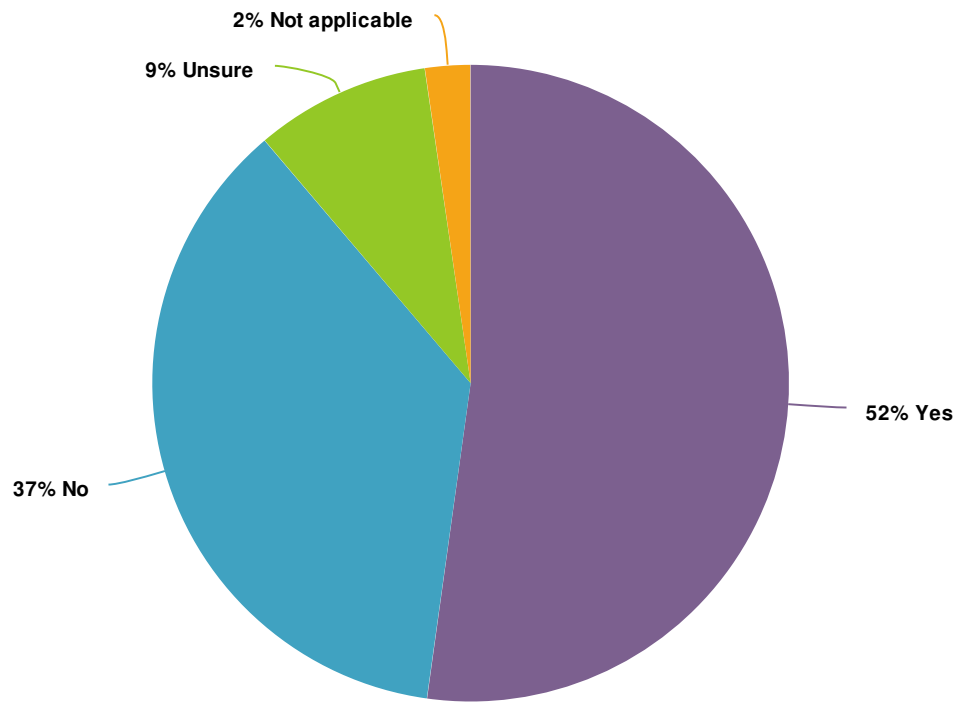
Note on Occupational Health and Safety Legislation

The “right to know” and the “right to participate” are two basic rights of workers that are enshrined in Occupational Health and Safety legislation. Teachers and school leaders have the right to know of potential hazards in the workplace and have access to health and safety information.

Teachers and school leaders also have the right to participate in hazards assessments, the monitoring of controls, the reporting of safety concerns, and to participate in health and safety discussions at school.

Employers are required under the legislation to ensure all workers are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the OHS legislation and to ensure workers are aware of any workplace health and safety issues.

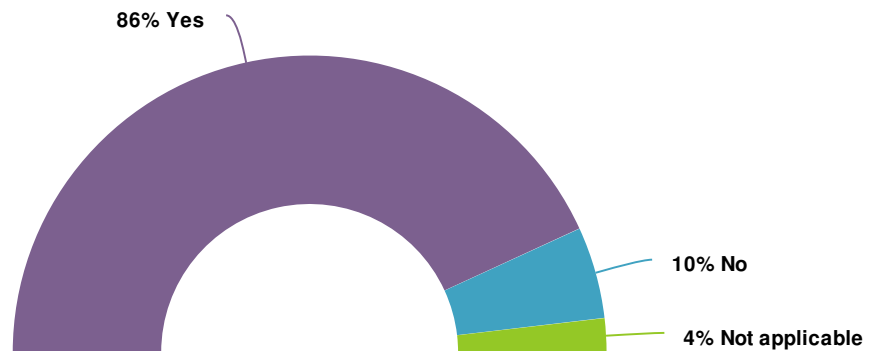
8. Have you been provided with the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training?



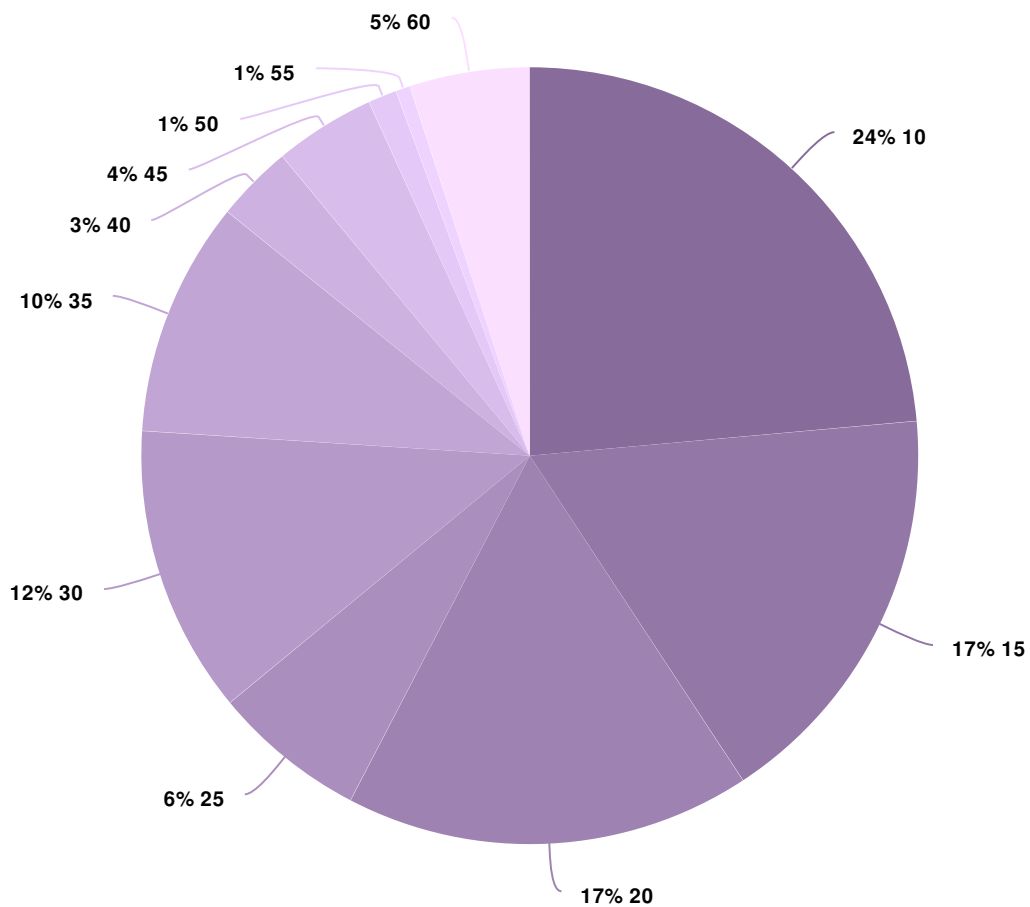
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	52.2%	1,439
No	36.6%	1,007
Unsure	8.9%	246
Not applicable	2.3%	63

Totals: 2,755

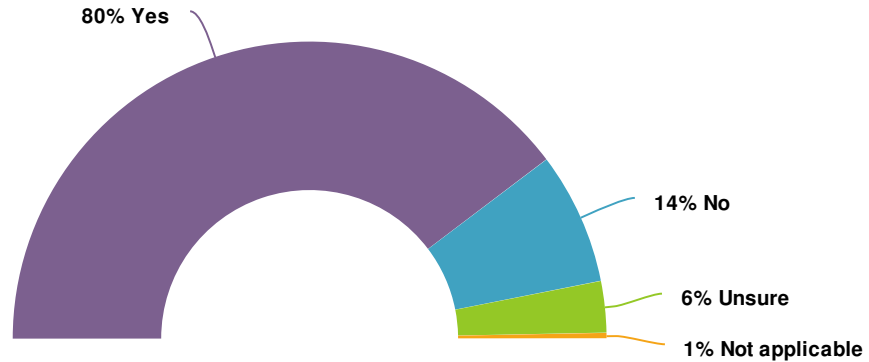
9. Are you taking on cleaning and/or sanitization tasks in your classroom(s)/school?



10. How much additional time (between 10 minutes to 60+ minutes) would you estimate you are currently spending each day to clean and/or sanitize your classroom(s)/school?



11. Taking on Cleaning/Sanitization (YES) - Have you been directed to take on cleaning and/or sanitization tasks in your school?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	79.5%	1,888
No	14.4%	341
Unsure	5.6%	132
Not applicable	0.6%	15

Totals: 2,376

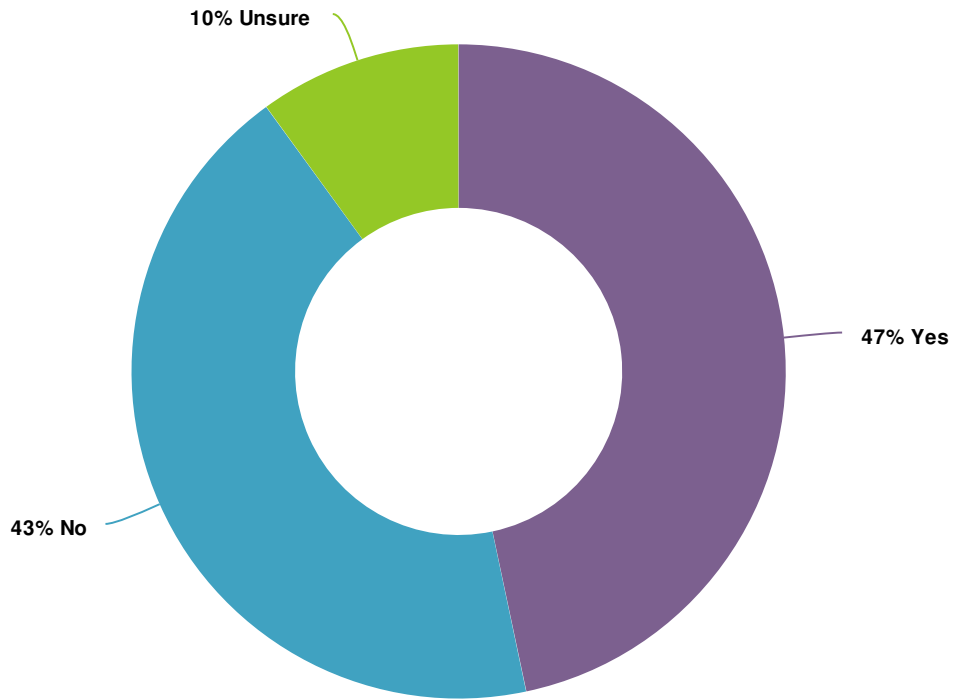
Representative Qualitative Comment(s) on Cleaning/Sanitization:

"I'm concerned about the increases in cleaning time and supervision time."
10/02/2020 Response id: 1

"More and more of the cleaning is falling on teachers in an already stressful and nearly unmanageable situation created by this pandemic."
10/02/2020 Response id: 57

"I have brought up my concerns in my school regarding the sanitization/cleaning log required at our school. We are directed to spray bleach, even while students may be in the room. I'm VERY uncomfortable with this directive."
10/03/2020 Response id: 342

12. Directed to Clean/Sanitize (YES) - Do you know what chemicals are being used for cleaning and sanitization?

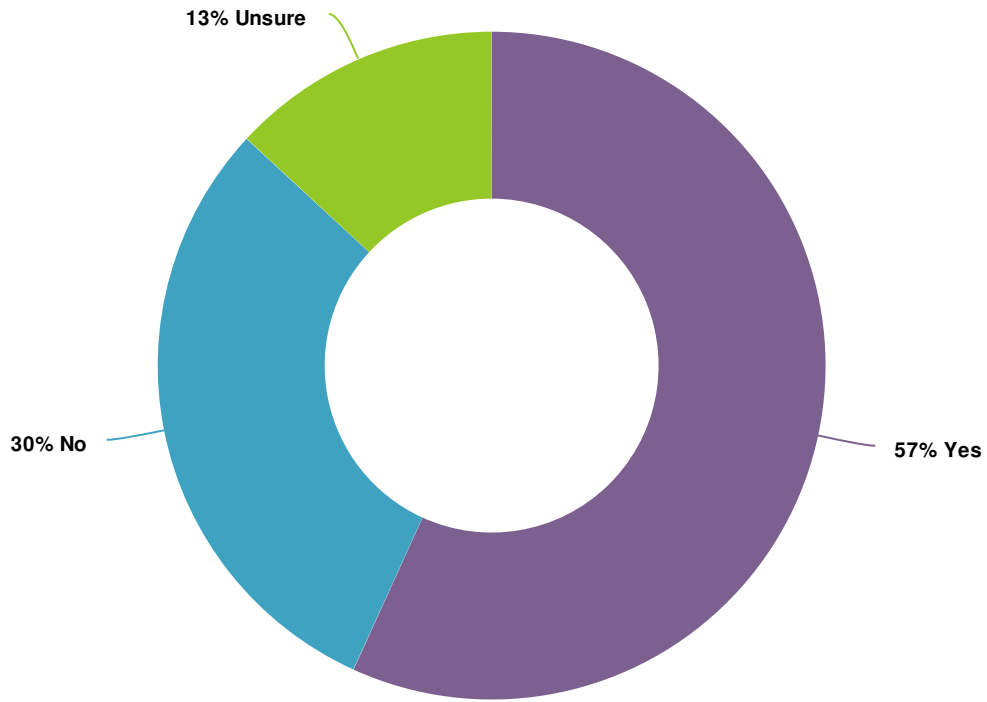


Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	46.7%	882
No	43.3%	817
Unsure	10.0%	189

Totals: 1,888

"What chemical is being fogged in our schools? Health effects? Long and short term?"
 10/05/2020 Response id: 1637

13. Directed to Clean/Sanitize (YES) - Do you know how to properly use and store the cleaning products?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	56.8%	1,072
No	30.1%	568
Unsure	13.1%	247

Totals: 1,887

14. How easy would you say it is to...

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neutral	Easy	Very easy	Not applicable	Responses
...judge if the information about COVID-19 in the news media is reliable? Count Row %	535 19.6%	982 35.9%	557 20.4%	512 18.7%	137 5.0%	10 0.4%	2,733
...judge if the information about COVID-19 in social media is reliable? Count Row %	985 36.1%	883 32.3%	359 13.1%	298 10.9%	123 4.5%	84 3.1%	2,732
...judge if the information about COVID-19 in schools provided by the Government of Alberta is reliable? Count Row %	686 25.1%	961 35.1%	583 21.3%	372 13.6%	124 4.5%	8 0.3%	2,734
Totals Total Responses							2734

Representative Qualitative Comment(s) on Information Reliability:

"The information between social media, news and the provincial updates along with our District rules are very conflicting and we are constantly stressed whether we are exposed to Covid or others are. Super stressed!"

10/03/2020 Response id: 667

"Are teachers supposed to be informed of student daily COVID self-assessment before they come to school?"

10/03/2020 Response id: 675

"I am concerned at the lack of reporting on how many (students, staff etc) are isolating at one time. This is a significant part of the impact of covid19 on our communities & for the government to not be releasing these numbers is irresponsible. I am also concerned at the lack of emphasis on ventilation systems, especially as the colder weather approaches. We will need to be heating & circulating air within schools & I have no information as to how safe this will be for those of us working in schools."

10/04/2020 Response id: 371

15. How easy would you say it is to understand Alberta Health Services recommendations for...

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neutral	Easy	Very easy	Not applicable	Responses
...when to stay at home from work, and when not to? Count Row %	357 13.0%	970 35.4%	396 14.5%	723 26.4%	286 10.4%	6 0.2%	2,738
...when to engage in social activities, and when not to? Count Row %	296 10.8%	878 32.1%	487 17.8%	786 28.7%	281 10.3%	8 0.3%	2,736
...how to protect yourself from COVID-19 in schools? Count Row %	472 17.3%	912 33.4%	529 19.4%	614 22.5%	196 7.2%	9 0.3%	2,732
...how to protect students from COVID-19 in schools? Count Row %	542 19.8%	1,024 37.5%	482 17.6%	516 18.9%	159 5.8%	10 0.4%	2,733

Totals

Total Responses

2738

Representative Qualitative Comment(s) on Alberta Health Services (AHS):

"The work load as a principal is beyond anything I could have imagined. The pace we are running at, the level of responsibility placed on us and the expectations placed on us by [Alberta Health Services] AHS and the Ministry are crushing. My experience with a confirmed case of COVID 19 in my school and AHS was not assuring. It took them 20+ hours to contact me from they knew about the case to the time they phoned me. The case worker was brand new and this was the first case of COVID 19 in a school that she had done. I knew more than her! I am also concerned about the work of AHS being downloaded to school leaders. This is unfair, unreasonable."

10/02/2020 Response id: 14

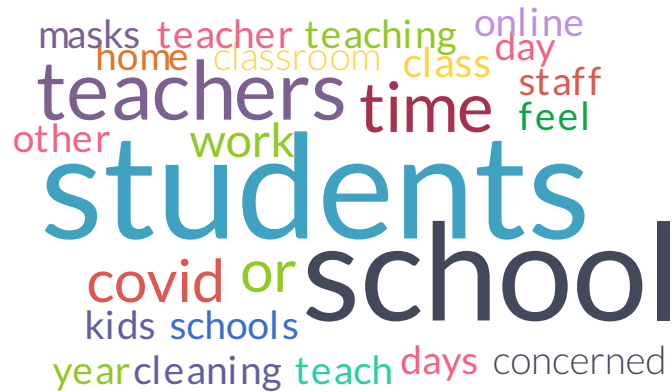
"There is a serious issue with individual contact tracing when a teacher has a positive case in one of their classes. I had this happen at the start of the year, the personal call that my principal said I would receive from the individual from Alberta Health who was in charge of the positive case at our school NEVER happened. I was left to deal with it on my own and received no specific guidance from this team. It was a VERY disappointing and EXTREMELY stressful experience."

10/02/2020 Response id: 26

Qualitative Data (n=1847)

Longitudinal/Chain-Referral Sample & Random Stratified Sample

16. What other questions/concerns/issues would you like to share with the Association?



QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (N=1487)

“ The work load as a principal is beyond anything I could have imagined. The pace we are running at, the level of responsibility placed on us and the expectations placed on us by [Alberta Health Services] AHS and the Ministry are crushing. My experience with a confirmed case of COVID 19 in my school and AHS was not assuring. It took them 20+ hours to contact me from they knew about the case to the time they phoned me. The case worker was brand new and this was the first case of COVID 19 in a school that she had done. I knew more than her! I am also concerned about the work of AHS being downloaded to school leaders. This is unfair, unreasonable. ”

10/02/2020 Response id: 14

“ I continue to be worried about the mental health of myself and my colleagues. Not enough resources are available to help with this increased mental fatigue. - burnout is a real threat - especially for myself and my high school colleagues reorganizing into quarters and trying desperately to enforce an impossible cohort model. ”

10/02/2020 Response id: 31

“ More and more of the cleaning is falling on teachers in an already stressful and nearly unmanageable situation created by this pandemic. ”

10/02/2020 Response id: 57

“ I have never in my 16 years of teaching seen so many staff members breaking down to the point of tears. We are stressed, overwhelmed and scared. ”

10/02/2020 Response id: 179

“ There are so many kids who returned with major anxiety and depression that teaching them the curriculum is not what they need. There are kids with major behaviour problems and not enough help in schools for teachers to safely teach the other kids when these behaviours occur. ”

10/02/2020 Response id: 215

“ We are buying our own supplies to sanitize materials. The masks provided by our school board were so ill fitting, they could not be used. I am buying my own disposable child masks for when a child forgets or soils theirs because the school only has adult masks that do not fit elementary students. I have had to buy my own classroom materials and manipulatives so that students can each have their own and not need to share. In September alone, I spent over \$300 to make this work in my setting ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 414

“ As an administrator AND teacher, I feel that schools are being used as a babysitters in order to stimulate the economy. The decisions that lie around this come from the fact that we have more chances of exposure than the medical field due to an ongoing exposure to children who they themselves or their families are not taking this pandemic seriously and we do not have the PPE that the medical field is given. There is also little concern for quality of education despite the additional burden of added protocols. ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 663

“ The information between social media, news and the provincial updates along with our District rules are very conflicting and we are constantly stressed whether we are exposed to Covid or others are. Super stressed! ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 667

“ Are teachers supposed to be informed of student daily COVID self-assessment before they come to school? ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 675

“ Many guidelines don't make sense. For example, having students wear masks all day in the classroom then they all take them off for physed class and play games together. ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 680

“ I'm a music specialist and it really stresses me to be in contact with all the kids in the school, since I have to teach in all the different classes 13 in total, also, makes my job a lot more physically and mentally hard with all the moving around and also all the supervisions (around 140 min/week)... ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 702

“ Sense of lethargy, mental wellness of staff. Overall feeling of exhaustion and anxiety is common ”

10/03/2020 Response id: 735

“ Major concerns about workload related to teaching online and in class simultaneously with no additional prep time. ”

10/04/2020 Response id: 865

“ Why when a positive case of covid was identified with an individual in our school, was the school not notified? ”

10/04/2020 Response id: 1234

“ My main concern is that children crave contact and proximity. They are like magnets as soon as they are outside ”

10/04/2020 Response id: 1368

“ As a colony teacher at my locations 2 different ones each at .5fte. I have been receiving little to no support when it comes to the enforcement of the guidelines surrounding covid. ”

10/04/2020 Response id: 1523

“ What chemical is being fogged in our schools? Health effects? Long and short term? ”

10/05/2020 Response id: 1637

“ Mandating diploma exams is a huge concern. We have enough stress and have already had many students miss class for several days due to self isolating. ”

10/05/2020 Response id: 1652

“ There is currently no pay for substitutes who have been contact traced (like I have) by AHS for being a close contact with a student with a confirmed case of covid. I was unable to work because of work! ”

10/05/2020 Response id: 1756

“ I was recently placed in quarantine, along with one of my senior high classes. I was confused because we have been logging seating plans to help with contact spreading, yet AHS did not ask for the plan and instead quarantined the class. It makes me wonder how many policies and procedures we are following that are either irrelevant or unclear. Why make a plan and log it if nobody asks for it when we have a case? ”

10/06/2020 Response id: 2464

I'm concerned about the increases in cleaning time and supervision time.

10/02/2020 Response id: 1

Recognizing additional risks when a teacher is in multiple schools weekly with different students/teachers/classes each visit and physical distancing is challenging. I am very concerned that this scenario makes me a potential 'super spreader' in both my professional and personal life. As a result, my mental health is affected and I feel I am being forced to choose to severely limit my personal connections and activities.

10/02/2020 Response id: 5

There is a serious issue with individual contact tracing when a teacher has a positive case in one of their classes. I had this happen at the start of the year, the personal call that my principal said I would receive from the individual from Alberta Health who was in charge of the positive case at our school NEVER happened. I was left to deal with it on my own and received no specific guidance from this team. It was a VERY disappointing and EXTREMELY stressful experience.

10/02/2020 Response id: 26

Distancing for the public matters, but it can be ignored in schools because we're cohorting and cleaning. Absurd.

10/02/2020 Response id: 28

I have not taken a sub shift yet. I have another job and am worried that if I come into contact with someone who tests "positive" I will be forced to isolate for 14 days regardless of my test results. This makes it very difficult for me to commit to working in a school.

10/02/2020 Response id: 39

We don't have many cases here... so I'm struggling with this decision: do we open things up for students so that we return to something that's a bit more normal. Or do we keep our tight restrictions because they seem to be working?

10/02/2020 Response id: 46

Teaching conditions have never been this poor. I have never truly felt unsafe until this school year. We need a strong voice!

10/02/2020 Response id: 49

Schools have robust health and cleaning protocols in place, and are able to manage these. However, it is clearly evident that secondary students do not follow these protocols (eg wearing masks, practicing physical distancing) when off campus or outside during breaks.

10/02/2020 Response id: 87

As a teacher and psychologist and I am extremely concerned about the mental health of teachers due to the dissonance created by comparing safety protocols for teachers vs other professions. The same safety precautions provided to other professions (distancing, work from home, proper ventilation, small groups, etc) are ignored in the teaching environment. This lack of perceived safety relative to others AND to the research that is widely distributed, has the potential to lead to demoralization and extreme stress reactions.

10/02/2020 Response id: 91

I started the year with 38 students in my class. We are so crammed in. And our school board does not allow us to require students to wear masks in class.

10/02/2020 Response id: 140

Workload of teachers has increased dramatically. I get a weekly checklist for online teachers and it is impossible to teach online and complete the requirements asked by my school board in a typical workweek. The first two weeks I put in 16 hour days everyday and in the last two weeks I have worked multiple 12 hour days each week and I'm still not keeping up with what is asked of me. In the school setting teachers are being asked to have an online presence or basically run an online classroom for absent students as well as teach in the regular classroom. Online there is too much to learn and not enough time to learn all the technologies. My stress is high, I get headaches daily, and my mental health is not well and I'm only in week 4.

10/02/2020 Response id: 172

It is very difficult to understand the importance of cohorts and how cohorts will keep us safe, and then hear the contradictory guidelines on school sports, recess, etc. I don't understand why we need to enforce strict rules at times and then not at all at other times.

10/02/2020 Response id: 197

We need to take action. My students are stressed. I am stressed. My colleagues are stressed. I have had to calm down several students in panic attacks because of anxieties around Covid. We are not doing enough. This group of kids are being collectively traumatized and we are pretending it is business as usual. I try to be positive as much as possible and to be my best, but I can't keep this up.

10/02/2020 Response id: 211

This is my 25 year of teaching. I have less preps, more classes, more supervision, and dealing with COVID cleaning. I love teaching, however, I am deeply disappointed in the lack of concern for our well being.

10/02/2020 Response id: 217

It is near impossible to control physical distancing requirements for young children during unstructured times (recess). We were told 6 feet apart because this is a mask break time. 6 year olds can not do this on a playground. They attract each other like magnets.

10/03/2020 Response id: 234

Supervision is a huge concern. Due to the amount of students in the school we have to have multiple recesses. Two days a week I get no break. None.

10/02/2020 Response id: 243

Online instruction requirements are far heavier than in the spring in time online and number of subjects. Preparing materials for online takes much longer. It is the general consensus among my online grade level learning community that the number of hours we are working to get everything done is unsustainable. We don't need more tech tricks that take just more time to implement and distance us from students. Provide me with the course material I need, to copy and send out to families so that we can work more directly with the students on camera and spend less hours just trying to get assignments and materials ready. Young kids need hands on engagement. Printing, cutting pasting, manipulatives etc. Not clicking a mouse for every assignment.

10/03/2020 Response id: 247

Cohorts don't work when you have large families with several (5-7) children in a K-9 school and they have many relatives that attend there and socialize outside of school with parents, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents. Then others in the community are telling people not to get themselves or their kids tested so the numbers go down and nothing gets closed down.

10/03/2020 Response id: 286

Keeping my students safe is top priority. I spend at least an extra 30 mins. sanitizing/record keeping/bathroom tracking etc. 10/03/2020 Response id: 301

I'm so done with everything. I am teaching 28 students in a split grade with one child not coded, but with severe behaviour. I have limited EA time. I am tired and depressed by the lack of care our government has for teachers and their students.

10/03/2020 Response id: 314

As a teacher of 26 years, I have never felt the level of stress I am feeling right now. I do support students being back in classes, but I do not feel at all like "Scenario 1" is an effective or safe choice for the kids or adults. Sure, it's going "all right" and "infections are less than 1% of the total student population" but a better question is "what does this approach cost in terms of the human resources to keep doing"

10/03/2020 Response id: 327

Mental health concerns are way up for students, families, and some staff. As a counsellor, I've never seen a September like this for students and family needs.

10/03/2020 Response id: 340

We had an outbreak at our school, and consequently I was no longer able to access physiotherapist for a recent car accident, nor was I able to go to my family doctor until I received my negative COVID-19 test results. That took a week, and my health deteriorated during this time.

10/03/2020 Response id: 341

I have brought up my concerns in my school regarding the sanitization / cleaning log required at our school. We are directed to spray bleach, even while students may be in the room. I'm VERY uncomfortable with this directive.

10/03/2020 Response id: 342

As a working teacher parent we need more support when our own children are sent home from school.

10/03/2020 Response id: 343

So many aspects of the daily routine seem to lack a clear or consistent protocol.

10/03/2020 Response id: 347

I would like to ask you why we are asked/told to teach in person yet govt aka politicians still don't have to appear in person in the leg.

10/04/2020 Response id: 352

I am concerned at the lack of reporting on how many (students, staff etc) are isolating at one time. This is a significant part of the impact of covid19 on our communities & for the government to not be releasing these numbers is irresponsible. I am also concerned at the lack of emphasis on ventilation systems, especially as the colder weather approaches. We will need to be heating & circulating air within schools & I have no information as to how safe this will be for those of us working in schools.

10/04/2020 Response id: 371

I am extremely concerned about teacher workload this year. We are being asked to prepare to live stream our classes and get all material online for when a student just stay home sick. We have not been given any materials or time to make this happen. I am also very concerned about the level that my students are currently at. They are well below grade level and I have been given very little support. We have lost a lot of time to sanitizing, handwashing, and waiting for halls and entrances to be clear. How am I supposed to catch them all up with no support and an hour less per day?

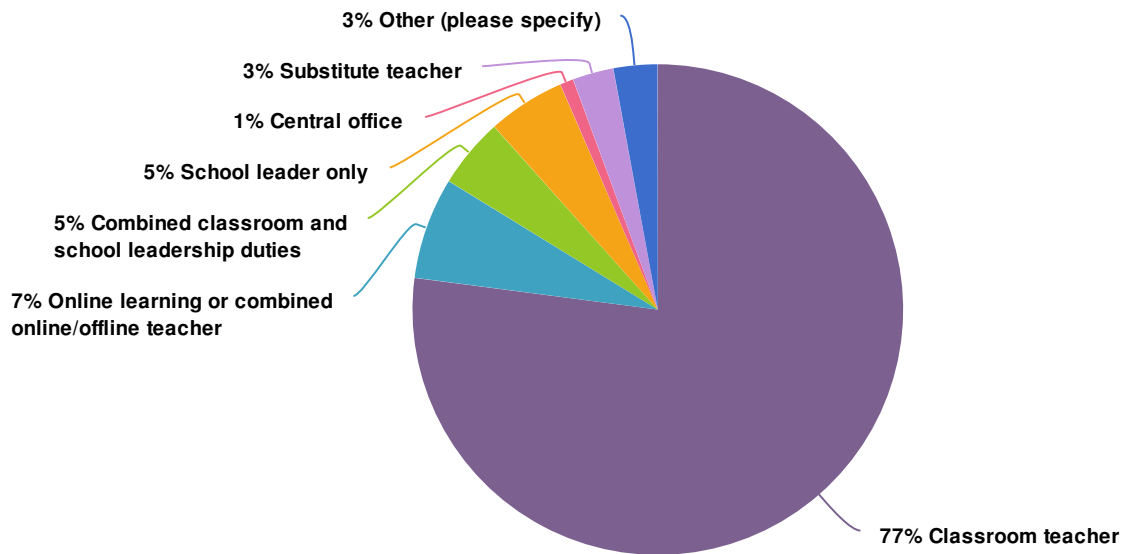
10/05/2020 Response id: 414

DEMOGRAPHICS

Completion Rate:	100%	<div style="width: 100%; height: 15px; background-color: #663366;"></div>
	Complete	<div style="width: 100%; height: 15px; background-color: #663366;"></div> 2,797

17. Your current assignment

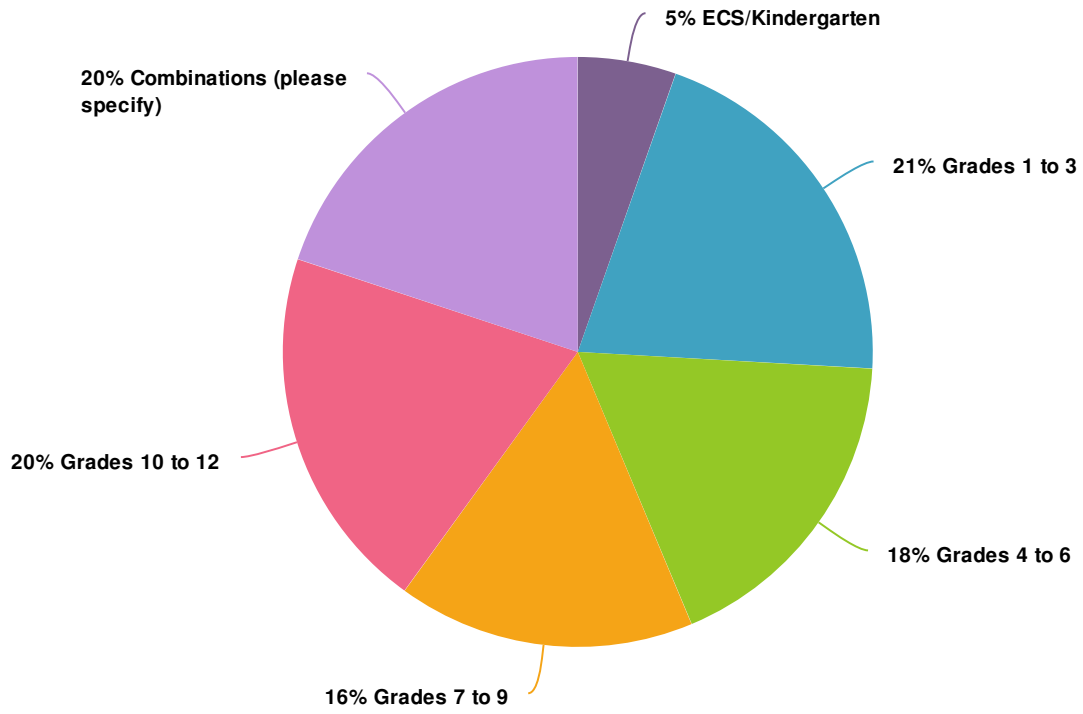
Totals: 2,797



Value	Percent	Responses
Classroom teacher	77.0%	2,153
Online learning or combined online/offline teacher	6.7%	188
Combined classroom and school leadership duties	4.6%	130
School leader only	5.1%	142
Central office	0.9%	26
Substitute teacher	2.7%	76
Other (please specify)	2.9%	82

Totals: 2,797

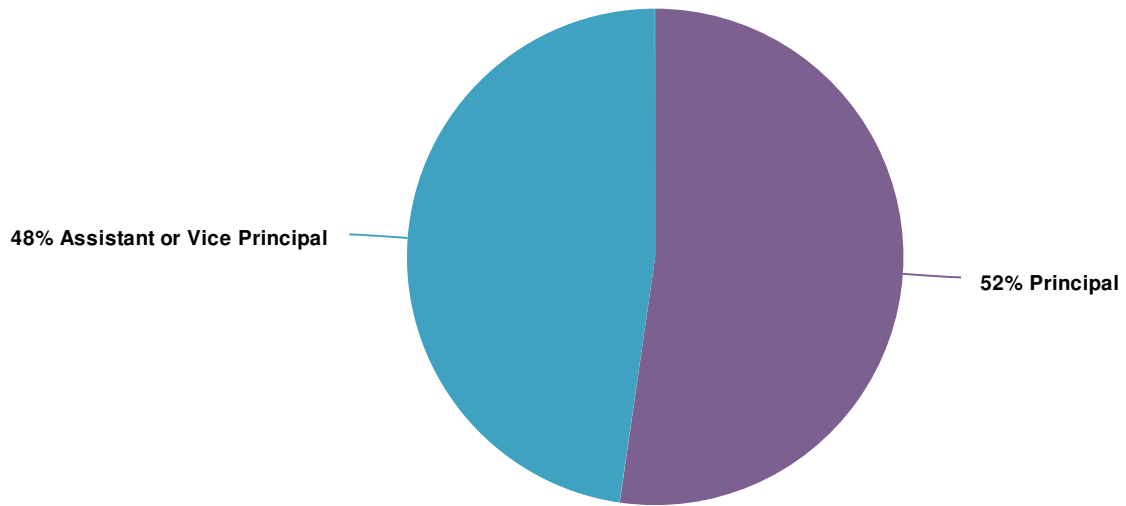
18. Your current assignment is related exclusively or mainly to students in





Value	Percent	Responses
ECS/Kindergarten	5.4%	147
Grades 1 to 3	20.5%	555
Grades 4 to 6	17.8%	483
Grades 7 to 9	16.3%	443
Grades 10 to 12	20.1%	545
Combinations (please specify)	19.9%	540

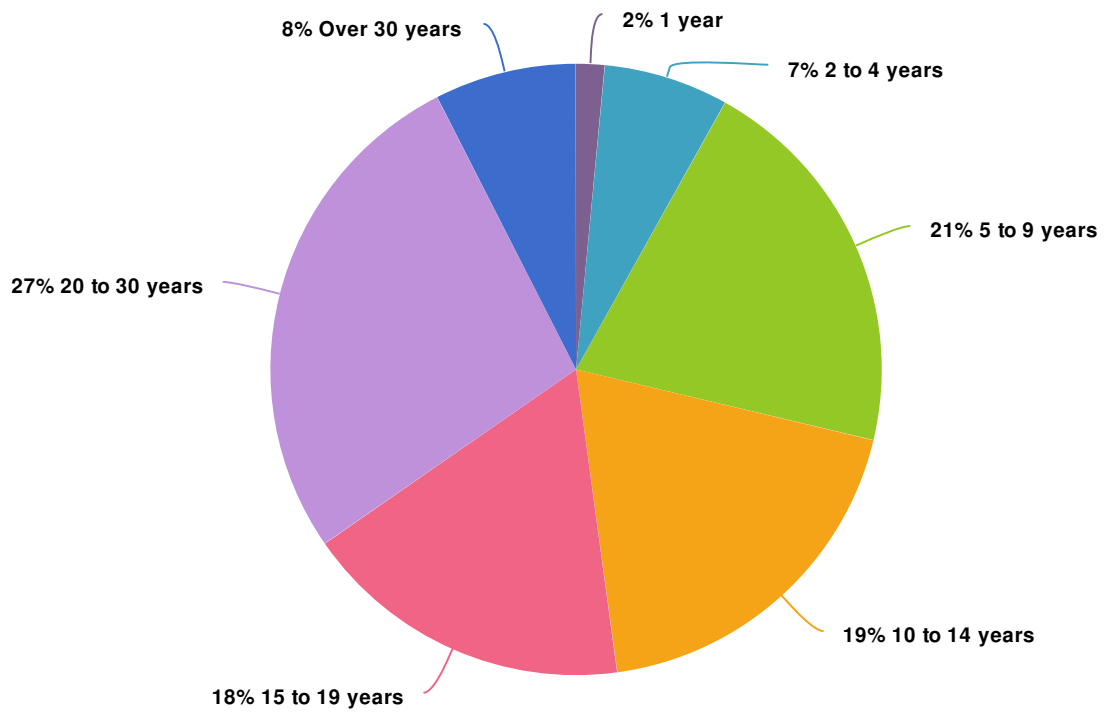
Totals: 2,713

19. Please select:



Value		Percent	Responses
Principal		52.3%	137
Assistant or Vice Principal		47.7%	125
			Totals: 262

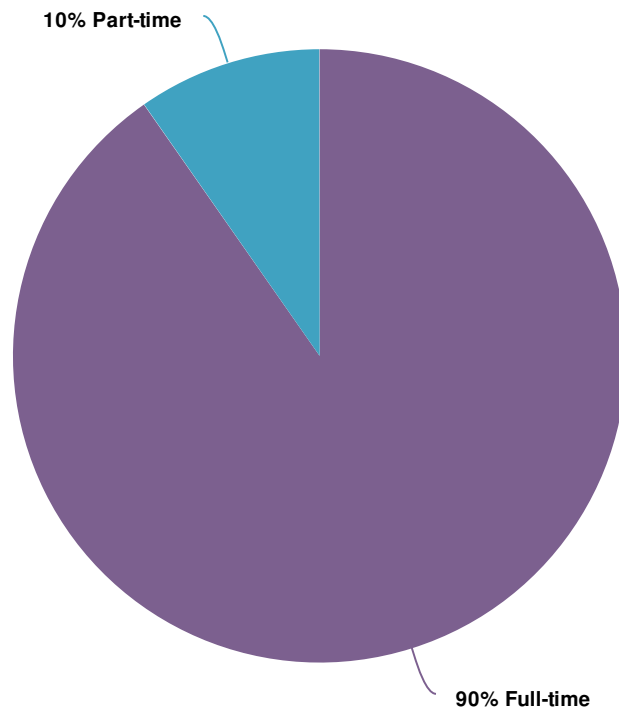
20. Your teaching experience, including current year





Value	Percent	Responses
1 year	1.5%	41
2 to 4 years	6.6%	180
5 to 9 years	20.6%	562
10 to 14 years	19.1%	521
15 to 19 years	17.5%	477
20 to 30 years	27.1%	738
Over 30 years	7.5%	204

Totals: 2,723

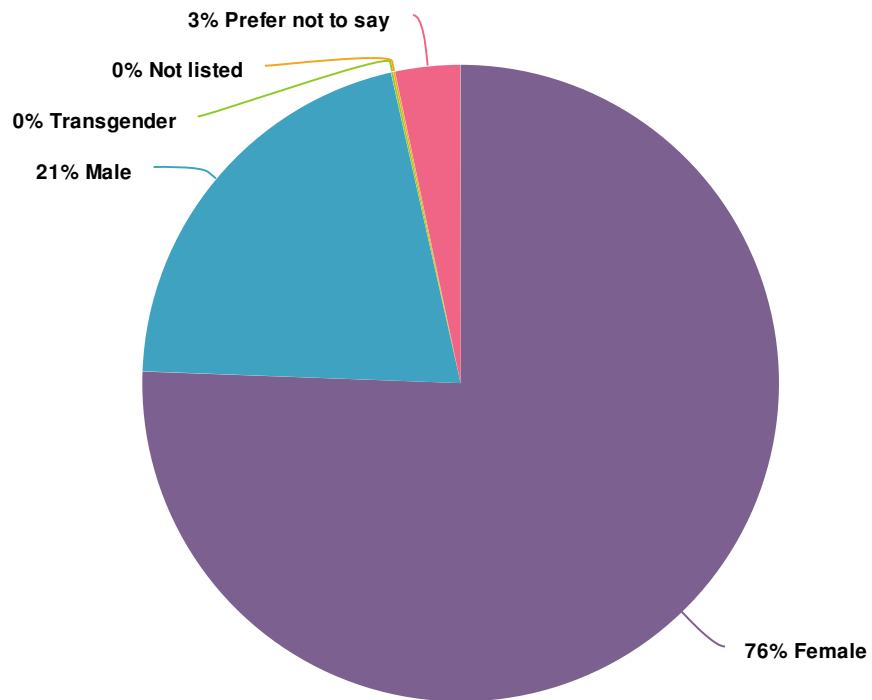
21. You are employed



Value		Percent	Responses
Full-time		90.3%	2,459
Part-time		9.7%	264

Totals: 2,723

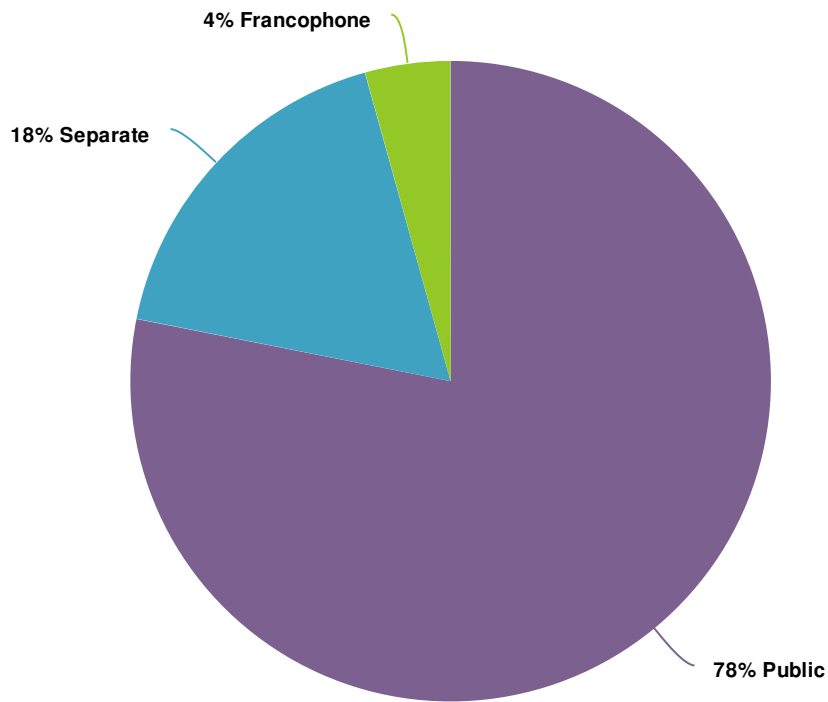
22. How do you identify?






Value	Percent	Responses
Female	75.6%	2,067
Male	20.9%	571
Transgender	0.1%	4
Not listed	0.1%	2
Prefer not to say	3.3%	91

Totals: 2,735

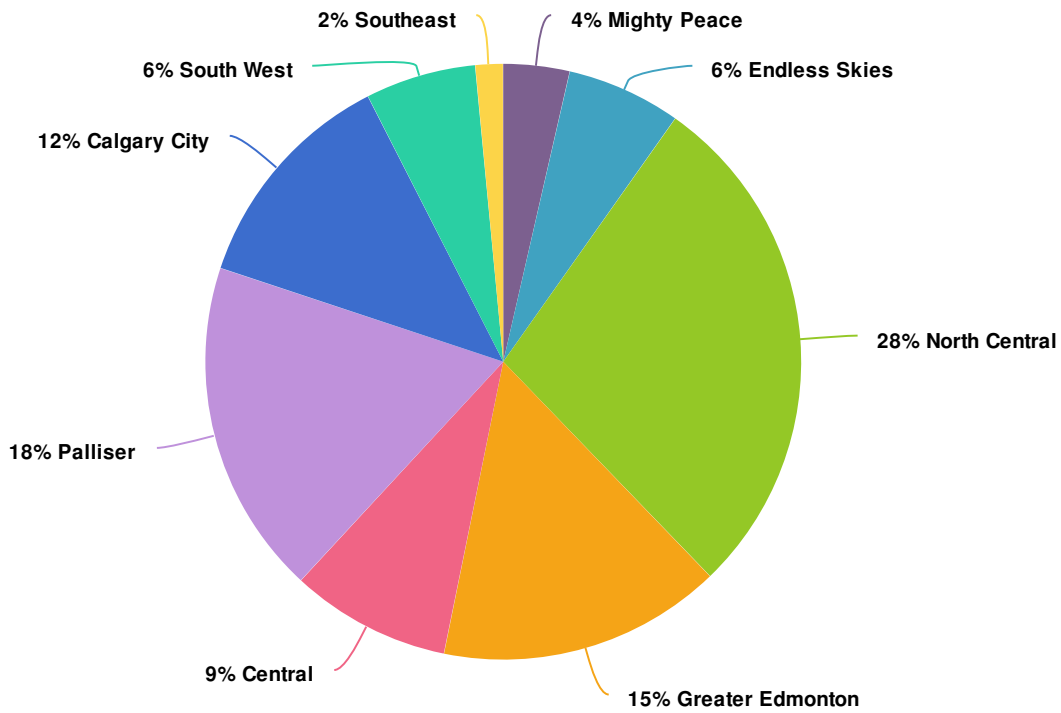
23. Type of school authority in which you are employed



Value		Percent	Responses
Public		78.2%	2,132
Separate		17.6%	479
Francophone		4.3%	117

Totals: 2,728

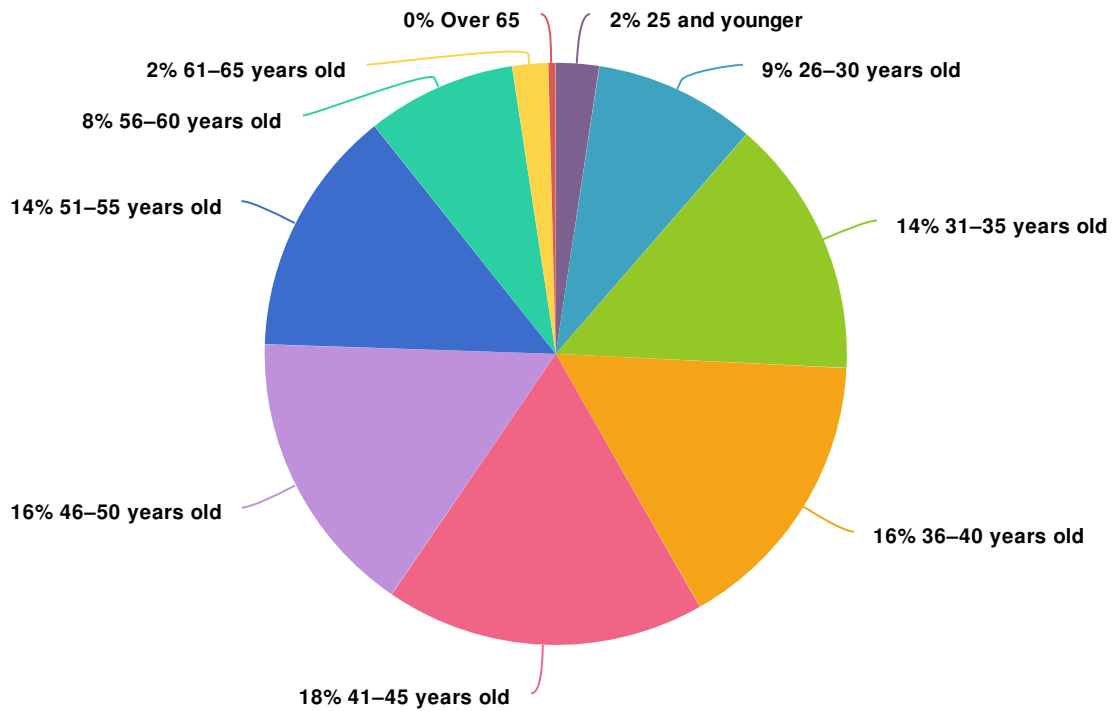
24. Teachers' convention that you attend



Value	Percent	Responses
Mighty Peace	3.6%	98
Endless Skies	6.2%	171
North Central	28.0%	766
Greater Edmonton	15.4%	421
Central	8.7%	238
Palliser	18.2%	497
Calgary City	12.4%	340
South West	6.0%	165
Southeast	1.5%	41

Totals: 2,737

25. Your age



Value	Percent	Responses
25 and younger	2.4%	66
26-30 years old	9.0%	242
31-35 years old	14.4%	388
36-40 years old	16.0%	433
41-45 years old	17.8%	480
46-50 years old	16.0%	432
51-55 years old	13.8%	372
56-60 years old	8.3%	223
61-65 years old	2.0%	54
Over 65	0.4%	11

Totals: 2,701

7 Key Findings (September 10 to 14, 2020)

COVID-19 Prevention, Infection and Control in K–12 Schools Reporting from 1,600+ Alberta Teachers and School Leaders

1

84% of respondents do not receive daily confirmation of **COVID-19 screening checklists** completion before a student(s) enters the classroom.



“I am spending most of my day isolating sick students, and following the sick student protocol. Contacting parents, re-explaining the COVID screening checklist and reassuring teachers!” – Alberta school principal

2

Only **18%**

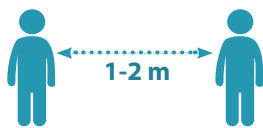


of respondents believe that the **cohorting of students** in place at their school will prevent or contain COVID-19 infection(s). Teachers and school leaders are observing students intermixing at lunchtime, during breaks, on buses, and before and after school.

“The kids all have active lives outside of the building. They do not adhere to cohorting when off campus. As hard as we try we cannot keep them 2 m apart.” – Alberta classroom teacher

3

50%



of the respondents “never, rarely and occasionally” observe **physical distancing** occurring in their classrooms, hallways and on school grounds.



Large and growing class sizes are deemed a significant factor in limiting physical distancing as a preventative health measure.

1 in 4 teachers have over **30 students** in their **largest classes**. Over 9% have more than 35 students in their classroom.

4

86%+ of respondents report compliance of **mask wearing** when students are interacting with others in classrooms and hallways, but with some challenges at different grade levels.



5

Student **hand washing** is rare, while disinfectant use is more common.

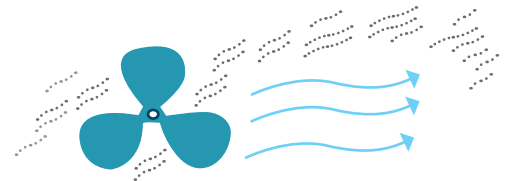


Concerns about adequate staffing for **sanitization** and teachers’ role and responsibility to disinfect surfaces in their classroom.



6

45%



of the respondents are attempting to create better **ventilation in the school** “frequently, usually, every time,” but they are limited by the nature of the physical school building.

7

Teacher and school leader well-being is of critical concern given the reporting of extreme and unsustainable levels of **fatigue, stress and anxiety** within the profession.



94%

of respondents reporting fatigue



95%

of respondents reporting stress



81%

of respondents reporting anxiety

“As a school leader I am beyond exhausted. I see my [teacher] colleagues are stressed, anxious and already close to burning out!” – Alberta school leader

1,600+ Alberta teachers and school leaders. Alberta Pandemic Pulse Survey (September 10 to 14, 2020)
Random stratified sample and longitudinal chain-referral sample.

Margin of Error +/- 2.5% on all questions (19 times out of 20).

Further information about the Association’s research is available from
Dr Philip McRae at the Alberta Teachers’ Association; e-mail: research@ata.ab.ca.



The Alberta
Teachers’ Association



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