



PK-12 School Staffing in Berkshire County 2022: A study of current issues and their impact

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Berkshire Education Resources K-12 (BERK)
Berkshire County Superintendents Roundtable

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This study is part of the 2021-2022 study group initiative of Berkshire Education Resources K-12 (formerly the Berkshire County Education Task Force) and the Berkshire County Superintendent's Roundtable. This work is supported by a grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Fund Code 191) administered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the early seventies, national data has tracked a steady decline in the number of people seeking undergraduate degrees in education and, with notable regional variations, a shrinking educator workforce. Stressful working conditions of the COVID pandemic may have accelerated this trend and, in some areas of the US, may have triggered more departures from the profession. In our region, other issues of public school staffing include a critical lack of diversity in the educator workforce and a sharp decline in the number of educators seeking positions in administration or leadership.

To examine these and other staffing issues in the public schools of Berkshire County, MA, school and district-level administrators, teachers and other personnel were surveyed about job stress and the intensity and impact of staffing issues in their schools. Information about the new educator “pipeline” was gathered through collection and analysis of national, state, and local data tracking enrollment and completion of educator prep programs. This study also examined considerations of teacher recruitment to the Berkshires: compensation, housing, childcare, and other regional demographic and geographic factors.

Key Findings

1. **Currently, almost all Berkshire County school districts are experiencing staffing shortages, with some districts describing their staffing issues as “severe” or “very severe.” These shortages are having varied but significant negative impacts on programs, staff morale, and student learning.**

Of the **school and district administrators** surveyed 87% identify staffing shortages at a moderate to very severe level. Nearly all administrators responding to the survey reported unfilled vacancies and more than a quarter of administrators counted more than six positions currently unfilled in their schools or districts. 87% of administrators surveyed identified some impact to their schools or districts as a result of staffing issues and 24% reported that staffing issues have “significantly impacted learning and other initiatives.” Participants in the administrator survey rated substitute teacher, paraprofessional, and special education teacher as the most difficult staff positions to fill.

Of the **school staff** (teachers, specialists, service providers, paraprofessionals) surveyed, 66% rated staffing shortages in their schools to be in the range of “moderate” to “severe.” 84% of staff surveyed reported that working in education is currently “more stressful” than in 2019. Since COVID, more staff responded that they were likely to think about leaving the profession. Staff surveyed most frequently rated “effective school leadership” as critical for job satisfaction.

2. Data from regional, state and national educator prep programs shows a likely reduction in the future supply of new educators and educational leaders. The COVID pandemic has accelerated this trend in some areas of the US.

Data from the US Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics (EdWeek) shows a steady decline in completion in undergraduate educator prep programs from a high of almost 200,000 in the seventies to under 90,000 in 2019. Although participation in graduate educator programs is also declining, there are now more people completing graduate educator programs than undergraduate programs. Nationwide, completion of graduate educator prep programs increased from about 87,000 in the 1970s to over 180,000 in 2010, then decreased to around 145,000 in 2019.

In Massachusetts, according to data from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, enrollment in educator preparation programs has followed a trend similar to that documented in national data. In 2014-15 Massachusetts had 16,898 people enrolled in educator preparation programs and in 2019 that number had dropped to 8,855.

Comparative data from the COVID years has not yet been gathered, but information from local and regional educator prep programs suggests that enrollment remains off from previous years, and the suspended and disrupted college experiences of late 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 may have postponed required field experiences. One university reported in the last year that many more students have been unable to pass the MTEL (state test for teacher licensure), which at one university is required to start student teaching.

Alternative pathways to teacher licensure may be countering the effects of declining enrollment in traditional educator prep programs. An October 2021 study by the Wheelock Educational Policy Center at Boston University looking at teacher turnover and the composition of the teacher workforce found that in 2020-2021, 15% of newly-hired teachers in economically disadvantaged schools held emergency licensure (requiring only a bachelor's degree and 'sound moral character.')

This alternative licensure pathway also seemed to contribute to the addition of more Black and Latinx teachers to the educator workforce.

3. Several challenging conditions present obstacles to the recruitment of educators to the Berkshires.

Teacher pay levels tend to vary significantly throughout the state and also within Berkshire County. Educators moving to the Berkshires from other areas of the Northeast and from other parts of Massachusetts will likely be compensated less than they would in the eastern two-thirds of Massachusetts. In 2019, average teacher pay in Berkshire County (about \$71,000*) was about \$13,600 a year below the state average (\$84,659).

Housing challenges for moderate to low-moderate income workers are prevalent in many areas including Berkshire County. In the past year, according to data from the Berkshire County Board of Realtors, average real estate cost was at its highest level ever while available property

inventory was at its lowest level since this data was first collected. Multiple sources also report shortages in available rental units throughout the county.

Other variables persistently present challenges to workforce recruitment into the region. A well-known lack of childcare providers can be an impediment to families moving here with young children. The area may present limited opportunities for accompanying partners, and potential relocators may see the area as offering limited lateral mobility across comparable employers in one's professional industry.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as possible responses to current conditions:

1. Elevate the importance of regional staffing challenges in district administration, school committee and community discussions. Consider the establishment of district-specific sub-committees on staffing and the creation of an inter-district task force with the common goals of adequately staffing schools, increasing educator diversity, and connecting staff between districts to widen mentorship and promote collegial support.
2. Fully leverage options for alternative pathways to licensure. Familiarize administrators around emergency licensure and other alternative pathways to educator licensure. Promptly and publicly identify positions as 'shortage areas' when appropriate. Carefully document the success and duration of hiring attempts to allow for licensure waivers as permissible.
3. Expand and enhance a Berkshire-wide education job-matching service (similar to [OLAS in New York](#)). Consider staffing this service with all participating districts contributing to the cost of its operation. Service staff would actively represent the region at job fairs and diversity in education events and build connections with career placement offices at universities throughout the region and at historically Black colleges and universities.
4. Consider providing relocation assistance to high-need educators coming from outside the area. As financially feasible and permissible through collective bargaining agreements, provide reimbursement for relocation for individuals filling roles identified as 'critical shortage.' Include stipends for moving assistance and transitional housing. Engage local real estate professionals to assist with the location of housing for relocating high-need educators.
5. Increase substitute and paraprofessional compensation to be regionally competitive. As fiscally feasible and permissible under collective bargaining, consider the appointment of a "building sub" - one staff member whose primary role is to cover staff absences. Anecdotally, school leaders rate the building sub role as a stable and effective way to cover short-term gaps in staffing.

6. Initiate or expand learning experiences for middle and high school students to learn about careers in education. Consider emphasizing education careers in MS career studies, perhaps enhancing with field experiences and internships with younger students. Expand and support internship opportunities for HS students and facilitate participation in programs such as Youth Teach Fellows, a dual enrollment collaboration of MCLA and BCC that will (starting 2022-2023) offer experiences in education while earning college credits.
7. With all staffing efforts, prioritize the creation of a more diverse educator workforce. Support the efforts of the Diverse Teaching Workforce Initiative and promote participation in the Berkshire Teaching Fellows and Youth Teach Fellows programs. Extend posting efforts to reach diverse populations of educators.
8. Create and or support pathways for paraprofessional job advancement and assist on-the-job paraprofessionals who wish to transition to the role of teacher. This would include the collaboration of degree-granting institutions, the financial and scheduling support of the employer, and a several years time (and perhaps financial) commitment on the part of the paraprofessional. MCLA is currently developing programs to enable paraprofessional job advancement to the role of teacher.
9. As staff consistently identifies effective school leadership as key to teacher job satisfaction and retention, administrative teams are encouraged to prioritize the establishment and maintenance of clear policies and practices for school operations, providing effective support to teachers in their work with students and families. New building leaders should be supported in developing these capacities and receive mentoring and support on a regular and consistent basis.
10. Enhance and expand mentorship and collegial support structures among staff. Institute systems of mentoring, partnership, co-teaching and team support for teachers and staff and provide regular opportunities for professional socialization around meaningful topics.
11. Be an advocate for regional efforts to increase the stock of affordable housing in our region. Lack of housing is a major impediment to recruitment of new staff, especially for those who may be arriving in the area with limited housing capital. Local agencies focused on economic development (1Berkshire and BRPC) have studied housing issues and their impact on recruitment and economic development. Further analysis and guidance can be found in the report of the housing working group in *A Housing Vision for the Berkshires*.

GUIDING QUESTIONS AND STUDY COMPONENTS

Five questions guided the work of this study:

1. What is the current severity of staffing shortages in the PK-12 public schools of Berkshire County?
2. What positions or roles are hardest to fill at this time?
3. Are the numbers of new educators-in-training sufficient to fill future vacancies?
4. What are the obstacles that new educators or mid-career educators face when coming to work in our region?
5. What can educational leaders learn from teachers and staff that may increase staff retention?

To answer these questions and organize this work, this study is divided into four components:

Administrator Perceptions: This component used a 9-item survey completed by building-level and district-level administrators in January and February of 2022. Detail about the survey and administrator responses can be found starting on page 8.

Staff Perceptions: This component employed a 12-item survey distributed electronically to teachers, special educators, paraprofessionals, and other professional staff through school district superintendents in March of 2022. Detail about the survey and staff responses can be found starting on page 13.

The Educator Pipeline: This component looked at short and long-term enrollment and completion trends in teacher preparation programs. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as well as national and Massachusetts-specific studies were accessed as references for this component. Detail about this component can be found starting on page 25.

Recruitment to the Berkshires: This component examined challenges to professional recruitment to our region. Teacher salary data from DESE and data from the Berkshire Board of Realtors informed sections on educator compensation and housing respectively. 1Berkshire (the Regional Economic Development Organization and Tourism Council of Berkshire County) provided information about other recruitment-related factors. (page 30).

FINDINGS

ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

Perceptions of Berkshire County administrators were sought using a 9-item survey distributed electronically through district superintendents to building and district level administrators in January of 2022. 58 administrators representing nearly all Berkshire County school districts completed all the survey items.

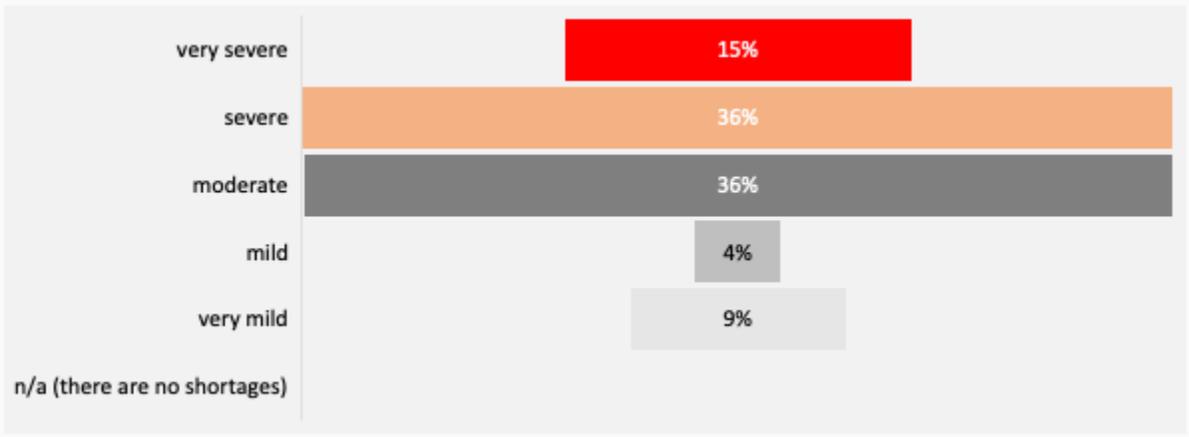
Severity of Staffing Shortages:

How much of a problem are staffing shortages in your school or district this year?

Possible responses range from “N/A (there are no shortages)” to “Very Severe”

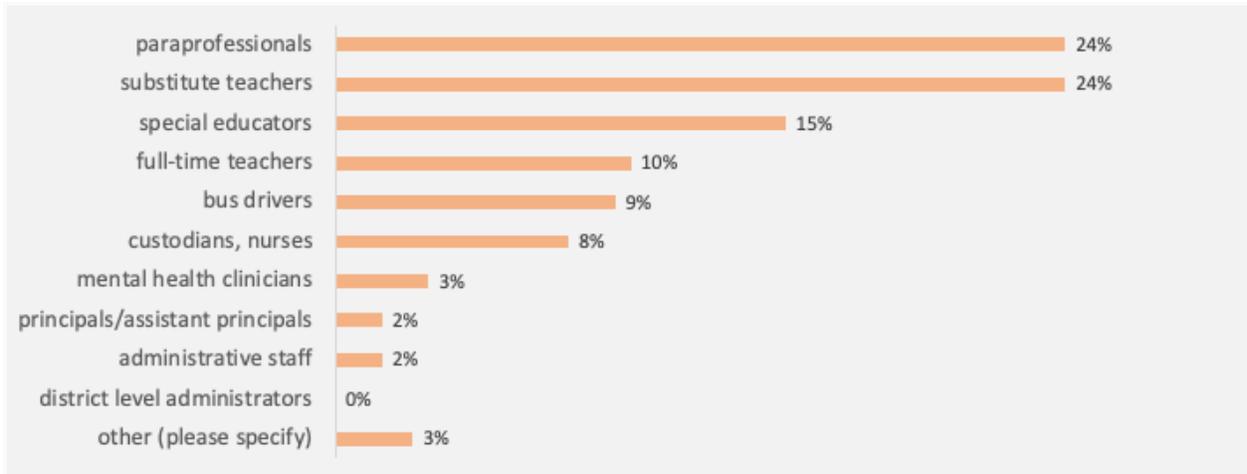
Nearly 87% of Berkshire County building and district administrators surveyed identified staffing shortages to be at least at a ‘moderate’ level. Nearly half of all administrators surveyed identified staffing shortages as “severe” or “very severe” this year.

Comparative data from a national survey of administrators showed 40% of administrators reporting staffing shortages as “severe” or or “very severe”. (Lieberman, *Edweek* 2021)



Positions Needed:

Since the beginning of the school year, my district/school has struggled to hire a sufficient number of (Select all that apply). Survey participants check positions from a list (paraprofessional, substitute, special educator, etc.)



Another item of the administrator survey asked administrators a similar question to the above using a ranked response of the position(s) that were most difficult to fill with an opportunity to write in additional positions that were difficult to fill.

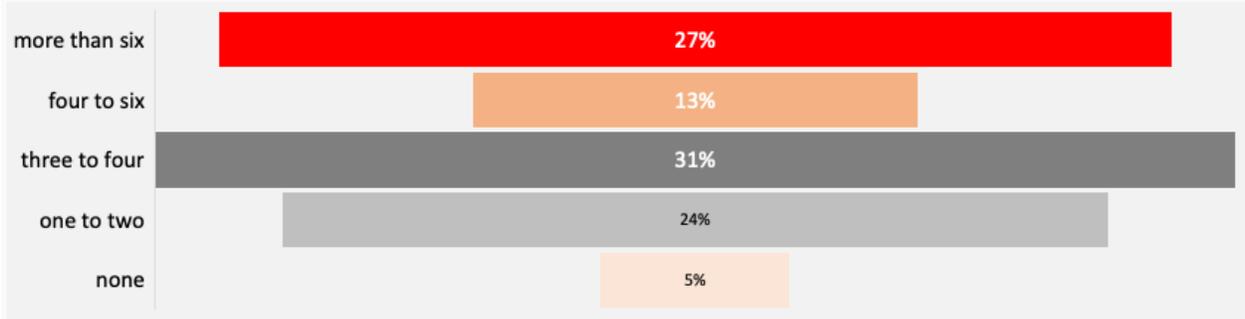
Responses from both questions consistently identified substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, and special educators as the most difficult to find. Some administrators reported ‘full-time teachers’ as a position that was difficult to hire. Write-in responses added “District Van Driver, Food Service, OT and Speech,” and one district identified the position of Principal as being difficult to fill.

Additional feedback from members of the Berkshire County Superintendents Roundtable on this question highlighted an immediate need to bring more racial and ethnic diversity to the faculty and staff of schools in all parts of the county. Superintendents also noted that when school leadership positions come open, the pool of qualified and experienced candidates is shrinking rapidly.

Responses from a national survey of school administrators (Lieberman *Edweek* 2021) similarly identified substitute teachers and paraprofessionals as highly in need. Bus drivers were ranked as being of higher need in the national surveys. The comparison national survey did not contain a choice specifically for special educators.

Unfilled Positions Mid-Year:

My school/district currently has _____ open or temporarily-filled positions that have not been permanently filled yet this year: Survey participants were asked to indicate a choice from “0” to “more than 6” There is a follow-up narrative blank asking participants to identify those positions.



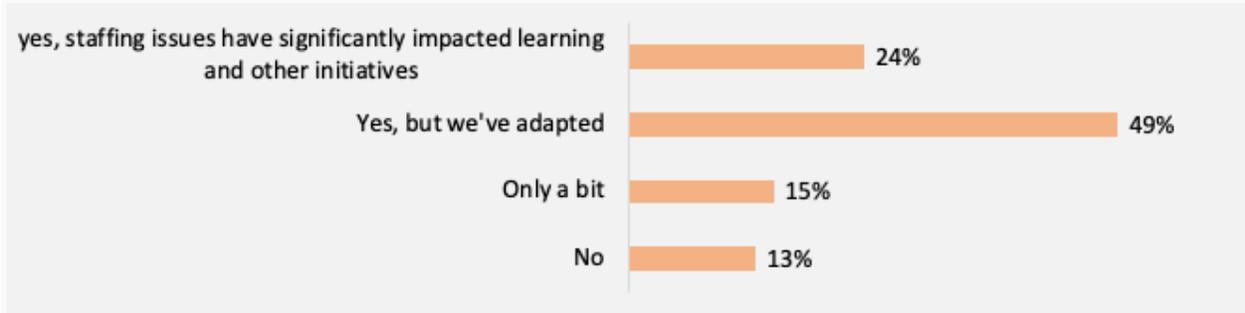
This question yielded responses showing that nearly all schools and districts represented by respondents continued to have unfilled or temporarily filled positions at mid year. As this question was going to both district-based and school-based administrators, the number of unfilled positions may appear elevated for district-level administrator respondents.

A write-in follow-up to this item asking respondents to identify positions that remained open showed the following (in order of most frequent responses): special education, severe special needs, paraprofessionals, substitutes and building subs, K/1 teacher, school adjustment counselor, OT/PT/SLP, district van driver, world language teacher, math/science teacher.

Narrative follow-up from school and district leaders described extreme difficulty in filling some positions: e.g “one special education position posted since June with zero applicants and one behavior support specialist posted and open for two years with zero applicants.”

Impact of Staffing Issues:

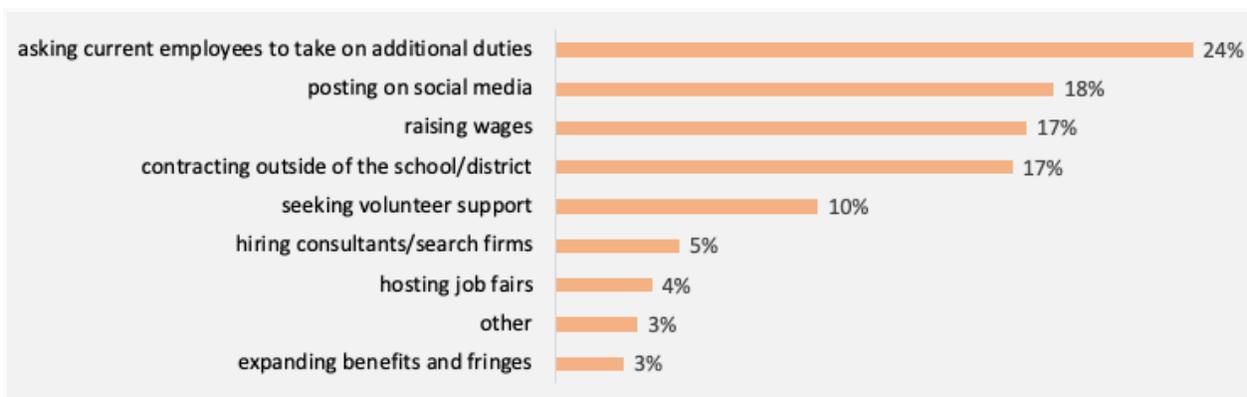
Have staffing issues affected your school/district’s capacity to continue learning initiatives? Survey participants chose from four choices ranging from “No” to “Yes, staffing issues have significantly impacted learning and other initiatives.”



Nearly a quarter of respondents identified that staffing issues are currently impacting learning and other initiatives in their schools or districts. About half of respondents report an impact of staffing issues but believe that adaptations may have avoided significant impact to learning and other initiatives. About a quarter of respondents report little or no impact of staffing issues to learning or other initiatives.

Response to Staffing Issues:

If your school/district has struggled to hire enough employees this year, what steps, if any, have been taken to address this problem? Indicate all you have tried: Survey participants are presented with a list of strategies or response steps and asked to check those they have tried.



The most frequent response of Berkshire administrators was to ask current employees to take on additional duties. Administrators adding a write-in response identified “posting and reposting,” “posting in more places,” and “partnering with MCLA.” Two write-in responses identified leveraging hardship waivers and emergency waivers (emergency licensure) as a way to bridge staffing gaps for licensed personnel.

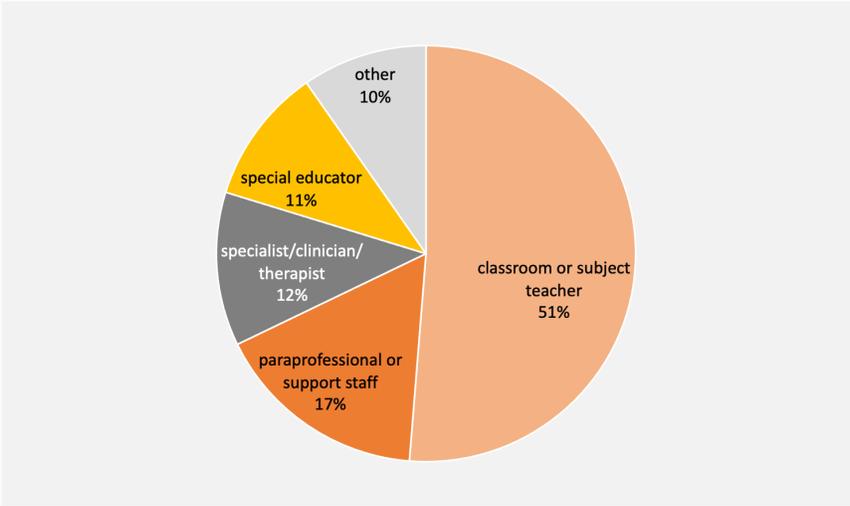
Results from a national survey (Lieberman *Edweek* 2021) suggest that districts around the country are employing mostly the same strategies with perhaps more schools and districts outside of our region using hiring bonuses and raising wages. National responses also showed the use of the strategy “hosting job fairs” at a higher rate.

FINDINGS

STAFF PERCEPTION SURVEY

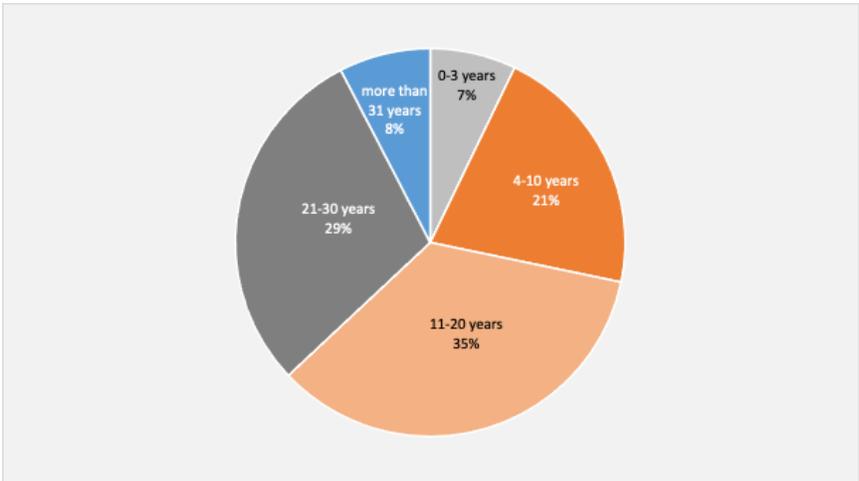
Perceptions of Berkshire County educators were sought using a 12-item survey distributed electronically to teachers, special educators, paraprofessionals, and other professional staff through school district superintendents in March of 2022. About 450 educators representing nearly all Berkshire County school districts responded to the survey.

Respondents identified their roles as follows:



Years in the Profession:

I have worked in education for ___ years. Survey takers chose from possible responses ranging from “0-3 years” to “more than 31 years”

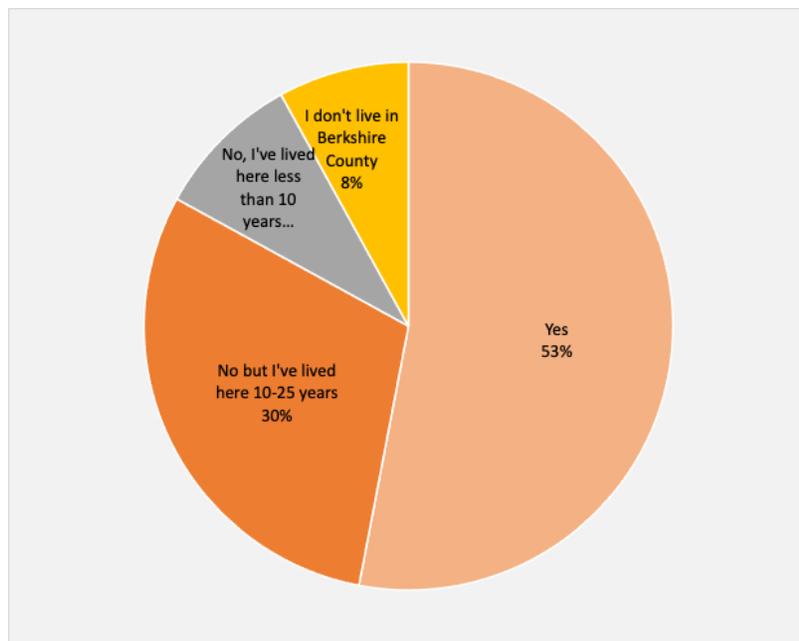


This question was included to better understand the distribution of experience levels amongst Berkshire County educators.

Responses suggest a somewhat even distribution of experience levels amongst educators from the year of attaining professional status (typically year 4), to the years that may precede retirement.

Educators who are Berkshire Natives:

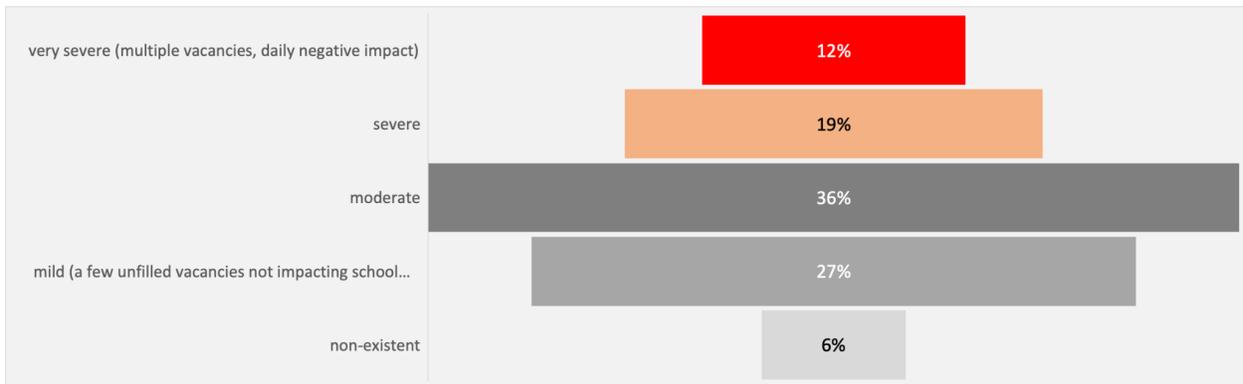
Are you a lifelong resident of Berkshire County? Four possible responses: “yes, no, but been here 10-25 years, no I’ve lived here less than 10 years, I don’t live in Berkshire County.”



More than half of respondents are natives of Berkshire County and another 30% have been in the area for more than a decade.

Survey results strongly suggest that the current educator workforce in Berkshire County is primarily made up of individuals with long-standing connections to the region.

I perceive staffing shortages at my school to be _____. A range of 5 responses from “non-existent” to “very severe.”

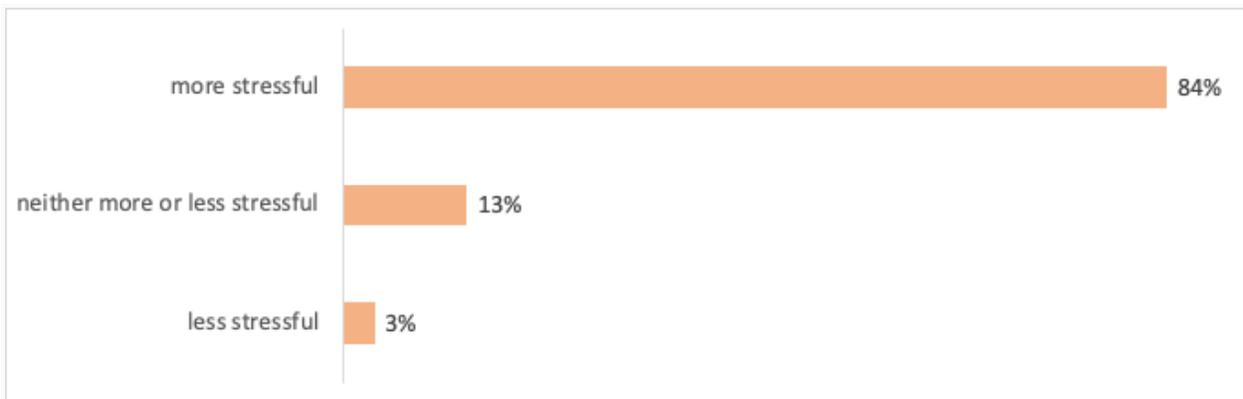


About 66% of educators responding to this question view staffing shortages as being “moderate” to “very severe.”

A small portion of staff respondents (6.48%) saw no staffing shortages in their schools. This contrasts somewhat with all administrator responses, all of whom identified the presence of at least mild staffing shortages.

The COVID Pandemic and Job Stress:

Compared to the year prior to the pandemic (2019-2020), working in public education is now: Possible responses are “more stressful,” “less stressful,” “neither more or less stressful.”

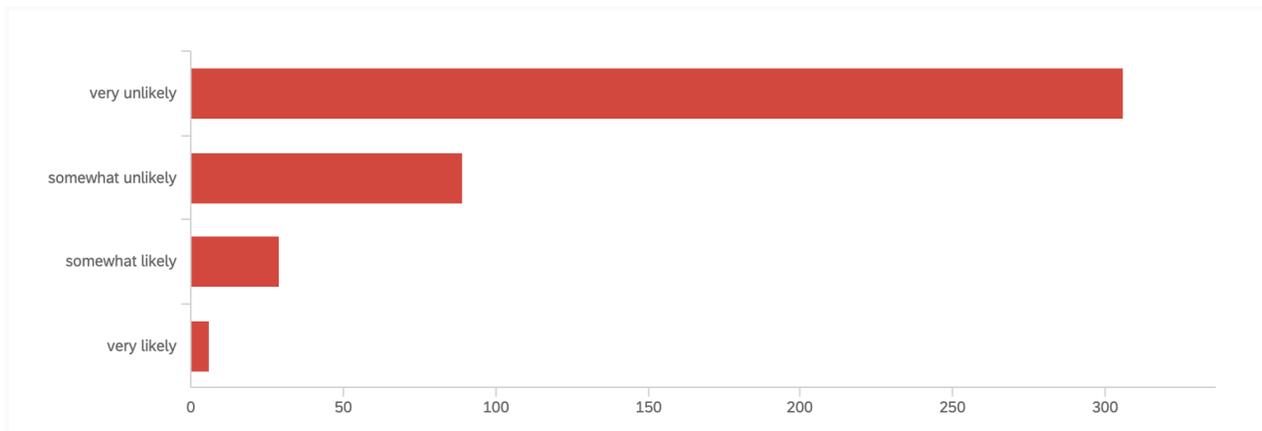


84% of respondents identify that working in public education is more stressful now than it was prior to the pandemic. This finding is consistent with findings of other studies conducted on a national level (Steiner, E and Woo, A, *Rand* 2021). In this study of teacher job stress, 78% of teachers surveyed nationally reported experiencing increased job stress in January of 2021.

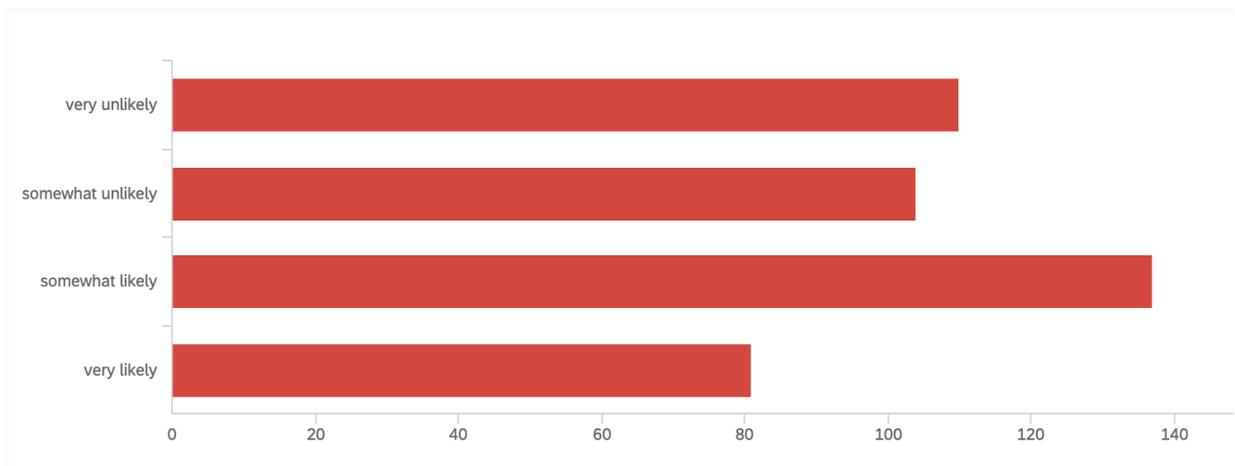
The Rand study compared educator responses to others in non-education areas of the general workforce. Job stress reported by K-12 educators was significantly higher than that of the rest of the workforce. The study reported that 40% of adults employed in areas other than education identified increased job stress.

Likelihood of leaving the profession: Pre-COVID vs Today:

If someone had asked me in the Fall of 2019 how likely it was that I would leave the profession within two years, I would have responded: Possible responses: “very unlikely, somewhat unlikely, somewhat likely, very likely.”



If someone were to ask me in the Fall of 2021 how likely it was that I would leave the profession within two years, I would have responded: Possible responses: “very unlikely, somewhat unlikely, somewhat likely, very likely.”*



*Note that the scale of the x axis is different on the second chart. The x axis shows the number of respondents.

The Rand study compared with more analysis and depth the responses of “likely leavers” before the pandemic with “likely leavers” during the pandemic. A finding of that study was that nearly 1

in 4 teachers were planning to leave, with an elevated percentage among Black educators. About 18% of Berkshire survey takers indicated that it was “very likely” they would leave soon if asked in the fall of 2021 compared to about 4% in fall of 2019.

Please tell us more about your answer to the previous question:

(If someone were to ask me in the Fall of 2021 how likely it was that I would leave the profession within two years, I would have responded: Possible responses: “very unlikely, somewhat unlikely, somewhat likely, very likely.”)

A sampling of narrative comments is below. *All narrative responses to this prompt can be found in Appendix A in the section titled ‘Q10 Narrative Responses.’*

-Too many students are abusive and highly work-avoidant. They also lack the prerequisite skills to access grade level content. Learning is depressingly low.

-Due to the negative impacts of the pandemic on families and overall mental health, it has become overly difficult to maintain a steady, consistent classroom and manage all of the behaviors within the classroom and outside of the classroom.

-Education during the pandemic is significantly different than it was prior to 2020. The demands and expectations have changed, and it frequently seems as if we are making things up as we go along. I do understand that this is necessary (to a degree) due to current circumstances. However, flying by the seat of our pants does not always lead to effective or compassionate treatment of students or staff.

-I don't believe that the current levels of daily stress, anxiety and trauma are sustainable for me long term.

-There's so much to say. The vicarious trauma of being with these children. The demands of the past two years have really taken a toll on all of us. And yet we're supposed to pretend it's business as usual. We need mental health support for all school community members now. Add the lack of pay and professional support/respect and it's easy to see why people are leaving the profession.

-I still enjoy my job overall. Though it is more stressful I have support of co-workers, family and my church that allow me to keep working.

-I still really enjoy teaching, though I am more open to other options such as online teaching now that I am more familiar with that model.

- I am a new educator, which is an advantage right now. I don't have the past experience of what education USED to be, I only know what it is NOW. While I can see the obvious areas of improvement, I have an overall more positive outlook on my career than some of my more seasoned colleagues, who feel that the field has changed too much.

-I have been a career teacher of 30+ years; i love what I do and can't imagine doing anything else. love my job, my co-workers, my school and district. I feel respected and supported.

-The students' needs after a year of remote learning have become more complex, along with the pandemic stressors still looming.

-I love teaching and it would take a lot to get me to change professions.

-Watching kids struggle so bad socially and with masks has been really difficult. I fear it will take years to get back to semblance of normalcy

-lack of support/staff has made it impossible to have a safe working environment

-I find myself doing significantly less planning and teaching, and significantly more classroom management and paperwork.

-Little support, short staffed, high expectations

-I love teaching, but the testing and assessing of the students as if things have been status quo the past couple of years infuriates me.

-The current demands of educators is at an all time high, and the respect for our position from our communities is at an all time low. It does not feel as if I am able to do the work I was hired to do.

Please rank the importance of the following factors as they relate to your job satisfaction and ability to work effectively. Drag the choices below into your preferred order.

Choices to be ranked included: “effective school leadership, support with challenging/struggling students, increased compensation, administrator support with difficult parents, smaller class sizes, staff access to counseling support, clear expectations from leaders, educator autonomy with teaching decisions, clearly articulated curriculum,” and a write-in blank for the survey taker to add content.

Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
effective school leadership	1.00	11.00	2.79	2.35	5.52	418
support with challenging students	1.00	11.00	3.96	2.35	5.52	418
increased compensation	1.00	12.00	4.49	2.91	8.47	418
more time for planning with colleagues	1.00	11.00	5.87	2.51	6.31	418
clear expectations from leaders	1.00	12.00	6.13	2.97	8.80	418
administrative support with difficult parents	1.00	12.00	6.45	2.49	6.22	418
educator autonomy in choosing learning goals and teaching methods	1.00	12.00	6.71	3.38	11.41	418
smaller class sizes (responsibility for fewer students)	1.00	12.00	6.72	2.93	8.58	418
quality professional development and training	1.00	12.00	7.24	2.46	6.03	418
clearly articulated and accessible curriculum	1.00	12.00	8.29	2.88	8.32	418
availability of counseling support to staff	1.00	12.00	8.35	2.59	6.71	418
Other (Please specify)	1.00	12.00	10.99	2.98	8.90	418

Answers above are arranged according to their highest ranked response. The lowest mean score for each response means that it was closest to being ranked number one. “Effective school leadership” was most commonly identified as the factor which is most important for job satisfaction and the ability to work effectively, followed by support with challenging students, increased compensation, more planning time with colleagues, etc.

A national survey (Libermann, *Edweek*) asking about the same factors was somewhat aligned in its findings although “educator agency” and autonomy trended somewhat higher in national surveys. ‘ Effective school leadership” can be assumed to include the establishment and implementation of clear routines and norms. Leadership and effective management of the school were rated at the same high level in literature related to teacher support.

I want educational leaders in Berkshire County to know THIS about working in public education at this time: This was a narrative write-in item.

A sampling of narrative comments is below. *All narrative responses to this prompt can be found in Appendix B in the section titled 'Q12 Narrative Responses.'*

-Teachers are exhausted from the mental and physical toll of teaching and living through the COVID pandemic. We care about students and clearly understand that they have suffered academic and social emotional losses. Students need access to more mental health resources. Many students lost critical academic skills and need remediation of Reading, Writing, and Math Skills. Students need time and help with developing coping strategies as well as academic stamina.

-Teachers work very hard to keep their students safe and on the right track. We do this with each and every student we work with. This is an amazing and exhausting feat and when students act out it beats us down. Though the job of a teacher is very rewarding, the struggle with it now is very real and disheartening. I believe we need more assistance in classrooms to support us in doing our jobs more effectively and help us help our kids. Remember, it takes a village to raise a child.

-We too are recovering from a global pandemic in which we were asked to do the impossible, and rose to the occasion regardless. We are here because we care about our students, but it feels as if we are being pulled into a million directions with no reprieve. School climate and culture needs to be rebuilt so colleagues begin to trust and respect one another again.

-It's an undeniable truth that many of us who've been teaching for a long time are looking toward an earlier retirement than we'd originally planned. What can we do to recruit new teachers and help us veterans perhaps make this transition?

-We are not appreciated enough or praised. We constantly have higher up administration members critiquing us and pointing out what we do wrong. We need higher pay where people should not be working in our schools from 7-2:30 every day and then have to go to a 2nd job afterwards.

-The expectations and pace increase each year. Sometimes I wish we were allowed to be more creative with our teaching approach, rather than constantly pushing to meet mandates.

-It's really impossible to be effective as a teacher.

-It's still challenging but kids need us!

-We, as teachers, are struggling. We have so much pressure on our shoulders to do it all...the academics, the social emotional, the medical aspects, it's overwhelming. And with constant scrutiny from some community members and the negative attitude towards educators in our society it doesn't feel worth the mounting stress these days.

-We teach human beings. We do not work in factories where all the products look identical and behave identically. We teach elementary children, not college. The Canvas platform and many of the tasks and tests students have been expected to take are not geared toward elementary, but for college. Teachers are also human beings who do not teach identically. We are expected to differentiate our instruction for

every single child but make them all take the same benchmark and state tests and score the same scores. This is not realistic nor healthy for students or staff. We are implementing Second Step for social emotional health, which is good, but we are also testing our students more this year than ever before and hustling to fill in any gaps we see. With all the testing we have added, we have lost valuable teaching time. Students are fatigued by the testing, feel worse about themselves when they take test after test, and they are less interested in learning on days they take those tests. Students used to be excited about what we would learn next. I don't see that enthusiasm as much since the pandemic and all the testing. We do not have substitutes for most of the support staff who provide interventions for our struggling learners so those students often lose instruction time several times a month, even several times per week, when those support staff are absent or have meetings. The lack of coverage is a huge concern for those students. If the district is so concerned with test scores and data, then they should be making sure those students get their intervention lessons every single day of the week.

-Telling teachers to practice self-care is not good enough. Empty positions and no subs take away support staff and admin who are detrimental to our day to day operations. Trust teachers are doing their best have their students' best interest at heart.

-Students are depressed, anxious, fearful and /or apathetic because of their awareness of the crises facing life on the planet at this time. Their mental health is not good. A radical change in educational priorities is desperately needed. A focus on SEL, community service to humanity, and care of the planet is the most urgent need for the health and success of our students. Hope must be restored through active engagement in solutions to world crises.

-Parent interactions have become more difficult as there is no accountability.

-Parents can no longer dictate how we are to handle difficult students. We must be allowed to intervene and coach troubled kids to produce a better long term result. There is so much intervention needed right now in both behaviors and content knowledge.

-It currently is a thankless job and the teachers doing the right things are the ones constantly under fire because they care so much about teaching and kids. Leaders need to support them and recognize we are struggling

-We (I) appreciate the support you are able to offer.

-No communication, no sense of community, we need to have families involved and allow some field trips , community helpers etc in to bring back a sense of that we matter and you can learn with fun. Less screen time.

-This is important, rewarding, but stressful work; educational leaders need to help teachers do effective work and not hinder them with useless tasks and directives that waste their precious time.

-The lack of support from the district and parents as well as the excessive expectations has really made me question whether I want to continue in the field. I work 10-14 hours daily and mostly on weekends. The salary doesn't even come close to amount of work and effort that I do on a daily basis! We need more support and smaller classes; not more administration.

-We have too many responsibilities put on us than ever before in past years plus the pressure of getting students back on academic grade level with less support than ever before, bigger class sizes and more behaviors.

-We deserve a livable wage.

-It's hard! We need to feel appreciated and backed by our administrators. Please stop asking us to solve all of the world's problems if you are not going to help and support with it. We need time to look at curriculum and how we can better meet the needs of the ever changing students.

-These days, I often feel like instead of working in public education I work in human services. The academic, social, and emotional needs of students are so great that schools cannot do it alone. If families aren't supported more we will continue to see children unprepared for the academic, social and emotional demands and expectations of school.

-As a para, I do not feel we are being treated with the respect and compensation we deserve and work for. We are being used as subs on a daily basis not just for teachers, but for indoor and outdoor duties.

FINDINGS

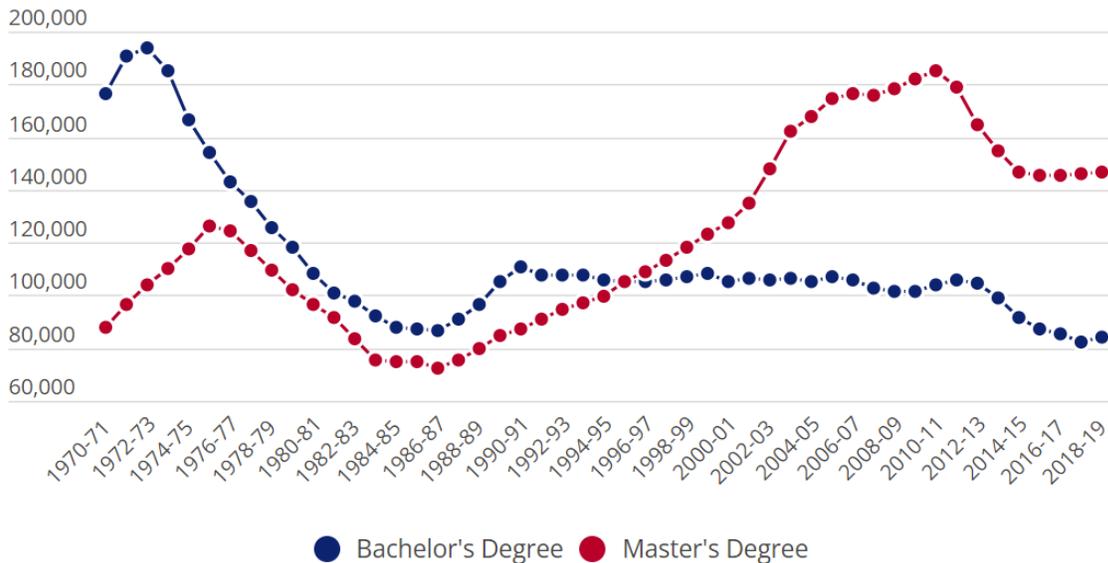
THE EDUCATOR PIPELINE

Data from the past 50 years shows a clear long-term trend: fewer people are choosing to pursue educator preparation programs in their undergraduate studies. A comprehensive study by American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) documented that “between the 2008-09 and the 2018-19 academic years, the number of people completing a teacher-education program declined by almost a third. Traditional teacher-preparation programs saw the largest decline—35 percent—but alternative programs experienced drops (for people who already have a bachelor’s degree) that are housed in colleges or universities. But all types of programs have seen drops” as well. (AACTE)

Other findings of the AACTE study document that in 2019, U.S. colleges awarded fewer than 90,000 undergraduate degrees in education, down from nearly 200,000 a year in the early 1970s. The number of students earning degrees in science and math education - an area of high-need in U.S. schools - has fallen by 27%.

Fewer Students Are Earning Degrees in Education

Number of Master’s and Bachelor’s Degrees Conferred in Education, 1970-71 to 2018-19



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

(Graphic: EdWeek)

Several studies have explored possible reasons for recent and long-term decline in participation in teacher education programs. According to a survey by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), deans of colleges of education report that the number one reason for the enrollment drop was “the perception of teaching as an undesirable career”.

According to AASCU, “[t]hat perception is likely based on complaints about a lack of professional autonomy and low wages. In the last few years [teachers report] ‘they’re more stressed than ever amid staffing shortages and other consequences of the pandemic.’” [Additionally] legislative and public efforts to curtail classroom discussions about race have led to intense scrutiny on teachers and their curricular choices.” (AASCU)

Longitudinal data collected by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) tracks educator candidate program enrollment, educator candidate program completion, and the annual number of MTEL (Massachusetts Tests for Education Licensure) test-takers and their pass rates. This data shows patterns of declining participation in educator preparation programs in Massachusetts prior to the COVID pandemic, consistent with national trends.

MA Enrollment in educator preparation programs: (DESE)

Academic Year	State Total: Enrollment of Educator Candidate Programs
2014-2015	16,898
2015-2016	14,447
2016-2017	15,413
2017-2018	9,734
2018-2019	9,544
2019-2020	8,855

Completion of educator preparation programs: (DESE)

Academic Year	State Total: Program Completers
2014-2015	5,274
2015-2016	5,114
2016-2017	5,069
2017-2018	5,007
2018-2019	4,870
2019-2020	4,592

MTEL Test-Takers (DESE)

Academic Year	Test Takers	Test Re-Takers	%Passing
2014-2015	2,980		97
2015-2016	3,166	*	97
2016-2017	3,331	*	98
2017-2018	3,043	2,187	99
2018-2019	2,869	2,053	99
2019-2020	2,743	1,892	98

Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

State data for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic years related to enrollment and completion of teacher preparation programs is not yet available. Some information about the last two years may be gleaned from looking at participation in student teaching and practicum experiences at two state universities that serve the western MA/Berkshire Region:

Westfield State University

- 54 students engaged in student teaching for the spring of 2021-2022. Department staff report that typically it would be about double that (practicum numbers are typically at about 120), but about 50 students have not passed the MTELS which is required for student teaching.
- Westfield usually has about 300-400 students each year in their education/teacher prep program.

- Passing the MTEL seems to be a major obstacle to completion of the full licensure program.

MCLA

- 2020-2021: 90 students enrolled in field experiences: pre-prac and full practicum (student teaching) during the academic year.
- 2021-2022: 69 students enrolled in field experiences: pre-prac and full practicum (student teaching) (M. Young)

This information shows that since the beginning of the pandemic, in at least two state universities serving our region, trends of declining enrollment continue and perhaps may be accelerating. The decline in students passing the MTEL may suggest an additional impact of disrupted study caused by the COVID pandemic.

There is other evidence that MA may not be experiencing the same severe degree of decline as in other parts of the country. One factor may be that educator compensation is generally higher in Massachusetts (and the Northeast) than in other areas of the country (*Chalkbeat* 2021) (NCES) and graduate degree participation in MA remains active, although this may be limited to institutions in the eastern two-thirds of the state.

Other possible Massachusetts-specific factors stabilizing educator turnover and increasing racial and ethnic diversity amongst educators are discussed in an October 2021 study by the Wheelock Policy Center at Boston University. This study found that teacher turnover in Massachusetts has *not* increased, but remained stable over the last five years. This study also documents that more early-career teachers, Black and Latinx teachers, and teachers in high poverty schools *stayed* than in prior years, and racial and ethnic diversity among newly-hired teachers continues to increase. The study suggests emergency licensure as a possible contributing factor:

“newly hired teachers holding an emergency license were substantially more likely to be Black or Hispanic/Latinx than other newly hired teachers. Approximately 30% of newly hired teachers in 2020-2021 who held emergency teaching licenses were people of color. By contrast, 10% of newly hired teachers who held initial licenses and 15% of those who held provisional licenses were people of color in 2020-2021.” (Bacher-Hicks, Chi, and Orellana, 2021, Wheelock Policy Center)

Further study is needed to see if these stabilizing trends are being seen and having a similar positive effect in rural areas and the Berkshire region.

Declining participation in teacher preparation programs is well-tracked through national data, but information about educators in leadership prep programs is not as widely available. Anecdotally, superintendents are finding principal positions more difficult to fill each year. This is especially true in districts where there are higher levels of economic disadvantage and fewer resources available to meet student needs. Fewer applications are coming in for open

leadership posts and the level of experience and qualifications seems to be declining. There is some evidence that school leaders are departing those roles at a quicker pace than before the pandemic. Surveys conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals cited in *Chalkbeat* and a report from the Wallace Foundation show that 4 in 10 principals are considering a departure from the profession within three years. (NASSP)

FINDINGS

EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT TO THE BERKSHIRES

Factors affecting educator recruitment to Berkshire County:

In recruiting educators and other professionals to Berkshire County, there are factors that attract workers to the area and dissuade potential workers from considering relocation. Berkshire County is known as a region of abundant natural beauty, offering year-round cultural and recreational opportunities and, at one time, living in Berkshire County may have been more affordable when relocating from an urban or suburban area.

There are many factors that influence a prospective employee's decision to relocate. This study briefly explores **educator compensation, housing, and other factors** that present long-term challenges in recruiting educators to the Berkshires.

Educator compensation

While paraprofessionals, administrators, and other school staff represent essential contributors to a school and district's operation, information about teacher pay is most accessible for comparison through collective bargaining agreements and DESE data. With a few exceptions, and recognizing that Berkshire County school districts compensate their staff at varied levels, it is likely that educators moving to the Berkshires would earn less than they would in other areas of the state.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education...[\(cite..link\)](#) annually collects data on teacher compensation in school districts around the state. Released data about the 2019-2020 school year suggests (again, with some exceptions) that educator pay increases as you go eastward in the state and to more suburban or urban areas around the Boston Metro area. Average salary (calculated as total district expenditure on teacher salary / total teacher FTE) for Boston was \$105,235, while Brookline was \$100,041. Cape communities, (Barnstable County) had an average salary of \$85,128 and a sampling of North Shore communities showed a somewhat lower average at \$79,555 (Lynn).

Per the same 2019-2020 data, moving west in the state one is more likely to see school districts with an average pay range from \$65,209 (Northampton) to \$80,338 (Amherst). Franklin County and north central MA show lower averages at \$68,142 (Greenfield) and \$72,538 (Gardner). The Worcester area showed a range of average pay levels from \$75,888 (Leominster) to \$86,937 (Worcester).

Berkshire County school districts showed a wide range of salary averages from about \$50,000 to over \$80,000 a year. This variation is well known to school business officials, human resources staff and superintendents who are responsible for placing incoming employees at a pay level per the collective bargaining agreement or teachers' contract. School Committee

members who work on negotiations may also be familiar with these variations if they have used salary information of other districts to inform contract negotiations. It is a somewhat common expectation that desirable levels of teacher compensation will be *regionally* competitive; meaning if one is considering an education position outside of metro Boston, one should not necessarily expect a metro Boston level of pay.

Given the variation in Berkshire County compensation levels, deriving a county average (which would be around \$71,000+) is perhaps of limited relevance and utility. By comparison, the whole state average was \$84,659 for 2019-2020. (DESE)

Teachers living in the Berkshires or considering a move to this region to teach, may also be in the running for positions at schools in surrounding states. Average salary information for NY, CT, and VT is not tracked by DESE but data from the National Center for Education Statistics showed 2017 average pay levels in these states to be \$79,637 (New York), \$72,561 (Connecticut), and \$60,187 (Vermont). It should be noted that these levels are four years old and subject to the same intra-state variability. (NCES, 2017)

When considering compensation as a factor for newly-minted educators looking for a place to start their careers, a similar east to west geographic compensation pattern (with significant in-county variation in Berkshire County) can be observed at the first step of the teacher's pay scale. BA, Step 1 (the common name for the first step of a teachers' salary scale) annual salaries range from a high of about \$55,000 in metro Boston to lows just under \$40,000 in Berkshire County. In Berkshire County, there is a noted variation: a range of \$39,515 to \$45,702. A county average of BA Step 1 derived from 2021-22 CBA salary schedules of the eight largest districts would be about \$43,300.

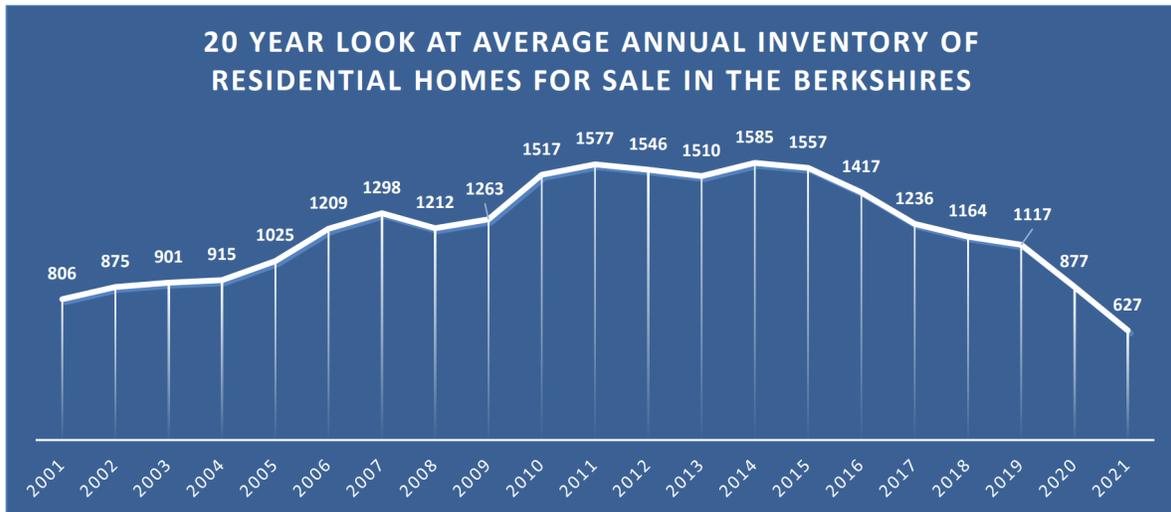
In comparison, BA Step 1 compensation levels in other areas of the state trend a bit higher:

- Brookline \$54,148, (2020-2021 level).
- Lincoln-Sudbury \$52,327 2020-2021 (CBA, Teachers)
- Worcester \$48,310 (2019-2020)
- Barnstable \$48,173 (2019-2020 CBA)
- Greenfield \$46,010 (2020-2021)
- Northampton \$46,733 (2021-2022 CBA, called "step 3")
- Amherst \$43,990 (2020-2021)
- Freetown-Lakeville \$45,087 (2020-2021 CBA)

Housing challenges:

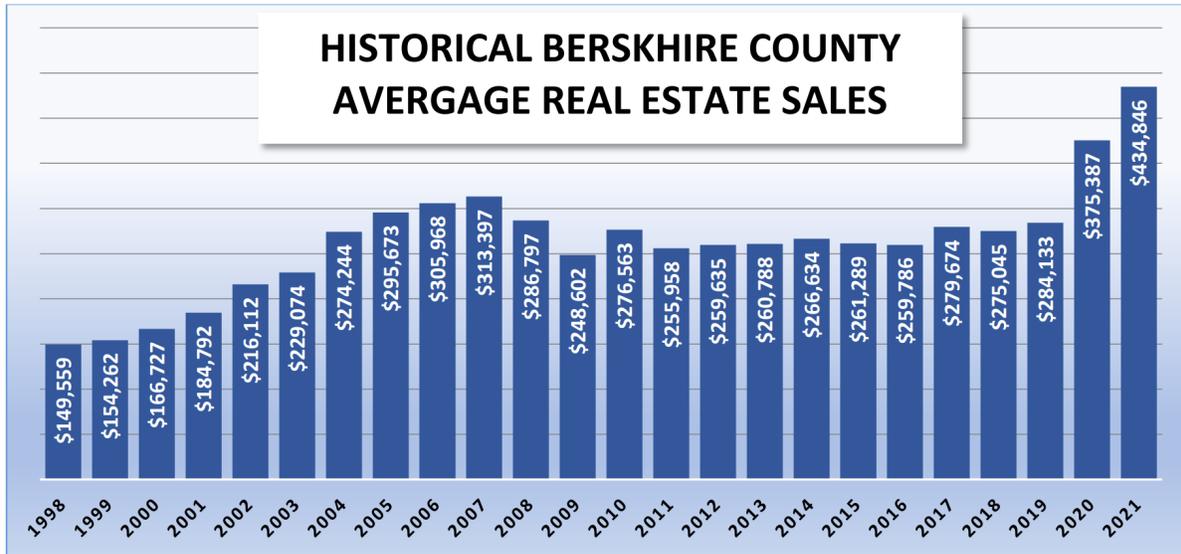
When recruiting from region to region in any profession, housing availability and affordability are important factors for potential employees. Some corporate and healthcare employers may offer relocation assistance and even interim housing to new high-need employees moving to the area. PK-12 education and other public-funded service employers will not typically offer this assistance. When considering a move to Berkshire County from other regions or states, relocating public employees will typically figure out housing on their own. Today, many relocating employees will encounter challenging conditions (not unique to Berkshire County) as they look for a home.

Data from the Berkshire County Board of Realtors shows a steady decline in the number of homes for sale in a year, from a high of 1,585 in 2014 to 627 at the end of 2021. There has been a particularly steep decline of real estate inventory since 2019 and in three years the county has seen a decline of about 44% in the inventory of available homes for sale.



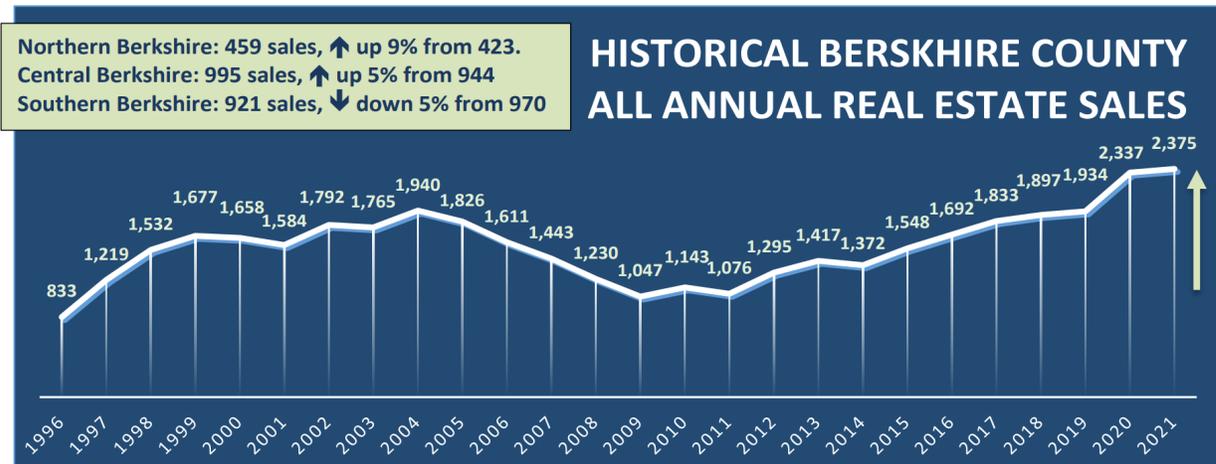
(Market Watch, Berkshire County Board of Realtors)

Mirroring trends in many other areas of the state, region and nation, high demand and declining inventory have caused steadily increasing prices. Until now, favorable interest rates may have supported the ability to afford more, perhaps making home purchase possible for more moderate income consumers as prices increased. However, the last two years have seen an increase in average real estate prices of 53%. It is noted that the data represented in the graph below represents all types of real estate (land, single family and multi family homes, condominiums, commercial) and increasing prices affect some areas of the county more than others.



(Market Watch, Berkshire County Board of Realtors)

Declining inventory and increased prices have not resulted in declining real estate sales in Berkshire County. Since 2018, total sales in dollars have increased from about \$505,000,000 (2018) to \$883,000,000 in December of 2021 and total sales in numbers during this time period increased from 1897 in 2018 to 2375.



(Market Watch, Berkshire County Board of Realtors)

Conditions of low inventory combined with high prices and brisk home sales are visible now in almost every major metro area of the United States. While it is important to note that current conditions can pose relocation obstacles for early career educators wishing to buy a home, mid career educators relocating to the Berkshires will likely find their current homes quick to sell with significant appreciation. Relocating mid-career teachers in this situation may still have to contend with high demand and a 20-year low level of housing inventory.

Other housing options are undergoing a similar pattern of dwindling availability and increasing prices. Historic rental data was not collected for this study but several sources suggest that the availability of rental units is not sufficient to meet housing needs. A March 2022 article in the Berkshire Eagle, focused mainly on north county, indicated that a property manager reported 51 inquiries in a week for a single open apartment. A 2020 housing needs assessment by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) assessed in North Adams alone that there was a deficit of 465 units in the moderate and middle income price range. In the recent Eagle article, Tom Matuszko, Executive Director of BRPC summarized the situation with a call to action: “We really need to bring awareness to Berkshire County that we are in a housing crisis, and I don’t use that term lightly...” (Stafford, S, *Berkshire Eagle* 2022)

For moderate income persons wanting to purchase or rent a home in Berkshire County, current conditions are quite challenging. Are these conditions predicted to stay in place for the long term? Sandra Carroll, president of the Berkshire County Board of Realtors points out that multiple agencies, governments and civic and professional organizations are now collaborating on the issue of housing insecurity in the Berkshires. In a phone interview Ms. Carroll suggested that the close of the COVID era may have some effect of moderating the extremes of the current housing market. Further assistance may come in the redefinition of eligibility for some federally-backed home loan programs. Such adjustments would be designed to favor owner-occupied homes over speculative investors. Housing stimulus provisions of the Biden infrastructure bill include \$213 billion allocated for housing, with a focus on low-and middle-income homeowners and prospective homebuyers.

Other Challenges to Workforce Recruitment:

Beyond the previously-stated challenges of comparatively low salaries and an existing housing crisis in the Berkshires, there are several other variables that have persistently presented challenges to workforce recruitment into the region. In no particular order, those primary issues have been identified as: lack of ample and affordable childcare providers, a limited but improving early professional socialization landscape, low-scoring metrics of the majority of the region’s school districts, cost of living indices offering skewed data based on assessed area, limited opportunities for accompanying partners, and limited lateral mobility across comparable employers in one’s professional industry.

When it comes to affordable and accessible childcare, candidates and employers alike have identified this as an impediment to committing to coming to or staying in the region for individuals currently with children or planning to have children. With most if not all facilities being at capacity, and with extremely limited options for infant care, this issue only seems to be exacerbated by the pandemic “baby boom.” Socialization and networking opportunities for young professionals has been a notable issue for quite a while, and while the opportunities for engagement had improved prior to the pandemic, the subsequent fallout over the last year and a half has impeded the growth of social opportunities that are attractive to young professionals looking to develop a community here. While we know many of our school districts have seen

meaningful improvements in their performance in recent years, historic trends and lagging metrics related to district quality have been noted as an issue for individuals who have or are planning to have children. Improving upon quality through regionalized resources and services has been noted as a potential opportunity to address this persisting issue.

Many Berkshire cities and towns still offer housing that is affordable. However in most (if not all) data collection platforms, the “Pittsfield Metro” area (which is considered the entirety of Berkshire County) is utilized to track the cost of living. This results in an artificially-inflated cost of living optic for the entire regional tract, due largely to the high real estate value and prices in the southern portion of the county, and the high income of individuals with second homes located in those more expensive areas. These inflated metrics subsequently make living in areas more proximal to urban settings or in denser tourism-centered areas more attractive, such as Saratoga or Hudson, NY.

Finally, limited opportunities in specific industries, and a low number of employers in any one specific industry, make it challenging for individuals to see themselves moving laterally across employers in the regional economic ecosystem. This also limits the number of visible career opportunities for the accompanying partners that would be moving to the region along with the individuals being recruited. Specific industries that need to be bolstered by the support and creation of more employers specifically include the tech realm and digital economy, as these industries present a large capacity for scalability and allow for increased remote work opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

After a review of professional literature survey response and data from multiple sources, answers to some of the guiding questions of this study can be offered:

-Currently, how severe are staffing issues in the PK-12 public schools of Berkshire County?

While responses to administrator surveys showed significant district to district variance, a vast majority of respondents (87%) rated staffing shortages as moderate to very severe. Anecdotal evidence and additional narrative input indicate that this long-term issue for Berkshire school districts *is becoming more severe*, having a daily disruptive impact on school initiatives and operations. Further examination of administrator responses reveals that in districts with fewer resources, serving students with more economic disadvantage, administrators are more likely to rate shortages as “severe” or “very severe.”

Despite increased job stress among teachers, educators currently on the job appear to be staying and not causing an ‘exodus’ from the profession as reported in other areas of the country. Massachusetts-specific data from the Wheelock Center and national data reported in *Chalkbeat* suggest that teacher turnover is staying steady. Currently employed teachers are staying put at current jobs or they may be staying in the profession but moving to new schools.

Lack of diversity in the educator workforce remains a serious challenge for Berkshire County. Even as the student population of our region becomes slowly more diverse, the educator workforce remains almost entirely white. Several Berkshire districts employ zero people of color and recruitment efforts to meet the challenge of building a more diverse workforce have been few and less than effective. Any efforts to address staffing issues of our public schools must include further study and targeted attention to increasing diversity in the educator workforce.

-What positions or roles are hardest to fill at this time?

National data and local survey responses align indicating that substitutes, paraprofessionals, and special educators are in universally short supply.

Narrative responses from the administrator survey show that specialized therapeutic positions such as speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist and school nurse are also very difficult to fill when open. Narrative responses also remind us of the long-term difficulty in finding and hiring science and math teachers, world language teachers, and teachers of English as a second language.

Berkshire County superintendents note that filling principal positions is getting more difficult each year and that the widely publicized vacancy postings may yield only one or two candidates. A study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals cited in an article by the Wallace Foundation identified that 4 in 10 principals are considering a departure

from the profession in the next three years. The Wallace Foundation reported that 26% of principals and other administrators had been targets of personal threats from parents and others about procedures and practices imposed during COVID. The study and article predicted that a lack of qualified school leaders, currently employed and in the pipeline, could cause a devastating “shock to the school systems” within a few years.

-Are there sufficient numbers of new educators in training to fill future vacancies?

Not conclusive. If the hiring pool for future teacher positions is comprised mainly of recent BA graduates, the data would indicate a call for serious concern. Completion of graduate programs in education continues to be significantly higher than that of undergraduate programs, but this enrollment has also leveled off over the last few years.

Comparing national trends of enrollment in undergraduate educator prep programs with state and regional ones show that a decline in teacher prep participation is not happening with the same severity in MA (or the Northeast). This may be tied to the fact that salaries in the northeast remain significantly higher for educators.

Superintendents and principals have observed a steady decline in the number of teacher applications for years, even for common positions which previously may have generated numerous applications. Postings for *any positions* no longer generate ‘abundant’ applications and postings for positions in the hard-to-fill categories may require several cycles of posting and reposting. Widening of the search radius for postings is now commonly needed to fill a range of vacancies.

-What are the obstacles that new educators or mid-career educators face when coming to work in our region?

Teacher pay in the Berkshires is less than that in many eastern communities in the state. At one time the lower pay may not have presented the same obstacle for teachers who knew that they would have numerous housing options and a lower cost of living. As the pool of newly-minted teachers shrinks every year, teacher candidates may have more options in higher paying locations where the cost of living is no longer radically different than that of the Berkshires.

The housing situation in the Berkshires is near or at crisis levels. For new educators looking to start their career in the Berkshires, the prospect of finding affordable housing within a 30-minute commute of their school can be daunting. There are no indicators that this trend will ease in the next two years. New educators without connections to our area will likely choose other locations to start their careers if housing availability does not improve.

-What can educational leaders learn from teachers and staff that may increase staff retention?

Educators surveyed rated effective school leadership, support with challenging/struggling students, increased compensation, and more time for planning with colleagues as the four top factors contributing to job satisfaction. Narrative comments from question 10 point to the importance of leadership understanding the challenges educators are facing in the classroom, recognizing and praising teacher efforts, supporting teachers with student and parent issues, and bringing order and predictability to the school setting with clear consistent policies and administrative practices.

Some educator comments asked that leaders employ flexible timelines and have different expectations when it comes to the academic progress-oriented agenda of schools. Multiple comments noted that time away from school, remote learning, and the pandemic in general have set many students back, not just in their academic progress but in their attention levels, behavior, and general ability to “do school.” Multiple narrative responses pointed to a need to prioritize the building of social-emotional capacities over getting students “caught-up.”

A March 2022 professional learning event hosted by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (*Education Now: Why Teachers Leave Teaching — and How to Support and Retain Them*) identified four key take-aways that seem to align with the input of Berkshire County educators:

- Effective leadership is key to teacher satisfaction.
- Transparent communication throughout a crisis (or anytime) makes teachers feel supported.
- Prioritize the development of clear and consistent practices and policies in your school.
- Prioritize the autonomy, leadership skills, and pedagogical decision-making skills of your teaching force.

Recommendations of the study group can be found in the Executive Summary on page 5.

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Brendan Sheran: A Pittsfield educator and PhD candidate at UMass Amherst.

Sandra Carroll: Chief Executive Officer at the Berkshire Board of Realtors.

Judy Rush: Director of Curriculum, Pittsfield Public Schools

Mark Lieberman: Contributing Writer to EdWeek

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Mary Nash, Copy Editor

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APPENDIX A: Q10 NARRATIVE STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES

Please tell us more about your answer to the previous question:

(If someone were to ask me in the Fall of 2021 how likely it was that I would leave the profession within two years, I would have responded: Possible responses: “very unlikely, somewhat unlikely, somewhat likely, very likely.”)

Q10
The stress, the expectations, the lack of supportive services, the pay, not being able to fully do my job and the lack of understanding of our role.
Too many students are abusive and highly work avoidant. They also lack the prerequisite skills to access grade level content. Learning is depressingly low.
I am frustrated by the public opinion of the job and the legislation surrounding it.
Due to the negative impacts of the pandemic on families and overall mental health, it has become overly difficult to maintain a steady, consistent classroom and manage all of the behaviors within the classroom and outside of the classroom.
I still enjoy my job overall. Though it is more stressful I have support of co-workers, family and my church that allow me to keep working.
I am a new educator, which is an advantage right now. I don't have the past experience of what education USED to be, I only know what it is NOW. While I can see the obvious areas of improvement, I have an overall more positive outlook on my career than some of my more seasoned colleagues, who feel that the field has changed too much.
Teaching is hard now, but honestly my early years in the profession were harder/more stressful. I have many more (internal and external) tools now. I have finally found myself in my desired role at my school and I tend to keep it as long as possible.
I would retire if I could in a heartbeat. I cannot financially do this though so I will stay.
I enjoy my job. I just don't get paid enough to deal with the challenges that are presented daily.
Education during the pandemic is significantly different than it was prior to 2020. The demands and expectations have changed, and it frequently seems as if we are making things up as we go along. I do understand that this is necessary (to a degree) due to current circumstances. However, flying by the seat of our pants does not always lead to effective or compassionate treatment of students or staff.
I am closer to retirement age. The stress of the profession has increased. I have lost friends and family causing me to realize that life is too short.
I still really enjoy teaching, though I am more open to other options such as online teaching now that I am more familiar with that model.
If I could find a job that was close to my current salary I would leave teaching. The only thing keeping in my job right now is that fact that moving in order to take a different job would be very disruptive to my family.
I have been a career teacher of 30+ years; i love what I do and can't imagine doing anything else
I don't believe that the current levels of daily stress, anxiety and trauma are sustainable for me long term. 1
I am going to retire before I wanted to especially if the ERI passes and I can buy up to the 80%. Still, even if it doesn't, I am leaving
I am underpaid for my position and we don't necessarily follow the BACB guidelines for RBTs
Education has changed so much. The pandemic has severely impacted the mental health of our students to the point where it is difficult to teach them. Their needs are so great and we don't know how to help them (and lack community partners to help too). Teachers are blamed for everything wrong in society today...we are constantly being pulled in 1,000 different directions with competing priorities from the state and are not treated as professionals on a national level. We are underpaid for our required education and training and it is demoralizing for such an important profession.

I am being told daily to fuck off by students which makes me want to leave. Students are having regulation of emotions issues, and I am working to help- I call counselors, call home, and I have a spreadsheet I keep for each class. It takes me two hours a day to manage the communication because of how many kids need more emotional support. Students and admin say I am "one of the good ones" but I don't get paid enough to keep feeling this way
I love the work that I do, it is very important to me
There's so much to say. The vicarious trauma of being with these children. The demands of the past 2 years have really taken a toll on all of us. And yet we're supposed to pretend it's business as usual. We need mental health support for all school community members now. Add the lack of pay and professional support/respect and it's easy to see why people are leaving the profession.
I am completely burnt out and feel there is minimal support.
Teaching in not just my profession, it is my vocation.
I love my job, my co-workers, my school and district. I feel respected and supported.
While I have no interest in leaving the education field, I have no interest in search for a new job in the education sector if I am let go from my current position.
We are not working smarter, just harder. Restrictions with discipline have caused the classrooms to be much harder to deal with.
Not worth the hassles imposed on classroom teachers
i am not planning on leaving.
Everything about teaching has become complicated with choices people in power make that challenge the day to day work with students.
I enjoy my job and the work I do with young adults. While education and working with young adults may be a challenge, it is that challenge that makes the job so rewarding and keeps me on my toes day in and day out.
lack of support/staff has made it impossible to have a safe working environment
The disengagement, disrespect, absences, tardies, phone addictions and the implementation of multiple new software programs to learn have significantly impacted my ability to teach with rigor and high standards.
The students' needs after a year of remote learning have become more complex, along with the pandemic stressors still looming.
I love teaching and it would take a lot to get me to change professions.
The stress put on the family for being sick will impact my wife's safety and wages. It may not be worth it to continue in the profession.
As this school year has progressed I have found myself looking into more options for potential career changes.
Despite challenges I still love working in a school setting supporting teachers, children and families.
My feelings were not related to the pandemic, but to an excessive workload.
I find myself doing significantly less planning and teaching, and significantly more classroom management and paperwork.
I receny joined this district due to stress in the previous school workedvat
Covid has made a negative impact on both students and faculty. We abide by rules that change constantly and never know what to truly expect.
I really enjoy doing my job and I plan to do this job until I am ready to retire, which is several years down the road.
Being remote with a emergency special education license and being in a tough classroom put my mental heath to the test. Now that I am in a different position and the restrictions are being lifted I feel much better.
I love teaching regardless of how stressful it can be at times. Every job has it's own unique stressors.
Watching kids struggle so bad socially and with masks has been really difficult. I fear it will take years to get back to semblence of normalcy
Little support, short staffed, high expectations
This is my first year teaching. I came in with high expectations but did not realize just how much of an impact the pandemic had on student development and engagement.

I love teaching, but the testing and assessing of the students as if things have been status quo the past couple of years infuriates me.
I don't feel that I can easily move into another career field at this point, so I'm unlikely to change jobs. I am less satisfied with my job than I was pre-pandemic, though.
I love my job, I love working with children. The stresses that are new are from the pandemic not the school structure.
I have faith that these unreasonable mandates are quickly on their way out and will not come back.
The stress and trauma of the pandemic has changed teaching tremendously. I truly feel that the expectations being put on teachers today is not sustainable.
If I wasn't so far into my career I would certainly be looking at what else I could do. Relatively speaking I am close to having the ability to retire and expect to do so as soon as I can.
I plan on working until I no longer can.
I love my job, but I know that teaching during COVID isn't NORMAL teaching. There is a light at the end of every tunnel, and I hope it's starting to shine brighter
I am close to retirement age so this has made me decide to retire this year.
I am retiring at the end of this school year.
It's more stressful because student needs have increased...but that's no reason to leave.
I just think sometimes I need a change in life
Things are tough all over. Teaching is hard always. We're getting through.
I have been a teacher since the age of 21. I am now 54. I can not afford to leave my pension nor transition to another location or career. I have teen children.
I chose 'somewhat unlikely' because I already left a position as a classroom teacher due to the overwhelming demands prior to the pandemic. I am happy as a reading specialist because I get to focus on one subject and use my expertise in that area and it is less demanding.
not what I was trained for, and teaching remotely or hybrid was not enjoyable
It is a stressful time to be serving in the educational field.
This is my first year teaching, so teaching during a pandemic is all that I know. All I can hope and think is that it will get better and not always be like this :)
I have always enjoyed my job and still do (for the most part). However, I do think about retirement. To be honest, MTRS is keeping me here. If early retirement is offered, I would be interested. Maybe less about the pandemic and more about "getting to that age". 1
I don't have an abundance of options. But I do not enjoy my job and I would leave if I could.
I am stuck teaching the same thing five times a day, despite being capable of much more. On top of the other stresses, it's very frustrating.
Getting older. Are there any incentives available for retirement before age 62?
I recently transitioned from teaching in a residential setting, to a public school.
looking forward to retirement
There is a lot more responsibilities put on us by the administration to complete, rather than complete the curriculum and things we would like to do with the students.
Although it is difficult to teach during the Pandemic - the worst thing I've ever endured was poor administration (which is not the case at the current school I am working at, but was at the previous Berkshire County high school).
as a paraprofessional I don't feel like I feel as much stress as an administrator or classroom teacher
The last two years has been incredibly stressful and the workload has doubled in many areas of teaching. Expectations of where the students should be academically and socially has not changed, and yet in reality those things have changed drastically. MCAS is still upon us and this requirement is completely ridiculous given what the teachers and students have been through the last two years.

We had a new scripted curriculum introduced during a pandemic. It felt like a punishment. It felt like the district did not trust our professional judgement to do our jobs as educators.
Personally I am still very happy here and look forward to spending the remaining 15 years of my career here.
Stress of the job due to increasing amount of management and lack of staffing where needed-with students.
School nurses have been given a huge increase in responsibility, with little increase in salary.
I'm exhausted by the past two years.
I am considering withting to SLP.
I enjoy what I do, despite how challenging the last two years have been.
I love where I teach. It's a small community. The classroom size made it easier to navigate the pandemic.
There is no accountability on the students part. I worked on our code of conduct and I feel as if it is non existent now.
Mainly the health risks at work, lack of competitive pay, and peers who still have all the benefits of working remotely at home in 2022. Hazard pay or tax credits for essential workers would be a good incentive or measure to keep people in the teaching profession.
The shortage of school staff is impacting students and staff. Students are not getting the support they need (or even required as in an IEP) and this is causing student behaviors to increase. The behaviors continue because there are no interventions that are happening on a regular basis because there isn't staff to implement them. Teachers are asked to do more and more (with academics and with SEL) and they are not being trained or given the resources to do so. Unqualified people are being hired to fill spots and those individuals are not receiving support on how to do the job they were hired for. All of the extra work that is not being done is falling on the veteran teachers. Teachers are no longer just teachers, they are performing the roles of counselors, nurses, parents, mentors, etc. all day. On top of that, teachers have become the scapegoats of education. All current problems in education seem to be based on the classroom and teaching. I feel that I am no longer supported by my principal or school administration. My colleagues and I are not heard.
Working conditions and salaries are falling more behind the pricate sector every day.
I like orking with the children , and the inconvenience of Covid hopefully will be over soon . Yes it is hard wearing a mask all day and only have it off when I eat my lunch. But I do my part even if it is nit easy cause I love my job and the children I work with . It will be nice when all this comes to an end .
Retirement seems more appealing
I have been at my school for nearly 30 years. It's my home/family.
I love teaching and have no plans to retire anytime soon, even though I am one of the older teachers in the school
Post-Covid challenges are impacting teaching, learning, behavior and SE health.
Love my job
I love teaching and I am glad to be working where I do.
On top of teaching through a pandemic the governemnt agencies and schook districts constantly add new responsibilities to our plates. Parents had usbteaching in their homes for a year and now feel empowered to tell us how to do out jobs. The state is also constantly pushing efforts to standsrdize a field that needs to be personalized and human. All combined the oandemic has showed us how little society values us our skills, and our education.
Teachers continued to be asked to do more and more and worry more and more... but also get kids to pass mcas, deal with rotten parents and out of touch admin.
I do not plan to leave my school district until I retire in 10-15 years.
we were required to learn a new platform, canvas, via zoom. then, we had to teach via zoom, with problematic internet. upon student return, students were significantly lower academically, emotionally, could not work independently, and had little problem solving skills and perseverance .
Teachers in our district are feeling very discouraged, insulted, and unappreciated. Those that do more are expedited to continue to do more and those that don't do not get or feel any repercussions. We are in a negotiation year and not being offered anything. We are being expected to add more time to our day with less compensation. We don't even fall in the middle of Berkshire County Salary schedules as it is. With cost of living rising and asking us to do more with no compensation is insulting and pushing others to look elsewhere.

Between the behavior issues, covering classes because there are no subs, mask mandates being dropped and the general stress of teaching and having my test scores questioned I am not sure if I can do this much longer
I feel unsafe in my classroom due to people not in my room deciding that students can be unmasked in there while singing and playing instruments in a poorly ventilated room. There is increasing pressure to simultaneously make everything about diversity, equity and inclusion while also being pressured to avoid telling students that racism is real. Everything has become politicized and I feel caught in the middle. Even basic safety and germ theory are politicized and I feel like my safety and my ability to protect my students is being ignored.
Lack of communication, lack of effective leadership, equity among staff, more being piled on with less time, resources, and effective and consistent training.
Nothing as changed for me!
Having an extremely supportive principal is the most significant thing that prevented me from leaving the profession in the fall of 2021. The other is enjoying the day-to-day work with students. It's been challenging to find other redeeming qualities of the profession, especially for the pay, outside of summers "off".
I love what I do
Absent staff and almost non existent subs causes extreme stress at a support level. Teachers are not pulled to sub for other teachers but support staff are pulled and moved around constantly. Children have so many more behaviors and stress now that it is exhausting .
Crushing, overwhelming, unprecedented expectations/demands to teach remotely, in-person, or both at the same time. The looming fear of contracting COVID and it's possible deadly impact for us, our families and our students.
I'm exhausted every day. I feel so disrespected by parents and students.
Students are not the same - masks have made a huge impact on properly teaching sounds - they are dirty - kids have poor OT/PT skills their social skills are poor and we teachers are being asked to do more - we claim that our mental health is important- but being held to the same standards as in the past - with kids that are 2 years behind is impossible. Administration needs to let us navigate this the best way we can! Let us!!
There is lack of support for the high need for the students and burnout is high
Extreme demands on teachers to help students with academic and social emotional issues. Teachers also need mental well being.
The job is insane, and way too much for one person to do alone. Meaning I am a classroom teacher who NEEDS A FULL TIME paraprofessional to stay in this profession. I have never in my life thought that I would feel like leaving this profession, but the demands with the effects from the pandemic, NEW curriculum (what the heck, and WHY), and the turn over rate of people leaving is all encompassing. What the heck is happening, and why do we not listen to teachers? Just get more administration to solve the problem...ha!! How about equipt each classroom with 2 teachers. The huge gap in learning is so obvious, and so hard for teachers to try an differentiate with NO TIME FOR planning, correcting, assessing, counseling, preparing, nursing, and caring for these children. I am a teacher, not a judge, or a nurse, or a behavior specialist, or a lawyer, or a detective, or an expert in parenting, or media specialist for gosh sakes!! I am exhausted, frustrated, anxious, and literally just keeping my nose above water. However, I love my kiddos. And that is why I am still here, but man is it hard...it is so hard, so draining. Just trying to survive and keep the faith. Thanks for listening!
Being on the front line and teaching in a pandemic is very difficult. Many other jobs pay better and seem much less stressful.
I am too far along in my career and invested in my retirement to stop now.
As much as I love what I do and who I do it with, right now I feel ineffective as an educator. We are dealing more with behaviors and less with academics, and even though that is important, it is exhausting and draining.
I have a retirement date in mind and am sticking to it
I love my work!
I'm burned out and would like a break, although I will likely return to teaching in a few years
I love my job and the students
I'm only 7 years from retirement. Leaving would be foolish.
Administration has lost touch with day to day classroom management as parents have become less involved in making kids understand they are not the bosses in a school. Anyone with a varying opinion is instantly labeled. Colleagues are not trust worthy. Everything is a compromise on a teachers behalf (even dicipline).

Only because I am retiring sometime in the next few years
Each year, student needs increase, but there is no more time given for preparing for classes. Our district is small enough that almost every teacher is required to teach more than 2 different/distinct classes. It seems that we are being asked to do more each year, but we are not given any additional time or resources or support. It is not sustainable.
I decided to retire early. The stress of being a classroom teacher is too high right now. The sheer volume of work and both emotional and mental regression of student health is too much. No matter what you do it isn't enough to overcome the issues students are facing right now.
The current demands of educators is at an all time high, and the respect for our position from our communities is at an all time low. It does not feel as if I am able to do the work I was hired to do.
I thought that the stressors at that time would end shortly
Classroom teachers have been treated horribly. Administrators do not protect us. I have no faith in the superintendent of this district.
No support from administrators, students control the building, lack of consequences for students
We keep anticipating that things will get better, but so far they haven't. I'm starting to lose patience with waiting.
With the lack of a full staff. Many students are not getting what they need for support. This is very frustrating and stressful to the students and staff.
I am on the cusp of retirement and leaving within the next two years would significantly affect my retirement income.
I had been working towards a teaching degree prior to the pandemic. The amounts of stress that I have had to endure on a daily basis, within the workplace and outside of it have left me to postpone my educational goals. I am also a father to two young children. One of which is not eligible for the Covid-19 vaccines that are currently available. As a parent and educator I have seen the tolls of this pandemic affect many families to include my own. It is still my hope that the levels of stress diminish as time passes and as this pandemic becomes endemic that it may still be possible again to resume my educational goals and in turn not only to better help myself and my family but to better continue to support my colleagues and the community of which I serve.
To be honest, I'm tired and ready to do something less stressful.
I am looking to retire. I simply can not keep up with the demands of job
I am not interested in doing anything other than teaching and being a support to help students become strong members of the community and in their lives.
When we came back to school after the closures, I had extra work but we weren't allowed much time in the building after school. Because of that, I fell further and further behind in maintaining and curating the library. Now, I'm not sure how I'll ever catch up.
Teaching has been incredibly stressful as we continue to redesign curriculum. Changes to policy and procedure have been stressful and inconsistencies in follow through is frustrating.
I have a lifelong passion for teaching. I am not leaving the profession just because some parts of it have gotten stressful.
I am too young to retire, but do so without hesitation if I was at all close. I have been considering looking for employment outside of teaching.
I love my job.
I don't see myself here 2 years from now.
I don't really think I'd make the choice to leave teaching but, for the first time I think about other options often.
The parents are taking all their frustrations out on teachers. Zoom. Hybrid back and forth send work home learn canvas. The changes we've adapted to are endless.
I enjoy my work and my kids. I also feel that my school and the principal have done everything humanly possible to keep all staff and students as safe as possible.
I plan to retire from teaching in order to collect my pension.
I feel extremely fortunate to be at Morris during the time. I feel supported by my BUILDING administrator. Lenox is my home. I am a Lenox graduate, student taught at Morris, and earned my dream position 4 years ago. Of course the profession has its ups and downs, and the last 2 years have been extremely stressful. But where I am, the pros outweigh the cons.

This has been the most difficult year teaching in my entire career
The teaching profession delivery of education has changed. More is expected of us because of the use of technology. Though I have improved and grown with my technology skills, there are time I would like to slow down the pace.
I love my job even when it's stressful.
Not only am I creating new curriculum content for each day, each class, we are expected (and appreciate having to) to incorporate SEL into those new plans. Students are out and we're not sure if it is vacation or illness. We can't ask. Do we 'fault' them or 'not grade' them? No one has the right answers. Our administration isn't clear, our administration seems out of touch with being in the classroom and in seeing how the kids actually 'work.' We need to prepare them for college but all sensitivities are high. The older the child, then less motivated they seem, OR they are ultra motivated. High schoolers have eating disorders, so many kids have anxiety. Teaching is far more than providing lessons on the subject "I teach." This is the hardest year of my career. I feel like I had held myself together well for the first 1.5 years but now I am tiring. Now I need the same sort of attention the kids need but we are asked to give more, do more, change grading software, work with Rediker and Canvas - but which one at which time? AND our building is crumbling, out of date and the repairs are slow, at best, in resolving. We need acute care, not just the students, but also the faculty and the building. Attention needs to be offered to allowing us to take care of ourselves so that we can come to work friendly, happy and able to give the students what they deserve. Happiness is born of trust within a community, one that helps one another and feels heard and listened to.
I have 10 years until retirement but if I could leave earlier I would. The stress and the added technology push has been difficult.
I would say somewhat unlikely- somewhat likely. Education has become more stressful because of changes in the students, which in turn makes it more stressful on the staff. There are days where it seems like what I do doesn't matter, so why be there. However, I enjoy the kids and helping them. There are mixed feelings in my thinking.
There is too much emphasis on bias training which is causing divisiveness, and not enough stress on services to help students with academics. The culture from admin has changed to be political and not about the well-being of students.
The pandemic prompted me to reprioritize, and I am now aware of a deep desire to spend more time at home with my family. Also, the crushing weight of this post 2020 life, including George Floyd, Jan. 6, the pandemic in all of its iterations, and now Ukraine, has made it much more difficult to do the work well—both because of how I am feeling and how my students are feeling. I think Americans are feeling generally uneasy, which is an adjustment, and schools are well-equipped to handle the fall-out of that change.
I am exhausted. Teachers, in general, are being asked to keep up with the regular curriculum, make sure students are ready to take MCAS, deal with intense social/emotional behaviors throughout the day, and now teach new curriculum on top of the already packed curriculum. I have always felt supported and valued by our school committee. I don't feel that way anymore. We have new members on our committee, and a couple of those new members have completely changed the culture. It feels like a "them against us" mentality now. There are talks of budget cuts in the area of staff, cutting valuable resources for our most at-risk students, hiring "younger teachers" so we can pay them less. New HR scrutinizes every penny and questions personal/sick leave. The culture in our district has changed I don't feel valued.
Somewhat unlikely because I've just begun working toward official licensure and certification. I've been working on an Emergency License.
lack of support/leadership (especially in the face of out-of-control students and unreasonable parents) has increased enormously
The building infrastructure is literally crumbling. Children require far more individual help and time post pandemic, yet our student workload has not been decreased in the slightest. Almost no attention appears to be put on reducing stress or workload for teachers besides platitudes. Meditating for a minute in the morning does not give me the additional time that I need to work with students in need.
I still enjoy the teaching part of school, even with the extra stress we have been feeling over the past two years.
My job has become so much more stressful, negatively impacting my health and wellbeing
The educational and SEL needs of my students outweigh my ability to support them and their willingness to help themselves.
Teaching has become much more challenging and I am worn out from it.
I was self-employed for the last two years and have just entered teaching at a public school once again. 1111
I am close to retirement. I need to stick it out. If money were not a factor I would retire at the end of this school year.
It has become much harder to see this as a life-long career. The stresses are too great and the lack of support too little.

I feel very fortunate to teach in Lenox. We have the financial resources necessary to teach our curriculum, a great staff, and wonderful students who are respectful and hardworking. I have worked in other districts where student behavior and classroom management take up the majority of a teacher's time. Violence in the hallways and classrooms cause anxiety for staff and students. In these districts there is often a lack of funds for activities and or curriculum and student supplies. It is very easy to burn out in these districts. I know that teaching is my calling and I am fortunate to work in a place where I feel valued and successful.
Business office is much less supportive than ever. Making it difficult for teachers to feel supported.
I would have stayed in education both years.
I love what I am doing and am willing to roll with the uncertainty that exists and will continue to exist in the future
I am the building clerk I call the substitutes. It has been very hard to find coverage. and has raised my stress level.
Being an educator has been a very stressful experience through this pandemic. It also showed how much of our public does not support educators and does not value all of the work we did to keep their students engaged. Overall, many teachers feel largely undervalued and feel that we are not supported by many community members.
I would NEVER leave education. My heart belongs to this field
The reason I choose that answer is because I have worked in the school system for 20 years and I feel the past couple years I have not been supported by administration.
the pandemic has little to do with the climate in my building
I've always loved my job but it has become increasingly difficult to do it well with the backlash from some community members and the perception of educators as a whole in our country.
I will never reach the 30 years as a public school teacher because of choices I have made to work on the college level for a number of years. There are so many issues now that I have no control over - staffing, lack of positive consistent leadership, and just plain exhaustion over our rolls every day and the mixed messages we receive on a daily basis, that I would like to leave the profession as soon as I can. I do love my students and colleagues and that keeps me going for now.
Very difficult year. I was not doing the role I was hired for. Instead of a school nurse I was a Public Health nurse and I had to involve myself in every aspect of a students home life. Also I was obligated to put in many hours that I was not recognized or compensated to do. I worked very early in mornings, and late after 3:30 and on weekends. I am not an administrator with this wonderful salary.
I am not tempted to leave education, but do feel the added stress post-pandemic. I believe it is not unique to our field.
I love my job.
I am too close to retirement to leave- I need to stay 5 years for this. If the MTA idea of buying 5 years/plus for age gets passed, then I would retire immediately.
Solely due to the pandemic and how things have transpired.
It was made very clear how little respect there is for educators during the pandemic. The hours we were asked to work and the workload we were expected to accomplish were both unreasonable. Test scores and data have been emphasized over human beings. Teachers are expected to care for ourselves last or not at all.
It is much harder to navigate parent and student attitude, behaviors, and expectations. It is less enjoyable than it has been in the years past.
I do not feel supported by our superintendent, or our school committee during a time in which teaching has never felt more stressful
This was my first year returning to work since taking an absence to be at home with my children so some of the changes I have observed may not just be due to the pandemic. However the instability of the year, frequently changing plans/expectations, while a continued emphasis on rigor and no movement at all by the state on standardized testing often seems untenable. I have also never known education to feel so politicized before, which is in itself exhausting. I love the classroom and the interaction with the students, but that somehow seems harder to get to and feel this year. The distractions of covid, masking policies and parental discontent have been more overwhelming than ever.
I have a passion for my job and the children. Overcoming the new challenges and hardships are worth it.
I never imagined that I would work in an environment where I would also be required to enforce social distancing and mask wearing. The social emotional impact on students, families and staff have been enormous. Helping families deal with this as well as keeping my family healthy and my own mental health has compounded the stress of an already stressful job. Lack of consistent support from the school committee has left me feeling unappreciated. I struggle every day with maintaining my positive energy in a very negative world. I have looked into pursuing other careers at the moment.

I don't feel supported by our school committee. I feel like they blame teachers for everything that went poorly during the last two years.
The workload for teachers with the added social emotional stressors, has increased dramatically. Simultaneously support from administration has disappeared and turned into just talk. Lots of emails are sent about self-care but not time or resources are provided for it.
Teaching has become way more stressful over the past two years and I feel less supported now than I ever had before by administration and higher ups. It feels like we are fighting this fight alone.
I have been teaching for nearly 30 years. This is my life.
I am just plain tired, the students already there gaps have increased dramatically as well as their inappropriate behaviors and lack of effort.
The fear of getting sick and the stress of being a teacher has changed drastically
The support for teachers feels slim to nonexistent. The behavioral issues in students have gone beyond the abilities for public education staff and programs to address. It is no longer about lighting the fire of education, it is simply about filling a pail and meeting certain standards and checking off boxes. These past school year, 2021-2022 has been exceptionally challenging and has caused so many individuals, particularly ones in the beginning of their careers to question their reasoning and to question whether or not they will remain in the profession.
Our pay in some cases is comparable to that of an employee at McDonalds. We are tasked with the safety and wellbeing of children, many of whom have learning disabilities or other diagnoses, at the cost of our own health and that of our family.. The cost of living continues to rise; housing is difficult to come by, and when you find it, you can't afford it; gas prices are rising exponentially, making it expensive to even drive to work. This is all so we can go to a job where we are not compensated for being frontline workers despite the MANY hats we are required to wear when we're in the building, and so we can be belittled by parents and micromanaged by people who rarely step foot in a classroom and instead sit safely behind their office doors. Our pay has never been equal to the time we put in or the duties we carry out, but since the pandemic began, we are consistently tasked with more and more responsibilities, but receive less in return. We are here for the kids, which is why most of us keep coming back, but when we could earn more money to pay for increasing living costs, by somehow working less hours and having less responsibility...that becomes tempting when a solution isn't in sight.
Working in this environment is rewarding. Cannot afford to exit position.
The amount of love I have for my job and being a school nurse outweighs the stress.
I like my position.
I was retirement age but planning to work until June 2025
Students have lost a lot of educational progress due to a poor decision of interrupting education, student behaviors have dramatically increased for the worse due to lack of supervision while left to their own resources with parents working and school "closed", student's academic responsibility severely damaged due to COVID years not holding students accountable for their work and/or grade requirements
The deficits we are now being asked to "fill in" while we are covering the current standards is overwhelming. In addition, students are used to be pushed through (passing without doing any work) and do not seem to want to take an active role in their education.
Since the pandemic we have constantly been asked to do more and more and more with less support and a great deal less respect for our professional opinion. At this point I feel as if I am just a "body" that is ordered around to provide basic coverage
Being in such a stressful, thankless job is not worth it.
If early retirement was offered, I would consider it, as I am currently the primary caregiver for my elderly mom and this era of covid concerns me as I see the entire school population in pK-5 every week.
You get to a point, you've no longer got career options. You're "all in" until you retire. Sad to say, I no longer have a choice.
These last two years have been overwhelming. And although we are told to take care of ourselves, not much has been done to take things off our plates/support us.
I'm retirement age anyway.
The struggles with the home environment, socialization, norms, issues beyond students control, and lost skill sets around a variety of subjects has been very difficult for everyone in education, to include the students, with little supports in place.
I like my job. I signed up for it and all that comes with it.
I have a hard time pinpointing exactly what has changed. I believe that the negativity in the building sets the mood.

Teaching profession job satisfaction has been steadily declining well before the pandemic. US society devalues and villainizes teachers and the weight of responsibilities has gone well beyond a mid-level teacher's expectations going into the field.
I actually love my job 1000% more BECAUSE of the pandemic. Without boring you, as a result of going Zoom and then coming back in person, I received a new perspective on student relations (I am not in conflict as before) and I have my own cart, laptop, and projector which has enabled me to design and implement a much improved curriculum. I love my job more than ever.
Teaching has become really difficult because the students and families seem to be considered "customers" that must be pleased at all costs v. learners that respect educators. Behavior issues and cell phone abuse are also huge problems and make teaching very unpleasant a lot of the time.
Feel very underused and not appreciated
I do not plan to leave my job right now or based on stress.
I've got too many years in education to leave now, but if given the opportunity to go back in time I would have chosen a different career path. .
In my opinion the pandemic is being used as an excuse for poor student behavior and work progress. I understand that some may suffer from underlying conditions, however nothing beats a good education. And when we are forced to "pass" all students we are paving the way for a very unsuccessful future for them and our country.
I love what I do, it is part of who I am, I love my profession and being a teacher.
Administration and School Committee are not supportive and teachers are not valued at this point in time; which is a true hardship since when I began in this district the level of professionalism, respect for all positions valued and staff were respected.
the amount of work everyone is doing for the amount of pay is ridiculous. People feel underappreciated at times and student discipline is not addressed. Everything is social and emotional and student's play that card too often rather than accepting they've done something wrong and there should be a consequence.
struggling with burnout, feeling overwhelmed, wanted to move from para to teacher role but now unsure
The day is heavier, students face many trauma related challenges. I've never had to have so many grief conversations with students before covid.
I do not plan to leave my job, even though it is more stressful. We need subs.
I'm just feeling so unappreciated, the public complains that we are lazy, our administration acts like we should just be grateful for the chance to have these jobs but they aren't grateful for us.
The pandemic is extremely hard in schools.
All I have ever wanted to do is teach. I wouldn't give this up for the world Even though COVID did a job on me. Very depressed
stress and lack of staff
Stressful job, but no intent on leaving -- unless I will the lottery!
I enjoy teaching.
Behavior and supports
Feel there is no recognition when going above and beyond especially when short staffed
I changed achool districts this year due to stress
My motto is that with any problem whether it be personal or professional life, a problem can be an opportunity for the positive change.
I'm hoping to retire in the next 3 years.
I like working with the children and try to make a difference in their lives. I like working
I need to retire to much worry about some one's mask or distance or getting sick over sharing a paper .
The last two years have been very challenging and although I am most likely not leaving the teaching profession in the next two years I have started to consider it. I have to admit I have checked out my retirement status more than once since the pandemic has started.
I am near retirement... not because of impact from Covid

I enjoy my job and would like to work as long as I am able but for health reasons my husband is considering relocating to a more moderate climate
i need financially need this job. I look forward to make a difference in peoples lives.
I love working with the children , some times this is their safe place and I ant them to feel comfortable and safe with me .
Starting to feel students are in control
because I love working with the students and I love my school community
I am close to retirement.
I am nearing retirement, love teaching, but have not been happy with many administrative decisions that have directly affected my job and the ability to do it effectively. Too many admin people without the experience or knowledge to make the decisions that are often being enforced top down. Way too many admin people and less people actually working hands on with students.
I love what I do, and I plan to continue teaching until retirement age.
It is not worth the daily stress
I continue to feel passionately about public education and will continue to fight.
Expectations are so high that it is hard to receive good feedback. Students are lacking social skills that makes behaviors more frequent and harder to wean out. Students speak poorly to each other which creates an unsafe learning enviornment at times.
While the stress of adjusting to changes due to Covid is real, I'm more frustrated with teacher's lack of interest in their students needs and interest in bettering their own education.
I like my job - I like the school that I work at. I like the supportive staff . I like the grade level that I teach.
I moved to Dalton in the fall of 2021 and began working in the Pittsfield School District. I have never worked in a school district that provided such limited direction and resources for teachers to support their students academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. I will be leaving the Pittsfield school district in June and I hope that I will not have to leave teaching all together.11
I need to get in more years of my Mass. Teachers Retirement before leaving.
The lack of support from the district and parents as well as the excessive expectations has really made me question whether I want to continue in the field. I work 10-14 hours daily and mostly on weekends. The salary doesn't even come close to amount of work and effort that I do on a daily basis!
There are long standing issues within the education field that would cause me to leave the profession, unrelated to the stressors caused by the pandemic.
Staffing issues have removed prep and follow through with ongoing feelings of inadequacy.
I am not happy with the political agendas that are being pushed through the public schools. I feel like teachers and parents do not have a voice in what they are seeing with their child's education in regards to curriculum, SEL, Diversity and Inclusion, etc. Discussions NEED to happen.11112
Classroom teachers have enough to deal with on a daily basis. Now add COVID restrictions, changes, inconsistencies in COVID policies to the list of concerns. TEACHPOINT should not be another thing to be concerned about.
Educators are overworked, do not receive support from administration, and are schools are understaffed.
I would never leave these kids that need me, but it does get old being the only one in your building that will step up when something needs to get done, which makes for 18-20 hour days, even on the weekends.
I am not at all close to retiring
My job is really tough and sometimes unsafe with the staff shortage.
Administration is not supportive of the new needs students are facing with regard to missing two years of a normal school experience. These students are facing severe social problems and lack the skills to interact in a social environment due to learning in a basically solitary environment. The gap in education is a struggle. A struggle to meet the state expectations. We are instructed to continue as if the pandemic didn't happen; however, students have not fully learned prior educational skills in order to be successful in their current year.
It's the only thing I've done so I won't leave the profession but I could easily leave this district.
Lack of teacher support, class sizes too large, no special education support, extra testing to track gaps in learning, scripted lessons, piecemeal learning

This school year behaviors are up, support is down and the ever changing Covid rules makes things anxiety producing
too many requirements put on teachers, not enough on parents
Covid has presented new stressors for educators, but teaching was already extremely stressful due to the unreasonable demands and negative attitude toward teachers that have prevailed in recent years. I
It's time for a new challenge for myself.
The difficulty of fulfilling my duty and covering for the staff shortages has been extremely stressful and the low pay rate that we receive is insulting.
The teaching profession has been devalued over the past few years by our political leaders. Teachers are given more to do with less funding and less resources. We are over-scrutinized based on test scores and not based on effective teaching. The teaching profession is becoming another political hot button issue where it should not be. The pandemic only made things more stressful because the "self-care" teachers are supposed to have access to is just another stupid faculty meeting with useless information.
While I love what I do, teaching is a lot of stress and the salary isn't keeping up with the cost of living.
I don't think that I will ever leave teaching until I retire, but I cannot predict the future. I still enjoy teaching because it is rewarding, but if things don't change, I am not sure.
I am finding it harder and harder to pay bills on my current salary. Our salary does not match our work and I am tired of needing two and three extra jobs just to survive. I have a masters degree and have been teaching for over 20 years.
same problems as before but with COVID on top
There is a lot more pressure today than two years ago. I don't feel supported as much, yet expectations are increasing. Expectations from the DESE down to Administration down to faculty and staff. I feel more is expected of us, and I feel it is becoming harder and harder to do my job (which should be the opposite with the experience I gain every year).
I cannot retire for another 10 yrs
Teachers are continually asked to change hats and give more with very little recognition. Kids are changing, parents are changing, and it's just getting more and more difficult to do the job and feel like you are making a difference.
I have invested too much time and money in my own education to consider leaving the profession to switch careers at this point in my life..
I found this position and really enjoy it.
teaching is not teaching anymore - its about pleasing people- we have to be so much more than a teacher- its run like a business and not run for the kids and their needs- we don't get paid enough
I am tired.
Things were not handled well in terms of the pandemic. Administration is not understanding or helpful regarding safety issues or the reality that kids are lacking many skills.
I will be retiring within the next ten years and am not considering leaving the profession.
I love my job and working with the children. I feel like I am making a difference.
Burning out from the staff shortages, the students' behavior, and the overwhelming times
There are a myriad of factors at play, including: PTSD from having to teach in bizarre conditions on Zoom last year, feeling pressure to keep students learning the same things as we would in a normal year even though they lost a year of normal learning, fear for my own health, the feeling that our administration is not looking out for our best interest, frustration with public education, increasing demands on teachers but no increase in pay to make up for it, worries about decreasing enrollment, etc.
I started in education as a second career, so I am not interested in changing careers for a third time. I am frustrated on certain days and about certain aspects of my job, but overall I am satisfied as an educator.
stressful working conditions, lack of a livable wage, the loss of three hours pay for every half day of school.

APPENDIX B: Q12 NARRATIVE STAFF SURVEY RESPONSES

I want educational leaders in Berkshire County to know THIS about working in public education at this time:

Q12
At this time we need to come together and find a way to support our teachers and support staff. We can't keep looking at data like the MCAS and Benchmarks when we have students drowning right now. Not only are students drowning but so are staff. We are overextended to which we cannot perform our full duties and in turn hurt our students. We need to have higher compensation and more supports.
It sucks.
teachers need more support in every capacity - more compensation, more respect, more time to do the job with less new initiatives. Teachers need to be treated as professionals rather dispensable employees.
Working in public education has become demoralized throughout the pandemic and all of the changes that have happened due to remote teaching, hybrid teaching, students being at home, parents having to assume more school-day responsibilities, etc. Working in public education used to be seen as educating the youth of America, but now it feels more like we are acting as babysitters who are trying to correct misbehaviors and navigate students through and around trauma-based responses to every stimulus.
Results on standardized testing is my lowest priority. I work to empower students and help them gain skills that will be effective on these assessments but those final outcomes are really not helpful since they are used to compare one group of students versus another group in a different year rather than track the progress of those students throughout their careers in school.
Right now our kids are struggling socially/emotionally. They need direct instruction in how to be a student again, how to be a contributing community member, how to be kind to each other. While there was academic learning loss during the pandemic, none was so severe as the social/emotional learning time that our kids lost. Trying to balance this with academic teaching time is a difficult task, and we're under a constant assault by community members who do not know what it is like to be in education or in a classroom. We need to figure out how to regain our high expectations, including holding students accountable for their own learning, while also supporting them socially/emotionally. To do this, we need the support of our administration and we need the resources to do our job well.
I would like more consistency - not need initiatives or curriculum. My current goals include perfecting the materials/practices I have. We need time just to settle into the current state of education, not try a collection of new things.
I would like to see teachers and staff and visitor to teach kids what they supposed i see teachers yell at kids for breakfast coolers aren't out side on time or not giving proper care of coolers in there classroom the stings are stretched to far and all adults visiting or working in the school's either have big conversation in hallways taking up the hallways even when you ask accuse me please and there's teachers or staff that would be get infront of you while you are carrying heavy stuff and say there more important but then slowly walk up the stairs
We are providing a necessary service for the community. Without teachers no career would be possible. We are underpaid, underappreciated, and not respected. It bothers me that we are required to obtain a masters and continue our education indefinitely yet we are paid less than a middle of the road wage. My son-in-law makes more money than me as an apprentice lineman (with 6 months training) than I do with 12 years experience and a masters.
Being over worked and under paid really upsets me.
Teachers are struggling! We are being asked to meet the same expectations (such as MCAS) that were in place prior to COVID. The post-COVID world is a different place, and many of our students are unable to meet prior standards due to emotional issues or due to learning gaps that resulted from the pandemic. Many suggestions that come to us from leadership are just band aids for a gaping wound. I have students whose lives have been permanently altered during the last two years. How can I ask them to meet the academic expectations that I had three years ago?
The number of students with trauma or mental health issues has increased significantly. There aren't enough services in the community to help these students.
Teachers face criticism from everyone - parents, administration, the public at large. Students are more emotionally impacted by the pandemic, making the strain of teaching them more burdensome in that we first need to provide for their overall emotional wellbeing and growth. These stressors (not to mention personal stressors related to the pandemic) are making teaching particularly challenging.

<p>It's very frustrating to have constantly shifting expectations for lesson plans, classroom practices, etc. We are in a constant state of trying to meet ever-shifting goals and it is infuriating to see teachers refusing to meet any of the expectations, so the expectations change to accommodate their refusal instead of someone, anyone, working to mentor them into some semblance of competence as educators. We have so many teachers who need support that there are not enough administrators to make it happen, and not enough accountability in the system in general. Classroom teachers feel like we do nothing but fail. I work harder than I have ever worked before and there is no value of any kind placed on my work. We do get occasional candy in our mailboxes with a little note, which is completely impersonal and insulting. This is a miserable, thankless, horrible job. I used to love teaching. Now I have weekly therapy and medication just so I can keep showing up, because my family cannot afford for me to be unemployed. It's not just because of the pandemic, but the pandemic made it all worse.</p>
<p>I work with veteran teachers who say that this is the most challenging school year of their career. We keep showing up because we care deeply about our students, but were are exhausted. We do not feel supported or recognized for the work we actually do. We do not feel heard when we express real concerns about the safety and mental health of staff and students.</p>
<p>Teacher trauma is a real thing. Over 40% of us are on meds for anxiety and/or depression and the evaluation system is anxiety producing and disheartening. I am a veteran teacher and I am done</p>
<p>It is extremely stressful and hard to get through each day. Burnout is a very real thing right now and most staff if not all are feeling this way. Child maladaptive behaviors are noticeably a lot higher now than before the pandemic. These kids need more support but all of us adults are spread thinner than the very little money we get doing this job.</p>
<p>Teachers feel defeated. It is as if the weight of the world is on our shoulders. We are expected to fix everything that is wrong in society and to do this, more and more just keeps being put on our plates. The balancing act is cracking and any day now, the whole system will finally break. DESE had a chance to reform education to the needs of students in the 21st century when we were forced to reinvent education overnight. They dropped the ball and reverted back to 1990s educational standards despite students needing different paths to be successful (yes I am referring to MCAS/state testing/accountability during a pandemic). We need flexibility to ensure our students get what they need but feel the pressure to get through the curriculum because the state is still issuing "report cards" letting us know what we still aren't doing enough.</p>
<p>I do not need gifts of candy. I do not need advice about self care. I need more support on the daily in my classes, I need to be believed that I'm working hard and care about my students, and I need to feel like you hear me.</p>
<p>Its about the kids</p>
<p>We're in the middle of a crisis. Help us!</p>
<p>Please no more micromangement</p>
<p>It is no longer a fulfilling job. The stress levels I am currently experiencing have effected every aspect of my life. I now have medical issues directly related to the stress of this job and I am actively searching for alternative employment.</p>
<p>We are all very stressed out.</p>
<p>We need to focus less on where students should be and more on where they are. We need more RTI -Tier II happening in classrooms with universal supports for all students where they are.</p>
<p>We are allowing a few students to ruin the learning experience of the rest of class. Way to many demands put on teachers that should be put on parents.</p>
<p>It's way worse in other states, but the pressure from those other effects are still having an impact here. It is very much NOT a case of the grass is greener in other districts. It's a matter of "is it worth it to remain a teacher at all"?</p>
<p>We are human being with emotions and needs. Expectations need to be "evaluated" with a degree of understanding considering working conditions they are asked under.</p>
<p>Its more like babysitting than actually teaching</p>
<p>YOU NEED TO PAY PARAPROFESSIONALS and BEHAVIOR TECHNICIANS a LIVEABLE WAGE</p>
<p>What looks good on paper is not always the best for our students or staff to do their jobs.</p>
<p>While a challenge, I feel if we can provide a unique and powerful experience that teachers the individual we will be setting ourselves up for success.</p>
<p>we are understaffed under supported and the kids run the school with no consequence</p>
<p>I would not recommend people choose teaching for a career. It literally gave me a heart attack last year.</p>
<p>Smaller class sizes along with dedicated, smart and talented staff makes all the differences on student achievement and the joy of learning!</p>

Teachers are showing up everyday, doing our best to serve each and every student where they are at.
maybe it's time they stepped back into some classrooms to see how things are really going from a teacher's perspective instead of continuing to send out surveys with pre-selected responses that can't possibly accurately convey how things really are in our buildings.
I want educational leaders in Berkshire County to know that we need to place more emphasis on student accountability.
It feels like many people are working in isolation in order to address issues, but changes need to happen on a large scale. There's a lack of consistency and our students sense this.
It is stressful and we need more de-stress techniques and check-ins
ITS HARD!
although there are tough days, the rewarding weigh out the tough.
I believe a lot of teachers just want recognition for all of their hard work and time.
Being an educator now requires us to work closely with mental health providers and bring emotional supports into our every day teaching. We can't say, "that's not our job. It may not be our expertise but it is going to have to be in order to survive as an educator supporting the current needs of our students.
There is not enough time to prepare lessons/activities during the work day!!!!
I love it but I am burnt out. We deserve a raise. We worked through the pandemic just like people in the medical field. We are one of the only fields that did not receive any kind of bonus.
It's really challenging and there is so much asked of us.
The challenge is that parents and students are disrespectful and disdainful to faculty and administrators. Makes it very difficult to teach subject matter.
All teachers want to make a difference, but we need more support. Kids are feeling disconnected and need help feeling motivated. They need more opportunities to feel a sense of community than the classroom alone can provide.
These past two years have been absolutely exhausting, and the hardest in my 32 year teaching experience. The state is SO out of touch with continuing MCAS, as we're trying to shove above grade level down the throats of children who haven't had a "typical year" in 2 years.
Everyone is feeling the stress, and we are all doing the best we can.
Let's continue on as we are while also going back to the basics like addition facts and taking time to read actual at level texts.
We deserve a public apology for the paranoid and harmful mitigation practices that were put into place. You were wrong, please say so.
Working in public education right now is so incredibly stressful and demoralizing for teachers. We are burnout!!!
It is stressful, exhausting and like you are treading water just barely keeping your head above water. It feels as though we are underappreciated by the community, everything is our fault and we are expected to do what should be done at home. There is always the expectation that we should and will do more. Teachers are exhausted and burnt out and I would not recommend teaching to anyone at this point.
My biggest worry is the "outing" I have observed happening to specific teachers across our nation. Especially with teachers who delve into sensitive subjects (racism, bias, comprehensive sexuality education, etc.), parents are attacking them PUBLICLY on social media and they are not always receiving the support of other families, district personnel, and colleagues. I think there needs to be an expectation put onto parents that they should be contacting their child's teachers directly with questions rather than skip-hopping over to twitter to post hateful, untrue, and ill-informed material. This hasn't happened to me, or even anyone in our district (that I know of, anyway), but those in public service are PUBLIC in a very different way these days than they ever have been. I am a person with a family who has made my life here; I don't want one assignment a parent misunderstood or doesn't agree with to ruin my reputation in the place I call home.
The public has become more demanding, impatient and everyone is entitled. Being a part of the frontline takes a lot more patience in dealing with many more difficult personalities.
is challenging and very important work that I feel lucky to be able to do.
Teaching during COVID is anything but normal, so business as usual is completely unreasonable. We understand the need for data, but students are not in a good place. Our first concern is their mental state which has taken a hit. While scores are important, their health is more so.

All I can say is that it is very different! I am worried about the younger students.
Schedule needs to change....not all HS classes need to meet every day.
So many children need to work on social skills. We need to have consistent expectations, limits and consequences.
While it is somewhat more stressful, please don't do anything to make even MORE stressful!
From the time out of school, the kids have some bad habits and/or missing skills and missing maturity. We need to repeat the basics of how to be a student.
It is stressful. Do not give us the association with doctors and lawyers and other professionals in our communities. We are not compensated in a similar manner nor are we regarded with as much respect.
A combination of difficult student behaviors, lack of parent accountability, and increasing 'paper work' that is not lesson planning has made it very difficult to feel valued.
Feeling even less appreciated during the pandemic.
There are too many demands from outside leadership like state government.
We come to work each day to give our best in a stressful time. We LOVE working with students and have their best interests in mind.
It is hard, the students are struggling, and teachers are tired. But we are doing everything we can for these kiddos and I am learning a lot to help benefit my students and myself for my future career.
88 minutes of prep time is not enough to prepare for 220+ minutes of teaching time, especially with 3 preps, labs, and refocusing from virtual back to in-person. This year is taking more work than my first year of teaching did.
It is important that there are clear expectations for teachers and students that are realistic. School climate is important and can be improved by a.) clear communication about school happenings b.) being intentional in planning staff activities for staff and c.) providing time for educator collaboration.
The number one, most effective intervention in helping kids is employing skilled teachers/para professionals. Listen to teachers.
There are not enough hours in the day to perform all of my required tasks to level of excellence and take care of myself and/or my family. I have no idea how I am going to be able to continue teaching and start another required master's program.
Almost everyone I work with is highly stressed, even damaged.
Trust teachers...ask our opinions. Look for guidance from those of us who know, love, and succeed at this job. Now is NOT the time for new initiatives and curriculum. We need support in the classroom to help provide as much as possible for the students who have so many holes in their learning from the last two years of interrupted teaching. The impacts of not enough support are weighing heavily on all of us. We are all stretched too thin. It is really too much to try to teach so many levels of learners with little support while also covering for lunches or recess when we have no substitutes.
More support is needed over the years for children with behavior challenges.
Our students are behind by two years. We are teaching 2nd graders kindergarten material. Getting children caught up has been a strenuous effort.
The administration is giving us more work to do, on top of teaching the students, but not providing us time to do such things.
It is challenging and overwhelming and support from leaders goes a loooooooong way. We need support on all fronts (disruptive students, you name it when need there to be support there).
This has been a very stressful year for students and staff.
Teachers need more support within the classroom. The academic needs are incredibly high. The spread of abilities is incredibly wide due to the lack of consistent educational expectations in the last two years. Children also lack the social skills that would have been learned if consistently in school, so classroom disruptions are constant. New curriculum programming was thrown at us this year, with no follow through from our curriculum coordinator as to how it is going (very poorly, by the way) when what was really needed was a year to focus on our students and not on learning new curriculum.
The some of the kids, especially those who were in middle school when the pandemic started are emotionally and socially behind. They need fewer interruptions to routines for testing and evaluations and more time to catch up to their expected stage in life.
It is a hard and time consuming job. If I don't have the backing of the leadership, then what do I have?
School nurses are vital to public education during a pandemic and always. Children must be healthy to be educated and must be educated to be healthy.
We're tired and we need more planning time and less pd to do our jobs well.

We need staff paying people more (especially paraprofessionals) is how to make this happen.
Everyone is doing the best they can and are educating and support students to the best of their ability.
I love my job and it has challenges but when a parent tells me how much progress they see and cry because they heard their child talk for the first time is the reason i do what i do
Educators want to be paid as professionals who can afford to live with the COLA of Berkshire County. Educators want benefits comparable to a Master Degree education level with benefits and protections comparable to other industries.
The job is stressful! Please listen to your teachers and staff, we are in the trenches and we know more about what happens within the school day than anyone. Talk to us, not at us! It is one thing to say "Take care of yourself." and it is another to actually do things that allow educators to take care of themselves. (i.e. Telling staff to take the weekend to themselves but having grades close on a Friday afternoon and expect everything to be ready for report cards on Monday morning at 8 a.m.)
The amount of work done each day has increased exponentially.
Many 5th graders are struggling with basic math facts. Many also struggle to write a complete sentence.
I want educational leaders in Berkshire County to know that teachers want to be recognized as the professionals we are. Empower teachers to take some risks, make decisions, and show their creativity based on what is best for our students. Let teachers use professional judgment as it relates to what and how we teach, along with managing our classrooms. Teachers aren't looking to be micromanaged.
I think that we are all at some point tired of the mask wearing ,even though it does help. I would like more support for all TA's not knowing enough about the children we work with which I think is wrong .We need to know what we are dealing with as well as the teachers . There is not enough support in this area for us .
I guess the non information of the illnesses or reason a child is out of school. I get the need for Confidentiality
Student behavior is out of control and there are few consequences
I love teaching! I understand and accept how much work goes into teaching effectively.
leave us alone and let us teach. micromanaging makes for MUCH worse teaching. we are dedicated professionals who know what is best. the role of administration is to support education by teachers, not to actively prevent us from doing our best job.
We are doing our very best with severe staffing shortages, a community of parents who are comfortable speaking negatively about us on social media, and our sense of unity is frayed.
Paraprofessionals are drastically underpaid for the major role they play in students lives
More explicit masking guidelines, when they change. Schools need more staffing/teachers. Smaller class sizes would be nice. More student support staff.
We are burnt out, exausghted, undervalued, underpaid, underappreciated, and our creativity/individuality is stifled. We are highly educated professionals who share the same goal of teaching students and helping them become productive members of our society. This is not a job that can be preformed by underpaid robots, so stop scing like that is what we are.
It's unbelievably difficult to balance our own stress, student stress, more and more detailed IEPs, rude students who are not held accountable for their grades or behavior and parents.
Students are struggling with appropriate socialization skills due to being taught remotely during the pandemic.
too much time is taken up dealing with explosive behaviors. it is not fair for students having to worry about their safety daily. move these explosive kids out of the classroom.
Value what you have
We are tired.
I'm working so hard. Please stop sending us articles about self-care. A bubble bath and cup of tea is not going to fix things. I need more time to plan and less meetings. When I raise safety concerns I want to have a conversation, not get brushed off. Many of us have done outstanding work during this- please acknowledge it. Please visit classrooms so you know what's going on and what the real conditions are.

<p>As educators, our job is not just to meet the educational needs of our students! We work hard to make sure that when each and every child walks into our classroom/building we are working to meet their emotional, safety, and physical needs as well. Before we can even ask them to pick up a pencil or read a book, we need to work on making sure they are in the right mindset to be in the classroom. After the past few years, this has proved increasingly more difficult. You have students coming in with trauma, anger, home issues, etc. Granted, this has always been something we have worked with a couple of students in a classroom, but not to this degree. Multiply this by ten or eleven students in a classroom and you have difficult challenges. Once you have achieved some sense of semblance, you may find a few minutes to get an actual lesson in. This is a lesson that you may have spent hours planning the night before only to have a few students available for learning. Those students, who are not struggling, are often having their learning disrupted by others behaviors. This leaves the teacher feeling less than adequate at times because he/she feels they have not done their job well. Teaching is a hard but rewarding profession, but as of late, things have shifted and it has become more difficult due to lack of support, resources, and staffing. The job has become less joyful.</p>
<p>We are human. We are impacted alongside the students and families we educate and support.</p>
<p>It's incredibly difficult. I've thought about changing careers often, and know teachers who have changed careers this year. It's also very difficult to untangle COVID-related learning loss from other factors when assessing students for special education, and it's challenging to get general education teachers and parents to understand this.</p>
<p>Teachers are exhausted from the mental and physical toll of teaching and living through the COVID Pandemic. We care about students and clearly understand that they have suffered academic and social emotional losses. Students need access to more mental health resources. Many students lost critical academic skills and need remediation of Reading, Writing, and Math Skills. Students need time and help with developing coping strategies as well as academic stamina.</p>
<p>We need more support and appreciation from the community.</p>
<p>It's not easy!!</p>
<p>It is extremely difficult and there is little to no support or appreciation</p>
<p>We are doing our best while treading water.</p>
<p>It is extremely exhausting right now. We need to get every elementary school teacher a paraprofessional in their classroom to help support teachers with this HUGE job. Teachers deserve an assistant to help them support the students within their room. This would solve so many problems, as well as provide teachers with an extra set of eyes and support. What we are seeing with students, and what is going on with students should not be put on ONE classroom teacher. We need help!! Give every teacher a paraprofessional. Use the covid money for that! Not for more PD people to come in and "talk to us 2 times" about gender. We need support!!! One teacher can not do it alone. The job is too big, and the students and families are changing.</p>
<p>Please place fewer expectations on teachers. They are doing so much to support their students!</p>
<p>I feel less able to pull myself out of difficult feelings and put them aside to focus on students needs than I have felt prior.</p>
<p>Everything has changed in the last 2 years and things need to be treated as such.</p>
<p>The amount of time and energy necessary to do this job well is incomprehensible. The gap in educational achievement and ability has grown immensely with the onset of the pandemic. I am dismayed at the lack of parental involvement and how little education is valued from parents and students.</p>
<p>Teachers work very hard to keep their students safe and on the right track. We do this with each and every student we work with. This is an amazing and exhausting feat and when students act out it beats us down. Though the job of a teacher is very rewarding, the struggle with it now is very real and disheartening. I believe we need more assistance in classrooms to support us in doing our jobs more effectively and help us help our kids. Remember, it takes a village to raise a child.</p>
<p>COVID time should NOT have been the time to change to a new curriculum. It's simply too much.</p>
<p>Education is wellness work and discovery, learning about each child's interests, and development. We are life coaches for all I believe at this time. Families are in need of much support and everyone is learning this "new normal" way of life. Lots of trauma.</p>
<p>Social promotion is doing some of our students a disservice. I understand keeping them with their peer group when we can, but blindly promoting them for multiple years is setting them up for failure when they can't access the curriculum. We need more supports in place for remediation and the intervention programs (math 180, read 180) are not aligned to the math and ELA curriculum.</p>
<p>The students run the school and make all the decisions</p>
<p>Mobile phone use in the classroom is the #1 deterrent to quality education.</p>
<p>True your teachers more and stop adding more and more responsibilities to our plates.</p>

The worry that there might not be a sub to cover your classes if you are out is real. Being a special subject teacher, it is much easier to be at school unwell than to be out of school. Planning for a sub is a really big deal when you're not sure they can handle what is left for them to do.
Everyone keeps preaching to support and respect teachers and administration down the board is the worst at honestly supporting their staff. They are good at telling us in meetings, but I've seen zero actual support in the 2 districts I've worked in.
In my 17 years working here, I have never seen so many students with socio/emotional problems and issues. The pandemic has made it even more of a problem.
This is not sustainable.
It's extremely difficult and now is not the time to add new initiatives or demands on teachers.
We too are recovering from a global pandemic in which we were asked to do the impossible, and rose to the occasion regardless. We are here because we care about our students, but it feels as if we are being pulled into a million directions with no reprieve. School climate and culture needs to be rebuilt so colleagues begin to trust and respect one another again.
The teachers are struggling, and pep talks and small gifts are not the answer.
It sucks. I feel like my life has been put into further danger as a teacher.
Education needs to change, I believe that students are not receiving the education they deserve
Leaders should not be focused on micromanaging things that are not necessary to run a school at this time. Leaders need to be focused on supporting staff with personal health as well as academic support. I am tired of stressing over things that normally wouldn't be an issue. I feel that there is no motivation of staff or students anymore. Every day is just another day of trying to get through. I miss the days of enjoying coming to work and feeling supported with what I am teaching. For too many years now, I have spent countless hours and my own dollars on creating curriculum and don't ever feel recognized as doing a good job. I have been in this profession for over 20 years and am at the stage where I am feeling burned out and maybe need a career change. I
It's hard. Teaching has always been hard, but the last couple of years have been unbearably so. The students are years behind - academically, socially and emotionally. We don't have the tools or training to address those needs, and all kids are falling behind while the expectations from teachers keeps increasing. All that paired with the backlash and pressure from society makes this an impossibly hard job right now.
We are one of the lowest paid vs other schools in the area. We are working very hard to compensate for the lack of unfilled positions. When challenging students present we are not being listened to by the District when higher levels of support are needed to help the students.
Please do not use the term "learning loss." If we are developing lifelong learners, their trajectory may have changed but their learning is merely on a new timeline. We should try to modify our understanding of the imposed (i.e., MCAS) timeline that was created in "normal" times.
It is not easy. We are tired of hearing the words "resilient and thinking outside the box". We are tired. We need real support, not just words.
The levels of social-emotional distress among the student body is of concern. I would like to see a way that cell phone use in particular be addressed in a more effective manner. The ability for students to be easily distracted by their use during the school day seems to have a impact on their ability to stay on task and complicates daily interactions between them.
It's an undeniable truth that many of us who've been teaching for a long time are looking toward an earlier retirement than we'd originally planned. What can we do to recruit new teachers and help us veterans perhaps make this transition? Our traditional model of hiring new teachers may need to be revisited. We should be co-teaching with new hires to make the job less intimidating and lonely, with fewer teachers throwing in the towel after a year. An expensive proposition that could pay off in the long run.
I am exhausted. I am doing the best I can but that does not seem to be recognized or appreciated by admin
The long term way to SOLVE the problems of the economic void and difficulties in the county are the responsibility of ALL cities and towns in the county. It is essential to the success of the progress of the county that all areas share their resources and value.
There wasn't enough staff before Covid. The idea of further staffing shortages is frightening.
teacher morale is at an all time low and most are feeling the effects of burnout
We are being pulled in many different directions. From closing learning gaps and making up for learning loss to trying to educate students on SEL. There is not enough time in the day to get it all done effectively. Some responsibilities need to be shared so it is not all on the classroom teacher.

We keep getting more responsibilities, breakfast in the classroom, Covid issues, mental health issues, DCF issues, trama, TOO MUCH ON OUR PLATE
Plain and simple- it is HARD! It feel like I am suddenly solely responsible for making everything better for students and families. It feels as if the pandemic provided families the opportunity to check-out of education. The lack of curriculum,clear expectations and support for teachers is at an all time low. I hear about Canvas and Teachpoint being utilized across the county, but where is the discussion and resources for consistent curriculum and instruction?
It is very stressful with ever increasing demands to meet student needs, complete necessary paperwork and manage legal, ethical and functional requirements of the work. Meeting the requirements of multiple stakeholders is increasingly challenging for school staff.
This is not the time to be concerned with standardized testing. We need to work on giving the students the supports they need to continue to grow.
We are not appreciated enough or praised. We constantly have higher up administration members critiquing us and pointing out what we do wrong. We need higher pay where people should not be working in our schools from 7-2:30 every day and then have to go to a 2nd job afterwards.
difficult
Staff shortages have caused those still working to take on more roles. Staff shortages have caused students with special needs to not have their needs met in the most fundamental of ways, in some cases. Some days it feels as if public schools are just a holding tank for children, as the fall out from the pandemic has turned education on its head. Staff is scrambling most days just to cover the most rudimentary tasks, such as specialist coverage, van drivers and more. Special education referrals are through the roof. There is not enough support for students or staff.
All of the different demands have increased and become overwhelming. I don't feel that we were truly able to meet the kids where they were and are because of constraints/demands at the state level. I wish we had approached this year very differently. Students are demonstrating such a wide variety of needs right now, both academic and emotional, that there is no standard or routine day. While I want quality curriculum and programs to pull from, it would have been helpful for teachers to have much more autonomy this year. There is no curriculum/test/grade level standard appropriately designed for students returning from a pandemic.
The current system is unsustainable.
It is thankless. It is stressful. School committee is working against us. The district has change so much. Inevitably things change but keep following XXXXX' directives and we will lose the XXXX edge. Accepting school choice throughout the year has great affects on existing students. Accepting too many creates larger classrooms and larger number of kids needing extra support. Then consider cutting staff- this is the recipe to have our school drop in its rankings.
It's a huge challenge but the reward of working with our kids and families doing a pandemic is been so incredibly rewarding.
We don't get compensated nearly enough for the hours that we put in. I work 60+ hours/week...easily. We are tired and under appreciated. Students are needier/less independent/more coddled than I have ever seen.
We need support from our leaders. The outside world has no idea what we have been doing inside out classrooms. I have never felt so disrespected by the public during as a professional as I have the past 2 years.
Positive leadership and a clear vision for the school is essential. So many teachers feel isolated and need guidance. The daily struggle would be easier if the entire team were trying to lift each other up. That being said, the accumulation of the last few years has been crippling at times.
The expectations and pace increase each year. Sometimes I wish we were allowed to be more creative with our teaching approach, rather than constantly pushing to meet mandates.
Invest in mental health resources and more counselors if you want staff and students to feel supported and quality learning to happen.
Teaching through the pandemic has been extremely difficult. The students are suffering on so many levels and we will be seeing the impact of this for years to come. Towns and school districts need to give the necessary resources to their schools and teachers.
I have seriously considered walking out of the the building twice this year during the school day because of administrative actions. I have over a decade until I retire but I cannot continue to teach if the stress continues to be this great.
It more challenging then ever more children with mental health needs that schools really do not have the resources to effectively help.
Teachers need to feel supported and appreciated now more than ever, especially by their leaders.
Working in public education at this time is extremely stressful. We struggle for kids to come in to school, stay focused/awake, and learn something each day. The students aren't motivated and some staff aren't motivated making each day harder to get through.

<p>Students are struggling in ways that are not being recognized unless you work with them every day... I'm not sure how to explain it but they are not remembering information in the same way. Also, parents seem less interested if their students attend school or do well. Absenteeism has made pacing and whole group instruction almost impossible- I've had to rethink how I do everything from day to day. Working with young children and not using facial expressions affects student learning and connectedness to community. Professional development should promote excellence in the subject matter that the teacher teaches at their own level and not always be about teaching students. For example, if I teach writing, I should be able to take classes at my own own level that make me a better writer- or mathematician, artist, etc. I would prefer to work and be compensated on my merit than by steps and having to pay union dues to groups that promote ideas that serve teachers over students and families... I mostly want leaders to talk to teachers individually and listen to what is really going on right now with students lacking memory/learning and how we need to focus on academics so they may build strong self esteem. We need smaller class sizes bc students need so much personal attention right now- they are not just behind with content and skills, but they do not know how to be students.</p>
<p>We are tired. We are underpaid and undervalued.</p>
<p>It is great in Lenox.</p>
<p>It's really impossible to be effective as a teacher.</p>
<p>We do not have enough support for all students to provide for their needs.</p>
<p>I can't speak to the county, only my building/district, where there is NO support for teachers who try to hold kids accountable and virtually NO leadership.</p>
<p>Major discrepancies between the treatment of union positions vs. non-union, non-administrative positions and fair pay practices including overtime. Highlights a need for training of administrators in Human Resources and Payroll practices. Some positions are left unprotected and vulnerable.</p>
<p>A large number of students are falling behind and have numerous emotional needs. Thus, working time per student has increased significantly. If educational leaders actually care about the well being of students, they should spend the money needed to reduce class sizes. Obviously, this costs money, but unlike useless platitudes, it would actually make a meaningful difference in the lives of teachers, students and the community.</p>
<p>Teachers are feeling the stress and anxiety, along with the students, so we need support to be at our best.</p>
<p>Daily stress negatively affects my ability to work with students, support colleagues, and continue to find my job fulfilling and enjoyable. When every day is a struggle, those who could help are struggling too, leaves me feeling defeated and looking for a change in profession.</p>
<p>Plunging ahead into "back to normal" has revealed gaps in student knowledge, understanding, and motivation. I have Honors 9th grade students who are unable to do the most simple Middle school math. I support them as much as I can, but there is a void that needs to be filled. We all acknowledge the gaps, but there needs to be a curriculum revamp to either clearly redefine educational goals/outcomes based, or support our students to help get them back to where they "should" be. I can only do so much in my own classroom. A coordinated effort needs to be made, but not put on the backs of educators. As classroom teachers, our shoulders are getting tired carrying the weight of our students needs.</p>
<p>It's hard for me to listen to the hypocrisy and outrage over masks from parents and blame schools for their children's mental health issues. I feel like someone needs to say we gave you a year home with your kids and you blamed us for all the issues they have now. Parents have no responsibilities anymore.</p>
<p>Increased use of technology is NOT the answer.</p>
<p>It's still challenging but kids need us!</p>
<p>We are all in this together. Everyone, in every profession is struggling. I am a music teacher. Personally the biggest struggle is beginning band. Trying to get kids started on wind instruments via Zoom was nearly impossible! this year is better because we are in person but not being able to see their faces creates a true roadblock to proper embouchure.</p>
<p>I am exhausted. It feels like when I am the most depleted I am now the least trusted, valued, or seen. I feel like I have been left alone to try my best to figure out how to help our students through this time and if decisions are made at the top, they aren't taking into account my professional expertise. I have taught for 9 years and before COVID I planned to do it until retirement. I now, at 30, am looking for a new career as I simply can't see myself being able to sustain this.</p>
<p>Students need us to demonstrate kindness, compassion, and empathy. They have experienced the loss of academic information, social skills, connections and friendships. Many are anxious and depressed. This impairs their ability to take in academic content at the pace and depth previously achieved. The emotional energy necessary coupled with the need for differentiated instruction depletes us. After 20 years of teaching, this is the most challenging time for me. I am fortunate that I love what I do, love my students, and love where I work. It keeps me going.</p>

their is NO Curriculum for education specialists!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Before you make changes ask the teachers.
Your teachers need support. We were given the impossible task of teaching in a hybrid setting during the pandemic. We were flexible and did everything in our power to reach as many students as we could during the pandemic. We did so many impossible tasks, as did our leaders, and we'd like to feel appreciated and heard. If you want to keep your teachers in your schools, do more to make them feel like what they have accomplished over these last two years is appreciated. Be transparent and supportive.
every position contributes to the education of each individual student.
Students and their parents are not always right. Guidance and teaching staff should be on the same team, not opposit ones.
All schools are short staffed at this time and administration needs to be more supportive. Lack of support from higher ups is what drives good staff out. There needs to be clearer communication between staff and students and more understanding from admin that we are working with what we have at this point in time.
I want the educational leaders to know how short staffed we are and that we are not supported by our administration.
district leadership seems more concerned with "appearances" and retaining their positions than creating schools that function effectively
We, as teachers, are struggling. We have so much pressure on our shoulders to do it all...the academics, the social emotional, the medical aspects, it's overwhelming. And with constant scrutinization from some community members and the negative attitude towards educators in our society it doesn't feel worth the mounting stress these days.
Working in public education has become more difficult and stressful during the pandemic. Politics has played a role in determining health and safety rules. Confidentiality has deteriorated and administrators have become more micromanagers.
Clearly, we are all exhausted. Our ability to work together has been impaired as we try to keep up with the changing norms each day and this has taken its toll on professional relationships. Our leaders don't seem to get along and we as a faculty feel that, which gives us the added burden of feeling isolated, unsupported, and having to carry the weight of "everything is going to be alright" on our own for our students. It's been a rough go. I'm sure the administrators have their own personal and interpersonal issues as well, but we need them to leave some of that at the door.
Really get to understand what it takes to run every job and how it has changed. What as a school, do they have for staff to go to who need extra support in the job or emotionally. There have been days where I cried because of the hours, pressure and work load of job which affected home life.
Communication and guidance are key to ensuring a positive enviroment for all!
It is challenging!
Teachers are under attack right now from all areas (students, parents, adminstration that is only concerned about cutting budet costs)and that is the opposite of what is best for students. Teachers are able to make students learn and grow when they receive support both parents and administrators. Teachers also need to be able to financially support their own familes otherwise they will need to find a new profession that allows them to do so.
It is tougher than ever and the demands are really high. I have many relatives and friends who are allowed to work remotely and treated like adults. We have been treated like children and criticized since the pandemic hit.
It is tough!
Take this job and shove it . It sucks!!!!
It is so much harder than it used to be. Expectations are high, student behaviors have changed, parent attitudes and expectations can be unreasonable, and overall it is just difficult. Having support of administrators and building morale is so important. Making thoughtful decisions regarding Covid and the health of others also makes a big difference.
the teachers in our building feel supported by our building principal, but it stops there. It doesn't feel as if we are supported by parents, the community, the super, and the school committee. It's a constant disheartening feeling on top of intense stress. It's not as joyful as it once was.
It is very difficult to meet every students need when there is not enough time to plan and prepare for daily activities.
We are scrutinized nationally and locally. It is sad to think that education has so far to go. I felt more like a child care provider through the pandemic and less of an educator. Please take care of our mental health just as much as the mental health os students.
Teachers are now responsible for teaching basic skills like empathy, communication, work ethic, adaptability, listening etc and the struggle is REAL. It sometimes feels impossible to provide the class curriculum while simultaneously teaching these "soft skills".

<p>It is very difficult to hear our superintendent and school committee focusing on reducing our budget rather than highlighting what our district is doing well. Revenues are up in our town, but the focus is still on what we can cut to meet an arbitrary limit put in place by the select board and finance committee. I do not feel supported. We do not have a teacher shortage, we have a compensation problem.</p>
<p>Teachers can't do this alone. Many administrators seemed to have forgotten, or have never experienced, what it is like to work in a classroom. With that, expectations that are set for teachers are not reasonable. On top of that, teachers are not valued as professional members of the school community, and decisions are made without their input. Or, just a select, admin preferred teachers are asked for their input. School committee meetings make teachers roll their eyes, as they listen to admin explain what "we" have done, and present initiatives that never have fully made it to the classroom. Or initiatives that were started, and forgotten after a few weeks. Teachers need to be seen as a valuable part of the puzzle, whose voices need to be heard and listened to.</p>
<p>We teach human beings. We do not work in factories where all the products look identical and behave identically. We teach elementary children, not college. The Canvas platform and many of the tasks and tests students have been expected to take are not geared toward elementary, but for college. Teachers are also human beings who do not teach identically. We are expected to differentiate our instruction for every single child but make them all take the same benchmark and state tests and score the same scores. This is not realistic nor healthy for students or staff. We are implementing Second Step for social emotional health, which is good, but we are also testing our students more this year than ever before and hustling to fill in any gaps we see. With all the testing we have added, we have lost valuable teaching time. Students are fatigued by the testing, feel worse about themselves when they take test after test, and they are less interested in learning on days they take those tests. Students used to be excited about what we would learn next. I don't see that enthusiasm as much since the pandemic and all the testing. We do not have substitutes for most of the support staff who provide interventions for our struggling learners so those students often lose instruction time several times a month, even several times per week, when those support staff are absent or have meetings. The lack of coverage is a huge concern for those students. If the district is so concerned with test scores and data, then they should be making sure those students get their intervention lessons every single day of the week.</p>
<p>Public education at this time is extremely challenging for both students and staff and I think there will be a huge exodus of teachers if something does not change in the next few years.</p>
<p>Telling teachers to practice self-care is not good enough. Empty positions and no subs take away support staff and admin who are detrimental to our day to day operations. Trust teachers are doing their best, have their students' best interest at heart, and know how to teach. Teachers are professionals who love their students and families.</p>
<p>It's more of a challenge and stressor, but that equates to it also being more fulfilling when you are successful.</p>
<p>It is difficult and emotionally draining</p>
<p>We need support!</p>
<p>Trust us to our job and stop forcing educational programs into our classroom. Programs that dictate our day to day lessons do not work!!!!</p>
<p>Teaching in the school year of 2021-2022 is the most challenging experience. It is not fun. It is anxiety-producing. It is confusing. It is a daily, hourly struggle. Right now, it does not feel worth it. If not for my wonderful colleagues and friends, I would not still be an educator.</p>
<p>Many of your staff feel under-appreciated, overworked, unheard, and overwhelmed. We need support, not micromanagement, and we deserve to be compensated fairly. If these things don't happen, teachers will continue to leave the profession, and the remaining staff will feel the current constraints we are under ten-fold.</p>
<p>There is a need for incentives to attract younger teachers. There is also a need to provide veteran educators with opportunities to retire earlier.</p>
<p>Students are academically behind, some are suffering from the isolating effects of the Covid 19 pandemic, tension between coworkers is high, frustration tolerance is low and many faculty/staff do not feel supported. Between caring for the students and communicating with uncooperative parents this year has taken a toll on educators. Like other professions who have received Covid hazard pay, we have not.</p>
<p>I have seen many interesting, and popular with students, classes eliminated from rosters over the years because of lack of resources for teachers. When teachers retire many times the elective courses that students enjoy are eliminated. Also, there needs to be more paraprofessional staff in the High School and the office staff is also in need of additional staff. These positions, when filled, are a resource for students and staff.</p>
<p>Students are depressed, anxious, fearful and /or apathetic because of their awareness of the crises facing life on the planet at this time. Their mental health is not good. A radical change in educational priorities is desperately needed. A focus on SEL, community service to humanity, and care of the planet is the most urgent need for the health and success of our students. Hope must be restored through active engagement in solutions to world crises</p>

It's a terrible time to be a teacher! Our love of students and the idea of educating them is the same; however, we are asked to do A LOT more for the same pay, while getting VERY LITTLE support from parents, students and/or administration holding students accountable. School is TOO EASY for students and as a result are learning A LOT less.
When students say they want to go to college to become teachers, I ask why? There are expensive educational requirements and continued training, and you essentially will be lucky to have a 2% increase each year. Every year in education you are asked to do more and more; from social emotional to testing and learning new standards, without compensation. Why would people want to stay in this profession? Rather than acknowledge what we are doing, our leadership asks for more or doesn't give anything in negotiations.
Right now teachers are expected to be ALL things but are not treated as professionals
There are so many professional roles that you will need to fill other than "teacher."
With no discipline (due to laws and fear of retribution), and the increasing responsibility of teaching children how to be polite, respectful, have self esteem, interest in learning, etc., it is just too much to expect from a teacher.
It is so important to feel appreciated and also have you visit - not to assess, but to take part in what we are doing. mask wearing and policing of proper mask wearing by students has been exhausting, as has the understanding of what is being expressed. with the release of the mandate, I am concerned that vulnerable students and teachers will be in a riskier situation, even with wearing their own mask. I appreciate this opportunity to give feedback. Lastly, we as educators need to play more, laugh more and build our own relationships within our school...separate from hours of meetings about scores and protocol.
There are too many people outside the classroom meddling with what's inside -- parents, Board members, legislators -- they're not letting the experts be expert.
The job is getting harder and harder - new initiative fatigue should be discussed and addressed.
It's a helluva lot easier than residential care.
Parent interactions have become more difficult as there is no accountability.
Everyday is so different, making it challenging to establish routines. With changes to regulations and expectations changing daily, students are less likely to respect teachers directions and adhere to guidelines.
There are so many additional expectations of educators today. We expected to not only teach but to council and sometimes "parent". On the one hand we asked to set high expectations but then pressured to pass students at all costs. It seems today it is implied to that no student should fail and we are to do everything possible to pass them despite students earning their grades.
We are still in it for the kids !
It is very difficult. I would say about 40% of the students don't care and are just disrespectful.
The negative energy felt from students and other staff members is really draining.
Too demanding. Don't feel valued. Overworked. Underappreciated. Not a team. It feels like we are running a business. Also, it's going to take a couple years for test scores to catch up, that doesn't mean we should cut other programs. The kids will be fine. Give them time.
The bar and expectations for academic learning continues to remain post covid. We all need to understand that both students and staff need a slower process to return to this expectation. Both students and many staff are anxious and unhappy. The state mandated tests and curriculum needs to reflect the reality of the covid gaps.
Please stand up for us in the face of constant public questioning and criticism. Shield us from the divide of people expecting us to parent and refusing to acknowledge our expertise.
I am grateful for our administration that cares about its students and teachers. We are all doing our best and we need to keep communicating as best we can. Our principal champions us every day and keeps inviting us to show up to her office with any issues.
Parents can no longer dictate how we are to handle difficult students. We must be allowed to intervene and coach troubled kids to produce a better long term result. There is so much intervention needed right now in both behaviors and content knowledge.
That it is very difficult because there is no respect from either the teachers or the students
We have not changed our teaching to meet student where they are currently in this tech/covid/social media/ word.
There is a disconnect between what DESE and district leaders want from us and what the students need. Educators are feeling the pressure to repair the damages done by the pandemic.

<p>We are paid only for the hours we are expected to be physically in the school. But when was the last time that planning and prepping (writing, copying, designing, creating models/examples, collecting materials, etc.) for even just One 20 min lesson/activity, designed for 15 children (differentiated to meet multiple abilities/needs) took just 50 mins all while also having to respond to parent emails, teacher emails, specialist emails, administration emails? The amount of prep time we are provided in no way covers even one days worth of teaching. We are expected to do so much on our own time while already receiving lower annually pay than many people with less advanced degrees than we are required to have. In general the system as a whole needs to be reconsidered and teachers time needs to be valued, respected and compensated.</p>
<p>Education is not what it used to be. No cursive, new math, no skills being taught for these kids to balance a checkbook. Education is not pushing kids through the system to make our schools look good. Education is getting them ready for the real work where you have to be on time, you have to follow the rules, and you have to be respectful. Education was never easy, but taking away the basics is definitely not the answer.</p>
<p>The social, emotional, and behavioral needs of our children serve as the greatest impediment to accessing meaningful instruction in a fair and appropriate manner.</p>
<p>We work in a great area, but our plates are full. The pandemic has created a host of social emotional challenges not just for students, but for staff too. When addressing pay for educators I'd like school leaders to recognize that low pay for teachers has deep roots in sexism. With tourism being at an all time high in the Berkshires and the cost of living in this area taking a sharp rise, I think we really need to have some serious discussions about wages in Berkshire county. Also, mandates to hire younger, less expensive teachers should not be passed down. That is age discrimination.</p>
<p>That is challenging, sometimes stressful and that we are giving all the best we can to our students and our schools</p>
<p>Teaching was once a valued well respected position in this district, that valued the worth in its school staff and that priority has changed, unfortunately.</p>
<p>It currently is a thankless job and the teachers doing the right things are the ones constantly under fire because they care so much about teaching and kids. Leaders need to support them and recognize we are struggling</p>
<p>This is not the time to make any big changes. It should be about the kids, and the kids have had two years of interrupted learning. We don't need to change anything, we need to let the kids settle down and catch up before anything new happens.</p>
<p>our kids need so, so much emotional support and individualized attention to their individual learning styles</p>
<p>it's been too long since they were in a classroom. They should have to teach 1 class a year at various grade levels so that they can understand what challenges we truly face.</p>
<p>It is difficult.</p>
<p>Teaching is difficult in the world of social media, Students come to us with so many issues. It is hard and has been for 2 years but I hope we back to normal soon.</p>
<p>children need more social and emotional support due to the pandemic. This is needed above academics at this point in time,</p>
<p>It is exhausting. Too many DESE mandates.</p>
<p>We (I) appreciate the support you are able to offer.</p>
<p>We need proper training that will help us deal with challenging students, both with behavior as well as special education supports. I want meaningful early childhood professional development opportunities for challenging students, and compensation that matches the recent stressful factors</p>
<p>Very difficult from just a few years back with students</p>
<p>As a coordinator overseeing and hiring staff, I would say this- no profession is easy and simple as the world changes, and my advice to all educators from admin to teachers is that we have to be flexible and open minded and ready to work hard to make a difference in the lives of our students. There has to be passion for what we do and commitment to the profession. As stated previously looking always for the opportunity in the problem.</p>
<p>No communication, no sense of community, we need to have families involved and allow some field trips , community helpers etc in to bring back a sense of that we matter and you can learn with fun. Less screen time.</p>
<p>Although the challenges have increased the rewards still outweigh these challenges. Some of the situations I have faced this year are unprecedented but I am enjoying being in the classroom again with children live and in person. I feel if you love working with children then education is still a great place to work every day. If you are having a tough time dealing with the new stress and students then maybe it is not the career for you.</p>
<p>It is crucial for all educators to work hard in order to provide a successful future for our next generation !!!</p>

It is essential that every capable educator stay devoted to teaching our students at every level in order to further success for future generations!!! Students have lost so much valuable instruction due to pandemic!!!
class sizes are to large, support staff need more HIGHER pay, Higher T.A Subs for each buildings.
It is not easy , the children have lots of worries and just want to be clear on wat i happening . The stress level is high in some children and trying to reassure them can be hard .
Shortage of reliable staff to student ratio is not benefiting any and all.
Paraprofessionals are an important part of the public education system and they are not given the recognition and respect by the parents, students and the community that they deserve. Paraprofessionals are qualified educated people and deserve some processing, planning and preparing time too so they are not spending hours at home doing school work, to be able to help the students in classrooms. Paraprofessionals do not have full excess to school resources but are expected to know everything. Paraprofessionals are not paid what they deserve and 'that is why it is hard to hire new people.
*Teaching at the high school level, I expect my students to be able to read with fluency and understanding. HOWEVER, many of my students cannot read at an appropriate high school level. If children are not able to read when they leave second grade, they are set up for failure for life. Most of the students who get into trouble in my school cannot read. Strategies are often implemented at the 7th, 8th, or 9th-grade level to encourage to help students who cannot read. What a compete waste of time. The time to help students is at the early elementary level. Students need to be held back in first or second grade until they can read. Otherwise, we are doing our young people a great diservice.
This is important, rewarding, but stressful work; educational leaders need to help teachers do effective work and not hinder them with useless tasks and directives that waste their precious time.
We can be mindful the social and emotional needs of everyone in our community. If educators and students are anxious, tired, afraid, stressed, angry, sad, hungry, and/or tired, we can look at ways to help guide them toward emotional wellness. To be able to guide our students, we must be emotionally well ourselves. Once we have addressed social emotional needs, we can shift our focus to other areas in need of growth. We need to focus first on how they are functioning as a person, we will not be successful in our efforts to improve their academic skill set.
It is a nightmare!!
So many learning gaps and too much is pushed out to dive deeper into learning
We need more highly qualified experienced educators and smaller class sizes if we are going to promote healing and learning in the Berkshires.
Teachers are trying just as hard and we really live this everyday.
Teachers want to be recognized for the efforts they are putting in, and feel heard when they have concerns.
More time should be spent on SEL learning- PD should be more about giving teachers time in their classroom to plan
It's important to know that you are doing all that you can with what you have. Take time for yourself and your own mental health. We can't support our students effectively if we are burnt out.
Teacher autonomy is important to teachers and we need to feel respected and trusted as professionals who know what is best for our students.
The lack of support from the district and parents as well as the excessive expectations has really made me question whether I want to continue in the field. I work 10-14 hours daily and mostly on weekends. The salary doesn't even come close to amount of work and effort that I do on a daily basis! We need more support and smaller classes; not more administration.
It's long past time for us to be respected had the highly educated professionals we are, rather than micromanaged by folks who do not have any idea what daily life in a classroom is like these days.
Staff is working incredibly hard as a team to connect with students and make education meaningful however lack of staffing, lack of administrative support and limited autonomy in teaching are taking away the pleasure of teaching.
There are so many political agendas that are being pushed through the publics schools. The Common Core Curriculum has been damaging for our students and the MCAS testing has taken away from teaching the basics to automaticity. We need to get back to teaching science, history(not social studies), math and reading. Students are graduating highschool with very few skills and understanding of US government, civics, writing, etc. It is embarrassing to see our education in the US take such a decline. Parents and teachers do not have a voice in the decisions being made. Everyone needs to have a voice.
It is hard. The kids and teachers are struggling. We need to stop pushing forward and catch these kids up on missed skills and social skills.

More tests and stringent curriculum guidelines are not the answer right now. Students are often two years behind - we need to meet them where they are and accelerate their learning. Let teachers do what we do best - teach!
More engaging lessons is not the answer to everything. Students need to be held accountable.
I feel we were far more successful in helping every student meet his/her potential when we had more autonomy on teaching our students when I began teaching 18 years ago. The more "standardized" we become in our teaching, the less engaging it seems to be for our students, especially in elementary school. I believe that we should all be responsible for teaching our grade level standards and to do so in engaging, creative, real-world contexts rather than following text books.
It's harder than it's ever been and we need all the support we can get.
Many days it is unsafe in our schools.
Teachers need support for students who consistently misbehave in the classroom. When they regularly disrupt in class and in the halls and nothing is visibly done it send a message that anything goes. Our kids deserve to know that their education is valued but that is not what they see from administration in XXX.
In elementary we are asked to be flexible and add more curriculum to our already overly ambitious Frameworks, but we are not given the time to learn programs effectively and there is no follow up with implementation. Currently a single district test can put a student on a learning track/direction not necessary or supportive of their needs.
We have too many responsibilities put on us than ever before in past years plus the pressure of getting students back on academic grade level with less support than ever before, bigger class sizes and more behaviors.
Behaviors are up, pay and support is down and nothing is being done to support teachers and support staff and there are too many new initiatives
Parents need to take responsibility for their child's actions and attendance. Teachers should not have to do more than the parent when it comes to accountability.
The single greatest stressor on teachers is the lack of respect from, and micromanagement by administration.
XXX School is a wonderful place to work.
It sucks! I leave every day exhausted and depressed. Trying to teach to all of the standards at grade level is an impossible task given that students have been out of the classroom consistently for the past two years. We are still working on basic socialization at the elementary level, while still being expected to have students prepared for the MCAS all to prove that I am doing my job in the classroom. One test for a years worth of work isn't really valuable. The expectations are too high, the support and compensation are too low. I would rather teach overseas where the education profession is respected and valued.
This is hard and getting harder. We don't get enough credit for what we are doing.
We deserve a livable wage.
I am proud to be a school nurse and to serve my students and colleagues. Compensation should be commensurate with teacher's pay scale.
In order to support all students in our classrooms, we need more compensation (since the cost of living has increased exponentially), and to feel appreciated and supported.
Teaching is extremely challenging right now! I feel like we are caught in a catch-22: students are demonstrating challenging behaviors because of disengagement and missing social skills, but staffing shortages vastly reduce the time and energy that teachers have to create and deliver meaningful lessons.
We are constantly having more to do and our pay is not rising with inflation. Most teachers I know have two and three other jobs. It makes it more challenging to be creative and productive educators when we are tired and stressed.
teachers are stuck doing it all between admin and parents/students. There is little or no accountability for administration - they beat us up but don't have anyone to call them out.
I feel that too many teachers are not truly dedicated to their students
Genuinely listen to teachers. We are not a big happy family if our voices are not heard. Visit classrooms and ask questions. Please know teachers care about their jobs and want to make a difference. This requires TRUST!
It is a challenge, but rewarding experience. I am very in favor of comfort facility dog to lower stress. We need more mental health programs/staff for students.

STUDENTS NEED US TO SLOW DOWN, TEACH TO MASTERY AND NOT WORRY ABOUT PACING. STUDENTS NEED TO COME FIRST AND THEIR SEL NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET AT ALL. ALSO THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH SUBS. TEACHING IS NOT FUN ANYMORE, AND I'M NOT SURE WE CAN SUSTAIN THIS ATMOSPHERE OF PRESSURE FROM ABOVE. WE NEED MORE PARAS AND LESS ADMIN. THE STUDENTS NEED DIRECT SUPPORT EVERY DAY IN THE CLASSROOM.
It's hard! We need to feel appreciated and backed by our administrators. Please stop asking us to solve all of the world's problems if you are not going to help and support with it. We need time to look at curriculum and how we can better meet the needs of the ever changing students.
Public education is at its most stressful level in decades. More and more staffing has been eliminated. We are seeing more social and emotional behaviors than ever before. Morale is at an all time low. Support in the classroom on an instructional level is imperative to our students success and emotional wellness.
I feel that every year the teaching profession becomes more stressful as more expectations and demands are made of educators who are already going above and beyond their job description.
I think we need a little more paraprofessional supports
Teachers do not have the respect from community members, parents and political leaders in the country. It seems that teachers are not trusted with their time and are dictated to as to what we are supposed to do. Teachers are not paid for going above and beyond what is expected from us on a daily basis, especially during hybrid teaching.
Its hard - we are not only teachers - emotionally draining - we are therapists, nurses, parent pleasers, - we are unable to teach the curriculum some years due to high social emotional or behavioral demands.
It is exhausting!
Many children have greater social emotional needs than we educators have the ability to address. Effective learning is in jeopardy unless we can address the social emotional needs of the children.
We need to get back to basics and stop introducing new initiatives that use a lot of resources, including time and money, without much benefit. We need to invest in having well paid paraprofessionals to provide the additional support to the students. We need less people at the District Level and more people in the schools providing direct services to our students.
Teachers are doing their best, and also feel defeated every day. We don't feel appreciated at all.
These days, I often feel like instead of working in public education I work in human services. The academic, social, and emotional needs of students are so great that schools cannot do it alone. If families aren't supported more we will continue to see children unprepared for the academic, social and emotional demands and expectations of school.
It is not an easy job. We are doing the best we can and we ARE making a difference in children's lives.
Students are struggling emotionally, socially, and academically more than ever before is what it feels like.
It is very stressful to have to cope with the effects of the pandemic and also have to worry about regionalization and how that will affect our jobs and the lives of our students. I also feel that teachers and administrators have not done nearly enough to deal with the emotional needs of students who have been living through a pandemic. Everyone feels the stress of trying to get students to make up for the lost year in addition to learning what they normally would this year. I see the stress especially in the older students in high school. I wish that our leadership did more to help teachers deal with these concerns compassionately.
The educators are required to accept a constant barrage of surveys, emails, curriculums, reports, data studies, involvement with parents, and in addition attempt to education several hundred children without paraprofessional support , be criticized for removing disruptive children from classes and the list goes on Educators need a specific plan, not layers of burden placed on them at whim of hasty decisions to seeking solutions.
The challenges and traumas that students bring into the classroom on a daily basis have changed dramatically over the past 10 years. The need for more teachers, more support staff, more training, more compensation, just more of everything than what worked 10 years ago, and we need less time on nonsense.
As a para, I do not feel we are being treated with the respect and compensation we deserve and work for. We are being used as subs on a daily basis not just for teachers, but for indoor and outdoor duties.

