COVID-19’s Impacts on Nebraska Educators

Pandemic reveals educators can adapt to ‘virtually’ anything but need systems and policies that provide more resources to schools.

A new study suggests the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on Nebraska’s PreK-12 educators, and by direct extension our children, may weaken the state’s future workforce if not addressed quickly. Teachers are adjusting to remote learning the best they can — but at what cost?

In July 2020, CYFS and the Nebraska Department of Education conducted a comprehensive statewide survey to better understand the pandemic’s immediate impacts on educators and educational systems. The data collected are representative of educators across Nebraska, including both rural and urban, and elementary and secondary schools. Phase one of this work sheds light on educators’ experiences in the aftermath of school closures in the spring.

**DATA INSIGHTS**

1. There is reason to be very concerned about Nebraska students and educators.
2. Experiences and consequences are nuanced based on stakeholder groups, geographic location and teaching level.

**IMPLICATIONS FOR NEBRASKA**

- Significant numbers of Nebraska students disengage during school shutdowns, which may cause irreversible gaps in learning.
- Lost instructional time, disruptions in learning, and increased teacher and student mental health problems may result in a future workforce that is less well-prepared.
- Nebraska is at risk of losing a sizable portion of our trained and experienced educators due to the stress and challenges of the job.
- To keep Nebraska’s students on track, we must uncover what is happening across the state’s educational systems, listen to educators to understand their needs, and intervene immediately to help children be successful.

**SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

Statewide survey data represent educators from 243 of 244 of Nebraska’s school districts.

- **6,938** PREK-12 TEACHERS (28.5% response rate)
- **207** PRINCIPALS (25.5% response rate)
- **84** SUPERINTENDENTS (39.8% response rate)
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**Student Participation**

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**Remote Learning Concerns**

**TOP 3 CONCERNS ABOUT STUDENT PARTICIPATION:**

1. **Family availability** (teachers, principals, superintendents)
2. **Students’ special needs** (teachers, principals, superintendents)
3. **Student motivation** (especially urban & secondary teachers)

Significantly more urban teachers expressed these concerns compared to rural teachers. Nearly all superintendents (90.5%) rated lack of family availability as a top concern.

**Urban vs Rural Challenges**

**TOP 3 TEACHING CHALLENGES:** Significantly more urban teachers expressed these challenges compared to rural teachers

1. Motivating students to work hard (More secondary than elementary)
2. Adapting to meet students’ needs (More elementary than secondary)
3. Collaborating with parents (More secondary than elementary)

**Educator Personal Well-being**

**TOP 3 PERSONAL CHALLENGES:**

1. Stress/mental health issues
2. Blurred work/home boundaries
3. Caring for children at home

**MODERATE TO EXTREME JOB STRESS:**

2/3 OF TEACHERS experienced moderate to extreme job stress

9/10 PRINCIPALS & SUPERINTENDENTS experienced moderate to extreme job stress

More educators are experiencing significant job stress during COVID-19 compared to pre-COVID-19. Teachers, principals and superintendents across the state expressed high levels of challenges with stress and personal well-being, regardless of where they live (urban, rural) and who they teach (elementary, secondary).