

Teacher Stress

**Why staying sane feels
like an uphill battle**

**Barb VanDoorn
4K-12 School Counselor
Lake Holcombe School
stretchedcounselor.com**

**Understanding the
forces against you
and what can be done**





**Teaching is not
always a zen-like
state**

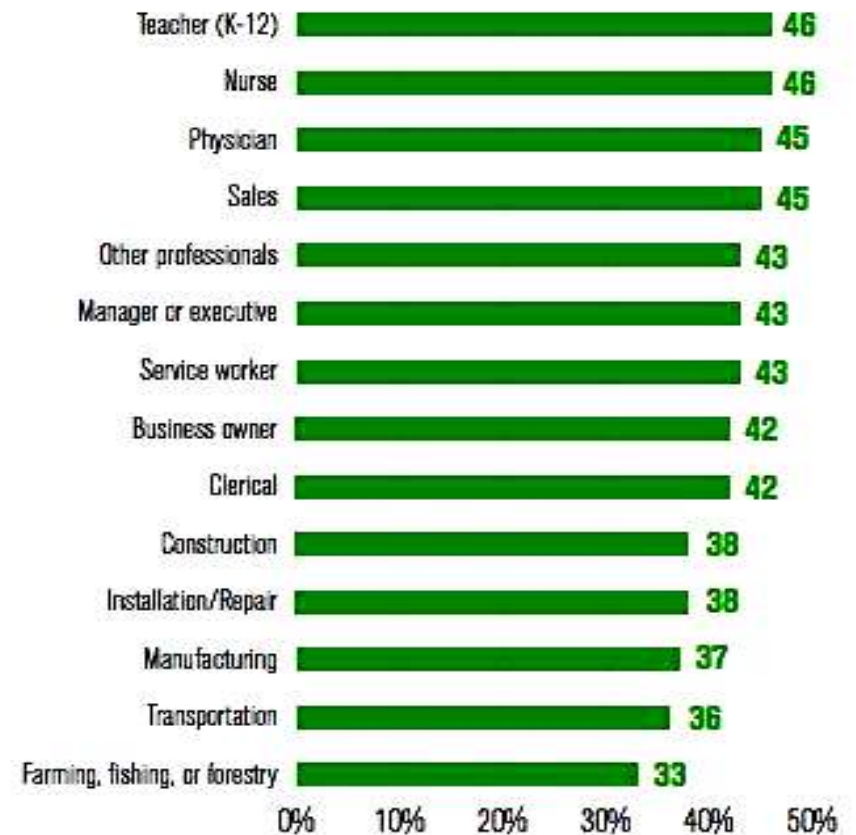
Educators report feeling
a great deal of stress.

46% of educators
report high daily stress

Nearly Half of Teachers Experience a Lot of Daily Stress

Did you experience stress during a lot of the day yesterday?

PERCENTAGE RESPONDING "YES"

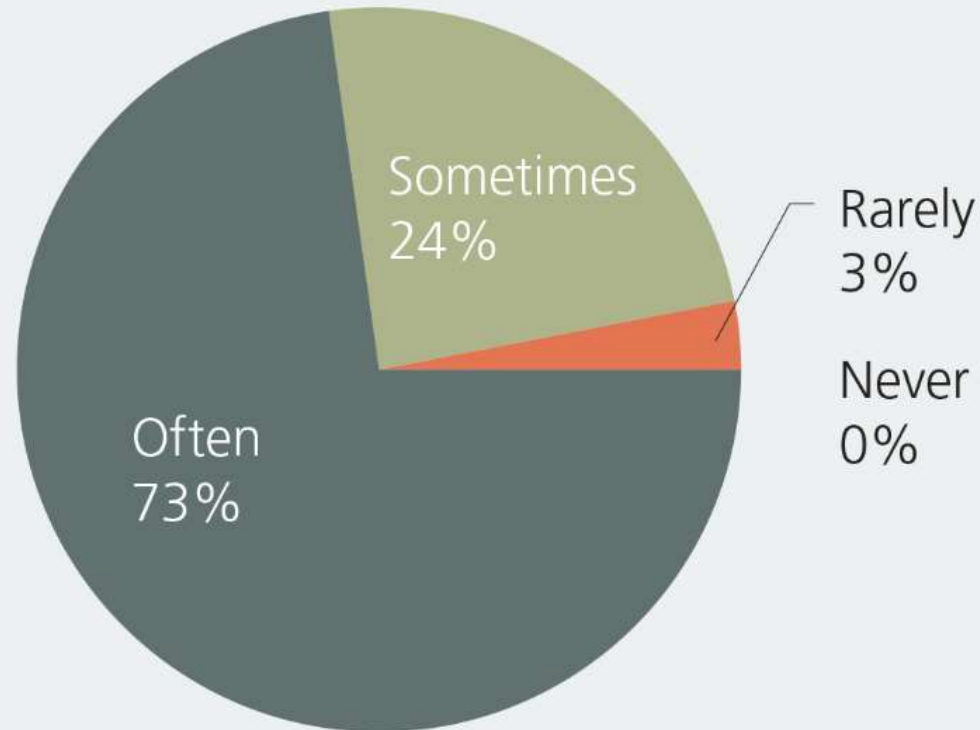


Results from the 2013 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index survey

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FIND YOUR WORK STRESSFUL?

The Quality of Worklife Survey

30,000 teachers surveyed in 2015 in the United States.



Quality of Worklife Survey, American Federation of Teachers, 2015

And it's not just in this country

“...in the 12 months to November 2015, more than 50,000 qualified teachers in England left the state sector.”

The importance of teacher wellbeing

By Peter Hrekow, Education consultant

In recent years the pressure on schools and teachers from government has arguably been greater than ever. Over the same period support for schools has dwindled. Local authority services have been dramatically reduced as a consequence of government cuts and an unprecedented growth of academies. Huge numbers of teachers are leaving the profession. DfE figures show that in the 12 months to November 2015, more than 50,000 qualified teachers in England left the state sector.

It is hardly surprising that teachers are becoming demoralised and disenchanted with the profession they entered to make a difference. This ideal is constantly under threat from impossible workloads, often collecting meaningless information, and a lack of support from senior leaders.

Common sense would indicate that when teachers are not stressed and feel positive, their pupils will make good progress. Research into the link between teacher wellbeing and pupils' achievement is sparse. However, where it does exist, it supports this common-sense view and suggests that there is a very real connection between the two.

Clearly, teachers' stress can be reduced and their wellbeing increased through a number of relatively simple measures: reducing workload to more manageable proportions; giving teachers greater control over how and what they teach; managing change more effectively; and providing appropriate support.

So, is it all gloom? Is the only way forward a major shift in government policy? Well, surprisingly, there still is a tremendous amount of resilience in the teaching profession. Initiatives such as the NUT's CPD programme can have a positive impact on teachers' sense of wellbeing. I have delivered training in the areas of behaviour and social,

**What's
behind the
high stress in
education?**



Listen To Us Teacher Views and Voices

Center for Education Policy,
George Washington University

May 2016

3300 teachers surveyed;

67 questions



Teacher Stress & Health

The effects on teachers, students, and schools.

Conducted by Penn State

funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



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Foundation



Wisconsin Educator Survey

August-September 2017

11,000 respondents

PURPOSE: "to gain deeper knowledge of the workforce issues facing Wisconsin schools"

Listen To Us Teacher Views and Voices

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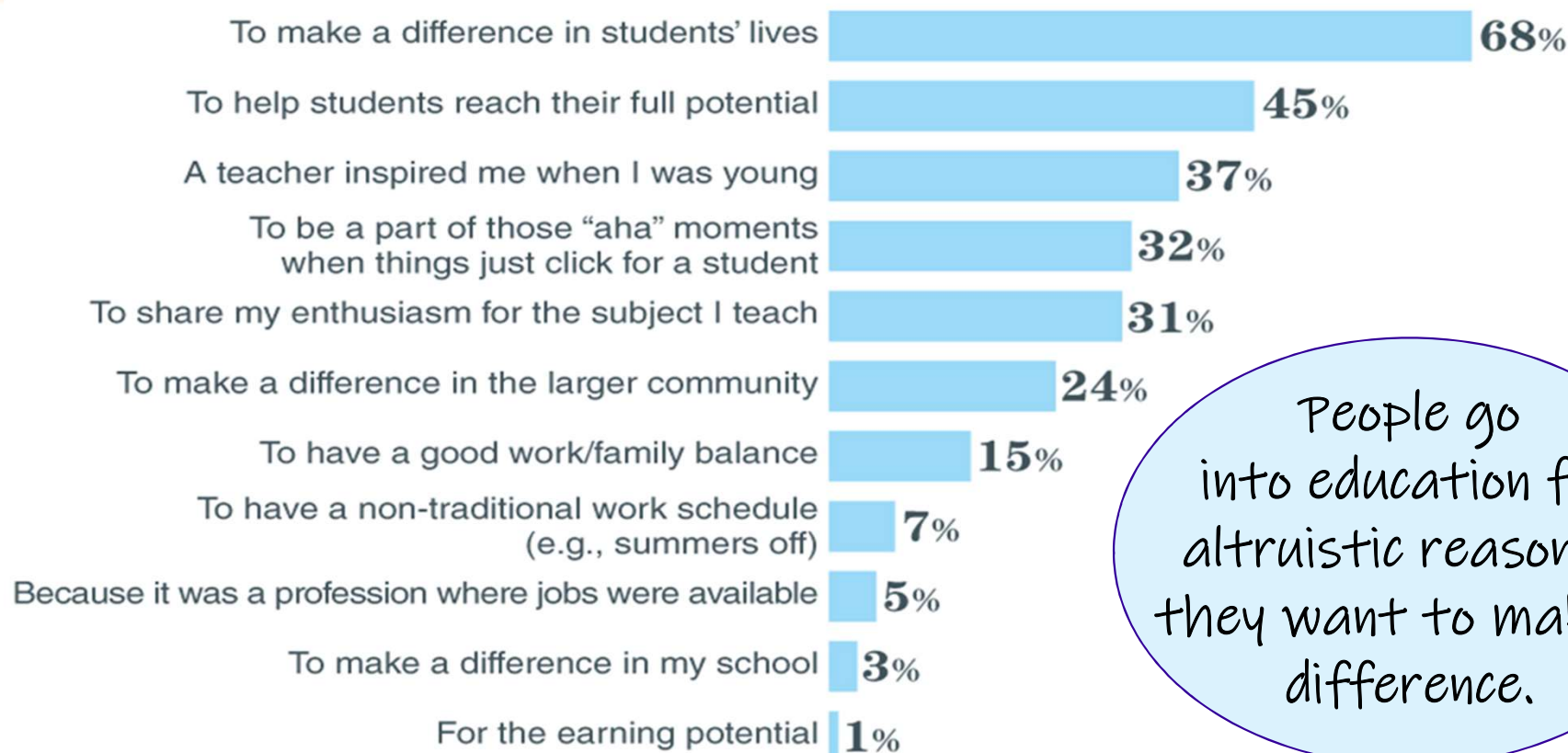
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Listen to Us
Teacher Views
and Voices

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

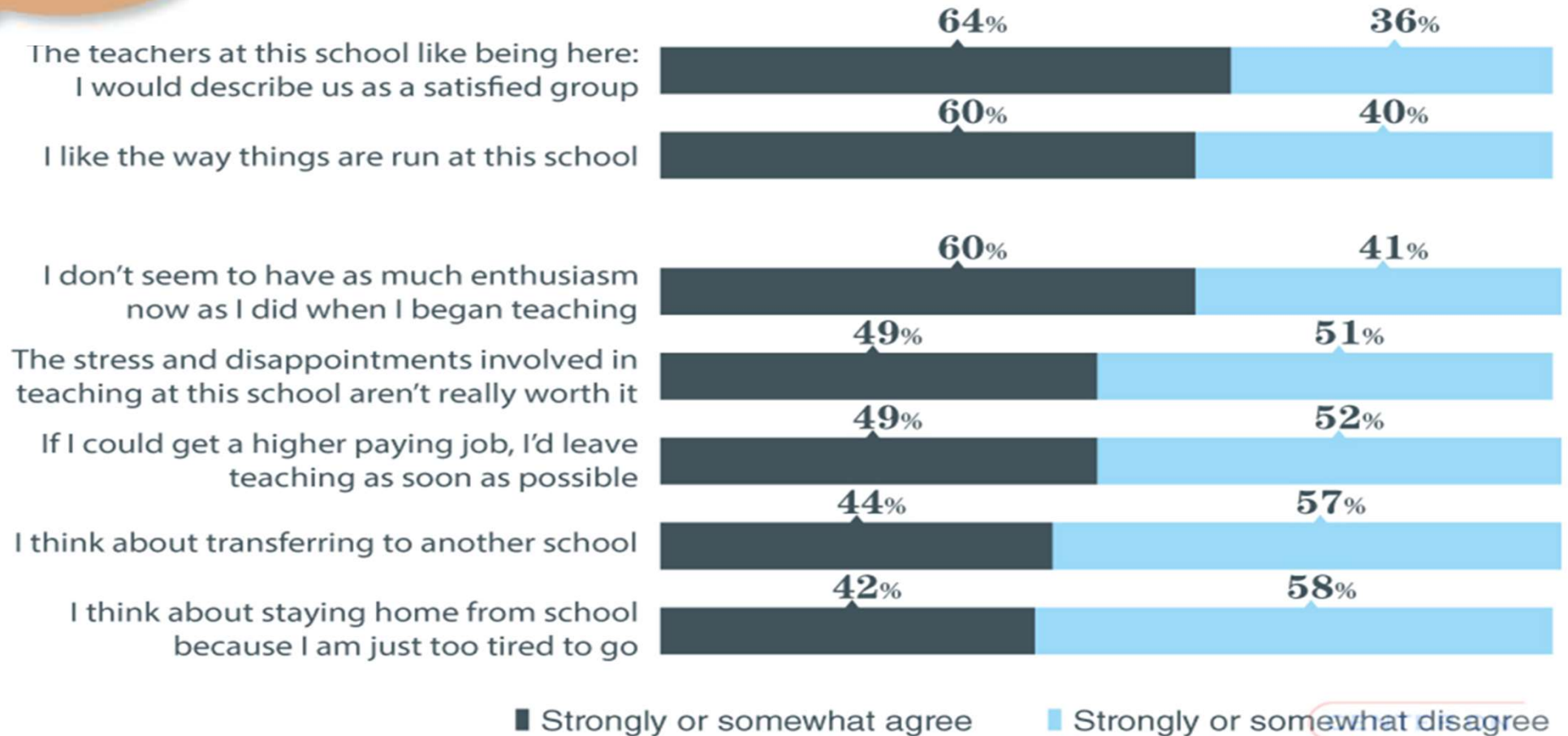
Most significant reasons why teachers joined the profession



People go into education for altruistic reasons... they want to make a difference.

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

Teacher Perceptions of their school, colleagues, & job



Listen to Us Teacher Views and Voices

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

Most significant challenges teachers face

Most significant challenges	Percentage of all teachers
<i>Challenges from systemic factors</i>	
State or district policies that get in the way of teaching	46%
Constantly changing demands placed on teachers	38%
Constantly changing demands placed on students	34%
<i>Challenges within the school</i>	
Managing student behavior	26%
Addressing the needs of economically disadvantaged students	24%
Large class sizes	23%
Lack of sufficient time for teachers to collaborate with each other	19%
Lack of sufficient instructional time for students	18%
Lack of supportive leadership in my school	12%
Lack of supplemental academic support for struggling students	10%
Need for more parent-teacher collaboration	7%
Unsafe working conditions	1%
<i>Challenges related to the profession</i>	
My limited earning potential	21%
Lack of career ladder/opportunity to advance in profession	7%
Lack of sufficient professional development to ensure my growth	5%
N/A: I don't face challenges as a teacher	<1% ON

Listen to Us Teacher Views and Voices

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

When
teachers
feel they
are being
heard

	Percentage of teachers who feel their opinion IS heard at the school level and strongly or somewhat agree with the statement	Percentage of teachers who feel their opinion IS NOT heard at the school level and strongly or somewhat agree with the statement
I like the way things are run at this school	79%	37%
The teachers at this school like being here; I would describe us as a satisfied group	60%	46%
I don't seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching	51%	70%
If I could get a higher paying job, I'd leave teaching as soon as possible	40%	59%
I think about staying home from school because I am just too tired to go	35%	50%
The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at this school aren't really worth it	34%	67%
I think about transferring to another school	32%	58%

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

Biggest challenge with economically disadvantaged

Figure 1-B. Biggest challenges in educating economically disadvantaged children



Figure reads: Of the public school teachers who selected “addressing the needs of economically disadvantaged students” as one of their top teaching challenges, an estimated 42% considered the emotional needs of these students as the most challenging need.

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

Biggest challenge with economically disadvantaged

Figure 1-B. Biggest challenges in educating economically disadvantaged children



Secondary Trauma Stress

SYMPTOMS: withdrawing from friends and family, unexplained irritability, inability to focus or sleep, feeling hopeless, persistently worrying about students.

Listen to Us: Teacher Views & Voice

Summary of findings:

- Half or more indicated decreased enthusiasm, high stress, and a desire to leave the profession
- Most notable stressors:
 - Changing demands
 - Focus on testing
 - Lack of teacher voice

None are within a
teacher's control

“Forces outside of teachers’ control may be taxing their good will & dedication.”



Wisconsin Educator Survey

August-September 2017

11,000 respondents

PURPOSE: “to gain deeper knowledge of the workforce issues facing Wisconsin schools”



Wisconsin Educator Survey

Have you given serious thought to leaving your school/district?

Percentage seriously thought about leaving district	Yes	No	Unsure
Overall	64.1	27.3	7.1
Administrators	48	46.7	3.6
Pupil Service Professionals	59.4	30.8	8.8
Teachers	65.9	26.1	7.1



Wisconsin Educator Survey

If yes, what is the biggest reason you are considering leaving?

Teachers- reason to consider leaving	All	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Leadership	18.7	19.4	19.5	17.1
Climate	8.0	8.3	9.0	6.5
Student behavior	6.1	3.5	3.9	11.6
Insufficient class room support	4.0	2.5	3.2	6.5
Feeling overwhelmed	14.0	12.8	15.9	13.4
Insufficient pay	19.9	23.4	20.3	15.3
Too much paperwork	5.1	5.7	5.0	4.5
Parents	.07	1.0	0.5	0.6
All of the above (+/- one reason)	2.0	1.5	1.7	3.0



Wisconsin Educator Survey

Have you seriously thought of leaving the profession?

Serious thought to leaving the profession	Yes	No	Unsure
Overall	56.0	36.0	6.7
Administrators	37.5	56.5	4.8
Pupil Services Professionals	43.1	48.2	7.5
Teachers	59.0	33.6	6.7



Wisconsin Educator Survey

Teachers by years of service who have seriously considered leaving the profession

Teachers by years of service, considered leaving	Yes	No	Unsure
1-5 years	47.2	42.4	9.9
6-10 years	59.5	31.2	8.6
11-20 years	63.6	29.7	6.2
More than 20 years	60.1	34.1	4.8



Wisconsin Educator Survey

If yes to leaving the profession, what would convince you to stay?

Teachers, would convince to stay	All	Rural	Suburban	Urban
More effective leadership	11.3	11.6	10.6	11.7
Better school climate	5.7	5.3	6.6	5.2
Better control of student behavior	9.1	6.8	6.4	14.9
More classroom supports	4.8	3.6	4.8	6.2
Better pay	29.3	33.3	29.4	24.5
Help with work/life balance	13.3	11.8	16.9	10.8
More respect	9.9	10.7	9.0	10.0
Less conflict with parents	1.3	1.7	1.2	1.1
All of the above	1.7	1.4	1.5	2.5



Wisconsin Educator Survey

How would you describe the leadership structure of your district?

		Overall	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Administrators	Top down	33.1	26.6	25.9	53.6
	Distributed	44.3	44.2	53.2	33.6
	Collective	22.5	29.2	20.9	12.8
Pupil Services Professionals	Top down	66.3	63.4	64.0	73.8
	Distributed	21.6	22.5	24.6	16.3
	Collective	12.1	14.1	11.4	10.1
Teachers	Top down	72.9	69.7	70.3	80.0
	Distributed	20.2	22.0	23.2	14.3
	Collective	6.9	8.3	6.4	5.6



Wisconsin Educator Survey

Factors that impact educator mental health:

- Lack of decision making
- Feeling overwhelming
- Climate, student behavior, lack of support

Stress– when risk factors exceed protective factors

Mental health concern– when your ability to live, work, and have satisfying relationships is compromised.

Teacher Stress & Health

The effects on teachers, students, and schools.

Conducted by Penn State
funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

2016



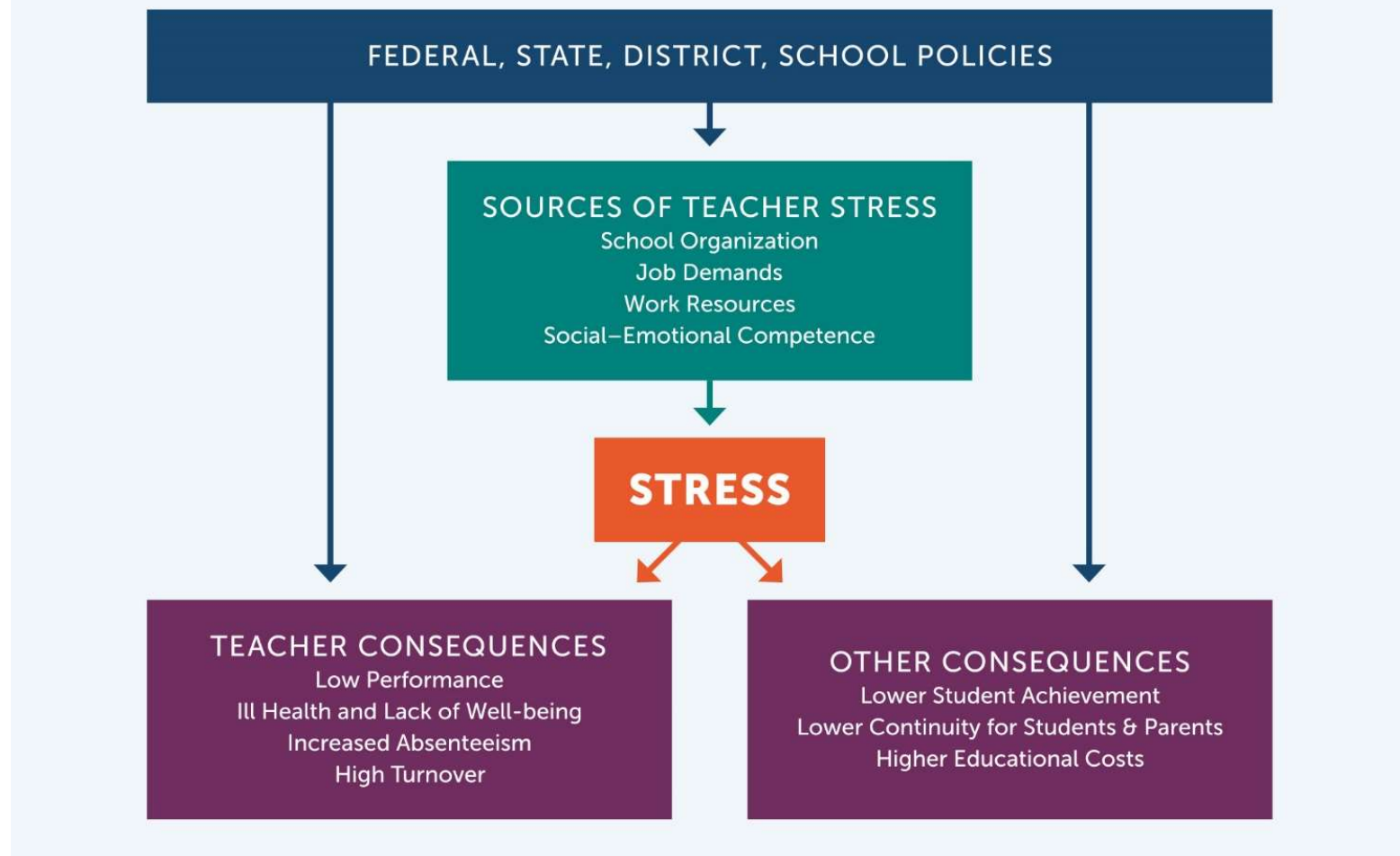
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Teacher Stress and Health

The effects on teachers, students, and schools.



Source of Educator Stress:

1. School organization
2. Job demands
3. Limited autonomy & decision making
4. Teacher social & emotional competence



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Source of stress:

- 1. School Organizations that lack strong principal leadership, a healthy school climate and a collegial, supportive environment.***



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Source of stress:

2. Job Demands are escalating.



U.S. Department of Education

ABOUT ED / INITIATIVES ED Initiatives

Initiatives and priorities of the President and

- Back-to-School Bus Tour
- Civic Learning
- Digital Government Strategy
- Early Learning
- ED Data Express
- Education Dashboard
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- Green Strides
- Homeless Students
- Investing in Innovation
- Labor-Management Collaboration
- Let's Move
- Let's Read. Let's Move.
- Military Families and Veterans
- Open Government
- Promise Neighborhoods
- Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE)
- Race to the Top Fund
- Race to the Top Assessment Program
- Rural Education
- School Improvement Grants
- Student Art Exhibit Program
- White House Initiatives



Initiatives at our schools:

PBIS
RTI
UDL
ACP
MHFA
Sbirt
SEL
TSS
ESY
BIP
LLI
SLO
PPG
EE
SPO
AODA
BAB

Testing
ACT
WorkKeys
Forward
DLM
NAAP
Aspire
ASVAB
PSAT
SAT
AP
SMI
SRI
PALS
WIDA

After School
Summer School
TLAs

Initiative Overload

Step 1:

In the center of the plate, write down your job title, then list your core responsibilities, those things that were listed in the job description. Draw a box around this.



Step 2:

With the same marker, go to the outer ring and write your outside of school time demands and concerns (family, activities, health, finances, drive to work, outside job, etc.). Things that take your energy and time.



Step 3:

With a different marker on the rest of the plate, write other school related responsibilities-- things that are assigned, you're expected to do, or that you've created or volunteered to do.



Look at what's on
your plate?

What's lacking?

What's over-powering?

Is there balance?

And your values?



How
can I make
this work?

Look at your CORE VALUES

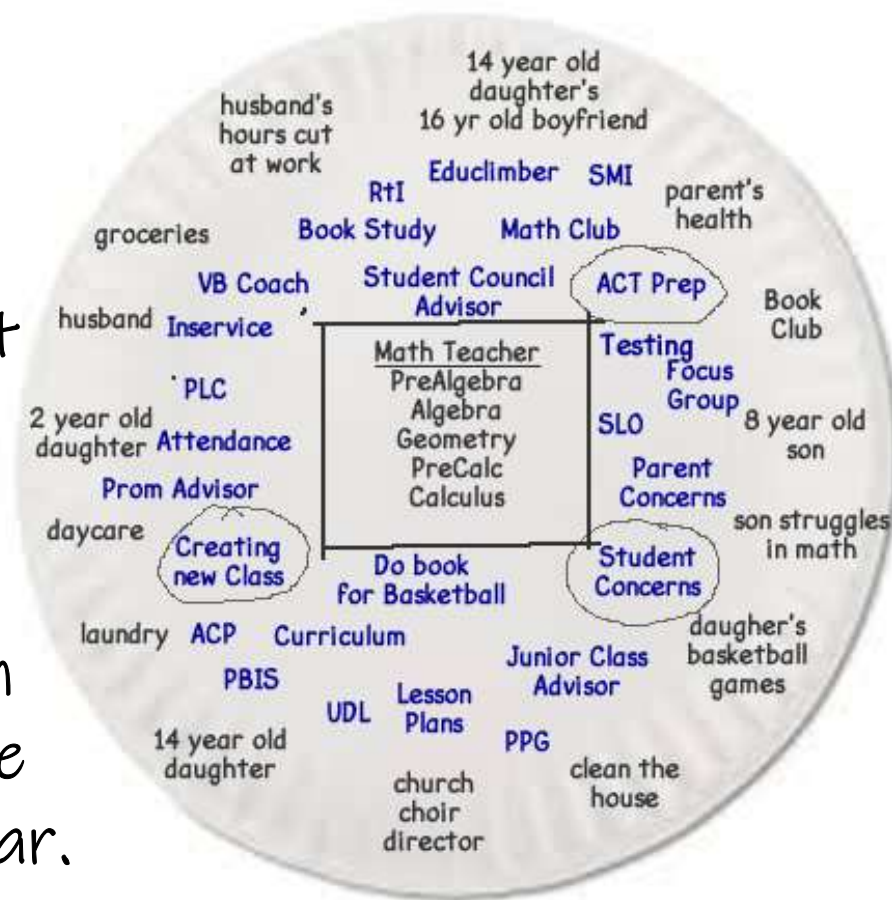
Learning
Helping
Creativity
Purpose
(Family)

**Are they in line
with what's on
your plate?**



Step 4:

Look at your plate.
Circle the 3 school additional responsibilities most important to you right now-- those things you feel are the most significant to you as an educator. They may vary from year to year, but what are the most important to you this year.





Eustress

**Good
Stress**

Helps you grow & remain healthy, gives feeling of fulfillment

Characteristics of eustress:

- **Motivates**
- **Usually short term**
- **Perceived as being within our coping ability**
- **Feels exciting**
- **Improves performance**

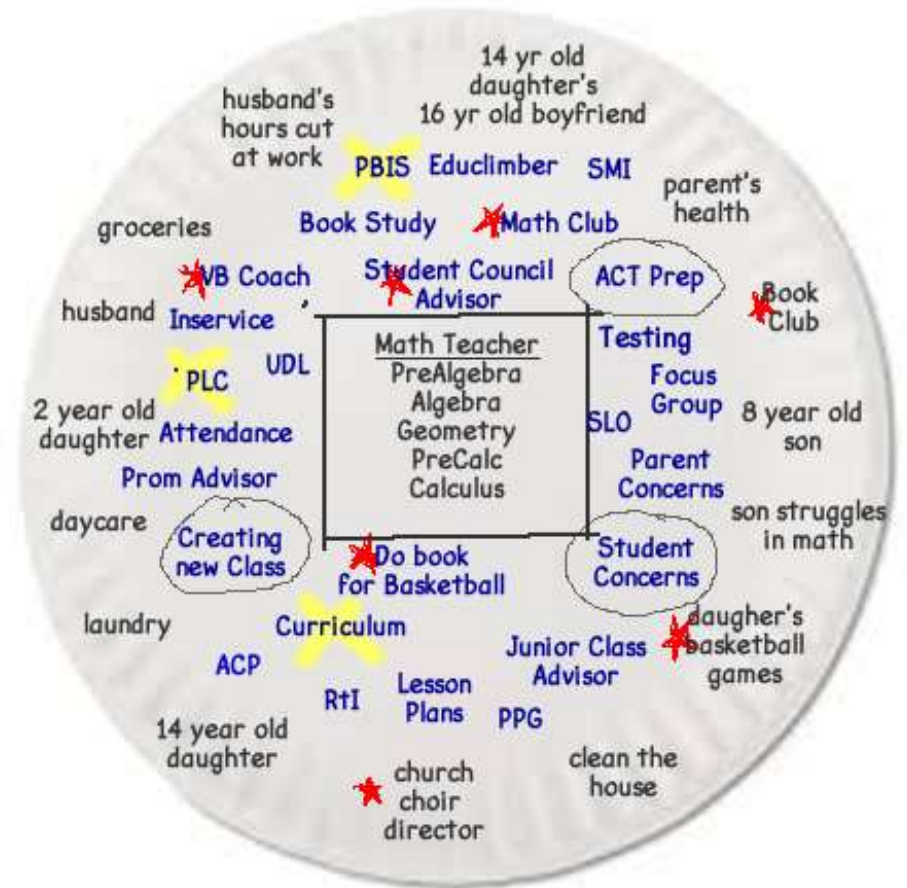
Step 5:

Look at your plate, and with the brightest marker, star the items--either school or out of school-- that "fuel you". They may take your time but they give back positive energy and keep you motivated.



Step 6:

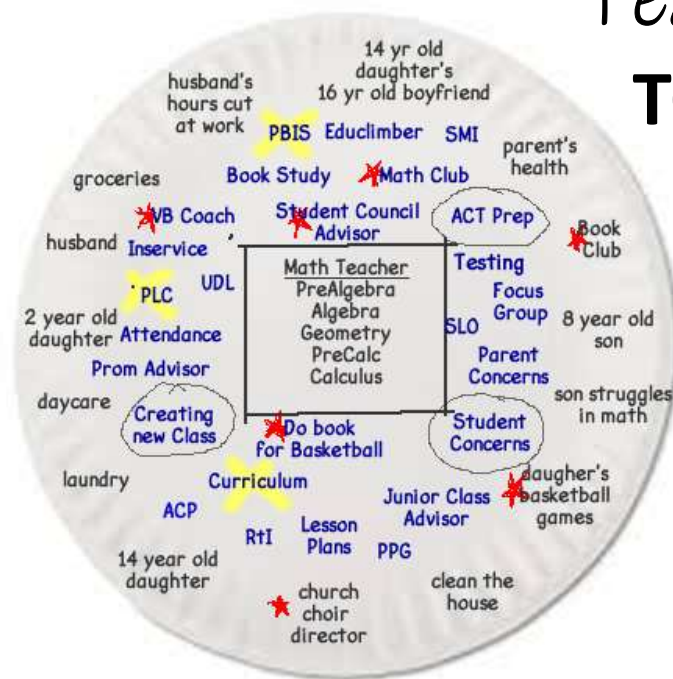
With the lightest marker, put an "X" on the things that drain you-- tasks and expectations that consume energy and time without giving much in return. These are likely things that do not align with your values.



Teacher in 2009



Teacher TODAY



It's not your imagination- additional expectations are real.

Based on teacher expectations in 2007 and 2017 at a small rural district.

Source of stress:

3. Limited sense of autonomy and decision-making power.

“The perfect storm of occupational stress appears to be a combination of two malignant facts:

- a great deal is expected of you and**
- you have no control over whether you will perform well.”**

Brain Rules, by John Medina, 2009

Source of stress:

4. Teacher Social and Emotional Competence to manage stress and nurture a healthy classroom.

Source of Educator Stress:

- ✓ 1. School organization
- ✓ 2. Job demands
- ✓ 3. Limited autonomy & decision making
- 4. *Teacher social & emotional competence*



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**Educator
stress?**

**It's not
just you.**



Systemic factors in education create stress.

Educator stress and mental health is a systemic problem.

systemic- (adj.) relating to a system, especially as opposed to a particular part

It can't be seen as an individual's responsibility.



"Since we initiated regular staff development sessions, we've turned the school around 360 degrees."

How we've addressed teacher stress in the past

Suggestions in the 1990s:*

- Adjust your diet
- Exercise
- Relaxation techniques
- Develop a support network
- Take breaks; don't take work home with you



Teachers are still told to rely on self-help.

*"How to Get Unstressed," Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, UW-Madison, 1991.

Self care can't fix everything



=



Mental Health Continuum

SELF CARE & SOCIAL SUPPORT

PROFESSIONAL CARE

HEALTHY

Normal Functioning

Normal mood fluctuations.
Takes things in stride.
Consistent performance.
Normal sleep patterns.
Physically and socially active. Usual self-confidence
Comfortable with others.

REACTING

Common & Reversible Distress

Irritable/Impatient.
Nervousness, sadness, increased worrying.
Procrastination, forgetfulness. Trouble sleeping (more often in falling asleep) Lowered energy. Difficulty in relaxing. Intrusive thoughts.
Decreased social activity.

INJURED

Significant Functional Impairment

Anger, anxiety. Lingering sadness, tearfulness, hopelessness, worthlessness.
Preoccupation. Decreased performance in academics or at work. Significantly disturbed sleep (falling asleep and staying asleep).
Avoidance of social situations, withdrawal.

ILL

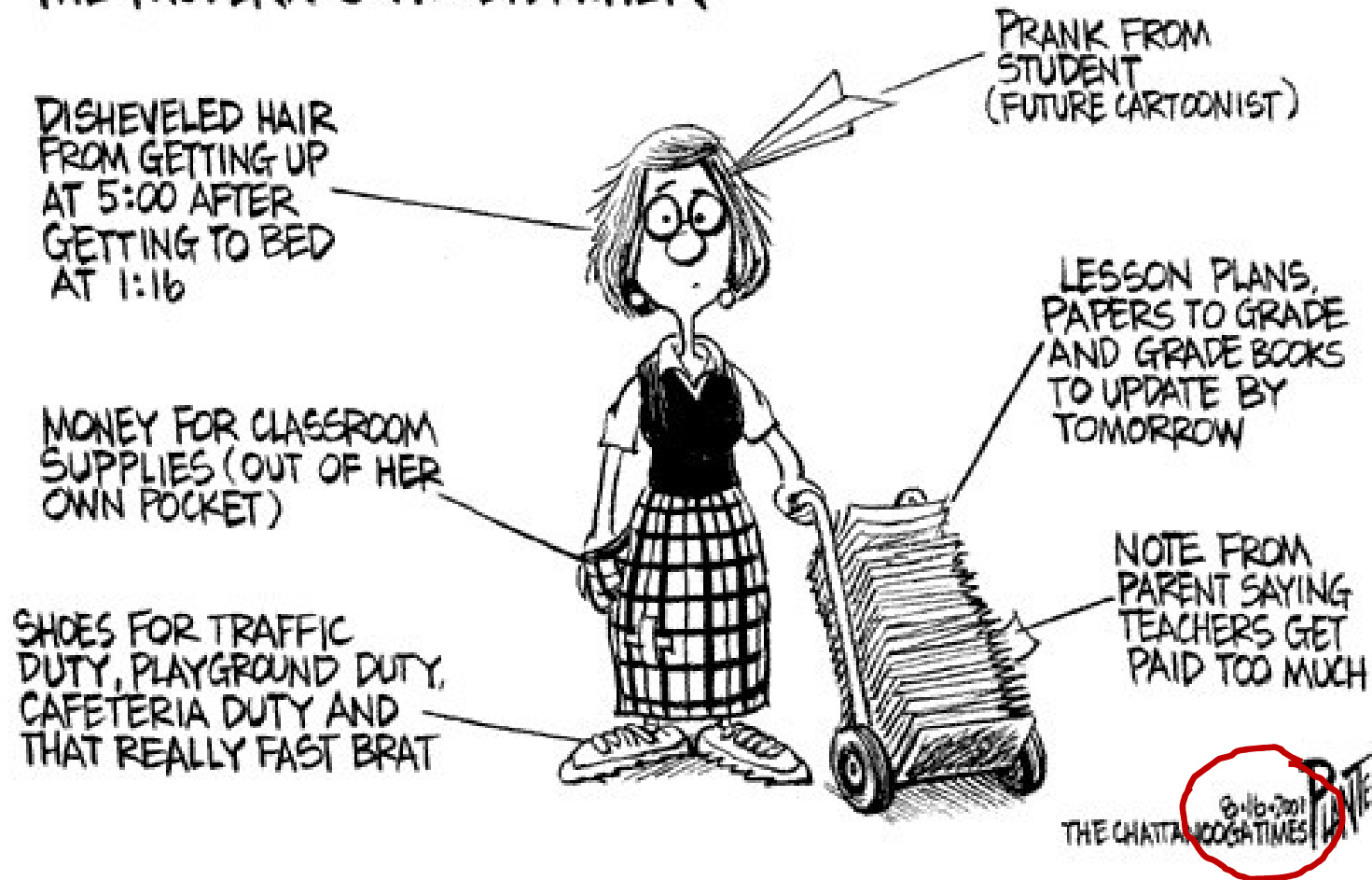
Clinical Disorder. Severe & Persistent Functional Impairment.

Significant difficulty with emotions, thinking High level of anxiety, Panic attacks. Depressed mood, feeling overwhelmed Constant fatigue. Disturbed contact with reality Significant disturbances in thinking Suicidal thoughts/intent/behaviour.



This MH Continuum is used by Canadian Armed Forces to identify early signs of mental health concerns that impact CAF members during their careers.

THE MODERN SCHOOLTEACHER



“Today, teaching is one of the most stressful occupations in the U.S.

High levels of stress are affecting teacher health and well-being, causing teacher burnout, lack of engagement, job dissatisfaction, poor performance, and some of the highest turnover rates ever.”



PennState



Robert Wood Johnson
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Advocate for

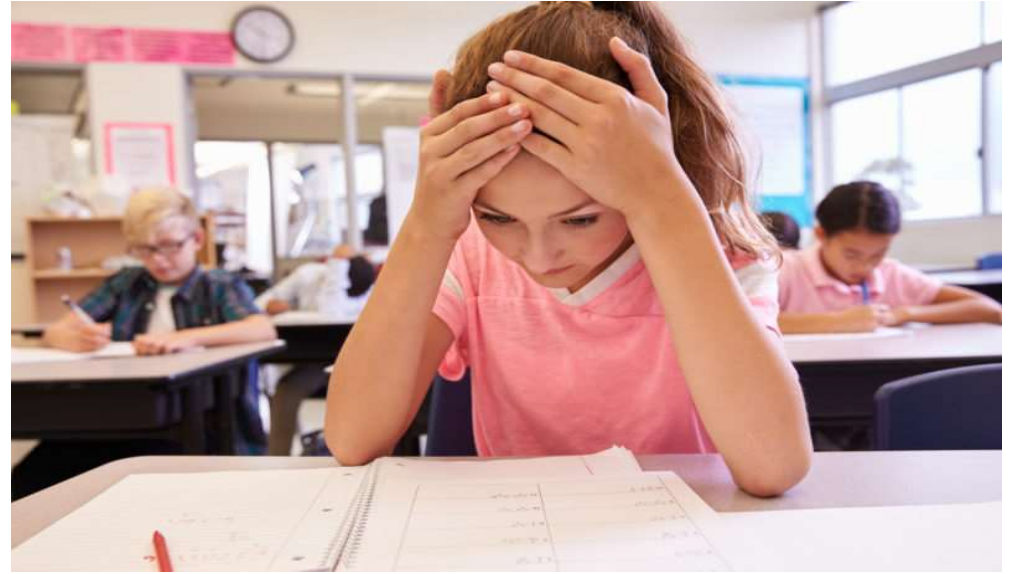
Less is more

**Respect as a
professional**



Bring sanity
back to the
profession

A teacher's work environment
is our students' learning environment.



Resilience Resources:

Article- 22 tools

10 Tips

Self Care Components

Resilience Building Plan

www.stretchedcounselor.com

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