

Reporting on COVID-19 Quarantines/Isolations, Curriculum Concerns and Mental Health Indicators

ATA Pandemic Research Study
Pulse Survey #4 (November 23 to November 27, 2020)



The Alberta Teachers' Association

www.teachers.ab.ca

Overview

As Alberta school communities ended the month of November 2020, the Association gathered information on the impact of widespread staff and student quarantines and/or isolations due to COVID-19 exposures. Specific attention was paid to the impact(s) that these quarantines and/or isolations were having on well-being, student learning, curriculum gaps and assessment challenges. The survey also explored Alberta school leaders' experiences and level of comfort with being required to undertake COVID-19 contact tracing activities within their school communities.

As with previous ATA pandemic pulse research surveys, this study follows the impact of the pandemic on teachers' mental and physiological well-being, with specific consideration given to measuring levels of anxiety and depression using an indicator scale designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹

This fourth ATA pandemic pulse survey was conducted during the last week of November 2020, when 18 per cent of all Alberta schools were reporting COVID-19 infections, with over 1,700 active cases of the disease in K to 12 schools. During this time, 155 Alberta schools had declared outbreaks (2 to 4 cases), while 110 schools were placed on watch status (5+ cases). Since September there have been 293 reports of in-school transmission and 51 school closures.

The Government of Alberta declared a public health emergency on November 24, which resulted in the closing of in-person learning for students in Grades 7 to 12 on November 30. By late November 2020, the government had lost its capacity to effectively contact trace over 80 per cent of the COVID-19 transmissions within Alberta communities.

As further mandatory work-from-home public health orders were declared across Alberta on December 8, 2020, Alberta teachers and school leaders were directed not to work from home, but to continue work from their respective schools. Elementary school staff were ordered to remain in-person with their K to 6 students until the scheduled holiday break.

The Association is committed to monitoring and openly reporting on COVID-19 developments throughout the pandemic in support of students, their families, and Alberta teachers and school leaders, and in the broader interests of public education.

The ATA pandemic pulse research studies are the only systematic documentation of the conditions and experiences of Alberta's K to 12 public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as such will become an important part of the historic record.

¹ www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm



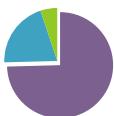
Three Key Findings (November 23 to 27)

1) COVID-19 Quarantines/Isolations 2) Curriculum Concerns 3) Mental Health Indicators

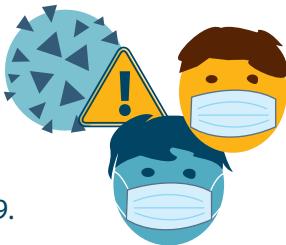
Reporting from 1,590 Alberta Teachers and School Leaders

1 COVID-19 Quarantines/Isolations

75%



of Alberta classrooms have had students moved into **quarantine and/or isolation** due to COVID-19.



"At times I had lost about half of all my students in my three classes. Recently we had to send home all of our grade ten and elevens."
– Alberta teacher

Teachers are **moderately to extremely concerned** about:

73%



student mental health

60%

student academic performance

"Huge impact on the quality and quantity of learning that has been difficult to catch up." – Alberta central office

1 in 3 Teachers

have been **quarantined and/or isolated** due to COVID-19 infections or exposures.



1 in 4 School Leaders

have been **quarantined and/or isolated** due to COVID-19 infections or exposures.

HALF of Alberta **school leaders** have had to directly **contact families** in their communities due to **COVID-19** exposure(s).

77% of **school leaders** indicate some level of **discomfort** at being asked to take on **contact tracing** activities.

"I'm not a public health official. I cannot rectify their concerns, expedite the process, share what I don't know, respect privacy already violated by social media while being open and transparent. These are unrealistic expectations and our admin team has worked countless evenings, weekends and statutory holidays doing this [contact tracing] aspect of working during COVID-19." – Alberta school principal

2 Curriculum Concerns

64%

of teachers state that **many students** in their **classes** are **struggling** with learning.

82%

of teachers state that student **assessment practices** are a **challenge** in the pandemic.
Online teachers--> strong agreement (91%).



*...do not think that Alberta schools will be ready to **implement** new programs of study in September 2021.*

9 in 10
Teachers

*...have **no confidence** in the new processes for **curriculum development** just introduced by the Minister of Education.*

3 Mental Health Indicators



92%

of respondents reporting **fatigue**



91%

of respondents reporting **stress**



62%

of respondents 'extremely' concerned about **teacher mental health**

"I feel exhausted, depleted and discouraged every day. The toll this is taking on teacher mental health and wellness is a detriment and completely unsustainable. I love my students and want to be a positive light for them; that's why I go to school everyday. I am considering leaving this system and profession...this could have been avoided by better planning, funding, resources, prioritizing and support." – Alberta teacher

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Measuring Teacher & School Leader Mental Health

More than half the days, or nearly every day, this past week...

52%

...feeling nervous, anxious or on edge

35%

...feeling down, depressed or hopeless

"The current scenario is not sustainable. We don't have enough drivers for busses, teachers for classrooms, custodians for schools, administrative assistants to answer phones. I'm exhausted and hopeless." – Alberta school principal

1,590 Alberta teachers and school leaders. Alberta Pandemic Pulse Survey (November 23 to 27, 2020).
Random stratified sample and longitudinal chain-referral sample.

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

Further information about the Association's research is available from

Dr Philip McRae at the Alberta Teachers' Association; e-mail: research@ata.ab.ca.



The Alberta
Teachers' Association

Full Data Set (November 23 to 27, 2020)

1. How are you feeling?



Value	Percent	Responses
Very Unhappy	13.1%	206
Somewhat Unhappy	35.6%	560
Neither Happy or Unhappy	35.3%	556
Somewhat Happy	13.5%	213
Very Happy	2.5%	40
Totals:		1,575

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

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Responses
I feel isolated. Count Row %	97 6.2%	372 23.6%	112 7.1%	694 44.0%	302 19.2%	1,577
I feel hopeful. Count Row %	242 15.3%	591 37.4%	406 25.7%	300 19.0%	40 2.5%	1,579
I feel stressed. Count Row %	29 1.8%	75 4.7%	42 2.7%	577 36.5%	859 54.3%	1,582
I feel exhausted by the end of the day. Count Row %	26 1.6%	77 4.9%	31 2.0%	376 23.8%	1,073 67.8%	1,583
Totals						1583
Total Responses						

Mental Health Indicators - Anxiety/Depression

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

	Not at all	Several days	More than half the days	Nearly every day	Responses
...having little interest or pleasure in doing things? Count Row %	352 22.2%	525 33.2%	380 24.0%	326 20.6%	1,583
...feeling down, depressed, or hopeless? Count Row %	380 24.0%	647 40.9%	317 20.0%	238 15.0%	1,582
...feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge? Count Row %	210 13.3%	549 34.7%	325 20.6%	497 31.4%	1,581
...not being able to stop or control worrying? Count Row %	352 22.2%	535 33.8%	301 19.0%	397 25.0%	1,585
Totals Total Responses					1585

Scoring and Estimation

The items in this measurement scale on depression and anxiety are drawn directly from a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) mental health survey instrument.

The first two questions (interest or pleasure in doing things / feeling down, depressed, or hopeless) utilize the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) scale and measures depression. The last two questions (feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge / not being able to stop or control worrying)utilize the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale and measures anxiety.

Technical Notes:

For each scale, the answers are assigned a numerical value: not at all = 0, several days = 1, more than half the days = 2, and nearly every day = 3. The two responses for each scale are added together.

A sum equal to three or greater on the PHQ-2 has been shown to be associated with diagnoses of major depressive disorder. A sum equal to three or greater on the GAD-2 has been shown to be associated with diagnoses of generalized anxiety disorder. For adults with scores of 3 or greater, further evaluation by a clinician or other health professional is generally recommended.

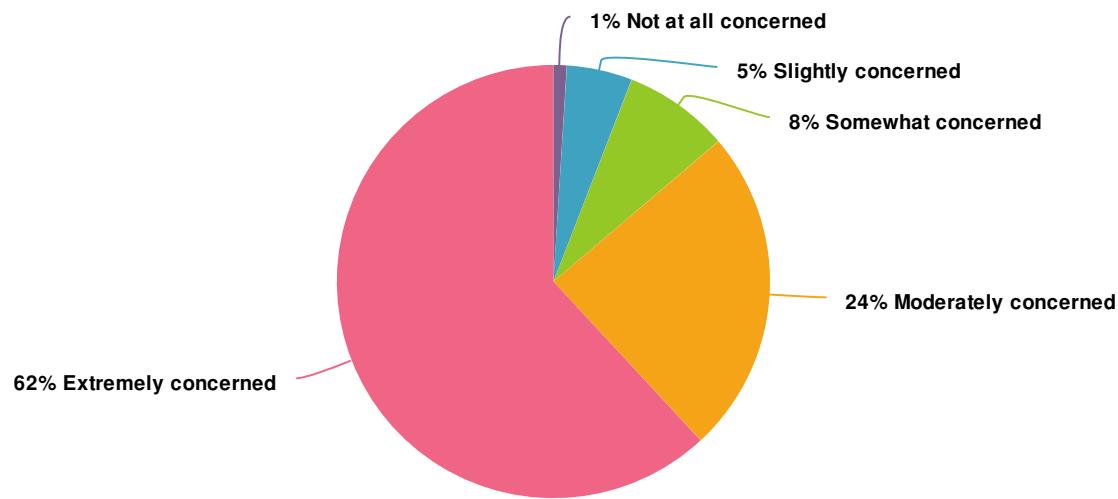
Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/mental-health.htm>

4. How often are you able to achieve the following within your daily schedule?

	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Responses
Sleep. I am getting sufficient sleep (quality and quantity) every night. Count Row %	173 10.9%	504 31.8%	555 35.0%	277 17.5%	78 4.9%	1,587
Nutrition. I am eating regularly to improve concentration and performance. Count Row %	53 3.3%	340 21.4%	510 32.1%	507 31.9%	177 11.2%	1,587
Hydration. I am drinking water while working and staying hydrated throughout the day. Count Row %	178 11.2%	527 33.2%	440 27.7%	316 19.9%	126 7.9%	1,587
Movement. I am setting aside time throughout my day - at regular intervals - to be physically active. Count Row %	241 15.2%	578 36.6%	410 25.9%	256 16.2%	96 6.1%	1,581

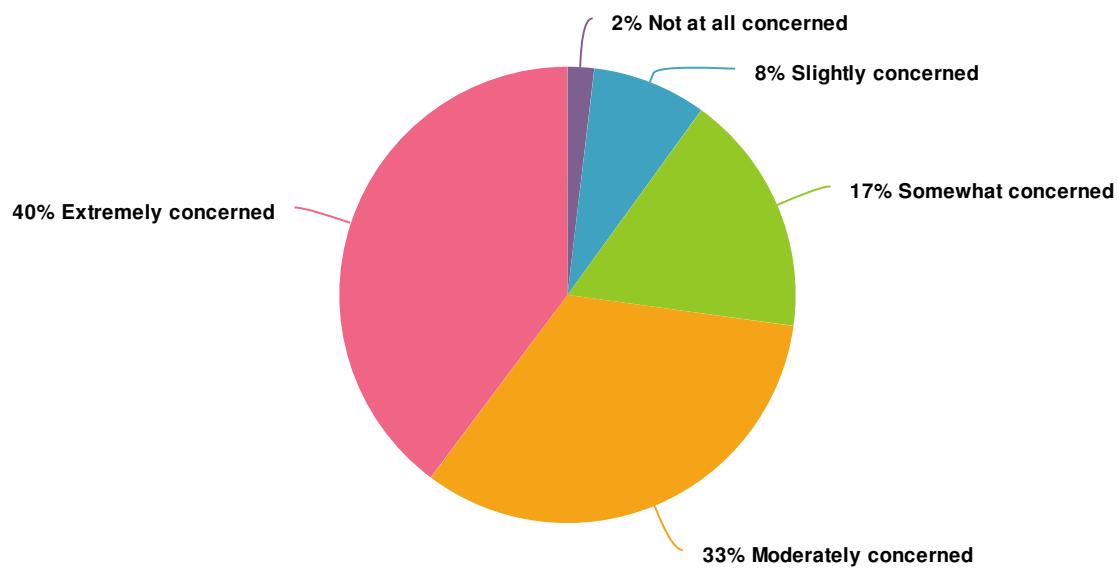
	Never	Infrequently	Sometimes	Frequently	Always	Responses
Prioritization. I am able to keep up with my tasks/electronic communication and can determine which tasks are most pressing. Count Row %	100 6.3%	349 22.0%	651 41.1%	387 24.4%	97 6.1%	1,584
Totals Total Responses						1587

5. Teacher mental health (anxiety/depression) - Level of concern?



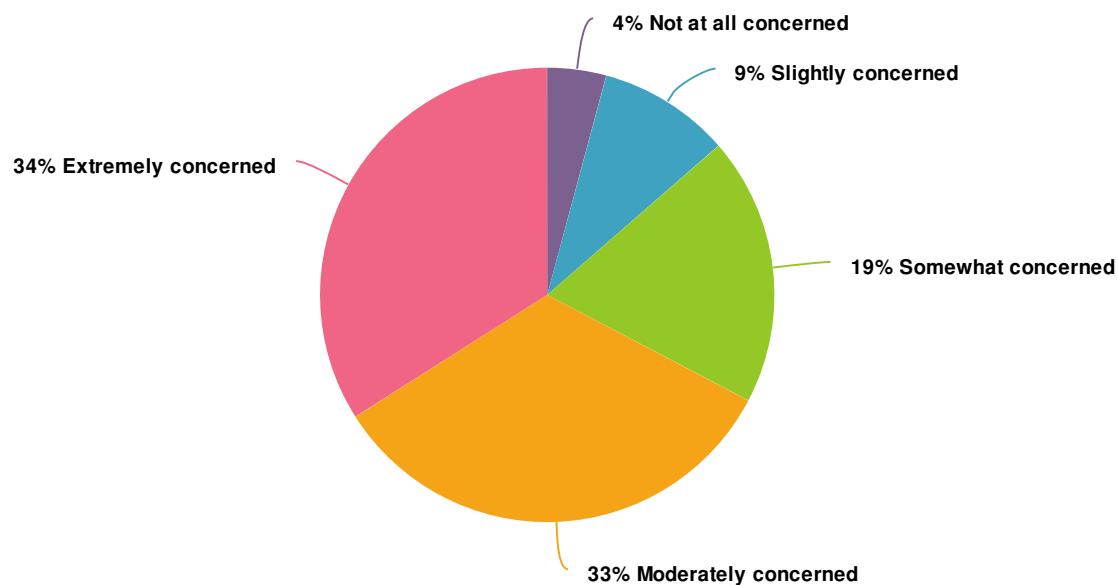
Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	1.0%	16
Slightly concerned	4.9%	77
Somewhat concerned	7.9%	125
Moderately concerned	24.3%	382
Extremely concerned	61.9%	975
Totals: 1,575		

6. Student mental health (anxiety/depression) - Level of concern?



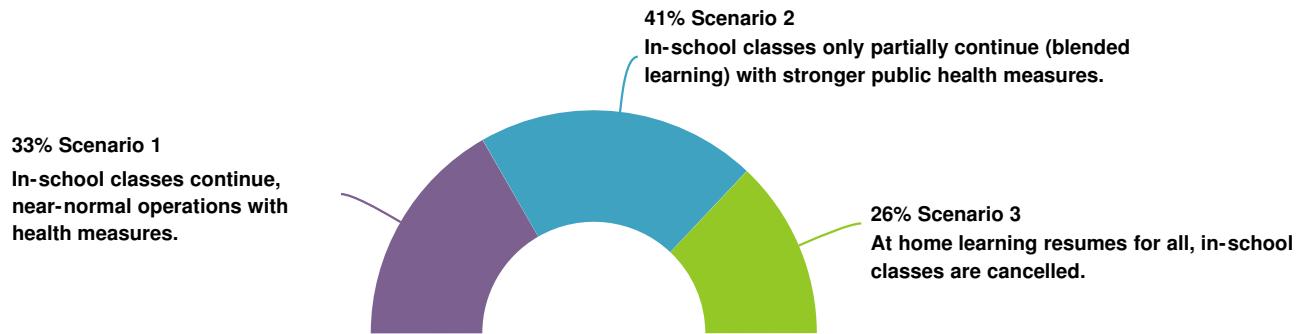
Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	1.9%	30
Slightly concerned	8.1%	127
Somewhat concerned	17.2%	270
Moderately concerned	33.1%	521
Extremely concerned	39.8%	626
Totals: 1,574		

7. Personal basic health needs (sleep/nutrition/physical health) - Level of concern?



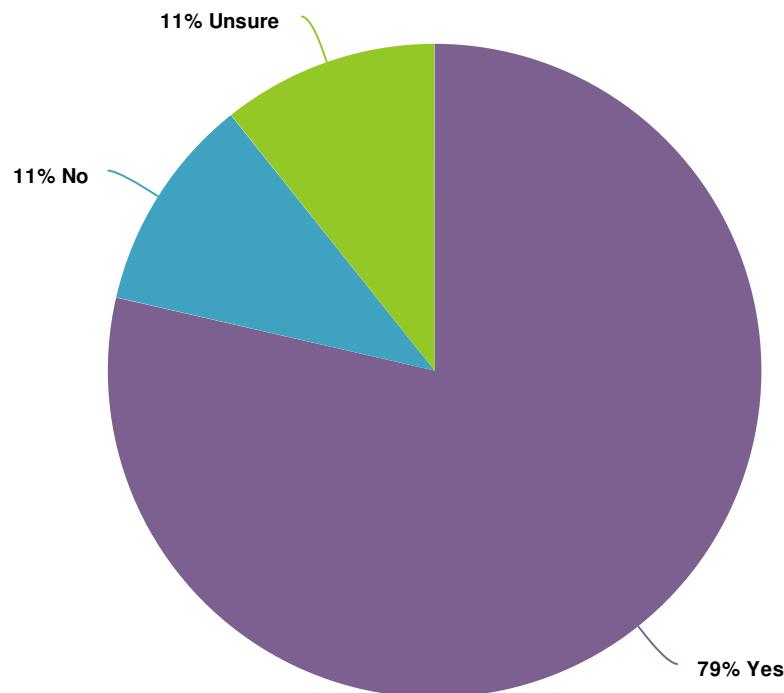
Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	4.2%	66
Slightly concerned	9.4%	146
Somewhat concerned	19.1%	297
Moderately concerned	33.3%	518
Extremely concerned	34.0%	530
Totals: 1,557		

8. Given the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, which of the following scenarios do you think would be best for your school community at this time?



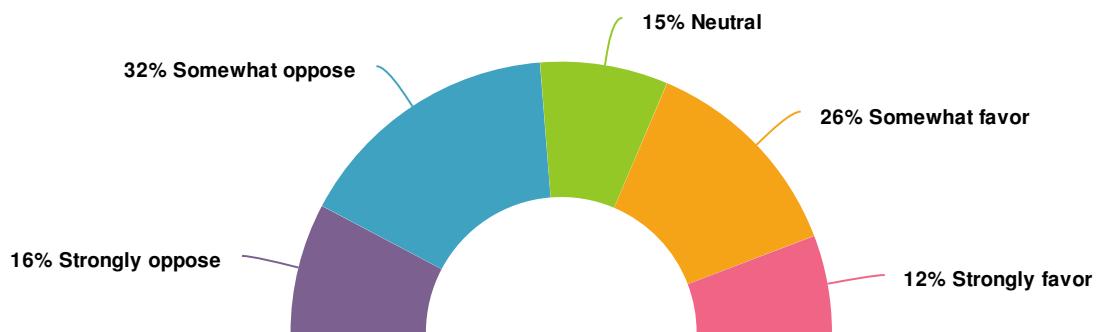
Value	Percent	Responses
Scenario 1 – In-school classes continue, near-normal operations with health measures.	33.4%	527
Scenario 2 – In-school classes only partially continue (blended learning) with stronger public health measures.	40.7%	643
Scenario 3 – At home learning resumes for all, in-school classes are cancelled.	25.9%	409
Totals: 1,579		

9. Do you believe stronger public health measures (such as closures of non-essential business and/or more stringent restrictions) should be considered in Alberta at this time?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	78.6%	1,229
No	10.7%	168
Unsure	10.7%	167
Totals: 1,564		

10. To what extent would the community where you live oppose or favor stronger COVID-19 public health measures?



Value	Percent	Responses
Strongly oppose	15.5%	241
Somewhat oppose	32.0%	499
Neutral	15.3%	239
Somewhat favor	25.6%	399
Strongly favor	11.6%	181
Totals: 1,559		

Representative Qualitative Comments n=1200+

What other questions/concerns/issues would you like to share?

“ Please help us. I know you are trying your best, just please don't give up. ”
11/21/2020 Response id: 12

“ We are desperate for more EA support! ”
11/21/2020 Response id: 27

“ While I am normally a proponent of year-end exams, I believe strongly that they should be canceled this year. The curriculum revisions being proposed and the teacher participation requested seems little more than a sham. I have no faith that the current government views teacher consultation as anything other than a box they need to check. The directions suggested so far for curriculum change worry me greatly. ”
11/21/2020 Response id: 100

“ I feel exhausted, depleted and discouraged every day. The toll this is taking on teacher mental health and wellness is a detriment and completely unsustainable. I love my students and want to be a positive light for them; that's why I go to school everyday. I am considering leaving this system and profession...this could have been avoided by better planning, funding, resources, prioritizing and support. ”
11/21/2020 Response id: 120

“ I have a large class with no educational assistant support. One third of my students are two years below grade level in both language arts and math. It is exhausting trying to meet of all their needs. ”
11/21/2020 Response id: 284

“ Teachers do not have the physical, cognitive nor emotional stamina to even consider looking at new programs of study, even though it is HUGELY important work. We're just trying to survive and our protocols and environment changes daily as COVID cases are identified. We have to be ready to change at a moment's notice on top of already doing so many new things ”
11/21/2020 Response id: 319

“ As an online teacher, my students have LESS access to resources for mental health. These students who have selected HUB learning are doing so out of worry for Covid and the Pandemic...of all students, their mental health should be paramount. We need more mental health caregivers within our schools and online schools! ”
11/23/2020 Response id: 687

“ We are people and we are struggling. I don't want to be called a super hero, I want someone to say "we're here, what do you need from us? How can we lighten this load? We see you and hear you." And much like us, the kids are angry and stressed. They are just waiting for the other shoe to drop. I have never seen anger in the kids like I'm seeing this year. There is a divide between the kids who go home and their parents tell them the virus is a hoax, masks are stupid, our freedoms are being attacked! ”
11/24/2020 Response id: 871

Community and connection are vital to us getting through these treacherous times. I am in full support of us keeping schools open, but how did we by-pass a scenario 2 for September and go right to "business as usual"?

11/21/2020 Response id: 352

The phrase "death by a thousand cuts" describes me right now. There isn't one thing that is overwhelming me but a bunch of little things.

11/21/2020 Response id: 358

I have thought more about leaving the profession this year than in my previous 5 years combined.

11/21/2020 Response id: 376

I shouldn't have 31 grade 4 students during a pandemic.

11/21/2020 Response id: 404

The current situation is unsustainable. I find myself wondering, everyday, when I get COVID from teaching in a high school (due to unsafe working conditions) and end up on a ventilator in the ICU (if there's even room), what will happen to my family? Everyday.

11/21/2020 Response id: 424

Junior highs need to be the focus right now. They were ignored at the beginning and continue to be ignored. I belong to 4 cohorts in my school and in the next semester I will belong to 5. I believe that is way too many.

11/21/2020 Response id: 425

Believe more support should be given to both mental health concerns and realistic assessment practices.

11/21/2020 Response id: 441

I am impressed with the planning that was done regarding health protocols in my school division. I believe I am doing all that I know at this time to reduce health risks for students and myself. Students are receiving quality instruction despite limitations. The extra time needed for safely handling materials and for sanitizing hands and desks, chairs, surfaces throughout the day take up a significant number of minutes, which impacts instructional time. Many of these responsibilities fall to the teacher which has left me exhausted by the end of the school day.

11/21/2020 Response id: 459

Contact tracing and hearing from AHS is taking too long. I had already returned from my isolation by the time I got an email from AHS. If we are supposed to be most contagious in the first 4-6 days, we must know sooner.

11/21/2020 Response id: 462

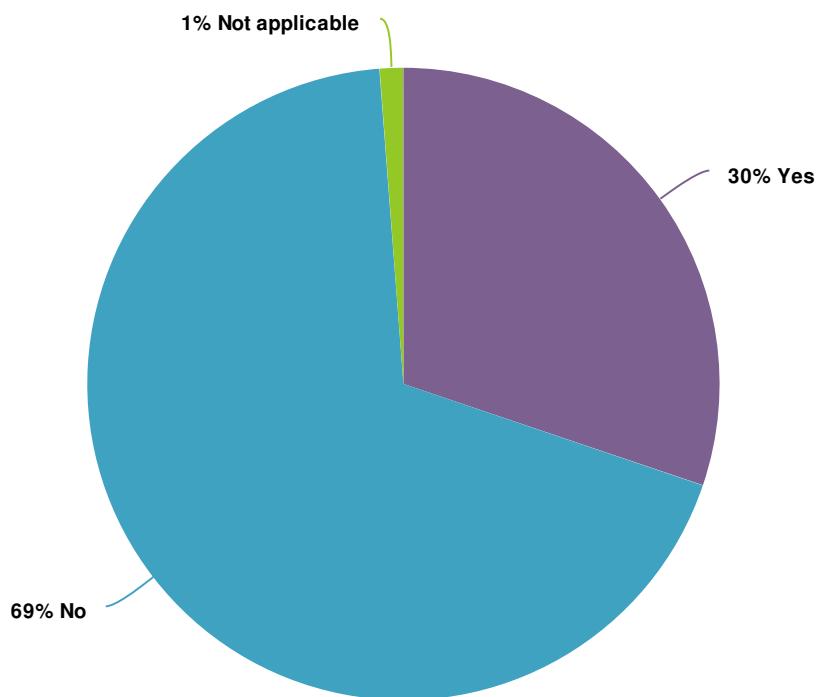
I have no confidence in the minister of education. I have no confidence in the Premier having the education of our students as a priority. I have no confidence in the Premier caring about the educators either.

11/21/2020 Response id: 466

The integration of high needs students without adequate support is alarming. It has an extremely negative and far-reaching impact.

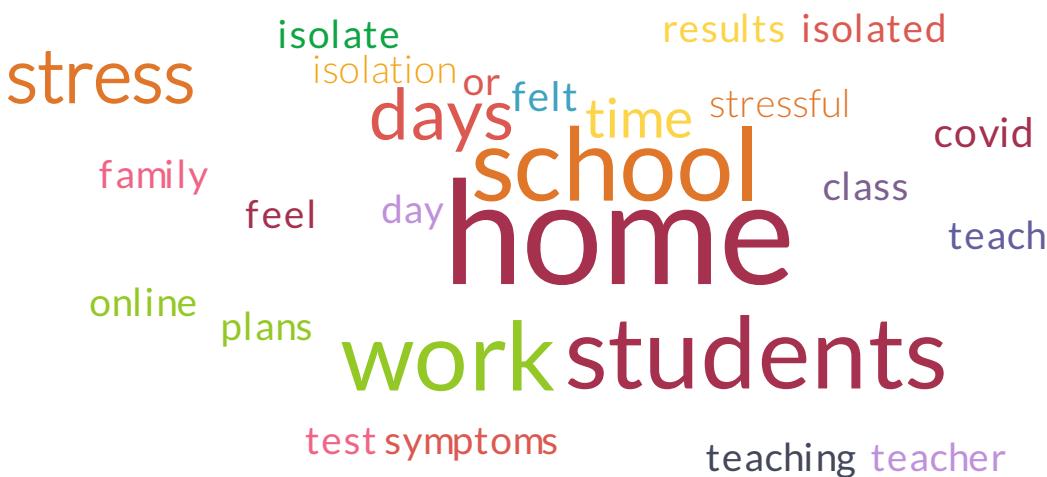
11/21/2020 Response id: 470

11. As a teacher, have you had to quarantine at home for 14 days and/or isolate for symptoms because of COVID-19?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	30.2%	433
No	68.6%	985
Not applicable	1.2%	17
Totals: 1,435		

12. If possible, please share the impact of this quarantine/isolation for you personally or professionally as a teacher.



1 14 day quarantine due to a covid-positive student in my class meant creating two weeks of sub-plans, fielding emails and phone-calls daily, communicating with students and parents from home. I work more from home to keep up during quarantine than when I am at school!

2 I had to isolate with my child who is in Kindergarten. I am still expected to teach because I am an online teacher however my son is also supposed to participate in online school since his whole class is isolating. Since we are isolating I cannot ask for help meaning I feel like I am neglecting his needs all day and I feel like an awful mother. It's causing great anxiety for me.

19 I have to quarantine twice for 14 days. The second time I went on quarantine the day I came out of the first one. I felt depressed and sad confined in the house and not being able to go even for a walk.

92 I had to quarantine during the first week of summer vacation, however the isolation period was extremely lonely. I felt abnormally high levels of stress anxiety and guilt.

105 I had to stay home for 2 weeks due to contracting COVID-19. Everyone in my household (my family) had it too. We are not sure where we got it. I felt very worried about passing it on to others (staff/students) at school, as well as others in my community, and I was extremely worried about my parents getting sick. Thankfully it appears no one got sick from me, and no one else at school had to quarantine due to the timing of my symptoms appearing (PD Day, long weekend, etc). It was a nerve-wracking two weeks.

I had to wait a week to hear from AHS, and two different people from AHS contacted me again to clarify the details about who I was close to at school, and whether we followed all proper procedures. While waiting, my principal was very supportive, but I still felt worried most of the two weeks, including the first week when I was feeling most symptomatic and fatigued. I was not clear about whether I needed to keep providing sub plans while sick or from school. I felt very "out of the loop" when I returned. Since my family was all isolating with me at the same time, I didn't get much rest as I was also caring for them and doing all the necessary things at home (which I usually do). I returned feeling worried and stressed about what others (staff/students) would say or think. It was not a restful two weeks.

164 Keeping distant from my family while still taking care of my house was difficult. Also, I was up until nearly midnight each day making updated sub plans, as my units and my classes are pretty interactive and dependent on how far each day gets us. Multiple subs were necessary, so this made it a bit more time consuming, and one day there was no sub available, so I had to leave instructions for my colleagues. Sub planning was very stressful in my extended absence.

186 My wife had to take on all responsibilities with our dog for walks and appointments. She had to do all grocery shopping and take on more than her share of work because I couldn't leave the house. My team at school had to alter instructional plans because I wasn't there as the learning leader and only full-time Phys. Ed. teacher to prepare materials and spaces for planned activities. This has resulted in shifting several aspects of our year plan to adjust.

204 It felt like house arrest and my teaching load actually increased as I was required to teach from home.

233 Very worried and stressed. Upset that my colleagues had to cover for me because there were no substitutes available.

277 The isolation meant I lost sick days. I only have a limited number since I'm new to the division. I fear I might run out and be forced to take time off without pay. This has caused my stress and anxiety to increase as my income is our only income at this time.

311 Personally: increases isolation, have to rely on others to help with my kids (to & from school/day home) and get things like groceries Professionally: unable to swing by physical building to pick up resources.

357 It was actually a relief because being at school is the most stressful part of my life so I was glad to isolate because it gave me a break I clearly wouldn't get unless I was sick. Even saying that feels sad though.

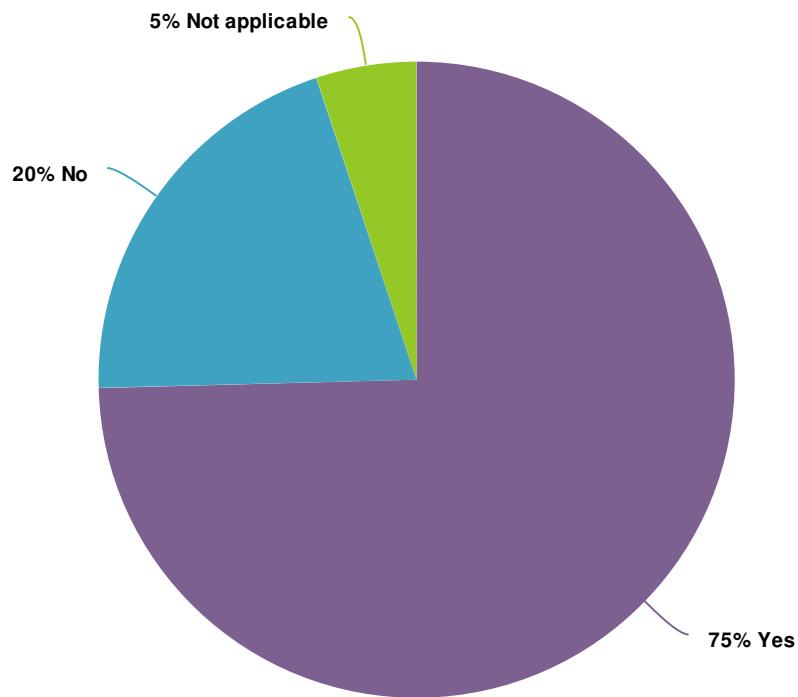
424 My quarantine resulted from a positive case in one of my classes. I was terrified because I'm Type 1 Diabetic. I also didn't want to bring COVID home to my wife and daughter. Even though I tested negative, the required isolation lead to depression and anxiety. I know it will happen again, but don't know when... I wish I was doing a safer job...

433 Professionally: Loss of connection with students; behind in curriculum; cut off from colleagues' support and school community; overwhelmed with planning for a sub and teaching online as well. Personally: completely cut-off from immediate family who have health risk concerns and constantly worried for them. After quarantine I have still not seen them; school has become my only in person contacts which is emotionally/mentally/spiritually unsustainable.

486 I feel overwhelmed. Which tasks to start - how well I am providing curriculum and contact with students/parents. The computer has brought in a tennis elbow condition, sheer exhaustion of "fake" happiness to try to have students engage. The knowing if the unknown and trying to put to practice the sanitation practices.

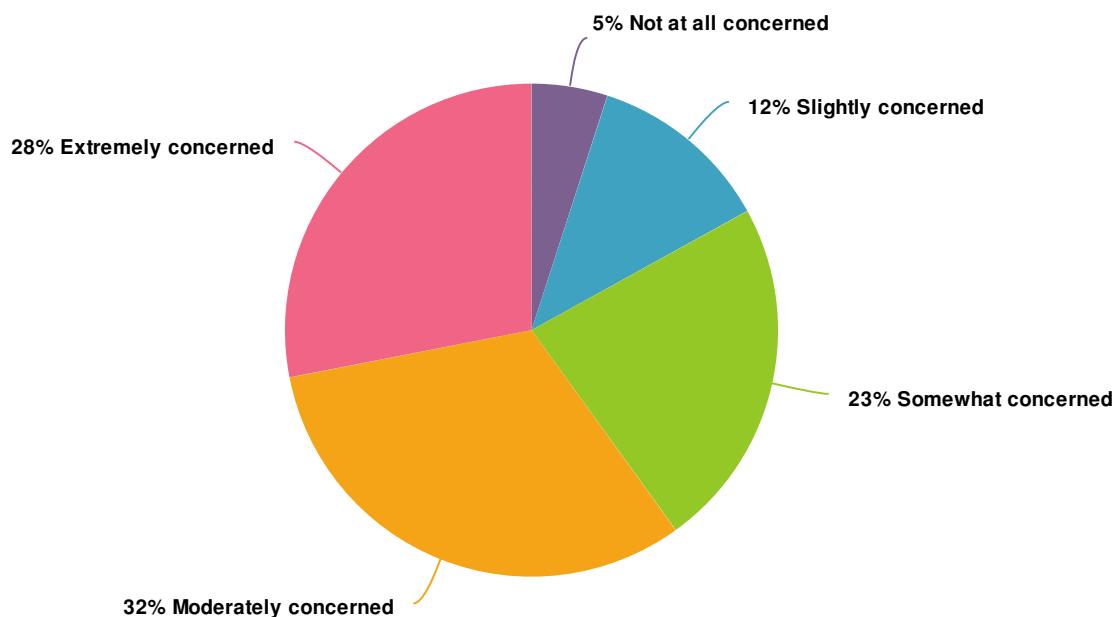
1021 Additional stress for myself in planning and pivoting to working from home. Further stress on my family that has to concern themselves about possible infection with COVID-19 from me.

13. Have you had any student(s) in your classes that had to quarantine at home for 14 days and/or isolate for symptoms because of COVID-19?



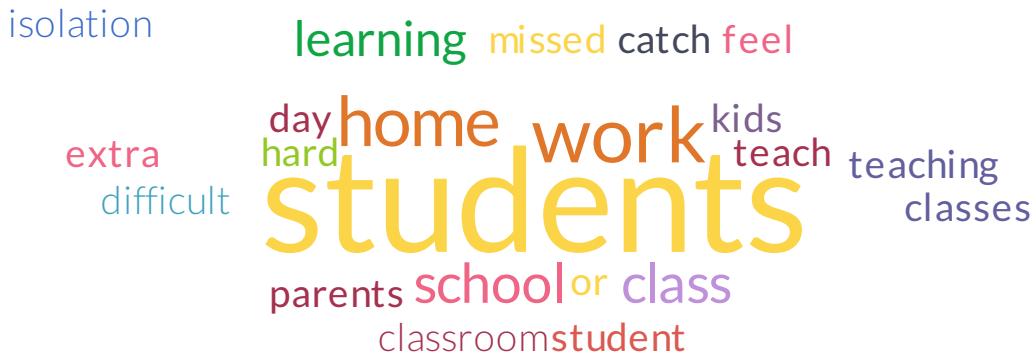
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	74.6%	1,071
No	20.3%	292
Not applicable	5.1%	73
Totals: 1,436		

14. Student academic performance - Level of concern?



Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	5.0%	78
Slightly concerned	12.0%	189
Somewhat concerned	23.1%	364
Moderately concerned	31.9%	502
Extremely concerned	28.1%	442
Totals: 1,575		

15. As a teacher, please share the impact of this quarantine/isolation for these student(s) in your classes, and/or for yourself.



3 They come back having to relearn routines, and missed content.

15 Lots of stress. Switching from in person to online in one day. Waiting for confirmation from AHS for multiple days.

29 Students really missed school and their friends. They engaged in online learning but struggled knowing many of their friends in other classes were still at school and they needed to be home.

47 Trying to balance online work for them so they are not missing key information and concepts. Students come back feeling confused and lost. Stress on teacher to get them caught up in time for assessments and progress reports.

60 The parents and students were all scared and nervous of their potential risk of being sick. Kids were worried about their classmates and we spent a lot of time working on their well being.

99 At times I had lost about half of all my students in my three classes. Recently we had to send home all of our grade 10s and 11s. We have set up excellent resources for them to continue learning and I think those who were sent away together are doing better than when individuals were sent.

116 Has increased level of anxiety among staff and students.

144 It was a real problem. Work was assigned - but most did not do the work. Trying to maintain contact was a continual challenge.

166 Takes large amounts of time to prepare materials for the students who are isolating. As soon as quarantine begins it seems parents forget that their child isn't my only student. I feel there needs to be a completely separate department dedicated to supporting "intermittently isolating" students.

178 Students come to school while symptomatic. I have not had a positive case in my classroom but students that stay home (or are sent home) are not doing their work at home. I am posting work and taking MORE of my limited time to post work that is not even being looked at (and I do not blame them one bit as they are sick and stressed too.) I teach a combined grade, for the first time, and I am quite simply drowning between the in class needs and trying to plan for quarantine and well being of my students.

188 There is fear and uncertainty as to did they pass covid onto other students or teachers.

214 Students frequent missing school and having to keep up. Posted more work online and feel like teaching online and in class, as well as frequent parent emails.

220 I am a special education teacher. Transitions and isolation are extremely difficult for my students. Trying to help them with synchronous learning is extremely stressful and time consuming.

250 During student isolation while waiting for test results, I was teaching in-person as well as managing online component. I had several students in staggered isolation, so my online component was unique to each student which caused me to spend evenings loading assignments and marking in addition to planning in-person classes. The stress of managing both online and in-person was overwhelming and I felt that I was unable to meet the needs of both online and classroom students.

296 I have a lot of students too afraid to come to school now. They're also terrified to admit if they're sick because they either do not want to be judged by peers or so not want to be sent home. The overall feeling towards school work is a mix of stress for core classes and apathy for anything not of the 4-core.

315 In a year when we are already behind academically we are now even further behind. It is very stressful.

325 Added stress and responsibilities. Continual contact with parents who are unfamiliar with technology we use in class. Pressure from admin to keep absent students caught up while continuing to teach regularly.

379 I've had students stressed where they are emailing every day feeling panicked about their work. I've also had students shut down and don't connect and then when they've got back to class they are stressed from the work they've missed.

394 Disruptive to families to have to isolate. There is added pressure and feeling of responsibility on the classroom teacher to keep kids from getting sick.(cold, flu, etc) Even if it is just a cold, so much is disrupted in people's lives.

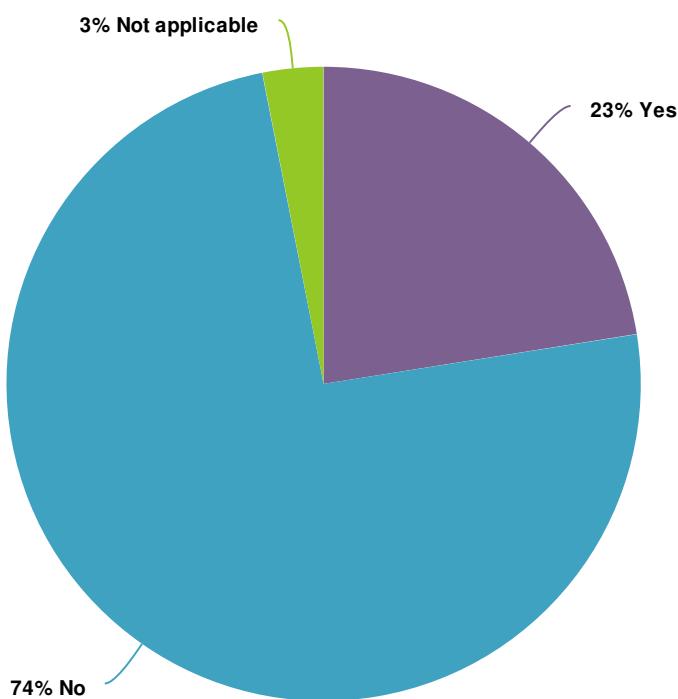
448 It is hard to build a cohesive classroom community with students constantly gone. Also, in Kindergarten students thrive with routine - when they miss so much school, it is for them to learn routine successfully.

475 I believe those that are active are struggling because their outlet, sports and other extracurricular, are gone. They are becoming more vocal about their frustrations. Their mental health is really being challenged.

502 I have a challenging class with many behaviors to control, many academically low students and 24 in my grade 1 class. This has been a very difficult year so far and I have considered taking a leave. There is little support for my students and with the increased supervision and cleaning tasks, I am exhausted with trying to keep up with [return to work].

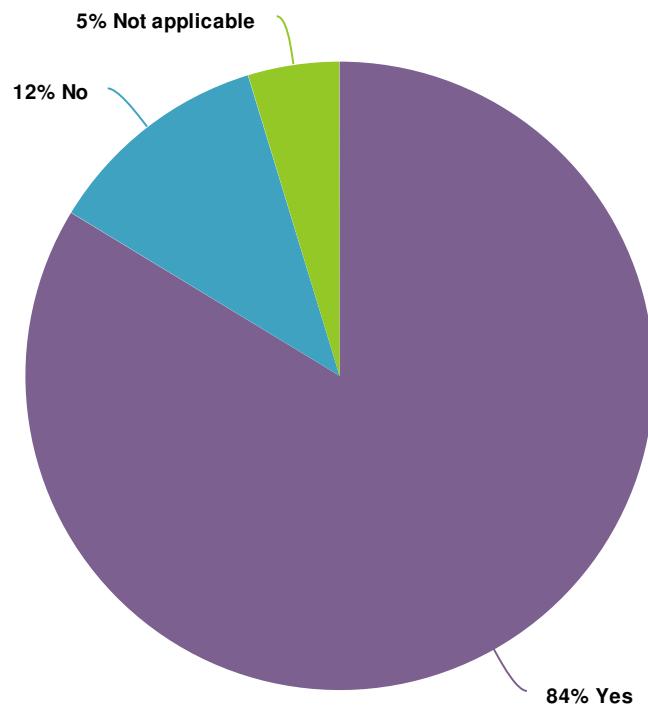
550 Adds to my workload because I have to provide at-home online learning for isolated students. I already have a heavier workload because of the restrictions on sharing materials between students, regular sanitizing, more supervision, etc.

16. As a school leader, have you had to quarantine at home for 14 days and/or isolate for symptoms because of COVID-19?



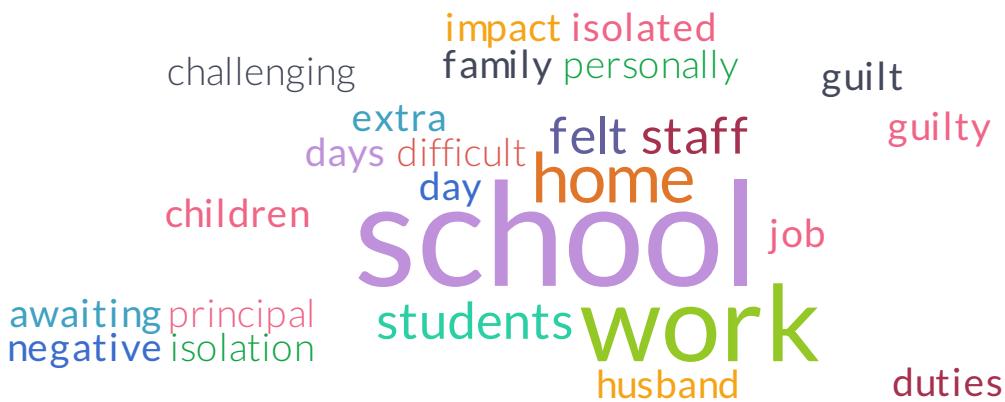
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	22.5%	29
No	74.4%	96
Not applicable	3.1%	4
Totals: 129		

17. As a school leader, have you had any student(s) in your school that had to quarantine at home for 14 days and/or isolate for symptoms because of COVID-19?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	83.7%	108
No	11.6%	15
Not applicable	4.7%	6
Totals: 129		

18. As a school leader, please share the impact of this quarantine/isolation for you personally or professionally.



158 My husband has had to take over many household duties, my principal has had to assume my responsibilities on site and I have had to try to fulfil my responsibilities while at home from isolation. In addition, previously when my principal was in isolation I had to do her job and my job during the tenure of her absence.

199 It was really hard to manage a school while not being in site.

237 Personally, I had to separate from my family. Professionally, I fell very far behind and felt like I was letting everyone down.

331 It was challenging but far better than remote learning. We M ST keep our schools open, for the wellbeing of all.

361 It was difficult both personally and professionally. I felt as though I couldn't do a good job and I was relying on others to do my work for me. Personally, I worried for my family.

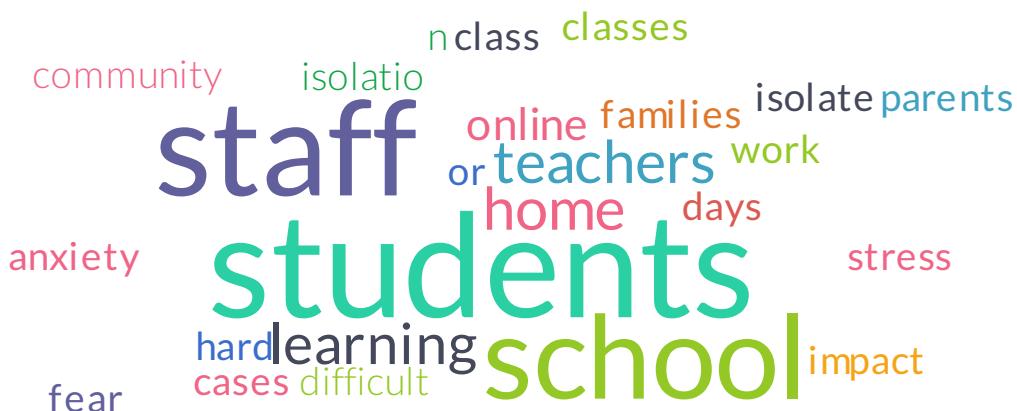
451 I felt disconnected and guilty that my colleagues were having to do more work because I was at home. I also worked the same number of hours while at home as I would have if I was at school. There is no shutting off the emails and the work. There is no reprieve even when sick.

603 Was very difficult to be away from the school during a very stressful time for staff and students.

724 As a school principal, being away from school is extremely challenging. The work of the school continues and others must step in and support the onsite demands.

903 My ability to respond to the needs of staff and students was greatly reduced.

19. If possible, please share your perspectives on the impact of quarantining/isolating student(s) and/or staff in your school community?



38 Students worry about falling behind.

46 We have had only 2 cases but the ability to maintain full staffing during isolation is tremendously difficult...we are in a rural setting and we don't have the same resources as an urban school division

68 It is hard to maintain healthy school cultures. Staff do not intermingle and prolonged social isolation is eating at the fabric of our school culture .

79 Huge impact on students staff and families. Many families are refusing to send kids to school because of fear and we cannot get them to come. This is having a huge detrimental effect because families can't switch to online.

85 Tremendous hours of work in evenings and on weekends to complete contact tracing on behalf of or in lieu of AHS. Keeping my school community aware and feeling safe to attend school is non-stop and exhausting. School leaders are bearing the brunt of this work. Staff are constantly hyper vigilant in keeping themselves, their colleagues, and their students safe from a virus. They are doing heroic work in trying to bring joy to the classroom in the midst of rising anxiety fear, and unknown future political decisions that have severe implications on their lives and their personal growth.

106 Students, staff and families are operating on a level of stress that is unmanageable.

119 Students can't work and some support family. Students can't play sports. Very difficult to track on large schools with multiple cases.

215 It is very difficult for staff as they are covering for those who have to quarantine as there are not enough subs to cover the teachers that have to stay home. It impacts those covering classes as they are not able to get to what they need to do for their own assignments.

243 It has had a huge impact to families and individual students and my staff. They are having to teach students in person and feel obligated to also teach more online. There has been little to no support from division office. They closed learning from home options early and now are changing semester two options for parents by closing. This is a direct change from what parents were told. There should have been province wide response not individual divisions as some are way behind others.

326 Teachers come to me highly stressed and in tears daily. Over 20 of the staff have talked to me about taking a health leave.

360 Students are devastated when they are required to isolate. Students who struggle with attendance and require supports have extreme difficulties returning to school after isolation. In some cases they have not returned at all.

363 This is absolutely brutal. The toll on my school has been tremendous. With the first 20 cases we have had to self-isolate 697 students, or 46.5% of our in-school students and 46 staff members, or 33.3% of our staff. We are a school of 1900 total students, split between the in-school and remote learners and 138 staff members. All the progress that we have made as a school in the last few years with our culture and climate, has been lost. Staff are at a very low place, morale wise. They are stressed, anxious and exhausted.

387 High stress for students - they want to be in school. High stress for staff - teaching online is stressful.

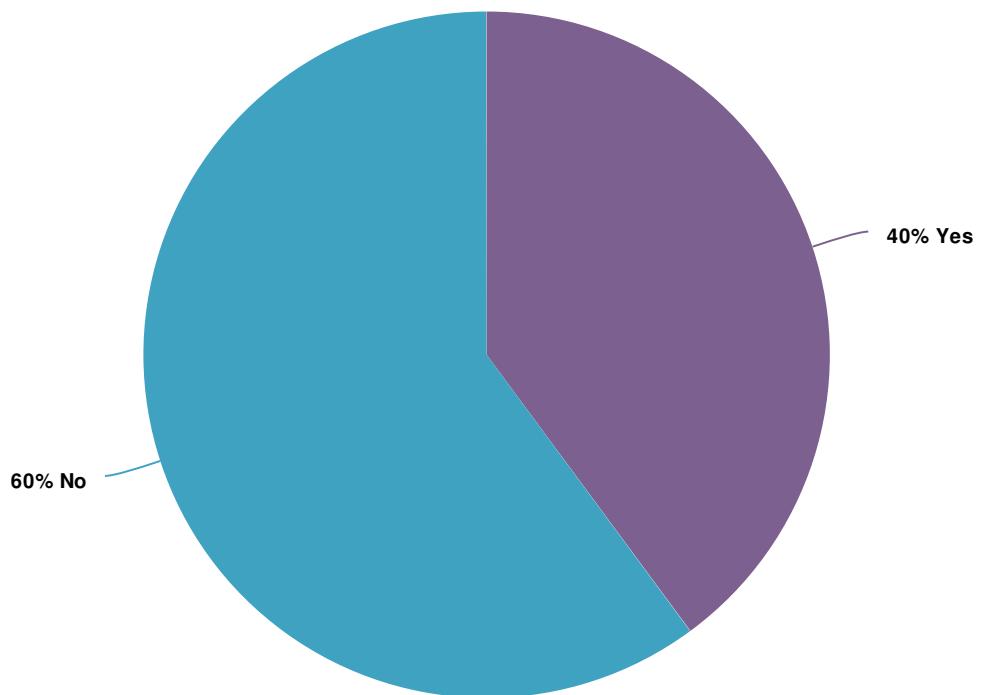
516 Learning decreases. Mental health issues increase.

586 The challenge is not the isolation, it is the shifting students back and forth from isolating. We have had some students who have required to isolate at least 3-4 times.

595 High stress. Parents and families make the school the target for their frustrations.

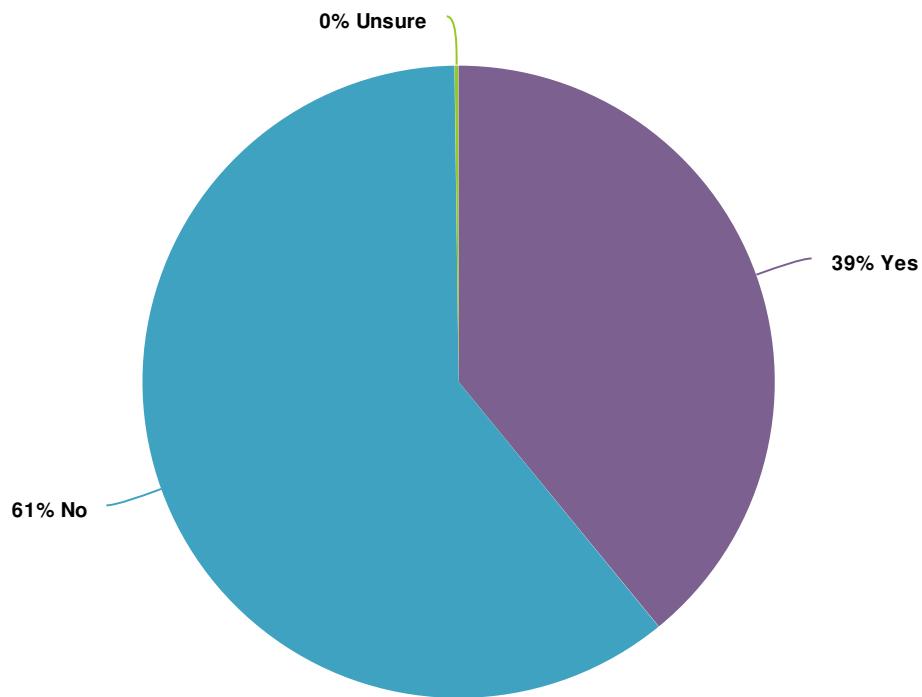
796 Makes running a school very difficult when 8 out of 20 staff are out.

20. Do you have school aged children in the Alberta K-12 education system?



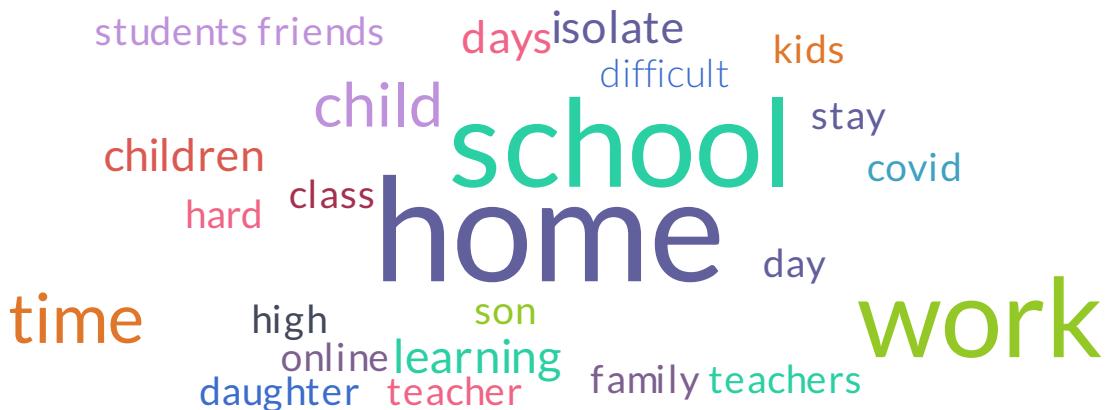
Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	39.9%	624
No	60.1%	938
Totals: 1,562		

21. Have your own school aged children had to quarantine at home for 14 days and/or isolate for symptoms because of COVID-19?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	39.1%	244
No	60.7%	379
Unsure	0.2%	1
Totals: 624		

22. If possible, please share your perspectives(personally/professionally) on the impact of the quarantining/isolating of your own children?



21 It was hard. I was unable to fully attend to them for I have over 87 grade 8 online students and 70 grade 9 students that I needed to devote all attention to. I am unable to keep up the balance for working online; I am working more than ever.

63 It is very difficult as both my wife and I are teachers, and neither of us likes missing work.

125 My son struggles to focus at home and quarantine had a negative impact on his learning.

135 VERY difficult to stay home with my child, manage our day, and plan for my students and their days.

166 Very difficult mentally and emotionally for my jr high aged child to isolate. Added to my stress because he was dying for human contact when I got home every day and yet I'm exhausted and stressed from being at work.

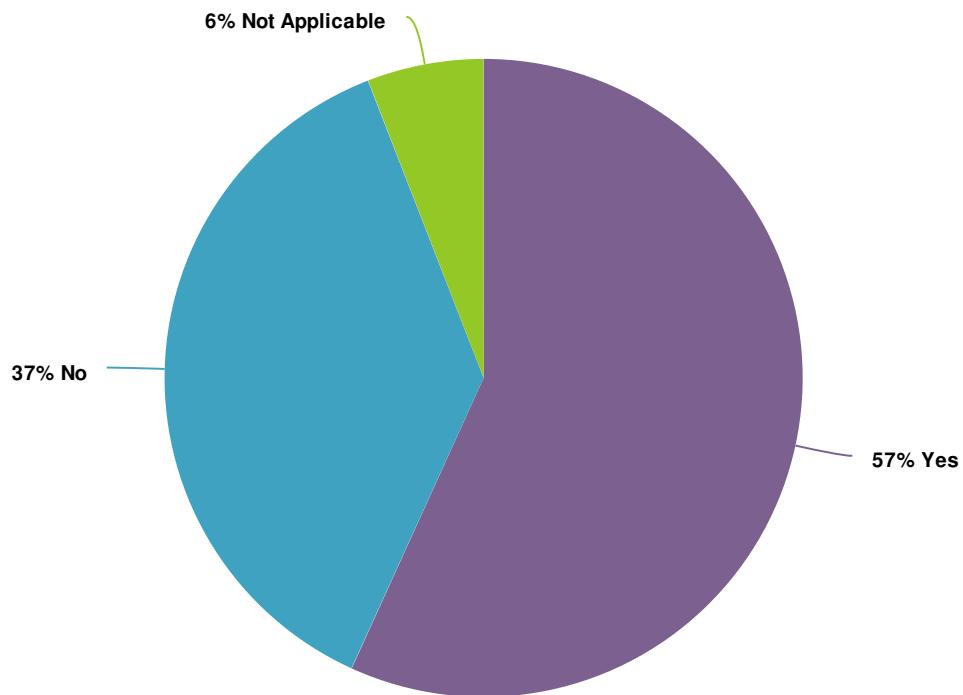
320 No one was able to stay home with them to help them learn.

397 My child coped quite well at home, and his teacher did an incredible job creating at home learning tasks and scheduling virtual classes. However, not being able to leave our property (and not having a yard) was extremely difficult for my child. He had no outlet for his energy. It also made it nearly impossible for me to complete my own work; it set me back with my marking and prep work and I have yet to catch up.

711 I missed work to stay with her as she cannot be watched by someone else with symptoms. I then got sick from her.

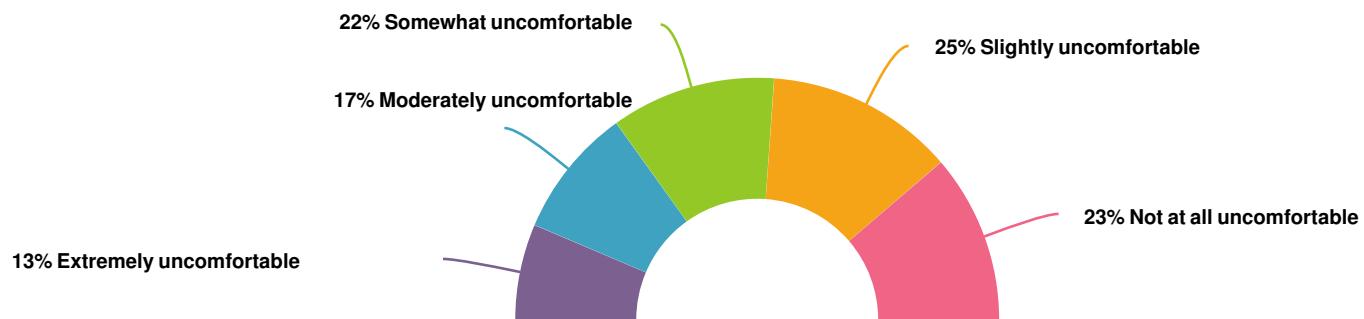
836 Balancing a child who needs supervision while away at work in my school building has been incredibly challenging. Have had to let so many things slide.... schoolwork for my child mostly at the expense of offering my high school student more of my energy. I feel that I am failing as a parent.

23. As a school leader, have you had to directly contact families as part of a COVID-19 exposure?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	56.8%	125
No	37.3%	82
Not Applicable	5.9%	13
Totals: 220		

24. As a school leader, what is your level of comfort being asked to contact parents/guardians of students in quarantine/isolation regarding COVID-19 exposures?



Value	Percent	Responses
Extremely uncomfortable	12.8%	28
Moderately uncomfortable	17.4%	38
Somewhat uncomfortable	22.0%	48
Slightly uncomfortable	25.2%	55
Not at all uncomfortable	22.5%	49

Totals: 218

25. As a school leader, please describe your level of comfort being asked to contact parents/guardians of students in quarantine/isolation regarding COVID-19 exposures?



Absolutely I was uncomfortable in calling my parents because this is not my bucket of work. I was uncomfortable because I felt like I was disappointing them as the leader of my school. I love my families and I want them to be safe. This is the work of AHS!!!

I already get yelled at all the time when I call parents to pick up their kids when they have symptoms.

This should be done by AHS.

I'm not a public health official. I cannot rectify their concerns, expedite the process, share what I don't know, respect privacy already violated by social media while being open and transparent. These are unrealistic expectations - and our admin team has worked countless evenings, weekends and statutory holidays doing this aspect of working during COVID-19.

I don't feel it should be my responsibility, but I don't have an issue doing it, if that is what is asked of me.

We are being asked to do something we are not trained to do and explain things we know very little about. However, given the disaster with contact tracking being done by AHS, our contact is better than nothing.

Families feel a sense of shame.

I understand the difficulties facing working parents but I also am concerned about the school staff and their families.

This should not be my job.

This should be the job of AHS contact tracers who receive ample training when school leaders received and email and were expected to be okay. It is outrageous!

Many parents have problems understanding spoken English and I worry they don't understand the message I am giving them.

I understand that AHS is overwhelmed and counting on school leaders to complete all the contact tracing and subsequent phone calls-it adds another burden to our already full plates and a layer of complexity; I feel that we are doing a task we aren't prepared for.

I was hired to be an educational leader not as a contact tracer. I get that desperate times and all but I feel like Government is saving money by having me taking on a second job. Surely there are enough people that have been put out of work that they can be co opted to be contact tracers.

All of a sudden (given the circumstances of a positive test) admin are expected to work overtime, with what in return? They spend hours away from their own family because of this huge responsibility. This really shouldn't be our job.

It is another add on to the position. On the one hand I appreciate the role in working within the school community. Being in a position of trust I suggest makes things go easier for everyone. On the other hand I already had a full time job. However, having to choose I would rather be the support to those in need than to shove it off to someone h the parents don't know.

I am used to calling parents. We maintain regular communications with parents on this subject, so the majority are comfortable talking to me about this subject.

AHS is so far behind I feel as though I have taken on some of their responsibilities.

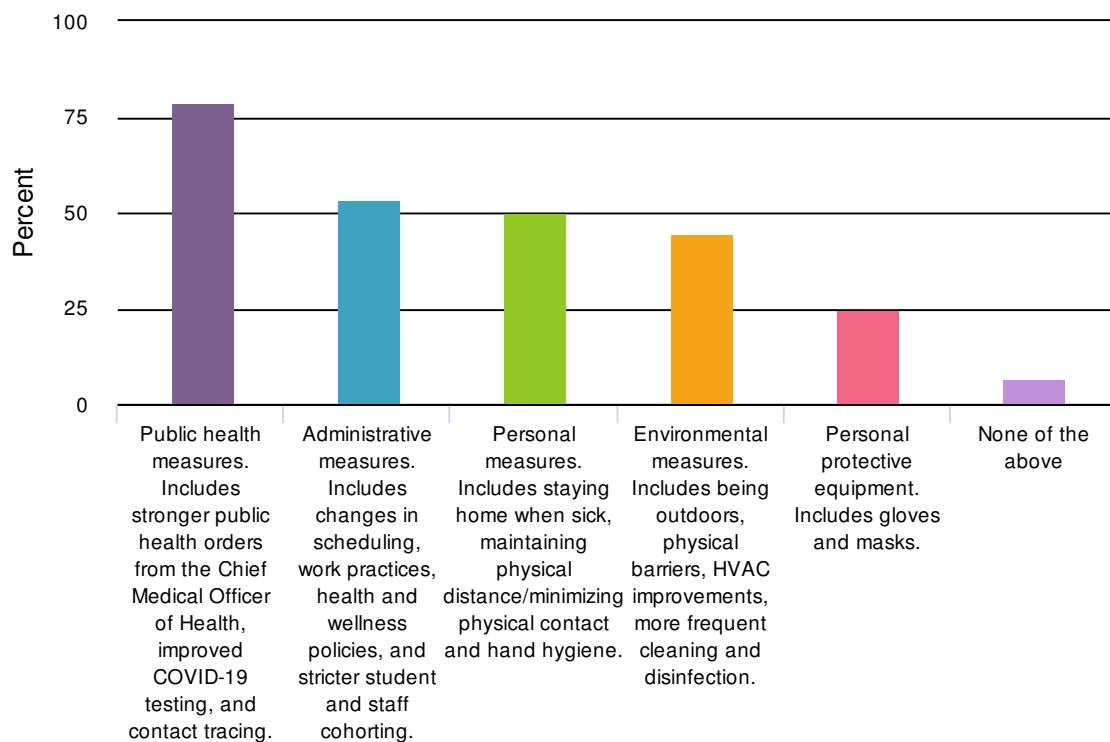
Parents become upset with you as an administrator. We take the blame for the measures. I am not uncomfortable doing this, just disappointed that this is happening. It is completely out of our control, in every aspect.

I work in a low income neighbourhood. The phone call for these families involves more than sending a child or a class home. It also requires the parents to find alternative care resulting in the loss of work and an added layer of complexity in meeting the needs of their families.

It is difficult because the parents are understandably frightened and have so many questions - that in the initial call cannot be answered because of time. A call back is almost always necessary and takes more time.

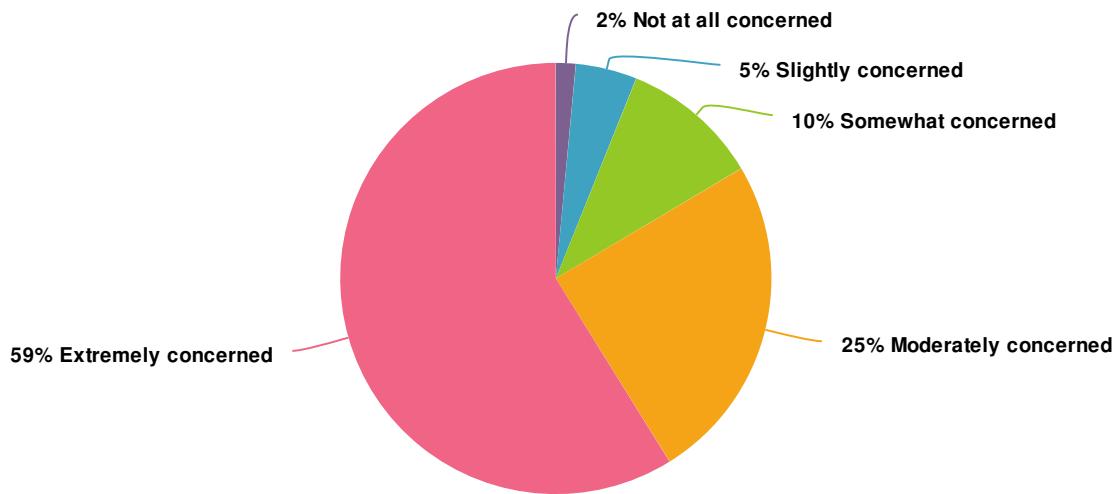
This should be the job of AHS. Administrators have enough to do already with trying to operate a school in a pandemic. The government has failed schools.

26. Which of the following health measures do you think requires more attention and resources in your school community to prevent and control the COVID-19 pandemic? Please check all that apply.



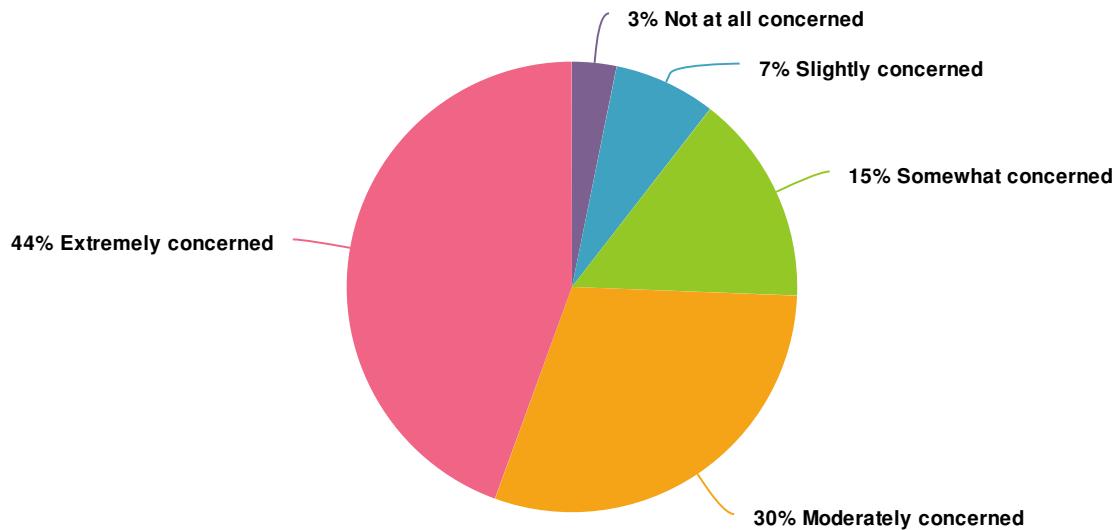
Value	Percent	Responses
Public health measures. Includes stronger public health orders from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, improved COVID-19 testing, and contact tracing.	78.7%	1,225
Administrative measures. Includes changes in scheduling, work practices, health and wellness policies, and stricter student and staff cohorting.	53.4%	831
Personal measures. Includes staying home when sick, maintaining physical distance/minimizing physical contact and hand hygiene.	49.8%	776
Environmental measures. Includes being outdoors, physical barriers, HVAC improvements, more frequent cleaning and disinfection.	44.4%	691
Personal protective equipment. Includes gloves and masks.	24.5%	381
None of the above	6.4%	99

27. Conditions of professional practice (workload/balance/control) - Level of concern?



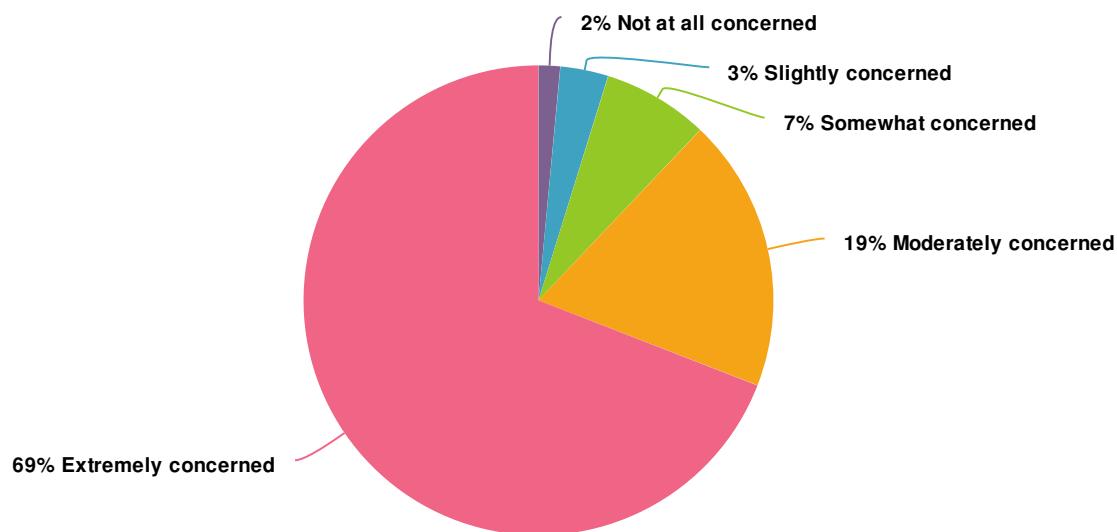
Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	1.5%	23
Slightly concerned	4.6%	72
Somewhat concerned	10.4%	164
Moderately concerned	24.7%	389
Extremely concerned	58.9%	927
Totals: 1,575		

28. Teacher loss of community (isolation/physical distancing) - Level of concern?



Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	3.2%	50
Slightly concerned	7.3%	115
Somewhat concerned	15.1%	238
Moderately concerned	29.9%	471
Extremely concerned	44.4%	699
Totals: 1,573		

29. Political environment (government rhetoric/job security/funding cuts) - Level of concern?



Value	Percent	Responses
Not at all concerned	1.5%	23
Slightly concerned	3.3%	52
Somewhat concerned	7.3%	114
Moderately concerned	18.8%	296
Extremely concerned	69.1%	1,086
Totals: 1,571		

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Responses
Many students in my classes have significant gaps in their understanding of the curriculum I am teaching. Count Row %	56 3.9%	228 15.9%	115 8.0%	467 32.5%	522 36.3%	50 3.5%		1,438
Many students in my classes are struggling with learning. Count Row %	39 2.7%	329 22.9%	114 7.9%	577 40.2%	353 24.6%	25 1.7%		1,437
The current health measures in schools are hindering my ability to cover the curriculum. Count Row %	61 4.3%	376 26.2%	167 11.6%	468 32.6%	299 20.9%	63 4.4%		1,434
Student assessment practices are more challenging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Count Row %	29 2.0%	141 9.8%	67 4.7%	491 34.2%	681 47.4%	27 1.9%		1,436

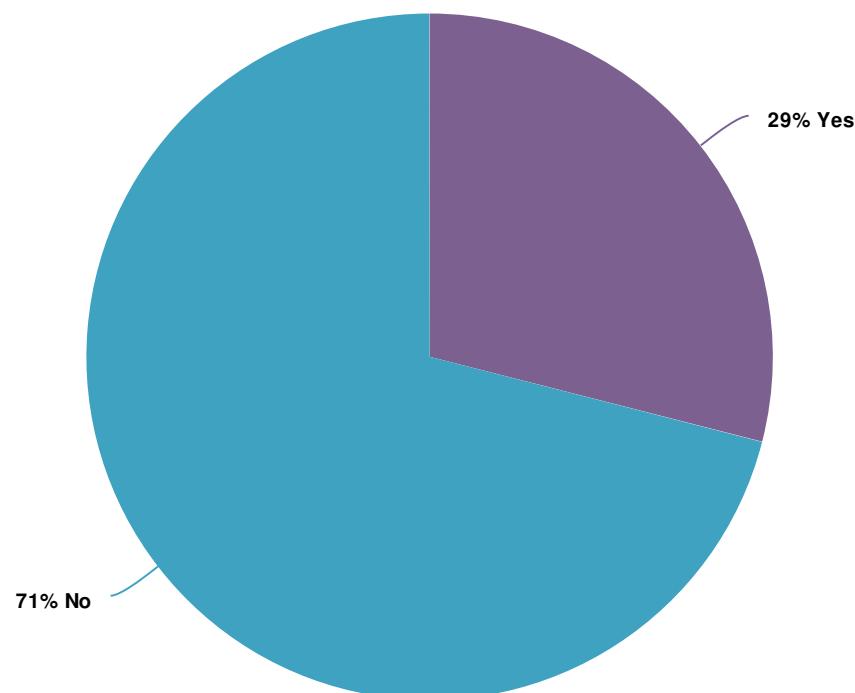
Totals

Total

Responses

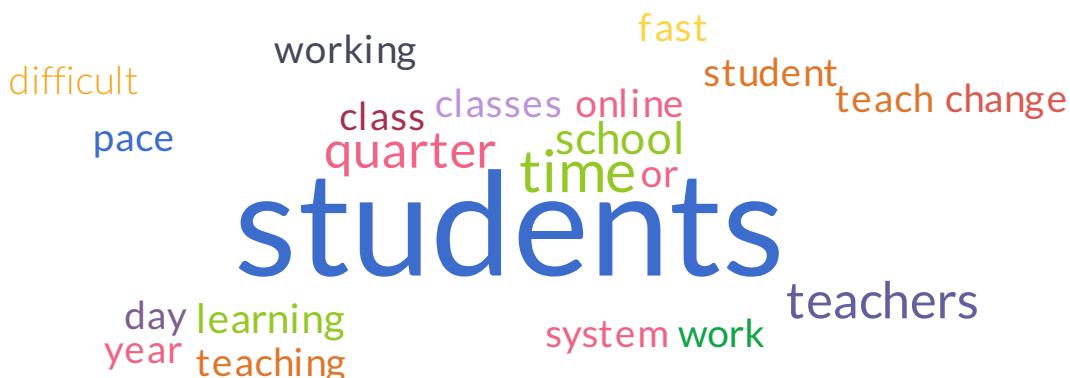
1438

31. Are you working in a school that is organized into four instructional quarters (two-month periods of learning)?



Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	29.0%	445
No	71.0%	1,089
Totals: 1,534		

32. If possible, please share your thoughts on how the quarterly instruction is working during the COVID-19 pandemic?



25 Doesn't work well for Alternative schooling as pace and workload are too fast and too much.

65 Learning should NOT happen in three hour windows.... it's just not right.

175 Well, but it can be detrimental when they have to miss more than a day or two

368 I am teaching online. The challenges have been exponential. I am exhausted, I barely have time for my home and kids. Online teachers are treading on new waters, and expecting such high standards while throwing in these extras are putting an enormous strain on online teachers.

492 It was the right decision to reduce contact for students but not the best for student learning post-pandemic. The fact that Alberta learning has not designated diplomas optional for the rest of the year is beyond frustrating for students an impossible for planning.

600 It makes sense and seems to be working. The element of parental choice aligns with the quarterly system and gives the parents a sense of control.

620 It works well for CTS being able to do longer cookery labs with the students. However, I think it is taking a mental toll on everyone in the system because of how draining it is.

713 The pacing is too fast for most students.

928 It has been a challenge trying to adjust the curriculum within a specific time frame especially in younger grades where social interaction is crucial for their learning.

971 Students are finding learning extremely difficult as cramming information into 3 hours requires little time for synthesis of that information.

982 It is a long time for students to be in one class. Our senior high students have two classes per day and even with scheduled breaks, it is a long time.

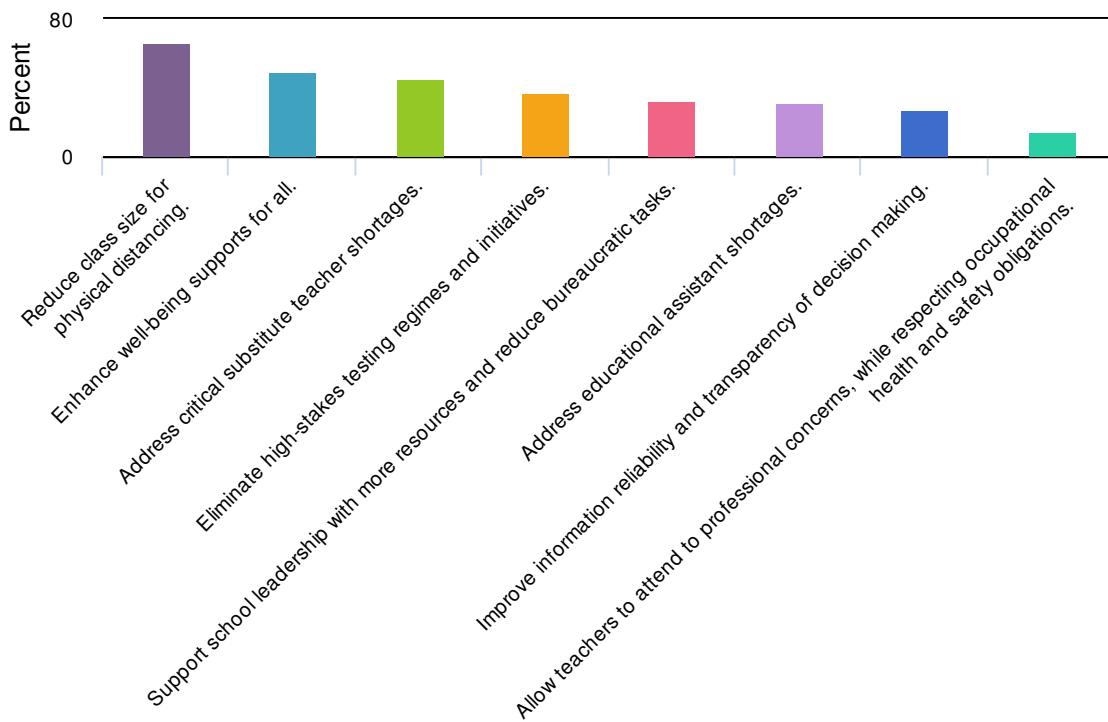
1006 Terrible. We will miss nearly an entire quarter of in person learning due to the new restrictions and school closures

33. The Government of Alberta has recently announced changes to curriculum development and provincial achievement testing. Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Responses
The Government of Alberta is being transparent with their approach to provincial achievement testing and diploma exams. Count Row %	674 42.9%	391 24.9%	319 20.3%	125 8.0%	27 1.7%	36 2.3%	1,572
The Government of Alberta is being transparent with their development of new Alberta curriculum. Count Row %	1,010 64.2%	328 20.8%	151 9.6%	61 3.9%	12 0.8%	12 0.8%	1,574
The Government of Alberta is adequately involving Alberta teachers with curriculum development. Count Row %	1,062 67.5%	290 18.4%	151 9.6%	49 3.1%	13 0.8%	8 0.5%	1,573

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	Responses
I have confidence in the new processes for curriculum development being introduced by the Minister of Education. Count Row %	1,155 73.5%	253 16.1%	118 7.5%	33 2.1%	8 0.5%	5 0.3%	1,572
Alberta schools will be ready to implement new programs of study in September 2021. Count Row %	1,230 78.2%	212 13.5%	97 6.2%	22 1.4 %	6 0.4 %	6 0.4 %	1,573
Totals Total Responses							1574

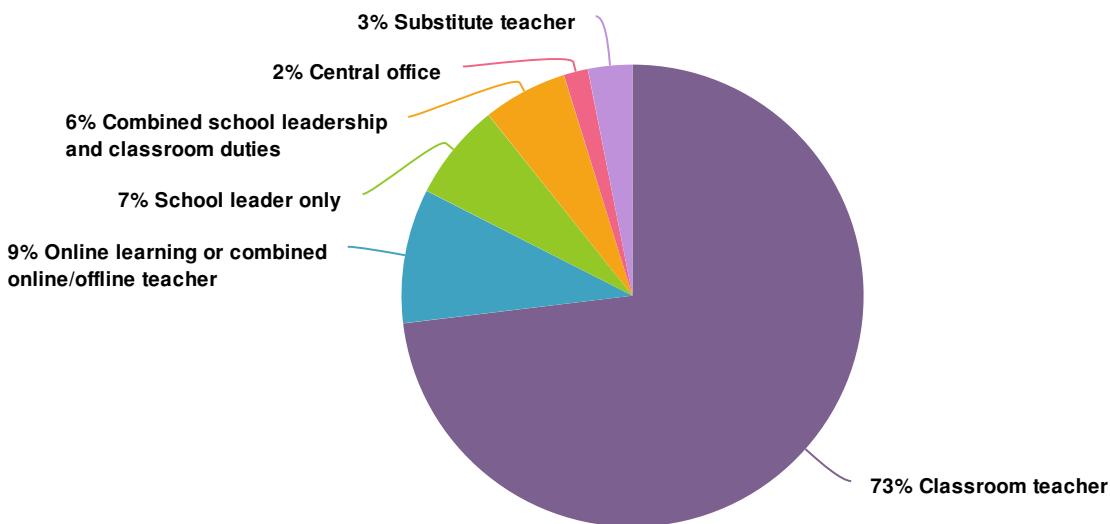
34. The following immediate actions for Alberta K to 12 schools have been developed from the thousands of previous ATA pandemic survey submissions. From the following list, please check your top three immediate actions.



Value	Percent	Responses
Reduce class size for physical distancing.	66.9%	1,046
Enhance well-being supports for all.	50.0%	782
Address critical substitute teacher shortages.	45.3%	709
Eliminate high-stakes testing regimes and initiatives.	37.1%	580
Support school leadership with more resources and reduce bureaucratic tasks.	33.0%	516
Address educational assistant shortages.	31.1%	486
Improve information reliability and transparency of decision making.	27.0%	422
Allow teachers to attend to professional concerns, while respecting occupational health and safety obligations.	14.2%	222

DEMOGRAPHICS

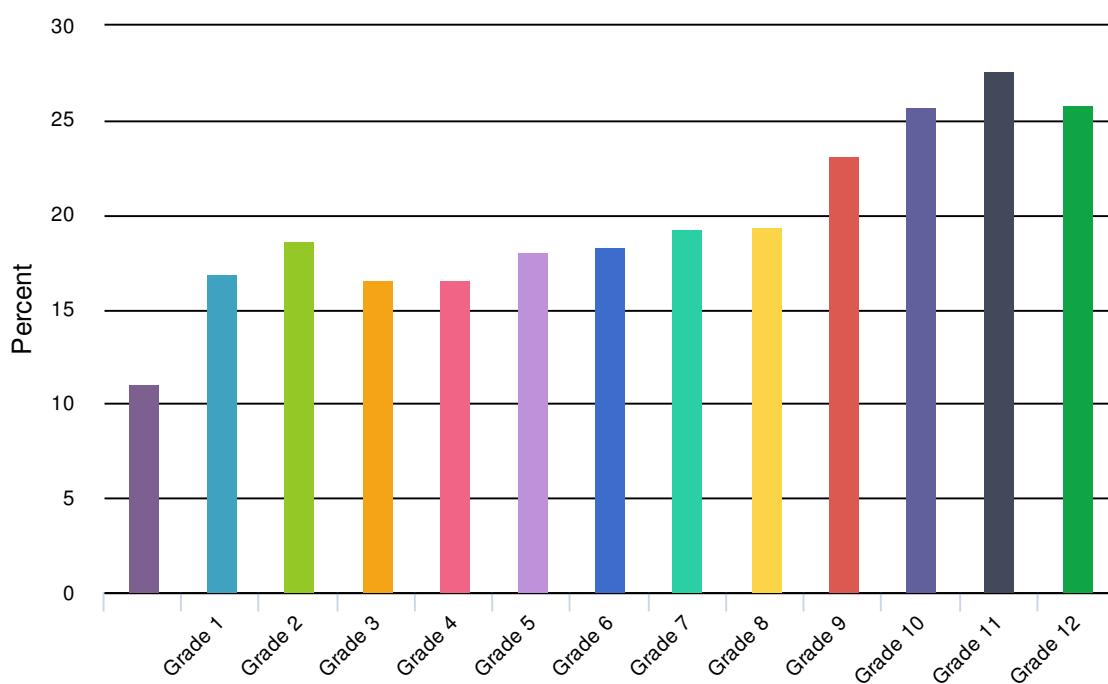
35. Your current assignment



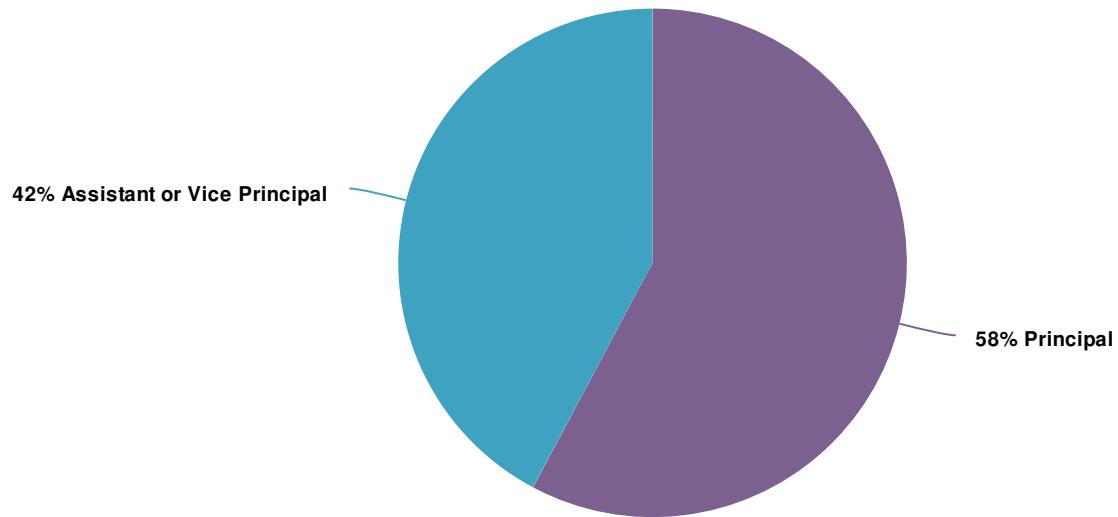
Value	Percent	Responses
Classroom teacher	73.1%	1,162
Online learning or combined online/offline teacher	9.4%	150
School leader only	6.8%	108
Combined school leadership and classroom duties	5.9%	94
Central office	1.7%	27
Substitute teacher	3.1%	49
Totals:		1,590

36. What grade levels are you currently teaching? Please check all that apply.

Grade Level Taught	Percent	Responses
ECS/Kindergarten	11.1%	161
Grade 1	16.9%	244
Grade 2	18.6%	269
Grade 3	16.6%	240
Grade 4	16.6%	241
Grade 5	18.0%	260
Grade 6	18.3%	265
Grade 7	19.2%	278
Grade 8	19.4%	281
Grade 9	23.1%	334
Grade 10	25.7%	372
Grade 11	27.6%	399
Grade 12	25.8%	373

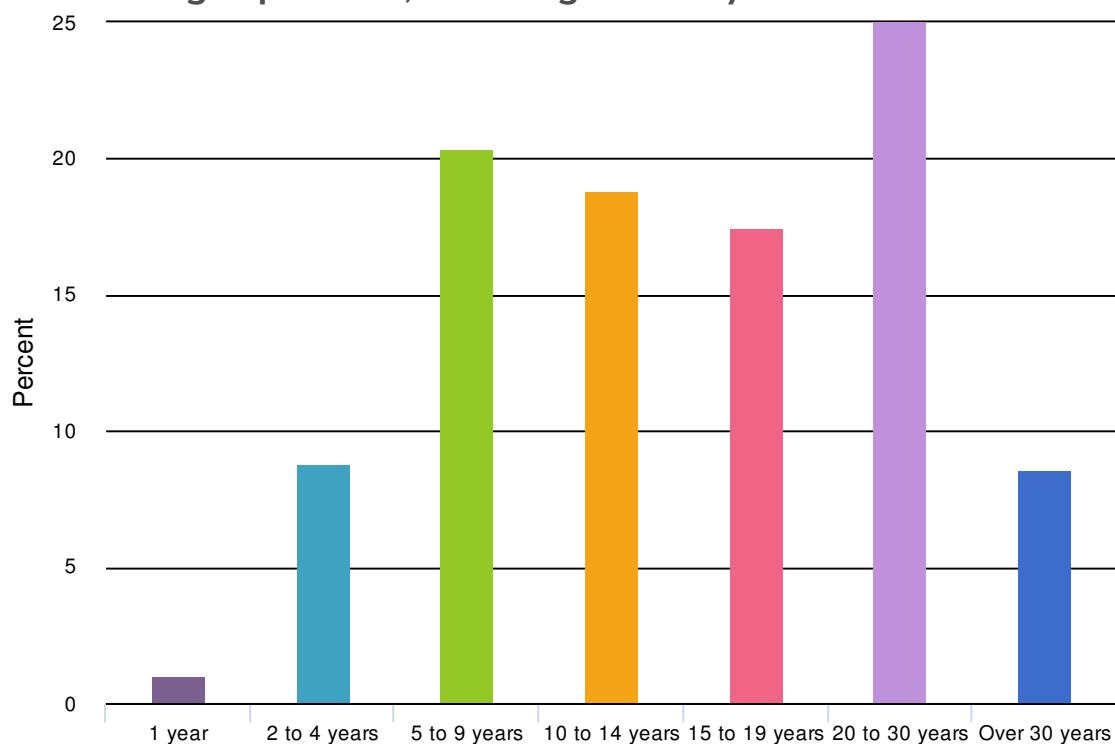


37. Please select:



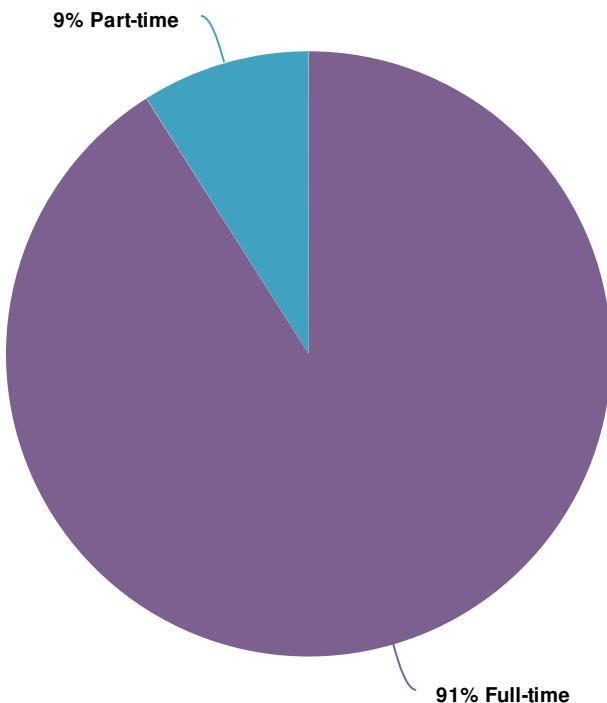
Value	Percent	Responses
Principal	57.8%	108
Assistant or Vice Principal	42.2%	79
Totals: 187		

38. Your teaching experience, including current year



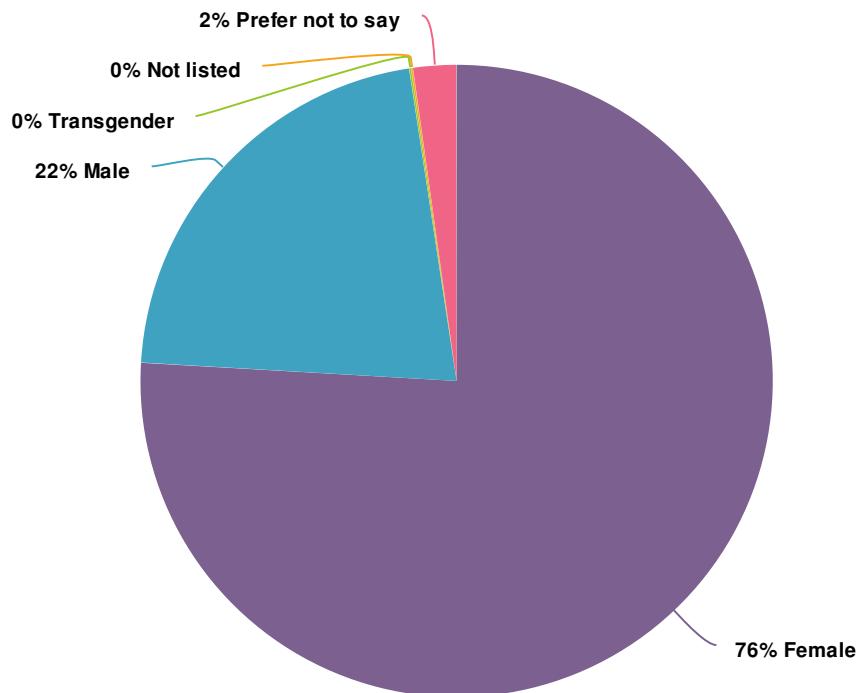
Value	Percent	Responses
1 year	1.0%	16
2 to 4 years	8.8%	137
5 to 9 years	20.4%	318
10 to 14 years	18.8%	294
15 to 19 years	17.5%	273
20 to 30 years	25.0%	390
Over 30 years	8.6%	134
Totals: 1,562		

39. You are employed



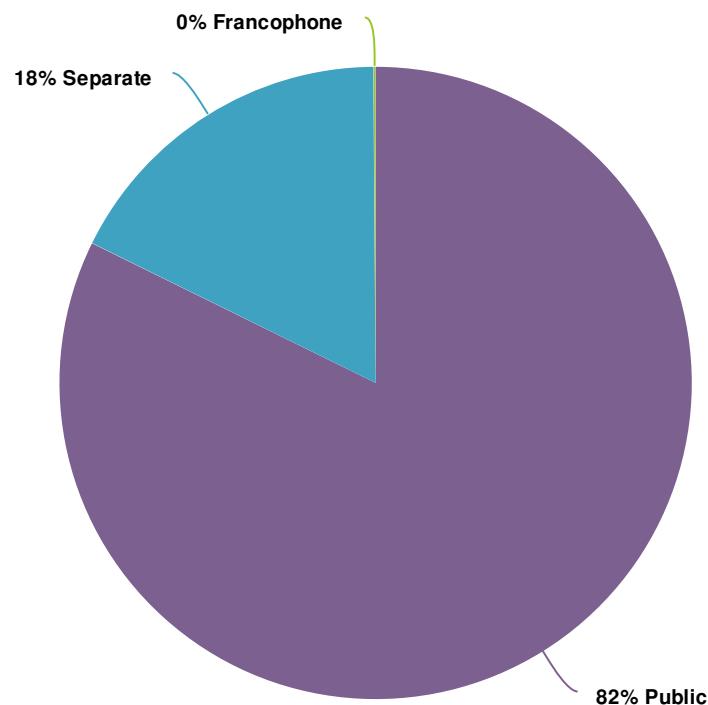
Value	Percent	Responses
Full-time	91.0%	1,422
Part-time	9.0%	140
Totals: 1,562		

40. How do you identify?



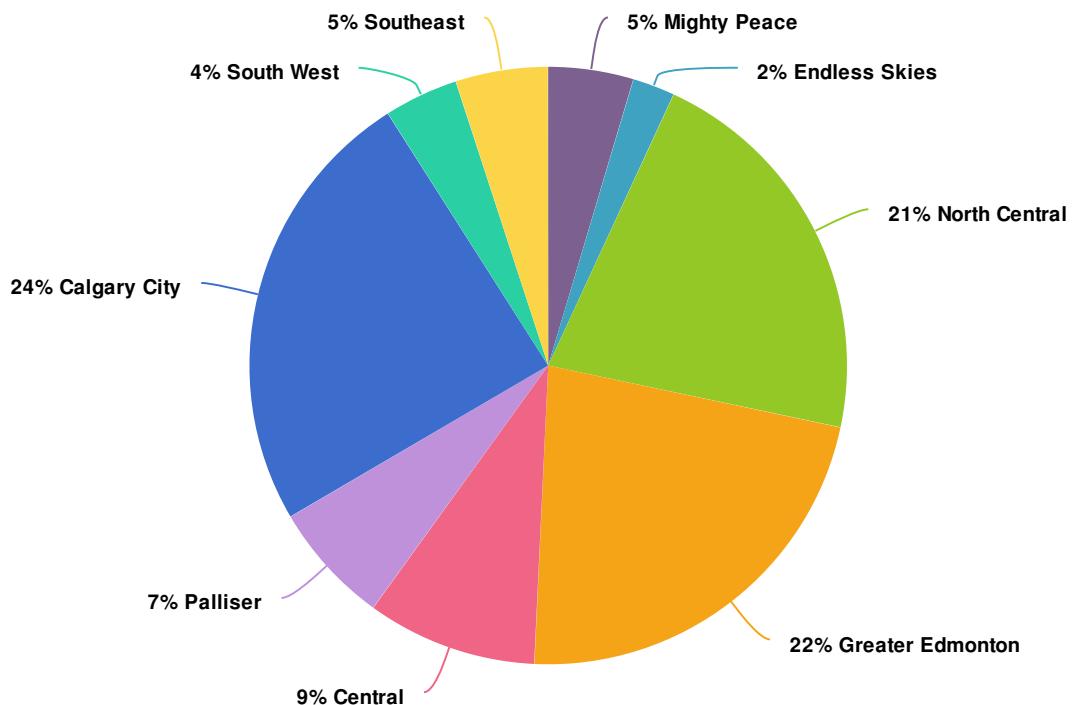
Value	Percent	Responses
Female	76.0%	1,186
Male	21.7%	338
Transgender	0.1%	1
Not listed	0.1%	1
Prefer not to say	2.2%	35
Totals:		1,561

41. Type of school authority in which you are employed



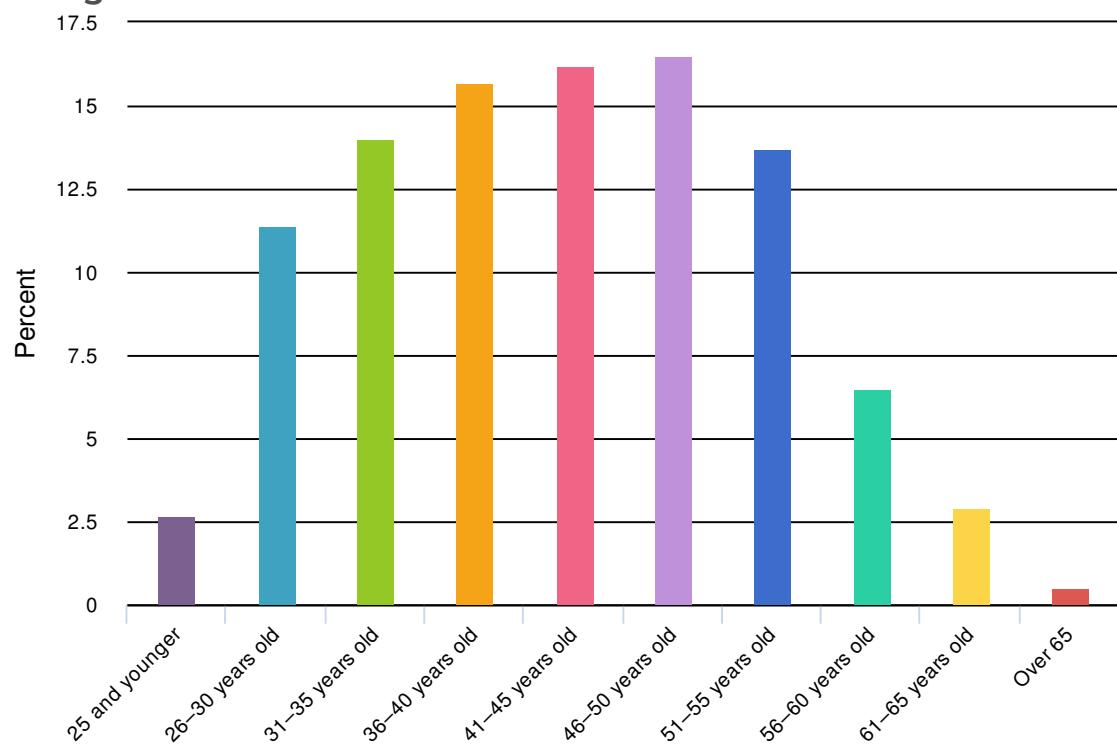
Value	Percent	Responses
Public	82.3%	1,285
Separate	17.6%	275
Francophone	0.1%	2
Totals: 1,562		

42. Teachers' convention that you attend



Value	Percent	Responses
Mighty Peace	4.6%	72
Endless Skies	2.3%	36
North Central	21.4%	333
Greater Edmonton	22.4%	349
Central	9.2%	143
Palliser	6.6%	103
Calgary City	24.4%	379
South West	4.0%	62
Southeast	5.0%	78
Totals: 1,555		

43. Your age



Value	Percent	Responses
25 and younger	2.7%	42
26–30 years old	11.4%	176
31–35 years old	14.0%	217
36–40 years old	15.7%	243
41–45 years old	16.2%	251
46–50 years old	16.5%	256
51–55 years old	13.7%	212
56–60 years old	6.5%	100
61–65 years old	2.9%	45
Over 65	0.5%	7

Totals: 1,549



The Alberta Teachers' Association

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Dr Philip McRae at the Alberta Teachers' Association; email research@ata.ab.ca.