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A Survey of PK-12 Teachers in Louisiana

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Executive Summary

This report presents results of a statewide survey of PreK-12 school teachers in Louisiana. The survey was administered to teachers in public, private, charter, and other type schools in the state in late fall 2020. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the views of classroom teachers with regard to their work environments and how they had responded to challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.   In addition, the survey asked respondents how well their teacher preparation programs had prepared them for the classroom.

A total of 1,207 teachers responded to the survey. The administration of the survey prioritized confidentiality and voluntary participation and, as such, was not intended to yield a rigorously representative sample of the state. Nevertheless, the respondents represent nearly 3% of the teaching workforce in the state in fall 2020 and their demographics, as described in the report, are similar to that of the larger population.

Among other topics, the survey presented questions related to the perceptions respondents held of their school environment, work life as teachers, and the impact of COVID 19. In general, the respondents were satisfied with their careers as teachers and held positive views of parents, students, colleagues and administrators. The primary sources of stress in their lives as teachers had to do with **workload, engagement of students and parents, accountability policies, and restrictions placed on their ability to tailor instruction to the needs of their students**. Pay and resources were also frequent issues raised as challenges for the respondents to the survey. COVID-19 tended to exacerbate these challenges due to its protocols and the requirement to move significant parts of instruction to some type of online format.

Recommendations

The results of this study suggest that while the classroom teachers who responded to the survey are largely satisfied with their careers, they experience significant sources of stress related to various educational policies in Louisiana (e.g. the requirement to follow pacing guides). It is noted, however, that the respondents to this survey may largely represent only a segment of the population of teachers in the state. For example, there are few teachers in urban settings represented in the sample. It is recommended that a more extensive survey be undertaken, and efforts be made to encourage a broader representation of the target population.

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Introduction

As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, January 2020 through December 2020 was a period of unprecedented disruption for schools and school systems throughout the country. In Louisiana, like most other states, by late spring of 2020 most schools had moved instruction to some form of remote learning. This continued through fall 2020 and into the spring 2021 semester. Educators and policymakers across the state employed a wide range of strategies intended to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on the state's educational system. In fall 2020, researchers in the School of Education at Louisiana State University sought information about the status of the state's PreK-12 educational system toward the end of providing policymakers, educators, and educator preparation programs with information useful for planning a path forward. As part of this effort, the researchers developed a survey designed to be administered to classroom teachers. In addition to demographic information and information on current teaching assignment, the survey included questions related to the following:

- **Perceptions of Teacher Preparation Program;**
- **Perceptions of School Environment;**
- **Work-Life as a Teacher;** and
- **COVID-19 Effects and Online Instruction.**

This report presents the results of this survey. The methods section describes the survey procedures and the results section presents survey respondent's demographics/teaching assignments and results for each of the four areas listed above. The final section of this report presents conclusions and recommendations.

Methods

Survey Sample and Administration Procedures

The PreK-12 teacher survey was administered to teachers in public, private, charter, and other types of schools in Louisiana in late fall 2020. The survey was administered electronically via Qualtrics. The process entailed contacting school district superintendents across the state and requesting that they facilitate the distribution of the survey to teachers in their districts. It should be noted that not all districts elected to participate.

Once permissions were obtained and the survey distributed, respondents were given four weeks, starting in mid-November 2020 to complete the survey. Because some items on the survey could be perceived as sensitive by respondents, confidentiality was prioritized. Toward this end, the survey did not collect identifying information from respondents. Additionally, no identifying information for schools and school districts was collected.

In addition to the distribution of surveys by district leaders, other strategies were used to make the survey available to the target population. These included posting links to the survey to the School of Education's website and including a request for participation in a monthly educational newsletter (*LSU Best Practices www.lsu.edu/bestpractices*) which has nearly 6,000 subscribers.

Survey Items and Analysis

The survey included both open-ended and multiple-choice items. **A total of 64 items were included in the survey.** These items were derived from existing literature by the researchers and addressed the following: Respondent Demographics and Teaching Assignment, Teacher Preparation Program, Perceptions of Teaching, Work-Life as a Teacher, and COVID-19 Effects and Online Instruction. Results for multiple-choice items are presented as frequencies and percentages. Open-ended items were analyzed using the SAS Enterprise Text mining software (https://www.sas.com/en_us/software/text-miner.html) and the Qualtrics Text- iQ program (https://www.qualtrics.com/iq/text-iq/). Both programs were used to identify major themes in the responses. For purposes of this, only major themes and sample responses are presented for open-ended items.

Results

Respondent Demographics

Gender. Of the 735 respondents who provided information on gender, 616 (83.81%) were female and 119 (16.19%) were male.

Gender	Frequency
Male	119 (16.19%)
Female	616 (83.81%)
Total	**735**

Louisiana Native. 596 (81.20%) of 734 respondents indicated that they were a Louisiana native.

Origin	Frequency
Louisiana Native	596 (81.20%)
Other	138 (18.80%)
Total	**734**

Race and Ethnicity. Of the 728 respondents who provided information on race and ethnicity, 635 (87.23%) indicated that they identified as White, 53 (7.28%) identified as Black or African American and 40 (5.49%) are reported as Other.

Race and Ethnicity	Frequency
White	635 (87.23%)
Black or African American	53 (7.28%)
Other	40 (5.49%)
Total	**728**

Teaching Assignment

In addition to personal demographics, respondents were asked a series of questions related to their teaching assignment. **The results showed that most respondents (91.83%) taught in the areas in which they were certified; more taught at the elementary level than either at the middle or high school levels; they were more likely to teach in rural or suburban settings than in urban settings; they worked at schools which, for the most part, served students from low socioeconomic backgrounds; and they were nearly evenly represented with regard to years of teaching experience in their current district, although there were more in the 0-3 years and 11-20 experience ranges than other ranges.**

Type of School. 821 respondents provided information on the type of school at which they teach: Elementary 373 (45.43%), Middle/Jr. High 225 (27.41%), and High 223 (27.16%).

Type of School	Frequency
Elementary	373 (45.43%)
Middle/Jr. High	225 (27.41%)
High	223 (27.16%)
Total	**821**

Type of Community. 351 respondents provided information on the type of community in which their school was located: Rural 161 (45.87%), Urban 63 (17.95%), and Suburban 127(36.18%)

Type of Community	Frequency
Rural	161 (45.87%)
Urban	63 (17.95%)
Suburban	127 (36.18%)
Total	**351**

Teaching Assignment (continued)

SES Level. 283 respondents provided information on the socioeconomic level of their school: High SES 48 (17.00%) and, Low SES 235 (83.04%)

SES Level	Frequency
High SES	48 (17.00%)
Low SES	235 (83.04%)
Total	**283**

Grades Taught. 825 respondents provided information on the grades at which they taught: Middle and Elementary 562 (68.12%), High School 221 (26.79%), Other 42 (5.1%)

Grades Taught	Frequency
Middle and Elementary	562 (68.12%)
High School	221 (26.79%)
Other	42 (5.1%)
Total	**825**

Teach in Primary Areas of Certification. Yes 674 (91.83%), No 60 (8.17%)

Teach in Primary Areas of Certification	Frequency
Yes	674 (91.83%)
No	60 (8.17%)
Total	**734**

Teaching Assignment (continued)

Subjects. 958 respondents provided information on the subjects they teach: Elementary Grades (multiple subjects) 238 (24.84%), English 185 (19.31%), Math 145 (15.14%), Science 127 (13.26%), Social Studies 131 (13.67%) and Other 132 (13.78%)

Subjects	Frequency
Elementary Grades (multiple subjects)	238 (24.84%)
English	185 (19.31%)
Math	145 (15.14%)
Science	127 (13.26%)
Social Studies	131 (13.67%)
Other	132 (13.78%)
Total	**958**

Years Teaching in School District. 0-3, 198 (26.94%), 4-6 115 (15.65%), 7-10 116 (15.78%), 11-20 116(15.78%), and 11-20 184 (25.03%)

Years Teaching in School District	Frequency
0-3	198 (26.94)
4-6	115 (15.65%)
7-10	116 (15.78%)
11-20	116 (15.78%)
11-20	184 (25.03%)
Total	**729**

Perceptions of Teacher Preparation Program

Tables 1 and 2 present results for items which asked respondents questions related to their teacher preparation program. **As presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents to the survey graduated from a traditional teacher education program, 68.48%, followed by an alternative certificate program from a higher education institution, 23.70%.**

Table 1

What best describes your preparation or training to be a teacher (Higher Education, Alt Cert, etc.)?

Answer	%	Count
Higher Education, degree program	68.48%	630
Higher Education, alternate certificate	23.70%	218
Alternate certification, not university	5.65%	52
Other	1.30%	12
Not certified	0.87%	8
Total	100%	920

In addition to the type of program attended, respondents were asked to rate their program with regard to its effectiveness in preparing them for the work of classroom teachers— see Table 2. **The majority (greater than 50%) strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the program prepared them for the classroom, prepared them to interact with other teachers, and prepared them to interact with administrators. Less than 50% felt that they were adequately prepared to interact with parents.**

Table 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your teacher preparation program?

Question	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
My training prepared me for the classroom environment.	251 (24.30%)	515 (49.85%)	79 (7.65%)	136 (13.17%)	52 (5.03%)	**1033**
My training prepared me to interact with parents.	94 (9.13%)	237 (23.01%)	174 (16.89%)	323 (31.36%)	202 (19.61%)	**1030**
My training prepared me to interact with other teachers.	288 (27.91%)	432 (41.86%)	161 (15.60%)	110 (10.66%)	41 (3.97%)	**1032**
My training prepared me to interact with administrators.	174 (16.89%)	402 (39.03%)	174 (16.89%)	194 (18.83%)	86 (8.35%)	**1030**

Perceptions of School Environment

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions related to their perceptions of students, parents, teachers, and administrators at their schools. These results are presented in tables 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Perceptions of Students

Table 3 presents results for questions in which respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or strongly agreed with statements about students at their school. **The results showed that the majority of respondents (greater than 50%) held positive views of the academic focus of their students, but were less positive concerning their developmental readiness for classroom content.**

Table 3
Perceptions of Students

Question	Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree
Students at my school are motivated to achieve academically. (n=891)	568 (63.75%)
Students in my classes are academically ready to learn. (n=889)	447 (50.28%)
Students in my classes are developmentally ready to learn. (n=891)	428 (48.04%)
Students in my classes are socially ready to learn. (n=887)	476 (53.67%)

In addition to the multiple-choice items presented in Table 3, an open-ended item was presented to respondents in which they were asked to identify sources of distress in their lives as teachers. Of the 671 respondents to this item, several responses addressed students. **Student apathy, lack of motivation and engagement in the learning process, and lack of accountability were frequent comments made by teachers.** The following are typical responses related to students.

> "My biggest stress is that the current students I have are not prepared to be learning the material that is being taught. I am struggling to fill in the learning gaps while trying to stay on pace with where the curriculum department tells me I need to be. I also feel that a handful of students are not motivated to learn. They tend to drag the class down. I know that the students are struggling because they have missed so many months of school and many of our students do not have the internet at home. So, while schools were closed in the Spring, they did not do much reading or schoolwork related activities. I am working diligently to fill in the gaps; however, I have not seen fruits of my labor yet. Another stress is large class size when trying to prepare students for taking the LEAP test for the first time. It is difficult to reach each student with large class sizes." CLASSROOM TEACHER

> "I am worried about the lack of effort, creativity, passion, and general participation of our students in the learning process. They come to class each day with less motivation to learn and participate in the productive struggle in understanding. They are more absorbed in media and instant gratification of Google than they are in committing skills and concepts to memory." CLASSROOM TEACHER

> "In 30 years, the biggest change and obstacle facing teachers today is apathy. Students seem to not care." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Perceptions of Students (continued)

"Never enough time to accomplish all the things; students who haven't been taught to respect authority at home." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"The other source of stress is the lack of respect many students demonstrate towards teachers covertly and overtly." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Student behavior is not that great, and is only getting worse. We spend so much time dealing with behavior issues, that we can't get our lessons taught. Our hands are tied because we have no real consequences to give." Kids are definitely NOT like they used to be.   CLASSROOM TEACHER

Perceptions of Parents

Table 4 presents results for items related to teachers' perceptions of parents. As presented in this table, **the majority of respondents reported that parents desire to send their children to school, 74.65%, and are supportive of their children's education, 57.85%. However, only about half, 49.77%, felt that parents were engaged in their children's education.**

Table 4
Perceptions of Parents

Question	Strongly agree or Somewhat Agree
Parents are engaged in their children's education.	432 (49.77%)
Parents are supportive of their children's education.	501 (57.85%)
Parents want to send children to my school.	648 (74.65%)

Comments to open-ended items regarding sources of teacher stress also addressed parents. The comments related to parents typically focused on their level of involvement with their children's education. Typical comments addressed the lack of involvement or levels of involvement that bordered on intrusion.

"Parents not making their jr high student accountable for their actions. Lack of back up from the parent" CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Lack of support from parents" CLASSROOM TEACHER

"There is no accountability for parents and there are little consequences." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"parents who do not support the teacher or hold their students accountable." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"My major sources of stress are constantly begging students to actually do or turn in the work and attacks from parents when contacting them about student behavior or lack of effort." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Perceptions of Teachers

Table 5 presents results for items which addressed respondents' perceptions of teachers at their schools. **The results indicate that they perceive their colleagues as caring about student learning and they report good attendance and little turnover among their colleagues. There is also some indication that they believe their colleagues feel relatively low levels of support from school administration and that they do not feel they are growing professionally.**

Table 5

Perceptions of Teachers

Question	Strongly agree or Somewhat Agree
Teachers at my school care if students learn.	807 (95.28%)
Teachers at my school demonstrate dedication through regular attendance.	786 (92.91%)
Teachers at my school demonstrate caring and supportive behavior to the students.	785 (92.57%)
Teachers at my school return to work at the school each year.	688 (81.42%)
Teachers at my school lead after-school activities for students.	555 (65.68%)
Teachers at my school feel supported by the administration team.	621 (73.4%)
Teachers at my school feel they are professionally growing.	551 (65.05%)

Perceptions of Administrators

Table 6 presents the results for items related to the respondents' perceptions of their school administrators. **Respondents were largely in agreement that their administrators support students, parents and teachers. However, there was less agreement that administrators provided teachers with resources and support and that teacher professional development was linked to identified needs.**

Table 6
Perceptions of Administrators

Question	Strongly agree or Somewhat Agree
The school administration is supportive of teachers.	680 (81.93%)
Resources and support are readily available.	578 (69.80%)
Professional development is linked to identified needs and best practices.	521 (63.07%)
The school administration is supportive of students.	736 (89.11%)
The school administration is supportive of parents.	717 (86.91%)
The school administration provides teachers with leadership opportunities.	600 (72.46%)
The school administration provides the faculty with continuous professional development.	609 (73.73%)

In addition to the items presented in Table 6, respondents included school administration in their descriptions of sources of stress in their lives as teachers. **Their responses addressed workload, support, evaluation, resources, respect for the professionalism of teachers and a possible disconnect between the views of teachers and administrators.** The following are typical comments offered by those respondents who linked administrators to sources of stress.

> "There is also very little support from administrators and central office staff. Promotions are based on who you know, not what you know. Teachers are often retaliated against and given bad evaluations for speaking out and pointing out problems" CLASSROOM TEACHER

> "Lack of respect by some administrators for teachers and their qualifications and experience. Letting male coaches choose their courses with no regard for other teachers experience and qualifications." CLASSROOM TEACHER
> "…administrators that are out of touch with the demands of teaching in today's climate, unreachable academic expectations of certain students, and insufficient tools/support from curriculum departments are all tremendous sources of stress for me!" CLASSROOM TEACHER

Perceptions of Administrators (continued)

"…principals; administration who doesn't have any idea how to lead a group of people to be successful; no resources to accomplish goals; professional development workshops have nothing to do with teaching or helping teachers grow as professionals or on content relevant to grade level or needs of students" CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Massive workload-things are constantly added to our plates by admin or district, but nothing is ever taken off our plate. Relentless pacing of high stakes tests. Not given freedom to teach the way I would like to as a professional; everything is dictated, down to being given a script. The burden of teaching hybrid and virtually." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Lack of respect as a professional - micromanagement and low morale." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"A teacher's professional judgement is not respected in this environment." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"No support from the administration when it comes to discipline, parental support, consistency, favoritism among employees, and being treated as a professional, rather than an lower ranking employee. No respect for the teachers." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Work-Life as a Teacher

In this section we present results for (a) job satisfaction, (b) source of stress, (c) aspects of teaching most disliked, (c) perceptions of the fairness of the state's accountability system, (d) retirement plans, and (f) reasons for leaving former school.

Job Satisfaction

As presented in Table 7, **the majority (greater than 50%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their career choice and intended to spend their entire career in their current school district. Only about 30% indicated that they would take another job, if available, or that they were considering leaving teaching. These results suggest that the 797 respondents to this item were largely satisfied with their careers as teachers.**

Table 7
Job satisfaction

Question	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I am satisfied with my career choice.	363 45.55%	244 30.61%	67 8.41%	93 11.67%	30 3.76%	797
I am currently considering leaving teaching.	108 13.53%	176 22.06%	120 15.04%	99 12.41%	295 36.97%	798
I intend to spend my entire career in my school district.	333 41.78%	173 21.71%	139 17.44%	74 9.28%	78 9.79%	797
I would take a job at another school if the opportunity presented itself.	86 10.79%	162 20.33%	168 21.08%	125 15.68%	256 32.12%	797

Sources of Stress

Table 8 presents responses to an open-ended item which asked teachers to identify major sources of stress they experience as teachers. Quotes from responses to this item were presented earlier in this report. **The results presented here summarize the major themes which emerged from all 671 respondents to this item.**

Table 8

Major Sources of Stress for Teachers (n=671 respondents)

Time, Workload, Expectations of Teachers	324 (27.55%)
Student Learning, Accountability, Testing, Readiness, Behavior	207 (17.60%)
Appropriateness of Curriculum, Pacing Guides, Teacher Autonomy	166 (14.12%)
Support from Administrators, Principals, Parents, Colleagues	143 (12.16%)
Other	336 (28.57%)
Teacher Salary, Pay	78
Quality of Leadership, Support and Resources for Teachers	74
Student Engagement, Motivation and Accountability	50
Teacher Evaluation, Accountability	38
Behavior Issues from Parents, Students and Respect for Teacher	34
Meeting Student Needs, SPED, Mental Health	23
Standardized Testing	19
Teacher Professional Development	14
State, District Policies and Mandates	6
Total	**1176**

As presented in this table, **the respondents noted that the workload they experienced as teachers, the high and often unrealistic expectations of student learning they were being asked to meet, the rigid curriculum, and the lack of support they received from administrators were major sources of stress.** The following are typical comments which illustrate the connections between these issues.

"Massive workload- things are constantly added to our plates by admin or district but nothing is ever taken off our plate. Relentless pacing of high stakes tests. Not given freedom to teach the way I would like to as a professional; everything is dictated, down to being given a script. The burden of teaching hybrid and virtually." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Data, data, data, and little to no time to really focus on teaching and address the students' needs. Lack of parental support and involvement. There is a disconnect between the high expectations of teachers, observations, and reality in the classrooms. Discipline and behavior concerns. A curriculum that doesn't match the children's developmental stages. There is a strong focus on moving and pushing standards. These days with the virus, the health and safety concerns are worrisome." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Sources of Stress Continued

"…extreme workload -none age-appropriate curriculum -children coming to me that are nowhere near ready for grade level standards -behavior in the classroom (so years) -lack of administrative support -lack of parental involvement." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"The number one stress for me as a teacher is being forced to push curriculum on students who are below grade level. Many of my students can't keep up, because they simply do not understand the content. They continue fall behind and never receive the help they need to be successful." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Rigid pacing of curriculum, overwhelming amount of "data" driven assessments and not enough time to address the deficits that these forms of data show; not being able to slow down to the student learning when needed; lack of freedom for teaching/pacing; rigid schedule with little time to accomplish things that should be in order to be a successful teacher." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Teachers today lack autonomy due to central office curriculum staff dictating every single thing that occurs during instructional time in the school day. The accountability system used to grade teachers is also unfair since they utilize student performance very heavily. Many factors play into a student's performance. A teacher's instruction is only one piece of the pie. A student's home life and parental participation is a big part of the pie. Unfortunately, teachers cannot control what goes on out of school." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Perceptions of State Accountability Program for Teachers

Table 9

The state accountability program for teachers is fair.

Answer	%	Count
Strongly agree	4.24%	33
Somewhat agree	18.10%	141
Neither agree nor disagree	17.46%	136
Somewhat disagree	26.70%	208
Strongly disagree	33.50%	261
Total	100%	779

Table 9 presents respondents' ratings of their perceptions of the fairness of the state's accountability system for teachers. **The majority, 60%, disagree or strongly disagree that it is fair.** This result is consistent with their open-ended responses related to accountability and suggest that they view it as punitive rather than supportive.

"The observation model is unfair for teachers, as it's based on how students perform without taking into account their home life, motivation, etc." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Make a teaching life better by being realistic with expectations in the classroom and testing. Make sure that student with discipline problems don't ruin an entire class. The unfairness for half the teachers that test scores count against their evaluation and the other half don't have that stress. It is unfair. All the changes that happen at one time. Not able to be flexible as a teacher....etc." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Stop evaluating teachers as if 1) they are lazy and will sit and eat bonbons while their students fail unless someone is holding their feet to the fire; and 2) as if student progress on a set of standardized metrics is a fair evaluation of what they are doing. I am not opposed to observations or evaluations, but they should be meaningful and professional. The current system is degrading and ineffective and has NOTHING MEANINGFUL to say about the teacher's actual abilities. Principals must the frontline in evaluating their staff. If they don't do it well or fairly then THEIR supervisors need to replace the principals. ALL of this VAM and SLT baloney needs to be jettisoned forthwith." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Reasons for Leaving Previous School
Table 10
Reasons for Leaving Previous School (n=383)

	Count	Percent
Administration, Principal *or* Leadership	46	10.45%
Home, Family, Children, Husband *or* Parent	107	24.31%
Move, Relocate *or* Military	119	27.05%
Private *or* Public	13	3.0%
Salary, Pay, Finance, Income *or* Money	35	8.0%
Other	120	27.27%
Total Comments	**440**	

Through an open-ended item, respondents were asked why they had left their previous school. **Of the 383 that responded to this item, the most common response concerned relocation. This was followed closely by those that switched schools to be closer to their home and family.** The following is a typical response.

> "Left the first district to be closer to home. Left the second district for a larger district for more growth opportunities and a higher salary." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Retirement Plans
Table 11
When do you think you may retire?

Answer	%	Count
0-3 years	14.92%	108
4-6 years	11.88%	86
7 - 10 years	15.61%	113
11 - 15 years	17.27%	125
16 - 20 years	12.98%	94
21 - 25 years	13.95%	101
26 - 30 years	13.40%	97
Total	**100%**	**724**

Table 11 presents responses to an item on the survey which asked respondents about their intentions related to retirement. The percent selecting the various ranges were fairly constant.

COVID-19 Effects and Online Instruction

The final aspect of the survey addressed the impact of COVID-19. Table 12 presents responses to an item which asked respondents how well prepared they were to deliver online instruction. **Approximately 39% indicated that they were slightly or not prepared to deliver online instruction.**

Table 12

How well prepared are you to deliver instruction remotely?

Answer	%	Count
Extremely well	10.86%	81
Very well	13.54%	101
Moderately well	34.85%	260
Slightly well	23.46%	175
Not well at all	17.29%	129
Total	100%	746

Table 13

Challenges of COVID-19, Online Teaching

Covid protocols and instructional demands	109.0 (61.58%)
Online or virtual or remote or hybrid	41.0 (23.16%)
Computer or technology skill level	20.0 (11.30%)
Technology	1.0 (0.56%)
Computers for students	4.0 (2.26%)
Online or hybrid	2.0 (1.13%)
Total	177

Table 13 presents a summary of responses to an open-ended item which asked respondents to identify major challenges they experienced related to COVID-19. **The most common response addressed the overall challenges brought on by the restrictions and disruption caused by the pandemic.** The following are typical responses.

> "Getting everything done. Especially this year. I have never been so challenged to plan, prepare, grade, and teach in a hybrid environment. The beginning of the year was 100% virtual, but now I've got about half of my students virtual and half in-person. That is really exhausting. Grading online also takes about 5x as long as grading physical papers." CLASSROOM TEACHER

COVID-19 Effects and Online Instruction (continued)

"This year it is definitely dealing with all of the Covid-19 protocols. Teaching itself requires much time and attention but trying to do that while ensuring students are wearing their facemasks properly, social distancing, sanitizing, and all of the other adjustments this year causes much stress." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"This year, COVID and the restrictions that come with it. No small groups and social distancing is hard for little ones. I have also had a lot of exhaustion with the added stresses. Before COVID, it was contacting parents and helping those most struggling students." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"If the class sizes could be smaller. The hybrid days of having half the students each day was so much less stressful to teach even in the event of this pandemic." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Teaching simultaneously in person and online, maintaining the attention of both sets of students simultaneously - tech: the school-issued teacher laptop is slow and over 7 years old - internet: frequently slow/down in the school/neighborhood - planning: limited planning despite countless additional responsibilities and teaching in 2 different ways." CLASSROOM TEACHER

"Getting all of my material into the digital format is time consuming. Grading online work takes MUCH longer than physical papers. Motivating students who are virtual is difficult. Teaching virtual kids at the same time as kids who are in-person. Doing labs- the kids need to have experiences with lab equipment and they're not. That's like me showing you a video of how to change your car tire. Could you do it after watching a video? Not as well as if you'd actually done it yourself. Managing my own children learning from home while I'm trying to teach virtually." CLASSROOM TEACHER

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the views of classroom teachers with regard to their work environments and how they had responded to challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of **1,207 teachers** responded to the survey. Of the respondents which provided information on demographics, the majority of respondents were White, taught in rural or suburban areas, and served largely low-income student populations. They tended to teach at the elementary level, although the middle and high school levels were well represented. They were also diverse with regard to content area and years of experience. It should also be noted that the majority of respondents were graduates of traditional university-based teacher preparation programs.

Among other topics, the survey presented questions related to the perceptions respondents held of their school environment, work-life as teachers and the impact of COVID-19. In general, the respondents were satisfied with their careers as teachers and held positive views of parents, students, colleagues, and administrators. The primary sources of stress in their lives as teachers had to do with **workload, engagement of students and parents, accountability policies,** and **restrictions placed on their ability to tailor instruction to the needs of their students**. Pay and resources were also frequent issues raised as challenges for the respondents to the survey. COVID-19 tended to exacerbate these challenges due to its protocols and the requirement to move significant parts of instruction to some type of online format.

Recommendations

The results of this study suggest that while the classroom teachers who responded to the survey are largely satisfied with their careers, there are significant sources of stress related to various educational policies in Louisiana (e.g. the requirement to follow pacing guides). It is noted, however, that the respondents to this survey may largely represent only a segment of the population of teachers in the state. For example, there are few teachers in urban settings represented in the sample. **It is recommended that a more extensive survey be undertaken and efforts be made to encourage a broader representation of the target population.**