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Report # 112021

CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM:

EDUCATORS'
EXPERIENCES &
ATTITUDES DURING
THE CORONAVIRUS
PANDEMIC

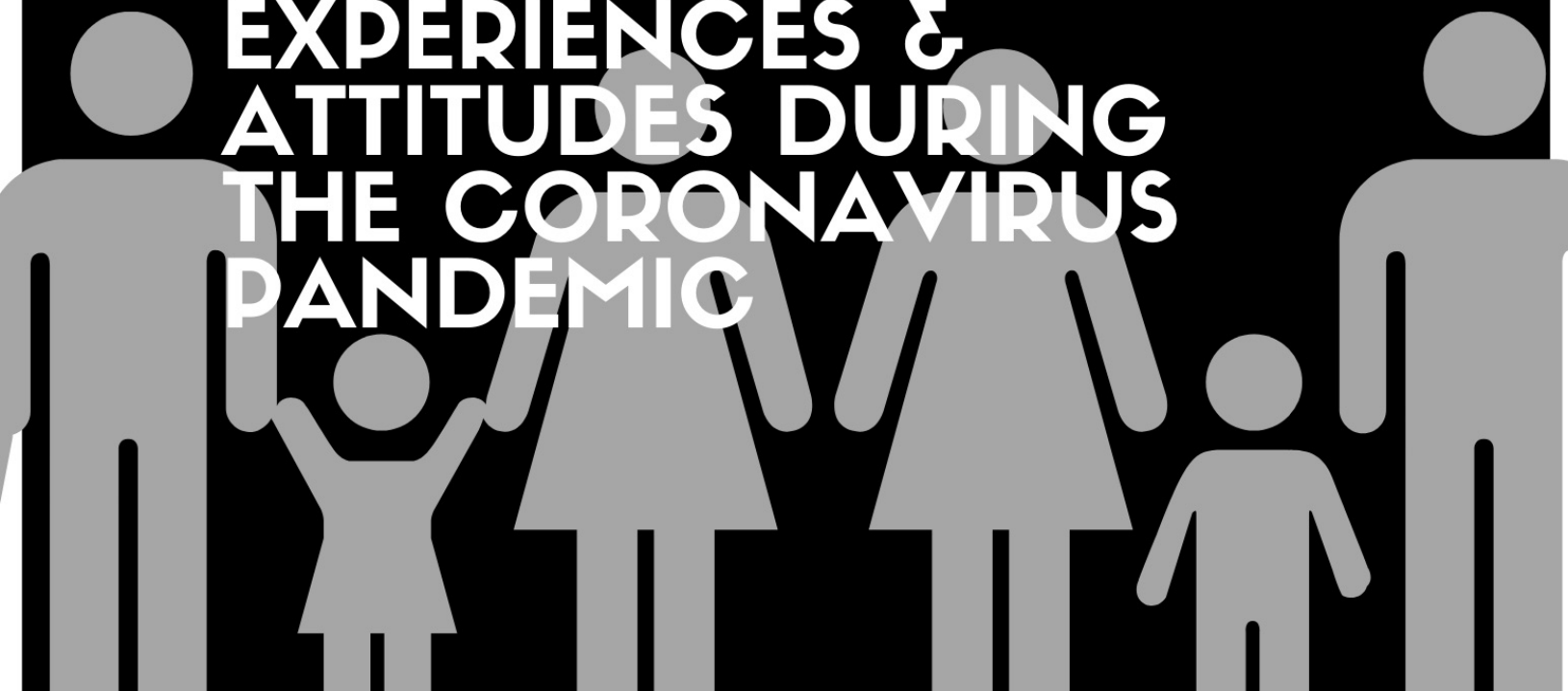


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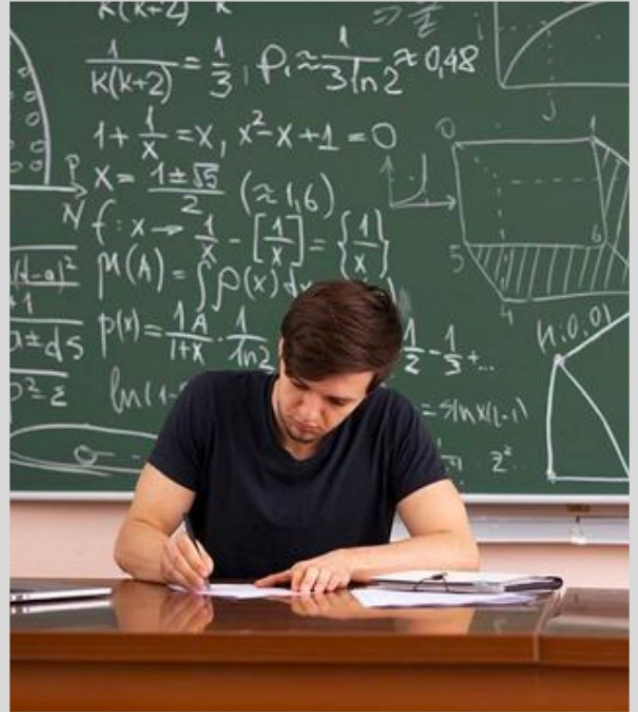
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Introduction

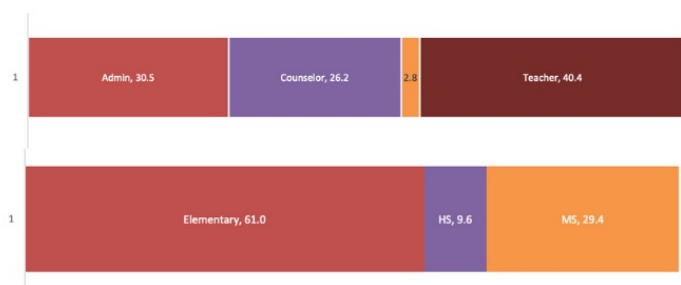
Most research examining the social and emotional impact of the pandemic has focused on children and families, without considering how classroom teachers, counselors and school administrators are coping. Yet educators have been profoundly impacted by the global Coronavirus Pandemic, both personally and professionally.

Early on in the pandemic, research noted rising levels of anxiety and depression in youth. Save The Children conducted surveys in April 2020, in the United States and in Europe, examining the mental health consequences of the pandemic and recession. During the lockdown, 17% of children in the surveys felt depressed often or always; 25% reported dealing with anxiety; 32% struggled to sleep; and 30% feared the COVID-19 virus. More recent research in 2021 suggests that this trend has continued and possibly even accelerated. A study of 240 teens from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center found that 71% reported increased feelings of anxiety and/or depression during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Yet while school closings have remained in the news media as a major source of these emotional troubles for children, relatively little research has considered how classroom teachers, school counselors, and school administrators are weathering this pandemic, despite the extraordinary demands made upon them. Educators have had to adapt their classrooms to remote learning, social distancing, and hybrid educational models. They've had to learn about the social and emotional impact upon children while attempting to help children who have fallen significantly behind academically during the pandemic.

This small study seeks to begin the exploration of educators' experiences during this pandemic, including their attitudes towards behavior and social changes in the children they teach, and any changes in their professional goals.

This Study: Crisis in the Classroom



This study examined the attitudes and feelings of 188 educators from 15 states in the USA. Classroom teachers, administrators, and counselors were all represented, from K-12 schools.

This exploratory study utilized a sample that was self-selected and thus is not likely to be representative of all educators in the United States. Schools and professional organizations were asked to help recruit educators as subjects for this online survey. IRB approval was obtained and participation was purely voluntary.



Children's behaviors

We examined educators' perceptions of any changes in children's behavior during the pandemic, including social skills, fighting, bullying, quarreling, and others.



Teaching remote and hybrid

How difficult was it for educators to use entirely remote and/or hybrid models of teaching? Which style was most challenging, and for which types of educators?



Leaving the field

Are educators increasingly considering leaving the field as a result of the pandemic, and what factors are related to these altered career plans?

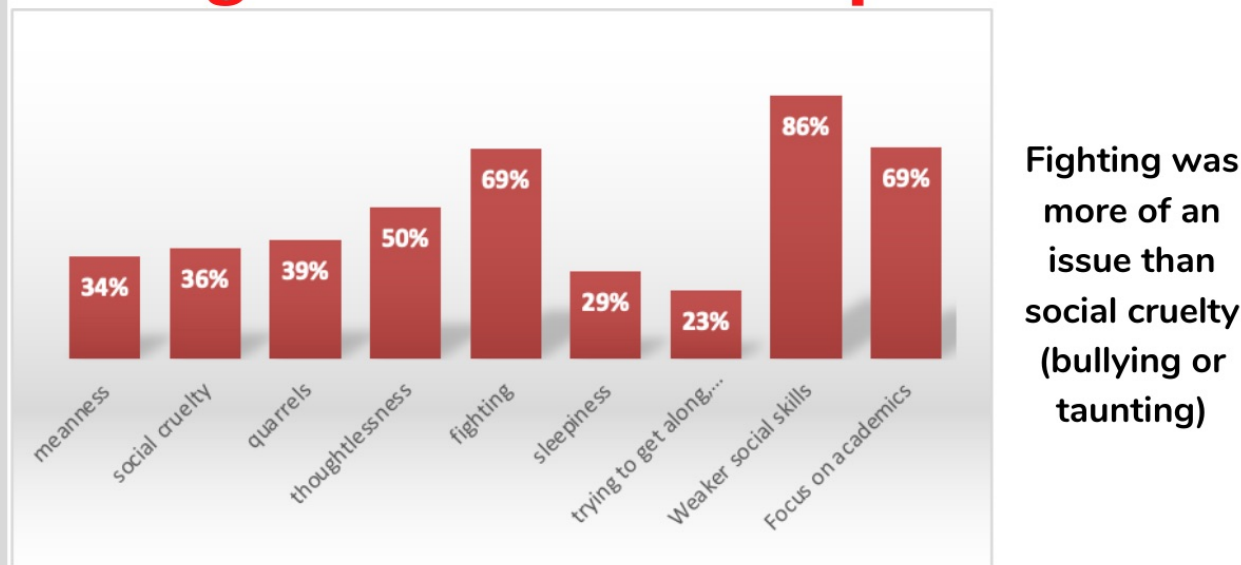


What would help?

We asked educators what would help - classroom support, academic support, social and emotional learning initiatives, and/or more education about the pandemic's impact?

STUDENT BEHAVIORS SINCE THE ONSET OF THE PANDEMIC

What student behaviors have changed because of the pandemic?



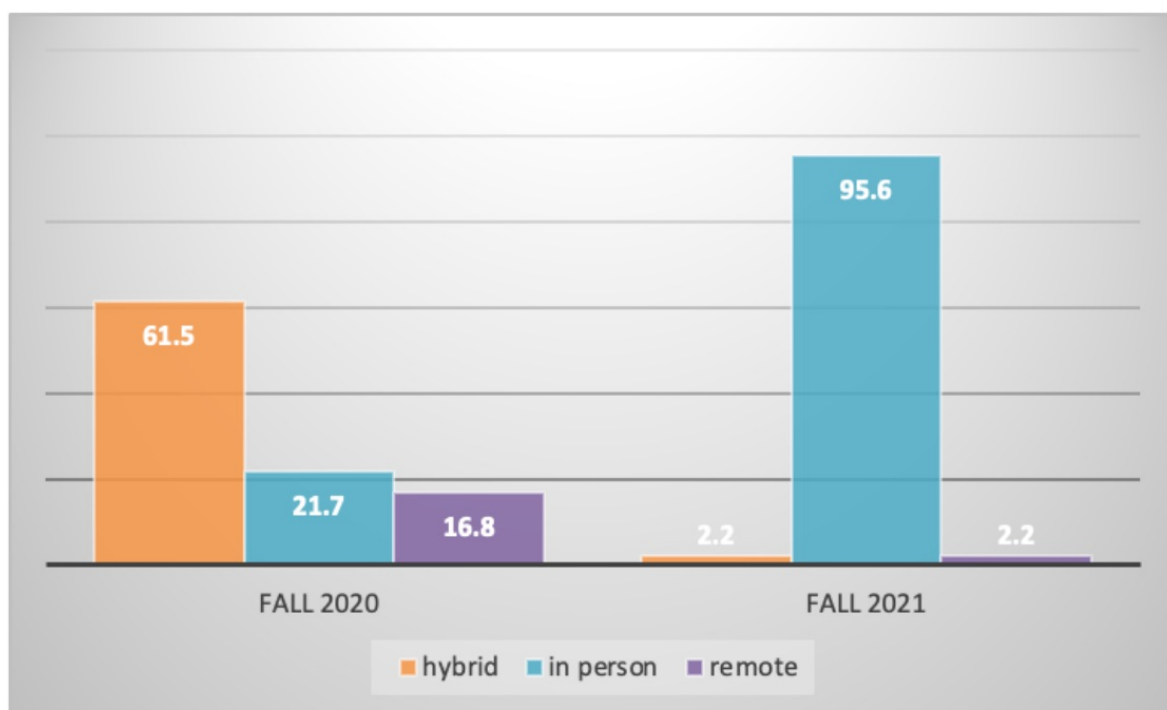
86%

Percent of educators who report significantly weaker social skills in students

- **Changes** - 54.4% of educators reported that student behavior has worsened this fall (2021). Only 6.6% reported that student behavior has improved,
- **Remote vs Hybrid vs In Person Classrooms** - Educators whose classrooms went **remote** or **hybrid** were more likely to report weaker social skills, compared to those whose classrooms remained **in person** (96%, 88%, and 74%, respectively).

Teaching Remote and Hybrid during a pandemic

Change in use of remote/hybrid learning during the pandemic: Comparing Fall 2020 to Fall 2021



84%

...of schools reported using some form of remote or hybrid learning during the pandemic.

In Fall 2020, only 21.7% of schools were conducting class in person. This rose to 95.6% by Fall 2021.

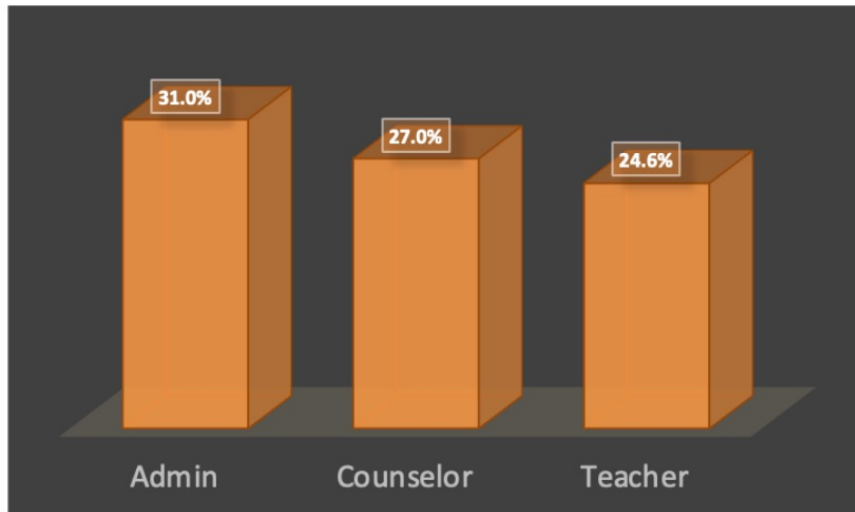
Teaching Remote and Hybrid during a pandemic

Some classes remained open for traditional in-person instruction during the entire pandemic. Others went entirely remote, conducting class over the Internet, while still others utilized a "hybrid" model in which on any given day (typically) half the students would be in school with the other half in class via remote connections on the Internet. Anecdotal information suggests that hybrid might be most challenging because it requires teachers to constantly shift their attention back and forth between a computer screen and the students who are physically in the classroom.

Remote	Hybrid	In person
Percent of educators who found this style most challenging: 25%	Percent of educators who found this style most challenging: <u>66%</u>	Percent of educators who found this style most challenging: 10%
The "Remote" model was the most challenging for counselors.	The "Hybrid" Model was the most challenging for teachers.	The "In person" model was least challenging overall, but administrators were most likely to rank it as most challenging.

LEAVING THE FIELD OF EDUCATION?

This fall, how many educators consider leaving the field "much of the time"?



38.5%

High School educators were most likely to feel this way.

25.6%

Elementary educators were least likely to feel this way.



27%

More than one-quarter of educators overall reported that they now consider leaving the field "much of the time."

- **Before the pandemic, versus Fall 2021** - Only 3% of educators reported that prior to the pandemic, they thought about leaving Education "much of the time." This compares to 27% during the Fall, 2021. 66% of the educators said before the pandemic they never considered leaving education, but now, only 34% say they never consider it.
- **Support from parents matters** - Only 13% of educators who rated parents as "most supportive" during Fall 2021 said they were thinking of leaving the field much of the time, compared to 71% of educators who rated parents as "least supportive."

What would help?



The study asked educators what would help them cope with the current changes in student behavior, use of technology, and their own feelings about leaving the field of Education. Which potentially helpful factors were most popular among educators?



47% agree

MORE FOCUS ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

SEL programs and curricula can help students cope with their complex emotions in the midst of a profoundly impactful global pandemic. SEL would, in turn, help improve student behavior.



35% agree

MORE CLASSROOM SUPPORT

Classroom support becomes more critical as student behavior becomes more challenging. More support in the form of paraprofessionals and other educators could reduce teachers' stress levels.



32% agree

MORE SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Studies examining anxiety and/or depression in children during this pandemic have found increases. Educators need help from counselors to help students cope.



30-32% agree

MORE INFO ABOUT THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON KIDS

Parents & educators both need more information about the pandemic's impact upon children, & how adults can help mitigate the negative effects.

Recommendations

This small study is only a beginning. More comprehensive research is needed to assess the impact of the pandemic upon educators.



More focus on SEL and counseling

- Can help students cope with emotions and thoughts.
- May reduce problem behaviors.



If in person school isn't possible, let's consider how to improve hybrid classes

- Hybrid classes may be better for children, but current models increase educators' stress and may thus reduce their effectiveness as a teacher.



Provide research-based Pandemic information

- Utilize programs and curricula that educate parents, students and educators about the consequences of the pandemic, and how to help adjust.

Educators are major stakeholders in the well-being of children, and they are the caretakers of children many hours virtually every day. Their mental and professional health is of critical importance.



**This report is the result of research
conducted at the Massachusetts
Aggression Reduction Center at
Bridgewater State University.**

The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center is an academic Center devoted to the psychological health of children and their caregivers, with a particular emphasis on aggression, digital behaviors, and peer relationships. We provide programs, research, and resources for the state of Massachusetts and the United States, and beyond. We are proud to report that 84% of our programs and curricula are provided to schools at no cost.

MARC offers a completely free Pandemic SEL Curriculum, among others.



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