

# NC Teacher Working Conditions 2026 Preliminary Findings

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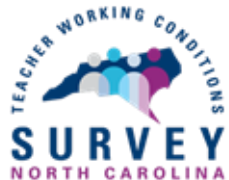
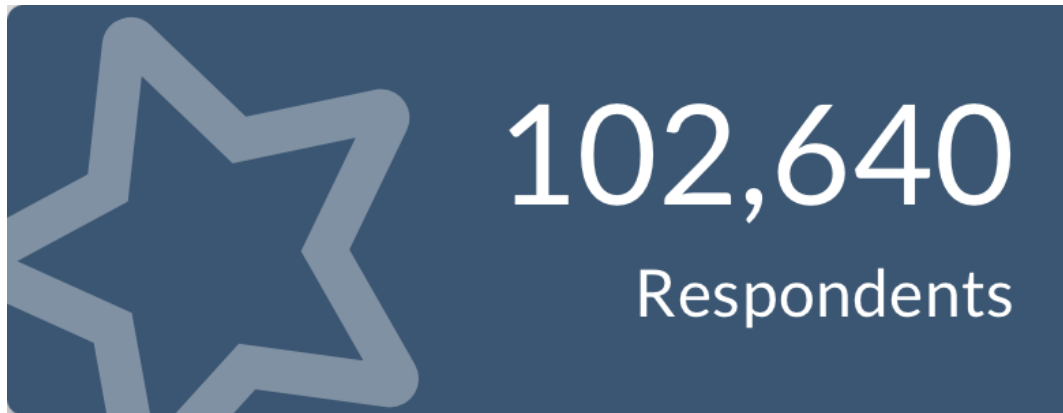
Office of Research & Promising Practices

May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026



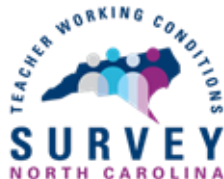
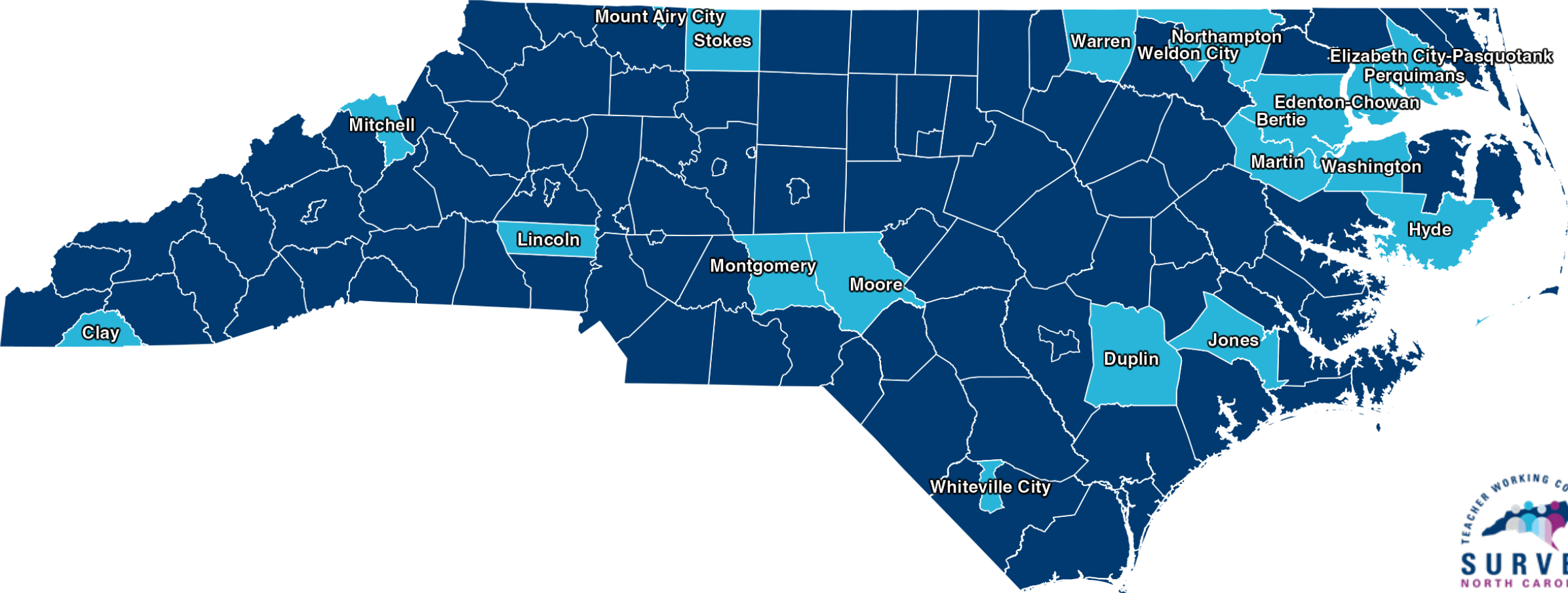
# 2026 Survey Participation

*The overall response rate improved +5 percentage points, from 85.4% in 2024 to 90.5% in 2026.*



# District Participation

*104 districts had over 90% participation, including 20 with 100% participation.*

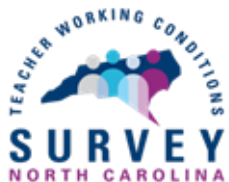
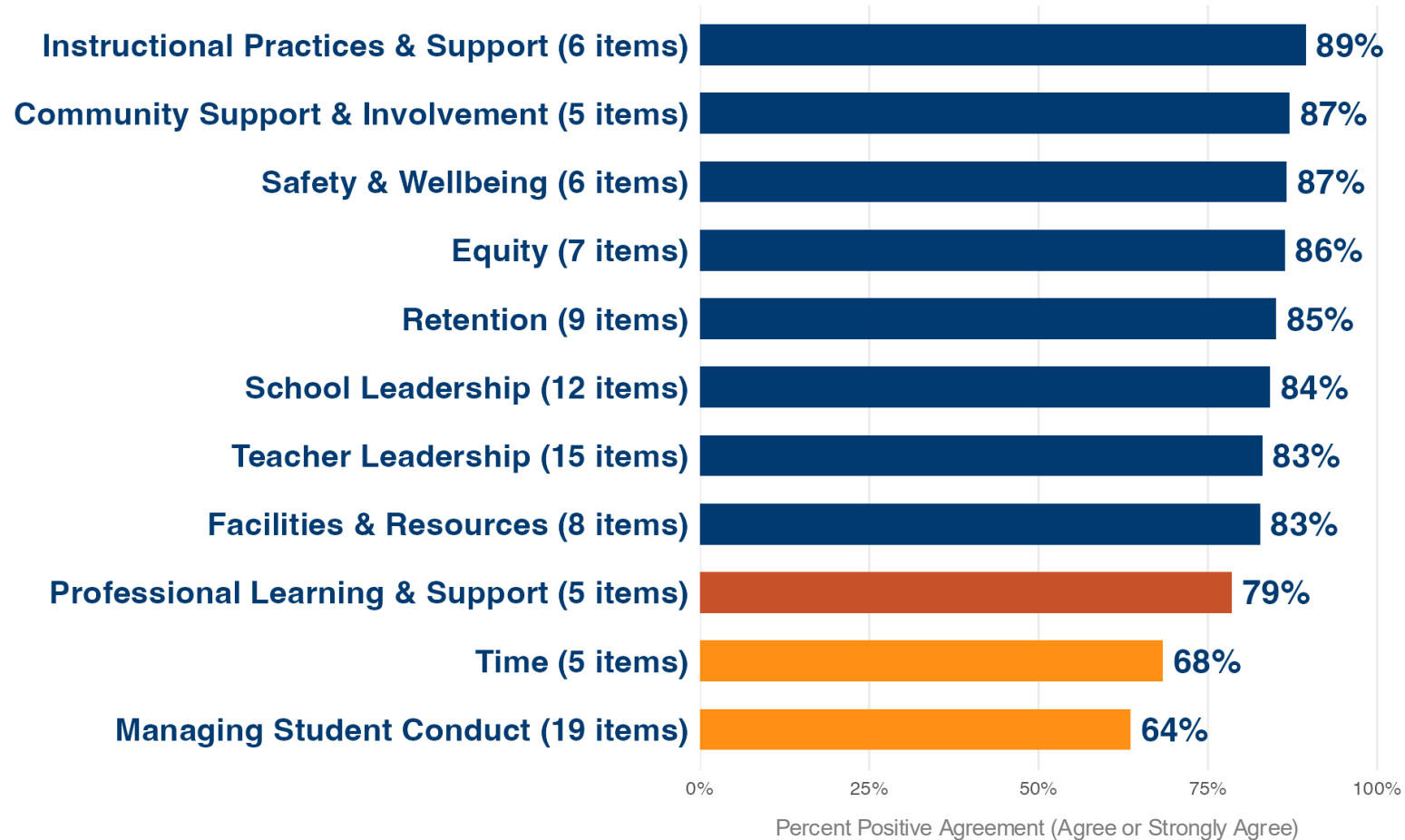


# Limitations of the Preliminary Findings

- **Limited analysis window:** Survey closed March 31, 2026; response data received April 15, 2026.
- **Preliminary findings only:** Prepared for the May 2026 State Board meeting; analysis and review are ongoing.
- **Descriptive, not causal:** Results identify patterns and relationships, but do not explain why they occur.
- **Statewide averages can mask variation:** Results will differ across districts, schools, and regions.

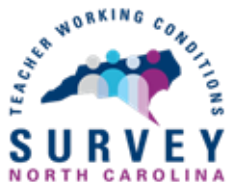
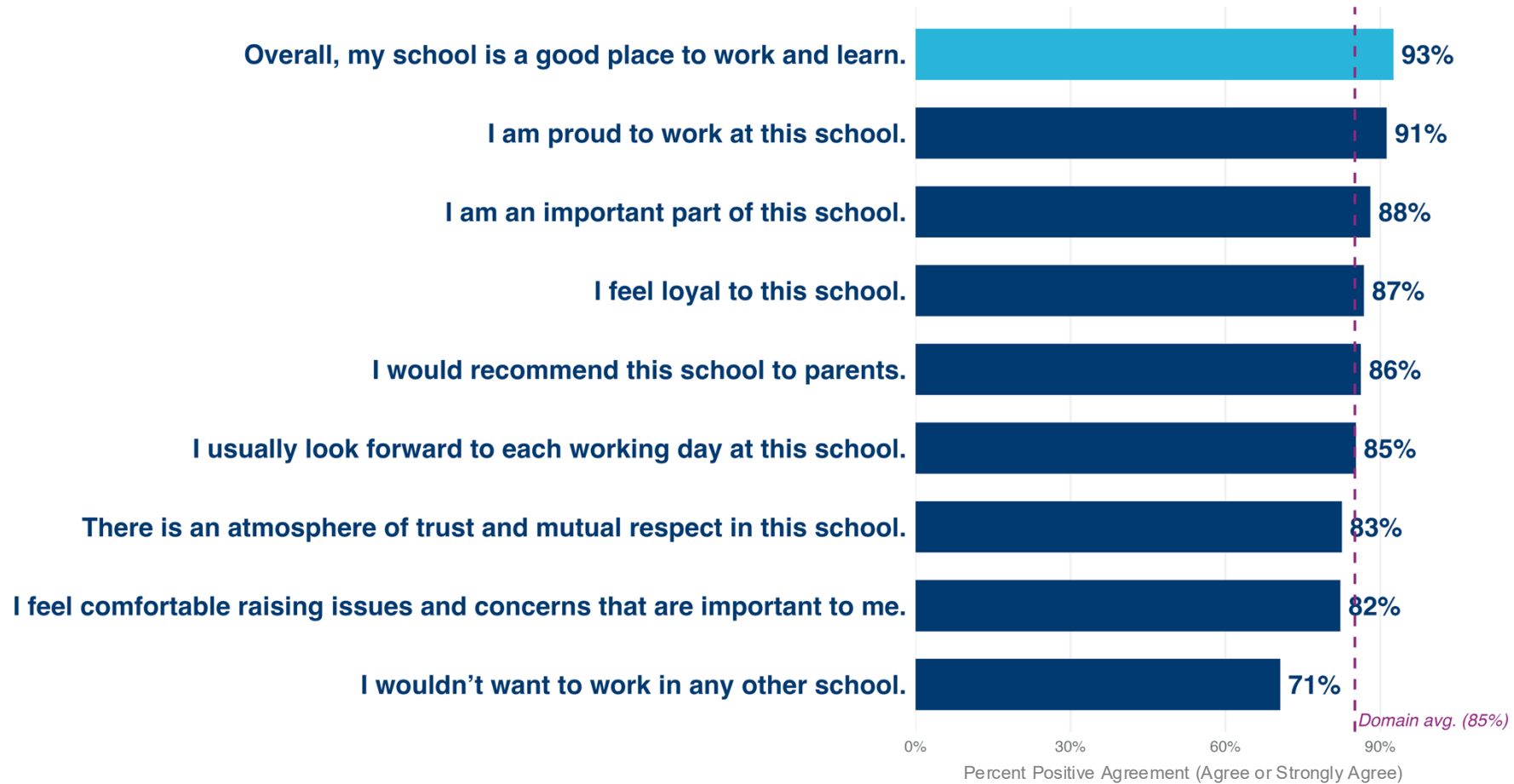
# Survey Domains & Positive Agreement

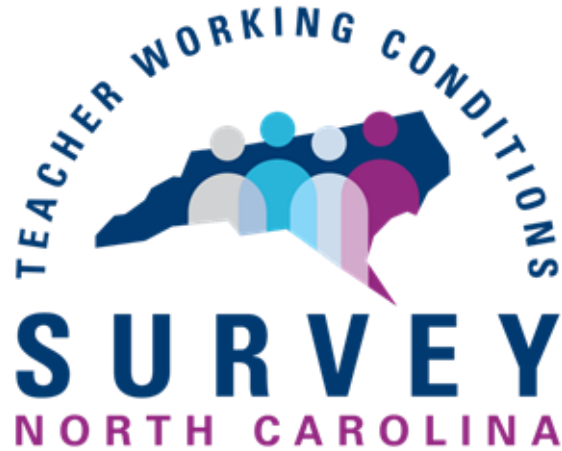
*Across domains, teachers are largely positive about their working conditions.*



# Connection to Schools

*Survey retention items suggest teachers are strongly committed to their schools.*



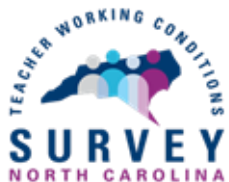
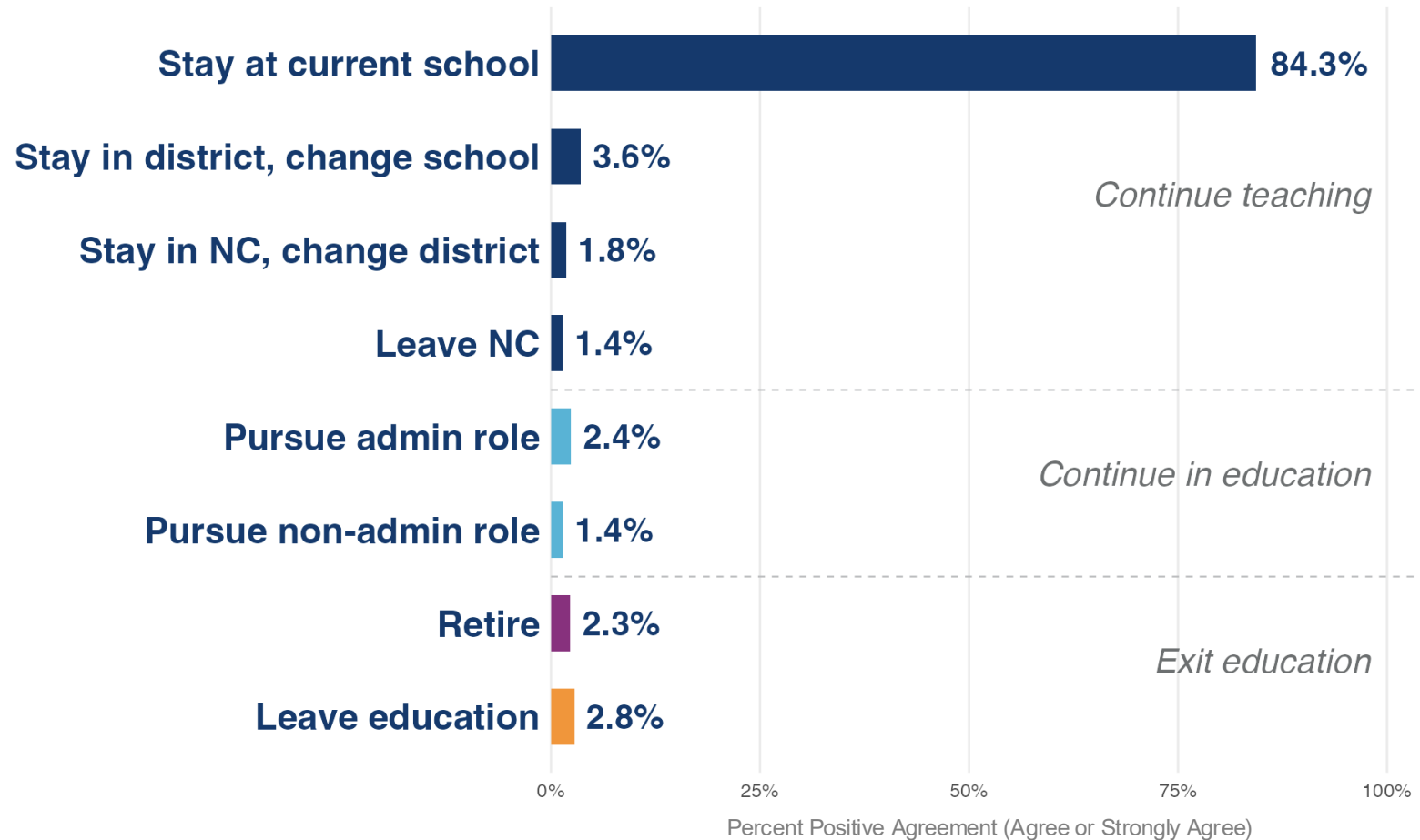


*“I am very happy here and proud to work at this school. Despite the challenges... staff at this school work hard to ensure the needs of all students are met.”*

- Elementary Teacher,  
Public Schools of Robeson County

# Plans for Next Year

*A large majority of teachers plan to continue teaching at their current school.*

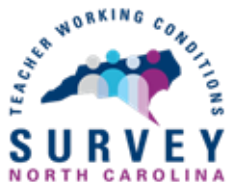


# Working Conditions and Teachers' Plans

Teachers' professional plans differ meaningfully by how they view their working conditions.

	Instructional Practices	Community Support	Safety & Wellbeing	Equity	Retention	School Leadership	Teacher Leadership	Facilities & Resources	Professional Learning	Time	Student Conduct	
<b>Stay at current school</b>	91%	88%	88%	88%	89%	87%	85%	84%	80%	71%	65%	Continue in education
<b>Change schools</b>	78%	77%	77%	72%	55%	62%	71%	74%	64%	49%	50%	
<b>Career transition</b>	85%	83%	83%	81%	78%	79%	78%	80%	74%	65%	58%	
<b>Retire</b>	89%	88%	86%	87%	87%	86%	84%	84%	80%	70%	62%	Leave education
<b>Leave education</b>	79%	75%	77%	73%	60%	66%	71%	72%	62%	47%	49%	

Percent Positive Agreement (Agree or Strongly Agree)



# School Leadership

Leadership was one of the most common themes among teacher comments, showing **how school leaders can strengthen or strain working conditions.**

## When teachers are heard

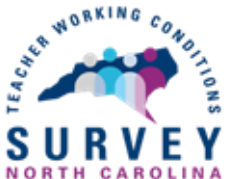
*“I always feel like leadership has my back... Having immediate open-door access means issues are solved collaboratively and quickly. I appreciate the professional trust.”*

- Middle School Teacher

## When they are not

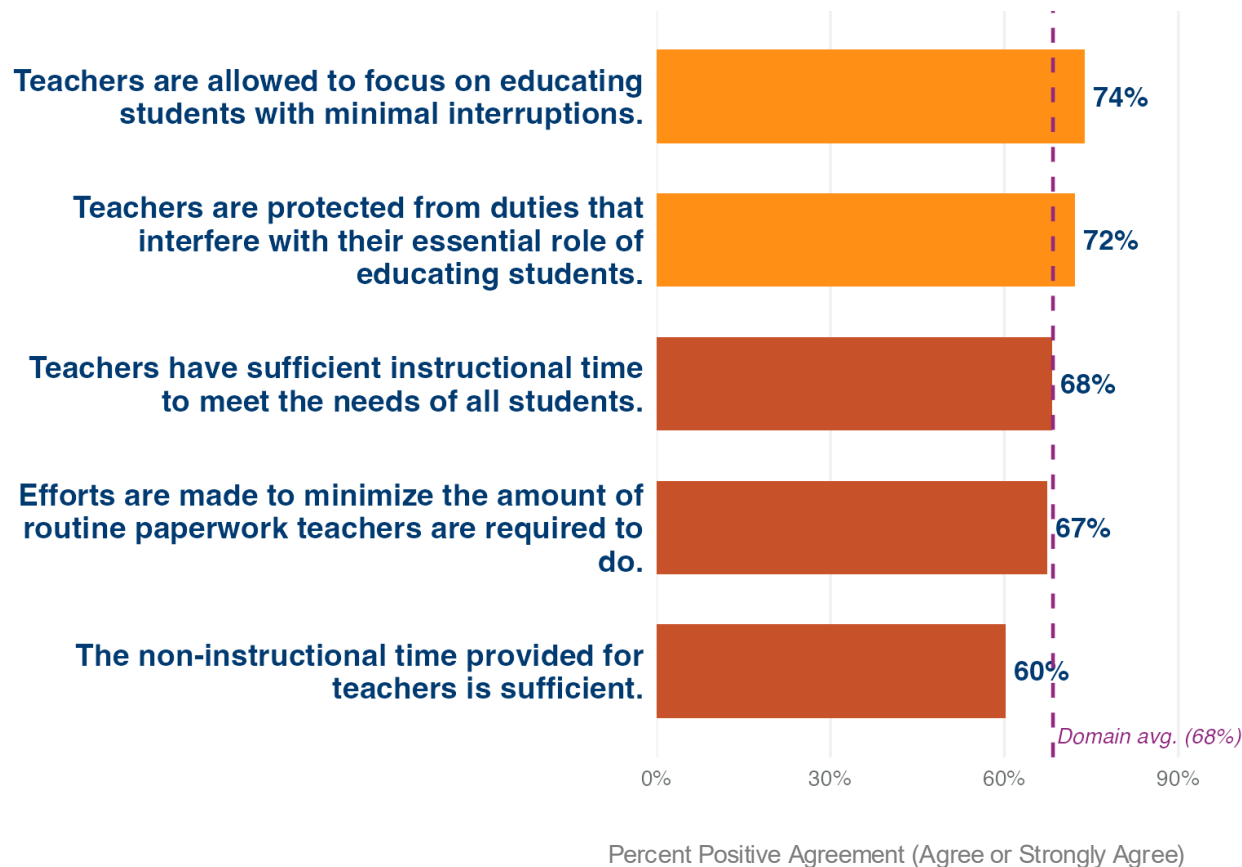
*“At this school there is no voice for teachers. Everything is micromanaged, and if it isn't what leadership wants to hear, it is shut down.”*

- Elementary School Teacher



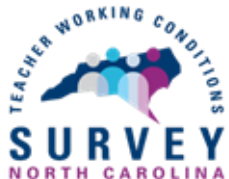
# Protected Time

On average, teachers reported spending about **9 additional hours each week** on school-related work outside the regular school day.



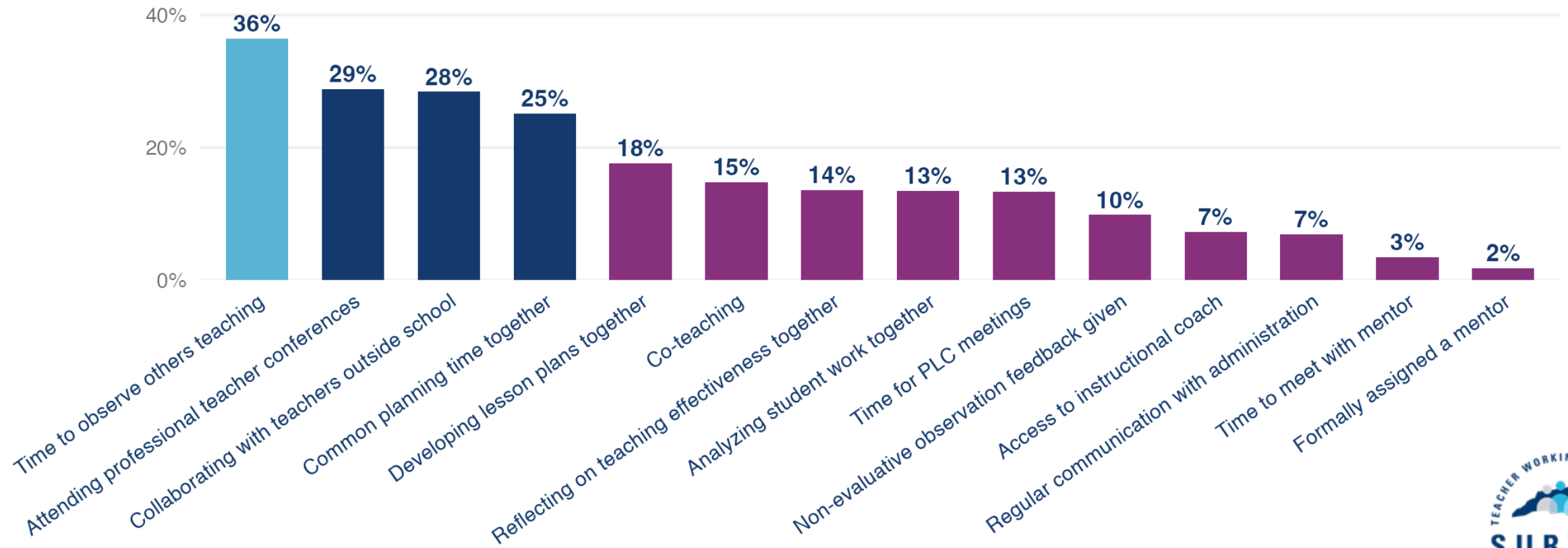
*“Time is what I struggle with most... We often have multiple meetings outside of instructional hours, which takes away valuable time for planning... that then has to be completed at home.”*

- Elementary Teacher

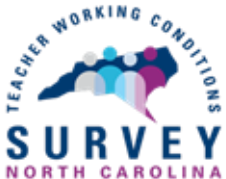


# Needed Instructional Supports

Teachers' most requested supports center on **time and opportunities to learn from other educators**, especially through observation, collaboration, and professional conferences.

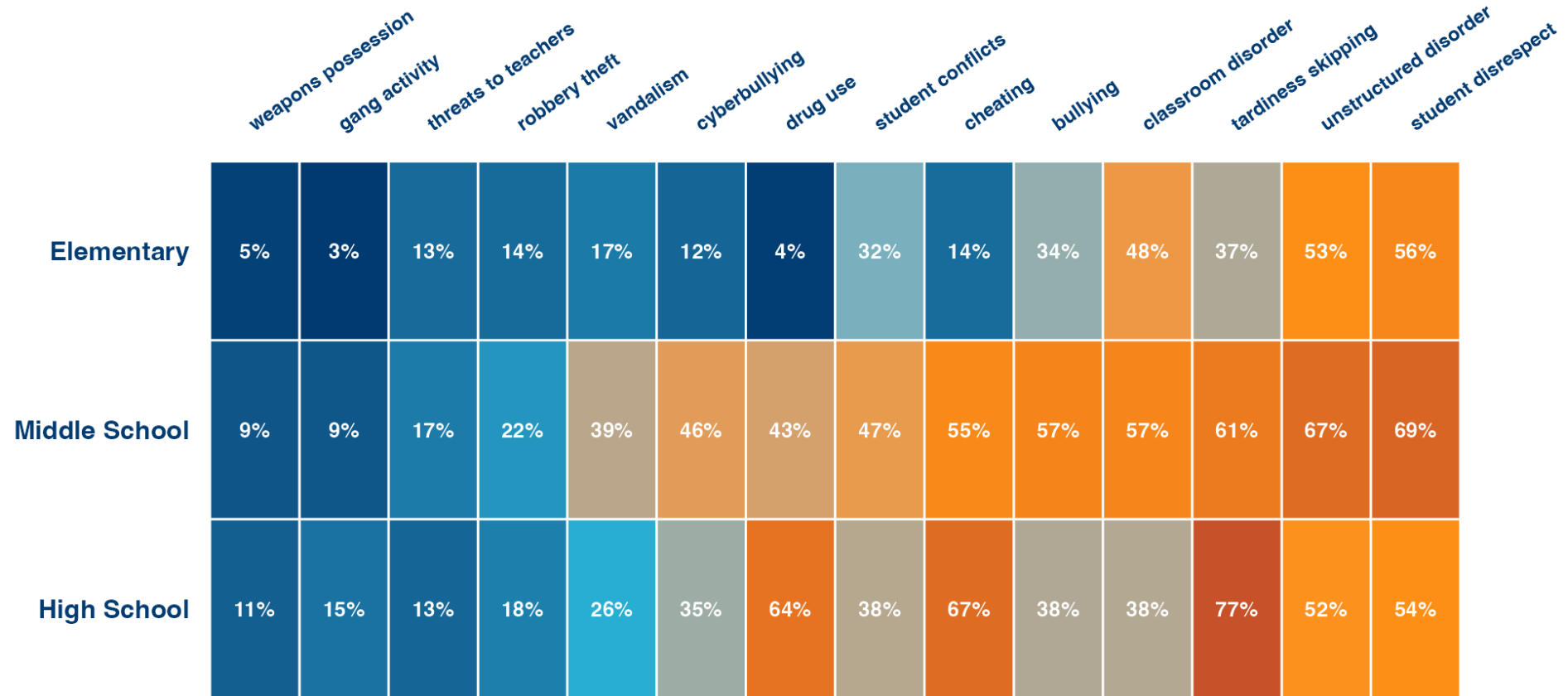


Percent of Teachers who Selected Each Item (selected up to 3)

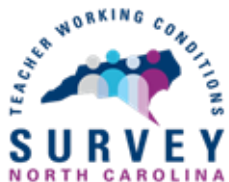


# Student Conduct

*Student conduct concerns are most pronounced in middle and high schools, especially around disrespect, tardiness, and disorder.*

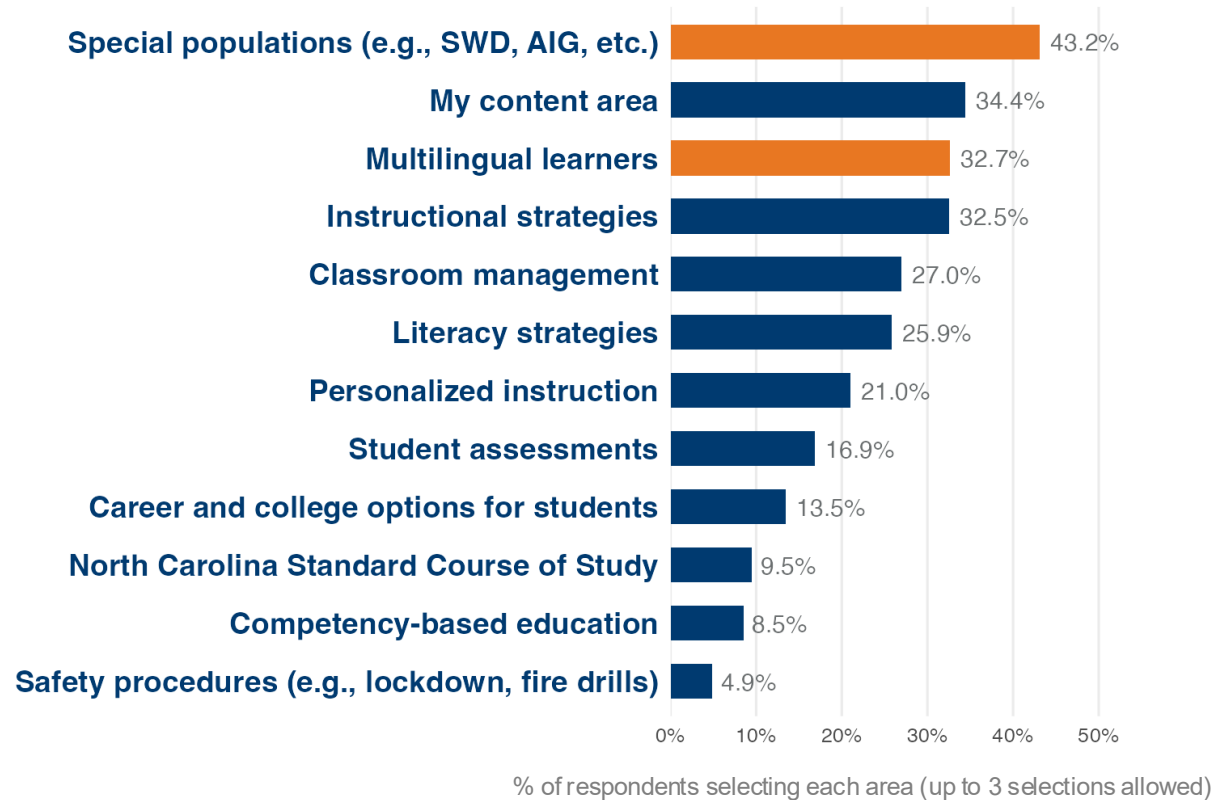


Percent of Teachers who Agree or Strongly Agree Behavior is an Issue in their School



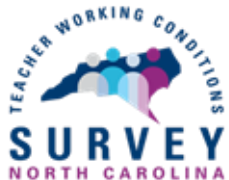
# Special Populations & Student Wellbeing

Teachers' comments and professional development priorities suggest that **additional support is needed to meet the increasingly complex needs of students.**



*“Our school is a rural, Title I school. Many students do not have adequate food, clothing, resources. Many come to school tired.”*

*- Elementary Teacher*

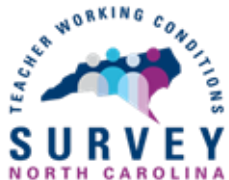


# Unique Themes from Teacher Comments

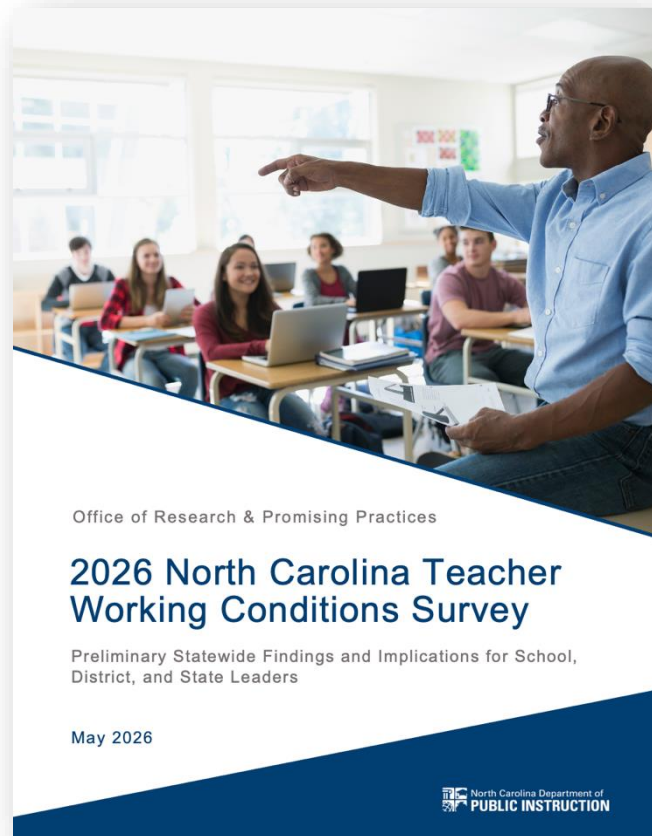
- **Compensation and funding emerged as recurring concerns.** Teachers connected pay, resource limitations, staffing, class size, and retention concerns to broader questions about whether teaching feels sustainable over time.
- **Many teachers distinguish school-level strengths from broader system constraints.** Teachers often described supportive school culture and leadership while pointing to broader policy, funding, staffing, and compliance issues at the district and state level.
- **Facilities and resources remain important contextual factors.** Although this was not among the lowest-rated domains statewide, teachers' comments show that building conditions, classroom resources, and access to support staff continue to impact daily work in some schools.

# Summary of Key Findings

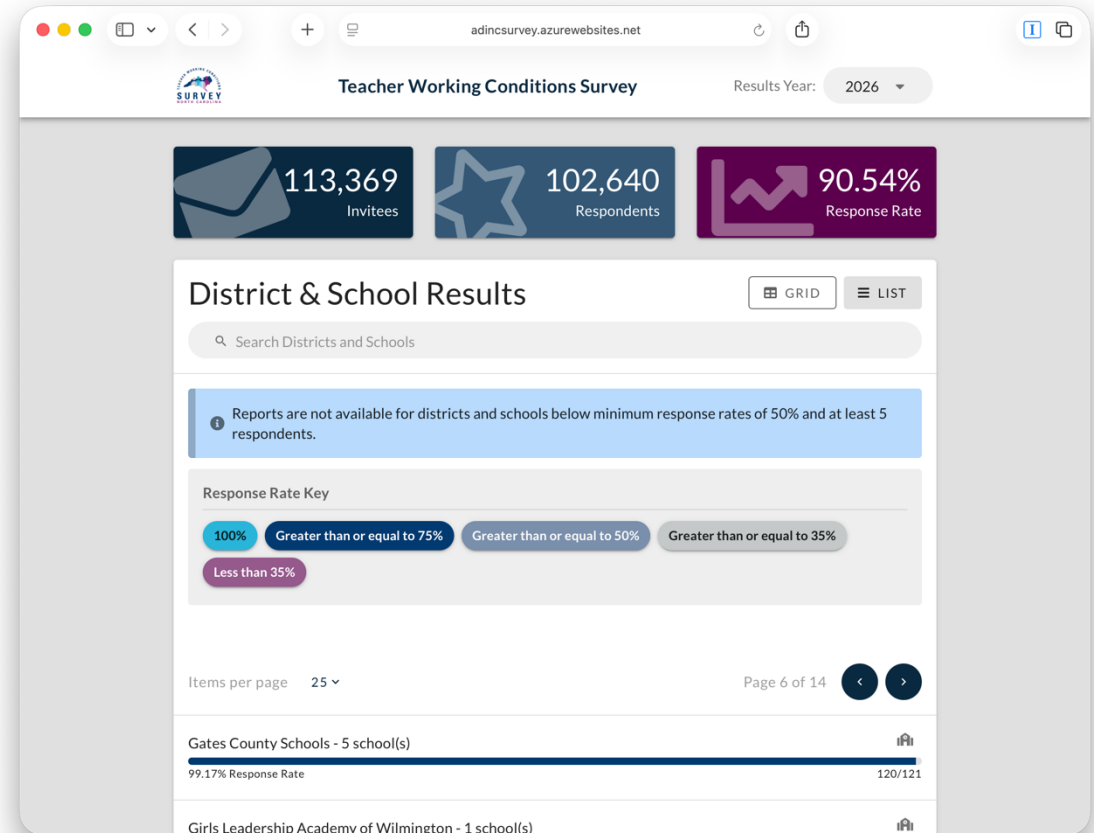
- Overall, **teachers are strongly committed to their schools.**
- The biggest threats to sustaining that commitment are **protected time, trust in (and from) leadership, and student conduct.**
- Specific areas for improvement include:
  - Protected time for instructional planning
  - Opportunities for learning with and from peers
  - Leadership support focused on building positive relationships
  - Targeted support for student behavior and high-need learners.



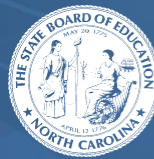
# Explore the Results Further



[go.ncdpi.gov/twc-report-2026](https://go.ncdpi.gov/twc-report-2026)



[nctwcs.org](https://nctwcs.org)



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State Board of Education  
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