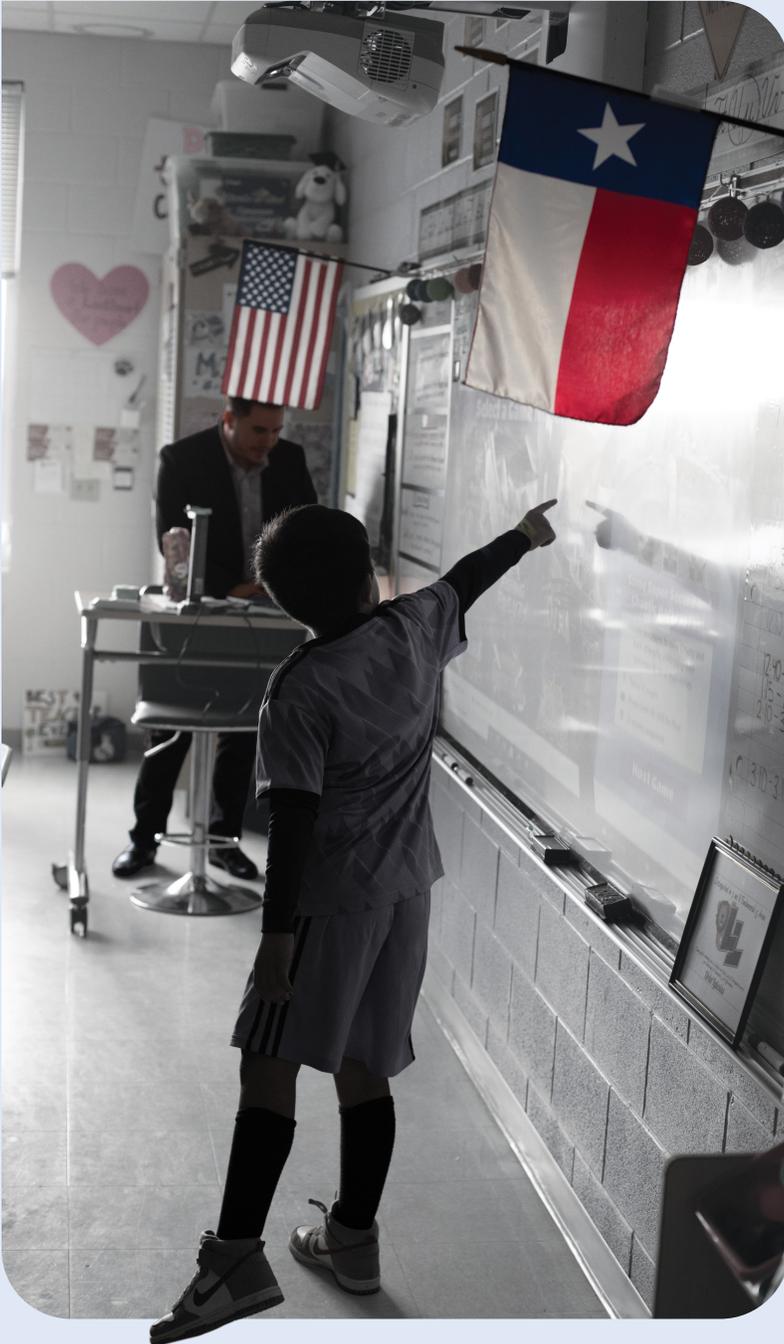


The 2023 Texas Teacher Poll:

# Listening to the Educator Experience Summary



The fourth annual public opinion poll of Texas Public School teachers recognizes that teachers understand their needs and the needs of their students. Importantly, 2023's findings show that teachers are experiencing stressors at the workplace, and these stressors influence teachers' decision to stay in the classroom. The Charles Butt Foundation hopes that this information will be used to inform policy on campuses, within districts, and across the state to inform the most precious resource of our public schools in Texas, our teachers.

## Teacher Mental Health and Emotional Well Being

Teacher retention continues to be a pressing issue across the state of Texas. One key indicator of job retention is an employee's mental and emotional health; therefore, this year, the Foundation asked teachers to share sources of stress they experienced during the school year. In 2023, a large majority, 94% of teachers, identified poor pay and benefits, excessive workloads/long hours, and staff shortages as sources of stress. Teachers are not only stressed from feeling underpaid and overworked. Many teachers feel they lack adequate training or support to respond to various school safety scenarios, and 86% of teachers express that the pressure to keep students safe is a source of stress.

## Spending Priorities

Because teachers are experts in their campus and classroom, the poll asked them to assess spending priorities on their campus. Nearly all Texas teachers identified increasing teacher salaries as extremely or very important. Unchanged from 2022, 81% of teachers feel their pay is unfair, with 56% of teachers citing this unfair pay as a major source of stress. Eighty-six percent of teachers identified assisting students with mental health needs as a spending priority. This prioritization is coupled with teachers' recognized need for adequate training and support for responding to a student mental health crisis, which half of teachers shared they lack.

## Vouchers

Seventy-three percent of Texas public school teachers say implementing a voucher program to allow parents to pay for a portion of tuition at private and religious schools would be harmful to the state's public schools. Eighty-five percent of public school teachers oppose implementing a voucher program in their community if it means reducing the funds distributed to their local public schools. Eighty percent of teachers oppose implementing a voucher program if participating private and religious schools do not have state educational oversight.

## Attrition

Our findings suggest that almost half of teachers planned on becoming life-long educators upon entering the profession. Twenty-one percent of Texas teachers surveyed shared they left their job as public school teachers and at some point returned. Despite this desire to stay in the profession, 75% of teachers are seriously considering leaving their job in the classroom at this time.

## Positive Work Culture and Environment

Previous poll findings found that nearly all teachers cited the attraction of positive work culture and environment as a retention factor; in 2023, 56% of teachers feel this is largely present in their current position. This year's poll explored steps administrators can take to create a positive work culture and environment, including over 90% of

teachers saying it is extremely or very important for administrators to give them autonomy in the classroom; support them in handling student discipline; take their opinions into account when setting school policy; advocate for them in interactions with parents and the community; provide adequate campus security, supplies and equipment, and support staff; and manage their level of non-instructional tasks and responsibilities.

## Sense of Belonging

Eight in 10 Texas public school teachers feel they have adequate support from their campus to foster a sense of belonging among all students in their classroom. This includes feeling supported to cultivate good relationships among students, creating a space where all students feel empowered to participate, and making a space where

students can be their genuine selves. Nineteen percent of teachers say they do not have adequate support from their campus to provide these elements of belonging for their students.

## Teacher Preparation

While there are various routes to teacher preparation in the state of Texas, teachers were clear that some elements of teacher preparation were highly important in supporting their development as an educator. Specifically, field experiences, including observing other teachers in the classroom, student teaching, or internships, were cited as extremely or very important to their teacher preparation experience by roughly eight in 10 teachers. While field experience was important, 74% of educators who had an assigned mentor shared that this was a highly important component of their preparation.



Each year, the Charles Butt Foundation makes listening to teachers an imperative to inform policy and support rooted in teachers' lived experiences. The fourth annual Charles Butt Foundation Texas Teacher Poll, *Listening to the Educator Experience*, surveyed 1,029 Texas public school teachers across the state from March until June of 2023.



Scan the QR code for access to the complete report, methodologies, and other research from the Charles Butt Foundation.



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