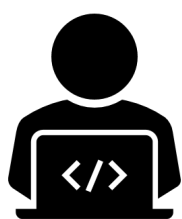


Public health, schools and elected officials need timely, actionable and school-specific data to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 in kindergarten-12th grade (K-12) school settings and to make sure schools can reopen and stay open, safely. In January 2021, the CDC Foundation, in partnership with Deloitte Consulting and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), launched the *Monitoring School COVID-19 Prevention Strategies Project* to assess school prevention strategies and impacts of COVID-19 on the social, mental and physical health of the school community.

This report provides main takeaways from a convenience sample survey of **576 school principals and vice principals in K-12 schools in the U.S.** conducted between April 7-17, 2021, through a partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This rapid data collection method provides real-time information related to COVID-19 and the changing circumstances in schools, from the perspective of principals. The report focuses on job satisfaction, COVID-19-related decision making, policies and practices related to COVID-19 and impacts on students.

KEY FINDINGS



n = 576 | N = 117,110 (weighted)*

Principals

- 45% of principals are **considering retiring early or finding a different profession** more often now than before the pandemic. Work-related stress and extra work hours due to the pandemic could be a contributing factor.
- While most principals had the **opportunity to provide input or feedback into district decisions** related to COVID-19 policies, satisfaction with specific policies and practices in school varied among principals.
- Top reported **barriers to schools' ability to implement COVID-19 prevention strategies** relate to physical infrastructure, lack of broadband access to support remote learning, lack of student and parent acceptance or adherence to prevention strategies, and lack of key staff (e.g., teachers, nurses, custodians) to support changing circumstances in school.
- During the 2020-2021 school year, 31% of principals observed a **↓ in student enrollment** and 65% observed an **↑ in student absences**. Issues with student attendance and enrollment were more often reported among rural and suburban schools than urban schools.
- Most reported **COVID-19 negatively impacted students' educational progress (85%) and mental health well-being (87%)**.
- Compared to before the pandemic, some reported feeling less confident in their school's ability to identify students in need of mental health services.
- As of April 2021, **a third** of principals reported that **all or nearly all of their staff had been vaccinated** against COVID-19.

IMPLICATIONS & PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Based on key findings, there are opportunities to:

- Better understand stressors for principals during the pandemic and how to best support them in their efforts to manage their school's COVID-19 prevention strategies and other COVID-19-related responsibilities to reduce principal turnover
- Address school infrastructure to better respond to the current pandemic, including increased ventilation strategies
- Explore opportunities to improve access to resources for identifying students/youth in need of mental health services and academic support
- Investigate ways to address learning loss due to COVID-19 to ensure students do not fall behind

PRINCIPAL DEMOGRAPHICS



Respondent Demographics

Institutional Role	Gender	Age	Tenure as Principal	Race
67% Principals 33% Vice principal	45% Male 55% Female	7% Under 35 years 29% 35-44 years 65% 45+ years	21% 0-3 years 17% 4-5 years 16% 6-7 years 46% 8-34 years	79% Non-Hispanic White 9% Non-Hispanic Black 3% Non-Hispanic Other* 8% Hispanic



Characteristics of Schools Represented

School Types	Grades Represented	School Operation Model	Location	Region
75% Public School 19% Private/Parochial/Independent School 3% Charter/Magnet School 3% Boarding or Other School	13% Kindergarten 38% Elementary school (grades 1-5) 55% Middle school (grades 6-8) 35% High school (grades 9-12)	28% In-person 54% Hybrid 19% Remote/virtual	29% Urban 45% Suburban 25% Rural	19% Northeast 22% Midwest 40% South 19% West

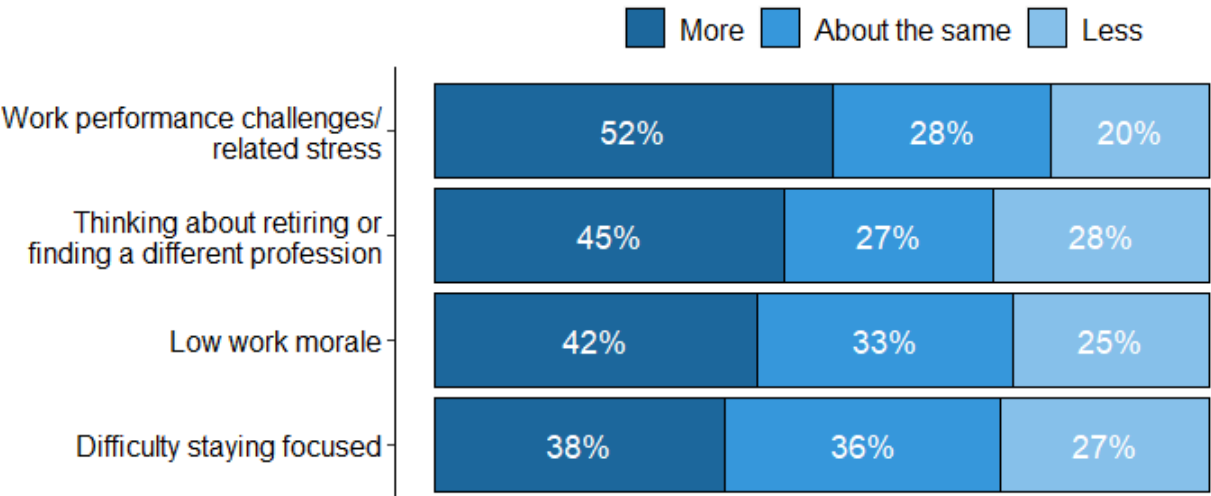
***Notes:** Please note that results in this report are not generalizable since they are based off a convenience sample survey. The electronic survey was approved by the Independent Review Board (IRB). These data have not been published. Weights were applied using nationally representative principal data from the National Center for Education Statistics given survey respondents account for only a portion of the full population of interest. The weights allow valid inferences to be made from the sample data about this population. All percentages in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number and thus totals may not add to exactly 100%. Chi-squared tests were used to test for differences across demographic variables (e.g., school operation mode, region, location). Additionally, the views expressed in this survey belong solely to the respondents and do not represent or reflect the view of the CDC Foundation.

*Non-Hispanic Other camp directors includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, multiple races and other.

J O B S A T I S F A C T I O N

Compared to before the pandemic began (February 2020), how much are you experiencing each of the following?

n = 576 | N = 117,110



Compared to before the pandemic:

- 63% of principals reported they are working more hours.
- 45% of principals are thinking about retiring or finding a different profession more now, particularly more principals working in schools in the Northeast (50%) and Midwest (51%) of the U.S. compared to those in the South (40%) and West (43%).* In addition, more principals in suburban (48%) and rural (55%) areas reported this sentiment compared to those in urban areas (33%).* No differences were observed across gender and age.
- Principals reported experiencing the following more often:
 - Low work morale (42%)
 - Difficulty staying focused (38%)
 - Work performance challenges and related stress (52%)

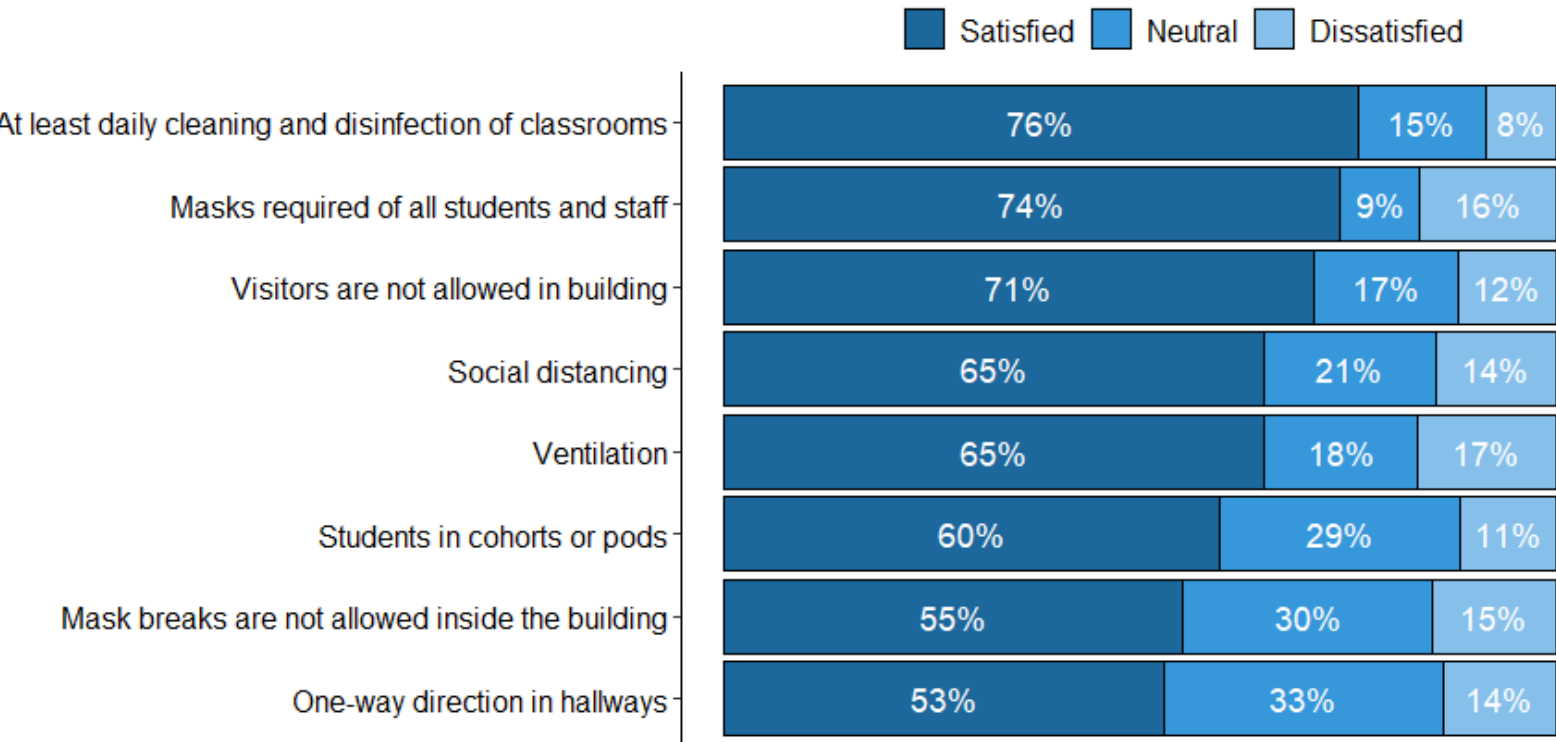
Mental health:

- Of the 85% principals who reported on their mental health, 9% reported frequent mental distress (14+ days of poor mental health) during past 30 days.
- 19% of principals noted they were frequently in a depressed mood and had little interest or pleasure in doing things in the past 2 weeks (suggesting signs of depression and further screening needed according to the Patient Health Questionnaire PHQ-2 score).

R E O P E N I N G D E C I S I O N S & O T H E R P R E V E N T I O N P O L I C I E S

How satisfied are you with these policies or practices in your school?

n = 576 | N = 117,110



Over 70% of principals were **satisfied with cleaning/disinfecting, mask, and visitor policies** in school

17% of principals were **dissatisfied with ventilation practices** in their school, including opening windows or doors, use of fans with open windows, installing HEPA filtration systems or UVGI

74% of principals were given the **opportunity to provide input or feedback** into district decisions about whether to open or close. Of those who were able to provide input, 70% said their input was considered a lot or some

- Roughly half of principals (51%) indicated their school closed 1-2 times due to COVID-19 this school year, 14% reported 3+ closures, 35% reported no closures.
- 70% were satisfied with their school district decisions related to COVID-19 policies and procedures while 19% were unsatisfied and 10% unsure.

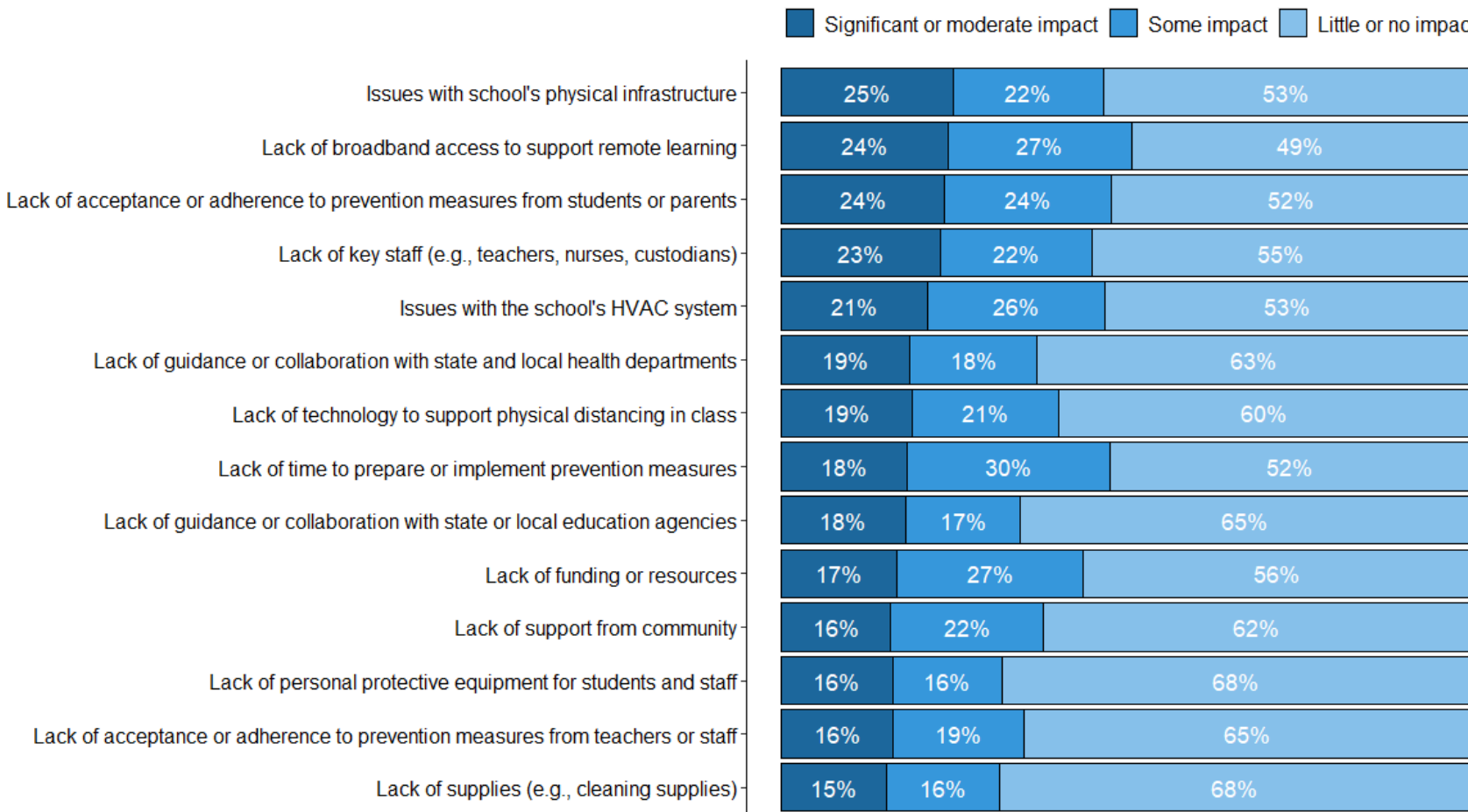
K E Y C H A L L E N G E S & C H A N G E S D U E T O C O V I D - 1 9

To what extent has each of the following factors negatively impacted your school's ability to implement COVID-19 prevention strategies?

n = 576 | N = 117,110

~25% of principals experienced significant or moderate **issues with their school's physical infrastructure, broadband access** to support remote learning, and limited number of key school staff

24% of principals reported that **lack of acceptance or adherence to prevention measures** from students or parents negatively impacted their school's ability to implement prevention strategies

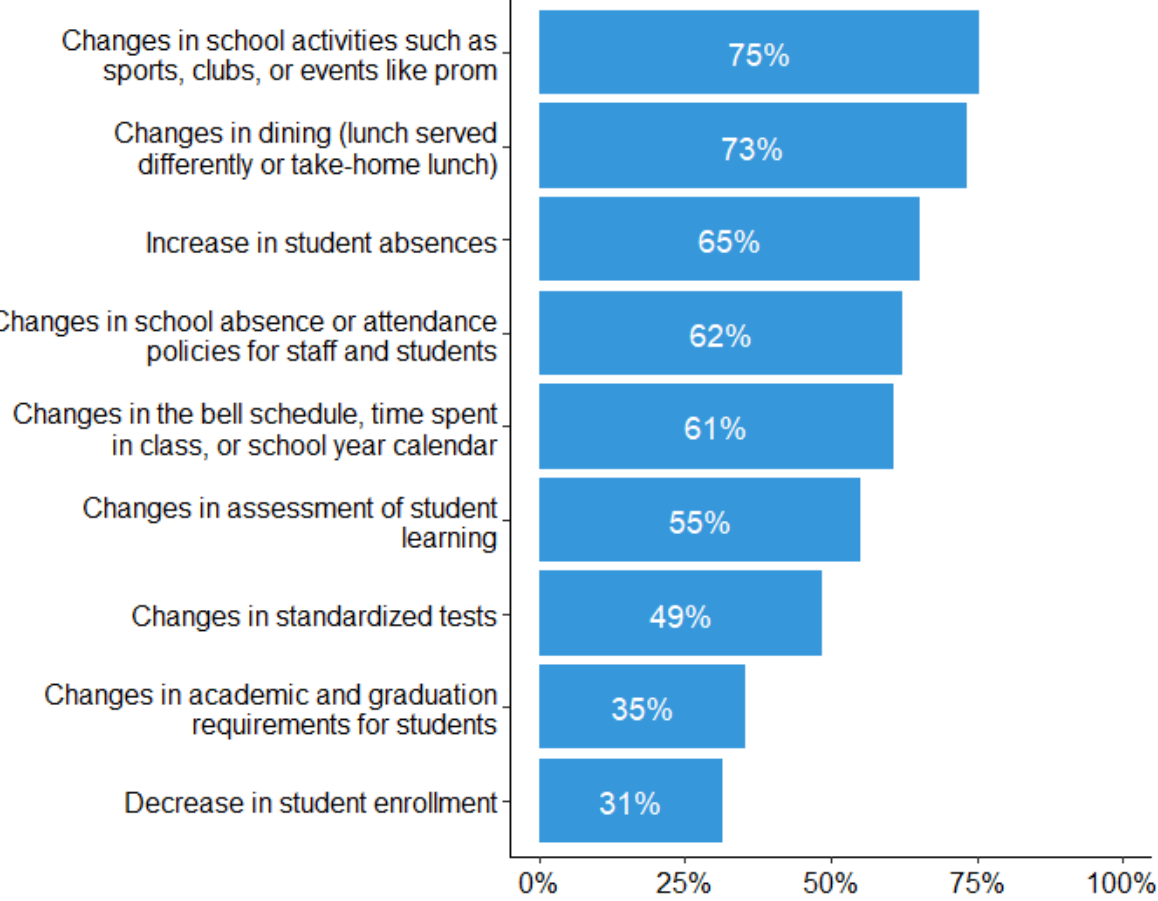


Note: *This finding was statistically significant. Chi-squared analyses were conducted to test for statistically significant (p<.05) associations between survey variables.

KEY CHALLENGES & CHANGES DUE TO COVID-19, cont.

Which of the following has changed during the current school year (2020-2021)? Check all that apply.

n = 576 | N = 117,110



31% of principals observed a ↓ in student enrollment this school year (2020-2021)

- Changes reported this school year (2020-2021):
- Most principals observed an ↑ in student absences and reported changes to school activities and where lunch is served for students.
 - Principals in suburban (36%) and rural (39%) areas more often reported a ↓ in student enrollment than those in urban schools (17%)*
 - Increases in student absences were more prominent in rural (79%) and suburban (66%) schools than urban schools (51%)*

- Resources and activities offered to students this school year (2020-2021):
- 44% reported their school offered all school sports and cocurriculars that were offered last school year while 43% reported only some were offered; 13% reported no sports or cocurriculars were offered at all.
 - 58% of principals reported most or nearly all of their students have access to internet that allows them to participate in live video instruction.
 - Schools offered the following resources to their students if needed:
 - Internet access at home (57%)
 - Internet access or hotspot at another location (67%)
 - A laptop for use at home (80%)
 - IT or technical support for problems with internet or computer (79%)

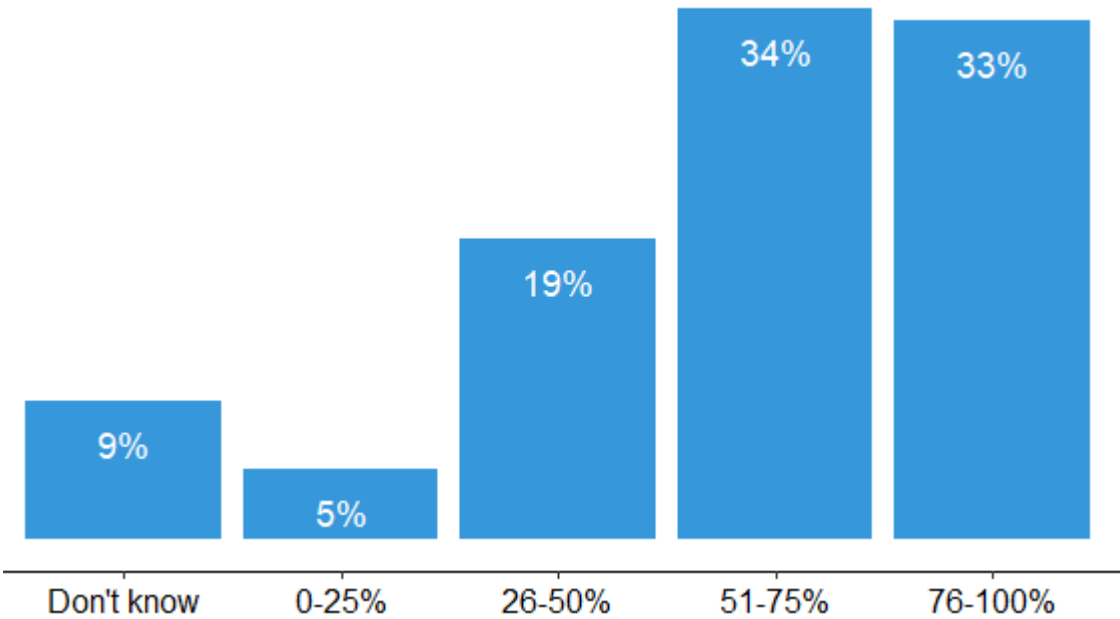
MONITORING COVID-19 CASES AT SCHOOL

83% of principals indicated their district has a public tracker noting all cases in a given school to date. Of those reporting a tracker, 73% reported the tracker is updated daily/as cases occur

- Majority of principals (96%) with students attending school in-person or hybrid reported there is a designated staff person assigned to track students who have tested positive. Most indicated this person is either a school nurse (57%) or administrator (principal/vice principal) (29%).
- As of April 2021, a third of principals reported that all or nearly all of their staff (e.g., teachers, maintenance staff, food service, etc.) had been vaccinated against COVID-19.
- 74% of principals were extremely or very confident that all staff who tested positive for COVID-19 were notified. In comparison, **only half** of principals were confident that all parents of students who tested positive notified them.

What percent of your school staff has already received a COVID vaccination?

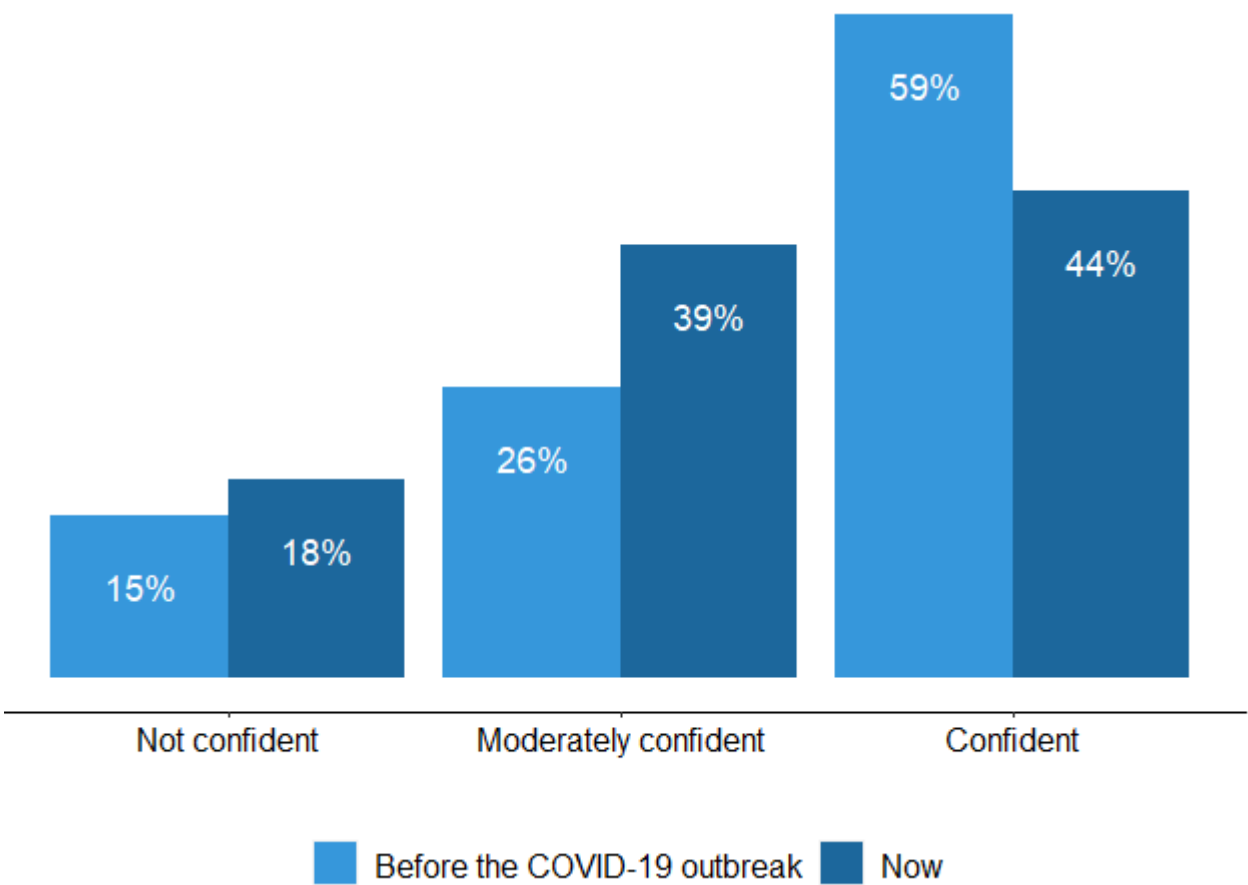
n = 576 | N = 117,110



PRINCIPALS' ASSESSMENT ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDENTS

How confident do you feel in your school's ability to identify students in need of mental health services?

n = 576 | N = 117,110



85% of principals believed COVID-19 had a **negative impact on their students' educational progress** (41% significant negative impact; 44% slight negative impact)

87% of principals believed COVID-19 had a **negative impact on most of their students' mental health** (38% significant negative impact; 49% slight negative impact)

- Overall, principals feel less confident in their school's ability to identify students in need of mental health services now than before the pandemic.
- Less than half of principals reported they participated in the following professional development workshops this school year (2020-2021):
 - Best practices for building trusting and caring relationships with students (47%)
 - Warning signs of depression or other mental health challenges in students/youth (45%)
 - Trauma-informed instruction or practices (49%)

Note: *This finding was statistically significant. Chi-squared analyses were conducted to test for statistically significant (p<.05) associations between survey variables.