



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

# 2025 Colorado Exit Survey: Summary of Results

By:

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## Executive Summary

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In 2024-25 Colorado's Educator Exit Survey was developed to better understand the factors contributing to educator turnover in Colorado and to provide actionable insights that can support statewide and local retention efforts. The purpose of the survey was threefold: (1) to gain insight into why educators choose to leave the profession, (2) to identify the conditions or changes that might entice educators to return, and (3) to share relevant findings with districts that are interested in understanding local patterns in educator attrition. Teacher turnover has well-documented consequences for student learning, school stability, and district resources, making it essential to understand the underlying reasons educators leave. This report highlights the findings from Colorado's Exit Survey for the 2024-25 academic year.

Adapted from the Ohio Department of Education's Educator Exit Survey, which was developed in collaboration with REL Midwest in 2019, Colorado's exit survey asked about eight core elements of school environments and educator daily experience. It also asked whether the educator would consider returning to the profession.

CDE invited 6,300 educators who were employed in a Colorado public school in 2023-24 but not in 2024-25 to take the survey, and 1,564 responded. This resulted in a 25 percent response rate. Most respondents identified as female (80%) and White, non-Hispanic (87%). Respondents represented 131 school districts, seven Boards of Cooperative Education (BOCES), and one facility school. Nineteen percent worked in a rural school district or a BOCES that served rural school districts.

### Why educators leave (all respondents)

Retirement was the most commonly selected reason for leaving (24.1%), followed by 'other' (18.0%) and leaving the field of education (17.8%). Additional reasons included moving to another state (13.7%), personal reasons such as health, pregnancy, or caregiving (12.1%), and continuing in a different position in education (6.7%).

### Daily working conditions that matter

Educators reported varied experiences across the eight domains. In this exit survey, higher mean scores indicate areas where educators generally felt positive and are unlikely to be reasons they left the profession. Lower scores point to conditions that may have contributed to their decision to leave. Staff collaboration received the highest scores, followed by instructional support and managing student conduct. In contrast, teacher leadership and professional learning received the lowest scores, suggesting that educators feel they had limited access to leadership opportunities and relevant, meaningful professional learning. Ratings for use of time and facilities and resources were also low, highlighting ongoing challenges related to workload and time constraints and the physical environment in which educators work.

### Potential Reentry

More than 70 percent of respondents indicated they would consider returning to Colorado public education in the future. The top factors that would entice them to return included increased salary, smaller class sizes, and protected planning and break time.

Together, these results indicate that workplace conditions, particularly teacher leadership, professional learning, and use of time, are central drivers of educators' decision to leave. They also point to an opportunity to reengage former educators and strengthen retention across the state.

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## Introduction

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In 2024-25 Colorado's Educator Exit Survey was developed to better understand the factors contributing to educator turnover in Colorado and to provide actionable insights that can support statewide and local retention efforts. The purpose of the survey was threefold: (1) to gain insight into why educators choose to leave the profession, (2) to identify the conditions or changes that might entice educators to return, and (3) to share relevant findings with districts that are interested in understanding local patterns in educator attrition. Teacher turnover has well documented consequences for student learning, school stability, and district resources, making it essential to understand the underlying reasons educators leave. Research from Regional Education Laboratory Midwest and the *Journal of Education and Human Resources* highlights the substantial impact of administrative support, school climate, and working conditions on retention (Wackwitz, 2020; Naff et al., 2022). The survey is intended to help Colorado understand and address these systemic issues and strengthen the educator workforce.

## Methodology

The Colorado Educator Exit Survey was adapted from the Ohio Department of Education's Educator Exit Survey, which was developed in collaboration with REL Midwest in 2019. Informed by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework, which describes how workplace demands and available resources influence employee well-being and satisfaction, the survey was designed to capture the various factors that impact educators' daily experiences. The survey includes eight domains with 44 total items:

1. Facilities and resources (5 items)
2. School administration (7 items)
3. Instructional support (6 items)
4. Managing student conduct (7 items)
5. Teacher leadership (5 items)
6. Professional development/learning (4 items)
7. Staff collaboration and relationships (5 items)
8. Use of time (5 items)

In addition to the eight domains, educators were asked whether they would consider returning to the profession and what factors might encourage them to do so. Administration occurred during the summer months, May to August 2025. It was administered to educators who were reported as working in a Colorado public school in 2023-24 but not in the following school year, 2024-25. Based on this criterion, 6,300 individuals received an email invitation to take the survey. Of those invited, 1,564 responded, resulting in a 25 percent response rate.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test if mean scores across the eight domains differed significantly based on respondents' stated reason for leaving the profession. Seven domains showed statistically significant differences (all  $p < .05$ ).<sup>1</sup>

For this analysis, respondents who indicated that the reason they left the profession was one of the following: retired, continued teaching in a private school, or continued working as an educator in another school district in Colorado, were excluded from completing the survey and were not included in the data analysis. Additionally,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for full ANOVA results.



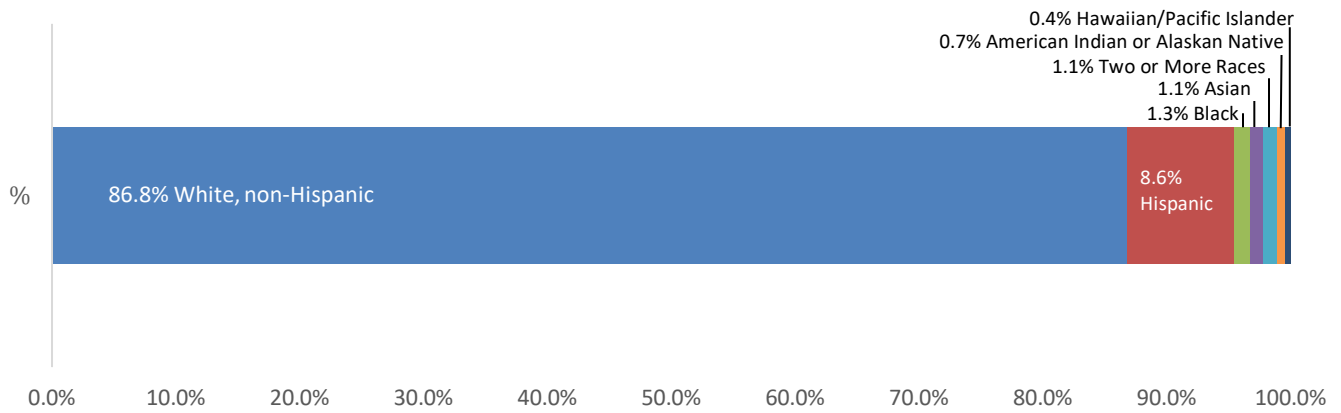
respondents who reported that they continued working as an educator in another state were also excluded from these analyses. This group represents geographic mobility, not necessarily attrition. Most of their responses were more positive across all domains and including them would have skewed the data analysis. As a result of not including these groups of respondents, the analytic sample included 825 respondents.

The educator exit survey results should be interpreted with awareness of several limitations. Response bias may be present as educators with strong positive or negative experiences are more likely to participate. Certain groups may be underrepresented, including those who left abruptly or for personal reasons. Responses are based on self-report and reflect individual perceptions, which vary in interpretation and may be influenced by timing, context, and emotional state at the point of departure. Finally, smaller sample sizes within some leaving-reason categories reduce comparability across groups. These limitations should be considered when drawing conclusions or making decisions based on the survey findings.

## Respondent Demographics

These demographic patterns help contextualize the findings that follow. A total of 825 educators were included in the survey analysis. According to CDE human resources records, 682 (82.7%) respondents were identified as female and 143 (17.3%) identified as male. Figure 1 shows the race and ethnicity distribution for the analytic sample.

Figure 1. Percent of analytic sample respondents by race/ethnicity (N = 825)



These educators were associated with 105 school districts, six BOCES, and the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) from nearly every region of the state. Nineteen percent worked in a rural school district or a BOCES that served rural districts.

These demographics show that the survey reached a broad cross section of educators who left Colorado public schools after the 2023-24 academic year. The makeup of the survey respondents is like the statewide educator workforce, which is 75 percent female and 83 percent White, non-Hispanic. One notable difference is in rural representation. In 2023-24, only eight percent of the educator workforce worked in a rural school district, while 19 percent of the survey analysis group worked in rural district or BOCES serving rural school districts.

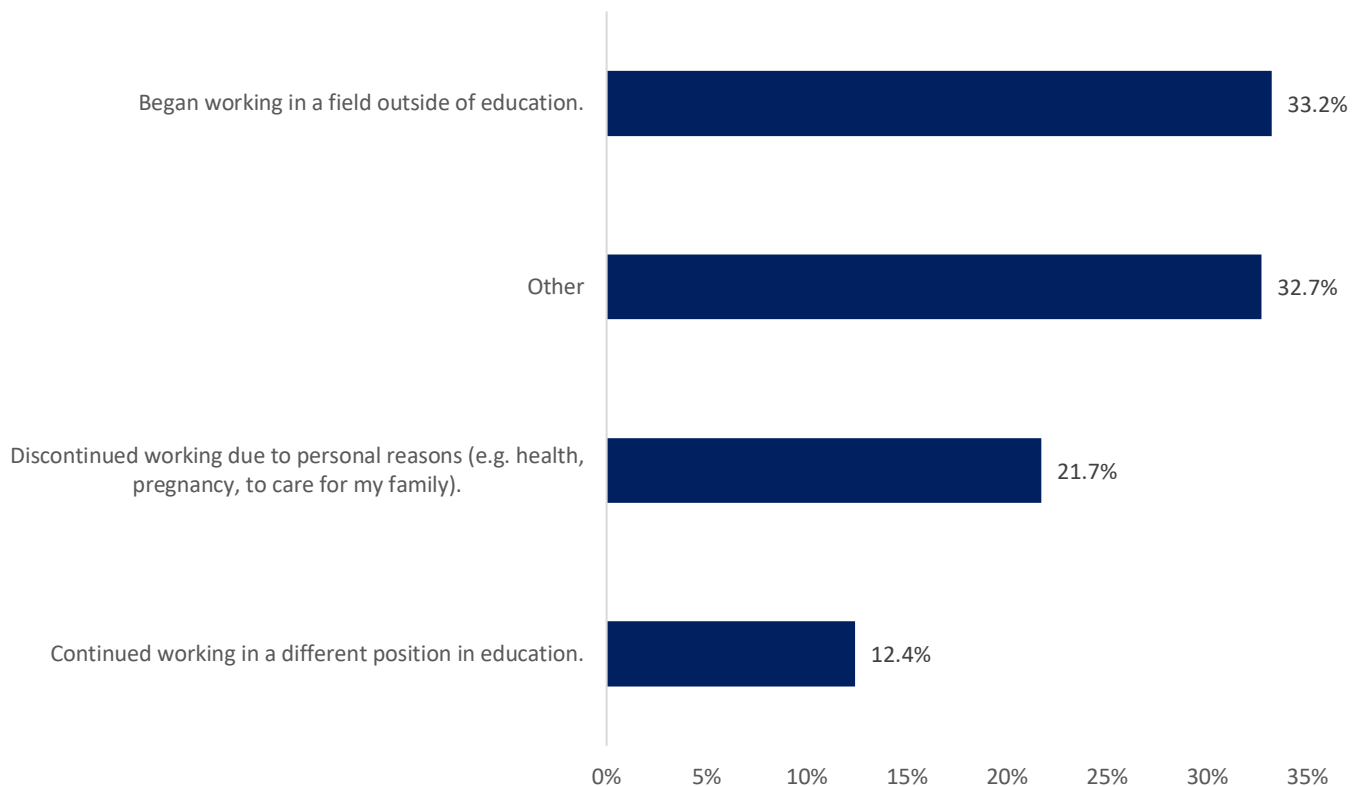
## Reasons for Leaving

The survey asked educators to indicate why they left the profession. Among those in the analytic sample, similar proportions selected moving to a field outside of education (33.2%) or reported 'other' (32.7%). Responses in the 'other' category generally described a mix of administrative or leadership issues, burnout or health concerns, job loss or position changes, relocation, and transitions into new roles inside or outside education. Almost 22 percent said they discontinued working due to personal reasons including health, pregnancy, or caregiving responsibilities, and just over 12 percent continued working in a different position within education.

Individuals who indicated that they retired or continued working in a Colorado district or a private school exited the survey early. These respondents did not complete the survey and are not included in the analytic sample. See Appendix B for data on all respondents.

Retired N = 377, 24.1%  
 Continued working in a Colorado district N = 65, 4.2%  
 Continued working in a private school N = 53, 3.4%

Figure 2. Percent of analytic sample survey respondents by reason they left the profession (N = 825)



## Factors Influencing Educators’ Decision to Leave

The survey asked educators who left to rate a series of items as to whether each statement was not at all true, a little true, mostly true, or very true. These 44 items measured eight working conditions that impact educators’ daily experience. Table 1 summarizes the mean scores, sample sizes, and variability of each factor, along with the corresponding 0–100 index values with 95% confidence intervals. The 0–100 index makes the domain scores easier to interpret. Scores above 50 indicate that respondents viewed the statements in that domain as more true overall, scores near 50 indicate moderately true responses, and scores below 50 reflect less true responses.<sup>2</sup> Because survey items were optional, sample sizes differ across domains and reflect participants who chose not to respond to certain questions. Respondents who skipped items did not differ meaningfully from those who completed them across demographic characteristics, with one exception.<sup>3</sup>

Table 1. Descriptive statistics summary and index score for eight domains, ordered from viewed most positively to viewed most negatively

	N	Mean	SD	Index (0–100)	95% CI for Mean
Staff collaboration	677	2.73	0.81	57.6	2.67–2.79
Instructional support	709	2.61	0.75	53.5	2.55–2.66
Managing student conduct	690	2.52	0.65	50.6	2.46–2.56
Facilities and resources	746	2.46	0.73	48.7	2.41–2.51
School administration	740	2.40	0.96	46.8	2.34–2.47
Use of time	674	2.24	0.43	41.2	2.20–2.27
Teacher leadership	682	2.21	0.88	40.2	2.14–2.27
Professional learning	681	2.21	0.79	40.2	2.15–2.27

Overall, the domain scores show variation in how educators experienced their working conditions. Staff collaboration received the highest ratings (Index = 57.6), indicating relatively stronger experiences with colleague relationships. Instructional support also received a moderately positive index score of 53.5. In contrast, the three lowest rated domains were use of time (Index=41.2), teacher leadership (Index = 40.2) and professional learning (Index = 40.2). These domains represent areas where respondents felt less supported and satisfied.

The survey framing helps interpret these results. Higher domain mean scores signal experiences educators felt good about and are unlikely to be reasons they left. Lower scores signal conditions that likely contributed to leaving. Using this approach, mean scores were compared across respondents’ stated reasons for leaving. Those who left for personal reasons serve as a reference group because they consistently reported more positive experiences across domains.

To determine whether differences across groups were statistically significant, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each domain. Results indicated statistically significant differences for facilities and resources, instructional support, managing student conduct, professional learning, school administration, teacher leadership, and use of time (all  $p < .05$ ). Only staff collaboration did not show a significant difference across groups ( $p = .067$ ). These findings show that perceptions varied across almost every domain depending on

<sup>2</sup> Index scores use the 1–4 scale and calculates a score that ranges from 0–100 using  $((\text{Mean} - 1)/3) \times 100$ .

<sup>3</sup> A chi-square test comparing three racial and ethnic groups (Hispanic, White, non-Hispanic, and all other racial groups) on managing student conduct showed a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0.012$ ).

why respondents left the profession. This suggests that experiences contributing to educator departure are not uniform and differ across key areas of day to day working conditions.

Several patterns stand out. School administration, teacher leadership and professional learning were most closely tied to leaving the profession or moving into a different role. Compared with personal reasons, ratings for school administration were lower by 0.69 for those who left the field and 0.30 for those who moved to another position in education. Teacher leadership was lower by 0.41 and 0.31, respectively. Professional learning was low across all groups, pointing to a potential need for system-wide improvement. While these numbers may be small, they show a consistent downward trend for educators who left for work-related reasons, which suggests these experiences played a role in their decision to exit the profession. Use of time was also rated lower across all groups, highlighting ongoing concerns about workload, planning time, and daily schedules. Staff collaboration remained relatively strong for everyone, especially those who left for personal reasons, which suggests that it may be a stabilizing force within educators’ day to day work.

To help interpret patterns in the mean scores, the domains were divided into two groups. The first chart shows the domains with relatively higher ratings, which likely did not influence their decision to leave the profession. The second chart shows those with lower ratings and may have contributed to why respondents left. This separation makes it easier to see where educators felt most supported and where they experienced more challenges.

Table 2. Mean scores for the higher-rated domains by reasons educators left

	Personal Reasons	Other	Continued working in a different position in education	Began working in a field outside of education
Staff collaboration	2.86	2.73	2.72	2.64
Instructional support	2.84	2.52	2.57	2.55
Facilities	2.63	2.44	2.39	2.40
Managing student behavior	2.70	2.44	2.54	2.47
School administration	2.69	2.26	2.42	2.36

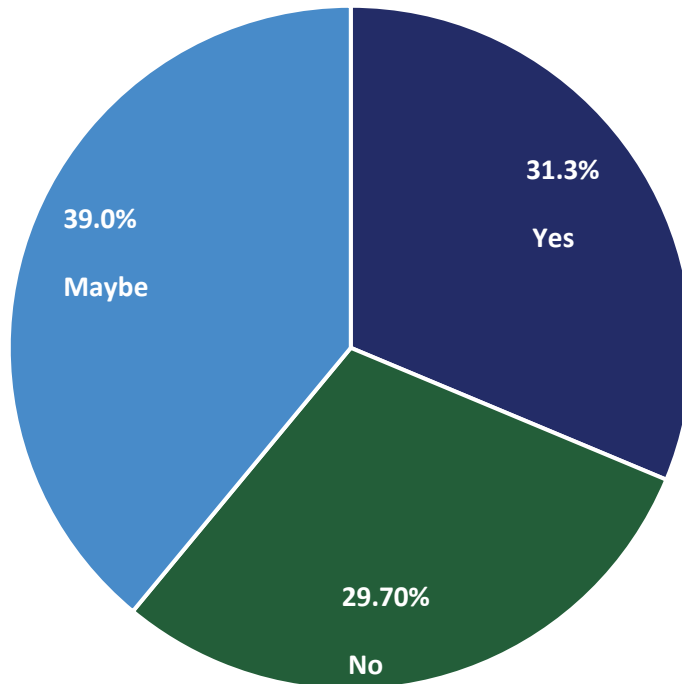
Table 3. Mean scores for the lower-rated domains by reasons educators left

	Personal Reasons	Other	Continued working in a different position in education.	Began working in a field outside of education.
Teacher leadership	2.53	2.07	2.22	2.12
Use of time	2.32	2.19	2.24	2.23
Professional learning	2.38	2.20	2.11	2.13

## Return to Teaching

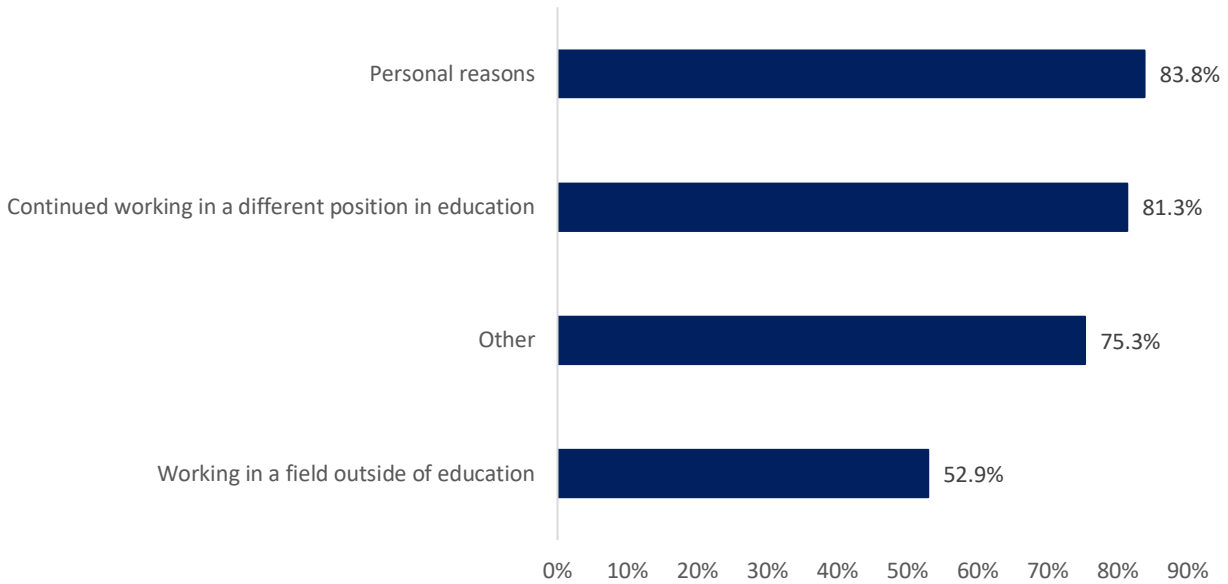
One of the goals of the Colorado Exit Survey was to understand whether educators who leave the profession would consider returning to public education. In the analytic sample, more than 70 percent of respondents said they would potentially consider returning.

Figure 3. Percent of survey respondents who would consider returning to education



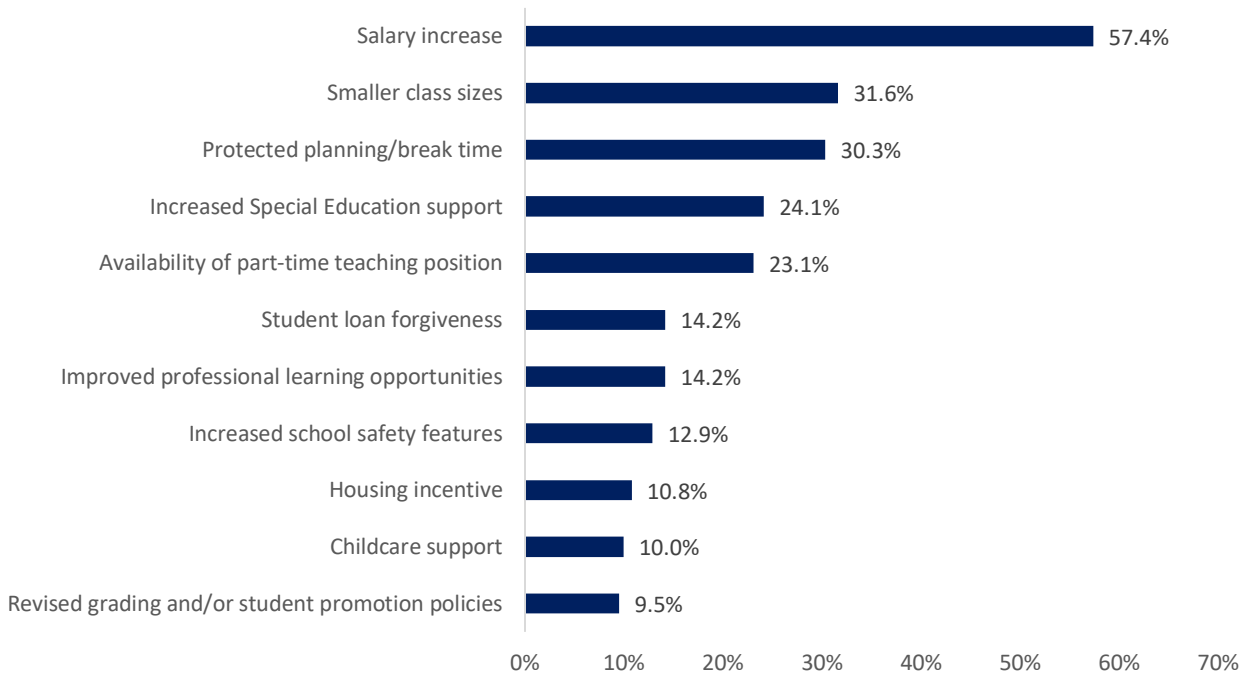
A more detailed analysis shows that respondents who left for personal reasons or continued working in education were most likely to consider returning to public education. Figure 4 below shows more than 81 percent of respondents in each of these groups said they would potentially consider returning to the profession. In contrast, respondents who left for 'other' reasons or left the profession completely were least likely to consider returning to the profession, 75 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

Figure 4. Percent of 'Yes' and 'Maybe' responses for whether they would consider returning to education by reason for leaving



Increased salary, smaller class sizes, and protected planning and break time are the top three factors that could influence the respondents to return to education.

Figure 5. Factors that could influence decisions to return to education



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## Implications of Survey Results

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The results from the 2025 Colorado Educator Exit Survey point to a set of daily working condition factors that can inform decisions about how best to support educators at the school and district level. Overall averages showed relatively strong experience in staff collaboration, and moderately positive ratings for instructional support. School administration, teacher leadership, professional learning, and use of time are consistent concerns. At the same time, one-way ANOVAs show that responses across seven of the eight domains vary by reason for leaving the profession. This means attrition is not caused by a single, uniform experience.

Below are some options to operationalize these findings to support teacher retention in Colorado's public schools.

- 1. Build on the strengths.** Domains with relatively high ratings, like staff collaboration and instructional support can be leveraged and may potentially keep educators in the profession. Protecting collaboration time, providing opportunities for peer observation and team-based problem solving are practical ways schools and districts can support educators.
- 2. Address system-wide issues.** Use of time consistently received low ratings. For educators, this reflects frequent interruptions to teaching and planning, as well as being assigned additional non-instructional duties. Districts and schools could consider reviewing schedules to ensure teachers have adequate teaching and planning time, providing duty-free blocks of time, considering ways to implement AI tools to relieve workload, and protecting planning time by limiting meetings or other events that encroach on that time. Those who would consider returning to education rated protected planning and break time as one of the top items that could encourage them to return.
- 3. Support school-level leadership.** Overall, lower average ratings and wide variability for the school administration domain suggest that leadership practices vary across the state. Targeted principal coaching, like [CDE's Principal Leadership Institute](#), and assisting leaders in lifting educator voice could improve the daily experiences for educators. It may also be helpful to encourage leaders to participate in [CDE's Learning Leadership Cohorts](#).
- 4. Empower educators as building leaders and as drivers of their professional learning.** Respondents reported having limited opportunities for leadership and little to no voice in professional learning opportunities. Districts and schools can allow educators to have meaningful input on building-level policies and practices, encourage teacher-led inquiry, and offer site-based professional learning options.

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## Conclusion

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The 2025 Exit Survey offers a clear message: working conditions matter. While many respondents reported positive experiences with staff collaboration and instructional support, lower ratings for school administration, teacher leadership, professional learning, and use of time point to areas where educators felt less support. These findings support retention initiatives aimed at developing strong building leadership, delivering meaningful professional learning opportunities, and supporting manageable workloads.

The survey also highlights that some educators are willing to return to the profession. More than 70 percent of respondents would consider returning to public education in Colorado. These individuals named concrete factors that would make reentry a possibility like increased salary, smaller class sizes, and protected planning time.

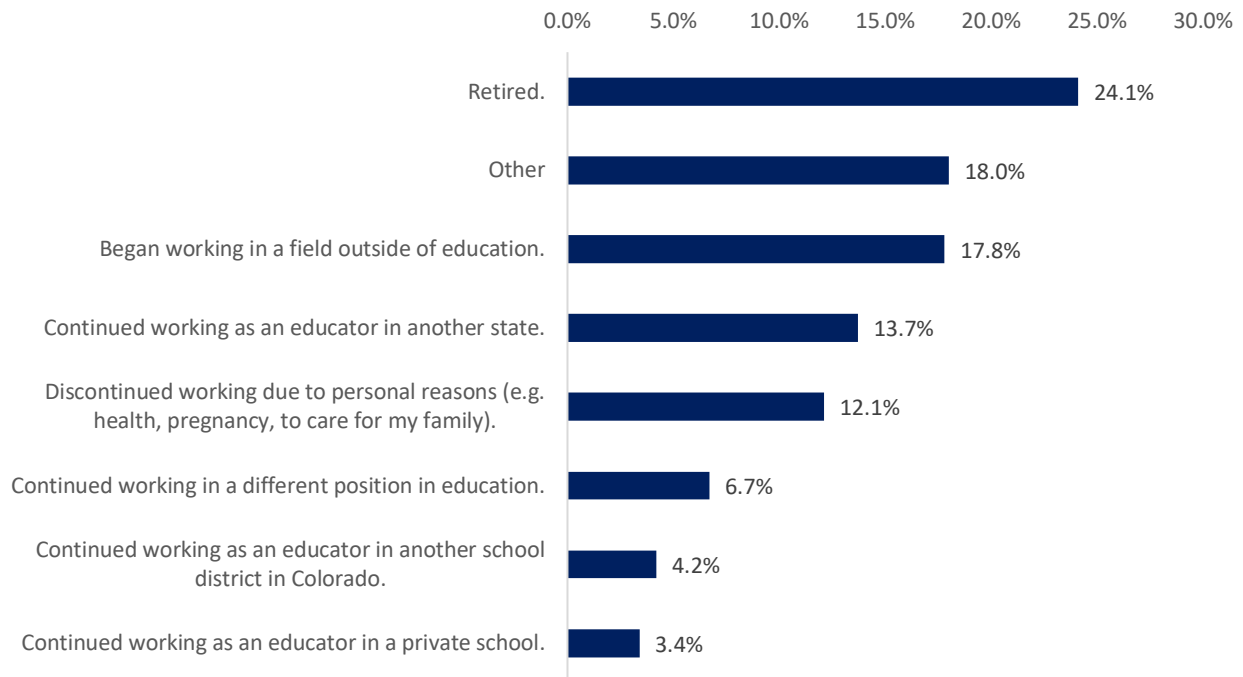
## Appendix A

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Facilities and resources	Between Groups	6.296	3	2.099	4.002	0.008
	Within Groups	389.058	742	0.524		
	Total	395.354	745			
Instructional support	Between Groups	10.741	3	3.580	6.538	0.000
	Within Groups	386.080	705	0.548		
	Total	396.821	708			
Managing student conduct	Between Groups	6.954	3	2.318	5.622	0.001
	Within Groups	282.827	686	0.412		
	Total	289.781	689			
Professional learning	Between Groups	6.368	3	2.123	3.430	0.017
	Within Groups	418.891	677	0.619		
	Total	425.259	680			
School administration	Between Groups	18.890	3	6.297	7.053	0.000
	Within Groups	657.026	736	0.893		
	Total	675.916	739			
Staff collaboration	Between Groups	4.655	3	1.552	2.392	0.067
	Within Groups	436.457	673	0.649		
	Total	441.111	676			
Teacher leadership	Between Groups	21.786	3	7.262	9.717	0.000
	Within Groups	506.717	678	0.747		
	Total	528.503	681			
Use of time	Between Groups	1.474	3	0.491	2.729	0.043
	Within Groups	120.628	670	0.180		
	Total	122.102	673			

## Appendix B

The percentages in Appendix B reflect all respondents, including those who exited the survey early. The sample used for the findings in the main report is described in the Methodology section.

Figure 6. Reasons Left the Profession All Respondents





## Appendix C

Survey Questions				
Which one of the following best describes why you left your position?				
Continued working as an educator in another school district in Colorado.				
Continued working as an educator in a private school.				
Continued working as an educator in another state.				
Continued working in a different position in education.				
Began working in a field outside of education.				
Discontinued working due to personal reasons (e.g. health, pregnancy, to care for my family).				
Retired.				
Other (please specify):				
Which reasons influenced your decision to leave your position in the district? For each possible factor listed below, indicate if it was not a factor, a minor factor, or a major factor in your decision to leave the district.				
	Not a factor	Minor factor	Major factor	
I want to take a more conveniently located job.				
I am moving out of the area.				
I want or need a higher salary.				
I want or need better benefits.				
I am dissatisfied with my work role or assignment (e.g. responsibilities, grade level, or subject area).				
I am dissatisfied with the facilities at my school.				
I am dissatisfied with the resources at my school.				
I am dissatisfied with the school administration.				
I am dissatisfied with the district administration.				
I am dissatisfied with the level of instructional support.				



I am dissatisfied with the level of student misbehavior.				
I am dissatisfied with the lack of professional advancement opportunities.				
I am dissatisfied with the professional development offerings.				
I am dissatisfied with the lack of control I have over the curriculum.				
I work too many long hours.				
I don't have enough time for planning.				
I don't have enough time to collaborate with my colleagues.				
Class sizes are too large.				
I am concerned about school safety.				
I do not feel close to many staff members.				
My contract was non-renewed.				
<b>Your School</b>				
Please indicate how true each of the following statements are about the school you are leaving.				
<b>Facilities and Resources</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
Class sizes are reasonable such that I was able to meet the needs of all my students.				
Necessary materials such as textbooks, supplies and copy machines are available as needed by the staff.				
My teaching is hindered by inadequate or outdated equipment or facilities at this school.				
The resources at this school are adequate to support teaching students with disabilities.				
The resources at this school are adequate to support teaching English learners.				
<b>School Administration</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true



The school administration is supportive and encouraging.				
The school administration shows respect for me.				
The school administration cultivates a trusting environment with and among staff.				
The administration's practices align with the school's mission and vision.				
I am recognized by administrators when I do a good job.				
I feel comfortable discussing feelings, worries and frustrations with my supervisor.				
Rules for student conduct are consistently enforced/applied by administration.				
The school administration has high academic expectations for all students regardless of background.				
<b>Instructional Support</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
I am given the curricular and instructional materials needed to teach the academic content to all my students.				
I am given the support I need to manage student conduct.				
The administration supports the use of evidence-based instructional strategies.				
My instructional time is protected.				
I receive adequate support and resources for assessing students.				
I have plenty of control over how I teach.				
<b>Managing Student Conduct</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
Student behavior in my classroom interferes with my teaching.				
Rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes.				



Staff at this school work together to ensure a safe environment.				
I feel physically safe at this school.				
The administration supports teacher’s discipline decisions.				
The administration has high behavioral expectations for all students regardless of background.				
The school administration disciplines students fairly.				
<b>Teacher Leadership</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
There are enough opportunities for leadership roles or professional advancement.				
My school fosters a culture of shared leadership between administration and faculty.				
Teacher leadership opportunities are provided to me.				
I was satisfied with the influence I have over school policies and practices at this school.				
Staff at this school have many opportunities to influence what happens within the school.				
<b>Professional Development</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
Quality professional learning opportunities to support my position were provided				
Professional learning opportunities to support the current student population were provided				
Teachers have a voice in determining what PD is offered				
The professional learning opportunities I was provided were useful and relevant to me.				
<b>Staff Collaboration and Relationships</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
Most of the staff share my beliefs and values about what the central mission of the school should be.				



There is a great deal of cooperative effort among the staff members.				
Teachers at this school feel responsible to help each other do their best.				
People at this school care about me as a person.				
Teachers at this school have mutual respect for each other.				
<b>Use of Time</b>	Not at all true	A little true	Mostly true	Very true
Teachers are able to focus on educating students without too many interruptions.				
Additional duties (e.g., bus, recess, lunch duty) interfere with my job of teaching.				
Non-instructional responsibilities (e.g., emails, meetings) interfere with my job of teaching.				
Teachers have sufficient instructional time to meet the needs of all students.				
Teachers have time available to collaborate with colleagues.				
Would you consider returning to Colorado public education in the future?	Yes	No	Maybe	
Of the factors listed below, what are the top three that would cause you to consider returning to Colorado public education?				
Smaller class sizes				
Availability of part-time teaching position				
Salary increase				
Housing incentive				
Student loan forgiveness				
Childcare support (e.g. scholarships or vouchers for your child(ren))				
Revised grading or student promotion policy				
Increased Special Education support				



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Protected planning/break time				
Increased school safety features (e.g. metal detectors, more school resource officers)				
Improved professional learning opportunities				

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## Citations

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