



Colorado Educator Exit Survey

2025 Highlights for District and School Leaders

In May 2025, the Colorado Department of Education administered the Educator Exit Survey to educators who were employed in 2023-24 but not in 2024-25. The survey examines why educators leave the profession, what conditions might encourage them to return, and what insights districts can use to strengthen educator retention. The survey received 1,564 responses (a 25% response rate), including an analytic sample of 825 former educators representing 105 districts, six BOCES, the Charter School Institute, and communities across Colorado, including 19% from rural areas.

Why Educators Leave

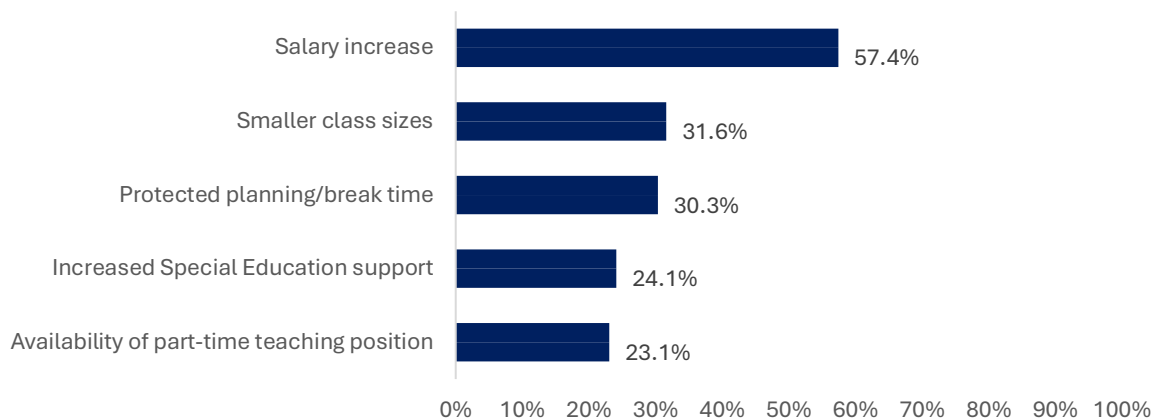
Among those in the analytic sample, similar proportions reported moving to a field outside education (33.2%) or selected “other” (32.7%) as their reason for leaving. Responses in the “other” category commonly referenced leadership or administrative challenges, burnout or health concerns, job loss or position changes, relocation, or transitions into new roles. About 22% reported leaving due to personal reasons such as health, pregnancy, or caregiving responsibilities, and just over 12% continued working in another education role, most often in private schools.

More than 70% of former educators indicated they would consider returning to the profession.

What Would Bring Educators Back

More than 70 percent of respondents indicated they would consider returning to Colorado public education in the future. As shown in Figure 1, the factors most likely to influence a return were increased salary, smaller class sizes, and protected planning and break time. Increased special education support and the availability of part-time positions were also frequently selected.

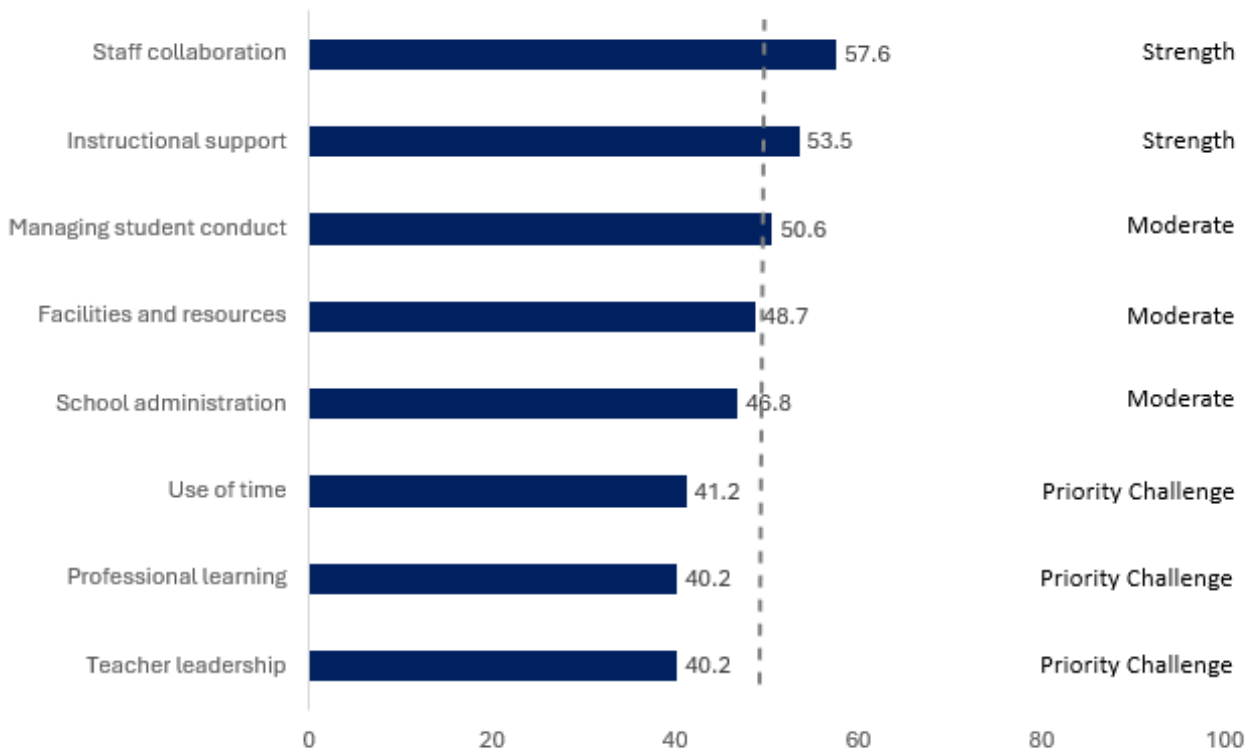
Figure 1. Top Factors that Could Bring Educators Back to the Profession



Working Conditions That Matter for Retention

Educators were asked to evaluate a variety of working conditions and how much each factor contributed to their decision to leave. Higher scores indicate areas that were less likely to contribute to educators leaving, while lower scores highlight areas that may have contributed more strongly. As shown in Figure 2, respondents reported the strongest experiences with staff collaboration and instructional support. Ratings for student conduct, facilities and resources, and school administration were more moderate, suggesting experiences in these areas varied across schools. In contrast, ratings for use of time, professional learning, and teacher leadership were consistently lower, factors often associated with increased burnout and higher rates of leaving the profession.

Figure 2. Educator Working Conditions Index Based on Exit Survey Mean Scores*



*Scores reflect an index calculated from mean ratings on the Educator Exit Survey.

What School and District Leaders Can Do

Although the decision to leave a teaching position is complex and shaped by both personal and workplace factors, school and district leaders can influence many of the conditions that affect educator retention. Protecting planning and collaboration time, expanding teacher leadership opportunities, providing relevant educator-driven professional learning, and investing in principal leadership development can help create more supportive and sustainable school environments.

Overall, these findings highlight both the workplace conditions and personal factors that influence educators' decisions to leave Colorado public schools, while also showing that many remain open to returning if key conditions improve. The full Colorado Educator Exit Survey report, including detailed analyses and additional findings, is available on the Colorado Department of Education website.