

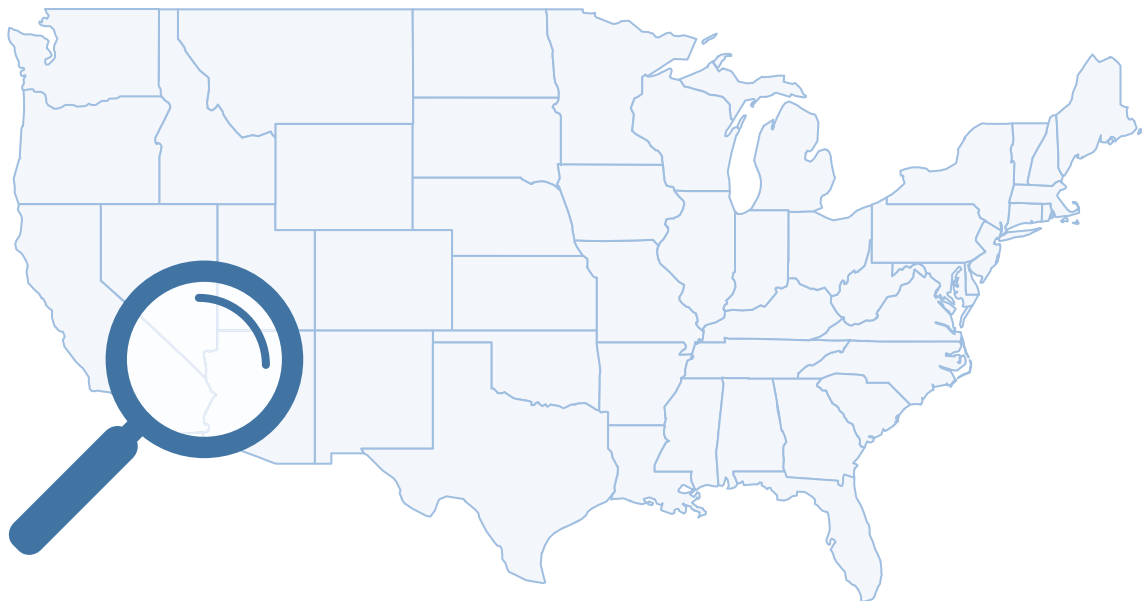


Research Report

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Working Conditions Related to Positive Teacher Well-Being Vary Across States

Findings from the 2022 Learn
Together Survey



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About This Report

Teacher morale declined during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, and teachers reported worse well-being than other working adults. Interventions to restore teacher well-being could improve job performance, job satisfaction, engagement, and retention. Although we know that working conditions are related to well-being among teachers nationally, we know little about which working conditions might support positive teacher well-being in which contexts. The variation in teacher labor markets across states reinforces the importance of understanding working conditions—and their relationships with well-being—at the state level.

In this report, we draw on data from the Learn Together Survey (LTS) of teachers, which was administered in March and April 2022. The LTS was administered to teachers from the American Teacher Panel (ATP), which is a nationally representative sample of more than 22,000 teachers across the United States. The ATP is one of three survey panels that comprise the American Educator Panels, which are nationally representative samples of teachers, school leaders, and district leaders across the country. The panels are a proud member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative.

For technical information about the surveys and analysis in this report, see Doan et al., 2022a. If you are interested in using AEP data for your own surveys or analysis or in reading other publications related to the American Educator Panel, please email aep@rand.org or visit www.rand.org/aep.

RAND Education and Labor

This study was undertaken by RAND Education and Labor, a division of the RAND Corporation that conducts research on early childhood through postsecondary education programs, workforce development, and programs and policies affecting workers, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy and decisionmaking. This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions presented are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. More information about RAND can be found at www.rand.org. Questions about this report should be directed to esteiner@rand.org, and questions about RAND Education and Labor should be directed to educationandlabor@rand.org.

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Summary

Teacher morale declined over the course of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, highlighting the importance of the quality of the workplace conditions that teachers experience and how those conditions might influence well-being and retention (Steiner, Schwartz, and Diliberti, 2022). Stress on the job can negatively affect teachers' physical health and is linked to absenteeism, turnover, and intentions to leave their job (Katz et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2017; Steiner and Woo, 2021). Taking steps to restore teacher well-being could improve job performance, job satisfaction, and engagement, and could boost retention for teachers of all backgrounds (Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli, 2016).

In response to widespread concerns about teacher shortages, many states are focusing on improving teachers' well-being and working conditions as strategies to boost teacher retention. An analysis of the 2023 State of the State addresses found that least 24 states have proposed or are enacting policies focused on improving teacher working conditions, including pay (Education Commission of the States, undated-b).

Although we know that working conditions are related to well-being among teachers nationally, we know little about which working conditions might be high-leverage for restoring teacher well-being in which contexts. The variation in teacher labor markets across states reinforces the importance of understanding working conditions and their relationships with well-being at the state level (Bleiberg and Kraft, 2023; Edwards et al., 2022).

In this report, we build on prior RAND Corporation research that relied on national samples of teachers. We examine teacher well-being, teachers' access to a variety of working conditions, relationships between well-being and working conditions, and school-provided supports for well-being in five focal states: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Washington state. We surveyed teachers about two broad categories of working conditions: *organizational factors* (e.g., school-level policies, programs, or structures that help or hinder the ability of the individual to perform their job), and *relational factors* (e.g., interpersonal relationships or the individual's relationship with the organization). We further organized the organizational factors about which we asked into two subcategories: factors related to teaching and factors related to pay.

We aim to address three research questions, which are based on the perspectives of kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) public school teachers:

1. Do teachers' reports of their well-being and access to various working conditions differ across states and from the national average?
2. Which working conditions are related to teacher well-being across the country generally and in five focal states specifically?
3. What policies, practices, and supports do teachers report their schools provide to support their well-being?

We leveraged data from the 2022 American Teacher Panel Learn Together Survey (LTS) that were related to teachers' self-reported well-being, access to working conditions, and the well-being supports provided by their schools. The LTS includes oversamples of teachers in the five focal states, which allow us to present state-representative data for each state. The focal states were selected by the funder of this research, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to monitor their investments. The LTS was administered in March and early April 2022, just after the COVID-19 omicron variant spike. We analyzed the responses of 3,606 teachers nationally. In our focal states, we analyzed the responses of 442 California teachers, 404 Florida teachers, 463 New York teachers, 418 Texas teachers, and 470 Washington teachers.

Chapter 1 of this report provides an overview of our methods and a description of how we categorized the working conditions we asked about. Chapter 2 includes a description of the teacher workforce and relevant workforce policies nationally and in our five focal states to provide context for our interpreting the survey results. In Chapter 3, we discuss teachers' self-reported well-being and the policies and supports that teachers said their school provides that are intended to promote positive well-being. In Chapter 4, we describe teachers' reported access to a variety of working conditions, and in Chapter 5, we explore the relationships between reported access to working conditions and well-being. Our results are intended to be a first step in understanding the local conditions and resources that support positive teacher well-being. In Chapter 6, we discuss implications and recommendations for education leaders and policymakers. More-detailed discussions of the results in each of our five focal states are provided in a separate document (Steiner et al., 2023). We hope that state education leaders and policymakers in these five states will use these state snapshots to inform their efforts to restore teacher well-being and improve working conditions for teachers.

Key Findings

- Teachers' self-reported well-being and access to a variety of working conditions varied across five focal states. New York teachers were least likely to experience indicators of poor well-being when compared with their national counterparts. Access to relational factors (e.g., interpersonal relationships) was most common.
- Relational factors (e.g., strong positive relationships with other teachers, administrators that support teachers' decisions about student behavior) were more strongly linked to positive well-being than organizational factors.
- A schoolwide focus on social and emotional learning (SEL) for teachers and students was linked to positive well-being. This condition was especially prevalent in New York, where teachers were the least likely to experience poor well-being among teachers in our focal states.
- Few teachers had access to financial incentives to work in high-needs schools or for student performance, but many teachers do not work in districts or schools that are eligible to provide such incentives. Florida teachers were more likely to report access to financial incentives than their national counterparts.
- Teachers said that their schools provided a variety of mental health and well-being interventions (e.g., counseling, wellness activities) but noted that such supports need to be convenient, accessible, and targeted to their needs to be effective.
- Teachers perceived strong positive relationships with their colleagues, supportive school leadership, and school administrator efforts to reduce meetings and paperwork so they could focus on teaching as well-being supports, highlighting the importance of addressing organizational and relational conditions to restore teacher well-being.

Implications and Recommendations

This report provides the first look at teachers' reports of their well-being and working conditions at the state level—and the relationships between the two—and compares them with conditions nationally. These findings can help state policymakers identify which working conditions could have the highest leverage for improving teacher well-being and retention.

We offer the following four recommendations based on our findings. Education leaders should:

1. **Assess state-level conditions to inform strategy and implementation of efforts to improve teacher well-being.** States vary in their policy contexts and the composition of their workforces. Thus, the policy levers that they can feasibly pull and the strategies that would be most beneficial could vary. For example, leaders in states with a relatively less experienced workforce might consider ways to help early-career teachers access relational supports by helping them build positive relationships in their school communities.
2. **Focus on relational working conditions as one promising approach to improving teacher well-being.** Three of the five working conditions that had the strongest relationships with positive well-being were relational—that is, focused on interpersonal relationships. Our qualitative data (along with other research) demonstrate that school leaders could play key roles in creating the conditions necessary to support teacher well-being. For example, organizations that provide principal training and preparation also might integrate a focus on building the skills of school leaders so that they are well-positioned to promote favorable relational and organizational conditions in their schools.
3. **Encourage schools to adopt a schoolwide vision for SEL and implement professional learning opportunities that focus on building adult and student SEL skills.** Our state-level data provide suggestive evidence that a focus on SEL for students and teachers could be a promising approach to improve teacher well-being; it would have the added benefit of improving student well-being. States and districts might consider ways that they could help teachers develop their own SEL skills and competencies. At the same time, our qualitative data suggest that how these supports are implemented is related to whether teachers actually find them helpful.
4. **Foster organizational conditions that allow teachers to focus on the core function of their jobs.** Efforts to improve well-being that are targeted at improving or changing the behavior of individuals (such as counseling or wellness activities) can be important levers but are not sufficient (Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli, 2016; Praslova, 2023). Education leaders might consider how they can provide the resources to create and sustain these organizational conditions, such as hiring more staff to allow teachers some control over their schedules or enable a reduction in administrative duties, or creating schedules that build in and protect time for planning, collaboration, and relationship-building.

Future research could include a more complete list of working conditions to further investigate which working conditions are most related to positive teacher well-being, the causal direction of the relationships observed between working conditions and well-being, or how teachers' reports of their well-being and working conditions vary at the district or school level.

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Introduction

Teacher morale declined during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (Steiner, Schwartz, and Diliberti, 2022). Teachers were twice as likely to report experiencing frequent job-related stress and difficulty coping with their job-related stress than other working adults (Agyapong et al., 2022; Steiner and Woo, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022). Teachers were more likely to report symptoms of anxiety than healthcare workers, office workers, and workers in other professions, and they were more likely to report depressive symptoms than healthcare workers (Kush et al., 2022).

Teachers need to be at their best so that they can effectively teach students as the United States recovers from effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Improving teacher well-being at work has the potential to improve job performance and retention. Poor teacher wellness and mental health have been linked with lower-quality student learning environments and poorer academic and nonacademic student outcomes (Madigan and Kim, 2021; McLean and Connor, 2015). Stress on the job can negatively affect teachers' physical health and is linked to absenteeism, turnover, and intentions to leave their jobs (Katz et al., 2016; Ryan et al., 2017; Steiner and Woo, 2021). Teacher turnover can have negative impacts on student academic achievement (Sorensen and Ladd, 2020).

During the pandemic, some groups of teachers reported experiencing worse well-being than others. In January 2022, teachers who identify as people of color were more likely to report experiencing symptoms of depression than their White colleagues, and well-being was especially poor among Hispanic or Latino/a teachers (Steiner et al., 2022). These patterns are concerning in light of the relationship between poor well-being and turnover. Previous research suggests that educators of color are more likely to leave their jobs than their White peers (Simon and Johnson, 2015; U.S. Department of Education, Policy and Programs Studies Service, 2016).

Taking steps to restore teacher well-being could improve job performance, job satisfaction, and engagement, and could boost retention of teachers of all backgrounds (Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli, 2016). Employers generally provide interventions that focus on individual wellness behavior, attempt to change organizational conditions to alleviate the sources of workplace stress, or do both (Sonnentag, Tay, and Shoshan, 2023). These approaches appear to be in use in some states and districts. Media reports suggest that many districts and schools across the United States are implementing new programs—or expanding existing offerings—that focus on individual behavior. Such programs are intended to reduce teacher stress and burn-out and promote well-being and retention (e.g., Casey, 2022).

Many states appear to be providing new resources to support organizational interventions. An analysis of the 2023 State of the State addresses found that least 24 states have proposed or are enacting policies that are focused on improving teacher working conditions; many of these policies and proposals include raising teacher pay (Education Commission of the States, 2023). Policymakers in Texas, for example, have recommended prioritizing teacher well-being by providing mental health supports and have recommended increasing teacher salaries (Texas Education Agency and Teacher Vacancy Task Force, 2023). However, we have little systematic information either nationally or at the state level about the school-provided individual or organizational supports that are intended to improve teacher well-being.

Of course, poor well-being is not the only reason teachers might consider leaving their jobs. For example, teachers might move or resign to assume family or caregiving responsibilities. In addition, working conditions, such as the quality of leadership support; relationships with colleagues; and feelings of safety, order, and discipline are all strong predictors of teacher turnover nationally and in local contexts (Ingersoll, 2001; Kraft, Marinell, and Yee, 2016). Prior research in many occupational settings has established that *working conditions*, which broadly include relational (i.e., interpersonal) factors and organizational factors (e.g., adequate time for collaboration, staffing, compensation) can enhance or diminish well-being (Sonnetag, Tay, and Shoshan, 2023).

Teachers are no different. Their perceptions of their pay, hours worked, access to employer-provided mental health resources, relationships with colleagues, involvement in school decisionmaking, administrator support, and feelings of safety (among others) are all working conditions that influence teacher well-being and their decisions to stay in—or leave—their jobs (Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson, 2005; Ladd, 2011; Steiner and Woo, 2021, Steiner et al., 2022). There is also some evidence that teachers' well-being is related to the degree to which they emphasize social and emotional learning (SEL) practices in their instruction and to the amount of time they spend interacting with students (Hamilton and Doss, 2020; Jones et al., 2022; Schonert-Reichl, 2017).

Although we know that working conditions are related to well-being among teachers nationally, we know little about how teacher well-being, access to favorable working conditions, and the relationships between well-being and working conditions vary (if at all) across states. We also know little about which working conditions might have the most potential to restore teacher well-being in which contexts. The variation in teacher labor markets across states reinforces the importance of understanding working conditions and their relationships with well-being at the state, district, or even school levels (Bleiberg and Kraft, 2023; Edwards et al., 2022).

In this report, we build on prior RAND Corporation research that relied on national samples of teachers to examine teacher well-being, school-provided supports for well-being, access to a variety of working conditions, and relationships between well-being and working conditions in five focal states: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Washington. We aim to address three research questions, which are based on the perspectives of K–12 public school teachers:

1. Do teachers' reports of their well-being and access to various working conditions differ across states and from the national average?
2. Which working conditions are related to teacher well-being across the United States and in five focal states?
3. What policies, practices, and supports do teachers report their schools provide to support their well-being?

Of course, the relationship between a teacher's well-being and their working conditions is bi-directional. Well-being can be influenced by the conditions in teachers' schools, but teachers' perceptions about their working conditions also can be influenced by their well-being (Hamilton and Doss, 2020). Thus, our findings should be strictly interpreted as descriptive and do not describe causal relationships. In addition, an individual's experience of their well-being is not static and can alter weekly or even daily (Podsakoff et al., 2019). The data described in this report were collected in March and early April 2022, just as the United States was recovering from effects of the omicron surge of COVID-19, which exacerbated school staffing struggles (Zuo, Huguet, and Steiner, 2023). Our results, as with all survey results, capture a snapshot of teachers' perceptions and experiences at the time of data collection.

Our results are intended to be a first step in understanding the conditions and resources that might support positive well-being nationally and in five focal states. We offer recommendations that are intended to

inform state and local education leaders and policymakers as they consider strategies to address teacher well-being and improve teacher retention in their contexts.

Overview of Methods

We leveraged data from the 2022 American Teacher Panel Learn Together Survey (LTS) related to teachers' self-reported well-being, access to working conditions, and the well-being supports provided by their schools. The LTS includes oversamples of teachers in five focal states: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Washington; this allows us to present state-representative data for each state. These five states were selected by the funder of this research, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to monitor their investments. See the LTS technical documentation for more information about survey sampling and weighting, and Appendix B for more detail about our quantitative and qualitative methods and limitations (Doan et al., 2022b).

The LTS was administered in March and early April 2022. We analyzed the responses of 3,606 teachers nationally, 442 in California, 404 in Florida, 463 in New York, 418 in Texas, and 470 in Washington state. The results were weighted to ensure national and state representation.

To capture kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) teacher well-being, we used items and scales previously fielded in the 2021 and 2022 State of the American Teacher survey (Woo and Steiner, 2021; Doan et al., 2022a). The well-being items included measures of job-related stress, how well teachers are coping with job-related stress, and measures of burnout. We briefly define each of the well-being measures in Chapter 3 (Box 3.1) and we provide original sources and full response scales in Appendix B.

We asked about a relatively small set of working conditions that have established links with teacher job satisfaction, well-being, and retention, but we were not able to include all potentially salient conditions.¹ The items about working conditions either were developed specifically for this survey or were borrowed or adapted from several sources, including the RAND COVID-19 survey (Kaufman et al., 2020) and the National Teacher and Principal Survey (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017).

We recognize that there are many ways that researchers have categorized, measured, and described teacher working conditions. We asked about working conditions that have established links with teacher job satisfaction, well-being, and retention, such as administrator support for decisions about student behavior, adequate collaboration time, feelings of safety, sense of belonging, schoolwide focus on SEL, teacher time use, and interpersonal relationships with colleagues (Dixon, Griffin and Teoh, 2019; Hamilton and Doss, 2020; Ingersoll, 2001; Jones et al., 2022; Kraft, Marinell, and Yee, 2016; Ladd, 2011; Lovison and Mo, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020, Steiner et al., 2022). We also asked about conditions that, at the time the survey was written, had become common in schools but for which there was little research about relationships between these conditions and well-being or retention (e.g., requiring cultural competency or antiracist training).

The relationship between well-being and retention, along with recent state efforts to implement or expand monetary incentives as a mechanism to improve teacher retention, motivated our inclusion of items about additional compensation (e.g., for performing additional work or roles; Education Commission of the States, undated-a; Saenz-Armstrong, 2022). We did not ask about teacher salary because its relationship with retention is, according to some studies, somewhat weaker than other organizational factors (Ingersoll, 2001; Nguyen et al., 2020).

We explored whether teachers' survey responses differed according to their demographic characteristics, their school locale, or the characteristics of the students in their schools. We performed these analyses for the

¹ For example, other research has suggested that teachers experience job-related stress as the result of the intrusion of political issues and opinions in their jobs (Woo et al., 2022), but those topics were not included in the LTS.

national sample and for the samples in each of our five focal states. We tested the robustness of significant differences across teacher subgroups to adjust for observable school-level characteristics (e.g., poverty level, student racial and ethnic composition, locale) and educator-level characteristics (e.g., race, gender, experience, grade level). These regression analyses are useful for understanding the drivers of differences, but we do not present regression-adjusted statistics because we believe that the descriptive teacher subgroup differences remain notable even if they could be driven by multiple underlying factors. For clarity and simplicity, unless otherwise noted, we discuss only differences among teacher subgroups that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ and that remain significant after controlling for all the teacher- and school-level characteristics that we mentioned previously.

How We Categorized Working Conditions

We categorized the working conditions that we examine in this report into two broad buckets, as shown in Figure 1.1, and use these terms to describe our qualitative and quantitative data. We drew these two main buckets—organizational factors and relational factors—from the organizational behavior and psychology literature as summarized in Sonnentag, Tay, and Shoshan, 2023. *Organizational factors* are school-level policies, programs, or structures that help (or hinder) the ability of the individual to perform their job. *Relational factors* are primarily concerned with interpersonal relationships among individuals within the organization or the individual’s relationship to the organization. We further bucket organizational factors into two categories—factors *related to teaching* and factors *related to pay*.

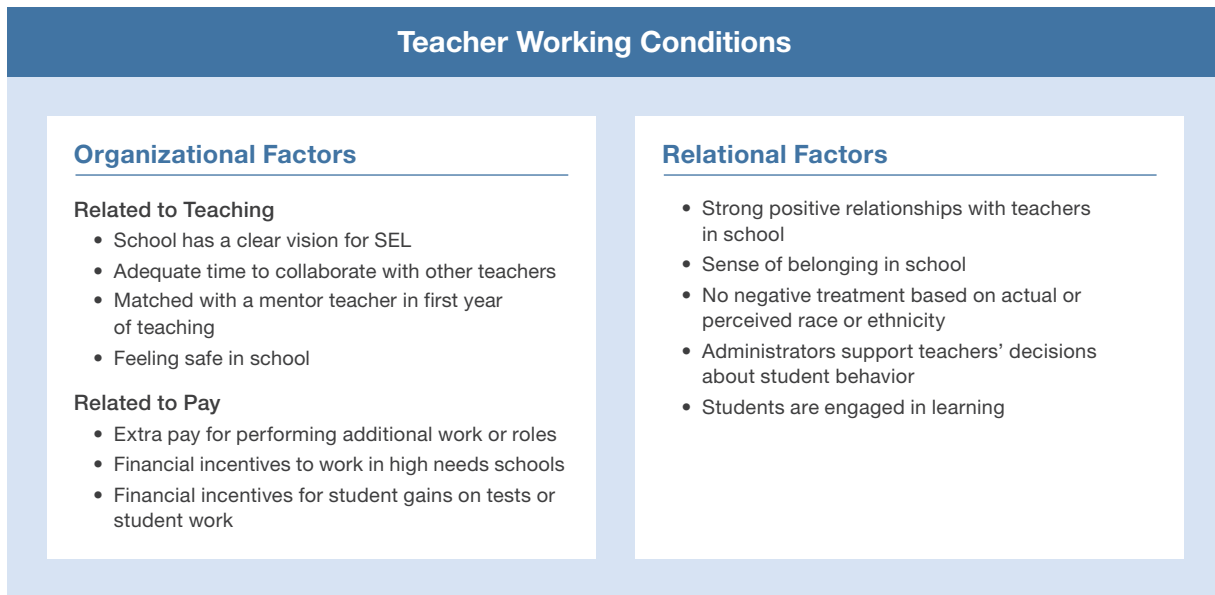
In practice, the boundaries between these categories are blurry—organizational factors can influence the strength of relational factors and vice versa. Several of the conditions about which we ask are dependent on organizational and relational components. Where prior research suggested whether teachers tend to have organizational or relational factors in mind when thinking about these concepts, we categorized them accordingly.

For example, teachers who report that they feel a sense of belonging in their school could be thinking about organizational efforts—such as affinity groups or social events—or they could be thinking about the quality of their relationships with school leaders, other staff, and students. Prior research suggests that relational factors likely are top of mind for teachers when they think about a sense of belonging, so we categorized this factor in the relational bucket (Bristol and Shirrell, 2019; Dixon, Griffin, and Teoh, 2019; Steiner et al., 2022).

In another example, the survey item about administrator support focused on administrator support for teachers’ decisions about student behavior, a condition with strong relationships to teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2001). Although there are many aspects of administrator support related to student behavior that are organizational in nature, such as developing school policies for student discipline, our item highlights the importance of principals’ ability to cultivate a sense of trust and autonomy among their teachers, so we put this survey item in the relational category (Grissom, Egalite, and Lindsay, 2021). In a final example, prior research demonstrates the strong role that positive student-teacher relationships play in promoting student engagement and motivation, so we also put student engagement in learning in the relational bucket (e.g., Scales, Pekel, and Houlberg, 2022). A limitation of our study is that we cannot be sure all teachers interpreted the survey questions in the same way (in this case, whether they had organizational or relational factors in mind when responding), a limitation that is present in all survey research. Nevertheless, we offer these categories as a rough way to organize and better understand the variety of working conditions that have the potential to promote teacher well-being.

Finally, in addition to discussing teachers’ working conditions, we also explore teachers’ access to *mental health or well-being interventions*, which we defined as programs, policies, or supports which are intentionally designed to enhance teacher well-being.

FIGURE 1.1
How We Categorized Teacher Working Conditions in This Report



NOTE: This figure lists examples in each category of working conditions. The full list of working conditions included in the survey can be found in Table A.1. For more information on how we defined each working condition, see Appendix B.

Qualitative Analysis of the Open-Ended Survey Question

We analyzed the results of an open-ended question that asked teachers “What programs, policies, or supports (if any) does your school offer to support teacher well-being? Please share specific examples.” A total of 3,476 teachers responded to this question, and we analyzed 3,264 responses that were clear enough for us to interpret and code. Among the teachers who responded to this question with an interpretable answer, 404 were from California, 364 were from Florida, 421 were from New York, 363 were from Texas, and 428 were from Washington state.

When we discuss the open-ended data, we use *majority* to refer to at least half of respondents in an applicable group and *most* to refer to at least three-quarters of survey respondents in an applicable group. We use *few* to refer to fewer than one-quarter of survey respondents in an applicable group and *some* to refer to more than one-quarter but fewer than half of survey respondents in an applicable group. Where appropriate, we provide frequency counts or percentages (e.g., “about 300 teachers,” or “one-fifth of teachers”) to provide a sense of how frequently some themes were represented in our data.

Limitations

Our findings are subject to several limitations, which we discuss in more detail in Appendix B. First, survey responses consist of self-reported information, which is a limitation present in all survey research. Second, we cannot be sure that all teachers interpreted the survey items or response categories in the same way. Third, we were not able to ask about all the working conditions that could be related to teacher well-being. The strength of the relationships between well-being and various working conditions could vary if a different set of working conditions were included. Finally, it is possible that other factors unmeasured by this survey, such as parental involvement or other aspects of the school environment, could have played a role in the differences across educator subgroups that we observe. Thus, our findings should be interpreted strictly as descriptive characterizations of educators’ responses. They are not intended to suggest causality.

The open-ended data provide a broad understanding of the types of well-being supports that teachers say their schools provide, but these data do not provide information about national or state prevalence of specific kinds of supports. In addition, the question did not ask teachers which supports they found to be helpful. Some teachers commented on how helpful they perceived the supports available to them to be, and we describe their responses, but our data on this topic are not systematic. Because of the broad nature of the open-ended question and the nonrepresentative nature of our qualitative data, the perspectives expressed by the teachers in our sample might be more (or less) prevalent in the general population of teachers than our data currently suggest.

Organization of This Report

We describe the teacher workforce and relevant workforce policies nationally and in our five focal states in Chapter 2 to set the context for our analysis. In Chapter 3, we discuss teachers' self-reported well-being and access to mental health or wellness interventions. In Chapter 4, we describe teachers' reported access to favorable relational and organizational working conditions, and in Chapter 5, we explore the relationships between reported access to those working conditions and well-being. In Chapter 6, we discuss implications and recommendations for education leaders and policymakers. Detailed discussions of the results in each of our five focal states are included in a separate document (Steiner et al., 2023). We hope that state education leaders and policymakers in these five states will use these state snapshots to inform their efforts to restore teacher well-being and improve working conditions for teachers.

Teacher Workforce Characteristics and State Context

In this section, we draw on data from the National Center for Education Statistics to present demographic information about the size and composition of the teacher workforce and relevant contextual factors nationally and in each focal state to provide context to our survey findings and to aid in interpretation of differences across states. We used the most-recent data available for each item and note the year in the table notes. We provide a complete explanation of our data sources in Appendix B.

Together, the five focal states represent approximately one-third of the national teacher workforce, as shown in Table 2.1. Texas, California, New York, and Florida have the four largest teacher workforces across all states in the country, which highlights the importance of studying teacher well-being and working conditions in these states. Even so, there is wide variation in the size of the teacher workforce across our focal states; Texas has over twice the number of teachers that Florida has, and among our focal states, Washington has by far the smallest teacher workforce.

Teacher well-being can vary by years of experience (Steiner et al., 2022) and teachers early in their careers may have access to different supports (e.g., a mentor teacher) than their more experienced peers. As of the 2017–2018 school year, most teachers in each focal state and nationally had ten or more years of teaching experience in their career. Teachers with four or fewer years of experience made up the smallest portion of the workforce nationally and in each focal state. Texas had a relatively higher proportion of teachers with less than four years of experience and a relatively lower proportion of teachers with ten or more years of experience. In comparison, the California and New York teacher workforces have, relative to the country, a relatively high proportion of teachers with ten or more years of experience.

States with higher rates of teachers' membership in a teachers' union or similar professional organization generally have higher teacher wages and may have access to other financial incentives (Northern, Scull, and Shaw, 2012). Table 2.1 shows that as of the 2020–2021 school year, teachers in California, New York, and Washington are, on average, paid more than other teachers nationally, while Texas and Florida teachers are, on average, paid less.

Membership in a union or a professional association varied across focal states as of the 2017–2018 school year. Over 90 percent of the teacher workforce in California, New York, and Washington are members of a union or professional organization, compared with about half of Florida and Texas teachers. In California, New York, and Washington, teachers' unions or professional associations collectively bargain—a legally binding process—with the district to establish pay and other benefits. While membership is no longer required (*Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees*, 2018), members may vote to refuse to work or strike if such negotiations do not result in an agreeable outcome. Florida requires collective bargaining, but does not allow teachers to strike, and it has not had mandatory union membership since 1943 (Constitution of the State of Florida, Article I, Section 6). In Texas, teachers' professional associations may advocate for teacher pay and other benefits, but membership is not required, and the process is not legally

TABLE 2.1
Characteristics of the Teacher Workforce and State Context

Characteristics of the Teacher Workforce	National	California	Florida	New York	Texas	Washington
Number of FTE teachers ^a	3,198,170	271,805	166,002	217,398	364,478	62,212
Percent of national workforce	100%	8%	5%	7%	11%	2%
Union or professional association membership ^b	69%	91%	53%	97%	51%	97%
Average starting salary ^c	\$41,770	\$49,933	\$44,040	\$47,618	\$44,527	\$ 51,040
Average salary ^d	\$65,090	\$85,892	\$49,583	\$87,738	\$57,641	\$79,529
Percentage of White teachers ^e	79%	62%	65%	80%	60%	88%
Percentage of teachers of color ^e	21%	38%	35%	20%	40%	12%
Less than four years of experience ^f	14%	12%	14%	10%	17%	15%
Four to nine years of experience	24%	19%	24%	19%	28%	25%
Ten or more years of experience	63%	70%	62%	71%	54%	60%
Contextual factors						
Urban ^g	31%	42%	28%	47%	41%	34%
Suburban	39%	46%	55%	36%	31%	41%
Town or rural	30%	12%	17%	17%	28%	25%
Percentage of White students ^h	46%	21%	36%	41%	27%	50%
Percentage of students of color ^h	54%	78%	64%	58%	73%	50%
Percent of students eligible for FRPL ⁱ	52%	59%	53%	56%	60%	44%
Student-teacher ratio ^j	15.9	22.7	17.2	12.4	15.1	18.4

^a Data are for the 2019–2020 school year. Full time equivalent (FTE) teachers include prekindergarten through grade 13 teachers.

^b Data are for the 2017–2018 school year. We display the percentage of teachers who indicated that they were “members of a union or an employee association similar to a union in each state.”

^c Data are for the 2020–2021 school year.

^d Data are for the 2020–2021 school year.

^e Data are for the 2017–2018 school year.

^f Data are for the 2017–2018 school year.

^g Data are for the 2019–2020 school year. The values indicate the percentage of public schools that are in each locale for each state.

^h Data are for various school years; for California, Florida, data are from 2021–2022 school year. For New York, Texas, and Washington, the data are for the 2020–2021 school year. The national data are for fall 2020. We defined *students of color* as students who reported their race or ethnicity as Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or multiracial. Students whose race was not reported were not added to this group.

ⁱ Data are for the 2019–2020 school year.

^j Data are for the 2019–2020 school year. These values include prekindergarten through grade 13 students and teachers.

binding. Texas’ Government Code, for example, prohibits public employees, including teachers, from collectively bargaining or striking (Title 6, Sec. 617.003).

Nationally and in each focal state, the teacher workforce as of 2020 was far less diverse than the student population, as shown in Table 2.1. Even though people of color make up at least half the student population nationally and in each focal state, White teachers make up a majority of the teacher workforce. But there is wide variation across states. About 40 percent of the teacher workforce in Florida, California, and Texas are people of color, compared with 20 percent of the New York teacher workforce and just 10 percent in Washington. California and Texas have the most diverse student populations among our focal states, while Washington has a relatively less diverse student population. See Table 2.1 and Figure A.1 for more details.

Larger student-to-teacher ratios are generally indicative of larger class sizes and may signal—very broadly—more responsibilities placed on teachers (Laitsch, Nguyen, and Younghusband, 2021). A higher percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL) might indicate that teachers are serving students who have greater levels of need (Parrett and Budge, 2016). California and Texas have the highest percentage of students qualifying for FRPL, while Washington has the lowest. New York and Texas have smaller student-teacher ratios than the national average, while student-teacher ratios in California, Florida, and Washington are larger. Florida, Texas, and Washington have all passed bills that cap class size at 26 or fewer students in each grade level (Florida Department of Education, undated-a; Texas Education Code, Title 2, Section 25.112; State of Washington, Open Data Portal, 2022). In California, the class size cap is just under 30 students per teacher (California Department of Education, 2022c). New York passed a bill in 2022 that aims to cap class size, but it will not be in full effect until 2028 (New York State Assembly, 2022).

In the next chapter, we discuss teacher well-being nationally and in our five focal states. We urge readers to keep the differences in state context and teacher workforce composition in mind when interpreting the state results.

Teacher Well-Being and Access to Mental Health or Wellness Interventions

Teachers in New York Were Less Likely to Experience Poor Well-Being Than Other Teachers Nationally

We observed some differences in teacher well-being across our five focal states. In each state, we compared teachers' reports of frequent job-related stress, constant job-related stress, difficulty coping with job-related stress, and feelings of burnout with other teachers nationally who do not reside in that state (e.g., California teachers compared with non-California teachers). We define our indicators of teacher well-being in Box 3.1; see Appendix B for more information.

Although there were many similarities across states, New York teachers were less likely than other teachers nationally to report that they experienced constant job-related stress and feelings of burnout, although the differences in magnitude were small. California teachers were also less likely than other teachers nationally to report feelings of burnout. New York teachers were unique among teachers in our focal states because they were less likely to experience multiple indicators of poor well-being than other teachers nationally, as shown in Table 3.1.

Florida and Texas teachers were more likely than other teachers nationally to experience some indicators of poor well-being. Texas teachers were more likely than other teachers nationally to report that they experienced frequent job-related stress and feelings of burnout. Florida teachers were more likely than other teachers nationally to report that they experienced feelings of burnout. In contrast to all other focal states, we observed mixed reports in Washington. While Washington teachers were less likely than other teachers

BOX 3.1

How We Measured Teacher Well-Being

In this report, we focus on four indicators of teacher well-being. We defined teachers as experiencing:

- frequent job-related stress if they responded they “often” or “always” to the question, “Since the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year, how often has your work been stressful?”
- constant job-related stress if they responded “always” to that same question
- difficulty coping with job-related stress if they responded 1 (not well at all) or 2 on a scale of 1 to 5 to the question, “How well are you coping with the stress of your job right now?”
- feelings of burnout if they responded “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree” to at least two of the following four statements (1) “The stress and disappointments involved in teaching aren’t really worth it,” (2) “I don’t seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching,” (3) “I look forward to teaching in the future,” (4) “I am glad I selected teaching as a career.” Statements 3 and 4 were reverse-coded so the directionality of the items was consistent.

TABLE 3.1
Teachers' Self-Reported Well-Being in Five Focal States

Teacher Well-Being Indicator	United States	California	Florida	New York	Texas	Washington
Frequent job-related stress	73	72	69	70	80*	78*
Constant job-related stress	28	31	27	22*	32	28
Difficulty coping well with job-related stress	26	27	22	21	26	30
Feelings of burnout	57	48*	63*	50*	66*	43*
Constant job-related stress and difficulty coping well with job-related stress	17	18	14	13*	19	17
Constant job-related stress, difficulty coping well with job-related stress, and burnout	15	14	12	10*	17	13

NOTE: * indicates that the difference in well-being reports between teachers in that state and other teachers nationally (e.g., California teacher versus non-California teachers) are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$, even after controlling for an array of school- and teacher-level characteristics. Green cells indicate better well-being than other teachers nationally, while red cells indicate poorer well-being. Gray cells indicate the national average. *N* of U.S. teachers = 3,509–3,510; *N* of California teachers = 429; *N* of Florida teachers = 399; *N* of New York teachers = 452–453; *N* of Texas teachers = 400 teachers; *N* of Washington state teachers = 448–449.

nationally to report feelings of burnout, they were slightly more likely than other teachers nationally to report experiencing frequent job-related stress.

Variation in teacher well-being could reflect state-level differences in access to working conditions and supports for well-being, as we discuss later in this report. It also could be indicative of local variation in teachers' intentions to leave their jobs. Intention to leave is an imperfect predictor of actual resignations but it may be an important indicator of job satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2022, Steiner et al., 2022). Lack of job satisfaction has been linked to teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). Although we did not measure teachers' intentions to leave in this survey, other recent nationally representative surveys have established that poor well-being is predictive of an intention to leave, as we explain in Box 3.2 (Steiner and Woo, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022). Teachers who experienced more than one indicator of poor well-being were especially likely to say they were considering leaving their job (see Box 3.2).

Teachers Who Described Well-Being Interventions Most Commonly Named Wellness Activities and Mental Health Services

We asked teachers to describe the programs, policies, or supports (if any) that their school offered to support teacher well-being in an open-ended question. We found that wellness activities and mental health care services were among the most common types of well-being interventions to which teachers said they had access, a finding that is consistent with our other research (Steiner et al., 2022).

Among the 3,264 teachers who provided an interpretable response to our open-ended question, one-third described interventions designed to support their well-being or mental health. The most commonly mentioned intervention—named by nearly one-fifth of teachers—was wellness

[Wellness programs] are hard to fit in, all after school time. [There is] nothing to alleviate the in school pressures.

—Secondary school teacher, Rhode Island

BOX 3.2

The Relationship Between Teacher Well-Being and Intentions to Leave

Teachers who experience poor well-being are more likely to say they are considering leaving their jobs. In the 2021 and 2022 State of the American Teacher Survey, teachers who experienced frequent or constant job-related stress, difficulty coping with their job-related stress, or burnout were more likely than teachers who did not experience those indicators of poor well-being to say that they were planning on or considering leaving their jobs (Steiner and Woo, 2021; Steiner et al., 2022).

Difficulty coping well with job-related stress appears to be especially linked to teachers' intentions to leave their jobs. For example, 52 percent of the teachers who said they had difficulty coping with their job-related stress reported that they were planning to leave or were considering leaving their jobs before the start of the next school year, in comparison with 25 percent of teachers who did not experience such difficulty (Doan et al., 2022a).¹

Teachers who experienced multiple indicators of poor well-being appear to be especially likely to report that they are considering leaving their jobs (Doan et al., 2022a). In January 2022, 13 percent of teachers reported that they experienced constant job-related stress and difficulty coping with that job-related stress; a striking 59 percent of those teachers reported that they were planning on or thinking about leaving their jobs before the start of the next school year. Eleven percent of other teachers nationally reported that they experienced constant job-related stress, difficulty coping with job-related stress, and feelings of burnout. Among those teachers, 64 percent reported intentions to leave their jobs.

¹ In our 2022 State of the American Teacher (Doan et al., 2022a), a nationally representative survey administered in January and February 2022 to 2,349 teachers, we asked teachers whether they were planning to leave their current teaching job at their school before the start of the next school year. We also asked them the same well-being items about frequent job-related stress, difficulty coping with job-related stress, and burnout that we asked in the LTS. This allows us to explore the connection between teachers' well-being and intentions to leave at the national level.

activities. These included yoga, mindfulness activities, meditation, physical fitness classes, access to technology applications that offer mindfulness or meditation guidance, or wellness rooms on campus where teachers can rest during the school day.

The second most common intervention, named by roughly one-eighth of our sample, was mental health services, which included counseling offered outside the school. Other less common supports included formal professional development on well-being, self-care, mental health, or stress management, mentioned by about 160 teachers; and employee assistance programs, mentioned by slightly over 100 teachers. About 100 teachers also said that they had the ability to take time off to support their own well-being (i.e., "mental health days"), although only about one-quarter of those teachers mentioned that their school administrators encouraged them to do so. In addition, a few teachers noted that staffing shortages made taking time off more difficult.

Finally, a relatively small proportion of teachers mentioned other types of well-being interventions, such as counseling provided by a district or school-based guidance counselor, newsletters or email communications about wellness and self-

I think my district has a free counseling service but I have only heard this from a coworker. My district has not provided any information on this or how to access this. It would be very helpful though.
—Elementary school teacher, Texas

care, and encouragement for self-care from leadership. These interventions were only mentioned by about 50 to 100 teachers each.

About 100 teachers shared their opinions about the helpfulness and effectiveness of these supports, even though we did not explicitly ask about it. Most of the teachers who discussed the helpfulness of the well-being interventions available to them—about 80—said those interventions were unhelpful because they were difficult to use. When speaking about their school or district wellness activities, these teachers described how they took too much time, were inconvenient, distracted them from their work, were insincere or superficial, or did not address the underlying reasons that teachers were stressed. Teachers who found the counseling services available to them unhelpful similarly named barriers to access or effective use, such as waitlists, scheduling conflicts, cost, challenges accessing the benefit, and not having enough time to attend therapy. A few teachers who had access to school- or district-based counselors said that caseloads were already filled with students or worried that teachers who sought counseling would be reported to the district.

Teachers' Access to Relational and Organizational Working Conditions

Access to Relational Working Conditions Was Most Common

More than three-quarters of other teachers nationally reported access to relational working conditions, which included having strong positive relationships with other teachers in their school, students generally engaged in learning, feeling like they belonged in their school, and having administrators who supported their decisions about student behavior, as shown in Table 4.1.

Among organizational conditions related to teaching, 88 percent of teachers reported feeling safe at school. Just under half of teachers said they had access to a mentor teacher who shared their race or ethnicity and that their school cultivates a sense of belonging for teachers who identify as people of color. About one-third of teachers reported having access to individual coaching provided by their district as well as access to required cultural competency or anti-racist training.

Fewer teachers reported access to professional learning opportunities that focused on teacher SEL competencies than those focused on student SEL competencies. This result is consistent with the current national emphasis on student social and emotional health (Wall, 2022) but suggests that there may be opportunities for schools to increase their focus on developing adult SEL competencies.

Reported access to some organizational and relational working conditions varied across teacher subgroups (see Table A.1). Teachers of color were more likely than their White colleagues to have experienced negative treatment based on their perceived race or ethnicity and less likely to report that they felt like they belonged in their school. Forty-eight percent of teachers of color reported that they had experienced negative treatment, compared with only 25 percent of White teachers. Teachers of color were slightly more likely to say that they had adequate time to collaborate with other teachers and that they received individual coaching provided by their district than their counterparts.

Teachers with five years of experience or less reported less access to some relational factors, such as positive relationships with other teachers in their school or feelings of belonging in their school, than their more experienced colleagues. But they were more likely than teachers with more experience to say that they had access to organizational conditions commonly made available to new teachers, such as individual coaching provided by their district. Although these results reflect the commonsense notion that relational factors may develop over time, the results suggest there might be room for schools to help newer teachers develop strong interpersonal relationships, perhaps through mentoring or schoolwide relationship-building activities.

Few Teachers Had Access to Financial Incentives to Work in High-Needs Schools or for Student Performance

Only 15 percent of teachers nationally reported that they had access to financial incentives to work in high needs schools (see Table 4.1). Of course, only a subset of teachers nationally are eligible for such incentives.

TABLE 4.1
Teachers' Reported Access to Working Conditions in Five Focal States

Relational Factors	Percentage of Teachers Reporting Access to Working Conditions					
	U.S.	California	Florida	New York	Texas	Washington
Strong positive relationships with other teachers in school	90	90	87	92	89	91
Feelings of belonging in school	84	85	82	84	79	84
No negative treatment based on race or ethnicity during my teaching career	70	69	60*	71	63	78*
School cultivates a sense of belonging for teachers who identify as people of color	43	45	50	43	44	32*
School administrators support decisions about managing student behavior	77	74	74	74	77	81
Student engagement in learning	84	84	83	88*	85	84
Organizational Factors Related to Teaching						
Feelings of safety at school	88	87	85	89	86	87
Matched with a mentor teacher in first year of teaching	70	62	67	66	69	60
At least 75 percent of working time spent interacting with students	63	62	63	64	60	69*
A clear vision for social and emotional learning at my school	60	61	64	69*	60	64
PL has placed a strong emphasis on student SEL skills and competencies	49	52	44	57*	50	54
Adequate time to collaborate with other teachers	55	59	58	51	57	53
Control over teaching schedule or course assignments	55	63*	49	50	55	61
Matched with a mentor teacher who shared racial or ethnic background in first year of teaching	48	34*	46	42	41*	42*
Less than 20 percent of working time spent on administrative activities	40	40	40	42	34	45
PL has placed a strong emphasis on developing teacher SEL skills and competencies	39	40	37	47*	37	39
District-provided individual coaching	38	33*	37	30*	43	37
School required cultural competency or anti-racist training for teachers and school administrators	35	35	31	44*	31	57*
Organizational Factors Related to Pay						
The teachers' union or professional association bargains to improve teacher pay	63	85*	77*	80*	31*	93*
Extra pay for performing additional work or roles	57	69*	54	64*	46*	65*
The opportunity to grow professionally in terms of additional responsibilities, authority, and pay	46	56*	47	48	36*	57*
Financial incentives to work in high-needs schools	15	13	32*	15	21	17
Financial incentives for student gains on tests or student work	11	5*	47*	7*	16	3*

NOTE: * indicates that teachers in a given focal state were significantly more likely to say that they had access to the working condition than other teachers nationally (e.g., California teacher versus non-California teacher) after controlling for an array of school- and teacher-level characteristics. PL = professional learning. Green cells indicate that teachers in a given focal state were significantly more likely to report access to the working condition than other teachers nationally. Red cells indicate that teachers in a given focal state were significantly less likely to report access to the working condition. Gray cells indicate the national average. For more information on how we defined each working condition, see Appendix B. *N* of U.S. teachers = 3,509–3,559; *N* of California teachers = 429–435; *N* of Florida teachers = 398–401; *N* of New York teachers = 453–457; *N* of Texas teachers = 399–410; *N* of Washington teachers = 448–460.

According to a 2022 analysis by the National Council on Teacher Quality, 31 states had funded programs that provide financial incentives to work in high-need schools. Although definitions vary, *high-need schools* are typically defined as schools that have the lowest student performance on achievement tests or the highest percentages of students living in poverty (Saenz-Armstrong, 2022). Similarly, few teachers—11 percent—said that they had access to financial incentives for student gains on tests or student work.

As of 2022, use of performance in determining teacher pay is required in 11 states and encouraged or required (with the ultimate decision left to the district) in an additional 13 states, but not all schools may be eligible to provide such incentives to teachers (Saenz-Armstrong, 2022). For example, although Utah requires use of performance in determining teacher pay, this requirement is limited to high-poverty schools (Saenz-Armstrong, 2022). Teachers' awareness of whether these financial incentives are available to them might depend, at least in part, on whether they work in a state that offers or at a school that is eligible for such incentives.

Reported access to pay-related supports varied by some teacher and school characteristics. Teachers with more than five years of experience—who also might be more inclined to seek out roles or responsibilities beyond classroom teaching—were slightly more likely than their counterparts to report access to extra pay for additional work or roles. Teachers of color, many of whom work in schools that fit local definitions of high-need, were more likely than their white colleagues to have access to financial incentives for student gains on test or student work and to financial incentives to work in high-needs schools (Achinstein et al., 2010).

More New York Teachers Reported Access to SEL Supports

New York teachers were consistently more likely than other teachers nationally to report that their school provided SEL supports, as shown in Table 4.1. New York teachers were more likely than their national counterparts to agree that their school has developed a clear vision for SEL and that their professional learning experiences focused to a moderate or great extent on developing SEL competencies for both students and teachers.

Otherwise, teachers in our five focal states reported similar access to favorable working conditions and supports as other teachers nationally. The differences we observed were generally consistent with the context in each state. For example, teachers in New York and Washington state were more likely than other teachers nationally to report access to required cultural competency or anti-racist training in their schools. New York has recently invested extensive resources in such trainings (New York State United Teachers, undated). In Washington, Senate Bill 5044, which was passed in April 2021, directs K–12 schools to use one of three professional learning days to specifically train all staff in the topics of “cultural competency, diversity, equity, or inclusion” (Washington State Legislature, 2021).

More Florida teachers reported that they had access to financial incentives for student gains on tests or student work and financial incentives to work in high needs schools than did teachers in the other focal states. These differences likely reflect the fact that Florida districts have been required to employ performance-based pay for new teachers since 2014 (Saenz-Armstrong, 2022). Programs in other states may be more recent or participation might not be universal. Texas, for example, established its Teacher Incentive Allotment program in 2019, and district participation is optional (Texas Education Agency, undated-a). As of November 2022, 378 local education agencies (LEAs) (about 30 percent of all Texas LEAs) have applied to or are participating in the program (Texas Education Agency, undated-b). We discuss state-specific results and context in more detail in the separate document that includes the State Snapshots (Steiner et al., 2023).

Teachers Identified Organizational Conditions, Such as SEL Initiatives, Collaboration Opportunities, and Schedule Flexibility, as Well-Being Supports

Nearly 700 of the 3,264 teachers (about 20 percent) who provided an interpretable response to our open-ended question about the well-being supports that their schools provided mentioned organizational conditions in their responses. We interpret the unprompted inclusion of organizational conditions in teachers' responses to a question about the well-being supports that their schools provide—even though such conditions might not be intentionally designed to address well-being—as support for our hypothesis that organizational factors can play a role in enhancing teacher wellness. In addition, the organizational conditions that teachers mentioned in their responses broadly aligned with those we asked about in other survey questions.

The most common type of organizational condition, mentioned by about 250 teachers, was receiving tokens of appreciation from school administrators, such as meals, snacks, massages, small gifts, or jeans

days. A few of these teachers—about 20—described these efforts as an “empty gesture” and as unhelpful for supporting their well-being. As one such teacher said, “There is no support for teachers whatsoever. Administration thinks allowing us to wear jeans to work and eating donuts takes away stress.”

About 100 teachers listed SEL-related programs or other approaches that embrace a whole-person approach as school-provided well-being supports, although it was not always clear whether the SEL supports were targeted to adults or students. Very few teachers provided unprompted responses about how helpful these programs were. One teacher who did said that their school was implementing an SEL curriculum and was “supportive and socially and emotionally

Our principal has acknowledged the need for teachers to connect with one another on a regular basis and has significantly cut our staff meeting time so we plan and prep and look over data with our grade-level and/or grade-band teams. This gift of time and trust for us classroom teachers has been, in my eyes, a support for teacher well-being.
—Elementary school teacher,
Washington

responsive.” Most teachers who commented on helpfulness found the SEL supports at their school unhelpful, expressing that SEL initiatives felt “fluffy” or “not effective” or that there was no follow-up on SEL trainings to promote long-term effectiveness.

Other types of organizational factors, such as opportunities to collaborate with fellow staff (e.g., professional learning communities or departmental or grade-level meetings), mentorship or coaching programs, and the ability to choose how to use their time were mentioned by roughly 60 to 70 teachers each as school-provided well-being supports. Teachers expressed that dedicated time for collaboration allowed them to engage with their peers about both their own mental health and instruction and strategies to support students. A few teachers who mentioned coaching said the quality of mentorship or coaching was critical for determining whether it actually supported their well-being. Teachers who mentioned time as a mental health and well-being support described having more time to plan for instruction, grade student work, or collaborate because of reduced time spent in meetings or on administrative tasks, such as paperwork; others appreciated having flexibility in their schedule to, for example, work remotely on professional development days. Only about 20 teachers mentioned access to various financial supports, including wellness stipends, bonuses, and compensation for taking on additional work responsibilities.

Relationships Between Teacher Working Conditions and Well-Being

Relational Working Conditions Were Most Strongly Linked to Positive Well-Being

Table 5.1 shows that relational working conditions appear to be most strongly linked to positive well-being. Specifically, teachers who had access to school administrators who support their decisions about managing student behavior and who feel that they belong in their schools were less likely—a difference of more than 20 percentage points—to report that they experienced burnout, constant job-related stress, and difficulty coping with their job-related stress than teachers who did not report access to such working conditions. Teachers who had strong positive relationships with other teachers and who felt that their students were generally engaged in learning were also much less likely to report poor well-being on more than one dimension than teachers who did not experience these conditions.

Notably, all three of the SEL supports about which we asked—whether targeted toward students or teachers—were linked to better teacher well-being. Although the magnitude of the relationships varied and were smaller than some other conditions, teachers who reported that their professional learning experiences emphasized developing students’ or teachers’ SEL skills and competencies to a moderate or great extent were less likely to experience each of the four indicators of poor well-being.

In addition, *how* teachers spend their time appears to make a difference in well-being. Teachers who reported spending more time interacting with students, spending less time on administrative tasks, and having some control over their teaching schedule or course assignments also reported better well-being. Other recent nationally representative surveys have found that lack of focus on core job responsibilities—specifically, instructing students—is a source of job-related stress for teachers (Jones et al., 2022; Steiner et al., 2022).

Pay-related conditions were as not strongly linked to well-being as relational and other organizational factors. Among the pay-related factors about which we asked, only access to extra pay for performing additional work or roles and the opportunity to grow professionally in terms of additional responsibilities, authority, and pay were linked to better well-being.

We have nothing formal, however, there are many close friendships at this school, so teachers can lean on each other . . . Administrators and teachers trust and respect one another, so allowances are always made when a teacher needs a mental break.”

—Secondary school teacher, New York

TABLE 5.1
Relationships Between Teacher-Reported Access to Working Conditions and Well-Being

Category	Working Conditions	Less Frequent Job-Related Stress	Less Constant Job-Related Stress	Less Difficulty Coping with Job-Related Stress	Less Burnout
Relational	School administrators support decisions about managing student behavior	++	+++	+++	+++
Relational	Feelings of belonging in school	++	+++	+++	+++
Organizational	Feelings of safety at school	++	+++	+++	+++
Relational	Strong positive relationships with other teachers in school	+	++	+++	+++
Relational	Student engagement in learning	+	++	++	+++
Organizational	Adequate time to collaborate with other teachers	++	++	++	++
Organizational	A clear vision for social and emotional learning at my school	++	++	++	++
Organizational	Control over teaching schedule or course assignments	++	++	+	++
Relational	No negative treatment based on race or ethnicity during my teaching career	+	++	+	++
Organizational	Less than 20 percent of working time spent on administrative activities	++	+	+	+
Organizational	The opportunity to grow professionally in terms of additional responsibilities, authority, and pay	+	+	+	++
Organizational	Extra pay for performing additional work or roles		+	+	++
Relational	School cultivates a sense of belonging for teachers who identify as people of color	+	+	+	+
Organizational	PL has placed a strong emphasis on student SEL skills and competencies	+	+	+	
Organizational	PL has placed a strong emphasis on developing teacher SEL skills and competencies	+	+	+	
Organizational	School requires cultural competency or anti-racist training for teachers and school administrators	+	+	+	
Organizational	District-provided individual coaching	+	+		+
Organizational	At least 75 percent of working time spent interacting with students		+	+	+
Organizational	Matched with a mentor teacher in first year of teaching			+	
Organizational	Matched with a mentor teacher who shared racial or ethnic background in first year of teaching				
Organizational	The teachers' union or professional association bargains to improve teacher pay				
Organizational	Financial incentives for student gains on tests or student work				
Organizational	Financial incentives to work in high-needs schools				

NOTE: In the left-most column, we indicate the type of working condition. *N* of U.S. teachers = 3,509–3,559. Cells with one or more + symbols indicate that the listed working condition is associated with positive teacher well-being among teachers nationally. +++ indicates that when we compared teachers who had access to the listed working condition with teachers who lacked access to the condition, teachers who had access to the working condition were at least 20 percentage points less likely to experience the listed indicator of poor well-being than teachers who lacked access to the condition. ++ indicates that teachers who had access to the working condition were 10 to 19 percentage points less likely to experience an indicator of poor well-being than teachers who lacked access to the condition. + indicates that teachers who had access to the working condition were less than 10 percentage points less likely to experience an indicator of poor well-being than teachers who lacked access to the condition. Otherwise, there were no statistically significant differences between teachers who had access to the working condition and teachers who lacked access to the working condition in terms of their well-being reports. All differences are statistically significant at *p* < 0.05 after controlling for an array of school- and teacher-level characteristics. For organizational factors related to pay, we also controlled for teachers' state because teachers' average base salaries vary by state.

Teachers Said Strong Positive Relationships with Colleagues Promoted Their Well-Being

Open-ended responses from teachers further highlighted the strong connection between teachers' positive relationships with other adults in the building and their own well-being. In response to our open-ended question about the policies, supports, and programs their school provides to promote their wellness, about 350 teachers (out of 3,264, or about 10 percent) named relational factors at school that supported their well-being. Nearly 200 of those teachers described how having close, supportive friendships with their colleagues provided them with opportunities to bond, relax, lean on one another, and vent. Most such opportunities described by teachers were social gatherings, but about 30 teachers mentioned organized group meetings, such as clubs where teachers gathered with their peers. In a few cases, teachers noted that the positive relationships they had with others in the building were the *only* well-being support they had access to in the absence of formal programs or supports offered by their school. As one teacher said, "I don't know of any programs, but the staff is extremely helpful and caring where I work. They make every day easier."

About 150 teachers talked about how their school leaders enhanced their well-being. These teachers described how their administrators conducted check-ins with teachers; offered encouragement and kindness; were attentive to teachers' concerns, challenges, and opinions; and created favorable organizational structures, such as allowing teachers instructional autonomy, reducing teachers' administrative work (e.g., paperwork and meetings), encouraging teachers to take time off, helping teachers find class coverage when they needed to take time off, and creating opportunities for collaboration. Although only about 80 teachers explicitly stated that they found their school's well-being supports helpful, effective, or supportive, most of these teachers mentioned that they have positive relationships with their colleagues or supportive administrators.

The most helpful support is not from any specific program, but is instead our principal. He is amazing and truly cares about every single person at our school. He has an open door policy and is always willing to listen. He frequently asks what he can do to make things easier for us (teachers). He starts every single school day by saying as part of the announcements, "Remember, we care about you and we believe in you!" And he does just that.

—Elementary school teacher, Florida

Conclusion

Much of the national conversation about teacher well-being and retention has focused on poor teacher well-being and the reasons that teachers leave. These results highlight the importance of taking steps to restore teacher well-being as one strategy (among others) to improve teacher retention. In this report, we present teacher perspectives that could inform potential solutions. We provide the first look at teachers' reports of their well-being and working conditions at the state level and the relationships between the two, and we compare them with conditions nationally. We also present national data on the mental health and well-being supports that teachers say are available at their schools. Together, these findings can help state policymakers who are working to improve teacher well-being identify which working conditions are most important to preserve and which are most important to address.

Consistent with research in other occupations, our data show that organizational and relational conditions are both strongly related to positive well-being. Some relational working conditions, such as school administrators that support teachers' decisions about managing student behavior, feelings of belonging in school, and strong positive relationships with other teachers, appear to have stronger relationships with positive well-being than others and might be high-leverage options for improving teacher well-being and by extension teacher retention. But access to these conditions and their relationships with well-being varied across five focal states. Although we were not able to investigate the causal direction of this relationship, these results suggest that efforts to improve teacher well-being should focus on local organizational and relational working conditions—neither may be sufficient on its own.

Our data offer suggestive evidence that a schoolwide focus on SEL for teachers and students also might be a viable strategy for improving teacher well-being. New York teachers were more likely than other teachers nationally to report access to a schoolwide vision for SEL and professional learning experiences that emphasized SEL for students and for teachers. New York teachers were less likely than other teachers nationally to experience constant job-related stress and feelings of burnout and to experience multiple indicators of poor well-being.

Although a relationship between a focus on adult and student SEL and teacher well-being is supported by other research (e.g., Hamilton and Doss, 2020), readers should interpret this finding with caution. Our data did not allow us to investigate the causal direction of this relationship, so we do not know if a focus on SEL caused teachers to report better well-being or if the reverse is true. We cannot determine if the apparent relationship is influenced by factors unmeasured by our study (such as parental involvement or other measures of school climate). Also, SEL-related conditions were not as strongly related to positive well-being as other working conditions about which we asked.

Teachers' qualitative responses indicate that schools generally seem to be providing a mix of mental health and well-being interventions. Teachers also appear to view some organizational and relational conditions in their schools as supportive of their own well-being. These findings reinforce our earlier research, which suggests that relational factors—including those that are organizational and relational, such as supportive leadership—are critical to positive teacher well-being (Steiner et al., 2022). When considered with prior research that has established a strong relationship between working conditions and teacher turnover

(Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson, Berg, and Donaldson, 2005; Kraft, Marinell, and Yee, 2016), our results suggest that a focus on strengthening relational factors and addressing organizational elements that contribute to teacher stress and desire to leave could improve teacher retention. Our results also serve as a reminder that thoughtful implementation matters. Mental health and well-being supports should be accessible, convenient, and tailored to the local needs of teachers if they are to be successful.

Recommendations

We offer four recommendations based on our findings. Education leaders should:

1. **Assess local conditions to inform strategy and the implementation of efforts to improve teacher well-being.** States vary in their policy contexts and the composition of their workforces, and it is likely that the policy levers that they can feasibly pull and the strategies that would be most beneficial will vary. For example, leaders in states with relatively less experienced workforces might consider ways to help early career teachers access relational supports by helping them build positive relationships in their school communities. Or leaders in states with a higher proportion of teachers of color might consider how they can create school environments that cultivate a sense of belonging for people of color.
2. **Focus on creating positive relational working conditions to improve teacher well-being.** Three of the five working conditions that had the strongest relationships with positive well-being were relational—that is, focused on interpersonal relationships. Our qualitative data demonstrate that fostering positive relational conditions is dependent, in part, on school leadership. Thus, education organizations and leaders should consider how to equip school leaders to cultivate the relational working conditions that promote positive well-being. For example, organizations that provide principal training and preparation might focus on building the skills of school leaders so that they are well-positioned to promote favorable relational and organizational conditions in their schools.
3. **Encourage schools to adopt a schoolwide vision for SEL and implement professional learning opportunities that focus on building adult and student SEL skills.** Although the relationships between teacher well-being and SEL supports were not as strong as those between teacher well-being and relational factors, our state-level data provide suggestive evidence that a focus on SEL for students and teachers could be a promising approach for improving teacher well-being, and could have the added benefit of improving student well-being (Katz, Mahfouz, and Romas, 2020). States and districts might consider ways that they could help teachers develop their own SEL skills and competencies. Prior research suggests that developing teachers' SEL skills can be beneficial for improving student SEL (Hamilton and Doss, 2020) and our data suggest a possible relationship with improved teacher well-being. At the same time, our qualitative data suggest that how these supports are implemented is related to whether teachers actually find them helpful. SEL supports that teachers perceive to be superficial or that are not sustained over time were viewed by teachers as relatively less useful for supporting their well-being.
4. **Foster organizational conditions that allow teachers to focus on the core function of their jobs.** Efforts to improve well-being that are targeted at improving or changing the behavior of individuals (such as counseling or wellness activities) can be important levers but are not sufficient (Greenberg, Brown, and Abenavoli, 2016; Praslova, 2023). Our data suggest that teachers value the organizational conditions that allow them to focus on the core functions of their jobs—specifically, instructing students. Such conditions for teachers include more time to plan and collaborate, more control over their schedules, spending less time on administrative tasks, and opportunities to be compensated for their

additional work and grow professionally. Education leaders might consider how they can provide the resources to create these organizational conditions, such as more staff to allow teachers some control over their schedules or to enable a reduction in administrative duties, or schedules that build in and protect time for planning, collaboration, and relationship-building.

This report contributes to our understanding of promising approaches that could improve teacher well-being and thus improve teacher retention, but more research is needed. We were not able to ask about a comprehensive set of working conditions; subsequent studies could include a more complete list to further investigate which working conditions are most related to positive teacher well-being. We were unable to determine the causal direction of the relationships between working conditions and well-being that we observed, which other studies could illuminate. Our study did not investigate whether and how teachers' reports of their well-being and working conditions vary at the district or school level; we think this information will be crucial for local education leaders to make informed decisions about strategy. Finally, to our knowledge, there are few studies that have evaluated the efficacy of interventions to improve teacher well-being, or which have tested whether improved well-being has a meaningful effect on teacher retention.

Additional Results

In this appendix, we show granular details on teachers' access to working conditions (Table A.1) and the racial and ethnic composition of students and teachers in each state (Figure A.1).

TABLE A.1
Teachers' Reported Access to Working Conditions

Individual Factors	All	Years of Experience			Urbanicity			Teacher Race		Student Demographic Composition				Grade Level	
		0-5 (Ref)	6-10	11+	Suburb (Ref)	Town or Rural	Urban	White (Ref)	Teachers of Color	Majority SOC (Ref)	Majority White	Low Poverty (Ref)	High Poverty	Elem. (Ref)	Sec.
Relational factors															
Strong positive relationships with other teachers in school	90	84	88*	91	91	91	88	91	87	88	92	91	90	91	90
Feelings of belonging in school	84	72	81*	86	84	84	84	85	79	83	85	85	83	86	83
Student engagement in learning	84	77	81*	85	84	85	83	85	82	82	86	86	82	90	79
School administrators support decisions about managing student behavior	77	68	76	78	76	78	76	78	73	76	78	77	77	80	75
No negative treatment based on race or ethnicity during my teaching career	70	74	74*	68	71	75	64	75	52	62	78	74	65	74	67
School cultivates a sense of belonging for teachers who identify as people of color	43	47	44	42	39	38*	54	41	54	53	32	36	51	47	40
Organizational factors related to teaching															
Feelings of safety at school	88	85	87	89	87	90	86	89	85	85	90	89	87	92	84
Matched with a mentor teacher in first year of teaching	70	74	76*	68	70	71	69	71	68	68	72	71	69	72	69
At least 75% of working time spent interacting with students	63	56	59*	64	60	65	64	64	58	62	63	63	63	68	59
A clear vision for social and emotional learning at my school	60	61	58	61	60	57*	64	60	62	61	60	60	60	68	54
Adequate time to collaborate with other teachers	55	55	53	56	54	56	56	54	60	55	55	55	56	58	53
Control over teaching schedule or course assignments	55	59	55	54	55	57	51	55	52	51	58	57	52	58	52

Table A.1—Continued

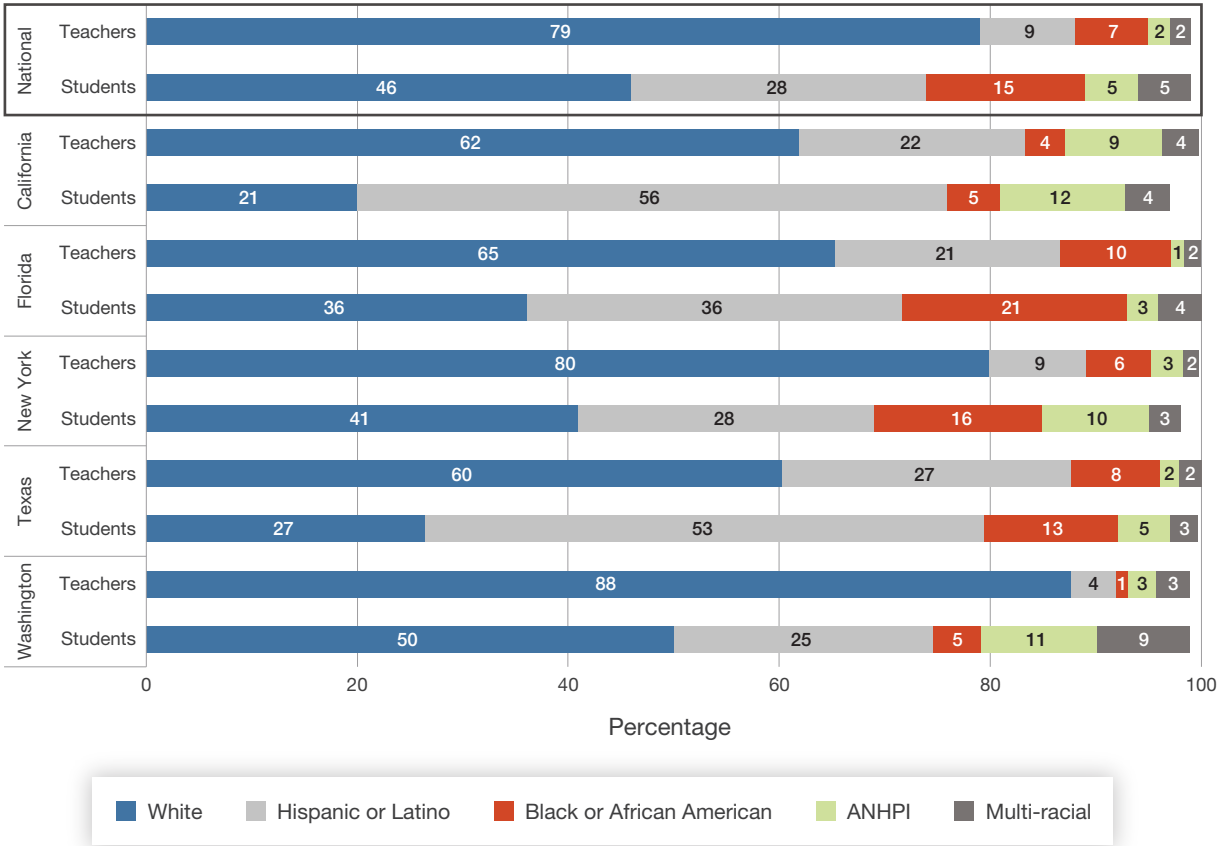
Individual Factors	All	Years of Experience			Urbanicity			Teacher Race		Student Demographic Composition				Grade Level	
		0–5 (Ref)	6–10	11+	Suburb (Ref)	Town or Rural	Urban	White (Ref)	Teachers of Color	Majority SOC (Ref)	Majority White	Low Poverty (Ref)	High Poverty	Elem. (Ref)	Sec.
PL has placed a strong emphasis on student SEL skills and competencies	49	59	48	48	51	43*	51	47	53	51	46	49	48	51	47
Matched with a mentor teacher who shared racial or ethnic background in first year of teaching	48	54	53*	46	46	54*	44	51	34	44	52	49	47	51	46
Less than 20 percent of working time spent on administrative activities	40	51	36	40	37	44	38	42	31	37	42	41	39	41	40
PL has placed a strong emphasis on developing teacher SEL skills and competencies	39	47	37	39	39	35*	44	37	44	40	38	37	40	41	37
District-provided individual coaching	38	53	42*	36	38	38	38	37	45	40	36	37	39	40	37
School requires cultural competency or anti-racist training for teachers and school administrators	35	43	37	33	38	29*	38	34	36	37	33	35	34	37	33
Organizational factors related to pay															
Financial incentives for student gains on tests or student work	11	12	12	11	11	11	13	10	18	14	9	9	14	13	11
Financial incentives to work in high-needs schools	15	21	19*	13	14	12	19	13	23	19	10	11	18	15	15
Extra pay for performing additional work or roles	57	42	53*	59	61	55	54	58	53	55	59	59	55	56	58
The opportunity to grow professionally in terms of additional responsibilities, authority, and pay	46	44	44	46	48	43	46	46	47	47	44	47	45	45	47

Table A.1—Continued

Individual Factors	All	Years of Experience			Urbanicity			Teacher Race		Student Demographic Composition				Grade Level	
		0–5 (Ref)	6–10	11+	Suburb (Ref)	Town or Rural	Urban	White (Ref)	Teachers of Color	Majority SOC (Ref)	Majority White	Low Poverty (Ref)	High Poverty	Elem. (Ref)	Sec.
The teachers' union or professional association bargains to improve teacher pay	63	53	55*	66	69	54*	65	63	60	62	63	66	60	61	65

NOTE: SOC = students of color. This table displays the percentage of teachers who reported access to each organizational or relational condition listed. We display the results of all teachers in our sample and teachers within each subgroup listed. Light gray columns indicate the reference group for each set of teacher subgroups; also indicated by "(Ref)" in the column header. Green cells indicate that teachers in a given subgroup were significantly more likely to say that they had access to the working condition than teachers in the reference group. Red cells indicate that teachers in a given subgroup were significantly less likely to report access to the working condition than teachers in the reference group. Where there are more than two teacher subgroups for each set of subgroup analyses (e.g., teacher experience, urbanicity), we use an asterisk (*) to note statistically significant differences between the two subgroups that are not the reference group. Only differences that remain significant after controlling for an array of school- and teacher-level characteristics are noted. White cells indicate a lack of statistically significant differences between teachers in a given subgroup and the reference group. *N* of all teachers = 3,509–3,556. Years of experience: *N* of those teachers with 0–5 years of experience = 196–199; *N* of teachers with 6–10 years of experience = 793–801; *N* of teachers with 11 or more years of experience = 2,519–2,556. Urbanicity: *N* of suburban teachers = 1,368–1,387; *N* of town or rural teachers = 893–908; *N* of urban teachers = 1,176–1,193. Teacher race: *N* of White teachers = 2,646–2,676; *N* of teachers of color = 715–727. Student demographic composition: *N* of majority students of color = 1,923–1,951; *N* of majority White students = 1,510–1,533; *N* of low-poverty schools = 1,765–1,787; *N* of high-poverty schools = 1,665–1,692. Grade band: *N* of elementary school teachers = 1,500–1,518; *N* of secondary school teachers = 1,890–1,920.

FIGURE A.1
Racial and Ethnic Composition of Students and Teachers in Each Focal State



NOTE: ANHPI = Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Teacher data are from NCES' National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) for the 2017–2018 school year (NCES, undated-a). Student data were found from various sources: National data for Fall 2020 were drawn from NCES, 2022; California Department of Education, 2022a (for 2021–2022 school year data for California); Florida Department of Education, undated-b (for 2021–2022 school year data for Florida); New York State Education Department, undated (for 2020–2021 school year data for New York); Nagy, Whalen, and Kallus, 2021 (for 2020–2021 school year data for Texas); and Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2022 (for 2020–2021 school year data for Washington). Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders were grouped with Asians, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives were omitted for clarity because of their small population size and reporting standards not being met. Students whose race or ethnicity was not reported are also omitted.

Methods

In this report, we present selected findings from the 2022 American Teacher Panel (ATP) LTS related to teacher working conditions and well-being. The LTS asked teachers about multiple topics, including SEL, student supports, mathematics instruction, teaching students with disabilities, and professional learning. We focus on the survey items related to teachers' self-reported well-being, their access to working conditions, and the well-being supports provided by their schools. In Table B.1, we provide a list of the survey questions we used in this report along with their response scales. We also define each variable that we used in our analysis.

Quantitative Analysis of Close-Ended Items

We surveyed teachers in March and early April 2022. In this report, we draw on nationally representative data and state-representative data in five states where we have teacher oversamples: California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Washington state. We analyzed the responses of 3,606 teachers nationally, 442 California teachers, 404 Florida teachers, 463 New York teachers, 418 Texas teachers, and 470 Washington teachers. The results were weighted to ensure national and state representation. See the LTS technical documentation for more information about survey sampling and weighting (Doan et al., 2022b).

We examined teacher survey responses for differences by the following respondent characteristics: gender (male or female), years of teaching experience (zero to five; six to ten; 11 or more), race and ethnicity (White or person of color), and grade level taught (*elementary*, which we defined as kindergarten through grade 5; or *secondary*, which we defined as grades 6 through 12). We also examined survey responses by the following school characteristics: locale (urban or not urban), *high poverty* (which we defined as schools where more than 50 percent of enrolled students received free or reduced-price meals), and *majority students of color* (which we defined as schools in which more than 50 percent of enrolled students are identified as non-White). To support the interpretability of our findings, when conducting subgroup analyses by grade level, we omitted reports regarding the small number of teachers who taught across both grade bands (119 teachers, or about 3 percent of our total sample), allowing us to compare the responses of elementary school teachers with those of secondary school teachers.

This analysis is primarily based on comparisons between sample means. Subgroup comparisons are reported as simple differences in means without statistical adjustment for covariates. We tested the robustness of significant differences across teacher subgroups to adjust for the observable school-level characteristics for which we had data (e.g., percentage of students eligible for FRPL, student racial and ethnic composition, school locale) and teacher-level characteristics (e.g., race or ethnicity, gender, years of experience, grade level). We controlled for these teacher- and school-level characteristics because many teacher- and school-level characteristics overlap. For example, teachers of color are generally more likely than White teachers to work in schools with more students of color and also more likely to work in schools with more students experiencing poverty; there is also substantial overlap among the demographic characteristics of students within a school in terms of socioeconomic status and race (de Brey et al., 2019; NCES, 2020b).

TABLE B.1
Survey Questions, Response Scales, and Variable Definitions

Variable	Definition	Survey Question	Items (if applicable)	Response Scale
Well-Being				
Frequent job-related stress	Responses of “often” or “always”	Since the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year, how often has your work been stressful?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • Sometimes • Often • Always
Constant job-related stress	Response of “always”			
Difficulty coping well with job-related stress	Responses of “1 (Not well at all)” or “2”	How well are you coping with the stress of your job right now?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (Not well at all) • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 (Very well)
Feelings of burnout	Responses of “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” to at least two of the items. Items 3 and 4 were reverse coded.	Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements about teaching.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “The stress and disappointments involved in teaching aren’t really worth it” 2. “I don’t seem to have as much enthusiasm now as I did when I began teaching” 3. “I look forward to teaching in the future” 4. “I am glad I selected teaching as a career” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly agree • Somewhat agree • Somewhat disagree • Strongly disagree
Relational Working Conditions				
No negative treatment based on race or ethnicity during my teaching career	Responses of “never”	How often have you experienced negative treatment because of your actual or perceived race or ethnicity in the following settings during your teaching preparation and career? Negative treatment was defined as “lack of courtesy or respect, offensive language, harassment, or microaggressions.”	Since I have been employed as a teacher throughout my career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never • A few times, but less than monthly • About monthly • Once a week or more
School cultivates a sense of belonging for teachers who identify as people of color	Responses of “to a moderate extent” or “to a great extent”	During this school year (2021–2022), to what extent does your school cultivate a sense of belonging for teachers who identify as people of color?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at all • To a small extent • To a moderate extent • To a great extent • I don’t know

Table B.1—Continued

Variable	Definition	Survey Question	Items (if applicable)	Response Scale
Strong positive relationships with other teachers in school	Responses of “I have this and it is not helpful” or “I have this and it is helpful”	Have you ever had access to any of the following working conditions or supports and to what extent have they helped you persist in the teaching profession?	I have strong positive relationships with other teachers in my school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don’t know if I have this • I do not have this but it would be helpful • I do not have this and it would not be helpful • I have this and it is not helpful • I have this and it is helpful
Feelings of belonging in school	I feel like I belong in my school.			
School administrators support decisions about managing student behavior	My school administrators support my decisions about managing student behavior.			
Student engagement in learning	In general, my students are engaged in learning.			
Organizational Working Conditions Related to Teaching				
Matched with a mentor teacher in first year of teaching	Responses of “I have this and it is not helpful” or “I have this and it is helpful”	Have you ever had access to any of the following working conditions or supports and to what extent have they helped you persist in the teaching profession?	In my first year of teaching, I was matched with a mentor teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don’t know if I have this • I do not have this but it would be helpful • I do not have this and it would not be helpful • I have this and it is not helpful • I have this and it is helpful
Adequate time to collaborate with other teachers	I have adequate time to collaborate with other teachers.			
Control over teaching schedule or course assignments	I have some control over my teaching schedule or course assignments.			
Matched with a mentor teacher who shared racial or ethnic background in first year of teaching	In my first year of teaching, I was matched with a mentor teacher who shared my racial or ethnic background.			
District-provided individual coaching	I receive individual coaching provided by my district.			

Table B.1—Continued

Variable	Definition	Survey Question	Items (if applicable)	Response Scale
School required cultural competency or anti-racist training for teachers and school administrators			My current school requires cultural competency or anti-racist training for all teachers and all school administrators.	
Feelings of safety at school	Responses of “very safe” or “mostly safe” for both in the hallways and bathrooms of their school and in their classes	How safe do you feel . . .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. in the hallways and bathrooms of your school? 2. in your classes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not safe • Somewhat safe • Mostly safe • Very safe
Time spent interacting with students	At least 75 percent of working time spent interacting with students	During a typical full week this school year (2021–2022), approximately what percentage of your time working do you spend interacting with students (i.e., teaching, advising, coaching, leading extracurricular activities)?	Include the time you work during the day, in the evening, or on weekends. Exclude any work you do outside of your teaching position.	Open-ended response
Time spent on administrative activities	Less than 20 percent of working time spent on administrative activities	During a typical full week this school year (2021–2022), approximately what percentage of your time working do you spend on administrative activities (i.e., meetings, planning, grading, taking attendance)?	Include the time you work during the day, in the evening, or on weekends. Exclude any work you do outside of your teaching position.	Open-ended response
School vision for SEL	Response of “somewhat agree” or “strongly agree”	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about social and emotional learning in your school during the current school year (2021–2022)?	My school has developed a clear vision for social and emotional learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly agree • Somewhat agree • Somewhat disagree • Strongly disagree
Emphasis on student SEL	Response of “to a moderate extent” or “to a great extent”	To what extent have your professional learning experiences this school year (2021–2022) emphasized developing SEL skills and competencies for students?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at all • To a small extent • To a moderate extent • To a great extent

Table B.1—Continued

Variable	Definition	Survey Question	Items (if applicable)	Response Scale
Emphasis on teacher SEL	Response of “to a moderate extent” or “to a great extent”	To what extent have your professional learning experiences this school year (2021–2022) emphasized developing SEL skills and competencies for teachers?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at all • To a small extent • To a moderate extent • To a great extent
Pay-related supports	Responses of “I have this and it is not helpful” or “I have this and it is helpful”	Have you ever had access to or used any of the pay-related supports, and to what extent have they helped you persist in the teaching profession?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives for student gains on tests or student work • Financial incentives to work in high-needs schools • Extra pay for performing additional work or roles (e.g., providing additional pay for mentoring new teachers or performing peer evaluations) • The opportunity to grow professionally in terms of additional responsibilities, authority, and pay (i.e., a “career ladder”) • The teacher’s union or professional association bargains to improve teacher pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don’t know if I have this • I do not have this but it would be helpful • I do not have this and it would not be helpful • I have this and it is not helpful • I have this and it is helpful

NOTE: The items related to job-related stress were adapted from the American Federation of Teachers’ Educator Quality of Work Life Survey (American Federation of Teachers and Badass Teachers Association, 2017) or developed specifically for this survey. The item about coping with job-related stress was drawn from Herman and colleagues’ work on teacher stress and coping (Herman, Hickmon-Rosa, and Reinke, 2018). Burnout items were drawn from the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) (NCES, 2017) and the Seidman-Zager teacher burnout scale (Seidman and Zager, 1987). The items about working conditions either were developed specifically for this survey or were borrowed or adapted from several sources, including the RAND COVID-19 survey (Kaufman et al., 2020) and the NTPS (NCES, 2017).

In addition, when examining the relationship between organizational supports related to pay and teacher well-being, we also controlled for teachers' states to account for the fact that teachers' average base salaries vary across states. These regression analyses are useful for understanding the drivers of differences, but we do not present regression-adjusted statistics because we believe that the descriptive teacher subgroup differences remain notable even if they could be driven by multiple underlying factors. For clarity and simplicity, unless otherwise noted, we discuss only differences among teacher subgroups that are statistically significant at $p < 0.05$ that remain significant after controlling for all of the teacher- and school-level characteristics that we mentioned previously. Finally, we did not make statistical adjustments for multiple comparisons because the intent of this report is to provide exploratory, descriptive information rather than to test specific hypotheses or causal relationships.

Qualitative Analysis of Open-Ended Items

We analyzed the results of an open-ended question that asked teachers, "What programs, policies, or supports (if any) does your school offer to support teacher well-being? Please share specific examples." A total of 3,476 teachers responded to this question, and we analyzed 3,264 responses that were clear enough for us to interpret and code. For instance, we did not include in our analysis a little over 200 responses that we considered uninterpretable. About 80 percent of these uninterpretable responses were some variation of "not applicable," which we chose not to include in our analysis because teachers could have responded "not applicable" because they had no such programs, policies, or supports available to them, or because they considered such programs inapplicable to them because they did not need them. The remaining uninterpretable responses were either unintelligible or did not answer the question that we asked. Among the teachers who responded to this question with an interpretable answer, 404 were from California, 364 were from Florida, 421 were from New York, 363 were from Texas, and 428 were from Washington.

To analyze our qualitative data, a team of qualitative researchers coded each of the 3,264 responses using a coding scheme inductively developed by the qualitative lead. Given the broad nature of the open-ended question that we posed to teachers, they provided us with a set of responses that ranged broadly in content and depth: Some teachers provided responses that consisted of just a few words, and other teachers wrote a sentence or two or even a short paragraph. Consequently, we designed our qualitative coding scheme such that we could capture broad themes and finer-grained sub-themes to meaningfully describe the variety of teachers' responses. The qualitative team met throughout the coding process to ensure reliability in applying the codes, resolve ambiguities, and discuss revisions to codes or the addition of emergent codes. In analyzing the coded excerpts, we examined whether there were substantive differences in teachers' responses by the same characteristics that we examined in the quantitative survey data; this included teacher characteristics such as teachers' state, racial background, grade level, and years of experience, and school characteristics such as the proportion of students experiencing poverty, the proportion of students of color, and locale. Where we observed notable differences, we have described them in the text.

When we discuss the open-ended data, we use *majority* to refer to at least half of respondents in an applicable group; *most* means at least three-quarters of survey respondents in an applicable group. We use *some* or *few* to refer to less than half of respondents in an applicable group, with *few* meaning less than one-quarter of respondents in an applicable group and *some* meaning more than one-quarter of respondents in an applicable group but fewer than half. Where appropriate, we also provide frequency counts (e.g., "about 20 teachers," "about 300 teachers," or "one-fifth of teachers") to provide readers with a sense of how frequently some themes arose in our analysis process, especially because our coding scheme often captured themes that were drawn from fewer than a quarter of our total sample of teachers. However, we also note that one of the primary goals of our qualitative analysis was to understand the variety of well-being supports that teachers said their schools provided rather than determine the prevalence of specific kinds of supports. We stress that

given the broad nature of both the open-ended question and teachers' responses and the nonrepresentative nature of our qualitative sample, the perspectives expressed by the teachers in our sample may be more (or less) prevalent in the general population of teachers than our data currently suggest.

Data Sources for Table 2.1

Here, we list all of the data sources for the elements of state context listed in Table 2.1.

1. Number of FTE teachers is drawn from NCES for the 2019–2020 school year as reported by state education agencies as full-time teaching staff. FTE teachers include prekindergarten through grade 13 teachers.
2. Data on union or professional association membership are drawn from NCES' NTPS for the 2017–2018 school year. We display the percentage of teachers who indicated that they were “members of a union or an employee association similar to a union in each state.” (NCES, undated-c)
3. Average starting salary data are drawn from the National Education Association, 2022. These data are for the 2020–2021 school year. *Starting salary* describes the average starting salary for public school teachers in the state.
4. Average salary numbers are estimates from NCES; these estimates are based on state reports (NCES, 2021a). Data are from the 2020–2021 school year. *Average salary* describes the average salary for all public school teachers in the state.
5. Data on teacher race and ethnicity are from the National Center for Educational Statistics' NTPS for the 2017–2018 school year (NCES, undated-a). Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders were grouped with Asians, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives were omitted for clarity because of their small population size and reporting standards not being met.
6. Data on years of teaching experience are drawn from NCES' NTPS for the 2017–2018 school year (NCES, undated-b). Table 2.1 shows total years of teaching experience.
7. Locale data are from NCES' “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey” and Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates' “Public School File” (NCES, 2021a). These data are for the 2019–2020 school year. The values indicate the percentage of public schools that are in each locale for each state.
8. Student data were from various sources: NCES, 2020a (for racial and ethnic enrollment data for Fall 2020, national); California Department of Education, 2022a (for 2021–2022 school year data for California); Florida Department of Education, undated-b (for 2021–2022 school year data for Florida); New York State Education Department, undated (for the 2020–2021 school year in New York); Nagy, Whalen, and Kallus, 2021 (for 2020–2021 school year data for Texas); and Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2022 (for 2020–2021 school year data from Washington). We defined *students of color* as students who reported their race or ethnicity as Hispanic, Black, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or multiracial. Students whose race was not reported were not added to this group.
9. Percentage of students eligible for FRPL is from NCES' “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey” for the 2019–2020 school year (NCES, 2021b). The value indicates the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch for each state.
10. Student-teacher ratio is drawn from NCES, “Public Elementary/ Secondary School Universe Survey,” “Local Education Agency Universe Survey,” and “State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education” (NCES, undated-d). Data are for the 2019–2020 school year. These values include prekindergarten through grade 13 students and teachers.

Limitations

Our findings are subject to several limitations. First, survey responses consist of self-reported information, which is a limitation present in all survey research. Second, we cannot be sure that all teachers interpreted the survey items or response categories in the same way, another limitation that is present in all survey research. This limitation is most relevant in relation to how we categorized the working conditions about which we asked. Many of the working conditions are resources supplied by the organization (e.g., collaboration time), but the relationship of that resource to well-being could depend in large part on relational factors (e.g., collaboration time could be related to positive well-being if teacher relationships are strongly positive). We do not know if teachers were thinking of each working condition in organizational or relational terms when they responded to the survey. Third, we were not able to ask about all the working conditions that could be related to teacher well-being. The strength of the relationships between well-being and various working conditions could vary if a different set of working conditions were included. Fourth, because of the nature of sampling, teachers' responses represent individual perspectives rather than the perspectives of all teachers in a school or district. Finally, it is possible that numerous other factors unmeasured by this survey, such as parental involvement or other aspects of the school environment, could have contributed to the differences across educator subgroups that we observe. Thus, our findings should be strictly interpreted as descriptive characterizations of educators' responses. They are not intended to suggest causality.

There are also several caveats to our analysis of the open-ended survey question, which limits its generalizability to teachers nationally. Teachers self-selected into our sample of open-ended responses by providing a response to the question; not all teachers who were presented the question opted to provide a response. Additionally, not all responses were clear enough to interpret and code. Although we drew on the responses of a large number of teachers, teachers only provided a single response to an open-ended question, rendering the nature of our qualitative data broad but relatively shallow.

In the 2022 LTS, we asked teachers to describe the programs, policies, or supports that their school offers to support teacher well-being. In our reporting, we present findings on teachers' perceptions about the helpfulness of the supports available to them, even though the survey question presented to teachers did not explicitly ask teachers to opine on whether their well-being supports were effective; as a result, there might be perspectives on these topics that we did not capture, or the perspectives expressed by the teachers in our sample might be more or less prevalent than our data currently suggest. All together, these caveats might limit the generalizability of findings drawn from teachers' open-ended responses and readers should interpret them with caution.

Abbreviations

ATP	American Teacher Panel
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
FRPL	free and reduced-price lunch
FTE	full-time equivalent
K-12	kindergarten through grade 12
LTS	Learn Together Survey
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NTPS	National Teacher and Principal Survey
PL	professional learning
SEL	social and emotional learning

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