



Designed to Last

Reimagining the Employee Value
Proposition in Independent Schools

Designed to Last: Reimagining the Employee Value Proposition in Independent Schools

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We strengthen member schools by providing high-quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership development programs.

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Executive Summary

Reimagining the Employee Value Proposition in Independent Schools is a sector-wide study of educators across the SAIS association membership. The study seeks to understand how independent school educators experience motivation, engagement, and meaning in their work—and how those experiences shape retention, well-being, and workplace culture over time.

sense of shared purpose and structural vulnerabilities that threaten long-term workplace sustainability.

What are the threads that bind? While each member of a school's faculty is unique, they contribute to the collective in a tapestry of many talents, experiences, and perspectives.

Analysis of responses from 1,558 educators reveals a central tension between a strong

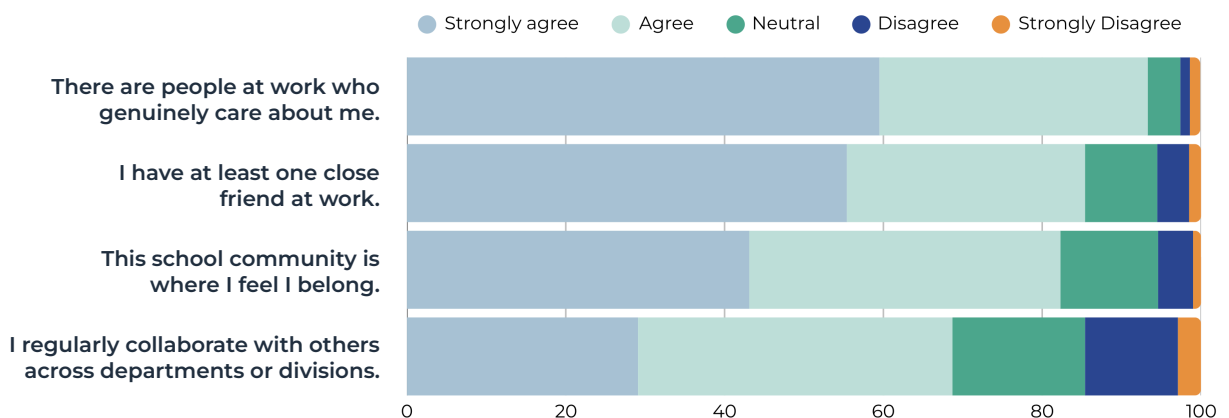
Shared Purpose

What would you say are the top reasons you remain employed at this school?

1. Community & Culture
2. Students
3. Colleagues & Relationships

The relational bonds within independent schools are notably strong. Survey results show that educators are able to form genuine friendships and experience a meaningful sense of belonging. When individuals feel known, valued, and connected, the decision to leave the community carries greater weight.

Despite the connective threads of shared purpose, this study uncovered critical vulnerabilities that threaten to unravel the fabric of school communities.



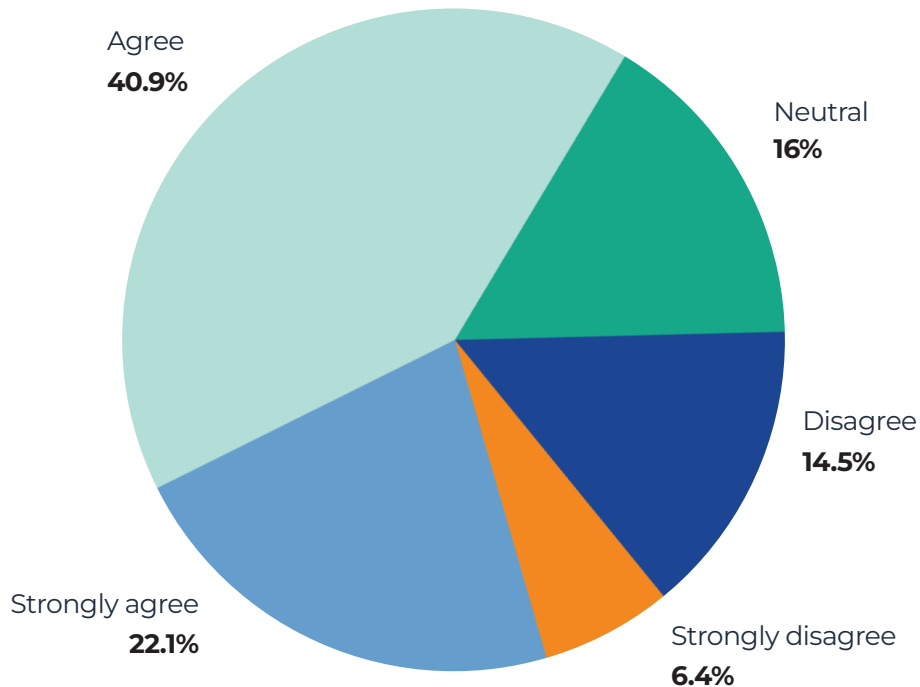
Critical Vulnerabilities

The results of the study amplify three interdependent vulnerabilities that can undermine the strongest mission-centered organizations.

1. Unsustainable Workload

Only 63% find workload manageable, with 20.9% explicitly disagreeing. This finding represents the most significant risk identified in the study. Unlike compensation, which often reflects a conscious tradeoff in service of mission, workload pressures affect daily well-being and sustainability. Educators may feel deeply connected to their school, aligned with its mission, and supported by colleagues, yet still reach a point where the demands of the role are difficult to sustain over time, leading some to step away despite strong commitment.

My workload is manageable and sustainable over time.

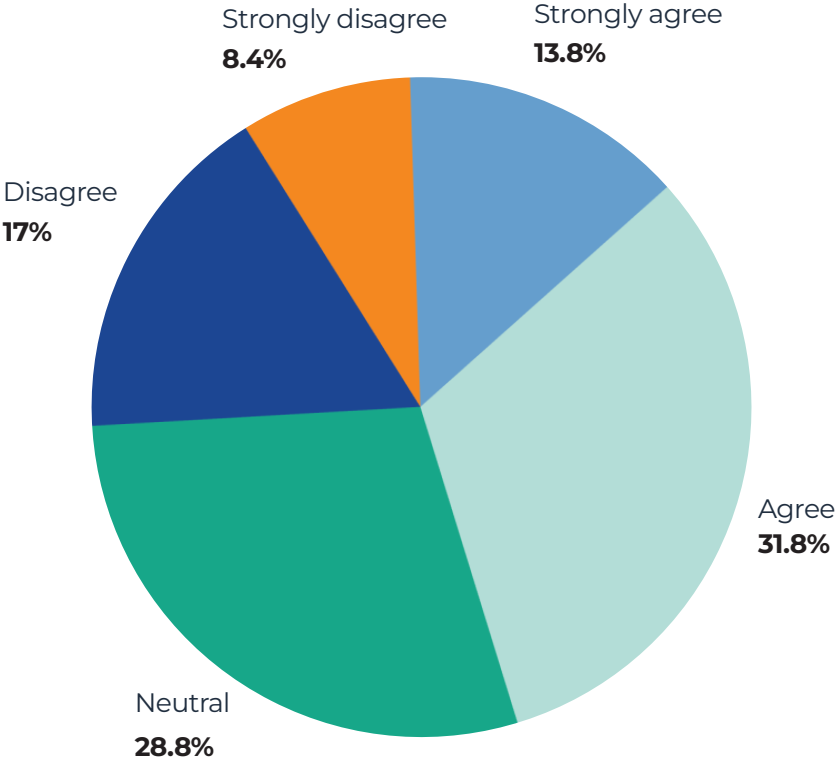


"As educators, we take on many roles besides being teachers. So much is asked from educators in and outside of the classroom. I would like to have support and professional development for the new changes that cause us to change our routines and curriculum."

2. Compensation Gap

Only 45.7% find compensation competitive. As long as educators can afford to prioritize mission over market rate, this works. But as housing costs rise and family obligations increase, more faculty reach a point where financial reality overrides mission alignment. School leaders are competing not just with other schools, but with careers that pay market wages.

My compensation is competitive compared to similar roles in other schools.

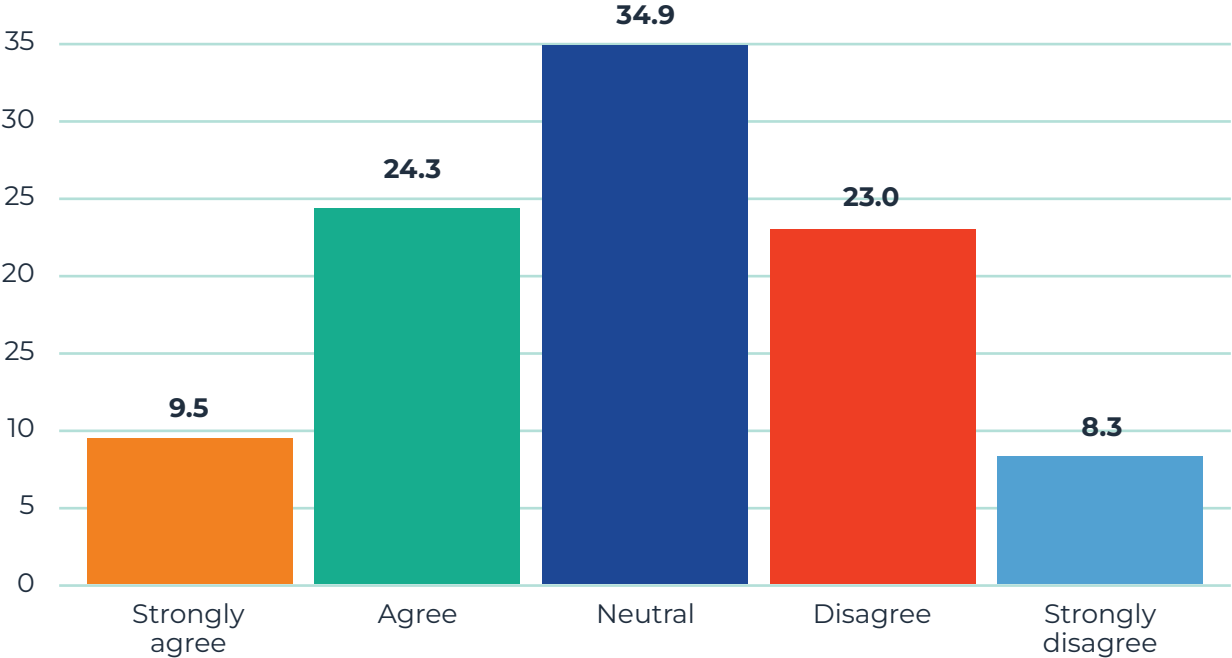


"The role continues to shift and change, with more responsibility being placed on teachers. Unfortunately, very little has been removed from my list of responsibilities, leading to frustration, resentment, and the overwhelming effects of burnout. If I was better compensated, I would feel greater motivation to work harder. I am at the point where I am at least glancing at other employment options that match my skillset because the pay disparity is so great."

3. Career Pathway Vacuum

Only 33.8% see clear advancement opportunities. Schools are attracting ambitious, growth-oriented people (89.3% seek learning opportunities; 94.4% engaged in PD) but not showing them how to progress professionally within one’s organization. For any educator, especially mid-career who have invested years building relationships and expertise, this creates a painful choice between community and career.

There are clear opportunities for career advancement within this school.



"I returned to the field of education 5 years ago after a decade away. I am a highly qualified, effective educator. I love working directly with students, and I love working in a school, which is why I left higher education and returned to elementary school work. However, there are major barriers to my satisfaction at work: lack of advancement opportunities; in an elementary school there are few or no leadership opportunities other than director."

Taken together, the findings present a clear mandate: SAIS schools are rich in mission-driven talent, but sustaining this strength requires intentional investment in workload sustainability, supervisory capacity, and organizational alignment. The challenge is not attracting educators who care deeply, but ensuring that the systems, leadership practices, and support structures are strong enough to honor and sustain that commitment over time. These are the ties that bind. Schools that intentionally mitigate the critical vulnerabilities previously outlined are schools designed to last.

8 Essential Employee Value Proposition Reflections for School Leaders

Based on the findings of this study, the following reflections offer a design tailored for strengthening the employee value proposition (EVP) in ways that honor both organizational mission and educator well-being:

01 **Make Expectations Match Reality.**

When educators' roles and expectations align with their strengths, values, and capacity, engagement and commitment are sustained over time. As workloads expand, engagement erodes well before educators decide to leave.

02 **Protect Educators' Time Like It Matters...Because It Does.**

Protecting educators' time is essential to sustaining engagement, effectiveness, and well-being. Clear priorities, fewer and more purposeful demands, and built-in planning time help reduce workload creep and prevent burnout, particularly for early-career educators.

03 **Show People How They Can Grow (Without Leaving the Classroom).**

Educators want clear opportunities to grow without having to leave the classroom or move into administration. When growth pathways are visible, valued, and discussed early, commitment strengthens.

04 **Normalize Recognition and Feedback.**

Regular, meaningful recognition and feedback help educators feel seen, supported, and confident in their work. When appreciation and developmental feedback are part of everyday practice, engagement strengthens and the risk of disengagement declines.

05 **Name the Reality of Compensation.**

Educators do not expect perfect compensation, but they do expect honesty and clarity about where pay stands and where it is headed. When leaders clearly name current realities and share a credible path forward, trust and commitment increase even before compensation improves.

06 **Make Leadership Visible, Supportive, and Human.**


Educators are more likely to stay when leadership is visible, supportive, and consistently present in daily school life. Trust is built through follow-through, clear communication, and advocacy for educators.

07 **Strengthen the Relationships That Anchor People.**

Strong relationships with colleagues, teams, and leaders are among the most powerful drivers of engagement and retention. When schools intentionally invest in connection, trust, and belonging, educators are far more likely to remain and thrive.

08 **Acknowledge What the Job Asks of People.**

Educators often make significant personal tradeoffs that go unspoken or unaddressed in daily school life. When schools acknowledge these demands and balance commitment with care, trust strengthens and the risk of quiet burnout is reduced.

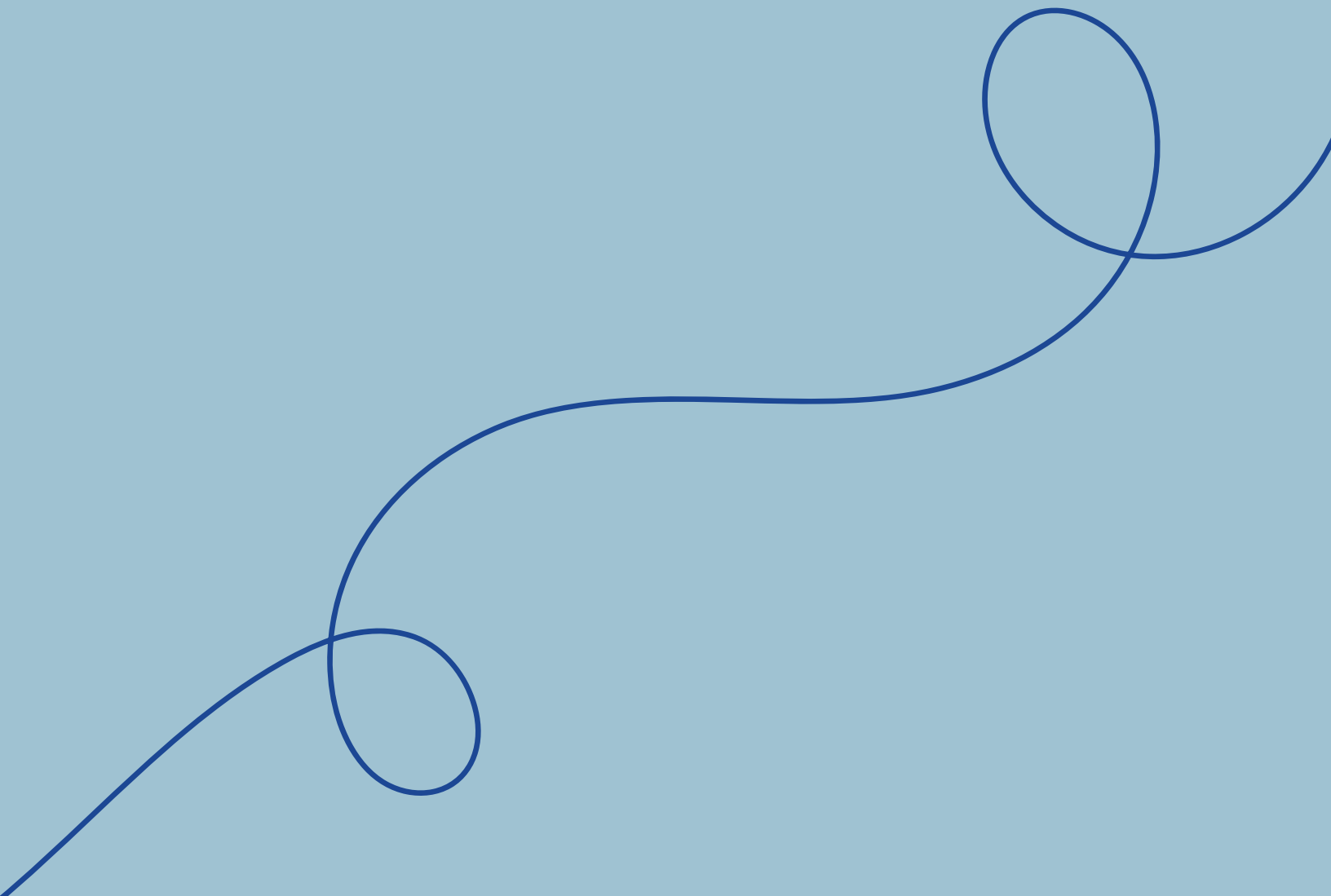


**Community and purpose
brought educators to
independent schools.
Workload sustainability,
competitive compensation,
and career pathways will
determine whether they can
afford to stay.**



Designed to Last

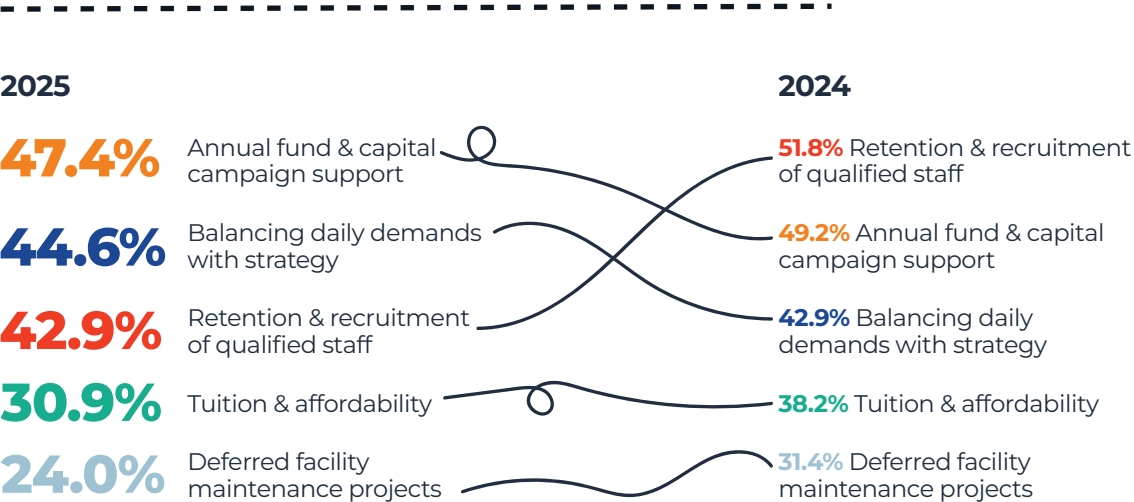
Reimagining the Employee Value
Proposition in Independent Schools



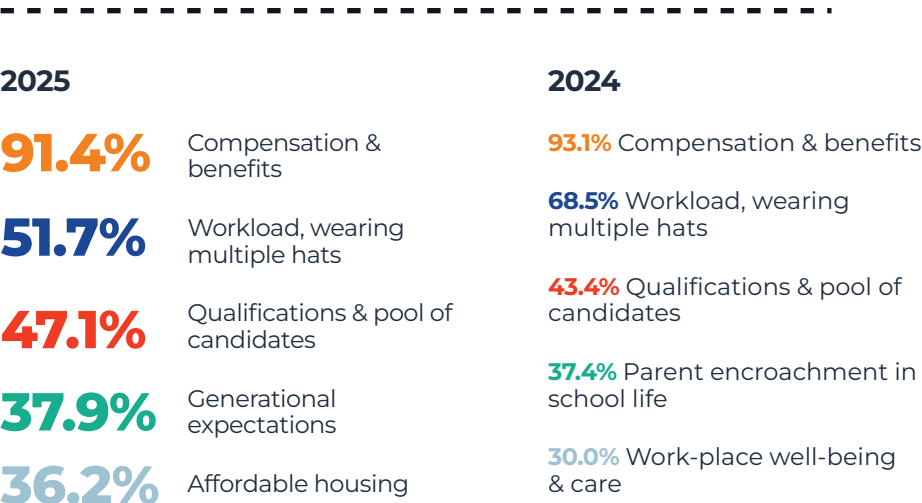
Purpose of Study

Reimagining the Employee Value Proposition in Independent Schools builds on SAIS's year-over-year Pulse Perspectives research, which has consistently identified retention and recruitment of qualified staff as one of the top concerns among SAIS heads of school. Across survey cycles, this concern has remained highly prominent, reflecting minimal variation in relative position and reinforcing that employee value pressures are structural rather than short-term.

What are the top 5 challenges you are confronting within your school community? Choose up to five.



What do you believe are the top 5 barriers to faculty/staff retention and recruitment? Choose up to five.



Head Survey, March 2025

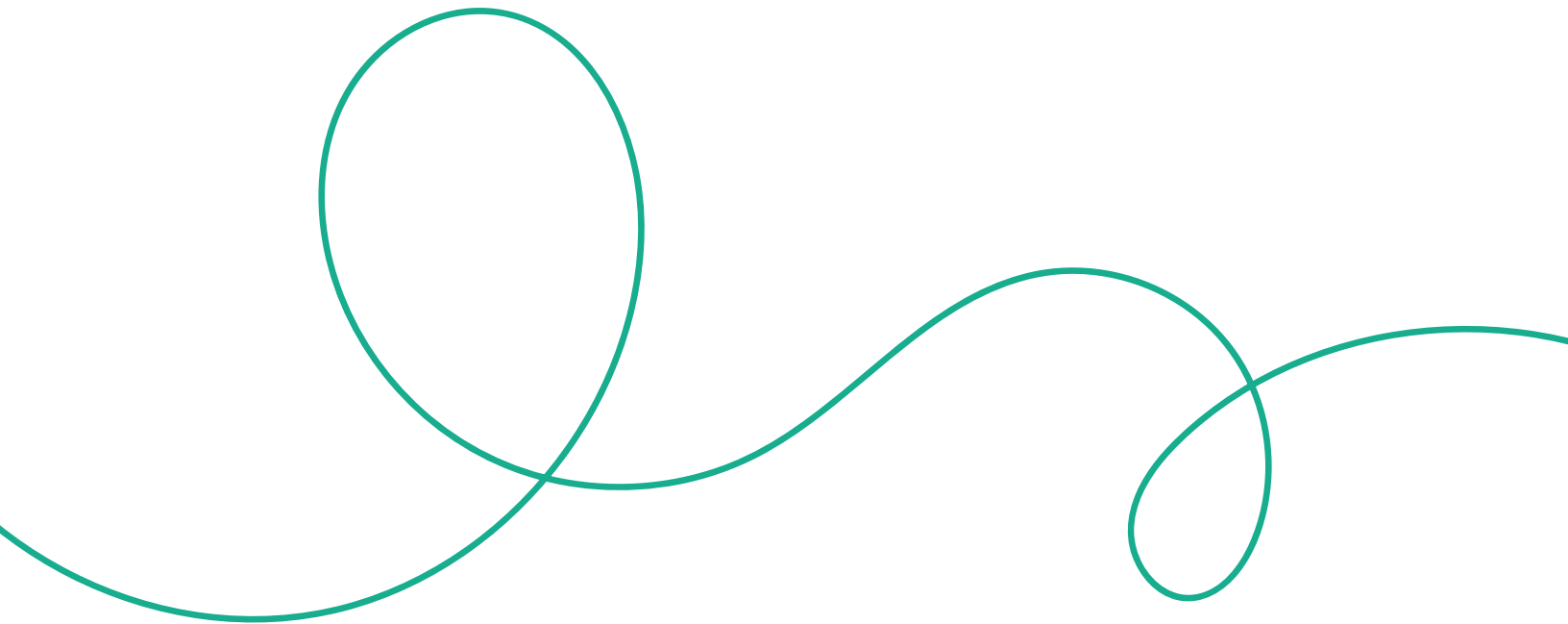
Additionally, SAIS pulse data indicate that these pressures are shaped by multiple, compounding factors. Attrition analysis shows that retirement is the leading cause of departures across all school sizes, accounting for a majority of exits in larger schools, while smaller schools experience comparatively higher attrition tied to personal or family reasons and compensation considerations. At the same time, hiring gaps increase with organizational scale, with extra-large schools reporting unfilled administrative roles at rates nearly three times higher than small schools, suggesting that complexity and leadership capacity intensify staffing challenges as schools grow¹.

The pulse data also complicate prevailing narratives about talent shortages. Across most school sizes and settings, schools report adequate to strong applicant pools, particularly in urban and suburban contexts. This pattern suggests that the staffing challenge facing independent schools is not

primarily about access to candidates, but about sustaining engagement, commitment, and alignment once educators are hired.

While pulse surveys capture what school leaders are experiencing, this study was designed to explore why those patterns persist by examining the lived experiences of educators themselves. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how independent school educators experience motivation, engagement, and meaning in their work and how those experiences shape retention, well-being, and workplace culture over time.

By centering the voice of the educator, this research reframes the employee value proposition not as a static set of benefits, but as a dynamic, relational experience shaped by workload sustainability, leadership practices, social connection, professional growth, and alignment with mission.



Research Methodology

To deepen insight into the human factors underlying pulse trends, SAIS conducted a cross-sectional motivation and engagement survey administered to independent school educators across the association.

The survey was intentionally designed to investigate the following guiding research question:

What factors most influence independent school educators' motivation, engagement, and sense of purpose—and how do they impact retention, well-being, and workplace culture?

This research question served as the organizing framework for survey design and analysis. Rather than focusing narrowly on intent to leave, the methodology emphasized identifying leading indicators of engagement and withdrawal, recognizing that retention outcomes are often the cumulative result of daily experiences related to role expectations, leadership support, connection, and meaning.

Survey items were structured to examine

dimensions closely aligned with observed pulse patterns, including

- educators' sense of connection and belonging within their school community;
- the clarity, intensity, and sustainability of workload and role expectations;
- perceptions of leadership support, trust, and recognition;
- alignment between personal values, professional purpose, and institutional mission;
- early signals associated with fatigue, disengagement, or reduced commitment.

Additionally, the survey was grounded in the job embeddedness theory, which emphasizes the social, organizational, and contextual forces that anchor individuals to their work and community². This theoretical lens is particularly relevant given pulse findings showing relatively strong applicant pools alongside persistent attrition, suggesting that retention is shaped less by entry conditions than by ongoing suitability, connection, and support.

2. Mitchell T. R., Holtom B. C., Lee T. W., Sablinski C. J., Erez M. (2001). Why people stay: using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Acad. Manag. J.* 44, 1102–1121

Participation

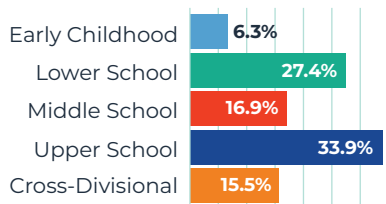
Across 15 states and 4 countries, data were collected between September - October 2025, allowing SAIS educators across diverse school contexts to participate.

A total of 1,558 SAIS independent school educators participated in the survey, providing a robust dataset for examining the motivation, engagement, and purpose across varied contexts. Respondents represented schools in 12 states and Mexico, reflecting the geographic breadth of the SAIS membership.

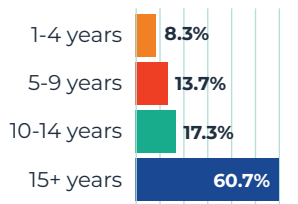
Participants Demographics:

- early childhood, lower, middle, and upper school divisions, as well as cross-divisional roles
- all career stages, with representation from early-career educators through those with more than 15 years of experience
- schools ranging from fewer than 100 students to more than 1,200 students
- urban, suburban, and rural settings

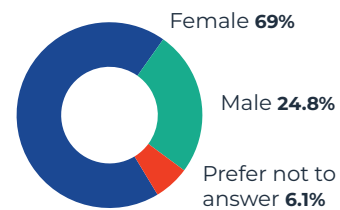
Division



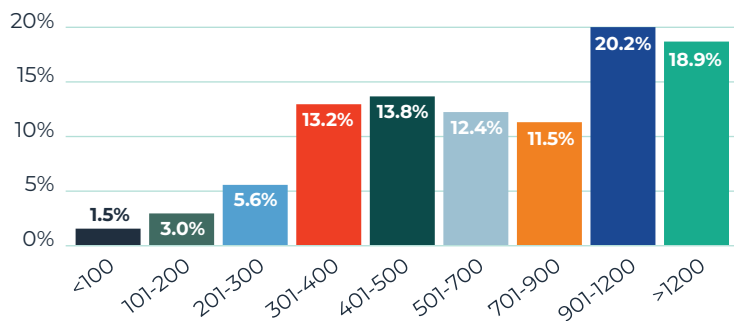
Tenure



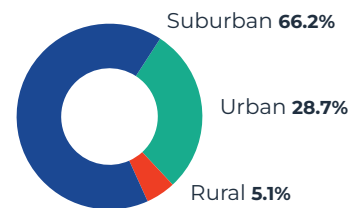
Gender



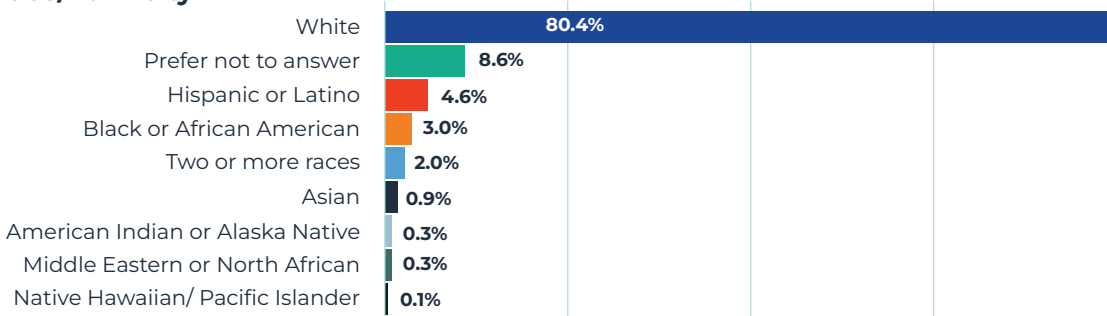
School Size



Setting



Race/Ethnicity



Instrument

The survey included 36 Likert scale and open-ended questions with six demographic sorting variables, generating 499 open-ended comments, allowing for both quantitative analysis and qualitative insight. This combination enables the study to surface not only broad patterns, but also contextual nuance, which is particularly important given pulse findings that staffing dynamics vary meaningfully by school size and setting.



Together, this participant profile provides a strong foundation for examining how the employee value proposition is currently experienced across SAIS independent schools and where misalignments between organizational intent and educator experience may be contributing to persistent staffing challenges.

Participant & Technology Disclosure

Participant Confidentiality

This study was conducted with strict adherence to participant anonymity and confidentiality. All survey responses were collected anonymously, and qualitative comments were de-identified prior to analysis. No personally identifiable information was included in data processing, analysis, or reporting.

Use of AI-Assisted Research Tools

In the analysis and presentation of this research, large language models (LLMs), including ChatGPT (OpenAI) and Claude (Anthropic), were used as analytical support tools under direct human supervision. These technologies assisted with

- Thematic coding and pattern identification in qualitative data.
- Synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings.

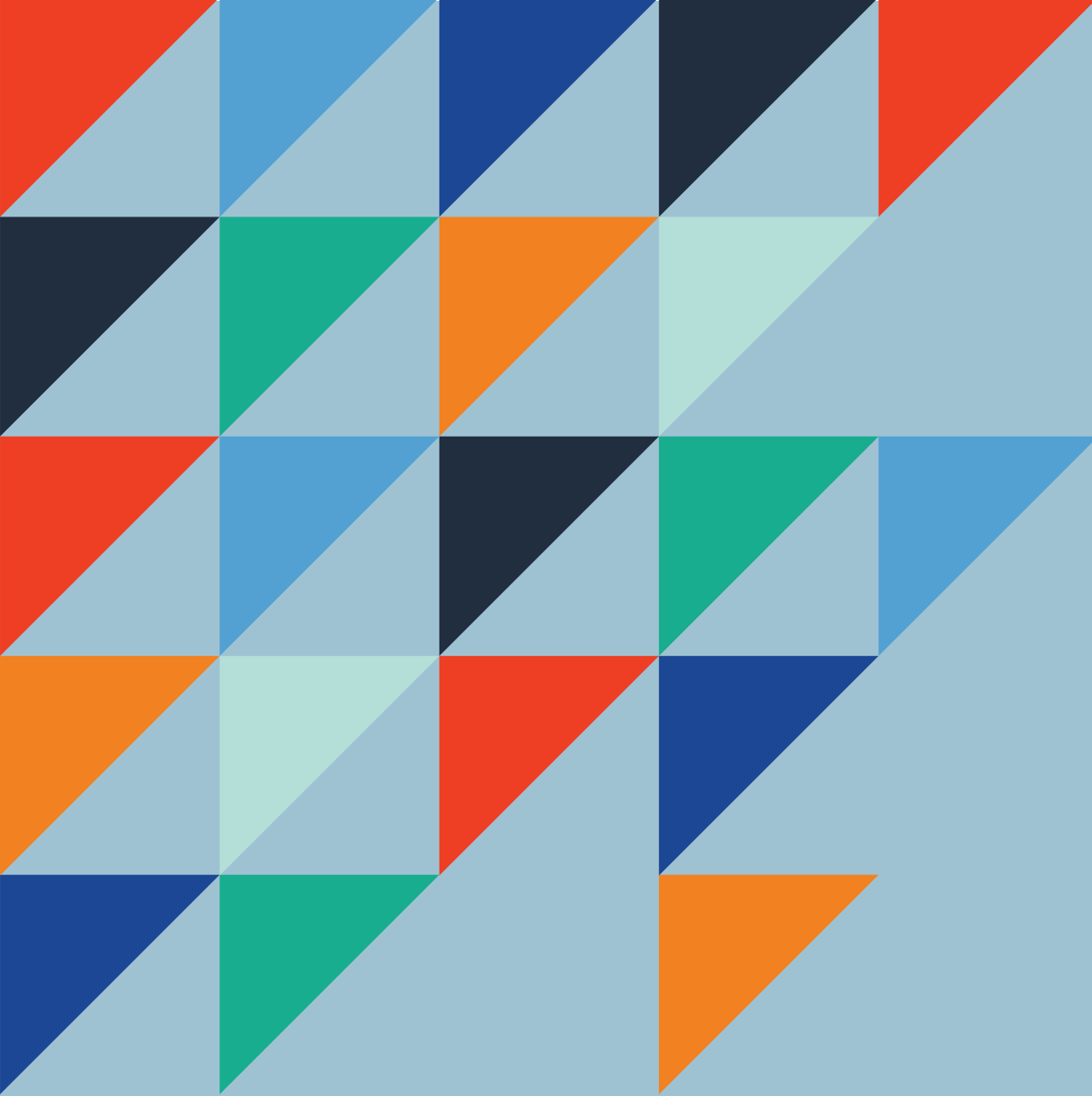
Human Oversight and Professional Judgment

All uses of AI-assisted tools were conducted under continuous human oversight and professional judgment. Research design, interpretation of findings, strategic recommendations, and all substantive conclusions were determined by the research team. Every output generated by AI tools was critically reviewed, validated against source data, and revised as necessary to ensure accuracy, contextual appropriateness, and alignment with research objectives.

Data Security

No participant data containing personally identifiable information was submitted to any external AI platform. Only aggregated, anonymized data and de-identified qualitative excerpts were processed through these tools. All analysis adhered to ethical research standards and institutional data protection protocols.





Key Findings



Key Findings Overview

SAIS educators bring a profound sense of purpose and commitment to their work—grounded in values alignment, community belonging, and meaningful impact. Many describe their role not simply as a job, but as a calling. This identity fuels high levels of engagement, discretionary effort, and willingness to go above and beyond for students, colleagues, and families. Educators overwhelmingly report that their roles align with their strengths, skills, and passions, and they value the autonomy and trust that define the independent school environment.

At the same time, this story of foundational strength is paired with a set of increasingly visible pressures. While autonomy is deeply valued, it becomes fragile when not matched with adequate support and enablement. A significant portion of SAIS educators report unmanageable workloads, limited collaboration across the school system, and concerns about compensation competitiveness relative to similar roles in other schools. These environmental stressors directly erode engagement, placing strain on an otherwise highly motivated workforce.

Leadership plays a central role in this dynamic. SAIS educators consistently describe their leaders using affirming language—human, caring, supportive, inspiring—indicating that leadership

presence and intent are both felt and appreciated. Yet the data also reveal high expectations and areas of misalignment. Many educators remain neutral or uncertain that leadership decisions consistently reflect integrity, transparency, and alignment with the school's mission, limiting their willingness to fully advocate for the organization.

The most immediate disconnect appears at the supervisory level, where day-to-day experience most directly shapes engagement. Nearly half of SAIS educators report that their efforts are not sufficiently recognized or rewarded. Many do not receive meaningful feedback on their performance, and a substantial number feel their ideas are not taken into account. These gaps weaken the connective tissue between purpose and practice, undermining trust, motivation, and long-term sustainability.

Taken together, the findings present a clear mandate: SAIS schools are rich in mission-driven talent, but sustaining this strength requires intentional investment in workload sustainability, supervisory capacity, and organizational alignment. The challenge is not attracting educators who care deeply, but ensuring that the systems, leadership practices, and support structures are strong enough to honor and sustain that commitment over time.

01

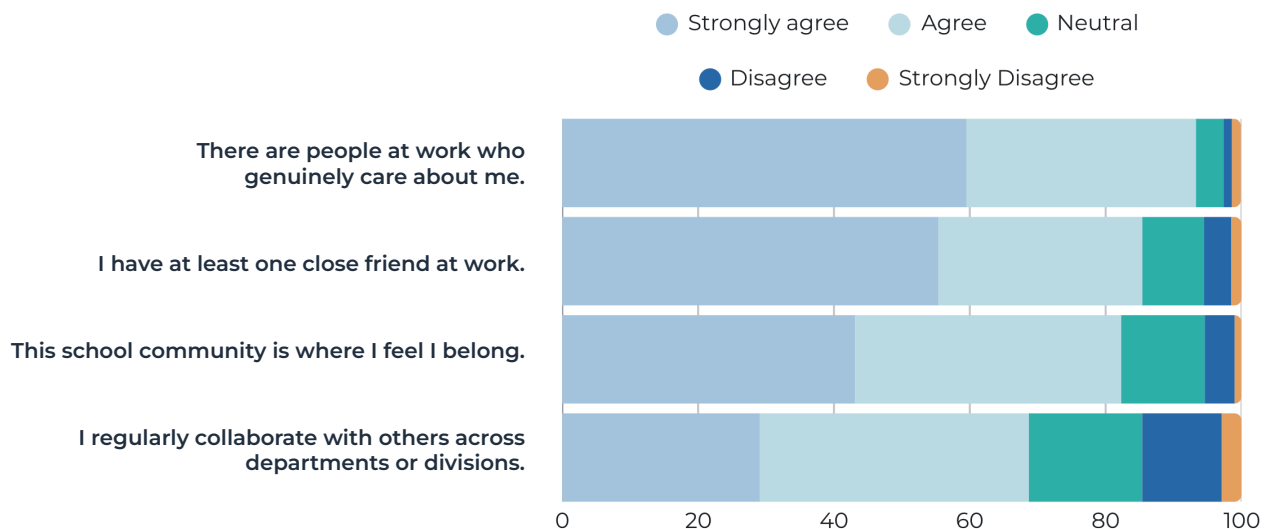
Interpersonal Connections and Relationships

The relational bonds within independent schools are notably strong. Survey results show that educators are able to form genuine friendships and experience a meaningful sense of belonging. When individuals feel known, valued, and connected, the decision to leave the community carries greater weight.

At the same time, these connections appear to be concentrated primarily within departments or divisions. Educators report frequent collaboration with their immediate teams but less interaction across the broader school, pointing to untapped opportunities to strengthen relationships that extend across the entire organization.

- Caring Workplace Culture:** An overwhelming 93.3% of faculty agree (33.8% agree, 59.5% strongly agree) that people at work genuinely care about them, with only 2.5% disagreeing. This represents the highest positive response in the entire survey and indicates exceptionally strong relationships.

- Close Friendships:** 85.4% of respondents report having at least one close friend at work (30.0% agree, 55.4% strongly agree), while 5.5% disagree. Close workplace friendships predict lower turnover by creating social costs to departure and emotional support networks that enhance daily experience.
- Sense of Belonging:** 82.3% of faculty feel the school community is a place where they belong (39.2% agree, 43.1% strongly agree), with 5.4% disagreeing. Fostering a stronger sense of belonging increases commitment to the organization over time.
- Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** While still positive, cross-departmental collaboration shows more variability—68.7% agree they regularly collaborate across divisions (39.6% agree, 29.1% strongly agree), with 14.6% disagreeing and 16.7% neutral. Results suggest that while within teams bonds are strong, broader institutional networks may be less developed in some contexts.



Qualitative Reflections

Strong Community

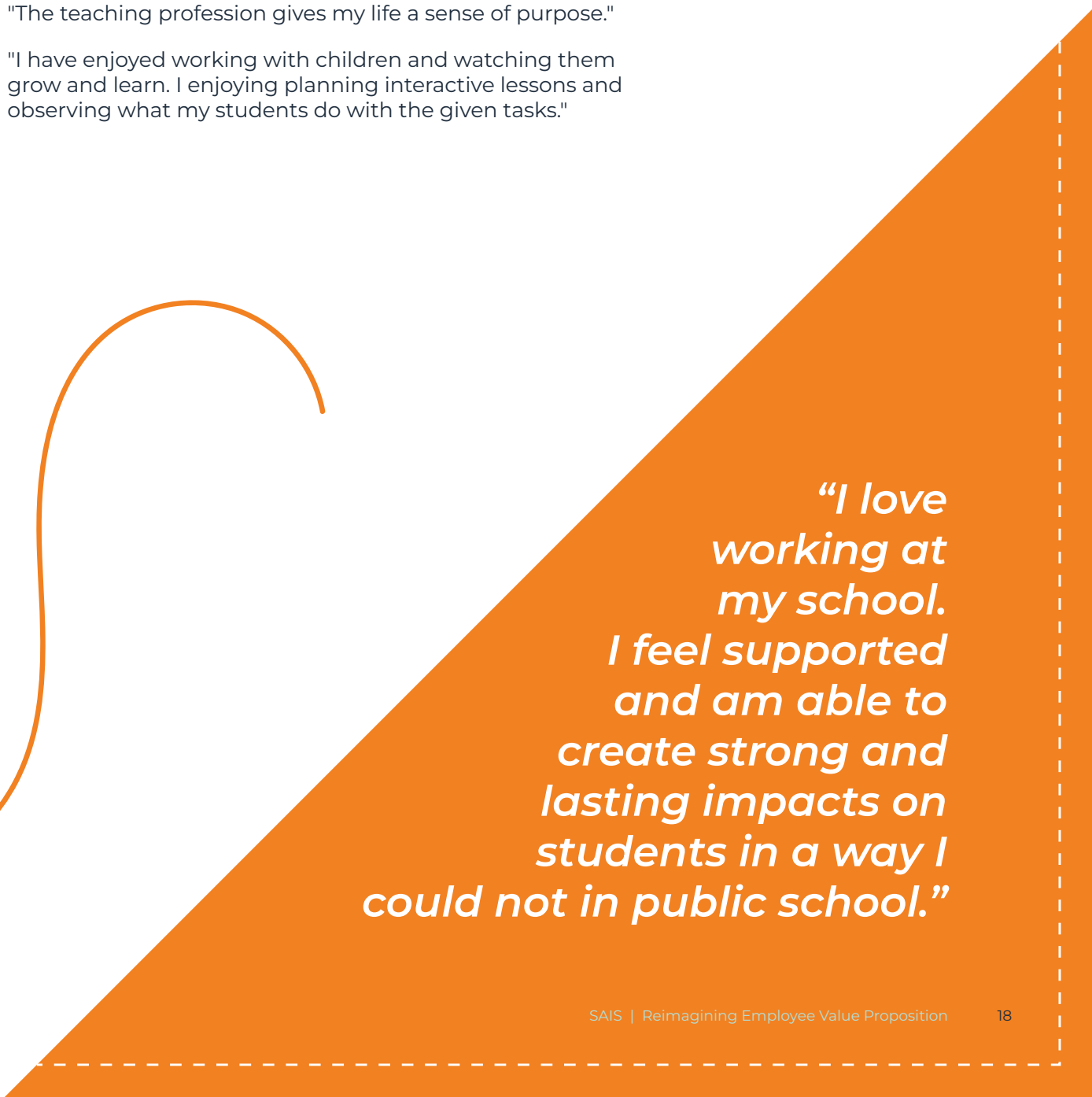

- "[The school] has reinvigorated my passion as an educator with their commitment to me as a human being and an educator."
- "I am at the end of my career and will always wish I had been paid well. However, I know I have benefitted others in ways that no other career can. And that makes me smile!"
- "I love working at my school. I feel supported and am able to create strong and lasting impacts on students in a way I could not in public school. I am happy every day that I come to work!"
- "I remember telling myself in college that I would never teach at a private school, and here I am loving every single minute of it. I can't see myself teaching anywhere else. It truly is a family and one of the most fulfilling and joyful parts of my life."
- "[The school] is truly an amazing place to work! I feel supported as a professional and as an individual."

Joy of Teaching

- "24 years and I still love walking into my classroom in the morning."
- "I genuinely enjoy coming to work."
- "I love teaching! [The school] is a wonderful place to work!"
- "Being an educator is the most amazing job. I am blessed every day to learn and grow with my students. The thing that would draw me away from being an educator is compensation."
- "I love shaping young minds."
- "First and foremost I consider that my primary job is instilling confidence and a desire [to learn within] my students."
- "I love teaching! I've had a great career in education, and I have loved every minute in the classroom and being with children."

Student Relationships

- "I really enjoy developing relationships with students by helping them to learn new content that will help prepare them to be independent and successful as they progress through education."
- "I enjoy helping create kind humans during middle school and feel accomplished when I make an impact on students. I like staying active in my role as an educator and enjoy watching students mature and grow and succeed."
- "Working with young people has been the most rewarding part of my vocation. [The school] is home."
- "The teaching profession gives my life a sense of purpose."
- "I have enjoyed working with children and watching them grow and learn. I enjoying planning interactive lessons and observing what my students do with the given tasks."



"I love working at my school. I feel supported and am able to create strong and lasting impacts on students in a way I could not in public school."

02

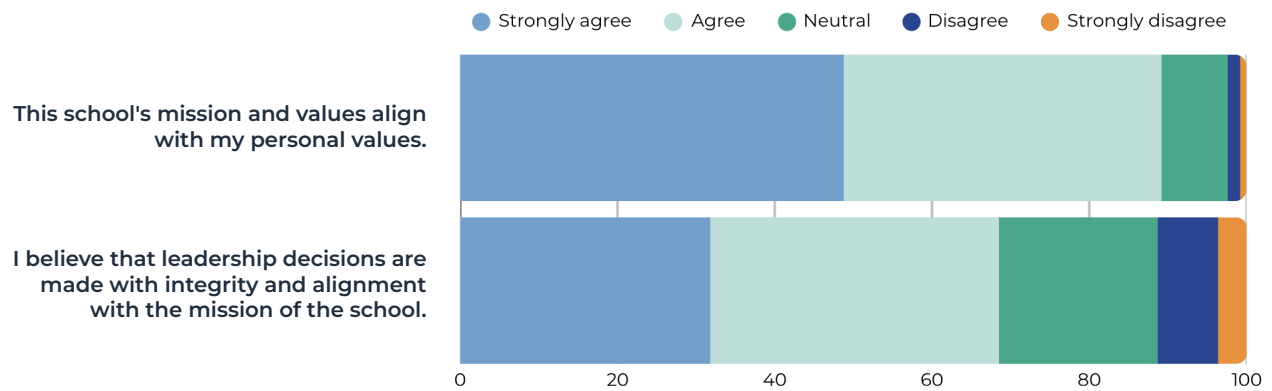
Organizational Suitability and Job Alignment

Educators participating in the study report a strong alignment with their school's mission and describe their daily work as both meaningful and well matched to their skills. However, the absence of clearly articulated

career pathways introduces a structural risk that may weaken long-term retention, particularly for ambitious educators in the middle stages of their careers.

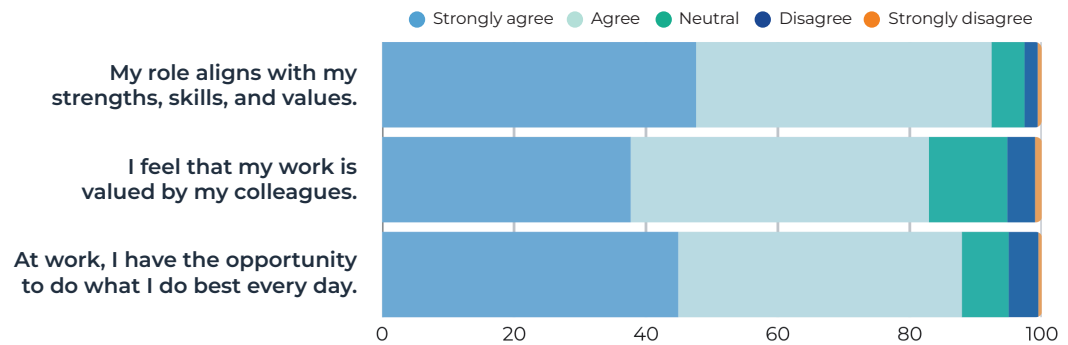
Mission and Values Alignment

- **Mission-Values Fit:** 89.2% of faculty report that their school's mission and values align with their personal values (40.4% agree, 48.8% strongly agree), with only 2.4% disagreeing.
- **Leadership Integrity:** 68.5% believe leadership decisions are made with integrity and mission alignment (36.7% agree, 31.8% strongly agree), though 20.2% are neutral and 11.4% disagree. This gap between personal values fit and leadership trust suggests some faculty experience dissonance between message and actual experience.



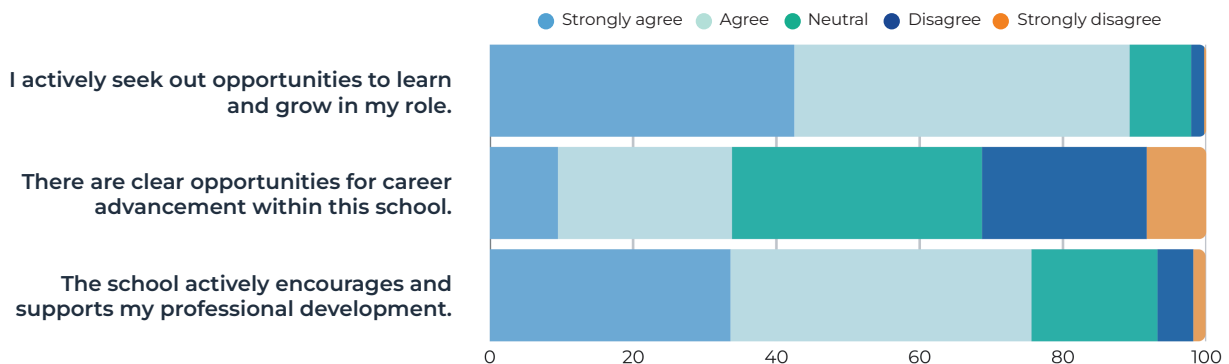
Role Suitability

- **Strengths, Skills, and Values Alignment:** 92.4% agree their role aligns with their strengths, skills, and values (44.8% agree, 47.6% strongly agree). The results indicate effective role design and placement by school leadership.
- **Valued by Colleagues:** 82.9% feel their work is valued by colleagues (45.2% agree, 37.7% strongly agree), with 11.9% neutral and 5.3% disagreeing. Perceived value reinforces fit by confirming one's contributions matter to the community.
- **Opportunity to Excel Daily:** 87.9% report having the opportunity to do what they do best every day (43.0% agree, 44.9% strongly agree).



Growth and Development

- **Growth Mindset:** 89.3% actively seek opportunities to learn and grow in their role (46.8% agree, 42.5% strongly agree), indicating a growth-oriented faculty culture that values continuous improvement.
- **Career Advancement Opportunities:** Only 9.5% strongly agree and 24.3% agree (total 33.8%) that clear career advancement opportunities exist, with 34.9% neutral and 31.3% disagreeing. This represents a critical gap. While faculty value growth, many do not perceive viable pathways within their current organization.
- **Professional Development Support:** 33.6% strongly agree and 42.0% agree (total 75.6%) that their school actively encourages and supports professional development, with 17.6% neutral and 6.7% disagreeing. The gap between faculty's growth orientation (89.3%) and perceived institutional support for development (75.6%) and advancement (33.8%) signals an implementation challenge.



Qualitative Reflections

Mission Alignment

- "I finally found a place that is truly concerned with the whole person. Spiritual development is just as important as physical and educational development for students and instructors. I love the balance."
- "[The school] quintessentially is where my values and beliefs as an educator match."
- "The values of the school align with my educational values."
- "I would not remain long at my current school if my values did not align with its mission; if my colleagues were not supportive, collaborative, and talented; or if I felt I was not allowed to educate students as well as possible."
- "Having several close friends and family in education, I know that [the school] is a fine place to work. We are given the opportunity to succeed and hone our craft with autonomy. I believe in our mission and how we resist the cultural changes that tend to lead to less accountability and lowering standards."

"I finally found a place that is truly concerned with the whole person... I love the balance."

Professional Respect

- "I have many years of experience in public education. I find this culture to be very supportive and healthy. Teachers are allowed to use professional judgment as it relates to curriculum and content. Admin is very supportive of teachers, and communication of teacher expectations is very clear from admin."
- "I truly love being a teacher at [the school]. However, lately I've felt that the pop-in visits from administration haven't been as helpful as I hoped. These visits often happen in the middle of instruction without context about what part of the lesson students are in. Afterwards, we receive emails with observations, vocabulary heard, and suggestions—even though the first part of the lesson, where those elements may have already been addressed, wasn't seen. This has been disheartening and has caused some anxiety, as the random timing of the visits makes it unclear what feedback will follow."
- "[The school] values the educator as an individual who can make decisions both for their students, but also as a team that best affects the outcomes of the student experience."
- "[The school] hired me for my professional opinion, allows me to use it, values it, and actively encourages me to foster its growth."

03

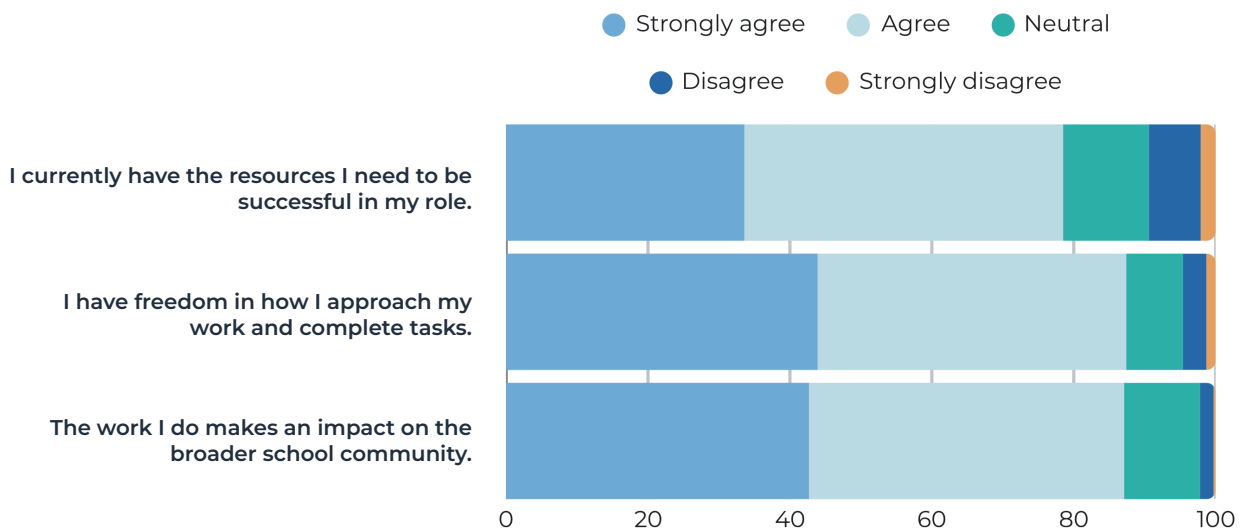
Perceived Cost of Leaving

Educators remain in their schools in part because leaving would require relinquishing significant relational capital, professional autonomy, and opportunities for meaningful impact. However, this sense of community is not reinforced by competitive compensation or robust recognition systems and is further

strained by persistent workload pressures. As workload demands intensify and external opportunities become more accessible, this approach appears increasingly fragile. Among all factors examined, the intersection of compensation and workload emerges as the study’s most significant vulnerability.

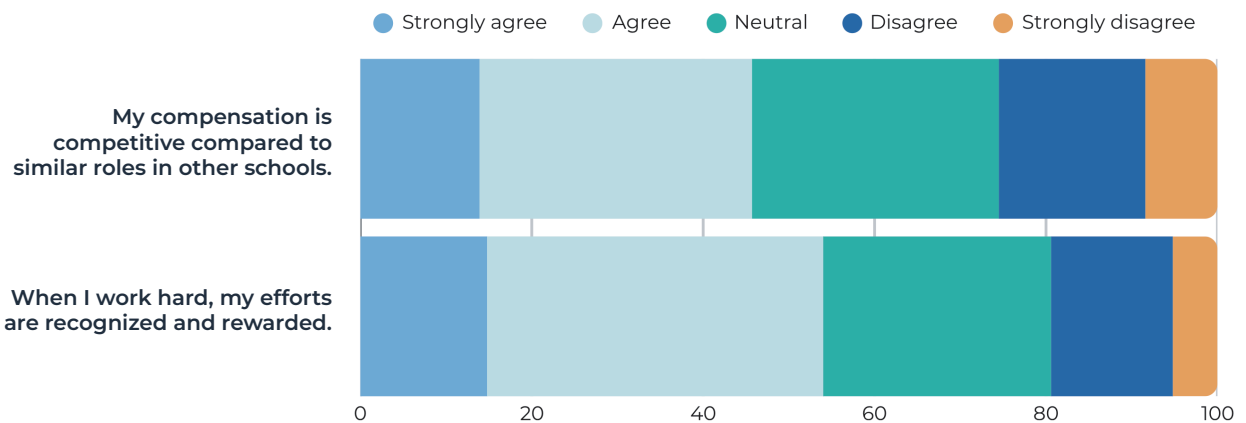
Professional Sacrifice

- **Resources for Success:** 78.5% agree they currently have the resources needed to be successful (44.9% agree, 33.6% strongly agree). This suggests faculty would sacrifice working conditions that enable effectiveness.
- **Autonomy and Professional Control:** 87.4% report having freedom in how they approach work (43.5% agree, 43.9% strongly agree). Departure would mean forfeiting substantial professional autonomy, a highly valued aspect of independent school teaching.
- **Meaningful Impact:** 87.1% feel their work makes an impact on the broader school community (44.4% agree, 42.7% strongly agree). Educators would sacrifice other things like pay or advancement if the sense of their work matters and contributes to a mission they value.



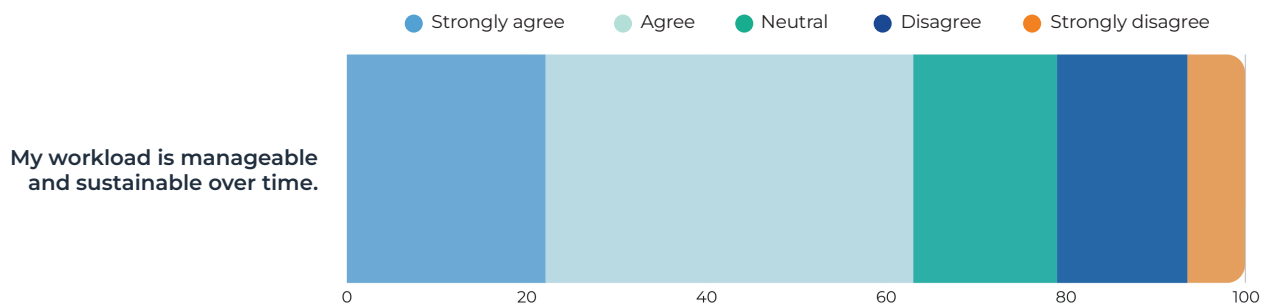
Compensation and Recognition

- Competitive Compensation:** Only 45.7% agree their compensation is competitive (31.8% agree, 13.9% strongly agree), with 28.8% neutral and 25.5% disagreeing. This represents the weakest area in terms of sacrifice where educators perceive limited material cost to departure because compensation is not competitive.
- Recognition and Rewards:** Similarly, only 54.0% agree their hard work is recognized and rewarded (39.2% agree, 14.8% strongly agree), with 26.6% neutral and 19.4% disagreeing. The substantial neutral and disagree proportions suggest recognition systems are inconsistent.



Workload Sacrifice

- Sustainable Workload:** Only 63% agree their workload is manageable and sustainable (40.9% agree, 22.1% strongly agree), with 20.9% disagreeing, the highest disagreement rate for any positively-framed item. This finding is particularly concerning because unsustainable workload does not function as a reason to stay but rather as a reason to leave.



Critical Data Point: 60.7% of the sample has 15+ years of experience. This concentration of veteran educators creates a retention cliff risk. If these educators exit due to compensation or workload, schools lose their most experienced talent simultaneously.

Qualitative Reflections

Autonomy and Professional Trust

- "As someone that transitioned to teaching after a long career in the private sector, I can not think of a more ideal place to do so. I am given full autonomy to design courses around my area of expertise and to teach and manage my classroom as I see fit."
- "I appreciate that I have the independence to decide on and implement curriculum."
- "I love working at a school where I have the autonomy to teach my subjects in the best ways I can based on what my students need. I feel respected, and it makes me want to be even better!"
- "I truly feel like I have found a place where decisions are made for what's best for the students, and adults are treated with respect and given the autonomy to practice their craft."
- "More than any school where I've worked in the past, I know that my voice matters at my current school. Whether I have concerns or ideas, people listen to me, take me seriously, and give me the autonomy to make changes."

Impact and Purpose

- "Teaching here has reminded me daily why I chose education and coaching – to make a meaningful difference in the lives of young people. I enjoy helping students discover their strengths, overcome challenges, and build skills that will benefit them long after high school."
- "Being an educator has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. This was a career change for me, so I was older when I began, which can be intimidating. However, every school I have worked at has been so welcoming and encouraging. Specifically being a part of [the school] has enhanced my teacher skills and made me a better educator."
- "I knew at an early age what I wanted to be when I grew up! Teaching is the most rewarding job I can think of, esp teaching Pre K 3!!!! They come in crawling as little caterpillars.... some still in their eggs. The gift is getting to watch them spread their wings and fly as beautiful butterflies to K4!"
- "I know it's what God called me to do."



Inadequate Pay

- "I can't afford to be an educator much longer."
- "Being compensated fairly is an issue. Currently I earn \$21,000 less than I would at a public school with my years of experience and advanced degrees."
- "I do not make enough money to support my family, could never live on my own God forbid something happened to my husband. I wish I did not have to live paycheck to paycheck and being able to go on vacation would be amazing..."
- "I am passionate and love my job, but my pay does not cover living expenses. Teacher pay has not kept up with inflation."
- "Inflation is so hard. Health care is so expensive. It's just hard to live a middle class lifestyle on a teacher salary now."
- "I will not be in education long term because of the salary constraints. As a single adult, it's very difficult to cover all expenses on my own with an independent school teacher's salary."

Pay Scale Issues

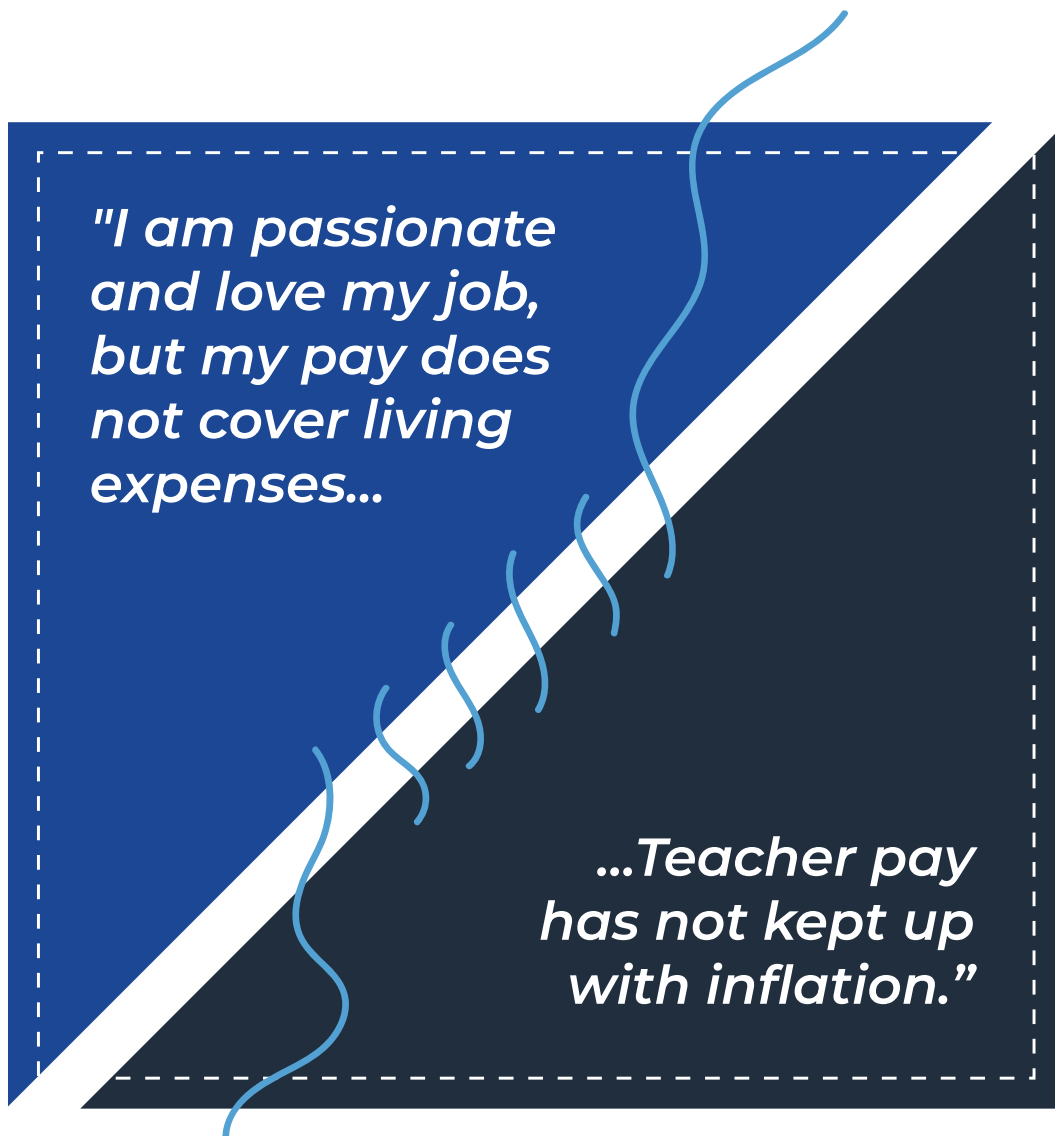
- "I really want to see a pay-scale instituted within the school. Years of service and education should be accounted for and a reliable yearly increase. The 1% this year and 4% the next makes it difficult for any long-term planning, especially when it comes to retirement investments and debt."
- "The role continues to shift and change, with more responsibility being placed on teachers. Unfortunately, very little has been removed from my list of responsibilities leading to frustration, resentment, and the overwhelming effects of burnout. If I was better compensated, I would feel greater motivation to work harder. I am at the point where I am at least glancing at other employment options that match my skillset because the pay disparity is so great."
- "I feel like my colleagues and I are undercompensated for the work that we do. Our raises do not even match the inflation rate. In real terms, I am losing money year over year."

Cost of Living Concerns

- "Insurance cost is proving impossible for my family."
- "I, financially, will probably only work here as long as I have children who attend and receive a faculty discount. After my children have graduated, it financially doesn't make sense to stay, as I make 20% under what I could make in a public system or another independent school."

Public vs. Private School Compensation

- "I love the school where I teach. However, I would make \$25K more a year at a public school in the area. We need better pay structure."
- "Being paid 30% less than my public school peers is disheartening. Our workload grows each year, and it seems that anyone and everyone is accepted into our school, creating more emotional demands on us as empathetic people."
- "Compensation is way out of alignment and needs to be addressed as to the classrooms for arts and lower school."
- "I shared my experience between public and private schools. When leaving the public sector, many make the conscious decision to earn less for the benefit of less work stress. Recently, the private sector has become more increasingly similar to public schools with class ratios, schedules, and learning challenges of students. It no longer makes sense to earn less for the same stressors."



Excessive Hours and Burnout

- "In my multi-decade career, I have never felt like I have been able to keep it to a 40 hour work week. Never have I had work-life balance. My passions become what I do at work."
- "I am exhausted. Too many students, not enough hours in the day. Not enough pay to make the free time worth it."
- "Being a teacher is exhausting and not just a job to have a job. You have to be passionate about what you do or this career choice will break you. The compensation is still laughable, and we need to be paid more, significantly more."
- "My overwhelming experience is that I am expected to do more than can be done within a 40 hour work week. All of my positions have required unpaid after hours work. This is disappointing."
- "We are asked to do more and more and not given ample time to do so. I bring home work almost every night. In recent years, I feel burned out every year by October. I used to have this feeling in February."

Time Management Challenges

- "I do not have enough time to adequately complete all the side tasks I am asked to complete and prepare excellent classes for every class I am assigned."
- "My main complaint is the hours. It is very hard to do my second job (being a mom) when my work hours are 7:45-4."
- "The workload and expectations of teachers is always increasing. More and more responsibilities are added but nothing is ever taken away. Sometimes I feel very overwhelmed and that I am not doing my job as well as I can because I am always exhausted and feel like I just can't catch up."
- "I do feel that the workload and expectations of teachers is always increasing. More and more responsibilities are added but nothing is ever taken away."
- "The number of different classes I teach is overwhelming. I have 5 different classes and the one class that I teach twice is separated by 6 periods, so I can't keep out lab supplies. It requires a lot of time to plan and prep for 5 lessons daily."

Work Creep and Boundaries

- "Workload seems to be increasing everywhere. We don't have the resources or bandwidth to provide accommodations for the number of students we now have enrolled with accommodations. We also spend more and more time communicating with parents who are regularly reaching out and want to meet, talk on the phone, or email regularly."
- "The overload of courses I teach this year is unsustainable. There are too many students in several of my classes. I have to take a lot of my work home. My admin has shifted many things to support me, but, ultimately, the recent increase in student population is a strain, and I will not be able to sustain. Having less planning time and more courses and students limits my ability to contribute to the school community as a whole, the way that I was able to last year."

Non-Teaching Duties

- "I love my job and my students. I am happy to be here, but I often feel overwhelmed by the amount of tasks required each day that don't directly relate to my students or my subject area. I feel that the number of extra hours for duties, weekly meetings, after-school activities, and other responsibilities is excessive and keeps me from devoting myself fully to creating lesson plans and activities that would benefit my students the most."
- "Would be great if we didn't have so many extra duties outside of teaching. Gate duty, lunch duty, detention duty. It is a lot for teachers who have family with young kids. Consider a paid approach for teachers who want extra money. I understand there may be financial hardships to this, but maybe there's a win-win somewhere."
- "The number of times I cover classes each semester is becoming an issue; as class size increases, it is difficult to do my own work when covering and monitoring 15 or more students."

Sustainability Concerns

- "I think I am at a wonderful school and would probably not be teaching anymore if I was not where I am. I do feel like teaching as a whole profession is becoming unsustainable. You can't provide for a family, and there is so much mental workload that it is hard to balance family life."
- "The longer I stay in education, the more exhausting it becomes. I feel called to teach, but the students are more needy and less focused."
- "Being a teacher is getting harder, less rewarding, and more emotionally draining. People don't want to do this anymore. Things need to change."
- "The workload and non-teaching expectations are soul destroying. I am actively searching for another job and will leave mid-year if I find one."

"Being a teacher is getting harder, less rewarding, and more emotionally draining. People don't want to do this anymore. Things need to change."

04

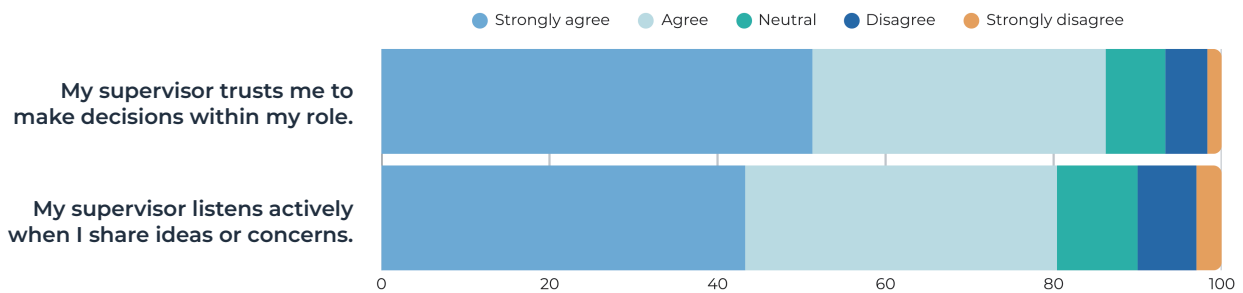
Leadership and Management Quality

Leadership quality presents a mixed profile. Supervisory relationships are generally strong, marked by high levels of trust and professional autonomy. However, key leadership practices, particularly regular, actionable feedback, show meaningful gaps that likely contribute to faculty frustration and limit professional growth. The contrast between high reported trust (86.2%) and relatively low feedback frequency (54.2%) points to a leadership culture that empowers educators but does not consistently support their development.

This approach may work well for experienced, self-directed faculty, but it risks leaving newer or struggling teachers without the guidance they need to succeed. The strong emphasis on integrity and trust, combined with a substantial share of neutral responses on leadership-related items, suggests uneven leadership practice across schools and highlights an opportunity to strengthen consistency and developmental support.

Supervisor Trust and Competence

- **Supervisor Trust:** 86.2% agree their supervisor trusts them to make decisions within their role (34.9% agree, 51.3% strongly agree), with only 6.7% disagreeing. This high autonomy-trust indicates effective supervisory relationships that empower rather than micromanage.
- **Supervisor Listening:** 80.4% agree their supervisor listens actively when they share ideas or concerns (37.1% agree, 43.3% strongly agree), with 9.6% neutral and 10.0% disagreeing.



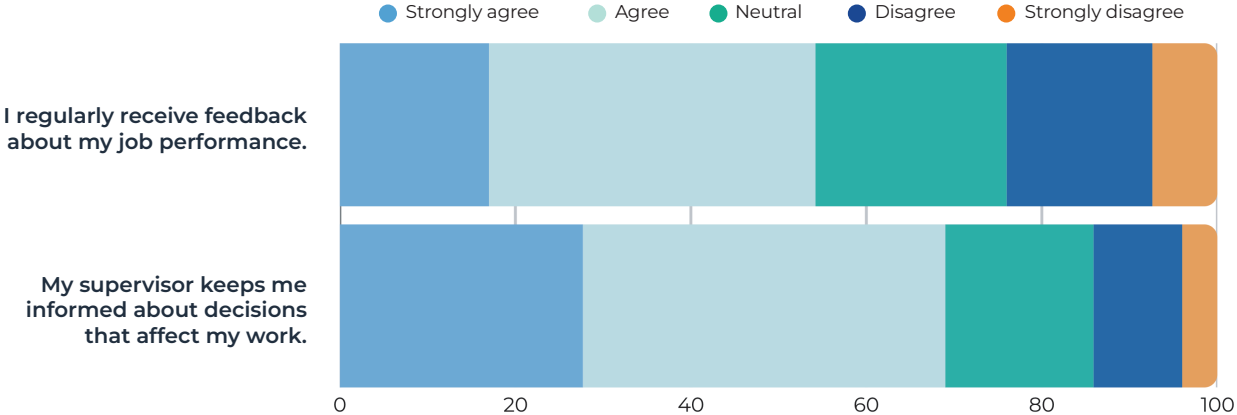
Essential Leadership Attributes

Participants were asked to identify the most essential leadership attributes for supporting and inspiring teams. The results reveal clear priorities:

1. Builds trust through integrity: 66.6%
2. Communicates a clear and compelling purpose: 53.5%
3. Shows compassion and empathy: 48.1%
4. Models clarity and consistency: 47.9%
5. Recognizes and celebrates contributions: 41.6%

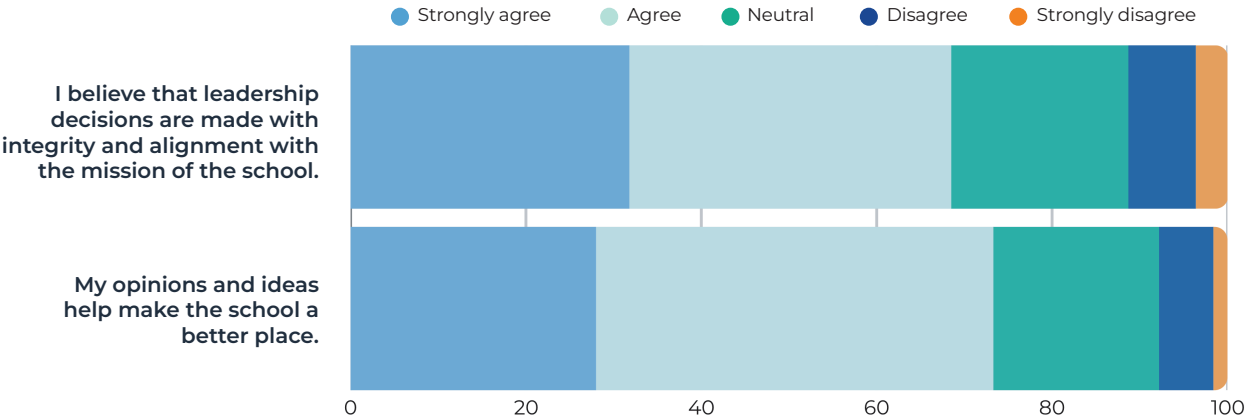
Feedback and Performance Management

- Regular Feedback:** Only 54.2% agree they regularly receive feedback about job performance (37.2% agree, 17.0% strongly agree), with 21.8% neutral and 24.0% disagreeing. This represents a significant gap—nearly half of faculty are not receiving consistent feedback.
- Informed About Decisions:** 69.0% agree their supervisor keeps them informed about decisions affecting their work (41.3% agree, 27.7% strongly agree), with 16.9% neutral and 14.1% disagreeing.



Organizational Leadership

- Leadership Integrity:** 68.5% believe leadership decisions are made with integrity and mission alignment (36.7% agree, 31.8% strongly agree), with 20.2% neutral and 11.4% disagreeing. The substantial neutral group suggests either limited visibility into leadership decisions or ambivalence about their quality.
- Input on School Decisions:** 73.3% agree their opinions and ideas help make the school a better place (45.3% agree, 28.0% strongly agree), with 18.9% neutral and 7.8% disagreeing.



Qualitative Reflections

Positive Leadership

- "Admin support, especially with difficult parents/students, is the absolute most important element of creating a working environment in which I am willing to stay."
- "A positive experience as an educator is primarily due to the support of the administration and the mindset of the students who appreciate learning."
- "Having the trust of my principal and confidence in my decisions is extremely important to me, and [she] expresses that through her actions, support, words, and faith in her teachers."
- "Our head of school is a great leader not a micromanager. Our school is like a family unit."
- "I have loved teaching at [the school]. I enjoy my work. I feel empowered that admin trust us."

Poor Leadership

- "I have a weak division head. He never follows through. He is a poor communicator, and he does not make any of his faculty feel valued. Very hard to work for a person like that. This is why I will not come back to teach next year."
- "Fundamentally, I'm frustrated and have been for years now. We have excellent faculty, and I truly enjoy time with my students. But the division leadership is unkind, difficult to work with, not interested in collaborating, and generally to be avoided. So every day is a dichotomy; I'm here to support my colleagues and students, but I'm anxious about any interactions with or mandates from division leadership."
- "My principal and assistant principal in lower school are not very understanding of personal life. One feels guilty when getting time off for a doctor's appointment."
- "The leadership of the school does not provide any positive feedback, nor do they seem invested in our happiness or mental health in the workplace. They rule through authority and obedience. The communication between the administration and faculty is extremely weak, though the administration sees their communication as effective."

Micromanagement

- "I am micromanaged and feel that my hard work is never acknowledged. I have so much to do all the time that I constantly have a feeling of being behind. What I earn for the amount of physical, mental, and emotional labor I put into this job is nothing short of an injustice. As a single [person], I can barely afford my living expenses, and that is not an exaggeration."
- "The last two years have been devastating. We have been micromanaged and, to some extent, belittled. We have been given extra work and extra expectations but with very little meaningful support and time to actually complete said extra expectations."
- "My dissatisfaction is strongly related to the person that is in the division supervisor. This person does not listen and does not appear to value our strengths in the role we are in. Clear communication is lacking."

Leadership Disconnect

- "Administrators in their ivory towers make unilateral decisions about policies that impact teachers and students without really understanding the consequences of those policies. I really feel every major admin person should have to teach a class so they live the experience of their faculty and own their decisions."
- "Adults ruin everything. Navigating bad hires and the amount of time leadership allows for the bad hires to remain in their roles have been my most significant obstacles in education."
- "The issues and negativity aren't caused by individuals or teams but by the board of directors and admin allowing the issues. The ability for one not to do your job efficiently and effectively just gives another person more work to do and at the end of the day, we all receive the same percentage increase in pay, so why strive to do better?"
- "Two huge negatives: 1. Upper leadership making decisions that are disconnected from and without the input of the people who actually deploy directives. These often hurt students in ways they don't see but might help the bottom line. 2. Upper leadership that doesn't want to do the dirty work of making hard calls with students and families that might make families or donors upset but are necessary for a healthy and safe school environment."

Feeling Valued

- "I am grateful every day for having such wonderful administration. Thanks to [our administrator], who leads with integrity, thoughtfulness, care, and concern for each individual child as well as the teachers in our division."
- "This is year #30 and year #20 at my school. I have loved our sense of community. I feel cared for and appreciated. I am treated professionally and with respect. Through family tragedy or illness, I have been 100% supported. Can't ask for a better place to be employed!"
- "I have loved working at my school for the past 18 years. I feel like I have grown professionally and personally in a way that has shaped me into a better educator and person. I appreciate all that this school has offered in these opportunities and that it is a beautiful place to work."
- "Support and encouragement from leadership has been a huge reason why I have stayed at this school. I am celebrated and championed in my success and challenged towards growth."

"Admin support...is the absolute most important element of creating a working environment in which I am willing to stay."

05

Professional Development and Growth Engagement

Independent school faculty demonstrate broad and sustained engagement in professional learning, reflecting a strong culture of self-directed growth. This commitment represents a significant organizational strength. However, the gap between faculty learning engagement and perceived institutional support indicates that many schools may be relying on individual initiative rather than intentionally reinforcing professional growth through protected time, visible encouragement, and dedicated financial investment.

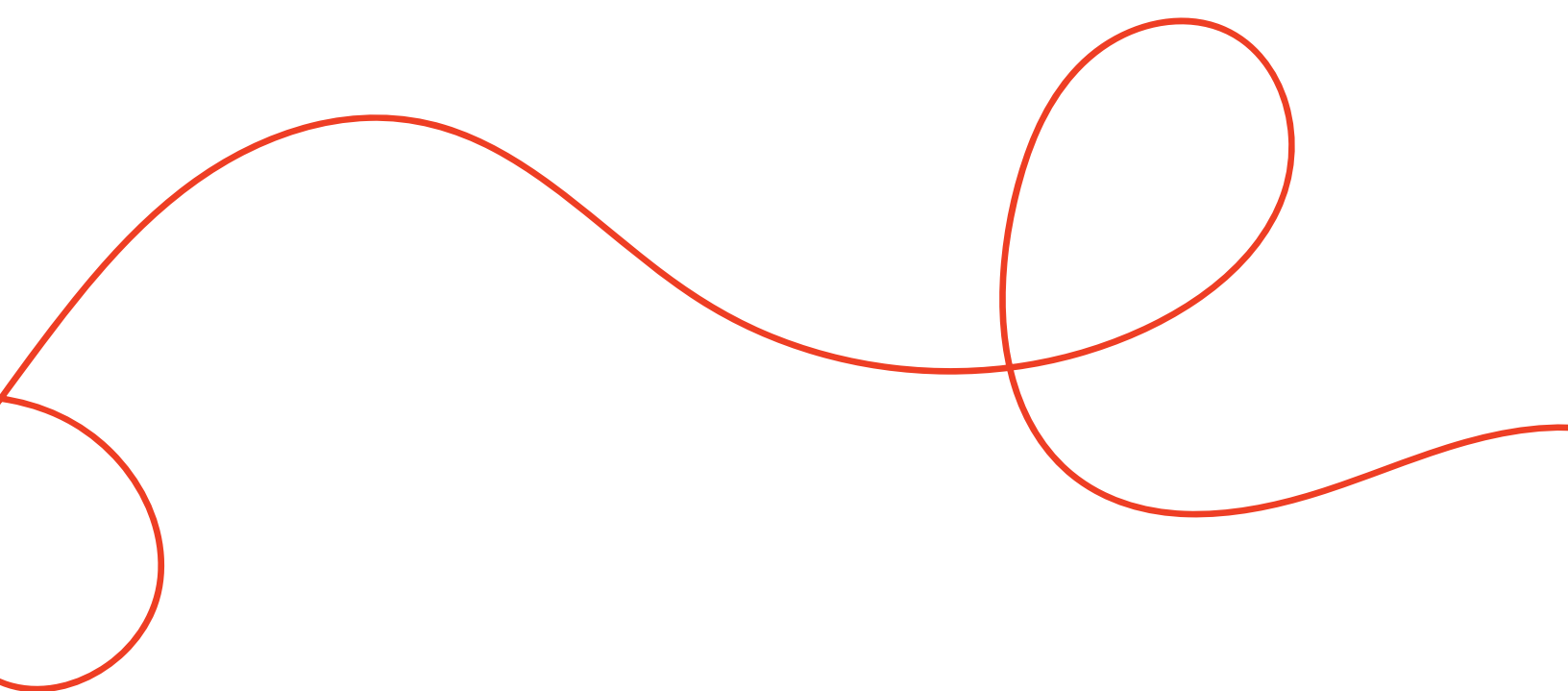
Participation patterns further illuminate this imbalance. While peer-based and informal learning are common, far fewer educators report access to formal mentorship (30.2%) or coaching (25.5%). At the same time, only 33.8% of faculty report seeing clear pathways for career advancement. Taken together, these findings suggest that ambitious educators are actively developing their skills without a clear understanding of how that growth connects to professional progression within their current school.

Learning Experiences in Past Year:

- Collaborated in a professional learning community: 56.5%
- Attended a professional conference: 49.6%
- Participated in school-wide or strategic initiatives: 41.5%
- Completed a course related to pedagogy, assessment, or subject expertise: 38.0%
- Participated in a curriculum development initiative: 33.3%
- Participated in formal mentorship as mentor or mentee: 30.2%
- Led or facilitated professional development for others: 28.9%
- Received coaching or instructional support: 25.5%
- Earned a certification related to my role: 15.5%
- Engaged in action research or practitioner inquiry: 8.2%
- Completed graduate coursework or an advanced degree: 5.8%
- None of the above: 5.6%

These patterns reveal several important findings:

- **High Overall Engagement:** 94.4% of faculty engaged in at least one learning experience during the past year, indicating a culture that values continuous professional growth. The average faculty member participated in 2-3 different activities.
- **Collaborative Learning Dominates:** Professional learning communities (56.5%) and conferences (49.6%) represent the most common forms of professional development, suggesting faculty value peer learning and external networking.
- **Formal Degree Completion Rare:** Only 5.8% completed graduate coursework or an advanced degree in the past year, likely reflecting the time and financial constraints of pursuing advanced degrees while teaching full-time.
- **Leadership Development Emerging:** Nearly 30% led professional development for others and 41.5% participated in school-wide strategic initiatives, suggesting a substantial cohort developing leadership capabilities.



Qualitative Reflections

Positive PD Experiences

- "I appreciate the professional development opportunities provided."
- "I am an educator who has always seen [myself] as a continuing learner, so having opportunities for professional development and specialized certifications is very appealing. I've been fortunate to be able to build my work and lessons based on observation and personal interests, making the process of teaching very engaging."
- "Through the years working at this school, I have grown as an educator thanks to the opportunities for professional development. Teaching different classes and learning about the various levels in the school have helped me better understand my students and support their learning more effectively."
- "So far, I have had many wonderful experiences that include parents' involvement in the classroom, student engagement leading to their success, and opportunities to enhance my teaching experience with professional developments to gain growth in my profession."

Lack of Support

- "I previously attended at least 1 conference a year. I enjoyed these opportunities and always shared what I learned with my team or division. I have shared conferences that I am interested in attending and have been told no several times so I have stopped sharing. I would like to continue to attend conferences to learn and grow my PLN but unsure of how to express this. I see the same people attending conferences now and it makes me wonder why they get to attend and others don't."
- "I have had substantial professional development, both provided by schools I worked at and independently, but I find many administrators only care about your level of degree. I believe my level of expertise is beyond someone who has received higher level degrees, but I don't get paid as well. That has been a big frustration."
- "The hours and extra requirements we have to complete outside of normal operation are exhausting! I have also asked several times to attend professional development conferences but was told the 'funds aren't there' to support me going."
- "No professional development that I can actually use in my classroom."



"The hours and extra requirements we have to complete outside of normal operation are exhausting!"

06

Retention Intentions and Commitment

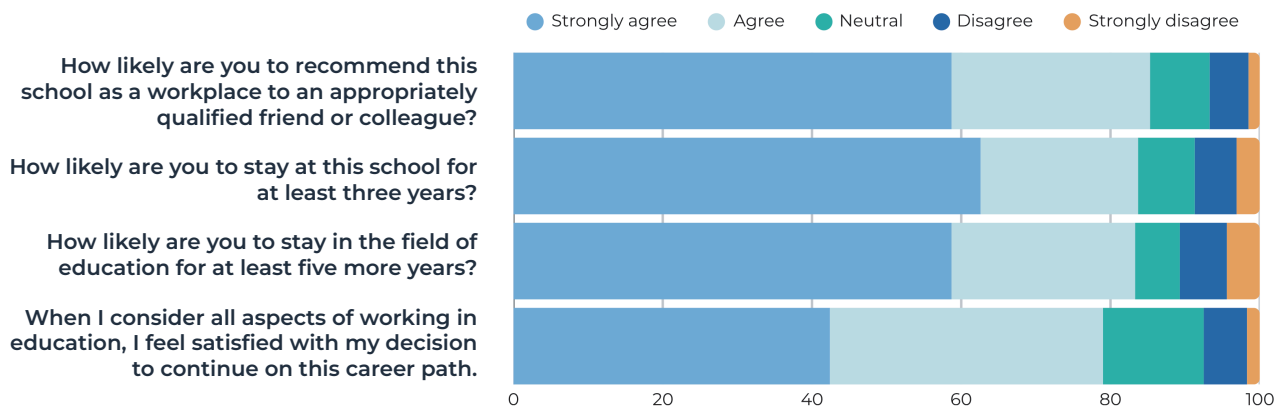
Retention indicators suggest that commitment is strongly shaped by relational ties, alignment with mission, and the perceived costs of leaving. At the same time, the findings reveal a critical vulnerability. Even faculty who feel deeply connected to their schools, find their work meaningful, and are strongly aligned with the mission show increased openness to departure when faced with unsustainable workloads and non-competitive compensation.

The results of the study indicate that connection and purpose provide meaningful protection against structural pressures. Notably, career satisfaction lags behind commitment to the institution, signaling that independent schools are competing not only with other schools, but with alternative career paths that offer greater balance and financial stability. The roughly 20% of faculty questioning their career choice represent an attrition impact that community, mission, and belonging alone cannot fully offset without sustained attention to workload and compensation.

- Likelihood to Recommend School:** An impressive 85.3% are likely to recommend their school as a workplace to an appropriately qualified colleague (26.6% somewhat likely, 58.7% extremely likely), with only 6.7% unlikely and 8.0% neutral.

This Net Promoter Score-style metric indicates strong organizational commitment that extends to advocacy.

- Intention to Stay at Current School:** 83.7% are likely to stay at their current school for at least three years (21.1% somewhat likely, 62.6% extremely likely), with 8.7% unlikely and 7.6% neutral. This three-year threshold is critical for independent schools given the investment in faculty development and the importance of continuity for student learning.
- Commitment to Education Profession:** 83.3% are likely to remain in the field of education for at least five more years (24.6% somewhat likely, 58.7% extremely likely), with 10.7% unlikely and 6.0% neutral. This professional commitment matters because it indicates whether retention challenges are sector-wide phenomena or institution-specific.
- Career Satisfaction:** 79.0% feel satisfied with their decision to continue on this career path when considering all aspects of working in education (36.6% agree, 42.4% strongly agree), with 13.5% neutral and 7.5% disagreeing. The substantial neutral and disagree proportions suggest approximately 20% of faculty are questioning their long-term career choice.



Qualitative Reflections

Why Educators Stay

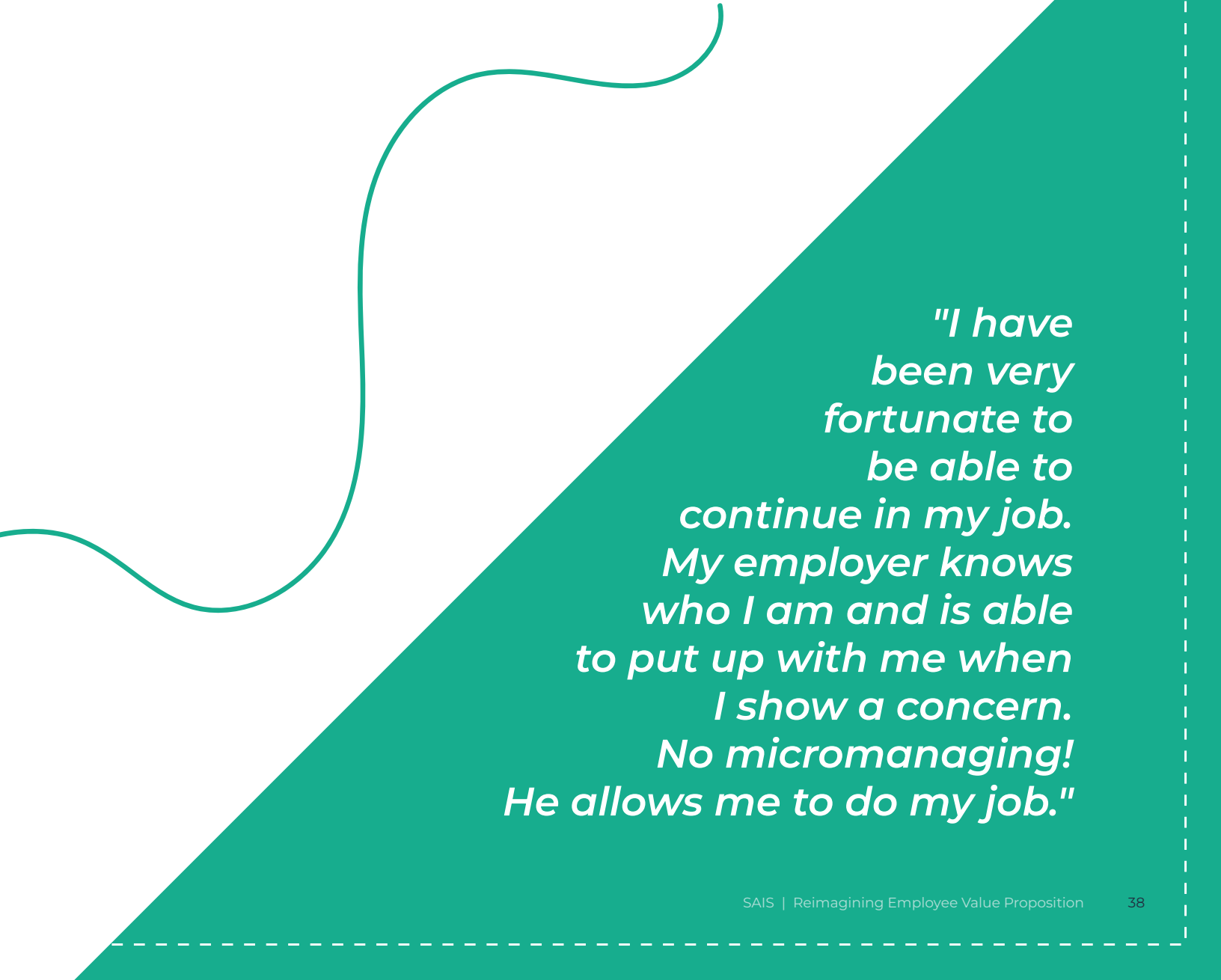
- "I am compelled to stay at my school because I completely trust the headmaster and principal to act and lead with integrity, provide me with continuing ed opportunities, and support me if I encounter difficult situations with students or parents."
- "I have been very fortunate to be able to continue in my job. My employer knows who I am and is able to put up with me when I show a concern. No micromanaging! He allows me to do my job."
- "This is the most amazing school environment I have been in. I feel supported, encouraged, and educated, but I also have much autonomy and independence. I believe this school makes me a better teacher and leader."
- "[The school] has been a great place to work. It's not perfect, but I do believe it is the best option for an educator like me. I love the community. I'm grateful."

Why Educators Leave

- "I think I am at a wonderful school and would probably not be teaching anymore if I was not where I am. I do feel like teaching as a whole profession is becoming unsustainable. You can't provide for a family, and there is so much mental workload that it is hard to balance family life."
- "I love educating young people, and it's exciting to think about all of the ways the field of education will be changing in the coming years. My responses about being unsure about staying are due to financial stress. Compensation and burnout. Unfortunately [living] on a teacher salary is extremely difficult and effort to support teachers financially while this field/industry doesn't easily allow people who work within it to 'turn it off'. In my experience, to be good at this job requires a sacrifice of self, and I'm not sure how much longer I will be able to justify the sacrifice, especially for the amount of compensation."
- "I am a veteran educator with over three decades of experience. I have had a very rewarding career, but it has become abundantly clear that I cannot support myself on the salary I make. There is no room for further advancement, so I am seeking careers in the private sector."

Considering Leaving

- "I revisit my commitment to this school every spring, seriously considering leaving the profession. The work community is wonderful, the freedom to innovate is encouraged, and the feeling that I make a difference gives me a sense of purpose. However, inconsistent/unavailable leadership are all reasons that I will likely leave the profession altogether in the next 5 years."
- "As this is my eighteenth year, I'm beginning to see shifts in education that concern me about the future of teaching. I'm less inclined to encourage others to invest in teaching."
- "The workload and non-teaching expectations are soul destroying. I am actively searching for another job and will leave mid-year if I find one."

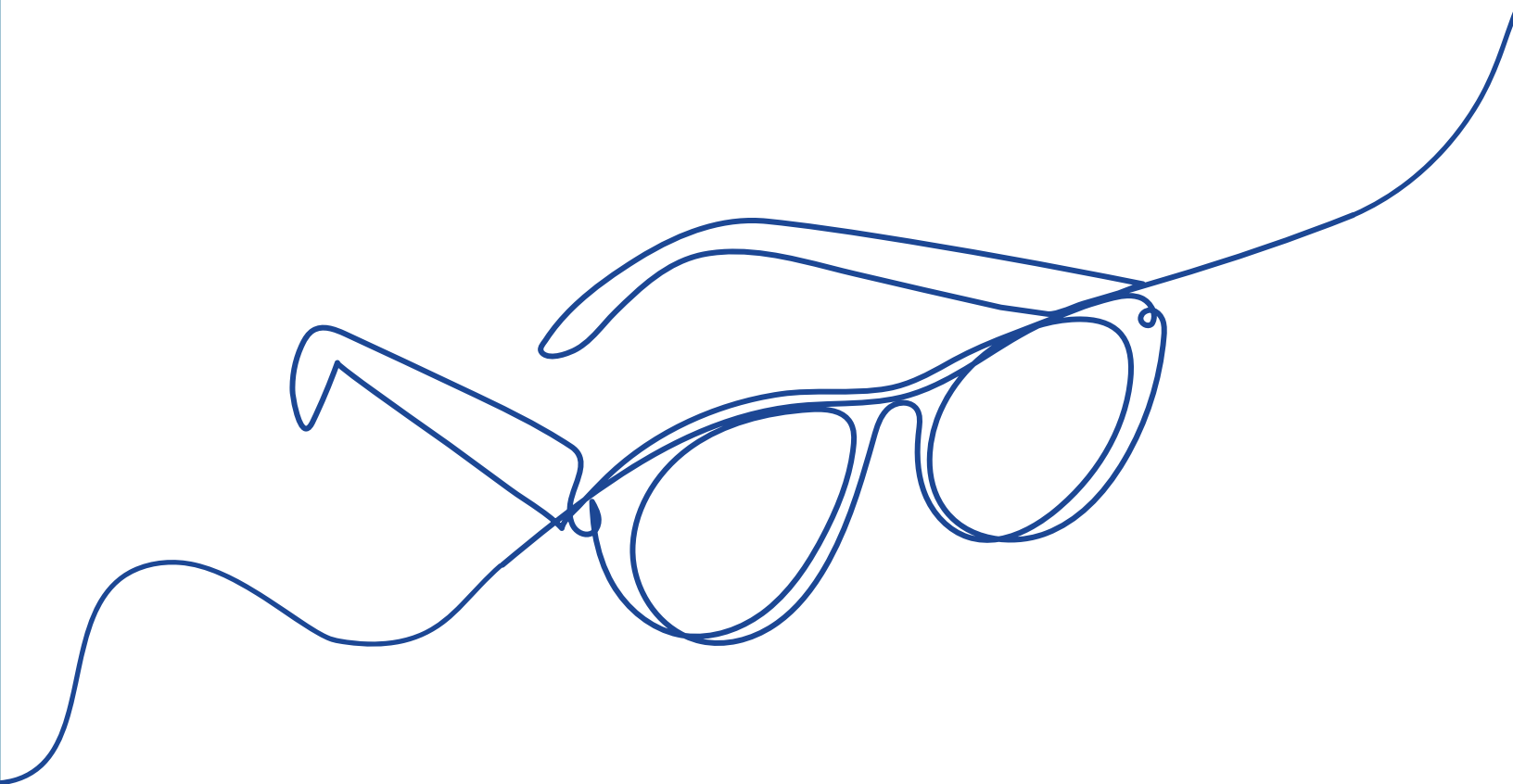


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Employee Value Proposition Reflections

8 Essential EVP Reflections for School Leaders





Make Expectations Match Reality.

Educators stay engaged when their roles, environment, and expectations align with their strengths, values, and capacity.

In practice:

- Clarify what success actually looks like in the role not just what's written in the job description.
- Revisit role scope as responsibilities grow or shift over time.
- Conduct a workload audit to map every obligation (teaching, duties, meetings, committees, extracurriculars, etc.).
- Ensure workload, schedule, and expectations are sustainable.
- Establish essential vs. important prioritization role and responsibilities. Conduct review of all non-teaching obligations. Eliminate or streamline items that are not mission-critical. Align evaluation and feedback with what educators are truly being asked to do.

When expectations and reality drift apart, engagement erodes long before someone decides to leave.



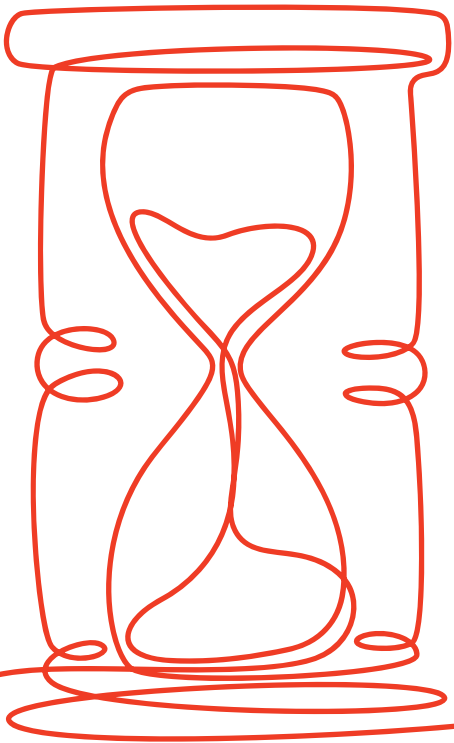
Protect Educators' Time Like It Matters... Because It Does.

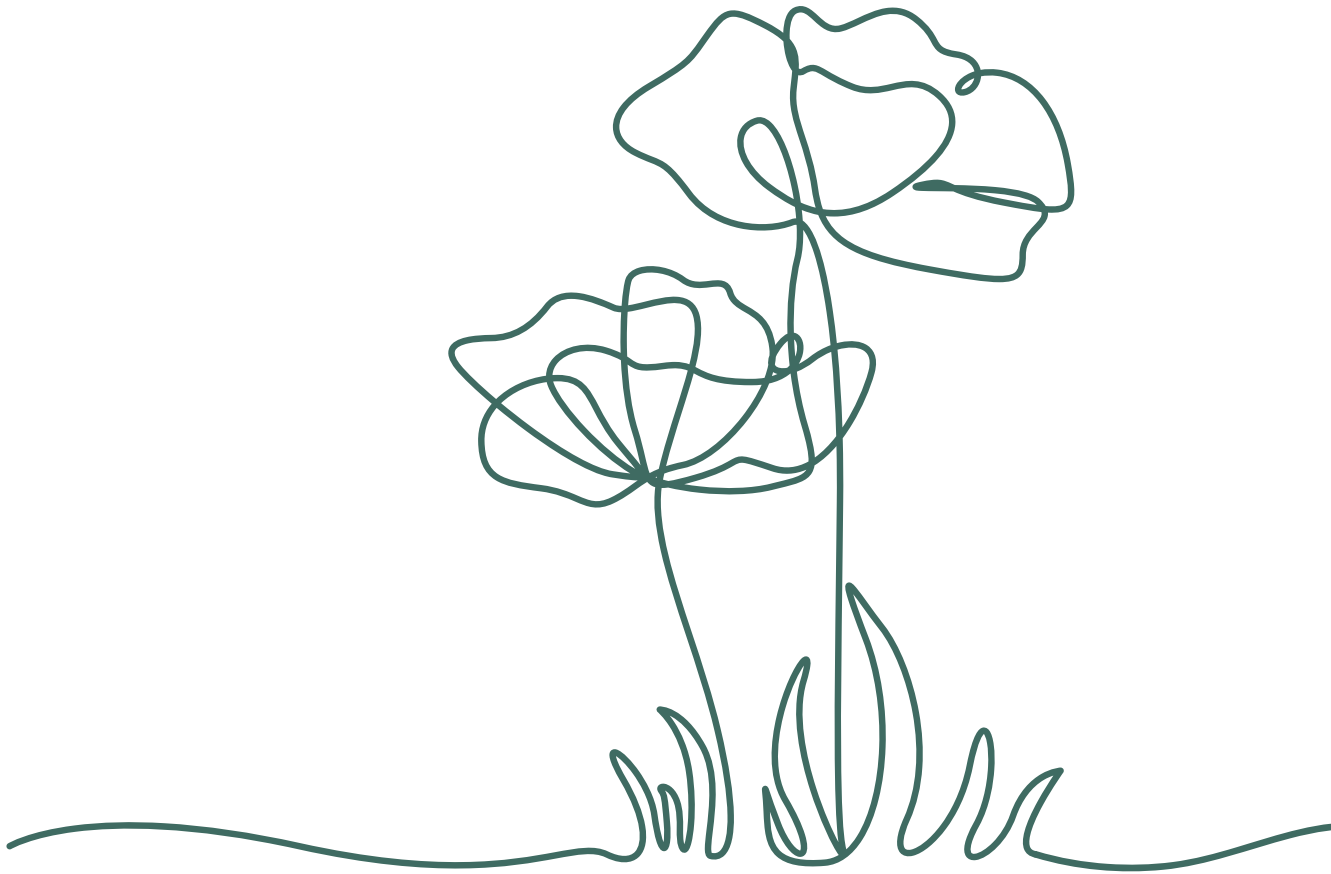
If everything is important, nothing is.

In practice:

- Implement protected time policies.
- Fewer meetings. Shorter meetings. Clear agendas.
- Fewer “extra” duties that quietly pile up.
- Real planning time built into the day.
- Model sustainable work boundaries as leaders.

Teachers are not asking for less care. They are asking for less chaos. Workload creep is one of the biggest drivers of burnout, especially for early-career educators.





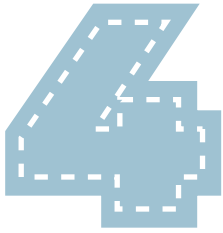
Show People How They Can Grow (Without Leaving the Classroom).

Not everyone wants to become an administrator, but everyone wants to grow. People want to grow differently—at different life stages, in different directions.

In practice:

- Create multiple pathways: mentor teacher, instructional lead, program coordinator.
- Publish these pathways so educators can see how their current role connects to future opportunities.
- Create leadership pipeline programs, identifying high-potential educators for leadership development experiences.
- Be clear about how people move forward and what it pays.
- Talk about growth early, not after frustration sets in.
- Have career conversations annually.
- Develop career maps.

When career paths feel vague, people disengage. When growth is visible and valued, commitment deepens, especially in years 3–7, when attrition risk is highest.



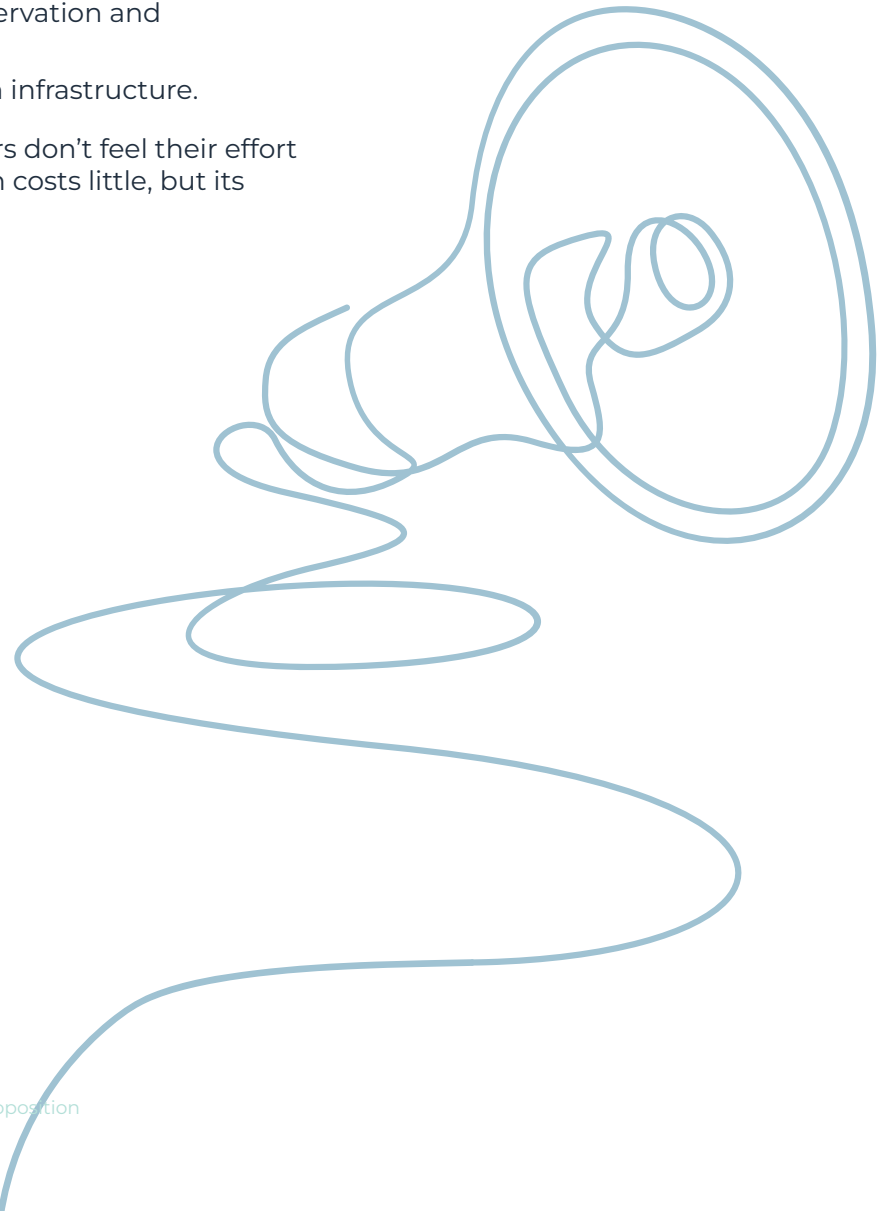
Normalize Recognition and Feedback.

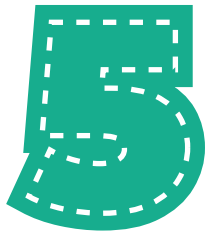
Recognition shouldn't be rare or performative.

In practice:

- Implement weekly call-outs of real, specific work.
- Provide regular check-ins (not just annual evaluations).
- Offer feedback that answers: "Am I doing well? What matters most?"
- Train supervisors in developmental feedback (balance appreciation vs coaching, managing difficult conversations).
- Separate development from evaluation.
- Establish peer observation and feedback systems.
- Build a recognition infrastructure.

Nearly half of educators don't feel their effort is noticed. Recognition costs little, but its absence costs people.





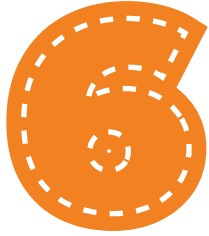
Name the Reality of Compensation.

Faculty don't expect miracles. They do expect clarity.

In practice:

- Conduct comprehensive compensation benchmarking.
- Target improvements where gaps are most acute.
- Expand non-salary compensation (retirement, professional development, housing assistance).
- Say plainly where compensation falls short.
- Share a multi-year plan, even if it's gradual.
- Make raises predictable, not mysterious.
- Reimagine compensation scale (step/lane, merit, bands).

Teachers can love their job and still be unable to afford to stay. When leaders name the reality and the roadmap, trust goes up, even before pay does.



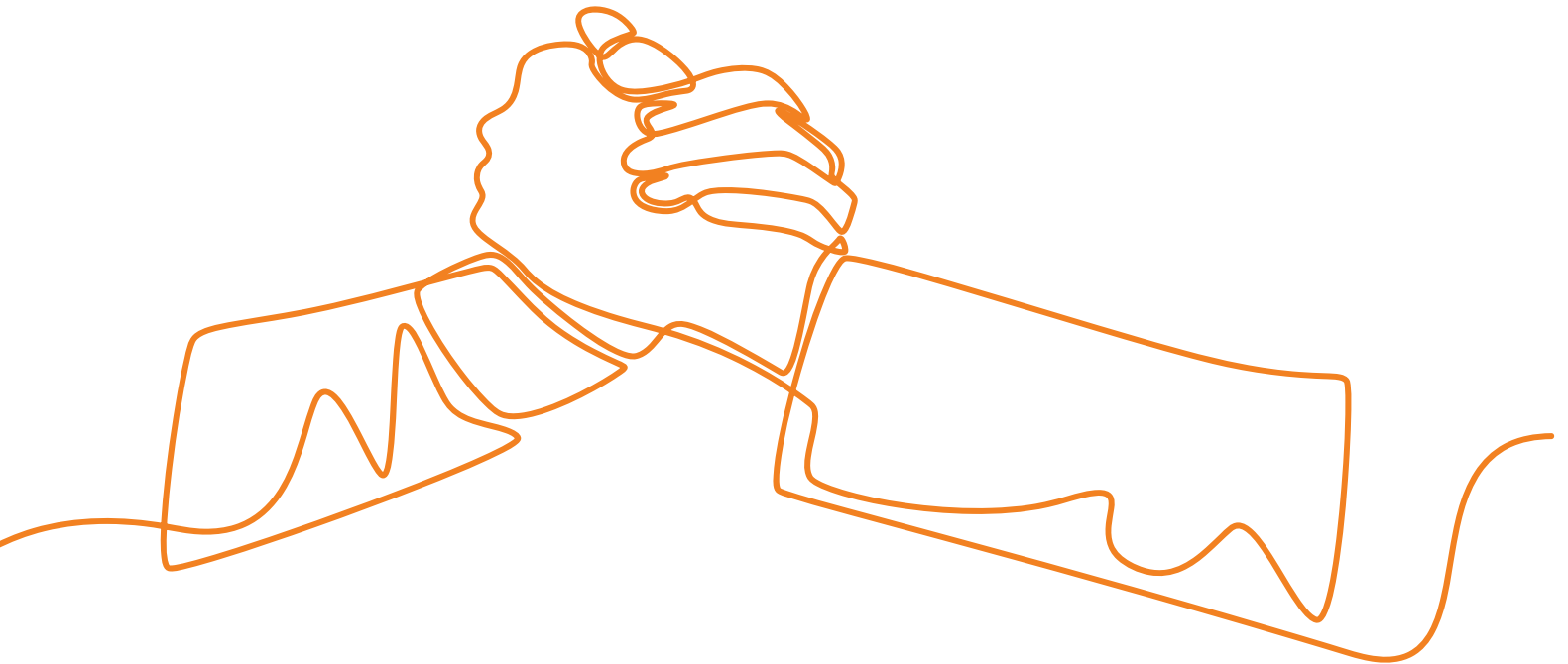
Make Leadership Visible, Supportive, and Human.

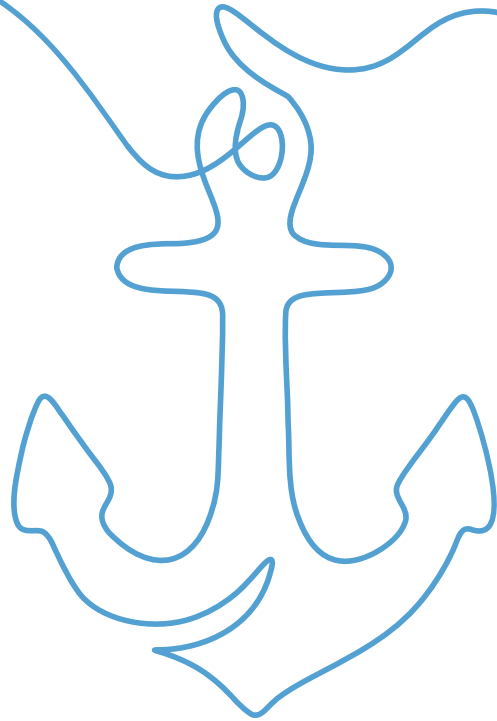
People stay where they feel seen and protected.

In practice:

- Leaders show up.
- Establish a leadership visibility standard.
- No surprises: explain decisions before and after they're made.
- Back teachers when parents push too far.
- Build capacity for middle-level leaders (attributes, immersion, modules, mentorship, self-management).

Leadership quality is the single biggest variable in whether teachers stay or go. Trust isn't built in announcements. It's built in everyday presence and follow-through.





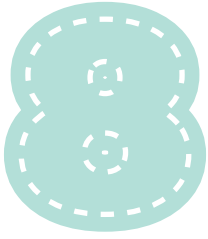
Strengthen the Relationships That Anchor People.

Connection to colleagues, teams, and leaders is one of the strongest predictors of engagement and retention.

In practice:

- Create intentional structures for collaboration, not just meetings.
- Invest in team norms that build trust, belonging, and psychological safety.
- Ensure new educators are socially integrated, not left to “figure it out.”
- Encourage leaders to be present, visible, and relational, not just operational.

People are far more likely to stay when they feel known, supported, and connected.



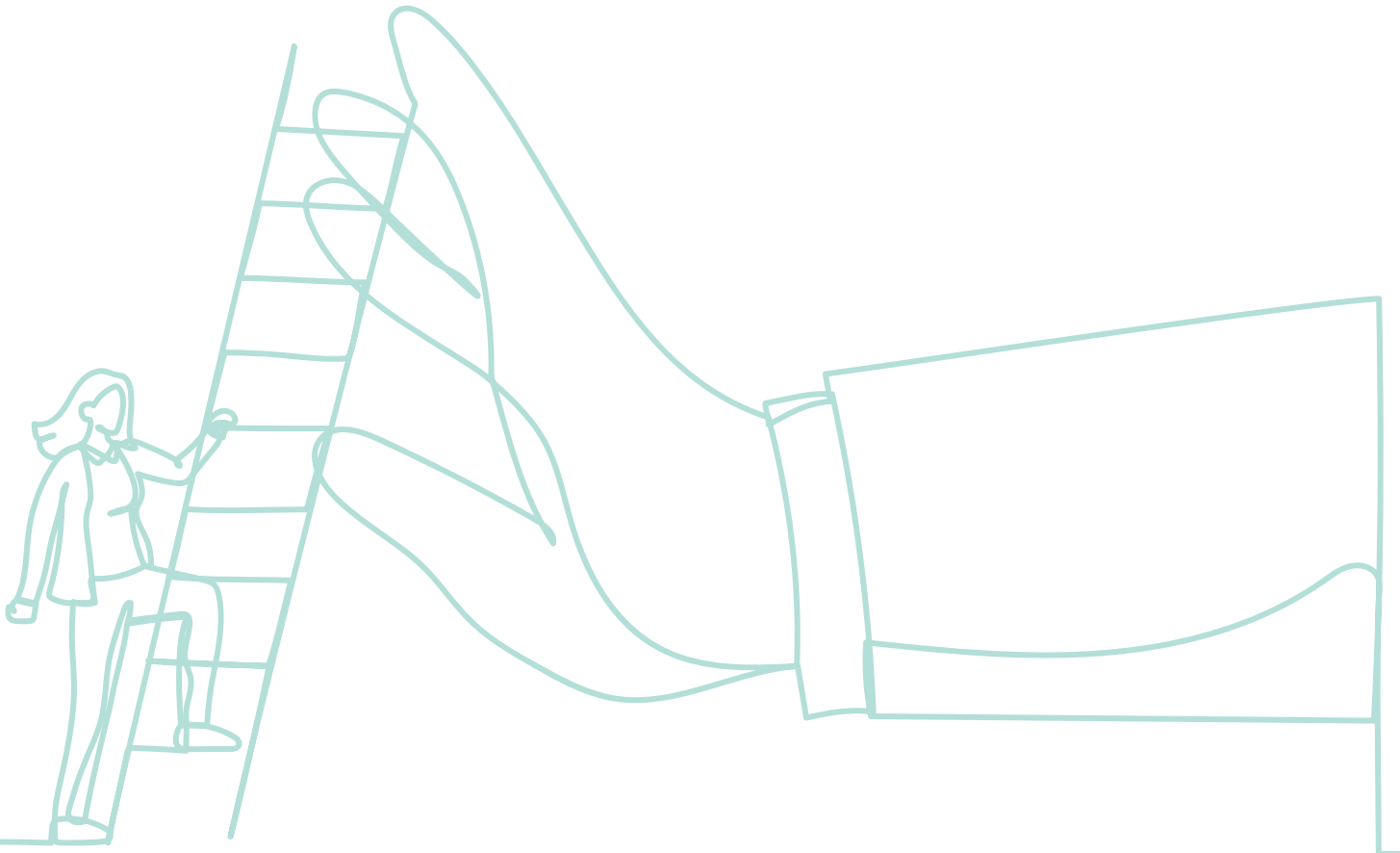
Acknowledge What the Job Asks of People.

Educators routinely make time, financial, and emotional sacrifices often without them being named or addressed.

In practice:

- Be honest about the personal tradeoffs the role requires.
- Examine where sacrifice has become normalized rather than intentional.
- Balance commitment with care by protecting time and energy.
- Recognize effort consistently, not only during moments of crisis.

Unacknowledged sacrifice leads to quiet burnout. Acknowledged sacrifice can build trust.





SAIS Motivation and Engagement Survey for Faculty

The Faculty Motivation and Engagement Survey gathers direct feedback from educators about workplace culture, well-being, and the factors that shape their professional experience at your school. This comprehensive assessment explores what drives motivation, engagement, and purpose in the workplace and how these factors influence teacher satisfaction, retention, and career commitment. By listening directly to educators about what fosters connection, professional growth, and meaningful work, schools gain actionable insights to better support, develop, and retain faculty at all career stages.

Understand What Drives Your Teachers—and What Keeps Them at Your School: The Faculty Motivation and Engagement Survey is a comprehensive assessment tool designed specifically for K-12 independent schools to measure the factors that influence teacher satisfaction, retention, and professional commitment.

Move beyond anecdotal feedback to understand the systemic factors affecting your faculty. Identify specific areas, from workload sustainability to leadership communication, where strategic interventions can make the greatest impact. Understanding what keeps your best teachers engaged gives you the insight needed to build a workplace culture that attracts and retains top talent. Simply asking shows faculty that leadership values their experience and is committed to continuous improvement.

What This Survey Measures

- **Workplace Relationships & Belonging**
The quality of collegial connections and sense of community
- **Autonomy & Role Alignment**
How well roles match faculty strengths, values, and professional identity
- **Leadership Effectiveness**
Trust in supervisors, communication quality, and decision-making integrity
- **Recognition & Growth**
Compensation competitiveness, professional development support, and advancement opportunities
- **Professional Development Engagement**
Current learning activities and growth pathways

Learn more about our surveys:



SAIS Motivation and Engagement Survey for Faculty and Students



School Community Feedback Survey



SAIS Governance Health Index



The Net Promoter Score

