

A Return to School

Educators Assess Mental Health Concerns for U.S. Teens



The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted instruction and learning in schools across the U.S. As many schools are returning to in-person instruction in the fall of 2021, educators face unique challenges associated with reemergence. These findings from the Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children’s Mental Health draw on a nationwide sample of 552 high school educators, including teachers, school counselors and social workers, and school and district administrators, and are intended to help inform the broader community as teens make their transition back to school.



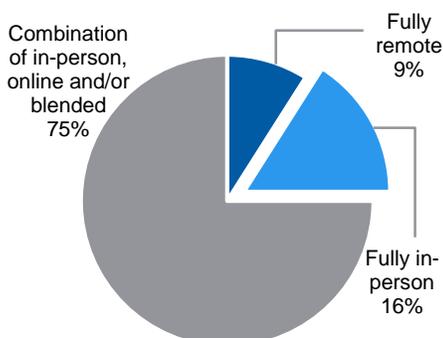
KEY FINDINGS

DISRUPTIONS TO INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING DURING THE 2020-2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

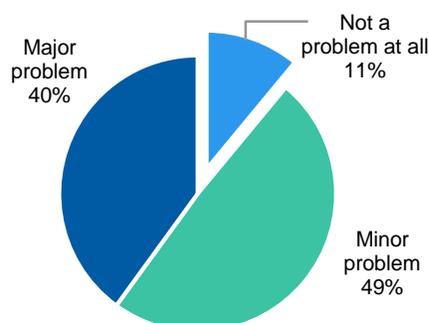
Our findings confirm what many have suspected: High school educators around the U.S. experienced significant disruptions to instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than eight in ten (84%) educators surveyed say that instruction was remote for at least part of the 2020-2021 school year. Furthermore, nearly nine in ten (89%) educators report that absenteeism was a problem, and almost two-thirds (65%) of educators report that enrollment was a problem.

FIGURE 1

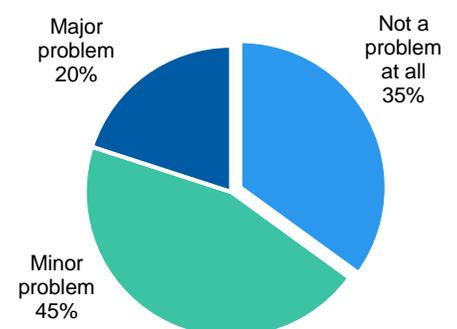
Instruction types during the 2020-21 school year



To what extent was student absenteeism a problem for your school/district during the 2020-2021 school year?



To what extent was enrollment a problem for your school/district during the 2020-2021 school year?



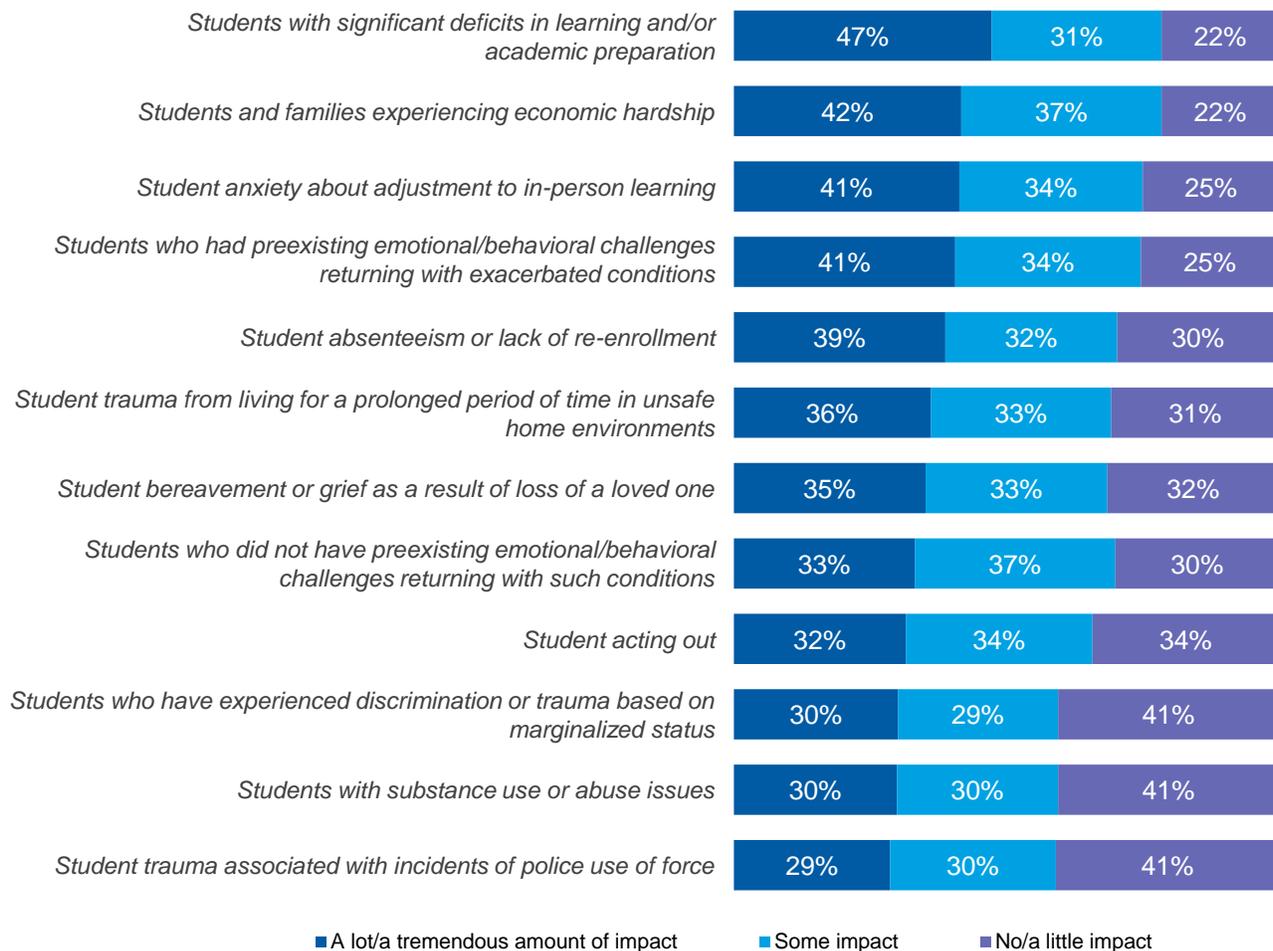
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATORS' CONCERNS ABOUT RETURNING TO IN-PERSON LEARNING

As many schools return to in-person learning in the fall of 2021, a significant number of educators say that the following issues will have a lot or a tremendous amount of impact on the quality of student learning:

- Deficits in student learning and academic preparation (47%);
- Students and families experiencing economic hardship (42%);
- Student anxiety about returning to in-person learning (41%); and
- Students with preexisting emotional or behavioral challenges returning with exacerbated conditions (41%).

FIGURE 2

How much impact do you expect each of the following issues to have on the quality of student learning at your school/district in the upcoming school year?

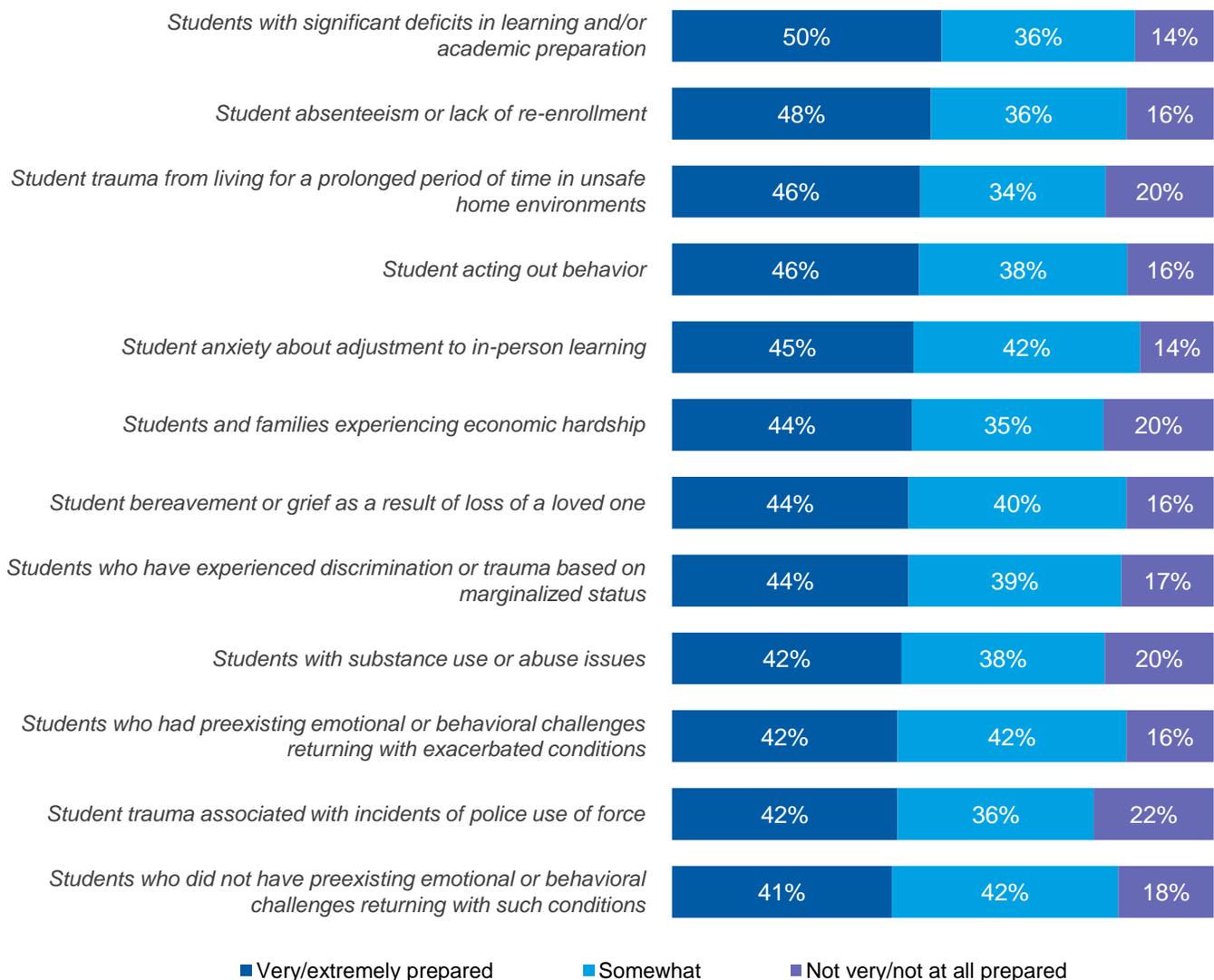


HIGH SCHOOLS' PREPAREDNESS TO ADDRESS REEMERGENCE ISSUES

Many educators report that their school or district is underprepared for the challenges associated with returning to in-person learning. Half or fewer of educators report that their school or district is extremely or very prepared to address any of the reemergence issues assessed. Educators are more likely to say their school or district is highly prepared to address student deficits in learning and academic preparation (50%) than to address students returning with emotional or behavioral challenges, whether they have preexisting conditions (42%) or not (41%).

FIGURE 3

How prepared is your school/district to address the following issues in the upcoming school year?



REEMERGENCE RESOURCES

Educators express the need for additional training and/or resources to help support them during the transition. The majority of educators report that additional information and training in each of the areas evaluated would be extremely or very useful.

When asked to select the three areas where additional training or information would be most useful, educators are most likely to select actively supporting students with emotional or behavioral challenges (41%), identifying these students (37%) and identifying external sources of support for these students (29%).

FIGURE 4

In which of the following areas would additional information and training in supporting students be most useful?



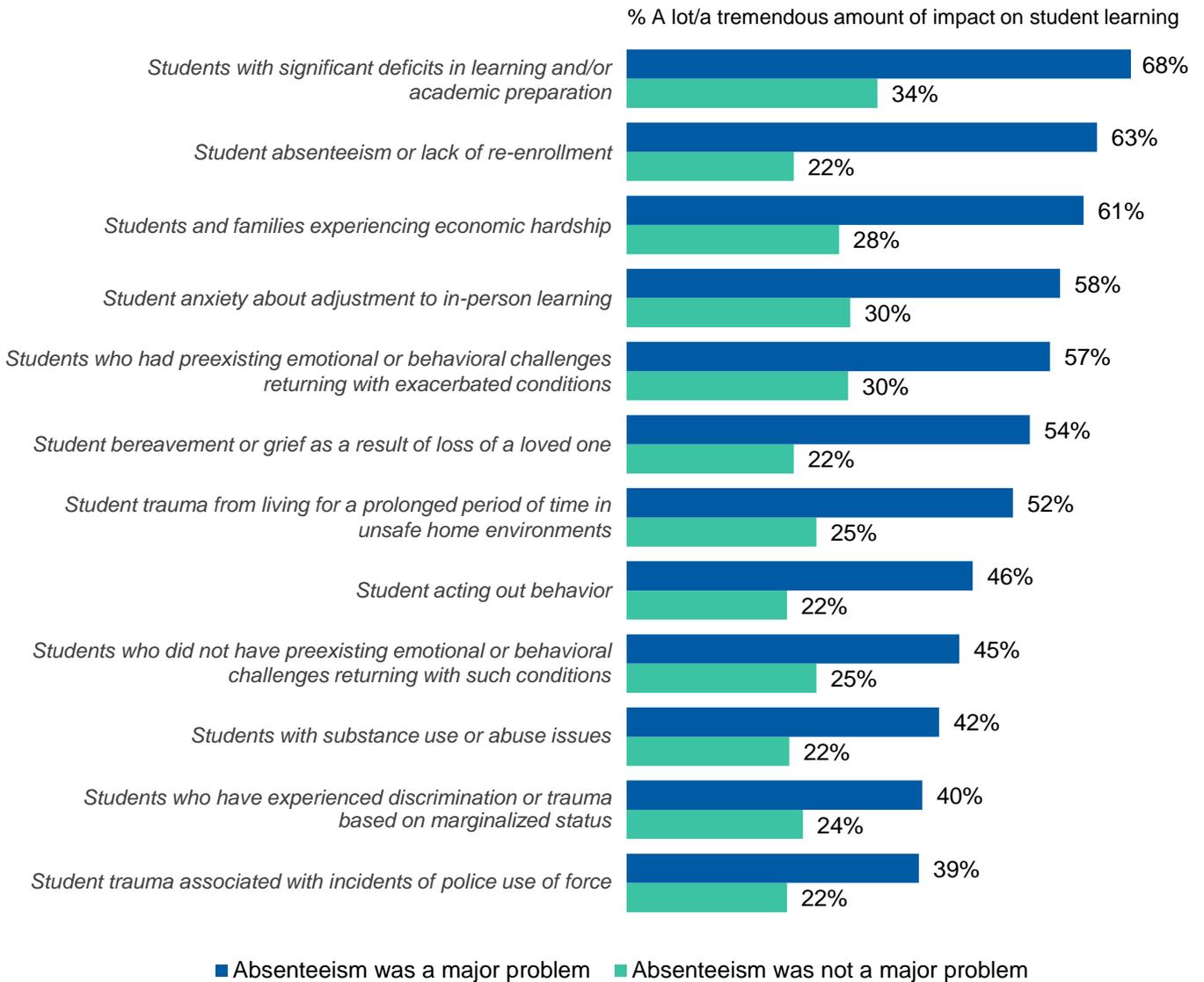
HIGH SCHOOLS WITH CRUCIAL NEED

Although educators across the range of schools and districts surveyed expressed concerns about reemergence issues and the need for additional resources and support, educators in certain schools and districts face distinct challenges.

In particular, educators who encountered major problems with student absenteeism during the past year indicate more concern about being prepared to handle reemergence issues and are more likely to say that all the reemergence issues will have a lot or a tremendous amount of impact on the quality of student learning.

FIGURE 5

How much impact do you expect each of the following issues to have on the quality of student learning at your school/district in the upcoming school year?



The student populations' income level differentiates some perspectives among educators. Educators in schools or districts where more than half of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch are more likely than other educators to anticipate that the following issues will have a lot or a tremendous amount of impact on student learning:

- Students and families experiencing economic hardship (48% vs. 38%);
- Student trauma from living in unsafe home environments (42% vs. 32%);
- Students acting out (37% vs. 28%).

These respondents are more likely than other educators to say that additional information or training would be highly useful in these areas: motivating students to participate in learning (78% vs. 70%) and stress management for school staff (73% vs. 65%).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted academic instruction and learning around the country. Readjusting to in-person learning in fall 2021 may present many challenges for school students and educators. Most educators, regardless of school or district demographics, have expressed a need for additional training and resources to help them support their students during the transition back to in-person instruction.

To help aid in that transition, the Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health has launched a new [Reemergence Program](#) to provide support and resources for educators and families during this crucial time. Key components of the program include [educator](#) and [caregiver](#) tip sheets, comprehensive digital resources and a convening for educators and school administrators. The program will expand throughout the school year, as the Alliance gains a better understanding of reemergence issues and needs, allowing it to continue to deliver targeted school- and community-based programs.

METHODOLOGY

Morgan Stanley commissioned Fluent Research to survey 552 high school educators in the U.S. online from June 12-July 8, 2021. Educators included 322 high school teachers, 134 high school counselors, social workers, and nurses, and 96 district and high school administrators (superintendents and principals).

MORGAN STANLEY ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

The Morgan Stanley Alliance for Children's Mental Health combines the resources and reach of Morgan Stanley with the knowledge and experience of distinguished nonprofit partner organizations to help deliver positive, tangible impact on the critical challenges of stress, anxiety and depression in children, adolescents and young people.

To learn more visit morganstanley.com/mentalhealthalliance