

Forward Together:

Pandemic Lessons for Effective Teaching Practices



Key Findings

Over the last year, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread virtual and hybrid learning, requiring educators to change how they instruct and support students with disabilities. NCLD and Understood commissioned the CERES Institute for Children & Youth at Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development to conduct research through nationwide surveys and focus groups with educators to understand their experience during the pandemic. We identified trends in how they are instructing and supporting students with learning and attention issues, as well as opportunities for continued growth and change in our schools.

Below are some of the key research findings and what educators shared with us:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted students with learning and attention issues in significant ways, with educators revealing lower rates of student engagement and student progress compared to other years.



- **Almost 50% of teachers indicated that students with learning and attention issues demonstrated lower levels of school engagement than in prior years.**
- **More than one-third of teachers reported similar patterns of low school engagement among students impacted by poverty and among English learners.**

2. The survey revealed the stress of the pandemic on teachers — but also their resilience and their desire to support all students.



- **58% of teachers reported feeling burnout from teaching. Those who taught in schools impacted by poverty and those working primarily with students with learning and attention issues were most likely to report feeling burnout.**
- **72% of teachers report that they don't have enough time to teach everything that they're expected to teach.**
- **86% of teachers believe all students can learn through effective teaching and hard work.**

3. Teachers want and need the help of their school and district leadership, including strategies to engage students and families and meet their social-emotional and academic needs.



- **70% of teachers would like to continue implementing strategies used during the pandemic, including having smaller cohorts of students so they can give more individualized attention; working collaboratively with colleagues; using education apps and games to enhance student learning; and creating smaller classrooms.**
- **Over 50% of teachers reported wanting to continue using synchronous online learning platforms and also to offer pre-recorded lessons and materials asynchronously.**

We know that the pandemic exacerbated inequities across the education system. Yet, there are lessons to be learned that can better equip educators in the upcoming school year to support students with learning and attention issues. Go deeper into the practices identified by educators as the most important strategies to support students by visiting www.ncl.org/forwardtogether2021.

Acknowledgments



[NCLD](#) works to improve the lives of the 1 in 5 children and adults nationwide with learning and attention issues — by empowering parents and young adults, transforming schools, and advocating for equal rights and opportunities. We're working to create a society in which every individual possesses the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in school, at work, and in life.



[Understood](#) is dedicated to growing and shaping a world where everyone who learns and thinks differently feels supported at home, at school, and at work; a world where people with all types of disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy meaningful careers; a world where more communities embrace differences. Because differences make the world worth exploring. Differences define who we are. Differences are our greatest strength.

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