FULL REPORT:

Trauma-informed Survey of PA Educators:

To what extent are PA educators prepared to recognize and respond to students impacted by trauma or distress, including trauma/distress related to COVID-19?

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Research and Evaluation

SEPTEMBER 2021

Abstract

It is likely that the pandemic has resulted in higher rates of children and youth experiencing emotional distress associated with an adverse childhood experience or traumatic event compared to pre-pandemic levels. While educators are increasingly called on to recognize and support students who experience emotional distress as well as trauma, little is known about educators' preparedness and confidence in supporting students in this regard. In spring 2021, 4,973 Pennsylvania educators completed an anonymous survey to assess their perceptions of their preparedness and ability to support students who experience emotional distress or trauma. Respondents were predominantly teachers, although other educator groups were represented in the sample. Nearly half of respondents felt they were not prepared to recognize trauma, with nearly 80% of teachers indicating they did not feel prepared to teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions. Three out of five teachers reported feeling inadequately prepared to communicate strategies to help students feel safe or motivate students to seek professional assistance. Further, a majority of respondents did not feel confident that they could implement trauma-informed practices in their classroom. Results of this survey provide strong evidence that educators need training to recognize and respond to students experiencing emotional distress as well as trauma.

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> **"** To what extent are PA educators prepared to recognize and respond to students impacted by trauma or distress, including trauma/distress related to COVID-19?

Overview

This report highlights the results of the funded investigation aligned with the PDE Research Agenda published in November 2020 (i.e., under School Climate, item number 4) entitled *To what extent are PA educators prepared to recognize and respond to students impacted by trauma or distress, including trauma/distress related to COVID-19?* This award, as described by PDE, was to provide a modified replication of the Kognito (2020) white paper: "Are teachers and staff ready to apply trauma informed practices?" A copy of this white paper is located here.

This narrative describes 1) details associated with the design and implementation of the investigation, 2) general highlights and disaggregation of the data, 3) guidance concerning generalization of the results, 4) limitations and caveats associated with this investigation, 5) recommendations for consideration by PDE, and 6) points of closure. The attached Executive Summary reflects a compatible format to the Kognito (2020) white paper previously noted and should lend itself to dissemination across an array of constituencies with vested interest.

Details Associated with Design and Implementation of the Investigation

As proposed, the survey was designed as a modified replication of the survey conducted in association with the Kognito (2020) white paper. The survey was available for educators between April 1 and June 30, 2021. Initial outreach coupled with a series of three follow-up communications occurred through targeted networks of groups during this three-month time frame as referenced in the proposal submitted by the authors. PDE, as well, issued a PENNLINK concerning availability of the survey towards the end of this time interval.

Conversion of Raw Data to Dichotomized Data

The original PDE Research Scholars Application proposal indicated a _likely_ (emphasis added) data analytic process by which the 5-point Likert scale response options on the trauma-related survey would be transformed into three categories: "1 & 2 (Low + Very Low; Strongly Disagree + Disagree); 3 (Neutral; Neither); 4 & 5 (High + Very High; Agree + Strongly Agree)" (p. 8). A *post hoc* decision, however, was made subsequent to the awarding of the application to mirror the data transformation utilized in the Kognito (2020) study given the intent of our application was a replication of the "multi-state empirical investigation conducted by Kognito…with educators across the commonwealth" (p. 1).

Consequently, our approach commenced with transforming the 17 items on the trauma-related survey into dichotomized responses in the following manner:

Domain 1 (Preparedness):

5-point Likert Response Option	Transformation for Data Analysis
1; Very Low	1; Very Low, Low, Medium
2; Low	1; Very Low, Low, Medium
3; Medium	1; Very Low, Low, Medium
4; High	2; High, Very High
5; Very High	2; High, Very High

Domain 2 (Confidence) and Domain 3 (Perceptions):

5-point Likert Response Option	Transformation for Data Analysis
1; Strongly Disagree	1; Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree
2; Disagree	1; Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree
3; Neither Disagree/Agree	1; Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree
4; Agree	2; Agree, Strongly Agree
5; Strongly Agree	2; Agree, Strongly Agree

Subsequent to the above transformation of raw data into dichotomies, initial data analytic procedures mirrored those of the Kognito (2020) white paper. Specifically, responses to Domains 1 and 2 were used to appraise the extent to which Pennsylvania educators and aligned professionals felt prepared

and confident to address trauma-related needs of students, respectively. Survey responses to Domain 3 assessed respondents' perceptions and their peers' perceived attitudes toward students receiving mental health services, role of teachers in addressing students' mental health needs, and root causes of students' disruptive behavior.

Survey Responses Disaggregated by Demographic Variables

The original PDE Research Scholars Application proposal suggested that data analyses disaggregated by the following demographic variables would be conducted:

1. **Intermediate Unit**
2. **Geographic region**
3. **Urban-centric locale**

Disaggregation by Intermediate Unit. Provided here is a breakdown of respondents by intermediate unit. Note that respondents to the survey who self-identified as pre-service educators were not asked to identify the intermediate unit in which they worked given these respondents were still at the pre-service level. Therefore, these data reflect only those respondents who identified as in-service educators and opted to respond to the question about the intermediate unit in which they were employed.

In-Service Respondents by Intermediate Unit

Intermediate Unit	*N*	% of Respondents
1 – Intermediate Unit 1	268	6.1%
2 – Pittsburgh/Mt. Oliver IU 2	27	0.6%
3 – Allegheny IU 3	258	5.9%
4 – Midwestern IU 4	58	1.3%
5 – Northwest Tri-County IU 5	168	3.8%
6 – Riverview IU 6	83	1.9%
7 – Westmoreland IU 7	25	0.6%
8 – Appalachia IU 8	173	4.0%
9 – Seneca Highlands IU 9	53	1.2%
10 – Central IU 10	51	1.2%
11 – Tuscarora IU 11	121	2.8%
12 – Lincoln IU 12	155	3.5%
13 – Lancaster-Lebanon IU 13	101	2.3%
14 – Berks County IU 14	106	2.4%
15 – Capital Area IU 15	90	2.1%
16 – Central Susquehanna IU 16	127	2.9%

Intermediate Unit	N	% of Respondents
17 – BLaST IU 17	43	1.0%
18 – Luzerne IU 18	204	4.7%
19 – Northeastern Educational IU 19	36	0.8%
20 – Colonial IU 20	437	10.0%
21 – Carbon-Lehigh IU 21	310	7.1%
22 – Bucks County IU 22	199	4.6%
23 – Montgomery County IU 23	264	6.0%
24 – Chester County IU 24	421	9.6%
25 – Delaware County IU 25	69	1.6%
26 – Philadelphia IU 26	97	2.2%
27 – Beaver Valley IU 27	133	3.0%
28 – ARIN IU 28	91	2.1%
29 – Schuylkill IU 29	209	4.8%
TOTAL	**4,377**	**100%**

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

While exact proportionate numbers of educators by intermediate unit across Pennsylvania are not known, it is clear from the above data that proportionate stratified sampling was not achieved. For example, Philadelphia County Intermediate Unit 26 and Pittsburgh/Mt. Oliver Intermediate Unit 2 serve the two largest public school districts in Pennsylvania, The School District of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh Public Schools, respectively. These two school districts account for 8% of the nearly 1.75 million public school students in 2020-2021 (Pennsylvania Department of Education, Public School Enrollments, 2021, https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx), yet accounted for 2.8% of all survey respondents. Consequently, a decision was made to not analyze data disaggregated by intermediate unit given this disproportionate response rate by intermediate unit. Finally, please note that participants voluntarily provided the intermediate unit in which they were employed. Thus, participants were permitted to skip this question. As a result, the total number of in-service educators who completed survey questions will not always match the 4,377 respondents who voluntarily provided information regarding the intermediate unit in which they are employed.

Disaggregation by Urban-Centric Locale. Earlier drafts of the PDE Research Scholars Application ultimately not submitted to PDE for review had a demographic question seeking respondents to identify the school district in which they worked. With those raw data, disaggregation of results by urban-centric locale per U.S. Census coding would have been possible. Decisions later in the proposal drafting process, however, led these authors to exclude the question seeking respondents to identify the public school in which they were employed. Reasons for this decision were numerous but primarily centered on three concerns. First, we desired for respondents to remain anonymous. If respondents provided the name of their public school employer, their anonymity could be compromised by triangulating their responses from other demographic questions (i.e., professional role) particularly in smaller school districts that only employ one or a handful of professionals by role (e.g., school psychologist; school social worker; school counselor). Second, some respondents, particularly those working for intermediate units or mental / behavioral health agencies, potentially work with multiple school districts rendering such a question as confusing at best. Third, an open-ended question requesting respondents to enter the name of their public-school employer creates challenges in discerning subjects' written responses to this question. For example, respondents' use of acronyms or imprecise language (e.g., Derry Township School District v. Derry School District), which these authors have often encountered in other, aligned state-wide evaluations conducted on behalf of PDE, make asking such a question difficult and time consuming to code and fraught with error. Thus, disaggregation of responses by urban-centric locale was not completed.

General Highlights & Regional Disaggregation of the Data

A total of 4,793 educators responded to the survey. There appears to be a great deal of alignment with the general findings from this commonwealth-specific investigation with the Kognito (2020) white paper. For example, both this investigation and the Kognito (2020) investigation found that 1 out of 2 educators do not feel adequately prepared to recognize signs of trauma in their students. This has particular relevance at this juncture as students (and their families and the staff that instruct them) navigate recovery from the pandemic. Similarly, in both studies, 3 in 5 educators indicated that they do not feel adequately prepared to use communication strategies to help students feel safe or to talk with a student to motivate them to connect with support. Having noted these similarities, there appears to be a slightly more pronounced need amongst educators in the commonwealth that responded to the survey when compared to the Kognito (2020) investigation in a few areas. For example, 4 in 5 teachers that responded in the commonwealth indicated that they do not feel adequately prepared to teach students activities to manage their stress (as compared with 3 in 5 educators reported in the Kognito (2020) white paper). Further, and in aligned manner, 3 in 4 of the respondent teachers in the commonwealth do not feel adequately prepared to implement trauma-informed approaches to teaching (as compared to 7 in 10 respondent teachers in the Kognito [2020] white paper). This high level of teachers in the commonwealth not feeling adequately prepared to implement

> One out of two educators do not feel adequately prepared to recognize signs of trauma in their students.

trauma-informed approaches has direct implications for ongoing in-service training in tandem with enhancing educator preparatory curricula to work up-stream prior to professional educators entering the field.

Encouragingly, and aligned with the results of the Kognito (2020) white paper, a significant majority of educators in Pennsylvania (95% in the commonwealth as compared to 98% reported in the Kognito [2020] white paper) believe all educators should receive explicit training in trauma-informed classroom practices. This finding, as well, would appear to have implications for both in-service and pre-service educator training. The following depicts the general results from the survey:

General Survey Results

	All Educators		Teachers	
Table 1. Please indicate your preparedness to:	*Very Low, Low, Medium*	*High, Very High*	*Very Low, Low, Medium*	*High, Very High*
Recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress	46%	54%	55%	45%
Talk with a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress to motivate them to connect with mental health support services	53%	47%	64%	36%
Use communication strategies to help a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress feel safe	50%	50%	60%	40%
Teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions in alignment with the PA Career Ready Skills	72%	28%	79%	22%
Implement trauma-informed approaches in teaching	67%	33%	75%	25%

Table 2. Indicate how much you disagree / agree with the following statements:	*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither*	*Agree, Strongly Agree*	*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither*	*Agree, Strongly Agree*
I feel confident in my ability to recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress.	22%	78%	28%	72%
I feel confident in my ability to talk with a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress to motivate them to connect with mental health support services.	30%	70%	38%	62%
I feel confident in my ability to use communication strategies to help a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress feel safe.	29%	71%	38%	62%
I feel confident in my ability to teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions.	35%	65%	43%	57%
I feel confident in my ability to implement trauma-informed approaches in teaching.	49%	51%	55%	45%

Table 3. Indicate how much you disagree / agree with the following statements:	*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither*	*Agree, Strongly Agree*	*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither*	*Agree, Strongly Agree*
I think that a student who is receiving mental health treatment is showing a sign of personal strength	14%	86%	15%	85%
Most teachers and staff in my school think that a student who is receiving mental health treatment is showing a sign of personal weakness	91%	9%	92%	8%

	All Educators		Teachers	
	Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither	*Agree, Strongly Agree*	*Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither*	*Agree, Strongly Agree*
Part of the role of teachers and staff in my school is to connect students experiencing psychological trauma or distress with mental health support services	19%	81%	21%	79%
Students who disrupt my class do not care about learning	97%	3%	96%	4%
I do not take it personally when a student is verbally aggressive towards me	36%	64%	44%	56%
Table 4. All Educators should receive training in trauma-informed classroom practices.	*No*	*Yes*	*No*	*Yes*
In your opinion, do you believe all educators should receive explicit training in trauma-informed classroom practices?	5%	95%	6%	94%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Disaggregation by Geographic Region. Disaggregation of responses by geographic region was accomplished by categorizing respondents into the three PaTTAN office regions (Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, East) according to the intermediate unit territory in which respondents were employed. Pre-service respondents to the survey, as previously noted, did not answer the question regarding in which intermediate unit they were employed given their pre-service status. This disaggregation by PaTTAN office regions applied exclusively to in-service respondents to the survey (4,377 in total). These respondents provided demographic data regarding the intermediate unit in which they were employed, thus permitting categorization of respondents by geographic region for these respondents. Provided here is a break-down of respondents by the three PaTTAN office regions.

Respondents by PaTTAN Office Regions

PaTTAN Office	*N*	% of Respondents
Pittsburgh	1,111	25.4%
Harrisburg	1,123	25.7%
East	2,143	49.0%
Total	**4,377**	**100%**

Note. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

The proportion of all public-school educators and aligned professionals across the three PaTTAN office regions is not known. If the assumption is that there should be an equal distribution of respondents across the three PaTTAN office regions, these results suggest a skewed sample with a disproportionate number of respondents from PaTTAN East. The assumption of equal distribution of respondents across the three PaTTAN offices, however, could be incorrect. Despite the unknown proportion of educators and aligned professionals across the three PaTTAN office regions and potentially biased sampling in the raw data, we decided to consider whether survey responses were different across the three PaTTAN offices per our original data analytic plan.

A series of Chi-Square Tests of Homogeneity were performed, one for each trauma-related survey question, to determine if there was a difference in the binomial proportions across the three PaTTAN offices. A Chi-Square Test of Homogeneity was preferred over other statistical procedures (i.e., one-way ANOVA) given that initial survey responses were to a Likert-type item and then the raw data were dichotomized prior to data analysis. Both of these factors violate the underlying methodological and statistical assumptions of a one-way ANOVA. Therefore, the Chi-Square Test of Homogeneity is preferable over parametric procedures such as a one-way ANOVA and was used in our analyses.

Responses disaggregated by the three PaTTAN offices are presented below. Statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) were found among the PaTTAN office regions on 10 of the 15 items (66.7%), although a discernible pattern among the three offices was not identified among all the items for which statistically significant differences were found.

That said, the results generally indicate that respondents from the west reported statistically significantly lower preparedness to talk with students exhibiting signs of trauma or stress to connect with mental health professionals, preparedness to communicate strategies to help students address trauma distress, preparedness to teach students how to manage their stress, and preparedness to implement trauma-informed approaches in their own teaching compared to respondents from the east.

Statistically significantly lower proportions of respondents from the west reported confidence in their ability to recognize signs of trauma or distress, talk to students exhibiting signs of trauma or distress to seek professional health, use communication strategies to help students experiencing trauma or distress, to teach students to manage their stress, and implement trauma-informed practices compared to respondents from the central and eastern regions of Pennsylvania.

> An overwhelming majority of individuals (95%) believe educators should receive specific training in trauma-informed classroom practices.

With one exception, respondents across the three PaTTAN office regions reported comparable proportions of colleagues who perceive seeking mental health treatment as a sign of personal strength and view one of their roles as connecting students to professional help to assist with trauma and distress. Furthermore, similar proportions of respondents across the three PaTTAN office regions reported that students who disrupt their class do not care about learning and do not take student verbal aggression as a personal attack on them as educators. Finally, similar proportions of respondents across the three PaTTAN office regions reported an overwhelming majority of individuals (95%) believe educators should receive specific training in trauma-informed classroom practices.

Responses to Survey Items by Geographic Region

Question/Response Category	Pittsburgh		Harrisburg		East	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Please indicate your preparedness to:						
1. Recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress						
Very Low, Low, Medium	484	47.7%	465	44.6%	888	45.4%
High, Very High	530	52.3%	577	55.4%	1,068	54.6%

Question/Response Category	Pittsburgh		Harrisburg		East	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
2. Talk with a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress to motivate them to connect with mental health support services						
Very Low, Low, Medium	567[a]	56.1%	559	53.7%	1,004[c]	51.5%
High, Very High	443[a]	43.9%	482	46.3%	947[c]	48.5%
3. Use communication strategies to help a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress feel safe connect with mental health support services						
Very Low, Low, Medium	548[a]	54.1%	522	50.2%	953[c]	48.8%
High, Very High	465[a]	45.9%	518	49.8%	1,000[c]	51.2%
4. Teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions in alignment with the PA Career Ready Skills						
Very Low, Low, Medium	777[a]	76.0%	751	72.1%	1,381[c]	70.8%
High, Very High	244[a]	24.0%	290	27.9%	569[c]	29.2%
5. Implement trauma-informed approaches in teaching						
Very Low, Low, Medium	760[ab]	75.1%	700[ac]	67,6%	1,226[bc]	62.9%
High, Very High	252[ab]	24.9%	336[ac]	32.4%	722[bc]	37.1%

Indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Question/Response Category	Pittsburgh		Harrisburg		East	
6. I feel confident in my ability to recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	265[ab]	26.1%	206[c]	19.9%	417[c]	21.4%
Agree, Strongly Agree	751[ab]	73.9%	831[c]	80.1%	1,533[c]	78.6%
7. I feel confident in my ability to talk with a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress to motivate them to connect with mental health support services						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	344[b]	34.1%	296[c]	28.7%	581	29.8%
Agree, Strongly Agree	665[b]	65.9%	735[c]	71.3%	1,367	70.2%
8. I feel confident in my ability to use communication strategies to help a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress feel safe						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	345[ab]	34.2%	284[c]	27.4%	568[c]	29.1%
Agree, Strongly Agree	664[ab]	65.8%	752[c]	72.6%	1,384[c]	70.9%
9. I feel confident in my ability to teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	408[ab]	40.6%	338[c]	32.6%	699[c]	35.9%
Agree, Strongly Agree	598[ab]	59.4%	700[c]	67.4%	1,249[c]	64.1%
10. I feel confident in my ability to implement trauma-informed approaches in teaching						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	589[ab]	58.0%	479[c]	46.3%	895[c]	46.0%
Agree, Strongly Agree	426[ab]	42.0%	556[c]	53.7%	1,050[c]	54.0%

Indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Question/Response Category	Pittsburgh		Harrisburg		East	
11. I think that a student who is receiving mental health treatment is showing a sign of personal strength						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	164[a]	16.2%	153	14.7%	251[c]	12.9%
Agree, Strongly Agree	848[a]	83.8%	887	85.3%	1,698[c]	87.1%
12. Most teachers and staff in my school think that a student who is receiving mental health treatment is showing a sign of personal weakness						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	915	90.3%	958	92.2%	1,790	91.7%
Agree, Strongly Agree	98	9.7%	81	7.8%	162	8.3%

Question/Response Category	Pittsburgh		Harrisburg		East	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
13. Part of the role of teachers and staff in my school is to connect students experiencing psychological trauma or distress with mental health support services						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	222	21.9%	190	18.3%	363	18.6%
Agree, Strongly Agree	790	78.1%	851	81.7%	1,586	81.4%
14. Students who disrupt my class do not care about learning						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	974	96.3%	1,000	96.2%	1,891	97.0%
Agree, Strongly Agree	37	3.7%	40	3.8%	58	3.0%
15. I do not take it personally when a student is verbally aggressive towards me						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	386	38.0%	374	35.9%	681	34.9%
Agree, Strongly Agree	630	62.0%	668	64.1%	1,271	65.1%
16. In your opinion, do you believe all educators should receive explicit training in trauma-informed classroom practices?						
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	49	4.9%	52	5.0%	92	4.7%
Agree, Strongly Agree	960	95.1%	991	95.0%	1,858	95.3%

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

SD *= Strongly Disagree.*
a *= statistically significantly different from PaTTAN East.*
b *= statistically significantly different from PaTTAN Harrisburg.*
c *= statistically significantly different from PaTTAN Pittsburgh.*

Guidance Concerning Generalization of the Results

Generalization of the results from this investigation should take in to account the previously noted limited sample size in tandem with the observations highlighted concerning demographic representation. The original PDE Research Scholars Application proposal suggested one of two ways to help generalize results of this sample to the larger population of educators across Pennsylvania. Given the sampling technique employed, response rate, and lack of random stratified sampling, it was decided that reporting 90% confidence intervals around the sample statistics was most appropriate for prompting caution in generalization of findings. These results are provided below. The 90% confidence interval indicates the likely proportion of responses if all educators in Pennsylvania completed the survey.

90% Confidence Interval Estimates for Survey Questions

Question/Response Category	Total Sample		Teachers only	
	%	90% CI	%	90% CI
Please indicate your preparedness to:				
1. Recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress				
Very Low, Low, Medium	46%	44.6 – 47.6%	55%	52.1 – 57.1%
High, Very High	54%	52.7 – 55.7%	45%	42.9 – 46.9%

Question/Response Category	Total Sample		Teachers only	
	%	90% CI	%	90% CI
2. Talk with a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress to motivate them to connect with mental health support services				
Very Low, Low, Medium	53%	51.8 – 54.8%	64%	61.8 – 65.6%
High, Very High	47%	45.2 – 48.2%	36%	34.4 – 38.2%
3. Use communication strategies to help a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress feel safe connect with mental health support services				
Very Low, Low, Medium	50%	48.9 – 51.9%	60%	57.9 – 61.8%
High, Very High	50%	48.1 – 51.1%	40%	38.2 – 42.1%
4. Teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions in alignment with the PA Career Ready Skills				
Very Low, Low, Medium	72%	70.3 – 73.0%	79%	76.9 – 80.2%
High, Very High	28%	27.0 – 29.7%	22%	19.8 – 23.1%
5. Implement trauma-informed approaches in teaching				
Very Low, Low, Medium	67%	65.5 – 68.4%	75%	73.0 – 76.5%
High, Very High	33%	31.6 – 34.5%	25%	23.5 – 27.0%

Indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Question/Response Category	Total Sample		Teachers only	
6. I feel confident in my ability to recognize when a student is exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	22%	20.8 – 23.3%	28%	26.0 – 29.5%
Agree, Strongly Agree	78%	76.6 – 79.2%	72%	70.5 – 75.0%
7. I feel confident in my ability to talk with a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress to motivate them to connect with mental health support services				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	30%	28.9 – 31.7%	38%	36.0 – 39.9%
Agree, Strongly Agree	70%	68.3 – 71.1%	62%	60.1 – 64.0%
8. I feel confident in my ability to use communication strategies to help a student exhibiting signs of psychological trauma or distress feel safe				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	29%	28.0 – 30.8%	38%	36.1 – 39.9%
Agree, Strongly Agree	71%	69.2 – 72.0%	62%	60.1 – 63.9%
9. I feel confident in my ability to teach students activities to manage their stress and emotions				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	35%	33.8 – 36.6%	43%	41.0 – 44.9%
Agree, Strongly Agree	65%	63.4 – 66.2%	57%	55.1 – 59.0%
10. I feel confident in my ability to implement trauma-informed approaches in teaching				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	49%	47.1 – 50.1%	55%	53.1 – 57.0%
Agree, Strongly Agree	51%	49.9 – 52.9%	45%	43.0 – 46.9%

Indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements:

Question/Response Category	Total Sample		Teachers only	
11. I think that a student who is receiving mental health treatment is showing a sign of personal strength				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	14%	12.9 – 15.0%	15%	13.8 – 16.6%
Agree, Strongly Agree	86%	85.0 – 87.1%	85%	83.4 – 86.2%
12. Most teachers and staff in my school think that a student who is receiving mental health treatment is showing a sign of personal weakness				
SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	91%	90.6 – 92.3%	92%	91.3 – 93.4%
Agree, Strongly Agree	9%	7.7 – 9.4%	8%	6.6 – 8.7%

Question/Response Category	Total Sample		Teachers only	
	%	90% CI	%	90% CI

13. Part of the role of teachers and staff in my school is to connect students experiencing psychological trauma or distress with mental health support services

SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	19%	18.0 – 20.3%	21%	19.3 – 22.5%
Agree, Strongly Agree	81%	79.7 – 82.0%	79%	77.5 – 80.7%

14. Students who disrupt my class do not care about learning

SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	97%	96.1 – 97.2%	96%	94.8 – 96.4%
Agree, Strongly Agree	3%	2.8 – 3.9%	4%	3.6 – 5.2%

15. I do not take it personally when a student is verbally aggressive towards me

SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	36%	34.7 – 37.5%	44%	41.7 – 45.6%
Agree, Strongly Agree	64%	62.5 – 65.3%	56%	54.4 – 58.3%

16. In your opinion, do you believe all educators should receive explicit training in trauma-informed classroom practices?

SD, Disagree, Neither Disagree/Agree	4.7%	4.1 - 5.4%	6.4%	5.4 – 7.4%
Agree, Strongly Agree	95.3%	94.6 - 95.9%	93.6%	92.6 – 94.6%

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
SD *= Strongly Disagree.*
Ns for each item vary from 4,208 to 4,230 for All Educators and 2,426 to 2,440 for Teachers Only.

Limitations and Caveats Associated with this Investigation

As with any investigation, there are limitations and caveats to consider when interpreting and/or utilizing the results. In alignment with the cautions previously provided concerning generalization of the results from this investigation, the greatest limitation is that of sample size. Acknowledging that the Kognito (2020) white paper reflected results of 11 states comprised of 8,054 teacher respondents, yielding 4,377 responses specific to Pennsylvania is noteworthy. However, this yield is projected to represent less than 5% of the educational work force in the commonwealth.

The greatest limitation is that of sample-size.

Further, and as previously highlighted, concern as to the representative nature of the sample yielded is a limitation. This was due, in largest part, to two inter-related factors. These factors were 1) the time and resource constraints associated with the awarded project and 2) to gain more proportional and representative response rates from larger (mostly urban) schools would have required processing individual IRB requests through each unique IRB approval process associated with each specific school system, particularly larger districts from areas in which we know response rates were very low (e.g., School District of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Erie's Public Schools).

Beyond these two-primary limitations, one could question the rationale for disaggregating the response data by PaTTAN office region as opposed to other potential options (e.g., regions associated with Student Assistance Programs). This approach was selected as it appeared to be the most logical for two reasons: 1) logistics associated with data analyses and 2) PaTTAN offices provide a substantial portion of professional development to educators across the commonwealth.

Recommendations for Consideration by PDE

In respect to the aforementioned details, the following recommendations are offered for consideration by PDE given the importance of trauma-awareness and trauma-informed approaches in schools across the commonwealth:

- In the event that PDE desires to conduct a more robust investigation yielding a greater representative sample size along with obtaining a stratified random sample (e.g., more sensitive to urban educators' perspectives from larger school systems such as the School District of Philadelphia and the Pittsburgh Public Schools), *PDE considers funding a study that runs over a two-year time frame to provide suitable time for 1) PDE IRB approval and 2) replication of seeking and gaining approval through larger/urban school-districts' IRB processes.*

- PDE continues to *disseminate information through logical conduits of kindred entities and networks that have a priority area of focus on trauma-informed practices in early childhood education and K-12 school programs* (e.g., HEAL PA, Resilient PA, Community of Practice on School-based Behavioral Health).

- PDE considers requesting information dissemination and training entities aligned with operations of PDE (e.g., PaTTAN and the Office for Safe Schools) that provide *regionalized outreach and supports on trauma-informed approaches to explore the appropriateness of delving deeper into the regional differences depicted in this report* with respect to their potential influence on planning of aligned trauma-informed outreach endeavors moving forward.

- PDE further explores *alignment of curricula and outreach between in-service educator professional development and pre-service educator preparatory programs on trauma-informed approaches* in educational settings.

Points of Closure

In closing, the authors thank PDE for the opportunity to conduct this investigation. While the sample size realized was not as large or demographically representative as hoped for, it was reasonably in-line with the projected sample size to be yielded through this study given the constraints previously noted. The existent time and resource constraints directly limited the ability of the investigators to process individualized requests through larger school systems' unique IRB processes, which predictably would have further enhanced the yielded responses. Despite this limitation, given the alignment of findings with the Kognito (2020) white paper coupled with the recommendations provided for consideration to PDE, the investigators believe the results from this survey should prove useful to PDE as well as kindred constituencies with a vested interest in trauma-awareness and trauma-informed practices in schools.

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