Yale *Center for Emotional Intelligence*

Supporting Connecticut Educators with SEL During Times of Uncertainty and Stress: Findings from Fall 2020

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This report was prepared by a collaborative team of researchers at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to support the real-time transmission of findings on the emotional health and well-being of Connecticut School Personnel during the fall of the 2020 school year. We share this report with the intention of lending science and evidence to cultivate resilience for school staff during this time of crisis.

Suggested Citation: Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (2020). *Supporting Connecticut Educators with SEL During Times of Uncertainty and Stress: Fall 2020 Findings*. New Haven, CT: Yale University

Executive Summary

This report shares baseline survey results from over 2,500 school personnel in Connecticut who registered for the free course, Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress, developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and funded by Dalio Education so that it could be offered at no charge to CT school staff. As part of the course experience, participants could participate in a short survey study to inform the scientific and practitioner communities about emotional experiences, impacts, and opportunities for cultivating resilience in both educators and students during this time of crisis. Participants reported on their emotional experiences, sources of stress and joy, recommendations for support, and key demographics through open-ended and closed-response questions.

Key findings included (1) differences between school personnel's responses, now and before the pandemic, on standardized measures of affective experiences and what they shared in their open response questions regarding their feelings of inclusion, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, intentions to quit, and perceived principal emotional intelligence, (2) sources of joy were grounded in school personnel's experiences with their students, colleagues, and families, and sources of stress included "everything else" related to the practice of teaching, and (3) a substantial lack of support for school personnel social-emotional needs and their request for resources and skill development.

About the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence is a self-supporting unit in the Child Study Center at the Yale School of Medicine. Directed by Dr. Marc Brackett, we use the power of emotions to create a healthier, and more equitable and compassionate society, today and for future generations. We conduct research and design educational approaches that support people of all ages in developing emotional intelligence and the skills to thrive and contribute to society. Learn more about us at www.ycei.org.

Abbreviations

AES: Affective Experiences Scale
CASEL: The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
CRESS: Crisis Response Educator SEL Survey
CSP: Connecticut School Personnel
EFESS: Emotion-Focused Educator SEL Survey
EI: Emotional Intelligence
MBI: Maslach Burnout Inventory
P-SOW: Sources of Well-being modified for the pandemic
SEL: Social and Emotional Learning
SOW: Sources of Well-being
YCEI: The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Supporting Connecticut Educators with SEL During Times of Uncertainty and Stress

FINDINGS FROM FALL 2020

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Introduction

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted teaching and learning, prompting an immediate transition to remote learning for most schools in the US. The ambiguity of the pandemic's trajectory, and variable threats to health and safety, necessitated remote and hybrid learning contexts that evolved from temporary solutions to longer term adaptations through 2020. This year was characterized by uncertainty regarding the short-term and long-term impact of COVID-19, the effects of the pandemic on individuals' physical and mental health, and the economic well-being of our nation. Educators have been especially affected by the pandemic, requiring them to overhaul their teaching methods, take on new roles, and continuously adapt as the conditions for teaching and learning changed.

At the end of March, our team at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (YCEI), along with colleagues at the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), launched an initial survey to inquire into the emotional lives of teachers during COVID-19. In the span of just three days, over 5,000 U.S. teachers responded to the survey. We asked them to describe, in their own words, the three most frequent emotions they felt each day.

The five most-mentioned feelings among all teachers were **anxious**, **fearful**, **worried**, **overwhelmed**, and **sad**.

Anxiety was, by far, the most frequently mentioned emotion. The reasons educators gave for these feelings could be divided into two categories. The first set of reasons were personal, including a fear that they or someone in their family would contract COVID-19. The second set of reasons pertained to the stress of managing their own and their families' needs, while simultaneously working full time from home and adapting to new technologies for teaching. Given the unexpected new demands educators were facing due to the pandemic, we might assume that teachers were feeling entirely differently during the pandemic compared to the emotions they were experiencing before the pandemic. But was that the case?

In 2017, our Center conducted a similar survey on teachers' emotions. A national sample of over 5,000 educators answered the same questions about how they were feeling. Back then, the top five emotions were: frustrated, overwhelmed, stressed, tired, and happy. The primary source of

their frustration and stress pertained to lack of support by their administration around challenges related to meeting all of their students' learning needs, high-stakes testing, an ever-changing curriculum, and maintaining work/life balance.

Before the pandemic, America's teachers were already burning out. Add in new expectations of becoming distance-learning experts to support uninterrupted learning for all their students, as well as caring for the ever-evolving demands of their families, and it's no surprise that 95 percent of the feelings they reported recently were rooted in **anxiety**.

As weeks in the pandemic turned to months, our team mobilized and partnered with educators and agencies across the country to understand and support educators and their school communities in real time. Through anonymous surveys, focus groups, longitudinal interventions, and interviews, we learned with educators and school personnel across the nation

(more than 20,000 and counting). The results are consistent across the studies we conducted this year. From district leaders (Brackett et al., 2020) to education support professionals (Cipriano et al., 2020a), educators spanning early childhood (Bailey et al., UR) through high school (Baumsteiger et al., UR; Hoffmann et al., 2020; Zieher et al., UR), those working with general and special education students (Floman et al., IP, & Cipriano et al., 2020b), and across all levels of their career (Brackett et al., IP; LaPalme et al., IP), there is a need among educators for more training and guidance on how to manage their emotions during this time—including what regulation strategies are, how to practice them for themselves, and how to support their students, colleagues and families to co-regulate.

We may not be able to control what is happening to and around us, but we can control how we respond to it. To support the psychosocial health and well-being of educators in Connecticut, the YCEI, with funding from Dalio Education (#19-07517) developed a free online certificate course for school personnel (hereafter referred to as CSP, Connecticut School Personnel). Developed by leading experts in the fields of psychology, education, and research at the YCEI, this 10-hour course launched on October 1st and provides school staff with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to understand and manage their emotions

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and to help students with their emotions. Course participants begin by learning about why social and emotional learning is an important component of education. Then, they explore how to identify and manage emotions, including how to support their students with their emotions in scientific and culturally responsive ways. Participants complete "Weekly Action Plans" to build a comprehensive and personalized guide for lasting change.

As part of the course experience, participants are invited to participate in a short survey study to inform the scientific and educator practitioner communities about their emotional experiences, impacts, and opportunities for cultivating resilience in both educators and students during this time of crisis. To support the real-time dissemination of findings and to offer support to educators as we continue to move through the challenges of pandemic teaching, we present results from the survey completed by CSP before starting the course and collected between October 1st and November 30th, 2020. In this report we present a state-level, fall 2020 snapshot of CSP's emotional health and SEL supports, as well as the conditions that reflect systemic approaches to SEL.

Research Questions

We organize this report around four research questions. During the fall of 2020:

1 How were CSP feeling about work?

Specifically, we examined which feelings CSP reported when asked to describe, in their own words, their typical feelings at work, and which feelings CSP rated as the most frequently experienced at school, using emotion rating scales.

2 What were the sources of stress for CSP?

Specifically, we examined which experiences CSP reported when they were asked to describe, in their own words, their experiences of stress and frustration at work, and what sources of stress CSP rated as the most frequently experienced at school using rating scales.

3 What were the sources of joy for CSP?

Specifically, we examined which experiences CSP reported when asked to describe, in their own words, their experiences of joy at work.

4 What were the sources of support for CSP?

Specifically, we examined how much CSP felt they were supported by their school or district in their own social and emotional needs, what strategies CSP reported using to manage their feelings, and what CSP reported, in their own words, their schools could do to better support educator health and well-being.
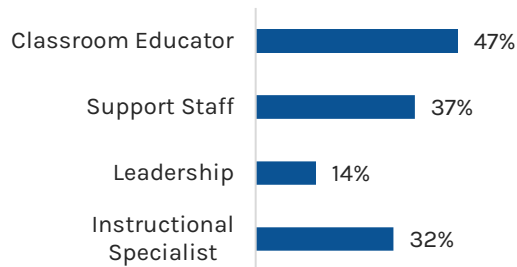
Methods

PARTICIPANTS

Of the 6,777 CSP who participated in the course at the time this data was drawn, (November 30, 2020), 2,631 (38.8%) consented to participate in the research study. The sample was largely female (79%) and White (83%), which mirror the characteristics of CT educators (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Participants' ranged in age from 20 to 75 (M = 43, SD = 11), teaching experience from 0 to 53 years ($Mean$ = 10.23, $Median$ = 8, SD = 8.42), and role (classroom educator = 47%, support staff = 37%, leadership = 14%, and instructional specialist = 32%).
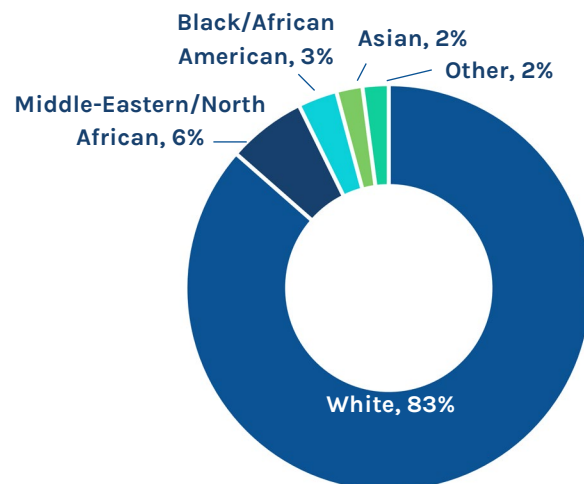
Role in School

Classroom Educator — 47%
Support Staff — 37%
Leadership — 14%
Instructional Specialist — 32%

Average Teaching Experience
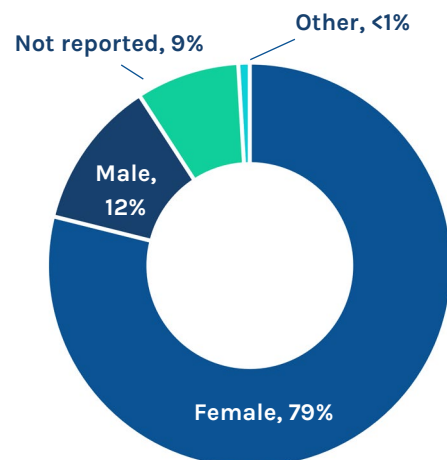
10 years, with a range of 0 – 53 years

Average Age

43 With a range from 20-75 years old

Race and Ethnicity

Black/African American, 3%
Asian, 2%
Other, 2%
Middle-Eastern/North African, 6%
White, 83%

Gender

Not reported, 9%
Other, <1%
Male, 12%
Female, 79%

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School Setting

Rural, 13%

Urban, 30%

Suburban, 53%

Grade Level

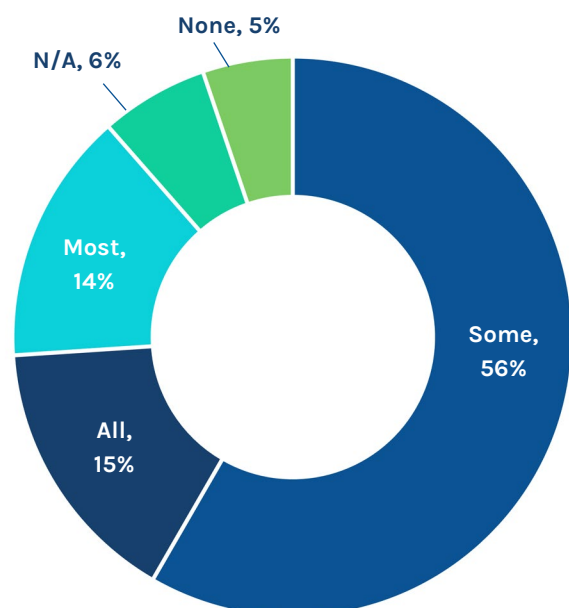|	
Other	5%
Afterschool	1%
Postsecondary Education	2%
High School	29%
Middle School	31%
Elementary School	45%
Preschool/Daycare	10%
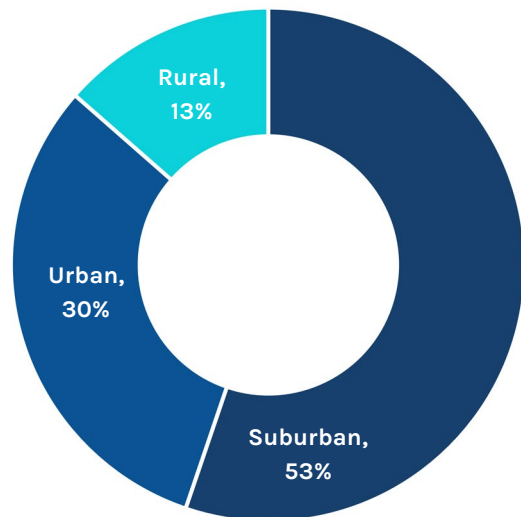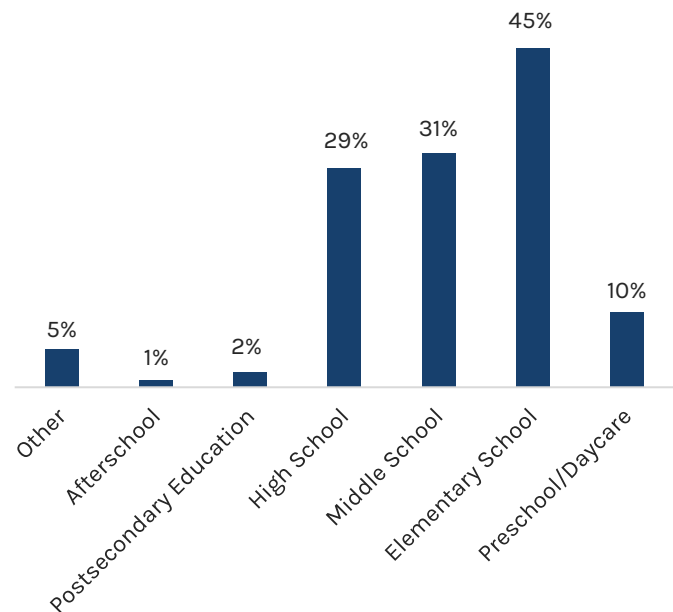
Mode of Instruction

86%

86% of participants reported their school utilizing a combination of distance and in-person learning

Schoolwide SEL Implementation

47%
Before pandemic

→

62%
After pandemic began

Proportion of Students with IEPs

None, 5%

N/A, 6%

Most, 14%

Some, 56%

All, 15%

MEASURES

The survey participants completed included demographic and descriptive items, questions from several scales that research teams at the YCEI have been developing for the past two years prior to the pandemic, and related open-ended questions.

Demographic and COVID-19 Learning Context. In addition to the demographic information already reported (age, gender, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, role in school, grade level, school type, and proportion of students with IEPs served), the survey included items to understand CSP's current learning context, specifically whether their school was currently delivering instruction in person, online, or mixed.

How CSP Feel. CSP affective experiences and well-being were measured several ways. First, CSP were asked to respond to the prompt: "How do you currently feel" and instructed to type one feeling into one of three text boxes. This allowed us to gather their most salient feelings in their own words. Next, CSP completed the 50-item Affective Experiences Scale (AES; Floman et al., IP), a teacher-report survey designed to capture educator experiences of positive and negative affect; the survey captures 29 positive and 21 negative feelings. CSP were

asked to rate how often they experienced the emotion in the past few weeks from *None of the time* (1) to *All of the time* (5). CSP were also asked to report the extent to which they feel safe from COVID-19 while at work from *Not at all safe* (1) to *Very safe* (4), with the option to select *Not applicable,* to learn about their feelings of safety in context of the pandemic. Finally, burnout was measured using the 14-item Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), including the Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment, Principal Emotional Intelligence (EI), Turnover Intentions, and Feelings of Inclusion subscales. Participants indicated how frequently, from *Never (1)* to *Daily* (5), they had particular experiences in the past few weeks (Maslach et al., 1986). Example items include "I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work" and "My principal is emotionally supportive of others."

Sources of Stress and Well-being. Sources of stress and well-being were measured with two open-ended questions related to sources of stress and joy, and with items from the P-SOW. The SOW (Floman et al. IP) is a teacher-report survey designed to identify how much experiences and perspectives common in education reflect educators' professional experience. It was modified in response to the COVID-19 crisis

to include pandemic specific items and omit items less applicable during the current crisis (P-SOW; Floman et al. IP). For the open-ended questions, CSP were asked to reflect on their experiences of stress and frustration and joy and inspiration at work, and then asked to type their responses to the following questions in text boxes: "What are the top three factors that contribute to your stress and frustration at school?" and "What are the top three factors that contribute to your joy and inspiration at school?" Extensive qualitative analyses were conducted on a random subset (N=500) of the open-ended responses of sources of stress and sources of joy; a text frequency analysis was conducted on the full sample of responses (N=2601) for confirmation. CSP were also asked to rate how well each of the 11 P-SOW item statements reflect their experience at work over the past month from *Never* (1) to *Daily* (5), reflecting sources of well-being related to having positive relationships with students and colleagues, feeling supported by school leaders, and feeling safe at work. Example items include "I make a difference in my students' lives" and "My colleagues are respectful to me."

Emotion Regulation. CSP reported the frequency that they used 15 emotion regulation strategies over the past two weeks. Listed strategies included items

emotional needs during the pandemic?" such as: "I reached out to someone to talk about my feelings" and "I tried to use humor or see the light side of things." They rated each item on a scale from *None of the time* (1) to *All of the time* (5).

School Support of CSP's Social and Emotional Needs. The CRESS (Zieher et al., 2020) was designed to better understand educators' SEL practices in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including guidance, support and priority of schools as well as educator use of SEL for themselves and with students. Select items from the CRESS were included in the survey. The CRESS is drawn from the Emotion Focused Educator SEL Survey (The EFESS), a teacher-report survey designed to capture teacher practices to cultivate positive classroom culture, emotion literacy, emotion regulation, social problem solving, and SEL integration (Strambler et al., IP).

Specifically, CSP were asked to rate "How much has your school (or district) supported your own social and on a scale from *Not at all* (1) to *A lot* (4) that also included the option *Unsure*. They were also asked to answer an open response question: "What could schools do to better support your health and well-being?"

Results

COVID-19 LEARNING CONTEXT

The majority of CSP (86%) reported their schools were offering a combination of distance and in-person learning; few reported they were offering only distance learning (2%), only in-person learning (3%), or another option (9%). More CSP reported that their school implemented a schoolwide SEL approach after the pandemic (62%) than before it began (47%).

HOW CSP FEEL

CSP open response feeling word entries were calculated per text box and overall. Feeling words were collapsed if they had the same word root (e.g., "overwhelming", "overwhelmed", and "overwhelm") or if they were misspelled (e.g., "anxious" and "axious"). See Table 1 for the top ten feeling words (per text box and overall) and their corresponding frequencies.

The most common feeling words reported overall were **overwhelmed**, **stressed**, and **anxious**.

CSP's most common affective experiences as reported across the survey questions included: pleasant feelings related to compassion, gratitude, and engagement; unpleasant feelings related to burnout, anxiety, and anger. See Table 2 for descriptive information on all assessed affective experiences. Based on the MBI, CSP reported high levels of Feelings of Inclusion (M = 4.00, SD = 1.06), Personal Accomplishment (M = 3.81, SD = 0.82), and Principal EI (M = 3.79, SD = 1.17), and low Turnover Intentions (M = 1.85, SD = 1.03, but also medium levels of Emotional Exhaustion (M = 2.90, SD = 1.09).

CSP who reported that they worked in person at least some of the time were asked to report their sense of safety from COVID-19. On average, CSP felt moderately safe from COVID-19 (*M* = 2.64, *SD* = .96), though 38% reported feeling *a little unsafe* and 9% reported feeling *not at all safe*.

TABLE 1: *TOP EMOTION FEELINGS WORDS*

Entry 1	%	Entry 2	%	Entry 3	%	Overall	%
Stressed	18.8	Stressed	10.8	Overwhelmed	7.0	Overwhelmed	11.2
Overwhelmed	17.3	Anxious	10.3	Anxious	6.7	Stressed	11.2
Anxious	13.2	Overwhelmed	9.3	Frustrated	6.4	Anxious	10.1
Frustrated	8.1	Frustrated	8.2	Tired	4.9	Frustrated	7.6
Happy	5.1	Happy	4.8	Happy	4.8	Happy	4.9
Tired	3.9	Tired	4.7	Stressed	4.1	Tired	4.5
Excited	2.8	Excited	3.2	Exhausted	3.1	Excited	2.8
Exhausted	2.6	Exhausted	3.2	Hopeful	3	Exhausted	3.0
Joy	1.8	Worried	3.1	Worried	2.7	Worried	2.4
Uncertain	1.7	Uncertain	2.1	Excited	2.5	Hopeful	1.6

Notes. Numbers reflect the frequency of self-entered feeling words per entry box and across all three boxes (N = 2601). Feeling words were collapsed if they were of the same root word, or if they were the same word but misspelled (e.g., ''overwhelming'', ''overwhelemed'' and ''overwhelmed'').

TABLE 2: *AFFECTIVE EXPERIENCES*

Pleasant Feelings	M	SD	Unpleasant Feelings	M	SD
Compassion	3.77	0.70	Burnout	3.40	0.97
Gratitude	3.55	0.83	Anxiety	3.07	0.92
Engagement	3.51	0.70	Anger	2.73	0.77
Belonging	3.28	0.83	Sadness	2.26	0.86
Hope	3.19	0.72	Loneliness	2.23	0.93
Pride	3.12	0.76	Boredom	2.09	0.75
Joy	2.99	0.80	Shame	1.44	0.58
Contentment	2.96	0.83			
Inspiration	2.61	0.84			

Notes. The table contains the most common affective experiences reported by CSP, as measured by the AES (Floman et al, 2019). A higher mean indicates a greater instance of reports of the affective experience (e.g., feeling compassion) by CSP.

SOURCES OF STRESS AND WELL-BEING

The most common sources of stress, as described by CSP in their own words, were **job demands** (15.2% of responses), **school regulations related to COVID-19** (12.9%), and a **lack of time, resources, or training** (12.6%).

The most common sources of joy, as described by CSP in their own words, were **positive interactions with students (23.8%), positive interactions with colleagues (17.8%),** and **watching students learn (16%).**

Other sources of stress related to administration/leadership (9.1%), general COVID concerns (7.3%), general school community (6.5%), colleague/coworker conflict (4.8%), a lack of student engagement/motivation (3.7%), technological challenges (3.7%), feeling unappreciated (2.9%), feeling incompetent (2.8%), interactions with parents (2.6%), personal factors/concerns (2.5%), students doing poorly (2.1%), feeling isolated (1.0%), and low pay (<1%). See Appendix A for the full description and examples of each source of stress.

Other sources of joy related to learning new skills (4.7%), having a sense of accomplishment (4.3%), extrinsic rewards (4.2%), a sense of school community (3.7%), intrinsic rewards (3.5%), personal self-care (2.3%), positive interactions with parents (1.7%), and positive interactions with school leaders (1.3%). See Appendix B for a full description and examples of each source of joy. Furthermore, based on responses to the P-SOW, CSP's most common sources of joy included positive interactions with students and colleagues, and the least-common source of joy was support from school leadership (see Table 3).

While the qualitative analyses conducted on the open-ended responses of sources of stress and sources of well-being were based on a random subsample of responses (N=500), a text frequency analysis on the full sample of responses (N=2601) was consistent with the five most common words relating to sources of stress and joy in the subsample. The most common word in sources of stress was "lack" (3.85%), while the most common word in sources of joy was "students" (10.62%). See Table 4 for the top five words (for the subsample and the larger respondent pool) and their corresponding frequencies.

**TABLE 3: *CSP SOURCES OF WELL-BEING AT WORK
(IN PERSON AND/OR REMOTELY)***

	M	SD
I have positive one-on-one interactions with my students.	4.27	0.92
I make a difference in my students' lives.	3.99	0.97
My colleagues are respectful to me.	4.37	0.79
I work collaboratively with my colleagues.	4.02	1.10
I feel physically safe at school.	3.81	1.16
I feel emotionally safe at school.	3.69	1.12
There are enough material resources available at my school to effectively meet all student needs.	3.41	1.30
There are sufficient staff in my classroom/school to meet all students' needs.	3.18	1.35
School leadership recognizes my contributions to the school.	3.03	1.36
School leadership offers opportunities for valuable professional development.	2.65	1.26
School leadership considers me in the school's decision-making process.	2.55	1.38

Note: Items were rated from 1 (Never) to 5 (Daily) on the frequency of experiencing the above items over the previous month.

TABLE 4: *FIVE MOST COMMON WORDS IN RESPONSE TO SOURCES OF JOY AND STRESS PROMPTS*

Responses from wider participant pool				Responses from random subset			
Sources of stress	*%*	*Sources of joy*	*%*	*Sources of stress*	*%*	*Sources of joy*	*%*
Lack	3.9	Students	10.6	Lack	5.0	Students	14.4
Students	3.8	Works	2.8	Students	3.8	Working	2.9
Times	2.3	Seeing	2.5	Times	3.0	Colleagues	2.7
Working	2.0	Colleagues	2.0	Working	2.0	Seeing	2.1
COVID	1.3	Learning	1.6	COVID	1.6	Learning	1.8

Notes. Percent frequency of the five most common words reported by the wider participant pool (N = 2601) and the random sample (N = 500) in response to the sources of joy and sources of stress prompts. Frequencies were calculated using Nvivo. Words with the same root were collapsed (e.g., "lack," "lacking", "lacked", and "lacks").

EMOTION REGULATION

CSP endorsed a range of emotion regulation strategies, with the most common being acceptance, cognitive reappraisal, and the use of humor, and the least common being religion/spirituality, giving up, and using alcohol to cope. Educators reported using healthy/neutral strategies significantly more often (*M* = 2.03, *SD* = .56) than unhealthy strategies (*M* = 1.36, *SD* = .66), *t*(2,532)= 37.66, *p* < .001. See Table 5 for the frequencies of all strategies and information on which strategies were coded as healthy or neutral (e.g., positive self-talk, listening to music) and those that were coded as unhealthy (e.g., giving up, taking anger out on others).

TABLE 5: EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES
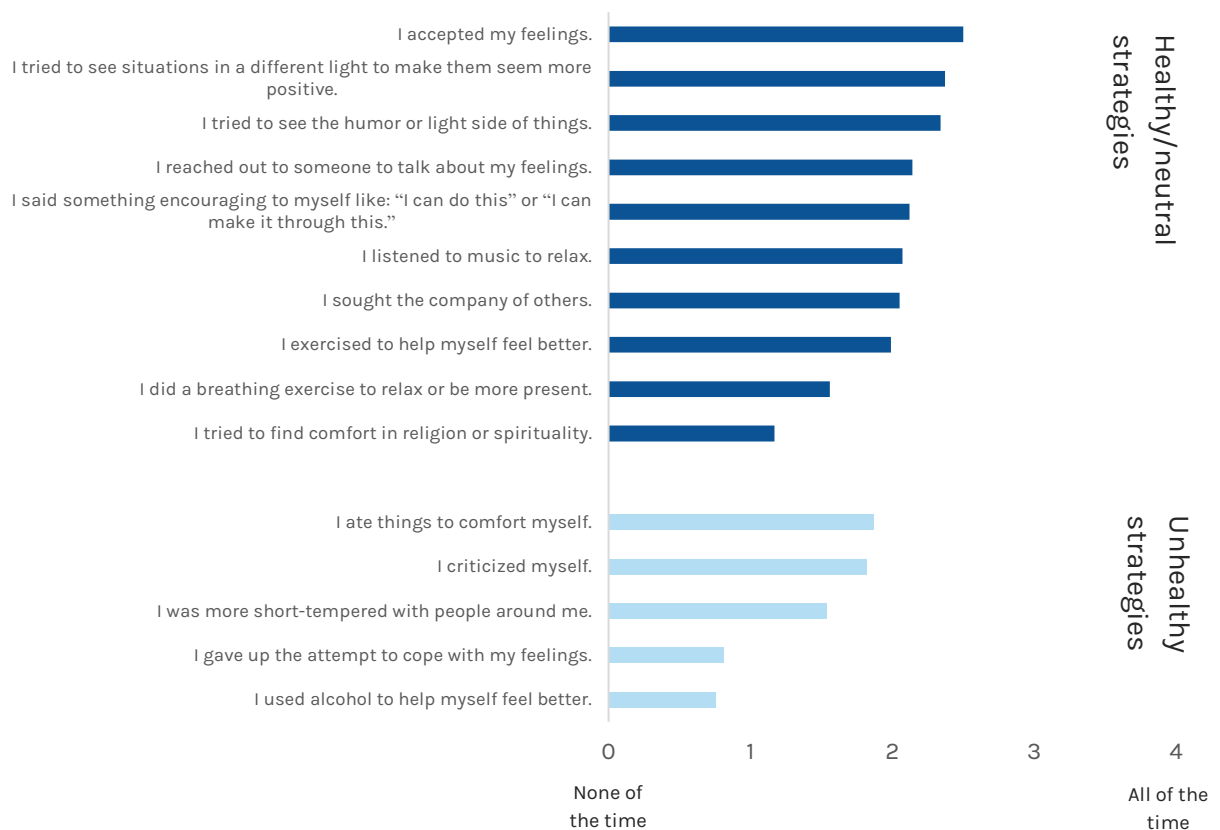
SCHOOL SUPPORT OF CSP'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS

On average, CSP reported that their school supported their social and emotional needs to some extent (*M* = 2.73, *SD* = .96), although 38% reported their school was providing *very little support*, and 9% reported receiving *no support at all* for their social and emotional needs.

When asked how schools could better support them, the most common responses were related to emotional support/self-care (35.1% of responses), reducing workload and providing more planning time (29.7%), changing school regulations (29.5%), providing more recognition and acknowledgement (22.5%), providing more resources/training (20.6%), and providing adequate cleaning supplies or ventilation systems (4.4%). See Appendix C for a description and examples of each theme.

Discussion

This report provides a snapshot of Connecticut School Personnel's emotional health and well-being during the fall of 2020. At first glance, our findings paint an encouraging picture of educators' experiences during this time. For example, CSP reported similar feelings of stress and anxiety as was reported at the onset of the pandemic, as well as the sources of these stressors (job demands, health and safety, and lack of time; Brackett & Cipriano, 2020).

Furthermore, over half of the CSP in our sample reported feeling supported in their own SEL use, and the CSP in our sample generally reported using healthy strategies (such as acceptance, reappraisal, and social support) more than unhealthy strategies (self-criticism, food and alcohol, defeat) to regulate their emotions. Although these data suggest in part that CSP felt supported and were managing their anxieties and stress well despite the stressors of the pandemic, a closer look at the open-ended responses and patterns of emotions and support reported by the 2,631 CSP in our sample suggests a much more complex picture of experiences and needs. We discuss three interrelated findings here for consideration.

First, *educators' responses on standardized measures of affective experiences differed from what they shared in their open response questions.* Specifically, we note discrepancies between how CSP reported their feelings of inclusion, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, turnover intentions, and perceived principal EI. A review of these standardized items alone for these five constructs from the MBI and P-SOW would suggest that our sample felt a strong sense of inclusion and personal accomplishment at work, that they perceived their principals to have high levels of EI, they felt moderately emotionally exhausted at this time, and had low intentions to leave their jobs. However, when we look at the open-response questions and themes that emerged from our sample, we find a very different narrative.

Feelings of inclusion. Despite relatively high ratings of inclusion on the standardized measures, in the open responses, CSP reported that they felt excluded from decision-making regarding how to conduct learning in the context of the pandemic.

"The expectations placed on teachers are very high, and in general, we are not appreciated by all. Leadership in the district behind closed doors (that I'm sometimes privy to) has been critical of teachers' concerns recently."

Others echoed this idea, attributing some of their stress to "decisions being made over which I have no input" and explaining, "discussions about reopening did not include any teachers," "our concerns aren't being heard or dealt with." CSP reported that that they want to feel more included, suggesting that leaders "be more positive about each of our contributions, communicate with us, make us feel valued, be honest about our job performance" and "include us in major decisions that affect us directly."

Sense of personal accomplishment. Like the results from our measure, open responses indicated that a major source of joy for CSP were personal accomplishments ("when I feel like I did something the right way"; "accomplishing something new"). Descriptions revealed that most of these accomplishments relate to CSP's ability to support students. Specifically, CSP reported finding joy in "seeing students succeed," "progress of instruction through difficult times," "breakthroughs with students," and "making a difference."

Emotional exhaustion. Based on our measure, CSP reported moderate levels of emotional exhaustion. However, the open responses revealed that many CSP felt "stretched thin" with "too many tasks, too little time."

"We wear too many hats and are expected to take care of the welfare of our students and in some sense, their families too. In these times, when it's hard enough to take care of oneself, this puts a huge burden on my shoulders."

Related to this, CSP reported that they did not have enough time to practice self-care. One person explained, "As silly as it sounds, getting days off that they took away so we can have a mental break from it all. We

have no break from the end of September to Thanksgiving. The weekends go too fast, you try to do errands, clean, plan doctor's appointments to catch up since COVID and they want you to do it after school hours, but having time for you to have fun and letting off steam is short lived." When asked to identify supports, CSP called for: "Giving us time to get the additional work done & time to self-care."

Principals' emotional intelligence. CSP ranked their principals as high in EI. Such a ranking would suggest that leaders are sensitive to the varied experiences and needs of their staff and address them with intentional, preventative, and inclusive action (Cipriano et al., 2020b). The open responses reinforced the ideas that some CSP feel supported by their principals. For example, one person stated, "I personally feel that my school administrators do a great job in supporting myself and others; as well as valuing my feelings." Another person reported a similar view, writing, "My school leadership is great - we do a lot of check-ins, field trips, and self-care." However, other CSP reported that they do not feel supported by their principal and other school leaders. For example, CSP indicated that a source of stress was a "lack of leadership from the department chair or principal," including a lack of direction, support, transparency around

> "Administration needs to reach out to teachers to see how they are doing. They act like they don't care."

decisions, transparency, and appreciation for classroom teachers.

Another said, "Admin need to manage their emotions. Conflict and feeling uncomfortable emotions are very difficult for my admin." These findings indicate that some principals and other administrators are exhibiting high emotion skills in supporting CSP, whereas others could take a more emotionally-intelligent approach.

Intentions to leave. Overall CSP reported low turnover intentions. However, as described above, open responses indicated that many CSP are currently feeling overwhelmed and unsupported. There was also evidence that these feelings are worse now than they were before the pandemic. One person addressed this explicitly, saying, "I have always loved my job. It is only September and I am 100% burnt out for the year already and so are my colleagues.". Another said, "At the beginning of COVID,

we were highly praised. It's changed immensely."

Teachers who were applauded as heroes at the beginning of the pandemic were criticized when they began to bring up their fears and uneasiness about returning to in-person instruction this past fall. Furthermore, CSP expressed many ideas about how they could be better supported (see adjacent).

Overall these responses indicate that many CSP do not feel adequately supported. If these feelings persist, then they could lead CSP to leave the field.

Secondly, *we report an important distinction between the sources of stress and sources of well-being.* In our sample, CSP reported their sources of joy to be grounded in their experiences with their students, colleagues, and families (e.g., "Seeing the children's faces when they smile, after they learn something new.," "connections with kids," "supportive conversations with parents and faculty"). The stresses reported were in many ways, "everything else" around the practice of teaching, including factors such as inadequate technology, too much screen time, additional paperwork, social distancing requirements, too many meetings, a tumultuous political climate, schedule changes, the requirement to uphold social distancing policies, and worries about getting sick.

"There is not much support for the care of staff but more so that we need to continue getting through tasks and pretend that everything is normal and fine so that we can address our students' needs. That can be hard to do if we are not addressing our own needs and stress first."

"First, urban districts need to consistently acknowledge that teachers are on the 'frontline,' and are often the 'first responders' to students in actively traumatic situations outside of school…we are told that this year we should focus more on social and emotional learning and well-being, yet we are also expected to return to business as usual for curriculum and instruction."

As one person wrote, "There needs to be less of busy work and administrative duties, teachers need more time to collaborate and focus on teaching." Most reports out right now are focusing on the difficulty teachers are having with navigating remote and hybrid instruction and their inability to engage students and connect. Interestingly in our study, CSP report that these interactions with students and their colleagues were their primary source of joy, and rather cited that all of the extra responsibilities and evolving requirements as a result of the changing conditions for teaching and learning were stressful—but their students and colleagues were what brought them joy. This is also important given what we have been learning from across the country regarding educators reported loss of self- and collective-efficacy during this tumultuous time. Together these findings point toward a need to elevate and center educators' instructional autonomy and to increase opportunities for meaningful engagement with students and colleagues. Reducing sources of stress and enhancing sources of joy could help to support CSP's overall health and well-being.

Further, we note that **the exact same pattern** was found between the sources of joy CSP reported in their open-ended responses, and what they reported in the items selected on the sources of well-being scale (P-SOW). Unlike reports of affective experiences in our study, where standardized reports of how teachers were feeling differed from what they reported in their open responses, sources of joy were consistent across both types of reports. Interactions with students and colleagues were ranked highest among their sources of joy and interactions with school leaders (including school administrators and district leaders) were ranked least likely to bring them joy. This consistency in reports provides evidence of convergent validity for the P-SOW scale and indicates that this finding accurately reflects the reality of CSP's experiences.

Lastly, *although CSP reported generally using healthy regulation strategies to cope through this time, they noted a significant lack of support and request for resources and skills.* Importantly, only just over half the sample reported feeling supported, with **47% of the sample reporting that their school was providing very little to no support at all for their social and emotional needs.** This finding is concerning due to the importance of educator's well-being, and its well-documented links to students' academic success and well-being (e.g., Becker et al., 2014; Keller et al., 2014; Radel et al., 2010; Rodrigo-Ruiz, 2016; Roorda et al., 2011). Thus, a critical step for supporting CSP is to provide access to tools for understanding and managing their emotions.

Moving Forward, Together

In sum, this report indicates that, as of the winter of 2020, CSP were experiencing significant stress from the added demands that were placed on them as a result of the pandemic. CSP expressed that they wanted more opportunities for meaningful interactions with students and greater appreciation from administrators. Looking ahead, our team plans to analyze corresponding data collected as CSP complete the course in the Spring 2021 to further understand the emotional experiences of CSP during this time and identify if and how supports, such as their participation in the course, may have impacted and improved their ability to manage their emotions during this time.

In addition, we are proud to announce that in December 2020, the YCEI launched the course, *Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress*, to educators and school staff across the nation on Coursera, free of charge. To date, over 17,000 learners have enrolled, and over 90% of those who completed the course said they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the course as a whole.

"This was an extremely relevant and valuable tool for me as a professional and as a person in general. The concepts that were presented were culturally relevant, research-based, authentic, and presented in such a way as to harness the interest of the learners while keeping them wanting more. I think that this may truly be one of the best PDs on SEL I have ever taken."

Our team will continue to review and report on findings from school personnel who participate in the corresponding research study alongside the course to support the transmission of data findings in real time.

Supporting Connecticut Educators with SEL During Times of Uncertainty and Stress

FINDINGS FROM FALL 2020

> "The course helped me get more deeply in touch with myself, which I know can only help me get more deeply in touch with my students."

This report shares baseline survey results from over 2,500 school personnel in the state of Connecticut who registered for the free course, Managing Emotions in Times of Uncertainty and Stress, offered by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. As part of the course experience, participants had the option to participate in a short survey study to inform the scientific and practitioner communities about the emotional contagion, impacts, and opportunities for cultivating resilience in both educators and students during this time of crisis. Participants reported on their emotional experiences, sources of stress and joy, recommendations for support, and key demographics through open ended and closed response questions. Key findings included (1) differences between educator's responses on standardized measures of affective experiences and what they shared in their open response questions regarding their feelings of inclusion, personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, intentions to quit, and perceived principal EI, (2) sources of joy to be grounded in their experiences with their students, colleagues, and families, and sources of stress to be "everything else" around the practice of teaching, and (3) a significant lack of support for educator SEL and request for resources and skills.

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Appendix

APPENDIX A: SOURCES OF STRESS CODING SCHEME

Category	Subcategory	Definition	Examples
1. Student - related Stressors	1a. Lack of engagement or motivation	*Students not engaging with school/academics; students who lack motivation to learn*	"students who do not engage" "not engaging" "difficulty interacting meaningfully with students"
	1b. Student well-being	*Related to students' well-being; students doing poorly mentally, physically, academically*	"regression of students" "number of students in need"
2. COVID-19	2a. School regulations	*Regulations in the school based on mask wearing policies, hybrid model, remote learning*	"wearing a mask all of the time (I support and believe in wearing masks -- it is just hard to do it all day)" "Trying to maintain the classroom as clean as possible for the students and myself" "hybrid schedule"
	2b. Personal concerns	*Personal worries because of COVID (e.g., family, health issues)*	"I am always thinking about the next job I go to after school - caring for elderly parent" "Probability of school closing because of Covid and not being able to provide for my family"
	2c. General COVID-19 stress	*General fear of the future because of COVID-19; feelings of unknown related to/due to COVID-19*	"Covid cases rising up in my district" "uncertainty with what the next few weeks will be like"
3. Job- related stressors	3a. Job demands	*Increased responsibilities, e.g. more paperwork; too much of a workload*	"paperwork" "Increasing responsibility without time" "too much on my plate"

	3b. Lack of time/resources/training	*Not having enough time, resources, or training to do job responsibilities*	"lack of time" "Trying to talk to all students on GoGuardian" "Need more help in the classroom"
	3c. Low pay	*Not being financially compensated fairly*	"low pay wage versus our job description"
	3d. Technology	*Issues that arise from using technology due to virtual learning; stress due to interacting with technology (e.g. feeling unskilled)*	"technological glitches" "too much time on screens" "technical skills"
4. Feelings	4a. Feeling unappreciated/unheard	*Feeling ignored or unappreciated*	"not taken seriously as a teacher"
	4b. Feeling incompetent	*Feeling incompetent/unskilled/unprepared for one's job; feeling ineffective*	"feeling unprepared" "not teaching to the best of my ability" "not knowing what to do"
	4c. Feeling isolated	*Feeling alone or separated from the community*	"I feel isolated from my colleagues" "exclusion"
5. School Community	5a. Colleague/coworker	*Lack of cooperation/coordination with coworkers; coworkers' incompetence*	"Colleagues who do not before they speak and take over meetings."
	5b. Administration/leadership	*Poor communication from leadership/lack of transparency; lack of trust from superiors in educators' capabilities*	"inconsistent expectations" "lack of direction from leadership" "Micromanagement" "Administrators not listening"
	5c. Parents	*Poor communication/cooperation with parents or families; parental demands or expectations*	"parents" "lack of engagement from families"
	5d. General school community	*Poor communication in general; lack of support from the school community*	"Poor communication" "Lack of or no miscommunication" "Lack of support"

Note. Inter-rater reliability was calculated amongst three raters and substantial agreement was found (Fleiss's Kappa = 0.71).

APPENDIX B: SOURCES OF WELL-BEING CODING SCHEME

Category	Subcategory	Definition	Examples
1. Student Interaction	1a. Teaching students; watching students learn	*Activities related to being a teacher; meaningful connections with students; centered around a teacher's experience rather than student-centered; student thriving academically*	"connecting with students during mask breaks" "facilitating conversation" "Helping students build confidence and explore new ways to help themselves both physically and emotionally" "advocating for kids" "students making a connection to learning" "Watching a student "get" a lesson" "Students laughing" "seeing the kids" "The kids"
	1b. Personal student interaction	*General comments about interacting with students; positive personal interactions*	
2. Motivation	2a. Intrinsic motivation; making a positive impact	*General comments about feeling useful/supporting others, and making a difference*	"Contributing to the common good" "Making a difference"
	2b. Extrinsic motivation; recognition; appreciation; monetary compensation	*Being recognized for good work*	"compliments"
3. Personal	3a. Learning new skills	*Learning about technology; taking on new responsibilities*	"trying new interventions" "learning" "learning from my students"
	3b. Self-care	*Emotional and physical well-being (e.g., breaks, sleeping, eating)*	"exercising" "Sleep, time to recharge, and deliver good lessons" "Given extra time to get things done"

	3c. Accomplishments	*Succeeding at tasks, doing well at things*	"Being knowledgeable about my field" "When a lesson goes well" "Lessons that come together"
4. School Community	4a. Colleagues	*Collaboration with colleagues; support from colleagues*	"interactions with colleagues" "laughing with students and colleagues"
	4b. Administration	*Collaboration with administration; support from administration*	"Interacting with my principal"
	4c. Parents	*Collaboration with parents/families; support from parents/families*	"supporting families" "parent feedback"
	4d. General school community	*Sense of community*	"collaboration" "teamwork" "school mission"

Note. Inter-rater reliability was calculated amongst three raters and substantial agreement was found (*Fleiss's Kappa = 0.721*).

APPENDIX C: SOURCES OF SCHOOL SUPPORT CODING SCHEME

Category	Subcategory	Definition	Examples
1. Emotional support/care	n/a	*More check-ins; sessions with school therapist; self-care strategy workshops; more empathetic leadership*	"Need more mental health days" "They could be more understanding that we are human also and we have feelings and limits. Schools could recognize the increased demands of this job by… emphasizing that time to grieve the deep losses of our community should be paramount. They should also provide multiple opportunities for self care and prioritize them…"
2. COVID-19	2a. School regulations	*Consistency regarding COVID 19 policies within the school; CDC COVID policies to be taken more seriously; more transparency and better communication regarding changes in policy; better planning*	"The administration keeps us in the dark about pretty much everything" "Need more transparent procedures for positive tested students and staff" "I would like for mask-wearing to be more consistent in some classes, and for teachers to stick to enforcing COVID policies"
	2b. Cleaning/ventilation concerns	*Providing enough cleaning supplies (e.g. masks, PPEs) for every classroom/teacher; regular classroom cleanings; better ventilation systems*	"Clean door handles and bathrooms more often" "Supply better PPE for all employees working in schools. I don't feel safe in what is supplied and can not afford to keep spending money on my own."
3. Job-related changes	3a. Reduced workload; more time	*Decreased responsibilities; workload; more time to plan*	"more time for a prep period so teachers can feel a little less stressed during the day with planning and trying to get everything done." "stop piling on work that is new and supposed to make our lives easier but really just makes for more work"

3b. Recognition; acknowledgement; trust	*Being recognized by members of the staff/admin for good work; provided with incentives for work (e.g. bonuses/shoutouts); being given autonomy; trusted by leaders to manage time*	"Listen. Listen to what we have to say." "Morale is very low, so any effort to show teachers that they are valued would be greatly appreciated." "Administration could be more flexible in their expectations and trust teachers to do what's best for their students."
3c. Resources and training	*Providing teachers with the resources they need for better lessons (e.g. internet, better pay)*	"Provide effective and pertinent Professional Development." "Provide adequate help/substitutes"

Note. Inter-rater reliability was calculated amongst two raters and substantial agreement was found (Cohen's Kappa = 0.669).