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The Art and Science
Driving the Transformation
of Learning Environments

Cultivating Educator Resilience:

Insight from the National *"Design Lessons from Teachers"* Report

AIA #: 2023LS49

OCTOBER 15TH, 2023

Introductions

Beverly Fornof

Senior Project Manager – Vice President
Corgan

Lane Pendleton

Project Architect – Senior Associate
Corgan

Chloe Hosid, M.Sc.

Education Design Researcher – Associate
Corgan

Malissa Jeffreys

ID Project Manager – Senior Associate
Corgan

Cultivating Educator Resilience

Learning Objectives

1 — Challenges in the Education Landscape

Gain insights and empathy for the challenges present in the education landscape, and the unique needs and perspective of educators, to facilitate dialogue and solutions for teacher wellbeing with their clients and staff.

2 — Practicing Evidence-Based Design

Attendees will discover direct connections between the findings from Corgan's national Teacher Survey to five key actionable focus areas to support teacher satisfaction and resilience.

3 — Educator Insight: Environment and Education

Gain insight from direct educator experiences and apply these insights to identify and address the specific challenges teachers face in their district or community.

4 — Supporting Teachers Through Design

Clear design solutions that can be implemented in existing and new school facilities to support teachers' needs, attract and retain talent, and ultimately support learning outcomes for students.

> "

At the **heart of our society lies the invaluable teaching profession** – entrusted with nurturing the educational journey of our youngest generation. **Yet, a concerning trend has emerged: the growing shortage of educators in the United States…** addressing this pressing issue has become more imperative than ever.

"The U.S Teacher Shortage 2023: A State-by-State Breakdown"
Scholaroo

44%

of public schools reported having one or more vacant teaching positions during the 2022-2023 school year

In 2022,

All 50 States

reported teacher shortages in at least one subject area

Approximately

33%

of teachers surveyed by McKinsey in 2021 planned to leave their role before the next school year

[Institute of Education Sciences, 2022; Bryant et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2022]

Why is There a Teacher Shortage?

1

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Increases in cost of living and cost of education outpace rate of teacher pay

2

DECREASED ENROLLMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Enrollment in traditional teacher preparation programs declined by nearly a third between 2010 and 2018

3

BURNOUT AND LOW MORALE

Teachers are decreasingly finding the stress and disappointments they experience in their job worthwhile, causing many to consider leaving
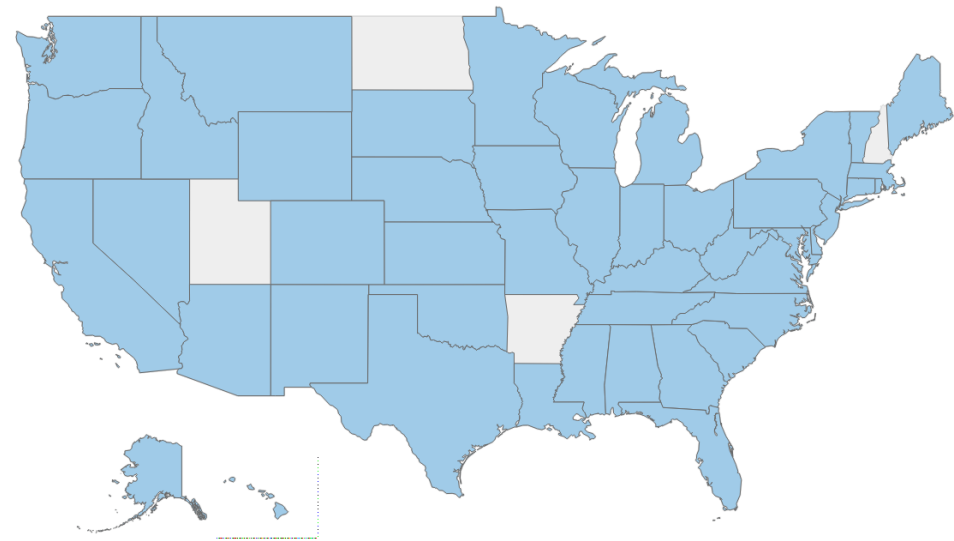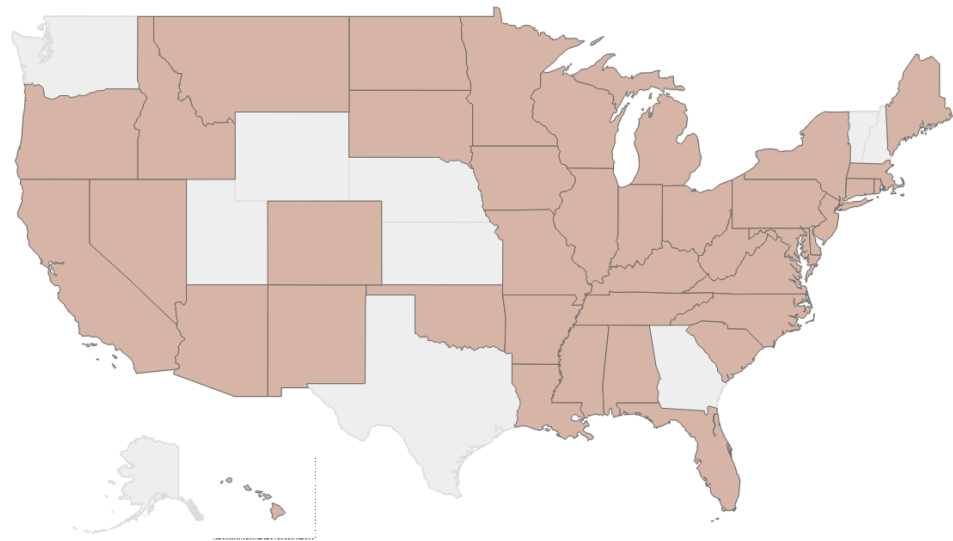
4

INCREASED DEMANDS

Supporting learning needs, recovering from COVID learning loss, parent expectations, additional roles and responsibilities

[Bryant et al., 2023; Garcia et al., 2022; Steiner et al., 2022]
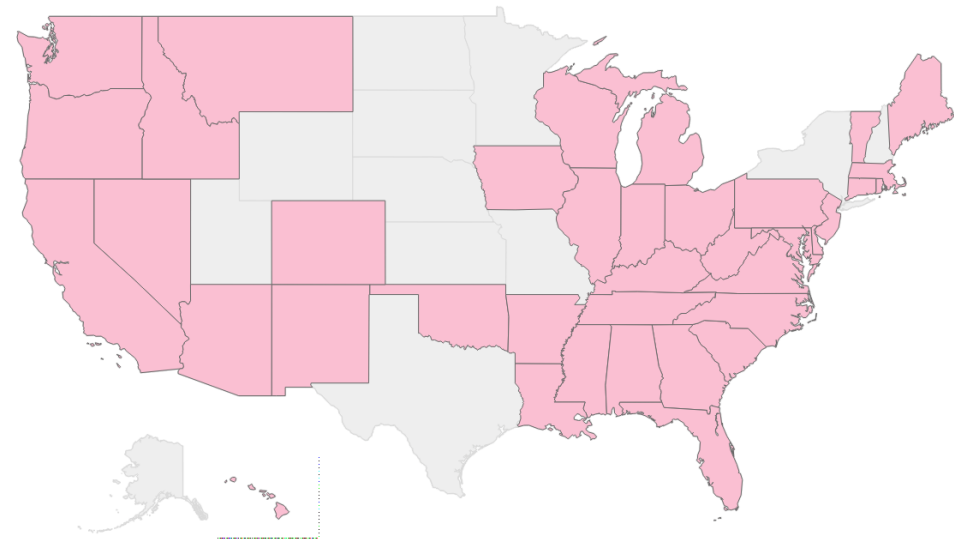
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Where is There a Teacher Shortage?

Subject Area Shortages by State - 2023
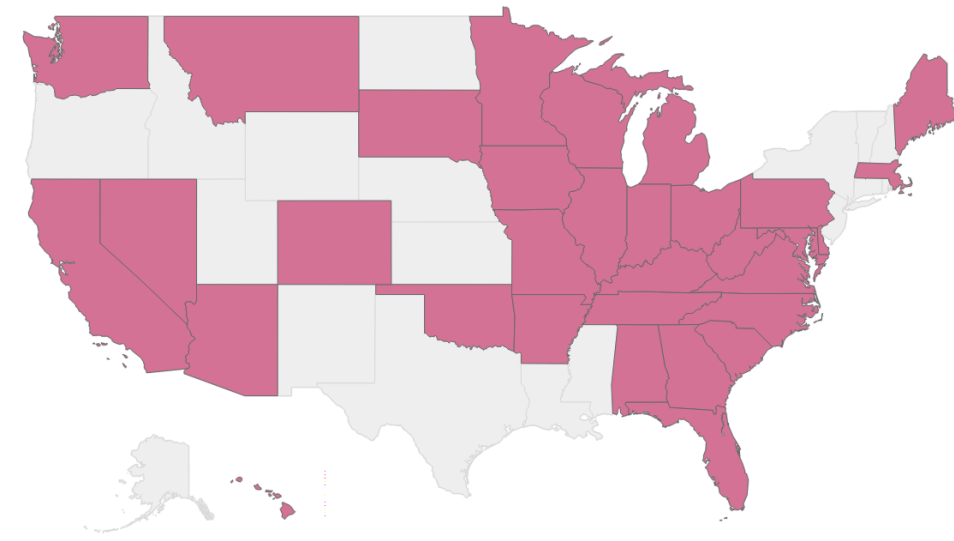

SPECIAL EDUCATION
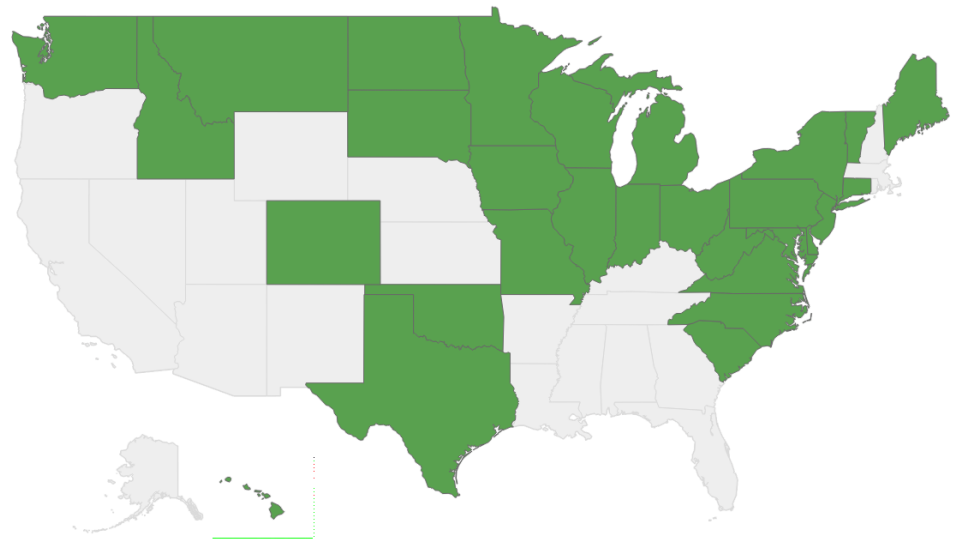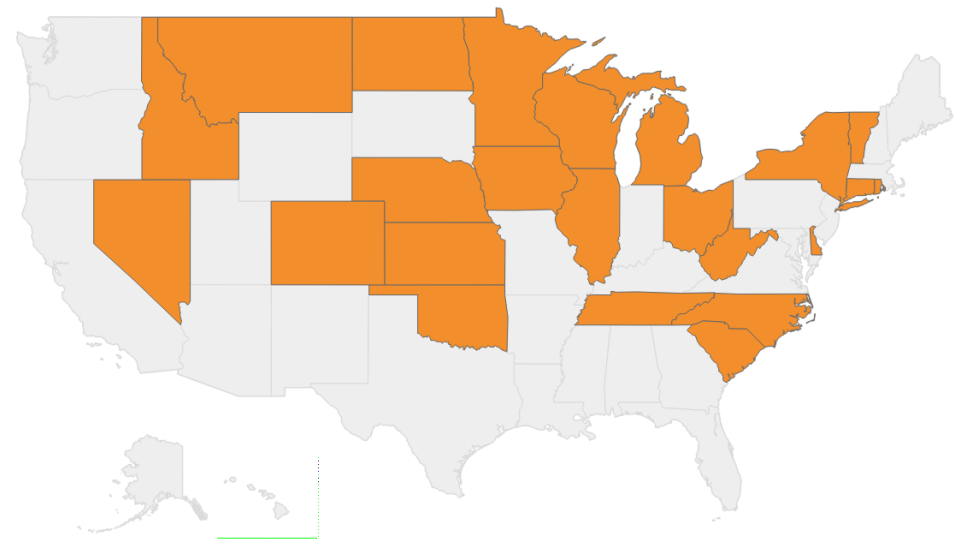
SCIENCE

MATH

LANGUAGE ARTS

CAREER AND TECHNICAL (CTE)

SUPPORT STAFF

Teacher Shortages and Issues of Equity

"

…**shortages of well-prepared teachers have historically been most severe** in schools that serve larger numbers of students from **low-income families** and **students of color,** and in **subjects with greater opportunity costs**, like special education, mathematics, and science.

Emma Garcia
Senior Researcher at the Learning Policy Institute

Impact of Turnover and Educator Burnout on Student Outcomes

POOR MORALE

- Morale for teachers and principals significantly declined during the pandemic
- Poor morale today might dissuade tomorrow's teachers from entering the field

Educator **BURNOUT** is associated with:

- Declines in academic achievement
- Lower quality student motivation

Teacher **TURNOVER**:

- Harms student achievement and perpetuates unequal opportunities to learn
- Impacts teacher effectiveness
- Erodes the profession's appeal
- Drains district resources

"High rates of underprepared teachers in a district decrease student achievement and, since they are more than twice as likely to leave the profession as fully prepared novices, exacerbate teacher turnover"

- Emma García, Matthew A. Kraft, and Heather L. Schwartz, 2023
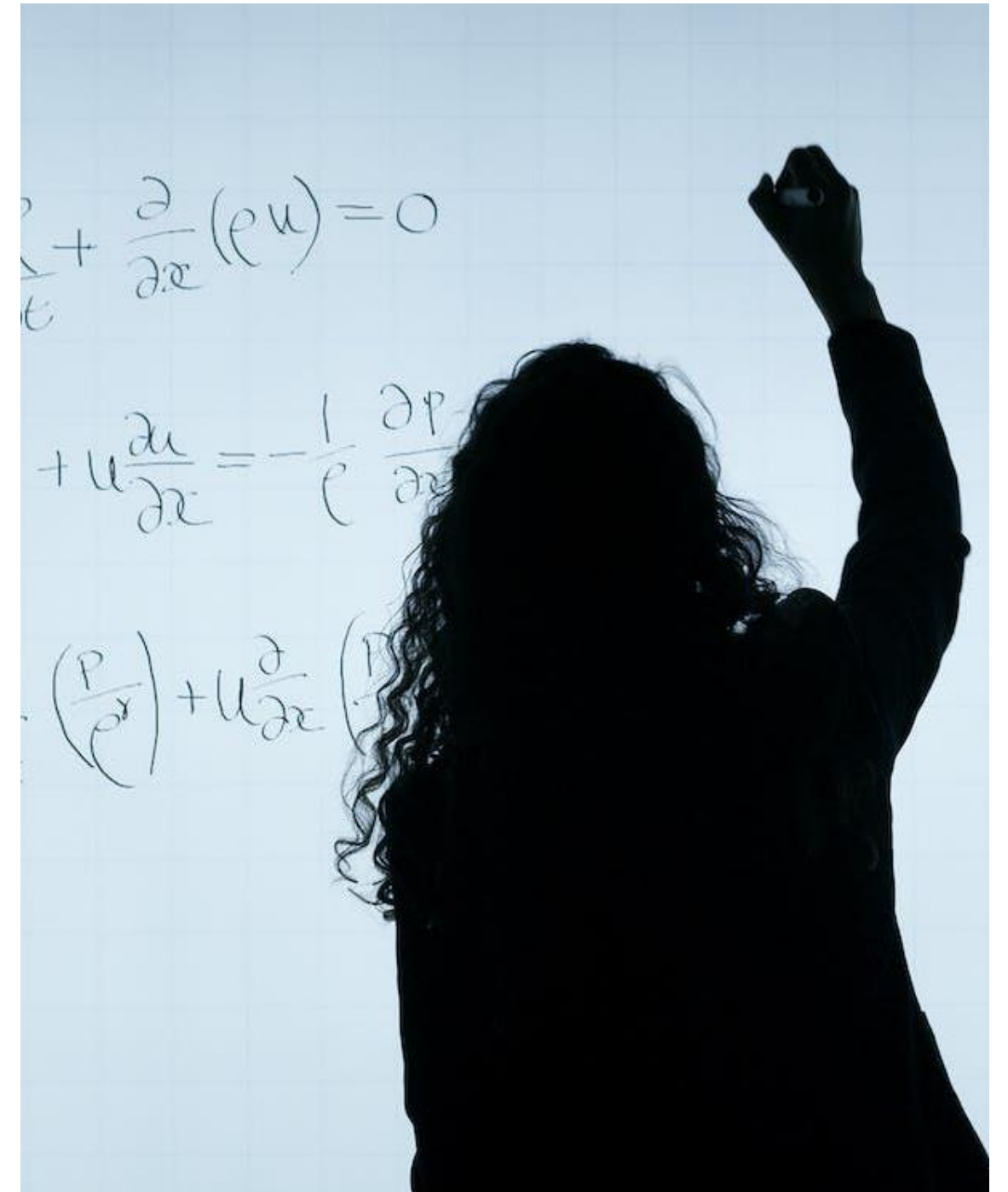
[Madigan & Kim, 2021; Garcia et al., 2023]

" **We should be deeply concerned** about the profession when teachers repeatedly tell us **they are burnt out and considering quitting…ignoring teachers' voices is partly how we got here.** All kids deserve teachers that are fully invested, not ones so overwhelmed that they understandably have one foot out the door.

—— *Matthew Kraft*
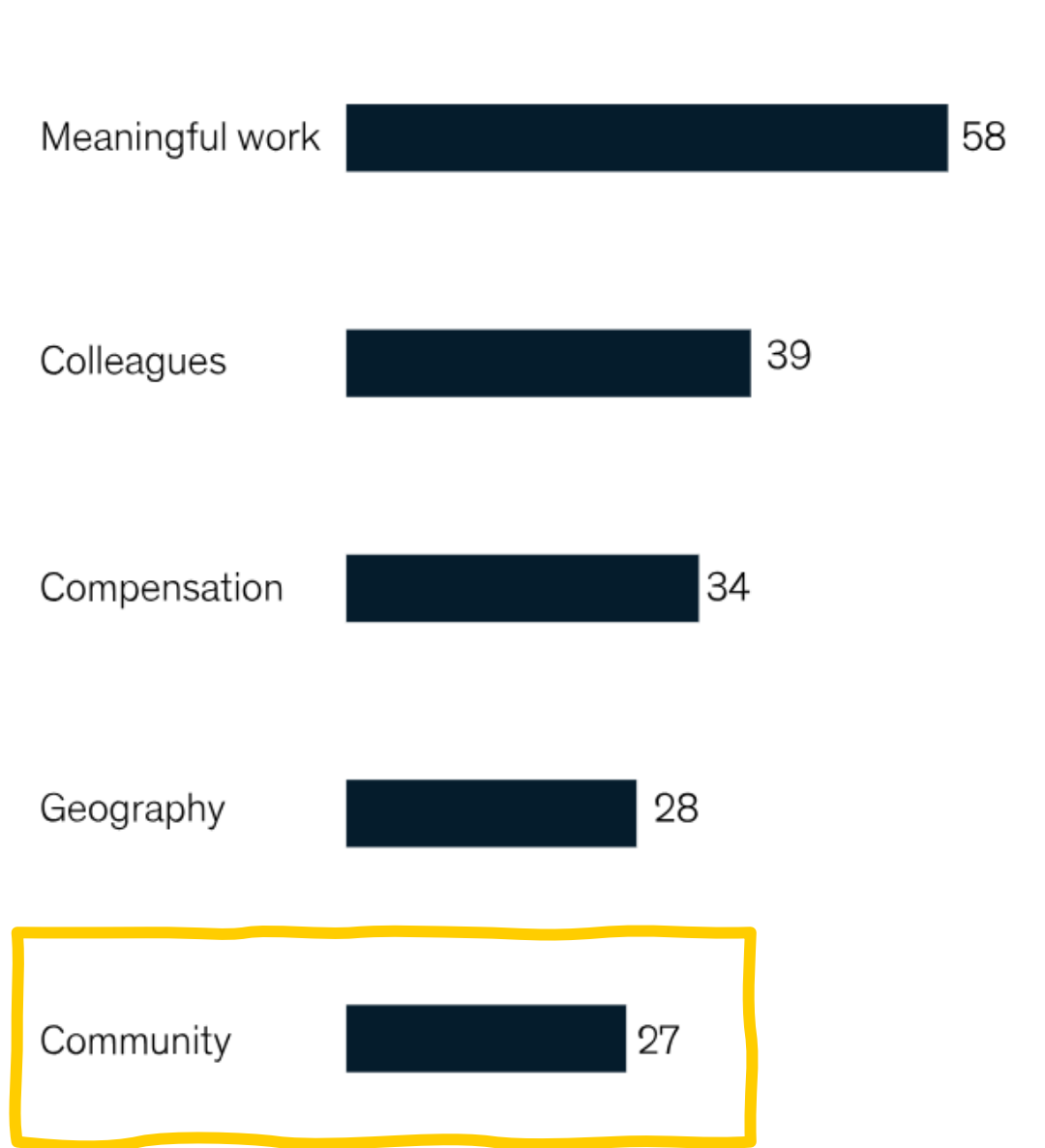*Associate Professor of Education at Brown University*

Should I *stay* or should I *go?*

Minimizing push factors and enhancing factors that encourage educators to stay.

Interpersonal factors drive educators to stay in their roles, while unmanageable work environments can drive them to leave.

Reasons that education sector employees plan to leave vs stay, % of respondents (n = 1,899)

Top factors driving educators to leave

■ Plan to leave   ■ Left

Compensation	48 / 42
Expectations	33 / 31
Well-being	31 / 23
Leadership	30 / 31
Workplace flexibility	26 / 21

Top factors driving educators to stay

Meaningful work	58
Colleagues	39
Compensation	34
Geography	28
Community	27

Note: Sample sizes are as follows: plan to stay, 59% (n = 1,126); plan to leave, 27% (n = 518); left, 13% (n = 255).
Source: Aaron De Smet, Bonnie Dowling, Bryan Hancock, and Bill Schaninger, "The Great Attrition is making hiring harder. Are you searching the right talent pools?," *McKinsey Quarterly*, July 13, 2022

McKinsey & Company

Supporting educators is a complex undertaking. How can the design community come together to respond to this pervasive challenge?

Design Lessons From Teachers 2.0

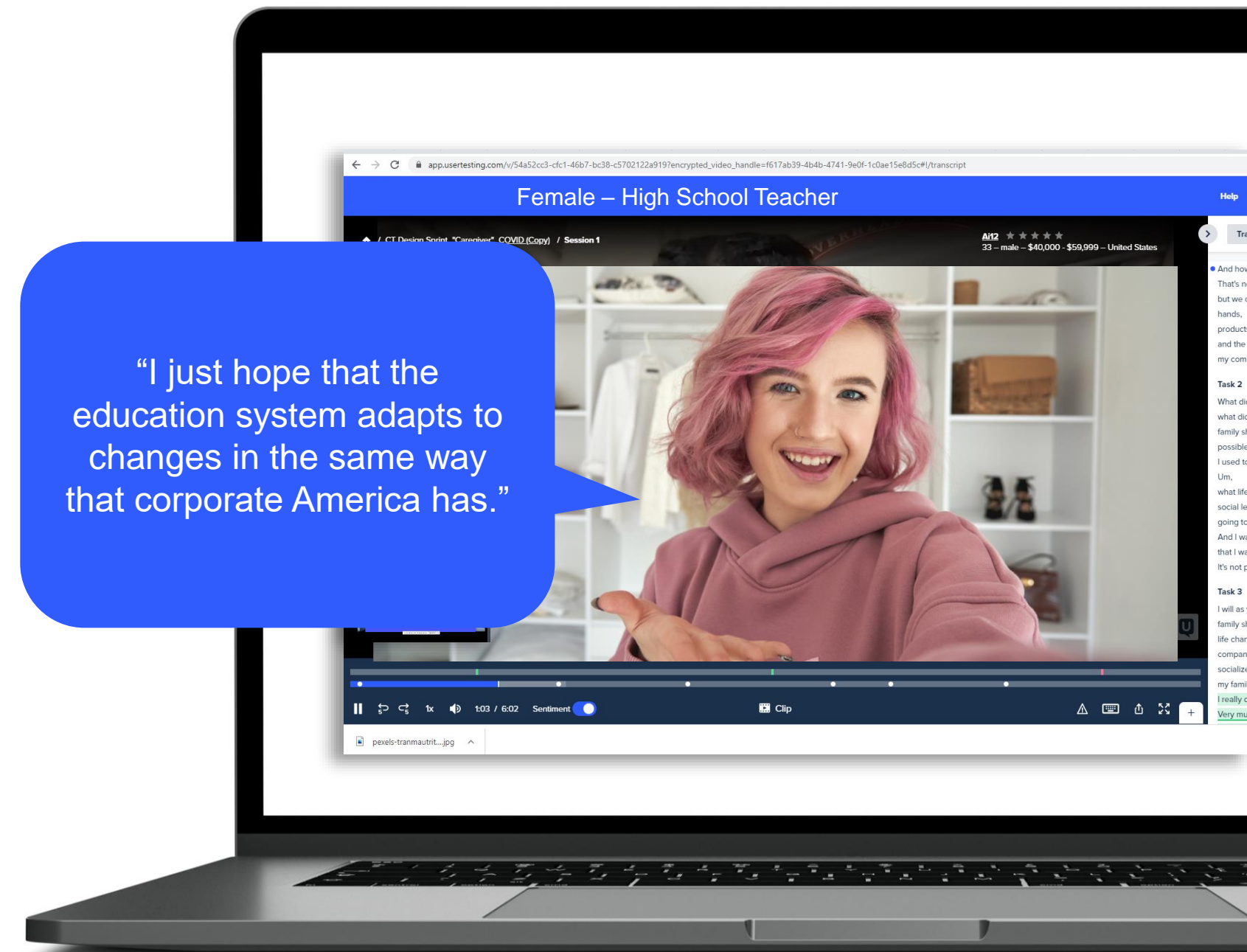Corgan's 2022 Survey

QUALITATIVE

36

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

with full time, K-12 teachers in the United States. **12 interviews** (each) were completed for **Elementary, Middle, and High School.**

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HOURS OF RECORDED DATA

"I just hope that the education system adapts to changes in the same way that corporate America has."

Female – High School Teacher

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QUANTITATIVE

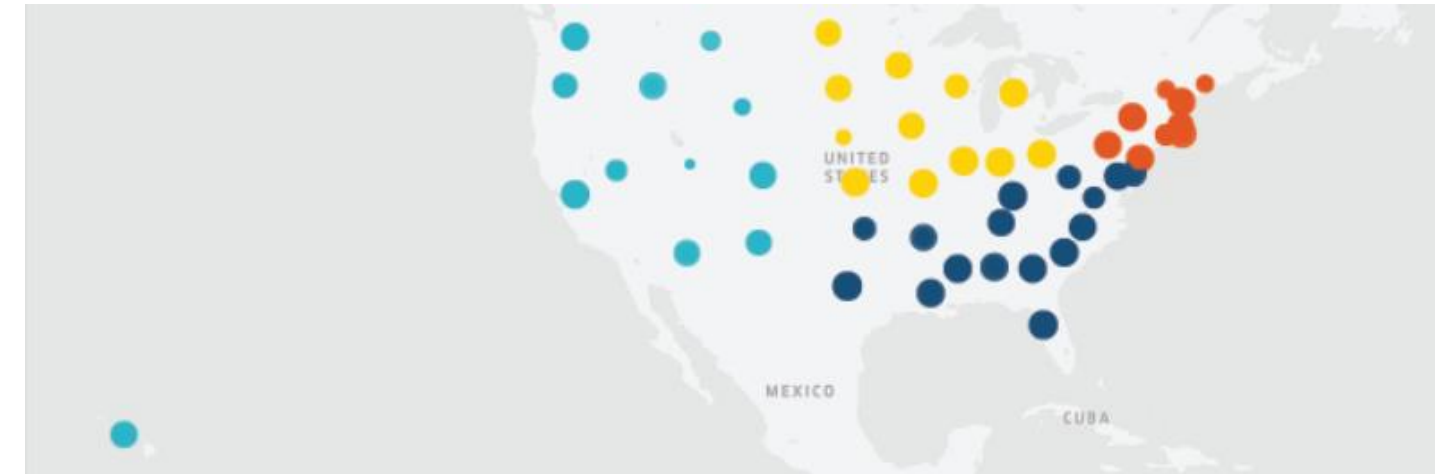# 1,000

SURVEY RESPONSES

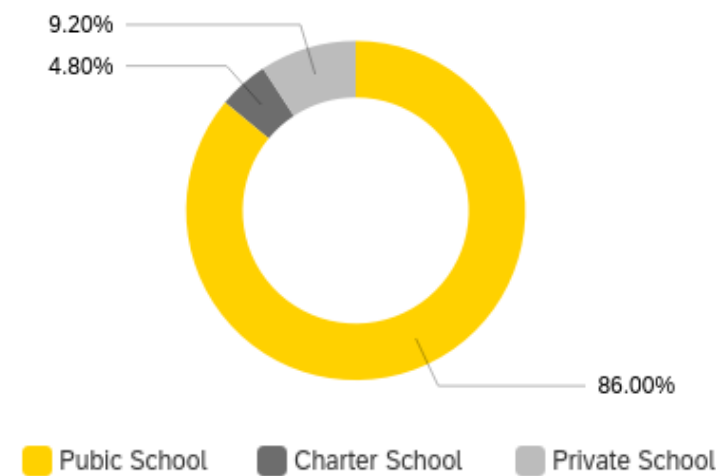From individuals who currently work as full-time, teaching staff for K-12 in the United States.

School levels were roughly balanced between Elementary School (357), Middle School (297), and High School (346).
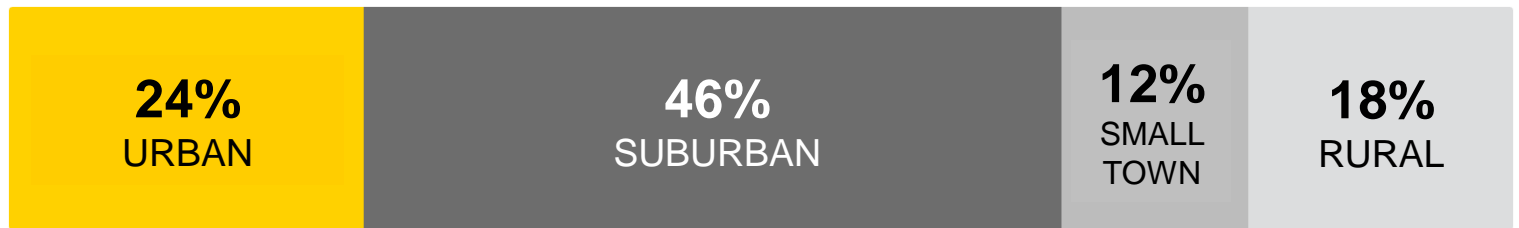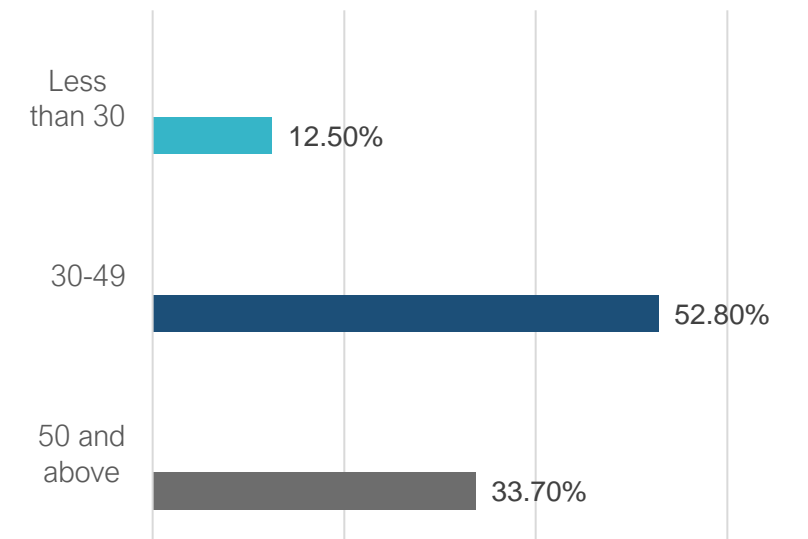
RESPONDENTS BY REGION

148	**256**	**362**	**234**
West	Midwest	South	Northeast

School Typology

9.20%
4.80%

86.00%

- Pubic School
- Charter School
- Private School

Age of Survey Participants

Less than 30	12.50%
30-49	52.80%
50 and above	33.70%

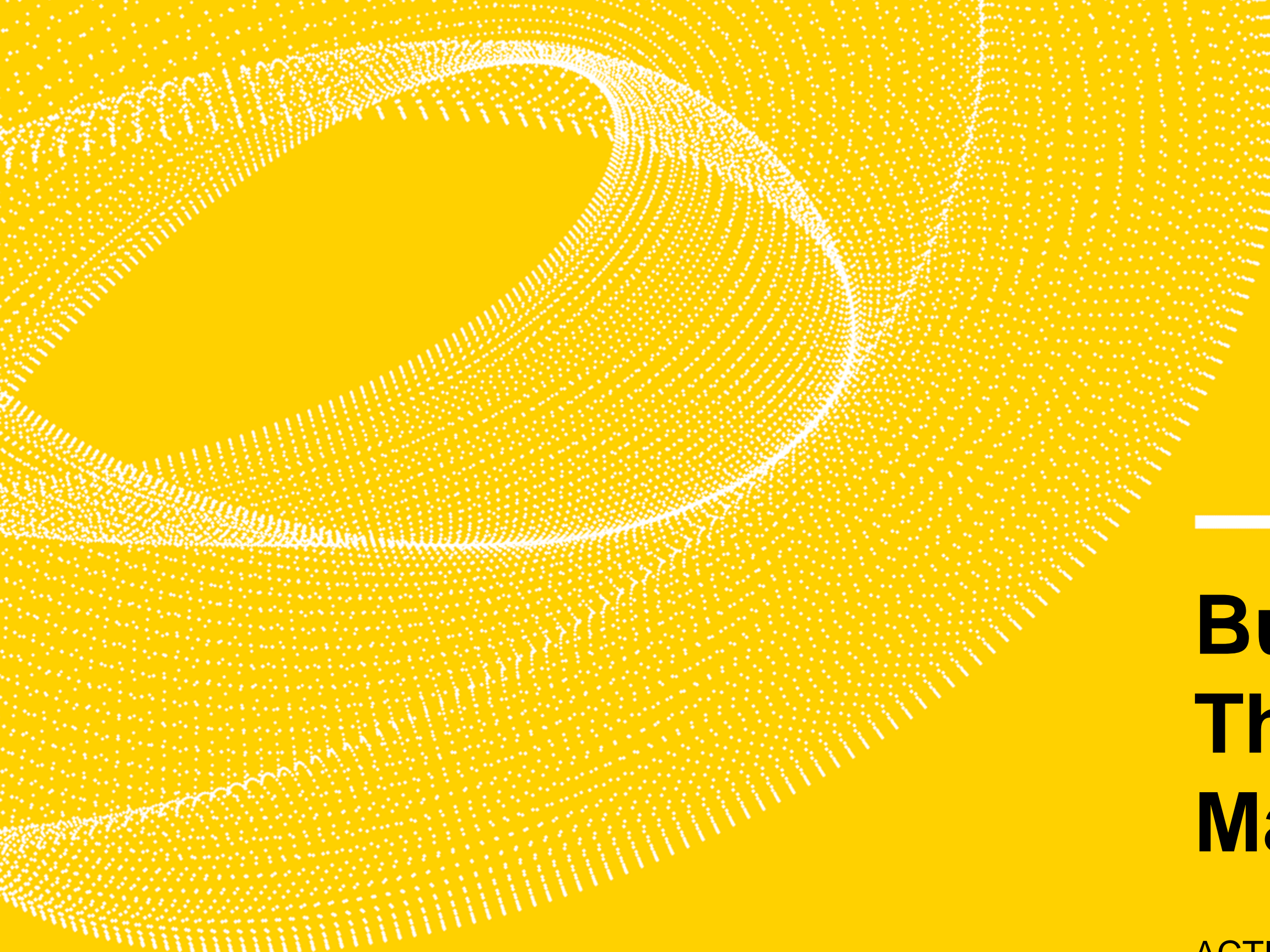| **24%** URBAN	**46%** SUBURBAN	**12%** SMALL TOWN	**18%** RURAL

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What Did We Find?

5 Key Insights

1. **Schools as a Workplace**

2. **Wellbeing**

3. **Physical / Virtual Environments**

4. **Personalization and Choice**

5. **Flexibility**

+ Longitudinal Findings

Building Empathy Through Journey Mapping

ACTIVITY #1

Building Empathy Through Journey Mapping

Put yourselves in the shoes of an educator working in a typical elementary school. What do you need in your environment and what missed opportunities for support can you identify in the design of the school?

Each table will receive an Educator Persona. Read about your educator and then map their journey on the provided floor plan.

Identify important nodes, pain points, and potential design interventions to improve their daily journey.

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Resilience in the Teaching Profession

Quality that enables teachers to **overcome personal and environmental vulnerabilities and maintain their commitment to teaching** in the face of work-related challenges, pressures, and demands

[Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2021; Bruneti, 2006; Daniilidou & Platsidou, 2018]

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Resilience is a Dynamic Process

Occupational Uncertainty

High Pressure

Optimism

Social Skills

Workload

Anxiety

Self-Esteem

Contextual Resources

Cognitive Abilities

Support Networks

Personal Characteristics

Stressful Event

[Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2021]
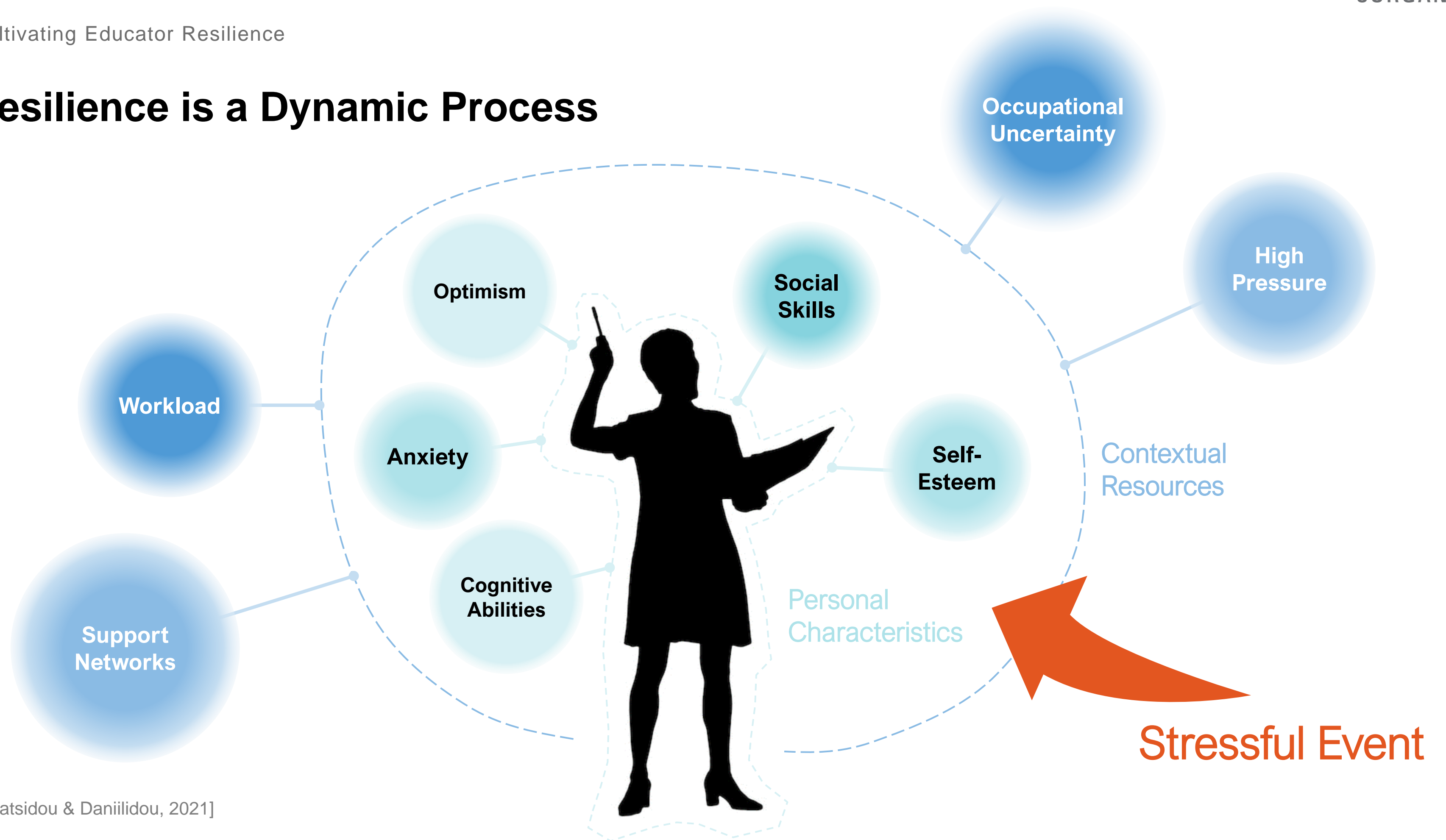
Responding to Stressful Events

- **Resilience is a box of tools and resources**, an individual brings to a situation to solve a problem

- Includes both personal and external resources

- It is not a quality you have or do not have

- Resilient teachers utilize **coping strategies** efficiently and effectively

[Wosnitza & Piexoto, 2018; Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2021]

Developing Resilience

"The environment can (and should) therefore provide the resources that nurture and enable the development of resilience by means of facilitating the construction of…"

Marold Wosnitza and Francisco Piexoto, 2018

Mentorship

Sense of Community

Positive Relationships

Self-Beliefs

Self-Concept

Identity

Sense of Competence

Personal

Professional

Self-Efficacy
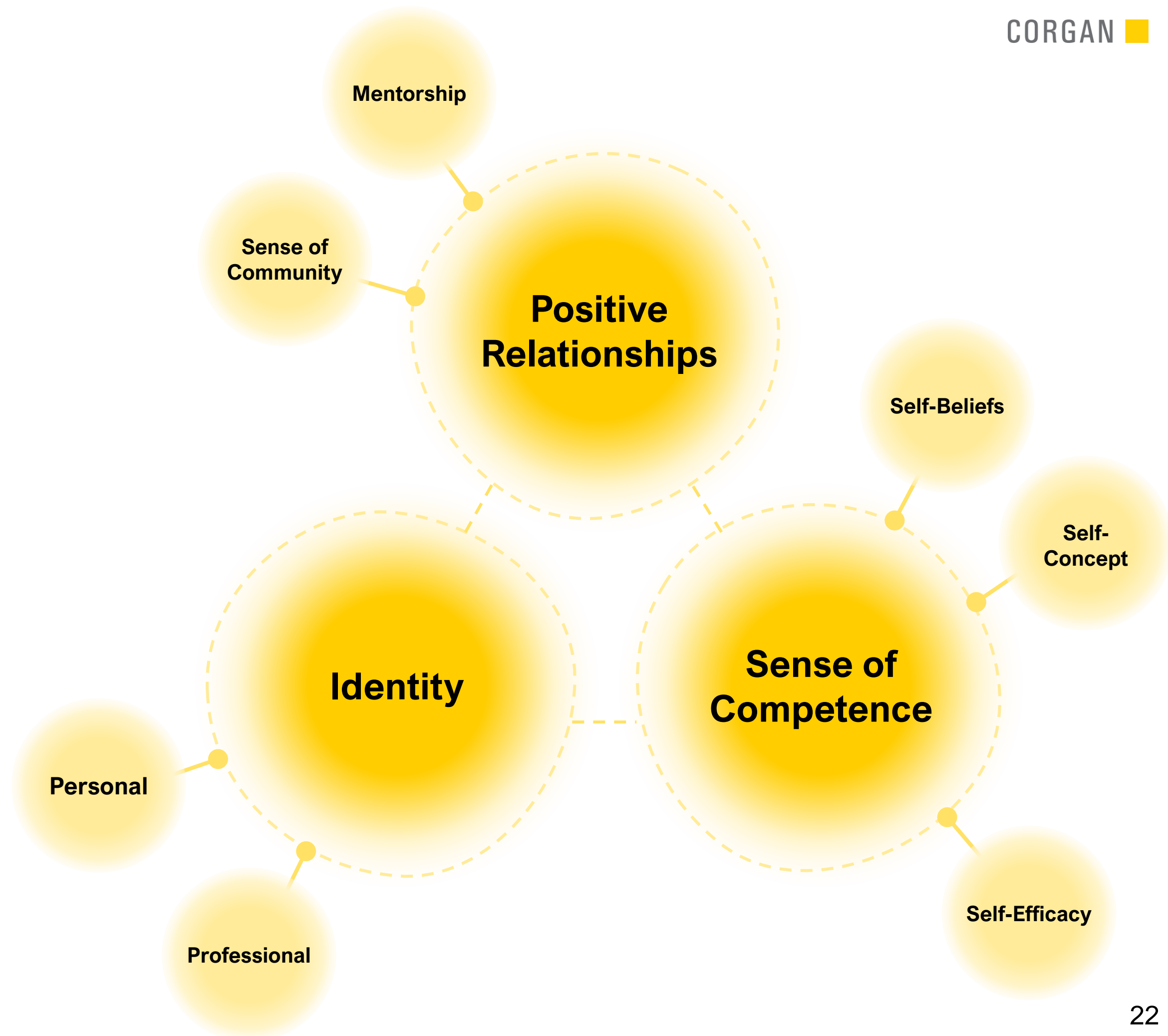
Resilience
Model of Protective Factors

Professional

- Teaching strategies
- Continued professional development
- Positive relationships
- Coping strategies

Emotional

- Emotional and stress management
- Not taking things personally
- Feeling of fulfillment

Motivational

- Continuous improvement and learning
- Persistence
- Setting goals
- Career decision making

Social

- Social support networks
- Mentorship
- Collaborating with colleagues

[Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2021; Wosnitza et al., 2018]

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Meaning in Life and Resilience

- "Meaningful Work" was the top factor driving educators to stay in their job (McKinsey Survey)

- **Meaning in life is a resource for resilience**

  - Human tendency to construct meaning even when confronted with stressful or traumatic events

- Search for Meaning vs. Presence of Meaning

- **Discovery Process**

  - High presence and high search for meaning

  - Higher levels of creativity, receptiveness, exploration, and flow

  - Professional growth and development, positive interactions

"Meaning in life is a significant resource in the resilience process, supporting the use of adaptive behaviors and enhancing the feeling of wellbeing."

- Platsidou and Daniilidou, 2021

[Platsidou & Daniilidou, 2021; Bryant et al, 2023]

What ***challenges to educator resilience*** do you see in your community?

Schools as a Workplace

"**I wish there was a nicer way to separate 'church and state'** - when it's your prep time and your work time where you don't have to **put your teacher glasses back on and be an authority figure.**"

- ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

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Schools as a Workplace:
Privacy and Quiet

> I don't really need many things. I need a desk that's mine and I'm fine… I just need to feel planted, and my work contained.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

> There's no space that is fully dedicated to teachers except the desk/chair. That's it.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Top 3 Spatial Qualities Teachers Desire for Focused Work

Quiet — 74%

Isolated from Students — 73%

Isolated from Other Teachers and Staff — 48%
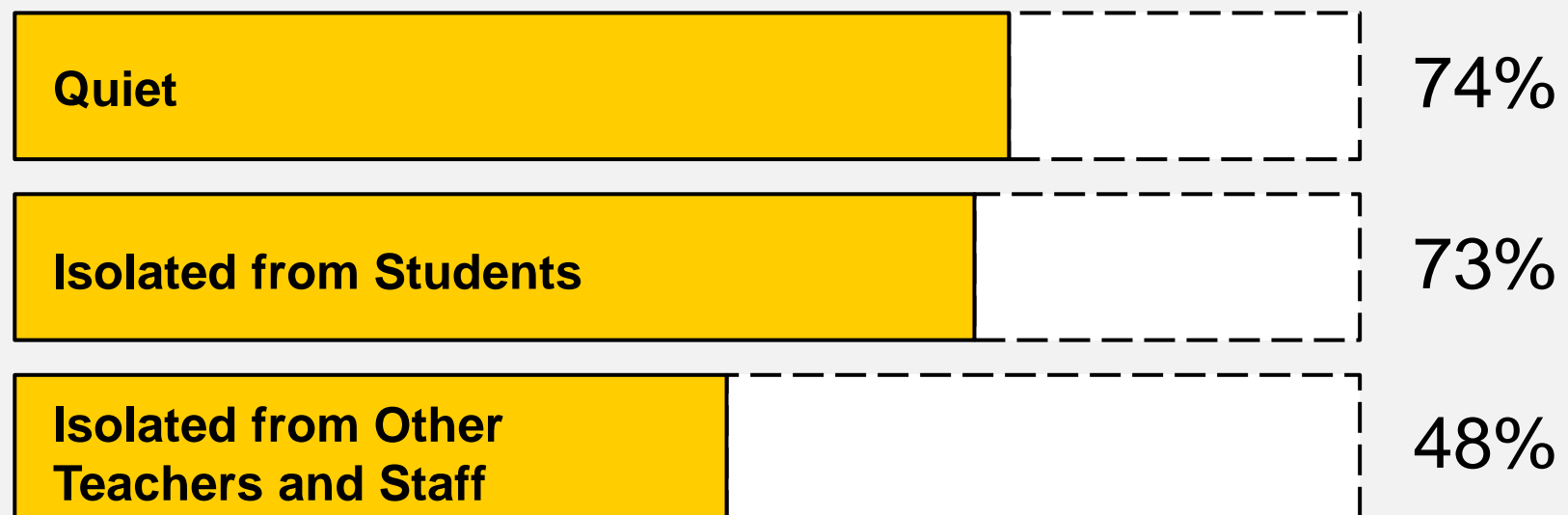
Spaces that Best Support Role Responsibilities Outside of Teaching

77% My desk in my classroom

15% Teacher workroom

14% Spaces at home

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Post-Pandemic Teacher Insight

The design of the classroom has an increased importance in their ability to be a good teacher **—up by 33% since 2019.**

38%   71%

2019   2022

Design Lessons from Teachers 2.0, 2022

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Wellbeing

"One of the best things for students is for **teachers to be happy and stable**"

- MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Cultivating Educator Resilience
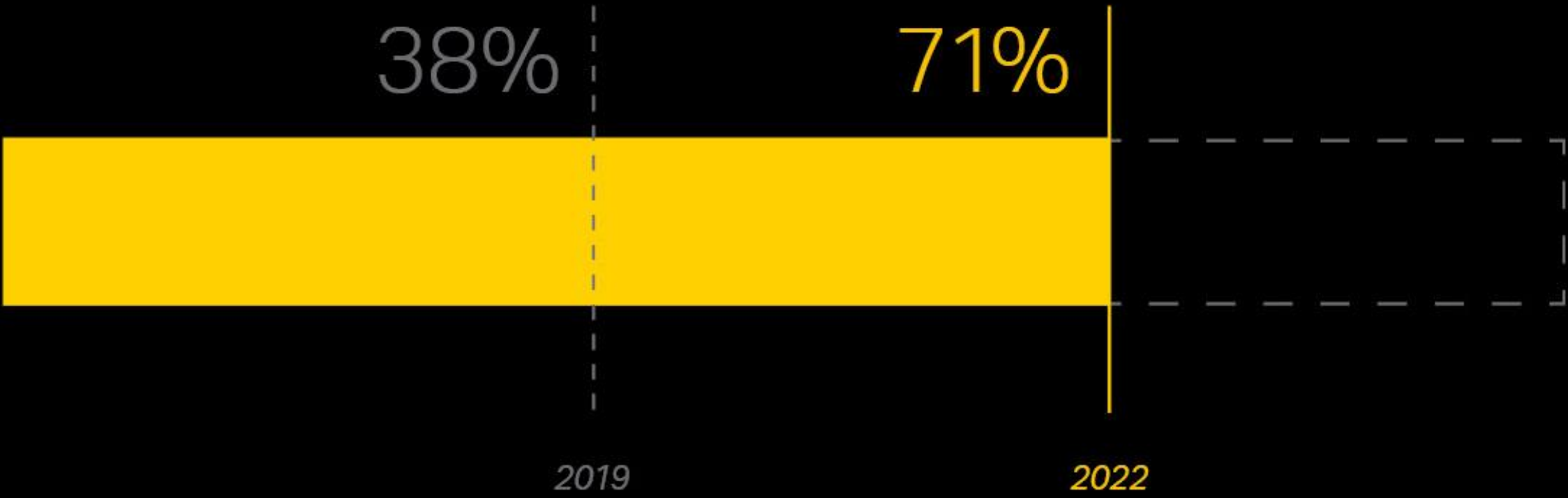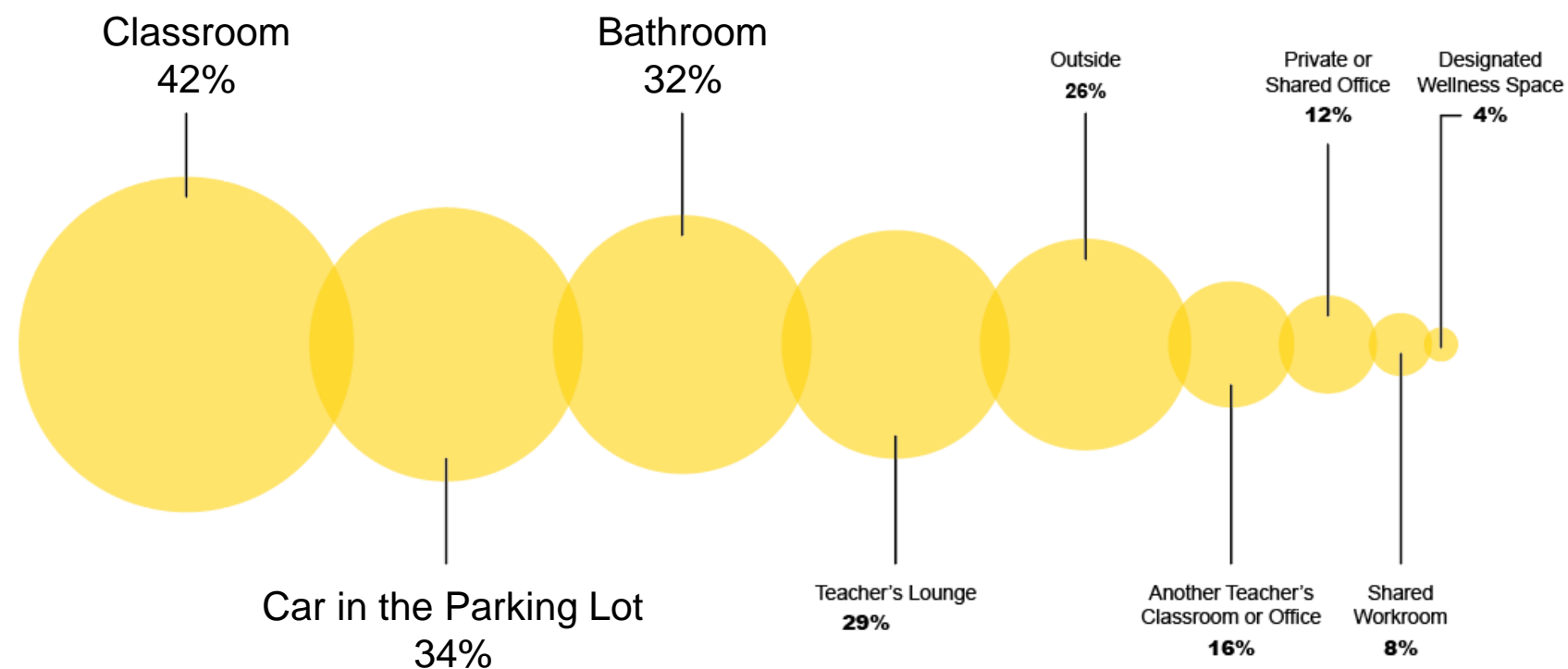
Wellbeing: Teachers first need their "oxygen mask"

Teachers are working professionals with unique needs of their own. However, they are often overloaded with responsibilities that go beyond the classroom itself. While these added responsibilities are commonly accepted as part of "the job," they can also take a toll on their wellbeing. **By better understanding and supporting their needs, teachers will be better equipped to support their students.**

Under Pressure: Primary Sources of Stress

- Pressure to catch up from **COVID-related learning gaps** and **providing educational equity (59%)**

- **Workload (53%)**

- **Safety:** teachers feel that a **safe classroom is of high importance (4.6/5)** but are **only moderately satisfied** with how safe they feel their classrooms currently are **(3.6/5)**

- **12%** of teachers identified as having one or more **mental or physical disabilities** that affect their experience with physical space

Where Teachers Currently Go When They Need a Moment to Themselves

Classroom 42%

Car in the Parking Lot 34%

Bathroom 32%

Teacher's Lounge 29%

Outside 26%

Another Teacher's Classroom or Office 16%

Private or Shared Office 12%

Shared Workroom 8%

Designated Wellness Space 4%

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Post-Pandemic Teacher Insight

The pressure teachers put on themselves to help students succeed is increasingly a primary source of stress **—up by 23% since 2019.**

31% 54%

2019 2022

Design Lessons from Teachers 2.0, 2022
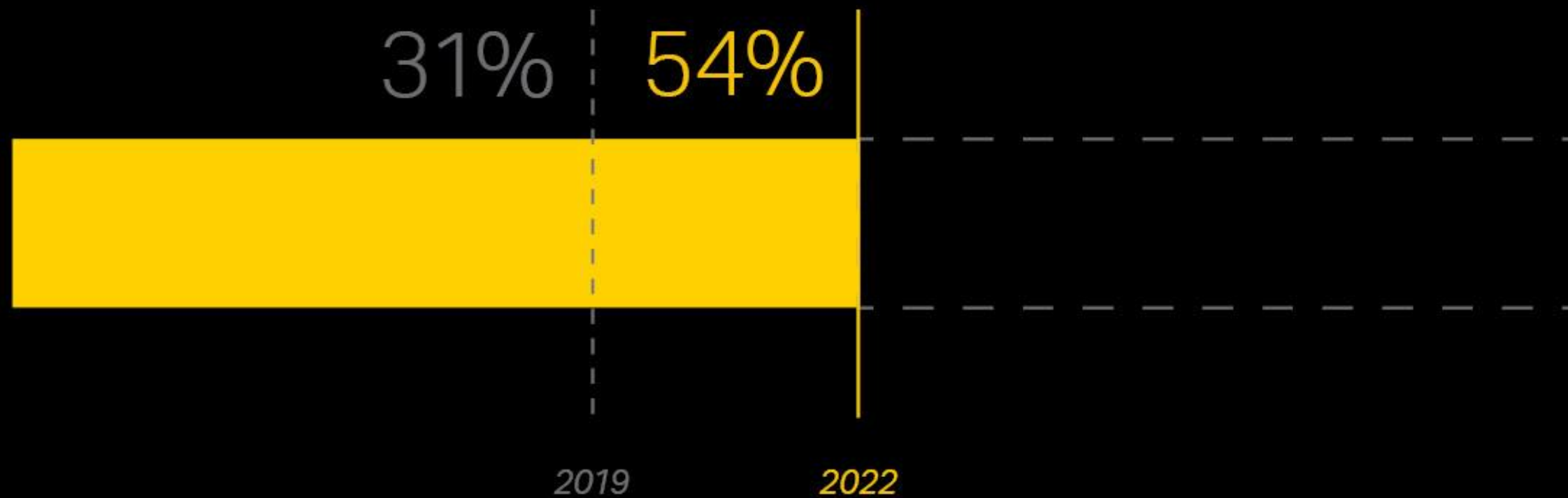
Cultivating Resilience Through Design
Opportunity for Restoration

High-Quality Environment

- WELL Building Standard
- Supports health, wellness, and cognitive performance
- Natural light
- Ventilation and thermal comfort
- Soundscape

Quiet Spaces for Wellbeing and Focus

- Opportunity to turn off "teacher mode"
- Access to nature
- Space to decompress, focus on individual needs

Comfort

- Inviting and relaxing environment
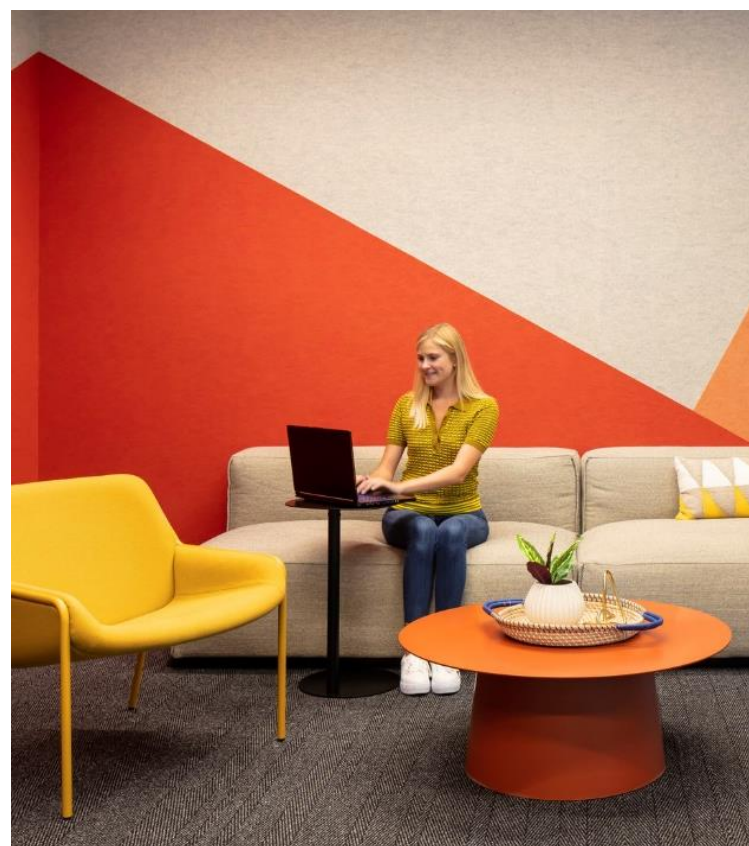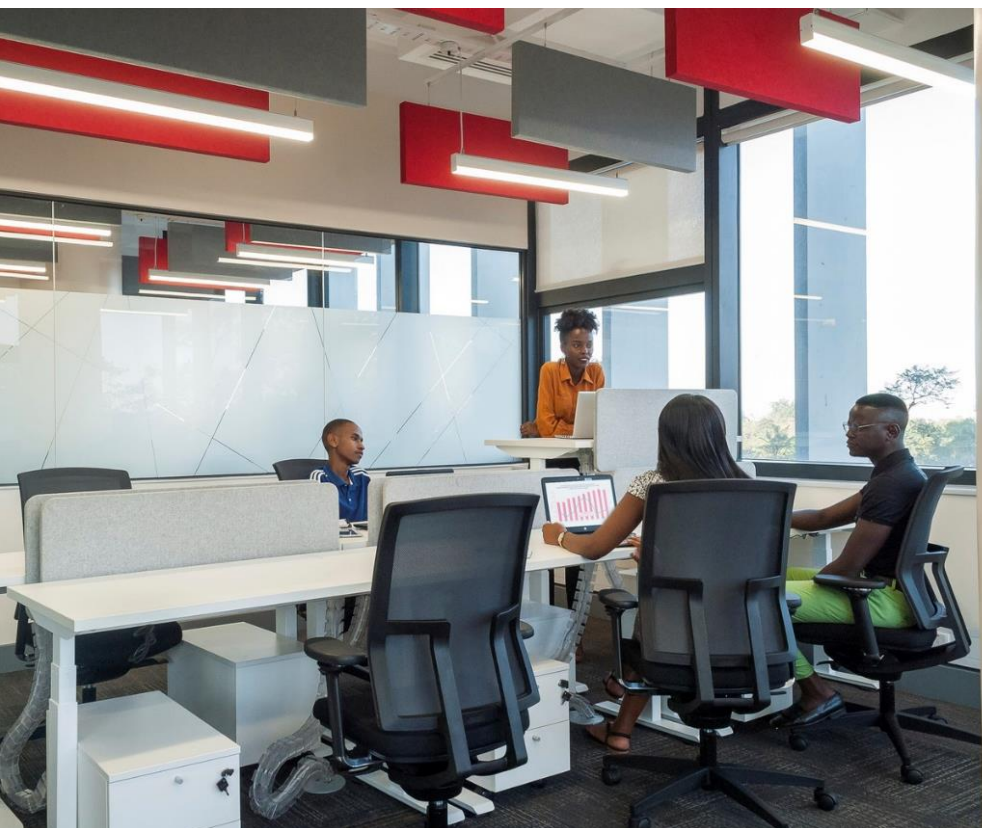
Cultivating Resilience Through Design
Community and Mentorship

Professional Settings

- Spaces that support focused, professional work
- Facilitate teacher collaboration with intentional shared workspaces
- Integrate opportunities for professional mentorship and social connections

Balance Individual and Shared Spaces

- Options: align workspace with the task at hand
- Strategic locations

Foster a Supportive School Climate

- Welcoming community spaces to encourage positive interactions
- Sense of belonging and mutual support

Physical and Virtual Environments

"Design for student learning and a teacher workplace don't have to be contradictory things. **Right now, the environment isn't ideal for either group**"

- MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Physical and Virtual Environments

It's not just a classroom. It's not just a workplace. It's something in between – and its technology driven.

Classrooms need to meet the needs of students and teachers as **separate, unique users.** When it comes to teaching and learning, technology is now a fundamental piece of that puzzle. **Classroom design needs to seamlessly integrate and support the growing use of technology and be change-ready as technology advances in the future.**

Limitations in Learning Environments

- Limited number of **outlets** (45%)

- **Limited space for group work or collaboration** (37%)

- Lack of **technology** or problematic technology (32%)

- Lack of **writable surfaces** (24%)

- Lack of access to **resources** (20%)

56%
of teachers indicated that **improvements in technology would help them to feel more supported** in their working environment

All of those pieces of technology **are key** in incorporating my planning, my learning, my students learning into one. Even if we are not doing remote learning, **those are all still things I use on a daily basis.**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

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Flexibility

"Flexibility means being able to choose how I set up my classroom and **how I work with students**"

- HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Flexibility: Not a Blank Check

Expectations and standards for learning are evolving, and the classroom needs to reflect the current world, which is flexible, fluid, and dynamic. Teachers are looking for *modifiable* spaces that have the appropriate affordances (technology integration, power outlets, etc.) to support layouts, group sizes, and activities to align with their teaching style.

82%
of surveyed teachers report they want more flexibility for their teaching environment

3.4/5
Teachers find teaching spaces limiting to their teaching style
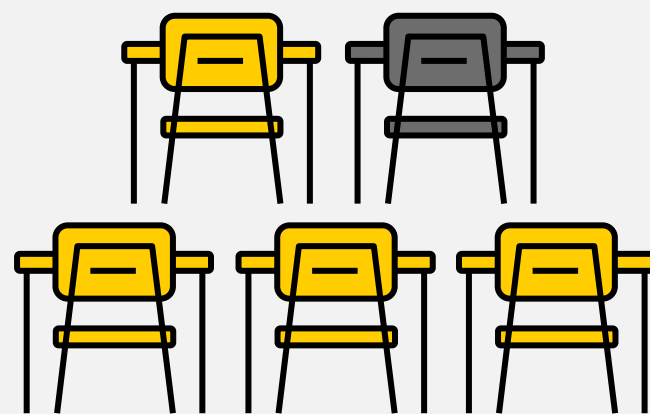
4/5
Teachers want more space for desk-free activities

Limitations in Learning Environments

- Furniture **cannot be reconfigured** to support different activities or group sizes (29%)

- Furniture that is **not movable** or easily movable (25%)

- Furniture that **does not meet needs or teaching style, activities, or grouping** (24%)

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Post-Pandemic Teacher Insight

Limiting learning environments are increasingly a primary source of stress **—up by 10% since 2019.**

35%

2022

25%

2019
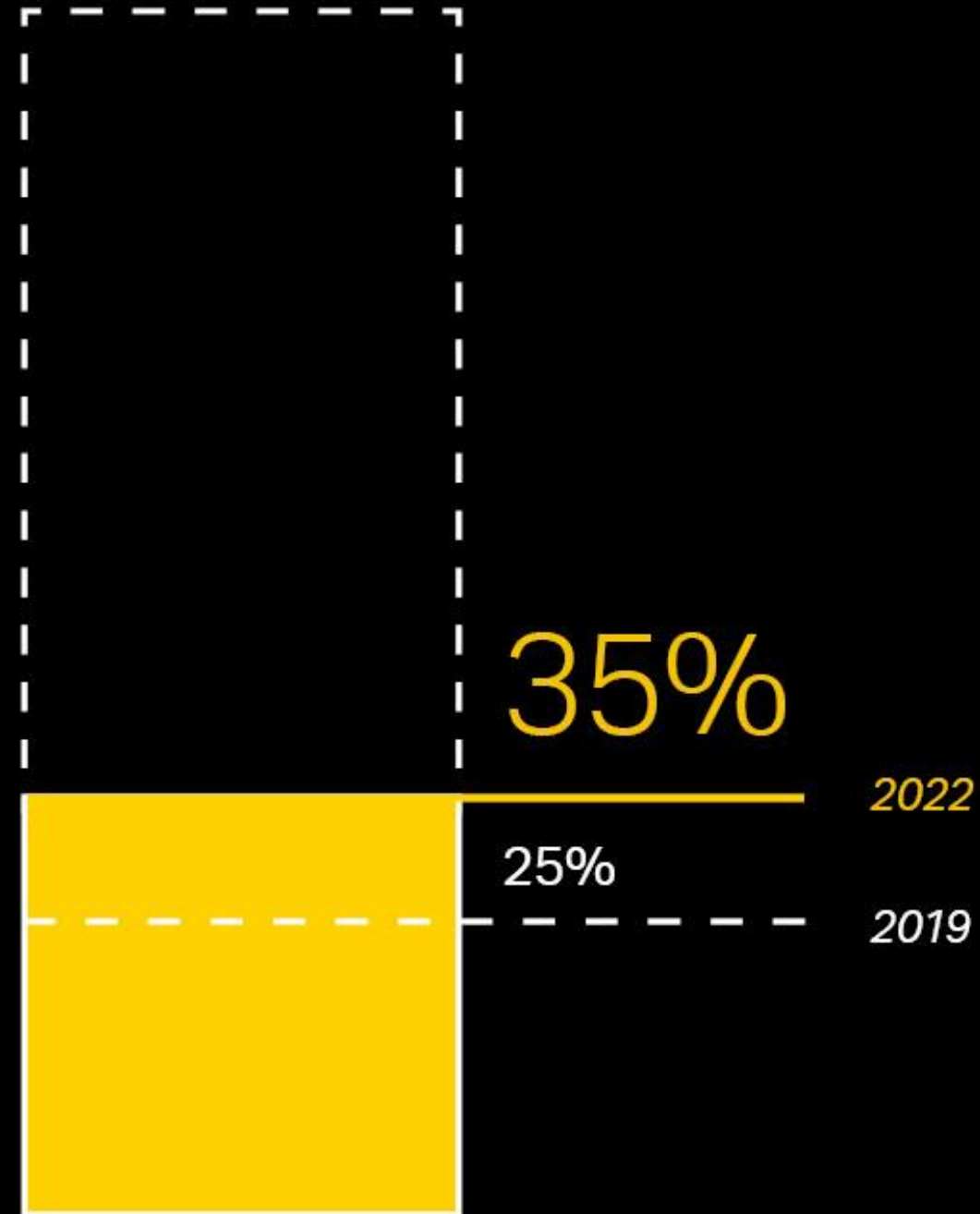
Personalization + Choice

"Students learn differently – whether verbal, auditory, tactile, kinesthetically…we need to meet students where they are…**Teachers also have different ways they interact with students."**

- MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Personalization + Choice:
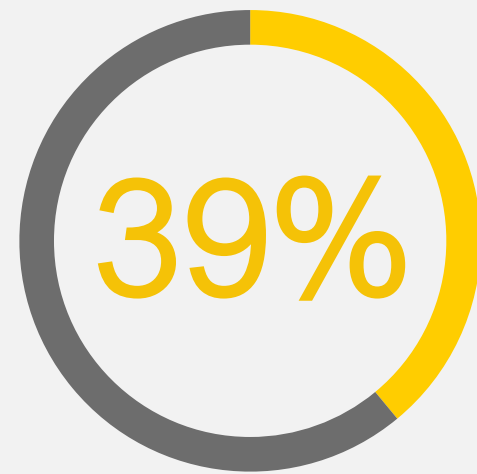# For Teachers and Students

Teachers (and students) are under more pressure than ever to perform amidst fluctuating circumstances, and they need different tools to succeed. One of those tools is the classroom itself and the **teachers' ability to adapt their space and curriculum to meet student and personal needs.** Teachers indicated that their **students benefit when both students and teachers are afforded personalization and choice.**

> " We are all about fostering individualism and personalizing… We try to provide choice over their environment and what is going to make them successful.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

39%

Teachers report that providing an environment that offers personalized learning and support is a primary source of stress

> " If teachers feel supported, then students feel supported.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Limitations in Learning Environments

- **Poor quality** of the physical environment (40%)

- **Distractions** in the surrounding environment (18%)

- Excessive **noise** (16%)

- **Ability to personalize/decorate** the classroom (11%)

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Cultivating Resilience Through Design
Self-Efficacy

Intuitive Affordances

- Integrate resources and features that are easy to understand and utilize - clear, readable design
- Seamlessly embedded technologies
- Zoning of spaces

Adaptability and Flexibility

- Modifiable spaces to support different needs
- Easily movable, modular furniture systems
- Accommodate changing paradigms

Ownership

- Individual needs, identity, feeling "planted"
- Provide opportunities for ownership at any available scale

Cultivating Resilience Through Design
Classroom-Level Focus

The Classroom Does It All

- Teachers utilize their classroom to support their wellbeing and professional needs
- Identify opportunities for integrated support for educators

Comfort and Ergonomics

- Consider the teacher's flow through the space
- Balance student and teacher needs
- Adjustable IEQ factors
- Distractions and level of stimulation
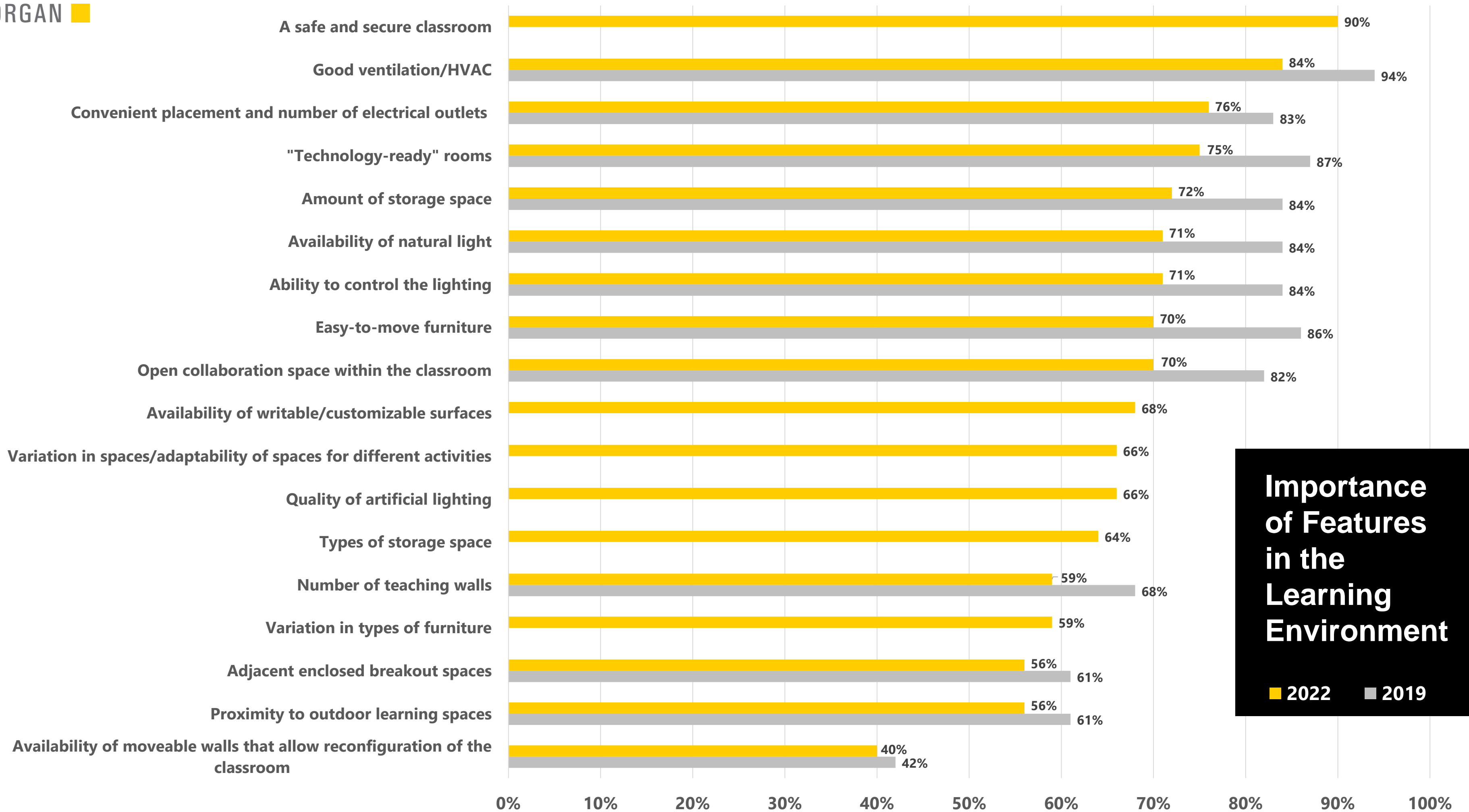
Teacher Professionalism

- Classrooms are learning spaces *and* working spaces

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Post-Pandemic Teacher Insight

"It's 100% a learning environment for students, but it's also 100% a work environment for teachers."

Importance of Features in the Learning Environment

■ 2022 ■ 2019

Feature	2022	2019
A safe and secure classroom	90%	
Good ventilation/HVAC	84%	94%
Convenient placement and number of electrical outlets	76%	83%
"Technology-ready" rooms	75%	87%
Amount of storage space	72%	84%
Availability of natural light	71%	84%
Ability to control the lighting	71%	84%
Easy-to-move furniture	70%	86%
Open collaboration space within the classroom	70%	82%
Availability of writable/customizable surfaces	68%	
Variation in spaces/adaptability of spaces for different activities	66%	
Quality of artificial lighting	66%	
Types of storage space	64%	
Number of teaching walls	59%	68%
Variation in types of furniture	59%	
Adjacent enclosed breakout spaces	56%	61%
Proximity to outdoor learning spaces	56%	61%
Availability of moveable walls that allow reconfiguration of the classroom	40%	42%

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Design Takeaways

1

MEET TEACHERS' BASIC NEEDS

Before higher aspirations can be met, many teachers still need the basics, like quality light and air, working technology, essential resources, and support

2

THE CLASSROOM DOES IT ALL

The classroom is a teachers' space as much as it is a students' space- it must support learning, professional work, and wellness

3

ADAPTABILITY + ALIGNMENT

Teachers need easily modifiable spaces with movable furniture and desire greater alignment between their space and their teaching style

4

TECHNOLOGY IS FUNDAMENTAL

Technology is now a given in the learning environment and it must be well supported and seamlessly integrated
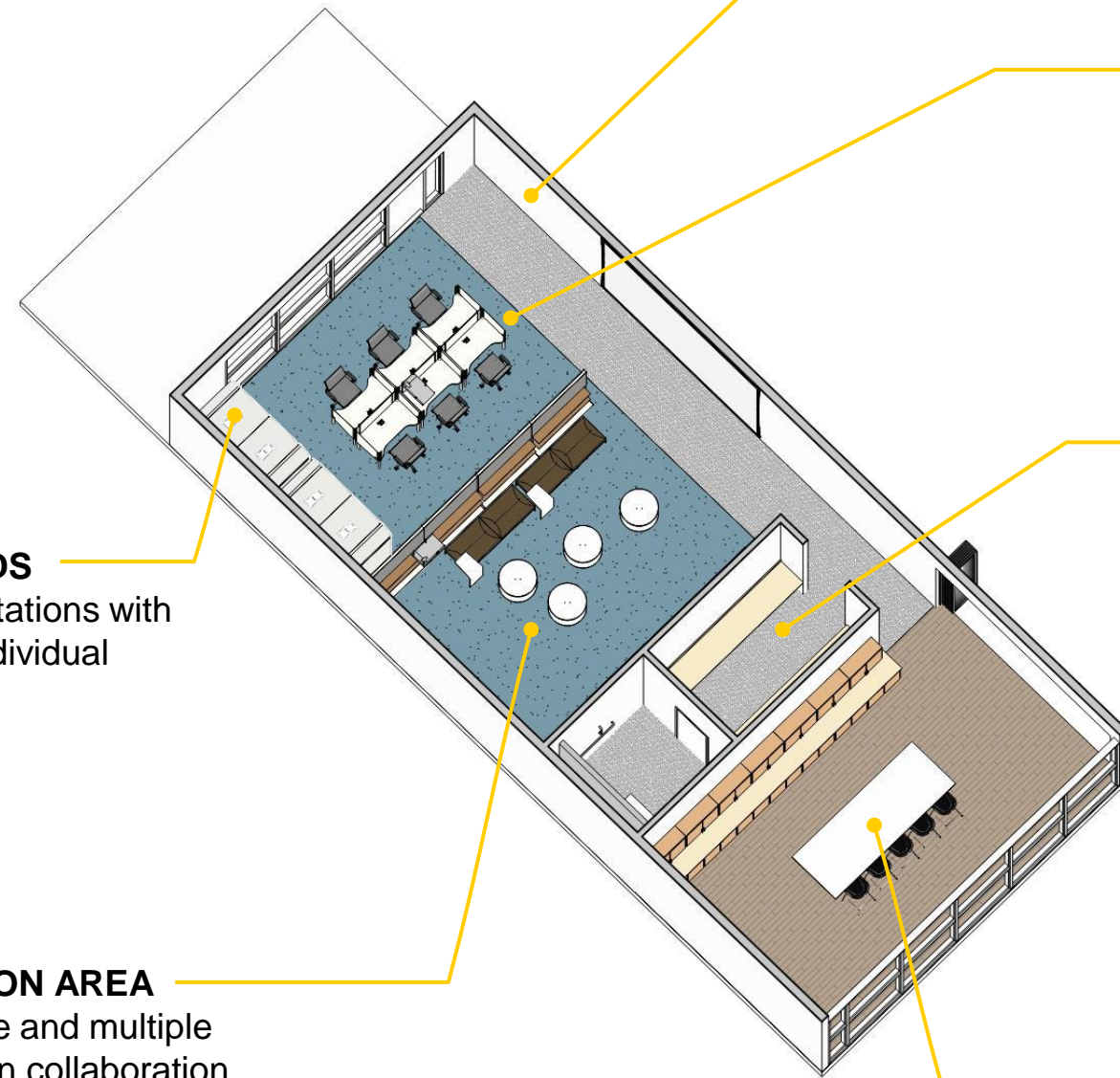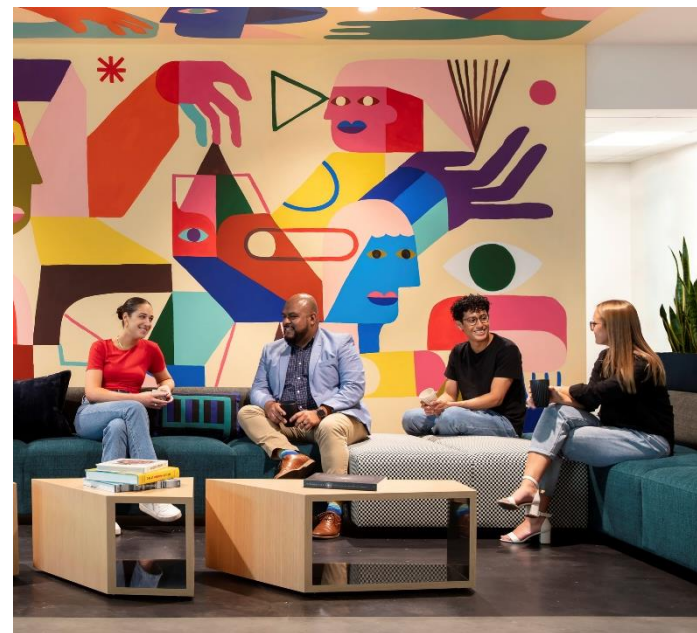
5

"TEACHER MODE": OFF

Teachers desire quiet, privacy, and separation from others when focusing on responsibilities outside of teaching

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Cultivating Educator Resilience

TEACHER'S HUB MODULE - SMALL

WRITABLE SURFACES
The whole wall to be writable surface and support discussion

FOCUS ZONE
With movable walls that separates or opens to collaboration zone

WORKROOM
Print room and storage

PERSONAL PODS
& movable workstations with power/data for individual working needs

COLLABORATION AREA
Movable furniture and multiple projection walls in collaboration space accommodate activities of different scales

GATHERING AREA
Open kitchen with outdoor connection

INSIGHTS   Schools as a Workplace   Wellness   Flexibility   Personalization and Choice   Physical and Virtual Environments

Cultivating Educator Resilience

TEACHER'S HUB MODULE - LARGE

WELLNESS AND FOCUS AREA
Furniture that fits different group sizes with movable walls that separates or opens to collaboration zone

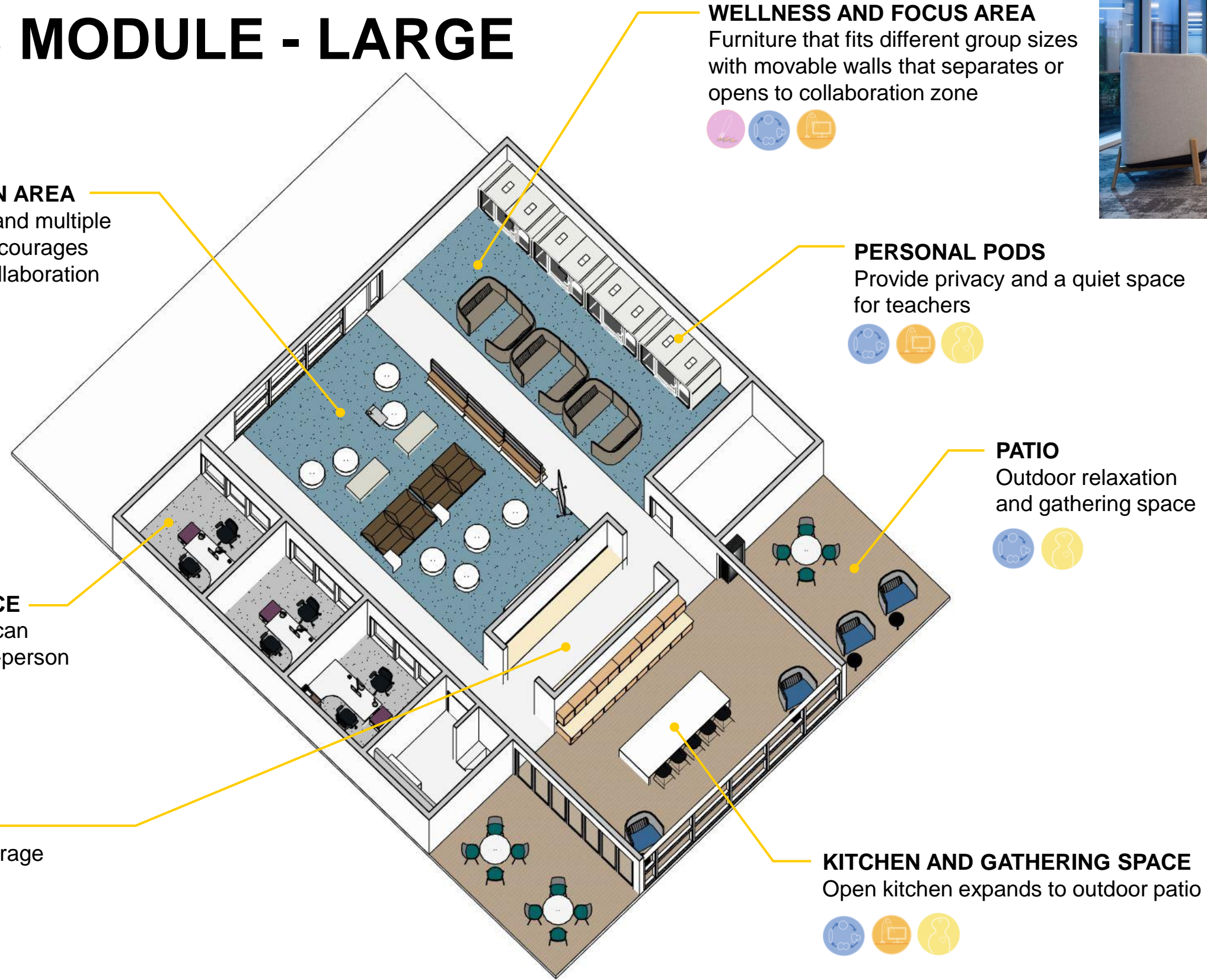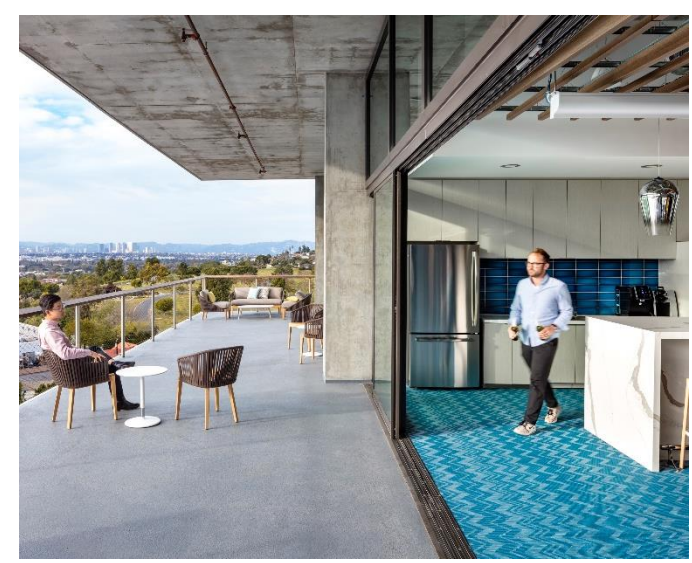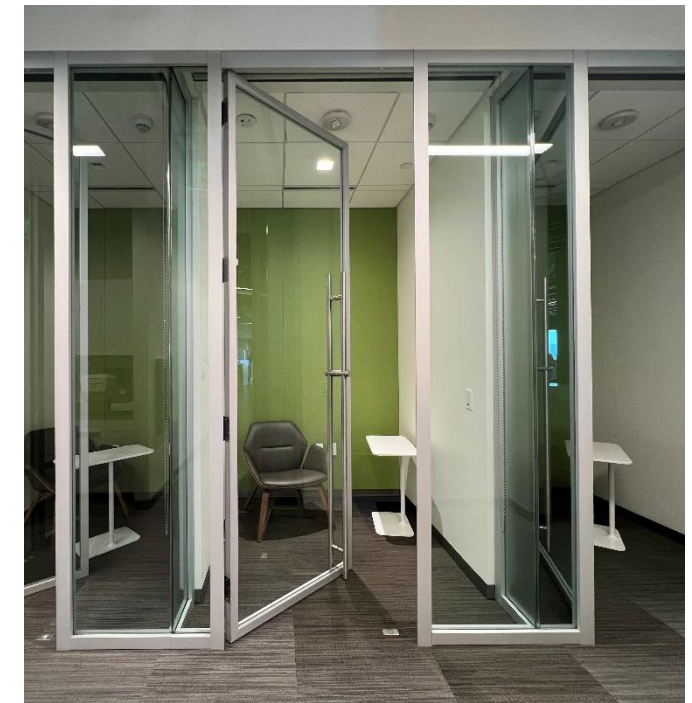**COLLABORATION AREA**
Movable furniture and multiple projection walls encourages interdisciplinary collaboration

PERSONAL PODS
Provide privacy and a quiet space for teachers

PATIO
Outdoor relaxation and gathering space

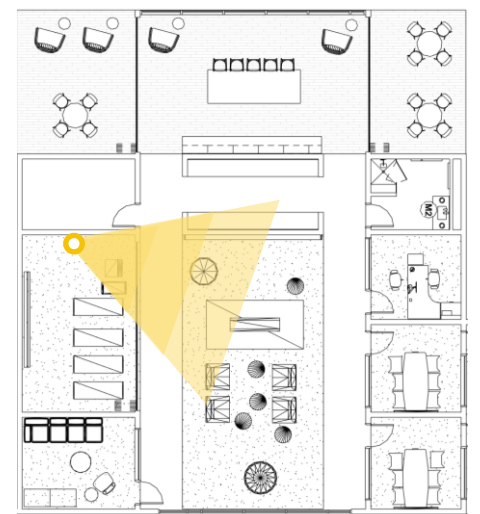**HOTELING OFFICE**
Small offices that can accommodate a 4-person meeting

WORKROOM
Print room and storage

KITCHEN AND GATHERING SPACE
Open kitchen expands to outdoor patio
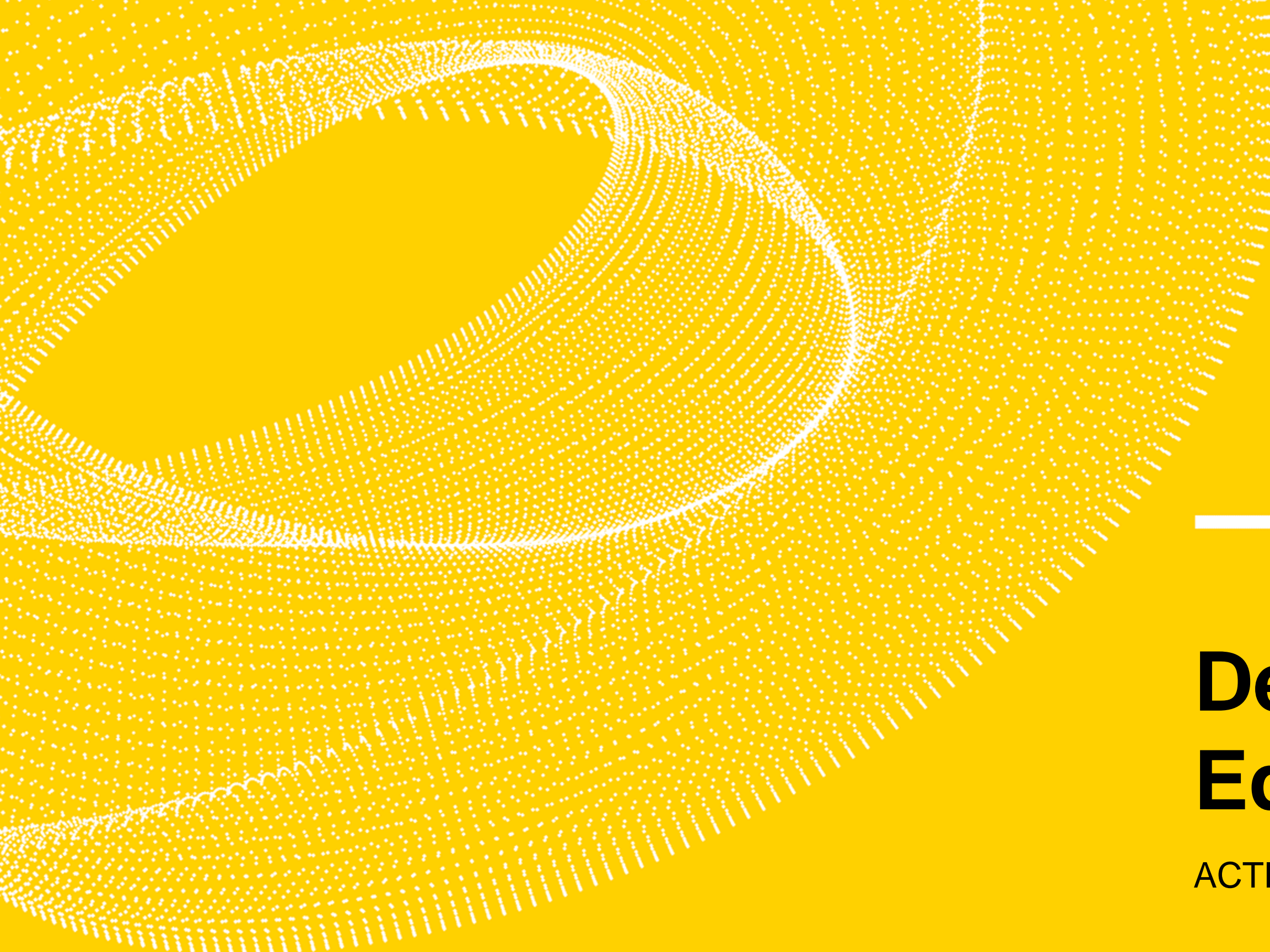
Cultivating Educator Resilience

Teacher's Hub – Wellness and Collaboration Space

Designing for Educator Resilience

ACTIVITY #2

Designing for Educator Resilience

Build on the sense of empathy created in the first activity to develop design interventions for your persona educator with the data we shared in mind.

You can focus on one or multiple spaces from the provided list or define your own. Feel free to draw a plan, create a sketch, use the provided images to show us what you imagine.

Each group will share out their thoughts on both activities

DESIGNING FOR EDUCATOR RESILIENCE:

*What **opportunities** do you see for design to support educator resilience in school environments? Draw on the **empathy** you developed for your educator in the first activity and **develop design ideas for spaces or features that could support their resilience**.*

EDUCATOR PERSONA:

SPACE(S):

Classroom	Hoteling Office
Teacher Desk	Phone Room
Workroom	Personal Pod
Wellness Room	Focus Area
Breakroom	_____
Classroom Pod	_____
Outdoor Space	_____
Collaboration Area	_____

DESIGN IDEAS: You can create a diagram, a sketch, or a plan!

Want to learn more?

Check out our resources

More information on this study is available through:

- A **research white paper** with full survey findings

- An **executive summary** of insights and survey findings

- A series of **blog posts** focusing on each major insight with supporting findings and potential design strategies

- An episode of the Square, Corgan's **podcast**

Contributors

2022 Design Lessons From Teachers 2.0
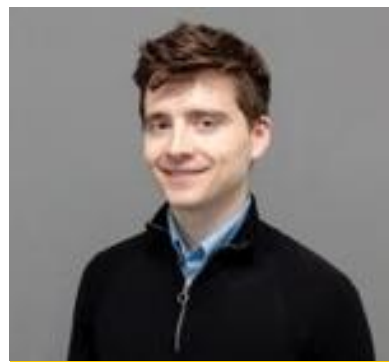
RESEARCH + INVESTIGATION

Melissa Hoelting

Design Researcher

Chloe Hosid

Education Design
Researcher

Kevin Sloan

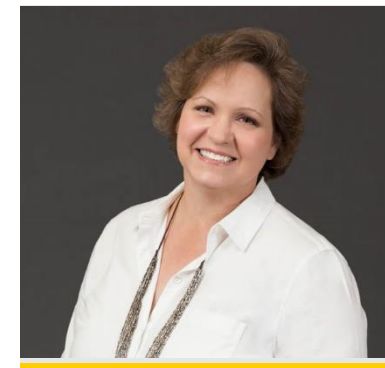Data Strategist

Samantha Flores

Director of Hugo

DESIGN + EDUCATION EXPERTISE

Steve Hulsey

President and Education
Sector Leader

Susan Smith

Principal

Brett Sumrow

Principal

Sangeetha Karthik

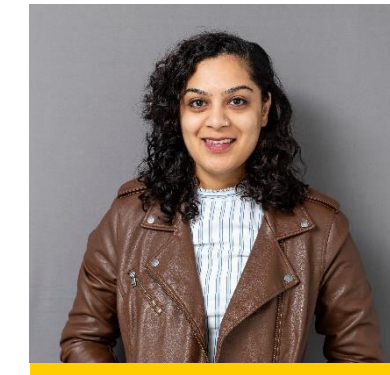Associate Principal

Jason Mellard

Senior Associate

Kelly Shulman

Senior Associate

Erik Larsen

Architect

Nida Ali

Project Specialist

Additional Contributor: *Tania White, Design Researcher*

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Questions?

Beverly Fornof

beverly.fornof@corgan.com

Lane Pendleton

lane.pendleton@corgan.com

Chloe Hosid

chloe.hosid@corgan.com