

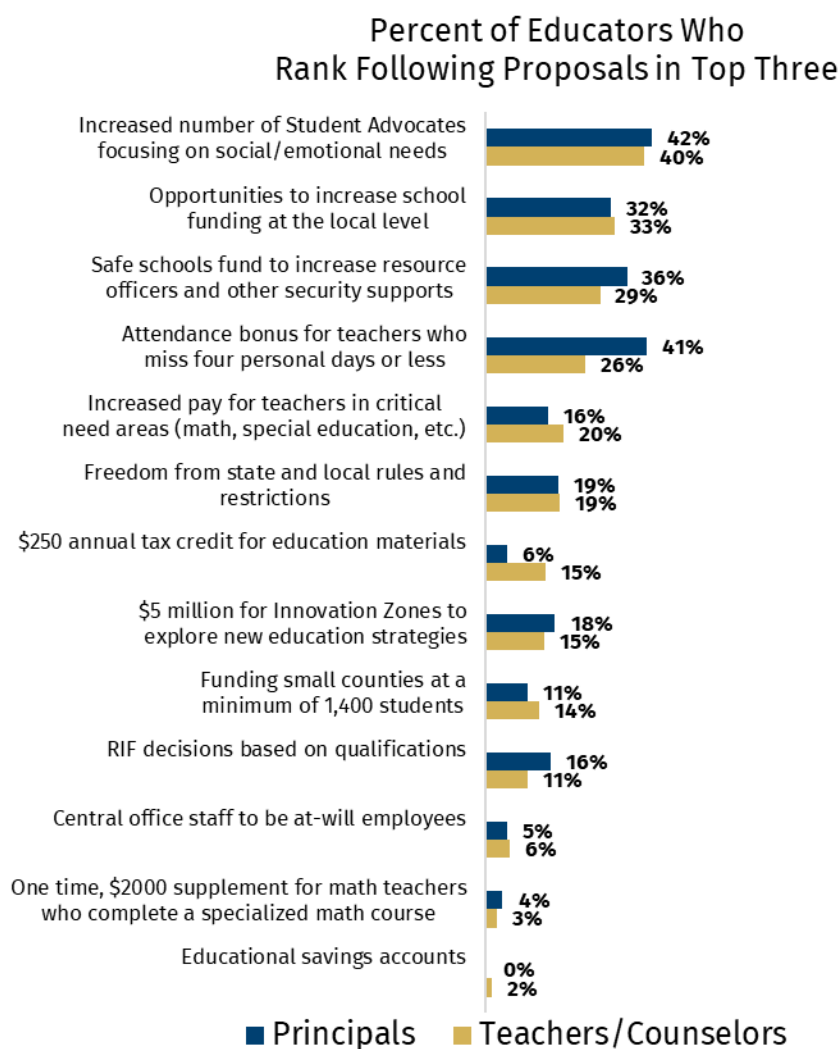
Educator Voice Survey Addendum: Views on Policy Proposals

The West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) asked the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) to conduct the *Educator Voice Survey* prior to the announcement of the special legislative session on education. In response, the WVDE added questions to the original survey to capture the views of educators on certain policy proposals to complement the West Virginia’s Voice Education Forums and other survey efforts in informing the special session. The original survey report for the WVBE focused on the original survey questions. This addendum provides results for the questions added to help inform the special session.

Ranked Choices

The *Educator Voice Survey* asked principals, teachers, and counselors to rank the top three proposals they believe will improve student outcomes in WV. The list of proposals presented to educators largely came from Senate Bill 451 of the 2019 West Virginia Legislative Session, but it is not an exhaustive list of proposals in the bill. In particular, the list did not include charter school or increased compensation options. The proposals included on this survey also differ from those presented on the *Education Survey for Family and Community*.

The accompanying figure shows the percent of educators who ranked each policy idea in their top three selections. The results are separate for principals (including assistant principals) and teachers and counselors. Both groups strongly feel that having increased staff to support social/emotional needs is critical. In general, both groups also tend to have more support for local funding opportunities and safe schools funding. Notable differences arise with administrators having a higher level of support for attendance bonuses and teachers having more support for a \$250 annual tax credit for education materials.



Views on Ideal Changes

Educators also had the opportunity to provide open-ended responses to the question below.

“If you could change one thing about how schools work to improve student outcomes in West Virginia, what would it be? (Max 300 Characters)”

Of the 7,211 teachers and counselors who responded to the *Educator Voice Survey*, 4,427 (61%) responded to the open-ended question. Of the 486 principals and assistant principals who responded to the survey overall, 321 (66%) responded to the open-ended question. The key findings are summarized below:

- **Funding Opportunities:** Many teachers and counselors report support for increased compensation for school personnel (with numerous mentions of increased salaries and PEIA). Principals overwhelmingly agree and often mention the difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers.

Many responses from teachers and counselors also indicate a need for more resources (with numerous mentions of technology and instructional resources/supplies) to improve student outcomes. There are also repeated concerns that existing funding is not being used as efficiently as it could be.
- **Instructional Quality:** Most responses share a universal theme that more should be done to support educators and respect their expertise in the classroom. Frequent comments also include a need for increased teacher autonomy, decreased class sizes, and less paperwork and other extraneous burdens.
- **School Choice and Innovation:** The responses include numerous unfavorable comments surrounding charter schools and education savings accounts. Educators also place emphasis on additional support needed in Grades K-2.
- **Social Emotional Supports:** Many principals, teachers, and counselors strongly support increasing the number of student support personnel, while also receiving further training in how to best support the social emotional needs of students. Many educators reference how students’ home lives are negatively influencing students’ educational experience. They report the necessity of qualified professionals with extensive training in social emotional supports to address these underlying, emotional issues that are at the root of academic challenges for many students.
- **Other:** A number of other comments from all groups mentioned testing fatigue (including a lessened focus on testing outcomes) resulting from additional local testing on top of state-mandated testing.

Multiple administrators also note the need for increased flexibility within their schools and for teachers in their classrooms. Some administrators mention that additional time for planning the school year and instructional activities would be very helpful.

A number of other comments called for increased accountability for students as well as their parents/caregivers. In general, many responses indicate favorability for increased local responsibility for educational decision making.