



Students walk with teachers as they arrive for the first day of the new school year at New Lebanon School in Greenwich on Aug. 29.

Ned Gerard/Hearst Connecticut Media

‘How long can I do this?’

Survey: Most Conn. teachers report burnout, job dissatisfaction

By **Natasha Sokoloff**
STAFF WRITER

Hundreds of Connecticut teachers are facing persistent burnout and worsening conditions, driving the ongoing educator shortage, according to a new survey by the state’s largest teachers’ union.

In a survey released Sept. 15 by the Connecticut Education Association, about 1,000 educators across the state reported issues including high stress, poor working conditions, low salaries, increased student behavioral challenges and a lack of support as the new school year began.

“The stress, the workload, what’s going on is starting to really wear on our teachers,” said Kate Dias, president of the Connecticut Education Association. “This is not a low-stakes, low-pressure profession. It is a high-stakes, high-pressure profession.”

About 98% of the respondents, or more than 800 edu-

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cators, reported stress and burnout was a top concern, according to the survey conducted last month. And nearly 70% of educators expressed dissatisfaction with conditions in their schools, with more than 500 educators saying things have gotten worse over the past two years, according to the survey results.

In the survey, hundreds of teachers reported several factors contributing to the broader educator shortage, including the high-stress job, too many behavioral problems with students, low salary, lack of respect for educators, better

employment opportunities outside of public schools, not enough support, hostility or criticism of educators, safety concerns, the political climate, unfair treatment and more.

“I think it’s a question everybody’s asking, ‘How long can I do this for before it physically and mentally takes a toll on me?’” Dias said.

Escalating student behavior challenges

Teachers are facing a number of different pressures, but hundreds of educators agreed that student behavior was a serious issue in their school

district, according to the survey results.

And 625 educators, or 76% of respondents, said too many behavioral problems with students was contributing to the shortage of educators in their school district and those entering the teaching profession.

Over the past few years, the majority of respondents reported seeing increased stress/anxiety, less concentration, increased aggression or dysregulated behavior, and more distraction in their students.

About three-quarters of respondents said they were seeing worse behaviors and socialization skills as children born during the COVID-19 pandemic reach school age, according to the survey. For students entering sixth grade and above, 63% of teachers said student behaviors, attitudes and socialization skills were diminishing.

Teachers continues on A4

Another self-storage facility approved in Stamford, near Greenwich border

By **Robert Marchant**
STAFF WRITER

STAMFORD — A new self-storage facility was approved by the Stamford Zoning Board after additional design upgrades were made to a previous plan that board members found unappealing.

Extra Space Storage gained the go-ahead to build a 61,077-square-foot, three-story structure off West Main Street at Commerce Road, with 522 storage units. Three other large storage facilities operated by ESS are already located on the same 4-acre site, which is near the Greenwich border.

The self-storage company added some additional design features to the structure since it was first proposed earlier this summer. Zoning Board members felt the earlier design was substandard and needed improvements, and they requested more texture and additional color on the exterior of the building.

The attorney representing the project, Jason Klein, said the company and its design team “sharpened our pencils on the look of the building” and came back with a new look for the structure.

The new design features trim around the window, cornices, panels and additional blocks of color on the structure. “We worked to get a nice end result for everyone,” Klein said.



Courtesy of BL Companies

Extra Space Storage gained approval for a 61,077-square-foot, three-story structure off West Main Street in Stamford, as seen in this rendering.

“It’s much better looking than what we were presented with originally,” said a Zoning Board member, William Morris.

“I think the end product is a big improvement from where we started,” added David Stein, the board chairman. The board approved the proposal unanimously.

Klein, the attorney representing the project, said the additional facility was needed to “accommodate the growing demand for self-storage in the city.”

The Zoning Board required the planting of 16 trees at the site as a condition of approval. The storage company will also pay \$100,000 to the city for the installation of new sidewalks in the area.

The site in the west end of the city was an old warehouse district in the 1950s and 1960s, and it later became a self-storage business in the 1970s and 1980s. The self-storage businesses in the city have been growing in recent years, as part of the expansion of residential construction in Stamford.

UConn Health has eyes on state’s hospitals

UConn Health is preparing to submit a bid for Waterbury Hospital as part of the Prospect Medical Holdings bankruptcy sale, and is also in discussions for a partnership with Day Kimball and Bristol hospitals, a push that could create a new public health care system for Connecticut.

The Waterbury expansion would more than double the inpatient capacity of UConn’s John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington, to more than 600 licensed beds from Dempsey’s current 257. But as UConn Health’s board chairman explained it to me, the acquisition — if the state medical center wins the bid — is not just about adding size.

“Our objective is to create a Connecticut health care system powered by UConn, where we partner with a number of hospitals,” UConn Health Chair John Driscoll told me. “We’d like to create a third alternative that is lower cost and as high quality.”

A third alternative, that is, to the two large statewide systems: Hartford HealthCare and Yale New Haven Health. If they can pull it off, that could help stabilize rising hospital prices in Connecticut.

Driscoll declined to talk about any other talks for mergers or partnerships with other hospitals. UConn Health said only that it is

Haar continues on A4



Dan Haar
COMMENTARY



Ken Dixon/Hearst Connecticut Media

Chief Justice of the state Supreme Court Raheem Mullins on Monday during a news conference with Gov. Ned Lamont in the State Capitol.

State chief justice wants to limit ICE tactics

By **Ken Dixon**
STAFF WRITER

HARTFORD — The state’s top judicial official on Tuesday issued guidance aimed at preventing Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents from masking themselves and hunting for possible targets for arrest and deportation inside state courthouses.

Connecticut Supreme Court Chief Justice Raheem L. Mullins made the announcement during a rare appearance in the state Capitol, stressing that the policy, identical to recent rules in Connecticut’s federal courts, was developed after conferring with ICE, which has been involved in several high-profile incidents, particularly in Danbury and Stamford with agents wearing masks to shield their faces from the public.

“The policy I issue today is directed at keeping our courthouses safe,” Mullins said. “Judges, staff, litigants, members of the public —

ICE continues on A4