

INSIGHTS

THE STATE OF TEACHING IN JAMAICA

2025

A Comprehensive National Teacher Survey

"FOR EDUCATION TO MATTER, OUR TEACHERS MUST MATTER"

OUR FINDINGS

EDUCATE JAMAICA

EST. 2012

The National Teacher Survey

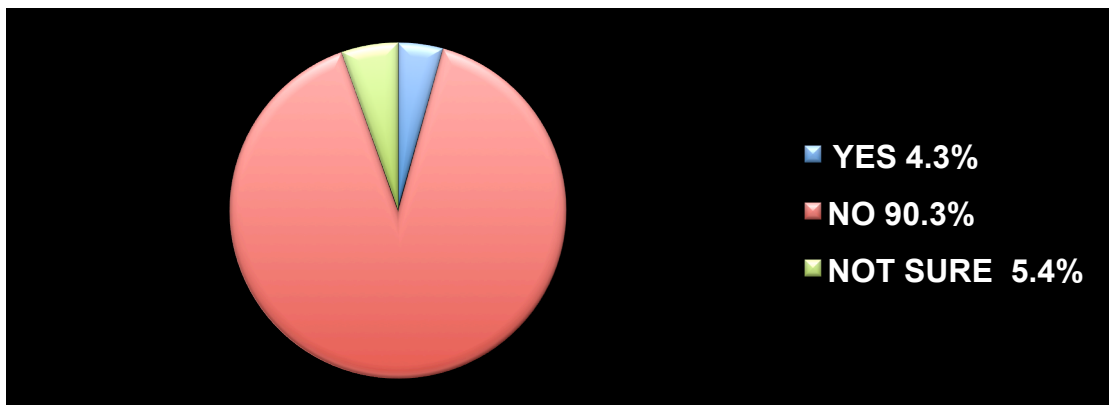
Teachers are the engines of our education system and when engines are not managed and supported properly they break, which creates a state of immobilization. The national teacher survey conducted by EDUCATE JAMAICA, seeks to tap the pulse of teachers to get a distinct view of what teachers in Jamaica are experiencing as they seek to navigate their daily existence as teachers in Jamaica. The exodus of teachers from the education system continues and by obtaining a good understanding of the state of teaching in Jamaica we will be better able to support our teachers.

The survey was completed by 300 teachers from across the island, with a margin of error of +/- 5%. This teacher survey offers a window, showing the everyday life within our schools and offers insights into the experiences of those shaping minds every day. Our survey provide teachers with an opportunity to have their experiences heard and for leaders and decision makers in education to have access to this helpful feedback. Helpful insight inspire meaningful change for teachers, education generally and school management operations. Insights help to shape change across the entire school landscape and collective feedback from teachers is an important component of any improvement strategy, as it offers great insights into how to better enhance teacher's daily experience of school leadership, students and parents.

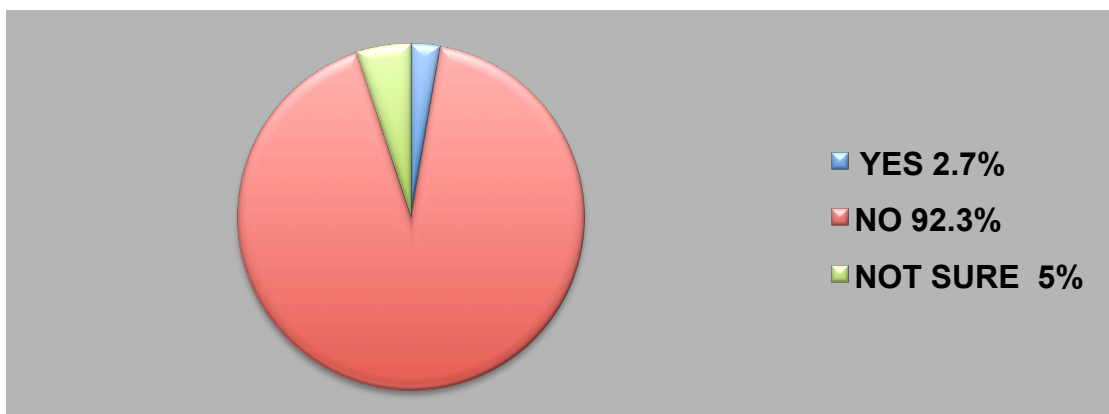
As frontline workers in education teachers are strongly positioned, if not the best positioned, to offer unparalleled insights into the areas that are working well and the areas that need improving.

The National Survey Team
EDUCATE JAMAICA

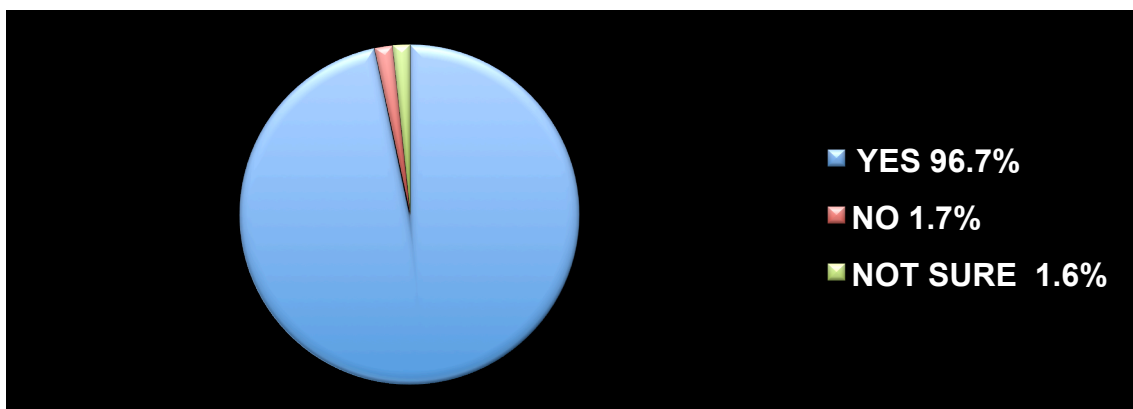
1. In terms of salaries, benefits and rewards, do you believe that teaching in Jamaica offers a competitive option in relative comparison to the other occupations on the island?



2. Based on your skill, education and level of experience as a teacher, do you believe that your salary and rewards take these reasonably into account?



3. Do you believe a significant percentage of competent and willing persons are being put off teaching because of the salaries and working conditions?

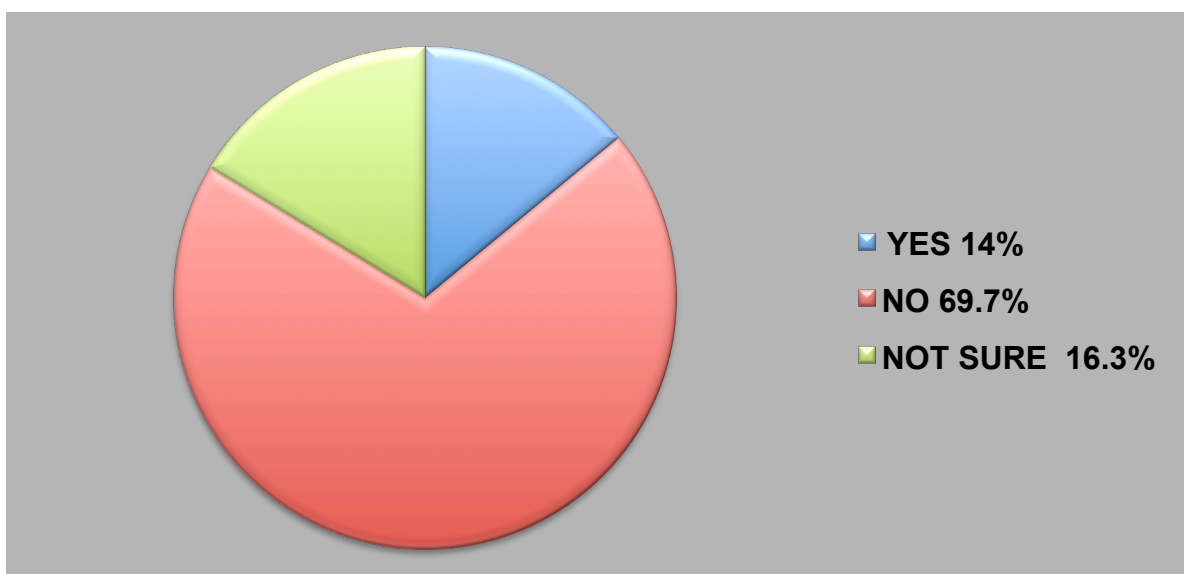


4. In the last 12 months, please select any of the following that you had to do:

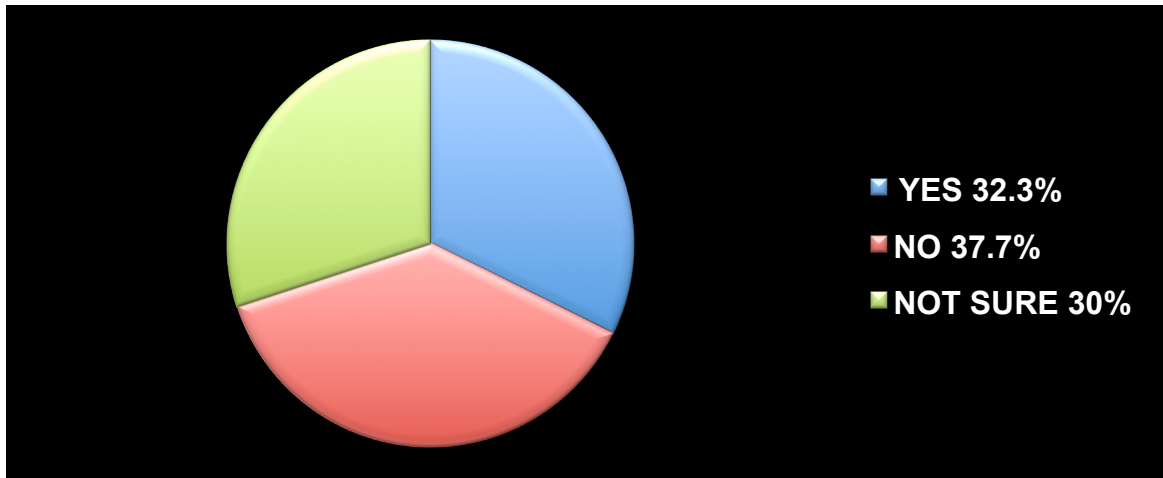
- Cut back on food spending
- Cut back on buying clothes
- Cut back on purchasing of essential household items
- Cut back on socializing
- Cancel cable TV
- Missed at least 4 payment deadlines for utility payments (light, water etc.)
- Increase use of credit card to cover essential bills
- Mortgage/rent arrears
- Doing a part-time/extra job to make ends meet

| In the last 12 months, teachers have had to take the following action: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|---|---|
| Cut back on food spending | 76.3% |
| Cut back on buying clothes | 76.7% |
| Cut back on purchasing of essential household items | 70.3% |
| Cut back on socializing | 62% |
| Cancel cable TV | 24.7% |
| Missed at least 4 payment deadlines utility payments (light, water etc.) | 27.3% |
| Increase use of credit card to cover essential bills | 50.7% |
| Mortgage/rent arrears | 17% |
| Doing a part-time/extra job to make ends meet | 60.3% |

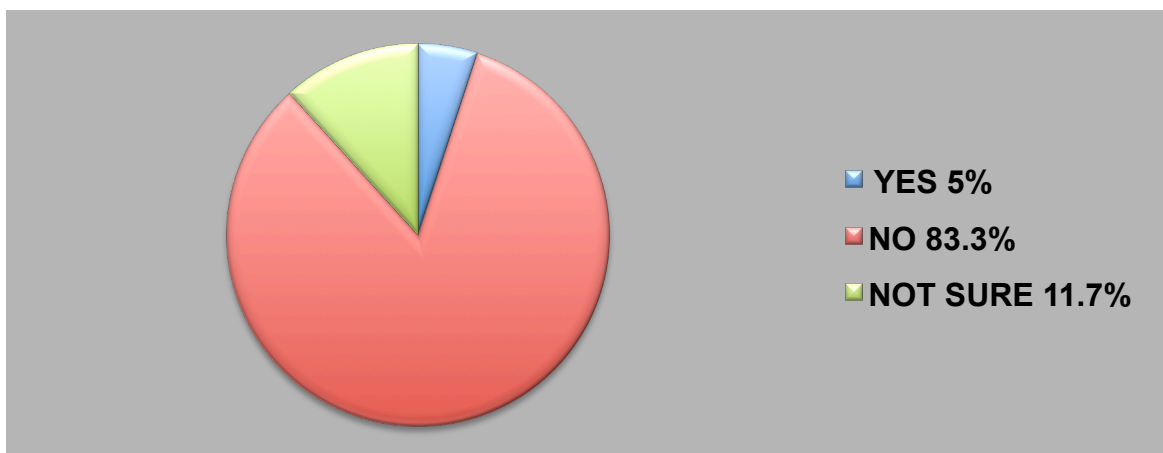
5. Given your experience of teaching in Jamaica, would you recommend teaching as a career to a friend or family members?



6. Do you believe given the opportunity and responsibility by the Ministry of Education, that your principal would make a fair decision about an appropriate salary, rewards and promotion of individual teachers in your school?



7. Are you paid for the full range of duties and responsibilities you do on daily basis?

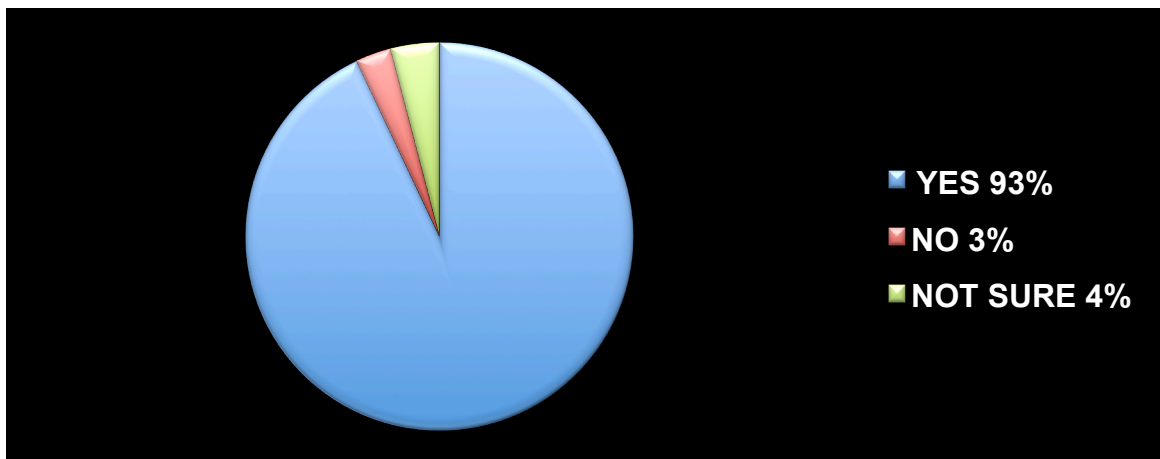


8. Select from the list below, what you believe to be the 5 main reasons behind poor pupil behaviour in your school generally:

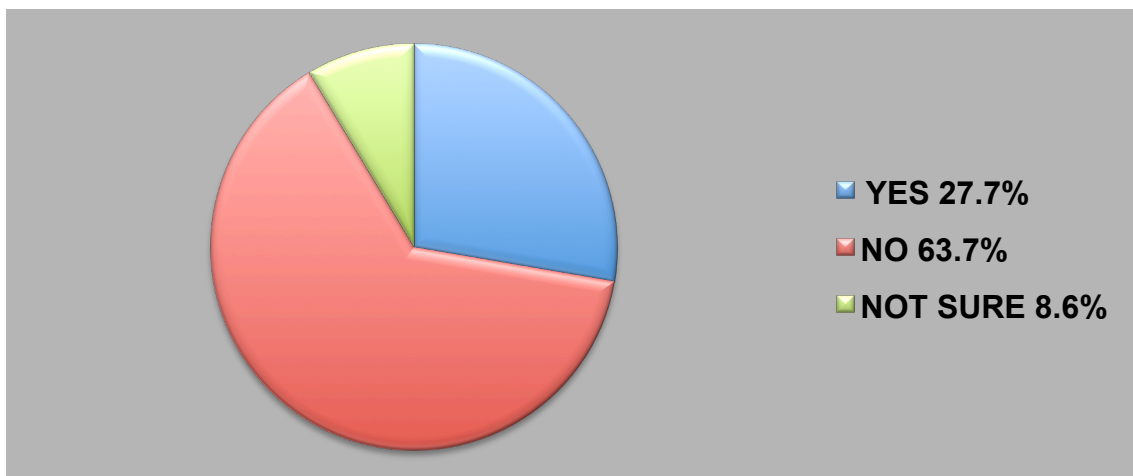
- Lack of enforcement of the school's rules
- Poor quality of teaching
- Lack of parental support
- Lack of back-up for teachers from the school senior management
- Lack of early intervention in behaviour management
- Substance abuse by students
- Class sizes are too large
- Poverty and deprivation
- Low expectation of students by teachers
- Lack of adequate access to external specialist behaviour support.
- Insufficient powers given to teachers to deal with poor student behaviour.

| Teachers believe the 5 main reasons behind poor pupil behaviour in schools generally are: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Lack of parent support | 93.3% |
| Lack of early intervention | 73.3% |
| Class sizes are too large | 58% |
| Insufficient powers given to teachers to deal with poor student behaviour | 53.3% |
| Lack of adequate access to external specialist behaviour support | 53% |

9. Do you believe there is a general widespread problem of poor student behaviour in schools in Jamaica today?



10. Have you been given appropriate training, guidance and information to deal with poor student behaviour?



11. What are the top 5 issues that are most prevalent in your school?

- Curse language spoken by students
- Verbal abuse of staff
- Inability by students to follow rules
- Physical assault on teachers
- Violence between pupils
- Late arrival to lessons by students
- Threatening behaviour by pupils
- Bullying between pupils
- Failure to complete work (including home work)
- Failure to comply with dress code
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices

| The top 5 issues that are most prevalent in their school are: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Failure to complete work (including home work) | 83.7% |
| Inability by students to follow rules | 68% |
| Curse language spoken by students | 65% |
| Bullying between pupils | 42.7% |
| Late arrival to lessons by students | 36.7% |

12. Please select from the list below all that you have experienced in the past 12 months:

- Social media abuse by student
- Social media abuse by parent/guardian
- Verbal abuse by student
- Physical assault by student
- Threats by students
- Physical assault by parent/guardian
- Verbal abuse by parent/guardian

| In the last 12 months, teachers have experienced the following in their school: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Verbal abuse by students | 33% |
| Verbal abuse by parents | 24.7% |
| Threats by students | 22% |
| Social media abuse by students | 13% |
| Social media abuse by parents | 7.7% |

13. Does your school have access to adequate external support as it relates to learning support needs (special educational needs) and difficult student behaviours?

- YES, at all times
- YES, when it is needed
- Sometimes
- Very rarely
- Never

| Does your school have access to adequate external support as it relates to learning support needs (special educational needs) and difficult student behaviours? | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Very rarely | 36.7% |
| Sometimes | 26.3% |
| Never | 22.4% |
| Yes, when it is needed | 12.3% |
| Yes, at all times | 2.3% |

14. From the list below please select the 5 activities that you believe are the most arduous when it comes to workload and bureaucracy in your school

- Report writing
- Lesson planning
- Meetings (internal and external)
- Entering pupil assessment and data
- Behaviour management record keeping
- Monitoring attendance and student attendance registration
- Parent meetings
- Marking (books and exam scripts)
- General pastoral duties
- None of the above

| The 5 activities that you believe are the most arduous when it comes to workload and bureaucracy in your school | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Lesson Planning | 75% |

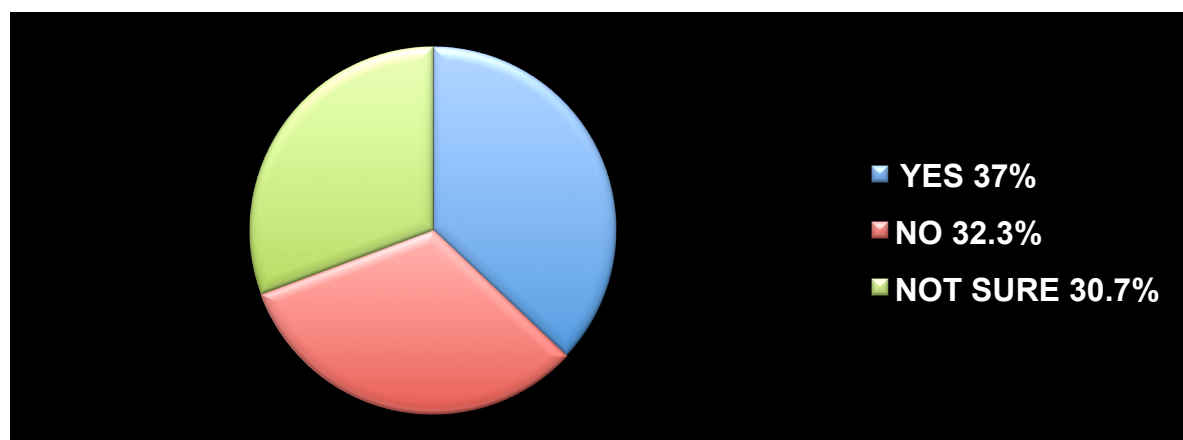
| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Behaviour management record keeping | 51.7% |
| Marking (book and exam scripts) | 48.3% |
| Report writing | 45.3% |
| Meetings (internal and external) | 41% |

15. Select from below the areas you believe adds excessively to your own personal workload:

- Class size
- Administrative tasks
- Coursework management
- Lesson planning
- Marking and assessments
- Meetings before and after school
- Matters relating to behaviour management inclusive of detentions

| The areas teachers believe adds excessively to their own personal workload: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Lesson Planning | 56.7% |
| Administrative task | 53% |
| Class size | 48.3% |
| Meetings before and after school | 43.7% |
| Marking and assessments | 34.7% |
| Matters relating to behaviour management inclusive of detentions | 31% |

16. Are teachers at your school professionally managed in a way that empowers them?

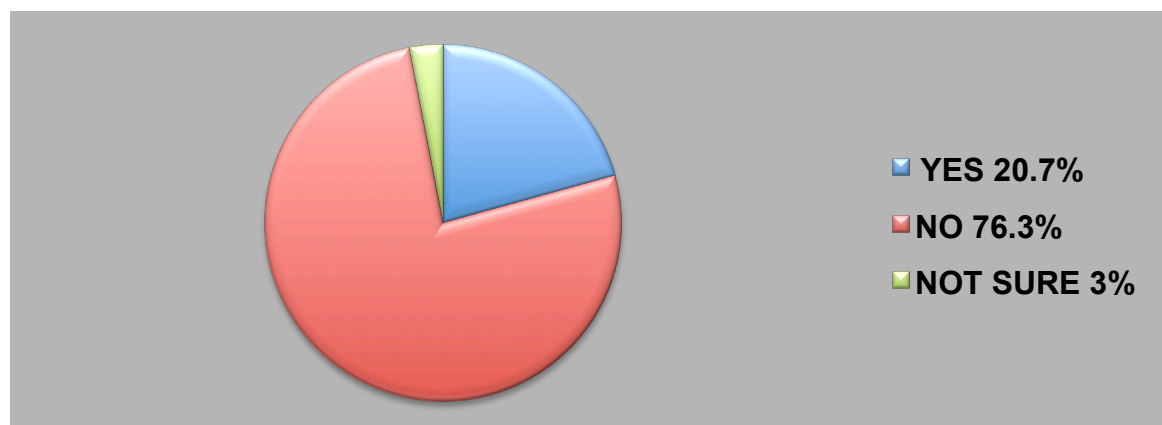


17. As a teacher please select from the list below, the things that are generally evident in your school:

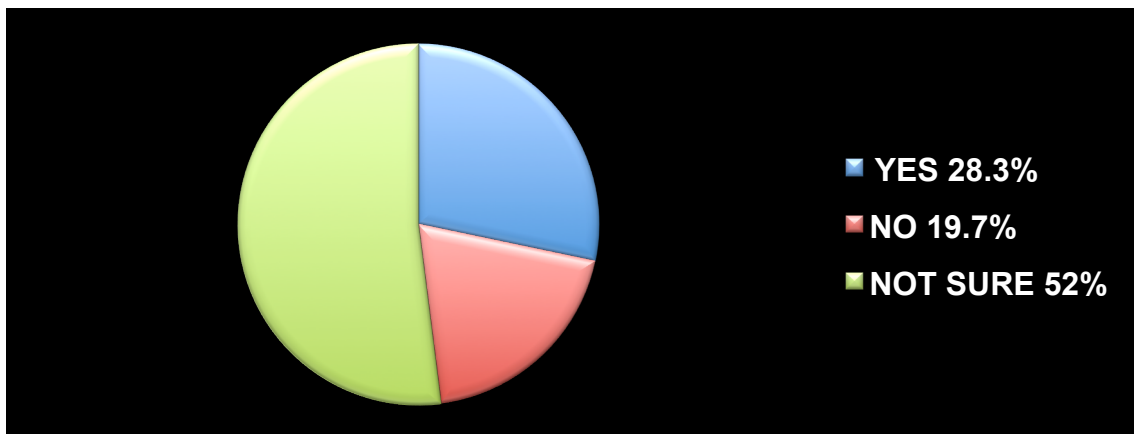
- A culture of criticism and blame rather than praise and reward
- Excessive monitoring of teachers
- Teacher’s views and opinions are not really considered or listened to.
- Lack of respect for the professional judgement of teachers
- Poor and inadequate facilities
- Lack of adequate and up-to-date teaching resources
- Unrealistic and unreasonable expectations
- Lack of access to professional development and relevant staff training

| The things that are generally evident: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|---|
| Lack of adequate and up-to-date teaching resources | 56.7% |
| Poor and inadequate facilities | 47.7% |
| Teacher’s views and opinions are not really considered or listened to | 45.3% |
| Unrealistic and unreasonable expectations | 45% |
| A culture of criticism and blame rather than praise and reward | 41% |
| Lack of respect for the professional judgement of teachers | 27.3% |
| excessive monitoring of teachers | 21% |
| Lack of access to professional development and relevant staff training | 11.7% |

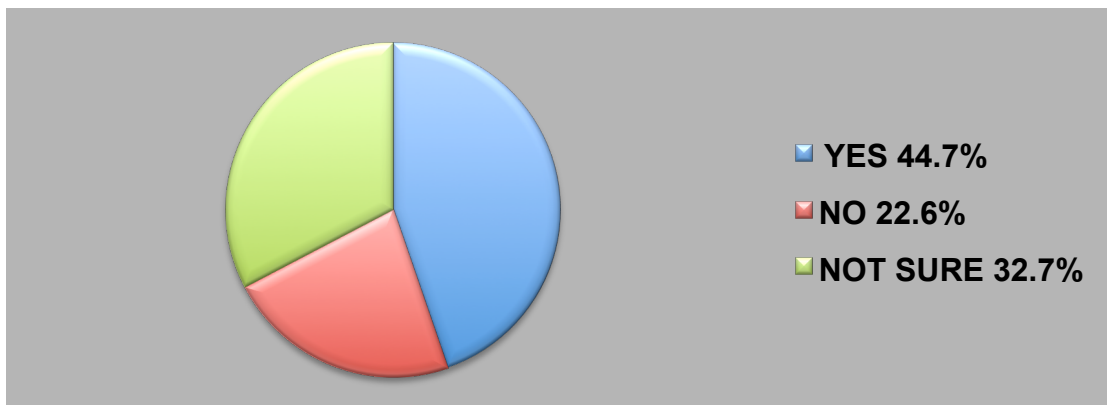
18. In the last 12 months has there been a letter or conversation with you concerning the quality of your teaching?



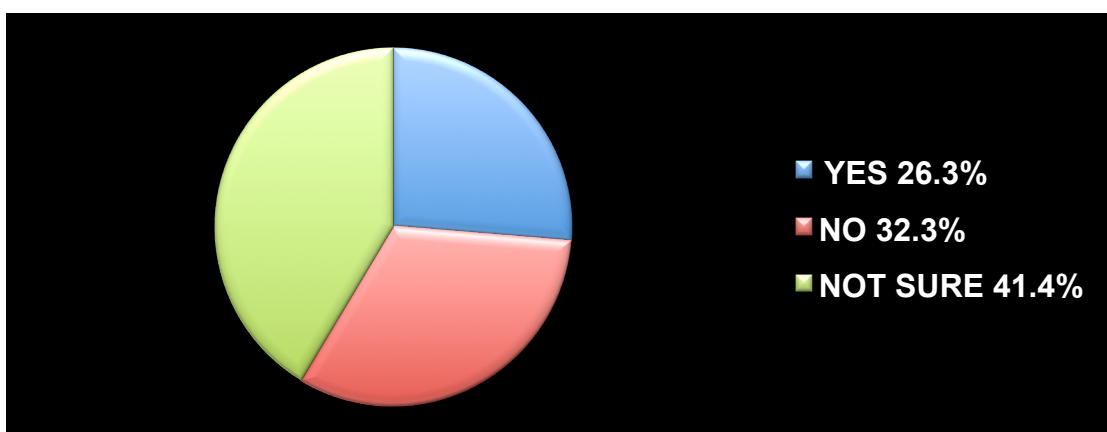
19. Does the school board do a good job?



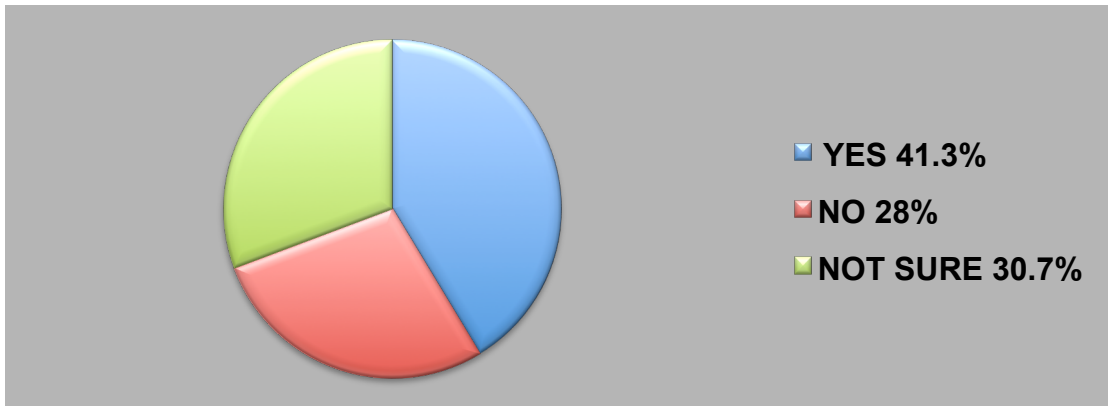
20. Is the school managed well by the senior leadership/management team?



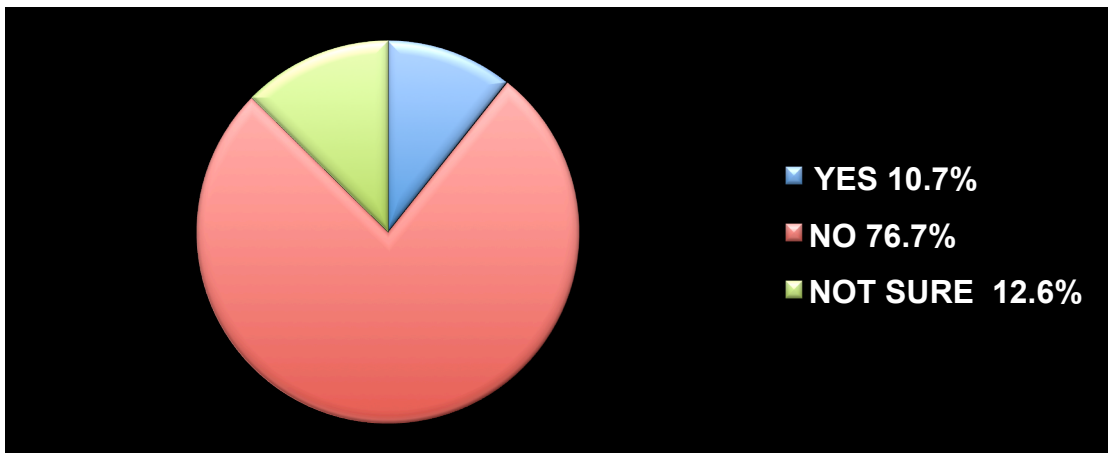
21. Do you believe that the school board is held to account?



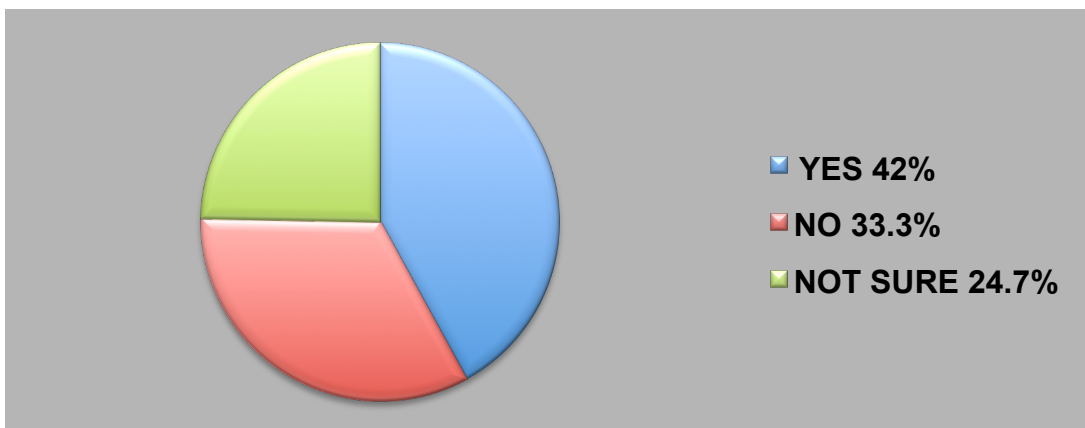
22. Do you believe the senior leadership team at the school is held to account?



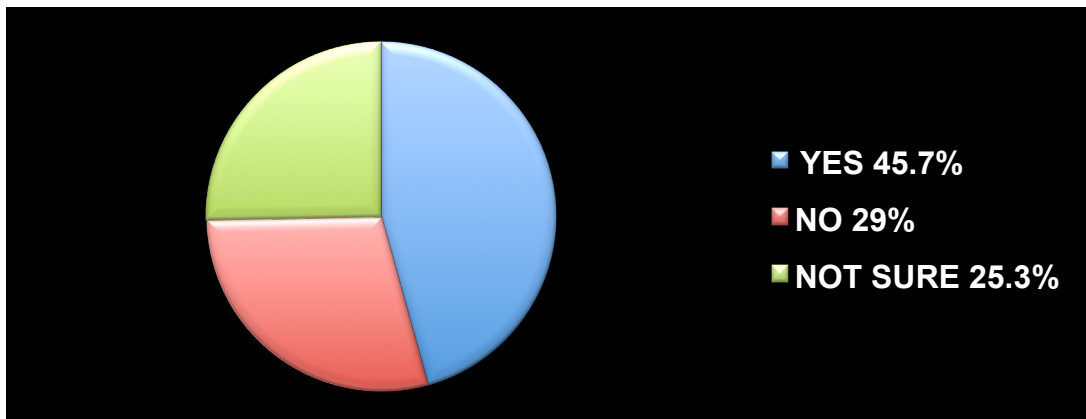
23. Do you believe that teachers are generally respected as professionals, by key stakeholders in education in Jamaica?



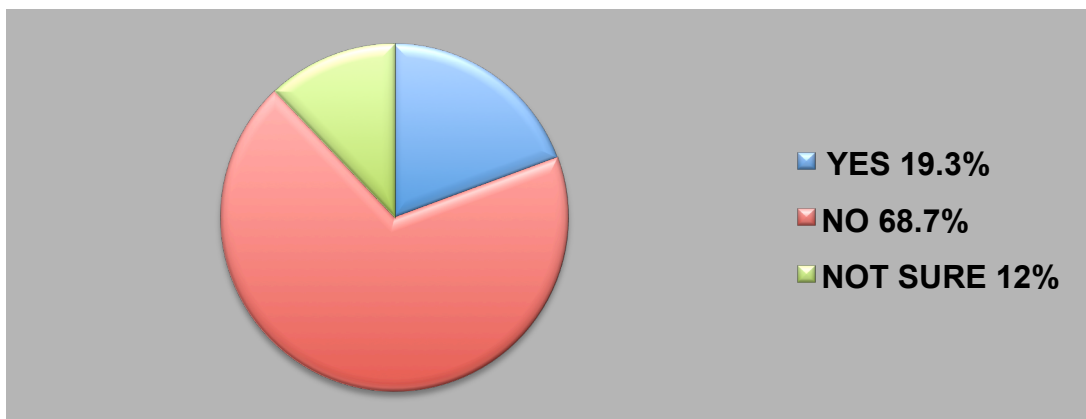
24. My health and well-being is viewed as important and valued by the senior leadership/management team at my school.



25. I believe my work and contribution to the school is valued by the senior leadership/management team.



26. I am adequately provided with the tools I need in order to do a good job.



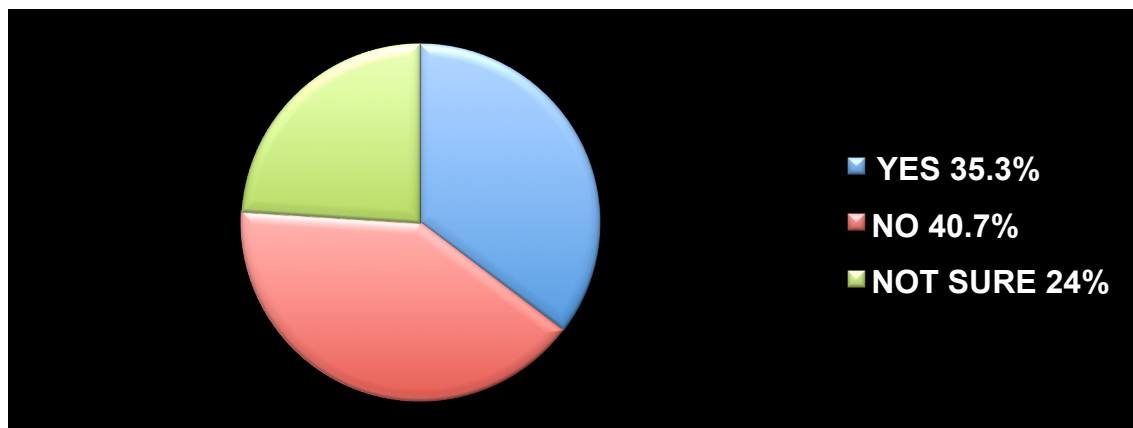
27. From the list below please select ALL the things you like most about your job:

- Pay and pension
- Relationship with parents
- Teaching
- Interaction with pupils
- The learning and progress of the students
- The work environment (physical)
- Professional development opportunities
- General working conditions
- Making a positive difference

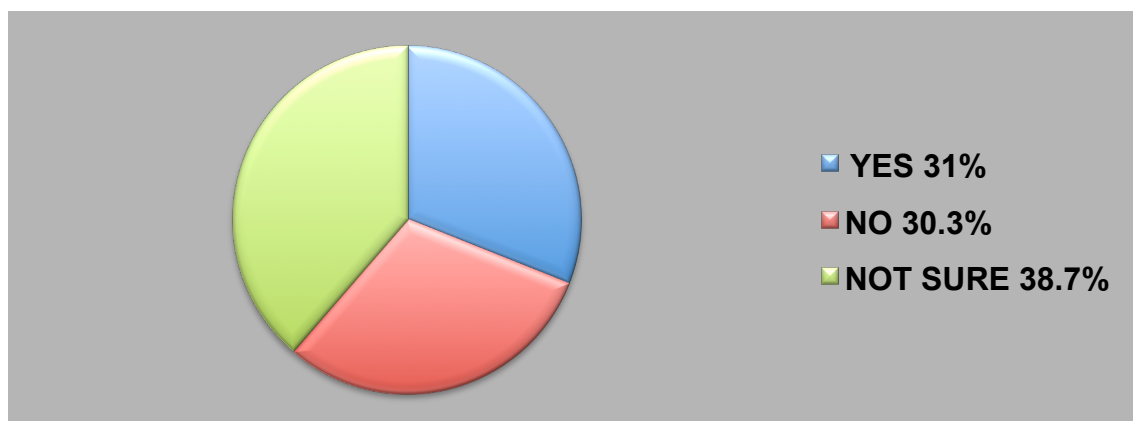
| The things teachers like most about their job: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|--|--|
| Making a positive difference | 84.3% |
| Interaction with pupils | 77.7% |
| Teaching | 73.7% |
| The learning and progress of the students | 68.7% |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Professional development opportunities | 23.7% |
| Relationship with parents | 21.3% |
| The work environment (physical) | 13.7% |
| Pay and pension | 7.7% |
| General working conditions | 5.3% |

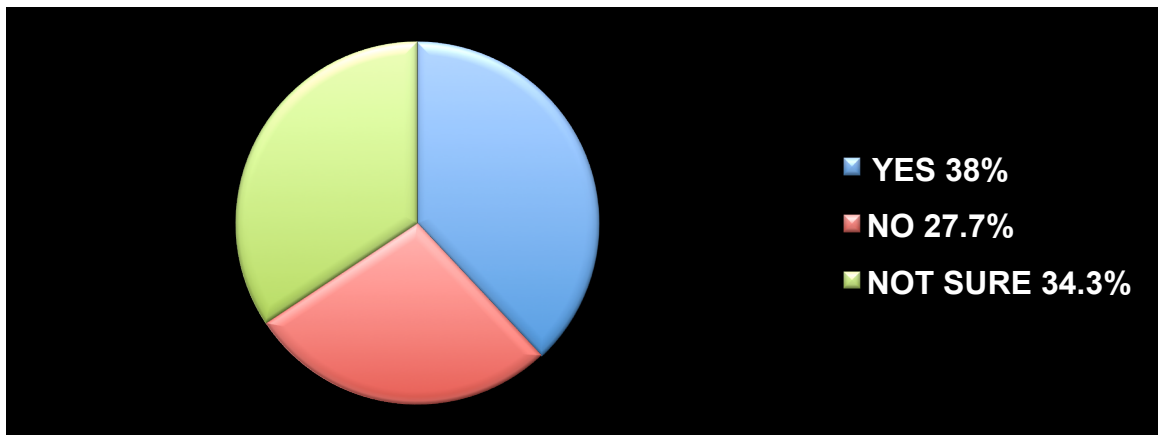
28. Do you believe that the management in your school equips and empowers you to deliver the best results for your students?



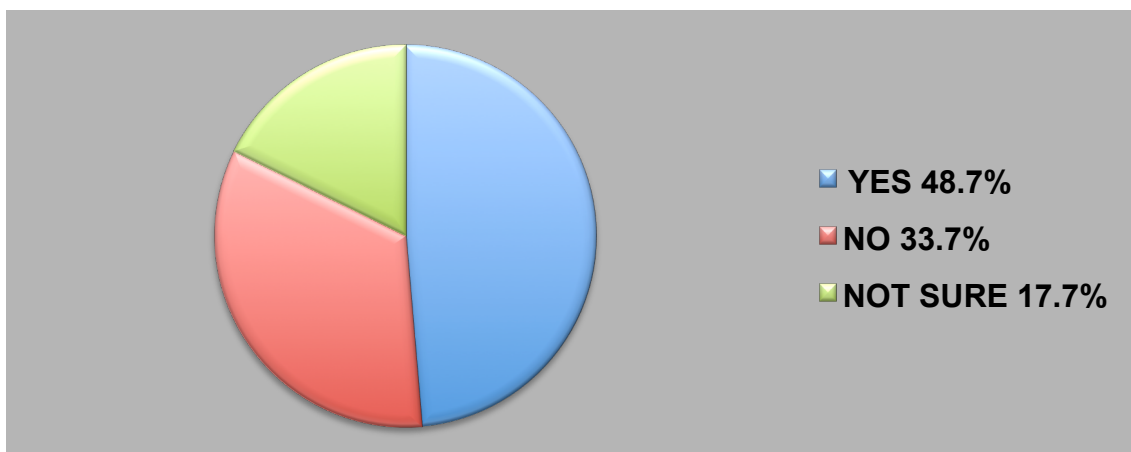
29. Are you confident in the school's board ability to make appropriate and competent decisions on matters of staff discipline?



30. Are you confident in the school's board ability to make appropriate and competent decisions on matters of appointing competent staff and competent leadership within the school?



31. Do you believe the school has done enough to ensure that the compound is adequately protected from possible intruders and safe for staff and students on a daily basis?



32. Overall, in the last 12 months how have you found your job?

- Very satisfying
- Satisfied
- Not satisfied
- Very dissatisfied

| In the last 12 months how have you found your job? | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|---|---|
| Not satisfied | 42.7% |
| Satisfied | 38.7% |
| Very dissatisfied | 14.3% |
| Very satisfied | 4.3% |

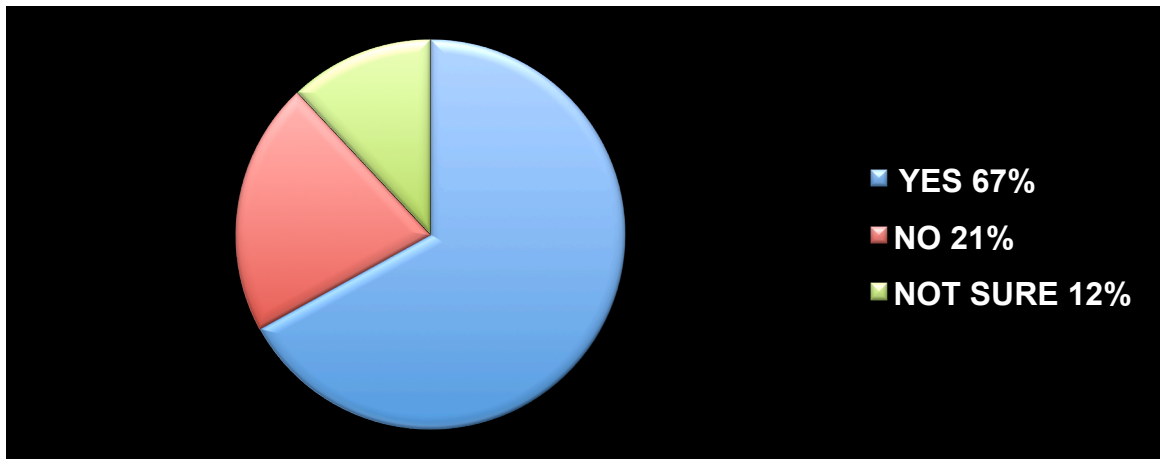
33. In the last 12 months how would you describe stress at work?

- An increase in work related stress
- A decrease in work related stress

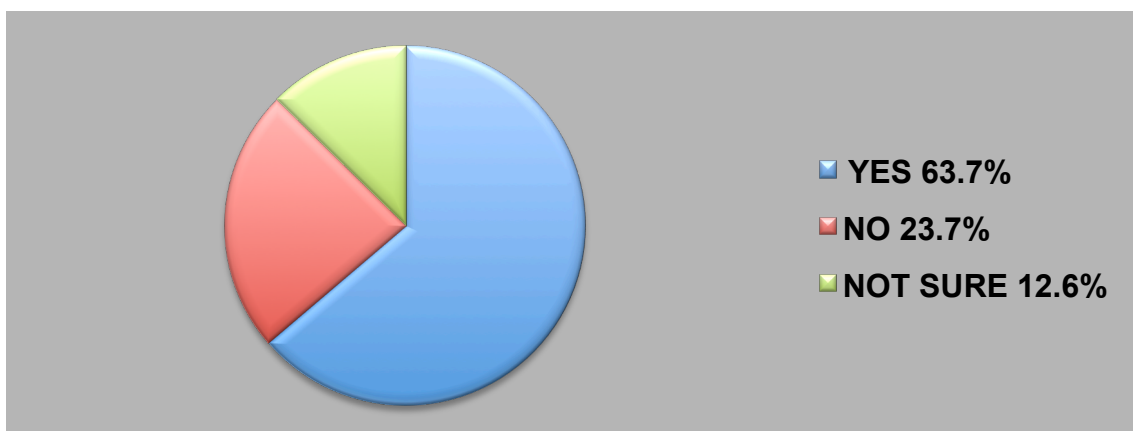
- Same as the previous 12 months (no increase)
- I am not experiencing any work related stress

| In the last 12 months how would you describe stress at work? | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|---|---|
| An increase in work related stress | 67.7% |
| Same as the previous 12 months (no increase) | 25% |
| I am not experiencing any work Related stress | 4.3% |
| A decrease in work related stress | 3% |

34. Do you believe your job is having a negative impact on your physical health and well-being?



35. Do you believe your job is having a negative impact on your mental health?



36. As a result of work related stress or work having an adverse impact on your physical and mental health, in the last 12 months you have had to do the following? (Select all that applies).

- Been admitted to hospital
- Take medication
- Significant period of absence from work
- Seeing a counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist etc.
- Had dialogue with your union representative
- Visit a doctor/medical professional
- None of the above

| As a result of work related stress or work having an adverse impact on your physical and mental health, teachers have had to do the following: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|---|---|
| Visit a doctor/medical professional | 50% |
| Take medication | 38.7% |
| Seeing a counselor, psychologist, Psychiatrist etc. | 15.3% |
| Significant period of absence from work | 9.7% |
| Had dialogue with your union representative | 6% |
| Been admitted to hospital | 3% |
| None of the above | 37.7% |

37. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

| The gender of the respondents: | Percentage of the 300 respondents (teachers) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Male | 19.3% |
| Female | 80.7% |

Summary

Teachers believe that low salaries and poor working conditions discourage a significant number/percentage of capable and motivated individuals from pursuing or continuing careers in teaching. They have expressed that teaching does not offer a competitive salary compared to other occupations/professions and teachers are not adequately remunerated for their skills, educational level, and experience. They firmly believe they are also not compensated for the full scope of duties and responsibilities they handle daily. Additionally, the majority of teachers surveyed indicated they would not recommend teaching as a career to their family and friends and over the past 12 months, many teachers have faced financial struggles, including increased food expense, missing bill payments, and falling behind on mortgage or rent payments.

Many teachers believe there is a widespread problem with poor student behavior and feel they have not received adequate training, guidance, or information to address it effectively. Most teachers surveyed identified a lack of parental support and early intervention as the primary causes of poor student behavior. Additional factors cited by many respondents include large class sizes, limited access to external behavioral specialist support, and insufficient authority granted to teachers. Teachers reported that incomplete work (including homework) and students' inability to follow rules are the most common behavioral issues in their schools. Additionally, they ranked the use of inappropriate language and bullying among students as two of the top five prevalent negative behaviors. Over the past year, many teachers have also experienced verbal abuse from both students and parents, as well as threats made by students.

Regarding workload and bureaucracy, teachers identify lesson planning, behavior management record-keeping, and marking as the most burdensome tasks. Report writing and attending meetings were also highlighted as challenging responsibilities. Surveyed teachers expressed that lesson planning, administrative duties, and large class sizes significantly contribute to their workload. Additionally, a substantial percentage believe that teachers in their schools are not being professionally managed effectively, leading to feelings of disempowerment.

In their schools, 41% of teachers believe there is a culture focused on criticism and blame rather than on praise and reward. Furthermore, 45.3% believe their views and opinions are not valued or considered. The most frequently reported concern is the lack of adequate and up-to-date teaching resources. Additionally, 47.7% of teachers pointed to poor and inadequate facilities, as well as unrealistic and unreasonable expectations placed on them, with 45% specifically identifying these expectations as a significant issue. Notably, 21% of surveyed teachers stated they had received a letter or participated in a conversation about the quality of their teaching.

Fewer than half of the 300 teachers surveyed believe their school board is performing well, and a similar proportion believe that the school board is being held accountable. As it relates to the senior leadership team at their school, less than half believe they are appropriately being held accountable and less than half of teachers surveyed believe the school where they work is managed well by the senior leadership/management team. Approximately 77% of respondents believe that teachers are generally not respected as professionals by key stakeholders in Jamaica's education system.

Fewer than half of the teachers surveyed agree that their health and well-being are prioritized by their school's senior leadership or management and similarly, less than half believe their work and contributions are valued by school leadership. Only 19.3% of teachers reported being provided with the tools they need to perform their job effectively.

Making a positive difference, interaction with pupils, teaching, and the learning and progress of the students are the top 4 reasons given by the teachers surveyed as it relates to the things they like most about their job. Less than half of the teachers surveyed believe that management in their school equips and empowers them to deliver the best results for their students. Fewer than half of the teachers surveyed believe their school board can make appropriate and competent decisions regarding staff discipline. They also lack confidence in the board's ability to make sound decisions and appoint qualified staff and effective leadership within their schools.

Fewer than half of the teachers surveyed believe that schools are doing enough to ensure the safety of the campus and protect staff and students from potential intruders daily.

57% of teachers surveyed are dissatisfied with their jobs, while approximately 67% indicated they are experiencing an increase in work-related stress. Approximately 64% of teachers reported that their job is negatively affecting their mental health, while 67% said it is impacting their physical health. Additionally, 50% of teachers indicated that they needed to see a doctor or medical professional, and 38.7% reported taking medication to address the negative effects on their mental and physical health.

Conclusion

Teachers have identified several factors that make their daily roles challenging, preventing them from being efficient and excelling at their jobs. It is clear that more effort is needed to shift the public's perception of teaching, and there may be a

connection between the abuse teachers face from students and parents and the way the profession is viewed by society.

The mental, physical, and overall well-being of teachers must be prioritized in discussions regarding the teaching profession. All stakeholders agree that poor mental and physical health, along with overall well-being, can negatively affect teachers' ability to provide effective instruction, which in turn impacts student learning outcomes. Providing teachers with an improved physical teaching and learning environment, along with the essential resources to do their jobs effectively, will not only result in better students but also lead to the development of better teachers.

When it comes to handling disciplinary issues and hiring qualified staff, there is a lack of confidence and trust in the senior leadership and management of schools, as well as in the school board themselves. It is also evident that schools need to engage more with their stakeholders to adopt a new approach focused on ensuring the safety of the school environment. If teachers, parents, and students do not feel that the school is safe and secure, it could begin to negatively affect both staff and student attendance.

Teachers are important and must be given the tools and the right conditions in order to maximize their output and effectiveness. There is an adage that makes reference to a basket being used to carry water and many teachers believe that this is the situation with which they face. The teachers within the Jamaican education system are not merely educators; they are there to guide, inspire, motivate and empower future leaders and world class citizens that will help to further build a better Jamaica and add value to the world at large.



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