New Research Finds Deep Concern About K-12 Workforce

A new national survey finds deep public concern about the K-12 school workforce. Eighty-three percent of Americans express concerns about public school staff shortages, while 81 percent are worried about workforce burnout. Most Americans (89 percent) say K-12 public school staff deserve more respect, and they indicate that better pay (92 percent), healthcare benefits (89 percent) and pensions (86 percent) would help address workforce shortages.

These findings are contained in a new research report from the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS), *Americans’ Views of Public School Teachers and Personnel in the Wake of COVID-19*. Read the research [here](#).

The challenges facing the K-12 workforce will be discussed at the NIRS 13th
Annual Retirement Policy Conference on Tuesday, March 1, 2022. The conference begins at 8:30 AM, and the education workforce panel discussion starts at 1:00 PM ET.

Retired Educator Association (REA) leaders are invited to hear more about this research during NRTA’s Monthly Call with REAs on Wednesday, March 16th at 3:00 PM ET. Join the call via Teams [here](https://example.com) or by calling 202-774-9340, Conference ID: 976 529 641.

The survey was conducted by Greenwald Research in December 2021, and the research was made possible thanks to a grant from NRTA: AARP’s Educator Community.

**Read the Research**

Watch the LIVE Webcast on the NIRS Retirement Policy Conference on March 1st

**Mobile Carriers Retiring 3G | What You Need to Know**

The country’s three major wireless carriers - AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile - will be retiring their third-generation (3G) cellular networks in 2022 to make room for better fourth-generation (4G) and new fifth-generation (5G) services.

As a result, many older phones will be unable to make or receive calls and text messages or use data services. This may also affect devices that rely on 3G connectivity, such as medical alert devices, tablets, smartwatches, in-car SOS services, Kindle readers, home security products and other devices that are dependent on 3G.

While the move to new 5G promises faster cellphone and internet
speeds, this technology transition could leave lower income and older Americans disconnected as they may lose cellphone service entirely, including the ability to call 911.

Phasing out older networks isn’t a new concept for wireless carriers as similar transitions have happened before – such as when second-generation (2G) networks were shut down in favor of building out the 4G network. Because of that experience, many service providers have developed programs and resources to help customers through the process.

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NEW Research Details Spending on Pensions

New research from the National Association of State Retirement Administrators (NASRA) details contributions made by state and local governments to pension trust funds.

The research finds that based on the most recent information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, in FY 19, about five percent of all state and local government spending is used to fund pension benefits for employees of state and local government.

State and local governments contributed, in aggregate, approximately $180 billion to pension funds in FY 20, which represents a 7.4 percent increase from the prior year and includes an additional $6.0 billion contributed by the State of California to its public pension plans, and an advance payment of $1.06 billion from Pennsylvania State University to the Pennsylvania State Employees' Retirement System.

Pension spending levels, however, vary widely among states, depending on various factors, and are actuarially sufficient for some pension plans and insufficient for others.
Consumer Fraud Losses Hit Record $5.8 Billion

Consumers reported losing a record-breaking $5.8 billion to fraud in 2021 for a 70 percent year-over-year increase, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) said in a new report.

The losses stemmed from a variety of schemes. The largest number hinged on impostors: crooks who stole money from people by posing as romantic interests, government employees, relatives in distress, tech-support experts or others, such as representatives of businesses or charities.

There were almost one million impostor scams among the nearly 2.8 million frauds reported in 2021 to the FTC’s Consumer Sentinel Network.

Impostor fraud losses skyrocketed to $2.3 billion in 2021, up from $1.2 billion in 2020.

The Consumer Sentinel Network takes reports from law enforcement, consumer-protection agencies and partners including AARP’s Fraud Watch Network. The reports fall into three buckets: fraud; identity theft; and other consumer complaints that run the gamut from defective appliances to predatory lending.
Millions of older Americans will be able to claim an earned income tax credit (EITC) when they file their 2021 tax returns this year.

Lisa Marsh Ryerson, AARP executive vice president and president of AARP Foundation, told U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris that AARP will raise awareness about the benefit and continue to urge that the EITC cap be permanently lifted.

“Older workers have been hard hit by the pandemic, and we’re delighted that now people age 65 and older are eligible to receive the EITC for the first time,” Marsh Ryerson said at a White House event designed to promote the changes to the EITC and Child Tax Credit included in the American Rescue Plan of 2021. “But poverty doesn’t go away in one year — this is an important benefit that must continue.”

Before the changes included in the rescue plan, individuals age 65 and older were not eligible for the EITC. For the 2021 tax year, the legislation lifted that age cap and also tripled the maximum credit for workers without children to $1,502. Workers age 65 and older are projected to total 13 million by 2024 and are the fastest growing age group in the workforce, according to AARP research.

Questions?

As always, the NRTA Team is available to answer your questions or provide counsel on issues. Below is our contact information:

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We thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with you and your members!