

The 2026 SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey

JUNE 2026

This overview highlights key findings from the 2026 SC Administrator Working Conditions Survey (SCAWCS), South Carolina's first statewide assessment of the working conditions and job satisfaction of public school administrators. Developed by SC TEACHER and grounded in the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, the survey examines administrators' perceptions of job resources and demands, alongside their job satisfaction and retention intentions. Designed to complement the SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey, the SCAWCS helps build a more complete picture of working conditions across South Carolina's educator workforce.

For full results from the 2026 SCAWCS, read the report at www.sc-teacher.org/ewc-SCAWCS-report-june2026.

Statewide Participation

In the 2026 SCAWCS pilot administration, 53 of South Carolina's 72 traditional school districts (73.6%) participated, along with four of the state's six specialty schools. Of the 2,442 administrators invited to participate, 1,679 (68.8%) responded, representing 828 schools statewide.

53 of 72

Traditional Districts
Participated (73.6%)

1,679

Administrators
Responded

828

Schools
Represented
Statewide

68.8%

Response Rate



EDUCATOR WORKING CONDITIONS

Perceptions of Working Conditions

+ Overall, school administrators across South Carolina reported strong working conditions: positive perceptions of job resources and moderate levels of job demands.

Across school organizational levels (elementary, middle, and high school), perceptions of working conditions were similar. Statistically significant differences among school levels emerged for only two resources:

PARENT/FAMILY SUPPORT High school administrators reported lower perceptions than elementary school administrators.	DISTRICT SHARED GOVERNANCE High school administrators reported lower perceptions than both elementary and middle school administrators.
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These patterns may reflect structural features of high school environments, such as reduced family engagement and larger organizational hierarchies. Such perceptions may warrant attention to how high school administrators are engaged in district decision-making and how family involvement is structured at the secondary level.

JOB RESOURCES

Administrators reported generally positive perceptions of all seven job resources (rated on an agreement scale of *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*). Faculty/staff support and autonomy received the highest ratings, while district shared governance received the lowest, suggesting opportunities exist for districts to more meaningfully involve school leaders in decisions that affect their schools.

RESOURCE	
Faculty/staff support	Highest rated: strong trust and collaboration within schools
Autonomy	Highest rated: meaningful professional freedom felt by administrators
Parent/family support	Positive: collaborative family engagement
District support	Positive: organizational backing from district leadership
Community support	Moderately positive: some involvement from broader social ecosystem
Professional development	Moderately positive: some offerings to enhance professional capabilities
District shared governance	Most room for improvement: opportunities to better integrate administrators into organizational decision-making

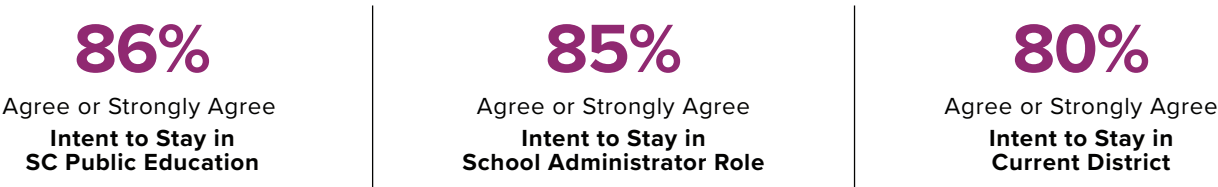
JOB DEMANDS

Of the six job demands (rated on a frequency scale of *Never* to *Every day*), cognitive demands were most frequently experienced, occurring several times per week, consistent with the complex decision-making inherent to school leadership. All other demands occurred up to several times per month; organizational demands were the least frequent.

DEMAND	
Cognitive demands	Most frequent (several times a week): Complex decision-making and rapid task-switching
Emotional and relational demands	Several times a month: Managing interpersonal complexity and emotional labor
Student discipline management	Several times a month: Navigating behavioral issues and disciplinary processes
Accountability	Several times a month: Meeting performance metrics and evaluation demands
Workload	Several times a month: Experiencing time scarcity and a high volume of tasks
Organizational demands	Least frequent (at least once a month): Working within resource limitations, staffing challenges, and external mandates

Job Satisfaction and Retention Intentions

+ **Administrators reported high overall job satisfaction.** For retention intentions, three distinct levels of retention were reported.



Intentions to remain in South Carolina public education and in school administration were strong. Intentions to remain in their current district, while still positive, were slightly lower. This pattern is worth monitoring as districts work to retain experienced local leaders.

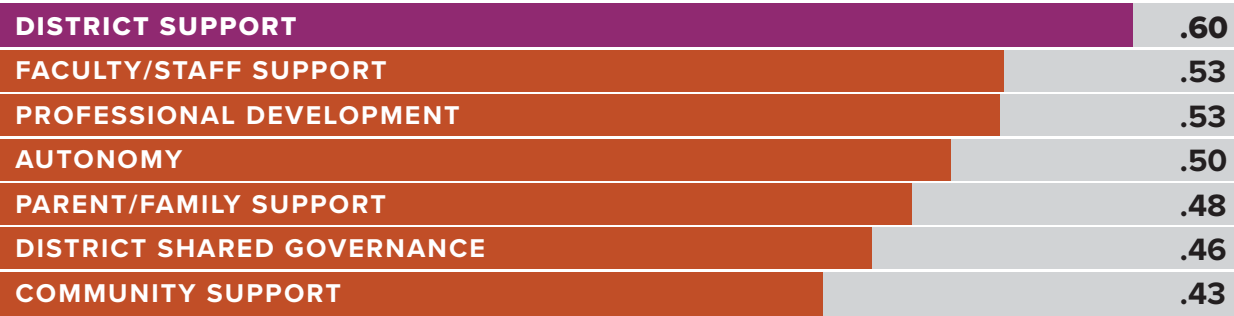
RELATIONSHIPS WITH WORKING CONDITIONS

All working conditions were significantly associated with both job satisfaction and retention intentions. Association values range from -1 to +1. For resources, values closer to +1 indicate a stronger link between resource availability and the outcome; for demands, values closer to -1 indicate a stronger link between demand frequency and the outcome. These values describe relationships, not causes.

Key Findings

1 Overall, resources had stronger associations with job satisfaction and retention intentions than demands. As such, resources may be a more actionable target for districts seeking to improve administrator satisfaction and retention.

Strongest Resource Associations With Job Satisfaction



2 Of demands, workload had the strongest negative association with job satisfaction and all retention intentions.
Other demands were also negatively associated but only modestly.

3 District-level resources were most strongly linked with intent to remain in the current district.
District support had the strongest association, followed by professional development, autonomy, and district shared governance.



Summary and Next Steps

The 2026 SCAWCS pilot provides an encouraging first statewide picture of South Carolina school administrators' working conditions. Administrators reported strong access to job resources, moderate demands, high job satisfaction, and strong retention intentions. Job resources—particularly those at the district level—were more strongly associated with administrator satisfaction and retention than job demands, pointing to practical priorities for district-level action.

WHAT SURVEY RESULTS SUGGEST FOR DISTRICTS

INVEST IN DISTRICT-LEVEL SUPPORT	District support showed the strongest associations with all outcomes. How districts engage and support their school leaders has direct implications for administrator well-being and retention.
EXPAND SHARED GOVERNANCE	District shared governance was the lowest-rated resource and strongly linked to intent to remain in the district. Meaningful inclusion of school leaders in district decision-making is an actionable priority.
PROTECT PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY	Autonomy was highly rated and strongly associated with retention in current districts. Preserving administrators' use of professional judgment supports satisfaction and local stability.
MONITOR WORKLOAD	Workload showed the strongest negative associations with outcomes of any demand. While demands are often difficult to alleviate due to systematic requirements, supporting school leaders in managing their workload offers a meaningful lever.
ATTEND TO HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP	High school administrators reported lower perceptions of parent engagement and district shared governance, offering opportunities for targeted supports at the secondary level.

LOOKING AHEAD

In addition to these findings, the 2026 SCAWCS informed refinements to the survey instrument for future administrations. Conducting the survey biennially will allow for trend analyses, deeper subgroup comparisons, and stronger integration with SC Teacher Working Conditions Survey findings and broader educator pipeline research over time. As the SCAWCS matures alongside other SC TEACHER surveys, it will contribute to a fuller, systemwide picture of the conditions shaping South Carolina's educator workforce and the strategies needed to sustain it.



ABOUT SC TEACHER

SC TEACHER provides comprehensive research, visualized data profiles, and compelling stories to communicate impact of educator pipeline policies and promote transformative practices that inform policymakers, educators, and communities who care about education scaling economic opportunity.