

# The hidden impact of COVID-19 on Illinois educators

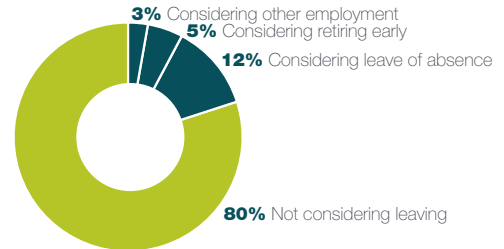
## *Rising health concerns, lower risk tolerance and benefit gaps*



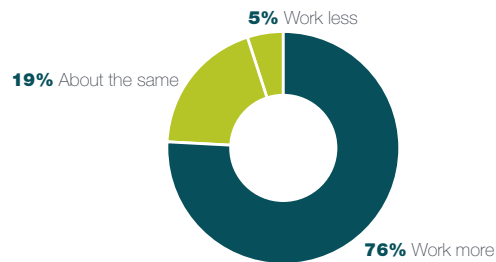
The prevalence of impromptu online and hybrid learning environments in 2020 has dramatically changed teachers' workloads. As of November, 76% of Illinois educators surveyed by Horace Mann were spending more time working than they were a year ago — and more than 64% were enjoying their jobs less than they did this time last year. Citing health and financial concerns, 20% of Illinois educators are now considering leaving the profession or taking a leave of absence due to COVID-19, according to the November Horace Mann survey.

A total of 54% responded that they did not feel secure or only somewhat secure about their district's health and safety precautions. Further, many educators believe there are gaps in their employer benefits. About 59% were concerned their benefits would not cover unplanned time off due to a health-related issue, and 27% were concerned their health insurance would not adequately cover illnesses or health issues.

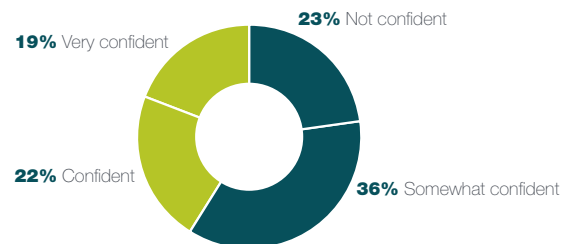
**Educators considering leaving due to COVID-19**



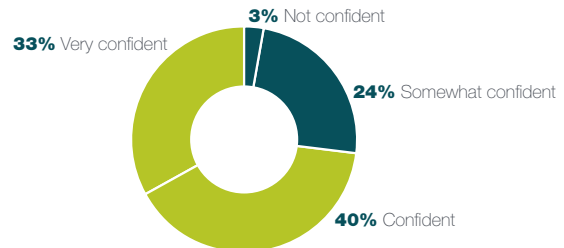
**Educator workload vs. a year ago**



**Educators' confidence that employer benefits will cover unplanned time off arising from a health-related issue**



**Educators' confidence that health insurance will adequately cover illnesses and health issues**



*“It is becoming more and more difficult to put everything you have into your job in education when the amount of hard work and care is not equally balanced out with being financially and socially supported.”*

— Illinois school social worker

While greater financial support from federal and state governments would help to address the issues, school districts can independently take steps to encourage educator retention. School districts can provide more robust voluntary benefits to address gaps; offer programs to help educators more fully understand their medical benefits and avoid surprise bills; and provide secure online access to educational materials or a hotline to assist employees with their health and financial questions.

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*This research is based on a survey of 163 Illinois educators, including public school K-12 teachers, administrators and support personnel. The survey was fielded by Horace Mann in October and November 2020.*  
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