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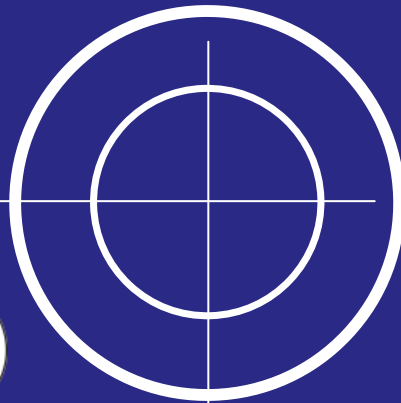# Health & Wellbeing

The New Zealand Primary Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey

2021 Data

REDI
RESEARCH FOR
EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

DEAKIN
UNIVERSITY

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Figures and Tables

① Research Summary

Working hours

In 2021, over 72% of primary school leaders reported working more than 50 hours per week and 16% reported working more than 60 hours per week.

Demands at Work

Primary school leaders reported that four out of the five job demands have increased over the last year. There has a been a significant increase in the frequency with which leaders experience more work than they can manage.

Workload

This year, school leaders reported that work pace was at its highest level since the survey began in 2016.

Job resources and source of support

Since last year, there has been a decline in key job resources.

Work-family conflict

School leaders work life conflict has slightly increased over the last year.

Job satisfaction

School leaders job satisfaction has slightly decreased over the last year.

Health and wellbeing

School leaders reported levels of burnout are high, but slightly lower than last year.

Source of Stress

The two major sources of stress at work 'sheer quantity of work' and 'lack of time to focus on teaching and learning' have slightly increased over the last year.

② Key Findings

Working hours (school term)

Data from the present survey demonstrates that over (72%) of school leaders report working more than 50 hours per week. Just under half (44%) report working more than 55 hours a week and approximately one in six school leaders (15.8%) report working more than 60 hours per week.

72%

More than 50
hours per week

44%

More than 55
hours per week

15.8%

More than 60
hours per week
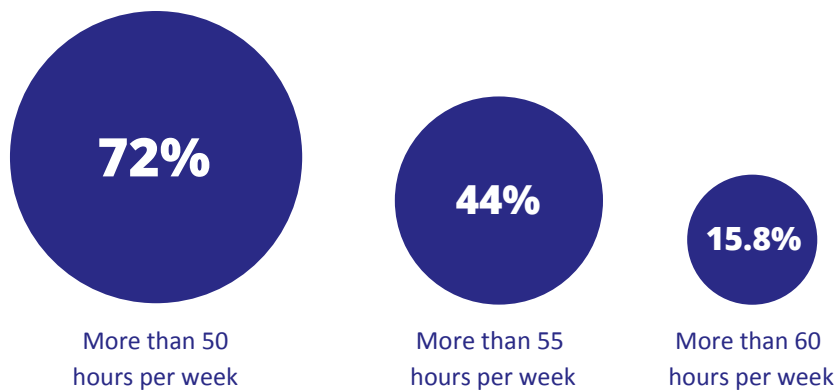
Demands at Work

School leaders faced significant job demands at work. Compared to the general working population of New Zealand, primary school leaders more regularly experienced having to work at a fast pace, emotional demands and heavy workloads (quantitative demands). The measures for work demands were derived from the COPSOQ instrument, which was a key part of the survey, and an in depth analysis will follow.

■ NZ working population

■ NZ primary leaders

38.5   68.8

0 Work Pace   100

57.5   70.2

0 Emotional Demands   100

56.3   58.1

0 Quantitative Demands   100
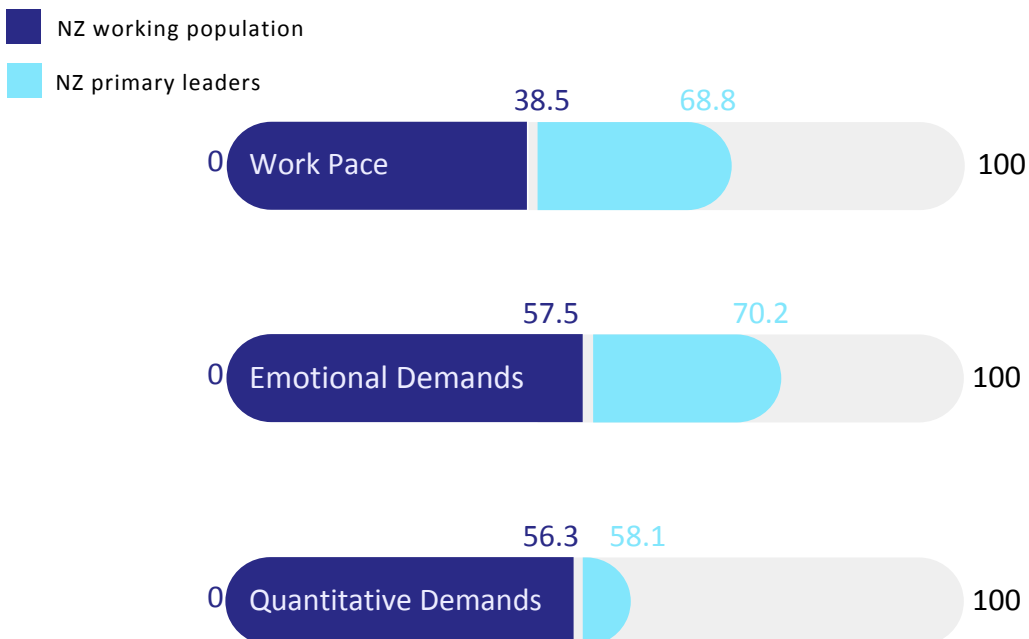
Health and Wellbeing of School Leaders: Key Facts

Primary school leaders
self-rated health

62

NZ working population

71   (averages out of 100)

Primary school
leaders **burnout**

59

NZ Working Population

57   (averages out of 100)

Major Sources of Stress

In this year's survey, sheer quantity of work was reported as the biggest source of stress for primary school leaders. Lack of time to focus on teaching and learning was reported as the second biggest stressor. Resourcing needs and student-related issues were other significant sources of stress for school leaders.

8.2

0 | Sheer quantity of work | 10

7.8

0 | Lack of time to focus on teaching & learning | 10

7.6

0 | Resourcing Needs | 10
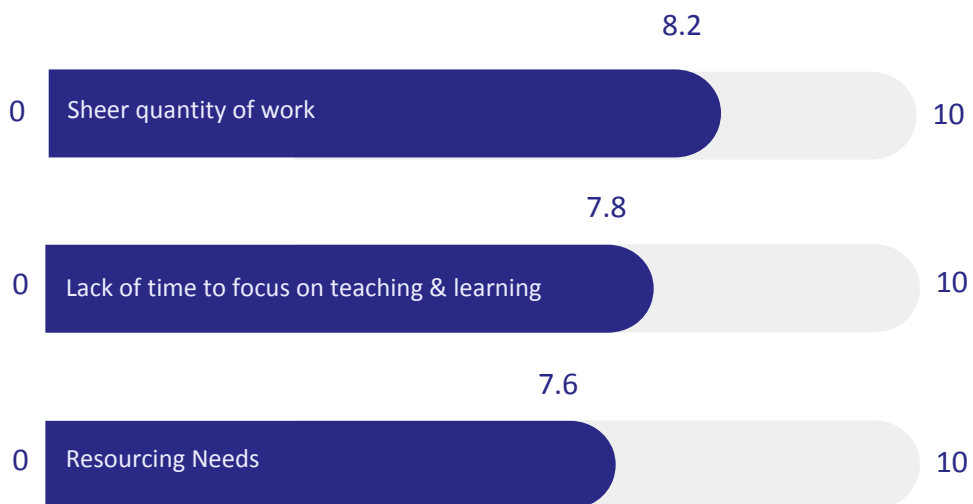
Access to support

Most school leaders (85%) reported that their partner was a source of support. Friends, colleagues from their place of work, and leaders or colleagues that they had a professional relationship with, were also reported as a source of support by a large proportion of school leaders.

85%

Partner

74%

Friend

69%
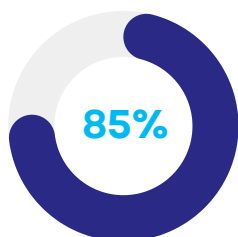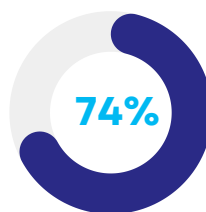
Colleague in
workplace

③ Introduction

Recent events have highlighted the importance of the school leadership workforce and the vital role that they play in maintaining the stability of the school system. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented school leaders with new challenges and required them to lead in the context of change and uncertainty. These new pressures have added to concerns about school leaders' workloads and the adverse effects of school leadership work on their personal health and wellbeing.

This report summarises the key findings of the 2021 New Zealand Primary Principal Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey. The survey covers key dimensions of leaders' wellbeing at work, including:

· The psychosocial work environment

· School leaders' experiences of work

. Key measures of school leaders' health and wellbeing[1]

Our survey instrument relies heavily on the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ-II). This questionnaire is regarded as the "gold standard" in occupational health and safety self-report measures. The structure of the COPSOQ-II consists of higher order domains and contributing subdomains/scales. These have been found to be very robust and stable measures of the psychosocial work environment and health and wellbeing (Burr, Albertsen, Rugulies, & Hannerz, 2010; Dicke et al, 2018; Kiss, De Meester, Kruse, Chavee, & Braeckman, 2013; Thorsen & Bjorner, 2010). All COPSOQ domain scores are transformed to 0-100 aiding comparisons across domains.

This report presents the average scores for all New Zealand primary school leaders on the main dimensions of the psychosocial work environment and health and wellbeing. Where possible, leaders' responses in 2021 are compared with the average scores for the New Zealand working population to illustrate the similarities and unique challenges of leaders' work. We also compare leaders' responses in 2021 with the responses of leaders in previous rounds of the survey (2016 to 2020) to show changes over time.

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[1] More information about the survey is included in Appendix 1

④ Research Aim and Survey Participants

Aim: To Track Primary Leaders' experiences of their work environments and health and wellbeing

The aim of this longitudinal research project is to track primary school leaders' work, health and wellbeing annually. The research team seeks to produce robust evidence about teaching professionals' work environments and health and wellbeing. The evidence generated through our analysis is intended to inform policies and strategies to promote safe, healthy work environments and appropriate support for New Zealand primary teaching professionals.

Survey Participants

In 2021, 411 New Zealand primary school leaders completed the survey.[2] Approximately 72% of participants had completed the survey in previous years and 28% joined the research program for the first time in 2021. The remainder of this section provides a brief breakdown of the survey sample.

Role

Of the 411 participants that completed the survey 319 (78%) were Principals and 71 (22%) were Deputy / Assistant / Associate / Acting Principals (see Figure 1).

Acting Principal 1%   Other 1%
Deputy Principal 1%
Associate Principal 2%

17%
Assistant
Principal

78%
Principal
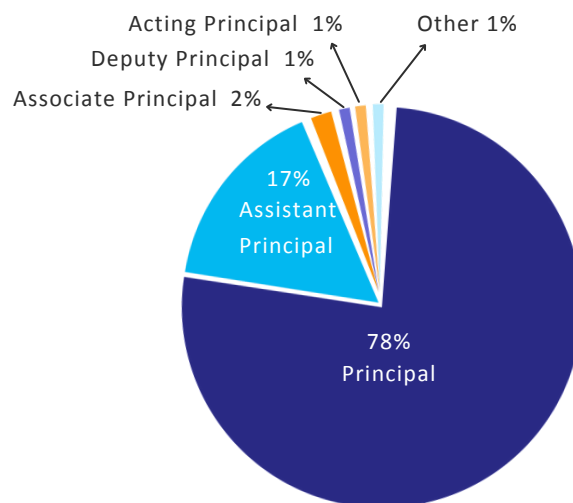
Figure 1: Sample distribution by role

[2] The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have negatively impacted on participation rates.

Gender

The gender breakdown for the sample was 281 (68.4%) female, 129 (31.4%) male and 1 participant (0.2%) preferred not to say (see Figure 2).
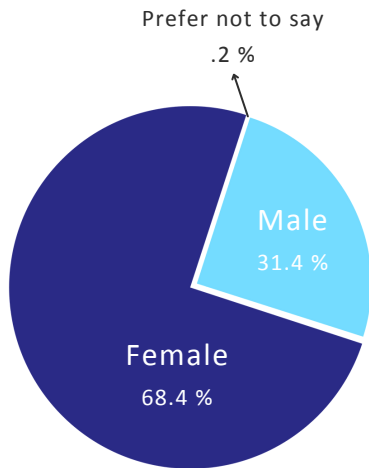
Figure 2. Sample distribution by gender

School Type

Of the participating school leaders, 371 worked in primary state schools (90.3%) and 38 (9.2%) worked in state integrated schools. Just 2 participants (0.5%) worked in Māori immersion schools (see Figure 3).
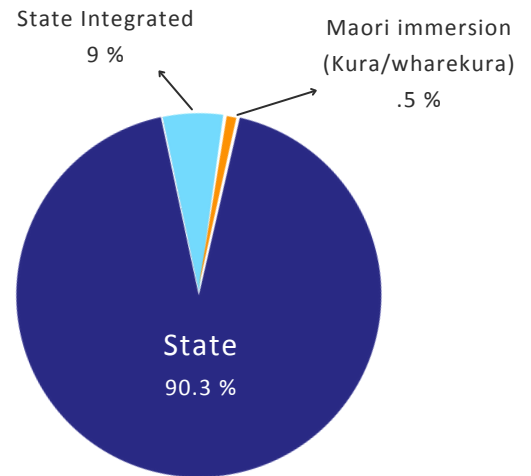
Figure 3. Sample distribution by school type

School Language

375 of the school leaders (91%) surveyed worked in English medium schools. 27 school leaders (6.6%) worked in a school with a Māori immersion unit or class and 7 (1.7%) worked in a full Māori immersion school. Only 2 (0.5%) leaders worked in schools with English medium with a language unit or class(es) other than Māori (see Figure 4).
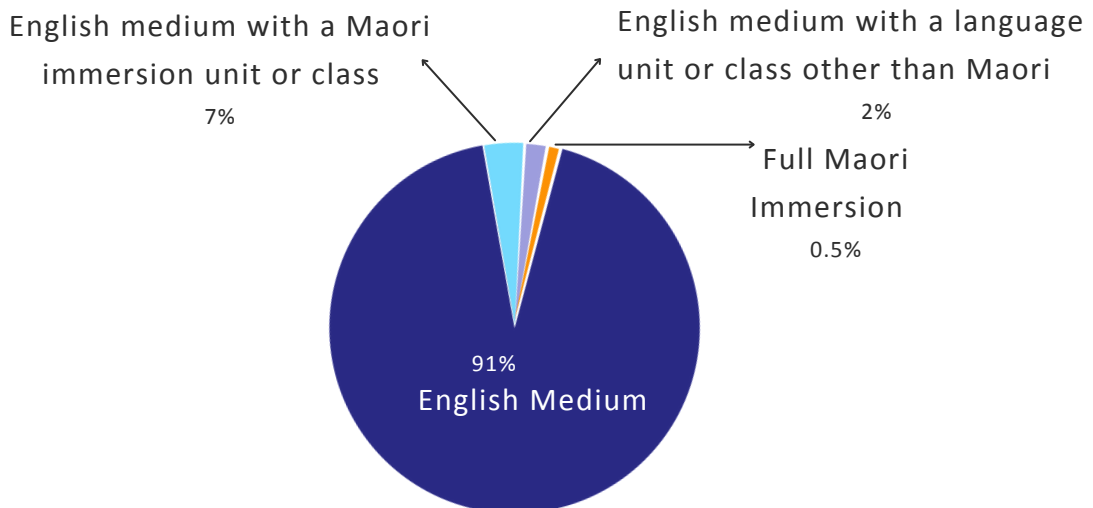
Figure 4. Sample distribution by school language medium

School leader experience

Many school leaders that completed the survey were very experienced. 49% had more than 13 years of experience in a leadership position. 27% of leaders' had gained over 12 years of teaching experience prior to commencing their leadership role. Approximately half of all school leaders (48%) had been in their current role for more than five years. Note: the dividing figures of 13, 12 and 5 were calculated based on the measures of central tendency (see Figures 5, 6 &7).
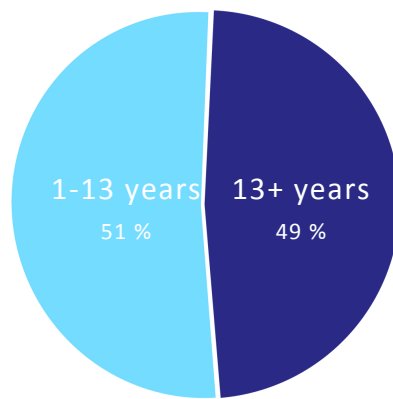
Figure 5. Sample distribution by years of working in a leadership role
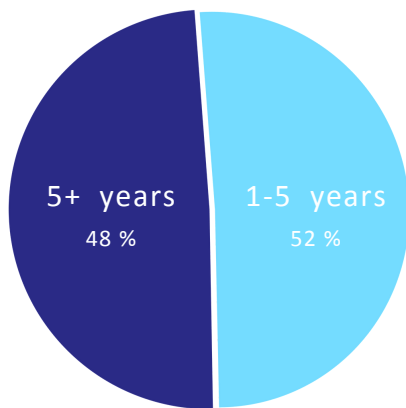
Figure 7: Sample distribution by years in current role
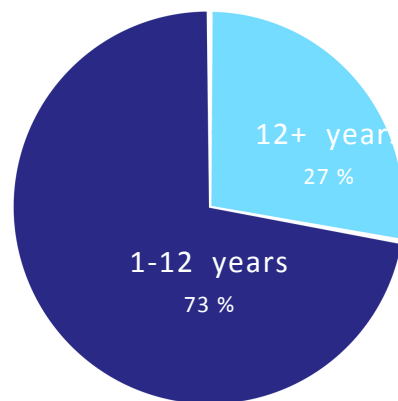
Figure 6: Sample distribution by years of working in a teaching role prior to undertaking a leadership role

5 Primary school leaders psychosocial work environments

The psychosocial work environment refers to the set of conditions under which school leaders perform their work in schools, such as job demands, work organisation, content of work or social relations at work. Psychosocial working conditions in schools are experienced by individual- and groups of- school leaders, and elicit cognitive and emotional responses that lead to mental and physical health outcomes.

In this section of the report, we consider primary school leaders' psychosocial work environments. We begin by reviewing school leaders average working hours before considering the major demands that school leaders face and the resources that they have available to them. We provide data on trends over time for the years 2016 to 2021 and compare 2021 data for school leaders to the general working population of New Zealand where possible.

Primary leaders' work environments: average working hours

Compared to their counterparts in other countries, teaching professionals in New Zealand are reported to work some of the longest hours in the world (OECD, 2018). Data from the present survey demonstrates that over (72%) of school leaders report working more than 50 hours per week. Just under half (44%) report working more than 55 hours a week and approximately one in six school leaders (15.8%) report working more than 60 hours per week. Less than 7% of school leaders reported working less than 45 hours per week (see Figure 8).
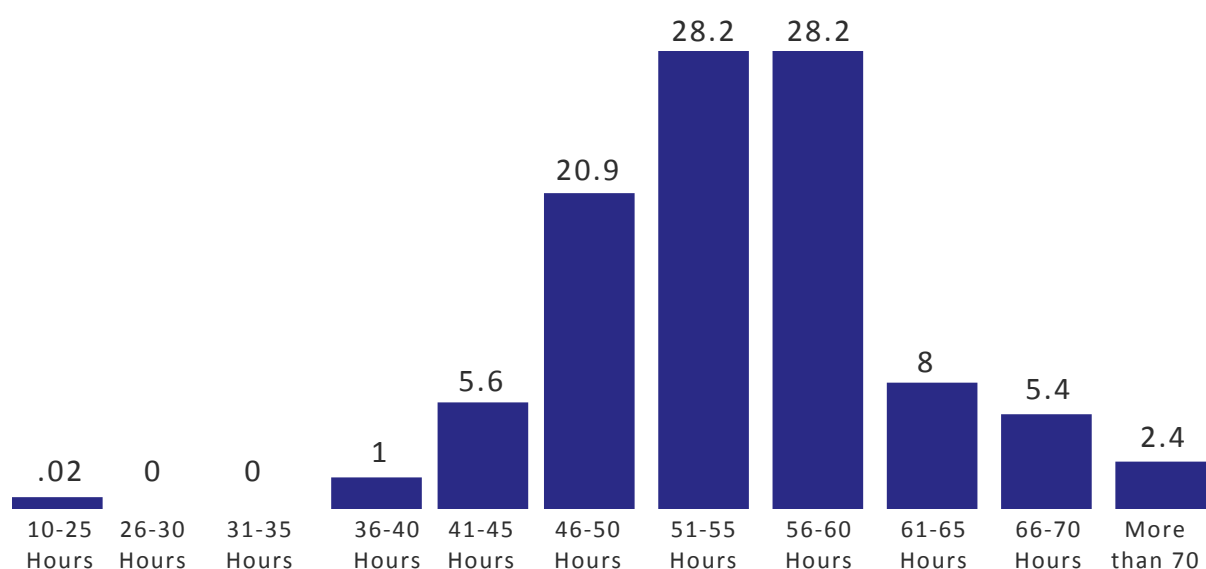
Figure 8: School leaders average working hours per week during term time (2021, %)

The proportion of school leaders working more than 50 hours per week has significantly increased since last year.

Table 1: Proportion of school leaders' working more than 50 hours per week (2016-2021, %)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
More than 50 hours per week	**71.8**	**79.7**	**81.9**	**79.7**	**69.6**	**72.3**

Primary school leaders' work environments: job demands

Job demands are the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of a job that require continuous physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort. In the survey, school leaders were asked about their experiences of five major job demands: quantitative demands, work pace, cognitive demands, emotional demands and demands for hiding emotions.

Table 2: Survey measures of school leaders' job demands

Quantitative Demands reflect the amount of work an individual experiences relative to their ability to complete that work. They can be assessed as an incongruity between the number of tasks and the time available to perform the tasks in a satisfactory manner.

Work Pace assesses the speed at which tasks must be performed. It is a measure of the intensity of work.

Cognitive Demands assesses demands involving the cognitive abilities of school leaders. The relationship between Cognitive Demands and wellbeing is complex. Facing new tasks or overcoming new challenges triggers strain but because it involves task variation or learning, it can also increase job satisfaction and facilitate personal development.

Emotional Demands assesses when school leaders must deal with or are confronted with other people's feelings at work or placed in emotionally demanding situations. Other people comprise both people not employed at the workplace (e.g., parents and students) and people employed at the workplace (e.g., colleagues, superiors or subordinates).

Demands for Hiding Emotions assesses when an employee must conceal their own feelings at work from other people. Other people comprise both people not employed at the workplace (e.g., parents and students) and people employed at the workplace (e.g., colleagues, superiors, or subordinates). The scale shows the amount of time individuals spend in surface acting (pretending an emotion that is not felt) or down-regulating (hiding) felt emotions.

In 2021, school leaders reported regularly to very regularly experiencing all five job demands. They 'sometimes' experienced more work than they could complete (quantitative demands), frequently worked at a fast pace and very frequently engaging in cognitively challenging work. They also reported regularly dealing with emotionally [3] challenging situations (emotional demands) and very frequently having to manage their own emotions. Compared to the New Zealand general working population (Johnson Hickey, and Fink-Jensen, 2010), primary school leaders more regularly experienced quantitative demands and much more frequently worked at a fast pace and experienced emotional demands at work (see Figure 9).

The findings illustrate that on average New Zealand primary school leaders work in very demanding environments where they are required to contend with a large volume of work, very frequently engage in mentally taxing tasks/activities, and are regularly required to deal with the emotions of others and manage their own emotions.
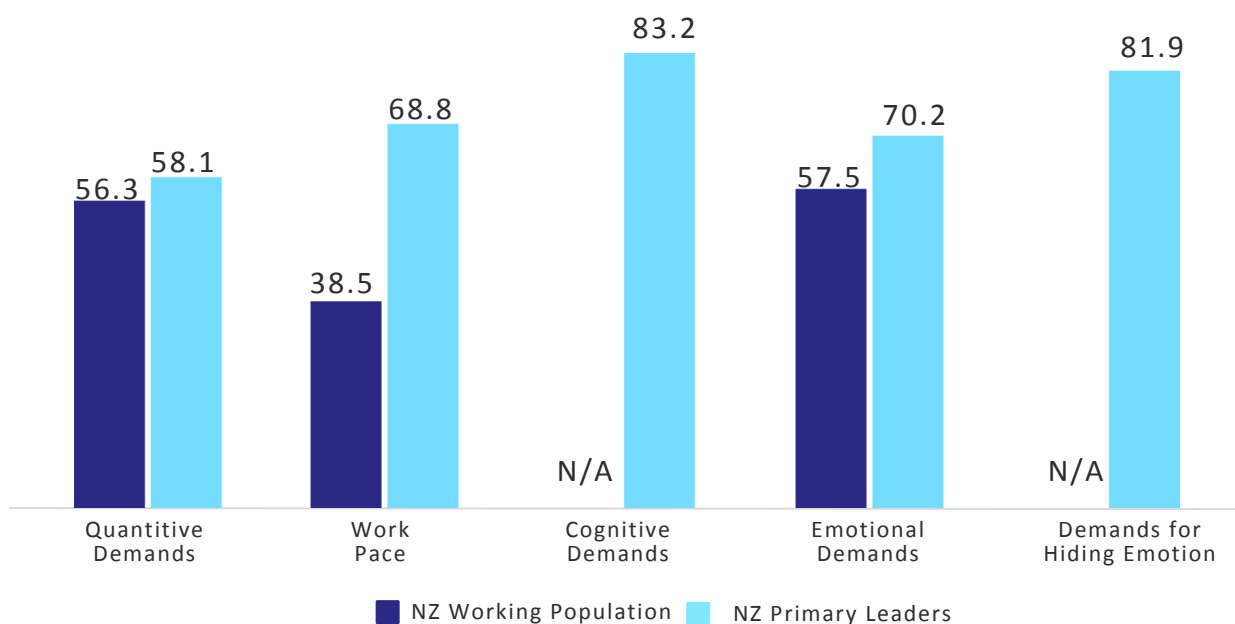
Figure 9: Primary school leaders job demands (2021)

*average scores for the working population
** 0 indicates that leaders never/hardly ever experience these demands and 100 indicates that they always experience them

---

[3] Measures for NZ working population were extracted from Johnson, Hickey, and Fink-Jensen (2010).

Compared to last year's results, most job demands increased in 2021 (see Table 3). This year, school leaders reported that they experienced working at a fast pace significantly more frequently- and experienced emotional and cognitive demands more frequently- than in 2020. In 2021, work pace, cognitive demands and emotional demands were reported at some of their highest levels since the survey began.

Table 3: Primary school leaders job demands (2016-2021)

Demands at Work	NZ Pop	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Quantitative demands	56.3	60.7	61	64.1	61.2	58	58.1
Work pace	38.5	68.6	67.1	69.1	67.2	67.7	68.8
Cognitive demands	N/A	81.4	81	83.6	82.6	82.7	83.2
Emotional demands	57.5	66.8	68.4	70.9	69.3	68.8	70.2
Demands for hiding emotions	N/A	82.2	81.9	82.4	81.5	82	81.9

Primary school leaders work environments: job resources

Job resources are the aspects of school leaders work that enable them to achieve work goals, and stimulate personal growth, learning and development. Workplace resources are the physical and social resources available in the workplace setting. They may include strong work relationships, clear leadership and trust, among many other factors. In this section we report on the following job resources: quality leadership, social support from colleagues, social community at work, trust and justice.

Table 4: Survey measures of job demands

Quality of Leadership assesses the leadership quality of school leaders' superiors.
Social Support from Colleagues Inside and Outside of School assesses school leaders' the extent to which school leaders can obtain support from colleagues if they need it.
Social Community at Work assesses whether there is a feeling of being part of the group of employees at the workplace (e.g., if employee's relations are good and if they work well together).
Trust Regarding Management (Vertical Trust) assesses whether employees can trust management and vice versa. Vertical trust can be observed in the communication between the management and the employees.
Mutual Trust between Employees (Horizontal Trust) assesses whether employees can trust each other in daily work or not. Trust can be observed in the communication in the workplace, e.g., if one freely can express attitudes and feelings without fear of negative reactions.
Justice assesses whether workers are treated fairly or not.

In 2021, primary school leaders in New Zealand reported that they experienced most of the job resources to a large extent. On average, leaders reported that they 'often' felt a strong sense of community at work and that they experienced a good degree of trust and justice at work. Leaders reported experiencing quality leadership at work to some extent. Social support from colleagues appeared to be quite limited with school leaders reporting 'sometimes' having such support available.

Compared to the general working population of New Zealand, primary school leaders experienced most resources more regularly or to a greater extent. The only resource that they experienced less than the general population was social support from colleagues (see Figure 10).
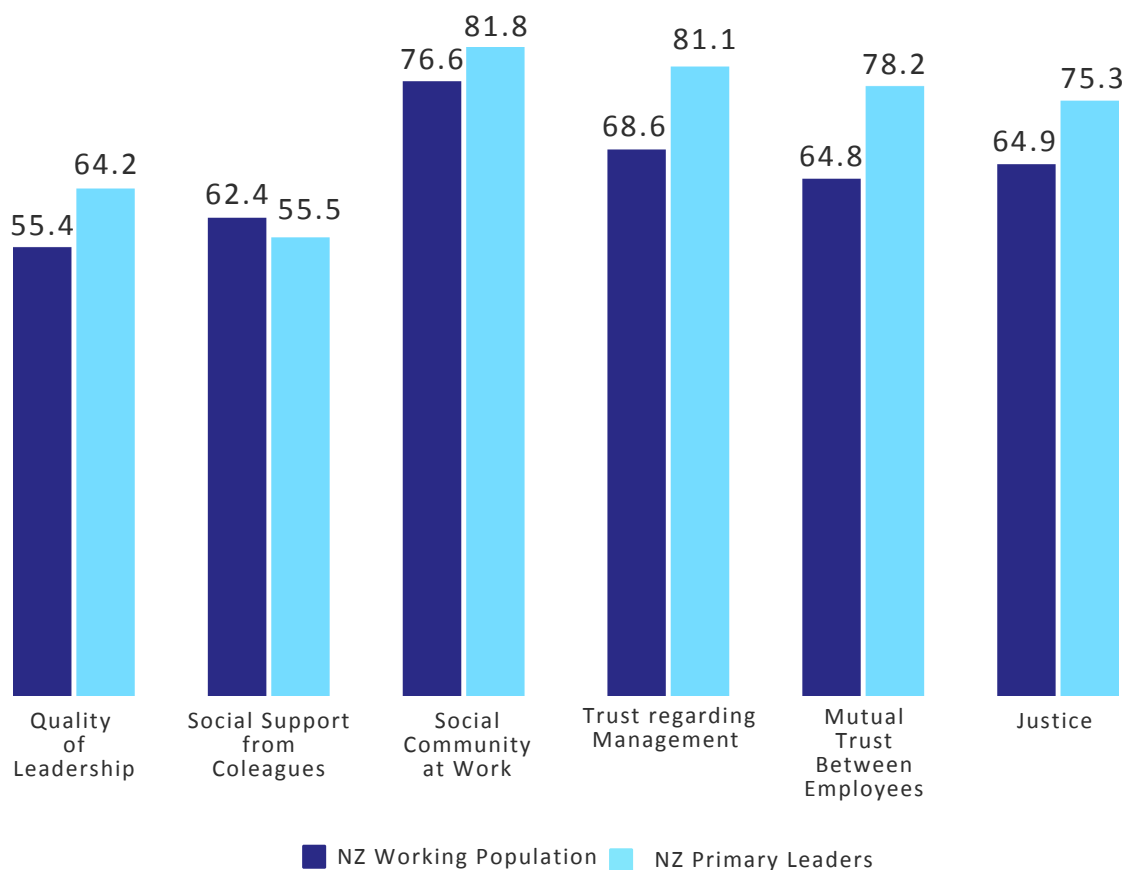
Figure 10: School leaders job resources (2021)

Reviewing the trends over time, Table 5 demonstrates that in 2021 almost all job resources were available at levels that exceeded all earlier rounds of the survey, with the exception for 2020. Since last year, all job resources except for quality leadership have decreased, and there have been significant decreases in social support from colleagues, trust regarding management and trust between employees. In 2021, social support from colleagues was significantly lower than all previous rounds of the survey. The results indicate that the very good relations and feelings of trust and justice that were established during the first year of the pandemic (2020) have diminished over the last year.

Table 5: Primary school leaders' job resources (2016-2021)

Scale	Sub-scale	NZ Pop	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Interpersonal relations & leadership	Quality of leadership	55.4	55.4	57.8	56.1	58.9	63.7	64.2
	Social support from colleagues	62.4	57.8	58.7	59.2	59.8	58.8	55.5
	Social community at work	76.6	78.6	79	79.3	80.7	82.7	81.8
	Trust regarding management	64.8	78.2	79	79.2	80.8	82.6	81.1
Values at the Workplace	Mutual Trust between employees	64.8	74.3	75.7	76.6	77.6	80.3	78.2
	Justice	64.9	71.5	72.5	72.1	73.9	76.2	75.3

Primary school leaders sources of support

As indicated in Figure 11, most school leaders (85%) reported that their partner was a source of support. Friends, colleagues from their place of work, and leaders or colleagues that they had a professional relationship with, were also reported as a source of support by a large proportion of school leaders

Value	Source
0	No source of support
4	Other
5	Department/Employer
6	Superior/Line manager
10	Psychologist/Counseller
12	Medical practitioner
18	Professional Association
45	School Leader/colleague also a friend
58	School Leader /coleague Professional Relationship
63	Family member
69	Colleague-Workplace
74	Friend
85	Partner
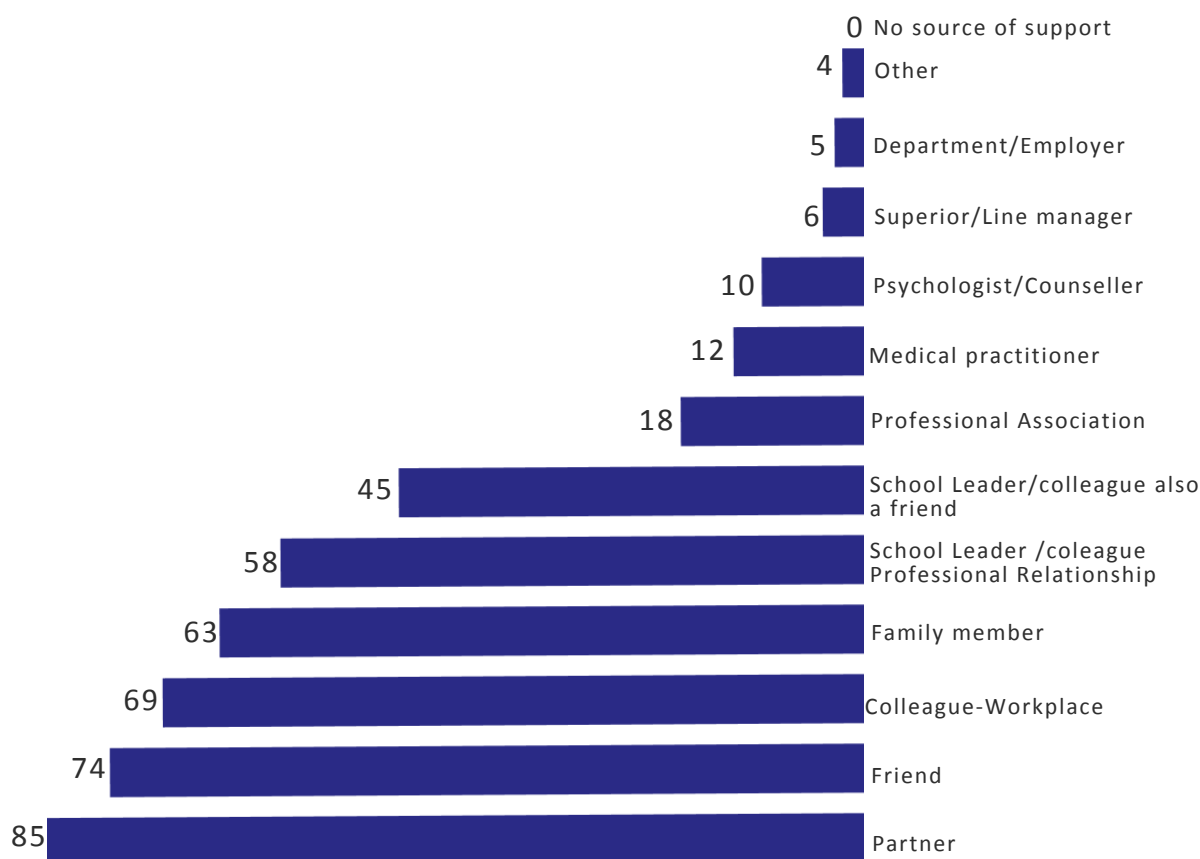
Figure 11: Primary school leaders sources of support (%)

Over the last year, the proportion of school leaders receiving support from a family member has increased while the proportion of school leaders receiving support from school leader colleagues, Department/employers, the professional association and medical practitioners has decreased. In 2021, the largest proportion of school leaders since the survey began report psychologist/counsellor as a source of support (see Table 6).

Table 6: Primary school leaders sources of support (2016-2021, %)

Sources of support	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Partner	84	79	83	84	85	85
Friend	70	66	70	72	74	74
Family member	54	54	60	54	60	63
Colleague in your workplace	65	66	70	67	68	69
School leader/colleague-professional relationship	63	58	60	66	62	58
School leader/colleague also a friend	51	42	45	55	49	45
Supervisor/Line manager	2	6	7	1	7	6
Department/Employer	4	6	5	5	8	5
Professional Association	16	17	17	16	22	18
Medical Practitioner	11	10	12	10	15	12
Psychologist/ counsellor	6	7	8	4	8	10

Summary

Primary school leaders in New Zealand work very long hours. Despite a decline in the proportion of school leaders working in excess of 60 hours per week, the overall proportion of leaders working more than 50 hours per week has increased between 2020 and 2021. Working long hours is associated with increased psychosocial risk, burnout and other personal, physical and psychological difficulties (Caruso, Hitchcock, Dick, Russo, & Schmit, 2004). Too many school leaders are working hours that place them at risk of experiencing adverse health outcomes.

A balance of job demands and job resources supports school leaders to have positive mental and physical health outcomes. Over the last year, school leaders report that most job demands have increased and several job demands are at levels that exceed the reported rates for most previous rounds of the survey. School leaders report good levels of resources at work in 2021; however, most job resources have declined since the 2020 round of the survey. The increase in job demands and decrease in job resources is a cause for concern. Further monitoring is required to establish whether this trend will continue.

⑥ Primary school leaders' health and wellbeing

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the issue of teaching professionals health and wellbeing sharply into focus. School leaders have had to lead in the context of ongoing change and provide support to school communities during periods of uncertainty. These new challenges have led to concerns about the adverse effects of the pandemic on school leaders' health and wellbeing.

In this section, we report on primary school leaders' health and wellbeing during 2021. We begin by considering key measures of school leaders' experiences of work before analysing the main school leader health and wellbeing outcomes included in the survey.

Primary school leaders' health and wellbeing: experiences of work

School leaders' experiences of their work assesses how they feel about their work and how their work impacts on their lives outside of work. In this section of the survey, we report on two key measures of school leaders' work experience: job satisfaction and work-family conflict (see Table 7).

Table 7: Survey measures of experiences of work

Job Satisfaction assesses the degree of pleasure or positive emotions that school leaders experience as a result of their work.
Work-family conflict measures the consequences of work on family/personal life.

Primary school leaders' reported job satisfaction has decreased over the last year. Despite the recent decline, school leader job satisfaction still remains significantly higher than the level of job satisfaction for the New Zealand working population. Over last year school leaders have also experienced increased work-family conflict. The negative effect of work on school leaders' family lives is significantly greater (over one standard deviation) than the impact that work has on the family lives of the average New Zealand worker.

Table 8: Primary school leaders experiences of work (2016-2021)

	NZ Pop	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Job Satisfaction	65.0	72.5	72.9	71.0	74.1	74.8	73.4
Work-family conflict	58.2	73.1	71.4	74.3	71.5	68.0	68.7

Primary school leaders' health and wellbeing: key outcomes

School leaders' experiences at work elicit cognitive and emotional processes that lead to mental and physical health outcomes (see Table 9). This section of the report summarises school leaders' experiences of four major health and wellbeing outcomes: self-rated health, burnout, sleeping troubles and stress.

Table 9: Survey measures of health and wellbeing

Self-rated Health is the school leader's overall assessment of their own general health.

Burnout assesses the degree of physical and mental fatigue/exhaustion of the employee.

Stress assesses a reaction of the individual, or the combination of tension or strain, resulting from exposure to adverse or demanding circumstances.

Sleeping troubles assesses sleep length and interruptions during sleep.

In 2021, primary school leaders in New Zealand rated their overall state of health as approximately 6 out of 10 (61.7 out of 100). On this scale, 10 is the best possible state of health and 0 the worst. On average, primary school leaders reported that they experienced sleeping troubles, stress and burnout 'some of the time'.

Compared to the average for the New Zealand working population, school leaders reported significantly lower levels of general health and more frequent symptoms of burnout. Although school leaders experienced symptoms of stress and sleeping troubles on some occasions, they did so less frequently than the average New Zealand working population (see Figure 12).
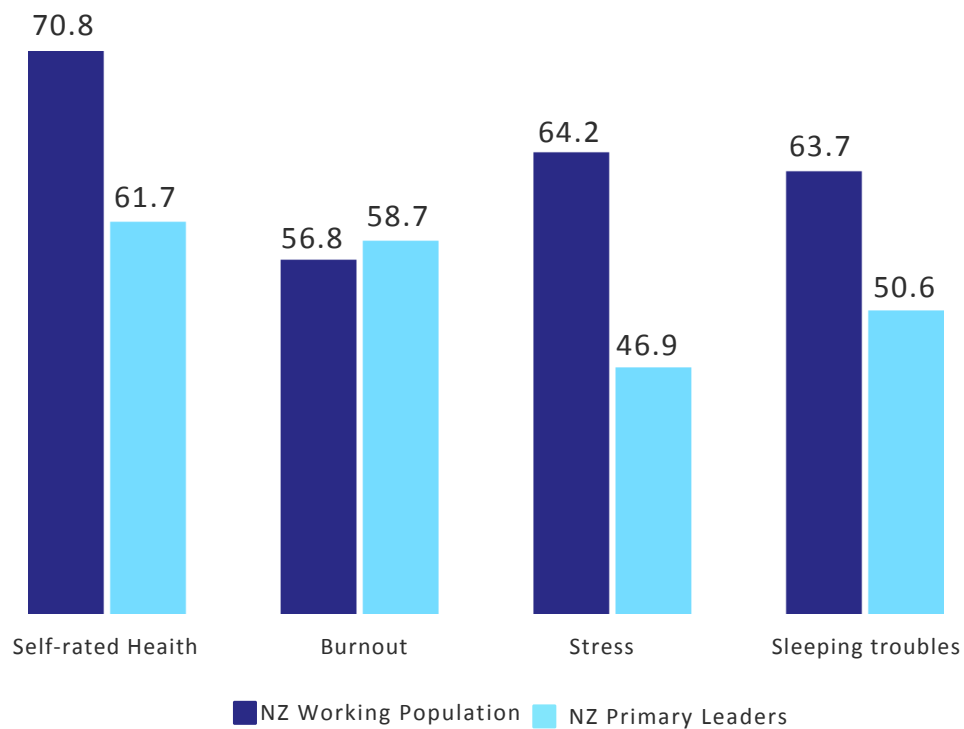
Figure 12: School leaders health and wellbeing (2021)

Over the last year, school leaders overall self-rated health has decreased and stress have increased slightly. Symptoms of burnout and sleeping troubles have decreased for school leaders since last year.

Table 10: New Zealand primary school leaders' health and wellbeing (2016-2021)

	NZ Pop	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Self-rated Health	70.8	64.6	62.3	60.1	61.0	63.5	61.7
Burnout	56.8	58.2	57.9	60.7	58.8	59.7	58.7
Stress	64.2	47.9	47.3	48.8	47.7	46.1	46.9
Sleeping Troubles	63.7	50.4	50.8	51.3	51.4	51.3	50.6

Primary school leaders' health and wellbeing: major sources of stress

In this year's survey, sheer quantity of work was reported as the biggest source of stress for primary school leaders. Lack of time to focus on teaching and learning was reported as the second biggest stressor. Resourcing needs and student-related issues were other significant sources of stress for school leaders.

Poorly performing Staff	5.2
Expectations of employer	5.6
Parent Related Issues	6.1
Mental health isusses of staff	6.4
Mental health isusses of student	6.7
Government initiatives	6.9
Student Related Issues	7.1
Resourcing needs	7.6
Lack of time to focus on teaching & learning	7.8
Sheer quantity of work	8.2
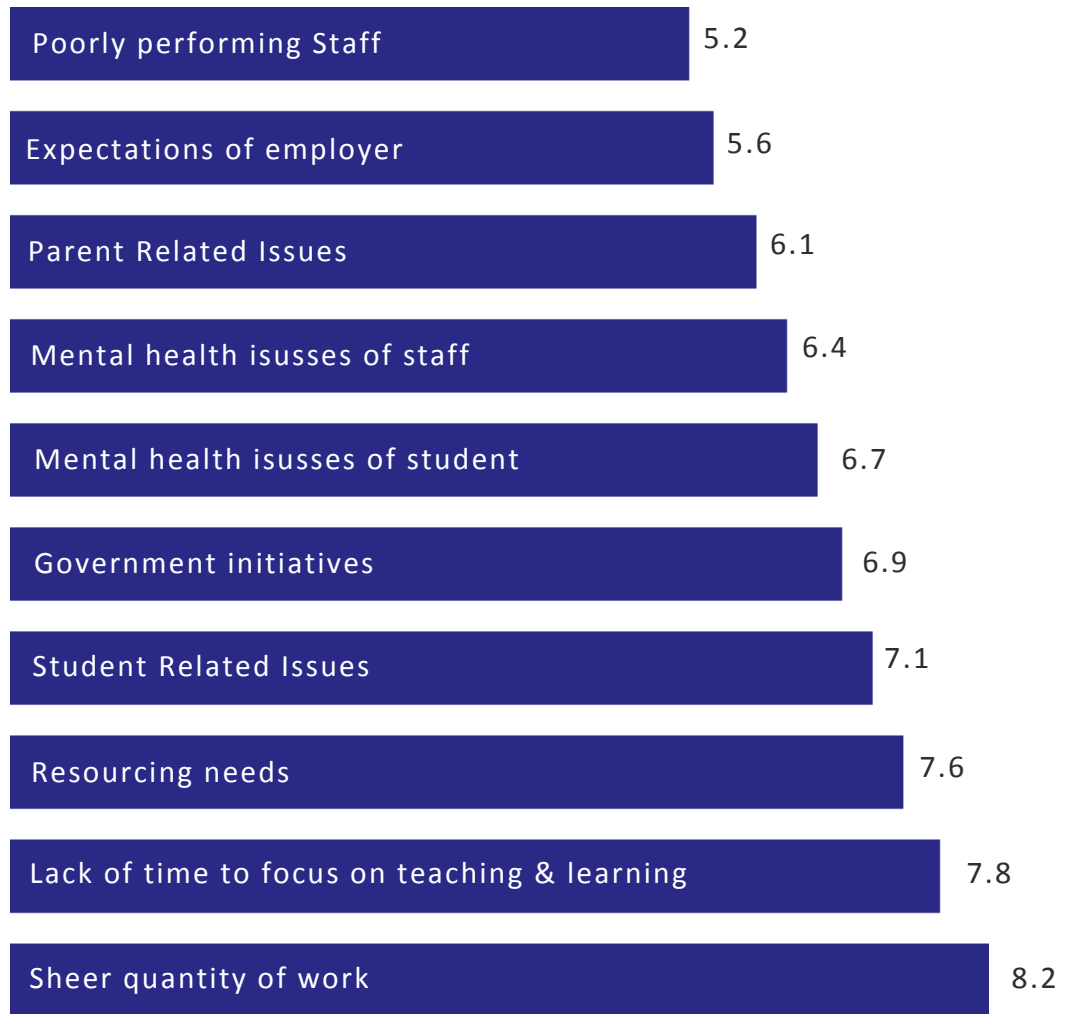
Figure 13: School leaders sources of stress at work (average out of 10)

Since the launch of the school leader survey in 2016, sheer quantity of work and lack of time to focus on teaching and learning have been reported as the two major sources of stress for school leaders. Compared to last year, both sources have stress have increased and sheer quantity of work caused more stress for school leaders this year than at any other time point, except for 2018. Over the last year, several factors (resourcing needs, student related issues, government initiatives and student and staff mental health issues) have become a greater source of stress for school leaders.

Table 11: Primary school leaders' sources of stress (2016-2021, average out of 10)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sheer quantity of work	7.8	7.9	8.4	8.0	8.1	8.2
Lack of time to focus on teaching & learning	8	7.8	8.2	7.9	7.7	7.8
Resourcing needs	6.7	7	7.8	7.1	6.9	7.6
Student Related Issues	6.2	6.8	7.5	6.9	6.9	7.1
Government initiatives	7.2	7.1	6.9	6.7	6.3	6.9
Mental health isusses of student	5.5	6.5	6.8	6.4	6.5	6.7
Mental health isusses of staff	4.8	5.7	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.4
Parent Related Issues	5.7	6.3	6.7	6.4	6.2	6.1
Expectations of employer	5.1	5.4	5.8	5.4	5.4	5.6
Poorly performing Staff	5.3	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.2	5.2

Summary

In 2021, school leaders reported experiencing significant conflict between their work and family lives and a decrease in the positive emotions that they receive from work. Furthermore, school leaders' levels of general health have decreased over the last year. Although school leader burnout and stress has decreased slightly, they regularly experience physical and mental exhaustion and stress.

School leaders' report that the sheer quantity of work they contend with causes them a great deal of stress at work. Several other factors (resourcing needs, student related issues, government initiatives and student and staff mental health issues) have caused school leaders considerable stress over the last year. These results illustrate that the current levels of demand pose a threat to the health and wellbeing of school leaders who require additional resources to support them to deal with the demands of their workplaces.

⑦ Offensive Behaviours against school leaders

Recent studies indicate that disruptive and extreme behaviour from primary aged students is a growing cause for concern for school leaders and teachers in New Zealand (Wylie and Macdonald, 2020). Wylie and MacDonald (2020) found that primary school teachers' reports of disruptive student behaviour and of feeling unsafe in English-medium primary schools had increased noticeably in recent years. In this section, we focus on leaders' experiences of offensive behaviours in primary schools (see Table 12). We report on primary school leaders' experiences of three offensive behaviours during the last 12 months: threats of violence, physical violence and bullying.

Table 12: Survey measures of offensive behaviours

Threats of Violence is the exposure to the threats of physical violence in the workplace.

Physical Violence is exposure to physical violence in the workplace.

Bullying refers to the repeated exposure to unpleasant or degrading treatment at work.

Offensive Behaviours: Trends over time

During the last 12 months of their work approximately 21% of New Zealand primary school leaders experienced bullying at work, 28% experienced threats of violence and 29% experienced physical violence (see Table 13). The proportion of leaders experiencing each type of offensive behaviour has decreased since 2020.

Table 13: Proportion of primary school leaders' who experienced each type of offensive behaviour (2019-2021) (%)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bullying	35	29	32	29	23	21
Threats of Violence	28	30	35	34	32	28
Physical Violence	27	30	34	32	35	29

Offensive Behaviour: school leader gender

Analysing leaders' experiences of offensive behaviours by gender in 2021 shows that female primary school leaders are more likely to experience each form of offensive behaviours than male leaders (see Figure 14).
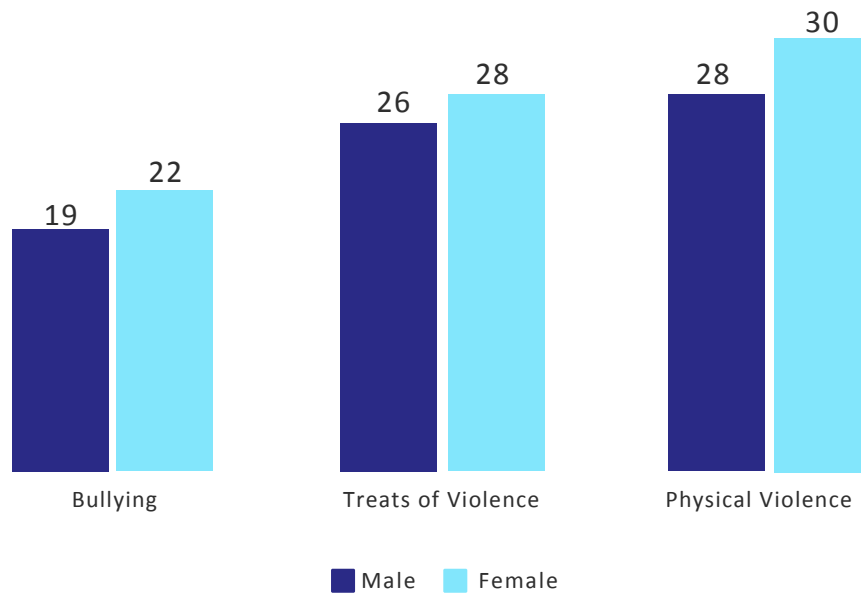

Male **Female**

Figure 14: Offensive behaviours according to school leaders' gender

Offensive behaviours in relation to school size

As indicated in the Figure 15, the proportion of primary school leaders experiencing bullying is smaller in schools with less than 220 students. In contrast, a greater proportion of school leaders in schools with less than 220 students experience physical violence and threats of violence than their colleagues in larger schools.
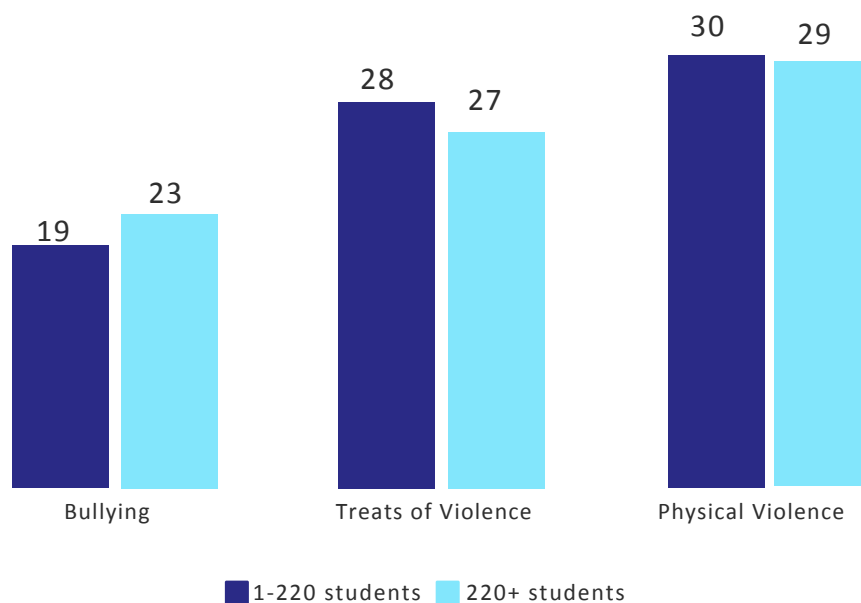

1-220 students **220+ students**

Figure 15: Offensive behaviours by primary school population size

Offensive behaviours in relation to school Geolocation

Analysis of 2021 survey data demonstrates that the proportion of school leaders experiencing physical violence at work is greater in urban primary schools than in schools in rural/isolated areas/offshore island locations (see Figure 16). Differences in school leaders' experiences of threats of violence and bullying vary only slightly by school location.
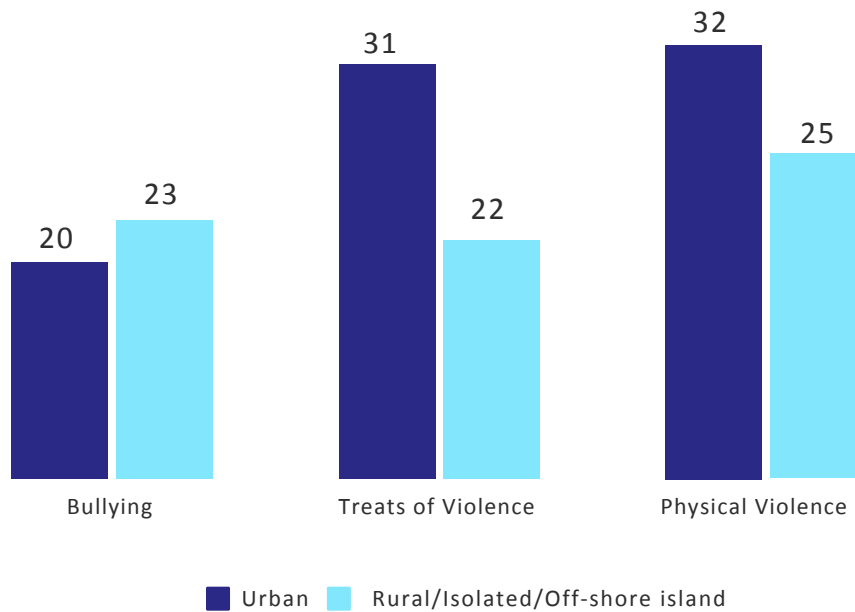
Figure 16: Offensive behaviours by primary school location

Summary

When compared to 2020, a smaller proportion of school leaders reported being subject to physical violence, threats of violence and bullying in 2021. While these decreases are welcome, the prevalence of these behaviours against leaders is still a cause for concern. Offensive behaviour in schools can have consequences that are costly for employers; school leaders may take time off due to ill health, submit OH&S claims against employers' for not providing a safe working environment and/or suffer reduced functioning while at work as a result of the high levels of offensive behaviour in the workplace.

These issues could be systematically addressed through a comprehensive investigation that examines the major issues related to offensive behaviours against teaching professionals, including the prevalence of offensive behaviours in different school settings, the reporting of offensive behaviours, and prevention policies, strategies and practices, and incident management.

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Appendix

Participant care

Each participant received an interactive, user specific report of their survey responses benchmarked against responses of their peers and members of the general population upon their completion of the survey. Returning participants were also provided with a comparison of their 2021 results against their results from previous years.

The survey included the assessment of three "red flag" risk indicators: Self-harm; Quality of Life; and Occupational Health. The red flag indicators are calculated as follows:

- Self-harm – a participant response of "sometimes", "often" or "all the time" to the question "Do you ever feel like hurting yourself?"
- Quality of Life – when aggregate scores on quality of life items fell two standard deviations below the mean for the school leader population.
- Occupational Health – when the composite psychosocial risk score fell into the high or very high-risk groups.

The report of any individual or combination of the three triggers resulted in the participant receiving a red flag notification, informing them of the indicator(s). The notification also included links to Employee Assistance Programs and local support services.

The survey

The survey captured three types of information drawn from existing robust and widely used instruments.

1. Comprehensive school demographic items drawn from:
   a. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS; Williams, et al., 2007).
   b. Program for International Student Assessment (PISA; Thomson, et al., 2011).
   c. International Confederation of Principals surveys were used to capture differences in occupational health and safety (OH&S) associated with the diversity of school settings and types.
2. Personal demographic and historical information.
3. School leaders' quality of life and psychosocial coping were investigated by employing two widely used measures:
   ○ The Assessment of Quality of Life – 8D (AQoL-8D; Richardson, et al., 2009; Richardson, Iezzi & Maxwell, 2014).
   ○ The Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire-II (COPSOQ-II; Pejtersen, et al., 2010).

Other measures used in the survey include:

a. The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT: Babour et al., 2001), developed for the World Health Organization.

b. Passion (Trepanier, Fernet, Austin, Forest & Vallerand, 2014; Vallerand, 2015).

c. The Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS: Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988).

d. Basic Psychological Needs at Work Scale (BPNWS: Deci & Ryan, 2004; Van den Broeck, Ferris, Chang, & Rosen, 2016).

e. 'Life Events'.

f. COVID-19 related questions were added.

The combination of items from these instruments allows for a comprehensive analysis of variation in both occupational health, safety, and wellbeing, as a function of geolocation, school type, sector differences and the personal attributes of the school leaders themselves.

Our survey instrument relies heavily on the Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ-II). This questionnaire is regarded as the "gold standard" in occupational health and safety self-report measures. It has been translated into more than 25 languages and is filled out by hundreds of thousands of workers each year. The structure of the COPSOQ-II consists of higher order domains and contributing subdomains/scales. These have been found to be very robust and stable measures, by both ourselves (Dicke et al., 2018) and others (Burr, Albertsen, Rugulies, & Hannerz, 2010; Kiss, De Meester, Kruse, Chavee, & Braeckman, 2013; Thorsen & Bjorner, 2010). All COPSOQ domain scores are transformed to 0-100 aiding comparisons across domains.

To maintain the participant anonymity, aggregate data is reported at demographic grouping levels. Some subgroups were unable to be reported due to insufficient sample size. Reporting results of subgroups of insufficient size may not provide a true reflection of the subgroup; and risk identifying primary school leaders if reported by the small subgroup. As some participants only partially completed the survey, some of the participant numbers for domains and subscales may vary. Subgroup distributions will be reported as a percentage of the data sample size.