

Not Too Cold, and Not Too Close

**How Can Educators Reduce
Stress for the Highest
Performing Students in
Washington, D.C.?**

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Rationale

- Many D.C. students already experience stress due to difficult life and family circumstances.
- Students who are high-achieving face internal pressure and external family pressure to perform well in school, on top of the other stresses typically felt by D.C. students.

→ **These students need to manage their stress levels in order to continue their high academic performance**



Literature Review

- Students who are high-performing experience stress, anxiety, and lack of sleep (Conner, et al.).
- Social-emotional learning can improve the lives of students who grew up in poverty (CASEL).
- One key is to build relationships with trusted adults (AEI/Brookings).
- Social-emotional supports are essential to increasing equity (ASPEN Institute).

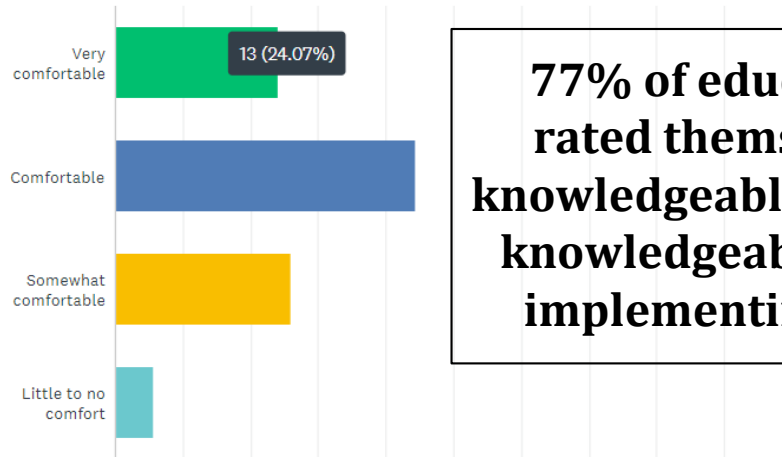


Data/Tools/Process

- Fifty-five experienced educators in D.C. Public Schools (charter and traditional) responded to an anonymous survey.
- Survey questions asked about an educator's comfort and knowledge of social-emotional learning, in addition to what types of stress most influenced their students.

Please rate your comfort with implementing social-emotional supports while also maintaining high expectations for students.

Answered: 54 Skipped: 1



**77% of educators
rated themselves
knowledgeable or very
knowledgeable with
implementing SEL**

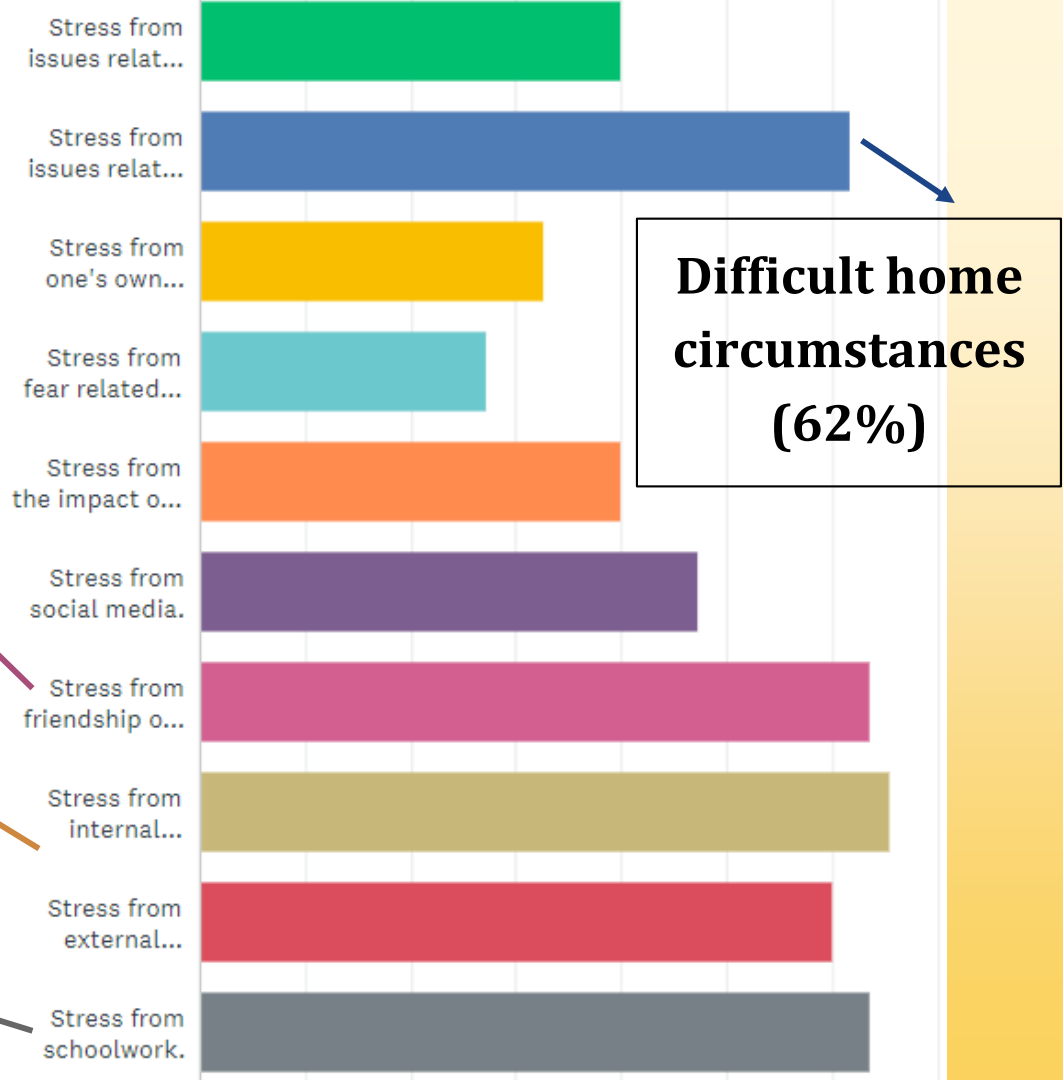
Data Analysis

More than **80%** of educators see a **need** for more social-emotional support for high-achieving students.

**Friendships
(64%)**

**Pressure to
Perform Well
(63%)**

**Schoolwork
(64%)**

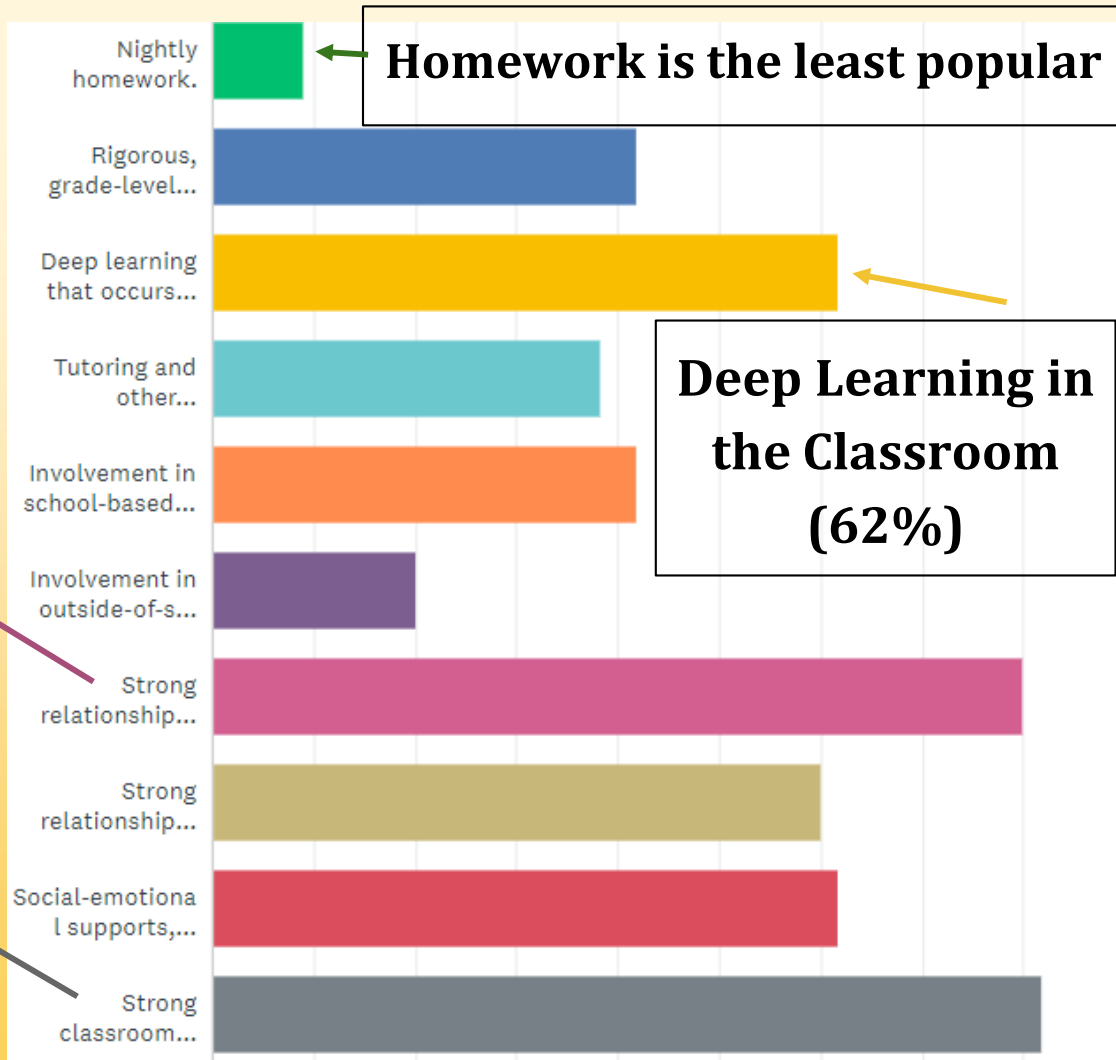


Data Analysis

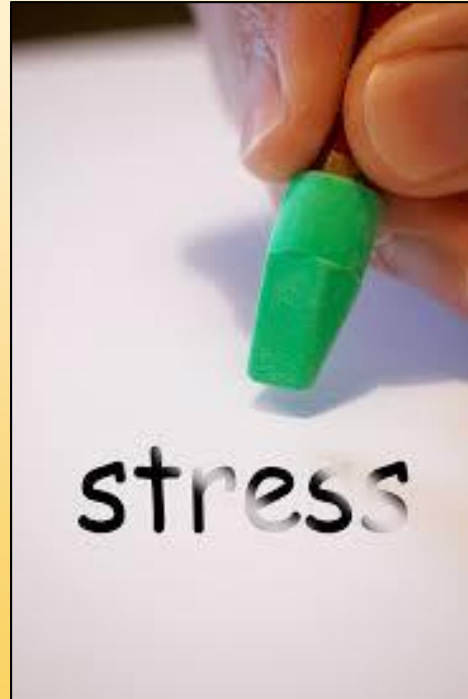
Most D.C. educators believe high-performing students' **academic learning is best supported** through:

Strong Relationships with Faculty & Staff (80%)

Strong Classroom Organization & Clear Expectations (82%)



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#1: Collect data about high-performing students' SEL needs.

“Most stress that I'm seeing seems to come from disorganized classes...and too much homework....That said, students are clearly asking for more fun, stress-relieving activities....I think these should be community-wide.”



“My Do Nows [give] all of my students opportunities to express themselves in a low-stakes environment.”

#2: Respond to the data through school-wide initiatives that are encouraged by school leadership.

“We need opportunities and procedures for students to take a break, reset, and return to their classroom.”



“I have an organized calendar and class agenda system. I survey my students about their experiences in my classroom and respond to their feedback. I provide a space for students to support one another.”

#3: Develop a team to continually check-in with students and staff members on progress toward academic and social-emotional learning goals.

“Anything that is
[organized]
across the school.
Can’t be in
isolated classes.”



“A great deal of PD
supported by a
helpful counseling
team.”

#4: Include student and community voices in the celebration of both academic and non-academic achievements.

“Awards Assemblies to encourage and celebrate success such as honor roll. Pep rally or stress reliever days.”



“I have a culture/care committee for each class that takes on celebrations, shout-outs, and check-ins for social emotional well-being.”

#5: Reduce work packets in order to make more time for deep, meaningful learning experiences.

“Assignments should be meaningful and rigorous and not over tasking to students. Heavily weighted assignments should be completed in school.”



“More focus on 'deep learning' and less stress about grades and/or test performance. Finding ways to bring joy to high level classes.”



COLLECT & CAPTURE

Thank you!



Support

