



**MAE SURVEY ON TEACHER ACTION | 2019**

**SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS**

**2019 Legislative Session Recap**

Over the course of the 2019 legislative session, educators and community members from across Mississippi made their voices heard throughout the Capitol. The message was clear: It's past time that state legislators start prioritizing education and investing in Mississippi's students and educators.

During this legislative session legislators had the opportunity to:

- Adjust teacher licensing requirements to help address the teacher shortage crisis;
- Properly fund public education (MAEP), which was underfunded by \$239 million this year alone;
- Increase the salary of assistant teachers whose base salary is \$12,500 per year, and;
- Provide a meaningful pay raise for certified teachers that would help move base salaries closer to the Southeastern average. Mississippi teachers have the lowest average salary in the United States.

Instead, by the conclusion of the legislative session, legislators had:

- Allowed the licensing requirements bill to die in committee;
- Refused to make progress in properly funding public education based on the funding formula;
- Settled on a \$1500 increase for assistant teachers and certified teachers, failing to provide a meaningful pay raise for Mississippi educators. This pay raise was both insulting and disappointing.

**Students across Mississippi need highly-qualified certified teachers in their classrooms. This pay raise will not help us provide students with the classroom stability they deserve.**

To add insult to injury, at the eleventh hour, legislative leaders elected to sneak \$2 million of voucher money into a completely unrelated bill. At the same time, legislators failed to properly fund special education. This bill's passage will result in \$2 million in taxpayer money funding private schools.

***In summary: The 2019 legislative session saw no real progress made for educators or public education.***

### **Spurred to Action**

Educators and public education supporters were spurred to action. Educators from all over the state expressed their anger both online and offline and began to discuss ways to make their voices heard. The actions discussed by educators include activities from **writing letters to being actively involved in elections to an all-out strike, and everything in between.** We know from past successful actions in Mississippi—and more recent actions taken by educators in other states—that **change must happen from the bottom-up.** We also know that educators must be organized and equipped with a plan.

***“This isn’t a Moment. This is a Movement.”***

**The following survey was created to help us determine the best way to move forward, amplifying and uniting educators’ voices from across the state.** MAE took special care not to advocate or encourage survey respondents to select any specific action. The action options that were listed on the survey were included because these were the actions being strongly considered by educators. The survey’s findings will guide the drafting of an organizing plan that will be implemented now through the 2020 legislative session.

Actions such as informational picketing or having a rally are not the endgame. These are tactics and activities that will be employed strategically to reach our goals.

**Our goal** is a state that pays all its educators—not only certified teachers—a living wage and a salary that is reflective of their value. **Our goal** is a state that properly funds public education and ensures every child, regardless of their zip code, receives a high-quality education.

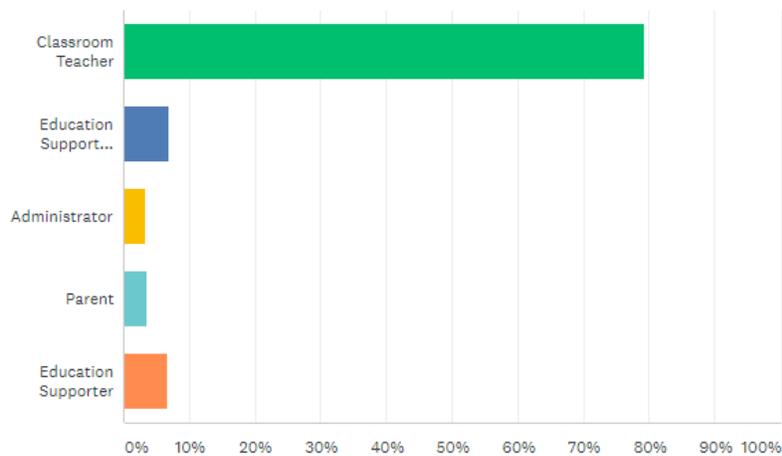
**If we are to make these things happen, we must stand together. *This isn't a moment. This is a movement.***

## Survey Results

Q1

I am:

Answered: 1,765 Skipped: 8

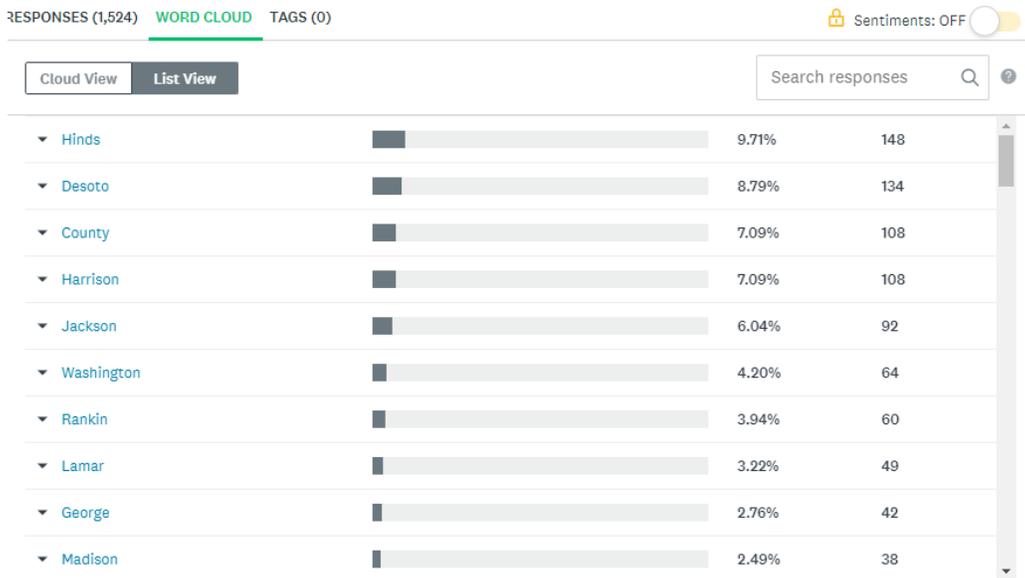


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Classroom Teacher	79.38% 1,401
Education Support Professional	6.97% 123
Administrator	3.34% 59
Parent	3.63% 64
Education Supporter	6.69% 118
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,765</b>

## Q2

If you chose Classroom Teacher or Education Support Professional, in which county do you teach?

Answered: 1,524 Skipped: 249

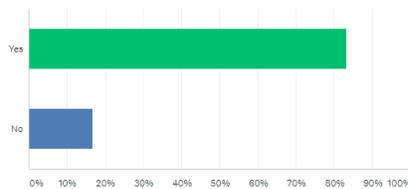


Survey respondents can be found across the state with the largest concentrations of respondents located in Hinds, DeSoto, and Gulf Coast counties. This geographic diversity is telling: It's not just one area of the state where citizens feel frustrated by lawmakers' inaction and divestment in public education. This frustration is felt by educators and public education supporters throughout Mississippi.

## Q3

Would you like to stay updated on the progress of the movement?

Answered: 1,745 Skipped: 28



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	83.32% 1,454
No	16.68% 291
TOTAL	1,745

## Q4

If yes, please provide your email and cellphone number. \*This information is for internal communication purposes only and will not be shared with anyone.

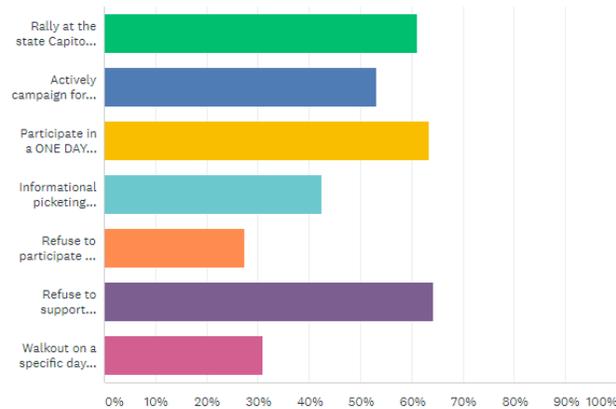
Answered: 1,379 Skipped: 394

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Email address	Responses 97.82% 1,349
Cell phone number	Responses 81.29% 1,121

## Q5

There have been conversations about educators taking actions in protest of the \$1500 pay raise and the intentional divestment in public education by state leaders. What actions are you willing to take? \*\*Check all that apply.

Answered: 1,681 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Rally at the state Capitol on a Saturday BEFORE the end of this school year	61.09% 1,027
Actively campaign for pro-public education candidates	53.06% 892
Participate in a ONE DAY statewide "sickout"— everyone takes off sick on the same day	63.47% 1,067
Informational picketing (peaceful protest) during non-contract hours	42.47% 714
Refuse to participate in school-related extracurricular activities	27.42% 461
Refuse to support businesses that donate(d) to the campaigns of anti-public education candidates	64.13% 1,078
Walkout on a specific day and refuse to return for an indefinite amount of time	30.93% 520
<b>Total Respondents: 1,681</b>	

Educators have discussed many responses to the legislative session ranging from voting out anti-public education lawmakers to walking out of their classrooms.

After the 1985 strike, educators were given a \$4400 pay raise. The very same legislation that provided that pay raise also forbids educators from walking out of their classroom and forbids any teacher organization, such as MAE, from organizing any such action.

This punitive measure has attempted to instill fear, rob Mississippi teachers of the power of a collective voice, and, to an extent, silence Mississippi's educators. We heard from teachers who were willing to take drastic measures to get the attention of legislators but were so terrified of the law that they were reluctant to share the county in which they teach for fear of retaliation.

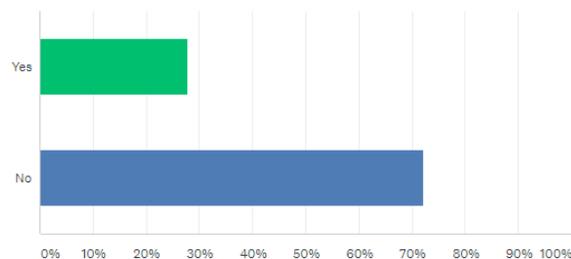
MAE is not advocating for one position over another; rather, we tried to capture the myriad actions being discussed by educators and determine what actions educators were actually willing to take.

These actions represent both immediate and long-term tactics that will help shape how educators and public education supporters move forward in their pursuit of a high-quality public education for every child in Mississippi, regardless of their zip code.

## Q6

Are you willing to be a local point of contact?

Answered: 1,701 Skipped: 72



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	27.75%	472
No	72.25%	1,229
TOTAL		1,701

We are incredibly encouraged by the number of educators and public education supporters from every corner of the state who responded to this survey.

Completing the survey is the first step in organizing and mobilizing our state's students, educators, and communities as we continue our advocacy efforts.

This is a grassroots endeavor and we see that reflected in the nearly 500 respondents ready to become future leaders in this movement.