



# REPORT

## MONITORING THE READINESS OF SCHOOLS FOR THE 2023/24 ACADEMIC YEAR IN FRONTLINE AREAS

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation into Ukraine, the sphere of education has suffered significantly. This report is created to **demonstrate the impact of the full-scale war on the functioning of educational institutions in the frontline areas of Ukraine**, including their readiness for the 2023/24 academic year.

A monitoring of the readiness of 220 secondary schools for the academic year was conducted during July-August 2023 through online surveys and personal interviews with the administrations of educational institutions by the coordinators of mobile teams of the "Vostok SOS" Charitable Foundation. **Schools from the Zaporizhzhia (52%), Mykolaiv (20%), Kherson (19%), Luhansk (7%), and Kharkiv (2%) regions participated in the survey.** A total of 218 regional educational institutions and 2 schools from Mykolaiv took part in the survey.

It is worth mentioning that the surveyed schools in the Luhansk region are displaced, and these institutions operate remotely due to the temporary occupation of parts of the region. A similar situation is observed among some schools in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.

The survey was conducted among educators who are located in territories controlled by the Government of Ukraine. The monitoring was carried out by specialists from the "Vostok SOS" Charitable Foundation in cooperation with the NGO "Kharkiv Institute for Social Research."

Municipal institution "Pervomaisk Lyceum №6 of Pervomaisk City  
Council of Kharkiv region"



## EXPERIENCE DURING WAR AND OCCUPATION

**47%** of the surveyed institutions have reported damage caused by the war. Less than **5%** have reported partial or complete restoration. Of those institutions with damages, **29%** are currently located in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. School administrations mainly describe **the consequences of shelling or direct hits on buildings, ranging from complete destruction to the need for roof, window, and door replacements, repairs to heating and water supply systems, individual buildings, classrooms, and halls.**

Some of the institutions whose premises were or are located in temporarily occupied territories have mentioned that their buildings were looted and/or damaged by occupiers. Administrations of schools in de-occupied territories have noted that these institutions were either not used at all by the occupiers or were used as places for the accommodation of russian military forces, less frequently as headquarters and hospitals. Typically, secondary schools did not cooperate with the occupiers.

“*In the conditions of occupation, the institution was occupied by representatives of the russian federation and used by them as a headquarters and a place of torture. They did not cooperate with the occupiers, and all teachers moved to the government-controlled territory, where they conducted education using the Ukrainian curriculum in an online format.*” (Kherson region)

“*During the occupation period (March-November 2022), when the premises of the institution were used by russian military personnel, all doors were damaged, 50% of the furniture was smashed or taken away, 100% of computer equipment and equipment was looted, all plumbing was completely destroyed, electrical systems were significantly damaged, as were plumbing and heating systems.*” (Kherson region)

Municipal Institution "Velykooleksandrivska Inclusive Resource Center",  
Beryslav district, Kherson region



“*The occupiers lived in the premises, and teachers who were simultaneously in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine were subjected to harsh methods in an attempt to compel them to cooperate. Out of the 30 teachers from the institution who were in the occupation, none agreed to cooperate or work in the school opened by the occupiers on the premises of the lyceum. Our institution conducted remote education using the Ukrainian curriculum.*” (Kherson region)

Representatives of Ukrainian schools who relocated from temporarily occupied territories and continued their work with the Ukrainian curriculum reported that approximately every 4th school in the occupation zone opened its doors to students and began operating under pressure from the enemy. Occupiers initiated education using the Russian curriculum within the premises of educational institutions with their own staff.

The premises of several institutions that are conducting remote education are currently being used for the accommodation or treatment of occupiers. In most cases, the occupational authorities leaned on or coerced teachers and school administrations to cooperate, but only **14 schools** (15% of all located in temporarily occupied territories) indicated during the survey that some staff members agreed to the proposed conditions.

“*Occupiers used the institution for educating children and encouraged the staff to cooperate. Some agreed.*” (Luhansk region)

“*The institution is located in a temporarily occupied territory. It operated according to Ukrainian standards and was looted by occupiers. The director was kidnapped and detained by representatives of the FSB for 'undermining the Russian Federation's education system on the city's territory.' They offered cooperation, promised a 'decent' salary in rubles, housing certificates, and various benefits from Russia.*” (Kherson region)

“*The institution is located in a temporarily occupied territory. Some of the teachers left with the deputy director (who is currently acting as director). Online education was organized for children who left or are in the conditions of occupation. 27 teachers remained in the temporarily occupied territory, and some of them were forced to cooperate, including the director and the branch manager. None of them agreed to cooperate.*” (Zaporizhzhia region)

Gymnasium №5 in Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk region



## SECURITY

The majority of schools reported having a complicated security situation in the areas where they are located. **41%** of school buildings are situated in temporarily occupied territories. Another third of respondents from the schools mentioned threats from shelling (33%) and landmines (33%). Only **19%** of schools characterized the security situation in their areas as calm and safe.

“We hear explosions, and sometimes drones are shot down near the settlement.” (Kherson region)

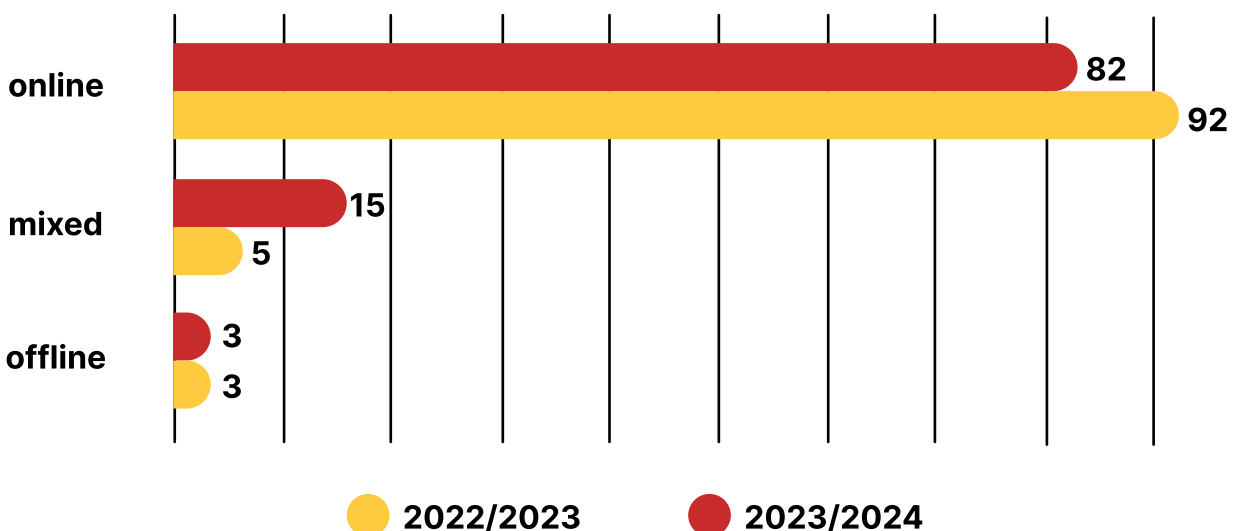
“The sounds of artillery fire don't cease; we hear shelling from the direction of the contact line, nearby settlements are hit constantly.” (Zaporizhzhia region)

“The territory is heavily mined, demining operations are conducted, and we can hear shelling of the Kherson region.” (Mykolaiv region)

“The city of Enerhodar is temporarily occupied... Minefields, shelling, psychological terror on the population.” (Zaporizhzhia region)

**46%** of schools in government-controlled territory have their own or nearby shelters. 40% of these shelters are in need of repair and equipping. **29%** of surveyed schools reported having Unbreakable Points.

Working hours in educational institutions (in %)



Most of the surveyed secondary schools are currently operating online and plan to continue doing so. A minimal number of institutions are working or will work in offline mode (3% or 7 schools). A hybrid mode is planned by **15%** of schools, which is a 10% increase compared to the previous year.

However, only every third of regional educational institutions has stable internet access, with a quarter of secondary schools reporting occasional disruptions. 13% of educational institutions lack stable internet access, and 29% do not have it at all.

More than **40%** are educating students from the first to the ninth grade (11%) or from the first to the eleventh grade (35%). Other institutions mentioned that they do not have certain classes due to the absence of students.

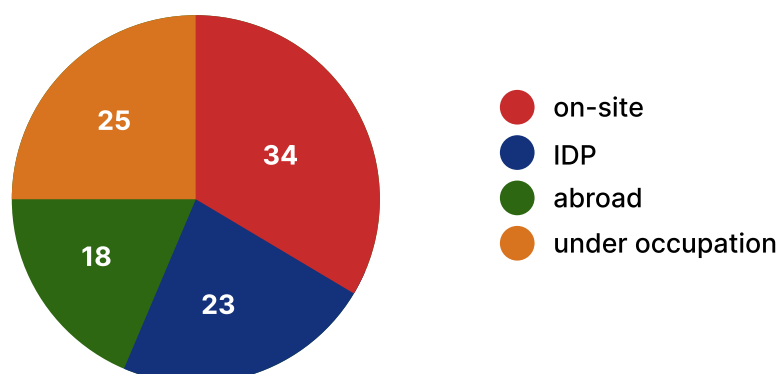
Each class has between 5 and 35 students. The number of students has decreased by a quarter compared to the previous year. **Before the full-scale war began, the surveyed institutions were educating over 54,000 students, but for the 2022/23 academic year, only 40,000 remained.** In September 2023, it is planned to enroll 45,000 individuals.

According to the monitoring data, the change in the number of children in educational institutions has occurred unevenly. Schools located in occupied areas mostly reduced the number of students, as did those subjected to shelling and located near the border with Russia. There is a decrease in the number of children because they have changed their place of residence. At the same time, some schools have increased their enrollment through mergers with other institutions. 12% of schools reported overhauls, including through mergers.

“ *There has been a reduction in the student population due to the opening of offline schools in host communities.*” (Luhansk region)

A quarter of students from the surveyed secondary schools are currently in the occupied territories. 41% of children have relocated (23% within Ukraine, and another 18% abroad). 34% of students have not moved and remain in the settlements where their schools are located.

### Location of students



## STAFFING SITUATION

The number of staff varies depending on the institution and its location. **80% of the schools that participated in the survey have between 10-50 staff members. Every tenth school has fewer than 10 employees, while another 11% have more than 50.**

58% have staff members who have not relocated, with every second school having a full teaching staff (95%+). Slightly more schools (64%) have teachers with internally displaced person (IDP) status. Schools that have moved with a complete teaching staff make up less than 10%.

In every third school (33%), some teachers are located in the occupied territories, primarily in institutions whose premises are in temporarily occupied territories. Two-thirds of such schools managed to relocate at least half of their teachers. Only 2 schools mentioned that more than 90% of teachers remained in the occupied territories.

44% of teachers have not relocated, while another third are internally displaced persons. 9% are abroad, and 15% are in the occupied territories.

### Teacher Deployment

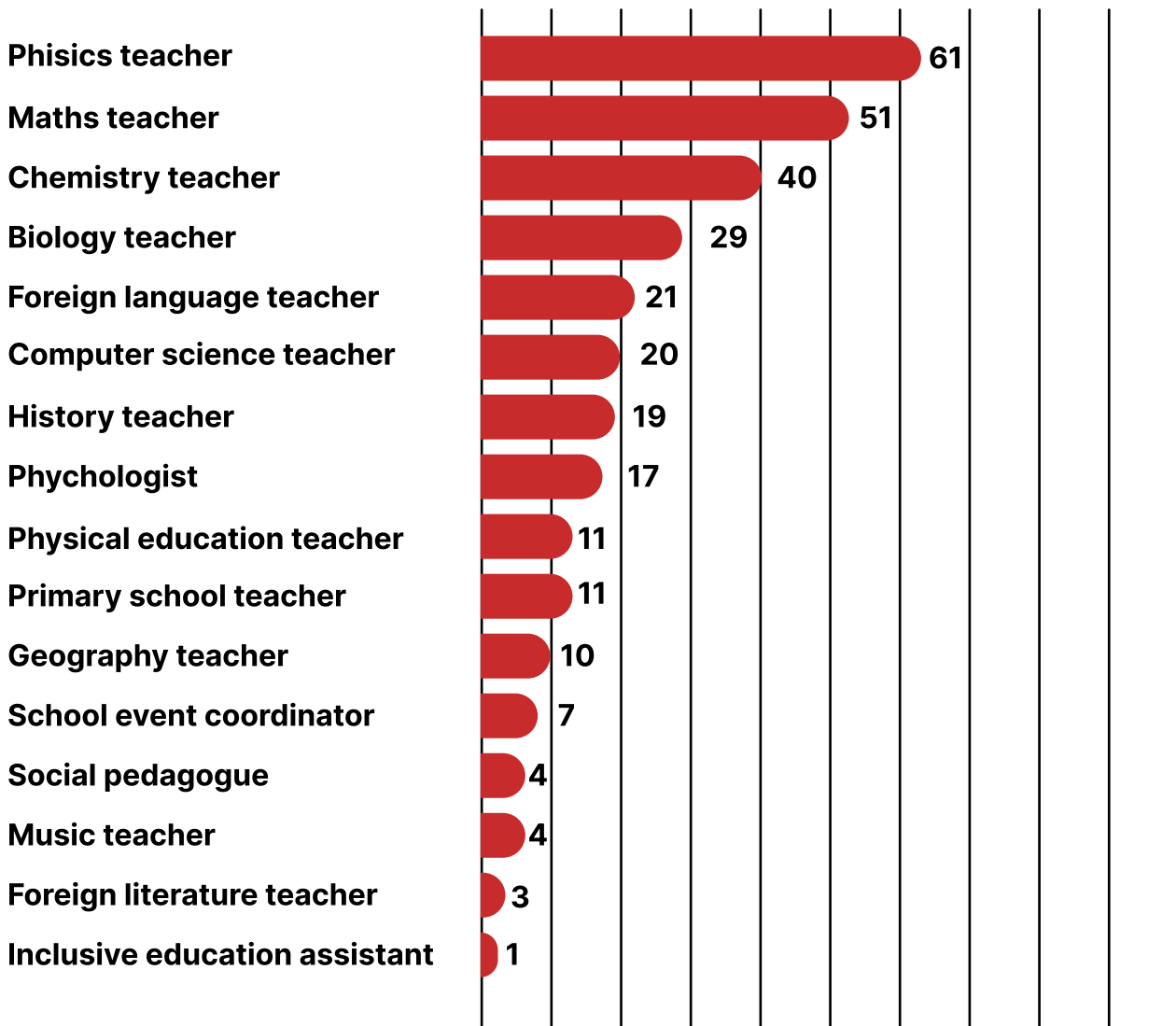
	On-site	IDP	Abroad	On the TOT
<b>% of teachers</b>	44	32	9	15
<b>% schools with teachers</b>	58	64	57	33

Lysychansk Lyceum №28 "Garant", Sievierodonetsk district, Luhansk region



**68%** of schools reported that they are adequately staffed, while a third have issues with staff shortages. The most significant shortages are in the subjects of physics, mathematics, chemistry, and to a lesser extent, biology, foreign languages, computer science, and history. **17%** of secondary schools indicated that they do not have psychologists on staff. This fact can have a significant impact on children who have experienced traumatic events and stress due to the war.

**Needs for teaching staff (in %)**





## EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND AVAILABLE SUPPORT

**90% of the surveyed educational institutions have acute needs.** 76% indicated the need for technical and material support, including computer equipment for organizing online learning for both teachers and students. There is also a need for printers, scanners, interactive whiteboards, video surveillance cameras, and more. Schools operating offline require furniture, kitchen, and dining room equipment, sports and household inventory, and more. **20% of secondary schools need assistance in the reconstruction/repair of premises, individual classrooms, and shelters.** 18% of institutions mentioned a need for humanitarian aid, with some indicating that assistance is also required for school staff. The need for teacher training was identified by 6%.

One in five educational institutions mentioned having a school bus (21%). Half of the schools do not have, nor do they require, transportation. 28% stated that they need to purchase a new (one or several) or repair an existing bus. According to the respondents, this need is due to several reasons: the vehicle was damaged due to the war, it was transferred to the Armed Forces, or changes in the school's operation require picking up children from various communities. Representatives of some schools believe that the need for a bus will intensify after de-occupation.

### The institutions also pointed out the following problems:

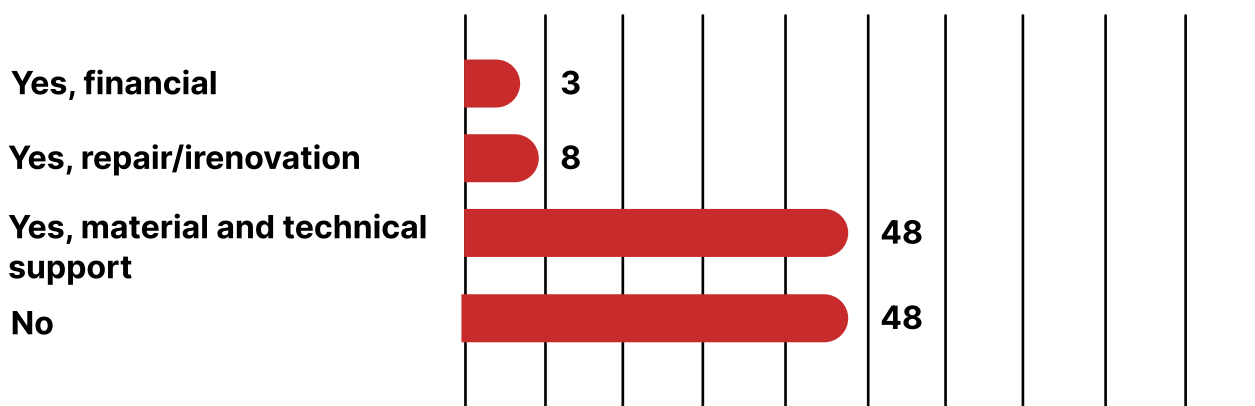
- a decrease in the number of students;
- destruction/poor condition of the infrastructure that supports the institution (heating, water supply, heating, etc.);
- the need for demining in the vicinity of the educational institutions;
- destruction of the library fund and teaching materials;
- difficulties in the process of restoring documents for teachers.

Municipal institution "Balabyno Gymnasium Prestige" of the Kushuhum village council of Zaporizhzhia district, Zaporizhzhia region



Almost every second school has already received some assistance from the state, Ukrainian or international non-governmental organizations, and foundations. The most significant support came in the form of material and technical assistance (48%), with significantly fewer schools receiving help for repairs or restoration (8%) and financial support (3%).

**School support from the state, NGOs, international organizations (in % of responses)**



Municipal institution "Rukavychka" of Kushuhum village council of Zaporizhzhia district, Zaporizhzhia region

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To implement existing mechanisms for coordinating the actions of the state, international, and national civil organizations regarding the continuous provision of educational services in wartime conditions, including issues related to material and technical support, assistance to educators, and the reconstruction and repair of educational institutions.
2. Allocate resources for the reconstruction and repair of damaged educational institutions operating offline or in a hybrid format.
3. Ensure the adequacy of shelters, and, if necessary, establish additional protective structures for children, teachers, residents, and service personnel.
4. Efforts should be made towards humanitarian demining of territories, and continue to implement education on mine and explosive safety.
5. Restore the destroyed library collections of educational institutions.
6. Provide proper humanitarian and legal support to participants in the educational process who remain in or have been forcibly evacuated from dangerous areas.
7. Develop a state program aimed at attracting qualified specialists to work in educational institutions that report staff shortages.
8. Declare a mandatory evacuation procedure for children from areas of active hostilities where it is necessary, such as in villages in the Berislavsky district of the Kherson region.
9. Continue informational and awareness campaigns in Ukraine and abroad regarding the realization of children's right to education during wartime.
10. Actively disseminate programs in the field of psychological assistance, taking into account trauma sensitivity, and teach students and teachers self-support and self-regulation skills.