



TEACHER & PRINCIPAL SCHOOL REPORT

# FLORIDA

Equity & Literacy

 SCHOLASTIC

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# EDUCATORS' VIEWS & EXPERIENCES: NATIONAL COMPARISON



## FLORIDA FINDINGS IN COMPARISON WITH THE NATION

Overall, Florida educators have similar views and experiences as their national peers. Key differences include:

### > BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Florida teachers are more likely to say that **family involvement in student learning** (56% vs. 48%) and **access to the internet and other learning resources out of school** (55% vs. 48%) are not adequately available for their students.

Florida educators are more likely to agree that **retaining high-quality teachers is a challenge** (63% vs. 49%).

Teachers in Florida are **more likely to receive discretionary funds** from their school district or PTA compared to teachers nationally (84% vs. 55%) and **spend slightly more of their own money** on their classrooms than average (\$548 vs. \$530).

### > FUNDING PRIORITIES

Florida teachers are more likely to identify **high-quality instructional materials** as a funding priority (67% vs. 55%).

### > FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Florida educators are more likely to say it is important to **make school information available in multiple languages** (66% vs. 53%) and to **provide opportunities and resources for summer learning** (63% vs. 55%) in order to encourage family engagement with their student's learning.

They are less likely to say that two important components of family engagement are happening to the degree they should: **accommodating families whose schedules prevent attendance at school events or meetings** (35% vs. 49%) and **community partnerships** to offer services to families and students (25% vs. 36%).

### > READING IN AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL

On average, Florida teachers have **18% fewer books per classroom** than the national average (216 vs. 254).

Florida teachers are **more likely to cite ebooks (49% vs. 41%) as classroom library needs**. Additionally, **ebooks are a top need for Florida teachers' classroom libraries** but do not appear as a top need nationally.



The national *Teacher & Principal School Report* series can be found at [scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport](https://www.scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport).



# BARRIERS TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Ninety percent of Florida teachers and principals agree that many of their students face barriers to learning from outside of the school environment. Teachers report having students in their classrooms who face myriad situations that can impede learning:

**85%** experiencing family or personal crisis

**71%** coming to school hungry

**80%** living in poverty

**66%** in need of healthcare services

**78%** in need of English language learning support

**62%** homeless or in temporary housing

**72%** in need of mental health services



Equity in education needs to improve. That means making sure that personal and social circumstances—gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status—is not an obstacle to achieving educational potential.

Florida Elementary School Principal

Resource needs in Florida are varied and significant, with teachers citing the following as NOT adequately available for their students:

## FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONDITIONS

**56%** Family involvement in student learning

**31%** Strong staff-to-family connections

**29%** Strong connections between schools and communities

## OUTSIDE-OF-SCHOOL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

**55%** Access to the internet and other learning resources outside of school

**53%** Access to fiction and/or nonfiction books at home

## IN-SCHOOL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

**41%** In-school specialists to address students' social and emotional needs

**20%** High-quality instructional materials

Within Florida, teachers in higher-poverty schools are more likely than those in lower-poverty schools to indicate their students lack adequate access to fiction/nonfiction books at home (65% vs. 28%) as well as family involvement in student learning (70% vs. 26%).

# TEACHERS' FUNDING PRIORITIES & PERSONAL SPENDING

The top five funding priorities among Florida teachers include:

Higher salaries	75%
High-quality instructional materials	67%
Technology devices and digital resources in school	53%
Academic or social-emotional intervention initiatives and programs	47%
Additional high-quality staff to reduce student-to-teacher ratio	46%

Eighty-four percent of teachers in Florida receive discretionary funds from their school district or PTA. In the past year, they have spent \$548 of their own money on items for their students and/or classrooms.

**53%**  
OF FLORIDA TEACHERS  
HAVE USED THEIR OWN  
MONEY TO PURCHASE  
CLASSROOM LIBRARY BOOKS  
OVER THE PAST YEAR

**62%**  
SAY THEY ARE ONLY  
ABLE TO UPDATE THEIR  
CLASSROOM LIBRARIES  
ONCE A YEAR OR LESS



“

There is a severe lack of quality instructional materials and textbooks in my district, and teachers are scrambling to find materials for their classrooms. A quality education cannot be provided with this hit or miss technique.

Florida Elementary School Teacher

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Nearly all Florida educators say that involving families in children’s learning is important for student success (98%), but many educators need help engaging families (77%).

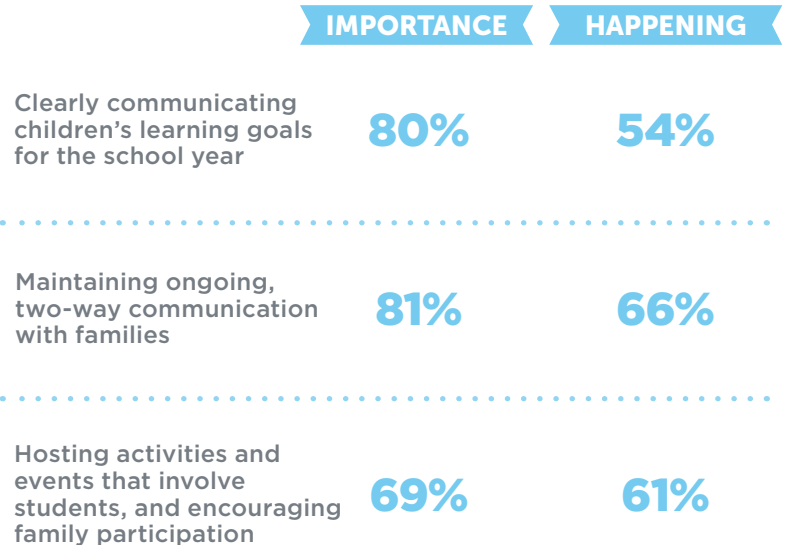
The top activities Florida educators identify as most important to help families engage in their children’s learning include:



Great teachers understand the social and emotional needs of their students and their students’ family members. They know that people need to feel safe and calm in order to learn and grow.

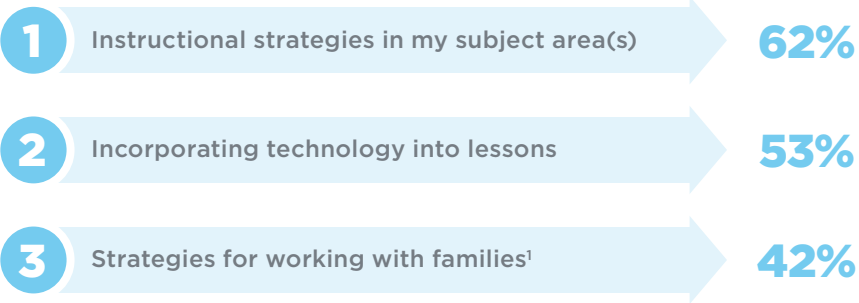
Florida Middle School Teacher

There are significant gaps between what Florida educators say is important and what is actually happening in schools. Among their top priorities, the largest gaps are in:



# TAILORED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Florida teachers indicate that the most effective formats for professional development include workshops conducted by outside consultants, authors or experts (67%), professional conferences (54%), and observing other teachers in their school or district (54%). The top areas in which Florida teachers would like professional development in the coming year include:



**99%** OF FLORIDA EDUCATORS AGREE THAT THEY **“WANT EFFECTIVE, ONGOING, RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT”**



<sup>1</sup>This item is a net of two items from the survey: “Strategies for working with students and families from all cultures” and “Strategies for improving engagement with families in support of their children’s learning.”

# EDUCATORS ON READING

## ALL YEAR-ROUND

NINETY-SEVEN PERCENT OF FLORIDA EDUCATORS AGREE PROVIDING YEAR-ROUND ACCESS TO BOOKS AT HOME IS IMPORTANT TO ENHANCING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

The number one way Florida students gain access to books during the summer, as reported by educators, is the public library (72%). Other notable sources of books include:

Teachers providing books	22%
School/district providing books	13%
Community partners providing books	11%

The top types of reading materials Florida teachers need in their classroom libraries are:

1	Culturally relevant titles	50%
2	eBooks	49%
3	Magazines	49%
4	Books in other languages	48%
5	Books published in the last 3-5 years	47%

FLORIDA  
TEACHERS'  
CLASSROOM  
LIBRARIES HAVE  
216 BOOKS  
ON AVERAGE



# INDEPENDENT READING IN FLORIDA

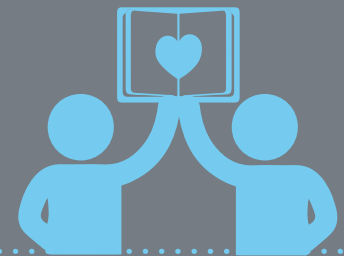
**Three in 10 Florida teachers set aside time for independent reading** or read aloud to their students every school day (30%)—for an average of 22 minutes. Forty-six percent of literacy teachers set aside this time.

Almost **three-quarters of Florida teachers say they wish that students were read aloud to or read a book of their choice independently more often (70%)**. This is more common among elementary school teachers than secondary school teachers (76% vs. 61%).

Among teachers who wish it occurred more often, **the biggest barriers to independent reading are the demands of the curriculum not allowing enough time (87%)** and that **independent reading is not considered an important use of class time at their school (23%)**.

# 93%

**OF FLORIDA EDUCATORS AGREE THAT STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE TIME DURING THE SCHOOL DAY TO READ A BOOK OF THEIR CHOICE INDEPENDENTLY**



The top ways Florida educators promote reading among students include:

- |          |   |            |          |   |            |
|----------|---|------------|----------|---|------------|
| <b>1</b> | Talking with students about the importance of reading   | <b>76%</b> | <b>4</b> | Encouraging students to use the school library                          | <b>64%</b> |
| <b>2</b> | Talking with students about the books they read for fun | <b>67%</b> | <b>5</b> | Making books available for students to take home during the school year | <b>61%</b> |
| <b>3</b> | Encouraging summer reading                              | <b>66%</b> |          |   |            |