TEACHER & PRINCIPAL SCHOOL REPORT
PENNSYLVANIA
Equity & Literacy
EDAUCATORS’ VIEWS & EXPERIENCES: NATIONAL COMPARISON

PENNSYLVANIA FINDINGS IN COMPARISON WITH THE NATION

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

▷ BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Educators in Pennsylvania are more likely to agree that most of their students start the school year academically ready for grade-level work (50% vs. 41%).

At the same time, compared to their peers nationwide, more Pennsylvania teachers have seen an increase in students living in poverty (43% vs. 36%) and coming to school hungry (40% vs. 32%) in the past three years.

▷ FUNDING PRIORITIES

Teachers in Pennsylvania are more likely to cite student access to wrap-around services, like healthcare, mental health services, etc. as a top funding priority compared to teachers nationally (41% vs. 31%).

▷ READING IN AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Pennsylvania educators are less likely to say that participating in or hosting a school book fair (39% vs. 48%) and talking with families about the importance of their children reading (44% vs. 52%) are ways they personally promote reading among their students.

Pennsylvania teachers are less likely to cite a lack of books at home (37% vs. 46%), or a lack of the internet and other learning resources outside of school (38% vs. 48%) as barriers to learning.

▷ FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Pennsylvania educators are less likely than those nationally to feel that schools are making school information available in multiple languages to the degree they should (27% vs. 45%).

The national Teacher & Principal School Report series can be found at scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport.
A majority of Pennsylvania teachers and principals agree that many of their students face barriers to learning from outside of the school environment (85%). Teachers report having students in their classrooms who face myriad situations that can impede learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experiencing family or personal crisis</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living in poverty</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in need of mental health services</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coming to school hungry</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in need of healthcare services</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homeless or in temporary housing</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in need of English language learning support</td>
<td>59%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family involvement in student learning</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong staff-to-family connections</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong connections between schools and communities</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the internet and other learning resources outside of school</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to fiction and/or nonfiction books at home</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-school specialists to address students’ social and emotional needs</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-quality instructional materials</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equity means giving every students what he or she needs to level the playing field. Some kids need more—and they should get it. We shouldn’t be doing the same thing for every student.

Elementary School Principal

Within Pennsylvania, 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 (68% vs. 23%) as well as family involvement in student learning (65% vs. 35%).
The top five funding priorities among Pennsylvania teachers include:

- Additional high-quality staff to reduce student-to-teacher ratio: 53%
- Technology devices and digital resources in school: 49%
- Academic or social-emotional intervention initiatives and programs: 47%
- High-quality instructional materials: 43%
- Student access to wrap-around services, like healthcare, mental care, etc.: 41%

Forty-eight percent of teachers in Pennsylvania receive discretionary funds from their school district or PTA and in the past year, they have spent $487 of their own money on items for their students and/or classrooms.

All students should have access to the supports they need to be successful—including funding that allows all kids to have access to appropriate class size, supplies and materials, technology, high-quality teachers, and the basic tools they need to learn.

Middle School Principal
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

All Pennsylvania educators say that involving families in children’s learning is important for student success (100%), but many educators need help engaging families (75%).

The activities Pennsylvania educators identify as most important in helping families engage in children’s learning include:

- Maintaining ongoing, two-way communication with families: 83%
- Making school information available in multiple formats: 76%
- Hosting and encouraging attendance at parent-teacher conferences: 72%
- Clearly communicating children’s learning goals for the school year: 67%
- Encouraging reading aloud and children’s independent reading at home: 65%

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

- Maintaining ongoing, two-way communication with families: Importance 83%, Happening 60%
- Clearly communicating children’s learning goals for the school year: Importance 67%, Happening 47%
- Encouraging reading aloud and children’s independent reading at home: Importance 65%, Happening 48%

I know some kids could achieve to a higher degree if they had more support at home, and it’s our job as teachers to help facilitate that. We can do more to help parents who struggle and the kids who are in those situations.

Elementary Teacher
Pennsylvania teachers say that the most effective formats for professional development include workshops conducted by outside consultants, authors or experts (66%) and professional conferences (61%). The top areas in which Pennsylvania teachers would like professional development in the coming year include:

1. Instructional strategies in my subject area(s) - 62%
2. Incorporating technology into lessons - 56%
3. Strategies for working with families¹ - 43%

98% of Pennsylvania educators agree that they "want effective, ongoing, relevant professional development.”

¹This 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.”
NINETY-SEVEN PERCENT OF PENNSYLVANIA EDUCATORS AGREE PROVIDING YEAR-ROUND ACCESS TO BOOKS AT HOME IS IMPORTANT TO ENHANCING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT.

According to educators, the number one way Pennsylvania students gain access to books during the summer is the public library (78%). Other notable sources of books include:

1. School/district providing books - 24%
2. Teachers providing books - 21%
3. Community partners providing books - 10%

The top types of reading materials Pennsylvania teachers need in their classroom libraries include:

1. Culturally relevant titles - 49%
2. High-interest, low-reading-level books - 46%
3. Magazines - 46%
4. Books published in the last 3-5 years - 44%
5. Graphic novels - 43%

Data are from the Teacher & Principal School Report series of reports from Scholastic, conducted by research firm, YouGov. Findings are among 217 teachers and 58 principals from Pennsylvania. For the full national report and methodology, please visit www.scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport.
One-third of Pennsylvania teachers set aside time for independent reading or read aloud to their students every school day (33%)—for an average of 23 minutes. Fifty percent of literacy teachers set aside this time.

Just over half of Pennsylvania teachers say they wish students were read aloud to or were able to read a book of their choice independently more often (55%). This is even more true among elementary teachers than it is of secondary teachers (66% vs. 46%).

Among teachers who wish it occurred more often, the biggest barriers to independent reading are the demands of the curriculum not allowing enough time (88%) and independent reading not being considered an important use of class time at their schools (24%).

The top ways Pennsylvania educators promote reading among students include:

1. Talking with students about the importance of reading 70%
2. Talking with students about the books they read for fun 69%
3. Reading aloud to students 67%
4. Encouraging summer reading 65%
5. Encouraging students to use the school library 64%
6. Making books available for students to take home during the school year 61%

scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport