

“I want to provide more opportunities for my students to have education experiences outside the classroom.” • “I am a life-long learner and hope to inspire that attitude in my students.” • “I teach each child as an individual first, then as part of the group.” • “Each classroom needs the necessary technology to teach our students for tomorrow.” • “Strong communication between school leaders, teachers, students and parents is essential.” • “I am constantly working to become a better teacher and increase my knowledge base.” • “I want my students to be successful, to be able to think independently and to make choices that will help them be productive citizens.” • “Students thrive when their home environment values education and success.” • “I am not

# PRIMARY SOURCES: 2012

## AMERICA'S TEACHERS ON THE TEACHING PROFESSION

*A Project of Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader and supporter.” • “We all need to take

responsibility for the education of our children.” • “My students make me want to be a better teacher.” • “Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.” • “Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.” • “We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.” • “I have always been a believer that in a thriving and fulfilling environment, all students can achieve.” • “Students need to be in a safe environment that provides instruction that best suits their learning styles and educational needs.” • “Our public education system is only as good as its partnership with families.” • “I have the privilege of working with an entire staff of professionals with the goal of educating students.” • “I teach because I love to watch students learn about the world around them and discovering their role in it.” • “Teachers should be able to teach what they feel is best for their class.” • “We need to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.”

“I want to provide more opportunities for my students to have education experiences outside the classroom.” • “I am a life-long learner and hope to inspire that attitude in my students.” • “I teach each child as an individual first, then as part of the group.” • “Each classroom needs the necessary technology to teach our students for tomorrow.” • “Strong communication between school leaders, teachers, students and parents is essential.” • “I am constantly working to become a better teacher and increase my knowledge base.” • “I want my students to be successful, to be able to think independently and to make choices that will help them be productive citizens.” • “Students thrive when their home environment

**“Working with students brings a new environment every year, every day, every hour. There’s nothing better than watching the lightbulb go on.”**

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

values education and success.” • “I am not just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader

and supporter.” • “We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.” • “My students make me want to be a better teacher.” • “Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.” • “Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.” • “We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.” • “I have always been a believer that in a thriving and fulfilling environment, all students can achieve.” • “Students need to be in a safe environment that provides instruction that best suits their learning styles and educational needs.” • “Our public education system is only as good as its partnership with families.” • “I have the privilege of working with an entire staff of professionals with the goal of educating students.” • “I teach because I love to watch students learn about the world around them and discovering their role in it.” • “Teachers should be using the method they

# A LETTER FROM SCHOLASTIC AND THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Every day in America teachers change lives. Learning is a Kindergarten teacher unlocking the language of letters and numbers, a fourth grade teacher revealing the world of science, a middle school teacher bringing history to life, or a high school teacher who introduces students to their favorite book.

In 2009, a Scholastic and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation survey of nearly 40,000 public school teachers confirmed what we know in our hearts – teachers are the single most important in-school factor in ensuring students’ academic success. They know what works in their classrooms, what resonates with their students, and what makes them the best teachers they can be.

In this year’s *Primary Sources: America’s Teachers on the Teaching Profession*, we asked more than 10,000 teachers about their schools and classrooms, about student and teacher performance and about the ways it should be evaluated, supported and rewarded. They shared their honest, professional opinions on everything from the role of standardized tests to teacher tenure, from family involvement to job satisfaction, from digital content to salaries.

We learned that the challenges facing America’s students, teachers and schools reported in the original survey are even greater today. Many teachers report increasing numbers of students who are hungry, homeless and have behavioral issues, and many tell us that learning challenges are increasing in communities at all income levels.

In spite of these obstacles, America’s teachers are determined to help students build the critical skills they need for an increasingly complex society. They want better instructional resources to further develop their students’ skills and their own practice. They are eager for the training and feedback they need to best meet the needs of their most struggling students and to ensure all students are able to meet the new Common Core State Standards. They seek strong school leadership and a deeper level of family involvement toward the important goal of meeting the needs of all learners.

*Primary Sources 2012* delves into the everyday experience of teaching in today’s schools, and reflects the diversity of opinion and practice in the teaching profession. The data reflects responses from educators in every state and at every grade level, and from those teaching students of all income levels

and of all learning abilities. As was the case with the 2009 *Primary Sources*, the diversity and variety of views of the teachers surveyed reflects the challenge and opportunity inherent in addressing policy in America's schools.

In this survey, teachers told us:

- **Raising Student Achievement Requires the Work Of Many** – Teachers agree that their primary goal is helping all students learn and achieve, but a hardworking, committed teacher cannot do it alone.
  - Other factors that teachers identify as essential to raising student achievement include: ***family involvement, quality curriculum, and a community of educators and school leaders*** committed to the success of all students.
- **Teaching and Learning Are Too Complex to Be Measured by One Test** –
  - Teachers are clear in their call for ***multiple measures of student achievement***, and they say that standardized tests do not accurately reflect their students' growth. In fact, we were surprised to learn that only 45% of teachers say their students take such tests seriously.
  - They also call for ***more frequent evaluation*** of their own practice from a variety of sources, including in-class observation, assessment of student work, and performance reviews from principals, peers and even students.
  - Teachers are open to ***tenure reform***, including regular reevaluation of tenured teachers and requiring more years of experience before tenure is granted. On average, teachers say that tenure should be granted after 5.4 years of teaching, more than the typical two to three years in most states today.
- **Challenges Facing America's Schools Are Significant and Growing** – Teachers are concerned about their students' academic preparedness. They tell us that, on average, ***only 63% of their students could leave high school prepared to succeed in college***. When we asked veteran teachers to identify what is changing in their classrooms, they told us:
  - Academic challenges are growing. Veteran teachers see ***more students struggling with reading and math*** today than they did when they began teaching in their current schools.
  - Populations of students who require special in-school services are growing as well. Veteran teachers report ***increasing numbers of students living in poverty, students who are hungry and homeless, and students who have behavioral issues***.
- **School and Community Supports Are Essential to Keeping Good Teachers in the Classroom**
  - When asked to identify the factors that most impact teacher retention, teachers agree that monetary rewards like ***higher salaries or merit pay are less important than other factors*** – though some of these factors require additional funding – including strong school leaders, family involvement, high-quality curriculum and resources, and in-school support personnel.

Without question, *Primary Sources 2012* reflects teachers' deep commitment to their students' futures and their own practice. Anyone who has ever been or ever known a teacher understands that, for many, teaching is more than a career—it is a calling. This data and the accompanying quotes from teachers reflect the passion and dedication they have to their students and to their profession, and underscore the need to support them with quality resources and professional respect. We are proud to share the *2012 Primary Sources* report with you.

*Primary Sources* is a part of an ongoing dialogue with America's teachers. We welcome your thoughts and opinions on the report at [www.scholastic.com/primarysources](http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources).

Sincerely,



**Margery Mayer**

*President, Scholastic Education  
Scholastic Inc.*



**Vicki L. Phillips**

*Director of Education, College Ready  
United States Program  
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REQUIRES THE WORK OF MANY .....9**

Family Involvement, High Expectations, and Engaged School Leaders Are Essential to Raising Achievement.....	9
Teachers Go Above & Beyond to Support Students.....	13
More Challenging Standards Are Coming, and Teachers Need Strong Resources & Professional Development to Prepare for Them .....	18
Teachers Are Realistic About Class Size—and Its Impact on Students .....	20

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE TOO COMPLEX TO BE MEASURED BY ANY ONE TEST .....25**

### **MEASURING STUDENT PERFORMANCE:**

Classroom Performance Is Named as the Most Important Measure of Student Achievement .....	26
Teachers See Some Value in Standardized Tests, but Are Wary of Using Them as the Sole Indicator of Student Achievement .....	28
Teachers Use Data in Multiple Ways to Advance Student Growth .....	30

### **MEASURING TEACHER PERFORMANCE:**

Teachers Want to Be Evaluated by Multiple Measures .....	32
Teachers Want More Frequent Evaluation of Their Practice.....	34
Teachers Say Tenure Should Be Granted After More Years Than Current Practice .....	38

## **CHALLENGES FACING STUDENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT AND GROWING .....43**

Veteran Teachers Report Increased Social and Academic Challenges .....	43
Challenges Extend Beyond Academics.....	48
Teachers Need Improved Instructional Resources and Better Training to Reach Every Student .....	50

## **SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO KEEPING GOOD TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM .....57**

Engaged School Leaders, Family Involvement, and High-Quality Curriculum Are Essential to Retaining Good Teachers.....	57
Resources and Supports Are Significantly More Important to Teachers Than Higher Salaries.....	63
Despite the Many Challenges Facing America's Teachers, the Majority Are Satisfied in Their Jobs.....	64

# OBJECTIVES

The goal of *Primary Sources 2012* is to place teachers' voices at the center of the conversation on education reform by sharing their thoughts and opinions with the public, the media, and education leaders.

The report seeks to

- Identify the supports and tools that directly impact student achievement and teacher retention.
- Identify the way teachers benchmark their success – and that of their students.
- Explore teacher views on teaching – where the practice of teaching stands today and how it should evolve to suit the changing needs of students and teachers.
- Identify the tools and resources necessary to attract and retain good teachers.

# METHODOLOGY

## National Survey

This national survey, conducted by Harrison Group, used an email-to-online survey method. The list of teachers was sourced from Market Data Retrieval's (MDR) database of public school teachers. The survey was conducted from June 28 to July 13, 2011 among 10,212 preK–12 public school classroom teachers.<sup>1</sup>

The sponsors of the research were not revealed to respondents. Respondents were incented to participate with a gift certificate to an online education store, which was revealed to be the Scholastic Teacher Store Online on after teachers had completed the survey.

Figures were weighted (also referred to as “sample balanced”) to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. The dimensions included in the sample balancing plan include teacher gender, years of teaching experience, grade(s) taught, and urbanicity, all within each of the nine census divisions.

Throughout this report, we display data on teachers who teach students in each of the three most common groupings:

- Teachers who teach Grade(s) preK–5 are often referred to as “elementary school” teachers.
- Teachers who teach Grade(s) 6–8 are often referred to as “middle school” teachers.
- Teachers who teach Grade(s) 9–12 are often referred to as “high school” teachers.

Some teachers may teach grades that cross the three subgroups cited above. Since these instances are fairly uncommon, and because there is ample size in each of the subgroups, we allow teachers to appear in more than one of these groupings. This allows each subgroup to be truly reflective of the teachers who teach students in those grades. No more than 15% of any subgroup according to grade(s) taught appears in more than one subgroup.

In the survey instrument, certain terms were defined to ensure that teachers were responding with a clear and consistent understanding of the topic. These included:

- “By academic achievement we mean your students’ preparedness for the next level of education.”
- “By student performance data we mean things such as performance on class assignments, class participation, and performance on standardized tests, etc.”

<sup>1</sup> Public school teachers who teach full-time in the classroom in Grades preK – 12, excluding those who teach physical education exclusively.



## Qualitative Teacher Collaboration

During the questionnaire design phase, the survey instrument was “pre-tested” in a qualitative fashion among a group of teachers in Waterbury, Connecticut, as well as several individual teachers across the nation. This feedback ensured that our question and response language matched its intended purpose.

The quotes that appear throughout this report were captured in one of two ways:

- Teachers who participated in the survey had the opportunity to weigh in on one of five open-ended questions regarding various educational issues. They typed their thoughts directly into the online survey.
- Teachers who participated in the pre-test phase, and those who were asked to share their thoughts on early study results spoke to researchers from Harrison Group and Scholastic, who, in turn, documented the teachers’ thoughts verbatim.

## Data Presentation

Data are presented throughout this report in charts and tables. Within tables, we indicate statistical significance at the 95% confidence level across subgroups of teachers. Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage. We only indicate statistical significance when there is a five or more point difference between two numbers.

Additionally, when data results are presented in charts or tables, we show the full question text and scale (where applicable) underneath the graphic, the first time a question result is presented. In subsequent presentation of data findings for the same question, we do not show the question text. All results from each measure in the survey are shown, along with full question and response text, in Appendix A. We show results among total teachers, grade(s) taught, and community income in this appendix.

Last, whenever a question was asked among a subgroup of teachers, we indicate this on a chart or table. The exception to this is on two questions that used a “split-sample” approach. These questions include:

- Impact efforts would have on improving student academic achievement
- Importance of factors in retaining good teachers

*NOTE: In some cases, percentages may not sum to 100%, due to rounding and small no-answer rates.*

“I want to provide more opportunities for my students to have education experiences outside the classroom.” • “I am a life-long learner and hope to inspire that attitude in my students.” • “I teach each child as an individual first, then as part of the group.” • “Each classroom needs the necessary technology to teach our students for tomorrow.” • “Strong communication between school leaders, teachers, students and parents is essential.” • “I am constantly working to become a better teacher and increase my knowledge base.” • “I want my students to be successful, to be able to think independently and to make choices that will help them be productive citizens.” • “Students thrive when their home environment

**“The education of a child involves three major components: teacher, student, and parents.”**

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, FLORIDA

values education and success.” • “I am not just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader

and supporter.” • “We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.” • “My students make me want to be a better teacher.” • “Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.” • “Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.” • “We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.” • “I have always been a believer that in a thriving and fulfilling environment, all students can achieve.” • “Students need to be in a safe environment that provides instruction that best suits their learning styles and educational needs.” • “Our public education system is only as good as its partnership with families.” • “I have the privilege of working with an entire staff of professionals with the goal of educating students.” • “I teach because I love to watch students learn about the world around them and discovering their role in it.” • “Teachers should be able to teach using the method they feel is best for their class.” • “We need more alternative assessments to accurately

# RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT REQUIRES THE WORK OF MANY

Teachers know they are a critical factor in student achievement. Nearly all teachers (99%) say that “effective and engaged” teachers are absolutely essential or very important to ensuring student academic achievement<sup>2</sup>—few other measures in the history of *Primary Sources* are rated higher. But even the best teachers are not enough to ensure success of all students; a combination of quality resources, committed school leaders, and involved family members is necessary to ensuring student success.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT, HIGH EXPECTATIONS, AND ENGAGED SCHOOL LEADERS ARE ESSENTIAL TO RAISING ACHIEVEMENT**

Teachers are aware of the need for supportive, positive role models in students’ lives. Educators across all subgroups identify family involvement as the most critical factor of student success, followed closely by high expectations for all students. As one New York high school teacher put it, student achievement will rise when “the whole community has high expectations for students, and encourages them to meet them.”

In conversation, teachers say that one of the most important ways they can support their students is to set the bar high and keep it high for each and every student—71% of teachers say “high expectations for all students” make a very strong impact on student achievement. An additional 25% say it makes a strong impact.

Other factors impacting student achievement include:

- A robust instructional foundation that ensures students have high-quality, engaging learning experiences through the presence of high-quality curriculum, 21st century learning experiences, and access to technology.
- Ensuring teachers have the resources and supports they need to maximize student success, like supportive leadership, professional development, resources to differentiate instruction, etc.

“Students who are motivated become involved in their own education and become life-long learners.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Working with students means experiencing a challenging new environment every year, every day, every hour.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Consistent family involvement at school will improve student achievement.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

<sup>2</sup> *Primary Sources* 2009, page 50

“Having the resources to effectively teach and empower all students is the greatest gift a teacher can receive.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I need technology integrated into project based learning in a classroom setting that is conducive to learning for a variety of student populations.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

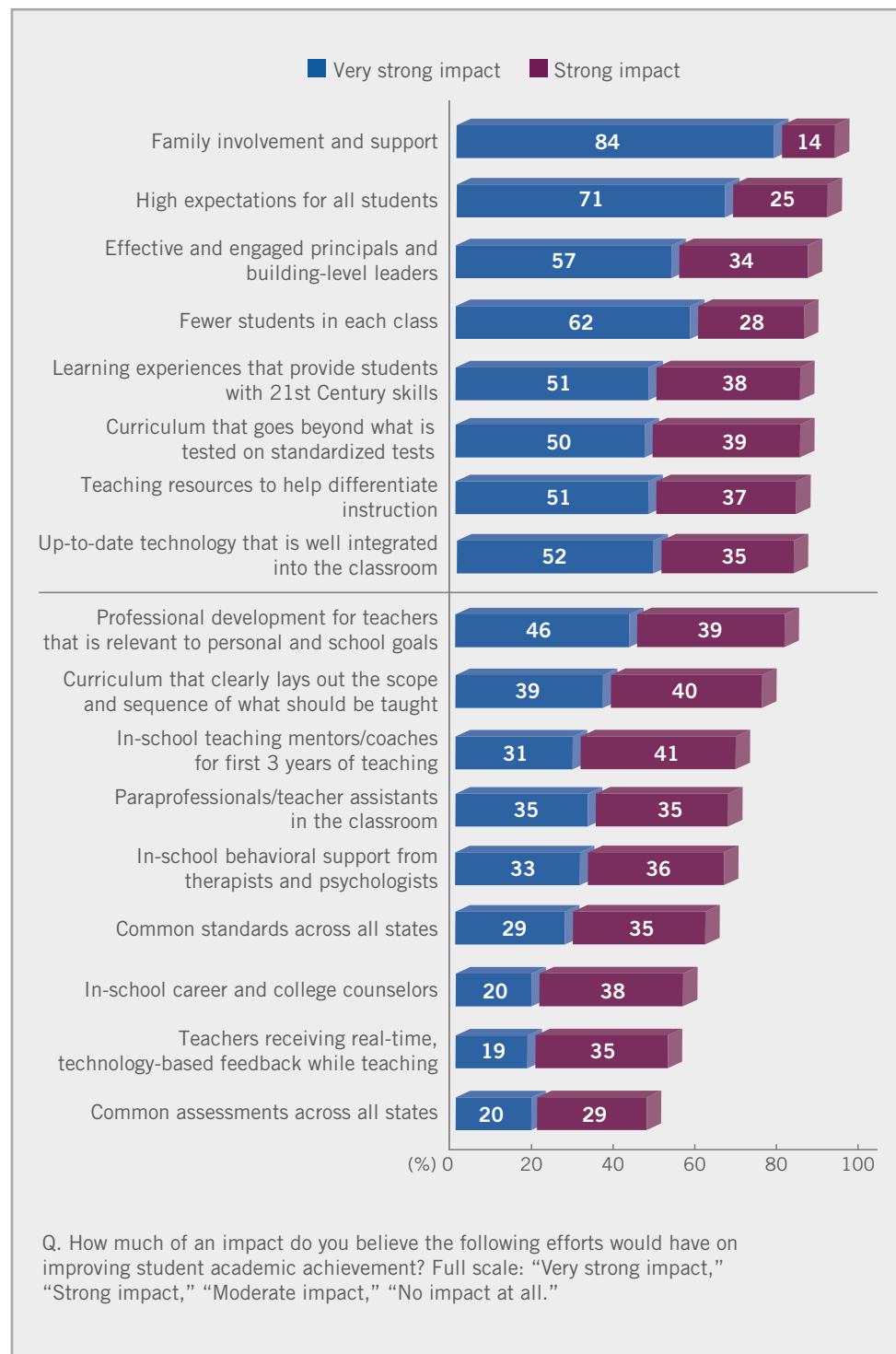
“To improve student achievement, I need curriculum that is research based and allows for differentiated instruction, and enough resources to help individual students.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Schools do not have enough technology. My students need to be comfortable with technology to prepare for college and life. This is an equity issue—especially in areas with high poverty.”

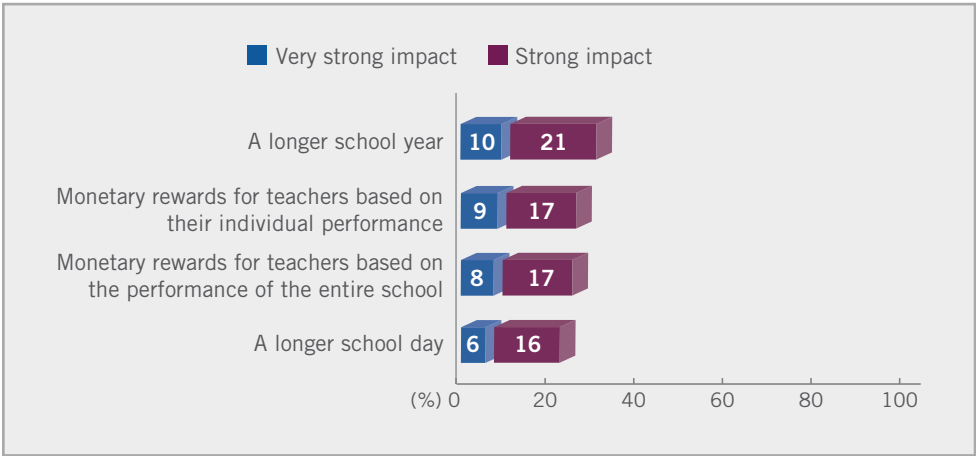
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## Teacher's Views on the Impact That Various Efforts Would Have on Improving Academic Achievement



Teacher views on “more time in school” (either by way of a longer school year or a longer school day) and “monetary rewards” (based on individual teacher or school performance) were also researched, but both areas are viewed as significantly less impactful than all other themes in improving student academic achievement.

**Teachers’ Views on the Impact That Various Efforts Would Have on Improving Academic Achievement**



The following factors are more important to elementary school teachers than to teachers of older students in impacting student success:

- Small class size
- Having classroom support from paraprofessionals and assistants and behavioral support from psychologists and therapists
- Having clarity and consistency in standards, curriculum, and assessments

“I teach first grade so a longer day is not a viable solution to the need for more time with students.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“It’s time for a 200-day school year.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“With the rigorous common core standards and higher class sizes, it is harder to reach all my special education, gifted, ELL, and behavior students along with my general education students. I need a longer day.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My parents are single moms, working two jobs, struggling to make ends meet. They don’t have time to come to school, but they do have time to ask their kids if they did their homework.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Most parents in my school work two jobs. Some may not speak English. We need programs to help these parents in helping their children at home as well as in school.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“If I had to choose one thing to work on to increase student achievement, it would be working with parents to educate and give them the tools to support their child’s success in school.”

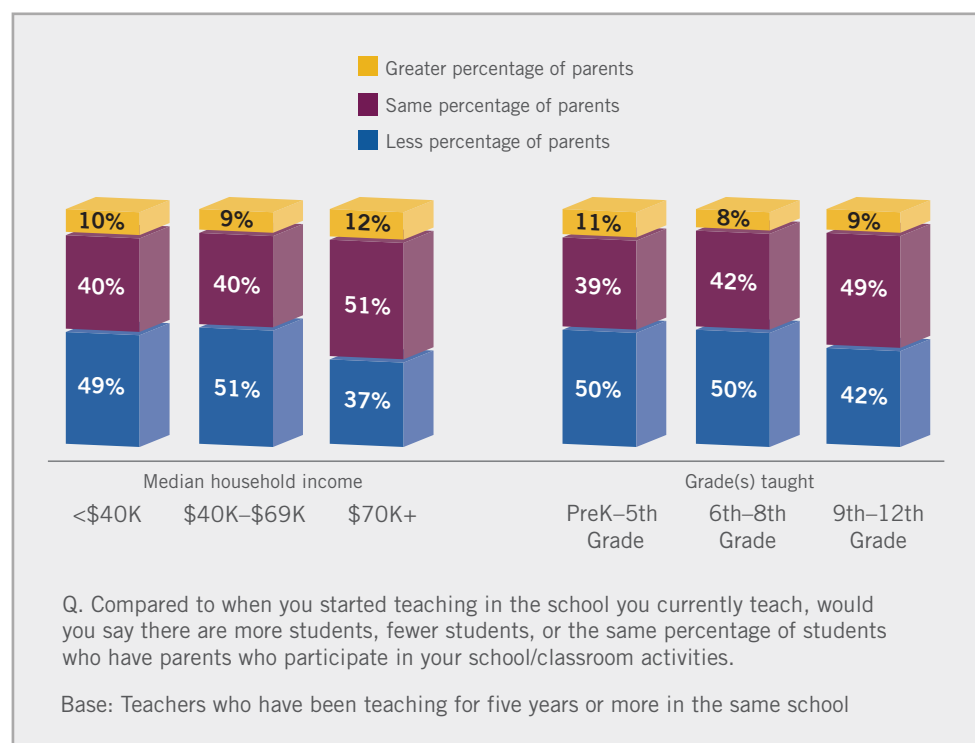
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

## Families Are Critical to Improving Student Achievement, Yet Many Teachers Report Lower Parental Participation

As noted, 84% of teachers say that family involvement and support makes a very strong impact on student achievement, with an additional 14% saying it makes a strong impact.

At the same time, 47% of veteran teachers who have been teaching for five or more years in the same school report lower parental participation in their schools and classrooms. In fact, teachers who teach in lower-income communities, middle-income communities, primary schools, and middle schools are more likely to say fewer parents participate in their schools and classrooms now than did when they began teaching in their current schools.<sup>3</sup>

### Teacher’s Views on How the Percentage of Parents Who Participate in School/Classroom Activities Has Changed, by Community Median Household Income and Grade(s) Taught



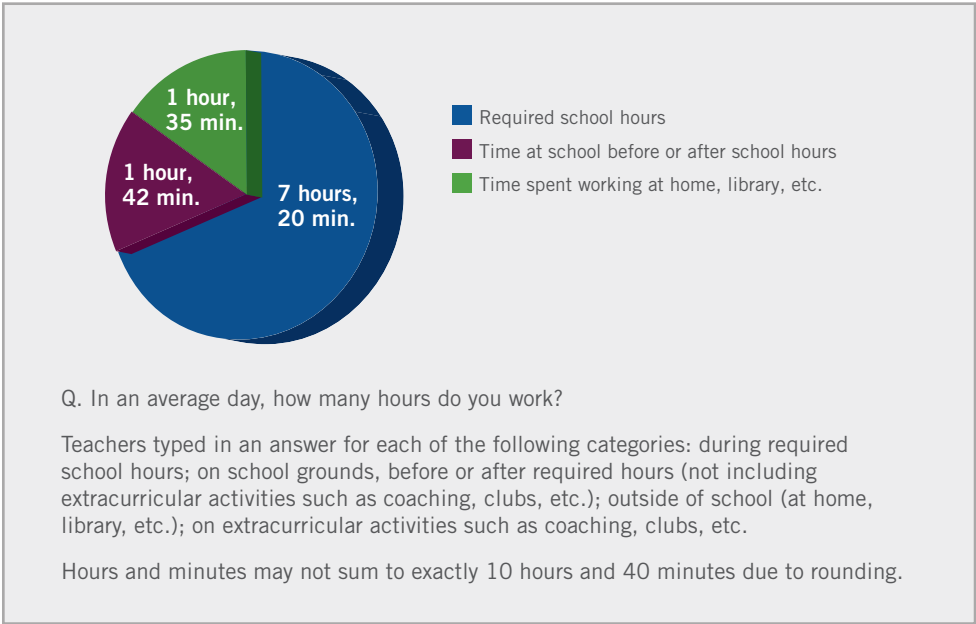
In conversation, teachers tell us that more parents are working multiple jobs and are less able to take time away from work and more students are coming from two-income families. Additionally, teachers say the strain and stress of financial difficulties (with many directly citing the current economic climate) prevents parents from being as involved. Because of these social conditions, teachers’ roles both in and out of the classroom are more complex than ever.

<sup>3</sup> Note: For the purposes of the study, low-income communities are defined by those where annual median household income is below \$40,000, middle-income communities are those where annual median household income is between \$40,000 and \$69,999, and high-income communities are those where annual median household income is above \$70,000.

TEACHERS GO ABOVE & BEYOND TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

Few would assume that teachers’ work days begin and end when the bell rings, but the degree to which teachers are investing time before and after school may be surprising: prior to taking on any extracurricular activities, teachers work an average of 10 hours and 40 minutes a day, three hours and 20 minutes beyond the average required work day in public schools nationwide.<sup>4</sup> Those teachers who take on extracurricular clubs or athletics (43% of teachers) add another 90 minutes on average to their work day. As one Kentucky teacher put it, “Our work is never done. We take grading home, stay late, answer phone calls constantly, and lay awake at night thinking about how to change things to meet our students’ needs.”

How Teachers Spend Their Work Day (10 hours, 40 minutes, on average)



For most classroom teachers, the required school day is primarily a mix of

- Instructional time,
- Student supervision and/or discipline,
- Preparation for instruction and collaboration with peers, and
- Documentation and analysis of student academic performance.

<sup>4</sup> The average required work day for teachers (time during which they are required to be on school grounds) is 7.5 hours, as reported by the teachers in the survey.

“I regularly put in 60 to 70 hours a week.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I get great satisfaction in knowing that I am making a positive difference in every student that comes into my classroom for their daily class lessons, lunch time tutoring, or extracurricular activities.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I’m at school for 9- and 10-hour days every day. My students need an additional three hours of school to get what they need, and I’m happy to provide it. But I’m burning out.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I could teach 24 hours a day and still not get everything done.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love what I do, but it is hard work. I have always been willing to work countless hours before and after school, on the weekends, and over the summer in order to provide the best learning experiences possible for my students. The truth is, this has come at great sacrifice to my family.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I spend half my day disciplining students. It’s not a worthwhile use of my time. If I had those hours back—think what my students could learn!”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Budget cuts mean my prep-time is gone, which means I can’t learn or collaborate with my colleagues. My practice suffers for that.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have too much paperwork and not enough time to spend with my students.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Non-teaching-related responsibilities—clerical work, lunch supervision, committee work—consume time I would use to adapt and differentiate lessons to meet student needs.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## How Teachers Spend Their Time During the Required School Day – in Detail

<b>Instruction</b>	<b>4 hours, 49 min.</b>
In-class instruction	4 hours, 29 min.
Providing student tutoring & extra academic help	20 min.
<b>Student supervision/discipline</b>	<b>36 min.</b>
Discipline	18 min.
Student supervision (hall monitoring/lunch/recess/etc.)	18 min.
<b>Planning, preparing, and collaborating with colleagues</b>	<b>45 min.</b>
Lesson planning/prep	30 min.
Collaborating with colleagues	15 min.
<b>Grading, documenting, analyzing student work</b>	<b>36 min.</b>
Grading student work/preparing student report cards	19 min.
Professional paperwork/filing reports/data analysis	15 min.
<b>Emailing, speaking to, or meeting with parents</b>	<b>14 min.</b>
<b>Free time/lunch/personal time</b>	<b>23 min.</b>

## To Connect Home and School, Teachers Expand Their Commitment to Students Outside of School

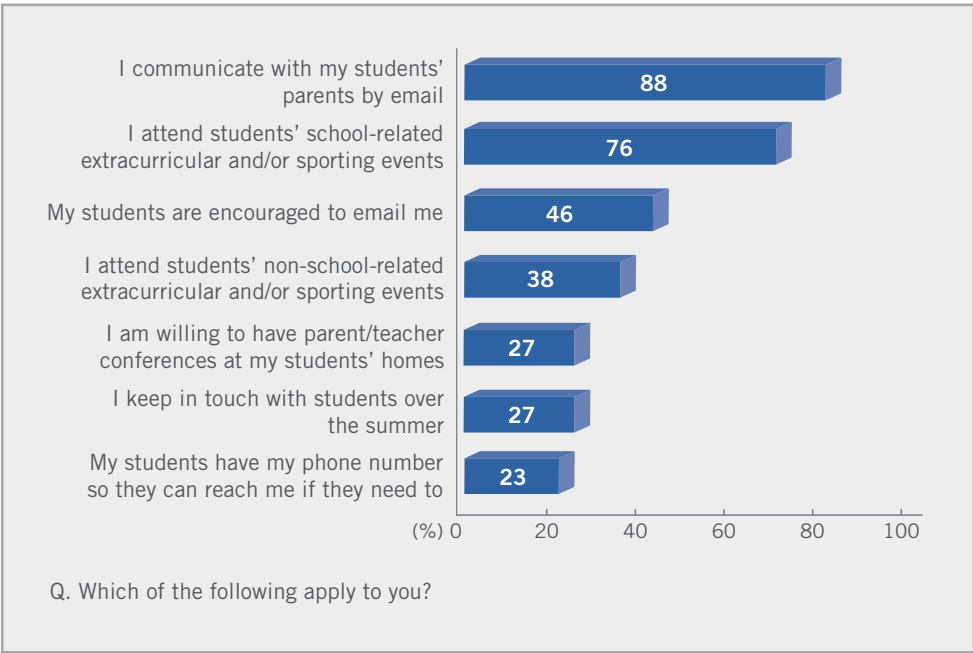
Teachers know that their commitment to their students must be accompanied by a committed effort to bringing students’ families into the learning community. Teachers show their commitment to children and families in a variety of ways, including:

- Communicating with parents and students via email or phone
- Attending students’ extracurricular events – both school-related and non-school-related
- Showing willingness to have parent/teacher conferences at students’ homes



These, and additional data, are shown here:

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Situation Applies to Them



Some of these dynamics differ across subgroups of teachers. For example, teachers in lower-income communities are less likely to communicate via email with students and parents and more likely to give students their telephone numbers and to offer to have conferences at a family's home.

Other differences are driven by student age, with teachers of younger children less likely to encourage students to email them and teachers of older students more likely to attend students' school-related events.

“Teachers need to be more flexible communicating with parents—especially with working parents. We should all be on the same side, working for the kids.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I meet with parents after school, before school, on weekends, whenever I can. I have learned that if I make time for them, they make time for me.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“To teach them in school, I have to know what their life is like out of school.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Of course my kids and their parents have my email address. It's 2011.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“They have to know I care. That's how I make sure they're in their seats every day.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I don't think I would be willing to go to parents' homes for conferences. I don't think I would be comfortable with that.”

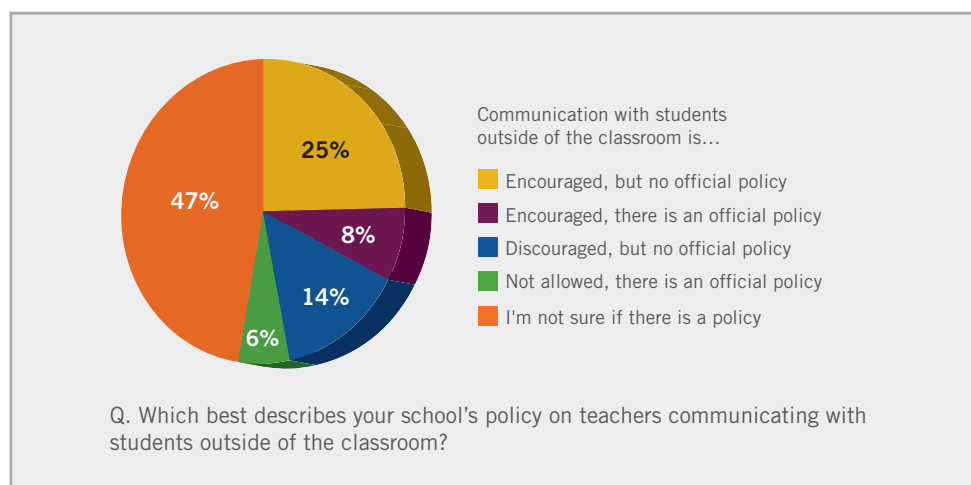
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

### Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Situation Applies to Them, by Community Median Household Income and Grade(s) Taught

	Community Income			Grades(s) Taught		
	<\$40K	\$40K–\$69K	\$70K+	PreK–5	6–8	9–12
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)
I communicate with my students' parents by email	79	<b>89a</b>	<b>95ab</b>	84	<b>90a</b>	<b>92a</b>
I attend students' school-related extracurricular and/or sporting events	75	76	76	67	<b>83a</b>	<b>85a</b>
My students are encouraged to email me	38	<b>46a</b>	<b>56ab</b>	27	<b>55a</b>	<b>69ab</b>
I attend students' non-school-related extracurricular and/or sporting events	38	39	37	<b>42c</b>	38	35
I am willing to have parent/teacher conferences at my students' homes	<b>36bc</b>	<b>27c</b>	19	<b>32bc</b>	<b>26c</b>	21
I keep in touch with students over the summer	25	26	29	27	23	<b>30b</b>
My students have my phone number so they can reach me if they need to	<b>29bc</b>	<b>24c</b>	15	22	21	<b>28ab</b>
NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.						

One third of teachers are encouraged to communicate with students outside of the classroom, one in five are discouraged or not allowed to do so, and nearly half (47%) do not know if their school has a policy or not.

### School's Policy on Teachers Communicating With Students Outside of the Classroom



The table below indicates that school policies regarding teacher/student communication outside of the classroom impact the prevalence of teacher engagement in the previously mentioned activities. When teachers are encouraged to communicate with students outside of the classroom, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that are known to strengthen the school-to-home connection and, by extension, increase academic achievement. As one Arizona teacher put it, “Getting to know our students and their families is one of the ways schools can improve students’ achievement.”

Percentage of Teachers That Say Each Situation Applies to Them, by School’s Policy on Communicating With Students Outside the Classroom

	Description of School Policy on Communicating With Students Outside of the Classroom		
	Allowed/ encouraged	Not allowed/ discouraged	Not sure
	(a)	(b)	(c)
My students have my phone number so they can reach me if they need to	33bc	16	19
My students are encouraged to email me	58bc	39	41
I communicate with my students’ parents by email	90	89	87
I attend students’ school-related extracurricular/ sporting events	82bc	75	71
I attend students’ non-school-related extracurricular/ sporting events	48bc	30	35
I keep in touch with students over the summer	37bc	17	23
I am willing to have parent/teacher conferences at my students’ homes	32bc	22	26
NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.			

“What would help me be a better teacher? I’d like to go on home visits. I’d like to access parents by email. I’d like to see what my kids’ lives are like, so I can better serve them.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“This is about access. Not all parents can check emails or easily respond to teachers’ calls about student progress. Others don’t know how to help their child. They don’t know what to ask for.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“If we want our students to be more motivated, we must get to know them and get to know what makes them tick.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I understand Common Standards, I have read them. And I like them. I need more curriculum support and training to integrate them into my lessons.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The Common Core reading and writing expectations are over the top for kindergarten. Just because students can do something in the classroom, doesn’t make it age/grade level appropriate. A lot of it has to do with maturity and readiness.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We are heading toward Common Core Standards and it is unfair to do so without a common funding measure. Everyone should have equal access to the materials and training that is needed no matter where they live.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

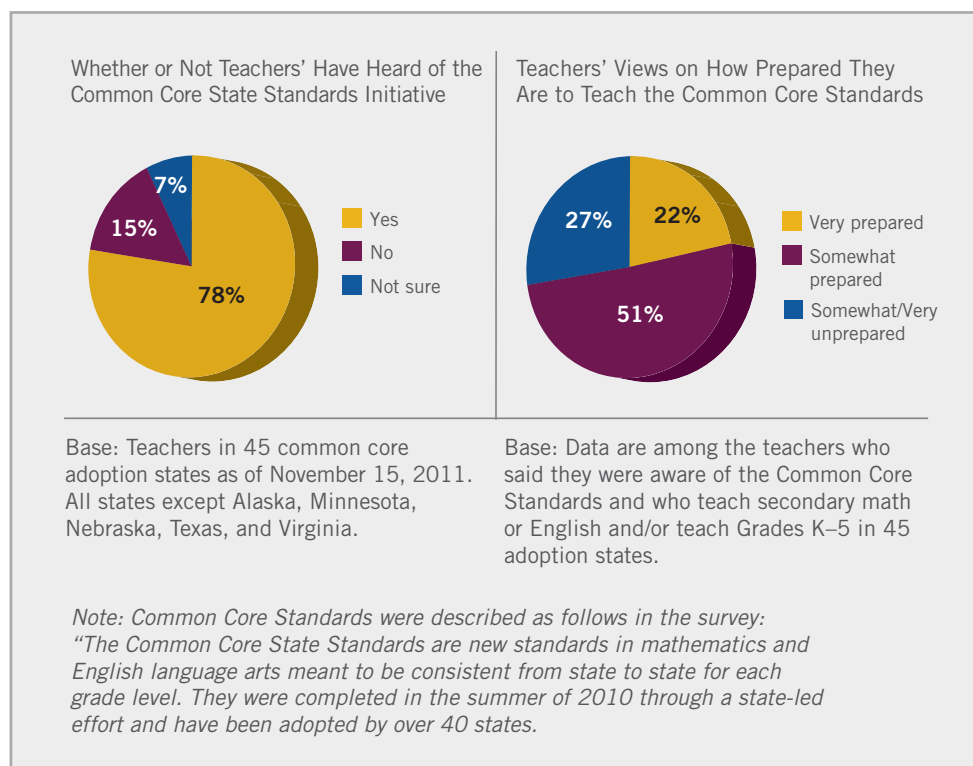
## More Challenging Standards Are Coming, and Teachers Need Strong Resources & Professional Development to Prepare for Them

Teachers clearly understand that their job is to keep students academically motivated and prepare them to meet the rigorous standards that nearly all states have adopted as part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI).<sup>5</sup>

In conversation, teachers identify a clear link between standards and consistent, equitable education for all students. As noted in the graphic on page 10, many teachers said that common standards (64%), clear curriculum (79%), and common assessments (49%) would make a significant impact on improving student academic achievement. The creation of the Common Core State Standards, adopted by 45 states at the time of the survey, elevated the discussion of consistent standards in the education sphere. *Primary Sources* asked respondents to share their knowledge of and preparation for the new standards.

While a majority (78%) of teachers are aware of the Common Core State Standards, many do not yet feel prepared to teach to these new standards.

### Teacher’s Awareness and Assessment of Their Own Preparedness to Teach to the Common Core Standards



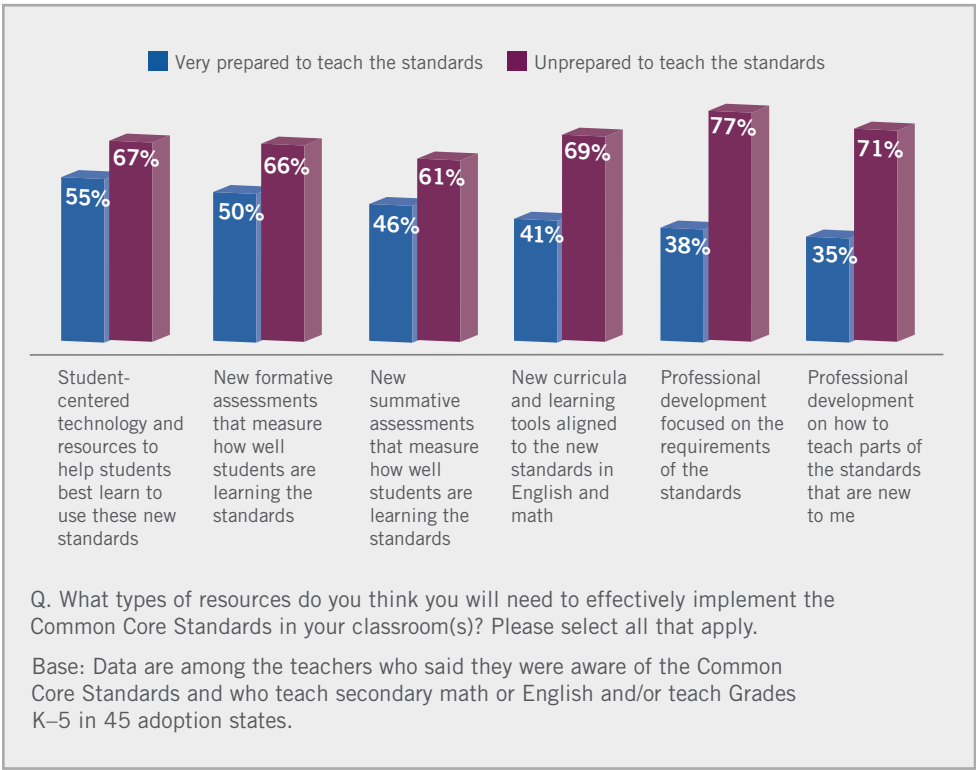
<sup>5</sup> Developed collaboratively and adopted by 46 (45 at the time of this survey) states, these math and English language arts standards “provide teachers and parents with a common understanding of what students are expected to learn [and] will provide appropriate benchmarks for all students, regardless of where they live.” [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

Teachers say they need tools and supports to effectively implement these standards in their classrooms. Specifically:

- 64% of teachers need student-centered technology and resources to help students best learn to these new standards
- 63% need professional development focused on the requirements of the standards
- 61% will need formative assessments that measure how well students are learning the standards
- 60% need professional development on how to teach parts of the standards that are new to them
- 59% need new curricula and learning tools aligned to the new standards in English and math

As might be expected, all of these needs—and especially the need for professional development—are greater among the 27% of teachers who feel unprepared to implement the standards.

**% of Teachers Who Need Each Type of Resources to Effectively Implement Common Core Standards, by Those Who Feel Very Prepared (blue) and Those Who Feel Unprepared (purple)**



“I’m ready for common standards, but I need adequate supplies and technology if I’m going to make them work for my students.  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Let’s adopt the Common Core and stick with it for at least 10 years. How can we see progress if we keep changing our plans?”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I don’t like the Common Core. Teachers need the freedom to teach children individually to build critical thinking skills, creative problem-solving skills, and passionate interests.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Smaller class size would allow me to more effectively differentiate instruction to meet individual student needs designed to improve student achievement.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“Class size is very important. Students benefit from immediate feedback from their teacher, and teachers can take time to reteach the things that kids miss.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“Huge class sizes are a challenge because it makes it hard to focus on individual students who are struggling or who are ready to go on to the next level.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Students can learn so much more when they are given more individualized instruction. My small groups are getting larger as class size grows.”

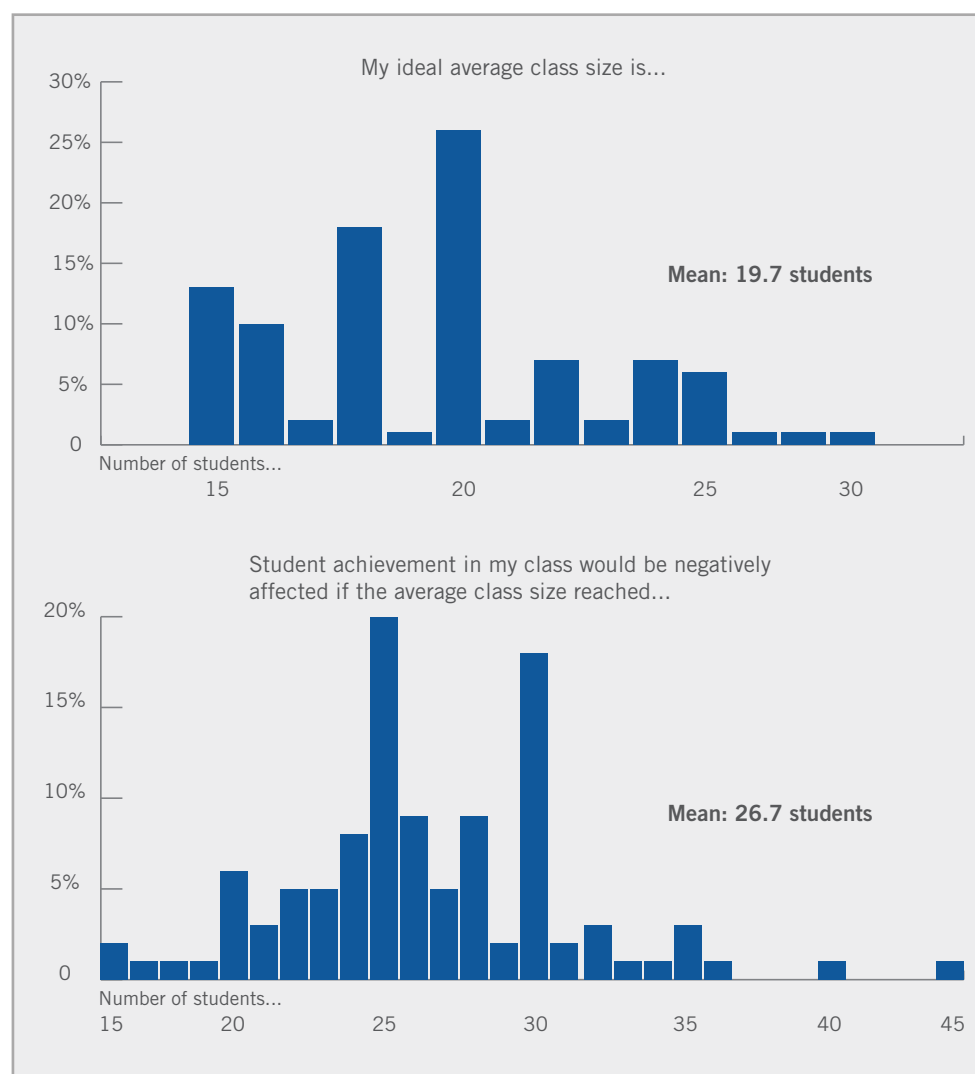
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TEACHER

## TEACHERS ARE REALISTIC ABOUT CLASS SIZE—AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENTS

As noted in the chart on page 10, 62% of teachers say that having fewer students in a class can have a “very strong” impact on improving student achievement. An additional 28% say this would have a “strong” impact, but teachers are realistic about critical issues that make smaller class sizes a challenge in public schools.

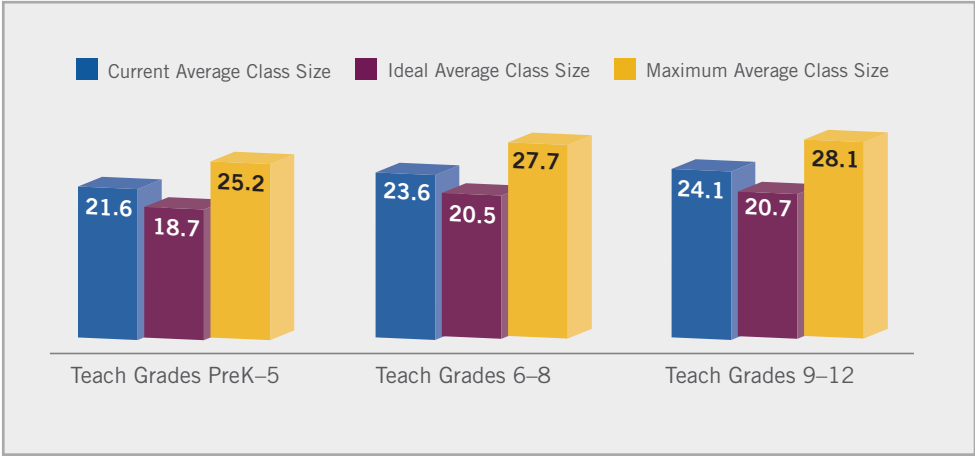
On average, teachers have 23 students in their classes and say that, ideally, they would have 20. When asked about the point at which student achievement would be negatively impacted, however, on average, teachers say 27 students is the tipping point. For purposes of this section, we will refer to this as “maximum class size.”

### Teachers’ Opinions on Class Size



All of these data, actual class size, ideal class size, and maximum class size, vary by grade level:

Actual, Ideal, and Maximum Class Size



“I can teach larger numbers of students. But which class would you prefer to have your kid in?”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Small class size would be the most efficient way to increase time with students, especially individual and small group time.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We know that differentiation makes the difference. But how am I supposed to differentiate to 30 different students in less than one hour a day?”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My students come to me eager to learn. I have always required them to push that extra mile, and I have received it from most of them, but my class has never been this large, and my resources have never been this limited.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Reducing class size and providing emotional and behavior support for students would greatly improve student achievement.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

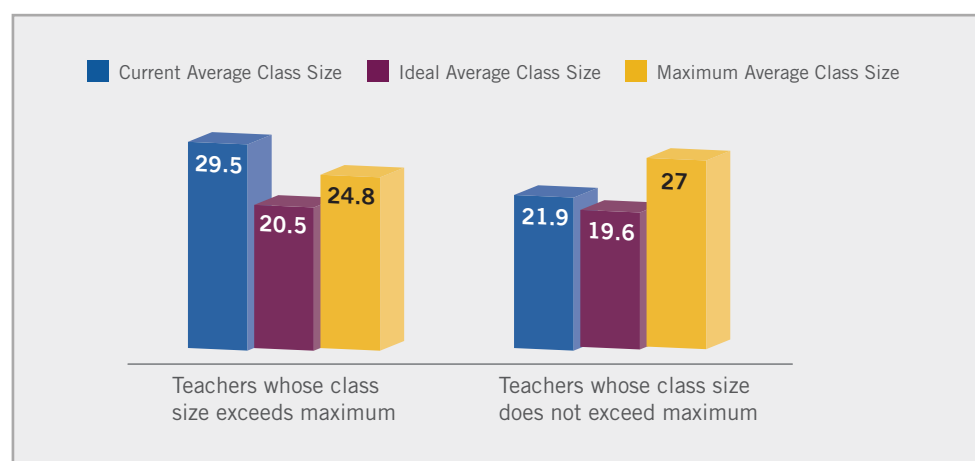
“Larger classes are by nature more impersonal; you just can't keep up with everyone.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

### Teachers Whose Class Size Exceeds the Maximum Are More Likely to Require Additional Resources

The average class size among teachers whose class size exceeds the maximum is nearly 30 students—35% larger than the average class size of those teachers with classes that do not exceed the maximum number of students. Interestingly, both groups of teachers have essentially the same views on the “ideal” class size, saying it is approximately 20 students. Teachers whose class size exceeds the maximum identify a slightly smaller class size as the point at which student achievement is negatively impacted: 25 versus 27 students.

#### Actual, Ideal, and Maximum Class Size (i.e., the Point at Which Student Achievement Would Be Negatively Impacted), by Views on Class Size



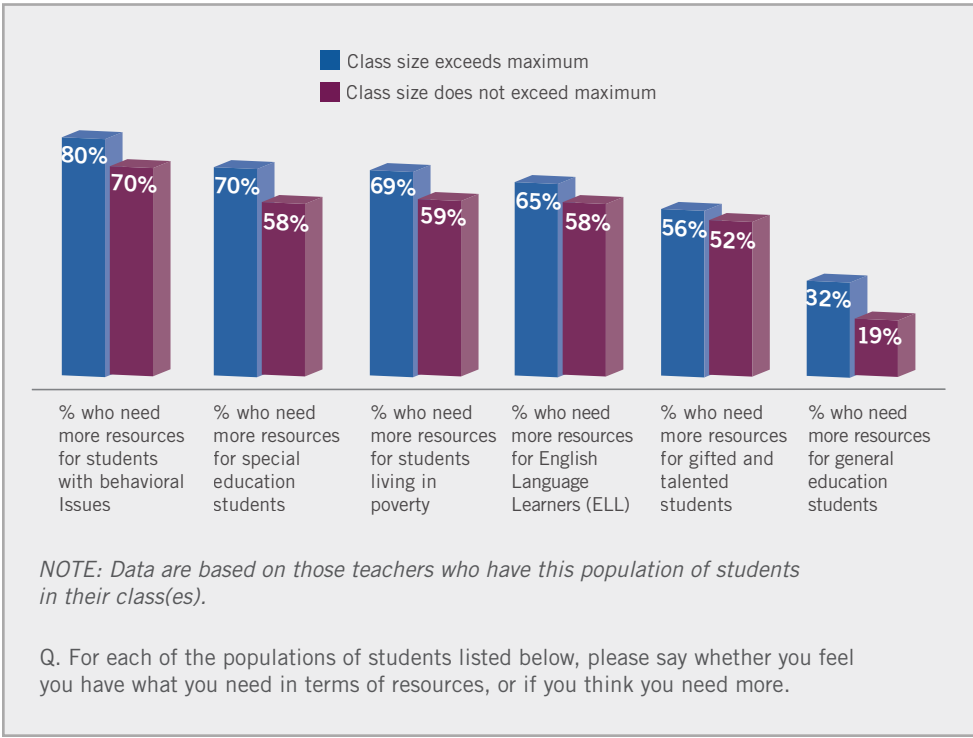
As might be expected, teachers whose class size exceeds the maximum are more likely to teach in urban districts (34% vs. 24% of teachers whose class size does not exceed the maximum) and are more likely to teach in large schools of 1,000 students or more (31% vs. 23%).



The presence of different student populations (such as special education, gifted and talented students, students with behavioral issues, etc.) varies very little according to teachers' views on their class size, but in conversation, teachers tell us that larger class sizes make it difficult to address the individual needs of each student – there simply isn't enough time in the school day. This increases teacher's needs for (among other things) tangible resources in the classroom, particularly for students who:

- Have behavioral issues,
- Have special education needs,
- Live in poverty,
- Are gifted and talented students, and
- Are considered general education students.

Percentage of Teachers Who Need More Resources for Each Student Population, by Views on Class Size



“It is hard to orchestrate and implement creative lessons and collaborative learning when I have kids literally sitting on top of shelves and cabinets with desks within 6 inches of my own.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Twenty-eight students at the early elementary level is too much, and their achievement shows it. They need and deserve more one-on-one time.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have students reading from second-grade to eighth-grade level. I have major behavior problems and special education, gifted, and regular education all in one class. I love it, but it does present a challenge.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I want to provide more opportunities for my students to have education experiences outside the classroom.” • “I am a life-long learner and hope to inspire that attitude in my students.” • “I teach each child as an individual first, then as part of the group.” • “Each classroom needs the necessary technology to teach our students for tomorrow.” • “Strong communication between school leaders, teachers, students and parents is essential.” • “I am constantly working to become a better teacher and increase my knowledge base.” • “I want my students to be successful, to be able to think independently and to make choices that will help them be productive citizens.” • “Students thrive when their home environment

**“Give them standardized tests, but not all the time. Their lives shouldn’t depend on it, and neither should ours.”**

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, GEORGIA

values education and success.” • “I am not just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader

and supporter.” • “We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.” • “My students make me want to be a better teacher.” • “Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.” • “Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.” • “We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.” • “I have always been a believer that in a thriving and fulfilling environment, all students can achieve.” • “Students need to be in a safe environment that provides instruction that best suits their learning styles and educational needs.” • “Our public education system is only as good as its partnership with families.” • “I have the privilege of working with an entire staff of professionals with the goal of educating students.” • “I teach because I love to watch students learn about the world around them and discovering their role in it.” • “Teachers should be able to teach using the method they feel is best for their class.” • “We need more alternative

# TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE TOO COMPLEX TO BE MEASURED BY ANY ONE TEST

Teachers are keenly aware of their role in preparing students for a global workforce. In conversation, they speak the complexities of this work, the challenges inherent in raising achievement and the nuanced ways that they must reach all students. Every student's learning style is different and because of that, every teacher's practice is unique. Because of this, teachers say standardized tests alone cannot provide a complete understanding of either student achievement or teacher performance. They are clear in their call for multiple, more frequent measures of teaching and learning.

## MEASURING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Clear, accurate, ongoing measures of student performance are critical to ensure that all students are learning and growing, and that teachers are properly tailoring their instruction to individual students. While teachers value the role standards play in improving academic achievement, they are very clear that standardized tests are not the best measure of student success.

"The obsession with student performance on standardized tests is forcing me to teach only the content that will be covered on that test. That's not learning. It's cramming."

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

"In states where math and reading are the only things tested, students receive little to no instruction in social studies, science, health, etc. So much of the creativity has gone out of the profession due to testing mandates. No wonder our kids don't like school."

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

"We lose a lot of classroom time due to tests—state, national, advanced placement. We are assessing our kids to death. While they may provide good measures, it really hurts the kids who are already taking highly competitive national exams but also have to take state minimum standard tests."

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Not all students perform well on tests. I believe lab work and other hands-on assessments could be included to ascertain a more complete picture of student understanding.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Students should not be judged by where they are at any given time, but how they’ve improved from point A to point B.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Having a common curricular focus and a variety of measurements is one of the ways we could improve American schools.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

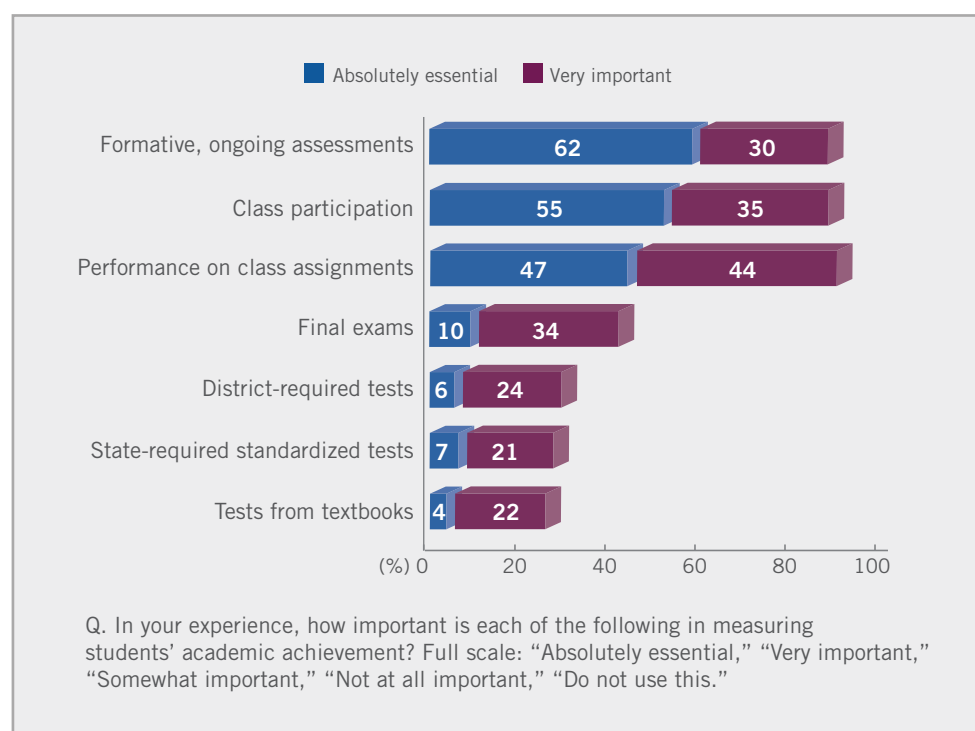
“The emphasis on state exams discourages the type of creative instruction that helps students gain important critical thinking skills.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

## Classroom Performance Is Named as the Most Important Measure of Student Achievement

Teachers overwhelmingly agree that students should be measured on the basis of classroom performance—including class assignments, formative assessments,<sup>6</sup> and class participation—more so than on the basis of formalized tests—standardized or not. As one New Mexico teacher wrote, “There needs to be less emphasis on mastering a test, and more emphasis on mastering the skills and higher-level concepts in the core subjects.”

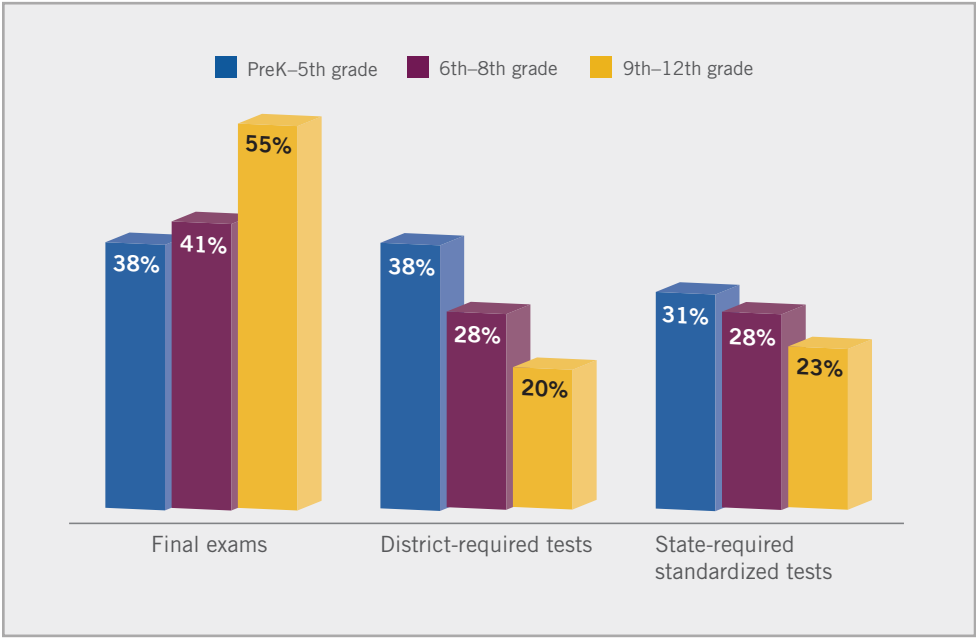
### Teachers Views on Importance of Student Performances Metrics in Measuring Student Academic Achievement



<sup>6</sup> While survey respondents were not provided with definitions of these terms, formative assessments are widely accepted to be part of day-to-day instruction, and are more fluid techniques that allow for real-time adjustments in teaching and learning. Summative assessments are given periodically (at the end of a unit, semester, or school year, for example) to determine student knowledge.

The highest ranked in the chart on page 26, do not vary significantly across teachers of different grade levels. Views on the importance of testing in measuring student achievement, however, do show variation by grade(s) taught:

**Percentage of Teachers Who Believe Each is Absolutely Essential or Very Important in Measuring Student Achievement, by Grade(s) Taught**



“I had a student reading three years below grade level this year. Now he’s reading one grade below. Shouldn’t that count for something?”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I’m with my students every day of the year. I see them on their best days and their worst. Trust me to know whether they’re growing. I want them to grow.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“It’s time for less focus on standardized tests and more on the development of creative and critical thought. The amount of time spent preparing for testing is disgraceful.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Putting so much emphasis on standardized tests has damaged education. I understand why new teachers leave. The unrealistic demands on their time, and the lack of creativity that comes with this culture of standardized testing would make anyone new walk away.”  
 —HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

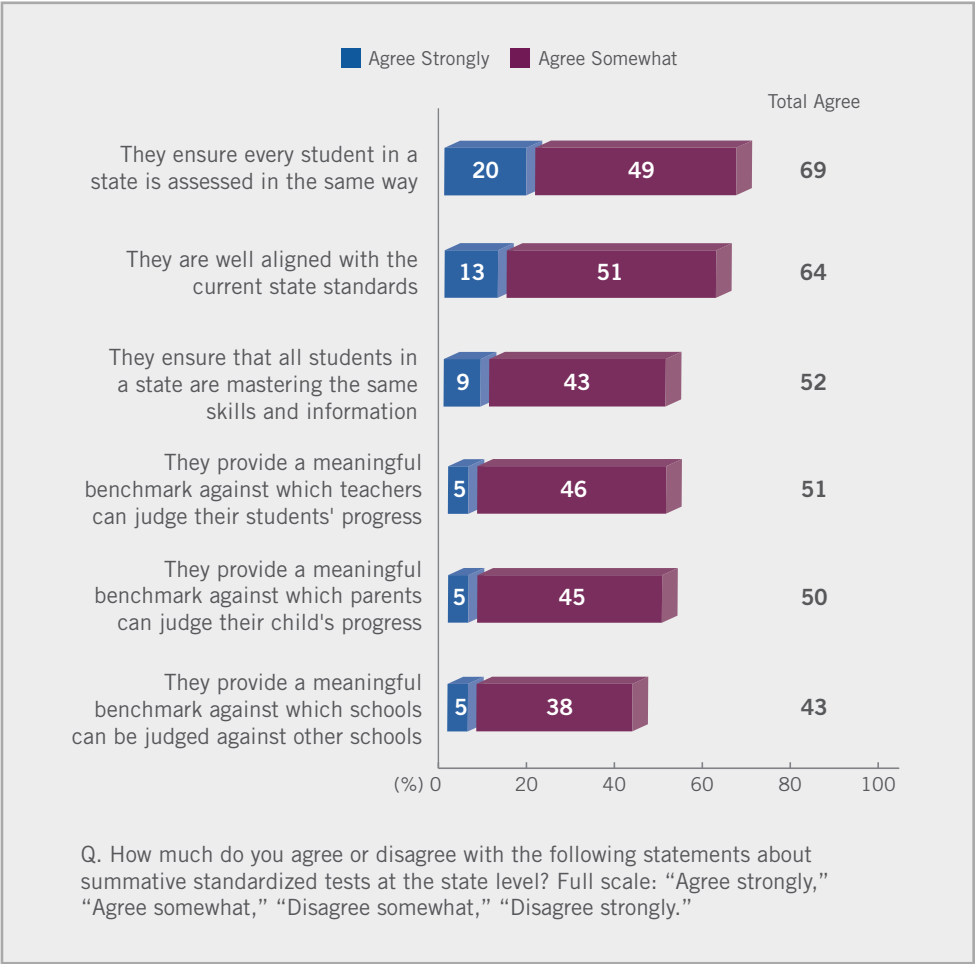
“The kids don’t care about the test. They don’t invest in it, and the enormous amount of time we spend preparing for them wastes time we could be spending on REALLY learning.”  
 —ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“These tests represent three days out of the 180 day school year. They do not show that the student who came into fourth-grade reading at a second-grade level actually gained a full year. They only show that the student is not performing at grade level.”  
 —ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

### Teachers See Some Value in Standardized Tests, but Are Wary of Using Them as the Sole Indicator of Student Achievement

When asked about the role that standardized tests play in America’s schools, many teachers see value in using the tests both to ensure equity and consistency in what students learn in school and to benchmark and compare student and school performance.

#### Teachers’ View on Summative Standardized Tests at the State Level

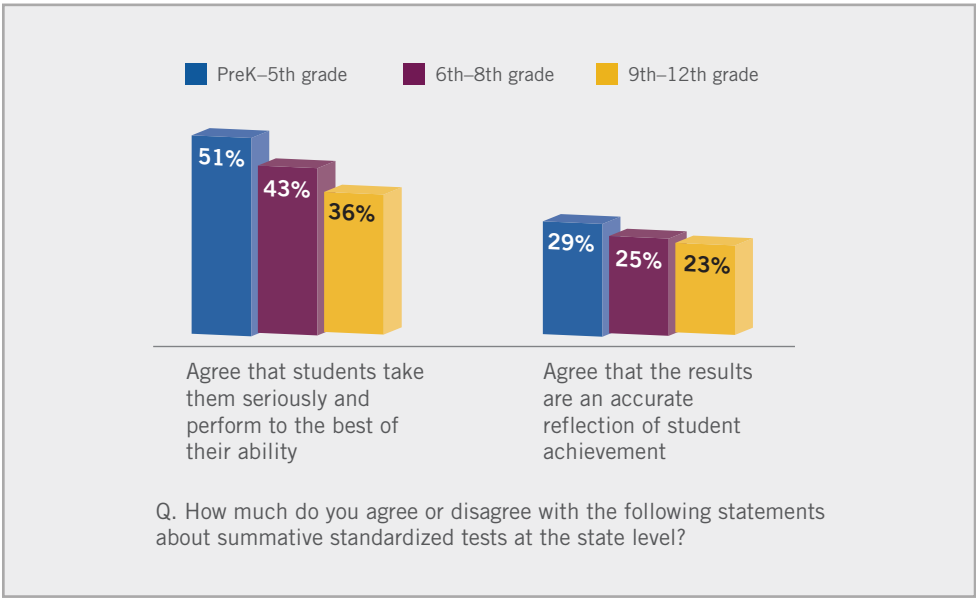


Far fewer teachers say summative standardized state tests are an accurate reflection of student achievement. In some cases, this may be because they see that not all students take the tests seriously and perform to the best of their abilities.

- Only 26% of teachers say that the results of standardized tests are an accurate reflection of student achievement.
- Only 45% say that students take them seriously and perform to the best of their ability.

These measures vary by grade(s) taught:

**Teacher’s View on Summative Standardized Tests at the State Level, by Grade(s) Taught**



At the same time, however, 60% of teachers say summative state tests determine what is taught in their classroom. This is in spite of the fact that, as previously noted, most teachers (89%) say that “curriculum that goes beyond what is tested on standardized tests” could make a very important/important impact on improving student achievement.

“The kids know that the TAKS only really ‘matters’ during their junior year. So, there is no motivation to try any other year. And in their junior year, the moment the test is over at the end of April, they completely stop working. They’re burnt out. And so are we.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love seeing the results in how my students perform on state standardized tests. Those tests show us where we’ve been and where we can be.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Many students have test anxiety and don’t perform well on standardized tests. Yet we use them to place children in class and to determine if they will do well in college. What a joke!”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love seeing my kids’ data. I know I can improve student achievement by analyzing and synthesizing that data and planning effective and engaging lessons; I just wish I had more time with it.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

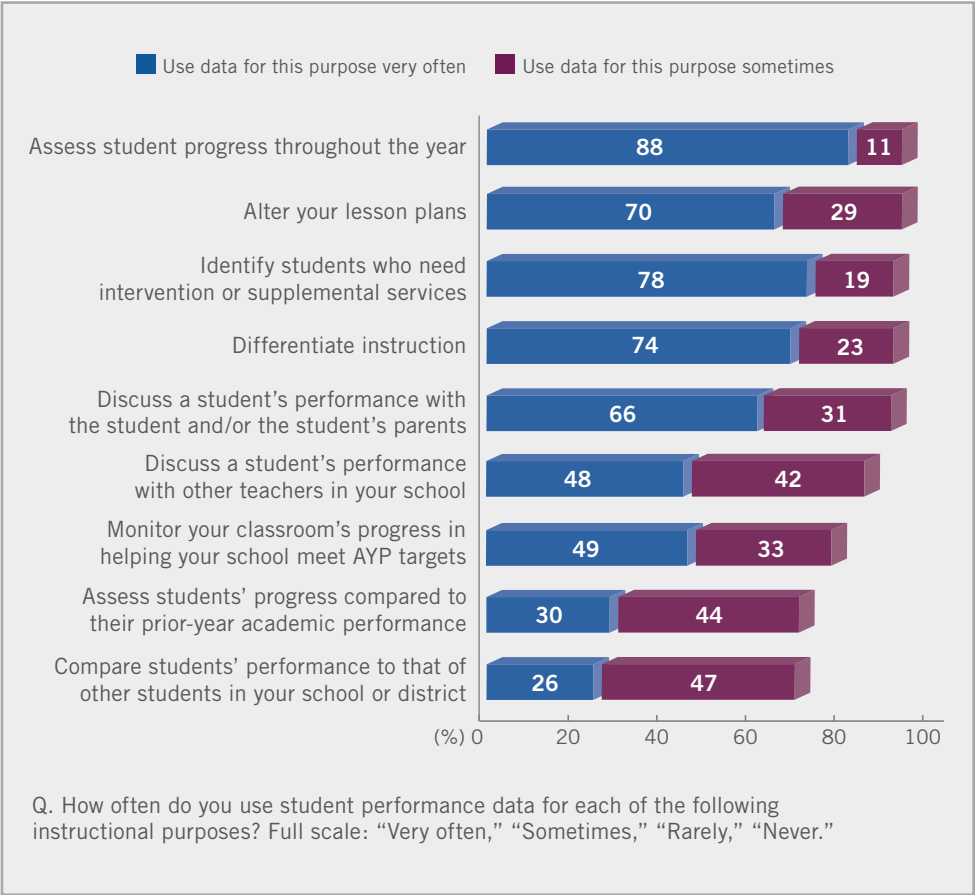
“I work with my colleagues to evaluate student data and create vibrant learning plans for students. We analyze the interventions we use regularly and work to make them better. Data helps with that.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I also spend my extra time trying to find ways to teach math in a way that will fun and educational for my students. I like breaking down the data to see where my students struggle and to try to get them to improve in those areas.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers Use Data in Multiple Ways to Advance Student Growth

Standardized tests are only one form of student performance data, however. When asked about data that are collected regularly inside the classroom, the vast majority of teachers use it to enhance their practice—assessing student progress over the course of a year in order to identify student needs, to better adjust and differentiate instructional practice, and to discuss student achievement with students and their families.

Teachers’ Use of Student Performance Data for Various Instructional Purposes





Elementary school teachers are more likely to use student performance data for instructional purposes than are middle school teachers. Middle school teachers are, in turn, more likely to use performance data than are high school teachers.

Percentage of Teachers Who Use Student Performance Data “Very Often” for Each Instructional Purpose, by Grade(s) Taught

	By Grade Taught		
	PreK–5	6–8	9–12
	(a)	(b)	(c)
Assess student progress throughout the year	94bc	85c	80
Identify students who need intervention or supplemental services	90bc	75c	60
Differentiate instruction	85bc	70c	60
Alter your lesson plans	73c	70c	65
Discuss a student’s performance with the student and/or the student’s parents	75bc	62c	54
Monitor your classroom’s progress in helping your school meet AYP targets	59bc	47c	33
Discuss a student’s performance with other teachers in your school	49c	53c	41
Assess students’ progress compared to their prior-year academic performance	34c	34c	23
Compare students’ performance to that of other students in your school or district	29c	26	22
NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.			

“Teachers need more time to be able to regularly analyze data and create lessons that are meaningful for students.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I don’t want my students to perform well on tests simply because I taught them to take the test well. I want them to do well because they understand. Because they’ve learned.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My principal comes into my classroom for fifteen minutes, once a year. How is that supposed to give him a real understanding of my performance?”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I don’t like the idea of student surveys. Kids don’t always know what good lessons look like.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think that moving to a peer evaluation system is much more beneficial to determining teacher effectiveness and quality.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## MEASURING TEACHER PERFORMANCE

It’s not enough to measure students. Teachers recognize the need for assessment and improvement for all members of a school community—including themselves. In fact, teachers are eager for more comprehensive evaluation of their work so they can continue to enhance their skills and better serve their students. As is the case with student performance measures, however, teachers are wary of student standardized data as a single indicator of their success. They prefer to be evaluated using more personal, student-focused measures, and are willing to have these data used for recurring tenure evaluation.

### Teachers Want to Be Evaluated by Multiple Measures

When asked about the measures that might be used to assess teacher performance, teachers were asked to consider review processes in three distinct categories:

- **Assessment of student and teacher content knowledge**, including student growth over the course of an academic year, student performance on class assignments, student scores on standardized tests, and teacher content-area knowledge.
- **Professional educator review**, including observation and review by school leaders and peers, as well as self-review.
- **Student and Parent Reviews**

Teachers overwhelmingly agree that student growth over the course of an academic year is the most important metric in measuring their performance; 85% of teachers say this should contribute a great deal or a moderate amount to measuring their performance, with 43% giving this a rating of a “great deal.” No other item in this question comes close to receiving this strong a rating (“Principal observation and review” follows at 29%).

Teachers’ Views on the Degree to Which Each Metric Should Contribute to Measuring Teacher Performance

	% saying this should contribute a great deal	% saying this should contribute a great deal/a moderate amount
Assessment of Student and Teacher Content Knowledge		
Student growth over the course of the academic year	43	85
Assessment of teacher’s content-area knowledge	29	75
Student performance on class assignments	16	63
Student scores on standardized tests	4	36
Professional Educator Review		
Principal observation and review	26	82
Formal self-evaluation	20	70
Teacher/peer observation and review	18	64
Department Chair/Team Leader observation and review	15	59
Client Review		
Student surveys	6	33
Parent surveys	4	32
Q. How much, if at all, do you think each of the following should contribute to measuring teacher performance? Full scale: “A great deal,” “A moderate amount,” “A slight amount,” “Not at all.”		

“I wish I were being tested on my content knowledge. I’d happily be judged on it.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The administration should hold all teachers accountable, just as teachers need to hold students accountable. I am sure that this happens at other schools, but not at my school.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have seen too many teachers evaluated by how well they get along with the principal, instead of how well they do in the classroom.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I want more evaluation. I want it “drive by.” My principal should surprise me and make sure my kids are getting everything they need. She doesn’t have time for this.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe American education would be improved by allowing teachers to make more decisions associated with their job and classroom. Teachers are not given the respect they deserve by principals and superintendents.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Performance evaluations instill personal accountability. A teacher who has been teaching 25 years may not be as effective as he/she once was so continued evaluation with consequence is important.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## Teachers Want More Frequent Evaluation of Their Practice

Teachers’ interest in ongoing professional development extends to their willingness—and even eagerness—to be observed, evaluated, and provided with feedback through an array of metrics.

The following table shows the percentage of teachers who would like each type of feedback to happen at least annually, alongside the percentage who are in schools where this *actually* occurs at least annually. It also shows the number of times, on average, that teachers believe each action should occur during the school year and the number of times, on average, each action actually occurs.

Of particular note:

- **Formalized self-evaluation:** Teachers would like this to happen with 75% more frequency than it currently does. Only six in 10 teachers teach in schools where this happens at least annually, compared with 94% of teachers who say this should happen at least annually.
- **Peer review:** Teachers would like peer review to happen more than twice as often as it currently does. Only one in three (36%) teachers teach in schools where this happens while 81% say this should happen at least annually.
- **Assessment of teacher content-area knowledge:** Teachers say an assessment of their content-area knowledge should happen with 64% more frequency than it currently does. Two in three teachers say this should happen at least annually but only one in four teach in schools where this happens.

In the following table note that teachers would like each item listed to occur more frequently than it currently occurs.

Teachers’ Views on the Ideal and Actual Use of Feedback and Review Systems

Metric	% who say this SHOULD happen at least annually	% who say this ACTUALLY happens at least annually	Avg. times per year this SHOULD happen	Avg. times per year this ACTUALLY happens
Principal observation and review	95	87	3.6	3.1
Formal self-evaluation	94	60	3.5	2
Teacher/peer observation and review	81	36	2.7	1.3
Department Chair or Team Leader observation and review	74	32	2.2	1.1
Assessment of teacher’s content-area knowledge	65	25	1.8	1.1
Q. Now thinking about these same things that might contribute to measuring teacher performance, how often do each of these happen at your school? Q. Now thinking about these same things that might contribute to measuring teacher performance, how often do you think each of these things <u>should</u> happen at your school?				
Bold indicates a notable gap between the two comparison columns.				

“We need measures of achievement that reflect the range and complexity of students’ learning needs in all subjects and at all levels, and that provide meaningful data to teaching professionals, whether or not that data is meaningful to non-teachers and politicians. And that can be administered without robbing instructional time!”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers’ salaries and job security should not be measured by test scores alone. Principal evaluations, and student and parent input are important too.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Through peer, administration, parent, and student observations, I have been commended for being a good teacher. That lets me know I am doing what I’m supposed to.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers need more time to be able to regularly analyze data so that lessons are meaningful for the students.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Just thinking about the time it takes to review student data and prepare for and deliver instruction to growing numbers of students, who all require ongoing formative assessments and differentiated instruction, leaves me breathless.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I’d like to be able to see as much data on my own work as I do on my students’.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

When asked about quantitative metrics that focus on students’ grades and test scores, teachers’ preferences for formal analysis reflect their views on the importance that each should have on gauging student achievement:

- **Formal analysis of student growth:** 80% of teachers engage in this at least annually, but nearly all teachers (97%) say they should be doing this annually.
- **Analysis of student performance on class assignments:** 75% of teachers do this at least annually, but 93% would like to do this at least annually.
- **Analysis of student scores on standardized tests:** 92% of teachers say a formalized analysis of student standardized test scores should happen at least annually and a similar percentage say that it does. Note that this is the only measure that currently occurs more often than teachers say it should.

Teachers’ Views on the Ideal and Actual Use of Feedback and Review Systems

Metric	% who say this SHOULD happen at least annually	% who say this ACTUALLY happens at least annually	Avg. times per year this SHOULD happen	Avg. times per year this ACTUALLY happens
Formalized analysis of student growth over the course of the academic year	97	80	4.9	4.0
Analysis of student performance on class assignments	93	75	10.3	8.8
Analysis of student scores on standardized tests	92	90	3.5	4.0
Bold indicates a notable gap between the two comparison columns.				

The table on page 33 shows that only about one third of teachers believe student or parent surveys should contribute to measuring teacher performance. These low numbers are likely related to the relatively limited experience teachers have with these kinds of feedback systems. Only four in 10 teachers teach in schools that administer parent surveys at least annually and only one in three are in schools that survey students at least annually.

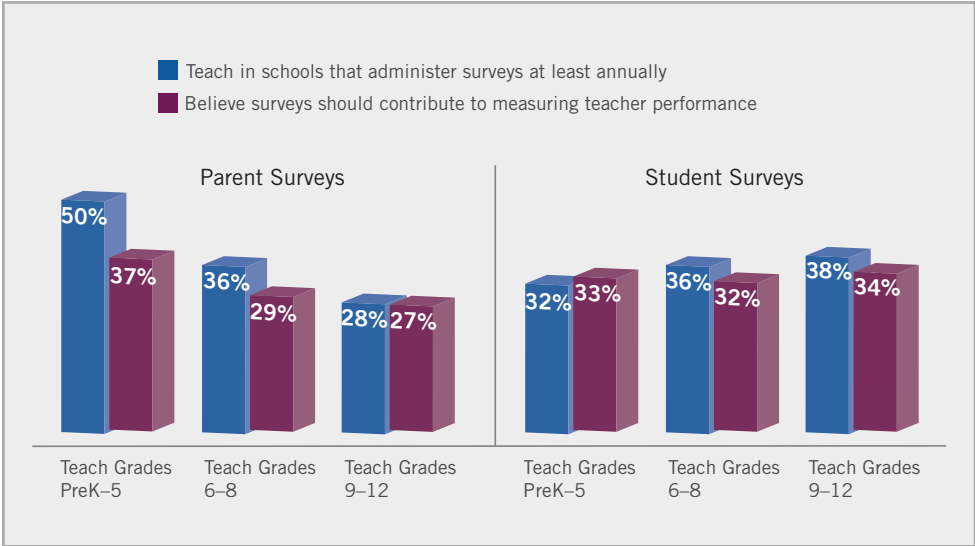
Teachers’ Views on the Ideal and Actual Use of Feedback and Review Systems

Metric	% who say this SHOULD happen at least annually	% who say this ACTUALLY happens at least annually	Avg. times per year this SHOULD happen	Avg. times per year this ACTUALLY happens
Parent Surveys	80	41	1.7	0.7
Student Surveys	78	36	1.9	0.7

Bold indicates a notable gap between the two comparison columns.

The percentages for parent surveys vary according to grade(s) taught, with elementary school teachers more likely to have experience with parent surveys and more likely to say they should contribute to teacher performance measurement a great deal or a moderate amount. Note that incidence of student surveys, and belief in the role they should play in performance measurement does not vary significantly by grade(s) taught.

Teacher’s Views and Experience With Parent and Student Surveys, by Grade(s) Taught



There is a positive relationship between teaching in a school that surveys parents and/or students and believing that these should play a role in teacher evaluation: 43% of teachers who teach in schools that survey students annually say student surveys should contribute at least moderately to teacher performance. Among teachers who do not have experience with student surveys, only 28% say they should make a contribution to teacher performance measurement.

“Our school population is transient and many families are troubled. That’s why I don’t believe parent and student surveys should be part of the evaluation process for teachers.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The students in my class who are not meeting grade-level expectations are those whose parents and families don’t prioritize education and don’t come in to the classroom. How would it make sense for them to evaluate the job I’m doing?”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Student surveys can easily become teacher popularity contests.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“We use student and parent surveys at our school, and I was skeptical to begin with. But now, I realize they’re surprisingly accurate.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Tenure should come later. Without tenure, I would be scared to say things that parents don’t want to hear, but in my district tenure comes after two years. It’s not enough. It needs to be double that.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers should be paid based on their effectiveness. This will keep good teachers in the classroom, and bad teachers out.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“One thing that would help improve American education is to really base teacher salaries and tenure on effectiveness and ability rather than standardized tests or number of years of service.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

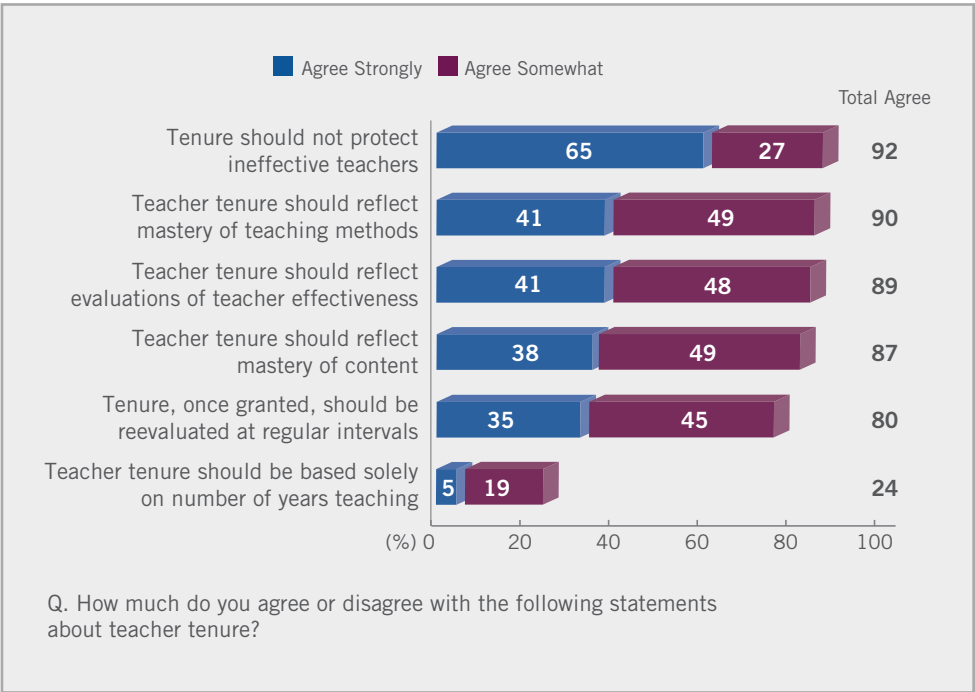
**Teachers Say Tenure Should Be Granted After More Years Than Current Practice**

Nearly nine in 10 (89%) teachers agree that tenure should reflect evaluations of teacher effectiveness, and 92% say that tenure should not protect ineffective teachers.

Additionally, since teachers believe that student growth is the most important measure by which their effectiveness can be determined, then it stands to reason that tenure should be reevaluated at various intervals in a teacher’s career, as their classrooms evolve; 80% of teachers agree that this should be the case.

Additionally:

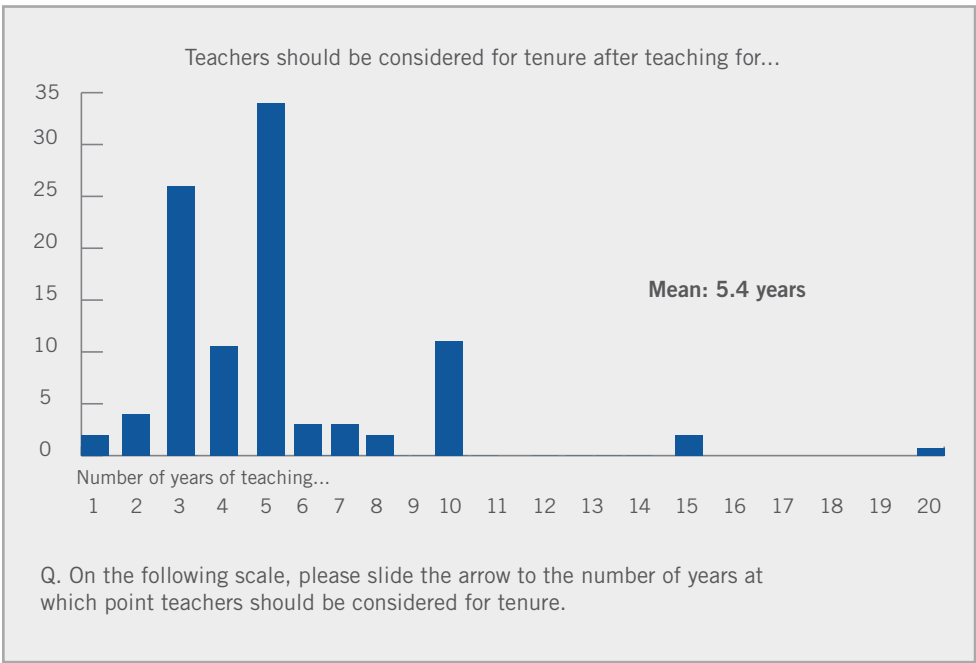
**Teacher’s View on Tenure**





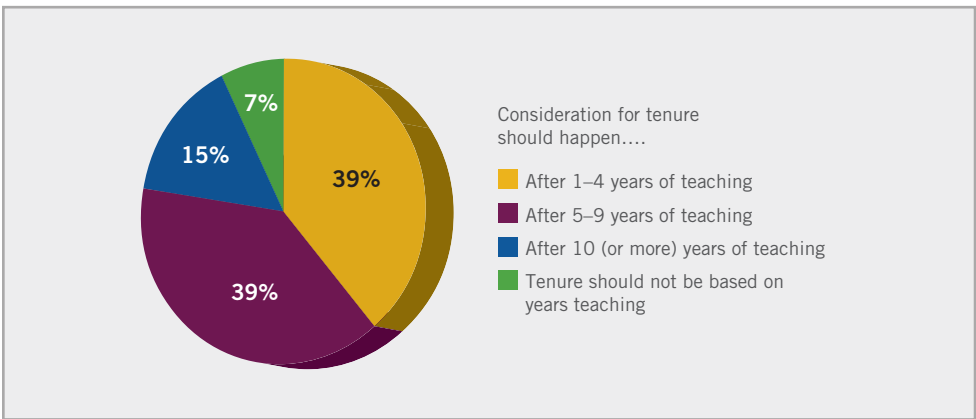
On average, teachers think that consideration for tenure should happen after 5.4 years of teaching experience.<sup>7</sup>

Teacher’s Views on When Tenure Consideration Should Happen



Note that 39% of teachers say tenure consideration should happen after five to nine years of teaching, 15% say this should happen after 10 years (or more) of teaching and 7% say tenure consideration should not be associated with years of teaching at all.

Teachers’ Views on When Tenure Consideration Should Happen



<sup>7</sup> The national average for number of years of teaching experience teachers must have before being considered for tenure is 3.1.

“I feel that experience adds to teaching quality and should be considered for tenure.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“After a teacher has been teaching for four years, they should receive tenure on the principal’s recommendation.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“For most teachers, the more years they have taught the better they are. Teaching is trial and error until you learn to do it well. But I do agree that not all teachers with tenure are effective.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think evaluations and student progress should be included in considering tenure, but years in teaching should be a major factor.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Why should I continue to work until 11 o’clock each night, and work on lesson plans and grading every weekend, when I am getting paid the same as a teacher who does no work outside of school and puts no effort into their job?”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“If teachers with many years of service are not protected, school districts would try to save money by firing them and hiring new young teachers at a cheaper price.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I would hope that by the fifth year of teaching, ineffective teachers would have been dismissed already.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Not surprisingly, belief that tenure should be awarded within the first five years of teaching is more common among new teachers and diminishes among teachers with more teaching experience. The pattern is reversed for belief that tenure decisions should be made after years five to nine. Note, however, in neither instance is the difference between new and experienced teachers dramatic. Additionally, equal percents of teachers in each “years of teaching experience” group believe that tenure should be considered after 10 years or that tenure should not be linked to years teaching at all.

Teachers’ Views on When Tenure Consideration Should Happen, by Years of Teaching Experience

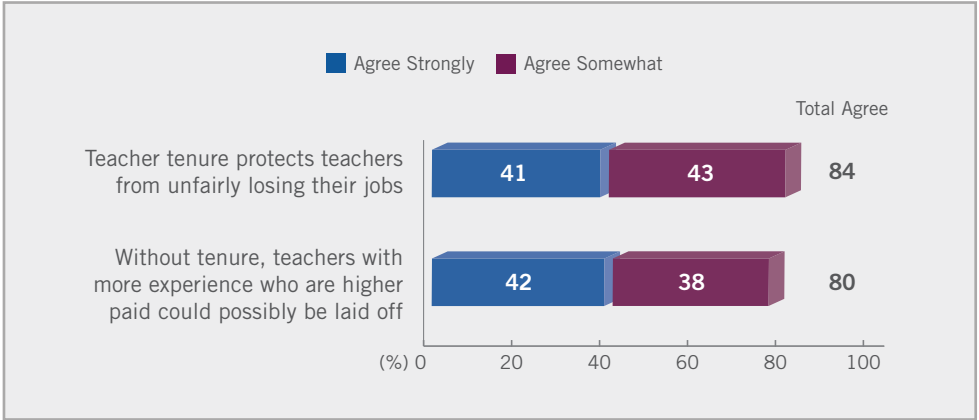
Consideration for tenure should happen...	Years of experience			
	Less than 4 years	4–10 years	11–20 years	Over 20 years
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
After 1–4 years of teaching	44cd	40cd	37d	35
After 5–9 years of teaching	34	38a	41ab	42ab
After 10 (or more) years of teaching	14	14	16	17
Tenure should not be based on years teaching	8	7	6	6

NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.

Many Teachers Also View Tenure as Protection from Lay-Offs for Senior Teachers

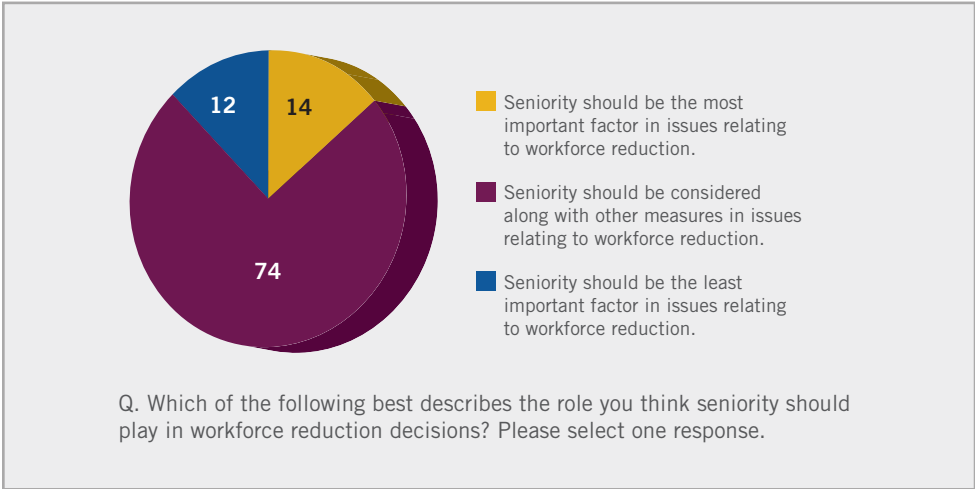
In conversation, teachers say that their views on tenure revolve around two key issues. First, as discussed in the preceding section, they view tenure as a signal of teacher competency and effectiveness. Second, many (about eight in 10) view tenure as protection against senior teachers losing their job due to budgetary issues (since teachers with more seniority generally have higher salaries).

Teachers’ Views on Tenure



Most teachers say that seniority should play a role in issues relating to workforce reductions, but that it should be balanced with other factors.

Teacher’s Views on the Role Seniority Should Play in Workforce Reduction Decisions



These data vary according to the number of years a teacher has been teaching:

Teachers’ Views on the Role Seniority Should Play in Workforce Reduction Decisions, by Years of Teaching Experience

	Years of experience			
	Less than 4 years	4–10 years	11–20 years	Over 20 years
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Seniority should be the most important factor in issues relating to workforce reduction.	9	9	16ab	23abc
Seniority should be considered along with other measures in issues relating to workforce reduction.	74d	77d	75d	68
Seniority should be the least important factor in issues relating to workforce reduction.	17cd	13d	9	8
NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.				

“Assuming that all teachers are professional and meet the standards that the district demands in terms of mastery of teaching methods and content, then it follows that the most fair way to conduct a reduction-in-force would be strictly by seniority.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Too many personnel decisions are made for merely political reasons.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel teachers may be let go because of test scores when there are so many other factors that relate to how students perform on test.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I want to provide more opportunities for my students to have education experiences outside the classroom.” • “I am a life-long learner and hope to inspire that attitude in my students.” • “I teach each child as an individual first, then as part of the group.” • “Each classroom needs the necessary technology to teach our students for tomorrow.” • “Strong communication between school leaders, teachers, students and parents is essential.” • “I am constantly working to become a better teacher and increase my knowledge base.” • “I want my students to be successful, to be able to think independently and to make choices that will help them be productive citizens.” • “Students thrive when their home environment

**“In my classroom, the biggest challenge is having enough resources to reach my students where they are and move them forward.”**

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, CALIFORNIA

values education and success.” • “I am not just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader

and supporter.” • “We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.” • “My students make me want to be a better teacher.” • “Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.” • “Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.” • “We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.” • “I have always been a believer that in a thriving and fulfilling environment, all students can achieve.” • “Students need to be in a safe environment that provides instruction that best suits their learning styles and educational needs.” • “Our public education system is only as good as its partnership with families.” • “I have the privilege of working with an entire staff of professionals with the goal of educating students.” • “I teach because I love to watch students learn about the world around them and discovering their role in it.” • “Teachers should be able to teach using the method they feel is best for their class.” • “We need more alternative assessments to accurately

# CHALLENGES FACING STUDENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT AND GROWING

Each day, teachers across the country dedicate themselves to educating, inspiring and preparing young people for college, career, and life. Their goal is clear: Help *all* students achieve. At the same time, the challenges students face are becoming more severe—veteran teachers<sup>8</sup> report growing numbers of students struggling socially and academically. Teachers are willing to go the extra mile to combat these issues, but they need additional resources and training to ensure that all students have an opportunity to succeed.

## VETERAN TEACHERS REPORT INCREASED SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC CHALLENGES

Eighty-two percent of teachers say that the goal of schools and teaching is to prepare students to succeed in the college or career of their choice.<sup>9</sup> With 26% of veteran teachers reporting that the number of students planning to attend college is growing, post-secondary preparedness is a major focus for educators across the country.

Despite the growing numbers of students planning to pursue some form of post-secondary education, teachers say that only 63% of their current students could leave high school prepared to succeed in a two- or four-year college. Few label academic achievement at their school as “excellent,” and barely half of teachers say that students enter their classroom prepared for on-grade-level work.

<sup>8</sup> Teachers who have been teaching for five or more years (59% of the total sample) will be referred to as “veteran teachers.” They comprise 59% of all teachers in the sample.

<sup>9</sup> *Primary Sources 2009*, page 9: 71% of teachers said the most important goal of schools and teaching is to prepare all students so they are ready for careers in the 21st Century; 21% said the most important goal is to prepare all students to be successful in a 2- or 4-year college. In conversation, teachers acknowledge that traditional post-secondary education may not be the answer for all students.

“When I began teaching, roughly 40% of our population received free and reduced lunch. That number has jumped to 65% in the last five years.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Are challenges growing? Yes. Are kids changing? No. They need encouragement and support, just like always.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“More than half of my students lack basic skills and motivation to succeed in school, which makes me feel like I’m treading water all year.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“We do the best we can with the students we have. No matter what.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

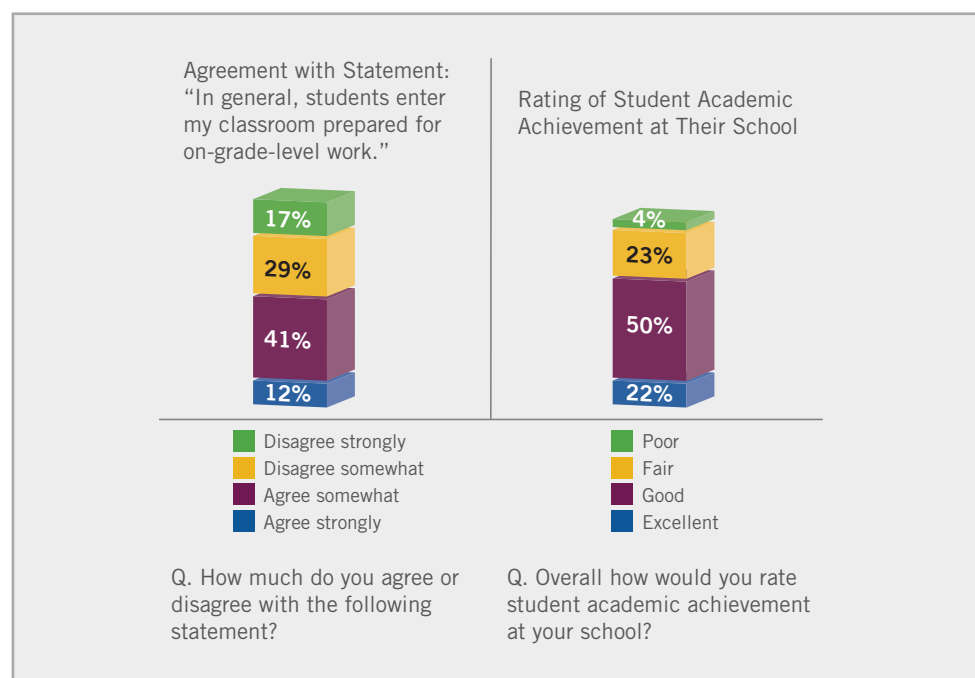
“Most of my students have high needs and I do pretty well, but for one teacher to meet all these needs—it’s difficult. It’s nearly impossible. How do I get them to learn if they haven’t slept? If they haven’t eaten?”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need to stop promoting students to the next grade just so they can stay with their age mates. The reality I face every day is students who are in the seventh grade but reading at the second- or third-grade level.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

## Teachers’ Views on Student Preparedness and Achievement



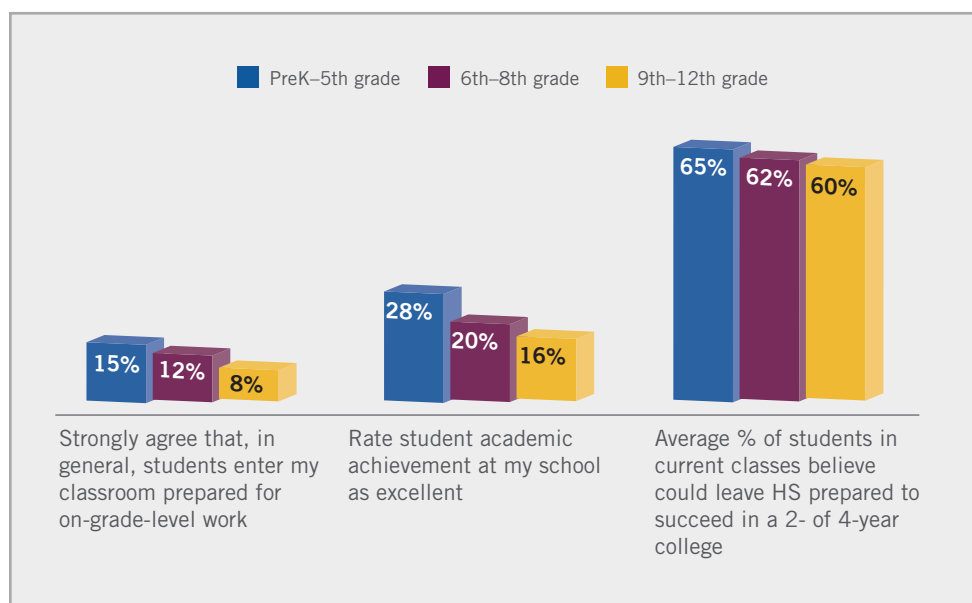
Further, many veteran teachers see a worsening trend in terms of student readiness to take on challenging work and student abilities in math and reading. Among teachers who have been at the same school for five or more years:

- 46% say they are seeing fewer students who are prepared for challenging school work (13% are seeing more).
- 43% say they are seeing a greater percentage of students who struggle with reading (10% are seeing fewer).
- 37% say they are seeing a greater percentage of students who struggle with math (9% are seeing fewer).
- 25% say they are seeing fewer students who are gifted and talented (11% are seeing more).

## Challenges Related to Academics Grow More Pronounced in Secondary Grades

In a trend that follows external data on student achievement, literacy rates, and graduation rates, teachers in secondary schools report even lower numbers related to student achievement. In conversation, teachers of older students express concern that there is too narrow a window of time in which they can tackle the challenges facing their students.

### Teachers' Views on Student Preparedness, by Grade(s) Taught



“My students have impressive dreams. They want to be physicians, scientists, and other professionals, but by the time I get them... these dreams are nearly impossible to reach. We have to change that. We have to give them the intervention they need in the early years.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“There is a strong push to prepare all students for college. However, not all students should be preparing for college, some should be preparing for other careers.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Too many students just don't get why education is so important. They are not motivated to do the work of learning so they don't experience its many rewards.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

"The biggest challenge I face in my classroom is convincing my students they can achieve."

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

"Too many students have been told since day one that everything they do is great, so when something challenging comes up, they give up too easily."

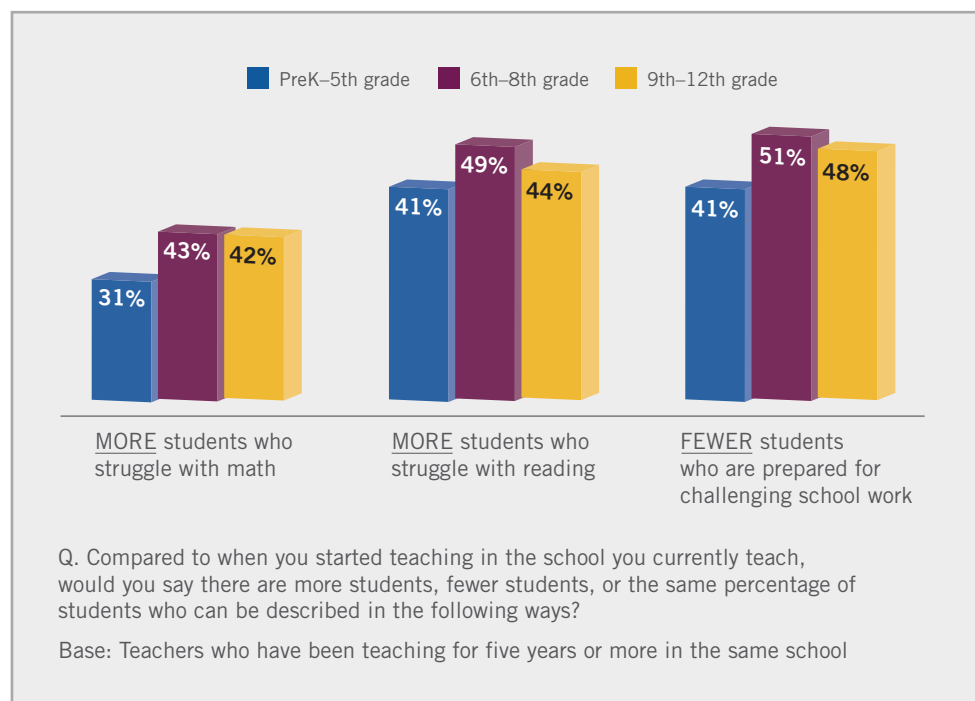
—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

"In our district, students are passed from grade to grade until high school, so when I get my freshmen, some have not passed science or math since fifth grade."

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

In addition to middle and high school teachers rating student achievement and preparedness lower than elementary school teachers do, veteran middle school teachers are also more likely to see a worsening trend in regards to math and reading achievement and a worsening trend in the percentage of students being ready to take on challenging work.

#### Teachers' Views on How the Makeup of the Student Body Has Changed Since Teacher Began Teaching in His/Her Current School, by Grade(s) Taught

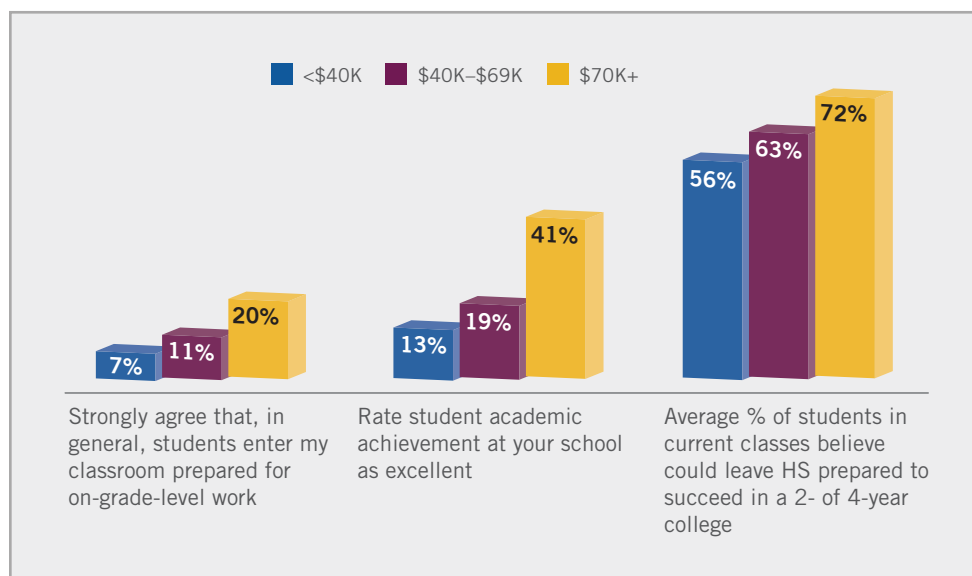


#### Academic Challenges in Low-Income Communities Are More Severe

It is well documented that teachers in low-income communities are faced with some of the most significant challenges in American education. Teachers who teach in low-income communities (with median household incomes of under \$40,000, evenly distributed between urban and rural areas) are more likely to give lower ratings on all student achievement measures.

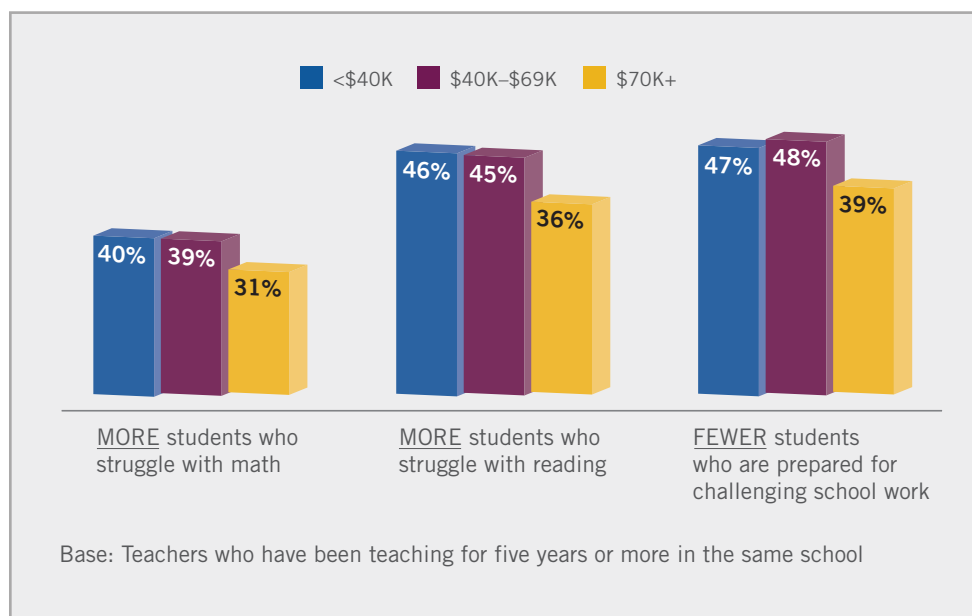


### Teachers' Views on Student Preparedness, by Community Median Household Income



Veteran teachers in lower- and middle-income communities are more likely to say they are seeing more students with academic challenges, relative to their colleagues in upper-income communities.

### Teacher's Views on How the Makeup of the Student Body Has Changed Since Teacher Began Teaching in His/Her Current School, by Community Median Household Income



“There is a huge discrepancy between the school readiness of children living in poverty and those who are more affluent. The one thing that would most help our school would be an early-learning program to support poor families.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Too many of my students can’t really come to school prepared to learn because their basic needs are not met—love, protection, food, and sleep.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“It is very challenging to try to improve my students’ literacy skills by several grade levels, when the level of literacy in their homes is so low.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our biggest challenge is controlling behavior of students who are not ready to learn and disrupt the learning of other students.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our families have hard lives. Many parents are working two jobs or very long hours. Many are homeless or don’t speak English.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

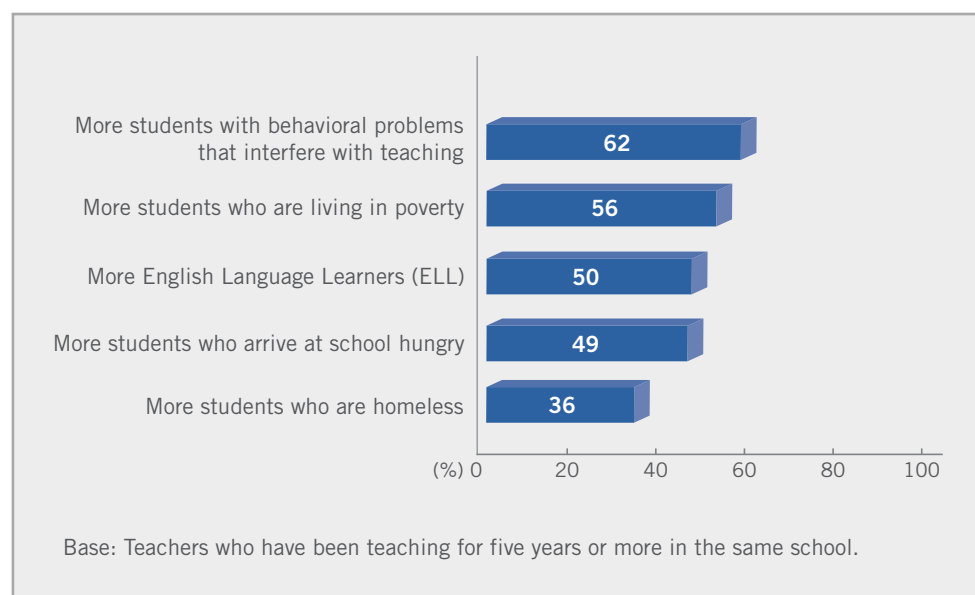
“The time it takes to referee fights and solve bullying issues takes away from academic instruction and keeps students from achieving as much as they could.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## CHALLENGES EXTEND BEYOND ACADEMICS

In addition to a decline in academic preparedness, many veteran teachers tell us that they are seeing more students with challenges related to shifting demographics, as well as socio-economic and behavioral issues. “Discipline and behavior issues eat up instruction time,” admitted one Louisiana teacher.

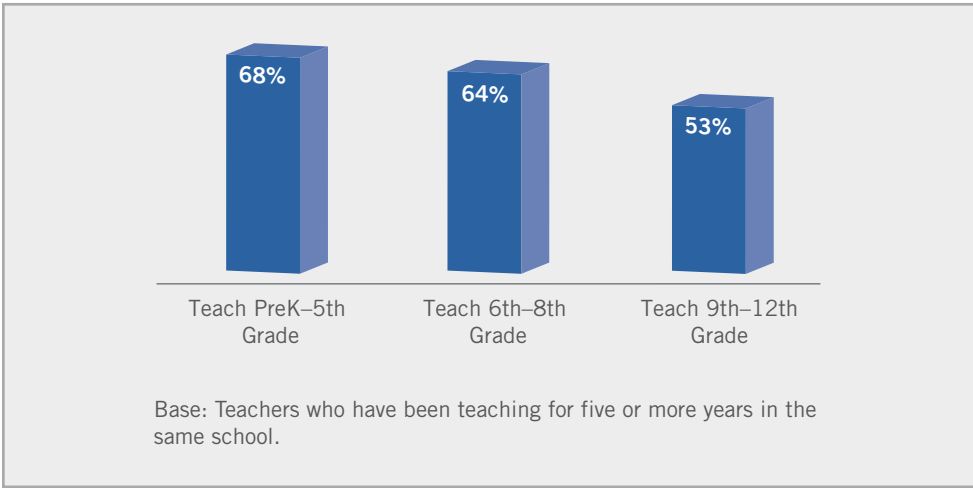
### Teachers’ Views on How the Makeup of the Student Body Has Changed Since Teacher Began Teaching in His/Her Current School



The reported increases in students in poverty, those arriving to school hungry, and those who are homeless vary little across teachers at different grade levels. The same is true of students who are English Language Learners.

While equal percents of teachers across grades say they have students with behavioral problems in their class, having students with behavioral problems that interfere with learning is a more pronounced issue for elementary teachers and middle school teachers, relative to high school teachers.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say There Are More Students With Behavioral Problems Now, Relative to When They Started Teaching in Their Current Schools, by Grade(s) Taught



Differences across income levels reflect the same pattern observed in the growth in the percentage of students with academic challenges. Veteran teachers in both low- and middle-income communities are more likely than their upper-income colleagues to say they are seeing more students who require in-school special services.

The exception here is English Language Learners, whose numbers are growing in middle- and high-income areas to a greater degree than they are growing in low-income areas. Presence and growth in ELL students is more closely related to region and urbanicity, than to community income, however the *concentration* of ELL students is greater in low-income communities. Twenty-nine percent of teachers in low-income communities say that 25% or more of their students are ELL. In high-income communities, this number is 19%.

Teacher’s Views on How the Makeup of the Student Body Has Changed, by Community Median Household Income

	<\$40K	\$40K–\$69K	\$70K+
	(a)	(b)	(c)
More students with behavioral problems that interfere with teaching	65	63	56
More students who are living in poverty	59	61	43
More students who are English Language Learners (ELL)	43	52	52
More students arriving at school hungry	50	53	37
More homeless students	35	40	27
Base: Teachers who have been teaching for five or more years in the same school			

“In my school, we are feeding the children, clothing the children, and keeping many of them from 7:30a.m. – 6:00p.m.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am a general education teacher but at least 50 percent of my class each year has special needs. At least 25 percent of these students have extreme behavior problems which interfere with teaching the other students to learn.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like working with kids and helping struggling students. I feel that’s where I can make the most difference.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I need concrete resources. I need help from specialists for special education students. I need counselors for students with behavioral issues. Students in poverty need help maintaining their health and well-being. This work cannot be done effectively in the classroom by one teacher.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“There is a huge discrepancy between the readiness of children living in poverty and those who are more affluent. This gap is nearly impossible to close due to lack of resources.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“It would make a big difference if we had consistent policies for behavior consequences and adequate resources for teachers and students.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Note that even in the instances where a greater percentage of teachers in lower- and middle-income communities say a student population has increased, there are still sizeable percentages in higher-income communities who say they too have seen an increase in students facing these challenges.

## TEACHERS NEED IMPROVED INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND BETTER TRAINING TO REACH EVERY STUDENT

Regardless of the degree to which teachers perceive student populations and academic needs as increasing or decreasing over time, nearly all teachers serve diverse student bodies. In addition to general education students, a remarkable:

- 87% teach students with behavioral issues
- 85% teach special education students
- 83% teach students living in poverty
- 69% teach gifted and talented students
- 64% teach English Language Learners (ELL)

Classroom diversity contributes to a need for differentiation of instructional practices. Eighty-eight percent of teachers say that having “teaching resources to help differentiate instruction” has a strong or very strong impact in improving academic achievement. Many teachers say they require additional resources to meet the individual needs of all students.

Teachers tell us they need more “tangible learning resources” like instructional materials, including workbooks, technology, software programs, textbooks, and mixed media content in classroom, and many say they need teacher training to help them learn best practices and master strategies to differentiate their teaching practices to instruct and engage students in the best possible ways.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The exact question text for these findings is: Q. We are interested in knowing the kinds of resources you need most when addressing the needs of different populations of students. We are specifically interested in two kinds of resources:

- **Tangible learning resources** like relevant instructional materials including workbooks, technology, software programs, textbooks, and mixed media content in classroom
- **Teacher training** in terms of best practices and strategies on differentiating teaching practices to best instruct and engage students

Percentage of Teachers With Each Student Population in Their Class(es), and Percentage Who Need More Resources and Training to Address Students’ Needs

	Have this student population in class %	Need more tangible resources to address their needs %	Need more training to address their needs %
Students with behavioral issues	87	72	64
Special education students	85	60	49
Students living in poverty	83	61	47
Gifted and talented students	69	53	41
English Language Learners (ELL)	64	59	49
Base for second and third columns is teachers who have the population of students in their class.			

Teachers are clear that technology plays several key roles in classrooms—from help with differentiated instruction, to supporting student achievement, to increasing student engagement.

- 88% of veteran teachers say that technology that is well integrated into the classroom has a strong or very strong impact on student achievement.
- 59% of veteran teachers say they are seeing more students who require technology to keep them engaged (this is higher for teachers who teach Grades 6–8 and Grades 9–12 at 63% each, compared with 56% for those who teach elementary grades).

In addition to teachers’ need for tangible resources and supports in the classroom, they tell us that complementary personnel can make a significant impact on student academic achievement:

- 70% say that paraprofessionals/teacher assistants in the classroom has a strong or very strong impact on student achievement.
- 69% say that in-school behavioral support from therapists and psychologists has a strong or very strong impact on student achievement.
- Approximately 8 in 10 elementary school teachers feel that these in-school supports will have a strong or very strong impact on student achievement, while only two-thirds of middle school and a little more than half of high school teachers respond similarly.

“I have no resources available to help the students in my class with behavior problems. No school counselors or social workers. A great deal of my time is spent trying creating an environment in which other students feel safe.

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Having access to more technology would help me improve my students’ achievement. Students are coming in very tech-savvy. I need to be able to get and keep their attention.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Access to computers and to the technology and software programs is absolutely necessary to effectively teach my students the content they will need when moving on to the next level of school.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“More money is needed for school improvement, for technology, for functioning clean buildings, for curriculum resources, for field trips, for groups that encourage parent involvement, and for mentoring. That’s the truth of it.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Appropriate training in differentiated instruction would really help me to meet my student’s needs.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

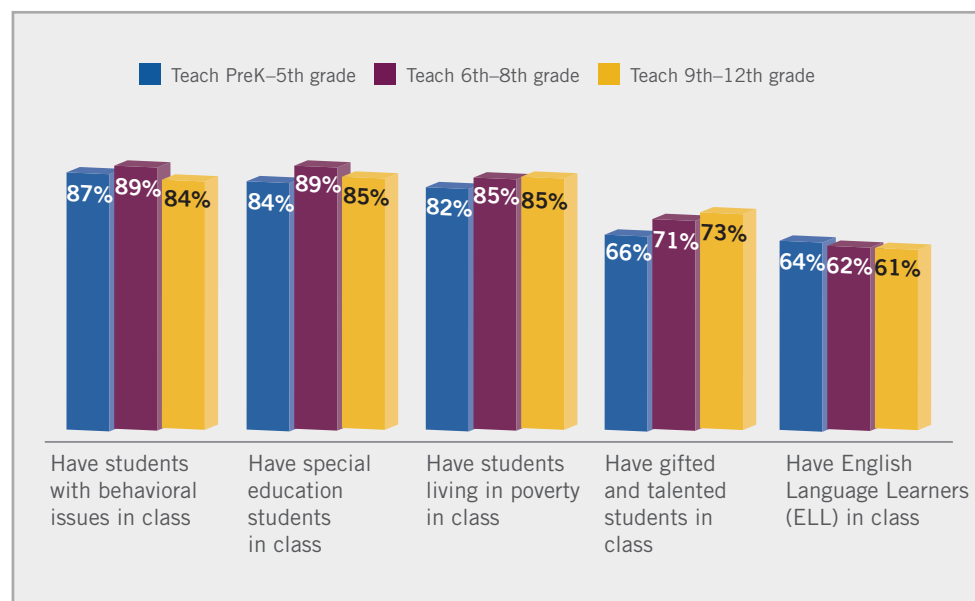
“As a new teacher, I need everything: books for a classroom library, math manipulatives for my students, more curriculum resources.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## Significant Percentages of Teachers Across All Grade Levels Report a Need for Classroom Resources and Professional Training

As noted, a majority of teachers have a variety of student populations represented in their classrooms – a fact that holds true regardless of the grades a teacher teaches. The only significant difference across grades taught is that a higher percentage of high school and middle school teachers say they have gifted and talented students in their classroom, as compared with teachers who teach elementary grades.

Percentage of Teachers With Each Student Population in Their Class(es), by Grade Taught



Views on needed resources do vary according to the grades teachers teach, however:

- Elementary teachers are more likely than high school teachers to need more tangible resources for students with behavioral issues (as previously noted, “tangible resources” refers to workbooks, technology, software programs, textbooks, and mixed media content in classroom).
- Elementary teachers are more likely than middle and high school teachers to need training for special education students.

- Elementary and middle school teachers are more likely than high school teachers to need tangible resources for gifted and talented students. Elementary teachers also need more training for this group.
- Middle and high school teachers are more likely than elementary school teachers to need tangible resources to assist students living in poverty.
- Middle and high school teachers are more likely than elementary school teachers to need tangible resources and training to assist ELL students.

**Percentage of Teachers Who Teach Each Type of Student Population and Say They Need More Resources/Training to Address These Student Needs, by Grade(s) Taught**

	% Who Need More Tangible Resources for the Population			% Who Need More Training for the Population		
	PreK-5	6-8	9-12	PreK-5	6-8	9-12
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)
Students with behavioral issues	<b>74c</b>	71	68	66	62	61
Special education students	61	58	58	<b>53bc</b>	44	46
Students living in poverty	57	<b>64a</b>	<b>64a</b>	44	48	<b>49a</b>
Gifted and talented students	<b>57bc</b>	52	48	<b>45bc</b>	39	36
English Language Learners (ELL)	54	<b>65a</b>	<b>63a</b>	44	<b>54a</b>	<b>55a</b>
<p><i>NOTE: Data are based on those teachers who have this population of students in their class(es).</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.</i></p>						

“The factors that most influence student achievement are outside the classroom. Hunger, poverty, homelessness.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love the challenge of helping struggling learners find strategies that help them develop the self-confidence they need to move to more complex skill sets.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My hope is to empower students with the tools, knowledge, and skills they will need to be productive members of society and have fulfilling relationships and satisfying lives. We need more resources to do that.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel like I am expected to do the impossible without any resources or training.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love my class of diverse students and would never give them up, but I know that many good teachers would opt out of teaching students with special education and behavioral challenges. We don’t have the training for it.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

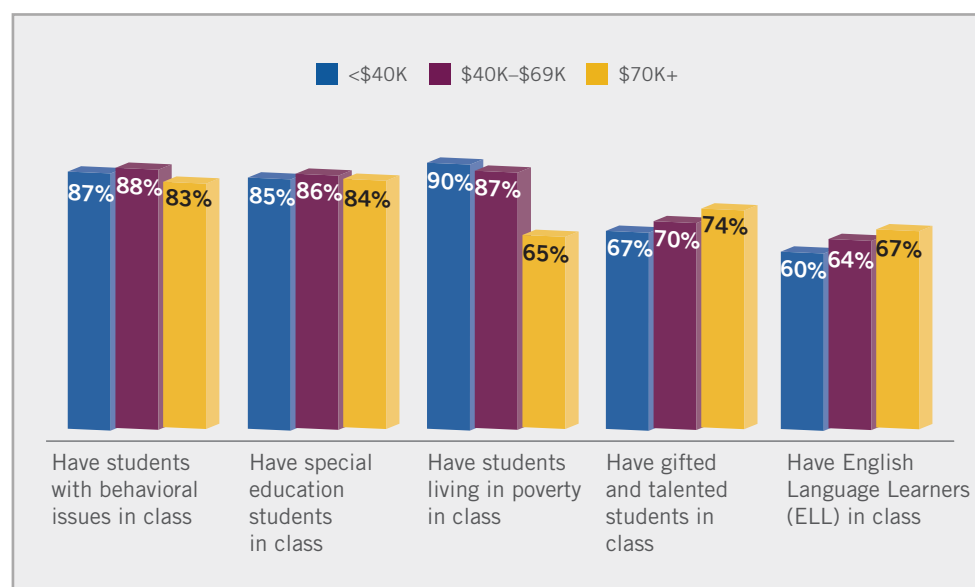
“What would make my job better? Effective school leaders, good resources, and ongoing teacher training.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## Teachers in Low- and Middle-Income Communities Report a Greater Need for Resources and Training in Their Schools

The presence of various student populations—particularly students living in poverty, gifted and talented students and English Language Learners—varies by median community income. Note, however, that even in high-income communities, 65% of teachers say they have students who are living in poverty. This rises to about nine in 10 teachers in low- and middle-income communities.

**Percentage of Teachers With Each Student Population in Their Class(es), by Community Income**



Of the 10 resource need categories shown in the table on page 55 (tangible resources for five specific student populations and training to address the needs of those same populations), teachers in both lower- and middle-income communities are more likely than teachers in higher-income communities to say they need resources in five of 10 categories. These include:

- Tangible resources for students with behavioral issues
- Tangible resources for special education students
- Tangible resources for ELL students
- Tangible resources *and* training for addressing the needs of gifted and talented students



Further, teachers in lower-income communities are more likely to want additional training to address the needs of special education students and those with behavioral issues. Teachers in higher-income communities are slightly more likely to want professional training to help them address the needs of students who live in poverty, while all three groups are equally likely (at six in 10) to want more tangible resources for these students.

Percentage of Teachers Who Teach Each Type of Student Population and Say They Need More Resources/Training to Address These Student Needs, by Community Income

	% Who Need More Tangible Resources for the Population			% Who Need More Training for the Population		
	<\$40K	\$40K–69K	\$70K+	<\$40K	\$40K–69K	\$70K+
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(a)	(b)	(c)
Students with behavioral issues	77bc	72c	64	68bc	63	60
Special education students	64c	60c	55	52c	49	47
Students living in poverty	61	61	60	45	46	51ab
Gifted and talented students	57c	55c	46	43c	42c	35
English Language Learners (ELL)	61c	61c	55	49	50	48
<p>NOTE: Data are based on those teachers who have this population of students in their class(es).</p> <p>NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.</p>						

“I am an ESL teacher and while I like working with the students, I don’t feel I have support from my school or district on how to help the students to achieve success.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am currently working to improve my skills and proficiencies as a teacher by completing an MA in Education, but I feel that I still need more training to be as effective as possible.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love being able to help change the lives of children and encourage them to do their best. Now that I am in a school with a healthy environment, resources and support, I feel comfortable and dedicated to the profession.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I want to provide more opportunities for my students to have education experiences outside the classroom.” • “I am a life-long learner and hope to inspire that attitude in my students.” • “I teach each child as an individual first, then as part of the group.” • “Each classroom needs the necessary technology to teach our students for tomorrow.” • “Strong communication between school leaders, teachers, students and parents is essential.” • “I am constantly working to become a better teacher and increase my knowledge base.” • “I want my students to be successful, to be able to think independently and to make choices that will help them be productive citizens.” • “Students thrive when their home environment

**“No matter how bad it seems, when the bell rings and I close my door...it’s magic.”**

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, ILLINOIS

values education and success.” • “I am not just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader

and supporter.” • “We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.” • “My students make me want to be a better teacher.” • “Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.” • “Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.” • “We need the freedom to make decisions based on the students we have in our classrooms.” • “I have always been a believer that in a thriving and fulfilling environment, all students can achieve.” • “Students need to be in a safe environment that provides instruction that best suits their learning styles and educational needs.” • “Our public education system is only as good as its partnership with families.” • “I have the privilege of working with an entire staff of professionals with the goal of educating students.” • “I teach because I love to watch students learn about the world around them and discovering their role in it.” • “Teachers should be able to teach using the method they feel is best for their class.” • “We need more alternative assessments to accurately

# SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO KEEPING GOOD TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

In light of the 2009 Urban Institute report finding that “almost a quarter of entering public-school teachers leave teaching within the first three years,”<sup>11</sup> it is important to consider teachers’ views on factors impacting teacher retention in order to best understand how to keep good teachers in the profession. Across all subgroups, teachers agree that monetary rewards (salary or bonuses) are less important than other factors (i.e., positive working environment, quality classroom resources, and strong leadership) when it comes to keeping great educators in the classroom. It is important to note, however, that these more important factors often require additional funding and resources.

## ENGAGED SCHOOL LEADERS, FAMILY INVOLVEMENT, AND HIGH-QUALITY CURRICULUM ARE ESSENTIAL TO RETAINING GOOD TEACHERS

When asked about the most important factors in retaining good teachers, teachers are clear on the importance of and need for school-wide systems to support their practice and increase student learning, including supportive school leaders, engaged parents, and quality curriculum.

In fact, several of the most important items in retaining good teachers align with the top factors teachers say would improve student academic achievement, indicating that family, school leadership, and curriculum are all critical to the mission of today’s schools:

“Teachers need to feel valued and to have administrators and politicians who respect our expertise.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“Budgetary woes are making it very hard for us. The loss of student services, activities, and electives is demoralizing. We also lost administrative, faculty, and support personnel.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“I enjoy teaching kindergarten at my current school. I work in a pleasant and collaborative learning environment. I have use of various academic resources and technological tools that support student learning.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TEACHER

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.urban.org/publications/1001270.html>. Data cited in this report are from the (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

“We need more money for Title I, counseling support staff, tutors, or aides to work with small groups or one on one with struggling students who need interventions. It's difficult to cover all general curriculum and work individually with the number of kids who need intervention.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Active involvement and commitment to education by the parents is critical to students' success.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

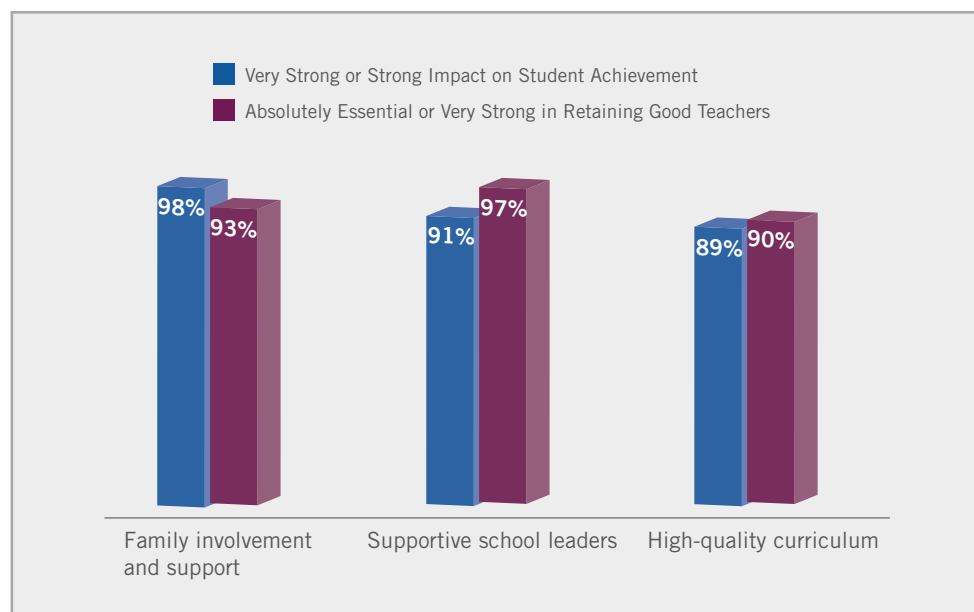
“Having an effective principal as a curriculum leader and an overall supportive administration can change the learning environment entirely.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Loss of funding and budget cuts are straining our resources and teachers are providing more money out of their own pockets.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

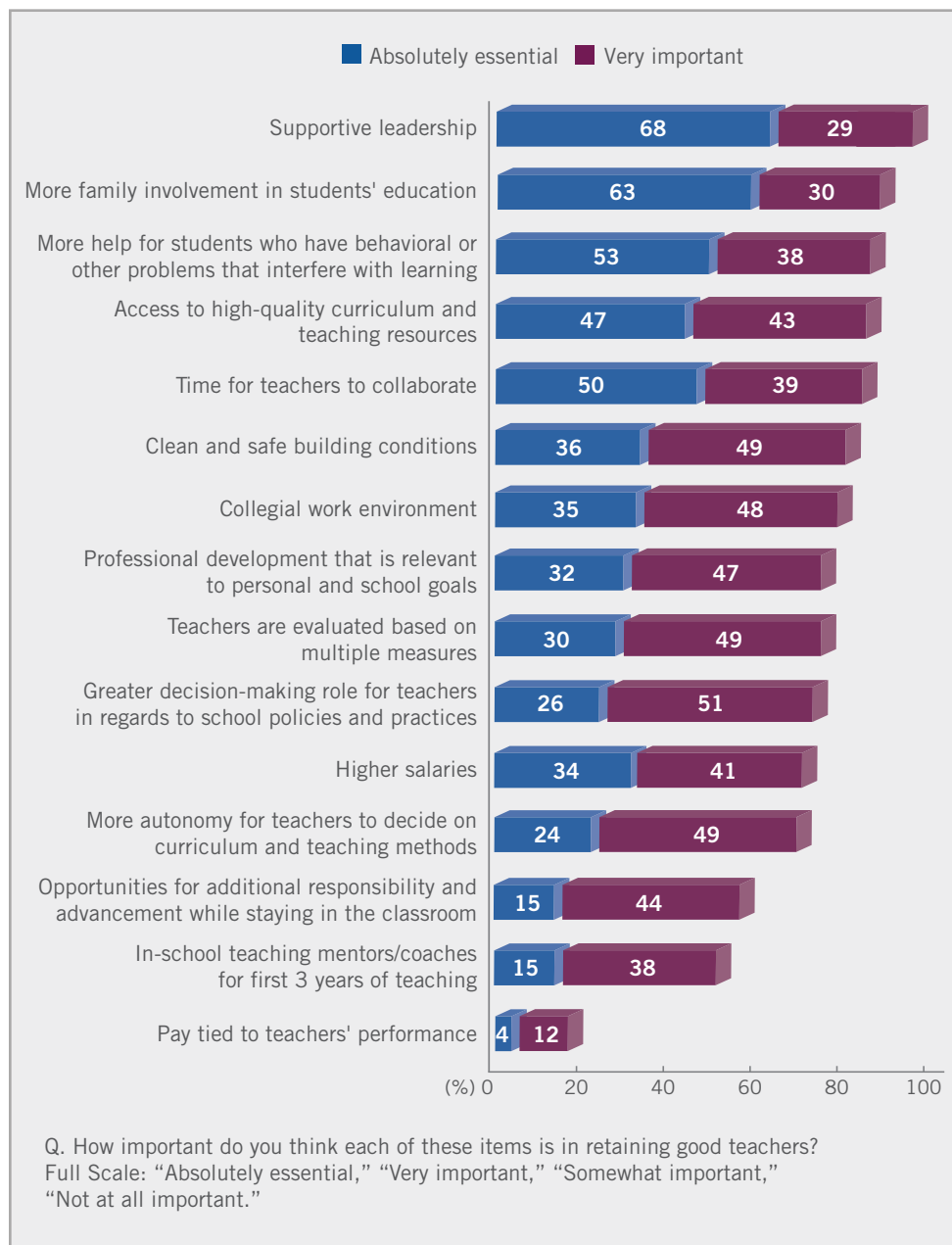
### Teachers' Views on Core Elements Needed to Ensure Student Academic Achievement and Retain Good Teachers



Other elements necessary to retaining good teachers center on:

- The presence of a positive, collaborative work environment
- Support staff available to assist when student have problems that impede learning
- Professional development to ensure teachers can regularly assess and improve their effectiveness

## Teachers' Views on Factors Impacting Teacher Retention



"We need paraprofessionals in the classroom. In kindergarten, usually about 10 students "need" the teacher at the same time, which is not humanly possible."

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

"I work in a Title I school. I know that I am helping my students and that they need me."

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

"At my school, I feel I am valued as an educator. My administration and colleagues offer support in each aspect of the teaching profession. I am doing what I was trained to do!"

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am not just an educator, but a coach, encourager, confidant, cheerleader, and supporter.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I need more help for the kids who need it. Social workers, paraprofessionals, additional assistance for special education and even gifted students. That’s how I’m going to be able to help every one of my students.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

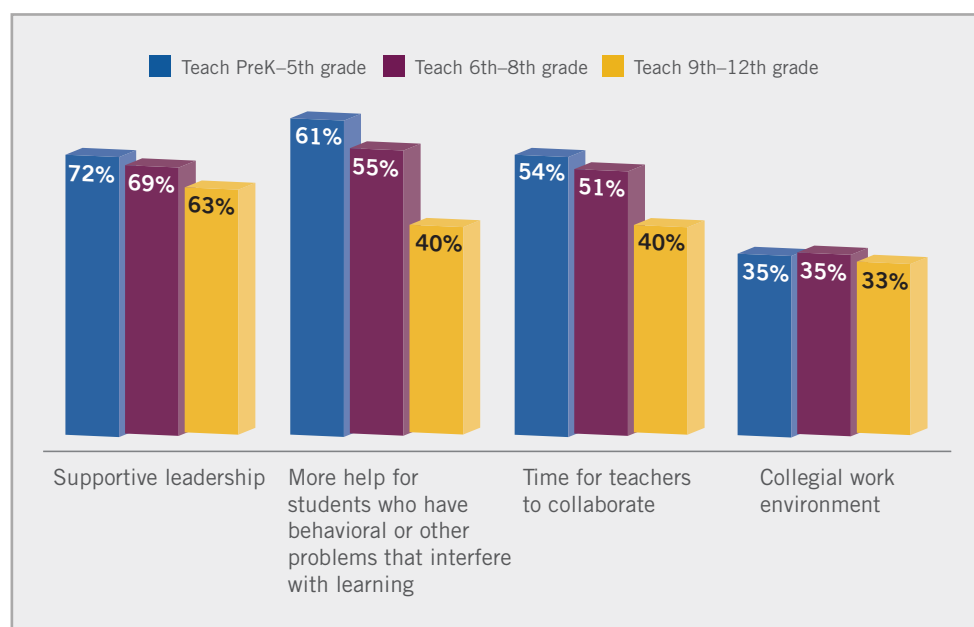
“I love going to work. I have great teachers on my team and a very supportive principal. Seeing the growth of my students every day gives me excitement to go back every day and do it all over again.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

## Teacher Retention Is Fostered by a Community of Colleagues

In considering the top factors impacting teacher retention, it is clear that a supportive, collegial environment is critical to retaining good teachers. Of the top seven factors impacting teacher retention, four involve other school personnel—contributing to a school’s “social capital.”<sup>12</sup> Teachers who teach elementary and middle school grades view these as even more important than teachers who teach high school grades.

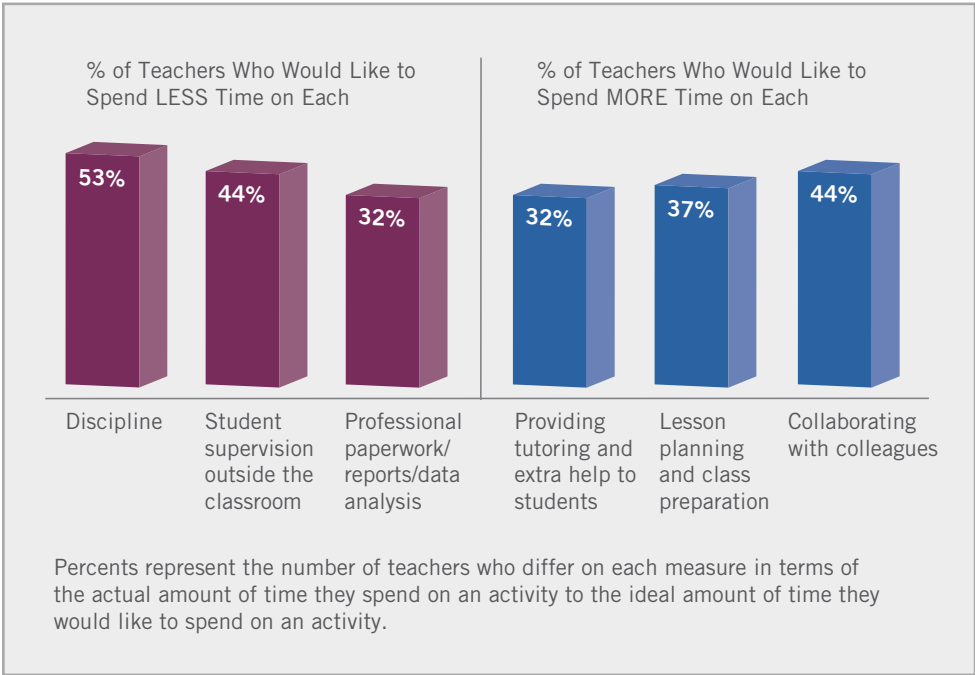
**Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each is “Absolutely Essential” in Retaining Good Teachers, by Grade(s) Taught**



<sup>12</sup> By “social capital,” we refer to the network of individuals who support student achievement through interpersonal collaboration, cooperation, and support. This can include principals, other teachers, in-class complementary staff like co-teachers, paraprofessionals, or teacher assistants, and out-of-class services like guidance counselors, therapists, tutors, and more.

Many teachers crave more time for collaborating with colleagues. When teachers are asked how much time they actually spend on certain activities during their work day and how much time they would like to spend on the same activities, time for collaboration was among the top three “time disconnects” for teachers (along with time spent disciplining students and time spent supervising students outside of the classroom). Note that teachers would also like to have more time to plan student lessons and provide extra help to students.

**Changes Teachers Would Like in the Way They Spend Their Required School Hours**



On average, the teachers who would like to be spending either more or less time on each of these activities would like to see the time adjusted by 20–25 minutes.

“Most teachers find that the job extends well beyond an eight-hour day. We work far more hours and days than we are paid for.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our math instruction time has been cut from 90 minutes to 56 minutes daily. It’s not the way it should be.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“A lot of teacher time is taken up either before or after school hours cutting, laminating, copying, and doing paperwork for data/documentation purposes. Some extra help, if even for a short period of the day, would help immensely.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Having the tools necessary to teach, and to differentiate instruction, is imperative. Professional development is crucial.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need practical training, not just theory, in special education. Whether it is gifted, emotionally disturbed, or learning-disabled students placed in our classrooms, teachers need to have strategies at the ready to help them succeed.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

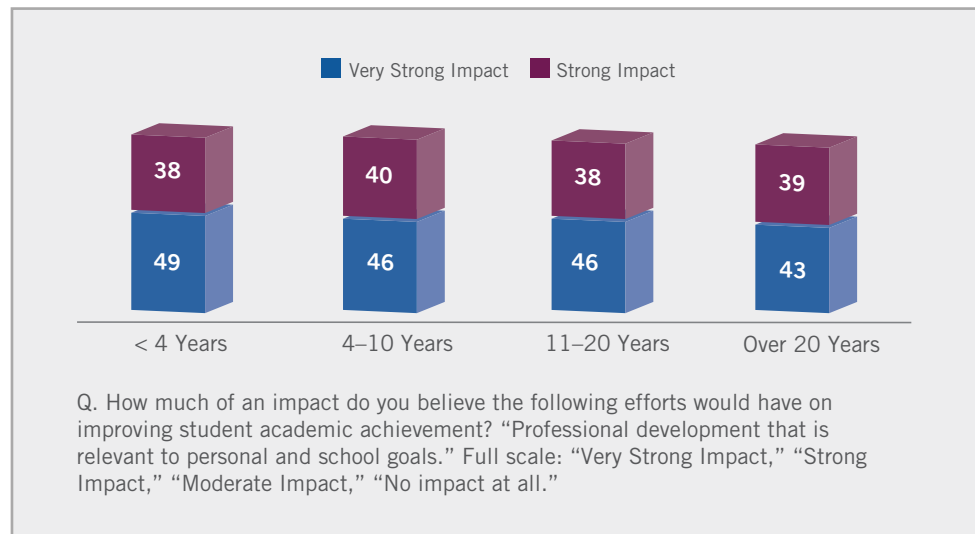
“I would like professional development funded by the district that is directly related to what I am teaching. Teachers cannot get better without it.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

## Teachers Are Eager for More Professional Development

With most teachers (83%) planning to stay in the classroom up to or past their retirement age, and only 6% planning to leave the field of education, the majority of teachers say that professional development is a must—throughout their careers.

### Teachers' Views on Impact of Professional Development on Improving Student Achievement, by Years of Teaching Experience



Note that teachers' views on the impact of professional development do not shift by years of teaching.



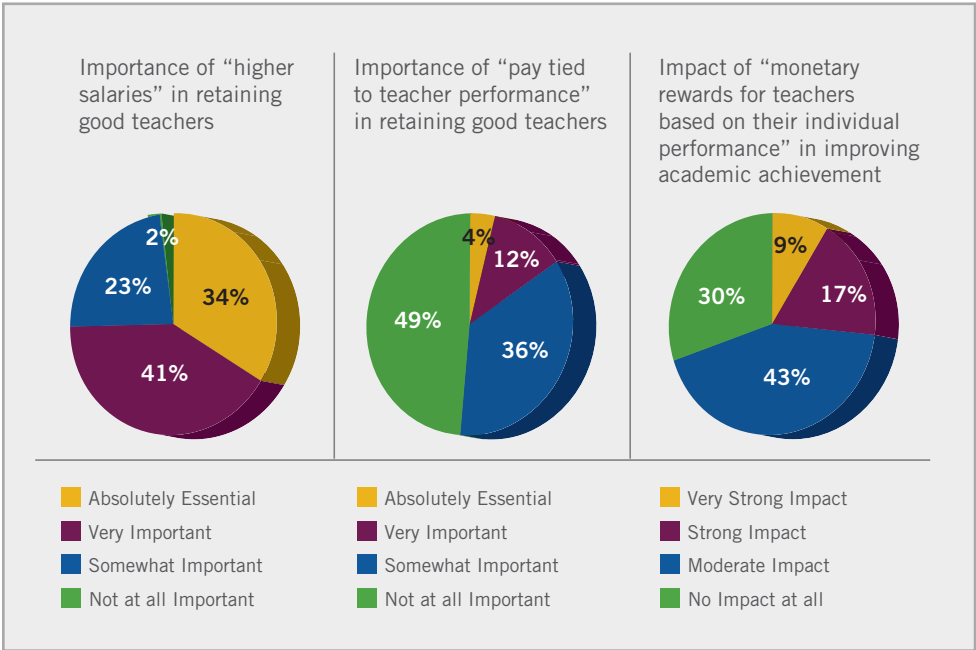
RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE IMPORTANT TO TEACHERS THAN HIGHER SALARIES

There’s no question that teachers’ salaries are an important factor in their job satisfaction and retention; 75% of teachers feel that salary is absolutely essential or very important to retaining good teachers. However, as shown in the chart on page 59, when given a list of factors that teacher believe impact teacher retention, “higher salaries” does not rank at the top of the list. Supportive leadership, family involvement in education, access to high-quality curriculum and student resources, and time for collaboration with colleagues are all thought to be more important to teacher retention than monetary factors.

When asked about monetary rewards for teacher performance, teachers are even more clear about the limited role compensation policies play in both student achievement and teacher retention:

- Only 16% of teachers feel that performance pay helps to retain good teachers (ranked 15th out of 15 items), and
- Only 26% feel that performance pay would make a strong or very strong impact on student achievement (ranked 19th out of 21 items, see chart on page 10).

Teachers’ Views on Salaries and Pay for Performance



In conversation, teachers told us that until performance evaluations truly reflect their effectiveness as teachers, pay for performance cannot be meaningfully implemented.

“We have to encourage the best and brightest to become teachers. That means competing with the business world—not just with money, but with better jobs, less intrusive paperwork, fewer ridiculous meetings. Give teachers and principles autonomy and control. We’ll get things done.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I don’t want more pay, but I do want more time.”  
—MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“With the threat of merit pay, I will admit that I was less likely to help my fellow colleagues and to share resources this year than I was in years past. At the high school level, we need to be a team to work for the better of our teenagers. They need us.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“My students make me want to be a better teacher.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“Seeing a child’s face light up with recognition when he understands a concept is pure joy!”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“As a fairly new teacher, I am satisfied with the growth I have made since my first year and with the vision I have of how I want to improve.”

—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

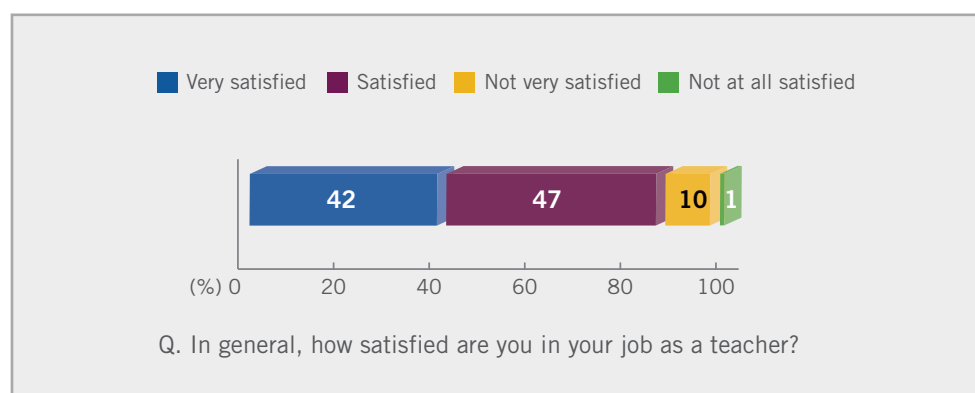
“I love interacting with my students and learning along with them. I find this to be a challenging and rewarding career. Every day is different and every day presents new challenges to be met. Although our importance in the lives of our students is not always recognized and, as teachers, we often feel underappreciated, I can’t imagine a career that I would have enjoyed more.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

## DESPITE THE MANY CHALLENGES FACING AMERICA'S TEACHERS, THE MAJORITY ARE SATISFIED IN THEIR JOBS

A remarkable nine in 10 teachers are satisfied with their job as a teacher: 42% are “very satisfied” and 47% are “satisfied.” In conversation, consistent across all groups of teachers, we heard that the primary reason for their satisfaction is the love of working with children and helping them to grow as learners. Teachers also cite their own professional growth as an important contributor to their job satisfaction. “I know I can be more effective and I strive each day to be more effective,” shares one Illinois teacher.

### Teacher Satisfaction

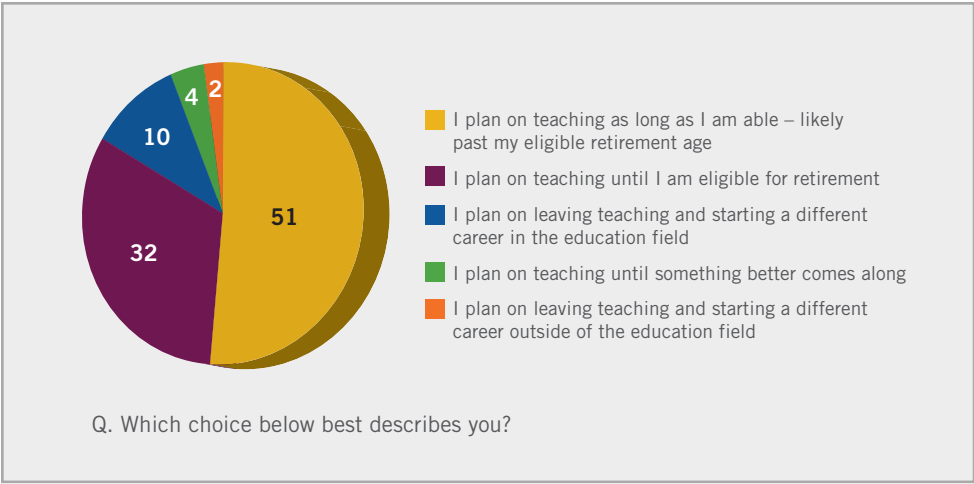


The percentage of teachers who are “very satisfied” varies only moderately (a maximum of seven points) across subgroups of teachers:

- The percentage of elementary teachers is five points higher than it is for high school teachers (44%, 39%)
- Teachers with over 20 years of experience are most satisfied (47% vs. about four in 10 of other teachers)
- Teachers in higher-income communities are more satisfied than teachers in lower-income communities (47% vs. about four in 10 of other teachers)

Teachers’ plans to stay or leave the teaching profession reflect their satisfaction:

Teachers’ Career Plans



Teachers who have been teaching for 10 years or less are much more likely to say they plan on leaving teaching compared to teachers who have been teaching for more than 10 years. However, of the teachers who plan on leaving, more plan to start different careers within the education field than plan on leaving education all together.

Teachers’ Career Plans, by years of teaching experience

	Teaching for less than 4 years	Teaching for 4–10 years	Teaching for 11–20 years	Teaching for over 20 years
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
I plan on teaching as long as I am able – likely past my eligible retirement age	51	48	48	59abc
I plan on teaching until I am eligible for retirement	28	28	38ab	36ab
I plan on leaving teaching and starting a different career in the education field	13cd	16cd	8	2
I plan on teaching until something better comes along/I plan on leaving teaching and starting a different career outside of the education field	8d	9d	6	3

NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.

“Teaching is an art and a craft, and if you cannot embrace change, love what you do, and look to drive students to college, then you should seek another profession.”  
—HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Despite many changes that make my job difficult, including cuts in spending, increased class sizes, and public backlash against teachers, I truly love teaching.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“It makes it hard to want to continue teaching, when teachers have so little input and supports rights and yet, the expectations for teachers are always increasing.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We have larger classes, more behavioral problems, increased numbers of special education students, limited technology, and no teacher aides. It’s not easy, but I do it. I’m not sure how much longer I can do it, though.”

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“We are expected to perform too many roles in our classrooms. We are parents, social workers, nurses, behavioral specialists, and psychologists. There is not enough support from the administration or from home.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
TEACHER

“While many days are frustrating, I still find satisfaction and enjoyment in the education of children and believe that it is one of the most important jobs in our country.

—MIDDLE SCHOOL  
TEACHER

Dissatisfied Teachers Report Higher Need For Resources and Training

While the vast majority of teachers are satisfied in their careers (as noted, 47% are “very satisfied” and 42% are “satisfied”), the 11% who are not satisfied in their careers seem to be dissatisfied in specific ways related to:

- Not having the resources and supports they need to educate their students
- Wanting higher salaries
- Wanting to play a greater decision making role in their schools
- Wanting more autonomy in their classrooms

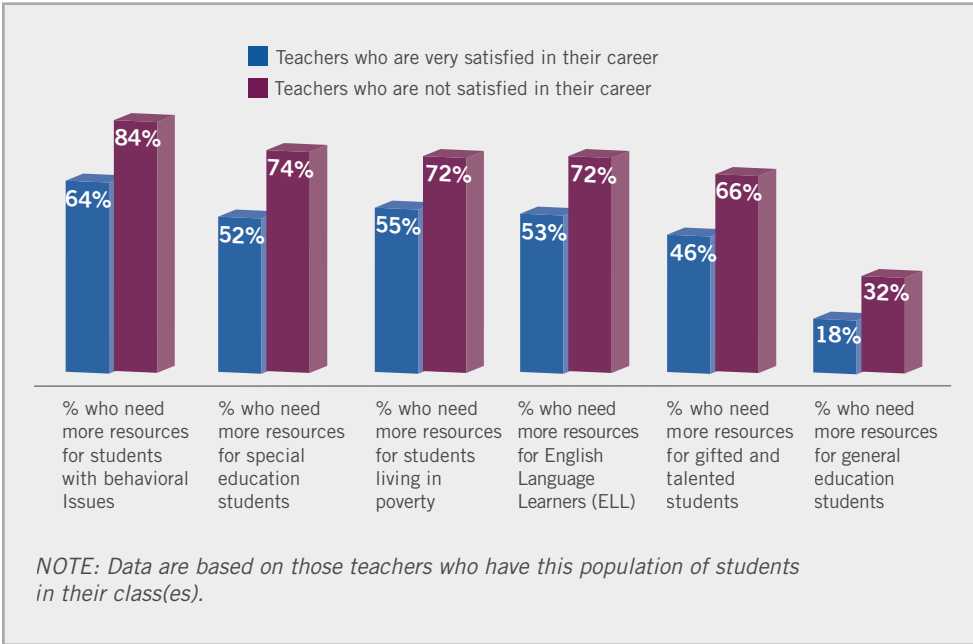
Factors That Are “Absolutely Essential” in Retaining Good Teachers, by Degree of Satisfaction With Career

	Among teachers who are very satisfied with their careers %	Among teachers who are not at all satisfied with their careers %
	(a)	(b)
More help for students who have behavioral or other problems that interfere with learning	50	68a
Higher salaries	28	47a
Greater decision-making role for teachers in regards to school policies and practices	24	38a
More autonomy for teachers to decide on curriculum and teaching methods	23	35a
NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.		

Despite their dissatisfaction, 61% of dissatisfied teachers plan on staying in the teaching profession through (or beyond) their eligible retirement age (compared with 92% of very satisfied teachers), 24% say they will leave the profession (compared with 2% of very satisfied teachers), and 16% will stay in the education field, but will not teach (compared with 7% of very satisfied teachers).

Regardless of their future plans, the reality is that there are approximately 350,000<sup>13</sup> teachers who are dissatisfied with their careers and these teachers, in addition to the factors noted previously, report significantly higher need for resources to empower them to tackle the issues in their classrooms.

**Percentage of Teachers Who Teach Each Type of Student Population and Say They Need More Resources to Address These Students' Needs, by Teacher Satisfaction**



“Too many demands are put upon us that we have no control over. Our students lack support at home to help them succeed in school but it is seen as our fault when they do not perform well. We are trying so hard to be the educator, parent, social worker, therapist for all these children and it is leading to burnout.”  
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Ultimately, I get a lot of personal satisfaction out of helping students learn. However, job insecurity, lack of administrative support, and the public negativity towards teachers hampers my overall satisfaction.”  
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“When I weigh the positives against the negatives, the good outweighs the bad. I chose this profession because I enjoy children, making a difference, and being on somewhat the same schedule as my children. Those things are still true.”  
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

<sup>13</sup> Calculated as 11% of the 3.2 million public school teachers in the United States  
<http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/quickfacts.asp#f3>

“I have worked in a wide-range of teaching environments, and the one constant is the joy of the moment when the lightbulb goes on.”  
 —MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“As an educator, I have the ability to impact the lives of others. It is a tremendous responsibility, and I take this job very seriously.”  
 —HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“To say that I have a “good” job does not suffice, I love my job. There is no greater office than a classroom full of smiling children wanting to learn!”  
 —ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

### Satisfied Teachers Are More Active in Students’ Lives

Not surprisingly, teachers who are very satisfied with their careers are more likely than those who are not at all satisfied to be engaged in all aspects of their students’ lives.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Applies to Them, by Degree of Satisfaction With Career		
	Among teachers who are very satisfied with their careers %	Among teachers who are not at all satisfied with their careers %
	(a)	(b)
I communicate with my students’ parents by email	90b	85
I attend students’ school-related, extracurricular and/or sporting events	78b	69
I attend students’ non-school-related extracurricular and/or sporting events	42b	33
I attend students’ extra-curricular and/or sporting events over the summer months	23b	15
I keep in touch with students over the summer	29b	24
I am willing to have parent/teacher conferences at my students’ homes	29b	24
NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.		

Despite the many challenges and frustrations, teachers overwhelmingly report a love for their profession and the children they serve. In conversation, they share a devotion to helping every child learn and achieve.

As one veteran teacher of 33 years shared, “Working with students brings a new environment every year, every day, every hour. Watching students grow and knowing I helped in that process brings meaning to teaching – meaning that is hard to find in any other profession.”



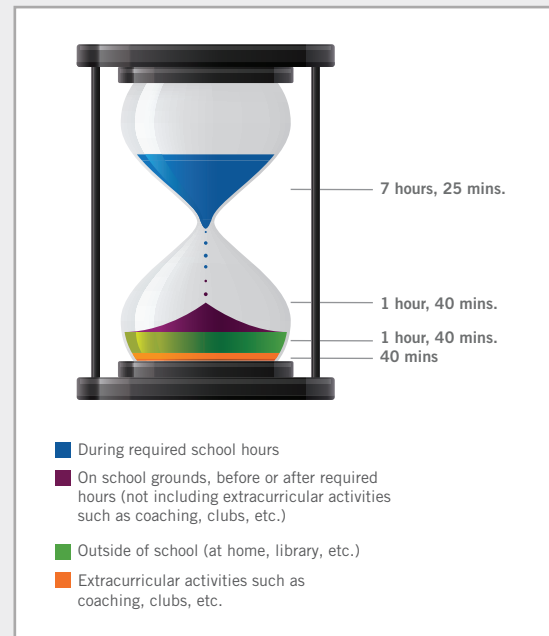




# A PORTRAIT OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS

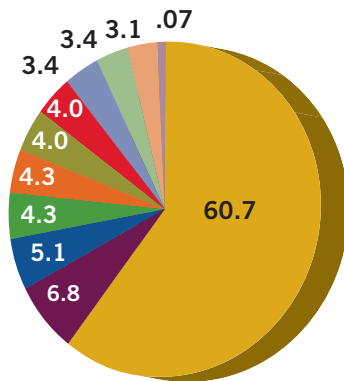
ON AVERAGE,  
TEACHERS WORK ABOUT

**11**  
HOURS AND  
25 MINUTES A DAY

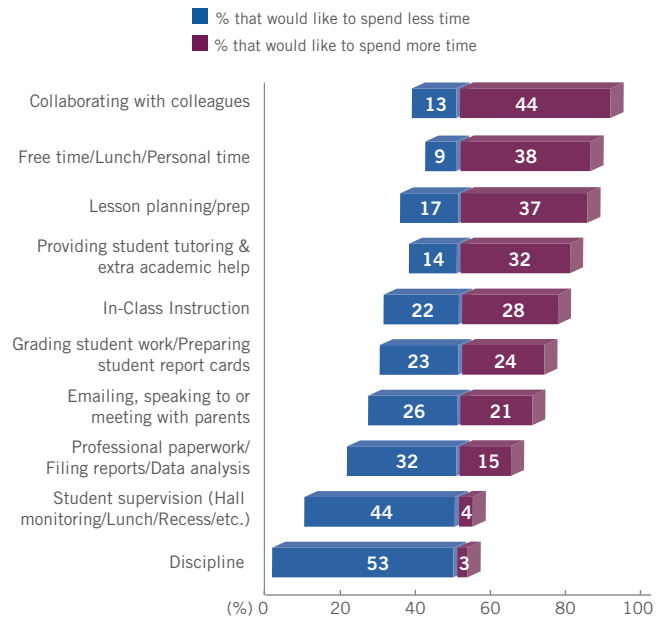


## HOW TEACHERS SPEND THE APPROXIMATE 7.5 HOURS OF THEIR REQUIRED SCHOOL DAY...

Percentage of the Day



- In-Class Instruction
- Lesson planning/Prep
- Free time/Lunch/Personal time
- Grading student work/Preparing student report cards
- Providing student tutoring & extra academic help
- Discipline
- Student supervision (Hall monitoring/Lunch/Recess/etc.)
- Professional paperwork/Filing reports/Data analysis
- Collaborating with colleagues
- Emailing, speaking or meeting with parents
- Other



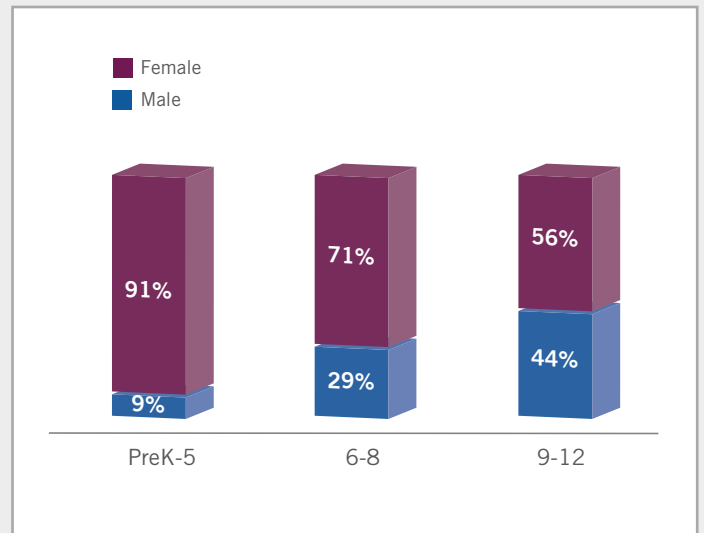
Average minutes are shown among teachers who want more or less time on each task.

**44%** OF TEACHERS WOULD LIKE **MORE TIME TO COLLABORATE WITH COLLEAGUES**, WHILE **53%** WOULD LIKE TO SPEND **LESS TIME DISCIPLINING STUDENTS**.

# A PORTRAIT OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS

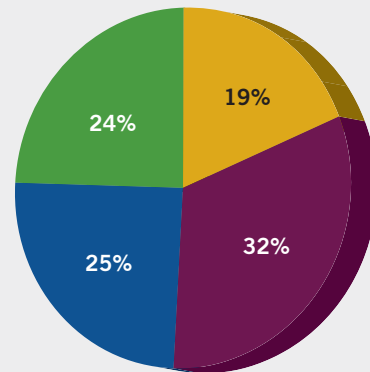
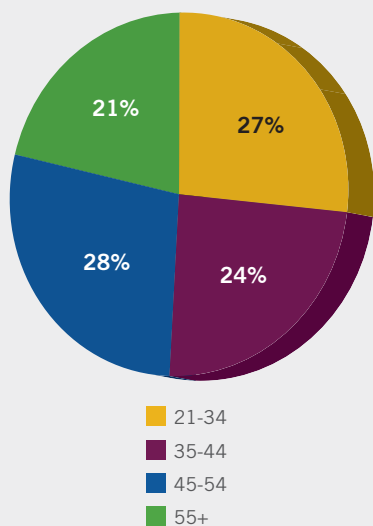
76%

OF TEACHERS ARE WOMEN, BUT THIS VARIES DRAMATICALLY BY GRADE(S) TAUGHT



43.7

THE AVERAGE AGE OF TEACHERS IN THE SURVEY



ON AVERAGE, TEACHERS HAVE ABOUT

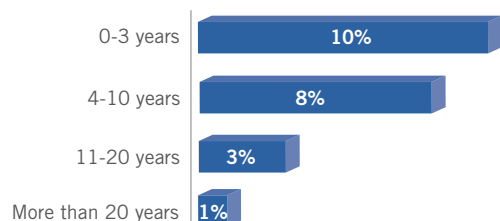
13

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

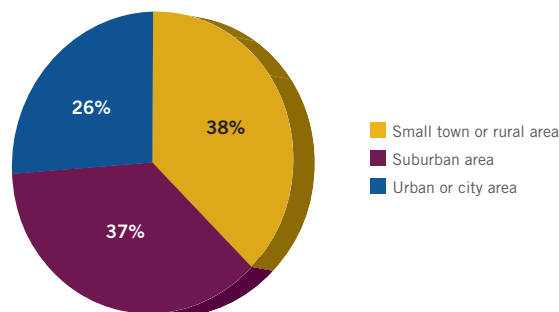
# A PORTRAIT OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS

**94%** OF TEACHERS TOLD US THEY HAVE **FORMAL TEACHER CERTIFICATION**,  
WHILE **6%** HAVE **ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION**.

**% OF TEACHERS WITH ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE**



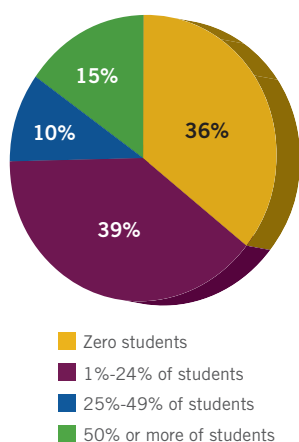
**WHERE TEACHERS TEACH...**



**TEACHER, SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM STATS BY SCHOOL METRO STATUS:**

	URBAN	SUBURBAN	SMALL TOWN/RURAL
Hispanic, African American or other racial/ethnic background	22%	12%	7%
Have worked as a teacher for 0-3 years	23%	18%	18%
School household income is <\$40,000 per year	35%	8%	33%
Have English Language Learners (ELL) in their class	76%	67%	51%

**Percentage of ELL Students in Class(es)**



**Number of Languages Spoken by ELL students**  
(Among teachers with ELL students)

	1%-24% of students are ELL	25% or more of students are ELL
	(a)	(b)
1 language	24	20
2 languages	47	43
3 or more languages	28	<b>37a</b>

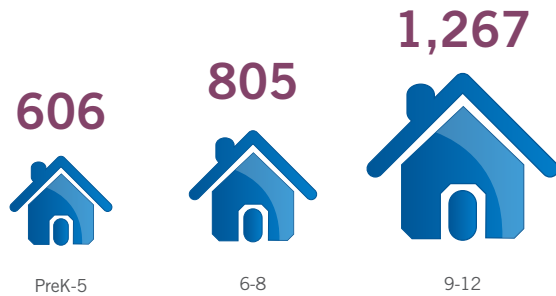
*NOTE: Letters next to percents denote a statistically significant difference between the percent shown and the percent(s) in the column indicated by the letter. Letters always appear next to the higher percentage.*

## **17%** OF NEW TEACHERS

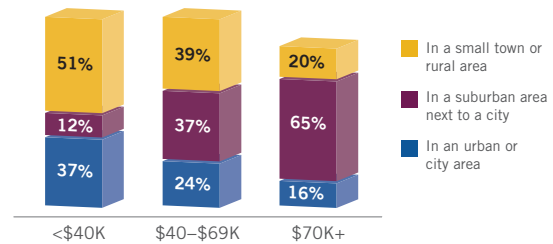
(WITH 0-3 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE)  
IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS  
HISPANIC, AFRICAN AMERICAN  
OR OF ANOTHER RACIAL/ETHNIC  
BACKGROUND VS. ONLY **8%**  
OF **VETERAN TEACHERS** (WITH  
21+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE)

# A PORTRAIT OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS  
IN TEACHERS' SCHOOLS  
(BY GRADE(S) TAUGHT)



% OF TEACHERS WHO TEACH  
IN EACH TYPE OF COMMUNITY, BY  
COMMUNITY MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME:



SCHOOL SIZE BY SCHOOL METRO STATUS:

	URBAN	SUBURBAN	SMALL TOWN/RURAL
Fewer than 500 students	27%	25%	47%
500-999 students	45%	45%	38%
1,000 students or more	28%	30%	14%

# 64%

OF TEACHERS SAID THEY HAVE ONE OR MORE **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS** (ELL) IN THEIR CLASSROOM. THIS RISES TO **90%** OF TEACHERS IN CALIFORNIA, **79%** IN TEXAS AND **66%** IN FLORIDA.

**24%** OF TEACHERS TEACH IN COMMUNITIES WITH A MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF **LESS THAN \$40,000**, WHILE **21%** TEACH IN COMMUNITIES WITH A MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF **MORE THAN \$70,000**.

“All teachers, young and old, need to be given the support and structure to grow. That growth should be required.” • “Working with students means experiencing a challenging new environment every year, every day, every hour.” • “No matter how bad it seems, when the bell rings and I close my door... it’s magic.” • “I firmly believe that the education of a child involves three major components: teacher, student and parents.” • “We need an overhaul in the culture of learning.” • “We are not in this business to make money, but to make a difference.” • “Having the resources to effectively teach and empower all students would be the greatest gift a teacher could receive.” • “The title ‘teacher’ is outdated. We are professional educators and deserve to be treated as such.” • “I have worked in a wide range of teaching environments, and the one constant is the joy of the moment when the lightbulb goes on.” • “Use a variety of measures, including individual growth, to measure teacher effectiveness.” • “I enjoy the challenge of implementing new technologies to enhance learning.” • “Respect, high expectations and encouragement are essential to any student’s achievement.” • “Teachers should be able to teach using the method they feel is best for their class.” • “We need more alternative assessments to accurately portray students’ understanding of content.” • “It’s a tough world out there for many young children. We need to remember each child’s situation is unique.” • “Our country needs to value education and provide teachers and students with the resources they need to do quality work.” • “To motivate students, take the time to figure out what makes them tick.” • “We need to help young people find their passion.” • “Awareness of and sensitivity to cultural diversity in the classroom is essential to education.”

**PRIMARY SOURCES** is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with America’s Teachers. We welcome your thoughts and opinions on the report at [www.scholastic.com/primarysources](http://www.scholastic.com/primarysources).