

“There is not just a curriculum. It will take a partnership of teachers, parents and administrators to improve student achievement. No one and no thing can accomplish this monumental task alone.”

“Treat all students equally, provide high-quality teaching, have high expectations and students will succeed.”

“In today’s world it is absolutely necessary for students to achieve at the highest level their ability allows, and then go beyond.”

PRIMARY SOURCES: AMERICA’S TEACHERS ON AMERICA’S SCHOOLS

DELAWARE

A PROJECT OF SCHOLASTIC AND THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

“Everyone should finish high school and move on to something higher. I think they all can.”

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

“Learning is a lifelong project and all students

are capable

being lifelong learners.”

“How do we prepare students for jobs that don’t yet exist?”

“Curriculum needs to be more relevant to the interests of students, and we need to better incorporate technology into the classroom.”
– *High School Teacher in Delaware*

***Primary Sources: Delaware* is meant for use in conjunction with the complete *Primary Sources* report available at www.scholastic.com/primarysources.**

A NOTE FROM SCHOLASTIC AND THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

In March 2010, Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation released the landmark study, *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools*, placing the views of our nation's public school teachers at the center of the discussion on education reform.

More than 40,000 teachers participated in the survey – from every state and at every grade level – and the unprecedented size and scope of the study allows for the release of new, state-level data from Delaware. *Primary Sources: Delaware* is based on the responses of 118 public school teachers across Delaware who participated in the national survey.

We asked teachers about the state of American education, the challenges facing students and the variety of supports and tools that teachers need to tackle those challenges. They responded with powerful, nuanced opinions on a number of issues, from student and teacher performance, to classroom innovation and academic standards, to the importance of the school-to-home connection.

Similar to their peers nationwide, teachers from Delaware had important opinions about critical issues in education at the national and state level. Specifically, teachers in Delaware:

- Are less likely than teachers nationwide to rate student academic achievement at their schools as “Excellent” (18% in Delaware, 28% nationally).
- View standardized tests—particularly state tests—as less important in evaluating student achievement than do their peers nationwide. Nearly four in 10 (39%) say state standardized tests are “not at all important” in measuring student achievement versus only 16% of teachers nationally.
- Are more likely than teachers nationwide to say pay-for-performance systems are important in retaining teachers.

It is important to note that *Primary Sources: Delaware* is a small subset of the data we collected on Delaware's teachers. Although we have selected the most statistically significant and state-relevant data for inclusion in this mini-report, we encourage you to look at the additional data on Delaware available in the appendices of the complete *Primary Sources* report.

While *Primary Sources: Delaware* reflects the wide range of voices and opinions of teachers across the state, one thing is constant: Teachers teach for the love of their students and the chance to make a difference in those young lives. Our goal should be to do all we can to support them in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Margery Mayer

President, Scholastic Education, Scholastic Inc.



Vicki L. Phillips

Director of Education, College Ready, United States Program

THE CHALLENGE

Delaware's Teachers Recognize the Challenges Facing Their Students

As is the case with teachers across the nation, teachers in Delaware are keenly aware of the limitations of a high school diploma and the disconnect between students' current levels of achievement and the levels at which they must perform to achieve success beyond high school.

Specifically:

- Delaware teachers are near unanimous in saying that a high school diploma is not enough for today's students. Ninety-nine percent of teachers in the state say that the most important goal of schools and teaching is to prepare students for success beyond high school (93% nationally).
- Nine out of 10 teachers in Delaware say that not all their students could leave high school prepared to succeed in a 2- or 4-year college (91% nationally).
- Only 6% of Delaware teachers strongly agree that their students enter their classroom prepared for on-grade-level work (an additional 31% "somewhat agree"). These data are significantly lower than the national average (16% and 44%, respectively).
- Only one in five (18%) Delaware teachers rate student academic achievement at their schools as "Excellent," compared to 28% of teachers nationwide.
- Only 42% of teachers in Delaware say that more than three quarters of their students could leave high school prepared to succeed in a 2- or 4-year college (46% nationally).

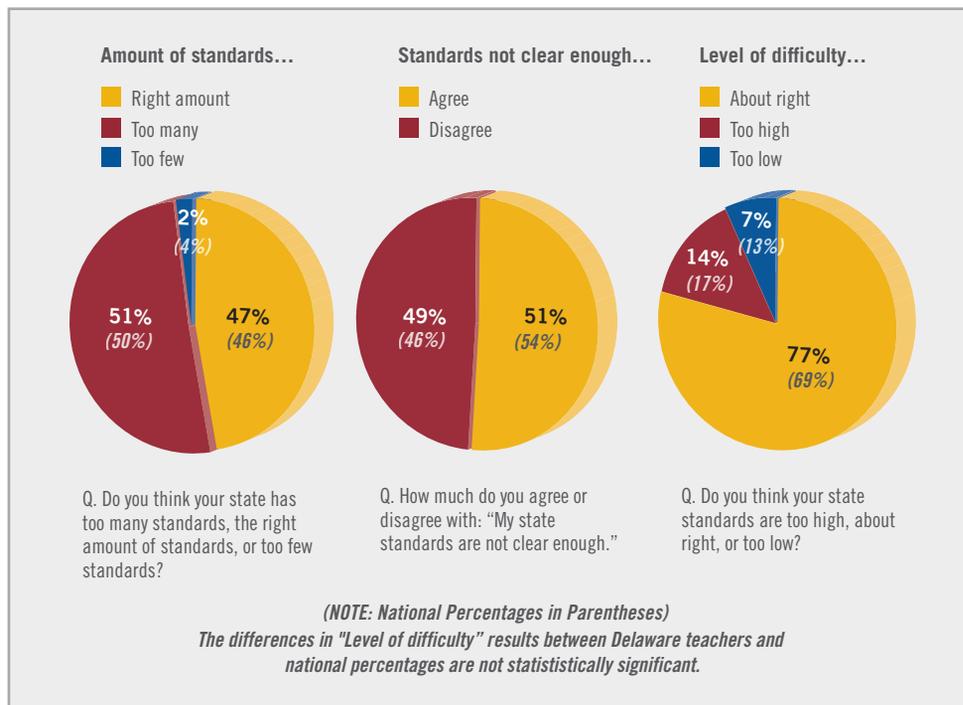
STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

Delaware Teachers' Views on Current Delaware State Standards

As is the case with their peers across the nation, teachers in Delaware recognize the role of academic standards in improving student achievement and preparedness. They are divided, however, in their opinions on the amount and clarity of their state standards:

- Teachers are split in their opinions on the amount of state academic standards, with about half saying that Delaware has too many standards (51%) and half saying that the number of standards is “about right” (49%). (50% and 46% nationally, respectively).
- As with their peers nationwide, a very small number of teachers in Delaware (2%) believe there are too few standards (4% nationally).
- Teachers are divided on whether their state standards are clear enough, with nearly half saying they are and half saying they are not.
- Nearly eight in 10 (77%) of Delaware’s teachers say the level of difficulty of their state standards is “about right,” with 14% saying standards are too high and 7% saying that they are too low.

Teachers' Views on Delaware State Standards



Delaware Teachers Support Clearer Standards, Common Across States

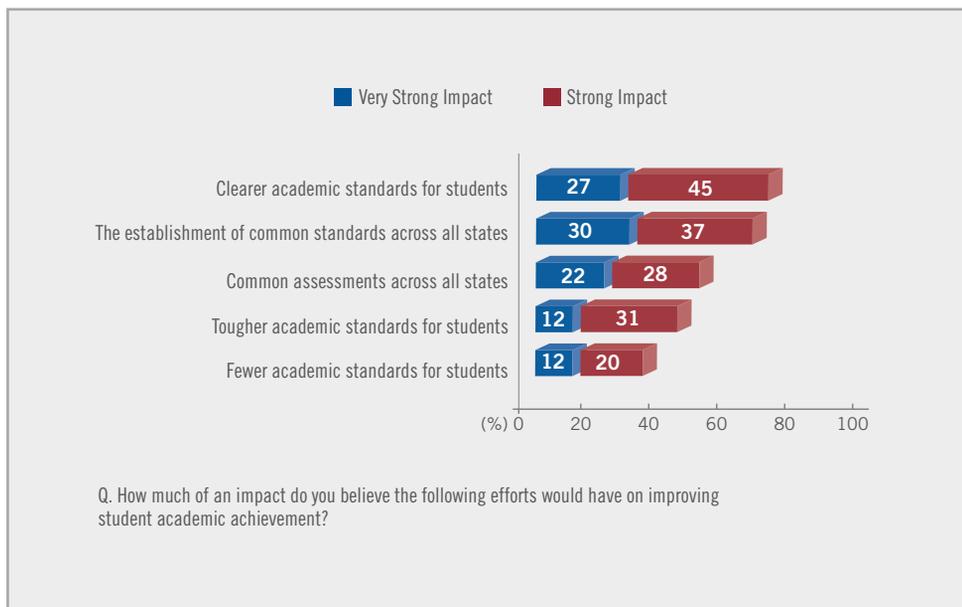
As is the case with their peers across the nation, Delaware's teachers support the establishment of clear and common standards across states. They say the following measures would have a very strong/strong impact on improving student achievement:

- Clearer academic standards for students (72% in Delaware, 74% nationally)
- Establishing common standards across all states (67% in Delaware, 60% nationally)

In keeping with the views of teachers across the country, Delaware teachers are far less certain that tougher and fewer standards would make a strong/very strong impact on improving student achievement:

- Tougher academic standards for students (42% in Delaware, 45% nationally)
- Fewer academic standards for students (32% in Delaware, 34% nationally)

Delaware Teachers' Views on the Impact Changes to Current Standards Would Have on Improving Academic Achievement

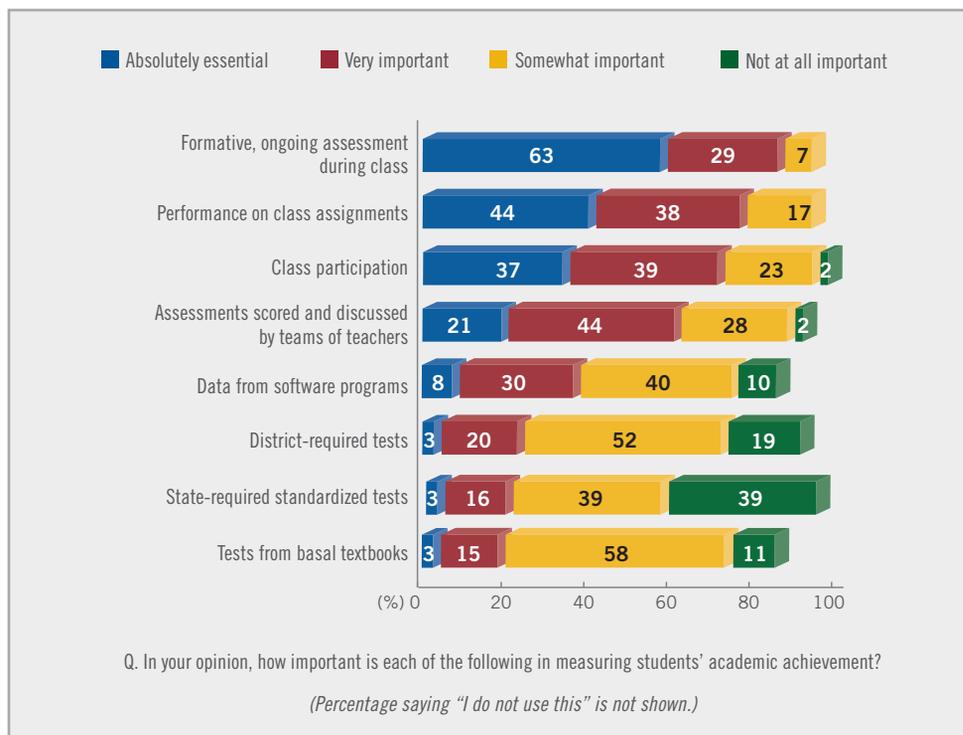


EVALUATING STUDENT AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Delaware Teachers' Views on Evaluating Student Performance

Delaware teachers are similar to the nation's teachers in their firm belief that student assessment should be driven by in-classroom experiences, including formative ongoing assessments, class participation and performance on class assignments.

Delaware Teachers' Views on Importance of Student Performance Measures



While district- and state-required standardized tests consistently rank low on the scale of importance for teachers across the country, Delaware's teachers appear to view current standardized tests—particularly state tests—less important than their peers:

- Nearly four in 10 (39%) teachers in Delaware say state standardized tests are “not at all important” in measuring student achievement, versus only 16% of teachers nationally.
- Nineteen percent say the same of district-required tests, versus 11% of teachers nationwide.

It should be noted, however, that this attitude is held among fewer than half of teachers in Delaware, while about half of teachers say common assessments across states would make a very strong or strong impact on improving student achievement, with an additional 39% saying these would make a moderate impact (as displayed on page 4).

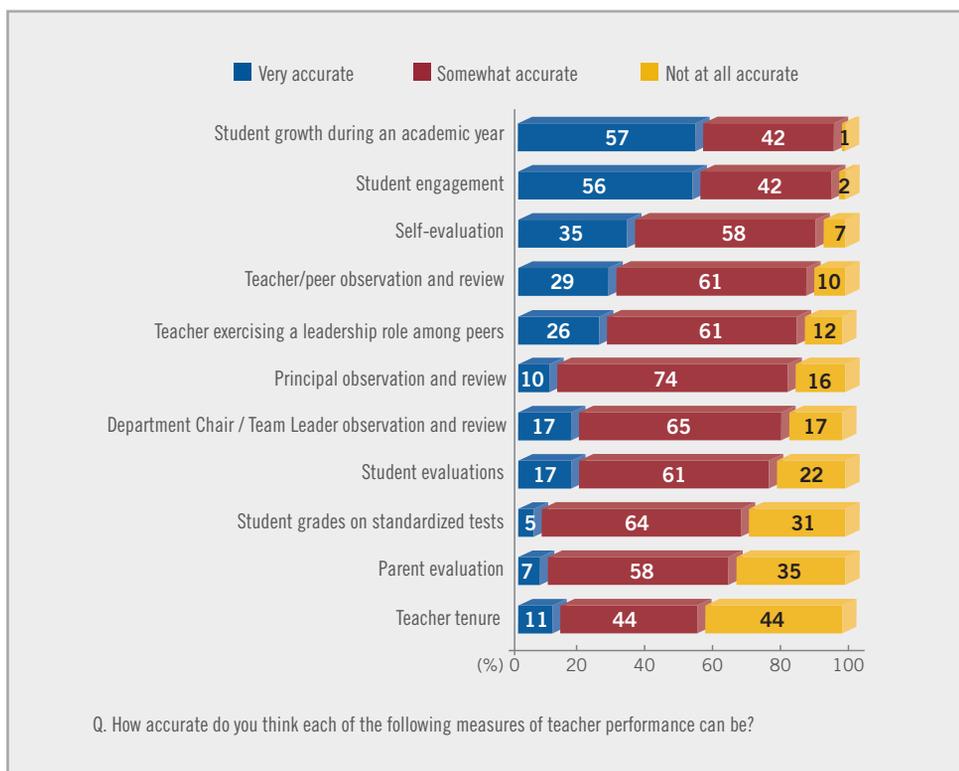
Additionally, teachers in Delaware are more likely than their peers nationwide to say that data from software programs are absolutely essential or very important in evaluating achievement (39% in Delaware, 29% nationally).

Delaware Teachers' Views on Measuring Teacher Performance

In qualitative conversation, teachers stress a desire for their performance to be based on factors they can impact directly—like student growth and student engagement—and not on factors that fail to consider the realities of individual students in individual classrooms.

This is clearly borne out in *Primary Sources* data at both the national and Delaware levels. By far, teachers say that student growth over the course of an academic year and student engagement are the most accurate measures of teacher performance.

Delaware Teachers' Views on the Degree of Accuracy of Measures of Teacher Performance



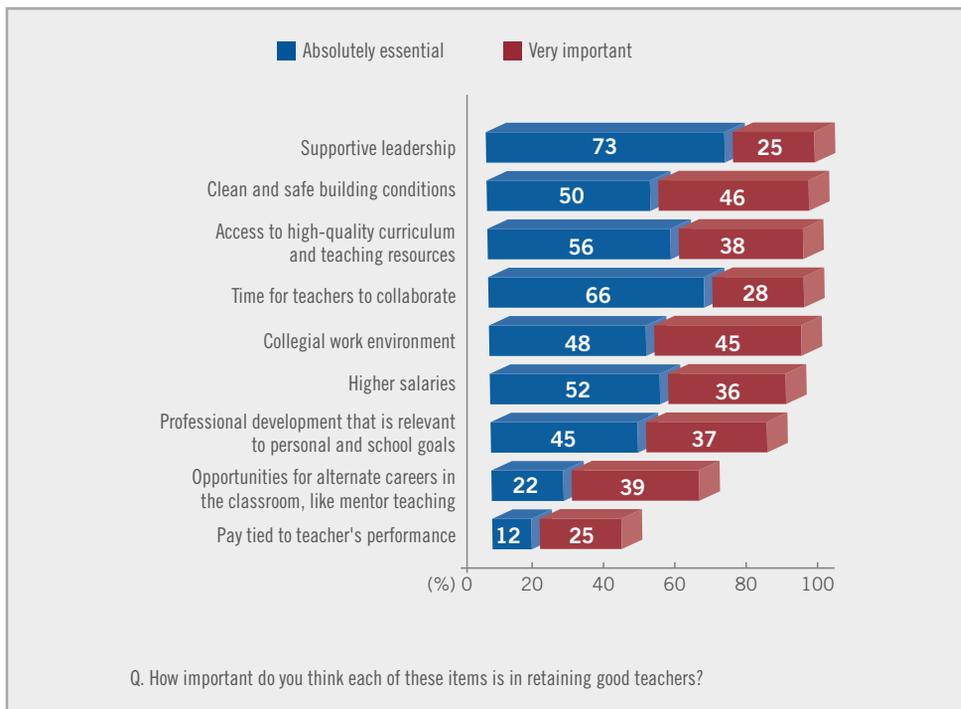
TEACHER RETENTION

Delaware Teachers' Views on Factors Impacting Teacher Retention

Teachers who participated in the *Primary Sources* study were asked to evaluate the importance of nine different factors in retaining good teachers. This information provided insight on the things teachers most value in their profession.

In nearly every state in the nation, supportive leadership is by far the most important factor in retaining good teachers, and Delaware is no exception. In Delaware, 73% of teachers say that supportive leadership is absolutely essential in retaining good teachers (68% nationally).

Delaware Teachers' Views on Factors Impacting Teacher Retention



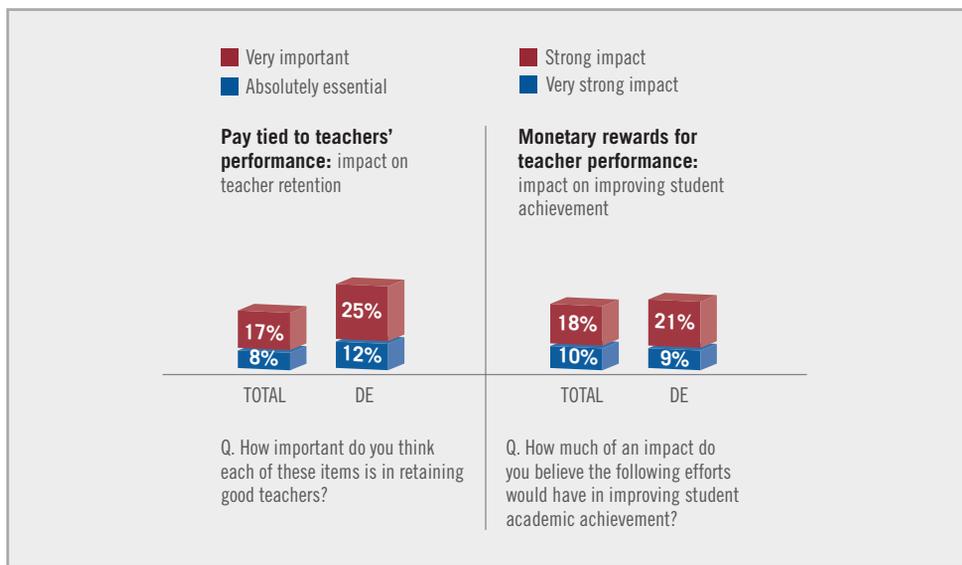
Higher salaries shows a good deal more variation across states but overall, it ranks far lower than non-monetary measures. In Delaware, teacher pay ranks sixth out of nine items asked about with 52% of Delaware teachers saying it is absolutely essential in retaining good teachers (this is statistically similar to the national average of 45%).

There are several factors that Delaware’s teachers are more likely to rate as absolutely essential or very important in retaining good teachers, however. These include:

- Clean and safe building conditions (95% of teachers in Delaware say this is absolutely essential or very important to teacher retention, vs. 88% of teachers nationally)
- Collegial work environment (93% in Delaware, 85% nationally)
- Pay tied to teachers’ performance (37% in Delaware, 26% nationally)

While Delaware teachers are more open to pay-for-performance systems as a way to retain teachers, they are no more likely than teachers nationwide to say pay-for-performance systems will have an impact on improving academic achievement.

Delaware Teachers’ Views on Monetary Issues



Methodology

This report is based on the responses of the 118 teachers in Delaware who participated in the national survey for *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools*. The data reflect a cross-section of Delaware's teachers across many teacher and school characteristics, including grade level(s) taught, years of teaching experience and community income.

Please note: Survey results are at the 90% confidence level. Nonetheless, because the sample of teachers in Delaware is relatively small, we encourage that these data be used as part of wider base of knowledge about Delaware's teachers.

For more details on the methodology of this study, please see the full *Primary Sources* report at: www.scholastic.com/primarysources.

“This job doesn't pay much but I always want to go to work”

“Teaching is not like any other job. It's a passion.”

“Standards are about equity and expectation.”

“Value should be placed on education. Every job, career, and occupation starts here.”

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.

“If you're not tech-savvy, you can't compete in the global marketplace.”

“Role model the skills, believe in the students, and never give up.”

“If we are going to compete as a nation we should be learning as a nation.”

“We have a great system for getting them through the system. We don't have a great system to teach them to think outside the box.”