

“There is not just a solution. 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

OHIO

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.”

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation

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

“Treat teachers as trusted professionals, provide them with the right tools, and students will find success.”  
– *Middle School Teacher in Ohio*

***Primary Sources: Ohio* is meant for use in conjunction with the complete *Primary Sources* report available at [www.scholastic.com/primarysources](http://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 Ohio. *Primary Sources: Ohio* is based on the responses of more than 1,600 public school teachers across the state of Ohio 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 Ohio had important opinions about the critical issues in education at the national and state levels. Specifically, in Ohio:

- Teachers are slightly more likely than teachers nationwide to rate student academic achievement at their school as “Excellent” (32% in Ohio, 28% nationally).
- Teachers are significantly more likely than teachers nationwide to say that their state has too many standards (60% in Ohio, 50% nationally).
- Even though a majority (71%) of teachers say the level of difficulty of their state standards is about right. Significantly more say standards are too high rather than too low (19% vs. 9%).
- Teachers are less likely than their peers nationwide to view monetary performance rewards for teachers as making a strong impact on either student achievement or teacher retention.

It is important to note that *Primary Sources: Ohio* is a small subset of the data we collected on Ohio'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 Ohio available in the appendices of the complete *Primary Sources* report.

While *Primary Sources: Ohio* 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

---

## Ohio's Teachers Recognize the Challenges Facing Their Students

Teachers in Ohio 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, in Ohio:

- Teachers say that a high school diploma is not enough for today's students. Ninety-four 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 say that not all their students could leave high school prepared to succeed in a 2- or 4-year college (91% nationally).
- Less than two in 10 (18%) teachers strongly agree that their students enter their classroom prepared for on-grade-level work (an additional 47% "somewhat agree"). This is similar to 16% and 44%, respectively, among teachers nationwide.
- Teachers are slightly more likely than the national average to rate student academic achievement at their schools as "Excellent" (32% in Ohio, 28% nationally).
- Less than half (45%) of teachers say that more than three quarters of the students currently in their classes could leave high school prepared to succeed in a 2- or 4-year college (46% nationally).

## Teachers in Ohio's Low-Income Communities Recognize Added Challenges

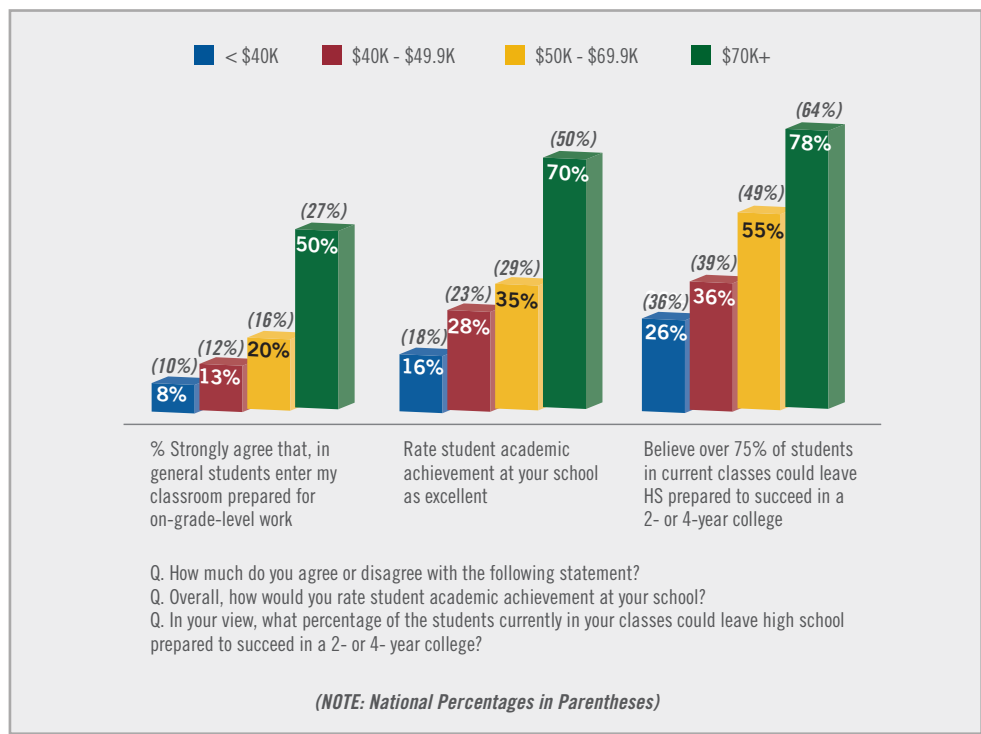
As with teachers nationwide, a comparison of responses from teachers in low- and high-income communities in Ohio underscores the inequity facing students in schools across the state and to the stark differences in teachers' perceptions of their students' ability to meet the challenges of today's workplace.

This achievement gap identified by teachers in the lowest and highest income communities is far greater in Ohio than it is nationally. For example:

- The gap in the percentage of teachers in lower and higher income communities who strongly agree that students enter their class prepared for on-grade-level work is 17 points nationally: from 10% to 27%. In Ohio, that gap is 42 points (from 8% to 50%).

- Similarly large gaps—both much larger than the average nationwide gap—are seen in teacher ratings of student achievement at their school and in teacher estimates of how many of their students could leave high school prepared to succeed in college.

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



It is important to note that despite the added challenges faced by teachers in low-income communities in Ohio, there is little difference in their views and the views of their peers in high-income communities on the reform-related issues discussed in this report and in the complete *Primary Sources*.

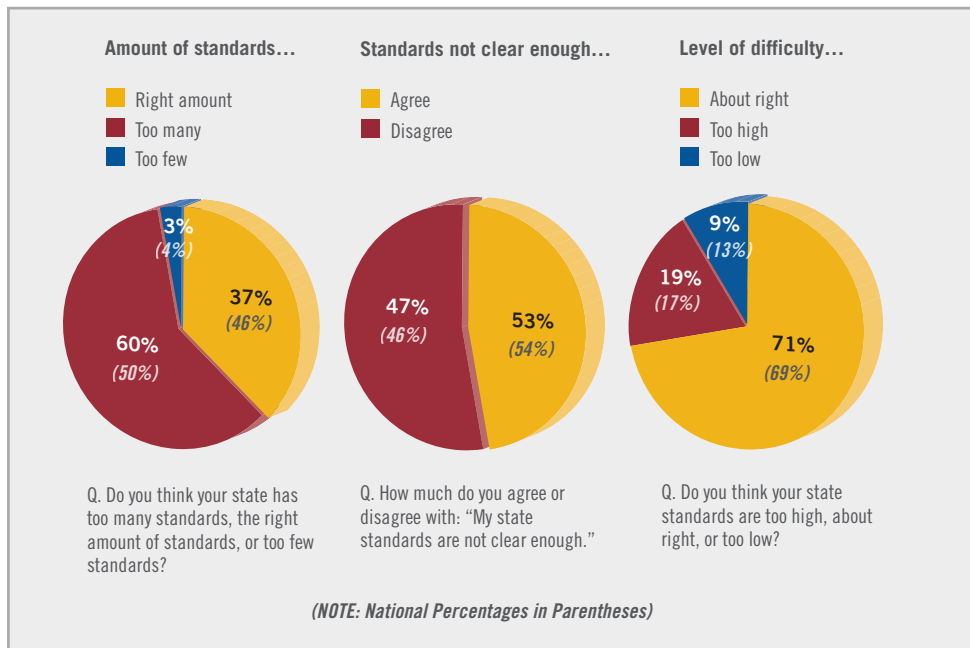
# STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

## Ohio Teachers' Views on Current Ohio State Standards

As is the case with their peers across the nation, teachers in Ohio 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:

- A majority of teachers (60%) feel that Ohio has too many state standards. Fewer than four in 10 say the number of standards is “about right.” These opinions are significantly different than the opinions of their peers nationwide (50% “too many” and 46% “about right”).
- A solid majority (71%) say the level of difficulty of their state standards is about right. Of the remaining three in 10 teachers, significantly more believe state standards are too high (19%) than too low (9%).

## Teachers' Views on Ohio State Standards

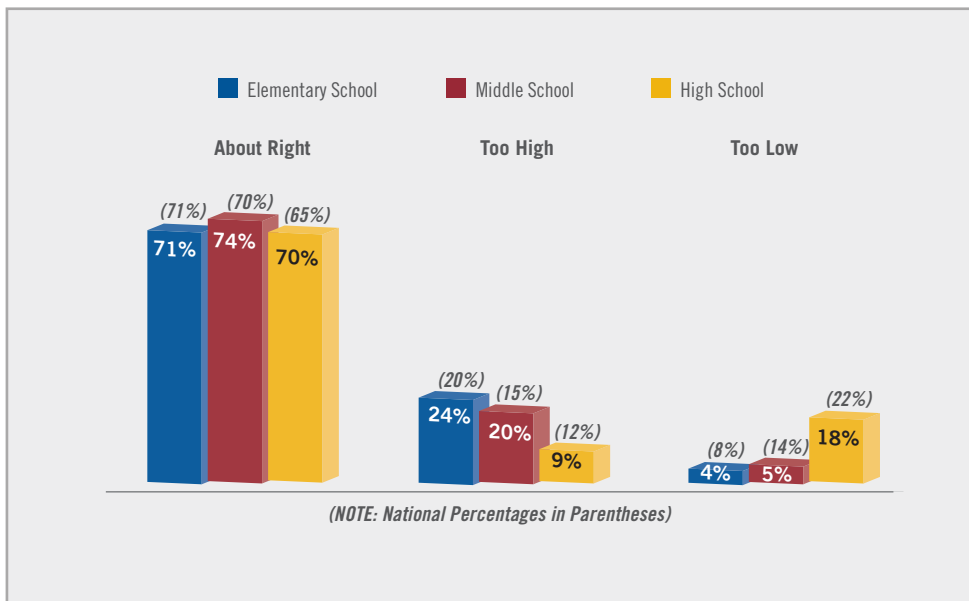


## Ohio Teachers' Views on Standards Shift as Students Progress in Grade Level

Although seven in 10 teachers at all school levels say the level of difficulty of Ohio's standards is "about right," the views among the remaining three in 10 vary significantly by grade(s) taught.

Elementary and middle school teachers are more than twice as likely as high school teachers to say standards are too high, while high school teachers are over three times likely as elementary and middle school teachers to think they are too low.

### Degree of Difficulty of Ohio State Standards, by School Level



## Ohio Teachers Support Clearer Standards, Common Across States

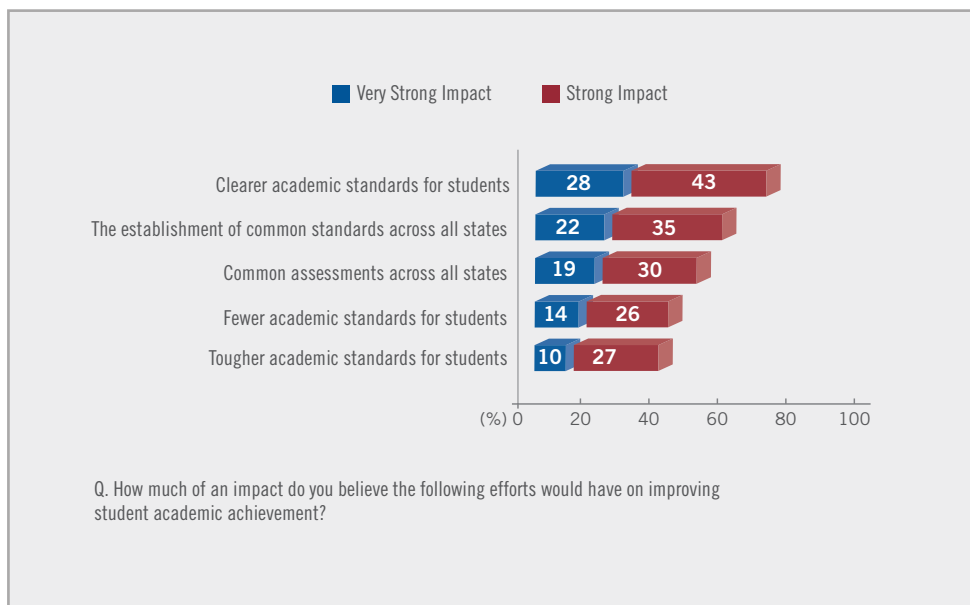
Ohio's teachers support the establishment of clear and common standards across states. They say the following measures would have a very strong/strong impact on improving student achievement:

- Clearer academic standards for students (71% in Ohio, 74% nationally)
- The establishment of common standards across all states (56% in Ohio, 60% nationally)

In keeping with the views of teachers across the country, Ohio's teachers are far less certain that fewer and more challenging standards would make a strong or very strong impact on improving student achievement:

- Tougher academic standards for students (37% in Ohio, 45% nationally)
- Fewer academic standards for students (40% in Ohio, 34% nationally)

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





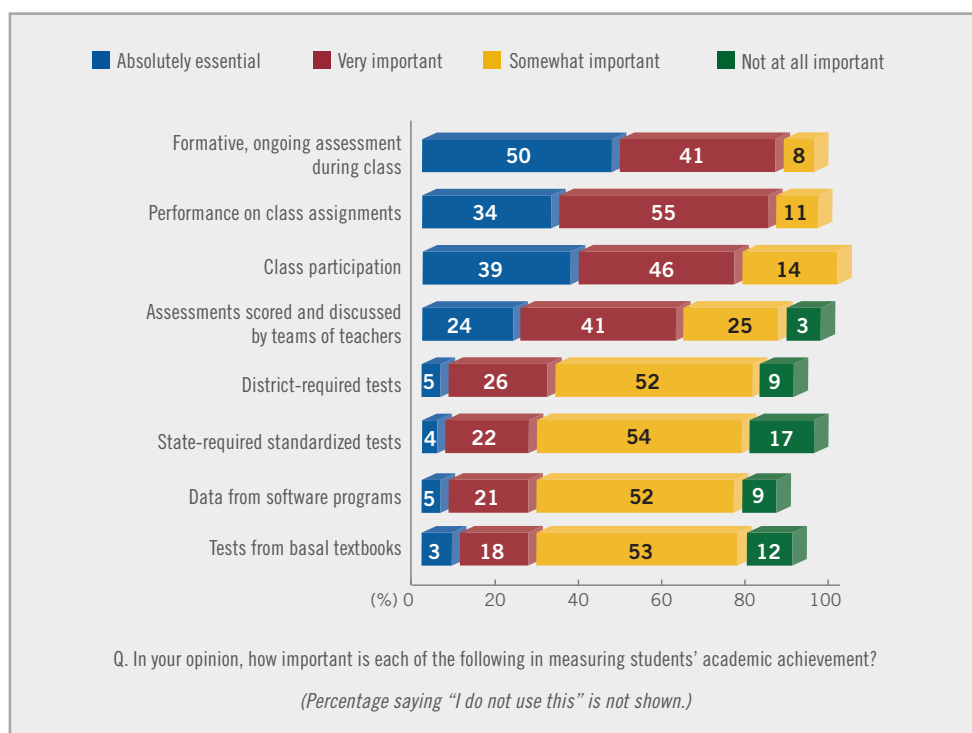
# EVALUATING STUDENT AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE

## Ohio Teachers' Views on Evaluating Student Performance

Ohio 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.

Teachers in Ohio also see value in standardized tests as a way to evaluate student performance. Only 9% and 17% of teachers say district- and state-required tests, respectively, are “not at all” important in measuring student academic achievement (11% and 16% nationally).

## Ohio Teachers' Views on Importance of Student Performance Measures



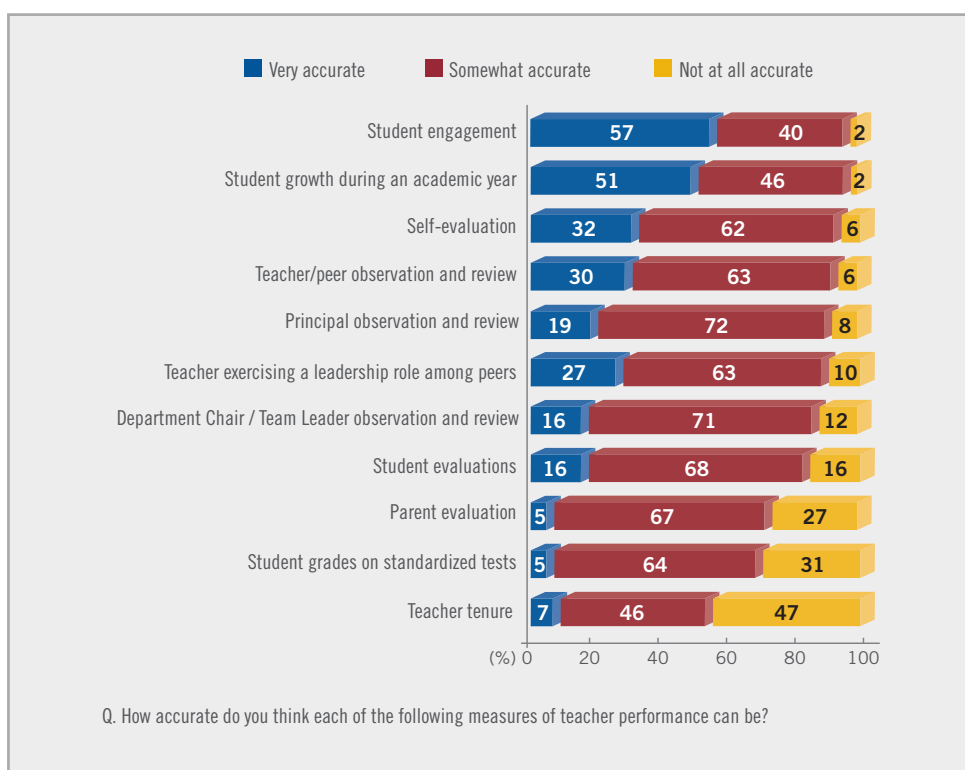
Further, as noted on page 6, 48% of Ohio teachers say common assessments across states would have a very strong or strong impact on improving student achievement—with an additional 36% saying these would make a moderate impact.

## Ohio 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 Ohio 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.

### Ohio Teachers' Views on the Degree of Accuracy of Measures of Teacher Performance



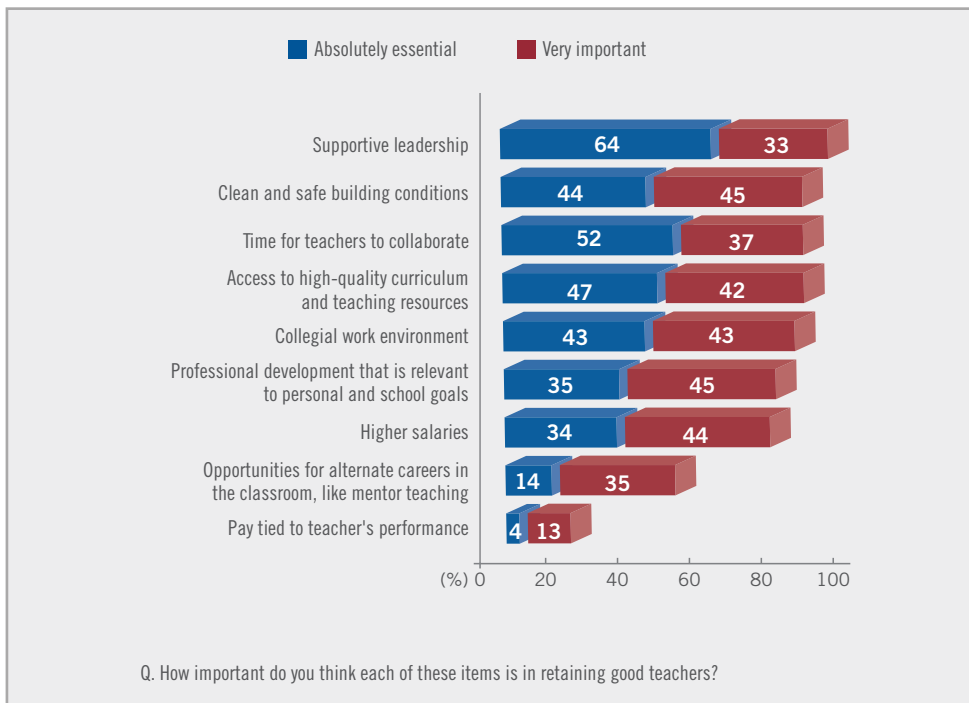
# TEACHER RETENTION

## Ohio Teachers' Views on Factors Impacting Teacher Retention

Overall, Ohio teachers feel similarly to their peers nationwide when it comes to the importance of various factors in retaining good teachers.

In nearly every state in the nation, supportive leadership is ranked the most important factor in retaining good teachers, and Ohio is no exception. In Ohio, 64% of teachers say that supportive leadership is absolutely essential in retaining good teachers (68% nationally).

## Ohio Teachers' Views on Factors Impacting Teacher Retention



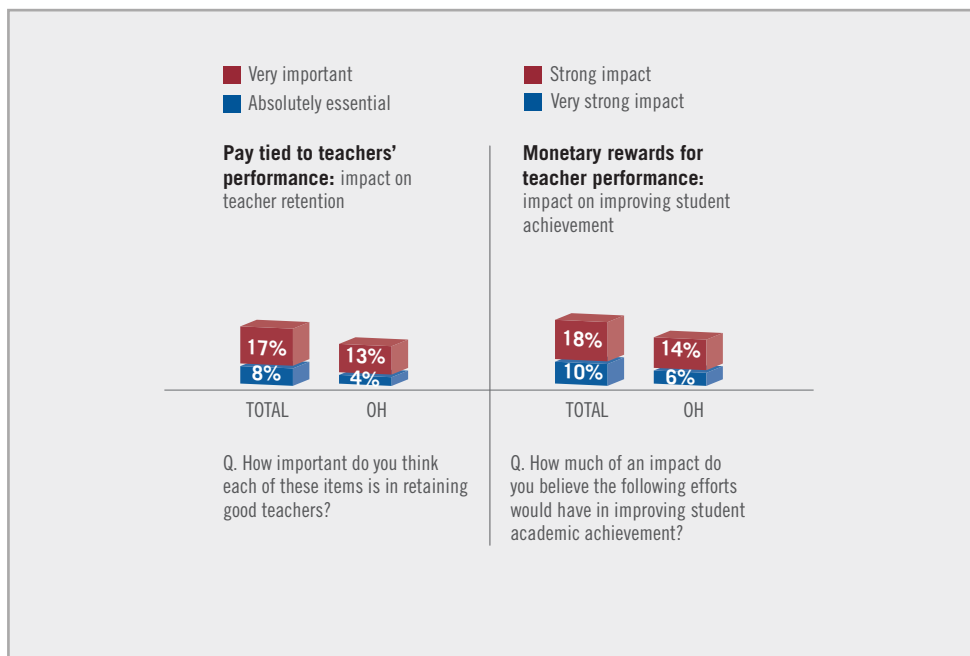
## Ohio Teachers' Views on Monetary Compensation

While the impact of higher salaries on teacher retention varies across states, it consistently ranks lower than other, non-monetary measures; this is no different in Ohio. The state's teachers rank higher salaries seventh out of nine items impacting teacher retention, with 34% of Ohio's teachers saying it is absolutely essential in retaining good teachers (lower than the national average of 45%).

Teachers in Ohio are even less likely than teachers nationwide to view pay-for-performance systems as making an impact on either teacher retention or student achievement:

- Only 17% (26% nationally) say that pay for performance is a critical component of retaining good teachers.
- Only one in five (21% in Ohio, 28% nationally) say that monetary rewards for teacher performance would have a very strong/strong impact on improving student academic achievement.

### Ohio Teachers' Views on Monetary Issues



---

## Methodology

This report is based on the responses of the 1613 teachers in Ohio who participated in the national survey for *Primary Sources: America's Teachers on America's Schools*. The data reflect a cross-section of Ohio's teachers across many teacher and school characteristics, including grade level(s) taught, years of teaching experience and community income.

The fieldwork for this survey was conducted in March through June of 2009 by phone (n=584) and online (n=1029). For more details on the methodology of this study, please see the full *Primary Sources* report at: [www.scholastic.com/primarysources](http://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.”

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

“Standards are about equity and expectation.”

**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).

“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.”