

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

“We need an overhaul in the culture of learning.”

“I firmly believe that the education of a child involves three major components: teacher, student and parents.”

PRIMARY SOURCES 2011

A FIRST LOOK FOR EDUCATION NATION

A PROJECT OF SCHOLASTIC AND THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

September 2011

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

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

“We all need to take responsibility for the education of our children.”

“We are not miracle workers.

We are hard workers.”

“We are not in this business to make money, but to make a difference.”

“I will be satisfied when those outside the classroom show appreciation of our work, listen to our ideas, and consider our thoughts. That would be the greatest payment of all.”
— *Elementary School Teacher*

A NOTE FROM SCHOLASTIC AND THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are thrilled to be a part of the NBC News 2011 Education Nation and the Teacher Town Hall—we are grateful to NBC for again dedicating time and coverage to the conversation on America’s schools, and for bringing teachers’ voices to the forefront of that discussion.

In March of 2010, we released *Primary Sources: America’s Teachers on America’s Schools*, the landmark study encompassing the voices of 40,000 public school teachers, which placed their views at the center of the national conversation on education. We are happy to announce that we have completed a second wave of the survey with 10,000 teachers and are eager to release the results to the public in January 2012.

Today, we share a first look at the research with Education Nation attendees.

We asked teachers about the state of American education, about the challenges facing students, and about the tools and supports that teachers need to tackle those challenges. We heard from educators about their willingness to be held accountable for their students’ performance, their desire to further engage families in children’s education, and their unwavering commitment to becoming the best teachers they can be.

What you see here is just the beginning. Please visit www.scholastic.com/primarysources to register to receive the full report upon its release in January.

Sincerely,



Melinda Gates

Co-Chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



Dick Robinson

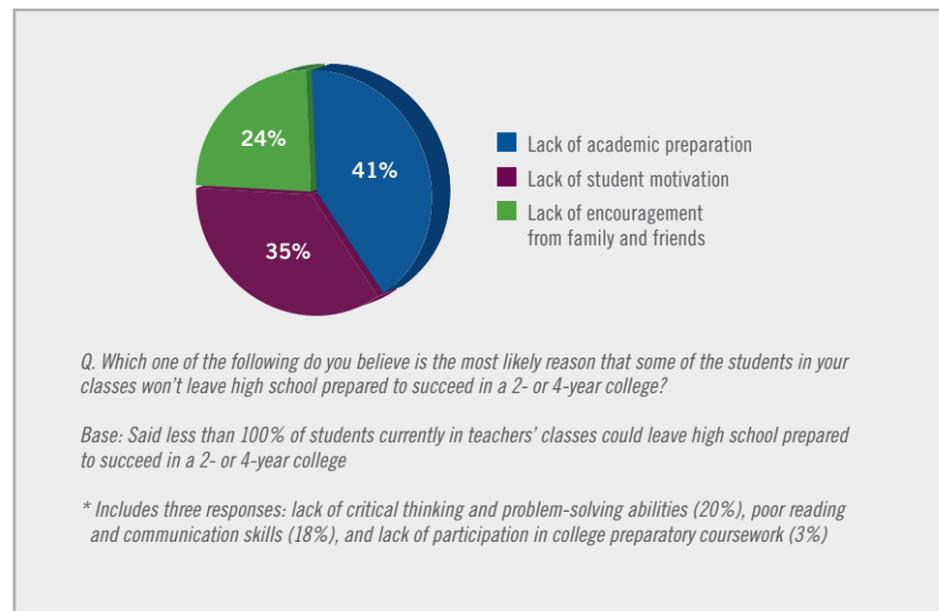
Chairman, President and CEO, Scholastic Inc.

The challenges facing America's teachers and students are significant... and growing.

Teachers recognize that many students are leaving high school ill prepared to succeed in college. In their view, more than one-third of America's students are not prepared for higher education, and on average, teachers believe that only 63% of their students will leave high school prepared to succeed in college. These data align with national high school graduation rates.

When asked to choose the one out of five possible reasons why this is the case, teachers across all grade levels are fairly evenly dispersed across three core components needed for success: academic instruction promoting critical thinking, problem solving, reading and college coursework; a social support system including family and friends; and student motivation.

Teachers' Views on the Most Likely Reason Their Students Won't Leave High School Prepared to Succeed in a 2- or 4-Year College

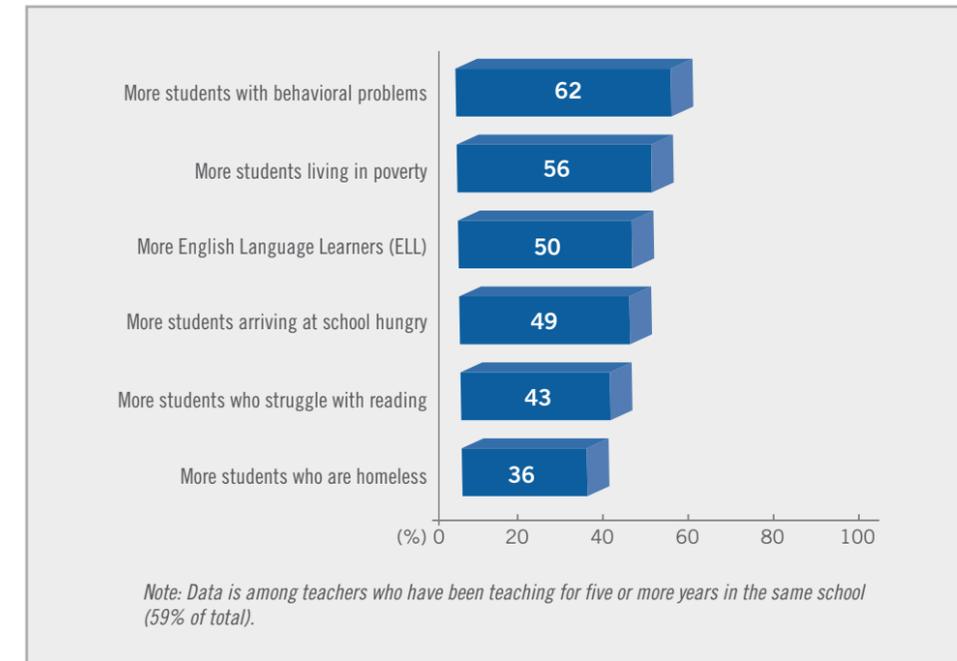


In addition to these factors, teachers who have been teaching in the same school for more than five years report increases in challenges in their classrooms:

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

– MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers' Views on How the Makeup of the Student Body Has Changed Since They Have Been Teaching in Their School



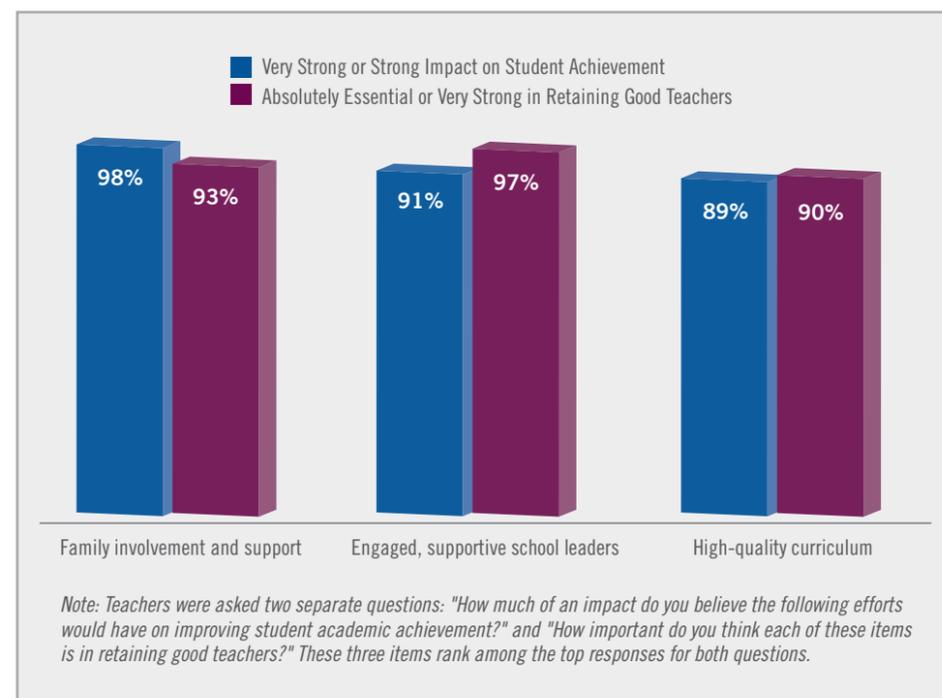
“What’s going to happen to these kids in college? I don’t know if they can make it.”

– HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers are ready to tackle these challenges, and they are eager for the tools, training and supports to do the job.

In conversation, teachers tell us that their primary goal is to be a great teacher, and they know what it takes to achieve that goal: high-quality curricula combined with school leaders and parents who are both engaged and supportive. Teachers tell us that these three factors are critical to improving student achievement and to ensuring that the best teachers stay in the teaching profession.

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



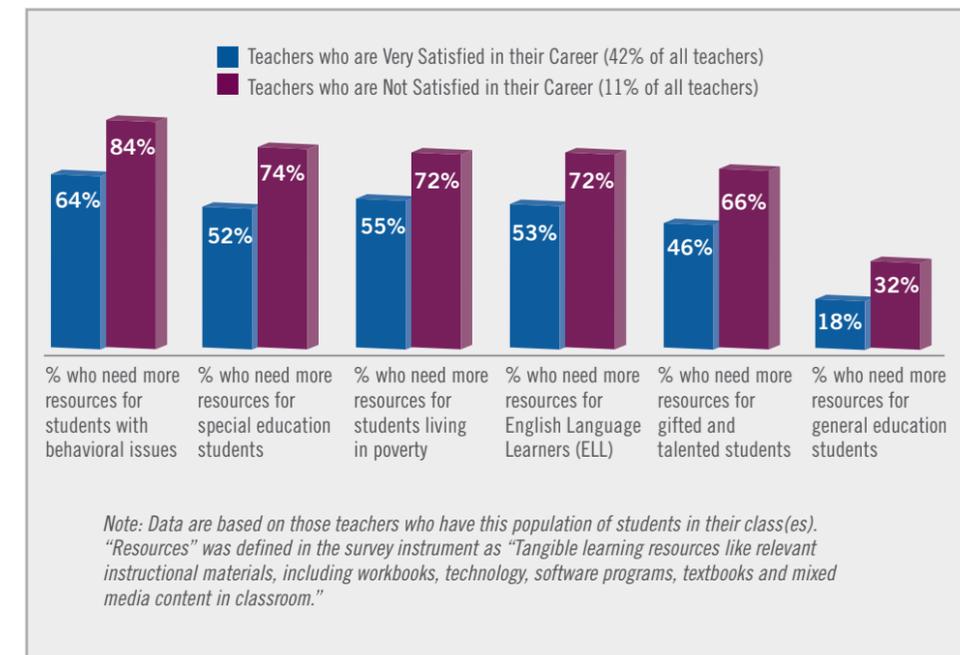
Teachers also report the need for additional resources to teach special populations in their classrooms—students with behavioral issues, students in special education, English Language Learners and others.

What's more, while 89% of teachers are satisfied (47%) or very satisfied (42%) in their career, the 11% who are dissatisfied report significantly higher need for resources and training to help them tackle the challenges in their classrooms.

"Having the resources to effectively teach and empower all students would be the greatest gift a teacher can receive."

– ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

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



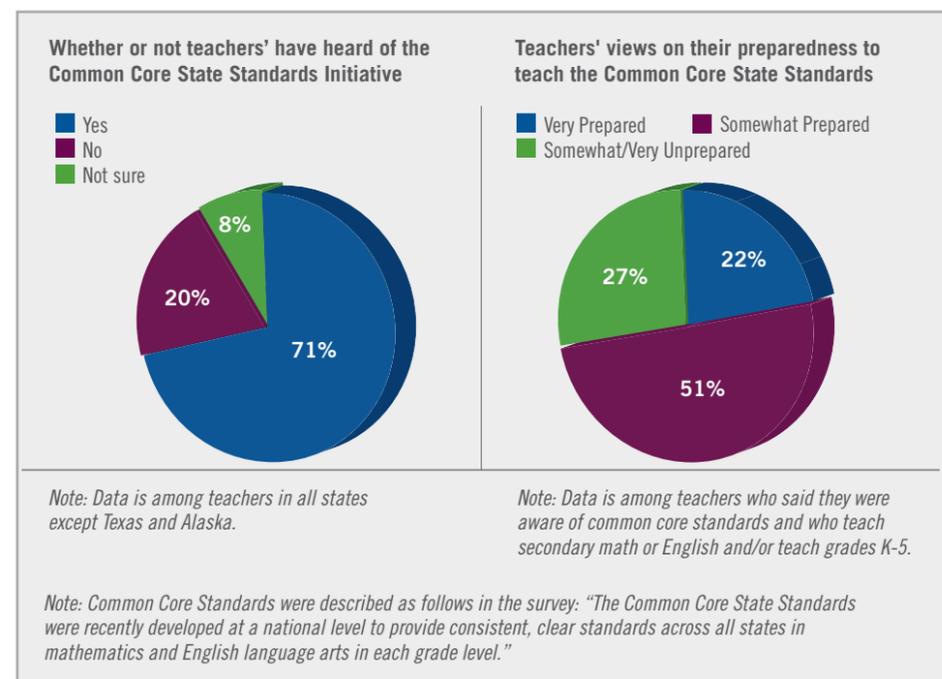
"We need materials that help differentiate instruction for the most challenged kids. They, more than any others, need to learn as individuals."

– MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Many teachers support the adoption of common standards, but they need resources to prepare for and implement them.

Sixty-four percent of teachers say that common standards across all states would make a very strong or strong impact on improving student achievement and 71% of teachers in 48 states and the District of Columbia¹ say they have heard of the Common Core State Standards Initiative. Of the teachers who are aware of the Common Core Standards, however, only 22% say they are “very prepared” to teach the standards.

Teachers' Awareness and Assessment of Their Own Preparedness to Teach to the Common Core Standards



Teachers—even those who feel prepared to teach to the new standards—tell us they need tools and supports to effectively implement the standards in their classrooms:

- 64% 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% need professional development on how to teach parts of the standards that are new to them, and
- 59% need curricula and learning tools aligned to the new standards in English and Mathematics.

1. Teachers in Texas and Alaska were not asked this question, as these states have not adopted the Common Core Standards.

“If we’re going to compete as a nation, we should be learning as a nation.”

– HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

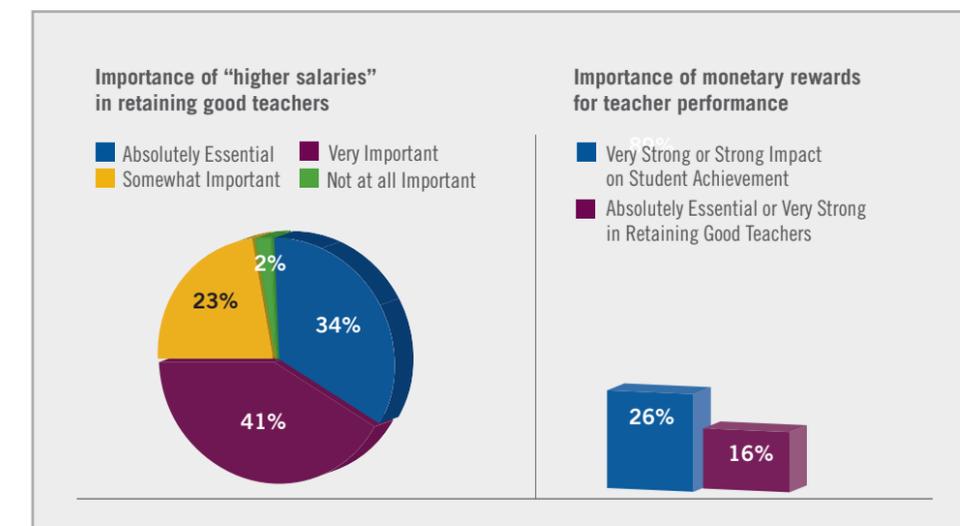
Nonmonetary supports are significantly more important to teachers than higher salaries and monetary rewards.

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, when given a list of factors that might impact teacher retention, “higher salaries” ranked 11 out of 15 items, behind a range of nonmonetary supports, including supportive leadership, family involvement in education, time for collaboration and professional development.²

When asked about monetary rewards for teacher performance, teachers are even more clear about the limited role compensation policies play in 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).

Teachers' Views on Salaries and Pay for Performance



2. The full list of items impacting teacher retention will be released in January 2012 with the complete *Primary Sources 2011* report.

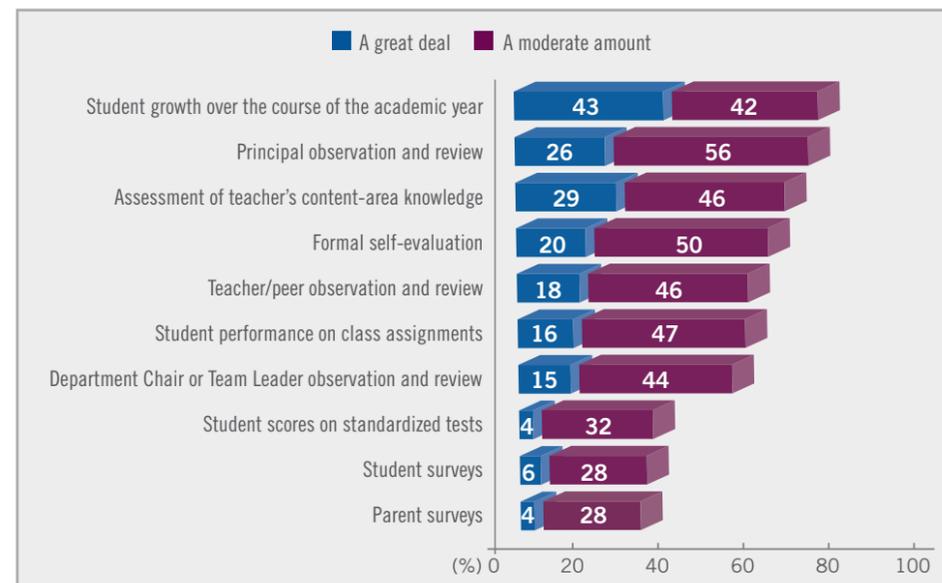
“We are not in this business to make money, but to make a difference.”

– ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers are willing to be held accountable for their students' growth through multiple measures, but they are discouraged by the narrow focus on standardized tests.

Teachers are open to a variety of measures of their performance, saying that the following metrics should contribute either a great deal or a moderate amount:

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



When asked to compare how often each of these forms of assessment should happen with how often each actually happens, teachers say that all of the above measures should happen more frequently, with the exception of analysis of student scores on standardized tests.

When asked about the role standardized tests play in America's schools, teachers are overwhelmingly clear—these tests are not the best way to judge either student or teacher performance. While 60% of teachers report that these tests determine what is taught in their classroom:

- Only 26% of teachers say that the results of standardized tests are an accurate reflection of student achievement,

- Only 36% say that those results should significantly contribute to the measurement of teacher performance, and
- Only 45% say that students take them seriously and perform to the best of their ability.

Teachers' views of tenure reflect a desire for additional, nuanced evaluation³:

- 93% of teachers agree (65% strongly, 27% somewhat) that tenure should not protect ineffective teachers,
- 89% agree (41% strongly, 48% somewhat) that tenure should reflect evaluations of teacher effectiveness,
- 80% agree (35% strongly, 45% somewhat) that tenure should be reevaluated at regular intervals, and
- On average, teachers think that tenure should be granted at 5.4 years of experience.

3. Additional information on teachers' views on standardized tests and teacher tenure will be released in January 2012 with the complete *Primary Sources 2011* report.

“If we're going to compete as a nation, we should be learning as a nation.”

– HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers should be measured by the growth of their students. ‘Where was the child when he entered my class and what did I help him achieve?’ That’s how I should be judged.”

– ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

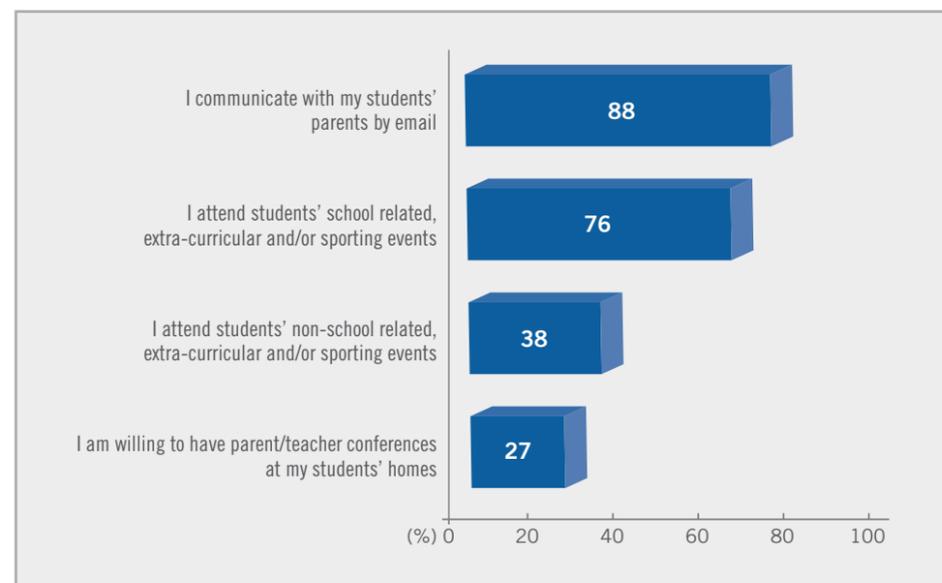
Teachers tell us that families are a critical factor in raising academic achievement, yet many report lower parent participation in their schools.

As noted, 98% of teachers say family involvement and support has a strong or very strong impact on student achievement. At the same time, 47% of teachers who have been teaching for five or more years in the same school (across all demographics) report lower parent participation in their schools and classrooms. A total of 43% say this percentage has not changed, and only 10% say there is a greater percentage of parents participating in their classroom now, compared with when they started teaching in the school where they currently work.

In conversation, teachers tell us that more parents are working multiple jobs, more students are coming from two-income families and parents are less able to take time away from work. Additionally, teachers say the strain and stress of financial difficulties (with many directly citing the current economic climate) prevents parents from being as involved.

Teachers and schools are focused on strengthening the school-to-home connection. Eighty percent of teachers say parents in their community feel welcome at their school, and teachers tell us:

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Situation Applies to Them



Teachers' firm commitment to helping students reach their potential resonates throughout *Primary Sources 2011*—Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are excited to share the complete findings and full report with you in January 2012. Please visit www.scholastic.com/primarysources to register to receive the full *Primary Sources 2011* report upon release.

“I firmly believe that the education of a child involves three major components: teacher, student and parents.”

– ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Methodology, in brief:

- Fieldwork and analysis for this national survey were conducted by Harrison Group.
- Teachers for this national survey were recruited using an email-to-online survey method from a targeted sample list of public school teachers maintained by Market Data Retrieval (MDR).
- A total of 10,212 preK–12 public school classroom teachers completed the survey from June 28 to July 13, 2011. These interviews averaged 28 minutes in length. The sponsors of the research were not revealed to respondents prior to survey participation. A gift certificate to an online education store was offered as an incentive for participation.
- As is the case with most national polls, the data were weighted to ensure representativeness across key characteristics. These included region of the country, urbanicity of schools in which teachers teach, number of years of teaching experience, and grade(s). Teacher characteristics were generally obtained from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, using publicly available data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), Public Teacher Questionnaire 2007–08, and the Digest of Education Statistics 2010.

NOTES

“I have worked in a wide range of teaching environments,
and the one constant is the joy of the moment
when the light bulb goes on.”
– *Elementary School Teacher*

Primary Sources 2011 is meant for use in conjunction with the complete *Primary Sources* report
available at www.scholastic.com/primarysources.

“Having the resources to effectively teach and empower all students would be the greatest gift a teacher could receive.”

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

“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.”

Please visit www.scholastic.com/primarysources to register to receive the full *Primary Sources 2011* report upon release.

Please add your voice to the Teacher Wall!
Visit www.teacherwall.org, upload a video, and share your thoughts on your work, your students and your world.

“Class sizes are larger, demands are larger, and pay is lower.”

“The title ‘teacher’ is outdated. We are professional educators and deserve to be treated as such.”

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

“Let me use the education I have to do what I know is the most effective in my classroom.”