



TEACHER & PRINCIPAL SCHOOL REPORT

# ALABAMA

Equity & Literacy

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# EDUCATORS' VIEWS & EXPERIENCES: NATIONAL COMPARISON



## ALABAMA FINDINGS IN COMPARISON WITH THE NATION

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

### > BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Alabama teachers are more likely to say that **programming that includes the arts and foreign languages is not adequately available** for their students (41% vs. 26%).

Teachers in Alabama are **more likely to receive discretionary funds from their school district or PTA** compared to teachers nationally (61% vs. 55%) and, when spending their own money, are **much more likely to buy clothing for students** than are other teachers in the nation (40% vs. 26%).

### > FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Alabama educators are more likely to say **it is important to accommodate families whose schedules prevent in-school meetings** (71% vs. 63%) in order to encourage family engagement with their child's learning. They are less likely to say that hosting and encouraging parent-teacher conference attendance is happening to the degree it should (66% vs. 77%).

### > READING IN AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL

Alabama educators include **encouraging reading aloud and/or children's independent reading** at home among their top five activities to support family engagement more often than their peers nationwide (75% vs 69%).

Almost three-quarters of Alabama teachers say they **wish students were read aloud to or were able to read a book of their choice more often**—more than said this nationally (73% vs. 63%).

Alabama teachers are **more likely to cite ebooks (50% vs. 41%) and reference databases (49% vs. 41%) as classroom library needs**. Additionally, these items are in Alabama teachers' top needs for classroom libraries but do not appear as top needs for teachers nationally.

Alabama educators are more likely to say their **students get access to books during summer break through a public library children's program** (85% vs. 77%) and are less likely to report students receive books for summer reading from their teachers (12% vs. 22%) or the school/district (3% vs. 17%).



The national *Teacher & Principal School Report* series can be found at [scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport](https://www.scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport).



# BARRIERS TO EQUITY IN EDUCATION

Nine in 10 Alabama teachers and principals agree that many of their students face barriers to learning from outside of the school environment (89%). Teachers report having students in their classrooms who are facing myriad barriers to learning:

- 89%** living in poverty
- 84%** experiencing family or personal crisis
- 79%** coming to school hungry
- 75%** in need of mental health services

- 66%** in need of healthcare services
- 65%** homeless or in temporary housing
- 59%** in need of English language learning support



Every child should have the same access to quality education and resources. Poverty and race should not be barriers; adequate funding is the first step.

Elementary School Teacher

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

### FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONDITIONS

- 55%** Family involvement in student learning
- 38%** Strong staff-to-family connections
- 24%** Strong connections between schools and communities

### OUTSIDE-OF-SCHOOL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

- 52%** Access to the internet and other learning resources outside of school
- 49%** Access to fiction and/or nonfiction books at home

### IN-SCHOOL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

- 35%** In-school specialists to address students' social and emotional needs
- 11%** High-quality instructional materials

Within Alabama, teachers in higher-poverty schools are more likely than those in lower-poverty schools to indicate their students lack adequate access to fiction/nonfiction books at home (67% vs. 25%) as well as family involvement in student learning (72% vs. 33%).

# TEACHERS' FUNDING PRIORITIES & PERSONAL SPENDING

The top five funding priorities among Alabama teachers include:

Additional high-quality staff to reduce student-to-teacher ratio	55%
Technology devices and digital resources in school	55%
Higher salaries	50%
High-quality instructional materials	49%
Programming that includes the arts, foreign languages, etc.	41%

Sixty-one percent of teachers in Alabama receive discretionary funds from their school district or PTA. In the past year, they have spent \$480 of their own money on items for their students and/or classrooms.

## 54%

OF ALABAMA TEACHERS  
HAVE USED THEIR OWN  
MONEY TO PURCHASE  
CLASSROOM LIBRARY BOOKS  
OVER THE PAST YEAR

## 64%

SAY THEY ARE ONLY  
ABLE TO UPDATE THEIR  
CLASSROOM LIBRARIES  
ONCE A YEAR OR LESS



“

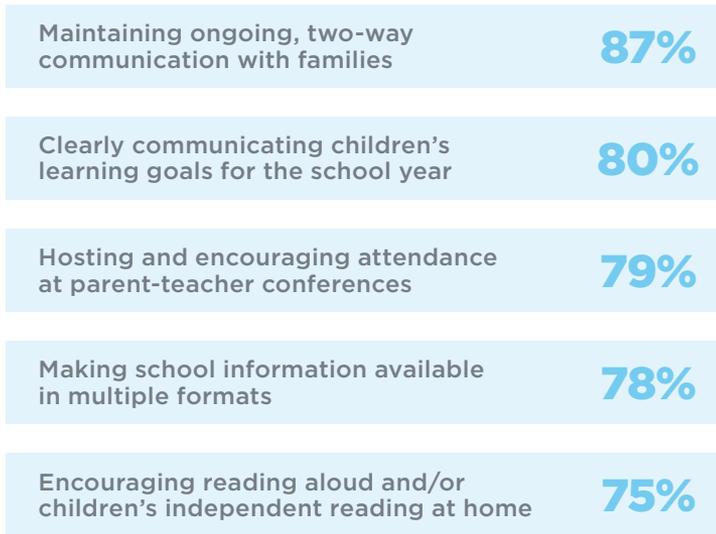
Teachers work hard at our jobs, and we do it for the kids. We know we have an impact on their future and we do the best we can with the resources we have. We don't hesitate to spend time and money on our classrooms to make them better for our students.

Middle School Teacher

# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Nearly all Alabama educators say that involving families in children’s learning is important for student success (98%), but many educators need help engaging families (79%).

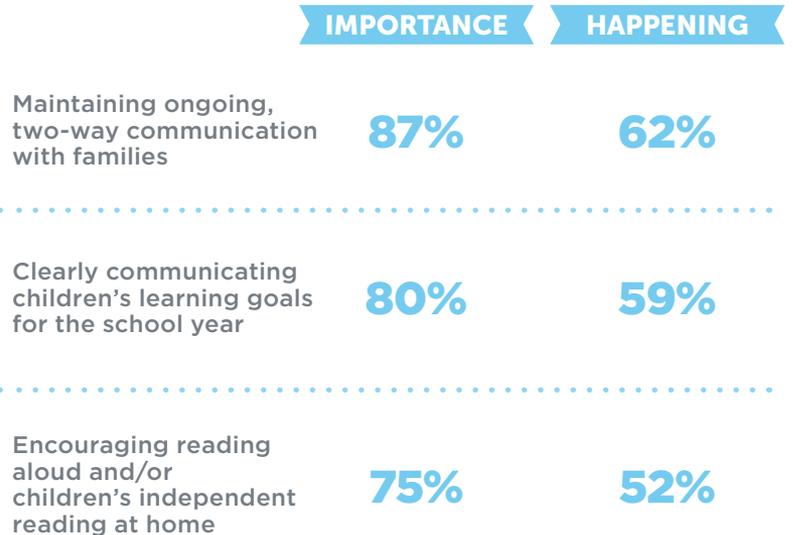
The top activities Alabama educators identify as most important to help families engage in their children’s learning include:



I have a diverse group of students from various backgrounds, home lives, and levels of income, all worthy of the best education we can give them.

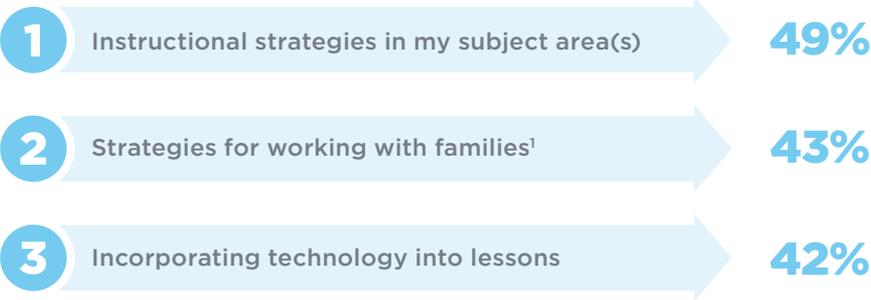
Elementary School Teacher

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



# TAILORED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Alabama teachers indicate that the most effective formats for professional development include workshops conducted by outside consultants, authors or experts (64%) and professional conferences (63%). The top areas in which Alabama teachers would like professional development in the coming year include:



**96%** OF ALABAMA EDUCATORS AGREE THAT THEY “WANT EFFECTIVE, ONGOING, RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT”



<sup>1</sup>This item is a net of two items from the survey: “Strategies for working with students and families from all cultures” and “Strategies for improving engagement with families in support of their children’s learning.”

# EDUCATORS ON READING

## ALL YEAR-ROUND

NEARLY ALL ALABAMA EDUCATORS AGREE PROVIDING YEAR-ROUND ACCESS TO BOOKS AT HOME IS IMPORTANT TO ENHANCING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (97%).

The number one way Alabama students access books during the summer, as reported by educators, is the public library (85%). Other notable sources of books include:

Teachers providing books	12%
Community partners providing books	11%
School/district providing books	3%

The top types of reading materials Alabama teachers need in their classroom libraries are:

1	eBooks	50%
2	Reference data bases	49%
3	Books published in the last 3-5 years	49%
4	Culturally relevant titles	47%
5	Multiple copies of popular titles	47%

ALABAMA TEACHERS' CLASSROOM LIBRARIES HAVE 269 BOOKS ON AVERAGE



# INDEPENDENT READING IN ALABAMA

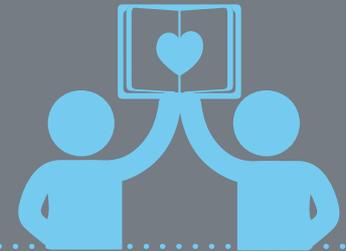
**Four in 10 Alabama teachers set aside time for independent reading or read aloud to their students every school day (41%)—for an average of 22 minutes. Fifty-six percent of literacy teachers set aside this time.**

**Almost three-quarters of Alabama teachers say they wish that students were read aloud to or read a book of their choice independently more often (73%). This is true regardless of grade.**

**Among teachers who wish it occurred more often, the biggest barriers to independent reading are the demands of the curriculum not allowing enough time (90%) and not having enough books (21%).**

# 97%

**OF ALABAMA EDUCATORS AGREE THAT STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE TIME DURING THE SCHOOL DAY TO READ A BOOK OF THEIR CHOICE INDEPENDENTLY**



The top ways Alabama educators promote reading among students include:

- |          |   |            |          |   |            |
|----------|---|------------|----------|---|------------|
| <b>1</b> | Talking with students about the importance of reading   | <b>74%</b> | <b>4</b> | Encouraging summer reading  | <b>67%</b> |
| <b>2</b> | Encouraging students to use the school library          | <b>72%</b> | <b>5</b> | Reading aloud to students   | <b>61%</b> |
| <b>3</b> | Talking with students about the books they read for fun | <b>68%</b> | <b>6</b> | Making books available for students to take home during the school year | <b>61%</b> |