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PRIMARY SOURCES

America’s Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change

A project of Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Third Edition

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“I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.”

“Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.”

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“I like the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. It’s important that our students are challenged to work and think at higher levels.” • “I believe that we have a responsibility to our students to prepare them for college and careers.” • “We all have the ability to make student learning successful, but we all need to work together.” • “Education must change as the world changes.” • “Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.” • “A good teacher refuses to let a child fail.” • “Teachers need a variety of resources to meet the variety of learning styles children have.” • “The Common Core State Standards are making me a better teacher and the students better learners.” • “Teaching is an art. Teachers need to have the

“I love what I do. Those moments with students when they realize they’ve learned something new about themselves or their world makes every meeting or change worth it.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of

their students.” • “Much of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.” • “Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is key factor in student achievement.” • “The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.” • “I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.” • “Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.” • “I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.” • “The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.” • “Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!” • “I feel frustrated by people in the community who

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often do not see teaching as a profession, but as a job.” • “Communication

A LETTER FROM SCHOLASTIC AND THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Every day in classrooms across America, teachers are responsible for countless “aha” moments. These flashes of understanding in students’ eyes are precious because as they accumulate, they become knowledge that lasts a lifetime. In the same way, teaching is a thousand acts of thoughtful instruction, guidance and encouragement that build upon each other to shape students and citizens of the world.

Today’s teachers are working in an era of change. Our economy is increasingly global and the jobs our children will compete for are rapidly changing or not yet imagined. By necessity, our schools and the teaching profession itself are adapting in order to better prepare students for college and the careers of tomorrow.

With change comes opportunity. If we are to ensure that every student achieves his or her full potential, it is critical that we learn from teachers’ views on what enables the most effective teaching to flourish as changes are planned and implemented in our nation’s schools.

The importance of teachers to students’ individual success and America’s continued prosperity has never been clearer. To that end, we are proud to present ***Primary Sources: America’s Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change***. This joint project of Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation reports the views of more than 20,000 public school teachers on important issues related to their profession. Fielded in July 2013, the survey asks teachers about their motivation, new learning standards, teacher evaluations, how they collaborate within and beyond school walls and how they are using technology. As was the case with the previous two editions of *Primary Sources* (2009, 2011), the results of this survey demonstrate teachers’ commitment to student success.

A vast majority of educators cite changing demands on students and teachers as the most significant challenge facing teachers today. But teachers’ dedication is also clear, with an even greater majority agreeing that the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges and reporting that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with their choice of profession.

A key finding from this research is the strong correlation between teachers’ job satisfaction and feeling that their voices are heard. We offer this report as a resource to bring teachers’ voices directly to administrators, district leaders, union leaders, legislators, parents and education advocates.

This year, we heard:

Teachers Bring Passion and Commitment to Their Challenging Work

- To learn more about teachers and their motivation, we asked why they chose teaching as their profession. Eighty-five percent (85%) of teachers say it was to make a difference in the lives of children.
- Nearly every teacher (98%) agrees that teaching is more than a profession; it is how they make a difference in the world.
- Almost all teachers (99%) agree that teaching is more than academics; it is about reinforcing good citizenship, resilience and social skills, and they believe great teaching demands a mastery of many skills.
- The combination of skills that hallmark great teaching is important as teachers strive to differentiate instruction more than ever before. All teachers report having two or more student populations in their classrooms, and nearly one-quarter (23%) of all teachers have seven different populations, such as special education students, gifted students and students working two or more grade levels below their peers.

Teachers Are Enthusiastic About the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards, Even as They Acknowledge Challenges Ahead

- Today's classroom cannot be understood without a deep look at teachers' views on the Common Core State Standards, a set of learning standards currently being implemented in more than 45 states and the District of Columbia. Overall, 73% of teachers who teach math, English language arts, science and/or social studies in Common Core states are enthusiastic about implementation in their classrooms. At the same time, an equal percentage of these teachers believe implementing the standards is or will be challenging.
- As classroom implementation of the Common Core progresses, the degree to which teachers believe the Common Core will positively impact students increases. For example, teachers who say implementation is fully complete in their school are most likely to say the standards will have a positive impact on the overall quality of education students will receive (73%, compared to 56% who say they are in the early stages of implementation and 40% who say implementation has not started).
- Teachers feel increasingly prepared to teach the Common Core (75% in 2013 vs. 59% in 2011), but want more resources, professional development and time to prepare lessons. When asked about their students meeting the standards, teachers express the most concern for students who are already struggling.

Teachers Find Evaluations Most Helpful When They Include Actionable Feedback and Multiple Measures of Teacher & Student Performance

- In this and previous waves of *Primary Sources*, teachers consistently tell us that they value the opportunity to grow their practice through evaluation, observation, feedback and professional development. Three-quarters (77%) of teachers feel they should receive a formal evaluation at least once a year and nearly all teachers (99%) believe they should receive one at least once every few years.
- Most teachers tell us they are formally evaluated and do find their evaluations at least somewhat helpful (78%) in refining or improving their practice, although just 21% say their evaluations are very helpful and 8% extremely helpful.
- The helpfulness of evaluations increases dramatically when they include actionable feedback, best garnered through frequent observations by qualified staff, multiple measures of teacher practice and student performance, and when professional development and classroom resources are tailored as a result of the evaluation systems.
- Conversely, the views of teachers who do not find their evaluations very or extremely helpful share that they desire more feedback (42%), increased fairness in the evaluation process (30%) and a desire for more—and better-qualified—evaluators and observers (23%).

Teachers Seek to Collaborate In and Outside of School to Best Serve Students


- Finding time to collaborate with colleagues is a challenge oft cited by teachers, but technology is changing how they collaborate and is enabling new types of collaboration. Nine in ten (91%) teachers report using websites to find or share lesson plans. Teachers are also using websites to get professional advice and support (65%) and to collaborate with teachers with whom they wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity (57%).
- Teachers are connecting with their students' parents and families to build a strong foundation of support for every child. Ninety-five percent (95%) of teachers say they encourage parents to reach out with questions, and 85% percent of teachers report initiating contact with parents outside of traditional progress reports.
- When asked what parents can do to support their children's schooling, teachers' responses reflect their understanding of today's busy families. By and large, engagement at home—such as making sure children are not absent and talking with them about school, etc.—are considered most helpful.

These insights and observations come directly from our nation's teachers and provide critical insight about the experience of teaching in an era of change. This report presents teachers' voices on the national and state levels, by grades and subjects taught, by years of teaching experience and by other aspects of teachers' diverse perspectives. By considering their nuanced and thoughtful viewpoints, we can all better understand the day-to-day challenges and rewards of teaching and the need for leaders, families and communities to support teachers, just as they support our students.

It is clear that one constant remains in this era of change: teachers' commitment to the success of their students. As one teacher in Ohio told us, "During my years in education, I find that the teaching styles, technology and curriculum change, but the students remain the same." We are pleased to share the third edition of *Primary Sources* with you, and hope it deepens your respect for teachers and their work, as it has ours.

Primary Sources is part of an ongoing dialogue with America's teachers. We welcome your thoughts and opinions on the report at 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*

OBJECTIVES

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

This year's report seeks to:

- Showcase the daily work and challenges of teachers in an era of change and provide insights into their perspectives on their work, craft and students
- Explore teachers' views on the Common Core State Standards
- Identify how teacher evaluations can be most helpful to teachers' growth and practice as evaluation systems evolve
- Display how teachers seek to connect with peers, parents and communities to ensure student success

METHODOLOGY

National Survey

This national survey, conducted by Harrison Group, a YouGov Company, 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 July 1, 2013 through July 22, 2013; 20,157 PreK–12 public school classroom teachers¹ completed the survey.

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 Scholastic Teacher Store Online after teachers had completed the survey.

One of the goals of this wave of the research was to be able to display results across states. Therefore, emails were sent out proportional to the desired sample size in each state. All states, with the exception of Alaska and Wyoming, achieved sample sizes of more than 100 and are included in any state-level analysis. Additionally, there was not sufficient sample size in the District of Columbia for those data to be analyzed.

The data were weighted using a two-step process. Each state was weighted on the following characteristics, based on available National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and MDR information on public school teachers: gender, years of teaching experience, grade(s) taught and urbanicity. Weights were then applied to ensure that each state was properly represented according to the natural distribution of teachers across the nation.

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

- Those teaching grade(s) PreK–5 are often referred to as “elementary school” teachers.
- Those teaching grade(s) 6–8 are often referred to as “middle school” teachers.
- Those teaching 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.

Further subgroups analyzed include:

- Teachers with differing years of teaching experience. We refer to teachers with fewer than four years of teaching experience as “new” teachers and we refer to teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience as “veteran” teachers.
- Teachers who teach various subjects. In Section II, where data and insights related to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are discussed, we often show data among teachers who teach math and/or English language arts (often shortened to “ELA”) compared to teachers who teach science and/or social studies (but not math or ELA).

¹ Public school teachers who teach full-time in the classroom in grades PreK–12, excluding those who teach physical education exclusively.

Qualitative Teacher Collaboration

Prior to questionnaire design, foundational, qualitative research was conducted to glean the top-of-mind issues that matter most to teachers, the language they use to describe their practice and the rewards and challenges of teaching. Four focus groups each in three cities—Las Vegas, Nevada; St. Louis, Missouri; and Stamford, Connecticut—were conducted between November 27 and December 13, 2012 by In Vision, Inc., a market research firm located in Stamford, Connecticut. A total of 80 public school teachers participated in this phase of the research.

Once the survey was drafted, it was “pre-tested” in a listen-and-learn session with eight public school teachers in Connecticut. This feedback helped ensure that our question and response language matched its intended purpose.

Additionally, once the data were collected and initial findings synthesized, a sample of the information was presented to approximately 20 teachers in a moderated information session presented by Scholastic and Harrison Group at Scholastic’s New York headquarters.

The quotes that appear throughout this report were captured in three ways:

- Verbatim teacher responses from the 12 focus groups.
- Verbatim teacher responses from the information session conducted at Scholastic headquarters.
- Verbatim teacher responses from across the 20,157 teachers who participated in the survey. These teachers had the opportunity to weigh in on one of several open-ended questions regarding various educational issues. They also had an opportunity to include additional thoughts on any topic they wished at the end of the survey. In both cases, teachers typed their thoughts directly into the online survey.

Data Presentation

Data are presented throughout this report in charts and tables. Because of the robust nature of the sample, it is safe to assume that any difference of five or more points across subgroups is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Additionally, when data results are presented in charts or tables, we show the full question text underneath the graphic. Further survey results are shown by total teachers, grade(s) taught and years of teaching experience in Appendix A. Appendix B shows survey results for Common Core questions among teachers in CCSS adoption states, by grade(s) taught and by subject(s) taught.

NOTE: In some cases, percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Additionally, when two or more scale points are combined, for example, to show the percentage of teachers who say something will have a very positive or positive impact, percentages may round up or down by one percentage point.

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“When you get those mini victories and you see that a child is learning and something positive is happening as a result of your time in your classroom, that’s a big deal.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

the basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students.” • “Much

of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.” • “Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is a key factor in student achievement.” • “The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.” • “I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.” • “Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.” • “I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.” • “The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.” • “Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!” • “I feel frustrated by people in the community who often

TEACHING IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

TEACHERS BRING PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO THEIR CHALLENGING WORK

Nearly every teacher (98%) agrees that teaching is more than a profession; it is how they make a difference in the world—one child at a time—as they share their love of teaching and learning to help their students reach their full potential.

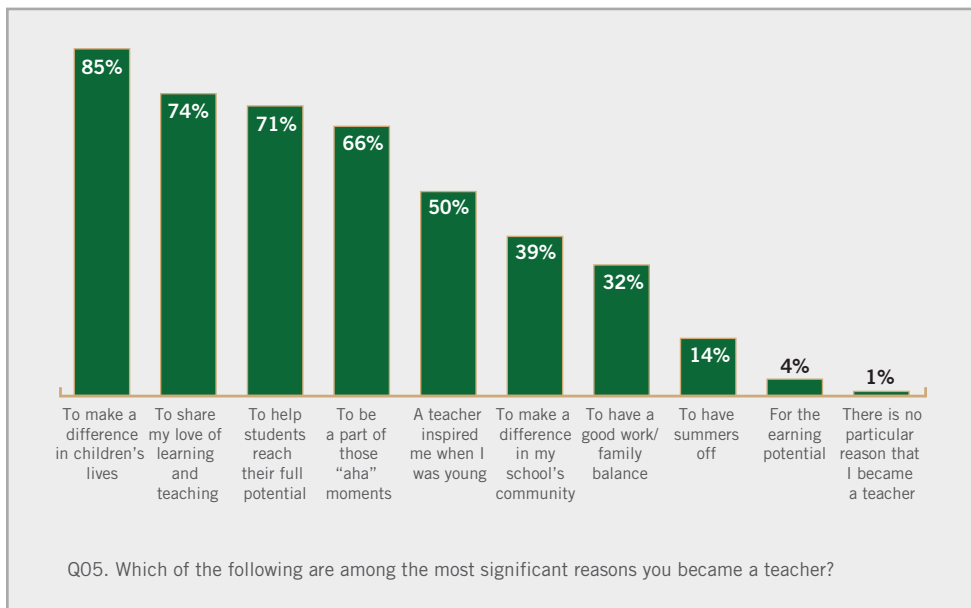
TEACHERS TEACH TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND BECAUSE THEY LOVE THE CRAFT OF TEACHING

Overwhelmingly (85%), teachers say they chose the teaching profession in order to make a difference in children’s lives. This, along with the desire to help students reach their full potential and to make a difference in their schools’ community, comprises the central reason most teachers enter the profession: to make an impact on the world by educating students.

Teachers also report a passion for the craft of teaching: three-quarters (74%) say they became a teacher to share their love of learning and teaching with others, and two in three (66%) say they became a teacher to experience and be a part of those moments when things “click” for a student.

Teachers’ Views on the Most Significant Reasons for Becoming a Teacher

Base: Total Respondents.



“I enjoy being a teacher. I do what I do to help students be successful and confident in their abilities.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching is not simply a career; it’s a calling.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers are the ones who are with the students every day; therefore, it is vital to listen to what they have to say about education.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“To see these kids become fluent readers is better than any paycheck!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“When you see a kid who’s been struggling for such a long time finally get it, you feel like you’re doing something worthwhile.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“My goal is to make a difference in the lives of students and their families. I am passionate about education and I hope to pass this passion on to my students.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

In conversation, teachers describe these “aha” moments as when they can “see the lightbulb turning on” in a child’s mind.

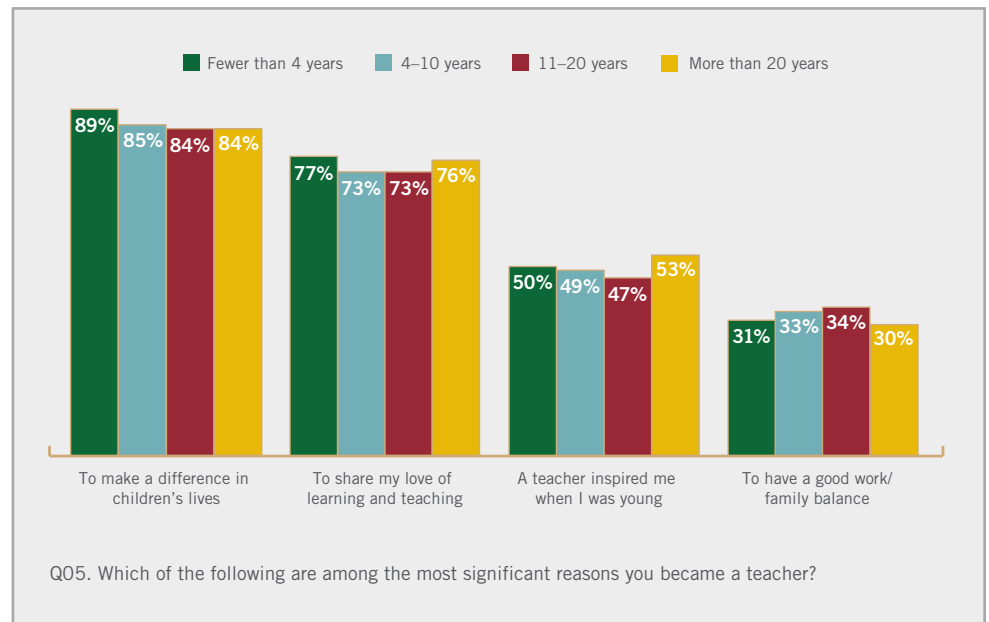
Far fewer teachers cite lifestyle as one of the most significant reasons for choosing the career. Only one in three (32%) teachers say they became a teacher to have a good work/family balance, and even fewer say they became a teacher to have summers off (14%) or for the earning potential (4%).

The Reasons Teachers Enter the Profession Stay Fairly Consistent Across Years of Teaching Experience

Teachers share similar views on the reasons for becoming a teacher, regardless of how long they have been in the classroom. A significant majority of both veteran teachers (that is, those with more than 20 years of teaching experience) and newer teachers say they entered the teaching profession to make a difference in children’s lives and to share their love of learning and teaching.

Teachers’ Views on the Most Significant Reasons for Becoming a Teacher, by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Total Respondents.

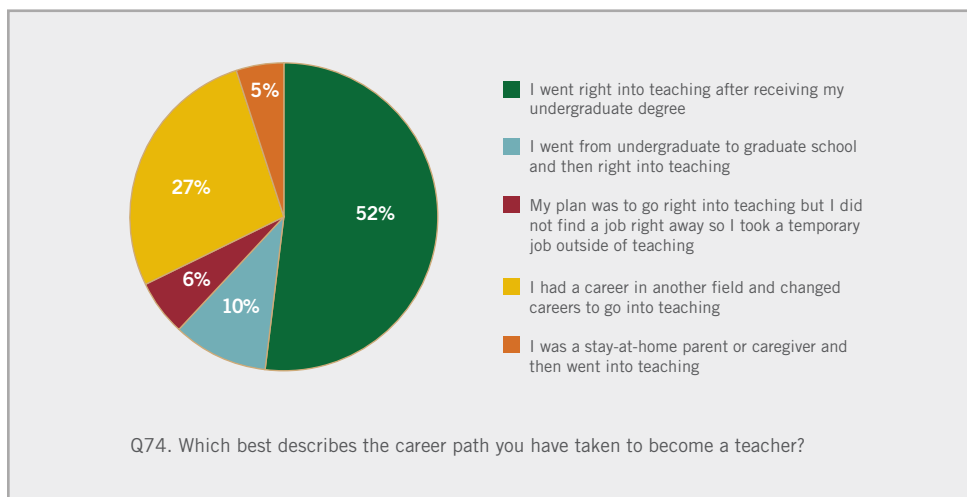


More Than Half of New Teachers Went from College into Teaching, While One in Four Changed Careers to Go into Teaching

In conversation, many teachers say they always knew they wanted to be a teacher; in fact, about six in 10 teachers (and nearly eight in 10 veteran teachers for whom alternative certification programs were likely not available) say they went right into teaching after receiving an undergraduate or graduate degree. Another 6% of teachers say it was their intention to go straight into teaching after college, but it took some time to find a position.

Path Taken to Become a Teacher

Base: Total Respondents.



“Teachers should be respected and compensated for their hard work.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching is part of my heart and soul. There isn’t anything I would rather do.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I entered teaching as a calling to reach out to students and prepare them for the future.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am pursuing a second master’s degree in education, all thanks to an art teacher who inspired me.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I went back to school to become a teacher because I love teaching and working with children and wanted to make a difference in the world.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I became a teacher after working in another field. I am glad I made the career change as this is the most fulfilling profession I think I could have found.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love teaching and as a second career in my life wish I had discovered it sooner.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES: Teachers Who Switched Careers

While there are no meaningful differences in the views shared in this study from teachers who switched careers to enter teaching versus those who entered education right away, an analysis of state-level data reveals the following:

States With Highest Proportion of Teachers Who Switched Careers	States With Lowest Proportion of Teachers Who Switched Careers
Massachusetts (43%)	Iowa (21%)
California/Washington (41%)	South Dakota (19%)
Alaska/Connecticut (39%)	Minnesota (18%)
Hawaii (38%)	Nebraska (17%)
Delaware/Florida/Georgia/New Jersey/Texas (37%)	North Dakota (13%)

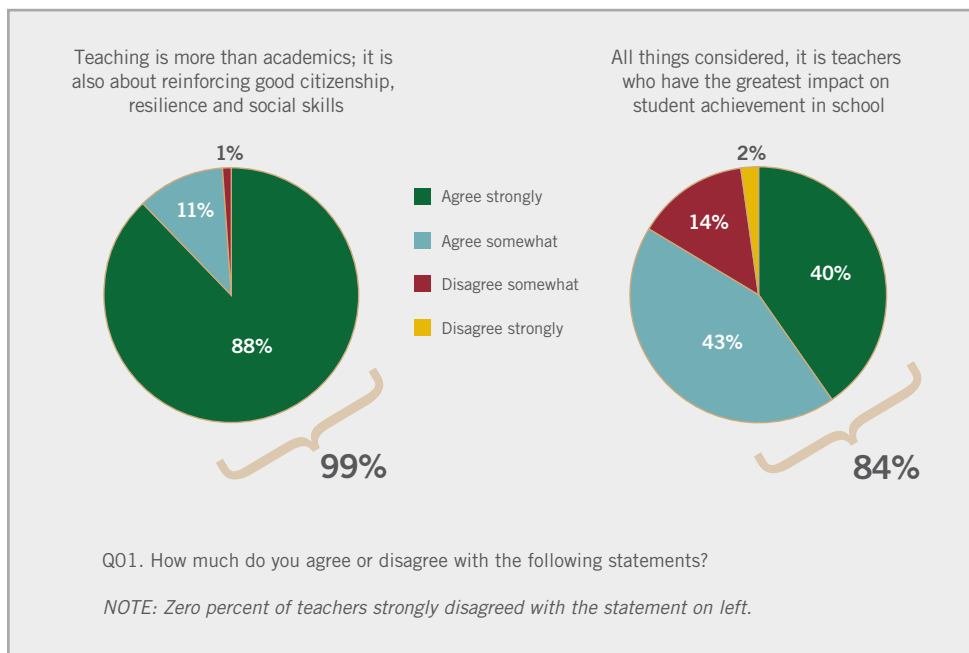
Q74. And which best describes the career path you have taken to become a teacher?
Base: Total Respondents.

GREAT TEACHING DEMANDS A MASTERY OF MANY SKILLS AND TALENTS

Nearly all teachers (99%) see their roles extending beyond academics to include things like reinforcing good citizenship, building resilience and developing social skills. Eight in 10 (84%) agree that it is teachers who have the greatest impact on student achievement in school. As one teacher from Tennessee said, “I believe teaching is more than just teaching subjects. It changes lives and should be about teaching social skills and respect as well.”

Agreement With Statements About the Teaching Profession

Base: Total Respondents.



From perfecting classroom management to creating a safe environment for students and from clear content delivery to maintaining high expectations, the skills that make a “great teacher” are varied and numerous. When asked, teachers said that the hallmark of a great teacher is not one single characteristic, but rather a combination of important skills that make an impact on students’ lives.

“We can learn from parents how to best reach their children. Together we can obtain the high levels of success needed for college, career and citizenship.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The lessons taught at school should not focus solely on standardized test items. Character education, citizenship and global living skills should be addressed as well.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching is so much more than just academics. You really need to teach the whole child, not just your content.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“The teacher is the most effective element in the classroom.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Classroom management is of very high importance if you want learning to occur.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe it is very important to tailor instruction to student needs.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe that the level of technology across school districts within our state needs to be balanced out in order for all students to learn in the 21st century.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I do feel it is important to include as much technology in our schools as possible.”

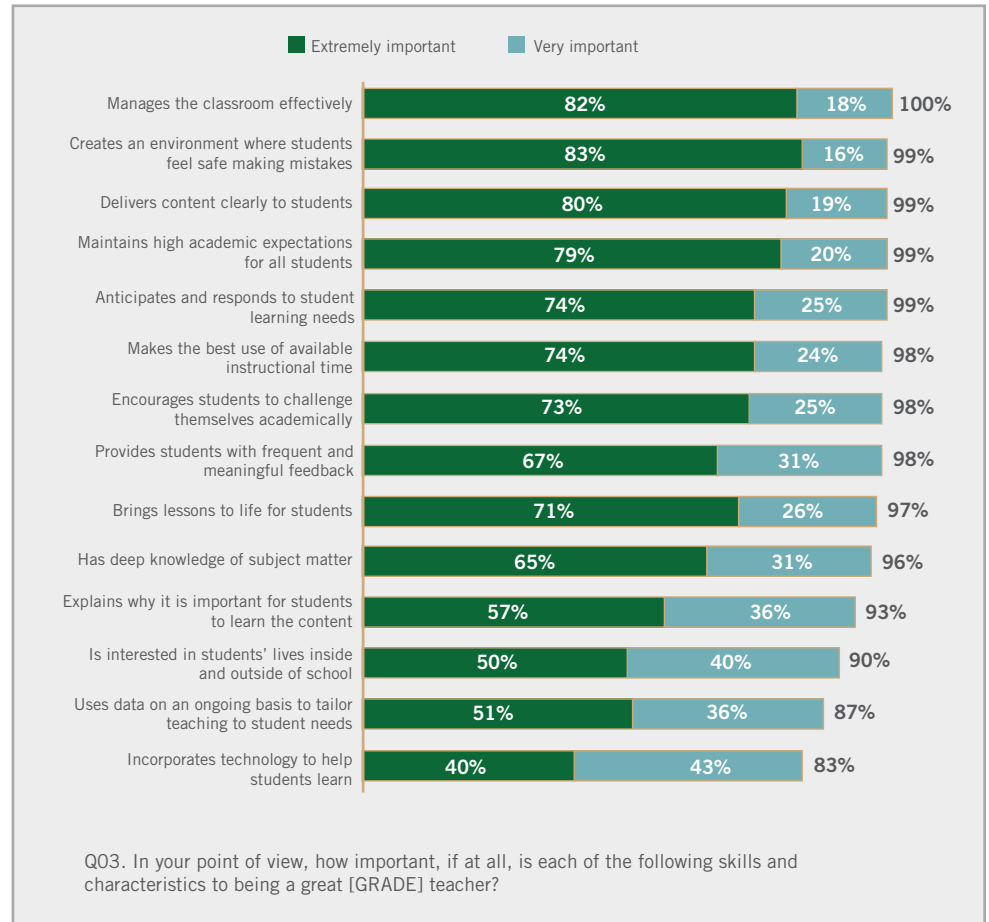
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

When it comes to the crucial skills of a great teacher, all teachers point to classroom management (100%), along with the creation of a safe environment (99%), clarity of content delivery (99%), setting high academic expectations for students (99%) and responding to student learning needs (99%).

Items of secondary importance to great teaching include use of data to tailor student instruction, as well as incorporation of technology. But even technology, which falls last in order of importance on the offered list of characteristics, is considered very or extremely important by 83% of teachers.

Teachers’ Views on the Importance of Various Skills and Characteristics to Being a Great Teacher

Base: Total Respondents.



TEACHERS ACKNOWLEDGE MANY CHALLENGES IN THE PROFESSION

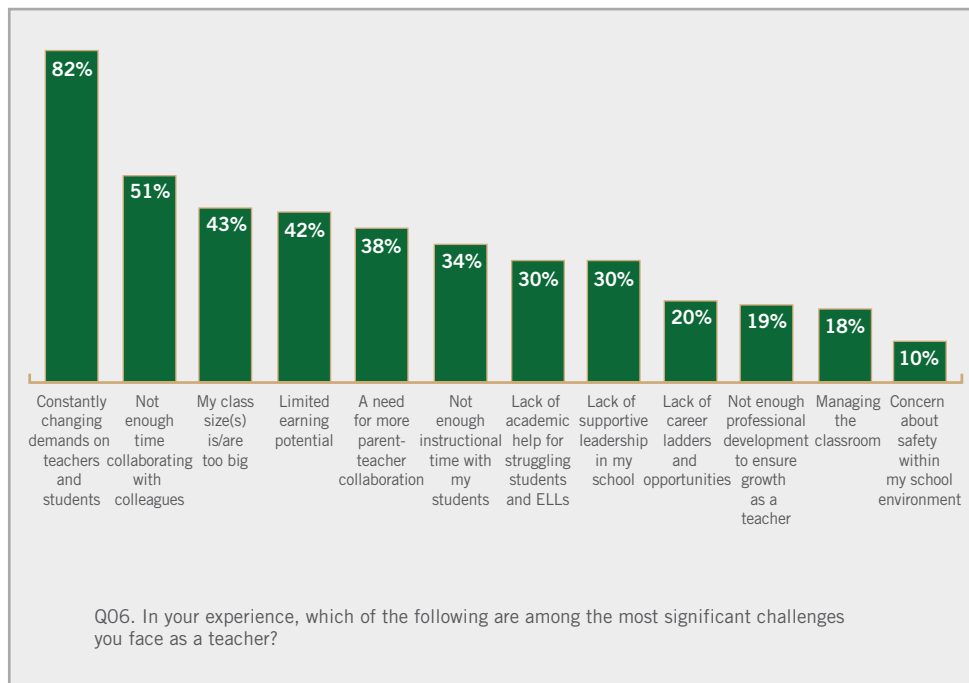
Teachers cite a variety of challenges in their profession, from the changing demands on teachers and students to the challenge of securing resources and supports for their students, and from managing their classrooms to adjusting their practice to suit the diverse needs of the students in them. This sentiment comes at a time when only 51% of teachers overall agree that education in America is moving in the right direction.

Changing Demands on Students and Teachers Tops Teachers' List of Challenges

Constantly changing demands on both teachers and students is far and away the challenge most cited by teachers. Eighty-two percent (82%) identify this challenge as significant, and this percentage stays at 80% or higher among all key teacher subgroups analyzed, with the exception of new teachers (of whom 75% selected this option).

Teachers' Views on the Most Significant Challenges Faced as a Teacher

Base: Total Respondents.



“I don’t think that people truly understand what a teacher goes through and how they think every day to prepare these students. Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Support and training are key to success in education in the U.S.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My school today is not the same school it was six years ago. There have been and continue to be many positive changes being made, and the students are benefiting from those changes.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I know a great deal of exceptional teachers who are leaving the profession due to the changes in evaluations and the increase in demands placed on them.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The demands of the classroom teacher have changed dramatically in the last decade. More and more is expected with fewer resources and materials.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Obviously, change is necessary to meet the growing needs of children, but how many times does the wheel have to be reinvented?”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like change, so I don’t fight it, but I wish the education system could agree on what is best for kids and stick with it.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I began teaching 22 years ago. I have watched education change before my eyes—some good things and some bad—however, I’ve loved every minute of it!”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

In conversation, teachers identify various issues within “constantly changing demands,” including changes in leadership, policies, curriculum, administrative systems and more. Many note that a large part of the challenge is the pressure these changes place on existing time and resources. As one teacher said, “Too many changes at one time waters down everything and doesn’t give teachers the time to effectively implement all of the changes.”

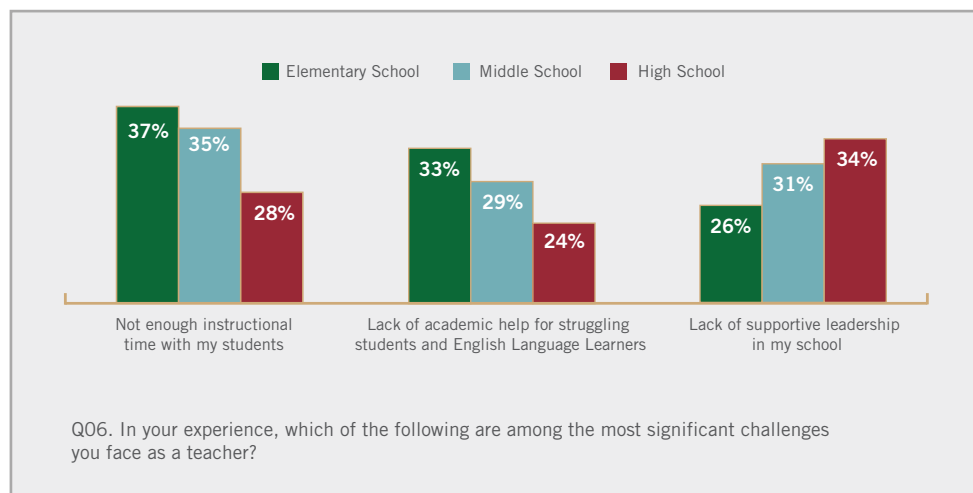
Not having enough time to collaborate with colleagues is the second most frequently mentioned issue, with half of teachers (51%) reporting this as a significant challenge. From there, teachers cite challenges including large class sizes (43%), limited earning potential (42%), lack of parent-teacher collaboration (38%) and issues that strike at the heart of their classroom instruction: not enough instructional time with students (34%), lack of support for struggling students (30%), lack of support from leadership (30%) and more.

Challenges Vary by Teacher Characteristics

Across grades taught, elementary school teachers are more likely to say they are challenged by not having enough instructional time with their students (37% vs. 28% among high school teachers). They are also more likely to say that lack of academic support for struggling students and English Language Learners (ELL) is among the most significant challenges they face as a teacher (33% vs. 24%). High school teachers, however, are more likely than teachers of other grades to cite a lack of supportive leadership as one of the most significant challenges they face (34% vs. 26% of elementary school teachers).

Teachers’ Views on the Most Significant Challenges Faced as a Teacher, by Grade(s) Taught

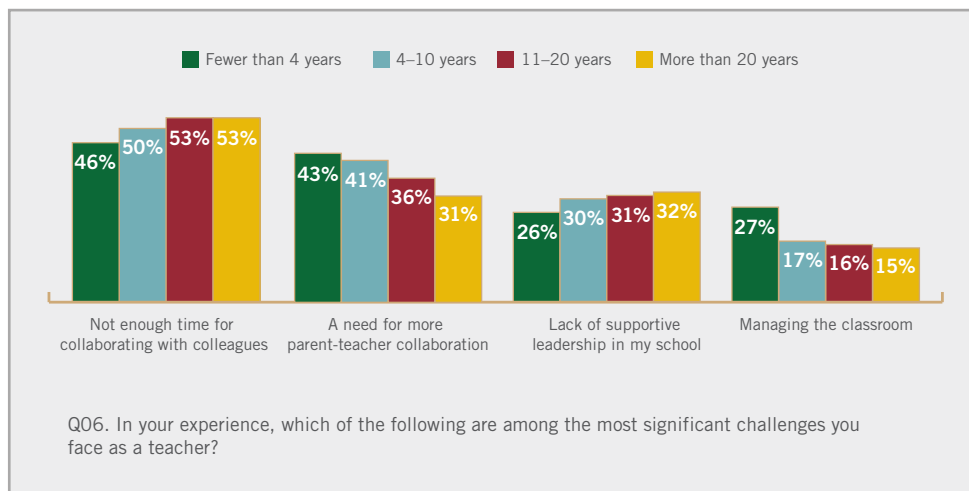
Base: Total Respondents.



Across years of teaching experience, veteran teachers are more likely than new teachers to say that not having enough time to collaborate with colleagues and a lack of supportive leadership are significant challenges. On the other hand, teachers with the least experience are more likely to say they are challenged by a need for more parent-teacher collaboration and with classroom management.

Teachers' Views on the Most Significant Challenges Faced as a Teacher, by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Total Respondents.



“In my opinion, the best improvement in my teaching has come from professional development and time to collaborate with other teachers.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“The biggest challenges affecting the quality of education today are class size, lack of parental involvement and lack of access to current technology.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

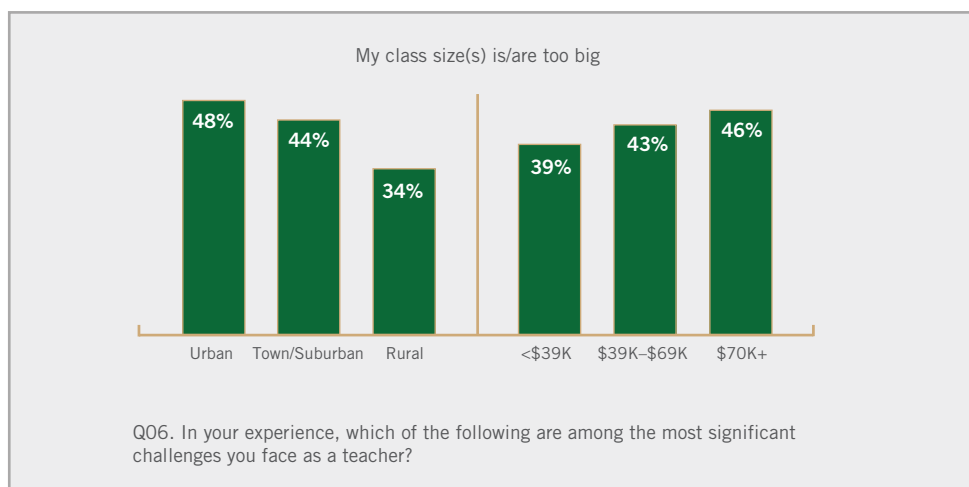
“It is imperative for districts to give the much-needed collaboration time to become a better teacher.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers in urban areas and in higher-income communities are most likely to say that too-large class size is among the most significant challenges they face as a teacher.

Teachers' Views on the Most Significant Challenges Faced as a Teacher, by Urbanicity and Community Median Household Income

Base: Total Respondents.



“Student behavior is the most time-consuming issue in the classroom.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our classroom sizes are getting larger, resources are less available and still the standards are becoming more difficult.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We have a new principal almost every two to three years, and that changes everything all over again.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My first six years of teaching were wonderful, with the same principal, grading system, calendar, etc. I’ve had four different principals in the past four years, curriculum changes and can’t even remember how many changes to grading systems, teacher websites, etc.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES:

Teachers Who Cited the Top Three Reported Challenges Facing Teachers

Constantly Changing Demands % Agree	Not Enough Time for Collaborating With Colleagues % Agree	My Class Size(s) Is/Are Too Big % Agree
Rhode Island (93%)	Maine (68%)	Arizona (62%)
Ohio/Tennessee (90%)	Vermont (64%)	Nevada (61%)
Arkansas (89%)	Iowa/Michigan/Minnesota/ Montana/Pennsylvania (61%)	Oregon (60%)
New Mexico/New York/ West Virginia (88%)	Massachusetts (60%)	California (59%)
North Carolina/Wisconsin (87%)	Maryland (59%)	Utah (57%)

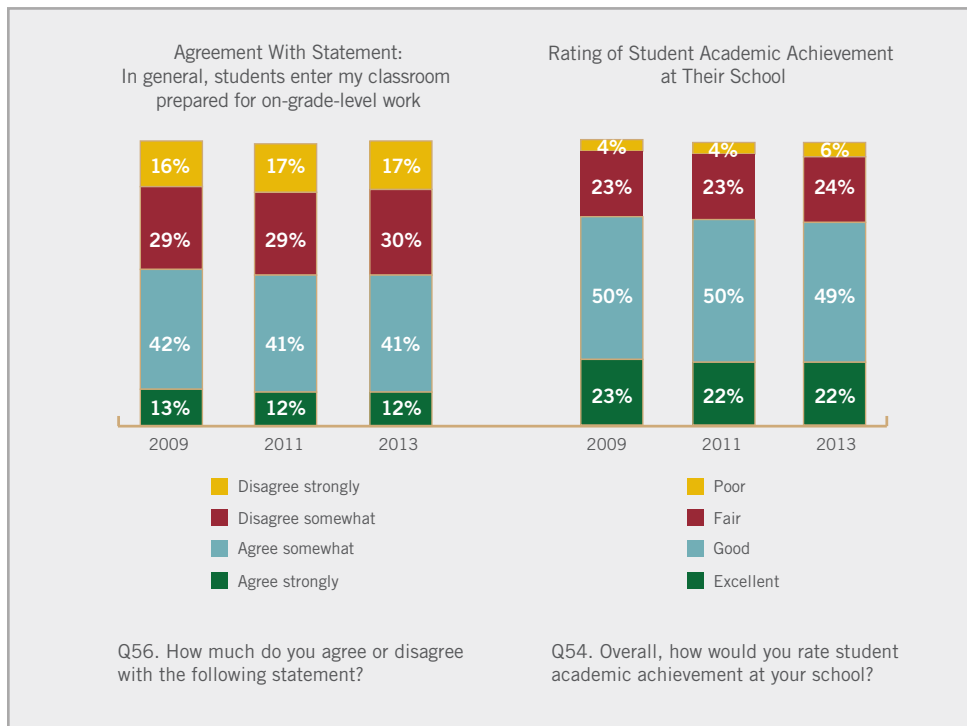
Q06. In your experience, which of the following are among the most significant challenges you face as a teacher?
Base: Total Respondents.

Teachers' Ratings of Student Achievement Are Unchanged Since 2009

Fifty-three percent (53%) of teachers agree that students come to their classroom prepared for on-grade-level work, although only 12% strongly agree. Seventy-one percent (71%) rate student academic achievement at their school as good or excellent, although only 22% describe it as excellent. These numbers have remained consistent since the first *Primary Sources* survey in 2009.

Teachers' Views on Student Academic Achievement at Their Schools

Base: Total Respondents.



“While I know that some of my students leave my class not ready for the next level, I also know that I moved them from where they were when they arrived.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“One of the biggest challenges I face is the fact that a majority of my students are not at grade level.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Students who walk through my classroom door know that the journey they will embark upon is much more than learning the academics!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Children and teachers need parents to be supportive, both academically and emotionally.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Every year, more demands have been made on the teacher with no extra time allowed to manage these demands.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

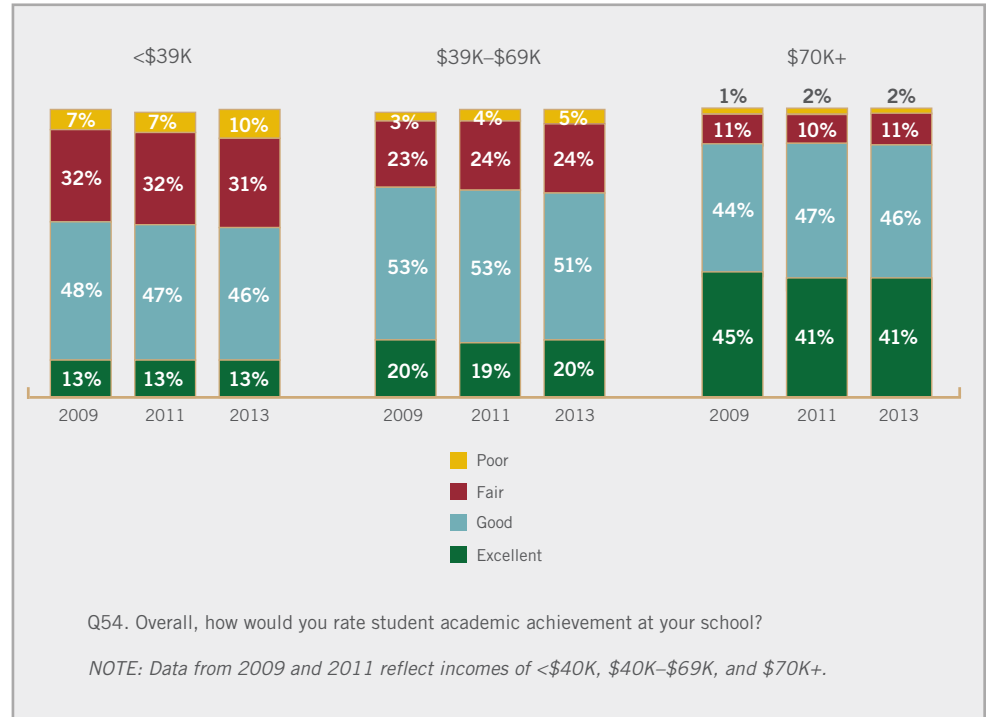
“Teaching is an art. Teachers need not only to have the basic skills and content knowledge, but also to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their ever-changing students.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Sentiments have also remained consistent across subgroups of teachers. The stark difference between teachers who rate student achievement as excellent in lower-income (13%) and higher-income communities (41%) remains notable and significant.

Teachers’ Ratings of Student Academic Achievement at Their Schools, by Community Median Household Income

Base: Total Respondents.

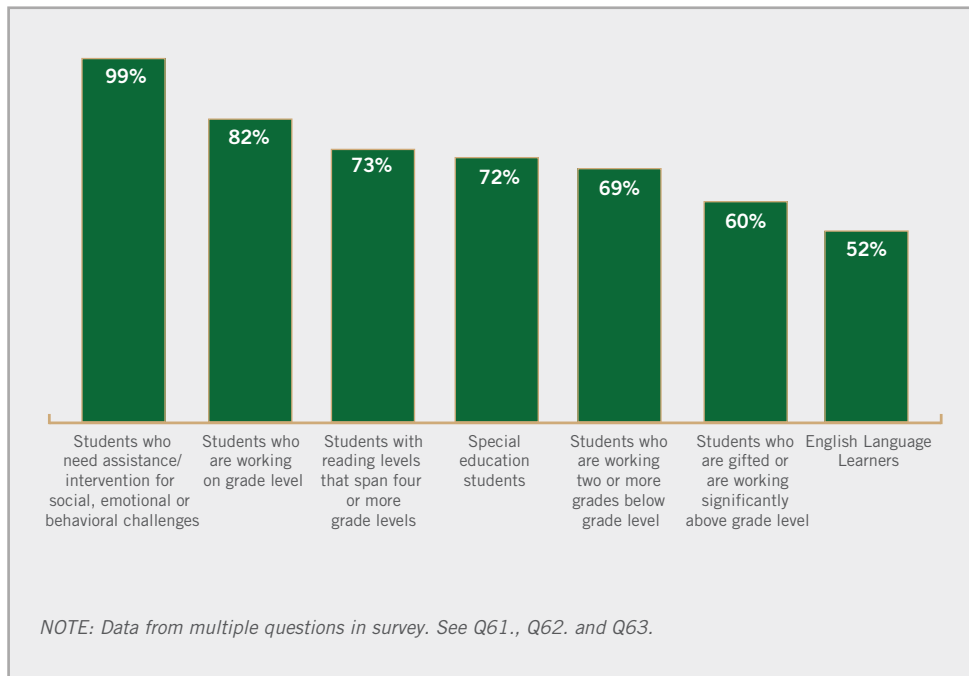


Classroom Dynamics Add to the Complexity of Teachers' Day-to-Day Mission

With a diverse student body, as defined by the seven metrics below, teachers are working with students of varied learning levels and characteristics. In conversation, teachers with a wide variety of students say that they find differentiation across a diverse population to be one of the most challenging aspects of their work.

Percentage of Teachers With Each Student Population in Their Classroom(s)

Base: Total Respondents.



“We must have high expectations but also understand that children learn at different rates and have different needs that influence learning in general.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My student population is increasingly diverse. I have more ELL and special education students than I have ever had before, and I have few resources to help me meet their needs.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“It is difficult to teach 20 or more students when they are all on completely different levels of learning.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“There needs to be more support for mental health and behavioral issues. Students are struggling and one teacher with a group of 28 is not enough to meet their needs, no matter how proficient the teacher is.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The demands on teachers are increasing each year and yet no additional time has been allotted for teachers to manage this increased workload.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

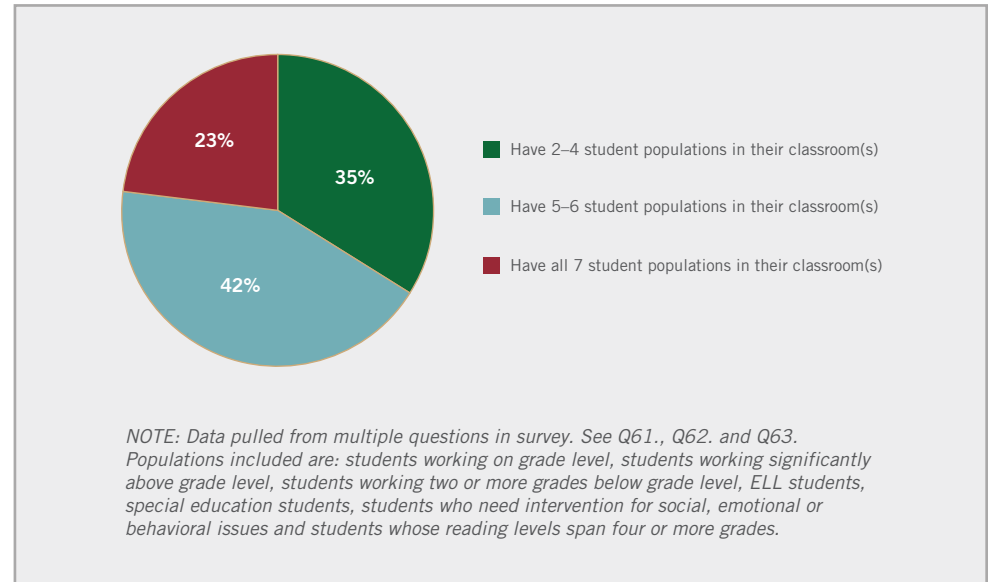
“A good teacher differentiates his or her instruction to meet student needs.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Of the seven student populations asked about in the survey, all teachers report having classrooms that include two or more of those student groups. Many teachers (35%) have between two and four of these populations in their classrooms, 42% have five or six and nearly one-quarter (23%) have all seven.

Percentage of Teachers Who Report Differing Student Populations in Their Classroom(s)

Base: Total Respondents.



SPOTLIGHT ON:**Teachers Who Teach Widely Differing Student Populations**

When considering the 23% of America’s teachers who have students in their classrooms representing all seven student populations asked about in the survey, the following findings emerge:

- These teachers are more likely than the total teacher population to cite a too-large class size as one of the most significant challenges they face as a teacher (52% vs. 43%). Their average class size is 25.54 students, compared to 23.39 students among total teachers.
- These teachers are also more likely than the total teacher population to say they are challenged by a lack of academic help for ELL and struggling students (40% vs. 30%).
- When asked to identify the student population they are most concerned about meeting the requirements of the Common Core State Standards, they are more likely than the total population of teachers to reference students working two or more grades below grade level (55% vs. 40%) and ELL students (20% vs. 13%).
- In thinking about tools and resources needed to help the student population they are most concerned about meet the requirements of the Common Core State Standards, they are more likely than the total teacher population to note a need for specialists in the school to help those students (35% vs. 27%).

“The key to changing the downward trend in teaching is to get content specialists for rigorous lessons.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Each student is different and what may work for one English Language Learner may not work for another.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think the biggest burden to teachers is class sizes. It is difficult to reach every student, give each one the time and attention that they deserve and be a masterful classroom manager.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe my students would benefit from more one-on-one instruction but I don’t have the time to give it!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think about my lessons, students and school events all the time and wake up thinking of what I need to do to be a better teacher. Teaching for me can be stressful in that it occupies my mind constantly! Nonetheless, I have enjoyed my career, as it has its rewards—touching people’s lives!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching in today’s society is challenging and at times overwhelming, but it is still what I enjoy doing.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love teaching. It is very rewarding to see children learn to read and write; the progress they make in first grade is amazing.”

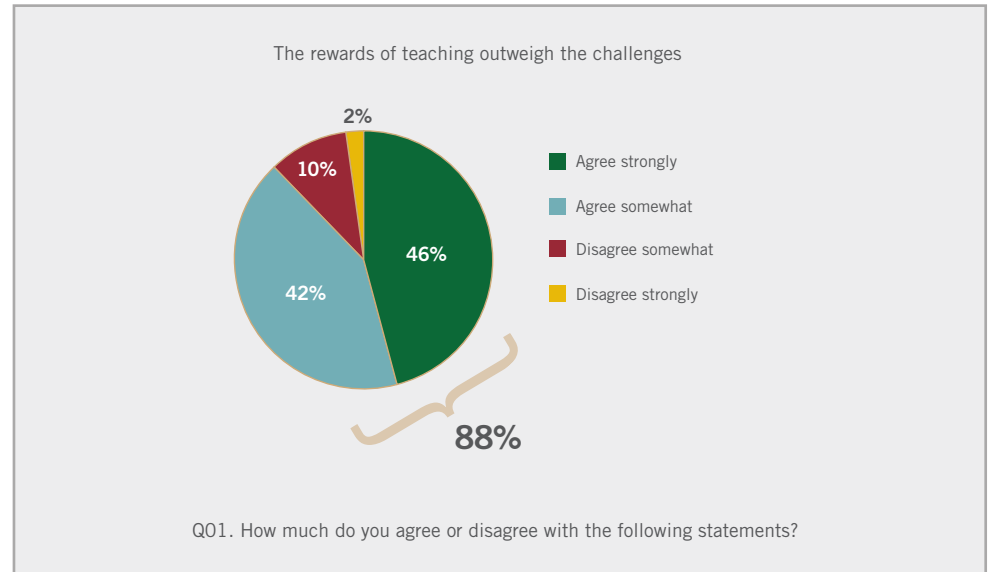
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

THE REWARDS OF TEACHING OUTWEIGH THE CHALLENGES

Challenges aside, nearly nine in 10 (88%) teachers agree that the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges—a finding that remains consistent across subjects taught, median household income of the school community and age of teacher.

Agreement With Statement About the Rewards of Teaching

Base: Total Respondents.



Findings do shift, however, across other subgroups:

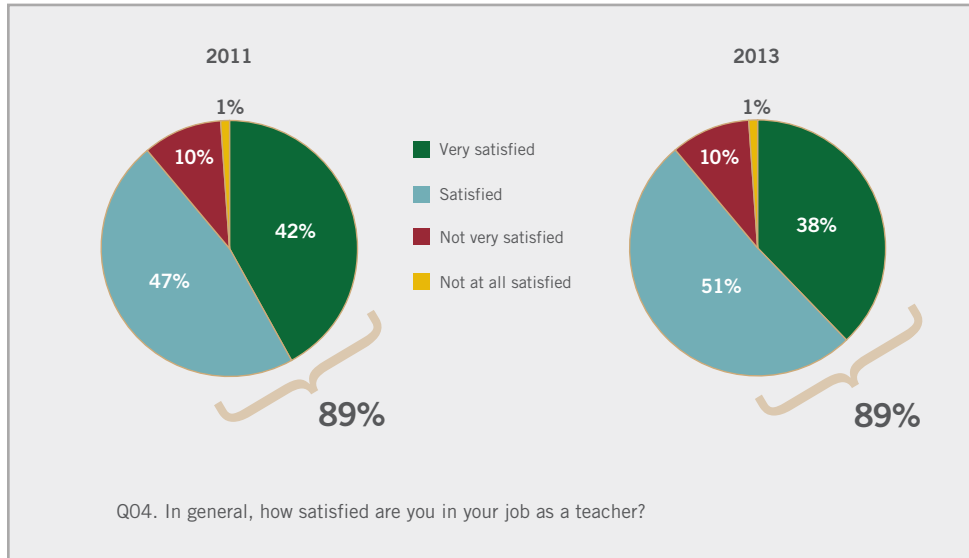
- New teachers are more likely than veteran teachers to strongly agree that the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges (54% vs. 44%).
- Elementary school teachers are more likely than high school teachers to strongly agree that the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges (49% vs. 43%).
- Teachers who teach only special education are more likely than teachers who do not have any special education students in their classroom to strongly agree that the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges (54% vs. 48%).

A Vast Majority of Teachers Are Satisfied in Their Jobs

It's not just that the rewards of teaching outweigh the challenges; a majority of teachers feel gratified by their careers, with a full 89% saying they are either satisfied or very satisfied.

Teachers' Degree of Satisfaction in Their Job as a Teacher

Base: Total Respondents.



“I couldn’t be happier with my choice in career.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have stayed in teaching because I am determined to help change the future for students, our community and the nation.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have loved my teaching career since day one. I take my job very seriously and try to do all that I can to prepare my students for success.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Education is the best job because we do help shape the future. We need teachers who are passionate about teaching.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love teaching. I love my students and I love what I do. However, I continue to become frustrated with the politics and decisions that are made in the field of education.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love being a teacher and just wish our profession rewarded good teachers.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

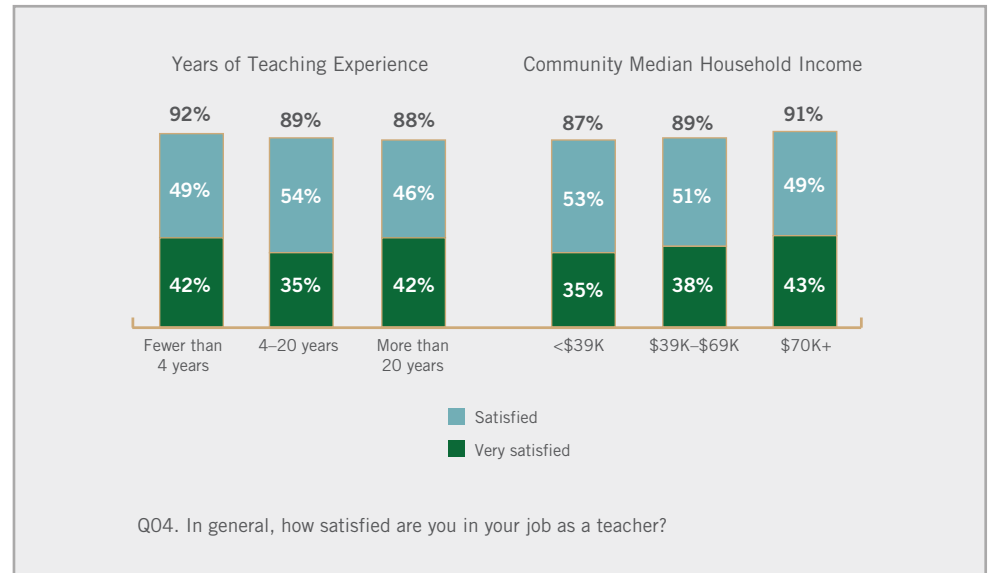
“Teaching is a very rewarding career and my goal is to prepare children socially, emotionally and academically.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Job satisfaction varies very little by teacher subgroups. The exceptions are by years of teaching experience and by community income, which display differences within the selection of very satisfied and satisfied, as illustrated in the below table.

Teachers’ Degree of Satisfaction in Their Job as a Teacher, by Years of Teaching Experience and Community Median Household Income

Base: Total Respondents.



TEACHERS WHO FEEL TEACHERS' VOICES ARE HEARD AND VALUED ARE MORE SATISFIED IN THEIR JOBS

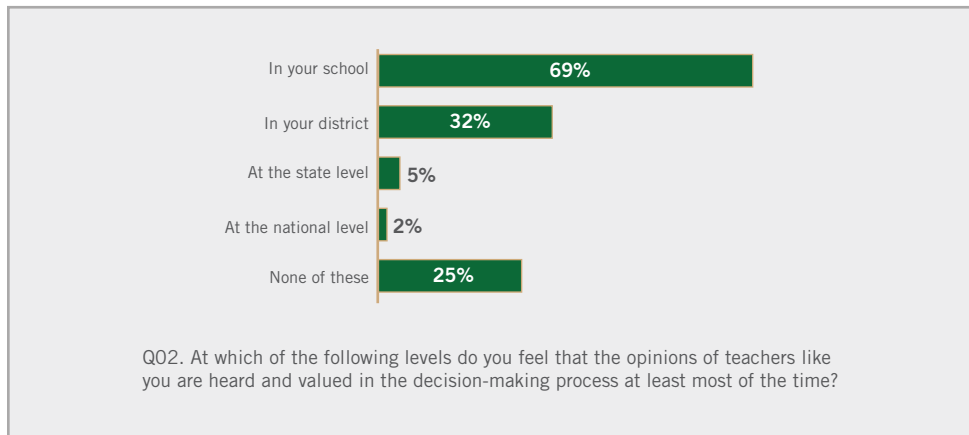
While nearly seven in 10 (69%) teachers feel that teachers' opinions are heard in their school, this number decreases drastically at the district, state and national levels:

- thirty-two percent (32%) say the opinions of teachers are heard and valued in the decision-making process at the district level at least most of the time;
- five percent (5%) say this is the case at the state level; and
- two percent (2%) say this is the case at the national level.

In conversation, teachers say that change is implemented most effectively when they are active participants in creating new policies and processes. As one teacher from Virginia said, "Experienced teachers know what their students need. We need to be heard and our opinions respected in order for our students to get the best possible education." However, one-quarter of all teachers feel teachers' opinions are not heard or valued at all.

Percentage of Teachers Who Feel the Opinions of "Teachers like me" Are Heard and Valued at Each Level

Base: Total Respondents.



"The last time teachers' voices were heard and we did what we thought was best for our particular student population, the kids did better on assessments. But then we had to change, and ever since, our scores have continued to fall."

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

"I love my job, but I feel that we as teachers need to be heard."

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

"The further removed the decisions are from the local level, the less respect teachers are given for our knowledge and expertise."

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The increasing demands of non-instruction-related tasks from all levels and sources are taking away our valuable instructional time.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Education in the U.S. has gotten too far away from the basics.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I appreciate the opportunity to be heard. My administrators do not want to hear anything from teachers that may point to mistakes or deficiencies on their parts. They are seldom in the classroom and are not aware of the school climate.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

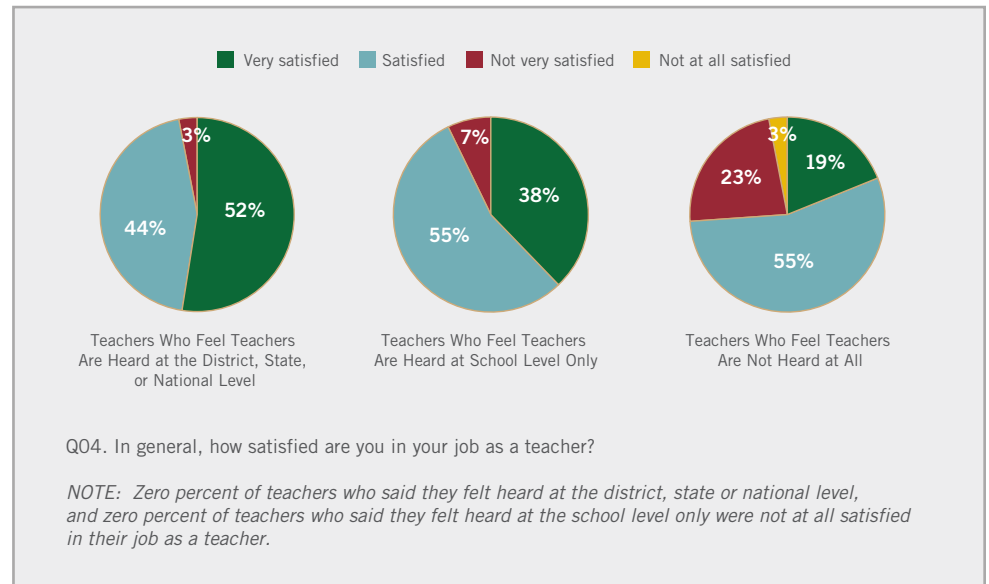
“Every school district has its own strengths and weaknesses. I am fortunate to be working in a school that supports fellow teachers and is willing to share ideas and work cooperatively.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

When teachers believe their voices are heard, they are more likely to be satisfied in their jobs. Specifically, those who feel the views of teachers like them are heard and valued at the district, state or national level are more likely to be very satisfied in their jobs than are those who feel teachers’ views are valued at the school level only (52% vs. 38%). Teachers who feel the voice of teachers is not heard at any level are far less likely to be very satisfied in their jobs (19%).

Teachers’ Degree of Satisfaction in Their Job as a Teacher, by Degree to Which They Feel the Voices of “Teachers like me” Are Heard and Valued

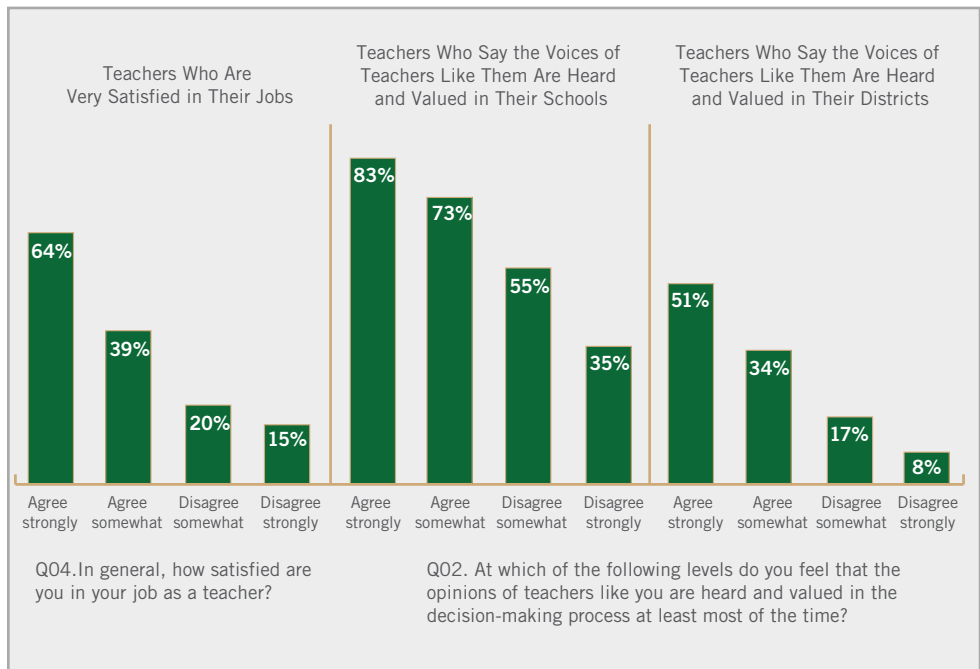
Base: Total Respondents.



Similarly, when teachers feel respected in the communities in which they teach, they are far more satisfied in their jobs and are far more likely to say the voices of teachers like them are heard and valued on school and district levels. Teachers who strongly agree that teachers are well-respected in their community are more than four times more likely to say they are very satisfied in their jobs than are teachers who strongly disagree that teachers are well-respected (64% vs. 15%). Additionally, they are more than two times as likely to say teachers’ voices are heard and valued in their schools (83% vs. 35%), and more than six times as likely to say their voices are heard and valued in their districts (51% vs. 8%).

Teachers’ Views on Satisfaction and Being Heard in Their Schools and Districts, by Agreement With Statement: “In the community where I teach, teachers are well-respected,” by Select Subgroups of Teachers

Base: Total Respondents.



The importance of hearing teachers’ views and voices on all aspects of their work cannot be overstated, which is why Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation conduct the *Primary Sources* study—to place the voice of teachers at the center of the conversation on the most pressing issues facing education in America today. This year’s report will continue to highlight the nuanced views of teachers from around the country as they tackle their important work in an era of change.

“Teaching is one of the most important jobs in America.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching has its challenges, but there is nothing I would rather be doing. I was made to teach!”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love being a teacher, but all the recent changes in content and evaluations, as well as the negative public perception of educators, have led me to consider other careers.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our students are our future leaders. Therefore, we must do everything in our power to help them be successful in all aspects of learning.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. It’s important that our students are challenged to work and think at higher levels.” • “I believe that we have a responsibility to our students to prepare them for college and careers.” • “We all have the ability to make student learning successful, but we all need to work together.” • “Education must change as the world changes.” • “Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.” • “A good teacher refuses to let a child fail.” • “Teachers need a variety of resources to meet the variety of learning styles children have.” • “The Common Core State Standards are making me a better teacher and the students better learners.” • “Teaching is an art. Teachers need to have

“I think the Common Core State Standards are definitely a step in the right direction for our children. All students need the same experiences and opportunities in learning.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

the basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students.” • “Much

of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.” • “Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is a key factor in student achievement.” • “The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.” • “I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.” • “Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.” • “I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.” • “The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.” • “Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!” • “I feel frustrated by people in the community who often

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

TEACHERS ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE, EVEN AS THEY ACKNOWLEDGE CHALLENGES AHEAD

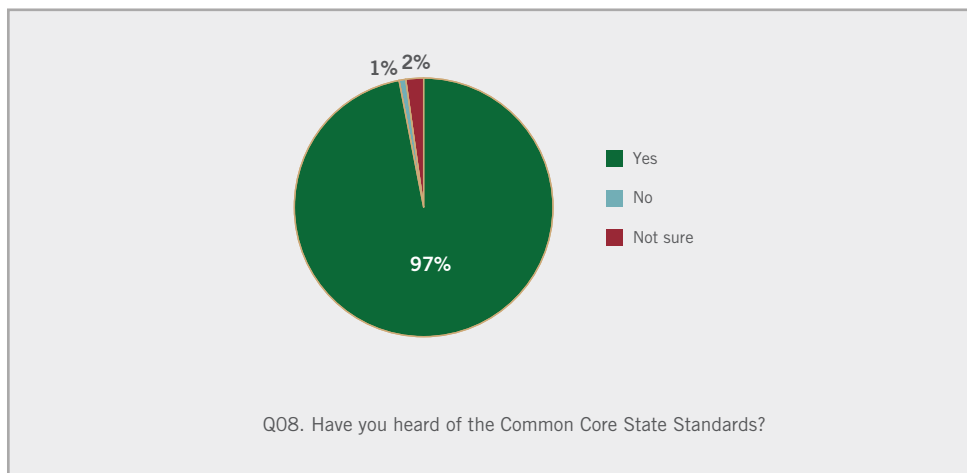
Nearly all teachers are aware of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and the majority is enthusiastic—although realistic—about its implementation. As teachers embrace the Common Core, they also recognize that it will require an adjustment to their teaching practice. Further, in order to successfully implement the standards, teachers say they need additional professional development and resources, particularly for those students who struggle most.

AWARENESS OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS IS NEAR UNIVERSAL, AND IMPLEMENTATION IS WELL UNDERWAY

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of teachers are aware of the Common Core State Standards, with that number increasing to a full 100% in states that have adopted the standards.¹

Teachers' Awareness of Common Core State Standards

Base: Total Respondents.



¹ As a reminder, *Primary Sources III* was fielded during the summer of 2013. At that point, the Common Core State Standards had been adopted in the District of Columbia and 45 states—the exceptions being Alaska, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia—as well as Minnesota, which adopted the Common Core State Standards in ELA only.

“I’m excited about where education is going with the CCSS and am impressed with the district training I’ve received.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“CCSS will be very good for our education system because it sets clear, rigorous expectations for student achievement.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“In my district, we are in the beginning of the CCSS implementation process. We had quite a lot of training last year and tried out some lessons that were provided.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think Common Core is heading in the right direction. I also feel it will take a while to get there because students are so far behind.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“It may take years to see results, but if we all have the same standards, we will produce effective and productive citizens across the nation.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am in my 40th year of teaching. Every year is more exciting and challenging. The CCSS are logical and make sense to me, rather than having each teacher doing his or her own thing.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Although my district has taken steps to prepare us for full ELA and math implementation, I do not think we are prepared to implement the CCSS effectively and I think all districts need to be monitored closely.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think it is going to take a generation of students before we can truly measure the effectiveness of the CCSS.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The Common Core is a huge step in the right direction toward college and career preparation for students from different walks of life, but it’s not a stringent curriculum, which is part of the confusion.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Awareness of the Common Core has grown over the last two years; when the 2012 *Primary Sources* report surveyed awareness, only 78% of teachers were aware of the standards.² Awareness is likely so high now because 93% of teachers in Common Core states report implementation of the standards has begun in math and/or English language arts (ELA).

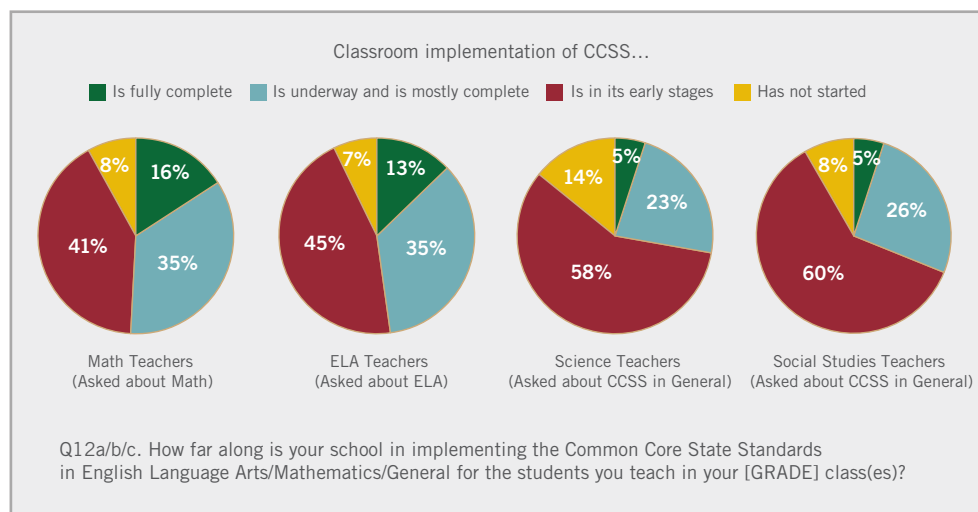
Math and English Language Arts Teachers and Elementary School Teachers Are Most Likely to Say Implementation Is Mostly or Fully Complete

Half (52%) of teachers who currently teach math and/or ELA in Common Core states say that implementation in their school is fully complete or mostly complete in at least one of these areas. Forty-two percent (42%) say implementation is in its early stages. Just 6% say implementation has not started.

When implementation of the standards in math and ELA are considered separately, far more math and ELA teachers say implementation of the standards in each respective subject is fully or mostly complete (51% for math and 48% for ELA) than do science or social studies teachers, who were asked about CCSS in general (28% and 31%, respectively). Classroom implementation is likely further along for ELA and math teachers since the standards were written primarily for ELA and math, with an eye toward cross-curricular implementation.³

Teachers’ Views on Status of Common Core State Standards Implementation, by Subject(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.



² In the 2012 *Primary Sources* report, fielded in the summer of 2011, the question was stated as follows: “The Common Core State Standards are new standards in mathematics and English language arts meant to be consistent from state-to-state for each grade level. They were completed in the summer of 2010 through a state-led effort and have been adopted by over 40 states.”

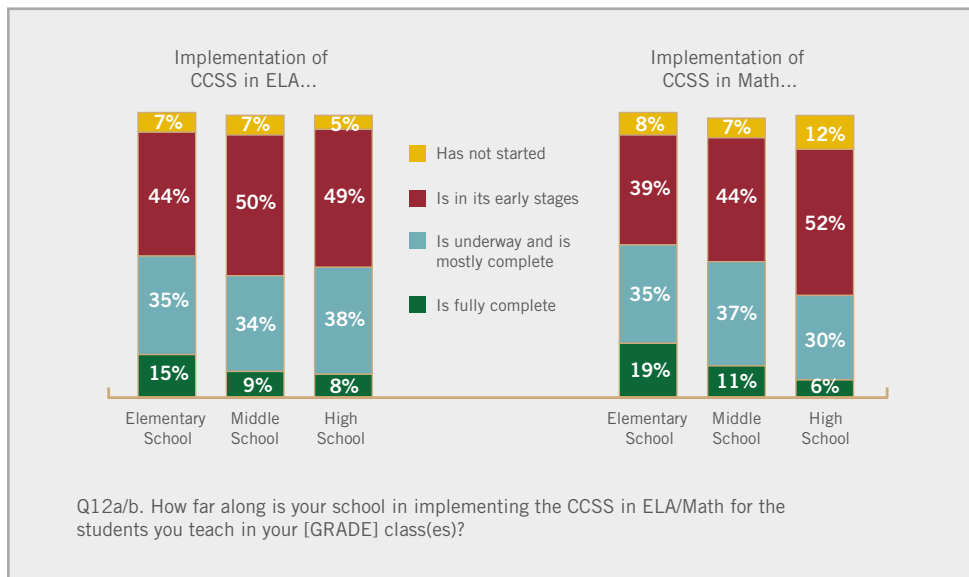
³ According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative website, “English language arts and math were the subjects chosen for the Common Core State Standards because they are areas upon which students build skill sets which are used in other subjects.”

When considering Common Core implementation of ELA and math by grade level, additional differences appear. Reported implementation of the standards in these two subjects is further along in elementary schools than in middle and high schools, with the difference greater in math than in ELA. Specifically:

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of elementary school teachers report that Common Core implementation in math is mostly or fully complete, compared to 48% of middle school and only 36% of high school math teachers.
- Fifty percent (50%) of elementary school teachers say ELA implementation is fully or mostly complete, compared to 43% of middle school and 46% of high school English teachers.

Teachers' Views on Status of Common Core State Standards Implementation, by Grade(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA or Math.



“If the Common Core State Standards are implemented correctly, they will challenge students to think more deeply than the old standards. Training them to think is a major life skill.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Implementing the Common Core is going to take time; there will be inconsistencies for a while.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We have been working with the CCSS for about two years, but our district is looking at a five-year time period to really get to implement them.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“CCSS in math must be implemented right from elementary school. If they are not, the students who come to us in the ninth grade do not have even the basic skills required for them to succeed.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I really love the way the Common Core is making students think deeper and justify their answers. I think it will improve the quality of education.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The standards are helpful in providing teachers with specific information about what students need to master at each grade level, while allowing all schools in the state to ensure they are teaching students the skills they have deemed necessary for the world we live in.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Most teachers believe that Common Core will be effective but that it was forced upon us without proper training!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe that the CCSS can be a strong driving force for children to learn what is needed in the 21st century.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel very good about the Common Core at the elementary school level. But at our high school, I feel we are way beyond those standards.”

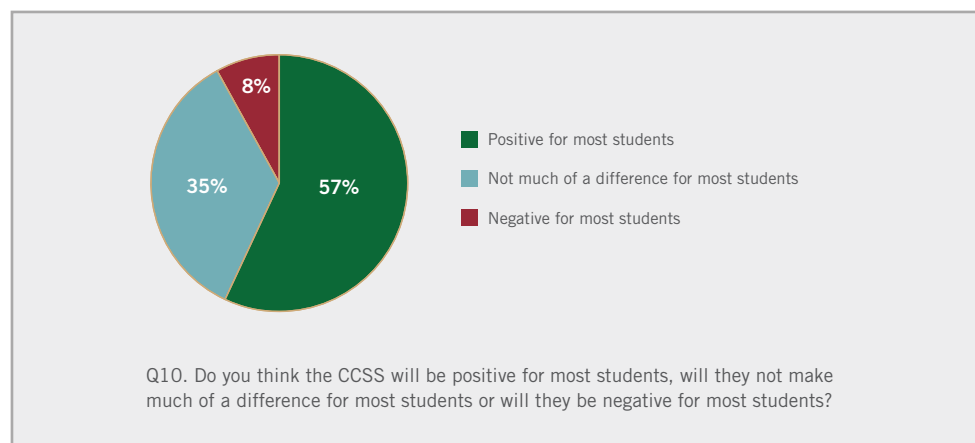
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

A MAJORITY OF TEACHERS SAY THE COMMON CORE WILL BE POSITIVE FOR MOST STUDENTS AND WILL DELIVER ON ITS GOALS

More than half of teachers (57%) in Common Core states say that the Common Core will be positive for most students; this positive view outweighs the negative seven-to-one, with only 8% of teachers reporting that the CCSS will have a negative impact. Thirty-five percent (35%) of teachers say that the standards will not make much of a difference.

Teachers' Views on Whether Common Core State Standards Will Be Positive, Negative or Will Not Make Much of a Difference for Most Students

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



In conversation, teachers elaborate on the range of views that can be found within this data, from enthusiasm to ambivalence to concerns that lead a minority of teachers to feel more negatively. As a teacher from Washington said, “I feel that my ability to be the best teacher possible for my students is most critically affected by the lack of professional time to adjust the curriculum to the Common Core and to differentiate for individual needs.”

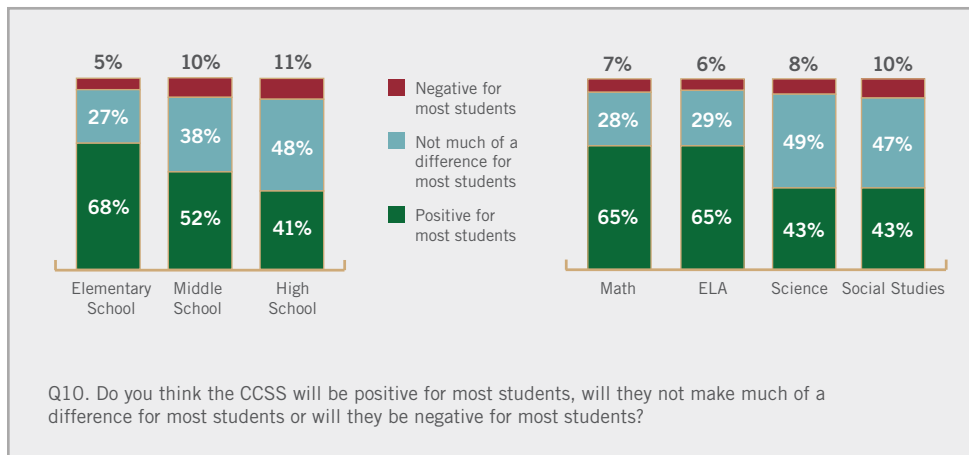
Elementary School Teachers and Math and ELA Teachers Are More Likely to Say That the Common Core State Standards Will Be Positive for Most Students

Elementary school teachers are more likely than others to say that the Common Core will be positive for most students, with just over two-thirds (68%) saying so. By comparison, 52% and 41% of middle and high school teachers, respectively, have similar views.

Across subjects, math and English language arts teachers are significantly more likely than are science and social studies teachers (who do not teach math or ELA) to say the standards will be positive for most students (65% of math and ELA teachers vs. 43% of science and social studies teachers). Still, nearly five in ten science and social studies teachers say the CCSS will have a neutral impact on most students and very few (one in 10 or less) say it will be negative for most students.

Teachers' Views on Whether Common Core State Standards Will Be Positive, Negative or Will Not Make Much of a Difference for Most Students, by Grade(s) Taught and Subject(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



“It feels like at my grade level the Common Core will help ensure a deeper understanding of content. I’m excited to teach it!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The goal of the Common Core Standards is admirable: to achieve a level of equality among the states and students.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like the rigor. It’s important that our students are challenged to work and think at higher levels.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am excited about the CCSS but feel that teachers need enough time to learn them and find materials that can help children discover and learn in a developmentally appropriate manner.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think the Common Core will bring teaching back to basics, where teachers help students learn how to think.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think that what is missing in the CCSS and the push in our school/district/state is career preparation.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The greatest aspect I see with the CCSS is the development of critical thinking skills through classroom discussion.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“CCSS are great for students who are performing at their grade level. Unfortunately, I teach a majority of students who are one to two years behind their peers and completing all of the CCSS by the time they graduate high school is not possible.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Every student will be challenged no matter where and regardless of their income. That excites me.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think the new standards are helpful, especially for new teachers. I think teachers need to challenge their students more in general.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

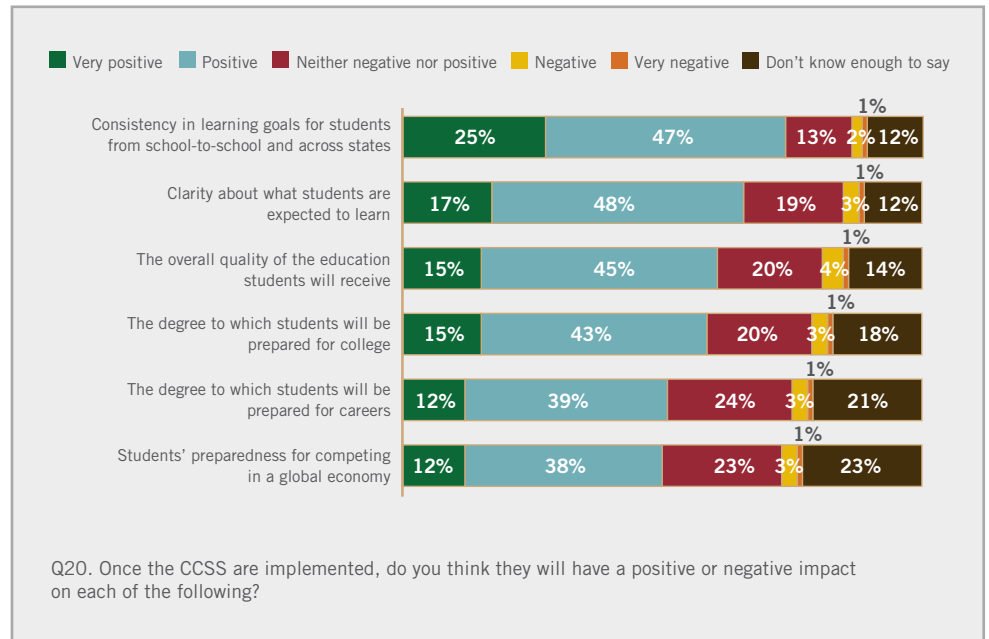
A Majority of Teachers Agree Common Core Will Positively Impact the Overarching Goals the Standards Seek to Address

From providing consistent learning goals across states to clarifying expectations for student learning and increasing students’ preparedness for higher education, most teachers say that the Common Core State Standards will meet their specified goals.⁴

More than seven in 10 teachers (72%) say the Common Core will promote consistency in learning goals regardless of where a student goes to school, and nearly two-thirds (65%) say they will foster clarity about what students are expected to learn. Teachers’ views on how the Common Core will impact students’ preparedness for the future—in careers, college or competing in a global economy—are somewhat less definitive, but even here, half of all teachers say the CCSS will be positive for students.

Teachers’ Views on Impact Common Core State Standards Will Have on Various CCSS Goals Once Implemented

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



⁴ Five of the six goals (all but “overall quality of the education students will receive”) measured in the survey and shown in the above table are specified in the Mission Statement for the Common Core State Standards at <http://www.corestandards.org/>. The sixth goal is referenced on the website at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards> and specifies: “...the Common Core State Standards are the first step in providing our young people with a high-quality education.”

In conversation, many teachers cite consistency as one of the most critical issues facing America’s students. As one high school teacher said, “I like the idea that no matter where students go in the U.S. they will be on the same page. Consistency is very important.”

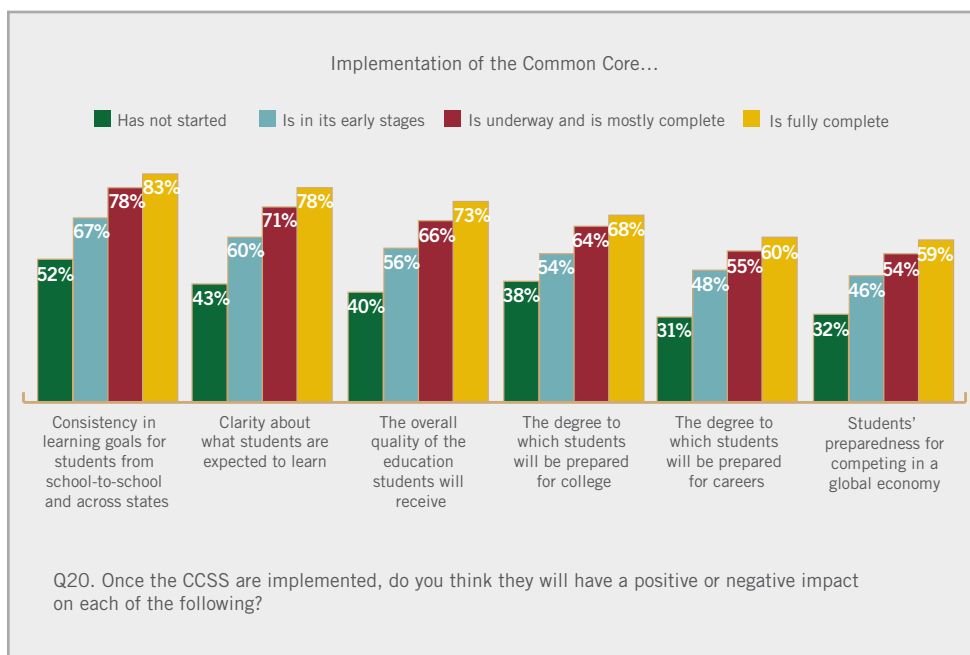
As is the case with views on implementation progress and overall impact of the Common Core on most students, elementary school teachers and math and ELA teachers are more likely than other teachers to say that the standards will meet their stated goals.⁵

TEACHERS FURTHEST ALONG IN IMPLEMENTATION ARE MOST LIKELY TO VIEW THE COMMON CORE POSITIVELY

Teachers who report being the furthest along in classroom implementation of the standards are most likely to view the impact of Common Core as positive or very positive. The percentage of teachers who say the standards will have a positive impact on its stated goals is higher among teachers at each stage of implementation.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Common Core State Standards Will Have a Very Positive or Positive Impact on Various CCSS Goals Once Implemented, by Stage of Implementation

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



“The goal of the Common Core is for students— regardless of their zip code or socioeconomic status—to have access to an education that provides an opportunity to the learn the skills that will allow them to succeed.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“It should be standard across the country for each child to receive a quality education, regardless of the neighborhood in which he or she lives.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“In thinking about where we are as a district with Common Core, I feel comfortable making the changes, although I don’t think they are going to be easy.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Students entering my class can be two to three years behind. Until the preschool program is aligned to Common Core as well, kindergarten classes will continue to receive students who aren’t prepared.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

⁵ See Appendix B, page 195 (www.scholastic.com/primarysources).

“I believe the Common Core Standards will improve the education our students receive and better prepare them for future careers and success in life.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“One of the hardest things about implementing the CCSS is the lack of resources.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“It is difficult to rate how CCSS prepare students without being familiar with all of the standards or knowing how teachers will interpret and teach the content.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am excited about the CCSS and their focus on critical thinking, close reading and evidence from the text. These ideas are powerful for student learning.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The kids don’t have to just know the answer; they have to know why it’s the answer.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

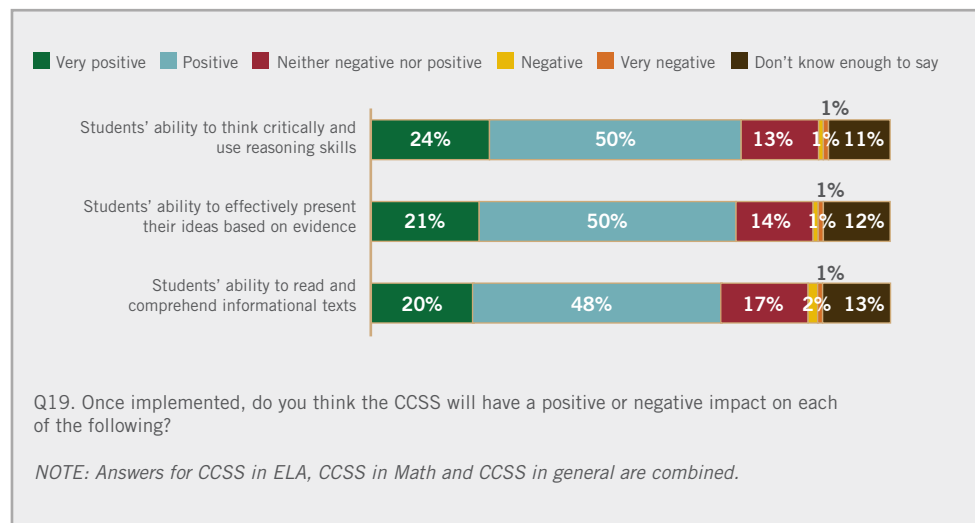
Given that teachers who are furthest along in implementation are more likely to be elementary school teachers and/or to teach math and ELA, as shown on pages 34 and 35, it aligns that teachers who are furthest along in implementation are also more positive in their response, relative to other teachers. This pattern, which remains consistent, likely reflects the fact that in many districts, implementation of the CCSS has been staged by grade level, with elementary schools being the first to work with the standards and the focus being on math and ELA more so than science and social studies.

Teachers Say the Common Core Will Positively Impact Student Learning

When asked to comment on the impact the Common Core will have on more specific topics related to student work and learning, seven in 10 teachers who teach math, ELA, science and/or social studies in CCSS states think the standards will have a positive or very positive impact on students’ ability to think critically and use reasoning skills (74%), students’ ability to present ideas based on evidence (71%) and students’ ability to read and comprehend informational texts (68%). For each skill, only 2–3% of these teachers believe the Common Core will have a negative or very negative impact.

Teachers’ Views on Impact Common Core State Standards Will Have on Select Student Skills and Abilities

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.



When considering math and/or ELA teachers compared to science and/or social studies teachers, math and/or ELA teachers are more likely to believe the Common Core will have a positive impact for each respective skill. For instance, three-quarters (77%) of math and/or ELA teachers believe the standards will have a positive impact on students’ ability to think critically and use reasoning skills, versus 61% of science and/or social studies teachers.

Further nuance in teachers' views on the impact of CCSS on student skills is seen when analyzing subjects taught individually.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Common Core State Standards Will Have a Very Positive or Positive Impact on Select Student Skills and Abilities, by Subject(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.

	Math	ELA	Science	Social Studies
Students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills	78%	77%	63%	61%
Students' ability to effectively present their ideas based on evidence	73%	76%	63%	60%
Students' ability to read and comprehend informational texts	65%	77%	60%	58%
<p>Q19. Once implemented, do you think the CCSS will have a positive or negative impact on each of the following?</p> <p><i>NOTE: Data reflects ELA teachers' responses to "CCSS in Math," ELA teachers' responses to "CCSS in ELA" and science and social studies teachers' responses to "CCSS."</i></p>				

Similarly, elementary school teachers are more likely than other teachers to think the standards will make a positive impact on these specific elements of student learning.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Common Core State Standards Will Have a Very Positive or Positive Impact on Select Student Skills and Abilities, by Grade(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.

	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills	79%	73%	63%
Students' ability to effectively present their ideas based on evidence	76%	71%	61%
Students' ability to read and comprehend informational texts	73%	69%	58%
<p>Q19. Once implemented, do you think the CCSS will have a positive or negative impact on each of the following?</p> <p><i>NOTE: Answers for CCSS in ELA, CCSS in Math and CCSS in general are combined.</i></p>			

“My school and education have trained me to teach students to answer higher-order thinking questions, as well as to create projects that demonstrate their understanding and application of ideas.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am looking forward to the full implementation of the CCSS, but it is full of challenges.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We have aligned our report cards to the Common Core, but we do not have resources provided by the district or any training in the Common Core to help us teach it.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The Common Core is a great idea but teachers need to be given time to develop new lessons!”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“The Common Core evens the playing field. All states have the same level of expectations.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am looking forward to the Common Core, which has specific outcomes but gives teachers some flexibility in the delivery.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching to each child and encouraging writing across the curriculum will be helpful and effective.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe in the standards, in the increase in informational texts and the depth at which we can now cover concepts.

I know that it will be a tremendous challenge, but this is why I want to teach!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am looking forward to not teaching as many concepts in math and going into greater depth on the concepts I do teach. For language arts, I am pleased that teachers will have greater flexibility in choosing materials to address the CCSS.”

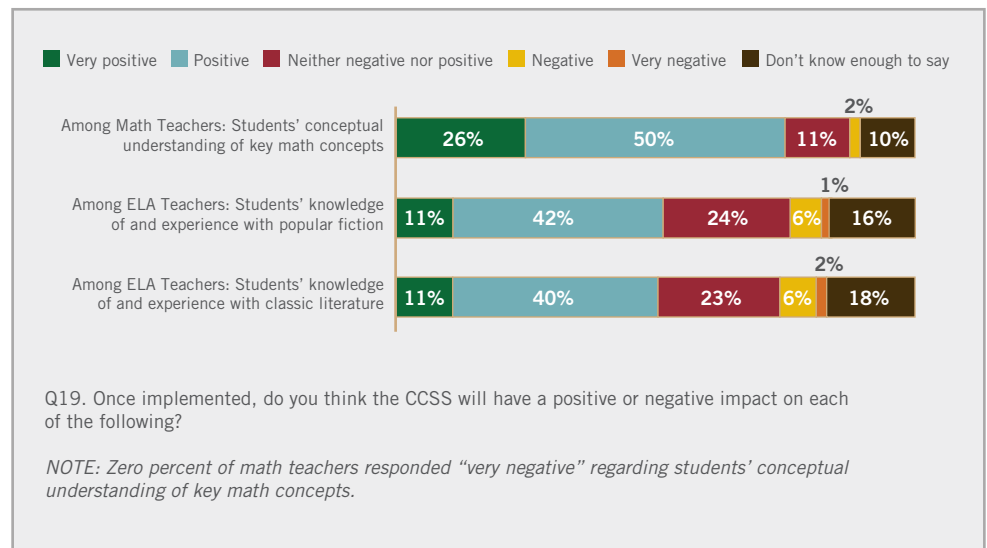
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Math and ELA Teachers Vary in Their Views on How the Common Core State Standards Will Impact Subject-Specific Experiences

When asked about subject-specific skills and experiences that are likely to be affected by the Common Core, 76% of math teachers feel the CCSS in math will have a positive impact on students’ conceptual understanding of math concepts. In contrast, just half of ELA teachers are confident that the standards will have a positive impact on students’ relationships with popular fiction and classic literature (53% and 51%, respectively). In conversation, a high school teacher explained one concern regarding the requirement to increase nonfiction instruction, saying, “I think that part of the fear regarding informational texts for an English teacher is that it will overwhelm and take over fiction and literature. But in reality, informational texts do have a really important role.”

Teachers’ Views on Impact Common Core State Standards Will Have on Select Student Skills and Abilities

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA or Math.

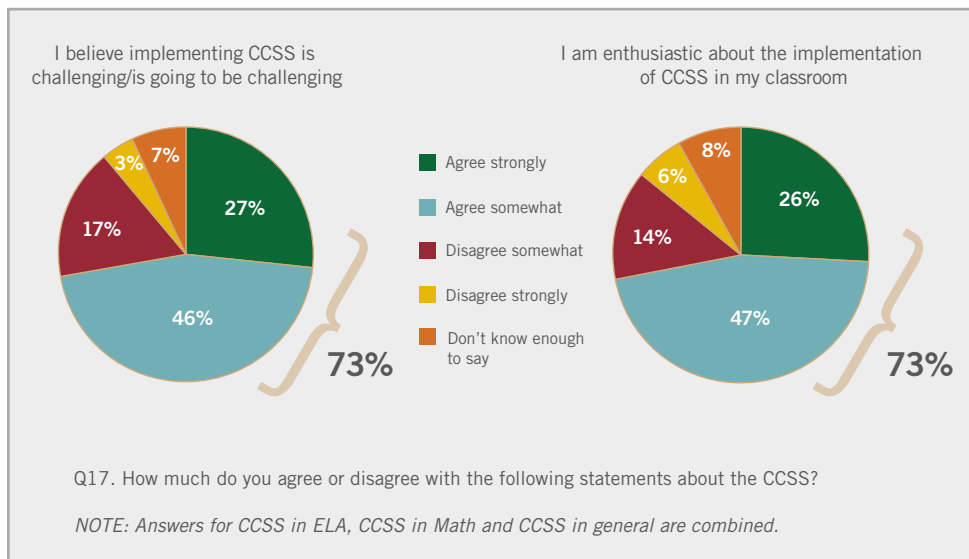


TEACHERS ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON CORE, DESPITE SAYING IT WILL BE A CHALLENGE

Seventy-three percent (73%) of teachers who teach math, ELA, science and/or social studies say the implementation of the Common Core is or will be challenging, but teachers are embracing that challenge—the same percentage (73%) reports that they are enthusiastic about the changes coming to their classrooms under the new standards. As one teacher from Arizona said, “Now with the Common Core, there’s much more pressure on me as a teacher to make sure every student gets what they need, but I feel like I can do this. I’m up for the challenge.”

Agreement With Statements About Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.



Enthusiasm for Implementing the Standards Is Higher Among Elementary School Teachers and Teachers Who Teach Math and/or English Language Arts

Eight in ten (81%) elementary school teachers agree that they are enthusiastic about the implementation of the Common Core in their classrooms, while middle school and high school teachers are less likely to agree (71% and 57%, respectively). Additionally, 77% of math and/or ELA teachers agree that they are enthusiastic about implementation, compared to 56% of science and social studies teachers.

“I am very comfortable with the CCSS and look forward to the positive changes this will bring. I expect there to be challenges from parents and some educators, but I do believe it is a good thing.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“CCSS ensures that we are all on the same page, making teacher collaboration easier.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need career readiness that prepares all students to be contributing members of society.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I look forward to the Common Core Standards; however, I feel our students are going to have a very difficult time making the adjustment. They have not been prepared and have very little motivation to succeed.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our district is only in the beginning stages of preparing for the Common Core. Perhaps once more training is made available there will be a bit less apprehension.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The further along teachers are in their current implementation, the more likely they are to believe the Common Core will be successful.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I was originally nervous that CCSS were taking away educational standards. But now I feel comfortable and am getting used to the CCSS.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am excited for the Common Core. As a science teacher, this is something that we do regularly, though I am excited to hopefully have more time now to add more inquiry-based activities and reading to my lessons. Often those important skills get left out due to time and trying to cover all of the content.”

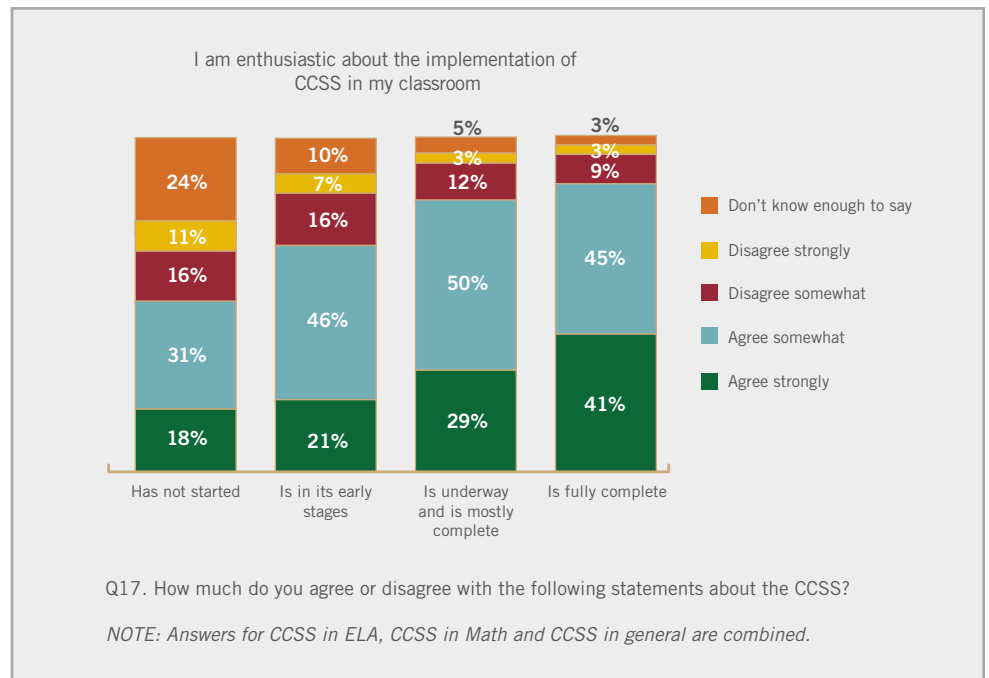
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Enthusiasm for the Common Core State Standards Increases as Implementation Progresses, Yet Belief That Implementation Is Challenging Remains

Teachers who teach math, ELA, science and/or social studies and say Common Core implementation is fully complete are significantly more enthusiastic about the CCSS than their peers who are not as far along in implementation (86% among teachers for whom implementation is fully complete vs. 67% among those for whom implementation is in its early stages and only 49% among those for whom implementation has not started).

Agreement With Statement About Common Core State Standards, by Stage of Implementation

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.

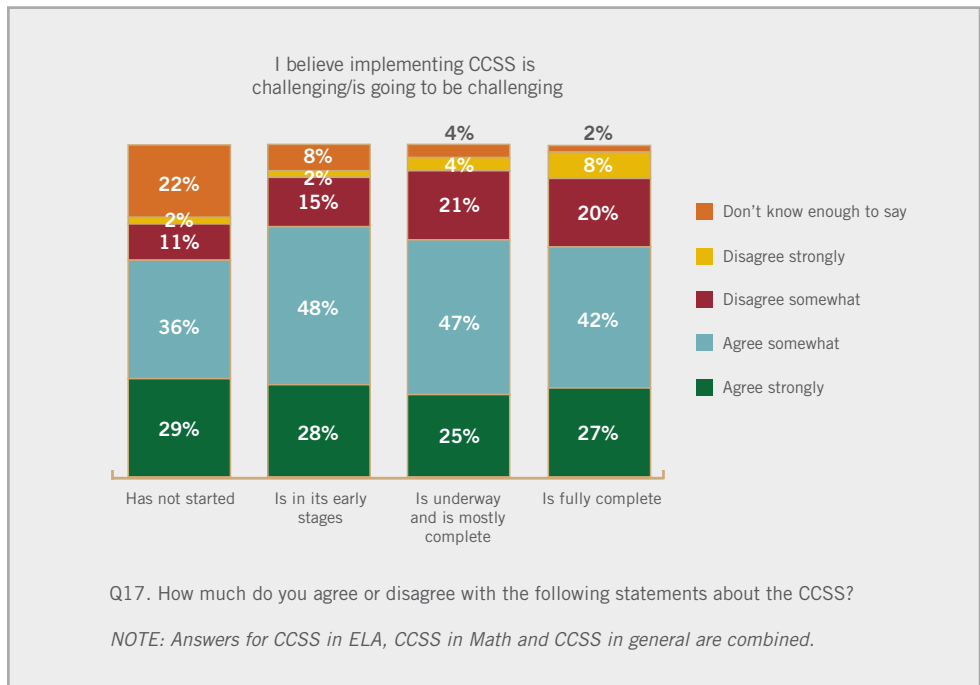


Yet teachers are only modestly less likely to say implementing the standards is challenging as implementation progresses:

- Among teachers for whom implementation is in its early stages, 75% say implementation is challenging.
- Among teachers for whom implementation is underway and mostly complete, 72% say implementation is challenging.
- Among teachers for whom implementation is fully complete, 69% say implementation is challenging.

Agreement With Statement About Common Core State Standards, by Stage of Implementation

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.



“I am passionate about providing rich instruction that creates lifelong inquiry and curiosity. This can be a challenge, but it is so necessary for college and career readiness.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I embrace CCSS for the depth of thinking it will provide students.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My main concern with the CCSS is the students who are barely passing the multiple choice assessments. How can we best prepare them for more challenging assessments when they have such difficulty with the current ones?”
 — MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe the CCSS will help improve our students’ ability to think deeply.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am excited about our state making a move toward Common Core. Our school has already shown growth in the past year and our rural school of nearly 400 students is going to continue to make great gains!”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Implementing the new CCSS is a challenge, but I see its benefits.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our school implemented the CCSS by changing from traditional instruction all in one year. The transition was not good for older students who didn’t know how to learn in this manner.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My school is working hard to interpret the standards and implement them at a developmentally appropriate level.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think the Common Core State Standards in math are rigorous and I have enjoyed teaching them this year.”

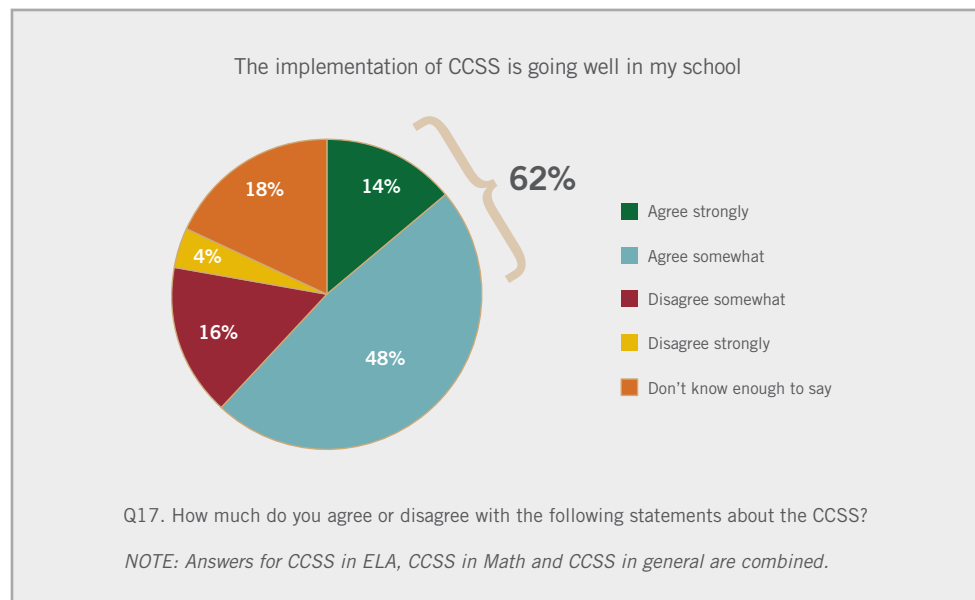
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

A Majority of Teachers Say That Common Core Implementation Is Going Well

Among the teachers who report implementation has started in their school, six in ten (62%) teachers agree that implementation is going well; 20% of teachers disagree.

Agreement With Statement About Common Core State Standards

Teach in a CCSS Adoption State, Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies, and Classroom Implementation of CCSS Has Started.



The percentage of teachers who agree with this statement is highest among those:

- for whom implementation is furthest along (85% among teachers in schools where implementation is complete, 78% in schools where it is mostly complete and 42% in schools where it is in its early stages);
- who teach elementary school (67%, vs. 60% of middle school teachers and 52% of high school teachers);
- who teach math and/or ELA, versus teachers who teach science and/or social studies and not math or ELA (64% vs. 50%).

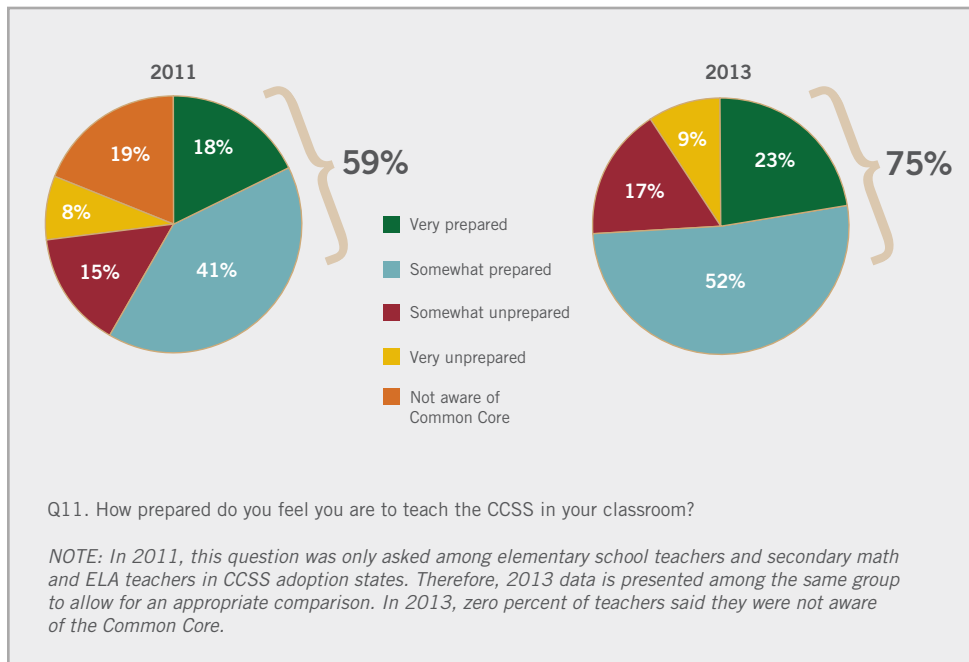
The 18% of teachers who say implementation has started in their school but responded they do not know enough to comment on how well implementation is going are more likely to teach in schools where implementation is in the early stages, less likely to have had experiences designed to prepare them to teach the Common Core, and more likely to feel unprepared to teach the standards.

TEACHERS FEEL INCREASINGLY PREPARED TO TEACH THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS AND ARE ADJUSTING THEIR TEACHING PRACTICE

Nearly three in four (72%) teachers in Common Core adoption states say they feel at least somewhat prepared to teach the Common Core. In 2011, among elementary school teachers and teachers who teach middle or high school math or ELA, 59% said they felt at least somewhat prepared. Two years later, that number has increased 16 points to 75% of elementary school teachers and teachers who teach middle or high school. In conversation, teachers say that this shift reflects more access to information, as well as additional professional development for and increased comfort with the standards.

Degree to Which Teachers Feel Prepared to Teach Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach Elementary School or Teach Middle or High School Math or ELA.



“The implementation of the CCSS is a good idea in general. The overall shift to more depth is a move in the right direction.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Although I have received some training on Common Core, I feel that I have not received enough to adequately implement it in my classroom.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe the CCSS offers support and guidance for educators to make student learning purposeful and practical.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel I have flexibility. You can do what you want every trimester, so long as the kids get what they need by end of year.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We had professional development as a district recently with speakers who came in, and then had breakout sessions. It was great to hear the language.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I work in a very forward-thinking school in my district and we have done a lot of front-loading of the CCSS. I’m excited and nervous to begin.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our school has been getting acquainted with the new standards and this year should be a little less stressful since we are more familiar with them.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love teaching and am incredibly excited about the Common Core. I do wish there was more professional development out there and grants for technology and professional development.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

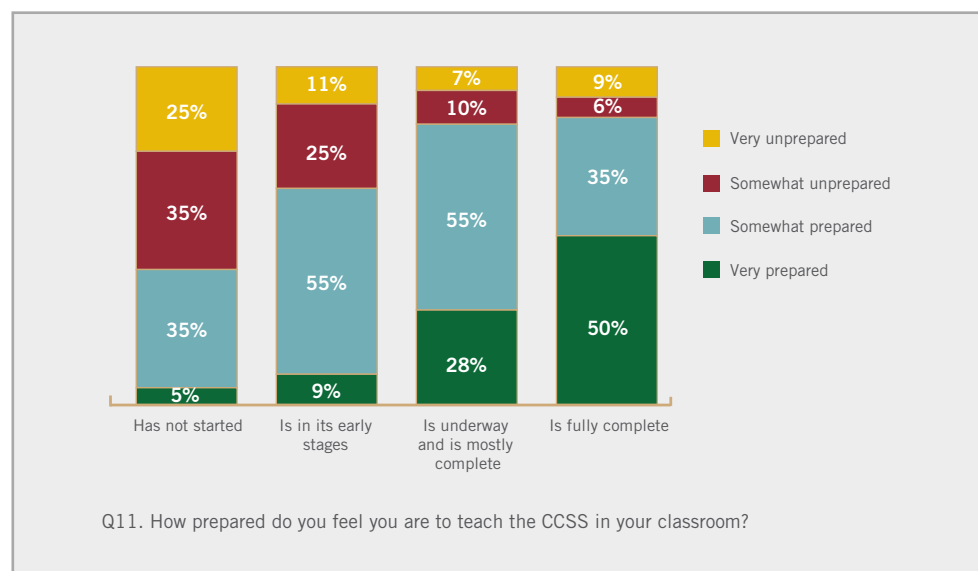
“When first learning about the CCSS I was very enthusiastic. I do believe students across the country should all have the same standards and expectations.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

The percentage of teachers who say they are very prepared to teach the standards rises dramatically as school implementation progresses. Teachers who say their school has fully implemented the CCSS feel most prepared to teach the standards (85%).

Teachers’ Preparedness to Teach Common Core State Standards, by Stage of Implementation

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



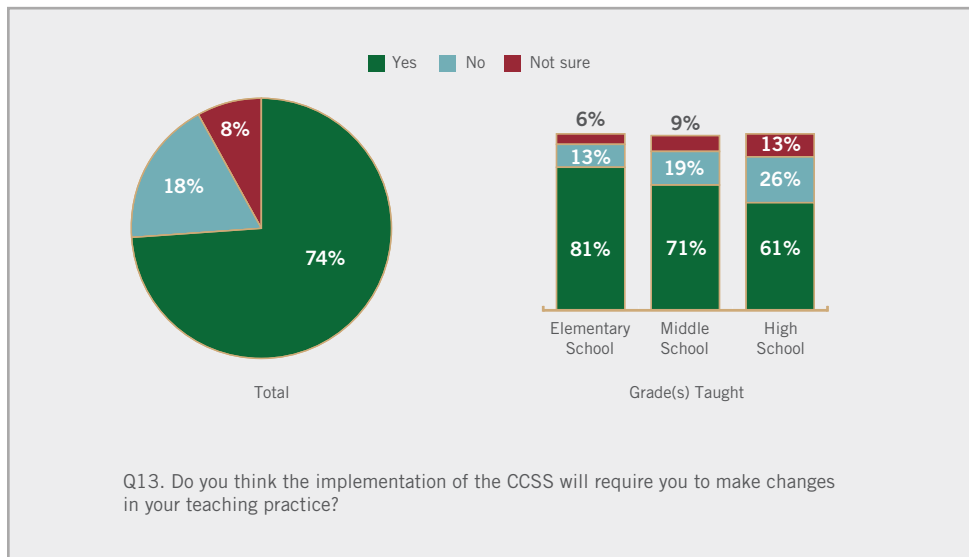
Teachers Expect That the Common Core Will Require Changes to Their Teaching Practice

Three in four (74%) teachers say that the Common Core has required or will require them to make changes to their teaching practice, with elementary school teachers more likely to say this (81%) than middle school (71%) or high school (61%) teachers.

In conversation, teachers share that this shift can take many forms and can look different in each classroom. As one elementary school teacher explained, “I know that for me the Common Core really made me appreciate my math curriculum, but I found that I needed to take a closer look at the way I was teaching reading and be much more specific in my objectives and the lessons I was using in order to teach those objectives to my students.”

Teachers’ Views on Whether Implementation of Common Core State Standards Has Required or Will Require Changes to Teaching Practice, in Total and by Grade(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



“The Common Core will only ever be as useful as the teachers teaching it.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Most teachers are very excited about implementing the CCSS, but there needs to be time and materials given to teachers to do it justice.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“While I believe that the Common Core State Standards are important and will improve education, I am very concerned about how these standards are being assessed. A particular test does not show that our students are intelligent, compassionate, critical thinkers ready to contribute to the global community.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Common Core State Standards themselves do not improve instruction or raise achievement—only teachers can do that!”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Principals and evaluators have to understand we’re all new at this. We’re not going to be perfect.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We had a meeting the other day and they said CCSS won’t change what we teach, but how we teach it.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“From the little bit of Common Core training we’ve had, I remember hearing less is more. I have to cover fewer things but get more deeply involved.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Many teachers in our district are afraid of CCSS because we are not sure how it will affect our teaching.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I would love to build more confidence in CCSS so I feel like I am providing my students with adequate instruction to maximize their success.”

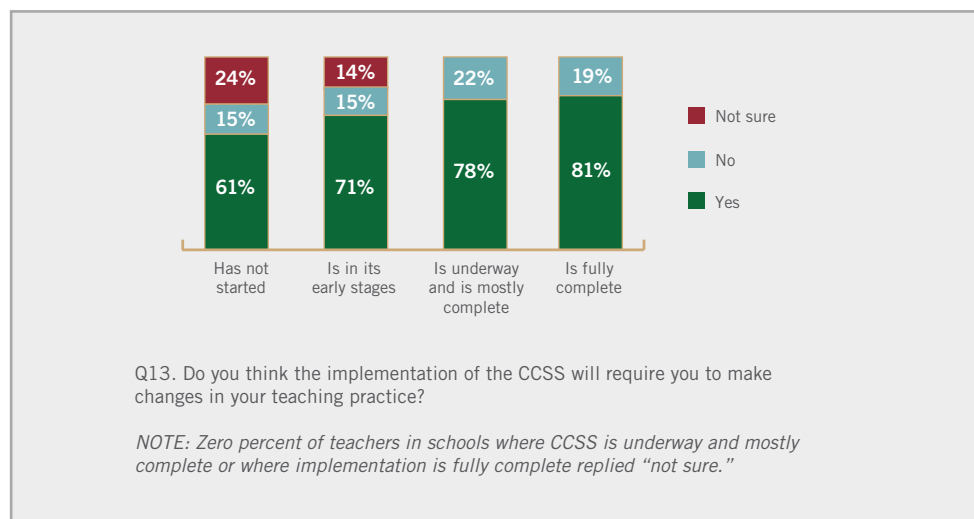
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Among the 18% of teachers who do not believe that their teaching practice will change with the Common Core, a full three-quarters (75%) say this is because they have always taught in the way the standards require. An additional 14% say that they have already made changes to the way they teach to prepare for the Common Core.

Interestingly, while most teachers say the Common Core will require a change to their teaching practice, those most likely to say so are those furthest along in the implementation process (81% of teachers where implementation is complete vs. 61% of teachers where it has not yet begun).

Teachers’ Views on Whether Implementation of Common Core State Standards Has Required or Will Require Changes in Teaching Practice, by Stage of Implementation

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.

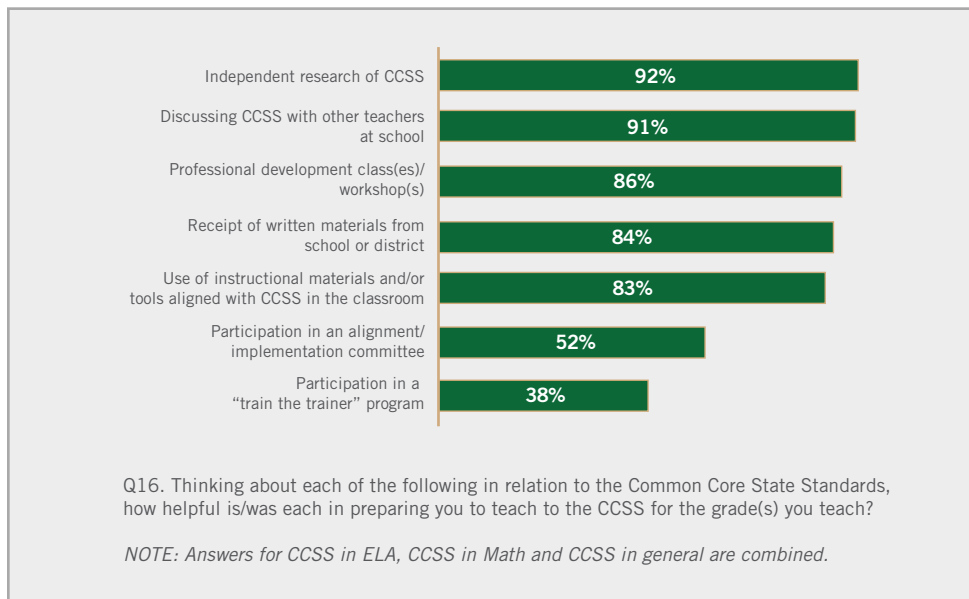


Teachers Are Seeking Out Information on the Common Core and Are Working to Become More Prepared to Teach the Standards

Nine in 10 teachers who teach math, ELA, science and/or social studies in Common Core adoption states have independently researched the CCSS (92%) and/or discussed CCSS with teachers at their school (91%). Nearly as many have participated in professional development classes/workshops (86%), received written materials from their schools or districts (84%) or have used CCSS-aligned instructional materials in their classrooms (83%).

Experiences Teachers Have Had in Relation to Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.



“I think there should be some discussion about how I am implementing the CCSS in my classroom. While I have sought out training on my own, many teachers are just waiting for the administration to tell them what to do. If the CCSS are going to be successful, we need specific feedback about how we are implementing them in our individual classrooms.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“A workshop to help teachers write a unit plan/hands-on lesson plan would be very helpful.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel CCSS will have a very positive impact on education and my personal teaching style.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers don’t have enough time or enough resources to meet the demands of the Common Core.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I do a lot of CCSS research on the Internet and meet at least two times a month with another cluster teacher from another district who has 15 years of experience.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have been highly invested in the CCSS for a long time, and have spent a great deal of time and energy training other teachers in their implementation.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am switching districts soon and the level of preparation for CCSS is completely different. My new district has not begun at all. There is a lot of fear out there, but with information that will go away.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

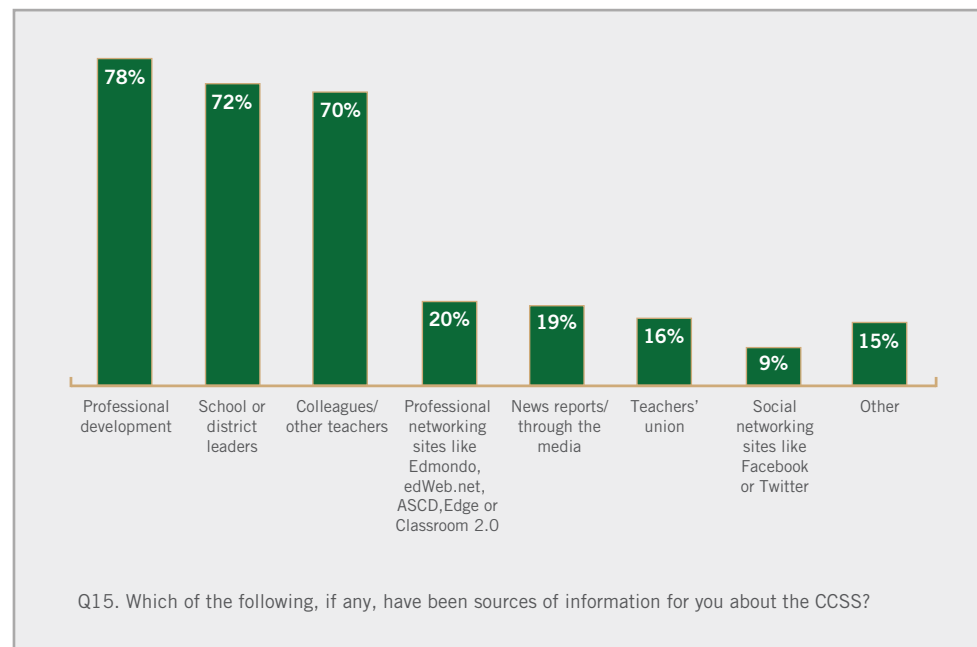
“I have learned a great deal through the CCSS online modules provided by our district.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

The sources of information about the Common Core reflect these experiences, with teachers being far more likely to receive information about the standards from professional development experiences and their colleagues (both teachers and school leaders) than they are from other sources.

Teachers' Sources of Information About Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.



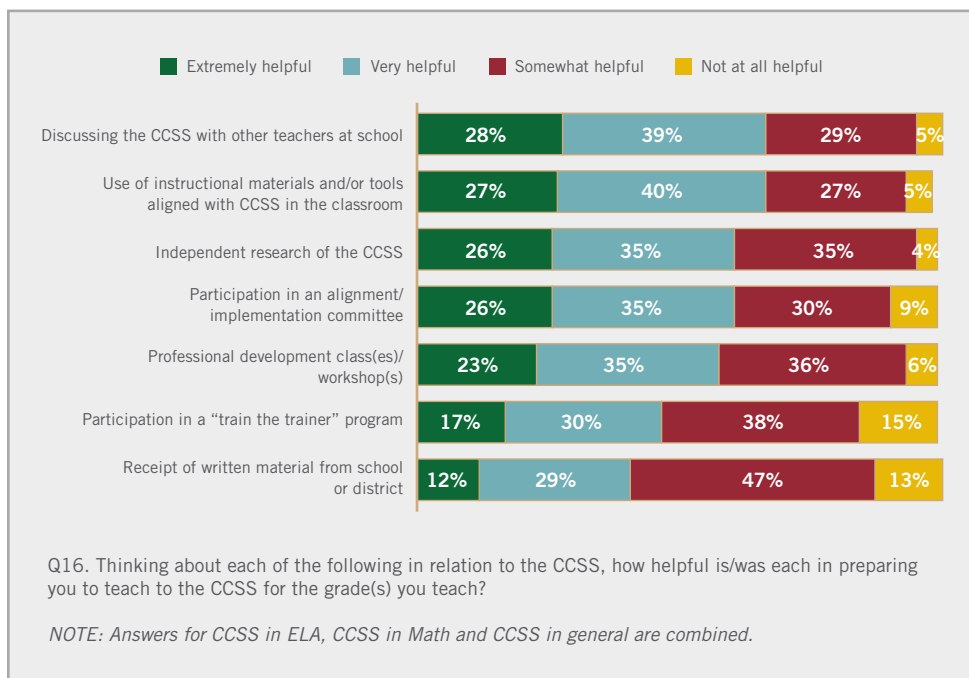
It is worth noting that teachers in non-Common Core states are much more likely to cite the news media as a source of information about the standards (34% vs. only 19% of teachers in CCSS states).

Teachers Find Discussing Common Core With Colleagues and Using Aligned Materials in the Classroom the Most Helpful Activities in Strengthening Their Preparedness to Teach the Standards

As they work to prepare for the new standards, teachers identify a number of activities as helpful. Among teachers who have participated in each activity, nearly seven in 10 teachers point to using Common Core–aligned materials and discussion of the CCSS with other teachers as the most valuable tools, with independent research, participation in implementation committees and professional development closely following. Programs like “train the trainer” and written materials from schools are reported as less helpful, but nearly half of all teachers who have participated in or received these still say they are extremely or very helpful.

Teachers’ Views on Helpfulness of Experiences in Preparing to Teach Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.
Base varies according to whether teacher experienced each.



As in other areas, those teachers who teach math and ELA are more likely to find these CCSS-related resources more helpful than teachers of science and/or social studies. For example, 70% of math and/or ELA teachers—compared to 52% of science and social studies teachers—say discussing the Common Core with other teachers is extremely or very helpful. Similarly, 60% of math and/or ELA teachers report that professional development is extremely or very helpful (46% of science and social studies teachers say the same), and 72% report the use of CCSS-aligned materials in the classroom is helpful (vs. 50% of science and social studies teachers).

“We have been preparing for the CCSS for the past year and a half in my district; however, I don’t feel that students will be any better- or worse-prepared. We always differentiate instruction to give each student whatever he or she needs to be successful and we always set the bar high.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have followed the changes in education closely and have researched every new mandate and product.”
 — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think it is important to get aligned reading materials for the CCSS in our schools. I am trying to get things from the Internet but it would be helpful to have books aligned.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers need more time to plan. We also need paraprofessionals in the classroom to keep up with student instruction and interventions to prepare for the next year.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am excited for Common Core, but it will take a few years for the students to be able to perform at the higher standards.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am very pleased with my school/district and the work they have put into the CCSS implementation. We are working very hard on alignment, using data, collaboration, professional development and outside training. Our district and principal work with us as a team and care about our staff, students and their families.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel very lucky to work in a small school district that considers Common Core important and has been aligning our curriculum and providing quality professional development.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The Common Core is going to change the way we think about teaching and how kids learn. We need to adjust our teaching, but districts also need to provide support for teachers to help implement the program.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Teachers Who Say Implementation of Common Core is Going Well⁷

In terms of the experiences teachers have had related to preparing them to teach the Common Core, there are more similarities than differences between teachers who think implementation is going well (62%) and those who do not (20%). The few differences between these groups of teachers include:

- use of CCSS-aligned instructional materials (93% for those who say implementation is going well vs. 82% who do not), and
- participation in an implementation or alignment committee (60% for those who say implementation is going well vs. 52% who do not).

However, there is a vast difference in the degree to which these teachers find their experiences helpful. Teachers who report that implementation is going well are more likely to rate all CCSS-related experiences as extremely or very helpful, including:

- use of CCSS-aligned materials (75% vs. 46%),
- discussing the CCSS with other teachers (77% vs. 48%),
- independent research of the CCSS (68% vs. 53%),
- participation in an implementation or alignment committee (68% vs. 39%),
- professional development (66% vs. 38%),
- participation in a “train the teacher” program (55% vs. 24%), and
- receipt of written materials from the school or district (50% vs. 18%).

Those who feel implementation is going well are more likely to be enthusiastic about implementation (87% vs. 53%), and overall, teachers who agree that implementation is going well are also more likely to agree that education in America is moving in a positive direction (59% vs. 34%).

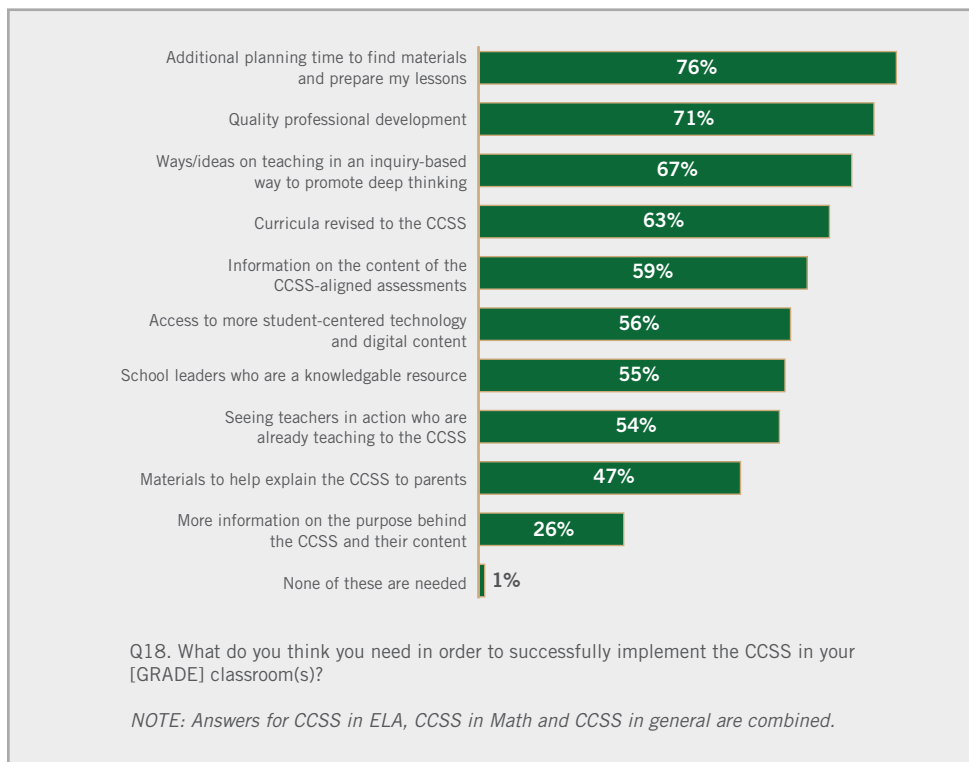
⁷ All data presented in this spotlight is among math, ELA, science and/or social studies teachers.

TEACHERS REPORT A WIDE RANGE OF RESOURCES NEEDED TO PROPERLY IMPLEMENT THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Regardless of their enthusiasm or preparedness for the Common Core, teachers report a wide range of resources needed in order to implement the standards. Three-quarters (76%) of teachers require additional planning time, with a similar number pointing to a need for quality CCSS-based professional development (71%). Two in three (67%) teachers need guidance and ideas for teaching in an inquiry-based way and about six in 10 need CCSS-aligned curricula (63%) and more information on the content of the CCSS-aligned assessments that are being developed (59%).

Tools and Resources Teachers Say They Need in Order to Successfully Implement the Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Teach ELA, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.



The top resource needs for the implementation of the Common Core do not vary significantly across subjects teachers teach. Similar to the data shown above, the number one need reported by math and/or English language arts teachers is more planning time to find materials and lesson plans (76%). Quality professional development follows closely, with 71% of teachers reporting a need for this. These data are similar among science and social studies teachers at 72% and 71%, respectively. Teachers who teach science or social studies are slightly less inclined than math and/or ELA teachers to express a need for ideas on inquiry-based learning (61% vs. 69%) or for materials to help explain CCSS to parents (39% vs. 49%). Science and social studies teachers more inclined to say they need information on the purpose and content of the standards (34% vs. 24%).

“CCSS is a wonderful opportunity. I hope that there will be support for students in the form of appropriate materials and for teachers via training and time for collaboration.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am concerned about the lack of technology and keyboard training for students to be successful with Common Core Standards.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our district’s greatest challenge, besides the demands of technology for testing, is the adoption of resources for teachers to teach them.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We are trying to find CCSS resources or create them on our own.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel that one of our greatest challenges in light of CCSS is working with children who start below grade level.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“You have some students who are emerging, some who are almost there, some who aren’t. You want them all to ‘be there’ but it’s not always possible.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“For special education student success in the CCSS, it is important to look at the students individually and if they are making positive progress. They may still be a long way from meeting the standards, but as long as they are making positive strides, they are successful.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“While I do believe in offering a rich and challenging curriculum for all students, it must be at their instructional level. It is not realistic to expect all students to achieve a proficient level on standards that are significantly above their instructional level.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers Are Concerned About the Success of Those Students Who Struggle the Most

When asked to identify the students they are most concerned about when it comes to meeting the goals of the Common Core, across grades taught, teachers report the most concern for those students who are currently working two or more grades below grade level. One-quarter of teachers are concerned about their special education students.

Student Populations Teachers Are Most Concerned About in Regards to Meeting the Requirements of Common Core State Standards, in Total and by Grade(s) Taught

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State.

	Total	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Students who are currently working two or more grades below grade level	40%	43%	40%	33%
Special education students	26%	25%	29%	25%
English Language Learners (ELL)	13%	14%	11%	11%
Students who are working on grade level	7%	6%	6%	9%
Students who are gifted or who are working significantly above grade level	2%	2%	2%	3%
I am not concerned about any of these	12%	10%	12%	19%
Q22. Of the student populations you have in your class(es), which, if any, are you most concerned about in regards to meeting the requirements of CCSS?				

It is notable that in the last wave of *Primary Sources*, even before the Common Core, teachers expressed a need for more tangible resources and training to address the needs of many of these populations, including special education students, gifted and talented students and English Language Learners.⁸

⁸ *Primary Sources* 2012, page 51.

SPOTLIGHT ON: Classrooms With English Language Learners

Fifty-two percent (52%) of teachers have at least one English Language Learner in their classroom, with the average ELL classroom serving students who speak three different languages.

Of teachers teaching English Language Learners:

- Fifty-six percent (56%) report that less than 20% of their students are ELL.
- Thirty-one percent (31%) report that 20–59% of their students are ELL.
- Thirteen percent (13%) report that more than 60% of their students are ELL.

Those states where teachers are most concerned about English Language Learners meeting the requirements of the Common Core State Standards and those that have the most English Language Learners in classes are:

States Where Teachers Are Most Concerned About ELL Students Meeting the CCSS	CCSS Adoption States Where the Most Teachers Have ELL Students in Their Classes
California (30%)	New Mexico (84%)
New Mexico (23%)	California (80%)
Nevada (20%)	Oregon (74%)
Arizona/Washington (19%)	Nevada (73%)
Colorado/Massachusetts (18%)	Hawaii (68%)

Q22. Of the student populations you have in your class(es), which, if any, are you most concerned about in regards to meeting the requirements of the CCSS?

Q64. About what percent of your students are English Language Learners?

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State. (Left)
Base: Total Respondents. (Right)

“Our ELL students need more support.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Fifty percent of our school is Hispanic, with Spanish listed by parents as the first and/or home language.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need more time to learn Common Core through more detailed training.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“As an ELL teacher, I have grave concerns about the CCSS. Too many students will not meet the raised bar, and nothing is being done to provide them an alternative. It takes 5–7 years to become fluent in a language to be able to perform at grade level. What will happen to those kids who fall below?”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Leadership and communication are key factors to making Common Core successful for our students.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am in favor of CCSS; however, the lack of technology in my district will strongly hamper my abilities to implement CCSS properly.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

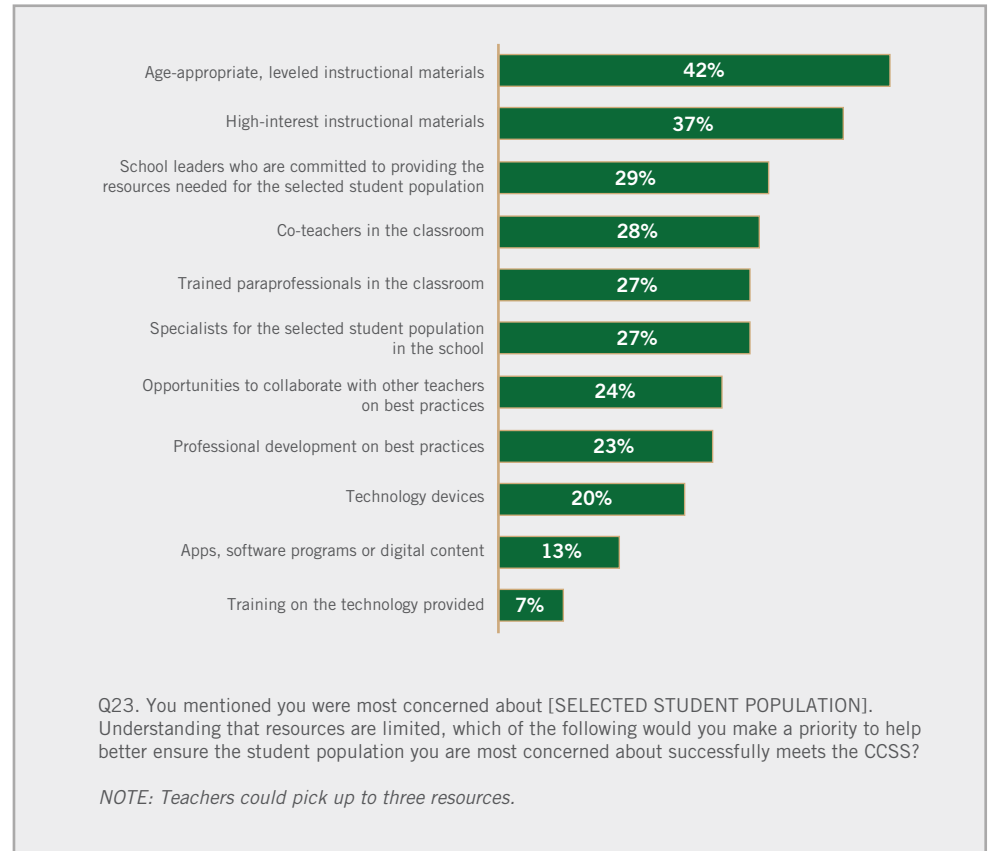
“I am very much in agreement with the Common Core State Standards and the improvement they will bring in overall learning achievement for students. Teachers of math and science need training to effectively implement the CCSS in their subjects, especially with technical reading and writing.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our young people are the future of our country. Giving them the education that will enable them to compete in the modern workplace is crucial to our survival as a nation.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

In general, teachers feel that instructional materials that are age-appropriate, leveled and high-interest are the most important resources required to ensure that their students meet the new state standards. After materials, teachers point to their colleagues—both teachers and administrators—and then time for collaboration and professional development, followed by technology.

Top Resources Teachers Would Make a Priority to Help Better Ensure the Student Population They Are Most Concerned About Successfully Meets Common Core State Standards

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Are Concerned About a Student Population.



When asked to prioritize resources for the student populations about which they are most concerned, teachers' responses vary. Age-appropriate, leveled instructional materials are a top priority for teachers whose students are working at or below grade level, while high-interest materials and technology are at the top of the list for students working significantly above grade level.

Top Resources Teachers Would Make a Priority to Help Better Ensure the Student Population They Are Most Concerned About Successfully Meets Common Core State Standards, by Student Population

Base: Teach in a CCSS Adoption State and Are Concerned About a Student Population.

Students Working Two or More Grades Below Grade Level	Students Who Are Gifted or Working Significantly Above Grade Level
Age-appropriate, leveled instructional materials (45%)	High-interest instructional materials (52%)
High-interest instructional materials (40%)	Technology devices (34%)
School leaders who are committed to providing the resources needed for this population (30%)	School leaders who are committed to providing the resources needed for this population (30%)
Co-teachers in the classroom (29%)	Opportunities to collaborate with other teachers on best practices (28%)
Specialists for this population in the school (29%)	Professional development on best practices (27%)
<p>Q23. You mentioned you were most concerned about [SELECTED STUDENT POPULATION]. Understanding that resources are limited, which of the following would you make a priority to help better ensure the student population you are most concerned about successfully meets the CCSS?</p> <p><i>NOTE: Teachers could pick up to three resources.</i></p>	

“My major concern is how we catch up students who are behind. The longer you wait for interventions, the harder it is to catch the students up. Not all students are developmentally ready in K–2 for Common Core. Will they give up if they are constantly behind?”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“More training is needed to successfully implement Common Core at all levels.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Implementation of CCSS for ELL students is far behind general education students. Research is needed and curricula developed to assist bilingual and ELL teachers in helping their students making greater strides across the gap they face.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like the Common Core Standards, but the problem my school district faces is having enough appropriate teaching materials—especially in language arts.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I am excited to work with the Common Core State Standards; however, I would love to have more resources available at the school/subject level.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The CCSS are going to make all students stronger in all their skills. Don’t be afraid of the standards and their complexity. Today’s students enjoy the rigor!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Though I have high expectations and try to encourage my students in every way, the CCSS will be a great challenge for ELLs with low-level English skills.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The switch to CCSS is going to have a tremendous impact on special education students and their participation in the general education setting.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Those teachers who are most concerned about special education students (26%) prioritize the following resources to ensure their students meet the Common Core:

- age-appropriate, leveled instructional materials (41%),
- co-teachers in the classroom (33%),
- trained paraprofessionals in the classroom (33%),
- high-interest instructional materials (30%), and
- school leaders who are committed to providing the resources needed for special education students (29%).

Age-appropriate, leveled instructional materials also top the list for teachers who feel they most need resources for English Language Learners (13% of teachers):

- age-appropriate, leveled instructional materials (36%),
- specialists for this population in the school (34%),
- high-interest instructional materials (31%),
- school leaders who are committed to providing the resources needed for ELL students (29%), and
- professional development on best practices (27%).

When ranked by importance, the resources teachers prioritize to ensure that the students they are most concerned about meet the Common Core do not vary significantly by grade level. The exception is trained paraprofessionals and specialists, whose importance is ranked much more highly by elementary school teachers (34% and 30%, respectively) than by their colleagues in middle (24% and 25%) and high schools (19% and 23%).

In each of the three iterations of *Primary Sources*, teachers' priorities are clear—student success is the most important aspect of their work, and they are committed to making their classrooms the best possible environments for learning. In conversation and in the quantitative data, teachers' concerns regarding the Common Core State Standards come from this drive to best serve students. As one teacher said, "It is important that even with the Common Core State Standards being utilized we do not lose sight of the importance of the teachers in the classroom and their ability to decide how to present the material in a manner that will best meet their students' needs." Amidst challenges and change, teachers continue their search for tools and resources that will allow them to grow in their practice and ensure they support their students' learning.

As shifts are made toward the Common Core, another change is happening throughout the country: new teacher evaluation systems. The next section will explore what is happening within evaluation systems and what the elements are that help teachers define their evaluations as most helpful.

"The Common Core is a set of objectives—what you are striving to meet. What all kids should know and be able to do."

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

"I am excited about the Common Core, but concerned about the implementation. If done correctly, it will be a great thing for math in the United States."

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

"The CCSS have brought about a change in what I teach in some circumstances, but will not affect how I teach. The best-practice decisions I make on a daily basis are for the benefit of my students as growing human beings, academically, socially and personally."

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

"I am concerned that teachers have not been given enough professional development and time regarding the CCSS."

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. It’s important that our students are challenged to work and think at higher levels.” • “I believe that we have a responsibility to our students to prepare them for college and careers.” • “We all have the ability to make student learning successful, but we all need to work together.” • “Education must change as the world changes.” • “Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.” • “A good teacher refuses to let a child fail.” • “Teachers need a variety of resources to meet the variety of learning styles children have.” • “The Common Core State Standards are making me a better teacher and the students better learners.” • “Teaching is an art. Teachers need to have

“I wish that teachers could receive feedback on a regular basis that was a narrative of what we are doing well and where we need to grow.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

the basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students.” • “Much

of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.” • “Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is a key factor in student achievement.” • “The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.” • “I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.” • “Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.” • “I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.” • “The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.” • “Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!” • “I feel frustrated by people in the community who often

TEACHER EVALUATION IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

TEACHERS FIND EVALUATIONS MOST HELPFUL WHEN THEY INCLUDE ACTIONABLE FEEDBACK AND MULTIPLE MEASURES OF TEACHER & STUDENT PERFORMANCE

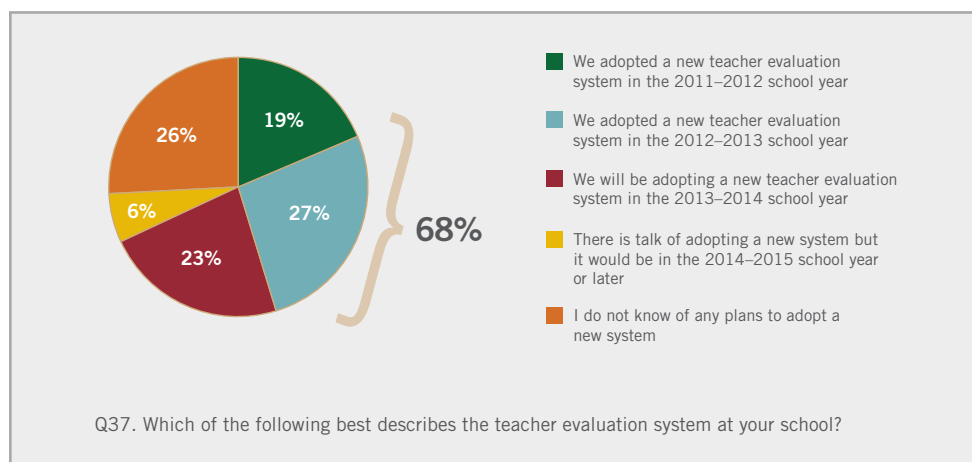
Since 2011, nearly seven in 10 teachers report their schools have transitioned to a new evaluation system. Teachers indicate that including multiple measures and actionable feedback—especially feedback from observations—is critical in ensuring that evaluations make a positive impact on teacher practice and on improving student performance. Many teachers offer ways to improve evaluations to support their professional growth, underscoring their role as not only teachers, but also lifelong learners.

MOST TEACHERS ARE EVALUATED AT LEAST ANNUALLY, WITH MANY EXPERIENCING NEW EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of teachers say their school has a teacher evaluation system in place and 68% report their school has transitioned to a new evaluation system since 2011 or is transitioning to a new evaluation system in the 2013–2014 school year.⁹

Timeline for Adoption of a New Teacher Evaluation System at Teachers' Schools

Base: Total Respondents.



⁹ Since teacher evaluation systems are often influenced by and/or defined at the state level, these data vary significantly across teachers in different states and are well-aligned with the findings from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) *State of the States 2013 Connect the Dots: Using Evaluations of Teacher Effectiveness to Inform Policy and Practice* (October 2013).

“The new teacher evaluation system is going to be a wonderful addition if administrators are trained properly and give appropriate feedback that can be used by the teacher.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My district is in the process of changing our teacher evaluation system. We have been transitioning this year and into next year.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“This year we will begin a new teacher evaluation process using teacher mentors.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“In general, the changes to the curriculum and the way teachers are evaluated could be positive, but the pace of change is just overwhelming and many teachers are extremely stressed out.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The new teacher evaluation system we have been introduced to and the Common Core alignment we are set to tackle in 2013–14 are steps in the right direction.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

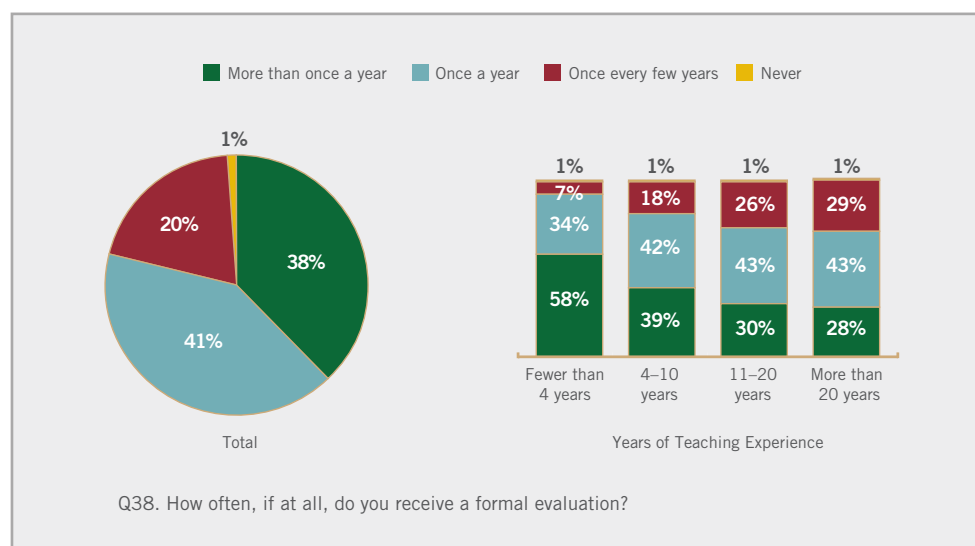
“We are going through the process of switching to a new evaluation system. I am heavily involved in this process, so I know how evaluations are going to shift in the coming year. But for the previous five years, I have only been formally observed once.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Nearly all (99%) teachers say they are evaluated at least once every few years and eight in 10 teachers (79%) say they receive an evaluation at least once a year. New teachers are far more likely than other teachers to report being evaluated more than once a year (58%).

Frequency With Which Teachers Report They Receive Formal Evaluations, in Total and by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Total Respondents.



Similar to the reported frequency above, nearly all (99%) teachers say they should receive a formal evaluation of their practice at least once every few years, with 77% saying they should receive a formal evaluation at least once a year and 31% saying they should be evaluated more than once a year.

Additionally, new teachers are most likely to say they should be evaluated more than once a year—a belief that declines with years of teaching experience. Specifically, 48% of new teachers, 35% of teachers with four to 10 years of experience, 25% of teachers with 11 to 20 years of experience and 20% of veteran teachers (those with more than 20 years of teaching experience) say they ought to be evaluated more than once a year.

Teachers Evaluated the Least Often Are Most Likely to Want More Frequent Evaluations

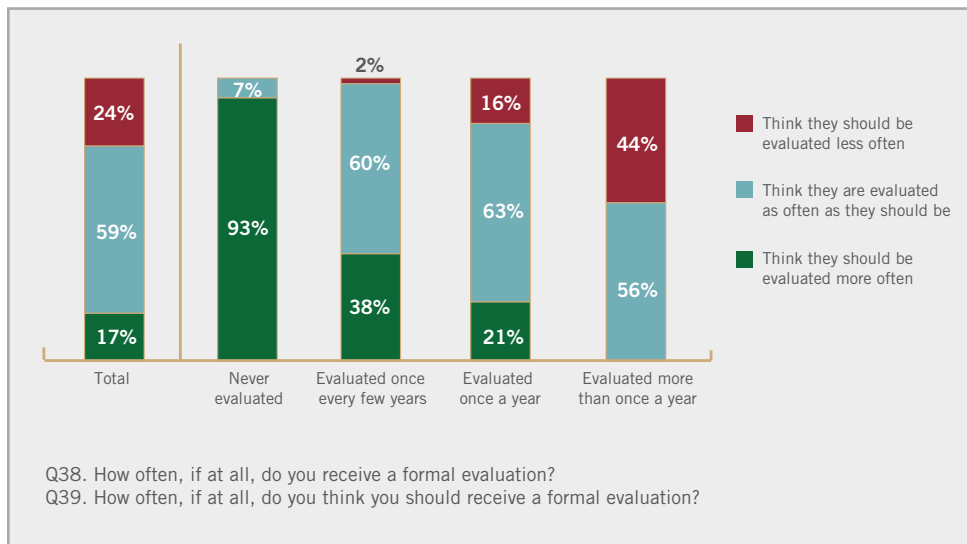
While a majority (59%) of teachers are satisfied with how often they are evaluated, many teachers feel they ought to be evaluated more often. For example:

- Among teachers who are evaluated once a year, 21% indicate they should be evaluated more often.
- Among teachers who are evaluated once every few years, 38% indicate they should be evaluated more often.
- Among the very few teachers who are not evaluated at all (1%), almost all (93%) say they ought to be evaluated.

Among teachers who are formally evaluated multiple times a year, 56% say they are evaluated as often as they should be, while 44% say they are formally evaluated more often than they should be and less than 1% say they should be evaluated more often.

Comparison of How Often Teachers Report They Are Evaluated With How Often They Believe They Should Be Evaluated, in Total and by Frequency of Evaluation

Base: Total Respondents.



“The evaluation process is very good in my school, which has very high standards. The administration is demanding; therefore, I don’t believe we should have more observations or change what we have in place.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I wish principals would pop into our classrooms all the time, even daily, rather than do formal 40-minute evaluations. These long evaluations are not natural and the teachers who aren’t doing their job are able to fake it while the principal is in the room.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“If the teacher is running the classroom and there are no complaints and the scores are good, I don’t think there’s a need to increase evaluation frequency.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Maybe because I was a new teacher, classroom management and assessment structure were really the focus of my formal evaluation, without much consideration for student data aside from observed behaviors.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Excellent teachers should be encouraged to mentor new teachers. Too often administrators make excellent, experienced teachers follow the same programs as new teachers, when they would be much more effective following their own paths to further improvement.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Making sure teachers are effective comes from administrators being in the classrooms.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

MOST TEACHERS RECEIVE FEEDBACK FROM EVALUATIONS BUT FEW RECEIVE CUSTOMIZED SUPPORTS TO IMPROVE OR REFINE THEIR PRACTICE

Teacher evaluations result in various outcomes, the most common of which is feedback from the evaluation for the purpose of helping teachers refine or improve their practice (69%). Fifty-seven percent (57%) report receiving a ranking or effectiveness score. Few teachers, however, report that professional support beyond feedback stems from the evaluations.

Percentage of Teachers for Whom Each Situation Applies as a Result of Formal Evaluations

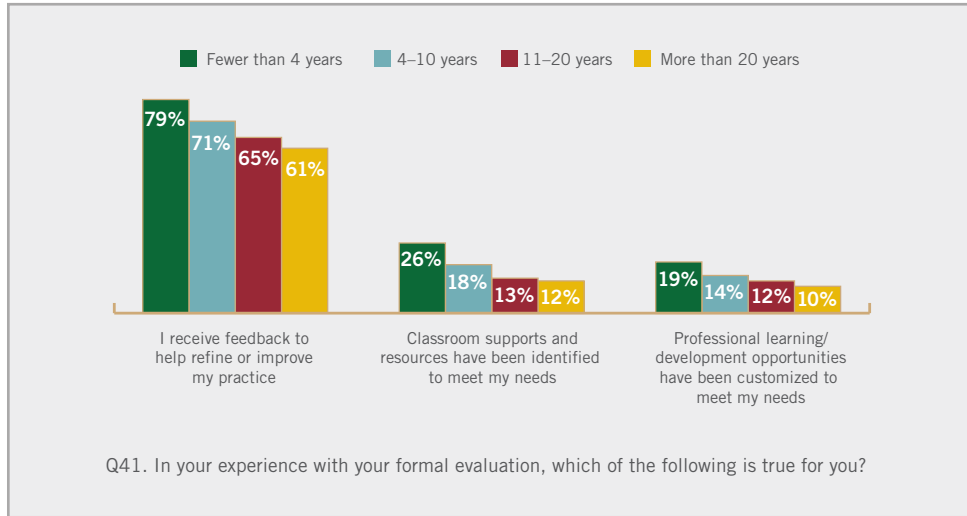
Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



The feedback and professional supports linked to teacher evaluations are more often directed to newer teachers compared to veteran teachers; yet, even among new teachers, customized classroom supports and customized professional development are relatively rare. In conversation, teachers note the importance of personalized feedback. As one teacher in Ohio shared, “If I am going to be evaluated based on student growth, that’s fine. Provide me with great professional development to help me help my students grow more.”

Outcomes of Formal Evaluations, by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



“Excellent teachers are always refining and improving—give them the space to do so.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“You want feedback right away so you can immediately make adjustments or know that the things that you were doing were working. It’s nice to hear something as opposed to nothing.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“In theory, evaluations should be ongoing with feedback to help you improve your practice.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES:

Teachers Most Often Cite Each Listed Outcome Is a Result of Their Formal Evaluation

I receive feedback to help refine or improve my practice	Classroom supports and resources have been identified to meet my needs	Professional learning/development opportunities have been customized to meet my needs
Minnesota (80%)	Nevada (26%)	Alabama (29%)
Colorado (79%)	Colorado/Hawaii (24%)	Kentucky/South Carolina (24%)
North Dakota/Utah (78%)	Iowa/Kansas/Nebraska/Utah (22%)	Arkansas/Colorado/Tennessee/Texas (18%)
Kansas/South Dakota (77%)	Mississippi (21%)	Oregon (17%)
Kentucky/Louisiana/Vermont (76%)	Kentucky/South Carolina/South Dakota/Texas (20%)	Nevada/Washington (16%)

Q41. In your experience with your formal evaluation, which of the following is true for you?
Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.

“The teacher evaluation system in my school is horrible. It provides almost no meaningful feedback and takes away from time I used to be able to dedicate to my students.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“We are professionals who continually work to hone our craft and learn more to benefit our students.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Administrators should have to undergo some sort of job evaluation just like teachers, and should be exemplary teachers themselves if they will be evaluating the teachers on their staffs.”

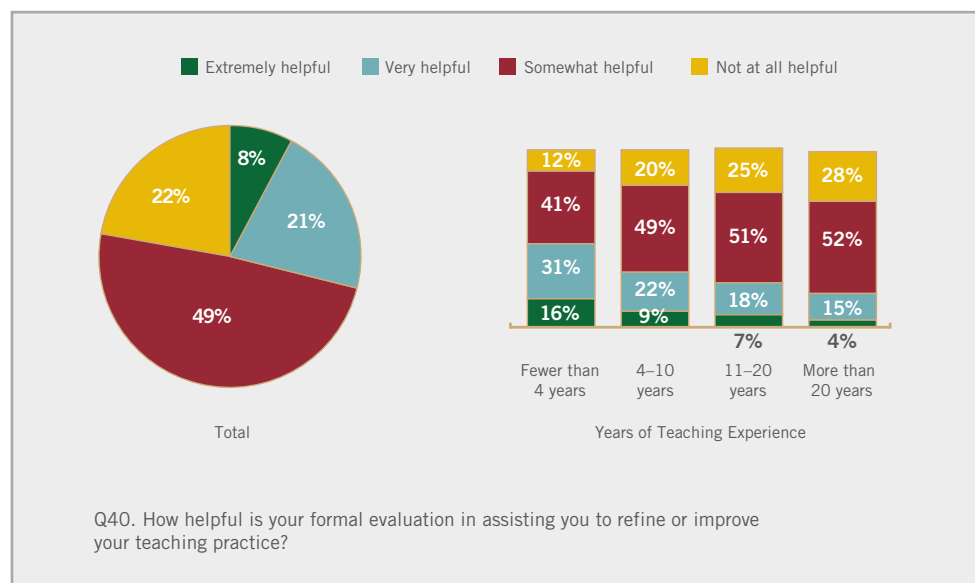
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Actionable Feedback Is Critical to Ensure Evaluations Improve Teaching

Nearly four in five teachers (78%) say their evaluations are at least somewhat helpful, although just 21% say they are very helpful and 8% say they are extremely helpful. One in five (22%) says their evaluation is not at all helpful. New teachers have the most positive views: 88% of those with fewer than four years of experience say that their evaluations are at least somewhat helpful.

Teachers’ Views on the Overall Helpfulness of Their Formal Evaluations in Refining or Improving Their Teaching Practice, in Total and by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



Teachers who reported their evaluations are not at all helpful or only somewhat helpful were asked to share the types of changes they would make to improve their evaluation to make it more helpful. No pre-defined list was provided; teachers typed in a response and those responses were then coded and grouped into themes.

Three main themes emerged:

- **Desire for more feedback, especially personalized feedback** – Forty-two percent (42%) of teachers made a reference to this theme. Teachers’ comments included suggestions such as: providing constructive criticism to help teachers improve; providing concrete examples of issues arising during observations; and providing immediate feedback to allow for a conversation to occur soon after the evaluation.

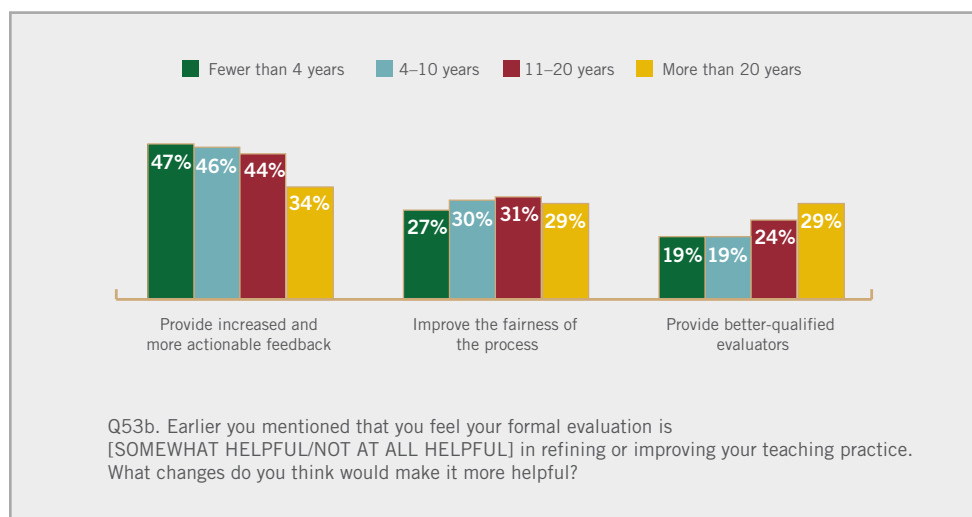
- **Desire for increased fairness in evaluations** – Thirty percent (30%) of teachers cited this theme. Teachers’ comments included suggestions such as: evaluators visiting the classroom more often and for longer periods of time to “really see my teaching”; using unbiased evaluators from outside the school; making evaluations less punitive; and increasing focus on student involvement and growth over student test scores.
- **Desire for better-qualified evaluators** – More than one in five (23%) teachers cited this theme. Teachers’ comments included suggestions such as: ensure school leaders and evaluators “understand the curriculum for my content area”; use evaluators with classroom experience and knowledge of best practices; and allow for additional input from peers, students and self-assessment.

Regardless of how long a teacher has been teaching, the desire for increased, actionable feedback was the most common theme, with 47% of new teachers and 34% of veteran teachers citing it as the type of change that would make their evaluation more helpful.

Veteran teachers were more likely than were newer teachers to say that better-qualified evaluators are needed in order to improve the helpfulness of their evaluations.

Teachers’ Views on Changes That Would Make Formal Evaluations More Helpful, by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation and Think Evaluation Is Somewhat or Not At All Helpful in Refining or Improving Teaching Practice.



“While I do believe that evaluation is critical, I do not think that a one-time visit to my classroom can tell my evaluator what kind of teacher I am.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Good leadership is vital. We need to identify and promote the cream of the crop to mentor teachers and guide education.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel it is imperative for districts to give the much-needed collaboration time to become a better teacher. Time with students is important, but preparing is also very important.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teacher evaluations need to be fair across the board. One should feel free to express opinions without negative consequences.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We have administrators who may not have ever taught come in for 10–15 minutes and determine if we taught at a high enough level. If the observation lasted longer and we could do it more naturally, I would be fine with it, but they are not seeing the real picture.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

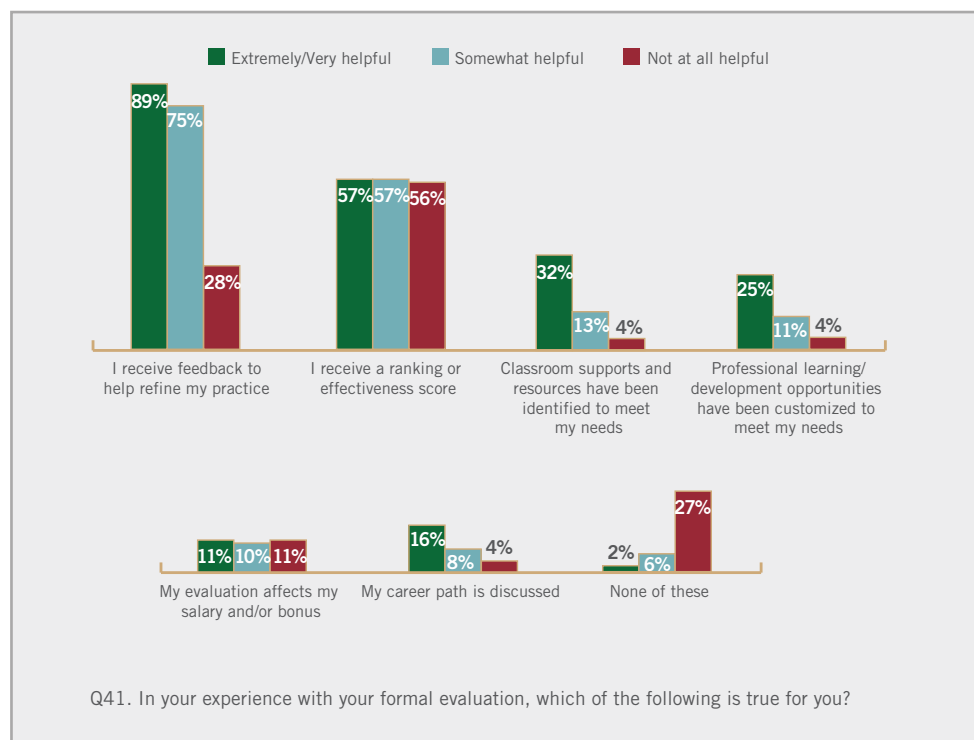
“Part of the reason that the evaluations are not helpful is that my evaluator really has little to no experience with my field. I would appreciate much more specific feedback.”
 — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Administrators should help with managing class sizes and defining professional activities for new teachers. Every district should have a mentoring program for newbies.”
 — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers who feel their evaluations are less helpful say that better feedback is a way to improve those evaluations, while teachers who say their evaluations are helpful are most likely to receive feedback and to have professional development and classroom supports and resources customized as a result of their evaluation.

Percentage of Teachers for Whom Each Situation Applies as a Result of Formal Evaluations, by Helpfulness of Evaluation

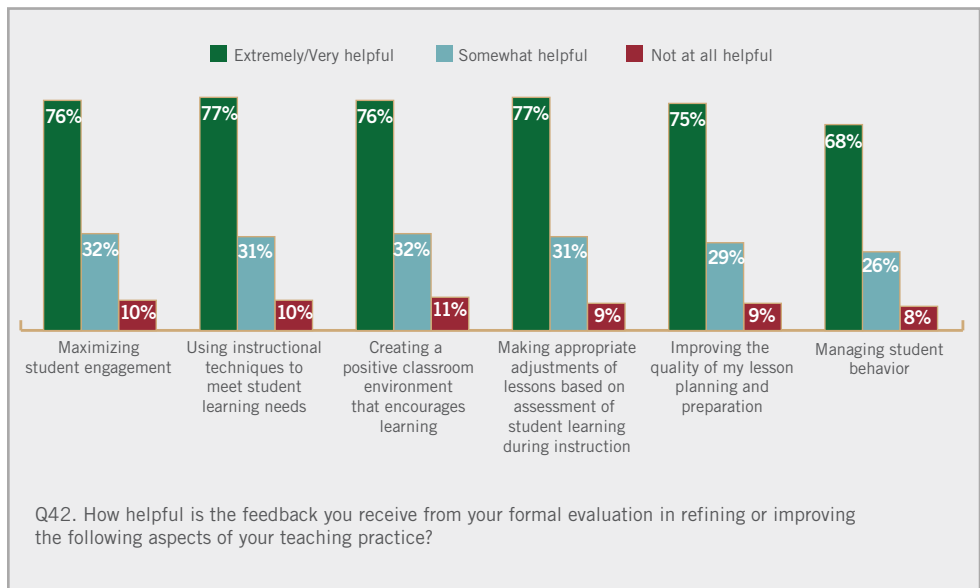
Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



Further, the more helpful teachers feel their evaluation is, the more likely they are to say the feedback helps them maximize student engagement, use instructional techniques to meet student learning needs, adjust lessons based on real-time assessments of student learning and improve the quality of lesson planning and preparation.

Percentage of Teachers Who Report the Feedback Received from Formal Evaluations is Extremely or Very Helpful in Specific Ways, by Helpfulness of Evaluation

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years and Receive Feedback from a Formal Evaluation to Help Refine or Improve Teaching Practice.



“Considering my evaluations, I always get rated proficient or expert. They’ve never given me feedback on improving my practice, only about being late to arrive in the mornings.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Personalized feedback from someone who cares about my personal and professional well-being is most effective.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I don’t think that teachers are evaluated enough. We know that in order for students to improve, they need frequent and specific feedback and teachers are no different than students. In order for teachers to improve, they need frequent and specific feedback.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“A large part of my formal evaluation comes through a dialogue with the evaluator—usually a building administrator—about topics of interest or concern to both of us. It is useful.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I would like for administrators to talk to my students and parents to see how I am doing, or to read the cards and notes that I get throughout the year from the families I serve.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think that multiple measures give a much broader picture of the teacher as a whole. You might have a really challenging class that doesn’t show as much growth on these tests, but the teacher is strong in the classroom and you can see that through the observations and through the surveys.”

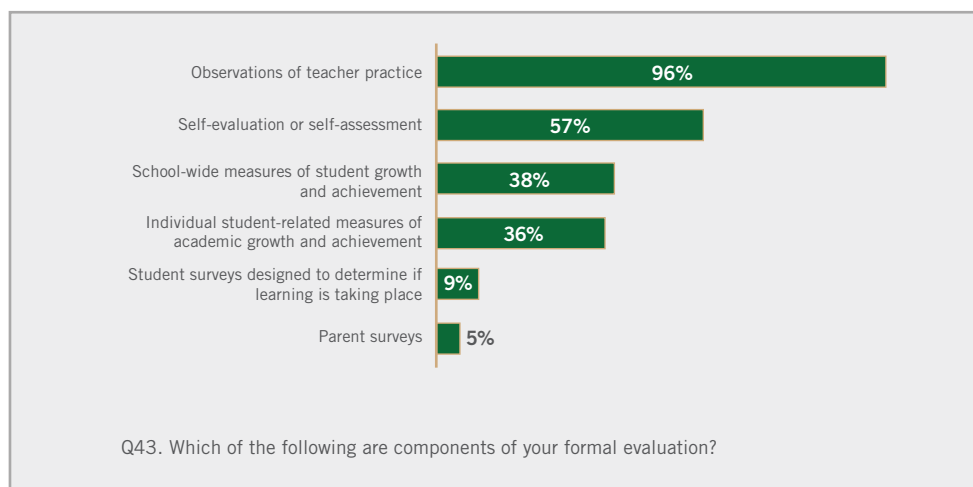
—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

THE MOST HELPFUL EVALUATIONS INCLUDE A WIDE VARIETY OF MEASURES OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE

While observations are by far the most common component of teachers’ evaluations—nearly all teachers (96%) say they are observed—many teachers report additional measures included in their formal reviews.

Components of Teachers’ Formal Evaluations

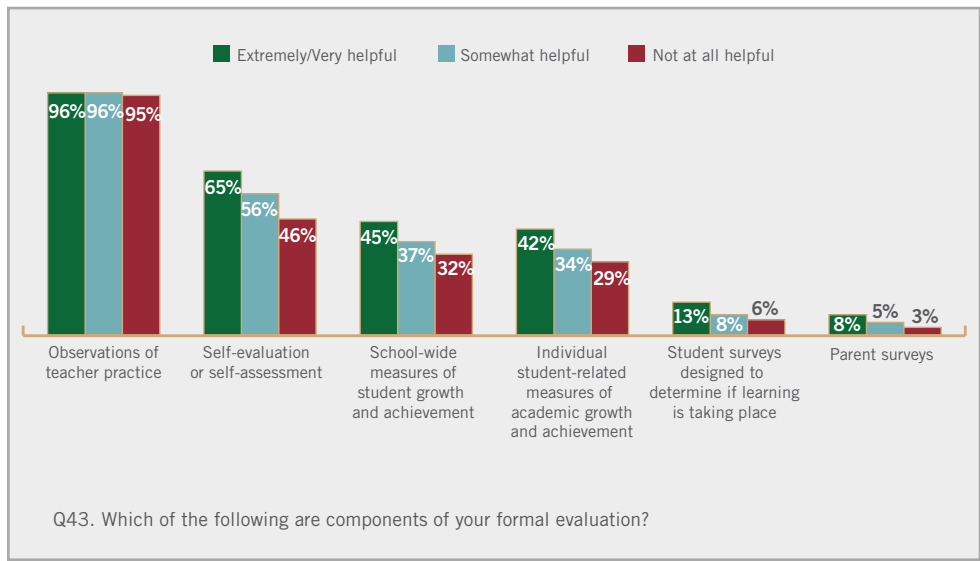
Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



Teachers who say their evaluations are extremely helpful or very helpful are more likely to have evaluation systems that include components beyond observation, including self-evaluation, individual student-related and school-wide measures of growth, as well as parent and student surveys.

Components of Teachers' Formal Evaluations, by Helpfulness of Evaluation

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



When the number of components included in evaluations is tallied, a positive relationship emerges between the number of components and the degree to which evaluations are viewed as helpful. More than eight in 10 teachers (83%) whose evaluations include three or more metrics say their evaluations are somewhat, very or extremely helpful in helping them refine or improve their practice. Among teachers whose evaluations include fewer than three measures, the percentage is lower (74%).

The relationship between the number of components and degree of helpfulness is even stronger when the percentage of teachers who say their evaluations are extremely or very helpful is considered. Specifically:

- Thirty-six percent (36%) of teachers whose evaluations include three or more metrics say their evaluations are extremely or very helpful (vs. 25% of teachers whose evaluations include fewer than three metrics).
- Among the 5% of teachers who are evaluated on five or more metrics, the percentage who say their evaluations are extremely or very helpful rises to 44%—a 76% increase compared to teachers with fewer than three metrics.

“The most important thing is coming in with positive feedback and reinforcement.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The point of an evaluation is not to fire people, but to provide them with feedback about what they’re doing well and what they need to improve so that they can become competent teachers and make change.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“My evaluation system doesn’t provide me with any tools with which to improve my practice and I think that at its heart, that’s what an evaluation system should be. An evaluation system should be a chance to reflect on practice, improve your practice and get better.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think the new system makes teachers re-evaluate what they teach and why.”
 — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“If you have no way of knowing how to get better, then you’re not going to get any better, and if you don’t get any better, you’re going to be miserable in this profession.”
 — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

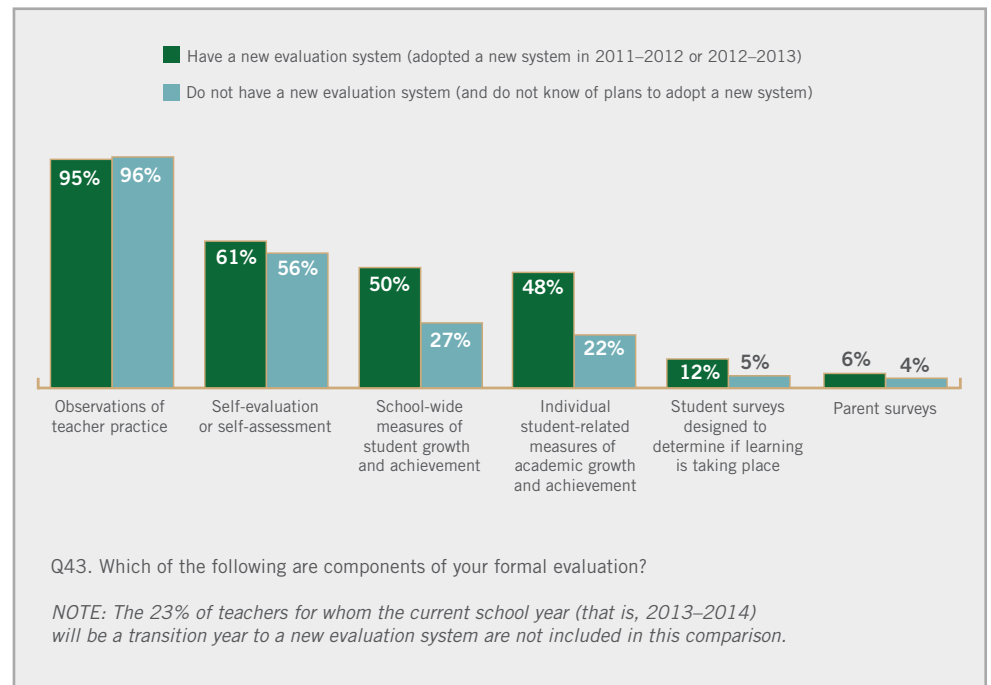
“Unfortunately, using a new teacher evaluation system has hindered rather than helped my teaching because I am being observed and evaluated by administrators who do not know the new standards and can’t model what they expect. As a result, I can’t give proper suggestions or advice.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Components of Evaluations Differ According to Evaluation System Adoption Timeline

When compared to older evaluation systems, newer evaluation systems (those reported to have been implemented in the 2011–2012 or 2012–2013 school years) are far more likely to include three or more components (54%) than are older systems (30%). Specifically, newer evaluation systems are more likely to include self-evaluations, school-wide and individual measures of student growth and student surveys.

Components of Teachers’ Formal Evaluations, by Type of Evaluation System (New or Old)

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



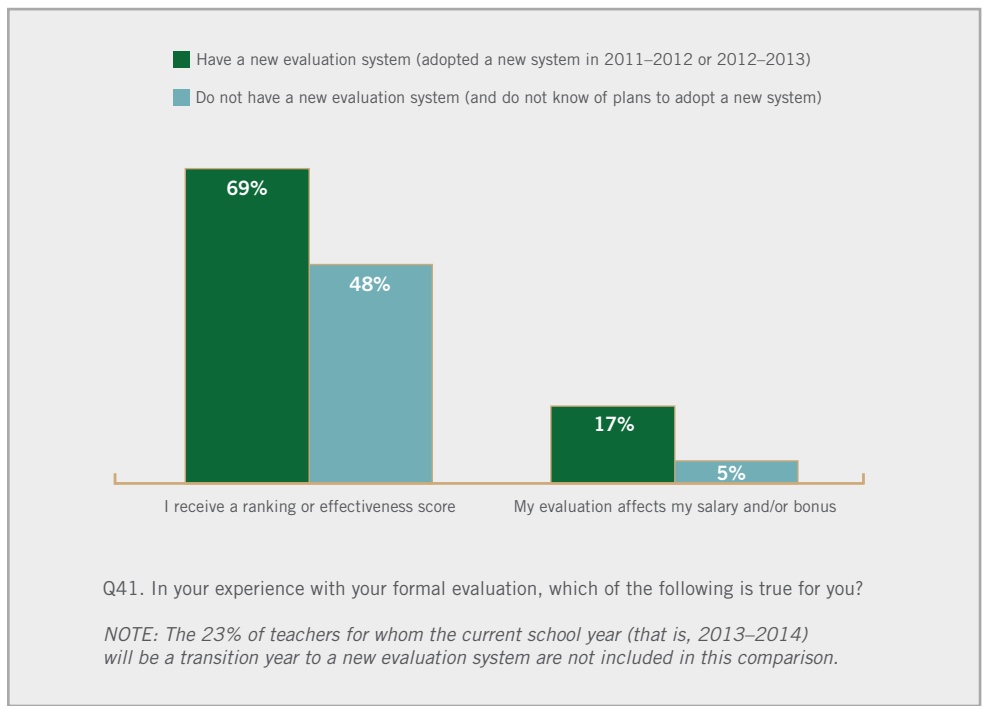
However, teachers with newer evaluation systems are no more likely to rate their systems as very or extremely helpful in assisting them to refine or improve their practice than are teachers with older systems (31% of teachers, compared to 28% who do not know if or when a new system will be adopted).

As noted on page 66, approximately seven in 10 teachers say that their evaluations result in feedback that helps them refine or improve their practice; this number stays consistent among both teachers who have and who have not reported their schools transitioned to a new evaluation system since 2011. Similarly, teachers who report having a newer system are no more likely than teachers with an older system to say that they receive customized professional development or classroom resources and supports in response to their evaluations.

The only outcomes that differ according to the newness of the evaluation systems are receiving a ranking or effectiveness score and having evaluations affect teachers' compensation.

Percentage of Teachers for Whom Each Situation Applies as a Result of Formal Evaluations, by Type of Evaluation System (New or Old)

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years.



“The CCSS is too big a part of our evaluation considering how new it is to our state. Teachers should have more time to learn the new standards before being evaluated as effective or ineffective based upon success with it.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe evaluations should be ongoing because we shouldn't be completely shocked by somebody's feedback. If you're participating in ongoing evaluation, that means ongoing reflection on your part, and that will fine-tune your ability to see some of your weaknesses and strengths and learn how to merge them.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teacher evaluations have a lot of room for improvement. The pressure put on teachers to always have the ideal lesson ready is overwhelming and causes a lot of stress amongst my coworkers.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I wish the times I was observed were much longer, more frequent and that some sort of feedback was given.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think that if a teacher has consecutive good evaluations they should only need to have formal evaluations every other year. This will allow the mentor evaluators to work with other teachers.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“With the new evaluation system, I am on a self-directed plan that includes numerous informal walk-throughs from my evaluator as a part of my formative/summative evaluations.”

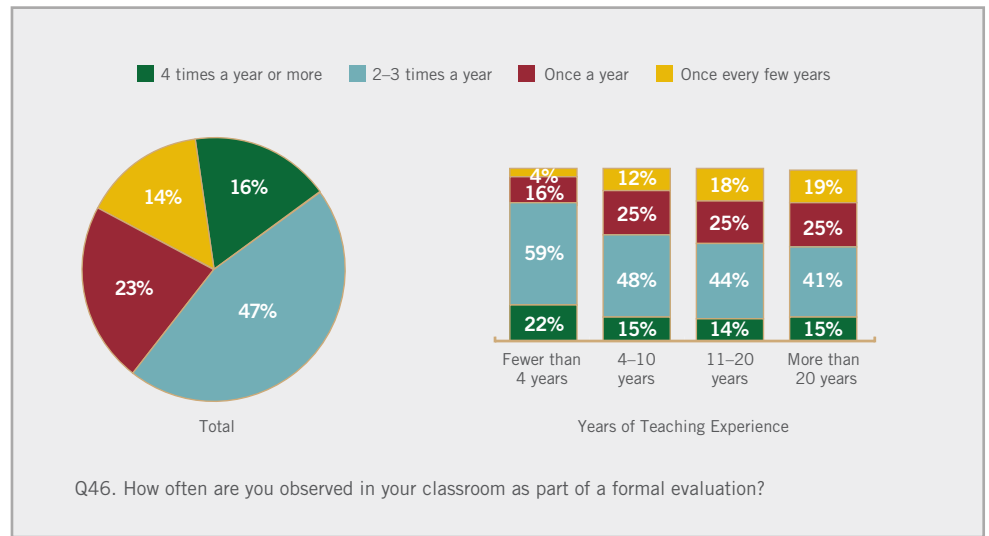
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

A MAJORITY OF TEACHERS SAY THEY SHOULD BE OBSERVED AS OFTEN OR MORE OFTEN THAN THEY ARE CURRENTLY OBSERVED

Of the 96% of teachers for whom observations are a part of their formal evaluation, 63% are observed two or more times a year, 23% are observed once a year and 14% are observed every few years. As years of teaching experience increase, the frequency of observations decreases; still, 56% of veteran teachers for whom observations are a part of their evaluation are observed twice a year or more.

Frequency With Which Teachers Report Their Practice Is Observed as Part of Formal Evaluations, in Total and by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Observed as Part of a Formal Evaluation.

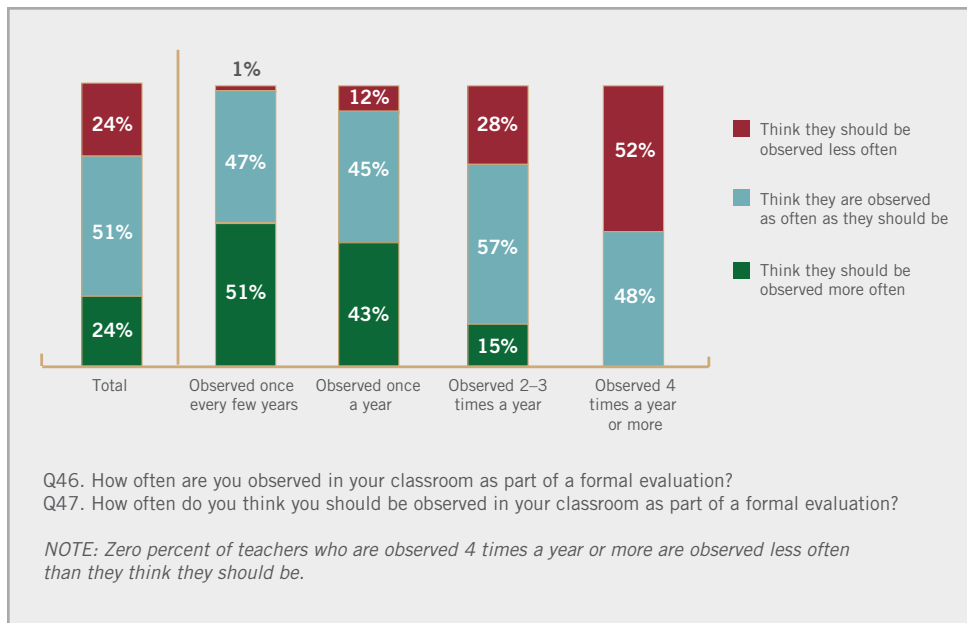


Additionally:

- Half (51%) of teachers who are observed as part of their evaluation say the frequency with which they are observed is about right.
- Twenty-four percent (24%) say they are observed less often than they think they should be.
- Twenty-four percent (24%) say they are observed more often than they think they should be.
- Teachers who are observed two to three times per year as part of their evaluation are the most likely to say they are observed with the right amount of frequency (57%).

Comparison of How Often Teachers Report They Are Observed With How Often Teachers Believe They Should Be Observed as Part of Formal Evaluations, in Total and by Frequency of Observation

Base: Observed as Part of a Formal Evaluation.



Of the small percentage of teachers (5%) who are not observed as part of a formal evaluation—either because observations are not included in their evaluation or because they are not evaluated at all—98% say their practice should be observed as part of an evaluation system, with 54% saying they should be observed twice a year or more.

“Teacher evaluations at my school are arbitrary. Administrators spend less than half an hour observing my teaching each year, but rate me on a number of criteria for which they have no empirical data.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“In my opinion, every teacher would benefit from more observations from other professionals who were specifically trained in the subject area to provide relevant feedback.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“It isn’t the feedback of my administrator that drives my planning and behavior for formal evaluations. It is the knowledge of the standards I need to meet and my own self-evaluation that push me to do well. Actually, the feedback I receive from the formal observation usually isn’t very significant or substantial.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I receive an evaluation every three years from my principal or assistant principal; however, we have walk-throughs in which I receive evaluations and feedback once, twice or sometimes more in the year. These may be done by a principal, assistant principal, reading or math coach, district leader, visiting school or peers. I also have informal observations throughout the year.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My district formally evaluates tenured teachers every three years, and we are evaluated three times in that year. However, our principals are also in our classrooms at least weekly (and sometimes daily) to just observe and see what is going on. My principal often leaves notes for us letting us know what he liked, along with suggestions, if he has any.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I believe that the number of observations and amount of feedback that a supervisor gives a teacher should depend on need. A struggling teacher should receive far more feedback and observations than a master teacher.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Nearly all teachers who are observed as part of their formal evaluations are observed by their principal or assistant principal. Slightly more variation in who observes teachers is seen according to years of teaching experience. Specifically, new teachers are more likely than other teachers to be observed by multiple staff, including mentor teachers (15%) and instructional coaches or master teachers (12%). However, even for new teachers, these percentages are small.

People Who Observe Teachers as Part of Teachers' Formal Evaluations, in Total and by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Observed as Part of a Formal Evaluation.

	Total	Years of Teaching Experience			
		Fewer than 4 years	4–10 years	11–20 years	More than 20 years
Principals/assistant principals at my school	97%	97%	96%	97%	96%
Someone other than principal (Net)	27%	38%	27%	22%	22%
Central-office administrator(s)	9%	11%	9%	8%	8%
Department head or team leader	9%	10%	10%	7%	7%
Instructional coaches or master teacher(s)	8%	12%	9%	7%	5%
My mentor teacher	4%	15%	3%	1%	1%
District-approved peer evaluators from my school	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
District-approved peer evaluators from other schools	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
Someone else (Specify)	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

Q50. Who observes your teaching as part of your formal evaluation?

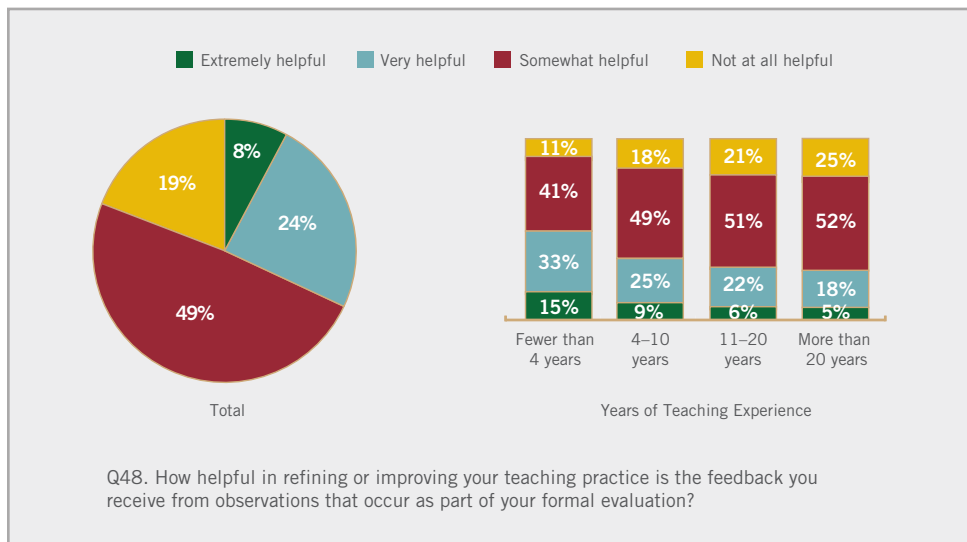
Observations Are Most Helpful When Frequent, When a Variety of Personnel Participate and for Newer Teachers

Feedback from observations plays a key role for teachers in refining or improving their practice. Eight in 10 (82%) say the feedback they receive based on observations of their practice is at least somewhat helpful, with 24% saying it is very helpful and 8% saying it is extremely helpful.

New teachers are far more likely than veteran teachers to rate feedback from observations that are part of evaluations as extremely or very helpful (48% vs. 23%).

Teachers' Views on Helpfulness of Feedback from Observations That Occur as Part of Formal Evaluations, in Total and by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Observed as Part of a Formal Evaluation.



“The new teachers today need ongoing training. When a teacher is hired, he or she should be required to attend a class on classroom management as well as receive tips on controlling behavior.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We have peer evaluations and collaboration on a regular basis, but they are not considered formal. These evaluations are much more useful to me than the formal evaluations.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our administrators visit the classroom routinely several times each week for 5–10 minutes to see what is going on. This is not part of the review process.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Regarding professional or non-professional reviews, I believe the feedback would be much more helpful if it came from a trained administrator or peer master-teacher evaluator in my academic area.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think an evaluation puts too much stress on the classroom. A principal should come in often, but not for a formal evaluation.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

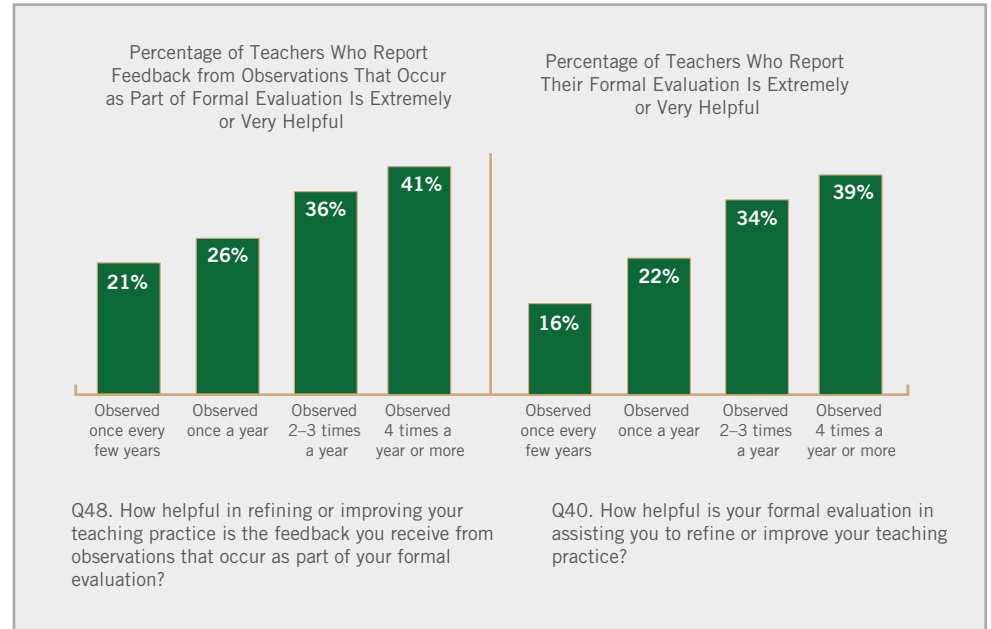
“Evaluations are only as helpful as the evaluator; that’s not something that is consistent.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

As the frequency of observations increases, so too does the helpfulness teachers ascribe to not only the feedback they receive from observations, but also their evaluations overall.

Teachers’ Views on the Helpfulness of Feedback from Observations That Occur as Part of Formal Evaluations and on Overall Helpfulness of Their Formal Evaluation, by Frequency of Observation

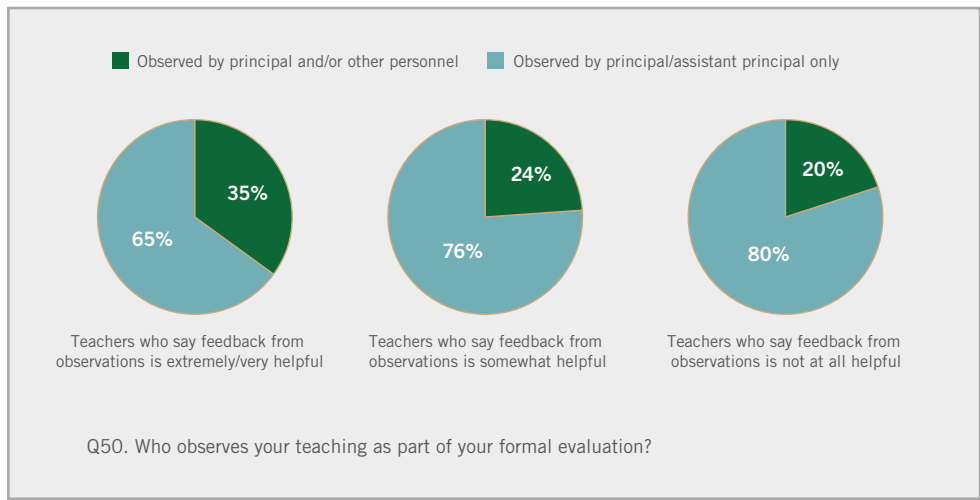
Base: Observed as Part of a Formal Evaluation.



Those who find feedback from observations extremely or very helpful are more likely to be observed by some combination of principals and other personnel, such as central-office staff, department heads, instructional coaches, etc., rather than principals alone (35% vs. 20%).

People Who Observe Teachers as Part of Teachers’ Formal Evaluations, by Helpfulness of Feedback from Those Observations

Base: Observed as Part of a Formal Evaluation.



“What’s needed is more support and opportunity for advancement and movement within my job and district.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Most of the time I only receive feedback if something is negative. I rarely receive positive feedback at my school.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have never been evaluated by anyone other than my own principal. That’s changing in our new plan—we have instructional coaches. We’ll be observing each other.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Because I have taught a long time and been in the district for six years, I am only formally evaluated about every three years. However, there is ongoing involvement and dialogue with the administration all year, every year.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

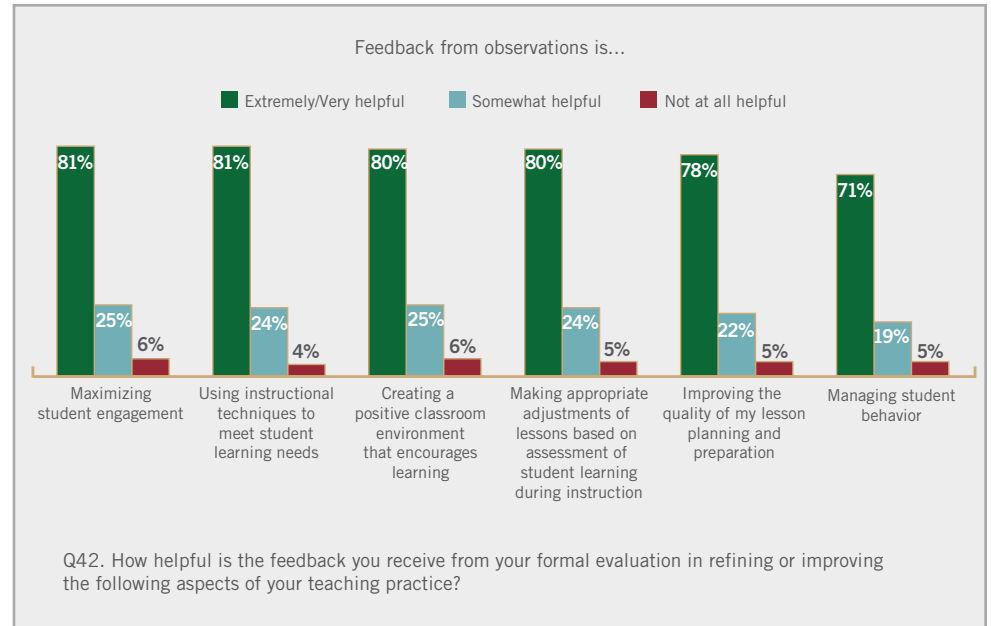
“Teachers want evaluations to be accurate and inclusive of the growth of the students in their class, not based on some arbitrary bar that may or may not be reasonable for the children that walked into their room in September.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Finally, teachers who find the feedback from observations extremely or very helpful are far more likely to find their overall formal evaluations helpful in refining or improving their teaching practice in specific ways.

Percentage of Teachers Who Report the Feedback Received from Formal Evaluations Is Extremely or Very Helpful in Specific Ways, by Helpfulness of Feedback from Observations

Base: Receive a Formal Evaluation at Least Once Every Few Years and Receive Feedback from a Formal Evaluation to Help Refine or Improve Teaching Practice.



Many Teachers Say Observations Outside of Evaluations Should Lead to Ongoing Feedback to Refine and Improve Their Practice

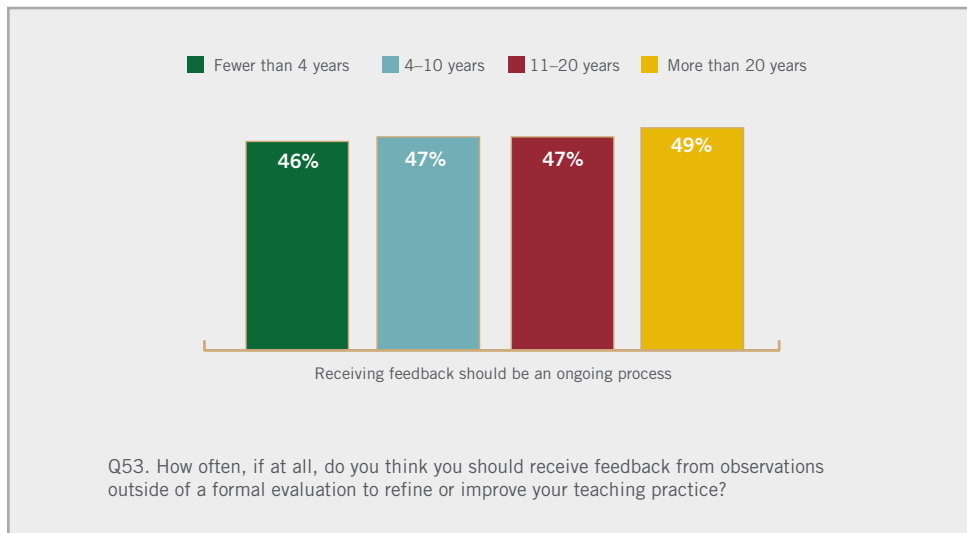
Observations outside of formal evaluations can supplement and complement the feedback teachers receive. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of teachers are observed outside of a formal evaluation system and a majority (86%) receive feedback based on these observations.

Veteran teachers are just as likely as newer teachers to be observed outside of formal evaluations, and most veteran teachers (82%) do receive feedback from these observations. Still, nearly one in five (18%) veteran teachers—compared to just under one in 10 (9%) new teachers—say they never receive feedback from observations that occur outside of evaluations.

When all teachers are considered, regardless of whether or not their practice is currently observed outside of formal evaluations, veteran teachers are just as likely as other teachers to say that feedback from observations outside of evaluations should be ongoing.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Feedback Based on Observations That Occur Outside of Formal Evaluations Should Be Ongoing, by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Total Respondents.



“Our principal visits our classrooms every day. It doesn’t always have to be a written evaluation to make it important.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“My district describes formal evaluation as a 45-minute evaluation. This year, I had two formal evaluations; however, we have 6–8 informal evaluations that are also included in the evaluation process.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“When I talk to my colleagues, that’s when I find out how I can improve. We’re close; we collaborate outside of the building and have small informal groups. We mentor each other and talk shop because we’re professionals and we don’t hesitate to critique each other.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I do think that when done objectively and frequently, observations can be a very helpful tool for a teacher. Positive, constructive feedback is something I crave as a teacher and would like more of from administrators and support staff.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“If it was not by my request, the principal at my school would have never given me feedback.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

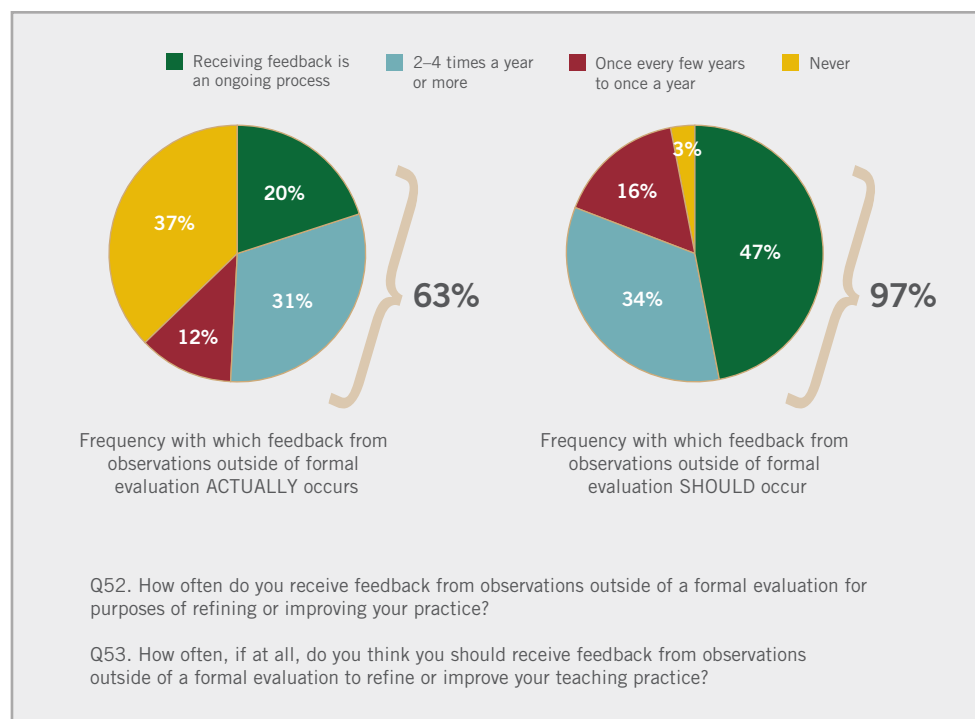
“Unless I ask for a preconference and direct my principal to look for something specific, I don’t typically get useful feedback.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Additionally, many teachers do not think they receive feedback from observations outside of evaluations as often as they should. Thirty-seven percent (37%) are not receiving feedback from these observations at all, but 97% say they should. Note that in the following chart, the 37% who never receive feedback includes the 27% who are not observed outside of evaluations, as well as the teachers who are observed but do not receive feedback.

Comparison of How Often Teachers Report They Receive Feedback from Observations That Are Not Part of Formal Evaluations With How Often They Believe They Should

Base: Total Respondents.



**SPOTLIGHT ON
THE STATES:**

**Teachers Are Observed Outside of Formal Evaluations
and Feedback from These Observations Is Ongoing**

Teaching Practice Is Observed Outside of Formal Evaluations	Receiving Feedback from Observations That Are Outside of Formal Evaluations Is an Ongoing Process
Kentucky (86%)	North Dakota/Oklahoma (38%)
Arkansas (85%)	Alabama (37%)
Nebraska (84%)	Colorado/West Virginia (36%)
Louisiana (83%)	Delaware/Kansas (35%)
Colorado/Missouri (81%)	Kentucky/Montana (34%)

Q51. Is your teaching practice observed outside of a formal evaluation?

Q52. How often do you receive feedback from observations outside of a formal evaluation for purposes of refining or improving your practice?

Base: Total Respondents. (Left)

Base: Teaching Practice Is Observed Outside of a Formal Evaluation. (Right)

“I think that teachers are so afraid of frequent evaluations because they don’t trust the evaluators.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“My administrators are extremely supportive and I work with many valuable, experienced teachers.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I think you will find that as more schools are moving towards CCSS, teacher observations are happening on a more consistent basis.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our evaluation system is too narrow in scope. You can’t judge a teacher based on student success in one year without considering absence rate, homework completion, etc. We need an algorithm that takes into account more variables.”
 — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like the idea of accountability for teachers but I think the way we currently assess student growth doesn’t do that. We need to give one pre-test assessment at the beginning of the year and that same test as a post-test assessment at the end of the year.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Good teachers who are devoted to student growth are the key. Some children do not test well, especially when they are timed on the assessment.”
 — ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

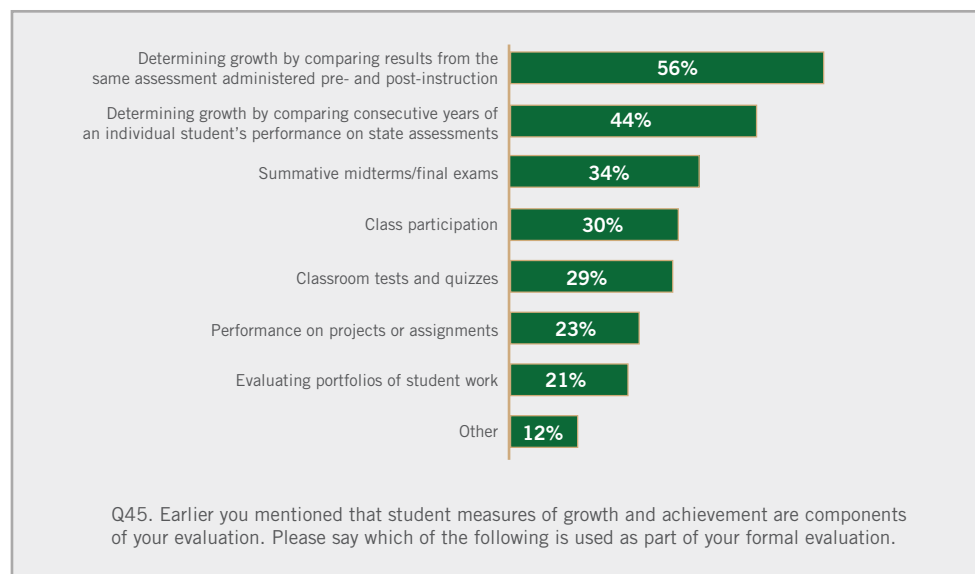
A VARIETY OF STUDENT-FOCUSED METRICS ARE COMPONENTS OF SOME TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Of the six components of teacher evaluation systems asked about in the survey, as noted in the chart on page 72, more than one in three (36%) teachers who are evaluated say their evaluations include individual student measures of academic growth and achievement, and nearly one in 10 (9%) say student surveys designed to measure if learning is taking place are included.

Measures of student growth and achievement can include a wide range of metrics; pre- and post-assessments are the most common, followed by the year-over-year comparison of individual student scores on state standardized tests.

Measures of Student Academic Growth and Achievement That Are a Component of Teachers’ Formal Evaluations

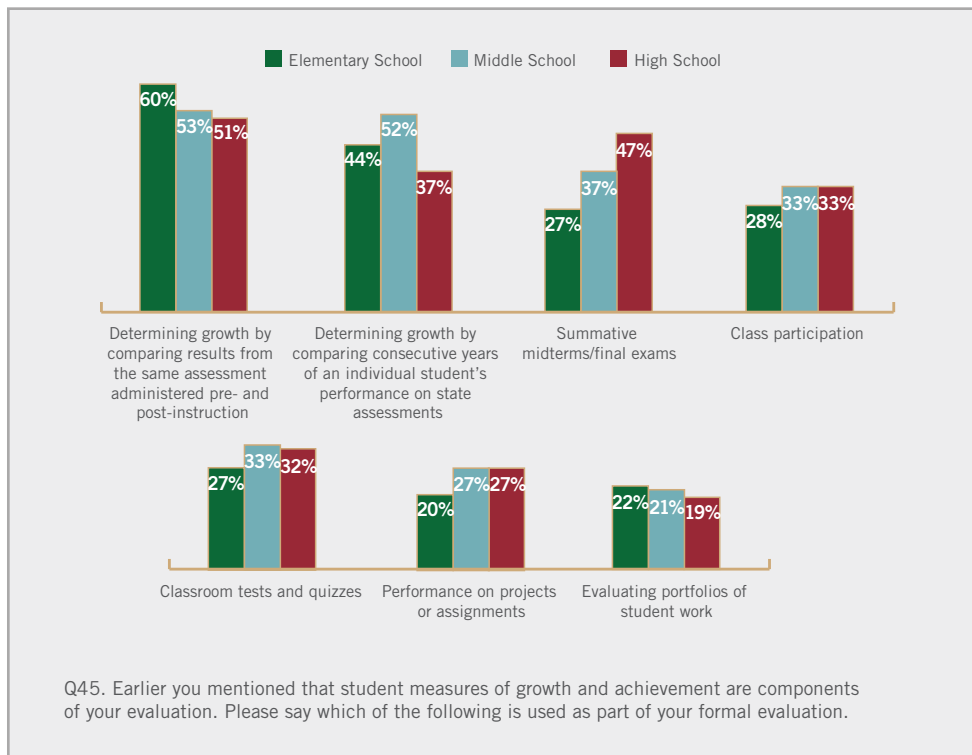
Base: Individual Student-Related Measures of Academic Growth and Achievement Are a Component of Teacher’s Formal Evaluation.



Measures included in evaluation systems vary across grades taught. For example, relative to other grades, determining growth via pre- and post-assessment is most common in elementary school, comparing consecutive year scores on state assessments is most common in middle school, and summative midterms and final exams are most common in high school.

Measures of Student Academic Growth and Achievement That Are a Component of Teachers' Formal Evaluations, by Grade(s) Taught

Base: Individual Student-Related Measures of Academic Growth and Achievement Are a Component of Teacher's Formal Evaluation.



“I believe that leadership and administration need to be held accountable through teacher evaluations to ensure that teachers are receiving all the support needed to be successful in school. This will make both the work of the teachers and the administrations fair, meaningful and focused on helping students to reach their full potential.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel that the evaluators should have experience teaching in the classroom in order to effectively evaluate teachers.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need an environment that fosters ongoing collaboration, not just a 20-minute evaluation. Administrators also need to really spend their time learning about the subject we teach so they can effectively evaluate us; without that knowledge, their input means very little.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Using test scores on the new evaluation is not a fair indicator or measure of teaching effectiveness. Children have so many other factors in their life that affect learning.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Standardized testing has been a way to observe progress, yet it doesn’t focus on the child’s individual needs or show individual growth.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Standardized tests are only one measure of the learning that takes place in a classroom. Teachers need to reach out to their students’ emotional needs as well as their academic needs. A good teacher is so much more than data results!”

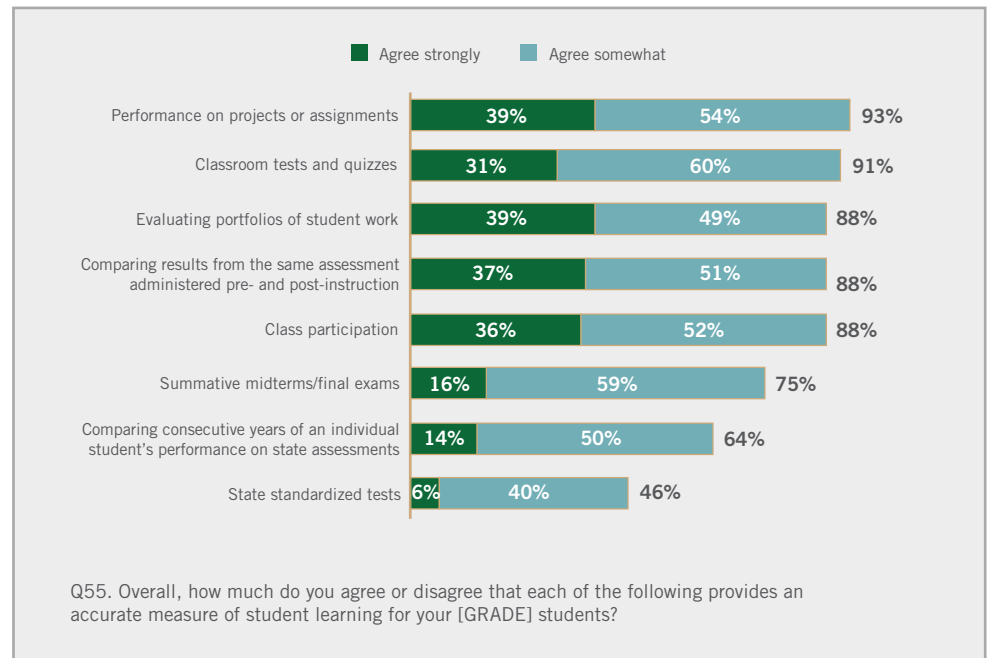
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers Rank a Variety of Metrics as More Accurate Measures of Student Learning Than Standardized Tests

The most common measures used as part of teacher evaluations do not always reflect the measures teachers say provide the most accurate reflection of student learning. Teachers are far more likely to cite classroom-based performance (including projects or assignments, class participation and student portfolios) as a more accurate measure of student achievement than they are state standardized tests. As one teacher in Missouri said, “I do not have a problem with using student scores as a basis for part of my evaluation as long as we are looking at pre- and post-testing. Looking at growth over time is much more valuable than a one-shot test.”

Teachers’ Agreement That Each Metric Provides an Accurate Measure of Student Learning

Base: Total Respondents.

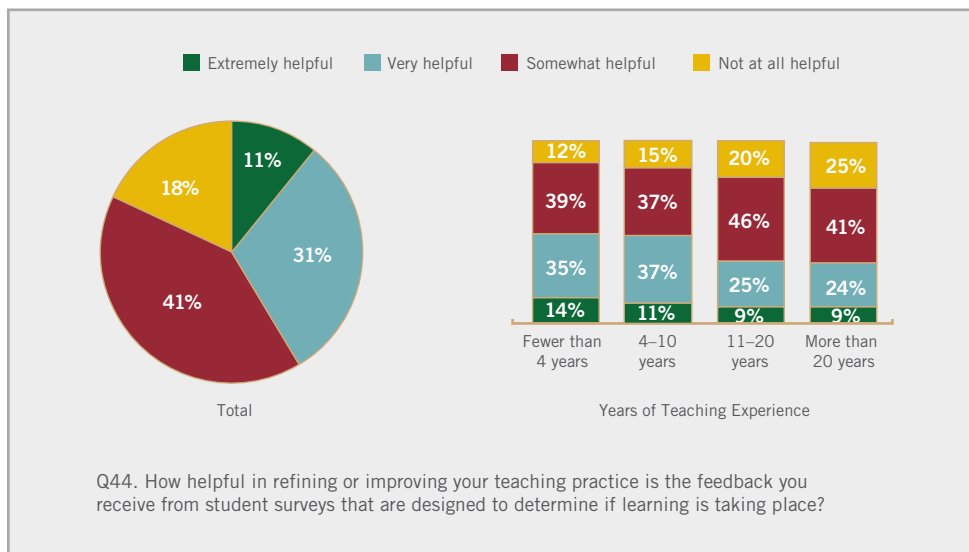


Student Surveys Are Rare but Helpful Components of Evaluations—Particularly for New Teachers

Among the 9% of teachers for whom student surveys are a part of their evaluations, about four in 10 (41%) say these are extremely or very helpful in refining or improving their practice. An additional 41% say student surveys are somewhat helpful. Newer teachers are more likely to say student surveys are helpful in refining or improving their practice than are teachers with 11–20 or more than 20 years of teaching experience.

Teachers' Views on Helpfulness of Student Surveys That Occur as Part of Formal Evaluations, in Total and by Years of Teaching Experience

Base: Student Surveys Are a Component of Teacher's Formal Evaluation.



For all teachers, evaluations that result in the greatest number of outcomes are deemed most helpful; in particular, receiving feedback on teaching practice is the best predictor of whether or not an evaluation will be helpful to a teacher. Many teachers ask that this feedback be ongoing and responsive to what they need to help their students. As one middle school teacher said, “I can only wonder at this point what kind of teacher I had the potential to become had I been given feedback and assistance to improve my skills.”

In conversation, teachers say that they judge their own success as a teacher based on their students’ academic success. Teachers’ deep commitment to their students is clear through their daily work and their call for accurate reflections of student growth as a part of their evaluations. Further, teachers’ desire to collaborate with educators, parents and community members on a single goal—student success in school and in life—vividly illustrates their commitment to looking beyond the classroom walls to help students. The next section of the report will explore the importance of collaboration in teachers’ work.

“Student and parent input should have equal weight as the administrator’s observation.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I definitely judge my success on student gains, but not just academic ones.”

—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We, as teachers, have the most influence, so we need strong leadership to help every teacher reach his or her full potential to best serve students.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I like the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. It’s important that our students are challenged to work and think at higher levels.” • “I believe that we have a responsibility to our students to prepare them for college and careers.” • “We all have the ability to make student learning successful, but we all need to work together.” • “Education must change as the world changes.” • “Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.” • “A good teacher refuses to let a child fail.” • “Teachers need a variety of resources to meet the variety of learning styles children have.” • “The Common Core State Standards are making me a better teacher and the students better learners.” • “Teaching is an art. Teachers need to have

“While some may say we can’t control out-of-school factors, we can definitely begin an educational dialogue with parents and guardians in order to get on the same page about the education of their children.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

the basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students.” • “Much

of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.” • “Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is a key factor in student achievement.” • “The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.” • “I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.” • “Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.” • “I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.” • “The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.” • “Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!” • “I feel frustrated by people in the community who often

CONNECTING WITH PEERS AND PARENTS IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

TEACHERS SEEK TO COLLABORATE IN AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL TO BEST SERVE STUDENTS

America’s teachers collaborate with peers, parents and caregivers in numerous ways to help every child learn. To create communities of support for their students, teachers actively build school-to-home connections with families and work with colleagues in school and online. Teachers identify technology as a potential tool to strengthen their ability to collaborate and ultimately improve student outcomes.

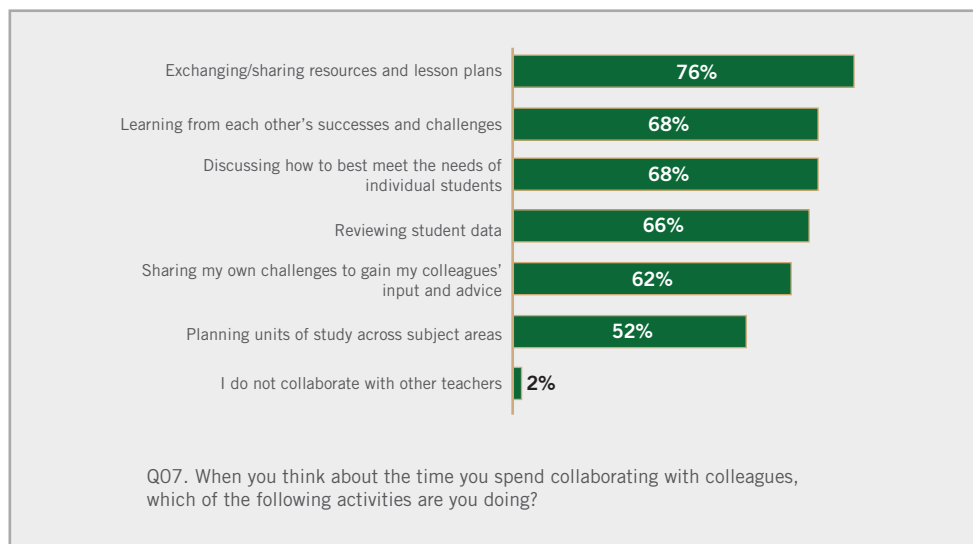
TEACHERS PROACTIVELY COLLABORATE WITH PEERS, BOTH ON AND OFFLINE

There is no doubt that collaboration is important to teachers. Fifty-one percent (51%) report not having enough time to collaborate with colleagues, making it the second most-cited challenge in their daily work (page 17).

Teachers say time collaborating with colleagues is most often spent exchanging or sharing resources or lesson plans, followed closely by learning from each other’s successes and challenges, discussing how best to meet the needs of individual students and reviewing student data.

Activities in Which Teachers Engage When Collaborating With Colleagues

Base: Total Respondents.



“My colleagues’ experience is my greatest resource.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I really enjoy my colleagues in my department and enjoy collaboration, but no time exists to collaborate.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“The public school system is one that requires effort and collaboration on the part of the students, parents, teachers and administrators to be successful.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Now more than ever, teachers need support from their administrators, parents and the community.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel that the collaborating I do with my colleagues has improved my teaching the most.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Good teachers are really collaborative, always working with other teachers.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Technology allows you to expand your collaboration group beyond what is defined by your subject area.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Collaboration is all about looking for strategies—how to teach something to students in a way that they’ll get.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Teachers say technology can create opportunities for collaboration and open doors to resources and information to help them grow their practice. As one elementary school teacher from Pennsylvania said, “With technology, I’ve made so many connections and I’ve gotten so many different avenues for personal development based on being able to connect with folks who are all over the country—all over the world, even.”

Teachers Use Both Mainstream and Professional Websites to Collaborate, Find Classroom Resources and Build Knowledge

Ninety percent (90%) of teachers use mainstream social networking sites for professional purposes, while 85% use educational websites for professional purposes.¹⁰ Teachers’ professional activities online often mirror the activities they engage in when collaborating with colleagues:

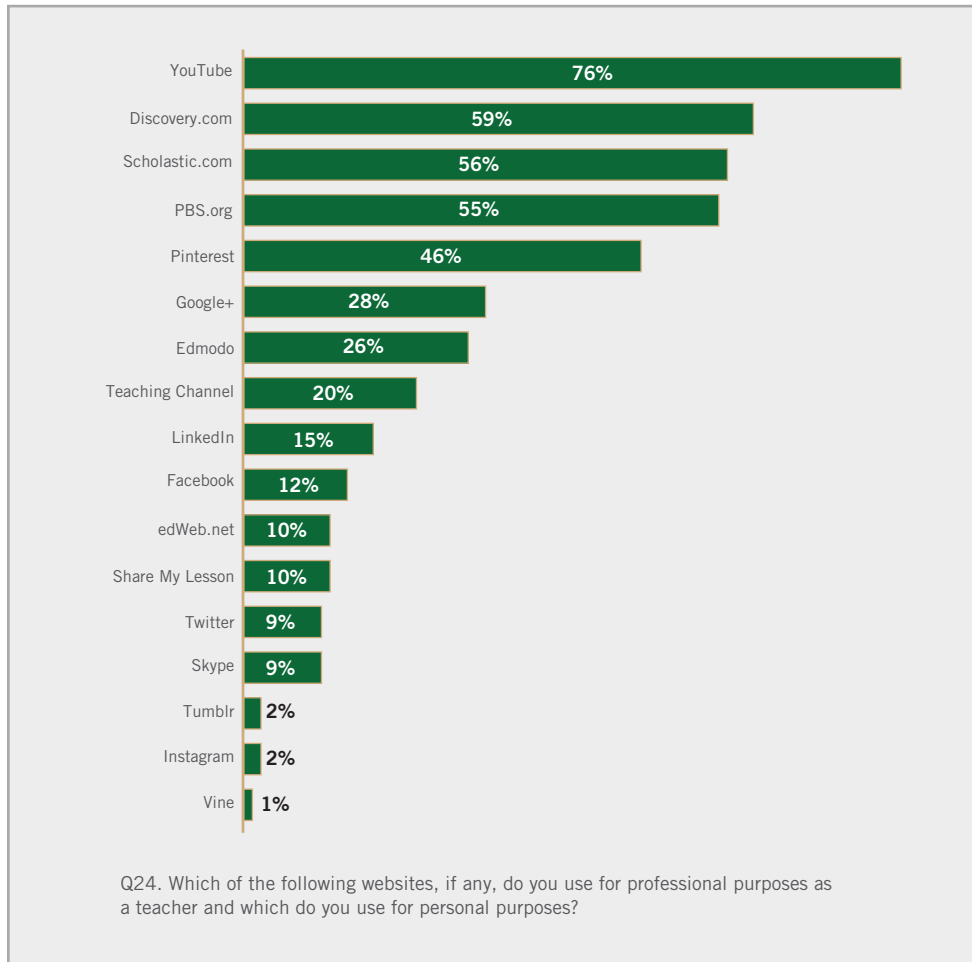
- ninety-one percent (91%) of teachers use websites to find or share lesson plans or other classroom content;
- sixty-five percent (65%) of teachers use websites for professional advice and support; and
- fifty-seven percent (57%) of teachers use websites to collaborate with teachers with whom they wouldn’t otherwise have had the opportunity.

¹⁰In this paragraph, the percentage of teachers who use “mainstream social networking sites” includes teachers who use any of the following sites: Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, Google+, YouTube, Skype, Tumblr and/or LinkedIn. The percentage who use “educational websites” includes teachers who use Edmodo, edWeb.net, Scholastic.com, Discovery.com, PBS.org, Share My Lesson and/or Teaching Channel.

YouTube is used for professional purposes more than any other website. Websites providing original content from companies including Discovery, Scholastic and PBS are also popular, used by more than half of teachers (59%, 56% and 55%, respectively), with Pinterest closely following (46%).

Websites Teachers Use for Professional Purposes

Base: Total Respondents.



“Collaboration works best when I meet teachers at trainings that I have chosen to go to. When teachers share best practices, activities and technology in an informal manner—that is when things happen.”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I feel that technology is an important piece in making our students successful.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“YouTube provides examples of what you’re teaching, not necessarily, ‘This is how you should teach it.’”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I use technology to collaborate with other teachers in other states and countries who teach what I teach in order to get good ideas and create lessons.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Technology allows me to bring the world to my classroom in a way I couldn’t before. It allows my students to communicate their great work to the world outside our classroom in a way that wasn’t possible.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I do a lot of collaborating with other teachers around the country that I wouldn’t be able to do without technology.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

As would be expected, the websites teachers turn to vary according to purpose. YouTube, Discovery and Scholastic top the list of sites used to find classroom content and for professional advice and support, while two in 10 teachers use Pinterest to collaborate with teachers with whom they wouldn’t otherwise have had the opportunity.

Websites Teachers Use for Each Professional Purpose

Base: Total Respondents.

To Find or Share Lesson Plans or Other Classroom Content		For Professional Advice and Support		To Collaborate With Teachers With Whom I Wouldn’t Otherwise Have Had the Opportunity	
YouTube	64%	YouTube	20%	Pinterest	20%
Discovery.com	50%	Scholastic.com	18%	Edmodo	12%
Scholastic.com	47%	Pinterest	17%	YouTube	10%
PBS.org	46%	Discovery.com	14%	Google+	10%
Pinterest	41%	PBS.org	13%	Facebook	7%
Google+	18%	Edmodo	11%	Scholastic.com	7%
Edmodo	17%	Google+	11%	LinkedIn	7%
Teaching Channel	15%	Teaching Channel	8%	Discovery.com	6%
Share My Lesson	8%	LinkedIn	7%	PBS.org	5%
edWeb.net	7%	Facebook	6%	Skype	5%
Facebook	5%	Twitter	5%	Twitter	5%

Q29. Across the top of the grid we have listed some reasons you might use websites for professional purposes. In each column, please select all of the websites you use for each purpose.

NOTE: Websites being used for each purpose by 5% or more teachers are shown.

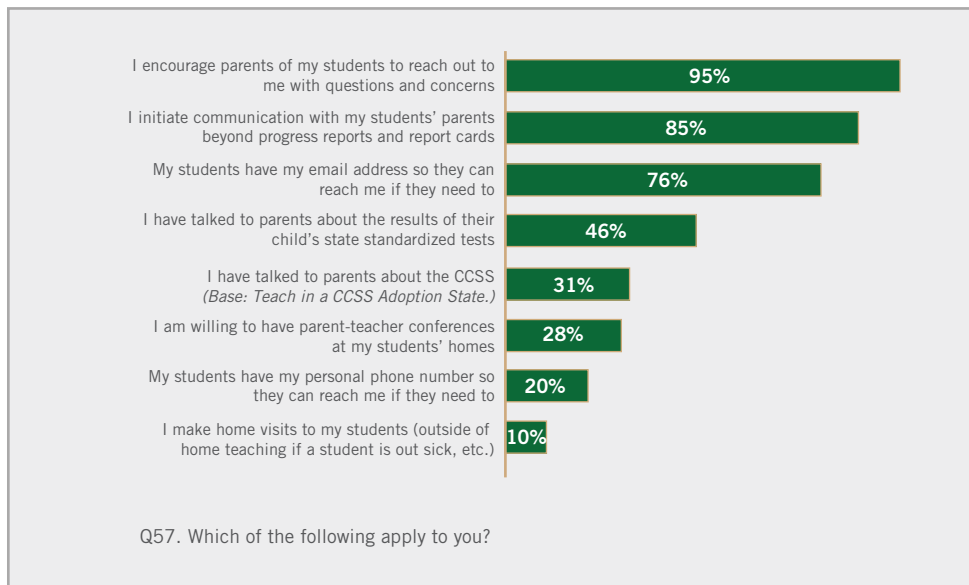
TEACHERS CONNECT WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Teachers nationwide are willing to reach out to students’ parents and families to build a strong network of support and help every child succeed. Ninety percent (90%) of teachers identify having an interest in students’ lives inside and outside of school as being either extremely or very important to being a great teacher (page 16). Nearly all teachers (95%) say they encourage parents to reach out to them and 85% say that they initiate contact with parents outside of traditional progress reports and report cards.

Smaller—but sizable—percentages of teachers say they talk to parents about the results of their child’s standardized tests (46%), and three in 10 (31%) teachers in Common Core State Standards adoption states report having discussed the standards with parents. In addition, 28% of teachers are willing to have parent-teacher conferences at students’ homes, and 10% of teachers report having made a home visit outside of home teaching if a student is out of school for illness or other circumstances.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Situation Applies to Them

Base: Total Respondents.



“Parent involvement and a culture of learning bred in the household are so nurturing to a young student.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“What I have noticed in 14 years of teaching is if the parents are involved with their child’s education, the student will succeed.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teachers do play a huge role in student performance; however, when there is a lack of parent support and students are unprepared and/or disruptive, it greatly hinders the teacher’s ability to successfully do their job.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“For me, it would help if parents were more concerned about what they could do to help meet the needs of their child.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I have many ways to communicate with parents: newsletters, email, agenda books, my cell. I spend time during my day trying to get in touch with them when needed and continue to remind them of events or paperwork due.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“It’s crucial that parents take an active role in preparing their children for school and continue to be actively involved throughout their children’s academic life.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

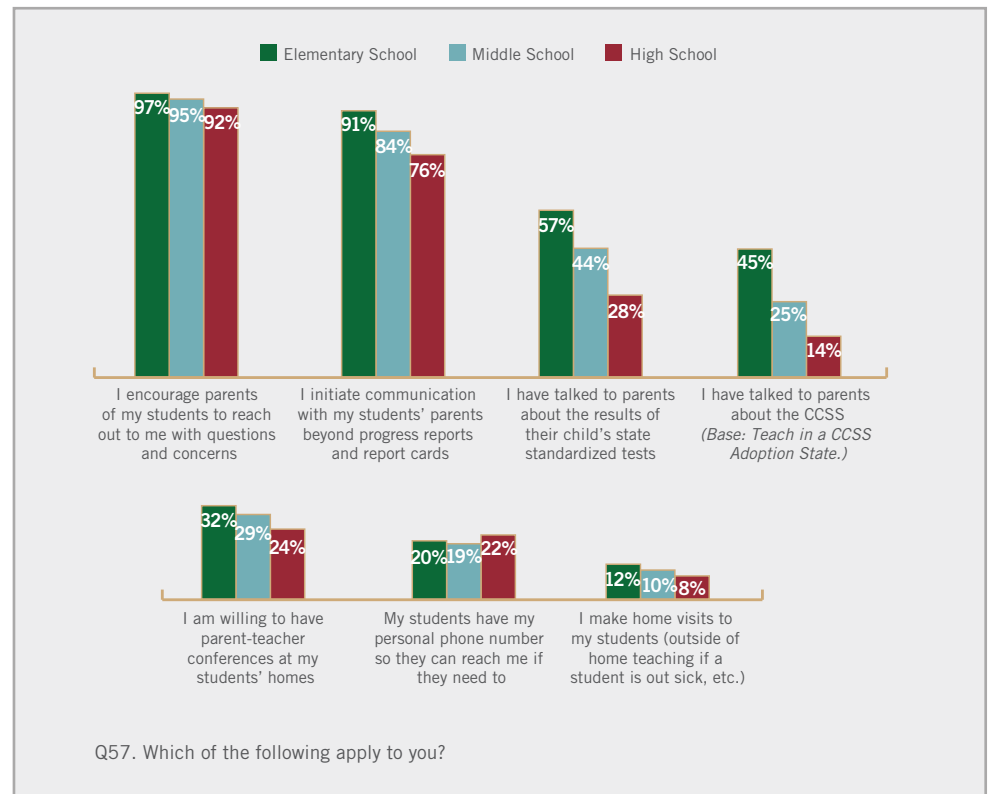
“Teaching needs to be a collaboration between school and home.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

The willingness to build connections with parents is evident across all grade levels, though activities vary by students’ ages. Teachers of younger grades are more likely to initiate communication with parents and to discuss state standardized tests and the Common Core with their students’ families. High school teachers are more likely to report their students have their email address so they can be reached with questions (shown in chart on page 101).

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Situation Applies to Them, by Grade(s) Taught

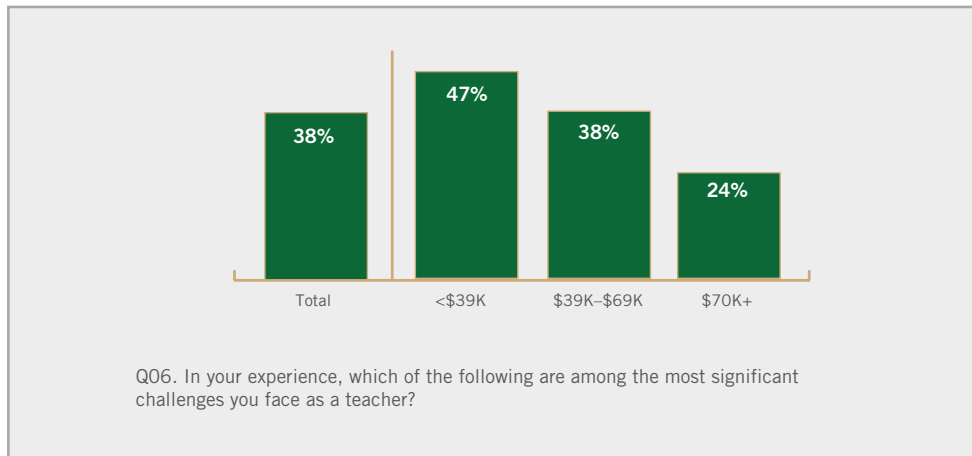
Base: Total Respondents.



As reported in Section I of the report, when asked to identify the most significant challenges they face as teachers, 38% of teachers cite a need for more parent-teacher collaboration (page 17). This challenge is called out by twice as many teachers in lower-income communities as higher-income communities.

Percentage of Teachers Who Identified “A need for more parent-teacher collaboration” as a Significant Challenge Faced as a Teacher, in Total and by Community Median Household Income

Base: Total Respondents.



“Successful educational experiences for students require an equal partnership among parents, the students and the educators.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I strongly feel that parents and students need to share some of the responsibility for education too. It is hard to compensate for a parent who does not value education.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Kids succeed when parents are involved and value education.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Parent involvement is very important to a child’s success. When the parent is very involved, the child performs better.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I truly believe it is important to make personal connections with my students in order for them to be successful in the classroom. I love to attend outside events for my kids such as sporting events, dance recitals, cheerleading competitions, etc.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“My students’ parents have my phone number and email and know that they can contact me at any time. My classroom has an open door policy and I love when families visit!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Education is so much more than what the school or teacher does.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Perhaps because of this particular challenge, teachers in lower-income communities are more willing to have parent-teacher conferences at their students’ homes and are more likely to have made home visits than their colleagues in higher-income areas. In conversation, one teacher shared, “I’m lucky I live in the neighborhood where I teach so I can run to a neighbor’s house. I told my students’ parents that at any given time, don’t be surprised if I ring the doorbell just to check in.”

Teachers in the lowest-income communities are also twice as likely as teachers in the highest-income communities to provide their personal phone number to students so students can reach them if needed.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Situation Applies to Them, by Community Median Household Income

Base: Total Respondents.



SPOTLIGHT ON:**Teachers Willing to Make Home Visits**

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of teachers are willing to have parent-teacher conferences at their students' homes, and 10% report making home visits.

These teachers are more likely to teach elementary school (64% vs. 55%) and less likely to teach high school (20% vs. 26%) than teachers who are not willing to make home visits. They are also more likely to teach in lower-income communities (31% vs. 25%).

Additionally, teachers willing to make home visits are more likely to:

- feel that characteristics of being a great teacher include: creating an environment where students feel safe making mistakes (87% vs. 82%); anticipating and responding to student learning needs (79% vs. 73%); and providing students with frequent and meaningful feedback on their individual progress (72% vs. 66%).
- say they became a teacher to help students reach their full potential (76% vs. 70%) and to make a difference in their school's community (47% vs. 38%).
- cite a need for more parent-teacher collaboration as being among the most significant challenges they face as a teacher (44% vs. 37%).
- have students in their classes who are working two or more grades below grade level (74% vs. 68%), who are special education students (77% vs. 72%) and who are English Language Learners (56% vs. 51%).

“I have shared my personal phone number with parents and visited their homes. I think this is very important.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The most important teachers in a child's life are his or her parents.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Parents who encourage and ensure that students are completing their assignments, and who respect teachers as professionals who know what they are talking about, would make the biggest difference of all.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“An involved parent reinforces at home what you are trying to get through to the student at school.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need a way to involve parents and the community so that my students have support and inspiration to do their homework and continue learning when they leave school.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“As teachers, it is our job to provide the foundation for higher learning, but parents and students need to be responsible and accountable.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“Parents and teachers have to work hand-in-hand for children to succeed in school!”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

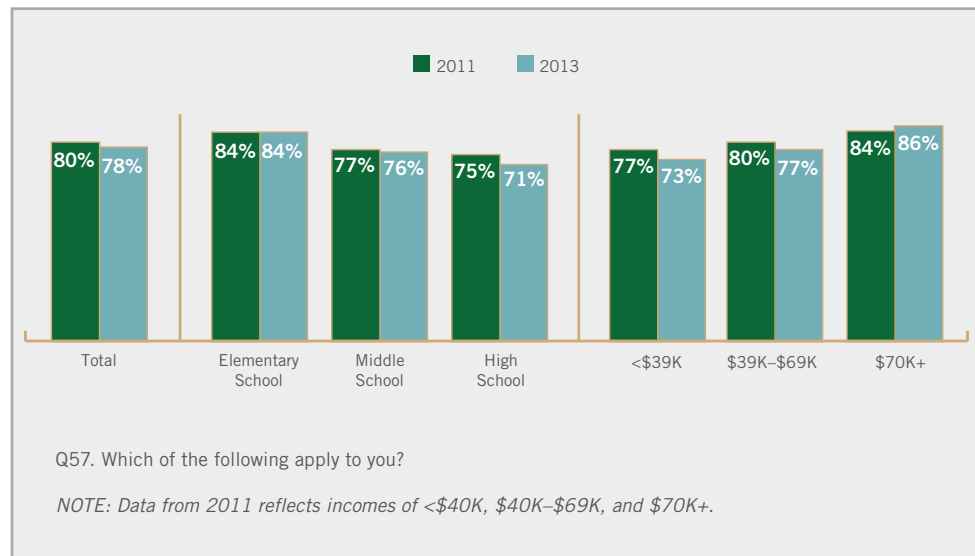
“Students need to read more, work hard and strive to excel, and parents must enforce this.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Nearly eight in 10 (78%) teachers believe their students’ parents feel welcome at their school—essentially unchanged since 2011. Also unchanged are the patterns observed across grade(s) taught and community income: the percentage of teachers who believe parents feel welcome at their school declines with grade(s) taught and rises across community income.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say “Parents in my community feel welcome at my school,” by Year of Survey

Base: Total Respondents.

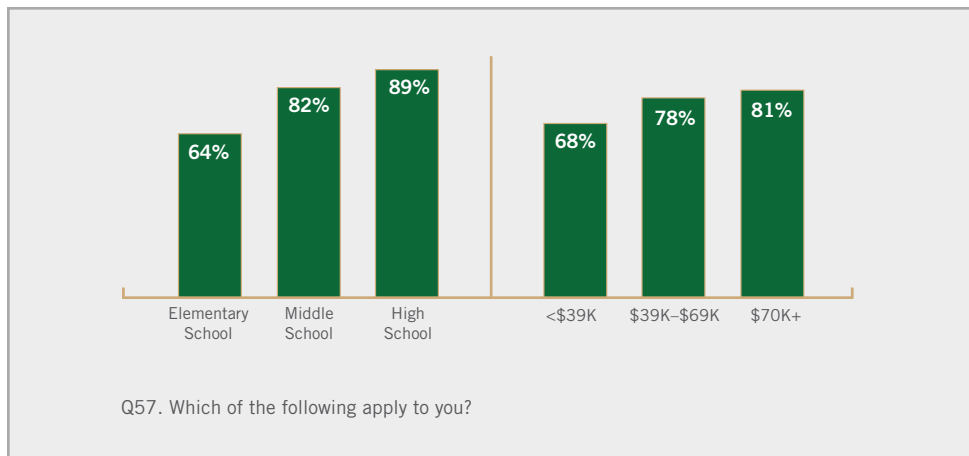


Teachers Are Using Technology to Connect With Students and Parents

As in all aspects of life, technology and social networking are becoming valuable tools for teachers to stay connected with students and parents outside of school walls. Seventy-six percent (76%) of teachers report their students have their email address so they can be reached when needed. This number increases with grade(s) taught and income level.

Percentage of Teachers Who Say “My students have my email address so they can reach me if they need to,” by Grade(s) Taught and Community Median Household Income

Base: Total Respondents.



“Many teachers at my school use technology to communicate with parents. It is at your fingertips via cell, tablet and desktop.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Our district uses a system that incorporates many aspects of communication with students and parents: videos, Skype, online testing, etc.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“I use a classroom website for my students’ parents and send weekly email updates.”
— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I use a blog to connect with parents.”
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Parents need to help set high expectations for students and push the importance of school.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The best family involvement is when a kid goes home and shares what happened in school.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Parents need to help and encourage students to gain an understanding of the value of an education in every content area, not just their favorite subjects.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

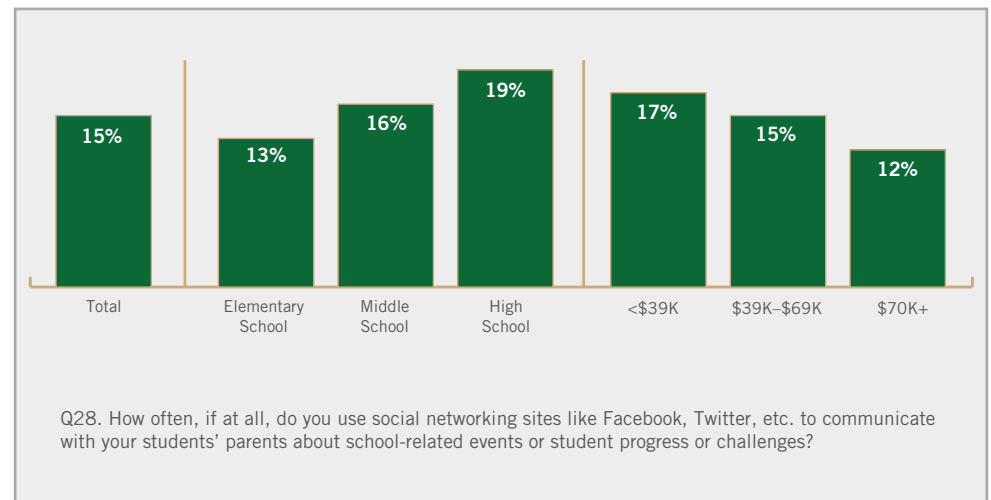
“If students aren’t read to, talked to, played with and given strict limits on screen time, they will more than likely struggle in school.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Of the 97% of teachers who use mainstream social networking sites for professional or personal purposes, only 15% use them to communicate with students’ parents, yet high school teachers and teachers in lower-income communities are more likely to do so than are elementary school teachers or teachers in higher-income communities.

Percentage of Teachers Who Use Mainstream Social Networking Sites to Communicate With Students’ Parents, in Total, by Grade(s) Taught and by Community Median Household Income

Base: Use Mainstream Social Network Websites for Professional or Personal Purposes.



TEACHERS OFFER MYRIAD WAYS FOR PARENTS TO HELP CHILDREN ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

In the spirit of collaboration, teachers cite a variety of activities and strategies for parents to engage with their children’s school and schoolwork. The activities teachers were asked about in the survey fall into three distinct categories:

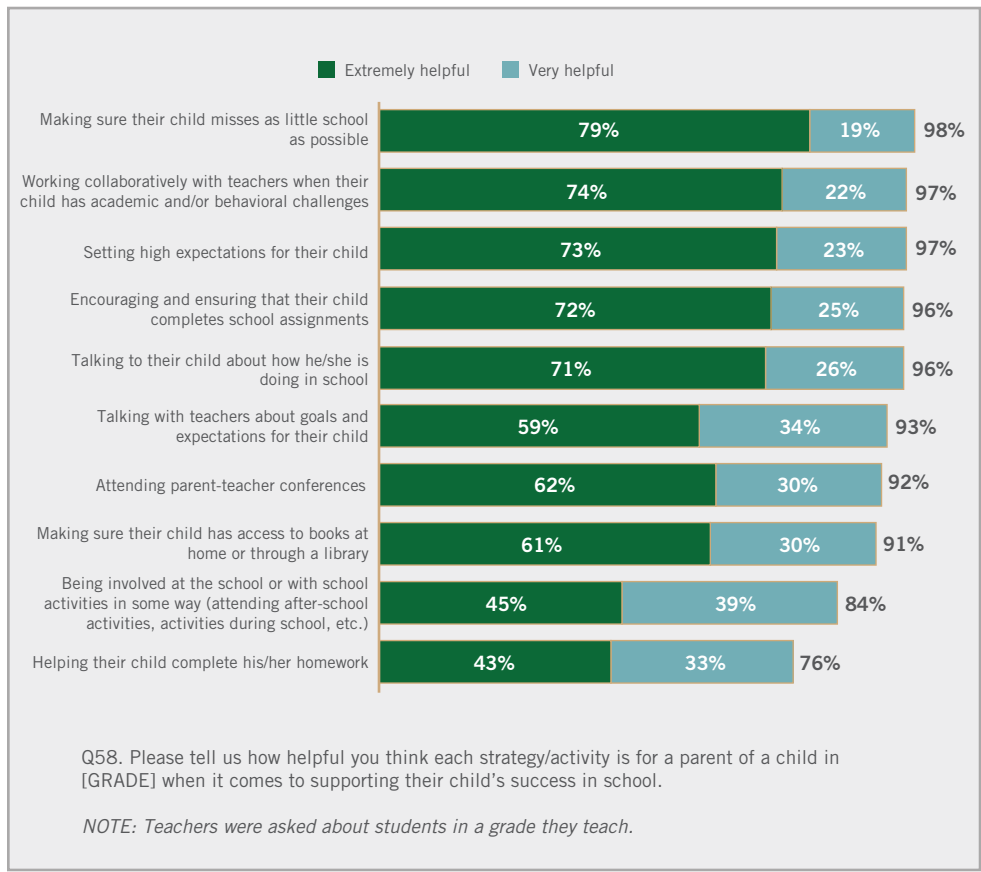
- **Engagement at Home** – Activities such as making sure children do not miss school, talking with children about school, encouraging children to complete homework and assignments, setting high expectations for children and making sure children have access to books at home or through a library.
- **Partnership With the Teacher** – Activities such as working with teachers when a child has academic or behavioral challenges and talking with teachers about goals and expectations for a child.
- **Activity on School Grounds** – Activities such as attending parent-teacher conferences, being involved at the school and attending after-school activities.

While a majority of teachers consider all of these activities very or extremely helpful in ensuring student success in general, they are more likely to find the activities in the “Engagement at Home” category the most helpful. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of teachers say making sure a child miss as little school as possible is very or extremely helpful, as is talking to children about how they are doing in school (96%) and encouraging and ensuring that children complete school assignments (96%).

When considering only those items that are extremely helpful in ensuring student success, teachers clearly prioritize these at-home activities far above in-school activities like attending parent-teacher conferences or being involved at the school.

Teachers’ Views on Helpfulness of Parents’ Strategies/Activities in Supporting Student Success in School

Base: Total Respondents.



“The most important thing parents can do to help their children is to not allow absences!”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“A parent’s role in their child’s education can be as simple as conversations and reading.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I want parents of my students to read to their kids. You need that modeling in the student’s life—those who don’t have it are worlds apart.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love hearing ‘my mom or dad helped me’—that means the parent is involved.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Even if the parent doesn’t know how to do the homework, as long as the parent is doing the social and emotional piece, they’re involved. They’re not just saying, ‘Did you do your homework?’ They’re saying, ‘Show me your homework.’”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“If parents ask their child if homework is being done, that’s helpful. They don’t need to be an expert on the subject.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I ask parents to read with their kids for about 20 minutes. It helps.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

“Much of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents or guardians.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

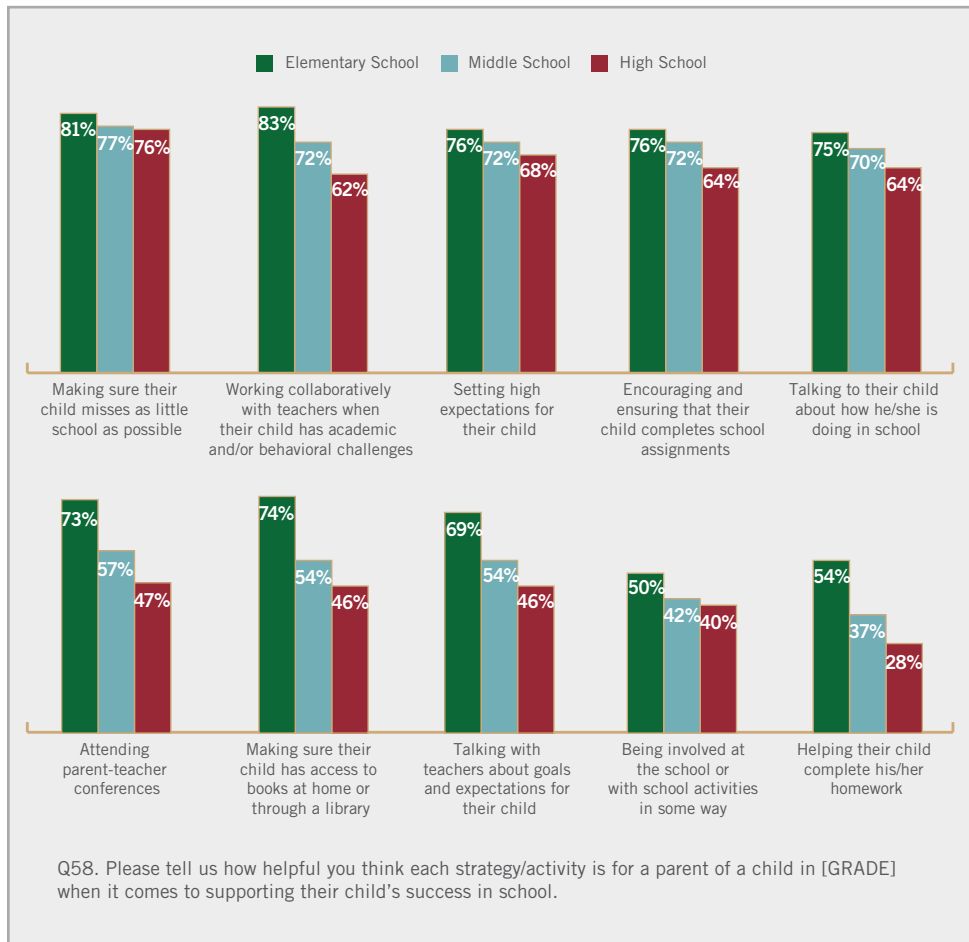
Teachers make a distinction between encouraging and ensuring that children complete school assignments versus helping children complete homework (72% and 43%, respectively, identify this type of involvement as extremely helpful). The grade-level differences across these two measures are telling:

- The helpfulness of encouraging and ensuring homework completion varies only slightly by grade(s) taught, with 76%, 72% and 64% of elementary, middle and high school teachers, respectively, saying this is extremely important.
- The helpfulness of parents helping children complete homework varies greatly across grades, from a high of 54% among elementary school teachers to 37% and 28% among middle and high school teachers, respectively.

In conversation, teachers cite the importance of students taking greater ownership and responsibility for their work as they advance through the secondary grades. They also note that it is often impractical to expect parents to be versed in the content being taught. As one middle school teacher shared, “The most helpful parent I’ve collaborated with couldn’t help with homework, but made sure the student was where he needed to be in order to get the help he needed. Her involvement made a difference in her child’s life.”

Percentage of Teachers Who Say Each Is an Extremely Helpful Parent Strategy/Activity in Supporting Student Success in School, by Grade(s) Taught

Base: Total Respondents.



“Ideally, all parents would be able to be extremely involved in their child’s education, but students can decide to succeed and teachers can still inspire even when parents are overwhelmed with making a living for their family.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“The most important element of teaching is the students’ desire to learn. If they come to class with a good attitude towards learning, they will be successful.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“We need parents and students to believe that education and a good work ethic matter to both students and our society.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“When children see their parent come into the classroom, they feel that the parent is interested in them.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Students need to know their parents want them to have a complete education, whether that is a high school diploma or a college degree. Too many parents do not speak to their children about the importance of education.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“I want to be the best teacher possible. I look at teaching as a way to help the next leaders of the world, and I want to do my part to help.”

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

“Teaching is an art and a science. Teachers must be proactive, reflective and productive every day.”

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

“I love teaching and I know that I am making a difference in the lives of my students.”

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

Though the teaching profession continues to change, the goal of teachers remains the same: to provide the best education possible for our nation’s students. In this pursuit, teachers are experts in knowing what is needed: a combination of skills to engage with students; the opportunity to refine and grow these skills through feedback and professional development; access to resources to meet the learning needs of all students; high expectations for all students; and a supportive and collaborative community of leaders, peers and parents.

As one teacher in California said, “Teaching is having a wide variety of strategies and methods that can be tweaked and adapted instantly and constantly as classroom dynamics and student needs change. Teaching is fluid and no one single way works for all.”

“I like the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. It’s important that our students are challenged to work and think at higher levels.” • “I believe that we have a responsibility to our students to prepare them for college and careers.” • “We all have the ability to make student learning successful, but we all need to work together.” • “Education must change as the world changes.” • “Before I started teaching, I thought it was an easy job.” • “A good teacher refuses to let a child fail.” • “Teachers need a variety of resources to meet the variety of learning styles children have.” • “The Common Core State Standards are making me a better teacher and the students better learners.” • “Teaching is an art. Teachers need to have the basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students.” • “Much of student success

**To view the full appendix,
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comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.” • “Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is a key factor in student achievement.” • “The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.” • “I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.” • “Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.” • “I thoroughly enjoy and continue to be passionate about my profession as a teacher. I am always striving to improve my craft.” • “The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.” • “Good teachers push their kids to be the best they can be. They want them to succeed and continue to flourish beyond their class!” •

“The one thing that I need most to become a more effective teacher is classroom preparation and planning time.”

“Communication and collaboration are the keys to success.”

“Teaching is about helping children reach their true potential.”

“The Common Core State Standards are making me a better teacher and the students better learners.”

“Giving time during the school day for teachers and teams to collaborate is a key factor in student achievement.”

PRIMARY SOURCES is part of an ongoing dialogue with America's teachers. We welcome your thoughts and opinions on the report at www.scholastic.com/primarysources

“I left another career to become a teacher because I truly believe teaching is one of the most important careers there is.”

“The teaching profession is so valuable. We need to encourage our best and brightest to be teachers.”

“Teaching is an art. Much of student success comes from having supportive and actively involved parents and guardians.”

Teachers need to have the basic skills and content knowledge but need to apply the art of teaching to meet the diverse needs of their students.”