

EDUCATION MATTERS

A publication of the Association of American Educators Foundation

2015 National Membership Survey

Professional Educators Support Reasonable Reform Efforts

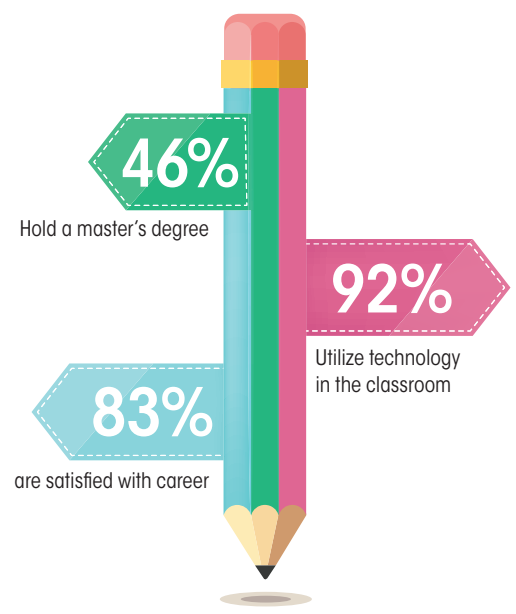
Reforming America's schools has become the number one domestic policy issue, with both Democrats and Republicans agreeing that changes are critical in 2015. As mounting calls for reform from both sides of the aisle take shape, teachers are right to question policies that will have lasting effects on their students and their profession.

A strong independent teacher voice is essential in bridging the gap between proposed reform policy and what really works in America's classrooms. The Association of American Educators (AAE) aims to fill this need via our well-informed and experienced membership base.

To say that education in America is changing would be an understatement. In 2014 alone, all fifty states passed sweeping education and labor reforms. This year's membership survey polls our members from all fifty states and paints the picture of a well-educated and dedicated teacher workforce. Forty-six percent of surveyed members hold a master's degree, 83 percent say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their careers, and 92 percent are utilizing technology in the classroom at least some of the time.

Among the topics explored in this membership survey are some of the most pressing issues facing the American education system, including school choice, technology, teacher preparation and leadership, and transparency in public schools. While the status quo would have you believe that teachers are in lock-step with the views of union leaders, AAE members are growing in their support of commonsense reform.

THE AAE EDUCATOR





As the profession evolves in 2015, teachers are embracing commonsense solutions. AAE is listening and we look forward to sharing your thoughts with policymakers and stakeholders on all levels.

School Choice Policies

As an organization that supports teachers in all academic settings, AAE and its members are supportive of many policies and laws that advance school choice and promote options for all stakeholders. For example, an overwhelming 97 percent of AAE members support public charter schools as options for students and teachers alike.

Similarly, 94 percent of survey respondents support course choice for students. This innovative policy allows students to craft an à la carte education uniquely tailored to their learning needs via courses from colleges, public high schools, virtual schools, and various online providers.

Another 56 percent of surveyed teachers support Empowerment Scholarship Accounts. These ESAs enable parents of special needs students to choose a school that best fits each child's needs utilizing 90 percent of the dollars already assigned to their children through state funding. That money, deposited into ESAs, can then be used to access a multitude of education options that better meet individual needs.

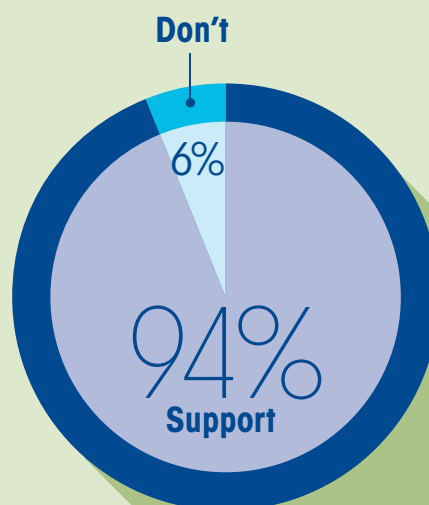
Virtual Education & Technology

As new technologies make it possible for students to learn at their own pace, states across the country are implementing policies that offer and encourage online learning. According to the data, 68 percent of AAE member teachers would support a blended learning environment where students spend part of their day with a teacher and part of their day working with a computer.

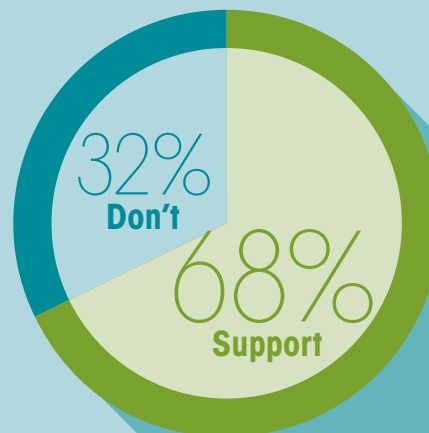
Another 67 percent of survey respondents agree with a proposal that would require students to take at least one online course to graduate.

While defenders of the status quo see virtual options as a threat, AAE members embrace new technologies as a means to prepare students for the job market of the 21st century.

Utilizing a policy known as course choice, students are able to craft an à la carte education uniquely tailored to their learning needs. Louisiana's course choice program enables K-12 students to take courses from colleges, public high schools, virtual schools and various online providers. It enables students to access Advanced Placement and career and technical education courses, allowing them to earn high school and college credit, and industry-based certifications. **Do you support course choice?**

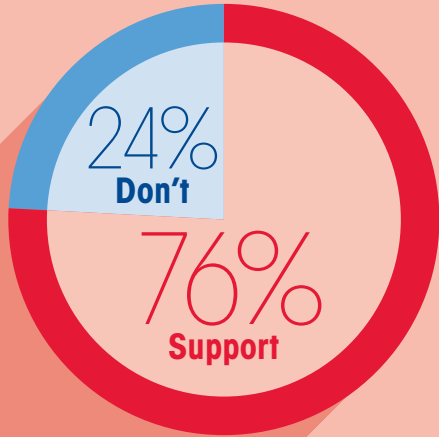


Would you support a blended learning environment in your school where students spend part of their day with a teacher and part of their day working with a computer if that meant more planning time and higher quality instruction?

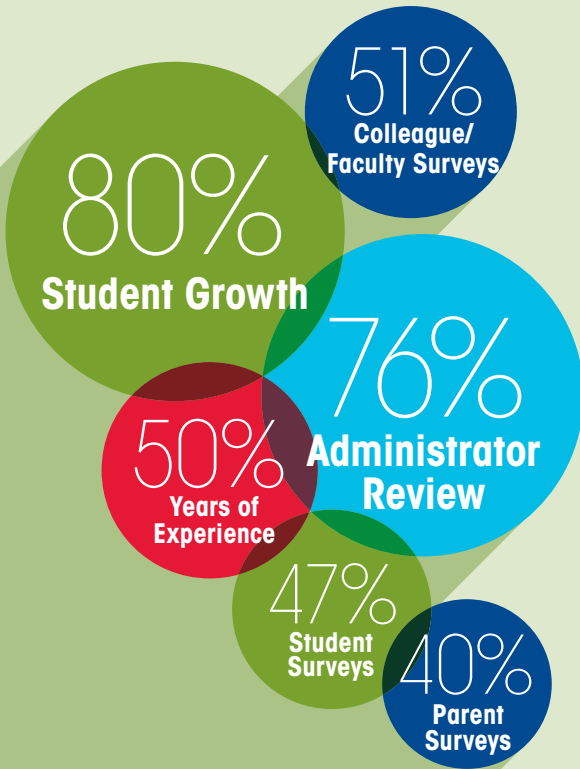


A recent report by the National Council on Teacher Quality was released as a means to rank schools of education as well as recommend strategies for improving teacher education. Among the many recommendations, it advised requiring rigorous teacher prep program admission tests, requiring an admission GPA of 3.0 or higher, and requiring candidates to pass subject-matter tests as a condition of admission into teacher programs.

Do you agree or disagree with the report's recommendation?



What criteria should be considered when labeling teachers "effective?" Check all that apply.



Teacher Preparation

One of the most prominent themes in education reform has been the concept of raising the bar for incoming educators. A whopping 37 percent of survey respondents did not feel prepared for the classroom after their traditional college of education experience. Another 76 percent believe that the bottom third of high school graduates entering schools of education is hurting the perception of teaching.

AAE teachers are in agreement that we must attract quality candidates to the profession. Seventy-six percent of survey respondents agreed with a recent National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) report that ranks schools of education and recommends requiring rigorous teacher prep program admission tests, an admission GPA of 3.0 or higher, and the passage of subject-matter tests as a condition of admission into teacher programs.

Members surveyed believe colleges of education should be more selective, with 53 percent of members supporting an admission requirement of a top 30 percent high school ranking.

Another 66 percent agree that to attract new teachers and teachers with experience in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects, we need to explore alternative certifications, allowing degreed professionals an easier path to the classroom.

Teacher Leadership

While measuring the effectiveness of a classroom educator is complex, AAE members are eager to embrace professionalism and policies that reward performance.

Sixty-seven percent of members surveyed support a multitiered teacher-level structure (i.e., standard, professional, master, or lead levels). This system would require a teacher to demonstrate increased teaching efficacy and growth to advance to higher licensure levels. Along with years of service, teachers would have to demonstrate various professional attributes including, but not limited to, effectiveness and leadership roles.

When asked what criteria should be considered when labeling a teacher "effective," AAE members selected student growth (80 percent) and administrator review (76 percent) as top components of evaluating classroom teachers.

Further, 60 percent of teachers supported a North Carolina initiative that proposed giving an 11 percent raise in exchange for giving up tenure.

Teachers also want to develop in their careers. Seventy-one percent of those surveyed are interested in hybrid roles that would encompass teaching in the classroom part time with additional leadership roles in a school or district.

Common Core State Standards

While some have argued that Common Core State Standards will advance a nationalized education agenda from the Department of Education, others have maintained that a set of rigorous standards will be instrumental in promoting results for students. AAE members continue to be split on the topic, with support once again declining in 2015.

According to survey results, 53 percent of AAE members have an unfavorable opinion of the standards.

When asked whether the Common Core State Standards will improve the quality of education in your community/state, just 30 percent of respondents believed they would have this effect. Thirty-six percent of member teachers believed they would have no effect, and 34 percent assert that CCSS will have an adverse effect on education in their state.

Transparency and Accountability

To foster a climate of accountability in public schools, educators are calling for a system that promotes a culture of transparency. Sixty-seven percent of survey respondents agree with a new Colorado law requiring school boards to let the public observe collective bargaining negotiations.

Additionally, 93 percent of teachers agree with a Massachusetts law calling for every public or private school employee who may be alone with students to be fingerprinted in order to check for previous arrests and convictions nationwide.

With regard to protecting the personal information of students, 86 percent of AAE members agree with California's SOPIPA law designed to protect student information by barring operators from compiling, sharing, or disclosing student information for any reason other than those related to K-12 purposes.

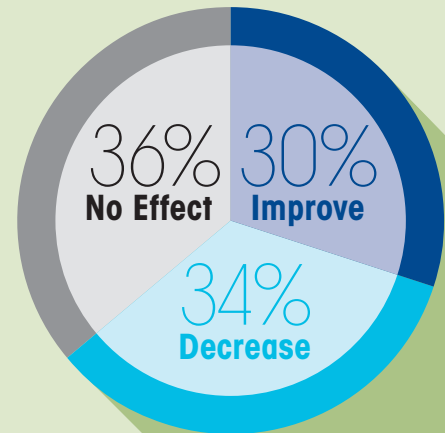
Members also stress the importance of local control in education. Fifty-two percent believe local school boards should have the greatest influence in public education. Another 33 percent believe the state government should have the greatest influence, and just 6 percent believe the federal government should have the greatest influence.

Budgets

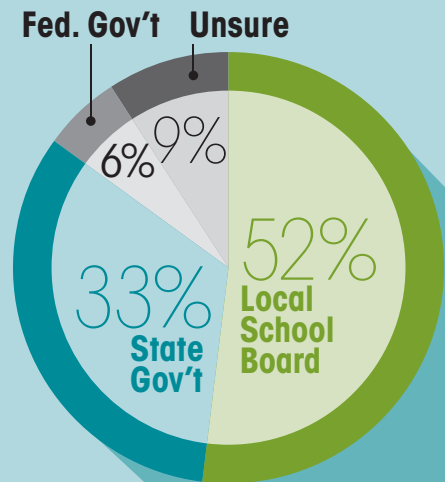
As the demographics of the teaching workforce changes, lawmakers are exploring options for fairly compensating educators with varied salary and benefit packages.

Teachers are willing to adopt policies that account for unique circumstances. Sixty-four percent of those surveyed would prefer to personally negotiate a salary and benefits package that best suits their lifestyle. Interestingly, a mere 12 percent believe collective bargaining leads to a better compensated workforce. ■

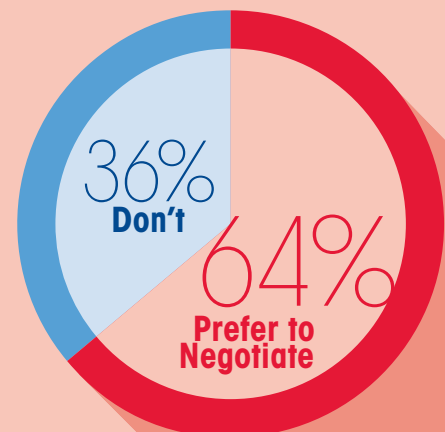
Do you believe Common Core State Standards will improve the quality of education in your community, decrease the quality of education in your community, or have no effect?



Who should have the greatest influence in public education?



Would prefer to personally negotiate a salary and benefits package that best suits their lifestyle.



A Big Thanks to Our Charter Member Apple Awardees

In celebration of AAE's 20-year anniversary, we awarded our charter members with an Apple Award to show our appreciation for their longstanding service and dedication to teachers across the nation. These teachers have felt the victory of the Charter School Expansion Act of 1998, have seen the birth of No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, and have struggled with the implementations of Common Cores Standards we deal with today! And through it all, they've devoted their careers to supporting students as members of AAE. We'd like to extend that thank you to ALL of our valued members. We couldn't have done it without you! Here are pictures of just a few of our charter members. ■



Order FREE AAE Materials to Share at Your Next Staff Meeting TODAY!

AAE offers our members FREE materials to share with your friends and colleagues. Many of our members request these materials to help them share more information with colleagues about AAE and how to become AAE members. Our AAE Tool Boxes include brochures, applications, and promo items to pass out to potential members.

Order your AAE Tool Box today by visiting aaeteachers.org/materials!



Scholarship & Grant Winners

Congrats to our fall 2014 teacher scholarship and classroom grant winners! AAE teachers truly are the cream of the crop among professional educators, and these teachers couldn't be better examples of that. Don't forget, the spring scholarship and grant deadline is March 1st. Pictured below are some of our award winners. Learn more at aaeteachers.org/awards today! ■



March 1st

**SPRING APPLICATION
DEADLINE**

Support the Foundation



The AAE Foundation is doing more to help reform and improve America's education system than any other organization of its kind. Here are just a few examples of the many ways we are making a difference in the lives of teachers and students nationwide:

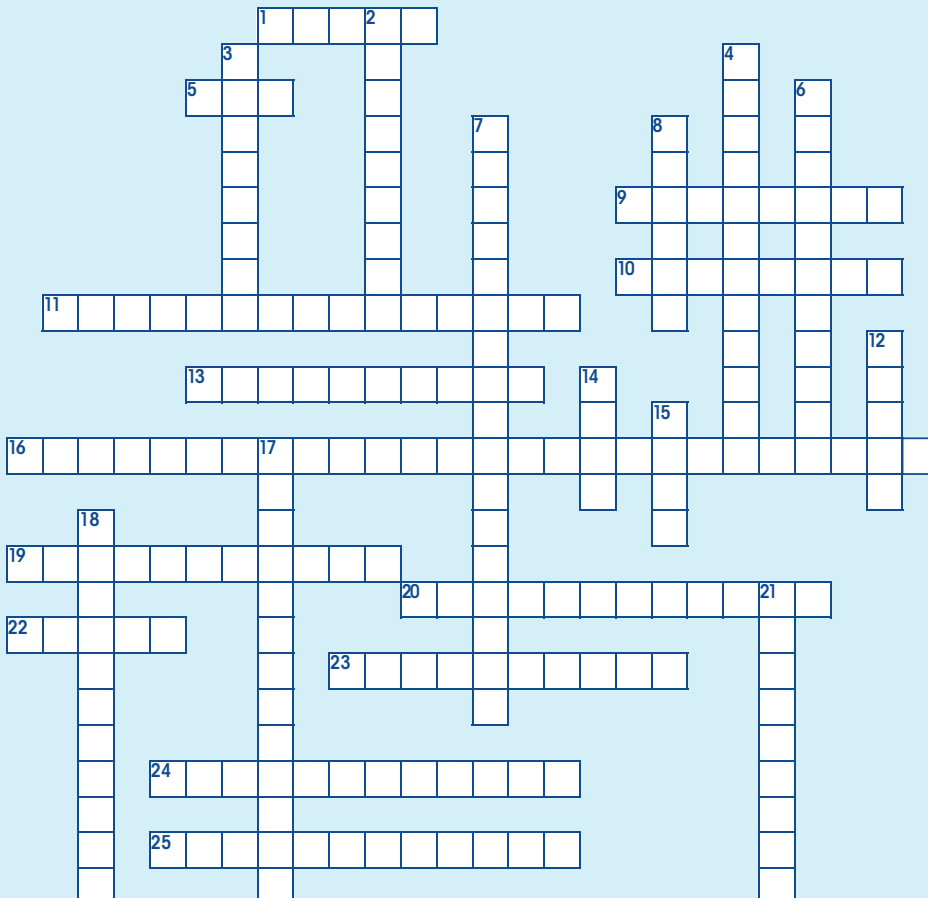
- AAE Foundation's scholarship and grant program is our most "in demand" program for educators because it provides thousands of dollars to classroom teachers and is designed to advance student learning, continue teacher education, and to fund innovative classroom projects.
- AAE Foundation promotes professionalism and engages educators through reform, curriculum, and leadership workshops and publications.
- AAE Foundation serves as a resource to school boards and school districts on issues pertaining to individual workplace rights and alternative forms of teacher representation.

Donate TODAY at aaeteachers.org/foundation to support the next generation of educators! ■

Teachers: Complete this crossword puzzle and email the results to editor@aaeteachers.org. All correct entries received by February 20th will be entered into a raffle for an Amazon gift card! Don't delay, send your entry today!

ACROSS

1. What kind of award did AAE send out to its charter members?
5. This supplementary insurance plan reimburses 80% of usual and customary charges for covered procedures with any licensed professional in the U.S. Association members receive an extra 5% discount on base plan premiums.
9. According to page 3, one of the most prominent themes in education reform has been the concept of raising the bar for these educators.
10. AAE is in favor of this policy protection that would prohibit unions from collecting dues via payroll deduction for political purposes.
11. According to the data listed on page 2 of this newsletter, 68 percent of AAE member teachers would support what kind of environment where students spend part of their day with a teacher and part of their day working with a computer.
13. What percent of national survey respondents support course choice for students in our 2014 survey?
16. If you cannot work due to a disability, you can receive up to 2/3 of your salary to age 65 with this optional insurance package at a discounted rate.
19. What is our Twitter Handle?
20. Who is the Executive Director of the Arkansas chapter of AAE?
22. In how many states does AAE have members in?
23. According to the data on page 4, 53% of AAE members have an unfavorable opinion of these standards.
24. In which city is our California office located?
25. Mention AAE and you may receive an additional 8% discount from GEICO (in most states) for this insurance coverage.



DOWN

2. This state's course choice program enables K-12 students to take courses from colleges, public high schools, virtual schools, and various online providers.
3. You can request up to \$750,000 of this outstanding coverage at special rates exclusively for AAE members.
4. Last month we celebrated a national week devoted to what?
6. AAE offers teachers exclusive savings through our member-only Discount Benefits Program. What company offered our featured discount as seen in January's eBlast?
7. In non-Right-to-Work states, you may have the right to redirect the entire union fee from the union to a nonunion, nonreligious charity. What is this group of people called?
8. What is the acronym for the Kansas chapter of AAE?
12. Teachers who do not live in right-to-work states are forced to pay fees to whom as a condition of employment?
14. What is the acronym for the AAE chapter that services Washington, Idaho, and Oregon?
15. How many basic principles are in the AAE Code of Ethics for Educators?
17. AAE has arranged to provide this protection through a partnership between the leading credit bureau and a respected 24/7 crisis response team, providing a comprehensive identity recovery system.
18. According to page 3, while measuring the effectiveness of a classroom educator is complex, AAE members are eager to embrace professionalism and policies that reward what?
21. AAE recognizes teachers as college-educated professionals who are capable of negotiating their own what?



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Member Teachers Enjoy Savings

Your AAE membership can save you hundreds of dollars. Whether you're buying supplies for your classroom or planning your next vacation, members can save money on everyday purchases thanks to AAE's exclusive member-only Discount Benefits Program!

This new initiative provides member educators with an elite collection of local and national perks and discounts, cash-back comparison shopping, and concierge services from thousands of hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, spas, theme parks, and more! The deep discounts AAE members receive on a variety of custom products and services could easily pay for the cost of your membership!

When it comes to your bottom line, your membership in AAE pays dividends. AAE has partnered with some of the best companies to give you the most for your money. These high-quality, value-added discounts will provide peace of mind to budget-conscious teachers across the country!

Visit aaeteachers.org/discounts to learn more!



Answers for the January Crossword

DOWN

1. Charters
2. Classroom
4. LiabilityInsurance
5. GaryBeckner
9. Teachers
12. Curriculum
14. Lesson Plans
16. Colleges
17. March
18. Hoxby

ACROSS

3. January
6. EducationMatters
7. RatherBe
8. BackToSchoolBox
10. NationalSurvey
11. SchoolChoice
13. Jacksonville
15. EducationReform
19. SocialEmotional
20. AAE
21. NewYears

Performance
 PersonalAuto
 Louisiana
 ReligiousObject
 MissionViejo
 NinetyFour
 TermLife
 Union
 OfficeDept
 Paycheck
 aeteachers
 Apple
 BlendedLearning
 CommonCore
 Contracts
 DisabilityIncomeProtection
 Fifty
 Four
 IDTheAssist

WORD BANK FOR FEBRUARY CROSSWORDS