



Finding Thankfulness in So Many Ways

Each year, as everyone's schedule gets busier and busier, with more commitments than there is time in the day, it is satisfying and refreshing to pause and reflect on the many people, experiences, and opportunities that make us remember how truly rewarding and fulfilling the field of education continues to be. Whether you are just beginning your career, starting a new position hundreds of miles away from your last one, or walking the same hallways of your school for so long that you now have professional colleagues you taught as middle

schoolers, we all have reasons why we can't imagine doing anything else.

Recently we asked you to share why you are thankful, and members from all over the country were quick to respond. It is clear that the moments of gratitude, motivation, and support you give each other and your entire education community are inspirational, and they give us at AAE renewed commitment to ensuring the value of membership by delivering the highest quality benefits, services, and professional materials. Here are some of your comments.



I am thankful for the opportunity to make a difference in how my students feel about themselves and their ability to learn, and developing a positive self-identity and growth mind set.

—Becky, Sioux Falls, SD

An amazing and supportive new principal, positive teachers to work with, and a fantastic group of lively learners in TK!

—Christa, Diamond Bar, CA

I am grateful for the paraeducators, specifically, Mrs. Isabel P. Carranza, for the outstanding attitude of service at West Shores Middle and High School, Salton City, CA.

—Diana, Thermal, CA

AAE's message of positivity...refreshing change from the NEA.

—Robbin, Grand Rapids, MI,

I am so thankful that I am not teaching six different subjects in six different periods for every school day which I was subjected to last school year.

—Scott, Albuquerque, NM

I am thankful for the great job I have assisting students with their college and career readiness, and helping them make plans for their lives beyond high school.

—Mike, Maplegrove, CA

Families that respond positively to a request from me and support their children academically and behaviorally. Working together with families is very important for a child's social and academic education. I am thankful for families!

—Charli, Mukwonago, WI

I am THANKFUL that GOD gives me the strength I need to come to school every day and to be here for the student(s) who may need me most. I pray that GOD will direct me in helping any of the children who need me more than just to teach them social studies.

—Dana, Paragould, AR

I am thankful for my precious students, educational support team, and family.

—Justina, Valentine, NE

I am thankful that I have insurance that will help me rebuild my home after its roof was destroyed during a storm...and that I have health insurance through my job for my back spasms.

—Jen, Yuma, AZ

I am very thankful for all my years of experience! It is helping me best serve my challenging class! And I know that by the time the school year ends I will look back and be thankful for my class this year!

—Jennifer, Craig, CO

I am thankful for the variety of professional organizations and especially for the ones I decided to join. Those organizations support educators every day by providing quality lesson plan ideas, networking opportunities, and protection against professional liability.

—Michael, Hesperia, CA

My wonderful, strong, and supportive school family.

—Mary, Monument, CO

I am thankful to be given the chance to grow as a student teacher and learn from a great mentor. Our students learn from us and, in turn, teach us a great many things every day.

—Lain, Aberdeen, WA

I am thankful for my job. I am thankful for your organization. I am thankful for my husband and son. I am thankful for my health and my new plant-based eating.

—Elizabeth, Mountain Village, AK

I am thankful for my team I get to teach with every day and the talents we each bring to the classroom.

—Melinda, West Jordan, UT

I am so thankful for the teachers and support staff who work diligently to support the traumatized children in our local schools each year.

—Rethel, Florissant, MO

My administrators know and understand middle schoolers, what they need, where they come from, and who they can become.

—Theresa, Fruitport, MI

I am thankful for the grant that I was awarded through the Assoc. of Amer. Educators! This grant allowed us to expand our special education coffee service in our high school. We make and deliver coffee & hot chocolate to teachers. This has been a great work-based learning experience for my students!! Thank you again for your support!!!

—Becky, Bryant, AZ

Thankful for being retired.

—Alan, Leadville, CO

Vocational education in the schools: cosmetology, pharmacy, and auto mechanics. I have seen these types of programs or selective guidance of curriculum help individuals to have successful, life-long careers.

—Cheryl Anne, Onalaska, TX

I am thankful for coworkers who you can count on for support during times of difficulty in school and life as well. Great friends are priceless!

—Donnie, Cabot, AR

I am thankful for my grade-level cohorts who have stepped up when my home was heavily damaged during a storm...I had to miss several days and they happily helped take care of my kids.

—Jennifer, AZ

Message from Gary Beckner,

AAE Founder and President

These reflections of appreciation that you've shared make all of us at AAE extremely thankful for all you do and proud to be your choice for a membership organization that supports you, your professional goals, and your dedication to your students. We wish you all the very best in this season of thanks.

Warm regards,



Gary



I am thankful for the foundation of freedom and pillars of honorable principles our nation is founded and stands on. As the social science teachers can attest, there has been no other civilization in the history of humankind like the one we enjoy and of course take for granted on a daily basis. This reflection of thankfulness reminds me of my personal responsibility as well as my civic duty to be a keeper of what was given sacrificially and requires a daily discipline to develop as well as uphold. Thank you for the opportunity to share. God bless America.

—Tirso,
Miami FL ■



A Commitment to “Teach Them All”

I am thankful for my stable career in teaching and my co-teacher. I stumbled upon this career as a special education teacher late in life. I am a board-certified music therapist. I had started my own private practice after working at a children’s hospital. I wrote grants and worked in my private practice that was funded by the grants I wrote for a few years. After working myself into debt, a dear friend of mine suggested that I get my teaching license for special education. That decision changed my life as well as the lives of the students I work with every single day. In this day where many teachers are going on strike and lacking resources, I am very thankful to work in a school district that has competitive pay, good benefits, and plentiful resources available to me as an employee. This year is my fourth year teaching, as well as my first year as an inclusion teacher in one grade level and classroom. I work with an amazing general education teacher. I am thankful to work with an amazing veteran teacher who has taught me so much about not only real-life teaching but also true friendship and colleague support. This is also something that appears to be lacking in the teaching profession as a whole. I honestly see myself working for many years with my current co-teacher. I am extremely thankful for our partnership and commitment to each other in our unity to “Teach Them All.” ■



Nicole Ribet is an AAE member, a board-certified music therapist, and a special education teacher in Gulfport, Mississippi.

“I am thankful to work with an amazing veteran teacher who has taught me so much about not only real-life teaching but also true friendship and colleague support.”



Save BIG This Holiday Season with AAE’s Discount Program!

This member-only program is one of AAE’s most popular membership benefits because it saves teachers money on their favorite retailers across the U.S. LOGIN NOW at

aaeteachers.abenity.com/perks and start saving today! Refer to your monthly newsletter eBlast to learn more about how to register!



AAE and Our Members Giving Back

In recognition of the tremendous service educators like you give each year to your students, your colleagues, your schools, and your communities, AAE Foundation will make a year-end donation in the name of AAE members to five non-profits supporting students and educators.

Four highly-rated national charities have been selected and are listed below, but we need YOUR help selecting the fifth charity. Visit aaeteachers.org/givebackvote to review and vote to select the fifth charity.



Are you interested in organizing a fundraiser engaging your students in serving others in their community? If so, AAE Foundation may be able to contribute to your project. Submit a brief (100 word) summary of the project to mckenzie@aaeteachers.org for consideration.



Who will feed the kids this weekend?

Blessings in a Backpack is a national program, headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, that mobilizes communities, individuals, and resources to provide food on the weekends for elementary school children across America who might otherwise go hungry.

► Learn more at blessingsinabackpack.org.



Shoes That Fit, based in Claremont, California, tackles one of the most visible signs of poverty in America by giving kids in need new athletic shoes to attend school with dignity and joy, prepared to learn, play, and thrive.

► Learn more at shoesthatfit.org.



Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, headquartered in Studio City, California, donates musical instruments to underserved schools nationwide in an effort to give youngsters the many benefits of music education, help them to be better students, and inspire creativity and expression through playing music.

► Learn more at mhopus.org.



StandUp for Kids, headquartered in Decatur, Georgia, works to end the cycle of youth homelessness by identifying and engaging homeless and at-risk youth. We then connect youth with an array of programs and outside community supports to address their whole-person needs to build healthy and trusting relationships, promote safety, and advocate with and for youth.

► Learn more at standupforkids.org. ■

2018 National Survey Preview— The Big Picture

Thank you so much for completing the 2018 National Survey! We are finalizing the results in a full report for you, policymakers, and the media. We want to share some interesting results with you:

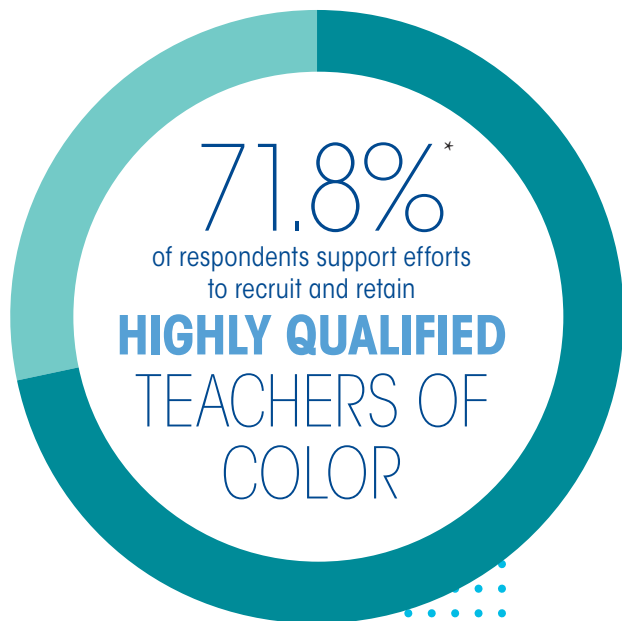
83.8%*

of respondents support

parents receiving state

INCOME TAX RELIEF

for approved educational expenses, which can include school tuition, books, supplies, computers, tutors, and transportation



STUDENT GROWTH

was the highest rated criteria in determining

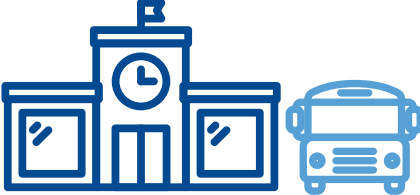
TEACHER
"effectiveness"



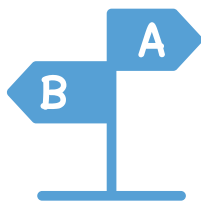
80.2%

of respondents would prefer a
PORTABLE 401(k)
to a traditional pension



74.1%* 
SUPPORT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

95.4%*
of respondents
SUPPORT
COURSE
CHOICE



Majority of respondents
RATED AAE
10/10
and would recommend AAE to a
fellow educator—**PLEASE DO!** We
love when you send us amazing
members!

85.9%
of respondents are
SATISFIED
with their
CURRENT
EMPLOYMENT
AS AN EDUCATOR



We are preparing to administer four smaller surveys quarterly moving forward, with the next 15-minute survey hitting your inbox in December. These will be topic focused and provide a deep dive into relevant policy- and employment-related issues to education.

If you have any questions, please email me at mckenzie@aaeteachers.org. Again, thank you so much for your detailed responses, time, and continued membership with AAE. ■

**percentages of tend to support and support have been combined for those percents.*



McKenzie Allen is Director of Advocacy, Association of American Educators Foundation. Previously, McKenzie served as the Advocacy Coordinator at Leadership for Educational Equity and taught in charter schools in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Building Effective Partnerships Between Pull-Out ELL Teachers and Classroom Teachers

In this season of thanks and as we reflect on what we are thankful for this year, most English Language Learner (ELL) teachers are thankful for great collaborative relationships with classroom teachers. However, great collaborative relationships in pull-out situations are not easily created. What should an effective ELL and classroom teacher collaboration look like in a pull-out situation? What are the responsibilities of classroom and ELL teachers, how can they help each other, and maximize their time? These tough questions can be answered with a “cornucopia” of helpful tips.



Responsibilities of ELL Teachers

- 1. Be understanding.** Classroom teachers have a whole class to take care of each day. They need the help of the ELL staff and administrators to feel capable of teaching ELL students effectively.
- 2. Be willing to provide resources and professional development.** This can be a tricky area for ELL teachers. You do not want to make classroom teachers feel inadequate or inferior, but you have resources to help classroom teachers.
- 3. Listen to the insights and observations of classroom teachers.** You only see students for a short time each day. Respect classroom teachers’ insights and observations. A classroom teacher may be the first person to notice a sight, hearing, or social issue.
- 4. Serve as a liaison with the parents.** This does not mean, however, that you should do all of the communication with the ELL families. There are language barriers that classroom teachers need help to navigate. You can help translate or find a translator. You can also provide insights into family dynamics, culture, and school expectations. ELL and classroom teachers can meet with ELL families together to show a united front.
- 5. Be a cultural advocate for your ELL students.** Make the classroom teachers and cafeteria personnel aware of religious and cultural holidays, as well as the dietary restrictions of each ELL student. Help classroom teachers understand why certain student behaviors are the result of cultural differences, such as a lack of eye contact. Explain customs that may vary from family to family. Classroom teachers must also know the “unspoken rules (shallow culture) and unconscious rules (deep culture)” of their students’ cultures (Sackman-Ebuwa, 2018).

“A strong collaborative relationship between ELL teachers and classroom teachers requires communication, patience, careful planning, and a thankful attitude. When those factors are present, ELL students can succeed at levels at or near their English-only peers.”

This requires all teachers to look far below the surface at customs of social interaction, how they make decisions, and working relationship preferences.

Responsibilities of Classroom Teachers

1. **Be open.** Yes, having ELL students can be difficult, but you can be thankful for the chance to grow as a teacher. Everyone can work together to make the experience easier and more enjoyable.
2. **Be willing to accept help with ELLs.** You are not expected to know everything. You must tell the ELL teachers what you need, and take the help that they offer.
3. **Share what you know about the ELL students because you spend the most time with them.** Share any observations about medical conditions, behavior issues, or social relationships with the ELL teachers. No detail is too small, as sometimes these observations can identify issues quickly.
4. **Be a good communicator with ELL parents.** Decide what items are most important to communicate to ELL parents, and plan ahead for a translator. Never use the student as a translator, as this is against Office of Civil Rights policy and can cause many issues

(Office of Civil Rights, 2015). If a situation arises where a translator is not available, smile and tell the parent how much you enjoy her/his student and that someone will call later.

5. **Make your room and class welcoming to all students.** This can be accomplished with class labels in the students' home languages and an enthusiastic welcome to all new students. Incorporate students' cultures into the curriculum.

Collaboration

1. **Set a time to meet or stay in touch electronically.** In an ideal world, the ELL and classroom teachers would be able to have a set time to meet each week. In reality, this rarely happens. Staying in contact by email regularly is essential.
2. **Set expectations.** Let the other teachers know what you need and when. Set times that class content will be given and when completed work will be returned. If something comes up, be sure to let the other teachers know when they can expect the content or work to be available.
3. **Decide who will take care of which tasks.** Who will plan content for the ELL students, make

the test accommodations, and communicate with ELL families? What part of the content will be taught by the ELL teachers, if any? The classroom teachers should plan content or it should be planned together. It is preferable that the classroom teachers make test accommodations, but they may need training on how to accommodate. If the ELL teachers are teaching content, they must know it well enough to teach it, have the resources needed, and understand how the ELL students will be assessed.

4. **Always go to the other people in the team first, if there is an issue.** Misunderstandings occur, as do unexpected circumstances. Work together to find a solution. Avoid bringing an administrator into the situation, unless all else has failed. This can erode trust, which is hard to rebuild.

Pull-out ELL classes are a popular method of providing services but are not always effective. A strong collaborative relationship between ELL teachers and classroom teachers requires communication, patience, careful planning, and a thankful attitude. When those factors are present, ELL students can succeed, reaching levels at or near their English-only peers. ■

This article is edited from a longer research paper available in its entirety at mrsschulzesclass.weebly.com.



Michelle Schulze, Ed.D. is assistant professor of education (ELL), Grand View University, Des Moines, Iowa. Dr. Schulze spent twenty years in K-12 education in Missouri and Kansas.

She began her career as a French teacher and coach of multiple sports. She then spent eleven years as an ELL teacher and two years as a 6-12 principal.

AAE Scholarship Winner Grateful For Chance to Attend Conference

AAE is privileged to provide teachers chances to go places and tackle projects for which they may not have otherwise had the opportunity. One scholarship winner was especially grateful for her award.



Ashley Peterson applied in the fall 2017 AAEF National Teacher Scholarships and Grants award cycle. As an early childhood special education teacher, she found that relevant professional development was not as plentiful as in other subject areas. Having recently been appointed as a team leader in a school specializing in students on the autism spectrum, the quality of the professional development that Ms. Peterson received would affect her team as well as herself. She applied for an AAE scholarship to attend the highly regarded Council for Exceptional Children Department of Early Childhood Annual International Conference.

When Ms. Peterson returned from the conference, she had nothing but good things to say about the experi-

ence, citing she received “strategies and resources that I can use with the families I work with and my early intervention team.” She noted several sessions, including one on supporting children in foster care and adoptive settings, and another session on cultural and linguistic diversity in assessments.

As we often find, Ms. Peterson’s conference attendance benefitted more than just herself. Upon her return, she shared the knowledge she gained with her team. According to Ms. Peterson, “We were able to use this information to update our meeting agendas and to plan activities to develop the skills of our team members.” She also shared the information with her school administration, further broadening the impact of this one scholarship.

Included in Ms. Peterson’s reporting, she reiterated her thanks to AAE for the experience. “I would not have been able to attend the pre-conference session and receive some of the resources offered at this conference without the support of the Association

of American Educators. Thank you again for allowing me to take part in this opportunity!” She also expressed gratitude to AAE for our day-to-day efforts and services, saying, “I appreciate all the work you do for teachers and that there is a non-union option for teachers to consider.”

For us at AAE, this appreciation goes both ways. Helping educators at all levels in their careers to advance student outcomes through our Scholarship and Grants Program is one of the most fulfilling aspects of our work. We’re thankful that teachers such as Ms. Peterson find a home in AAE, and we look forward to attracting such passionate, dedicated teachers for years to come. ■



Melissa Pratt is AAE’s professional programs manager. In that capacity, she creates and manages programs that help AAE’s members increase their professional capacity.

Her favorite part of the job is the funding that she is able to provide to teachers each year through AAE’s National Teacher Scholarship and Classroom Grant program.

SCHOLARSHIP & GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 1!

The AAE Foundation’s National Teacher Scholarships and Classroom Grants competition is held twice a year in the fall and spring. Its purpose is to help teachers such as Ashley Peterson. The deadlines are March 1 and October 1 of every year. For more information, visit aaeteachers.org/awards.

Legal Corner – A Case Study in Persistence: AAE Legal Services Protect Member Rights

June 2018 marked a major victory for teacher freedom when the Supreme Court ruled in *Janus v. AFSCME* that public sector employees cannot be forced to pay agency fees as a condition of employment. The ruling also stated that union membership is opt in rather than opt out. AAE and AAE Legal Services have worked tirelessly toward ensuring that teachers everywhere know their association rights and are free to choose the option that best suits their goals, values, and budget.

AAE Legal Services has also come to the aid of numerous members who are experiencing difficulties in exercising their association rights. When AAE member William Lin chose to leave the California Teachers Association (CTA), he found that rescinding his Dues Commitment was not as straightforward a process as the *Janus* decision ordered. After several unsuccessful attempts to resolve the issue on his own, Mr. Lin consulted with our legal team. We were able to quickly intercede to successfully cease deductions of any APLE/CTA/NEA dues from his payroll.

“Thank you so much, Sharon, for helping me get this issue resolved. I appreciate the letters you wrote and the time you took to talk me through each step of the process.”

—William Lin (New AAE professional member)

AAE serves to defend your rights as an educator, which include joining the professional association of your choice. If you have encountered difficulty exercising your association rights, please contact us. ■



Sharon Nelson is the director of legal services for the Association of American Educators. In this capacity, Ms. Nelson oversees AAE’s legal service team and works daily with members and panel counsel to address members’ legal concerns. A passionate advocate for educators, Ms. Nelson has been a lawyer focusing on employee rights issues for nearly twenty years.

AAE Out and About



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Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays

*from all of us at
the Association of American Educators*

