



2010 Member Survey:

Teachers support reform efforts when reform efforts are fair

Teachers largely have been pushed aside as education reformers determine how to help America's students catch up with the rest of the world. Yet teachers have valuable input to add to the debate, and AAE is listening.

In its most recent survey, AAE found its members encouraging reform efforts under certain conditions. Educators do not want to be left out of the debate, and they want reformers to understand the challenges they face each day in the classroom. Teachers want to be held accountable for what occurs in their classrooms, but the accountability must be fair and balanced taking into consideration outside factors that affect student learning.

Great Teachers, Great Leaders

Two factors that respondents agree affect student learning are great teachers and great leaders. Nearly as many 89% believe that in an academic setting effective teachers and principals are the two most important variables to help students improve performance. More than 90% of AAE members agree strongly or in part that recruiting and retaining great teachers and great leaders is the best way to transform public education and help close the achievement gap. Most teachers believe that developing excellent teachers, principals, and administrators is absolutely essential to reform education, but the question of how to evaluate excellence remains.



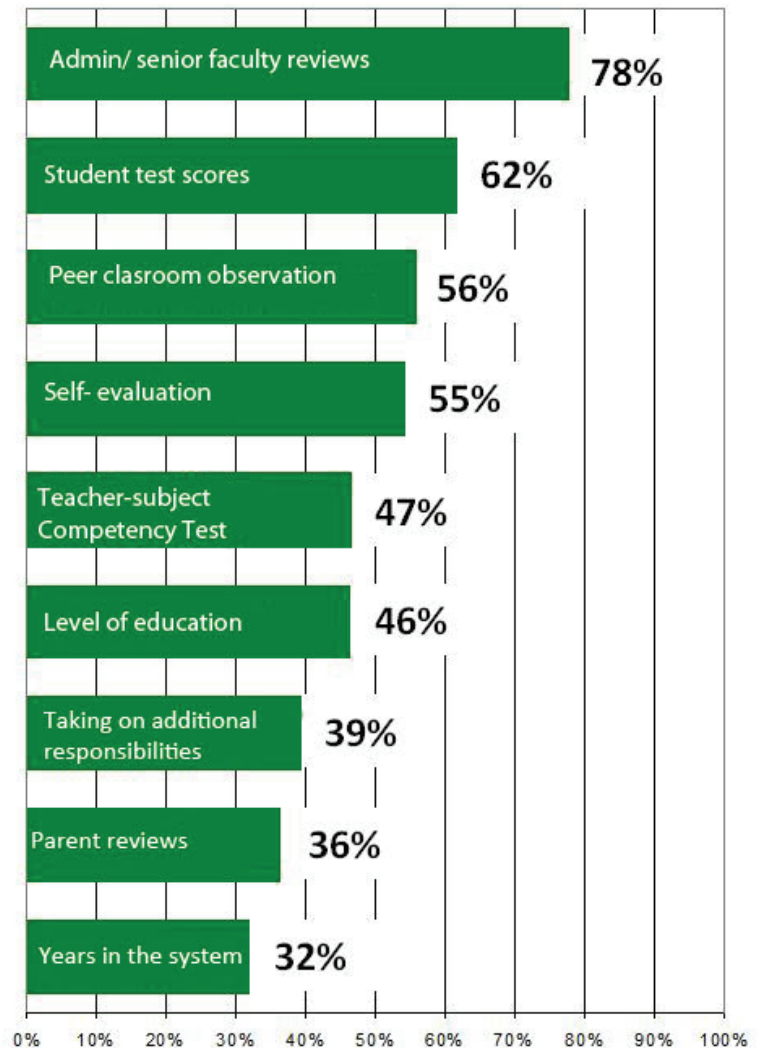
Evaluations

Opposition against teacher evaluation based solely on student test scores is strong. However, the perception that educators do not want to be evaluated by test scores is a sweeping generalization that leaves many caveats unaddressed. AAE's survey dug deeper into the question of evaluation by test scores, and here's what teachers had to say:

Eighty percent of teachers surveyed support a value-added model of student assessment when student test scores are used as a part of teacher evaluation. Value-added models take into account important student characteristics such as eligibility for special education services, free and reduced lunch status, school attendance and other factors beyond a teacher's control, thus evaluating educators who teach similar students. Value-added models also ensure that teachers and schools get credit for not only leading their students to achieve high absolute levels of academic success but also ensuring that students continue to make positive academic gains each year. This is despite the fact those students may not be proficient at a specific grade level.

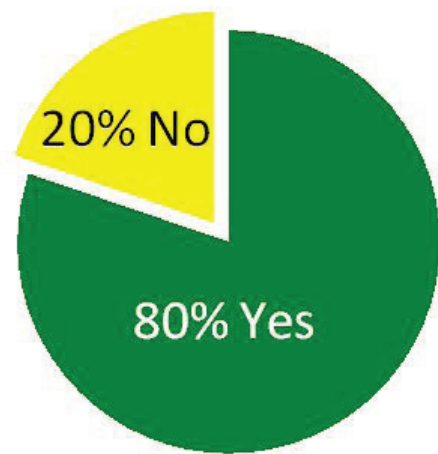
Forty percent of teachers surveyed believed 50% or more of their personal evaluation should be determined by student test scores with the use of a value-added model. Seventy percent of teachers believed that 25% or more of their personal evaluation should be determined by student test scores with the use of a value-added model.

When asked what type of evaluation should be included in evaluating teacher effectiveness, 62% believed



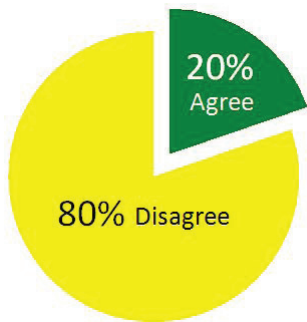
that student test scores should be part of the criteria. Student test scores were second only to administrator/senior faculty reviews which 78% believed should be part of the criteria. Student test scores were included as a part of evaluation criteria more frequently than peer classroom observation (56%), self-evaluation (55%), teacher-subject competency test (47%), level of education (46%), taking on additional responsibilities (39%) or parent reviews (36%).

Would you support a value-added model into student achievement assessment if student test scores were part of your evaluation as an effective teacher?

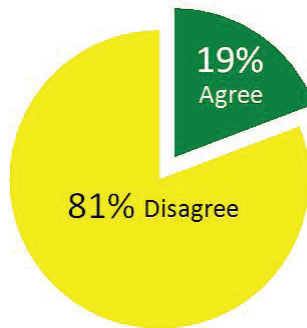


Tenure

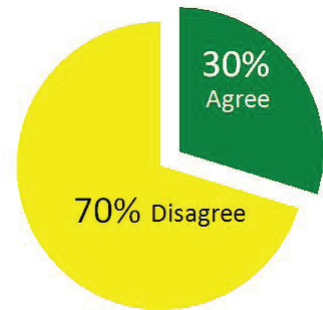
Teachers unions promote tenure as a crucial means of protection for teachers to be able to perform their jobs, but our survey showed teachers have a different opinion. Eighty-one percent of those surveyed responded that tenure is not necessary for an educator to properly perform his or her job effectively, and a vast majority of respondents (80%) asserted that achieving tenure does not indicate that a teacher is effective.



“Achieving tenure indicates an effective teacher.”



“Tenure is necessary for an educator to properly perform his or her job effectively.”



Do you agree with the policy, “Last hired, first fired.”

Accountability

Also debunked in the AAE survey is the myth that all teachers believe they should have a job for life. Sixty-one percent of members surveyed agreed with a Delaware policy that teachers must be removed from the classroom if they have an ineffective rating for more than two years. Further, 73% agreed with a Colorado policy that teachers can lose tenure if they are deemed ineffective for two consecutive years.

Compensation

Despite union efforts to keep educators on predetermined salary schedules, with criteria such as length of time in the system and level of education, teachers support certain types of differentiated pay and disagree strongly with the saying, “Last hired, first fired.” More than 80% of respondents to the survey supported educators being paid more for taking on additional roles and responsibilities in their schools, and 79% supported educators being paid more to teach in high-need schools such as inner city or rural schools.

National Standards

While 63% supported some form of national standards, how the standards should be set was mixed. Only 31% believed that the federal government should mandate standards, while 64% supported the states making the final determination about the standards. Of that 64%, nearly 27% felt that only state-designed state-specific standards approved at the federal level best described the national standards that should be implemented. Supporting the notion that teachers want to be held accountable, 64% support the notion that national standards should “provide a uniform evaluation and comparison of local schools and schools in other states.”

Most teachers would agree that today’s education landscape is vastly different than just a decade ago. The AAE member survey reflects that teachers’ attitudes have changed as well. What hasn’t changed, however, is that teachers want to see their students excel and succeed. As this survey is shared with policymakers and education reformers, we hope they know that they can move forward with teachers as part of the team.



Association of American Educators
1645 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703)739-2100
www.aaeteachers.org