



Communities In Schools

National Survey of American Teachers by Communities In Schools

Communities In Schools and Public Opinion Strategies completed a national poll of 700 teachers. The poll was done from May 8-12 and has a margin of error of +/- of 3.7%. This poll is among the largest and most in-depth examination of issues facing teachers, from the teacher viewpoint. The key findings demonstrate that poverty and the manifestations of poverty are a critical impediment to education. In addition to the student impact, we have learned that teachers spend considerable amounts of time and personal resources to address these impediments. Teachers are also nearly unanimous in their preferred solution to addressing these challenges: a dedicated person to work with these students and their families.

As with most polls from teachers, they are most concerned about “too much testing,” student apathy and lack of parental engagement. However, when asked to identify and rank problems facing their local schools **88% of teachers say that poverty is a barrier to learning.**

Further supporting this, the other problems identified by teachers as significant are all manifestations of poverty:

- Disruptive behavior (92%);
- chronic absenteeism (89%); and
- poor student health (85%).

This impact of poverty is so great that teachers themselves are overwhelmed helping students addressing non-educational issues.

- 91% of teachers spend their own money on supplies.
- 54% of teachers have used their own money to help feed students.
- 52% of teachers have helped a student and/or their family through a crisis.
- 49% of teachers have helped a student get new clothing or footwear.
- Nearly one-third (29%) of teachers have arranged for a student to receive medical attention.

Most importantly, teachers are spending time to address these needs. When asked what percentage of time do you spend helping students with problems they face at home/outside the classroom, **the average was 20%.**

20% of their time helping students address problems outside the classroom. Fully, one day a week, 4 days a month, or, extrapolated out, roughly 2.5-3 years out of a child’s 12-year career their teacher is spending time on non-educational issues. This is time addressing the needs of a few students at the expense of an entire classroom. This impacts all students.

Yet, teachers also feel strongly about solutions to address these problems.

- 94% favor providing dedicated staff from the local community to work closely with students and families with greatest needs.
- 92% favor organizations/individuals working inside the school to help kids with non-academic needs.

Teachers believe it is:

- Very important (90%)
- and very valuable (93%)

to teachers personally to have people dedicated solely to addressing non-academic barriers to student learning.

Teachers overwhelmingly want trained staff from the local community to bring these services into the school and support these kids, and the teachers.

- Nearly 60% believe dedicated professionals are better than using existing school resources

They believe these issues are best addressed by dedicated professionals from the community. These external professionals are better suited to deliver these supports and services.

Most importantly, of those who have CIS in the district, over 80% of teachers with CIS is believe it very helpful for their district.

Based on a description of CIS, 82% of those teachers who do not have CIS have a favorable impression of the work we do.