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TEACHING FOR TOMORROW

Arkansas Educators



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Executive Summary and Key Findings

Teachers play a central role in engaging students and fostering their confidence in the future. Findings from the Walton Family Foundation and Gallup's research with Gen Z youth nationwide show that students with the most engaging teachers are more likely than students without engaging teachers to be thriving (72% vs. 42%), to agree they have a great future ahead of them (94% vs. 74%) and to feel prepared for the future (83% vs. 42%). Given the crucial role teachers play in supporting students, the Walton Family Foundation partnered with Gallup on a new initiative in 2025 to conduct the Teaching for Tomorrow study, a multiyear study of U.S. elementary, middle and high school teachers. Results from a national survey of over 2,000 teachers, including over 300 from Arkansas, reveal how educators experience their schools as a place to work and identify what they need most to be effective. Findings ultimately spotlight the conditions that most effectively support Arkansas teachers, and teachers nationally, in doing their best work and fulfilling their core mission: preparing the next generation for successful lives and careers.

Key findings from the *Teaching for Tomorrow: Arkansas Educators* report include:

01.

About **three-quarters** of Arkansas teachers (76%) are **satisfied** with their **school as a place to work**, higher than the national average of 69%.

02.

Teachers with the **ability to do what they do best** are **three times as likely** to be **satisfied with their job**. **Forty-one percent** of Arkansas teachers **strongly agree** they can **do what they do best at work**, more than the national average of 34%.

03.

Nationwide, teachers who have the **materials and equipment** they need are **significantly more likely** to be able to **leverage their strengths** and say they **have opportunities to do what they do best** (88% vs. 48%). While **78%** of Arkansas teachers **agree** they have the **materials they need to do their job right**, more than one in five do not.

04.

People resources — teaching assistants, special education teachers, tutors and others — are among the types of resources that Arkansas teachers, and teachers nationwide, report **they are most lacking**. Roughly **six in 10** Arkansas teachers **do not have enough** of these staff members.

05.

About **one in five** Arkansas teachers rate their **curricular materials**, including district-provided materials, assessments or teacher guides, as **low quality** (a range of 16% to 25%, depending on the type of material).

06.

Arkansas teachers **outpace** the national average in **use of AI tools** (71% vs. 60%) but are **similar** to teachers nationally when it comes to **how many are using the tools at least weekly** (36% vs. 32%). Teachers who use AI tools at least weekly **save** about **six hours per week**.

Detailed Findings

About three-quarters of Arkansas teachers are satisfied with their school as a place to work.

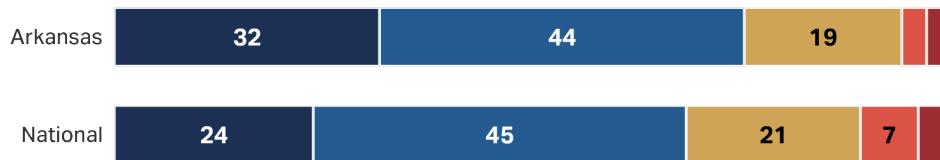
Seventy-six percent of Arkansas teachers are extremely or somewhat satisfied with their school as a place to work, above the national average of 69%. Compared to the national average, Arkansas teachers are also more likely to give the highest rating and say they are extremely satisfied with their workplace (32% vs. 24%).

CHART 1

Arkansas Teachers' Job Satisfaction vs. National Average

How satisfied are you with your place of employment as a place to work?

■ % 5 Extremely satisfied ■ % 4 ■ % 3 ■ % 2 ■ % 1 Extremely dissatisfied



Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ±1.

Elementary teachers in Arkansas are especially likely to be satisfied with their workplace compared to teachers of other grade levels — a trend not observed among elementary teachers at the national level. Elementary teachers are an important driver of Arkansas teachers' overall rate of satisfaction, as well as other positive workplace ratings.

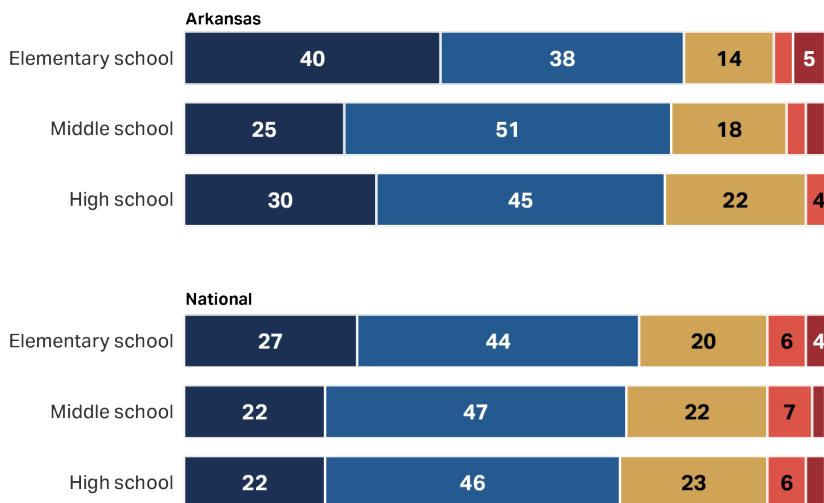


CHART 2

Arkansas Elementary Teachers Especially Likely to Be Extremely Satisfied With Their Workplace

How satisfied are you with your place of employment as a place to work?

■ % 5 Extremely satisfied ■ % 4 ■ % 3 ■ % 2 ■ % 1 Extremely dissatisfied



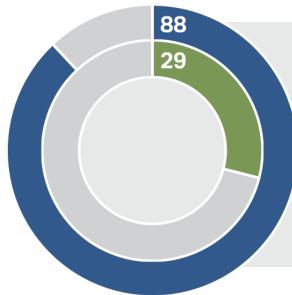
Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ± 1 .

Arkansas teachers with the opportunity to do what they do best are three times as likely to be satisfied with their school as a place to work compared to those who do not have the opportunity to do what they do best.

National findings highlight three important areas of teachers' workplace experiences that drive their overall workplace satisfaction:

- 1 the extent to which teachers have opportunities to do what they do best every day
- 2 satisfaction or dissatisfaction with workload
- 3 satisfaction or dissatisfaction with level of pay

These same drivers are important to Arkansas teachers' satisfaction at work.



Almost nine in 10 Arkansas teachers (88%) **who have the opportunity to do what they do best every day** are satisfied with their workplace, compared to **just 29% of teachers** who **do not have that opportunity**.

CHART 3

Opportunity to Do What They Do Best, Workload and Pay Drive Job Satisfaction

% Extremely satisfied + somewhat satisfied

How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your job? Your pay



How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your job? Your workload



At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.



Note: Among Arkansas teachers. Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Similar patterns are observed in teachers nationwide.

On two of these important drivers — pay and workload — Arkansas teachers report a similar level of satisfaction as their peers nationwide. However, when it comes to the opportunity to do what they do best, Arkansas teachers are more likely to strongly agree they have opportunities to do what they do best every day than teachers nationally (41% vs. 34%).

CHART 4

Arkansas Teachers' Opportunity to Do Best vs. National Average

At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

■ % 5 Strongly agree ■ % 4 ■ % 3 ■ % 2 ■ % 1 Strongly disagree



Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ±1.

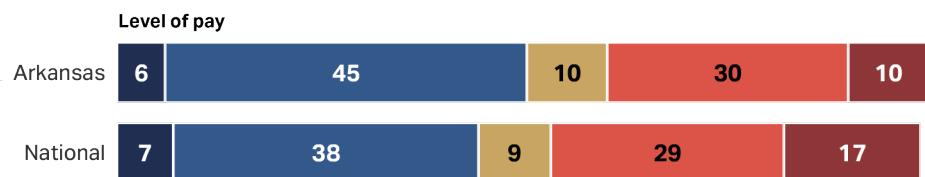
Arkansas teachers experienced a change in pay structure beginning in the 2023-2024 school year through the LEARNS Act, which was created to help balance the pay gap between rural and urban districts and remedy Arkansas' position at the time as one of the lowest-paying states for teachers. Additional updates to teachers' pay structure have been implemented since the act was first introduced.¹ In 2025, Arkansas teachers report similar satisfaction with their pay and workload as the nationwide averages.

CHART 5

Arkansas Teachers' Workload and Pay Satisfaction vs. National Averages

How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your job? Level of pay

■ % Extremely satisfied ■ % Somewhat satisfied ■ % Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
■ % Somewhat dissatisfied ■ % Extremely dissatisfied



Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ±1.

1 Arkansas Department of Education. (2024). Arkansas LEARNS. <https://learns.ade.arkansas.gov/>

Sufficient materials and equipment can remove barriers for teachers to do what they do best.

Early research from the national Teaching for Tomorrow study shows that the quality and availability of teachers' materials and equipment can support their ability to do what they do best every day. The same is true in Arkansas, where teachers who have the materials they need to do their work right are 40 percentage points more likely to say they have the opportunity to do what they do best than those who don't (88% vs. 48%).

CHART 6

Arkansas Teachers With Access to Materials More Likely to Be Able to Do Best

At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

% Strongly agree or agree

Teacher strongly agrees or agrees they have the materials and equipment they need to do their work right

88

Teacher is neutral, disagrees or strongly disagrees they have the materials and equipment they need to do their work right

48

Note: Among Arkansas teachers. Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. A similar pattern is observed in teachers nationwide.



While a majority of teachers agree or strongly agree that they have the materials they need to do their job (78%), the rest — more than one in five — do not agree they have the necessary materials. Nineteen percent of Arkansas teachers are neutral, while 3% strongly disagree or disagree they have the materials they need. The results are similar among Arkansas schools of varying rates of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

CHART 7

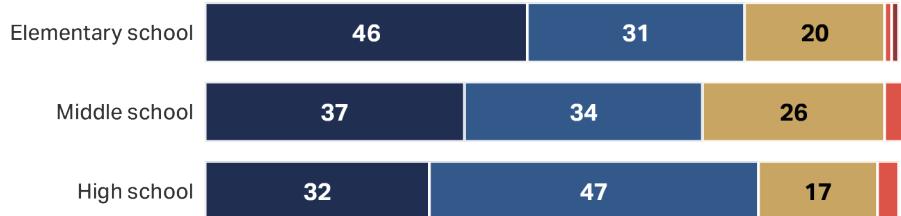
Arkansas Teachers' Access to Materials and Equipment Needed for Their Work

I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

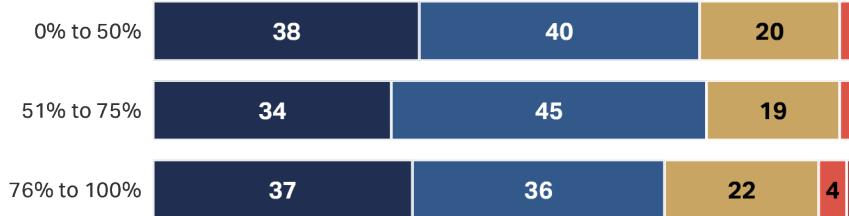
■ % 5 Strongly agree ■ % 4 ■ % 3 ■ % 2 ■ % 1 Strongly disagree



Grade level



Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch



Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ±1.

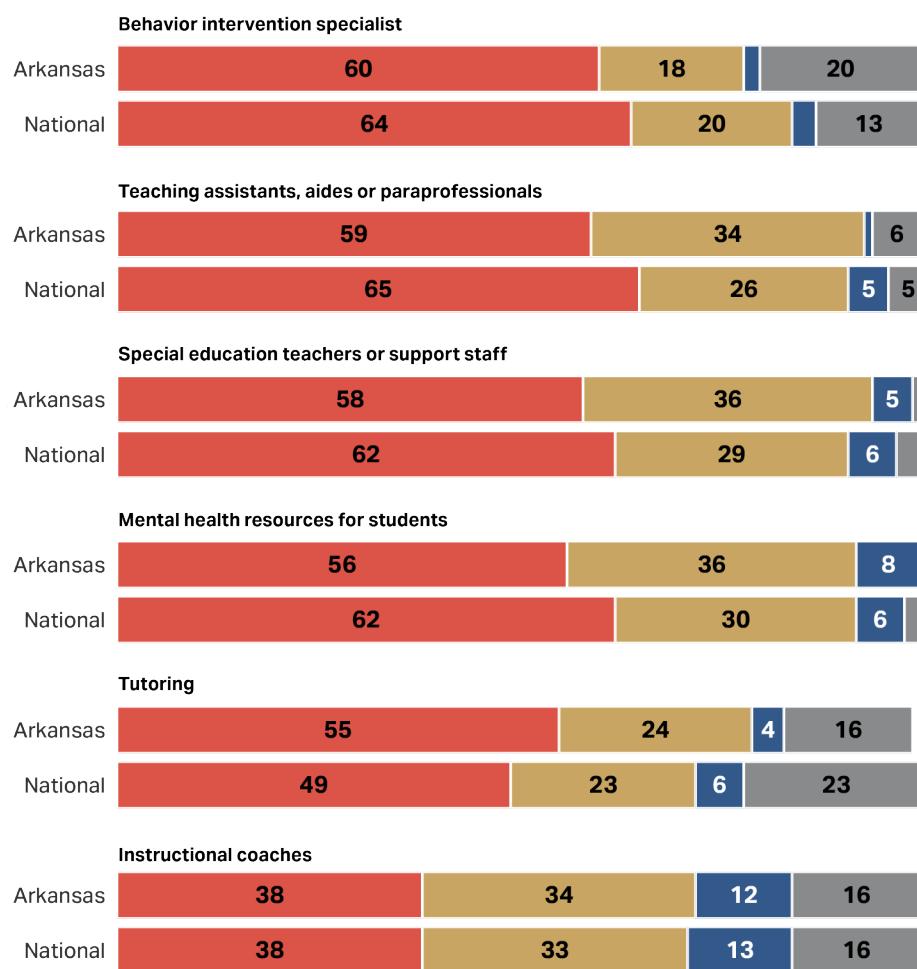
To better understand what types of materials and equipment are needed, teachers were asked to share whether they have enough of a variety of resources ranging from physical materials to staff support. People resources are among the types of resources that Arkansas teachers — and teachers nationwide — report they are most lacking. At the top of this list are behavior intervention specialists (60% of Arkansas teachers say they do not have enough), teaching assistants (59%) and special education teachers (58%).

CHART 8

Extent to Which Arkansas Teachers Have Enough People Resources vs. National Averages

Do you have more than enough, the right amount or not enough _____?

■ % Not enough ■ % The right amount ■ % More than enough ■ % Not applicable to my role/classroom



Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ±1.

Roughly one in five Arkansas teachers rate their curricular materials as low quality.

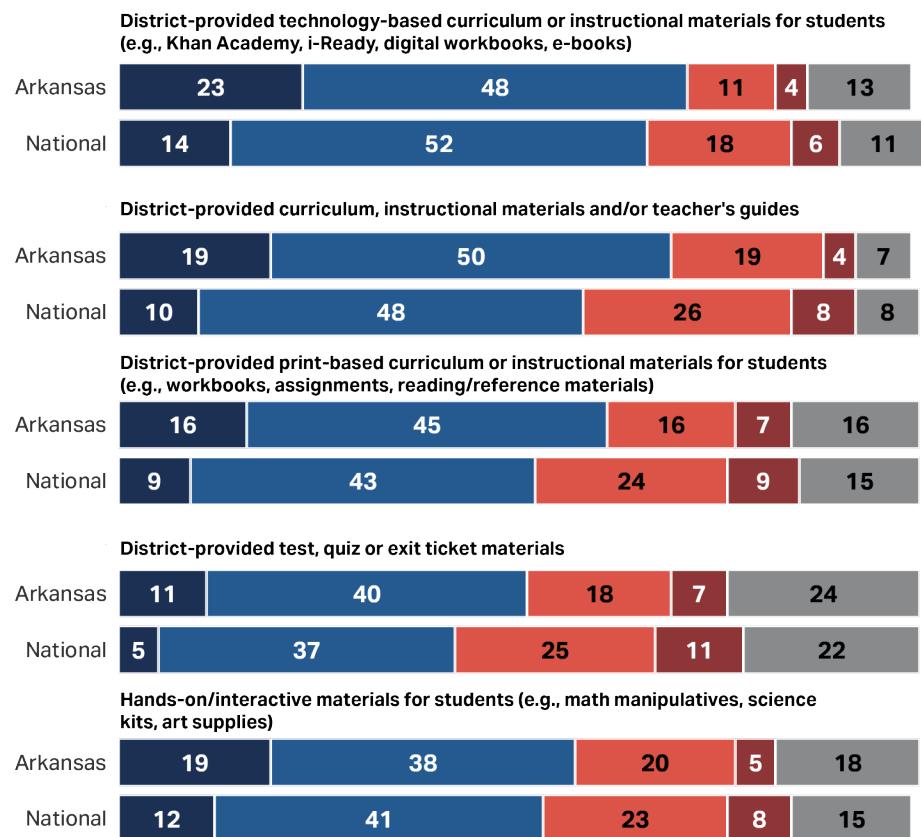
Between 16% and 25% of Arkansas teachers say their test and quiz materials, print-based curriculum, instructional materials and teacher guides, technology-based curriculum, and hands-on materials are very or somewhat low quality. Across all types of curricular materials, Arkansas' rate of low-quality materials falls below the national average, as teachers nationwide rate 23% to 36% of their curricular materials as low quality, depending on type. For example, 23% of Arkansas teachers rate their district-provided curriculum as very or somewhat low quality, compared to 34% of teachers nationally.

CHART 9

Arkansas Teachers' Quality Ratings of Their Curricular Materials vs. National Averages

How would you rate the quality of your ____?

- % Very high quality ■ % Somewhat high quality ■ % Somewhat low quality
- % Very low quality ■ % Not applicable to my role/classroom



Note: Data collected April 17 to May 19, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% ±1.

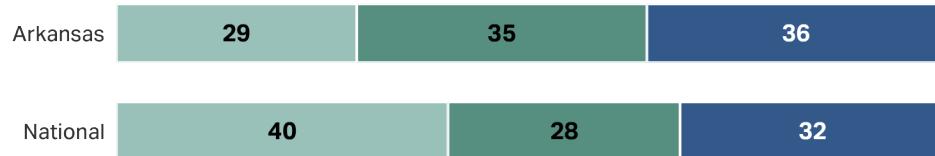
Seven in 10 Arkansas teachers used AI tools in the 2024-2025 school year.

Arkansas teachers face many of the same challenges as teachers nationwide and are similarly turning to artificial intelligence (AI) to save time and access new tools. Statewide, Arkansas teachers are more likely than their peers elsewhere in the country to have used AI in their work as a teacher. About seven in 10 teachers in Arkansas (71%) say they've used AI tools in the 2024-2025 school year, compared to the national average of 60%. Thirty-six percent of Arkansas teachers use those tools at least weekly, similar to the national average of 32%.

CHART 10

Teachers' Use of AI Tools in Arkansas vs. National Average

■ % Teacher does not use AI ■ % Teacher uses AI, but infrequently (monthly or less)
■ % Teacher uses AI for one or more tasks at least weekly



Note: Data collected March 18 to April 11, 2025. Data labels 3% or less are not displayed. Due to rounding, percentages may sum to 100% w±1.



Arkansas teachers most often use AI tools while preparing to teach, with one in four doing so at least weekly.

Arkansas teachers most often use AI tools in lesson preparation, including preparing to teach (25% use it weekly or daily), making worksheets (23%), modifying materials to meet student needs (19%) and making assessments (15%). Teachers' use of AI tools is similar between Arkansas teachers and their nationwide peers, with one exception: Teachers in Arkansas are more likely to use AI tools at least weekly for making worksheets and assignments, compared to the national average (23% vs. 15%).

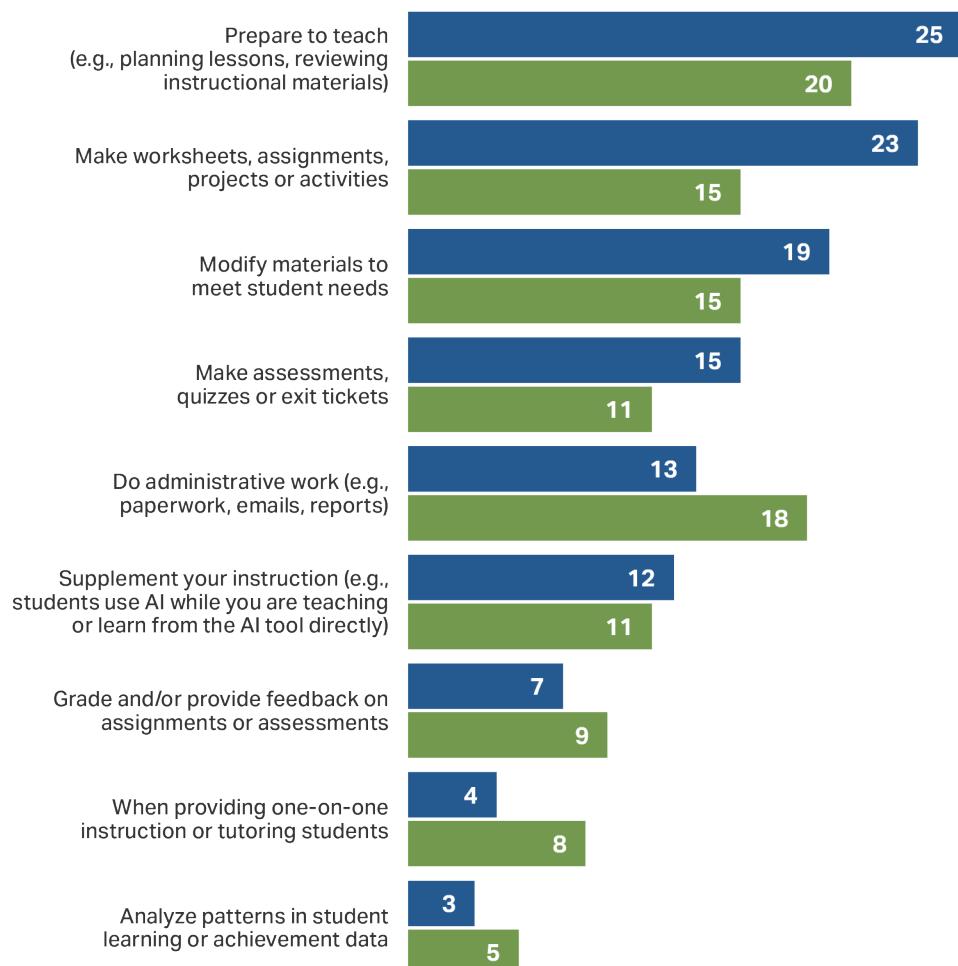
CHART 11

Arkansas Teachers' Application of AI Tools vs. National Averages

How often do you use AI tools to ____?

% Daily or weekly

■ Arkansas ■ National



Note: Data collected March 18 to April 11, 2025.

Nationwide, teachers who use AI at least weekly save about six hours per week, on average, to reinvest in other areas.

Arkansas teachers who use AI tools at least weekly save six hours per week on average, similar to the national rate of 5.9 hours per week among weekly users. Qualitative data from the survey show that teachers — both in Arkansas and nationally — often reinvest the time they save into their classroom. Arkansas teachers described using their newfound time to individualize the curriculum, give more meaningful feedback to students, spend more one-on-one time with students who need it or avoid evening work hours.

“

Arkansas teachers on how they reinvest time saved with AI tools:

“I get to spend more time assessing student learning trends overall so that I can make informed decisions about how I can intervene to support students.”

“I’ve [been able to implement] daily intervention time for at-risk students, as well as enrichment time every day for all students.”

“I spend the extra time on more meaningful feedback for my students. It also allows me to get my work done during my contracted time, so I am not having to stay late after work.”



Methods

Results are based on two web surveys of K-12 public school teachers conducted March 18 to April 11, 2025, and April 17 to May 19, 2025. Teachers were recruited from the RAND American Teacher Panel, a nationally representative, probability-based panel of U.S. public school teachers. More information about the RAND American Teacher Panel is available [here](#).

The final samples were weighted to match the school- and teacher-level demographics of K-12 public school teachers in the U.S. and in Arkansas, including school level, student poverty, student race and Hispanic ethnicity, school size, school urbanicity, teacher gender, teacher race and Hispanic ethnicity, and teacher years of experience. Targets for these characteristics were retrieved from the National Center for Education Statistics. Teacher-level characteristics were based on the 2020-2021 National Teacher and Principal Survey, while school-level characteristics were based on the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 Common Core of Data.

National Sample

For national results based on the survey conducted March 18 to April 11, 2025, with 2,232 U.S. teachers, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For results based on the survey conducted April 17 to May 19, 2025, with 2,167 U.S. teachers, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Arkansas Sample

For Arkansas results based on the survey conducted March 18 to April 11, 2025, with 333 teachers in the state of Arkansas, the margin of sampling error is ± 6.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. For results based on the survey conducted April 17 to May 19, 2025, with 414 teachers in the state of Arkansas, the margin of sampling error is ± 5.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Margins of error for subgroups are higher. All reported margins of sampling error include computed design effects for weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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