We Asked, You Answered

ARE STUDENTS TESTED too much? Are discipline policies consistently implemented? Is No Child Left Behind helping schools improve? These are key questions—and no one can provide more expert answers than teachers. So the AFT has been asking representative samples of its K-12th-grade teachers about these and other important issues for many years. Here we bring you some highlights. Unless otherwise noted, the findings are from early 2008, our most recent survey.

The results confirm that teachers are fed up with too much testing and the effects of No Child Left Behind (NCLB): 71 percent said students in their school are tested too frequently, and 64 percent said NCLB has had a negative effect on public education. Yet there is some good news: the majority of teachers surveyed are satisfied with a couple key aspects of their profession. More than 80 percent reported they were very/fairly satisfied with the quality of teaching in their school. And 71 percent felt very/fairly satisfied with opportunities to update their knowledge of the subject areas they teach and improve their teaching skills. See the charts (below and right) for more noteworthy results.

In Too Many Schools, Discipline Policies Are Not Consistently Enforced

Which one of the following statements best describes your school’s current student discipline policy?

- My school has a clearly stated discipline policy, and it is consistently enforced: 43%
- My school has a clearly stated discipline policy, but it is not consistently enforced: 46%
- My school does not have a clearly stated discipline policy: 9%
- Not sure: 2%

Teachers Are Satisfied with the Quality of Teaching in Their School, but Not with the Level of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of teaching</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the principal</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to update subject knowledge/improve teaching skills</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect from parents</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher salaries/benefits</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher input in academic/professional decision-making</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline/behavior</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough time to meet all professional responsibilities</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of stress for teachers</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers Prefer to Be Evaluated by Qualified Peers

Which one of the following do you think is the best way to evaluate which teachers are doing a good job and which ones are not?

- Evaluations by qualified teachers: 62%
- Evaluations by school administrators: 27%
- Student achievement as measured by test scores: 4%
- Parent satisfaction: 2%

Not sure: 5%
NCLB: Not for the Better

- NCLB has had a positive effect on public education:
  - 2003: 10%
  - 2008: 22%
- NCLB has had a neutral effect on public education:
  - 2003: 26%
  - 2008: 21%
- NCLB has had a negative effect on public education:
  - 2003: 39%
  - 2008: 64%
- Don’t know/not sure:
  - 2003: 13%
  - 2008: 5%

There’s Too Much Testing and Too Much Test Prep

- Students in my school are being tested too frequently:
  - 1999: 39%
  - 2002: 56%
  - 2007: 69%
- The school system puts too much emphasis on preparing students for state accountability tests:
  - 1999: 47%
  - 2002: 60%
  - 2007: 71%

Too Many Standards-Based Tests Are Not at the Right Level

- Too low a level:
  - 1999: 7%
  - 2002: 11%
  - 2008: 23%
- Too high a level:
  - 1999: 45%
  - 2002: 33%
  - 2008: 49%
- The right level:
  - 1999: 49%
  - 2002: 44%
  - 2008: 44%
- Does not apply:
  - 1999: 4%
  - 2002: 4%
  - 2008: 5%
- Not sure:
  - 1999: 11%
  - 2002: 12%
  - 2008: 8%

Professionalism and Quality Teaching Should Be Top Union Priorities

In general, when your union deals with issues that affect both teaching quality and teachers’ rights, which should be the higher priority?

- Working for professional standards and good teaching: 66%
- Defending teachers’ job rights: 22%
- Neither/not sure: 3%
- Both equally: 9%

Who should have the main responsibility for working to ensure quality teaching in your district?

- Teacher union: 83%
- Administration: 15%
- Both equally: 2%