

2018 Educators' Survey: Shining the Light

Identifying the Educators

Useful Tools

Attitudes toward Education and Support from the Community

A Focus on Character

How Do They Do It

2018 Survey Results: Identifying the Educators

thedockforlearning.org/contributions/2018-survey-results-who-are-the-respondents/

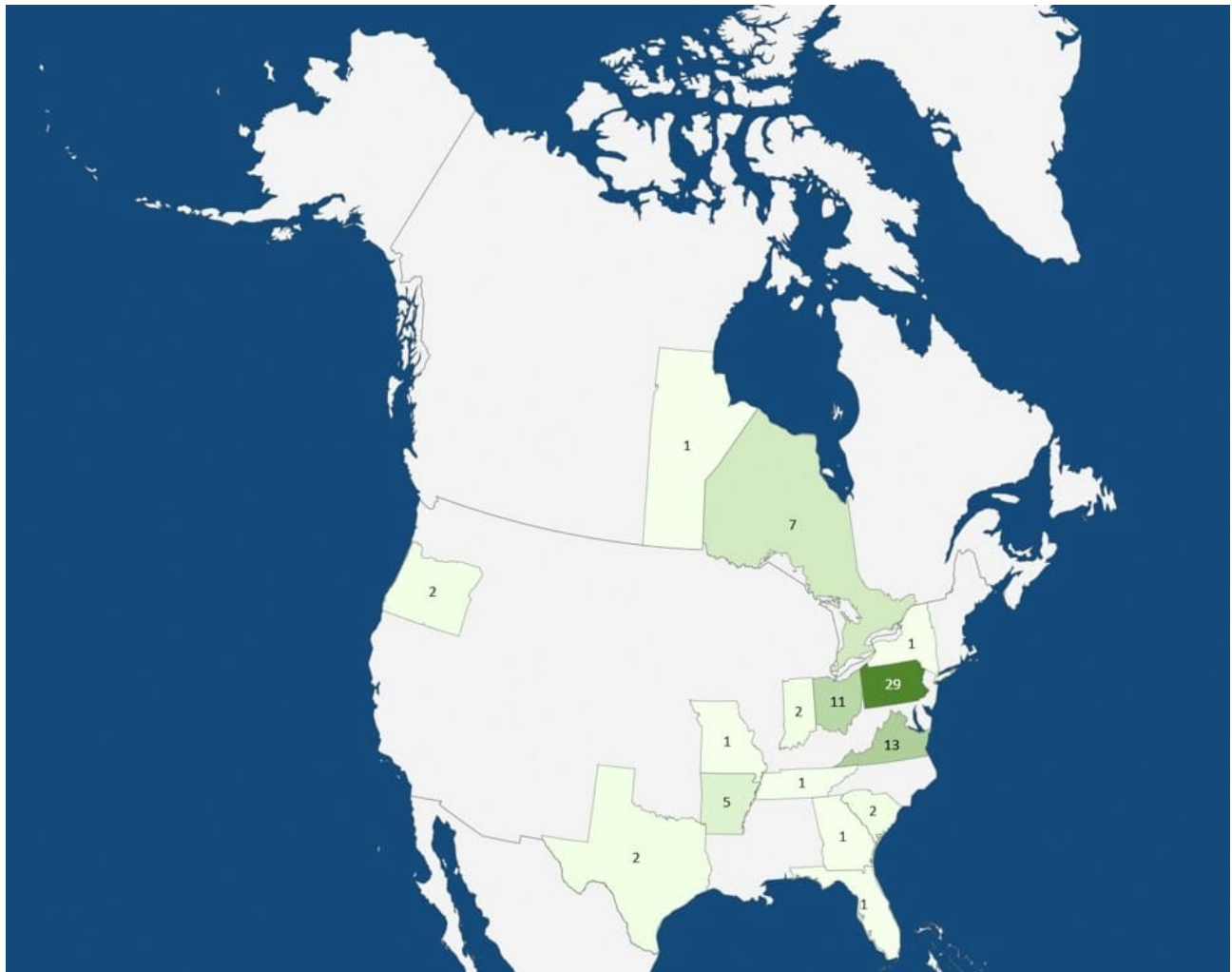
December 5, 2018 by The Dock Administrator 2 Comments

December 5, 2018

For three weeks in November, we asked conservative Anabaptist educators to tell us about their work at school. In this post, we begin sharing the results. As you read, remember: this survey was conducted online and does not represent a scientific sampling of educators in the conservative Anabaptist community. The results should not be taken as accurate representations of the situation in most schools. Instead, we offer these insights to prompt your reflections and encourage your own work in education.

Who are the respondents?

85 people filled out the survey. Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Ohio were particularly well-represented, which seems to reflect the higher number of conservative Anabaptist schools in those states.



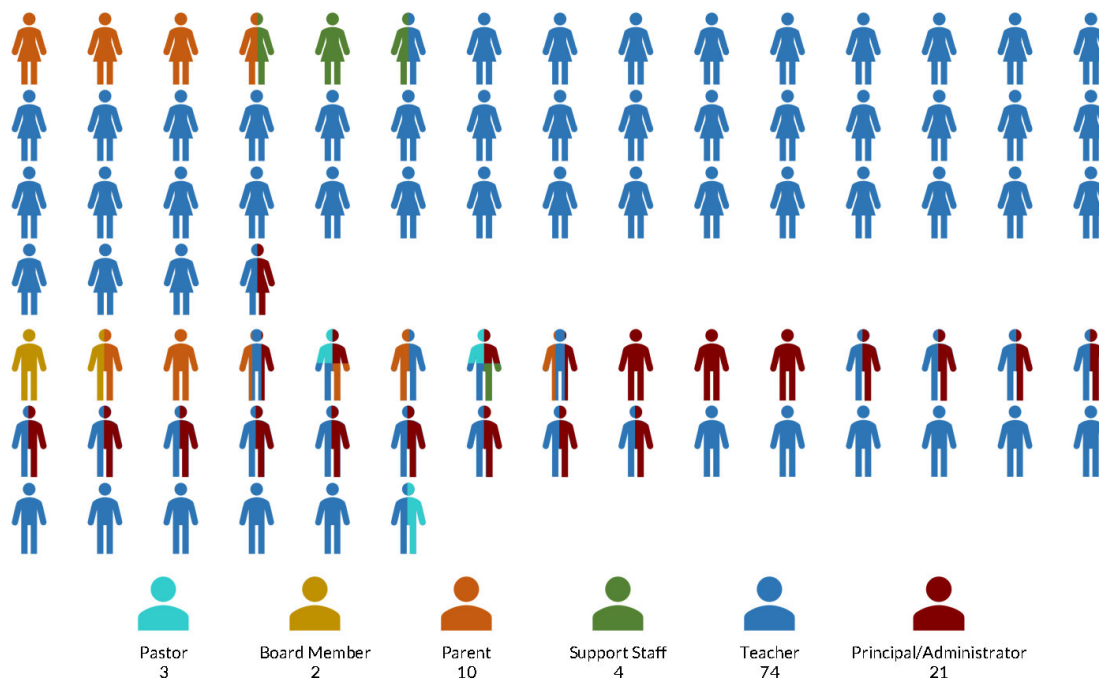
Map data from Bing.

Not shown:

- Thailand: 1
- Belize: 1

Role in School

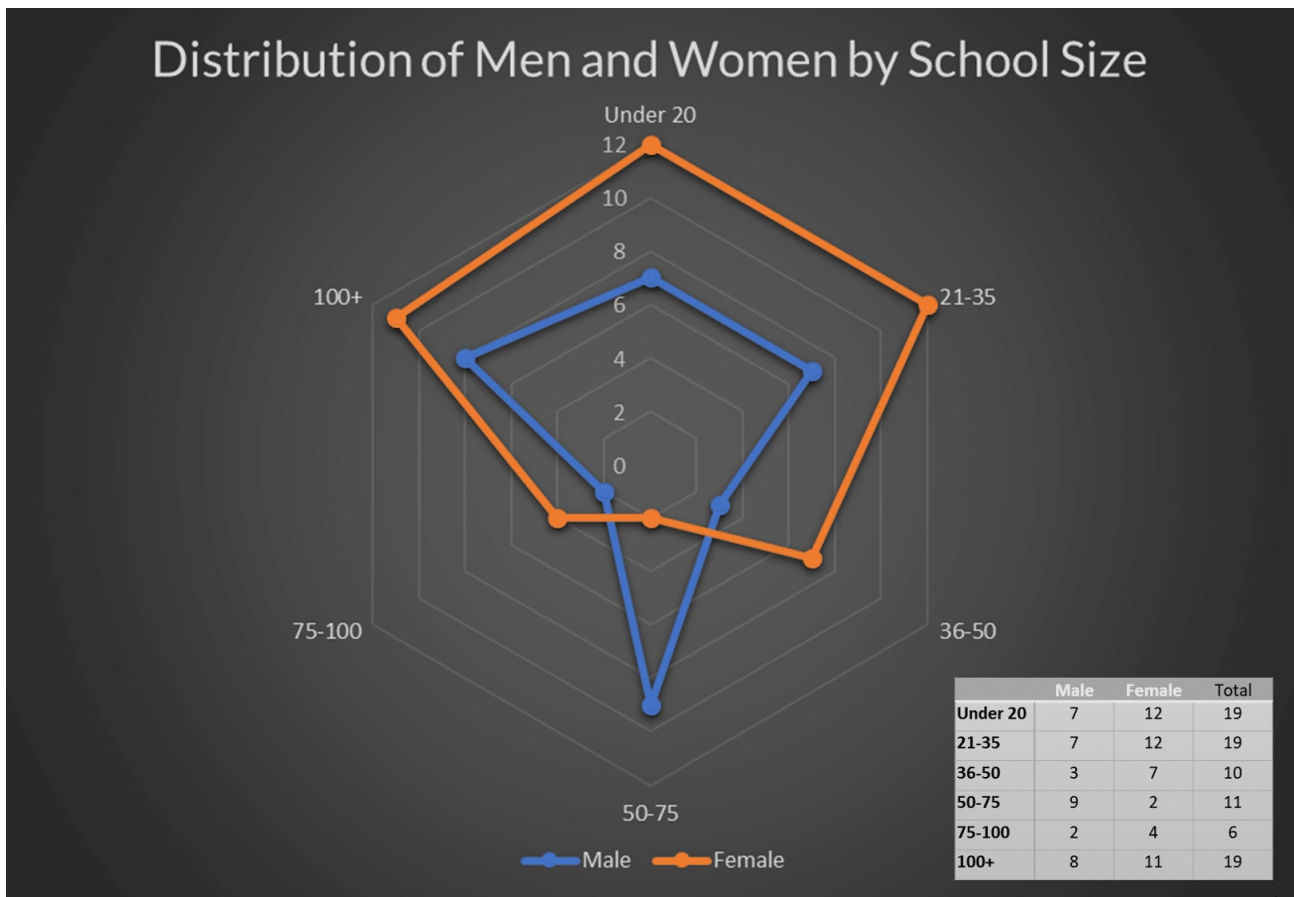
Forty-nine women and thirty-six men responded. While men are more likely to be administrators, women staff the majority of teaching positions.



Since many respondents fill several roles, the total of the above numbers is more than the total number of respondents.

School Size and Gender

The majority of respondents work with schools that have fewer than 35 students, or more than 100. Interestingly, men outnumbered women in one category: schools with 50-75 students.



Not all respondents answered the school size question. In addition, note that larger schools might be expected to provide more respondents.

School Resources

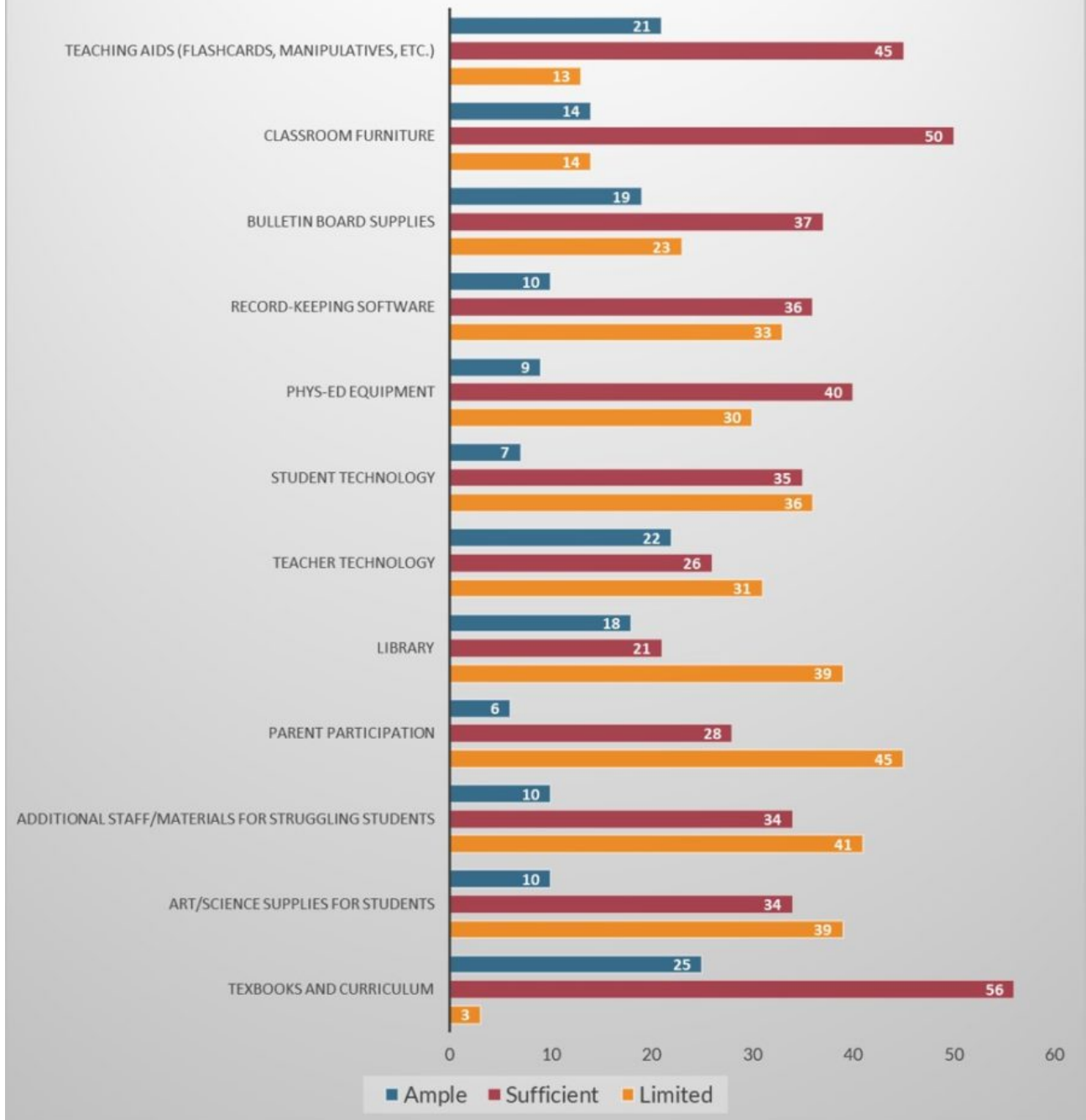
Respondents were asked to rank their school's resources in twelve categories. In general, majorities of the respondents felt that their schools provide ample or sufficient resources in most categories.

Notice that parent participation received the largest number of "limited" responses. Textbooks and curriculum received the largest number of "ample" ratings.

We divided responses by number of students in the school, which revealed some interesting variations. Educators at small schools were more likely to feel that they had limited resources. Educators at every size school felt the need for more parent participation.

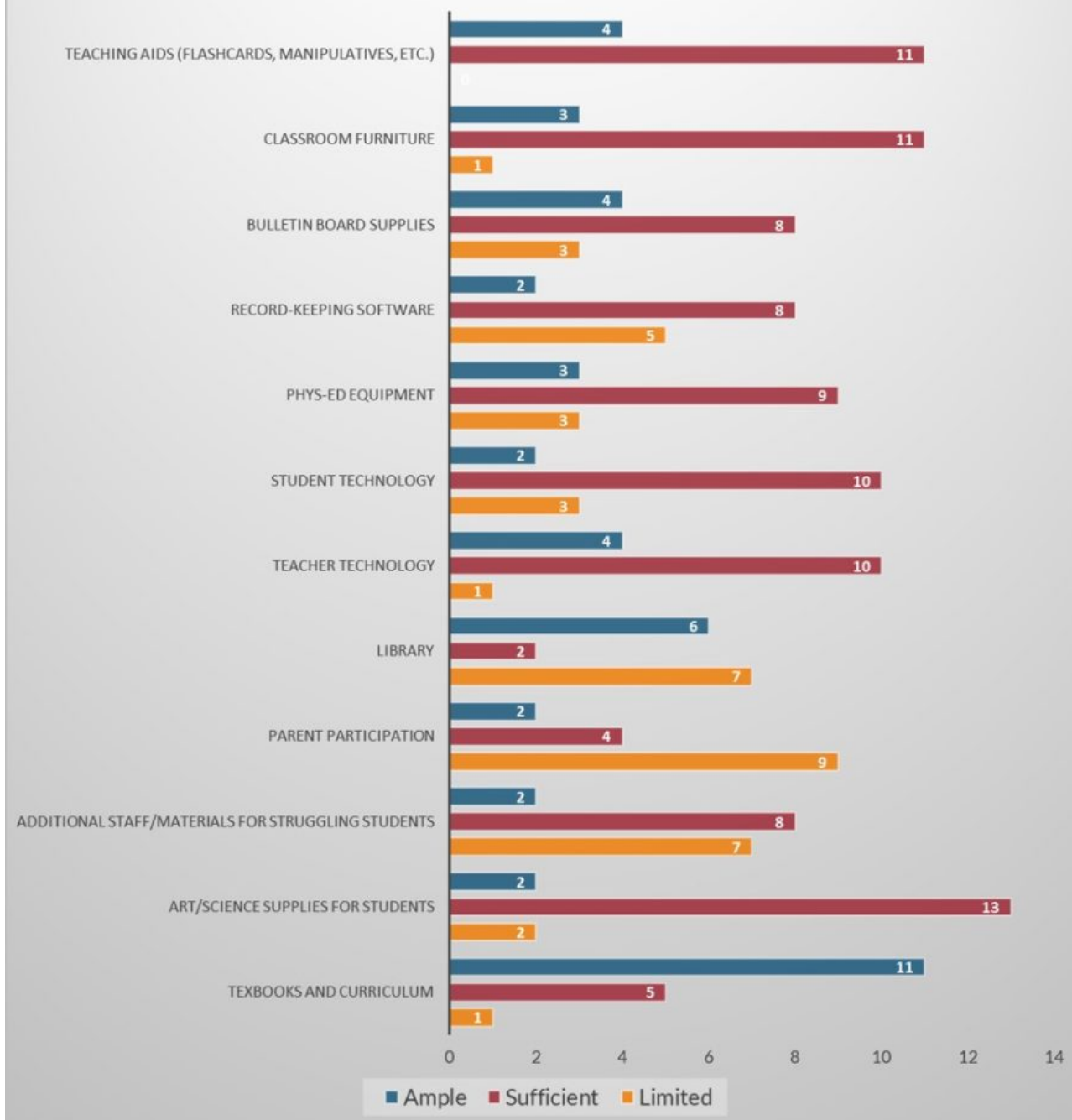
How would you describe your school's resources?

All Schools



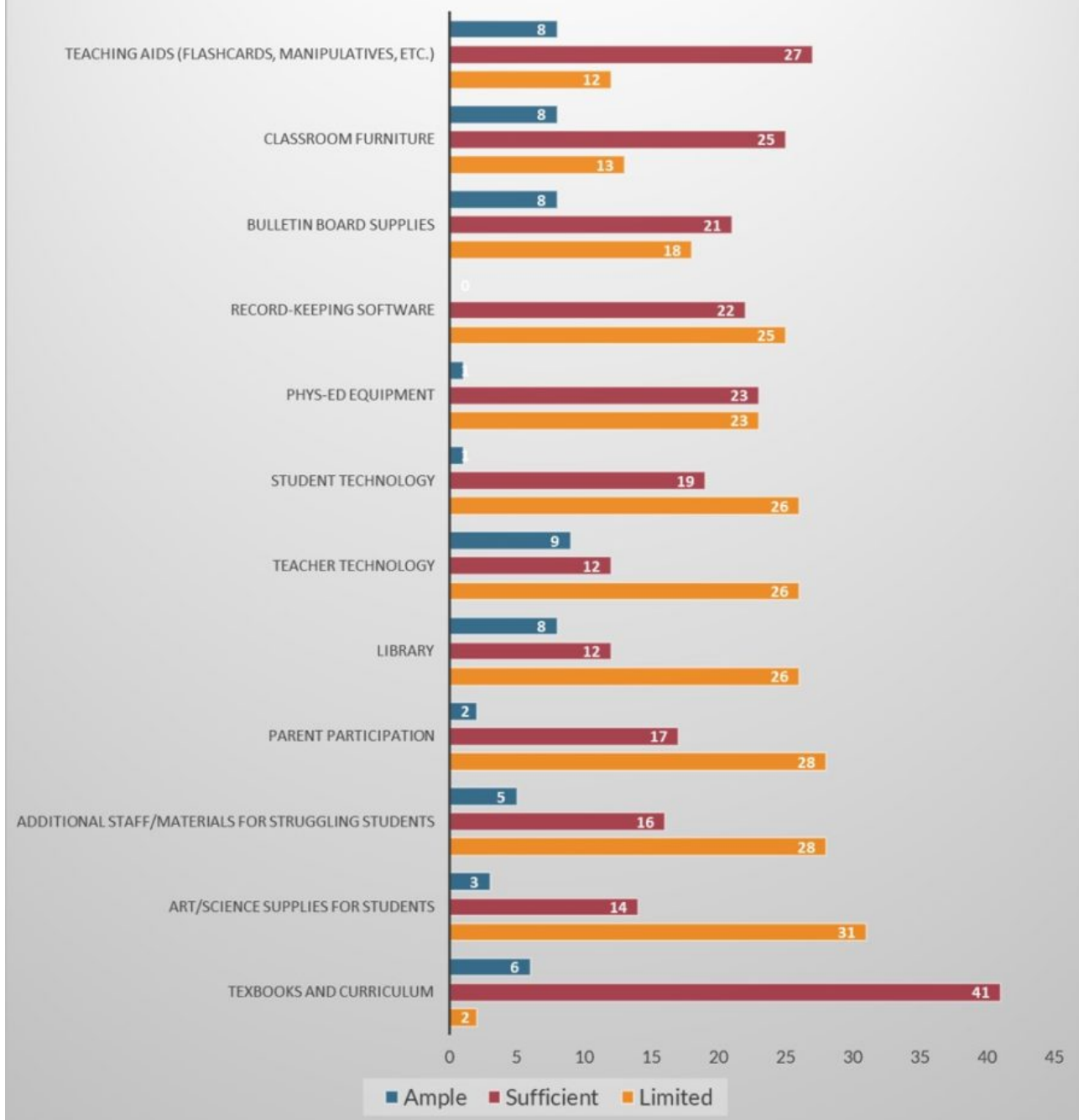
Small Schools

How would you describe your school's resources? 50-100 Students



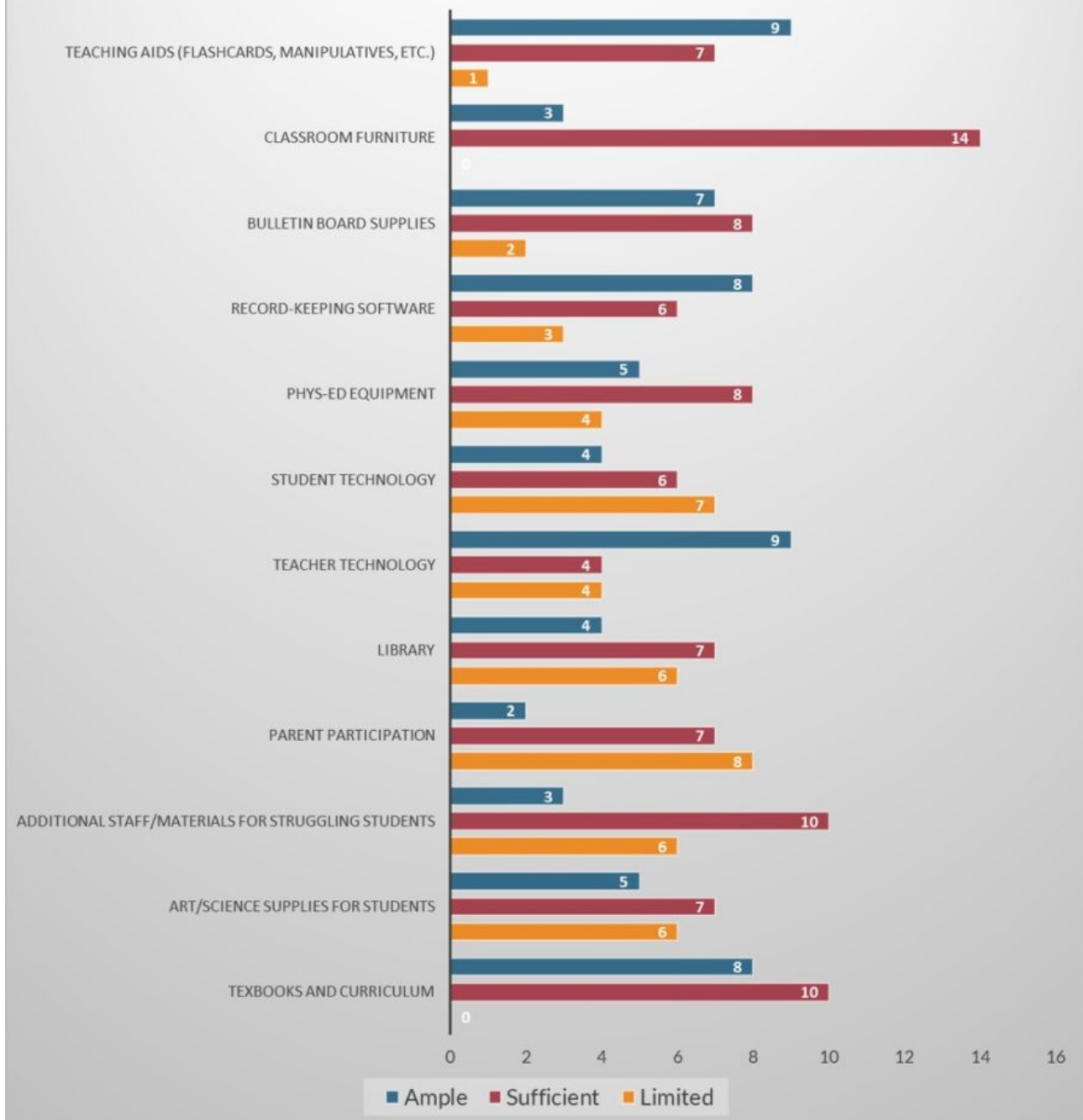
Small Schools

How would you describe your school's resources? Under 50 Students



Small Schools

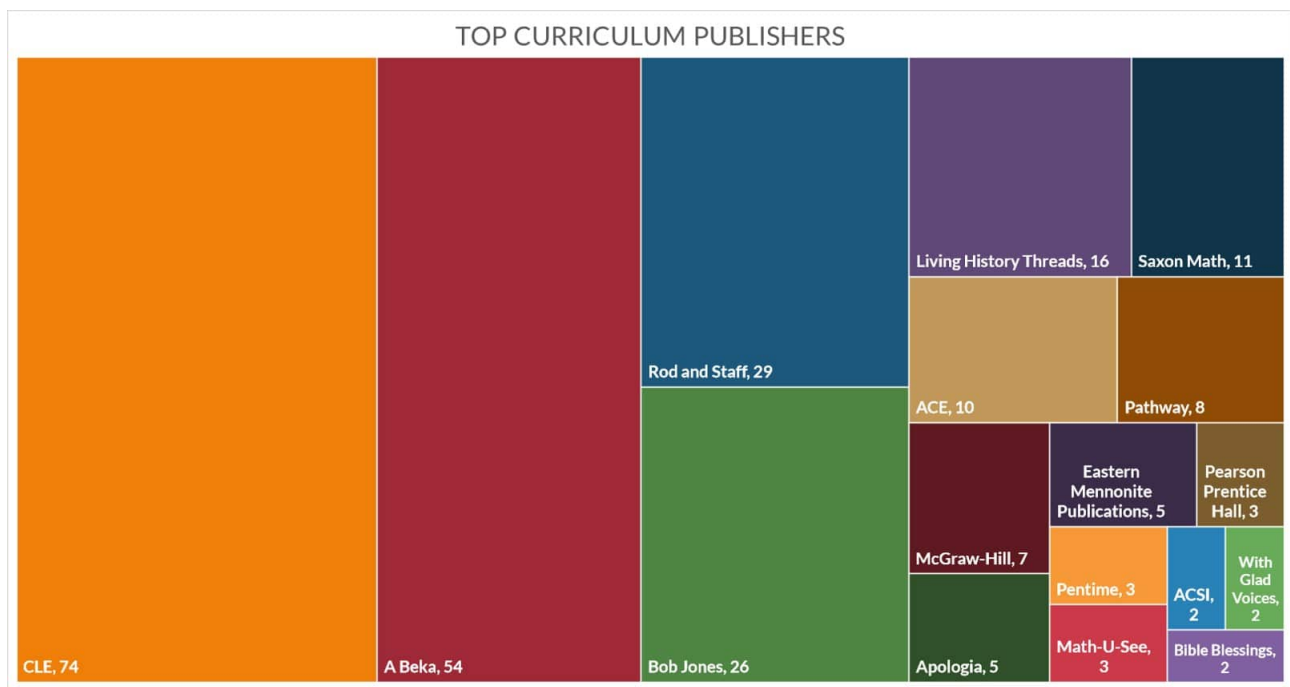
How would you describe your school's resources? More than 100 Students



Common Curricula

Educators who responded to this survey selected the curriculum their school uses, and filled in additional titles not listed in the survey.

Schools represented here show a strong preference for Christian curriculum, particularly from Anabaptist publishers. In addition to the main publishers in these groups, schools supplement with a variety of curricula from secular and homeschool publishers.



Other titles that received one mention each: AOP, ARTiculations, BCE, Betty Lukens, CoppClark Demme Foundational Foundational Math Geraldine Koehn's music books Globe Book Co., Grace Press, Hake Publishers, IEW, Journeys with God, local, Memoria, Moyer Music, Positive Action Bible Curriculum, Purposeful Design, School Aid, Social Studies Alive!, stuff teachers make up, Teaching Textbooks, Wordly Wise, WWPPS, Zaner-Bloser, and "a few others not on this list."

2018 Survey Results: Useful Tools

thedockforlearning.org/contributions/2018-survey-results-useful-tools/

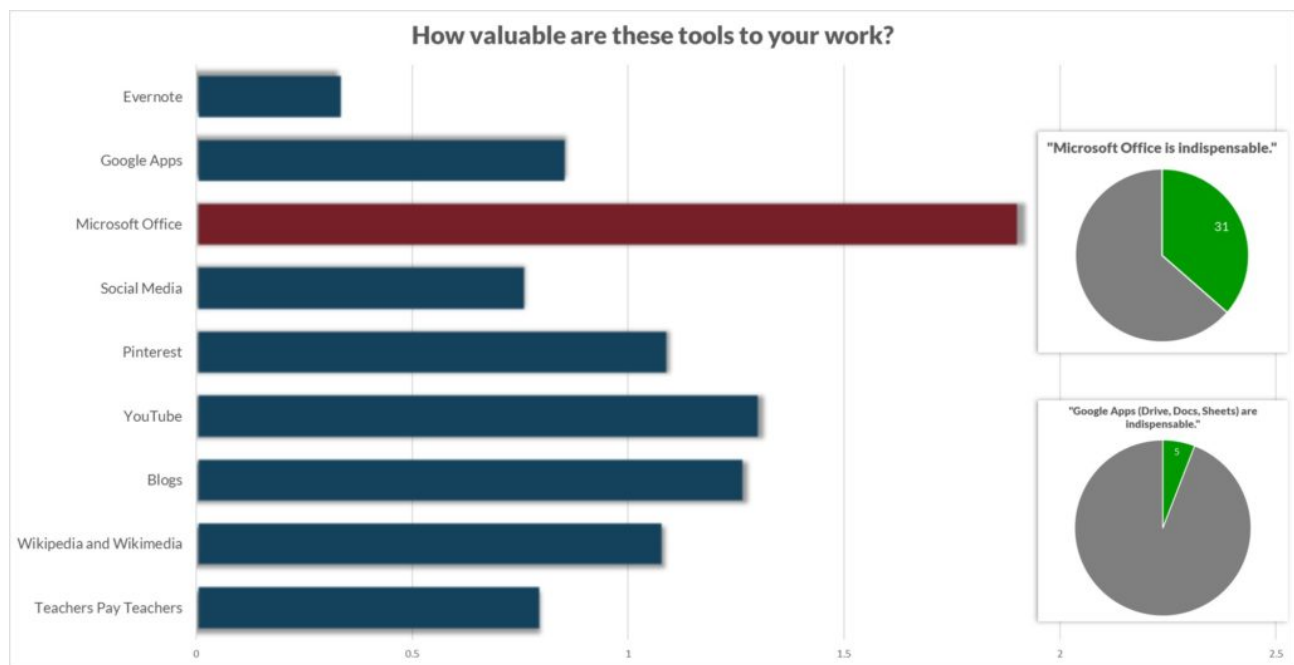
December 14, 2018 by Lucas Hilty [Leave a Comment](#)

December 14, 2018

In this post, we continue digesting the input from the 85 Anabaptist educators who filled out our survey. For Part 1 of the results, which includes demographic profiles of respondents and the types of curricula and resources their schools make available, [go here](#).

How valuable are these tools to you?

We asked respondents to rate the value of a number of digital tools in their educational work. They could choose from “Don’t use,” “Helps a little,” “Very useful,” and “Indispensable.” In the chart below, we have converted these responses to numbers 0-3 and taken the average ranking for each tool. The chart represents the overall likelihood that a respondent finds a tool valuable.



The pie charts (inset) show a slightly different metric: which respondents felt that a technology was crucial. Here, Office is even stronger. Google's free suite of apps has not convinced schools to move away from Microsoft's desktop programs. Microsoft's generous offers for schools no doubt helps.

Perhaps surprisingly, these educators valued blogs more than Pinterest. Perhaps this reflects the fact that the survey was conducted on The Dock, not Pinterest, so our audience was skewed.

What other resources can you recommend?

This question was wide open, and the responses were fascinating. Educators named or described 87 different resources. Many items were nominated by more than one respondent. These are indicated with a number in parentheses.

The results below are not sorted by school subject, but they are categorized by the type of resource. Educators recommended an inspiring number of books and a surprising number of websites and apps. Several respondents noted the value of interacting with other educators, both formally and informally.

Click on a category to view its resources.

Websites and Apps

- artprojectsforkids.org
- basketballforcoaches.com
- cK-12.org
- deepspaceparkle.com for art lesson ideas
- Desmos.com
- d-maps.com
- Duolingo
- FileFolderFun.com
- GAMEO.org
- desmos.com
- math-aids.com
- mathisfun.com
- memrise.com
- plickers.com
- purplemath.com
- Quizlet (4)
- remind.com
- Settera
- shopbottools.com/mSupport/forteachers.htm
- slideplayer.com
- Splash Math
- stackexchange.com
- study.com
- supercoloring.com
- teach4theheart.com
- The Dock (5)
- thecornerstoneforteachers.com
- themathworksheetsite.com
- Things app
- Wolfram Alpha
- xtramath.com (3)

Books

- *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History* by Curtis, Lang, and Petersen
- *Charolotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola
- *The First Days of School* (5)
- *Handbook for Creative Teaching* (2)
- *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer J. Adler
- *How to Read Better and Faster* by Norman Lewis
- *The Insanity of God* by Nik Ripken
- *Invitation to Science Inquiry* by Tik Liem
- *Leadership and Self-deception* by Arbinger Institute
- *Molder of Dreams* by Guy Doud
- *Number Talks* by Sherry Parrish
- *Overcoming Dyslexia*
- *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey
- *The Seven Laws of Teaching* by John Milton Gregory
- *The Seven Laws of the Learner* (3)
- *The Story of Christianity* by Collins and Price
- *The Story of Christianity* by Hart
- *The Thread that Runs So True* by Jesse Stuart
- *Teach Like a Champion* (2) [One respondent wrote, "Read it in chunks throughout the school year and look for opportunities to apply techniques. Be accountable to fellow staff members."]
- *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire* by Rafe Esquith
- *Teacher 50* by Baruti Kafele
- *Teaching to Change Lives* (2)
- *Ten P's in a Pod* by Arnold Pent III
- *With All Due Respect* (2)
- the many books Faith Builders uses as resources
- thick, serious, printed nonfiction books of all kinds

Training

- CLE Workshops (2)
- Faith Builders
 - Faith Builders in general (3)
 - TAP (2)
 - Summer Term (2)
 - Teachers Week (2)
- Hartwell Teachers Seminar
- Any type of teacher interaction... whether it be by blog, social media groups, or actual workshops. These all are great morale boosters, and you have contact with people who actually 'get' what you do and love to talk about the same things.
- I have found all training that I take to be useful in some way.

- Interacting with other teachers, whether on social media, at teacher conventions/workshops, or with co-teachers
- Inviting input from the administrator or fellow teachers
- Local adult education/career centers
- Networking with other teachers
- Nothings beats teacher conferences and any other kind of actual teacher interactions or training.
- Observing other teachers teach in one's own school or a neighboring school
- Our moms of adopted children frequently let us know of classes or webinars coming up that help reach trauma children.
- Teacher friends! (Hearing their stories and ideas is a definite fuel.)

Recordings

- Audible.com (as a way of getting Great Courses)
- Khan Academy (3)
- Lectures.dollarstreet.org
- TED talks
- TheGreatCourses.com

Other Resources

- Books containing the paintings of Rembrandt
- Danielson Framework
- Dianne Craft resources
- "Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction is Hijacking our Kids—And How to Break the Trance" by Nicholas Kardaras
- Jossey Bass publications
- Professional reading, such as ASCD, Ed Week, journals
- Sycamore
- *The Course of Empire* and *The Journey of Life* paintings by Thomas Cole
- World Magazine

Which resources would you add?

2018 Survey Results: Attitudes toward Education and Support from the Community

 thedockforlearning.org/contributions/2018-survey-results-attitudes-toward-education-and-support-from-the-community/

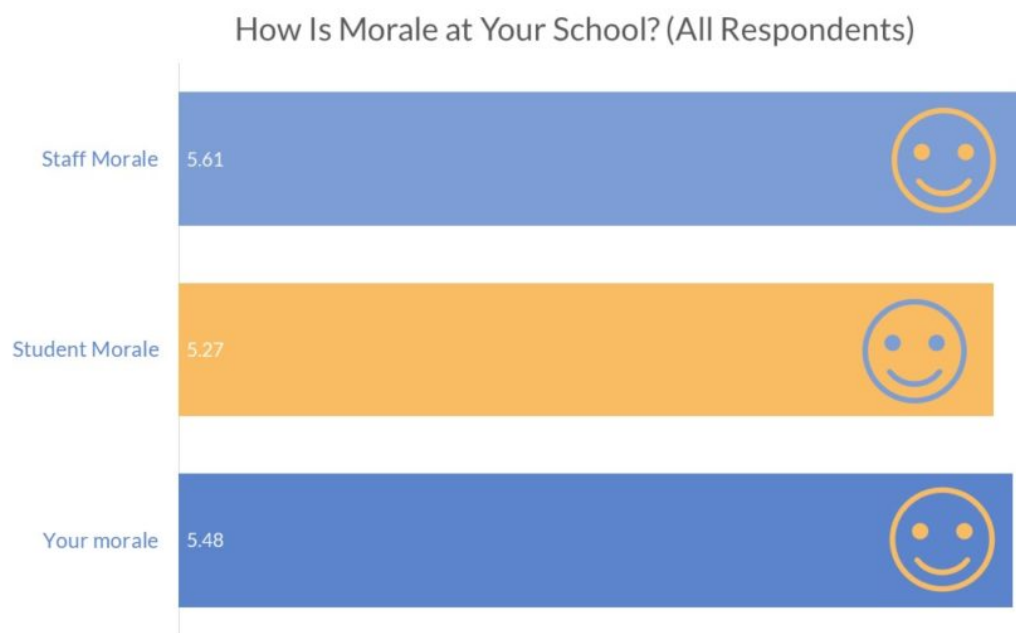
December 18, 2018 by Lucas Hilty [Leave a Comment](#)

December 18, 2018

How do teachers, board members, and other team members feel about their work in education? In this section of the survey results, we explore morale, as well as levels of support from administration and the community.

How is Morale at Your School?

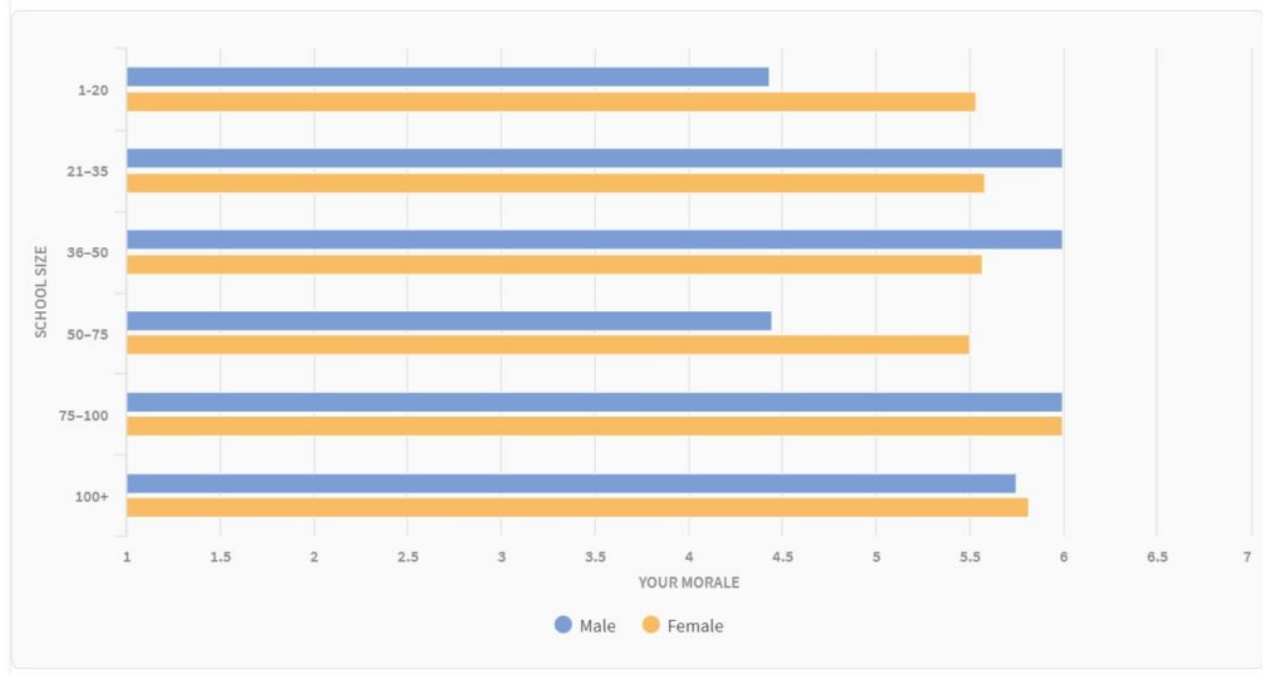
This question is, by its nature, subjective. Respondents might not all choose the same number on a scale even to describe the same level of morale. Nonetheless, morale across the group seemed to be strong:



In general, respondents felt that staff morale was slightly higher than student morale—and that their own morale was lower than that of staff in general. Perhaps we project more confidence than we feel.

Separating responses according to gender and school size revealed some interesting differences.

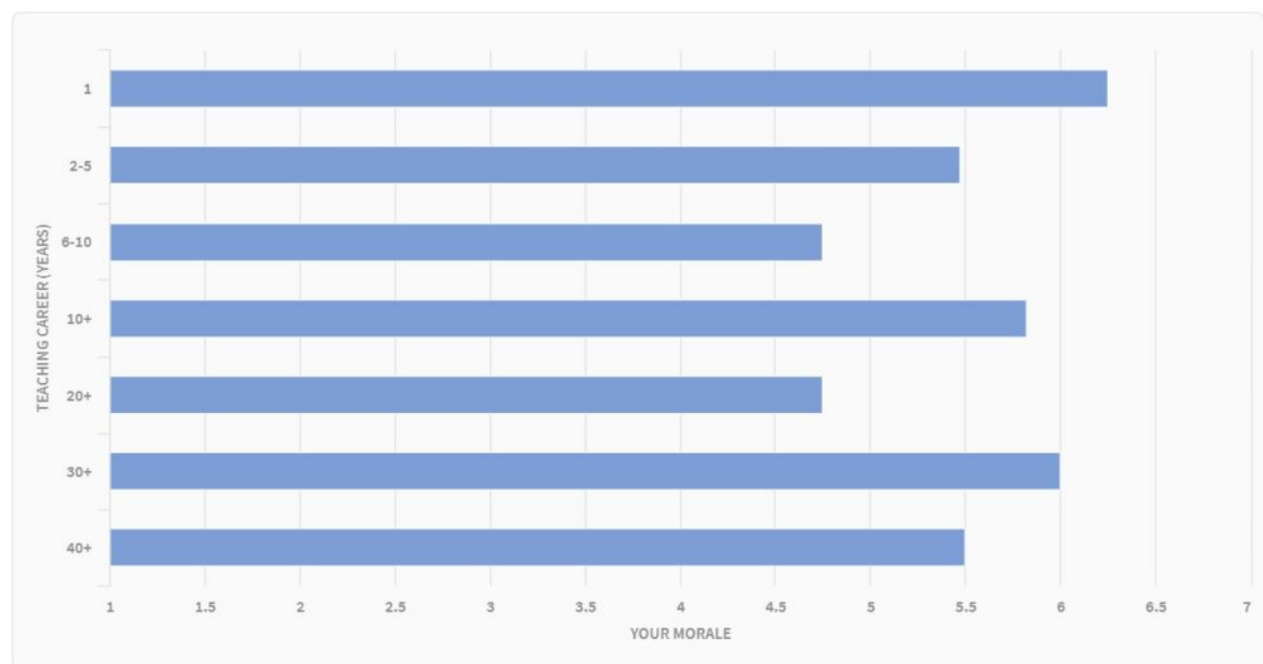
How is Your Morale? (Men and Women by School Size)



Men in the smallest schools and in mid-size schools felt the least enthusiastic about their work. It is important to note, however, that even their rating of 4.4 represents a slightly better than neutral outlook.

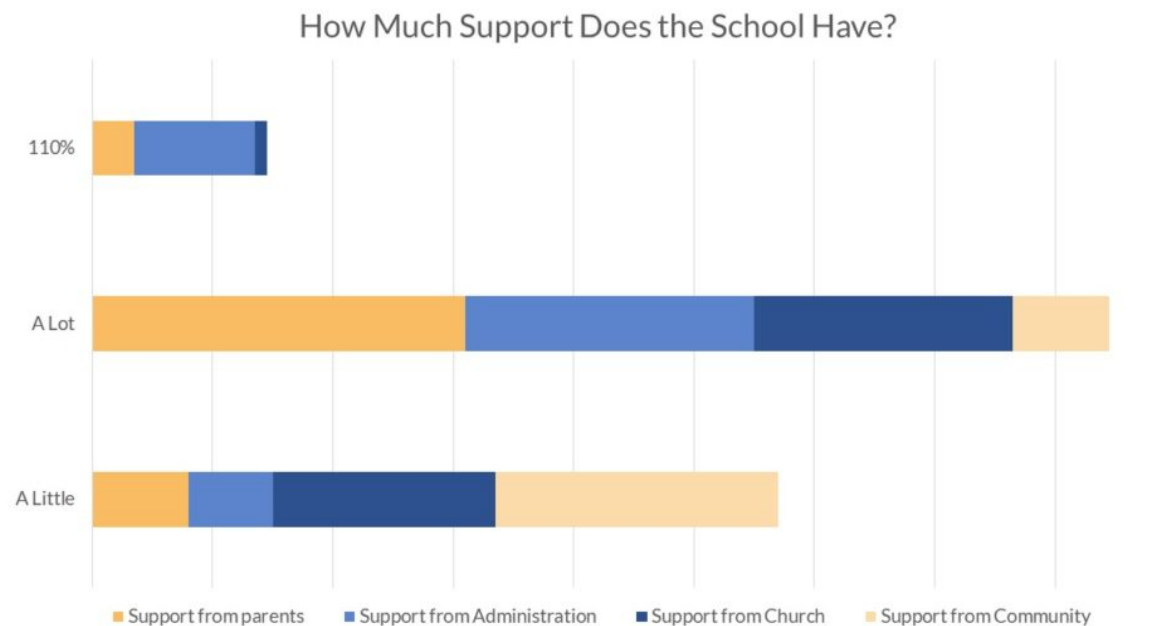
When morale is filtered by experience, however, the results are not quite what one might expect. The newest teachers feel the best about their teaching:

How is Your Morale? (Teachers Only, by Experience)



How Much Support Does the School Have?

Respondents noted strong support from parents and administration, with somewhat less consistent support from church.



What is One Important Thing You Learned This Year about Education?

We asked educators to offer one insight they've discovered in the past year. Below are ten responses to this question. We look forward to sharing more in the coming weeks.

Humility is required!

That differentiated instruction is very difficult.

Classroom control is challenging if the students had a year without it.

So much goes into the behind the scenes!

That students learn more by what they see me do than by the words I say.

I'm working with a child who is confrontational, I've learned that one way to avoid a blowup is to give him a choice. E.g., Would you like to go out now or to and sit in your desk? There is something powerful about giving them the choice. Please understand that this is a difficult situation I'm in and not how I would normally interact with my students.

The importance of prayer. We as staff members have made a point to pray for each student individually (we pull names from container each week, returning them to a separate container, then starting all over again, about every 4-5 weeks). We also pray for each other by name. The staff ladies have also begun meeting each morning for a prayer time for specific students who are creating challenges in their classrooms.

This might not seem like it's about education, but in the long run it is because it affects the heart, which is where we need to begin for education to have any lasting value.

Parents do not care enough about it! They do not seem to realize that education through the school years is a onetime opportunity, and children cannot make choices about this area of their own life. By the time they are old enough to understand completely, it is too late.


Progress is not always big and noticeable. Sometimes it's as small as a baby step.

Excessive screen time at a young age can do the same thing to children's brains that addiction to drugs does.

ADHD is a condition that exists because of other conditions, of which there are many possibilities. What works one day for a child with ADHD will most likely stop working in a few days or less.

Children with RAD need to be trained very differently than children without RAD. One thing they do well at is pitting their authority against each other so as to get the attention off themselves – divide and conquer. I have a student with RAD and ADHD this year. I learned that answers are difficult to find and sometimes even more difficult to implement well."

2018 Survey Results: A Focus on Character

 thedockforlearning.org/contributions/2018-survey-results-a-focus-on-character/

December 29, 2018 by Lucas Hilty [Leave a Comment](#)

December 29, 2018

In this fourth installment of survey results, we examine what teachers say about their students' character. We also publish the observations about education that rose to the top for many educators.

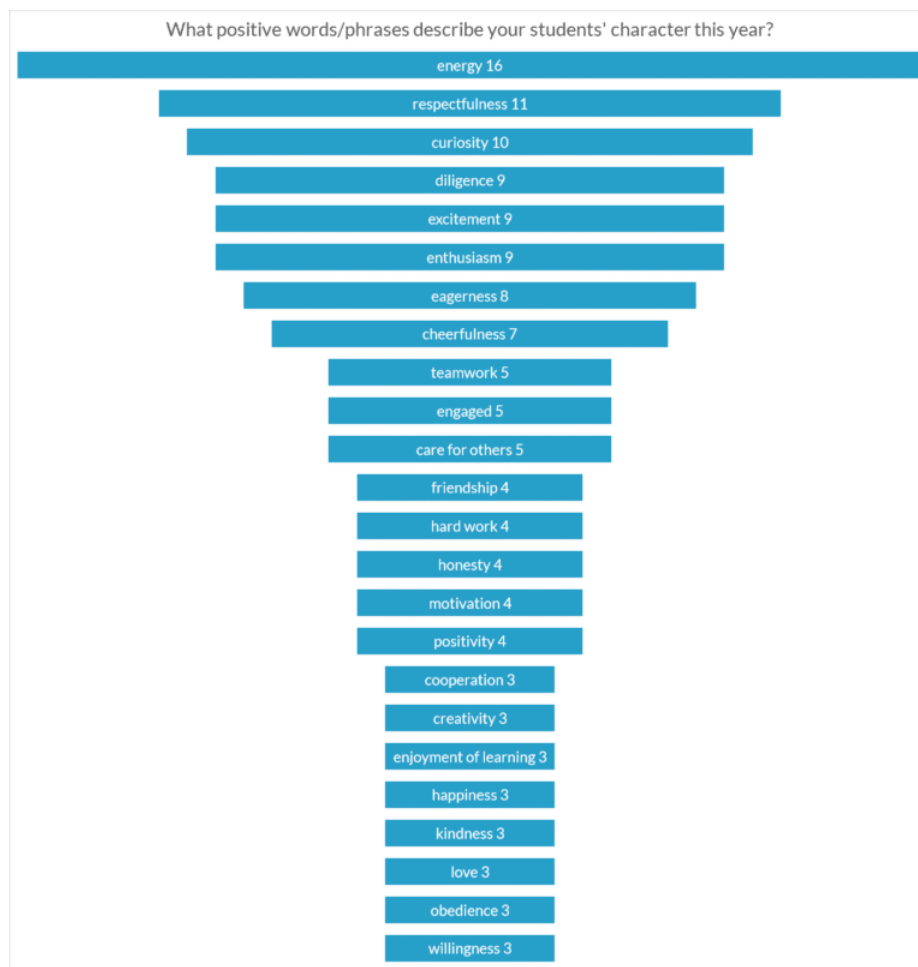


Image courtesy [Victor Bezrukov](#)

What strengths and needs do you observe in your students' characters?

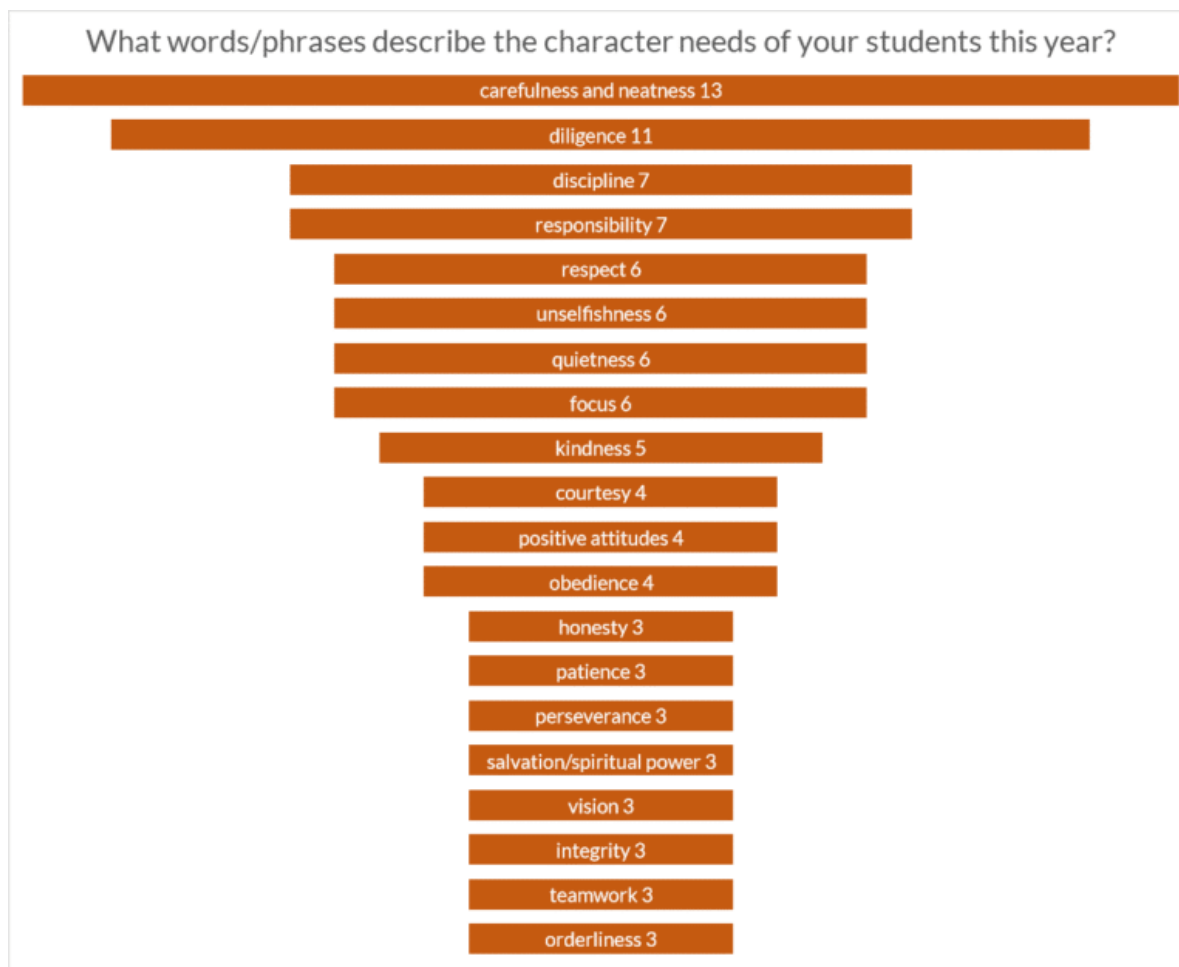
Educators develop more than a math sense and a love for reading. You train the characters of your students. In turn, character development allows students to learn better, and to apply their knowledge to good ends.

We asked teachers to describe their students' character strengths and needs. Each respondent could offer up to three words or phrases describing their students' strengths and three for their needs. The results are non-scientific, and we took the liberty to edit responses lightly to allow similar responses to be grouped.



Other Character Strengths (One or Two Responses)

acceptance, active, adventure, ambition, asking hard questions, attention, carefree, carefulness, Christian, collaborative, compassionate, competitive, conscientious, consideration, driven, efficiency, exuberance, forgiveness, fun, getting along, good attitude, good behavior, gratitude, grit, growth, helpfulness, hilarious, imagination, improvisation, industry, inspiration, integrity, interest in learning, involvement, joy, leadership, love for singing, maturity, memorizing skill, neatness, openness, responsibility, seeking, sensitivity, social skill, sparkle, sponges, spontaneity, study skills, supportive, sweetness, systematic, talkative, teachable, thirst for education, thoughtfulness, unselfishness.



Other Character Needs (One or Two Responses)

accountability, assured, attentive, avoiding argument, awareness of others, caring, committed, compassionate, considerate, consistent, content, conviction, creative, critical thinking, depth, discerning, dyslexia, encouraging, engaged, filling a bucket, freedom from prejudice, generosity, gentle, global awareness, good sports, gratitude, guided by priorities, humble, imaginative, independent, keeps moving, listening to others, maturity, motivated, not complacent, not overly meticulous, not tattlers, not trying to run the classroom, one-on-one time, peacemaking, planning, pleasant, politeness, precise, punctual, reverent toward authority, secure, servant attitude, social graces, stable, study habits, submissive, trusting, trustworthy, values time, cheerful.

A teacher also noted dyslexia and sensory processing disorder as areas that affect some students.

Observations

The children in our schools demonstrate an overwhelming degree of zest for their learning: energy, curiosity, excitement, enthusiasm, cheerfulness, and eagerness are top words to describe their strengths. This zeal is not always accompanied by discipline; many teachers note their students' need for carefulness and neatness, diligence, discipline, and responsibility.

As is the case for any generalizations, these character profiles do not necessarily describe any

individual student. No parent or teacher will be surprised at the variations within the results. While 9 respondents noted their students' diligence, 11 respondents described diligence as a primary need among their students. Respect, kindness, and care for others likewise are strengths for some students and needs for others. However, the survey indicates the character areas in which many of our homes and schools are doing well, and likewise the character areas in which many of our students need growth.

What Is One Important Thing You Learned This Year about Education? (Part 2)

We asked educators to offer one insight they've discovered in the past year. In the previous post, we published [ten responses](#) to this question. Here are the remaining 39. (Some educators contributed several observations.)

Not all students will be on the same level, regardless of my efforts.

That students can LOVE to write when you make it a habit every day.

Getting your students to write is one of the best things you can do for them.

That our enemy can so easily build off our pride, sowing suspicion, which can lead to division in the school and church.

No child will "get" everything.

My spiritual and emotional health is just as important / has more impact on the success of a school day than does being perfectly, minutely prepped for each class.

We are doing Art as Idea this year. This is a new concept in our community, extracting ideas placed into pictures by artists. I especially value the work of Rembrandt for this.

I learned that in an environment that they feel safe in students will be very open. They will ask honest questions. This has caused me to care deeply about creating a safe, warm, environment for learning.

My students will remember how I made them feel more than what they learned in the classroom.

Education doesn't replace experience...

Education needs accountability.

Though education and eloquence may win the debate, wisdom will win in life.

How vital patience is, and a love for my students. They quickly sense when you're frustrated.

Difficulties last term can lead to pleasure this year.

Education is vital for life skills.

That I need to communicate with parents better.

In order for students to enjoy their academics, it needs to be connected with the beauty of God and create desire.

Something I really have come to appreciate this year is how much time and effort parents put into helping their children.

Personal development is so important.

Humility is essential.

Student attitudes make such a difference, and the ones with the most knowledge or skill are not necessarily the ones with the best attitudes! 🙄

Giving students performance opportunities to SHOW/USE what they are learning can really boost the energy and enthusiasm needed to actually learn the material.

This year I learned that, in order to have a coherent strategy for education, we need to have a very clear idea of who our primary stake-holders are. (Church? Community? Individual?)

It takes endless support and resources.

The best thing I can do for my students is to love God with all my heart, soul and mind.

Parental and school board support is invaluable!

How to use Orton Gillingham principles in the normal classroom.

Do your best and let the rest.

Reaching the hearts of our students is more important than them growing intellectually. In fact, if we reach their hearts, the rest will happen more effectively.

My personal life (outside of school) affects my students and how I teach them.

They (students) want to. They might show otherwise. They might not know they want to. They find out they want to.

This year I have been reminded of the importance of young teachers. Obviously the level of experience is less but the idealism they bring to the job has been refreshing.

Background knowledge has a larger influence on reading comprehension than reading skills.

Good note-taking needs to be taught and modeled, and it makes a significant difference in student learning. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/note-taking/>

I need to face/process my personal fears and insecurities in order to meet the needs of my students.

Students learn so much better in a non-threatening, strongly encouraging environment.

It is arduous and long.

Trello is a great way to organize tasks.

...that effective teachers are made and not born. We must invest more time and energy into developing teachers, both before they begin and after they are in the harness.

The idea that certain students need content presented in specific ways (learning styles) is largely false. The more intelligences that a teacher engages in a lesson, the better.

Over my years of teaching I've learned that the average student wants to excel. Likely if they're not achieving it's because they can't, not because they don't want to.

As teachers, we have the tendency of developing tunnel vision. That behavioral issue or this academic struggle becomes the thing that takes up most of our time and emotional energy. While these do need our attention, our classrooms should always be viewed in light of the bigger story. Perspective can make all the difference. Oh, and love.

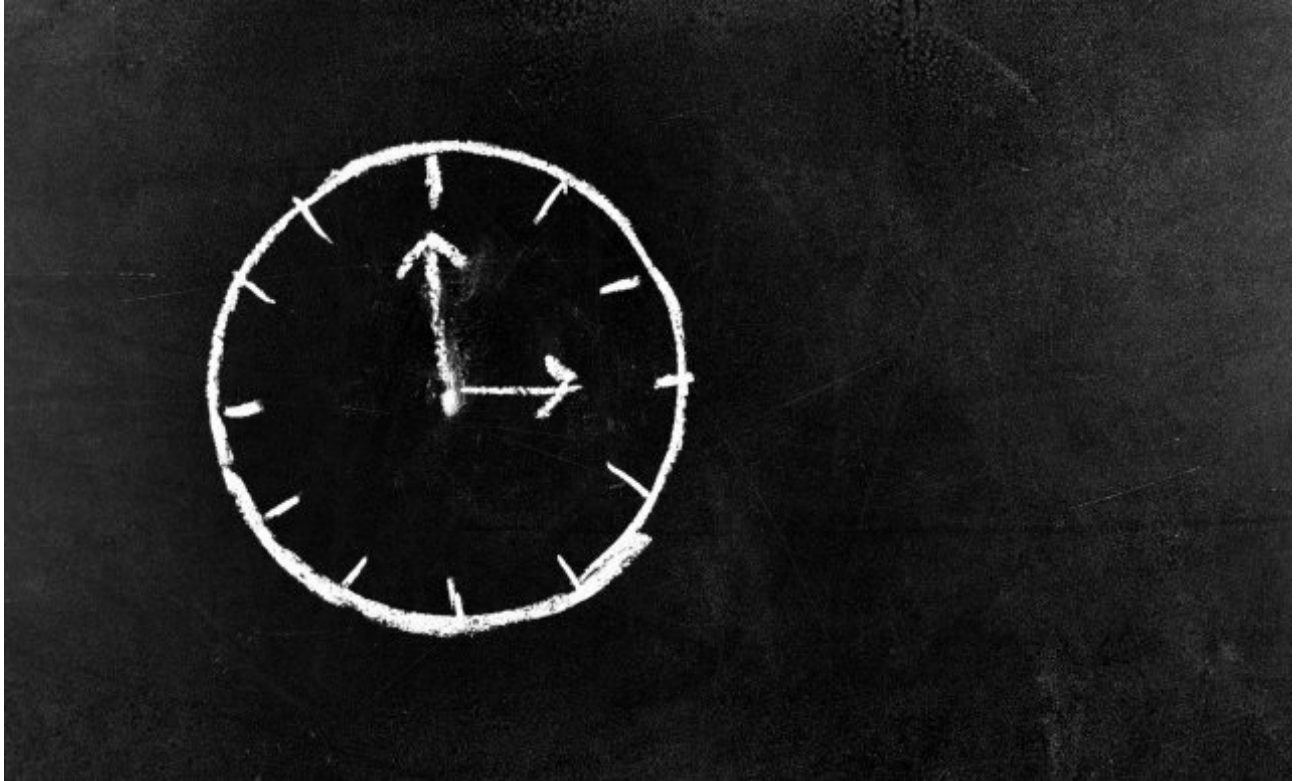
2018 Survey Results: How Do They Do It?

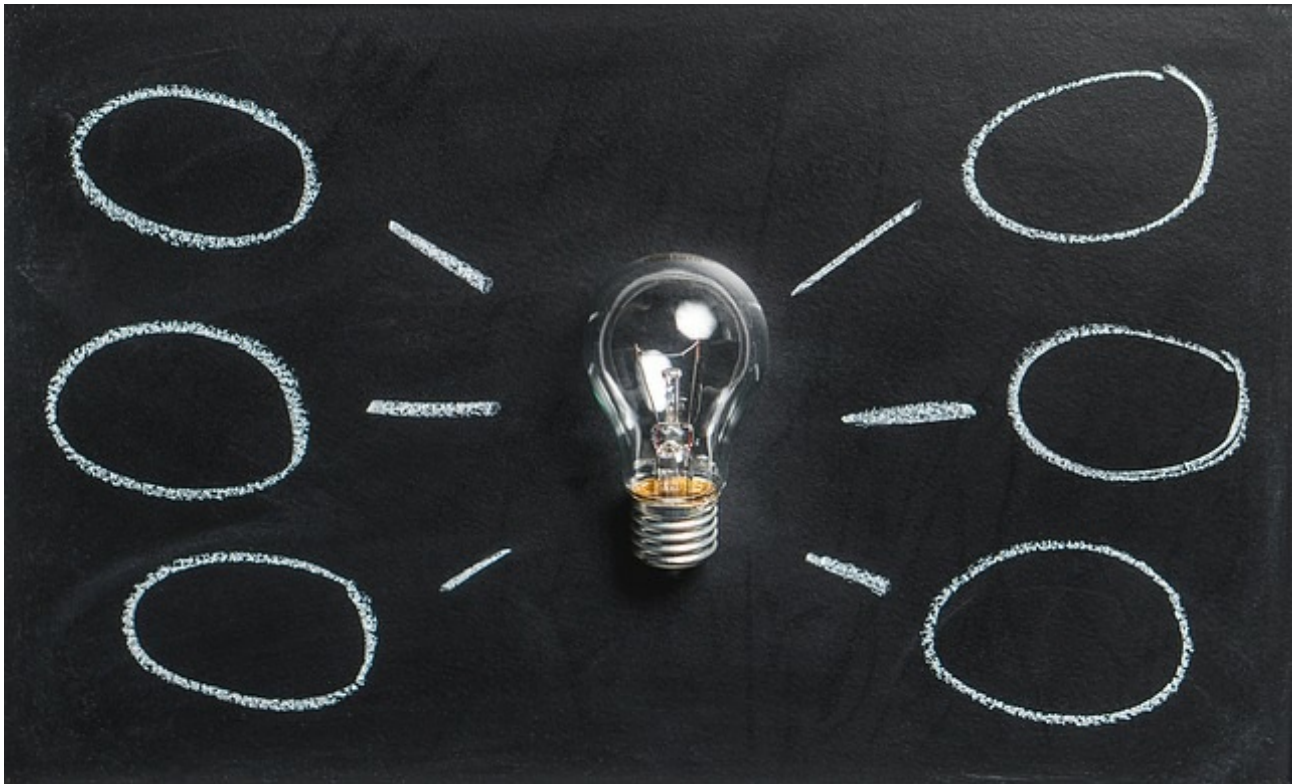
thedockforlearning.org/contributions/2018-survey-results-how-do-they-do-it/

January 5, 2019 by Lucas Hilty [Leave a Comment](#)

January 5, 2019

In this fifth and final installment of survey results, we consider how educators think about their calling, how they use their non-teaching time, and what they do for refreshment.





What is the most challenging part of your work? The most satisfying?

Those who serve our schools face serious challenges. More than 30 responses note the difficulty of reaching around as a teacher, principal, or other educator: we often feel we don't have enough time. Other common challenges include a lack of career teachers, lack of commitment from parents, and pedagogical and classroom discipline issues.

The list of rewards, however, is as inspiring as the previous list is daunting. Can you count the number of references to light bulb moments? Teachers love to share knowledge with students, and look forward to seeing their students make wise life choices as results of their training.

Challenges

Click a heading to expand the section.

Time and Energy

- A big challenge to me is keeping up with the daily demands of teaching and staying energetic and passionate about it.
- Balancing being a wife and teacher
- Balancing and prioritizing the needs in school with my personal needs
- Balancing my personal life and school life. Learning to place school very high on my priority list
- Balancing personal energy limitations
- Burn-out!

- Difficulty in balancing time among school/church/community
- Enough time
- Feeling like I don't reach around to all my students
- Finding time for everything that is important.
- Finding time to do everything school-related that I want to do and personal time as well
- work
- Having enough time to prepare solid, engaging lessons
- Having enough time to reach around
- I have 5 grades, so my greatest challenge is getting all the classes in!
- Lack of time to do everything I would like to do.
- Long term sustainability
- Maintaining balance
- More energy
- My greatest challenge is managing all the essential tasks to complete them properly.
How do I ever have time to properly prepare for tomorrow's classes? And then also balance my home/school/ and administrator roles. All are essential tasks. Which is most important? I feel that when I'm a good teacher, then I'm a poor husband and father and principal. If I spend the proper time with wife and family, then the classroom suffers.
- My greatest challenge is not always having enough time to work with my students in their areas of difficulty.
- My role as a full-time teacher and principal is very challenging. I can't do justice to both positions so one or the other suffers at times.
- Not enough time
- Not enough time in a school day to reach all the corners that should be reached
- Overworking; doing a good job while not spending too much time at the job
- So much to do the important things get neglected
- The challenge of balancing school and prep time with the other areas of my life; having a life outside of school
- The greatest challenge I face is lack of time to invest in the school like I wish I could.
- There is never enough time.
- There is simply not enough time and energy for everything that I would like to do.
- There's never enough time to teach everything in the curriculum.
- Time
- Time crunch
- Time management
- Time to do everything that needs done:)

Staff Development

- A lack of teachers that make a career in the field of teaching
- Adequate training for staff
- Developing teachers.

- Having the staff-power to cover all the classes the could/should be taught.
- High teacher turnover, plus most of them quite young
- Lack of experienced/long-term teachers
- Lack of male teachers
- Lack of personal knowledge and skills in teaching
- Lack of willing teachers
- Not enough knowledge
- Parents that are disconnected from the vision of Anabaptist education
- The biggest challenge for me is not having a complete mastery of the subjects I teach. I could definitely use more professional training and would benefit from holding a degree in my field.

Support

- A lack of communication and working together with the principal especially, and somewhat the home room teachers. I feel I'm pretty much on my own as a volunteer... teacher—I guess I feel that I realize more than some of them the value of my contribution. I think they're glad I come (especially because it relieves them of worrying about teaching [the subject], or feeling guilty that they don't teach [it]), but don't see me as a real part of the team and the overall picture of what the school is about.
- Communicating problems to parents
- Doing all I can to make sure parents and students know what is expected and required, only to find that they saw the note/email/text message, but never really read it. In the same vein: spending hours and hours assembling/editing/updating a handbook that never gets read/is viewed as unimportant (dress code especially)
- Education being undervalued in the church and community
- Finances since this somewhat limits my ability to gain knowledge in subject areas
- Funding our school
- Getting parents to appreciate school for more than its daycare-type qualities
- I think it's recognizing potential improvements that my co-teacher or school board either don't concern themselves about or shy away from. We use no internet at our school. Neither is there strong encouragement from the church community for formal teacher training. There is almost no conflict between teacher and parents, and the emotional support for this kind of demanding job is wonderful, but our education could be so much better. Also, there is almost nothing to help our students wisely use/navigate technology... So far it has been treated as a thou shalt not.
- Lack of vision from and pettiness in parents and faculty.
- Low expectations of parents
- Low pay
- Not having supplies that would make teaching a lesson so much easier.
- Overworked and underpaid
- Seeing parents struggle to make the monthly tuition payments, but also admiring them

for making this conscious decision that will affect their children for the rest of their life.

- Showing that education is important to students and parents
- Talking with parents and getting them to see students' needs.
- Working with outdated and poorly written curriculum

The Teaching Craft

- Being consistent
- Remaining calm and patient when my goals are not getting reached
- Classroom management
- Communicating vision to teachers and board.
- Disciplining intimidating students
- Figuring out how to reach the ones that have a harder time learning
- Finding a balance for students who are struggling academically. When should I push them, and when do I give a break? And how much say do the parents have in this?
- Finding creative ways to do the same job year after year
- Finding time/ taking time for the students who are straight a's, and really don't need me for their lessons, but notice how much attention the needy ones get
- I can't get away from grading:/)
- Lack of structure in school
- Helping students learn math facts
- Learning how to stretch each child to his potential, including slow learners and above average students
- Maintaining a consistent system in my classroom
- Making quick decisions
- Motivating students about English. Keeping them at their work
- Music curriculum, especially for the middle grades. I've had to do a lot of my own research to fill that need and have given a lot of time and effort.
- My greatest challenge is really knowing my students well enough in their learning progress to be certain they've attained the understandings needed to move ahead.
- One of the greatest challenges is to have enough time to properly teach what needs to be taught. I have three elementary grades this year, and it is just tough sometimes to make sure everyone is really learning what they should.
- Planning programs
- Preparing adequately for teaching new concepts and ideas
- Reaching around to the wide range of abilities in my class
- Staring obvious failure in the face every day, choosing which objectives to fail less at, while truly believing that God's grace is made perfect in weakness
- Staying connected
- Strengthening my weakness which is knowledge in subject areas
- Students with reading disabilities. Being kind and patient when I don't feel like it.
- To encourage academic excellence, but not expect all A averages

- To be firm, but fun
- To be structured, but not stilted
- To just teach the material and move on isn't enough. Children learn at varying rates and in different ways.
- To keep school engaging, but educational
- Trying to decide what is really important and what I should let go because there just isn't time
- Using my time wisely
- Working with multi levels in classroom abilities is a challenge that can't really be prepared for, since every situation is different.

Working with Others

- Co-teachers who are unwilling to continue developing and to utilize forms of learning support [and vital drills]. [Some] teachers... cling to what worked 10-20 years ago and refuse to change or value the opinions of those younger than themselves.
- Working well with others
- Working with other parents and administration
- Working with people 😊

Student Issues

- Bad student attitudes
- Balancing the issue of respect with allowing for dialogue from students
- Broken homes
- Dealing with prejudice, ignorance, and apathy
- Discipline
- Fighting for souls is never easy. My greatest challenge usually comes in the form of one or two children in my classroom who seem bent on defying authority. Addressing major learning difficulties is a challenge too.
- Getting pupils to understand the importance of all the subjects and to be willing to put their all into their work.
- Getting students to focus on learning and value it, rather than just rushing through their
- Knowing how much to push a struggling student. Also how to inspire that student when they don't seem to get excited about anything in life.
- Knowing the best way to help my students who have learning disabilities to succeed
- Lack of self-discipline
- My students live in a different world from the one that existed when I was young. It is a challenge for me to maximize the benefits of these changes and minimize the harms.
- One of the greatest challenges I face is being an ever-present example of a Christian to my students. How I live my life will forever impact the lives of my students especially

since I am their authority.

- Relating to students who come from a diversity of homes and blending the convictions of each set of parents into a cohesive school unit
- Responding to disrespect and silliness
- Screens negatively affecting students (and teachers)
- Settling disputes
- Special needs students
- Students who do poorly in their school work and tests because of continual carelessness rather than lack of comprehension
- This year it's the management of the classroom in behavior—some students who are presenting challenges in that!
- Trying to help student overcome some social barriers among themselves
- Unmotivated, struggling students
- We are facing more and more learning disabilities invading our schools. Large classrooms such as I have make it hard for the teacher to reach around and address those needs adequately.

Rewards

Click a heading to expand the section.

The Joy of Learning

- Exploring fascinating subjects with my students
- Having good discussions with the students
- Hearing from my children what they are learning
- Helping the child to “get it”
- Helping children learn new things.
- I absolutely love when students have their nose in a book, and when parents say, “He asked for books for his birthday! I was so shocked! He has never done that before!”
- I love seeing my students excited about a subject, and not only be excited about something, but succeed.
- I love to see hands eagerly waving when I ask a question in class, and hear comments like, “I was so surprised to learn that! That is so cool!”
- I love to watch my students get excited about the things they are learning
- It's especially rewarding to see “the light bulb come on” for students that struggle.
- I simply love teaching children new and exciting and useful things.
- I work mostly with students who have dyslexia and ADHD. The most satisfying part of my work is seeing a struggling student succeed. To be able to help them get to that point where they can succeed is not an easy task, but the struggle turns even the smallest victories into great accomplishments.
- Knowing that my students recognize and understand theory behind rules that work
- Light bulb moments academically for struggling students
- Listening to them read for the first time

- Making information easy and interesting for them
- Opening new worlds of intellectual exploration for students. (Particularly, I love when the way I choose to teach something helps it click for the students.)
- Watching them get excited about all the interesting things there are to learn about
- Planning and preparing lessons
- Professional development
- Seeing a child's eyes light up with the joy of a new skill or discovery
- Seeing a student become excited and engaged
- Seeing a student's face light up when they suddenly get the concept of what you are teaching them.
- Seeing children be able to do things they couldn't do just a short time ago (read, draw, jump rope, etc.)
- Seeing children discover and learn to love learning.
- Seeing children learn, when they finally get that math concept or the tough English lesson
- Seeing kids' faces light up when they get a new concept and listening to their Bible knowledge
- Seeing light bulb moments happen
- Seeing my children learn
- Seeing my students' eyes light up when they understand a new concept.
- Seeing my students having fun learning and wanting to learn more
- Seeing students learn and learn to enjoy learning.
- Seeing students' progress, and those light bulb moments when they understand a new concept
- Seeing the children learn and just being able to teach them so many things
- Seeing the light go on when they understand
- Seeing the student's eyes light up he/she gets a concept.
- Seeing the students pay attention and "catch on" to the concepts/skills. Having the students perform, showing a working knowledge of the material.
- Seeing them learn. Trying again and again to reach their goal and finally getting it. Watching them stretch their minds around an "above their level" concept
- Seeing understanding dawn in the minds of my students as students understand new concepts and seeing them learn new songs and apply Biblical principles to their lives
- Teaching
- Teaching in the classroom
- Teaching new concepts to students and seeing the "lights come on" when they understand.
- Teaching well-prepared lessons that connect with students
- The joy students experience when learning to do a new task
- Watching "lights come on" for the students
- Watching a child pick up a book and being able to read it.
- Watching children enjoy learning: through class discussions, through personal observation and experience, and as always, the books!

- When connections are made and students become really interested in what we're studying
- When I realize my first graders really do know how to read
- When my goal of a quality education is achieved (in other words when students understand the material and how it applies, is important, or necessary in life)
- When something "clicks"
- When students do well, especially when the lights suddenly turn on

Student Success

- A great reward is keeping up with former students as they finish school, get baptized, married, or send their own children to school.
- Although I have not seen this yet: watching my former students go into different areas of life and making a change in their lives and the community around them!
- Seeing students mature and develop from one year to the next. Someone you first knew as a 7th grader is suddenly a senior—an adult ready to enter life."
- Hearing graduation speeches that indicate an awareness of the global world in which they live
- Hearing the teachers discuss a problem they solved without my help.
- Helping students reach their full potential.
- I enjoy seeing youth gain skills and become responsible young people. I also find it very satisfying to see them develop convictions.
- I also love when they ask good questions, because I know that will help them in their spiritual journey as they mature.
- Seeing former students become teachers
- Seeing former students grow to Christian maturity
- Seeing people succeed
- Seeing students achieve
- Seeing students take on meaningful responsibilities more readily and effectively as a result of skills/knowledge gained at school
- Watching my students succeed at something that was previously difficult
- Watching students graduate and transition into productive Kingdom builders

Student Growth

- A good (calm) day for a hyper-active child
- Behavior growth after persistent direction/discipline
- Breakthrough moments for a child with insecurity issues
- Encouraging my children to work hard.
- Engaging with students of all ages to help them feel accepted and so they experience the worth they have.

- Helping children think outside of themselves, helping them develop a servant attitude
- Helping students think through their challenges and opportunities.
- I find it very satisfying when I hear my students “unconsciously” emphasizing the same concept that I have been trying hard to teach
- Seeing their character develop is a joy.
- I love to hear students cheering on a slower student in games or other work. I like when they pause before answering in a race against a slower student to give that child a chance.
- I love watching children grow. It’s so satisfying to watch a first grader change from uncertain to confident and independent. Also since I teach in a very small school I have the privilege of watching children mature into young men and women. I love to see them starting to take responsibility and look out for others, especially ladies and younger children.
- I love watching my students grow and improve.
- Observing attitudes of interest and desire to take part to the best of their ability
- Satisfaction of seeing them become independent
- Seeing character growth
- Seeing children caring for others
- Seeing children grow and change for the better is a reward in itself that never grows old. I love the feeling of having an important role to play in shaping the future of our church and community.
- Seeing high school boys be motivated about class, recess, and singing
- Seeing my children grow in their understanding and abilities
- Getting into deep conversations with my teenagers and soon-to-be-teenagers. Watching them grow in their relationship with God
- Seeing progress in my student’s lives
- Seeing student growth
- Seeing students grow in academic and character development, especially over time
- Seeing students learn and value important things
- Seeing students recognize how God is at work in the world and in their lives. Helping them develop a comprehensive worldview is very satisfying to me. I love to help them learn how to apply God’s Word to their lives today.
- Seeing the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of young people
- Seeing the progression of learning in students
- The most satisfying part of my work in education is the long-lasting effects it brings to myself and to my students. My students help to mold and shape me into who I need to be just as much or more than the impact that I have on them.
- To see children get excited about learning and to see them grow in character
- Watching student development
- Watching students develop and begin to use the things they’ve learned
- Watching students grow, physically, mentally, and spiritually
- Watching them respond to a situation with good character

The Joy of Relationships

- Being able to show them that I care about their lives
- Children all around my desk, telling stories (stories that I most likely won't remember)
- It is a thrill to be able to work and interact with your children.
- Learning to know my students.
- Interaction with the children outside of 'book learning'. These times are just amazing.
- Listening to their thoughts about subjects of discussion
- Personal relations with students
- Personal relationships/connections with my students
- Simply enjoy being with the children!
- Socializing with my students. Discussions and singing with them.
- Staff interactions
- Student interactions
- The meaningful relationships that I have with other staff
- The relationships built
- Student interaction is what I love.
- Working with people: students, parents, teachers, board members

A Place to Belong

- As school secretary:
 - Doing all I can to ensure supplies/materials/information is here in a timely manner so the teachers can focus on teaching
 - Interactions with parents
- Being able to be an active participant in my church community
- Building relationships with students, parents, staff, and continuing those relationships
- Educating for God's Kingdom
- Hearing positive feedback from parents at PTC
- Helping shape the community
- I am able to work with the world's greatest commodity—children. I can be used if God to build His kingdom by teaching the future generation of believers.
- I feel fulfilled in teaching. It is satisfying to know I am impacting students' lives, and investing my time into something that is worthwhile.
- Knowing I'm making a difference
- Making sure all the staff are taken care of the school is running smoothly and orderly.
- Moments when I can see I made a difference
- Praying for the teachers
- When students, parents, and staff see the benefits/importance of education
- Working with board and staff to accomplish objectives

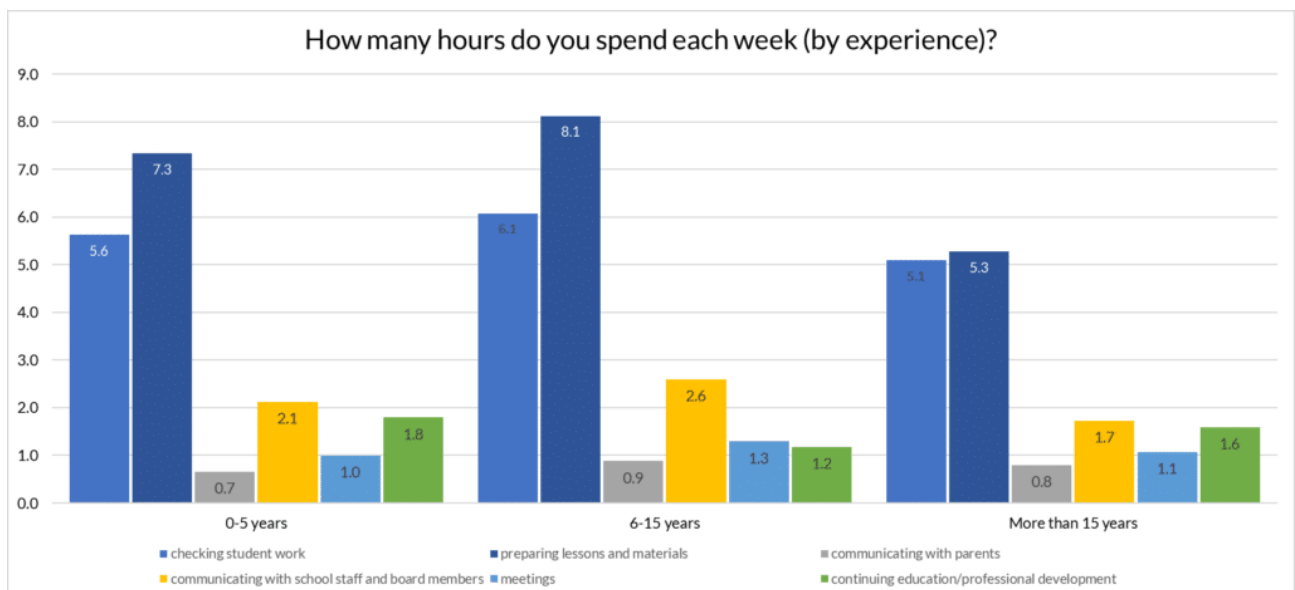
How much time do you spend on these tasks each week?

As noted above, many of us struggle to find time for everything that seems important. We asked educators how they spend their out-of-class time each week. Below are the averages.



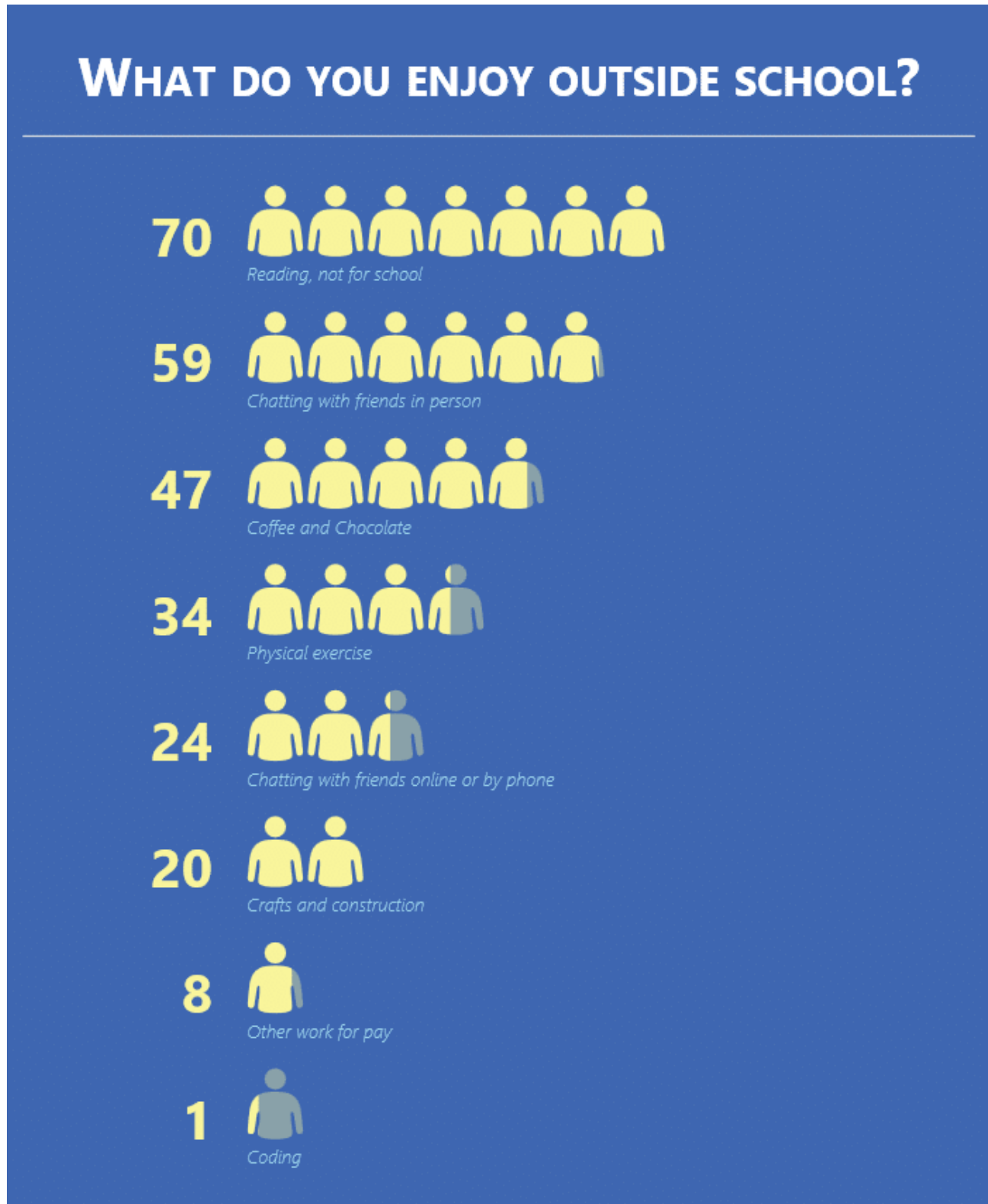
When responses are separated by teachers' experience, it appears that teachers with more than five years' experience spend more time in lesson prep and checking than newer teachers. In fact, they spend more time in all these areas except for continuing education.

Note that the chart above includes all respondents, while the chart below includes only teachers.



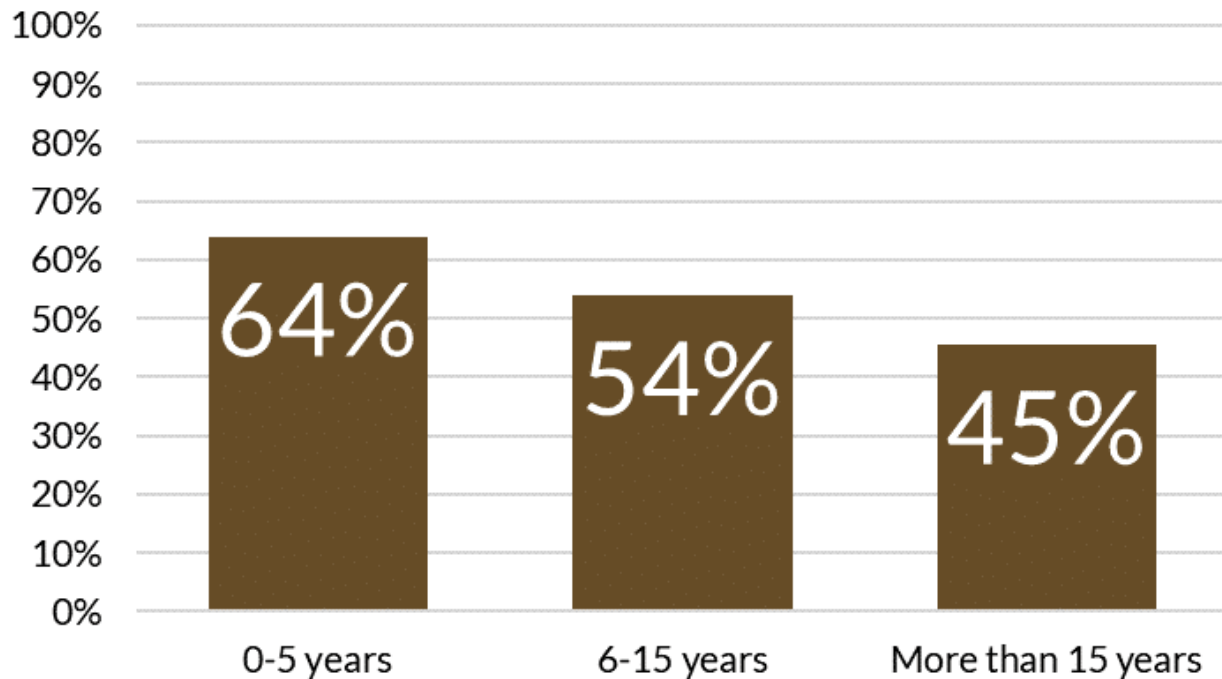
What do you enjoy outside of school?

On a less serious but still important note: What do educators enjoy outside school? We're glad to see you like to read.



Coffee and chocolate are also popular, though it's worth noting the decline in consumption as teachers gain more experience. Or perhaps experienced teachers enjoy more of their coffee while at school rather than outside school.

I Enjoy Coffee and Chocolate Outside of School



The options offered in the survey clearly missed many important activities. Respondents listed dozens of other activities. Music leads the list:

- music (6), singing (4), playing an instrument (3)
- spending time with my family (4), being with children, playing games with one of my students at their house, playing with my children at home, spending time with my husband, visiting family and friends in different parts of the country
- my other work, remodeling my house! working in my family's hardware store
- animals, astronomy, baseball, gardening (4), farming (2), mountain biking/hiking, outside work, spending time in nature
- creating atmosphere, crocheting, cooking (3)
- coffee (not chocolate), eating out, traveling (2), browsing in antique shops
- listening to podcasts (which I think of as another form of reading), looking at magazines, puzzles, technology, web surfing
- art, writing, writing poetry, photography (4)

What is your vision?

We asked educators to finish this sentence:

As an educator, my responsibility is to...

academically train children for God's work.

aid parents by teaching academic skills to the children they've entrusted to us, and come alongside the parents in the character development of their children.

aid the church in shaping young people's lives in a social and educational environment.

assist the parent in bringing the child up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord in the academic setting.

cause my students to learn and grow, and discover the joy of learning.

cause them to learn!

cause to learn (and what that includes).

communicate: all the time and every day. Take care of details no one else has time for. Be all things to all men. 😊

connect with my students and develop a love for learning.

continue the training program the parents have set in place while I do my best to teach them foundational concepts for learning.

develop young people focused on serving Christ and empowered with skills to do so.

do all I can to help each child be successful in their learning journey, to make it interesting, enriching and nurturing.

emulate Christ in teaching, learning, and dealing with my fellowman.

enable learning for productive living.

encourage and equip children to serve God.

energize the next generation for beneficial service to the world and church.

equip children to be better able to serve in God's kingdom.

equip my students with the things they need to know in the future, most importantly teaching them about the importance of God and showing them the love of God each and every day.

equip students to be prosperous Kingdom servants.

equip students to pursue wisdom.

equip workers for the Kingdom of God.

foster a comfortable, yet challenging, Christian education environment.

give my students the tools for kingdom work by providing hard work, developing critical thinking skills and a compassionate spirit in a secure classroom environment.

give my student tools they will need for life, be an example for their social lives, and a spiritual stepping stone.

give students a foundation from which they can serve God and others throughout life.

give students the necessary tools (skill and knowledge) to be successful in the home, workplace, community, and church.

give students the tools they need to serve God.

guide my students in the way of truth.

help equip my students with knowledge and character traits that will make them better for service in God's kingdom.

help in shaping the hearts and minds of young people by giving them the tools they need to be effective workers in God's kingdom.

help kids further the kingdom of God by teaching academics well.

help make learning a fun and safe and adventure.

help my students learn.

help prepare my students for life after school.

help students become more like Jesus while learning how to be creative along with learning the basic skills needed to succeed in life.

help the students, patrons, and teachers understand how God is at work in the world.

ignite students' appetite for learning, guide their social interactions, and point them to Jesus.

influence children to prepare them for life.

influence students to build their character

inspire.

instill godly values in the consciences of the students.

instill in children a love for learning truth.

lead my students well academically and spiritually, modeling Christ to them and modeling life-long learning.

love, serve, and teach children both academics and Kingdom building concepts.

make disciples that impact the world for Christ.

make sure learning happens and that the needs of the school are met.

make sure the needs and responsibilities of the school are fulfilled and to educate my class in an excellent way!

make sure the others can do their work well.

meet my students where they are and take them forward.

motivate students to learn.

nurture a love for God and provide a quality education that will aid in developing student's skills and talents so that they can use them in effective service to God.

nurture and train lovers of God.

nurture lovers of God.

nurture souls to be lovers of God.

organize school administration and teach the older students.

partner with the church/community/parents in raising children who choose to be lovers of God and active participants in His Kingdom. Though specifically responsible for students' academic development, I am also an influencer and nourisher of loves.

prepare children for a life of service in the church and community

prepare my students to be effective in the kingdom of God through instructing, loving, and nurturing them.

prepare my students to serve well in their communities and churches.

prepare the next generation.

prepare useful servants for God.

realize I am called by God, and commit to serving to the best of my abilities in meeting my students academic, emotional, and spiritual needs.

serve and love the students who have been placed in my care.

serve and love the students who have been placed in my care.

serve my children's needs to the best of my abilities; to make learning fun.

serve the parents by teaching their children academics and character.

set an educational and godly standard, and live it out personally. Be available/attentive to all students' needs, especially those struggling emotionally. Teach outside the box.

shape the loves of my students in positive ways and provide an excellent environment for learning.

steward faithfully the opportunity to shape and equip our students for eager and skillful participation in God's work in the world.

teach academics, and use opportunities to teach life lessons and good character.

teach and guide, both by my words and by my life.

teach children life skills for service in the kingdom of God.

teach classes and oversee lunch and recess for grades 1-3.

teach essential life skills and shape the character of my students.

teach for the kingdom of God.

teach the classes, answer questions, oversee recess, and inspire students to love God and learning.

teach students about God.

teach students information and skills they will need in life.

teach students to think the way Christ thinks and to do things the way He does.

teach my students.

teach, Jesus and His ways first, information next.

Thank you!

To each person who invested time in reflecting on the work of Anabaptist education: your response is a testament to the work you are pouring into God's kingdom. May his grace lift you above your challenges and give you success.

To every person who reads these reflections: your interest in Anabaptist education encourages many people. May we all be faithful in the work we are given.
