What Can Be Done to Improve TEACHER SATISFACTION?

FREE WEBINAR:
Thursday, April 19, 2012
2 to 3 p.m. ET
Liana Heitin
Associate editor, *Education Week Teacher* and *Teacher PD Sourcebook*
What Can Be Done to Improve Teacher Satisfaction?

Expert Presenters:

Dana Markow, Ph.D., vice president of youth and education research, Harris Interactive

Susan Moore Johnson, Jerome T. Murphy professor in education, Harvard Graduate School of Education
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Teachers, Parents and the Economy

Survey conducted by Harris Interactive

April 19, 2012
The MetLife Surveys of American Teachers are designed to let the voices of teachers be heard. MetLife began listening to teachers as part of the public debate on education in 1984.

This year’s report, *Teachers, Parents and the Economy*, examines the views of teachers, parents and students about the teaching profession, parent and community engagement, and effects of the current economy on families and schools.
# The Survey in Context: Selected Trends of the 1980’s, 1990’s, 2000’s and 2010’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1980’s</th>
<th>1990’s</th>
<th>2000’s</th>
<th>2010’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENTS:</strong></td>
<td>Gen X</td>
<td>Gen X ➔ Gen Y</td>
<td>Gen Y</td>
<td>Gen Y ➔ Gen Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION:</strong></td>
<td>Fewer than half are “very satisfied”</td>
<td>Half are “very satisfied”</td>
<td>Majority are “very satisfied”</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARENT ENGAGEMENT:</strong></td>
<td>Half of parents and teachers believe that many parents fail to motivate or discipline their children</td>
<td>One-third of parents say they go to school to hear about and discuss school issues more than 3 times a year</td>
<td>Three in ten parents are satisfied with frequency of contact with child’s teachers and school</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology

Interviews conducted October 14 – November 10, 2011

Telephone interviews with 1,001 public school teachers, grades K-12

Online interviews with 1,086 parents of public school students in grades K-12

Online interviews with 947 public school students, grades 3-12
MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 2011: Key Themes

1. Teachers are less satisfied with their careers.
   - Perceptions of job security have declined along with job satisfaction.
   - Professional experiences, school resources and parent involvement are important factors in job satisfaction.

2. The effects of the economic downturn are felt widely and deeply in education.
   - Budget reductions are widespread across schools.
   - Students and parents share worries about the effects of the economy.

3. Parent and community engagement has increased but remains a challenge for many schools.
   - Schools are helping parents engage in their children’s education.
   - The quality of different types of parent and community involvement varies.
The Teaching Profession
Lowest Level of Job Satisfaction in 20 Years

Teacher Job Satisfaction (% Very Satisfied)


40% 44% 33% 40% 50% 54% 52% 57% 56% 62% 59% 44%

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Likelihood to Leave the Profession Has Increased

Likelihood to Leave the Teaching Profession (% Very/Fairly Likely)

- 2009: 17%
- 2011: 29%
Feelings of Job Security Have Decreased

Trends in Teachers’ Views

Feel Job Is Secure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treated as a Professional by Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Salary Is Fair for Work Done

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Harris Interactive
## Teachers and Parents Share Similar Views About the Profession

### Beliefs about Public School Teachers (% Yes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief</th>
<th>Teachers (%)</th>
<th>Parents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treated as professionals by the community</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance benefits are fair for the work they do</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement benefits are fair for the work they do</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries are fair for the work they do</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics of Teachers with High Job Satisfaction:
Individual and School Demographics

Teachers with High versus Lower Job Satisfaction

≈ Gender

≈ Years of teaching experience

≈ School level (elementary, middle or high)

≈ Race/ethnicity
Teachers with High Job Satisfaction Are Less Likely to Leave Teaching

= likely to leave the profession

Teachers with **High** Job Satisfaction

13% Likely to Leave the Profession

Teachers with **Lower** Job Satisfaction

41% Likely to Leave the Profession

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Characteristics of Teachers with High Job Satisfaction: Professional Experiences

Teachers with high job satisfaction are...

- **More** likely to feel their **job is secure** (75% vs. 56%)
- **More** likely to feel they are **treated as a professional** by the community (89% vs. 68%)
- **More** likely to have adequate **opportunities for professional development** (86% vs. 72%)
- **More** likely to have increased or maintained **time to collaborate** with other teachers in the past 12 months (73% vs. 56%)
- **More** likely to be **optimistic that level of student achievement will be better** five years from now (66% vs. 45%)
What We Know About Job Satisfaction From Previous MetLife Surveys of the American Teacher

From *Collaborating for Student Success* (2009):

Teachers with high job satisfaction are...

- More likely to strongly agree that their school structures time for teachers to work together (40% vs. 26%)
- More likely to strongly agree that the teachers, principals, and other professionals at their own school trust one another (59% vs. 40%)

From *Expectations and Experiences* (2006):

Factors that were significant predictors of job satisfaction included:

- Teacher feels that his/her salary is fair for the work done.
- Teacher is treated as a professional by the community.
- Teacher has adequate involvement in team building and problem-solving.
- Teacher has adequate ability to influence policies that affect him/her.
- Teacher has adequate time for classroom instruction.
- Teacher has adequate involvement in shaping the school curriculum.
Effects of Economic Changes on Schools, Students and Parents
**Budget Reductions Are Widespread Across Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Experiences at School in Past Year (% Yes)</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Budget decreased</strong></td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layoffs of other school staff</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layoffs of classroom teachers</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layoffs of parent or community liaisons</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassignments of teachers and staff increased</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductions or eliminations of arts or music programs</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductions or eliminations of foreign language programs</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductions or eliminations of physical education programs</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Layoffs (NET): 66%**

**Reductions or Eliminations (NET): 36%**
Many Parents Lack Knowledge of School Budget Changes

Changes in School Budget in Past Year

**Teachers**
- Decreased 76%
- Stayed the same 12%
- Not sure 7%
- Increased 5%

**Parents**
- Decreased 35%
- Stayed the same 24%
- Not sure 32%
- Increased 9%
Teachers Note Increased Student Needs, While Services Reduced

**Service Reduction:**
- 28% Teachers reporting reductions or eliminations of health or social services

**Student Need:**
- 64% Teachers reporting increase in number of students and families needing health and social support services
- 35% Teachers reporting increase in number of students coming to school hungry
Characteristics of Teachers with High Job Satisfaction: Relation to Economic Changes

Teachers with high job satisfaction are...

- **Less** likely to be in schools with **layoffs of teachers** (37% vs. 49%) or **other school staff** (49% vs. 66%)

- **Less** likely to be in schools with **reductions in health or social services** (23% vs. 31%) or **after-school programs** (23% vs. 34%)

- **Less** likely to be in schools with **increase in average class size** (53% vs. 70%) or **increase in students and families needing health/social services** (56% vs. 70%)
Nurturing Parent and Community Engagement
More Students Today Report Parent Engagement in Schools

Student Reports of Parent Engagement in School (% Yes)

- **Talk to parents every day about school**
  - 2011: 64%
  - 1988: 40%

- **Parents visit school at least once a month**
  - 2011: 46%
  - 1988: 16%
Fewer Parents Today Believe Lack of Parent Engagement Is Widespread

Beliefs about Parental Engagement in Education (% Most or Many Parents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Take Too Little Interest in Their Children’s Education</th>
<th>Fail to Motivate Their Children So They Want to Learn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Parent Information on School Comes Primarily from Their Child and Teachers

### Parent Ratings of Importance of Sources of Information about Child’s School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Absolutely Essential</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My child</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual teachers</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General written communications from the school</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District or school website</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital communication such as emails, blogs, texts, etc.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA/PTO</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Ratings of How Well Teachers Deliver on Areas of Importance Varies by Grade Level

Parent Assessment of What Teachers Are Doing for Parents (% Excellent/Good)

- **Contacting you if your child is having academic or social problems**
  - Elementary School: 86%
  - Middle School: 70%
  - High School: 64%

- **Being responsive to your requests for information**
  - Elementary School: 87%
  - Middle School: 80%
  - High School: 69%

- **Contacting you with concerns about your child’s health and well-being that affect ability to succeed at school**
  - Elementary School: 83%
  - Middle School: 69%
  - High School: 61%
Most Teachers Report School Has Parent and Community Engagement Plan, But Many Parents Not Sure

School Has Parent and Community Engagement Plan

**Teachers**
- Yes: 86%
- No: 12%
- Not sure: 2%

**Parents**
- Yes: 42%
- No: 19%
- Not sure: 39%
Six Types of Parent-School-Community Involvement

1. **Parenting**: Assisting families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students

2. **Communicating**: Having effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and student progress

3. **Volunteering**: Providing a wide range of volunteer opportunities for parents and community members to support the school

4. **Learning at home**: Involving families with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions

5. **Decision making**: Including parents as participants in school decisions

6. **Collaborating with the community**: Coordinating resources and services both from the community and to the community

Teachers and Parents Rate Schools Highest on Communication and Lowest on Assisting with Parenting Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating Schools on Six Types of School-Parent Involvement</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having effective communications</td>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart2.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing volunteer opportunities</td>
<td><img src="chart3.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart4.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving families with homework/curriculum</td>
<td><img src="chart5.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart6.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including parents in school decisions</td>
<td><img src="chart7.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart8.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating with the community</td>
<td><img src="chart9.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart10.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with parenting skills</td>
<td><img src="chart11.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
<td><img src="chart12.png" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents in Schools with High Parent Engagement...

Parents reporting high-quality parent engagement are...

- More likely to be optimistic that student achievement will be better in five years (73% vs. 45%)
- More likely to agree that they and their child’s teachers work together to help their child succeed in school (96% vs. 55%)
- More likely to rate other parents at their child’s school as excellent or good in effectively engaging them in their child’s school and education (82% vs. 21%)
- More likely to rate the PTA/PTO (76% vs. 35%) and other parents (66% vs. 35%) as absolutely essential or very important sources of information
Characteristics of Teachers with High Job Satisfaction: Parent-School Engagement

Teachers with high job satisfaction are...

• **More** likely to agree that their school *helps all parents understand what they can do at home* to support a student’s success in school (95% vs. 87%)

• **More** likely to say their *school has a plan for parent and community engagement that is linked to specific goals* for improving student learning and healthy development (93% vs. 81%)

• **More** likely to rate their preparation and support to engage parents effectively as “excellent” or “good” from the following:
  – The principal of their school (90% vs. 72%)
  – Their professional development (82% vs. 67%)
  – Pre-service training (76% vs. 61%)
1. Teachers are less satisfied with their careers.
   - Perceptions of job security have declined along with job satisfaction.
   - Professional experiences, school resources and parent involvement are important factors in job satisfaction.

2. The effects of the economic downturn are felt widely and deeply in education.
   - Budget reductions are widespread across schools.
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   - Schools are helping parents engage in their children’s education.
   - The quality of different types of parent and community involvement varies.
Teachers, Parents and the Economy

The full report for this survey and the previous reports in the series are available at:
www.metlife.com/teachersurvey

Susan Moore Johnson
Project on the Next Generation of Teachers
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Decline in Teachers’ Satisfaction

- Financial recession and threat of layoffs

- Responses by a new generation of teachers: Different attitudes, different options

- Retained, but disengaged?
School as the site of satisfaction

- Individual vs. the organization
- Students: more needs, fewer supports
- Colleagues: less time to collaborate
- Principals: inclusive leadership to address complex challenges
- School culture: trust and order
External demands and constraints

- Accountability and Sanctions
- Value-added scores made public
- Reduced time for teaching and discovery
- State laws eliminating tenure, constraining collective bargaining
Visit our website:

Project on the Next Generation of Teachers
http://www.gse.harvard.edu/~ngt/
What Can Be Done to Improve Teacher Satisfaction?

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What Can Be Done to Improve Teacher Satisfaction?

Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Survey: Teacher Job Satisfaction Hits a Low Point**
Teacher job satisfaction is at the lowest it's been in more than two decades, likely as a consequence—at least in part—of the economic downturn and resulting cuts to education budgets, according to a national survey.
SCALING UP
STUDENT SUCCESS
REGISTER TODAY!
edweek.org/go/spring2012
Promo code: WEBINAR20