



A PREVIEW OF RESULTS

VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM

A SURVEY OF AMERICA'S EDUCATORS

Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America's Educators is a ground-breaking, nationally representative survey written for teachers, by teachers. Produced by the teacher-led organization Educators for Excellence (E4E), the national survey was designed by current classroom teachers from across the country to gather teachers' valuable insight into what's working, what holds promise, and what needs to be changed in their schools, districts, unions, states, and at the federal level.

A decision is expected early this summer from the U.S. Supreme Court on *Janus v. AFSCME*, a case regarding the right of labor unions to collect mandatory fees from nonunion members for activities, including representation for wages and benefits, grievances and disciplinary matters. The Janus decision will have major implications for teachers unions' future memberships and revenue, so E4E is sharing survey results now relating to this case and to teachers' thoughts about unions more generally.

**E4E will release the full survey results on August 1.
Learn more at e4e.org/teachersurvey.**



Teachers largely regard unions as essential

Eighty-five percent of all teachers regard unions as essential or important, as do 74 percent of nonunion teachers.

For current union members, 94 percent find the union to be essential or important.

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Do you think of teachers unions or associations as...?

	Total	Union	Nonunion	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
Absolutely essential	52%	69%	32%	53%	43%
Important, but not essential	33%	25%	42%	33%	34%
Something you could do without	10%	5%	16%	10%	14%
Not sure	5%	1%	10%	5%	8%

Teachers largely regard unions as essential

Without collective bargaining or a union, 86 percent of teachers believe the working conditions and salaries of teachers would be much worse, which is a nine percentage point increase since Educator Sector's 2012 *Trending Toward Reform* survey asked the same question.

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**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Without collective bargaining, the working conditions and salaries of teachers would be much worse.**

	Total	Union	Nonunion	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
Strongly agree	44%	58%	28%	45%	35%
Somewhat agree	42%	36%	50%	42%	51%
Somewhat disagree	11%	5%	18%	11%	11%
Strongly disagree	3%	1%	5%	3%	3%

Teachers largely regard unions as essential

Eighty-five percent of teachers believe they would be vulnerable to school politics or administrators who abuse their power.

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**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Without a union, teachers would be vulnerable to school politics or administrators who abuse their power.**

	Total	Union	Nonunion	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
Strongly agree	52%	65%	36%	51%	54%
Somewhat agree	33%	28%	40%	33%	33%
Somewhat disagree	12%	6%	19%	13%	9%
Strongly disagree	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%

Teachers prioritize wages, benefits, and job protections over politics

Union teachers and nonunion teachers believe it is critically important for unions to bargain for wages, health and retirement benefits, and protect teachers' jobs.

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How important to you are each of the following for teachers unions to do?

	Critically Important		Important, but Not Critical		Somewhat Important		Not that Important		Not Important At All	
	UNION	NONUNION	UNION	NONUNION	UNION	NONUNION	UNION	NONUNION	UNION	NONUNION
Bargains for wages / salary	81%	71%	12%	19%	5%	8%	1%	1%	–	1%
Bargains for health / retirement benefits	78%	69%	14%	19%	6%	10%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Protects teachers' jobs	76%	72%	16%	13%	7%	12%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Provides information about political candidates and their issue positions	22%	21%	31%	27%	25%	26%	13%	12%	9%	13%
Supports / endorses political candidates	15%	13%	23%	18%	26%	30%	22%	21%	14%	18%

Most teachers believe their unions' policy decisions are not greatly aligned with their own policy preferences

Despite being the primary agent for teachers in policy decisions, 52 percent of union teachers said their union represents their perspective only somewhat, while another 20 percent said that it did not very much or did not at all.

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To what degree do you believe that your perspective as a teacher is represented in policy decisions in your union?

	Union Total	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
A great deal	28%	28%	21%
Somewhat	52%	52%	56%
Not very much	15%	15%	23%
None at all	5%	5%	—

Unions are currently engaging only approximately half of their members

Although they feel the unions are important, teachers' engagement is relatively low with only about half of union members reporting that they voted in a union election, spoke to a union representative, or attended a union meeting in the past year.

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Which of the following union activities, if any, have you done in the past year?

	Union Total	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
Read news from your union	61%	63%	42%
Vote in a union election	53%	54%	34%
Speak with your union representative	51%	52%	33%
Attend a union meeting or event	50%	50%	52%
Complete a survey from your union	48%	50%	26%
Participate in a rally organized by your union	18%	17%	28%
Take an online advocacy action organized by your union	15%	14%	25%
Serve as an elected or appointed union representative	13%	13%	18%
Other	1%	1%	—
None of the above	6%	5%	7%

More than half of teachers have heard nothing about *Janus v. AFSCME*

As of April 2018, 78 percent of teachers had heard not much or nothing about the case.

And, a full 47 percent of union members said they had heard nothing about the case.

How much have you heard or read about the *Janus v. the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)* Supreme Court case?

	Total	Union	Nonunion	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
A lot	7%	10%	3%	7%	11%
Some	15%	20%	10%	15%	15%
Not much	21%	23%	19%	20%	31%
Nothing at all	57%	47%	68%	58%	43%

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Unions could face membership and revenue challenges if, as expected, the Supreme Court rules in favor of Janus

When asked if they would be likely to actively opt in to their union if they were not automatically enrolled, eight out of ten said they would be likely to do so.

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If you were not automatically enrolled into your union membership, how likely would you be in the coming year to actively opt in?

	Union Total	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
Very likely	60%	61%	33%
Somewhat likely	22%	20%	51%
Not very likely	5%	5%	8%
Not likely at all	7%	8%	3%
Not sure	5%	5%	5%

Unions could face membership and revenue challenges if, as expected, the Supreme Court rules in favor of Janus

For nonunion members currently paying fair-share fees, six out of ten would be likely to opt out of doing so.

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If the Supreme Court case rules in favor of Mark Janus, you would have the option to opt out of paying agency fees to a union. How likely would you be to opt out of paying agency fees to a union?

	Nonunion Total	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools
Very likely	36%	36%	38%
Somewhat likely	25%	25%	30%
Not very likely	13%	12%	20%
Not likely at all	9%	10%	2%
Not sure	17%	18%	10%

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Janus v. AFSCME Background

Currently, all public sector workers have the right to opt out of joining a union. In some states, public sector unions have had the right to collect “fair share” fees from those who opt out in order to cover the cost of the services the union is required to provide to all employees. Unions can only use fair share fees for non-political activities, such as negotiating contracts, legal representation, or speaking up on general policy issues like professional standards for teachers or access to educational resources for students. They cannot use these fees for political activities such as lobbying or supporting candidates.

If Janus prevails, the Supreme Court would rule that all union activities constitute political speech, making it unconstitutional to charge compulsory dues. This would reduce the revenue that unions use to negotiate job matters like fair pay, access to healthcare and retirement benefits even though they would still be required to do this on behalf of all teachers. Public sector workers, which include teachers, would have to actively opt in to join a union. In addition to losing members, their dues and the fair-share fees of non-members, unions may have the added expense of collecting dues no longer automatically deducted from paychecks, thereby further draining resources used for providing services to teachers.

About the Survey

E4E's mission is to ensure that teachers have a leading voice in the policies that impact their students and profession. Even though policymakers at every level of the system are talking about teachers, they rarely are talking with teachers.

Voices from the Classroom: A Survey of America's Educators captures crucial insight on the views and opinions of representative sample of current public school teachers across the country on a wide variety of issues impacting their students and their profession. The full survey will be released on August 1.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted online from April 14–May 6, 2018 among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 full-time traditional public school and public charter school teachers. The survey questionnaire was developed in consultation with E4E member teachers from across the U.S. The instrument was written and administered by Gotham Research Group, an independent, New York-based research firm.

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