

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Geoff Garin, President, Hart Research Associates
DATE: April 11, 2016
RE: National survey reveals strong support for TeachStrong Agenda to improve public education in America

This memo summarizes the key findings from a national online survey among 871 adults, 558 parents of public school students in kindergarten through 12th grade, and 606 kindergarten through 12th grade public school teachers. The interviews were conducted February 10 to 17, 2016.

1. The prevailing view across the American public is that we profoundly undervalue teachers compared to other professions, despite the very important role that teachers play.

Seven in 10 (69%) adults and an even higher proportion of parents (75%) believe that public school teachers play a VERY important role in ensuring the continued well-being and success of local communities and the country overall. Greater proportions think this about teachers than about medical doctors (62%), college professors (37%), business professionals (29%), and lawyers (21%).

While the public acknowledges the important role that teachers play, three in four (74%) believe that as a country, we undervalue teachers in how we treat the teaching profession and support them.

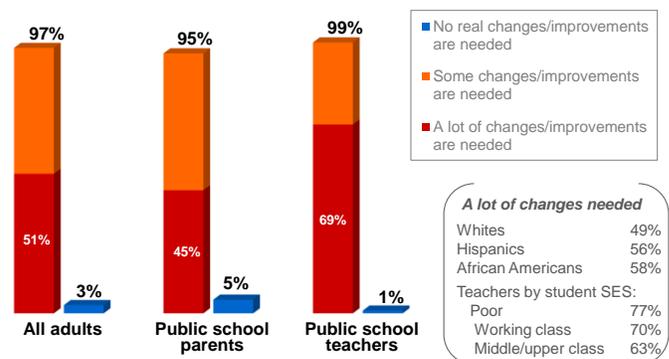
2. Nearly all those surveyed agree that changes and improvements are needed in the way we treat teachers.

Half (51%) of adults believe that A LOT of changes and improvements are needed, and an additional 46% believe that some changes and improvements are needed. Only 3% believe that no changes are needed in the way we treat teachers.

- The belief that we must change the way we treat teachers pervades all demographics, with more than nine in 10 Democrats, independents, and Republicans, as well as similarly high proportions of people who live in urban, suburban, and rural communities believing that changes and improvements are needed.

Agreement is nearly unanimous that changes and improvements are needed in the way we treat teachers.

Assessment of the way we treat teachers and the teaching profession in our country today



3. Large majorities of the public, parents, and teachers believe that an agenda to elevate the teaching profession and do more to support teachers would improve public education.

Four in five (80%) adults and similarly high proportions of parents (77%) and teachers (76%) agree with the following goal statement (rating it from 6 to 10 on a zero-to-10 scale), with majorities of all audiences **STRONGLY** agreeing (rating it from 8 to 10).

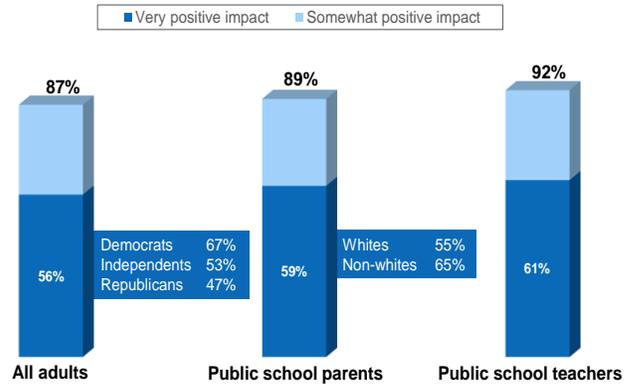
All students, especially those from low-income families, deserve to be taught by great teachers. To accomplish this goal, we must modernize and elevate the teaching profession. This effort will require transforming the systems and policies that support teachers throughout all stages of their careers.

Upon reviewing the nine principles (see [appendix](#)) that make up the agenda to elevate the teaching profession and support teachers, overwhelming majorities believe that if enacted, this approach will have a positive impact on the quality of education in our public schools, with majorities of adults (56%), parents (59%), and teachers (61%) believing that it will have a VERY positive impact.

There is strong consensus that enacting this agenda would make a real difference in improving all public schools, including schools in low-income communities. If the nine principles were enacted, four in five adults (79%), parents (82%), and teachers (81%) believe that public schools throughout the country would improve a great deal or fair amount.

Large majorities believe that this agenda would improve public education.

Expected impact of nine principles on the quality of education in public schools

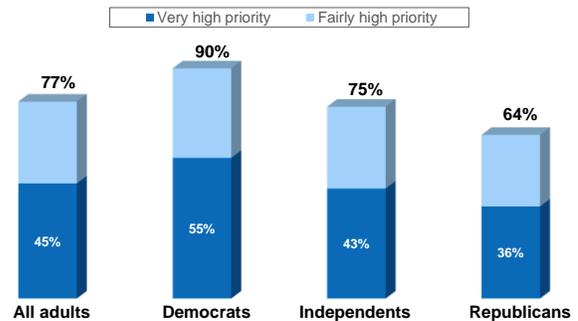


4. Republicans and Democrats alike want policymakers to enact an agenda to elevate the teaching profession and support teachers.

More than three in four adults (77%), parents (79%), and teachers (84%) want their elected leaders to place high priority on enacting this agenda. The desire for policymakers to enact this approach to improve education in our public schools is the majority view across the political spectrum: 90% of Democrats, 75% of independents, and 64% of Republicans want their elected leaders to act.

Republicans and Democrats alike want elected leaders to enact an agenda to elevate and support the teaching profession.

How high a priority should it be for our elected leaders to put into practice this approach to how we train and treat teachers in an effort to improve the quality of public education in America today?



Appendix

Nine principles of the TeachStrong Agenda

1. Provide support for new teachers through enhanced real-world classroom training programs and mentorships in the early stages of their careers.
2. Change our approach to the training and education of teachers to bring it more in line with classroom practice and a professional knowledge base, with consistently high standards for all teacher candidates.
3. Provide significantly more time, tools, and support for teachers to succeed, including time for planning, collaboration, and professional development.
4. Design training and professional development to better address student and teacher needs, and to encourage feedback and improvement.
5. Create career pathways that give teachers opportunities to lead and grow professionally.
6. Increase teacher compensation to a level similar to other professions in order to reflect the important role that teachers play.
7. Identify and recruit more people who have great potential to succeed as teachers, with a specific focus on diversity within the teacher workforce.
8. Raise the standards for teacher licensing so that a license is a meaningful measure of readiness to teach.
9. Ensure the granting of teacher tenure is a meaningful signal of professional accomplishment.