



Most Teachers Believe Public Educators Are Not Paid Fairly, Have Thought About Leaving the Profession

USA Today/Ipsos poll examines views on teacher pay, strikes, quality of education, and unions

Washington, DC, January 22, 2018 — In the midst of protests staged by Los Angeles teachers, Ipsos examined the outlook and attitudes of K-12 teachers nationwide. This poll, conducted in collaboration with USA TODAY, found that more than seven in ten (77%) school teachers agree that they have the right to strike. This is higher than a [USA Today/Ipsos poll of the general public last September](#), when 66% of Americans agreed that public school teachers have the right to protest.

Teachers face many barriers to educating their pupils, as they feel that they don't receive enough resources. Nearly eight in ten (79%) teachers report purchasing school supplies with their own money, and 64% have spent time outside school hours to help children. Half (52%) of teachers spend anywhere from 5 to 15 hours a week outside of work to complete paperwork. At the same time, some teachers report being stretched financially: 38% of teachers have worked a second job to make ends meet and 29% have ran up debt to make ends meet. Despite these setbacks, 92% of teachers say they love being a teacher and 73% said that if they could pick a career all over again, they would still decide to be teachers (including 45% who *strongly* agree with this sentiment).

When asked about the state of their school systems, a majority of teachers (62%) say that public schools are doing a better job of educating students than they were 10 years ago. On the other hand, sentiments toward charter schools are mixed: 62% of teachers agree that charter schools require more oversight and regulation, and that charter schools take money and good students away from public schools (59%). About half of teachers (53%) believe that charter schools don't pay teachers enough and that private and charter schools usually provide a better education than public schools (47%). Teachers (47%) are less likely than the general public (60%) to believe charter schools provide better education than public schools. Teachers who belong to a union are more likely to believe that charter schools would benefit from unions (56%) than non-unionized teachers (37%).

Sentiments toward unions and educational leadership vary based on union membership. Eight in ten (81%) unionized teachers approve of their local teachers' union. This approval drops by nearly half to 44% among non-unionized teachers. When it comes to their state union leadership, 79% of unionized teachers approve while 42% of non-unionized teachers approve. Approval of the national teacher's union stands at 77% among unionized teachers and 51% among non-unionized teachers. Unionized teachers have a stronger belief that teachers' unions improve the quality of education (79%) than non-unionized teachers (53%), and they are also more likely to believe that teachers' unions improve the quality of teachers (75% vs. 52% non-union). There is one place of agreement, however; both unionized (62%) and non-unionized teachers (64%) agree that unions make it harder to fire bad teachers.

Thinking about their motivations to become a teacher, virtually all say that they became a teacher because they like teaching children and teens (94%). 77% of them also said that they became a teacher because they wanted a stable career. Almost eight in ten teachers agree that public schools are worth the tax money that goes into them (78%) and more than half encourage their own children (56%) and their best students (54%) to become teachers.

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1. Do you currently work as an educator in:

	Total (n = 504)	Unionized Teachers (n = 236)	Non-unionized teachers (n = 239)
Kindergarten	17%	15%	19%
1-6 grade	40	34	46
7-8 grade	12	16	10
9-10 grade	27	33	20
11-12 grade	32	33	32

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Select one for each)

% Agree	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
I became a teacher because I like teaching children and teens	94%	94%	94%
I love being a teacher	92%	93%	90%
I became a teacher because I wanted a stable career	77%	81%	73%
I have thought about leaving my job as a teacher	54%	52%	56%
It is easy to become a teacher	35%	43%	28%

a. I became a teacher because I wanted a stable career

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	34%	40%	31%
Somewhat agree	43	42	42
Somewhat disagree	14	13	15
Strongly disagree	8	6	11
Don't know	1	*	2
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>25</i>

b. I became a teacher because I like teaching children and teens

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	70%	74%	68%
Somewhat agree	24	20	26
Somewhat disagree	4	5	4
Strongly disagree	1	*	1
Don't know	1	*	1
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>94%</i>	<i>94%</i>	<i>94%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>

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c. I love being a teacher

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	55%	60%	52%
Somewhat agree	37	33	38
Somewhat disagree	4	3	5
Strongly disagree	3	2	3
Don't know	2	1	2
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>92%</i>	<i>93%</i>	<i>90%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>8</i>

d. I have thought about leaving my job as a teacher

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	26%	28%	23%
Somewhat agree	28	24	33
Somewhat disagree	21	20	22
Strongly disagree	22	25	21
Don't know	2	3	1
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>56%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>43</i>

e. It is easy to become a teacher

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	14%	19%	10%
Somewhat agree	21	24	18
Somewhat disagree	39	37	41
Strongly disagree	25	20	31
Don't know	1	*	*
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>35%</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>28%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>72</i>

3. **[Base: Teachers who have thought about leaving their jobs]** In your own words, please describe the reasons why you have thought about leaving your job as a teacher. **[Awaiting open-ended responses]**
4. **[Base: Teachers who have not thought about leaving their jobs]** In your own words, what has kept you the most engaged with the teaching profession? **[Awaiting open-ended responses]**

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5. In the last year, have you done any of the following (Select all that apply)

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Purchased school supplies with your own money	79%	79%	80%
Devoted your own time outside of school hours to helping a student or students	64	58	70
Worked a second job to make ends meet	38	33	40
Run up debt to make ends meet	29	31	28
None of these	8	8	8

6. Do you approve or disapprove of the following (Select one for each)

% Approve	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Your school district administration	67%	69%	67%
National teachers' unions	63%	77%	51%
Your local teachers' union	62%	81%	44%
Your state teachers' union leadership	59%	79%	42%
Your state Department of Education leadership	53%	59%	47%
The U.S. Department of Education leadership	41%	49%	35%

a. National teachers' unions

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly approve	23%	36%	12%
Somewhat approve	21	23	19
Lean toward approve	19	18	20
Lean toward disapprove	10	9	10
Somewhat disapprove	6	7	5
Strongly disapprove	6	2	8
Don't know	15	4	25
<i>Approve (net)</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>51%</i>
<i>Disapprove (net)</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>24</i>

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b. Your local teachers' union

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly approve	24%	35%	16%
Somewhat approve	21	30	13
Lean toward approve	17	17	16
Lean toward disapprove	10	11	9
Somewhat disapprove	5	3	6
Strongly disapprove	5	2	8
Don't know	18	2	33
<i>Approve (net)</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>81%</i>	<i>44%</i>
<i>Disapprove (net)</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>23</i>

c. Your school district administration

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly approve	20%	23%	19%
Somewhat approve	28	30	27
Lean toward approve	19	15	22
Lean toward disapprove	14	15	11
Somewhat disapprove	8	6	10
Strongly disapprove	7	8	6
Don't know	4	2	6
<i>Approve (net)</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>67%</i>
<i>Disapprove (net)</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>27</i>

d. Your state teachers' union leadership

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly approve	21%	30%	14%
Somewhat approve	20	29	13
Lean toward approve	18	20	15
Lean toward disapprove	12	8	15
Somewhat disapprove	5	6	5
Strongly disapprove	4	2	6
Don't know	20	5	31
<i>Approve (net)</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>42%</i>
<i>Disapprove (net)</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>26</i>

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e. Your state Department of Education leadership

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly approve	13%	18%	8%
Somewhat approve	19	21	17
Lean toward approve	21	20	22
Lean toward disapprove	18	17	19
Somewhat disapprove	14	11	17
Strongly disapprove	8	8	8
Don't know	8	5	8
<i>Approve (net)</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>47%</i>
<i>Disapprove (net)</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>44</i>

f. The U.S. Department of Education leadership

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly approve	13%	19%	9%
Somewhat approve	14	17	12
Lean toward approve	14	14	14
Lean toward disapprove	16	15	16
Somewhat disapprove	13	9	17
Strongly disapprove	24	21	26
Don't know	6	5	6
<i>Approve (net)</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>49%</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Disapprove (net)</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>60</i>

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements (Select one for each)

% Agree	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Public school teachers have the right to strike	77%	83%	73%
Teachers' unions improve the quality of education	65%	79%	53%
Teachers' unions make it harder to fire bad teachers	63%	62%	64%
Teachers' unions improve the quality of teachers	63%	75%	52%
Public school teachers are paid fairly	31%	39%	24%

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Press Release – continued –

a. Public school teachers have the right to strike

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	47%	54%	39%
Somewhat agree	31	29	33
Somewhat disagree	11	9	14
Strongly disagree	5	4	5
Don't know	6	4	8
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>19</i>

b. Teachers' unions improve the quality of education

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	25%	34%	18%
Somewhat agree	40	44	35
Somewhat disagree	16	15	17
Strongly disagree	8	5	12
Don't know	10	2	18
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>53%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>29</i>

c. Teachers' unions make it harder to fire bad teachers

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	29%	29%	29%
Somewhat agree	34	33	35
Somewhat disagree	17	24	11
Strongly disagree	8	8	7
Don't know	12	6	18
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>64%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>18</i>

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d. Teachers' unions improve the quality of teachers

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	24%	34%	16%
Somewhat agree	39	41	36
Somewhat disagree	17	14	18
Strongly disagree	9	7	11
Don't know	11	4	19
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>29</i>

e. Public school teachers are paid fairly

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	15%	20%	11%
Somewhat agree	16	19	13
Somewhat disagree	27	22	32
Strongly disagree	39	36	42
Don't know	3	3	2
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>24%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>74</i>

8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements (Select one for each)

% Agree	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Public schools are worth the tax money that goes into them.	78%	83%	73%
Public schools are doing a better job of educating students than they were 10 years ago.	62%	65%	59%
Charter schools require more oversight and regulation.	62%	69%	54%
Charter schools take money and good students away from public schools.	59%	67%	52%
Charter schools don't pay teachers enough.	53%	58%	49%
Private and charter schools usually provide a better education than public schools.	47%	43%	48%
Charter schools would benefit from unions.	45%	56%	37%

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a. Charter schools require more oversight and regulation.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	33%	37%	30%
Somewhat agree	29	32	24
Somewhat disagree	13	11	15
Strongly disagree	9	8	9
Don't know	16	11	22
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>69%</i>	<i>54%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>25</i>

b. Charter schools don't pay teachers enough.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	27%	31%	23%
Somewhat agree	27	27	26
Somewhat disagree	11	12	11
Strongly disagree	3	3	4
Don't know	32	27	35
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>53%</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>49%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>

c. Charter schools would benefit from unions.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	20%	28%	14%
Somewhat agree	25	27	23
Somewhat disagree	14	14	12
Strongly disagree	8	4	11
Don't know	34	26	41
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>37%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>23</i>

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d. Charter schools take money and good students away from public schools.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	33%	39%	28%
Somewhat agree	26	27	24
Somewhat disagree	22	18	27
Strongly disagree	8	7	9
Don't know	11	8	12
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>67%</i>	<i>52%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>36</i>

e. Private and charter schools usually provide a better education than public schools.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	23%	24%	21%
Somewhat agree	24	19	27
Somewhat disagree	25	25	24
Strongly disagree	21	24	19
Don't know	8	7	9
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>47%</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>48%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>43</i>

f. Public schools are doing a better job of educating students than they were 10 years ago.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	23%	29%	17%
Somewhat agree	39	36	41
Somewhat disagree	18	14	21
Strongly disagree	12	12	11
Don't know	8	8	9
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>59%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>33</i>

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g. Public schools are worth the tax money that goes into them.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	51%	59%	44%
Somewhat agree	27	24	29
Somewhat disagree	14	10	17
Strongly disagree	5	4	6
Don't know	4	2	5
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>83%</i>	<i>73%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>23</i>

9. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements (Select one for each)

% Agree	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
If I could pick a career all over again, I would still decide to be a teacher.	73%	80%	69%
I encourage my best students to become teachers.	54%	59%	49%
[Parents] I would encourage my child to become a teacher.	56%	57%	58%

a. If I could pick a career all over again, I would still decide to be a teacher.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	45%	50%	44%
Somewhat agree	28	30	25
Somewhat disagree	14	10	16
Strongly disagree	6	6	7
Don't know	7	4	9
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>80%</i>	<i>69%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>22</i>

b. I encourage my best students to become teachers.

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	21%	24%	17%
Somewhat agree	32	35	33
Somewhat disagree	28	26	31
Strongly disagree	10	10	12
Don't know	8	6	8
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>59%</i>	<i>49%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>43</i>

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c. I would encourage my child to become a teacher.

	Parents (n = 234)	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Strongly agree	24%	33%	14%
Somewhat agree	32	24	43
Somewhat disagree	17	19	15
Strongly disagree	16	11	21
Don't know	11	13	7
<i>Agree (net)</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>57%</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>Disagree (net)</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>36</i>

10. How many years have you taught in K-12 grade?

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
1-9 years	51%	47%	53%
10-19 years	30	35	27
20-29 years	13	13	10
30-39 years	4	5	5
40-49 years	0	0	1
50-55 years	0	0	1
Mean	11.6	11.7	11.8

11. Is the school where you do most of your teaching (Select one)

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Public	77%	89%	65%
Private - Parochial	9	6	12
Private - Non-parochial	9	4	15
Charter	5	2	7

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12. What subjects do you principally teach? (Select all that apply)

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
Elementary/all subjects	31%	30%	33%
English	22	23	22
Science, technology, engineering or math	21	21	22
History, civics, or other social sciences	18	21	15
Special Education/all subjects	15	17	14
Arts or music	9	11	7
Athletics or physical education	8	8	8
Foreign language	6	6	5
Other	11	10	12

13. What state is your school in? [Data can be found in detailed tables]

14. Not counting grading, how much time do you spend per week completing paperwork?

	Total	Unionized Teachers	Non-unionized teachers
2 to 5 hours a week	31%	27%	36%
5 to 10 hours a week	33	33	32
10 to 15 hours a week	19	23	15
15 to 20 hours a week	8	8	8
More than 20 hours a week	4	7	2
Don't know	5	2	7

15. Do you belong to a teachers' union? (Select one)

	Total
No	46%
Yes	45
Don't know	3
Prefer not to say	6

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About the Study

These are findings from an Ipsos poll conducted January 11 - 17, 2019. For the survey, a sample of 504 teachers age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii were interviewed online in English. The sample includes 236 unionized teachers, and 239 non-unionized teachers.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos's online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online nonprobability sampling polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.0 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=504, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=6.5).

The poll also has a credibility interval plus or minus 7.3 percentage points for unionized teachers and, plus or minus 7.3 for non-unionized teachers.

For more information about conducting research intended for public release or Ipsos' online polling methodology, please visit our [Public Opinion Polling and Communication](#) page where you can download our brochure, see our public release protocol, or contact us.

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Press Release – continued –

About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

Ipsos has media partnerships with the most prestigious news organizations around the world. In Canada, the U.S., UK, and internationally, Ipsos Public Affairs is the media polling supplier to Reuters News, the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. We provide boutique-style customer service and work closely with our clients, while also undertaking global research.

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Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

GAME CHANGERS

« Game Changers » is the Ipsos signature.

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society.

We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.

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