

# AAE 2011 Member Survey

## Teachers Speak Out

AAE members address the most pressing issues facing the American education system, including school choice, technology, attracting new teachers to the workforce, and collective bargaining.



**2011** has been a year of unprecedented education and labor reform nearly nationwide as teachers have questioned and debated policies that affect them in the classroom. While reformers are championing new and innovative ideas, an authentic teacher voice is critical in establishing a system that works for students and teachers alike. AAE fills this need with valuable input from our well-informed and experienced membership base.

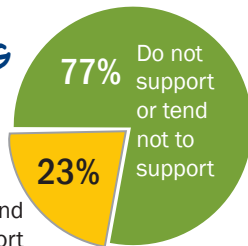
Clearly the education landscape is changing rapidly. This year's membership survey polls our members from coast to coast and paints the picture of a teacher workforce overwhelmingly committed to staying in the classroom until retirement (85 percent), using technology in the classroom at least some of the time (92 percent), and who consider themselves well-versed on education policy (79 percent).

Among the topics explored in this membership survey are some of the most pressing issues facing the American education system, including school choice, technology, attracting new teachers to the workforce, and collective bargaining. While educators have approached these new ideas with caution, overall, AAE members are supportive of commonsense reform, local control, and new and emerging technologies.

## FEDERAL FUNDING

Do you support increased federal funding and regulations in your state?

Support or tend to support



## Federal Education Spending and Washington Mandates

With new legislation designed to increase federal spending in education through competitive grants and teacher union bailouts, AAE members stress local control, and are suspect of increased federal assistance with ties to Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Department of Education. Seventy-seven percent of survey respondents do not support increased federal spending on education at the expense of increased regulations in their respective states.

Further, 83 percent of AAE members do not support a national curriculum, and are not interested in their state being subject to the political whims of the federal bureaucracy. Teachers believe states should have the power to design individualized curriculum based on local needs.

## School Choice Policies

AAE members support certain laws that advance school choice. Seventy-eight percent of survey respondents agree with a law in Oklahoma that provides a tax credit to individuals and corporations that donate to organizations providing Opportunity Scholarships to students in failing schools.

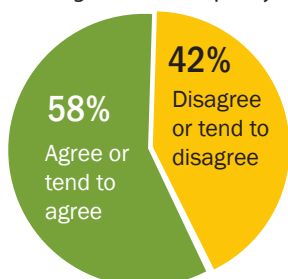
Sixty-one percent of those surveyed agree with an Arizona law providing tax credit scholarships to special education students in traditional public schools, allowing them to attend the public or private school of their choice.

While the union-backed establishment sees school choice as detrimental to the teaching profession, AAE member teachers support varied policies that empower parents to choose the learning environment best suited for their child.

## Virtual Education and Technology

As new technologies develop and emerge, school systems across the country are catching onto the possibilities of incorporating online learning and technology into the classroom. According to the data, 92 percent of AAE member teachers incorporate technology in their lesson plans at least some of the time.

In order to move toward digital learning, certain states are considering replacing textbooks with digital content, including interactive and adaptive multimedia. Do you agree or disagree with this policy?



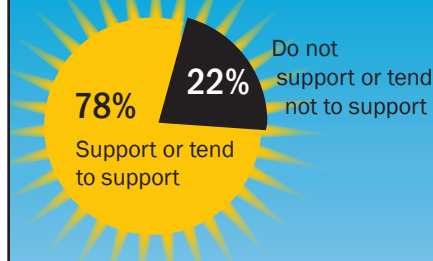
Another 58 percent of survey respondents agree with a policy that would phase out textbooks with digital content, including interactive and adaptive multimedia.

In Utah, a law guaranteeing high school student access to any course via an online da-

## SCHOOL CHOICE POLICIES

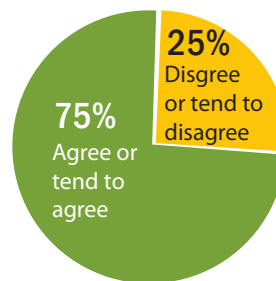
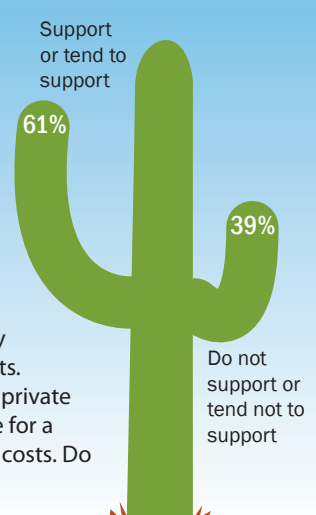
### TAX CREDITS FOR OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS

A law in Oklahoma provides a tax credit to individuals and corporations that donate to organizations providing "Opportunity Scholarships" to students. Scholarships go toward paying school tuition. Do you support this law?



### TAX CREDITS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

A law in Arizona provides tax credit scholarships to special education students in traditional public schools, allowing them to attend the public or private school of their choice. Included in these scholarships are considerations for foster care students, allowing them to attend the private school of their choice so that they may have more continuity in their education environments. After students are admitted to private schools, they apply to the state for a scholarship to help cover their costs. Do you support this law?



A law in Utah guarantees high school students personalized options via online access to any course including any AP, foreign language, or STEM course. Do you agree with this law?

tabase (including any AP, foreign language, or STEM course) sets the bar high for access to online learning. An overwhelming 75 percent of teachers support this law and its efforts to offer students personalized options.

While defenders of the status quo see virtual options as a threat, AAE members embrace new technologies as the wave of the future.

## Alternative Certification and Attracting New Teachers to the Profession

In the next ten years, half of our current teacher workforce will retire. As we search for ways to attract top college graduates and other seasoned professionals to the classroom, alternative certification programs and reforming teacher preparation have

been catching on as crucial components of creating a workforce for the twenty-first century.

AAE teachers overwhelmingly support new policies and programs designed to develop, attract, and sustain effective teachers. Seventy-one percent agree that in order to attract new teachers, and teachers with experience in the STEM subjects, we must explore alternative certifications, allowing degreed professionals an easier path to the classroom.

Seventy-eight percent agree with a Minnesota law that would allow future teachers to be permitted alternative certification through 200 hours of intensive preparation from a nonprofit-, university- or college-based, board-approved teacher preparation program. Teachers then would have to be evaluated by the district or charter school to be recommended for a standard license.

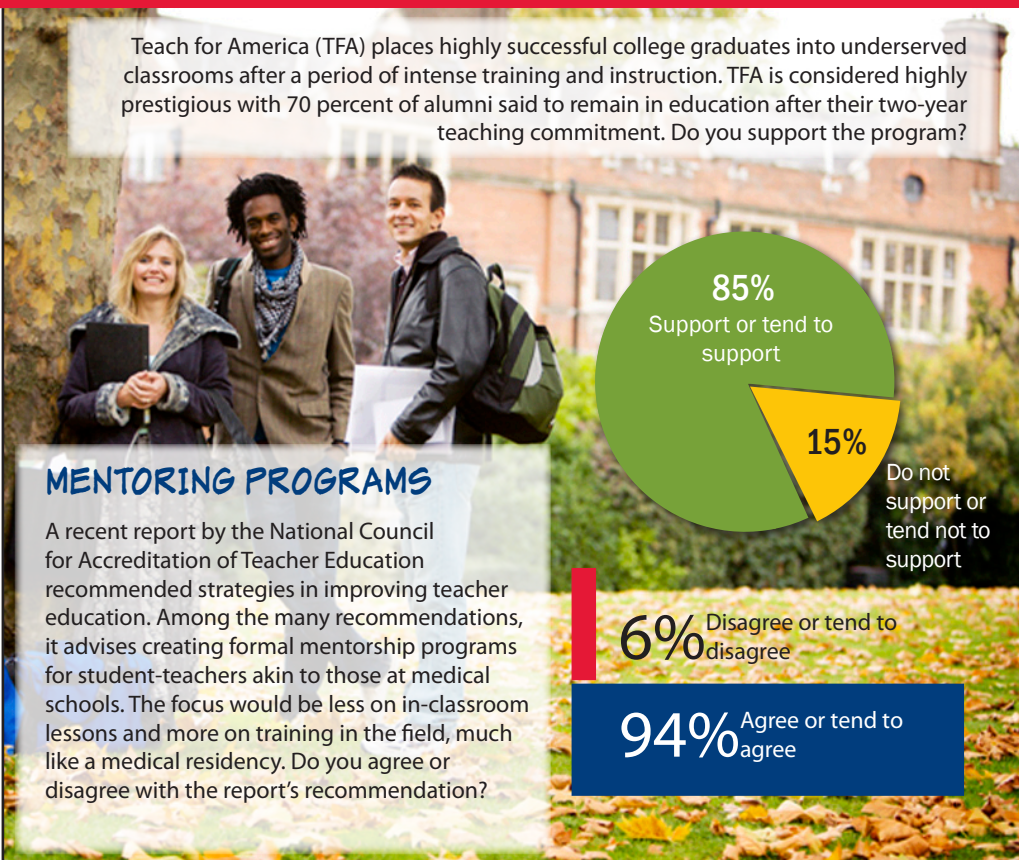
While union officials have publicly denounced programs such as Teach for America (TFA), 85 percent of AAE members support TFA and its mission to place recent top-tier college graduates into high-need classrooms after an intense training regimen.

AAE members also recognize the need for better preparing new teachers for classroom challenges. Ninety-four percent agree with a report by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education that recommends improving teacher education via mentorships programs akin to those at medical schools. Survey respondents overwhelmingly agree with focusing less on in-classroom lessons and more on training in the field, much like a medical residency.

### Collective Bargaining and Labor Policy

In the wake of forty-eight states considering labor reform legislation in 2011, the value and cost of the collective bargaining and one-size-fits-all system have been heavily debated. Seventy-eight percent of survey respondents assert that collective bargaining has little to no effect on their ability to teach effectively, and just 28 percent of teachers believe collective bargaining equates to a better compensated workforce.

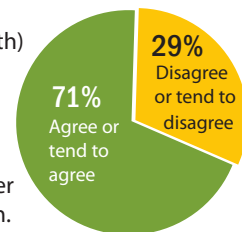
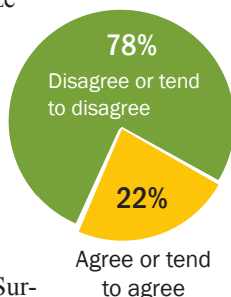
Teach for America (TFA) places highly successful college graduates into underserved classrooms after a period of intense training and instruction. TFA is considered highly prestigious with 70 percent of alumni said to remain in education after their two-year teaching commitment. Do you support the program?



### ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION

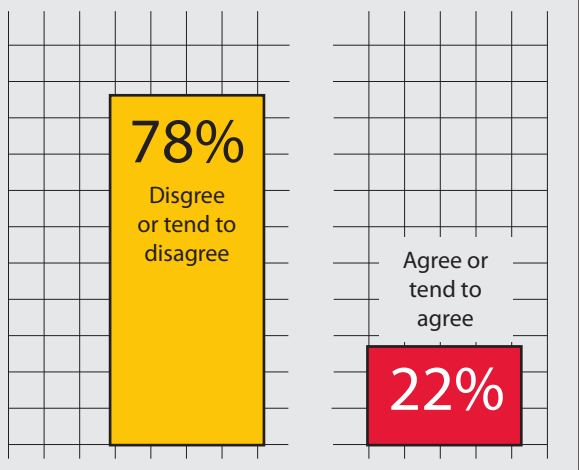
Under a Minnesota law, teachers, in combination with a nonprofit-, university- or college-based board-approved teacher preparation program would be permitted alternative certification through 200 hours of intensive preparation before entering the classroom. Teachers then have to be evaluated by the district or charter school to be recommended for a standard license.

In order to attract new teachers, and teachers with experience in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects, we need to explore alternative certifications, allowing degreed professionals an easier path to the classroom.



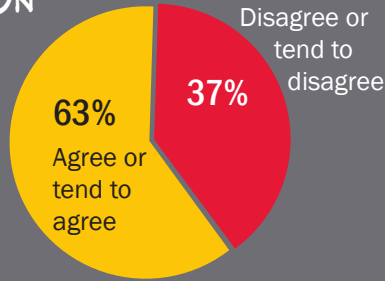
### NECESSITY OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Do you think collective bargaining is necessary to perform your job effectively?



# CONTRACT NEGOTIATION

"I would prefer to negotiate my own contract so that I can negotiate a salary and benefits package that best suits my lifestyle. For example, as I am unmarried, I would prefer to have a higher salary than have X amount of sick-days."



A majority of member teachers would prefer to negotiate their own contract to account for their unique circumstances. Sixty-three percent agree with the statement "I would prefer to negotiate my own contract so that I can negotiate a salary and benefits package that best suits my lifestyle. For example, as I am unmarried, I would prefer to have a higher salary than have X amount of sick-days."

A nearly unanimous 98 percent of teachers believe that teachers should have a choice in union membership, further advancing AAE's position that no educator should be required to pay union dues as a condition of employment. Moreover, 84 percent of those surveyed believe that teacher unions are hurting the teaching profession.

With regard to another union-backed policy, 74 percent of AAE members disagree with LIFO or "last in, first out," jumping nearly four points from last year's survey.

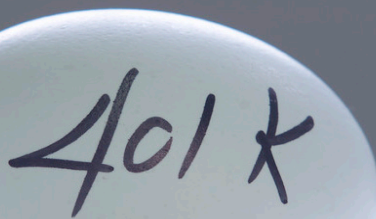
# PORTABLE PENSION

89%  
Support or tend to support

"Do you support a portable pension system that would allow teachers to take the pension money earned during their time in a school system to be rolled into a 401K in another job?"

Do not support or tend not to support

11%



# School Budgets and Pensions

Transparency and pension sustainability have been hot topics as states and local districts feel the effects of the recession on education budgets. Ninety-seven percent of teachers believe that school budgets should be shared with the public as a means to ensure state/federal monies are being allocated effectively.

Further, 89 percent of those surveyed would support a portable pension system that would allow teachers to take the pension money earned during their time in a school system to be rolled into a 401K in another job.

As the profession evolves, and the cry for reform grows louder, teachers are embracing commonsense solutions that put students first. AAE is listening, and we look forward to sharing your thoughts with policymakers and stakeholders on all levels. ■

# LABOR POLICIES

74%  
Do not support or tend to not support

Do you support the policy that retains or RIFs/pink slips teachers solely based on seniority? (Also known as "last in, first out" or LIFO)

26%  
Support or tend to support

84%  
Hurting

Do you believe teacher unions are helping or hurting the teaching profession?

16%  
Helping

98%  
Agree or tend to agree

Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

Teachers should have a choice in union membership. Membership in any education association should be entirely voluntary and no union fees should be paid as a condition of employment in any school.

2%  
Disagree or tend to disagree

The Association of American Educators is the largest national, non-union, professional educators' association, offering an alternative to the partisan politics and non-educational agendas of the teacher labor unions. AAE does not endorse, support or contribute to any political cause or candidacy. AAE has members in all 50 states and welcomes professionals from all education entities. Membership is \$15 per month which includes \$2 million professional liability insurance, employment rights coverage, professional development resources as well as a host of other benefits. Visit [aaeteachers.org](http://aaeteachers.org) for further information.