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Supporting Teacher Talent: The View From Generation Y

By Jane G. Coggshall, Ph.D., Amber Ott, Elen Behrstock, and Molly Lasagna



Supporting Teacher Talent

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Young Teachers Assess Old Views and Traditional Methods: 7 Out of 10 Gen Y Teachers Open to Incentive Pay, but Only 10 Percent Rate Standardized Testing as Successful Measure

New Research by Public Agenda and Learning Point Associates
Examines Gen Y Teacher Views



New York, NY—A new study released today paints a national picture of Generation Y teachers revealing an openness to incentive pay. Seventy-one percent of Gen Y teachers are open to rewarding teachers based on incentive pay, whereas only 10 percent of Gen Y teachers think that student performance on standardized tests is an “excellent” measure of teacher success.

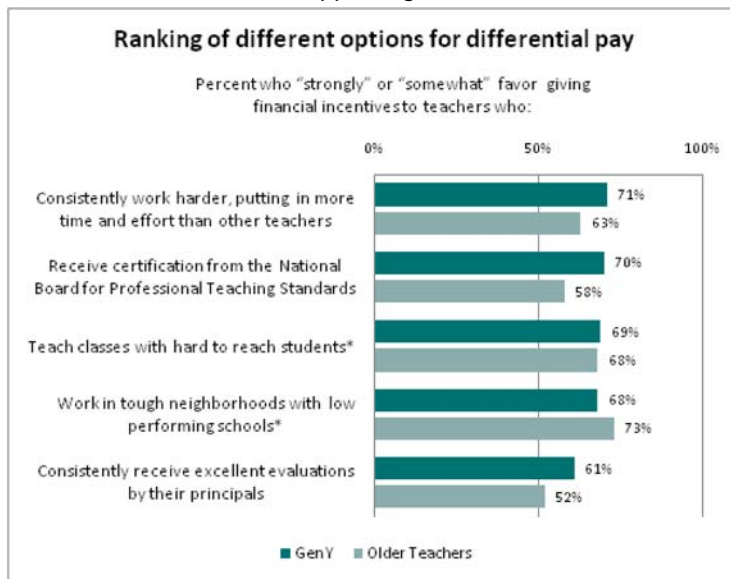
The nationwide study, [Supporting Teacher Talent: The View from Generation Y](#), from Public Agenda, a nonprofit research organization, and Learning Point Associates, a nonprofit education research and consulting organization, offers a comprehensive and nuanced look at the question of whether different generations bring different aspirations, concerns, and perspectives to teaching.

“Traditionally, teachers have strongly opposed differentiating pay based on student performance, but we found evidence that those attitudes may be changing among Gen Y teachers,” said Jane Coggshall, Ph.D., coprincipal investigator for the Supporting Teacher Talent study. “However, young teachers, like teachers of all ages, are concerned about using standardized test scores as the principal criterion.”

According to Sabrina Laine, Ph.D., chief program officer for educator quality at Learning Point Associates, “The study findings send a strong message to school leaders who need to recognize that to retain our best teachers, it is imperative to support teacher effectiveness through improved teaching and learning conditions because teachers, more than anything, want to make a difference for their students.”

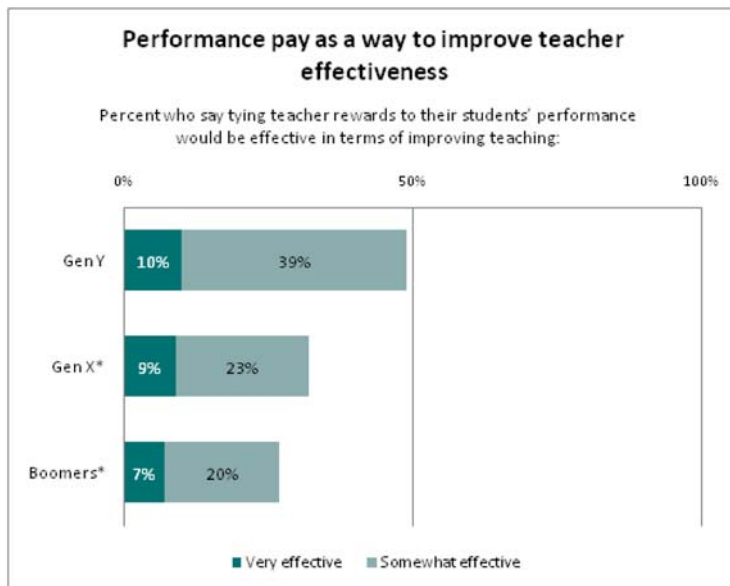
The study explores the attitudes of all teachers toward how they wish to be compensated, examines how they view their unions, and expands on the following findings:

- 1. Most Gen Y teachers support incentive pay for teachers who consistently work harder and put in more time and effort than other teachers.** Seventy-one percent of Gen Y teachers favor giving financial incentives to teachers who consistently work harder, putting in more time and effort than other teachers, with 25 percent “strongly” in favor.



* These differences are not statistically significant.

2. Gen Y teachers are deeply concerned about using standardized test scores to measure their performance. Only 10 percent of Gen Y teachers think that how well students perform on standardized tests is an "excellent" measure of success as a teacher, and 72 percent of them believe it is unfair to tie teacher pay to how well students perform when so many things that affect learning are beyond their control.



* Gen X teachers are defined as those teachers between the ages of 33 and 44. Baby Boomers are those teachers aged 45 to 63.

Despite openness to incentive pay, it is not Gen Y's first choice as a strategy for improving teaching. The idea of tying teacher rewards to student performance ranked last among 12 proposals, including requiring new teachers to spend more time teaching in classrooms under the supervision of experienced teachers, requiring teachers to pass tough tests of their knowledge of the subjects they are teaching, and ensuring that the latest technology is available in each classroom to aid instruction.

3. Teachers' concerns that unions sometimes protect seriously underperforming teachers have risen in recent years. Sixty-six percent of all teachers agreed that unions sometimes fight to protect teachers who should not be in the classroom, as compared with 48 percent of teachers who agreed with this statement in 2003.

Supporting Teacher Talent: The View from Generation Y is based on six focus group interviews conducted throughout the country as well as a national, random-sample survey of 890 public school teachers conducted in spring and summer 2009, including an oversample of 241 teachers aged 32 and under. The work was underwritten by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Joyce Foundation.

Funding & Acknowledgements



Founded in 1975 by social scientist and author Daniel Yankelovich and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Public Agenda works to help the nation's leaders better understand the public's point of view and to help average citizens better understand critical policy issues. Our in-depth research on how citizens think about policy has been praised for its credibility and fairness, by elected officials, experts and decision makers from across the political spectrum. Our citizen education materials and award-winning website, PublicAgenda.org, offer unbiased information about the challenges the country faces on a wide range of policy

issues.



Learning Point Associates is a nationally recognized, nonprofit education research and consulting organization with 25 years of experience working with educators and policymakers to transform education systems and student learning. Our reputation is built on a solid foundation of designing and conducting rigorous and relevant education research and evaluations; developing and delivering tools, services, and resources targeted at pressing education issues; and analyzing and synthesizing education policy trends and practices. Our professional staff of 150 continues to grow as our work expands both nationally and internationally. Our offices are located in Chicago, Washington, D.C., Naperville, Illinois; and New York. For more information, please visit <http://www.learningpt.org>.



Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.



The Joyce Foundation supports efforts to protect the natural environment of the Great Lakes, to reduce poverty and violence in the region, and to ensure that its people have access to good schools, decent jobs, and a diverse and thriving culture. We are especially interested in improving public policies, because public systems such as education and welfare directly affect the lives of so many people, and because public policies help shape private sector decisions about jobs, the environment, and the health of our communities. To ensure that public policies truly reflect public rather than private interests, we support efforts to reform the system of financing election campaigns.

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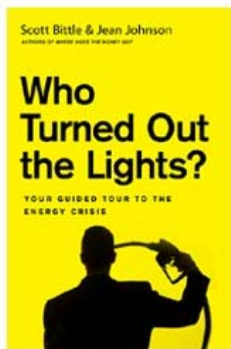
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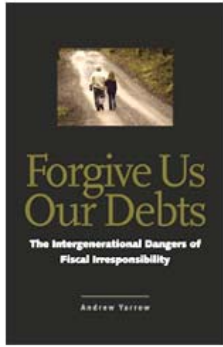
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