

2014 Wisconsin Education Survey

Prepared for:
Suzanne & Richard Pieper Family Foundation

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Gathering information to create and launch market research insights



Gather



Create



Launch

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Background & Objectives | 3 |
| Methodology | 4 |
| Executive Summary | 5 |
| Detailed Findings | 9 |
| Public's Respect for Occupations | 10 |
| Reasons for Respect Level | 12 |
| Shift in Opinion of Teachers | 22 |
| Reasons for Shift in Opinions of Teachers | 23 |
| Impact of Act 10 Disputes on Opinions of Teachers | 24 |
| Appendix | 25 |
| Respondent Profile | 26 |
| Statistical Reliability & Limitations | 28 |

Background & Objectives

Background & Objectives

- The Suzanne & Richard Pieper Family Foundation was interested in conducting a survey among Wisconsin residents to understand public perceptions of teachers throughout the state.
- The primary objectives for the research were to establish what Wisconsin residents think about Wisconsin public school teachers and to understand the factors impacting their opinions.
- Additional objectives included:
 - Assessing whether Wisconsin residents' opinions of Wisconsin public school teachers has shifted over the past four years
 - Evaluating the potential impact that the 2011 disputes over collective bargaining and the subsequent passage of Act 10 have had on Wisconsin residents' opinions of public school teachers.
- The results from this research will help inform teachers throughout the state regarding the public's perception of them and their profession.

Methodology

Methodology

- The Dieringer Research Group (The DRG) was commissioned to conduct an online survey among Wisconsin residents.
- In order to qualify to participate in the study, respondents needed to be Wisconsin residents age 18 or above.
 - A total of 388 surveys were completed between September 25 – October 1, 2014.
- The data was weighted in order to be representative of the Wisconsin adult population, based on U.S. Census data.
 - The following demographic measures were used:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Education
 - Geography

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Level of Respect for Wisconsin Public School Teachers

- Overall, Wisconsinites have a good deal of respect for Wisconsin public school teachers, with 72% rating them on a Top-2-Box basis in terms of level of respect for the profession.
 - Respect ratings for WI teachers is comparable to ratings for doctors (80%), military officers (79%), and police officers (68%).
 - The only profession with a significantly higher respect rating than teachers are small business owners (83%).
 - Those employed in education, including K-12 teachers, have a significantly higher level of respect for their profession than those not employed in education (89% vs. 71% respectively).
- The most frequently mentioned reasons* why Wisconsinites respect WI teachers include perceptions that:
 - Teaching is a challenging and important profession (33%)
 - WI teachers are doing a good job (22%)
 - Teachers are underpaid for the work they do (9%)
 - Teachers deserve respect and need support (8%)

**Note: % mentioned by total respondents (N=388)*

Executive Summary

Reasons for Lower Respect Ratings

- Fewer than one in ten Wisconsinites (9%) give teachers low respect ratings (on a Bottom-2-Box basis).
- The most frequently mentioned criticisms* of WI teachers include perceptions that:
 - Some teachers don't care/are not doing a good job (10%)
 - Teachers are too demanding (4%)
 - Criticisms of WEAC (4%)

Level of Respect for Local Schools and Teachers

- Wisconsinites who have children age 18 or younger were also asked to rate the level of respect they have for their local schools and teachers.
 - The level of respect for local schools and teachers closely mirrors that for WI teachers statewide, with 70% rating them on a Top-2-Box basis.
 - Just under one-fourth (23%) are neutral in terms of the level of respect they have for local schools and teachers, while fewer than one in ten (8%) give them low respect ratings (Bottom-2-Box).

**Note: % mentioned by total respondents (N=388)*

Executive Summary

Impact of Act 10 on Opinions of WI Public School Teachers

- Opinions about WI public school teachers have remained the same over the past four years for more than half of Wisconsinites (55%).
 - Nearly one-third (31%) state that their regard for WI teachers is greater.
 - Reasons for the positive shift closely align with the reasons for respecting the profession overall, including the fact that teaching is a hard job, as well as personal experiences with teachers.
 - Just over one in ten Wisconsinites (14%) indicate that their regard for WI teachers is less than it was four years ago.
 - Among those whose regard for teachers is lower than it was four years ago, disapproval of how teachers and the WEAC handled the collective bargaining dispute was commonly cited, along with the perception that teachers demand too much in terms of compensation and benefits.
 - Regard for teachers did not decrease among those employed as K-12 public school teachers.
- The disputes regarding Act 10 had a polarizing impact on opinions of WI teachers.
 - While more than half (56%) say the issue had no impact on their opinions of WI teachers, the balance are split between those whose impressions were positively impacted (22%) and those who were negatively impacted (22%).

Detailed Findings

Wisconsin public school teachers are well respected; only small business owners garner a significantly higher level of respect among Wisconsin residents.

- The level of respect for Wisconsin public school teachers (72%) is on par with other public service professions including doctors (80%), military officers (79%), and police officers (68%).
 - Those employed in education, including K-12 teachers, have a significantly higher level of respect for their profession than those not employed in education (89% vs. 71% respectively).
 - Among residents with children, 70% respect their local schools and teachers specifically.

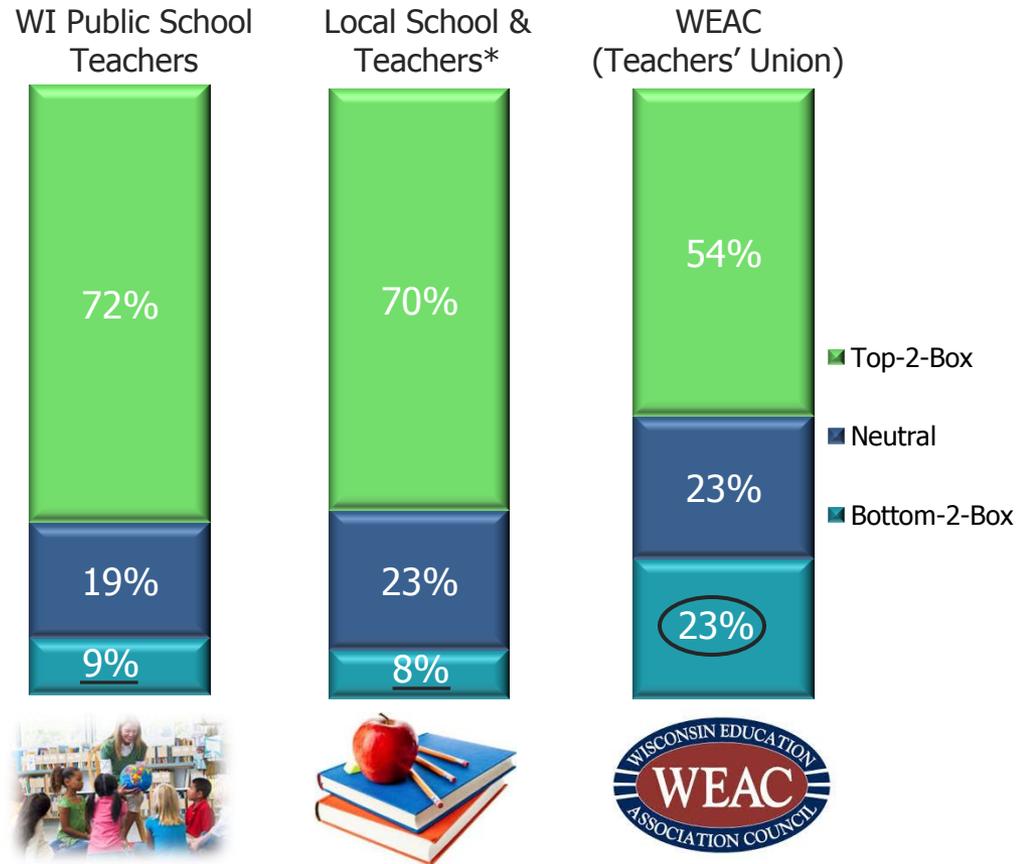


Q3. Please rate the following professions or organizations in terms of the overall level of respect you have for each, using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "Do Not Respect Them at All" and 5 meaning "Respect Them a Great Deal." (N=388) *Note: Local school and teachers asked only of those with presence of children in home (N=120)

Respect for Wisconsin teachers is significantly higher than for the teachers' union (WEAC).

- Nearly three-fourths of Wisconsinites (72%) have a good deal of respect for WI teachers, compared to just over half (54%) who respect the WEAC.
- Fewer than one in ten (9%) have lower respect for public school teachers, while nearly one-fourth of residents (23%) do not respect the WEAC.
 - Negative ratings for the WEAC are more likely to be among those not employed in the education field (24%), while only 9% of those employed in education rate the WEAC negatively.

Respect Level for Professions/Organizations



Q3. Please rate the following professions or organizations in terms of the overall level of respect you have for each, using a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning "Do Not Respect Them at All" and 5 meaning "Respect Them a Great Deal." (N=388) *Note: Local school and teachers asked only of those with presence of children in home (N=120) Circled numbers are significantly higher than underlined numbers at the 95% confidence level. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

More than half of Wisconsinites shared positive comments expressing their support for WI teachers.

Reasons for Respect Level Ratings for WI Public School Teachers (Total Respondents N=388)

55% Net Supporting Comments:

33% Teaching is a hard/important job

- Teachers have a hard job (19%)
- Teachers educate/influence children (9%)
- Teachers are important to society (3%)
- Students are disrespectful (3%)
- Classrooms are overpopulated (1%)
- Blamed for problems with children (1%)
- Teaching/education is important (1%)
- Lack of parental involvement (<1%)
- Teaching is a thankless job (<1%)

22% Teachers do a good job

- Teachers are good/great at their job (18%)
- Teachers are dedicated and care (5%)
- Teachers are well educated (<1%)

9% Teachers are underpaid/under-funded

- Teachers are underpaid (9%)
- There is little budget for education (1%)
- Teachers have to use their own money (<1%)

8% Teachers deserve respect

- Deserve respect/are under-appreciated (7%)
- Need more administrative support (1%)
- Criticism of Walker/State Government (1%)

1% Experience being a teacher

7% Net Neutral Comments:

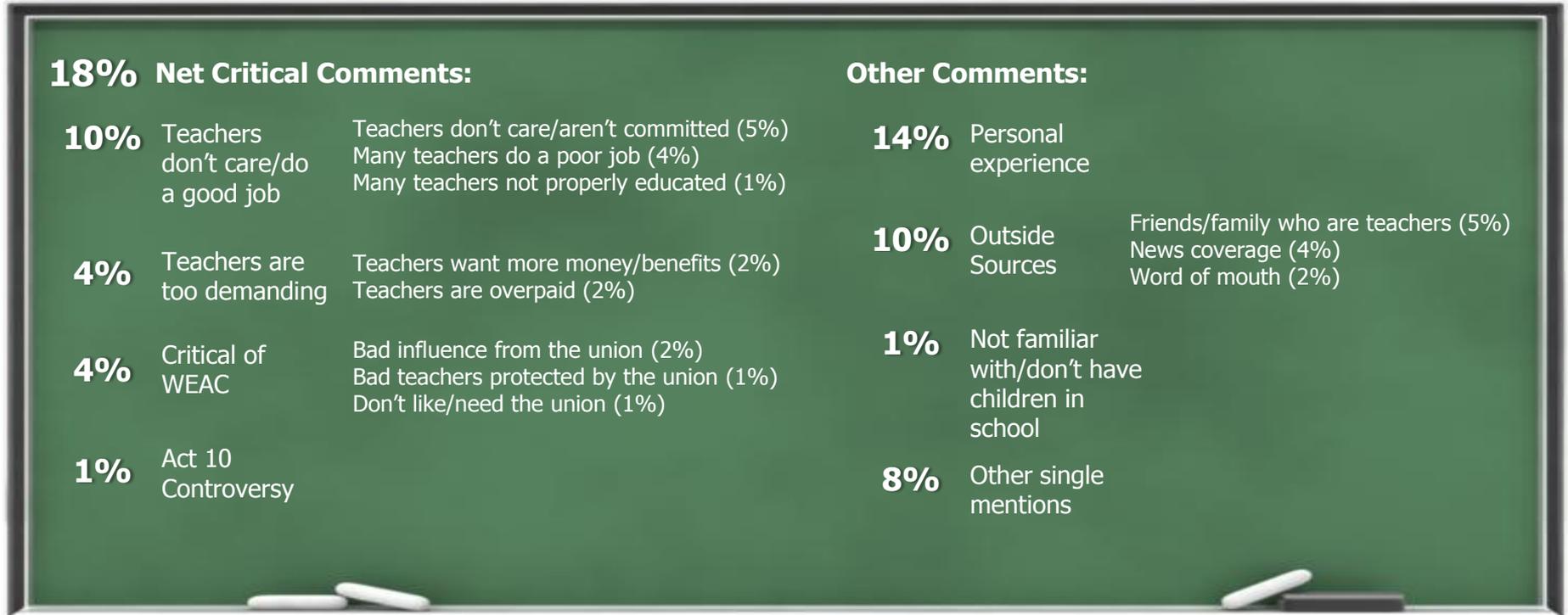
7% There are good & bad teachers

1% There is room for improvement

Q4. When thinking of Wisconsin Public School Teachers, why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3a RATING]? (N=388)
Note: Numbers may not add up to net amounts due to multiple responses.

Among those expressing criticisms of WI teachers, comments regarding teachers' commitment and poor job performance were mentioned most frequently.

Reasons for Respect Level Ratings for WI Public School Teachers (Total Respondents N=388)



Q4. When thinking of Wisconsin Public School Teachers, why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3a RATING]? (N=388)
Note: Numbers may not add up to net amounts due to multiple responses.

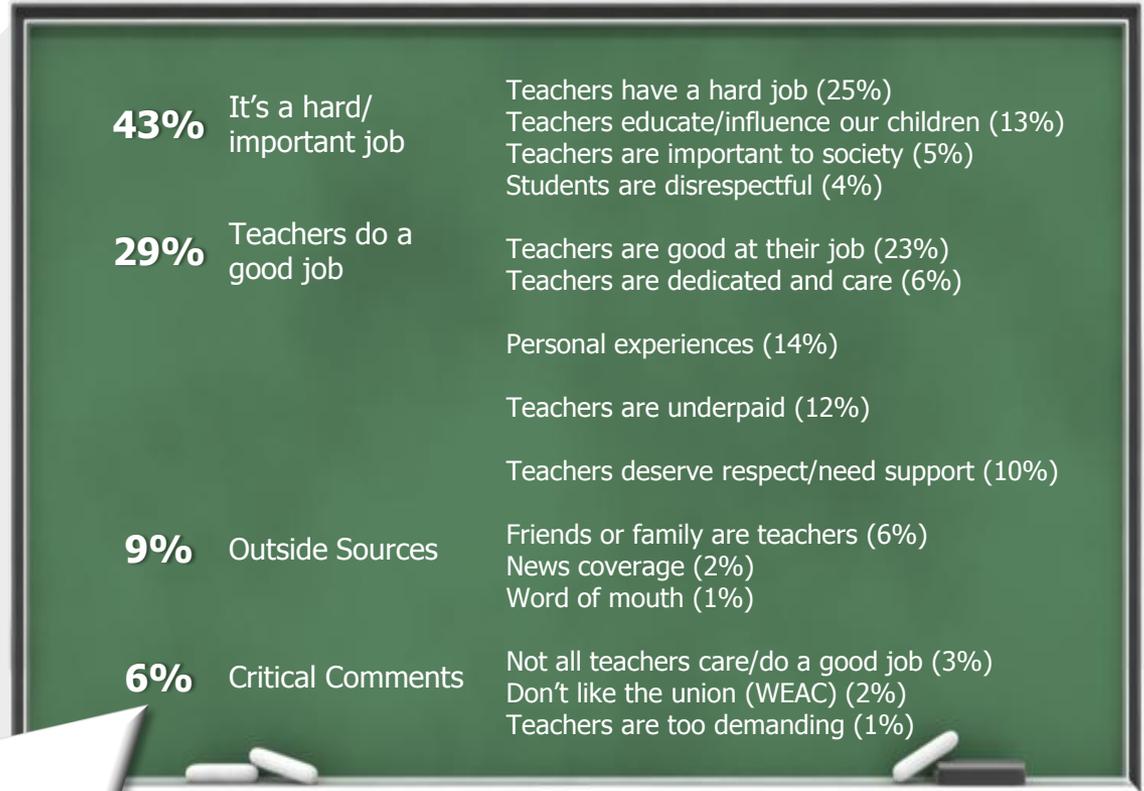
Wisconsinites respect teachers for performing well in a challenging, yet very important profession.

Reasons for Top-2-Box Respect Ratings

**WI Teacher
Respect Rating**



72%
(Top-2-Box %)



A few residents also shared some criticisms of teachers and the WEAC, even though they have strong respect for teachers overall.

Q3. Please rate the following professions or organizations in terms of the overall level of respect you have for each. (N=388)
Q4. When thinking of Wisconsin Public School Teachers, why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3a RATING]? (N=272)
Note: Numbers may not add up to net amounts due to multiple responses.

Reasons for Strong WI Teacher Respect Ratings (Among Those Rating Top-2-Box)



Teaching is a hard job

"Our Wisconsin public school teachers work hard at educating our kids. I personally know that their students greatly admire their teaching habits and skills, and their students love them!"

"They work long hours and deal with real problem-kids and parents."

"The majority of teachers are hard working and care about the kids they work with."

"Teaching our children is one of the hardest jobs a person can do, but also one of the most important. Teachers have a tremendous impact on our children's lives."



Teachers are dedicated and do a good job

"They do an outstanding job and get blamed for many of the shortcomings of the students or their failure to achieve."

"I have grandchildren in the same school my kids went to and the teachers, most of them, have been excellent."

"I think that they are doing a wonderful job with our kids, helping them learn and keeping them safe."

"I think that, as a whole, they do a good job and that they truly care for their students."



Teachers deserve respect

"I think that teaching overall is a profession that deserves respect, simply for their willingness to give knowledge to the next generation."

"I respect them and they get a bad reputation, but I don't believe it is their fault for the bad scores in public schools."

"I think that teachers are the backbone to the progress of this country."

"They are the most important group, helping shape children into responsible adults and contributors to society."

Q4. When thinking of Wisconsin Public School Teachers, why do you rate your level of respect for them a [Q3a RATING]? (N=272)

Those with less respect for WI teachers cite lack of commitment, poor job performance and high demands as reasons for lower respect ratings.

Reasons for Bottom-3-Box Respect Ratings

WI Teacher Respect Rating



28%

(Bottom-3-Box %)

Despite having lower respect ratings, a number of these Wisconsinites recognize that teaching is a difficult job.

- 29%** Teachers don't care/ don't do a good job
 - Teachers don't care/aren't committed (14%)
 - Many teachers do a poor job (11%)
 - Many teachers are not properly educated/qualified (4%)
 - There are good and bad teachers (15%)
- 14%** Outside Sources
 - News coverage (9%)
 - Word of mouth (5%)
 - Have friends/family who are teachers (1%)
 - Personal experience (13%)
- 12%** Teachers are too demanding
 - Teachers want more benefits/money (7%)
 - Teachers are overpaid (5%)
- 9%** Critical of WEAC
 - Bad influence from union (6%)
 - Bad teachers are protected by the union (3%)
 - Act 10 controversy/strike in Madison (2%)
- 7%** Teaching is a hard job
 - Teachers have a hard job (3%)
 - Classrooms are overpopulated (2%)
 - Teachers are blamed for problems with children (1%)
 - Students are disrespectful (1%)
 - Teachers deserve respect/need support (5%)
 - Teachers are good at their job (5%)
 - Not familiar with schools/don't have kids in school (5%)

Q3. Please rate the following professions or organizations in terms of the overall level of respect you have for each. (N=388)
 Q4. When thinking of Wisconsin Public School Teachers, why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3a RATING]? (N=116)
 Note: Numbers may not add up to net amounts due to multiple responses.

Reasons for Lower WI Teacher Respect Ratings

✓ Some teachers don't do a good job

"It seems that all they care about is how much time they get off in their contract. They don't want to perform to standards and I am just disgusted with the whole education system."

"You have some of them who are only there for the check and could care less about the children. I have seen it."

"I have personally had a lot of issues with teachers regarding my daughter over the course of her 12 years in school. They were not very helpful or understanding of her issues during that time, so I have little regard for them now."

✓ Teachers are too demanding

"I lost respect for many teachers and public employees, in general, following the Act 10 controversy. They are out of touch with reality. Their benefits are still much better than most private sector workers but they continue to feel as though they deserve more."

"They are more interested in monetary gain than providing quality education."

"Most them are whiny about their benefits and time off. I can't even afford benefits and my job doesn't offer them so, I think they should just do what the rest of the hard working Americans do and pay for their own benefits. When they had to start paying more towards their health, more in tune with what the rest of us have always had to pay, their complaints never stop."

✓ Criticism of WEAC

"Bad union is corrupting a lot of good teachers."

"I respect the teachers, not the union."

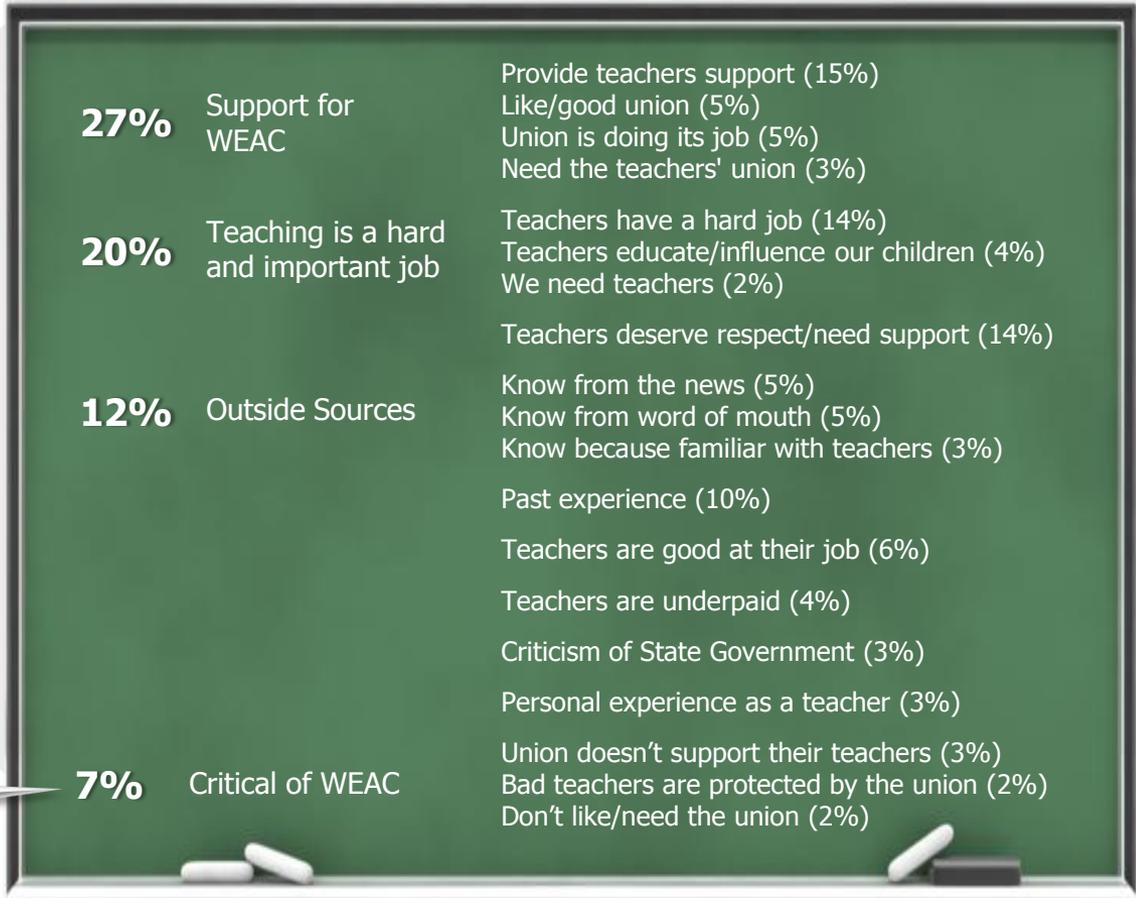
"Tenure allows for bad teachers to continue teaching, but the majority of teachers are wonderful."

"There are good, devoted teachers in most school districts, although conservative teachers are generally blackballed and intimidated by the unions that benefit from their dues. On top of that, almost all union dues that are allocated to political candidates go to liberals, even when conservative teachers don't want their dues so spent."

Q4. When thinking of Wisconsin Public School Teachers, why do you rate your level of respect for them a [Q3a RATING]? (N=116)

Residents who respect the teachers' union believe it provides necessary support to hardworking teachers.

Reasons for Top-2-Box Respect Ratings



Even among WEAC supporters, a number shared criticisms of the union.

Q3. Please rate the following professions or organizations in terms of the overall level of respect you have for each. (N=388)

Q5. When thinking of Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3b RATING]? (N=190)

Note: Numbers may not add up to net amounts due to multiple responses.

Reasons for Strong WEAC Respect Ratings



Teaching is a hard job

"They do the best they can to help promote and improve education but have been greatly hampered in the last few years by the Republicans in the government."

"It's a very hard job to do on a very small paycheck."

"They work hard educating our public school children, at times, putting in lots of hours and paying for things out of their own pocket. I know teachers and my niece is a teacher."

"Teachers have a lot to deal with when it comes to the steadily declining quality of the education system here."



WEAC supports teachers

"The WEAC represents the public policy, labor and professional interests of its members. WEAC is a strong voice for the children in public schools."

"WEAC works hard for teachers' rights. This is from personal experience."

"I think the union is trying to help the teachers. Although they aren't always perfect, I do believe that the teacher's have someone to fight for them. I'm very upset with our Governor and his role in dealing with people who have put so much time and effort into their careers."

"They want to make things better for teachers, who seem to be constantly taken advantage of by the government."



WEAC has done a good job

"WEAC has always represented the state's teachers well. They have done very good things with pension funds and benefits."

"I think the union does a good job standing up for their teachers, but have not always gone about it in a way that shows that to the general population."

"The union is there to help and protect the members and they don't get enough credit in doing so."

"Teacher's need a union to help them in their employment struggles."

Q5. When thinking of Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3b RATING]? (N=190)

Wisconsinites who have less respect for WEAC commonly cite high, unrealistic demands and dislike of unions in general as reasons for lower ratings.

Reasons for Bottom-3-Box Respect Ratings



50% Critical of WEAC

11% Outside Sources

- They ask for/want too much (21%)
- Don't like/need the union (20%)
- Union is unwilling to compromise (3%)
- Don't trust unions (3%)
- Bad teachers are protected by the union (3%)
- Friends or family are teachers (5%)
- News coverage (4%)
- Word of mouth (4%)
- Many teachers do a poor job (4%)
- Act 10 controversy/Governor recall efforts (5%)
- Past experience (4%)
- Don't like how insurance was being handled (2%)
- They are too liberal (2%)
- Teachers deserve respect/need support (4%)
- Union is doing its job (2%)
- There are good and bad unions (2%)
- Not familiar with WEAC (12%)

Among those with lower respect for WEAC, a few shared supportive comments.

Q3. Please rate the following professions or organizations in terms of the overall level of respect you have for each. (N=388)
 Q5. When thinking of Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3b RATING]? (N=198)
 Note: Numbers may not add up to net amounts due to multiple responses.

Reasons for Lower WEAC Respect Ratings

✓ Teachers don't need a union

"Unions' raison d'être expired decades ago. Their existence assures much higher cost to the taxpayers than is justified; onerous, unreasonable work rules, restrictions, bullying of non-members, employers (think of SEIU, Longshoremen and Teamsters, just to name a few), other criminal acts, outrageous waste of members' dues, including huge salaries and high living by union officials."

"I do not believe in unions, but I do respect what our teachers do."

"I don't like unions at all. They have outlived their usefulness and should all be abolished."

✓ WEAC is too demanding

"In the case of teachers' unions, the members seem to care more for their union and their pensions and benefits, than they do for the proper education of the students entrusted to them to teach."

"They seem to want more and more benefits and pay while teachers are doing less and less in classrooms and for students."

"Because the union does not understand how much they are bleeding the taxpayers dry for all the perks they want for their members."

✓ Criticism of WEAC

"They are not doing enough to support good teachers and providing a good image for the profession."

"They protect the bad teachers as well as helping the good ones, and all they seem to care about is power. Strikes punish the children and their parents, not the school districts or local officials. If they cared about education, the teachers would keep working during negotiations."

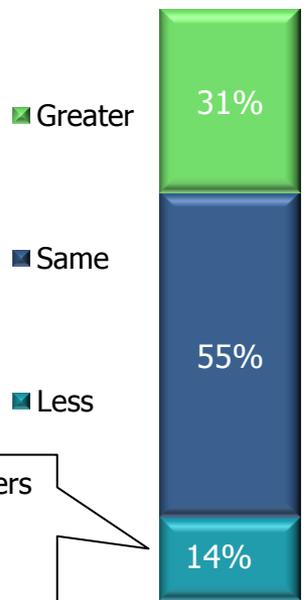
"They do not care about the kids at all. It is only about themselves. News coverage indicates this fact."

Q5. When thinking of Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), why do rate your level of respect for them a [Q3b RATING]? (N=198)

For most Wisconsinites, regard for public school teachers has either increased or remained the same over the past four years.

- Just under one-third of residents (31%) have a greater regard for public school teachers today than they did four years ago, while perceptions remain the same for more than half (55%).

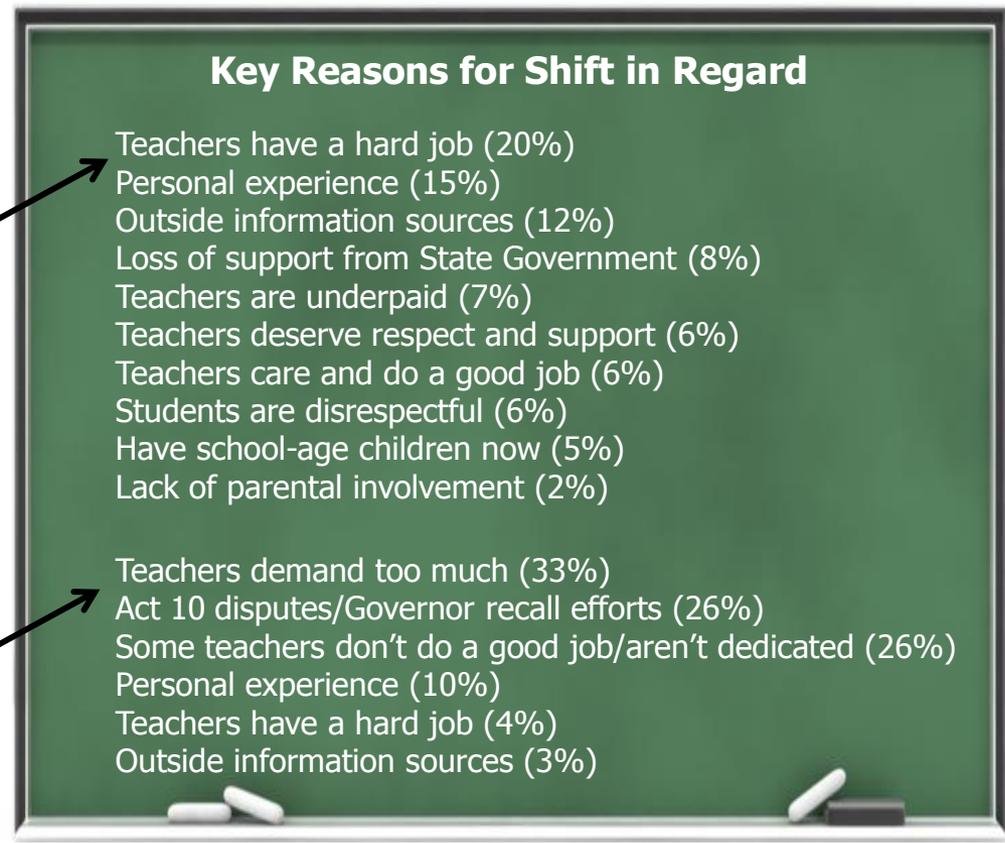
Shift in Regard for Public School Teachers



• Regard for teachers decreased only among those not employed in education.

Key Reasons for Shift in Regard

- Teachers have a hard job (20%)
- Personal experience (15%)
- Outside information sources (12%)
- Loss of support from State Government (8%)
- Teachers are underpaid (7%)
- Teachers deserve respect and support (6%)
- Teachers care and do a good job (6%)
- Students are disrespectful (6%)
- Have school-age children now (5%)
- Lack of parental involvement (2%)
- Teachers demand too much (33%)
- Act 10 disputes/Governor recall efforts (26%)
- Some teachers don't do a good job/aren't dedicated (26%)
- Personal experience (10%)
- Teachers have a hard job (4%)
- Outside information sources (3%)



Q6. Has your opinion of Wisconsin Public School Teachers changed over the past four years? (N=388) Q7. Why do you say that you have a [Q6 RATING]? (N=388)

Reasons for Shift in Regard for WI Teachers



Greater Regard for Teachers Than 4 Years Ago

31%
(Top-2-Box %)

"Teachers have undergone public scrutiny and attack by government leaders. In spite of everything, Wisconsin remains one of the nation's leaders in education."

"Teachers are expected to do more and more outside the classroom. Also, parents seem to be doing less and less. There needs to be more home involvement and less blame placed on the teacher/school when a child 'fails'."

"They work harder than most people do at other jobs. They also put up with more public opposition than other people get in their jobs. One bad teacher can ruin the respect for one-thousand outstanding teachers."

"They are operating with changing student populations and less support by government."

"They have had to deal with Walker taking away their union."

"They are getting less pay and benefits than four years ago. They are settling for less for their public service."

"They are not paid enough and they deserve more."



Less Regard for Teachers Than 4 Years Ago

14%
(Bottom-2-Box %)

"All the striking that went on just showed why they were in the profession they were in. It should be about the love of children and enjoyment of teaching them not money and benefits."

"Far too many teachers care more for their union and their benefits and pensions than they do for the proper education of the students entrusted to them to teach. Far too left leaning to be considered straight and honest in their presentation of facts to the students. Just plain dishonest ideologues, in my opinion."

"Lost respect for them after they tried to recall Scott Walker because they didn't want to pay what the rest of us pay for - insurance and retirement."

"The behavior, whining, and general 'thuggery' by some WEAC members during the Act 10 debate really opened my eyes to the sense of entitlement and persecution some teachers wrongly believe they have."

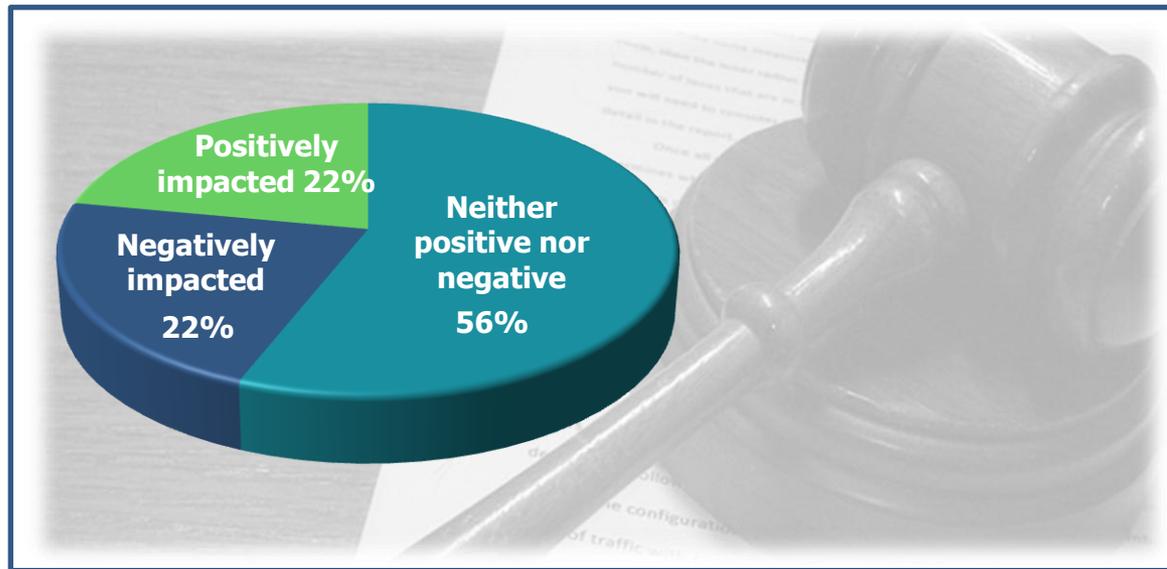
"They listen to the union instead of making up their own mind."

Q7. Why do you say that you have a [Q6 RATING]?

The Act 10 disputes had a polarizing affect on the public's opinion of Wisconsin public school teachers

- Over half of residents (56%) state that the disputes over collective bargaining rights had no impact on their opinion of Wisconsin teachers; however, the balance are evenly split between positive and negative perceptions.
 - Just over one-fifth (22%) say this issue has positively impacted their opinion of Wisconsin teachers, while the same proportion (22%) state their opinion has been negatively impacted.

Impact of Act 10 on Opinions of WI Public School Teachers

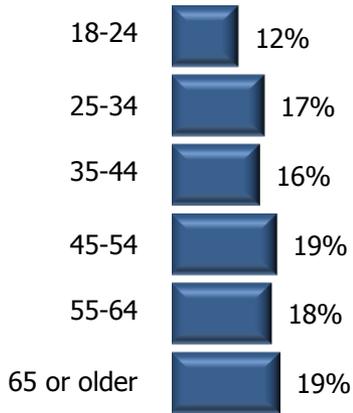


Q8. As you may recall, in 2011, the WEAC fought to retain their full collective bargaining rights as state employees. However, in June 2011, a bill was passed that significantly limited the union's collective bargaining rights. Based on what you may have heard or read about this issue, what impact, if any, did this have on your opinion of Wisconsin Public School Teachers? Would you say your opinions have been...? (N=388)

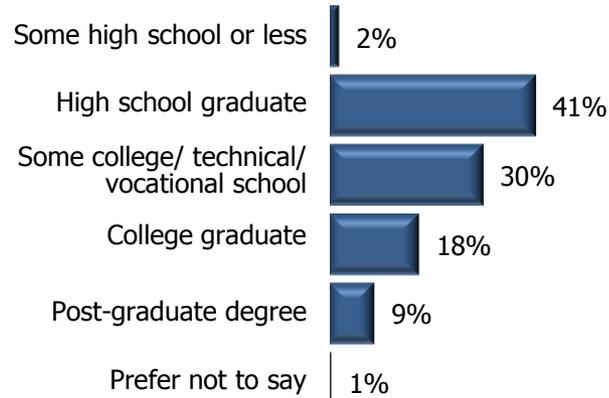
Appendix

Respondent Profile

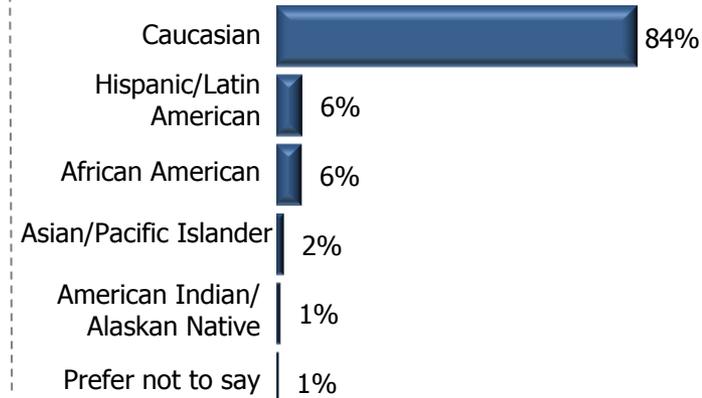
Age



Education



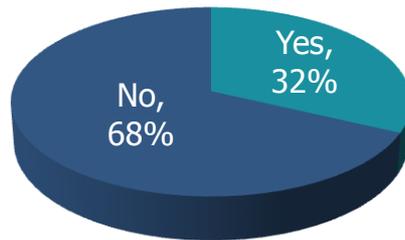
Ethnicity



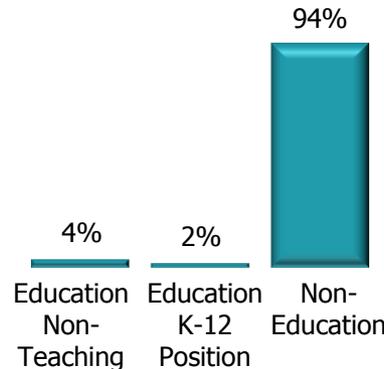
Gender



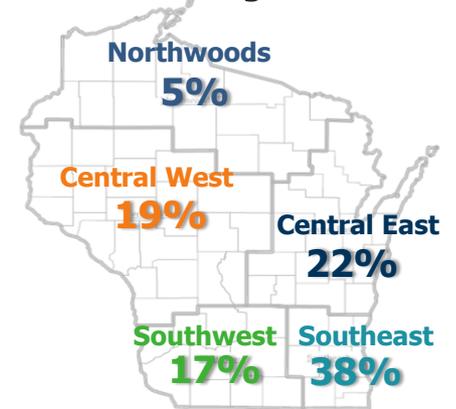
Children Under 18 in Household



Occupation



Region



Q1. What is your age?

Q2. Do you have any children 18 years or younger currently living in your household at least part-time?

Q9. What is your gender?

Q9a. What is your zip code?

Q10. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Q11. Which one of the following best describes your race or ethnic background?

Q12. Which of the following best describes the industry you work in?

May not add to 100% due to rounding.

Executive Summary

Level of Respect for Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC)

- The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC), is respected by just over half of state residents (54%), a significantly lower level than for public school teachers.
 - The level of respect for WEAC (Top-2-Box ratings) among those employed in the education field* (65%) is not statistically different than among those not employed in education (53%).
- Among those who respect the WEAC, their main reasons include the belief that:
 - WEAC supports teachers' rights and is needed
 - WEAC has done a good job
 - Teachers have a hard job and deserve support
- Nearly one-fourth of Wisconsinites have little respect for the teachers' union, with 23% rating it on a Bottom-2-Box basis in terms of respect.
 - However, only 9% of those employed in education* have a low level of respect for the organization (Bottom-2-Box ratings), compared to 24% among those not employed in education.
 - Reasons for low respect focus on the belief that the union is too demanding, and is no longer needed by teachers.

**Note: Includes K-12 Teachers and those employed in non-teaching education positions.*

Statistical Reliability and Limitations

Statistical Reliability and Limitations

- Reliability is the degree to which survey sample data reflects the actual population and the true parameters of that population. It is dependent primarily upon survey sample size, along with other factors, including the degree of representativeness of the original sample selection, types of questions asked, answers received, and respondent quality.
- For the Suzanne & Richard Pieper Family Foundation Education Study, the sample of 388 respondents yields overall data reliable with 95% confidence and a +/-4.97% sampling error interval.
 - That is to say, if a similar survey were conducted repeatedly, results within plus or minus 4.97% would occur for any one question 95 out of 100 times. Looking at it another way, if a question received a "yes" answer by 60% of the 388 respondents, the chances are 95 out of 100 that between 55.03% and 64.97% of the targeted population would answer a similar "yes" response, if asked.
- Surveys should also never be viewed as 100% reliable. A small difference between two statistics or findings cannot be considered necessarily meaningful; however, as the sample size or market segment increases, the margin of error (sampling error) decreases, thereby providing more conclusive and reliable data.

