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NATIONAL STUDY FINDS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT AMONG TEACHERS AND THE PUBLIC FOR GREATER TEACHER ROLES IN SCHOOL, THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

New initiative seeks to build awareness of the benefits and successes of “teacher-powered schools” nationwide and inspire other teachers and communities to create more

Nashville – A whopping 91 percent of Americans believe teachers should have greater influence over decisions that affect student learning, with 81 percent of Americans indicating they trust teachers to make “schools run better,” according to a first-of-its-kind national opinion study.

On issues ranging from tailoring curriculum and evaluations to selecting colleagues, textbooks, technology and budgetary priorities, Americans expressed unprecedented support for teachers to have meaningful authority in making the decisions that drive student and whole-school success.

These are just a few key findings of the comprehensive research commissioned by *Education Evolving* and outlined in the report, “[Teacher-Powered Schools: Generating Lasting Impact through Common Sense Innovation](#).” In “teacher-powered schools,” teams of teachers work collaboratively as leaders and partners to make professional decisions over the areas that matter most for their students, including selection of colleagues, evaluation, budget and resources, curriculum and school-level policymaking.

Equipped with this information, a resounding 85 percent of Americans in the national survey indicated they believed teacher-powered schools operating under a professional partnership arrangement are a good idea. More than half of the public reported they are “very interested” in seeing teachers explore this type of opportunity within their local schools and communities.

“The standardization teachers are reporting today is a growing concern,” said Ted Kolderie, a co-founder of Education Evolving. “Learning now can be, and should be, increasingly personalized. Only the teachers can do this: in school, only the teachers know the students as individuals.”

Top-line findings among teachers include:

- An overwhelming 78 percent of teachers say the teacher professional partnership arrangement is a good idea.
- Fifty-four percent of teachers indicate they are “very interested” in working in a teacher-led partnership.
- More than three quarters of teachers (76 percent) think at least some of their colleagues would also be interested in pursuing a teacher-partnership in their school.
- Among surveyed teachers, more “voice” in school-based decisions is identified as one of the single changes that would most improve student learning, second only to increased parental involvement.

When asked in focus groups about the potential impact of teacher-powered schools in their school and community, teachers said they look forward to developing a positive school culture; setting school policies and schedules; implementing the best programs; better representing the interests and needs of their students; and more effectively using the financial resources of the school and district over the long run. These attitudes were generally consistent across location, gender, age and experience level.

Teacher participants in both the survey and focus groups noted the importance of multiple education stakeholders, including their principals, parents, school district leaders, union leaders, superintendents and state policymakers, in creating teacher-powered schools that fit the unique needs of each community.

“Accountability and authority need to go together,” Kolderie said. “No more than other reasonable people are teachers likely to accept accountability for decisions made by others. But teachers will accept accountability for student and school success if they can control what matters for student and school success. This is a model, a different deal, the country needs to try.”

Click [here](#) for more information on survey results and methodology.

[Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative](#)

Using this research as a foundation, Education Evolving, in partnership with the Center for Teaching Quality, today launched a national initiative to grow awareness and support for teachers to explore these important leadership opportunities through the professional partnership governance structure. In district and charter schools nationwide, teachers can secure authority to design and run whole schools, a department within a school, or a program that spans several schools.

Presently, there are more than 60 teacher-powered schools operating across 15 states from California to Minnesota to Colorado and Massachusetts. While no two schools are the same, early research has shown that they function much like high-performing organizations in other fields, and rely on the expertise and know-how of practitioners — the teachers — to drive student and school success. These schools align authority with accountability in education, ensuring that those who are most accountable for improving student success have the ability to do so.

The [Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative](#) seeks to create the conditions for the teacher professional partnership concept to flourish by cultivating a collaborative school governance structure where teachers work together with support from principals, parents and community leaders to achieve school success. Working with local leaders to create the policy conditions necessary for development, teacher-powered schools are designed by teachers, led by teachers and inspired by students — an environment in which students, schools and education can thrive.

"Teacher-powered schools are fueled by the decisions of classroom experts: teachers who know students and families best," said Barnett Berry, founder and CEO of the [Center for Teaching Quality](#). "We're thrilled to work with this initiative by developing how-to resources and offering a virtual community (the [CTQ Collaboratory](#)) of and for teachers who seek to start schools or redesign existing ones."

“Every district should provide opportunities for teacher-powered schools, and teachers should be treated as professionals by having opportunities to share their knowledge and lead together,” said

Carrie Bakken, program coordinator at Avalon School, a teacher-powered school in Minnesota. "Students feel empowered in their learning when they have empowered teachers that have autonomy and collaborate."

For more information on Teacher-Powered Schools and how you can take action to create the conditions for a teacher-powered education, visit www.teacherpowered.org or follow the initiative on Facebook (www.facebook.com/teacherpowered) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/teacherpowered).

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[About the Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative](#)

The Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative seeks to build awareness, support and action for the professional partnership concept to take root among teachers in K-12 education. There are currently more than 60 teacher-powered schools operating in 15 states across the country. Teachers can secure authority to design and run whole schools, a department within a school, or a program that spans several schools.

In teacher-powered schools, teacher teams design and run their schools to make the decisions influencing school and student success. Teachers become directly responsible for the success of their school, increasing their passion for the job and their ability to make the dramatic changes in school that are needed to really improve student learning. Their design and management choices are similar to those of high-performing organizations in other fields.

[Additional survey information](#)

The study, conducted by Widmeyer Communications, a Finn Partners Company, was developed through a series of in-depth interviews, focus groups and two national opinion surveys. An online survey of 643 K-12 traditional public or public charter educators was conducted and resulted with a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. The second nationwide survey of 1,000 U.S. adults was conducted by telephone with a margin of error +/- 3.1 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.