

## Roundtable News, June 1, 2016

Greetings!,

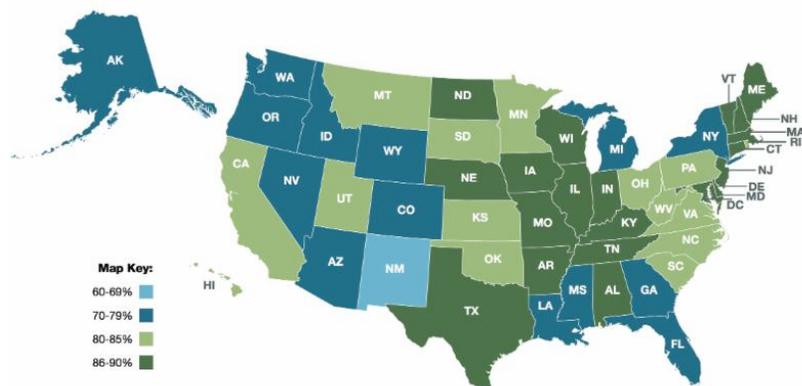
As the Roundtable continues to grow, we welcome our new members and look forward to seeing everyone at our meetings in San Francisco and Washington, D. C. later this year. In the meantime, here's a round up of developments in education:

- Great News: On-Time Graduation Rate Reaches 82%
- Schools Alone Can't Solve Race and Poverty Issues
- "Listen to Us": Teachers Views & Voices
- Top 10 Worries of School Superintendents
- Just 3% Graduate from High School in Rural China
- Here Come the Robots
- Profiting from Children
- About That 6-Hour School Work Day....

### Great News: On-Time Graduation Rate Reaches 82%

It's official: on-time graduation rates are going up. A review of U.S. Department of Education data, [The 2016 Building a Grad Nation Report](#), confirms that on-time graduation rates among U.S. high school students are on the rise, with an average 82.3% graduating across the country in 2014. The hope is that these rates will top 90% by 2020.

Figure 1. U.S. ACGR Ranges by State, 2013-14



Very troubling and significant gaps in graduation rates remain. Graduation rates below 70% were reported by 16 states for low-income students, by 16 states for Black students, by 11 states for Hispanic/Latino students, by 33 states for students with disabilities, and by 35 states for English-Language Learners. Still,

African-American students have exceeded the national rate of improvement, making yearly gains averaging more than 1.3 percentage points since 2011. The same is true for Hispanic/Latino students.

The new national high water mark includes encouraging news in several states. In California, for example, on-time [graduation rates have risen for six consecutive years](#) to 82.3% and [Connecticut has set an all-time state record](#) for itself of 87.2%.

## Schools Alone Can't Solve Race and Poverty Issues

It's about time someone said it. On May 2nd, [Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. spoke to the Education Writer's Association](#), and focused much of his



U.S. Secretary of Education John King (Photo by Katherine Taylor for EWA)

talk on issues of race and class in education. He confirms that we need to address the elephant in the room: the link between local schools, and communities that are, in every sense, still *de facto* segregated by socio-economic status and race.

Over at [Ed Week's policy blog](#), Jill Berkowitz and Ann Meyers use King's comments as a jumping off point, and call on educators to take the "10,000 foot view" and start a broader conversation about social policy and

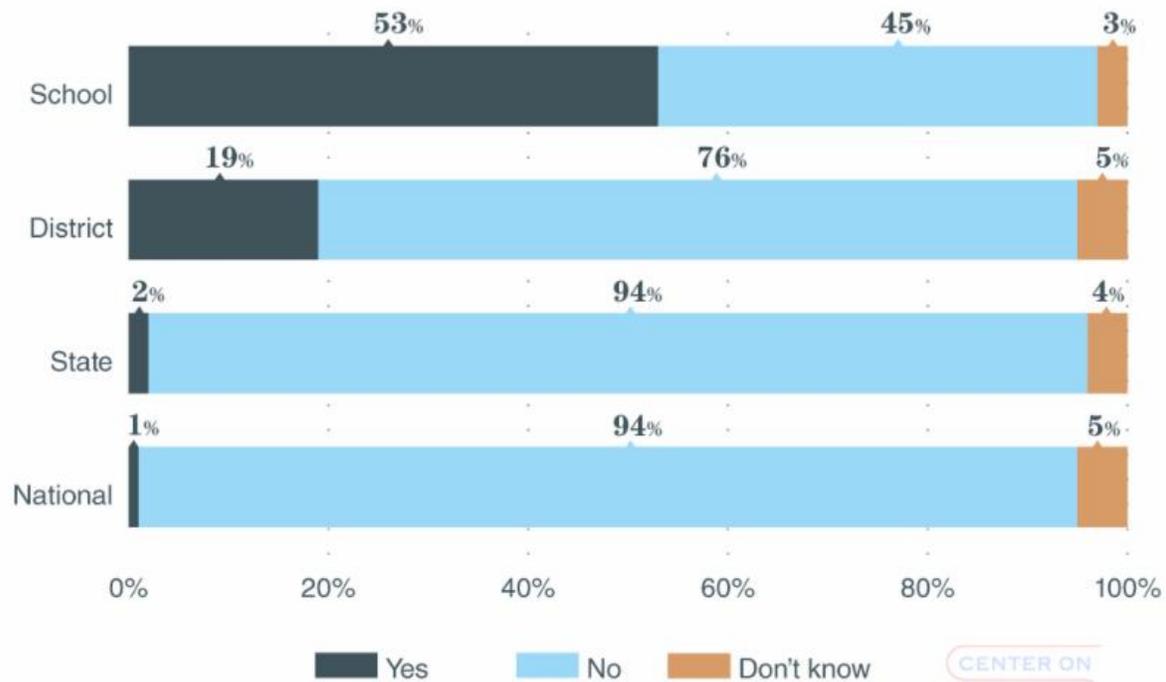
its impact on education.

What can educators do? [Berkowitz and Meyers point to concrete actions](#) that can provide an "opening" for educators to join the social policy conversation. Segregated schools and communities cannot be changed by educators. "Effective educational policy choices require the strong and articulate voices of wise and selfless school leaders," they argue. Partnerships for change are also critical. "Partnerships with business, healthcare, and higher education all can improve the quality of the education we can offer students," they write, urging K-12 educators to leverage business and higher education partnerships.

## Listen to Us: Teachers Views and Voices

We've heard a lot of anecdotal evidence that students and parents are frustrated with the "teach to the test" policies taking hold in public schools. Now, [a new survey from the Center for Education Policy](#) gives voice to the people at the front lines of implementing those policies: teachers.

**Figure 1-D.** Teacher perceptions about whether their opinions are factored into decision-making



**Figure reads:** An estimated 53% of public school teachers said they believed teachers' opinions were factored at least most of the time into decision making at the school level.

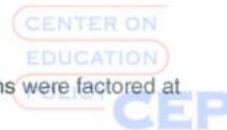
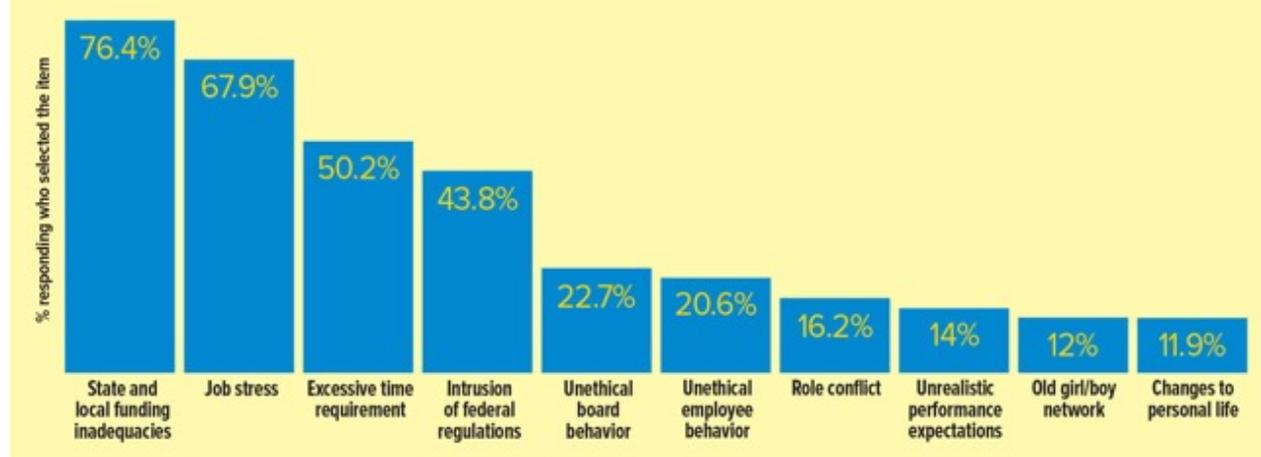


Image courtesy of Center on Education Policy

Most teachers entered the profession to make a difference, according to the survey, but they cite the frustrations of "external policies," "constantly changing demands," and state or district policies as getting in the way of their teaching. Significantly, an overwhelming majority - 94% - believe their voices did not matter in the decision making process at the state and national levels, with 76% making the same complaint about involvement in local decision making.

## Top 10 Worries of Superintendents

**Teachers are important, but let's pay a little attention to the views of superintendents too!** The May issue of *School Administrator* included an informative figure outlining the top 10 challenges-on-the-job for school superintendents. Funding inadequacies, job stress, and excessive time demands head the list of complaints. Based on a survey conducted by AASA, The School Superintendents Association, the figure was constructed by Leslie A. Finnan, Robert S. McCord, Christopher C. Stream, T.C. Mattocks, George G. Petersen and Noelle M. Ellerson.



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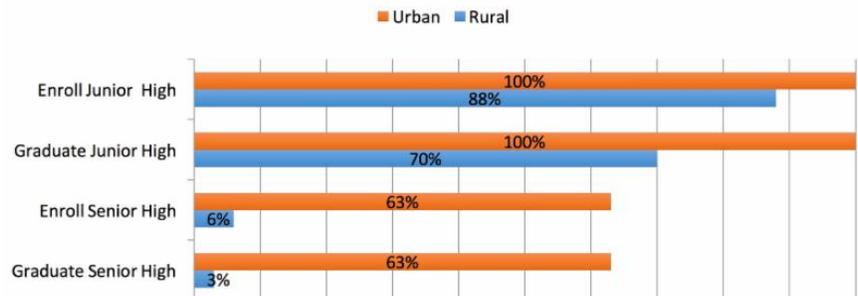
## Just 3% graduate from high school in rural China

In the May 24 issue of the [Washington Post](#), Valerie Strauss's blog, "Learning Matters," included a column by Roundtable executive director James Harvey that broke down the reasons why Shanghai's schools, far from being a "model" worthy of emulation by American schools, were not representative of China's overall performance - and indeed, "are not even representative of Shanghai."

"A Chinese news anchor recently acknowledged that 500,000 migrant children of school age in Shanghai are under-served in the schools," Harvey wrote. Because of their status as migrants, they do not qualify for "resident" benefits, and so are

ignored in the PISA assessment. The essential problem is that PISA samples 15-year-olds in school and not 15-year-olds in the population. Public confusion is compounded when Shanghai, one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in China, is discussed as representative of the entire country. However, only about 6% of rural Chinese youth enroll in high school, according to official data, and only about 3% graduate. About 60% of all Chinese youth live in rural areas. The full text of the article is available [here](#).

### China: Urban and Rural School Enrollment and Graduation Rates



Source: Wall Street Journal (May 12, 2016) based on data from Ministry of Education, China Education Statistical Yearbook, and Asian Development Bank

## Here Come the Robots

Automation is redefining the world of work. Robots are no longer content with



taking over manufacturing jobs, such as painting a car on an assembly line or retrieving and sorting boxes for delivery. Today's robots are driving cars, controlling airplanes in flight, even replacing teachers and **grading essays for the Common Core Exam.**

What if 7 out of 10 Americans got pink slips? How would they survive? Fanciful? Perhaps not. **A recent article in Wired** predicts that by

the end of this century, 70 percent of today's occupations will be replaced by automation, on a global scale. If that seems far-fetched, consider the following: **BBC reports** that Chinese manufacturer Foxconn replaced 60,000 workers with robots. **Adidas, the sports shoe manufacturer,** is shifting some production from Asia back home to Germany. But its new "Speedfactory" in Amsbach will use robots to do jobs once done by hand. Robot-made shoes will start rolling off the assembly line later this year. Or think about this: two hundred years ago, 70% of American workers lived on a farm. Today it's about one percent.

**Philanthropist Bill Gates, Tesla boss Elon Musk, and theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking** have all hailed the potential of technology to do human work, while worrying about the long-term effects of artificial intelligence. Who is thinking about the implications of these developments for our schools and the work lives of our children?

## Profiting from Children

We've worried earlier about the implications of privatizing schooling for the benefit of investors. **It's an issue in the United States.** It's an issue **in England, where a school privatization measure was recently shot down.** In India, the **Punjab Teacher's Union staged a sit-in this month** to protest privatization of Punjabi schools.

Surprisingly, it's an issue across the developing world. **Writing in Wired in April,** Anya Kamenetz reports that Pearson, one of the driving forces behind the Common Core, is a key actor peddling for-profit education in the developing world through investments from its "Affordable Learning Fund." Schooling, principally job preparation, is available from some of the vendors at a cost of as little as \$2 a day or even \$6 a month.

With its eye on a \$5.5 trillion global outlay on schools, Pearson is already serving 360,000 students in Africa and Asia, with a goal of one million students by 2020, says Kamenetz. UN agencies such as the Human Rights Council and the Committee on Rights of the Child worry about profit-seekers excluding the most needy.

## Portfolio: APEC



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- PHP 23,000 SCHOOL YEAR

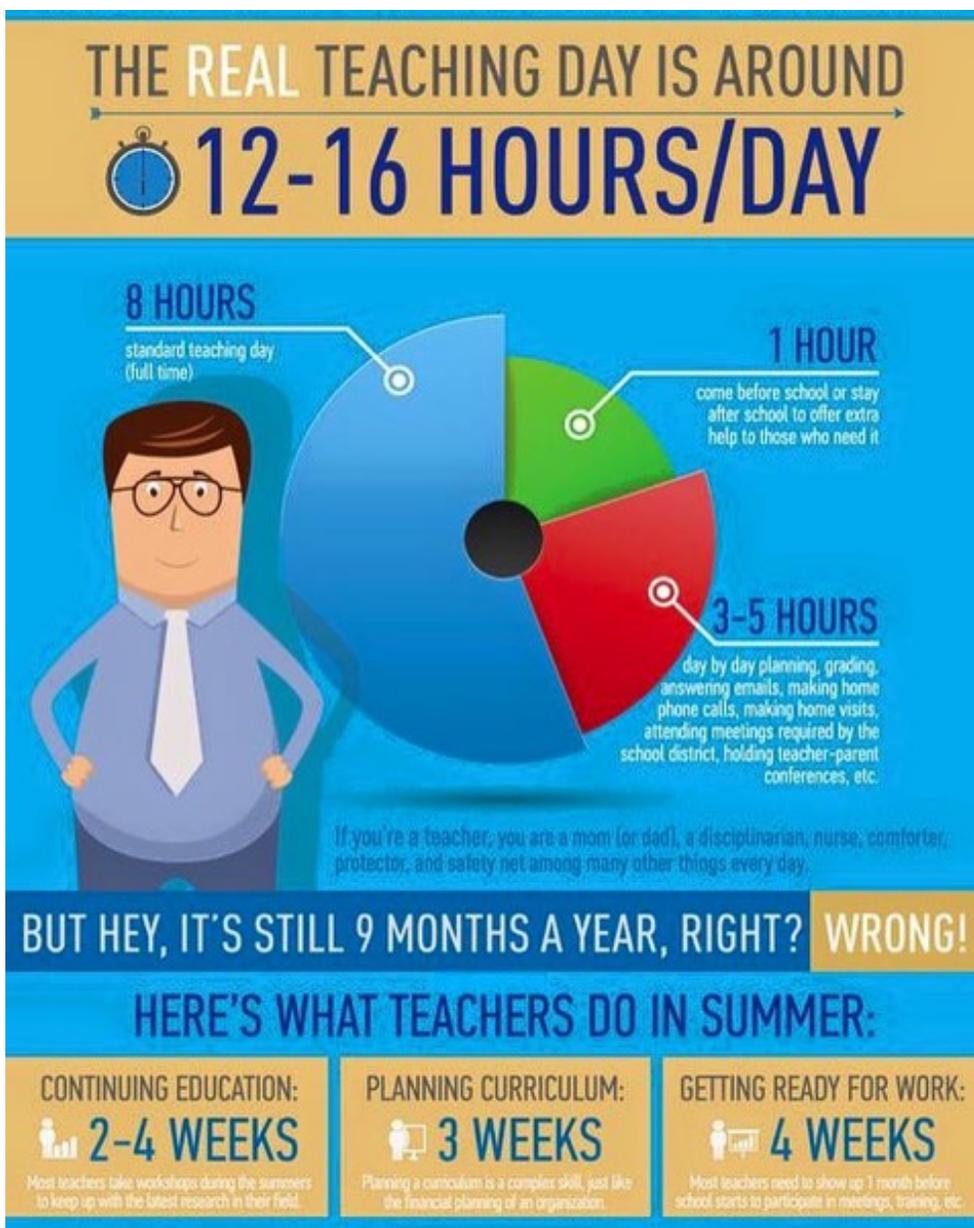
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## About those 6 Hour Days...

**Yes, about those 6-hour days with 3 months off...** What a lush life teachers lead. Afternoons hanging out with friends. Summers spent lounging around the pool. right? This graphic from the Ohio Education Association gives a better picture of how teachers spend their day, year-round.



## Roundtable's 2016 Semi-Annual Meetings

**Getting Organized to Help Kids** -- The Roundtable's "Iceberg effect" report indicates that the U.S. has the largest proportion of low-income children in the developed world. They live with remarkably high levels of stress and little support for families. This July 15-17 meeting will gather near Union Square to foster greater collaboration with units of general purpose local government.



**School Governance** -- October 7 -9 will find the Roundtable in Washington, D.C., to examine school governance. What do superintendents, boards, and unions need to do to get their act together to improve outcomes for students? The meeting will be held near the national capital's historic Rock Creek Park.



## New Members

We are pleased to note several new members who have joined the Roundtable for 2016. They include:

- Jeffrey Baier, Los Altos, California
- Yvonne Caamal Canul, Lansing, Michigan
- Charles Dumais, Woodbridge, Connecticut
- John D. Ewald, Caroline County, Maryland
- Mary Kay Going, Moreland, California
- David Hicks, Sherman, Texas
- Jessica Huizenga, Southbridge, Massachusetts
- Laura Kagy, Attica, Ohio
- Salah Khelfaoui, Lowell, Massachusetts
- John Kopicki, Altoona, Pennsylvania (new assignment)
- Robert Kravitz, Englewood, New Jersey
- Tim Mains, Jamestown, New York
- Tammy Mangus, Monticello, New York
- Ralph Marino, Jr., Hewlett-Woodmere, New York (new assignment)
- Thomas McMorran, Easton-Redding, Connecticut
- Mark Miller, Dillonville, Ohio
- Thomas Parker, Ecorse, Michigan
- Alan Peterson, Merced, California
- Elizabeth Polito, Woodside, California
- John Ramirez, Salinas, California
- Theresa Rouse, Joliet PSD-86, Illinois (new assignment)
- Sarah Shubel, East Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Kathleen Smith, Brockton, Massachusetts
- Rick Stout, Jacksonville, North Carolina
- Julie Vitale, Romoland, California
- Matthew Wendt, Oswego, Illinois
- Nikki Woodson, Indianapolis, Indiana
- Paul Zinni, Avon, Massachusetts

Welcome!

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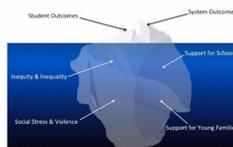
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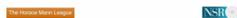
## Interested in the Roundtable?

Now offering 50% discount on annual membership. [Learn More!](#)

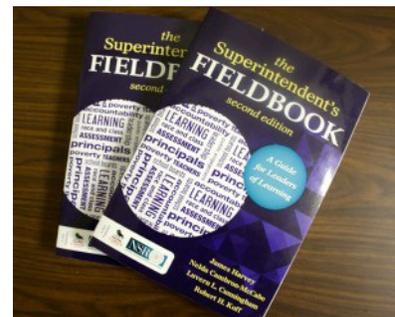
### School Performance in Context: Indicators of School Inputs and Outputs in Nine Similar Nations



January 2015



**Iceberg Effect Report**  
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