



Research

Collective Bargaining and Student Academic Achievement

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Executive Summary

Over the last 40 years, collective bargaining by teacher unions has had an enormous impact on public education. And while there continues to be debate whether teachers are fairly compensated^[1], salaries and benefits for teachers have increased over the last four decades while student academic achievement remains flat. Historically, teacher unions have been successful in their vehement opposition to placing weight on student academic performance in teacher evaluations. Yet students in right to work states, where collective bargaining is not required, are out performing their union-educated peers. Additionally, teacher unions have been successful in maintaining tenure policies, which allow poorly qualified teachers to remain in the classroom, affecting student performance not only while in school but also after they graduate. Consider these facts:

- Nationally, 40 percent of 4th graders performed at or above grade level in math and 32 percent of 4th graders were reading at or above grade level in 2011.
- In Chicago and New York City, where collective bargaining is mandated, the percentages are below the national average by half and one-third respectively.
- In Charlotte, NC and Austin, TX, both cities in right to work states where collective bargaining is not required, students in 4th and 8th grade are performing higher than the national average in both reading and math.
- Thirty-nine states award teacher tenure virtually automatically after two to three years of teaching.
- Only 10 states measure a new elementary teacher's knowledge of reading instruction and 11 states require a test to measure their mathematical skills.

Studies prove that good teachers have a positive effect on students while in the classroom and long after they graduate. Students assigned to high value-added teachers are more likely to attend college, earn higher salaries, and live in better neighborhoods and less likely to have children as teenagers.

Yet, teacher unions continue to oppose policies that link student academic performance to teacher evaluations, as well as efforts to reform teacher tenure. These policies contribute to the dismal student academic achievement levels in reading and math, particularly for minority students, who live in large urban school districts where collective bargaining is often required.

Read the [complete paper here](#).

[1] See for Instance: Are Teachers Overpaid? Arguments From Both Sides of the Teacher Salary Debate; Neil Johnson, U.S. News & World Report, http://www.usnewsuniversitydirectory.com/articles/are-teachers-underpaid-or-overpaid_12810.aspx#.UZEAr6LCZ8E