

# Staff Awards, Teacher Gifts and The Problem of Recency Bias!

Hey Teacher Tapp Community!

It's Week 32 and for some of you the school year is coming to a close - but others still have a while to go! In any case, there's lots to learn, so let's go!

Want to help Teacher Tapp grow?

■■ Invite your colleagues to join!

The best link to share is [onelink.to/teachertapp](https://onelink.to/teachertapp) – it takes them straight to the app store! ■■■

■■ Share us in your teacher lounge!

[Print this poster](#) and pin it in your lounge to help spread the word.

Now, time for the edu-data!

## 1. The REAL job of schools? ■■

■■ Skills first, grades last?

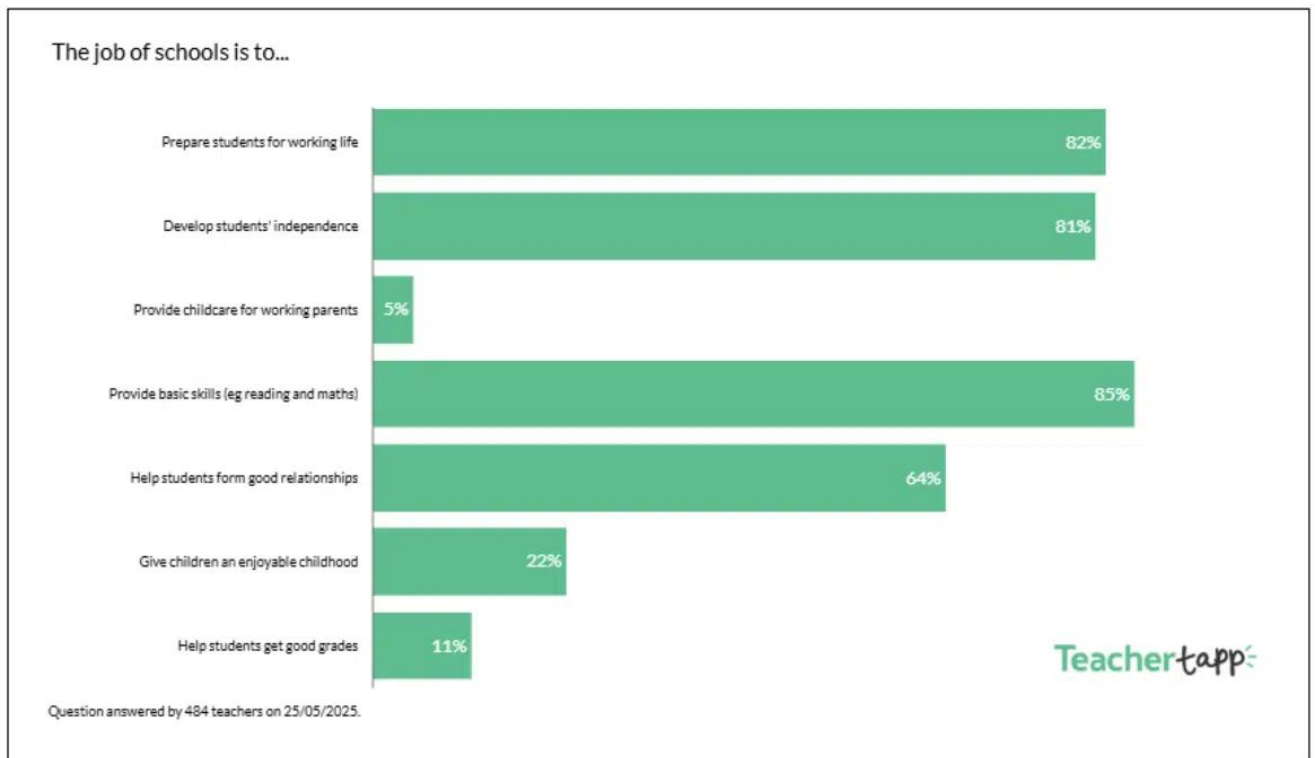
Debating the purpose of school is nothing new. (Even the ancient Greeks had opinions!)

But what does a typical teacher in America think the purpose is?

Three answers soared to the top:

- Providing basic skills like reading and math (85%)
- Preparing students for work (82%)
- Developing independence (81%)

Grades and childcare barely registered. Only 11% said “getting good grades” was even part of the job.



## ■ ■ But what's most important?

In the question above, teachers could pick as many purposes as they wanted. What happens if they have to pick just one - the MOST important purpose of schools?

"Basic skills" still won—but only just. Nearly 1 in 3 teachers picked "working life prep," and another 1 in 5 chose "independence." Taken together, it's clear: teachers see school as a place where you get ready for adult life.

## 2. Memorial Day ■ ■

Compared to other holidays, such as Thanksgiving, or even Valentines, it seems that Memorial Day isn't a big hit in schools.

For a start, 35% of you are already out on vacation. Of those left, 41% said their school doesn't mark it in any way, and only 2% reported doing a formal assembly.

So while this national holiday looms large in civic life, in schools? It's mostly announcements, if anything.

The purpose of Memorial Day is to offer a day of mourning for those who fell in national service. 8% of you said you'd be definitely visiting a place of rest over the weekend - suggesting that some of you do mark the day.

## ■ ■ "Hey, Principal!"

A teacher on Reddit asked whether principals typically recognize their teachers. Silver lining alert! We found that if you had run into your principal over the holiday weekend, there's a 97% chance they'll know your name. Anyone else feeling sorry for the Reddit teacher now? ■■

### 3. ■■ AWARDS (STUDENT & STAFF)

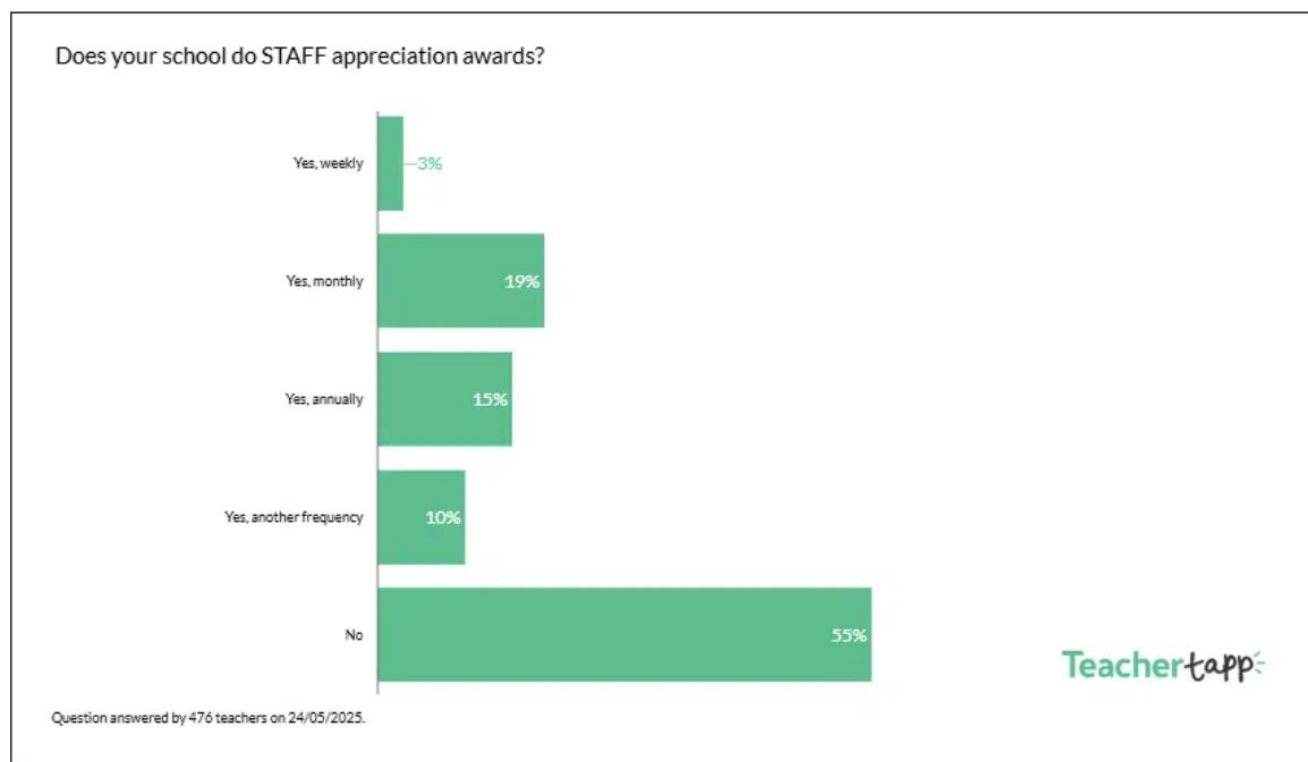
"Employee of the Month" photos are often a source of embarrassment in Hollywood movies. But who doesn't love a prize? So how common are they really in schools?

■■ Student of the Month: Still going strong

Over two-thirds of you said your school had some version of a "Student of the Week" or "Month" award. The most popular format? Monthly recognition (42%). On the downside, 38% of teachers said their school doesn't do it at all. We may dig into this in future!

■■ What about teachers?

Staff awards are much rarer. A full 55% of schools don't do them in any form. Only 3% give weekly shoutouts. In a profession where appreciation is too often silent, we wonder: could small moments of recognition go further than we think?



### 4. The Hardest Month ■■

■■ May looks brutal

Which is the hardest month in the school year? Across all choices, May was voted the

hardest—by far. Nearly a third of teachers said it's the most difficult month of the year.

Why? Exhaustion. Standardized testing. End-of-year pressure. It's the final stretch—and it's tough. March and April trailed behind, but not by much.

■ ■ BUT... is that just recency bias?

Psychologists warn us to be careful here. Recency bias is the tendency to focus on what just happened, rather than what was truly hardest. It's why people often rate recent stress as worse than things they endured earlier—even when it wasn't.

This bias shows up all the time in surveys. It's why we regularly ask about wellbeing, classroom behavior, and job satisfaction as you go, rather than asking you to remember later. Real-time answers help give us a clearer picture—without memory playing tricks. This is why regularly answering Teacher Tapp helps build the most realistic picture of what's happening on the ground - thank you for taking part!

## 5. Goodbye Gifts ■ ■

■ ■ Gift cards reign supreme

If you're wondering what to give a teacher at the end of the year, wonder no more: 73% of teachers said "gift card" is the way to go. The next most popular choice? A handwritten thank-you card from the student (16%).

Chocolates, flowers, alcohol? Nice, but barely made a dent. So if you're buying for a teacher, skip the mug. Slide them a Target card and a kind note—and you've got it just right.

# Best End-Of-Year Gift for a Teacher?



**73%**  
chose a  
gift card

**16%** said a  
thank you note



*Question answered by 524 US teachers in May 2025*

**Teachertapp**

## Daily Reads

We know lots of teachers on Teacher Tapp LOVE the daily reads! If you have ideas of reads we could feature, get in touch by emailing [usa@teachertapp.com](mailto:usa@teachertapp.com) and we will check it out!

This week our most-read blog was from [Inner Drive on shy girls and cold-calling techniques.](#)

Until next week!

