

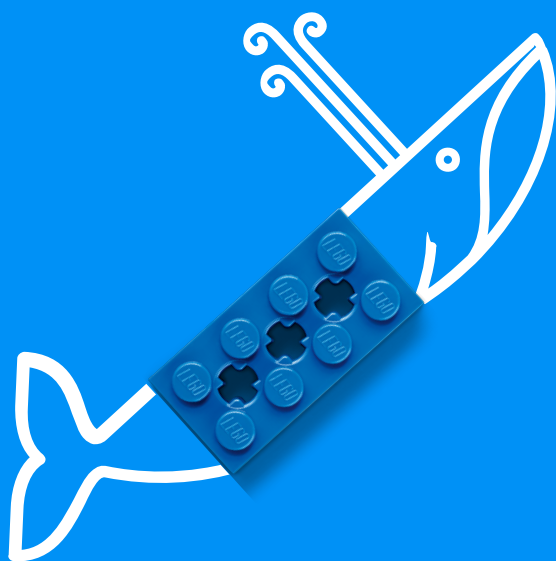
State of Classroom Engagement Report:

How Global Insights from 6,000-Plus Administrators, Teachers, Parents, and Students Reveal Strategies to Build More Engaged Classrooms



State of Classroom Engagement Report

A Path to Stronger Classroom Engagement from LEGO® Education



A student that is engaged in school has the desire to “know more,” the ability to use their knowledge in real-world situations, and the motivation to share what they’ve learned with others. Engaged students pursue their studies with passion and excitement and can’t wait to talk about what they learned in school.

Yet the seemingly simple question of “How was school today?” often generates short and uninspired responses from students. While the merits of the question itself can be debated, the typical responses to it often mirror the level of disengagement many see in the classroom.

What would it take to achieve a world where learning was so engaging, inspiring, and relevant that students couldn’t wait to talk about how school was each day, before they’re even asked?

We’re determined to find out.

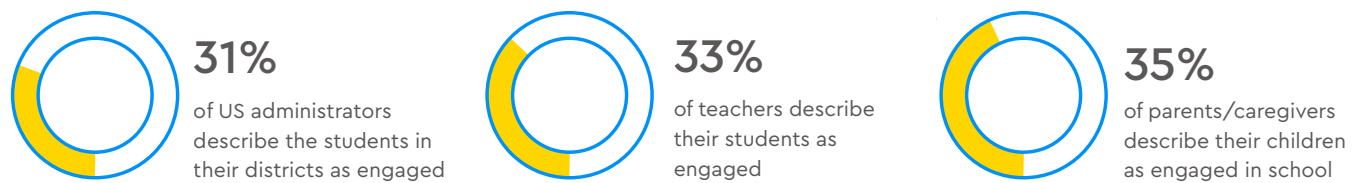
The LEGO® Education State of Classroom Engagement Report summarizes the findings from a global survey of more than 6,000 administrators, teachers, parents, and students aged 5–14¹. This research uncovered deeper insight into what engages, inspires, and builds confidence in students and educators.

Despite some countries having starkly different approaches to education, we found four themes that surfaced globally and speak to the universal challenges and opportunities in education today. This report examines the current state of classroom engagement² and the ripple effects of engagement and disengagement – both of which permeate far beyond school. Most critically, we dive into the actions you can take to boost engagement and set students up for success in your classroom, school, or district.

Key Insight #1

Administrators, teachers, and parents agree that students are not engaged in their learning, but peer collaboration is a powerful engagement driver.

The Current State of Classroom Engagement



Student engagement is lower than we want it to be. Administrators and educators are concerned about academic performance and absenteeism, and in need of new approaches and resources.

Only a third of teachers, parents/caregivers, and US administrators describe students as engaged in learning, underscoring the critical need for more engaging learning experiences.

Data demonstrates how low engagement is intertwined with student comprehension of curricula. Over half of teachers think their students only grasp the curriculum at a surface level, suggesting students are not retaining or effectively applying the concepts being taught.

Disengagement not only signals a lack of comprehension, but it also has a detrimental impact on student mindset and adversely affects school systems.

While addressing disengagement is important for deepening students' knowledge and understanding, it also helps mitigate other negative trends, such as:

Absenteeism:

47% of US administrators believe that absenteeism and overall declines in enrollment are related to students being disengaged.

Behavioral Issues:

61% of US teachers report that disengaged students demonstrate increased behavioral issues.

Underperformance and Low Confidence:

29% of teachers say their students are underperforming, and this rises to 39% in the US alone. This underperformance profoundly affects student confidence, too.

But there is something that makes students excited to go to school every day.

The vast majority of students are excited to go to school each day—but it's not necessarily to learn. Only about half say what they like most about school is learning something new. The real reason they love going to school: their friends. School leaders and teachers can channel this into positive and engaged learning.

The Takeaway:

Harness the Power of Student Connection with Collaborative, Hands-on Learning

"It's really about active participation. What can that look like in classrooms? Students are talking about the learning that's happening. They're working collaboratively and hands-on through a project, or they're trying to solve a problem together."

Dr. Jenny Nash, LEGO® Education Head of Education Impact, U.S.



Hands-on learning encourages collaboration and leverages students' natural inclination to connect with one another, driving engagement by making the material more fun, tangible, and relevant.

Start small

It doesn't have to be a complete overhaul of the curriculum from day one. Encourage teachers to take one concept or activity in their current lesson plan and reinvent it as a collaborative exercise in class. Once you see students engaged and learning through play, it clicks, and the question goes from how to how do we add more?

Be patient

Trying something new can be an adjustment for teachers and students. Make note of students who may need support or coaching in how to work with others and facilitate peer interaction to strengthen their collaboration and social emotional skills. After a few times, everyone will be ready for larger projects.

Advise teachers to facilitate peer learning to deepen comprehension

Working in pairs or groups allows students to naturally teach and learn from one another. Observe how students use and explain the vocabulary and listen to how their conversations change. Are they talking about the concepts, asking questions, and sharing ideas?

Create a safe space

When students and teachers feel supported to make mistakes and learn from them, they develop a growth mindset and build confidence and resilience. Create a culture of openness and innovation that encourages trying new things without the fear of failure.

Key Insight #2

Engagement improves academic outcomes and student well-being.

At least 85% of parents and caregivers of engaged students say they're satisfied with their students' academic outcomes across all subjects.

Students who are engaged perform better in school and they're happier.

Teachers who describe their students as engaged report much higher satisfaction with their performance across subjects than those whose students are disengaged.

Beyond academic results and skills, teachers and parents want to inspire a lifelong love of learning. Both groups want their students to develop problem-solving skills and find a self-motivated joy in learning.

This highlights the importance of prioritizing a positive mindset,

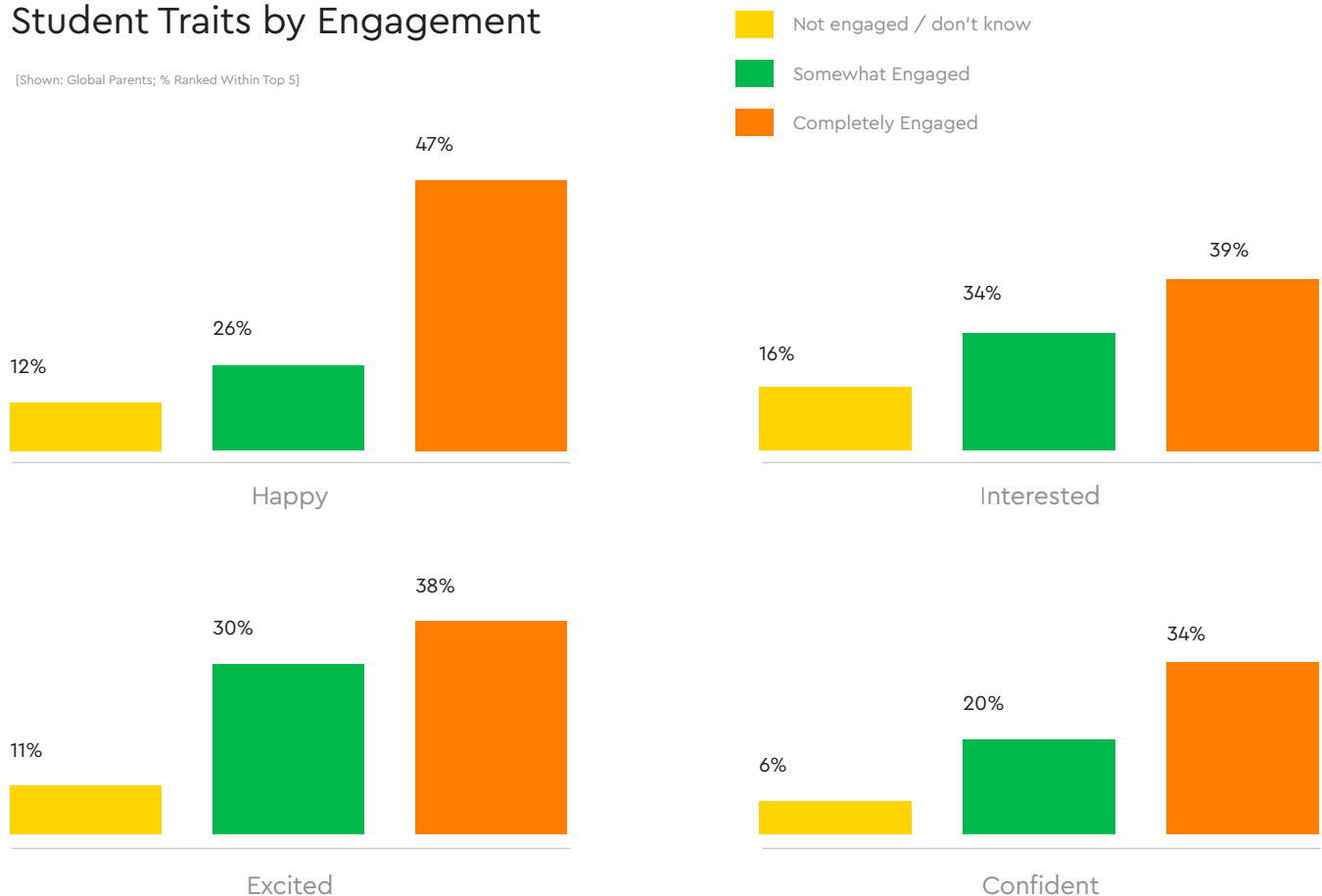
motivation, and resilience alongside academic performance.

The most effective path to achieving these critical attributes? Engagement. Teachers who describe their students as "engaged" are almost twice as likely to say their students find joy in learning and are self-motivated.

Engagement also sparks improved well-being for students. Parents/caregivers believe students who are more engaged in school are 4x more likely to be happy and 5x more likely to be confident than disengaged students.

Student Traits by Engagement

[Shown: Global Parents; % Ranked Within Top 5]



The Takeaway:

Engage the whole student to boost academic performance, attendance, skills development, and overall well-being.

With increased pressure to demonstrate improved academic outcomes, the data shows student engagement improves performance and attendance. But education is about more than test scores. A Pew Research Center analysis³ of district mission statements found 80% emphasize future readiness, which might include goals like college and career readiness, developing lifelong learners, and creating productive citizens.

Ideally, the methods we apply in the classroom should help close the gap in academic comprehension and performance, while also boosting students' self-esteem and happiness to ensure their overall well-being and future readiness.

Look at the standard you plan to teach and explore how to make that concept more engaging

Engagement should not only be reserved for "Fun Fridays" or extracurriculars. The more engaged students are in the material, the better their academic performance. To make the core curriculum more engaging, start by posing a question or a challenge for students to solve that allows for open-ended creativity and collaboration.

Build confidence through the curriculum

The data demonstrates a clear connection between engagement and confidence. Encourage meaningful failure, resilience, and iteration so that students feel motivated to try again instead of pressured to find the single correct answer or solution.



Key Insight #3

Improving student engagement improves teacher retention.



Most teachers (eight in 10) would be happier with their work and find it more rewarding if their students were more engaged.

But teachers are feeling the weight of not having enough support.

Compared to their global counterparts, US teachers are more likely to say they need resources that are flexible for all learners. US administrators agree – over a third (35%) say the biggest barrier to engagement is access to lessons and teaching materials that do not broadly apply to all student abilities.

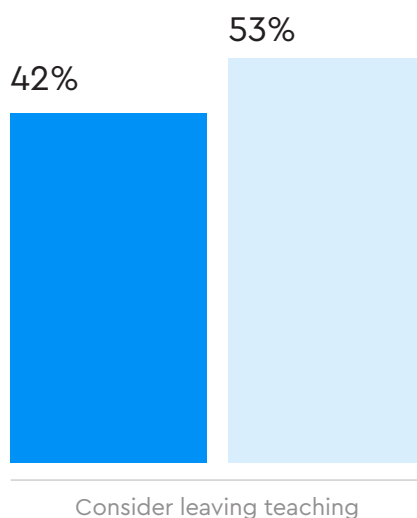
There is a clear opportunity to provide better tools and approaches that support teachers in meeting diverse student needs.

Teachers also need more access to professional learning. In the US, educators spend only seven hours per year on training, which is less than any other country. And 31% of these educators say they aren't using resources as effectively as they could be. Ongoing professional learning ensures educators are equipped to make the most of the resources and programs their schools invest in.

Student Engagement Impact on Teachers

[Shown: Global Teachers; % Selected]

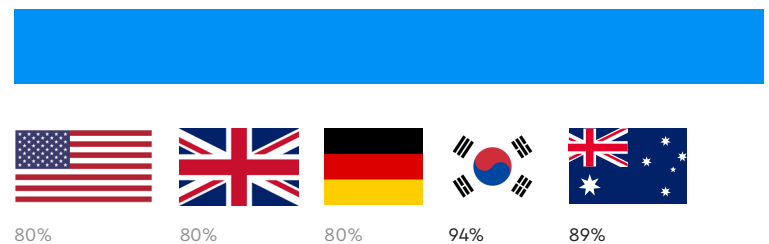
- Describe their students as "engaged"
- Do not describe their students as "engaged"



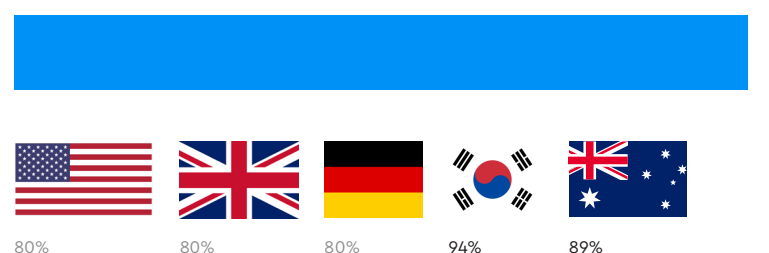
Job Satisfaction Among Teachers

[Shown: Global Teachers, Top 3 Box Agree on a 7-pt Scale]

My job would be more rewarding if my students were engaged in learning



I would be happier at my job if my students were engaged in learning



The Takeaway:

Invest in and empower teachers with ongoing support, professional learning, and resources to improve teacher retention and job satisfaction.

"Great curriculum leads to instruction.
Great teaching leads to learning."

Dr. Alex Marrero, Superintendent,
Denver Public Schools

Engaged students lead to engaged teachers, and engaged teachers are happier with their profession and find it more rewarding. But they can't do it alone and need the right support in place to avoid burnout.

Administrators play a crucial role, from investing in professional learning to providing solutions that make it easier for teachers to implement innovative approaches that engage and inspire students. Many educators are learning an entirely new approach, so they need to experience this type of learning firsthand and then learn how to facilitate it for their students. The type of support needed may also look different for new and experienced teachers.

Establish an open, two-way dialogue

Encourage partnership between administrators and teachers to ensure they feel heard, supported, and prepared. Listen to their feedback on what's working or ideas they want to try in their classroom.

Provide engaging professional learning

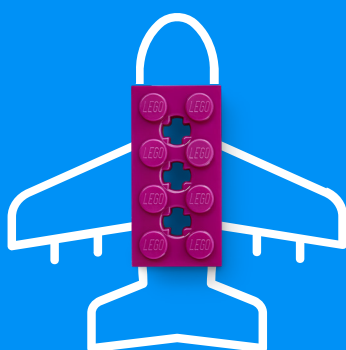
Teachers are often not getting enough support to successfully implement the latest innovative approaches and pedagogies. Remember, adults deserve engaging learning experiences too. Some educational solutions – like those from LEGO Education – offer ongoing professional training and coaching that teachers need. Administrators may also need learning opportunities that prepare them to lead a more engaged school and staff.

Implement solutions that support students and teachers

Finding easy-to-use solutions is one step, but implementation is where you set up success. Whether it's a pilot or a district-wide rollout, having a comprehensive implementation plan that includes support and ongoing professional learning is key. Districts can also leverage implementation services to streamline the process and get support. Some districts may not be ready for a full district adoption. However, taking the first step is what's most important, such as initiating a pilot with a group of teachers, gathering feedback, and expanding over time.

Remember the 'why'

Sometimes all it takes is seeing and hearing a classroom full of engaged students or witnessing one student who doesn't actively participate become a leader to remind you and your staff why you love teaching.



Key Insight #4

The path to increased engagement is paved in purposeful play.

Increasing engagement in the classroom doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming, and nine in ten teachers agree that it is never too late to engage students in learning. In fact, there is an approach that can facilitate and inspire administrators, teachers, parents, and students alike: learning through play.

The learning through play methodology leverages our natural and intuitive way of learning—which is actively engaging, meaningful, iterative, socially interactive, and joyful.

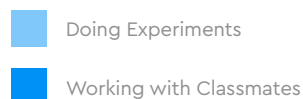
This methodology is defined by its use of creativity and curiosity, encouraging students to adapt, build confidence, and problem-solve. It encourages active student involvement in the classroom, from asking critical questions to creating connections between concepts. Through play, students develop cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and creative skills. When combined with intentional and purposeful instruction, this results in meaningful learning.

LEGO Education is not the only voice championing this approach.

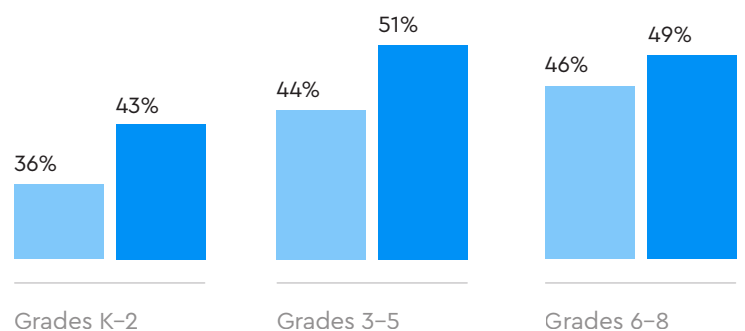
When asked their favorite ways to learn, students overwhelmingly prefer hands-on, play-based experiences and opportunities to collaborate with classmates. This preference increases with age—even outranking “watching a movie/video,” “playing online games,” or any options involving working alone.

However, the opportunities for playful, hands-on, and collaborative experiences decline as students age. When students are craving more opportunities for active discussion and analytical thinking, they're receiving less. Unfortunately, these findings are not surprising, as middle school is often when curriculum requirements, testing, and lack of resources are viewed as barriers to more playful experiences. But the benefits of play make it worthwhile to implement at any age—a sentiment that administrators, teachers, parents, and students can all agree on.

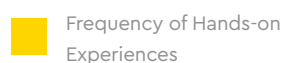
Favorite Ways to Learn by Grade



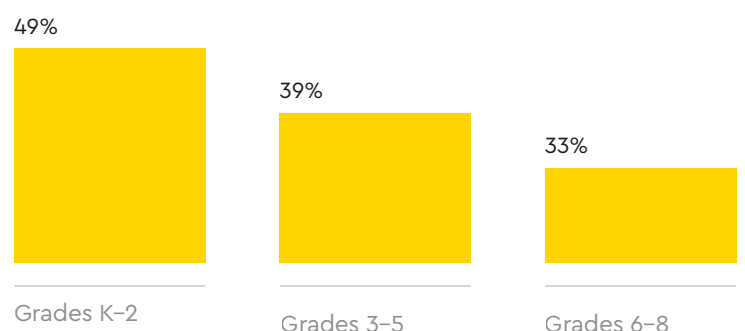
[Shown: Global Parents; % Ranked Within Top 5]



Frequency of Hands-on Experiences by Grade

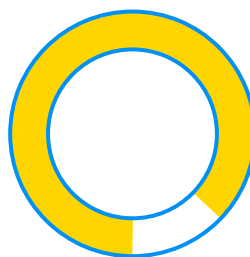


[Shown: Global Students; % Selected Often / Always]



Though administrators and teachers believe in the validity and benefits of learning through play, they are craving simple ways to bring it to their schools.

At LEGO Education, our ambition is to help transform education by making it easier for administrators and educators to bring joy and curiosity into the classroom. Equipped with the right tools, support, and education, educators can drive engagement that sets their students, schools, districts, and themselves up for better academic outcomes, improved student and teacher well-being, and lower teacher attrition rates.



89%
of students say
that their favorite
ways to learn are
through interactive
experiences.

Educators need easy-to-implement solutions to engage students through play in the classroom.



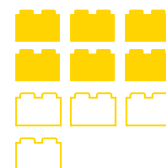
7 in 10 US educators

believe incorporating play into lesson plans is a worthwhile investment, yet only 32% feel adequately equipped with what they need to truly engage students.

Teachers and parents think that LEGO Education could be the answer.

6 in 10 teachers

and seven in ten parents believe LEGO Education solutions would have a positive impact on student engagement.



9 in 10 US administrators

say new curricula, resources, and approaches are necessary to increase engagement, and seven in ten want them to be more play-based, collaborative, and joyful.

also believe that a hands-on approach and learning through play are great ways to include everyone in the learning process.

9 in 10 teachers

believe that their students are most engaged during hands-on activities, and over 80% say learning through play supports improvements in collaboration, problem-solving skills, self-motivation, and knowledge retention.

9 in 10 parents

say that play is essential to learning.



The Takeaway:

Foster a culture of play to make learning engaging.

"Their joy is through the roof! Kids are like 'When are we going to do this again? Are we going to do it in math? Are we going to do it in reading or science?' They want to fit it into every part of the curriculum and core content that we have."

Chejuana Willis-Martin, Irving ISD Digital Learning Coach

Incorporating play into the classroom can be daunting. At first glance, it may seem chaotic and messy or at odds with traditional instruction. However, with the right approach and mindset, bringing play into the classroom via hands-on learning can be seamless and immensely beneficial to students and teachers alike.

Learning through play at school is a legitimate and effective methodology. Not only is it natural for students, but it's also a proven approach that drives better academic outcomes, attendance, future-ready skills, well-being, and joy. It's a part of other trusted pedagogies like inquiry-based, project-based, Montessori, and constructivist learning.

Let students take the lead

Play is universal. It's how students intuitively engage with their environment and seek to understand it. And it's relevant to every student, so let them take ownership of their learning. Have your teachers get comfortable giving up some of the control and being the facilitator.

Make it relevant to each classroom and community

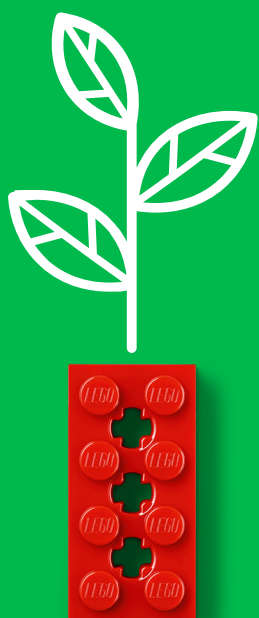
Students want opportunities for collaboration, discussion, and problem-solving when the subject matter becomes more relevant and meaningful to them. Incorporate more hands-on experiences into existing lessons and relate them to the students' lives, culture, and community.

Embrace the messiness of play

Provide students with hands-on tools that allow them to be curious, ask questions, and get out of their seats to collaborate, iterate, and solve problems with other students. Remember that creativity often looks like a loud classroom, filled with lively discussions and laughter – a strong sign of engagement.

Give permission to play

Teachers create the environment of their classrooms and want their administration's support and trust to be innovative and think outside the box. When given this freedom, teachers can connect the standards to engaging, playful learning experiences that all students can enjoy.



Engagement in the classroom is within reach, and learning through play is a powerful tool to engage students and educators around the world.



LEGO Education is a unique team of educators and innovators, and based on the LEGO® brick, we have built engaging learning experiences for over 40 years. We are committed to supporting administrators and teachers in their efforts to inspire students, ensuring questions like "How was school today?" or "Did you experience something new today?" are answered with passion and excitement about learning.

Learning through play places a fully engaged class within reach. Administrators, educators, parents, and students all agree that it is the type of innovative approach schools need to not only increase engagement, but also improve the overall well-being of students and educators.

If you would like to book a meeting to discover how LEGO Education solutions can help boost engagement in your district, get in touch with us [here](#).

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¹Survey respondents encompass over 6,000 administrators, teachers, parents, and students aged 5–14 from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, South Korea, and Australia. Note that administrator statistics are US only, while all other statistics presented in this report are global unless specified otherwise.

²In this study, engagement is defined as a student's genuine and self-motivated interest and involvement in the learning process.

³"Future readiness and safety and health are most commonly mentioned issues in U.S. school district mission statements," Pew Research Center, accessed August 8, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/04/04/school-district-mission-statements-highlight-a-partisan-divide-over-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-k-12-education/dl_2023-03-30_school-mission_0-01a-png/.