The toxic stress of poverty is the biggest barrier to learning for kids in need.

- 62% of educators report that trauma and extreme stress are common barriers to learning.
- 67% of educators report that inadequate access to mental and emotional health support impacts kids’ learning.
- 90% of educators report that they could have a greater impact if they had the right resources.

Meeting basic human needs would have the greatest impact on students’ learning potential.

- 57% of educators report that meeting basic needs would have the greatest impact on their students’ learning potential.
- 56% of educators report they would spend their own money on basic needs items.

Educators need more training and resources to support students with special needs.

- 88% felt they could better serve children with special needs if they had the right resources.
- 60% said they needed professional development.
- 47% said they need funding.

Educators want to talk about diversity and inclusion with students, but need resources.

- 63% report that a lack of culturally relevant books is a common barrier to learning.
- 51% report that diverse, inclusive books are a #1 priority when spending their own money.

Educators are focusing on what they can control.

- Educators cited a lack of family engagement as a top barrier to learning, but they also indicated they are focusing less on family engagement and more on classroom success.
- Selected “encourage reading/learning in the home” as an objective in 2019, vs. 56% in 2018 and 64% in 2017.

In many cases, educators prioritize professional development over funding.

- 66% said they need professional development.
- 44% said they need funding.

Creating a school library is, in many cases, innovative.

Educators reported that kids often don’t see themselves as learners because education is not viewed as essential in their homes.

- More and more educators indicate their school or community has no library.

Rural and urban communities face many of the same challenges.

- Educators cite lack of family engagement as an issue:
  - 75% in rural areas vs 72% in urban areas.

- Educators cite complex family structures as an issue:
  - 74% in rural areas vs 76% in urban areas.

- Educators cite hunger as an issue:
  - 52% in rural areas vs 55% in urban areas.

To better serve kids affected by trauma and stress,

- 66% said they need professional development.
- 44% said they need funding.

Emerging Trend: Kids don’t see themselves as learners.

- Educators in the First Book Network say that they joined to “become part of a movement that promotes equal access to quality education for kids in need.”

Nearly 1/3 of educators in the First Book Network report that they joined to “become part of a movement that promotes equal access to quality education for kids in need.”

*These learnings are compiled from multiple surveys fielded in 2019 and are based on survey samples that are representative of the First Book Network in terms of organization type, job title, geographic setting, etc. Some learnings are from qualitative research rather than quantitative.*