

A Few Bad Apples

Is your teaching effectiveness hobbled by a few persistent troublemakers?



Ever thought of quitting because of them?

IF SO, you've got a lot of company, according to Public Agenda, a nonprofit research organization, which polled public secondary school teachers and parents to get their views on discipline problems and what to do about them. Three-quarters of the teachers say they "could be teaching a lot more effectively" if it were not for discipline problems, and one-third have "seriously considered quitting" because of them.

Parents who don't discipline their children get most of the blame—from teachers and from other parents. But school officials and lawyers also get some criticism. Nearly 80 percent of teachers say their schools have persistent troublemakers who already should have been removed and sent to alternative schools. Fifty-five percent believe a fear of lawsuits causes many administrators to back down when challenged by parents.

It's not surprising then that 94 percent of teachers think holding parents more accountable for their kids' behavior would keep more problem pupils in line.

