The Metropolitan Life Survey of

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

1996

Students Voice Their Opinions on: Their Education, Teachers and Schools

Part II

MetLife®

The Metropolitan Life Survey of The American Teacher

1996

Students Voice Their Opinions on: Their Education, Teachers and Schools

Part II

Conducted for
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
by
Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1996, Students Voice Their Opinions on: Their Education, Teachers and Schools was conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. on behalf of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. This report, the second in a series of four, reflects MetLife's continued efforts to bring insight and understanding to current issues in education that affect the nation's public schools. MetLife's overall goal is to bring the opinions of teachers, students and parents to the attention of educators, policymakers and the American public.

This survey sought students' opinions about the education they receive. Public school students from middle and high schools nationwide, in grades seven through twelve, were asked to rate the quality of their schools, teachers and guidance counselors. The results yield a report card on:

- ✯ The quality of education;
- ✯ Teacher characteristics;
- ✯ Guidance counselor characteristics; and
- ✯ School resources.

Differences among students from urban, suburban and rural schools and among racial and ethnic groups were of particular interest in this survey, given their relevance in previous MetLife surveys in accounting for significant variations in teacher and student experiences.

The overall purpose of this survey is threefold: ① to understand how students view their education and where improvements are most needed; ② to establish baseline measures for use in tracking important areas of change in students' experiences over time; and ③ to compare the responses of students and teachers.

Survey Method

A total of 2,524 questionnaires were completed with public school students enrolled in grades seven through twelve throughout the continental United States. Every public school containing any of these grades had an equal chance of being selected. Weights were applied so that the sample of students in grades seven through twelve is projectable to the total student population nationally. From December 19, 1995 through February 2, 1996 questionnaires were self-administered by students in the classroom under the close supervision of a teacher.

Notes on Reading Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents. The base for each question is the total number of respondents answering that question.

Public Release of Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from the survey may be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is also available.

Project Responsibility and Acknowledgements

The Harris team responsible for the design and analysis of this survey includes Robert Leitman, Executive Vice President; Katherine Binns, Senior Vice President; and Alan Steinberg, Research Director. Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. gratefully acknowledges the contributions to this project of our colleagues at MetLife.

Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. is responsible for the final determination of the topics, question wording, collection of the actual data, and analysis and interpretation in the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents students' evaluations of their education, school and teachers. Students were asked to rate specific aspects of their teachers, guidance counselors and school resources. Where possible, students' evaluations are compared with those of a nationwide sample of teachers who were surveyed earlier in 1995; results of the survey are reported in the *Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1995: Old Problems, New Challenges.*

A few general trends emerge from the study: ① urban students, racial and ethnic minority students and low academic performers are the most dissatisfied with their teachers, school resources and the overall quality of education; ② students are more satisfied with the quality of their teachers, including specific characteristics of their teachers, than they are with other aspects of their school and education; and ③ teachers have more positive views of the education system than students.

Although students are generally satisfied with their education, with two-thirds giving their school A's or B's on the overall job it's doing, too many are left feeling dissatisfied (29%). Teachers feel much more positive about this than students: nine in ten teachers gave their school positive ratings on the quality of education it provides.

Schools come up short in other areas as well. Students feel that their teachers are not putting enough effort into making learning interesting. For example, over half give their teachers mediocre or low marks on making learning interesting, and a larger majority feel that teachers do not provide them with enough interesting learning experiences outside the classroom (72%) and do a fair job, at best, of integrating technology into the learning process (62%).

The concern among students over the lack of basic skills among their peers is widespread -- more than half (53%) believe this is a serious problem in their school. Overcrowded classrooms and shortages of textbooks are serious problems for at least one in three students nationwide; lack of equipment in labs and athletic and exercise facilities is a problem faced by more than half of all students. Fortunately, many of these problems are getting better, not worse.

Students in urban schools are more likely to face problems in these areas than their suburban and rural counterparts, particularly regarding overcrowded classrooms, students deficiencies in basic skills and shortages of textbooks. African-American and Hispanic students express greater concern with overcrowded classrooms and supplies of textbooks; problems concerning dated

equipment and textbooks are more widespread among Hispanics than among white and African-American students. Students who do poorly academically are the most concerned with dated textbooks and supplies of textbooks.

Where students do derive their satisfaction is from their teachers. Seven in ten students give their teachers high marks on the job they are doing, overall, and an even larger majority perceive their teachers as competent professionals who understand the subjects they teach and who offer help to students who have problems with their studies. And although many schools face problems with overcrowded classrooms, students feel their teachers do a good job of controlling them. A majority of students acknowledge another positive aspect of their teachers: their respect for students. Students also point to the areas where teachers need to improve: the degree to which they encourage students' academic interests and taking an interest in students' home lives. Also, as mentioned above, most students would like teachers to make learning more interesting.

These characteristics are not only important ingredients in student-teacher relationships, but are associated with peer relationships as well. In the first report in this series, *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1996: Students Voice Their Opinions on: Violence, Social Tension and Equality Among Teens*, many of these characteristics were found to be consistently associated with positive social relations among students and safer school environments.

Students also indicate how guidance counselors can better meet their needs. Counselors need to become more available to students who are seeking advice and improve the job they are doing in helping students who are having problems with their studies. Students are pleased with counselors' knowledge and understanding of their subject matter.

The finding that urban schools generally face greater problems in many of the areas assessed in this survey is consistent with the findings from the 1995 teachers survey which showed that not only do teachers from urban schools feel less satisfied overall, but over the past decade, while suburban and rural schools improved in many areas, urban schools have gotten worse.

This report will hopefully provide the education community with a useful report card of pluses and minuses that reflects students' current feelings about their education and points to areas that need to improve.

Major Findings

I. Quality of Education

1. Middle and high school students nationwide give their schools, on the average, a grade of "B" on the quality of education they receive.

★ Two-thirds of students nationwide give their schools either A (24%) or B (42%) on the quality of education their school provides.

★ A noteworthy number of students (29%), however, express dissatisfaction with their education, assigning their schools grades of C or worse.

★ Students are less pleased than teachers with the quality of education. In a 1995 MetLife survey, nine in ten teachers gave their schools excellent (47%) or good (48%) ratings.

★ There is a strong association between how well students do academically and their level of satisfaction with their education: the lower their course grades, the lower their evaluations. Three-quarters of students who get mostly A's or B's in their courses give the same grades to their schools, while only 33% of those who usually get C's or worse give their school grades of A or B.

2. More than half (53%) of students nationwide consider the lack of basic skills among their peers a very or somewhat serious problem in their schools.

★ This deficiency is perceived as more problematic in urban schools (60%) than suburban (45%) or rural schools (52%).

★ African-American students also consider this more problematic in their schools than white and Hispanic students (61% vs. 50% and 56%, respectively).

★ Teachers believe this problem is more serious than students do (74% vs. 53%).

II. Report Card of Teachers

1. Students are generally satisfied with their teachers -- three quarters give them ratings of "excellent" or "pretty good" on overall quality.

★ Nonetheless, one in four say they are not very satisfied with their teachers: 20% rate their teachers as only fair and 5% as poor.

★ Students are more likely to feel positive about their teachers than about the overall quality of their education (73% vs. 66%).

2. Overall ratings of teachers are lower for urban students, minority students, males and low academic performers.

★ Ratings of teachers are lowest for students who do poorly in school, of whom 54% give their teachers positive ratings.

★ Students in rural areas are more likely (80%) to feel satisfied with the caliber of teachers in their schools than urban (69%) or suburban (73%) students.

★ African-American (66%) and Hispanic students (67%) are less likely to give their teachers high ratings than white students (77%). Also, males view their teachers less favorably than females (68% vs. 78%).

3. Teachers get their highest grades for being knowledgeable on the subjects they teach (77%) and helping students who have difficulty with their studies (70%).

★ Teachers also receive high grades from a majority of students on treating students with respect (65%), caring about their futures (62%) and keeping control of the classroom (65%).

4. **Teachers receive high grades from substantially fewer students on making learning interesting (39%) and taking an interest in students' personal and home lives (27%).**

5. **Students' evaluations of their teachers differ by geographic size and race and ethnicity.**

   ★ Urban students evaluate their teachers less positively on keeping control and discipline in their classrooms and on encouraging students' academic interests. There is more than a ten percentage point difference between the proportion of urban vs. suburban and rural students who give their teachers A's or B's on these dimensions.

   ★ African-American students are less likely to think their teachers are knowledgeable in the subjects they teach (68%) than are white and Hispanic students (81% and 73%, respectively).

III. School Resources and Community Support

1. **At least one-third of students nationwide (37%) say they experience problems with overcrowded classrooms.**

   ★ This problem is worse for urban students (45%) than it is for suburban (34%) and rural (32%) students.

   ★ High school students are more concerned with overcrowded classrooms than middle school students (42% vs. 30%).

2. **Lack of equipment in places such as science labs and gymnasiums is a very or somewhat serious problem among half of all students (48%).**

   ★ This problem is more pervasive in schools situated in large urban school districts. In fact, nearly two in three students (64%) in the nation's largest five school districts experience problems of overcrowded classrooms.

★ Fewer students (38%) indicate that their school has a shortage of textbooks and other educational materials.

3. **Fewer students report problems with up-to-date equipment and textbooks than with shortages of these resources. While nearly one-half (48%) say that the lack of resources is a very or somewhat serious problem, only 28% state that their equipment is dated and a similar proportion (30%) report that their textbooks are dated.**

★ Academic status bears a strong relationship to students' ratings of their school resources. As academic status declines, the proportion who report having up-to-date resources declines dramatically.

IV. Use of Technology and Other Means to Enhance Learning

1. **Six in ten students believe their school does no better than an average job in using computers and technology to help them learn.**

2. **Six in ten also say their school does no better than an average job in teaching them how to use computers.**

3. **A large majority (72%) believe their school does not provide enough interesting experiences outside the classroom, such as field trips, visiting guests or special events.**

★ Suburban and rural students (77% and 73%) are more likely to report the lack of experiences outside the classroom than urban students (68%).

4. **Students are more satisfied when it comes to their choice of classes: two-thirds say they have enough or more than enough choices.**

5. **While a majority of students experience satisfaction with the support their school receives from parents and their**

community (51%), quite a large minority (40%) believe the level of support is too low.

★ Only one-third of students with low or failing grades believe the level of support is adequate compared with more than half of high academic performers.

★ Rural students are the most satisfied (59%) while urban students are the least (45%).

V. Report Card of Guidance Counselors

1. **Guidance counselors receive their highest ratings on being knowledgeable about course requirements for high school graduation (84%) and college admissions (77%).**

2. **Counselors receive somewhat lower grades on being knowledgeable about non-academic programs (67%) and their level of interest in students' futures (68%).**

3. **Students are much less satisfied with counselors' availability when students need their advice (58%) and helping students who are having problems with their studies (52%).**

CHAPTER 1: QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHERS

The most popular grade students assign to the quality of their education is B. Two in five (42%) students give B's and one-quarter (24%) give A's, resulting in a two-thirds majority who express satisfaction with the job their schools are doing to educate them. While the overall picture looks bright, there are more than one in four who express dissatisfaction in this area by giving their school grades of C or worse (29%).

The same question was asked of students in the *Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1994: Violence in America's Public Schools: The Family Perspective.* Three in four (74%) middle and high school students gave positive ratings ("excellent" or "good") to the quality of education they receive, suggesting that students feel somewhat less positive today than they did a few years ago. However, caution should be exercised when interpreting these differences because the rating scales used in the two surveys are not directly comparable, and it is not known what proportion of this difference may be due to the dissimilarity of the scales.

Students from urban, suburban and rural locations share similar views of their education: 63% of urban students, 67% of suburban and 69% of rural students report the quality of education they receive is positive (A or B). However, students from the nation's largest 15 urban school districts feel the least positive (56%).

> *Observation:*
> *Students are less pleased than teachers are with the quality of education. When teachers were asked the same question in the* Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1995: Old Problems, New Challenges, *nine in ten gave their schools excellent (47%) or good (48%) ratings. Twice the proportion of teachers than students (47% vs. 24%) gave high ratings (ratings of "excellent" and "A," respectively) on the quality of education.*

There is a strong relationship between students' course grades and the grades they assign to their schools on the quality of education. The lower their course grades, the lower their school evaluations are. Among those who receive mostly A's and B's (above average or high performers), three in four (75%) give the same grades to their school on the quality of education; among those who receive mostly B's and C's (average performers), 59% give their schools A's and B's; only 33% of students with course grades of C or worse (below average or low performers) assign their school grades of A or B.

Closely tied to the issue of quality education is the extent to which students complete their education with a firm command of the basics. In this study, students were asked to indicate the degree to which they consider the lack of basic skills among students to be a serious problem in

their school. More than half (53%) say that it is a very or somewhat serious problem. This is more of a problem in urban schools where 60% report this as a serious problem, compared with rural (52%) and suburban (45%) schools. African-Americans are more likely (61%) to perceive the lack of basic skills as a serious problem in their schools than are white (50%) or Hispanic (56%) students.

Observation:
Teachers believe this problem is more serious than do students. Three in four (74%) report that the deficiency in basic skills is a very (21%) or somewhat (53%) serious problem. Both teachers and students report having greater concerns with this problem in urban areas. Among teachers in urban schools, 79% feel this problem is serious compared with 68% in suburban and 72% in rural schools.

TABLE 1-1

QUALITY OF EDUCATION BY SCHOOL LOCATION AND STUDENT COURSE GRADES

Q.B1: Students are given grades in school -- A, B, C, D or FAIL based on the quality of their school work. If you were to grade your school on the job it does providing you with a good education, what grade would you choose?

		LOCATION			COURSE GRADES		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2519	1398	654	467	1453	815	245
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A	24	24	22	27	30	16	13
B	42	39	45	42	45	42	21
C	20	22	19	19	16	25	35
D	5	6	6	4	4	6	14
Fail	4	5	3	3	2	5	12
A/B	66	63	67	69	75	59	33
C or Worse	29	33	28	26	21	36	60
Don't Know	5	4	4	5	4	5	6

TABLE 1-2

STUDENTS LACKING BASIC SKILLS

Q.B3-2: In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem?

Students Lacking Basic Skills

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2517	1394	654	469	1325	472	497
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very/Somewhat Serious	53	60	45	52	50	61	56
Not Very/Not At All Serious	40	34	36	41	43	34	36
Don't Know	7	6	8	7	7	4	9

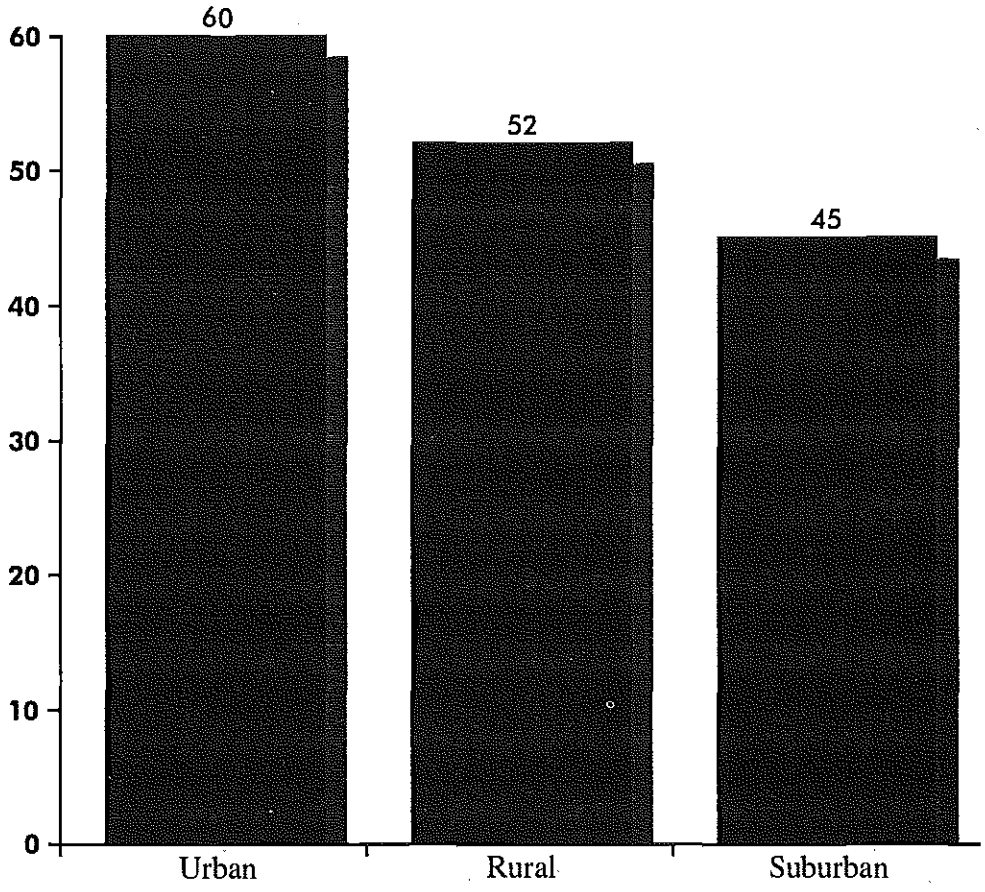
TABLE 1-3

LACK OF BASIC SKILLS AMONG PEERS

Q.B3: In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem?

Lack of basic skills

% Reporting Very Serious or Somewhat Serious



Overall Quality of Teachers

Students were asked to grade the overall quality of the teachers in their school. Three-quarters give their teachers positive ratings of excellent (16%) or pretty good (57%). Others, however, express dissatisfaction with their teachers with ratings of only fair (20%) or poor (5%).

Overall ratings of teachers are lower for urban than non-urban students, and lower for minority vs. white students. About two-thirds (69%) of urban students give their teachers marks of excellent or pretty good, whereas three-quarters or more from suburban (73%) and rural (80%) schools feel their teachers are deserving of these ratings. Similarly, about two-thirds of African-American (66%) and Hispanic (67%) students give their teachers high ratings compared with over three-quarters (77%) of white students. Female students view their teachers more favorably than male students. Over three-quarters (78%) of females compared with two-thirds (68%) of males say their teachers are excellent or pretty good.

> *Observation:*
> *Students are less satisfied with the quality of teachers in their schools than teachers are. Nearly all teachers rated the quality of teachers as excellent (55%) or good (41%). Substantially more teachers than students gave their schools "excellent" ratings in this area (55% vs. 16%). Unlike students who feel the quality of teachers is lower in urban than non-urban schools, teachers uniformly (more than 9 in 10) believe the quality of teachers is excellent or good, regardless of location.*

There is a strong relationship between overall teacher ratings and students' academic status. Among students who do well in school (A's and B's), eight in ten (80%) feel their teachers are excellent or good; this proportion drops to two-thirds (65%) among students who do average in school (B's and C's) and further declines to nearly half (54%) among those who do poorly in school (C or worse).

TABLE 1-4

QUALITY OF TEACHERS BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B2-1: How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

The Quality of Teachers in Your School

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2520	1396	655	469	1327	475	495
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Excellent	16	18	17	11	15	19	16
Pretty Good	57	51	56	68	62	47	51
Only Fair	20	23	20	16	17	25	24
Poor	5	7	5	5	5	6	5
Don't Know	1	2	2	0	1	3	4
Excellent/Good	73	69	73	80	77	66	67
Fair/Poor	26	30	25	20	22	31	29

TABLE 1-5

QUALITY OF TEACHERS BY SCHOOL LEVEL AND GENDER

Q.B2-1: How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

The Quality of Teachers in Your School

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2520	879	1639	1156	1359
	%	%	%	%	%
Excellent	16	19	14	16	15
Pretty Good	57	54	59	52	62
Only Fair	20	19	21	21	19
Poor	5	6	5	8	2
Don't Know	1	1	1	2	1
Excellent/Good	73	73	73	68	78
Fair/Poor	26	26	26	30	21

TABLE 1-6

QUALITY OF TEACHERS BY COURSE GRADE

Q.B2-1: How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

The Quality of Teachers in Your School

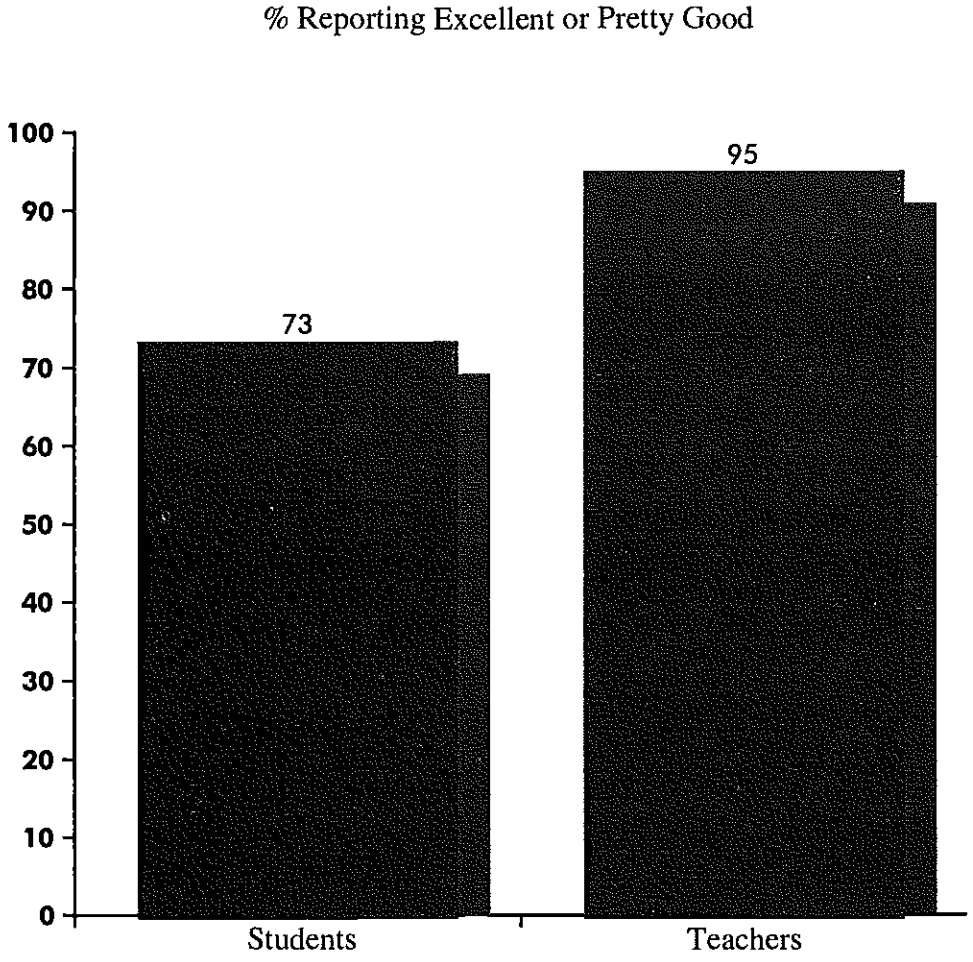
		COURSE GRADES		
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2520	1455	814	244
	%	%	%	%
Excellent	16	18	12	12
Pretty Good	57	62	53	41
Only Fair	20	16	25	28
Poor	5	3	7	16
Don't Know	1	1	2	2
Excellent/Good	73	80	65	54
Fair/Poor	26	19	33	44

TABLE 1-7

OVERALL QUALITY OF TEACHERS: A STUDENT VS. TEACHER PERSPECTIVE*

Q.B2: How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

The quality of teachers in your school.



* Data for teachers is reported in the "Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1995: Old Problems, New Challenges."

Report Card of Teachers

There are eight specific dimensions on which students grade their teachers using the familiar letter grades A, B, C, D and Fail. Teachers receive the largest proportion of high grades (A's and B's) on the following dimensions:

- ✯ Understanding the subjects they teach (77%);
- ✯ Helping students who are having problems with their studies (70%);
- ✯ Treating students with respect (65%); and
- ✯ Keeping control and discipline in their classrooms (65%).

Teachers receive an average grade of B[1] on understanding the subjects they teach and helping students who are having problems with their studies. Between one-half and two-thirds of students give their teachers A's or B's on caring about their futures (62%) and encouraging students' academic interests (58%). Teachers receive their lowest grades on taking an interest in students' home and personal lives (27%) and on making learning interesting for everyone (39%). For both of these items, teachers receive average grades of C.

> *Observation:*
> *It appears that students' lack of interest in the subjects they're taught has not improved since 1988, the first time this question was asked.* The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1988: Strengthening Relationships Between Teachers and Students *found a similar proportion of students as in the current survey reporting a lack of interest in their studies: 41% agreed with the statement "Generally, what we learn at school doesn't interest or excite me." The same proportion of teachers in the 1995 MetLife survey report that students' lack of interest is a very or somewhat serious problem.*

Students' ratings of their teachers vary by urbanicity, race and ethnicity and academic status. Urban students report less positive evaluations than suburban and rural students on six dimensions. The largest differences occur on two dimensions: keeping control and discipline in the classroom and understanding the subjects they (teachers) teach. For each of these, the difference is more than 10 percentage points between the proportion of urban students and rural students who give their teachers A's or B's.

Ratings given by white students are generally higher than those given by minority students, and students who do better academically give teachers higher ratings than those with mediocre or poor academic records.

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[1]Average grades were computed by first converting letter grades to numbers and then computing the mean. Letter grades were assigned the following numeric codes: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4 and Fail = 5.

Among racial and ethnic groups, there are three items on which the ratings of white and minority students differ substantially from one another. While four in five (81%) white students give their teachers A's or B's on understanding the subjects they teach, two-thirds (68%) of African-American students give their teachers the same ratings. Two-thirds (68%) of white students give their teachers high marks on keeping control of the classroom, yet the proportion of minority students who give teachers similar marks ranges from 9-12 percentage points less. Similarly, three in five (61%) white students compared to less than half of African-American (49%) and Hispanic (47%) students assign A's or B's to their teachers on encouraging students' academic interests.

More dramatic differences are evident among students who vary in academic performance. For example, among students who usually do above average in their courses, 73% give their teachers A's or B's on treating them with respect; among those who do average in their courses, 55% give teachers high ratings; among students who do poorly, 42% give high ratings to their teachers. On another dimension, two-thirds (67%) of students with above average grades feel their teachers are doing a good job of encouraging their academic interests, but only 45% of those with average grades and 39% of those with below average grades feel their teachers encourage them. This pattern consistently occurs for all the dimensions on which students evaluate their teachers.

> *Observation:*
> *Students of low academic status who stand to benefit the most from being respected and encouraged are the least likely to perceive these characteristics in their teachers.*

Using a true/false response format, students rated their teachers on three additional dimensions. About one in five (22%) disagree with the statement that teachers often treat students like numbers. There is a noteworthy minority (28%) who disagree with the statement that teachers do everything they can to help students succeed.

On a third dimension students are more clearly divided in their opinions. Half (50%) express positive sentiment by disagreeing with the statement that teachers don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone, while two in five (40%) agree with this statement. Together, these false/true responses suggest that while students are unlikely to feel their relationships with teachers are impersonal, they are also unlikely to feel personally attended -- their relationships with teachers lie somewhere in between.

Students' responses to these true/false statements are highly similar across urban, suburban and rural areas, although racial and ethnic differences are noteworthy. African-American students,

compared with white and Hispanic students, are less likely to evaluate their teachers negatively on two of these dimensions: helping students succeed and paying enough attention to everyone. Hispanic students, on the other hand, are the most likely to evaluate their teachers negatively on these dimensions. For example, nearly half (48%) of Hispanic students compared with 39% of white and 35% of African-American students evaluate their teachers negatively on paying enough attention to everyone.

TABLE 1-8

RATING OF TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B10: If you could grade THE TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL on the following items, what grade would you give them?

SUMMARY OF GRADES A/B

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2524	1399	656	469	1327	476	497
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Understanding the subjects they teach	77	71	80	83	81	68	73
Helping students who are having problems with their studies	70	67	70	74	72	67	63
Treating students with respect	65	63	63	70	67	59	61
Keeping control and discipline in their classrooms	65	59	66	71	68	59	56
Caring about their students' futures	62	60	65	62	63	62	61
Encouraging students' academic interests	58	51	64	59	61	49	47
Making learning interesting for everyone	39	41	38	38	38	42	44
Taking an interest in students' home and personal lives	27	26	25	31	26	31	28

TABLE 1-9

REPORT CARD OF TEACHERS

Characteristic	Average Grade*
Understanding the subjects they teach	B
Helping students who are having problems with their studies	B
Treating students with respect	B-
Encouraging students' academic interests	B-
Keeping control of the classroom	B-
Caring about students' futures	B-
Making learning interesting	C
Taking an interest in students' home and personal lives	C-

*Average grades were computed by first converting letter grades to numbers and then computing the mean. Letter grades were assigned the following numeric codes: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4 and Fail = 5.

TABLE 1-10

RATINGS OF TEACHERS BY STUDENT COURSE GRADES

Q.B10: If you could grade THE TEACHERS IN YOUR SCHOOL on the following items, what grade would you give them?

SUMMARY OF GRADES A/B

		COURSE GRADES		
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2524	1456	815	245
	%	%	%	%
Understanding the subjects they teach	77	85	70	52
Helping students who are having problems with their studies	70	77	62	46
Treating students with respect	65	73	55	42
Keeping control and discipline in their classrooms	65	70	59	51
Caring about their students' futures	62	69	53	45
Encouraging students' academic interests	58	67	45	39
Making learning interesting for everyone	39	45	32	26
Taking an interest in students' home and personal lives	27	31	21	18

TABLE 1-11

RATINGS OF SELECTED TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS BY ACADEMIC STATUS

Q.B10: If you could grade the teachers in your school on the following items, what grade would you give them -- A, B, C, D, or Fail?

% Reporting Grades A or B

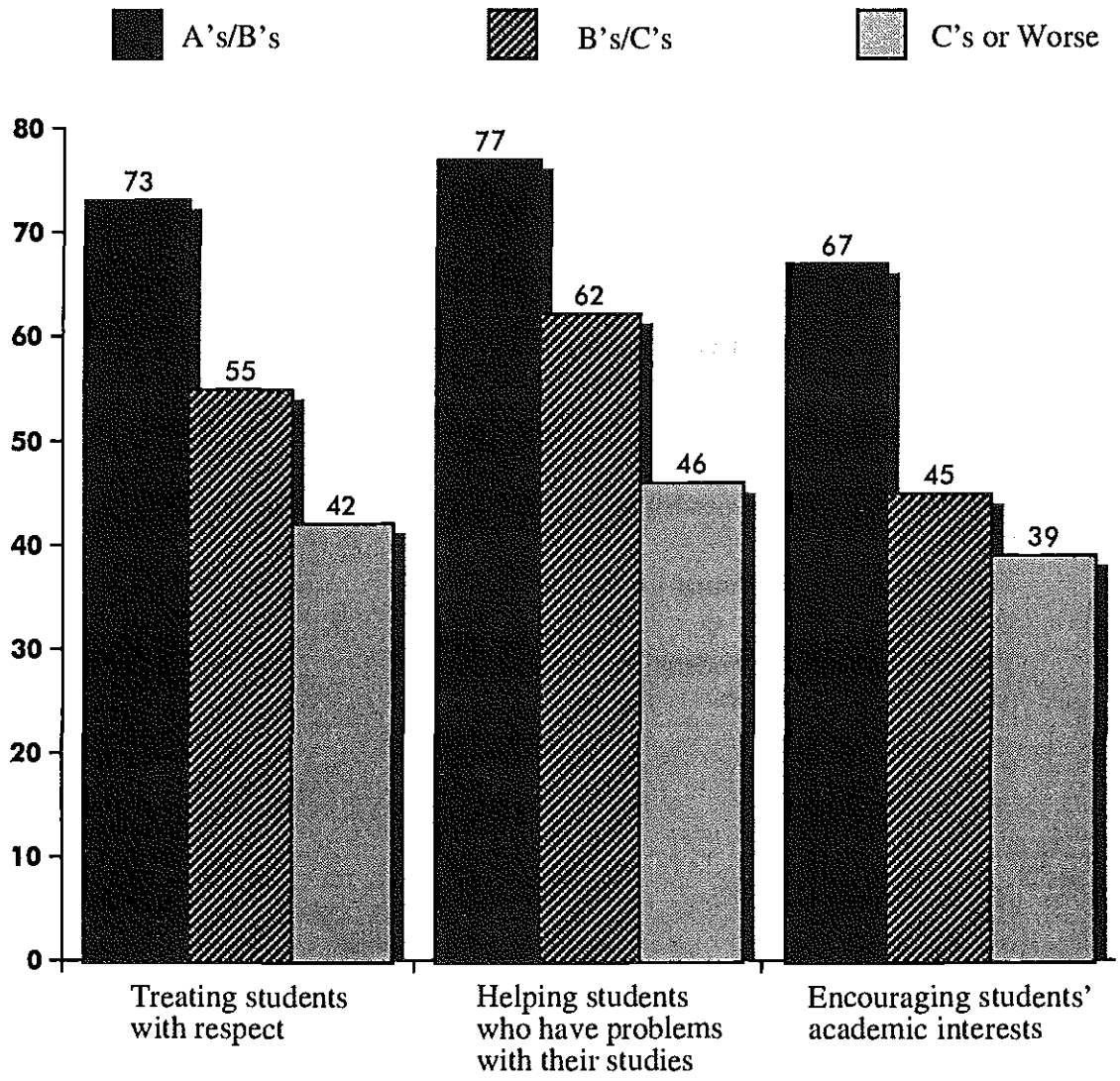

TABLE 1-12

TRUE/FALSE STATEMENTS ABOUT TEACHERS

Q.B11: Please mark whether you think each of these statements is more often true or more often false for your school?

	More Often True	More Often False	Don't Know
	%	%	%
Teachers in my school often treat their students like numbers	22	58	20
Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed	62	28	10
Teachers in my school don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone	40	50	10

TABLE 1-13

TRUE/FALSE STATEMENTS ABOUT TEACHERS BY SCHOOL LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B11: Please mark whether you think each of these statements is more often true or more often false for your school?

SUMMARY OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2506	1387	652	467	1321	470	492
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Teachers in my school often treat their students like numbers	22	23	23	19	21	21	24
Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed	28	28	28	28	28	23	31
Teachers in my school don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone	40	42	39	39	39	35	48

CHAPTER 2: REPORT CARD ON SCHOOL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Overcrowded Classrooms and Lack of School Resources

Students were asked to evaluate how serious a problem overcrowded classrooms and lack of resources are in their school. A majority (61%) say they do not experience problems with overcrowded classrooms, although more than one-third (37%) do report such problems. Half are divided on whether this problem is getting better (25%) or worse (25%). Another two in five (43%) report that class size has stayed the same.

Urban students are more likely to experience serious problems with overcrowded classrooms than suburban or rural students (45% vs. 34% and 32%, respectively). However, urban students are also more likely to say this problem is getting better than getting worse (28% vs. 23%). This is particularly evident in the nation's largest school districts where 30% say the problem is getting better as opposed to only 19% who say it is getting worse. The opposite is true for rural schools where 21% report that this problem is getting better and 27% say it is getting worse.

Among racial and ethnic groups, white students are more likely to report that overcrowded conditions are getting worse (29%) than better (21%). African-American and Hispanic students are much more likely to say the opposite -- that conditions are getting better (41% and 31%, respectively) than worse (13% and 18%, respectively).

High school students are more likely to say they experience very or somewhat serious problems with overcrowded classrooms than middle school students (42% vs. 30%). Moreover, high school students are also less likely to say this problem is getting better (23%) than middle school students (29%). Students' level of concern with this problem remains consistent across levels of academic status.

Students are equally divided on whether or not lack of equipment in places like science and computer labs and gym facilities is a serious problem. Just under one-half (48%) say that it presents a very or somewhat serious problem in their school although the same proportion believe it is not a problem. The lack of equipment is a more pervasive problem among the nation's 15 largest school districts where three in five report serious problems (60%). Students nationwide are more likely to say this problem is getting better (34%) than getting worse (15%), and are as likely to say it is changing in either direction (49%) than staying the same (43%). This trend is consistent across school locations and race and ethnicity.

When asked about their concerns with supplies of textbooks and other educational materials, 38% indicate that their school does not have enough to go around. While this problem is more likely to be reported in urban and rural schools than suburban ones, it is most likely to be reported by students from the largest school districts in the nation (53%). African-American and Hispanic students are more likely to report serious problems in this area (46%) than white students (35%).

As academic status declines, the lack of textbooks and educational material becomes more of a concern. Among students who do poorly in school, half (50%) report serious problems in their school regarding the supply of educational materials. By comparison, one-third (35%) of above average students consider this problem a serious one.

Observation:
When comparing equipment to textbook shortages, equipment shortages represent a greater concern to students but are also more likely to be improving over time.

TABLE 2-1

RATINGS OF SCHOOL RESOURCES

Q.B3: In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem?

	Very Serious	Somewhat Serious	Not Very Serious	Not At All Serious	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms	11	26	39	22	2
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms or computer labs	20	28	29	20	4
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	19	19	29	30	3

TABLE 2-2

RATINGS OF SCHOOL RESOURCES BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B3: In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem?

SUMMARY OF VERY SERIOUS/SOMEWHAT SERIOUS

		LOCATION				RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	15 Largest Districts	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2519	934	1394	654	469	1324	474	496
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms	38	44	45	34	32	37	40	42
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms or computer labs	48	60	51	45	48	46	50	52
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	38	53	41	34	40	35	46	46

TABLE 2-3

SCHOOL RESOURCES PROBLEMS AND HOW THEY ARE CHANGING

Q.B4: Overall, do you think each of these problems is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	Not Sure
	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms	25	25	43	7
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms, or computer labs	34	15	43	9
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	27	12	50	10

TABLE 2-4

SCHOOL RESOURCES PROBLEMS AND HOW THEY ARE CHANGING
BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B4: Overall, do you think each of these problems is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

		LOCATION				RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	15 Largest Districts	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2519	934	1394	654	469	1324	474	496
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms								
Getting Better	25	30	28	24	21	21	41	31
Getting Worse	25	19	23	24	27	29	13	18
Staying the Same	43	44	40	45	45	45	39	40
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms or computer labs								
Getting Better	34	27	31	33	39	33	39	32
Getting Worse	15	16	15	14	14	16	13	11
Staying the Same	43	47	44	45	39	43	38	46
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around								
Getting Better	27	27	29	23	30	25	41	28
Getting Worse	12	17	13	13	11	12	11	13
Staying the Same	50	45	45	56	50	54	37	49

TABLE 2-5

RATINGS OF SCHOOL RESOURCES BY SCHOOL LEVEL AND GENDER

Q.B3: In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem?

SUMMARY OF VERY SERIOUS/SOMEWHAT SERIOUS

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2519	878	1637	1153	1359
	%	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms	38	30	42	36	39
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms or computer labs	48	46	49	48	48
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	38	39	38	38	39

TABLE 2-6

SCHOOL RESOURCES PROBLEMS THAT ARE GETTING BETTER

Q.B4: Overall, do you think each of these problems is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

SUMMARY OF GETTING BETTER

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2519	878	1637	1153	1359
	%	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms	25	29	23	24	26
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms, or computer labs	34	40	30	35	32
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	27	31	25	28	27

TABLE 2-7

RATINGS OF SCHOOL RESOURCES BY COURSE GRADES

Q.B3: In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem?

SUMMARY OF VERY SERIOUS/SOMEWHAT SERIOUS

		COURSE GRADES		
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2517	1453	812	244
	%	%	%	%
Overcrowded classrooms	38	38	35	41
Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms, or computer labs	48	46	50	50
Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	38	35	40	50

Up-To-Date Equipment and Textbooks

The other aspect of school resources that students evaluated was how up-to-date their equipment and textbooks are. This apparently was a difficult area for students to assess, given that about one in five indicate they do not know whether or not their school provides up-to-date equipment (22%) and textbooks (18%). Among those who had an opinion, only half say their equipment (50%) and textbooks (52%) are up-to-date. Another 28% state that their equipment is dated and a similar proportion (30%) report that their textbooks are dated.

Observation:
When comparing students' assessments of school resources, it appears that the lack of equipment is more problematic to them than old, dated equipment. In other words, quantity is more an issue than quality.

Students from urban areas are no more likely than their suburban and rural counterparts to say that their school provides them with dated equipment. However, when asked to evaluate their textbooks on the same dimension, urban students are less likely (27%) than suburban (30%) and rural (35%) students to report using dated textbooks.

Academic status, once again, bears a strong relationship with students' evaluation of their schools' resources. Whereas only 39% of those who do poorly in school report having up-to-

date equipment, this proportion grows to 45% for average students and 55% for above average students. This pattern is somewhat less dramatic, but still noteworthy regarding their assessment of textbooks.

TABLE 2-8

WHETHER OR NOT EQUIPMENT IS UP-TO-DATE

Q.B5: Do you think your school provides students with up-to-date equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms and computer labs, or not?

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2514	1393	653	468	1323	472	495
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
School Provides Up-To-Date Equipment	50	46	54	52	53	50	41
Does Not	28	29	27	27	28	23	31
Don't Know	22	26	19	20	19	28	28

TABLE 2-9

WHETHER OR NOT EQUIPMENT IS UP-TO-DATE BY STUDENTS' COURSE GRADES

Q.B5: Do you think your school provides students with up-to-date equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms and computer labs, or not?

		COURSE GRADES		
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2514	1452	811	243
	%	%	%	%
School Provides Up-To-Date Equipment	50	55	45	39
Does Not	28	25	31	33
Don't Know	22	20	24	28

TABLE 2-10

WHETHER OR NOT TEXTBOOKS ARE UP-TO-DATE

Q.B6: Do you think your school provides students with up-to-date textbooks, or not?

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2518	1396	654	468	1323	472	495
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
School Provides Up-To-Date Textbooks	52	52	53	50	54	53	45
Does Not	30	27	30	35	29	30	34
Don't Know	18	21	17	15	17	18	21

TABLE 2-11

WHETHER OR NOT TEXTBOOKS ARE UP-TO-DATE BY STUDENTS' COURSE GRADES

Q.B6: Do you think your school provides students with up-to-date textbooks, or not?

		COURSE GRADES		
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2518	1455	811	244
	%	%	%	%
School Provides Up-To-Date Textbooks	52	54	51	41
Does Not	30	29	30	39
Don't Know	18	17	19	21

Use of Computers and Other Means to Enhance Learning

Only one in three (33%) students nationwide believe their school does a good job of using computers and technology to help them learn; a larger proportion believe their school is doing an average (46%) or a poor job (16%). If one considers an average job a sign of needing improvement, then more than six in ten (62%) students nationally believe that computers can be better integrated into the learning process.

Urban students are just as likely (64%) as suburban (62%) and rural (60%) students to feel their schools do an average or poor job of using computers to help students learn. African-American students give their schools better evaluations in this area than white and Hispanic students: they are less likely to say their school does a poor job (8%) than white (17%) and Hispanic (14%) students, and more likely to say their schools do a good job (40% vs. 33% and 34%, respectively).

Just one-third of students nationwide (33%) also believe their teachers do a good job of teaching them how to use computers. Since 43% say their teachers do an average job and 17% a poor job, then a majority (60%) of students believe their school does no better than an average job of teaching them how to use computers. Students from urban and non-urban schools report similar ratings: 59% of urban, 62% of suburban and 60% of rural students give their school ratings of average or poor.

Enhancing the learning process by providing students with interesting experiences outside the classroom (i.e., field trips, visiting speakers, special events) is not done often enough according to students. More than seven in ten (72%) believe this is done too infrequently, while only one in four (24%) believe their school provides the right amount or more experiences of this kind than are needed. Larger proportions of suburban (77%) and rural (73%) students than urban (68%) students feel they are not provided with enough learning experiences outside the classroom. African-American students seem to be the most satisfied: 37% say their school does enough or more than enough in this area than compared with 21% white and 30% Hispanic students. Further, middle school students are more likely to be satisfied than high school students (31% vs. 22%). In general, however, the most salient finding across all demographic groups is that a large majority of students believe this method of teaching has not been emphasized nearly enough.

> *Observation:*
> *Enhancing the learning process seems to be closely tied to students' level of interest in their school work. As reported earlier, teachers are not making learning interesting enough for students. The findings in this section may, in part, explain why students feel that their teachers are not putting enough effort into enhancing*

and enriching their learning experiences through innovative use of technology and real life experiences.

While public schools across the nation come up short of students' desires for learning experiences outside the classroom, they fare better in providing students with enough choices of classes. Two-thirds (63%) say they have just enough or more than enough choices of classes. Students from rural communities are the least satisfied with their choices of classes: 40% say there are not enough choices, compared with 35% of urban and 30% of suburban students.

TABLE 2-12

USE OF COMPUTERS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN
BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B7: Does your school do a good job, an average job or a poor job of using computers and technology to help students learn?

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2517 %	1396 %	652 %	469 %	1326 %	473 %	495 %
A Good Job	33	30	34	37	33	40	34
An Average Job	46	47	46	45	46	48	44
A Poor Job	16	17	16	15	17	8	14
Don't Know	4	6	4	3	3	4	8

TABLE 2-13

HOW WELL TEACHERS TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT COMPUTERS

Q.B8: Does your school do a good job, an average job or a poor job of teaching students how to use computers?

		LOCATION		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base	2516 %	1392 %	655 %	469 %
A Good Job	33	30	33	38
An Average Job	43	40	45	44
A Poor Job	17	19	17	16
Don't Know	7	11	6	3

TABLE 2-14

LEARNING EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B9: How would you rate your school on providing students with interesting experiences outside the classroom -- like field trips, visiting speakers or special events -- do they do more than is needed, the right amount, or not enough?

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2517	1393	655	469	1325	472	496
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
More than is Needed	3	4	4	2	2	6	7
The Right Amount	21	24	17	22	19	31	23
Not Enough	72	68	77	73	76	58	66
Don't Know	3	4	3	3	2	5	4

TABLE 2-15

LEARNING EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
BY SCHOOL LEVEL AND GENDER

Q.B9: How would you rate your school on providing students with interesting experiences outside the classroom -- like field trips, visiting speakers or special events -- do they do more than is needed, the right amount, or not enough?

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2517	879	1636	1154	1358
	%	%	%	%	%
More than is Needed	3	5	3	4	3
The Right Amount	21	26	19	19	23
Not Enough	72	66	76	73	71
Don't Know	3	4	3	4	3

TABLE 2-16

CHOICE OF CLASSES

Q.B9a: How would you rate the choice of classes you have in your school -- do you have more than enough choices, just enough choices, or not enough choices?

Base: Grades 10-12 Only

		LOCATION		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base	1174	606	306	262
	%	%	%	%
More than Enough Choices	20	22	21	17
Just Enough Choices	43	40	47	41
Not Enough Choices	35	35	30	40
Don't Know	2	3	3	1

Parental and Community Support

A large minority of students nationwide (40%) believe the level of support their school receives from parents and their community is only fair or poor. As size of school location becomes larger, more students are dissatisfied with the level of support. In rural communities, 35% of students rate the level of support as fair or poor; this percentage increases to 40% in suburban areas and to 44% in urban areas. Among racial and ethnic groups, African-American students are the least satisfied with the level of support their school receives, with 46% giving ratings of only fair or poor, compared with 42% of Hispanic and 37% of white students.

Opinions about parental and community support also vary by academic status. Consistent with the findings reported in previous sections, those with lower course grades have a greater tendency to negatively evaluate their schools on the level of support they receive. One-third (36%) of students with low or failing grades appear satisfied with the current level of support, whereas among students with above average grades, well over half (57%) are satisfied.

Observation:
There are just as many teachers as students who believe the level of support for their school is fair or poor (39%). Yet, at the other extreme, substantially more teachers (22%) than students (13%) believe the level of support deserves a rating of excellent.

TABLE 2-17
PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT BY LOCATION AND RACE/ETHNICITY

Q.B2-2: How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

Parental and Community Support for Your School

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2504	1384	652	468	1322	466	494
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Excellent	13	10	13	16	14	12	11
Pretty Good	38	34	38	43	41	32	34
Only Fair	26	27	26	26	26	30	22
Poor	14	18	14	9	12	17	21
Don't Know	9	11	9	6	8	11	12
Excellent/Good	51	45	51	59	55	43	46
Fair/Poor	40	44	40	35	37	46	42

TABLE 2-18
PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT BY STUDENTS' COURSE GRADES

Q.B2-2: How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

Parental and Community Support for Your School

		COURSE GRADES		
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2504	1447	808	242
	%	%	%	%
Excellent	13	15	9	13
Pretty Good	38	42	35	23
Only Fair	26	27	26	24
Poor	14	10	18	29
Don't Know	9	7	13	10
Excellent/Good	51	57	43	36
Fair/Poor	40	36	44	53

CHAPTER 3: REPORT CARD OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Students in grades ten through twelve were asked to grade their guidance counselors on six dimensions using the same rating scale as they did for evaluating their teachers. These dimensions include knowledge of course requirements and vocational training programs, counselor availability and showing an interest in students. Guidance counselors do best (receive A's or B's) on:

- ✯ Being knowledgeable about the courses students need to graduate from high school (84%) and
- ✯ Being knowledgeable about the courses they need for college (77%).

Their highest average grade is an A- for being knowledgeable about high school course requirements, followed by a B+ for their knowledge of college courses. Average grades that students assign their guidance counselors range from A- to B-.

A smaller majority give counselors A's or B's on being knowledgeable about post-secondary school options aside from college, like vocational or technical training programs (67%) and for taking an interest in students' futures (68%). A smaller majority still, give them high marks on being available when students need advice (58%) and helping students who have problems with their studies (52%).

While on the one hand, a majority of students give their guidance counselors B or better on each dimension, a sizable number of students feel there are areas where improvement is needed. More than one-third of students give counselors C or worse on their availability when students are seeking advice (38%) and on helping students who are having problems with their studies (35%). One in five students (22%) also feel their counselors are not very knowledgeable in non-academic programs, such as vocational or technical training.

When examining students' ratings of their counselors by race and ethnicity, urban students consistently give lower grades than suburban and rural students. The proportions of urban students who give their counselors A's or B's on the six dimensions range from 5-11 percentage points lower than those of suburban and rural students.

Hispanic students are less pleased with their counselors' knowledge of requirements and of non-academic training programs than white or African-American students. Although a majority of Hispanic students give their counselors A's or B's on being knowledgeable about courses they

need for high school graduation (70%) and for college admissions (64%), a substantially larger proportion of white (87% and 80%, respectively) and African-American (81% and 78%, respectively) students give their counselors A's or B's on these dimensions. Fewer Hispanics (60%) also believe their counselors know enough about vocational or technical training programs, compared with white (69%) and African-American students (69%). African-American students are the least satisfied with the level of interest counselors take in students' futures. Just over half (56%) give their counselors high marks compared with three-quarters of white students (73%) and two-thirds of Hispanic students (64%).

TABLE 3-1

RATINGS OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Q.B15: If you could grade your school's GUIDANCE COUNSELORS on the following items, what grade would you give them -- A, B, C, D, or Fail?

Base: Grade 10-12 Only

	A	B	C	D	Fail	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Being knowledgeable about the courses you need to graduate from high school	63	21	8	2	3	3
Being knowledgeable about the courses you need for college	50	27	10	4	4	5
Being knowledgeable about options aside from college, like vocational or technical training programs	41	26	13	5	4	11
Being available when you need advice	31	27	19	9	10	4
Taking an interest in students' futures	38	30	15	5	6	5
Helping students who are having problems with their studies	31	21	17	9	9	13

TABLE 3-2

REPORT CARD OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Base: Grades 9-12

Characteristic	Average Grade*
Being knowledgeable about the courses students need to graduate from high school	A-
Being knowledgeable about the courses students need for college	B+
Being knowledgeable about options aside from college, like vocational or technical training programs	B
Taking an interest in students' futures	B
Being available when students need advice	B-
Helping students who are having problems with their studies	B-

*Average grades were computed by first converting letter grades to numbers and then computing the mean. Letter grades were assigned the following numeric codes: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4 and Fail = 5.

TABLE 3-3

RATINGS OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS BY LOCATION AND RACE AND ETHNICITY

Q.B15: If you could grade your school's guidance counselors on the following items, what grade would you give them -- A, B, C, D, or Fail?

Base: Grades 10-12 Only

SUMMARY OF A OR B RESPONSES

		LOCATION			RACE/ETHNICITY		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	1175	607	306	262	642	200	227
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Being knowledgeable about the courses you need to graduate high school	84	78	88	86	87	81	70
Being knowledgeable about the courses you need for college	77	72	80	81	80	78	64
Being knowledgeable about options aside from college, like vocational or technical training programs	67	60	71	72	69	69	60
Being available when you need advice	58	52	61	60	60	53	55
Taking an interest in students' futures	68	62	73	72	73	56	64
Helping students who are having problems with their studies	52	48	53	54	54	49	51

CHAPTER 4: STUDENTS' INTERESTS IN A CAREER IN EDUCATION

Students were queried about their interests in becoming a teacher. Among students nationwide, one-third (32%) say they are at least somewhat interested in becoming a teacher. While the level of interest remains the same throughout middle school and high school, greater numbers of females (38%) than males (26%) express an interest. This is not surprising given the predominance of female teachers in the workforce. Responses are fairly consistent across school location and racial and ethnic groups. However, it is interesting to note that just as many students who do poorly in school (28%) express at least some level of interest in becoming a teacher as those who do average (27%).

> *Observation:*
> *Students nationwide appear to have the same level of interest in pursuing a career in teaching as they did in 1988, reported in the* Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1988: Strengthening the Relationship Between Teachers and Students. *Thirty percent of students in grades 4-12 said they were very or somewhat likely to consider becoming a teacher.*

Most students have not talked to a teacher about the possibility of becoming a teacher themselves one day (87%); however, their responses vary to some degree by school level and gender. Nine percent of middle school students say they have talked to their teachers about the prospects of pursuing teaching as a career; this percentage increases to 14% among high school students. The difference between males and females is similar -- 9% of males compared with 15% of females have talked to a teacher about the possibility.

Students are more likely to be approached by their teachers than to initiate a conversation with them about pursuing a career in education. Twenty-two percent of all students, but 28% of female students, have been told by their teachers that they would make a good teacher themselves. African-Americans are even more likely than females (31% vs. 28%) to have been told this by their teachers. Not surprisingly, students with high grades are more likely to have been approached by a teacher (26%) than those with average (17%) or poor grades (17%).

TABLE 4-1

INTEREST IN BECOMING A TEACHER

Q.B12: How interested would you be in becoming a teacher -- very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested, or not at all interested?

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2516	879	1635	1152	1359
	%	%	%	%	%
Very Interested	8	8	8	5	11
Somewhat Interested	24	23	25	22	27
Not Very Interested	25	23	27	24	27
Not At All Interested	41	45	39	48	34
Don't Know	1	1	1	2	1
Very/Somewhat Interested	32	31	32	26	38
Not Very/Not At All Interested	67	67	66	72	61

TABLE 4-2

EVER TALKED TO TEACHERS ABOUT TEACHING AS A CAREER

Q.B13: Have you ever talked to one of your teachers about the possibility of becoming a teacher yourself one day, or not?

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2515	878	1635	1151	1359
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, have talked to a teacher about the possibility	12	9	14	9	15
No, have not	87	90	85	89	84
Don't Know	1	1	1	2	1

TABLE 4-3

EVER BEEN TOLD THEY WOULD MAKE A GOOD TEACHER

Q.B 14: Has one of your teachers ever told you they thought you would make a good teacher, or not?

		SCHOOL LEVEL		GENDER	
	Total	7-8	9-12	Male	Female
Base	2515	879	1634	1151	1359
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, have been told I would make a good teacher	22	20	24	17	28
No, have not	73	75	71	77	68
Don't Know	5	5	5	5	4

APPENDIX A: CLEANING DATA FOR THE REPORT

CLEANING DATA FOR THE REPORT

As with all self-administered surveys, school-based surveys are susceptible to recording error. Although we take every possible precaution to prevent students from missing questions or misunderstanding instructions, we do not have the ability to ensure complete and error-free completion of every questionnaire. For this reason, there are a number of quality control steps and decision rules that we follow with school-based surveys. It should be noted that creating decision rules is as much an art as a science. They are reviewed on a study specific basis and whenever possible are designed to reduce the potential for bias. However, there are often no right or wrong answers and several different arguments could be made for or against each type of decision rule. This appendix provides a brief description of three basic categories of decision rules and provides examples of the kinds of rules that were used for this report.

Accounting for Missing Data

The majority of the questions in this survey were asked of all students; however, individual students occasionally missed questions or chose not to answer them. For this reason, the frequencies for each question (with only a few notable exceptions as described below) are based on the total number of responses to each question. As an overall check, each questionnaire is reviewed to ensure that a majority of all possible responses have been completed.

Filters and Consistency Checks

Because school-based surveys are "self-administered," it is our preference to keep skip instructions to an absolute minimum in order to reduce the potential for recording error and for accidental skips of questions that should have been completed. Data cleaning permits us to double check written skip instructions and to add filters so the base for a given question is more closely defined. In other instances, it is possible to check for consistency between responses on separate questions and create decision rules that set a precedence between potentially conflicting responses.

Two specific examples:

> In this survey, students were asked how many adults live in their household and how many of these adults work full-time or part-time (Q.A4 and Q.A7). First, a filter was added to this question so that any students living in a home with no adults would not be included in the group of students answering the

question about adult employment. Second, a consistency check was used with the two questions, so that the number of employed adults could not exceed the total number of adults living with the respondent.

Decision Rules for Erroneous Multiple Responses

Many questions in this survey required students to choose only one answer (e.g., gender or grade in school). If more than one response was selected when only one was allowed, two types of decision rules were applied: prioritization or deletion of these responses from the individual record. Where multiple responses make it impossible to prioritize without potential bias -- such as gender or parents' marital status -- responses are deleted.

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

An Overview

This survey on young people's opinions and perceptions of social tension, violence and equality among teens was conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. on behalf of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. A total of 2,524 questionnaires were completed with public school students in grades 7 through 12 throughout the United States. All administrations of the survey were conducted in the classroom between December 19, 1995 and February 2, 1996.

There are several benefits that can be gained from school-based interviewing as compared to home- based, in-person, or telephone interviewing. The school setting proves to be far more neutral, since young people are allowed to express their attitudes and experiences without the influence of a parent nearby. The privacy of a self-administered questionnaire provides further guarantee of confidentiality when asking young people questions of a sensitive nature. Furthermore, this approach assures the sample will include young people in households without telephones or whose parents might otherwise not agree to allow their teenager to complete an interview.

Creating a School Sample

The Harris Scholastic national probability sample of schools and students is based on a highly stratified two-stage sampling design. This design employs features similar to the sample designs used in various national surveys of students and schools that are conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

The sample was selected to account for differences in grade enrollment, region and the size of the municipality where schools are located. A random selection of schools was drawn on the basis of the number of students in each cell proportionate to the number of students in the universe, creating a cross section of young people in grades 7 through 12. For this survey, two separate samples were created: a nationally representative sample of schools and an oversample of schools from the nation's 15 largest school districts. Urban schools were defined as those located in the named central cities of metropolitan statistical areas (MSA's) as they are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau; suburban schools are located in the remaining portion of MSA's, and rural schools are located outside MSA's. Appendix C provides a detailed technical summary of the Harris Scholastic sample design methodology.

Weighting the Data

As with all school-based surveys, a two-stage weighting process was used to ensure a representative sample of students. These weights are based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, and they control the distribution of students by grade, region, size of place, gender and race/ethnicity. The average class size was 23 students per class. Second stage weights controlled for grade, region, size of place, gender and race/ethnicity.

Table B-1 provides a comparison of the demographic profile of the weighted and unweighted total sample. Table B-2 provides a demographic profile of the weighted total sample, of urban, suburban and rural students. Table B-3 provides the same information for the unweighted sample, followed by a list of the 15 largest school districts by tier, the first tier representing the five largest districts, the second tier representing the 6th-10th largest districts, and the third tier representing the 11th-15th largest districts.

TABLE B-1

A COMPARISON OF WEIGHTED AND UNWEIGHTED SAMPLES

	TOTAL SAMPLE	
	Weighted	Unweighted
Base	2524	2524
	%	%
Grade:		
7th	18	20
8th	17	15
9th	19	18
10th	16	17
11th	16	14
12th	13	16
Region:		
East	22	11
South	31	42
Midwest	25	20
West	22	27
Location:		
Urban	39	55
Suburban	35	26
Rural	26	19
Gender:		
Male	51	46
Female	49	54
Race:		
White	66	53
African-American‡	15	19
Hispanic	12	20

‡The term "African-American" is used to refer to both non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic African-Americans.

TABLE B-2

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE BY LOCATION
(WEIGHTED TOTAL SAMPLE)

		LOCATION		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base	2524	981	883	660
	%	%	%	%
Grade:				
7th	18	12	16	30
8th	17	30	5	15
9th	19	14	38	*
10th	16	18	13	19
11th	16	15	13	24
12th	13	11	16	12
Region:				
East	21	11	34	22
South	32	43	9	43
Midwest	25	26	27	18
West	22	19	29	17
Location:				
Urban	39	100	-	-
Suburban	35	-	100	-
Rural	26	-	-	100
Gender:				
Male	51	50	52	51
Female	49	49	47	49
Race:				
White	66	46	74	84
African-American‡	15	29	5	6
Hispanic	12	17	14	3

*Less Than 0.5%

‡The term "African-American" is used to refer to both non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic African-Americans.

TABLE B-3

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE BY LOCATION
(UNWEIGHTED DATA)

		LOCATION		
	Total	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base	2524	1399	656	469
	%	%	%	%
Grade:				
7th	20	18	15	32
8th	15	22	3	12
9th	18	16	35	*
10th	17	18	16	16
11th	14	13	12	20
12th	16	13	18	20
Region:				
East	11	7	17	14
South	42	50	21	47
Midwest	20	18	25	20
West	27	25	37	19
Location:				
Urban	55	100	-	-
Suburban	26	-	100	-
Rural	19	-	-	100
Gender:				
Male	46	46	46	45
Female	54	54	53	55
Race:				
White	53	38	63	82
African-American‡	19	28	8	6
Hispanic	20	24	21	5

*Less Than 0.5%

‡The term "African-American" is used to refer to both non-Hispanic Blacks and non-Hispanic African-Americans.

List of the fifteen largest school districts from which oversample was drawn:

First Tier:
New York City
Los Angeles Unified
City of Chicago
Dade County, FL
Philadelphia

Second Tier:
Houston ISD
Broward County, FL
Detroit Public Schools
Clark County, NV
Dallas ISD

Third Tier:
Fairfax County, VA
Hillsborough County, FL
San Diego City Unified
Palm Beach County, FL
Duval County, FL

Reliability of Survey Percentages

The results from any sample survey are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of this variation is measurable and is affected both by the number of interviews involved and by the level of the percentages expressed in the results.

Table B-4 shows the range of sampling variation that applies to percentage results for this survey. The chances are 95 in 100 that the survey results do not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points from the results that would have been obtained had interviews been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

For example, if the response for a sample size of 300 is 30%, then in 95 out of 100 cases the response of the total population would be between 25% and 35%. Note that survey results based on subgroups of a small size can be subject to large sampling error.

TABLE B-4

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

Number Of People Asked Question On Which Survey Result Is Based	Survey Percentage Result At 10% Or 90%	Survey Percentage Result At 20% Or 80%	Survey Percentage Result At 30% Or 70%	Survey Percentage Result At 40% Or 60%	Survey Percentage Result At 50%
2,500	1	2	2	2	2
2,000	1	2	2	2	2
1,500	2	2	2	2	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

Sampling tolerances also are involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample (subgroup analysis) or from different surveys. Table B-5 shows the percentage difference that must be obtained before a difference can be considered statistically significant. These figures, too, represent the 95% confidence interval.

For example, suppose one group of 1,000 has a response of 34% "yes" to a question, and an independent group of 500 has a response of 28% "yes" to the same question, for an observed difference of 6 percentage points. According to the table, this difference is subject to a potential sampling error of 5 percentage points. Since the observed difference is greater than the sampling error, the observed difference is considered statistically significant.

TABLE B-5

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

Approximate Sample Size Of Two Groups Asked Question On Which Survey Result Is Based	Survey Percentage Result At 10% Or 90%	Survey Percentage Result At 20% Or 80%	Survey Percentage Result At 30% Or 70%	Survey Percentage Result At 40% Or 60%	Survey Percentage Result At 50%
2,500 vs. 2,500	2	2	3	3	3
2,000	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	3	3	4	4
500	3	4	4	5	5
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
2,000 vs. 2,000	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	3	3	4	4
500	3	4	4	5	5
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
200	5	6	7	7	8
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
500 vs. 500	4	5	6	6	6
200	5	7	8	8	8
100	6	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	13	14	15
200 vs. 200	6	8	9	10	10
100	7	10	11	12	12
50	9	12	14	15	15
100 vs. 100	8	11	13	14	14
50	10	14	16	17	17
50 vs. 50	12	16	18	19	20

The Interviewing Process

Gaining the Principal's Consent and Selecting a Class

After they were sent a letter soliciting their participation, Louis Harris and Associates contacted the principals in selected schools by telephone to request their participation in the survey. An eligible grade was randomly assigned to each school. If the principal agreed to participate, a random selection process was then used to select a particular class to complete the survey. The principal was asked to alphabetize all English classes for the grade assigned by the Harris firm. Using a random number selection grid, the interviewer identified an individual class. The survey was limited to English classes since this is one subject that all students are required to study at every grade level, which ensures a more representative sample of students by academic track and level of achievement.

Maximizing Response Rates

A number of steps were included in the consent process in order to maximize response rates among schools. The alert letter contained a brief description of the survey process and some background information on the Harris organization. Schools were offered educational materials from Scholastic as an incentive to participate. Our past experience has proven that the combination of the Harris and Scholastic names yields very high cooperation rates within the schools.

In addition, at a principal's request, calls were made to local boards or district offices to gain approval from the appropriate officials. If necessary, new copies of the introductory letter were mailed or sent via fax to the principal and/or other school officials.

Maintaining a Representative Sample

If a particular school could not participate, it was replaced by a school with similar demographic characteristics so as to preserve the integrity of the primary selection. Another randomly drawn school was chosen within the same region, with similar grade enrollment and size of municipality, and in the same or the nearest zip code to the original school.

Questionnaires were mailed to 126 schools in total; of these schools, 100 completed and returned the questionnaires. Table B-6 provides a breakdown of consents and completes for the national cross-section and the oversample.

TABLE B-6

A COMPARISON OF SCHOOLS WHO CONSENTED AND THOSE WHO COMPLETED THE INTERVIEW

	Consents	Completes
	126	100
Cross-Section	82	66
Oversample	44	34

Interviewing the Students

Louis Harris and Associates mailed instructions, a set of questionnaires, and materials for return mail to the teacher of the selected class. In addition, teachers were provided with general instructions to use when administering the survey. The directions for each individual question appeared in capital letters above or near each question on the survey instrument itself.

The teachers administered the questionnaire from the front of the classroom; they were encouraged to read questions out loud to their students if they felt their class would have difficulty reading or answering the questions. By providing teachers with educational materials, including *The Basic Primer on Public Opinion Polling*, we hoped to assure that this exercise was woven into the classroom curriculum in a meaningful way. Furthermore, by surveying only one class in each school we imposed on the school as little as possible. Students were given envelopes in which to seal their completed surveys before returning them to the teacher. Please note that the survey instrument is anonymous; at no point is the student asked to provide his or her name.

Questionnaire Development

Initial drafts of the questionnaire were tested for length and comprehensibility. Testing was conducted in the classroom using the exact procedures that would be used for the full survey. Members of the Harris staff spoke to the teachers who administered the survey and asked for their observations regarding comprehensibility and about questions their students had difficulty answering. The survey instrument was refined accordingly.

Cleaning the Data

All interviews were carefully edited and checked for completeness and accuracy (see Appendix A for details). Surveys with significant errors or large proportions of missing data were removed; less than 1% of the questionnaires from this survey were removed. However, as with all self-administered questionnaires, occasional questions are sometimes left blank. For the purposes of this survey, the findings for each question are based on the total number of answers rather than the total number of potential respondents in the sample; for this reason, the bases on individual questions vary slightly.

Potential Sampling Error

The results for sample surveys are subject to sampling error -- the potential difference between results obtained from the sample and those that would have been obtained had the entire population been questioned. The size of the potential sampling error varies with both the size of the sample and with the percentage giving a particular answer.

Sampling error is only one way in which a survey may vary from the findings that would result from interviewing the entire population under study. Survey research is susceptible to human and mechanical errors as well. The most important potential sources are:

- ✔ Non-response (if those who are interviewed differ from those who are not interviewed). It should be noted that in this survey all students completed the survey, so errors caused by non-response are non-existent.

- ✔ Random or sampling error, which may in theory be substantial, even on large samples. Contrary to the impression given by the typical media caveat, there is no way to calculate the maximum possible error for any survey. All we deal with are probabilities.

- ✔ Question wording, particularly where the survey is measuring attitude or future intention and not a "fact." Several equally good questions may yield different (and equally valid) responses. In addition, question sequence can influence the responses, particularly to attitude questions.

The results of this survey, therefore, are susceptible to a variety of errors, some of which cannot be quantified. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm reflect the most reliable information available.

APPENDIX C: HARRIS SCHOLASTIC SAMPLE DESIGN METHODOLOGY

HARRIS SCHOLASTIC SAMPLE DESIGN METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The Harris Scholastic national probability sample of schools and students is based on a highly stratified two-stage sampling design. This design employs features similar to the sample designs used in various national samples of students and schools that are conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Many of the studies which employ the Harris Scholastic national probability sample are based on a sample size of 2,500 students distributed over 100 schools. However, the basic design is sufficiently flexible to support any overall sample size between 500 and 25,000 students distributed over 25 to 1,000 schools.

The basic sample design involves two stages of sampling. In the first stage, a sample of schools is selected from a list of all schools. In the second stage, a sample of students is selected within those schools that are selected into the sample in the first stage.

Special procedures are employed to assure that the sampling process adequately represents the full range of schools over the entire nation. Particular care is given to the replacement of schools that are initially selected but are unwilling or unable to cooperate in the subsequent second stage selection of students.

Basic Sampling Design

The basic design used by Harris Scholastic for the selection of student samples involves a two-stage, stratified and clustered sampling process. Stratification variables involve school type (public, parochial and private), grade coverage, urbanicity and region. Specifically:

For public schools, the stratification dimensions include:

a. Grade coverage (elementary, middle, upper, K-12 and other odd grade ranges 1-8, 6-12, etc.).

b. Urbanicity (URBAN = central city of MSA or CMA; SUBURBAN = non-central city of MSA or CMA; RURAL = non-MSA).

c. Region (Northeast, Midwest, South and West).

Within the basic strata, defined by these dimensions, stratification is carried out by state, grade enrollment and zip code.

The numbers of sub-stratum depend upon the particular design. Within each sub-stratum, the required number of schools is selected on an "nth student" basis (i.e., with probabilities proportional to the number of students). Replacement schools are selected by finding the nearest match (by zip code) for selected schools within the same cell and the same size group.

Sample Efficiency

In general, when clustered samples are compared to pure random samples that involve no clustering, it is found that the cluster samples exhibit somewhat greater sampling variation. The ratio of the variance shown by the cluster sample to the variance that would be expected from a pure random sample of the same size is known as the design effect or DEFF[2]. The square root of DEFF is denoted by DEFT. The design effect is a measure of efficiency of a given sample design as compared to the benchmark of simple random sampling.

On the basis of empirical computation, the values of DEFF and DEFT for the standard Harris Scholastic sample design have been determined as 2.25 and 1.50, respectively. Thus, statistical inferences using data from a Harris Scholastic sample, which employ standard statistical formulas for the variance and standard error of estimate, should be modified through multiplication by the factors of 2.25 and 1.50, respectively. It is often the case that in-person area samples have DEFF values of approximately 2.0. The ratio of this DEFF value to average DEFF values calculated from other Harris Scholastic studies (i.e., DEFF = 2.25) shows that samples using the present design show variations similar to that of household samples of about 88% the size. Thus, the design as presented is highly efficient.

Values shown in Tables C-1 and C-2 may be converted into 95% confidence ranges through multiplying by the factor 1.96.

[2]See, for example, the discussion by L.Kish in Kotz, S. and Johnson, N.L. *Encyclopedia of Statistical Sciences: Vol. 2* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1982.

TABLE C-1

HARRIS SCHOLASTIC SAMPLES
SAMPLING ERRORS FOR SINGLE PERCENTAGES
PERCENTAGES FROM SAMPLE

Sample Base	5% or 95%	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
5000	0.46	0.64	0.85	0.97	1.04	1.06
4750	0.47	0.64	0.86	0.98	1.05	1.07
4500	0.47	0.65	0.87	1.00	1.06	1.09
4250	0.48	0.66	0.88	1.01	1.08	1.10
4000	0.49	0.67	0.89	1.02	1.10	1.12
3750	0.50	0.68	0.91	1.04	1.11	1.14
3500	0.50	0.69	0.93	1.06	1.13	1.16
3250	0.51	0.71	0.94	1.08	1.16	1.18
3000	0.53	0.72	0.97	1.11	1.18	1.21
2750	0.54	0.74	0.99	1.14	1.21	1.24
2500	0.56	0.76	1.02	1.17	1.25	1.27
2250	0.57	0.79	1.05	1.21	1.29	1.32
2000	0.60	0.82	1.10	1.25	1.34	1.37
1750	0.62	0.86	1.15	1.31	1.40	1.43
1500	0.66	0.91	1.21	1.39	1.48	1.51
1250	0.71	0.97	1.30	1.48	1.59	1.62
1000	0.77	1.06	1.41	1.62	1.73	1.77
750	0.87	1.19	1.59	1.82	1.95	1.99
500	1.03	1.42	1.90	2.17	2.32	2.37
250	1.42	1.96	2.61	2.99	3.19	3.26

NOTE: To use this table, find the row corresponding to the size of the sample base for the proportion. For base sizes not shown, use the next smallest base that appears in the table. Use the column corresponding to the sample proportion for which a sampling error is desired. If the sample proportion is not shown, round toward 50% (e.g., 43% becomes 50%).

TABLE C-2

HARRIS SCHOLASTIC SAMPLES
SAMPLING ERROR FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SUBCLASS PERCENTAGES
PROPORTION NEAREST 50%

Subclass Split	5% or 95%	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
5-95	1.50	2.06	2.75	3.15	3.36	3.43
10-90	1.14	1.57	2.09	2.39	2.56	2.61
15-85	0.99	1.36	1.82	2.08	2.23	2.27
20-80	0.91	1.25	1.67	1.92	2.05	2.09
25-75	0.86	1.19	1.58	1.81	1.94	1.98
30-70	0.83	1.14	1.52	1.75	1.87	1.91
35-65	0.81	1.11	1.49	1.70	1.82	1.86
40-60	0.80	1.10	1.46	1.67	1.79	1.83
45-55	0.79	1.09	1.45	1.66	1.77	1.81
50-50	0.79	1.08	1.44	1.65	1.77	1.80

NOTE: This table shows sampling errors for differences between percentages P1 and P2, based on two subclasses. First, find the subclass proportion nearest 50%. Use this proportion to find the appropriate column. The appropriate row is determined on the basis of the sample split between the two subclasses. For example, if the total sample size is 2,000 and the subclass sizes were 500 and 1,500, the split would be 25-75. A split of 25-75 uses the same table row as a split of 75-25. This table is only appropriate for dichotomous subclasses.

APPENDIX D: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC.
111 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10003

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Questionnaire No.:_____
(1-5)

Study No.952030
(108-113)

Card Number (6,7)

December 18, 1995
(Grades 7-12)
(114-115)

Sample Point No. / / / / / / / / / / /
(116-125)

STUDENTS VOICE THEIR OPINIONS

THANK YOU for taking part in our important study. This survey is being conducted to help us learn more about students' experiences and opinions of school life and their day-to-day challenges and concerns.

Many of the questions are about serious topics and issues. It is very important that you answer all questions truthfully and completely, saying exactly what you think, or have experienced. This is not a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Again, please be as honest as you can in answering these questions.

Please answer the questions in the order they appear and do not skip ahead.

We are not asking for your name, your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous. You have been given an envelope in which to seal your questionnaire before you hand it in. It will not be opened except by Harris personnel.

The schools taking part in this project have been scientifically chosen to represent all schools in the country. So it is very important that you answer all questions carefully.

NOTE: This questionnaire contains students' responses to Section A (Demographics) and Section B, the subject of this report. Sections C, D and E are the subjects of other reports in this series.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS EASY TO FILL OUT

1. Simply circle the number that matches your answer. On a few questions you may write in an answer -- you will see a line where you can do this.

EXAMPLES:

What is your favorite season of the year? **(CIRCLE *ONE* ANSWER ONLY)**

Spring 1
Summer 2
Fall 3
Winter 4
Don't know 5

What are your favorite colors? **(CIRCLE AS MANY ANSWERS AS APPLY)**

Blue 1
Green 2
Red 3
Yellow 4
Purple 5
Other (WRITE IN ANSWER BELOW):
_____ 6
Don't know 7

2. Other questions will ask you to answer a series of questions.

EXAMPLE: Do you go to school during the **(CIRCLE ONLY *ONE* FOR EACH ITEM -- A THROUGH D)**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
A. Spring	1	2	3
B. Summer	1	2	3
C. Fall	1	2	3
D. Winter	1	2	3

3. Use a **pencil** to mark your answers. In case you change your mind, you can then erase your first answer and mark the one you want. Make sure you erase your first answer completely.

4. Please do not talk over your answers with others.

IN ADVANCE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS VERY IMPORTANT STUDY

A. HOME AND SCHOOL LIFE

A1. What grade of school are you in?

7th grade	7	**18**	
8th grade	8	**17**	
9th grade	9	**19**	
10th grade	10	**16**	
11th grade	11	**16**	
12th grade	12	**18**	(137-138)

A2. Are you...?

Male (a boy)	1	**51**	(139)
Female (a girl)	2	**49**	

A3. What is your race or ethnic background? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

White (not Hispanic)	1	**66**	(140)
Black or African-American (not Hispanic)	2	**15**	
Hispanic/Latino -- White	3	**8**	
Hispanic/Latino -- Black	4	**1**	
Asian, Asian Indian, or Pacific Islander	5	**5**	
Native American or Alaskan Native	6	**1**	
Some other race **(WRITE IN BELOW)**			
Hispanic/Latino-Unspecified	7	**3**	
Don't know	8	**1**	

Bold = % Answering

A4 How many adults in total -- that is, people who are age 18 or over -- live in your household? **(WRITE THE NUMBER BELOW)**

MEAN = 2 (141-142)

A5. Which of the adults listed below do you live with most of the time...? **(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)**

Mother	1	**91**	(143)
Father	1	**65**	(144)
Stepmother	1	**2**	(145)
Stepfather	1	**9**	(146)
Grandmother	1	**6**	(147)
Grandfather	1	**3**	(148)
Aunt	1	**3**	(149)
Uncle	1	**2**	(150)
Other adults **(WRITE IN BELOW)**			
Sibling	1	**7**	(151)
Mother and Father		**60**	

A6. Which of the following best describes your family? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

My parents (or guardians) are married	1	**67**	(152)
My parents (or guardians) are separated or divorced	2	**24**	
My parents (or guardians) have never been married	3	**6**	
Other **(WRITE IN BELOW)**			
_____	4	**-**	
Don't know	5	**1**	

Bold = % Answering

A7. How many of the adults in your home work full-time or part-time outside the home? **(WRITE THE NUMBER BELOW)**

MEAN = 2 (153-154)

1 Adult = 29%; 2 Adults = 55%; 3 or More Adults = 21%

A8. How many of the adults in your home are currently unemployed, but would like to work? **(WRITE THE NUMBER BELOW)**

_____(155-156)

1 Adult = 21%; 2 Adults = 4%; 3 or More Adults = 1%

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL LIFE.

A9. What grades do you usually get? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Mostly A's	1	**16**	(157)
Mostly A's and B's	2	**37**	
Mostly **B**'s	3	**7**	
Mostly **B**'s and C's	4	**25**	
Mostly C's	5	**5**	
Mostly C's and D's	6	**7**	
Mostly D's and F's	7	**2**	

A10. In a typical school week, how often are you assigned homework -- everyday, 3 or 4 days a week, 1 or 2 days a week, or less often? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Every day	1	**49**	(158)
3 or 4 days a week	2	**34**	
1 or 2 days a week	3	**10**	
Less often	4	**5**	
Don't know	5	**2**	

Bold = % Answering

A11. How often do you complete your homework -- nearly always, sometimes, hardly ever, or never? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Nearly always	1	**66**	(159)
Sometimes	2	**27**	
Hardly ever	3	**5**	
Never	4	**1**	
Don't know	5	**1**	

A12. Have you ever been suspended or expelled from school, or not?

Have been suspended or expelled	1	**22**	(160)
Have not	2	**78**	

A13. Do you take part in your school's free lunch program, or not?

Take part in lunch program	1	**21**	(161)
Do not	2	**79**	

162-180Z

B. EVALUATING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

B1. Students are given grades in school -- A, B, C, D or FAIL based on the quality of their school work. If you were to grade your school on the job it does providing you with a good education, what grade would you choose? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

A	1	**24**	(208)
B	2	**42**	
C	3	**20**	
D	4	**5**	
Fail	5	**4**	
Don't know	6	**5**	

Bold = % Answering

B2. How would you rate your school on the following issues -- excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ITEM)**

	Excellent	Pretty Good	Only Fair	Poor	Don't Know	
1. The quality of teachers in your school	1 **16**	2 **57**	3 **20**	4 **5**	5 **1**	(209)
2. Parental and community support for your school	1 **13**	2 **38**	3 **26**	4 **14**	5 **9**	(210)

B3. In your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH STATEMENT)**

	Very Serious	Somewhat Serious	Not Very Serious	Not At All Serious	Don't Know	
1. Overcrowded classrooms	1 **11**	2 **26**	3 **39**	4 **22**	5 **2**	(211)
2. Students lacking basic skills	1 **20**	2 **33**	3 **31**	4 **10**	5 **7**	(212)
3. Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms or computer labs	1 **20**	2 **28**	3 **29**	4 **20**	5 **4**	(213)
4. Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	1 **19**	2 **19**	3 **29**	4 **30**	5 **3**	(214)

B4. Overall, do you think each of these problems is getting better, getting worse or staying the same? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH STATEMENT)**

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying The Same	Don't Know	
1. Overcrowded classrooms	1 **25**	2 **25**	3 **43**	4 **7**	(215)
2. Students lacking basic skills	1 **23**	2 **23**	3 **38**	4 **16**	(216)
3. Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms, or computer labs	1 **34**	2 **15**	3 **43**	4 **9**	(217)
4. Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around	1 **27**	2 **12**	3 **50**	4 **10**	(218)

B5. Do you think your school provides students with up-to-date equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms and computer labs, or not?

School provides up-to-date equipment	1	**50**	(219)
Does not	2	**28**	
Don't know	3	**22**	

B6. Do you think your school provides students with up-to-date textbooks, or not?

School provides up-to-date textbooks	1	**52**	(220)
No, does not	2	**30**	
Don't know	3	**18**	

B7. Does your school do a good job, an average job or a poor job of using computers and technology to help students learn?

A good job	1	**33**	(221)
An average job	2	**46**	
A poor job	3	**16**	
Don't know	4	**4**	

B8. Does your school do a good job, an average job or a poor job of teaching students how to use computers?

A good job	1	33	(222)
An average job	2	43	
A poor job	3	17	
Don't know	4	7	

B9. How would you rate your school on providing students with interesting experiences outside the classroom -- like field trips, visiting speakers or special events -- do they do more than is needed, the right amount, or not enough?

More than is needed	1	3	(223)
The right amount	2	21	
Not enough	3	72	
Don't know	4	3	

B9a. How would you rate the choice of classes you have in your school -- do you have more than enough choices, just enough choices, or not enough choices?

More than enough choices	1	20	(224)
Just enough choices	2	43	
Not enough choices	3	35	
Don't know	4	2	

B10. If you could grade the teachers in your school on the following items, what grade would you give them? **(CIRCLE ONE GRADE FOR EACH ITEM)**

	A	B	C	D	Fail	Don't Know	
1. Treating students with respect ...	1 **23**	2 **42**	3 **21**	4 **6**	5 **6**	6 **2**	(225)
2. Helping students who are having problems with their studies	1 **33**	2 **37**	3 **19**	4 **6**	5 **3**	6 **1**	(226)
3. Making learning interesting for everyone	1 **11**	2 **28**	3 **32**	4 **14**	5 **13**	6 **1**	(227)
4. Caring about their students' futures	1 **30**	2 **32**	3 **19**	4 **10**	5 **6**	6 **4**	(228)
5. Taking an interest in students' home and personal lives	1 **8**	2 **19**	3 **27**	4 **17**	5 **20**	6 **9**	(229)
6. Understanding the subjects they teach	1 **45**	2 **32**	3 **15**	4 **3**	5 **3**	6 **2**	(230)
7. Keeping control and discipline in their classrooms	1 **27**	2 **37**	3 **20**	4 **7**	5 **7**	6 **2**	(231)
8. Encouraging students' academic interests	1 **22**	2 **35**	3 **24**	4 **8**	5 **8**	6 **3**	(232)

B11. Please mark whether you think each of these statements is more often true or more often false for your school? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH STATEMENT)**

	More Often True		More Often False		Don't Know		
1. Teachers in my school often treat their students like numbers	1	**22**	2	**58**	3	**20**	(233)
2. Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed	1	**62**	2	**28**	3	**10**	(234)
3. Teachers in my school don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone	1	**40**	2	**50**	3	**10**	(235)

B12. How interested would you be in becoming a teacher -- very interested, somewhat interested, not very interested or not at all interested? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Very interested	1	**8**	(236)
Somewhat interested	2	**24**	
Not very interested	3	**25**	
Not at all interested	4	**41**	
Don't know	5	**1**	

B13. Have you ever talked to one of your teachers about the possibility of becoming a teacher yourself one day, or not?

Yes, have talked to a teacher about the possibility	1	**12**	(237)
No, have not	2	**87**	
Don't know	3	**1**	

B14. Has one of your teachers ever told you they thought you would make a good teacher, or not?

Yes, have been told I would make a good teacher	1	**22**	(238)
No, have not	2	**73**	
Don't know	3	**5**	

B15. If you could grade your school's guidance counselors on the following items, what grade would you give them -- A, B, C, D, or Fail? **(CIRCLE ONE GRADE FOR EACH ITEM)**

	A	B	C	D	Fail	Don't Know	
1. Being knowledgeable about the courses you need to graduate from high school	1 **63**	2 **21**	3 **8**	4 **2**	5 **3**	6 **3**	(239)
2. Being knowledgeable about the courses you need for college	1 **50**	2 **27**	3 **10**	4 **4**	5 **4**	6 **5**	(240)
3. Being knowledgeable about options aside from college, like vocational or technical training programs	1 **41**	2 **26**	3 **13**	4 **5**	5 **4**	6 **11**	(241)
4. Being available when you need advice	1 **31**	2 **27**	3 **19**	4 **9**	5 **10**	6 **4**	(242)
5. Taking an interest in students' futures	1 **38**	2 **30**	3 **15**	4 **5**	5 **6**	6 **5**	(243)
6. Helping students who are having problems with their studies	1 **31**	2 **21**	3 **17**	4 **9**	5 **9**	6 **13**	(244)

245-280Z

C. SOCIAL TENSIONS, VIOLENCE AND EQUALITY AMONG TEENS

C1. Overall, would you say that most students in your school get along with one another, only some students get along, or hardly any students get along with one another? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Most students get along	1	(308)
Only some students get along	2	
Hardly any students get along	3	
Don't know	4	

C2. Thinking about your school, do you think each of these issues is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all a serious problem? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH STATEMENT)**

	Very Serious	Somewhat Serious	Not Very Serious	Not At All Serious	Don't Know	
1. Tight groups of friends that do not talk to one another	1	2	3	4	5	(309)
2. Hostile or threatening remarks between different groups of students	1	2	3	4	5	(310)
3. Threats or destructive acts, other than physical fights	1	2	3	4	5	(311)
4. Turf battles between different groups of students	1	2	3	4	5	(312)
5. Physical fights between members of different groups of friends	1	2	3	4	5	(313)
6. Gang violence	1	2	3	4	5	(314)

C3. In the past year, has the level of violence at your school increased, decreased, or stayed about the same?

Increased	1	(315)
Decreased	2	
Stayed about the same	3	
Don't know	4	

C4. How often do you see violence in or around your school -- very often, sometimes, rarely, or never?

Very often	1	(316)
Sometimes	2	
Rarely	3	
Never	4	
Don't know	5	

C5. How worried are you about being physically attacked (hurt by someone else) in or around your school -- very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried, or not at all worried?

Very worried	1	(317)
Somewhat worried	2	
Not very worried	3	
Not at all worried	4	
Don't know	5	

C6. Which of these statements best describes most of the physical fights that take place in your school? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Most physical fights are between friends	1	(318)
Most physical fights are between students who know, but do not like each other	2	
Most physical fights are between students who barely know one another	3	
Don't know	4	

C7. Overall, would you say that in your school students from different economic backgrounds get along very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all well?

Very well	1	(319)
Somewhat well	2	
Not very well	3	
Not at all well	4	
Don't know	5	

C8. In your school, how likely is it that students who come from different economic backgrounds would become friends -- very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

Very likely	1	(320)
Somewhat likely	2	
Not very likely	3	
Not at all likely	4	
Don't know	5	

C9. Overall, would you say that in your school students from different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds get along very well, somewhat well, not very well, or not at all well?

Very well	1	(321)
Somewhat well	2	
Not very well	3	
Not at all well	4	
Don't know	5	

C10. In your school, how likely is it that students who are of different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds would become friends -- very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

Very likely	1	(322)
Somewhat likely	2	
Not very likely	3	
Not at all likely	4	
Don't know	5	

C11. How confident are you that, in your community, young people from different economic backgrounds are treated equally by the following groups -- very confident, somewhat confident, or not very confident? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ITEM)**

	Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not very Confident	Don't Know	
1. Teachers	1	2	3	4	(323)
2. Parents	1	2	3	4	(324)
3. Police Officers	1	2	3	4	(325)
4. Local storekeepers	1	2	3	4	(326)
5. The courts	1	2	3	4	(327)

C12. How confident are you that, in your community young people from different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds are treated equally by the following groups -- very confident, somewhat confident, or not very confident? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH ITEM)**

	Very Confident	Somewhat Confident	Not very Confident	Don't Know	
1. Teachers	1	2	3	4	(328)
2. Parents	1	2	3	4	(329)
3. Police Officers	1	2	3	4	(330)
4. Local storekeepers	1	2	3	4	(331)
5. The courts	1	2	3	4	(332)

C13. If a young person like you were a suspect in a crime, how likely do you think it is that they would be treated fairly by the police -- very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

Very likely	1	(333)
Somewhat likely	2	
Not very likely	3	
Not at all likely	4	
Don't know	5	

C14. If a young person like you were the victim of a crime, how likely do you think it is that they would be treated fairly by the police -- very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely?

Very likely	1	(334)
Somewhat likely	2	
Not very likely	3	
Not at all likely	4	
Don't know	5	

335-380Z

D. VALUES IN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

D1. Do you believe that lessons on values and principles of right and wrong belong in the classroom, or not?

Lessons on values and principles of right and wrong belong in the classroom	1	(408)
No, they do not	2	
Don't know	3	

D2. When teachers in your school talk about values and principles of right and wrong in the classroom, do you think the examples they use are realistic, or not?

The examples they use are realistic	1	(409)
They are not realistic	2	
Don't know	3	

D3. Do you think the lessons teachers try to teach about values and principles of right and wrong will be helpful to you in the future, or not?

They will be helpful in the future ...	1	(410)
They will not	2	
Don't know	3	

D4. Overall, do you think your school should place more emphasis on teaching values and principles of right and wrong, less emphasis, or is the level of emphasis about right?

Should place more emphasis on teaching values	1	(411)
Should place less emphasis on teaching values	2	
Current emphasis is about right	3	
Don't know	4	

D5. In your school life, how important to you are faith and values -- very important, somewhat important, or not very important?

Very important	1	(412)
Somewhat important	2	
Not very important	3	
Don't know	4	

D6. Where do you think teenagers <u>mostly</u> learn their values -- from their parents, their friends, their teachers, or from someone else? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

From their parents	1	(413)
From their friends	2	
From their teachers	3	
From someone else	4	
Don't know	5	

D7. Who do you think teenagers go to most often when they need advice -- to their parents, their friends, their teachers, or someone else? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

Their parents	1	(414)
Their friends	2	
Their teachers	3	
Someone else	4	
Don't know	5	

D8. When you have an argument with another person, which statement is most true for you? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

1. I try to convince the other person to agree with my point of view 1 (415)

OR

2. I try to understand the other person's point of view and agree with that person 2

D9. When you have to make a difficult decision, which statement is most true for you? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

1. I like to know I made a decision that I think is right 1 (416)

OR

2. I like to know that my friends think I made the right decision 2

D10. When you have to make a difficult decision, which statement is most true for you? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER ONLY)**

1. I think it is best to learn from the advice of people you respect 1 (417)

OR

2. I think it is best to make your own decisions and learn from your own mistakes 2

D11. Which of these activities have you taken part in during the past year? **(CIRCLE ALL THE ACTIVITIES YOU HAVE TAKEN PART IN)**

1. Attending religious services 1 (418)
2. Belonging to an after school group, like the drama club, a sport team or the school choir 1 (419)
3. Participating in demonstrations or political rallies 1 (420)
4. Running for student government 1 (421)
5. Doing volunteer work or community service, like helping in a nursing home, community center or public library 1 (422)
6. Belonging to a youth organization like the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, or 4H Club 1 (423)

(CIRCLE BELOW IF YOU DO NOT DO ANY OF THESE THINGS)

7. I don't do any of these things 1 (424)

425-480Z

E. MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CLASSROOM

E1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements? **(CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH STATEMENT)**

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
1. The teachers in my school mirror the social and ethnic make-up of the students in my school	1	2	3	(508)
2. My school does not offer classes that teach students about the history and culture of people who came to the U.S. from different parts of the world, such as Asia, India, Africa or South America	1	2	3	(509)
3. My school does a good job of helping students who have recently moved to this country learn or improve their English	1	2	3	(510)

E2. Many schools are trying to teach students about the history and culture of many different people. Do you think your school places the right amount of emphasis on these kinds of lessons, too much emphasis, or not enough emphasis?

The right amount of emphasis 1 (511)
Too much emphasis 2
Not enough emphasis 3
Don't know 4

E3. Do you think your teachers do a good job, an average job or poor job of helping students learn to be tolerant of those who are different from themselves?

Do a good job of helping students learn to be tolerant 1 (512)
Do an average job of helping students learn to be tolerant 2
Do a poor job of helping students learn to be tolerant 3
Don't know 4

E4. How interested would you be in learning more about the holidays and other special events that people celebrate in different parts of the world -- very interested, somewhat interested, or not very interested?

Very interested	1	(513)
Somewhat interested	2	
Not very interested	3	
Don't know	4	

514-580Z

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY, YOUR PARTICIPATION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

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