

Trends & TudesSM

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Keeping you informed of current topics in youth and education research.

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An Examination of School Leadership

Public education has a broad base of concerned parties. Educators, parents and the general public all have a stake in the quality of American K-12 education. Particularly in an election year, this issue rises to the forefront of public attention. Since 1984, Harris Interactive has been proud to conduct an annual survey on behalf of MetLife® on issues in public education: *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*. Each year this series addresses important issues related to students' experiences and the teaching profession. This year's survey, "An Examination of School Leadership," explores several issues related to leadership in schools today.

This year's survey included a nationwide cross section of 1,017 public school teachers who teach kindergarten through grade 12; 800 public school principals of schools covering kindergarten through grade 12; and 1,107 parents of public school students in kindergarten through grade 12. We also interviewed a total of 2,901 public school students in grades 3 through 12 in a series of three surveys.

Four themes emerged from the research:

- Consensus exists among the different members of the school community on the goals of school leadership.
- Opinions diverge on whether schools are achieving these goals and on the performance of school leaders.
- Satisfaction with school relationships varies widely.
- Students look to principals to keep their schools safe.

We began by asking teachers, principals and parents what were their priorities for their schools and what they thought were the most important components of a principal's job. In these areas, there was agreement between the different members of the school community. The majority of teachers, principals and parents report that motivation of students and faculty to achieve is the most important aspect of school. Motivating teachers and students is also seen as a primary part of the principal's job. Teachers, principals and parents report that the two most important features of a principal's job are to encourage teachers and students to do their best and to make sure the school is safe. Students also focused on school safety as the most important function of a principal's job.

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YOUTH AND EDUCATION
The Harris Poll® PEOPLE

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Editorial: Our Take On It

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As part of *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*, Harris Interactive has measured the satisfaction of public teachers nine times over the last 20 years. One truly remarkable finding of this year's survey is that teachers' job satisfaction is at an all-time high since the *Survey of the American Teacher* began tracking it in 1984. In our most recent survey, the proportion of public school teachers who reported that they were "very satisfied" with "teaching as a career" rose to 57%, the highest level we have ever recorded.

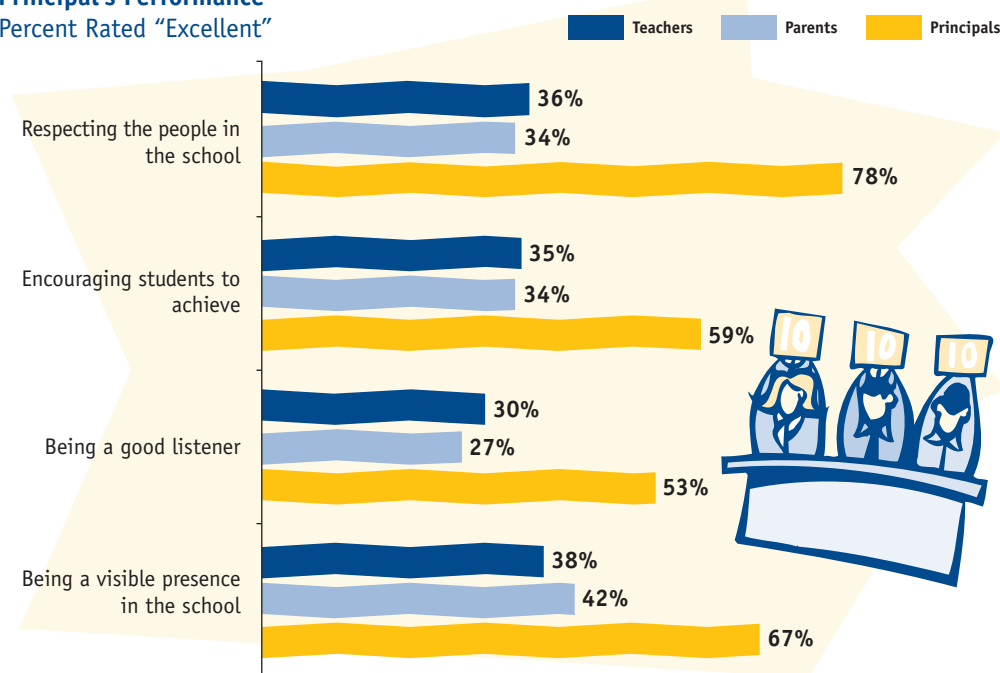
This high level of satisfaction compares with low points of 40% in 1984 and 1987, and the lowest point of 33% in 1986. In our two most recent surveys, we had found 54% (in 1995) and 52% (in 2001) who were very satisfied with their career choice.

This year's survey also found that more principals than teachers are satisfied with their jobs. Overall, two-thirds of principals (66%) are very satisfied with their job, and job satisfaction for principals is at about the same level as it was in 2001 (61%).

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Unfortunately, this consensus among the different members of the school community begins to break down when the subject turns to how well schools and school leaders are achieving these goals. Principals' perspectives are often at odds with those of teachers and parents. The majority of principals report that they are doing an excellent job in such key areas as encouraging students to achieve, respecting the people in the school, being a good listener and being a visible presence in the school, but fewer than half of teachers or parents rate their principal highly in these areas. The agreement among both teachers and parents on these issues is particularly remarkable given that they have very different roles and experiences in the school.

Principal's Performance Percent Rated "Excellent"



Source: *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership, February, 2004. Study conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of MetLife. Base: Teachers (n=1,017), Parents (n=1,107), Principals (n=800).*

Teachers' understanding of principals' priorities and how principals spend their day is also very different from what principals themselves report. In terms of priorities, teachers believe that test scores are what are most important to principals. But principals report that motivation of students and faculty to achieve is most important to them – the same goal that teachers believe should be most important. Teachers believe that principals spend more time on reporting and compliance than on guiding and motivating teachers. Principals report the opposite emphasis in how they spend their time. In other words, principals tend to believe they have the priorities that teachers want them to have, but teachers don't see it that way.

Principals' perspectives also differ from parents' views on how the school is connecting to parents. While 9 in 10 principals say their school is welcoming to parents, only 6 in 10 parents describe their child's school this way. Parents are also less likely than principals to be satisfied with the principal-parent relationship. In fact, 16% of parents report that there is no relationship between the principal and parents at their school.

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Comparing Job Satisfaction with Prestige

It is interesting to compare the trend on job satisfaction with another trend, which shows the percentage of adults who regard teachers as having “very great prestige.” On the two occasions Harris Interactive asked this question before the 1990s, we found that only 29% (in 1977) and 28% (in 1982) of the public thought that teachers had very great prestige. By 1992, this had risen 13 points to 41%, and by 1998 it had risen to 53%, where it remained, more or less, until 2002, when it dropped slightly to 47%. Last year it stood at 49%.

Over the long haul, there has been a clear relationship between job satisfaction and prestige as they both rose from lower levels in and before the 1980s to higher levels in the 1990s. However, this relationship is not very strong. Between 2001 and 2003, teachers’ job satisfaction rose five points while their prestige, in the eyes of the public, slipped five points.

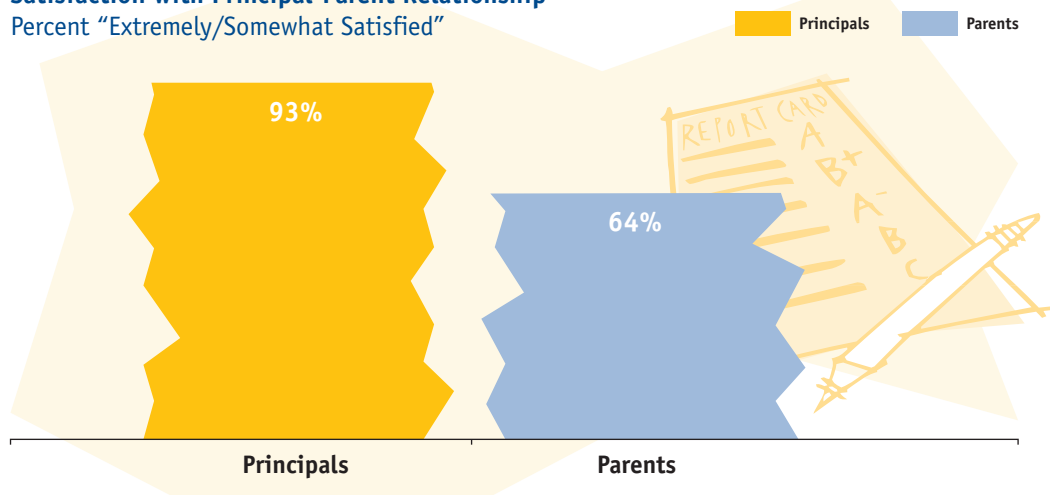
Job Satisfaction and the Principal-Teacher Relationship

This year’s survey reveals the connection between teachers’ job satisfaction and the actions of principals. Positive and active relationships with principals appear to drive

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Satisfaction with Principal-Parent Relationship Percent “Extremely/Somewhat Satisfied”



Source: *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership, February, 2004*. Study conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of MetLife. Base: Parents (n=1,107), Principals (n=800).

As in previous years, students state that safety is a major concern. Students believe that making sure the school is safe is the most important part of a school principal’s job. But fewer than half of students describe their school as safe (46%); and students are less likely than parents (57%), teachers (67%) or principals (89%) to describe their school as safe.

Implications

We believe the findings from this year’s MetLife Survey of the American Teacher support the following suggestions for schools and school leaders:

- Assume that satisfaction is not as good as you think it is.
- Measure satisfaction and perceptions of teachers, students and parents to be better able to respond to their needs.
- Be more visible – one-on-one and in group settings.
- Document and communicate to teachers, parents and students the actions the schools and principals are taking to motivate students and teachers to achieve.

Find out more

More information on the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership* (including a downloadable copy of the report) is available on MetLife’s website: www.metlife.com/Applications/Corporate/WPS/CDA/PageGenerator/0,1674,P4033,00.html

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teachers' job satisfaction. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely than teachers who are dissatisfied with their jobs to be satisfied with their relationship with their principals (74% vs. 49%). Satisfied teachers also have more frequent contact with their principals. They are more likely than dissatisfied teachers to have daily or weekly contact with their principals in one-on-one meetings (25% vs. 13%), in informal conversations (80% vs. 63%) and by being observed while teaching (20% vs. 7%). They are also more likely to rate their principals highly on a number of key dimensions. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely than dissatisfied teachers to rate their principal as excellent at being an overall leader (32% vs. 15%), being a visible presence throughout the school (41% vs. 17%) and supporting teachers to be the best they can be (35% vs. 16%).

While these correlations do not prove causality, they do emphasize the vital role that principals play in teachers' lives. Job satisfaction illuminates the current state of leadership and who will be the leaders in schools in the coming years. Unhappy teachers and principals may be less able to muster the resources to effectively lead their schools and their students.

Recent Research for Public Release

From time to time, the Harris Interactive Youth Research team is fortunate to work with media, leading foundations and nonprofit organizations, and often we are able to release the results of some of these studies publicly.

Harris Interactive Survey of U.S. Public School Teachers and Principals Finds That the Current Legal Climate Has Caused a Phenomenon Called "Defensive Teaching"

Nearly Two-thirds of Principals Surveyed Have Been Threatened With a Legal Challenge by Parents.

A new survey by Harris Interactive of public school teachers and principals throughout the nation has found that more than three-quarters of those surveyed – 82 percent of teachers and 77 percent of principals – agree that the current legal climate has created a phenomenon that could be called "defensive teaching" – meaning that their decisions are motivated by a desire to avoid legal challenges. And the threat of lawsuits has become pronounced: 62 percent of principals surveyed said that they have been threatened with a legal challenge by parents, while 35 percent of principals have been threatened with other harm or assaulted by parents.

The survey, released in March of 2004, was conducted for Common Good, a nonpartisan legal reform coalition. Harris Interactive conducted the telephone survey among 500 teachers and 301 principals from public schools nationwide.

Other findings from the poll include the following:

- 77 percent of principals think that principals (other than themselves) avoid decisions that they think are right simply because they might be challenged legally;
- 61 percent of teachers think that teachers (other than themselves) avoid decisions that they think are right simply because they might be challenged legally;
- 62 percent of principals believe that concerns about legal challenges have made teachers' relationships with students less personal.

For more information on this, please visit http://cgood.org/schools/item?item_id=44954

Youth Marketers Feel It Is Appropriate to Begin Marketing to Kids at Age Seven

Results from Harris Interactive/Kid Power Poll of Youth Marketers shows three-fourths think the positive impact their organization has on youth far outweighs any negatives.

A new ground-breaking survey of professionals who work in youth-related fields shows that they feel it is appropriate to begin marketing to children at age seven, on average. This is more than two years before they feel most young people can view advertising critically (age 9.1), or when they feel most young people can effectively separate fantasy from reality in media and advertising (age 9.3). Youth marketers feel it is appropriate to target marketing to children almost five years before they feel that most young people can make intelligent choices as consumers (age 11.7).

These are some of the findings of the Harris Interactive/Kid Power Poll of Youth Marketers conducted online by Harris Interactive in February 2004 among 878 individuals working in

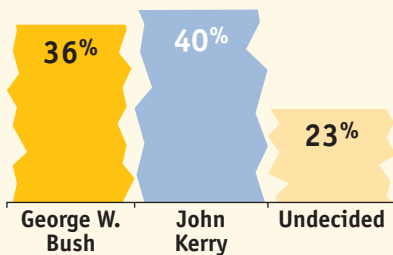
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Election Update

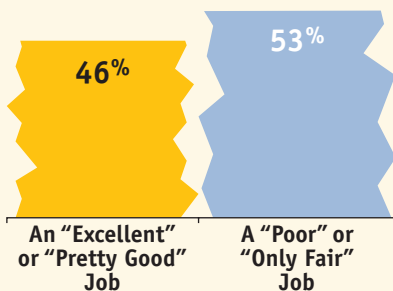
Until the Presidential election in November, Harris Interactive will report on our election poll that we are conducting among 8- to 18- year olds.

In April 2004, this study found that if the election were held today and these respondents could vote, 36% would vote for George W. Bush, 40% for John Kerry and 23% would be undecided. Slightly less than half (46%) said that President Bush is doing an excellent or pretty good job as president, while 53% said that he is doing a poor or only fair job.

Presidential Candidate Preference Among 8- to 18-Year-Olds



Satisfaction with President's Performance Among 8- to 18-Year-Olds



youth-related fields. Survey participants were professionals working in a range of youth-related fields, including: youth marketing, market research, advertising/public relations, media, education and non-profit organizations. The poll covered a number of topics regarding commercialism and youth, marketing in schools, youth obesity, and sexual and violent content in media.

For more information, please visit

<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=792>

Three-Quarters of Youth Industry Professionals Expect to See Increased Marketing in Schools

Results from Harris Interactive/Kid Power Poll of Youth Marketers show what they think appropriate and inappropriate about marketing to young people.

A new survey of professionals working in youth-related fields shows that although youth marketers don't necessarily see marketing to children during school time as important, 74% of them expect to see the level of advertising in schools rise in the future. Results of this poll indicate that:

- 64% feel that reaching children during school time is not very or not at all important;
- 20% feel that reaching children during school time is somewhat important; and
- 16% of respondents feel that reaching children during school time is extremely or very important.

These are some of the findings of the Harris Interactive/Kid Power Poll of Youth Marketers conducted online by Harris Interactive in February 2004 among 878 individuals working in youth-related fields. Survey participants were professionals working in a range of youth-related fields, including: youth marketing, market research, advertising/public relations, media, education and non-profit organizations. The poll covered a number of topics regarding commercialism and youth, marketing in schools, youth obesity, and sexual and violent content in media.

"The media world has fragmented, and many marketers see schools as a way to effectively reach children and support education at the same time," said Candi Schwartz, Managing Director of the Kid Power Exchange. "The poll shows that some in-school marketing tactics are seen by youth marketers as much more appropriate than others."

For more information, please visit

<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=790>

Survey of Youth Industry Professionals Says Overweight/Obese Youth is a Major Public Health Concern

Youth marketers realize the impact they can have on youth health and well-being. Results from Harris Interactive/Kid Power poll of youth marketers.

A large majority (86%) of those working in youth-related fields see the issue of overweight youth as an extremely or very important public health concern. And, youth industry professionals feel that the increased level of media coverage over the issues of obesity and overweight children is warranted and appropriate.

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Trends & Tudes Poll Vault

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Contact Us

To make suggestions regarding this newsletter or to discuss a business issue involving youth or the people and issues that influence today's youth, please contact our Information Desk at 877.919.4765 or info@harrisinteractive.com.

You received this newsletter because you provided your contact information to a member of our youth research team. If you would prefer to be removed from our distribution list, please send an email to HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net and write the word "Remove" in the subject line. If others in your organization are interested in receiving our information, please have them forward their email address to HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net.

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"Survey results verify that those working in youth fields feel that childhood obesity is a national priority," said Candi Schwartz, Managing Director of the Kid Power Exchange. "As one respondent told us: *marketers have a responsibility to help educate parents and children about the importance of good nutrition and physical activity.*"

For more information, please visit <http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=788>

Come See Us...

Tween and Teen Power!

June 22-24, 2004 at The Catamaran Resort in San Diego, CA. This event focuses on these two booming consumer groups (twens 8-12 year olds and teens 13-19 year olds). For more information, go to: www.kidpowerx.com



IIR's Youth Marketing Mega-Event!

We will also be presenting, along with our colleagues from Yahoo!®, at the IIR's Youth Marketing Mega-Event, June 27-30, in Anaheim, California. This session will present the results of the "Born to Be Wired: A New Media Landscape Comes of Age" project, which we conducted for Yahoo! and Carat Interactive in June 2003. More information is available at <http://www.iirusa.com/youth/>

360 Youth College Explorer: 2003-2004

Powered by Harris Interactive is Now Available!

You can now subscribe to 360 Youth College Explorer, the annual study of college students powered by Harris Interactive. This is the only study of its kind to provide marketers with insights about the entire college market of 18- to 30-year-olds, including: full- and part-time students, students at 2- and 4-year institutions, and undergraduate and graduate students. This year's topics cover income and spending, financial services, online behavior, technology and wireless, entertainment, food and dining, and much more. Contact us at 877.919.4765 or info@harrisinteractive.com for details.

