

Trends & TudesSM

2005

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

Contents

Helping Teachers and Students Thrive During Transition	1-3
Editorial: Our Take On It	2-6
Recent Research for Public Release	4
What Do Kids And Teens Think?	5
Ask A Question	5
YouthPulse 2005 Released This Month	5
Get Smart!	6
Trends & Tudes Poll Vault	6
The Greatest Communicator	6
Contact Us	6

• EDITORS •

Todd Butler

Marketing Manager
Youth and Education Research

Dana Markow, Ph.D.

Senior Director
Youth and Education Research

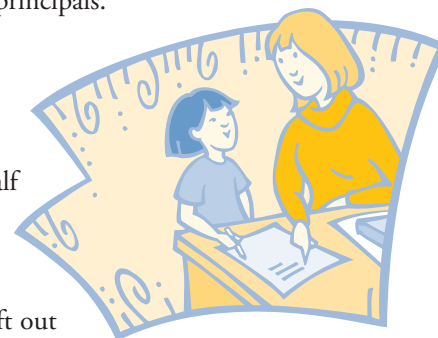
Helping Teachers and Students Thrive During Transitions

September is here and across the country, students and teachers are returning to the classroom. For many, this marks a transition to a new school or a new profession. These transitions can represent times of excitement, but also of stress. Questions abound. “What will the other students be like?” “Will I like my teachers?” “Where are the bathrooms?” “How do I get the supplies I need for my students?”

This year’s *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* explores the role of supportive relationships during two important transitions in school life: students entering secondary school and new teachers’ first years in the classroom. The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* is an annual series of surveys examining important issues in American public education and Harris Interactive is proud to have conducted these surveys on behalf of MetLife for over 20 years. To better understand the transition experiences of secondary school students and new teachers, we interviewed a nationwide cross section of 1,073 public school students in grades 7-12, 800 K-12 public school teachers with less than six years of teaching experience; and 841 K-12 public school principals.

The High School Years

In previous years, the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* has documented that secondary school years are a vulnerable time for students. Half of secondary school students very often or often feel nervous or stressed.¹ Four in ten secondary school students feel that what they think does not count very much at school and three in ten feel left out of things going on around them at school.² In this year’s survey, fewer secondary school students see their current school as a safe, caring place than their elementary school. About three in ten secondary school students strongly agree that at their current school they feel safe (29%) or that their teachers care about them (28%). In comparison, about four in ten students felt safe (43%) or that teachers cared about them (37%) at their previous school. Furthermore, many secondary school students enter their new schools without receiving critical information. Thirty-one percent report that no one gave them information about what classes to take and 20% say that no one told them where things were located.



¹MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2002)

²MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2000)

Continued from Page 1

Editorial: Our Take On It

Dana Markow, Ph.D.

Senior Director

Youth and Education Research

Back to school. The phrase probably conjures up specific and resonant images for you. These images are drawn from your own experiences in education – as a student yourself, as a parent or as an educator. But how closely do your ideas of school match the experiences of young people across the U.S. today? We thought we would take this opportunity to examine some of the recent trends in K-12 education.

First of all, how many students are we talking about? In the United States, more than 54 million young people are enrolled in grades K-12. Boys outnumber girls in elementary and secondary school (51% to 49%), which reflects the overall population. However, this trend reverses itself in college. Among undergraduates, female students outnumber male students (55% vs. 45%).³

The number of children enrolled in public school has been increasing since the late 1980's. This is a result of the large number of births driving the "echo boom" of Generation Y and increases in immigration. In 2004, an estimated 48.3 million students were enrolled in pre-K through grade 12. This enrollment is expected to increase through the next decade, with an anticipated peak of 50.0 million in 2014. Geographically, the South has the largest share of public school enrollment, a trend that has been in evidence since 1965.⁴

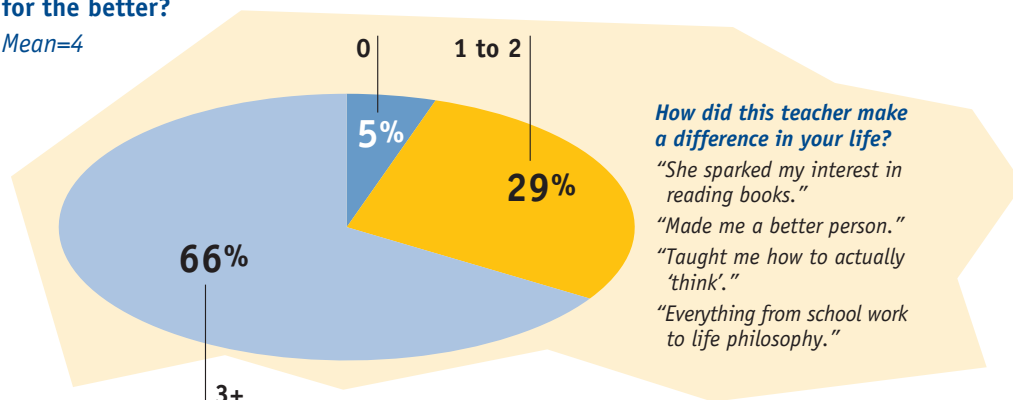
Although there has been increasing enrollment during this time, the ratio of students to teachers in public schools has not seen a similar increase. In fact, over the past forty

Continued on Page 3

The good news is that secondary school students with involved parents and strong connections to teachers have more positive school experiences. Three-quarters of secondary school students (75%) say their parents are involved in their education. Two-thirds (66%) of secondary school students have had at least three teachers who have made a difference in their lives. These same students are more likely to be interested in their classes (36% vs. 18% strongly agree), feel safe at school (33% vs. 23% strongly agree) and say that higher education is extremely important for their future (89% vs. 74% strongly agree).

How many teachers have you ever had who really made a difference in your life for the better?

Mean=4



Source: MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships (Nov. 29, 2004 – Jan. 12, 2005). N=1,073 public school students, grades 7-12.

Becoming a Teacher

New teachers' first years in the classroom are also a critical time. A sizable number of new teachers leave the profession. The 1992 *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* found that 19% of second year teachers reported they were very or fairly likely to leave the teaching profession to go into some different occupation and 7% of an initial cohort of first year teachers had already left the profession after only one year of classroom experience.

In this year's survey, we asked new teachers what type of support and guidance they believe is most helpful for first-time teachers and the extent to which they received such support themselves. New teachers emphasize the importance of mentors for preparing first-time teachers, and principals agree. Yet two in ten (19%) new teachers were not assigned a more experienced teacher as a mentor during their first year of teaching. Furthermore, 18% of new teachers were not given a tour of the school to show them where things were located during their first year.



Another area considered by both principals and new teachers to be of critical importance in effective teaching is the ability to work well with parents.

Eight in ten (81%) new teachers and nine in ten (90%) principals strongly agree that effective teachers need to be able to work well with students' parents. But new teachers report that parental engagement poses their biggest challenge. More new teachers say that their biggest challenge is communicating with and involving parents (31%) than report that their

Continued on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

years there has been a steady **decrease** in the pupil/teacher ratios in public schools. In 1965, this ratio was 24.7 to 1. In 1985, this ratio had fallen to 17.9 to 1. Today, the pupil/teacher ratio is 16.2 to 1. The investment per student has also increased during this time. Over the past 20 years (between 1981-82 and 2001-02) expenditures per student rose by 73%, from \$5,200 to \$9,000 (after adjustment for inflation).⁵

Another important trend in public school education is the increasing diversity of the students. In 2003, 42% of public school students were from a racial or ethnic minority group. The comparable figure in 1972 was 22%. The largest increase has been among Hispanics. In 2003, 19% of public school students were Hispanic, more than tripling the 1972 level of 6%. The black student population has remained steady during this time period (16% in 2003 vs. 15% in 1972).⁶

Although decreasing pupil/teacher ratios and increasing expenditures per student may be evidence of good news, poverty continues to be a problem among the nation's young people. Eligibility for the free or reduced-price program is a proxy measure of low-income family status. In 2003, 40% of fourth graders were eligible for this program. Although this overall level is high, the figures for specific racial or ethnic minorities tell an even more striking story. Seventy percent of black and 71% of Hispanic fourth graders were eligible for the program, compared to 23% of white students. Furthermore, black and Hispanic students are more likely than white students to attend schools with a majority of students from low-income families. About half of black (47%) and Hispanic (51%) students were in the highest poverty schools – where more than 75% of

Continued on Page 4

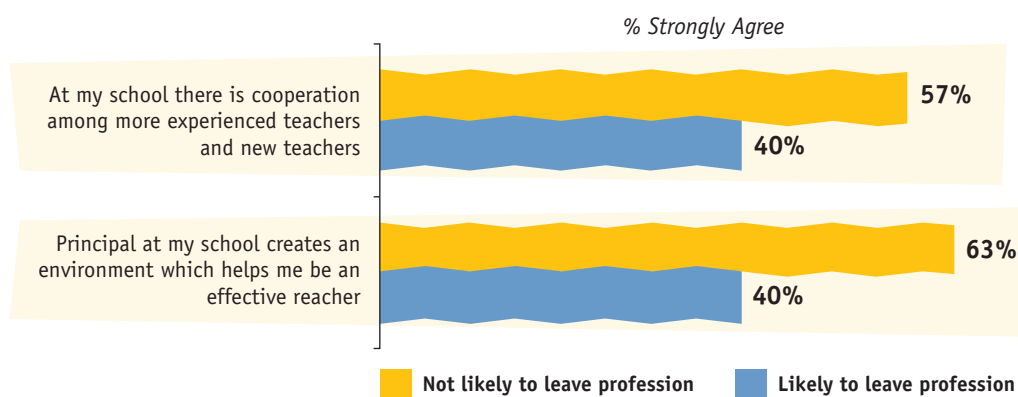
Continued from Page 2

biggest challenge is getting sufficient resources (22%), maintaining order and discipline in the classroom (20%), or preparing students for testing (14%). Engaging parents is also the area where new teachers feel the most unprepared. One-quarter of new teachers (23%) report they were not prepared in their first teaching position to engage families in their children's education; and a similar number of new teachers (20%) report that their experience working with parents has been unsatisfying. Two in five new teachers (39%) strongly agree that they receive guidance from their school's principal on how to engage parents.



Why do these findings matter? The survey results suggest that new teacher retention is related to the quality of these professional connections. Two in ten (18%) new teachers report that they are likely to leave the profession in the next five years. These teachers at risk for leaving the profession are less likely than others to experience cooperation with more experienced teachers (40% vs. 57% strongly agree), to have a principal who creates a supportive environment (40% vs. 63% strongly agree) and to be very satisfied with their relationships with other teachers (38% vs. 61%) or their principal (34% vs. 57%).

The Relationship of Teacher Retention to the Quality of Professional Connections



Source: MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships (Nov. 29, 2004 – Jan. 12, 2005). N=800 K-12 public school teachers with less than six years teaching experience.

The results of this year's *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* reveal that the transition to a new school or a first teaching experience comes with many challenges. Without the support system of formal and informal mentoring, these struggles can be exacerbated and lead to dissatisfaction. However, when students, teachers, principals and parents form personal connections with each other during these points of transition, these relationships can be their areas of greatest satisfaction and supportive of their success in school.

More information on the study, including this year's full report and previous reports in the series, is available in the "Corporate Citizenship" section of MetLife's website: <http://www.metlife.com/Applications/Corporate/WPS/CDA/PageGenerator/0,1674,P2315,00.html>

Continued from Page 3

students are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program – compared to only 5% of white students.⁷

The preceding figures have focused on public education. But public schools are not monolithic and there are options other than public education available to parents. Most students in grades one through 12 attend an “assigned” public school – typically the public school assigned on the basis of where they live. However over the past decade or so, there has been a decrease in the proportion of students attending assigned public schools, from 80% in 1993 to 74% in 2003. What types of schools have seen an increase in attendance? One trend is in the proportion of students attending a “chosen” public school – that is, a public school other than their assigned public school. Today, 15% of students in grades one through 12 attend a “chosen” public school, compared to 11% in 1993.⁸

Not all of the nation’s public schools are even located in the United States. The Department of Defense Education Activity is a civilian agency of the US Department of Defense. The DoDEA operates schools serving children of military service members and Department of Defense civilian employees in the United States and internationally. It operates a total of 223 public schools in 15 districts located in 13 foreign countries, seven US states, Guam and Puerto Rico. The overall enrollment trend here has been that of a gradual decrease, from 116,000 students in 1996 to 102,600 in 2003. Enrollment did increase in 2004 to 104,935 students.

Along with an increase in attendance in “chosen” public

Continued on Page 5

Recent Research for Public Release

America’s Youth Speak Out, Provide Revealing Snapshot Into Their Lives In New Nationwide Poll

A new nationwide survey conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of America’s Promise – The Alliance for Youth shows that America’s young people overwhelmingly believe in the American Dream, but more than four in ten express doubts that they will be able to realize it for themselves because they are stressed out, worried about their personal safety and confused about how to make smart choices regarding their health and well-being.

This spring, 1,278 young people aged 10-17 were polled with appropriate representation from urban, suburban and rural neighborhoods. The question development and survey analysis for this study was conducted by Just Kid Inc. (JKI). The entire “Voices Study” is available at the America’s Promise home page at www.americaspromise.org.

Today’s young people demonstrate much of the same optimism about the future as previous generations of Americans. The results show that:

- 95% of respondents have set personal goals for themselves, agreeing “I have goals that I want to reach in my life.”
- 92% agreed with the statement, “My success depends on how hard I work.”
- 88% agreed with the statement, “I’m confident that I’ll be able to find a good-paying job when I’m an adult.”

But young people also have serious doubts about achieving their goals for the future.

- 42% expressed concern about achieving their specific dream, agreeing with the statement, “I don’t know if I’ll be able to reach my goals.”
- 1 in 5 (20%) disagree that “In America, kids can grow up to become anything they want.”
- 1 in 3 (34%) do not believe they have enough skills to be successful in life.

The results show that a sizeable number of young people have serious concerns about their own personal safety.

- 4 in 10 said kids in their community fight too much.
- 3 in 10 said too many kids in their community have guns/knives/other weapons.
- 3 in 10 stated they do not feel safe walking alone in their communities.
- 44% feel they need to watch out for bullies.

The complete release is available at:

<http://www.americaspromise.org/media/releasedetail.cfm?prID=139>



Continued from Page 4

schools, private school attendance has seen a small increase as well: 10.8% attend a private school today vs. 9.1% in 1993. Church-related private schools account for the largest proportion of that enrollment. Today, 8.4% of students attend private, church-related schools and 2.4% attend other private schools.⁹ All in all, about 5.2 million first- through twelfth-graders attend private schools. States with the highest proportion of students in private school include Louisiana, Delaware, Hawaii, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. At least 15% of students attend private school in these states. In Utah, Wyoming, Nevada and West Virginia fewer than 6% of students attend private schools.¹⁰

A discussion of schooling options would not be complete without mentioning homeschooling, a growing trend. In 2003, 2.2% of the school-age population was homeschooled. The most frequent reasons reported by parents for homeschooling their children are concerns about the school environment, such as safety, drugs and negative peer pressure (85% of parents), a desire to provide religious or moral instruction (72%) and dissatisfaction with academic instruction (68%). The number of homeschooled students has increased from 850,000 in 1991 to 1 million in 2003.¹¹

As mentioned previously, the overall school-age population and school enrollment has been increasing. Are we seeing complementary trends in school completion rates? In the United States, school attendance is compulsory for children ages 7 to 15 years old. A look at the high school dropout rates among 16-24 year olds (those who are not enrolled and have not completed a high school

Continued on Page 6

What Do Kids and Teens Think?

This month, we offer responses – in young peoples' own words – to the following question:

If you could change one thing in your life, what would you change?

"I love my life and wouldn't have it any other way."

"I would have more money and my parents would let me have a play station."

"I wish I was not looked up to."

"My mom wouldn't have to work two jobs to support us. She works very hard and I don't get to see her much."

"I would get rid of the bullies in my school."

"For my parents to have lots of money so we could afford to do lots of things together."

"My teeth. I need braces."

"Having no pimples, blemishes, zits, etc."



Source: Harris Interactive YouthQuerySM Online Omnibus, U.S. Youth Ages 13-18; August 17-22, 2005 (n=1,445).

Ask a Question...

And get some answers. Have a burning question you would like to ask kids and teens? Here's your chance to submit a free question for our upcoming YouthQuerySM youth omnibus. Just send us an email (HI_youth_research@harrisinteractive.net) with your suggestion. We will pick one question each month and then publish the results in the next issue of the newsletter. YouthQuery is your chance to ask one or a series of questions of 1,100 young consumers nationwide, and get accurate, projectable answers within days. To learn more about YouthQuery, contact us.

It's 8 a.m.—do you know what American kids are doing?

YouthPulseSM 2005 to be released this month

You need to know almost as much about the youth market as you would if they were all your own children. How they spend their time, how they spend their money, their hopes, fears and aspirations and which parts of the kid experience are totally different today than they were a decade—or even a year—ago. YouthPulseSM is the only study covering these topics and hundreds of others for kids from age 8 to 21, and the 2005 study is about to be released. To learn more about YouthPulse, contact us.

Continued from Page 5

program) has shown a decrease in the past two decades, from 12.6% in 1985 to 9.9% in 2003. This time period also saw an increase in the proportion of 25-29 year olds who have completed a bachelor's degree, from 22.1% in 1985 to 28.4% in 2003.¹²

As we enter a new school year, the education trends give more than insight into the schooling experiences of young people and the demographic changes in the United States today. Understanding education today provides a peek into the future and the diversity and skill of the workforce of tomorrow.

³ United States Census 2000.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *The Condition of Education 2005*, NCES 2005-094, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2004.

⁶ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2004.

⁷ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2004.

⁸ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2004.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2004.

¹⁰ United States Census 2000.

¹¹ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). *The Condition of Education 2005*, NCES 2005-094, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

¹² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2004.

For more information, please contact us at:

877.919.4765

or visit our website at

www.harrisinteractive.com

Media inquiries, contact:

Kelly Gullo 585.214.7172

kgullo@harrisinteractive.com

Nancy Wong 585.214.7316

nwong@harrisinteractive.com

Get Smart!

Did you know that Harris Interactive conducts up to five free webinars a month? Spanning a variety of business issues facing a handful of industries, these one-hour interactive sessions allow you to catch up on the latest research advancement, proprietary industry findings, and best practices. Register for one or more sessions at <http://harrisinteractive.webex.com>. Visit often as our schedule changes weekly.

Trends & Tudes Poll Vault

To view previous issues of *Trends & Tudes*, please visit our website at www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_k12.asp.

Imagine your research directly and immediately influences your CEO's decisions and dialogue. Now imagine your CEO is the President of the United States.

On Tuesday, August 30, publisher John Wiley & Sons will release the paperback version of *The Greatest Communicator: What Ronald Reagan Taught Me about Politics, Leadership, and Life*. The book, written by Dr. Richard Wirthlin, founder of Wirthlin Worldwide®, tells the real-life tale of how this respected researcher became one of Ronald Reagan's most trusted advisors and the chief architect of Reagan's two successful White House bids. Filled with high emotion, reason, and political intrigue, you'll enjoy the personal perspective Dr. Wirthlin brings to this inside look at the high-stakes world of presidential polling.

Buy this book at Amazon.com and bn.com.

The views and opinions expressed in this book are not those of Harris Interactive.

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 us 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 with 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.