

The Metropolitan Life Survey of

THE  
AMERICAN  
TEACHER

1996

Students Voice Their Opinions on:  
Learning About Multiculturalism

Part IV



## Surveys in this Series

*The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher* series explores teachers' opinions and brings them to the attention of the American public and policy makers.

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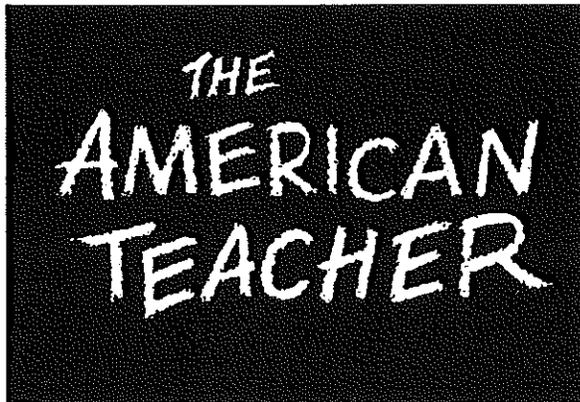
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(Continued on inside back cover)

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1996

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Learning About Multiculturalism

Part IV

Conducted for  
**Metropolitan Life Insurance Company**  
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## INTRODUCTION

*The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher 1996: Students Voice Their Opinions On: Multiculturalism in the Schools* was conducted by Louis Harris and Associates on behalf of Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. This report, the last in a series of four 1996 releases, 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 assessed students' opinions and interests in learning about multicultural topics. Public school students from middle and high schools nationwide, grades seven through twelve, responded to questions on the availability of multicultural courses, their interest in taking these courses, their opinions about the emphasis their school places on this subject and their evaluations of teachers' lessons on tolerance.

Although this report offers only a brief sketch of multicultural issues, the findings provide an important and encouraging message to educators about ① the level of student interest in multicultural programs, ② the need to expand these programs and ③ the likely benefit to both students and teachers if multiculturalism is given greater attention in the schools.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The growth of cultural diversity in the United States is one of the most significant demographic trends in recent decades. The Census Bureau estimates that by 2000, one in three children will be of a racial or ethnic background other than non-Hispanic white. As a result of this trend, the need for multicultural education in the nation's schools is growing rapidly.

Many schools offer classes on the history and culture of people who have immigrated to the United States from different regions of the world, and most students are interested in learning about these cultures. More than seven in ten, in fact, express an interest in learning about the special events that people from different cultures celebrate. Yet, there are a fair number of students who express an interest in multicultural subjects but don't have the opportunity to take courses in these subjects. As many as one in four indicate that no courses are offered in their school.

Although shy of a majority, more students are satisfied with their school's current emphasis on multicultural education than not. Among those who are not, most feel there is not enough rather than too much emphasis. Further, students who attend schools that do not offer courses in multiculturalism would welcome the opportunity. Only one in ten students feel their school places too much emphasis on this subject.

One area of education in which students voice a need for improvement is learning how to be tolerant of others who are different from themselves. About one in five students feel their teachers do a poor job of teaching tolerance and more than twice as many think their teachers do just an average job. In a recent MetLife release, *The Metropolitan Survey of the American Teacher, 1996: Students Voice Their Opinions On: Violence, Social Tension and Equality Among Teens*, students indicated that social relations among students from different economic or racial and ethnic backgrounds are better when teachers do a good job (vs. a poor job) of teaching tolerance. This finding suggests that multicultural education can help teens overcome their negative attitudes, prejudices or fears of racial and ethnic groups that are different from their own and enable more positive relations to flourish.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that schools should expand their programs in multiculturalism because students appear interested in developing a deeper understanding of the history and culture of diverse groups of immigrant people. An equally compelling reason for expanding multicultural programs is the likely payoff: that tolerance among students will improve. And this we have shown is associated with better social relations.

## Major Findings

**1. A majority of students say their school offers classes on multiculturalism; however, this number is far from unanimous.**

- ★ Six in ten (61%) students say their school offers classes on the history and culture of people who immigrated to the United States from different parts of the world. One in four report that no classes are taught on multiculturalism in their school, while another 14% are not sure.

**2. Students are divided in their opinions on whether their school is placing the right amount of emphasis on teaching multiculturalism.**

- ★ More students feel their school places the right amount of emphasis on teaching multiculturalism (45%) than either too little (28%) or too much (11%), but when the latter two points of view are considered together (i.e., current emphasis is not the right amount) nearly as many are dissatisfied as they are satisfied (39% vs. 45%).

- ★ Among those who are dissatisfied, most would like their school to place more rather than less emphasis on multiculturalism.

- ★ Older students, more so than younger ones, would like their school to pay greater attention to this subject (32% vs. 20%).

**3. Students' interest in learning more about the holidays and other special events that people in different parts of the world celebrate was assessed. Most are either very or, more likely, somewhat interested in this topic.**

- ★ Seven in ten students nationwide either express some interest (44%) or a high level of interest (27%) in learning about special events in different cultures. A fair number express no interest (24%).

- ★ Females express a greater interest in this subject than male students (78% vs. 63%). In fact, nearly one-third of male students are not very interested compared with less than one-fifth of female students.

**4. Learning to be tolerant of those who are different from oneself is an important component of lessons on multiculturalism. When asked to rate their teachers on how well a job they do teaching tolerance, many more students say their teachers do an average job than an above or a below average job, but even this number is below half.**

- ✪ Less than half of students nationwide (44%) think their teachers do an average job of helping them to be tolerant of others. One in four students (26%) give their teachers higher ratings ("good") but nearly one in five (18%) feel their teachers do a poor job.

**5. Students also evaluated their school on the job it's doing of helping immigrant students learn or improve their English. A slight majority agree that their school has done a satisfactory job in this area.**

- ✪ While one in two (51%) students feel their school does a satisfactory job of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to immigrant students, an unusually large number (31%) don't know what kind of job their school is doing in this area. Another one in five (19%) express a contrary opinion, saying that their school does not do a good job in this area.

- ✪ Students who are satisfied with the quality of their teachers are much more likely to believe their school's ESL program is satisfactory (56% vs. 38%).

**6. Students are equally divided on whether or not the teachers in their school mirror the social and ethnic makeup of the students.**

- ✪ One-third of students nationwide believe their teachers reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the students, while one-third believe teachers do not.
- ✪ African-American students responded differently to this question than students overall: a larger proportion (39%) believe their teachers' ethnic makeup is different than their students' and only 28% say there is a similarity in background. Among African-American students in suburban and rural schools, a much smaller proportion (19%) than is found in urban schools (31%) believe there is a similarity in ethnic makeup.



## SURVEY FINDINGS

### Schools That Offer Classes on Multiculturalism

Six in ten (61%) students nationally say that their school offers classes on the history and culture of people who have immigrated to the United States from different regions of the world. While differences emerge across demographic groups, the proportions who respond affirmatively are consistently a majority of students.

The likelihood that schools offer classes on multiculturalism increases from urban to suburban and rural locations (57% vs. 62% vs. 68%, respectively). Fewer African-Americans than other racial or ethnic groups report that their school offers classes on multiculturalism (52% vs. 63% for white and 61% for Hispanic students). Middle schools are more likely to offer these courses than high schools (68% vs. 58%).

Observation:

*The finding that fewer urban schools offer classes on this subject than non-urban schools is surprising given that urban areas contain the highest concentrations of recent immigrants. Although it is not clear what factors account for these differences, one fact that can be inferred from the data is that urban schools are not placing enough emphasis on multicultural education.*

TABLE 1-1

**SCHOOLS THAT OFFER CLASSES ON MULTICULTURALISM:  
BY RACE AND LOCATION**

Q.E1-2: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

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

	RACE				LOCATION		
	Total	White	African-American	Hispanic	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base	2474	1310	463	483	1370	642	462
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	25	22	34	26	27	24	22
Disagree	61	63	52	61	57	62	68
Don't Know	14	14	13	13	16	15	11

TABLE 1-2

SCHOOLS THAT OFFER CLASSES ON MULTICULTURALISM: BY SCHOOL LEVEL

Q.E1-2: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

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

	GRADE LEVEL		
	Total	7-8	9-12
Base	2474	850	1622
	%	%	%
Agree	25	20	27
Disagree	61	68	58
Don't Know	14	12	15

**Whether or Not Schools Are Placing the Right Amount of Emphasis on Multiculturalism**

More students feel their school places the right amount of emphasis (45%) on multiculturalism than either too little emphasis (28%) or too much (11%). However, the proportion of students who are not satisfied with the current emphasis amounts to 39%, which is not much smaller than the proportion who are satisfied. Most of these students feel there is not enough rather than too much emphasis, and thus welcome a more enhanced program of multicultural education in their school.

Those groups who are less likely to say their school offers classes on multiculturalism are more likely to say there is not enough emphasis on multiculturalism in their school. These groups include high school students, urban students and African-American students. High school students feel more strongly than middle school students that their school does not emphasize multiculturalism enough (32% vs. 20%) and are also more likely to be dissatisfied with their school's current emphasis (42% vs. 50%). Also, African-American students show more of an interest in expanding the multicultural curriculum in their school than white and Hispanic students (34% vs. 26% and 25%, respectively). Similarly, urban students are somewhat more likely than suburban students, and the latter more likely than rural students to want their school to expand their multicultural program.

The lower students' academic performance, the less satisfied they are with the current emphasis and the more they feel there is too much emphasis. For example, about half (49%) of high academic performers think their school places the right amount of emphasis on multiculturalism. Yet, only one in three (35%) low performers feel the same way. Further, although the proportions in absolute terms are small, twice as many low performers think there is too much emphasis on multiculturalism in their school than high performers do (17% vs. 8%).

In addition, students who are satisfied with the overall quality of their teachers or their education are more likely to express satisfaction with their school's current emphasis. In fact, students who are satisfied with their teachers are almost twice as likely (52% vs. 28%) to feel their school places the right amount of time and energy into educating them about multiculturalism. Similarly, those who are satisfied with the quality of education are about twice as likely (53% vs. 27%) to feel the current emphasis is about right.

Observation:

*The findings thus far paint a positive picture: More students are satisfied than dissatisfied with their school's multicultural program; those who are dissatisfied are much more likely to want their school to place more not less emphasis on multiculturalism. And those groups who report a lack of multicultural classes in their school are more likely to want their schools to pay more attention to this subject. In fact, students who attend schools that do not offer these classes are much more likely to say there is not enough emphasis (54%) compared to those whose school does offer classes in this subject (19%).*

TABLE 1-3

AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS PLACED ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:  
BY SCHOOL LEVEL

Q.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?

	GRADE LEVEL		
	Total	7-8	9-12
Base	2474	850	1622
	%	%	%
The Right Amount of Emphasis	45	50	42
Too Much Emphasis	11	12	10
Not Enough Emphasis	28	20	32
Don't Know	17	18	16

TABLE 1-4

AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS PLACED ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:  
BY RACE AND LOCATION

Q.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?

	RACE				LOCATION		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>African- American</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Suburban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Base	2474 %	1308 %	460 %	485 %	1366 %	645 %	463 %
The Right Amount of Emphasis	45	48	37	46	41	45	50
Too Much Emphasis	11	10	14	13	12	9	11
Not Enough Emphasis	28	26	34	25	31	27	24
Don't Know	17	16	16	16	16	18	15

TABLE 1-5

AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS PLACED ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:  
BY COURSE GRADE

Q.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?

	COURSE GRADES			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>A/B Mostly</u>	<u>B/C Mostly</u>	<u>C or Worse</u>
Base	2474 %	1436 %	795 %	235 %
The Right Amount of Emphasis	45	49	40	35
Too Much Emphasis	11	8	13	17
Not Enough Emphasis	28	28	27	28
Don't Know	17	14	21	21

TABLE 1-6

AMOUNT OF EMPHASIS PLACED ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:  
BY QUALITY OF TEACHER AND EDUCATION

Q.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?

	QUALITY OF TEACHER			QUALITY OF EDUCATION		
	Total	Excellent/ Pretty Good	Fair/ Poor	A or B	C	D or Worse
Base	2474	1741	686	1586	547	241
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Right Amount of Emphasis	45	52	28	53	31	27
Too Much Emphasis	11	9	15	9	14	14
Not Enough Emphasis	28	24	38	23	38	41
Don't Know	17	15	19	15	17	19

### Students' Interest in Learning About Other Cultures

Seven in ten (71%) students nationwide are at least somewhat interested in learning more about cultural events that people celebrate in different parts of the world. Most of these students show some (44%) and about one-quarter show a lot of interest (27%) in learning about this subject. There is another one-quarter of students who are not interested in this subject. Male students are less interested than female students (31% vs. 18%) in learning about other cultures and customs.

Minority students are likelier than white students to be very interested (38% for Hispanics and 32% for African-Americans vs. 23% for white students) in learning about cultural events; Hispanics are the most likely to express an interest, with 77% saying they are very or somewhat interested.

Academic performers at the high end have different interests than those at the low end. The proportion of high performers who say they are at least somewhat interested in cultural events (75%) drops ten percentage points for average performers (65%) and another six points for low performers (59%).

Observation:

*This question can be viewed as one indicator of students' general interest in learning or taking courses in cultural diversity. And as such, it suggests that a large proportion of students nationally show at least some interest in learning about different cultures.*

TABLE 1-7

INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT CULTURAL EVENTS: BY SEX

Q.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?

	SEX		
	Total	Male	Female
Base	2476 %	1126 %	1346 %
Very Interested	27	22	31
Somewhat Interested	44	41	47
Not Very Interested	24	31	18
Don't Know	5	6	3

TABLE 1-8

INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT CULTURAL EVENTS: BY RACE

Q.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?

	RACE			
	Total	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2476 %	1313 %	456 %	486 %
Very Interested	27	23	32	38
Somewhat Interested	44	47	41	39
Not Very Interested	24	27	22	17
Don't Know	5	4	6	6

TABLE 1-9

INTEREST IN LEARNING ABOUT CULTURAL EVENTS: BY COURSE GRADES

Q.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?

	COURSE GRADES			
	Total	A/B Mostly	B/C Mostly	C or Worse
Base	2476	1437	796	235
	%	%	%	%
Very Interested	27	27	25	31
Somewhat Interested	44	48	40	28
Not Very Interested	24	21	28	35
Don't Know	5	3	7	7

**Evaluating Lessons on Tolerance**

Learning to be tolerant of others whose cultural background differs from one's own is an important topic in multicultural education. While tolerance can evolve from a basic understanding of or appreciation for cultural differences, it can also be taught to students directly as a set of skills. When students are asked to rate their teachers on how well a job they do teaching them tolerance, students most often give their teachers "average" ratings (44%), although about one-quarter (26%) feel their teachers deserve "good" ratings (the highest rating in the scale). This leaves a fair number (18%) who feel their teachers do a poor job of teaching students tolerance.

Female students and rural students evaluate their teachers somewhat more favorably than their counterparts. However, by far the largest group difference is found between those who are satisfied vs. dissatisfied with their teachers. Three-quarters (75%) of students who give their teachers high ratings on overall quality also give them good or average ratings on teaching tolerance; by comparison, a much smaller proportion (55%) of those who are dissatisfied with their teachers give them favorable ratings on the job they do teaching tolerance.

**Observation:**

*In an earlier MetLife survey, teaching tolerance well was found to be associated with better social relations among students. The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1996: Students Voice Their Opinions On: Violence, Social Tension and Equality Among Teens reports that students are more likely to say students of different backgrounds get along well when they also say their teachers do a good job (vs. poor job) of teaching tolerance.*

TABLE 1-10

HOW WELL TEACHERS TEACH TOLERANCE: BY SEX

Q.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?

	SEX		
	Total	Male	Female
Base	2476 %	1127 %	1345 %
Do a good job of helping students learn to be tolerant	26	26	25
Do an average job of helping students learn to be tolerant	44	40	48
Do a poor job of helping students learn to be tolerant	18	20	15
Don't Know	13	13	12

TABLE 1-11

HOW WELL TEACHERS TEACH TOLERANCE: BY RACE AND LOCATION

Q.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?

	RACE				LOCATION		
	Total	White	African-American	Hispanic	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base	2476 %	1311 %	458 %	486 %	1367 %	646 %	463 %
Do a good job of helping students learn to be tolerant	26	25	28	29	27	26	24
Do an average job of helping students learn to be tolerant	44	45	41	40	42	41	50
Do a poor job of helping students learn to be tolerant	18	18	14	18	17	19	17
Don't Know	13	12	17	13	14	15	9

TABLE 1-12

HOW WELL TEACHERS TEACH TOLERANCE: BY QUALITY OF TEACHERS  
AND EDUCATION

Q.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?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>QUALITY OF TEACHER</u>		<u>QUALITY OF EDUCATION</u>		
		<u>Excellent/ Pretty Good</u>	<u>Fair/ Poor</u>	<u>A or B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D or Worse</u>
Base	2476	1744	685	1588	547	242
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Do a good job of helping students learn to be tolerant	26	30	13	31	16	16
Do an average job of helping students learn to be tolerant	44	45	42	46	42	34
Do a poor job of helping students learn to be tolerant	18	12	33	11	27	41
Don't Know	13	12	12	11	15	9

### Evaluating Schools on Their ESL Programs

Students also evaluated their school on the job it is doing to help immigrant students learn or improve their English. A slight majority of students (51%) believe their school is doing a good job in this area while a much smaller number (19%) believe their school is not, and an unusually large proportion (31%) say they are not sure. Apparently many students are unfamiliar with the ESL (English as a Second Language) programs their school provides. Among racial and ethnic groups, there are notable differences between Hispanic and African-American students: the former group is more likely to give their school positive ratings (55% vs. 46%).

There are two factors that account for a substantial variation in responses: academic performance and overall satisfaction with teachers. High or average academic performers are more likely to rate their school's ESL efforts positively than poor performers (a ten percentage point difference). The most dramatic differences can be seen between those who are satisfied vs. dissatisfied with their teachers: more than one in two satisfied students (56%) believe their school's ESL efforts are average or good, whereas only 38% of dissatisfied students believe these efforts are average or good.

TABLE 1-13

HELPING IMMIGRANT STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH: BY RACE AND LOCATION

Q.E1-3: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

My school does a good job of helping students who have recently moved to this country learn or improve their English

	RACE				LOCATION		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>African-American</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Suburban</u>	<u>Rural</u>
Base	2465 %	1309 %	459 %	478 %	1361 %	641 %	463 %
Agree	51	51	46	55	50	50	52
Disagree	19	17	24	19	20	16	20
Don't Know	31	31	30	26	30	34	28

TABLE 1-14

HELPING IMMIGRANT STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH: BY COURSE GRADES

Q.E1-3: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

My school does a good job of helping students who have recently moved to this country learn or improve their English

	COURSE GRADES			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>A/B Mostly</u>	<u>B/C Mostly</u>	<u>C or Worse</u>
Base	2465 %	1431 %	794 %	233 %
Agree	51	52	51	41
Disagree	19	16	19	33
Don't Know	31	32	30	25

TABLE 1-15

HELPING IMMIGRANT STUDENTS LEARN ENGLISH: BY QUALITY OF TEACHERS

Q.E1-3: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

My school does a good job of helping students who have recently moved to this country learn or improve their English

	QUALITY OF TEACHER		
	Total	Excellent/ Pretty Good	Fair/Poor
Base	2465	1738	680
	%	%	%
Agree	51	56	38
Disagree	19	14	31
Don't Know	31	30	31

**Whether or Not Teachers Mirror the Ethnic Makeup of the Students**

Finally, students were asked to report whether or not the teachers in their school mirror the social and ethnic makeup of the students. Students were equally divided, with 33% saying teachers do, 33% saying they don't and 34% saying they are not sure. White and Hispanic students give the same responses as students overall, but African-American students responded quite differently to this question. They were more likely to say teachers do not mirror the ethnic makeup of their students (39%) than to say teachers do (28%).

This relationship was further examined by comparing racial and ethnic groups across school location. For white and Hispanic students, teachers are more likely to mirror the social and cultural makeup of the students in suburban and rural areas than in urban ones. However, the opposite is true for African-American students, of whom only 19% see cultural similarities between the teachers and students in suburban and rural schools, a much smaller proportion than is found in urban schools (31%).

TABLE 1-16

SIMILARITY BETWEEN ETHNIC MAKEUP OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS: BY RACE

Q.E1-1: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

The teachers in my school mirror the social and ethnic makeup of the students in my school

	RACE			
	Total	White	African-American	Hispanic
Base	2473 %	1311 %	463 %	480 %
Agree	33	34	28	32
Disagree	33	32	39	32
Don't Know	34	34	33	35

TABLE 1-17

SIMILARITY BETWEEN ETHNIC MAKEUP OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS:  
BY RACE ACROSS LOCATION

Q.E1-1: Please mark whether you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

The teachers in my school mirror the social and ethnic makeup of the students in my school

	WHITE			AFRICAN-AMERICAN		HISPANIC	
	Total	Urban	Suburban/ Rural	Urban	Suburban/ Rural	Urban	Suburban/ Rural
Base	2473 %	518 %	793 %	382 %	81 %	329 %	151 %
Agree	33	30	36	31	19	29	36
Disagree	33	34	31	38	45	36	28
Don't Know	34	36	33	31	37	35	36

## **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

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. The national cross section sample yielded 1,588 completed questionnaires while the oversample of the largest school districts yielded 936 completed questionnaires. 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 %
<u>Grade:</u>		
7th	18	20
8th	17	15
9th	19	18
10th	16	17
11th	16	14
12th	13	16
<u>Region:</u>		
East	22	11
South	31	42
Midwest	25	20
West	22	27
<u>Location:</u>		
Urban	39	55
Suburban	35	26
Rural	26	19
<u>Gender:</u>		
Male	51	46
Female	49	54
<u>Race:</u>		
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
	%	%	%	%
<u>Grade:</u>				
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
<u>Region:</u>				
East	21	11	34	22
South	32	43	9	43
Midwest	25	26	27	18
West	22	19	29	17
<u>Location:</u>				
Urban	39	100	-	-
Suburban	35	-	100	-
Rural	26	-	-	100
<u>Gender:</u>				
Male	51	50	52	51
Female	49	49	47	49
<u>Race:</u>				
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 %
<u>Grade:</u>				
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
<u>Region:</u>				
East	11	7	17	14
South	42	50	21	47
Midwest	20	18	25	20
West	27	25	37	19
<u>Location:</u>				
Urban	55	100	-	-
Suburban	26	-	100	-
Rural	19	-	-	100
<u>Gender:</u>				
Male	46	46	46	45
Female	54	54	53	55
<u>Race:</u>				
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<sup>1</sup>. 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.

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<sup>1</sup>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**





**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**)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
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.

<b>IN ADVANCE, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP          WITH THIS VERY IMPORTANT STUDY</b>
--

**A. HOME AND SCHOOL LIFE**

A1. What grade of school are you in?

7th grade	7	<b>18</b>	
8th grade	8	<b>17</b>	
9th grade	9	<b>19</b>	
10th grade	10	<b>16</b>	
11th grade	11	<b>16</b>	
12th grade	12	<b>18</b>	(137-138)

A2. Are you...?

Male (a boy)	1	<b>51</b>	(139)
Female (a girl)	2	<b>49</b>	

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

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

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

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

My parents (or guardians) are married .....	1	<b>67</b>	(152)
My parents (or guardians) are separated or divorced .....	2	<b>24</b>	
My parents (or guardians) have never been married .....	3	<b>6</b>	
Other <b>(WRITE IN BELOW)</b>			
<u>Don't know</u> .....	4	<b>-</b>	
	5	<b>1</b>	

**Bold** = % Answering



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

Nearly always .....	1	<b>66</b>	(159)
Sometimes .....	2	<b>27</b>	
Hardly ever .....	3	<b>5</b>	
Never .....	4	<b>1</b>	
Don't know .....	5	<b>1</b>	

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

Have been suspended or expelled ....	1	<b>22</b>	(160)
Have not .....	2	<b>78</b>	

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

Take part in lunch program .....	1	<b>21</b>	(161)
Do not .....	2	<b>79</b>	

162-180Z
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## **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	(208)
B .....	2	
C .....	3	
D .....	4	
Fail .....	5	
Don't know .....	6	

**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)**

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Pretty Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
1. The quality of teachers in your school .....	1	2	3	4	5	(209)
2. Parental and community support for your school .....	1	2	3	4	5	(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)**

	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not Very Serious</u>	<u>Not At All Serious</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
1. Overcrowded classrooms .....	1	2	3	4	5	(211)
2. Students lacking basic skills ..	1	2	3	4	5	(212)
3. Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms or computer labs .....	1	2	3	4	5	(213)
4. Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around .....	1	2	3	4	5	(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)**

	<u>Getting Better</u>	<u>Getting Worse</u>	<u>Staying The Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
1. Overcrowded classrooms .....	1	2	3	4	(215)
2. Students lacking basic skills .....	1	2	3	4	(216)
3. Not enough equipment in places like science labs, gym rooms, or computer labs .....	1	2	3	4	(217)
4. Not enough textbooks or other educational materials to go around .....	1	2	3	4	(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	(219)
Does not .....	2	
Don't know .....	3	

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

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

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	(221)
An average job .....	2	
A poor job .....	3	
Don't know .....	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	(222)
An average job .....	2	
A poor job .....	3	
Don't know .....	4	

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	(223)
The right amount .....	2	
Not enough .....	3	
Don't know .....	4	

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	(224)
Just enough choices .....	2	
Not enough choices .....	3	
Don't know .....	4	

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)**

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Fail</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
1. Treating students with respect .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(225)
2. Helping students who are having problems with their studies .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(226)
3. Making learning interesting for everyone .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(227)
4. Caring about their students' futures .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(228)
5. Taking an interest in students' home and personal lives .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(229)
6. Understanding the subjects they teach .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(230)
7. Keeping control and discipline in their classrooms .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(231)
8. Encouraging students' academic interests .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(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            More            Don't  
Often True   Often False   Know

- |  |   |   |   |       |
|--|---|---|---|-------|
| 1. Teachers in my school often treat their students like numbers .....             | 1 | 2 | 3 | (233) |
| 2. Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed .....     | 1 | 2 | 3 | (234) |
| 3. Teachers in my school don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone ..... | 1 | 2 | 3 | (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 |  | (236) |
| Somewhat interested .....   | 2 |  |       |
| Not very interested .....   | 3 |  |       |
| Not at all interested ..... | 4 |  |       |
| Don't know .....            | 5 |  |       |

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 |  | (237) |
| No, have not .....                                     | 2 |  |       |
| Don't know .....                                       | 3 |  |       |

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 |  | (238) |
| No, have not .....                                    | 2 |  |       |
| Don't know .....                                      | 3 |  |       |

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)**

	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Fail</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
1. Being knowledgeable about the courses you need to graduate from high school .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(239)
2. Being knowledgeable about the courses you need for college .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(240)
3. Being knowledgeable about options aside from college, like vocational or technical training programs .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(241)
4. Being available when you need advice .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(242)
5. Taking an interest in students' futures .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(243)
6. Helping students who are having problems with their studies .....	1	2	3	4	5	6	(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)**

	<u>Very</u> <u>Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Serious</u>	<u>Not Very</u> <u>Serious</u>	<u>Not At All</u> <u>Serious</u>	<u>Don't</u> <u>Know</u>	
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)**

	<u>Very Confident</u>	<u>Somewhat Confident</u>	<u>Not very Confident</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
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)**

	<u>Very Confident</u>	<u>Somewhat Confident</u>	<u>Not very Confident</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
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
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#### 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 mostly 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   **33**   2   **33**   3   **34** (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   **25**   2   **61**   3   **14** (509)

3. My school does a good job of helping students who have recently moved to this country learn or improve their English . . . . . 1   **51**   2   **19**   3   **31** (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	<b>45</b>	(511)
Too much emphasis . . . . .	2	<b>11</b>	
Not enough emphasis . . . . .	3	<b>28</b>	
Don't know . . . . .	4	<b>17</b>	

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	<b>26</b>	(512)
Do an average job of helping students learn to be tolerant . . . .	2	<b>44</b>	
Do a poor job of helping students learn to be tolerant . . . . .	3	<b>18</b>	
Don't know . . . . .	4	<b>13</b>	

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	27	(513)
Somewhat interested .....	2	44	
Not very interested .....	3	24	
Don't know .....	4	5	

514-580Z

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

●*The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1984-1995, Old Problems, New Challenges* revisits concerns addressed in our first survey, in an attempt to find out whether the educational system has changed after years of intensive reform efforts. (Out of print)

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