



The MetLife Survey of

*THE*  
**AMERICAN  
TEACHER**

**Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships**

2004-2005

Since 1984, MetLife has conducted this series of surveys that bring the views and voices of those closest to the classroom to the attention of policymakers and the public. Conducted by Harris Interactive, survey topics have changed to address key issues over the years – from reform to violence – but the premise remains the same: to give voice to teachers and others most familiar with classroom realities and most affected by education reform. The following is a list of the surveys in the series to date.

- **The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2003, An Examination of School Leadership** explores the attitudes and opinions of teachers, principals, parents and students regarding school leadership; the role of the school leader in establishing the school's atmosphere; and relationships among members of the school community.
- **The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2002: Student Life: School, Home & Community** focuses on student life by asking students and teachers their opinions on what students worry about, whether they participate in activities outside the school day and what parents know about their children's lives.
- **The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2001: Key Elements of Quality Schools** explores how teachers, principals and students evaluate their own school on key measures of an effective school environment, such as: teacher quality, school building conditions, standards and expectations, and relationships between key groups.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 2000: Are We Preparing Students for the 21st Century?** examines teachers', students' and parents' views on where students are headed and how prepared they will be to reach their future goals.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1999: Violence In America's Public Schools: Five Years Later** revisits issues addressed in the 1993 study, and compares current findings with the state of affairs five years ago. This survey investigates the issue of school violence from the perspectives of students, teachers and law enforcement officers.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1998: Building Family-School Partnerships: Views of Teachers and Students** revisits issues addressed in the 1987 survey and compares and contrasts current teacher opinions on parental involvement in education with those of a decade ago. This report focuses primarily on the various ways parents can be actively involved with their children's education.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1997: Examining Gender Issues in Public Schools** examines the opinions of teachers and students on topics related to students' future goals and aspirations in the classroom. Gender differences and similarities are the primary focus of the report.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1996, Students Voice Their Opinions on:**
  - *Violence, Social Tension and Equality Among Teens—Part I*, is the first in a series of four 1996 releases of students' opinions that provide insight and understanding to the issues of violence and social tension in the nation's public schools (out of print).
  - *Their Education, Teachers and Schools—Part II*, provides students' views on their education and where improvements are most needed.
  - *Learning About Values and Principles in School—Part III*, gives the education community a general understanding of students' receptivity to learning about values and principles of right and wrong in the classroom (out of print).
  - *Learning About Multiculturalism—Part IV*, assesses students' opinions and interests about multicultural topics and provides an important and encouraging message to educators about the likely benefits if multiculturalism is given greater attention in the schools.
- **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).
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1994, Violence in America's Public Schools: The Family Perspective** examines the contrasting views of parents and students about what goes on in and around the school building.
- **The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1993, Violence in America's Public Schools** illustrates the concerns of teachers, students and law enforcement officers across the country, about the increasing violence and fears of violence in their schools.

(Continued on inside back cover)

# The MetLife Survey of *THE AMERICAN TEACHER*

## Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships

### A Survey of Teachers, Principals and Students

*Conducted for:*  
MetLife, Inc.

*Field Dates:*  
Principals: November 29, 2004 to December 17, 2004  
Teachers: December 7, 2004 to January 12, 2005  
Students: December 29, 2004 to January 11, 2005

*Project Directors*  
Dana Markow, Ph.D., Senior Research Director  
Suzanne Martin, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate



## **Message from MetLife**

The issues surrounding the experience of change are ripe for examination. Change is constant for people of all ages and walks of life. The degree to which people are supported at each transition can have a great impact on their success, whether in school, on the job, or in the next phase of their life. Successful organizations recognize the importance of providing the tools and resources necessary for new employees to make a smooth transition to their workplace. Any institution that does not value the people at its core, and work to help them in their new situation, is likely to find itself struggling to keep people.

Transitions are particularly relevant to those in our public schools, and an apt topic for the latest *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*. Thirty to 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. When demographics such as retirement of current teachers and increases in student enrollment are factored in, studies predict that 2.2 million teachers will need to be hired in the next decade. For young people, every day presents changes in every aspect of their lives. Since our schools are filled with people in transition, we asked them how they experience those transitions, what their biggest challenges are and what support helps them succeed.

While the issues raised in the survey might be disconcerting to some, we can all focus on the opportunity they present – to stimulate discussion and action. We look forward to education leaders drawing on the survey findings to determine new, improved ways to support our students and teachers and strengthen our public schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Benmosche". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and a prominent initial "R".

Robert H. Benmosche  
*Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer*  
*MetLife, Inc.*



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## Introduction

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*The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships* was conducted by Harris Interactive Inc<sup>®</sup>. This report is the twenty-second in the series of surveys sponsored annually by MetLife since 1984. This year's report examines the essential aspects in student and educator transitions including the supporting relationships. The current study incorporates the perspectives of key stakeholders in exploring this issue: new public school teachers in grades K-12, public school principals in grades K-12, and secondary public school students in grades 7-12. Topics in this survey include: the role of principals in staffing and managing schools, the general attitudes, expectations and challenges associated with education, the profiles of teachers likely to leave their profession, and the various relationships surrounding the transition for new teachers, principals and students.

### Survey Method

#### *Principals*

A nationally representative sample of 841 public school principals of grades K–12 were interviewed on the telephone. Telephone interviews of principals averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted between November 29, 2004 and December 17, 2004. Telephone interviews were conducted by a data collection facility from Harris Interactive's network of approved suppliers.

#### *New Teachers*

A nationally representative sample of 800 public school teachers of grades K–12, who were teaching for no more than five years, were interviewed on the telephone. Telephone interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted between December 7, 2004 and January 12, 2005. Telephone interviews were conducted by a data collection facility from Harris Interactive's network of approved suppliers.

#### *Students*

A nationally representative sample of 1073 public school students in grades 7–12 were interviewed online. Student online interviews were conducted between December 29, 2004 and January 11, 2005, using a self-administered questionnaire via Harris' proprietary, web-assisted interviewing software.

Detailed methodologies of the principal, new teacher and student survey appear in Appendix A. Both survey questionnaires, including the total responses to each question, appear in Appendix B.

### A Note on Reading the Exhibits and Figures

An asterisk (\*) on an exhibit signals a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (–) represents a value of zero. Percentages depicted may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding, the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents, or because some answer categories may be excluded from the figure. Calculations of responses discussed in the text are based on raw numbers and not percentages, therefore these figures may differ slightly from calculations based on percentages. Subgroups presented are non-overlapping (e.g., elementary vs. secondary school). In those instances where a respondent qualified for inclusion in both groups (e.g., teacher of elementary and secondary grades), the respondent was excluded from the subgroup analysis. Therefore, subgroup base sizes may not always add up to the total. The base for each question is the total number of respondents answering that question. Note that in some cases results may be based on small sample sizes. This is typically true when questions were asked of subgroups. Caution should be used in drawing any conclusions from the results based on these small samples.

### *Project Responsibility and Acknowledgments*

The Harris team responsible for the design and analysis of the survey included Dana Markow, Ph.D., Senior Research Director, Suzanne Martin, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate and Osa Hirsch, Research Manager. Harris Interactive Inc. is responsible for final determination of the topics, question wording, collection of data, analysis and interpretation in the report.

### *Public Release of Survey Findings*

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

## **The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships**

### **Executive Summary**

Transitions mark passages from one stage of development to the next. Although it is common to think of students as passing through developmental progressions, people experience transitions throughout their personal and professional lives. Important transitions for students include starting a new school – whether entering kindergarten or moving on to secondary school. But students are not the only ones in the school building experiencing transitions. Beginnings mark important transitions for teachers and principals as well. First-time teachers and principals undergo a progression from novices to experienced educators. For both students and the important adults in their lives, transitional periods can often be a time of flux or stress. These periods of stress bring to the forefront what is working in the educational system and also where there are areas of weakness.

This year's *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* examines critical transition periods in educators' and students' school careers and the role of supportive relationships in making these transitions successful. Two transition periods in particular were addressed: becoming a new classroom teacher and students' entry to secondary school. New teachers (those with no more than five years of experience) and students in grades 7 – 12 were surveyed. In addition, principals were surveyed to examine their experiences in assuming principalship and to gain their perspectives on school relationships overall. During these transition periods, relationships with other members of the school community emerged as important sources of support. New teachers and students who have supportive school relationships are also more likely to have other positive school outcomes.

Principals and new teachers place a high value on personal connections. This applies to their students' education and to their own professional development. Nearly nine in ten principals and new teachers strongly agree that they can make a difference in their students' lives. This attests to educators' belief in the power of their individual connections to students. Educators also believe in the importance of connecting with and engaging parents in the education process. Eight in ten new teachers strongly agree that effective teachers need to be able to work well with students' parents. The strength of these beliefs is not uniform across all groups of educators. One factor that distinguishes the views of both teachers and principals is the age of their students. Principals and new teachers who work with secondary school students are less likely than elementary school principals and new teachers to strongly agree that they can make a difference in their students' lives. They are also less likely to strongly agree that effective teachers need to be able to work well with students' parents. Yet even at the secondary school level, the majority of principals and new teachers believe in the importance of these connections.

Principals and new teachers benefit from personal connections within their own development as well. For new teachers, their fellow teachers and principal can be sources of support when transitioning to their first teaching position. According to new teachers, room for improvement exists in the quality of this support. Slightly more than half of new teachers strongly agree that there is cooperation between older, more experienced teachers and new teachers at their school. Fewer than six in ten new teachers strongly agree that their school principal creates an environment which helps them be an effective teacher. Two in ten new teachers were not assigned a more experienced teacher as a mentor when they began teaching.

New teachers' satisfaction with and the quality of their professional connections is related to whether they plan to remain in the profession. New teachers who are likely to leave teaching in the next five years are less satisfied with their relationships with other teachers, their principal and with their students. They are also less likely to report that their principal creates a supportive environment and more likely to feel as if

their job is not valued by their supervisor. These findings indicate that those interested in retaining qualified teachers in the profession would benefit by paying attention to the support systems available to new teachers.

Principals and new teachers emphasize the importance of parents in the education of their children in supporting and partnering with the teachers' efforts. Communicating with and engaging parents is the most frequently cited challenge among new teachers and the area they feel least prepared to take on in their first teaching position. One-quarter of secondary school students reports that their parents are not very or at all involved in their education. Students with involved parents are more likely than others to have satisfying relationships with their parents and to be able to go to their parents for advice about what classes to take at school. They are also more likely to report being interested in their classes, to value higher education and to feel safe at school. Parental involvement is also associated with students having better relationships with their teachers. Students with involved parents are more likely to say that their teachers care about them and that they have satisfying relationships with their teachers and principal. These results in particular reveal the interconnectedness between students and the quality of a range of their school-related relationships.

Of course a key school relationship for students is their relationship with their teachers. Nearly all secondary school students have had at least one teacher who they describe as having made a difference in their lives. Those students who have had at least three such connections with teachers report a variety of positive school experiences. Students who have had at least three teachers who have made a difference in their lives are more likely than others to be interested in their classes, to feel safe at school, to value higher education and to say that their opinion counts at school. These areas related to personal connections with teachers also overlap with the areas previously mentioned as associated with students with involved parents.

Students, teachers and principals face a variety of transitions throughout their school careers. 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 come 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 and principals form personal connections with each other during these points of transition, these relationships can be their areas of greatest satisfaction and support their success in school.

## Major Findings

### *I. Teachers' Transition to the Classroom*

**Principals and new teachers emphasize the importance of mentoring and learning from more experienced teachers. Not all teachers have this benefit and many lack the most basic guidance and support.**

- Four in ten principals (44%) and new teachers (38%) say that being assigned a skilled, experienced teacher as a mentor would be most helpful training for first-time teachers. For both groups, year-long internships or other practical training come in a close second in being most helpful for preparing teachers (34% of new teachers, 43% of principals).
- Two in ten new teachers (19%) were not assigned a more experienced teacher as a mentor when they began teaching.
- Two in ten new teachers (18%) were not given a tour of their new school when they first began teaching.
- About one in ten new teachers had no one to go to for advice and guidance about teaching the curriculum (12%), classroom management (9%), or administrative responsibilities (9%).
- 54% of new teachers strongly agree that at their school there is cooperation between older, more experienced teachers and new teachers; 57% of new teachers describe their relationship with other teachers at their school as very satisfying.
- 58% of new teachers strongly agree that their school principal creates an environment which helps them be an effective teacher; 53% of new teachers describe their relationship with the school principal as very satisfying.

**New teachers consider engaging and working with parents as their greatest challenge and the area they were least prepared to manage during their first year.**

- New teachers are most likely to report the biggest challenge that they face as a teacher is communicating with and involving parents. Three in ten (31%) believe that this is the greatest challenge, compared to two in ten (22%) who say that it is getting sufficient resources and two in ten (20%) who say that maintaining order and discipline in the classroom is the greatest challenge.
- New teachers are least satisfied with their relationship with their students' parents. Only one-quarter (25%) of new teachers describes the relationship as very satisfying and 20% describe it as very or somewhat unsatisfying.
- During their first year of teaching, new teachers felt least prepared to engage families in supporting their children's education. One-quarter (24%) felt they were not prepared for this responsibility.

**Two in ten (18%) new teachers are very or fairly likely to leave the profession. New teachers who are likely to leave the profession in the next five years are less satisfied than others with their school relationships.**

- Compared to those who plan to continue teaching, fewer teachers who are likely to leave the profession are very satisfied with their relationships with students (48% vs. 72%), other teachers (38% vs. 61%), and their principal (34% vs. 57%).
- Teachers who are likely to leave the profession are less likely to strongly agree that their principal creates an environment which helps them be an effective teacher (40% vs. 63%).
- Teachers who are likely to leave the profession are less likely to strongly agree that there is cooperation among more experienced teachers and new teachers (40% vs. 57%).

## *II. The Transition to Secondary School*

**The transition to junior and senior high can be challenging for students and many do not receive support to help with this change.**

- 31% of secondary school students did not receive information or guidance about what classes to take when they first started attending their current school.
- 20% of secondary school students received no instruction about where things were located.
- Secondary school students are less likely to feel safe at their current school than their previous school (29% strongly agree vs. 43% strongly agree).
- Secondary school students are less likely to say that their teachers care about them at their current school than their previous school (28% strongly agree vs. 37% strongly agree).

**Three-quarters (75%) of secondary school students describe their parents as very or somewhat involved in their education. This level has declined slightly since 1998 in *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Building Family-School Partnerships* when 83% of students reported that their parents were involved. Today, one-quarter of students (24%) say that their school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles.**

Students whose parents are involved are more likely to have other positive associations with school. They are more likely:

- To have very satisfying relationships with their parents (47% vs. 14%)
- To have very satisfying relationships with their teachers (22% vs. 13%)
- To strongly agree that their parents know their teachers (24% vs. 9%)
- To strongly agree that they are interested in their classes (32% vs. 24%)

**Nearly all secondary school students (95%) have had a teacher who has made a positive difference in their lives. These teachers have helped students do better in school, introduced them to new ideas and helped them to pursue their interests. Students who have had many of these quality connections with teachers have many other positive associations with school.**

Students who have had at least three teachers who have made a difference are more likely than other students:

- To be interested in their classes (36% strongly agree vs. 18% strongly agree)
- To feel safe at school (33% strongly agree vs. 23% strongly agree)
- To say that their teachers care about them (34% strongly agree vs. 16% strongly agree)
- To say that higher education is extremely important for their future (89% vs. 74%)
- To say that their opinion counts at school (20% strongly agree vs. 11% strongly agree)



## **Part I: New Teachers**

### **Chapter 1: First Impressions**

#### *Overview*

The first years in the classroom are an exciting and important time for teachers. They now have the opportunity to put their training into action and exercise their skills. They are in the classroom and working to make a difference in students' lives. But this time of opportunity can also present challenges for which they may feel less prepared, such as managing a classroom, obtaining needed resources and working with their students' parents. As new teachers make the transition from the theoretical to the actual classroom, most receive mentoring and guidance from the school principal and from more experienced teachers. But two in ten teachers do not receive even the most basic orientation to their first school. These experiences, as well as their other first impressions of teaching, inform new teachers' views on the type of support that new teachers need to be successful.

#### *Biggest Challenges for New Teachers*

A first step in addressing the needs of new teachers is to understand the challenges they face. What do new teachers (those with five years or fewer of experience) view as their biggest challenge? New teachers are most likely to say that their biggest challenge is communicating with and involving parents. For new teachers, parental involvement is a greater challenge than acquiring sufficient resources or maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. New teachers are twice as likely to say that their biggest challenge is working with parents as to say it is preparing students for testing (31% vs. 14%). Although the experiences of elementary and secondary school teachers are oftentimes quite distinctive, particularly when it comes to parental involvement, elementary and secondary school teachers both view communicating with and involving parents as their greatest challenge.

#### *MORE TO COME....*

Parental involvement and the parent-teacher relationship are addressed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The challenge of parental involvement is particularly acute for those new teachers in schools with a majority of students from low-income families. They are more likely than teachers in schools with fewer low-income students to report that their biggest challenge is working with parents (40% vs. 24%). The challenges faced by teachers in schools with high percentages of low-income students deserve particular attention because schools with the highest percentages of low-income students are more likely to have beginning teachers than schools with few low-income students.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (1999-2000)

**Table 1.1**  
**The Biggest Challenges Faced by Teachers**

*Q410:* Which of the following is the biggest challenge that you face as a teacher?

*Base:* All Teachers (*n*=800)

	<u><b>Type of School</b></u>			<u><b>Low-Income Students</b></u>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Schools with Less Than 50% Low-Income Students</b>	<b>Schools with 50% or More Low-Income Students</b>
Base:	800	501	270	362	422
	%	%	%	%	%
Communicating with and involving parents	31	31	30	24	40
Getting sufficient resources and materials	22	21	24	25	19
Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom	20	17	23	20	20
Preparing students for testing	14	16	13	17	11
Getting needed guidance and support	9	11	7	10	8
No answer	3	4	3	5	2

Principals can be an important source of support and guidance for new teachers. Do they hold the same views as teachers on what are the areas of teachers' greatest needs? Principals, like new teachers, are most likely to say that communicating with and working with parents is the biggest challenge that teachers face. One-third of principals (34%) and three in ten new teachers (31%) identify working with parents as the greatest challenge teachers face. However, in other areas new teachers' and principals' views diverge. New teachers are twice as likely as principals to view maintaining order and discipline in the classroom as teachers' greatest challenge (20% vs. 9%). Conversely, principals are nearly twice as likely as new teachers to perceive preparing students for testing as the teachers' greatest challenge (26% vs. 14%). To the extent that principals recognize the challenges faced by the teachers in their school, they can begin to help address teachers' needs. The survey shows that principals and new teachers both view communicating with and involving parents and getting sufficient resources and materials as the areas where teachers need the greatest support, but principals may underestimate new teachers' struggles with classroom management.

**Table 1.2**  
**The Biggest Challenges Faced by Teachers from Teachers and Principals**

*Q410 Teachers: Which of the following is the biggest challenge that you face as a teacher?*

*Q410 Principals: Which of the following is the biggest challenge that teachers in your school face?*

*Base: All Teachers (n=800) All Principals (n=841)*

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Principals</b>
Base:	800	841
	%	%
Communicating with and involving parents	31	34
Getting sufficient resources and materials	22	22
Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom	20	9
Preparing students for testing	14	26
Getting needed guidance and support	9	6
No answer	3	3

### *New Teachers' Expectations about Effective Teaching*

Of course, the world of the new teacher contains more than just challenges and obstacles. New teachers' first impressions of their students' and their own potential are quite positive. Nine in ten (89%) new teachers strongly agree that all children can learn, and nearly as many (85%) strongly agree that they can really make a difference in the lives of their students. *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, 2001*, demonstrated that this optimism is more common among new teachers than those with more experience. In 2001, 86% of new teachers strongly agreed that all children can learn, compared to 79% of teachers with more years of experience who held this view.

An important factor in new teachers' attitudes about their own and their students' abilities is the grade level of their school. Elementary school teachers are more likely than those in secondary school to believe that all children can learn and that they can really make a difference in the lives of their students.

**Table 1.3**  
**Teacher Expectations**

*Q401:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

*Base:* All Teachers ( $n=800$ )

#### % Strongly Agree

	Total	New Teachers	
		Elementary	Secondary
Base:	800	501	270
	%	%	%
All children can learn	89	92	84
I can really make a difference in the lives of my students	85	91	80
If I do my job well, my students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions	51	51	50

***DID YOU KNOW THAT...?***

The change in optimism among teachers as they gain more teaching experience has been documented in previous *MetLife Surveys of the American Teacher*. Over a decade ago, this series first examined new teachers' expectations. In 1990, 1991 and 1992 *The MetLife Surveys of the American Teacher* followed a cohort of new teachers, from the time right before they began teaching until just after they finished their second year of teaching. This series of surveys demonstrated how the same group of teachers' attitudes changed and developed over time. Recent graduates about to embark on their teaching careers were consistently optimistic about their ability to make a difference and children's abilities. Before facing a classroom for the first time, 93% of new teachers strongly agreed that all children can learn and 83% strongly agreed that they can really make a difference in the lives of their students. One year later, these teachers were significantly less optimistic, particularly about their own abilities. While 83% had strongly believed that they can really make a difference in the lives of their students before they had a classroom, after one year of teaching only 68% held this view. This level held after their second year of teaching as well. New teachers after one or two years of experience were also less likely than those without teaching experience to believe that all children can learn (88% vs. 86% vs. 93%).

**Table 1.4**  
**The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 1990-1992**  
**Teachers' Expectations over Time**

*Base: All teachers whose first year teaching was between 1990 and 1991*

% Strongly Agree

	<b>No Teaching <u>Experience</u> 1990</b>	<b>One Year Teaching <u>Experience</u> 1991</b>	<b>Two Years Teaching <u>Experience</u> 1992</b>
Base:	1,002	1,007	1,000
	%	%	%
All children can learn	93	88	86
I can really make a difference in the lives of my students	83	68	71

Although new teachers believe that they can really make a difference in the lives of their students, they are less likely to believe that this ability is independent of what is going on in the school as a whole. Only half of new teachers (51%) in this year's survey strongly agree that if they do their job well their students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions. Today's new teachers do appear to be more confident of their ability to help students independent of the school's support than did new teachers in the past. In the 1992 *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, The Second Year: New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals*, 43% of second year teachers strongly agreed that if they do their job well their students will benefit regardless of the functioning of the school as a whole, compared to 51% of new teachers who hold that belief today.

### *The World of a New Teacher*

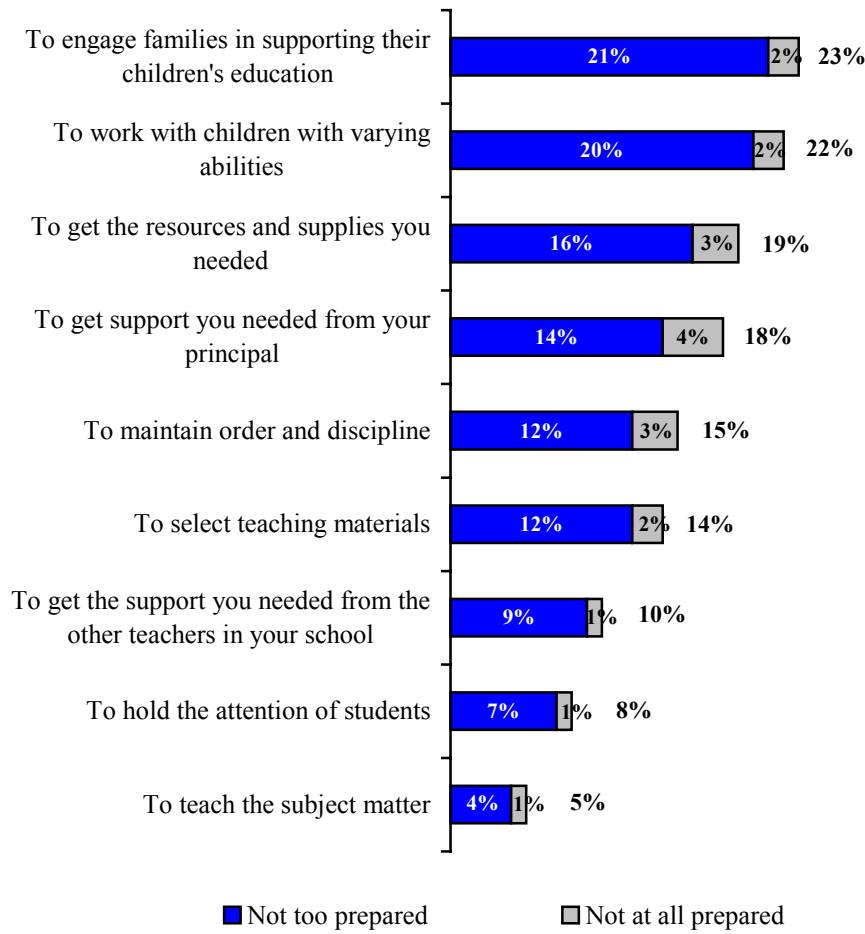
New teachers show that they have high expectations for their students and themselves and that their greatest challenge extends beyond the school walls to engaging parents in their children's education. Determining how to work effectively with parents emerges as one of the initial struggles of teachers. In their first teaching position, one-quarter of new teachers (23%) felt that they were not prepared to engage families in supporting their children's education. Secondary school teachers are more likely than elementary school teachers to have felt not prepared to engage families (28% vs. 20%). Many teachers felt ill-equipped during their first year to deal with other important aspects of their job as well, including working with children with varying abilities (23%), getting the support they needed from their principal (18%) and getting the resources and supplies they needed (18%). Fewer teachers felt not very or at all prepared in the following areas:

- To maintain order and discipline (15%)
- To select teaching materials (14%)
- To get the support you needed from the other teachers in your school (10%)
- To hold the attention of students (8%)
- To teach the subject matter (5%)

**Table 1.5**  
**Activities New Teachers Feel Unprepared to Handle**

*Q671:* How prepared were you for the following aspects of your first teaching position? Were you extremely prepared, very prepared, not too prepared or not at all prepared to . . . ?

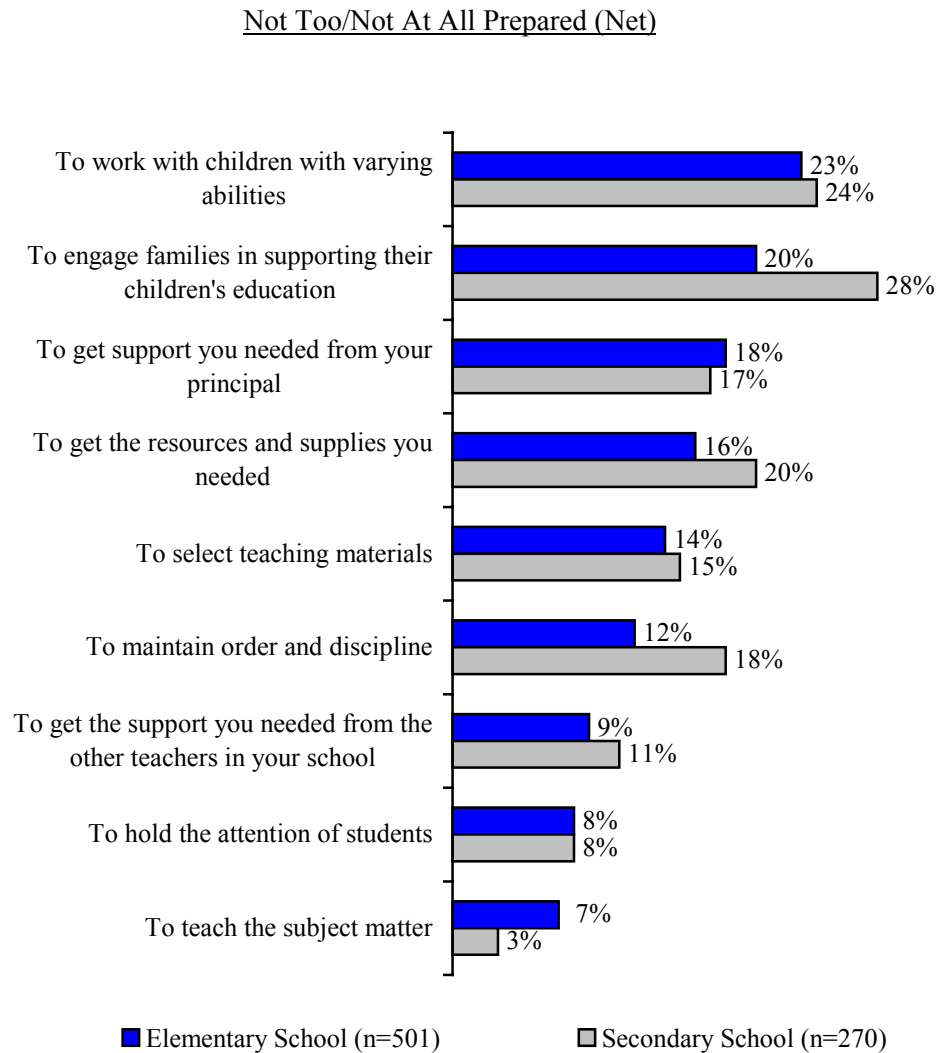
*Base: All teachers (n=800)*



**Table 1.6**  
**Activities New Teachers Feel Unprepared to Handle: Elementary and Secondary Schools**

*Q671:* How prepared were you for the following aspects of your first teaching position? Were you extremely prepared, very prepared, not too prepared or not at all prepared to . . . ?

*Base: All teachers (n=800)*



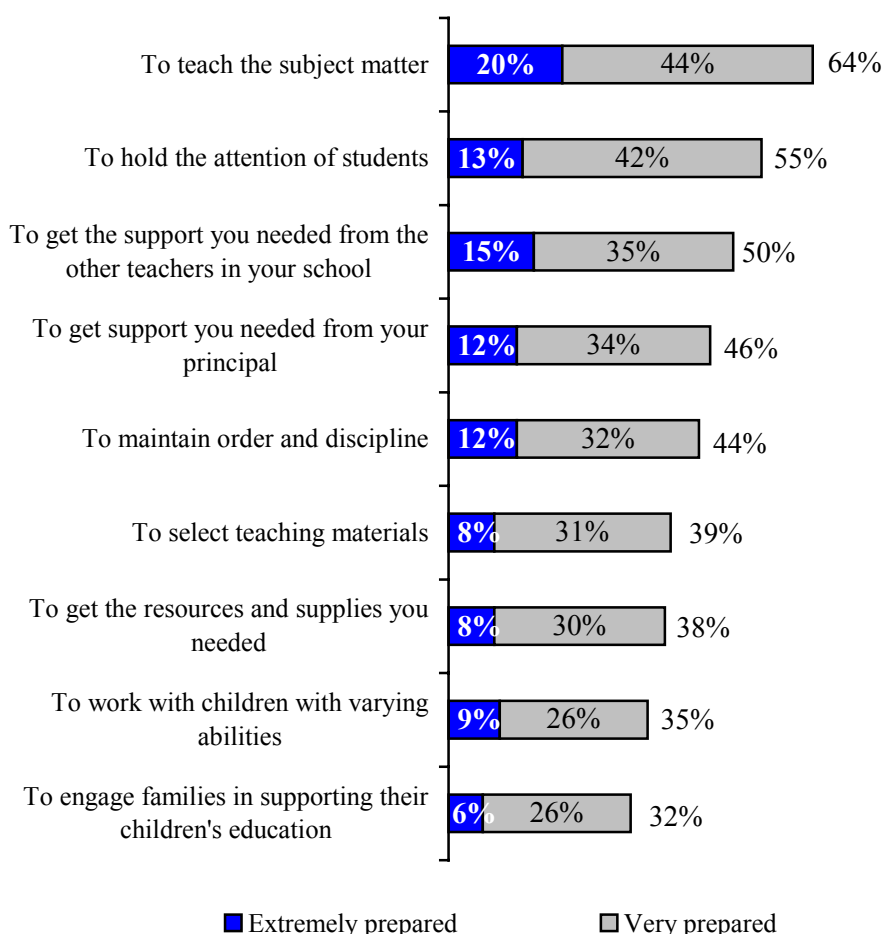


New teachers felt most prepared to teach the subject matter. More than six in ten (64%) felt extremely or very prepared to teach the subject matter during their first year. Only half as many felt as prepared to engage families in supporting their children's education (32%).

**Table 1.7**  
**Activities New Teachers Feel Prepared to Handle in their First Teaching Position**

*Q671:* How prepared were you for the following aspects of your first teaching position? Were you extremely prepared, very prepared, not too prepared or not at all prepared to . . . ?

*Base: All teachers (n=800)*



A majority of new teachers report that they did not feel extremely or very prepared to get the support they needed from the other teachers in their school or to get the resources and supplies they needed. Given these findings, what actions do schools take to welcome new teachers and help them with their transition into the school? Although the majority of teachers (82%) report that someone in their school provided them with an orientation, this was by no means a universal experience. About one in five new teachers (18%) were not given a tour of their new schools. These teachers were not shown the location of such important places as the library, cafeteria, supply room, etc. This lack of an orientation was just as common among secondary school teachers (16%) as elementary school teachers (19%).

**Table 1.8**  
**Frequency of New Teacher School Facility Orientation**

*Q605:* During your first year of teaching, did someone give you a tour of the school to show you where things are located, such as the teacher's lounge, bathroom, library, cafeteria, supplies, etc.?

*Base:* All Teachers (*n*=800)

	<b>Total</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>		<b><u>Location</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Urban/Inner City</b>	<b>Suburban/Rural Schools</b>
Base:	800	501	270	192	594
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	82	80	84	76	85
No	18	19	16	24	14
No answer	*	1	-	-	1

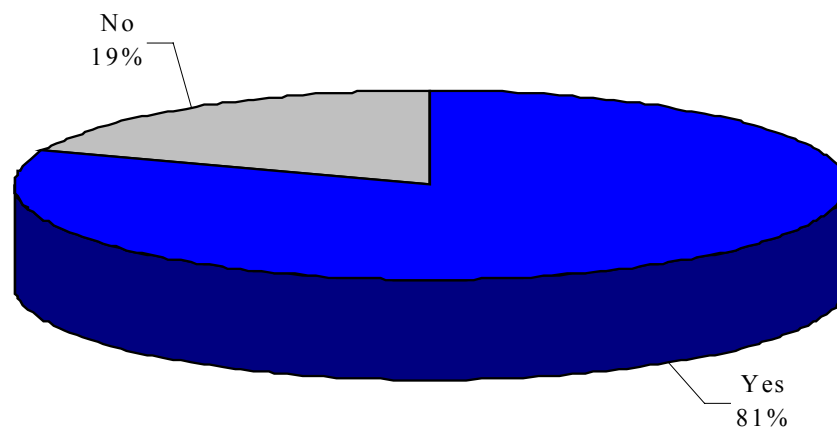
A similar proportion of new teachers, 19%, were not assigned to or matched with a mentor who was a more experienced teacher during their first year of teaching. As with orientation, the lack of a mentor was just as common among secondary school teachers (21%) as elementary school teachers (18%). For the most part, the 80% of new teachers who were matched with a mentor rated this mentor as either extremely (43%) or very (19%) helpful. However, 16% of all new teachers found this mentor to be not too or not at all helpful. Taken in combination with those new teachers who were not assigned a mentor at all, this means that one-third of new teachers (32%) either had no mentor or had one who was not helpful.

**Table 1.9**  
**Percentage of Teachers Assigned an Experienced Mentor**

*Q650:* During your first year of teaching, were you assigned or matched with a mentor who was a more experienced teacher?

*Base:* All teachers ( $n=800$ )

Assigned a Mentor with More Experience



**Table 1.10**  
**Helpfulness of Assigned Teacher Mentor**

*Q660:* How helpful was this mentor – extremely helpful, very helpful, helpful, not too helpful or not at all helpful?

*Base:* Teachers who had a mentor (n=627)

	<b>Total</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>		<b><u>Location</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Urban/Inner City</b>	<b>Suburban/Rural Schools</b>
Base:	627	403	205	151	469
	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely/Very helpful (Net)	63	66	60	59	65
Extremely helpful	43	49	37	44	43
Very helpful	19	17	23	14	22
Helpful	21	20	23	23	21
Not too/Not at all helpful (Net)	16	14	17	18	14
Not too helpful	11	8	13	12	10
Not at all helpful	5	6	4	6	4

Regardless of whether new teachers were matched with or assigned a mentor during their first year of teaching, did these teachers have anyone they could go to for advice about their daily teaching needs? A substantial minority of new teachers report that they had no one to go to for advice and guidance about basic aspects of teaching, including:

- Teaching the curriculum (12%);
- Classroom management (9%); and
- Administrative responsibilities (9%).

Secondary school teachers are more likely than elementary school teachers to have lacked an advisor on teaching the curriculum (16% vs. 8%).

**Table 1.11**  
**Availability for First Year Teacher Guidance and Advice**  
**By Elementary and Secondary Schools Teachers**

*Q621:* During your first year of teaching, did you have at least one person in your school you could go to for advice and guidance about the following?

*Base:* All teachers (n=800)

	<u><b>Total</b></u>		<u><b>Elementary School Teachers</b></u>		<u><b>Secondary School Teachers</b></u>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Base:	800		501		270	
	%		%		%	
Teaching the curriculum	88	12	91	8	84	16
Classroom management	91	9	92	8	90	10
Administrative responsibilities such as record keeping, teaching plans, report cards, attendance reports, etc.	91	9	91	9	92	8

New teachers are nearly equally divided as to whether having a skilled, experienced teacher assigned to them for advice and guidance (38%) or more practical training before having their own classroom (34%) would have been most helpful in preparing them to be more effective teachers during their first year of teaching. Two in ten (22%) believe that better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds would be the most helpful. When this question was asked of first-year teachers only in 1991, their top response was also having a teacher-mentor (46%), with more practical training a more solid (33%) second choice.

### *Managing and Supporting New Teacher Development*

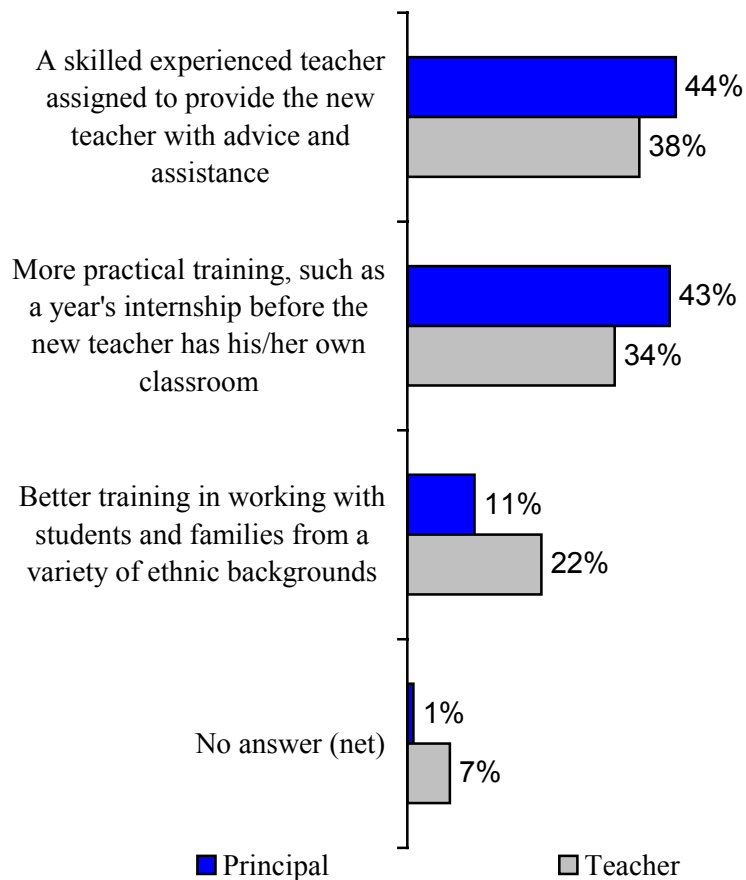
Support and guidance is a theme that principals also stress in new teacher training. Nearly all principals report that first-time teachers (96%) are assigned or matched to a more experienced teacher as a mentor. As with new teachers, principals are split as to whether having a skilled, experienced teacher assigned to them for advice and guidance (44%) or more practical training before having their own classroom (43%) would be most helpful in preparing first-time teachers to be more effective. Fewer principals than new teachers believe that better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds would be the most helpful (11% vs. 22%).

**Table 1.12**  
**Preparation to be a More Effective Teacher**

*Principals Q645:* Which one of the following would be most helpful in preparing first-time teachers to be more effective teachers? Would it be . . . ?

*Teachers Q675:* Thinking of your first year as a teacher, which one of the following would have been most helpful in preparing you to be a more effective teacher? Was it . . . ?

*Base:* All principals (n=841); All teachers (n=800)

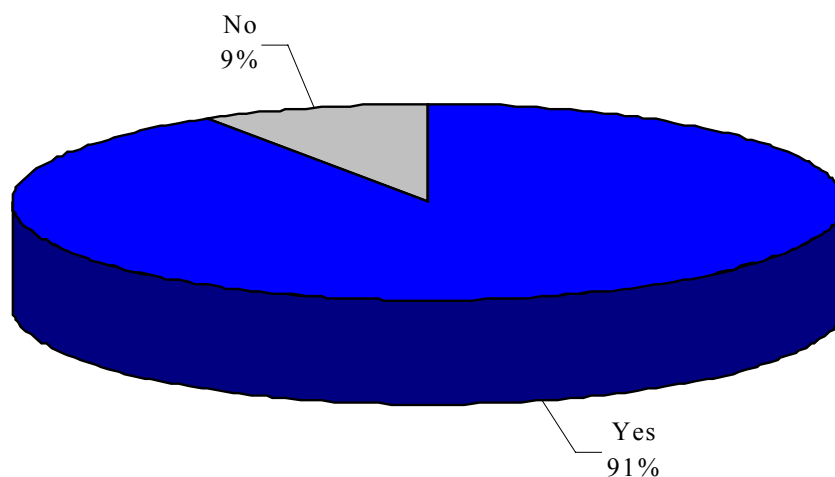


For most principals, these views on teachers' needs are based on direct experience. Nine in ten principals (91%) have hired first-time teachers in the past five years. On average, 39% of their hires have been first-time teachers. Principals tend to give their personal attention to hiring new teachers, although they often are not the final decision makers. Nine in ten (89%) principals always have an in-person meeting with a teaching candidate before he or she is hired. Most often (65% of the time) principals are not the final decision makers on hiring teachers in their own schools. The majority of principals (60%) makes recommendations to the district but is not involved in the final hiring decision. Elementary and secondary school principals report similar levels of involvement.

**Table 1.13**  
**Rate of Principals Hiring First-Time Teachers**

*Q620:* During the past five years, about what percentage of the classroom teachers whom you have hired were first-time teachers?

*Base:* All principals ( $n=841$ )



**Table 1.14**  
**Frequency of Principals' Meeting with Teaching Candidates**

*Q610:* How often do you have an in-person meeting with a teaching candidate before he or she is hired to teach at your school?

*Base:* All principals (n=841)

	<b>Principal</b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	
		<b>Urban/Inner City</b>	<b>Suburban/Rural Schools</b>
Base:	841	100	741
	%	%	%
Always/Most of the time (Net)	97	99	96
Always	89	84	90
Most of the time	8	15	5
Some of the time	1	-	1
Rarely/Never (Net)	2	1	2
Rarely	1	1	1
Never	1	-	1

**Table 1.15**  
**Degree of Principal Involvement in Teacher Hiring Decisions**

*Q615:* What is your involvement in hiring decisions regarding teachers in your school? Do you . . .?

*Base:* All principals (n=841)

	<b>Principal</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>
Base:	841	431	320
	%	%	%
Make the final hiring decision	35	38	34
Make a recommendation to the district, but not the final decision	60	58	60
Other	5	4	6

Principals take an active role in observing their new teachers. Eight in ten observe first-year teachers a few times a month or more. About one third of principals (34%) observe a few times a week or more and



almost half (46%) observe a first-year teacher in their classroom a few times a month. However, two in ten principals (20%) observe first-year teachers only a few times a semester or less.

**Table 1.16**  
**Frequency of Principals Observation of New Teachers**

*Q625: During a teacher's first year, how often do you usually observe the teacher in the classroom?*

*Base: Have hired first-time teachers (n=740)*

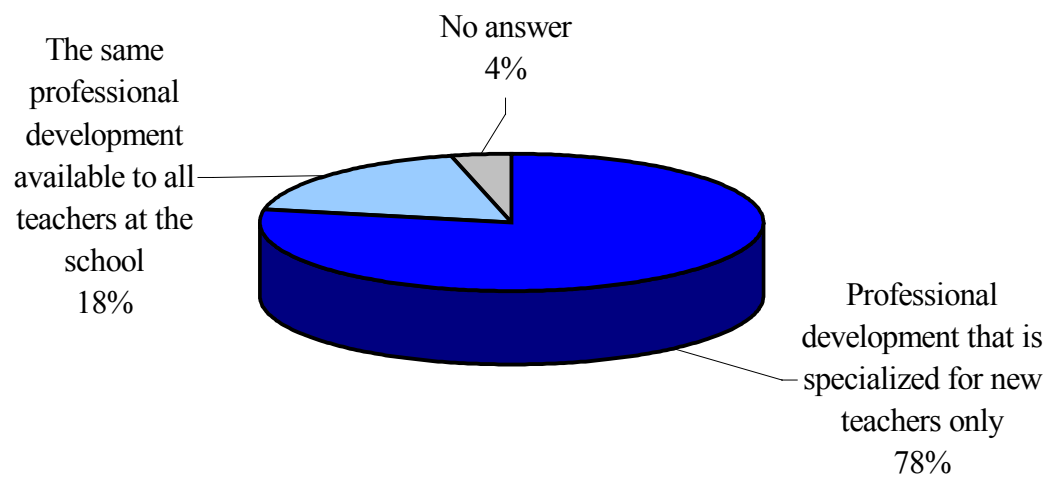
	<b>Principal</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>		<b><u>Location</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Urban/Inner City Schools</b>	<b>Suburban/Rural Schools</b>
Base:	740	385	286	94	646
	%	%	%	%	%
A few times a week or more often	34	35	28	33	34
A few times a month	46	45	51	41	48
A few times a semester	14	13	14	17	13
A few times a year	6	7	6	9	5

Principals recognize the need for specialized new teacher training but generally feel that creating this is not their responsibility. A majority of principals (78%) feel that first-time teachers need professional development that is specialized for new teachers only; however, only 29% of them think that they should be chiefly responsible for providing or coordinating specialized professional development for first-teachers. Instead, 58% of principals believe that this responsibility should be taken on by the district/central administrators or some other school-level personnel (8%) or just someone else (5%).

**Table 1.17**  
**Principals Preferred Type of Professional Development Opportunities for First-Time Teachers**

*Q635: What type of professional development opportunities do you think first-time teachers need?*

*Base: All principals (n=841)*



**Table 1.18**  
**People Principals Would Assign Responsibility for**  
**First-Time Teachers' Specialized Professional Development**

*Q640:* Whom do you think should be mainly responsible for providing or coordinating specialized professional development for first-time teachers?

*Base:* Principals who say new teachers need specialized professional development (n=631)

	<b>Principal</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>		<b><u>Low-Income Students</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>Teachers at Schools with Less Than 50% Low-Income Students</b>	<b>Teachers at Schools with 50% or More Low-Income Students</b>
Base:	631 %	319 %	252 %	367 %	264 %
District/central administrators	58	61	54	61	52
School principal	29	25	33	25	36
Other school-level personnel	8	8	7	9	5
Someone else	5	5	5	3	7
No answer	1	1	1	1	*

### *Conclusions*

Principals and new teachers share a common perspective on new teachers' greatest challenges and on the types of support that new teachers need. These educators both focus on the challenge of communicating with and engaging parents. They also emphasize the importance of new teachers receiving mentoring and practical experience. Teachers enter their profession with positive, optimistic attitudes of their students' and their own potential, but feel less prepared as new teachers to face the challenges associated with a classroom of students with differing abilities and of engaging their parents.

## Chapter 2: New Teachers' Support and Guidance from School Relationships

### Overview

As teachers begin their careers in the classroom, many of the challenges they face focus on relationships. New teachers highly value and desire guidance from more experienced teachers and their principal. New teachers struggle with establishing connections with parents to help further their students' education. Relationships are also their source of greatest satisfaction in teaching, specifically, new teachers' relationships with their students. The quality of all these relationships relates to the successfulness of a new teacher's transition into the classroom.

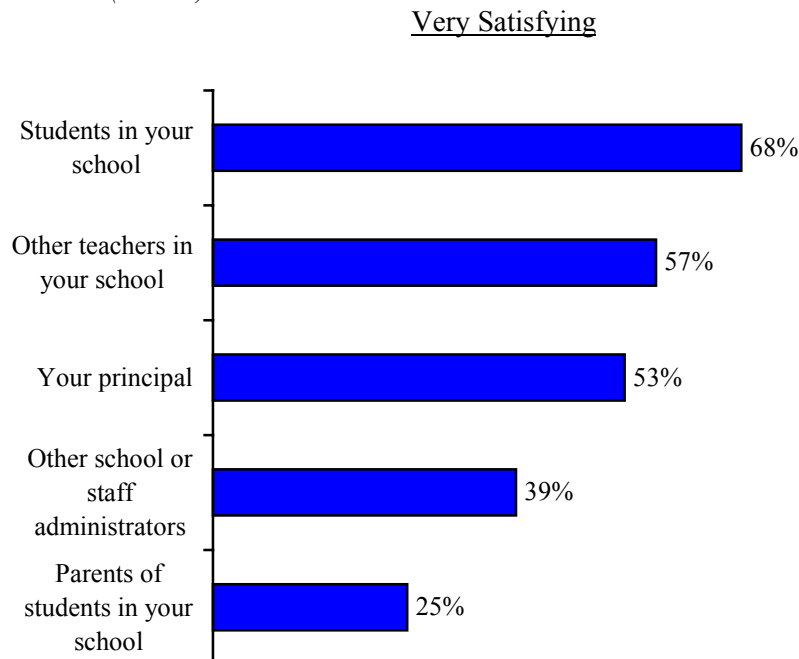
### Satisfaction with Relationships

An examination of new teachers' school relationships reveals a broad range in satisfaction levels. New teachers are most satisfied with their relationships with their students. Seven in ten (68%) describe this relationship as very satisfying. A majority of new teachers (57%) describe their relationship with other teachers as very satisfying, while half (53%) say they are very satisfied with their relationship with their principal. New teachers are least satisfied with their relationship with parents. Only one-quarter (25%) describe this relationship as very satisfying. New teachers in schools with a majority of low-income students are less likely to be very satisfied with their relationships with other teachers (52% vs. 62%), their principal (48% vs. 58%) and with parents (18% vs. 30%). It is important to note that teachers in low-income schools are just as likely as those in other schools to be very satisfied with their relationships with their students (65% vs. 70%).

**Table 2.1**  
**New Teachers' Satisfaction with Relationships**

*Q501:* Has your experience as a public school teacher working with...been very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, somewhat unsatisfying or very unsatisfying?

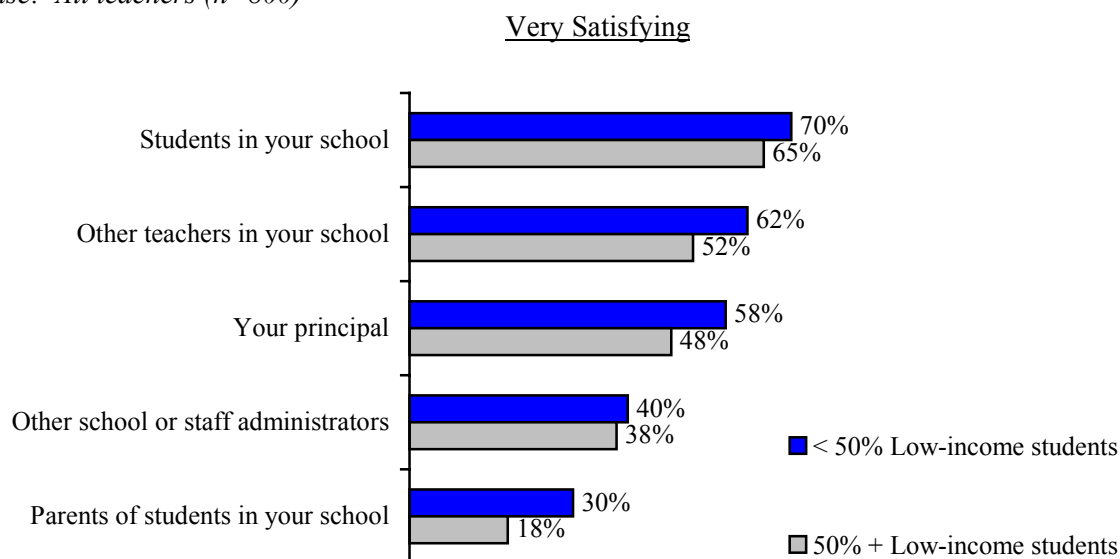
*Base:* All teachers ( $n=800$ )



**Table 2.2**  
**New Teachers' Satisfaction with Relationships by Income Level of Students**

*Q501:* Has your experience as a public school teacher working with...been very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, somewhat unsatisfying or very unsatisfying?

*Base: All teachers (n=800)*



### *Teacher Support and Guidance*

As previously noted, new teachers value the guidance of their fellow teachers. Four in ten new teachers (38%) believe that having a skilled experience teacher assigned to them for advice and guidance would have been most helpful in preparing them to be more effective teachers during their first year of teaching. New teachers' relationships with other teachers in their school are second only to students in being very satisfying. About half (54%) strongly agree that there is cooperation between older, more experienced teachers and new teachers at their school. But one-third of new teachers (32%) either did not have a teaching mentor or had one who was not helpful.

**Table 2.3**  
**Cooperation: Experienced and New Teachers**

*Q536:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree strongly?

*Base:* All teachers (*n*=800)

“At my school there is cooperation between older, more experienced teachers and new teachers”

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>		<b><u>Location</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Urban/Inner City</b>	<b>Suburban/Rural</b>
Base:	800	501	270	192	594
	%			%	%
Strongly/Somewhat agree (Net)	91	91	91	90	91
Strongly agree	54	55	54	48	57
Somewhat agree	37	36	38	43	35
Somewhat/Strongly disagree (Net)	9	9	8	10	8
Somewhat disagree	6	6	6	6	6
Strongly disagree	2	3	2	4	2

The school principal is another potential source of support for new teachers. Half of new teachers (53%) describe their relationship with their principal as very satisfying. A majority of new teachers (58%) strongly agree that the principal of their school creates an environment which helps them be an effective teacher. A majority (62%) also strongly agree that the principal of their school creates an environment which helps their students learn. However, principals receive lower marks in an area where new teachers report needing the most support. Fewer than four in ten (39%) of new teachers strongly agree that the principal of their school provides guidance on how to involve parents in their children’s education.

**Table 2.4**  
**Teachers Beliefs about Principals Role in School Environment**

*Q536:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree strongly.

*Base:* All teachers (n=800)

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
The principal of my school creates an environment which helps my students learn	%	62	31	4	3
The principal of my school creates an environment which helps me be an effective teacher	%	58	31	7	4
The principal of my school provides guidance on how to involve parents in their children's education	%	39	42	13	6

**MORE TO COME...**

Dissatisfaction with school relationships is associated with new teachers' likelihood of leaving the profession. Teachers who say they will leave teaching are more likely than others to be unsatisfied with their relationships with parents (32% vs. 17%), their principal (23% vs. 8%), and with their students (13% vs. 1%). Chapter 8 examines in more detail the characteristics of new teachers who plan to leave the profession.

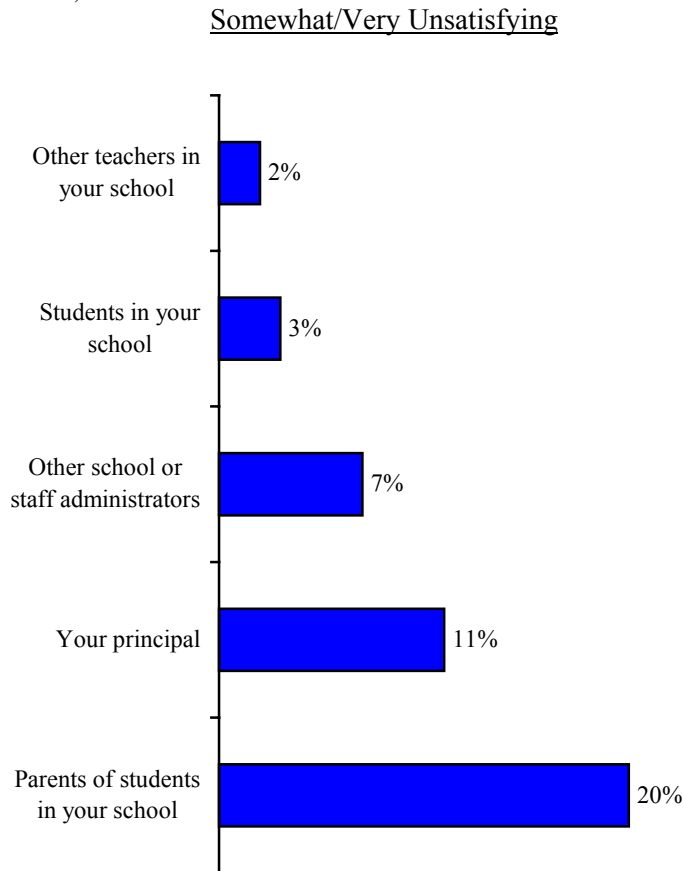
*The Teacher-Parent Relationship*

New teachers' relationships with their students' parents appear to be the most tenuous school relationship. One in five new teachers (20%) reports a somewhat or very unsatisfying relationship with parents of students at their school – a greater degree of dissatisfaction than with any of their other school relationships. As discussed in the preceding chapter, new teachers are most likely to say that communicating with and involving parents is the biggest challenge that they face. For new teachers, parental involvement is a more common challenge than getting sufficient resources, maintaining order and discipline in the classroom, preparing students for testing and getting needed guidance and support. Relationships with parents are also mentioned by many new teachers as their greatest source of stress and anxiety as educators. Two in ten new teachers (20%) and 28% of principals mention parents as causing them the most stress in their jobs.

**Table 2.5**  
**Percentage of New Teachers Unsatisfactory Relationships**

*Q501:* Has your experience as a public school teacher working with...been very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, somewhat unsatisfying or very unsatisfying?

*Base: All teachers (n=800)*



If educators did not believe that teachers' working in concert with parents was so important, perhaps these findings would not be that noteworthy. But teachers view parental involvement as a critical component of children's educational experience. The gap between educators' high expectations and their daily experiences may serve to heighten their dissatisfaction in this area. Eight in ten new teachers (81%) strongly agree that effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents, and virtually all (98%) strongly or somewhat agree with this statement. This expectation is particularly strong among elementary school teachers and less so for secondary school teachers (88% vs. 73% strongly agree).



**Table 2.6**  
**Teachers Beliefs about Effective Teachers and Parents**

*Q516:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

*Base:* All teachers (*n*=800)

“Effective teachers need to be able to work well with students’ parents”

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Base:	800	501	270
	%	%	%
Strongly/Somewhat agree (Net)	98	98	97
Strongly agree	81	88	73
Somewhat agree	17	11	24
Somewhat/Strongly disagree (Net)	2	1	2
Somewhat disagree	2	1	2
Strongly disagree	*	*	*
No answer	*	*	*

Nearly three-quarters of new teachers believe that too many parents today treat their children’s schools and teachers as adversaries (20% strongly agree and 53% somewhat agree). A note of optimism in this discussion is that more teachers describe the parent-teacher relationship as respectful than describe it as adversarial. Nearly nine in ten new teachers report that teachers and parents at their school respect one another (31% strongly agree and 57% somewhat agree).

**Table 2.7**  
**Teachers Beliefs about Parents Adversarial Role**

*Q516:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

*Base:* All teachers (*n*=800)

“Too many parents today treat their children’s school and teachers as adversaries”

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Base:	800	501	270
	%	%	%
Strongly/Somewhat agree (Net)	73	76	70
Strongly agree	20	18	21
Somewhat agree	53	58	49
Somewhat/Strongly disagree (Net)	25	22	29
Somewhat disagree	21	16	26
Strongly disagree	4	5	3
No answer	2	2	2

### *Parental Involvement*

Respect is an important component of the teacher-parent relationship. But the common point is the student and the parent’s involvement in their child’s education. This involvement takes place in both the home and the school and can be encouraged at both the school and classroom levels. How do teachers rate their schools’ performance in encouraging parental involvement? Nine in ten new teachers report that involving parents in their children’s education is a priority at their school (59% strongly agree and 31% somewhat agree). However, making parental involvement a priority is more common at the elementary than secondary school level (71% vs. 47% strongly agree).

**Table 2.8**  
**Involving Parents in Children's Education**

*Q516:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

*Base:* All teachers (n=800)

“At my school, involving parents in their children's education is a priority”

	Teachers	Type of School	
		Elementary	Secondary
Base:	800	501	270
	%	%	%
Strongly/Somewhat agree (Net)	90	95	85
Strongly agree	59	71	47
Somewhat agree	31	23	38
Somewhat/Strongly disagree (Net)	10	5	15
Somewhat disagree	8	4	13
Strongly disagree	2	2	2
No answer	*	-	*

According to new teachers, their schools regularly ask parents to be involved in a variety of ways. Most new teachers report that students' parents are asked as a matter of course to come to parent-teacher conferences (97%), to participate in school fund raising activities (88%), to make sure homework is done (87%), involve their children in educational activities at home (86%) and to go on field trips (81%). However, new teachers of secondary school grades are less likely than elementary school teachers to report that parents are asked to do these activities, particularly educational activities at home and field trips:

- Come to parent-teacher conferences (94% vs. 99%);
- Participate in school fund raising activities (81% vs. 95%);
- Make sure homework is done (77% vs. 97%);
- Involve their children in educational activities at home (73% vs. 98%);
- Go on field trips (64% vs. 95%).

**Table 2.9**  
**Teacher's General Parental Requests**

*Q521:* Which of the following do you or your school ask students' parents to do as a matter of course, and not just in special circumstances? Do you or your school ask parents to . . .?

Base: All teachers (n=800)

*Multiple Response Item*

% Yes

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Base:	800	501	270
	%	%	%
Come to parent-teacher conferences	97	99	94
Participate in school fund raising activities	88	95	81
Make sure homework is done	87	97	77
Involve their children in educational activities at home – such as read with children, discuss current events, visit museums, etc.	86	98	73
Go on field trips	81	95	64

Despite the fact that most new teachers say that they and their schools ask parents to be involved in these activities, new teachers report that parents' participation is not common. Among those new teachers who have asked parents to do these activities, hardly more than half say that all or most parents participate. This level of participation is reported by even fewer secondary school teachers.

**Table 2.10**  
**Parental Compliance with Teacher's General Requests**

*Q525: Overall, how many parents . . . all, most, some, very few or none at all?*

*Base: Teachers who requested these tasks from parents (n=432)*

% All /Most

	<b>Teachers</b>	<b><u>Type of School</u></b>	
		<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Base:	432	294	127
	%	%	%
Come to parent-teacher conferences	56	71	37
Make sure homework is done	40	56	19
Involve their children in educational activities at home – such as read with children, discuss current events, visit museums, etc.	27	36	14
Participate in school fund raising activities	21	24	15
Go on field trips	14	17	8

This gap between teachers' expectations and parents' actual involvement may contribute to teachers' dissatisfaction with this school relationship.

MORE TO COME...

Students describe their parents' involvement in their education in Chapter 7.

### *A Special Case: Special Needs Students*

By definition, special needs students have additional, specific requirements from teachers and parents. Nearly nine in ten (88%) new teachers have special needs students in their classes. Recall from Chapter 1 that one of the areas that new teachers felt most unprepared for was working with children with varying abilities. Half of new teachers (53%) report that they are extremely or very familiar with the resources available to special needs students. However, 35% of new teachers report that parents of special needs students know less than they need to about available resources. New teachers in schools with a majority of low-income students are more likely than other new teachers to report this lack of knowledge among parents (47% vs. 25%). Principals have a different perspective on the knowledge of parents of special needs students. Only 16% of principals think these parents know less than they need to about available resources.

**Table 2.11**  
**Teacher Awareness of Special Needs Resources**

*Q550:* How familiar are you with the resources that are available to special needs students? Are you... with these resources?

*Base: Teachers that teach special needs students (n=704)*

	Teachers
Base:	704
	%
Extremely/Very familiar	53
Extremely familiar	11
Very familiar	42
Familiar	39
Not very/Not at all familiar	8
Not very familiar	7
Not at all familiar	1
No answer	-

**Table 2.12**  
**Parental Awareness of Resources for Special Needs Students by Teachers and Principals**

*Q555 Teachers:* Overall, how much do you think the parents of your special needs students know about the resources that are available to their children? Do these parents know?

*Q550 Principals:* How much do you think the parents of your special needs students know about the resources that are available to their children? Do these parents know?

*Base: Teachers that have special needs students (n=704)*

*Base: All Principals (n=841)*

	Teachers	Principals
Base:	704	841
	%	%
Less than they need to know	35	16
Just enough	49	51
More than they need to know	13	31
No answer	2	2

### *Conclusions*

New teachers draw strength from their relationships with their students and their fellow teachers. These interactions are the sources of their greatest satisfaction. Most new teachers report that their principal creates an environment which helps them to be an effective teacher. The school relationship that shows the most need for improvement is the teacher-parent relationship. New teachers are least satisfied with these interactions and with parents' involvement in their children's education. A gap exists between the level of parental involvement that new teachers desire and the parental participation that they observe.

## Part II: The Principals' Perspective

### Chapter 3: Becoming a School Principal

#### *Overview*

Unlike the transition to becoming a teacher, the transition to becoming a school principal is usually preceded by work experience in general, and in the education field in particular. On average, the principals surveyed have worked 13.6 years as teachers before becoming school principals. This previous experience appears to ease the transition to the position of principal. Principals report fewer challenges when embarking on this new aspect of their education career than do new teachers. This chapter focuses first on the perspectives of new principals – those with five years or less of experience as a principal. The views of more experienced principals are then incorporated. These more experienced educators' opinions on their initial preparedness for their job appear to diminish with that gain in experience.

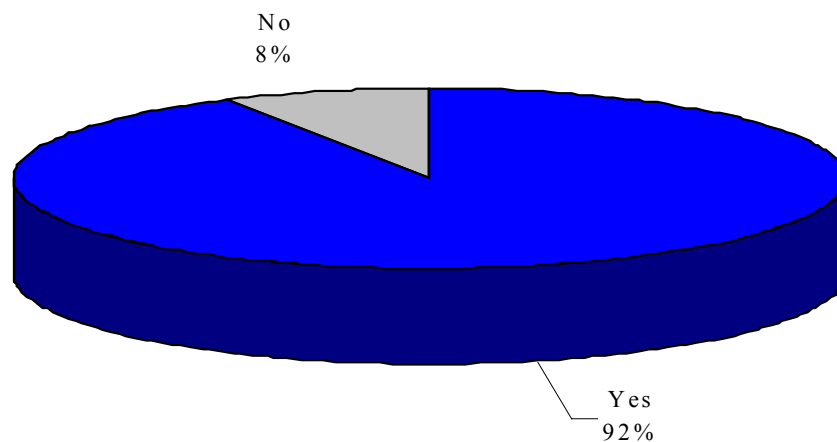
#### *The World of a New Principal*

Most new principals report that they have sources of helpful support for their transition to being a principal. Nine in ten new principals (92%) had someone in their school or district they could go to for advice and guidance about their school responsibilities. Seven in ten new principals report that district or central administrators were extremely (40%) or very (31%) helpful in providing support and guidance during that first year. Only 8% of new principals found the administrators' support and guidance to be not helpful. However, 12% report that they currently get less support than they need from district-level administrators.

**Table 3.1**  
**Percentage of New School Principals Receiving Advice and Guidance in Their First Year**

*Q650:* During your first year as a principal, did you have someone in your school or district you could go to for advice and guidance about your school responsibilities?

*Base:* New principals ( $n=333$ )





Overall, new principals are more likely than new teachers to feel that they were well prepared for different key aspects of their job. While in most areas, no more than half of new teachers feel they were extremely or very prepared to deal with different aspects of teaching, at least half of new principals feel that they were extremely or very prepared for their work. New principals are most likely to feel that they were extremely or well-prepared in their first year to maintain order and discipline in the school (81%). They are least likely to feel they were prepared to work effectively with community members or organizations (55%), to carry out reporting and compliance (54%) and to get necessary resources (53%).

- To maintain order and discipline in the school, 81%
- To make sure the school is safe, 74%
- To be the leader of the school, 68%
- To get the support you needed from district or central administrators, 63%
- To guide and motivate teachers, 62%
- To engage families in supporting their children's education, 58%
- To work effectively with community members or organizations, 55%
- To carry out your responsibilities regarding reporting and compliance, 54%
- To get the resources and supplies you needed for your school, 53%

**Table 3.2**  
**Prepared for Aspects of Being a Principal during First Year**

*Q661: How prepared were you for the following aspects of your position during your first year as a school principal?*

*Base: New principals (n=333)*

**Principal 5 Years or Less**

		<b>Extremely/ Very Prepared (Net)</b>	<b>Extremely Prepared</b>	<b>Very Prepared</b>	<b>Prepared</b>	<b>Not Too/ Not at All Prepared (Net)</b>	<b>Not Too Prepared</b>	<b>Not at All Prepared</b>
To maintain order and discipline in the school	%	81	31	50	18	1	1	-
To make sure the school is safe	%	74	23	51	24	2	2	*
To be the leader of the school	%	68	19	50	30	2	2	-
To get the support you needed from district or central administrators	%	63	17	46	29	9	8	1
To guide and motivate teachers	%	62	13	50	33	5	5	*
To engage families in supporting their children's education	%	58	10	48	35	7	7	*
To work effectively with community members or organizations	%	55	15	40	37	7	7	1
To carry out your responsibilities regarding reporting and compliance	%	54	11	43	36	10	9	1
To get the resources and supplies you needed for your schools	%	53	16	37	38	9	8	1

Principals' assessment of the guidance they initially received and their preparedness upon first becoming principals differs between new and more experienced principals. While only 8% of new principals report that they had no one available for advice or guidance, 21% of principals with more than five years of experience report that they did not have an available mentor. This trend also appears when the helpfulness of district or central administrators as providers of support and guidance to principals is examined. Eight percent of new principals report that district or central administrators were not too or not

at all helpful in providing support and guidance during their first year as school principals. However, principals with more than five years of experience are twice as likely to describe these administrators as not helpful (17% vs. 8%).

**Table 3.3**  
**Advice and Guidance during First Year as Principal**  
**by Years of Experience**

*Q650:* During your first year as a principal, did you have someone in your school or district you could go to for advice and guidance about your school responsibilities?

*Base:* All principals (n=841)

	Principals	<u>Years of Experience as a Principal</u>			
		5 Years or Less	More Than 5 Years	6-15 Years	16+ Years
Base:	841	333	508	349	159
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	84	92	79	79	81
No	16	8	21	21	19

Similarly, principals with more experience are less likely to describe themselves as having been extremely or very prepared for a variety of areas during their first year. Principals with more than five years experience are less likely than new principals to say they were extremely or very prepared to make sure the school is safe (59% vs. 74%), to get needed support from administrators (50% vs. 63%), and to engage families in supporting their children's education (49% vs. 58%).

**Table 3.4**  
**District and Central Administration Support during First Year as a Principal**  
**by Years of Experience**

*Q655:* How helpful were the district or central administrators in providing support and guidance to you during your first year as a school principal?

*Base:* All principals (n=841)

	Principal	<u>Years of Experience as a Principal</u>			
		5 Years or Less	More Than 5 Years	6-15 Years	16+ Years
Base:	841	333	508	349	159
	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely/Very helpful (Net)	63	71	57	58	55
Extremely helpful	34	40	30	27	35
Very helpful	29	31	28	31	20
Helpful	23	20	25	24	29
Not too/Not at all helpful (Net)	13	8	17	18	15
Not too helpful	10	5	13	15	10
Not at all helpful	3	3	4	3	5

These differences between more and less experienced principals are striking in their consistency. However, the question remains as to the cause of these differences. One possibility is that training for principals may have improved during the past five years or so. Another possibility is that principals' assessment of their preparedness and the support they received from others may have become more critical over time. In other words, as principals gain more experience they realize that they were less prepared for the challenges of school leadership than they initially thought.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT....**

“When principals were asked to describe what best prepared them for handling complex challenges, experience turned out to be a great teacher. The academic training they received was often dismissed, but rarely was on the job experience or time with mentor discarded.”

Portin, B. Schneider, P., DeArmond, M., and Gundlach, L. (2003). Making sense of leading schools: A study of the school principalship.

*Conclusions*

Beginning a new job or career involves both challenges and opportunities. New principals, unlike new teachers, already have experience within the education profession. They may even have direct experience with that school or school district. These factors may explain why new teachers report more unmet needs than new principals.

## Chapter 4: Principals' Expectations

### Overview

*The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership (2003)* revealed that principals tend to have a greater degree of satisfaction with school relationships than others in the school community and to believe they are doing a better job in key areas of school leadership than teachers and parents report. This trend is found again when comparing principals to new teachers. However, principals and new teachers are similarly optimistic about their students' and their own potential.

### Principals' School Relationships

Principals report higher levels of satisfaction with their school relationships than do new teachers. But as with new teachers, principals' highest satisfaction is with their relationships with students and their least satisfaction is with their relationships with the parents of their students. Nine in ten (87%) principals describe their relationships with students as very satisfying. Slightly fewer are very satisfied with their relationship with teachers (77%) and other school staff (70%). However, only half of principals are very satisfied with their relationship with parents (50%).

**Table 4.1**  
**Satisfaction Working with People at School**

*Q501:* How satisfying has your experience as a public school principal been working with . . . very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, somewhat unsatisfying or very unsatisfying?

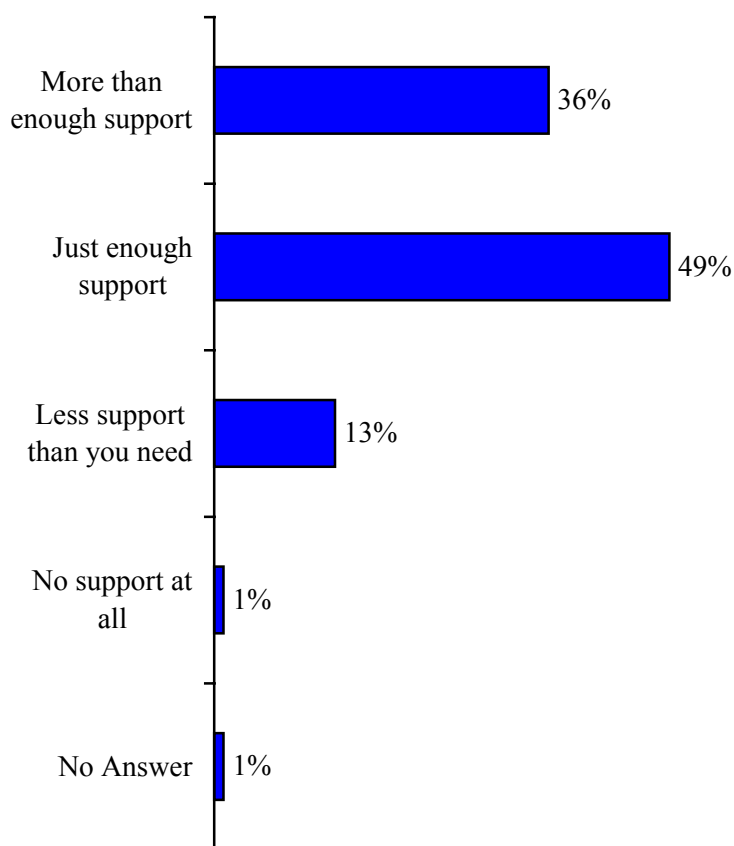
*Base:* All principals (n=841)

	<b>Students in Your School</b>	<b>Teachers in Your School</b>	<b>Parents of Students</b>	<b>District-Level Administrators</b>	<b>Other School Staff</b>
	%	%	%	%	%
Very/Somewhat satisfying (Net)	100	100	97	93	99
Very satisfying	87	77	50	53	70
Somewhat satisfying	13	23	47	40	28
Somewhat/Very unsatisfying (Net)	*	*	3	7	1
Somewhat unsatisfying	*	*	3	6	*
Very unsatisfying	-	*	*	1	*

Principals report the highest level of dissatisfaction with their relationship with district-level administrators. Seven percent of principals describe their relationship with administrators as unsatisfying. In addition, one in eight (13%) principals reports receiving less than they need or no guidance and support from the district-level administrators.

**Table 4.2**  
**Level of Support and Guidance District-Level Administrators Give Principals**

*Q505: How much support and guidance do you currently get from district-level administrators?*  
*Base: All principals (n=841)*



Principals, like new teachers, emphasize the importance of the teacher-parent relationship. Nine in ten principals (90%) strongly agree that effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents. Most principals believe that they are providing the necessary support in this area. Six in ten principals (59%) strongly agree that they provide guidance to teachers on how to involve parents in their children's education. This contrasts with the views of new teachers who are less likely (39%) to strongly agree that their principal provides guidance on how to involve parents.

Principals' views on other aspects of the school-parent relationship tend to be more positive than new teachers' perspectives. Nearly all principals (71%) strongly agree that involving parents in their children's education is a priority at their school. This compares to 59% of new teachers who report that this is a priority at their school. Nearly half of principals (45%) describe the teacher-parent relationship as one of respect, compared to 31% of new teachers who strongly agree with this view.

**Table 4.3**  
**Principals Perceptions of the Parental Role**

*Q516/536:* Based on your experience as a public school principal, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree strongly.

*Base:* All principals (n=841)

		<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents	%	90	9	*	*
Too many parents today treat their children's schools and teachers as adversaries	%	12	48	27	12
At my school, involving parents in their children's education is a priority	%	71	26	3	*
At my school, teachers and parents respect one another	%	45	52	3	*
At my school, I provide guidance to teachers on how to involve parents in their children's education	%	59	40	1	*
My students' parents do all they can to help their children succeed in school	%	16	61	20	3

### *Principals' Expectations*

Principals are as optimistic as new teachers when it comes to their views on students' and their own potential. Nine in ten principals strongly agree that all children can learn (88%) and that they can really make a difference in the lives of their students (87%). Principals and new teachers' views diverge again as to whether teachers' ability to make a difference is independent of what is going on in the school as a whole. Half of new teachers (51%) strongly agree that if they do their job well their students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions. However, fewer principals (43%) strongly agree that a teacher's performance is independent of the overall school functioning.

**Table 4.4**  
**Teacher, Principal and Student Expectations**

*Q500/Q401:* Based on your experience as a teacher/principal/student, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

*Base:* All teachers (n=800); All principals (n=841); All students (n=1073)

#### % Strongly Agree

	<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Principals</u>		<u>Students</u>
	Elementary	Secondary	Elementary	Secondary	Secondary
Base:	501	270	431	320	1073
	%	%	%	%	%
All children can learn	92	84	92	82	58
I can really make a difference in the lives of my students	91	80	90	84	52
If I do my job well, my students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions	51	50	43	43	-

### *Conclusions*

As with new teachers, principals report the greatest room for improvement in their relationship with the parents of students at their school. Unlike new teachers, principals are more likely to believe that they are taking the steps necessary to support and encourage parental involvement in their school.



### Part III: Secondary School Students

#### Chapter 5: The Transition to Secondary School and The New Student Experience

##### Overview

A common theme in recent editions of *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* has been the vulnerability of the secondary school years and the marked contrast between the elementary and secondary school experiences and views of educators, parents and students. The transition to secondary school is characterized by feelings of alienation, lack of trust and stress. In 2000, *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* found that feelings of alienation were common among students (and their parents). Four in ten (39%) of secondary school students felt that what they think does not count very much at school and 28% felt left out of things going on around them at school. Many students (39%) had little or no trust in their teachers. The 2002 Survey revealed that 46% of secondary school students very often or often felt nervous and stressed and over half (55%) of junior and senior high school students feel bored very often or often. In this year's *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*, the focus is on students' experiences as they transition from elementary to secondary school. What is it like to be a new student in a junior or senior high school? How does their school life today compare to their life at their previous school?

##### The Emotional Impact

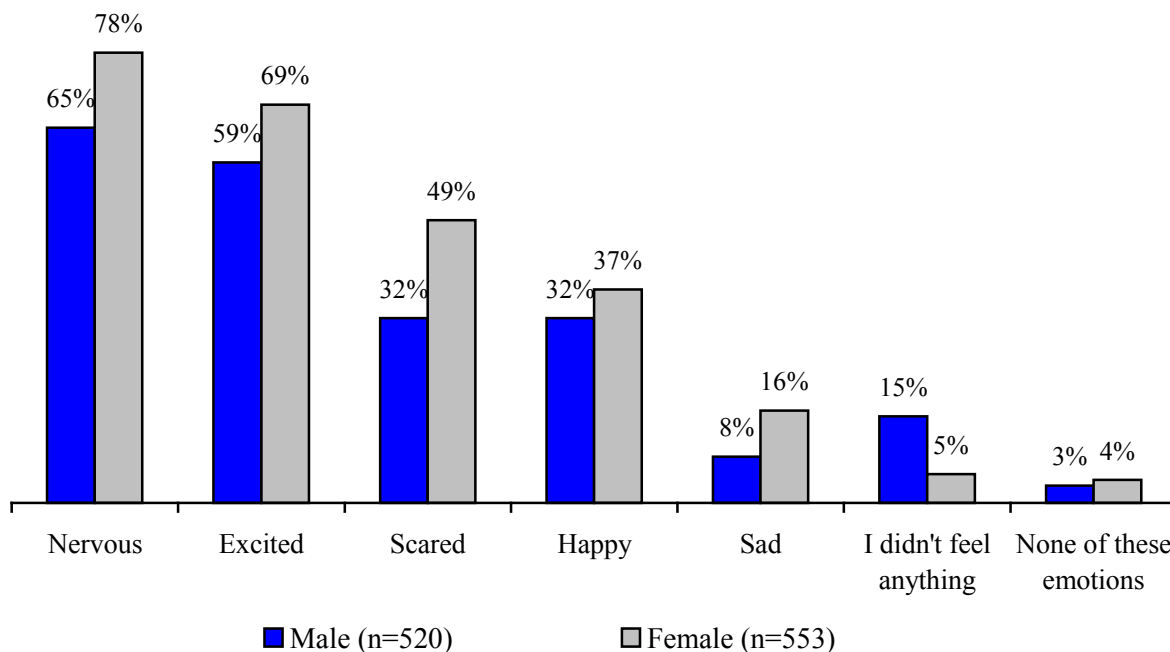
Making a shift to a new school stirs up emotions in the lives of students and the experience is somewhat different for boys and girls. The predominant emotion felt by new students was nervousness (71%) followed by excitement (64%). Four in ten students (40%) felt scared about going to a new school. Girls were more likely to attribute an emotional response to this transition (95% vs. 85%). They were more likely to report being nervous (78% vs. 65%), excited (69% vs. 59%), scared (49% vs. 32%), happy (37% vs. 32%), sad (16% vs. 8%), I didn't feel anything (5% vs. 15%) and none of these emotions (4% vs. 3%).

**Table 5.1**  
**Students' Feelings about New School Attendance**

Q420: How do you feel about going to a new school?

Base: All students (n=1073)

Multiple Response Item



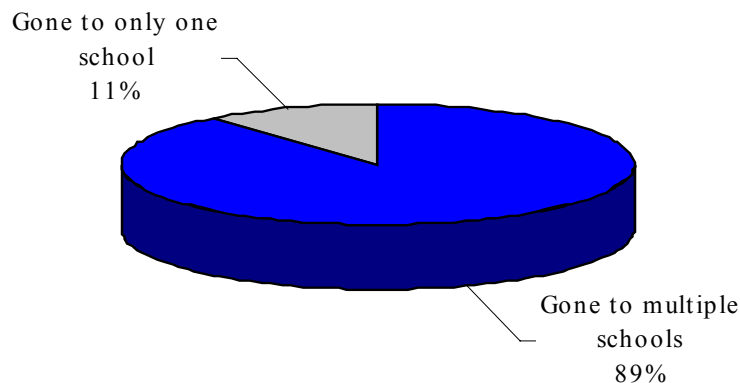
### *Finding Their Way*

The vast majority of 7<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> graders (89%) have attended more than one school in their life. Their current school differs in many ways from their previous school. Most secondary school students (81%) are now in a school that is bigger than their previous school. Although the school is large and unfamiliar, many students maneuver through their transition to a new school deficient in essential information necessary to make the transition a smooth one. One in five students (20%) received no instruction about where things were located, such as bathrooms, their locker, the gym, etc. One-quarter of students (26%) were not given information about where to get lunch. Finally, fully 31% of students report that no one gave them information or guidance about what classes to take when they first started going to their current school.

**Table 5.2**  
**Number of Schools in a Student's Educational Experience**

*Q432:* Is your school...bigger than your previous school, about the same size as your previous school, smaller than your previous school or have you only gone to one school?

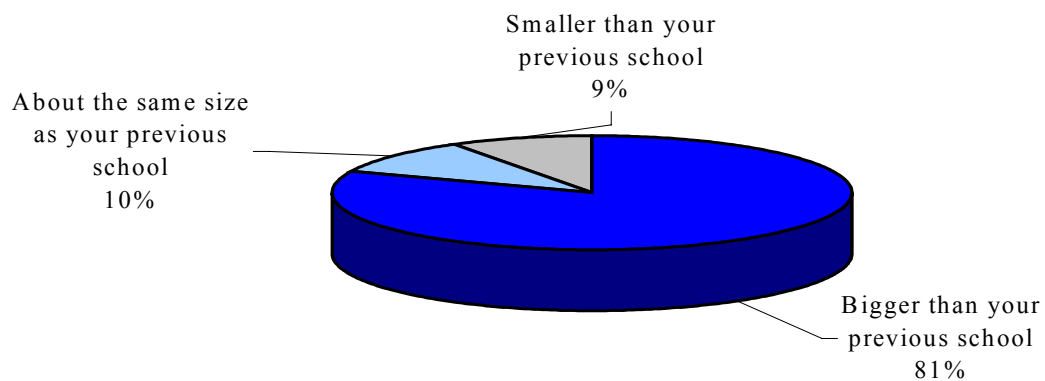
*Base:* All students ( $n=1073$ )



**Table 5.3**  
**Size of Student's Previous School**

*Q432:* Is your school...bigger than your previous school, about the same size as your previous school, smaller than your previous school or have you only gone to one school?

*Base:* Students who attended multiple schools (n=956)



**Table 5.4**  
**Frequency of New Student Orientation**

*Q410:* When you first started going to your current school, did anyone at school give you information or guidance about the following . . ?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)

		No	Yes	Not Sure
What classes to take	%	31	64	5
Where to go to lunch	%	26	71	3
Where things were located, such as bathrooms, your locker, the gym, etc.	%	21	76	3

### *The New Social Order*

More than the physical structure of the school is new. Students are encountering a different social structure as well. Six in ten secondary school students who have gone to more than one school (62%) report that most of the other students were not from their previous school. One-quarter of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders (24%) report that when they first started going to their current school, students rarely or never helped them. For some students, this was not benign neglect. Half of students (50%) report being teased or bullied as a new student, with seven percent reporting that this was a frequent (very often or often) occurrence. More students, 76%, were ignored at some point as a new students, with 18% reporting that this was a frequent occurrence.

**Table 5.5**  
**Changes in the Student Cohort from Previous School**

*Q435:* When you started . . . grade at current school, how many of the students were from your previous school?

*Base:* Students who have gone to another school (n=937)

	Total	Grade Level	
		7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Base	937	371	566
	%	%	%
All/Most (Net)	38	35	42
All	7	7	7
Most	31	29	34
Some/None (Net)	62	65	58
Some	47	51	43
None	15	14	16

**Table 5.6**  
**Student Reported Frequency of Schoolmates Helping, Ignoring, Teasing and Bullying**

*Q425:* When you were in . . . grade and first started to go to your current school, how often did the following happen?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)

		Very Often/Often	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/ Never	Rarely	Never
Students helped me	%	33	6	27	43	24	18	6
Students ignored me	%	18	5	13	31	51	27	24
Students teased and bullied me	%	7	3	5	16	76	27	50

Who are these “other students”? They include both older students and those in the same grade. However, these interactions play out differently for boys and girls. Girls who have been teased or bullied are more likely to report the person responsible to be in the same grades rather than older grades (71% vs. 49%). For boys, the reverse was true. When they are teased or bullied, those students tend to be in older grades (63%) and not their classmates (55%). Girls who report being ignored are more likely than boys to say they were ignored by students in their own grade (65% vs. 53%). However, for both girls and boys, the students who helped them in their new school are most likely their classmates. Three-quarters (75%) of students who were helped by others say these students were in the same grade, compared to 61% who report being helped by students in older grades. Girls are more likely than boys to have been helped by students in older grades (67% vs. 56%).

**Table 5.7**  
**Frequency of Student Helping, Ignoring, Teasing and Bullying by Grade and Gender**

*Q430: In what grades were the students who did the following . . .?*

*Base: Respondents to whom students helped, ignored or teased (n=1053)*

	<u>Older Grades</u>		<u>Same Grade</u>		<u>Younger Grades</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Variable base	%	%	%	%	%	%
Students helped me	56	67	75	74	7	6
Students ignored me	70	68	53	65	14	12
Students teased and bullied me	63	49	55	71	9	10

Compared to their own experiences as a new student at their school, secondary school students believe that new students are helped – and hurt – more often. Although only one-third (33%) of students report that they were frequently helped by students when they started going to their school, they are more likely to believe this is common occurrence for new students overall. Nearly half of students (47%) report that new students are very often or often helped by other students at their school. They also believe that being teased and bullied is more common. Two in ten students (20%) report that new students are very often or often teased or bullied by other students, compared to 7% who were frequently teased or bullied themselves.

**Table 5.8**  
**Frequency New Students are Teased, Bullied and Helped by Grade**

*Q450:* At your current school, how often do the following things happen?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)

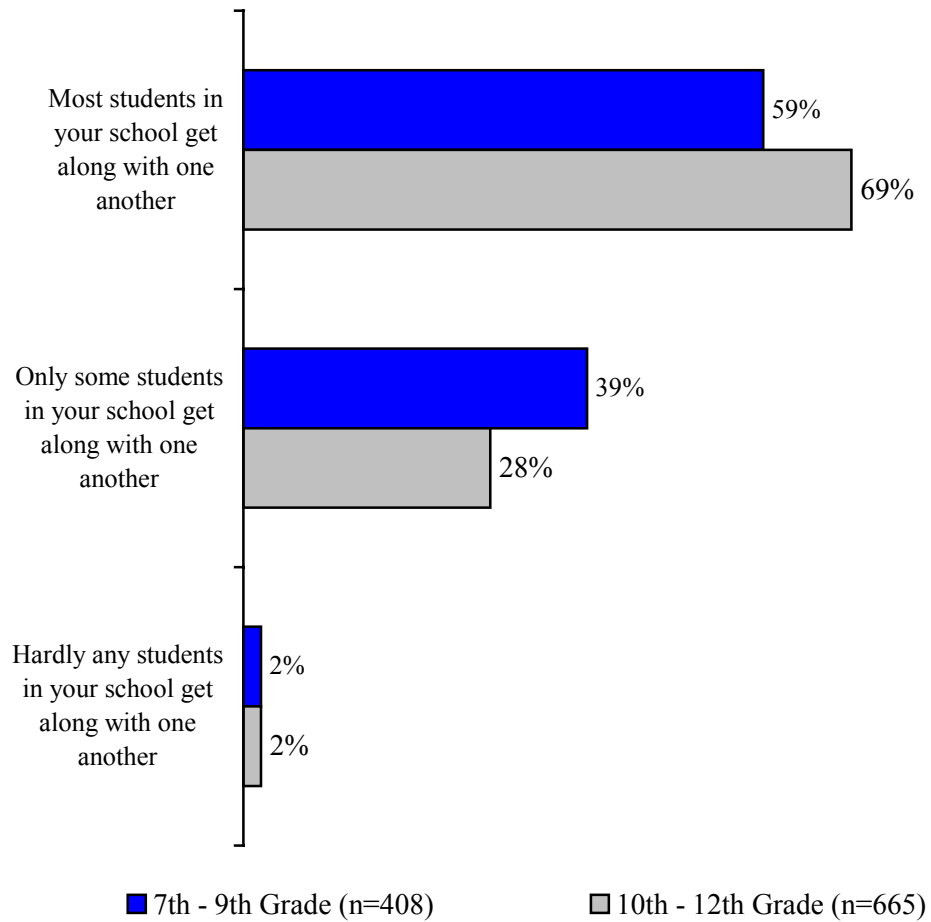
	<b>New Students Are Teased or Bullied By Other Students</b>		<b>New Students Are Helped By Other Students</b>	
	<b>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup></b>
	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Base:	408	665	408	665
	%	%	%	%
Very/Often (Net)	25	14	43	52
Very often	8	4	11	13
Often	17	9	32	39
Sometimes	40	33	43	37
Rarely/Never (Net)	36	54	14	11
Rarely	26	42	11	9
Never	9	12	3	2

It is the relationships with their fellow students that teens value the most in their school life and, overall, the positives outweigh the negatives. Secondary school students are more likely to mention their classmates as the part of school that they like the most (53%), with after-school activities (37%) coming in second place. The predominant view among secondary school students is that most students in their school do get along with one another. Nearly two-thirds of students (64%) endorse this view. However, fully one-third of students (34%) describe their school as a place of cliques, where only some students get along with one another. This view is more common among 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> graders than 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders (39% vs. 28%). Furthermore, these middle- and junior-high school age students are also more likely than older students to report that other students are the part of school that cause them the most worry or stress (18% vs. 12%). These findings highlight a special challenge of the middle school years.

**Table 5.9**  
**General Quality of Student Relationships**

*Q455: Overall, would you say . . . ?*

*Base: All students (n=1073)*



**Table 5.10**  
**Aspects of School Students Liked Most**

*Q655: Which aspects of school do you like the most?*

*Base: All students (n=1073)*

*Open ended responses*

	<b>Total</b>	<b><u>Gender</u></b>		<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>	
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Base:	1073	520	553	408	665
	%	%	%	%	%
Other students	53	52	55	56	50
After school activities like sports, band or clubs	37	35	39	39	34
Learning new things	31	36	26	29	34
Doing well in a class	30	26	34	29	31
Not being at home	16	15	17	13	18
Teachers	6	5	7	5	7
Taking tests	2	2	1	1	3
Homework	1	1	1	2	1
Flirting	1	1	*	1	1
Particular class mentions	1	1	*	1	*
Lunch time/Break	1	*	1	*	1
Something else	3	4	2	3	3
Nothing	6	7	5	6	7



### IN THEIR OWN WORDS: STUDENTS

#### Which aspects of school do you like the most?

“The social aspect, the away from mother aspect, actually being involved in something”

“Being with my friends”

“Gym class and sports”

“Choir”

“Friends and teachers. Maybe sometimes learning something new.”

“Being challenged in learning and sports”

“Lunch and break time”

“Getting good grades”

“I like having supportive teachers and encouraging principals who know my name.”

“That I have the opportunity to learn, and that my school will help a lot while applying for college admission and scholarships”

“Extra-curriculars, friends, a FEW teachers and their classes”

“I like being directly involved with decisions made at the school”

### *What’s Lost and Gained in the Transition to High School*

The transition to a new school may be more difficult for middle school students as well. Overall, most secondary school students say they felt safer in and more connected to their previous school. This finding is even more striking among 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Feeling safe and having teachers and parents connected to their school lives was twice as common for students in their elementary school. Half of 7<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> graders strongly agree that they felt safe at their previous school (47%), compared to 29% who say they feel safe at their current school. Half (52%) of 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> graders report that their parents knew their teachers at their previous school, compared to only one-quarter (24%) who say their parents know their teachers at their current school. Four in ten (40%) strongly agree that the teachers at their previous school cared about them, compared to only one-quarter (25%) who say the same about their current teachers. Across all grade levels, relatively few students feel that their opinion counted at their previous school (16%) or current school (17%). One bright note for high school is that students view the classes as more interesting. Overall, 30% of 7<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> grade students strongly agree that they are interested in their classes at their current school, an increase compared to the 17% who say they were interested in the classes at their previous school.

**Table 5.11**  
**Comparisons of Previous and Current School by Grade**

*Q440:* Thinking about your previous school, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

*Base:* Students who have gone to another school (n=937)

*Q445:* Thinking about your current school, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)

% Strongly Agree

	<u>Previous School</u>		<u>Current School</u>	
	<u>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup></u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup></u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup></u> <u>Grade</u>	<u>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup></u> <u>Grade</u>
Base:	371	566	408	665
	%	%	%	%
My parents or guardians knew/know my teachers at my previous school	52	25	24	15
I felt/feel safe at my previous/current school	47	37	29	30
Teachers at my previous/current school cared/care about me	40	33	25	32
I was/am interested in my classes at my previous/current school	19	16	26	34
My opinion counted/counts at my previous/current school	16	15	13	21

**Table 5.12**  
**Aspects of School that Cause Students the Most Worry or Stress**

*Q660: Which aspects of school cause you the most worry or stress?*

*Base: All students (n=1073)*

*Open ended responses*

	<b>Total</b>	<b><u>Gender</u></b>		<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>	
		<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Base:	1073	520	553	408	665
	%	%	%	%	%
Taking tests	56	53	60	55	58
Homework	45	46	44	42	49
Doing well in class	35	34	36	31	40
Other students	15	14	17	18	12
Teachers	12	13	12	16	9
After school activities like sports, band or clubs	5	3	6	5	4
Learning new things	4	5	3	5	3
Not being at home	3	2	3	3	2
Projects	*	1	*	*	1
Safety	*	*	1	*	*
Being bullied/picked on	*	*	*	*	1
Something else	3	3	2	3	2
Nothing	5	7	3	5	6

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS: STUDENTS

### Which aspects of school cause you the most worry or stress?

“The students”

“Phys. Ed tests”

“Going from a very small Catholic school to a very huge public school”

“Too many assignments to complete”

“Making good grades for my parents because I will lose all my privileges if I don’t”

“The rumors that go around”

“The unfairness of teachers because they don’t like you”

“tests and research papers”

“grades”

“not being safe in school”

“not getting good enough grades to make everyone around me happy”

“talking in front of the class for presentations. I am extremely afraid of public speaking but I am forced to do it anyway”

“projects, essays”

“gossip”

“grades would be a big part and other personal issues”

“violence”

“safety”

“the future”

“My parents having such high expectations for me and pushing me so hard”

## *Conclusions*

Upon beginning secondary school, students are entering a world where both the physical layout and the social connections are new, large and unfamiliar. As with new teachers and new principals, many students enter new schools without guidance on how to navigate this new domain.

Entering the school environment and leaving the home creates enjoyment in and of itself as 16% of students report this as the aspect they like most about school. However, social connections are far and above the paramount reasons for student’s enjoyment of school. The top two features of school students like best are other students (53%) as the most like aspect of school and after school activities (37%). Thirty-one percent of students enjoy the prospects of learning new things and enjoy the positive reinforcement of doing well in a class, as almost one third (30%) reported liking this aspect of school most.

## Chapter 6: Students' Sources of Support and Guidance

### *Overview*

Students have many potential sources of support and guidance in their school lives. Teachers and guidance counselors are students' primary sources of support within the school walls. Parents and friends are also available for help and guidance. The survey reveals that as students progress through high school they rely more and more on teachers' and guidance counselors' advice about school work. Although students may not often go to teachers for help with other areas of their school lives, those who do have found this assistance helpful. In fact, nearly all secondary school students have had a teacher who they say has made a positive difference in their lives.

### *Student Support and Guidance*

As with principals and new teachers, secondary school students show a range of satisfaction levels with their different school relationships. Students are most satisfied with their relationship with their parents and other students and least satisfied with their relationships with teachers and their principal. Compared to principals and new teachers, students report the lowest levels of satisfaction with their school relationships. Four in ten students describe their relationships with their parents (38%) and students (37%) as very satisfying. Two in ten (20%) are very satisfied with their relationships with teachers and 12% are very satisfied with their relationship with their school principal. Older students (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders) are more satisfied than younger students with the teacher-student relationship (25% vs. 15%) and less satisfied with the parent-student relationship (31% vs. 45%).

Student satisfaction with the teacher-student relationship may be a reflection of the fact that students sense teacher time constraints and many do not feel that teachers do everything they can to help them succeed. Almost half of 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders (45%) and 38% of 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students feel their teacher does not have enough time to pay attention to everyone. Additionally, a little more than one quarter of secondary school students (26%) does not believe teachers in their school do everything they can to help students most of the time. This level has remained consistent with findings from *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* in 1996.

**Table 6.1**  
**Levels of Student Satisfaction with Relationships**

*Q650: How would you describe your relationship with the following people this year?*

*Base: All students (n=1073)*

	<u>Other Students</u>		<u>My Principal</u>		<u>My Teachers</u>		<u>My Parents</u>	
	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Base:	408	665	408	665	408	665	408	665
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very/Somewhat satisfying (Net)	85	82	56	47	76	77	86	76
Very satisfying	35	38	13	10	15	25	45	31
Somewhat satisfying	50	44	43	37	61	52	40	46
Somewhat/Very unsatisfying (Net)	15	18	44	53	24	23	14	24
Somewhat unsatisfying	11	13	22	26	14	17	11	13
Very unsatisfying	4	5	22	28	9	5	4	11

The importance of the parental relationship as well as the changes it undergoes during high school is apparent when examining who students choose to seek out information regarding which classes to take. Overall, secondary school students are as likely to go to their family (78%) for advice about what classes to take at school as they are to seek advice from school staff (80%). Friends (71%) are the single most common source of advice, while two-thirds of secondary school students say they can go to their parents (65%) or teachers (65%) for advice about what classes to take. Although a minority, four percent of students report that there is no one they could go to for advice about classes.

Middle school and junior high school students differ from senior high school students in whom they seek for advice. Most 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> (78%) grade students seek advice from a parent regarding classes to take at school compared to 52% who would go to a guidance counselor. As students reach higher grade levels, reliance on parents and family for advice lessens and the burden on the school to provide information to students regarding classes increases, particularly for guidance counselors. Once students reach 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades their main source to seek information regarding classes is the guidance counselor (70%) and the number seeking a parent's advice drops to 50%.

**Table 6.2**  
**People from whom Students Seek Class Advice, by Grade**

*Q645: Who are the people you could go to if you needed advice about what classes to take at school?*  
*Base: All students (n=1073)*

	<u><b>Total</b></u>	<u><b>Grade Level</b></u>	
		<b>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Base:	1073	408	665
	%	%	%
School staff (Net)	80	76	85
Teacher	65	64	66
Guidance counselor	61	52	70
Principal	1	1	1
Family (Net)	78	88	66
Mother or father	65	78	50
Brother or sister	39	41	37
Aunt or Uncle	3	4	2
Grandparents	2	3	*
Relative/family member	2	2	1
Cousins	1	1	1
Friend	71	67	76
Clergy (minister, priest, rabbi or imam)	5	6	5
Older/Graduated students	1	1	1
Friend's family member	*	-	1
Someone else	3	3	2
No one	4	3	5

Most students have sought teachers' help in a variety of areas including school work (95%), problems with other students (71%), problems with emotions they may experience such as feeling discouraged or anxious about school (68%), or problems with other teachers (67%). Among those who have asked for help with school work, nine in ten rated their teachers as very (53%) or somewhat (38%) helpful. Two-thirds of those who ask for help with emotions (68%) or problems with other students (67%) rate their teachers as very or somewhat helpful. Students are less likely to rate the help they receive regarding teacher problems as helpful (56%).

**Table 6.3**  
**Students' Ratings of Teachers' Helpfulness**

*Q515: How helpful are your teachers when you ask for their help with...?*

*Base: All students (n=1073)*

		<b>Very Helpful</b>	<b>Somewhat Helpful</b>	<b>Not Very Helpful</b>	<b>Not At All Helpful</b>	<b>Never Asked for Help</b>
Your school work	%	51	36	6	2	5
Problems you're having with other teachers	%	9	28	18	11	33
Emotions you might experience, such as feeling discouraged, disappointed or anxious about school	%	16	30	13	9	32
Problems you're having with other students	%	16	31	16	8	29

*Teachers Who Make a Difference*

Half of secondary school students (52%) strongly agree that teachers can really make a difference in students' lives. In contrast to teachers' views, students are less optimistic about the effect that teachers can have on their lives. Eighty percent of secondary school teachers strongly agree that they can make a difference in students' lives.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT...?**

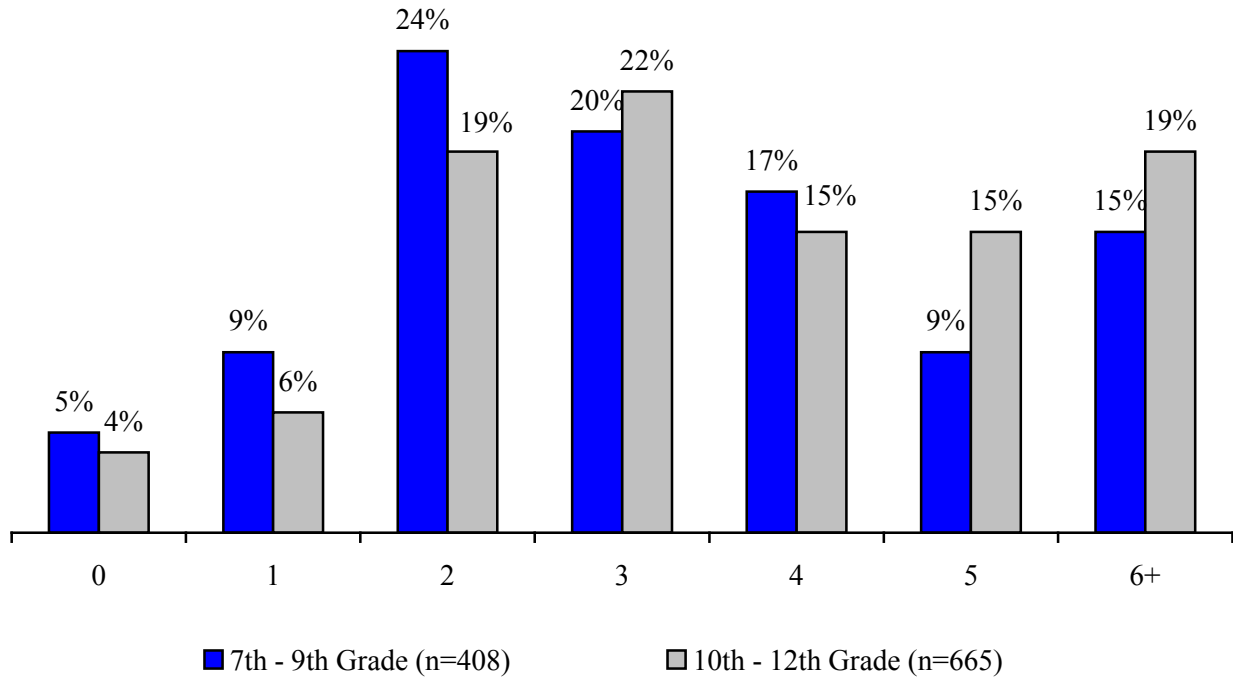
Students are also more critical than educators of students' potential. Six in ten students (58%) strongly agree that all children can learn, compared to eight in ten new secondary school teachers (84%) and secondary school principals (82%). Students' views represent a slight drop from the level in 2001 *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Key Elements of Quality Schools*, when 64% of secondary school students held this view.

Yet students' views on "teachers" in the abstract are different than their descriptions of their own connections with teachers. When are asked if they personally have had a teacher who has really made a difference in their lives for the better, nearly all (95%) say yes. On average, by the time students are in secondary school they have had 4 teachers who have made a positive difference in their lives. By the time they reach senior high, one-third of students (34%) report that they have had at least 5 teachers who have really made a positive difference in their lives.



**Table 6.4**  
**Number of Teachers that Made a Student's Life Better**

*Q520: How many teachers have you ever had who really made a difference in your life for the better?*  
*Base: All students (n=1073)*



Who are the teachers who have made the biggest difference in students' lives? Overall, nearly six in ten (57%) students say that the teacher who had the biggest impact was a secondary school teacher. However, a recency effect appears to be in play here. A majority (57%) of 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders say the teacher who had the biggest effect was **before** the sixth grade, while most 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders (74%) say they had this teacher sometime from the sixth grade onward. Most students (86%) report that this teacher taught a general or core subject such as English, math or history.

**Table 6.5**  
**Students' Grade when they had the Teacher that Made the Biggest Difference in their Life**

*Q525:* Think about the teacher who has made the biggest difference in your life. What grade were you in when you had this teacher?

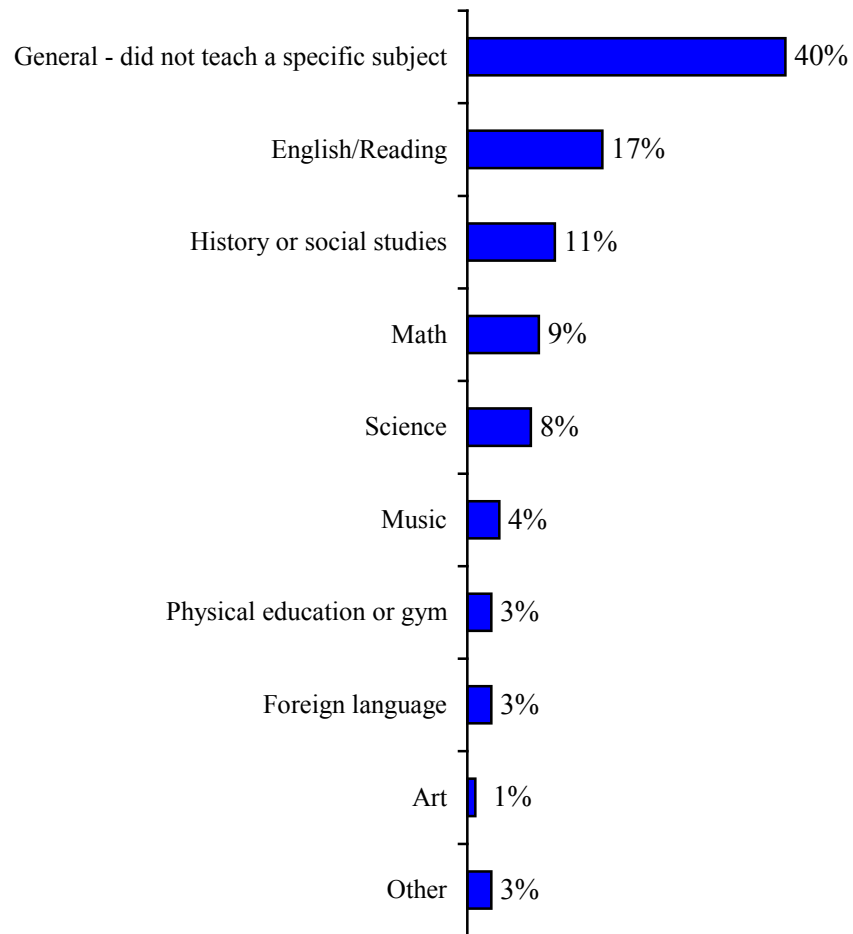
*Base:* Students who had teacher who made a difference ( $n=1015$ )

	<u>Grade Level</u>	
	<u>7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup></u>	<u>10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup></u>
	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Base:	386	629
	%	%
Kindergarten or earlier	6	2
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	7	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	8	5
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	8	3
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	12	6
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	16	7
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	15	7
7 <sup>th</sup> grade	12	7
8 <sup>th</sup> grade	14	14
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	3	18
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	-	13
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	-	11
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	-	4

**Table 6.6**  
**Subject Taught by Teacher who Made a Difference in a Student's Life**

*Q530: What subject did this teacher teach?*

*Base: Students who had teacher who made a difference (n=1015)*



**OBSERVATION:** It is important to note that, for 13% of students, the teacher who made the biggest difference in their life taught a subject such as music, art or gym.

The help that these teachers provide is most often related to school work; 75% of students mention that the teacher who made a difference helped them to do better in school. But these teachers' impact goes beyond specific classroom needs or even the school walls. Students tell us these teachers' impact was from introducing them to new ideas (69%) and helping them to pursue their interests (55%). One-quarter of students mention that the teacher helped them with a problem with other students (27%) or with a personal or family problem (26%).

**Table 6.7**  
**Teachers Made a Difference in these Areas of a Student's Life**

*Q535: In which areas of your life did this teacher make a difference?*

*Base: Students who had teacher who made a difference (n=1015)*

*Open Ended Responses*

	<b>Grade Teacher Made A Difference</b>	
	<b>K-5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></b>
Base:	407	608
	%	%
Helped me to do better in school	82	70
Introduced me to new ideas	67	70
Helped me to pursue my interest	46	62
Helped me with a problem I had with other students at school	30	24
Helped me with a personal or family problem	24	28
Helped me get a job	1	4
Helped me build confidence/helped me build self-esteem	3	1
Helped me learn/Increased my interest in learning	3	1
All areas/Everything	2	1
Was a nice/good teacher	1	1
Helped me open up/express myself	2	1
Self discovery/Personal development	2	1
Helped me in a particular subject (English, Math, etc.)	1	1
Taught values of life	*	1
Helped me adjust to new environment	1	*
Helped in my social life	*	1
Changed my perception/thinking	*	1
Cared for me	1	*
Helped with my future	*	1
Helped me work harder	*	*
Positive influence on life	-	*
Something else	5	6
Don't know	*	1

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS: STUDENTS

In what area of your life did this teacher make a difference?

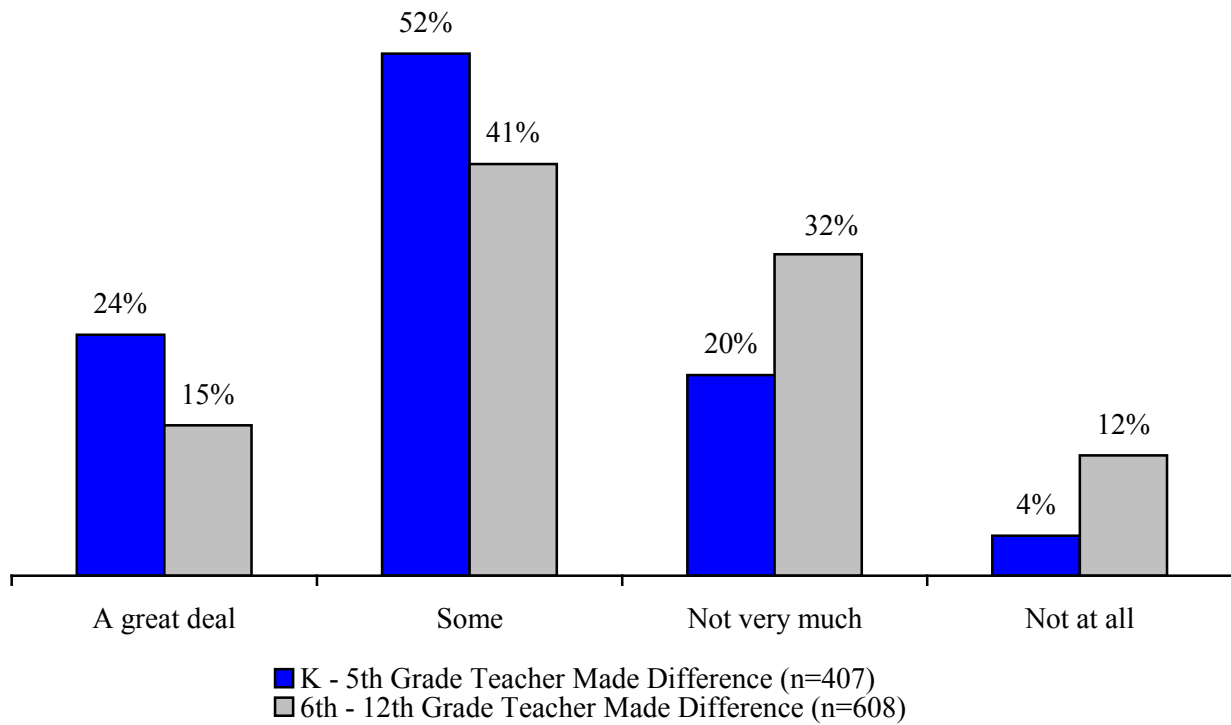
- “She sparked my interest in reading books”
- “Made me a better person”
- “Encouraged me to have fun and want to learn biology”
- “Opening up a whole new world to me”
- “She let me know she cared”
- “Made me think about who I was as a person”
- “Really made me look at the world in different ways”
- “Helped me realize what things were important to me”
- “Taught me how to actually ‘think’ “
- “Helped me understand myself”
- “Taught me to hold my head high”
- “Made me feel included and wanted”
- “Everything from school work to life philosophy”
- “Told me I’m important and I can do whatever I want in life”
- “Opened my mind to accepting new ideas”
- “Helped me be more confident”

According to students, knowing about their life outside of school is often a characteristic of a teacher who made a difference in their life, but not a prerequisite. Over one-third of students (36%) report that the teacher who made the biggest difference in their life did not know very much or anything at all about their life outside of school. This was particularly true when this teacher was a secondary school teacher. Nearly half (44%) of students with a secondary school teacher who made the biggest difference said this teacher did not know very much or anything about their life outside of school. In contrast, three-quarters (76%) of students who had an elementary school teacher who affected them the most said this teacher knew a great deal or some about their life outside of school. Teachers’ perspective on this issue differs from that of students. Overall, two-thirds of teachers (65%) strongly agree that they need to know what is going on in their students’ lives in order to be an effective teacher. However, differences based on grade levels taught reflect trends in students’ experiences. Secondary school teachers are less likely than elementary school teachers to believe that knowing about their students’ lives outside of school is a prerequisite to having an impact on students’ lives (56% vs. 72%).

**Table 6.8**  
**Teachers Who Made a Difference**  
**Knowledge of Student's Life Outside of School by Grade**

*Q540: How much did this teacher know about your life outside of school?*

*Base: Students who had teacher who made a difference (n=1015)*



Who are the students whose teachers have made a difference in their lives? How do they differ from those who have not? The following table presents a profile of those students who report having at least three teachers who have a difference in their lives compared to those students who have had fewer or none at all. Boys and girls are equally likely to report having several special teachers in their lives. Race/ethnicity also does not distinguish these groups. Students who report having several teachers who have made a difference in their lives do differ from those who have not had these quality teacher relationships in their attitudes about school. Students who have been positively affected by several teachers are twice as likely as others to be interested in their classes (36% vs. 18%); say that teachers care about them (34% vs. 16%); and report that their opinion counts at their school (20% vs. 11%). They are also more likely to report that they feel safe at school (33% vs. 23%), that teacher quality is excellent at their school (36% vs. 25%) and that teachers do everything they can to help students succeed (70% vs. 52%). Finally, these students are more likely to believe that higher education is extremely important for their future (89% vs. 74%).

**Table 6.9**  
**Profile of Students whose Teachers have Made a Difference**

	<b><u>Number of Teachers Who Made A Difference in Student's Life</u></b>	
	<b>Less Than 3</b>	<b>3 or More</b>
Base:	340	733
	%	%
Gender		
Male	52	50
Female	48	50
Race/Ethnicity		
White	63	59
Black/African American	13	16
Hispanic	15	16
Attitudes about school		
I am interested in my classes at my current school (strongly agree)	18	36
I feel safe at my current school (strongly agree)	23	33
Teachers at my current school care about me (strongly agree)	16	34
My opinion counts at my current school (strongly agree)	11	20
The quality of teachers in my current school is excellent	25	36
Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed (most often true)	52	70
Higher education is extremely important for my future	74	89

### *Conclusions*

Fortunately, having a teacher who has changed their life for the better appears to be a common experience for students. When students have many of these positive connections with teachers, they are also likely to have many other positive school experiences and hold positive views of their education. Those students who have benefited from having several such teachers in their lives are more likely to have positive experiences with and attitudes about education and learning. The student responses indicate that teachers' and principals' perceptions about making a difference in their students' lives are valid.



## Chapter 7: Parental Involvement

### Overview

Principals and new teachers have indicated that they value parental involvement, but that the goal of engaging parents in their children's education can be challenging and elusive. Parental involvement is important from the students' perspective as well and is associated with positive indicators in a teen's educational experiences. But secondary students do not always see the opportunities for parental involvement that principals and teachers report.

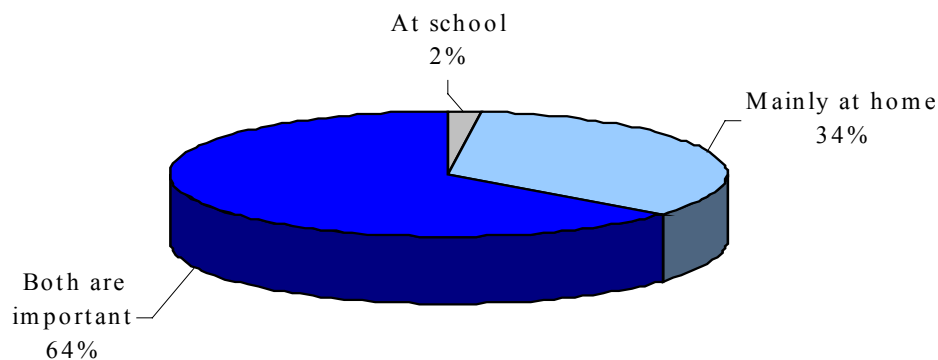
### Student Expectations

Most secondary school students believe that parents should be involved in their school lives. Two-thirds of secondary school students (64%) think it is important for parents to be involved with education both at school and at home. This is twice as many as believe that parents' involvement in education is mostly centered at home (34%). However, a gap exists between this expectation of involvement and what students perceive as their parents' knowledge of their school life. Today, half of secondary school students strongly (19%) or somewhat (34%) agree with the statement, "My parents really don't know what is going on in my school." This is particularly true among senior high school students (10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders). Two-thirds (65%) of senior high school students say that their parents really do not know what is going on in their school, compared to 44% of middle/junior high school students.

**Table 7.1**  
**Students Ratings of Importance of Parental Involvement in School and At Home**

*Q615:* In general, when parents are involved with education, do you think it is important for them to be involved at the school itself, to be involved mainly at home, or are both important?

*Base:* All students (*n*=1073)

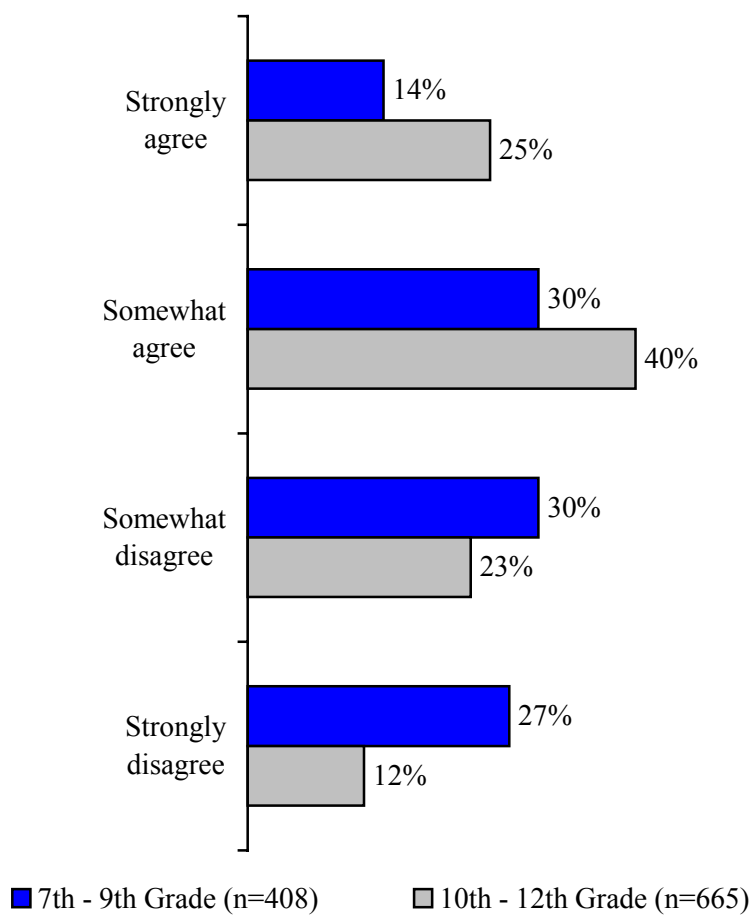


**Table 7.2**  
**Student Perception of Parental Knowledge of School Activity**

*Q610:* How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)

“My parents really don’t know what is going on in my school.”



### *Opportunities for Parental Involvement*

Several factors may contribute to why students feel that their parents are distanced from what is happening in their school. One reason may be students' role in communicating their experiences to their parents. This was not measured in the current study. Another factor is the extent to which the school provides opportunities for and encourages parents to be involved in their children's education. According to two-thirds of secondary school principals (66%) and half (47%) of new teachers at the secondary school level, involving parents is a priority at their school. Students' perspectives on this issue are slightly different. Parental involvement tends to be more focused on after-school activities. Nearly half (45%) say that their school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in after-school activities. But this is almost twice as many as say that their school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in the classroom (27%). And for every student who says that their school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in the classroom, there is a student who says that their school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles (24%). The predominant opinion among secondary school students is that their school only contacts parents when there is a problem with their child (68%).

**Table 7.3**  
**School's Role in Involving Parents in Children's Education**

*Q516:* Based on your teaching experience, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

*Base: All teachers (n=800)*

*Base: All principals (n=841)*

"At my school, involving parents in their children's education is a priority"

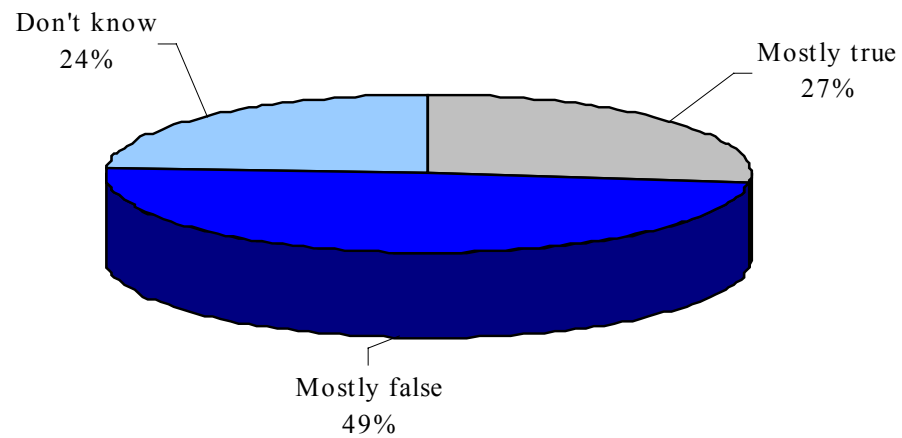
	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Principals</b>
Base:	800	841
	%	%
Strongly/Somewhat agree (Net)	90	97
Strongly agree	59	71
Somewhat agree	31	26
Somewhat/Strongly disagree (Net)	10	3
Somewhat disagree	8	3
Strongly disagree	2	*
No answer	*	-

**Table 7.4**  
**Quality of School's Role in Encouraging Parental Involvement**

*Q605:* Do you think each of the following statements about your school is mostly true or mostly false?

*Base:* All students (*n*=1073)

"My school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in the classroom."



**Table 7.5**  
**School's Role in Encouraging Parental Involvement in After-School Activities**

*Q605:* Do you think each of the following statements about your school is mostly true of mostly false?  
*Base:* All students (*n*=1073)

		Mostly True	Mostly False	Don't know
My school only contacts parents when there is a problem with their child	%	68	21	11
My school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in sports, arts and other after-school activities	%	45	33	23
My school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles	%	24	48	28

**DID YOU KNOW THAT...?**

Students today are just as likely as those in 1998 to report that their school only contacts parents when there is a problem with their child (65%). The number of students who report that their school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles has increased slightly over the past seven years. In *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 1998: Building Family-School Partnerships: Views of Teachers and Students*, 18% of secondary school students reported that their school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles, compared to 24% who report this today.

As seen in Chapter 2, secondary school teachers believe that their school offers a range of ways for parents to participate, but that most parents do not. A majority of secondary school teachers reports that their school asks parents to attend parent-teacher conferences, fundraising, oversee homework, participate in educational activities at home and go on field trips with the class. But fewer than half of teachers say that most parents participate in these activities.

Secondary school students provide a different perspective than new teachers on specific opportunities that are available for their parents to participate. They appear to contradict new teachers' perceptions. Six in ten secondary school students (63%) say that, at least once a week, their parents talk about current events and six in ten (57%) make sure their homework is done. As for their parents participating with them in school or other educational activities, a striking finding is how many students say that these types of activities did not occur at all in the past year – with or without their parents:

- 35% of secondary school students say that they did not have field trips in the past year.
- 35% of secondary school students say they did not go to a museum in the past year.
- 18% of secondary school students say that there were no parent-teacher conferences in the past year.
- 11% of secondary school students say that there were no open-school nights in the past year.

**Table 7.6**  
**Parental Involvement in School Activities in the Last 12 Months**

*Q640:* In the past 12 months, have your parents . . .?

*Base:* All students (*n*=1073)

		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Did Not Have Event</b>
Attended an open school night	%	55	34	11
Attended a parent-teacher conference	%	49	34	18
Visited a museum with you	%	18	47	35
Gone on field trips with you	%	12	53	35

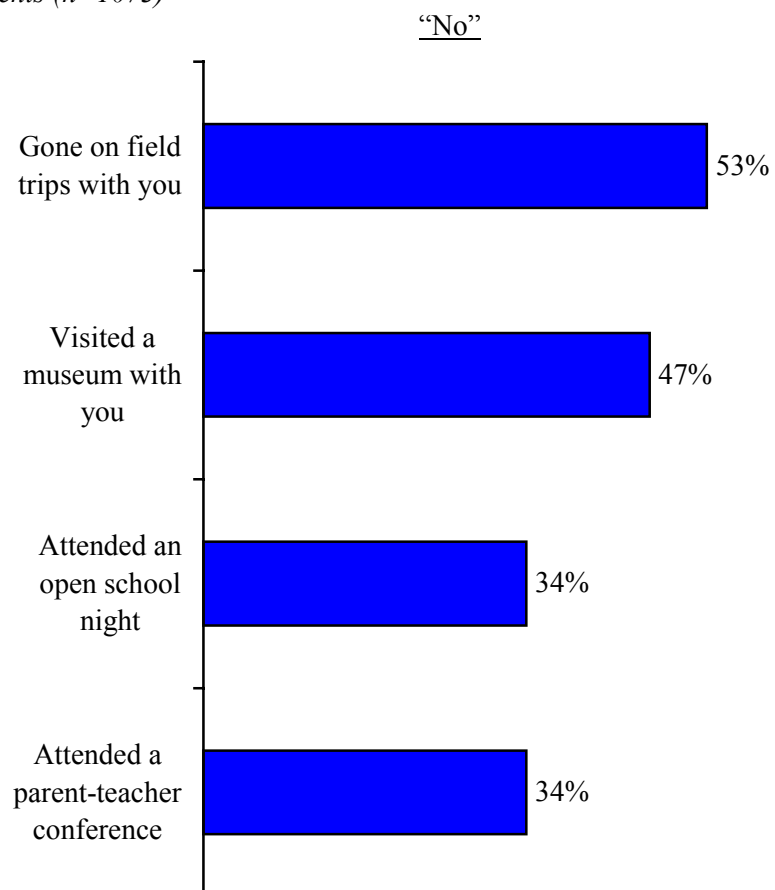
In addition to those students who report that these opportunities for involvement were not available during the past year, large numbers of students report that their parents have not done these activities:

- 53% say their parents have not gone on field trips with them.
- 47% say that their parents have not visited a museum with them.
- 34% say that their parents have not attended a parent-teacher conference.
- 34% say that their parents have not attended an open school night.

**Table 7.7**  
**Lack of Parental Involvement in the Last 12 Months**

*Q640:* In the past 12 months, have your parents . . . ?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)



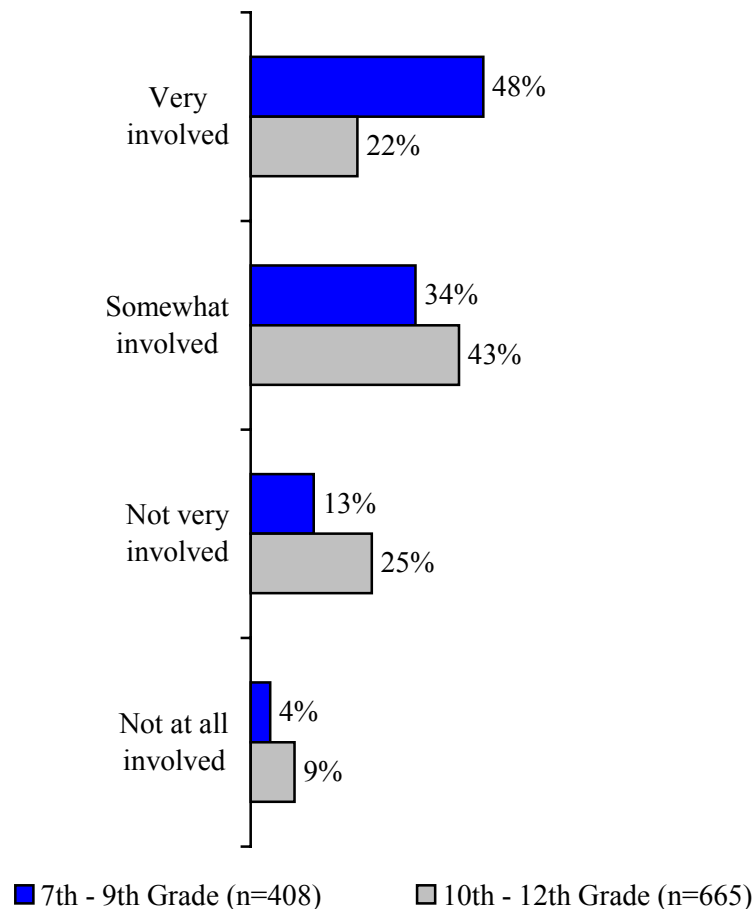
### *Students' Ratings of Parental Involvement*

Despite this lack of participation in specific school-oriented events, most students report that their parents are involved in their education. Three-quarters of secondary school students describe their parents as very (36%) or somewhat (39%) involved with their education. But even within secondary school, this level appears to decline over time. Students in 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades are less likely than those in 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> grades to describe their parents as involved with their education (66% vs. 82%). Although those students whose parents are less involved are more likely than others to want their parents to become more involved (26% vs. 9%), most students do not want their parents' involvement to change.

**Table 7.8**  
**Student Perceptions of Parental/Guardian Involvement in their Education by Grade**

*Q620: How involved are your parents or guardians with your education?*

*Base: All students (n=1073)*

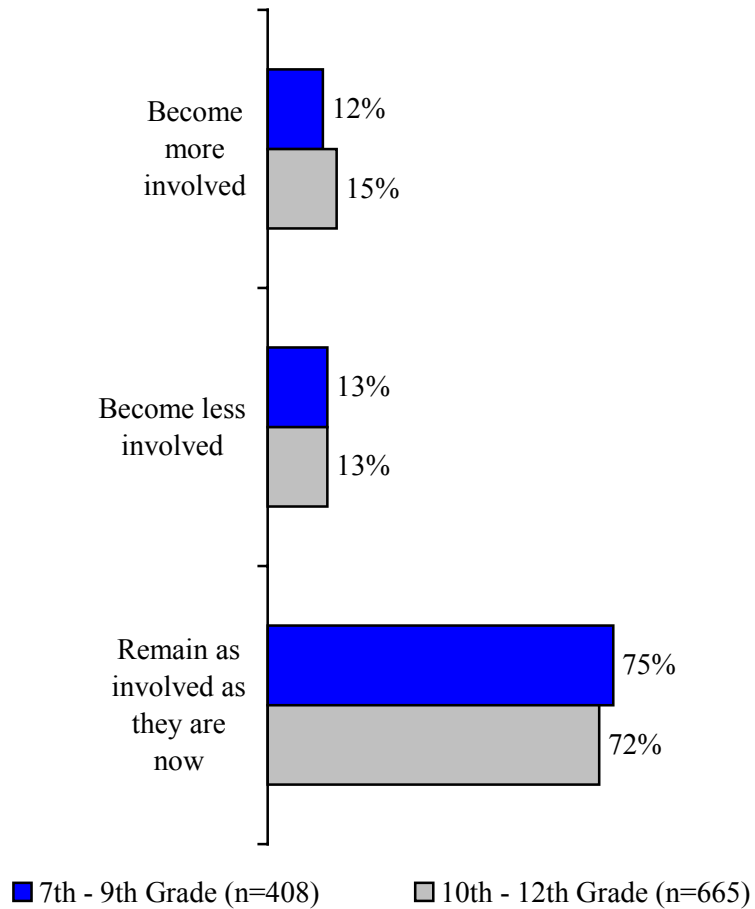




**Table 7.9**  
**Student Desire for Parents/Guardians to be more Involved with their Educational Life**

*Q625:* Would you like your parents or guardians to become more involved, less involved or remain as involved as they are now with your education?

*Base:* All students (*n*=1073)



**DID YOU KNOW THAT...?**

According to students, parental involvement has declined slightly since 1998. In *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 1998: Building Family-School Partnerships: Views of Teachers and Students*, 83% of secondary school students reported that their parents were very (40%) or somewhat (43%) involved with their education. Today, 75% of secondary school students report that their parents are very or somewhat involved in their education.

Students who report that their parents are not involved in their education differ from those with involved parents in several areas. Students' ratings of their parents' level of involvement in their education are associated with their reports of their parents' participation in specific school activities, their parents' knowledge of school and the quality of their relationship with their parents. Students whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to report that their parents know their teachers, and have participated in school activities. Furthermore, these students are more likely than others to have a satisfying relationship with their parents and feel that they could go to them for help in choosing classes.

**Table 7.10**  
**Student Perceptions of Parental Involvement in Student Activities**

	<b>Students</b>	<b><u>Parent Involvement</u></b>	
		<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
Base:	1073	808	265
	%	%	%
My parents or guardians know my teachers at my school (strongly/somewhat agree)	57	66	29
My parents really don't know what is going on in my school (strongly/somewhat agree)	53	45	79
Parent-school activities in past 12 months			
Attended an open school night	55	63	31
Attended a parent-teacher conference	49	55	29
Gone of field trips	12	14	5
Lack of parent involvement in activities in past 12 months			
Never made sure homework was done	19	10	44
Never talked about current events	10	6	25
Very/somewhat satisfying relationship with my parents	81	89	58
Could go to mother/father if they needed advice what classes to take at school	65	76	34

An area that many secondary school teachers report encouraging parental involvement is making sure homework is done. However, only 19% of new teachers who ask parents to be involved this way report that most parents take them up on this offer. Nine in ten students (92%) do report asking their parents for

help with school work. Most secondary school students also report asking their parents for help with problems with their teacher or other students, or dealing with emotions. However, this is not universal:

- 19% of secondary school students do not ask their parents for help with their emotions.
- 13% of secondary school students do not ask their parents for help with problems with teachers or students.
- 8% of secondary school students do not ask their parents for help with school work.

**Table 7.11**  
**Student Perception of Parental Involvement in their Education in the Last 12 Months**

*Q635:* In the past 12 months, how often have your parents done the following?

*Base:* All students (n=1073)

	<b>Made Sure My Homework Was Done</b>	<b>Talked About Current Events or What Was Going on in The News With Me</b>
Base:	1073	1073
	%	%
A few times or more/Once a week (Net)	57	63
A few times a week or more	46	41
Once a week	11	22
Once or twice a month	11	17
A few times a year/Never (Net)	33	20
A few times a year	14	9
Never	19	10

It is important to note that students with highly involved parents do not differ than other students in these reports. They are just as likely to ask for help from their parents. However, these groups of students do differ in how helpful they say their parents are when they do ask them for help in these matters.

Overall, three-quarters or more students who ask for assistance say their parents have been helpful:

- 80% say their parents have been very (46%) or somewhat (34%) helpful when they ask for help with problems they're having with teachers or students.
- 75% say their parents have been very (47%) or somewhat (29%) helpful when they ask for help with emotions, such as feeling discouraged, disappointed or anxious about school.
- 75% say their parents have been very (41%) or somewhat (34%) helpful when they ask for help with their school work.

Note that those students whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to report that their parents have been very helpful in these areas:

- Help with problems they're having with teachers or students (56% vs. 17%);
- Help with emotions they experience (57% vs. 15%);
- Help with school work (50% vs. 14%).

Students who have parents who are involved in their education differ in other ways from those whose parents are not involved in their education. They are more likely to describe successful school experiences, better relationships with teachers and a greater value of education. They are also more likely to have more satisfying relationships with their peers. Although middle/junior high school students are more likely to have involved parents, these two groups do not differ by gender or race/ethnicity.

**Table 7.12**  
**Student Perceptions of School Experiences by Level of Parental Involvement**

	<b>Students</b>	<b><u>Parent Involvement</u></b>	
		<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
Base:	1073	808	265
	%	%	%
Teacher quality			
The quality of teachers at my school is excellent/pretty good	83	85	77
Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed (more often true)	64	68	53
Teachers in my school don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone (more often true)	42	39	49
Teacher-student relationship			
Teachers at my school care about me (strongly/somewhat agree)	78	82	67
Very/somewhat satisfying relationship with my teachers	77	82	62
Very/somewhat satisfying relationship with my principal	52	56	40
School attitudes and atmosphere			
I am interested in my classes at school (strongly/somewhat agree)	79	81	72
Higher education is extremely important for my future	84	87	75
My opinion counts at my school (strongly/somewhat agree)	56	60	47
I feel safe at school (strongly/somewhat agree)	74	77	63
Parental and community support for my school is excellent/pretty good	63	67	49

**Table 7.13**  
**Demographic Profile of Students Based on Parental Involvement**

	<b>Students</b>	<b><u>Parent Involvement</u></b>	
		<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
Base:	1073	808	265
	%	%	%
Gender			
Male	51	52	48
Female	49	48	52
Grade Level			
7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	54	59	37
10 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup>	46	41	63
Parent's Education			
High school or less	32	30	36
Some college/Associate's degree	31	31	29
College degree or more	29	31	22
Size of place			
Urban	29	29	29
Suburban	48	48	50
Rural	23	24	21
Race/Ethnicity			
White	60	63	52
Black/African American	15	16	13
Hispanic	16	14	22

### *Conclusions*

These findings demonstrate that parental involvement in education is related to many aspects of students' lives. This supports teachers' and principals' emphasis on the critical importance of parents in students' education. The challenge for both educators and parents is to how best promote and encourage parental involvement in ways that most contribute to teacher effectiveness and student success, particularly as they transition to secondary school.

## Part IV: Tomorrow's Teachers and Principals

### Chapter 8: The State of Professions in Education

#### Overview

Teachers are leaving the profession in great numbers. This departure has been documented in several recent studies. In 2001, overall turnover rate in education was 13%<sup>2</sup>. For new teachers leaving the profession, the rates of departure jump significantly, particularly in at-risk schools. A report from 2000 found that one fifth of beginning teachers left the profession within their first four years<sup>3</sup>. The turnover rate then jumps to almost 50% for new teachers in high-poverty schools, according to a forthcoming report.<sup>4</sup> Retaining qualified teachers is important for the future of the profession and also for economic reasons. The average cost to recruit, hire, prepare and then lose a teacher is \$50,000.<sup>5</sup> In the context of the attrition of teachers through the beginning retirement of the baby boom generation, the loss of teachers at the very start of their career highlights the importance of retaining qualified teachers, and understanding the various predictors involved in teachers and principals departing from their professions.

This chapter examines educators' and students' own assessment of the state of the profession, as well as teachers' and principals' satisfaction with their careers. Examining the role of satisfaction and how that has changed over the years informs us about the state of being in the educational profession at this time. *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* has explored the topic of satisfaction over the past two decades and provides a snapshot of trends in professional satisfaction.

#### New Teacher and Principal Satisfaction

Recent editions of *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* demonstrate that new teachers tend to be less satisfied than more experienced teachers with their jobs. In 2001, *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Key Elements of Quality Schools* found that 45% of new teachers were very satisfied with their jobs, compared to 54% of experienced teachers. This trend held in the 2003 *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: An Examination of School Leadership* as well, although overall satisfaction increased for both groups (49% vs. 59%). In this year's survey, satisfaction has continued to increase, with 66% of teachers with 5 years or less experience who are very satisfied with teaching as a career and a total of 94% who are very or somewhat satisfied.

For new teachers, satisfaction does not differ among elementary and secondary school teachers or based on the proportion of low income students in the school. However, satisfaction does vary as a function of the school location and the proportion of minority students in the school. New teachers working in an urban setting report lower satisfaction levels than those in suburban or rural areas (56% vs. 70% very satisfied). New teachers working in schools where half or more of the student body are minority students are less satisfied with teaching as a career (57% vs. 71% very satisfied).

Principals report higher overall levels of satisfaction than teachers in their educational roles. Three-quarters (76%) are very satisfied with their job as principal in a public school. Unlike teachers, new principals did not differ from more experienced principals in their level of satisfaction. This difference

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<sup>2</sup> Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover, teacher shortages, and the organization of schools. Seattle, WA: University of Washington, Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

<sup>3</sup> Henke, R. R., Chen, X., Geis, S. & Knepper, P. (2000). *Progress through the teacher pipeline: 1992-93 college graduates and elementary/secondary school teaching as of 1997*. (NCES Report No. 2000-152). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

<sup>4</sup> Berry, B. & Hirsch, E. (2005) Recruiting and retaining teachers for hard to staff schools, Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices.

<sup>5</sup> *No Dream Denied* (2003). National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

may be due to the fact that new principals are not really “new” to the education profession. On average, the new principals, those with 5 or less years experience, have already worked 14.2 years as a teacher.

### *Most Satisfying Aspects as a Teacher and Principal*

Principals and new teachers in the survey were asked about their greatest sources of satisfaction and of stress and worry in their careers. Despite their different roles and different levels of experience, the top most satisfying aspects of being a teacher and being a principal are identical. Both teachers and principals are most likely to mention the students as their greatest sources of satisfaction (75% of new teachers and 77% of principals). The next most common reason cited by both groups is a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment (35% of new teachers and 35% of principals).

Elementary school principals are more likely than secondary school principals to emphasize the student relationship (80% vs. 71%), while secondary school principals are more likely than their elementary school counterparts to mention a sense of fulfillment (42% vs. 30%). For new teachers, school level does not distinguish their greatest sources of satisfaction. Rather, school location and having a predominantly minority student population appears to play a role. New teachers in suburban or rural schools are more likely than urban teachers to emphasize the student relationship (78% vs. 67%), while new teachers in urban schools are more likely than suburban or rural teachers to mention a sense of fulfillment (45% vs. 31%). The same pattern for new teachers in urban schools holds true for teachers in schools with a predominantly minority student population. New teachers in schools with a majority of minority students are less likely than others to emphasize the student relationship (69% vs. 78%), and more likely to emphasize the sense of fulfillment (46% vs. 29%).



**Table 8.1**  
**Aspects of Teaching/Being a Principal that are the Most Satisfying**

*Q715: Regardless of how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with teaching/being a principal as a career, what aspects of teaching give you the greatest satisfaction? (Open-ended)*

*Base: All teachers (n=800); All principals (n=841)*

	Principals	Teachers
Base:	841	800
	%	%
Staff/Teachers	25	4
Parents	13	3
Students	77	75
Fulfillment	35	35
Helping (staff, parents, kids, etc.)	4	1
Designing/Implementing new programs/curriculum/ policy/vision	2	*
Working with the community	2	*
Daily variety	1	*
Providing good learning environment	1	-
Other	5	2

#### *Most Stressful Aspects as a Principal and Teacher*

While educators showed a consensus on a focused list of sources of satisfaction, they convey a more detailed and lengthy list for their sources of stress and anxiety. Topping the list for new teachers as their greatest sources of stress or anxiety are administrative, classroom management and testing responsibilities (34%), followed by student-related areas (28%) (including disorderly or unmotivated students, as well as letting students down). New teachers' third most common source of stress is parents. While only 3% of new teachers mention parents as a source of satisfaction, 20% say they are among their greatest sources of stress or anxiety. Principals' list of stressors differs in emphasis from that of new teachers. Principals' most common source of stress is parents (28%), followed by testing, administrative and management duties (27%). For principals, government, bureaucracy and politics (15%) and student issues (15%) rounds out their list of stressors.

As with satisfaction, sources of stress and anxiety do differ based on such factors as school level, although school location and student composition play less of a role. Principals and new teachers in secondary school are both more likely than their elementary school counterparts to mention students as a source of stress. New teachers at the elementary school level are more likely than secondary school teachers to mention administrative duties, particularly the emphasis on testing (16% vs. 8%). However, elementary and secondary school educators are equally likely to mention parents as stressors.

**Table 8.2**  
**Aspects of Teaching/Being a Principal that are Greatest Source of Stress or Anxiety**

*Q725: What aspects of teaching/being a principal are your greatest sources of stress or anxiety? (Open-ended)*

*Base: All teachers (n=800); All principals (n=841)*

	Teachers	Principals
Base:	800	841
	%	%
Service/Duty	34	27
Students	28	15
Parents	20	28
Time constraints	9	8
Staff/Teachers	7	8
Government/Politics	4	15
Unrealistic demands/work load/number of responsibilities	4	6
Administration	4	1
Finance	3	9
Personnel issues/Union/Low pay/Teacher conflict, discipline, complaints and incompetence	3	6
Lack of resources	2	5
Not receiving recognition for a job well done	1	1
Concern about lack of safety	1	3
Board	*	1
Dealing with difficult unexpected/uncontrollable situations and people	*	2
Meeting everyone's needs	-	1
Other	6	6
None/Nothing	1	*
No answer	1	2

#### *Profile of Teachers and Principals Likely to Leave the Profession*

Over a decade ago, *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* conducted a series of surveys which followed the experiences of new teachers, conducting interviews immediately prior to their first year of teaching, after their first year and after their second year of teaching. In the 1992 *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: The Second Year: New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals*, 19% of teachers who had just completed their second year of teaching reported that they were very or fairly likely to leave the

teaching profession to go into some different occupation. In addition, at that point in 1992 in *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: The Second Year*, 7% of the original sample of teachers had already left the profession. In the 2001 *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*, 23% of teachers with five years or less experience reported that they were very or fairly likely to leave the profession. This year's study found that these rates have remained relative stable. Two in ten (18%) new teachers reported that they were fairly or very likely to leave the profession. Similarly, 23% of new principals report that they are very or fairly likely to leave the profession. Overall, a little over one-third (35%) of principals report that it is very or fairly likely they will leave their job as a school principal to go into another occupation within the next five years.

Who are these new teachers who expect to leave the profession in the next 5 years – the “at-risk” teachers? Not surprisingly, they are much more likely to be dissatisfied with teaching than other new teachers (26% vs. 2%). Although grade level taught does not differentiate between these groups, new teachers who are likely to leave the profession are more likely to teach in urban schools or in schools with high proportions of low income or minority students. New teachers who plan to leave the profession are more likely to be Black or Hispanic than teachers who do not plan to leave.

**OBSERVATION...**

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1999-2000), Black or Hispanic teachers are more likely than White teachers to be beginning teachers. The current survey revealed that Black or Hispanic teachers are also more likely to teach in schools with a predominantly low income population, schools that have traditionally been harder to staff.

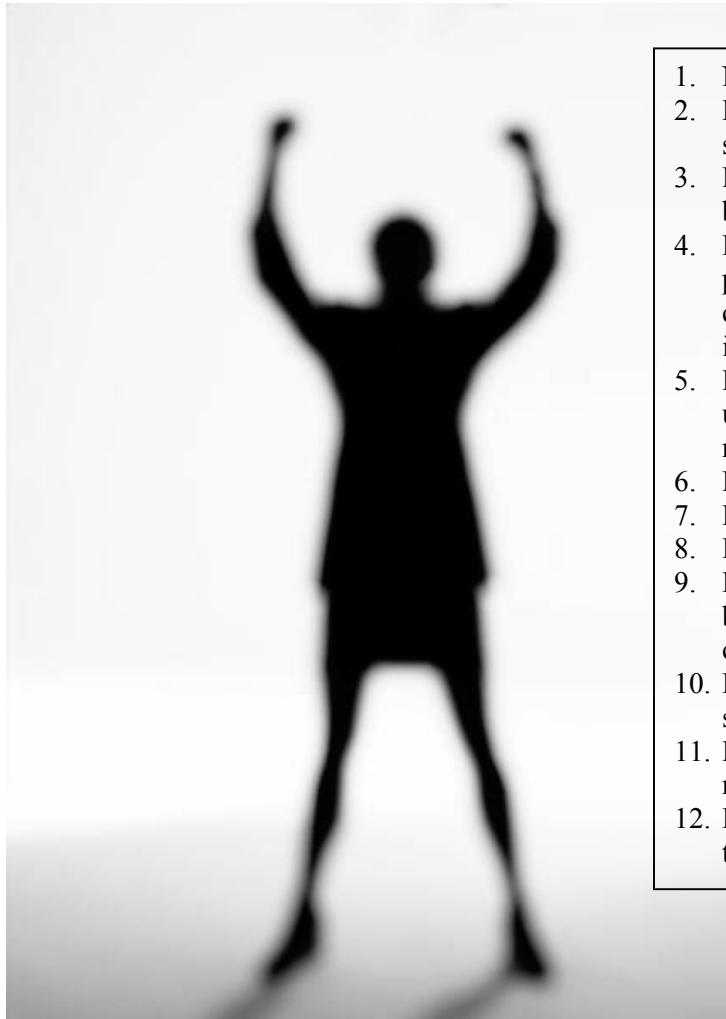
In contrast, the profile of principals who plan to leave the profession does not differ much from those who plan to remain principals. However, the principals participating in this study reflect both new and experienced principals. Thus, the one area that the principals who plan to leave differ from others is in age. Principals who plan to leave the profession are 5 years older, on average, than other principals.

**Table 8.3**  
**Teachers and Principals**  
**Likelihood of Leaving Profession – Demographic Profile**

	<b>New Teachers Likelihood of Leaving Profession</b>		<b>Principals Likelihood of Leaving Profession</b>	
	<b>Very/Fairly Likely</b>	<b>Not at all/ Not Too Likely</b>	<b>Very/Fairly Likely</b>	<b>Not at all/ Not Too Likely</b>
Base:	146	652	295	536
	%	%	%	%
Satisfaction with career				
Very/Somewhat satisfied	73	98	98	99
Very/Somewhat dissatisfied	26	2	2	1
Age (Mean)	34.0	34.1	52.5	47.4
Gender				
Male	20	26	54	48
Female	80	74	46	52
Hispanic ethnicity				
Hispanic	11	6	3	2
Non-Hispanic	87	93	96	98
Race				
White	70	88	90	89
Black/African-American	15	5	5	5
Other	15	7	5	6
Years of experience in current occupation (Mean)	4	3.9	12	7.3
School Level				
Elementary (K-5)	59	54	66	67
Secondary (6-12)	44	49	40	41
School Location				
Inner city/Urban	39	27	23	28
Suburban	36	42	38	32
Small town/Rural	22	30	39	40
Size of school				
300 students or less	7	13	29	31
More than 300	93	86	71	68
Students from low income families				
Less than 50%	45	53	62	61
50% or more	54	44	38	39
Students from minority families				
Less than 50%	55	68	74	76
50% or more	44	31	26	24

The preceding table shows that the profiles of teachers “at-risk” for leaving the profession differ from those of other teachers. Beyond this description, an analysis of teachers’ views and experiences revealed that these reasons can predict which teachers are likely to leave<sup>6</sup>. Twelve factors examined significantly predict why a teacher would be likely to leave the profession of teaching to go into a different profession in the next five years.

## Portrait of a Teacher Likely to Leave in the Next 5 Years



1. Not satisfied with teaching as a career
2. Feels as if their job is not valued by their supervisor
3. Feels stress and anxiety related to reviews by their supervisor
4. Feels stress and anxiety related to personnel issues, union, low pay, teacher conflict, discipline, complaints and incompetence
5. Feels stress and anxiety related to unrealistic demands, workload, number of responsibilities
6. Fewer years of experience teaching
7. Minority teacher
8. Feels stress and anxiety related to safety
9. Feels stress and anxiety related to budget/lack of funding/financial constraints
10. Finds making a contribution to society a source of greatest teaching satisfaction
11. Feels stress and anxiety related to lack of resources
12. Finds pay/salary a source of greatest teaching satisfaction

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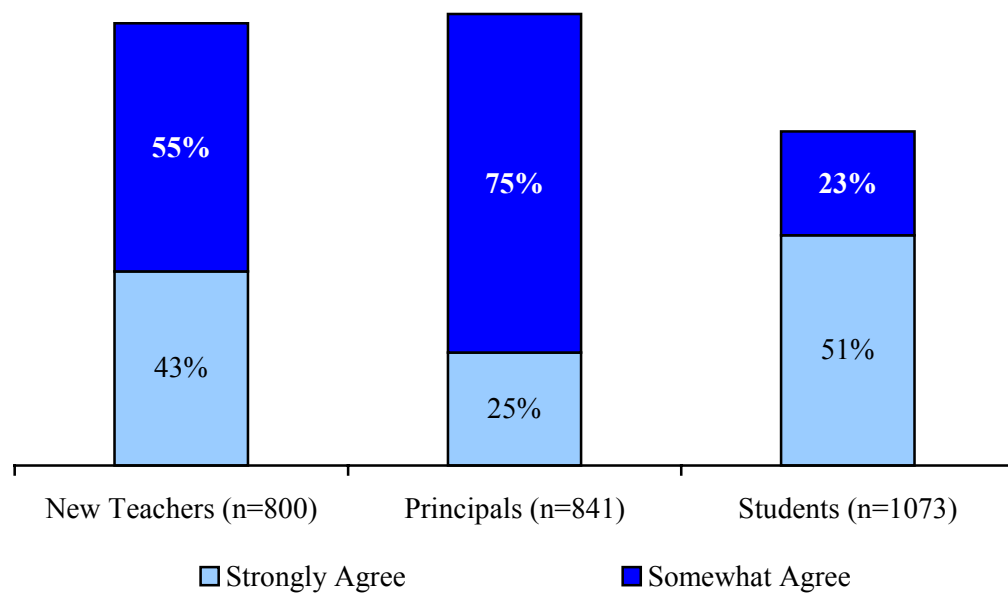
<sup>6</sup> Regression analysis;  $R^2 = 0.522$

Unlike new teachers, principals' responses to the current survey did not predict who is likely to leave the profession. Other factors not covered in the current study are likely to be involved.

### *Dedication and Respect*

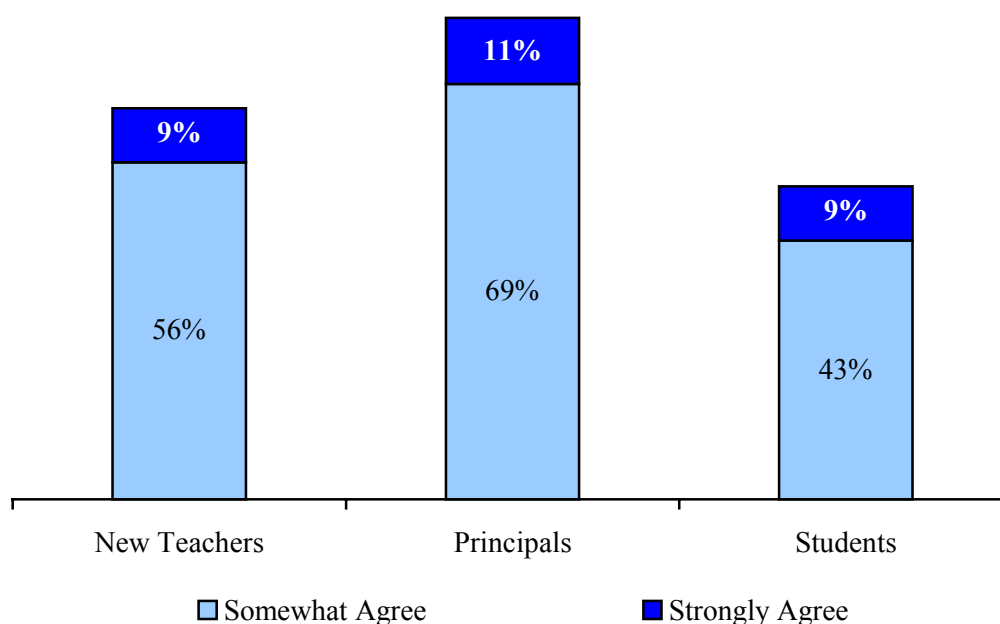
Although most principals and new teachers agree that most teachers are dedicated to their work, new teachers appear to be harder on their colleagues than are principals. Three-quarters of principals (75%) strongly agree that most teachers are dedicated to their work. In contrast, fewer new teachers (55%) hold this view. Secondary students are less likely to endorse the dedication of teachers in general. Only one-quarter (23%) strongly agree that most teachers are dedicated to their work.

**Table 8.4**  
**New Teachers, Principals and Students**  
**Perception of Teacher Dedication**



Although principals and new teachers believe in the dedication of teachers, they are much less positive about their place in society. Only about one in ten new teachers (9%) or principals (11%) strongly agree that teachers are respected in today's society. On this matter, secondary school students are in agreement with educators. Only 9% of students strongly agree that teachers are respected in today's society. Principals and new teachers who are planning on leaving the profession have even more jaded views in this area. Those planning on leaving are less likely than others to agree (strongly or somewhat) that teachers are respected in today's society (principals: 74% vs. 83%; teachers: 45% vs. 70%).

**Table 8.5**  
**New Teachers, Principals and Students**  
**Perception of Society's Respect for Teachers**



Despite new teachers' relatively negative view of the future of teaching reflected in these findings, they actually present a slight improvement compared to those of new teachers a decade ago. In 1992, 56% of teachers with two years of experience strongly or somewhat agreed that teachers are respected in today's society and 91% agreed that most teachers are dedicated to their work. Our current survey found that, among teachers with two years or less experience, 70% agreed that teachers are respected in today's society and 96% agreed that most teachers are dedicated to their work. This trend has also been seen in an overall increase in teacher satisfaction over the past decade and provides an optimistic note to the future of the teaching profession.

### *Conclusions*

Job satisfaction among principals and new teachers is high. Two-thirds of new teachers and three-quarters of principals are very satisfied with their careers. Educators' greatest source of satisfaction is their students and administrative responsibilities rank high among teachers' and principals' sources of stress. However, two in ten new teachers report that they are likely to leave teaching in the next five years – just as they have begun to accumulate training and experience. Those who plan on leaving are more likely to be dissatisfied with their career and to mention stress and anxiety related to their relationship with their supervisor. One area which does not differentiate teachers who plan to leave, and is also a source of common ground among new teachers, principals and students, is how few believe that society respects the teaching profession. Only one in ten members of these groups strongly agree that teachers are respected in today's society.



## **APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY**

## METHODOLOGY

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*The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Transitions and the Role of Supportive Relationships* utilized a multimodal methodology to capture the views of key school stakeholder groups. Telephone interviewing was used to survey teachers and principals. Online interviewing methods were used to capture the perspectives of students. The various sample groups and interviewing methods allow us to gain a greater understanding of school supportive relationships.

### *Teacher Sample*

A total of 800 public school teachers with five years or less teaching experience were interviewed between December 7, 2004 and January 12, 2005 via a telephone interview.

A nationally representative sample of current public school teachers of grades K through 12 with five years or less teaching experience throughout the continental United States was interviewed. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted by a data collection facility from Harris Interactive's network of approved suppliers. Harris Interactive purchased the sample from Market Data Retrieval. The sample included current U.S. public school teachers of grades K-12 with five years or less teaching experience. Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each teacher was screened to ensure that he or she was currently teaching at least part-time in a public school, currently taught in grades K through 12 and had five years or less teaching experience. If the respondent passed the screen, the interview was completed at that time or an appointment was made to complete the interview at a time convenient for the teacher.

### *Weighting of Teacher Data*

Data was weighted to key demographic (school level, sex, region, size of place) variables to align it with the national population of new (5 years or less experience) U.S. elementary and secondary public school teachers.

### *Principal Sample*

A total of 841 public school principals were interviewed between November 29 and December 17, 2004 via telephone interview.

A nationally representative sample of current public school principals of grades K through 12 throughout the continental United States was interviewed. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted by a data collection facility from Harris Interactive's network of approved suppliers. Harris Interactive purchased the sample from Market Data Retrieval. The sample included current U.S. public school principals of grades K-12. Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each principal was screened to ensure that he or she was currently a principal in a public school in grades K through 12. If the respondent passed the screen, the interview was completed at that time or an appointment was made to complete the interview at a time convenient for the principal.

### *Weighting of Principal Data*

Data was weighted to key demographic (school level, sex, region, size of place) variables to align it with the national population of U.S. elementary and secondary public school principals.

### *Student Sample*

A total of 1073 public school students in grades 7-12 were interviewed between December 29, 2004 and January 11, 2005 via an online survey. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length.

Sample was drawn from the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) multimillion member online panel of cooperative respondents from over one hundred countries. In order to reach students in grades 7 through 12, the sample utilized the Youth Panel, a subset of the Harris Interactive Panel of Cooperative Respondents.

Email addresses for respondents in the database have been obtained from a number of sources, including those that follow: HPOL registration site, the Harris/Excite Poll, HPOL banner advertisements, Epinion registrations, Excite product registrations, and Matchlogic sweepstakes. Invitations for this study were emailed to a selected sample of the database: U.S. residents 13-18 years old who were asked to complete the survey themselves, and U.S. parents of 8-12 year olds who were asked to have their child complete the survey.

### *Weighting of Student Data*

Data were weighted to reflect the national population of children 13-18 years old for key demographic variables (grade, gender, race, size of place, region and parent education). Demographic weights were based on data from the U.S. National Center of Education Statistics.

### *Telephone Interviewing Procedures (Teachers and Principals)*

Interviewing for this study was conducted by professional staff and was continuously quality monitored by the supervisory staff. Through direct supervision of the interviewing staff and continuous monitoring of the interviews, a uniformity of responses was achieved that could not have been obtained by other interviewing methods.

The computer-assisted telephone interviewing system (CATI) permits on-line data entry and editing of telephone interviews. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

The CATI system reduces clerical error by eliminating the need for keypunching, since interviewers enter the respondents' answers directly into a computer during the interview itself. For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Provides," "Does not provide," "Not sure"), the CATI system will only accept coded responses corresponding to these choices. All data is tabulated, checked for internal

consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Edit programs act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the CATI program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

### *Online Interviewing Procedures (Students)*

Interviews were conducted using a self-administered, online questionnaire, via Harris' proprietary, web-assisted interviewing software. The Harris Online interviewing system permits online data entry of interviews by the respondents. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Agree", "Disagree", "Not sure"), the system will only accept coded responses corresponding to these choices. All data is tabulated, checked for internal consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

1. Password protection: Each invitation contains a password that is uniquely assigned to that e-mail address. A respondent is required to enter the password at the beginning of the survey to gain access into the survey. Password protection ensures that a respondent completes the survey only one time.
2. Reminder invitations: To increase the number of respondents in the survey and to improve overall response rates, up to two additional reminder invitations are typically mailed at 2-4 day intervals to those respondents who have not yet participated in the survey.
3. Summary of the survey findings: To increase the number of respondents in the survey and to improve overall response rates, respondents are often provided with a summary of some of the survey responses. This too is done via the Internet. Respondents are sent an email that provides them access to a web site that will contain the survey findings. As with the survey itself, this is a password-protected site that is accessible for a limited period (1-2 weeks).

To maintain the reliability and integrity in the sample, the following procedures are used. The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Our edit programs

act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the online program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

### *Reliability of Survey Percentages*

The results from any survey sample 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.

Exhibit A.1 shows the range of sampling variation that applies to percentage results for this type of 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.

**Exhibit A.1**  
**Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to**  
**Use in Evaluating Percentage Results**

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%
2,000	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. Exhibit A.2 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 Exhibit, 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.

**Exhibit A.2**  
**Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use**  
**in Evaluating Differences Between Two**  
**Percentage Results**

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%
2,000 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

*Non-Sampling Error*

Sampling error is only one way in which survey findings may vary from the findings that would result from interviewing every member of the relevant population. Survey research is susceptible to human and mechanical errors as well, such as interviewer recording and data handling errors. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm, including the CAI systems described earlier, keep these types of errors to a minimum.

## **APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE**



HARRIS INTERACTIVE  
161 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10013

**METLIFE SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2004-2005**  
**Datasheeted Student Questionnaire**

**Field Period: 12/29/04 - 1/11/05**  
**1,073 completed interviews with students in grades 7-12.**

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**SUBJECTS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

SECTION 300:	SCREENING QUESTIONS
SECTION 400:	BEING AT A NEW SCHOOL
SECTION 500:	KIDS' VIEWS ON TEACHING
SECTION 600:	PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS
SECTION 700:	RESULTS/SOFT EXIT ITEMS
SECTION 100:	DEMOGRAPHICS

---

Notes on reading the results

The percentage of respondents has been included for each item. An asterisk (\*) signifies a value of less than one-half percent. A dash represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents answering that question.

<b>SECTION 300: SCREENING QUESTIONS</b>
---

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q102**

Are you...?

01	Male	51
02	Female	49

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q104** In what year were you born? *Please enter as a four-digit number, e.g., 1963.*

□□□□

**MEAN (AGE COMPUTED FROM DOB) 14.7**

**BASE: ALL U.S. RESPONDENTS (Q110/244)**

**Q315** What is your status as a student this school year?

01	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	18
02	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	17
03	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	19
04	10 <sup>th</sup> grade	17
05	11 <sup>th</sup> grade	15
06	12 <sup>th</sup> grade	14

**BASE: ATTEND GRADE 3 - 12(Q315/2-11)**

**Q320** Is the school that you currently attend...?

1	In an urban or city area	29
2	In a suburban area next to a city	48
3	In a small town or rural area	23

**BASE: ATTEND GRADE 3 - 12(Q315/2-11)**

**Q325** Is your school...?

1	A private or parochial school	-
2	A public school	100
3	I am homeschooled.	-
8	Not sure	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(360/1-6 and Q390/2,3)**

**Q330** What is the youngest grade in your school?

1	Kindergarten or earlier	9
2	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	*
3	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	*
4	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	*
5	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	*
6	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	2
7	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	19
8	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	12
9	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1
10	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	55
11	10 <sup>th</sup> grade	2
12	11 <sup>th</sup> grade	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q340 What is the oldest grade in your school?

8	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	*
9	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	29
10	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	2
11	10 <sup>th</sup> grade	1
12	11 <sup>th</sup> grade	*
13	12 <sup>th</sup> grade	67

**SECTION 400: BEING AT A NEW SCHOOL****BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**Q405 The next few questions will be about your experiences when you first started going to your current school.

What grade were you in when you first started going to your current school? If this is your first year at the school, please select your current grade.

1	Kindergarten or earlier	4
2	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	1
3	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	*
4	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	*
5	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	*
6	5 <sup>th</sup> grade	2
7	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	18
8	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	14
9	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1
10	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	53
11	10 <sup>th</sup> grade	5
12	11 <sup>th</sup> grade	2
13	12 <sup>th</sup> grade	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q410 When you first started going to your current school, did anyone at school give you information or guidance about the following...?

Q411

	1 No	2 Yes	8 Not sure
1 Where to get lunch	26	71	3
2 Where things were located, such as bathrooms, your locker, the gym, etc.	20	76	3
3 What classes to take	31	64	5

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q420 If you've only ever attended one school, please think about how you felt when you first attended that school. How did you feel about going to a new school? Please select &lt;font color=blue&gt;all&lt;/font&gt; that apply.

1	Happy	34
2	Sad	12
3	Nervous	71
4	Scared	40
5	Excited	64
6	I didn't feel anything.	10
7	None of these	3

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q425 When you were in [INSERT from Q405] grade and first started to go to your current school, how often did the following happen?

Q426

	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Some- times	4 Often	5 Very often
1 Students ignored me	24	27	31	13	5
2 Students teased or bullied me	50	27	16	5	3
3 Students helped me	6	18	43	27	6

**BASE: STUDENTS IGNORED, TEASED OR HELPED (Q425/ANY 1-3 AND Q426/2-5)**

Q430 In what grades were the students who did the following?

Q431

	1 In older grades	2 In same grade	3 In younger grades
1 Students ignored me	69	59	13
2 Students teased or bullied me	57	62	9
3 Students helped me	61	75	7

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q432 Is your school ...?

1 Bigger than your previous school	72
2 About the same size as your previous school	9
3 Smaller than your previous school	8
4 I have only gone to one school.	11

**BASE: HAVE GONE TO ANOTHER SCHOOL(Q432/1-3)**

Q435 When you started [INSERT FIRST GRADE AT CURRENT SCHOOL Q405] grade at your current school, how many of the students were from your previous school?

1 All	7
2 Most	31
3 Some	47
4 None	15

**BASE: HAVE GONE TO ANOTHER SCHOOL (Q432/1-3)**Q440 Thinking about your previous school, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q441

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Some- what disagree	3 Some- what agree	4 Strongly agree
1 Teachers at my previous school cared about me.	7	9	48	37
2 I felt safe at my previous school.	7	12	38	43
3 My parents or guardians knew my teachers at my previous school.	13	16	31	40
4 My opinion counted at my previous school.	19	24	42	16
5 I was interested in my classes at my previous school.	11	22	50	17

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**Q445 Thinking about your current school, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q446

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Some- what disagree	3 Some- what agree	4 Strongly agree
1 Teachers at my current school care about me.	7	15	50	28
2 I feel safe at my current school.	10	16	44	29
3 My parents or guardians know my teachers at my current school.	19	24	37	20
4 My opinion counts at my current school.	16	27	40	17
5 I am interested in my classes at my current school.	9	13	49	30

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q450 At your current school, how often do the following things happen?

Q451

	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Very often
1 New students are teased or bullied by other students.	11	33	36	13	7
2 New students are helped by other students.	2	10	40	35	12

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q455 Overall, would you say....?

1 Most students in your school get along with one another	64
2 Only some students in your school get along with one another	34
3 Hardly any students in your school get along with one another	2

<b>SECTION 500: KIDS' VIEWS ON TEACHING</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q500 How much do you agree or disagree with the following?

Q501

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Some- what disagree	3 Some- what agree	4 Strongly agree
1 Teachers can really make a positive difference in the lives of their students.	3	7	38	52
2 Teachers are respected in today's society.	14	35	43	9
3 Most teachers are dedicated to their work.	8	19	51	23
4 Teachers need to know what is going on in their students' lives in order to be good at their jobs.	9	19	51	21
5 All children can learn.	2	9	30	58

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q505 How would you rate your school on the following issues?

Q506

	1 Excellent	2 Pretty good	3 Only fair	4 Poor	9 Don't know
1 The quality of teachers in my school	32	51	9	6	1
2 Parental and community support for my school	22	40	21	11	5

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q510 Do you think each of these statements is more often true or more often false for your school?

Q511

	1 More often True	2 More often false	9 Don't know
1 Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed.	64	26	10
2 Teachers in my school don't have enough time to pay attention to everyone.	42	43	15

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q515 How helpful are your teachers when you ask for their help with...?

Q516

	1 Very helpful	2 Somewhat helpful	3 Not very helpful	4 Not at all helpful	5 Never asked for help
1 Your school work	51	36	6	2	5
2 Problems you're having with other teachers	9	28	18	11	33
3 Problems you're having with other students	16	31	16	8	29
4 Emotions you might experience, such as feeling discouraged, disappointed or anxious about school	16	30	13	9	32

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

**(645,646)**

Q520 How many teachers have you ever had who really made a difference in your life for the better?

/ \_ / \_ /

**Mean**

**4.0**

**BASE: HAD TEACHER WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE(Q520/1-50)**

Q525 [IF MORE THAN ONE TEACHER (Q520/2-50): Think about the teacher who has made the biggest difference in your life.] What grade were you in when you had this teacher?

1 Kindergarten or earlier	4
2 1 <sup>st</sup> grade	5
3 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	6
4 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	6
5 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	9
6 5 <sup>th</sup> grade	12
7 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	11
8 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	10
9 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	14
10 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	10
11 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	6
12 11 <sup>th</sup> grade	5
13 12 <sup>th</sup> grade	2

**BASE: HAD TEACHER WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE(Q520/1-50)**

Q530 What subject did this teacher teach?

1	General – did not teach a specific subject	40
2	English/Reading	17
3	Math	9
4	Science	8
5	History or social studies	11
6	Physical education or gym	3
7	Music	4
8	Art	1
9	Computers	*
10	Foreign language	3
11	English as a second language (ESL)	*
12	Other	3

**BASE: OTHER SUBJECT (Q530/12)**

Q532 What subject did this teacher teach?

[TEXT BOX]

**BASE: HAD TEACHER WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE(Q520/1-50)**

Q535 In which areas of your life did this teacher make a difference? Please select <font color=blue>all</font> that apply.

1	Helped me to do better in school	75
2	Helped me to pursue my interest	55
3	Helped me to get a job	2
4	Helped me with a personal or family problem	26
5	Helped me with a problem I had with other students at school	27
6	Introduced me to new ideas	69
7	Something else [SPECIFY]	22

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q535/7)**

Q537 In what area of your life did this teacher make a difference?

[TEXT BOX]

**BASE: HAD TEACHER WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE(Q520/1-50)**

Q540 How much did this teacher know about your life outside of school?

1	Not at all	9
2	Not very much	27
3	Some	46
4	A great deal	19



<b>SECTION 600: PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q605 Do you think each of the following statements about your school is mostly true or mostly false?

Q606

	1 Mostly true	2 Mostly false	3 Don't know
1 My school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement	27	49	24
2 My school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in sports, arts and other after-school activities.	45	33	23
3 My school does not give parents the opportunity for any meaningful roles.	24	48	28
4 My school only contacts parents when there is a problem with their child.	68	21	11

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q610 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Q611

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Somewhat disagree	3 Somewhat agree	4 Strongly agree
1 Teachers in my school do everything they can to help students succeed.	7	21	53	19
2 My parents really don't know what is going on in my school.	20	27	34	19

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q615 In general, when parents are involved with education, do you think it is important for them to be involved at the school itself, to be involved mainly at home, or are both important?

1 At school	2
2 Mainly at home	34
3 Both are important	64

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q620 How involved are your parents or guardians with your education?

1 Very involved	36
2 Somewhat involved	39
3 Not very involved	19
4 Not at all involved	7

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q625 Would you like your parents or guardians to become more involved, less involved or remain as involved as they are now with your education?

1	Become more involved	13
2	Become less involved	13
3	Remain as involved as they are now	74

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q630 How helpful are your parents or guardians when you ask for their help with...?

Q631

		1	2	3	4	5
		Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not very helpful	Not at all helpful	Never asked for help
1	Your school work	38	32	13	10	8
2	Problems you're having with your teachers or other students	40	30	10	8	13
3	Emotions you might experience, such as feeling discouraged, disappointed or anxious about school	38	23	10	10	19

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q635 In the past 12 months, how often have your parents done the following?

Q636

		1	2	3	4	8
		A few times a week or more	Once a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Never
1	Made sure my homework was done	46	11	11	14	19
2	Talked about current events or what was going on in the news with me	41	22	17	9	10

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q640 In the past 12 months, have your parents...?

Q641

		1	2	8
		Yes	No	Did not have event
1	Gone on field trips with you	12	53	35
2	Attended a parent-teacher conference	49	34	18
3	Visited a museum with you	18	47	35
4	Attended an open school night	55	34	11

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q645 Who are the people you could go to if you needed advice about what classes to take at school? Please select all that apply.

1	Mother or father	65
2	Brother or sister	39
3	Friend	71
4	Teacher	65
5	Guidance counselor	61
6	Clergy (minister, priest, rabbi or imam)	5
96	Someone else [SPECIFY]	13
98	No one	4

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q645/96)**

Q647 Who else do you go to if you need advice about what classes to take at school?

[TEXT BOX]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q650 How would you describe your relationship with the following people this year?

Q651

	1 Very satisfying	2 Somewhat satisfying	3 Somewhat unsatisfying	4 Very unsatisfying
1 Other students at my school	37	47	12	5
2 My principal	12	40	23	25
3 My teachers	20	57	16	7
4 My parents	38	43	12	7

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q655 Which aspects of school do you like the most? Please select up to two answers.

1	Other students	53
2	Teachers	6
3	Learning new things	31
4	Doing well in a class	30
5	Not being at home	16
6	After-school activities like sports, band or clubs	37
7	Taking tests	2
8	Homework	1
9	Something else [Specify]	5
10	Nothing	6

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q655/9)**

Q657 What aspects of school do you like the most?

[TEXT BOX]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1-6 AND Q390/2,3)**

Q660 Which aspects of school cause you the most worry or stress? Please select up to two answers.

1	Other students	15
2	Teachers	12
3	Learning new things	4
4	Doing well in a class	35
5	Not being at home	3
6	After-school activities like sports, band or clubs	5
7	Taking tests	56
8	Homework	45
9	Something else [Specify]	4
10	Nothing	5

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q660/9)**

Q662 What aspects of school cause you the most worry or stress?

[TEXT BOX]

<b>SECTION 700 RESULTS/SOFT EXIT ITEMS</b>
--

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

Q705 Are a lot of your friends enrolled in school?

1	Yes	94
2	No	6

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

Q710 How do you usually get to school?

1	I drive.	28
2	I take a bus.	41
3	I walk.	11
4	I take a train.	1
5	Another way	20
6	I do not go to school.	*

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

Q721 How important do you think higher education is for your future?

1	Not at all important	1
2	Somewhat important	13
3	Extremely important	84
6	Not sure	3

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

Q731 How important do you think higher education is for a career?

1	Not at all important	1
2	Somewhat important	12
3	Extremely important	85

**SECTION 100: DEMOGRAPHICS****BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q222** To the best of your knowledge, what is the highest level of education your mother has completed or the highest degree she has received?

1	Less than high school	4
2	Completed some high school	6
3	High school graduate or equivalent (e.g., GED)	30
4	Completed some college, but no degree	20
5	Associate's degree	8
6	College graduate (e.g., B.A., B.S.)	14
7	Completed some graduate school, but no degree	2
8	Completed graduate school (e.g., M.S., M.D., Ph.D.)	6
9	Not sure	10

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q224** To the best of your knowledge, what is the highest level of education your father has completed or the highest degree he has received?

1	Less than high school	5
2	Completed some high school	5
3	High school graduate or equivalent (e.g., GED)	28
4	Completed some college, but no degree	18
5	Associate's degree	8
6	College graduate (e.g., B.A., B.S.)	12
7	Completed some graduate school, but no degree	1
8	Completed graduate school (e.g., M.S., M.D., Ph.D.)	7
9	Not sure	16

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q300** Region indicator

1	East	21
2	Midwest	23
3	South	33
4	West	23

HARRIS INTERACTIVE  
161 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10013

**METLIFE SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2004-2005**  
**Datasheeted Teacher Questionnaire**

**Field Period: 12/07/04 - 1/12/05**  
**800 completed interviews with teachers.**

---

**SUBJECTS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

SECTION 300:	SCREENING
SECTION 400:	ATTITUDES, EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES
SECTION 500:	RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND MENTORING
SECTION 600:	FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING
SECTION 700:	THE FUTURE OF TEACHING
SECTION 800:	SCHOOL & TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

---

Notes on reading the results

The percentage of respondents has been included for each item. An asterisk (\*) signifies a value of less than one-half percent. A dash represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents answering that question.

<b>SECTION 300: PRELOADS AND SCREENING</b>
--

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS****Q300** Region indicator

5	East	26
6	Midwest	24
7	South	37
8	West	14

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q305** Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from Harris Interactive, a national survey research firm in New York. We are contacting teachers across the country for a survey on education. Your name was selected on a random basis, and we would like to include your opinions. May I please speak with \_\_\_[PROGRAMMER: INSERT RESPONDENT NAME FROM SAMPLE]\_\_\_\_\_.

(INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY: The sponsor of this study is MetLife. MetLife and Harris Interactive have conducted annual surveys of school teachers for twenty years. This highly publicized series of survey reports, called The American Teacher, has tracked changes in teachers' opinions and needs, and has provided valuable information for both policy makers and the general public.)

(INTERVIEWER: Please be advised that this call may be monitored for quality control purposes)

First, I would like to confirm some information.

**BASE: TEACHERS (Q305/1)****Q310** Do you currently teach in a public school?

1	Yes, teach in public school	100
2	No, do not teach in public school	-
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: CONFIRMED PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS (Q310/1)****Q320** Do you currently teach at least part-time in the classroom?

1	Yes, teach at least part-time in the classroom	100
2	No, do not teach at least part-time in the classroom	-
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS (Q320/1)****Q322** What grades do you currently teach?

01	Kindergarten	13
02	First grade	15
03	Second grade	12
04	Third grade	15
05	Fourth grade	13
06	Fifth grade	11
07	Sixth grade	10
08	Seventh grade	12
09	Eighth grade	12
10	Ninth grade	21
11	Tenth grade	20
12	Eleventh grade	19
13	Twelfth grade	18
98	Not sure	-
99	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS (Q320/1)****Q330** Altogether, how many years have you worked as a teacher/principal?

□□□

**MEAN 3.9****SECTION 400: ATTITUDES, EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES****BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)****Q400** I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Based on your teaching experiences, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q401	1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 All children can learn.	89	10	1	*	-	*
2 If I do my job well, my students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions.	51	40	6	3	*	-
3 I can really make a difference in the lives of my students.	85	13	1	1	-	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)****Q410** I am going to read a list of several areas that can be challenging to teachers. Which of the following is the biggest challenge that you face as a teacher?

1	Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom	20
2	Preparing students for testing	14
3	Getting needed guidance and support	9
4	Getting sufficient resources and materials	22
5	Communicating with and involving parents	31
8	Not sure	3
9	Decline to answer	*



**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q415** I am going to read you a list of statements about teachers. Based on your teaching experiences, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q416	1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Teachers are respected in today's society.	9	56	26	8	*	-
2 Most teachers are dedicated to their work.	55	43	2	*	-	-

**SECTION500: RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND MENTORING****BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q500** Has your experience as a public school teacher working with been very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, somewhat unsatisfying or very unsatisfying?

Q501	1 Very satisfying	2 Somewhat satisfying	3 Some- what unsatisfying	4 Very unsatisfying	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Students in your school	68	29	2	1	-	-
2 Your principal	53	36	8	3	*	-
3 Parents of students in your school	25	55	15	5	*	*
4 Other teachers in your school	57	41	2	1	-	-
5 Other school staff or administrators	39	52	6	1	2	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q515** I am going to read you a list of statements about parents and the community. Based on your teaching experiences, please tell me for each if you strongly agree,, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q516	1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents.	81	17	2	*	*	-
2 Too many parents today treat their children's schools and teachers as adversaries.	20	53	21	4	2	*
3 At my school, involving parents in their children's education is a priority.	59	31	8	2	*	-
4 At my school, teachers and parents respect one another.	31	57	9	1	1	-
5 I need to know what is going on in my students' lives in order to be an effective teacher.	65	32	2	1	*	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q520** There are many ways that parents can be involved in their child's education. Which of the following do you or your school ask students' parents to do as a matter of course, and not just in special circumstances? Do you or your school ask parents to?

Q521	1 Yes	2 No	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Make sure homework is done	87	12	1	-
2 Go on field trips	81	17	2	-
3 Come to parent-teacher conferences	97	3	-	-
4 Involve their children in educational activities at home -- such as read with children, discuss current events, visit museums, etc.	86	13	1	-
5 Participate in school fund raising activities	88	11	1	-

**BASE: SELECTED ANY TASKS FOR PARENTS (Q520/1-5 AND Q521/1)**

**Q525** Overall, how many parents-- all, most, some, very few or none at all?

Q525	1 All	2 Most	3 Some	4 Very few	5 None	8 Not sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Make sure homework is done	4	37	40	19	*	*	-
2 Go on field trips	2	11	44	39	2	2	*
3 Come to parent-teacher conferences	14	42	28	15	1	*	-
4 Involve their children in educational activities at home -- such as read with children, discuss current events, visit museums, etc.	2	25	45	26	*	2	-
5 Participate in school fund raising activities	1	20	51	27	1	1	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q535** Next, I am going to read you a list of statements about teachers and administrators. Based on your teaching experiences, please tell me for each if you agree strongly, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree strongly.

Q536	1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 The principal of my school creates an environment which helps my students learn.	62	31	4	3	*	-
2 The principal of my school creates an environment which helps me be an effective teacher.	58	31	7	4	-	-
3 The principal of my school provides guidance on how to involve parents in their children's education.	39	42	13	6	*	-
4 At my school, there is cooperation between older, more experienced teachers and new teachers.	54	37	6	2	*	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q540** Which of the following best describes the class or classes that you currently teach? Is your class general education or special needs or education?

1	General education	81
2	Special needs or education	18
8	Not sure	1
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: TEACH GENERAL ED (Q540/1)**

**Q545** Do you have any students with special needs in your class? Please include students who have special physical, emotional or learning needs.

1	Yes	88
2	No	12
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: HAS SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS (Q540/2 OR Q545/1)**

**Q550** How familiar are you with the resources that are available to special needs students? Are you (READ LIST) with these resources?

1	Extremely familiar	11
2	Very familiar	42
3	Familiar	39
4	Not very familiar	7
5	Not at all familiar	1
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: HAS SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS (Q540/2 OR Q545/1)**

**Q555** Overall, how much do you think the parents of your special needs students know about the resources that are available to their children? Do these parents know?

1	Less than they need to know	35
2	Just enough	49
3	More than they need to know	13
8	Not sure	2
9	Decline to answer	*

<b>SECTION 600: FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING</b>
--

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q605** Next, I'd like to talk with you about your experiences during your first year of teaching.

During your first year of teaching, did someone give you a tour of the school to show you where things are located, such as the teacher's lounge, bathroom, library, cafeteria, supplies, etc.?

1	Yes	82
2	No	18
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q620** During your first year of teaching, did you have at least one person in your school you could go to for advice and guidance about the following?

Q621

	1 Yes	2 No	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Teaching the curriculum	<b>88</b>	<b>12</b>	*	-
2 Classroom management	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>	*	-
3 Administrative responsibilities such as record keeping, teaching plans, report cards, attendance reports, etc.	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>	-	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q650** During your first year of teaching, were you assigned or matched with a mentor who was a more experienced teacher?

1 Yes	<b>80</b>
2 No	<b>19</b>
8 Not sure	*
9 Decline to answer	-

**BASE: HAD MENTOR FROM SCHOOL (Q650/1)**

**Q660** How helpful was this mentor– extremely helpful, very helpful, helpful, not too helpful or not at all helpful?

1 Extremely helpful	<b>43</b>
2 Very helpful	<b>19</b>
3 Helpful	<b>21</b>
4 Not too helpful	<b>11</b>
5 Not at all helpful	<b>5</b>
8 Not sure	-
9 Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q670** How prepared were you for the following aspects of your first teaching position? Were you extremely prepared, very prepared, prepared, not too prepared or not at all prepared to . . ?

Q671

	1 Extremely prepared	2 Very pre- pared	3 Pre- pared	4 Not too prepared	5 Not at all prepared	8 Not sure	9 Decline to answer
1 To teach the subject matter	20	44	31	4	1	*	-
2 To hold the attention of students	13	42	38	7	1	-	-
3 To maintain order and discipline	12	32	41	12	3	-	-
4 To get the support you needed from your principal	12	34	36	14	4	1	-
5 To get the support you needed from the other teachers in your school	15	35	39	9	1	*	-
6 To get the resources and supplies you needed	8	30	43	16	3	*	*
7 To work with children with varying abilities	9	26	42	20	2	*	-
8 To select teaching materials	8	31	44	12	2	1	-
9 To engage families in supporting their children's education	6	26	44	21	2	*	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q675** Thinking of your first year as a teacher, which one of the following would have been most helpful in preparing you to be a more effective teacher? Was it...?

1 A skilled, experienced teacher assigned to provide you with advice and assistance	38
2 More practical training, such as a year's internship before having your own classroom	34
3 Better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds	22
8 Not sure	5
9 Decline to answer	1

**SECTION 700: THE FUTURE OF TEACHING**
**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q710** All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with teaching as a career?

1 Very satisfied	66
2 Somewhat satisfied	28
3 Somewhat dissatisfied	5
4 Very dissatisfied	2
8 Not sure	*
9 Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q715** Regardless of how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with teaching as a career, what aspects of teaching give you the greatest satisfaction?

1	Staff/Teachers	4
2	Parents	3
3	Students	75
4	Fulfillment	35
8	Other [SPECIFY Q720]	5
98	Not sure	*
99	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q715/8)**

**Q720** What other aspect of teaching gives you the greatest satisfaction?  
[TEXT BOX]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q725** What aspects of teaching are your greatest sources of stress or anxiety?

[MULTIPLE RESPONSE]

1	Parents	20
2	Students	28
3	Finance	3
4	Administration	4
5	Time constraints	9
6	Service/duty	34
7	Board	*
8	Government/politics	4
13	Other [SPECIFY Q730]	19
98	Not sure	*
99	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q725/13)**

**Q730** What other aspects of teaching are your greatest sources of stress or anxiety?  
[TEXT BOX]

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q735** Within the next five years, how likely is it that you will leave the teaching profession to go into some different occupation – very likely, fairly likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

1	Very likely	7
2	Fairly likely	10
3	Not too likely	28
4	Not at all likely	54
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	-

<b>SECTION 800: SCHOOL &amp; TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS</b>
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q801** The next few questions ask for demographic information to help classify your answers.

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q810** Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

1	Inner city	13
2	Urban	16
3	Suburban	41
4	Small town	17
5	Rural	11
8	Not sure	1
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q820** What percentage of students in your school come from low income families?

    |\_|\_|\_| %                      *Mean*                      46.6

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q840** What percentage of students in your school come from minority families?

    |\_|\_|\_| %                      *Mean*                      37.7

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q850** In total, how many students attend your school?

    |\_|\_|\_|                      *Mean*                      816.7

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q855** How many years have you been teaching in your current school?

/ \_ / [RANGE: 0-5, 8, 9]                      *Mean*                      3.4

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q860** What is the zip code of your school?

    |\_|\_|\_|\_|

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q875** Do you have teacher certification, or not?

1	Yes	98
2	No	2

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q885** Gender:

1	Male	25
2	Female	75

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q890** What is your year of birth? <I>Please enter as a four-digit number, e.g., 1963.</I>

□□□□

Mean

34.1

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q895** Are you of Hispanic origin, such as Mexican American, Latin American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

1	Yes, of Hispanic origin	7
2	No, not of Hispanic origin	92
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	1

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q900** Do you consider yourself...?

01	White	85
02	Black	3
03	African American	3
04	Asian or Pacific Islander	2
05	Native American or Alaskan native	*
06	Mixed racial background	2
96	Other race	3
98	Not sure	*
99	Decline to answer	2

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q920** Thank you for participating in this survey.



**HARRIS INTERACTIVE  
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**METLIFE SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2004-2005  
Datasheeted Principal Questionnaire**

**Field Period: 11/29/04 - 12/17/04  
841 completed interviews with principals.**

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**SUBJECTS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

SECTION 300:	SCREENING
SECTION 400:	ATTITUDES, EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES
SECTION 600:	HIRING TEACHERS AND EXPERIENCES AS NEW PRINCIPAL
SECTION 700:	THE FUTURE OF TEACHING
SECTION 800:	SCHOOL & TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

---

**Notes on reading the results**

The percentage of respondents has been included for each item. An asterisk (\*) signifies a value of less than one-half percent. A dash represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents answering that question.

<b>SECTION 300: SCREENING</b>
-------------------------------

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS****Q300 Region indicator**

9	East	17
10	Midwest	28
11	South	34
12	West	22

**BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS**

**Q305** Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ from Harris Interactive, a national survey research firm in New York. We are contacting principals across the country for a survey on education. Your name was selected on a random basis, and we would like to include your opinions.

(INTERVIEWER, IF NECESSARY: The sponsor of this study is the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. MetLife and Harris Interactive have conducted annual surveys of educators for more than twenty years. This highly publicized series of survey reports, called The American Teacher, has tracked changes in teachers' opinions and needs, and has provided valuable information for both policy makers and the general public.)

(INTERVIEWER: Please be advised that this call may be monitored for quality control purposes)

First, I would like to confirm some information.

**BASE: PRINCIPALS (Q305/1)****Q307** Are you a principal in a public school?

1	No	-
2	Yes	100
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: PUBLIC SCHOOL K-12 PRINCIPAL (Q307/2)****Q317** Is your school an elementary school, a junior high or middle school, or a senior high school?

01	Elementary school (K – 5 <sup>th</sup> grade)	67
02	Junior high or middle school (6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade)	24
03	Senior high school (9 <sup>th</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade)	24
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: PUBLIC SCHOOL K-12 PRINCIPAL (Q307/2)****Q330** Altogether, how many years have you worked as a principal?

□□□	MEAN	9.0
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SECTION 400: ATTITUDES, EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES
---

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q400** I am going to read you a list of statements about students. Based on your experiences as a principal, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q401		1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1	All children can learn.	88	11	*	*	*	-
2	If teachers do their jobs well, their students will benefit regardless of how the rest of the school functions.	43	41	13	3	*	*
1	I can really make a difference in the lives of my students.	87	13	*	-	-	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q410** I am going to read a list of several areas that can be challenging to teachers. Which of the following is the biggest challenge that teachers in your school face?

1	Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom	9
2	Preparing students for testing	26
3	Getting needed guidance and support	6
4	Getting sufficient resources and materials	22
5	Communicating with and involving parents	34
8	Don't know	2
9	Decline to answer	1

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q415** I am going to read you a list of statements about teachers. Based on your teaching experiences, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q416		1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1	Teachers are respected in today's society.	11	69	16	4	-	-
2	Most teachers are dedicated to their work.	75	25	*	*	-	*

### SECTION III: RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND MENTORING

#### **BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q500** How satisfying has your experience as a public school principal been working with --- very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, somewhat unsatisfying or very unsatisfying?

Q501	1 Very satisfying	2 Somewhat satisfying	3 Somewhat un- satisfying	4 Somewhat un- satisfying	8 Not sure	9 Decline to answer
1 Students in your school	87	13	*	-	-	-
2 Teachers in your school	77	23	*	*	-	*
3 Parents of students in your school	50	47	3	*	*	-
4 District-level administrators	53	40	6	1	*	*
5 Other school staff	70	28	*	*	1	*

#### **BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q505** How much support and guidance do you currently get from district-level administrators? Do you get more than enough support, just enough support, less support than you need or no support at all?

1 More than enough support	36
2 Just enough support	49
3 Less support than you need	13
4 No support at all	1
8 Don't know	1
9 Decline to answer	*

#### **BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q515** I am going to read you a list of statements about parents and the community. Based on your experiences as a public school principal, please tell me for each if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q516	1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
[RANDOMIZE]						
1 Effective teachers need to be able to work well with their students' parents.	90	9	*	-	-	-
2 Too many parents today treat their children's schools and teachers as adversaries.	12	48	27	12	*	*
3 At my school, involving parents in their children's education is a priority.	71	26	3	*	-	-
4 At my school, teachers and parents respect one another	45	52	3	*	-	-
5 My students' parents do all they can to help their children succeed in school.	16	61	20	3	*	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q535** For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree.

Q536	1 Strongly agree	2 Some- what agree	3 Some- what disagree	4 Strongly disagree	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
[RANDOMIZE]						
1 At my school, I provide guidance to teachers on how to involve parents in their children's education.	59	40	1	*	*	*
2 At my school, there is cooperation between older, more experienced teachers and new teachers.	76	22	1	*	*	*
3 I create an environment at my school which helps students learn.	91	9	*	-	-	*
4 I create an environment at my school which helps the teachers to be effective at their jobs.	85	15	*	-	-	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q550** Overall, how much do you think the parents of your special-needs students know about the resources that are available to their children? Do these parents know?

1 Less than they need to know	16
2 Just enough	51
3 More than they need to know	31
8 Not sure	1
9 Decline to answer	1

**SECTION 600: HIRING TEACHERS AND EXPERIENCES AS NEW PRINCIPAL**
**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q610** How often do you have an in-person meeting with a teaching candidate before he or she is hired to teach at your school?

1 Always	89
2 Most of the time	8
3 Some of the time	1
4 Rarely	1
5 Never	1
8 Not sure	1
9 Decline to answer	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q615** What is your involvement in hiring decisions regarding teachers in your school? Do you ?

1 Make the final hiring decision	35
2 Make a recommendation to the district, but not the final decision	60
3 Other	5
8 Not sure	*
9 Decline to answer	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q620** During the past five years, about what percentage of the classroom teachers whom you have hired **were first-time teachers**? (IF NECESSARY: By first-time teacher, I mean a teacher who had little or no previous experience teaching in a classroom. Your best estimate is fine.)

/ \_ / \_ / \_ /                      **MEAN                      39.1**

**BASE: HAVE HIRED FIRST-TIME TEACHERS (Q620/1-100)**

**Q625** Next, I'd like to ask a few questions about your experiences hiring and training first-time teachers. During a teacher's first year of teaching, how often do you usually observe the teacher in the classroom?

1	A few times a week or more often	<b>34</b>
2	A few times a month	<b>46</b>
3	A few times a semester	<b>14</b>
4	A few times a year	<b>6</b>
5	Once a year	-
6	Never	-
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: HAVE HIRED FIRST-TIME TEACHERS (Q620/1-100)**

**Q630** At your school, are first-time teachers assigned or matched to a more experienced teacher as a mentor?

1	Yes	<b>96</b>
2	No	<b>4</b>
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q635** What type of professional development opportunities do you think first-time teachers need?

1	The same professional development available to all teachers at the school	<b>18</b>
2	Professional development that is specialized for new teachers only	<b>78</b>
		<b>3</b>
8	Not sure	<b>1</b>
9	Decline to answer	

**BASE: NEW TEACHERS NEED SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Q635/2)**

**Q640** Whom do you think should be mainly responsible for providing or coordinating specialized professional development for first-time teachers --- the district or central administrators, the school principal, other school-level personnel, or someone else?

1	District/central administrators	<b>58</b>
2	School principal	<b>29</b>
3	Other school-level personnel	<b>8</b>
4	Someone else	<b>5</b>
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	<b>1</b>

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q645** Which one of the following would be most helpful in preparing first-time teachers to be more effective teachers? Would it be?

1	A skilled, experienced teacher assigned to provide the new teacher with advice and assistance	44
2	More practical training, such as a year's internship before the new teacher has his/her own classroom	43
3	Better training in working with students and families from a variety of ethnic backgrounds	11
8	Not sure	1
9	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q650** Next, I'd like to talk with you about your experiences during your first year as a principal. During your first year as a principal, did you have someone in your school or district you could go to for advice and guidance about your school responsibilities?

1	Yes	84
2	No	16
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q655** How helpful were the district or central administrators in providing support and guidance to you during your first year as a school principal – extremely helpful, very helpful, helpful, not too helpful or not at all helpful?

1	Extremely helpful	34
2	Very helpful	29
3	Helpful	23
4	Not too helpful	10
5	Not at all helpful	3
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q660** How prepared were you for the following aspects of your position during your first year as a school principal? Were you extremely prepared, very prepared, prepared, not too prepared or not at all prepared to. . . ?

Q661

		1 Extremely Prepared	2 Very Prepared	3 Prepared	4 Not too Prepared	5 Not at all Prepared	8 Not Sure	9 Decline to answer
1	To maintain order and discipline in the school	26	51	21	1	*	-	-
2	To guide and motivate teachers	12	45	35	8	*	-	*
3	To get the support you needed from district or central administrators	14	41	34	9	2	1	*
4	To get the resources and supplies you needed for your school	12	37	40	10	1	*	*
5	To engage families in supporting their children's education	11	41	38	9	*	-	-
6	To work effectively with community members or organizations	12	40	38	10	1	-	-
7	To carry out your responsibilities regarding reporting and compliance	11	40	38	10	1	-	*
8	To be the leader of the school	16	47	33	3	1	-	-
9	To make sure the school is safe	19	46	31	4	*	-	*

**SECTION 700: THE FUTURE OF TEACHING**
**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q710** All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job as a principal in the public schools?

1	Very satisfied	76
2	Somewhat satisfied	23
3	Somewhat dissatisfied	1
4	Very dissatisfied	*
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q715** Regardless of how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with being a principal as a career, what aspects of being a principal give you the greatest satisfaction?

1	Staff/Teachers	25
2	Parents	13
3	Students	77
4	Fulfillment	35
8	Other	15
98	Not sure	-
99	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q715/8)**

**Q720** What other aspect of being a principal gives you the greatest satisfaction?  
[TEXT BOX]



**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)****Q725** What aspects of being a principal are your greatest sources of stress or anxiety?

1	Staff/Teachers	8
2	Parents	28
3	Students	15
4	Finance	9
5	Administration	1
6	Time constraints	8
7	Service/Duty	27
8	Board	1
9	Government/Politics	15
10	Other [SPECIFY]	28
98	Not sure	1
99	Decline to answer	*

**BASE: SOMETHING ELSE (Q725/8)****Q730** What other aspects of being a principal are your greatest sources of stress or anxiety?  
[TEXT BOX]**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)****Q735** Within the next five years, how likely is it that you will leave your job as a school principal to go into some different occupation – very likely, fairly likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

1	Very likely	23
2	Fairly likely	12
3	Not too likely	24
4	Not at all likely	40
8	Not sure	1
9	Decline to answer	*

**SECTION 800: SCHOOL & TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS****BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)****Q801** The next few questions ask for demographic information to help classify your answers.**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)****Q810** Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

1	Inner city	9
2	Urban	17
3	Suburban	34
4	Small town	15
5	Rural	25
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)****Q820** What percentage of students in your school come from low income families?

<div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> <div>%</div>	MEAN	41.9
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**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q840** What percentage of students in your school come from minority families?

    |\_|\_|\_|%                    **MEAN**            **28.0**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q850** In total, how many students attend your school?

    |\_|\_|\_|                    **MEAN**            **525.5**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q855** How many years have you been the principal at your current school?

    |\_|\_|                    **MEAN**            **5.2**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS(Q360/1)**

**Q857** How many years did you work as a teacher?

    |\_|\_|                    **MEAN**            **13.6**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q860** What is the zip code of your school?

    |\_|\_|\_|\_|\_|

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q880** Did you have another career or profession before you were a principal or teacher?

1	Yes	<b>21</b>
2	No	<b>79</b>

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q885** Gender:

1	Male	<b>51</b>
2	Female	<b>49</b>

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q890** What is your year of birth? <I>Please enter as a four-digit number, e.g., 1963.</I>

    |\_|\_|\_|                    **MEAN**            **49.1**

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q895** Are you of Hispanic origin, such as Mexican American, Latin American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

1	Yes, of Hispanic origin	<b>3</b>
2	No, not of Hispanic origin	<b>97</b>
8	Not sure	<b>-</b>
9	Decline to answer	<b>*</b>

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q900** Do you consider yourself...?

01	White	89
02	Black	2
03	African American	3
04	Asian or Pacific Islander	1
05	Native American or Alaskan native	1
06	Mixed racial background	1
96	Other race	3
98	Not sure	*
99	Decline to answer	1

**BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (Q360/1)**

**Q920** Thank you for participating in this survey.

- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1993, *Teachers Respond to President Clinton's Education Proposals* provides valuable insight into what teachers believe needs to be done to make our schools safe and productive places for learning.
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1992, *The Second Year: New Teachers' Expectations and Ideals* revisits the new teachers after completing two years of teaching in America's classrooms.
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1991, *The First Year: New Teachers Expectations and Ideals* returns to the cohort of new teachers who entered the classroom in the fall of 1990 and gauges their attitudes as they conclude their first year in the classroom.
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1990, *New Teachers: Expectations and Ideals—Part I Entering the Classroom* examines the views of first-time teachers entering the classroom in the fall of 1990.
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1989, *Preparing Schools for the 1990s* looks back at the changes in education through the 1980s and looks ahead to the changes teachers say would improve education.
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1988, *Strengthening the Relationship Between Teachers and Students* includes the views of students in grades 4–12, and focuses on minority teachers' satisfaction with teaching and ways to increase their participation in the profession (executive summary available).
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987, *Strengthening Links Between Home and School* includes the views of parents of America's schoolchildren and reveals how parents and teachers are united in their commitment to educating America's youth (out of print).
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of American the Teacher, 1986, *Restructuring the Teaching Profession* explores the current structure of the teaching profession and ways to restructure it (executive summary available).
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America, 1986 reflects the views of those who left the teaching profession for other occupations (out of print).

- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1985, *Strengthening the Profession* examines teachers' own agenda for educational reform (out of print).
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1984 analyzes attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers toward both public education in the United States and educational reform (out of print).

## MINI-SURVEYS—TEACHERS' VIEWS ON CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION

- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1991, *Coming to Terms* probes emerging problems related to tightened school budgets (out of print).
- The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1992, *Ready or Not: Grade Level Preparedness* examines teachers' perspectives on an issue that is key to the new national education goals (out of print).
- The series also includes several reports on individual states—two surveys of California teachers and one of New York teachers—whose questions parallel the 1984 and 1985 nationwide studies (out of print).

## ALSO AVAILABLE:

- *Preparing Schools for the 1990s: An Essay Collection* contains the views of distinguished education leaders including Theodore R.Sizer, Albert Shanker, Michael W. Kirst, and Floretta Dukes McKenzie who discuss recent and future directions in the efforts to improve our public schools.

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