

The 10th Annual Gallup Poll



Of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

by George H. Gallup

For the ninth consecutive year, the Kappan is privileged to publish the full report of an attitude survey conducted by the Gallup Poll. The first report in the 10-year series was published in full by the Institute for Development of Educational Activities (IIDIEIA). A compilation of the first 10 polls will be available later this fall as a Phi Delta Kappa paperback, The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education, 1969-1978. Reprints of individual polls may also be obtained from Phi Delta Kappa.

The Gallup education polls are an established source of reliable information concerning trends in opinion about significant school questions. For school officials, the polls are valuable in at least two important ways. They alert decision makers to overall public reaction to a variety of school programs and policies. And they serve as a national benchmark against which local attitudes may be measured.

George Gallup is now at work on a book intended to explain in detail how local attitudes toward the schools may be measured. It will be published by Phi Delta Kappa soon; look for an announcement. Meanwhile, if local poll directors wish to employ the same questions asked in the Gallup education surveys, they are welcome to do so. The questions are not copyrighted. Moreover, no limitations are placed upon the use of information contained in this report, beyond customary credit to source and observance of the usual canons of accuracy and completeness of quotation.

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation, through its affiliate, IIDIEIA, is now financing the education poll, while Phi Delta Kappa has been authorized to publish it in full before distribution to other media. We are grateful to B. Frank Brown and Samuel G. Sava of IIDIEIA and Kettering for their strong support of the project. — SME

Purpose of the Study

This survey, which measures the attitudes of Americans toward their public schools, is the tenth annual survey of this series, currently funded by I/D/E/A, the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., an affiliate of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. Each year efforts are made to deal with issues of greatest concern to both educators and the public. New as well as trend questions are included in this and every survey.

To be sure that the survey would embrace the most important issues in the field of education, the Kettering Foundation sent letters to educators across the nation asking for their views. Following this, a selected group of educators and leaders in other fields met with representatives of Gallup and I/D/E/A to evaluate preliminary questions and to suggest other possible issues for inclusion.

The panel members this year were: Gregory R. Anrig, commissioner of education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Edward Brainard, chairman, Colorado State Committee, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley; B. Frank Brown, I/D/E/A Information and Services Program, Melbourne, Florida; Gregory Caras, principal, Longfellow I.G.E. Magnet School, Dayton, Ohio; Alonzo A. Crim, superintendent, Atlanta (Georgia) Public Schools; Stanley Elam, director of publications, Phi Delta Kappa, Bloomington, Indiana; Warren G. Hill, executive director, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado; Harold L. Hodgkinson, executive director, Professional Institute, American Management Association, Washington, D.C.; K. Jessie Kobayashi, superintendent, Murray School District, Dublin, California; Sid McDonald, senator and chairman, Education Committee, Alabama State Legislature; Belen Moreno, teacher, Avondale (Arizona) Elementary School; Curtis Peterson, senator and chairman, Education Committee, Florida Senate; Samuel G. Sava, executive director, I/D/E/A, Dayton, Ohio; Leonard Price Stavisky, assemblyman and chairman, Education Committee, New York State Assembly.

We wish to thank these individuals for their valuable help.

Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample used in this survey embraced a total of 1,539 adults (18 years of age and older). It is described as a modified probability sample of the nation. Personal, in-home interviewing was conducted in all areas of the nation and in all types of communities. A description of the sample will be found at the end of this report.

Time of Interviewing. The fieldwork for this study was carried out during the period of April 27 through May 1, 1978.

The Interviewing Form. All the questions included in the survey instrument were pretested by the staff of interviewers maintained by the Gallup organizations.

The Report. In the tables that follow, the heading "Parochial School Parents" includes not only parents of students who attend parochial school but also parents of students who attend private or independent schools. This heading is used because parochial school students outnumber private or independent school students.

Findings of this report apply only to the country as a whole and not to individual local communities. Local surveys, using the same questions, can be conducted to determine how local areas compare with the national norm.

Major Problems Confronting the Public Schools in 1978

It will come as no surprise that discipline again tops the list of major problems facing the local public schools of the nation. Only once in the 10 years since these surveys were initiated has discipline failed to receive more mentions than any other problem.

Since parents with children now attending the public schools presumably are in a better position to judge public school problems than other groups, their views should carry extra weight. With this group, discipline is ranked first. Lack of proper financial support is named by the second largest number in this group. Third in their list is the use of dope/drugs; fourth, problems arising out of integration and busing. And fifth in mentions is poor curriculum/poor standards.

Parents with children in nonpublic schools name discipline as the top problem of the public schools. They are far more inclined to mention integration/busing than parents with children in the public schools. Likewise, they cite poor curriculum/poor standards far more often than do parents who have children attending the public schools.

Citizens who have no children in either public or nonpublic schools and who must obtain most of their information about the local public schools from the media or hearsay cite discipline most often, followed by integration/busing, use of drugs, poor curriculum/poor standards, and lack of proper financial support.

After a dip last year in mentions, dope/drugs has again assumed a high place in the public's concerns about the public schools. Crime/vandalism for the first time receives sufficient mentions to place it among the top 10 major problems.

Below, in order of mentions, is the list of top problems as perceived by a sample of all adults of the nation: 1) lack of discipline, 2) use of dope/drugs, 3) lack of proper financial support, 4) integration/segregation/busing, 5) poor curriculum/poor standards, 6) difficulty of getting good teachers, 7) size of school/classes, 8) pupils' lack of interest, 9) crime/vandalism, 10) parents' lack of interest.

The question was:

What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Lack of discipline	25	24	25	30
Use of dope/drugs	13	13	13	15
Lack of proper financial support	13	11	18	11
Integration/busing (combined)	13	14	11	22
Poor curriculum/poor standards	12	12	10	18
Difficulty of getting good teachers	9	9	10	9
Large school/too many classes	5	5	5	5
Pupils' lack of interest	4	5	2	5
Crime/vandalism	4	5	3	5
Parents' lack of interest	4	4	5	4
Teachers' lack of interest	3	2	4	3
Mismanagement of funds/programs	3	3	2	2
Lack of proper facilities	2	2	2	1
Problems with administration	2	2	2	3

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Communication problems	2	2	2	-
Drinking/alcoholism	2	1	3	-
School board policies	1	1	2	-
Too many schools/declining enrollment	1	1	2	-
Parents' involvement in school activities	1	1	1	1
Transportation	1	*	1	-
There are no problems	4	2	10	-
Miscellaneous	6	5	10	5
Don't know/no answer	12	15	4	7

*Less than 1% (Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

1978 Ratings of the Public Schools

A slight drop in the public's rating of the public schools has been registered during the past year. In the 1977 survey a total of 37% gave the public schools a rating of A or B. In the present survey the figure is nearly the same — 36%, with the percentage giving the schools an A rating dropping from 11 to 9. At the other extreme, 16% gave the schools D or Fail in 1977. In the latest survey the figure is 19%.

The ratings are based upon a five-point scale. The question reads as follows:

Students are often given the grades A,B,C,D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here — A,B,C,D, or FAIL?

Below are the national ratings given the public schools by local residents for the last five years — the period in which this scale has been employed:

	National Totals				
Ratings Given the Public Schools	1978 %	1977 %	1976 %	1975 %	1974 %
A rating	9	11	13	13	18
B rating	27	26	29	30	30
C rating	30	28	28	28	21
D rating	11	11	10	9	6
FAIL	8	5	6	7	5
Don't know/ no answer	15	19	14	13	20

Analysis of the findings by different groups in the population, by areas, and by city size provides many interesting insights into the way Americans perceive their public schools.

Parents who have children now attending the public schools hold their schools in much higher esteem than do others in the population. The lowest ratings are given by those who have children enrolled in nonpublic schools. The overall decline in ratings can be explained partly by the fact that there is a continuing decline in the number of U.S. families with children of school age.

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents* %
A	9	7	15	4
B	27	24	36	19
C	30	29	32	30
D	11	11	10	11
FAIL	8	9	5	21
Don't know/no answer	15	20	2	15

*Includes parents of students attending private and independent schools as well as parochial (nonpublic) schools.

Major differences appear in the ratings when the attitudes of those who live in the larger cities (cities over 50,000) are compared with attitudes of those who live in cities with populations under 50,000. Attitudes are far more favorable in the smaller cities and towns than in the larger cities. In fact, residents of the central cities give their schools the lowest ratings in the nation: A and B ratings combined, 21%; D and Fail ratings combined, 30%. This compares with the highest ratings found (in cities 2,500 to 49,999) of 45% for A and B combined and 12% for D and Fail combined.

Of all groups, blacks living in the North give their public schools the lowest rating. This group rates its schools 43% D or Fail and only 27% A or B.

An interesting contrast is found when Northern blacks are compared with Southern blacks. Almost the opposite in ratings is found. Southern blacks give a top rating (A and B combined) of 35% to the public schools and an unfavorable rating (D and Fail combined) of only 14%.

When the four main areas of the nation are compared, it is found that people living in the West — the area embracing the Rocky Mountain and Pacific states — are least satisfied with their schools.

Younger persons — those 18 to 29 — tend to be slightly more critical than those in the next older age group, as well as more critical than the oldest age group (when only those with opinions are taken into account).

Further breakdowns follow:

	A %	B %	C %	D %	FAIL %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	9	27	30	11	8	15
Sex						
Men	9	26	32	12	7	14
Women	10	27	28	10	10	15
Race						
White	10	27	30	10	8	15
Nonwhite	8	21	27	15	14	15
Age						
18-29	6	25	37	13	9	10
30-49	11	31	29	10	9	10
50 & over	10	24	25	10	8	23
Community size						
1 million & over	8	22	22	14	18	16
500,000 — 999,999	5	22	38	15	2	18
50,000 — 499,999	6	25	38	10	9	12
2,500 — 49,999	13	32	30	8	4	13
Under 2,500	13	31	25	9	6	16
Central city	5	16	35	17	13	14
Education						
Grade school	14	18	25	7	9	27
High school	9	27	30	11	10	13
College	7	31	33	12	6	11
Region						
East	8	32	26	10	11	13
Midwest	10	28	29	10	6	17
South	13	26	30	9	7	15
West	5	17	37	17	10	14
Region/race						
Northern white	8	28	30	11	8	15
Southern white	14	26	30	8	8	14
Northern black	6	21	22	21	22	8
Southern black	11	24	28	10	4	23

How the Public Would Improve the Schools

If school authorities were to take time to talk to a representative sample of people in their school districts to obtain their ideas as to what the schools might be doing that they are not now doing, they would likely find that the public's suggestions fall chiefly into seven categories.

The question asked was an "open" question, which

permits each respondent to offer any suggestion or suggestions that he or she wishes:

What, if anything, do you think the public schools in this community should be doing that they are not doing now?

The number and type of suggestions obviously would differ from school district to school district. But for the nation as a whole, they range in the order below:

1. *More strict discipline.* This, of course, has been a constant complaint of the public for the last decade, as reported in this survey series.

The public is bothered by the lack of respect shown to, or demanded by, teachers. They read about the chaos in classrooms. They complain that teachers let children do anything they wish, dress any way they want, pay no attention to school rules, stay away from school whenever they feel like it.

2. *Better teachers.* By “better teachers,” the public does not necessarily mean teachers who are better trained or more knowledgeable in the subjects they teach.

They are much more inclined to think of “good” teachers as the teachers who take a personal interest in each student, who try to understand each student and his or her problems, who encourage students in the subjects taught so that they will achieve high grades, and, finally, who inspire students to set high goals in life for themselves.

3. *Back to basics.* This movement has support throughout the nation and, of course, many school systems have already made changes to give more attention to the so-called basics. Even so, many people want greater emphasis placed upon what they often describe as the “fundamentals,” meaning reading, writing, and arithmetic.

4. *More parental involvement.* A frequent suggestion is for closer teacher/parent relationships. Many complain that teachers show a poor attitude in communicating with parents. They suggest more conferences between parents and teachers. They would like to know much more about what parents can do in the home to help their children in school.

5. *Higher scholastic standards.* The public has been made aware through the media of declining test scores throughout the nation. People read about automatic promotion and about young persons who are graduated from high school but who can barely read or write. They complain that not enough homework is given to their children. Some say the school day should be longer. They say it is too easy to get good grades.

6. *More education about health hazards.* The widespread use of alcohol, drugs, marijuana, and cigarettes by young people has become an important worry to many parents. They want help from the schools. They want schools to point out the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse and smoking, and they want the schools to establish rules that will be a deterrent.

7. *More emphasis on careers.* Parents whose children do not intend to go on to college want to be sure that their children are ready to fill some kind of job after they are graduated. Even in the case of those whose children plan to enter college, parents see a need to give guidance about careers that are available, the abilities required, and the rewards offered in different occupations.

Automatic Promotion

If a national referendum were held on the promotion issue, a majority of more than 2-1 would favor promoting

children from grade to grade only if they can pass examinations. Answers to a second question asked of all respondents should give some comfort to those who oppose such a requirement. By an even larger majority, the public would favor offering special remedial classes in the subjects students fail and not require students who fail to repeat the whole year’s work.

This leaves unanswered the question of what to do with those students who do not pass the examinations even after they have received extra instruction.

The question was:

What do you think should be done with students who do not pass the examinations even after they have received extra instruction?

Here the public is divided on the policies to be followed, with about half saying that in this situation the child should repeat the grade and the rest suggesting further help or placing the child in a special program.

An interesting aspect of the public’s views on automatic promotion comes to light in an examination of the groups who support and those who oppose automatic or social promotion. Those who are most likely to have children who fail in their schoolwork — poorly educated parents — are the ones most in favor of requiring students to pass tests for promotion. At the other extreme, persons who have completed high school or college are most in favor of automatic or social promotion.

Those persons interviewed in the survey who have no children of school age are more in favor of the test requirement for promotion than those who now have children attending the public or the nonpublic schools.

The question posed was this:

In your opinion, should children be promoted from grade to grade only if they can pass examinations?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should	68	71	60	59
No	27	24	35	38
Don't know/no answer	5	5	5	3

Further breakdowns follow:

	Yes, They Should %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Race			
White	69	27	4
Nonwhite	61	29	10
Age			
18-29	64	33	3
30-49	63	32	5
50 & over	74	20	6
Education			
Grade school	79	13	8
High school	66	30	4
College	65	30	5
Region			
East	62	33	5
Midwest	66	29	5
South	76	20	4
West	67	27	6

The next question asked was:

Should students who fail be required to take special remedial classes in the subjects they fail or should they be required to repeat the whole year’s work?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, special remedial classes	81	80	82	87
No, repeat whole year's work	14	14	14	9
Don't know/no answer	5	6	4	4

Local, State, or National Tests?

If promotion and graduation are to be based upon tests, who should prepare the tests — the local school system, the state, or the federal government?

The public is divided on this issue, but a plurality would favor having such examinations prepared by the local school system.

Obviously, this is a question that needs to be debated at great length. The arguments pro and con are not well known to the general public; the answers, therefore, should be regarded as indicative but by no means final.

The question was worded in this manner:

Some people believe that since every community has a different racial and occupational mix, tests given in different subjects for promotion should be prepared for that school system only. Other people think the tests should be prepared on a statewide basis. Still others think that they should be prepared on a national basis to be given to students in the same grade throughout the nation. Which of these three ways would you prefer — having tests prepared on a local, state, or national basis?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Tests should be prepared on a:				
Local basis	37	38	36	38
State basis	25	24	27	19
National basis	28	27	30	39
Don't know/no answer	10	11	7	4

It will be noted that parents of children now attending nonpublic schools are evenly divided as to whether tests should be prepared by the local school system or the federal government. Residents of suburban communities are also evenly divided on this point, as are those in cities of 500,000 to 999,999.

Equal Educational Opportunity

A wide difference of opinion is found between the views of whites and blacks on the question of equal educational opportunity. By a margin of 52 to 38, non-whites hold the view that minorities do not have the same educational opportunities as whites. On the other hand, whites are overwhelmingly of the opinion that blacks do have the same educational opportunities.

An interesting difference comes to light when the views of Northern blacks are compared with the views of Southern blacks, as the following table shows.

The question asked was this:

In your opinion, do black children and other minorities in this community have the same educational opportunities as white children?

	Yes, They Do %	No, They Do Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Southern whites	85	10	5
Southern blacks	54	37	9
Northern whites	86	8	6
Northern blacks	21	67	12

It will be noted, from the responses to another question in this same survey, that Northern blacks give their public schools the lowest rating of all groups in the nation, whereas Southern blacks give the public schools in that part of the nation a favorable rating, comparable to that given by whites.

Parents with children in the schools — both public and nonpublic — say by a large majority that blacks have the same educational opportunities as whites, as the following results show:

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Same Educational Opportunities?				
Yes, same opportunities	80	78	86	82
No	14	15	11	14
Don't know/no answer	6	7	3	4

Further breakdowns:

	Yes %	No %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	80	14	6
Sex			
Men	80	15	5
Women	80	13	7
Race			
White	86	8	6
Nonwhite	38	52	10
Age			
18-29	74	19	7
30-49	80	15	5
50 & over	85	9	6
Community size			
1 million & over	63	29	8
500,000 — 999,999	81	14	5
50,000 — 499,999	82	13	5
2,500 — 49,999	85	10	5
Under 2,500	88	5	7
Education			
Grade school	75	16	9
High school	83	11	6
College	78	16	6

Marijuana Use

The use of marijuana by high school and junior high students is widespread. It is regarded as a serious problem in all sections of the nation — in the smallest communities as well as the largest cities. In the central city of metropolitan areas, the problem is regarded as serious by the greatest percentage of those interviewed. In the central cities 74% say it is a serious problem, 16% say it isn't, and 10% have no opinion.

Perhaps the best informed on marijuana use are those who now have children enrolled in the public schools. Interestingly, their opinion closely parallels the views of the nation as a whole.

The question was worded as follows:

From what you have heard or read, is the use of marijuana by students enrolled in junior high (middle school) or high school here a serious problem, or not?

The same question was asked about alcohol and hard drugs.

	Marijuana Use			
	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, it's a serious problem here	66	65	65	75
No, it isn't	20	19	22	17
Don't know/no answer	14	16	13	8

Further breakdowns:

	Yes, Is Serious %	No, Is Not %	Don't Know/No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	66	20	14
Sex			
Men	64	23	13
Women	67	17	16
Race			
White	66	20	14
Nonwhite	63	17	20
Age			
18-29	61	28	11
30-49	63	22	15
50 & over	72	12	16
Community size			
1 million & over	66	17	17
500,000 — 999,999	65	22	13
50,000 — 499,999	71	17	12
2,500 — 49,999	67	20	13
Under 2,500	61	23	16
Central city	74	16	10
Education			
Grade school	70	10	20
High school	68	19	13
College	59	27	14

Alcohol Use

Of those interviewed, almost the same percentage report that alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) has become a serious problem for students attending junior and senior high school as say that marijuana is a serious problem. Again, the problem is nationwide in scope. Findings are almost the same for every section of the nation and for cities and communities of all population sizes, except the very smallest.

Parents with children now attending public school hold virtually the same views as those less familiar with the local school situation. The question:

What about the use of alcohol (beer, wine, liquor) by students here? Is it a serious problem, or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, it's a serious problem here	64	67	60	58
No, it isn't	19	17	23	17
Don't know/no answer	17	16	17	25

The highest percentage for alcohol use was found in the central cities, lowest in the towns under 2,500 population.

Hard Drug Use

The use of hard drugs (heroin, cocaine, etc.) is regarded as a serious problem for junior and senior high school students in their communities by a third of those interviewed throughout the nation. However, about one person in four claims not to be well enough informed to have an opinion.

Contrary to the replies concerning marijuana and alcohol, respondents say that hard drug use is much more common in the bigger cities than elsewhere. But even respondents in the smallest communities report some use.

Northern blacks are most inclined to report use of hard drugs as a serious problem in the schools attended by local children. As the following results indicate, a wide difference of opinion is found between the North and the South:

	Hard Drug Use		
	Yes, a Serious Problem Here %	No %	Don't Know/No Answer %
Race/region			
Southern whites	29	49	22
Southern blacks	23	51	26
Northern whites	36	39	25
Northern blacks	59	27	14
Community size			
1 million & over	49	29	22
500,000 — 999,999	39	37	24
50,000 — 499,999	39	41	20
2,500 — 49,999	29	41	30
Under 2,500	21	52	27
Central city	52	34	14
Education			
Grade school	40	25	35
High school	37	40	23
College	29	50	21
Region			
East	34	37	29
Midwest	39	39	22
South	28	49	23
West	41	36	23

Persons who do not have children attending the local public schools are more inclined than public school parents to say that hard drug use is a serious problem for junior and senior high school students in their community. The question was:

What about hard drug use (heroin, cocaine, etc.)? Is it a serious problem among students here?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, it's a serious problem here	35	38	26	40
No, it isn't	41	38	49	37
Don't know/no answer	24	24	25	23

Adult Education

A surprisingly large number of individuals throughout the nation would be interested in taking special adult education courses or training. Of course, many factors are taken into account before the desire to continue one's education is put in action, e.g., time, availability, cost. But evidence from the present survey strongly suggests that through proper planning local school systems could make far better use of their facilities by expanding adult education courses.

Nearly a third of all adults in the nation claim to have taken, at some time in their lives, adult education courses. Of those who have taken a course at some time, about one adult in nine (11%) says that he or she has taken such a course during the last year, 7% say one to three years ago, and 12% say over three years ago, with 1% giving no response.

The following questions were asked first:

Are you now taking, or have you ever taken, any

**courses in an adult education program? (If yes)
When was that?**

All of those reached in the survey were then asked:

**Would you be interested next year in taking any
special courses or training in any fields or in any
subjects? (If yes) In what?**

Four in 10 of those questioned (41%) said they would be interested in taking such a course or training. If this percentage is applied to the whole adult population, a staggering number — 60 million — say they would be interested. But, as pointed out above, this number would have to be heavily discounted because few schools could offer the courses at the right time and at the right cost. However, the figures do indicate that there is room for much expansion in the field of adult education.

What courses or training would interest these individuals? When asked specifically to name the courses or training, respondents fall into four main categories (ranked in order of mention):

1. Job-related courses (typing, accounting, computers, general business economics, etc.)
2. Liberal arts (English, mathematics, art and music, science, etc.)
3. Technical-vocational courses (auto mechanics, carpentry, drafting, etc.)
4. Hobbies (arts and crafts, photography, sewing, cooking, home decorating, etc.)

Interesting differences show up when adults are grouped according to whether they have children now enrolled in school and the type of school.

**Have You Ever Taken Any Adult
Education Courses?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, have taken adult education courses	31	29	34	41
No, have not	68	70	65	59
Don't recall/no answer	1	1	1	*

*Less than 1%

More adults with children attending school claim to have taken an adult education course than adults without children. And when asked about taking a course next year, a greater number of parents of public and parochial school children say they would be interested than do those with no children presently attending school.

**Would You Be Interested Next Year
In Taking a Course?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, would be interested	41	36	54	54
No, would not	54	59	41	43
Don't know/no answer	5	5	5	3

Importance of a College Education Today

In the postwar era, colleges and universities in the U.S. prepared for a great increase in college enrollments. Each year a higher percentage of high school graduates entered institutions of higher learning, and many college authorities assumed that this constantly increasing percentage of high school graduates going on to college would continue for many years.

The forecasts proved to be wrong. The trend flat-

tened out, and at the same time the birthrate began to decline. Therefore it is a matter of prime concern to discover the attitudes of the people, and especially of parents of children now in school, toward the importance of a college education today.

This question was asked:

**How important is a college education today —
very important, fairly important, or not too impor-
tant?**

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Very important	36	35	38	34
Fairly important	46	44	48	54
Not too important	16	19	12	11
Don't know/no answer	2	2	2	1

Unfortunately, questions dealing with the importance of a college education were not included in earlier surveys in this series. The findings from the present survey will, therefore, have to serve as a benchmark for future studies.

Further breakdowns:

	Very Important %	Fairly Important %	Not Too Important %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Race				
White	35	47	16	2
Nonwhite	46	32	18	4
Community size				
1 million & over	41	39	18	2
500,000 — 999,999	35	45	19	1
50,000 — 499,999	38	46	14	2
2,500 — 49,999	36	44	18	2
Under 2,500	31	51	16	2
Education				
Grade school	44	33	18	5
High school	34	46	19	1
College	35	52	11	2
Region				
East	38	47	13	2
Midwest	32	49	17	2
South	40	44	14	2
West	35	40	24	1
Income				
\$20,000 & over	33	49	16	2
\$15,000 — \$19,999	31	53	14	2
\$10,000 — \$14,999	33	40	26	1
\$7,000 — \$9,999	37	48	15	—
Under \$7,000	45	39	13	3

Parents of children now attending school hold views close to the national average, and they will be influential in their children's decision about college attendance. Slightly more than a third of those interviewed believe that a college education is "very important" today, nearly one-half say "fairly important," and one in eight believes that a college education is "not too important."

One of the most interesting findings from the present survey is that persons in the disadvantaged categories, both in terms of race and income, are the ones who place the greatest importance on a college education.

In fact, the groups attaching the highest importance to a college education are blacks, individuals whose education did not go beyond grade school, and those earning less than \$7,000 a year.

Minimum Requirements for Graduation

Most states are now concerned with establishing minimum requirements for graduation from high school.

In effect, these requirements will apply chiefly to those students who do not intend to enter college but who plan to take a job, or job training, after they finish high school. Typically, colleges set their own requirements.

Because of the current interest in minimum requirements, a question asked in the 1975 survey was repeated this year. Ten areas of learning were covered, and respondents were asked in the case of each to say whether in their opinion the requirement as stated was "very important," "fairly important," or "not important."

Requirements that top the list are writing, reading, and arithmetic. Two others also get high scores: knowing the health hazards of smoking, alcohol, and drugs; and having a salable skill, such as typing, auto mechanics, etc.

The three requirements that receive less than a 50% vote as "very important" are knowledge of world affairs, the history of mankind, and knowing a foreign language.

Results from the 1978 question are approximately the same as those found in 1975. One question was added to the 1975 list this year -- the question dealing with health hazards -- and a slight change was made in the wording of the question dealing with reading.

The results below show the percentage of all respondents who regard each requirement as written as "very important," "fairly important," and "not important." The results have been listed in descending order, based upon the percentage who say the requirement is "very important."

What requirements, if any, would you set for graduation from high school for those students who do not plan to go on to college but who plan to take a job or job training following graduation? I'll read off a number of requirements, and then you tell me how important each one is as a requirement for graduation for these students. We would like to know whether you think it is very important, fairly important, or not important.

	Very Important %	Fairly Important %	Not Important %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
How important is it that these students...				
... be able to write a letter of application using correct grammar and correct spelling?	90	9	*	1
... be able to read well enough to follow an instruction manual for home appliances?	86	12	1	1
... know enough arithmetic to be able to figure out such a problem as the total square feet in a room?	84	14	1	1
... know the health hazards of smoking, use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs?	83	14	2	1
... have a salable skill, such as typing, auto mechanics, nurse's aide, business machines?	79	17	3	1
... know something about the U.S. government, the political parties, voting procedures?	66	30	3	1
... know something about the history of the U.S., such as the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the like?	61	31	7	1
... know something about the major nations of the world today, their kind of government, and their way of life?	42	46	10	2
... know something about the history of mankind, the great leaders in art, literature?	30	48	21	1
... know a foreign language?	16	32	50	2

*Less than 1%

Importance Placed Upon Extracurricular Activities

Those who believe in the importance of extracurricular activities in the schools will find support from the present survey. Approximately half of the parents with children now enrolled in school regard these activities as "very important." About four in 10 say they are "fairly important," and only one parent in eight says they are "not too important" or "not at all important."

This is the question asked:

I'd like your opinion about extracurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, the school paper. How important are these to a young person's education -- very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Very important	45	44	47	51
Fairly important	40	40	40	38
Not too important	9	9	10	9
Not at all important	4	4	2	2
Don't know/no answer	2	3	1	*

*Less than 1%

Opportunities for Finding Part-Time Jobs

In earlier generations young persons acquired work habits through part-time jobs that they could hold while attending school. In our present industrial-technological society most of these jobs are vanishing.

To discover how difficult it is for young people today to find part-time jobs, and in what situations they are most likely to be found, this question was asked:

In your opinion, are the opportunities for young people to obtain part-time jobs in this community good, only fair, or poor?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Good	28	28	29	34
Only fair	39	39	39	36
Poor	25	23	27	24
Don't know/no answer	8	10	5	6

The results show that part-time jobs are difficult to find in all sections of the nation -- in the large cities as well as the small communities. Blacks find it particularly difficult to find part-time jobs for their children in their communities, especially blacks who live in the North.

Another breakdown:

	Good %	Only Fair %	Poor %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	28	39	25	8
Race				
White	30	40	22	8
Nonwhite	14	33	47	6
Community size				
1 million & over	27	34	27	12
500,000 -- 999,999	32	31	24	13
50,000 -- 499,999	35	44	16	5
2,500 -- 49,999	25	39	25	11
Under 2,500	23	41	32	4
Region				
East	24	37	30	9
Midwest	32	40	20	8
South	28	43	22	7
West	30	35	27	8

	Good %	Only Fair %	Poor %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Race-region				
Northern white	30	38	23	9
Southern white	31	43	19	7
Northern black	11	30	54	5
Southern black	15	43	37	5

Course Credit for Community Service

The proposal to give high school credit to juniors and seniors for community service — a plan now followed in some schools — meets with widespread approval across the nation. Eighty-seven percent of all respondents would like to have juniors and seniors earn course credit for giving service to the community. Those with children as well as those without children in school hold the same view.

The question was put to respondents in this fashion:

A plan has been suggested to enable all juniors and seniors in high school to perform some kind of community service for course credit — such as working in a hospital or recreation center, beautifying parks, or helping law enforcement officers. Would you like to have such a plan adopted in this community, or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, would like plan	87	88	86	86
No, would not	8	7	11	10
Don't know/no answer	5	5	3	4

What To Do with Closed Schools

Because declining school enrollments have forced the closing of many schools, public opinion was sought on what to do with these buildings. The question:

Many schools are being closed today because of a drop in enrollment. What suggestions do you have as to how vacant school buildings might be used?

Suggestions for the use of vacant school buildings are many and range in the following order, based upon the number of mentions given each use:

1. Community activities
2. Adult education centers
3. Vocational and job training
4. Cultural centers (museums, libraries, concerts, exhibitions, theater)
5. Senior citizen centers
6. Youth activities
7. Make into offices
8. Use for governmental agencies
9. Sell or rent
10. Convert to apartments

No doubt many districts have already instituted some of these uses, but other school systems have simply closed down such buildings and now could be faced with increased vandalism.

Making Parents Responsible for Vandalism

School vandalism has been a big problem for many schools throughout the nation. Students themselves are

sometimes the ones caught doing damage, and the question arises as to how to deal with these students.

In the present survey, this question was put to respondents:

Should parents be made financially responsible, or not, for damage to school property done by their children?

Parents should be held financially responsible for the damage to school property done by their children, in the opinion of almost all citizens, as well as of almost all parents with children now enrolled in school.

Make Parents Financially Responsible

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, they should be	86	85	88	93
No, they shouldn't	11	12	10	6
Don't know/no answer	3	3	2	1

Separating Vocational Education from School

The proposal that vocational education be separated from the school and be conducted in a separate location by other agencies such as business or industry does not carry much appeal to parents with children now attending school. Nor does it appeal particularly to those who have no children of school age.

The chief reason given by respondents for not approving this plan is that it takes children out of the school environment and would deprive them of educational training in the basics. Those who favor the plan stress the importance of on-the-job training, that business has more know-how than vocational teachers, and that students would acquire a better understanding of what business and industry are all about. At the same time, there is much sentiment for combining the two kinds of education — with students spending part of the day in the classroom and part of the day in the real world of business and industry.

The questions were worded:

In your opinion, should vocational education be separated from the school and conducted in a separate location by other agencies such as business or industry? Why do you say this?

Separate Vocational Education?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, should separate	32	34	28	30
No, should not	53	48	62	60
Don't know/no answer	15	18	10	10

Dealing with Absenteeism

Currently one of the most difficult problems for schools to deal with is absenteeism. And for this reason the views of parents with children now attending school are especially important.

Parents of children enrolled in public or nonpublic schools believe, by a large majority, that students who are absent from school without good reason should be forced to attend. Moreover, by an even larger majority, they believe that parents should be held responsible for their children's school attendance.

Two questions were asked:

In some of our schools, absenteeism is as high as 40% on a given day. In your opinion, should those students who are frequently absent *without good reason* be dismissed from school, or should they be forced to attend?

Should or should not parents be held responsible for their children's school attendance?

What To Do with Students				
	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Should be dismissed	19	20	17	15
Should be forced to attend	63	62	65	78
No action should be taken	6	6	5	2
Don't know/no answer	12	12	13	5

Should Parents Be Held Responsible?				
	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Parents should be made responsible	86	85	89	92
Parents should not be	6	7	4	3
Don't know/no answer	8	8	7	5

Confidence in School Boards

Citizens of the nation give their school boards a vote of confidence. School boards get their highest vote of confidence in the Midwest and South and in the smaller communities. The lowest vote is recorded in the cities with one million population or more. Northern blacks, of all groups, give their school boards the lowest rating. And, as noted elsewhere, they also give their schools the lowest rating. Southern blacks, on the other hand, give their school boards a rating above the national average.

The question:

Thinking about the school board in your school district, how much respect and confidence do you have in its ability to deal with school problems — a great deal of confidence, a fair amount, very little, or none?

	Great Deal %	Fair Amount %	Very Little %	None %	Don't Know/No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	18	43	16	6	17
Sex					
Men	18	43	16	6	17
Women	18	43	16	5	18
Race					
White	18	44	16	6	16
Nonwhite	16	35	21	7	21
Age					
18-29	13	42	23	5	17
30-49	20	45	17	5	13
50 & over	20	41	11	7	21
Community size					
1 million & over	14	32	21	9	24
500,000 — 999,999	16	43	11	6	24
50,000 — 499,999	14	48	19	6	13
2,500 — 49,999	20	48	17	4	11
Under 2,500	24	43	13	4	16
Central city	12	39	22	8	19
Education					
Grade school	23	31	14	4	28
High school	18	44	17	6	15
College	16	47	17	6	14

	Great Deal %	Fair Amount %	Very Little %	None %	Don't Know/No Answer %
Region					
East	14	44	15	7	20
Midwest	22	39	18	3	18
South	22	44	16	4	14
West	12	44	16	10	18
Race-region					
Northern white	17	44	15	6	18
Southern white	22	43	18	5	12
Northern black	12	31	26	11	20
Southern black	23	46	10	2	19

It will come as some comfort to local school boards that parents of children now enrolled in the public schools give their school boards a higher rating than does the general public.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Great deal of confidence	18	17	23	10
Fair amount	43	39	52	46
Very little	16	17	13	19
None	6	6	5	8
Don't know/no answer	17	21	7	17

Influence of Groups on Local Education

About one American adult in five believes there is a group of people in the local community that has more influence than it should in the way the schools are run. But the groups mentioned vary widely, and no group is named by more than a small minority.

Oddly enough, in the list of groups believed to have too much influence, the local school board is often named. This underscores a finding from another survey that many persons are wholly unaware of the function of local school boards.

Politicians receive some mentions, as do blacks and the NAACP, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (PTA), and "the wealthy." But, on the whole, there is no group that, throughout the nation, seems to exercise too much influence, in the public's view.

The question was worded thus:

In your opinion, is there any group of people in this community that has more influence than it should have in the way schools are run? (If yes) Who is that?

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Yes, too much influence	20	18	24	26
No	46	43	52	42
Don't know/no answer	34	39	24	32

Financing the Public Schools

The adoption of Proposition 13 in California and resistance throughout the nation to higher property taxes have focused attention on the problem of how best to finance the public schools.

When the public is questioned about how the public schools are presently financed, about half (49%) name property or real estate taxes, or say "local taxes." Surprisingly few are acquainted with other sources of revenue. As a matter of fact, for the nation as a whole 48% of the revenues to finance the public schools come

from local sources, 44% from the state, and 8% from the federal government. However, only one person in 9 (11%) of those included in the survey mentions that money comes from the federal government, and only one in six (16%) specifically mentions state sources. The following question was asked:

There has been much discussion in the nation about the best way to finance the public schools. Do you happen to know where *most* of the money comes from to finance schools in this community? Where?

A second question dealing with school financing asked if the respondent were satisfied or dissatisfied with this way of raising money to support the public schools. Here is the question:

Are you, yourself, satisfied or dissatisfied with this way of raising the money?

When the answers to this question are then related to the answers given to the previous question about how the schools are financed, the results show:

	Satisfied %	Dissatisfied %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Those who named:			
Property taxes	43	52	5
Federal sources	68	21	11
State sources	68	20	12

A third question dealing with school financing was asked of those who said they were dissatisfied with the present way of financing the schools:

What other way would you prefer?

Responses to this question indicate that many would prefer that state and federal sources be relied upon to a greater extent. As a favored way to support the schools, they cite income taxes and sales taxes, or they simply say that money should come from the state and federal governments.

The public's wish to lower property taxes in favor of increased state taxes was reported in 1970 in this survey series and then again in 1971 and 1972. In those years the survey question was worded as follows:

It has been suggested that state taxes be increased for everyone in order to let the state government pay a greater share of school expense and to reduce local property taxes. Would you favor an increase in state taxes so that real estate taxes could be lowered on local property?

	1970 %	1971 %	1972 %
For	54	46	55
Against	34	37	34
No opinion	12	17	11

In the years since 1970 a smaller percentage of the funds to support the public schools has come from property taxes and a larger percentage has come from state and federal sources.

One fact brought to light by the questions dealing with school financing could prove worrisome to educators in the future. When asked what other way they would prefer to finance schools, a surprisingly large number of persons volunteered the comment that people with children in the schools should pay a special

tax and that the elderly and those without children in the schools should not have to pay any tax to support the public schools.

Those who are interested in the continued welfare of the public schools should enlighten the public as to the need to support public school education in a democracy such as ours, should inform the public as to how the schools are presently supported, and, hopefully, work out an acceptable way to support the schools.

State and Federal Regulations

Evidence grows that the public is becoming aware of state and federal efforts to regulate to a greater extent the educational programs of local schools. Big government, other surveys show, is being regarded by many citizens as an undesirable trend in national life.

To discover the public's attitudes toward government regulation — state and federal — and how it may affect the local schools, this question was asked:

Some people worry that the state and the federal government are adopting many regulations regarding educational matters which don't take account of the local school situation. Do you think these actions by the state and the federal government are more likely to help, or more likely to hinder, public school education here?

While many persons have not made up their minds on this question (28% nationally), those who have an opinion believe, by a 2-1 ratio, that state and federal regulations are more likely to hinder than to help.

When asked "Why do you say this?" those who say that state and federal regulations are likely to help point to the greater expertise of those in higher levels of government. They say that higher standards will be required, that local politics aren't involved, and that new and better programs will be introduced.

Those who say that state and federal regulations are likely to hinder the local schools point to specific programs of which a majority of local residents do not approve, such as busing, bilingual language instruction, avoidance of prayers, and school building construction requirements that are both costly and needless. But the reason advanced by most of those who are opposed is that state and federal regulations ignore the vast differences in the problems of big-city schools and those in small towns, of rich suburban communities and those located in impoverished industrial areas, those with a high percentage of minorities and those with a small percentage.

Greater opposition to state and federal regulations is found among parents with children now enrolled in non-public schools than among parents of children now attending public schools.

	National Totals %	No Children In Schools %	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
State and federal regulations help	23	23	24	14
Hinder	44	43	46	54
Make no difference	5	5	5	5
Don't know/no answer	28	29	25	27

In recent years, in this same series of surveys, questions have twice been asked about federal and state control versus local control.

On both occasions the findings show the public strongly in favor of local control. A question asked in the

1976 survey revealed that two-thirds of those questioned want their local school boards to have greater responsibility in running the schools. In the 1977 survey a majority of approximately the same size favored giving local school authorities jurisdiction over how money is to be spent in carrying out programs mandated by federal agencies.

Subjects Found Most Useful in Later Life

What can be learned from those who have finished high school and who have had the opportunity to make use of their school experience in later life? To discover how adults now regard the kind of education they received in high school, this question was asked:

What subjects that you studied or experiences that you gained in high school have you found to be most useful in later life?

These are the subjects, or experiences, found most useful, in order of mention:

1. English (literature, composition, grammar)
2. Mathematics (arithmetic, business math, etc.)
3. Commercial subjects (typing, bookkeeping, etc.)
4. Extracurricular activities (sports, drama, band, newspaper, etc.)
5. Shop (woodworking, drafting, machines, etc.)
6. History
7. Science
8. Foreign language
9. Psychology
10. Domestic science (sewing, cooking, etc.)

A second question asked:

And now thinking only of the subjects that were offered in your high school, are there any subjects you wish you had studied and didn't that would be of special help to you now?

The subject mentioned by far the most often is typing. The list follows, in order of mention:

1. Typing and other secretarial skills
2. Mathematics
3. Shop
4. Foreign languages
5. Science
6. English
7. History
8. Civics
9. Home economics
10. Music

Enjoyment of School

Do young people enjoy going to school today? To shed some light on this question, parents with children now enrolled in school were asked to give their impressions. The question:

Just how much or how little does your (eldest) child enjoy going to school — very much, somewhat, or very little?

Most parents say their children do enjoy going to school. There is little difference between those who attend public schools and those who attend private schools.

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Enjoy very much	60	63
Somewhat	29	23
Very little	8	6
Don't know/no answer	3	8

Differences do appear when one-parent families are compared with two-parent families, with children in the one-parent families less likely to enjoy school. Mothers are more likely to say that their children do not enjoy school than are fathers. Those living in the East as well as those in large cities are also more likely to say that their children do not enjoy school.

Further breakdowns follow: (Percentages are based on the number of parents only.)

	Very Much %	Some- what %	Very Little %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	60	28	8	4
Sex				
Men	68	24	3	5
Women	54	31	12	3
Race				
White	60	28	8	4
Nonwhite	61	28	9	2
Age				
18-29	63	18	7	12
30-49	60	32	7	1
50 & over	60	23	11	6
Community size				
1 million & over	51	32	13	4
500,000 — 999,999	58	31	6	5
50,000 — 499,999	59	31	7	3
2,500 — 49,999	63	30	4	3
Under 2,500	66	22	8	4
Education				
Grade school	61	27	10	2
High school	61	27	10	2
College	58	31	4	7
Region				
East	49	34	12	5
Midwest	63	24	7	6
South	64	26	7	3
West	67	29	4	—
By family				
One-parent families	51	26	11	12
Two-parent families	62	29	7	2

Time Spent with Schoolchildren

With so many mothers working outside the home, the question arises as to how much time parents have to devote to their children of school age. This question was asked:

As a parent, how much time do you usually have to devote to your youngster in the evening to assist him/her with his/her homework — enough time, not enough time, or none at all?

	Public School Parents %	Parochial School Parents %
Have enough time	64	67
Not enough time	18	17
No time at all	14	5
Don't know/no answer	4	11

Parents with only a grade school education are more likely to say they do not have enough time. In fact, 48% of this group report that they do not have enough time or have none at all. Nonwhites report that they have less time than whites. Further breakdowns follow: (Percentages are based on the number of parents only.)

	Enough Time %	Not Enough Time %	None at All %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
NATIONAL TOTALS	64	17	13	6
Sex				
Men	60	21	12	7
Women	68	14	14	4
Race				
White	65	16	13	6
Nonwhite	59	25	13	3
Age				
18-29	51	19	13	17
30-49	67	19	12	2
50 & over	66	10	19	5
Community size				
1 million & over	62	19	13	6
500,000 — 999,999	79	5	11	5
50,000 — 499,999	59	18	17	6
2,500 — 49,999	65	15	13	7
Under 2,500	64	21	11	4
Education				
Grade school	49	19	29	3
High school	66	17	14	3
College	66	18	6	10
Region				
East	60	16	17	7
Midwest	62	22	8	8
South	65	19	13	3
West	74	11	13	2
By family				
One-parent families	58	12	10	20
Two-parent families	66	18	13	3

COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE

Adults	%	Income	%
No children in schools	68	\$20,000 and over	28
Public school parents	28*	\$15,000 to \$19,999	17
Parochial school parents	5*	\$10,000 to \$14,999	19
		\$ 7,000 to \$ 9,999	9
		\$ 5,000 to \$ 6,999	11
		\$ 3,000 to \$ 4,999	8
		Under \$3,000	5
		Undesignated	3
*Total exceeds 32% because some parents have children attending more than one kind of school.			
Sex	%	Region	%
Men	47	East	27
Women	53	Midwest	27
		South	28
		West	18
Race	%		
White	88		
Nonwhite	12		
Age	%	Community size	%
18 to 24 years	17	1 million and over	20
25 to 29 years	12	500,000 to 999,999	12
30 to 49 years	32	50,000 to 499,999	25
50 years and over	37	2,500 to 49,999	15
Undesignated	2	Under 2,500	28
Occupation	%	Education	%
Business & professional	27	Elementary grades	16
Clerical & sales	5	High school incomplete	14
Farm	4	High school complete	34
Skilled labor	18	Technical, trade, or business school	7
Unskilled labor	23	College incomplete	15
Non-labor force	20	College graduate	14
Undesignated	3	Undesignated	*
Political affiliation	%		
Republican	19		
Democrat	43		
Independent	35		
Other	3		

*Less than 1%

THE DESIGN OF THE SAMPLE

The sampling procedure is designed to produce an approximation of the adult civilian population 18 years of age and older, living in the United States, except for those persons in institutions such as prisons or hospitals.

The design of the sample is that of a replicated probability sample,

down to the block level in the case of urban areas and to segments of townships in the case of rural areas. Approximately 300 sampling locations are used in each survey. Interpenetrating samples can be provided for any given study when appropriate.

The sample design included stratification by these four size-of-community strata, using 1970 census data: 1) cities of population 1 million and over; 2) 250,000 — 999,999; 3) 50,000 — 249,999; 4) all other population. Each of these strata was further stratified into seven geographic regions: New England, Middle Atlantic, East Central, West Central, South, Mountain, and Pacific. Within each city-size/regional stratum, the population was arrayed in geographic order and zoned into equal-sized groups of sampling units. Pairs of localities were selected in each zone, with probability of selection of each locality proportional to its population size in the 1970 census, producing two replicated samples of localities.

Within localities so selected for which the requisite population data are reported, subdivisions were drawn with the probability of selection proportional to size of population. In all other localities, small definable geographic areas were selected with equal probability.

Separately for each survey, within each subdivision so selected for which block statistics are available, a sample of blocks or block clusters is drawn with probability of selection proportional to the number of dwelling units. In all other subdivisions or areas, blocks or segments are drawn at random or with equal probability.

In each cluster of blocks and each segment so selected, a randomly selected starting point is designated on the interviewer's map of the area. Starting at this point, interviewers are required to follow a given direction in the selection of households until their assignment is completed.

Interviewing is conducted at times when adults, in general, are most likely to be at home, which means on weekends, or if on weekdays, after 4:00 p.m. for women and after 6:00 p.m. for men.

Allowance for persons not at home is made by a "times-at-home" weighting procedure rather than by "call-backs." This procedure is a standard method for reducing the sample bias that would otherwise result from underrepresentation in the sample of persons who are difficult to find at home.

The prestratification by regions is routinely supplemented by fitting each obtained sample to the latest available Census Bureau estimates of the regional distribution of the population. Also, minor adjustments of the sample are made by educational attainment by men and women separately, based on the annual estimates of the Census Bureau (derived from their Current Population Survey) and by age.

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error; that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

Readers interested in determining the approximate size of sampling error for any percentage given in this report should obtain a copy of *The Gallup Polls of Attitudes Toward Education, 1969-1978*, which is planned for publication this fall. (Order from Phi Delta Kappa, Eighth and Union, Bloomington, IN 47401. Price, \$5.50 each or \$4.50 each for five or more copies.)

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