

The 33rd Annual
Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup

Poll

OF THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FOR THE first time in the 33-year history of these polls, a majority of respondents assign either an A or a B to the schools in their communities. And, as has been the case in all past polls, the closer people are to the public schools, the better they like them. The percentage of A's and B's rises from 51% for all respondents to 62% for public school parents and to 68% when these same parents are asked to grade the school their oldest child attends.

These high marks may explain why, when asked to choose between improving schools by reforming the existing system or by finding an alternative to that system, 72% of Americans choose reforming the existing system. This percentage, while up from 59% in the 2000 poll, is consistent with the 1999 and 1997 findings, in which 71% preferred to reform the existing system.

Poll findings confirm the decline in support for using public money to fund attendance at private or church-related schools. Thirty-four percent in this year's poll favor allowing families to choose to attend a private school at public expense, a drop of five percentage points since last year and 10 points from the 1997 and 1998 highs of 44%. In a companion question regarding allowing parents to choose a public, private, or church-related school to attend with the government paying all or part of the tuition, the percentage favoring that proposal stands at 44%, down one point from last year.

The public is relatively uninformed on charter schools. Last year's poll found that only about half of the respondents had heard or read about such schools. When given a brief description of a charter school, a small plurality expressed disapproval. This year's poll shows only limited change. The percentage of respondents who say they have heard or read about such schools is up from 49% to 55%.

While falling short of majority approval, home schooling continues to gain public support. Forty-one percent of respondents this year regard home schooling as a good thing, while 54% regard it as a bad thing. However, the 41% figure is up from 16% when the question was first asked in 1985.

The public is less willing to embrace cyberspace instruction. In a new question, 67% of respondents disapprove of allowing students to earn high school credits over the Internet without attending a regular school. Pressed further, half of the 30% who approve of this practice say they would be unwilling to have a child of theirs take most courses online at home instead of attending a regular school.

Public opposition to having a school board contract with local businesses or private companies to run the entire school operation is growing. The percentage opposing this practice stood at 59% in 1996 but has now risen to 72%.

Respondents to each poll are given the opportunity to identify the biggest problem facing schools in their respective communities. Topping the list this year are lack of school funding and lack of discipline, both mentioned by 15% of respondents. Fighting/violence/gangs and overcrowded schools tied for third, each mentioned by 10%.

Opinion is little changed on questions first asked in 1993 addressing issues of school quality and financing. Fifty-nine percent of respondents say that the *quality* of education in their

states differs from district to district a great deal or quite a lot; 57% say that the *funding level* differs from district to district a great deal or quite a lot; and 68% say that the amount of money spent makes a great deal or quite a lot of difference in the quality of education that students receive.

That all students can learn at high levels is one of the mantras of school improvement efforts nationally. Last year's poll showed the public divided on this issue, with 55% saying that all students can learn at high levels and 43% believing that only some students have this ability. More surprising was the fact that 80% believed that most students achieve only a small part of their academic potential in school. Those results are confirmed this year, with 52% believing all students can learn at high levels and 46% believing only some can. Meanwhile, the percentage believing that students achieve only a small part of their potential remains essentially unchanged at 81%.

The President's possible impact on education becomes more significant when a new President is elected. Last year's respondents split almost equally on whether then-candidate George Bush or then-candidate Al Gore would do the most for education. This year's respondents, by 49% to 33%, express the view that President Bush will do a better job of school improvement than President Clinton did.

Continuing with the politics of education, respondents graded various government officials for the job done in the 1990s in bringing about school improvement. Forty-six percent of respondents gave their governors a grade of A or B, 40% gave President Clinton an A or a B, 39% gave their state legislatures an A or a B, and 30% gave Congress an A or a B.

Participants also rated three items in President Bush's education program. A split sample was used to test the effect of associating the President's name with the item on responses. With the President's name included, 55% support the increased use of standardized tests, 75% support holding the public schools accountable, and 77% support giving the states greater authority in deciding how federal funds should be used. With the President's name omitted, support for the first two programs increases to 63% and 81% respectively, but support for giving states more authority drops to 71%.

Respondents judged President Bush's plan to use tax money to pay faith-based organizations to conduct after-school programs designed to improve academic performance. Sixty-two percent favor this program, while 35% are opposed. Republicans and Democrats are in near agreement, with 62% of Republicans and 61% of Democrats approving.

The public remains somewhat divided regarding the emphasis placed on standardized testing and is even more divided regarding the use of such tests in assessing student achievement. When asked about the emphasis on standardized tests, the public splits, with 31% saying there is too much emphasis, 22% saying there is not enough emphasis, and 44% saying that the emphasis is just about right.

Turning to high-stakes testing, 53% favor the use of a single standardized test to determine promotion from grade to grade, while 45% are opposed. These figures change to 57% in favor and 42% opposed when the decision involves awarding a high school diploma. Support for these uses seems to run counter to the fact that 66% of the public believes that standardized tests should be used to guide instruction, while only 30% believe such tests should be used to measure student learning. The issue is further blurred by the fact that 65% believe student achievement should be measured by classroom

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work and homework, while only 31% would rely on testing.

A new question this year asked respondents about how to treat schools that do not show progress toward state standards. Sixty-five percent favor awarding more state and federal dollars to such schools, while only 32% favor withholding funds from those sources. Fifty-four percent favor not renewing the contract of the principal, while 49% favor not renewing the contracts of the teachers. And 51% favor giving parents in such a school vouchers to use at public or private schools of their choice.

One criticism of current school improvement efforts is the emphasis on the basic subjects. Therefore, this poll repeats a question first asked in 1979 and repeated in 1993. Fifty-four percent of this year's sample opt for a varied curriculum for high schools, while 44% choose an emphasis on basic courses. This is a change since 1979, when basic courses were preferred by a margin of 49% to 44%, and since 1993, when they were preferred by 51% to 48%.

In the late 1970s, this poll set out to determine the public's attitude regarding the education of minority children. In a finding almost unchanged since 1978, 79% of respondents to the 2001 poll believe that blacks and other minority children in the community have the same educational opportunities as white children. However, the percentage of nonwhites answering yes to this question (57%), while up 19 points since 1978, remains 26 points below the percentage for whites (83%).

New questions in this year's poll delve further into the education of minorities. Forty-eight percent believe that the achievement of white students exceeds that of black and Hispanic students. As to the cause of this achievement gap, 73% believe it is related to factors other than schooling, and 88% believe that closing this gap is either "very important" or "somewhat important."

While the public does not hold schools responsible for the achievement gap, 55% of respondents believe it is the public schools' responsibility to see that it is closed, while 45% assign this responsibility to government. Among the latter group, there is an almost even three-way split between those who would assign it to the federal government (34%), the state government (35%), or local government (29%).

Anticipated teacher retirements are expected to produce a serious teacher shortage in the coming years. Making it easier for teachers to transfer pension benefits and to receive salary credit when moving from state to state and raising teacher salaries are the two strategies that draw strongest support for dealing with this possible shortage. The percentages favoring these steps are 89% and 88% respectively. Options related to

reducing requirements for teachers are soundly rejected: 82% oppose lowering state requirements for teacher training, and 67% oppose permitting persons with bachelor's degrees to become teachers without preparation in teacher education. Some 73% support the idea of forgivable federal loans for those who become teachers.

The final issue explored in the 2001 poll deals with firearms and firearm safety. The public splits on whether a mandatory course in firearm safety for those requesting gun permits would reduce the number of shooting deaths in the nation, with 48% saying yes, it would, and 50% saying no, it wouldn't. Fifty-five percent believe that the public high schools should offer such a course. On an issue being debated across the country, 73% oppose permitting public school security employees to bring their handguns onto school property.

Attitudes Regarding the Public Schools

Grading the Public Schools

Respondents traditionally assign low grades to the nation's schools and higher grades to the schools in their own communities. This year's poll is no exception. When respondents grade schools in their own community, the percentage awarding them A's and B's climbs to 51%, the highest in the poll's 33-year history. When grading the nation's schools, 23% award them an A or a B. The combined percentage of A's and B's for community schools goes to 62% for public school parents and to 68% when public school parents grade the school their oldest child attends. Regional differences find 56% of those in the East and 58% of those in the Midwest assigning an A or a B to community schools as compared to 46% in the South and 48% in the West.

The first question:

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?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
A & B	51	47	47	44	62	56
A	11	11	8	10	19	14
B	40	36	39	34	43	42
C	30	35	33	35	25	33
D	8	8	8	8	8	6
FAIL	5	3	4	3	4	3
Don't know	6	7	8	10	1	2

The second question:

How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally — A, B, C, D, or FAIL?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
A & B	23	20	22	19	25	22
A	2	2	1	2	2	2
B	21	18	21	17	23	20
C	51	47	53	47	47	47
D	14	14	13	14	15	12
FAIL	5	5	5	6	4	4
Don't know	7	14	7	14	9	15

The third question:

Using the A, B, C, D, FAIL scale again, what grade would you give the school your oldest child attends?

	Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %
A & B	68	70
A	28	26
B	40	44
C	22	21
D	6	5
FAIL	3	2
Don't know	1	2

Seeking Improvement in Our Schools

Public support for improved schooling is generally accepted as fact, and this year's poll provides confirmation. Respondents this year were given the opportunity to choose between improvement through reforming the existing system or finding an alternative system. Seventy-two percent of respondents said they favor reform through the existing system. In a second question, respondents were asked to choose between improving the public schools and providing vouchers for parents to use to pay for private or church-related schools. This time, 71% favored improving the existing schools.

The first question:

In order to improve public education in America, some people think the focus should be on reforming the existing public school system. Others believe the focus should be on finding an alternative to the existing public school system. Which approach do you think is preferable — reforming the existing public school system or finding an alternative to the existing public school system?

	National Totals				No Children In School				Public School Parents			
	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'97 %	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'97 %	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'97 %
Reforming existing system	72	59	71	71	73	59	73	70	73	60	68	72
Finding alternative system	24	34	27	23	23	34	24	23	25	34	30	24
Don't know	4	7	2	6	4	7	3	7	2	6	2	4

The second question:

Which one of these two plans would you prefer — improving and strengthening the existing public schools or providing vouchers for parents to use in

selecting and paying for private and/or church-related schools?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Improving and strengthening existing public schools	71	71	73
Providing vouchers	27	26	25
Neither (volunteered)	—	—	2
Don't know	2	3	—

Choice and Private Schooling at Public Expense

For some years now the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup polls have tracked the public's attitude toward giving parents and students the choice of attending private or church-related schools at public expense. Two questions are repeated each year, the first asking whether the respondent favors or opposes allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense. The second includes public schools in the choice and refers to the government as the source of funds. Last year's report suggested that the use of public funds to finance private school choice had peaked and was on the decline. This year's results confirm that trend.

The proportion of respondents in favor of allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense started at 24% in 1993, rose to 44% in 1997 and 1998, dropped to 39% in 2000, and is at 34% in 2001. Given the political significance of this issue, it is interesting that 44% of Republicans support this choice as compared to 29% of Democrats.

The decline in public support for government-financed choice is also evident. The percentage of respondents who oppose permitting choice between a public, private, or church-related school with the government paying all or part of the tuition increased from 52% in 2000 to 54% this year. It is significant that the choice here includes public schools.

The first question:

Do you favor or oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense?

	National Totals						
	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'98 %	'97 %	'96 %	'95 %
Favor	34	39	41	44	44	36	33
Oppose	62	56	55	50	52	61	65
Don't know	4	5	4	6	4	3	2



The second question:

A proposal has been made that would allow parents to send their school-age children to any public, private, or church-related school they choose. For those parents choosing nonpublic schools, the government would pay all or part of the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal in your state?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Favor	44	39	52
Oppose	54	58	47
Don't know	2	3	1

	National Totals						Public School Parents					
	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'98 %	'97 %	'96 %	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'98 %	'97 %	'96 %
Favor	44	45	51	51	49	43	52	47	60	56	55	49
Oppose	54	52	47	45	48	54	47	51	38	40	43	49
Don't know	2	3	2	4	3	3	1	2	2	4	2	2

Perhaps the most significant question related to choice involves the public's attitude toward accountability for private or church-related schools that accept government tuition payments. The public belief that such schools must be accountable is consistent and growing. The 82% responding "yes" in this year's poll is the highest percentage since the question was first asked in 1998.

The third question:

Do you think private or church-related schools that accept government tuition payments should be accountable to the state in the way public schools are accountable?

	National Totals				No Children In School				Public School Parents			
	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'98 %	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'98 %	'01 %	'00 %	'99 %	'98 %
Yes, should	82	76	77	75	82	74	77	74	83	82	79	80
No, should not	16	21	21	20	16	23	21	22	15	16	18	16
Don't know	2	3	2	5	2	3	2	4	2	2	3	4

Other Forms of Schooling

Charter Schools

There are currently more than 2,000 charter schools in the United States. They vary according to the state laws under which they are created and the specific desires of the organizers. Last year's poll found the public generally uninformed about such schools. That finding is confirmed this year.

The first question asks respondents if they have heard or read about charter schools. The 55% who say yes is up six points from last year. Some are better informed than others.

Sixty-two percent of suburbanites are familiar with charter schools, as are 71% of those who have an income of more than \$50,000 a year.

After being given a brief definition of charter schools, 47% of last year's respondents opposed the idea while 42% approved. This year, 49% oppose the idea, and 42% favor it. The philosophical difference between the political parties is again demonstrated on this issue, with 48% of Republicans expressing approval as compared to 40% of Democrats. Nonwhites and those between 18 and 29 years of age are more favorable than others in the sample toward charter schools, with 53% of each group expressing approval.

While public familiarity with charter schools may be lacking, 77% of Americans believe that such schools should be accountable to the state in the same way other public schools are accountable.

The first question:

Have you heard or read about so-called charter schools?

	National Totals		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Yes	55	49	50	44
No	44	50	49	55
Don't know	1	1	1	1

The second question:

As you may know, charter schools operate under a charter or contract that frees them from many of the state regulations imposed on public schools and permits them to operate independently. Do you favor or oppose the idea of charter schools?

	National Totals		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Favor	42	42	43	40
Oppose	49	47	47	47
Don't know	9	11	10	13

The third question:

Do you think that charter schools should be accountable to the state in the way regular public schools are accountable?

	National Totals		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Should be accountable	77	79	77	81
Should not	18	17	18	14
Don't know	5	4	5	5

Home Schooling

In 1985 respondents were asked whether home schooling was a good or a bad thing for the nation. Only 16% said it was

a good thing. That percentage has increased each subsequent time the question has been asked, rising to 28% in 1988, 36% in 1997, and 41% this year. This is another area that divides the political parties, with 47% of Republicans but only 34% of Democrats viewing home schooling as a good thing.

Probing deeper into the home schooling movement, two new questions were included in this year's poll, the first exploring home schooling's impact on the nation's academic standards and the second, its impact on good citizenship. The results show a divided public, with 50% believing home schooling does not contribute to raising academic standards and 43% believing it does. Meanwhile, 49% of respondents believe home schooling does not promote good citizenship, and 46% believe that it does.

Forty-eight percent of Republicans believe home schooling contributes to raising academic standards, and 53% believe it promotes good citizenship. On the other hand, just 36% of Democrats believe home schooling helps raise academic standards, and 39% believe it fosters good citizenship. A regional difference also surfaces, with 53% of those in the West believing home schooling promotes good citizenship as compared to 37% of those in the East.

The first question:

Recently, there has been a movement toward home schools — that is, situations in which parents keep their children at home to teach the children themselves. Do you think that this movement is a good thing or a bad thing for the nation?

	National Totals				No Children In School				Public School Parents			
	'01	'97	'88	'85	'01	'97	'88	'85	'01	'97	'88	'85
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Good thing	41	36	28	16	39	34	27	16	42	38	29	14
Bad thing	54	57	59	73	55	59	59	72	54	56	61	75
Don't know	5	7	13	11	6	7	14	12	4	6	10	11

The second question:

Do you feel that home schooling contributes to raising the nation's academic standards or not?

	National Totals				No Children In School				Public School Parents			
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, helps raise academic standards	43				41				43			
No, does not raise academic standards	50				51				51			
Don't know	7				8				6			

The third question:

Do you feel that home schooling promotes good citizenship or not?

	National Totals				No Children In School				Public School Parents			
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, promotes good citizenship	46				46				43			
No, does not promote good citizenship	49				48				52			
Don't know	5				6				5			

Cyber Schooling

In an exciting new area, two questions deal with the public's attitudes toward students' earning high school credit online without attending a regular school. The public disapproves of this practice by 67% to 30%. Age is a factor here. While both those between 18 and 29 years of age and those age 65 and older disapprove of this practice, the percentage who disapprove in the younger group is 64% as compared to 79% in the older group. The difference between Republicans and Democrats also surfaces again, with 33% of the former approving of the practice as compared to 22% of the latter.

A follow-up question was asked of the 30% who approve of the practice: only half indicate a willingness to have a child of theirs go through high school taking most courses online over the Internet instead of attending a regular school. The interesting difference here is regional, with 59% of those in the West but only 36% of those in the East saying they are willing to have their own children take most high school courses online.

The first question:

There are increasing opportunities for students to earn high school credits online over the Internet without attending a regular school. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of this practice?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Approve	30	27	35
Disapprove	67	70	63
Don't know	3	3	2

The second question (asked of those who said they approve):

Would you be willing or not willing to have a child of yours go through high school taking most courses online over the Internet at home instead of attending a regular school?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Willing	49	48	49
Not willing	49	50	49
Don't know	2	2	2

Problems Facing the Public Schools

The Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup polls offer respondents the opportunity to identify the biggest problems facing local public schools. Last year the lack of financial support made its way to the top of the list. It remains there this year with 15% identifying it as the top problem — the same percentage as identified discipline as the top problem. Fighting/violence/gangs and overcrowded schools were each mentioned by 10%. Use of drugs/dope, mentioned by 9%, completes the top five.

The question:

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

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Lack of financial support/funding/money	15	18	15	17	17	19
Lack of discipline/more control	15	15	17	17	10	9
Fighting/violence/gangs	10	11	11	11	9	11
Overcrowded schools	10	12	7	10	15	14
Use of drugs/dope	9	9	9	10	10	9
Difficulty getting good teachers/quality teachers	6	4	6	4	6	4



Quality and Funding Issues

The Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll last explored the relationship between the quality of education and the level of school funding in 1993. Three questions asked in 1993 were repeated this year. The results can be summed up by saying that the public believes there are great variances in both the quality of education and the levels of funding and that the difference in funding contributes directly to the quality differences.

Regarding the difference in quality, 59% believe it varies from district to district either a great deal or quite a lot. Fifty-seven percent believe the same is true of funding. And 68% hold the view that the amount spent affects the quality of education a student receives either a great deal or quite a lot. These percentages have not changed significantly since 1993. Once again, the positions of Republicans and Democrats differ, with 64% of the former and 72% of the latter believing that money makes a great deal or quite a lot of difference.

The first question:

Just your impression, how much would you say the quality of the education provided by the public schools in your state differs from school district to school district — a great deal, quite a lot, not too much, or not at all?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'93 %	'01 %	'93 %	'01 %	'93 %
A great deal and quite a lot	59	62	56	61	65	62
A great deal	33	33	31	31	38	35
Quite a lot	26	29	25	30	27	27
Not too much	33	30	35	30	29	33
Not at all	2	1	2	1	2	1
Don't know	6	7	7	8	4	4

The second question:

Again, just your impression, how much would you say the amount of money spent on the public schools

in your state differs from school district to school district — a great deal, quite a lot, not too much, or not at all?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'93 %	'01 %	'93 %	'01 %	'93 %
A great deal and quite a lot	57	54	56	52	60	58
A great deal	28	28	27	28	31	26
Quite a lot	29	26	29	24	29	32
Not too much	28	33	28	34	28	32
Not at all	3	3	3	3	3	3
Don't know	12	10	13	11	9	7

The third question:

In your opinion, how much does the amount of money spent on a public school student's education affect the quality of his or her education — a great deal, quite a lot, not too much, or not at all?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'93 %	'01 %	'93 %	'01 %	'93 %
A great deal and quite a lot	68	68	65	67	73	70
A great deal	38	38	34	37	44	40
Quite a lot	30	30	31	30	29	30
Not too much	25	25	27	25	23	25
Not at all	5	5	6	6	3	2
Don't know	2	2	2	2	1	3

Ability and Achievement

While the public is somewhat divided on whether all students can learn at a high level, it is solidly committed to the belief that most students realize only a small part of their academic potential. Two questions asked last year were repeated this year.

Fifty-two percent of respondents in this year's poll believe that all students can reach a high level of learning; 46% believe that only some have this ability. These percentages have changed little since last year. Age makes a difference, with 64% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 believing this year that all students can learn at a high level, compared to 35% of those 65 and older. The percentage believing that most students achieve only a small part of their academic potential remains virtually unchanged since last year at 81%.

As we noted last year, it is interesting that the public gives the schools such high marks while clinging to the view that a high percentage of students are underachieving. Two follow-up questions asked last year seem to hold the answer. A combined 70% said that either parents or students have the greatest effect on student achievement, and — given a choice between parents or the school — 60% said parents are the more important factor in determining whether students learn in school. These responses suggest that the public believes that parents and students share a great deal of the responsibility for student achievement.

The first question:

In your opinion, do all students have the ability to reach a high level of learning, or do only some have the ability to reach a high level of learning?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
All have the ability to reach a high level of learning	52	55	48	53	59	60
Only some have the ability	46	43	50	45	40	38
Don't know	2	2	2	2	1	2

The second question:

Which more accurately reflects your own views of students' ability to achieve their academic potential in school? Do you think most students achieve their full academic potential in school, or do you think most students achieve only a small part of their academic potential in school?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Most students achieve their full potential	16	17	15	16	17	18
Most achieve only a small part of their potential	81	80	82	80	80	79
Don't know	3	3	3	4	3	3

Education and Minorities

Relative Opportunity and Achievement Levels

Equal opportunity and equal achievement for minorities remain points of contention for the American public schools. In a repeat of a question first asked in 1978, 79% say the opportunities are the same. The 1978 figure was 80%. This question divides whites and nonwhites, with 83% of whites saying "the same" as compared to 57% of nonwhites. This large difference obscures the fact that the 57% for nonwhites is up 19 points since 1978. This is a question on which political affiliation comes into play. Although strong majorities in both parties hold the view that opportunities are the same, the figure for Republicans is 87%, and the figure for Democrats is 72%.

When asked to identify whether achievement is higher for whites or for blacks and Hispanics, 48% say the achievement of whites is higher, while just 5% say the achievement of whites is lower. This view is also held more strongly by nonwhites, with 61% identifying whites as higher achievers. When asked to account for the differences in achievement, 73% attribute it to factors other than schooling.

The first question:

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

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'78 %	'01 %	'78 %	'01 %	'78 %
Yes, the same	79	80	78	78	80	86
No, not the same	18	14	17	15	18	11
Don't know	3	6	5	7	2	3

The second question:

Just your impression, is the academic achievement of white students nationally higher, lower, or about the same as that of black and Hispanic students?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Higher	48	47	46
Lower	5	5	5
About the same	39	38	43
Don't know	8	10	6

The third question:

In your opinion, is the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students mostly related to the quality of schooling received or mostly related to other factors?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Related to the quality of schooling received	21	20	22
Related to other factors	73	72	74
Don't know	6	8	4

The Achievement Gap

The achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students is not disputed in the education community. While research suggests that some progress has been made in closing the gap, much remains to be done. This year's poll seeks to determine the public's attitude regarding the responsibility for closing the gap.

The first question produces near consensus with 88% of respondents believing that closing the gap is either very important or somewhat important. Here too, the difference in political affiliation surfaces, with only 59% of Republicans but 74% of Democrats saying that closing the gap is very important.

The second, third, and fourth questions explore the responsibility for closing the gap. Despite the fact, as noted above, that the public attributes the gap to factors other than schooling, a majority (55%) of respondents believe that closing it is a school responsibility.

A slim majority (52%) of respondents say it is *not* the government's responsibility to close the gap, while 45% say that it is. Nonwhites (65%) and Democrats (53%) are most likely to assign this responsibility to government. When those believing that closing the achievement gap is a government responsibility are asked which level of government should be responsible, the split is almost even, with 34% selecting the federal government, 35% selecting the state government, and 29% selecting the local government.

The first question:

In your opinion, how important do you think it is to close the academic achievement gap between

(Continued on page 53)

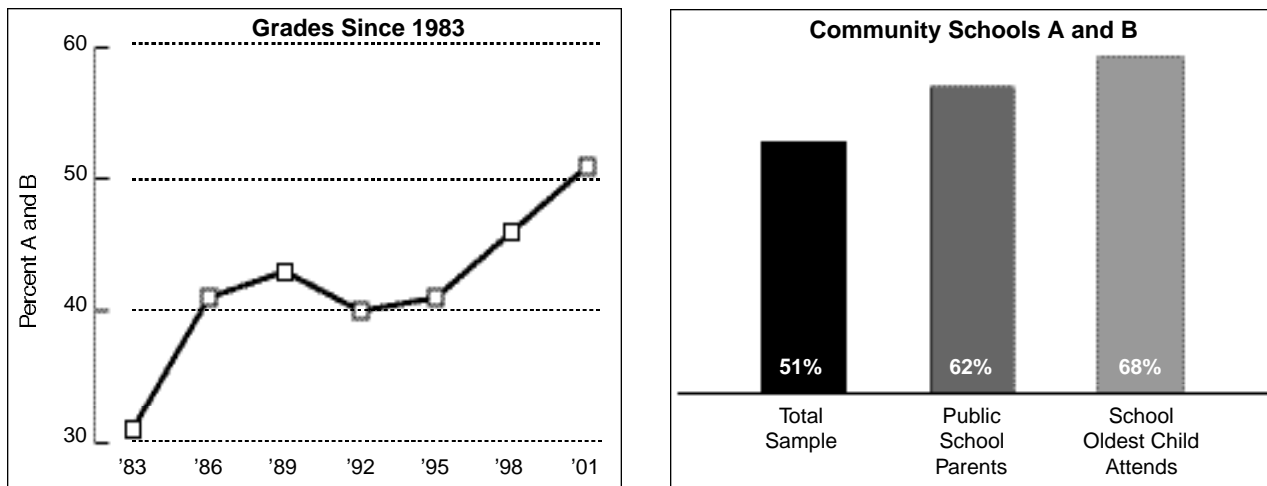
Policy Implications

OF THE 33rd ANNUAL PHI DELTA KAPPA/GALLUP POLL

It has always been the purpose of this annual poll to provide information for use by policy makers in shaping the decisions that guide the direction of the public schools. Last year's poll was the first to be accompanied by a special section with implications drawn from the poll's findings. It was so well received that it is continued in this, the 33rd poll. The following summary has been funded by the Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation in memory of Bessie F. Gabbard.

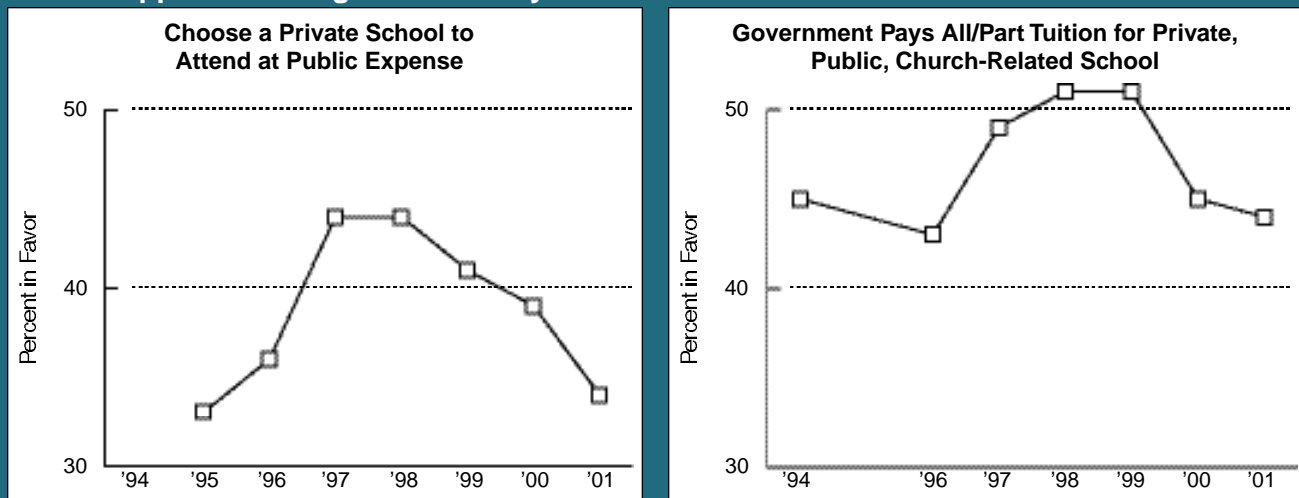
Conclusion 1. Public support for the public schools is at an all-time high. The overall approval ratings, coupled with the strong support of parents, provide the base for initiatives designed to improve student achievement in the public schools.

FIGURE 1.
Public Support for Local Public Schools Is at an All-Time High



Conclusion 2. Support for allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense is on the decline, a fact that may explain why recent efforts to promote vouchers at the ballot box have had little success.

FIGURE 2.
Public Support for Using Public Money for Private School Tuition Is on the Decline



Conclusion 3. There is a strong base of support for reform efforts that seek to rebuild and strengthen the schools we now have.

Conclusion 4. The public is not well informed regarding charter schools.

FIGURE 3.
The Public Supports Reforming Existing System

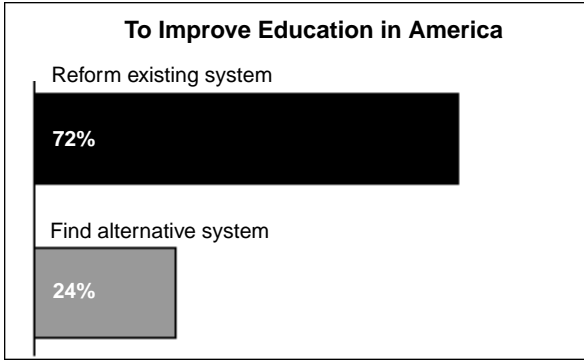
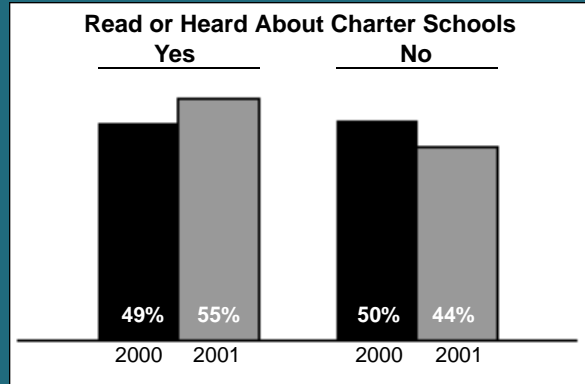


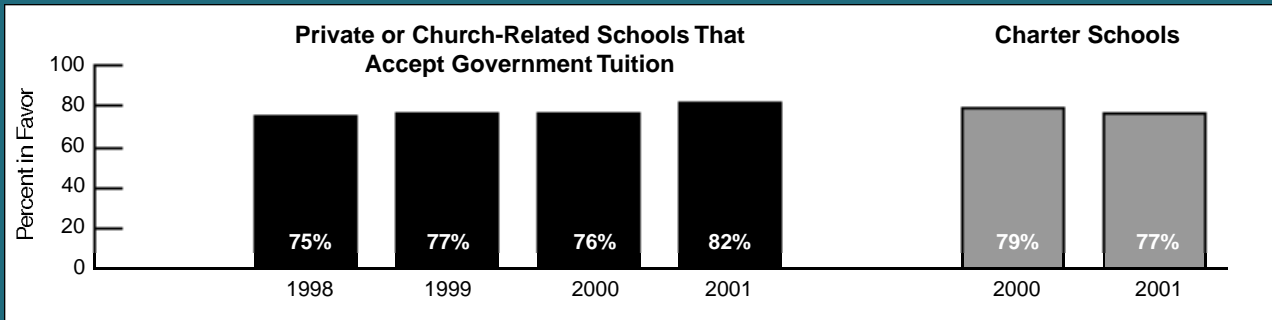
FIGURE 4.
Awareness of Charter Schools



Conclusion 5. The public is strong and consistent in its belief that any private, church-related, or charter schools that accept

public funds should be accountable to the public in the same way public schools are accountable.

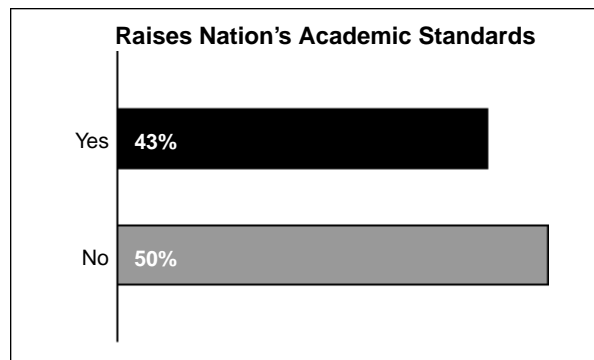
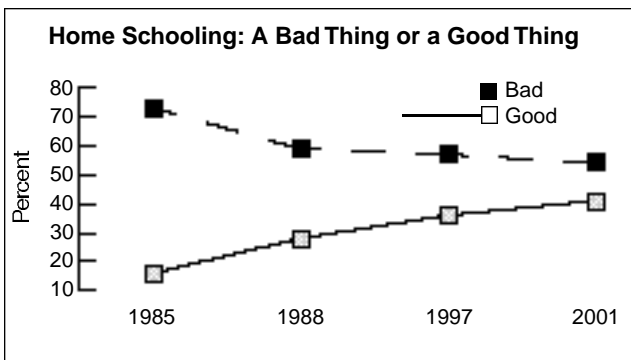
FIGURE 5.
Private Schools and Charter Schools Should Be Accountable for Public Monies



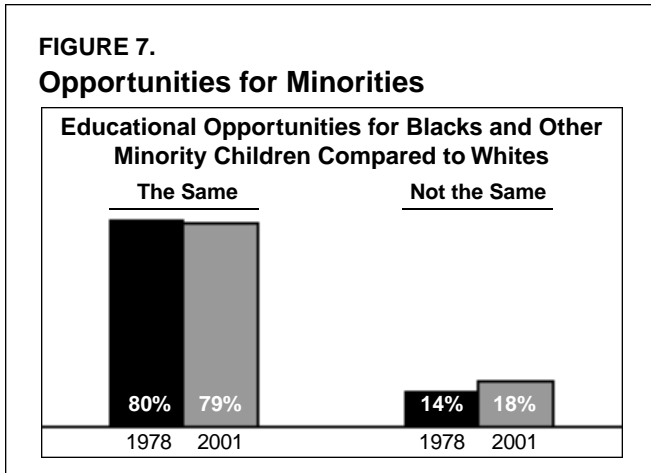
Conclusion 6. Home schooling is the form of alternative schooling that has had the greatest success in gaining public support.

The public does not, however, believe that such schools raise the nation's academic standards.

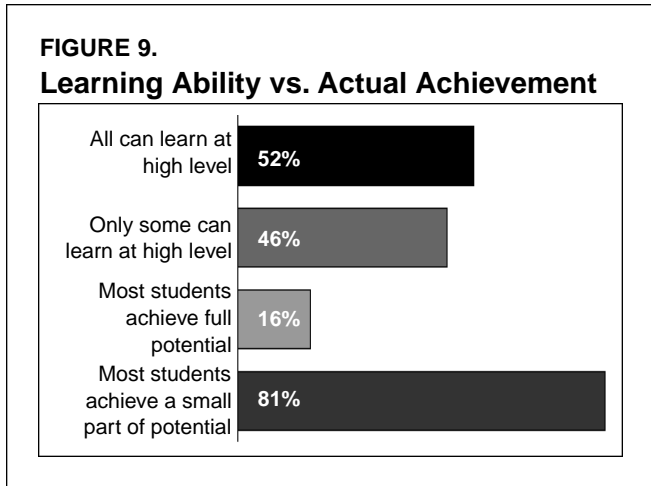
FIGURE 6.
Public Opinions About Home Schooling



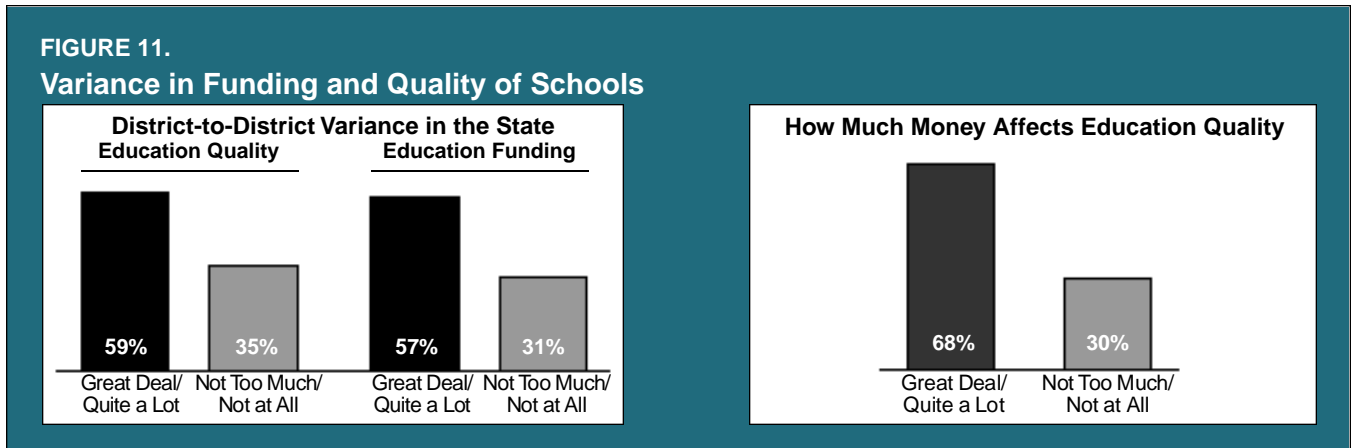
Conclusion 7. The public believes that black children and other minority children have the same educational opportunity as white children. This percentage is unchanged since 1978.



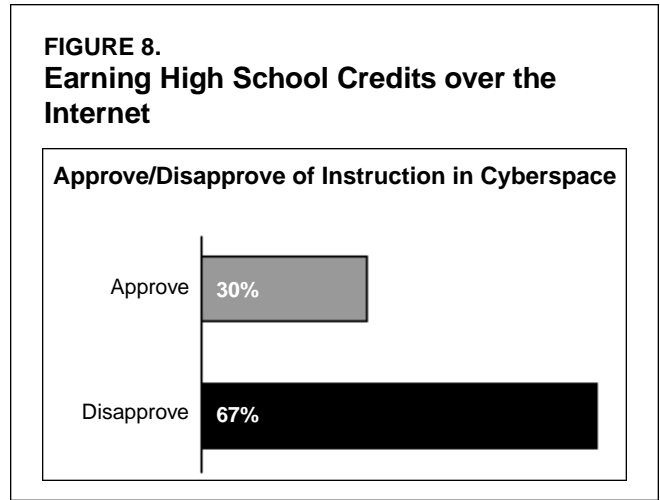
Conclusion 9. The public continues to be divided on whether all students can learn at high levels but is firmly convinced that most students achieve only a small part of their potential in school.



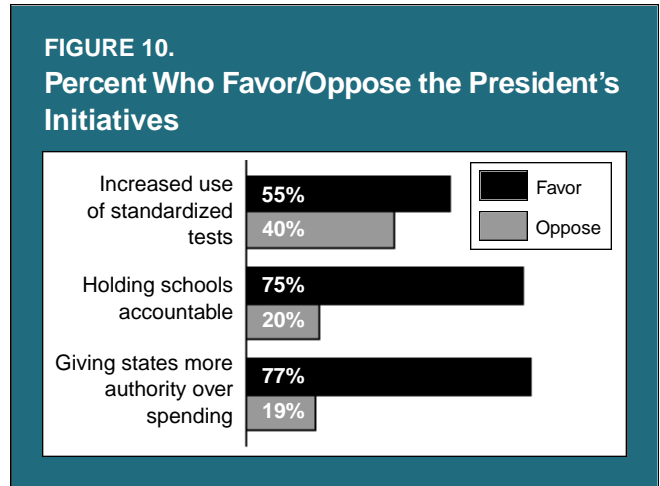
Conclusion 11. The public believes that both the quality of education and funding for education vary greatly (within the state)



Conclusion 8. The public is not yet ready to embrace instruction in cyberspace.



Conclusion 10. President Bush's initiatives involving the increased use of standardized tests, holding schools accountable, and giving greater authority to the states in spending federal money enjoy solid support.

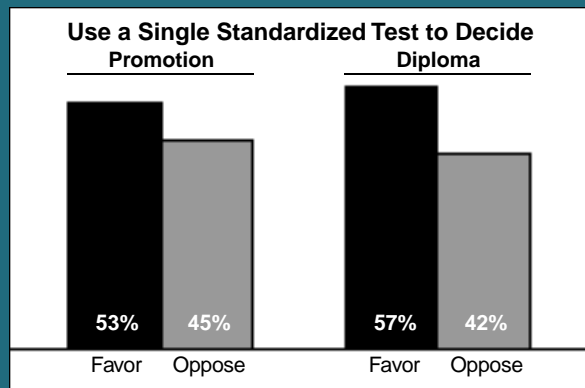
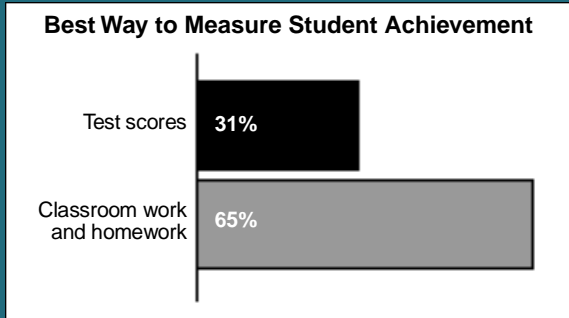


and links the variance in quality to the level of funding.

Conclusion 12. The public sends mixed signals on standardized tests. Americans offer narrow support for the use of a single test in decisions regarding grade-to-grade promotion and

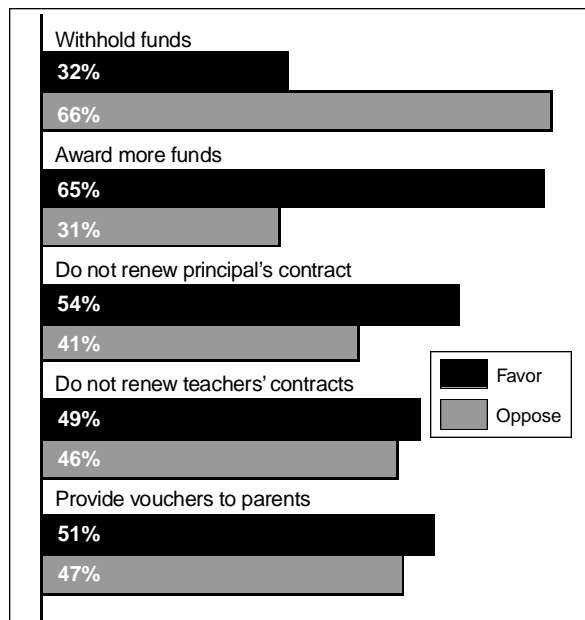
graduation, but they reject such tests in favor of classroom work and homework when it comes to measuring student achievement.

FIGURE 12.
Opinions Regarding Standardized Testing



Conclusion 13. The public would provide more money rather than less for schools that fail to meet state standards but is willing to consider not renewing contracts of the principal and teachers in such schools and giving vouchers to parents for use in other public and private schools.

FIGURE 13.
Consequences for Schools That Do Not Progress Toward State Standards



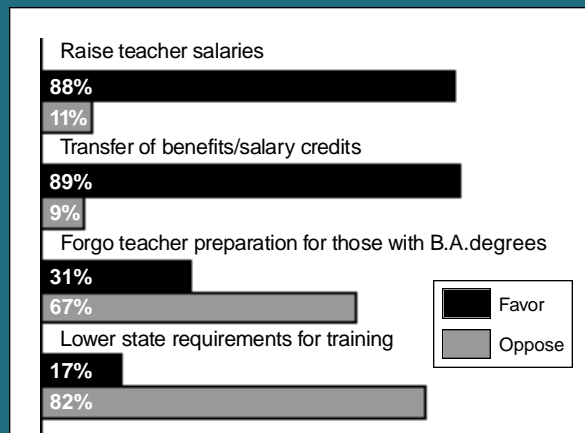
Conclusion 14. The public, which in 1979 and 1993 supported an emphasis on basic subjects, has now moved to a position favoring a varied curriculum.

FIGURE 14.
Opinions Regarding Curriculum

	1979	1993	2001
Wide variety of courses	44%	48%	54%
Basic courses	49%	51%	44%

Conclusion 15. The public favors between-state transfer of benefits and higher salaries for teachers as means of meeting an anticipated teacher shortage, while solidly rejecting the lowering of requirements for the preparation of teachers.

FIGURE 15.
Addressing Expected Teacher Shortage



Poll of the Public's Attitudes

(Continued from page 48)

white students and black and Hispanic students — very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Very important	66	66	67
Somewhat important	22	23	20
Not too important	5	5	5
Not important at all	5	4	6
Don't know	2	2	2

The second question:

In your opinion, is it the responsibility of the public schools to close the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Yes, it is	55	56	53
No, it isn't	41	39	45
Don't know	4	5	2

The third question:

In your opinion, is it the responsibility of the government to close the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Yes, it is	45	42	51
No, it isn't	52	54	47
Don't know	3	4	2

The fourth question (asked of those who see closing the



gap as a responsibility of government):

Which level of government do you think should be responsible for closing the gap — the federal, state, or local government?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Federal government	34	32	39
State government	35	35	36
Local government	29	32	24
Don't know	2	1	1

Standardized Testing And School Improvement

The increased use of standardized tests is one of the strategies in current school improvement efforts across the United States. The trend is becoming increasingly controversial as the tests are used for high-stakes decisions. The issue of testing was explored thoroughly in the poll last year and is revisited in this year's poll.

Last year's results indicated some resistance to the increased use of tests, with the percentage believing there was too much emphasis on testing increasing from 20% in 1997 to 30% and the percentage of those believing that there is not enough emphasis dropping from 28% in 1997 to 23%. The only significant change since last year is among nonwhites, where the percentage who believe that there is too much emphasis on testing has increased from 27% to 42%.

The question:

Now, here are some questions about testing. In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in your community, not enough emphasis on testing, or about the right amount?

	National Totals			Public School Parents		
	'01 %	'00 %	'97 %	'01 %	'00 %	'97 %
Too much emphasis on testing	31	30	20	36	34	19
Not enough emphasis	22	23	28	20	19	26
Just the right amount of emphasis	44	43	48	43	46	54
Don't know	3	4	4	1	1	1

Two new questions seek to determine the public's attitude toward the use of a single standardized test to determine grade-to-grade promotion and to decide whether a student should receive a high school diploma. Majorities of the public support each practice, with 53% favoring use of a test in grade-to-grade promotion and 57% in the decision to grant a diploma.

Differences are found among the groups. Forty-one percent of those between the ages of 18 and 29 support the use of a single test in promotion decisions, compared to 68% of those 65 and older. Showing consistency, 47% of those between the ages of 18 and 29 support the use of a single test in the decision to grant a diploma, compared to 69% of those 65 and older.

The first question:

Do you favor or oppose using a single standardized test in the public schools in your community to determine whether a student should be promoted from grade to grade?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Favor	53	55	48
Oppose	45	43	51
Don't know	2	2	1

The second question:

How about for a high school diploma? Do you favor or oppose using a single standardized test in the public schools in your community to determine whether a student should receive a high school diploma?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Favor	57	58	54
Oppose	42	41	45
Don't know	1	1	1

Opposition to using a single standardized test in making high-stakes decisions can probably be attributed to public beliefs about the way tests should be used and the way student achievement should be measured. Two questions asked for the first time last year and repeated this year explore those issues.

The first asks respondents to indicate whether tests should be used to determine how much students have learned or to determine the kind of instruction needed. In both 2000 and 2001, two-thirds of respondents indicated that tests should be used to drive instruction. This finding gives heart to those who believe that this is the basic purpose of testing. It offers less cheer to those who believe that tests should be used to support high-stakes decisions. Nonwhites (77%) and those between the ages of 18 and 29 (79%) believe even more strongly that test use should be related to instruction. Political affiliation again comes into play, with 40% of Republicans but only 25% of Democrats believing that tests should be used to judge student learning.

The second question asks respondents whether test scores or classroom work and homework are the best way to meas-



ure student achievement. Sixty-five percent come down solidly on the side of classroom work and homework. This percentage rises to 77% among those between the ages of 18 and 29. This is another finding that seems inconsistent with the current emphasis on testing.

The first question:

In your opinion, should the primary use of tests be to determine how much students have learned or to determine the kind of instruction they need in the future?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Determine how much students have learned	30	30	30	32	29	27
Determine the kind of instruction needed	66	65	65	63	69	69
Don't know	4	5	5	5	2	4

The second question:

In your opinion, which is the best way to measure student academic achievement — by means of test scores or by classroom work and homework?

	National Totals		No Children In School		Public School Parents	
	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %	'01 %	'00 %
Test scores	31	26	31	28	31	23
Classroom work and homework	65	68	65	66	66	71
Don't know	4	6	4	6	3	6

The Politics of School Improvement

The emerging emphasis on education as the number-one priority at both the federal and state levels brings increased attention to the public schools. Thus in this year's poll, the first since the 2000 election, we explore the politics of education. This year's effort began last year when respondents were asked to indicate which of the two candidates, Al Gore or George Bush, would do the most to strengthen the public schools. In a result as close as the election itself, Bush nipped Gore 38% to 37%.

This year's poll asks respondents to assign grades to various government officials based on their contributions to the school improvement effort in the 1990s. The state governors come out on top, with 46% receiving either an A or a B for their efforts. Former President Clinton comes in second with 40%, followed by the collective state legislatures with 39% and the U.S. Congress with 30%.

The first question:

As you may recall, by the early 1990s government officials at all levels had publicly committed themselves to improvement of the public schools by the

year 2000. Thinking back to those government officials in office during the 1990s, what grade would you give each of the following for improving the public schools during that time — A, B, C, D, or FAIL?

	A&B %	A %	B %	C %	D %	F %	Don't Know %
President Clinton	40	8	32	31	12	13	4
The U.S. Congress	30	3	27	42	14	7	7
Governor of your state	46	10	36	29	10	10	5
Your state legislature	39	6	33	37	9	7	8

Respondents were then asked to indicate whether they think President Bush will do a better job or a worse job of school improvement than President Clinton did. Forty-nine percent expect Bush to do a better job, while 33% expect that he will do worse. Bush's margin comes not so much from Republicans as from the fact that 23% of those identifying themselves as Democrats believe that he will do better. The political realities are evident in some of the demographic differences: 54% of whites believe President Bush will do a better job, compared to 24% of nonwhites; 62% of those in the South expect President Bush to do better, compared to 33% of those in the East.

The second question:

Do you believe President Bush will do a better job of school improvement than President Clinton or a worse job?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Better job	49	46	51
Worse job	33	33	34
Same/no difference	6	6	5
Don't know	12	15	10

The next question focuses directly on three programs advocated by President Bush. A split sample was used, with the question for half of the respondents identifying the proposals as associated with President Bush and the question for the other half deleting that reference. There is majority support for each of the three proposals; however, support for the first two rises when the reference to the President is dropped, but support for giving states greater authority in funding decisions rises when the President's name is mentioned.

The third question (first version):

As I read off each of the following measures that would be part of President Bush's education program, would you tell me whether you would favor or oppose it?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know %
Increased use of standardized tests for measuring student achievement	55	40	5
Holding the public schools accountable for how much students learn	75	20	5
Giving the states greater authority in deciding how federal funds should be used	77	19	4

The third question (second version):

As I read off each of the following measures that would be part of a national education program, would you tell me whether you would favor or oppose it?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know %
Increased use of standardized tests for measuring student achievement	63	35	2
Holding the public schools accountable for how much students learn	81	18	1
Giving the states greater authority in deciding how federal funds should be used	71	25	4

The final question in the political section asked respondents about another of President Bush's programs — providing tax dollars to faith-based organizations to use in providing a broad range of services including after-school programs designed to improve academic performance. While seemingly controversial, it has the support of 62% of those surveyed. Surprisingly, it has the support of 62% of Republicans and 61% of Democrats.

The fourth question:

In your opinion, should faith-based or religious organizations receive public tax money for providing after-school programs designed to improve students' academic performance?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Yes, should	62	58	70
No, should not	35	39	29
Don't know	3	3	1

Issues Related To School Improvement

Breadth of the Curriculum

School improvement efforts across the country are often directed at English, math, science, and social studies. This emphasis is sometimes challenged by those who favor a broader curriculum. A question in this year's poll seeks to determine what the public wants in the way of a curriculum. While views are mixed, 54% of respondents express the desire for a curriculum that includes a variety of courses. This desire is especially strong among those between 18 and 29 years of age, where the percentage rises to 73%. The public's position has switched since 1979, with support for a varied curriculum increasing 10 points.

The question:

Public high schools can offer students a wide variety of courses or they can concentrate on fewer basic courses, such as English, mathematics, histo-

ry, and science. Which of these policies do you think the local high schools should follow in planning their curricula — a wide variety of courses or fewer but more basic courses?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Wide variety of courses	54	50	64
Basic courses	44	48	35
Don't know	2	2	1

	National Totals		
	2001 %	1993 %	1979 %
Wide variety of courses	54	48	44
Basic courses	44	51	49
Don't know	2	1	7

Schools That Do Not Meet State Standards

Current school improvement efforts seek to identify schools in which students are not meeting state standards. Approaches used with such schools vary greatly. This year's poll offers five possibilities. Sixty-five percent of respondents believe such schools should be awarded more state and federal education funds, while only 32% would withhold funds. Fifty-four percent favor not renewing the principal's contract, while 49% favor not renewing the contracts of teachers. And 51% favor giving parents in such schools vouchers to use at any public, private, or church-related school.

The question:

If a public school in your community does not show progress toward meeting state-approved standards for student learning, would you favor or oppose each of the following measures?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know %
Withholding state or federal education funds from the school	32	66	2
Awarding more state and federal education funds to the school	65	31	4
Not renewing the contract of the principal	54	41	5
Not renewing the contracts of the teachers	49	46	5
Providing vouchers for parents to use at a public, private, or church-related school of their choice	51	47	2

Dealing with an Anticipated Teacher Shortage

The public consistently supports the need for highly qualified teachers. This year's respondents rated six strategies for addressing the teacher shortage that is expected as an aging teaching force is shrunk by retirements while school enrollment continues to grow. Making it easier for teachers to transfer pension benefits and to receive salary credit when moving between school districts and states draws the strongest support (89%). Eighty-eight percent of respondents support raising teacher salaries, 73% favor forgivable federal loans for prospective

teachers, and 61% support recruiting teachers from other countries. Respondents reject two strategies that would reduce requirements for obtaining a license to teach, with 82% opposing lowering state teacher training requirements and 67% opposing letting those with bachelor's degrees teach without teacher training.

The question:

It is generally accepted that increasing student enrollments and the growing number of teacher retirements will result in a serious teacher shortage in the coming years. Please tell me whether you would favor or oppose each of the following as a way to meet the expected shortage of teachers.

	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know %
Having the federal government provide loans that would be forgiven if the prospective teacher entered the field of teaching	73	25	2
Permitting persons with bachelor's degrees to become teachers without requiring preparation in the field of education	31	67	2
Lowering state requirements for the training to become a licensed teacher	17	82	1
Raising teacher salaries	88	11	1
Making it easier for teachers to transfer pension benefits and to receive salary credit when changing jobs between school districts and states	89	9	2
Recruiting qualified teachers from other countries	61	37	2

Private Contracting for School Services

The 1996 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll asked the public about the wisdom of allowing school boards to contract with businesses in the community for certain services. In this year's poll, support for contracting for school buses and transportation, for building and facilities maintenance, and for food services remains strong, with three-quarters of the public supporting each of these practices. Support for contracting with businesses to run the entire school operation has changed, however. The 1996 response showed 34% in favor and 59% opposed. The percentage in favor has now dropped to 26%, and the percentage opposed has climbed to 72%.

The question:

Are you in favor of or opposed to the school board in your community contracting with local businesses to provide the following?

	Favor %		Oppose %		Don't Know %	
	'01	'96	'01	'96	'01	'96
School bus and other transportation services	75	75	23	20	2	5
School building and facilities maintenance	75	79	23	17	2	4
Food services	75	81	22	15	3	4
Running the entire school operation	26	34	72	59	2	7

Schools and Firearms

In a topic addressed for the first time, three questions explored firearms as they relate to schools. The first seeks to determine whether the public believes that a mandatory course in firearm safety for those requesting gun permits would reduce the number of shooting deaths. The second asks whether schools should offer such a course, and the third asks whether school safety officers should be allowed to carry firearms on school property.

The public is divided on the likely impact of a firearms safety course. Forty-eight percent believe it would reduce the number of shooting deaths. Fifty percent believe it would not. Fifty-five percent believe that schools should offer a course in firearms safety, while 43% are opposed. And, in the question among the three drawing the strongest response, 73% oppose permitting school safety officers to carry handguns on school property.

The first question:

As you probably know, the issues of firearms and firearm safety are being debated across the country. Do you think that a mandatory course in firearm safety for those people requesting gun permits would reduce the number of deaths in the nation from shooting or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Yes, would reduce number of deaths	48	50	45
No, would not reduce number of deaths	50	49	54
Don't know	2	1	1

The second question:

In your opinion, should the public high schools in your community offer a course in firearms safety or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Yes, should	55	55	56
No, should not	43	44	42
Don't know	2	1	2

The third question:

In your opinion, should public school security employees be permitted to bring their handguns onto school property or not?

	National Totals %	No Children In School %	Public School Parents %
Yes, should	26	27	23
No, should not	73	72	76
Don't know	1	1	1



Research Procedure

The Sample. The sample used in this survey embraced a total of 1,108 adults (18 years of age and older). A description of the sample and methodology can be found at the end of this report.

Time of Interviewing. The fieldwork for this study was conducted during the period of 23 May to 6 June 2001.

The Report. In the tables used in this report, "Nonpublic School Parents" includes parents of students who attend parochial schools and parents of students who attend private or independent schools.

Due allowance must be made for statistical variation, especially in the case of findings for groups consisting of relatively few respondents, e.g., nonpublic school parents.

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

Sampling Tolerances

In interpreting survey results, it should be borne in mind that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, i.e., 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 error depends largely on the number of interviews.

The following tables may be used in estimating the sampling error of any percentage in this report. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary 95% of the time, assuming the same sampling procedure, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire.

The first table shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of a percentage:

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of a Percentage

	In Percentage Points (at 95 in 100 confidence level)*						
	Sample Size						
	1,500	1,000	750	600	400	200	100
Percentages near 10	2	2	3	3	4	5	8
Percentages near 20	3	3	4	4	5	7	10
Percentages near 30	3	4	4	5	6	8	12
Percentages near 40	3	4	5	5	6	9	12
Percentages near 50	3	4	5	5	6	9	13
Percentages near 60	3	4	5	5	6	9	12
Percentages near 70	3	4	4	5	6	8	12
Percentages near 80	3	3	4	4	5	7	10
Percentages near 90	2	2	3	3	4	5	8

*The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figures shown.

The table would be used in the following manner: Let us say that a reported percentage is 33 for a group that includes 1,000 respondents. We go to the row for "percentages near 30" in the table and across to the column headed "1,000."

The number at this point is 4, which means that the 33% obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus four points. In other words, it is very probable (95 chances out of 100) that the true figure would be somewhere between 29% and 37%, with the most likely figure the 33% obtained.

In comparing survey results in two samples, such as, for example, men and women, the question arises as to how large a difference between them must be

before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In the tables below, the number of points that must be allowed for in such comparisons is indicated. Two tables are provided. One is for percentages near 20 or 80; the other, for percentages near 50. For percentages in between, the error to be allowed for lies between those shown in the two tables.

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference

**In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)***

TABLE A
Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80

Size of Sample	1,500	1,000	750	600	400	200
1,500	4					
1,000	4	5				
750	5	5	5			
600	5	5	6	6		
400	6	6	6	7	7	
200	8	8	8	8	9	10

TABLE B
Percentages near 50

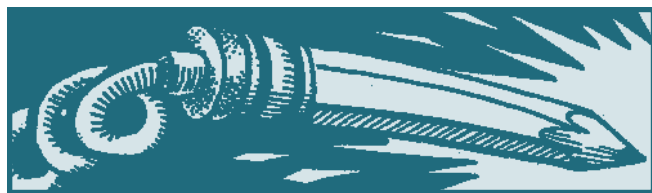
Size of Sample	1,500	1,000	750	600	400	200
1,500	5					
1,000	5	6				
750	6	6	7			
600	6	7	7	7		
400	7	8	8	8	9	
200	10	10	10	10	11	13

*The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figures shown.

Here is an example of how the tables would be used: Let us say that 50% of men respond a certain way and 40% of women respond that way also, for a difference of 10 percentage points between them. Can we say with any assurance that the 10-point difference reflects a real difference between men and women on the question? Let us consider a sample that contains approximately 750 men and 750 women.

Since the percentages are near 50, we consult Table B, and, since the two samples are about 750 persons each, we look for the number in the column headed "750," which is also in the row designated "750." We find the number 7 here. This means that the allowance for error should be seven points and that, in concluding that the percentage among men is somewhere between three and 17 points higher than the percentage among women, we should be wrong only about 5% of the time. In other words, we can conclude with considerable confidence that a difference exists in the direction observed and that it amounts to at least three percentage points.

If, in another case, men's responses amount to 22%, say, and women's to 24%, we consult Table A, because these percentages are near 20. We look in the column headed "750" and see that the number is 5. Obviously, then, the two-point difference is inconclusive.



Design of the Sample

For the 2001 survey the Gallup Organization used its standard national telephone sample, i.e., an unclustered, directory-assisted, random-digit telephone sample, based on a proportionate stratified sampling design.

The random-digit aspect of the sample was used to avoid "listing" bias. Numerous studies have shown that households with unlisted telephone numbers are different in important ways from listed households. "Unlistedness" is due to household mobility or to customer requests to prevent publication of the telephone number.

To avoid this source of bias, a random-digit procedure designed to provide representation of both listed and unlisted (including not-yet-listed) numbers was used.

Telephone numbers for the continental United States were stratified into four regions of the country and, within each region, further stratified into three size-of-community strata.

Only working banks of telephone numbers were selected. Eliminating non-working banks from the sample increased the likelihood that any sample telephone number would be associated with a residence.

The sample of telephone numbers produced by the described method is representative of all telephone households within the continental United States.

Within each contacted household, an interview was sought with the youngest man 18 years of age or older who was at home. If no man was home, an interview was sought with the oldest woman at home. This method of respondent selection within households produced an age distribution by sex that closely approximates the age distribution by sex of the total population.

Up to three calls were made to each selected telephone number to complete an interview. The time of day and the day of the week for callbacks were varied so as to maximize the chances of finding a respondent at home. All interviews were conducted on weekends or weekday evenings in order to contact potential respondents among the working population.

The final sample was weighted so that the distribution of the sample matched current estimates derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) for the adult population living in telephone households in the continental U.S.

Composition of the Sample

Adults	%	Education	
No children in school	65	Total college	62
Public school parents	32	College graduate	25
Nonpublic school parents	3	College incomplete	37
		Total high school	38
Gender	%	High school graduate	24
Men	47	High school incomplete	14
Women	53	Income	
Race		\$50,000 and over	37
White	84	\$40,000 and over	47
Nonwhite	15	\$30,000-\$39,999	14
Black	10	\$20,000-\$29,999	12
Undesignated	1	Under \$20,000	19
Age		Undesignated	8
18-29 years	19	Region	
30-49 years	43	East	22
50 and over	38	Midwest	24
		South	32
		West	22
		Community Size	
		Urban	25
		Suburban	48
		Rural	27

Conducting Your Own Poll

The Phi Delta Kappa Center for Professional Development & Services makes available PACE (Polling Attitudes of the Community on Education) materials to enable nonspecialists to conduct scientific polls of attitude and opinion on education. The PACE manual provides detailed information on constructing questionnaires, sampling, interviewing, and analyzing data. It also includes updated census figures and new material on conducting a telephone survey. The price is \$60. For information about using PACE materials, write or phone Shari Bradley at Phi Delta Kappa International, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789. Ph. 800/766-1156.

How to Order the Poll

The minimum order for reprints of the published version of the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup education poll is 25 copies for \$15. (Institutional purchase orders, cash, or MasterCard or VISA number required.) Additional copies are 50 cents each. This price includes postage for delivery (at the library rate). Where possible, enclose a check or money order. Address your order to Phi Delta Kappa International, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789. Ph. 800/766-1156.

If faster delivery is desired, phone the Shipping Department at the number listed below. Persons who wish to order the 347-page document that is the basis of this report should contact Phi Delta Kappa International, P.O. Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402-0789. Ph. 800/766-1156. The price is \$95, postage included.