

Highlights of the 2009

Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Support for NCLB continues to decline. Only one out of four Americans believe NCLB has helped schools in their community. But, two to one Americans support annual testing of students in grades three through eight and using a single national test rather than letting each state use its own test.



CHARTER SCHOOLS

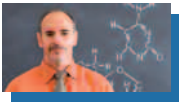
Almost two out of three Americans support charter schools. But, they clearly don't understand exactly what they are, showing confusion about whether they're public schools and whether they can charge tuition, teach religion, or select their own students.



TEACHER PAY

Almost three out of four Americans favor merit pay for teachers. Advanced degrees, student academic achievement, and administrator evaluations are the three most favored criteria for awarding merit pay.

Americans estimate that teacher salaries are lower than what they believe teachers should receive.



TENURE

Americans split on teacher tenure, depending on how the question is asked. They disapprove of teachers having a "lifetime contract" but agree that teachers should have a formal legal review before being terminated.



DROPOUTS

Almost nine out of 10 Americans believe the U.S. dropout rate is either the most important or one of the most important problems facing high schools today.



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Americans strongly endorse making either half-day or full-day kindergarten compulsory for all children.

Having children start school at age four is too early — Americans split on whether they believe starting school earlier would improve a child's achievement.

Five out of 10 Americans believe preschool programs should be housed in public schools, with parents even more supportive of that idea.



MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Americans appear to be open to more innovation in their schools. The two issues that are most important for moving schools in the right direction: better teachers and more parental support. Lack of money was cited as the biggest obstacle.



ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Economic stimulus money should be used to retain teachers slated to be laid off, followed by support to the lowest-performing schools.



MEDIA COVERAGE OF EDUCATION

Newspapers and school employees remain the top two sources of information about schools.

The 2009 PDK/Gallup Poll results are available at www.pdkpoll.org.