

# Annotated Public Opinion Research on Teachers and Teacher Quality

## Education Week Surveys

Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications. (2000). *Making the grade: Teachers' attitudes toward academic standards and state testing*. Washington, DC: Education Week. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://counts.edweek.org/sreports/qc01/pdfs/qcresearch.pdf>

### **Key TQ Issues: professional development, teacher evaluation, standards-based reform**

This telephone survey of 1,019 public K–12 teachers of mathematics, English, science, and social studies covered teachers' support for academic standards (including whether they believe the standards are too high or too low, whether their students are meeting the standards, and whether their students are learning more as a result of them) and state tests (including students' level of preparation and the utility of the exams). The survey also covers whether teachers believe they receive adequate training and support to implement the standards and to use tests for diagnostic purposes and whether the standards have changed teachers' practice (in terms of developing lessons or modifying their curricula to fit the standards). Finally, the survey asks teachers how best to evaluate their performance, whether via peer assessment, teacher testing, or their students' test results.

Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications. (2003). *Expectations, achievements and challenges teaching special education students*. Washington, DC: Education Week. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [http://counts.edweek.org/sreports/qc04/tables/Teacher\\_poll\\_report.pdf](http://counts.edweek.org/sreports/qc04/tables/Teacher_poll_report.pdf)

### **Key TQ Issues: teacher preparation, teaching special education**

From a nationally representative sample of 400 K–12 public school general education teachers and 400 K–12 public school special education teachers, this report is based on a survey of a final sample of 444 teachers representative of both groups. The survey examined teachers' opinions on the current status of special education and the impact that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is having, and may have, on the education of children with special needs. It also asks teachers about their level of preparedness to teach students with individualized education programs.

Belden Russonello & Stewart Research and Communications. (2005). *From the top: Superintendents on instructional leadership*. Washington, DC: Education Week. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.edweek.org/media/report-final.pdf>

### **Key TQ Issues: teacher induction, professional development, teacher leadership, school leadership**

Although this is a survey of district superintendents ( $N=813$ ), some questions relate to the professional learning of teachers—for example, whether districts use instructional walkthroughs,

induction programs for new teachers, common planning time, professional development, training for teachers and principals on using performance data, and teacher leadership positions to improve instruction.

## **ETS Surveys**

Hart, P. D., & Teeter, R. M. (2002). *A national priority: Americans speak on teacher quality*. Princeton, NJ: ETS. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://ftp.ets.org/pub/corp/survey2002.pdf>

### **Key TQ Issues: teacher preparation, recruitment, retention, evaluation, and school leadership**

This report is based on surveys of the public, educators, and education policymakers. The final sample included 1,003 adults (including 409 parents of school-age children); 409 educators (roughly half of which were teachers, the other half administrators); and 203 policymakers, including superintendents, legislators, and other elected officials. It examines opinions regarding the importance of education as a policy priority, the sources of problems with the public schools, proposals to improve teacher quality (e.g., improving working conditions, school leadership, preparation, entry standards), student standards and accountability, willingness to spend money to improve the public schools, and tying teacher evaluations to measures of student learning. Finally, it examines the general awareness of the NCLB Act.

## **MetLife Surveys**

Markow, D., & Martin, S. (2005). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Transitions and the role of supportive relationships*. New York: MetLife. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/34996838801118758796V1FATS\\_2004.pdf](http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/34996838801118758796V1FATS_2004.pdf)

### **Key TQ Issues: preparation, retention, working conditions, new teacher support**

This survey examines the beliefs and reported experiences of new teachers (those with five years or fewer of teaching experience), principals, and students. It explores the challenges faced by new teachers, the importance of mentoring, the quality of preparation they feel they received to deal competently with parents, classroom management, curriculum, and more. The authors of the report compare teachers who plan to stay in the profession with those who do not on the satisfaction they have with in relationships with colleagues and school leaders. The final sample includes 800 public K-12 teachers with five years or fewer of teaching experience, 841 principals, and 1,079 public school students in Grades 7–11. MetLife conducts a survey of teachers and educators annually. The reports can be found at <http://www.metlife.com/Applications/Corporate/WPS/CDA/PageGenerator/0,4132,P288,00.html>

MetLife. (2006). *The MetLife survey of the American teacher: Expectations and experiences*. New York: MetLife. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.metlife.com/WPSAssets/81821402701160505871V1F2006MetLifeTeacherSurvey.pdf>

### **Key TQ Issues: preparation and education, new-teacher support, retention, working conditions, job satisfaction**

This survey of 1,001 public K–12 teachers, 500 principals, and 200 deans and department chairpersons in schools of education looked at what teachers expect from their workplaces and how their expectations often are unmet, seeming to lead many of them to report that they are likely to leave the profession. The survey also examined the quality of teachers' preparation and education.

### **National Center for Education Information**

Feistritzer, C. E. (2005). *Profile of alternate route teachers*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.ncei.com/PART.pdf>

Feistritzer, C. E. (2005). *Profile of Troops to Teachers*. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [www.ncei.com/NCEI\\_TT\\_v3.pdf](http://www.ncei.com/NCEI_TT_v3.pdf)

Feistritzer, C. E. (2005). *Profile of teachers in the U.S. 2005*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Information.

### **Key TQ Issues: teacher salaries, mobility, recruitment, alternative certification**

The National Center for Education Information has three polls that survey nationally representative groups of teachers asking roughly the same questions; the third is not available online. The first poll involves a sample of all teachers. It surveyed 1,028 public school K–12 teachers on their demographics, educational backgrounds, reasons for teaching, their salaries, how they view the profession and policies to improve teacher quality, and how likely they are to move to a rural or city school. The second poll asked similar questions to a sample of 2,647 alternate route teachers (including individuals who entered teaching through alternate routes in Texas, Florida, the Troops to Teachers program, the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center program, and the New York City Teaching Fellows program). The third poll specifically examined 1,431 teachers from the Troops to Teachers program.

### **Public Agenda Surveys**

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Foleno, T. (2000). *A sense of calling: Who teaches and why*. New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/sense\\_of\\_calling.pdf](http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/sense_of_calling.pdf)

### **Key TQ Issues: certification, preparation, recruitment, working conditions**

This survey explored the attitudes of new teachers (those on the job for five years or fewer), administrators, and adults who could be teachers regarding teachers' commitment to teaching (or college educated adults' willingness to teach), whether they feel teachers are compensated appropriately and duly respected, and what kinds of policy solutions would improve teacher

quality. It also explored opinions regarding barriers to the profession and financial incentives. The final sample consisted of 664 K–12 public school teachers who have taught for five years or fewer as well as 551 public school superintendents and principals and 802 adults under 30 who have a college degree.

Farkas, S., Foley, P., & Duffett, A. (2001). *Just waiting to be asked? A fresh look at attitudes on public engagement*. New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/pubengage/pubengage.htm>

**Key TQ Issues: teacher control over school decisions, teacher professionalism**

This survey asked 404 K–12 public school teachers, 475 public school board members, and 686 public school superintendents about their opinions regarding public engagement in the management and governance of America's public schools. It explored the relationships between school boards, district offices, parents, teachers, and nonparent members of the local community. It gauged the extent to which teachers feel a part of the decision-making process.

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Duffett, A. (2003). *Stand by me: What teachers really think about unions, merit pay, and other professional matters*. New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/stand\\_by\\_me.pdf](http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/stand_by_me.pdf)

**Key TQ Issues: preparation, certification, recruitment, compensation, new teacher support, tenure, and professionalism**

This report is based on a survey of 1,354 public school teachers and six focus groups. It examined teachers' attitudes toward teachers' unions, teacher tenure, compensation based on merit or ability and willingness to teach in shortage areas as well as teacher recruitment, evaluation, preparation, and certification. It also explored the importance of supporting new teachers and the pluses and minuses of student testing.

Public Agenda. (2006). *Reality check 2006: Is support for standards and testing fading?* (Issue No. 3). New York: Author. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/rc0603.pdf>

**Key TQ Issues: teacher professionalism, workplace conditions, accountability**

This large survey of multiple groups gauged attitudes toward student academic standards, testing, funding for public schools, class crowding, and student respect for teachers. It also explored the public's growing knowledge and awareness of NCLB. The report is based on telephone surveys of 1,379 parents; 1,342 students; 721 teachers; 254 superintendents; and 252 principals.

Johnson, J., & Duffett, A. (2003). *An assessment of survey data on attitudes about teaching: Including the views of parents, administrators, teachers, and the general public*. New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [http://www.publicagenda.com/research/pdfs/attitudes\\_about\\_teaching.pdf](http://www.publicagenda.com/research/pdfs/attitudes_about_teaching.pdf)

### **Key TQ Issues: teacher expectations, effectiveness, tenure, compensation**

This is a review of more than 20 opinion polls about teaching, teachers, and teacher quality. It explored teachers' expectations for their students, administrators' expectations for teachers, and the public's opinion about the quality of the teaching workforce. It also reported views on tenure, teacher pay, unions, student testing, parental involvement, and the skills of high school graduates.

Public Agenda. (2004). *Teaching interrupted: Do discipline policies in today's public schools foster the common good?* New York: Author. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from [http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/teaching\\_interrupted.pdf](http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/teaching_interrupted.pdf)

### **Key TQ Issues: teacher retention, preparation, working conditions**

This report is based on a survey of a national random sample of 725 middle and high school teachers and 600 parents of middle and high school students. It looks at student discipline and behavior problems and policies in the public schools and specifically examines the link between student misbehavior and teacher attrition.

Johnson, J., Arumi, A. M., & Ott, A. (2006). *Reality check 2006: The insiders: How principals and superintendents see public education today* (Issue No. 4). New York: Public Agenda. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/rc0604.pdf>

### **Key TQ Issues: recruitment, teacher quality, HQT requirements, tenure, alternative certification, preparation, compensation**

This latest addition to Public Agenda's Reality Check series surveyed 254 school superintendents, 252 school principals, 721 public school teachers, and 1,379 parents of children who are now in public schools. The report details findings regarding how school leaders view their role as school leaders and the amount of authority they feel they have as well as the quality of the schooling that children are receiving. The report also looked at how they view the quality of teachers in their schools and how it could be improved.

## **The Teaching Commission**

Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive. (2005). *Americans' commitment to quality teaching in public schools*. New York: The Teaching Commission. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.theteachingcommission.org/press/pdfs/pollreport-final.pdf>

### **Key TQ Issues: professional development, compensation, evaluation**

This report is based on two surveys—one of 807 U.S. adults (of whom 127 have children in public schools) and 553 K–12 public school teachers. It polled attitudes toward teacher compensation, standards and accountability, professional development and training, principal authority, and the multiple purposes of schooling. It also explored the public's and teachers' receptiveness to linking teacher pay to student achievement.

## **Teach For America**

Smith, A. (2006). *Equity within reach: Insights from the front lines of America's achievement gap*. New York: Teach For America. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/assets/documents/equitywithinreach.pdf>

**Key TQ Issues: prospective teachers, teacher efficacy, alternative certification programs**

This report is based on an online survey of 1,970 Teach For America corps members. A shorter version of the same survey was administered to 177 incoming members for comparison purposes. It examines these teachers' attitudes toward the causes of the achievement gap as well as strategies for addressing it.

## **Phi Delta Kappan**

Langdon, C. A., & Vesper, N. (2000). The sixth Phi Delta Kappa poll of teacher's attitudes toward the public schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(8), 607–611. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/klan0004.htm>

**Key TQ Issues: workplace conditions, recruitment, evaluation**

This poll of 361 teachers (response rate was 18 percent) explored teachers' views on public school problems, school safety, ways to attract and retain teachers, teacher testing, public school alternatives (e.g., vouchers, charter schools), academic standards, and student discipline. It also gauged teachers' views on what kinds of resources the federal government should fund.

## **Survey Reviews**

The Business Roundtable. (2003). *What parents, students, and teachers think about standards, assessments, Accountability... and more*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.brtable.org/pdf/477.pdf>

**Key TQ Issues: professional development, accountability, compensation, teacher evaluation and testing**

This easily digestible review of several public opinion polls explores the attitudes of parents, students, and teachers toward standards, assessments, accountability, the achievement gap, and teacher quality (referencing the ETS poll for the latter).

Coggschall, J. G. (2006). *Prospects for the profession: Public opinion research on teachers*. Washington, DC: The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.ncctq.org/publications/October2006Brief.pdf>

**Key TQ Issues: teacher preparation, supply, certification, recruitment, retention**

This comprehensive review of 16 nationally representative public opinion polls conducted between 2000 and 2006 provides insight into how teachers, school administrators, parents, and the general public view the teaching profession. It looks specifically at issues of teacher availability, recruitment, and retention for at-risk and hard-to-staff schools and offers guidance to education policymakers as they work to improve teacher quality and to staff all classrooms with highly qualified teachers.

The Teaching Commission and Learning Point Associates. (2005). *Teachers off the record*. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates. Retrieved December 8, 2006, from <http://www.learningpt.org/evaluation/record.pdf>

**Key TQ Issues: recruitment, compensation, professional development, hiring practices, teacher control over decisions, school leadership**

This report synthesizes findings from The Teaching Commission's survey on America's attitudes toward teaching and a series of focus groups of public K–12 teachers conducted by Learning Point Associates. It examines teachers' opinions about financial incentives, pay-for-performance schemes, professional development, recruitment and hiring practices, control over school decision making, and the importance of school leadership.