

Education, Gender and Race: A Review of Current Public Opinion

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Introduction

America places education at the top of its concerns for the nation, not because Americans are worried about intellectual development or even work skills. The motivation is more fundamental. Education is the top concern because the nation is worried about our youth, our future. As the one vehicle to act collectively for children (who are otherwise the sole domain of the family), the public uses the education issue as a conduit for expressing broader concerns for youth.

Americans' concern for youth is so strong that they are willing to support a multitude of reforms for schools. They support more funding for education for the solutions money can buy, such as fixing run-down schools, higher quality teachers, and smaller classrooms. However, the education reform debate cannot hinge on money, since people believe many of the problems facing children are ones money cannot address. They want to see values in school such as tolerance and responsibility because they worry that today's youth are disrespectful, violent, and irresponsible. They want more standards and accountability in order to assure themselves that teachers know how to teach, and that children are actually learning. More than anything else, they want more attention paid to youth. They feel parents are failing at raising their children, and want to see adults more involved in kids' lives.

People are willing to support just about anything under the banner of "education." However, gender and racial equity in the classroom is likely to be a less compelling issue, due to the public's beliefs about what constitutes equality.

Americans see women's suffrage and the civil rights movement as two of the most important events for the nation. These historic moments have made the country a better place. Dramatic progress has been made, yet Americans recognize that discrimination still exists.

For most, equality is defined by opportunity, not outcome. The public firmly believes that people should be treated the same, so they support laws to prevent discrimination and to require equal pay for equal work. However, "sameness" in treatment also results in both blacks and whites rejecting racial preferences in hiring. It results in both women and men believing the nation would be "the same" if more women held positions of power. Fundamentally, a majority would rather the country focus on what we have in common over appreciating our diversity. Any effort that seems to be giving something different or special to a group of people is not likely to be supported by the majority.

Furthermore, discrimination, particularly gender discrimination, is a workplace issue, not an education issue. While racial discrimination extends into more areas of society, both blacks and whites think that black children have as good a chance of getting an education as white children in their community. (Importantly, this interpretation is only intended to suggest that within a given school or community, people do not feel that white and black

children are treated differently. This should not be translated to broader understandings of equal funding or treatment of school districts, where the public's view would be very different.)

When gender equity does intersect with education, it is in a way that hurts Schott's objective rather than advances it. The nation continues to be conflicted over women in the workforce. While the public sees choice as good, and does not want to return to traditional gender roles, most also feel the country has gone too far by leaving our children in childcare. Part of the reason children are failing is because moms are not at home.

When racial equity intersects with education, integration is top-of-mind. A majority supports integration, but diversity is not essential to white Americans, and they do not feel the same level of intensity as black parents about black children who are failing. Their weak support for integration is easily undermined by the power of neighborhood schools.

On this issue, there are dramatic variations by gender and racial subgroup. Women are far more open to hearing a conversation on gender equity, while African Americans are far more willing to hear a conversation on racial equity. Both believe that discrimination exists and more progress is needed, so equity advocates can have a more open dialogue with these audiences. However, even among these more favorable groups, the assumption is that the basic goal is to be treated "the same," but not, necessarily, to end up in the same place.

Outside the core supportive audiences, it is very difficult to have a conversation on inequity. There is less personal urgency to the issue, and most want to focus on similarities, not differences. More importantly, their understanding of equality is "the same treatment." They are likely to see students in one classroom, with the same resources, as being treated equally. It would be difficult to convince them otherwise.

However, Schott may have an opportunity to create a values-based discussion that lays the foundation of understanding to address gender and racial inequity. Americans want values stressed in education because they believe children are not learning respect and responsibility. They see the influence of peer pressure on a child's choices. More than standards, test scores, or graduation rates, the public views the sign of a quality school as happy children who love to learn. By grounding the dialogue in incorporating universal values into the classroom – the values of tolerance, appreciation of differences, moral courage, and respect for self and others – and by working toward the goal of happy children who love to learn, Schott can create an environment in which all children are valued. The standard for quality education then becomes providing approaches that work for all children.

Education Values

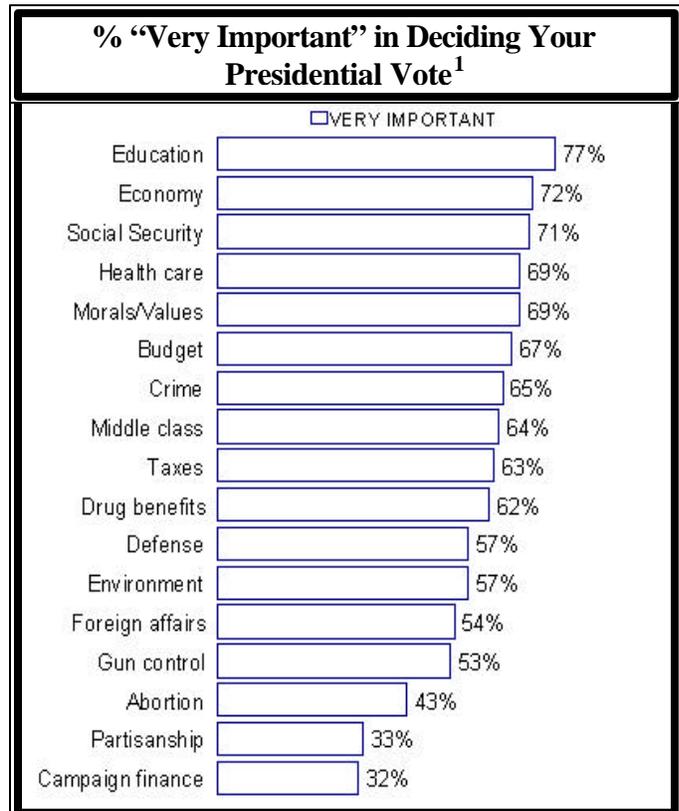
Now is the time to have a conversation on education. The public sees education as an important issue facing the nation, and intends to vote with schools in mind. As they look to the future, Americans hope for, and expect, major changes in education.

As of Labor Day, traditionally the point in the election when candidates believe voters start to pay attention to the issues, education stood as the issue of most importance to 77% of registered voters – higher than any other topic. Since the economy has improved, and the rate of violent crime has fallen, education has moved to the top of the public agenda. In fact, in over 60 years of trending responses to the open-end question “what is the most important problem facing the country?” Gallup notes that education took the top spot and received its highest number of mentions (16%) in Spring 2000.¹ The public also most frequently mentions education as the worst problem in their community (17%).²

As Americans look to the future, their greatest hope for the nation is that there will be improvements in education (36%).

This is important to more people than lessening crime and drug abuse (34%), better race relations (29%), economic prosperity (26%), a cleaner environment (18%), or more personal freedom (8%).³ The necessary changes are major. Nearly two-thirds (63%) say “there are good things, but the public school system in this country requires major changes,” rather than “it’s basically okay, but does require some minor changes (39%).” However, few (6%) believe “we need to completely replace it.”⁴

Not only do they hope for improvements in education, nearly half expect there will be big changes in education over the next 30 years. More expect changes in education (45%) than in work life (24%) or politics (24%).⁵ In fact, people are twice as likely to believe the public education system will improve in the next 50 years (66%) than believe it will get worse (30%).⁶



Education holds such prominence in the public's mind because people see it as the best way to help America's youth and improve our future.

Of a variety of different ways to help kids, two-thirds view improving school quality as the most effective approach, higher than community centers or more flexible work schedules for parents, specifically: improving the quality of the public schools (68% very effective way to help kids); more programs and activities for kids to do after school in places like community centers (60%); employers giving parents more flexible work schedules so they can spend more time with their kids (59%); more involvement by volunteer organizations dedicated to kids, like the Boy Scouts and the YMCA (52%); and a nighttime curfew after which kids could not be on the street without their parents (51%).⁷

People place the future in the hands of schools. When asked how big a role various institutions will play in making life better in the future, schools and universities are near the top (79% major role) after science and technology (89%) and medical advances (85%). Schools are seen as having a more major role than government, business, the military, the media, or religion.⁸

According to the public, schools' main purpose is to prepare students for life. Their interpretation of "life preparation" is less about preparation for college or a vocational skill, and more about thinking well, and having practical skills and basic values.

Schools have the wrong priorities. In the public's view, schools are giving priority to "preparing students for college" (38%) and "providing vocational skills that prepare students for employment" (28%). However, they most *want* schools to be "teaching students basic values, such as honesty and respect for others" (37%) and "teaching students how to reason and think well" (36%). Civic responsibility is at the bottom of what schools prioritize (9%) and what the public believes should be a priority (11%).⁹

More (50%) would emphasize "teaching practical skills that are useful in the workplace and daily life" over "teaching academic subjects and intellectual development" (32%).¹⁰ The American belief in a person's ability to be successful through adversity and hard work is so strong that a majority (55%) continue to believe that "success in the workplace depends mainly on what you learn and your ability to adapt to your job after you leave school, so you can still succeed with a high-school diploma or two-year college degree" over "it's almost impossible to get ahead these days without a four-year or postgraduate degree, so you have to go to college in order to gain the credentials and knowledge necessary to get ahead" (42%).¹¹

Technological advances and increased communication are strong influences on the next generation's ability to succeed.

Two-thirds (69%) assert there has been a "great deal of change" in what today's young people need to learn before they graduate from high school, and computers are the top

change to which they point (36%).¹² Reading, writing and math skills are universally viewed as important to future success, followed by good work habits. But the ability to communicate well and use technology are now also “basic” skills needed to succeed.

% Very Important Skills for Young People to Get Ahead¹³

Having good basic reading, writing, and math skills	99% very important
Having good work habits, such as being responsible, on time, and disciplined	98%
Having good communications skills	89%
Knowing how to use computers and up-to-date technology	80%
Knowing how to speak a foreign language	28%

In fact, more see changes in technology and communications as an influence on the job force of the future than the trends toward downsizing or globalization.

% Great Deal of Influence on the Future of Young People¹⁴

The growing importance of computers and up-to-date technology	77% great deal
More sources of information and more ways to communicate information	60%
Less job security and more downsizing	50%
The growth of the global economy	49%
Diversity in the workforce	39%
The declining number of manufacturing jobs	38%

Teachers, adults, and high school students agree on what is essential for a high school education. Reading, writing and math top the list, followed by universal values, and then technological skills.

% “Absolutely Essential” for Your Local Schools			
	Teachers¹⁵	Adults¹⁶	High School Students¹⁷
Basic reading, writing, and math skills	98	92	94
Good work habits such as being responsible, on time and disciplined	90	83	86
The value of hard work	83	78	81
Values such as honesty and tolerance of others	82	74	78
Computer skills and media technology	72	80	75

Failing the Test

Americans increasingly believe the nation's schools are failing our children. They rate public schools poorly, report that children today are getting a worse education than they did, and see American schools falling behind the rest of the world.

Most Americans conclude that the United States leads the world in just about every area, but when it comes to schools, more than three-quarters rank our schools as “average” (37%), “below average” (31%) or “among the worst” (7%) compared to other industrialized countries.¹⁸

Only one-quarter state the nation's public schools are in “excellent” (1%) or “good” (24%) shape. Nearly half (48%) rate them as “only fair” and 18% say “poor.”¹⁹ Using a different scale, only 18% of adults give the nation's schools a grade of “A” or “B.”²⁰ A majority (54%) believes children today get a worse education than they did, and only 28% think children are getting a better education. Even parents of children in K-12 schools, who tend to be more optimistic about education, think children are getting a worse education (52%) with only one-third (33%) believing their education is better.²¹ This is a reverse from the early 1970s when a firm majority (60%) felt children were getting a better education compared to their own, and only 20% felt it was worse.²²

Furthermore, people have lost respect and confidence in public schools since the 1970s. In 1973, 58% said they had “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in public schools. That figure has eroded over time and now stands at 36%, with 26% reporting they have “very little confidence” or “none.”²³

Importantly, the decline in the American assessment of public schools has occurred in perceptions of schools nationally, while views of neighborhood schools have remained constant.

Public opinion data consistently demonstrates strong differences between the public's view of the nation's schools and their community schools. For example, only 20% of adults give schools nationally a grade of “A” or “B,” but this response moves up to 47% for local public schools.²⁴

Some have argued the differing opinions of community and national schools are due to increased familiarity at the community level. There is some evidence that familiarity matters. While 47% of adults give their community public schools a grade of “A” or “B,” more public schools parents give a high rating (56%). However, when they turn to rating schools nationally, their views are consistently negative, with 20% of adults giving an “A” or “B” compared to 22% of public school parents.²⁵

Public opinion data would suggest that ratings of the nation's schools are driven by negative perceptions of inner city schools, rather than schools generally. For example,

overall a majority of women rate their community public schools “A” or “B” (57%), but only 38% grade the nation’s schools at the same level. Looking at ratings of local schools by city size clarifies that few of those who live in big cities rate their local schools highly (41%). The high response for community schools is the result of the response of those who live in suburbs (57% rate their community schools an “A” or “B”), small towns (66%), and rural areas (69%).²⁶

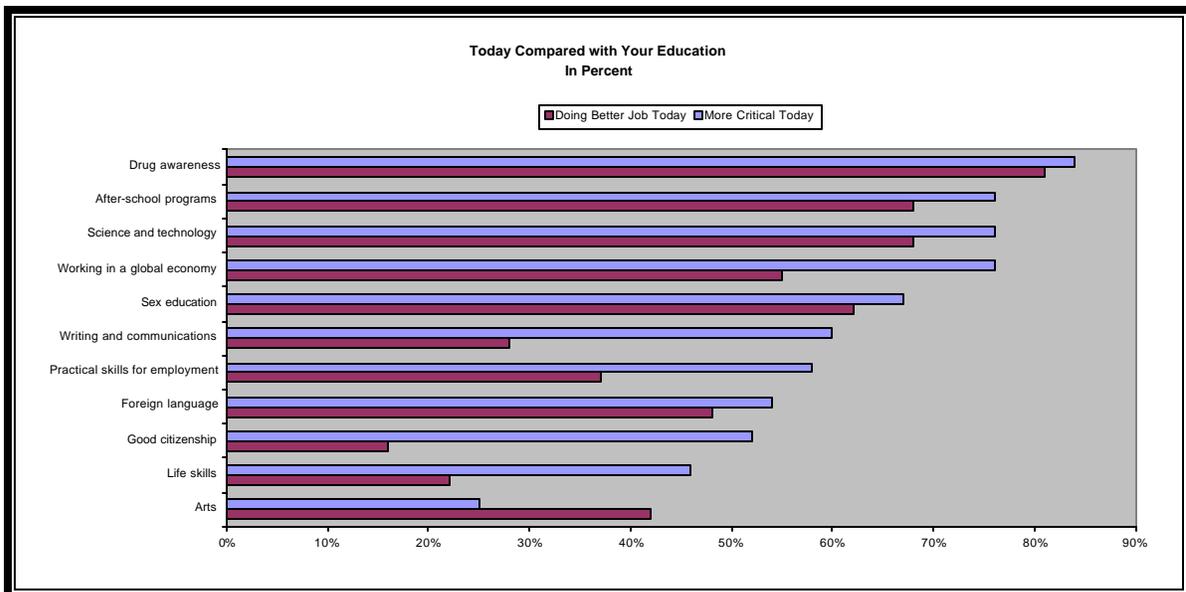
Furthermore, while views of the nation’s schools have plummeted over the past 30 years, views of neighborhood schools have stayed constant. This suggests that there are negative perceptions being communicated about schools across the country that are not reflected in people’s own experiences.

When thinking broadly about education, people have harsh and negative assessments. However, when they think more narrowly, either looking at their neighborhood schools, or rating specific subject areas, they have more favorable views.

How would you rate the public schools in the neighborhood or area where you live?		
	1998	1972
Excellent	12	13
Good	40	40
Only fair	26	26
Poor	15	13
Not sure	7	9

**1998 data, the Shell Poll by Hart Research; 1972 data, the Gallup Organization.*

Overall, a majority (54%) asserts that children today get a worse education than they did.²⁷ However, when asked to rate very specific areas of education, majorities report schools doing a better job in the top five areas they rate as being more critical today: drug education (81% say schools are doing a better job today), after school programs (68%), science and technology (68%), sex education (62%), and preparation for working in a global economy (55%). The two areas with large percentages reporting that their own education was better are “educating students on good citizenship” (53% say their own education was better), and “teaching writing and communications skills” (45%).²⁸



Employers and college professors hold particularly negative views of public schools' ability to prepare students for work or college. They do not see a high school diploma as evidence a student has learned the basics, and few rate recent job applicants or students as having good basic skills.²⁹

There is a great divide in perceptions of the worth of a high school diploma. Parents and teachers stand on one side of the divide, and professors and employers stand on the other. Most parents and teachers see a high school diploma as evidence that a student has learned the basics, while professors and employers disagree.

Value of a High School Diploma³⁰				
	Parents	Teachers	College Professors	Employers
A high school diploma means a student has at least learned the basics	66%	74%	33%	39%

Note: "Teachers" are k-12.

Additionally, few professors or employers rate their recent students or job applicants as having good basic skills. They are harshest in their assessment of high school graduates' ability to write, and have the fewest critiques of their ability to use computers.

Rate Skills of Recent Job Applicants/Students³¹ (% Fair/Poor)		
	Employers	Professors
Writing clearly	79	82
Grammar and spelling	77	79
Work habits: being organized and on time	75	74
Being motivated and conscientious	71	59
Basic math skills	59	61
Being curious, interested in learning	57	55
Being respectful and polite	54	34
Speaking English well	50	49
Working with others effectively	49	34
Honesty	44	30
Ability to use computers	33	20

Whether at the community or national level, non-parents are harsher in their judgment of schools in almost every area.

Higher proportions of non-parents point to parental involvement, drugs, and discipline as major problems. Parents place overcrowded classrooms in their top three concerns with

drugs and parental involvement, followed by discipline. Furthermore, inequality in funding is a major issue for parents, but a middling concern for non-parents.

Percent Saying Each is a “Major Problem” in Public Schools in Their Community³²		
	Non-Parents	Parents
Lack of parental involvement	60	43
Student use of alcohol or illegal drugs	54	44
Students who are undisciplined and disruptive	54	40
Overcrowded classrooms	49	44
Violence and lack of school safety	37	31
Lack of adequate academic standards	33	27
Inequality in funding among school districts	32	36
Poor school administration	30	23
Poor quality teachers	29	21
Lack of computers and technology	24	24
Public school facilities that are unsafe or unhealthy	23	18
Discrimination against children because of race or gender	18	18

Generally, non-parents also have harsher judgments than parents in rating the nation’s schools with three exceptions. Parents rate three areas as a higher concern than non-parents do: overcrowding, inequality in funding, and lack of technology.

Percent Saying Each is a “Major Problem” in Public Schools in The Nation³³		
	Non-Parents	Parents
Lack of parental involvement	82	68
Students who are undisciplined and disruptive	74	71
Student use of alcohol or illegal drugs	73	62
Violence and lack of school safety	63	63
Overcrowded classrooms	59	64
Lack of adequate academic standards	53	46
Inequality in funding among school districts	49	54
Poor school administration	43	41
Public school facilities that are unsafe or unhealthy	37	36
Poor quality teachers	35	33
Discrimination against children because of race or gender	32	33
Lack of computers and technology	29	32

Solutions for Children and Failing Schools

The public sees a myriad of problems facing children, not all of them the fault of schools. However, school becomes the vehicle through which the public can create change for children, so the public's wide-ranging concerns about, and solutions for kids, get played out through the schools.

Parents

According to the public, lack of parental involvement is the top problem facing children, and “fixing” parents fixed is the best solution. People believe parents matter more than school in a child’s ability to succeed, and they worry that schools are being asked to do parents’ job.

As noted in the previous tables, more people rate “lack of parental involvement” as a “major problem facing schools” than any other problem, including drugs, discipline, crowding and violence. Three-quarters (78%) see lack of parental involvement as a major problem for the nation’s schools; 55% say it is a major problem in their own community schools. Discipline and drugs follow at 73% and 69% respectively for the nation’s schools, 50% and 51% for community schools.³⁴

Furthermore, parents are perceived to be more important than teachers in achieving educational success. Twice as many (42%) think “the involvement and attention of the parents” matters more in determining the quality of a child’s education than the “quality of the teachers and the school” (21%).³⁵ But most agree schools are being asked to compensate for parental failures. Two-thirds (66%) believe “we are asking our schools to do too many things that really should be handled by parents at home” while only 24% think “with families and children under so many pressures today, it’s important for schools to take on more responsibilities concerning students.”³⁶

Though the public views “lack of parental involvement” as a major problem facing schools, parents are more involved in their child’s education than prior generations. Parents also value involvement, and would like to be involved in more significant ways.

Parents report that they are more involved in their children’s education than their parents were (74%). Even so, 71% wish they could be doing more.³⁷ Parents universally (91%) state it is extremely important to be involved in school. Most cite time and being unavailable during school hours as their reasons for not being more involved (52% choose one of these reasons).³⁸

The public rates a variety of communications measures as effective in increasing parental involvement:

- Public school open houses (89% very/somewhat effective, 54% very effective)
- Public school newsletters (87%, 47%)
- Open hearings (85%, 48%)
- Neighborhood discussion groups (81%, 43%)
- Public schools news hotlines (77%, 35%)
- Televised school board meetings (74%, 39%)
- Internet “chat rooms” set up by your local school (63%, 25%)³⁹

But the public is willing to go beyond communications. Significant percentages are willing to give parents a very substantive role in education (public school parents’ ratings are higher). Roughly half want parents to have more say in:

- Allocation of school funds (57% want “more say,” 8% “less say”)
- Selection and hiring of administrators and principals (55%, 9%)
- Curriculum, that is, the subjects offered (53%, 10%)
- Selection and hiring of teachers (48%, 13%)
- Teacher and administrator salaries (48%, 14%)
- Selection of books and instructional materials (46%, 13%)
- Books placed in school libraries (44%, 14%)⁴⁰

A majority of parents would feel comfortable with a substantive role, including:

- Chaperone class trips (91% feel “very” or “somewhat comfortable,” 73% “very”)
- Help with school events (91%, 62%)
- After school activities (85%, 53%)
- Help evaluate teachers (74%, 37%)
- Decide how to spend your school’s funds (73%, 36%)
- Serve on a committee to decide which new teachers to hire (63%, 31%)
- Serve on a committee to propose changing how teachers teach (60%, 27%)
- Help to plan the school curriculum (61%, 25%)⁴¹

But this does not necessarily match with the role teachers want for parents. Very few teachers approve of parents changing their teaching methods, making hiring decisions, or evaluating teachers, though more approve of involvement in budget decisions or curriculum suggestions:

- Propose changes to classroom teaching methods (15% approve)
- Make hiring decisions on incoming teachers and administrators (25%)
- Evaluate the quality of your school’s teachers (26%)
- Suggest materials and topics for the school curriculum (49%)
- Make decisions on spending school funds (54%)
- Propose changes to the lunchroom menu (85%)⁴²

Teachers

The public regards teaching quality as a problem, and supports measures to guarantee quality teachers in the classroom. However, Americans also like and respect teachers, and feel most have student’s best interests at heart.

A solid majority (60%) believes teacher quality is a problem in the public schools.⁴³ While teachers behold those who choose teaching as the “cream of the crop” or “better than average” (64%), fewer parents (37%), college professors (41%), or employers (40%) share that view. Roughly half (53% of parents and employers, 47% of college professors) evaluate the people who choose teaching as simply “average.”⁴⁴

Teachers also report that most are committed to their profession and really care about their students (77% of teachers say that comes “very close to describing my school”). Most college professors agree (60%), but fewer parents (48%) and employers (34%) share that sentiment.⁴⁵

Still, the public feels teachers have their students’ best interests at heart. Two-thirds (66%) say “teachers can be trusted to do what’s right for their students” all or most of the time.⁴⁶ And they view teachers as “part of the solution in helping to improve public education” (62%) not “part of the problem with the things that are wrong with public education” (20%).⁴⁷

Interestingly, the public and teachers have completely different priorities for how to use funding to improve schools.

When asked to prioritize government funding, the public places more importance on books, staff development and technology, while teachers place more importance on reducing class size and teachers’ salaries.

Priority of Educational Areas – % Rating 5 on a Scale of 1-5⁴⁸		
	Public % Rating 5	Teachers % Rating 5
Update instructional materials and books	72	37
School staff development and training	65	30
Technology	61	32
Keeping teachers’ salaries competitive	54	62
Class-size reduction	50	70

Parents and teachers agree on most solutions for attracting and retaining good teachers, but they differ on the effectiveness of merit pay.

To address the problems they see in teacher quality, the public strongly supports periodic testing for all teachers (83% strongly support), rewarding teachers based on student performance (66%), and empowering schools to remove low-performing teachers (65%).

There are lower, but still significant levels of support for offering alternative teacher certification (47%), and establishing a national teacher corps (39%).⁴⁹

Teachers and parents agree on the importance of professional development opportunities and scholarships for new teachers. While both favor increased pay for all teachers, more teachers place importance on that solution. Parents prefer increasing the pay for those teachers who have performed to increasing salaries for all. Teachers view performance-based pay as one of the least desirable solutions.

% Favor Solution to Attract and Retain Good Public School Teachers ⁵⁰		
	Teachers	Parents
School-financed professional development opportunities	91	85
Increased pay for all teachers	89	62
Loans and scholarships for prospective teachers	85	86
Increased pay for teachers who demonstrate high performance	53	90
Tax credits for teachers who demonstrate high performance	39	63

Funding

The public assessment is that education needs more funding, and they would be willing to pay more taxes to provide that funding. At the same time, they see many of the problems facing schools, as problems money cannot fix.

Two-thirds (66%) say government spends too little on public school education,⁵¹ and 65% would like to see federal spending on education increased.⁵² A majority of both parents (59%) and non-parents (53%) are willing to pay as much as \$500 per year in increased taxes to provide for their desired changes for education. This show of support is particularly compelling since respondents were also given options to support \$100 (9% favor giving \$100 but not \$200), and then \$200 (20% favor paying \$200, but not \$500).⁵³

A majority (58%) views “not enough money being spent on education” as a very important factor contributing to problems with our educational system.⁵⁴ However, the debate over fixing schools cannot rest on funding, since many of the problems people see are not problems money can solve. While 33% believe that increasing funding for public schools is the most important thing that the federal government can do to improve education, 64% believe there are more important things that need to be done.⁵⁵ Only by a slim 8-point margin do people think the quality of schools is related to the amount of money spent (50% say “yes,” 42% “no”).⁵⁶

Money can address problems such as run-down schools, class size, equipment and teachers’ salaries. However, other popular reforms such as higher standards and more values do not hinge on funding.

People strongly favor a series of funding proposals for schools. Eighty-two percent favor (54% strongly favor) giving “state and local governments more say in how to spend federal education money.” Nearly as many favor increased “federal spending on new

school construction and modernization” (76% favor, 48% strongly), and increased “federal funding to states so that all 4-year-olds may attend preschool” (64% favor, 45% strongly). They do not want to use money as a weapon, however. Only 33% favor (13% strongly favor) reducing “federal education funding to states where the academic performance of public school students is low and has not improved in five years.”⁵⁷

Decaying school buildings is a high priority. “Fixing run-down schools” is the strongest priority for funds (80% strongly favor), even over reducing class size (69%), more computers (61%), teacher pay (60%), and increased security (53%).⁵⁸ The intensity of support for fixing run-down schools is likely due to American’s desire to improve inner city schools. Fully 86% state that improving the nation’s inner city schools is “very important,” and 66% are willing to pay more taxes to provide the funds to improve these schools.⁵⁹

While they support additional funds for schools, Americans also see the need for fundamental changes that do not require money, such as standards and values. “High standards” is typically at the top of the public’s favorite reforms with 85% strongly favoring “making students meet adequate academic standards to be promoted or graduated.”⁶⁰

Values

The public wants schools to place more emphasis on universal values – tolerance, honesty, and democracy.

A strong majority (61%) desires more influence on schools from religious and spiritual values.⁶¹ However, the values being referred to are the non-controversial, universal human values we all share. Interestingly, the public is far more willing than teachers to have schools cover the more contentious topics such as acceptance of people with controversial views or different sexual orientation, abstinence and choice.

% Saying Value Should be Taught in Their Community Public Schools ⁶²		
	Teachers	Public
Acceptance of people of different races and ethnic backgrounds	98	93
Honesty	98	97
Democracy	93	93
Patriotism/love of country	90	90
Caring for friends and family members	88	90
Moral courage	87	90
The Golden Rule	86	86
Acceptance of people who hold unpopular or controversial political or social views	64	71
Sexual abstinence outside of marriage	45	68
Acceptance of people with different sexual orientations, that is, homosexuals or bisexuals	35	55
Acceptance of the right of a woman to choose abortion	16	48

Discipline

Even before Columbine, the public was very concerned about violence in schools. Columbine served to bring an issue of concern to center stage. Though they do not see serious problems with violence in their own schools, parents still fear for their children's safety.

In summer 1998, one year before Columbine, 75% of adults reported that violence and school shootings were a "very serious concern."⁶³ Columbine made the issue top-of-mind. Right after the incident, discipline, violence and guns moved to the top of the list (47%) of problems in schools, ahead of lack parental involvement (12%).⁶⁴

Forty-three percent of parents with children in K-12 fear for their child's physical safety when at school.⁶⁵ This figure reached its highest point (55%) after Columbine, but has still not reverted to its pre-Columbine 1998 level of 37%.⁶⁶ Parents are afraid, even though few of them (23%) see violence as a serious problem at their child's school, and 61% think their school does an excellent or good job with security precautions.⁶⁷

More than violence, teens are critical of their school's ability to maintain class discipline. They give their school high grades for being a safe place without violence (41% of teens give their school an "A"), but far fewer give an "A" for maintaining discipline in the classroom (25%).⁶⁸

Overwhelmingly, the public sees paying attention to youth as the solution to school violence.

More than gun control or media reform, Columbine caused the public to agree that America needs to focus on youth. The top solution to address violence is paying attention to teens and their problems. To prevent school shootings we as a society need to start "paying more attention to kids' anti-social attitudes and behaviors" (60%) over increasing school security (11%), reducing violence in popular entertainment (13%) or passing stricter gun control laws (6%).⁶⁹ The importance of identifying and counseling troubled youth is unanimous:

Security Measures Schools Should Take⁷⁰		
	Teen	Parent
Offer effective counseling & other assistance to troubled students	98%	97%
Try to identify troubled students who may be prone to violence	93%	97%
Have police officers or armed security guards on patrol at school	69%	65%
Conduct random searches of students' lockers	68%	81%
Have metal detectors at school entrances	50%	59%
Conduct random searches of students themselves	50%	56%

In addition to helping troubled youth, random searches, metal detectors, and armed security are measures supported by a majority of parents. Less dramatic, but supported,

measures include: “removing disruptive students” (57% say that is “very likely to improve my child’s public school”), “zero tolerance policies on discipline” (39%), and “conflict counselors” (39%).⁷¹

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure concerns more people than low standards or poor quality teachers. Parents and students agree that social pressures are among the most challenging problems children face.

“Peer pressure about drinking, drugs, and sex” is a very serious concern according to 65% of adults, higher than “low academic standards” (59%), “poor quality of teaching” (47%), or “lack of adequate equipment and supplies” (36%).⁷² Even when thinking of their own child’s school, parents most frequently point to “social pressures to be popular” as a serious problem (64% serious problem, 25% very serious).⁷³ This is not just a problem for teens. Twenty percent of elementary school parents point to peer pressure as their top concern.⁷⁴

High school students also see peer pressure and behavioral problems as serious issues they face. They give their school fairly high grades for teaching basic academic subjects (61% “A”), but fewer give their school an “A” in “kids treating each other with respect” (13%).⁷⁵ Across racial groups, vanity, disruptive students, and cheating are the most frequently identified problems:

Students’ Views of the Problems Facing High Schools by Race of Student⁷⁶ (% Very Serious)			
	White	African American	Hispanic
Students pay too much attention to what they’re wearing and what they look like	31	51	41
Too many disruptive students	27	41	36
Students cheat on tests and assignments	23	39	31
Too many students get away with being late to class and not doing their work	17	27	29
The school fails to challenge students to do their best	15	27	26
The textbooks and equipment are out of date	13	22	22
Too much drugs and violence in school	19	26	19
Classes are too crowded	16	26	25

To Love School

In the midst of all the rational indicators of school performance, there is one emotional indicator that matters most. Parents want their children to love to learn.

Though people show strong support for testing, standards, and more parental involvement, the proof of a quality school is very simple – children who like school (61% say it is one of the most important signs of a quality school). Only 11% of kids say they love school and an additional 28% “like school a lot.”⁷⁸

But few parents receive any guidance from their school about how to get their children excited and interested in learning. Only 20% of parents say their school does an excellent job in that area.⁷⁹ Only 36% of students give their school an “A” in “challenging students to do the best they can” compared to 61% who give an “A” for teaching basic academics.⁸⁰

% One of the Most Important Signs of School Quality ⁷⁷	
Happy children who like school	61
High graduation rates	42
High attendance rates	40
High parental involvement	40
Small class size	37
High college attendance rates	36
Strong principals	36
Availability of technology	35
Small school size	29
Extra curricular activities	25
Low teacher turnover	22
High test scores	17
The way a school looks	17
Teacher awards	17
Awards in math and science	16

The Impact of Race and Gender

Women gaining the right to vote in 1920 and Passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act are considered two of the most important events of the century. Two-thirds (66%) of Americans rate suffrage as one of the most important events, second only to WWII. A majority (58%) rates the Civil Rights Act as one of the most important events, the fifth highest event, and ahead of WWI, or landing a man on the moon.⁸¹ Women entering the workforce and the civil rights movement have made this country better (83% and 84% respectively).⁸²

Americans believe great progress has been made on gender and racial equality, but that discrimination still exists. They see that the nation has become more tolerant of people who are different (59%).⁸³ However, they want the country “to focus on what we all have in common” (52%), over “appreciating its diversity better” (38%).⁸⁴ There are both commonalities and division in opinion: women and men differ on many opinions, and blacks and whites differ on many opinions, but there is strong agreement across both divides as well.

Gender

Americans hold favorable views of the Women’s Movement, and women feel they have personally benefited from it. As they look back over the past 20 years, men see a lot of progress in women’s rights, while women are less sure.

Three-quarters believe the Women’s Movement has had a positive impact on women in general, with 44% stating it has had a large positive impact.⁸⁵ Men and women respond similarly about the effect of the women’s movement. However, response is very different among women of different parties. Many more Democratic and Independent women see the women’s movement as a positive influence compared to Republican women: Democratic women (51% large positive impact, 34% small); Independent (41%, 33%), Republican (33%, 32%).

Younger women have the most favorable view of the women’s movement, with 84% of Gen Xers holding a favorable opinion, 72% of 30-44 year olds, 63% of 45-64 year olds, and only 45% of seniors.⁸⁶

To a certain extent, women feel a personal connection with the movement. A majority of women (57%) feel they have personally benefited from it, but a majority of men (55%) have not.⁸⁷ Though they hold warm feelings about the Women’s Movement and feel they have benefited from it, less than one-third of women (29%) consider themselves a feminist, while 66% reject that identification.⁸⁸

Men and women see different levels of progress for women. As they look back over the past 20 years, men see far more progress than women see. Younger and older women

report more progress than baby boomer women. Both sexes agree that the most progress for women has occurred in the workplace.

% Women Made a Lot of Progress Over Past 20 Years⁸⁹				
	At Work	Customers	At Home	Media Portrayal
Men	49	44	33	35
Women	36	33	30	26
<35	36	38	36	26
35-54	30	31	23	23
55+	46	35	31	29

Gender discrimination and sexual harassment still exist. Significant percentages of women report personal experience with discrimination and harassment. Both are viewed primarily as workplace issues.

Forty-four percent of women have experienced discrimination, particularly college educated women (55% say they have felt discrimination), professional women (58%), and younger women (54% of 35-49 year olds, 50% of 18-34 year olds). Discrimination is identified as a workplace issue (58%) with few seeing it as a school issue (16%).⁹⁰ Furthermore, both women and men are most likely to see disparities in achieving top executive positions (71% of women, 59% of men feel that women are discriminated against in that area), followed by promotions to supervisor (62%, 54%). Fewer see disparities in women getting entry-level jobs (43%, 28%).⁹¹

The face of sexual harassment looks very different. One-third (31%) of women have experienced sexual harassment, with the highest reports among blue-collar workers (39%), and 35-49 year olds (41%). Like discrimination, harassment is identified as a workplace issue (73%) with few seeing it as a school issue (20%).⁹²

While more than three-quarters support enforcement of equal pay laws, few witness problems with pay equity.

Three-quarters (79%) favor increased enforcement of equal pay laws.⁹³ However, far fewer see pay equity as a problem where they work, with women more likely than men to say it exists where they work. One-third (30%) of women employed full time say they get paid less than a man would in their job,⁹⁴ compared to 13% of men employed full time who say women at their work get paid less than men who do the same job.⁹⁵

While there has been progress, there is still a long way to go particularly in workplace fairness issues. At the same time, the public feels dual income families have pushed some changes too far, such as putting young children in day care.

A brief look at some of the shifts in public opinion over time clarifies how dramatically times have changed. For example, in 1936, only 18% of adults thought a married woman

should earn money if she has a husband capable of supporting her. In 1951, only 21% approved of a woman wearing shorts on the street in hot weather. Today, 92% are willing to vote for a woman for president, compared with only 66% in 1971, and 48% in 1949.⁹⁶

Two-thirds (66%) of women and 58% of men agree “we still need to go further in establishing equal rights for women.”⁹⁷ Specifically, majorities believe we have not gone far enough in establishing equal pay, funding for girls sports, and women in professions.

% Saying Change Has Not Gone Far Enough ⁹⁸		
	Women	Men
Women are getting paid a more equal wage for their work	72	59
School athletic programs for girls receive as much funding as programs for boys	59	52
Many more women are working in professions such as medicine and law	52	44

However, there are several other areas where substantial percentages of women and men think society has gone too far: young children spending more time in child care (58% of women, 60% men believe change has gone too far), social acceptability for sexually active unmarried women (52% women, 43% men), unacceptability of telling sexist jokes (39% of women, 40% of men say too far), and more mothers working rather than at home with children (39% of women, 44% of men).⁹⁹

The nation continues to struggle with feelings over women in the workforce. Most believe this has been a change for the better and do not want to return to traditional roles. However, the public is worried about the pressures of managing work and family, and are concerned that children will lose.

Fully 83% believe that women’s entering the workforce has been a change for the better,¹⁰⁰ and 71% disagree (48% completely) with the statement “women should return to their traditional roles in society.”¹⁰¹

At the same time, they worry about lack of attention to children. Only a slim majority (51%) of both men and women believe “it’s fine for a mother with young children to take a job if she feels she can handle both responsibilities,” over “a mother who is able to financially should stay at home with young children” (43% of women, 41% of men agree).¹⁰² “At-home” is the preferred state. Three-quarters (79%) agree “it may be necessary for mothers to be working because the family needs the money, but it would be better if she could stay home and just take care of the house and children.”¹⁰³ Women agree in even higher numbers than men with the statement “there is too much pressure to have it all – marriage, family and a successful career” (78% of women, 67% of men).¹⁰⁴

Two-thirds say there has been a “great deal” (32%) or “quite a lot of change” (37%) in “recent years in the relationship between men and women in their roles in families, the

workplace, and society.”¹⁰⁵ The nation is mixed on whether these changes have made the lives of most Americans better (31%), worse (36%), or made no difference (31%). The majority (53%) believes these changes have made no difference in their own lives, with one-third saying it has made things better (30%), and a few worse (15%).¹⁰⁶

Changes in gender relationships in recent years have made it harder: “for parents to raise children” (80%); “for families to earn enough money to live comfortably” (65%); “for marriages to be successful” (71%); “for women to lead satisfying lives” (47%, with women 6 points more likely than men to say harder); and “for men to lead satisfying lives” (48% with men 9 points more likely than women to say harder).¹⁰⁷

They fear that the family structure they think is best for children will vanish. A majority (52%) believes that “mothers staying home to raise their children” will have disappeared within 30 years.¹⁰⁸

Women assert men have more advantages in life and men generally agree. Men have the most perceived advantages in getting top executive jobs and being paid well. Though there are fewer male advantages in balancing work and family, both agree that women shoulder the burden of housework.

Nearly half (49%) of Americans believe there are more advantages to being a man than a woman (10%) in our society today. More women feel this way than men (57% and 41% respectively). Men are particularly advantaged in getting top executive jobs (63% easier for men), with more women seeing it as easier for men (67%) but a majority of men agreeing (58%). While both believe that men generally earn more than women for the same work, women are more likely to believe this (70%) than men (59%).

There is less division in opinions toward balancing work and family. While women are slightly more likely to think it is easier for men to have a full time job and raise a family (46% easier for men, 42% no difference), men are more likely to say there is no difference between the sexes in this regard (56% no difference, 32% easier for men).

Housework may be the current war of the sexes; 70% say in most dual income households the woman does more housework, with more women believing this (81%) than men (57%). In their own households, 66% of women say they do “all” or “more” of the chores, compared to 27% of men.¹⁰⁹

Most believe that women and men are basically the same, and the world would be no different if it were a women’s world.

Two-thirds of women (65%) and a majority of men (53%) state the difference between men and women is mainly determined by what we are taught.¹¹⁰

Furthermore, majorities believe that most things would be the same if it were a women’s world. Two thirds (67%) of registered voters report things would be the same if most CEOs of corporations were women. Sixty percent say it would be the same if most

Supreme Court Justices were women, and a majority (54%) thinks it would be the same if most members of Congress were women. Women, particularly college educated women, are more likely than men to say things would be better, while men are more likely to say things would be the same. The one area with a plurality saying the world would be worse is if most breadwinners were women and child-care providers were men (44% worse).¹¹¹

Race

Americans believe the civil rights movement and laws to combat racial discrimination have been good for the country. Across race, people see anti-discrimination laws as continuing to be necessary. African Americans want affirmative actions programs to continue, while whites want them phased out.

Across race, Americans assert the civil rights movement has been good for America. Three-quarters (76%) of African Americans and 61% of whites feel the civil rights movement had a large positive impact on the values and beliefs of people today.¹¹²

Furthermore, a majority (59%) says affirmative action has been good for the country,¹¹³ and continues to favor affirmative action programs for women and minorities (58%).¹¹⁴ If given the choice between continuing affirmative action and phasing it out, strong differences by race emerge. Eighty percent of African Americans want affirmative action programs continued, while only 35% of whites would agree. Nearly half (45%) of whites think affirmative action programs should be phased out, compared to only 17% of African Americans. No African Americans would end it now, but 13% of whites would.¹¹⁵

Though they disagree on the future of affirmative action, both whites (65%) and African Americans (88%) think it continues to be necessary to have laws to protect racial minorities from discrimination in hiring and promotion.¹¹⁶

Americans know discrimination exists, but blacks and whites disagree about the extent of its reach and significance.

Americans reject the statement “discrimination against blacks is rare today” (73% disagree).¹¹⁷ Yet blacks and whites have very different assessments about the level and impact of racism. A majority (57%) of African Americans feel “blacks are discriminated against in society a lot” compared to only 22% of whites.¹¹⁸ A majority of African Americans (56%) see racism in society as a big problem today, while only 31% of whites say the same. Similarly, 46% of African Americans see racism in the workplace as a big problem, compared to 25% of whites.¹¹⁹ A majority (57%) sees discrimination against Latinos as “a problem” (82% among Hispanics).¹²⁰

White Americans say that African Americans in their community have as good a chance as whites of getting an education (93%), housing (86%) and any kind of job (79%). African Americans agree, but at far lower proportions, for education (71%), and housing (58%), and less than half agree for work (46%).¹²¹

By 30-point margins, more blacks than whites see unfair treatment throughout society:

% Saying Blacks are Treated Less Fairly Than Whites in Situation ¹²²		
	Blacks	Whites
By police	64	30
On the job or at work	47	10
In stores downtown or in malls	46	15
In restaurants, bars, theaters	39	11
In neighborhood shops	35	13
On public transportation	19	6

Fully two-thirds of African Americans say it is true (39%) or might be true (29%) that “Government makes sure drugs are available in poor black neighborhoods to harm black people. Comparatively, only 5% of whites think it is true, with 20% saying it might be true.¹²³

Significant percentages of African Americans and Hispanics personally experience discrimination. Young black men report the highest levels of discrimination.

Across age and gender, African Americans experience discrimination most frequently while shopping. Young black men experience more discrimination of every kind:

African Americans: % Experiencing Discrimination Within the Last 30 Days¹²⁴

	18-34 Men	18-34 Women	35+ Men	35+ Women
Shopping	45%	28	25	26
Dining Out	32%	24	19	15
At Work	23%	10	19	15
With Police	34%	8	17	9
Public Transportation	12%	2	8	3

Forty percent of Hispanics have experienced discrimination due to their ethnic background,¹²⁵ but half (49%) of Hispanics think the younger generation of Hispanic Americans faces less prejudice than their parents did.¹²⁶

There has been significant progress in addressing racism, but few Americans think relations between the races are good. While they hope for improved relations in the future, many feel it will not happen.

Racial attitudes have shifted in the last half-century. For example, in 1958, 80% of whites said they would move if blacks moved into their neighborhood in great numbers.

This percentage dropped to 53% by 1978 and now stands at 18%. Today, nearly two-thirds (63%) agree “interracial marriages are good because they help break down racial barriers” while only 26% agree “interracial marriages are bad because mixing races reduces the special gifts of each individual race.”¹²⁷ Three-quarters (73%) approve of interracial dating.¹²⁸ People are not pretending racism has gone away: 40% of African Americans and 32% of whites confess to having at least some racist feelings.¹²⁹

Few feel the state of race relations in the US is “very good” (7% of African Americans, 6% of whites). However, whites are more likely to see race relations as very or somewhat good (43% of whites, 35% of African Americans), while African Americans are more likely to see race relations are very or somewhat bad (47% of African Americans, 31% of whites).¹³⁰

As they look to the next 50 years, people are optimistic that race relations will improve (68% likely to improve) rather than get worse (28%).¹³¹ However, majorities of both whites (51%) and blacks (59%) believe race relations will always be a problem.¹³²

As they rate the severity of problems facing African American families today, more African Americans than whites see the problems they face as severe. The largest differences in response are in not having enough jobs, racism, lack of social programs and role models.

African Americans see a series of tough problems facing their families, and in some areas they are not optimistic about their ability to address the problem. For example, 68% of African Americans say that lack of good jobs is a big problem. When asked whether or not African Americans will be able to close the income gap in the future, by 49%-42% African Americans think they will not be able to close the income gap. Three-quarters (71%) of whites, however, think the gap will close.¹³³

% Big Problem for African American Families¹³⁴

	All	White	African American
too many teenage girls having children	62	61	78
crime in their neighborhoods	61	60	60
people depending too much on welfare	55	53	63
people not following moral and religious values	52	50	63
drugs and alcoholism	51	50	66
not enough jobs paying decent wages	50	48	68
too many parents never getting married	49	49	51

public schools not providing a good education	44	42	54
racism in society in general	36	31	56
racism in the work place	28	25	46
the government not spending enough on social programs	28	24	52
not enough successful blacks for young people to look up to	26	24	41

They, their faith, and their communities, have helped to improve conditions for African Americans. African Americans also point to Clinton's policies and affirmative action programs as helping to improve conditions.

% Helped A lot to Improve Conditions for African Americans¹³⁵

	All	Whites	African American
self-help by black Americans themselves	41	40	41
black churches	41	40	46
community action	31	30	36
welfare-to-work laws	28	28	29
a more color-blind society	28	28	20
economic conditions	24	25	24
affirmative action programs	24	22	32
other government social programs	18	17	25
the policies of the Clinton Administration	17	15	37

The Convergence of Race, Gender, and Education

There is an enormous division between white and black perspectives on the impact of race on education. Whites and blacks disagree about the extent of discrimination in education and the urgency of the problem.

For three-quarters of adults, racial disparities in their neighborhood schools are a non-issue. Fully 72% of adults think “African-American, Latino and other minority children get as good an education as white children” in their community.¹³⁶

When people think of racism in society they are most likely to think of housing. For African Americans and Hispanics, the next place where they see racism is the workplace. Half of African Americans (50%) and 40% of Hispanics, but only 27% of whites, see racism as a major problem in education. Even with these high responses among African Americans and Hispanics, this response does not necessarily mean that respondents were thinking of racial disparities within a given school or classroom. They may have been responding more broadly to racism in determining priorities or funding for school districts, for example.

% Racism is Major Problem in this Part of Society ¹³⁷				
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic
Housing	35	30	59	41
The workplace	27	21	59	41
Education	31	27	50	40
Health care	19	16	35	30

Stating that there is an issue will not create urgency among white Americans. Even if they hear that many African American children are not doing well in school, only one-third (33%) of white parents would view it as a crisis that needs to be addressed quickly. A majority (52%) would see it as “a serious problem, but not a crisis.” In comparison, African American parents would take that news far more seriously. A majority (54%) would treat it as a crisis that needs to be quickly addressed, while only 28% would see it as a serious problem, not a crisis.¹³⁸

Most feel integration has been good for students, and support its continuation. However, the appeal of neighborhood schools is strong and undermines weak support for integration, particularly among whites.

While a majority of whites (54%) believe more should be done to integrate schools throughout the nation, support among African Americans is nearly universal (90%). There is a dramatic correlation by age as well, with the most dramatic change in support between Gen Xers who support integration in large numbers (77%) and baby boomers with slim support (56%).¹³⁹

Two-thirds (68%) think integration has improved the quality of education for African American students, and 50% think integration has improved the quality of education for white students.¹⁴⁰

At the same time, whites give little priority to racial diversity. Three-quarters (77%) of African Americans but only 32% of whites think it is very important for a company to have a racially diverse workforce. Similarly, 76% of African Americans but only 36% of whites think it is very important for a college to have a racially diverse student body.¹⁴¹ Sixty percent of African American parents but only 34% of white parents think it is absolutely essential for a school to have a diverse student body.¹⁴²

Finally, white Americans overwhelmingly prioritize attending local schools over creating integration through transferring students out of their community (87% prefer staying in local schools even if most students are of the same race). African American parents also prefer neighborhood schools, but by a very narrow 48%-44% margin.¹⁴³ Rather than integration, 60% say the best way to help minority students is to increase funding for minority schools.¹⁴⁴

On fundamental values, there is complete agreement across race. Americans want to teach tolerance, respect, and patriotism.

Across race, parents think it is absolutely essential for schools to teach acceptance. It is essential for schools to teach students “to respect others who are from different ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds” (85% white, 88% African American) and “that whatever their ethnic or racial background, they are all part of one nation” (85%, 84%).¹⁴⁵

White and black parents share priorities for their children’s schools. In only three areas do African American parents have significantly higher expectations for schools than white parents: teach black history (+16 points), expect all kids to go to college (+20 points), and have a diverse student body (+26 points).

% Absolutely Essential for a School to... ¹⁴⁶		
	White Parents	African American Parents
Be free from weapons, drugs, and gangs	97	93
Make sure students master the basics such as reading, writing, and arithmetic	95	91
Promote kids to the next grade only after they show they have learned what they were supposed to	82	83
Make sure students behave themselves in class and on school grounds	87	82
Have a diverse student body, with kids from different ethnic and racial backgrounds	34	60

Expect all kids to go to college	31	51
Have teachers who pay personal attention to kids and want them all to succeed	89	88
Have teachers and a principal who push students to study hard and to excel academically	82	87
Make sure all kids can speak and write standard English, with proper pronunciation	90	86
Teach such values as honesty, respect and civility	83	84
Teach the contributions blacks and other minorities have made to American history	59	75
Teach good work habits such as being neat, responsible and on time	80	78

Whites and blacks react similarly to racial preferences. They want the same treatment, and would erase race as a factor if they could.

Neither African American parents nor white parents want race to be a criterion for hiring teachers. Even more African American parents (77%) than white parents (64%) believe that a mostly black school district should hire the best teachers regardless of race.¹⁴⁷

When asked if between an equally qualified white and black student, a college should admit the black student for racial balance, or should not make race a factor, two-thirds believe race should not be a factor (69% of whites, 63% of blacks), while 20% of whites and 25% of blacks would admit the black student. Similarly, whites and blacks are equally mixed in their opinion about whether or not it is generally a good or bad idea to select a minority candidate over an equally qualified white candidate for hiring, promotion and college admissions. African Americans are slightly more likely to say it is a good idea (38% say good idea, 36% bad idea) while whites are slightly more likely to see it as a bad idea (38% of whites say it is a bad idea, 31% good idea).¹⁴⁸ “Race should not be a factor” is a phrase that taps American’s fundamental beliefs about equality in a way the issue standing alone does not.

Americans believe in gender parity and support tough choices to get to the appropriate result.

There is very little data that provides insight into how Americans view the relationship between gender and school. Attitudes toward Title IX, however, provide some sense of how strongly people feel about gender fairness. Three quarters (76%) approve of “cutting back on men’s athletics to ensure equivalent athletic opportunities for women.”¹⁴⁹

People recognize the value of sports. Women and men agree the real value of sports is its ability to build girls confidence and self-esteem (47% of women, 49% of men).¹⁵⁰

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- ¹ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1006 adults nationally, March 10-12, 2000.
- ² Sponsored by CNN/USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1032 adults nationally, May 23-24, 2000.
- ³ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1264 adults nationally, November 5-8, 1998.
- ⁴ Sponsored by the Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard university, conducted by ICR, 1225 registered voters nationally, May 11-22, 2000.
- ⁵ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1264 adults nationally, November 5-8, 1998.
- ⁶ 1999 Millennium Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1546 adults nationally, April 6 – May 6, 1999.
- ⁷ Sponsored by the Advertising Council and Ronald McDonald House Charities, conducted by Public Agenda, 1005 adults nationally, December 1-8, 1998.
- ⁸ 1999 Millennium Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1546 adults nationally, April 6 – May 6, 1999.
- ⁹ Shell Oil Company Poll, by Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 1998.
- ¹⁰ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.
- ¹¹ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.
- ¹² “Education Technology Survey” sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation, conducted by Hart Research Associates, 1012 registered voters nationally, May 29-31, 1997.
- ¹³ “Education Technology Survey” sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation, conducted by Hart Research Associates, 1012 registered voters nationally, May 29-31, 1997.
- ¹⁴ “Education Technology Survey” sponsored by the Milken Family Foundation, conducted by Hart Research Associates, 1012 registered voters nationally, May 29-31, 1997.
- ¹⁵ Conducted by Public Agenda, 800 public school teachers, October 9-26, 1995.
- ¹⁶ Conducted by Public Agenda, 800 adults nationally, May 12-25, 1995.
- ¹⁷ Conducted by Public Agenda, 1000 high school students, October 29 – November 20, 1996.
- ¹⁸ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.
- ¹⁹ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.
- ²⁰ “Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1998 Survey” sponsored by Phi Delta Kapa, by Gallup, 1151 adults nationally, June 1998.
- ²¹ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, April 7-9, 2000.
- ²² Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1973.
- ²³ Gallup trend.
- ²⁴ Sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1093 adults nationwide, June 5-29, 2000.
- ²⁵ Sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1093 adults nationwide, June 5-29, 2000.
- ²⁶ AAUW Survey, by Lake Research 675 women nationally, June 1998.
- ²⁷ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, April 7-9, 2000.
- ²⁸ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.
- ²⁹ Reality Check 2000, conducted by Public Agenda, 615 parents of children in public school, 604 public school teachers, 260 employers of recently graduated students, 251 college professors who teach freshmen and sophomores, October-November, 1999.
- ³⁰ Reality Check 2000, conducted by Public Agenda, 615 parents of children in public school, 604 public school teachers, 260 employers of recently graduated students, 251 college professors who teach freshmen and sophomores, October-November, 1999.
- ³¹ Reality Check 2000, conducted by Public Agenda, 615 parents of children in public school, 604 public school teachers, 260 employers of recently graduated students, 251 college professors who teach freshmen and sophomores, October-November, 1999.
- ³² NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ³³ NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ³⁴ NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ³⁵ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.

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- ³⁶ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 17-20, 1998.
- ³⁷ Public Agenda, 1220 parents nationally, December 1998.
- ³⁸ PTA survey, by Bennett, Petts, and Blumenthal, 800 parents of public school children nationally, December 1998.
- ³⁹ “Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1998 Survey” sponsored by Phi Delta Kapa, by Gallup, 1151 adults nationally, June 1998.
- ⁴⁰ “Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1998 Survey” sponsored by Phi Delta Kapa, by Gallup, 1151 adults nationally, June 1998.
- ⁴¹ Public Agenda, 1220 parents nationally, December 1998.
- ⁴² Public Agenda, 1000 K-12 public school teachers nationally, December 1998.
- ⁴³ The Democratic Leadership Council Blueprint Poll, conducted by Penn Schoen and Berland Associates, 502 adults nationwide, June 17-20, 1999.
- ⁴⁴ Reality Check 2000, conducted by Public Agenda, 615 parents of children in public school, 604 public school teachers, 260 employers of recently graduated students, 251 college professors who teach freshmen and sophomores, October-November, 1999.
- ⁴⁵ Reality Check 2000, conducted by Public Agenda, 615 parents of children in public school, 604 public school teachers, 260 employers of recently graduated students, 251 college professors who teach freshmen and sophomores, October-November, 1999.
- ⁴⁶ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1277 adults, March 16-20, 1999.
- ⁴⁷ Sponsored by NBC News and the Wall Street Journal, conducted by the Hart and Teeter Research Organizations, 2006 adults nationally, June 18-21, 1998.
- ⁴⁸ Sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1103 adults nationwide, May 18 – June 11, 1999, and 361 teachers via a mailed survey, October-November 1999.
- ⁴⁹ The Democratic Leadership Council Blueprint Poll, conducted by Penn Schoen and Berland Associates, 502 adults nationwide, June 17-20, 1999.
- ⁵⁰ Sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1103 adults nationwide, May 18 – June 11, 1999, and 361 teachers via a mailed survey, October-November, 1999.
- ⁵¹ Conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, 1011 adults nationally, April 22-27, 1998.
- ⁵² The ABC News/Washington Post Poll, 1083 adults nationally, March 30 – April 2, 2000.
- ⁵³ NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ⁵⁴ Sponsored by NBC News/Wall Street Journal, conducted by Hart and Teeter Research Organizations, 2010 adults nationally, March 6-10, 1997.
- ⁵⁵ Sponsored by the Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard university, conducted by ICR, 1225 registered voters nationally, May 11-22, 2000.
- ⁵⁶ “Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1998 Survey” sponsored by Phi Delta Kapa, by Gallup, 1151 adults nationally, June 1998.
- ⁵⁷ Sponsored by the Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard university, conducted by ICR, 1225 registered voters nationally, May 11-22, 2000.
- ⁵⁸ NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ⁵⁹ “Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1998 Survey” sponsored by Phi Delta Kapa, by Gallup, 1151 adults nationally, June 1998.
- ⁶⁰ NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ⁶¹ Sponsored by the Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard university, conducted by ICR, 1225 registered voters nationally, May 11-22, 2000.
- ⁶² Sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1103 adults nationwide, May 18 – June 11, 1999, and 361 teachers via a mailed survey, October-November, 1999.
- ⁶³ Shell Oil Company Poll, by Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 1998.
- ⁶⁴ CBS News Poll, 450 adults nationwide, April 22, 1999.
- ⁶⁵ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 291 K-12 parents, April 7-9, 2000.
- ⁶⁶ Gallup trend.
- ⁶⁷ ABC News/Washington Post Poll, conducted by ICR, 500 high school teenagers and 522 parents of high school teenagers nationwide, April 22-25, 1999.

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- ⁶⁸ Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1015 public and nonpublic school students nationwide who had just completed grades 9-12, June 8-29, 1999.
- ⁶⁹ April 2000 News Interest Index, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1184 adults nationwide, March 15-19, 2000.
- ⁷⁰ ABC News/Washington Post Poll, conducted by ICR, 500 high school teenagers and 522 parents of high school teenagers nationwide, April 22-25, 1999.
- ⁷¹ Sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators, conducted by Lake Snell Perry & Associates, 750 K-12 public school parents, October 14-19, 1999.
- ⁷² Shell Oil Company Poll, by Hart Research, 1123 adults nationally, July 1998.
- ⁷³ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 338 K-12 parents, August 24-26, 1999.
- ⁷⁴ Newsweek/Kaplan Education Center Poll, by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 407 parents of children in grades K-8 nationally, March 1998.
- ⁷⁵ Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1015 public and nonpublic school students nationwide who had just completed grades 9-12, June 8-29, 1999.
- ⁷⁶ Conducted by Public Agenda, public high school students (669 white, 200 African American, 200 Hispanic), October 29 – November 20, 1996.
- ⁷⁷ Sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators, conducted by Lake Snell Perry & Associates, 750 K-12 public school parents, October 14-19, 1999.
- ⁷⁸ The Shell Education Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1015 high school students, June 8-29, 1999.
- ⁷⁹ Conducted by Public Agenda, 708 parents of public school children, October - November 1998.
- ⁸⁰ Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1015 public and nonpublic school students nationwide who had just completed grades 9-12, June 8-29, 1999.
- ⁸¹ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, November 1999.
- ⁸² 1999 Millennium Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1546 adults nationally, April 6 – May 6, 1999.
- ⁸³ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1277 adults, March 16-20, 1999.
- ⁸⁴ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1277 adults, March 16-20, 1999.
- ⁸⁵ Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ⁸⁶ Conducted by CBS News, 840 women, December 13-16, 1999.
- ⁸⁷ The Shell Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.
- ⁸⁸ Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ⁸⁹ Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ⁹⁰ Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ⁹¹ Survey of Americans on Gender in the Workplace, sponsored by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University Survey Project, conducted by Chilton Research Services, 804 adults nationally, November 17-23, 1997.
- ⁹² Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ⁹³ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1044 adults nationally, January 25-26, 2000.
- ⁹⁴ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1044 adults nationally, asked of 265 women employed full-time, January 25-26, 2000.
- ⁹⁵ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1044 adults nationally, asked of 331 men employed full-time, January 25-26, 2000.
- ⁹⁶ Gallup Organization trends.
- ⁹⁷ The Shell Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.
- ⁹⁸ The Shell Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.
- ⁹⁹ The Shell Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.
- ¹⁰⁰ 1999 Millennium Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1546 adults nationally, April 6 – May 6, 1999.

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- ¹⁰¹ Sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1411 adults, October 7-11, 1999.
- ¹⁰² The Shell Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.
- ¹⁰³ Survey of Americans on Gender in the Workplace, sponsored by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University Survey Project, conducted by Chilton Research Services, 804 adults nationally, November 17-23, 1997.
- ¹⁰⁴ Survey of Americans on Gender in the Workplace, sponsored by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University Survey Project, conducted by Chilton Research Services, 804 adults nationally, November 17-23, 1997.
- ¹⁰⁵ Survey of Americans on Gender in the Workplace, sponsored by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University Survey Project, conducted by Chilton Research Services, 804 adults nationally, November 17-23, 1997.
- ¹⁰⁶ Survey of Americans on Gender in the Workplace, sponsored by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University Survey Project, conducted by Chilton Research Services, 804 adults nationally, November 17-23, 1997.
- ¹⁰⁷ Survey of Americans on Gender in the Workplace, sponsored by the Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Harvard University Survey Project, conducted by Chilton Research Services, 804 adults nationally, November 17-23, 1997.
- ¹⁰⁸ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1264 adults nationally, November 5-8, 1998.
- ¹⁰⁹ CBS News Poll, 1558 adults nationwide, December 13-16, 1999.
- ¹¹⁰ The Shell Survey, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.
- ¹¹¹ Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ¹¹² Sponsored by NBC News/Wall Street Journal, conducted by the Hart and Teeter Research Organizations, 2003 adults, December 5-9, 1996.
- ¹¹³ Conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1051 adults nationally, August 4-5, 2000.
- ¹¹⁴ Sponsored by CNN/USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1027 adults nationally, January 13-16, 2000.
- ¹¹⁵ Conducted by CBS News/NYT, 933 white adults, 173 African American adults, December 6-9, 1997.
- ¹¹⁶ Conducted by CBS News/NYT, 933 white adults, 173 African American adults, December 6-9, 1997.
- ¹¹⁷ Sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 985 adults, September 28 – October 10, 1999.
- ¹¹⁸ ABC News/Lifetime Television Poll, 1107 adults nationally, including an oversample of 192 African Americans, October 13-19, 1999.
- ¹¹⁹ Sponsored by Newsweek, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 751 adults nationally, April 16-19, 1999.
- ¹²⁰ Sponsored by Kaiser Family Foundation and the Washington Post, conducted by ICR, 4614 adults, including 2417 Hispanics, June 30 – August 30, 1999.
- ¹²¹ The 1997 Gallup Poll Social Audit on Black/White Relations, 3036 adults nationally, of whom 1269 identified as African American, 1680 as white, January 4 – February 28, 1997.
- ¹²² “Black/White Relations in the U.S.,” conducted by the Gallup Organization, 2006 adults nationally, including 1001 black adults, September 24 – November 16, 1999.
- ¹²³ Conducted by CBS News/NYT, 1438 adults, including 132 African Americans, October 10-13, 1996.
- ¹²⁴ The 1997 Gallup Poll Social Audit on Black/White Relations, 3036 adults nationally, of whom 1269 identified as African American, 1680 as white, January 4 – February 28, 1997.
- ¹²⁵ Sponsored by Kaiser Family Foundation and the Washington Post, conducted by ICR, 4614 adults, including 2417 Hispanics, June 30 – August 30, 1999.
- ¹²⁶ Newsweek Poll, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 505 Hispanic adults nationally, June 25-30, 1999.
- ¹²⁷ 1999 Millennium Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1546 adults nationally, April 6 – May 6, 1999.
- ¹²⁸ Sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 985 adults nationally, September 28 – October 10, 1999.
- ¹²⁹ ABC News/Lifetime Television Poll, 1107 adults nationally, including an oversample of 192 African Americans, October 13-19, 1999.

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- ¹³⁰ Sponsored by CNN/USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1003 adults nationally, June 5-7, 1998.
- ¹³¹ 1999 Millennium Survey, sponsored by the Pew Research Center, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 1546 adults nationally, April 6 – May 6, 1999.
- ¹³² “Black/White Relations in the U.S.,” conducted by the Gallup Organization, 2006 adults nationally, including 1001 black adults, September 24 – November 16, 1999.
- ¹³³ Newsweek Poll, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 751 adults nationwide, including 264 African Americans, April 16-19, 1999.
- ¹³⁴ Newsweek Poll, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 751 adults nationwide, including 264 African Americans, April 16-19, 1999.
- ¹³⁵ Newsweek Poll, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 751 adults nationwide, including 264 African Americans, April 16-19, 1999.
- ¹³⁶ NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Education Survey, conducted by ICR, 1422 adults nationally, June 25 – July 19, 1999.
- ¹³⁷ Sponsored by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 3384 adults nationally, July 7 – September 19, 1999.
- ¹³⁸ Sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, Inc., and the Rockefeller Foundation, conducted by Public Agenda, 800 African American parents and 800 white parents with children in K-12, March 26 – April 17, 1998.
- ¹³⁹ Sponsored by CNN and USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1031 adults, July 16-18, 1999.
- ¹⁴⁰ Sponsored by CNN and USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1031 adults, July 16-18, 1999.
- ¹⁴¹ Conducted by CBS News/NYT, 933 white adults, 173 African American adults, December 6-9, 1997.
- ¹⁴² Conducted by Public Agenda, 800 African American and 800 white parents of K-12 students, March 26 – April 17, 1998.
- ¹⁴³ Sponsored by CNN and USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1031 adults, July 16-18, 1999.
- ¹⁴⁴ Sponsored by CNN and USA Today, conducted by the Gallup Organization, 1031 adults, July 16-18, 1999.
- ¹⁴⁵ Conducted by Public Agenda, 801 parents with children in K-12 public school, September 3-16, 1998.
- ¹⁴⁶ Sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, Inc., and the Rockefeller Foundation, conducted by Public Agenda, 800 African American parents and 800 white parents with children in K-12, all questions were asked of half sample, March 26 – April 17, 1998.
- ¹⁴⁷ Sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, Inc., and the Rockefeller Foundation, conducted by Public Agenda, 800 African American parents and 800 white parents with children in K-12, all questions were asked of half sample, March 26 – April 17, 1998.
- ¹⁴⁸ Conducted by CBS News/NYT, 933 white adults, 173 African American adults, December 6-9, 1997.
- ¹⁴⁹ Wall Street Journal/NBC News Poll, conducted by the polling organizations of Peter Hart and Robert Teeter, 2010 adults nationally, June 14-18, 2000.
- ¹⁵⁰ The Shell Poll, conducted by Peter Hart Research, 1040 women and 413 men, January 7-13, 2000.