

# 2009 Education Next-PEPG Survey of Public Opinion

## Public School Performance Knowledge of Student Performance

1. A 2006 government survey ranked the math skills of 15-year-olds in 29 industrialized countries. What is your best guess of where American 15-year-olds ranked on this test?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) 1-5 (best)	3%	2%	4%	7%		0%
b) 6-10	8	6	5	18		8
c) 11-15	22	21	24	27		13
d) 16-20	31	30	37	30		25
e) 21-25	21	24	15	11		33
f) 26-29 (worst)	16	17	14	6		21

2. What is your best guess as to the percentage of students in U.S. public school who graduate from high school within four years of entering 9th grade?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
Mean	66%	69%	56%	59%		66%

## Grading the Public Schools (Experiment with 3 conditions)

3a. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in the nation as a whole?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) A	1%	1%	1%	1%		1%
b) B	17	17	11	28		26
c) C	57	59	55	49		56
d) D	19	20	23	13		13
e) Fail	6	3	10	8		4

3b. A 2006 government survey ranked the math skills of 15-year-olds in 29 industrialized countries. In this survey, the United States ranked 24th. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in the nation as a whole?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) A	2%	1%	10%	*%		2%
b) B	11	10	4	20		30
c) C	52	50	59	56		45
d) D	25	28	20	15		21
e) Fail	10	11	8	9		2

3c. According to the most recent available data, roughly 75 percent of 9th graders in U.S. public schools graduate from high school within four years. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in the nation as a whole?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) A	2%	1%	3%	4%		2%
b) B	18	19	24	10		36
c) C	56	56	57	62		46
d) D	19	21	9	15		12
e) Fail	5	4	7	9		4

## No Child Left Behind and School Accountability

### No Child Left Behind (Experiment with 2 conditions)

4a. As you may know, the No Child Left Behind Act requires states to set standards in math and reading and to test students each year to determine whether schools are making adequate progress, and to intervene when they are not. This year, Congress is deciding whether to renew the No Child Left Behind Act. What do you think Congress should do? Should it...

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Renew the legislation as is	21%	18%	23%	32%	8%
b) Renew with minimal changes	28	28	27	26	15
c) Renew with major changes	30	29	34	26	38
d) Not renew at all	22	25	16	16	38

4b. As you may know, federal legislation requires states to set standards in math and reading and to test students each year to determine whether schools are making adequate progress, and to intervene when they are not. This year, Congress is deciding whether to renew this federal legislation. What do you think Congress should do? Should it...

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Renew the legislation as is	25%	23%	37%	31%	8%
b) Renew with minimal changes	35	32	42	45	17
c) Renew with major changes	28	31	19	17	47
d) Not renew at all	12	15	2	6	27

## Common Standards

5. For holding schools accountable, should all state governments adopt the same set of educational standards and give the same tests in math, science and reading? Or do you think that there should be different standards and tests in different states?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) One test and standard for all students	72%	75%	71%	65%	62%
b) Different tests and standards in different states	19	16	25	28	23
c) No national or state tests should be given	9	10	4	7	15

## State Tests

6\*. In your state, students in public schools regularly take the [state test]. Do you think the results from these tests provide good information about the quality of the school in your community?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Excellent information	6%	5%	12%	8%	2%
b) Good information	31	31	32	31	23
c) Fair information	34	34	26	39	37
d) Poor information	15	15	11	12	30
e) No opinion	14	14	19	10	8

\*Note: Each respondent was provided with the name of the test used for accountability purposes in his or her state.

## Charter Schools, Vouchers and Tax Credits

### Charter School (Experiment with 3 conditions)

7a. Many states permit the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but are not managed by the local school board. These schools are expected to meet promised objectives, but are exempt from many state regulations. Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely support	14%	14%	14%	17%	14%
b) Somewhat support	25	23	35	23	23
c) Neither support nor oppose	44	43	42	52	32
d) Somewhat oppose	10	11	7	5	21
e) Completely oppose	7	9	2	3	10

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7b. Many states permit the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but are not managed by the local school board. These schools are expected to meet promised objectives, but are exempt from many state regulations. President Barack Obama has expressed support for charter schools. What do you think? Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?

	Racial/Ethnic Identity				
	National	White	African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely support	13%	10%	23%	20%	11%
b) Somewhat support	37	38	30	36	32
c) Neither support nor oppose	37	39	32	34	28
d) Somewhat oppose	8	9	5	6	19
e) Completely oppose	6	4	10	5	10

7c. Many states permit the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but are not managed by the local school board. These schools are expected to meet promised objectives, but are exempt from many state regulations. A recent study presents evidence that students learn more in charter schools than in public schools. What do you think? Do you support or oppose the formation of charter schools?

	Racial/Ethnic Identity				
	National	White	African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely support	24%	23%	37%	20%	22%
b) Somewhat support	29	31	16	25	30
c) Neither support nor oppose	37	35	36	50	21
d) Somewhat oppose	6	6	10	2	14
e) Completely oppose	5	5	1	4	12

### Vouchers (Experiment with 4 conditions)

8a. A proposal has been made that would use government funds to help pay the tuition of low-income students whose families would like them to attend private schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

	Racial/Ethnic Identity				
	National	White	African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely support	14%	7%	34%	32%	12%
b) Somewhat support	21	21	23	20	18
c) Neither support nor oppose	24	24	24	17	13
d) Somewhat oppose	21	23	12	20	24
e) Completely oppose	21	26	7	11	34

8b. A proposal has been made that would use government funds to help pay the tuition of low-income students whose families would like them to attend private schools. President Barack Obama has expressed opposition to such a proposal. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

	Racial/Ethnic Identity				
	National	White	African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely support	12%	8%	26%	21%	6%
b) Somewhat support	12	11	19	14	13
c) Neither support nor oppose	23	20	22	43	11
d) Somewhat oppose	21	24	17	6	27
e) Completely oppose	31	37	16	16	42

8c. A proposal has been made that would use government funds to help pay the tuition of low-income students whose families would like them to attend private schools. A recent study presents evidence that students learn no more in private schools than in public schools. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

	Racial/Ethnic Identity				
	National	White	African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely support	6%	3%	17%	13%	12%
b) Somewhat support	19	18	32	21	10
c) Neither support nor oppose	27	26	32	27	15
d) Somewhat oppose	22	23	8	28	23
e) Completely oppose	26	31	11	11	40

8d. A proposal has been made that would give low-income families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private schools instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely support	14%	10%	21%	23%		4%
b) Somewhat support	26	22	44	24		22
c) Neither support nor oppose	27	27	24	22		9
d) Somewhat oppose	15	18	4	11		28
e) Completely oppose	19	23	7	20		37

### Tax Credits (Experiment with 2 conditions)

9a. A proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for educational expenses (fees, supplies, computers, and tuition) to low- and moderate-income parents who send their children to public and private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely favor	22%	18%	33%	32%		19%
b) Somewhat favor	38	39	36	32		38
c) Neither favor nor oppose	24	26	21	21		18
d) Somewhat oppose	9	9	7	8		15
e) Completely oppose	6	7	2	7		10

9b. A proposal has been made to offer a tax credit for individual and corporate donations that pay for scholarships to help low-income parents send their children to private schools. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely favor	15%	9%	35%	22%		18%
b) Somewhat favor	31	33	32	25		30
c) Neither favor nor oppose	27	24	30	34		17
d) Somewhat oppose	11	13	1	13		14
e) Completely oppose	16	21	3	7		21

## School Spending

### School Spending (Experiment with 2 conditions)

10a. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Greatly increase	9%	5%	21%	15%		16%
b) Increase	37	34	61	41		39
c) Stay about the same	46	52	17	39		40
d) Decrease	7	8	1	5		3
e) Greatly decrease	2	1	0	*		1

10b\*. According to the most recent information available, in your district [amount] is being spent each year per child attending public schools. Do you think that government funding for public schools in your district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Greatly increase	7%	6%	14%	7%		16%
b) Increase	31	28	34	36		36
c) Stay about the same	53	55	50	45		40
d) Decrease	8	9	2	9		7
e) Greatly decrease	2	3	0	2		2

\*Note: Each respondent was provided with the most recent available information on per pupil spending in his or her school district.

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11. If more money were spent on public schools in your district, how confident are you that students would learn more?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Very confident	12%	8%	30%	19%		18%
b) Somewhat confident	41	39	47	47		49
c) Not very confident	33	37	19	28		23
d) Not confident at all	13	16	3	6		10

12\*. Given the current economic climate, many budgets analysts expect that state and local governments will have to cut spending. As a percentage of their current budgets, in what two areas should the largest cuts should be made?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Medical services	10%	8%	8%	17%		11%
b) Elementary and secondary education	10	10	9	7		4
c) Colleges and universities	53	59	35	38		48
d) Police and prisons	30	23	46	46		27
e) Transportation	77	76	83	75		78
f) Aid to the poor	23	24	19	17		31

\*Note: Results sum to 200% because respondents selected two areas.

## Teacher Pay and Tenure

### Teacher Salaries (Experiment with 2 conditions)

13. Do you think that teacher salaries in your state should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Greatly increase	11%	9%	20%	15%		29%
b) Increase	45	42	55	56		48
c) Stay about the same	40	45	25	26		19
d) Decrease	4	5	1	3		2
e) Greatly decrease	0	0	*	*		2

14\*. In your state, teachers are paid an average annual salary of [amount]. Do you think that these teacher salaries should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Greatly increase	8%	5%	21%	13%		26%
b) Increase	32	32	36	37		45
c) Stay about the same	53	56	39	45		26
d) Decrease	5	7	1	2		1
e) Greatly decrease	1	1	2	3		2

\*Note: Each respondent was provided with the latest available information on average teacher salaries in his or her state.

### Merit Pay (Experiment with 3 conditions)

15a. Do you favor or oppose basing a teacher's salary, in part, on his or her students' academic progress on state tests?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely favor	13%	14%	12%	12%		0%
b) Somewhat favor	30	31	20	39		12
c) Neither favor nor oppose	30	26	44	33		18
d) Somewhat oppose	15	15	15	10		27
e) Completely oppose	12	15	9	6		43

15b. President Barack Obama has expressed support for the policy of basing teachers' salaries, in part, on their students' academic progress on tests? What do you think of this policy?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	16%	13%	26%	26%	6%
b) Somewhat favor	40	43	29	29	25
c) Neither favor nor oppose	22	21	29	31	8
d) Somewhat oppose	13	13	16	12	21
e) Completely oppose	8	11	1	2	40

15c. A recent study presents evidence that students learn more when their teachers are paid, in part, according to their academic progress on tests? What do you think of this policy?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	14%	10%	34%	14%	4%
b) Somewhat favor	35	40	26	24	14
c) Neither favor nor oppose	28	25	33	35	13
d) Somewhat oppose	11	12	4	13	29
e) Completely oppose	12	13	3	14	40

## Teacher Tenure

16. Teachers with tenure cannot be dismissed unless a school district follows detailed procedures. Some say that tenure protects teachers from being fired for arbitrary reasons. Others say that it makes it too difficult to replace ineffective teachers. We want to know what you think of tenure. Do you favor or oppose offering tenure to teachers?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	6%	4%	15%	10%	20%
b) Somewhat favor	19	19	24	18	33
c) Neither favor nor oppose	30	26	41	44	16
d) Somewhat oppose	30	35	16	21	23
e) Completely oppose	15	17	4	8	8

17. Some have proposed offering teachers a higher salary in exchange for giving up tenure. What do you think of this proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	6%	4%	7%	12%	9%
b) Somewhat favor	24	25	29	17	24
c) Neither favor nor oppose	47	46	53	52	32
d) Somewhat oppose	12	14	7	11	19
e) Completely oppose	11	12	4	8	17

18. Another proposal has been made that would require teachers to demonstrate that their students are making adequate progress on state tests in order to receive tenure. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	13%	11%	15%	20%	5%
b) Somewhat favor	38	39	39	34	19
c) Neither favor nor oppose	29	28	33	35	18
d) Somewhat oppose	12	13	11	6	24
e) Completely oppose	8	10	2	4	34

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### Virtual, Home, and Single-Sex Schooling

#### Virtual Schooling (Experiment with 2 conditions)

19a. A proposal has been made to allow middle school students to receive credit for state-approved courses taken entirely over the internet. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	8%	6%	13%	20%	6%
b) Somewhat favor	27	29	27	20	22
c) Neither favor nor oppose	30	27	37	33	23
d) Somewhat oppose	21	24	16	14	27
e) Completely oppose	13	15	7	12	22

19b. A proposal has been made to allow high school students to receive credit for state-approved courses taken entirely over the internet. Would you favor or oppose such a proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Completely favor	14%	12%	25%	16%	14%
b) Somewhat favor	28	29	19	29	31
c) Neither favor nor oppose	28	26	37	33	19
d) Somewhat oppose	19	22	14	11	21
e) Completely oppose	10	11	5	10	17

#### Virtual Schooling (Experiment with 3 conditions)

20a. Would you be willing to have a child of yours go through high school taking some academic courses over the internet?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Very willing	17%	17%	18%	18%	15%
b) Somewhat willing	34	36	33	32	38
c) Neither willing nor unwilling	22	22	18	27	8
d) Somewhat unwilling	16	16	14	16	20
e) Very unwilling	11	9	17	7	20

20b. Would you be willing to have a child of yours go through high school taking most academic courses over the internet?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Very willing	7%	5%	6%	14%	8%
b) Somewhat willing	21	21	16	27	20
c) Neither willing nor unwilling	19	16	28	26	9
d) Somewhat unwilling	26	29	26	13	19
e) Very unwilling	27	29	24	20	44

20c. Would you be willing to have a child of yours go through high school taking some elective courses over the internet?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		
			African American	Hispanic	Public School Teachers
a) Very willing	19%	17%	24%	15%	17%
b) Somewhat willing	33	35	28	25	48
c) Neither willing nor unwilling	21	20	24	31	12
d) Somewhat unwilling	14	15	18	11	16
e) Very unwilling	12	13	6	18	8

21. Do you know any students who have taken a course entirely over the internet for middle or high school credit?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Yes	8%	8%	8%	9%	26%	
b) No	92	92	92	91	74	

## Home Schooling

22. Rather than send them to a school, some parents prefer to educate their children at home. Do you know any family that currently home schools its child?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Yes	38%	44%	19%	26%	61%	
b) No	62	56	81	74	39	

## Single-Sex Schooling

23. Some people have proposed that public school districts offer parents the option of sending their child to an all-boys or all-girls school? What do you think about this proposal?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely support	12%	12%	16%	12%	17%	
b) Somewhat support	22	22	20	27	28	
c) Neither support nor oppose	36	36	43	35	28	
d) Somewhat oppose	15	16	12	14	16	
e) Completely oppose	14	15	10	13	12	

24. Would you consider sending your own child to an all-boys or all-girls school?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Definitely would consider	15%	14%	15%	17%	19%	
b) Probably would consider	30	29	34	32	32	
c) Probably would not consider	35	36	34	26	29	
d) Definitely would not consider	21	21	18	25	21	

## School Governance

### Mayoral Control (Experiment with 2 conditions)

25a. In some communities that have a large percentage of low-performing public school students, the mayors have taken control over the entire public school system to attempt to correct the situation. If the public schools in your community had a large percentage of low-performing students, would you favor or oppose having the mayor take control over the schools?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely favor	10%	7%	11%	17%	6%	
b) Somewhat favor	22	23	23	16	11	
c) Neither favor nor oppose	32	30	38	32	22	
d) Somewhat oppose	20	21	18	15	21	
e) Completely oppose	16	18	10	19	40	

25b. Would you favor or oppose having the mayor take control over the public schools in your community?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity			Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic		
a) Completely favor	3%	2%	5%	6%	0%	
b) Somewhat favor	7	7	9	9	4	
c) Neither favor nor oppose	34	30	43	48	21	
d) Somewhat oppose	22	23	19	16	27	
e) Completely oppose	34	38	23	21	48	

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#### School Board Elections

26. To the best of your knowledge, are members of your local school board elected or appointed by another public official such as a mayor?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic	
a) Elected	81%	85%	71%	75%	90%
b) Appointed	19	15	29	25	10

27\*. Many school board elections are held at a time different from other elections; and very little information is easily available about the candidates in most school board elections. As a result, only a small fraction of the American public tends to vote in these elections. Do you remember for sure whether you voted in the last school board election?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic	
a) Voted	38%	41%	31%	28%	59%
b) Did not vote	35	33	39	38	26
c) Ineligible	3	2	1	5	2
d) Don't know, can't remember	24	23	29	28	12

\*Note: Limited to respondents who answered "Elected" to question 27.

#### Teacher Unions

28. Some people say that teacher unions are a stumbling block to school reform? Others say that unions fight for better schools and better teachers. What do you think? Do you think teacher unions have a generally positive effect on the schools in your community, or do you think they have a generally negative effect?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic	
a) Completely positive	7%	6%	13%	10%	17%
b) Somewhat positive	21	19	29	20	31
c) Neither positive nor negative	42	38	49	53	28
d) Somewhat negative	20	23	8	12	17
e) Completely negative	11	14	1	5	7

#### Attention to Education

29. How much attention do you pay to issues involving education?

	National	White	Racial/Ethnic Identity		Public School Teachers
			African American	Hispanic	
a) A great deal	14%	11%	29%	16%	59%
b) Quite a bit	24	24	22	26	26
c) Some	42	45	30	37	10
d) Very little	16	16	14	17	4
e) None	5	4	4	5	1