

TRENDS & TUDES

Keeping you connected to today's youth audience

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EDITORIAL

Our Take On It



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One of the biggest changes in education since 1984 is the role of computers and the Internet in schools and in all aspects of students' and teachers' lives. Mention the word "computer" in 1984 and the picture that would come to mind was likely a mainframe that required its own room and "World Wide Web" would likely evoke the image of some monster spider run amok. To put this into context, Apple only just introduced the first Macintosh in 1984 and the Internet was not being used by the public until the 1990's.

In schools, increasing access to computers and the Internet were a large focus of the mid- to late- 1990's. In 1994, 35% of public schools had Internet access. By the fall 2005, nearly 100% of public schools had access to the Internet, a level that

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A Generation of Change in American Public Education

A big part of understanding kids and teens is understanding their lives as students. Young people spend a large portion of their lives in schools and the influence of their educational experience extends beyond the curriculum itself; students are influenced by their teachers, the principal, their fellow students and by the school's facilities and infrastructure. Since 1984, the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* has provided important insights into the state of American public education and the teaching profession. The Survey, conducted annually by Harris Interactive since the series' inception, gives voice to teachers and other school stakeholders and has chronicled key issues in education. This year's report, *Past, Present and Future*, takes advantage of the long standing history of the Survey to examine how teaching and education has changed in the past 25 years, document current issues of concern and explore expectations for the future.

Twenty-five years ago, teachers held clear views about the future of education, but most felt their voices were not adequately heard. Teachers provided their perspectives on policies that in 1984 were not widely instituted, but that are part of the fabric of public education today. In 1984, nine in ten teachers (87%) felt that establishing minimum competency tests for students at predetermined grade levels



would have a positive effect on education. Six in ten teachers (61%) were willing to be measured on the basis of standardized tests that measured the improvement in skills of the students in their entire school compared to other schools in their state. Over half (55%) favored increased federal funding and participation. Perhaps most tellingly, nearly three-quarters (72%) of teachers did not believe that their voices had been adequately heard in the debate about education.

In addition, the majority of teachers expressed concern about the state of the teaching profession. In 1984, fewer than half of teachers: were very satisfied with teaching as a career (40%); strongly agreed that they were usually recognized for good performance (33%); agreed that they felt respected in today's society (47%); or agreed that their job allowed them the opportunity to earn a decent

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never communicate online with other teachers outside of their district (e.g. email, instant message, or blog). Web 2.0 has not yet come to the teaching profession. Nearly three-quarters of teachers (72%) have never read or written a blog about teaching and 85% of teachers have never participated in a professionally-oriented online community or social networking site.

And when we ask the schools' tech "experts" – that is, students themselves, they indicate that the digital world is an area in need of attention in their education. Students' ratings of their teachers' ability to teach about computers and the Internet is among the lowest of any subject or skill category. One-quarter (26%) rate their teachers fair or poor in preparing them in this area.

What is fascinating to me in discussions about technology and education over the years is the many roles it plays. It serves as a measurement of resources and equipment and thus is another way to highlight gaps between low income schools and others. It can be the focus of a specialized field of study or as part of the necessary skills for everyday life. Interestingly, technology can also highlight differences in pedagogical approaches and what is the role of K-12 education – preparing students for life skills, for college, or to become lifelong learners. And fundamentally, how do the different aspects of digital technology (near instantaneous access to information, multiple connections to people across the globe and the ability to multitask to name a few) influence the way students think and learn?

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being a teacher as an occupation of very great prestige than did in 1982 (52% vs. 28%) – the greatest increase among over a dozen professions¹. Given these findings, it is perhaps not surprising that many more teachers today would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching (75% vs. 45%).



quality of education. The number of teachers who rate the academic standards in their school as excellent has doubled from 26% in 1984 to 53% in 2008. Today, twice as many teachers rate the availability of materials and supplies as excellent compared to 1984 (44% vs. 22%). Furthermore, nine in ten teachers (89%) rate their school curriculum as excellent or good in 2008, compared to eight in ten teachers (81%) who said it was excellent or good in 1984.

Improvements Among Students and Families

Teachers also see students as better prepared. More teachers report that at least three-fourths of their students arrive at school prepared to learn at their grade level, (54%, compared to 44% in 1992). Teachers (77%) and principals (78%) report that their schools do an excellent or good job of preparing students for college

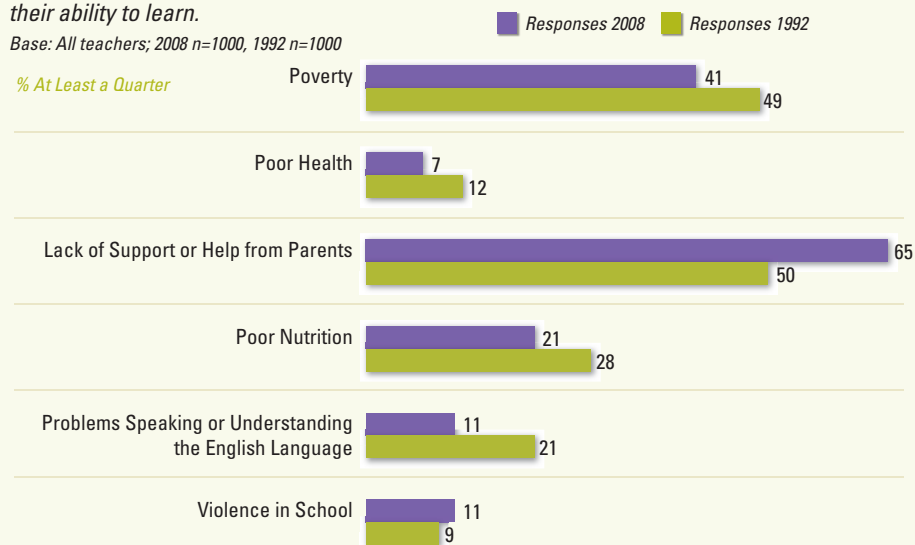
Academic Standards and Curriculum Are Stronger

A number of measures in the MetLife Survey indicate improvements in the

Problems May Hinder Student Education

For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn.

Base: All teachers; 2008 n=1000, 1992 n=1000



Source: The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future

Team Spotlight

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Steve heads up the Youth and Kids practice in the United Kingdom with a special focus on technology, media and telecom. Steve has held positions in qualitative and quantitative research at TNS and RDSi Research, brand planning at Logistix Kids and marketing consultancy at Catalyst Marketing Consultants during his 10 year career. He has conducted research in most of the major markets around the world and has worked across various sectors for youth and kids oriented clients as diverse as Nestle Worldwide, Burger King and Disney. Steve has written papers and presented seminars about generational perspectives and enjoys bringing much of the theory of Generation Y to life for clients in the UK. Steve holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Studies.

http://www.harrisinteractive.com/europe/pubs/hi_trendstudes_uk_2009_v1.pdf

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- and students want to go. Nearly three-quarters of students (73%) think it is very likely that they will go to college, a sizable increase since 1988 when 58% said that they were very likely to go to college.

Improvements have also been seen in relations between teachers and students. More students today compared to 1988 feel they get personal attention from their teacher most or all of the time (42% vs. 25%), and fewer students today than in 1988 report hardly ever receiving attention (7% vs. 20%). Perhaps it is not a coincidence that there has been a parallel increase in trust between teachers and students. In the 2000 MetLife Survey, 39% of 7th – 12th graders indicated that they trust their teachers only a little or not at all. Today, this has decreased to 28%.



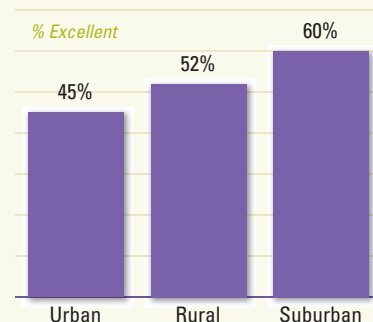
Challenges Remain

Despite the massive improvements that have taken place, there are significant challenges for the educational system, including problems that have existed since 1984 and earlier coupled with new challenges. Half of teachers report that lack of support or help from parents (50%) and poverty (49%) are problems that hinder learning for at least a quarter of their students. The number of teachers that report that poverty is a challenge has increased since 1992 (49% vs. 41%). Poor nutrition (21% vs. 28%) and problems speaking or understanding the English language (11% vs. 21%) are also challenges

Suburban Schools Rate Higher According to Teachers

How would you rate your school on academic standards?

Base: All Teachers; n=1000



Source: The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future

affecting at least a quarter of students that more teachers report today than did in 1992.

Teachers in urban schools rate problems as more severe than do suburban and rural teachers in most respects: in the resources they are given, in the support students receive from parents, and in the preparedness levels their students have when they enter their classes. Teachers in urban schools are less likely than those in rural or suburban schools to rate academic standards in their school as excellent (45% vs. 52% vs. 60%). Lower numbers of urban teachers than suburban teachers rate their students' skills as excellent or good in major subject and skill areas, including reading (61% vs. 86%), writing (55% vs. 68%), math (53% vs. 76%), science (47% vs. 62%) and humanities (37% vs. 60%). Six in ten (59%) teachers in urban schools say that more than a quarter of their students come to school not fully

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Recent Research for Public Release

O, The Oprah Magazine and Seventeen Magazine reveal the results of the Mother-Daughter Sex talk survey



April 9, 2009 (New York, NY) – It's one of the most sensitive – and important – conversations between mother and daughter: The Sex Talk. But how honest and effective are these heart-to-hearts? *O, The Oprah Magazine* and *Seventeen* magazine partnered for the first of its kind survey to investigate the communication gap between mothers and daughters on the hottest of hot-button topics, with results that reveal what girls and moms are – and aren't – talking about.

Find out more, and see the results here:

www.oprah.com/article/omagazine/200905-omag-sex-survey

www.seventeen.com/fun-stuff/17-buzz/seventeen-magazine-oprah

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prepared to learn at their grade level, compared to 46% of rural teachers and 35% of suburban teachers.

Looking to the Future. Global Awareness

In an increasingly global community, students' knowledge of other nations and cultures is a subject area singled out by teachers and students alike as needing improvement. One-third of teachers (34%) rate their students' knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues as excellent or good. This contrasts with three-quarters of teachers (77%) who rate their students' reading skills this high and 69% of teachers who say their students' math skills are excellent or good. Students themselves indicate that they feel less than prepared in this area. Students rate their teachers' ability to prepare them about knowing about other nations and cultures lowest among major subject areas, including 32% who rate their teachers fair or poor.



During the past 25 years since the first *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*, the education landscape has changed in ways that would have been hard to predict in 1984. Computers and the Internet have entered teaching and classrooms, and dialogue is focused on accountability, testing and choice. We look forward to seeing what the next 25 years will bring and hope the voices of teachers and students will continue to be included in efforts to improve education in America.

Interested in learning more?

Read the full report at: www.metlife.com/teachersurvey The entire survey series is also available online at the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) www.eric.ed.gov

Join the conversation!

Check out our blog, with postings and comments on the Survey: www.overtthewire.typepad.com/my_weblog/education/

Contact Us

To make suggestions regarding this newsletter, or to discuss a business issue involving youth or the people and issues that influence today's youth, please contact us at **877.919.4765** or info@harrisinteractive.com

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