



STATE OF AMERICA'S
SCHOOLS

THE PATH TO WINNING AGAIN IN EDUCATION

GALLUP®

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The *State of America's Schools: The Path to Winning Again in Education* report highlights findings from Gallup's research in education. Citing data from numerous sources — from the largest annual survey of fifth- to 12th-graders in the U.S., to Gallup's decades-long study of exceptional teachers and principals — the report contains a wealth of knowledge. This information can help educators prepare all students to learn by elevating their sense of hope for the future and increasing their emotional investment in the education process. The report provides anyone concerned about the future of America's schools with insights about what leaders can do to improve engagement and student achievement in their schools.

FROM GALLUP'S VICE CHAIR OF EDUCATION



Providing every child in the U.S. with a high-quality education is more important than ever as the global competition for good jobs increases. From Gallup's *State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement Insights for U.S. Business Leaders* report released in 2013, we know that we need more engaged, talented workers in this country. The state and fate of the American workplace ultimately depend on what our schools produce. Young Americans' ability to find good jobs drives economic activity *and* helps determine their quality of life. Long-term unemployment shreds an individual's emotional well-being and sense of self-worth.

This report on the state of American schools highlights the need to give the U.S. a sustainable economic advantage by helping young people find jobs that make the most of their strengths. We need ways to tap the human talent and energy that exist in every corner of our society.

Right now, our schools are not set up to match students' talents with college and career paths they find fulfilling and on which they excel. The current focus on standardized testing assumes that all students should have a similar educational experience. We leave little time for students to figure out what they love to do and where their greatest talents lie. We waste time and talent.

But talented, engaged teachers and principals can guide students to brighter futures. Gallup's decades of research on teacher talent reveal that the best educators cultivate their students' strengths, learn about their hopes and dreams, and constantly let them know that educational goals will help them achieve those aspirations. Dr. Don Clifton, former Gallup chairman, brought this mission to

Gallup when the company began to identify teacher talent in the early 1970s: “Our greatest contribution is to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student, every day, learns and grows and feels like a real human being.”

Excellent teachers, supported by gifted and visionary school leaders, keep students engaged in the learning process and hopeful about their own futures — two of the crucial outcomes the Gallup Student Poll measures. More than 600,000 students took this brief, simple survey in 2013. One of the key findings is that students who strongly agreed that their school is committed to building students’ strengths *and* that they have a teacher who makes them excited about the future are almost 30 times as likely to be engaged learners as their peers who strongly disagreed with both statements.

What if schools prioritized these principles of talent exploration and engagement in the learning process?

An education that makes students hopeful and prepared to find or create good jobs isn’t just important to America’s future — it should be a fundamental right of every student in the country.

Connie Rath, Ed.D.



Vice Chair, Gallup Education

Connie Rath, Ed.D., is Vice Chair of Gallup Education. Dr. Rath leads Gallup’s Education Practice, which serves school districts, states, and institutions of higher education. Under her leadership, Gallup helps K-12 school districts to facilitate student success through selection, strengths development, and measurement. Prior to assuming her current role, Dr. Rath managed Gallup’s selection and development services and led Gallup’s human resources efforts for 20 years. She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her doctorate in education and leadership from the University of Southern California.

6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gallup's research on student achievement demonstrates the importance of "human" elements such as self-discovery and emotional engagement in the learning process. Failing to focus on these fundamental aspects of human nature will leave U.S. schools struggling to help students achieve their full potential.

10 INTRODUCTION

Americans have lost faith that increasing testing is helping their local schools. It's time for a new approach to improving student achievement.

12 2013 GALLUP STUDENT POLL: ONE IN THREE PARTICIPANTS ARE "SUCCESS-READY"

Just 33% of the more than 600,000 students who participated in the 2013 Gallup Student Poll scored highly on all three factors linked to success at school and beyond: hope, engagement, and well-being.

16 EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT: THE HEARTBEAT OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS

Gallup studies have revealed a powerful link between students' levels of engagement with the learning process and their academic achievement.

20 WANT TO HELP STUDENTS RACE TO THE TOP? TEACH THEM TO START WITH THEIR STRENGTHS

Less than half of students strongly agree that they get to do what they do best every day, leading to boredom and frustration as their greatest talents go undeveloped.

22 U.S. SCHOOLS MUST ATTRACT AND RETAIN — RATHER THAN HINDER — TEACHER TALENT

Within the first five years on the job, between 40% and 50% of teachers leave the profession. A lack of autonomy needed to effectively use their talents plays a significant role in teacher turnover rates.



26 NEARLY 70% OF K-12 TEACHERS ARE NOT ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK

Teachers compare favorably to other U.S. workers in agreeing that they are able to do what they do best every day — but they are last among 12 occupational groups studied when it comes to feeling their opinions count at work.

30 MANY AMERICANS DOUBT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ARE PREPARED FOR COLLEGE OR WORK

Just 29% of Americans agree that the country's high school graduates are ready for college, and 17% say graduates are prepared to join the labor force.

33 GREAT PRINCIPALS FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AMONG TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS

Just as exceptional teachers help students stay emotionally invested in the learning process, great principals provide the support that teachers and other staff members need to achieve high levels of performance.

36 BEYOND THE PRINCIPAL: U.S. EDUCATION SYSTEM NEEDS VISIONARY LEADERS

Many U.S. school districts struggle with a lack of adequate school board leadership; 37% of superintendents strongly agree that their districts are well-governed at the board level.

39 BUILDING A WORKFORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Young adults who say they had frequent opportunities in their last year of school to develop real-world problem-solving skills are about twice as likely as those who disagree to report higher-quality work lives.

42 A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ALL STUDENTS IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

Securing three simple rights for students can change the trajectory of their lives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thirty years after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the landmark report that concluded the country's schools were failing and touched off a series of massive reform efforts, fears that the U.S. education system is outdated remain widespread. A 2013 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll found that fewer than three in 10 Americans feel high school graduates are prepared for college, and that fewer than two in 10 say graduates are ready to enter the labor force.

Recent years have seen growing concern among U.S. employers that schools in America are not adequately equipping students with “21st-century skills” — real-world problem-solving, critical thinking, and skilled communication. Gallup's 2013 research with Microsoft Partners in Learning and the Pearson Foundation supports the importance of developing such skills in school, as young adults who say they had opportunities to develop such skills report higher-quality work lives.

This report presents results from Gallup's research on the conditions that lead to high-quality learning environments and promote student achievement. It features several data sources, including results from the 2013 Gallup Student Poll, administered to more than 600,000 students in grades 5 through 12, as well as larger-scale studies on the central role of emotional engagement in the learning process.

Through decades of research on the characteristics of high-performing teachers, principals, and schools, Gallup has gained unparalleled expertise on the “human” elements — including a focus on strengths development and engagement in the classroom — that drive student success. These elements are often overlooked in the effort to “fix” America's education system, but there is growing recognition that unless U.S. schools can better align learning strategies and objectives with fundamental aspects of human nature, they will always struggle to help students achieve their full potential.

SOME OF GALLUP'S MOST IMPORTANT FINDINGS INCLUDE:



Among more than 600,000 Gallup Student Poll participants in 2013, one-third were found to be “success-ready.”

- In 2013, 33% of the students in grades 5 through 12 who took the Gallup Student Poll (GSP) were classified as “success-ready.” These students scored highly on all three dimensions that the assessment measures: hope, engagement, and well-being.
- The GSP’s hope dimension addresses students’ belief that they can — and will — succeed at school and beyond, making them more likely to bring positive energy and creativity to the learning process. The 2013 results found that 54% of students surveyed are hopeful, while 32% are “stuck” and 14% feel discouraged about the future.
- Students’ emotional engagement at school is the noncognitive measure most directly related to academic achievement. The 2013 GSP results indicated that 55% of students are engaged in the learning process, while 28% are “not engaged” — i.e., mentally checked out — and 17% are “actively disengaged,” feeling negatively about school and likely to spread that negativity.
- The GSP’s well-being questions gauge how students evaluate their lives and the extent to which they report positive daily experiences. The 2013 GSP found that 66% of participants fall into the highest well-being category, “thriving,” while 32% are “struggling” and 2% are “suffering.”



Hope and engagement predict students’ academic achievement.

- A 2010 Gallup study of 148 schools in a large urban school district found that students’ average levels of hope and engagement were significant predictors of academic achievement.
- In 2009, Gallup conducted an in-depth study of more than 78,000 students in 160 schools across eight states and found that a one-percentage-point increase in a school’s average student engagement score was associated with a six-point increase in reading achievement and an eight-point increase in math achievement.



Student engagement is strongly related to strengths development and teacher performance.

- The 2013 GSP found that participants who strongly agree with these two statements are 30 times as likely to be engaged at school as those who strongly disagree:
 1. “My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.”
 2. “I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.”
- A 2009 Gallup study also found that teachers’ engagement levels are directly related to those of their students — and thereby to student achievement outcomes.



Schools must improve their ability to attract and engage talented teachers.

- Gallup has studied the characteristics of exceptional teachers for four decades. These teachers’ most consistent common attributes include:
 - 1) having a strong achievement drive; 2) balancing classroom structure and planning; and 3) building strong relationships with students and parents.
- Retaining great teachers means ensuring they have a voice in school-level decisions that affect them, and that they are not subject to unrealistic expectations. Gallup’s 2012 Daily tracking research found that K-12 teachers are the least likely among 12 occupational groups studied to agree that, “At work, my opinions seem to count.” Further, 46% of K-12 teachers report high daily stress.
- Less than one-third of K-12 teachers (31%) are engaged in their jobs. Teachers’ average engagement level drops significantly in their first few years on the job, a likely factor in low retention rates among new teachers.



Talented principals are crucial to building engaging learning environments.

- A 2012 Gallup study involving principals who had taken Gallup’s PrincipalInsight, a talent assessment based on years of studying outstanding principals, found that schools that hired principals with high PrincipalInsight scores had teachers who were 2.6 times more likely to have above-average teacher engagement scores.
- The engagement item most clearly related to principal talent is “In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.”
- Gallup’s research on highly effective principals has identified a set of common attributes:
 - 1) a strong determination to overcome adversity in achieving performance outcomes; 2) an ability to maintain order and accountability in their schools; and 3) a talent for building great relationships with teachers, students and parents.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TO SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Measure the psychological factors affecting students' motivation. Understanding and measuring the emotional underpinnings of students' performance can open up new strategies for raising achievement levels. The three dimensions assessed by the Gallup Student Poll — hope, engagement, and well-being — offer important insights into factors that can fuel or detract from students' motivation.

Create a strengths-based strategy for personalizing students' education plans. Leaders of schools that focus on students' ability to discover and develop their strengths find ways to appeal to student interests during the school week. Some schools offer numerous after-school activities and clubs, while others provide work experience at school or in the community. School districts should expand on these efforts by ensuring that students and educators know their strengths and have plans to put them to use. Students should have strengths advisers, clear goals, and access to various online educational resources and experiences that complement their unique strengths.

Take three steps to improve teacher engagement. To boost the overall engagement level of teachers in their schools, principals are advised to: 1) Ask teachers important questions about curriculum, pedagogy, and schedules, and incorporate their feedback into the decision-making process; 2) Partner their most engaged administrators and teachers with new teachers; and 3) Remove the most disengaged teachers from the classroom for a brief period, help them invest in what they do best with continuing education, and eliminate major barriers to their engagement.

Recognize the importance of teachers' ability to connect with students to help them envision their futures. Young Americans who say they had teachers who “cared about my problems and feelings” and who “knew about my hopes and dreams” are much more likely to have experienced 21st-century skills development while in school, and therefore more likely to have higher-quality work lives.

Develop a talent-based leadership pipeline. Given the pivotal role of principals and other school leaders in engaging teachers and leading their schools to higher achievement levels, school districts should build leadership pipelines for recruiting and filling roles based on talent. Hiring decisions that are reactive rather than intentional leave schools vulnerable to the pitfalls that come with a poor leadership fit.

Help prepare the next generation of American entrepreneurs. To meet the country's need for job creation and economic growth, the nation's schools must build alternative pathways through the education system that identify and develop entrepreneurial talent in the same way they identify and develop talent in academic areas. **G**

INTRODUCTION

Results from the OECD's 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment, released in December 2013, revealed that U.S. students' performance remained flat compared with previous years, even as students' scores in several other countries improved. The U.S. scores were met with the usual round of hand-wringing as analysts and policymakers reiterated now-familiar concerns that the U.S. risks becoming less economically competitive if something is not done to "fix" the country's schools.

In fact, the case for fundamental changes to how the U.S. measures educational effectiveness has become virtually impossible to ignore. Employers and educators alike are increasingly concerned that too many students graduate without the skills most relevant to 21st-century jobs, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. Such skills require giving teachers more latitude to tailor instructional content and techniques in ways that fully engage students in the learning process.

Unwillingness to adapt to changing workforce needs may force the U.S. education system to play catch-up with other countries that are more successfully supporting job growth and economic productivity in their schools. A 2012 report by Pearson and the Economist Intelligence Unit rated education systems in 40 developed countries according to various educational and socio-economic outcomes, including national unemployment rates and GDP. Finland, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan held the top spots, while the U.S. ranked 17th. Leading countries maintain a "culture" of education, said Pearson's chief education adviser, and they afford teachers a high status to help attract top talent to the profession.

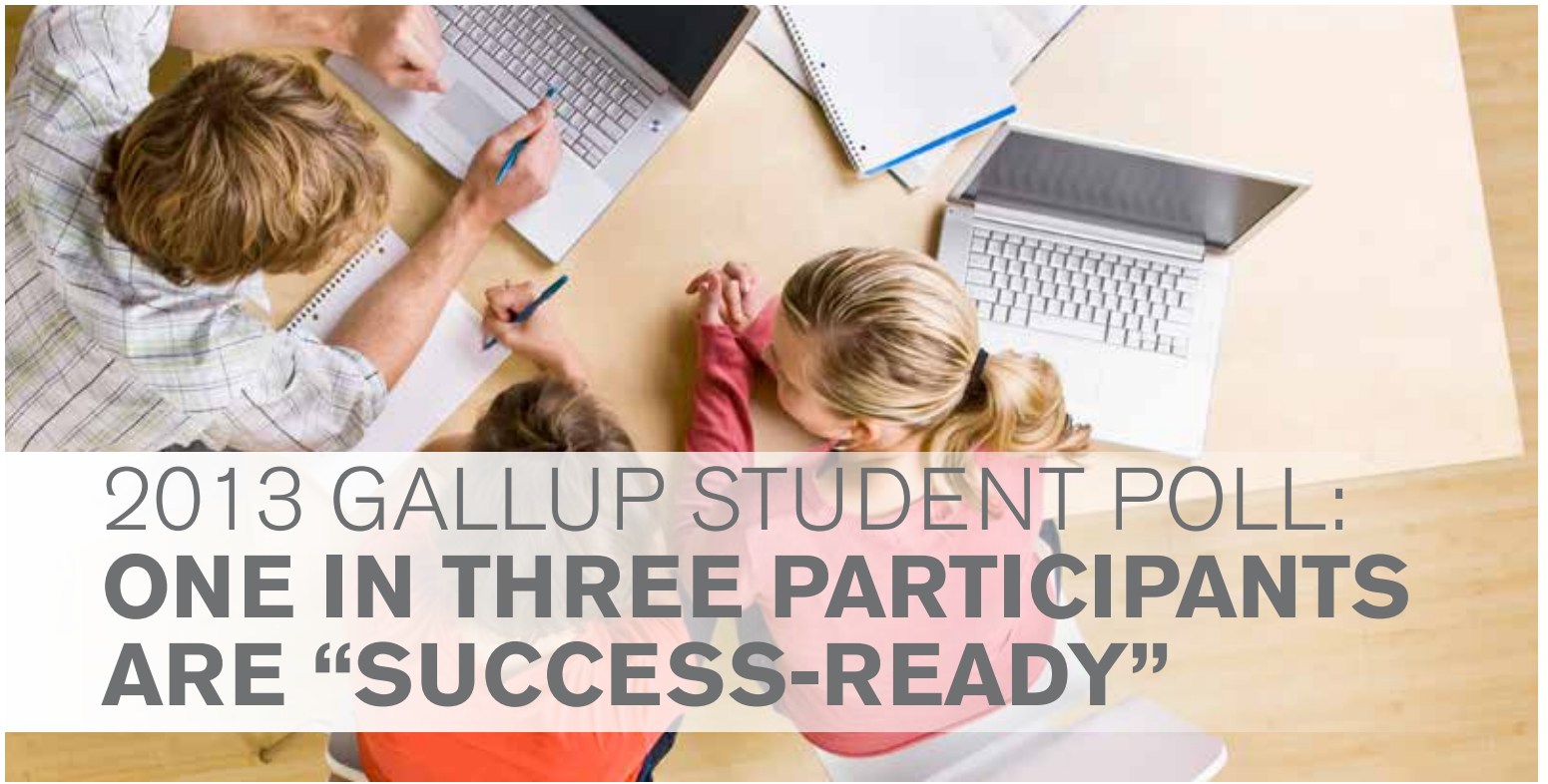




Americans themselves commonly express frustration with the country's education system. In 2013, the annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll on public schools found that 22% of Americans believe increased testing has helped the performance of their local public schools, while 36% say it has hurt those schools. Asked to rate their level of agreement with the idea that high school graduates are ready for the world of work, 17% agree (by giving a rating of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). Further, 29% agree that America's high school graduates are ready for college.

What is the state of America's schools? International rankings don't tell a particularly optimistic story, and neither does the country's youth unemployment rate of 15%. However, this report focuses on a different set of indicators — measures that address factors underlying students' achievement, including their awareness of their innate talents, their sense of hope for the future, and their emotional engagement with the learning process.

As this report demonstrates, there is much room for improvement in these vital areas as well. The good news is that teachers and school leaders can directly influence these factors. Effective principals and teachers increasingly expect to be positioned to use their unique talents and expect to have engaging workplaces. These priorities offer clear strategies for moving education forward at the local level, helping students to achieve their full potential at a time of widespread uncertainty about national reform strategies. [G](#)



2013 GALLUP STUDENT POLL: ONE IN THREE PARTICIPANTS ARE “SUCCESS-READY”

More than 600,000 students in grades 5 through 12 completed the Gallup Student Poll in the fall of 2013. For most, it was just one of a number of assessments they took that year — but this one was a little different. It required no preparation, consisted of just 20 online questions, and typically took less than 10 minutes to complete. More importantly, it wasn't trying to gauge students' knowledge or skill levels. Instead, the Student Poll measured three factors linked to their success at school and beyond: 1) their hope for the future, 2) their engagement with school, and 3) the quality of their lives — i.e., their well-being.

Years of psychometric testing and validation prior to the launch of the first Gallup Student Poll in 2009 demonstrated that each factor — hope, engagement, and well-being — is significantly related to student performance. And the combined measure of these factors is predictive of student outcomes that parents and educators care about, such as grades, credits earned, achievement scores, likelihood to stay in school, and future employment.

The 2013 Gallup Student Poll results indicated that 33% of those who took the assessment scored highly in all three dimensions. In other words, as the poll's co-creator

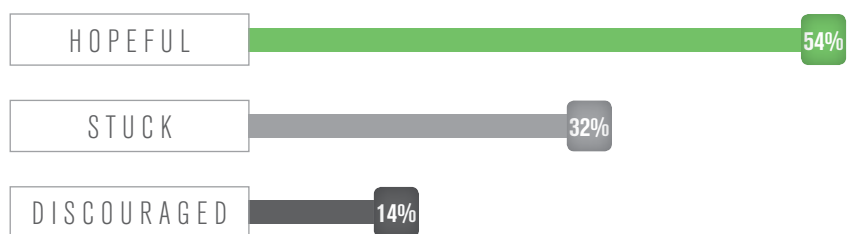
Dr. Shane Lopez has put it, one-third of students are “success-ready.”

Gallup offers public schools and school districts across the U.S. the opportunity to participate in the online poll each year, and releases the combined results from all schools that elected to take part. Thus, although a large number of students take the poll each fall, the results are not representative of the entire U.S. student population. But the results do offer an illustrative look at how more than half a million young people across the country feel about the quality of their lives, their experiences at school, and their own futures.

HOPE

When students have hope for the future, they take their education more seriously and bring positive ideas and lots of energy into the learning process, which in turn makes emotional engagement in that process more likely. This dimension also addresses students' belief that they can — and will — succeed at school and beyond. The 2013 Gallup Student Poll found that slightly more than half of students (54%) who took the survey are hopeful. One-third (32%) feel “stuck” — i.e., they find it difficult to overcome challenges in pursuing their goals. And 14% gave responses indicating that they feel discouraged about the future.

The poll also suggested that teachers can affect student hope. A majority (63%) of students who strongly agreed that they have at least one teacher who makes them excited about the future qualify as hopeful. Of these students, 70% are engaged with school, and 72% are considered to be thriving. On the other hand, among students who said they do not have a teacher who makes them excited about the future, 42% are hopeful, 35% are engaged, and 57% are thriving.

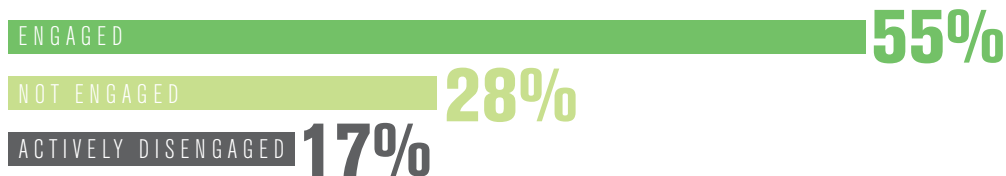


Source: 2013 Gallup Student Poll, U.S. overall

ENGAGEMENT

Students' emotional engagement with school is the noncognitive measure most directly related to academic achievement. Though education researchers have proposed various ways to measure student engagement for more than 20 years, Gallup is the first to do so via a large-scale survey with results that correlate with educational outcomes.

The 2013 Gallup Student Poll found that slightly more than half of students surveyed (55%) are engaged with school. The GrandMean for engagement (the average rating of the survey's five engagement items on a five-point scale, where 1 is “strongly disagree” and 5 is “strongly agree”) falls steadily as students advance in school. While the GrandMean among fifth-graders is 4.4 out of 5, among 11th- and 12th-graders, it is 3.8.



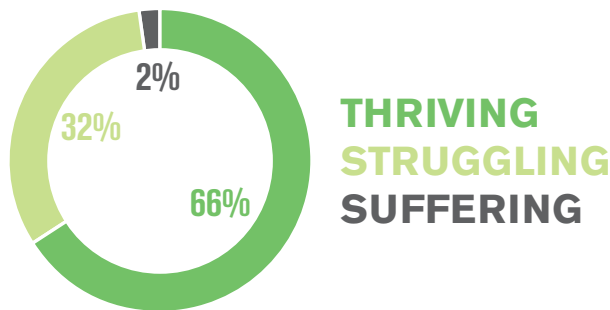
Source: 2013 Gallup Student Poll, U.S. overall

WELL-BEING

Students’ levels of well-being — how they evaluate their lives and the extent to which they report positive daily experiences — likely partly depend on factors beyond a school’s control, including students’ socio-economic status, physical and emotional health, and familial relationships.

However, a positive, strengths-focused school environment can be a good source of emotional and physical well-being for even the most disadvantaged students. In the 2013 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, 64% of parents with school-aged children said they strongly or somewhat agree with the statement, “My child has substantially higher well-being because of the school he or she attends.” Another 56% agreed with the statement, “My child’s school does things to help him or her become healthier.”

Unlike the PDK/Gallup poll, which tracks public opinion about America’s public schools, the Gallup Student Poll gathers opinions directly from students. In the 2013 Gallup Student Poll, two-thirds of participants rated their overall lives positively enough to be considered “thriving,” while 32% fell into the “struggling” category and 2% gave ratings low enough to be classified as “suffering.”



Source: 2013 Gallup Student Poll, U.S. overall

Gallup classifies respondents as thriving, struggling, or suffering according to how they rate their current and future lives on a ladder scale with steps numbered from zero to 10, based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale. People are considered thriving if they rate their current lives a 7 or higher and their lives in five years an 8 or higher. People are considered suffering if they rate their current lives and future lives a 4 or lower.

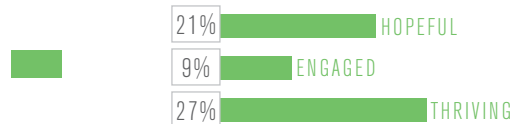
In addition to the survey questions based on the life evaluation ladder scale, four questions on the Gallup Student Poll ask about students’ daily experiences at school. The questions ask students whether they were treated with respect, smiled or laughed a lot, learned or did something interesting, and had enough energy to get things done “yesterday.”

Nearly four in 10 students (38%) reported having a “positive yesterday” — that is, they responded “yes” to all four daily experience questions. These students were more likely to be hopeful and engaged, and they were more likely than their peers who reported negative experiences to evaluate their overall lives positively. Together, these four well-being elements provide a useful gauge for leaders seeking to build a positive school environment to help set students up for long-term success.

AMONG STUDENTS REPORTING A “POSITIVE YESTERDAY”:



AMONG STUDENTS REPORTING A “NEGATIVE YESTERDAY”:

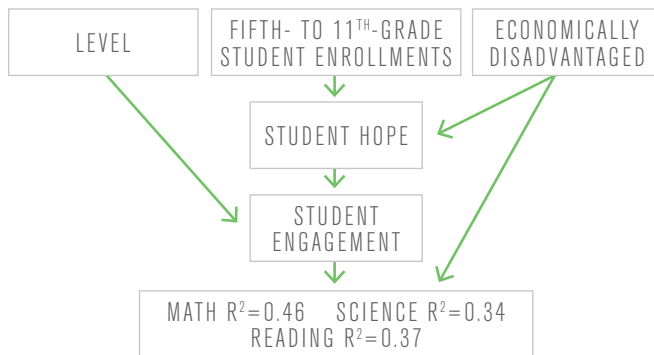


A NEW TAKE ON EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

The Gallup Student Poll offers an alternative prescription for improving educational outcomes: Strengthen the focus on students' readiness to learn, their interest in what happens in the classroom, and their recognition that the effort they invest at school shapes their prospects for the future.

Gallup quantified the relationships among students' economic status, their levels of hope and engagement, and their academic achievement in a separate, 2010 study of 148 schools in a large urban school district. The study examined school level (elementary, middle, or high school); total school enrollment; percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch; and student hope, engagement, and well-being.

Relationships Among Students' Levels of Hope and Engagement and Their Academic Achievements



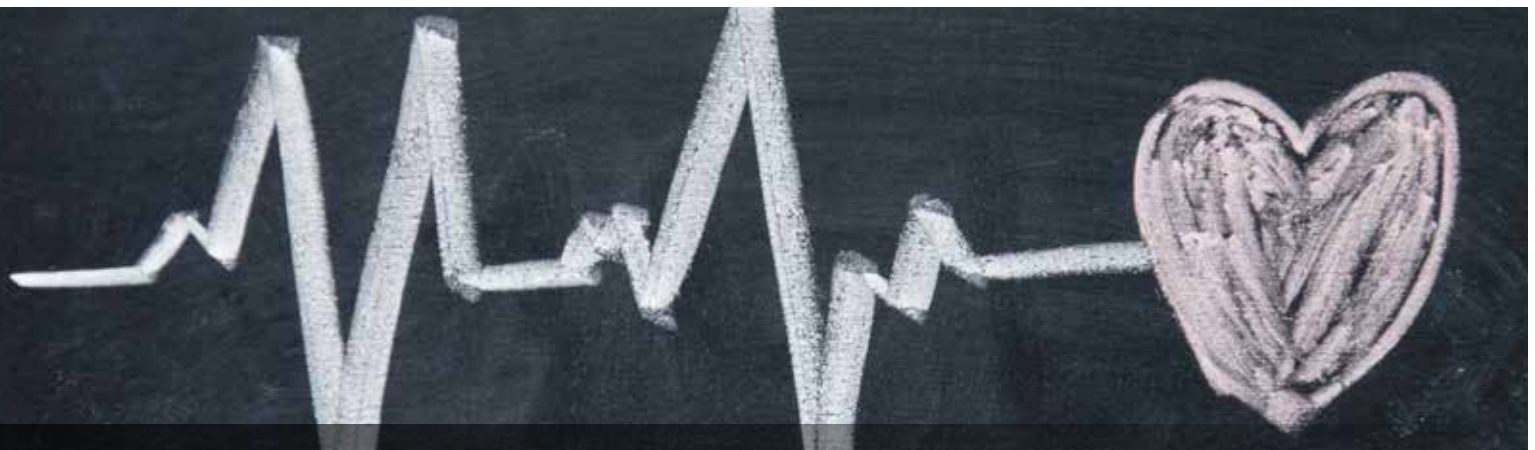
n=148 schools

The study showed that as school level increased, student engagement diminished. The size of the school and the percentage of students on free or reduced lunch had the same negative relationships with hope. However, students' levels of hope were positively related to their emotional engagement with school, which in turn correlated positively with their math, reading, and science performance. And these relationships were not modest: The model accounted for almost half of the variation in students' math achievement and at least one-third of the variation in reading and science attainment.

GIVING STUDENTS A VOICE

Perhaps most importantly, the Gallup Student Poll provides students with a way to convey their own perspectives about their educational experiences. Giving students a voice is crucial to a communitywide dialogue on student dropout prevention, college readiness, and student improvement, and is a critical element long missing in evaluations of educational effectiveness. Equipped with annual Gallup Student Poll results, school and community leaders will have reliable and valid measures of students' experiences with which they can create data-driven strategies for improving individual schools and shaping broader community efforts for student success. **G**

Gallup makes the Student Poll available at no cost to public schools in the U.S., and school administrators can easily access their individual school's results shortly after the survey is completed. For information on how to register your school for the 2014 poll, go to www.gallupstudentpoll.com.



EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT: THE HEARTBEAT OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS

Of the three factors the Gallup Student Poll measures — hope, engagement, and well-being — engagement is the one on which teachers and schools have the greatest influence. Gallup’s research focuses on students’ *emotional* engagement — simply put, their level of involvement in and enthusiasm for school. This factor incorporates students’ perceptions of their teachers, classmates, and overall learning environment. Emotional engagement is the heartbeat of the education process, pumping energy and imagination into students’ day-to-day experiences at school.

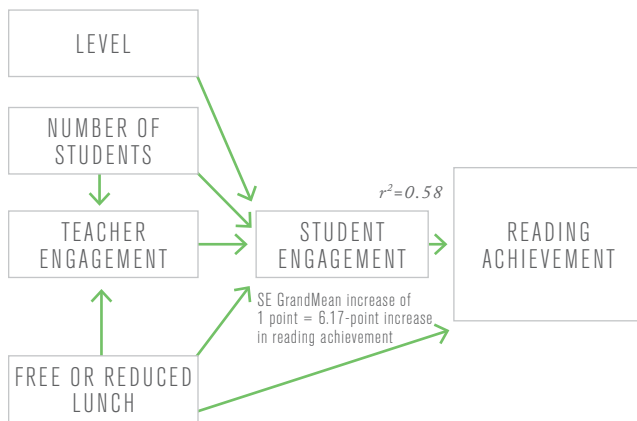
It should come as no surprise, then, that students’ engagement levels are directly related to their academic performance. In 2009, Gallup conducted an in-depth study of 78,106 students in 160 schools across eight states; the results offered compelling evidence of a connection between engagement and achievement. Researchers statistically controlled for students’ average socio-economic status using the percentage of students in each school receiving free or reduced lunch.

The resulting statistical model included several school-level factors shown to be predictive of student engagement,

including a school’s level (elementary, middle, or high school), its size, the percentage of its students receiving free or reduced lunch, and — most importantly, from an education reform perspective — its teachers’ overall engagement level.

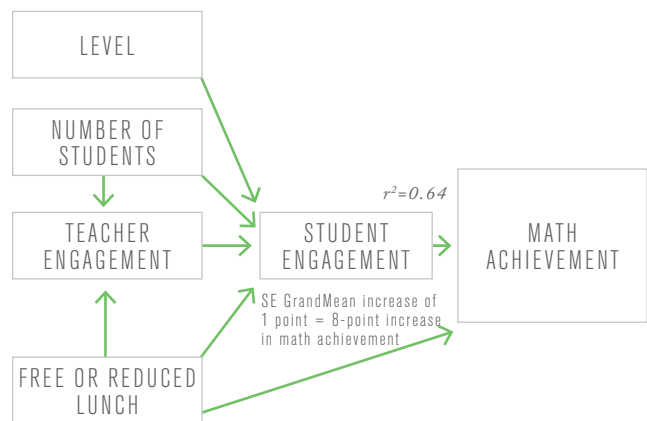
The results were dramatic. A one-percentage-point increase in a school’s student engagement GrandMean was associated with a six-point increase in reading achievement and an eight-point increase in math achievement scores.

Engagement and Reading Achievement



Teachers n=8,341; Students n=78,106

Engagement and Math Achievement



Teachers n=8,341; Students n=78,106

Schools in which students were in the top quartile of average engagement results were 50% more likely to be above average in statewide reading achievement scores than schools in which students were in the bottom quartile of Gallup’s engagement database. Top-quartile schools were also 82% more likely than bottom-quartile schools to be above the state average for math achievement.

MEASURING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

To assess levels of student engagement, the Gallup Student Poll asks students to rate the following five statements using a five-point scale, where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 5 means “strongly agree.”

- I have a best friend at school.
- I feel safe in this school.
- My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
- At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

- In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.

The results from more than 2,000 schools that participated in the 2013 survey appear in the table. As noted previously, the overall results are from a convenience sample; therefore, local schools and districts should use them cautiously as a point of comparison.

Almost three-fourths of students strongly agreed with the statement, “I have a best friend at school.” No more than half of students strongly agreed with any of the other four items. The lowest-rated item, “recognition or praise,” received a rating of 5 by less than one-third of participants.

THE POWER OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK

The relatively low student ratings for “recognition or praise” call for further discussion. Gallup’s workplace research has long demonstrated direct links between recognition and praise and specific business outcomes such as increased individual productivity, higher customer loyalty, and better safety records.

Engagement-Item-Level Responses From the Gallup Student Poll – U.S. Overall

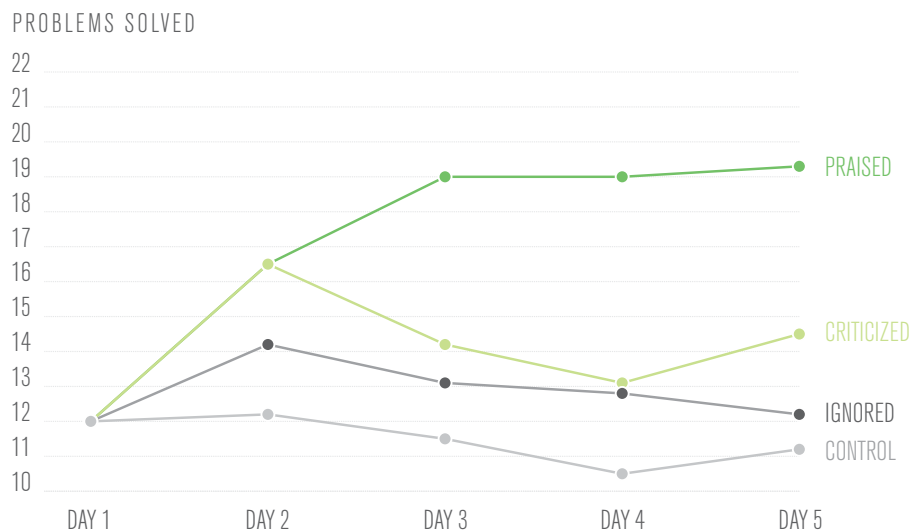
ITEM RESPONSES	N	%				
		1	2	3	4	5
	SIZE	STRONGLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY AGREE		
I have a best friend at school.	609,392	5	3	6	13	73
I feel safe in this school.	611,773	5	5	14	30	47
My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.	612,645	4	4	13	29	50
At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	610,367	5	6	17	32	40
In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.	602,017	13	11	19	26	31

In *How Full Is Your Bucket?*, Donald O. Clifton and Tom Rath note the effects of positive interactions and the importance of avoiding a negativity-based approach. They write, “This focus on what is wrong is particularly evident in our school experiences. ... And our schools, which are built around ‘core curricula’ that students have to learn regardless of their interests or natural talents, reinforce this kind of thinking.”

Indeed, the major education reform initiatives of the past 20 years — including the No Child Left Behind Act, the Race to the Top Assessment Program, and now the Common Core State Standards initiative — have had an overwhelmingly remedial focus. Leaving “no child behind” means delineating a rigid set of education standards, and then striving to shore up areas of weakness among students and schools relative to those standards.

This makes intuitive sense, at least to some degree. But the costs of such an approach are too often overlooked. From students’ perspectives, it has encouraged teachers and parents to focus on the lowest grades on their report cards. An unintended consequence is that they often stop short of offering much praise for the A’s and B’s students have earned.

The power of positive feedback is certainly not a novel concept. Clifton and Rath describe Dr. Elizabeth Hurlock’s 1925 study in which she analyzed the effect of giving students different types of feedback on their work. Fourth-graders and sixth-graders were randomly placed into three groups. Students in the first group received praise in front of the class for their good work, students in the second group were criticized in front of the class for their poor work, and those in the third group were completely ignored. By the fifth day of the experiment, the group that received praise



had improved their test scores by 71%, while the criticized group had improved by 19% and the ignored group by 5%.

More recently, neuroscientists have studied the biological basis for why people react so strongly to praise and recognition. Researchers have found that positive words activate regions of the brain related to reward, producing a surge of the neurotransmitter dopamine that results in feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction.


Gallup’s decades of workplace research indicate that for recognition to have such positive effects, it must be *individualized*, *specific*, and *deserved*. However, the multilayered testing regime under which most teachers work today leaves them with far less time and latitude, making it challenging to tailor their instructional approach to individual students’ needs and to ensure that the praise they offer is personal and meaningful.

Meaningful interactions at school drive student engagement. But they don’t happen often enough or without a purposeful effort by school leaders to provide an environment in which students’ strengths are celebrated and talented teachers work under conditions that promote their own engagement.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: THE BOTTOM LINE

Students' engagement at school may be influenced by innumerable factors largely outside a school's control. However, there are fundamental strategies schools can focus on to dramatically raise the likelihood that students will be emotionally engaged in the classroom on any given day.

Those strategies include providing students with opportunities to discover and develop their talents, and with teachers who inspire a sense of optimism about what they can achieve with those talents. Among the 600,000 students who took the poll in 2013, those who strongly agreed with two simple statements were 30 times as likely as those who strongly disagreed with both to be emotionally engaged at school. Those two statements were:

1. My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.
2. I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future. 



WANT TO HELP STUDENTS RACE TO THE TOP?

TEACH THEM TO START WITH THEIR STRENGTHS

By Connie Rath, Gallup's Vice Chair of Education

Every student is unique — each has a set of talents and goals that, if recognized and cultivated, will lead him or her to achieve long-term success and a fulfilling future.

But many U.S. schools are missing the mark on helping students discover and maximize their unique talents. Less than half of America's students strongly agree that they get to do what they do best every day, according to the Gallup Student Poll. That means millions of students are focusing on the wrong things, while their talents are languishing unnoticed — likely leaving them bored and frustrated. What these young scholars need is help in understanding and developing what they are really good at — a personalized approach to how and what they need to learn.

In essence, today's students need to know what their strengths are, and education leaders need to teach students how to use these strengths.

In recent years, the U.S. government has increasingly recognized that striving for greater standardization in students' education experience isn't the right approach if the goal is helping those students achieve their full potential. In 2012, the U.S. Department of Education opened up its Race to the Top competitive

federal grant program to individual school districts, instead of allowing only states to apply. According to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, the program's goal is to focus on the classroom level and “personalize education” while taking classrooms “beyond a one-size-fits-all model.”

So how do schools create personalized plans for students? The key, from Gallup studies of schools nationwide, is to build education plans that match up with each student's unique strengths. In other words, when students know what they do best and have opportunities to develop those talents, they are more motivated and enthusiastic about learning. Gallup's research shows that more than eight in 10 students who strongly agree that their school is committed to building the strengths of each student are engaged in school. The leaders of these schools have developed ways to appeal to student interests during the school week; for instance, some schools offer a wide range of after-school activities and clubs, while others provide work experience for students at school or in the community.

What the nation needs are more of these strengths-based schools. Here's how districts can build them:

- **Start with strengths:** Start now with a campaign for every student and educator to know his or her strengths and create a plan to put them to use. Ensure students have strengths advisers, clear goals, and access to a wide range of online educational resources and experiences that match their unique strengths. Outlining an in-depth plan can reinforce important academic goals and stimulate interests and talents.
- **Monitor hope, engagement, and well-being:** When students know and use their strengths, they rate themselves and their schools higher on these three factors. Good schools can get better by participating at no cost in the Gallup Student Poll, which gauges student hope, engagement, and well-being. Schools receive scores reflecting students' perceptions of these key metrics, and leaders can use this information to target areas in need of improvement.

- **Apply strengths to college and work:** Middle school is the right time for students to begin thinking about how an understanding of their strengths can help guide their choices about high school, college, and the working world. They can discover what they do well and explore what they want to do in the future by discussing their unique talents and then planning experiences to test and practice them.

Washington may be shifting its focus to more personalized education, but this change will not happen because of Washington alone. It will happen because school leaders, teachers, parents, and students insist on working together to develop creative pathways to personal achievement.



U.S. SCHOOLS MUST ATTRACT AND RETAIN — RATHER THAN HINDER — TEACHER TALENT

The vast majority of Americans say a person's ability to teach comes more from natural talent (70%) than from college training about how to teach (28%), according to a PDK/Gallup poll.

This finding exemplifies one of the key issues the U.S. education system is currently wrestling with: School districts need better ways to identify teacher talent and demonstrate its relationship to student achievement. As students and parents can attest, subject-matter knowledge alone is not sufficient to manage a classroom and impart that knowledge to students. In other words, there is an important difference between teaching *content* and teaching *children* — and effective teachers must be able to do both.

AMERICANS SAY A PERSON'S ABILITY TO TEACH COMES MORE FROM NATURAL TALENT THAN FROM COLLEGE TRAINING ABOUT HOW TO TEACH.

Gallup has studied the characteristics of exceptional teachers since the early 1970s. Though they exhibit various combinations of strengths that lead them to approach their jobs differently, great teachers share some essential behavior patterns. These teachers consistently express the following tendencies and characteristics:

- **Achievement drive** — Great teachers demonstrate a powerful motivation to enable students to succeed in the classroom; they take that success personally. They are driven to reach ever-higher levels of mastery, learning, and student achievement. They enjoy setting goals, monitoring progress, and taking ownership of students' success.
- **Classroom structure and planning** — Balancing both innovation and discipline are hallmarks of exceptional teachers. They are thoughtful and creative while establishing a sense of order in their classrooms. These teachers are well-prepared, and they keep themselves busy thinking about new approaches to teaching, learning, and discovery.
- **Strong student and parent relationships** — These relationships are the foundation for successful learning environments. Great teachers intuitively understand that creating these relationships involves helping others feel important and unique, and making a commitment to understand and develop every student. These teachers are energetic and positive and enjoy communicating with students. Further, they understand that relationships outside the classroom with parents and peers are equally important.

MANY SCHOOLS HAVE A “REVOLVING DOOR” FOR TALENTED TEACHERS

Unfortunately, too many young people with the potential and motivation to be outstanding teachers don't go into the profession. It is hard to blame them, given that the profession has been vilified repeatedly in recent years. As *New York Times* columnist Charles M. Blow put it in 2012, “Teachers have been so maligned in the national debate that it's hard to attract our best and our brightest to see it as a viable and rewarding career choice, even if they have a high aptitude and natural gift for it.”

In many schools, a “revolving door” for new teachers exacerbates the hiring situation. Recent estimates put the proportion of teachers who leave the profession within the first five years on the job between 40% and 50%. Insufficient pay is a factor for many, but hardly the only reason for leaving. Most young teachers probably didn't go into the classroom expecting to be highly paid, but neither did they expect that they would often be denied the autonomy needed to effectively use their talents. They also may have underestimated the rarity of opportunities to collaborate with other teachers and administrators, as well as the reams of paperwork and lack of preparation time that routinely keep many at school until the evening hours.

In a 2009 study funded by Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, researchers conducted a non-representative survey of more than 40,000 U.S. teachers and noted the following: “When asked about teacher retention, nearly all teachers say that nonmonetary rewards like supportive leadership and collaborative working environments are the most important factors to retaining good teachers. Fewer than half of teachers say higher salaries are absolutely essential for retaining good teachers.”

SETTING TALENTED TEACHERS UP FOR SUCCESS

The importance of teacher talent may seem obvious, but many education reform initiatives throughout the past 20 years have sought not to find and cultivate teacher talent, but rather to make it less relevant. The idea has been that reducing variability in what is taught — and in how it is taught — can bring even the worst-performing teachers and schools up to a minimal standard. As well-intentioned as the many researchers and policymakers who pursued this line of thinking were, they fundamentally undervalued the role of teacher talent in the classroom.

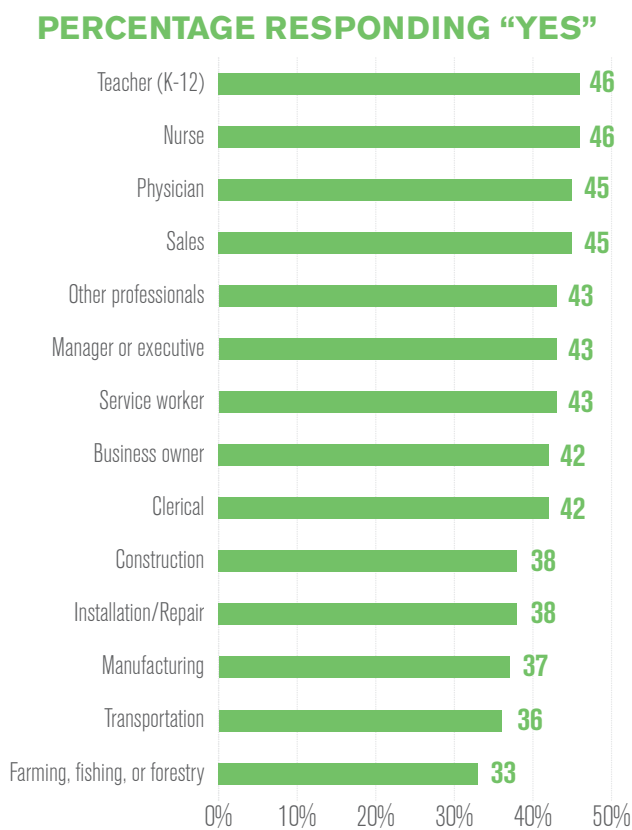
Consider the following findings from Gallup's recent research with teachers:

- Among employees in 12 different occupational categories Gallup surveyed in 2012, K-12 teachers were the least likely to agree with the statement, “At work, my opinions seem to count.” This is an alarming sign — that teachers see few opportunities to work with school leaders on issues that keep them from using their talents on behalf of their students.

- In general, data from the 2013 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index indicate that teachers experience frequent positive interactions during the day; they are particularly likely to say they smile and laugh a lot and experience enjoyment for much of the day. However, nearly half of K-12 teachers (46%) report high daily stress during the school year. That figure matches those from other highly demanding professions, such as nurses (46%) and physicians (45%), for the highest stress levels among all occupational groups surveyed.

Nearly Half of Teachers Experience a Lot of Daily Stress

Did you experience stress during a lot of the day yesterday?



Results from the 2013 Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index survey

Low pay and a lack of adequate planning time undoubtedly fuel many teachers’ stress levels. However, teachers suggest the rising focus on standardized tests has compounded that stress by too often making them responsible for outcomes over which they have limited control — and then setting them up as scapegoats if they fail to achieve those outcomes. Evaluating teachers on multiple outcomes directly related to their performance in the classroom — including student engagement — might ease that stress burden for many.

The reality is that gifted young people with the talents to be great teachers have other options if they don’t feel encouraged to use their strengths in pursuit of their mission to make a difference for students. They could just as effectively apply their resilience, relating skills, and strong sense of purpose in other roles, such as corporate trainers or public relations specialists. And in these roles, they are probably more likely to be treated as professionals.

ARE U.S. TEACHERS PROFESSIONALS?

Cultural attitudes toward the role of “teacher” play an important part in American schools’ abilities to attract and retain exceptional teacher talent. Richard Ingersoll, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s education school, has observed that in the U.S., teaching at the primary and secondary level was originally intended to be a temporary occupation for women who did not yet have families to raise and for men who would quickly work their way up into administrative positions.

This view of teaching as a short-term job helps to explain the typically low pay and lack of influence associated with the highly demanding profession. A teacher’s role is not thought of as “talent-based” in the same way as is being a skilled surgeon or an accomplished musician. Few would argue, for example, that a gifted pianist would benefit from being told to change her technique and play only compositions assigned to her by officials who are not themselves pianists.

Not thinking of teachers as talented professionals is one of the systemic flaws holding back the U.S. education system. Discounting teacher talent is doing a great disservice


to this country's educators — and, more importantly, to its students. As a Virginia middle school teacher put it during a Gallup focus group addressing educators' working conditions, "Standards are good to have as a framework for understanding, but standardization puts a stranglehold on teachers and students. Why do we spend four years in college and two years in grad school to not be a professional?"

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results consistently rank Finnish students among the top performers in literacy and math skills. These results have been attributed to many factors, but prominent among them is a decision made in Finland in 1979 to move teacher preparation from teachers' colleges into more rigorous university programs, thereby helping professionalize the occupation and making it more attractive to talented, ambitious young people. *The New York Times* recently noted that "the Finns have made teaching the country's most popular occupation for the young. These programs recruit from the top quarter of the graduating high school classes, demonstrating that such training has a prestige lacking in the United States."

Finns share this cultural emphasis on training teachers with schools in Shanghai and other parts of East Asia, many of which were top performers in the 2012 PISA rankings. In assessing the PISA results, CNN noted the high level of professionalism teachers in the East Asian region enjoy, while *The Economist* argued, "Successful countries focus fiercely on the quality of teaching and eschew zigzag changes of direction or philosophy."

Hiring tools that more effectively assess the talent to teach should help "professionalize" teaching. However, more rigorous hiring standards need to be accompanied by improved working conditions, greater autonomy, and professional development opportunities that provide career momentum. Otherwise, U.S. schools will continue to struggle to find enough applicants with the talent to be great teachers.

Raising the status of teaching as a profession helps ensure that 1) those without the potential to be great teachers do not end up in the classroom, and 2) teachers take great pride in their ability to engage students in well-crafted and highly relevant lessons, thereby easing the current obsession with accountability. Commenting on countries with the highest PISA scores in 2011, Harvard Graduate School of Education Professor Howard Gardner noted, "Whatever the differences among Finland, Singapore, and Korea, teachers in those countries are treated as professionals and consider themselves so. Being a teacher is a sought-after position, and providing the right cocktail of incentives and disincentives is not a major preoccupation of policymakers." 

"Whatever the differences among Finland, Singapore, and Korea, teachers in those countries are treated as professionals and consider themselves so."

HOWARD GARDNER

Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education



NEARLY 70% OF K-12 TEACHERS ARE NOT ENGAGED IN THEIR WORK

Gallup asked more than 70,000 U.S. employees in 2012 about working conditions that distinguish highly engaged workplaces from those in which employees are less engaged. Results from this simple set of 12 survey items, which Gallup has validated repeatedly across industries and job types, are predictive of a wide range of positive workplace outcomes, including higher retention rates and productivity. (The 12 survey items appear at the end of this section.)

The 2012 workforce sample included more than 7,200 K-12 teachers. Results among this group revealed that nearly 70% are not engaged in their jobs:

NEARLY
70%
ARE NOT ENGAGED
IN THEIR JOBS

- Approximately a third of U.S. teachers (31%) are “engaged” — meaning they are involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their work, and that they know the scope of their jobs and constantly look for new and better ways to achieve outcomes.
- Just over half (56%) are “not engaged” — meaning they may be satisfied with their jobs, but they are not emotionally connected to their workplaces and are unlikely to devote much discretionary effort to their work.
- About one in eight (13%) are “actively disengaged” — meaning they are dissatisfied with their workplaces and likely to be spreading negativity to their coworkers.

The proportion of K-12 teachers engaged in their jobs is similar to the 30% of engaged U.S. workers overall. U.S. employees overall are somewhat more likely than teachers to be actively disengaged, at 18%, while 52% are not engaged.



ENGAGED NOT ENGAGED ACTIVELY DISENGAGED

Not too bad, right? At least teachers are less likely than other American workers to be actively spreading negativity to their colleagues. The problem is that when teachers are not fully engaged in their work, their *students* pay the price every day. Disengaged teachers are less likely to bring the energy, insights, and resilience that effective teaching requires to the classroom. They are less likely to build the kind of positive, caring relationships with their students that form the emotional core of the learning process.

Gallup’s research highlights the central role of teacher engagement in helping students realize their full potential. Gallup’s 2009 study of more than 78,000 students in 160 schools found that teachers’ engagement levels are directly related to those of their students — and thereby to student achievement outcomes.

Engaged teachers not only challenge students to grow, but they also trust, encourage, and

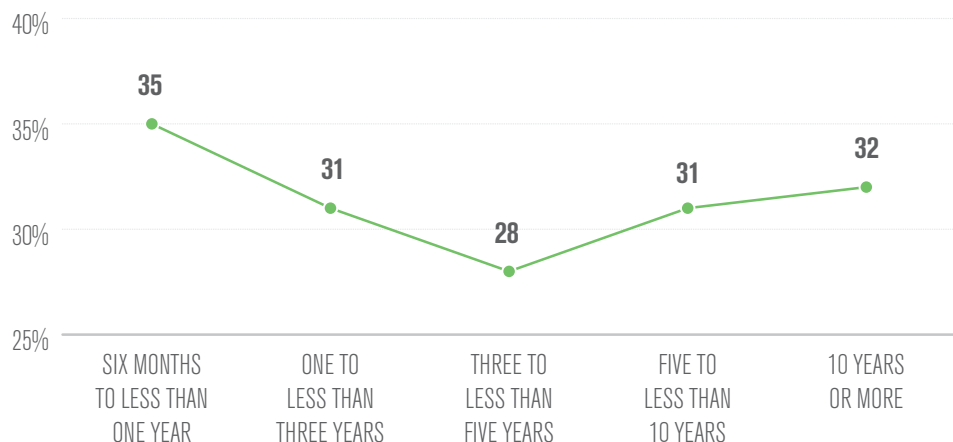
engage their fellow teachers, building the foundation for a great school. A 2010 study commissioned by The Wallace Foundation suggested that adult relationships in a school indirectly affect student achievement by increasing the school’s use of “focused instruction.” The researchers concluded, “Effective leadership strengthens professional community — a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning.”

So if nearly 70% of teachers are just going through the motions at work — or worse, undermining student learning by spreading negativity — that’s a big problem facing the nation’s schools.

ENGAGEMENT LEVEL DROPS SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF TEACHING

The 2012 Gallup study further revealed that K-12 teachers’ average engagement level drops in their first few years on the job. Teachers with less than one year of experience on the job are the most engaged, at 35%. That number drops significantly to 28% among teachers on the job for three to five years. This is undoubtedly a factor in retention rates. For many young teachers, the job may not be what they thought it was, given their relative lack of autonomy and limited opportunities for collaboration — so they reroute their career paths.

Workplace Engagement Levels Among K-12 Teachers in the U.S., by Years of Experience



Teachers' overall engagement level begins to rise again as they move further along in their careers, perhaps adapting their expectations or developing their own strategies for overcoming some of the systemic barriers to engagement. But for many talented young people who have already left the profession, it's too late.

THE GOOD NEWS

In some respects, it seems America's K-12 teachers *should* be registering higher levels of workplace engagement. They tend to be particularly satisfied with their lives overall. On the Gallup-Healthways Life Evaluation Index, which combines respondents' ratings of their current lives and their lives five years in the future, only physicians outscore teachers among 14 job types studied.

Life Evaluation Index Score

BY OCCUPATION TYPE

OCCUPATION	LIFE EVALUATION INDEX SCORE
Physician	74.9
Teacher (K-12)	68.8
Professional	64.3
Nurse	63.9
Manager, executive, or official	61.2
Business owner	56.3
Clerical or office	55.3
Sales	54.1
Service	50.3
Manufacturing or production	44.1
Construction or mining	44.0
Farming, fishing, or forestry	43.3
Installation or repair	43.1
Transportation	40.0

Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

Teachers also compare favorably with other workers on several specific workplace conditions. They are more likely than those in most other job types to say they have the opportunity to do what they do best every day at work. This finding underscores the notion that good teachers view their role as more than just a job or career — they see it as a *calling*.

Further, teachers are more likely than most other American employees to strongly agree with the statement, “There is someone at work who encourages my development.” This is a promising finding because great teachers are habitual learners who need developmental opportunities to take on new challenges and responsibilities while using their core strengths.

THE BAD NEWS

Teachers are dead last among the occupational groups Gallup surveyed in terms of their likelihood to say their opinions seem to count at work. In the absence of school leaders who build opportunities for collaboration among teachers and between teachers and administrators, many teachers feel isolated and disempowered. Increased use of high-stakes testing at the state and district levels may be exacerbating this problem by limiting teachers' control over their own work.

HOW TO INCREASE TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Fortunately, many policymakers are recognizing that the prevailing approaches to education reform do not lead to improved learning environments for most students. State and federal representatives are likely sensitive to public opinion trends showing that most Americans do not believe increased testing is helping their local schools. (See the “Many Americans Doubt High School Graduates Are Prepared for College or Work” section for more details.) Further, 68% of Americans favor the idea of charter schools that operate independently of many state regulations, implying widespread recognition that the task of building a great learning environment depends primarily on the efforts of school leaders and teachers themselves.

Dr. Shane Lopez, a Gallup senior scientist and leading advocate for psychological reform in America's school system, offers this advice for anyone concerned about the quality of schools in his or her area:

“I encourage each of you to walk through your neighborhood school. Chances are, for every spirited, engaged teacher you observe, you will see two who are just going through the motions. And for every 10 teachers, you will see one who is undermining the teaching and learning process through active disengagement.

“Share your observations with your principal, and ask the principal what he or she can do to better engage our teachers. If principals are at a loss for next steps, let’s encourage them to do these three specific things:

1. Ask teachers important questions about curriculum, pedagogy, and schedules. Listen to their answers. Incorporate their feedback into changes and decision-making. Trust will grow.
2. Partner the most engaged administrators and teachers with teachers who have been in your building for five years or less. Give them time to collaborate on student-centered projects. Enthusiasm will spread.
3. Remove the most disengaged teachers from the classroom for a brief period. Invest in what they do best with continuing education, and eliminate major barriers to their engagement. Disruptive professional behavior will decrease.”

Amid widespread doubts about national and state-level reform initiatives, local and school-level efforts to improve the learning environment for teachers and students are more important than ever. Dr. Lopez’s advice spotlights principals’ crucial role in creating a climate of trust and collaboration that boosts engagement levels campuswide. The next section will take a closer look at the importance of talented leadership in every school. [G](#)

GALLUP’S Q¹²®

01

I know what is expected of me at work.

02

I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

03

At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

04

In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

05

My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

06

There is someone at work who encourages my development.

07

At work, my opinions seem to count.

08

The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.

09

My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

10

I have a best friend at work.

11

In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

12

This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

MANY AMERICANS **DOUBT** HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES ARE PREPARED FOR COLLEGE OR WORK

For over 40 years, Gallup and Phi Delta Kappa have conducted an annual poll gauging Americans' views on public education in the U.S. The 2013 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll results revealed that after more than a decade of sweeping education reforms, most Americans feel the country's education system is failing to prepare students for the future. Just 17% of Americans agree that U.S. high school graduates are ready for the world of work, and 29% agree that they are ready for college.

In addition, the poll found that fewer than one in four Americans (22%) say increased testing has helped the performance of their local public schools, while 36% say it has hurt performance. Americans are also open to the idea of greater

autonomy at the school level: More than two-thirds (68%) favor the idea of charter schools, which are allowed to operate independently of many state regulations. Slightly more than half (52%) believe students receive a better education at public charter schools than at other public schools.

AMERICANS' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION QUALITY VARY DRAMATICALLY BY STATE

A separate, larger-scale Gallup study focused on conditions affecting well-being among residents in the 50 U.S. states. North Dakota residents have the most positive outlook on their state's education system — 87% say it's excellent or good — while people living in New Mexico responded least favorably, at 41%.

Overall, how would you rate the quality of public education provided in grades K through 12 in this state — as excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

TOP STATES (% EXCELLENT/GOOD)		BOTTOM STATES (% EXCELLENT/GOOD)	
North Dakota	87%	New Mexico	41%
Iowa	83%	Nevada	42%
Minnesota	81%	Louisiana	45%
Nebraska	80%	Hawaii	46%
South Dakota	80%	Illinois	49%
Wyoming	79%	California	50%
Massachusetts	78%	Mississippi	52%
Kansas	78%	Oregon	54%
Wisconsin	78%	Arizona	55%
Montana	78%	West Virginia	57%

These differences in perceptions of education at the state level matter, in part because they strongly relate to state-level economic conditions. States in which residents are most likely to rate the quality of education that their public schools provide as excellent or good also tend to have low unemployment and poverty rates, and vice versa for states with residents rating their education systems poorly.

North Dakota, where residents have the most positive outlook on their schools, also boasts the nation's lowest unemployment and poverty rates. On the other hand, Nevada and New Mexico, where about four in 10 residents view their public schools favorably, have serious economic problems. Nevada's unemployment rate remains sky high, at nearly 10%, and New Mexico's poverty rate is among the country's highest, at nearly 21%.

Unemployment Rates of States Scoring in the Top and Bottom of Public Education Perceptions

North Dakota	2.9%
South Dakota	3.8%
Nebraska	3.9%
Iowa	4.6%
Wyoming	4.6%
Hawaii	4.8%
Minnesota	5.1%
Kansas	5.4%
Montana	5.6%
Louisiana	6.2%
West Virginia	6.5%
Wisconsin	6.7%
New Mexico	6.9%
Massachusetts	7.1%
Oregon	7.7%
Arizona	8.0%
Mississippi	8.6%
California	8.9%
Illinois	9.2%
Nevada	9.8%

Unemployment rates are based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics annual average rankings for 2013.

With the exception of Hawaii and Illinois, all of the states where residents are most optimistic about their public schools have lower poverty rates than the states where residents are least likely to view their public schools favorably.

Poverty Levels of States Scoring in the Top and Bottom of Public Education Perceptions

North Dakota	11.2%
Minnesota	11.4%
Hawaii	11.6%
Massachusetts	11.9%
Wyoming	12.6%
Iowa	12.7%
Nebraska	13.0%
Wisconsin	13.2%
South Dakota	13.4%
Kansas	14.0%
Illinois	14.7%
Montana	15.5%
Nevada	16.4%
California	17.0%
Oregon	17.2%
West Virginia	17.8%
Arizona	18.7%
Louisiana	19.9%
New Mexico	20.8%
Mississippi	24.2%

Poverty levels are based on U.S. Census Bureau percentages from 2012.

The Gallup study also looked at other individual factors that gauge Americans' views on state-level public education. The results revealed a great deal of consistency in the top and bottom states' perceptions across all questions.

Do you believe your state public school system prepares students for success in the workplace?

TOP STATES (% YES)		BOTTOM STATES (% YES)	
South Dakota	83%	Nevada	48%
North Dakota	82%	New Mexico	51%
Iowa	81%	California	52%
Nebraska	79%	Oregon	54%
Minnesota	76%	Illinois	55%
Wisconsin	75%	Hawaii	56%
Wyoming	75%	Arizona	57%
Montana	73%	Louisiana	58%
Kansas	71%	Idaho	59%
Massachusetts	71%	New York	60%

Do you believe your state public school system prepares students to get a good job?

TOP STATES (% YES)		BOTTOM STATES (% YES)	
North Dakota	84%	Nevada	46%
Iowa	80%	New Mexico	46%
South Dakota	79%	California	47%
Nebraska	76%	Oregon	52%
Wyoming	72%	Illinois	53%
Kansas	71%	Arizona	53%
Montana	70%	Louisiana	53%
Wisconsin	70%	Hawaii	54%
Indiana	69%	Idaho	56%
Minnesota	69%	New York	57%

Do you believe that teachers in the city or area where you live are well-respected, or not?

TOP STATES (% YES, RESPECTED)		BOTTOM STATES (% YES, RESPECTED)	
Wyoming	89%	Nevada	62%
North Dakota	87%	Louisiana	63%
Nebraska	87%	New Mexico	65%
Iowa	87%	North Carolina	66%
Montana	86%	Mississippi	67%
Alaska	86%	Rhode Island	67%
Kansas	85%	New York	68%
South Dakota	84%	Illinois	68%
Maine	84%	Maryland	68%
Minnesota	83%	Pennsylvania	69%

The causal relationship between school satisfaction and economic conditions is likely to run both ways. In one direction, low-quality schools could make it harder for states to attract new employers and could limit residents' spending power — both factors that may stymie economic growth.

In the other direction, poor economic conditions may lower property values and the funding available to maintain up-to-date facilities, keep class sizes down, and attract young people with the talent to be great teachers. The latter concern is particularly troubling; as Gallup's research has demonstrated, without teachers who can make them excited about the future, students are much less likely to be fully engaged, high-achieving learners.



GREAT PRINCIPALS FOSTER ENGAGEMENT AMONG TEACHERS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS

Large class sizes, disgruntled parents, and standardized tests are common sources of stress in teachers' lives. But principals and other school administrators top the list of factors likely to make the difference between a talented young teacher who leaves the profession after two years and one who enjoys a long, fulfilling tenure at his or her school.

**MANAGERS
INFLUENCE AT
LEAST 75% OF
THE REASONS
FOR VOLUNTARY
TURNOVER.**

One of the most consistent findings from Gallup's workplace research across industries is that employees typically quit their jobs to escape bad managers — not for better pay or benefits. Dr. Jim Harter, Gallup's chief scientist for workplace management and well-being, has concluded that managers influence at least 75% of the reasons for voluntary turnover.

Among teachers specifically, more than one-third (37%) in a 2013 study said they had quit a job to get away from their manager. This emphasizes the importance of the principal's role in maintaining a school culture that actively encourages teacher engagement.

TALENTED PRINCIPALS BUILD POWERFUL RELATIONSHIPS, LEAD SCHOOLS TO HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT

Just as great teachers' fundamental purpose is to help students realize their full potential, great principals seek to maximize the potential within their teachers and other staff members.

For principals, this means engaging educators in ways that encourage them to fully use their strengths. As a principal in one of Gallup's focus groups commented, "Empowerment can't be emphasized enough. If you are going to be successful as a principal, the teachers have to take things and go with them. You have to be the guide; you have to be the catalyst; but if you empower them, they will take off."

A principal's ability to foster teacher engagement largely depends on his or her own innate talents, refined and complemented by learned skills and knowledge. Gallup's extensive research points to a common set of attributes among highly effective principals:

- **They are strongly determined to overcome adversity and resistance to achieving performance outcomes.** This is a crucial attribute for principals to have because they must simultaneously address the requirements of policymakers, district administrators, their own staff members, and the students and parents in their schools. These principals thrive under such conditions, leading the school to ever-higher achievement outcomes by setting clear goals for themselves and others. They then pursue these goals with persistence and a willingness to stake their own success on the school's success.
- **They are skilled at planning and maintaining order and structure in their schools.** Masters of orchestration, great principals plan, organize, multitask, and delegate with ease. In turn, students, teachers, and parents recognize these principals' dependability because they don't allow anything to fall through the cracks. Successfully implementing plans depends in equal parts on their ability to know others and to lead people with confidence.
- **They maintain a culture of clear accountability in their schools.** Great principals work with staff members to set clear, measurable performance

outcomes — outcomes for which staff members are then held strictly accountable. By involving teachers in setting these standards, principals ensure that they "buy in" to their accountability goals, rather than resent them.

- **They develop strong relationships with staff members, students, parents, and other community members.** These principals encourage teamwork and build trust with teachers. They maintain an open dialogue with staff members and are transparent about all policies that may affect them. And they forge bonds both inside and outside the school by creating an open, inviting atmosphere for everyone. Great principals are characterized by their contagious enthusiasm and ability to inspire and motivate others with their positive vision for the school and community.

Unfortunately, just as schools too often hire teachers based on criteria that have little to do with their capacity to engage students, the process for selecting principals is rarely predictive of essential traits like those outlined above. Instead, schools often resort to selecting principals using criteria such as tenure, an individual's relationships with district leaders, and simple expedience to fill the role when a vacancy arises.

TALENTED PRINCIPALS ARE MORE SUCCESSFUL AT ENGAGING TEACHERS

Gallup conducted a study in 2012 to better understand the link between principal talent and teacher engagement. Prior to being appointed to the job, participating principals completed PrincipalInsight, a talent assessment based on years of studying outstanding principals. Toward the end of the principals' third year, teachers in their schools took Gallup's short employee engagement survey, the Q¹², to gauge the effects of principal talent on teacher engagement. The Q¹² survey measures employees' involvement in, enthusiasm for, and commitment to their work.

The results of these assessments revealed that schools that hire principals with high PrincipalInsight scores have teachers who are 2.6 times more likely to have above-average teacher engagement scores three years later. Teacher responses for principals scoring at or above the PrincipalInsight mean score were meaningfully higher for

seven of the 12 survey items. The following three were most strongly related to principal talent, with the first item on recognition or praise easily the one that most distinguishes talented principals from the rest.

- Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Gallup found that these relationships vary among individual schools within the same district, indicating that even in similar contexts, some principals show a greater ability than others to foster high levels of teacher engagement. Thus, principal talent is an essential factor in improving student achievement. When talented principals create environments in which teachers are highly motivated and productive, it puts students in a better position to succeed.

TALENTED PRINCIPALS HELP PARENTS FEEL LIKE PART OF THE SCHOOL

Cultivating a school environment in which teachers are treated like professionals may also have broader implications for the culture of education in the U.S. Top-down control of teachers' work implies distrust and positions teachers as an easy scapegoat for societal ills that many relate to issues in the classroom. Principals are in a unique position to influence that perception, particularly in facilitating opportunities for parents and teachers to work together constructively. The 2012 Gallup study found that teachers whose principals scored higher on the PrincipalInsight talent assessment were more likely to say their principals engage parents in ways that have beneficial outcomes for students.

Students have an advantage when their parents work actively with teachers and schools to support their education. However, too often schools do little to encourage parent engagement. When asked about their districts' effectiveness at forming great partnerships with parents/guardians, just 36% of superintendents said their efforts are "very effective." Talented principals help parents feel like part of the school and encourage them to partner with teachers in promoting student success.

SCHOOLS MUST CULTIVATE A TALENT-BASED LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

Ensuring that principals and other district leaders can create engaging environments for staff members and students is easier said than done. The task requires building talent-based pipelines for all key leadership positions. As Dr. Gary Gordon, a strategic consultant in Gallup's Education Practice, noted, "Leadership succession involves the district's leadership team in a systemwide, continuous process of improvement."

Leadership pipelines require a long-term vision for recruiting and filling roles based on talent. Hiring decisions that are reactive rather than intentional leave schools vulnerable to the pitfalls that come with a poor leadership fit.

Building these leadership pipelines starts with training principals and district administrators to be talent scouts. These talent scouts should learn to recognize individuals with exceptional leadership abilities among the district's current staff and encourage them to consider pursuing roles that may make the best use of those abilities. The search for leadership talent should not remain exclusively within a school district, however; education conferences, professional development seminars, public school board hearings, and other education-oriented events offer opportunities for ongoing talent scouting.

"Talent" is the operative word in this leadership pipeline process. Training and on-the-job experience are important, but as Gallup's research has long demonstrated, the foundation for greatness in any role is innate talent. District leaders should be leery about hiring based on gut instinct, personal judgment, or professional connections alone. Teachers and students districtwide benefit more from an objective, systematic strategy for ensuring that talented individuals are available to serve in key leadership roles at all levels. **G**



BEYOND THE PRINCIPAL: U.S. EDUCATION SYSTEM NEEDS VISIONARY LEADERS

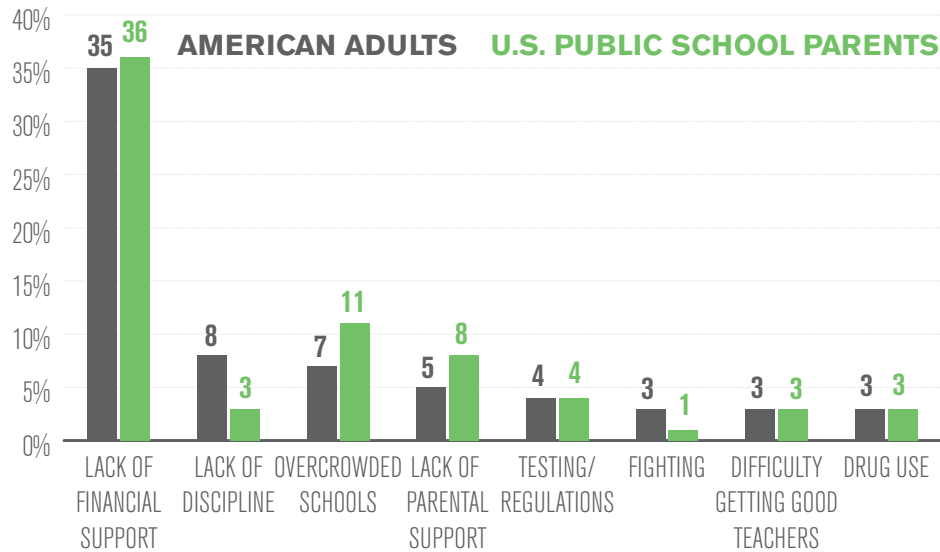
Though talented principals and district leaders are critical to cultivating engaging environments for teachers and students, accountability for educational outcomes does not end with them. Highly qualified school board members demonstrate visionary leadership for their districts. They work with leaders within the district as well as the broader community to articulate a clear set of values and priorities for their schools. And well-informed, practical policymakers at all levels institute guidelines and allocate resources to help schools attract and retain talented educators. Above all, they help schools avoid restricting students to a one-size-fits-all approach to learning.

**37% of
superintendents
strongly agree
that their school
districts are well-
governed at the
board level.**

SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AFFECTS OUTCOMES DISTRICTWIDE

Many U.S. school districts struggle with a lack of adequate leadership at the board level. Results from the 2013 Gallup-*Education Week* Superintendent Panel survey revealed that 37% of superintendents strongly agree that their school districts are well-governed at the board level. Inconsistent, ill-informed district leadership is one of the factors that explains why successive waves of learning standards and curricular requirements have restricted principals' and teachers' autonomy.

What do you think are the biggest problems that the public schools of your community must deal with?



Results from the 2013 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll

School board members in public school districts are typically elected through popular vote or appointed by elected officials. Brandon Busteded, executive director of Gallup Education, says that regardless of the selection method, the criteria should be the same: “We should be looking carefully at whether board members have relevant expertise in education, whether they are committed to being prepared and staying abreast of the issues, and how well they demonstrate having educators and learners foremost in their mind.”

Unfortunately, political appointments and low-turnout elections too often result in board members who fail to meet Busteded’s criteria. He calls for greater involvement from parents and other community members in determining who serves on their school board. The consequences of not being involved in school board appointments, Busteded notes, percolate throughout the district and ultimately affect the community’s future: “Governance is critical to getting it right. Great boards hire great leaders. These leaders inspire great teachers, who engage students to help them reach their full potential. Bad boards, on the other hand, pretty much eliminate the possibility that anything great will come from the schools they govern.”

EDUCATION POLICIES CAN HAMPER EFFORTS TO BUILD ENGAGED SCHOOLS

This report focuses on conditions at the local level — primarily, how conditions in each school can influence the effort to build engaging learning environments for students. Those conditions are too often underemphasized in the search for districtwide, statewide, or nationwide cure-alls for the U.S. education system. However, that’s not to say broader policy concerns should be ignored, or that they have no bearing on schools’ capacity to help students achieve.

Funding for education is a perennial point of contention. Americans generally dislike the idea of higher taxes. But when asked about the biggest problem facing their communities’ public schools, they are most likely to cite a lack of financial support.


By international standards, however, schools in the U.S. don’t seem to be underfunded. In fact, the U.S. devotes a larger share of its total GDP to education than many other developed countries — and the percentage has risen since 2000.

Part of the problem lies in how the U.S. distributes school funding. Instead of lawmakers devoting extra resources to schools with disadvantaged students or even distributing

funds equitably among public schools in low-income and high-income areas, much of the funding available to schools comes from local property taxes. Funding from these taxes creates substantial discrepancies in expenditure per student, depending on the property wealth of a community. That translates into larger class sizes and heavier workloads for teachers in low-income areas — factors that could influence teachers’ engagement levels and their ability to build a strong relationship with each student.

Another part of the problem is that the U.S., compared with other developed countries, tends to devote a larger share of resources to things that don’t necessarily promote the two most important factors in the learning process: teacher engagement and student engagement. Consider each of the following:

- High teacher turnover forces many schools to spend too much on recruiting and training new teachers, and not enough on identifying and improving workplace conditions that are causing so many teachers to leave in the first place.
- Many districts purchase expensive classroom technology with little or no proven learning value. High-tech devices and software should be evaluated carefully for their capacity to help teachers individualize instruction and to promote rather than distract from student-teacher relationships, which constitute the core of the learning process.
- A 2012 study by the Brown Center on Education Policy found that standardized testing costs states a combined \$1.7 billion per year, though that figure is just a tiny fraction of overall K-12 spending. More important is the opportunity cost such tests represent in terms of lost instructional time and reduced capacity to individualize students’ learning experiences.

School districts across the country should consider spending priorities with an eye toward how each new investment may affect the likelihood that schools will be filled with talented, highly engaged teachers and administrators. Rich or poor, only schools characterized by high levels of engagement among staff and students are in a position to prepare students for the shifting demands of the 21st-century job market. 

**ONLY SCHOOLS
CHARACTERIZED BY HIGH
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AMONG STAFF AND STUDENTS
ARE IN A POSITION TO
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BUILDING A WORKFORCE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The need to create learning environments that support students' strengths and engagement is likely increasing in importance with the growing focus on teaching students 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, creativity, communication, and global awareness. Such abilities are more difficult to quantify for testing than lower-order skills like basic content comprehension.

An April 2013 study conducted by Gallup in collaboration with Microsoft Partners in Learning and the Pearson Foundation asked 18- to 35-year-olds in the U.S. about the opportunities they had in their last year of school to develop seven higher-order skills. Those who said they had frequent opportunities to develop such skills — most notably, real-world problem-solving — were about twice as likely to report higher-quality work lives than those who did not experience these types of opportunities.

The study also demonstrated the importance of teachers' ability to connect with students in helping prepare them for the future. Young Americans who say they had teachers who "cared about my problems and feelings" and who "knew about my hopes and dreams" were much more likely to have developed 21st-century skills. The full report on this study is available on Gallup's website.

The Common Core State Standards acknowledge the importance of 21st-century skills; the initiative's website declares that the standards are "based on rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order thinking skills" and are "aligned with college and career expectations." Nevertheless, the Common Core has become a source of controversy, with some educators arguing that any attempt to standardize education creates harmful rigidity and stifles creativity in the classroom. The long-term success or failure of the initiative may in part hinge on whether its proposed measures are validated by studies that track their relationship to students' performance in college and/or the job market and are flexible enough to allow teachers to retain control over their instructional plans and avoid "teaching to the test."

The development of real-world problem-solving skills is particularly important in the education of America's next generation of entrepreneurs and business leaders. As Brandon Busted, executive director of Gallup Education, argues, programs that identify and nurture entrepreneurial talent are crucial to the country's economic future.

TIME FOR AMERICA TO GO TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP SCHOOL

By Brandon Busteed, Executive Director, Gallup Education



Brandon Busteed is the executive director of Gallup Education. His work involves integrating Gallup's research and science on selection, strengths, engagement, and well-being to improve educational outcomes. His mission is to create a national movement to measure the educational outcomes that matter most, connect education to jobs and job creation, and promote a paradigm shift from knowledge mastery to emotional engagement in education.

Busteed is a nationally known speaker and author on education policy. His work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* and on NPR and the NBC News "TODAY" show, among others. He is a trustee emeritus of Duke University and has served on the Board of Visitors of the Sanford School of Public Policy.

Here's a new old idea for America: Let's identify, recruit, develop, and make a welcoming home for all of the entrepreneurs in the world. We've done it before, and we can do it again. But to do it again, it will require all of us to go back to entrepreneurship school.

As Gallup's chairman and CEO, Jim Clifton, argues in his book *The Coming Jobs War*, job creation is almost entirely in the hands of small and medium-sized businesses. In other words, America's economic engine runs on the backs of its entrepreneurs. It's that simple. To remain the world's leading economic power, we need to create the world's most potent entrepreneurial talent pipeline.

This pipeline is our education system. And in it, everyone counts: K-12 public schools, private schools, charters, colleges and universities, and vocational training programs. But our current system not only fails to embrace entrepreneurs — in many ways, it holds them back.

Gallup's findings on entrepreneurs tell us they are not typically the kids with the best grades, the kids who pay the most attention in class, or the kids who follow traditional education paths. If we made this idea of becoming the world's "entrepreneurial talent pipeline" a national priority, we'd start by reimagining and reinventing our entire education system. We'd focus on building alternative pathways through our system that identify and develop

entrepreneurial talent in the same way that we identify and develop talent in academic fields.

This is not a crazy idea. In fact, Gallup recently launched a scientifically valid assessment of entrepreneurial talent, one that provides developmental guidance for the entrepreneur and for his or her mentors and teachers. Clifton has noted the transformational nature of this new tool, saying, “We need to make identifying entrepreneurs as intentional as we do finding kids with genius IQs or recruiting the next football, basketball, and baseball stars.”

Vocational training in the U.S., tragically, has a negative connotation. It’s seen as second or third place to college. But that’s about to change. Vocational training is entrepreneurship. And entrepreneurship is the hottest ticket on the planet. Farmers, restaurateurs, and trade workers such as electricians and plumbers — all of them are entrepreneurs. You don’t need a degree to start a company. But if we do this right, we’ll have a lot more entrepreneurs with degrees and trade skills, simply because we engineered these programs to embrace them and their talents, as opposed to neutralizing or marginalizing them.

All educational institutions can and must move in the direction of embracing entrepreneurs, but those who move fast will win the most talent, prestige, and alumni-funded financial windfalls. Vocational programs have a history of moving really fast. And they will be leading the way in getting America back to entrepreneurship school.

In the meantime, Gallup is ready to play its role in identifying all of the entrepreneurial talent in the country, and that starts with America’s entrepreneurial talent pipeline — our schools.

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ALL STUDENTS IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

A Nation at Risk, the landmark 1983 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, lambasted the “mediocre education performance” of U.S. schools and sounded a clarion call for sweeping reform. Three decades later, the national dialogue about American education has produced countless arguments on what schools should do differently and how to better prepare American students for success. Recommendations have focused largely on how to address shortcomings among students, teachers, schools, and entire districts.

Imagine what the world would look like if, instead, much of this discussion was devoted to finding ways to maximize human potential. Picture more education reform initiatives focused on creating new avenues that allow all involved — from students to superintendents — to do more of what they do best every day. The potential impact is unfathomable.

According to Gallup data, students’ overall level of engagement with the learning process peaks at 76% in elementary school, before falling to 60% in middle school and then 43% in high school. If schools put more focus on students’ strengths rather than their weaknesses, students would be more engaged throughout their education.


Add in the effect of teachers who have the ability to keep students focused on their hopes and dreams, and the results are amazing. It’s worth reiterating: Among the 600,000 students who took the Gallup Student Poll in 2013, those who strongly agree that their schools are committed to building students’ strengths *and* that they have teachers who make them excited about the future were almost 30

times as likely to be engaged learners as their peers who strongly disagreed with both statements.

Brandon Busteded, executive director of Gallup Education, has proposed a new Bill of Rights for U.S. students. “Fixing our economy and the education system that fuels it can’t be accomplished by focusing on weaknesses,” Busteded says. “We need to find what’s strong, not what’s wrong.”

It ensures that students at all levels of the U.S. education system are able to agree with the following three statements about their experiences at school:

1. I have someone who cares about my development.
2. I do what I like to do each day.
3. I do what I’m best at every day.

Securing these basic rights will change the trajectory of students’ lives. It will also transform the state of America’s schools — and help put the country on a more sustainable track toward progress and prosperity. 



ABOUT GALLUP EDUCATION

Gallup's work serving K-12 education institutions starts with a focus on the development of students into successful, healthy, and happy individuals who thrive by doing meaningful work and contributing to society. American students' ability to achieve great jobs and great lives is the ultimate outcome for which educators are held accountable. Gallup is working diligently to support education leaders in this pursuit.

To develop students, schools must identify and hire the most talented staff, teachers, and principals. Gallup aids superintendents in finding the most talented people and helps them implement strengths-based leadership and development programs for their staff, teachers, and students. In turn, Gallup helps school leaders measure and drive teacher and student engagement.

For more information about Gallup's work with school districts and other education institutions, please visit education.gallup.com, or email us at education@gallup.com.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY NOTES AND REFERENCES

Much of the data in this report come from the 2013 Gallup Student Poll, the 2013 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, Gallup's Daily tracking survey, and Gallup Panel surveys. Please see the following pages for details.

THE GALLUP STUDENT POLL

The annual Gallup Student Poll is offered at no cost to public schools and districts in the United States. The online poll is completed among a convenience sample of schools and districts each fall. Schools participating in the annual Gallup Student Poll are not randomly selected and are neither charged nor given any incentives beyond receipt of school-specific data. Participation rates vary by school. The poll is conducted during a designated survey period and is available during school hours Tuesday through Friday only. The Gallup Student Poll is administered to students in grades 5 through 12. The primary application of the Gallup Student Poll is as a measure of noncognitive metrics that predicts student success in academic and other youth development settings.

The overall data from the annual administration of the Gallup Student Poll may not reflect responses from a nationally representative sample of students, and the overall data are not statistically weighted to reflect the U.S. student population; thereby, overall data and scorecards should be used cautiously by local schools and districts as a data comparison. School and district data and scorecards provide meaningful data for local comparisons and may inform strategic initiatives and programming, though the results are not generalizable beyond the universe of the participating school or district.

To access the survey on school computers, a user for the school or district must register an account at www.gallupstudentpoll.com. It is recommended that students take the survey in a computer lab environment where all computers can be logged in and ready for polling prior to student arrival. However, any school computer with access to the Internet can be used. Survey administrators

will need to create a personal account on their school's portal at the Gallup Student Poll website. The user must log in to every computer used for polling. By logging in to the school's account and accessing the survey, each complete registered through that account is assigned to that school's data and scorecard.

2013 PHI DELTA KAPPA/GALLUP POLL

Gallup conducts an annual poll on behalf of the education association Phi Delta Kappa International. The overall objective of this study is to learn the opinions of the American public on key issues facing K-12 education in this country.

To achieve this objective in 2013, Gallup conducted 1,001 interviews from May 7 to May 31 with members of the Gallup Panel aged 18 and older who reside in households with telephones. All interviews were conducted via outbound telephone interviewing, with a national sample of adults aged 18 and older drawn from the Gallup Panel (see below for details on Gallup Panel methodology). Gallup sampled a national cross-section of households to yield a representative survey across all segments of the population in telephone-owning households. The obtained sample was statistically adjusted (weighted) to be representative of U.S. adults nationwide.

Gallup conducted surveys in English only. Up to five calls were made to each household to reach an eligible respondent.

For results based on the total sample of 1,001 adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the margin of error attributable to sampling error is ± 3.8 percentage points; in the case of subsamples, the margin of error would be greater. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls. Reported frequencies may not add up to 100% as a result of rounding or the exclusion of "Don't know/Refused" results in some cases.

GALLUP DAILY TRACKING

Gallup Daily tracking methodology relies on live interviewers and dual-frame telephone sampling (which includes listed landline and random-digit-dial (RDD) cellular phone sampling to reach those in cellphone-only households) and uses a multical design to reach respondents not contacted on the initial attempt. Gallup interviewers employ a “most recent birthday” selection method for choosing adult respondents within a landline household. Gallup Daily tracking includes Spanish-language interviews for Spanish-speaking respondents, and interviews in Alaska and Hawaii.

Gallup weights the data daily by number of adults in the landline household to adjust for any disproportion in selection probabilities and by the respondents’ reliance on cellphones. Next, Gallup weights the data to compensate for nonrandom nonresponse, using targets from the U.S. Census Bureau for age, region, gender, education, ethnicity, and race. The resulting sample represents an estimated 95% of all U.S. households.

Gallup weights data summarized at the state, congressional district, and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) level twice per year (for states) or once per year (for congressional districts and MSAs) to ensure that samples are representative of these areas.

THE GALLUP PANEL

The Gallup Panel recruits its panelists by calling prospective members via an RDD frame of landline and cellphone numbers or using address-based sampling. Those who agree to join the Panel complete a short set of demographic questions about themselves. Upon Gallup’s receipt of this information, these individuals officially become members of the Gallup Panel.

Once individuals are part of the Panel, Gallup encourages them to remain members as long as they are willing and interested. Panel members agree to participate in an average of three surveys per month. Surveys are either administered by an interviewer (over the phone) or are self-administered (either by mail or via the Web, depending on the respondent’s Internet accessibility).

RETENTION

As with any sample designed for longitudinal analysis, attrition affects the Gallup Panel. However, Gallup attempts to retain panelists for as long as possible and makes special efforts to retain individuals who are in the greatest danger of attrition. When panelists fail to respond to three consecutive surveys, they receive a postcard encouraging them to participate the next time they receive a survey. If they still do not respond after two additional surveys, they receive a courtesy call asking if there are any problems and encouraging their participation. After six consecutive missing survey responses, Gallup drops them from the Panel. Because of these efforts, attrition averages about 3% per month.

SIZE

Currently, the Gallup Panel consists of more than 60,000 individual members from more than 50,000 households. Gallup recruits new members on an ongoing basis to replenish demographic segments that have left the Panel.

RESPONSE RATES

The response rate for any individual survey conducted through the Gallup Panel ranges between 50% and 70%, depending on the length of the field period. However, to calculate the American Association for Public Opinion Research or Council of American Survey Research Organizations response rate, one must take into account all recruitment phases. The initial RDD recruit has a response rate of about 27%. Approximately 55% of those who agree to participate in the Panel ultimately are officially enrolled in the Panel. Thus, before Gallup conducts any individual study, the response rate is between approximately 7% and 10%.

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