

The American Public Speaks!

As Congress debates changes to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act with an eye to maximizing the achievement of all students, the following findings from the 2007 PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools highlight potential improvements in our nation's education policy and identify the public's interests and concerns. Now in its 39th year, the PDK/Gallup poll is the **only** authoritative source of longitudinal data on the public's views on the nation's schools and education policy.



Public Opinion Shifts Against NCLB

- ~ Only 1 in 4 Americans believe that NCLB is helping their local schools; the rest believe the law is either making no difference or hurting schools.
- ~ For the first time since 2003, more Americans have an unfavorable view (40%) of NCLB than a favorable one (31%).
- ~ Similarly, for the first time, more Americans (49%) would blame the law if large numbers of schools fail to meet the requirements than would blame the schools (43%).

Testing

- ~ In just the last five years, the number of Americans who believe there is too much emphasis on testing in their local schools has jumped by 12%.
- ~ Eight in 10 Americans prefer that school effectiveness be measured by improvement in student achievement rather than the current method that calculates adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Narrowing the Curriculum

- ~ One of every two Americans believes that NCLB's focus on reading and mathematics has reduced instructional time in other subjects.
- ~ Nine in 10 of those who feel that NCLB has resulted in a narrower curriculum are concerned about it.

Improve NCLB Treatment of Special Needs Students

- ~ Nearly 8 in 10 Americans feel that English-language learners should be required to pass an English proficiency test before their reading and math scores are used to measure school performance.
- ~ Seven in 10 Americans question holding special education students to the same standards as all other students.

Globalization

- ~ Nearly 6 in 10 Americans think that students need to spend more time learning about other nations and cultures.
- ~ Nearly 9 in 10 Americans believe that all children should become proficient in a second language in addition to English; 7 in 10 believe that foreign language instruction should begin in elementary school.

High Marks for Our Public Schools

- ~ Nearly 5 in 10 Americans grade the schools in their community with an A or B, and nearly 7 in 10 public school parents give the schools their children attend an A or B.

PDK International is a 501(c)(3) association of over 40,000 education professionals that promotes high-quality education for all since 1906. To read the full report of the poll, including information on the survey methodology, visit www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kpollpdf.htm.

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