TQ RESEARCH & POLICY
BRIEF

PROSPECTS FOR THE PROFESSION:

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH ON TEACHERS

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This comprehensive review of 16 nationally representative public opinion polls conducted between 2000 and 2006 provides insight into how teachers, school administrators, parents, and the general public view the teaching profession. It looks specifically at issues of teacher availability, recruitment, and retention for at-risk and hard-to-staff schools and offers guidance to education policymakers as they work to improve teacher quality and staff all classrooms with highly qualified teachers. Among its findings is that although the profession continues to be attractive and job satisfaction is high among most teachers, polls find that one in four teachers is planning to leave the profession, including 17 percent of new teachers who say they are likely to leave. Moreover, administrators in urban and mainly minority schools and districts report widespread teacher shortages. However, many teachers profess a willingness to move to hard-to-staff schools if there are high levels of administrator support. Reasons for these findings as well as the favorability of potential policy solutions are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

To achieve high levels of learning among at-risk students, there is no surer work that state education leaders can undertake than the cultivation of teacher quality. Improvements in the availability, recruitment, and retention of highly qualified and effective teachers for hard-to-staff schools will do more to ensure that all students are proficient in all core academic subjects before the end of this decade than any other set of policy interventions in existence. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) makes this claim with confidence and in concert with myriad researchers who have found that high-quality teachers can have a greater impact on student learning than any other school factor. Furthermore and compellingly, most members of the American public agree. As this comprehensive review of recent public opinion polls will demonstrate, although raising teacher quality is complex, difficult, and expensive work, the public supports the endeavor, the challenges are not insurmountable, and the goal of getting a highly qualified teacher in every classroom in America is not too distant a dream.

This review of 16 nationally representative opinion polls gauging the attitudes and opinions of teachers, local school administrators, parents, and the general public illuminates the sources for this optimism as well as many reasons for caution. For example, although most teachers in the United States are satisfied with their work and have made teaching a lifelong career choice, many indicate they have plans to leave the profession within the next few years. Although many teachers are open to moving to schools where they are needed as well as to policy changes that can affect their compensation and other aspects of their work, school administrators report widespread shortages of teachers in low-income and mainly minority schools. And while many parents would support their child's decision to become a teacher, almost a quarter of teachers would not recommend the profession to recent college graduates. Further, as the authors of the Public Agenda report, *A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why* (Farkus, Johnson, & Foleno, 2000), write:

> While young college graduates are not crashing the gates to become teachers, many are intrigued by the profession and could be convinced to join its ranks. On the other hand, to deliver what many of them want—kids who are dedicated, well-behaved and interested in learning—is no simple matter. And changing some of their negative impressions of the schools and the profession calls for much more than simple image management (p. 17).

All told, the teaching profession remains fairly attractive. However, it will take many good ideas and hard work to improve the availability, recruitment, and retention of teachers—especially for at-risk students and schools.

Fortunately, education leaders working to raise teacher quality have a clear mandate from the American people to do so. According to a survey conducted by Hart Research and Harris Interactive for The Teaching Commission (2005), nine in 10 adults including teachers believe it is very important to ensure that a high-quality teacher is in every classroom. Haselkorn and Harris (2001) in their survey for Recruiting New Teachers found that roughly the same percentage of Americans believed this in 2001 as well. The Teaching Commission report also notes:

> By a lopsided margin, the public believes that the quality of a student's teacher is the single most important factor in determining students' academic achievement (45 percent), well ahead of parental involvement (29 percent), facilities and resources (12 percent), or the quality of the principal (3 percent) (p. 1).

A survey conducted for the Public Education Network and *Education Week* (2003) determined that more registered voters indicate that raising teacher quality is their greatest priority for improving public education, more than reducing class sizes or providing early childhood education for all children. Experimental research provides strong evidence that the public is not wrong: Effective teachers do appear to have a greater impact on student achievement gains—especially for low-income students and especially in mathematics—than the school a student attends (Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004).

To assist policymakers as they make decisions that affect teacher quality, this paper summarizes the information related to issues of teacher availability, recruitment, and retention gleaned from 16 opinion polls conducted between 2000 and 2006. Some of these surveys count only teachers among their respondents, while others include principals, parents, superintendents, and the public. Two focus primarily on teachers with five years of experience or less. The appendix lists the polls reviewed as well as a brief description of their samples and an approximation of their sampling errors. The scope of the present review is limited to issues of availability, recruitment, and retention. However, there is a significant amount of polling data that illuminates teachers' and the public's attitudes toward their preferred ways to evaluate and compensate teachers once they are on the job as well as how they feel about unions, tenure, standards, assessments, and accountability.

Public opinion polls are powerful tools. They illuminate trends that are otherwise hidden, giving insight, for example, into what public school teachers—all 3.1 million of them—generally think and how the public generally views the profession. Polling results ought to be read judiciously, however. Sampling error may slightly skew results, respondents may misinterpret questions, and opinions often change given more information, more time, or different contexts. Public opinion research is one way leaders can learn how much work still needs to be done and how to direct their resources to improve the availability, recruitment, and retention of teachers in at-risk schools.

This paper begins with an examination of polling data that tap into the desirability and attractiveness of the teaching profession at the beginning of the 21st century as well as into what kinds of people the public thinks ought to be in the teacher supply pool in the first place. Next, a review of polls that survey teachers and the public about financial incentives and other recruitment efforts is presented. A close look at the condition of teachers' work and what compels teachers to stay or leave the profession follows. Finally, a compendium of advice from the public and teachers is presented on the best policies, in their view, to improve teacher quality.

TEACHER AVAILABILITY

To ensure that every school in every state is staffed with highly qualified and effective teachers, education leaders must be concerned with four aspects of the supply of teachers: its quantity, quality, assortment, and distribution. That is, a school principal looking to fill a vacancy would prefer to have a large group (quantity) of good candidates (quality) to choose from, whether that principal is looking for a special education teacher or a social studies teacher (assortment) or is working in a high-needs urban school or a well-resourced suburban school (distribution). Toward that end, it is important that state education leaders have a sense of how attractive the teaching profession is to future members of the workforce overall in order to think of informed ways to expand the size of the potential pool of teachers. They would then need to develop the best ways to nurture these teachers' professional learning to ensure that only high-quality candidates comprise that expanded pool. Additionally, policymakers must figure out ways to direct the ambition of such candidates to work in high-needs subject areas and schools.

Many schools and districts experience difficulty finding teachers to staff all their classrooms, especially urban schools (Public Agenda, 2000). Overall, more than three quarters of American public school principals and superintendents report that they face a shortage of teachers at least for some subject areas, and more than twice as many urban superintendents as suburban superintendents say they face a "widespread" shortage (26 percent compared with 11 percent suburban). Overall, half of the administrators surveyed reported that it is the quantity and not the quality of potential hires that is the problem (while 13 percent suggest that neither is a problem for them). In fact, a slight majority (52 percent) say the quality of teachers coming into the profession is improving. Still, these numbers suggest that more work needs to be done. As another indicator of the availability of qualified teachers, one in four teachers who have been teaching for five or fewer years said they faced “hardly any competition” when they first applied to a teaching position within their current district (Farkas, Johnson, & Duffett, 2003, for Public Agenda).

HOW ATTRACTIVE IS THE TEACHING PROFESSION AS A CAREER?

For the National Center for Education Information (NCEI), Feistritzer and Shankar (2005b) asked a representative sample of teachers to choose three reasons from a list of 17 that represented why they originally chose to become teachers. The most frequently chosen option was “a desire to work with young people” (75 percent). The next six most frequently cited reasons were: “an interest in the subject matter field” (38 percent), “the influence of a teacher in elementary or secondary school” (35 percent), “the value or significance of education to society,” (28 percent), “a long summer vacation” (17 percent), and “job security” and “spend more time with my family” (both 15 percent). “Financial rewards” was the least cited option (3 percent). Interestingly, 10 percent said employment mobility was one of their top three reasons, and 6 percent said teaching was “one of the few professions open to me.”

In its 2000 *A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why* report, Public Agenda polled college graduates under the age of 30—people who could be but are not now teachers nor are currently training to become teachers—about their perceptions of the teaching profession and under what circumstances they would themselves consider becoming a teacher. Eighteen percent said they would “very seriously” consider it and a full half said it was “one of many jobs they would consider.” Although a third of college graduates under 30 said they could never imagine themselves teaching, most are not repelled by the idea. However, as Table 1 suggests, many would need to be persuaded that the pros of the teaching profession outweigh the cons.

Table 1. Advantages and Drawbacks of Teaching as a Career as Perceived by Young College Graduates

College Graduates Under 30 Who Say:	Percent
Teachers contribute to society and help others.	97%
Teachers do work they love.	90%
Teachers have enough time to be with their family.	89%
Teachers often have to worry about personal safety.	89%
Teachers have job security.	83%
Teaching provides a more important benefit to society than my current job.	80%
Teachers are seriously underpaid.	78%
Teachers today are often made scapegoats for all the problems facing education.	76%
Teachers do not have good opportunities for advancement.	69%
Teachers do not get the sense they are respected and appreciated.	66%
Teaching requires more dedication and commitment than my current job.	64%

Source: Public Agenda (2000)

Of those who said they would very seriously consider becoming teachers, and thus need the least persuading, 70 percent said they would be even more likely consider becoming a teacher if they "would be making a difference in the lives of at-risk kids" (Public Agenda, 2000). Somewhat more than half said they would be more likely to consider it if they could become a teacher without having to go back to school or if they were sure they would be teaching kids who were well-behaved and eager to learn. Somewhat less than half (47 percent) said they might give it a try if teaching paid more than it does.

Finally, most of today's parents are not averse to encouraging their children to become teachers. Phi Delta Kappa, with Gallup, has been asking this question of parents every few years since 1969. In 2005, 62 percent of parents said they "would like to have a child of [theirs] take up teaching in the public schools as a career," while a full third were decidedly against the idea (Rose & Gallup, 2005). In the early 1980s, parents were the least positive about teaching as a career: with just 45 percent saying they would like their child to go into the profession; in 1975, sentiment was at its highest with three quarters of parents saying they approve. In contrast, almost one in four public K–12 teachers (24 percent) said they would not recommend a career in teaching to a "talented young person coming out of college" (Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive, 2004b).

WHO TEACHES?

As for those individuals who did end up becoming teachers, more than half said teaching was something "they were hoping to do for quite some time." A third said they chose teaching as a career when they were in college, and 12 percent said they fell into teaching by chance (Public Agenda, 2000). Of this group, according to some nonopinion research (the nationally representative Schools and Staffing Survey 1999–2000), whites and women make up the bulk of the nation's public school teachers. Men make up a quarter of the workforce—which is roughly 3 million strong. An overwhelming 84 percent of teachers are white, while just 8 percent of teachers are black and 6 percent are Hispanic. The remaining 2 percent are split between Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, and Alaskan Natives (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Almost a third of all teachers in America are more than 50 years old, and this proportion has been growing larger in recent years (NCEI, 2005b).

Overall, most principals and superintendents are satisfied with the quality of their teaching staff—96 percent of principals and 98 percent of superintendents are either very or somewhat satisfied (Johnson, Arumi, & Ott, 2006, for Public Agenda). More than 90 percent of all principals and superintendents believe that all or mostly all of their teachers know a lot about the subjects they teach, treat students with respect, handle discipline problems quickly and fairly, and make sure disruptive students don't take over the class. They have less confidence that all or mostly all of their teachers "have high academic expectations for all of the students they teach" (83 percent of superintendents and 89 percent of principals say so) or "have a real knack for inspiring and motivating kids to do their best" (66 percent of superintendents and 76 percent of principals). Importantly, however, there are differences in administrators' satisfaction in their teachers depending on the demographics of the student bodies. In mainly white schools, for example, 65 percent of principals are "very satisfied" with their teaching staff, while only 44 percent of principals are so satisfied in schools with mainly minority student bodies. Moreover, in lower income districts, only 31 percent of superintendents are very satisfied while 63 percent of the superintendents of higher income school districts are very satisfied with their teaching staff.

WHO OUGHT TO TEACH?

Americans, not surprisingly, have strong opinions on the characteristics of good teachers. In 2002, ETS commissioned a poll (Hart & Teeter) of the general public as well as teachers and administrators that asked what attributes, in their opinion, comprise quality teachers. Table 2 details the results.

Interestingly, both educators and the general public seem to value the ability to inspire students and convey information more than whether teachers have experience or an advanced degree.

Nevertheless, other polls indicate that the public is not willing to skip formal training altogether. Although one poll of registered voters found that only 54 percent favor banning teachers with emergency licenses from teaching in schools that are identified as low performing (Public Education Network and *Education Week*, 2003), another poll of the general public (registered voters or not) found that 75 percent of Americans oppose giving licenses to teachers who have had no teacher preparation (Recruiting New Teachers, 2001). In fact, 76 percent favor making teacher licensing standards higher and even more (80 percent) believe that parents should receive information about the qualifications of their child's teacher at the beginning of the year. This is perhaps because only a quarter of the public strongly agrees that their local school district always hires fully qualified teachers.

Among educators, say Public Agenda (2000), a little more than half of principals and superintendents surveyed thought it was a "good idea" to "open up the teaching profession to qualified, motivated people who want to be teachers but who have not had formal teacher training," while just four in 10 teachers thought it was a good idea. More recent data suggests that alternative certification as a policy solution has yet to take off. It shows that very few superintendents and principals—just 4 percent of both groups—say relying more heavily on alternative certification programs would be "very effective" in improving teacher quality (Public Agenda, 2006). According to a 2003 poll of the general public, 78 percent of registered voters support "encouraging individuals from other fields to enter teaching by alternative routes outside the traditional teacher preparation system in colleges and universities" (Public Education Network and *Education Week*, 2003). In sum, alternative routes to teaching have mixed support among both educators and the public.

Table 2. Attributes of Quality Teachers

Aspect of a Good Teacher	% of Adults Who Agree	% of Educators Who Agree
Having skills to design learning experiences that inspire/interest children.	42%	56%
Having a lot of enthusiasm for the job.	31%	27%
Having a caring attitude toward students.	26%	33%
Having a thorough understanding of their subject.	19%	15%
Having a lot of involvement with parents.	16%	6%
Having several years experience as classroom teacher.	6%	6%
Having advanced degrees from good schools.	4%	3%

Source: ETS (2002)

Some of the support that does exist for alternate routes may stem from the fact that many people believe the certification and licensing processes in many states are overly burdensome. Table 3 displays data collected by The Teaching Commission that indicates that roughly two in 10 teachers found the certification and licensing system frustrating; however, more than three of the remaining 10 found it to be streamlined and easy to understand. Although it may be due to the rose-colored glasses of hind sight, almost half of all teachers who had been teaching for more than 20 years remembered the process to be streamlined and easy to understand (Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive, 2004b).

Nonetheless, no matter what route teachers take, teacher education programs are not universally highly regarded among local administrators. For example, 62 percent of superintendents and 58 percent of principals say "typical teacher education programs" are very or somewhat "out of touch with the realities of what it takes to be an effective teacher" (Public Agenda, 2006). Surveys of teachers may illuminate why administrators feel this way.

HOW DO TEACHERS PERCEIVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR PREPARATION, AND HOW IS IT PERCEIVED BY OTHERS?

MetLife (Markow & Martin, 2005) asked new teachers (those teaching five years or fewer) how prepared they felt they were for several aspects of their first teaching position. It turned out new teachers felt most well prepared to teach the subject matter and to hold the attention of students, but least well prepared to engage families in supporting their children's education and to work with children with varying abilities. Fifteen percent said they were either "not too prepared" or "not at all prepared" to maintain order and discipline in their classrooms and slightly fewer (14 percent) did not feel prepared to select teaching materials. Finally, roughly one in five new teachers did not feel prepared to garner resources at their schools, either in terms of support from their principal or for getting teaching supplies.

In 2000, Public Agenda asked teachers from traditional preparation programs as well as the principals and superintendents who manage them about specific aspects of the quality of their preparation. Table 4 displays the results.

Other results from this survey bolstered these findings. Table 5 details the perceptions of new teachers' training needs as observed by all teachers —both new and veteran.

Table 3. Teachers' Views of Certification and Licensure

Which comes closest to describing your view of the certification and licensure system that you went through to become a teacher?	All Teachers	10 or Fewer Years Teaching	11–20 Years Teaching	More Than 20 Years Teaching
It was streamlined and easy to understand.	34%	28%	30%	47%
It took some time and effort but was appropriate.	42%	43%	45%	37%
It was frustrating and bureaucratic.	22%	26%	24%	15%
Not sure.	2%	3%	1%	1%

Source: Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive (2004b)

Table 4. Perceptions of the Quality of Teacher Preparation Programs Received

Area of Training	Asked of new public school teachers who went through a formal training program: How good a job did your teacher training do when it came to each of the following? (% responding "excellent" or "good")	Asked of principals and superintendents: How good a job do you feel education schools and teacher training programs do when it comes to each of the following? (% responding "excellent" or "good")
Making sure teachers have enough teaching experience in front of real classrooms.	70%	39%
Preparing teachers for the classroom.	71%	55%
Making sure teachers know how to teach effectively.	70%	58%
Making sure teachers know how to maintain discipline.	43%	33%
Making sure teachers are able to deal with the pressure and stress of teaching.	37%	25%

Source: Public Agenda (2000)

Table 5. Perceptions of New Teachers' Training Needs

New and veteran teachers asked: How many of the new teachers you see need . . .	None	A Few	More Than a Few	Quite a Few
. . . A lot more content knowledge of the subject they teacher.	13%	53%	20%	10%
. . . A lot more exposure to pedagogy and theories of education.	25%	46%	15%	9%
. . . A lot more training on effective ways to handle students who are discipline problems.	2%	21%	31%	45%
. . . A lot more training on effective ways to reach struggling students.	2%	21%	33%	42%

Source: Public Agenda (2003)

In another survey commissioned by *Education Week*, among general education teachers only 45 percent feel “very” prepared to teach students with individualized education programs (IEPs). Among special education teachers, 95 percent do. Neither groups of teachers felt that they were very prepared to interpret results from state exams to inform the instruction of their IEPs (33 percent and 43 percent, respectively) (Belden Russonello & Stewart, 2003).

All told, the quantity, quality, assortment, and distribution of well-prepared teachers has ample room to grow. Fortunately, the soil is fertile; parents and young college graduates see possibility in the profession and although there seems to be evidence that preparation programs need improvement, teachers themselves can help guide the effort. As these polling results indicate, teachers know the aspects of their training they wish were better—for example, they wish they had more preparation in the best ways to interact with students’ families, manage discipline problems, and reach struggling learners. Policymakers can thus target their efforts to improve preparation programs in these areas.

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Once the decision has been made to become a teacher and some training is received either in a traditional or alternative route program toward an initial certificate, how can teachers be recruited to schools that need them the most? In this section, a description of the polling data is presented on the willingness of teachers to move to high-needs schools as well as the kinds of incentives that teachers and the public support to induce them to go.

WHAT KINDS OF SCHOOLS DO TEACHERS PREFER?

Public Agenda (2000) asked new teachers: Given a choice between two schools in otherwise identical districts, which would they prefer?

- Eighty-six percent said they would take a school with significantly better student behavior and parental support over one where they made a significantly higher salary.
- Eight-two percent said they would take a school with administrators who are strongly supportive over one where they made a significantly higher salary.
- Seventy-seven percent said they would take a school with highly motivated and effective teachers over one where they made a significantly higher salary.
- Seventy-four percent said they would take a school with a mission and teaching philosophy similar to one’s own over one where they made a significantly higher salary.

Thus the majority of new teachers prefer schools in which students behave, parents are involved, and administrators are supportive over those where they are paid more. Unfortunately, there is no survey data as yet telling us whether veteran teachers would make the same choices. It is conceivable that salary differentials would matter more to older adults.

Similarly, NCEI (2005b; Feistritzer, 2005a) asked two samples of teachers how likely they would be to move from where they are to different types of communities within the state "where the demand for teachers is greatest." One sample was teachers who came into teaching through an alternate route, and one sample was of all teachers. Results include the following:

- Thirty-one percent of alternate route teachers and 28 percent of all teachers said they are either very or somewhat likely to move to "a rural area within the state where the demand for teachers is greatest."
- Thirty-six percent of alternate route teachers and 18 percent of all teachers said they are either very or somewhat likely to move to "a metropolitan area within the state where the demand for teachers is greatest."
- Twenty-two percent of alternate route teachers and 16 percent of all teachers said they are either very or somewhat likely to move to "a rural area out of state where the demand for teachers is greatest."
- Thirty-one percent of alternate route teachers and 13 percent of all teachers said they are either very or somewhat likely to move to "a metropolitan area out of state where the demand for teachers is greatest."

These results from both polls imply (but do not directly contend) that many teachers, especially ones that took alternate routes to teaching, are willing to move to shortage areas given the right mix of financial incentives and workplace conditions. Moreover, they suggest that rural schools will have slightly more luck than urban schools in recruiting traditional route teachers, but overall alternate route teachers seem slightly more willing to move to shortage areas.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO RECRUIT TEACHERS TO AT-RISK SCHOOLS?

In 2001, Recruiting New Teachers found that the American public values teachers highly and "three quarters or more support attracting new teachers from other fields, by providing tax credits and forgiving student loans to teachers who work in high-poverty schools" (RNT, 2001). And 88 percent of the public favor raising teacher salaries across the board.

A 2005 study by The Teaching Commission found that 77 percent of teachers and 76 percent of the public favorably regard the proposal to pay higher salaries to teachers willing to serve in high-poverty schools. There is less support among teachers for the idea of offering higher salaries to teachers who teach hard-to-staff subjects such as mathematics, science, and special education (only 52 percent feel favorably). Younger teachers (with less than 10 years experience) and the public, however, tend to support this idea more strongly (60 percent and 72 percent, respectively).

Public Agenda (2000) also was interested in this question, asking new teachers whether they believe it is a good or bad idea to pay higher salaries to teachers who work in difficult schools with hard-to-educate children (84 percent said it was a good idea; 15 percent a bad idea). Meanwhile, more teachers thought it was a bad idea to pay more money to teachers in subjects such as mathematics and science, where there are severe teacher shortages (44 percent good; 54 percent bad). Six years later, Public Agenda asked superintendents and principals similar questions. Superintendents in mainly minority school districts are especially supportive of proposals to pay teachers more to work in low-performing schools—in fact, 100 percent of them supported such a proposal (Public Agenda, 2006). This proposal enjoyed broad support among principals and superintendents in all types of schools and districts, with superintendents in higher income districts being the least likely to think it is a good idea (73 percent said it was). Superintendents in mainly minority districts also were more supportive (89 percent) than superintendents in mainly white districts (63 percent) of paying higher salaries to teachers who teach subjects such as mathematics or science where there are teacher shortages. Principals in lower income schools also were somewhat more likely than those in higher income schools to support such a measure (66 percent and 56 percent, respectively).

Although teachers do not tend to go into teaching for the money (as seen earlier in this review), according to Recruiting New Teacher's 2001 poll, more than eight in 10 Americans would encourage a family member to teach if the salary was at least $60,000 per year, and about six in 10 said they themselves would consider teaching for that salary. Thus, financial incentives could expand the pool of teachers. Further, this survey found that Americans might be willing to go into their pockets to support higher salaries to recruit teachers: More than 80 percent said they would pay $10 a year more in taxes to help even the disparity between what teachers and other professionals with the same level of education get paid. Americans in general support increasing salaries to both hire and retain good teachers according to the 2002 ETS poll—50 percent strongly and 33 percent somewhat favor it, even if it means increasing taxes. Seventy-five percent of Americans also support hiring more teachers to reduce class sizes even if it means raising taxes.

As for other methods to recruit teachers, the 2001 Recruiting New Teachers poll found that 89 percent of the public favors the establishment of a central clearinghouse where people interested in teaching can find jobs anywhere in the country and where school districts can look nationwide to find qualified teachers. Unfortunately, not many nonfinancial recruiting methods (innovative or otherwise) were interrogated by public opinion polling centers. For example, how far and wide do district hiring officials search for teachers? How many work to "grow their own?" Nor do they examine what some of the barriers to recruitment may be. For example, what problems have teachers encountered when trying to teach in a high-needs school in another state? Or to switch from teaching general education English to special education?

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIRING TEACHERS?

Because there are a vast number of schools and districts and the governance of public schooling in America has a history of weak central control, there is considerable variation in how teachers are recruited and hired from place to place. For example, only 35 percent of principals in the MetLife (2005) survey reported having the final say over hiring decisions; most (60 percent) say their role is to make recommendations to the district. Eleven percent of principals do not meet with every candidate before he or she is hired. Both teachers and the public might prefer it this way. They give lukewarm support to giving principals ultimate authority to hire and fire teachers. Still, when teachers and the public are given arguments for and against such a proposal, their support for it increases to roughly half the public and slightly less than half of teachers favoring it (Teaching Commission, 2005).

TEACHER RETENTION

Once qualified teachers have been made available and recruited to high-needs schools, it becomes extremely important to keep them there. Teacher turnover is extremely expensive—not just in terms of the sunk costs (preparation and costs associated with hiring) but also in terms of the knowledge, skills, and experience each teacher brings to the school. Given the high price of attrition,[1] what can schools and policymakers do to ensure that new teachers of high quality become perennials? It goes almost without saying that people who are satisfied with their jobs, all else being equal, are more likely to try and keep their jobs. Therefore, this discussion now turns toward measures of teachers' job satisfaction.

HOW SATISFYING IS TEACHING?

For the most part, teachers find their work quite satisfying, and according to the 2003 MetLife *Survey of the American Teacher*, 87 percent of teachers say they are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their jobs. This is up significantly from the mid-1980s when only 79 percent said so (Markow & Scheer, 2003). Similarly, NCEI found high levels of satisfaction among its sample of all teachers, with 83 percent reporting that they were overall either very or somewhat satisfied with their jobs (NCEI, 2005b).

In their survey of new teachers, Public Agenda (2000) found that almost all of them (96 percent) say "teaching involves work they love to do" and a little more than two thirds of them "got a lot of satisfaction out of teaching." This difference between 96 percent and two thirds suggests that new teachers may love some aspects of their work but may not feel efficacious, appreciated, or satisfied in other aspects. For example, according to the 2005 MetLife survey (which also polled only new teachers), most new teachers draw satisfaction from their relationships with their students (68 percent are very satisfied) but are less satisfied with their working relationships with other teachers in their school (57 percent) or their principal (53 percent) or with their students' parents (25 percent). For new teachers in schools with low-income children, these levels of satisfaction are much lower (65 percent, 52 percent, 48 percent, and 18 percent, respectively). The causes of such disparity is worthy of further qualitative research.

Still, Public Agenda (2000) found that 80 percent of new teachers said they would choose teaching again if starting over, and 75 percent said teaching is a lifelong career choice. And two thirds of these new teachers say their current teaching position "gives the sense" that they are "respected and appreciated."

WHY DO TEACHERS LEAVE?

Three surveys of teachers—the 2005 MetLife survey of new teachers and NCEI surveys of both alternate route and all teachers—asked teachers directly about their likelihood of "retention." The MetLife survey asked whether within the next five years they were likely to leave the profession to go into some different occupation. Seven percent said they were very likely to leave, and 10 percent said they were somewhat likely to leave. Among those two groups, slightly more work in schools with low-income students (54 percent), or in inner city or rural schools (61 percent).

NCEI (2005b) found that four in 10 teachers do not expect to still be teaching in a K–12 school five years from now. Roughly the same proportion of alternate route teachers intends to leave (38 percent) (NCEI, 2005a). Two percent of all teachers (7 percent of alternate route teachers) expect to be teaching in a postsecondary position, while 9 percent (17 percent alternate route) expect to be working within the education occupation, just not as a teacher. Twenty-two percent (2 percent alternate route) expect to be retired, 4 percent (5 percent alternate route) expect to be employed in a different profession, and 2 percent (1 percent alternate route) expect to be homemaking or child-rearing full time. These numbers suggest that teacher turnover is quite endemic to the profession and worse in at-risk schools. It will take strong leadership and an understanding of why teachers leave to shore up teacher retention.

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[1] Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) estimates that teacher turnover—including teachers that leave the profession or transfer from school to school—costs the nation $4.9 billion every year with local districts bearing the brunt of the expense.

The Teaching Commission poll provided some insight into some of the reasons why teachers leave (Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive, 2004b). Their poll asked teachers to list one or two of the biggest reasons that so many new teachers leave the profession within five years. Almost half said the pay was too low, and slightly fewer (47 percent) said new teachers do not get enough help and support. Thirty-eight percent said there is not enough respect for the teaching profession in society, and 25 percent said the reason teachers leave is because students lack discipline. Very few teachers indicated that they attributed high turnover to either poor facilities (1 percent) or not enough potential for career advancement (4 percent).

Although a quarter of teachers in The Teaching Commission sample indicated that student discipline was one of two of the biggest reasons teachers leave, in a 2004 survey conducted by Public Agenda, 34 percent of middle and high school teachers admitted to having “seriously considered” leaving the teaching profession because of student behavior and discipline problems. Moreover, 40 percent of public middle and high school teachers strongly agree with the statement: “If it weren’t for discipline problems, I could be teaching a lot more effectively.” Thirty-six percent “somewhat agree” with that statement as well (Public Agenda, 2004).

Satisfying relationships are critical to retention. According to the 2005 MetLife survey, new teachers who report being very or fairly likely to leave the profession are not as satisfied with their relationships with their students, other teachers, or their principal compared to those who do plan to stay. Also, likely leavers are less likely to strongly agree that there is cooperation among more experienced teachers and new teachers at their school (40 percent versus 57 percent). School leadership and feelings of efficacy also seem to be important for retention. Teachers in the 2005 MetLife survey who are likely to leave the profession are less likely to strongly agree that their principal creates an environment which helps them to be an effective teacher (40 percent of those who are likely to leave versus 63 percent who plan to stay).[2]

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[2] Although not strictly a public opinion poll, the National Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) together with the supplemental Teacher Follow-up Survey (both conducted by the National Center on Education Statistics), provides some attitudinal data that is relevant to this discussion (though based on data that is relatively old compared to the other surveys reviewed). According to Ingersoll’s (2001) analysis, 25 percent of teachers who left the profession between the 1990–91 and 1991–92 school years left because they were dissatisfied with teaching. Of the reasons they gave for this dissatisfaction, 45 percent indicated it was because of poor salary, 30 percent student discipline problems, 30 percent lack of administrative support, 38 percent lack of student motivation, 23 percent inadequate time to prepare, 18 percent lack of faculty influence on school decisions, 13 percent class sizes too large, 11 percent intrusions on teaching time, 10 percent poor opportunity for professional advancement, and 2 percent unsafe environment. Ingersoll’s (2002) reanalysis of the 1994–95 SASS data found large differences in the sources of dissatisfaction among teachers who work in high-poverty urban schools versus low-poverty suburban schools. For example, 50.1 percent of urban teachers cited poor administrative support as a source of dissatisfaction, whereas only 30.1 percent of those who work in suburban schools said so. Student discipline problems are more of an issue for teachers in high-poverty urban schools (25.6 percent urban versus 16.3 percent suburban), as was a lack of faculty influence (42.5 percent urban versus 14.3 percent suburban). Ingersoll also found that the annual attrition rate in the 2000–01 school year was 6.8 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools and 10.6 percent of teachers in high-poverty schools.

WHY DO TEACHERS STAY?

When NCEI (2005b) asked teachers to choose three main reasons they originally decided to become a teacher, NCEI also asked them from among the same options to choose the three reasons they are still teaching. A desire to work with children still tops the list (67 percent) as does the "value and significance of education in society" (36 percent) and "interest in subject-matter field" (34 percent). However, both "job security" (25 percent) and "too much invested to leave now" (25 percent) rose significantly in the ranks. Being able to "spend more time with family" than other careers and having a "long summer vacation" helps keeps teachers teaching as well (20 percent and 17 percent, respectively).

WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE WORKPLACE FOR TEACHERS AROUND THE COUNTRY, AND HOW DOES THIS AFFECT THE RETENTION OF TEACHERS?

Working conditions that may affect retention can not only include the facilities and resources to which teachers have access but also may include their workload—in terms of class size, course load, and total student load (i.e., how many students teachers are responsible for throughout the day) as well as the number of preparation and duty periods a teacher has, even the length of the school day. Working conditions also can include the school's climate and safety as well as the level of faculty collegiality within a building. The opportunities for professional learning are critical aspects of the workplace for many individuals. Finally, an important aspect of working conditions is the amount of control teachers feel they have over their work. The following sections examine each of these in turn.

How Safe Do Teachers Feel?

The answer to this question varies depending on the characteristics of the school in which a teacher teaches. Table 6 indicates some of this variability.

Do Teachers Feel Frustrated With Their Workload?

Public Agenda (2003) asked new and veteran teachers, "When it comes to class size and teaching load, are the working conditions at your school very good, manageable, or a serious problem?" Thirty-nine percent thought they were very good, about half said they were manageable, and 17 percent called their workload a serious problem.

Table 6. The Condition of Working Conditions for New Teachers

Teacher Type	The working conditions at my school are very good when it comes to having an orderly, safe, and respectful school atmosphere (% agreeing)
Urban teachers	41%
Suburban and rural teachers	61%
High school teachers	47%
Elementary school teachers	62%
Teachers of mostly minority students	35%
Teachers of few minority students	68%

Source: Public Agenda (2000)

Although MetLife (2005) did not ask new teachers specifically about the size of their workload, it did ask them to identify their biggest challenge. Table 7 displays the results for those teachers teaching in high-poverty schools.

MetLife (2005) also asked open-endedly what new teachers' greatest sources of stress and anxiety are; 34 percent said administrative, classroom management, and testing responsibilities, while 28 percent said the students themselves—including not wanting to let students down as well as disorderly behavior or lack of motivation. Other sources of frustration were time constraints, politics, and unrealistic work loads. Moreover, 40 percent of teachers strongly agree (and 35 percent somewhat agree) that they are seriously underpaid (Public Agenda, 2000).

In addition to these surveys, Public Agenda (2003) asked teachers: "If you had to pick from this list, which would be the most difficult thing about being a teacher?" Their answers: unreasonable pressure to raise student achievement (36 percent), lack of support from parents (21 percent), lack of effort from students (19 percent), low pay and lack of opportunity for advancement (16 percent), lack of support from administrators (7 percent), and not sure (2 percent).

How Much Control Do Teachers Have Over the Decisions That Affect Their Practice?

In another Public Agenda (2001) survey, *Just Waiting to be Asked*, 43 percent of teachers strongly agree (and 27 percent somewhat agree) that "rank-and-file teachers are often left out of the loop in their districts' decision-making process." However, in its 2003 survey, 88 percent of teachers reported either being very or somewhat interested in having more influence over and getting more involved in decisions about curriculum and instruction.

How Are New Teachers Inducted Into the Occupation?

Quasi-experimental research has shown that new teachers who are exposed to high-quality induction programs, with mentoring as a critical component, are more likely to remain in the profession (Cohen, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). However, 18 percent of the new teachers in MetLife 2005 survey did not even receive a tour of the school facility to learn the locations of the bathrooms or library, and 19 percent were not assigned a mentor—a more experienced teacher as a guide. Of those who were assigned a mentor, 16 percent of the new teachers found their mentors not too helpful, or not at all helpful, especially when it came to

Table 7. Biggest Challenges for New Teachers

Biggest Challenge	Asked of new teachers working in schools with 50 percent or more low-income students (% agreeing)
Communicating with and involving parents	40%
Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom	20%
Getting sufficient resources and materials	19%
Preparing students for testing	11%
Getting needed guidance and support	8%
No answer	2%

Source: MetLife (2005)

teaching the curriculum, classroom management, and administrative responsibilities. Still, 95 percent of all teachers surveyed by The Teaching Commission (2005) believe that assigning experienced mentors to new teachers is a worthwhile reform proposal (including 88 percent who feel "very favorably" toward such a reform), with 82 percent of the general public agreeing.

The 2001 Recruiting New Teachers poll also found that more than nine in 10 members of the public favor induction programs that match new teachers with successful veteran teachers. Unfortunately for this perspective, a poll conducted for *Education Week* (Belden Russonello & Stewart, 2005) found that only eight in 10 superintendents report having a districtwide induction program for new teachers.

OVERALL POLICY SOLUTIONS

WHAT TEACHER QUALITY SOLUTIONS ARE MOST FAVORED?

Knowing the current levels of acceptance for certain policy solutions could help policymakers design appropriate ways to implement the ones they believe will be effective and feasible. Table 8 displays several of these policy solutions and how strongly they are favored by different groups of stakeholders. Reducing class size is a popular prescription for improving teacher quality, especially among teachers. Although evidence based on experiments or quasi-experiments is mixed as to whether smaller classes in and of themselves will improve the effectiveness of teachers in terms of improving student achievement, these results suggest that reducing class sizes may have an influence on teacher retention. It could alleviate some of the reasons teachers cite for high turnover, including unsatisfying student-teacher relationships (MetLife, 2005) (as there would be fewer to manage) as well as reduce student discipline problems (Public Agenda, 2004). However, it would require an increased quantity of qualified teachers—relatively difficult to come by in some parts of today's teacher labor market—but its potential effect on retention may ultimately reduce the demand for new teachers over time.

Another popular solution is increasing teacher salaries across the board in order to recruit and retain teachers. Not surprisingly perhaps, teachers find this solution much more favorable than the public. Offering higher salaries to only those who work in hard-to-staff subjects, on the other hand, received mixed support. Teachers were less in favor of it than other groups. Interestingly, more principals working in higher income schools supported it than principals in lower income schools.

Of the other solutions listed in Table 8, neither much of the public nor many teachers are willing to lower standards to improve the availability of teachers, but few are opposed to alternative teacher certification (though, as the earlier discussion of alternative certification revealed, it is not embraced as a cure-all even in traditionally hard-to-staff schools and districts). Also, eliminating tenure for teachers gets mixed support among both teachers, principals, and the public.

The public also supports requiring teachers to pass rigorous tests of their subject matter more than teachers do. This may be explained by a finding reviewed earlier—that most teachers feel well prepared in their subject matter, and so they may believe that a test result would not reveal much. Finally, tying sanctions and rewards to teachers based on student performance receives even less favor than many other solutions to improve teacher quality among all groups polled. Still there is a slight and possibly growing base of support on which policymakers could build if they hoped to implement such a solution.

Principals and superintendents for their part are increasingly optimistic they can meet the highly qualified teacher requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Public Agenda (2006) found that 71 percent of principals say it is realistic for their district to meet NCLB's teacher quality goals (up from 59 percent in 2003). Superintendents are a bit less sanguine—59 percent believe it is realistic, up only 4 percent since 2003. This review of public opinion research illuminated both the problems and the possibilities that these educators face and give some direction for how state education leaders can help.

Unfortunately, these surveys leave many questions unanswered. For example, in terms of learning more about the availability of new teachers and the best ways to recruit them, an important question would be: How do prospective teachers view their chosen profession? And how similar are these views to those of the new teachers that MetLife and Public Agenda polled? What kinds of schools do they aspire to teach in and why? To what extent do loan forgiveness programs factor in to their decision to become teachers? What do they expect in terms of salary and job satisfaction and a career trajectory in three years? In 10? In terms of retention, none of the extant opinion surveys attempt to gauge what the implications are for teacher retention due to recent trends to centralize curriculum decisions and increase school accountability for student achievement.

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality is committed to helping find answers to such questions and others to assist regional comprehensive assistance centers, states, and other education stakeholders in strengthening the quality of teaching for all students. This review of public opinion research on the availability, recruitment, and retention of teachers in at-risk schools is just a beginning.

Table 8. Advice for Improving Teacher Quality

Policy Solution	% of new teachers who say item is a "very effective" way to improve teaching quality (Public Agenda, 2000)	% of adults who are "favorable" toward item (Recruiting New Teachers, 2001)	% adults who "strongly favor" item to improve teaching quality (ETS, 2002)	% of teachers who "strongly" or "somewhat favor" item (Public Agenda, 2003)	% of teachers who agree item would "strengthen teaching as a profession" (NCEI, 2005b)	% of adults who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education (Teaching Commission, 2005~)	% of teachers who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education (Teaching Commission, 2005~)	% of principals who say the item would be "very effective" at improving teacher quality (Public Agenda, 2006)
Reduce class size.	86%	n/a	62% (45% even if it means increasing taxes)	*	n/a	36%	67%	54%
Require secondary school teachers to major in the subject they teach.	59%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Increase professional development opportunities for teachers.	57%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	73% ("providing high-quality professional development and ongoing training to teachers")	76% ("providing high-quality professional development and ongoing training to teachers")	62%
Increase teacher salaries (across the board).	52%	n/a	58% (50% even if it means increasing taxes)	*	n/a	47% (45% even if it means increasing taxes)	77% (61% even if it means increasing taxes)	45%
Offer higher salaries in hard-to-staff subjects such as mathematics, science, and special education to attract teachers with specific qualifications.	44% (think it's a "good idea")	n/a	n/a	50% of new teachers, 40% of veteran teachers	n/a	54%	36%	56% (of principals in higher income schools) 48% (in lower income schools)

Policy Solution	% of new teachers who say item is a "very effective" way to improve teaching quality	% of adults who are "favorable" toward item	% adults who "strongly favor" item to improve teaching quality	% of teachers who "strongly" or "somewhat favor" item	% of teachers who agree item would "strengthen teaching as a profession"	% of adults who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education	% of teachers who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education	% of principals who say the item would be "very effective" at improving teacher quality
Require new teachers to spend more time under supervision of experienced teachers.	51%	"More than 9 in 10 favor so-called induction programs"	n/a	n/a	n/a	67% ("requiring schools to assign an experienced teacher to serve as a mentor")	88% ("requiring ("requiring schools to assign an experienced teacher to serve as a mentor")	54%
Require a graduate degree in education.	20%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20%
Require teachers to pass tough tests of their subject-area knowledge.	16%	n/a	n/a	n/a	51%	73% ("introduce a proficiency exam for entrance into teaching, similar to the Bar Exam")	47%	n/a
Eliminate teacher tenure.	12%	n/a	65% (support making it "easier to fire teachers who are not competent")	—	27%	29% ("giving principals the ultimate authority to hire and fire teachers based on their performance")	15% ("giving principals the ultimate authority to hire and fire teachers based on their performance")	29%

Policy Solution	% of new teachers who say item is a "very effective" way to improve teaching quality	% of adults who are "favorable" toward item	% adults who "strongly favor" item to improve teaching quality	% of teachers who "strongly" or "somewhat favor" item	% of teachers who agree item would "strengthen teaching as a profession"	% of adults who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education	% of teachers who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education	% of principals who say the item would be "very effective" at improving teacher quality
Tie teacher rewards and sanctions to student performance.	12%	n/a	45%	38% ("giving financial incentives to those whose kids routinely score higher than similar students on standardized exams")*	42% ("pay teachers based on job performance")	25% (student performance "as measured by gains in test scores")	3% (student performance "as measured by gains in test scores")	17%
Change teacher certification procedures to allow for college graduates and midcareer professionals who have not had traditional education school training more opportunity to become teachers.	8% ("relying more heavily on alternative certification programs" while 39% say it's a good idea to open up the teaching profession to qualified, motivated people … who have not had formal training")	75% "support attracting new teachers from other fields"	n/a	56% of new teachers and 45% of veteran teachers "think alternative certification is generally a good idea"	58% ("recruit individuals from other careers into teaching")	41%	21%	4% ("relying more heavily on alternative certification programs")

Policy Solution	% of new teachers who say item is a "very effective" way to improve teaching quality	% of adults who are "favorable" toward item	% adults who "strongly favor" item to improve teaching quality	% of teachers who "strongly" or "somewhat favor" item	% of teachers who agree item would "strengthen teaching as a profession"	% of adults who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education	% of teachers who find item to be "very favorable" to improve public education	% of principals who say the item would be "very effective" at improving teacher quality
Reduce regulations and requirements for teacher certification.	7%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Make teacher preparation programs more rigorous across the board.	n/a	76% ("strengthening teacher licensing standards")	n/a	n/a	n/a	40%	26%	n/a

n/a = not asked

* When asked, "Among these three reforms, which do you think would be a better way to improve the quality of teaching: (1) expand the pool of qualified applicants by increasing pay for all teachers, (2) improve working conditions in school by reducing class size, or (3) make it easier for districts to financially reward outstanding teachers." Thirty-nine percent of teachers chose the first option, 47 percent chose reducing class size, 9 percent said rewarding great teachers, and 5 percent were unsure (Public Agenda, 2003).

— When asked if you had the choice, would you personally be willing to trade tenure for a pay increase (e.g., $5,000 per year), or would the pay increase have to be a lot higher, or would you rather hold on to tenure? Thirty-one percent would trade tenure for a pay increase, 26 percent said the increase would have to be a lot higher, 29 percent would hold on to tenure, and 14 percent were unsure (Public Agenda, 2003).

~ Some of the results from this poll were taken from Peter D. Hart Research Associates and Harris Interactive, 2004a, 2004b.

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APPENDIX.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE POLLS REVIEWED

Table 9 lists the 16 nationally representative polls reviewed for this brief, a short description of their samples, and the reported sampling error[3] for each poll. It should further be noted that sampling errors are larger when comparing across subgroups (e.g., when comparing the attitudes of public versus private school teachers or new versus veteran teachers).

Other sources of error may stem from the order and wording of questions which may influence how people answer, and data entry mistakes also can occur. Finally, the response rate for such large surveys is often low (in some cases, just a quarter of those sampled mailed their surveys back or answered their phones), thus decreasing the likelihood that the sample represents the population at large. The groups conducting all of the polls reviewed here, however, took steps to minimize such sources of error. For example, most of the groups reported that they held focus groups to ensure the construct validity of the questions they were asking (i.e., are they asking what they think they are asking, and what questions are relevant), and field tested the developed survey prior to its administration.

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[3] For example, if a polling center were to ask a random sample of 300 teachers whether they prefer cookies to apples as holiday gifts from their students and if that center reported that 30 percent of all teachers in fact prefer cookies to apples, then that center would also have to report the sampling error: say plus or minus 5 percent. That is, if the polling center were to ask the same question of 100 different samples of 300 random teachers, the center would find that between 25 percent and 35 percent of the teachers in each of the 95 samples preferred cookies to apples. Five of the 100 samples are likely to come up with a percentage outside of that plus or minus 5 percent range. Larger samples have lower sampling errors (though not proportionally). Sampling error also is affected by the size of the overall population under study as well as the variability in the characteristic of interest (say cookie preference). The sampling errors increase when comparing subgroups because the relative size of the samples decreases. For example, if say 60 percent of male teachers and 40 percent of female teachers preferred cookies, the sampling error may be +/- 8 percent because the relative size of the samples are smaller—say 100 male and 200 females. Again this would mean that there is a 95 percent probability that between 52 percent and 68 percent of all male teachers in America would rather be gifted with a cookie. One also could conclude that male teachers prefer cookies more often than female teachers prefer cookies because the sampling errors do not overlap.

Table 9. Survey Details With Reported Sampling Errors

Sponsoring Organization	**Year Conducted**	**Sample**	**Sampling Error (95% confidence)**
Education Week	2003	444 general and special education teachers	+/- 4.9%
Education Week	2005	813 school district superintendents	+/- 3.3%
ETS	2002	1,003 adults (including 409 parents of school-aged children)	+/- 3.2% (+/- 5.0%)
		409 educators (half teachers, half administrators)	+/- 5.0%
		203 policymakers (including superintendents, legislators, and other elected officials)	+/- 7.0%
MetLife	2003	1,017 public school teachers	b/w +/- 2% and +/- 3%
MetLife	2005	800 public K–12 teachers with five or fewer years of teaching experience	b/w +/- 2% and +/- 3%
		841 principals	b/w +/- 2% and +/- 3%
		1,079 seventh through 11th grade public school students	b/w +/- 2% and +/- 3%
National Center for Education Information	2005a	2,647 alternate route teachers (individuals who entered teaching through alternate routes in Texas, Florida, the Troops to Teachers Program, the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center Program, and the New York City Teaching Fellows program)	b/w +/- 1% and +/- 2%
National Center for Education Information	2005b	1,028 public school teachers	b/w +/- 2% and +/- 3%
Phi Delta Kappa	2005	1,000 adults over 18	b/w +/- 2% and +/- 4%

Sponsoring Organization (Polling Organization)	**Year Conducted**	**Sample**	**Sampling Error (95% confidence)**
Public Agenda	2000	664 K–12 public school teachers with five or fewer years experience	+/- 4%
		250 K–12 private school teachers with five or fewer years experience	+/- 6%
		802 adults under 30 with a college degree (312 randomly selected, 490 targeted)	+/- 6% (for randomly selected portion of sample)
		511 public school superintendents and principals	+/- 4%
Public Agenda	2001	404 K–12 public school teachers	+/- 5%
		475 public school board of education members	+/- 4%
		686 public school superintendents	+/- 4%
Public Agenda	2003	1,354 public school teachers	+/- 3%
Public Agenda	2004	752 middle and high school teachers	+/- 4%
		600 parents of middle and high school students	+/- 4%
Public Agenda	2006	721 public school teachers	+/- 4%
		1,379 parents of children now in public school	+/- 3.8%
		254 school district superintendents	+/- 6%
		252 school principals	+/- 6%
Public Education Network and *Education Week*	2003	800 registered voters (with oversamples of 125 registered African Americans and 125 registered Latinos)	+/- 3%
Recruiting New Teachers	2001	2,501 adults	+/- 2%
Teaching Commission	2005	807 adults (127 with children in public schools)	+/- 3.5%
		553 K–12 public school teachers	+/- 4.3%

ABOUT NCCTQ

The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (NCCTQ) was launched on October 2, 2005, after Learning Point Associates and its partners—Education Commission of the States, ETS, and Vanderbilt University—entered into a five-year cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education to operate the teacher quality content center.

NCCTQ is a part of the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Centers program, which includes 16 regional comprehensive assistance centers that provide technical assistance to states within a specified boundary and five content centers that provide expert assistance to benefit states and districts nationwide on key issues related to the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act.

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