MetLife®

The MetLife Survey of THE AMERICAN TEACHER

Past, Present and Future

The MetLife Survey of THE AMERICAN TEACHER

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

A SURVEY OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND STUDENTS

Conducted for:
MetLife, Inc.

Survey Field Dates:
Students: June 18 to June 27, 2008
Teachers: May 28 to June 25, 2008
Principals: May 23 to June 28, 2008

Advanced Strategy Lab Session Field Date:
Teacher Leaders and Principals: July 16, 2008

Project Directors:
Dana Markow, Ph.D., Vice President and Senior Consultant, Youth and Education Research
Michelle Cooper, Senior Research Associate, Youth and Education Research

Report Date: October 2008

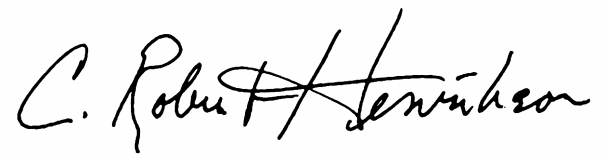
Message from MetLife

High quality public education helps build secure lives and a dynamic society. In introducing its first MetLife *Survey of the American Teacher* in 1984, MetLife emphasized its commitment to public schools and its respect for the unparalleled role that teachers play in this way:

> Teachers are at the center of the educational experience. Despite enormous daily pressures, they are expected to transmit the accumulated knowledge of decades to children of differing backgrounds, abilities and needs – a tall order. If we as a nation truly want quality public education, we must pay more attention to the needs and concerns of teachers. They must be an integral part of any effort to attain a higher level of educational excellence.

These words ring as true today as they did when the first survey was launched 25 years ago. Since that time, the volume of knowledge has exploded, along with opportunities to access and share information. Students are challenged as never before to succeed in school and be prepared to continue their education for a lifetime.

Since the Survey began, our country, states, communities, schools and classrooms have made many changes intended to improve the quality of education for every student. In the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future*, we share the current views of teachers, principals and students, compare them to the past, and offer perspective on encouraging improvements, challenges old and new, and what lies ahead. The intent and value of the MetLife Survey remains the same: to share the voices of those closest to the classroom in order to help strengthen education for all of our children. Our current survey reminds us once again that effective education is a collaborative venture depending on good teachers, able administrators, caring parents and an engaged society.



C. Robert Henrikson
Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer
MetLife, Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE **11**
INTRODUCTION **19**
Research Methodology 19
A Note on Reading the Exhibits and Figures 20
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **21**
MAJOR FINDINGS **25**
Chapter One: Are Teachers Satisfied with Their Careers **33**
Overview 33
Teacher Satisfaction – Trends Over Time 33
Teacher Satisfaction – A Closer Look 36
Principal Satisfaction 41
Summary 43
Chapter Two: Teaching and Learning **45**
Quality of Education 45
Teacher Quality 49
Professional Development and Technology 50
Teacher and Principal Insight on Standardized Tests 51
Time and Attention for Teaching 52
Class Size Perspectives from Teachers, Principals and Students 55
Students with Special Needs 60
Summary 63
Chapter Three: Student Success **65**
Preparation for Learning 66
Changes in Students' Skills by Subject over the Past 20 Years 68
Current Student Skills by Subject Matter 69
Students Rate Teacher Ability to Teach by Subject 71
Student Drop-Out Rates – Teacher and Principal Perspectives 73
Student Preparedness for College 75
Students' College Ambitions 77
Educators on Relationships with Students 78
Student Opinions on Relationships 80
Student Trust for Teachers 84
Effective Teaching – A Student Perspective 85
Summary 86
Chapter Four: Professional Relationships and Communication **89**
Guidance for Effective Teaching 89
Relationships: Principals and Teachers 91
Relationships: Teacher to Teacher 94
Relationships: Perceptions and Quality 96
Relationships: Team Work 98
Relationships: Communication about Student Progress 100
Digital Media as a Resource for Professional Relationships and Communication 103
Digital Media and Training: Interacting Online with Colleagues at a Distance 107
Summary 109
Chapter Five: School Conditions, Resources and Challenges **111**
Support of Administration for Teachers 111
Professional Development as Support for Teachers 113
Disciplinary Policy 113
Class Size 115

Teaching Materials and Supplies 116
School Building and Physical Facilities 118
Challenges That Can Hinder Learning 119
Challenges: Parent Support 120
Challenges: Poverty 122
Challenges: Nutrition 124
Challenges: English Language Facility 125
Challenges: Health 126
Challenges: Violence 127
Preparation for Dealing with the Challenges 129
Changes in Challenges from 1992 to 2008 130
Parent and Community Support 132
Relationships of Teachers and Principals with Parents 135
Summary 137
Chapter Six: The Future of Teaching 139
Teachers for the Future: Supply 140
Teachers for the Future: Turnover 142
Teachers for the Future: Retention 143
Teachers for the Future: Mentoring 144
Differences in Perceptions for Teachers and Principals 146
Challenges and Opportunities Looking Ahead 147
Challenges for the Future of Teaching 150
Teaching in 2018 150
Tomorrow's Teachers 151
Conclusion 154
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY 157
Reliability of Survey Percentages 161
Non-Sampling Error 163
Online Strategy Session Among Teachers, Principals, and Department Chairs 163
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRES 165

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

Figure 1.1 Levels of Teacher Satisfaction 1984 - 2008 34
Figure 1.2 Teacher Satisfaction by Experience and School Level 34
Figure 1.3 Teacher Satisfaction by Location 35
Figure 1.4 Factors Contributing to Teacher Satisfaction Over Time 36
Figure 1.5 Teacher Opinions on Their Salary by Experience and Ethnicity 37
Figure 1.6 Teacher Perception on Recognition for Good Performance 38
Figure 1.7 Teachers on Recommending a Teaching Career by Experience and School Level 39
Figure 1.8 Teachers on Training and Preparation by Experience and Level of School 39
Figure 1.9 Teachers on Respect by Student Minority Population and Level of School 40
Figure 1.10 Teachers on Love for Teaching by Experience and Level of School 41
Figure 1.11 Principal Job Satisfaction by School Location and Level 42
Figure 1.12 Factors Contributing to Principal Satisfaction 43
Figure 2.1 Teachers Today Rate the Quality of Education as Excellent at Higher Rates Than 20 Years Ago 45
Figure 2.2 Teachers Today Agree That Academic Standards Are Higher Than in 1984 46
Figure 2.3 Teachers on Academic Standards 47
Figure 2.4 Principals on Academic Standards 47
Figure 2.5 Teachers Today Rate the Curriculum as Excellent at Higher Rates than in 1984 48
Figure 2.6 Teachers' and Principals' Ratings of the Curriculum 48
Figure 2.7 Principals on the Quality of New Teachers 49
Figure 2.8 Teachers' and Principals' Rating of Teacher Professional Development in their Schools 50
Figure 2.9 Teachers Rate Technology as a Tool for Teaching, by Experience and School Level 51
Figure 2.10 Technology as Enhancing Teaching Ability 51
Figure 2.11 Standardized Tests to Track Students' Performance 52
Figure 2.12 Teacher Opinion on Non-Educational Responsibilities' Impact: 1988 vs. 2008 53
Figure 2.13 Non-Educational Responsibilities' Impact on Teacher-Student Relationships 53
Figure 2.14 Amount of Time Teachers Spend Teaching in the Classroom: 1988 vs. 2008 54
Figure 2.15 Time Spent on Teaching 55
Figure 2.16 Teachers Today Rate Class Size: 1984 vs. 2008 56
Figure 2.17 Teachers Rate Class Size by Experience and School Level 56
Figure 2.18 Principals Rate Class Size by Location and School Level 57
Figure 2.19 Student Opinion on Class Size: 1988 vs. 2008 58
Figure 2.20 Student Opinion on Class Size by Gender and Grade 58
Figure 2.21 Student Take on How Often They Receive Attention from Teachers: 1988 vs. 2008 59
Figure 2.22 Students Report on Level of Personal Attention from Teachers 59
Figure 2.23 Teachers Rate School Policy on Students with Special Needs in 2008 vs. 1984 61
Figure 2.24 Teachers and Principals on Policies for Students with Special Needs 61
Figure 2.25 Teachers and Principals on Students with Mixed Needs in the Classroom by Level 62
Figure 2.26 Teacher Opinion on Mixed Student Abilities Affecting Teacher Effectiveness: 2008 to 1988 62
Figure 3.1 Teachers in 2008 Report Fewer Students Unprepared for Grade Level Work than in 1992 66
Figure 3.2 Teachers Rate Student Preparation for Learning at Grade Level 67
Figure 3.3 Principals on Student Preparedness by Location and Level of School 68
Figure 3.4 Changes in How Teachers Rate Students on Skills by Subject between 1988 and 2008 69
Figure 3.5 Teachers Rate Student Skill Levels by Subject by Location and Level of School: Excellent or Good 70
Figure 3.6 Principals Rate Student Skill Levels by Subject by Location and Level of School: Excellent or Good 71
Figure 3.7 Principals and Teachers Rate Student Skill Levels by Subject: Fair or Poor 71

Figure 3.8 Students Assess How Well Teachers Prepare Them by Subject vs. Teachers Assess the Strength of Student Skills by Subject: Excellent or Good 72
Figure 3.9 Teachers vs. Students in Assessment of Subject Skills: Excellent or Good 73
Figure 3.10 Teachers Evaluate Dropout Rates 74
Figure 3.11 Principals Evaluate Dropout Rates 75
Figure 3.12 Teachers Rate Schools on College Preparation by Proportion of Minority Students and School Level 76
Figure 3.13 Principals Rate Schools on College Preparation by Proportion of Minority Students and School Level 76
Figure 3.14 Students Likelihood to Attend College 77
Figure 3.15 Students Likelihood to Attend College 78
Figure 3.16 Teacher Opinions on School Culture and Relationships Between Students and Teachers 79
Figure 3.17 Teacher Satisfaction with Student Relations by School Location and Level 79
Figure 3.18 Principal Satisfaction with Student Relations by School Location and Level 80
Figure 3.19 Students on Relationships with People in Their School Lives: Percent Very or Somewhat Satisfied 81
Figure 3.20 Student Opinion on Their Teacher's Ability to Relate 82
Figure 3.21 Student Opinions on the Impact of Differences with Teacher Backgrounds: 1988 vs. 2008 82
Figure 3.22 Student Opinion on School Culture for Encouraging Student and Teacher Relationships 83
Figure 3.23 Student Opinion on Schools Encouraging Relationships Between Students and Teachers: 1988 vs. 2008 84
Figure 3.24 Student Trust for Friends, Family and Teachers 85
Figure 3.25 Student Trust for Teachers 85
Figure 4.1 Teachers on Support and Guidance for Being an Effective Teacher 90
Figure 4.2 Principals on Support and Guidance for Being an Effective Teacher 90
Figure 4.3 Frequency of Principals Meeting with Experienced Teachers to Discuss Teaching 91
Figure 4.4 Frequency of Principals Meeting with a Beginning Teacher to Discuss Teaching 92
Figure 4.5 Frequency of Principals Observing Teachers and Providing Feedback 92
Figure 4.6 Frequency That Teachers Report Being Observed by Their Principal 93
Figure 4.7 Frequency with Which Teachers Go to Their Principal for Advice 94
Figure 4.8 Teacher Frequency of Meeting with a More Experienced Teacher 95
Figure 4.9 Teacher Frequency of Meeting with a Beginning Teacher 95
Figure 4.10 Teachers on Relationships with Other Teachers in Their School 96
Figure 4.11 Teacher Satisfaction with Their Principal 97
Figure 4.12 Principal Satisfaction with Teachers in Their School 97
Figure 4.13 Principal Satisfaction with District-Level Administrators 98
Figure 4.14 Teachers on School Culture for Teamwork 99
Figure 4.15 Principal on School Culture for Teamwork 99
Figure 4.16 Frequency of Communication about Student Preparation by Teachers at Other Grade Levels 100
Figure 4.17 Frequency of Principals Discussing Student Preparation with Principals at Different Grade Levels 101
Figure 4.18 Frequency of Teacher Discussions on Data Including Grades and Test Scores 102
Figure 4.19 Frequency of Principal Discussions with Teachers on Data Including Grades and Test Scores 102
Figure 4.20 Teachers on Use of Software to Track Student Progress 103
Figure 4.21 Principals on Use of Software to Track Student Progress 104
Figure 4.22 Teachers on Their Use of the Internet as a Teaching Resource 104
Figure 4.23 Principals on Their Use of the Internet as a Leadership Resource 105
Figure 4.24 Teachers on Use of Teaching-Related Blogs 106
Figure 4.25 Principals on Use of Teaching or Principal-Related Blogs 106

Figure 4.26 Teachers Who Have Taken a Course Online 107
Figure 4.27 Principals Who Have Taken a Course Online 107
Figure 4.28 Teachers and Principals on Communicating With Out of District Counterparts 108
Figure 4.29 Teacher Use of Online Communities 109
Figure 4.30 Principal Use of Online Communities 109
Figure 5.1 Teachers and Principals on Support of the Administration 112
Figure 5.2 Teachers Rate the Support They Receive from the Administration in 1984 vs. 2008 112
Figure 5.3 Teachers and Principals on Professional Development for Teachers 113
Figure 5.4 Teachers and Principals on Disciplinary Policy 114
Figure 5.5 Teachers Rate Their School on Disciplinary Policy in 1984 vs. 2008 115
Figure 5.6 Differences Between Teachers and Principals Rate Factors Influencing School Quality 116
Figure 5.7 Teachers and Principals on Availability of Teaching Materials and Supplies 117
Figure 5.8 Teachers Rate Their School on Availability of Supplies in 2008 vs. 1984 117
Figure 5.9 Teachers and Principals on School Physical Facilities 118
Figure 5.10 Teachers Rate Their School's Physical Facilities in 1984 vs. 2008 119
Figure 5.11 Summary of Challenges for a Quarter or More Students, Teachers and Principals 120
Figure 5.12 Teachers and Principals on Lack of Support from Parents 121
Figure 5.13 Teachers Rate Parental Support in 1984 vs. 2008 122
Figure 5.14 Teachers and Principals on Poverty 123
Figure 5.15 Teachers and Principals on Poor Nutrition 125
Figure 5.16 Teachers and Principals on Problems with Speaking and/or Understanding English 126
Figure 5.17 Teachers and Principals on Poor Health 127
Figure 5.18 Teachers and Principals on Violence in Schools 128
Figure 5.19 Students on Safety 128
Figure 5.20 Differences in Student Feelings of Safety Over 15 Years 129
Figure 5.21 Students on Concerns for Physical Safety 129
Figure 5.22 Summary of Preparation to Deal with Challenges: Level of Preparation 130
Figure 5.23 Differences in Problems Hindering Learning for At Least a Quarter of Students, According to Teachers: 1992 vs. 2008 131
Figure 5.24 Differences in Teacher Preparation for Helping Students with Problems: 1992 vs. 2008 132
Figure 5.25 Teachers and Principals on Parental and Community Support for the School 133
Figure 5.26 Teachers and Principals on Relationships with Parents and Schools 134
Figure 5.27 Teachers Ratings of Very Satisfied on Student, Principal and Parent Relationships 2005 to 2008 136
Figure 5.28 Teacher Satisfaction with Parent Relations by School Location and Level 137
Figure 5.29 Principal Satisfaction with Parent Relations by School Location and Level 137
Figure 6.1 Teachers on the Severity of the Problem of Getting Enough Qualified Teaches in Their School 141
Figure 6.2 Principals on the Severity of the Problem of Getting Enough Qualified Teaches in Their School 141
Figure 6.3 Teachers on the Severity of the Problem of Teacher Turnover in Their School 142
Figure 6.4 Principals on the Severity of the Problem of Teacher Turnover in Their School 143
Figure 6.5 Education Leader Assessment of Effective Mentoring Program Characteristics 145
Figure 6.6 The Biggest Current Challenges in the School Environment 148
Figure 6.7 Prioritization of Solutions Challenges in the School Environment 149
Figure 6.8 The Biggest Challenges Facing the Teaching Profession in the Future 150
Figure 6.9 Students on Their Interest in Becoming a Teacher 152
Figure 6.10 Student Interest in Becoming a Teacher: 2001 vs. 2008 152

PROLOGUE

The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* began as a simple but provocative idea: listen to teachers. In 1984, Americans were concerned about the quality of education and debating solutions. Though teachers were the focus of much attention and criticism, they were largely absent from the debate. The *MetLife Survey* has served to capture and share the important voice of teachers on issues that affect classrooms and schools, issues with major implications for policy, society and the future. The purpose of the series is to inform. As educators, policymakers and the public have considered student needs and the future of education, the *MetLife Survey* has provided authentic perspectives from the people who know the classroom best.

In the mid-1980s, schools began to face looming teacher shortages, bringing to light high teacher turnover and its effects. The *MetLife Survey* brought teacher perspective on strategies for retention: adequate preparation, support for beginning teachers, sufficient pay, teaching conditions including class size, career progress and satisfaction, and home, school and community relationships. Over 25 years, additional perspectives have come from surveying others with close proximity to the classroom: principals, parents and, of course, students. From time to time for broader insight, individual reports have also included future and former teachers, university deans of education, policymakers at all levels, and law enforcement officials. Specific issues explored in depth have included gender, violence, student life, and homework.

The *MetLife Survey* has addressed issues that are both timely and timeless. While each annual *MetLife Survey* has had an overarching theme, some questions have been revisited, benchmarking trends over time. While the theme has changed year to year along with changes in education and society, its primary focus has been the same: the American Teacher. In 2008, to mark 25 years, the emphasis is again specifically on teachers and teaching: past, present and near future. As a prologue to the current findings, this overview highlights the larger themes explored throughout the *MetLife Survey* series and that have framed the 2008 *MetLife Survey*: education reform; teaching as a profession; students; leadership and professional relationships; parent and community relationships, and school conditions.

Education Reform

The release of the report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education riveted public attention on the need to improve schools and on the teacher as a primary agent of change. The first *Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher*, as it was then called in 1984, grew out of society's concern for its schools. Seven in ten teachers in the first *Survey* felt their voices were not adequately heard in the public debates about the future of education. Nonetheless, teachers expressed a

willingness to make changes in their own classrooms to implement reform they thought could be effective. In 1984, nearly nine in ten (87%) teachers looked favorably upon creating minimum competency tests for student grade-level promotion and three in five (61%) were in favor of standardized tests to measure student achievement of all the students in their school.

Grade level preparedness was central in federal policy framed as the National Education Goals/Goals 2000, which set the agenda for reform in the 1990s and sparked much innovation. With emphasis on high standards, the goals acknowledged that achievement depends on many factors, including school readiness, teacher education and professional development, safe schools and parental involvement. In 1984, over half (55%) of teachers favored increased federal funding and participation, and 70% were willing for their performance to be measured by standardized tests. By 1993, 63% of teachers felt the federal government could play an important role in improving the educational system. The *MetLife Survey* that year provided an opportunity for teachers to react to emerging federal initiatives including competency testing for students and teachers, decentralized decision-making, bolstering of school safety and prevention of substance abuse. Teachers in 2008 report less favorable views on standardized tests, compared to teachers in the past.

Beginning in 2001, a shift in federal policy defined by the No Child Left Behind Act placed greater emphasis on accountability for meeting standards, standardized tests, and low achieving students and schools. In recent years, survey findings have continued to have policy implications. Over the years, the *Survey* has informed educators and the public about topics and issues. Although issues such as rewards, satisfaction, retention and professional growth remain central, the emphasis is less on quantity and teacher shortages, and more on quality, teacher effectiveness, collaboration, and student achievement. In 2008, a full range of new trend data offers a fresh perspective.

Teaching as a Profession

Teachers were the subject of considerable controversy in the mid-1980s in the debate about educational quality. The early *MetLife Surveys*, however, gave teachers an opportunity to speak for themselves. Contrary to the perceptions of vocal critics, the findings portrayed teachers as knowledgeable, dedicated, concerned, responsible professionals who were open to change and eager to participate in reform. Above all, teachers desired to be respected as professionals. They sought compensation comparable to other professions, and conditions and materials that would enable them to perform and succeed professionally. Teachers had clear opinions about how to recruit talented individuals into teaching, engage them effectively, and increase their satisfaction and effectiveness across their careers. They expressed

continued passion for teaching, but looked for decent salary, respect in society, more motivated students, increased support for school systems.

One of the most significant areas the *MetLife Survey* has explored has been the distinctive perspective of new teachers, not only as those most challenged and vulnerable, but also as the cutting edge and future of the profession. The findings have provided insights on the policies and practices for both hiring and retaining new teachers. Beginning in 1990, a series of three *Surveys* tracked the experience of new teachers from the time they finished college and accepted positions through the first and the second years of teaching. The portrait was one of declining optimism and enthusiasm for teaching. Prior to beginning to teach, 83% agreed strongly that they "can make a difference in the lives of their students;" after the second year 71% agreed. At the outset, 28% agreed that "many children come to school with so many problems that it's difficult for them to be good students," and after two years, 50% agreed. A fifth of the new teachers (19%) were very or fairly likely to leave the profession in five years, with significantly greater discouragement for teachers in high schools, urban schools and schools with large numbers of minority and low-income students. The reasons cited for leaving included lack of parental support (40%), pay (29%), lack of support from the school administration (29%), and social problems faced by students (25%).

With insights gained from new and former teachers, and successful veterans, the *Survey* has identified and tracked major concerns contributing to teacher discouragement and teacher satisfaction, informing profiles of both successful teachers and those most likely to leave. Teachers in 2008 express greater satisfaction on several important indicators, but considerable dissatisfaction remains.

Students

Ultimately, students are the measure of successful teaching. Beyond academics, college and jobs, successful teachers help students prepare for balanced, satisfying and productive lives, and to be lifelong learners. Students entered as a voice in the *MetLife Survey* in 1988, when the student-teacher relationship was addressed. Throughout the 1990's, the *Survey* incorporated student perceptions on such diverse topics as violence in schools (1993, 1994, 1999), peer relationships and tensions (1996), values and multiculturalism (1996), gender in the classroom (1997), and school-family partnerships (1998). Students' voices continued to be heard in the next decade as well, addressing how well schools were preparing students for the new century (2000), student life at home, in school and the community (2002).

A significant aspect of student and teacher relationships addressed by the *MetLife Survey* relates to expectations and student performance. In 1989 the *Survey* report noted: "Educators have long been aware of the 'Pygmalion effect' in schools – the process through which students whose teachers expect them to learn do, and those not expected to learn do not." Although 64% of teachers overall were optimistic about the educational performance of their students in the future, nearly as many teachers (60%) in fair and poor schools expressed pessimism. A decade later (2001), only 40% of secondary school teachers, and 25% of students agreed strongly that teachers have high expectations for all students. Teachers were far less likely (32%) than their students (71%) to think their students would go to college. High income students were more likely than low income students to believe that their teachers and parents expect excellent work from them (2001), illustrating "subtle nuances of low expectations." Nearly 9 in 10 teachers strongly agreed that students need a high school diploma to be successful in life, but only 15% of teachers felt comparably about a college degree (2002).

In 1989, teachers expressed the desire for schools to be able to assist students and their families with social and health problems which affect the educational process (1989). A large majority of teachers (82%) reported in 1992 that many of their students came to school with so many problems that it was difficult for them to be good students. The most serious challenges they identified included problems with English, alcohol or drug abuse, poor nutrition, lack of parental support and violence at home or school. Fewer than a third of teachers reporting these problems felt very well prepared to help students address them. The *MetLife Survey* in 2008 includes trend comparison on these challenges and perceptions of teacher capacity to address them.

Leadership and Professional Relationships

In the early years of the *MetLife Survey*, education leaders at all levels, including principals, recognized the coming teacher shortage, and acknowledged the need to listen to, better understand, train and retain America's teachers as critical issues (1986). Principals brought comparative perspective in subsequent studies and were prominent in the 2003 and 2004 *MetLife Surveys*, which included examinations of school leadership and nurturing new teachers, respectively.

In a recurring pattern, principals have tended to have the most positive attitudes toward their schools and professional relationships, with students and parents the most negative, and teachers in between. Principals described their schools as friendly, caring and safe places, and had the most favorable views on standards and curricula. Compared with principals, significantly fewer teachers described the crucial teacher-principal relationship in their school as open, collaborative, friendly, mutually respectful and

supportive (2003). How teachers rated the quality of their school was strongly associated with their optimism about teacher-principal relationships (1989). Findings in 2008 reveal some significant continuing differences in the views of teachers and principals.

Teachers have favored reforms that could promote professional collegiality among teachers themselves and reduce classroom isolation, including mentoring programs, structured time to talk with other teachers about instruction, and the opportunity to work as teams rather than teaching all classes and subjects alone (1989). Teachers in 2008 report on professional relationships and methods and frequency of communication. For the first time in the series, the 2008 *Survey* examines the use of digital information and communication as a professional resource for teachers.

Parent and Community Relationships

Parents play an unparalleled role in the personal development and academic success of their children, and the prospect of success in school is greatly enhanced when there is a strong supportive home-school relationship. In the mid-1980s new demographic realities required rethinking of traditional parenting. Forty-four percent of homes had a single full-time working parent or two parents working full-time. Only 27% of households had two parents.[1] A small majority (54%) of teachers rated home and community support of their school as excellent or good, a rating that increased to 60% over the next decade. The *MetLife Survey* first included parents in *Strengthening Links Between Home and School* (1987), and parents have participated prominently at intervals throughout the series.

In 1987, more parents (72%) than teachers (60%) rated parent-teacher relationships as strong or good, but more teachers than parents said that their school does a good job of encouraging parental involvement in educational areas. Teachers and parents agreed on a role for parents that includes volunteer work, supportive activities and promotional efforts, and in a teacher responsibility to provide parents with information and materials to support or reinforce what is being taught in school. Teachers saw less value in parental involvement in school management or curriculum decisions. Nearly two-thirds of teachers identified lack of support or help from parents as a serious hindrance to students' ability to learn. They also identified other major family-oriented challenges: children left on their own after school, poverty, single parent families, families where both parents work. Almost all teachers (96%) said they thought that children left on their own after school was a cause of students having difficulty in school (1987) and three quarters (76%) said children left alone after school was a problem in their school (1989).

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March and Annual Social and Economic Supplements, 2006 and earlier.

In addition to its influence on student achievement, parental involvement has a significant affect on teacher satisfaction. More than half of teachers in 1985 believed that having more parent involvement in their schools would help a lot in keeping good people in teaching. In 2006, education deans/chairpersons (57%) and principals (63%) agreed. In 1987, teachers who reported excellent parent-teacher relations were more satisfied in their jobs and less likely to leave teaching. In 1992, new teachers who said they were likely to leave the teaching profession in the next five years most often cited lack of parental support as a major factor in their decision. Concern about the recruitment, retention and morale of America's teachers includes concern about the quality of home-school relationships. Teachers in 2008 see improvements in school relationships with parents, but also rate lack of parental support as a major, continuing challenge to student achievement.

School Conditions

Beyond instruction and relationships, quality education depends on creating the conditions in which students and teachers can succeed. Broadly considered these include order, safety, and adequate facilities and supplies. The *MetLife Survey* has looked at these issues throughout the series, most directly in the studies of violence (1993, 1994 and 1998) and *The Elements of a Quality School* (2001), which included perspectives on school buildings and equipment among many variables.

In 1984, 40% of teachers identified overcrowded classes the most serious problem, and the issue has remained prominent. It remained the top concern for increasing numbers of teachers in 1985 (49%) and 1995 (53%). In 1985, 79% of teachers said "providing smaller class size would "help a lot" in reducing teacher attrition. Class size is an important issue for instruction, budget, teacher workload, student-teacher and student-student relationships, facilities and equipment. Teachers in 2008 are less concerned about class size than teachers in the past.

Facilities and materials influence instructional quality, comfort, safety, parent and community relations, and capacity to address gender and multicultural differences. School facilities, equipment and materials were addressed in the early years (1984, 1985) as sources of dissatisfaction compared by teachers and former teachers to the perceived benefits of other professions. More than a third of teachers in 1984, rated physical facilities (37%) and teaching supplies and materials (35%) for their school as fair or poor. Teachers in 2008 report more favorable views on both facilities and materials. Looking back on their first years of teaching, over half (51%) of new teachers and experienced teachers (54%) in 1991 identified "smaller classes, and better supplies and materials" as something that would have helped them be more effective.

School order and safety have been topics in the *MetLife Survey* over the years. For example, from the outset and periodically, teachers have rated the discipline policy of their school, and alcohol and drug abuse as significant issues. In the early and late 1990s, the theme of school violence was addressed from the perspectives of teachers, students, law enforcement officers and parents. In 1993, most teachers felt very safe in or around school. Teacher perception of safety, however, was correlated to whether or not the school provides a good education: 44% of teachers who said their school provides a fair or poor education felt very safe in or around their school. Half of students surveyed in 1993 reported feeling very safe. Though the majority of students had never been the victim of violence, those who had experienced violence were more likely than other students to have other negative experiences in their school lives and were more likely to say that their parents have infrequent communications with the school.

Violence was revisited as a topic five years later in 1999. In the months between choosing a topic and publishing the report, the tragic school shootings in Littleton, Colorado at Columbine High School took place, riveting national attention on violence prevention and safety in schools. Before that tragic event, one quarter of students reported being the victim of violence at school, and one in eight carried some sort of weapon to school, consistent with findings from five years earlier. More teachers, one in six (17%) compared to one in nine (11%) reported having been the victim of violence in or around their school. Though urban teachers were more likely to perceive a threat of violence, urban and suburban teachers were just as likely to have been the victim of a crime. In 2008, teacher concern about violence has decreased and their sense of capacity to address it has improved.

Looking Forward with an Understanding of the Past

Teachers were the focus of reform when the *MetLife Survey* began. One consequence of decades of change in society and reform in education has been the need to share more broadly the responsibility for student learning, with students becoming more responsible as active learners for their own intellectual development. Responsibility for guiding that development for every student is less now that of an individual teacher, and more broadly shared. In the future, the expanding role of teachers as collaborators can enhance their stature, value and effectiveness as professionals and leaders. Over the last 25 years, the voice of teachers has gained resonance as a voice of leadership in education. In 2008, the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* remains focused on teachers and teaching, and as the 25th anniversary edition, looks across years to capture trends, shares current perspectives and looks ahead.

INTRODUCTION

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future was conducted by Harris Interactive and is the twenty-fifth in a series sponsored annually by MetLife since 1984. This 25th anniversary edition includes the views of teachers, principals and students and looks back to the earliest *MetLife Surveys* to examine how perspectives on teachers, teaching and public education have changed. It documents current attitudes, examines trends and considers future implications, addressing teacher satisfaction with careers; academic standards and curriculum; student success; professional relationships and communication; school conditions; parent and community relations; and challenges beyond the classroom.

A national sample of public school students in grades 3 through 12, public school teachers of grades K through 12 and public school principals in grades K through 12 participated in the 2008 *Survey.* In addition, public school principals and teacher leaders took part in an online strategy session to discuss implications of some of the *MetLife Survey's* findings.

Research Methods

This research combined both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a clear picture of attitudes and perceptions of teachers, parents and students.

Survey of Teachers

A nationally representative sample of 1,000 public school teachers of grades K through 12 was interviewed. Interviews were conducted on the telephone. Respondents were recruited using a targeted sample list. Telephone interviews averaged 16 minutes in length and were conducted between May 28, 2008 and June 25, 2008.

Survey of Principals

A nationally representative sample of 502 public school principals in schools with grades K through 12 was interviewed. Interviews were conducted on the telephone. Respondents were recruited using a targeted sample list. Online interviews averaged 14 minutes in length and were conducted between May 23, 2008 and June 25, 2008.

Survey of Students

A nationally representative sample of 902 students in grades 3 through 12 was interviewed. The online interviews were conducted between June 18, 2008 and June 27, 2008.

Detailed methodologies of all surveys appear in Appendix A. All survey questionnaires, including the total responses to each question, appear in Appendix B.

Strategy Session Among Teacher Leaders and Principals

In addition, Harris Interactive conducted a strategy session among twenty-one K - 12 public school teacher leaders and principals recruited from a targeted sample list. The session was conducted online using Harris Interactive's proprietary Advanced Strategy Lab® Online (ASL® Online) on July 16, 2008. Doug Griffen, Director of Strategy & Facilitation at the Advanced Strategy Center, moderated the session. Respondent comments from the group are included in the report.

A Note on Reading the Exhibits and Figures

An asterisk (*) on an exhibit signals a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (–) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add up to 100% because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents. Calculations of responses discussed in the text are based on raw numbers and not percentages, therefore these figures may differ slightly from calculations based on percentages. The base for each question is the total number of respondents answering that question. Note that in some cases results may be based on small sample sizes. This is typically true when questions were asked of subgroups. Caution should be used in drawing any conclusions from the results based on these small samples. Percentages depicted may not add up to 100% because some answer categories may be excluded from the figure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future* (2008) is the 25th anniversary edition of a survey series begun in 1984, and there is good news to report. Many of the findings are substantially more positive than they have been in the past. One striking finding is the improvement in teachers' assessment of the state of their profession. Teachers today are more satisfied in their careers than teachers were in earlier years. While their love of teaching has been a constant over the last 25 years, today more teachers feel respected in society, recognized for their work and better compensated than they have in the past. They rate the quality of their schools higher, as well as their school's academic standards and curricula. Overall, principals agree with teachers on the improvements of career satisfaction and school quality and are generally even more positive than teachers in their assessments.

The trends on student achievement are also positive. Teachers view students today as better prepared for grade level work and they see improvements in student knowledge on specific subjects and skills. Most principals and teachers believe their schools do well in preparing students for college, and a higher percentage of students aspire to attend college today than 20 years ago (and girls aspire to go at higher rates than boys). Teachers and students generally feel encouraged by their school culture to build strong relationships with one another. Students generally rate teachers highly in preparing them academically, and students today are more trusting of their teachers than they were in past decades. Students often mention interpersonal skills when asked about what makes a good teacher.

The *MetLife Survey* also reveals encouraging signs for the quantity and quality of teachers for the future. The majority of teachers and principals do not see the supply of qualified teachers as a serious problem for their school, and teachers and principals also rate the training preparation of teachers for the classroom more highly than they did in the past. Furthermore, teachers today are more likely to recommend a career in teaching than they were a generation ago.

However, there are serious causes for concern which pose challenges to educators and policy makers. Educators in urban schools are significantly less positive in their assessment of many factors than their colleagues in suburban and rural schools. Teachers and principals tend to rate urban schools significantly lower on school quality, and teachers and principals in schools with a high proportion of minority students give significantly lower ratings on academic standards, curriculum, and student preparation. Urban educators also show greater concern about factors including the supply of qualified

teachers, teacher turnover, student dropout rates, quality of college preparation, school disciplinary policy, parental support, poverty and poor nutrition. One notable exception to this pattern of urban schools being more at-risk is in the area of professional development. Urban principals give professional development higher ratings than their suburban or rural counterparts, and urban teachers report that their professional development has prepared them to face a variety of challenges effectively at rates in line with their suburban or rural counterparts.

Much has changed in education over the past 25 years, and the education environment will continue to change. Education reform since 1984 has shifted from a focus on teaching to a focus on student achievement, with teachers as leaders in a responsibility more broadly shared among teachers, administrators, parents, the community and the students themselves. Teachers today have access to a wider range of resources for instruction, professional development, and professional communication than teachers did in 1984. Most new teachers meet at least once a month and a substantial amount meet once a week with more experienced teachers to discuss teaching. Most teachers also meet at least once a month to discuss student data with other teachers in their school to improve teaching. Teachers see progress in addressing outside challenges that can inhibit learning, and in how well prepared they are to address those challenges, yet areas for improvement remain. Fewer teachers today value standardized testing as a resource for improving teaching than in the past. Although some improvement in grade level preparation of students is evident, substantial numbers of teachers seldom communicate with teachers at other grade levels in their district about how well students are prepared, and ratings of student preparation do not increase as students progress from primary to secondary grades.

Looking forward, digital information and communication represent both challenges and resources for schools and for educators. Teachers value technology and use the Internet. They are using the Internet and technology in a variety of ways including accessing online courses, using software to track student performance, and participating in social networking sites related to teaching, but do so with varying frequency. In fact, digital communication and information accessing is more common among principals than teachers.

As it has done from the outset, this year's *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* has given a voice to teachers' own experiences and perspectives on their profession. Their commitment to and love of teaching comes through loud and clear. All the more reason that their voices, along with the voices of students and principals, should be heard when they raise concerns about continuing struggles regarding

sufficient classroom time for teaching and the challenges of poverty as a barriers to education. The *MetLife Survey* helps ensure that the perspectives of American teachers, as well as principals, students and others closest to daily school life are documented, shared and heard.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Public schools have improved in the views of American teachers and principals, but challenges remain.

After 25 years of reform …

… teachers are more satisfied in their careers.

- A majority of teachers (62%) are very satisfied with their careers, compared to 40% in 1984.
- More teachers (66%) feel respected in society today, compared to 47% in 1984.
- Nearly twice as many teachers in 2008 agree that their job allows them the opportunity to earn a decent salary (66%), compared to 1984 (37%).
- More teachers report that they are usually recognized for good performance (48%), compared to 1984 (33%).
- Far more teachers today (75%) report that they would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching, compared to 1984 (45%).
- Highly experienced teachers with more than 20 years of experience (67%) and new teachers with five years or less experience (66%) are more likely than mid-career teachers with 6 to 20 years of experience (58%) to be very satisfied with their careers.

… academic standards and curriculum are stronger.

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

… teachers are better prepared.

- Two thirds (67%) of teachers agree that the training and preparation teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom, compared to 46% of teachers in 1984.
- More principals (51%) report that the quality of new teachers entering the profession is stronger currently than it was in 1986 (44%), and those principals reporting that teacher quality was better in the past has declined (7% vs. 15%).

… teachers are addressing diversity better and giving more personal attention to students.

- More teachers in 2008 than in 1992 report being well prepared to address important challenges to student learning (in schools where at least a quarter of the students face the challenge): poverty (80% vs. 56%); problems speaking or understanding the English language (79% vs. 66%); lack of parental support (79% vs. 63%); and poor health (60% vs. 51%).
- Most teachers (88%) rate their school policy about serving students with special needs as excellent or good, compared to 72% who rated their school policy on children with disabilities excellent or good in the 1984 *MetLife Survey*.
- More students today compared to 1988 feel they get personal attention from their teacher most or all of the time (42% vs. 25%), and fewer students today than in 1988 report hardly ever receiving attention (7% vs. 20%).
- Fewer students (18%) agree that teachers cannot relate to them because of differences in backgrounds, compared to 1988 (25%).

… teachers are more prepared to deal with school violence.

- Far more teachers in 2008 (63%) feel prepared to address school violence than in 1992 (36%).

… students are better prepared, more ambitious, and more trusting of teachers.

- A majority of teachers (54%) report that at least three-fourths of their students arrive at school prepared to learn at grade level, compared to 44% in 1992.
- In 1988, eight in ten students (79%) said they were likely to go to college, compared to 90% today. The ranks of the "very likely" attendees increased even more dramatically over the past 20 years: from 58% to 73% between 1988 and 2008.
- Girls report that they are very likely to go to college at significantly higher rates than boys (95% vs. 86%).
- Teachers (77%) and principals (78%) report that their schools do an excellent or good job of preparing students for college.
- The number of secondary school students who trust their teachers only a little, or not at all decreased to 28% in 2008 from 39% in 2000.

… many students may not be improving sufficiently, however, as they move to higher grade levels.

- Teacher ratings of student skills as "excellent or good" are substantially lower for secondary schools than elementary schools in subjects including reading (67% vs. 83%), writing (53% vs. 68%) and math (53% vs. 79%).

… teachers place less value on standardized tests.

- In 1984, three in five teachers (61%) were in favor of standardized tests to measure student achievement of all the students in their school. Today half (48%) of teachers agree that standardized tests are effective in helping them to track student performance.

… parental support and school relationships have improved.

- More teachers today (67%) than in 1984 (54%) rate parental and community support for their school as good or excellent.
- A larger proportion of principals (70%) and teachers (63%) agree that relations between parents and schools have improved in recent years.
- Half of teachers (50%) report that lack of parental support or help is a serious hindrance to learning for at least a quarter of their students, down from 65% in 1992.

… progress is less for urban schools.

- Teachers in urban schools are less likely than those in rural schools or suburban schools to rate academic standards in their school as excellent (45% vs. 52% vs. 60%).
- Teachers in urban schools are less likely than those in suburban schools to rate the availability of teaching materials as excellent (33% vs. 54%).
- Three in five (61%) teachers in urban schools rate their disciplinary policy as excellent or good, compared to three quarters of rural (75%) and suburban (74%) teachers.
- Teachers in urban schools are twice as likely as teachers in suburban schools to say that getting a sufficient number of qualified teachers is a serious problem (40% vs. 19%).
- Urban principals are more likely than rural or suburban principals to report that more than a quarter of their students arrive not fully prepared to learn at their grade level (67% vs. 31% vs. 23%).
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of teachers in urban schools report that lack of parental support is a problem with at least a quarter of their students, compared to half of rural teachers (49%) and 41% of suburban teachers.

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of principals in urban schools see lack of parental support as a problem with at least a quarter of their students, compared to 40% of rural and 30% of suburban principals.
- Fewer teachers in urban schools than those in rural or suburban schools think that parent relations have improved recently (51% vs. 66% vs. 70%).
- Teachers in urban schools are more likely than their suburban counterparts to say that dropout rates are a problem in their district (63% vs. 32%).
- Lower numbers of urban than suburban teachers rate their students' skills as "excellent or good" in major subject and skill areas, including reading (61% v. 81%), writing (55% vs. 68%), math (53% v. 76%), science (47% vs. 62%) and humanities (37% vs. 60%).

… some big challenges grow larger.

- Nearly twice the proportion of teachers today as in 1992 say that a lack of facility in English hinders learning for at least a quarter of their students (22% vs. 11%), and 30% of urban school teachers report that lack of facility in English is a problem for at least a quarter of their students.
- Today, half (49%) of teachers say that poverty hinders learning for at least a quarter of their students, compared to 41% in 1992.
- More teachers (43%) agree that their classes have become so mixed in terms of students' learning abilities that they can't teach them effectively, compared to 1988 (39%).

Today's teachers …

… continue to be passionate about teaching.

- Eight in ten teachers (82%) agree strongly that they love to teach, a level similar to 1984.

… feel well supported.

- Most teachers (83%) agree that they have the guidance and support they need to be an effective teacher, including 45% of teachers who strongly agree.
- Eight in ten teachers (78%) and nine in ten principals (91%) report that professional development for teachers is excellent or good.
- Three-fourths (74%) of teachers report that their administration's support for teachers is excellent or good, including more than a third (37%) who rate the support as excellent.

… put a high premium on experience.

- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of teachers meet with a more experienced teacher to discuss teaching at *least once a month*.
- Teachers who have less experience meet with another teacher to discuss teaching at a higher frequency. Six in ten new teachers (59%) meet with another teacher on teaching at *least once a week*, compared to 42% of teachers with 6 to 20 years of experience, and 30% of teachers with 21 years or more experience.
- Most principals are experienced teachers: 89% of those surveyed have served in the classroom for more than 5 years, and the average teaching experience among the principals is 14 years.

… often agree with principals, but differ substantially on some major issues.

- Eight in ten principals (81%) report that teachers in their school spend at least three-quarters of their classroom time with students on teaching, compared to 53% of teachers who report that level of time spent on teaching (as opposed to disciplining or administrative work).
- Most principals (96%) rate their school's discipline policy as excellent or good, whereas 71% of teachers rate the discipline policy as excellent or good. This is the largest gap in perception between teachers and principals for this *MetLife Survey*.
- Many teachers (43%) agree that their classes have become so mixed in terms of students' learning abilities that they can't teach them effectively, compared to 24% of principals who agree. In the 2008 *MetLife Survey*, more secondary teachers (49%) agree with this statement than elementary teachers (40%).
- Principals' estimate of the number of students in their school who come prepared to learn at their grade level is more positive than teachers' reports. Six in ten principals (61%) report that less than a quarter or none of their students are not prepared, compared to 54% of teachers.
- Far more principals (79%) agree that standardized tests help teachers in their school to better track students' performance than teachers agree (48%).
- More urban principals (83%) than urban teachers (65%) report that poverty is a problem hindering learning for at least a quarter of their students.

Looking to the future, public school educators …

… do not see teacher supply or teacher retention as serious problems for their school.

- Most teachers (73%) and principals (70%) report that getting enough qualified teachers is not a serious problem for their school.
- Most teachers (67%) and principals (82%) report that teacher turnover is not a serious problem for their school.

… see teachers as better prepared.

- More teachers today (67%) agree that the training and preparation teachers receive does a good job of preparing them for the classroom, compared to 56% of teachers in 1995.

… are likely to recommend teaching as a career to young people, at a time fewer students express an interest in teaching.

- Far more teachers today (75%) report that they would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching compared to 1984 (45%).
- Overall, 27% of students are very or somewhat interested in teaching, slightly less than in 2001 (31%).
- Girls (40%) are more than twice as interested in a career in teaching as are boys (16%).
- Fewer secondary school students (21%) are interested in becoming a teacher than elementary school students (36%).

… support the concept of teamwork more than they may practice it.

- All principals (100%) and the vast majority of teachers (92%) agree that their school encourages teamwork among teachers and other professional staff.
- Principals (90%) and teachers (85%) discuss student data to improve classroom teaching at least once a month, and half of principals (49%) and teachers (51%) report such discussions at least once a week.
- Many teachers communicate infrequently about student preparation with teachers at other grade levels. Overall 39% of teachers report communicating about student preparation a few times a year or less.
- More than a quarter of teachers (28%) never seek advice from their principal about teaching.

- Among teachers with more than 21 years of experience, 33% report meeting with a new teacher to discuss teaching a few times a year, less than a few times a year, or never.

… feel schools are not doing a good job educating for global awareness.

- Nearly two-thirds of teachers (64%) and half of principals (51%) rate their students as fair or poor on their knowledge of other nations and cultures and international issues.
- More than half of teachers (57%) and principals (57%) rate their students as fair or poor on foreign language skills.
- Students rate their teachers' ability to teach about nations and cultures lowest among major categories of knowledge and skills, including 32% who rate their teachers fair or poor.

… value technology and use the Internet and digital communication in varying degrees.

- Nine in ten teachers (90%) say that technology enhances their ability to teach.
- The value teachers place on technology varies by their generational cohort: 66% of those in Generation Y (30 years old or younger) strongly agree that technology enhances their ability to teach; 58% of those in Generation X (31 - 43 year olds) and 49% of Baby Boomers (44 - 62 year olds) strongly agree.
- Six in ten (62%) teachers use the Internet as a teaching resource on a weekly basis.
- New teachers also use the Internet as a resource on at least a weekly basis more often than more experienced teachers: 69% of those with five years or less experience use the Internet as a resource for teaching on a weekly basis versus 58% of those with 21 or more years of experience.
- Nearly four in ten (39%) teachers have taken an online course for degree credit or professional credit.
- Six in ten (57%) teachers have communicated online (e.g. email, instant message, blog) at some point with teachers outside their district during the past year.
- Principals generally utilize technology and digital communication more frequently than teachers.

… but have not explored the range of digital communication available for professional development and interaction.

- 43% of teachers never communicate online (e.g., email, instant messaging, blog) with other teachers outside of their district.
- 60% of teachers have never taken an online course.
- 72% of teachers have never read or written a blog about teaching.

- 85% of teachers have never participated in a professionally-oriented online community or social networking site.

… and do not receive high marks from students on ability to teach about computers or the Internet.

- Students rate their teachers lower on their ability to teach about computers and the Internet than in all but one other subject and skill category, including 26% of students who rate their teachers fair or poor.

CHAPTER ONE
ARE TEACHERS SATISFIED WITH THEIR CAREERS?

Overview

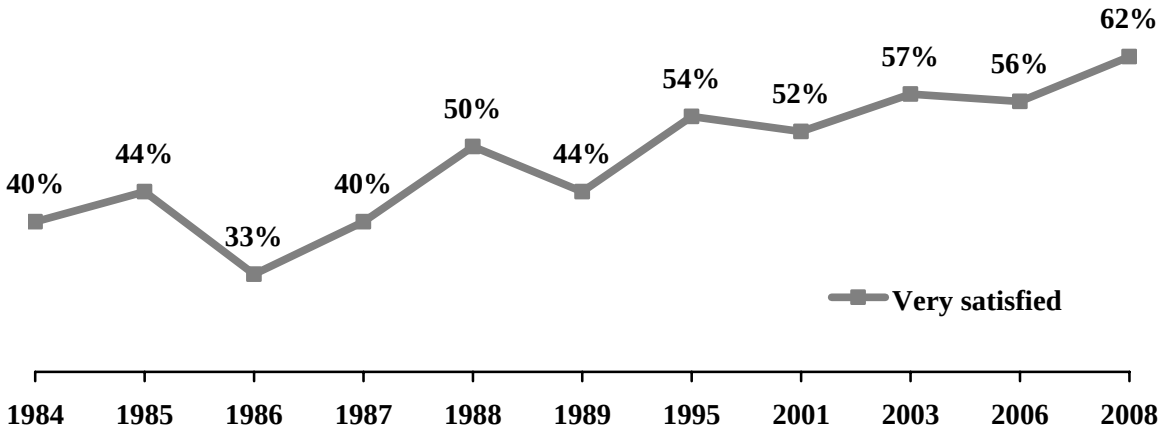
American society and the world of work have changed dramatically in the last 25 years. Those years have been characterized by new technology, changing social patterns and increased diversity, an emerging global society, and the move from a manufacturing to an information and service-based economy. Education reform gained momentum with the *Nation at Risk* report in 1983, in part to update a system originally designed to meet 19th century needs. Policymakers and educators recognized over time that rapid societal change was challenging education to keep pace with a demanding future.

In fundamental ways, the goal of teaching remains the same: challenge and nurture young minds to master and apply basic knowledge and skills, and develop the capacity to learn for a lifetime. Yet the conditions, opportunities and challenges of teaching have been changed by policy and reforms, better understanding of how learning occurs, changes in families and communities, the effects of poverty, the progress of technology, and the realities of an evolving economy. Teachers have been challenged to preserve the core and best of their profession while addressing new standards, working to prepare every child adequately and more, and aiming at a future often uncertain.

Teacher Satisfaction – Trends Over Time

The *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*, first conducted in 1984, gave teachers and others closest to the classroom a voice in the reform of education. One of its first contributions was to give teachers the opportunity to talk about their satisfaction with the profession. Over 25 years, teacher career satisfaction has increased significantly, from 40% who were very satisfied in 1984, to 62% in 2008.

Figure 1.1
Levels of Teacher Satisfaction 1984 - 2008



2008 *Q705 (Teachers) All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with teaching as a career?*
Base = All Teachers.

Today, job satisfaction is strongest among elementary school teachers, 65% of whom are very satisfied, compared to 56% of secondary school teachers. A dip in satisfaction appears among teachers in the middle of their careers, suggesting that career stage and experience have an impact. In this year's *MetLife Survey*, 66% of new teachers (five years or less experience) and 67% of highly experienced teachers (more than 20 years experience) are very satisfied with their career, compared to 58% of teachers with 6-20 years of experience.

Figure 1.2
Teacher Satisfaction by Experience and School Level

Q705 (Teachers): All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with teaching as a career? Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**94**	**95**	**94**	**92**	**93**	**94**
Very satisfied	62	66	58	67	65	56
Somewhat satisfied	32	28	37	26	28	38
DISSATISFIED (NET)	**6**	**5**	**6**	**8**	**7**	**6**
Somewhat dissatisfied	5	2	5	6	5	4
Very dissatisfied	1	3	1	2	1	2
Not sure	*	-	*	-	-	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 1.3
Teacher Satisfaction by Location

Q705 (Teachers): All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with teaching as a career? Base: All Teachers	Total	Location		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base:	1000	266	227	494
	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**94**	**91**	**96**	**94**
Very satisfied	62	56	66	62
Somewhat satisfied	32	35	30	32
DISSATISFIED (NET)	**6**	**9**	**4**	**6**
Somewhat dissatisfied	5	7	3	5
Very dissatisfied	1	2	1	1
Not sure	*	-	-	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-

Many factors contribute to the job satisfaction of teachers. In the 2006 *MetLife Survey*, results found that significant predictors of teacher satisfaction included being assigned to a class the teacher feels qualified to teach, feeling that the salary is fair for the work done, not having problems with threats by students or disorderly behavior, being treated as a professional and being involved in problem-solving. The 1995 *MetLife Survey* noted that for an overwhelming majority of teachers, working with children was a major source of satisfaction in their career. In the 2004-2005 *MetLife Survey*, factors that predicted whether a new teacher intended to leave the profession in the near future included low ratings on several sources of satisfaction along with not feeling valued by their supervisor and not being satisfied with teaching as a career overall.

In this year's *MetLife Survey*, teachers indicate a general increase in career satisfaction and increases in several specific areas contributing to overall satisfaction compared to 1984. One factor that has been fairly consistent over the past 25 years has been teachers' passion for teaching. In 1984, eight in ten teachers (78%) strongly agreed that they love to teach, and a similar number of teachers (82%) feel that way today. Other factors initially measured in 1984 show dramatic improvement today:

- In 1984, 33% of teachers strongly agreed that they are usually recognized for good performance. Today, 48% feel this way.
- In 1984, fewer than half of teachers (47%) strongly agreed that they felt respected in today's society. Today, two-thirds of teachers (66%) agree that they are respected.

- In 1984, 37% of teachers agreed that their job allows them the opportunity to earn a decent salary. Today, two-thirds (66%) agree somewhat that their job affords them a decent salary.

Teacher training and preparation is another area that shows improvement. In 1995, 56% of teachers agreed that the training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom. Today, 67% of teachers strongly or somewhat agree with this statement.

Finally, teachers' willingness to recommend teaching as a career to others is an important indication of job satisfaction and how optimistic teachers are about the profession in the future. By this measure too, job satisfaction has improved. In 1984, 45% of teachers agreed that they would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching. Today, 75% feel this way.

Figure 1.4
Factors Contributing to Teacher Satisfaction Over Time

Q710 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools? Base: All Teachers		1984	1995	2008
		%	%	%
I love to teach	**Agree strongly**	**78**	**78**	**82**
	Agree strongly/somewhat	96	98	98
I am usually recognized for good performance	**Agree strongly**	**33**	**37**	**48**
	Agree strongly/somewhat	70	77	85
I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching	**Agree strongly**	**12**	**24**	**34**
	Agree strongly/somewhat	45	67	75
The training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom	**Agree strongly**	**10**	**13**	**18**
	Agree strongly/somewhat	46	56	67
As a teacher, I feel respected in today's society	**Agree strongly**	**10**	**9**	**17**
	Agree strongly/somewhat	47	53	66
My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary	**Agree strongly**	**8**	**17**	**16**
	Agree strongly/somewhat	37	63	66

Teacher Satisfaction – A Closer Look

At the same time that overall satisfaction has increased, teachers have become more positive about their earning power. In 1984, more teachers disagreed (63%) than agreed (37%) that their job allows them the opportunity to earn a decent salary. Today, the inverse is true, and two-thirds of teachers (66%) agree that they have the opportunity to earn a decent salary. The link between satisfaction and salary was also suggested in the 1986 *MetLife Survey* of teachers who had left the profession, in which 60% of teachers who left cited poor salary as the biggest reason for leaving.

Though the majority of teachers agree that they are able to earn a decent salary, this varies among subsectors of teachers. Teachers who are white are significantly more likely than minority teachers to agree that they can earn a decent salary as a teacher (68% vs. 58%), but there is little difference between teachers based on location or gender. Length of teaching experience also is a factor in teachers' perception of this issue. Teachers with more than five years of experience are more likely than new teachers (five years or less experience) to agree that they can earn a decent salary as a teacher (68% vs. 57%). However, there are no significant differences between teachers who teach in urban, suburban or rural schools.

Figure 1.5
Teacher Opinions on Their Salary by Experience and Ethnicity

Q710_1 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools. ***My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Teacher Ethnicity**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21 +**	**White**	**Minority**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	825	160
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**66**	**57**	**68**	**68**	**68**	**58**
Agree Strongly	16	8	17	19	17	14
Agree Somewhat	50	48	51	49	51	44
DISAGREE (NET)	**33**	**43**	**31**	**32**	**32**	**42**
Disagree Somewhat	19	20	19	18	19	20
Disagree Strongly	14	23	12	14	13	22
Not sure	*	-	1	*	*	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

In addition to salary, recognition for a job well done and respect contribute to job satisfaction. More teachers today than in 1984 agree strongly that they are usually recognized for good performance (48% vs. 33%). New teachers and secondary school teachers are less likely than others to feel that they are receiving the appropriate recognition for a job well done. New teachers are less likely than highly experienced teachers to strongly agree that they are usually recognized for good performance (39% vs. 54%). Elementary school teachers are more likely than secondary school teachers to strongly agree with this statement (51% vs. 41%).

Figure 1.6
Teacher Perception on Recognition for Good Performance

Q710_2 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools. ***I am usually recognized for good performance.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**85**	**84**	**86**	**84**	**87**	**81**
Agree Strongly	48	39	47	54	51	41
Agree Somewhat	37	45	39	30	36	40
DISAGREE (NET)	**15**	**16**	**14**	**16**	**12**	**19**
Disagree Somewhat	9	9	8	10	8	11
Disagree Strongly	6	7	5	6	5	8
Not sure	*	-	*	*	*	*
Decline to answer	*	-	*	*	*	-

Whether or not a teacher would recommend a young person to pursue a career in teaching varies based on the amount of experience a teacher has. Teachers who have been teaching for the longest are least likely to recommend that a young person go into teaching. Of those with 21 or more years of experience, 69% recommend teaching, whereas 79% of new teachers (five years or less experience) and 78% of teachers with 6-20 years of experience would recommend a young person go into teaching. However, the willingness of teachers to recommend teaching as a career does not vary by the grade level at which they teach. Both elementary and secondary school teachers are equally likely to advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching.

Figure 1.7
Teachers on Recommending a Teaching Career by Experience and School Level

Q710_3 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools. ***I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**75**	**79**	**78**	**69**	**74**	**78**
Agree Strongly	34	44	35	28	34	33
Agree Somewhat	41	35	43	41	39	44
DISAGREE (NET)	**23**	**20**	**22**	**28**	**25**	**20**
Disagree Somewhat	14	16	12	15	14	13
Disagree Strongly	10	4	9	12	11	8
Not sure	1	1	1	2	1	2
Decline to answer	*	-	-	1	*	-

Teachers today report improvements in teacher training and preparation. Two-thirds (67%) of teachers agree that the training and preparation teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom, compared to 46% in 1984. New teachers today are most likely to agree than new teachers in 1984 to report that their preparation is good (75% vs. 58%).

Figure 1.8
Teachers on Training and Preparation by Experience and Level of School

Q710_5 (Teachers): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**67**	**75**	**66**	**65**	**69**	**64**
Agree Strongly	18	22	17	18	18	18
Agree Somewhat	49	53	49	47	51	46
DISAGREE (NET)	**30**	**25**	**31**	**31**	**28**	**33**
Disagree Somewhat	20	17	22	19	20	21
Disagree Strongly	10	8	9	13	9	12
Not sure	3	-	3	4	3	3
Decline to answer	*	-	*	*	*	*

Feeling respected is an important factor in job satisfaction. When the *MetLife Survey* began, nearly half of teachers (47%) agreed that they felt respected by society including 10% who agreed strongly. Today, two thirds (66%) of teachers agree, including 17% who agree strongly that they feel respected in today's society.

From an August, 2008 Harris Poll …

Firefighters, Scientists, Doctors, Nurses and Teachers Top List of Most Prestigious Occupations

The biggest change over the last 30 years: a huge increase in the prestige of teachers

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – August 5, 2008 – Firefighters, scientists, doctors, nurses and teachers are seen as the most prestigious of a list of 23 occupations…

The occupations at the top of most prestigious occupations are:

- *Firefighter (57% "very great prestige")*
- *Scientist (56%)*
- *Doctor (53%)*
- *Nurse (52%)*
- *Teacher (52%) – up 23 points from 29% in 1977*

Figure 1.9
Teachers on Respect by Student Minority Population and Level of School

Q710_6 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools. ***As a teacher, I feel respected in today's society.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**Level of School**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**66**	**62**	**65**	**70**	**66**	**66**
Agree Strongly	17	19	11	21	19	13
Agree Somewhat	49	43	54	50	46	54
DISAGREE (NET)	**34**	**38**	**35**	**29**	**34**	**33**
Disagree Somewhat	20	21	22	19	21	20
Disagree Strongly	14	17	13	11	13	14
Not sure	*	*	-	*	*	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

As noted previously, one constant element over the past 25 years is the passion of teachers for teaching. Nearly all teachers (98%) agree that they love to teach, including 82% who agree strongly with this statement. Furthermore, teachers' love of teaching shows little variation across segments. Elementary and secondary school teachers are equally likely to love to teach, as are new and highly experienced teachers. A love of teaching is critical to teacher retention. In 1995, teachers who said they were likely to

stay in teaching attributed their loyalty to the profession to love of teaching (72%) as the primary reason they planned to stay, compared to 23% who reported job security and benefits, and 4% who reported difficulty finding another job as reasons they planned to stay.

Figure 1.10
Teachers on Love for Teaching by Experience and Level of School

Q710_4 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools: ***I love to teach.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**98**	**99**	**98**	**97**	**97**	**99**
Agree Strongly	82	85	80	84	84	78
Agree Somewhat	16	14	18	13	13	20
DISAGREE (NET)	**2**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**
Disagree Somewhat	1	1	1	1	1	1
Disagree Strongly	1	-	*	1	1	*
Not sure	*	-	*	-	*	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	*	*	-

Principal Satisfaction

Principals contribute significantly to the tone of the school environment. While most teachers will not become principals, most principals at some point have been teachers. Of the principals in the 2008 *MetLife Survey*, 89% served in the classroom for more than 5 years, and the average teaching experience among principals is 14 years. The 2004-2005 *MetLife Survey* linked principal leadership and teacher retention. It found that teachers who were more likely than others to leave the profession are less likely to have a principal who creates an environment that helps them to be an effective teacher.

Principals enjoy a high degree of job satisfaction that is slightly higher than teachers. Seven in ten principals (68%) are very satisfied with their job as a principal in the public schools, an increase from 2001 when the *MetLife Survey* found that 61% of principals were very satisfied. While elementary and secondary school principals do not differ in their levels of job satisfaction, more suburban principals are very satisfied with their job than are their urban and rural counterparts. Three-fourths (74%) of suburban principals are very satisfied, compared to two-thirds of urban (66%) and rural (64%) principals.

Figure 1.11
Principal Job Satisfaction by School Location and Level

Q705 (Principals): All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job as a principal in the public schools? Base: All Principals	Total	Location			Level of School	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**96**	**96**	**96**	**96**	**96**	**96**
Very satisfied	68	66	74	64	69	65
Somewhat satisfied	28	30	22	32	27	31
DISSATISFIED (NET)	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**4**
Somewhat dissatisfied	3	4	4	3	4	3
Very dissatisfied	*	-	1	-	-	1
Not sure	*	-	-	1	-	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

This year, the *MetLife Survey* asked principals about specific factors that can contribute to overall job satisfaction. Similar to teachers, principals also have a passion for their career. Eight in ten principals (78%) strongly agree that they love being a principal. Also similar to teachers, half of principals (51%) strongly agree that they are usually recognized for good performance. However, nearly three times as many principals as teachers strongly agree that their job allows them the opportunity to earn a decent salary (49% vs. 16%). In addition, many more principals than teachers feel that they are respected in today's society. Half (47%) of principals strongly agree with this statement, compared to 17% of teachers.

Principals are generally more positive than teachers in views about teaching, including two factors that have implications for the future. More principals than teachers agree that the training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom (86% vs. 67%). Even more striking is a comparison of the willingness of principals (64%) and teachers (34%) who strongly agree that they would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching.

Figure 1.12
Factors Contributing to Principal Satisfaction

Q710_1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (Principals) For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a principal in the public schools. Base: All Principals	**Agree Strongly**	**Agree Somewhat**	**Disagree Somewhat**	**Disagree Strongly**	**Not Sure**	**Decline to Answer**
Base: 1000	%	%	%	%	%	%
I love being a principal	78	19	2	*	*	*
I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching	64	29	5	2	1	*
I am usually recognized for good performance	51	39	7	3	*	*
My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary	49	44	4	3	-	*
As a principal, I feel respected in today's society	47	46	6	1	*	*
The training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom	29	57	11	3	*	*

Summary

Compared to 25 years ago, teachers today continue to be passionate about teaching and are more satisfied with their careers. More teachers today feel respected in society, report that they have a decent salary and feel rewarded for good performance. Most principals have had substantial teaching experience, are satisfied with their jobs, and are more positive than teachers about teacher satisfaction. Another encouraging signal for the future is that more teachers and principals today report that teachers are being well prepared for their career in teaching. However, there is reason for caution and room for improvement. Significant groups of teachers and principals are dissatisfied, particularly in urban and secondary schools, and those with concentrations of low-income students.

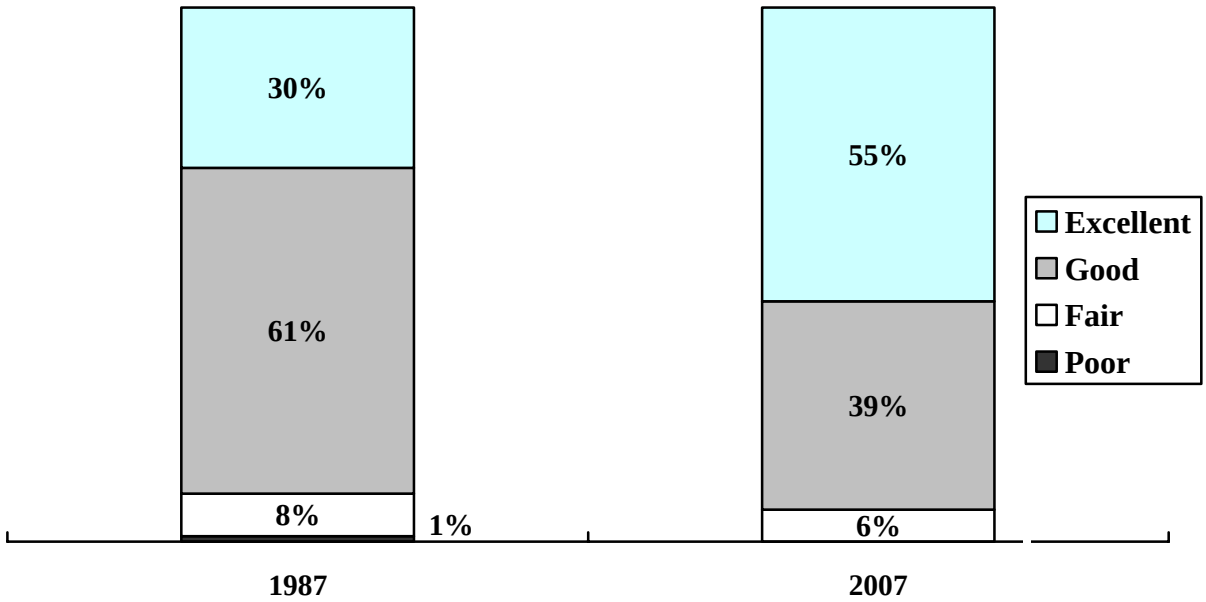
CHAPTER TWO
TEACHING AND LEARNING

A love of teaching and working with young people motivates many individuals to teach. Teachers are focused in their classrooms on guiding the essential acquisition of knowledge and personal skill development that shape lives. Emphasis on educational quality has brought reforms intended to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Because teachers remain central to this process and progress, their perspectives on the impact of these reforms are particularly important to know and to share.

Quality of Education

Teachers rate the overall quality of education at their schools higher today than in the past. In the 1987 *MetLife Survey*, three in ten teachers (30%) rated the overall quality of education that students receive at their school as excellent. By 2007, this number had nearly doubled, with 55% of teachers reporting that the overall quality of education at their school was excellent.

Figure 2.1
Teachers Today Rate the Quality of Education as Excellent at Higher Rates Than 20 Years Ago



2007 Q505 (Teachers) How would you rate the overall quality of the education that students receive at your school?
Base = All Teachers

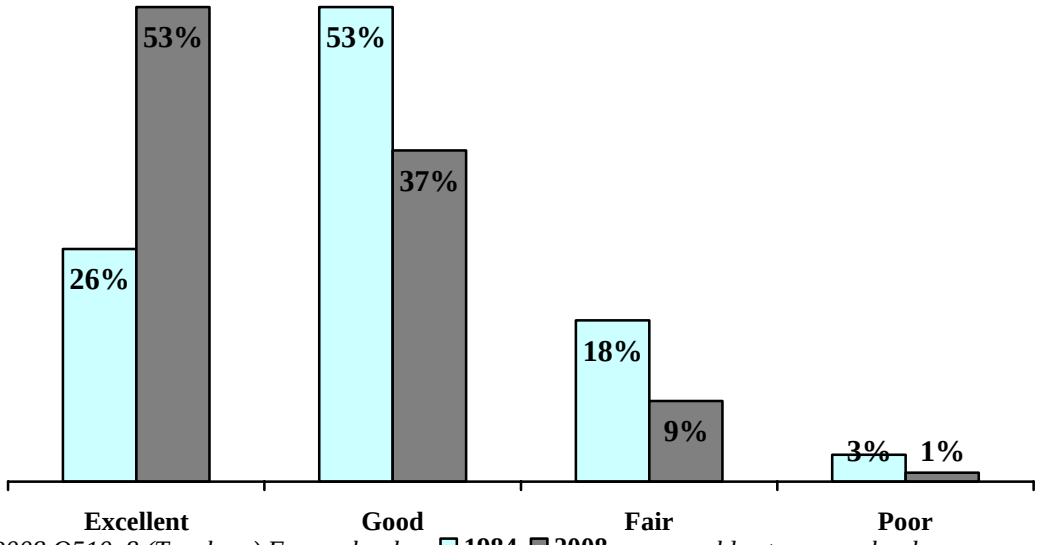
The national debate about education quality has focused particular attention on academic standards, curriculum and assessment, and teachers report some improvements in these areas. In the 1984 *MetLife Survey*, one-quarter of teachers (26%) rated the academic standards in their school as excellent. Today,

twice as many (53%) teachers give their schools an excellent rating. Overall, nine in ten teachers (90%) rate the academic standards in their school as excellent or good in contrast to 79% of teachers who did so in 1984.

Today, elementary school teachers in particular rate academic standards at their schools highly – 95% say the standards are excellent (57%) or good (37%), compared with 81% of secondary school teachers who say the academic standards are excellent (45%) or good (36%). Significantly more urban teachers rate their school's academic standards as fair or poor (16%) than do suburban teachers (5%). Teachers in suburban schools are most likely to report that academic standards are good or excellent (95%) compared to urban teachers (84%) or rural teachers (90%).

Principals today are even more likely than teachers to give a high rating to academic standards at their school. Nearly all (96%) principals rate the academic standards at their school as excellent (65%) or good (31%). As with teachers, elementary school principals are more likely than secondary school principals to rate their academic standards as excellent (73% compared to 52%). The differences among suburban, rural and urban principals are not as pronounced on academic quality as they are among teachers: 96% of principals in all three groups rate academic quality as good or excellent.

Figure 2.2
Teachers Today Agree That Academic Standards Are Higher Than in 1984



2008 Q510_8 (Teachers) For each, pleas *you would rate your school… on academic standards.*
Base = All Teachers

Figure 2.3
Teachers on Academic Standards

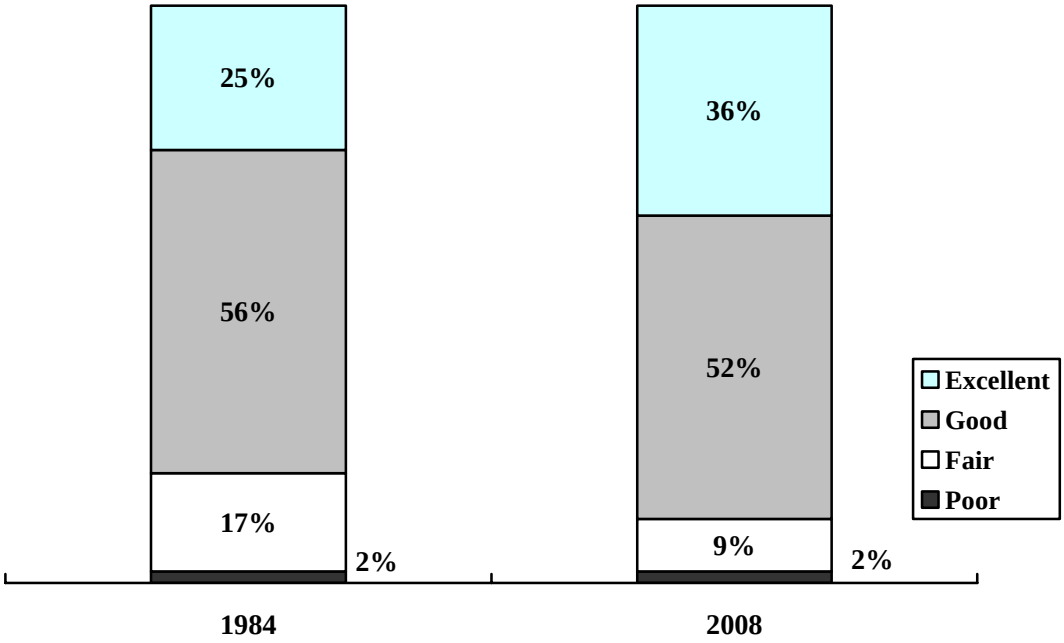
Q510_8 (Teachers): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The academic standards in your school.*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			Level of School	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**90**	**84**	**95**	**90**	**95**	**81**
Excellent	53	45	60	52	57	45
Good	37	38	35	38	37	36
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**10**	**16**	**5**	**10**	**5**	**18**
Fair	9	13	5	9	5	16
Poor	1	3	*	1	1	2
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	*	*		-	-	*

Figure 2.4
Principals on Academic Standards

Q510_8 (Principals): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The academic standards in your school.*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			Level of School	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**96**	**96**	**96**	**96**	**97**	**94**
Excellent	65	66	73	55	73	52
Good	31	30	23	41	24	42
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**6**
Fair	4	4	4	4	3	6
Poor	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Along with improvements in academic standards, teachers report that there have been improvements to the curriculum, although to a lesser extent. In the1984 *MetLife Survey*, eight in ten teachers (81%) rated the curriculum in general as excellent (25%) or good (56%) compared to nine in ten teachers (89%) in 2008 rating it as excellent (36%) or good (52%), showing a significant increase in the excellent rating. Interestingly, while today's elementary and secondary school *teachers* are equally likely to rate their curriculum as excellent, elementary school *principals* are more likely than their secondary school counterparts to rate their curriculum this highly (63% vs. 37%).

Figure 2.5
Teachers Today Rate the Curriculum as Excellent at Higher Rates than in 1984



2008 Q510_9 (Teachers) Would you rate your school... on the curriculum in general?
Base: All Teachers

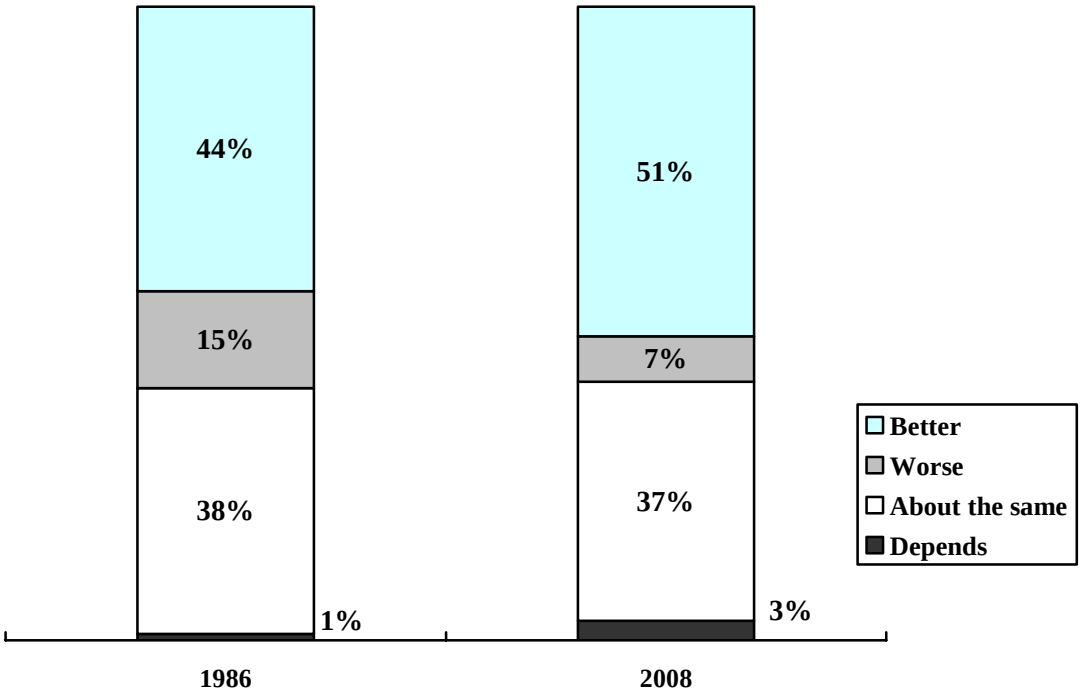
Figure 2.6
Teachers' and Principals' Ratings of the Curriculum

Q510_9 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The curriculum in general.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	Teachers			Principals		
	Total	Level of School		Total	Level of School	
		Elementary	Secondary		Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	679	321	501	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/ GOOD (NET)	**89**	**91**	**85**	**97**	**99**	**95**
Excellent	36	37	35	52	63	37
Good	52	54	50	45	37	58
FAIR/ POOR (NET)	**11**	**9**	**14**	**3**	**1**	**5**
Fair	9	8	11	2	*	5
Poor	2	1	3	*	*	-
Not sure	*	*	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	*	-	*	-	-	-

Teacher Quality

Teachers' assessment of the qualifications and competence of other teachers in their school has also improved over the past two decades. Teachers in the 2007 *MetLife Survey* were more likely than their counterparts in the 1987 *MetLife Survey* to rate the qualifications and competence of teachers in their school as excellent (69% vs. 51%). In the 2008 *MetLife Survey*, principals report a similar optimistic attitude that bodes well for the profession looking ahead. When asked about the quality of new teachers entering the profession today compared to the quality of new teachers in the past, half (51%) of principals report that the quality is better and only 7% describe it as worse. In 1986, fewer principals (44%) reported that the quality of new teachers was better than it was in the past, and twice as many principals (15%) described it as worse.

Figure 2.7
Principals on the Quality of New Teachers



2008 Q545 (Principals) Is the overall quality of new teachers today better, worse or about the same as in the past?
Base: All Principals

Professional Development and Technology

Professional development can contribute to teacher quality, job satisfaction and student achievement. Overall, educators rate the professional development of teachers highly – eight in ten teachers (78%) and nine in ten principals (91%) report that professional development within schools is excellent or good.

Figure 2.8
Teachers' and Principals' Rating of Teacher Professional Development in their Schools

Q510_11 (Teachers, Principals): Please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***For professional development for teachers.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Total Teachers**	**Total Principals**
Base:	1000	501
	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**78**	**91**
Excellent	35	50
Good	43	41
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**22**	**9**
Fair	17	8
Poor	5	1
Not sure	*	-
Decline to answer	*	-

Technology and standardized testing have received increased emphasis since 1984 as potential resources to improve teaching and learning. Today, nine in ten teachers (90%) agree that technology enhances their ability to teach, including more than half of teachers (53%) who strongly agree. The value teachers place on technology varies by their generational cohort. Two-thirds (66%) of those in Generation Y (30 years old or younger) strongly agree that technology enhances their ability to teach while six in ten (58%) Gen X'ers (31–43 year olds) share this view, and half (49%) of Boomers (44–62 year olds) strongly agree that technology enhances their teaching. Principals also value the supportive role of technology with nearly all (97%) agreeing that technology helps, including 69% who strongly agree.

Figure 2.9
Teachers Rate Technology as a Tool for Teaching, by Experience and School Level

Q710 _9 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools. ***Technology enhances my ability to teach.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Generation**			**Level of School**	
		Gen Y	**Gen X**	**Boomers**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	119	313	512	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**90**	**93**	**94**	**88**	**89**	**94**
Agree Strongly	53	66	58	49	48	62
Agree Somewhat	37	27	35	39	40	32
DISAGREE (NET)	**9**	**7**	**6**	**11**	**10**	**6**
Disagree Somewhat	6	3	4	7	7	4
Disagree Strongly	3	3	2	4	4	3
Not sure	1	-	*	1	1	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 2.10
Technology as Enhancing Teaching Ability

Q710_9 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher/principal in the public schools. ***Technology enhances my ability to teach.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Total Teachers**	**Total Principals**
Base:	1000	501
	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**90**	**97**
Agree Strongly	53	69
Agree Somewhat	37	28
DISAGREE (NET)	**9**	**3**
Disagree Somewhat	6	2
Disagree Strongly	3	1

Teacher and Principal Insight on Standardized Tests

Teachers' views on standardized tests have changed over the life of the *MetLife Survey*. In the 1984 *Survey*, six in ten teachers (61%) were in favor of standardized tests to measure student achievement of all the students in their school. With more direct experience, teachers today are divided over whether or not standardized tests are effective in helping them to track student performance. Half of teachers agree (48%) and half disagree (50%) that standardized tests help to better track student performance, including a quarter (26%) of teachers who disagree strongly. More principals (79%) agree that standardized tests help teachers in their school to better track students' performance, but one in five principals (20%) disagree.

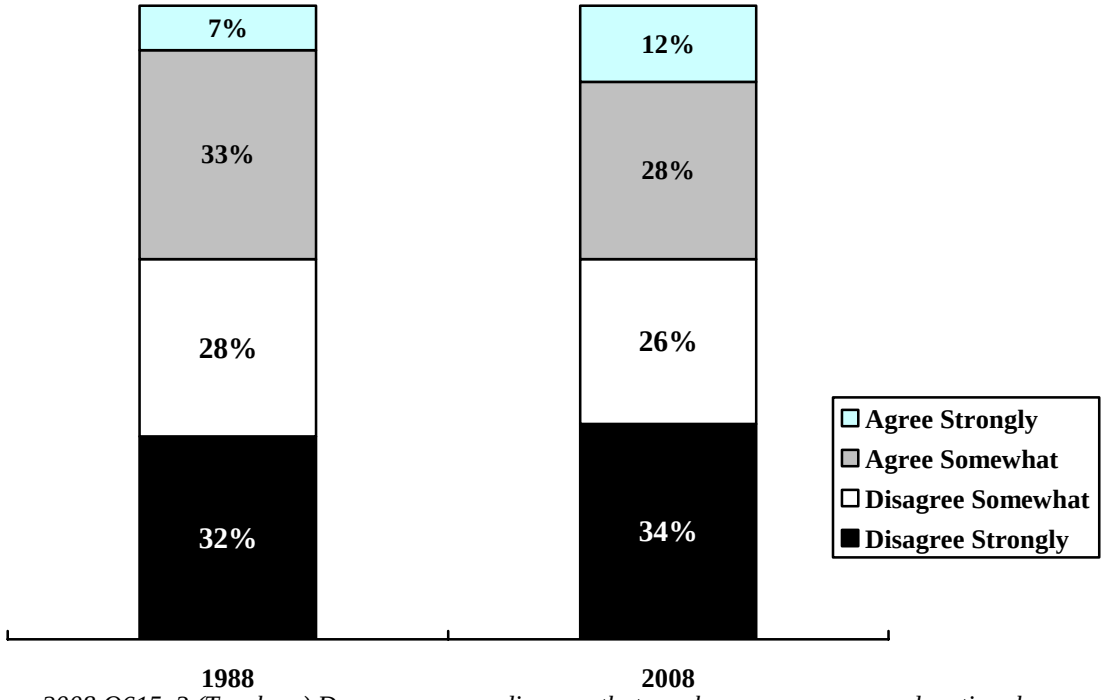
Figure 2.11
Standardized Tests to Track Students' Performance

Q710_7 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher/principal in the public schools. ***Standardized tests help you to better track your students' performance?*** Base: All Teachers, Base: All Principals	**Total Teachers**	**Total Principals**
Base:	1000	501
	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**48**	**79**
Agree Strongly	10	32
Agree Somewhat	38	47
DISAGREE (NET)	**50**	**20**
Disagree Somewhat	25	13
Disagree Strongly	26	7
Not sure	2	*
Decline to answer	*	-

Time and Attention for Teaching

Teachers' opinions have changed little regarding the impact of non-educational responsibilities on their ability to develop positive relationships with students. Today, as in 1988, six in ten teachers (60%) do not believe non-educational responsibilities are a hindrance to developing positive relationships with students. However, a large minority (40%) continues to report that teachers in their school have so many non-educational responsibilities that they don't have time to develop positive relationships with students. Most principals (75%) disagree that teachers in their school have so many non-educational responsibilities that they don't have time to develop positive relationships.

Figure 2.12
Teacher Opinion on Non-Educational Responsibilities' Impact: 1988 vs. 2008



2008 Q615_3 (Teachers) Do you agree or disagree that you have so many non-educational responsibilities that you don't have time to develop positive relationships with students?
Base = All Teachers

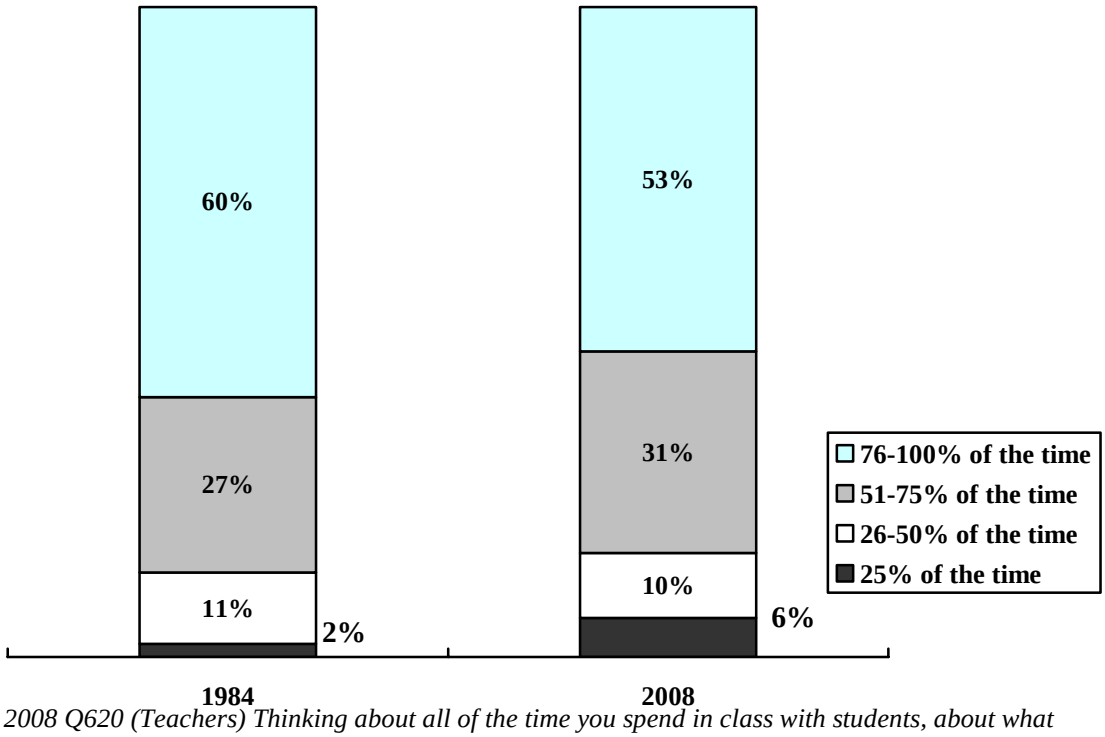
Figure 2.13
Non-Educational Responsibilities' Impact on Teacher-Student Relationships

Q615_3; Q615_2, (Teachers ,Principals): Do you agree or disagree that you/teachers in my school have so many non-educational responsibilities that you/they don't have time to develop positive relationships with students? Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Total Teachers**	**Total Principals**
Base:	1000	501
	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**39**	**25**
Agree Strongly	12	4
Agree Somewhat	28	21
DISAGREE (NET)	**60**	**75**
Disagree Somewhat	26	26
Disagree Strongly	34	50
Not sure	*	-
Decline to answer	*	-

While a majority of teachers report that their responsibilities do not interfere with their relationships with students, another measure indicates that the time spent on teaching may be decreasing. In the 1984

MetLife Survey, six in ten teachers (60%) reported that they spend more than three-quarters of their classroom time with students on teaching as opposed to disciplining or administrative responsibilities. Today, teachers report spending a smaller proportion of their time on teaching. Although overall 84% of teachers spend more than half of their classroom time with students on teaching, half of teachers (53%) now spend at least three-quarters of their time on teaching, as compared to 60% in 1984. Elementary and secondary school teachers report similar proportions of time on teaching compared to other responsibilities.

Figure 2.14
Amount of Time Teachers Spend Teaching in the Classroom: 1988 vs. 2008



2008 Q620 (Teachers) Thinking about all of the time you spend in class with students, about what percentage of that time do you actually spend teaching as opposed to disciplining or administrative work?
Base = All Teachers

The perception of principals regarding how teachers spend their time in the classroom differs markedly from what teachers report. More than nine in ten principals (94%) think that teachers in their school spend more than half of their classroom time with students on teaching as opposed to disciplining or conducting administrative work. This contrasts to 84% of teachers who report spending this amount of time teaching. Furthermore, eight in ten principals (81%) think that teachers in their school spend at least three-quarters of their classroom time with students on teaching, compared to the 53% of teachers who report this distribution.

Figure 2.15
Time Spent on Teaching

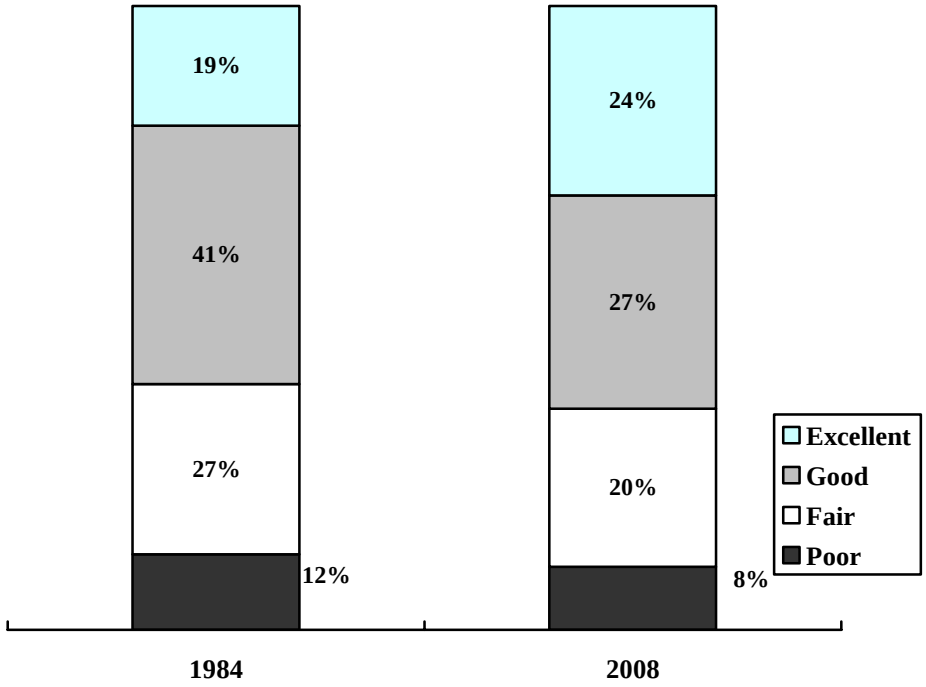
Q620 (Teachers, Principals): Thinking about all of the time you/teachers in your school spend in class with students, about what percentage of that time do you/they actually spend teaching as opposed to disciplining or administrative work? Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Total Teachers**	**Total Principals**
Base:	1000	501
	%	%
25% of the time	6	4
26-50% of the time	10	2
51-75% of the time	31	13
76-100% of the time	53	81
Not sure	*	-
Decline to answer	-	*

Class Size Perspectives from Teachers, Principals and Students

Class size was addressed in the initial *MetLife Survey* twenty-five years ago as a school reform issue. Class size is a factor in the conditions for teaching and learning, teacher satisfaction, and workload. In the 1984 *MetLife Survey*, six in ten teachers (60%) rated the number of students in their classes as good (41%) or excellent (19%). Today, teachers rate class size more positively: nearly three-quarters of teachers (72%) describe the number of students in their classes as good (48%) or excellent (24%). Elementary school teachers in particular rate their class sizes as excellent (28%) compared to secondary teachers (18%). As in other areas of school quality, principals are more positive than teachers when rating class sizes in their school. Nearly nine in ten (87%) describe the number of students in classes at their schools as either excellent or good

Observation
Teachers who have been in the classroom for more than 20 years are more likely than those with fewer years of experience to rate the number of students in their classes as good or excellent. Potentially, because as teachers gain more experience, they may become more comfortable with managing classes regardless of the number of students.

Figure 2.16
Teachers Today Rate Class Size: 1984 vs. 2008



2008 Q510_5 (Teachers): Would you rate your school excellent, good, fair or poor on the number of students in your classes?
Base = All Teachers

Figure 2.17
Teachers Rate Class Size by Experience and School Level

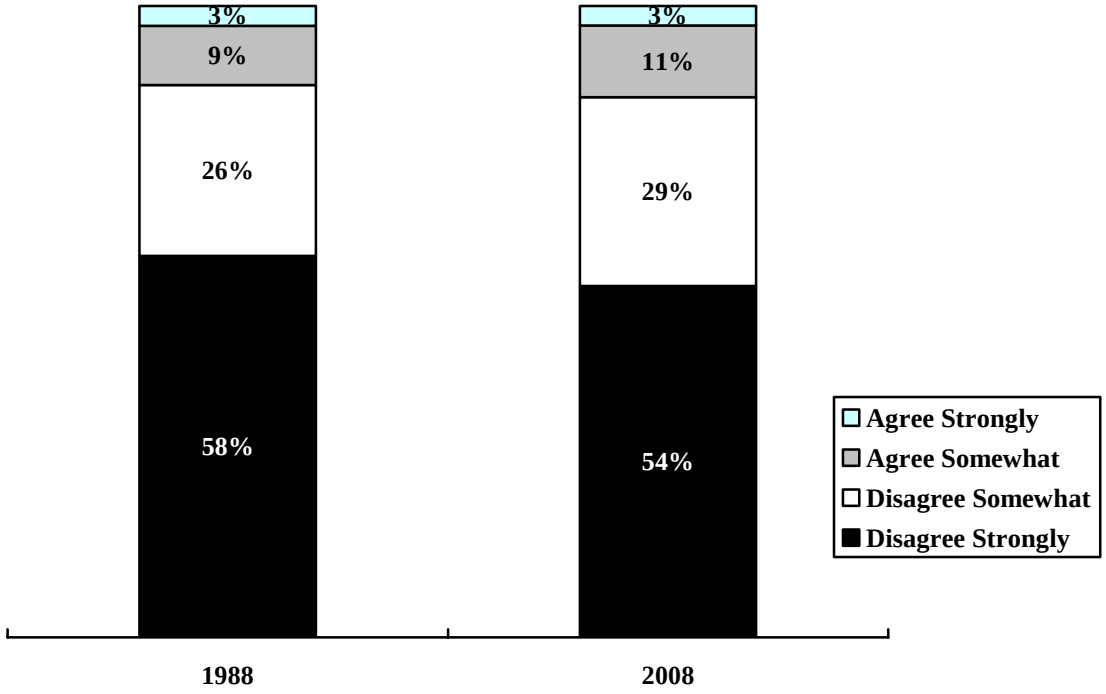
Q510_5 (Teachers): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The number of students in your classes.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Experience**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/ GOOD (NET)	**72**	**67**	**69**	**80**	**75**	**67**
Excellent	24	23	21	30	28	18
Good	48	44	47	50	47	49
FAIR/ POOR (NET)	**27**	**31**	**31**	**20**	**25**	**31**
Fair	20	23	23	13	18	22
Poor	8	7	8	7	7	10
Not sure	1	2	*	1	*	1
Decline to answer	*	1	-	-	-	*

Figure 2.18
Principals Rate Class Size by Location and School Level

Q510_5 (Principals): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The class sizes at your school.*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**Level of School**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/ GOOD (NET)	**87**	**87**	**88**	**88**	**87**	**88**
Excellent	44	40	40	51	42	45
Good	44	47	48	37	45	43
FAIR/ POOR (NET)	**13**	**13**	**12**	**12**	**13**	**12**
Fair	11	13	8	11	12	9
Poor	2	*	4	1	1	3
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Students were also asked to weigh in on the issue of the quality of their time spent with teachers. Most students (83%) do not think class size prevents their teachers from knowing them – a level similar to 1988. Although more students today report that they receive personal attention from their teachers all or most of the time (42%) than did students in 1988 (25%), a majority of current students (58%) report receiving personal attention less consistently. There is no difference between the ratings of male and female students.

Figure 2.19
Student Opinion on Class Size: 1988 vs. 2008

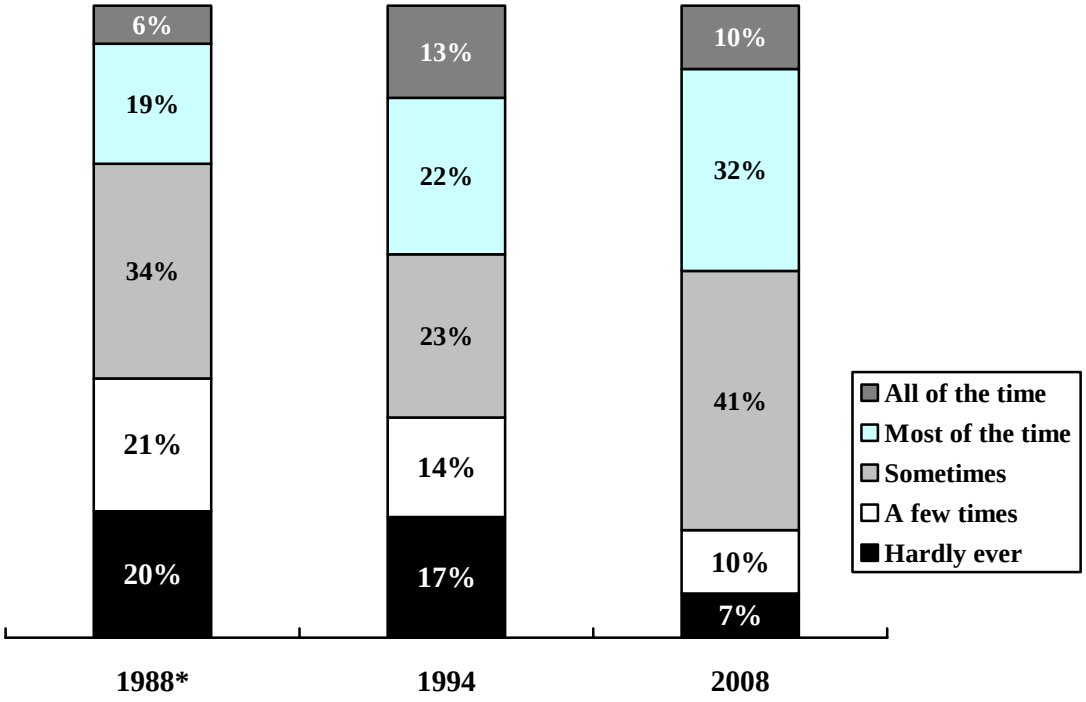


2008 Q716_2 (Students) Do you agree or disagree that your classes are so big that your teachers don't really know you?
Base = All Students

Figure 2.20
Student Opinion on Class Size by Gender and Grade

Q716_2 (Students): Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: My classes are so big that my teachers don't really know me. Base: All Students	**Total**	**Gender**		**Level of School**	
		Male	**Female**	**Grades 3-6**	**Grades 7-12**
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE STRONGLY/ SOMEWHAT (NET)	**14**	**15**	**13**	**11**	**17**
Agree Strongly	3	3	2	3	3
Agree Somewhat	11	12	11	9	14
DISAGREE STRONGLY/ SOMEWHAT (NET)	**84**	**83**	**84**	**88**	**80**
Disagree Somewhat	29	26	33	25	33
Disagree Strongly	54	57	51	63	47
Not sure	2	2	2	1	3

Figure 2.21
Student Take on How Often They Receive Attention from Teachers: 1988 vs. 2008



2008 Q710 (Students) *How often do you feel that you get personal attention from your teachers?*
Base = All Students: *1988 data = 4th - 12th graders

Figure 2.22
Students Report on Level of Personal Attention from Teachers

Q710 (Students): How often do you feel that you get personal attention from your teachers? Base: All Students	Total	Gender		Level of School	
		Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST SOMETIMES (NET)	**83**	**82**	**84**	**82**	**83**
ALL OF THE TIME/ MOST OF THE TIME (NET)	**42**	**42**	**42**	**40**	**44**
All of the time	10	10	10	11	9
Most of the time	32	32	32	30	35
Sometimes	41	39	42	42	40
HARDLY EVER/ A FEW TIMES	**17**	**18**	**16**	**18**	**17**
A few times	10	9	10	9	10
Hardly ever	7	9	5	8	6

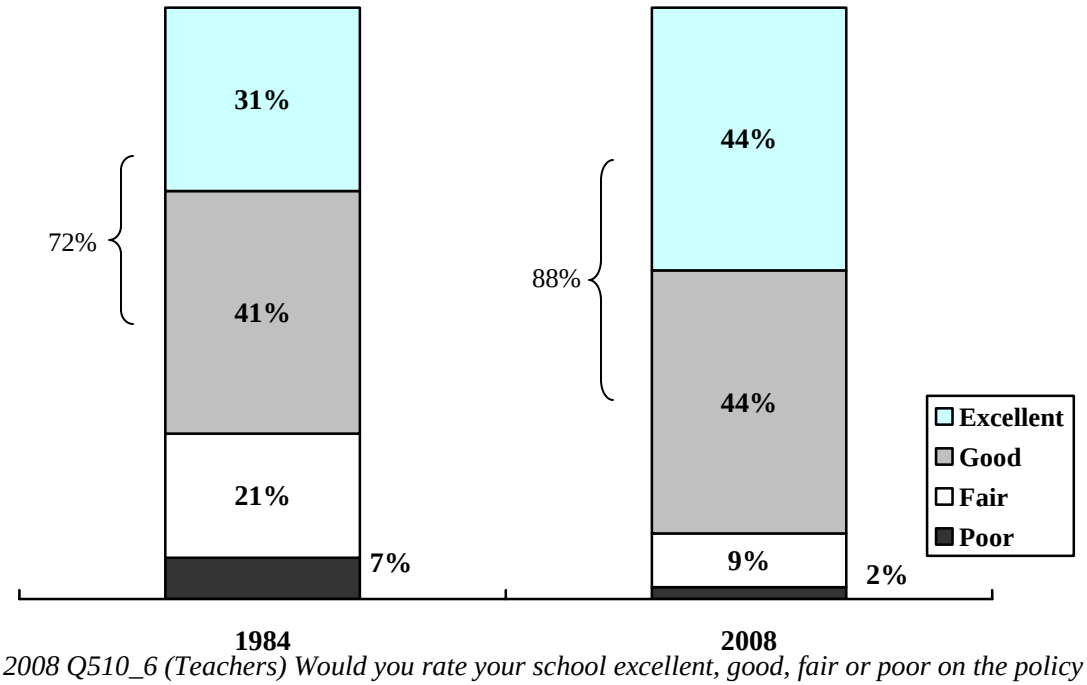
Students with Special Needs

Emphasis on improving student achievement for all students has increased steadily over the last 25 years. Major changes in how special needs students are educated in public schools have increased diversity in regular classrooms. Most teachers (88%) rate their school policy about serving students with special needs as excellent or good, compared to 72% who rated their school policy on children with disabilities excellent or good in the 1984 *MetLife Survey*. Today, urban teachers (83%) are less likely than rural (89%) or suburban (91%) teachers to rate the policies for special needs students as excellent or good. Most principals similarly rate their policies for special needs students highly, with 96% rating their school policies as excellent or good.

At the same time that teachers' positive ratings of serving special needs students have increased, teacher concern about classroom composition with mixed ability students has increased over the last two decades. Today, 43% of teachers agree that their classes have become so mixed in terms of students' learning abilities that they can't teach them effectively, compared to 39% in the 1988 *MetLife Survey*. In the 2008 *MetLife Survey*, more secondary teachers (49%) agree with this statement than elementary teachers (40%). Principals (24%) are much less likely to agree that this is the case.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Amendments of 1997 (IDEA) grew out of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) enacted in 1975 and was reauthorized by Congress in 2004. IDEA is the national special education law and guarantees all children the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) appropriate

Figure 2.23
Teachers Rate School Policy on Students with Special Needs in 2008 vs. 1984



2008 Q510_6 (Teachers) Would you rate your school excellent, good, fair or poor on the policy of your school regarding students with special needs.
Base = All Teachers

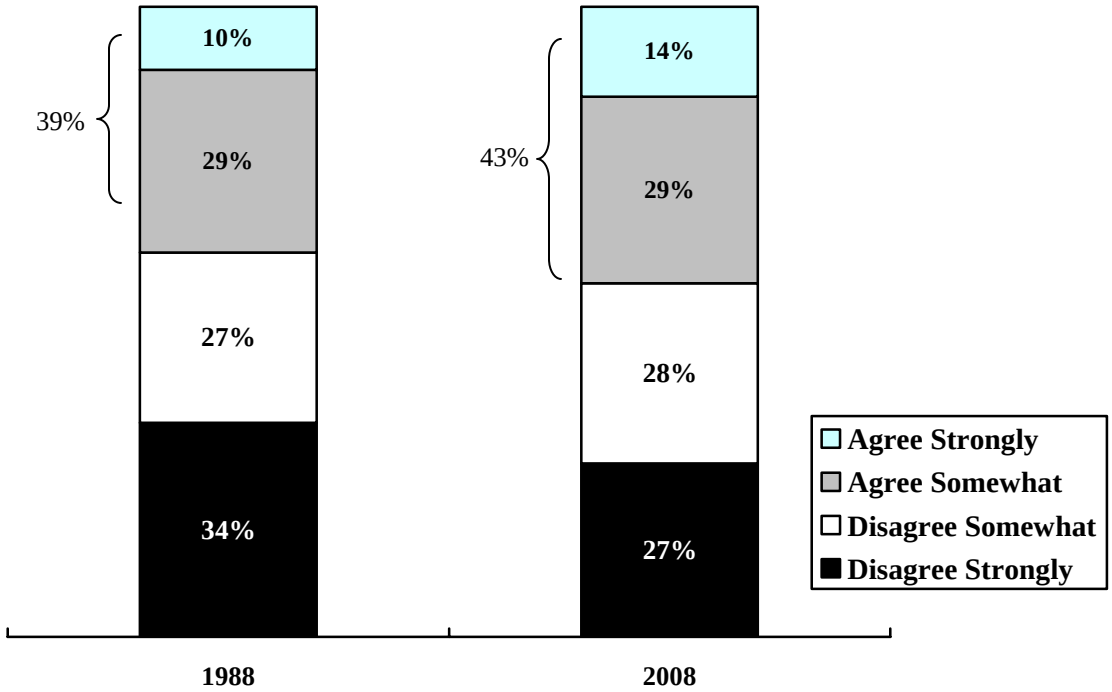
Figure 2.24
Teachers and Principals on Policies for Students with Special Needs

Q510_6 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The policy of your school regarding students with special needs*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**88**	**83**	**91**	**89**	**96**	**97**	**96**	**96**
Excellent	44	39	48	44	70	68	77	66
Good	44	44	43	46	26	29	19	30
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**12**	**17**	**9**	**10**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**4**
Fair	9	15	7	8	4	3	4	4
Poor	2	2	3	2	-	-	-	-
Not sure	*	*	-	*	*	-	*	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-

Figure 2.25
Teachers and Principals on Students with Mixed Needs in the Classroom by Level

*Q615_1 (Teachers, Principals): Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements…**My classes/classes in my school have become so mixed in terms of students' learning ability that I/teachers can't teach them*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Level**			**Principal Level**		
	Total	**Elementary**	**Secondary**	**Total**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	679	321	501	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**43**	**40**	**49**	**24**	**24**	**24**
Agree strongly	14	11	18	4	4	4
Agree somewhat	29	28	31	20	20	20
DISAGREE (NET)	**56**	**59**	**50**	**76**	**76**	**76**
Disagree somewhat	28	30	25	33	32	37
Disagree strongly	27	29	25	43	45	39
Not sure	1	1	*	-	-	-
Decline to answer	*	*	*	-	-	-

Figure 2.26
Teacher Opinion on Mixed Student Abilities Affecting Teacher Effectiveness: 2008 to 1988



2008 Q615_1 (Teachers) My classes have become so mixed in terms of students' learning abilities that I can't teach them effectively.
Base = All Teachers

Summary

Substantially more teachers and principals today give high ratings to the overall quality of education, academic standards, curriculum, and professional development, compared to ratings 25 years ago although urban schools continue to lag behind. Teachers and principals agree in large measure that technology enhances capacity to teach, but are more divided in opinions about the value of standardized testing as a resource for teaching. Today, half of teachers disagree that standardized tests are effective in helping them track student performance, whereas in the 1984 *MetLife Survey*, 61% were in favor of using standardized tests to measure achievement. Educators today are more positive about class size, capacity to give individual students attention and policy and practice in education for special needs students. Although student perceptions of individual attention from teachers have improved over the decades, most students report inconsistency in the attention they receive, but do not attribute this to class size.

As with teacher satisfaction, the data raise concerns about quality and outlook in urban schools and secondary schools. Differences in teacher and principal perceptions also raise concerns, particularly regarding quality of professional development and time available for and devoted to classroom teaching and learning in their schools.

CHAPTER THREE
STUDENT SUCCESS

Any meaningful discussion of teaching must include a focus on students. Over the last 25 years, the initial emphasis in education reform was on teachers and it has now shifted to students: what they know and are able to do, and to the critical role teachers play in student achievement. Decades of reform have forged more agreement on academic standards and curriculum than on how best to assess what students are learning or how well they can apply what they know. Standardized tests have become a significant measure of student achievement, and they do offer some evidence of improvement in student achievement. The national average reading and mathematics scores of 4th and 8th graders, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), increased between 1992 and 2007[2].

In the early grades, one major indicator of student success and effective teaching is adequate preparation for the next grade and level of study. Increasingly in higher grades, student success is in preparation for postsecondary education, work, and leading responsible, satisfying and productive lives. Many schools and districts remain challenged to reduce the 30% of 9th graders who drop out of school prior to high school graduation[3]. Increasingly, however, high school graduation alone is not sufficient preparation for a secure work life. Access to an estimated 85% of current jobs and nearly 90% of fast growing and well paying jobs depends on some education beyond high school[4]. To meet their own needs, along with those of the economy and society, more students must aspire and achieve at higher levels.

In addition to academics, teachers also have an important role in guiding the personal development of their students. The quality of the relationship between student and teacher affects both academic achievement and preparation for life.

---

[2] Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2008.* Federal Interagency Forum. on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

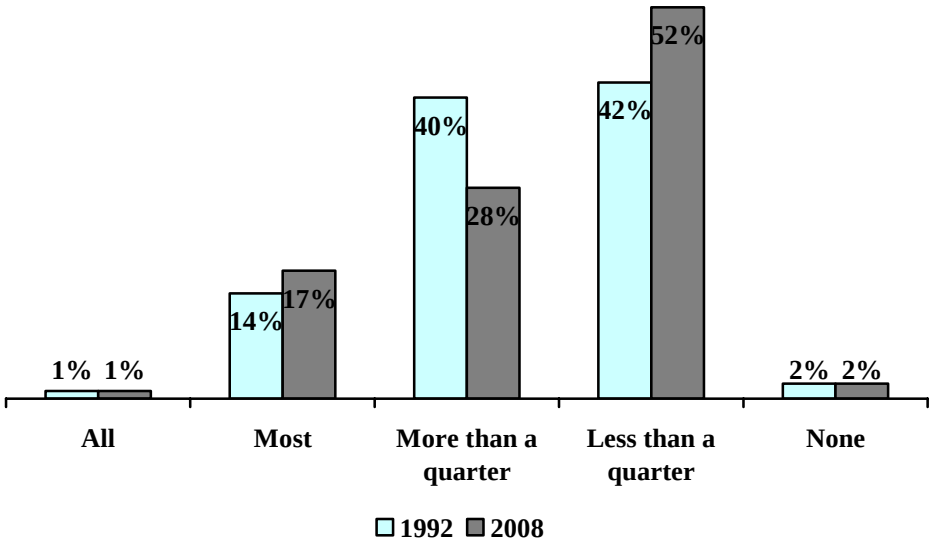
[3] Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Provasnik, S., Kena, G., Dinkes, R., Kewal, Ramani, A.,and Kemp, J. (2008). *The Condition of Education 2008* (NCES 2008-031). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

[4] Alliance for Education. *High School Teaching for the 21st Century: Preparing Students for College.* Issue Brief. September, 2007. Washington, DC..

Preparation for Learning

Slightly more than half of current teachers (54%) report that at least three-quarters of their students arrive at school prepared to learn at grade level – an improvement compared to 44% of teachers in the 1992 *MetLife Survey*.

Figure 3.1
Teachers in 2008 Report Fewer Students Unprepared for Grade Level Work than in 1992



2008 Q515_1 (Teachers) About what proportion of your students would you say come to school not fully prepared to learn at their grade level
Base = All Teachers

Teachers from urban, suburban and rural schools differ, however, in their views on student preparedness. Teachers in urban areas report the highest proportion of students **unprepared** to learn at grade level. Six in ten urban teachers (59%) report that at least a quarter of their students arrive unprepared for grade-level work, including 24% of urban teachers who report that all or most of their students are unprepared. Fewer rural school teachers (46%) report at least a quarter of their students arrive unprepared to learn at grade level, and teachers in suburban schools (35%) are the least likely to report this level of student unpreparedness. The fact that there is no perception of improvement as students progress raises questions about school effectiveness, factors beyond the classroom, and parental and community support. Teacher ratings of preparedness are almost the same for elementary and secondary schools.

Figure 3.2
Teachers Rate Student Preparation for Learning at Grade Level

Q515 (Teachers): About what proportion of your students would you say come to school not fully prepared to learn at their grade level? Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
MORE THAN A QUARTER (NET)	**46**	**59**	**35**	**46**	**45**	**47**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**18**	**24**	**14**	**15**	**18**	**17**
All	1	1	1	*	1	1
Most	17	23	13	15	18	16
More than a quarter	28	35	20	31	27	30
LESS THAN A QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**54**	**40**	**65**	**53**	**54**	**53**
Less than a quarter	52	39	63	51	51	52
None	2	2	3	1	3	*
Not sure	*	-	-	1	*	*
Decline to answer	*	*	-	-	-	-

As has been seen throughout this years' *MetLife Survey*, principals' assessments are more optimistic than teachers. Principals estimate that a larger number of students in their school come prepared to learn at their grade level than do teachers. Six in ten principals (61%) report that less than a quarter or none of their students are not prepared, compared to 54% of teachers. However, principals show a similar pattern to teachers based on the location of their school. Suburban principals (23%) are least likely to report that at least a quarter of their students arrive not fully prepared to learn at their grade level compared to 31% of principals in rural schools and two-thirds (67%) of urban school principals.

Figure 3.3
Principals on Student Preparedness by Location and Level of School

Q515 (Principals): About what proportion of students at your school would you say come to school not fully prepared to learn at their grade level? Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**Level of School**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
MORE THAN A QUARTER (NET)	**38**	**67**	**23**	**31**	**38**	**41**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**16**	**30**	**10**	**11**	**14**	**18**
All	1	2	1	2	1	3
Most	14	28	9	9	14	15
More than a quarter	23	38	13	20	23	23
LESS THAN A QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**61**	**31**	**76**	**68**	**61**	**59**
Less than a quarter	58	29	72	68	58	58
None	2	2	5	1	3	1
Not sure	1	2	-	*	1	-
Decline to answer	*	-	*	-	-	*

Changes in Students' Skill by Subject over the Past 20 Years

Between the1988 and 2008 *MetLife Surveys*, teachers' assessments of many student skills have improved. Computer literacy shows the largest gains in ratings of student skills as excellent or good (51% vs. 75%), followed by writing skills (52% vs. 62%).

Smaller gains have been made in the areas of reading skills (71% vs. 77%) and foreign language skills (22% vs. 27%). According to teachers, math skills have declined, with 72% of teachers rating their students as excellent or good in the 1988 *MetLife Survey*, compared to 69% of teachers today. Teachers' assessment of student skills as excellent or good has declined in knowledge of humanities subjects (from 51% to 49%) and knowledge of science subjects (from 63% to 59%).

Figure 3.4
Changes in How Teachers Rate Students on Skills by Subject between 1988 and 2008

Q520 (Teachers): Here is a list of the skills and knowledge students acquire in the course of learning. How would you rate students at your school on…? Base: All Teachers	Excellent/Good			Fair/Poor		
	1988	**2008**	**Difference**	**1988**	**2008**	**Difference**
	%	%		%	%	
Reading skills	71	77	+ 6	28	22	-6
Writing skills	52	62	+10	48	37	-11
Math skills	72	69	- 3	27	29	+2
Computer literacy	51	75	+24	47	24	-23
Foreign language skills	22	27	+ 5	67	57	-10
Knowledge of science subjects	63	59	- 4	36	39	+3
Knowledge of humanities subjects	51	49	- 2	47	47	0
Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	n/a	34	n/a	n/a	64	n/a

* Not sure answers not included

Current Student Skills by Subject Matter

Assessments by teachers and principals of students' skills vary greatly among academic subjects. Skills in core areas such as reading and math fare better than foreign language or international awareness. Ratings by principals tend to be higher than those of teachers, but their views are similar as to which subject areas have the highest and lowest skill sets. Three-quarters of teachers describe their students' reading skills (77%) and computer literacy skills (75%) as excellent or good. Writing and math skills and science knowledge fare less well, with 69% of teachers giving an excellent or good rating to their students for math skills, 62% giving this rating for their students' writing skills and 59% giving this rating for their students' knowledge of science subjects. Teacher assessment of student knowledge of humanities subjects, international issues and foreign language skills are notably low. Teachers rate substantial numbers of students at their school as fair or poor on their knowledge of other nations and cultures and international issues (64%), foreign language skills (57%) and knowledge of humanities subjects (47%).

Teacher ratings of student skills differ not only by subject, but also based on school level. Elementary school teachers are more likely than secondary teachers to say that their students' skills are excellent or good in reading (83% vs. 67%), math (79% vs. 53%) and writing (68% vs. 53%). Secondary school

teachers are more likely than elementary school teachers to say that their students' skills are excellent or good in computer literacy (81% vs. 71%) and foreign language 39% vs. 21%). Suburban and rural teachers are more likely than urban or inner city teachers to say their students are excellent or good in all subjects included, except for foreign language, where suburban teachers (30%) and urban teachers (31%) give comparable ratings.

The views of principals follow a similar pattern: elementary school principals are more likely than secondary school principals to say that their students' skills are excellent or good in reading (88% vs. 76%), math (89% vs. 66%) and writing (79% vs. 70%). Secondary school principals are more likely than elementary principals to say their students' skills are excellent in computer literacy (84% vs. 75%) and foreign language skill (39% vs. 17%).

Figure 3.5
Teachers Rate Student Skill Levels by Subject by Location and Level of School: Excellent or Good

Q520 (Teachers): Here is a list of the skills and knowledge students acquire in the course of learning. How would you rate students at your school on... Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**Level of School**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reading skills	77	61	86	81	83	67
Writing skills	62	55	68	63	68	53
Math skills	69	53	76	76	79	53
Computer literacy	75	68	78	79	71	81
Foreign language skills	27	31	30	22	21	39
Knowledge of science subjects	59	47	62	64	61	55
Knowledge of humanities subjects	49	37	60	47	48	50
Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	34	26	39	34	34	33

Figure 3.6
Principals Rate Student Skill Levels by Subject by Location and Level of School: Excellent or Good

Q520 (Principals): Here is a list of the skills and knowledge students acquire in the course of learning. How would you rate students at your school on… Base: All Principals	Total	Location			Level of School	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reading skills	84	76	87	87	88	76
Writing skills	76	67	83	76	79	70
Math skills	80	74	80	85	89	66
Computer literacy	78	70	83	80	75	84
Foreign language skills	26	26	33	17	17	39
Knowledge of science subjects	69	59	76	70	70	67
Knowledge of humanities subjects	62	52	73	58	61	62
Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	47	42	56	42	47	46

Figure 3.7
Principals and Teachers Rate Student Skill Levels by Subject: Fair or Poor

Q520 (Teachers, Principals): Here is a list of the skills and knowledge students acquire in the course of learning. How would you rate students at your school on… Base: All Teachers, All Principals	Teachers Total	Principals Total
Base:	1000	501
	%	%
Reading skills	22	16
Writing skills	37	24
Math skills	29	20
Computer literacy	24	21
Foreign language skills	57	57
Knowledge of science subjects	39	31
Knowledge of humanities subjects	47	36
Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	64	51

Students Rate Teacher Ability to Teach by Subject

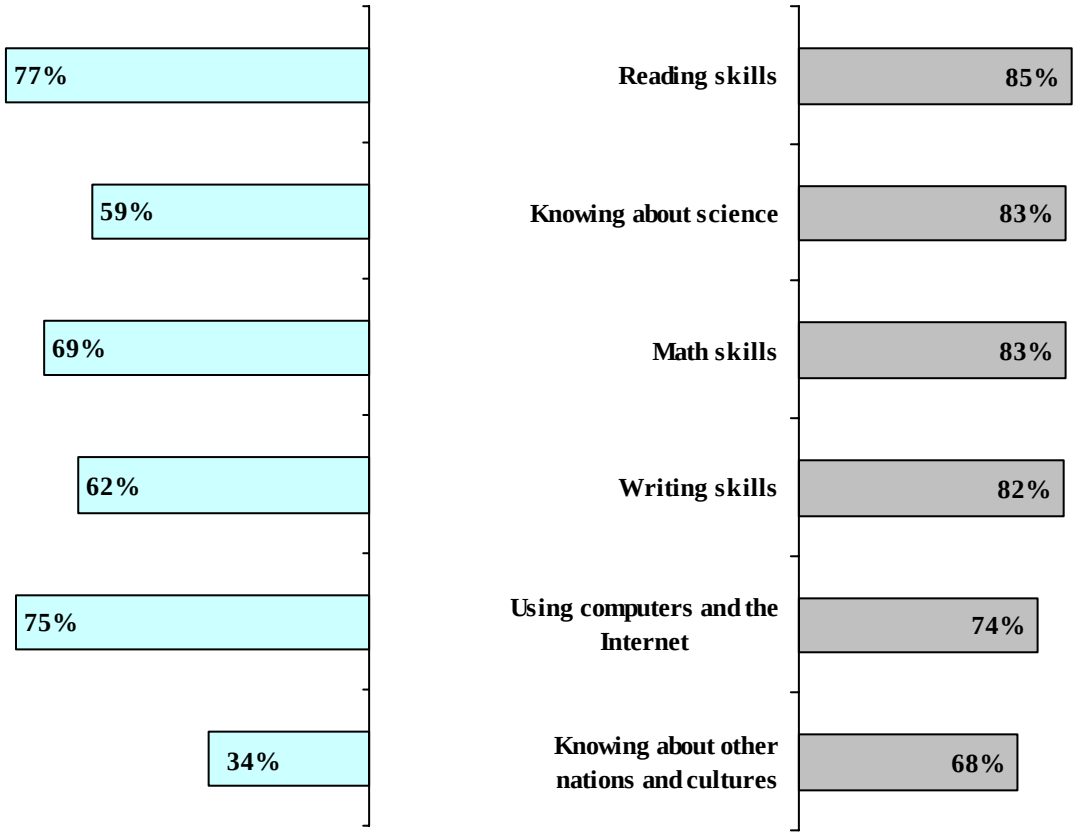
This year's *MetLife Survey* asked students to review how well their teachers prepare them in these same subject areas. Students tend to rate their teachers' abilities to prepare them more highly than teachers rate students' skills in these areas. However, students and teachers were similar in their rankings with regard to which subject areas are rated highest and lowest. The two areas where this pattern does not hold is knowledge of science and computer literacy. While students give teachers their second highest rating in science and their fifth highest rating in computer literacy, teachers show the reverse pattern. They rate students' computer skills as second highest, but rate students' knowledge of science in fifth place.

Reading receives excellent or good ratings from more students (85%) and teachers (77%) than any other subject, and international awareness receives fewer ratings of excellent or good from students (68%) and teachers (34%). More elementary students than secondary students give their teachers excellent or good scores on every subject except for using computers and the Internet, where they do not differ.

Figure 3.8
Students Assess How Well Teachers Prepare Them by Subject vs. Teachers Assess the Strength of Student Skills by Subject: Excellent or Good

Q725 (Students): How would you rate your teachers in preparing you in the following areas? Base: All Students	**Students**		
	Total	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	902	400	502
	%	%	%
Reading skills	85	88	83
Knowing about/ Knowledge of science subjects	83	86	81
Math skills	83	88	79
Writing skills	82	82	82
Using computers and the Internet/ Computer literacy	74	73	75
Knowing about other nations and cultures/ Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	68	71	67

Figure 3.9
Teachers vs. Students in Assessment of Subject Skills: Excellent or Good



2008 Q520 (Teachers) How would you rate students at your school on…?
Base = All Teachers

2008 Q726 (Students) How would you rate your teachers in preparing you in the following areas?
Base = All Students

Student Dropout Rates – Teacher and Principal Perspectives

One measure of the effectiveness of a school system is its high school graduation rate, although graduation alone does not necessarily signify student mastery of knowledge and skills. It is important to note in discussing school persistence, dropout and graduation data that despite recent attention on the issue there is currently no national standard definition or formula for a dropout rate calculation that assures comparability between school districts, and between states. High school graduation rates as reported by the U.S. Department of Education have grown slightly higher between 1984 and 2005 (the most recent year for which data is available) from 85% to 88%, but high school graduation rates are not equal among all students. Male and minority students are less likely than female and white students to finish high school[5]. In this year's *MetLife Survey*, 44% of teachers say that the school dropout rate within their district is a very or somewhat serious problem. A higher number (49%) of secondary school

[5] Laird, J., DeBell, M., Kienzl, G., and Chapman, C. (2007). *Dropout Rates in the United States: 2005* (NCES 2007-059). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

teachers say that dropout rates are a problem within their district. In urban schools, 63% of teachers say that dropout rates are a problem in their district, compared to one-third (32%) of teachers in suburban schools.

Figure 3.10
Teachers Evaluate Dropout Rates

Q535_2 (Teachers): Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools… ***School dropout rates within your district.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**Level of School**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
VERY OR SOMEWHAT SERIOUS (NET)	**44**	**63**	**32**	**41**	**40**	**49**
Very serious	12	23	6	9	11	13
Somewhat serious	32	40	26	31	29	36
NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SERIOUS (NET)	**51**	**31**	**63**	**55**	**52**	**49**
Not very serious	34	21	42	37	33	37
Not at all serious	17	9	21	18	19	12
Not sure	5	6	5	4	7	2
Decline to answer	*	1	*	*	1	-

Fewer principals than teachers express concern about school dropout rates, but the pattern for school location is similar to that of teachers. Overall, 36% of principals believe dropout rates in their school is a very or somewhat serious problem, with a higher ratio of principals in urban schools (57%) and a lower ratio in suburban schools (25%) reporting that dropout rates are a serious problem. Principals in secondary schools see the issue as a problem (43%) at higher rates than do elementary school principals (31%).

Figure 3.11
Principals Evaluate Dropout Rates

Q535_2 (Principals): Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools… ***School dropout rates within your district.*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**Level of School**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
VERY OR SOMEWHAT SERIOUS (NET)	**36**	**57**	**25**	**31**	**31**	**43**
Very serious	9	17	5	6	8	9
Somewhat serious	27	40	19	25	23	34
NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SERIOUS (NET)	**55**	**28**	**67**	**65**	**57**	**53**
Not very serious	27	14	29	36	27	30
Not at all serious	28	13	37	30	30	23
Not sure	7	14	7	3	11	3
Decline to answer	1	1	2	1	1	1

Student Preparedness for College

Greater emphasis on higher achievement and aspirations for all students is part of preparation for a demanding future and is one strategy for addressing the challenge of school dropouts. When asked how well their school prepares students for college, nearly eight in ten (77%) teachers say their school does an excellent or good job, including 30% who say their preparation is excellent. Suburban teachers are particularly likely to say preparation is good or excellent (82%) compared with urban teachers, 70% of whom say preparation of students for college is good or excellent. In fact, a quarter (24%) of urban teachers rate the preparation of their students for college as either fair or poor.

The perceptions of principals about how well their school prepares students for college parallels those of teachers. Nearly eight in ten (78%) say college preparation in their school is excellent or good, including 37% excellent. Principals in schools with a high proportion of minority students, however, are less likely to rate college preparation so strongly. More than eight in ten (85%) principals in schools with fewer than a third minority students rate the preparation as good or excellent, but this number decreases to six in ten (59%) principals in schools with more than two-thirds of their student body made up of minority students who rate the college preparation as good or excellent.

Figure 3.12
Teachers Rate Schools on College Preparation by Proportion of Minority Students and School Level

Q510_10 (Teachers): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The preparation of students for college.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**% of Minority Students**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 33	**34 to 66**	**67+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	543	186	249	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/ GOOD (NET)	**77**	**84**	**74**	**64**	**77**	**76**
Excellent	30	39	24	16	31	29
Good	47	45	51	48	47	47
FAIR/ POOR (NET)	**16**	**10**	**16**	**30**	**13**	**21**
Fair	13	9	16	23	11	18
Poor	3	2	1	7	2	4
Not sure	5	5	5	4	7	2
Decline to answer	2	1	4	1	2	*

Figure 3.13
Principals Rate Schools on College Preparation by Proportion of Minority Students and School Level

Q510_10 (Principals): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The preparation of students for college.*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**% of Minority Students**			**Level of School**	
		0 to 33	**34 to 66**	**67+**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	301	81	112	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/ GOOD (NET)	**78**	**85**	**76**	**59**	**76**	**80**
Excellent	37	46	24	20	35	40
Good	41	39	52	39	41	40
FAIR/ POOR (NET)	**12**	**5**	**13**	**29**	**7**	**19**
Fair	11	5	11	27	7	17
Poor	1	*	2	2	-	2
Not sure	9	7	10	10	14	1
Decline to answer	2	2	2	2	3	*

Students' College Ambitions

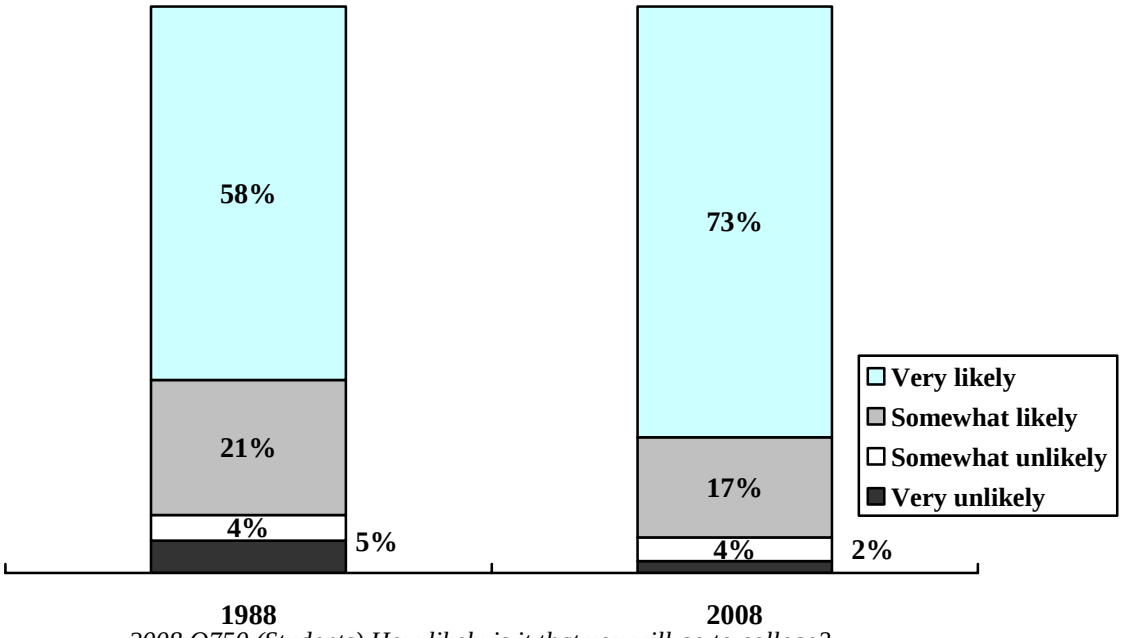
Students aspire to attend college at high levels. Most students (90%) report that it is likely that they will go to college, including three-fourths (73%) of whom say that it is very likely. Consistent with changes in college enrollment patterns that began in the 1980's, when the proportion of females who went to college eclipsed the proportion of male college students, girls are more likely than boys (95% vs. 86%) to say that it is very or somewhat likely that they will go to college. As students who have persisted through high school get closer to graduation, they are more likely than students in lower grades to report a strong intention to attend college. More than three-fourths of seventh to twelfth graders (77%) report that they are very likely to attend college, compared with 69% of those in grades 3–6.

Students' intentions to go to college have increased over the past 20 years. In the 1988 *MetLife Survey*, eight in ten students (80%) said they were likely to go to college, compared to 90% today. The ranks of the very likely attendees increased even more dramatically: from 58% to 73% between 1988 and 2008.

Figure 3.14
Students Likelihood to Attend College

Q750 (Students): How likely is it that you will go to college? Base: All Students	**Total**	**Gender**		**Level of School**	
		Male	**Female**	**Grades 3-6**	**Grades 7-12**
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
VERY/SOMEWHAT LIKELY (NET)	**90**	**86**	**95**	**88**	**92**
Very likely	73	69	78	69	77
Somewhat likely	17	17	16	19	15
VERY/SOMEWHAT UNLIKELY (NET)	**5**	**8**	**2**	**6**	**5**
Somewhat unlikely	4	6	2	4	3
Very unlikely	2	2	1	2	1
Not sure	4	6	3	6	3

Figure 3.15
Students Likelihood to Attend College



2008 Q750 (Students) How likely is it that you will go to college?
Base = All Students

Educators on Relationships with Students

For most teachers, their work with students is a major source of satisfaction. Few teachers (8%) report that they work in a school culture where building strong relationships between teachers and students is discouraged. Similarly, nearly all teachers (97%) are satisfied with their relationships with students in the school, including nearly two-thirds (64%) who are very satisfied. Teachers are satisfied with their relationships with students at higher rates than any other group asked about in this year's *MetLife Survey,* including other teachers, parents or the principal. Urban teachers are slightly less likely to be very satisfied (51%) with student relationships than are suburban (72%) or rural (67%) teachers. Elementary teachers are more likely than are secondary teachers to be very satisfied with students (69% compared to 55%).

Principals are even more satisfied with their relationships with students than are teachers. Overall, most principals are very satisfied (86%) with their relationships with students in their school. Elementary principals (91%) are very satisfied with student relationships, compared to 76% of secondary principals.

Figure 3.16
Teacher Opinions on School Culture and Relationships Between Students and Teachers

Q615_2 (Teachers): Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. ***My school does not encourage strong relationships between students and teachers*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**8**	**8**	**6**	**9**	**7**	**9**
Agree strongly	3	2	2	4	3	3
Agree somewhat	5	6	4	5	4	7
DISAGREE (NET)	**91**	**92**	**92**	**90**	**92**	**90**
Disagree somewhat	20	27	15	19	19	22
Disagree strongly	72	65	77	71	73	69
Not sure	1	-	1	1	1	*
Decline to answer	*	-	1	*	1	*

Figure 3.17
Teacher Satisfaction with Student Relations by School Location and Level

Q715_1 (Teachers): How satisfied are you with your relationship with ***Students in your school****?* Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**97**	**94**	**98**	**98**	**97**	**97**
Very satisfied	64	51	72	67	69	55
Somewhat satisfied	33	43	26	31	28	41
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**3**	**6**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**3**
Somewhat unsatisfied	3	5	2	1	2	3
Very unsatisfied	*	*	-	1	*	*
Not sure	*	*	-	-	*	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 3.18
Principal Satisfaction with Student Relations by School Location and Level

*Q715_1 (Principals): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **Students in your school**?* Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**99**	**99**	**99**	**99**	**99**	**98**
Very satisfied	86	83	88	85	91	78
Somewhat satisfied	13	16	11	14	8	21
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**
Somewhat unsatisfied	1	1	1	1	*	2
Very unsatisfied	*	-	1	-	*	-
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Student Opinions on Relationships

Overall, students are satisfied with the relationships in their school lives. Most (91%) report being satisfied with their relationships with parents, followed by 87% who are satisfied with their relationships with other students. Nearly as many (85%) are satisfied with their relationships with their teachers, though fewer (69%) report satisfaction in their relationship with their principals. Students in grades 3-6 though are more satisfied in their relationships than students in grades 7–12 with their parents (95% compared to 89% satisfied) and their principal (81% vs. 60%).

Figure 3.19
Students on Relationships with People in Their School Lives: Percent Very or Somewhat Satisfied

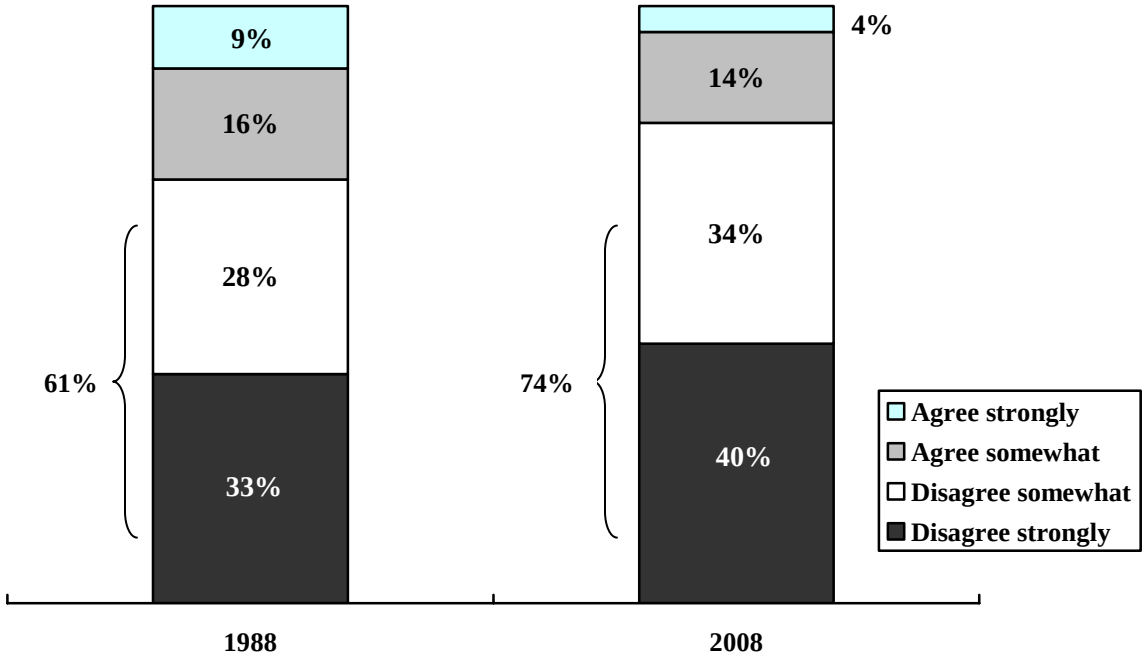
Q730 (Students): During this school year, how satisfied have you been in your relationships with the following people in your school life? Base: All Students		Total	Gender		Level of School	
			Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
Base:		902	450	452	400	502
		%	%	%	%	%
Your parents	**Very or somewhat satisfied (NET)**	**91**	**90**	**93**	**95**	**89**
	Very satisfied	62	61	62	75	51
Other students	**Very or somewhat satisfied (NET)**	**87**	**90**	**84**	**86**	**89**
	Very satisfied	37	36	38	34	39
Your teachers	**Very or somewhat satisfied (NET)**	**85**	**82**	**88**	**88**	**82**
	Very satisfied	39	40	38	48	31
Your principal	**Very or somewhat satisfied (NET)**	**69**	**73**	**65**	**81**	**60**
	Very satisfied	27	28	26	38	18

Similarly, students disagree with the statement that teachers don't relate to them because their background is so different. Three-fourths of students disagree (73%) with the statement, and four in ten (40%) disagree strongly. Students' views on this have improved since the1988 *MetLife Survey*. At that time, fewer students (61%) disagreed that differences in their teacher's background interferes with their ability to relate to students.

Figure 3.20
Student Opinion on Their Teacher's Ability to Relate

Q716_3 (Students): Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your school and yourself? ***My teachers don't relate to us because their background is so different.*** Base: All Students	Total	Gender		Level of School	
		Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT (NET)	**18**	**18**	**17**	**18**	**18**
Agree strongly	4	6	2	5	3
Agree somewhat	14	13	15	13	14
DISAGREE STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT (NET)	**73**	**74**	**73**	**74**	**73**
Disagree somewhat	34	34	33	28	38
Disagree strongly	40	40	40	45	35
Not sure	9	8	10	9	9

Figure 3.21
Student Opinions on the Impact of Differences with Teacher Backgrounds: 1988 vs. 2008



2008 Q716_3 (Students) My teachers don't relate to us because their background is so different.
**1988 student data = 4th - 12th graders* Base = All Students

Students also disagree, though less strongly, with the statement that their school does not encourage strong relationships between students and teachers. Two-thirds (65%) disagree, including nearly four in ten (38%) students who disagree strongly. Younger students, those in grades 3–6, are more likely to disagree strongly than are students in grades 7–12 (46% compared to 31%). In this area too, students

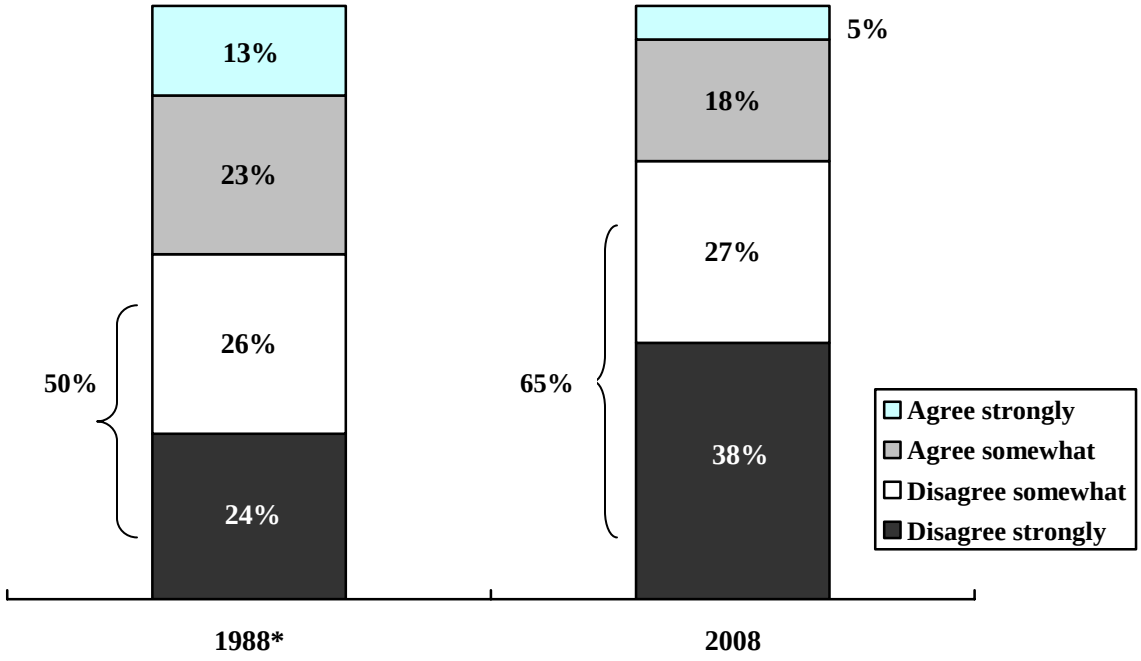
indicate an improvement in teacher-student relations. More students today than in 1988 disagree that their school does not encourage strong relationships between students and teachers (65% vs. 50%).

As noted earlier in this chapter, teachers, for the most part, disagree that they are discouraged by their school from forming strong relationships with students. More than nine in ten teachers (91%) disagree (72% disagree strongly) that their school does not encourage strong relationships between students and teachers (see figure 3.16).

Figure 3.22
Student Opinion on School Culture for Encouraging Student and Teacher Relationships

Q716_1 (Students): Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your school and yourself? ***My school doesn't encourage strong relationships between students and teachers.*** Base: All Students	**Total**	**Gender**		**Level of School**	
		Male	**Female**	**Grades 3-6**	**Grades 7-12**
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT (NET)	**23**	**22**	**24**	**17**	**29**
Agree strongly	5	3	7	4	6
Agree somewhat	18	19	18	12	23
DISAGREE STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT (NET)	**65**	**65**	**65**	**71**	**60**
Disagree somewhat	27	23	31	25	29
Disagree strongly	38	41	34	46	31
Not sure	12	13	11	13	11

Figure 3.23
Student Opinion on Schools Encouraging Relationships Between Students and Teachers: 1988 vs. 2008



2008 Q716_1 (Students) My school doesn't encourage strong relationships between students and teachers.
Base = All Students **1988 student data = 4th - 12th graders*

Student Trust for Teachers

Trust is an aspect of the student-teacher relationship that affects both academic and interpersonal interaction. This year's *MetLife Survey* indicates student trust of teachers has improved in the past decade. In the 2000 *MetLife Survey*, 39% of 7th–12th graders indicated that they trust their teachers only a little or not at all. Today, this has decreased to 28% of secondary school students who trust their teachers only a little or not at all. Despite these gains, students trust teachers less than they trust their family or friends; 34% of students say they trust their teachers a lot, compared to 49% of students who trust their friends a lot and 78% who trust their family a lot. Older students trust family and teachers less than younger students: two in ten (23%) students in grades 7–12 trust teachers a lot, compared to nearly half (48%) of students in grades 3-6. Seven in ten (70%) 7th–12th graders trust their family a lot compared to nearly nine in ten (88%) 3rd– 6th graders.

Figure 3.24
Student Trust for Friends, Family and Teachers

Q720 (Students): How much do you trust the following groups of people? Base: All Students		Total	Gender		Level of School	
			Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
		902	450	452	400	502
		%	%	%	%	%
Your friends	A lot	49	46	52	47	51
	A lot/Somewhat	**92**	**93**	**91**	**90**	**94**
Your family	A lot	78	78	78	88	70
	A lot/Somewhat	**97**	**97**	**96**	**100**	**94**
Your teachers	A lot	34	34	34	48	23
	A lot/Somewhat	**79**	**81**	**77**	**88**	**72**

Figure 3.25
Student Trust for Teachers

*Q721_3 (Students): How much do you trust the following groups of people?... **Your Teachers*** Base: All Students	Total	Gender		Level of School	
		Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
A LOT/SOMEWHAT (NET)	**79**	**81**	**77**	**88**	**72**
A lot	34	34	34	48	23
Somewhat	45	47	43	40	49
NOT AT ALL/ONLY A LITTLE (NET)	**21**	**19**	**23**	**12**	**28**
Only a little	16	13	20	7	24
Not at all	4	5	4	5	4

Effective Teaching – A Student Perspective

When asked to describe what qualities made their best teacher so good, students offered a wide range of answers and some insights, often noting interpersonal skills. Students reported that good teachers listen; are caring, respectful, encouraging; and connect on the students' level while still being the teacher. Perhaps most of all, a good teacher is aware of and understands a student's particular need at a particular time and takes appropriate action.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: WHY ARE THE BEST TEACHERS SPECIAL?

"She finally understood that I was not getting enough attention, even though I figured it out for myself. She then rewarded me for the work I did."
- 13 year-old

"*She listened to what I had to say*"
- 10 year-old

"He was able to talk to us like a person and not a teacher. treated us with respect but joked around but kept the line of teacher and student"
- 14 year-old

"A good teacher pays attention to the kids. A good teacher knows if there is a problem and helps with problems besides just school work. A good teacher really cares about the class."
- 8 year-old

"She worked hard with me on reading so I could bring my test scores up. She kept telling me I could do it and she didn't get mad or put me down when I made mistakes."
- 14 year-old

"She knows how to talk to us on our level, not talking down to us and makes class interesting."
- 15 year-old

"Mr. C… always told me I was smart when I didn't feel like it."
- 10 year-old

"I learned more from this one teacher because she didn't just have us do stuff from a book, she did creative things to help us learn about stuff."
- 12 year-old

"She was a good teacher because she was able to make learning fun, and she related to our lives. She was able to find fun ways to learn, instead of the boring 'textbook approach."
- 15 year-old

Summary

Student achievement is the most direct indicator of the quality of teaching. Teachers and principals report that more students arrive in classrooms today prepared to learn at grade level than in past. However, ratings of lack of preparation remain high, particularly in urban schools, and ratings of preparation do not improve from elementary to secondary schools. Teachers today rate student skills in computer literacy and writing significantly higher than in the past, with smaller increases or small declines in other skills. Generally, teachers rate student skills in reading, computer literacy, writing, math, science and humanities as good or excellent. In contrast, the majority of teachers rate student knowledge of other cultures and

foreign languages as fair or poor. Interestingly, student ratings of teacher skills are highest for science and lowest for computer literacy.

While overall, most teachers and principals report that student dropout is not a major problem for their school district, this is not the case for the majority of urban school teachers. A larger majority of students aspire to college today than in the past, and most teachers and principals feel that their schools prepare students well for college.

The relationship between student and teacher is particularly important for student academic achievement and personal development. Teacher and student relationships have improved as both groups report that their school culture encourages strong relationships, and students today are more trusting of their teachers. Further, students report that class size and a difference of background with a teacher do not negatively affect relationships. When students describe good teaching, they often mentioned interpersonal skills and capacity to recognize and offer the right help when needed.

CHAPTER FOUR
PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION

Successful teaching depends on many relationships: with students first and foremost, but also among teachers, principals, district administrators, parents and community members. Isolation in the classroom has always been a particular professional challenge for teachers and has been an issue addressed by recent decades of reform. Over the years of the *MetLife Survey*, many new opportunities have evolved for teacher-to-teacher professional relationships, including mentoring, formal professional development and follow-up, teacher networks, advanced credentialing, and digital communication. Teachers interact in a variety of ways to help develop, improve and sustain their capacity for effective teaching. Their professional relationships may be formal or informal; mandatory or voluntary; seeking and offering information, feedback or advice; and conducted face-to-face or electronically, locally or at a distance. The 2008 *MetLife Survey* explored with whom, by what methods, for what reasons and how often teachers and principals interact as professionals.

Guidance for Effective Teaching

Most teachers agree (83%) that they have the guidance and support they need to be an effective teacher: eight in ten (83%) teachers agree overall, including 45% of teachers agree strongly. New teachers are less likely to agree than are veteran teachers that they have sufficient support to be a more effective teacher. New teachers are also less likely to rate their support highly. Three-quarters (74%) of teachers with five years or less experience agree that they have sufficient support, compared to 85% of teachers with six or more years of experience. Rural teachers are the most likely to report that they have the guidance and support they need. Nearly nine in ten (88%) teachers in rural schools agree that they have the support they need, compared with eight in ten urban (81%) and suburban (80%) teachers.

Figure 4.1
Teachers on Support and Guidance for Being an Effective Teacher

Q615_4 (Teachers): Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements… ***I have sufficient support and guidance to be a more effective teacher.*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Years of Teaching Experience			Location		
		0 to 5	6 to 20	21 +	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Base:	1000	162	509	329	266	227	494
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**83**	**74**	**85**	**84**	**81**	**80**	**88**
Agree strongly	45	42	46	44	39	46	47
Agree somewhat	38	32	39	40	43	34	41
DISAGREE (NET)	**16**	**26**	**15**	**14**	**18**	**19**	**12**
Disagree somewhat	12	17	11	10	13	14	8
Disagree strongly	5	9	4	4	5	5	4
Not sure	*	-	*	1	*	1	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	1	1	-	*

In many areas examined by the 2008 *MetLife Survey*, urban teachers and principals perceive greater challenges than do their rural and suburban counterparts. However, in this context principals report that urban schools are faring well. Nearly all principals (97%) agree that teachers in their school have sufficient support and guidance to be more effective teachers. Overall, 64% of principals strongly agree that their teachers have sufficient support. Urban principals are more likely to agree strongly (73%) compared with suburban (60%) or rural (61%) principals. Elementary principals are more likely to agree strongly than are secondary principals (69% vs. 57%) that their teachers have the support they need.

Figure 4.2
Principals on Support and Guidance for Being an Effective Teacher

Q615_3 (Principals): Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements… ***Teachers in my school have sufficient support and guidance to be a more effective teacher.*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**97**	**98**	**95**	**98**	**98**	**96**
Agree strongly	64	73	60	61	69	57
Agree somewhat	33	25	35	37	29	39
DISAGREE (NET)	**3**	**2**	**5**	**2**	**2**	**4**
Disagree somewhat	2	1	3	1	2	2
Disagree strongly	1	1	1	1	1	2
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Relationships: Principals and Teachers

Principals relate to teachers in different roles: supervisors and managers, instructional leaders and professional mentors. Although meetings with teachers and classroom observations alone are not a measure of professional development and mentoring, the frequency with which they occur is an indicator. Most principals (86%) report meeting with experienced teachers at least once a month to discuss teaching. Urban principals in particular are likely to meet with experienced teachers: 92% compared to 82% of suburban and 86% of rural principals.

Figure 4.3
Frequency of Principals Meeting with Experienced Teachers to Discuss Teaching

Q630_1 (Principals): How often have you… ***Met with an experienced teacher at your school to discuss their teaching.*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**86**	**92**	**82**	**86**	**89**	**82**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**57**	**65**	**52**	**56**	**57**	**56**
Every day or almost every day	19	27	14	18	18	19
Once or twice a week	38	38	38	38	39	37
Once or twice a month	29	28	30	31	32	26
A few times a year	**13**	**8**	**17**	**13**	**10**	**17**
Less than a few times a year	*	-	1	-	-	1
Never	*	-	-	*	*	-
Not sure	*	-	1	-	-	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Most (90%) principals also report spending time observing teachers in the classroom and providing feedback about teaching skills at least once a month, and seven in ten (70%) of principals do so at least once a week. Urban principals are most likely to do this, with 86% observing at least once a week, compared to 67% of suburban and 61% of rural principals. About one in ten principals (9%) conduct observations a few times a year or less. Principals report meeting with new teachers as frequently as with experienced teachers. Most principals (90%) meet with a beginning teacher at least once a month to discuss teaching, and more than half (55%) meet once a week or more. Differences by location and level of school are insignificant.

Figure 4.4
Frequency of Principals Meeting with a Beginning Teacher to Discuss Teaching

Q630_5 (Principals): How often have you… ***Met with a beginning teacher at your school to discuss teaching.*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**90**	**90**	**89**	**89**	**90**	**88**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**55**	**58**	**52**	**55**	**55**	**54**
Every day or almost every day	14	20	9	14	14	14
Once or twice a week	41	38	43	41	42	40
Once or twice a month	35	32	38	34	35	34
A few times a year	3	3	3	3	2	6
Less than a few times a year	1	-	1	1	1	1
Never	4	4	2	5	4	3
Not sure	1	1	3	1	1	2
Decline to answer	1	1	2	1	2	1

Figure 4.5
Frequency of Principals Observing Teachers and Providing Feedback

Q630_2 (Principals): How often have you… ***Observed teachers in the classroom and provided feedback about their teaching skills.*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**90**	**95**	**90**	**87**	**91**	**90**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**70**	**86**	**67**	**61**	**71**	**68**
Every day or almost every day	31	39	34	23	33	29
Once or twice a week	38	47	33	37	38	39
Once or twice a month	21	9	23	26	19	22
A few times a year	9	3	10	12	8	10
Less than a few times a year	*	-	-	*	-	*
Never	*	-	-	1	*	-
Not sure	*	2	-	-	1	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Principals' teacher meetings and observations are spread among the many teachers at their schools, thus the teacher view of principal-teacher contact is much different. One in ten teachers (11%) report never being observed, and a quarter of teachers (25%) are observed less often than a few times a year. Nearly half of teachers (45%) are observed at least a few times a year. Two in ten (19%) teachers are observed at

least once a month, and 5% are observed at least once a week. In comparison, new teachers report being observed more often: 10% at least once a week, 29% at least once a month and 52% a few times a year, and only 1% are never observed by their principal.

Figure 4.6
Frequency That Teachers Report Being Observed by Their Principal

Q630_2 (Teachers): How often have you… ***Had your principal observe you in the classroom and provide feedback about your teaching skills.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Teaching Experience**			**School Level**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21 +**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**19**	**29**	**16**	**19**	**22**	**15**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**5**	**10**	**3**	**6**	**5**	**5**
Every day or almost every day	1	1	1	2	2	1
Once or twice a week	4	8	3	4	4	4
Once or twice a month	14	20	13	13	16	10
A few times a year	45	52	47	37	45	45
Less than a few times a year	25	16	24	30	25	25
Never	11	1	12	14	9	14
Not sure	*	1	-	1	*	1
Decline to answer	*	-	-	*	*	-

Another indicator of teacher-principal relationships is the frequency with which teachers seek a principal's advice on teaching. Nearly three in ten (28%) teachers never go to their principal for advice on teaching. New teachers report going to their principal for advice more than experienced teachers: 20% of new teachers report never going to their principal for advice, compared with 31% of more experienced teachers who never go to their principal for teaching advice. For secondary school teachers, 39% do not go to the principal for advice, compared with 22% of elementary teachers.

Figure 4.7
Frequency with Which Teachers Go to Their Principal for Advice

Q630_3 (Teachers): How often have you… ***Gone to your principal for advice on teaching.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Teaching Experience**			**School Level**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21 +**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**24**	**28**	**28**	**16**	**29**	**16**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**5**	**3**	**7**	**3**	**5**	**6**
Every day or almost every day	1	-	1	*	*	1
Once or twice a week	5	3	6	3	5	5
Once or twice a month	19	25	21	13	24	11
A few times a year	27	28	26	27	29	23
Less than a few times a year	20	24	16	25	20	21
Never	28	20	29	31	22	39
Not sure	*	-	*	*	*	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Relationships: Teacher to Teacher

Teachers are important resources for each other. This is reflected in the frequency with which they meet with more experienced teachers. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of teachers meet with a more experienced teacher to discuss teaching at least once a month. Teachers who have less experience meet with another teacher to discuss teaching with a higher frequency. Six in ten new teachers (59%) meet with another teacher on teaching at least once a week, compared to 42% of teachers with 6 to 20 years of experience, and 30% of teachers with 21 years or more experience. Four percent of teachers with less than five years of experience have never met with a mentor, compared to 10% of those with 6 to 20 years of experience, and 17% of those with more than 21 years of experience, indicating more widespread implementation of mentoring programs for new teachers over the past decades.

Figure 4.8
Teacher Frequency of Meeting with a More Experienced Teacher

Q630_1 (Teachers): How often have you… ***Met with a more experienced teacher to discuss your teaching – either in person, by phone or online.*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Years of Teaching Experience			School Level	
		0 to 5	6 to 20	21 +	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**63**	**83**	**66**	**47**	**66**	**57**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**41**	**59**	**42**	**30**	**43**	**36**
Every day or almost every day	16	26	14	14	17	14
Once or twice a week	24	33	27	15	26	22
Once or twice a month	22	24	24	18	23	22
A few times a year	16	12	18	16	15	18
Less than a few times a year	9	1	7	17	8	11
Never	11	4	10	17	10	12
Not sure	1	-	-	3	1	1
Decline to answer	*	-	-	1	*	1

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of teachers with 21 or more years of experience meet with a beginning teacher to discuss teaching at least once a month, compared to 57% of teachers with 6 to 21 years of experience, and 55% of teachers with 5 or fewer years of teaching experience.

Figure 4.9
Teacher Frequency of Meeting with a Beginning Teacher

Q630_6 (Teachers): How often have you… ***Met with a beginning teacher to discuss teaching – either in person, by phone or online.*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Years of Teaching Experience			School Level	
		0 to 5	6 to 20	21 +	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**59**	**55**	**57**	**64**	**59**	**59**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**44**	**37**	**42**	**49**	**42**	**46**
Every day or almost every day	19	12	19	21	19	18
Once or twice a week	25	25	23	28	23	28
Once or twice a month	16	18	15	15	17	13
A few times a year	14	14	17	10	14	15
Less than a few times a year	8	5	8	8	8	7
Never	18	26	17	15	18	17
Not sure	1	*	1	2	1	2
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Relationships: Perceptions and Quality

Teachers are satisfied with the relationships they have with other teachers in their school, including two thirds (66%) who are very satisfied. Teachers today are more likely than they were than just five years ago to be very satisfied in their relationships with other teachers at their school (66% compared to 57%), based on data from the 2004-2005 *MetLife Survey*. Teachers are also generally satisfied in their relationship with their principal. Half (52%) of teachers are very satisfied, and another third (32%) are somewhat satisfied. Teacher satisfaction in their relationships with principals has remained nearly the same as it was reported in the 2004-2005 *MetLife Survey*, with half of teachers (53%) very satisfied. Differences between school level, location and years of teaching are negligible.

Figure 4.10
Teachers on Relationships with Other Teachers in Their School

*Q715_2 (Teachers): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **Other teachers in your school.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**96**	**93**	**98**	**97**	**97**	**95**
Very satisfied	66	65	68	66	67	65
Somewhat satisfied	30	28	30	31	30	30
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**4**	**7**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**5**
Somewhat unsatisfied	3	5	2	2	3	4
Very unsatisfied	1	2	-	1	1	1
Not sure	*	-	-	*	*	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 4.11
Teacher Satisfaction with Their Principal

*Q715_3 (Teachers): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **Your principal.*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**84**	**79**	**87**	**85**	**84**	**84**
Very satisfied	52	45	55	56	52	52
Somewhat satisfied	32	35	32	29	32	32
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**15**	**19**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**14**
Somewhat unsatisfied	9	10	7	9	8	9
Very unsatisfied	6	9	6	5	7	6
Not sure	*	*	*	1	1	*
Decline to answer	*	1	-	*	*	1

Virtually all principals report being satisfied with their relationships with teachers in their school, including 76% who are very satisfied. Elementary principals are particularly likely to be very satisfied with their teacher relationships compared with secondary principals (82% vs. 67%). Urban and suburban principals are more satisfied than their rural counterparts (80% and 81% vs. 69%). Principals also have very favorable levels of satisfaction with district-level administrators. More than half (55%) of principals are very satisfied, and 35% are somewhat satisfied. Satisfaction levels are not significantly different by school level or location.

Figure 4.12
Principal Satisfaction with Teachers in Their School

*Q715_2 (Principals): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **Teachers in your School.*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**99**	**99**	**99**	**99**	**99**	**99**
Very satisfied	76	80	81	69	82	67
Somewhat satisfied	23	19	18	30	17	32
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**1**	**1**	**1**	*****	**1**	**1**
Somewhat unsatisfied	*	1	1	*	*	1
Very unsatisfied	*****	-	1	-	*****	-
Not sure	*	-	-	1	*	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 4.13
Principal Satisfaction with District-Level Administrators

*Q715_3 (Principals): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **District level administrators.*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural/Small Town**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**89**	**91**	**89**	**88**	**90**	**88**
Very satisfied	55	51	57	54	58	50
Somewhat satisfied	35	40	32	34	31	38
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**10**	**8**	**11**	**11**	**10**	**10**
Somewhat unsatisfied	6	4	5	8	5	6
Very unsatisfied	4	3	6	4	5	4
Not sure	1	1	1	1	1	1
Decline to answer	*	1	-	-	-	1

Relationships: Team Work

For the most part, teachers agree that their schools encourage teamwork among teachers and other professional staff. Elementary school teachers are more likely than secondary school teachers to report that their school encourages teamwork (94% vs. 88%), as are teachers with more than 5 years of experience (94% vs. 86% for teachers with 5 years or less teaching experience). All principals (100%) agree that their school encourages teamwork.

Figure 4.14
Teachers on School Culture for Teamwork

Q710_8 (Teachers): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools: ***My school encourages teamwork among teachers and other professional staff.*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Years of Experience			Level of School	
		0 to 5	6 to 20	21+	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**92**	**86**	**94**	**93**	**94**	**88**
Agree Strongly	67	63	68	67	70	61
Agree Somewhat	25	23	26	26	24	27
DISAGREE (NET)	**7**	**14**	**6**	**7**	**5**	**11**
Disagree Somewhat	4	7	3	4	3	5
Disagree Strongly	3	7	3	3	2	6
Not sure	*	-	*	*	*	*
Decline to answer	*	-	*	-	-	*

Figure 4.15
Principal on School Culture for Teamwork

Q710_8 (Principals): For each, please tell me if you agree… in terms of your own job as a principal in the public schools: ***My school encourages teamwork among teachers and other professional staff.*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
Agree Strongly	86	87	91	80	88	83
Agree Somewhat	14	13	9	20	12	17
DISAGREE (NET)	*****	-	-	*****	-	*****
Disagree Somewhat	*	-	-	*	-	*
Disagree Strongly	-	-	-	-	-	-
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Relationships: Communication about Student Progress

Interaction with teachers at different grade levels regarding student preparation and performance could provide useful information and feedback to help teachers improve teaching and learning. Four in ten (39%) teachers report that they communicate with teachers at other grade levels in their districts about student preparation a few times a year or less. However, 60% of teachers report they communicate with teachers of other grades at least once a month, including 29% who share information once a week and 11% every day or almost every day.

Figure 4.16
Frequency of Communication about Student Preparation by Teachers at Other Grade Levels

Q630_5 (Teachers): How often have you… ***Communicated about student preparation with teachers at other grade levels than your own within your district?*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Teaching Experience**			**School Level**	
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21 +**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**60**	**58**	**59**	**62**	**63**	**55**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**29**	**31**	**27**	**32**	**30**	**28**
Every day or almost every day	11	12	9	13	10	11
Once or twice a week	19	20	19	19	20	17
Once or twice a month	30	27	32	30	33	26
A few times a year	25	20	26	27	25	26
Less than a few times a year	10	13	11	7	8	14
Never	4	8	4	3	3	6
Not sure	1	1	*	1	1	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-		-

In comparison, principals communicate with other principals within their own district at different school levels regarding student preparation with more frequency than teachers. Half (49%) of principals are in touch with other principals within the district about student preparation once or twice a month, and just under a quarter (23%) are in touch a few times a year.

Figure 4.17
Frequency of Principals Discussing Student Preparation with Principals at Different Grade Levels

Q630_4 (Principals): How often have you… ***Communicated about student preparation with principals of schools covering different grade levels than yours in your district about students' preparation?*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**69**	**74**	**69**	**65**	**70**	**67**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**19**	**22**	**19**	**19**	**16**	**25**
Every day or almost every day	4	6	2	5	3	5
Once or twice a week	15	16	17	13	13	20
Once or twice a month	49	53	50	46	54	42
A few times a year	23	17	23	26	22	25
Less than a few times a year	4	4	4	3	4	4
Never	4	5	4	5	4	4
Not sure	*	*	-	1	*	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Student data can provide perspective on the individual student, the classroom, the school and the preparation of students across grades and levels of instruction for the individual educator, teams, and for productive discussion. The large majority of teachers are discussing the implication of student data for improving classroom teaching. About half (51%) of teachers discuss data including grades and test scores with other teachers, with respect to improving teaching, at least once a week, and 85% of teachers do so at least once a month. Elementary school teachers are more likely than secondary school teachers to discuss data once a week or more (54% vs. 44%). Teachers in different school settings discuss data and test scores at similar rates, but principals in urban schools discuss student data at least once a week with higher frequency (60%) than do rural (40%) and suburban principals (49%).

Figure 4.18
Frequency of Teacher Discussions on Data Including Grades and Test Scores

Q630_8 (Teachers): How often have you… ***Discussed data, such as grades and test scores, with other teachers in your school regarding improvements for classroom teaching?*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Years of Teaching Experience			School Level	
		0 to 5	6 to 20	21 +	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	162	509	329	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**85**	**83**	**85**	**86**	**87**	**81**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**51**	**43**	**52**	**53**	**54**	**44**
Every day or almost every day	19	13	18	22	20	16
Once or twice a week	32	29	34	31	34	29
Once or twice a month	34	40	33	33	33	37
A few times a year	13	13	14	13	12	16
Less than a few times a year	1	1	1	1	*	1
Never	1	3	1	*	*	2
Not sure	*	*	*	*	*	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 4.19
Frequency of Principal Discussions with Teachers on Data Including Grades and Test Scores

Q630_7 (Principals): How often have you… ***Discussed data, such as grades and test scores, with other teachers in your school regarding improvements for classroom teaching?*** Base: All Principals	Total	School Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**90**	**95**	**90**	**85**	**93**	**86**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**49**	**60**	**49**	**40**	**50**	**47**
Every day or almost every day	16	24	15	10	15	17
Once or twice a week	33	36	34	30	35	30
Once or twice a month	41	35	41	45	43	38
A few times a year	10	5	8	15	6	14
Less than a few times a year	*	-	-	*	-	*
Never	1	-	1	1	1	-
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Digital Media as a Resource for Professional Relationships and Communication

Advances in technology are changing society and classrooms. Today, digital media provide resources and opportunities for teachers and principals that can help build their capacities as professionals and as colleagues. Most teachers and principals believe technology enhances teaching and learning (see Chapter 2). Students, however, rate their teachers lowest on their ability to teach about computers and the Internet, among major categories of knowledge and skills (see Chapter 3). To gain perspective on how educators are using technology to communicate and to learn, the 2008 *MetLife Survey* focused on an array of options that were unavailable 25 years ago, including student tracking software, the Internet, blogs, online courses, social networks, and interaction with colleagues at a distance.

While paper and pencils are critical to many school functions, computer software is making inroads on keeping track of student grades. Overall, half (52%) of teachers have used computer **software to track student academic progress**, including collecting data about grades and test scores. Secondary school teachers (59%) are more likely than elementary school teachers (49%) to use software to track student progress, and urban (56%) and suburban (54%) teachers are slightly more likely than rural teachers (49%) to use tracking software.

Figure 4.20
Teachers on Use of Software to Track Student Progress

Q635_3 (Teachers): Have you ever done the following related to your teaching or school responsibilities, or not? ***Used computer software (such as ParentConnect or Edline) to track student progress.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	52	56	54	49	49	59
No	47	44	46	50	51	40
Not sure	*	-	*	1	*	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Seven in ten (70%) principals have used computer software to track student progress. Slightly more secondary principals (75%) than elementary principals (68%) have used such software programs. There are negligible differences by location.

Figure 4.21
Principals on Use of Software to Track Student Progress

Q635_3 (Principals): Have you ever done the following related to your professional responsibilities, or not? ***Used computer software (such as ParentConnect or Edline) to track student progress?*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	70	72	69	70	68	75
No	29	27	31	30	31	25
Not sure	1	1	*	1	1	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Most teachers, 96%, used the **Internet** as a resource for teaching ideas at least a few times over the past year. Six in ten (62%) teachers use the Internet as a teaching resource at least once a week: seven in ten (67%) secondary teachers, and six in ten (59%) elementary school teachers use the Internet once a week or more. New teachers also use the internet as a resource on at least a weekly basis, more often than teachers with more experience. Seven in ten teachers (69%) with five or fewer years of experience use the Internet as a resource for teaching at least weekly compared to 62% of teachers with 6 to 20 years, and 58% of teachers with 21 or more years of experience.

Figure 4.22
Teachers on Their Use of the Internet as a Teaching Resource

Q630_4 (Teachers): How often have you ***used an internet resource to get teaching ideas****?* Base: All Teachers	Total	School Type		Years of Teaching Experience		
		Elementary	Secondary	0 to 5	6 to 20	21+
Base:	1000	679	321	162	509	329
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**85**	**84**	**85**	**92**	**85**	**80**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**62**	**59**	**67**	**69**	**62**	**58**
Every day or almost every day	27	26	28	37	26	23
Once or twice a week	35	32	40	33	36	35
Once or twice a month	23	25	18	23	23	23
A few times a year	11	10	12	7	12	11
Less than a few times a year	2	3	1	*	2	4
Never	2	2	2	*	1	4
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Principals use the Internet as a resource for leading their school slightly less often than teachers use the Internet as a resource for teaching. More than three-fourths (77%) of principals use the Internet as a school leadership resource at least once a month, and nearly half (49%) use it at least once a week. One in five (19%) principals use the web as a school leadership resource every day.

Figure 4.23
Principals on Their Use of the Internet as a Leadership Resource

Q630_3 (Principals): How often have you ***used an internet resource for leading your school?*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**School Type**		**Location**		
		Elementary	**Secondary**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
Base:	501	241	235	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**77**	**76**	**78**	**73**	**82**	**75**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**49**	**49**	**48**	**52**	**48**	**45**
Every day or almost every day	19	18	20	22	19	16
Once or twice a week	30	31	29	30	29	30
Once or twice a month	29	27	29	20	34	30
A few times a year	15	15	16	19	9	19
Less than a few times a year	5	5	5	6	5	3
Never	3	4	2	2	5	3
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

More than a quarter (28%) of all teachers reported having written or read a **blog** about teaching. Suburban teachers are most likely to have read or written a blog, with a third (33%) reporting they do so, followed by rural (28%) and urban (22%) teachers. Secondary school teachers (31%) are also slightly more likely to have read or written a blog than are elementary school teachers (26%). Principals overall are more likely than teachers to have read or written a blog related to their professional activities. More than four in ten (42%) principals reported having written or read a blog about teaching or being a principal. Rural principals are more likely to have done so (47%) than suburban (40%) or urban (36%) principals.

Figure 4.24
Teachers on Use of Teaching-Related Blogs

Q635_4 (Teachers): Have you ever done the following related to your teaching or school responsibilities, or not? ***Read or written a blog about teaching?*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	28	22	33	28	26	31
No	72	78	67	72	74	69
Not sure	*	-	-	*	*	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 4.25
Principals on Use of Teaching or Principal-Related Blogs

Q635_4 (Principals): Have you ever done the following related to your professional responsibilities, or not? ***Read or written a blog about teaching or being a principal?*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	42	36	40	47	43	41
No	58	64	60	53	57	59
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Nearly four in ten (39%) teachers have taken an **online course** for degree or professional credit. Teachers at rural schools (43%) are more likely than teachers at urban (38%) or suburban schools (37%) to have done so. Teachers with the most experience are less likely to have taken professional or degree credit courses online (30%) than teachers with six to 20 years of experience (43%) or 5 years or less experience (45%). Principals have taken courses online for degree or professional credit at rates similar to teachers. Overall, four out of ten (41%) principals have taken an online class for degree or professional credit. Half (49%) of rural principals have taken an online course for professional or degree credit, compared to 45% of urban principals, and a third (33%) or suburban principals.

Figure 4.26
Teachers Who Have Taken a Course Online

Q635_2 (Teachers): Have you ever done the following related to your teaching or school responsibilities, or not? ***Taken an online course for degree credit or professional credit?*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			Years of Teaching Experience		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	0 to 5	6 to 20	21+
Base:	1000	266	227	494	162	509	329
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	39	38	37	43	45	43	30
No	60	62	62	57	55	57	69
Not sure	*	-	*	-	-	-	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 4.27
Principals Who Have Taken a Course Online

Q635_2 (Principals): Have you ever done the following related to your professional responsibilities, or not? ***Taken an online course for degree credit or professional credit?*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	41	45	33	49	43	38
No	58	55	67	51	57	61
Not sure	*	-	-	*	-	*
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Digital Media and Training: Interacting Online with Colleagues at a Distance

Teacher utilization of electronic media to communicate with **colleagues outside of their districts** is mixed. Nearly three in ten teachers (27%) report communicating online with a teacher outside of his or her own district using the Internet at least once a month, and just over four in ten (43%) teachers report never doing this. There is very little variance by years of teacher experience, school type or location of school.

Principals are about twice as likely as teachers to contact counterparts outside of their own school districts for advice at least once a month: 62% of principals communicate with a principal outside of their own district at least once a month compared to 27% of teachers.

Figure 4.28
Teachers and Principals on Communicating With Out of District Counterparts

Q630_7 (Teachers), Q630_6 (Principals): During the past school year, how often have you ***Communicated online with a teacher/principal outside your district – for example by email, instant messaging, on a blog, etc.?*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	Teachers				Principals			
		Location				Location		
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH (NET)	**27**	**28**	**27**	**26**	**62**	**50**	**61**	**70**
AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK (NET)	**11**	**13**	**10**	**12**	**38**	**33**	**35**	**45**
Every day/almost every day	3	5	3	3	16	16	14	18
Once or twice a week	8	8	7	9	23	17	21	27
Once or twice a month	15	15	17	14	23	17	26	25
A few times a year	19	14	19	22	18	22	17	16
Less than a few times a year	12	8	14	12	8	9	9	6
Never	43	50	40	40	13	19	14	8
Not sure	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

While most teachers do not use online community sites or **social networks** related to teaching or school responsibilities, a noteworthy minority have done so. Overall, 15% of teachers have used an online community or social networking site related to teaching or school responsibilities. Suburban teachers are the most likely to have done so (20%) compared to urban (14%) and rural (13%) teachers. Principals overall have used social networking sites at slightly higher rates than teachers. Two in ten (22%) principals have used such sites for their school responsibilities. More than a quarter (27%) of rural principals reported having used social networking sites, compared to 22% of urban and 17% of suburban principals.

Figure 4.29
Teacher Use of Online Communities

Q635_1 (Teachers): Have you ever done the following related to your teaching or school responsibilities, or not? ***Participated in an online community or a social networking site such as TeachAde, Tapped In, or Facebook?*** Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			Years of Teaching Experience		
		Urban	Suburban	Rural	0 to 5	6 to 20	21+
Base:	1000	266	227	494	162	509	329
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	15	14	20	13	19	15	14
No	85	86	80	87	81	85	86
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 4.30
Principal Use of Online Communities

Q635_1 (Principals): Have you ever done the following related to your professional responsibilities, or not? ***Participated in an online community or a social networking site such as TeachAde, Tapped In, or Facebook?*** Base: All Principals	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	22	22	17	27	22	24
No	78	78	83	73	78	76
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary

Teachers today have more opportunities than teachers did 25 years ago for professional relationships and communication that are not restrained by real time and proximity. Overall, teachers feel supported, but patterns of differences in the positive perception of teachers and principals may signal the need to improve quality of communication.

Although most principals are involved every week in classroom observations and feedback and in discussions with new and experienced teachers about teaching, this translates into interaction with an individual teacher a few times a year. Most teachers seek advice on teaching from their principal a few times a year or less, with 28% reporting that they never seek advice. Teachers look to more experienced

teachers for advice at least once a month, face to face, by phone or online. In similar numbers, they communicate at least once a month with teachers at other grade levels about student preparation, and in even larger numbers with teachers in their school about student data. Most teachers and every principal feel that their schools encourage teamwork. Patterns and topics of communication, however, suggest that for many, effective teams focused on improving teaching and learning are still more of a goal than a common practice.

Most teachers and principals value technology and use the Internet frequently. Far fewer are exploring the use of digital media for professional development and communication, including interaction with colleagues beyond their schools and districts.

CHAPTER FIVE
SCHOOL CONDITIONS, RESOURCES AND CHALLENGES

Many things influence the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms and schools. In this *MetLife Survey*, several factors are described collectively as school environment, culture and conditions. This chapter looks beyond academics to factors both in school and outside of school that shape the context in which teachers teach and students learn, including: administration support for teachers; disciplinary policies, teacher professional development; class size; and supplies, resources, and physical facilities. Among these are specific challenges to student learning that teachers and schools cannot address alone such as parental support, poverty, nutrition, health, English language facility and violence. Important too is how well teachers feel prepared to address these issues. Finally, the chapter reports perspectives on the quality of parent and community support as a resource for teachers and schools in addressing student needs in the classroom and beyond.

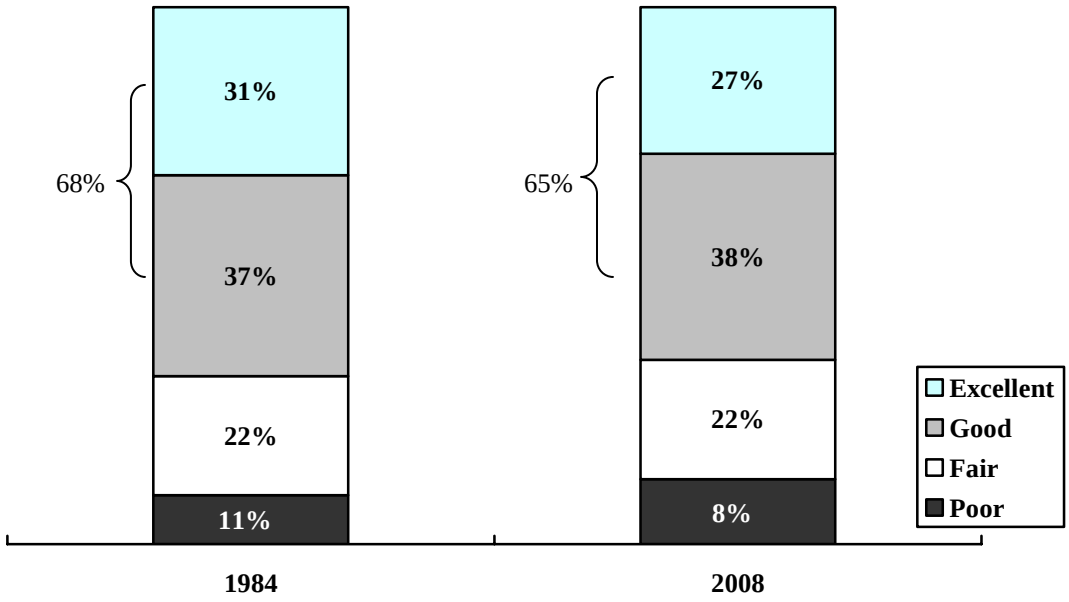
Support of Administration for Teachers

Three-fourths (74%) of teachers report that their administration's support for teachers is excellent or good, including more than a third (37%) who rate the support as excellent. Suburban and rural school teachers (78%) are more likely than urban teachers (65%) to rate this support as excellent or good. Teacher perception of administrative support has remained relatively constant over the past quarter of a century. Nearly all (98%) principals rate their administration's support of teachers as excellent or good, including seven in ten (72%) who rate the support as excellent. Principals' rating of administrative support for teachers as excellent varies by school location. Nearly eight in ten (79%) suburban principals rate their administration's support for teachers as excellent, compared to 69% of urban and 68% of rural principals.

Figure 5.1
Teachers and Principals on Support of the Administration

Q510_3 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The support of the administration in your school for the teachers.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**74**	**65**	**78**	**78**	**98**	**98**	**99**	**98**
Excellent	37	27	42	38	72	69	79	68
Good	37	38	36	40	26	29	20	30
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**25**	**35**	**22**	**21**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**2**
Fair	17	22	14	15	2	2	1	2
Poor	8	12	7	7	-	-	-	-
Not sure	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 5.2
Teachers Rate the Support They Receive from the Administration in 1984 vs. 2008



2008 Q510_3 (Teachers) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school on... The support of the administration in your school for the teachers.
Base = All Teachers

Professional Development as Support for Teachers

One clear indicator of school quality and measure of administrative support is the availability and adequacy of ongoing professional development for teachers. The term "professional development" often connotes ongoing support for improving teaching and learning (see Chapters 2 and 3). Effective professional development also encompasses helping teachers address aspects of the school context that are beyond their capacity to handle alone, but if left unchecked could hinder their capacity to teach. Specific challenges and how effectively teachers are prepared to address them are more fully addressed below.

Teachers have favorable perspectives on professional development at their school, with eight in ten teachers (78%) rating their school as excellent or good. There are not significant differences by grade level, location, or size of school. Principals rate teacher professional development within their schools even higher, with 91% rating it as excellent or good. This is the first year that the *MetLife Survey* has explored professional development as an indicator of support for teachers.

Figure 5.3
Teachers and Principals on Professional Development for Teachers

Q510_11 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***Professional Development for Teachers.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**78**	**76**	**80**	**78**	**91**	**98**	**91**	**85**
Excellent	35	27	42	35	50	62	50	40
Good	43	49	39	43	41	37	42	45
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**22**	**24**	**20**	**22**	**9**	**2**	**9**	**15**
Fair	17	18	17	17	8	1	8	12
Poor	5	6	3	5	1	*	1	3
Not sure	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-

Disciplinary Policy

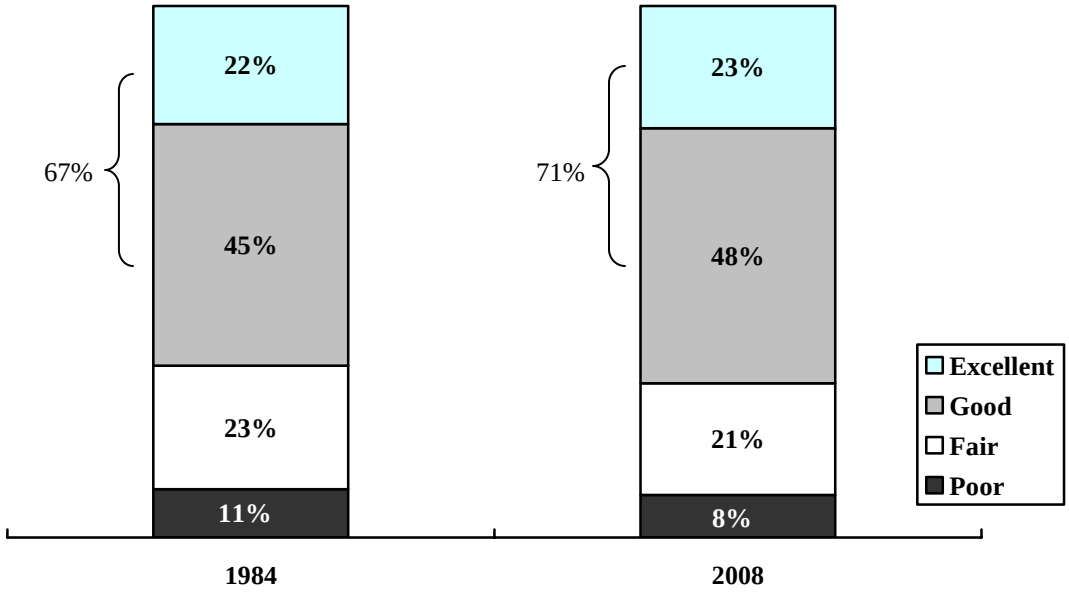
Elementary school teachers (74%) rate the disciplinary policy at their school as excellent or good at higher rates than do secondary teachers (65%). Three-quarters of rural (75%) and suburban (74%) teachers rate the disciplinary policy at their school as excellent or good, compared with 61% of teachers in urban schools. Seven in ten (71%) teachers rate the disciplinary policy in their schools as excellent or good. Principals are more positive about the policy and most (96%) rate their school's discipline policy

as excellent or good, and there is very little difference in principal perception by the level and location of school. There is a larger difference between the number of teachers and principals who rate their school discipline policy as excellent or good than on any of the other school condition issues explored. Teacher perception of disciplinary policy has remained at the same level as 25 years ago.

Figure 5.4
Teachers and Principals on Disciplinary Policy

Q510_4 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The disciplinary policy of your school.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**71**	**61**	**74**	**75**	**96**	**95**	**98**	**94**
Excellent	23	15	25	27	53	50	59	48
Good	48	46	49	48	43	45	39	46
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**29**	**39**	**26**	**25**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**6**
Fair	21	24	21	20	4	4	2	5
Poor	8	15	5	5	*	-	-	1
Not sure	*	-	*	-	*	*	-	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 5.5
Teachers Rate Their School on Disciplinary Policy in 1984 vs. 2008



2008 Q510_4 (Teachers) Would you rate your school excellent, good, fair or poor on... The disciplinary policy of your school.
Base = All Teachers

Class Size

As noted in Chapter Two, today, seven in ten (72%) teachers rate the size of their classes as excellent or good. Teachers who have been in the classroom for 21 years or more are more likely than new teachers to rate class size as excellent or good. This difference could be indicative of improvements to class size made over the span of their careers, the departure of teachers for whom class size was an impediment, or the benefit of teaching experience for being able to effectively teach larger groups of students. Principals have an even more positive view than teachers with nearly nine in ten (87%) rating class sizes as excellent or good.

Figure 5.6
Differences Between Teachers and Principals Rate Factors Influencing School Quality

Q510 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. Base: All Teachers, Base: All Principals	Excellent/Good		
	Teachers	**Principals**	**Difference**
	1000	501	
	%	%	
The disciplinary policy of your school	71	96	- 25
The support of the administration in your school for teachers	74	98	- 24
The number of students in your classes/class sizes in your school	72	87	- 15
Professional development for teachers	78	91	- 13
The availability of teaching materials and supplies	83	95	- 12
Parental and community support for the school	67	79	- 12
The curriculum in general	89	97	- 8
The policy of your school regarding students with special needs	88	96	- 8
Academic standards in your school	90	96	- 6
The school's physical facilities	79	74	+ 5
The preparation of students for college	77	78	- 1

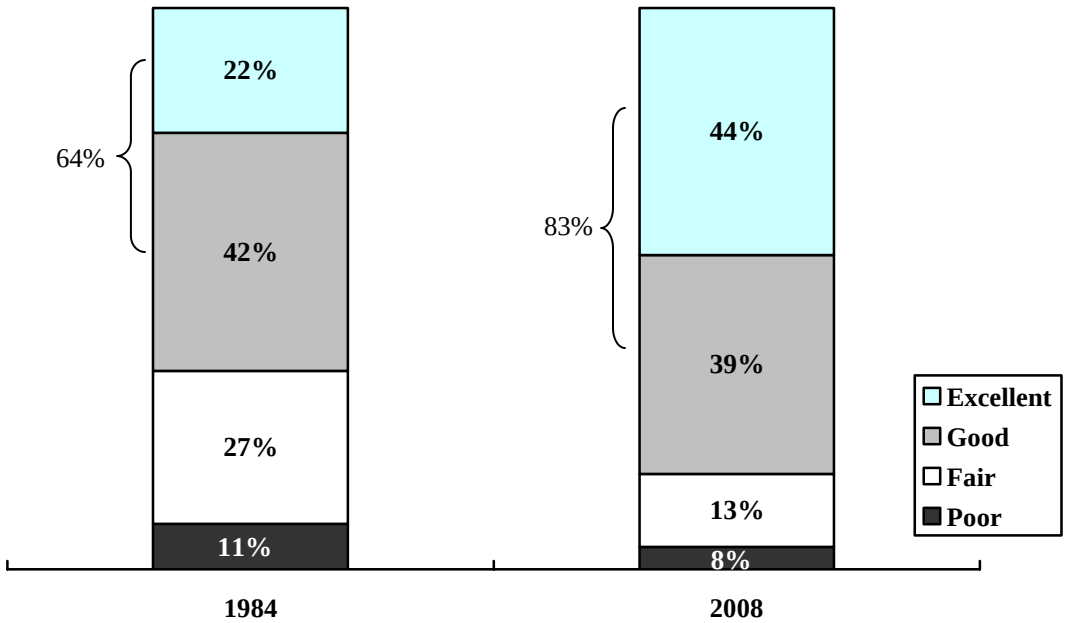
Teaching Materials and Supplies

Overall, teachers and principals rate the availability of teaching materials and supplies in their schools highly, but nearly two in ten teachers (17%) rate the availability as fair or poor. Principals rate availability positively at even higher rates than teachers do, with only 5% rating availability as fair or poor. Over the past 25 years there has been marked change in the number of teachers who rate availability of materials and supplies as excellent with twice as many teachers rating it as excellent as did in 1984 (44% vs. 22%).

Figure 5.7
Teachers and Principals on Availability of Teaching Materials and Supplies

Q510_2 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***The availability of teaching materials and supplies.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	Teacher Location				Principal Location			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**83**	**80**	**84**	**84**	**95**	**97**	**96**	**93**
Excellent	44	33	54	40	54	53	58	52
Good	39	47	30	44	41	44	39	41
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**17**	**20**	**16**	**16**	**5**	**3**	**3**	**7**
Fair	13	15	10	14	4	3	2	5
Poor	4	4	5	2	1	-	*	2
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	-	*	-	1	-

Figure 5.8
Teachers Rate Their School on Availability of Supplies in 2008 vs. 1984



2008 Q510_2 (Teachers) Would you rate your school excellent, good, fair or poor on... The availability of teaching materials and supplies
Base = All Teachers

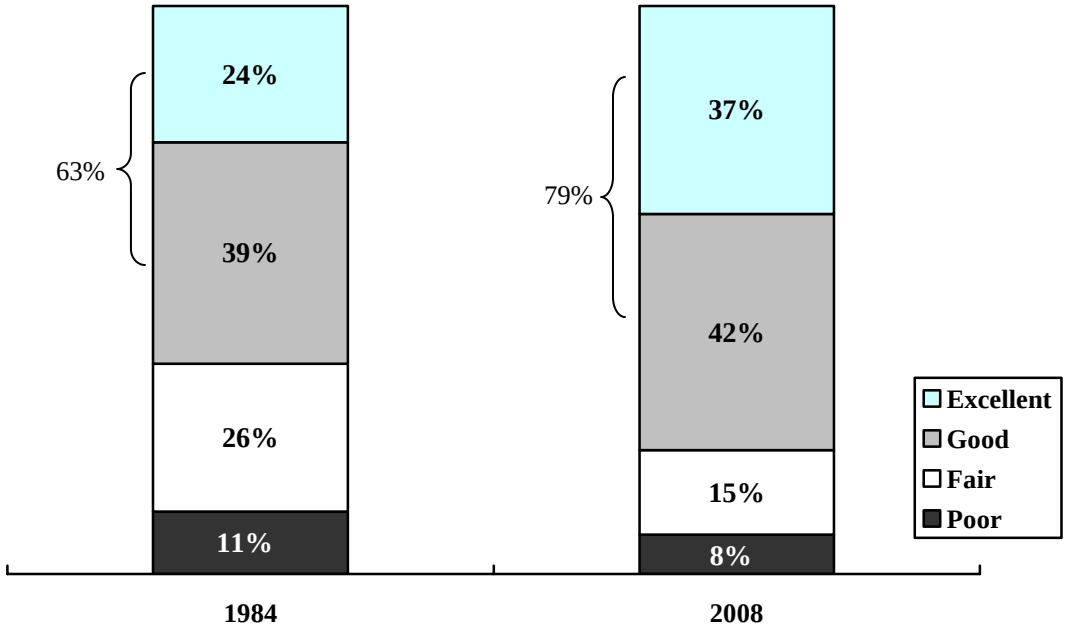
School Building and Physical Facilities

Four out of five teachers (79%) rate their school's physical facilities favorably, as excellent or good, and three-fourths (74%) of principals rated facilities as excellent or good. Principals of rural or small town schools (68%) are the least likely to rate their facilities as excellent or good. Teacher ratings of facilities have improved over the past 25 years with 79% rating facilities as excellent or good in 2008 compared to 63% rating them as excellent or good in 1984.

Figure 5.9
Teachers and Principals on School Physical Facilities

Q510_1 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school … on that criterion. ***The school's physical facilities.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**79**	**75**	**82**	**77**	**74**	**76**	**81**	**68**
Excellent	37	32	43	33	37	29	50	29
Good	42	43	40	44	38	47	31	38
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**21**	**25**	**18**	**23**	**25**	**24**	**19**	**32**
Fair	15	16	13	16	19	17	15	25
Poor	7	9	5	7	6	7	5	7
Not sure	*	*	-	-	*	-	-	1
Decline to answer	*	-	-	-	*	*	-	-

Figure 5.10
Teachers Rate Their School's Physical Facilities in 1984 vs. 2008



2008 Q510_1 (Teachers) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school on.... The school's physical facilities
Base = All Teachers

Challenges That Can Hinder Learning

Teachers and principals were presented with a series of six factors that go beyond the reach of the classroom but that can hinder students from learning to their full potential: violence, English language facility, poor nutrition, lack of parental support or help, poor health, and poverty. The list was developed from questions initially asked in the 1992 *MetLife Survey*. The teachers and principals for whom a particular challenge is an obstacle to learning for at least a quarter of their students were also asked whether or not teacher training was effective in preparing them to deal with this particular issue.

Overall, teachers and principals have similar perspectives on which problems are most pervasive for at least a quarter of their students. One exception is parental support. Teachers rate lack of parental support as highest among the challenges on the list while principals rate it second behind poverty, and teachers report this as a challenge for at least a quarter of their students at higher rates than principals do (50% compared with 43%).

Figure 5.11
Summary of Challenges for a Quarter or More Students, Teachers and Principals

Q525 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. Base: All Teachers, All Principals:	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
At Least a Quarter	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of support from parents	50	64	41	49	43	64	30	40
Poverty	49	65	34	53	52	83	27	55
Poor Nutrition	28	38	18	30	24	45	13	20
Problems speaking or understanding the English language	21	30	18	15	16	31	13	7
Poor health	12	19	6	12	10	19	6	7
Violence in the school	9	16	6	7	3	8	*	2

Challenges: Parent Support

Lack of parental support tops the list of problems that teachers say may interfere with learning for a quarter or more of their students. Half of teachers (50%) overall and nearly two-thirds (64%) of teachers in urban schools report that lack of parental support is a problem for at least a quarter of their students. One third (33%) of teachers in urban schools say that it is a problem with all or most of their students. Principals see lack of parental support or help as less of a problem than teachers do, but it still appears in the number two position on the list. Overall, more than four in ten principals (43%) see lack of support or help from parents as a serious hindrance to learning for at least a quarter of their students, but nearly two-thirds (64%) of principals in urban schools see this as a problem with at least a quarter of their students, compared to 30% of suburban and 40% of rural principals.

Figure 5.12
Teachers and Principals on Lack of Support from Parents

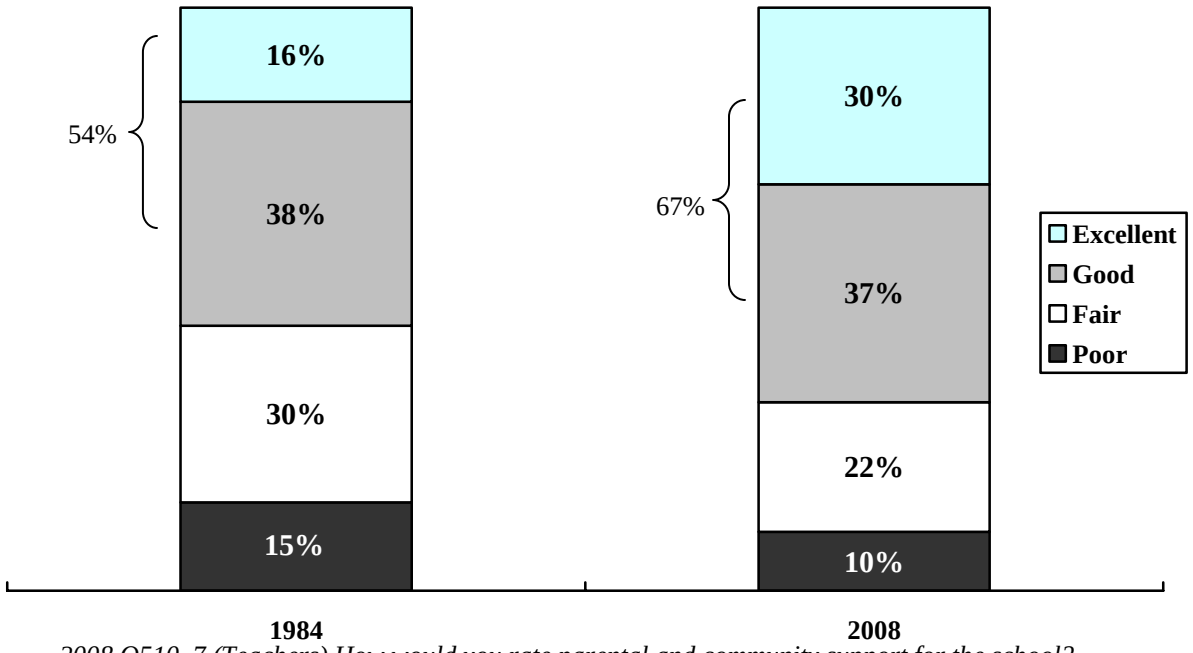
Q525_4 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. ***Lack of support of help from parents.*** Base: All Teachers, Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST A QUARTER (NET)	**50**	**64**	**41**	**49**	**43**	**64**	**30**	**40**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**19**	**33**	**13**	**16**	**13**	**22**	**5**	**13**
All	1	2	*	1	1	*	1	*
Most	18	31	13	15	12	21	5	13
More than a quarter	31	31	28	32	30	43	24	27
LESS THAN QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**49**	**35**	**59**	**51**	**57**	**35**	**70**	**60**
Less than a quarter	44	29	52	48	52	34	63	54
None	5	6	7	3	5	1	8	6
Not sure	*	1	-	*	*	1	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Teachers who are facing the problem of lack of parental support are not necessarily floundering. For those teachers who report that at least a quarter of their students face lack of parental support or help as an obstacle to their learning, eight in ten (79%) say that their training and education has prepared them either very or somewhat well to deal with this lack of support.

While teachers point to lack of parental support as a potential hindrance to learning, more than two-thirds (67%) report that parental support in their school is excellent (30%) or good (37%). Urban teachers are less likely to report that this support is excellent (17%) than are suburban (39%) or rural teachers (31%). Principals are even more positive about parent and community involvement: 79% call it excellent or good (42% rate it as excellent) but again, only a quarter of urban principals (25%) rate parental and community support as excellent, compared to nearly half of suburban (47%) and rural (49%) principals.

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of teachers, and seven in ten (70%) principals agree that relationships between parents and schools have improved in recent years. However, a quarter (24%) of urban principals disagree strongly (compared to 11% of suburban and 10% of rural teachers).

Figure 5.13
Teachers Rate Parental Support in 1984 vs. 2008



2008 Q510_7 (Teachers) How would you rate parental and community support for the school?
Base = All Teachers

Challenges: Poverty

Nationally, 39 percent of children in the United States between birth and age 18 live in low-income families, and 17% are considered to be living in poverty[6]. Half of teachers (49%) say that for at least a quarter of their students, poverty is a serious issue, hindering their ability to learn, and one in five teachers (18%) say that for most of their students, poverty is a hindrance to learning. In urban schools, nearly four in ten teachers (39%) report that poverty is a hindrance for most or all of their students, compared to 12% of teachers in suburban schools and 18% of teachers in rural schools who say that poverty is a hindrance to learning for all or most of their students. For those teachers who report that poverty is a problem for at least a quarter of their students, 80% say that their training has prepared them very or somewhat well to deal with the issue.

For principals, half (52%) say that poverty is a problem for at least a quarter of their students – compared to 49% of teachers. However, urban principals are more likely than urban teachers to report this as prevalent. Half of urban principals say it is problem for all or most of their students, compared to 39% of teachers. Furthermore, 83% of urban principals, vs. 65% of urban teachers, say that poverty is a problem hindering learning for at least a quarter of their students. This difference in perception between principals

[6] Ayana Douglas-Hall and Michelle Chau. National Center for Children in Poverty. "Basic Facts About Low-Income Children: Birth to Age 18," September, 2007.

and teachers differ from the general pattern of findings in this *MetLife* Survey, in which principals answer more positively than teachers. On the issue of teacher preparation to deal with poverty, most principals (95%) who are in schools where a quarter or more students are hindered in learning by poverty report that teachers are very well or somewhat well prepared by their training to deal with student poverty.

Figure 5.14
Teachers and Principals on Poverty

Q525_6 (Teachers, Principals): For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. ***Poverty.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST A QUARTER (NET)	**49**	**65**	**34**	**53**	**52**	**83**	**27**	**55**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**22**	**39**	**12**	**18**	**24**	**50**	**7**	**20**
All	4	8	2	3	3	5	2	2
Most	18	31	11	15	21	45	5	18
More than a quarter	28	26	21	36	29	33	20	35
LESS THAN QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**50**	**35**	**65**	**46**	**47**	**17**	**73**	**45**
Less than a quarter	42	31	51	42	41	16	57	42
None	7	3	14	4	7	1	16	2
Not sure	1	1	1	-	*	-	-	1
Decline to answer	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-

Challenges: Nutrition

Nearly three in ten teachers (28%) report that nutrition is a problem hindering learning for at least a quarter of their students. In recent years the prevalence of childhood obesity, described as an epidemic by the National Centers for Disease Control, has heightened awareness of nutrition as a concern for health and education. As is the case with other challenges, concerns about nutrition are most pronounced for urban or inner city teachers, 38% of whom say nutrition is a hindrance to learning, compared to 30% of rural or small town teachers and 18% of suburban. Slightly fewer principals than teachers say that nutrition is a hindrance for at least a quarter of their students (28% vs. 24%). More than a third (36%) of teachers who are in schools where a quarter or more students have nutrition problems affecting learning do not feel that their training prepared them well do deal with the issue. Principals are more positive on the issue: only 14% of those who are in schools where a quarter of more of their students are hindered in learning by nutrition problems feel that their teachers were not well or were poorly prepared to deal with nutrition issues.

***According to the most recent data from the National Institutes of Health Working Group Report on Future Research Directions in Childhood Obesity Prevention and Treatment**, between 1970 and 2004, the number of overweight children quadrupled among children ages 6 to11. In 2003-2004, 17.1% of children aged 2 to 19 years were at or above the 95th percentile of Body Mass Index (BMI) compared to 5-6% in the 1970s. These levels are higher in non-Hispanic Blacks and Mexican Americans (20.0% and 19.2%) than in whites (16%) Currently, about 25 million U.S. children and adolescents are overweight or obese and children from families that are of low socio-economic status are disproportionately affected.*

Figure 5.15
Teachers and Principals on Poor Nutrition

Q525_3 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. ***Poor Nutrition.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST A QUARTER (NET)	**28**	**38**	**18**	**30**	**24**	**45**	**13**	**20**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**10**	**15**	**6**	**9**	**7**	**16**	**4**	**3**
All	1	1	2	1	*	1	-	-
Most	9	15	4	8	7	15	4	3
More than a quarter	19	23	12	21	17	29	9	17
LESS THAN QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**70**	**59**	**81**	**70**	**75**	**55**	**86**	**80**
Less than a quarter	53	46	57	54	58	47	58	67
None	18	13	24	16	17	8	28	13
Not sure	1	2	1	*	1	*	1	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-

Challenges: English Language Facility

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2006, one in five children (20%) between ages 5 and 17 in the U.S. spoke a language other than English at home: an increase from 9% in 1979. In 2006, of those students who were not speaking English at home, a quarter (25%) spoke English with difficulty[7]. Problems speaking or understanding English ranks fourth among the six challenges with 21% of teachers overall; 30% of urban teachers say this is a problem with no fewer than a quarter of their students. One in six principals (16%) say that this is a problem in their school, compared with 31% of urban or inner city principals. For those working in schools where a quarter or more of their students have their learning hindered by a lack of English language facility, four in five (79%) teachers feel somewhat or well prepared to help their students, and nearly all principals (97%) report that their teachers are well prepared by their training to help these students.

[7] Planty, M., Hussar, W., Snyder, T., Provasnik, S., Kena, G., Dinkes, R., KewalRamani, A., and Kemp, J. (2008). *The Condition of Education 2008* (NCES 2008-031). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

Figure 5.16
Teachers and Principals on Problems with Speaking and/or Understanding English

Q525_2 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. ***Problems speaking or understanding the English Language.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST A QUARTER (NET)	**21**	**30**	**18**	**15**	**16**	**31**	**13**	**7**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**7**	**12**	**6**	**3**	**5**	**10**	**2**	**2**
All	1	2	2	*	-	-	-	-
Most	6	10	4	3	5	10	2	2
More than a quarter	14	17	13	12	12	21	11	5
LESS THAN QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**79**	**70**	**81**	**85**	**84**	**69**	**87**	**93**
Less than a quarter	54	52	61	50	55	46	67	49
None	25	18	20	35	29	23	20	43
Not sure	*	*	*	*	*	-	*	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Challenges: Health

Health issues rank fifth among the challenges to learning, with one in eight (12%) teachers reporting that a quarter or more of their students are facing health issues that interfere with their learning. Again, inner city or urban teachers (19%) and rural teachers (12%) are significantly more likely than suburban teachers (6%) to say that poor health is a serious hindrance to learning to at least a quarter of their students. Principals overall report that for 10% of their students health presents a serious hindrance to learning: 19% of urban or inner city principals report that this is so, compared to 7% of rural and 6% of suburban principals. Of those teachers working in schools where they report at least a quarter of their students face health problems, nearly four in ten (38%) teachers feel not well prepared or poorly prepared to deal with such issues, and 15% of principals say that teachers are not well prepared by their training to deal with health issues.

Observation:

Past *MetLife Surveys* have specifically addressed the issue of adequate sleep, which contributes to overall health. In 2007, 46% of students felt they do not get enough sleep, and the *Survey* examined the potential consequences for classroom performance.

Figure 5.17
Teachers and Principals on Poor Health

Q525_5 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. ***Poor health.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST A QUARTER (NET)	**12**	**19**	**6**	**12**	**10**	**19**	**6**	**7**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**4**	**7**	**2**	**3**	**2**	**4**	**-**	**2**
All	1	1	2	-	*	*	-	-
Most	3	6	1	3	2	4	-	2
More than a quarter	8	12	3	9	8	14	6	6
LESS THAN QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**87**	**80**	**93**	**88**	**90**	**81**	**94**	**93**
Less than a quarter	66	68	63	69	71	72	70	72
None	21	12	30	19	19	9	24	21
Not sure	1	1	1	*	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Challenges: Violence

Despite high profile incidents, violence in the school is rated least prevalent among the list of challenges that can hinder student learning. However, overall, 9% of teachers say violence inhibits learning for at least a quarter of their students. Again, this issue affects urban schools disproportionately with 16% of urban teachers reporting that violence hinders learning for at least a quarter of their students, compared with 7% of rural and 6% of suburban teachers. Overall 3% of principals report that violence is a problem for at least a quarter of their students; 8% of urban or inner city principals, 2% of rural or small town principals, and less than half a percent of suburban principals report that violence is a problem with at least a quarter of students in school. Teachers for whom at least a quarter of their students are hindered in learning by violence disagree about their preparation: just under two-thirds (63%) feel very well or somewhat prepared, and just over a third (36%) feel not well or poorly prepared. Nearly all (97%) principals for whom this is an issue for at least a quarter of the students in their school report that their teachers have been well or somewhat well prepared to deal with violence per their training.

Student perception of safety has remained consistent over the past 15 years with 90% of students feeling very or somewhat safe in 1993, 92% in 1998 and 93% in 2008. Most students report feeling safe at

school: half (50%) feel very safe, another four in ten (43%) feel somewhat safe. Fewer than one in ten (7%) do not feel safe. However, just under a third of students (30%) are worried about being physically attacked by someone in the school.

Figure 5.18
Teachers and Principals on Violence in Schools

Q525_1 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. ***Violence in the school.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT LEAST A QUARTER (NET)	**9**	**16**	**6**	**7**	**3**	**8**	*****	**2**
ALL OR MOST (NET)	**3**	**6**	*****	**3**	**1**	**2**	*****	**1**
All	1	2	*	*	-	-	-	-
Most	2	4	-	2	1	2	*	1
More than a quarter	6	10	5	4	2	6	-	1
LESS THAN QUARTER OR NONE (NET)	**91**	**84**	**94**	**93**	**97**	**92**	**100**	**98**
Less than a quarter	54	58	52	52	50	62	47	45
None	37	26	42	41	47	30	53	53
Not sure	*	-	-	*	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 5.19
Students on Safety

Q740 (Students): How safe do you feel when you are at school? Base: All Students	**Total**	**Gender**		**Level of School**	
		Male	**Female**	**Grades 3-6**	**Grades 7-12**
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
VERY/SOMEWHAT SAFE (NET)	**93**	**91**	**95**	**93**	**92**
Very safe	50	52	48	57	45
Somewhat safe	43	40	46	37	48
NOT AT ALL/NOT VERY SAFE	**7**	**9**	**5**	**7**	**8**
Not very safe	6	6	5	7	5
Not at all safe	1	2	*	*	2

Figure 5.20
Differences in Student Feelings of Safety Over 15 Years

Q740 (Students): How safe do you feel when you are at school? Base: All Students	1993	1998	2008
Base:	1232	1040	902
	%	%	%
VERY/SOMEWHAT SAFE (NET)	**90**	**92**	**93**
Very safe	50	56	50
Somewhat safe	40	36	43
NOT AT ALL/NOT VERY SAFE	**7**	**7**	**7**
Not very safe	4	5	6
Not at all safe	3	2	1

Figure 5.21
Students on Concerns for Physical Safety

Q745 (Students): How worried are you about being physically attacked (hurt by someone else) in or around your school? Base: All Students	Total	Gender		Level of School	
		Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
VERY/SOMEWHAT WORRIED (NET)	**30**	**29**	**31**	**35**	**26**
Very worried	5	6	4	7	3
Somewhat worried	25	24	27	28	23
NOT AT ALL/NOT VERY WORRIED	**70**	**71**	**69**	**65**	**74**
Not very worried	38	38	38	37	38
Not at all worried	32	33	32	28	36

Preparation for Dealing with the Challenges

The preceding review of each of the challenges includes perceptions about the adequacy of teacher preparation from those who report that at least a quarter of their students are affected. Overall while most teachers report being well prepared to deal with these hindrances to student learning, and they report a greater need for support than principals perceive.

For each of the individual challenges explored within this context, teachers for whom at least a quarter of their students face this problem overall feel well prepared to deal with that particular challenge from either their education or ongoing development. Principals agree with the assessment that in schools where more than a quarter of their students face a particular challenge, their teachers are well prepared.

Figure 5.22
Summary of Preparation to Deal with Challenges: Level of Preparation

Q530 (Teachers, Principals): How well would you say that your education and training has prepared you to help your students with…? Base: Teachers, Principals who report that issue is a hindrance with at least a quarter of students	Teacher Location				Principal Location			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base (varies by question)								
Very or Somewhat Well Prepared	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Lack of support from parents	79	83	75	81	92	91	97	90
Poverty	80	80	81	79	95	94	93	96
Poor Nutrition	63	60	68	65	84	86	86	78
Problems speaking or understanding the English language	79	79	81	79	97	98	96	93
Poor health	60	66	58	60	85	78	91	91
Violence in the school	63	59	76	62	97	95	100	100

Changes in Challenges: 1992 vs. 2008

The biggest change among the challenges that can hinder student learning between 1992 and 2008 is an improvement in teacher perception of parent support. Today 50% of teachers report that at least a quarter of their students are hindered by lack of support from parents, down from 65% in 1992. Conversely, nearly twice the proportion of teachers as in 1992 say that lack of facility with English hinders learning for at least a quarter of their students (11% vs. 21%). In addition, half (49%) of teachers say that poverty hinders learning for at least a quarter of their students, whereas in 1992, 41% of teachers said so. Teachers also perceive nutrition as more of a problem in 2008 (29%) than in 1992 (21%), hindering learning for a quarter or more of their students.

Figure 5.23
Differences in Problems Hindering Learning for At Least a Quarter of Students, According to Teachers: 1992 vs. 2008

Q525 (Teachers): Please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn. Base: All Teachers	At Least a Quarter		
	1992	**2008**	**Difference**
At Least a Quarter		1000	
	%	%	
Violence in the school	11	9	- 2
Problems speaking or understanding the English language	11	21	10
Poor nutrition	21	28	7
Lack of support or help from parents	65	50	-15
Poor health	7	12	5
Poverty	41	49	8

In addition to the changes in prevalence of these challenges, teachers' preparedness to address these problems has also changed, and for the most part, improved. More teachers in 2008 than in 1992 report that their education and training have prepared them very or somewhat well to help students with a particular problem. Teachers report being prepared to deal with violence at markedly higher rates compared to 1992 (63% report being very or somewhat well prepared in 2008 vs. 27% in 1992). Teachers report being prepared to deal with poverty at higher rates than in 1992: 80% compared with 56% report being very or somewhat well prepared.

Figure 5.24
Differences in Teacher Preparation for Helping Students with Problems: 1992 vs. 2008

Q530 (Teachers): …How well would you say that your education and training has prepared you to help your students with…? Base: Issue is a Hindrance for More than a Quarter of Students	Very/Somewhat Well		
	1992	**2008**	**Difference**
Very or Somewhat Well			
	%	%	
Violence in the school	27	63	36
Problems speaking or understanding the English language	66	79	13
Poor nutrition	69	63	-6
Lack of support or help from parents	63	79	16
Poor health	51	60	9
Poverty	56	80	24

Parent and Community Support

School reform over the decades of the *MetLife Survey* has placed emphasis on the significance of parent and community support for education. Overall, two-thirds (67%) of teachers rate parental and community support at their school as good or excellent, and elementary and secondary school teachers do not differ in their ratings. However, only half (52%) of urban teachers give such a rating to support at their schools. Compared to 78% of teachers at suburban and 69% of teachers at rural schools. Teachers report that parental and community support has improved over the past 25 years. In 1984, just over half (55%) of teachers rated parental and community support for the school as good or excellent, compared to 67% today.

Principals rate parent and community support as excellent or good at even higher rates: 79% of principals overall, compared to 67% of teachers. Similar to teachers, principals of urban schools are least likely to rate parental and community support this highly (63% of principals at urban schools vs. 91% of principals at suburban schools vs. 78% of principals at rural schools).

Figure 5.25
Teachers and Principals on Parental and Community Support for the School

Q510_7 (Teachers, Principals) For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school… on that criterion. ***Parental and community support for the school.*** Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
EXCELLENT/GOOD (NET)	**67**	**52**	**78**	**69**	**79**	**63**	**91**	**78**
Excellent	30	17	39	31	42	25	47	49
Good	37	35	39	38	37	38	44	29
FAIR/POOR (NET)	**32**	**48**	**21**	**31**	**21**	**37**	**8**	**22**
Fair	22	28	14	24	16	27	7	18
Poor	10	20	6	7	4	10	1	3
Not sure	*	-	1	-	*	-	*	-
Decline to answer	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Parental roles in education can encompass a range of activities, from helping to prepare their own child for class to communicating with their child's teacher: from volunteering for schools and in the classroom to participating on a school leadership team. Overall, nearly two-thirds (63%) of teachers agree that relationships between parents and schools have improved in recent years, while a sizable minority (35%) of teachers disagree with this view. Elementary and secondary school teachers are equally likely to share this perspective. Fewer teachers in urban schools (51%) think that parent relations have improved recently, compared to rural (66%) and suburban (70%) teachers. An even larger proportion of principals than teachers (70% vs. 63%) agree that relations between parents and schools have improved in recent years, but there are no significant differences in views based on the principal's school location.

Figure 5.26
Teachers and Principals on Relationships with Parents and Schools

Q615_5 (Teachers) Q615_4 (Principals): …Relationships between parents and schools have improved in recent years Base: All Teachers, All Principals	**Teacher Location**				**Principal Location**			
	Total	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**	**Total**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural/ Small Town**
Base:	1000	266	227	494	501	137	172	190
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AGREE (NET)	**63**	**51**	**70**	**66**	**70**	**69**	**70**	**70**
Agree strongly	22	18	24	23	30	30	31	29
Agree somewhat	41	33	45	42	40	40	39	41
DISAGREE (NET)	**35**	**48**	**27**	**33**	**28**	**29**	**25**	**28**
Disagree somewhat	21	25	17	23	21	20	21	20
Disagree strongly	14	24	11	10	7	9	4	8
Not sure	2	1	3	1	2	2	4	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	*	-	1	-

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: HAVE PARENT-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS IMPROVED?

A group of education leaders was convened and asked why they thought relationships between parents and schools have improved in recent years, and whether they thought this area would continue to show improvement in the next five years.

"Parents are more involved in the schools [than] they ever have been. I see parents becoming even more involved."
- Elementary school principal

"Improved efforts to communicate with families. Yes, school wide newsletters from administrators and websites by teachers all improve communication between school and home."
- Elementary school teacher

"The ongoing dialogue between parents and teachers has improved and we have seen this at our school."
- Elementary school principal

"There's more information out there for parents to understand what goes on in the classroom."
- Middle school principal

"Schools have become centers of the community and there is much more focus on PTO's, which have a real effect on school improvement."
- Elementary/middle school teacher

"Parents are more dependent on teachers."
- Middle school teacher

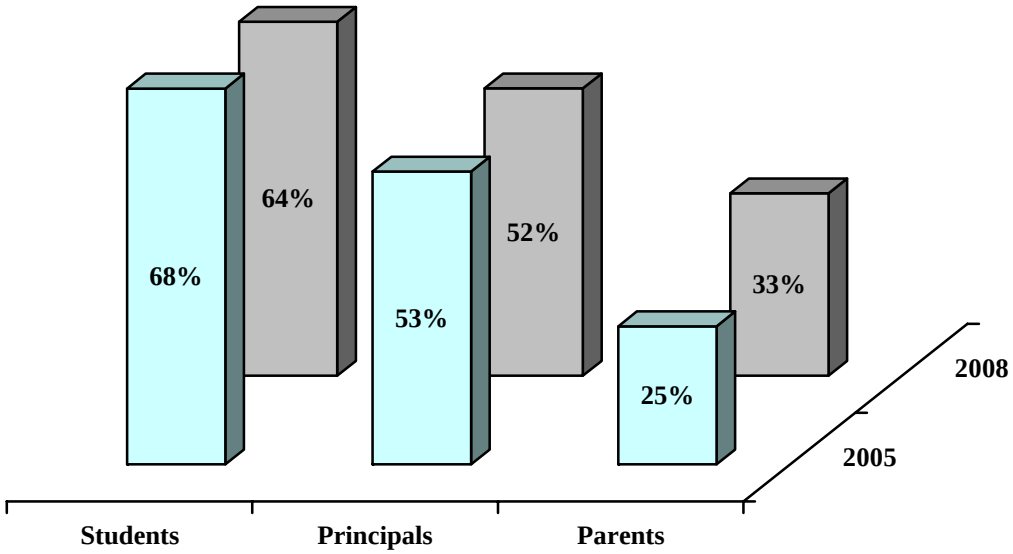
"I think schools have made more of an effort to reach out to their communities. I have seen this in my school and expect it to continue as we have it as a school improvement goal."
- Elementary school principal

Relationships of Teachers and Principals with Parents

Although two-thirds of teachers report that relations between parents and schools have improved in recent years, teachers are less satisfied in their relationships with parents than they are in their relationships with other teachers, their principal or students. Only one-third (33%) are very satisfied with their relationship with parents, while two-thirds of teachers are very satisfied with the relationships they have with students in their school (64%) and other teachers in the school (66%), and half (52%) are very satisfied with their relationships with their principals. Elementary school teachers are very satisfied with their relationships with parents at higher rates than are secondary school teachers (36% vs. 27%), and suburban and rural teachers (37% and 35%) are very satisfied at higher rates than are urban teachers (25%) in their relationships with students' parents.

Principals are more likely to be very satisfied with parent relations (53%) than are teachers: (33%). The influence of school level and school location follows a similar pattern as with teachers. Elementary principals are most satisfied (58% are very satisfied) compared to 46% of secondary principals who are very satisfied. Fewer urban principals than suburban principals are very satisfied with their relationship with parents in their school (47% vs. 59%).

Figure 5.27
Teachers Ratings of Very Satisfied on Student, Principal and Parent Relationships 2005 to 2008



2008 Q715 (Teachers) How satisfied are you with your relationship with… (Very Satisfied)
**2005 data = Has your experience as a public school teacher working with… (Very Satisfied)*
Base: All Teachers

Figure 5.28
Teacher Satisfaction with Parent Relations by School Location and Level

*Q715_4 (Teachers): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **Parents of students in your school**?* Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	1000	266	227	494	679	321
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**84**	**74**	**91**	**86**	**87**	**79**
Very satisfied	33	25	37	35	36	27
Somewhat satisfied	52	49	54	51	51	53
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**15**	**25**	**9**	**14**	**13**	**20**
Somewhat unsatisfied	12	19	7	10	10	16
Very unsatisfied	3	6	1	4	3	4
Not sure	1	1	-	*	*	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 5.29
Principal Satisfaction with Parent Relations by School Location and Level

*Q715_4 (Principals): How satisfied are you with your relationship with **Parents of students in your school**?* Base: All Teachers	Total	Location			School Level	
		Urban	Suburban	Rural/Small Town	Elementary	Secondary
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
SATISFIED (NET)	**95**	**92**	**96**	**97**	**97**	**92**
Very satisfied	53	47	59	53	58	46
Somewhat satisfied	42	45	37	45	39	46
UNSATISFIED (NET)	**5**	**8**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**8**
Somewhat unsatisfied	4	6	3	2	2	6
Very unsatisfied	1	2	1	1	1	2
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Summary

Many conditions shape the context for teaching and learning in classrooms. Overall, teachers feel supported in a full range of responsibilities including disciplinary policies, class size, facilities and supplies. Overall, principals are more positive than teachers about school conditions and challenges beyond the classroom, reflecting differing roles and responsibilities. For conditions that are beyond the capacity of teachers and schools to address alone, parent and community support are particularly

important. Although teachers report improvements in parent and community relationships, they continue to identify lack of parental support and the effects of poverty as major challenges, particularly in urban schools. More teachers today than in the past also identify poor health and nutrition as problems for significant numbers of students.

It is noteworthy for teacher preparation and professional development that majorities of teachers feel well equipped to deal with the challenges that stretch beyond the classroom. The 2008 *MetLife Survey* notes a slight decline in concern about violence, and substantial increase among teachers in their sense of capacity to address the challenge. Although most teachers rate parent and community support for their school as good or excellent, substantially fewer urban teachers share that experience. The findings underscore a need to further strengthen supportive relationships among home, school and community to help all teachers, students, classrooms and schools focus on learning.

CHAPTER SIX
THE FUTURE OF TEACHING

The *MetLife Surveys* offer perspectives on teaching over time and provide insights on the progress of the teaching profession and public education. The series shows encouraging trends for the future of teaching in terms of quality of preparation, growing respect for the profession and increasing job satisfaction among teachers.

The past twenty-five years have seen changes that have both challenged and opened up new opportunities within public education. As today's teachers look to the future, they continue to both learn themselves and to work increasingly as collaborators to meet the needs of all students. An important consequence of the education reform launched in the mid-1980s has been an emphasis on accountability for student learning shared among teachers, school administrators, parents, community, policymakers, and students. Looking ahead, the role of teachers as collaborators is likely to enhance their value and effectiveness as professionals and leaders.

In the classroom itself, good teaching in the future must be able to accommodate further changes both in the world and the classroom. Such changes may include the rapid expansion of knowledge, greater student diversity, a growing global community, and the evolving role of technology in organizing, sharing and accessing information.

In addition to data drawn from this *MetLife Survey* of teachers, principals and students, this chapter includes insights from a group of education experts. Public school teachers with education leadership experiences and principals representing a diverse range of schools from across the country participated in an online strategy session. They discussed some of the larger findings, the condition of teaching and its near future. Together, these teachers and principals compared and contrasted their respective views and roles, providing additional insights included in this chapter.

Teachers for the Future: Supply

Most teachers (73%) report that staffing is not a serious problem for their schools. In fact, the number reporting that their schools have difficulty getting enough qualified teachers (26%) is down from 1984 (31%). However, this is still an issue for urban schools. Higher numbers of urban teachers report getting qualified teachers as a problem (40%): nearly double the rate of suburban teachers (19%). Newer teachers are more likely than more experienced teachers to see getting enough qualified teachers in their school as a serious problem. Nearly four in ten teachers with five years or less experience (37%) report that difficulties getting enough qualified teachers is a problem, compared to a quarter (24%) of teachers with six or more years of experience. Similarly, more principals in urban schools (39%) report that recruiting enough qualified teachers is a somewhat or serious problem than do rural (30%) or suburban (20%) principals. Whereas elementary and secondary teachers do not vary on opinion for recruiting enough teachers, secondary principals report recruiting teachers as a serious problem at higher rates than do elementary principals: 37% compared to 23%.

Two encouraging current trends reported in Chapter 2 have implications for quality of teachers in the future. Teachers rate the quality of their colleagues higher today than in the past, and half of principals (51%) report that the quality of new teachers entering the profession today is better than in the past, with only 7% describing new teacher quality as worse.

Figure 6.1
Teachers on the Severity of the Problem of Getting Enough Qualified Teaches in Their School

Q535_1 (Teachers): I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is… in the public school where you teach. ***Difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers.*** Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Teaching Experience**			**Location**		
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21 +**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	266	227	494
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
VERY OR SOMEWHAT SERIOUS (NET)	**26**	**37**	**24**	**25**	**40**	**19**	**24**
Very serious	5	8	5	5	6	5	6
Somewhat serious	21	29	19	20	34	14	18
NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SERIOUS (NET)	**73**	**63**	**76**	**74**	**60**	**81**	**75**
Not very serious	33	28	35	30	33	31	33
Not at all serious	41	35	40	44	27	50	43
Not sure	1	-	1	1	1	-	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Figure 6.2
Principals on the Severity of the Problem of Getting Enough Qualified Teaches in Their School

Q535_1 (Principals): I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is… in the public school where you teach. ***Difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers.*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
VERY OR SOMEWHAT SERIOUS (NET)	**29**	**39**	**20**	**30**	**23**	**37**
Very serious	5	8	4	4	3	8
Somewhat serious	24	31	17	26	21	29
NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SERIOUS (NET)	**70**	**61**	**78**	**70**	**76**	**63**
Not very serious	27	29	21	32	26	29
Not at all serious	44	32	58	38	50	35
Not sure	*	-	*	*	1	-
Decline to answer	*	-	1	-	1	-

Teachers for the Future: Turnover

The anticipated retirements of Baby Boom teachers will amplify openings created by teacher turnover and the importance of retaining new teachers[8]. Teacher turnover is particularly great in high needs schools. While overall a third (32%) of teachers cite turnover as a very or somewhat serious problem within their school, half (48%) of teachers in urban schools report turnover as a problem. Principals are not as highly concerned about the problem of teacher turnover: two in ten (18%) report that turnover is a serious problem in their school, with a third of principals (32%) in urban schools reporting that teacher turnover is a serious problem.

Figure 6.3
Teachers on the Severity of the Problem of Teacher Turnover in Their School

Q535_3 (Teachers): I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is… in the public school where you teach. ***Teacher turnover***. Base: All Teachers	**Total**	**Years of Teaching Experience**			**Location**		
		0 to 5	**6 to 20**	**21 +**	**Urban**	**Suburban**	**Rural**
Base:	1000	162	509	329	266	227	494
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
VERY OR SOMEWHAT SERIOUS (NET)	**32**	**47**	**31**	**27**	**48**	**23**	**29**
Very serious	9	15	9	6	16	6	7
Somewhat serious	23	32	22	20	32	17	22
NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SERIOUS (NET)	**67**	**52**	**68**	**72**	**52**	**75**	**70**
Not very serious	38	30	41	37	34	40	40
Not at all serious	28	22	27	34	18	35	30
Not sure	1	1	*	1	1	1	*
Decline to answer	*	-	1	-	-	1	-

[8] Dohm, Arlene. "Gauging the labor force effects of retiring baby-boomers." *Monthly Labor Review*, July 2000.

Figure 6.4
Principals on the Severity of the Problem of Teacher Turnover in Their School

Q535_3 (Principals): I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is… in the public school where you teach. ***Teacher turnover*** Base: All Principals	**Total**	**Location**			**School Level**	
		Urban	**Suburban**	**Rural**	**Elementary**	**Secondary**
Base:	501	137	172	190	241	235
	%	%	%	%	%	%
VERY OR SOMEWHAT SERIOUS (NET)	**18**	**32**	**14**	**13**	**16**	**21**
Very serious	2	4	1	2	1	3
Somewhat serious	16	28	13	11	15	18
NOT VERY OR NOT AT ALL SERIOUS (NET)	**82**	**68**	**85**	**87**	**84**	**78**
Not very serious	37	35	32	41	35	40
Not at all serious	45	34	53	46	49	39
Not sure	*	-	1	-	-	1
Decline to answer	-	-	-	-	-	-

Teachers for the Future: Retention

Retaining talented teachers can ease the pressure and cost of recruiting and inducting large numbers of new teachers and help schools gain from the value of experience for the benefit of student achievement. Education leaders were presented with the finding that nearly twice as many teachers as principals say that teacher turnover is a serious problem at their school and were asked to comment on the differences in perceptions. Excerpts from the dialogue are noted below.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: EDUCATION LEADERS ON TEACHER TURNOVER

"Principals are not very disturbed at teacher turnover, possibl[y] in the hope that the "new blood" may do a better job in raising those grades."
- Elementary School Music Teacher

"Teachers are not the ones who see the overall pictures in the district."
- Middle School Principal

"Teachers are working together and the effect of teacher turnover results directly are seen in classrooms each day, whereas the principal looks at the overall picture of the school"
- Kindergarten Teacher

"From the principal's chair there are some teachers that you don't want to stay in the school or even the profession. I think many teachers see any turnover as a loss."
- High School Principal

"Not sure. I know in my city, principals manage the budget and can get two inexperienced teachers for the same money it takes to pay a veteran. So maybe principals don't mind the turnover but ignore the impact it has on the students."
- 8th Grade Teacher

"Teachers often find their work environments to be unpleasant and very challenging, especially in the urban environment. Principals may not often understand the real reasons teachers leave; often they could have expressed greater appreciation and support which would in turn increase teacher retention."
- 5th Grade Teacher

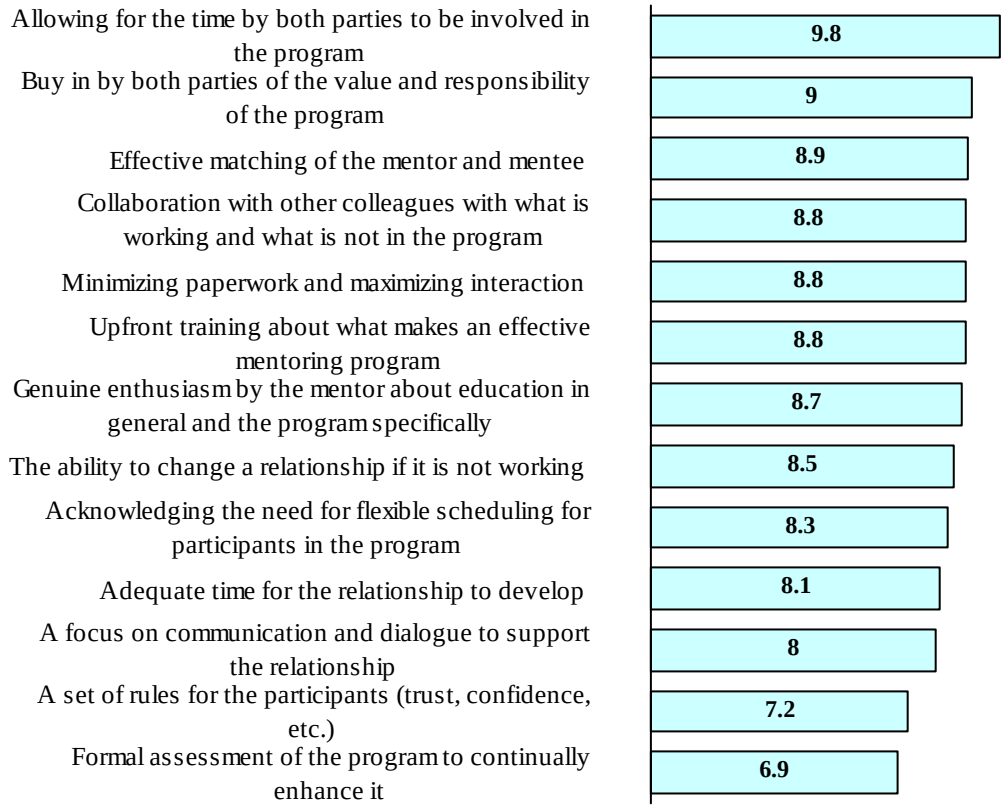
Teachers for the Future: Mentoring

Mentoring is an important strategy for retaining new teachers and for career-long, teacher-to-teacher professional development as a method of capturing the wisdom that comes with experience. As a follow-up to their discussion of teacher turnover, the education leaders identified characteristics of a successful mentoring program, and then rated the importance of each on a scale of 1 to 10. There was strong consensus on the most important characteristic: "allowing time for both the mentor and the mentee to participate in such a program" received an average score of 9.8 out of 10 points. Other highly rated factors followed closely. Next were "buy-in, by both the mentor and the mentee" with 9.0 points, and "an effective matching of the partnership" with 8.9 points. The next three characteristics tied with an average of 8.8 out of 10 points: "collaboration with other colleagues with what is working and what is not in the program;" "minimizing paperwork and maximizing interaction;" and "upfront training about what makes an

The *Quality Counts 2008* study conducted by *Education Week* found that 25 states require and finance mentoring for all beginning teachers and 20 of those states have some form of mentoring program standards for selecting, training, and/or matching mentors to novice teachers.

effective mentoring program." Next among the top rated group was "genuine enthusiasm by the mentor about education in general, and the mentoring program specifically," with 8.7 points out of 10.

Figure 6.5
Education Leader Assessment of Effective Mentoring Program Characteristics



Q8 Overall, what do you feel are the characteristics of a highly effective mentoring program?
Base = 21

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: EDUCATION LEADERS ON EFFECTIVE MENTORING

"Really care for the success of the new teacher. Trying to model great habits for them."
- 9th grade teacher

"Mentor must be skilled at working with similar population of students mentee works with, time must be provided trust between mentor and mentee – mentee should not be afraid of mentor's critiques."
- 8th grade teacher

"Structured, trusting, on the same/similar grade level and subjects taught, flexible, compassionate, supportive, and non judgmental...."
- 4th grade teacher

Differences in Perceptions for Teachers and Principals

As shared responsibility for measures of success in schools between principals and teachers may continue to grow in the future, success will require greater collaboration among teachers and with principals. The education leaders group also considered the finding from the *2008 MetLife Survey* that nearly twice as many principals as teachers say that support of the administration in their school for teachers is excellent. When asked about the implications of this perception gap, the group highlighted how both teachers and administrators contribute to the problem: teachers by not speaking up, the administration for not soliciting sufficient teacher opinions and feedback on decisions, and both sides by not fully appreciating the role and responsibilities of the other.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: EDUCATION LEADER ON DIFFERENCES IN THE PERSPECTIVES OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS…

"Principals are rating their own ability (self assessment) because they know all that they do, whereas teachers may not actually see everything that goes on behind the scenes, but just the results of things that may not have gone well".
- Kindergarten Teacher

"Teachers have a narrow view of administration. Most teachers are unfamiliar with the varied tasks of an administrator, therefore lacking appreciation for them."
- 9th Grade Teacher

"[The difference in perspective] clearly exposes a communication gap between teachers and principals. I think teachers often feel afraid to speak to their principals about concerns. Principals then interpret their silence as contentment."
- High School Principal

"Principals are often not reflective about how their decisions affect teachers...they make big decisions about the school without asking the teachers their opinions, and if teachers don't 'buy in' to the idea, they become really dissatisfied, and the program or school is less effective than it could be".
- 1st Grade Teacher

"Teachers usually are not consulted by principals about decisions made, and are not approached for honest feedback. So there's a huge gap in perception about what happens at the school and principals are afraid to know what teachers think – on the other hand some teachers are going to complain about everything because they are generally unhappy in their job. Principals may be wise to know when to ignore this".
- 8th Grade Teacher

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS ON INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDANCE

When asked what they look for from principals in terms of instructional guidance, the teachers in the education leaders group gave responses that ranged from tactical role-model issues to broader support and development.

According to Teachers…

"How they effectively discipline while they teach – can they practice what they preach?"
- 2nd Grade Teacher

"They should be facilitators who create teacher networks and learning communities. Principals need to foster the environment where teachers feel safe to take risks and continue learning and the principals should take part in those risks and continued learning as well. Principals should not only offer their own expertise; but seek out others' as well."
- 4th Grade Teacher

"I look for a principal who will support my curriculum and instructional ideas and acknowledge when I'm successful. Also a principal who gives teachers a chance to share best practices and listens to our suggestions for where we need P[rofessional] D[evelopment]."
- 8th Grade Teacher

When the principals in the education leaders session were asked what they thought they should offer to teachers in terms of instructional leadership their answers complemented the teacher requests.

According to Principals…

Offer Professional Development opportunities. Do small interest groups on subjects we all need to know about. Enlist the experts among us (i.e., teachers on our staff) to provide instructional guidance. I know I'm not an expert on all things!"
- High School Principal

"I try to provide them with all the data they need to make decisions in their Professional Learning Communities (PLC). I try to involve them in the purchases of resources. Also provide them with whatever training they need and/or would like to further their professional growth."
- Elementary School Principal

"Leadership skills and qualities as well as being able to relate to the students."
- Elementary School Principal

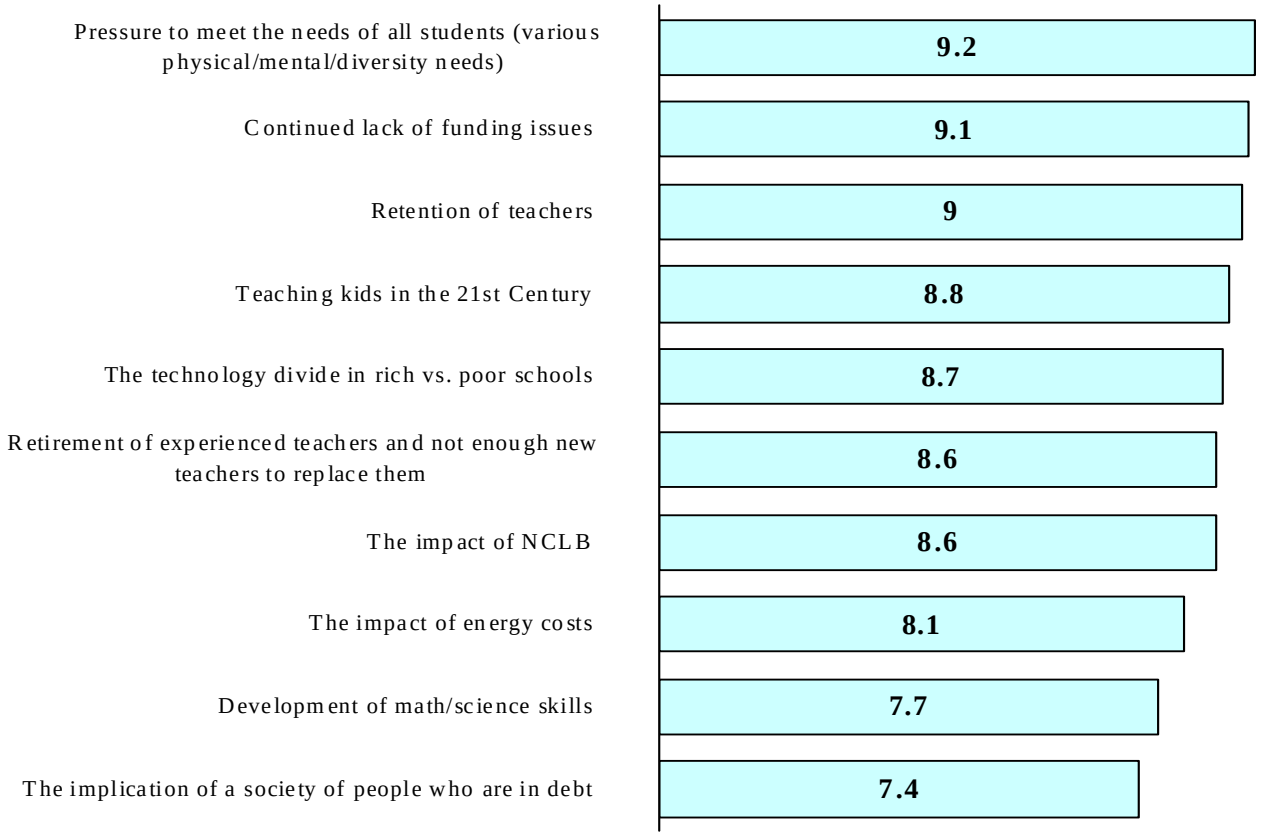
Challenges and Opportunities Looking Ahead

Even with marked improvements in education over the past 25 years, challenges persist. The group of education leaders developed and prioritized a list of problems faced in schools and ranked them on a scale

of 1-10, with 1 as insignificant and 10 as extremely significant. Meeting the needs of all students was ranked the highest among the problems, at 9.1, followed by unfunded mandates at 8.2 and too much focus on testing at 7.9 out of 10 possible points.

When asked to list and then rate the challenges in the school environment which are most daunting, the education leaders cited the pressure to meet the needs of all students highest. Meeting the needs of students with varying needs rated an average of 9.2 points on a scale of 1 to 10. Following closely behind was a continued lack of funding rating 9.1 points, and retaining teachers in the profession at 9 points out of a possible 10. The group's list echoed challenges identified by the 2008 *MetLife Survey* including the challenges of teaching in more diverse classrooms, differences in school resources including technology, teacher recruitment and retention. The education leaders also identified economic vulnerabilities beyond poverty, noting energy costs and level of debt in society.

Figure 6.6
The Biggest Current Challenges in the School Environment



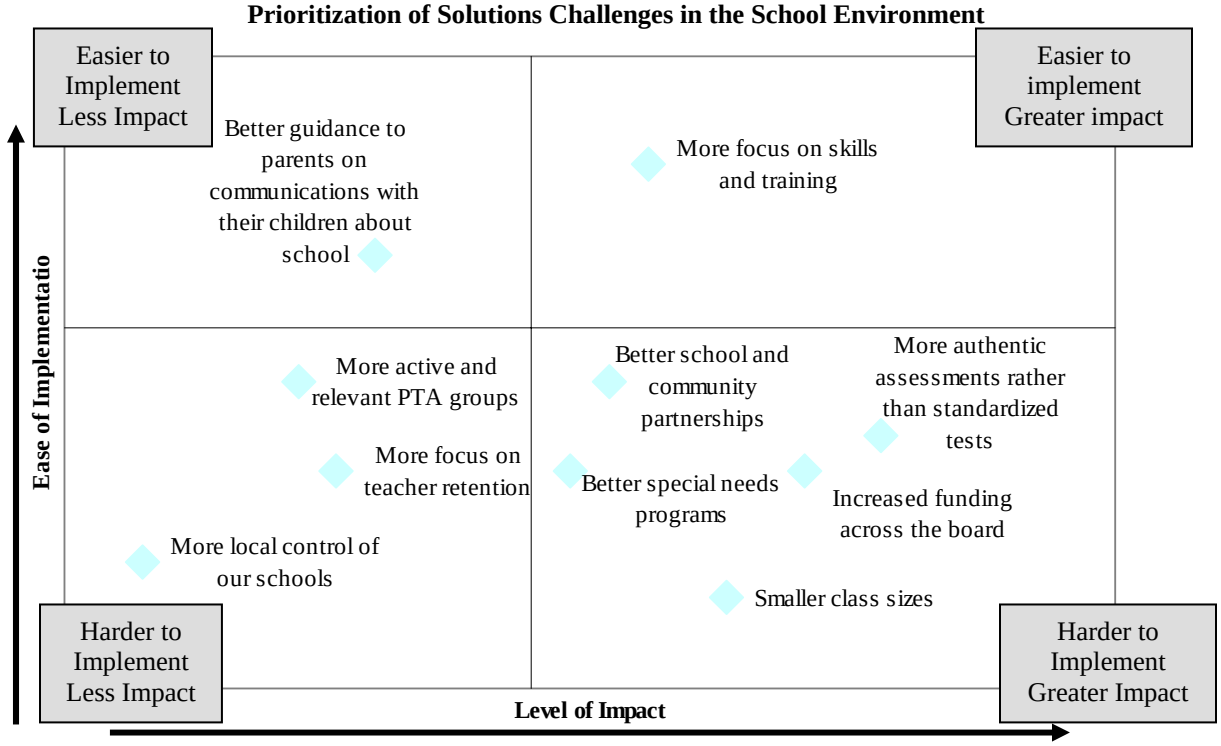
Based on your experience, what do you think are the main challenges that teachers and their schools currently face today?
Base = 21

One teacher leader summarized ways to address the problems faced by schools:

> *Less focus on testing, alternative assessment, more teacher autonomy, increase pay and time, compensate teachers for their time, greater focus on authentically meeting student needs and developing the whole child, making schools centers of communities w/ physical and mental health facilities, after school programs, fitness, service learning, parent classes and workshops....*

Education leaders participating in the electronic discussion were then asked to brainstorm about **solutions** to the challenges they had identified. The group generated and then rated potential solutions in two ways: both the **level of impact** the particular solution might have, and **the ease** with which it might be implemented. Ideal solutions are both easy to implement and have high potential impact. The one solution rated both as easy to implement and with a high level of potential impact is a focus on skills and training.

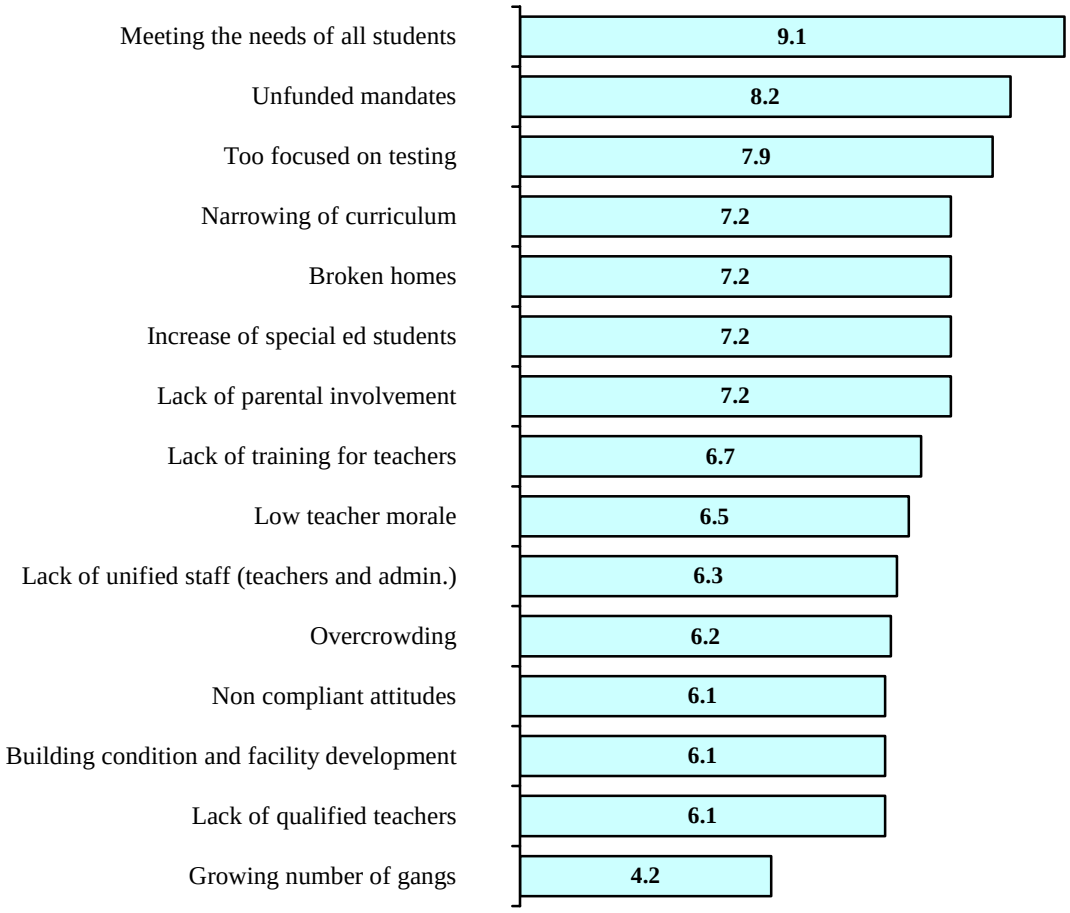
Figure 6.7
Prioritization of Solutions Challenges in the School Environment



Challenges for the Future of Teaching

The education leaders were also asked to identify challenges specifically for the future of teaching, and then rate the combined list on the 1 to 10 scale of significance. As with current school challenges, meeting the needs of all students clearly ranked the highest, followed by funding concerns. Worries about testing, parents and home, narrowing curriculum and increase in special needs students were also rated as having high significance. Concerns about teacher training, morale, qualifications, and lack of unified staff were also concerns.

Figure 6.8
The Biggest Challenges Facing the Teaching Profession in the Future



Now, we'd like you to think about the next five years. What do you feel will be the biggest challenges the teaching profession will face in the future in terms of public school education?
Base = 21

Teaching in 2018

Finally, the education leaders were asked to imagine the profession 10 years into the future – the year 2018. What would they like to see the teaching profession look like? Again, in their own words…

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TEACHERS ON TEACHING IN THE FUTURE

"Teachers train with mentor teachers for two years before they enter the classroom. Positions between teaching and administration that teachers could grow in to. Equitable funding for all schools. Less standardized testing and more authentic assessment."
- 12th Grade Teacher

"Teachers would have the freedom to actually teach according to their teaching and what works best in their learning environment."
- 2nd Grade Teacher

"There would be a collaboration between teachers, parents and principals, as well as a unified vision."
- 1st Grade Teacher

"Use of effective technology to reduce time consuming paper load for teachers and students."
- 8th Grade Teacher

"I would like to see more people embarking on teaching as a career and this will include more professional training and development. Lastly, to see the increase in salaries for teachers so they are not the lowest paid professionals anymore."
- 10th Grade Teacher

"The profession would be adaptive to the students' needs. Teachers would have an active role instead of being the ones dishing out what is mandated."
- 12th Grade Teacher

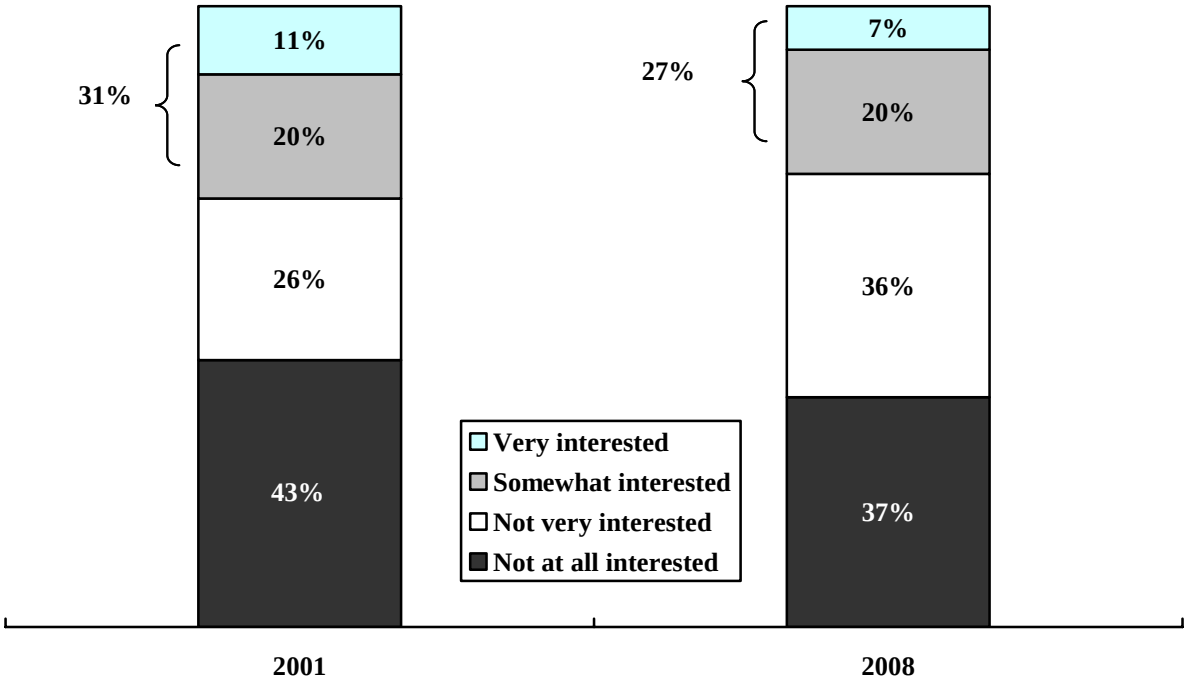
Tomorrow's Teachers

The new and pre-service teachers of 2018 are now students in our classrooms. Thus, current students offer an important perspective on the future of teaching. Today, 75% of teachers report that they would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching, compared to 45% in 1984 (see Chapter 1). The 2008 *MetLife Survey* also asked students how interested they are in becoming a teacher upon completing their education. Overall, 27% of students are very or somewhat interested in teaching, slightly less than in 2001 (31%). Girls are more than twice as interested as boys: 40% of girls are interested compared to 16% of boys are interested. Older students are less interested in becoming a teacher some day: more than a third (36%) of third to sixth graders are interested, and 21% of seventh to twelfth graders are interested in becoming a teacher.

Figure 6.9
Students on Their Interest in Becoming a Teacher

Q755 (Students): How interested are you in becoming a teacher when you finish your education? Base: All Students	Total	Gender		Level of School	
		Male	Female	Grades 3-6	Grades 7-12
Base:	902	450	452	400	502
	%	%	%	%	%
VERY/SOMEWHAT INTERESTED (NET)	27	16	40	36	21
Very interested	7	4	11	10	5
Somewhat interested	20	12	28	25	16
NOT AT ALL INTERESTED/NOT VERY INTERESTED (NET)	72	84	60	64	79
Not very interested	36	40	31	35	36
Not at all interested	37	44	29	29	43

Figure 6.10
Student Interest in Becoming a Teacher: 2001 vs. 2008



2008 Q755 (Teachers): How Interested are you in becoming a teacher when you finish your education?
Base = All Teachers

This year's *MetLife Survey* also asked students who expressed an interest in teaching *why* they were interested. Because the *MetLife Survey* was created to capture and share the voice of teachers, it seems fitting to include some student voices that may be those of future teachers.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: STUDENTS ON WHY THEY ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TEACHER

"Because being a teacher seems cool. You're never bored, and you have a choice of what type of group of kids you want to teach. I want to be that one teacher where kids look back and say she really made me understand, she was very helpful. I want to change how there's only a couple of teachers who actually seem dedicated to their work."
- 13 year-old

" I like to help others and to make the world a better place."
- 9 year-old

"Because I haven't been satisfied with past teachers and I think I could learn from my former teacher's mistakes and be an excellent teacher."
- 13 year-old

"Because I like learning and I want other kids to like learning."
- 8 year-old

"Because I like to interact with the younger kids at my school and help out with their learning! I think school is a very important thing in your life...well for me it is!"
- 10 year-old

"Because I want to show off what I learned in school and have children go home after their college remembering me as their great teacher who taught them a lot. I want to see what they grow up to be and how well I taught them."
- 9 year-old

"Because you could be off in the summer from your job."
- 10 year-old

"Because there are so few adequate teachers in today's society. I want to provide other kids with a safe and constructive environment, free from the pressures and intolerance of today's classrooms and society in general."
- 14 year-old

"Because my mom is a teacher and helps kids too."
- 9 year-old

Conclusion

The perspectives of teachers, principals and students in the 2008 *MetLife Survey* offer encouraging signs of progress along with implications for the future of teaching and public education. The voices of those closest to the classroom indicate that teachers are more satisfied in their careers in many dimensions. Also these voices tell us that students are better prepared, learning more, aspiring to college at higher rates, and that their parents are more involved than they have been in the past. They report improvements in teacher preparation and professional development and a variety of opportunities among teachers and between teachers and principals to improve student learning. Teacher and principals are encouraging young people to consider teaching as a career; they are less concerned about teacher supply and teacher retention, and they value mentoring and sharing of experience as strategies to keep good teachers in the classroom. Educators report less concern about school violence and more confidence in the training they have received to address it.

Despite the encouraging trends, there are reasons for concern. Substantial numbers of teachers are dissatisfied. Urban schools and secondary schools have benefited less from the progress of reform, particularly schools serving large numbers of lower income and minority students. While acknowledging recent improvement in school and parent relations, many teachers, particularly urban teachers, continue to view lack of parental involvement as the most significant challenge to student achievement.

Modest, rather than large improvement in student achievement in core subjects may put individuals and the nation at competitive risk in the global economy. A significant lack of student understanding of other nations, cultures, international issues, and world languages may enhance that risk. Global awareness is an important area of concern for schools and society that relates to both economic vitality and responsible citizenship.

Over the years of reform covered by the *MetLife Survey*, the role of the principal has emerged as crucial in assuring that good classrooms become good schools, that teachers are prepared and successful, and that students learn effectively. In 2008, teachers and principals embrace the concept of teamwork, but many of their responses raise questions about how well teamwork is being practiced. Large segments of both groups report infrequent communication and significant differences in perceptions about curriculum, school discipline and involvement of parents. Perhaps most significant are the differences in the ways teachers and principals view the availability of time for teaching.

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, President and Future offers perspective on distance traveled, current place, and future direction. It is information for further thought, discussion and action.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Past, Present and Future utilized a multimodal methodology to capture the views of key school stakeholder groups. Teachers and principals were interviewed by telephone and students were interviewed online; and additional teacher leaders and principals were gathered to participate in an online strategy session.

Teachers

A total of 1,000 public school teachers were interviewed by telephone between May 28, 2008 and June 25, 2008. Interviews averaged 16 minutes in length and were conducted by a data collection facility from Harris Interactive's network of approved suppliers.

Teacher Sample

A nationally representative sample of current public school teachers of grades K through 12 throughout the continental United States was interviewed. Harris Interactive purchased the sample from Market Data Retrieval. The sample included current U.S. public school teachers of grades K through 12. Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each teacher was screened to ensure that s/he was currently teaching, or taught over the past school year at least part-time in a public school, and currently taught in grades K through 12. If the respondent passed the screen, the interview was either completed at that time or an appointment was made to complete the interview at a time convenient for the teacher.

Teacher Interviewing Procedures

Interviewing for the teacher survey was conducted by professional staff and was continuously quality monitored by the supervisory staff. Through direct supervision of the interviewing staff and continuous monitoring of the interviews, a uniformity of responses was achieved that could not have been obtained by other interviewing methods.

The computer-assisted telephone interviewing system (CATI) permits online data entry and editing of telephone interviews. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks

7. Special edit procedures

The CATI system reduces clerical error by eliminating the need for keypunching, since interviewers enter the respondents' answers directly into a computer during the interview itself. For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Provides," "Does not provide," and "Not sure"), the CATI system will only accept coded responses corresponding to these choices. All data are tabulated, checked for internal consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Edit programs act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the CATI program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

Weighting of Teacher Data

Data were weighted to key demographic (school level, sex, region, and size of place) variables to align it with the national population of U.S. elementary and secondary public school teachers.

Principals

A total of 502 public school principals were interviewed by telephone between May 23, 2008 and June 25, 2008. Interviews averaged 14 minutes in length and were conducted by a data collection facility from Harris Interactive's network of approved suppliers.

Principal Sample

A nationally representative sample of current public school principals throughout the continental United States was interviewed. Harris Interactive purchased the sample from Market Data Retrieval. The sample included current U.S. public school principals of elementary through high schools. Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each principal was screened to ensure that s/he was currently working, or worked during the most recent school year at least part-time in a public school. If the respondent passed the screen, the interview was either completed at that time or an appointment was made to complete the interview at a time convenient for the principal.

Principal Interviewing Procedures

Interviewing for the teacher survey was conducted by professional staff and was continuously quality monitored by the supervisory staff. Through direct supervision of the interviewing staff and continuous monitoring of the interviews, a uniformity of responses was achieved that could not have been obtained by other interviewing methods.

The computer-assisted telephone interviewing system (CATI) permits online data entry and editing of telephone interviews. Questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

The CATI system reduces clerical error by eliminating the need for keypunching, since interviewers enter the respondents' answers directly into a computer during the interview itself. For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices (e.g., "Provides," "Does not provide," and "Not sure"), the CATI system will only accept coded responses corresponding to these choices. All data are tabulated, checked for internal consistency and processed by computer. A series of computer-generated tables is then produced for each sample group showing the results of each survey question, both by the total number of respondents and by important subgroups.

The data processing staff performs machine edits and additional cleaning for the entire data set. Edit programs act as a verification of the skip instructions and other data checks that are written into the CATI program. The edit programs list any errors by case number, question number and type. These were then resolved by senior EDP personnel, who inspected the original file and made appropriate corrections. Complete records were kept of all such procedures.

Weighting of Principal Data

Data were weighted to key demographic (school level, sex, region, and size of place) variables to align it with the national population of U.S. elementary and secondary public school principals.

Students

Students – Online Survey

The survey questionnaire was self-administered online by means of the Internet to 902 public school students in grades 3 through 12. Interviews averaged 15 minutes in length and were conducted between April 16, 2007 and April 27, 2007.

Sample was obtained from the Harris Poll Online (HPOL) opt-in panel of millions of respondents. Invitations for this study were emailed to a stratified random sample drawn from the Harris Poll Online database identified as United States residents and parents of 8-17 year olds, or United States residents and ages 13 - 18. Qualified respondents were U.S. residents, ages 8 - 18 and public school students in grades 3 through 12.

To maintain the reliability and integrity in the sample, the following procedures were used:

- Password protection. Each invitation contained a password-protected link to the survey that was uniquely assigned to that email address. Password protection ensures that a respondent completes the survey only one time.
- Reminder invitations. To increase the number of respondents in the survey, one reminder invitation was mailed 2 days after the initial invitation to those respondents who had not yet participated in the survey.
- "Instant Results" of selected survey findings. To improve overall response rates, respondents were invited to access results to pre-determined, selected questions after completing the survey.
- HIPoints[SM] and HIStakes[SM]. HPOL panel members (age 13 and older) are enrolled in the HIPoints rewards program in which respondents earn points for completing surveys. These points can be redeemed for a variety of merchandise and gift certificates. In addition, survey respondents are offered entry in the monthly HIStakes sweepstakes drawing.

Interviews were conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire via Harris' proprietary, web-assisted interviewing software. The Harris Online interviewing system permits online data entry by the respondents.

Online questionnaires are programmed into the system with the following checks:

1. Question and response series
2. Skip patterns
3. Question rotation
4. Range checks
5. Mathematical checks
6. Consistency checks
7. Special edit procedures

For questions with pre-coded responses, the system only permits answers within a specified range; for example, if a question has three possible answer choices ("Agree," "Disagree," "Not Sure"), the system will accept only one response from these choices.

Weighting of Student Data

Data were weighted to key demographic (sex, grade level, race/ethnicity, size of place, and highest level of parents' education) variables to align it with the national population of U.S. public school students in grades 3 through 12.

Reliability of Survey Percentages

The results from any survey sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of this variation is measurable and is affected both by the number of interviews involved and by the level of the percentages expressed in the results.

Exhibit A.1 shows the range of sampling variation that applies to percentage results for this type of survey. The chances are 95 in 100 that the survey results do not vary, plus or minus, by more than the indicated number of percentage points from the results that would have been obtained had interviews been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

For example, if the response for a sample size of 300 is 30%, then in 95 out of 100 cases the response of the total population would be between 25% and 35%. Note that survey results based on subgroups of a small size can be subject to large sampling error.

Exhibit A.1
Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use in Evaluating Percentage Results

Number of People Asked Question on Which Survey Result Is Based	Survey Percentage Result at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Result at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Result at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Result at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Result at 50%
2,000	1	2	2	2	2
1,500	2	2	2	2	3
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

Sampling tolerances also are involved in the comparison of results from different parts of the sample (subgroup analysis) or from different surveys. Exhibit A.2 shows the percentage difference that must be obtained before a difference can be considered statistically significant. These figures too represent the 95% confidence interval.

For example, suppose one group of 1,000 has a response of 34% “yes” to a question, and an independent group of 500 has a response of 28% “yes” to the same question, for an observed difference of 6 percentage points. According to the Exhibit, this difference is subject to a potential sampling error of 5 percentage points. Since the observed difference is greater than the sampling error, the observed difference is considered statistically significant.

Exhibit A.2
Approximate Sampling Tolerances (at 95% Confidence) to Use in Evaluating Differences Between Two Percentage Results

Approximate Sample Size of Two Groups Asked Question on Which Survey Result Is Based	Survey Percentage Result at 10% or 90%	Survey Percentage Result at 20% or 80%	Survey Percentage Result at 30% or 70%	Survey Percentage Result at 40% or 60%	Survey Percentage Result at 50%
2,000 vs. 2,000	2	2	3	3	3
1,000	2	3	3	4	4
500	3	4	4	5	5
200	4	6	7	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14
1,000 vs. 1,000	3	4	4	4	4
500	3	4	5	5	5
200	5	6	7	7	8
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	9	11	13	14	14
500 vs. 500	4	5	6	6	6
200	5	7	8	8	8
100	6	9	10	11	11
50	9	12	13	14	15
200 vs. 200	6	8	9	10	10
100	7	10	11	12	12
50	9	12	14	15	15
100 vs. 100	8	11	13	14	14
50	10	14	16	17	17
50 vs. 50	12	16	18	19	20

Non-Sampling Error

Sampling error is only one way in which survey findings may vary from the findings that would result from interviewing every member of the relevant population. Survey research is susceptible to human and mechanical errors as well, such as interviewer recording and data handling errors. However, the procedures used by the Harris firm, including the CAI systems described earlier, keep these types of errors to a minimum.

Online Strategy Session Among Teachers, Principals, and Department Chairs

Teachers, principals, and department chairs participated in an online strategy session conducted on June 16, 2008. The session was conducted online using Harris Interactive's proprietary Advanced Strategy Lab® Online (ASL® Online) on June 12, 2007. Doug Griffen, Director of Strategy & Facilitation at the

Advanced Strategy Center, moderated the session. Twenty-four respondents were recruited for the session (12 teachers and 12 principals) and 21 participated. Participants represented a geographic spread across the country, and reflected a range of experience levels, grade levels, district sizes, school sizes, student income levels, subject areas, and gender.

Before being asked to take part in the online strategy session, all participants were screened to ensure that they were current teachers, or principals. Teachers were defined as current elementary and secondary school teachers in a public school system; individuals who teach at least part-time in the classroom; and have had some sort of leadership role including department chairing or mentoring. Principals and department chairs were defined as current elementary and secondary principals.

Participants were given an incentive to participate in these bulletin-board focus groups. All participants were given a $160 incentive for their participation.

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRES

HARRIS INTERACTIVE
METLIFE: SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2008
TEACHER SURVEY

SECTION 400: SCREENER

BASE: TEACHERS

Q410 During this school year (IF NECESSARY: 2007-2008), did you teach in a public school?

1	Yes, teach in public school	**100%**

BASE: CONFIRMED PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

Q420 Do you currently teach or did you teach over the past year at least part time in the classroom?

1	Yes, teach at least part time in the classroom	**100%**

BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS

Q421 Is your school an elementary school, a junior high or middle school, or a senior high school?

1	Elementary school (K – 5th grade)	**63%**
2	Junior high or middle school (6th – 8th grade)	**20%**
3	Senior high school (9th – 12th grade)	**21%**
8	Not sure	-
9	Decline to answer	-

BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS

Q425 Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

1	Inner city	**13%**
2	Urban	**14%**
3	Suburban	**36%**
4	Small town	**19%**
5	Rural	**16%**
8	Not sure	**1%**
9	Decline to answer	**-**

BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS

Q431 U.S. Region-Harris Interactive Definition

01	Northeast	**19%**
02	Midwest	**26%**
03	South	**22%**
04	West	**33%**

BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS

Q435 What grades do you currently teach?

01	Kindergarten	**15%**
02	First grade	**15%**
03	Second grade	**13%**
04	Third grade	**14%**
05	Fourth grade	**12%**
06	Fifth grade	**12%**
07	Sixth grade	**10%**
08	Seventh grade	**9%**
09	Eighth grade	**10%**
10	Ninth grade	**14%**
11	Tenth grade	**13%**
12	Eleventh grade	**15%**
13	Twelfth grade	**15%**
98	Not sure	-
99	Decline to answer	-

BASE: PART-TIME OR MORE TEACHERS

Q440 Altogether, how many years have you worked as a teacher?

Mean in years	**16.4**

SECTION 500: SCHOOL QUALITY AND STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q510: Now I would like you to evaluate some more specific things about the public school at which you teach. I am going to read several criteria on which public schools can be judged. For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school excellent, good, fair, or poor on that criterion.

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	The school's physical facilities	**37%**	**42%**	**15%**	**7%**	*	*
2	The availability of teaching materials and supplies	**44%**	**39%**	**13%**	**4%**	-	*
3	The support of the administration in your school for the teachers	**37%**	**37%**	**17%**	**8%**	*	*
4	The disciplinary policy of your school	**23%**	**48%**	**21%**	**8%**	*	*
5	The number of students in your classes	**24%**	**48%**	**20%**	**8%**	**1%**	*
6	The policy of your school regarding students with special needs	**44%**	**44%**	**9%**	**2%**	*	*
7	Parental and community support for the school	**30%**	**37%**	**22%**	**10%**	*	*
8	Academic standards in your school	**53%**	**37%**	**9%**	**1%**	-	*
9	The curriculum in general	**36%**	**52%**	**9%**	**2%**	*	-
10	The preparation of students for college	**30%**	**47%**	**13%**	**3%**	**5%**	**2%**
11	Professional development for teachers	**35%**	**43%**	**17%**	**5%**	*	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q515 About what proportion of your students would you say come to school not fully prepared to learn at their grade level? Would you say all, most, more than a quarter, less than a quarter or none?

1	All	**1%**
2	Most	**17%**
3	More than a quarter	**28%**
4	Less than a quarter	**52%**
5	None	**2%**
8	Not Sure	*****
9	Decline to answer	*****

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q520 Here is a list of the skills and knowledge students acquire in the course of learning. How would you rate students at your school on – excellent, good, fair or poor?

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Reading skills	**24%**	**53%**	**18%**	**4%**	**1%**	**-**
2	Writing skills	**15%**	**48%**	**30%**	**8%**	**1%**	**-**
3	Math skills	**19%**	**51%**	**24%**	**5%**	**2%**	**-**
4	Computer literacy	**22%**	**53%**	**20%**	**4%**	**1%**	**-**
5	Foreign language skills	**7%**	**21%**	**24%**	**33%**	**13%**	**3%**
6	Knowledge of science subjects	**9%**	**50%**	**32%**	**7%**	**2%**	*****
7	Knowledge of humanities subjects	**7%**	**42%**	**39%**	**9%**	**3%**	*****
8	Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	**4%**	**29%**	**38%**	**26%**	**2%**	*****

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q525 I am going to read you a list of things that can make it hard for students to learn. For each, please tell me for how many of your students it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn.
Is it a serious hindrance for all, most, more than one-quarter, less than one-quarter or none of your students?

BASE: ISSUE IS A HINDERANCE FOR MORE THAN A QUARTER, MOST OR ALL STUDENTS

Q530 How well would you say that your education and training has prepared you to help your students with _____.
Are you very well prepared, somewhat well prepared, not well prepared, or poorly prepared?

		Q525							Q530					
		All	Most	More than one-quarter	Less than one-quarter	None	Not Sure	Decline to answer	Very well prepared	Somewhat well prepared	Not well prepared	Poorly prepared	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Violence in the school	**1%**	**2%**	**6%**	**54%**	**37%**	*	-	**19%**	**44%**	**23%**	**13%**	**1%**	-
2	Problems speaking or understanding the English language	**1%**	**6%**	**14%**	**54%**	**25%**	*	-	**37%**	**42%**	**12%**	**7%**	**2%**	-
3	Poor nutrition	**1%**	**9%**	**19%**	**53%**	**18%**	**1%**	*	**19%**	**44%**	**26%**	**10%**	**1%**	-
4	Lack of support or help from parents	**1%**	**18%**	**31%**	**44%**	**5%**	*	-	**29%**	**49%**	**16%**	**5%**	*	-
5	Poor health	**1%**	**3%**	**8%**	**66%**	**21%**	**1%**	-	**13%**	**47%**	**31%**	**7%**	**2%**	-
6	Poverty	**4%**	**18%**	**28%**	**42%**	**7%**	**1%**	*	**31%**	**49%**	**14%**	**6%**	**1%**	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q535 Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious in the public school in which you teach.

		Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	Not at all serious	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers	**5%**	**21%**	**33%**	**41%**	**1%**	**-**
2	School dropout rates within your district	**12%**	**32%**	**34%**	**17%**	**5%**	*****
3	Teacher turnover	**9%**	**23%**	**38%**	**28%**	**1%**	*****

SECTION 600: SCHOOL CULTURE AND TEACHER PREPAREDNESS

BASE ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q615 Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly?

		Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	My classes have become so mixed in terms of students' learning abilities that I can't teach them effectively	**14%**	**29%**	**28%**	**27%**	**1%**	*****
2	My school does not encourage strong relationships between students and teachers	**3%**	**5%**	**20%**	**72%**	**1%**	*****
3	I have so many non-educational responsibilities that I don't have time to develop positive relationships with students	**12%**	**28%**	**26%**	**34%**	*****	*****
4	I have sufficient support and guidance to be a more effective teacher	**45%**	**38%**	**12%**	**5%**	*****	*****
5	Relationships between parents and schools have improved in recent years	**22%**	**41%**	**21%**	**14%**	**2%**	**-**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q620 Thinking about all of the time you spend in class with students, about what percentage of that time do you actually spend teaching as opposed to disciplining or administrative work?

1	25% of the time	**6%**
2	26-50% of the time	**10%**
3	51-75% of the time	**31%**
4	76-100% of the time	**53%**
8	Not sure (v)	*****
9	Decline to answer (v)	**-**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q630 During the past school year, how often have you done the following? How often have you _____ – every day or almost every day, once or twice a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, less than a few times a year, or never?

	Every day/almost every day	Once or twice a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Less than a few time a year	Never	Not sure	Declined to answer
Met with a more experienced teacher to discuss your teaching – either in person, by phone or online	**16%**	**24%**	**22%**	**16%**	**9%**	**11%**	**1%**	*****
Had your principal observe you in the classroom and provide feedback about your teaching skills	**1%**	**4%**	**14%**	**45%**	**25%**	**11%**	*****	*****
Gone to your principal for advice on teaching	**1%**	**5%**	**19%**	**27%**	**20%**	**28%**	*****	**-**
Used an Internet resource to get teaching ideas	**27%**	**35%**	**23%**	**11%**	**2%**	**2%**	**-**	**-**
Communicated about student preparation with teachers at other grade levels than yours within your district	**11%**	**19%**	**30%**	**10%**	**25%**	**4%**	**1%**	**-**
Met with a beginning teacher to discuss teaching – either in person, by phone or online	**19%**	**25%**	**16%**	**14%**	**8%**	**18%**	**1%**	**-**
Communicated online with a teacher outside of your district – for example by email, instant messaging, on a blog, etc.	**3%**	**8%**	**15%**	**19%**	**12%**	**43%**	*****	**-**
Discussed data, such as grades and test scores, with other teachers in your school regarding improvements for classroom teaching	**19%**	**32%**	**34%**	**13%**	**1%**	**1%**	*****	**-**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q635 Have you ever done the following related to your teaching or school responsibilities, or not?

		Yes	No	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Participated in an online community or a social networking site such as TeachAde, Tapped In, or Facebook	**15%**	**85%**	-	-
2	Taken an online course for degree credit or professional credit	**39%**	**60%**	*	-
3	Used computer software (such as ParentConnect or Edline) to track student progress	**52%**	**47%**	*	-
4	Read or written a blog about teaching	**28%**	**72%**	*	-

SECTION 700: TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q705: All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with teaching as a career – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

1	Very satisfied	**62%**
2	Somewhat satisfied	**32%**
3	Somewhat dissatisfied	**6%**
4	Very dissatisfied	**5%**
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	-

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q710: I would like to read you some statements people have made about their jobs. For each, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly in terms of your own job as a teacher in the public schools.

		Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary	**16%**	**50%**	**19%**	**14%**	*	-
2	I am usually recognized for good performance	**48%**	**37%**	**9%**	**6%**	*	*
3	I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching	**34%**	**41%**	**14%**	**10%**	**1%**	*
4	I love to teach	**82%**	**16%**	**1%**	**1%**	*	*
5	The training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom	**18%**	**49%**	**20%**	**10%**	**3%**	*
6	As a teacher, I feel respected in today's society	**17%**	**49%**	**20%**	**14%**	*	-
7	Standardized tests help me to better track my students' performance	**10%**	**38%**	**25%**	**26%**	**2%**	*
8	My school encourages team work among teachers and other professional staff	**67%**	**25%**	**4%**	**3%**	*	*
9	Technology enhances my ability to teach	**53%**	**37%**	**6%**	**3%**	**1%**	-

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS
Q715 How satisfied are you with your relationship with– very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, very unsatisfied?

		Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Students in your school	**64%**	**33%**	**3%**	*****	*****	**-**
2	Other teachers in your school	**66%**	**30%**	**3%**	**1%**	*****	**-**
3	Your principal	**52%**	**32%**	**9%**	**6%**	*****	*****
4	Parents of students in your school	**33%**	**52%**	**12%**	**3%**	**1%**	**-**

SECTION 800: TEACHER AND SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS
Q800 The next few questions ask for demographic information to help classify your answers.

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS
Q805 What subjects do you teach THIS SCHOOL YEAR?

1	General subjects	**49%**
2	Math	**31%**
3	English	**26%**
4	Science (including biology, chemistry, physics, etc.)	**25%**
5	Social Studies	**25%**
6	Foreign language	**2%**
7	Band/Orchestra/Music/Chorus	**2%**
8	Business courses	**1%**
9	Computers	**3%**
10	Physical education	**4%**
11	Special education	**2%**
12	Vocational education	**1%**
13	Other	**17%**
98	Not sure	**-**
99	Decline to answer	*****

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS
Q850 Do you have teacher certification, or not?

1	Yes	**99%**
2	No	**1%**
8	Not sure (v)	*****
9	Decline to answer (v)	*****

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q855 What was the last grade or level of school that you yourself completed?

1	Two-year college graduate	**1%**
2	Four-year college graduate	**26%**
3	Some graduate credits	**14%**
4	Master's completed	**47%**
5	Credits beyond master's	**11%**
6	Ph.D. (Ed.D) completed	**1%**
8	Not sure	*
9	Decline to answer	*

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q820 What percentage of students in your school come from low income families?

Mean = **46.8%**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q825 What percentage of students in your school come from minority families?

Mean = **39.1%**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q830 What percentage of students in your school speak English as a second language?

Mean = **20.6%**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q735 In total, how many students attend your school?

1	< 500	**37%**
2	500-999	**38%**
3	1000+	**24%**

Mean = **802.0**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q860 Gender:

1	Male	**25%**
2	Female	**75%**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q865 What is your year of birth?

Average: **1963 (45 years of age)**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q870 Are you of Hispanic origin, such as Mexican American, Latin American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

1	Yes, of Hispanic origin	**6%**
2	No, not of Hispanic origin	**93%**
8	Not sure	**-**
9	Decline to answer	**1%**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q875 Do you consider yourself…? (READ LIST)

01	White	**86%**
02	Black	**2%**
03	African American	**4%**
04	Asian or Pacific Islander	**1%**
05	Native American or Alaskan native	*****
06	Mixed racial background	**2%**
96	Other race	**3%**
98	Not sure	*****
99	Decline to answer	**2%**

BASE: ALL QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Q880 Thank you for participating in this survey.

SECTION 400: SCREENER

BASE: PRINCIPAL AND CONNECTED

Q410 Are you a principal in a public school?

1	Yes	**100%**

BASE: PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Q421 Is your school an elementary school, a junior high or middle school, or a senior high school?

1	Elementary school (K-5th grade)	**63%**
2	Junior high or middle school (6th – 8th grade)	**21%**
3	Senior high school (9th – 12th grade)	**22%**
8	Not sure (v)	-
9	Decline to answer (v)	-

BASE: PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND SPECIFIED GRADE LEVEL

Q425 Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

1	Inner city	**11%**
2	Urban	**16%**
3	Suburban	**36%**
4	Small town	**14%**
5	Rural	**21%**
8	Not sure (v)	**1%**
9	Decline to answer (v)	-

SECTION 500: **SCHOOL QUALITY AND STUDENT PREPAREDNESS**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q510: Now I would like you to evaluate some more specific things about the public school at which you are the principal. I am going to read several criteria on which public schools can be judged. For each, please tell me whether you would rate your school excellent, good, fair, or poor on that criterion.

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	The school's physical facilities	**37%**	**38%**	**19%**	**6%**	*	*
2	The availability of teaching materials and supplies	**54%**	**41%**	**4%**	**1%**	-	*
3	The support of the administration in your school for the teachers	**72%**	**26%**	**2%**	-	-	-
4	The disciplinary policy of your school	**53%**	**43%**	**4%**	*	*	-
5	The class sizes at your school	**44%**	**44%**	**11%**	**2%**	-	-
6	The policy of your school regarding students with special needs	**70%**	**26%**	**4%**	-	*	-
7	Parental and community support for the school	**42%**	**37%**	**16%**	**4%**	*	-
8	Academic standards in your school	**65%**	**31%**	**4%**	-	-	-
9	The curriculum in general	**52%**	**45%**	**2%**	*	-	-
10	The preparation of students for college	**37%**	**41%**	**11%**	**1%**	**9%**	**2%**
11	Professional development for teachers	**50%**	**41%**	**8%**	**1%**	-	-

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q515 About what proportion of students at your school would you say come to school not fully prepared to learn at their grade level? Would you say all, most, more than a quarter, less than a quarter or none?

1	All	**1%**
2	Most	**14%**
3	More than a quarter	**23%**
4	Less than a quarter	**58%**
5	None	**2%**
8	Not Sure (v)	**1%**
9	Decline to answer (v)	*

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q520 I am going to read a list of skills and knowledge students acquire in the course of learning. How would you rate students at your school on each attribute, – excellent, good, fair or poor?

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Reading skills	**34%**	**50%**	**14%**	**3%**	*	*
2	Writing skills	**20%**	**56%**	**20%**	**4%**	*	*
3	Math skills	**27%**	**53%**	**16%**	**4%**	-	-
4	Computer literacy	**24%**	**54%**	**19%**	**2%**	**1%**	**1%**
5	Foreign language skills	**5%**	**20%**	**25%**	**32%**	**12%**	**6%**
6	Knowledge of science subjects	**14%**	**55%**	**27%**	**3%**	*	*
7	Knowledge of humanities subjects	**12%**	**50%**	**31%**	**5%**	**2%**	*
8	Knowledge of other nations and cultures, and international issues	**6%**	**41%**	**40%**	**11%**	**1%**	**1%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q525 I am going to read you a list of things that can make it hard for students to learn. For each, please tell me for how many of students at your school it presents a serious hindrance to their ability to learn.

The [INSERT "first", if first loop, INSERT, "next", if loop 2-5, INSERT, "last", if it's the sixth loop] statement is [INSERT STATEMENT HELD AT Q522].

BASE: IF ALL/MOST/MORE THAN ONE-QUARTER FOR STATEMENT AT Q525

Q530 How well would you say teachers at your school are prepared to help students with [INSERT STATEMENT FROM Q522]? Are they very well prepared, somewhat well prepared, not well prepared, or poorly prepared?

		Q525							Q530					
		All	Most	More than one-quarter	Less than one-quarter	None	Not Sure	Decline to answer	Very well prepared	Somewhat well prepared	Not well prepared	Poorly prepared	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Violence in the school	-	1%	2%	50%	47%	-	-	24%	73%	3%	-	-	-
2	Problems speaking or understanding the English language	-	5%	12%	55%	29%	*	-	31%	65%	2%	1%	-	-
3	Poor nutrition	*	7%	17%	58%	17%	1%	-	22%	62%	13%	1%	1%	*
4	Lack of support or help from parents	1%	12%	30%	52%	5%	*	-	30%	62%	6%	2%	*	-
5	Poor health	*	2%	8%	71%	19%	-	-	31%	54%	12%	3%	-	-
6	Poverty	3%	21%	29%	41%	7%	*	-	30%	65%	4%	1%	-	-

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q535 Now I am going to read some things that some people have said are problems with the public schools. After I read each one, please tell me if you think that problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious in the public school at which you are the principal.

		Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	Not at all serious	not Sure	declined to Answer
1	Difficulties in getting enough qualified teachers	**5%**	**24%**	**27%**	**44%**	*	*
2	School dropout rates within your district	**9%**	**27%**	**27%**	**28%**	**7%**	**1%**
3	Teacher turnover	**2%**	**16%**	**37%**	**45%**	*	-

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q545 Is the overall quality of new teachers entering the profession today better, worse or about the same as the quality of new teachers in the past?

1	Better	**51%**
2	Worse	**7%**
3	About the same	**37%**
4	Depends (v)	**3%**
8	Not sure (v)	**1%**
9	Decline to answer (v)	**1%**

SECTION 600: SCHOOL CULTURE AND TEACHER PREPAREDNESS

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q615 Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly? (READ EACH ITEM)

		Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Classes in my school have become so mixed in terms of students' learning abilities that teachers can't teach them effectively	**4%**	**20%**	**33%**	**43%**	-	-
2	Teachers in my school have so many non-educational responsibilities that they don't have time to develop positive relationships with students	**4%**	**21%**	**26%**	**50%**	-	-
3	Teachers in my school receive sufficient support and guidance to be more effective teachers	**64%**	**33%**	**2%**	**1%**	-	-
4	Relationships between parents and schools have improved in recent years	**30%**	**40%**	**21%**	**7%**	**2%**	*

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q620 Thinking about all of the time teachers in your school spend in class with students, about what percentage of that time do they actually spend teaching as opposed to disciplining or administrative work?

1	25% of the time	**4%**
2	26-50% of the time	**2%**
3	51-75% of the time	**13%**
4	76-100% of the time	**81%**
8	Not sure (v)	-
9	Decline to answer (v)	*

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q630 During the past school year, how often have you [INSERT STATEMENT]? Would you say every day/almost every day, once or twice a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, less than a few times a year, or never.

		Every day/almost every day	Once or twice a week	Once or twice a month	A few times a year	Less than a few time a year	Never	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Met with an experienced teacher to discuss their teaching	**19%**	**38%**	**29%**	**13%**	*	*	*	-
2	Observed teachers in the classroom and provided feedback about their teaching skills	**31%**	**38%**	**21%**	**9%**	*	*	*	-
3	Used an Internet resource to get teaching ideas	**19%**	**30%**	**29%**	**15%**	**5%**	**3%**	-	-
4	Communicated about student preparation with principals of schools covering different grade levels than yours <u>in your district</u> about students' preparation	**4%**	**15%**	**49%**	**23%**	**4%**	**4%**	*	-
5	Met with a beginning teacher at your school to discuss teaching	**14%**	**41%**	**35%**	**3%**	**1%**	**4%**	**1%**	**1%**
6	Communicated <u>online</u> with a principal <u>outside of your district</u> – for example by email, instant messaging, on a blog, etc.	**16%**	**23%**	**23%**	**18%**	**8%**	**13%**	-	-
7	Discussed data, such as grades and test scores, with teachers in your school regarding improvements for classroom teaching	**16%**	**33%**	**41%**	**10%**	*	**1%**	-	-

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q635 Have you ever done the following related to your professional responsibilities, or not?

		Yes	No	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Participated in an online community or a social networking site such as TeachAde, Tapped In, or Facebook	**22%**	**78%**	**-**	**-**
2	Taken an online course for degree credit or professional credit	**41%**	**58%**	*****	**-**
3	Used computer software (such as ParentConnect or Edline) to track student progress	**70%**	**29%**	**1%**	**-**
4	Read or written a blog about teaching or being a principal	**42%**	**58%**	**-**	**-**

SECTION 700: PRINCIPAL JOB SATISFACTION

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q705 All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job as a principal in the public schools – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

1	Very satisfied	**68%**
2	Somewhat satisfied	**28%**
3	Somewhat dissatisfied	**3%**
4	Very dissatisfied	*****
8	Not Sure (v)	*****
9	Decline to answer (v)	**-**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q710: I would like to read you some statements people have made about their jobs. For each, please tell me if you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly in terms of your own job as a principal in the public schools.

		Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	My job allows me the opportunity to earn a decent salary	**49%**	**44%**	**4%**	**3%**	**-**	*****
2	I am usually recognized for good performance	**51%**	**39%**	**7%**	**3%**	*****	*****
3	I would advise a young person to pursue a career in teaching	**64%**	**29%**	**5%**	**2%**	**1%**	*****
4	I love being a principal	**78%**	**19%**	**2%**	*****	*****	*****
5	The training and preparation that teachers receive today does a good job of preparing them for the classroom	**29%**	**57%**	**11%**	**3%**	*****	*****
6	As a principal, I feel respected in today's society	**47%**	**46%**	**6%**	**4%**	*****	*****
7	Standardized tests help teachers in my school to better track students' performance	**32%**	**47%**	**13%**	**7%**	*****	**-**
8	My school encourages team work among teachers and other professional staff	**86%**	**14%**	*****	*****	**-**	**-**
9	Technology enhances the ability of teachers in my school to teach	**69%**	**28%**	**2%**	**1%**	**-**	**-**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS
Q715 How satisfied are you with your relationship with [READ EACH ITEM] – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, very unsatisfied?

		Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied	Not sure	Declined to answer
1	Students in your school	**86%**	**13%**	**1%**	*****	**-**	**-**
2	Teachers in your school	**76%**	**23%**	*****	*****	*****	**-**
3	District level administrators	**55%**	**35%**	**6%**	**4%**	**1%**	*****
4	Parents of students in your school	**53%**	**42%**	**4%**	**1%**	**-**	**-**

SECTION 800: **PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS
Q800 The next few questions ask for demographic information to help classify your answers.

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS
Q837 Region

01	Northeast	**19%**
02	Midwest	**26%**
03	South	**22%**
04	West	**33%**
05	ALL OTHERS	**-**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS
Q840 Altogether, how many years have you worked as a principal?

Mean= **9.3 years**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS
Q845 How many years, if any, have you taught full time in an elementary or secondary school classroom?

Mean= **14.1 years**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q855 What was the last grade or level of school that you yourself completed? (Read list if necessary)

1	Two-year college graduate	**-**
2	Four-year college graduate	*****
3	Some graduate credits	**1%**
4	Master's completed	**39%**
5	Credits beyond master's	**49%**
6	Ph.D. (Ed.D) completed	**10%**
8	Not sure (v)	**-**
9	Decline to answer (v)	*****

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q820 What percentage of students in your school come from low income families?

MEAN= **45.4%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q825 What percentage of students in your school come from minority families?

MEAN= **34.5%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q830 What percentage of students in your school speak English as a second language?

MEAN= **14.9%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q735 In total, how many students attend your school?

MEAN= **578.0**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q860 Gender:

1	Male	**52%**
2	Female	**48%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q865 What is your year of birth?

MEAN**:** **1958 (50 years of age)**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q870 Are you of Hispanic origin, such as Mexican American, Latin American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

1	Yes, of Hispanic origin	**6%**
2	No, not of Hispanic origin	**92%**
8	Not sure (v)	*****
9	Decline to answer (v)	**2%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q875 Do you consider yourself…?

01	White	**79%**
02	Black	**2%**
03	African American	**6%**
04	Asian or Pacific Islander	**1%**
05	Native American or Alaskan native	**2%**
06	Mixed racial background	**4%**
96	Other race	**2%**
98	Not sure (v)	*****
99	Decline to answer (v)	**3%**

BASE: ALL PRINCIPALS

Q880 That are all the questions I have, thank you for participating in this survey.

HARRIS INTERACTIVE
METLIFE: SURVEY OF THE AMERICAN TEACHER 2008
STUDENT SURVEY

SECTION 700: STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONS

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q710 How often do you feel that you get personal attention from your teachers?

1	All of the time	**10%**
2	Most of the time	**32%**
3	Sometimes	**41%**
4	A few times	**10%**
5	Hardly ever	**7%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q715 Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your school and yourself?

		Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	Not sure
1	My school doesn't encourage strong relationships between students and teachers	**5%**	**18%**	**27%**	**38%**	**12%**
2	My classes are so big that my teachers don't really know me	**3%**	**11%**	**29%**	**54%**	**2%**
3	My teachers don't relate to us because their background is so different	**4%**	**14%**	**34%**	**40%**	**9%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q720 How much do you trust the following groups of people – a lot, somewhat, only a little, or not at all?

		A lot	Somewhat	Only a little	Not at all
1	Your friends	**49%**	**43%**	**7%**	**1%**
2	Your family	**78%**	**18%**	**3%**	**1%**
3	Your teachers	**34%**	**45%**	**16%**	**4%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q725 How would you rate your teachers in preparing you in the following areas?

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1	Reading skills	**45%**	**40%**	**12%**	**3%**
2	Writing skills	**37%**	**46%**	**15%**	**3%**
3	Math skills	**44%**	**39%**	**13%**	**4%**
4	Knowing about science	**40%**	**43%**	**12%**	**5%**
5	Using computers and the Internet	**32%**	**42%**	**18%**	**8%**
6	Knowing about other nations and cultures	**25%**	**43%**	**25%**	**6%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q730 During this school year, how satisfied have you been in your relationships with the following people in your school life?

		Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
1	Other students	**37%**	**50%**	**10%**	**3%**
2	Your teachers	**39%**	**46%**	**12%**	**3%**
3	Your principal	**27%**	**42%**	**18%**	**13%**
4	Your parents	**62%**	**30%**	**7%**	**2%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q735 Think about the best teacher you have ever had. What do you think made them a good teacher? Please type your response in the text box below.

TO BE CODED

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q740 How safe do you feel when you are at school - do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, not very safe, or not at all safe?

1	Very safe	**50%**
2	Somewhat safe	**43%**
3	Not very safe	**6%**
4	Not at all safe	**1%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q745 How worried are you about being physically attacked (hurt by someone else) in or around your school – very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried, or not at all worried?

1	Very worried	**5%**
2	Somewhat worried	**25%**
3	Not very worried	**38%**
4	Not at all worried	**32%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q750 How likely is it that you will go to college?

1	Very likely	**73%**
2	Somewhat likely	**17%**
3	Somewhat unlikely	**4%**
4	Very unlikely	**2%**
5	Not sure	**4%**

BASE: THIRD - TWELFTH GRADE PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Q755 How interested are you in becoming a teacher when you finish your education?

1	Not at all interested	**7%**
2	Not very interested	**20%**
3	Somewhat interested	**36%**
4	Very interested	**37%**

BASE: INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TEACHER

Q760 Why are you interested in becoming a teacher when you finish your education?

TO BE CODED

BASE: NOT INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TEACHER

Q765 Why are you not interested in becoming a teacher when you finish your education?

TO BE CODED

SECTION 800: STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

BASE: QUALIFIED U.S. RESPONDENT AGES 8-18 AND QUOTA OPEN

Q816 What is your current status as a student? If you have already finished school for the year, please indicate the grade that you just completed.

01	2nd grade or earlier	-
02	3rd grade	**8%**
03	4th grade	**10%**
04	5th grade	**13%**
05	6th grade	**15%**
06	7th grade	**8%**
07	8th grade	**9%**
08	9th grade	**12%**
09	10th grade	**13%**
10	11th grade	**13%**
11	12th grade	-
12	Attending college part time	-
13	Attending college full time	-
14	Attending a business or trade school	-
15	Attending a graduate school	-
96	Attending other school or college program	-
97	Not attending school or college	-

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS

Q820 Is the school that you currently attend…?

1	In an urban or city area	**27%**
2	In a suburban area next to a city	**47%**
3	In a small town or rural area	**22%**
4	I do not attend school	-
5	Not sure	**4%**

BASE: CURRENTLY ATTENDS SCHOOL

Q821 Is your school…?

1	A private or parochial school	-
2	A public school	**100%**
3	I am home-schooled	-
8	Not sure	-

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS

Q105 How old are you?

Mean = **12.4**

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS

Q412 Are you a boy or a girl?

1	Boy	**51%**
2	Girl	**49%**
3	No answer	-

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS

Q174 U.S. Region – Harris Interactive Definition (Does not appear on screen)

1	East	**19%**
2	Midwest	**21%**
3	South	**35%**
4	West	**24%**

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS

Q236 Are you of Hispanic origin, such as Mexican American, Latin American, Puerto Rican, or Cuban?

1	Yes, of Hispanic origin	**20%**
2	No, not of Hispanic origin	**77%**
9	Decline to answer	**3%**

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS

Q238 Do you consider yourself…?

01	White	**63%**
02	Black	**9%**
03	Asian or Pacific Islander	**6%**
04	Native American or Alaskan native	***%**
05	Mixed racial background	**7%**
06	Other race	**5%**
08	African American	**6%**
94	Decline to answer	**4%**

BASE: ONLINE AND U.S. RESPONDENT AND MIXED RACIAL BACKGROUND

Q242 You indicated that you consider yourself of a mixed racial background. With which of the following racial groups do you most closely identify? Please select all that apply.

01	White	**58%**
02	Black	**26%**
03	African American	**2%**
04	Asian or Pacific Islander	**16%**
05	Native American or Alaskan native	**15%**
06	Other race	**53%**
94	Decline to answer	**6%**

BASE: DATA ENTRY OR ONLINE AND 8-17 YEARS OLD

Q222 To the best of your knowledge, what is the highest level of education your mother has completed or the highest degree she has received?

1	Less than high school	**4%**
2	Completed some high school	**4%**
3	High school graduate or equivalent	**29%**
4	Completed some college, but no degree	**27%**
5	Associate's degree	**6%**
8	College graduate (e.g., B.A., B.S.)	**12%**
9	Completed some graduate school, but no degree	**2%**
10	Completed graduate school (e.g., M.S., M.D., Ph.D.)	**6%**
11	Not sure	**10%**
12	No answer	*

BASE: DATA ENTRY OR ONLINE AND 8-17 YEARS OLD

Q224 To the best of your knowledge, what is the highest level of education your father has completed or the highest degree he has received?

1	Less than high school	**5%**
2	Completed some high school	**7%**
3	High school graduate or equivalent	**27%**
4	Completed some college, but no degree	**22%**
5	Associate's degree	**5%**
8	College graduate (e.g., B.A., B.S.)	**11%**
9	Completed some graduate school, but no degree	**1%**
10	Completed graduate school (e.g., M.S., M.D., Ph.D.)	**6%**
11	Not sure	**16%**
12	No answer	-

BASE: DATA ENTRY OR ONLINE AND U.S. RESIDENT

Q244 [HIDDEN COMPUTE QUESTION]

01	White	**54%**
02	Black	**9%**
03	Asian or Pacific Islander	**6%**
04	Native American or Alaskan native	*****
07	Hispanic	**20%**
08	African American	**6%**
05	Mixed racial background	**3%**
06	Other race	**1%**
94	Decline to answer	*****
99	Unknown	*