**Education in America: How We See It**

**Solutions? —One Response to Lack of Discipline—**

**Spanking—Has Lost Favor**

**1958**

**Question:** Some teachers say they should have the right to punish students in grade school by paddling them. Do you think they should be allowed to do this, or not?

- Yes, should be allowed: 62%
- No, should not be allowed: 35%

**GALLUP** December 3-8, 1958

**1964**

**Question:** Do you agree or disagree...Teachers should be allowed to paddle children who do not behave in school?

- Agree: 71%
- Disagree: 28%

**NORC** October, 1964

**1983**

**Question:** As a way of maintaining proper discipline in public schools in your community, do you favor or oppose allowing teachers to physically punish elementary school students—for example, spanking?

- Favor: 44%
- Oppose: 54%

**NYT** February 7-12, 1983

**1994**

**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the use of spanking as a form of punishment in the public schools?

- Approve: 38%
- Disapprove: 56%

**PSRA** April 7-8, 1994

**Solutions: "Standards" Reforms Are Endorsed**

**Growing Support for National Testing**

**Question:** Should all high school students in the U.S. be required to pass a standard nationwide examination in order to get a high school diploma?*

- 1958: 50% (Positive response)
- 1961: 47% (Positive response)
- 1990: 67% (Positive response)
- 1995: 65% (Positive response)

**GALLUP/PDK**

**Note:** Question wording varies slightly in 1990 and 1995. The 1990 and 1995 survey was done for Phi Delta Kappa.

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**People, Opinions, & Polls**

*Education in America: How We See It*

**Solutions: Stress the “Basics”**

1994

**Question:** ...[Do you] think...[the subject listed] should be given more emphasis, less emphasis, or the same emphasis it now receives in high school, regardless of whether or not you think it should be required?

% responding “more emphasis”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>More Emphasis</th>
<th>Same</th>
<th>Less</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US History/Gov't</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GALLUP/PDK** May 10-June 8, 1994

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—Yes, And More Homework Isn’t a Bad Idea—

1986

**Question:** To improve the quality of education in American schools, how important is it for schools to...increase homework...?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not too Important</th>
<th>Not at all Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HARRIS** July 29-August 7, 1986

1990

**Question:** Would...[more homework] help or hurt the education of students, or wouldn’t it make much difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>No difference</th>
<th>Help</th>
<th>Hurt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CBS** May 30-June 2, 1990
**Education in America: How We See It**

**Solutions: More Parental Choice**

If “Which Public School?,” Strong Support for Parental Choice

**Question:** Do you favor or oppose allowing students and their parents to choose which public schools in this community the students attend, regardless of where they live?

![Graph showing percentage favor and oppose from 1989 to 1995](chart)

**GALLUP/PDK**

**But Even Here, A Downside is Recognized**

**Question:** What effect do you think allowing students and their parents to choose the students’ schools would have on the public schools of this community? Do you think it would improve all schools, hurt all schools, or would it improve some and hurt others?

- Improve all schools: 21%
- Hurt all schools: 6%
- Improve some/hurt others: 69%

**GALLUP/PDK**

May 21-June 9, 1993

**Question:** [If parents were given a choice between several different public schools for their child]...[Do you think]...it probably would happen, or probably would not happen [that] some schools would be unpopular and children going there would lose out?

- Probably would not: 30%
- Probably would: 70%

May-June 1987
**People, Opinions, & Polls**

**Education in America: How We See It**

**On the Question of Public Tax Money for Private Schools, A Very Different Response**

Conflicted Values—So, How It's Asked Shapes the Answers

**Question:** Would you favor or oppose giving parents education tax credits or vouchers to pay for their children's tuition at the public or private school of their choice?

Oppose: 39%  
Favor: 61%

**NBC/WSJ**  
May 10-14, 1991

**Question:** Two proposals have been made for allowing parents more choice in deciding what schools their children attend....which one...[do] you prefer...?

Not sure/other: 12%  
Proposal A: 46%  
Proposal B: 42%

Proposal A would provide tax vouchers to elementary and high school students which they could use to pay for attending the public, parochial or private school of their choice. Proposal B would allow parents to choose among different public schools, but would not provide vouchers for use in parochial or private schools.

**NBC/WSJ**  
July 23-26, 1994  
October 2-5, 1992

**Question:** ...[Do you agree or disagree]...Parents should be given government-funded school vouchers so they can send their children to the public, private, or religious school of their choice?

Disagree: 45%  
Agree: 55%

**Family Research Council**  
September 1993

**Question:** ...[Do you]...strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose...vouchers or government financial aid to help parents pay the costs of sending a child to a church-run or other private school?

Oppose: 55%  
Favor: 45%

**PSRA**  
August 26-September 1, 1994

**Question:** Do you favor or oppose using public education money to give parents a choice of sending their children to private and religious schools?

Oppose: 71%  
Favor: 29%

**Y/C/S**  
May 8, 1991

Even Private School Parents Say No

**Question:** Do you favor or oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Favor (%)</th>
<th>Oppose (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children in school</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public school parents</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpublic school parents</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GALLUP/PDK**  
1995

**THE PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE, OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1995** 35
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A Long-Standing Commitment to State/Local Control...

1943

Question: Do you think that public school systems should be mostly controlled by the federal government...or...each state government?

1978

Question: Some people worry that the state and federal government are adopting regulations regarding educational matters which don't take account of the local school situation. Do you think these actions...are more likely to help...or hinder public school education?

1981

Question: ...[Do you think elementary and high school education]...is best provided by the federal...state...or local government or should mostly be provided outside government?

...That's Perhaps Even Stronger Today

Question: ...[S]hould your state have more say in the way money from federal education programs is spent in your state, less say, or about the same as now?

Question: ...Do you think your state should have more say in the way money from federal education programs is spent, if it means less money would be available, or not?

Question: When the federal government appropriates money for educational programs, it usually requires the schools that receive this money to spend it as the federal government directs. Should or should not this be changed to permit local school authorities to decide how the money is to be spent?

GALLUP
April 27-May 1, 1978

GALLUP/PDK
1995

GALLUP/PDK

Public School Parents

NORC
November, 1943

ROPER/STARCH
November 14-21, 1981

GALLUP/PDK

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