

2014 Schooling in America Survey, Questions and Results

Interview Dates:	April 23 to May 4, 2014
Sample Frame:	Adults (age 18+)
Population Sample:	National/American Adults = 1,007
Margin of Error:	National/American Adults = \pm 3.1 percentage points

Displayed numbers in tables are percentages, unless otherwise noted.

Due to rounding, percentage totals for a given question may be slightly greater or less than 100%.

“For this brief interview, if you are completely unsure about your answer or have no feelings for an answer, you can say ‘I Don’t Know.’” [ENTER AS “DK”]

[CODE GENDER OF RESPONDENT; DO NOT ASK, UNLESS GENDER IS IN QUESTION]

	Male	Female
AMERICAN ADULTS	49	51

1. Which of the following do you see as the most important issue facing the country right now?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES 1-9 TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Crime	Economy & Jobs	Education	Environment	Healthcare	Housing	Immigration	Values Issues	Taxes
AMERICAN ADULTS	4	38	13	4	16	3	4	7	5

2. Are you currently the parent or guardian of a child who lives with you, and who is in any grade from preschool through high school?

[IF NEEDED: IF CHILD IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED OR ENTERING PRESCHOOL IN THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR, ENTER "YES"]

[IF NEEDED: IF YOUNGEST CHILD JUST GRADUATED IN 2014, ENTER "NO"]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Yes	No < PK	No > HS	No Children	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	32	3	25	40	< 1

3. In the United States, do you feel things in K-12 education are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Right Direction	Wrong Track	DK/Ref (VOL.)
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AMERICAN ADULTS	33	58	8
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4. Generally speaking, how would you rate the federal government’s handling of matters in K-12 Education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/Ref (VOL.)
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AMERICAN ADULTS	3	19	37	37	4
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5. How much do you think is spent per year on each student in our country's public schools? Your estimate (to the nearest thousand dollars) will represent the combined expenditures of local, state, and federal governments.

[OPEN-END. BASED ON RESPONSE, SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE, OFFERING RANGE CATEGORIES. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Less than \$4,000	\$4,001 – \$8,000	\$8,001 – \$12,000	\$12,001 – \$16,000	Over \$16,000	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	26	23	14	8	12	18

6. **(Split A)** Do you believe that public school funding in the United States is at a level that is:

[ROTATE “TOO HIGH” AND “TOO LOW”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	10	27	56	7

6. **(Split B)** According to the most recent information available, in the United States \$10,658 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in our country is at a level that is:

[ROTATE “TOO HIGH” AND “TOO LOW”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	14	35	47	5

7. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...

[GRADE OPTIONS: A, B, C, D, or F]

[ROTATE “REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS,” “CHARTER SCHOOLS,” “PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	A	B	C	D	F	DNA/DK/Ref (VOL.)
Regular Public Schools	9	34	31	14	8	4
Charter Schools	13	25	18	4	4	36
Private Schools	23	36	13	2	2	24

8. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Charter School	Homeschool	Private School	Regular Public School	Virtual School	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	10	11	40	37	1	3

9. What is the most important characteristic or attribute that would cause you to choose a **[INSERT SCHOOL TYPE FROM PREVIOUS QUESTION]** for your child? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

[OPEN-END. IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

Top 10 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

AMERICAN ADULTS

BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	118
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	99
BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING	87
CLASS SIZE / STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	69
SOCIALIZATION / PEERS / OTHER KIDS	67
ACADEMICS / CURRICULUM	65
DISCIPLINE / STRUCTURE	54
DIVERSITY / VARIETY	52
ENVIRONMENT / CULTURE / COMMUNITY	41
OUTCOMES / RESULTS / GRADUATION RATE	40

OTHER RESPONSES	76
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	30

“For the remainder of this interview, if you are completely unsure about your answer or have no feelings for an answer, feel free to say ‘I Don’t Know.’” [ENTER AS “DK”]

10.Based on what you know, or have heard from others... In general, do you favor or oppose “charter schools”?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	20	26	12	10	32

11. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	24	38	15	11	12

12. Based on what you know, or have heard from others... In general, do you favor or oppose "school vouchers"?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	21	22	8	13	37

13. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	35	28	13	20	4

14. **(Split A)** Some people believe that school vouchers should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	48	17	11	20	4

14. **(Split B)** Some people believe that school vouchers should only be available to families based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	21	18	18	39	5

15. Thinking ahead to the next election, if a candidate for Governor, State Senator, or Representative supports school vouchers, would that make you more likely to vote for him or her, less likely, or make no difference whatsoever in your voting?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	More Likely	No Difference	Less Likely	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	27	53	16	3

16. **(Split A)** Based on your best observation or guess, to what extent does the Republican Party favor or oppose school vouchers?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	19	17	11	11	42

16. **(Split B)** Based on your best observation or guess, to what extent does the Democratic Party favor or oppose school vouchers?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	10	18	16	18	38

17. An "education savings account" – often called an ESA – allows parents to take their child out of a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses. Parents can then use these funds to pay for private school tuition, online education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of "savings account system"?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	27	29	12	21	10

18. Thinking ahead to the next election, if a candidate for Governor, State Senator, or Representative supports education savings accounts, would that make you more likely to vote for him or her, less likely, or make no difference whatsoever in your voting?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	More Likely	No Difference	Less Likely	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	27	51	19	4

19. **(Split A)** Based on your best observation or guess, to what extent does the Democratic Party favor or oppose education savings accounts?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	13	17	13	12	45

19. **(Split B)** Based on your best observation or guess, to what extent does the Republican Party favor or oppose education savings accounts?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	15	22	11	11	41

20. A “tax credit” allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A “tax-credit scholarship system” allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	27	37	12	14	11

“Now we have some questions about a couple other education issues in the news.”

“When thinking about standardized assessments and tests...”

21. How much time do you think a typical American student spends in a school year on preparing for standardized tests and taking these tests? Your estimate, in school days, will reflect total time for the state test and any additional standardized tests administered by the district or school.

[OPEN-END. BASED ON RESPONSE, SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE, OFFERING RANGE CATEGORIES. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	5 or Less	6 to 10	11 to 15	16 or More	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	18	15	8	42	18

22. Do you believe the amount of time spent on standardized testing in American schools is:

[ROTATE "TOO HIGH" AND "TOO LOW"]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	36	33	24	7

23. **(Split A)** To the best of your knowledge, who do you think IS held accountable for standardized test results under current education policies? Please indicate with a “Yes” or “No” to each one of the following:

[RANDOMIZE 23AA, 23AB, 23AC, 23AD, 23AE]

[FOR EACH ITEM, ALLOW ON FIRST RESPONSE “DK” OR “REFUSE”]

% “Yes”	Students	Teachers	Principals	School District Officials	State Government Officials
AMERICAN ADULTS	57	73	63	66	45

23. **(Split B)** Now we would like to know who you think SHOULD BE held accountable for standardized test results. On a scale from 1 to 5, please indicate the degree of accountability – tied to standardized test results – for each one of the following? 1 would reflect LOWEST ACCOUNTABILITY; 5 would reflect HIGHEST ACCOUNTABILITY

[RANDOMIZE 23BA, 23BB, 23BC, 23BD, 23BE]

[FOR EACH ITEM, ALLOW ON FIRST RESPONSE “NONE”, “DK” OR “REFUSE”]

% “4” and “5”	Students	Teachers	Principals	School District Officials	State Government Officials
AMERICAN ADULTS	59	62	50	53	40

24. (Split A) Who do you think should make final decisions when it comes to DEVELOPING academic standards?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES 1-6 TO AVOID BIAS]

[FOR EACH ITEM, ALLOW ON FIRST RESPONSE “DK” OR “REFUSE”]

	Parents	Teachers	Principals	School District Officials	State Government Officials	Federal Government Officials
AMERICAN ADULTS	19	29	6	23	11	8

24. (Split B) Who do you think should make final decisions when it comes to IMPLEMENTING academic standards?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES 1-6 TO AVOID BIAS]

[FOR EACH ITEM, ALLOW ON FIRST RESPONSE “DK” OR “REFUSE”]

	Parents	Teachers	Principals	School District Officials	State Government Officials	Federal Government Officials
AMERICAN ADULTS	15	23	8	28	13	9

25. Based on what you know, or have heard from others... In general, do you favor or oppose “the Common Core State Standards” in K-12 education?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	11	23	15	24	26

26. The objective of the Common Core State Standards Initiative is to establish similar academic standards and comparable tests across all states for students in grades K-12. The standards were initially developed by the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers. States and districts have adopted the common standards and tests in association with U.S. Department of Education incentives. In general, do you favor or oppose the “Common Core”?

[PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	16	34	16	25	9

27. Thinking ahead to the next election, if a candidate for Governor, State Senator, or Representative supports the Common Core, would that make you more likely to vote for him or her, less likely, or make no difference whatsoever in your voting?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	More Likely	No Difference	Less Likely	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	16	56	24	4

“Now the following questions should be pretty quick, and for statistical purposes only....”

28. Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

[Code for Democrat, Republican, Independent, Libertarian, Other, or “DK”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other	Libertarian (VOL.)	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	31	23	30	10	2	5

29. How would you best describe where you live?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	23	34	23	18	1

30. Which of the following age categories do you fall in?

[OPEN END, THEN CODE TO AGE CATEGORY]

	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 & Over	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	31	36	31	3

31. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino origin, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Hispanic	Not Hispanic	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	14	86	< 1

32. Which of the following best describes your race?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	American Indian, Native American	Asian, Pacific Islander, Asian American	Black, African American	Mixed Race	White	Other	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	1	5	12	3	72	5	2

33. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? **[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]**

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

None (Grades 1-8)

High School Incomplete (Grades 9-11)

High school Graduate (Grade 12 or GED Certificate)

Technical, Trade, or Vocational School (AFTER High School)

Some College (Associate’s Degree, No 4-Yr Degree)

College Graduate (Bachelor’s Degree or Other 4-Yr Degree)

Post-Graduate Training or Professional Schooling After College (Toward a Master's Degree, Ph.D.; Law, Medical School)

	Grades 1 to 8	Grades 9 to 11	HS Graduate	Technical/ Vocational	Some College	College Graduate	Post- Graduate
AMERICAN ADULTS	1	4	26	3	24	23	16

34. Please stop me when I read the category that best describes your current annual household income, before taxes?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 & Over	DK/Ref (VOL.)
AMERICAN ADULTS	35	28	28	9

[PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AVAILABLE TO INTERVIEWERS ANYTIME A RESPONDENT ASKS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE SURVEY SPONSOR OR FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION]

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