

Full Survey Results

The findings in “Important, but Not for Me” are based on 2,767 telephone interviews with a representative sample of parents and students in Kansas and Missouri. Interviews were conducted between April 16 and June 10, 2007. The margin of error for parents is plus or minus 2.55 percentage points, and it is 2.72 for the sample of students. A full methodology is available at www.publicagenda.org.

SECTION A: PARENTS

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
1 Would you say that, generally speaking:				
Your local schools are doing a good job preparing students to be successful as adults	70	73	44	64
They need to be doing a lot better	28	24	53	34
Don't know	2	2	3	1
2 Suppose your community got extra money to spend on its schools and you were asked to help decide how to spend that money. Would you prefer the money go toward:				
Reducing class size	33	35	27	25
Making pre-school available to all children	7	5	11	25
Improving math and science education	27	27	31	23
Paying teachers more	28	28	27	24
Don't know	4	4	3	2
3 Do you think the most pressing problems facing the high schools in your local community more likely come from:				
Social problems and kids who misbehave	66	67	63	60
Low academic standards and outdated curricula	21	20	25	29
Don't know	12	13	11	10
5 As far as you know, do you think that:				
The U.S. is well ahead of other industrialized countries when it comes to educating its young people in science and math	10	10	5	28
The U.S. is far behind	57	56	72	47
It is about the same	25	27	17	18
Don't know	7	7	6	7
6 Here are some things the schools may teach students before they're done school. Is this absolutely essential, important, but not essential, or not important?				
Making sure students learn basic reading and writing skills				
Absolutely essential	92	93	86	74
Important, but not essential	7	6	14	22
Not important	1	1	—	3
Don't know	1	*	—	1
Knowing how to speak a foreign language				
Absolutely essential	27	25	38	51
Important, but not essential	56	56	56	41
Not important	16	18	6	5
Don't know	1	1	—	3

6 (continued) **Here are some things the schools may teach students before they're done school. Is this absolutely essential, important not essential, or not important?**

Understanding basic scientific ideas and principles

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
Absolutely essential	60	62	51	52
Important, but not essential	37	36	46	43
Not important	2	2	3	3
Don't know	*	—	*	1

Understanding advanced sciences like physics

Absolutely essential	23	22	27	40
Important, but not essential	62	64	55	52
Not important	13	12	17	6
Don't know	2	2	1	2

Having basic math skills

Absolutely essential	91	93	86	76
Important, but not essential	8	7	14	21
Not important	1	*	—	2
Don't know	*	—	—	1

Understanding higher level math like calculus

Absolutely essential	23	21	37	45
Important, but not essential	63	65	52	46
Not important	12	12	11	8
Don't know	2	2	*	1

Being punctual, respectful of others and finishing work on time

Absolutely essential	85	87	82	77
Important, but not essential	14	13	17	21
Not important	1	1	1	1
Don't know	*	—	—	1

Being able to work well as part of a team

Absolutely essential	73	74	77	64
Important, but not essential	25	24	22	31
Not important	1	2	1	3
Don't know	*	*	—	2

7 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Students today are not really learning basic math

Strongly agree	26	23	35	39
Somewhat agree	19	18	30	22
Somewhat disagree	25	28	13	17
Strongly disagree	26	27	22	18
Don't know	3	3	1	3

Many more companies would move into your area if it had a reputation for workers with great science and math skills

Strongly agree	31	30	37	45
Somewhat agree	26	28	19	25
Somewhat disagree	23	24	23	17
Strongly disagree	14	14	15	7
Don't know	5	5	7	5

7 (continued) **Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?**

The students who are strong in math and science tend to be less popular

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
Strongly agree	12	11	22	30
Somewhat agree	16	16	19	15
Somewhat disagree	32	34	24	25
Strongly disagree	35	36	31	26
Don't know	4	3	3	4

Students with advanced math and science skills will have a big advantage when it comes to work and college opportunities

Strongly agree	65	65	72	64
Somewhat agree	21	21	17	16
Somewhat disagree	9	9	6	11
Strongly disagree	4	4	3	6
Don't know	2	1	1	3

I would be really unhappy if my child's career required advanced math or science

Strongly agree	12	11	16	36
Somewhat agree	9	7	16	15
Somewhat disagree	29	29	29	22
Strongly disagree	47	49	38	26
Don't know	3	4	1	1

Requiring students to take advanced math classes in high school is not really needed because most students never use it and don't remember what they learn

Strongly agree	17	17	24	28
Somewhat agree	25	25	23	28
Somewhat disagree	25	27	14	19
Strongly disagree	29	28	38	25
Don't know	3	3	1	—

Requiring students to take advanced science classes in high school is not really needed because most students never use it and don't remember what they learn

Strongly agree	18	17	31	47
Somewhat agree	28	29	27	22
Somewhat disagree	25	26	14	17
Strongly disagree	26	26	28	10
Don't know	3	3	*	5

7AA Do you think that ability in math and science is:

Something kids are mostly born with	17	18	10	27
Mostly something kids can learn & develop with experience	76	76	85	67
Don't know	6	6	5	6

8 There are lots of reasons that students might do poorly in math and science. Of these two statements, please tell me which better explains why students may do poorly in math and science.

There aren't enough really good math and science teachers	40	40	45	44
Students think these subjects are irrelevant to their lives	50	51	48	41
Neither	6	6	5	9
Don't know	4	4	3	5

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
9 And of these two statements please tell me which statement better explains why students may do poorly in math and science?				
Many students simply lack the natural ability to do well in these kinds of subjects	34	34	42	47
Most parents don't really expect their kids to do well in these subjects	48	49	37	41
Don't know	16	15	17	11
10 Which comes closer to your view?				
Most students don't need to study higher math skills like advanced algebra and calculus—all most really need in life is good basic math skills	37	38	35	39
It's crucial for most of today's students to learn higher-level math skills like advanced algebra and calculus—they are the gateway to success in college and work	57	57	58	58
Don't know	6	5	7	4
11 Should all students be expected to take advanced science classes such as physics and advanced chemistry, or should that be expected only of the students who show special interest in science?				
All students should be expected to take advanced science	24	22	37	40
Expected only of the students who show promise or interest	73	75	61	58
Don't know	2	2	1	2
12 If the public schools in your community taught the theory of evolution—that is, the idea that human beings evolved from other species of animals—would you be upset, or not?				
Upset	33	32	46	29
Not Upset	62	64	47	66
Don't know	4	4	7	5
14 As far as you know, how important is it for high school students to learn algebra if they want to go to college?				
Absolutely essential	79	80	79	70
Important, but not essential	19	18	18	28
Not important	1	1	2	1
Don't know	1	1	*	—
20A If you had to choose, which student would you say is more likely to end up with a solid career that pays well?				
The student who is very strong in math and science, but not in other areas	34	33	41	43
The student who is educationally well-rounded, but not very strong in math and science	56	57	51	52
Don't know	10	10	8	4
17 Do you think that your child's school should be teaching (him/her/them) a lot more math and science, less or are things fine as they are?				
More math and science	25	23	45	35
Less math and science	2	2	4	10
Things are fine as is	70	74	49	50
Don't know	2	2	2	2

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
16 Which comes closer to your view? Would you say:				
The school has much more basic problems to solve before they can start worrying about improving math and science education	44	43	49	49
The school needs to improve math and science education as quickly as possible—it cannot afford to wait	31	30	35	37
Nothing needs to be fixed in the school	20	22	10	7
Don't know	4	4	6	5
18 Overall, would you say your child's teachers are mostly succeeding or mostly failing when it comes to the following?				
Getting your child excited about learning math				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	62	64	47	66
Mostly failing	27	27	34	22
Somewhere in between	8	6	16	8
Don't know	2	2	3	4
Getting your child excited about learning science				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	62	65	43	57
Mostly failing	27	24	40	31
Somewhere in between	8	8	16	7
Don't know	3	3	1	3
Showing your child that math is relevant and important in the real world				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	74	75	75	66
Mostly failing	20	21	14	18
Somewhere in between	3	2	9	12
Don't know	2	2	1	3
Showing your child that science is relevant and important in the real world				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	65	67	49	60
Mostly failing	19	17	37	26
Somewhere in between	9	10	8	9
Don't know	6	6	6	4
Teaching students how to make the most of cutting-edge technologies				
Mostly succeeding	63	65	50	66
Mostly failing	25	23	36	20
Somewhere in between	8	8	8	9
Don't know	4	3	5	5
Helping struggling students keep up in math				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	59	60	50	62
Mostly failing	26	25	36	27
Somewhere in between	6	6	7	7
Don't know	8	8	7	4
Helping struggling students keep up in science				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	54	57	31	62
Mostly failing	24	21	51	30
Somewhere in between	9	10	8	2
Don't know	12	12	11	4

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
18 (continued) Overall, would you say your child's teachers are mostly succeeding or mostly failing when it comes to the following?				
Making sure your child is ready for beginning college-level math (Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	74	77	58	69
Mostly failing	20	19	30	15
Somewhere in between	2	1	3	16
Don't know	3	2	8	1
Making sure your child is ready for beginning college-level science (Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	69	71	67	62
Mostly failing	18	17	11	18
Somewhere in between	9	8	14	8
Don't know	3	3	7	10
19 In general, do you think the MATH your child is learning is harder, easier or about the same as when you were in school?				
Harder	69	71	60	68
Easier	7	6	7	16
About the same	23	22	31	12
Don't know	1	1	2	3
20 In general, do you think the SCIENCE your child is learning is harder, easier or about the same as when you were in school?				
Harder	51	52	46	50
Easier	8	6	9	17
About the same	38	39	42	29
Don't know	2	2	3	2
21 When compared with other teachers your child has this year, would you say that your child's current MATH teacher is:				
Especially good	43	45	30	55
Average	43	43	50	38
Below average	10	10	15	2
Don't know	3	2	6	3
22 When compared with other teachers your child has this year, would you say that your child's current SCIENCE teacher is:				
Especially good	42	43	32	52
Average	47	47	57	38
Below average	7	6	8	3
Don't know	4	4	2	5
23 Compared with other subjects, is MATH a subject your child finds easy, something they struggle with or is it about average?				
Finds easy	41	42	35	44
Something they struggle with	21	20	34	30
About average	36	37	30	23
Don't know	1	1	1	2

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
24 Compared with other subjects, is SCIENCE a subject your child finds easy, something they struggle with or is it about average?				
Finds easy	45	45	44	44
Something they struggle with	14	14	19	27
About average	39	40	36	26
Don't know	1	1	1	3
25 Compared with other subjects, would it be much harder for you to help your child with MATH homework, much easier, or is it about the same?				
Much harder	47	48	42	54
Much easier	21	21	16	20
About the same	30	28	41	22
Don't know	2	2	1	2
26 Compared with other subjects, would it be much harder for you to help your child with SCIENCE homework, much easier, or is it about the same?				
Much harder	29	29	26	39
Much easier	23	24	20	23
About the same	45	45	53	31
Don't know	3	2	1	6
27 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Your child would be really unhappy if (he/she/they) ended up in a job or career that required doing a lot of math or science.				
Strongly agree	21	20	26	44
Somewhat agree	16	15	20	19
Somewhat disagree	26	26	26	18
Strongly disagree	30	32	22	15
Don't know	5	5	5	3
28 If you knew the following, would you encourage your child to take advanced math and science courses?				
Most good colleges expect your child to have advanced math and science courses on their high school transcripts				
Yes, a lot	77	77	86	77
Yes, a little	16	17	9	16
No	5	5	4	5
Don't know	1	1	*	1
Advanced math and science skills will open up good job and career opportunities for your child				
Yes, a lot	77	77	82	75
Yes, a little	16	16	11	20
No	5	5	4	3
Don't know	1	1	2	1
More college scholarships are available to students with advanced math and science skills				
Yes, a lot	76	75	84	75
Yes, a little	15	14	12	18
No	8	8	4	4
Don't know	1	1	–	2

28 (continued) **If you knew the following, would you encourage your child to take advanced math and science courses?**

Your child must pass rigorous tests in math and science to graduate from high school

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
Yes, a lot	78	78	86	76
Yes, a little	14	14	8	18
No	5	6	5	4
Don't know	2	2	*	*

Our nation is falling behind other countries economically because we're not producing people with strong math, science and technology skills

Yes, a lot	69	69	80	73
Yes, a little	18	19	14	19
No	10	10	5	7
Don't know	2	2	*	1

Performing poorly in math and science will cause your child to be left back a grade

Yes, a lot	66	66	76	65
Yes, a little	14	15	10	23
No	15	16	11	9
Don't know	3	3	3	1

Performing poorly in math and science will mean your child will have to go to summer school

Yes, a lot	67	67	78	72
Yes, a little	18	19	14	20
No	10	11	5	6
Don't know	3	3	3	1

Performing poorly in math and science will mean your child cannot participate in sports or other extracurricular activities

Yes, a lot	60	59	74	64
Yes, a little	20	21	14	21
No	15	16	9	12
Don't know	4	4	2	1

Your child will have to show (his/her/their) high school transcript in order to get a job

Yes, a lot	71	71	83	75
Yes, a little	16	16	8	19
No	10	11	8	3
Don't know	1	1	1	1

29 Please tell me how much each of the following would improve math and science education in your child's school:

Paying math and science teachers more than English and social studies teachers because those positions are hardest to fill

A lot	27	27	28	49
A little	32	33	31	23
Would do nothing at all	35	36	36	23
Don't know	4	4	4	4

28 (continued) **Please tell me how much each of the following would improve math and science education in your child’s school:**

Putting students in classes according to their ability, so that fast learners are together in one class, and slower learners are together in another

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
A lot	54	55	48	52
A little	25	25	31	26
Would do nothing at all	17	17	19	18
Don’t know	3	3	2	2

Encouraging students to rely more on calculators so that they can concentrate on math concepts instead of doing math by hand

A lot	27	27	25	39
A little	33	34	37	29
Would do nothing at all	36	35	35	25
Don’t know	3	3	3	5

Requiring students struggling with math or science to take summer school in those subjects

A lot	48	45	62	63
A little	39	41	29	29
Would do nothing at all	10	11	7	5
Don’t know	2	2	1	1

Establishing a national curriculum in math and science so that schools everywhere teach the same topics

A lot	44	43	53	59
A little	31	32	30	30
Would do nothing at all	19	20	13	8
Don’t know	5	5	4	2

Extending the current school year by one month to insure that all students fully understand the math and science curricula

A lot	26	24	29	54
A little	28	29	25	22
Would do nothing at all	42	43	43	22
Don’t know	3	3	2	1

Requiring students to pass challenging tests in math and science in order to graduate

A lot	43	41	49	64
A little	38	40	25	26
Would do nothing at all	17	17	23	8
Don’t know	1	1	3	*

Making students who are failing math and science attend classes after school to catch up with the rest of the class

A lot	50	49	53	62
A little	33	35	30	23
Would do nothing at all	14	14	16	11
Don’t know	1	1	1	2

Characteristics of the sample

	Total (%)
Gender	
Male (father)	45
Female (mother)	55
Employment	
Full-time	67
Part-time	15
Retired	3
Not employed	7
Homemaker	4
Student	*
Disabled	1
Don't know	*
Marital status	
Married	81
Living as married	2
Divorced	5
Separated	2
Widowed	2
Never married/Single	6
Don't know	1
Education	
None, or grade 1-8	2
High school incomplete	4
High school graduate	25
Business, technical, or vocational school AFTER high school	6
Some college, no 4-year degree	27
College graduate	23
Post-graduate training or professional schooling	10
Don't know	1
Income	
Less than \$10,000	2
\$10,000 to under \$20,000	2
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	6
\$30,000 to under \$50,000	14
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	21
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	13
\$100,000 or more	20
Don't know	3
Free/reduced price lunch	
Yes	14
No	82
Don't know	1

SECTION B: STUDENTS

1 Would you say that generally speaking, your school:

Is doing a good job preparing you for future success
Needs to be doing a lot better
Don't know

Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
87	90	70	81
12	9	29	17
1	1	*	1

2 Here are some things the schools may or may not need to teach students before they're done with high school and go out into the real world. Is this absolutely essential, important but not essential or not important?

Making sure students learn basic reading and writing skills

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

83	85	70	76
16	14	28	23
1	1	1	*
*	*	1	1

Knowing how to speak a foreign language

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

27	25	30	36
58	60	54	53
14	14	16	10
*	*	*	1

Understanding basic scientific ideas and principles

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

47	48	41	47
48	47	51	48
5	5	7	5
1	1	1	—

Understanding advanced sciences like physics

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

24	23	28	37
61	63	56	53
13	13	13	9
1	1	2	1

Having basic math skills

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

79	81	71	72
20	18	28	26
1	1	1	2
*	—	—	1

Understanding higher level math like calculus

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

26	23	35	39
59	60	55	49
14	15	9	12
1	1	1	1

Being punctual, respectful of others, and finishing work on time

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

75	76	67	72
24	23	31	26
1	1	2	2
*	*	—	—

Being able to work well as part of a team

Absolutely essential
Important, but not essential
Not important
Don't know

67	69	52	65
31	29	46	33
2	2	2	2
*	*	—	*

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
3 Do you think the most pressing problems facing the high schools in your local community come from:				
Social problems and kids who misbehave	79	79	78	77
Low academic standards and outdated curricula	16	16	17	18
Don't know	5	5	4	5
4 Compared with other subjects, is math something you find pretty easy, something you struggle with or is it about average?				
Pretty easy	48	50	37	47
Something you struggle with	15	13	21	19
About average	37	37	42	34
Don't know	*	*	—	—
5 Compared with other subjects, is science something you find pretty easy, something you struggle with or is it about average?				
Pretty easy	50	51	47	46
Something you struggle with	8	8	11	15
About average	41	41	42	40
Don't know	*	*	*	—
6A Overall, would you say that your teachers are helping you learn a lot about math, or do you think there is room for improvement? (Asked of half of the respondents)				
Helping you learn a lot	73	75	67	67
There's room for improvement	26	24	32	33
Don't know	*	*	1	—
6B Overall, would you say that your teachers are helping you learn a lot about science, or do you think there is room for improvement? (Asked of half of the respondents)				
Helping you learn a lot	71	73	59	70
There's room for improvement	29	27	41	30
Don't know	*	*	1	1
7A Thinking back to when you first started middle school, do you think that your elementary school teachers prepared you for middle-school-level math work, or not? (Asked of half of the respondents)				
Yes	82	81	86	79
No	16	17	14	21
Don't know	2	3	—	—
7B Thinking back to when you first started middle school, do you think that your elementary school teachers prepared you for middle-school-level science work, or not? (Asked of half of the respondents)				
Yes	82	85	75	77
No	18	15	25	20
Don't know	*	—	—	2

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
8A Thinking back to when you first started high school, do you think that your middle school teachers prepared you for high-school-level math work, or not?				
Yes	77	79	62	79
No	21	18	36	21
Don't know	2	2	2	—
8B Thinking back to when you first started high school, do you think that your middle school teachers prepared you for high-school-level science work, or not?				
Yes	74	77	64	76
No	22	20	33	19
Don't know	4	4	4	5
9 Overall, would you say your school is mostly succeeding or mostly failing when it comes to the following?				
Getting students excited about learning math				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	55	57	49	65
Mostly failing	35	34	44	26
Somewhere in between	9	9	7	7
Don't know	1	1	1	2
Getting students excited about learning science				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	54	55	55	60
Mostly failing	34	34	36	28
Somewhere in between	11	9	9	8
Don't know	1	1	—	4
Having science labs that are up-to-date and well-equipped				
Mostly succeeding	79	83	59	74
Mostly failing	16	12	37	20
Somewhere in between	3	3	3	5
Don't know	2	2	2	1
Explaining how the math you learn in class is used in the real world				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	69	70	64	78
Mostly failing	25	25	30	21
Somewhere in between	5	4	6	1
Don't know	1	8	—	—
Explaining how the science you learn in class is used in the real world				
(Asked of half of the respondents)				
Mostly succeeding	74	74	69	75
Mostly failing	20	20	23	21
Somewhere in between	5	5	7	4
Don't know	1	1	1	1
Having teachers and equipment that can help students learn all the newest and most important computer and other technology skills?				
Mostly succeeding	82	84	69	76
Mostly failing	15	12	27	16
Somewhere in between	3	2	3	7
Don't know	1	1	*	1

Helping struggling students keep up in math

(Asked of half of the respondents)

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
Mostly succeeding	77	80	61	74
Mostly failing	18	14	35	20
Somewhere in between	5	4	3	6
Don't know	1	1	—	—

Helping struggling students keep up in science

(Asked of half of the respondents)

Mostly succeeding	75	78	63	76
Mostly failing	19	17	33	13
Somewhere in between	3	3	2	11
Don't know	2	2	2	1

Making sure students are ready for beginning college-level math

(Asked of half of the respondents)

Mostly succeeding	81	86	61	74
Mostly failing	11	7	28	19
Somewhere in between	4	3	7	6
Don't know	3	3	4	1

Making sure students are ready for beginning college-level science

(Asked of half of the respondents)

Mostly succeeding	77	79	64	79
Mostly failing	15	13	29	10
Somewhere in between	4	4	3	7
Don't know	4	4	3	4

10 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The students who are truly gifted in math and science are often bored and uninspired in school

Strongly agree	25	23	28	26
Somewhat agree	27	28	27	28
Somewhat disagree	30	32	25	30
Strongly disagree	17	17	18	14
Don't know	1	*	2	1

The students who are strong in math and science tend to be less popular

Strongly agree	13	12	13	22
Somewhat agree	16	16	17	23
Somewhat disagree	34	35	36	24
Strongly disagree	36	36	33	28
Don't know	1	1	1	3

Students with advanced math and science skills will have a big advantage when it comes to work and college opportunities

Strongly agree	63	62	66	54
Somewhat agree	27	28	24	37
Somewhat disagree	8	8	6	4
Strongly disagree	2	2	2	4
Don't know	*	*	1	*

I'd be really unhappy if my career required advanced math or science

Strongly agree	23	23	21	37
Somewhat agree	18	17	24	25
Somewhat disagree	27	28	22	22
Strongly disagree	1	1	31	16
Don't know	1	1	1	—

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
11 There are a lot of reasons that students might do poorly in math and science. Out of these statements, please tell me which better explains why students may do poorly in math and science.				
There aren't enough really good math and science teachers	20	17	35	29
Students think these subjects are irrelevant to their lives	76	79	62	65
Neither	2	2	2	5
Don't know	2	1	1	2
12 Which better explains why students may do poorly in math and science?				
Many students lack the ability to do well in these subjects	54	51	68	62
Parents don't expect their kids to do well in these subjects	40	43	29	32
Don't know	5	6	3	6
13 Do you think that ability in math and science is:				
Something kids are mostly born with	13	12	13	21
Something kids can learn in school and develop with experience	85	85	85	77
Don't know	2	2	2	2
14 Which comes closer to your view?				
Most students don't need to study higher-level math like advanced algebra or calculus—all most really need in life is good basic math skills	34	34	29	42
It's crucial for most of today's students to learn higher-level math skills, like advanced algebra or calculus—they are the gateway to success in college and work	63	62	68	55
Don't know	3	3	3	3
15 Should all students be expected to take advanced science classes such as physics and advanced chemistry, or should that be expected only of the students who show special interest in science?				
Should be expected to take advanced classes such as physics and advanced chemistry	27	26	32	34
Should be expected only of students who show special interest in science	72	73	66	65
Don't know	1	1	2	1
16 If you had to choose, which student would you say is more likely to end up with a solid career that pays well?				
The student who is very strong in math and science but not in other areas	47	47	45	52
The student who is educationally well-rounded, but not very strong in math and science	50	51	53	46
Don't know	2	2	2	2
17 As far as you know, how important is it for high school students to learn algebra if they want to go to college?				
Absolutely essential	70	71	65	59
Important, but not essential	28	27	33	38
Not important	1	1	1	2
Don't know	1	1	*	1

18 Please tell me how would you rate your current MATH teacher when it comes to:

Knowing a lot about the subject

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
Excellent	65	68	56	53
Good	23	22	24	34
Fair	8	7	12	10
Poor	3	2	8	3
Don't know	*	*	—	—

Giving students extra help when they fall behind

Excellent	51	53	43	45
Good	29	29	29	29
Fair	13	13	14	19
Poor	6	5	15	6
Don't know	*	1	—	*

Inspiring and motivating kids to do their best

Excellent	42	42	42	44
Good	34	36	30	32
Fair	16	16	15	13
Poor	7	6	13	10
Don't know	*	*	*	*

19 Please tell me how would you rate your current SCIENCE teacher when it comes to:

Knowing a lot about the subject

Excellent	62	65	50	54
Good	24	24	26	30
Fair	9	7	17	12
Poor	4	3	5	4
Don't know	1	1	1	*

Giving students extra help when they fall behind

Excellent	39	40	34	39
Good	35	36	31	37
Fair	18	17	22	18
Poor	7	6	12	5
Don't know	1	1	1	1

Inspiring and motivating kids to do their best

Excellent	41	43	36	46
Good	34	33	34	32
Fair	16	16	20	13
Poor	7	6	9	9
Don't know	1	1	1	1

20 How much does your current science teacher use experiments and hands-on learning in class?

A lot	45	47	34	39
Some	34	34	28	39
A little	17	15	28	18
Not at all	3	2	8	3
Don't know	1	1	2	1

20A If you knew the following, would that encourage you to take advanced math and science courses?

Most good colleges expect you to have advanced math and science courses on your high school transcripts

	Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
Yes, a lot	80	82	78	72
Yes, a little	15	14	18	21
No	4	3	4	6
Don't know	1	1	*	—

Advanced math and science skills will open up good job and career opportunities for you

Yes, a lot	79	79	81	75
Yes, a little	16	16	15	21
No	4	4	4	4
Don't know	1	1	—	—

More college scholarships are available to students with advanced math and science skills

Yes, a lot	75	77	76	69
Yes, a little	18	16	19	23
No	6	5	5	8
Don't know	1	2	—	*

You must pass rigorous tests in math and science to graduate from high school

Yes, a lot	72	72	78	71
Yes, a little	19	19	17	21
No	7	8	4	8
Don't know	1	1	1	*

Our nation is falling behind other countries economically because we're not producing people with strong math, science and technology skills

Yes, a lot	57	58	60	57
Yes, a little	26	25	26	29
No	16	16	14	14
Don't know	1	1	1	*

Performing poorly in math and science will cause you to be left back a grade

Yes, a lot	74	72	82	70
Yes, a little	17	18	11	22
No	8	8	6	7
Don't know	1	1	*	1

Performing poorly in math and science will mean you will have to go to summer school

Yes, a lot	66	66	66	65
Yes, a little	20	19	23	20
No	13	13	10	15
Don't know	1	1	1	*

Performing poorly in math and science will mean you cannot participate in sports or other extracurricular activities

Yes, a lot	64	64	64	62
Yes, a little	21	20	25	25
No	14	15	11	14
Don't know	1	1	—	—

20A (continued) **If you knew the following, would that encourage you to take advanced math and science courses?**

You will have to show your high school transcript in order to get a job

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- No
- Don't know

Total (%)	White (%)	African-American (%)	Hispanic (%)
76	75	78	73
17	17	17	20
6	6	5	6
1	1	1	—

21 **What was your overall grade average last year?**

- A
- B
- C
- Less than a C
- Don't know

53	57	30	49
33	31	45	35
10	9	21	11
2	1	3	3
2	2	2	2

24 **Which of the following best describes you and your family?**

- You live with both your parents
- You live with one of your parents
- You live with someone other than your parents
- Don't know

80	86	45	77
17	12	46	21
2	1	8	2
*	*	1	—

Characteristics of the sample

	Total (%)
Gender	
Male	52
Female	48
Grade	
Sixth grade	14
Seventh grade	14
Eighth grade	14
Ninth grade	14
Tenth grade	14
Eleventh grade	14
Twelfth grade	14
School type	
Not applicable	2
Middle	75
High school	23
Don't know	*