

Education NEWS & NOTES

Are Students Making The Grade? A Difference Of Opinion

(NAPS)—Is the generation gap getting wider, or are students today not realistic about their goals?

According to a survey from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, America's young people are optimistic about their futures—a view not universally shared by their teachers and parents.

The survey results show that six out of ten students are very confident that they will achieve their life goals. In comparison, half of the parents and only 19 percent of teachers surveyed think today's students will reach their goals.

"Our schools are a national resource. Every day teachers hold the future of this country in their classrooms. We depend on them in ways we often take for granted. They educate our children, prepare our workforce and build tomorrow's citizens," said Robert H. Benmosche, MetLife Chairman and CEO. "Every year MetLife conducts its Survey of the American Teacher to bring the teacher's voice, and others close to the classroom, to the attention of policymakers and the public. To meet the challenges that face our schools, we must listen to each other and work together."

Students hold high expectations for themselves in terms of their education, career and personal life. Seventy-one percent of high school students say they plan to attend a four-year college; but only 52 percent of their parents and 32 percent of teachers believe that will happen.

Half of the teachers report that some of their students, who have the aptitude to go to college, might not go because of high costs.

Students place the entertainment industry, high-tech, education and health care as their top choices for future careers. Teachers felt that the areas of work that

held the most potential for their students were high tech, health care, education, retail, construction, restaurants and hotels and manufacturing.

Half of secondary school parents, 39 percent of students and 27 percent of teachers feel that what they think, "doesn't count very much at school."



Are schools making the grade? Schools get higher marks for preparing students in basic skills such as English, math and science than in general life skills such as getting along with others and being good citizens.

Far too many students, teachers and parents feel alienated from their schools. Half of secondary school parents, 39 percent of students and 27 percent of teachers feel that what they think, "doesn't count very much at school." Parents' feelings of alienation from school increase significantly from the elementary to the secondary grades.

Are We Preparing Students for the 21st Century is the 16th in a series of teacher surveys sponsored annually by MetLife. The surveys are designed to bring the voices of those most affected by education reforms and most familiar with classroom realities to the attention of policymakers and the American public.

Survey topics change over the years, but the premise remains the same: to give voice to those closest to the classroom.

Copies of the survey and more information can be downloaded at the Web site www.metlife.com.