Giving a Voice to America's Youth
THE GALLUP STUDENT POLL

In the national dialogue about dropout prevention and college readiness, one crucial voice is missing — the voice of American youth.

To ensure this critical population is heard, Gallup has partnered with America’s Promise Alliance and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) to create the Gallup Student Poll (GSP) — a free, online survey that tracks the hope, engagement, and wellbeing of students in grades 5 through 12 across the United States annually.

The GSP is composed of 20 core items measuring hope, engagement, and wellbeing. These items ask what students do, how they think, and how they feel about their lives at home, in school, and in their communities. Students also answer demographic questions and may answer a short, randomly assigned index with a few additional items.

The GSP gives students a forum to express how they feel about the opportunities and challenges in their daily lives. The results supply teachers, administrators, and community leaders with an accurate, useful, and holistic picture of their students’ levels of hope, engagement, and wellbeing. The GSP equips these key decision makers with the knowledge they need to consistently and effectively shape student achievement by affecting the way students feel about their current lives and their futures.

Cities and school districts across the United States are partnering with Gallup and America’s Promise Alliance to facilitate new family, school, and community conversations and solutions toward ensuring student success.
The conversation about the future of American youth starts with a shared understanding of what is right with our students, rather than what is wrong. Gallup employs a unique approach to understanding and improving student wellbeing by focusing on the importance of sound, actionable metrics and continuous monitoring.

Through a review of social science and educational research, Gallup researchers chose three variables as the targets of the GSP. These three variables — hope, engagement, and wellbeing — are proven indicators of success, with links to:

- Grades
- Achievement scores
- Retention
- Future employment

HOPE, ENGAGEMENT, and WELLBEING are defined as:

- **Hope** — Students’ ideas and energy for the future.
- **Engagement** — Students’ involvement in and enthusiasm for school.
- **Wellbeing** — How students think about and experience their lives.
Gallup selected these three items because they met the following five criteria:

1. They can be reliably measured.
2. They have a meaningful relationship with or effect on educational outcomes.
3. They are malleable and can be enhanced through deliberate action.
4. They are not measured directly by another large-scale survey or testing program.
5. They are not associated with income status.

When used correctly, these actionable metrics provide the true understanding and guidance necessary to overcome today’s challenges in the educational environment.

Fundamental findings from Gallup’s research on hope, engagement, and wellbeing prove:

**Hope**
Hope drives school attendance, credits earned, and GPA of high school students. Hope scores are also more robust predictors of college success than high school GPA, SAT, and ACT scores.

**Engagement**
Engagement distinguishes high-performing and low-performing schools.

**Wellbeing**
Wellbeing tells school and community leaders how their students are doing today and predicts their success in the future.
THE BENEFITS

The GSP gives American students a voice in the national discussion about education. By providing schools and communities with meaningful data about their students, GSP can empower communities to expand discussions about solutions to the dropout crisis. GSP allows schools to:

- **Receive real-time results** — Schools will receive a simple, online scorecard within three weeks after the polls close, which reports the level of the hope, engagement, and wellbeing of the students surveyed.

- **Anticipate problems before they happen** — The GSP results predict how students will perform in the future. Its outcomes can help identify effective interventions for struggling students.

- **Improve outcomes for youth** — Be on the cutting edge of student polling. The poll provides key insights for schools and communities and relevant measurements that can lead to increased graduation rates, better teacher effectiveness, and higher student aspirations for college and careers.

- **Implement community-based solutions** — The scorecard can be a “wake-up call” for how everyone in a community can participate inside and outside the classroom to improve outcomes for local youth.

The GSP makes possible new conversations and tailored solutions for bold, lasting reforms to ensure the success of students, schools, and communities.

FALL 2010 POLLING DATES

Schools may select one of the two-week polling periods below:

EASY TO PARTICIPATE

Free and Confidential — The GSP is free to all public schools in the United States, and results are confidential.

Available Online — Schools are responsible for scheduling students in grades 5 through 12 to take the survey during school hours on Internet-accessible computers during the annual polling period each fall. The survey is accessible through the users’ secure account that a designated project leader in each district and/or school creates.

Quick and Easy to Complete — Gallup has designed the language the items use to be age- and reading-level appropriate for students in grades 5 through 12. Completion of the survey items, demographics, and one randomly assigned index with additional items will take the average student less than 10 minutes to complete. The survey is available in English and Spanish.

Fast Results — Gallup shares the results with superintendents and principals via an online scorecard within days after the survey period ends. Results are available at the school and district levels.

Ongoing Support — Gallup is committed to providing school and community leaders with the tools and ideas to build an action plan for the results they receive.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

To sign up for the next administration of the Gallup Student Poll or to learn more, please visit

www.gallupstudentpoll.com
or e-mail
studentpoll@gallup.com
THE 20 CORE ITEMS

The following core items make up the GSP.

1. Please imagine a ladder with steps numbered from 0 at the bottom to 10 at the top. The top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you, and the bottom of the ladder represents the worst possible life for you. On which step of the ladder would you say you personally feel you stand at this time?
   On which step do you think you will stand about five years from now?*

2. I know I will graduate from high school.

3. There is an adult in my life who cares about my future.

4. I can think of many ways to get good grades.

5. I energetically pursue my goals.

6. I can find lots of ways around any problem.

7. I know I will find a good job after I graduate.

8. I have a best friend at school.

9. I feel safe in this school.

10. My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.

11. At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

12. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.

13. My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.*

14. In the last month, I volunteered my time to help others.

Please think about yesterday, from the morning until the end of the day. Think about where you were, what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt as you respond to the next six items.

15. Were you treated with respect all day yesterday?

16. Did you smile or laugh a lot yesterday?

17. Did you learn or do something interesting yesterday?

18. Did you have enough energy to get things done yesterday?

19. Do you have health problems that keep you from doing things other people your age can do?

20. If you are in trouble, do you have family or friends you can count on whenever you need them?

*Based on the Cantril Self-Anchoring Striving Scale.
CREATING CUSTOM COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

The involvement of the broader community can greatly increase the chances of success for any youth initiative. With the addition of significant technology enhancements, the GSP is now equipped to offer customized solutions to communities, as well as schools, through an enhanced platform — the GSPi.

Gallup’s precise measurement and analysis enable community leaders to develop powerful new strategies to address critical issues. Through the GSPi platform, Gallup can provide community leaders with information that they can compare and trend via:

- **Community and school tracking** — Continuous monitoring of youth attitudes and behaviors
- **Custom studies, reports, and dissemination** — Delving deep into specific topics of interest
- **Custom indexes** — Measuring the metrics that matter most to community leaders
- **On-site analysts** — Customized analysis and recommendations

The GSPi offers community leaders a suite of options that will allow them to develop comprehensive action plans and create solutions for individual students. These customized options will allow community leaders to:

- Administer the poll outside of the school setting in other community-based organizations with Internet access
- Create an annually updated database on all youth, not just those currently attending public schools (e.g., students who have dropped out or are enrolled in alternative programs or in private and parochial schools)
- Explore options for tapping perceptions of older youth (aged 18 to 24)
- Provide individual feedback and track individual progress over time through the use of student identifiers
- Integrate with other individual student data such as GPA, attendance, and SAT scores
- Measure the effectiveness of newly implemented programs
ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS

In addition to the standard GSP and the custom options available through the GSPi, Gallup can help schools and communities with the following.

**Strengths-Based Education**
Implementing strengths-based education (www.strengths.org) can enhance hope. In addition, a school’s ongoing commitment to develop the strengths of each student can increase student engagement. Putting strengths-based education into action begins with educators discovering what they do best and developing and applying their own strengths while they help students identify and apply their strengths in the learning process so that they can reach previously unattained levels of personal excellence.

**Selection Systems for School Effectiveness**
Schools that select for talent have more effective principals, teachers, and support staff. Highly engaged educators increase student engagement and achievement. Gallup selection instruments are predictive, Web-based and cost efficient.

**Community Wellbeing Audits**
Historically, community audits have focused on aspects of ill-being such as premature births and murder rates. Now, through the collaboration between Gallup, Healthways, and America’s Health Insurance Plans, there is representative wellbeing data for Americans, aged 18 and older, living in each of the 435 congressional districts (see http://www.ahphiwire.org/wellbeing/). Given the coverage of all communities and the breadth of wellbeing indexes measured (Life Evaluation, Emotional Health, Physical Health, Healthy Behavior, Work Environment, and Basic Access), community leaders can begin discussions of what is working for adults and how that could affect the wellbeing of young people.
Gallup, America’s Promise Alliance, and AASA are collaborating to offer the GSP free of charge to public schools and school districts across the United States for 10 years.

America’s Promise Alliance is a cross-sector partnership of more than 300 corporations, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and advocacy groups that are passionate about improving lives and changing outcomes for children. America’s Promise Alliance is committed to ending the dropout crisis in the United States. For more information on America’s Promise Alliance, visit www.americaspromise.org.

The AASA is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. The mission of the AASA is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. For more information on AASA, visit www.aasa.org.

Gallup partners with Ready by 21 to develop an enhanced version of the GSP — GSPi — with the features that school and community leaders need to develop custom solutions to influence positive youth development.

The Ready by 21 Challenge is a call to leaders to use bigger goals, bolder strategies, and broader partnerships to improve programs for children and young people. It’s not a new task for leaders; instead, Ready by 21 gives leaders the tools and supports to make the most of what they’re already doing — offering powerful solutions for passionate leaders.

Ready by 21’s national partners include the Forum for Youth Investment, United Way of America, AASA, America’s Promise Alliance, Corporate Voices for Working Families, National Collaboration for Youth, National Conference of State Legislatures, and Search Institute.

To learn more, visit www.readyby21.org.
Gallup and Operation HOPE have partnered to create the Gallup-HOPE Youth Financial Literacy Index. The Gallup-HOPE Financial Literacy Index will assess youth on their financial responsibilities and opportunities to evaluate their financial literacy and analyze how that relationship factors into their hope and wellbeing. The index will provide policy-makers and community-based organizations with a tangible way to measure youth financial literacy and its effect on their communities and local economies.

Operation HOPE, America’s first nonprofit social investment banking organization, works to develop programs focused on connecting the minority community with mainstream, private sector resources, and empowering under-served communities through a series of public/private partnerships and strategic alliances.

To learn more, visit www.operationhope.org.

Gallup and Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), with the support of the Bob Woodruff Foundation, partner to better understand the needs of military children. Through this partnership, Gallup analyzes and reports findings about the hope, engagement, and wellbeing of the children of military families.

Military families face unique challenges associated with their service to America. Children of military families benefit from the understanding and advocacy of support agencies, such as MCEC, whose mission it is to ensure quality educational experiences for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.

To learn more, visit www.militarychild.org.
For more information about the Gallup Student Poll, please visit www.gallupstudentpoll.com or e-mail studentpoll@gallup.com.

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