

## New Surveys Show Need for New Conversation to Transform K-12 Education

**June 29, 2019, Colorado Springs, CO** – Accompanying the launch of **yes. every kid.**, **yes. every kid.** released the results of two nationwide surveys – conducted on its behalf by YouGov – showing both the American public and K-12 educators support transforming the K-12 education system from a standardized system focused on universal testing to one where students discover their unique talents, aptitudes, and passions. The surveys were conducted this month and included responses from more than 1,200 U.S. adults and 800 U.S. educators.

“The national debate about our schools has been stuck in neutral, and our survey results show opinions of K-12 education have declined as a result,” said Meredith Olson, board chair of **yes. every kid.** “Educators are as frustrated as the public, if not more so, and even though the policy debate often pits these two groups against one another, we found significant agreement about the purpose of education and how to best achieve its goal. There clearly is an opportunity to stand together to advance a new conversation about bold new visions to transform K-12 education and help every child recognize and unleash their potential.”

“Our studies with YouGov show Americans and educators generally agree it is time to rethink the purpose of education, how schools are set up, and how much influence policymakers have over school curriculum,” said Olson. “The general public and educators really believe it is time to wrest control from state and federal bureaucrats and empower the individuals closest to the children to determine where the money goes and what students are learning.”

When given two options and asked what schools should focus on, an overwhelming majority of both adults (73 percent) and educators (86 percent) said the goal of K-12 education should be to expose students to a broad range of subjects so they could find their own passion and educational path, rather than prepare students specifically to do well in college. Additionally, 55 percent of adults and 69 percent of educators said the proper role of a teacher is to help students discover and excel at the subjects that matter the most to them, as opposed to ensuring that students excel on an educational path that is laid out for them.

Both audiences also embraced the idea that individual schools and teachers should determine what is taught inside a classroom. When asked who should be most responsible for determining curriculum, a plurality of adults (43 percent) and nearly three-quarters of educators (73 percent) said local teachers and administrators. A plurality of adults (39 percent) and 56 percent of educators also said administrators should have more flexibility over the structure of and budget for their own schools.

“This preference for giving more flexibility also manifested itself in responses to queries about standardized testing,” explained Olsen of **yes. every kid.** “While Americans are unsure how much time school children spend preparing for and taking mandated testing, educators are adamant they spend too much time teaching to the test.”

Instead of taking standardized tests, 44 percent of adults, a plurality, and 63 percent of educators said students’ proficiency in a subject should be determined by examining project work throughout the year. Only 37 percent of adults and 29 percent of educators said students should show proficiency by taking the same set of standardized tests and being ranked in relation to their peers. Fifty-seven percent of adults and 74 percent of educators said it was more important that, at graduation, a student had discovered what they’re good at than had showed they have learned the subject matter by passing tests (27 percent of adults, 21 percent of educators).

The results also showed strong support for the ability of families to decide where individual children should attend school, and the majority of adults and educators said this choice should not be limited by factors like income, race, special needs, or other factors. Specifically, 57 percent of adults and 60 percent of educators said that if choice were an option, all families should get to decide where their child goes to school.

#### **ABOUT yes. every kid.**

**yes. every kid.** supports education policies that respect the dignity of every student by pursuing a diversity of approaches that ensure every kid can reach their full potential. By working with anyone to do good, **yes. every kid.** builds coalitions and drives a fresh conversation that engages families, educators, and communities to ensure every kid can rise.

#### **ABOUT YouGov**

YouGov is a global public opinion and data company that collects opinions from around the world about brands, politics and current affairs. The online poll of 1,209 U.S. Adults (aged 18+) was conducted June 20-21, 2019. The online poll of 800 U.S. educators (aged 18+) was conducted June 19-25, 2019. Figures have been weighted and are representative of all U.S. adults and all U.S. teachers, respectively.

**yes. every kid.** National Surveys

N=1,209 Adults (**ADLTs**) // June 20-21, 2019

N=800 K-12 Educators (**EDCTRs**) // June 19-25, 2019

---

- *All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc and were collected on behalf of **yes. every kid**. Total sample sizes were 1,209 U.S. Adults (fieldwork undertaken June 20-21, 2019) and 800 U.S. K-12 Educators (fieldwork undertaken June 19-25, 2019). The surveys were carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all U.S. Adults (aged 18+) and all U.S. K-12 Educators (aged 18+), respectively.*
  - *A dash (--) represents no response.*
  - *Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.*
- 

1. Over the last five years, have the country's K-12 schools gotten better, stayed the same, or gotten worse?

| <u>ADLTs</u> | <u>EDCTRs</u> |                     |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| <b>14%</b>   | <b>24%</b>    | <b>TOTAL BETTER</b> |
| <b>45%</b>   | <b>48%</b>    | <b>TOTAL WORSE</b>  |
| 4%           | 4%            | Much better         |
| 10%          | 21%           | Somewhat better     |
| 18%          | 26%           | Stayed the same     |
| 26%          | 38%           | Somewhat worse      |
| 19%          | 9%            | Much worse          |
| 23%          | 1%            | Don't know          |

2. If you had to choose, do you think your local school system should focus more on preparing students specifically to do well in college or exposing students to a variety of subjects so they can find their own passion and educational path?

| <u>ADLTs</u> | <u>EDCTRs</u> |                                                                                                  |
|--------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14%          | 13%           | Preparing students specifically to do well in college                                            |
| 73%          | 86%           | Expose students to a variety of subjects so they can find their own passion and educational path |
| 13%          | 1%            | Don't know                                                                                       |

3. In general, do you think local school administrators should have more or less flexibility to structure their schools in the way they think is best?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                              |
|-----|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 39% | 56% | School administrators should have more flexibility                           |
| 28% | 34% | On average, school administrators should have the same amount of flexibility |
| 11% | 7%  | School administrators should have less flexibility                           |
| 22% | 4%  | Don't know                                                                   |

4. If you had to choose, which of the following do you think BEST fits as a description of the proper role of a teacher in a K-12 classroom?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                                   |
|-----|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 55% | 69% | Help the students discover and excel at the subjects that matter the most to them |
| 30% | 27% | Ensure that their students excel on an education path that is laid out for them   |
| 15% | 3%  | Don't know                                                                        |

5. Who among the following do you think should be most responsible for deciding what curriculum is taught in K-12 classrooms?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                          |
|-----|-----|------------------------------------------|
| 43% | 73% | Local teachers and school administrators |
| 16% | 5%  | Parents                                  |
| 9%  | 5%  | Federal policy makers                    |
| 8%  | 10% | State policy makers                      |
| 5%  | 2%  | Students                                 |
| 3%  | 4%  | Other (please specify)                   |
| 16% | 1%  | Don't know                               |

6. **(ASKED OF ADULTS)** In general, throughout the school year in your state, how many weeks do you estimate that students spend preparing for district and state mandated tests? // **(ASKED OF EDUCATORS)** In general, throughout the year, how many weeks do you estimate that you spend preparing students for district and state mandated tests.

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                    |
|-----|-----|--------------------|
| 7%  | 10% | Less than one week |
| 15% | 15% | 1 to 2 weeks       |
| 21% | 28% | 2 weeks to a month |
| 24% | 47% | More than 1 month  |
| 33% | --  | Don't know         |

7. **(ASKED OF ADULTS)** And, on average, throughout the school year in your state, how many weeks do you estimate that students spend taking district and state mandated tests? // **(ASKED OF EDUCATORS)** In your school system, on average throughout the year, how many weeks do you estimate that students spend taking district and state mandated tests?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                    |
|-----|-----|--------------------|
| 14% | 8%  | Less than one week |
| 27% | 34% | 1-2 weeks          |
| 19% | 41% | 2 weeks to a month |
| 8%  | 16% | More than 1 month  |
| 32% | --  | Don't know         |

8. And, in general, do you believe your K-12 school system spends too much, the right amount, or too little time preparing for and taking district and state mandated tests?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                      |
|-----|-----|----------------------|
| 30% | 62% | Too much time        |
| 20% | 26% | Right amount of time |
| 14% | 8%  | Too little time      |
| 36% | 4%  | Don't know           |

9. Which of the following comes closest to your view?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                                                               |
|-----|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 44% | 63% | Each student should show their proficiency by examining their project work throughout the year                |
| 37% | 29% | All students should take the same set of standardized tests to see where they rank in relation to their peers |
| 19% | 8%  | Don't know                                                                                                    |

10. Upon graduation from high school, do you think it's more important for a child to have passed a test showing that they have mastered specific subject matter or to have discovered their talents and interests and to pursue that path forward?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                    |
|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 57% | 74% | Discovered what they're good at and to pursue that path forward    |
| 27% | 21% | Show they've learned the subject matter by passing different tests |
| 16% | 4%  | Don't know                                                         |

11. Which THREE of the following do you think are the MOST important things for schools to focus on?  
Please select up to three only.

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                         |
|-----|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 63% | 67% | Life skills (e.g. budgeting, computer skills, minor home repairs, etc.) |
| 51% | 58% | Exposing students to a variety of subjects                              |
| 40% | 44% | Academic achievement                                                    |
| 34% | 51% | Social-emotional learning and development                               |
| 28% | 38% | Character development                                                   |
| 15% | 11% | Parental involvement                                                    |
| 12% | 11% | Physical safety                                                         |
| 8%  | 8%  | Fine arts                                                               |
| 6%  | 3%  | Athletics                                                               |
| 2%  | 1%  | Other (please specify)                                                  |
| 7%  | 1%  | Don't know ( <b>EXCLUSIVE</b> )                                         |

12. When it comes to allocating tax dollars to K-12 schools and programs for a child, who among the following do you think should be most responsible for making the decisions about which schools and programs receive those dollars?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                   |
|-----|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 31% | 60% | Local teachers and administrators |
| 19% | 19% | State policy makers               |
| 16% | 8%  | Families                          |
| 9%  | 5%  | Federal policy makers             |
| 3%  | 2%  | Students                          |
| 3%  | 3%  | Other (please specify)            |
| 19% | 4%  | Don't know                        |

13. Right now, most taxpayer money spent on public K-12 schools is based on a family's home address. There is a debate about whether that is the best system. If you had to choose, which of the following BEST reflects your view on how taxpayer money should be spent?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 44% | 44% | Taxpayer money for K-12 education should be equally distributed directly to the students and their families and they should be able to select whatever educational setting best works for them, regardless of their home address. Educators and families should do everything possible to ensure a quality education at those schools. |
| 31% | 49% | Funding should be automatically allocated to local public schools based on a family's home address. Government should do everything possible to ensure a quality education at those schools.                                                                                                                                           |
| 25% | 7%  | Don't know                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

**14.** Right now, most children go to public K-12 school based solely on their home address. There is debate about whether that is the best system. If it was an option, what type of families do you think should be able to select where their children go to school? Please select all that apply.

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                                                                      |
|-----|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 57% | 60% | All families <b>(EXCLUSIVE)</b>                                                      |
| 7%  | 9%  | Families with special needs children                                                 |
| 6%  | 5%  | Low-income families                                                                  |
| 5%  | 3%  | Middle-income families                                                               |
| 5%  | 2%  | High-income families                                                                 |
| 4%  | 2%  | Families with a racial minority student                                              |
| 4%  | 2%  | Families with children with low test scores                                          |
| 3%  | 2%  | Families with children with high test scores                                         |
| 11% | 21% | Kids should go to school based solely on their place of residence <b>(EXCLUSIVE)</b> |
| 14% | 6%  | Don't know <b>(EXCLUSIVE)</b>                                                        |

**(ASKED OF N=660 ADULTS WHO ARE PARENTS OF CHILDREN OF ANY AGE, N=800 EDUCATORS)**

**15.** Are you a parent or guardian of a child or children currently enrolled in any grade from pre-kindergarten through high school?

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |            |
|-----|-----|------------|
| 36% | 39% | Yes        |
| 62% | 61% | No         |
| 2%  | --  | Don't know |

**(IF Q15:A, ASKED) (ASKED OF N=245 ADULTS WITH CHILDREN ENROLLED IN K-12, N=320 EDUCATORS WITH CHILDREN ENROLLED IN K-12)**

**16.** What type of school does your child or children attend? If you have children in different types of schools, please select all that apply.

**ADLTs   EDCTRs**

|     |     |                                 |
|-----|-----|---------------------------------|
| 74% | 74% | Traditional public school       |
| 11% | 3%  | Home school                     |
| 8%  | 13% | Private school                  |
| 7%  | 5%  | Charter school                  |
| 7%  | 3%  | Online education program/school |
| 5%  | 6%  | Parochial or religious school   |
| 5%  | 2%  | Micro-school                    |
| 1%  | 1%  | Other (please specify)          |
| 1%  | --  | Don't know <b>(EXCLUSIVE)</b>   |

**(IF Q15:A, ASKED) (ASKED OF N=245 ADULTS WITH CHILDREN ENROLLED IN K-12, N=320 EDUCATORS WITH CHILDREN ENROLLED IN K-12)**

**17.** If it were your decision and you could select any type of school for your child or children, regardless of money or location, what type of school would you select for them to obtain the best education? If you have more than one child and would choose differently for them, please select all that apply.

| <u>ADLTs</u> | <u>EDCTRs</u> |                                 |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 42%          | 57%           | Traditional public school       |
| 32%          | 24%           | Private school                  |
| 14%          | 7%            | Home school                     |
| 13%          | 6%            | Online education program/school |
| 12%          | 12%           | Charter school                  |
| 12%          | 10%           | Parochial or religious school   |
| 4%           | 5%            | Micro-school                    |
| 2%           | 1%            | Other (please specify)          |
| 4%           | 1%            | Don't know ( <b>EXCLUSIVE</b> ) |

*For additional information on the educator universe, please see the following questions, which were asked of this audience at the beginning of the survey.*

**X1.** What type of school or university do you work for?

|     |                                                                                                            |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 50% | Public elementary school                                                                                   |
| 38% | Public secondary school (includes middle-school or junior high)                                            |
| --  | Public university ( <b>THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED</b> )                                                      |
| 5%  | Private elementary school                                                                                  |
| 7%  | Private secondary school (includes middle-school or junior high)                                           |
| --  | Private university ( <b>THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED</b> )                                                     |
| --  | Early education (includes pre-school, pre-kindergarten, or day care) ( <b>THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED</b> )   |
| --  | Other ( <b>THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED</b> )                                                                  |
| --  | Not applicable – I am not currently employed by a school or university ( <b>THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED</b> ) |
| --  | Not applicable – I am currently not employed ( <b>THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED</b> )                           |

**X2.** Which grade levels are you teaching or are responsible for this school year? Please select all that apply.

- 24% Kindergarten
- 21% First grade
- 22% Second grade
- 19% Third grade
- 20% Fourth grade
- 19% Fifth grade
- 18% Sixth grade
- 17% Seventh grade
- 18% Eighth grade
- 21% Ninth grade
- 22% Tenth grade
- 23% Eleventh grade
- 22% Twelfth grade
- I am not/am no longer a K-12 educator **(THANKED AND SURVEY ENDED)**