

Table 2.6

Attitudes toward the biggest problems facing public schools

By school status, United States, 1993-96^a

Question: "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools of this community must deal?"

	National				No children in school				Public school parents				Non-public school parents			
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1993	1994	1995	1996	1993	1994	1995	1996	1993	1994	1995	1996
Use/abuse of drugs	16%	11%	7%	16%	17%	11%	7%	17%	14%	13%	7%	14%	9%	7%	8%	12%
Lack of discipline	15	18	15	15	15	18	17	16	15	17	11	12	19	22	18	18
Lack of proper financial support	21	13	11	13	19	12	10	14	24	16	12	13	13	9	3	7
Difficulty in getting good teachers	5	3	2	3	4	4	2	3	7	2	3	3	3	2	(b)	3
Standards/quality of education	9	8	4	NA	9	8	4	NA	8	5	4	NA	18	11	4	NA
Overcrowded/large schools	8	7	3	8	6	5	3	6	11	11	5	11	10	10	3	15
Parents' lack of support/interest	4	3	2	NA	5	4	2	NA	4	2	2	NA	3	3	3	NA
Pupils' lack of interest/truancy, poor attitudes	4	3	2	5	3	3	2	5	4	3	1	6	4	5	2	4
Integration/segregation/racial discrimination	4	3	2	2	4	3	2	2	4	2	2	3	4	2	(b)	2
Fighting/violence/gangs	13	18	9	14	12	19	9	14	14	16	8	15	17	17	8	17
Lack of family structure/problems of home life ^c	NA	5	3	4	NA	5	3	5	NA	3	1	1	NA	4	5	1
Crime/vandalism	NA	4	2	3	NA	5	2	3	NA	4	2	1	NA	3	2	3
Lack of respect for self/others ^d	NA	3	3	2	NA	2	3	2	NA	3	4	1	NA	1	6	2
There are no problems ^e	NA	1	3	3	NA	1	2	2	NA	2	6	7	NA	2	2	3

Note: Some problems mentioned by a small percentage of respondents have been omitted. For a discussion of public opinion survey sampling procedures, see Appendix 6.

^aTotals add to more than 100% because of multiple responses.

^bLess than 0.5%.

^c"Problems of home life" added in 1994.

^d"For self/others" added in 1996.

^eReworded to "no problems" in 1996.

Source: Stanley M. Elam, Lowell C. Rose, and Alec M. Gallup, "The 25th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (October 1993), p. 139; "The 26th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1994), p. 43; Stanley M. Elam and Lowell C. Rose, "The 27th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1995), pp. 52, 53; and Stanley M. Elam, Lowell C. Rose, and Alec M. Gallup, "The 28th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 1996), p. 49. Table adapted by SOURCEBOOK staff. Reprinted by permission.