

The PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

Each year, the PDK/Gallup poll allows educators and policy makers to track public opinion about one of this nation's most important institutions: its public schools.

What did Americans say in 2014 about the most pressing issues in education — and did Democrats and Republicans agree?

Scroll down to see results

Try it again, Uncle Sam

The 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools

Americans aren't convinced that the Common Core and federal involvement will improve education. Is it time to go back to the drawing board for school reform?

By **William J. Bushaw** and **Valerie J. Calderon**

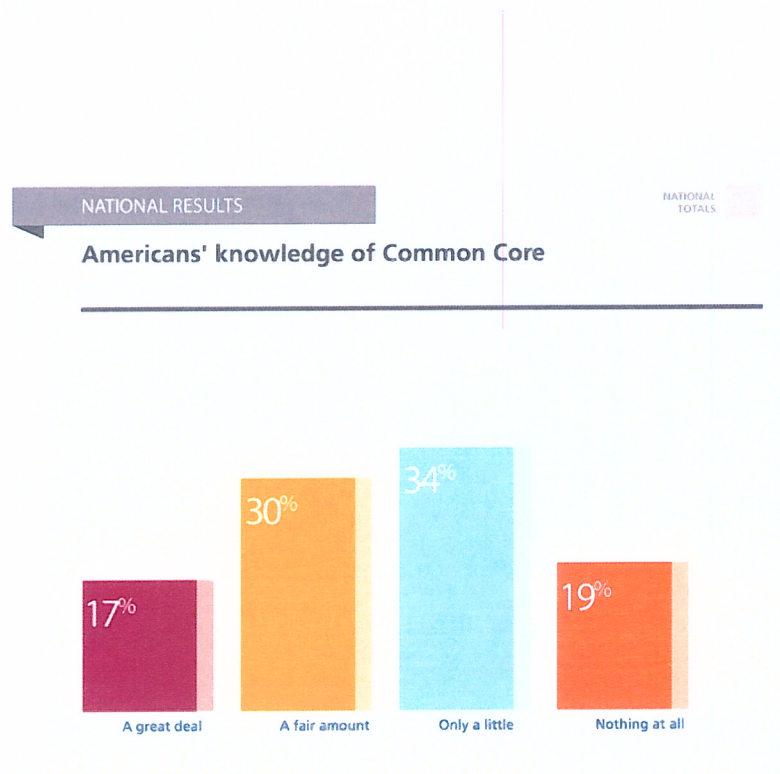
Deep in this nation's DNA is an abiding belief in personal liberty and freedom, and, for much of our history, these values often have conflicted with national and state policies. In public education, this conflict plays out under the guise of local control, that is, who should be most responsible for the quality of public education? Should it be the local school district, which is typically governed by a board of education; or state authorities, which usually include the governor, state legislature, and a state board of education; or is public education policy ultimately the responsibility of the President and Congress?

WILLIAM J. BUSHAW is chief executive officer of PDK International, Arlington, Va. **VALERIE J. CALDERON** is senior education research consultant at Gallup, Omaha, Neb.

Most Americans are familiar with Common Core

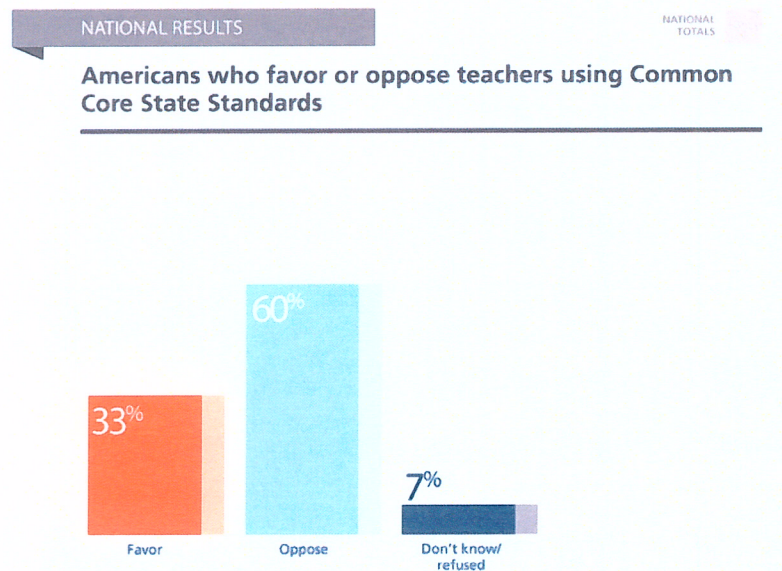
Q. How much, if anything, have you heard about the new national standards for teaching reading, writing, and math in grades K through 12, known as the Common Core State

Standards — a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or nothing at all?



Americans oppose local use of Common Core State Standards

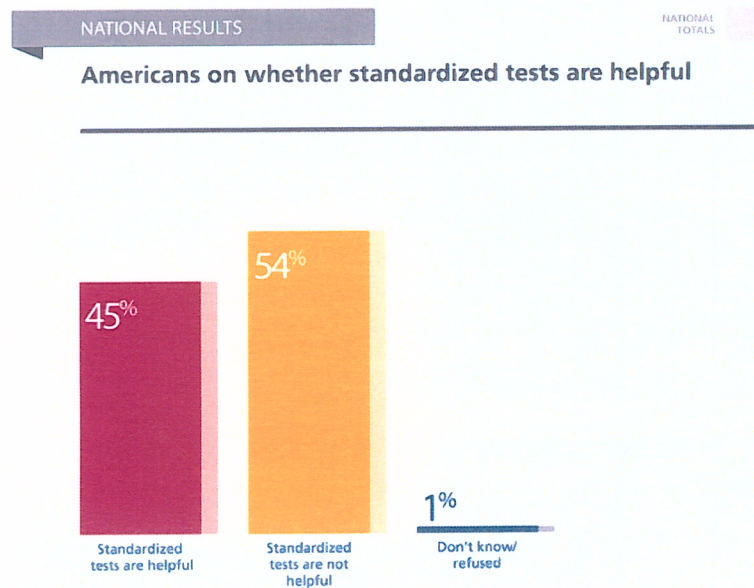
Q. Do you favor or oppose
having the teachers in
your community use the
Common Core State
Standards to guide what
they teach?



Americans say standardized tests not helpful

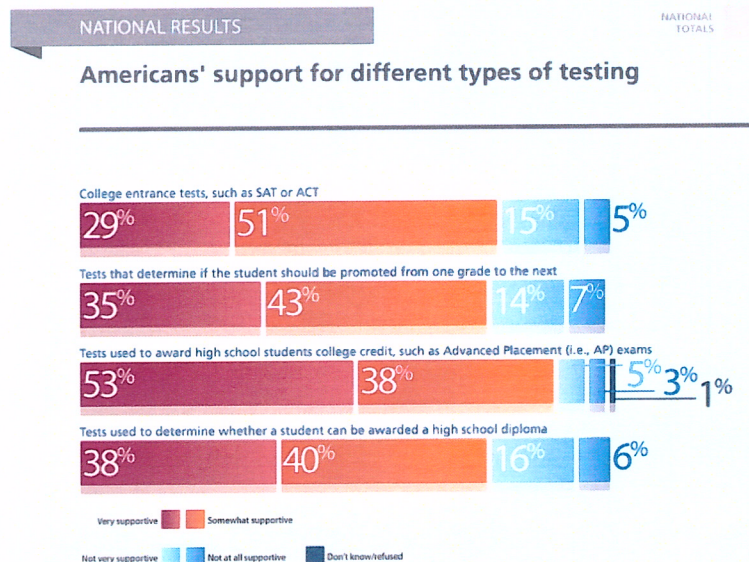
Q. Some teachers believe student standardized tests help them know more about their students' academic achievements. Other teachers believe that student standardized tests do not help them know what to teach.

What do you think? Are student standardized tests helpful, or are they not helpful to teachers?



Americans support some, not all testing

Q. How supportive are
you of the following
types of student tests?
Are you very supportive,
somewhat supportive,
not very supportive, or
not at all supportive?



Americans say international | comparisons matter

The results of a test known as the Program for International Student Assessment, or PISA, were released last December. The test measures the achievement of students living in 65 countries, including the United States.

Q. Using a five-point scale, where 5 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements about the PISA international test comparisons.

NATIONAL RESULTS

NATIONAL TOTALS

Americans on using international comparisons

International comparison tests such as PISA accurately measure student achievement scores across nations



Understanding how students are taught in other countries could help improve schools in my community



International test comparisons are critical to helping improve schools in this country



Strongly agree (1) (2) (3) (4) Strongly disagree (5) Don't know/refused

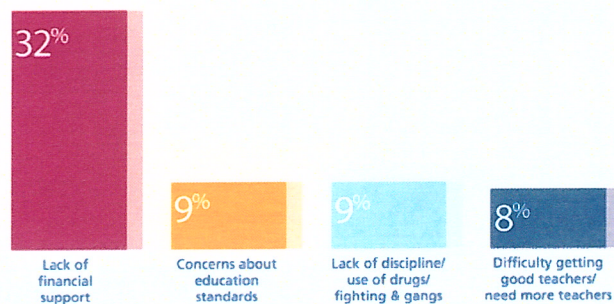
Americans say finance is biggest problem

Q. What do you think are
the biggest problems
that the public schools of
your community must
deal with?

NATIONAL RESULTS

NATIONAL
TOTALS

Americans on public schools' biggest problems



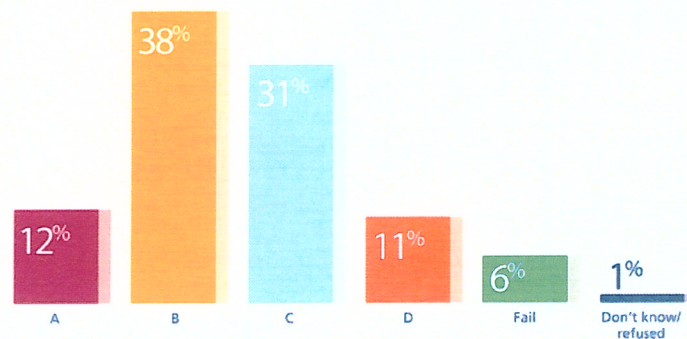
Americans give local schools good grades

Q. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves in your community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here — A, B, C, D, or Fail?

NATIONAL RESULTS

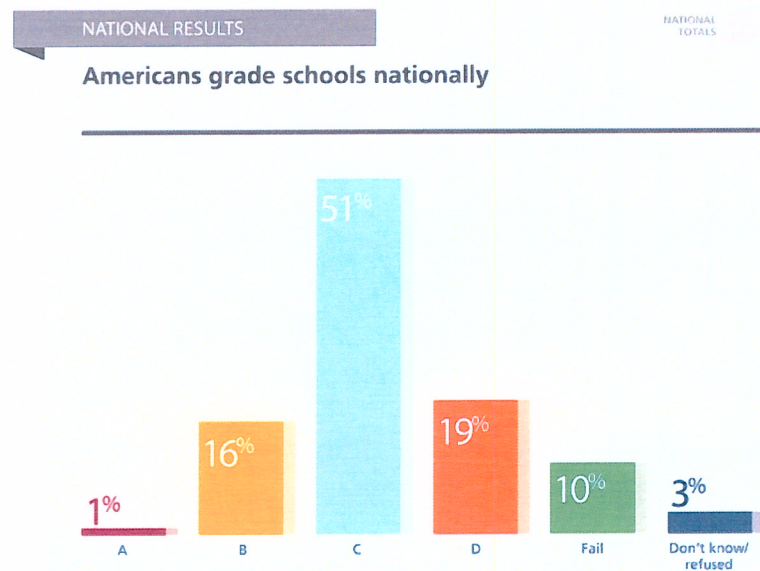
NATIONAL TOTALS

What grade would you give the public schools in your own community?



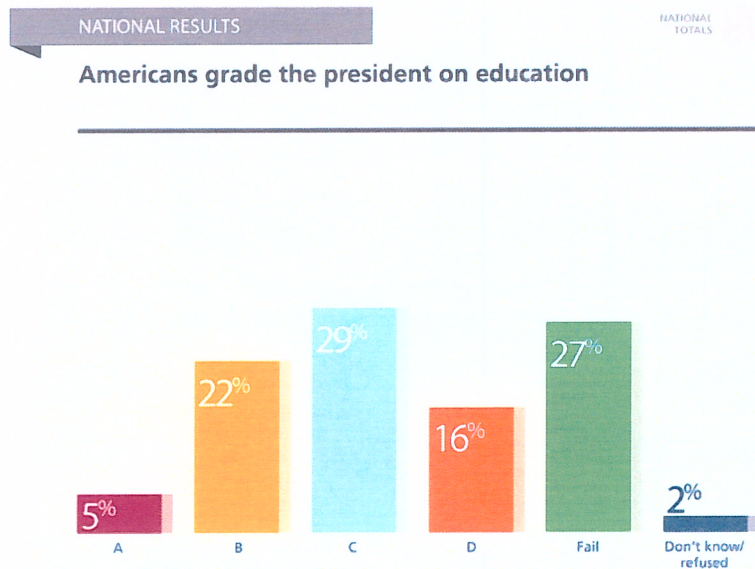
Half of Americans give schools nationally a grade of C

Q. How about the public
schools in the nation as a
whole? What grade
would you give the public
schools nationally — A,
B, C, D, or Fail?



Americans give Obama divided grades on education

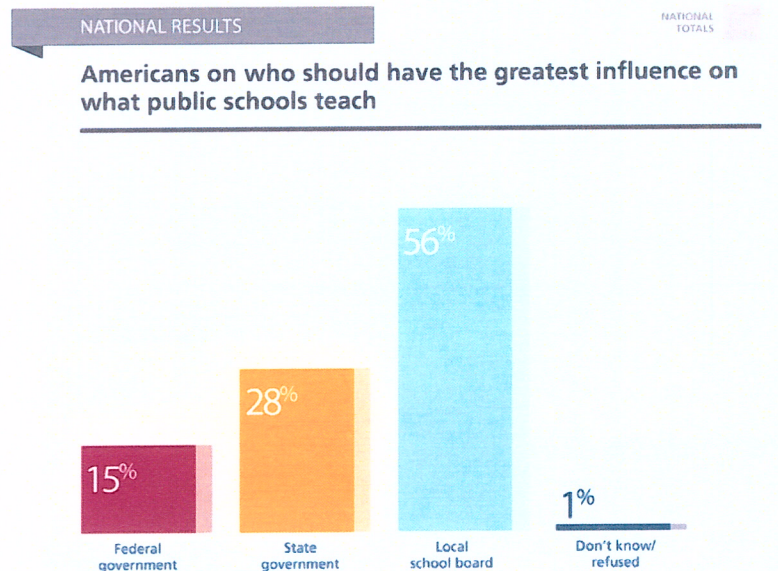
Q. President Obama is continuing his second term in office. How would you grade his performance in support of public schools using the A, B, C, D, or Fail scale?



Americans say local school boards should have most influence

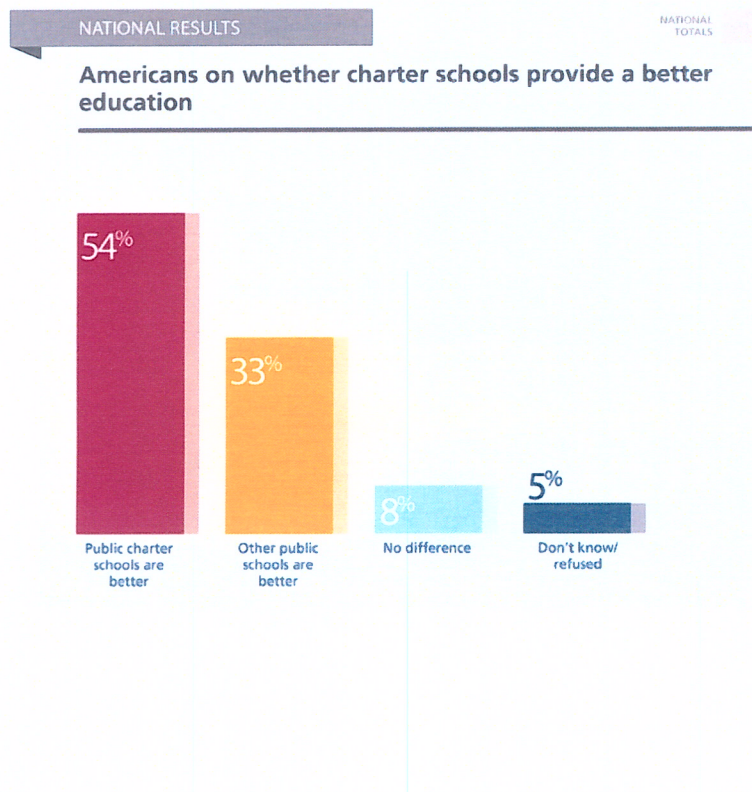
Q. In your opinion, who
should have the greatest
influence in deciding
what is taught in the
public schools here —

the federal government,
the state government, or
the local school board?



Americans believe that charter schools provide a better education

Q. Do you believe
students receive a better
education at a public
charter school than at
other public schools?



Americans oppose vouchers

Q. Do you favor or oppose
allowing students and
parents to choose a
private school at public
expense?

NATIONAL RESULTS

Americans who favor or oppose vouchers

NATIONAL
TOTALS

