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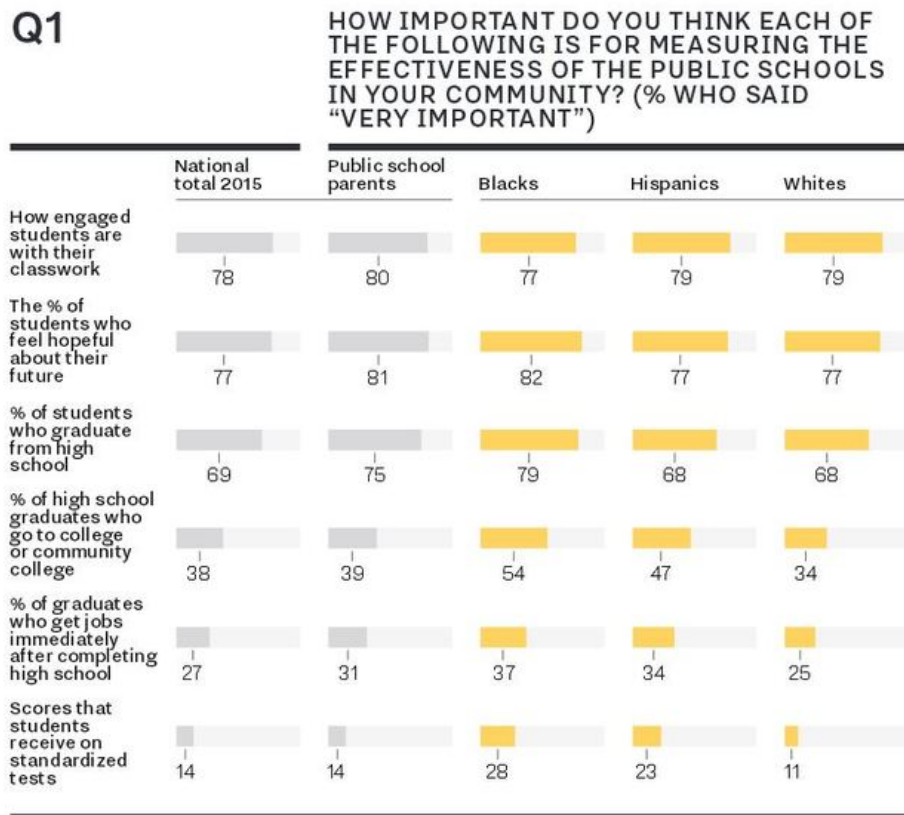
Student Engagement, Hope Outrank Tests as Measures of Schools' Success, Poll Finds

By [Evie Blad](#) on August 24, 2015 5:21 PM | [No comments](#)

How should the public determine if schools are doing their jobs?

Respondents to the 2015 PDK/Gallup poll ranked "how engaged students are with their classwork" and "the percentage of students who feel hopeful about their future" at the top of a list of possible signs of schools' success, well above standardized test results, which won the least favor in the poll.

Check out this *Education Week* story for a run-through of [the poll's complete results](#). But first, check out this graph to learn more about respondents' views on school effectiveness.



The poll results, released Sunday, will surely bolster growing efforts to boost student engagement, to nurture social and emotional skills in schools, and to track non-academic indicators alongside grades and test scores.

A growing body of research finds that students who are engaged in classroom work are more likely to be academically successful. And some organizations, such as Gallup Education, see [students' hope as a predictor of engagement](#). Gallup has even developed a hope index, a series of questions used to track students' hope for the future.

How do schools measure students' hope and engagement?

In a separate unweighted 2014 poll of U.S. students, Gallup [used a series of questions to measure students' hope and engagement](#). Using the results, the organization classified 54 percent of respondents as "hopeful," 32 percent as "stuck," and 14 percent as "discouraged." Of respondents, 55 percent were deemed "engaged," 28 percent "not engaged," and 17 percent as "actively disengaged."

Gallup used student responses to the following questions to measure hope:

- I know I will graduate from high school.
- There is an adult in my life who cares about my future.
- I can think of many ways to get good grades.
- I energetically pursue my goals.

I also find lots of ways around my problems.

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- I can find lots of ways around any problem.
- I know I will find a good job after I graduate.

These questions were used to gauge engagement:

- I have a best friend at school.
- I feel safe in this school.
- My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.
- At this school, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good schoolwork.
- My school is committed to building the strengths of each student.
- I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.

Of course, public recognition of the importance of these issues isn't necessarily a sign they should be used in school accountability frameworks. That's in part because these qualities are difficult to measure. But the poll results do provide insight for policymakers and educators about how much the public is paying attention to issues other than traditional academic accountability.

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