

Educational Program Survey

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS SUMMARY

1,797 students (grades 4,5,6) responded from all eleven elementary schools. 17 questions made up the questionnaire: 11 multiple choice and 6 open-ended. Multiple choice answers were noted on cards by the students and processed by computer. On the basis of the student's designation of his own school size, a cross tabulation was done on the other multiple choice questions. The open-ended answers were processed by hand by the committee.

Of the sample
 31% were in grade 4
 32% were in grade 5
 35% were in grade 6

and
 19% thought they were in small schools
 47% thought they were in large schools
 30% said they had attended both large and small

When asked if the size of the school mattered students responded:

	<u>a lot</u>	<u>some</u>	<u>not much</u>	<u>not at all</u>
all students	10%	24%	34%	28%
attended large and small	11%	24%	31%	33%
now in large	8%	26%	38%	21%
now in small	10%	21%	28%	38%

When asked if the age of the school mattered

all students	18%	28%	25%	25%
attended both	16%	29%	23%	28%
now in large	22%	30%	26%	19%
now in small	12%	24%	25%	35%

Students in large schools seem to care much more about the age rather than the size of a school; they want to stay in a new school. In the large schools, 52% care a lot or some about the AGE of the school and 34% care a lot or some about the SIZE of the school. In the small schools, 66% cared not much or not at all about SIZE, and 60% cared not much or not at all about AGE.

"I don't care about large, small, old, new. It's what you learn in them and if you are happy in the school."

"I don't really care if it is small, large, old, or new just as long as I get to go to school."

"Well if you've been to five schools in Lexington like I have you sort of get used to all kinds of schools but my personal opinion is large schools because you get better facilities and a larger choice of friends."

Students use playgrounds after school to this extent:

	<u>not often</u>	<u>sometimes</u>	<u>a lot</u>
all students	51%	39%	8%
attended <u>both</u>	53	37	9
now in large	55	38	5
now in small	41	47	12

Greater use by students in small schools may be because those small schools are centrally located with students living close-by.

Parental help in the schools was independent of school size:

13% helped often
 29% sometimes
 52% seldom

Parental interest in the elementary schools as perceived by the students, was both high and independent of school size.

72% of students thought their parents very interested
 22% of students thought their parents slightly interested
 and only 3% of students thought their parents were not very interested in what happens in their school.

When asked Is school fun?

	<u>often</u>	<u>sometimes</u>	<u>not very often</u>
all students	39%	49%	9%
attended both	38	50	9
now in large	37	52	9
now in small	48	41	10

(Note the greater positive response from those in small schools along with the consistent 9-10% who do not find much fun whether in large or small schools.)

If you have worked with older or younger students in school, was it interesting and did you like it?

82% liked it, 13% did not. This seems to be independent of school size, though in small schools those who liked it registered 85%.

The most important thing about school is considered to be "what you learn" by 68% of all students.

	<u>teachers</u>	<u>classmates</u>	<u>what you learn</u>	<u>school size</u>	<u>materials & resources</u>
all students	13%	8%	68%	0%	3%
attended both	12	9	68	0	4
now in large	15	9	68	0	3
now in small	12	5	72	1	4

The flavor of responses is reflected in representative quotations below:

"Concepts and how to get along with other people....Reading and Math....
Almost everything..."

When asked which subject is best taught in your school?, Math was uniformly the choice throughout the schools.

	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Language Arts</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Social Studies</u>
all students	14%	40%	13%	12%	13%
attended both	15	39	10	12	15
now in large	14	42	13	13	13
now in small	13	39	19	9	12

(Note the 10 point discrepancy between Language Arts and Science in small schools. In large schools, these each received 15%, in the small schools Science dropped to 9% and Language Arts rose to 19%. Do more adequate facilities at larger schools account for this significant difference? Further exploration appears warranted here.)

Students listed what they like best about their schools:

Subjects (math and art were particularly strong)	36%
Relationships with and among adults	35%
Gym and Sports	15%
Special activities (field trips etc.)	15%
Peers	13%

Students stated their feelings very clearly.

"I like the teachers we have because they care about us and what we learn."

"I mean if you don't have good teachers, what's the point of going to school?"

"My school is sort of an open place where you do work and meet friends. And what I like best is you do your own thing."

Students liked least

Food	15%
Building	13%
Teachers, Aides, Principals	10%
Nothing	9%
French	7%

Bathrooms are the least liked aspect of the 'Building' across the elementary system. Many boys can't understand why lavs have no doors. Children bussed any distance can't understand why they can't use toilets shortly before embarking. Gyms and moisy lunch-rooms/cafeterias drew second place on this list. Children feel strongly about 'aides' who could not handle 'bullies' on the playground, etc.

Students feel the most important things to learn about are:

Math	34%
Reading	31%
Social & Emotional Growth	20% (10% - "Getting along with others")
Language Arts	10%

When asked what makes a teacher a good teacher students described someone who:

Teaches well	45%
Is nice	20%
Is understanding	15%
Fairly strict but nice	7%

"A teacher who is patient and able to help other children is a great teacher but a teacher who has a little bit of laughs with the children is a fantastic teacher."

"Understanding, empathy, and a good knowledge of the matter and the pupils he or she teaches."

Students listed more than a hundred things they would change about school if they could. These fell generally into the following categories:

Nothing	18%
Food	17%
Some teachers, aides	10%
Playgrounds	9%
Gym, cafeteria, bathrooms	7%

And furthermore -

"I'd change my reading"

"Fix it so we could learn faster"

"You spend the rest of the day learning what you already know"

"I would make it if a student's doing something and it's interesting and it's time for another subject, they should let the student continue"

