



Cutting Through the Noise: Parents, Schools and Technology

An examination of Parent Perceptions and Aspirations

Background & Summary

Public education budgets are under increasing pressure, important components of education face attack, and often inconsistent visions of reform compete for attention and support. A subtext of much of the policy debate is an assumption that public schools are failing, and that educators are incompetent, uncaring, or worse. Education technology is a particular focus of scrutiny, and has already been subject to successive cycles of hype and skepticism, much of it uninformed and naive.

Largely absent from the national political dialogue is the direct voice of parents, via dispassionate examination of their attitudes, perceptions and aspirations for their children – and their views as taxpayers.

At the same time, potential funders are interested in messaging around education. But their efforts are getting lost amidst the “noise” from multiple media and a fragmented public.

High-visibility public surveys are a very effective way of addressing these multiple challenges by cutting through the media noise while simultaneously influencing the debate over education and technology.

The Study

We propose a carefully constructed national survey of parents of K-12 students, to be conducted with the Learning First Alliance (LFA), the umbrella group for the nation’s leading education associations. This survey will build on the success of earlier Grunwald Associates research, all of which uses sound methodology and careful analysis to produce studies with extremely high public impact. Our approach will utilize the same proven, online survey methodology used on our previous industry-wide surveys, and with the annual PBS Education Technology Survey. This survey will use a carefully constructed, nationally representative sample, with a planned sample size of approximately 1,000 parents.

Specific research topics will be chosen by LFA in consultation with underwriters. Among the topics that could be addressed:

- General attitudes towards education
- Views about the role of Federal and state government in education
- Performance of local schools
- Attitudes towards teachers
- Understanding of key education technologies
- Role of technology in education
- Interest in, and attitude towards specific education technologies
- Support of specific technologies
- Mobile technology and social media in education
- Attitudes on a) education funding and b) education technology budgets

Benefits to Underwriters

- Partnering with the umbrella organization of the nation's 17 leading education associations, including AASA, NSBA, PTA, NEA, AFT and others
- Opportunity to inject objective data and analysis into the public debate
- Positioning as industry leader with national policy makers & education thought leaders
- Participation in the most respected--and methodologically sound--series of industry surveys
- Input on the direction and topics of the survey
- Access to non-public survey results, with actionable findings on marketing and communications messages for parents, including how terms and concepts resonate, effective framing, levels of understanding and related topics.

Deliverables

- Widely distributed public PDF report.
- Prominent mention of underwriters in news release(s) and other public materials
- Presentation and other elements for underwriter policy statements, promotional materials and presentations.
- Access to non-public survey findings and data
- Electronic file with survey cross-tabs.

About LFA

The Learning First Alliance is a partnership of the nation's 17 leading education associations, with more than 10 million members dedicated to improving student learning in America's public schools. Among LFA's members are the National PTA, National School Boards Association, American Association of School Administrators, National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National School Public Relations Association.

Grunwald Qualifications & Approach

This survey will be the latest in a series of respected high impact surveys conducted for more than 15 years by Grunwald Associates with major national association partners. Grunwald surveys offer:

- Carefully designed methodology generating nationally-projectable data.
- Analysis of the results by "hands on" industry leaders.
- Results positioned to generate maximum trust – and impact – with educators, thought leaders, the general public, and industry strategists.

The Grunwald survey series has an unbroken track record of generating extensive media coverage and attracting serious attention from opinion leaders. Results have been featured on the front pages of the Wall Street Journal & USA Today, and in the Washington Post, CNN, Newsweek, New York Times, MSNBC, Parade Magazine, Education Week, E-School News, and many other outlets. Underwriters that have benefited from association with this survey series include Kodak, BellSouth, Verizon, AT&T, Microsoft, Educational Testing Service, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Sesame Workshop, and others. Previous report examples can be viewed at <http://www.grunwald.com/reports/>

Underwriting Cost

Estimated \$51,000 for each of three underwriters; other combinations are possible. (Grunwald Associates will also create and license a commercial package of findings on parental interest in educational products.)