

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	i - iii
<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>The Survey of Experienced Texas High School Teachers</b> .....	1
<b>The Public and Private High School Environments</b> .....	2
<b>Survey Results</b> .....	2
School Discipline .....	3
Control Over Class Content .....	5
Parental Involvement .....	6
Academic Performance .....	7
Impact of External Testing .....	11
Would Send My Child to My School .....	12
Teacher Morale .....	14
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	17
Education Reform in Public Education .....	18
Parental Choice in Education .....	19
<b>Appendix A: Survey Instrument</b> .....	21
<b>Appendix B: Public and Private High School Environments</b> .....	25
<b>Appendix C: Detailed Survey Results</b> .....	26
<b>Appendix D: Public High School Teacher Comments on Administrative     Environment/Support</b> .....	30

# Executive Summary

This report summarizes the results of a survey of Texas high school teachers conducted in the spring of 1999. The survey was sent to mathematics, English, social science, and science coordinators in both public and private high schools.

The survey reveals important comparisons between public and private school teachers for:

- (1) school discipline,
- (2) control over class content,
- (3) parental involvement,
- (4) academic performance,
- (5) attitude of a teacher toward sending their own child to their school, and
- (6) overall teacher morale.

## Key Findings

### **Discipline**

- Teachers in private high schools were almost twice as likely to give their school's discipline program an effective rating.
- Teachers in private schools tended to see their school discipline programs as improving. Teachers in public high schools, on balance, found school discipline worsening.

### **Control Over Class Content**

- Teachers in private schools appear to have greater autonomy or control over the content of classes they teach.

### **Parental Involvement**

- The survey found a pronounced difference in parental involvement. Not surprisingly, private schools had much more supportive parental involvement.

### **Academic Performance**

- Regarding overall academic trends, private high school teachers were somewhat more likely to believe their schools were improving. Public school teachers were somewhat more likely to say their schools were experiencing a decline in academic achievement.

- Teachers were asked to rate the level of academic challenge for below-average, average, and above-average students. The public school teachers saw a stronger challenge for above-average students. The private school teachers found a stronger challenge for average and below-average students.

### **Would Send My Child To My School**

- Teachers were asked if they would feel comfortable sending their child to their school. With regard to (1) safety and security, (2) character education, and (3) academic standards, private school teachers were more likely to say they would be comfortable sending their child to their school. The differential was greatest for safety and security.

### **Overall Teacher Morale**

The most crucial questions on the survey focused on overall teacher morale.

- Private school teachers revealed no strong trend toward either worsening or improving teacher morale. Public school teachers indicate an overwhelming view that teacher morale is declining in their schools. Sixty-one percent of public school teachers thought morale at their school was worsening. Just 17% of public school teachers believed morale was improving at their school.
- For both public and private school teachers, student behavior and attitudes was the leading contributor to declining teacher morale. For public school teachers, the # 2 problem was treatment by administrators. For private school teachers, the # 2 problem was insufficient financial compensation.

## **Recommendations For Education Reform**

The research results summarized above have important implications for education reform in two general areas:

- The first is improvement within public schools.
- The second is the potential benefit of expanding tax-funded school choice to include private schools.

### **Education Reform in Public Schools**

The major hurdle to be cleared in public education in the years ahead is recruiting and retaining enough teachers to staff Texas classrooms. The leading strategy for meeting this challenge is to increase teacher compensation. In 1999, Texas provided a \$3,000 salary increase to its public school teachers. While higher pay for teachers is a laudable goal, this approach alone won't work if teachers are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their work environments. Trying to attract teachers with higher salaries without improving the school environments would

be like trying to cut cloth using scissors with one sharp blade and one very dull blade.

Achieving the quality of education we want in Texas requires more than attracting the necessary quantity of teachers. High quality instruction will not be achieved if teachers are not serving their students in positive school environments. From school discipline to parental involvement and academic performance, public school teachers show a more negative attitude profile compared to their private school counterparts. The situation is encapsulated by the question on trend in teacher morale. The general assessment of declining teacher morale cannot be ignored in policies to reform public education.

The survey points toward the solution to declining teacher morale. Texas public school teachers are dissatisfied with the level of support and respect they receive from school administrators.

### **Parental Choice in Education**

The more positive profile of teacher attitudes in private school supports the appeal of tax-funded school choice which includes private schools. While recognizing that students and parents in public and private schools are different, the differential attitudes of public and private school teachers is too large to be ignored. The most crucial area of the survey is trend of teacher morale. The question on the morale trend is one for which there is no compelling reason to expect a more positive picture for private school teachers. We expect private school teachers to be in more positive work environments than public school teachers. Given different starting points, public schools have more opportunity to *improve* morale. Starting with a high morale level in private schools, there would be less “room” for morale improvement. Unfortunately, we find that teacher morale in public schools continues to move in a negative direction. While we cannot be sure of the causes, the organizational and administrative differences in public and private schools cannot be ignored.

Another important finding in support of school choice is that private school teachers rated the academic challenge for average and below-average students as stronger compared to public school teachers. Since the academic achievement of weaker students is a prime focus of education reform in Texas, private schools offer promise to these students.

# Introduction

*Quality Counts 2000: Who Should Teach?* This was the cover title for the January 12, 2000 issue of **Education Week**, a leading journal for public education professionals. Topics in this issue included the following:

- Finding and Keeping Competent Teachers
- Sweetening the Pot: Enticements to Lure Teachers
- Competition Is Fierce for Minority Teachers
- Taking a Different Road to Teaching

This issue of **Education Week** highlights a major challenge for elementary and secondary education in our country. Will we be able to attract and retain the quantity and quality of teachers needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

The Executive Summary of this issue of **Education Week** states,

*Good teaching matters. Savvy parents have long known this, and the research is confirming it. With U.S. schools needing to hire about 2 million teachers in the next decade, the push is on to make sure those who take those jobs are qualified to teach to the higher academic standards now expected of students. . . . Quality Counts 2000 looked at the incentives states offer to attract bright college graduates to teaching. It found that most such incentives are weak and rarely focus on the schools or subjects where teachers are needed most. . . . Moreover, salaries alone won't keep teachers in the classroom, and studies show that far too many leave the profession within the first five years.*

By asking teachers themselves what they think about their school environments, this report contributes to our understanding of the challenge of attracting effective teachers to Texas classrooms. The views of school administrators, parents, students, taxpayers, and elected officials are all important in planning for education reform in general and teacher retention in particular. All too often, the voices and views of teachers are not given the prominence they deserve.

## The Survey of Experienced Texas High School Teachers

In the spring of 1999, a survey was sent to a sample of teachers in public and private high schools in Texas. See Appendix A for the complete survey instrument containing 35 questions.

To assess various school sizes, a random sample of public schools from all five athletic (basketball) classifications was selected. For these schools, the survey instrument was sent to four teachers at each school:

- Mathematics Coordinator (or senior mathematics teacher)

- English Coordinator (or senior English teacher)
- Social Studies Coordinator (or senior social studies teacher)
- Science Coordinator (or senior science teacher)

One survey question asked if the teacher's school was located in a rural or small town area, a suburban area, a city, or a large urban area. Since a large number of public schools in the survey were designated as rural/small town and few private schools were rural/small town, schools in this category were excluded from the survey results presented below. Comparisons presented here are based upon 235 responses from public school teachers and 108 responses from private school teachers. The survey return rates were 34% for public school teachers and 22% for private school teachers.

The teachers targeted in the survey bring an intended bias. Teachers surveyed do not represent the full range of experience levels of Texas teachers. By sending the survey to departmental or area coordinators, the survey focuses on more experienced classroom teachers. The public school respondents averaged just over 16 years of teaching at their current schools and 21.8 years of total teaching experience. The private school teachers averaged 8.2 years of teaching at their current schools and 14.7 years of total teaching experience.

## The Public and Private High School Environments

It is important to recognize that there are differences in the environments of public and private schools. Appendix B summarizes several comparisons from teacher survey responses. Key distinctions are the following:

- Over half of private school teachers judged the general income levels of parents of their students as above-average. Just 13% of public school teachers gave this response.
- Private schools were substantially smaller than public schools in the survey.
- Private schools had the larger percentage of married teachers.
- Public school teachers were somewhat older than their counterparts in private schools.
- Public school teachers had the larger percentage of teachers holding a master's degree as their highest degree.

## Survey Results

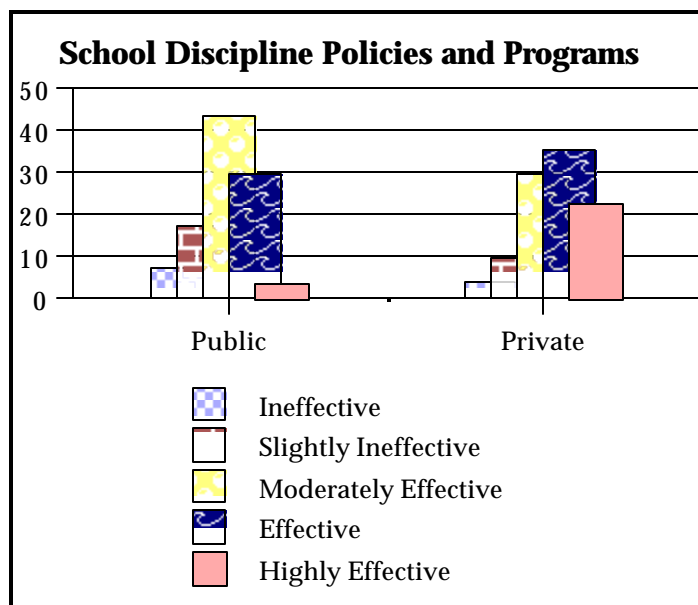
Teachers were asked to rate several features of their school environments. Appendix B contains a detailed and comprehensive table of the results of the survey. This section presents the most interesting and important contrasts between Texas public school and private school teachers. All of the public school/private school comparisons presented below represent differences that are

statistically significant.<sup>1</sup>

### School Discipline

Teachers were asked to rate their school discipline policies and programs. The teachers in private schools gave their school the high rating of “effective” or “highly effective” almost twice as frequently as their public school counterparts.

Figure 1

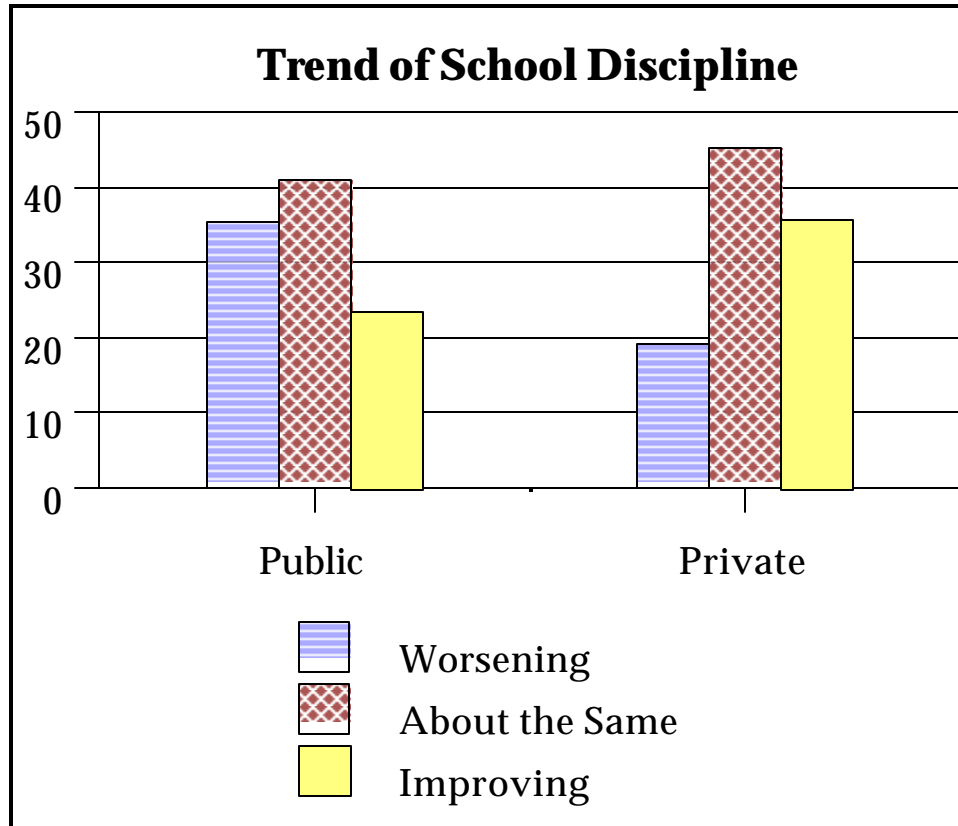


	Public	Private
Ineffective	6.8	3.7
Slightly ineffective	17.1	9.3
Moderately effective	43.6	29.6
Effective	29.5	35.2
Highly Effective	3.0	22.2

The question on trend of school discipline reinforces concern over discipline in public schools. In Figure 2, we find that just over 40% of both public school and private school teachers found school discipline programs neither improving nor worsening. However, 35.6% of private school teachers stated that the trend of discipline programs was improving. Nearly the same percentage of public school teachers saw their school’s discipline programs worsening.

<sup>1</sup> The statistical test used was the chi-squared test of homogeneity of proportions. This test was performed on cross tabulations of question responses for public compared to private school teachers. All the questions discuss in the body of this report had results significant at either the .01 or .05 level.

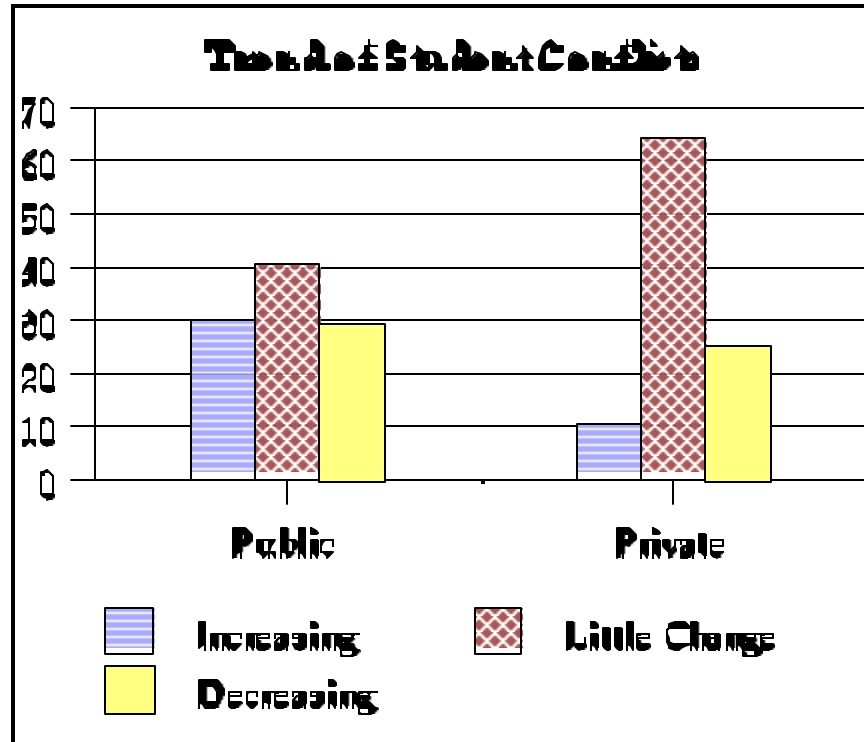
**Figure 2**



	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Worsening	35.5	19.2
About the same	41.0	45.2
Improving	23.5	35.6

Closely related to school discipline programs is the question on the trend of student verbal and physical conflicts. Figure 3 reveals that 30% of public school teachers saw student conflict increasing compared to 11% of private school teachers.

Figure 3

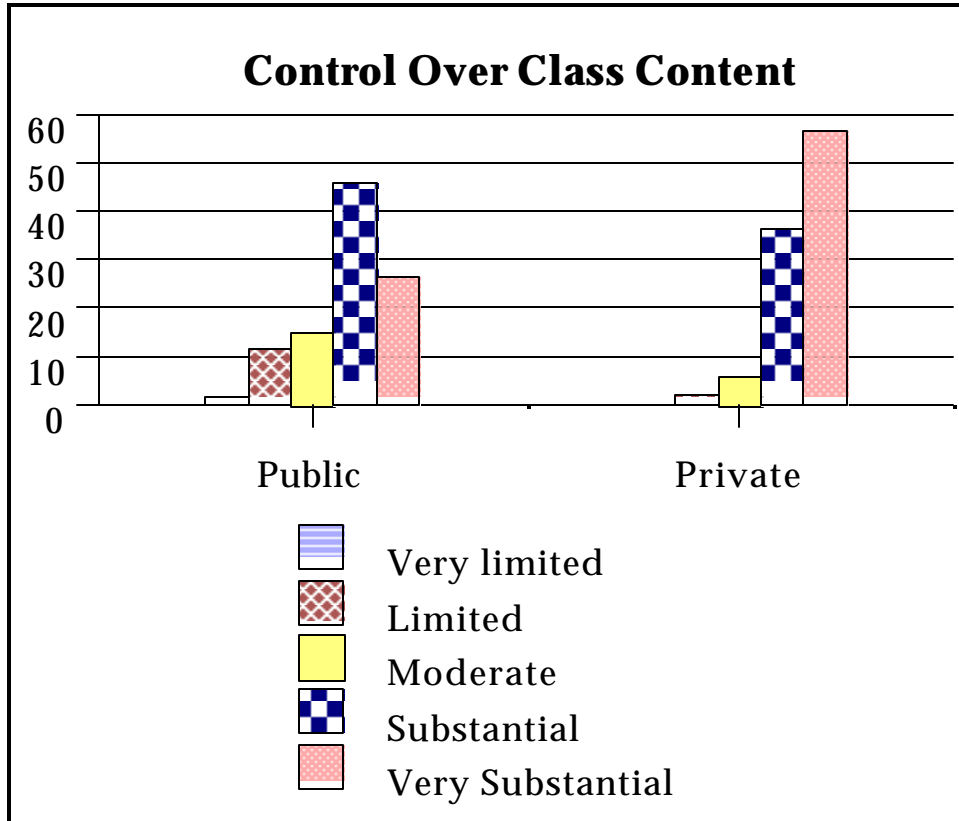


	Public	Private
Increasing	29.9	10.6
Little change	40.7	64.4
Decreasing	29.4	25.0

### Control Over Class Content

Private school teachers appear to have greater autonomy in their classrooms compared to teachers in the public school setting. Teachers were asked to rate “the extent of your discretion and control over class content and teaching strategies.” Figure 4 indicates that over half of the private school teachers saw themselves as having very substantial control over class content. Just 26% of public school teachers saw themselves as having a similar level of control.

**Figure 4**

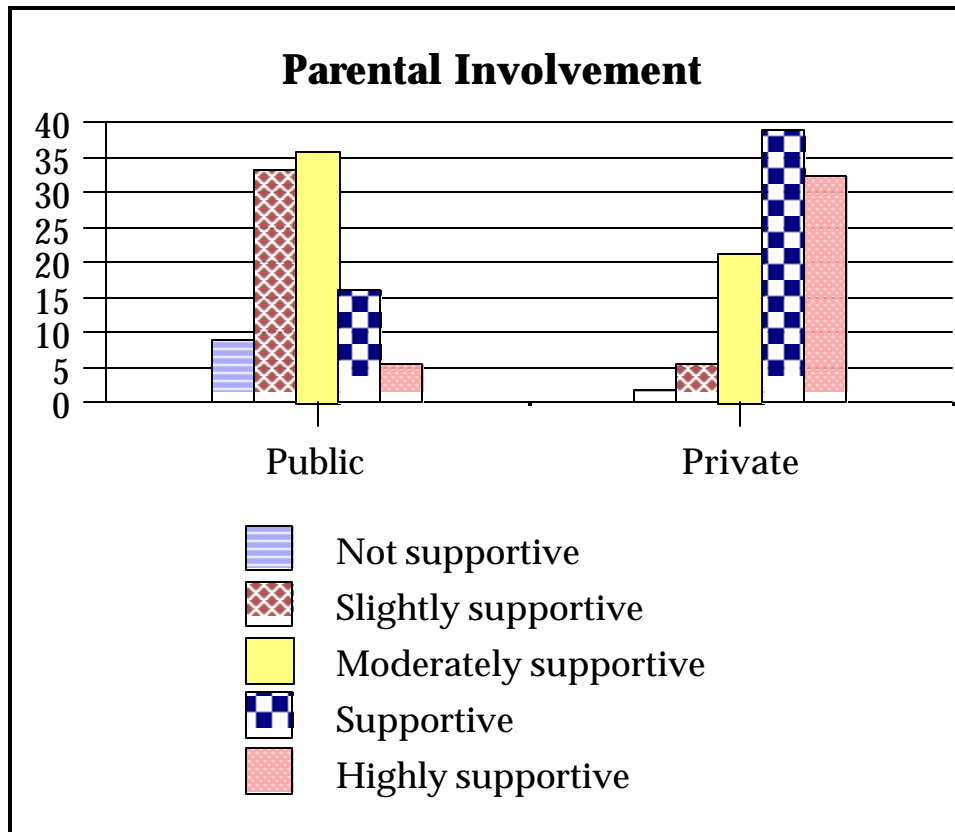


	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Very limited	1.7	
Limited	11.6	1.9
Moderate	14.6	5.6
Substantial	45.9	36.1
Very substantial	26.2	56.5

### **Parental Involvement**

The most pronounced difference in the survey is in parental involvement. Teachers in private schools were over three times as likely to rate parental involvement as “highly supportive” and “supportive” than teachers in public schools. For public school teachers, 42% rated parental involvement as “not supportive” or “slightly supportive.” Only 8% of the private school teachers were in these categories.

**Figure 5**

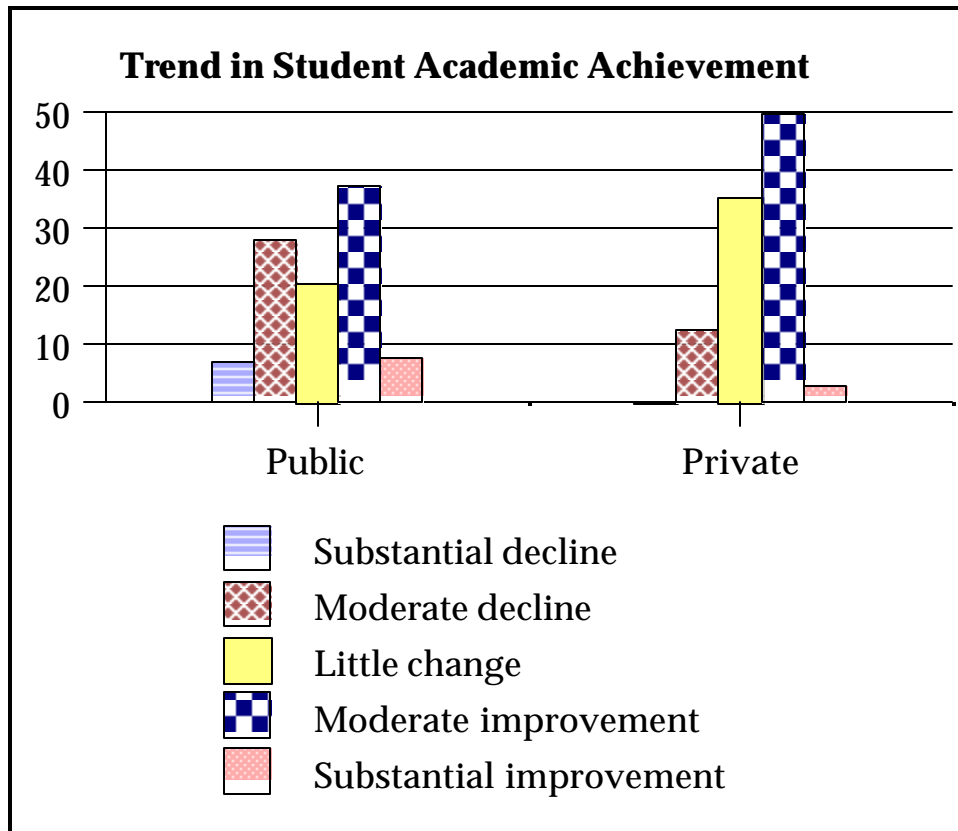


	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Not supportive	9.0	1.9
Slightly supportive	33.3	5.6
Moderately supportive	35.9	21.3
Supportive	16.2	38.9
Highly supportive	5.6	32.4

### **Academic Performance**

Teachers were asked to assess the trend of academic achievement in their schools over the last five years. A larger percentage of public school teachers saw “substantial improvement.” However, compared to private school teachers, a larger percentage of public school teachers also saw either a “substantial decline” or a “moderate decline” in student academic achievement.

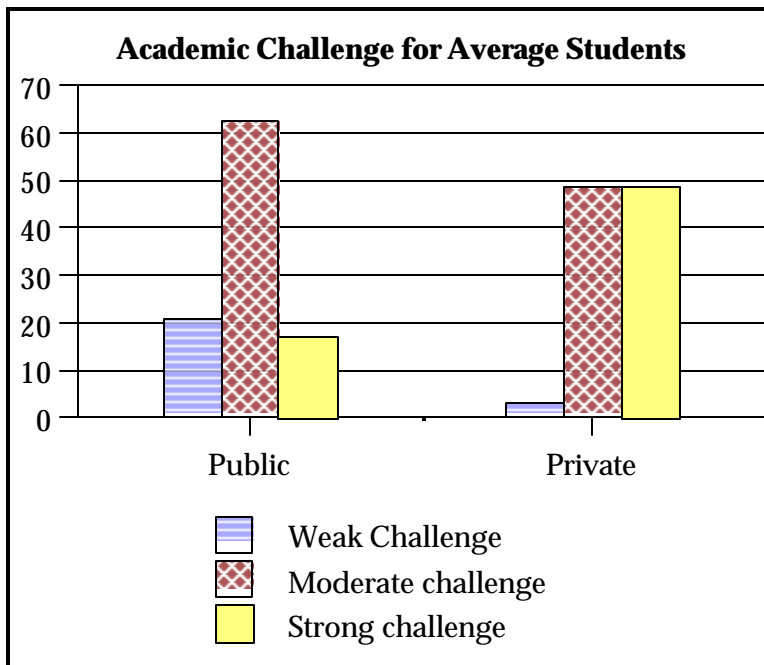
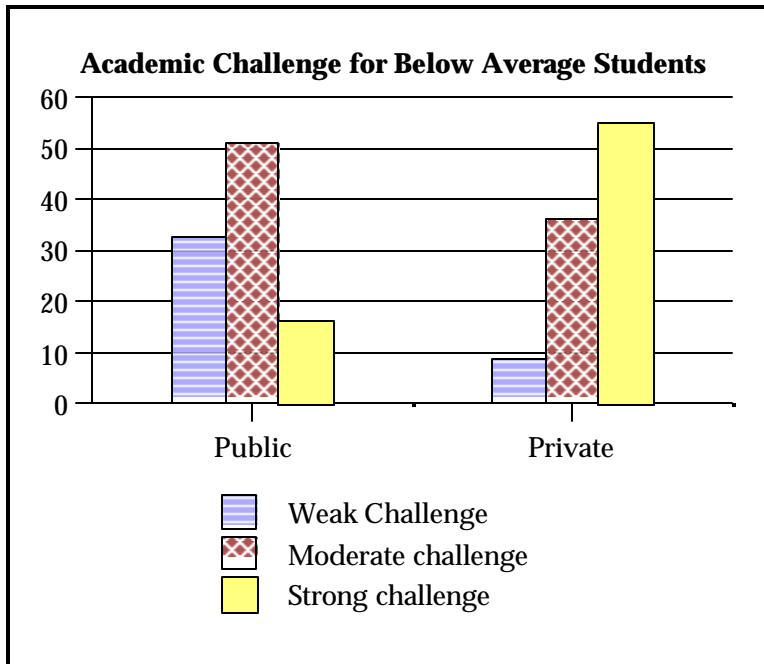
**Figure 6**

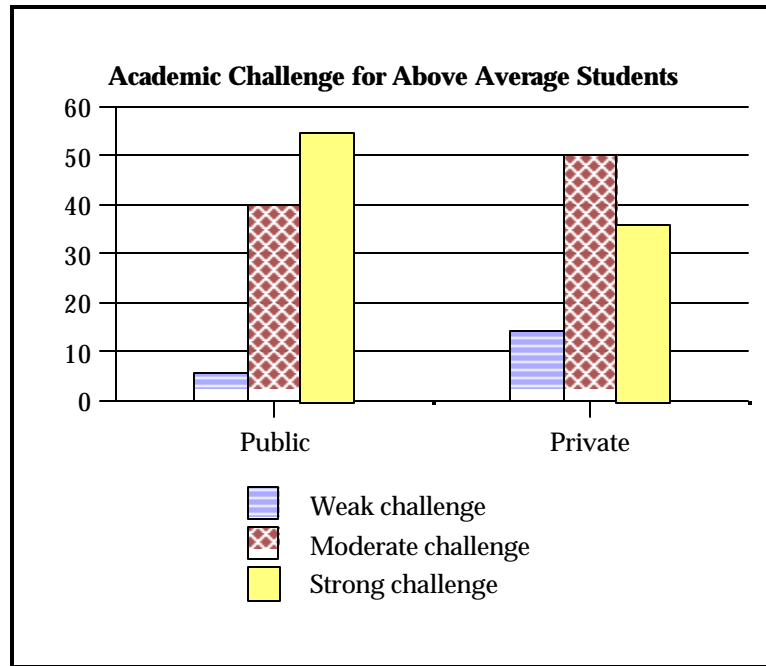


	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Substantial decline	6.9	–
Moderate decline	28.0	12.6
Little change	20.3	35.0
Moderate improvement	37.1	49.5
Substantial improvement	7.8	2.9

One of the most striking results of the survey is the question which asked teachers to rate the level of academic challenge for students in the “below-average,” “average” and “above-average” ranges. For each student category, teachers were asked to rate the academic challenge as “weak”, “moderate,” or “strong.” Figure 7 shows the overall picture for this question.

**Figure 7**  
**Academic Challenge for Different Levels of Student Ability**





<b>Academic challenge for below-average students</b>		
	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Weak challenge	32.8	8.8
Moderate challenge	51.1	36.3
Strong challenge	16.2	54.9
<b>Academic challenge for average students</b>		
	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Weak challenge	20.5	2.9
Moderate challenge	62.4	48.6
Strong challenge	17.0	48.6
<b>Academic challenge for above-average students</b>		
	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Weak challenge	5.7	14.2
Moderate challenge	39.9	50.0
Strong challenge	54.4	35.8

- Below-average students: Teachers in private schools rated the challenge for these students as much stronger compared to the ratings of public school teachers.
- Average students: Again, a stronger academic challenge was found in private schools. However, the difference was not so great as for below-average students.
- Above-average students: For these students the appraisal is reversed. Teachers in public schools generally saw a stronger challenge for above-average students compared to teachers in private schools.

### **Impact of External Testing**

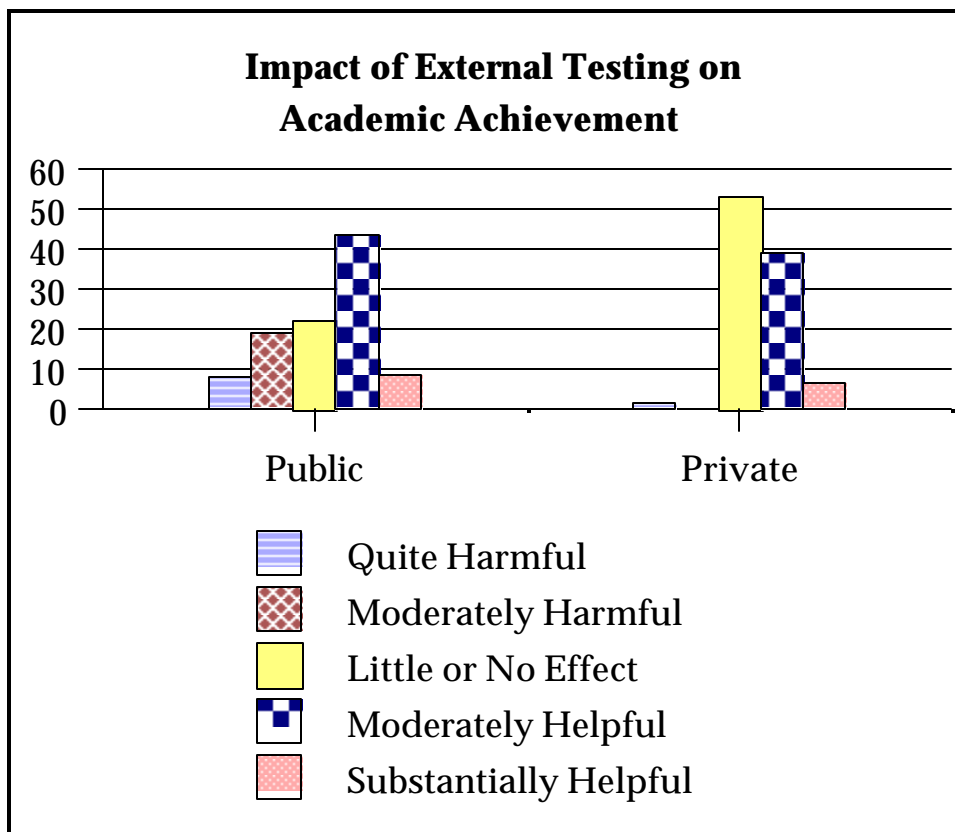
Teachers in public and private high schools have different experiences with “external testing.” The main form of testing originating outside of public schools is the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills or TAAS. This includes the high school exit tests administered at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade (and in later grades for students who fail). In 1999, Texas also administered “end of course” tests for Algebra I, Biology, English II, and U.S. History.

A fourth of private high schools in the survey had no external testing. For the majority of private schools with external examinations, this was typically a nationally recognized program such as the Stanford or Iowa Achievement Tests.

Teachers were asked about the impact of external testing on academic achievement. The responses are summarized in Figure 8. Just about all of the private school teachers regarded external testing as having little effect or being helpful for academic achievement. Most of the public school teachers also saw external testing as neutral or helpful.

A substantial portion of public school teachers did find external testing, or TAAS, to be a negative for academic achievement. While only one percent of private school teachers regarded external testing as harmful, over a fourth of public school teachers found external testing “quite harmful” or “moderately harmful.”

**Figure 8**

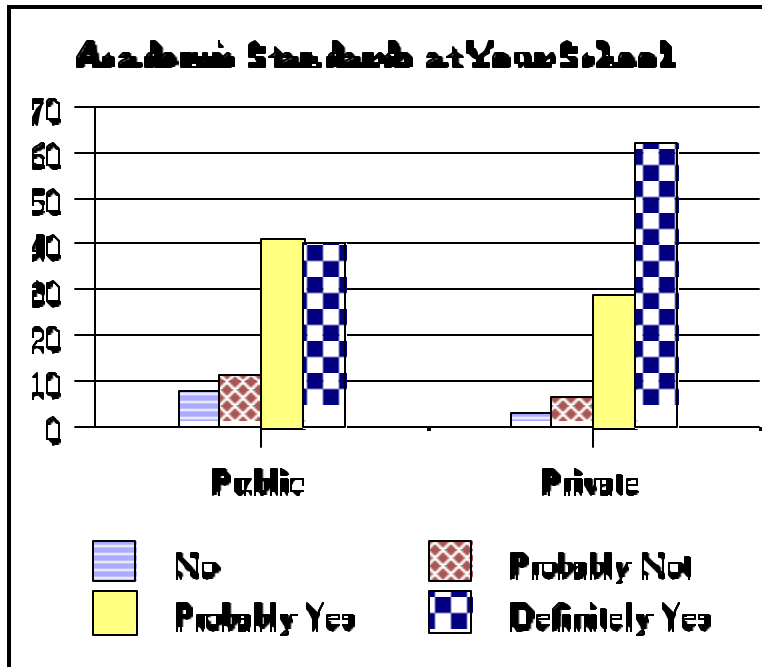
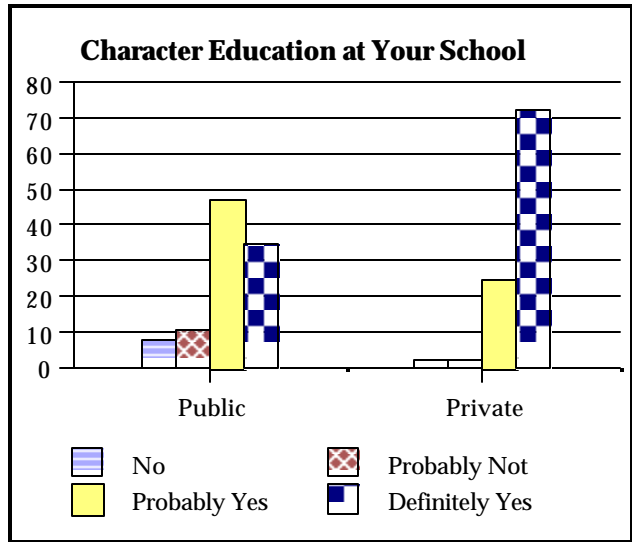
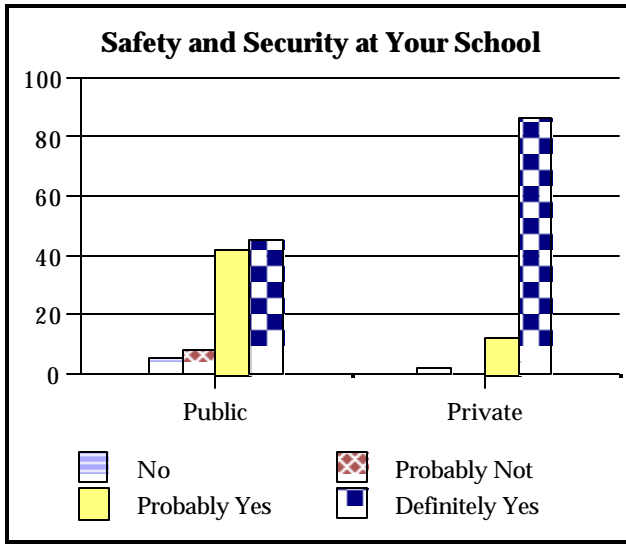


	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Quite harmful	7.8	1.3
Moderately harmful	18.7	–
Little or no effect	21.7	53.2
Moderately helpful	43.5	39.2
Substantially helpful	8.3	6.3

### Would Send My Child to My School

“If you had a school-age child, would you be comfortable having your child attend your school?” Three survey items contained this question. The three questions related to safety and security, character education, and academic standards. Figure 9 shows that for all three questions, private school teachers were much more likely to offer the “definitely yes” response. With regard to safety and security, 86% of the private school teachers answered “definitely yes” compared to 45% of the public school teachers. For character or values education, the “definitely yes” percentages for private and public school teachers were 72% and 35%. For academic standards, the margin of difference narrowed with 62% of private school teachers and 40% of public school teachers indicating they would definitely send their child to their school.

**Figure 9**  
**Would Send My Child to My School**



<b>Safety and security at your school</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Probably not</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>–</b>
<b>Probably yes</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>Definitely yes</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>86.0</b>
<b>Character education at your school</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Probably not</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>
<b>Probably yes</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>24.3</b>
<b>Definitely yes</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>72.0</b>
<b>Academic standards at your school</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Probably not</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Probably yes</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>28.7</b>
<b>Definitely yes</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>62.0</b>

### **Teacher Morale**

The most crucial survey questions for the future of Texas education focused on teacher morale. Teachers were asked, “What is the trend of teacher morale at your school?” The possible responses were:

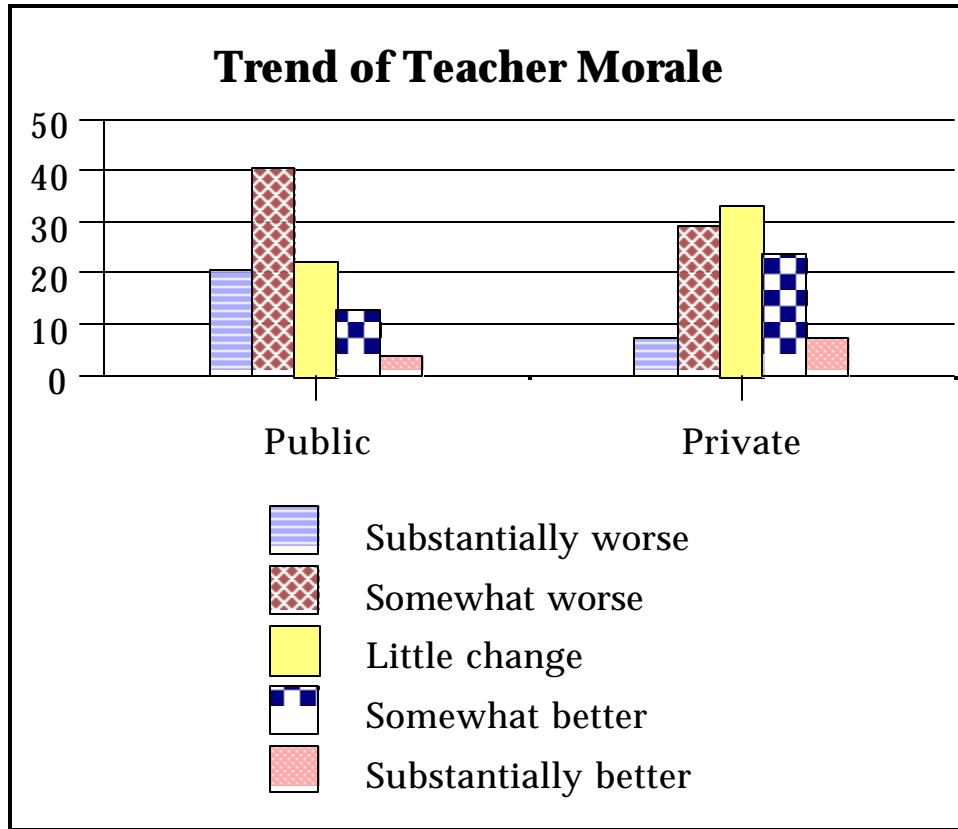
- Becoming substantially worse
- Becoming somewhat worse
- Little change
- Becoming somewhat better
- Becoming substantially better

Keep in mind that teachers surveyed were very experienced teachers who were quite familiar with their schools and recent trends.

Figure 10 summarizes survey results in the very important area of trend of teacher morale. Before comparing public versus private, let’s examine each one separately. The responses for private schools were closely balanced around the middle response of “little change.” This indicates there is no clear trend of either improving or worsening teacher morale in private schools. The distribution for public school teachers shows an overwhelming trend of worsening teacher morale. The two “worsening” responses were given by 61% of the teachers. The two “improving” responses were given by only 17% of public school teachers.

With these pronounced differences in the individual snapshots on teacher morale, the comparison, of course, shows large differences. Private school teachers were almost twice as likely to give the three more positive responses. Public school teachers were almost twice as likely to offer the two more negative responses.

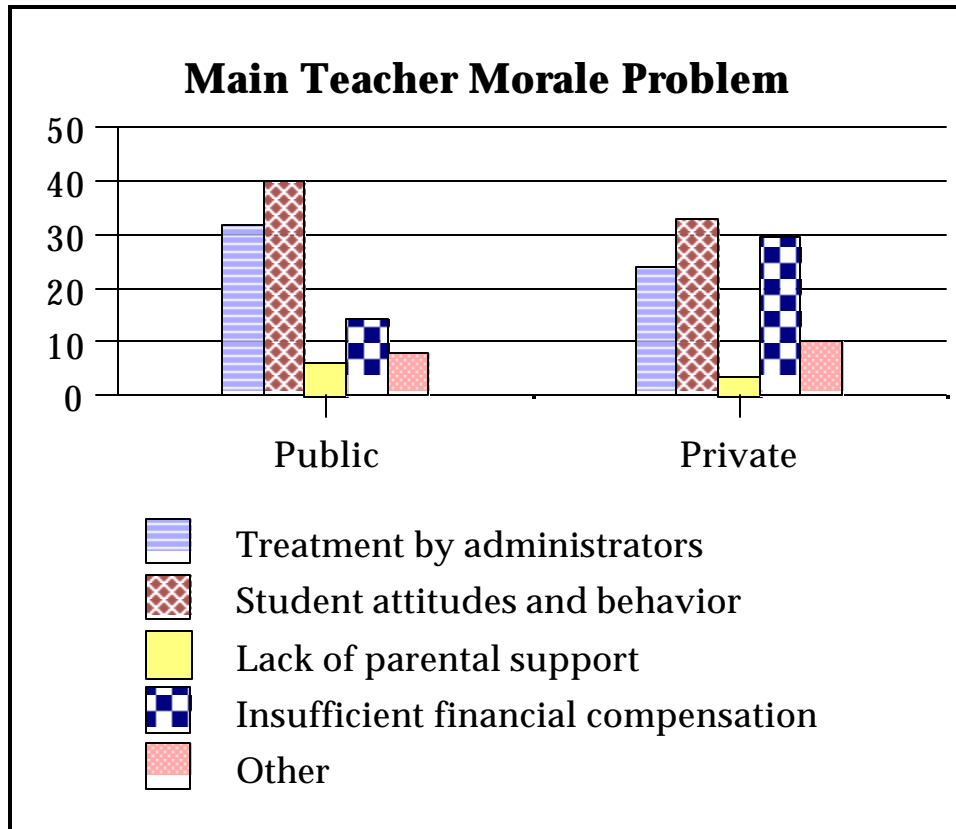
**Figure 10**



	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Substantially worse	20.5	7.5
Somewhat worse	40.6	29.3
Little change	22.2	33.0
Somewhat better	12.8	23.6
Substantially better	3.8	7.5

A follow-up question on teacher morale asked respondents to select the main teacher morale problem at the school. Figure 11 shows a different pattern for public and private school teachers.

**Figure 11**



	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
Treatment by administrators	31.7	23.9
Student attitudes and behavior	40.1	33.0
Lack of parental support	5.9	3.4
Insufficient financial compensation	14.4	29.5
Other	7.9	10.2

Public and private school teachers agree on the #1 morale problem in the teaching environments. Both place student behavior at the top of their lists. Forty percent of public school teachers and 33% of private schools teachers pointed to student behavior as the major morale problem.

Poor treatment by administrators figures prominently in the morale picture for teachers in both types of schools. At 32%, this was the #2 problem in public schools. Administrative treatment was the #3 problem in private schools at 24%.

In neither public nor private schools was financial compensation the top concern. At 14%, financial compensation was a distant third for public school teachers. For the private school teachers, 30% cited financial compensation as their school's prime morale problem.

While public school teachers note a lack of parental support in their schools, this is not a major explanation for declining teacher morale. Just 6% of public school teachers point to a lack of parental support as their main reason for the decline. This is just slightly higher than the 4% for private schools.

The numbers cited above provide important insights into Texas schools. With student behavior ranking #1, it is obvious that private schools are not immune to societal changes affecting student behavior. Also, it is not surprising to find private school teachers citing financial compensation as an important morale problem. Private school teachers are generally paid less than their public school counterparts.

The two leading morale problems in public schools are closely related. A major reason for poor student behavior is the lack of administrative support for teachers. Appendix D contains all the survey comments from public school teachers regarding administrative support--or the lack thereof. The picture presented in these teacher comments reveals deep dissatisfaction and frustration. The following comments are representative of the teacher survey comments:

- *In order to avoid a hugely increased failure rate, most administrators advise teachers to change instructional strategies and do whatever it takes to enable students to “succeed.”*
- *We once had a school with high standards and discipline and learning. Our current superintendent has destroyed almost all aspects of our school learning, discipline, communication, and accountability. The students run our school.*
- *Most of the teachers feel that if we had a strong, organized, discipline-minded leader, we could then begin to deal with student attitudes.*
- *Our principal allows students to come to him with personal gripes. There are no serious consequences for bad behavior, vulgar language, or rude treatment of teachers by students.*
- *Administrators long ago left the reality of the classroom. They have no idea what it is like and how their demands affect both teachers and students. Decisions are made supposedly by site-based teams, but our suggestions are really only for show, not decisions.*

## Conclusions

Implications of this research lie in two directions. One consideration is public education reform. How can Texas improve its public schools which currently are responsible for educating nine out of ten of our students? A second issue is parental choice in education or school vouchers. Should Texas use tax dollars to fund parental choice that includes private schools?

## U Education Reform in Public Schools

Public education reform has many dimensions. In Texas, statewide testing using the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) has attracted nationwide attention. Texas has also moved toward equalization of funding among school districts. In Texas, and across the nation, there is a growing challenge of attracting a sufficient number of skilled teachers in the face of the twin challenges of increasing student enrollment and a high level of teacher attrition. An essential part of any program for education reform must include attracting skilled and motivated teachers.

The leading strategy for teacher recruitment and retention in Texas and other states has been increasing financial compensation. The appeal of this policy is obvious. Improving financial rewards increases the relative attractiveness of teaching compared to other professional alternatives. Improved compensation is also intended to persuade teachers to endure the difficulties of their work environments.

Under Governor George W. Bush, the Texas legislature has increased teacher compensation. The entry-level salary has increased from \$18,000 to \$24,000 under Governor Bush. In the state budget enacted in 1999, Texas public school teachers received a \$3,000 across-the-board salary increase.

Beyond salaries, some states and school districts have been quite creative regarding teacher compensation. Massachusetts offers a “signing bonus” to attract teachers. California Governor Gray Davis has proposed that all California public school teachers be made exempt from the state’s income tax. The Chicago school system has considered a proposal to help teachers buy inner-city homes if they will teach in inner-city schools.

The survey results presented here are not encouraging for the strategy of relying solely or primarily on financial incentives to meet the challenge of teacher recruitment and retention. A single-minded focus on teacher pay will not get the job done.

A good analogy for the challenge of sustaining an outstanding cadre of public school teachers is the task of cutting fabric with very dull scissors. Think of the two blades of the scissors as teacher compensation and the school environments. For the scissors, it would be unproductive to go to a cutlery shop to sharpen just one blade. One sharp blade might help a little, but this is not ultimately the solution. Both blades of the scissors must be sharpened.

Likewise for public education, we must have a two-fold strategy. Yes, let’s continue to increase teacher salaries. However, this will ultimately fail if the teaching environments of our dedicated Texas teachers are not improved dramatically.

Even if improved compensation were somehow successful in filling all teaching positions, this would not be what we want for public education. We need teacher quality along with teacher quantity. The quality problem goes beyond the abilities possessed by teachers. The quality challenge also involves administrative support that will take full advantage of teacher abilities. This survey presents a picture of public education in which the teacher support environment would be more likely to diminish rather than enhance teacher effectiveness and productivity.

As stated in the previous section, we would not expect the profile of teacher attitudes in public schools to be as positive as in private schools. Still, we ignore the differences at the peril of public education. Public school teachers are much less satisfied with school discipline programs. Public school teachers feel they have less control of class content and are less supported by parents. School academic performance and trends reveal a mixed picture at best.

These teacher assessments cannot help but undercut teacher morale in public high schools. A disturbing fact is that substantially more public school teachers are seeing morale at their schools as getting worse rather than better. Financial compensation was by no means at the top of the list of problems that cause deterioration in teacher morale. More than money, negative school environments were the big morale buster. Teachers, using their own initiatives, can improve school environments only marginally. The responsibility of improving school environments rests on the shoulders of school administration: superintendents, trustees, and school principals.

Teacher treatment by administrators was the second leading reason for declining teacher morale for public school teachers. The most important reason for the decline in teacher morale was student attitudes and behavior. Certainly there are societal changes at work in this regard. But are administrations responding to these societal changes by supporting their teachers to the extent they can and should?

Teachers are our most valuable resource in Texas public education. Public education will flourish in service to our children and our communities only if teachers are respected and supported in their efforts to serve. It is not likely that Texas can sustain improving educational performance in the face of declining teacher morale. School administrators are faced with the challenge of finding ways to improve the work environment of their teachers. With this improvement, together with increasing teacher compensation, public education can work more effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **UParental Choice in Education**

Care must be taken regarding the implications of this research for parental choice or vouchers. Because of important differences between public and private education, it would be possible to claim too much from the differences found. Two important and closely related features of private education are a higher level of parental income and greater parental involvement. Without question, these parental distinctions result in a great educational challenge for public schools compared to private schools.

Acknowledging the difficulties in making comparisons, some important points for consideration remain. Private school teachers express a more positive assessment of their teaching environment. Recapping some of the differences, we found that:

- private school teachers were more comfortable with current school discipline policies and the trend of these policies,

- private school teachers judged themselves as more in control of the content of their classes,
- considering the areas of (1) safety and security, (2) character education, and (3) academic standards, private school teachers were more comfortable with the idea of sending their child to their school,
- teachers in public schools revealed a pronounced trend toward declining teacher moral, and
- and, teachers in private schools were less likely to point to treatment by administrators as the main reason for declining morale.

The possibility exists that these positive assessments are not simply due to the profile of private school students and parents. However, some of the differences may also result from the organizational and support differences inherent in the two types of schools. School choice offers a way of tapping the organizational advantages of private schools for the benefit of more Texas students.

For most teacher attitude questions, a more positive result would be expected for private school teachers. However, this is not the case for the question on trend of teacher morale. Because private schools have “easier to educate” students and more supportive parents, we expect the level of teacher morale to be higher in private schools. If private schools are starting with higher morale levels, these schools have less room for an improving trend. On the other hand, if public schools are starting from lower morale levels, these schools have substantial room for an improving trend. As we have seen, the private school response showed no clear trend to either improving or worsening teacher morale. For public schools, expected to start from a lower morale level, the clear trend was to even *lower* teacher morale.

The survey points to a further consideration regarding academic challenge for students. Recall the responses to questions on the academic challenge for below-average, average, and above-average students. Public school teachers gave the higher rating of the academic challenge their schools provided to above-average students. On the other hand, private school teachers gave the higher rating of the academic challenge in their schools for average and below-average students. This indicates that, for academic challenge alone, school choice may provide little academic benefit for above-average students. However, the potential benefit of expanding private school options may be substantial for average and below-average students—the students who are the main focus in education reform.

## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

### 1999 Texas Teacher Survey

**Directions:** Circle or mark the answers to questions that apply to you. Please write additional comments regarding questions in the space provided at the end of the survey.

1. Which of the following is your primary teaching responsibility?
  - 1 English/language arts
  - 2 Mathematics
  - 3 Sciences
  - 4 Social Studies/History
  - 5 Other, please specify
2. How many hours per week do you spend outside the school day on school-related work?
  - 1 less than 5 hours
  - 2 5-10
  - 3 11-16
  - 4 17-25
  - 5 over 25
3. For the last five years, which of the following has been the most important (mark 1) and the second most important (mark 2) area of improvement at your school?  
 higher academic expectations for students  
 higher expectations for student behavior  
 more professional treatment of teachers by administrators  
 greater financial compensation for teachers  
 more frequent and more supportive parental involvement  
 improved student preparation and attitude  
 other \_\_\_\_\_
4. How do you rate discipline policies and programs in your school?
  - 1 ineffective
  - 2 slightly effective
  - 3 moderately effective
  - 4 effective
  - 5 highly effective
5. What has been the trend of student discipline at your school in the last five years?
  - 1 worsening
  - 2 about the same
  - 3 improving
6. How do you rate academic support policies and programs in your school?
  - 1 ineffective
  - 2 slightly effective
  - 3 moderately effective
  - 4 effective
  - 5 highly effective
7. What has been the trend of support for academic instruction at your school in the last five years?
  - 1 decreasing
  - 2 about the same
  - 3 increasing

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>8. How do you rate parental involvement in your school?</p> <p>1 not supportive<br/>2 slightly supportive<br/>3 moderately supportive<br/>4 supportive<br/>5 highly supportive</p> <p>9. What has been the trend of parental involvement in your school in the last five years?</p> <p>1 decreasing<br/>2 about the same<br/>3 increasing</p> <p>10. How would you rate the extent of your discretion and control over class content and teaching strategies in your courses?</p> <p>1 very limited<br/>2 limited<br/>3 moderate<br/>4 substantial<br/>5 very substantial</p> <p>11. What has been the trend of teacher discretion over class content and teaching strategies in your school in the last five years?</p> <p>1 decreasing<br/>2 about the same<br/>3 increasing</p> <p>12. Rate the level of academic challenge at your school for the following student groups. (Select one response for each.)</p> | <p>13. How has the quality of student academic achievement changed at your school in the last five years?</p> <p>1 substantial decline<br/>2 moderate decline<br/>3 little change<br/>4 moderate improvement<br/>5 substantial improvement</p> <p>14. How would you describe the trend of verbal and physical conflict among students in your school in the last five years?</p> <p>1 increasing<br/>2 little change<br/>3 decreasing</p> <p>15. What is the trend of teacher morale in your school?</p> <p>1 becoming substantially worse<br/>2 becoming somewhat worse<br/>3 little change<br/>4 becoming somewhat better<br/>5 becoming substantially better</p> <p>16. To the extent that teacher morale is a problem at your school, which of the following is the main source of the problem?</p> <p>___ teacher treatment by administrators<br/>___ student attitudes and behavior<br/>___ lack of parental support and involvement<br/>___ insufficient financial compensation<br/>___ other _____</p> |
|--|--|

Weak    Moderate    Strong  
Challenge Challenge Challenge

Below average students	1	2	3
Average students	1	2	3
Above average students	1	2	3

17. Does your high school administer a state or other “external” test of academic achievement?
- 1 none
  - 2 TAAS
  - 3 other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 TAAS & other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. If your answer to the previous question is “yes”, what is the impact of this testing on academic achievement in your school?
- 1 quite harmful
  - 2 moderately harmful
  - 3 little or no effect
  - 4 moderately helpful
  - 5 substantially helpful
19. This question relates to safety and security at your school. If you had a school-age child, would you be comfortable having your child attend your school?
- 1 no
  - 2 probably no
  - 3 probably yes
  - 4 definitely yes
20. This question relates to character or values education at your school. If you had a school-aged child, would you be comfortable having your child attend your school?
- 1 no
  - 2 probably no
  - 3 probably yes
  - 4 definitely yes
21. This question relates to the level of academic standards and expectations at your school. If you had a school-age child, would you be comfortable having your child attend your school?
- 1 no
  - 2 probably not
  - 3 probably yes
  - 4 definitely yes
22. If you had a friend ( with five years of teaching experience) looking for a teaching position, would you advise your friend to seek work at your school?
- 1 no
  - 2 probably not
  - 3 probably yes
  - 4 definitely yes
23. Which of the following best describes your school location?
- 1 rural/small town
  - 2 suburban
  - 3 city (e.g. Lubbock, Abilene, Waco, Baytown)
  - 4 large urban (Houston, D/FW, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, El Paso)
24. Which of the following best describes the income level of a majority of parents of students in your school?
- 1 below average
  - 2 average
  - 3 above average

25. Which of the following describes your school?

- 1 public
- 2 public/charter
- 3 private
  - A. Religious
  - B. Not religious
  - C. Coed
  - D. Male
  - E. Female

26. How many students attend your school (grades 9-12)?

- 1 50 or less
- 2 50 to 159
- 3 160 to 344 (or 2A basketball)
- 4 345 to 779 (or 3A basketball)
- 5 780 to 1,779 (or 4A basketball)
- 6 1,780 and above (or 5A basketball)

27. Your gender?

- 1 male
- 2 female

28. Your age?

- 1 22-29
- 2 30-39
- 3 40-49
- 4 50+

29. Your marital status?

- 1 married
- 2 single

30. Are you the primary source of income for your household?

- 1 no
- 2 equal
- 3 yes

31. Your salary for this academic year.

- 1 \$15,000 to \$17,999
- 2 \$18,000 to \$20,999
- 3 \$21,000 to \$23,999
- 4 \$24,000 to \$26,999
- 5 \$27,000 to \$29,999
- 6 \$30,000 to \$32,999
- 7 \$33,000 to \$35,999
- 8 \$36,000 to \$38,999
- 9 \$39,000 to \$41,999
- 10 \$42,000 to \$44,999
- 11 \$45,000 to \$47,999
- 12 \$48,000 or above

32. What is your highest degree?

- 1 bachelor's
- 2 master's
- 3 doctorate

33. Years of teaching in your current school? \_\_\_\_\_

34. Years of teaching in public school?

35. Years of teaching in private schools?

**Please provide any additional comments about particular questions on the back page.**

---

---

---

---

---

John Pisciotta, Ph.D.  
Dept. of Economics  
Baylor University  
Waco, TX 76798-8003

**Appendix B: Public and Private High School Environments**

	Public	Private
<b>General income level of parents</b>		
<b>of students in your school</b>		
Below average	42.9	6.6
Average	43.7	39.6
Above average	13.4	53.8
<b>Location of school</b>		
Suburban	39.6	24.1
City	20.9	28.7
Large urban	39.6	47.2
<b>Number of students in school.</b>		
up to 159	1.7	39.8
160 to 344	1.3	33.3
345 to 779	6.0	23.1
780 to 1779	32.3	3.7
1780 or higher	58.7	-
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	29.4	34.4
Female	70.6	65.7
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	73.2	83.2
Single	26.8	16.8
<b>Are you the primary source</b>		
<b>of household income?</b>		
No	31.5	51.9
Equal	29.4	14.8
Yes	39.1	33.3
<b>Age</b>		
22-29	2.6	6.5
30-39	11.5	3.9
40-49	34.9	49.1
50+	51.1	30.6
<b>Highest Degree</b>		
Bachelor's	33.8	48.6
Master's	63.2	46.7
Doctorate	3.0	4.7

**Appendix C: Table of Survey Results**

	Public	Private
<b>1 Teaching area</b>		
English/Lang. Arts	26.0	24.0
Mathematics	28.5	27.9
Sciences	24.7	27.9
Social Studies/Hist.	20.0	19.2
Other	0.9	1.0
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.980	
<b>2 Extra hours worked</b>		
<5	1.7	6.5
5 to 10	27.2	30.8
11 to 16	36.2	35.5
17 to 25	23.0	19.6
over 25	11.9	6.5
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.066	
<b>3a. Improvement Area (#1)</b>		
Academic Expectations	55.1	41.2
Student Behavior	16.9	21.6
Treatment of Teachers	4.8	6.2
Financial Compensation	4.3	13.4
Parental Involvement	3.9	6.2
Student Preparation	10.1	9.3
Other	4.8	2.1
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.041	
<b>3b. Improvement Area (#2)</b>		
Academic Expectations	19.6	24.4
Student Behavior	31.7	29.1
Treatment of Teachers	7.4	5.8
Financial Compensation	11.6	18.6
Parental Involvement	6.3	8.1
Student Preparation	16.4	11.6
Other	6.9	2.3
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.369	
<b>4. Discipline in school</b>		
Ineffective	6.8	3.7
Slightly Ineffective	17.1	9.3
Moderately Ineffective	43.6	29.6
Effective	29.5	35.2
Highly Effective	3.0	22.2
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	

	Public	Private
<b>5. Trend/Discipline in school</b>		
Worsening	35.5	19.2
About the same	41.0	45.2
Improving	23.5	35.6
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.006	
<b>6. Academic support programs in school</b>		
Ineffective	4.7	2.8
Slightly ineffective	15.4	12.0
Moderately ineffective	39.3	36.1
Effective	34.2	37.0
Highly Effective	6.4	12.0
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.346	
<b>7. Trend/academic support</b>		
Decreasing	17.5	8.6
About the same	39.3	43.8
Increasing	43.2	47.6
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.099	
<b>8. Parental involvement</b>		
Not supportive	9.0	1.9
Slightly supportive	33.3	5.6
Moderately supportive	35.9	21.3
Supportive	16.2	38.9
Highly supportive	5.6	32.4
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>9. Trend/parental involvement</b>		
Decreasing	26.5	11.4
About the same	58.5	65.7
Increasing	15.0	22.9
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.005	
<b>10. Control over class content</b>		
Very limited	1.7	--
Limited	11.6	1.9
Moderate	14.6	5.6
Substantial	45.9	36.1
Very substantial	26.2	56.5
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	

**Teacher Attitudes in Texas Public and Private Schools**

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>11. Trend/control over class content</b>		
Decreasing	23.5	1.9
About the same	53.0	80.6
Increasing	23.5	17.5
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>12a. Academic challenge for below-average students</b>		
Weak challenge	32.8	8.8
Moderate challenge	51.1	36.3
Strong challenge	16.2	54.9
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>12b. Academic challenge for average students</b>		
Weak challenge	20.5	2.9
Moderate challenge	62.4	48.6
Strong challenge	17.0	48.6
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>12c. Academic challenge for above-average students</b>		
Weak challenge	5.7	14.2
Moderate challenge	39.9	50.0
Strong challenge	54.4	35.8
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.002	
<b>13. Student academic achievement</b>		
Substantial decline	6.9	--
Moderate decline	28.0	12.6
Little change	20.3	35.0
Moderate improvement	37.1	49.5
Substantial improvement	7.8	2.9
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>14. Trend/student conflicts</b>		
Increasing	29.9	10.6
Little change	40.7	64.4
Decreasing	29.4	25.0
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>15. Trend/teacher morale</b>		
Substantially worse	20.5	7.5
Somewhat worse	40.6	29.3
Little change	22.2	33.0
Somewhat better	12.8	23.6
Substantially better	3.8	7.5
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>16. Teacher Moral: Main Problem</b>		
Administrators	31.7	23.9
Student behavior	40.1	33.0
Lack parental support	5.9	3.4
Financial compensation	14.4	29.5
Other	7.9	10.2
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.03	
<b>17. External test administered</b>		
None	0.4	25.0
TAAS	42.1	1.9
Other	4.3	68.3
TAAS and other	53.2	4.8
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>18. Impact of External Tests</b>		
Quite harmful	7.8	1.3
Moderately harmful	18.7	--
Little or no effect	21.7	53.2
Moderately helpful	43.5	39.2
Quite helpful	8.3	6.3
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>19. Safety &amp; Security Would send my child to my school.</b>		
No	5.5	1.9
Probably not	7.7	--
Probably yes	41.7	12.1
Definitely yes	45.1	86.0
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	

**Teacher Attitudes in Texas Public and Private Schools**

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>20. Character Education Would send my child to school.</b>		
No	7.7	1.9
Probably not	10.6	1.9
Probably yes	46.8	24.3
Definitely yes	34.9	72.0
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>21. Academic Standards Would send my child to school.</b>		
No	7.7	2.8
Probably not	11.5	6.5
Probably yes	40.9	28.7
Definitely yes	40.0	62.0
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.002	
<b>22. Would advise friend to teach</b>		
No	4.3	4.7
Probably not	11.6	18.7
Probably yes	46.4	31.8
Definitely yes	37.8	44.9
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.061	
<b>23. Location of school</b>		
Suburban	39.6	24.1
City	20.9	28.7
Large urban	39.6	47.2
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.017	
<b>24. General income level of parents of students in your</b>		
Below average	42.9	6.6
Average	43.7	39.6
Above average	13.4	53.8
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>26. Number of students in school</b>		
up to 159	1.7	39.8
160 to 344	1.3	33.3
345 to 779	6.0	23.1
780 to 1779	32.3	3.7
1780 or higher	58.7	--
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>27. Gender</b>		
Male	29.4	34.4
Female	70.6	65.7
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.362	
<b>28. Age</b>		
22-29	2.6	6.5
30-39	11.5	13.9
40-49	34.9	49.1
50+	51.1	30.6
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.003	
<b>29. Marital Status</b>		
Married	73.2	83.2
Single	26.8	16.8
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.044	
<b>30. Are you primary source of household income?</b>		
No	31.5	51.9
Equal	29.4	14.8
Yes	39.1	33.3
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.001	

**Teacher Attitudes in Texas Public and Private Schools**

---

	<b>Public</b>	<b>Private</b>
<b>31. Your salary for this academic</b>		
\$15,000 - \$17,999	--	13.5
\$18,000 - \$20,999	0.4	13.5
\$21,000 - \$23,999	1.3	11.5
\$24,000 - \$26,999	1.3	12.5
\$27,000 - \$29,999	3.0	14.4
\$30,000 - \$32,999	7.3	11.5
\$33,000 - \$35,999	9.8	12.5
\$36,000 - \$38,999	10.7	1.0
\$39,000 - \$41,999	10.7	1.9
\$42,000 - \$44,999	19.7	1.0
\$45,000 - \$47,999	9.0	1.9
\$48,000 or above	26.9	4.8
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.000	
<b>32. Highest Degree</b>		
Bachelor's	33.8	48.6
Master's	63.2	46.7
Doctorate	3.0	4.7
<i>chi-squared significance</i>	0.016	

## Appendix D: Public High School Teacher Comments on Administrative Environment/Support

A major conclusion of this survey is that teacher dissatisfaction with school administration is a major impediment to effective education and teacher retention in Texas public high schools. This conclusion is supported by statistical analysis in the body of this report. Additional and compelling evidence of administrative problems in public education were clearly revealed in the specific comments by teachers in the 1999 survey.

The comments below are not a sample of teacher comments. They are all the comments teachers offered regarding school administration. Comments including positive assessments are followed by the negative. There were some positive comments about school administration, however, the ratio of negative to positive comments is four to one.

### Positive Comments About Public School Administration

- *Our school has seen some major changes in the last two years, all for the better. We have a new superintendent who has revitalized a majority of the educators and improved morale.*
- *Our administration/principal/superintendent is very fair.*
- *Teacher morale has been better due to a change in administration. Teachers feel that if we have support from administration we can handle any discipline problem child.*
- *Three years ago we lost all 4 high school administrators over the issue of block scheduling. Since then, with the help of our present principal, we have started to focus on academic concerns and heal wounds caused by the strife three years ago.*
- *I do like the backing I get from administrators here.*
- *The principal is very easy to work with and manages to cushion the wrath of a tyrannical superintendent.*
- *We have a very strong disciplinarian as a principal. This has probably been good for the school, but has caused a few problems with teacher morale. There is no direct connection between the two, other than that the principal spends the majority of each day dealing with discipline problems and seldom has a chance to visit or encourage the teachers.*
- *Since our school obtained a new principle the discipline and academics are, this year, starting to improve. Our school board is in shambles.*
- *We have come out of a particularly rough time with a poor administrator to a kinder and gentler principal. Facilities are run down and new furniture is almost non-existent.*

## Negative Comments About Public School Administration

- Q *The main problem of teacher morale has more to do with treatment by administrators than with pay. The majority of people in the state are too cowardly to really admit what the educational problems are in this state. Schools are run by the sports establishment. Most principals are ex-coaches who actually become assistant athletic directors because they know athletics, but have very little feel for the classroom.*
- Q *Also, respecting a teacher's discipline within the classroom has collapsed. Our principal allows students to come to him with personal gripes, then certain teachers have been confronted about their decisions in front of classes. There are no serious consequences for bad behavior, vulgar language, rude treatment of teachers by students, or even hitting a teacher. Our teachers feel we have lost control over our student body.*
- Q *Students are unprepared for high school or the real world because of the pressure teachers in elementary and middle school face to not fail students. Drop out rates would be much higher if teachers followed actual policy rather than accommodating principal's fears.*
- Q *In order to avoid a hugely increased failure rate, most administrators advise teachers to change instructional strategies and do whatever it takes to enable students to "succeed."*
- Q *The problem comes with administrators who do not hold all of us accountable for meeting deadlines, being on time to work, teaching bell to bell, and enforcing school rules. These are classic stories of this lack of consistency which then spills over to those of us who teach. If students are not performing in the classroom, if students are not following rules, if students are causing problems, it is, I firmly believe, because the administrator is not holding the teacher accountable. The faults lie ultimately with the person who is called to walk the halls, sign the evaluations, and make the teacher assignments. As long as an administrator will not call the difficult shots, the quest for excellence continues in isolated classrooms rather than in a united building. Let's begin by firing all weak administrators rather than promoting them up the salary ladder.*
- Q *We once had a school with high standards and discipline and learning. Our current superintendent has destroyed almost all aspects of our school learning, discipline, communication, and accountability. The students run our school. He communicates with students instead of teachers; students are allowed to leave campus for any reason, given credit for courses that they don't attend; students are not punished even with teacher referrals. Students are allowed to exceed the number of absences allowed by the state. The superintendent does actual homework and correspondence course work for students. He ignores all the school and state rules he doesn't agree with. His favorite phrase is "I wasn't aware of that." His procrastination is legendary.*
- Q *Administrators only care about improving TAAS scores to make themselves look good. Teachers have no input on planning, scheduling, etc. Student discipline is ludicrous, one parent calls a school board member and policy is changed immediately. Administrators who could no more teach any class much less mine are nit-picking and telling me how I should teach. Cooperative learning should be banned.*

*Administrators want us to use it so everyone will pass, not because it is a sound educational practice.*

- Q Our superintendent's definition of success is high TAAS scores. Basically, the academic teachers teach the TAAS from August until February. After the test, teachers then can focus on the tests that are required by the TEA. Teachers are threatened with being moved to another content area if scores are not high enough. After a student passes the Exit TAAS our school is finished with challenging them in academics. Obviously our TAAS scores overall look great, especially on the superintendent's resume.*
- Q Administrators long ago left the reality of the classroom. They have no idea what it is like and how their demands effect both teachers and students. Decisions are made supposedly by sight-based teams, but our suggestions are really only for show, not decision. After 21 years in this profession, I feel like we are fighting a futile battle, the kids and administrators against the teachers. And our legislative system has only made it worse with their demands from their ivory palaces with no class experience or at least no recent class experience.*
- Q We have had administrative change this year and new superintendent and high school principal. Unfortunately, our school has gone down south since then.*
- Q My responses reflect what I consider to be the major problems in education: the financial gap between administrators and teachers (and spare me the drivel about how hard it is to be an administrator) and the disdain administrators have for teachers (attributable in part to the bloated administrator salaries and ever shrinking teacher's salaries).*
- Q Frequent change in administration and faculty leads to much of our trouble.*
- Q Lack of administrative support and adequate pay for work are reasons I most often hear from young teachers as to why they are leaving the profession. Little respect is given to teachers.*
- Q Poor pay, increased expectations, and weak administrative support are all problems facing teachers but all of these are accentuated because of the non-parental involvement.*
- Q There has been increasing administrative pressure to focus on TAAS related objectives. The rationale for this has been that, if our district and school are going to be judged in the eyes of the public based predominantly on our TAAS scores, that we must "align" our curriculum to pursue the better TAAS scores.*
- Q The administration (superintendent) has a dictatorial way of leadership. Therefore, he is respected by few and honored by none. When leadership like this comes into a system, many things begin to decline.*
- Q Parental involvement has affected the discipline in our school. The administration is afraid of lawsuits to greatly punish anyone. The local school board is in control of everything from teachers to curriculum. Very little of their time is spent on policy. Athletics are king.*
- Q Our strong teachers are very strong, but weary of the never-ending battle with administrative inertia, hostile parents, and cruisin kids.*

- *This no personal time coupled with low pay. Administrators act like we don't do enough and make work for teachers intolerable at times.*
- *Administrators should be required to teach at least one class. Too many parents make excuses for their children rather than letting their child learn consequences and administrators allow parents to make excuses.*
- *The legislators make rules for education and many have never been involved in it. Rules protect ineffective teachers and administrators. If principals do their job, teachers work harder to do their job and students are held accountable. If a principal doesn't do his job, there is usually low teacher morale and student behavior is usually worse.*
- *Administration cuts the budget in the areas of academics but they do not all with the public access to this information. We cover up with excellent TAAS scores, which helps to promote a positive learning environment, when the truth stems from excellent teachers and not necessarily a supportive administration.*
- *Teacher morale is low at our school because our board tells us they can not afford to pay the teachers anything above the state base, yet they can find the money to remodel the administration building.*
- *The district is not hiring teachers who have more than 5 years of experience, in order to cut back expenditures in the area of salaries. On the other hand, the number of higher administrative positions has increased.*
- *Teachers have been moved to different departments (math and science) to make room for incoming coaches. Coaches make very poor academic teachers. Administrators do not usually see this as a problem because the majority seems to be former coaches.*
- *There is far too much bureaucratic involvement and administrative interference. Administrators need to administrate and allow their teachers to teach.*
- *One of the most frequently given reasons for leaving is that teaching requires an excessive amount of time after school hours to grade papers for class. The second reason is lack of administrative support when dealing with parents.*
- *Parents sometimes unite against a good teacher who is trying to do their job until the teacher quits or is released by the administration.*
- *Very little regard is given to teacher morale. Several times, I myself personally, have heard administration say, "We are not here for teacher morale."*
- *I see our administration spend much of the day in ARD meetings, an impact the public doesn't even think about.*
- *We have been without a principal for 2 years, instead sharing one with the middle school on a separate campus. Teachers have had to be self-sufficient, which has hurt morale. Also contributing to lower morale*

*is the lack of support from the school board and public in understanding our difficulties.*

- Q In my school district for example; out of a total of 37 faculty, 12 have at least part-time coaching duties. All coaches are paid above base and no teachers are. Parents complain if homework interferes with athletic practices. Field trips are discouraged because they interfere with the academic school day, but students are regularly pulled out of class for athletics. Discretionary funds are spent first on athletics. Teachers are pressured to “pass” students so they will remain eligible for athletics. Since the majority of administrators are former coaches, this system is self-perpetuating and not open to discussion.*
- Q My community and administration likes high academic achievement but they don't like what it takes to get it. Discipline has gone down due to the administration not following through.*
- Q It seems to me that the new prerequisite for becoming an administrator is to say, “we're learning how to develop a system of totalitarianism.”*
- Q Our school has had three different principals in the last three years. With each new leader, changes are made without complete research of our problem. Just because a program worked for them at a previous school, doesn't mean the same program will work effectively here. So, in the past few years we have implemented many new programs, followed through with very few of them, and many teachers are frustrated with all of the new changes.*
- Q We need better-prepared administrators who are held accountable. Why aren't they working as hard as the dedicated classroom teacher? Administrators don't have a clue about how to address morale or discipline and use privacy laws to hide behind.*
- Q I feel that student desires for different science courses with state approved texts should be listened to despite what ACT, Globe, and the principal says.*
- Q Administrators make most decisions with no real teacher input. It bothers me that all campus professionals who do not teach students earn more than those who teach.*
- Q I see a huge need for better compensation to attract and keep excellent teachers in the profession, and I think that increased community support, as well as increased administrative support, would help morale.*
- Q The administrators seem to take the teachers for granted. Those of us who go above the “call of duty” are not recognized for our extra effort.*
- Q The morale at my school is low, and teachers are leaving because they are frustrated with discipline, the increasing amount of paperwork, an emphasis on TAAS to the exclusion of more worthwhile activities, and a district policy which continually adds high paid consultants and administrators but claims a poverty which prevents adequate raises for teachers.*
- Q In seven years we have had three new principals and two new superintendents plus an interim superintendent as well. Our school has lost the confidence of the community through the problems of the school board running against teachers and administrators. We teach in a somewhat hostile environment. However, we hope through the efforts of a new board and a new superintendent to see improvements.*

# About the Author

**John Pisciotta, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor, Department of Economics**  
**Hankamer School of Business, Baylor University**

John Pisciotta is a Senior Fellow with Texas Public Policy Foundation and has been a faculty member with Baylor University's Hankamer School of Business faculty since 1980. Initially, he was Associate Director of the Center for Private Enterprise. His work in the Center involved creating educational materials for teaching economics and delivering economic education seminars. Since 1987, Pisciotta has worked full-time in the Department of Economics.

Dr. Pisciotta has specialized in innovative approaches to teaching economics. These have included working physical models such as the Macroeconomics Tank and the Economic Balance Model. Dr. Pisciotta's teaching innovations have been honored with awards from the National Council on Economic Education and the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.

His primary teaching areas are microeconomics and the economics of government. The latter course explores the relative roles of government and private sector initiatives in several areas of the economy, including education.

Dr. Pisciotta's main research interests are taxation and education. He has authored two previous studies for the Texas Public Policy Foundation: **Teacher Satisfaction in Private and Public Schools** (1997) and **The Milwaukee School Choice Program: Lessons for Texas** (1995).

John Pisciotta is originally from the farming community of Vineland, Colorado. He earned his undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Colorado. His Ph.D. in economics is from The University of Texas at Austin. Research for his doctoral dissertation was carried out in Santiago, Chile. From 1971 to 1980 he served on the faculty of the University of Southern Colorado.