



## **Methodological Report Public Schools Study**

### **Prepared by International Communications Research for The Annenberg Public Policy Center**

The Public Schools Study was conducted for The Annenberg Public Policy Center from December 2002 to April 2003. International Communications Research (ICR) conducted interviews by telephone, attaining 2,411 completed interviews. The project was comprised of four separate studies, one that surveyed the general population (n = 802), another parents of children attending Kindergarten through Grade 12 (n = 800), a sample of school principals (n = 101) and superintendents (n = 100), and finally a sample of teachers (n = 608).

#### ***Study Design***

The parents and general population studies used a simple RDD design, with the parents sample screening only for parents of children in Kindergarten through grade 12. The teachers and administrators samples used a listed sample design of teachers at their home residence and administrators at their school or office.

#### ***Field Period***

The field period for this study was February 5, 2003 – March 17, 2003.

The interviewing was conducted by ICR/International Communications Research in Media, PA. All interviews were conducted using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system ensured that questions followed logical skip patterns and that the listed attributes automatically rotated, eliminating “question position” bias.

#### ***Response Rate***

Following is a full disposition of the sample selected for this survey.

TOTAL NUMBERS DIALED	3,619
Non-working, disconnected, business or government	291
Data/Modem/Fax line	26
Duplicate number	25

Ineligible	236
Language Barrier	48
Respondent away for study duration	8
Non-contacts	
No answer/Answering machine	229
Busy	9
Callback	40
Breakoffs	107
Refusals	581
Completed Interviews:	
No one disabled in household	514
Disabled household member	1505

Interviewers made contact with a household at 93% of working numbers and were able to gain the cooperation of 69% of those households contacted. This translates into an overall response rate on the study of 75.1%.

The following formula was used to calculate the response rate:

*(Completes)*

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$$[ \text{Completes} + \text{Refusals} + (\text{Non-completion percentage} * \text{non-contacted group}) ]$$

### ***Weighting***

Non-response in telephone interview surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population, and these subgroups are likely to vary also on questions of substantive interest. For example, men are more difficult than women to reach at home by telephone, and people with relatively low educational attainment are less likely than others to agree to participate in telephone surveys. In order to compensate for these known biases, the sample data were weighted in analysis.

The demographic weighting parameters were derived from a special analysis of the most recently available Census Bureau Annual Demographic File (from the March 2002 Current Population Survey). This analysis produced population parameters for the demographic characteristics of adults ages 18 and older, which were then compared with the sample characteristics to construct sample weights.

The defined universe for school administrators includes all school administrative personnel and thus is more inclusive than just principals and superintendents. While the census does provide data on teachers, it was decided that since the other listed sample, administrators, would not contain a weight, a more straightforward strategy would be to use sampling quotas on each of the samples in order to create samples that were essentially “self-weighted” across quota variables. Quota targets for the teachers sample were generated from Census CPS counts while administrators quota were created from the listed universe from which the sample for the study was generated. Additionally, parents and general populations sample quota were created based on CPS counts. Quota were set by region and gender.

A special weighting procedure was enacted for the parents and general population samples. Rather than keep these two samples separate, both were combined with a single weight based on their proportions within the general population. Since both samples employed RDD methodology and many general population respondents are parents, the study in fact surveyed 1065 (802 parents from the parents sample plus 265 parents from the general population sample) rather than 802 parents. As such, two weights were created based on the same overall weighting process.

The weighting process entailed obtaining CPS count data on age, education, race/ethnicity and gender of parents in the continuous United State (18 years of age and older) and similar counts for non-parents. These two counts, of course, add to the overall counts of adults ages 18 and over within the general population. Thus, parents were weighted separately from non-parents.

Two sets of weights were then created based on this overall weighting strategy. The variable “weight” was created by applying a factor to parents so that the unweighted count of 1065 appeared proportionate to their true incidence within the general population, which would be an  $n = 265$  for a overall general population survey  $n = 802$ . This weight is designed for analysis of the general population. Rather than simply conduct analyses with the general population sample, this weight allows the researcher to conduct analyses with the general population and parents samples combined, who, when weighted, are representative of the general population. The scheme provides greater precision of estimates for parents within the general population compared to simply using the general population sample alone. Using the general population sample alone with the weight will underrepresent parents: both general population and parents samples must be used together for this weight.

The second weight (compwght) was designed for analysis of comparisons between parents and non-parents, or of either population alone. This weight applied a separate factor to parents and non-parents to balance the weighted  $n$  to the unweighted  $n$  of both parents and non-parents, and thus will not provide accurate estimates of general population analyses but will provide accurate estimates and maximum statistical power for comparisons of parents to non-parents and analysis of just parents or just non-parents. A summary of these weights is provided below.

<b><i>Weight</i></b>	<b><i>Unweighted</i></b>	<b><i>Weight</i></b>	<b><i>Compwght</i></b>
Use		Gen Pop Analyses	Parents to Non-Parents Analyses; Analyses of Parents only or Non-Parents only
Gen Pop and Parents Samples (combined)	1,602	802	1,602
Gen Pop Sample	802	600	802
Parents Sample	800	202	800
All Parents in Gen Pop Sample	265	63	265
All Parents in Parent Sample	800	202	800
All Parents in Parents and Gen Pop Samples (combined)	1065	265	1065