



**New NWEA/Gallup Survey Reveals Educators and Parents View Academic and Nonacademic Skills Assessment of Equal Importance; Views on Which Skills Should be Taught, Where, and by Whom Vary Widely**

*Teamwork, Critical Thinking, and Creativity Seen as Critical Skills, but Adequate Assessment Is Lagging*

**Portland, Ore. – August 21, 2018** – Parents, teachers, and school administrators are in agreement about the importance of measuring students’ soft skills like critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork, according to a [new report](#) commissioned by [NWEA](#), the leader in K-12 education assessment, and conducted by [Gallup](#). Despite this recognition, assessment of these skills and communication about them between parents and teachers remains elusive. Views on which nonacademic skills schools should teach, the ways they are fostered, and whether schools, families, or communities should play the primary role in helping children develop these skills vary widely among those surveyed.

The report, “[Assessing Soft Skills: Are We Preparing Students for Successful Futures?](#),” is the fourth in NWEA’s Assessment Perceptions Study series, its biennial investigation into public perceptions of K-12 assessment, and includes findings from more than 4,000 parents, teachers, principals, and superintendents. The findings, collected through phone interviews and online surveys, were released this week as more than 50 million PreK-12 students begin heading back to school in districts across the country.

Looking at indicators of student success, the survey revealed that parents are optimistic about the quality of education today. A majority believe their children are receiving a better education than they did and are learning what they need to succeed in the future. However, they do not think the tests their children take are sufficient in measuring long-term outcomes.

“This year’s report addresses the important question of whether we are adequately preparing our students for the future, and it has revealed a number of areas of opportunity,” said Chris Minnich, CEO, NWEA. “Where I see the most potential is in truly measuring what matters for student success and ensuring that every assessment that exists today or is being created for tomorrow is relevant to student learning. NWEA is exploring pathways to making this a reality. We must continue our dialogue on this to create a future for assessment in which all students are able to fully realize their potential.”

Key findings of the survey are below. The full report is available at <https://www.nwea.org/resources/gallup-report-assessing-soft-skills-are-we-preparing-students-for-successful-futures/>.

**The Importance of Developing and Assessing Nonacademic Skills** (*Section 1*)

- Over eight in 10 teachers (83%), parents (82%), superintendents (82%), and principals (83%) say it is equally important to assess both academic skills and nonacademic skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and creativity
- Only about one in 10 teachers say that the formal and informal assessments used by their school to gauge nonacademic skills measure them “very well”
- When asked to describe what type of nonacademic skills schools should teach, interview respondents replied with a wide variety of life skills ranging from character development attributes to interpersonal soft skills to functional life skills (*Appendix A*)
- Although a majority of stakeholders believe it is very important for schools to measure nonacademic skills, many interview respondents said that those skills should be developed at home

### **Parents Perspectives on Schools, Assessments, and Students’ Future Success** (*Section 2*)

- More than 60% of parents agree (27%) or strongly agree (34%) that their child is learning the necessary skills in school that will make their child successful in the future
- Only one in five parents (20%) say that assessments their child takes in school measure “very well” whether their child will be successful in college
- When asked to compare the quality of their K-12 education with their child’s education, over half of parents (52%) say the education their child is receiving is better than the education they received; just 22% said quality was worse

### **Time Spent Taking and Communicating About Assessments**

- While a majority of teachers and administrators say that too much time is spent on assessments, a majority of parents (59%) say students spend just the right amount of time or too little time taking assessments (*Section 3*)
- Most (52%) teachers say that just the right amount of time is spent communicating assessment results to parents while a plurality of parents (46%) say that teachers spend too little time communicating results to parents (*Section 4*)

### **About NWEA**

NWEA® is a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measure growth and proficiency—and provide insights to help tailor instruction. Educators in more than 10,000 schools, districts, and education agencies in 141 countries rely on our flagship interim assessment, MAP® Growth™; our progress monitoring and skills mastery tool, MAP® Skills™; and our reading fluency and comprehension assessment, MAP® Reading Fluency™. Visit [NWEA.org](https://www.nwea.org) to find out how NWEA can partner with you to help all kids learn.