

YouthTruth

— STUDENT SURVEY —

A NATIONAL NONPROFIT

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NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION YOUTHTRUTH HARNESSES HALF-MILLION STUDENT VOICES TO HELP SCHOOLS IMPROVE

SAN FRANCISCO - [YouthTruth Student Survey](#) announced today that it crossed the threshold of surveying half a million students across 36 states and four countries. The San Francisco-based organization — which is the only major student and stakeholder survey partner that is an independent nonprofit — works with schools, districts, CMOs, and education funders to gather feedback from students, parents/guardians, and school staff on the topics that research shows matter most to student achievement and positive school climate.

“This is an exciting moment that signals to us the growing hunger within the education community for actionable feedback from students,” said YouthTruth Executive Director Jen Wilka. “We are meeting more and more educators and education funders who not only want to engage in the student voice movement, but also want to do so in partnership with an organization that understands the complexity of student feedback data and can help leaders use that data to drive meaningful changes in schools.”

With eight years of experience gathering robust student perception data, YouthTruth has learned directly from students about their experiences across a range of topics including [academic rigor](#), [college and career readiness](#), [bullying](#), and [school culture](#). YouthTruth regularly releases findings from their aggregate dataset to help education leaders and funders more deeply understand students’ experiences.

For example, recent findings include:

- Rates of bullying vary dramatically across schools, with a recent analysis showing schools ranging from a low of 12 percent to a high of 59 percent.
- While the vast majority of high school students want to go to college (87 percent), only 45 percent feel positively about their readiness for college and career.
- Only one in three students rate their school culture positively.

Recent [research](#) from the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) finds that foundation CEOs believe that the most promising practice for the future of foundations is “seeking to learn from the experiences of those they are ultimately trying to help.” Sixty-nine percent of CEOs who were surveyed point to this practice as one that holds a lot of promise. In education, those ultimate beneficiaries are the students, and student perception data can help foundations better understand the impact of their education initiatives on the lives of students. Funders can use this data to change or affirm strategy, revise tactics, adjust funding levels or priorities, convene conversations, and broker relationships, among other actions.

“Too often, we ignore the constituents who matter most — the intended beneficiaries of our work,” said Fay Twersky, director of the Effective Philanthropy Group at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and co-founder of YouthTruth. “It is clear that YouthTruth is meeting a critical need to systematically listen to students.”

Founded in 2008 with a pilot of 20 schools through a collaboration between the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) and the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), YouthTruth helps schools across the country gather and act on feedback to improve outcomes. [Stanford University’s John W. Gardner Center](#) has found student perceptions to be linked to academic outcomes, and a recent [synthesis of 15 years of research](#) found that a healthy school climate — often measured through surveys — can help close the achievement gap. Utilizing sophisticated technology to analyze feedback against a robust library of aggregate data, YouthTruth also consults with schools to make meaningful changes grounded in data.

About YouthTruth Student Survey

YouthTruth is a national nonprofit that harnesses student perceptions to help educators accelerate improvements in their K–12 schools and classrooms. Through validated survey instruments and tailored advisory services, YouthTruth partners with schools, districts, states, funders and educational organizations to enhance learning for all students. Founded in 2008 in collaboration with the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), YouthTruth has surveyed over a half-million students across 36 states and four countries, including Russia, Thailand, and Singapore. For more information, visit www.youthtruthsurvey.org.

About the Center for Effective Philanthropy

The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide data and create insight so philanthropic funders can better define, assess, and improve their effectiveness and impact. CEP received initial funding in 2001 and has offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts and San Francisco, California. For more information on CEP’s work, including its research, programming, and assessments, see <http://www.effectivephilanthropy.org/>.

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