



NATIONAL
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National Education Poll Underscores Need for Better Professional Development

*PDK/Gallup poll ranks teacher quality as nation's top education issue;
cites professional development as key tool*

WASHINGTON – August 25, 2010 – Improving the quality of our nation's teachers is the nation's top education priority, and providing quality professional development is viewed as critical to achieving this goal, the annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll has found.

The annual poll, administered for the Phi Delta Kappa professional association by the Gallup organization, indicates that parents view teacher learning as a critical factor in improving outcomes for students.

“The findings of the PDK/Gallup poll demonstrate that the public recognizes professional development is key to offering quality teaching and improving student performance,” said Stephanie Hirsh, Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council.

“Education stakeholders from classroom teachers to superintendents and elected officials can use these findings as incentives to shift professional development from an occasional event to a cycle of continuous improvement that is grounded in research, addresses student performance data and is incorporated seamlessly into every school day,” Hirsh added.

Nearly half of the respondents – 44 percent – ranked “having teachers spend more time learning new ways to teach” as the tactic that would have the greatest impact on improving student learning. Respondents also routinely selected “improving teacher quality” as the single most important need for our nation's schools.

NSDC is working to advance legislation pending in Congress – HR 5218, the Great Teachers for Great Schools Act – that would enhance the national definition of professional development to help expand access to high-quality, continuous, and data-driven teacher support in schools throughout the nation.

“The respondents of the poll understand what educators and parents have been saying for years: when teachers learn, students learn,” said Ingrid Carney, NSDC president and former deputy superintendent of schools in Boston. “High-quality professional learning on the job offers our best chance for improving the knowledge and skills of our current educator workforce.”

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About National Staff Development Council

The National Staff Development Council's purpose is ensuring that every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves. For more than 40 years, NSDC has focused on increasing student achievement through more effective professional development. To learn more about the impact of high-quality professional learning, visit www.nsd.org.