



# Bits 'n Pieces

Fall 2020  
for use by School Leaders

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## Did you Know?

- Six in 10 adults and 7 in 10 public school parents call public education highly important in their vote for president this fall.<sup>1</sup>
- About 4 in 10 adults approve of adding charter schools.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly half of the adults surveyed approve of partially funding private and/or religious schools.<sup>1</sup>
- 36.15 percent of classroom teachers and 28.77 percent of district administrators express concern about students' ability to learn in a distance environment vs. 57.46 percent of students on the same question.<sup>1</sup>
- 9.23 percent of teachers and 8.22 percent of district administrators expressed the loss of extra curriculars as the largest concern, however, 45.18 percent of students expressed that as their largest concern.<sup>1</sup>
- There are more urgent issues than the issue of teacher diversity, but diversity is no less important and yet only 26.58 percent of district administrators are emphasizing diversity more than in previous years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2020 PDK Gallup poll report, Find the full report, PowerPoint, all of the charts, and more at [pdkpoll.org](http://pdkpoll.org).

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## Grappling with Gaps

- 87 percent of high school seniors graduated in 2020. It's the state's highest graduation rate on record.<sup>3</sup>
- The graduation rate for American Indians was stuck at roughly 50 percent compared with a statewide average of about 84% for all students in 2019.<sup>4</sup>
- 67 percent of African-American students graduated in 2018.<sup>5</sup>
- 51 percent of Native American students graduated in 2018.<sup>5</sup>
- 66 percent of students classified as English learners graduated in 2018.<sup>5</sup>
- 63 percent of white students met proficiency standards in math.<sup>5</sup>
- 26 percent of black and American Indian Students met proficiency standards in math.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. New and World Report, By Emma Kerr and Melissa Shin

<sup>4</sup> Minnesota high school graduation rates rise slightly, By Mary Lynn Smith and Natalie Rademacher, Star Tribune, March 5, 2020

<sup>5</sup> Minn. High School Graduation Rate Up But Racial Gaps Persist, Mark Zdechlik, NPR, April 23, 2019

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# Talking Trust

A University of Minnesota survey of over 15,000 educators, was conducted in June of 2020.<sup>4</sup> The most frequently cited concern for staff was building relations during a period of racialization, violence, and covid19 issues. Trust-building emerged as a major component of staff/student relationships that helped students to feel they belong and that encourage an effective learning environment.<sup>4</sup>

As in any trust relationship, competency, motive, understanding, and dependability are essential and can be expressed through the following (spoken or unspoken) student queries and staff responses.<sup>5</sup>

1. **Why are you here?** Be clear about what motivates you.  
*I want to make a difference in students' lives.*
2. **How much do you know and care about me?** Be empathetic.  
*I acknowledge and understand the challenges facing students and want to learn more.*
3. **How much do you respect me?** Be optimistic and avoid unnecessary judgement and criticism.  
*I believe in your capabilities and your growth potential.*
4. **How real are you?** Be self-aware and credible.  
*Demonstrate racial and other self-awareness.*
5. **Do you know how to help me learn?** Foster student academic enagement and build faith in instructional competence.  
*I want a classroom where every student feels they belong. I want you engaged in your learning and the learning of other students.*
6. **What are you willing to do to help me?** Be patient and available and invest emotional labor.  
*I will do my best to,be available, and invest in you as a person and a learner.*

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<sup>4</sup>Gibbons, K., and Pikel, K. (2020) Minnesota PK-12 Distance Learning Survey: Experiences of Minnesota Eduators March-June 2020. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

<sup>5</sup>Peter Demerath, Sam Kemper, Eskender Yousuf, Bodunrin Banwo Submitted to *Education Week* 7/31/20, University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development (adapted for this article)

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## Quotes and Quotables

- "...”The disruptions created by all the year’s events make for a moment that schools should seize if they hope to fix the problems that have been talked about for years.” – *Jessica Davis, 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year*
- “All the diversity, all the charm, and all the beauty of life are made up of light and shade.” – *Leo Tolstoy*
- “You don’t have true freedom until you allow a diversity of opinion and a diversity of voices.” – *Don Lemon*
- “If we cannot now end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.” – *John F. Kennedy*

- “We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” –*Maya Angelou*
- “Diversity: the art of thinking independently together.” – *Malcolm Forbes*
- “Ultimately, America’s answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired.” – *Robert Kennedy*
- “It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.” – *Maya Angelou*
- “We are a nation of communities...a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky.” – *George H.W. Bush*
- “We need to reject any politics that targets people because of race or religion. This isn’t a matter of political correctness. It’s a matter of understanding what makes us strong.” – *Barack Obama*
- “It is never too late to give up your prejudices.” – *Henry David Thoreau*
- “Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.” – *Mahatma Gandhi*
- “Open your mind to new information, even if it is different from your preconceived notion or what you have heard or read from a single source.” – Anonymous