

Appendix A. Methodology

Waiting to Be Won Over is based on a nationally representative random sample of 1,010 K–12 public school teachers conducted in fall 2007. The margin of error for the overall sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points. The survey was preceded by six focus groups.

The Survey

The sample was randomly drawn from a comprehensive database of current K–12 teachers maintained by Market Data Retrieval, a subsidiary of Dun & Bradstreet. A multi-mode approach that included both mail and online versions of the survey was used.

The first mailing, which included a questionnaire and a cover letter, was sent via first-class mail on September 25, 2007, to 7,200 randomly selected K–12 public school teachers in the United States. A reminder postcard was sent on October 3, 2007. A second mailing of the questionnaire with instructions to those who had not yet participated was sent on October 16, 2007. Each mailing of the questionnaire included a prepaid business reply envelope. Teachers for whom an e-mail address was available—about 50 percent of the sample—were sent e-mails with an embedded URL linking them to the online version. A total of 139 surveys were completed online.

The margin of error for the results from the overall sample of 1,010 is plus or minus 3 percentage points. It is higher when comparing percentages across subgroups. Subgroup differences reported in this study are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level. Teachers in urban districts were oversampled to insure the survey netted a sufficient number (1,200 of the original 7,200 were part of the urban oversample). The results are weighted to reflect the actual distribution of urban teachers in the teacher population.

The overall response rate for the survey is 14 percent. As with all surveys, the risk of non-response is that the pool of survey respondents could differ from the true population of teachers, decreasing the ability to draw inferences from the data. A comparison of the demographic profile of respondents to that of the overall population of teachers shows they are very similar when it comes to such key variables as race and ethnicity, urbanicity, region, and sex (see Population vs. Sample Comparison). Results can also be affected by non-sampling sources of bias, such as question wording. Steps were taken to minimize these, including extensive pre-testing of the survey instrument with focus group participants and six one-on-one telephone interviews with current K–12 teachers.

The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed by the FDR Group and Education Sector; the two organizations are responsible for all interpretation and analysis contained within this report. FDR Group (Farkas Duffett Research Group) is a nonpartisan public opinion research firm specializing in surveys, focus groups, and program evaluations. The survey was fielded and tabulated by Robinson and Muenster Associates, Inc., of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

The Focus Groups

To help develop the questionnaire, six focus groups with K–12 public school teachers were conducted, with each group having 10–12 participants. The groups were conducted in five sites selected for geographic and regional representation:

Milwaukee (one group with teachers working in the city, another with teachers working in the suburbs), New York City (teachers working in city only), Chicago (mix of city and suburban), Atlanta (mix of city and suburban), and Phoenix (mix of city and suburban). Participants were recruited to FDR Group specifications to ensure a proper demographic mix. These discussions were crucial to developing the wording of the survey questions and to understanding why teachers feel as they do. Quotes in this report are drawn from the focus groups and from comments survey respondents wrote on their questionnaires in response to open-ended questions. All focus groups were moderated by the FDR Group.

Population vs. Sample Comparison (by percent)

	Population	Sample (n=1,010)
Race/Ethnicity		
White	83	88
Black	8	5
Hispanic	6	4
Asian/Pacific	2	1
Native American/Other	2	2
Sex		
Male	25	21
Female	75	79
School Type		
Elementary	52	51
Middle	20	21
High	23	27
Something else	5	1
Urbanicity		
Urban	31	29
Suburban	38	42
Rural/small town	31	29
School Enrollment		
<300	11	10
300–499	23	26
500–999	45	36
1,000 or more	22	28
Region		
Northeast	18	17
Midwest	24	28
South	39	35
West	19	20

Sources: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Science, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2006; NCES Schools Staffing Survey, 2003–2004.