

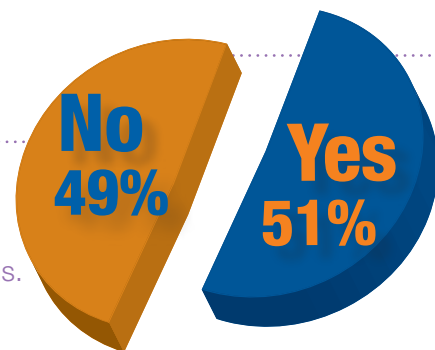
# READERS respond

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## POLL RESULTS

### Is It Time for a National Student Tracking System?

Poll takers and those who sent letters were evenly divided on this issue. Variations in state educational systems and costs topped the list of concerns.



#### Has To Happen Eventually

Digital technologies are decreasing the importance of geography as an educational constraint. Increased family mobility is causing stresses on inter-district sharing of student contact and academic learning information. We are going to have to confront this issue sometime. Why not sooner rather than later?

*Scott McLeod*  
CASTLE, Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa

#### Cost Is Too Great

What will it cost and what are the benefits? If the benefits don't outweigh the costs, it should not be done. Many of us have experienced the implementation of statewide identifiers for student tracking and probably would agree that the benefits do outweigh the costs. However, in a national system of tracking where you don't have uniform curriculum, uniform laws governing education etc., etc., the cost/benefit relationship gets considerably skewed to the cost side. Not worth it—yet!

*James H. Dillon, Jr.*  
Cranston Public Schools  
Cranston, Rhode Island

#### Would Be Beneficial

A secure national student tracking system would have a great deal of benefits, including the ability to illustrate to the nation the true need for additional funding and intervention, particularly in overcrowded, rural, and low-socioeconomic schools, and aid teachers and schools in accessing specific performance data for transfer students.

*Ashlee Copper*  
Ketchikan Charter School  
Ketchikan, Alaska

#### Weakens State Control

No, the complexities due to the variation of all the states educational systems would be too difficult to organize without a huge expense. Also each state has different state assessments, and criteria. Not all schools have the technology to establish and contribute to such a system. Much national standardization would need to be done, and states would feel that their rights would be weakened too much.

*Karl Sprenger*  
Penn State University INSYS Department  
University Park, Pennsylvania

#### Time To Standardize

It is simply time to standardize, as a nation, the results we expect students to achieve, the standards we expect teachers to relay, and the plethora of consistent tests we need to follow in measuring student achievement. A simple yet optionally complex and report-generating national database is absolutely necessary.

*Douglas Belk*  
Mississippi Educational Computing  
Association  
Pascagoula, Massachusetts

#### Will Only Label Students

No! Enough is enough! All we do anymore is teach to the test. And if you don't do well enough on the test, you get a label and a plan to fix your problem. Who decides I have a problem? Does it matter if I'm happy? Have you taught me anything I WANTED to learn? No, tracking is a way of providing a label to children, a label they don't need. Bring back recess!!

*Steve Martin*  
Newberry County School District  
Newberry, South Carolina

#### Time Is Being Wasted

Absolutely! We're wasting valuable hours creating a system internally that should be standardized across the board to accommodate students transferring from and to schools from around the country. Some might feel that Big Brother is watching—He is! So, why not give us access to the information he already knows?

*Jeremy Shorr*  
Aurora City Schools  
Aurora, Ohio

## Just For Fun!

teh i11it3r4t3 o teh 21 c3ntury w0nt b th0s3  
wh0 c4nt r34d & wr1t3 but th0s3 wh0 c4nt  
134rn un134rn & re134rn

Can you decipher the Chatspeak quotation?  
See below for translation.

The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century won't be those who can't read and write, but those who can't learn, unlearn and relearn—Alvin Toffler