



For Immediate Release
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YouthTruth Data Finds a Majority of Students Feel Challenged in the Classroom

Perceived support decreases as students progress through school

SAN FRANCISCO — The majority of students feel challenged by both their teachers and coursework a survey of 183,000 students in grades three through twelve conducted by YouthTruth Student Survey found. This majority also recognizes that they need to work hard to succeed in school. However, as students advance from elementary to secondary school they report decreasing motivation and support. In particular, only 54 percent of high schoolers feel that their teachers do not let them give up when work gets hard. This is compared to 70 percent of middle schoolers and 85 percent of elementary schoolers.

YouthTruth Student Survey is a national non-profit that surveys students about their educational experience. They partner with schools and districts across the U.S. to identify areas of success as well as opportunities to help educators accelerate improvements in their K-12 classrooms. Because student perceptions are empirically linked to and predictive of academic outcomes, YouthTruth survey findings help educators make real-time adjustments before it's too late.

“Rigorous coursework and instruction are fundamental to student engagement and achievement. It is encouraging that a majority of students feel challenged at school. This data affirms that by and large, students feel challenged to work hard and think critically in order to succeed academically,” said YouthTruth Executive Director Jen Vorse Wilka. “But, there are also some sobering findings. As students get older, far fewer feel that their teachers do not let them give up when the work gets hard. This data is not indicative of teachers’ intentions, but rather a direct reflection of students’ perceptions. We hope these findings spark questions and conversation that teachers and administrators can use in their own schools.”

YouthTruth’s assessment of students’ perception of rigor in their classrooms and instruction found that:

- A majority of students report feeling challenged by their teachers and coursework.

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
82%	73%	67%

- A significant majority of students report that they must work hard to receive good grades.

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
76%	87%	82%

- However, as students progress through grade levels, fewer students feel as though their teachers do not let them give up when work gets hard.

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
85%	70%	54%

- In all grade levels, there is room for improvement in terms of the impact of students' assignments. Only 62 percent of elementary, 61 percent of middle school, and 59 percent of high school students say their teachers give them assignments that really help them understand the subject.

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 and educational organizations to enhance learning for all students. Since 2008, YouthTruth has surveyed hundreds of thousands of students in 33 states and four countries, including Russia, Thailand, and Singapore. For more information, visit www.youthtruthsurvey.org.

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