



# Education E-Newsletter

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## Web vs. Telephone Survey: Why an Online Survey Isn't Enough



School district administrators across the country have many things in common within their school systems. Often times school districts encounter similar situations such as tight budgets and reduced state funding. For example, most school administrators have had to put a proposal on an election ballot and then respond to the election results, whether or not the outcome was favorable.

In our experience as market researchers, administrators can relate to the issues and challenges that come about during the decision-making process involved in millage elections and compare it to the decision-making process involved in conducting research or selecting a consultant. After working with dozens of school districts, we have found that for any type of research project-such as surveys and strategic planning efforts -groups within the district such as staff members, parents, and the community all tend to play a role in the decision-making process.

With all the people involved, and all the questions that arise regarding the research expenditure; how does everyone get on the same page? What frequently tends to happen is that the superintendent and other administrative staff are interested in research and understand the benefits, but when the topic is brought to the board, there is commonly a disconnect that causes the board to question the costs of research and idea is turned down.

## Did You Know?

- An estimated 130 million of the world's 15-to 24-year-olds cannot read or write
- There are 781 million illiterate adults worldwide, and 64 percent of them are women
- Nearly 115 million children are out of school

Source: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

- The National Education Association suggests and supports classroom sizes of 15 students
- Based on a recent study from Student Achievement Nation, students enrolled in smaller class sizes at a young age complete more advanced math and English courses
- When compared to regular classrooms, smaller classrooms have a 72% graduation rate compared to 66% in a regular classroom size
- Students from smaller classes are 4% more likely to stay in school and graduate with honors

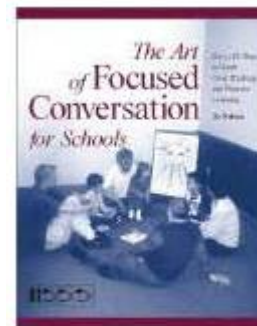
To read the report, [click here.](#)

To read the rest of the whitepaper, [click on this!](#)

## Look At This Book: Art of Focused Conversation for Schools

By Michelle M. Sears  
Director of Client Relations

Successfully educating and preparing youth for the future is a challenge that educators and parents rise to each day. With that in mind, it is important that every interaction school administrators have with students, staff, and parents are focused and effective.



The book, *Art of Focused Conversation for Schools*, by Jo Nelson explores the social interactions between students, staff, parents and the community. Each chapter demonstrates the different uses of the focused conversation method and how it can be applied to everyday life.

The focused conversation method is a four-level process for engaging a group in conversation and is based on the natural thinking processes behind everyday communication. When used in an educational setting, it uses focused questions to encourage and assist teachers, administrators, students, and others to work together as a team to address school concerns. The four levels consist of the objective level, reflective level, interpretive level, and decisional level.

The book is broken down into specific sections that address theory, application, and examples of focused conversations that can help improve human reflection processes and encourage improvement within individual group experiences. The method demonstrates how planned focused conversations can improve educational settings for grades K-12.

With more than 100 examples within the chapters, the book addresses making learning meaningful, making communication effective in groups, preventing and solving problems, and the use of creative applications in a variety of situations. For example, one of the methods that would be beneficial for school district administrators includes thought provoking questions like: "Why can't students do higher order thinking?, Why do educators have endless staff meetings with few

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## We want your feedback!



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results? How can parents and teachers communicate better?"

I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to improve their school's ability to stimulate conversations to uncover the changes and improvements needed within a school. As more pressure is placed on educators to teach more material, relate to students with different cultural backgrounds, and leave no children behind while doing so, anything that makes that easier, is a great resource tool to introduce in the classroom.

Source: Nelson, Jo. *Art of Focused Conversation for Schools*. Canada: New Society Publishers: 2001.

If your district is facing a situation where parent, community, student, staff, or graduate information would allow you to make informed and effective decisions, give Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc. a call at (800) 724-9994, or visit our web site at [www.perspec.com](http://www.perspec.com) for additional information on our services. We would be pleased to share our experiences working with other school districts and discuss how we can help your school plan for continued success.

Sincerely,

Michelle M. Sears

Director of Client Relations  
Perspectives Consulting Group, Inc.

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