

America's Teens Report Technology, Science and Math as Critical to Succeeding in Global Economy

10th State of Our Nation's Youth Report Provides Latest Views of Nation's Teens

WASHINGTON (August 5, 2008) - America's teens express their needs to compete and succeed in the global economy, citing improved technology as a critical requirement, according to a new report issued today.

The 10th *State of Our Nation's Youth* report was issued today by the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans. The report compiles the results of the national survey conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. The 2008-2009 report is a comprehensive study of American high school students' opinions, apprehensions and aspirations. Highlights from this year's survey include:

One in three (34%) students say that science and technology classes are the most important school subjects that prepare teenagers for the global economy, while 38% of students ranked more up-to-date technology as the most desirable school improvement that would benefit their education. Math is cited next (26%) as the most important subject they will take in school. The report further finds that despite considerable attention paid to education over the past decade, efforts to improve schools have not made a difference in the eyes of students, whose ratings of their schools have remained at a 'B' average since 2001.

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Pressure on Students - Of all pressures that teens face, the need to get good grades (38%) tops all others. Students also report spending more time on their homework than in past years—to achieve the same grades. One in five (21%) students dedicates more than 10 hours each week to homework compared to 2005, when

only 12% of students reported spending as much time on their homework.

Parents - Teens are continuing to benefit from the positive influence of family role models with 57% of teens naming a family member as their role model. Three-quarters of teenagers say that their parents would be more proud of them for receiving straight A's on their report cards than for receiving an athletic (5%) or community service (18%) award.

Gap Year - Of college-bound students, 18% plan on taking time off, known as "a gap year," before starting college. Seven out of 10 students affirm that they plan on attending a four-year college or university, and only 4% of students have no plans for continuing their education.

Careers - When asked directly about several possible career tracks, half (49%) of students say they have thought about becoming a teacher, 42% have thought of joining the military, 33% have thought about serving in the government and 20% have thought about running for public office.

Religion - Religion has a positive influence on some students' lives. Just over half (53%) of American teens consider themselves religious. Religion is most likely to have an impact in the South, where 62% of teenagers consider themselves religious, than in the Midwest (53%), West (50%), or Northeast (44%). African-American students (62%) are more likely to say they are religious than Caucasian (53%) and Hispanic (49%) students.

Cyber Bullying - Of the 14.9 million American high school students, 2.4 million (16%) reported that they have been a victim of cyber bullying. A remarkable portion of teens, almost one-third (30%), view online bullying as a greater threat than traditional bullying in schools.

Internet - Students are using the Internet more for entertainment and social networking than for help with homework. Today's teenagers spend an average of 11 hours a week using the Internet, 4.5 of which are spent getting online help with homework. One in three (33%) students cites the Internet as a primary news

source. One in five (20%) students uses news websites and 13% use online blogs.

“This year’s survey brings us valuable insight into American teens,” said Peter D. Hart, president of Peter D. Hart Research Associates. “What emerges from the research is a portrait of a generation who believe in themselves and their abilities, and who recognize the important role that technology plays in preparing for their future.”

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc. has conducted more than five thousand public opinion surveys encompassing interviews with more than three million individuals over the past 30 years. This is the fifth *State of Our Nation’s Youth* survey that has been conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

The telephone survey included 1,006 students in grades nine through 12 and between ages 13 and 19. The sample of high school students was based on a compiled list provided by American Student List, the well-respected national list management firm, which specializes in maintaining lists of K-12 students. The survey sample closely matches U.S. Government (Census and Department of Education) statistics for age, area, race, and gender. The margin of error is ± 3.1 percentage points.

“A key mission of the Association is to invest in our nation’s teens, and with this research, we continue to utilize the tools to gain an understanding of America’s teens,” said David L. Sokol, President and CEO of the Horatio Alger Association. “Our aim is to initiate a dialogue between teens and the adults in their lives which encourages growth, appreciation, and most importantly, success.”

The Horatio Alger Association is steadfast in its commitment to America’s youth. Its network of field directors works with public, private and parochial school administrators as well as state departments of education throughout the country to share the *State of Our Nation’s Youth* results across the United States and to market the Horatio Alger scholarship programs.

For more information on the State of Our Nation’s Youth report, please see the following link or contact Chelsea Cummings, ccummings@qorvis.com, 202-683-3106/ Carrie Blewitt, cblewitt@qorvis.com, (202) 744-5270.

The State of Our Nation's Youth Report in PDF form and Broadcast Quality Press Conference Video:

<http://www.horatioalger.org/youthreport08.cfm>.

About The Horatio Alger Association

Founded in 1947, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans continues to fulfill its mission of honoring the achievements of outstanding individuals in our society who have succeeded in spite of adversity and of encouraging young people to pursue their dreams through higher education. The Horatio Alger Association offers three annual scholarship programs: the National Scholarship Program and state scholarship programs, available to high school seniors in all 50 states, and the Horatio Alger Military Veterans Scholarship Program for U.S. veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. The Association awards more than \$12 million annually in college scholarships and has given over \$63 million to deserving students since 1984. The Association is a 2008 Combined Federal Campaign participant, ID# 77062. For more information about the scholarships, please visit www.horatioalger.org.

http://www.horatioalger.com/news/08sony_release2.cfm