

**To:** MENC  
**From:** Regina Corso  
**Date:** June 6, 2008  
**Re:** National Anthem Survey Results Summary

---

### KNOWLEDGE OF WORDS

Overall, two-thirds (67%) of Americans say they know all the words to the National Anthem and this is up from 2004 when 61% said they knew all the words. One in six Americans (16%) say they do not know the words while the same number say they are not sure.

Interestingly, there is a regional difference as to knowledge of all the words to the National Anthem. Those in the Northeast and Midwest are more likely to know all the words while those in the Southern and Western parts of the country are more likely to not know all the words to the National Anthem.

	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+	Northeast	Midwest	South	West
	%		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	67	64	72	65	69	71	70	64	65
No	16	21	17	17	10	12	12	19	21
Not sure	16	14	12	18	20	17	18	17	13

There is also an age divide – those who are 18-34 are most likely to say they do not know all the words. But it isn't the oldest age group who say they know all the words – it is 35-44 year olds as almost three-quarters of them say they do.

	Total	HS or Less	Some College	College Grad
	%	%	%	%
Yes	67	59	70	79
No	16	21	14	11
Not sure	16	20	16	10

There is also an education correlation with knowledge of the words to the National Anthem. The more education one has, the more likely one is to know all the words.

### TEACHING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM IN SCHOOLS

Since those with only a high school education are the ones most likely to not know all the words to the Star Spangled Banner, one idea is that it should be taught in schools. And, 85% of Americans agree with this idea. In fact, two-thirds of them (67%) strongly agree with it. When we examine this by the different educational levels, we see that while four in five (82%) of those with a high school education agree with this idea, that number rises to nine out of ten (90%) among those with a college degree.

	Total	HS or Less	Some College	College Grad	18-34	35-44	45-54	55+
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total Agree (NET)	85	82	86	90	76	85	90	91
Strongly agree	67	64	71	69	50	67	74	80
Somewhat agree	18	18	15	21	26	18	16	12
Total Disagree (NET)	9	10	10	7	15	9	6	6
Somewhat disagree	5	6	3	4	8	4	4	2
Strongly disagree	5	5	7	3	7	5	2	4
Not sure	5	8	4	3	9	6	4	2

Age shows some of the larger differences in agreement on whether the Star Spangled Banner should be taught in schools. Nine out of ten of those aged 45-54 (90%) and 55 and older (91%) agree with this idea as do 85% of those 35-44. However, “just” three-quarters (76%) of those 18-34 agree with the same idea. Much of this is most likely due to those who are the youngest in this age group having just gotten out of high school. They are most likely to remember and, therefore, most likely to disagree with anything specific being added to the curriculum.

#### MUSIC EDUCATION AND SUCCESS IN OTHER SUBJECTS

Looking at music education in general, there is strong agreement with the idea that music education teaches valuable skills that can help students be more successful in other subjects such as math or science. Over eight in ten Americans (84%) agree with this statement and over half (54%) strongly agree.

	Total	HS or Less	Some College	College Grad	Less than \$35k	\$35k-\$49.9k	\$50k – \$74.9k	\$75k and up
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total Agree (NET)	84	79	86	91	83	90	87	86
Strongly agree	54	47	54	65	50	56	51	60
Somewhat agree	30	32	32	25	33	34	36	25
Total Disagree (NET)	9	11	10	6	10	5	6	11
Somewhat disagree	6	8	4	4	7	4	4	6
Strongly disagree	3	3	6	2	3	1	2	5
Not sure	7	10	5	3	7	6	7	3

Looking again at this by the different education levels, those with more education are more likely to agree. Nine in ten college graduates (91%) agree, including two-thirds (65%) who strongly agree, compared to eight in ten (79%) of those with a high school education or less who feel the same.

## CONCLUSIONS

First, in the course of four years, slightly more people now say they know all the words to the National Anthem. Knowing how repeated the 61% figure was a few years ago, this increase of 6 percentage points may be due to a bit of embarrassment on the part of some Americans. Regardless, there is very strong support for making sure that number rises even more by teaching the Star Spangled Banner in school.

The second take away is one we saw last year – music education isn't just about music. Americans do realize that music education teaches other things and by having it, that helps students be more successful on other subjects.

### **Methodology:**

Harris Interactive conducted the study online within the United States between June 2 and 4, 2008 among 2,035 adults. Figures age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, and household income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the online population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

If you have any questions about any of the research findings contained in this document please do not hesitate to contact Regina Corso (212.539.9522).