

## Same-Sex Public Schools Hit Milestone, Few Obstacles

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**PHILADELPHIA** — Single-sex public education is a growing trend in America's schools, but some observers warn educators to avoid stereotypes and teaching methods that would threaten civil liberties.



groups.

Ten years ago, the Young Women's Leadership School was created as a public school for lower-income, mostly minority girls in Harlem, it was a pioneer in the area of same-sex education. Today, about 200 primary and secondary public schools in the United States offer single-gender classes not only for gym or health, but also for subjects such as math; more than 40 of these schools are completely one-gender. Although they're championed by many educators as a vital way to boost kids' performance, morale and self-esteem, they're also being challenged by civil-rights

After decades of striving for full equality in education and trying to ensure girls and boys — as well as kids of different skin colors — had access to the same facilities and coeducational classes, it just may be that one way to get kids to excel in school is to go in the opposite direction: literally to separate the boys from the girls. The federal government is expected to release regulations soon on how to make it easier for schools to experiment with these types of classes. "When you separate boys and girls, they both lose because one group doesn't learn from the other," said David Sadker, who added that it's important to educate the individual, not the gender. These opponents of single-gender classrooms say the key to helping kids learn better is to rebuild and strengthen coeducation, get more parents involved and boost resources.

A University of Michigan study that found students at single-sex schools had better academic achievement, higher educational aspirations, more confidence, and a more positive attitude toward academics. Girls also had fewer stereotyped ideas about what women can and cannot do. A 2003 University of Virginia study that shows that boys in a single-sex setting were more than twice as likely to pursue art, music, and drama interests than males in a coed setting who would think these subjects were "for girls."

San Francisco's public 49ers Academy, classrooms are single-gender but after-school programs, field trips, recess and dances are not. The same teachers for each subject also teach both male and female students. The demographics are primarily low-income, with 65 percent Latino, 30 percent black and 5 percent Pacific Islander students; common demographics for most of the country's 40 single-gender public schools.

Perhaps one reason many low-income schools adopt single-gender classes is because of the Adequate Yearly Progress report, (AYP) part of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The NCLB allows for public single-sex classes or schools; in 2001, it appropriated \$3 million for grants to local educational agencies for such programs. Under the act, public schools are evaluated by students' progress in reading/language arts, mathematics and either graduation or attendance rates.

1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the pros and cons of same-sex schools. You may create a Venn Diagram as a resource; however, not in lieu of writing a paragraph.
2. The national education budget currently stands at \$69 billion (ed.gov) with an enrollment of 76.6 million K-12 students. Assuming these funds were equally distributed how much is invested in each student's education?
3. Assuming the San Francisco 49ers Academy current enrollment is 1,762 determine the demographics of its students and assemble this information into a table and graph.
4. The nation's population as of Thursday, October 19, 2006 at approximately 11:20 p.m. E.D.T. was 300,020,332 (census.gov). As a simplified fraction, decimal, and percent, express the relationship between the number of students *not* enrolled in K-12 school and the nation's population.
5. In your own words, briefly explain No Child Left Behind. Do you agree or disagree with its implementation? Explain.
6. In paragraph form, what research-based results were derived from the major University studies?
7. In the passage above, in paragraph form, explain at least five ways using the red "Four-Step Reading" poster simplifies understanding of the material. Be specific.
8. Using contextual clues only, explain the meaning of the words: stereotypes, vital, aspirations, and appropriated.
9. In paragraph form, explain at least five legitimate and educational purposes behind The Daughtry Times.