



QUALITY EDUCATION FOR *ALL*

**SURVEY OF DUVAL COUNTY
ADULT RESIDENTS**

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

Conducted For
The Community Foundation, Inc.
in Jacksonville, Florida

Conducted By
Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc.
Washington, D.C.



METHODOLOGY

This survey of 1,100 adult residents of Duval County, Florida was commissioned by The Community Foundation, Inc. of Jacksonville, Florida. It was conducted by telephone from January 26 through February 4, 2006 by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C.

Those interviewed were selected by the random variation of the last four digits of telephone numbers. A cross-section of exchanges was utilized and quotas were assigned in order to ensure an accurate reflection of the demographic profile of Duval County.

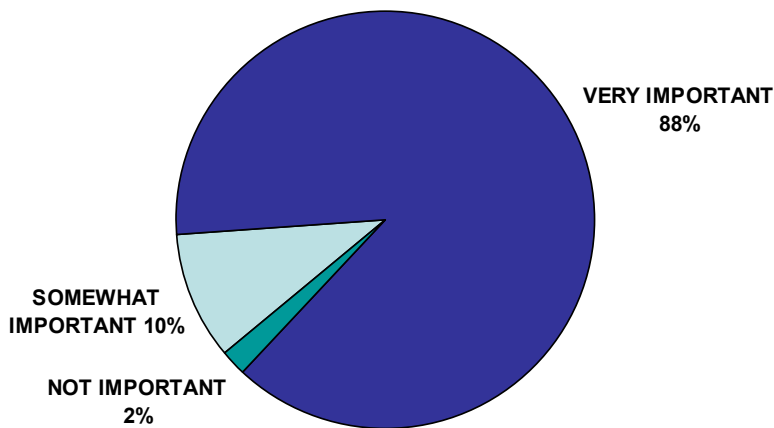
The margin for error for each survey, according to standards customarily used by statisticians, is no more than plus or minus 3 percentage points. This means that there is a 95 percent probability that the "true" figure would fall within that range if all county adults were surveyed. The margin for error is higher for any subgroup, such as an age or gender grouping.

Executive Summary

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

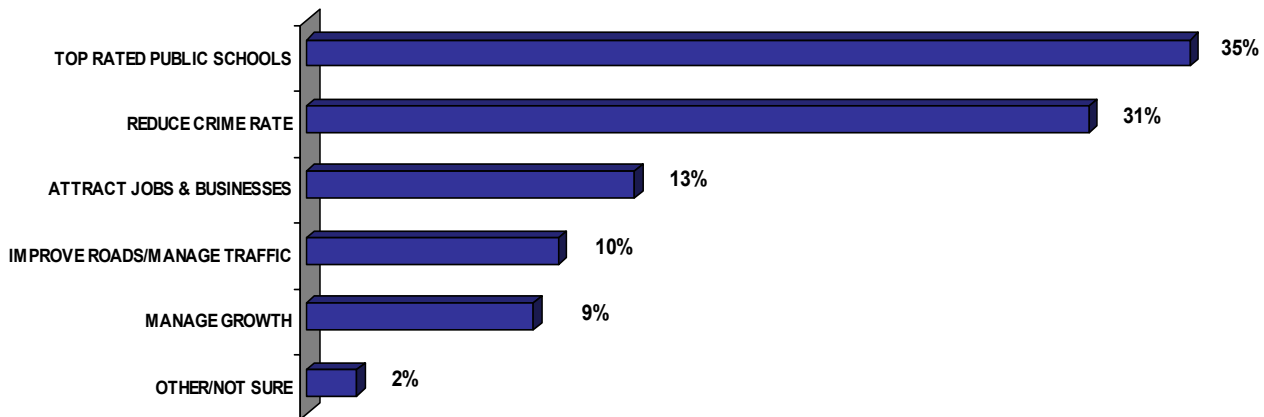
Having a top-rated public school system is “very important” to Jacksonville’s future, respondents said.

IMPORTANCE OF TOP-RATED PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM



Given a choice of five major local issues – education, crime, economic development, roads and growth management, more residents felt that having a top-rated public education system was most important to Jacksonville’s future (35%). Reducing the local crime rate (31%) came in a close second.

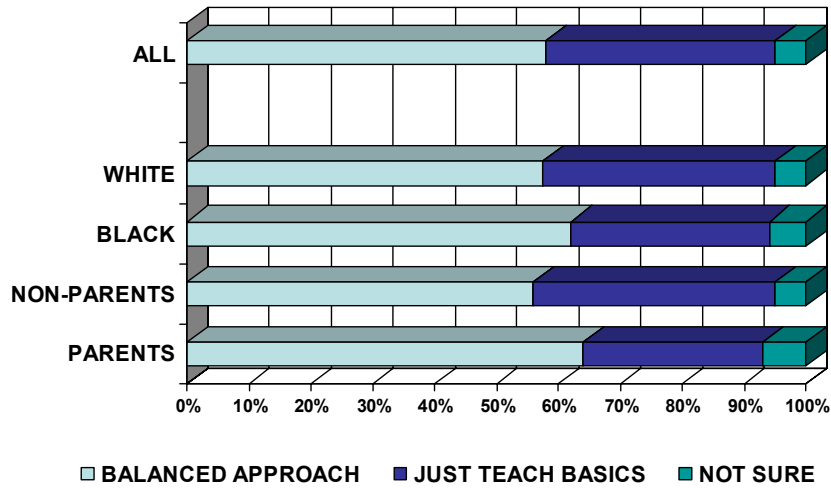
MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE TO JACKSONVILLE’S FUTURE



ROLE OF SCHOOLS -- The majority of Duval County residents (58%) felt that the primary purpose of public schools is “to provide a balanced education in which the basics are only one factor.” Only 37% said that the primary purpose is “to teach the basic subjects such as English, math and science.”

Providing a “balanced education” was more strongly supported by blacks (62%) and school parents (64%).

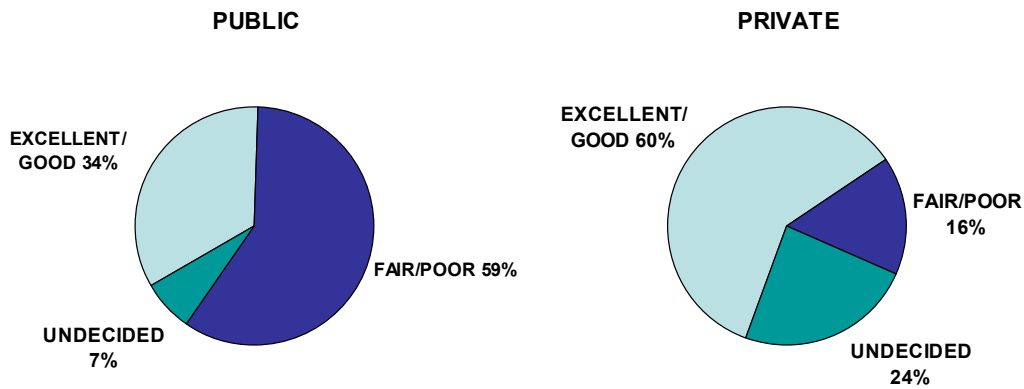
PRIMARY PURPOSE OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS



RATING THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOLS

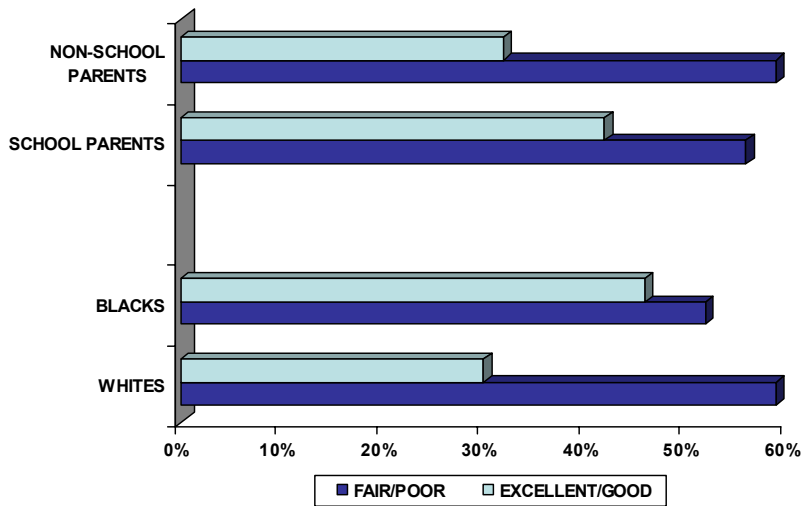
The Duval County public schools get mixed ratings from local residents. Overall, only 34% of adults said the performance of the school system is “excellent” or “good”, while 40% said “fair” and 19% said “poor.” In comparison, 60% said the performance of private schools in the area is “excellent” or “good.”

***RATING THE PERFORMANCE OF
DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC & PRIVATE SCHOOLS***



Two groups give slightly better ratings to the public schools. Of adults with a child enrolled in the Duval County public schools, 42% said the performance of the schools was “excellent” or “good”, and among blacks the public schools were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 46%.

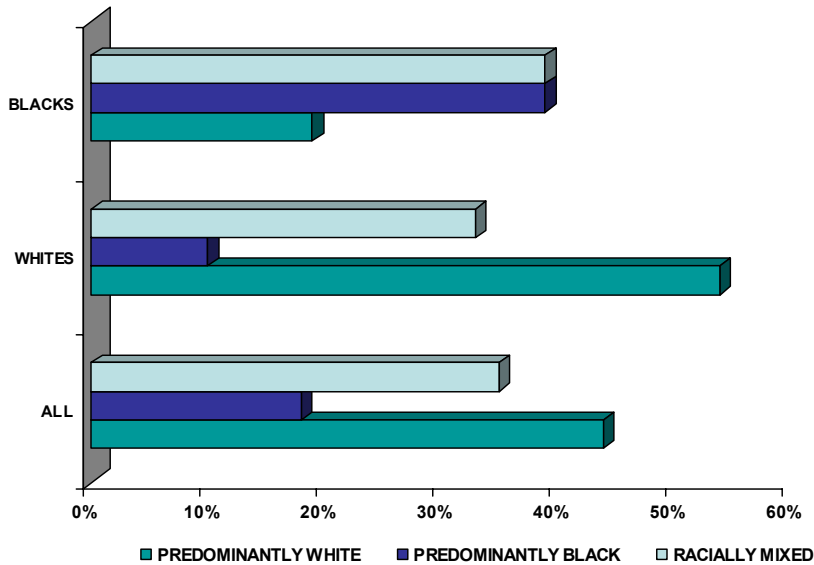
RATING THE PERFORMANCE OF DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



EQUITY OR INEQUITY?

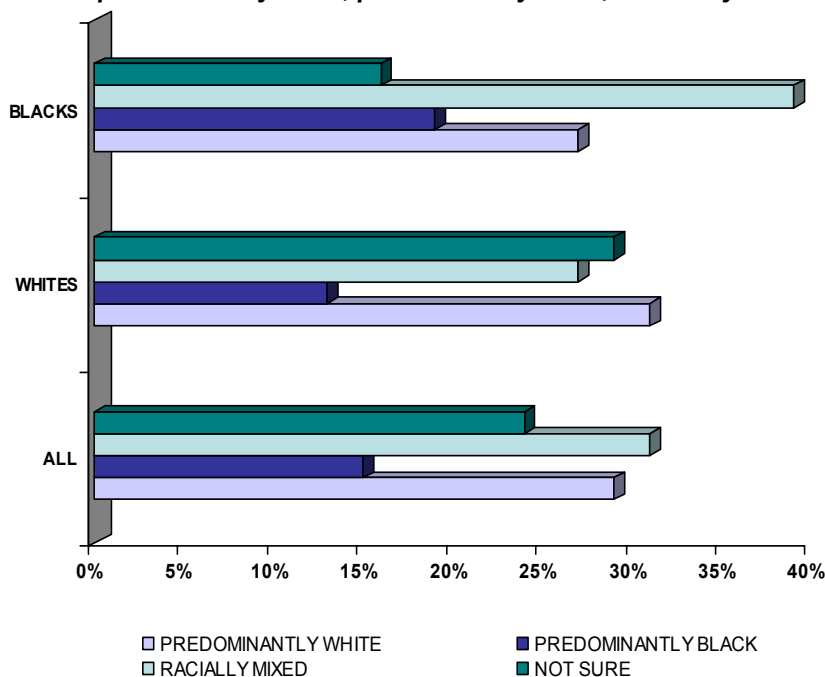
RACIAL BALANCE -- Only 35% of Duval County residents said that their neighborhood schools are “racially mixed.” A majority of white residents (54%) indicated that their neighborhood schools are “predominantly white.” Just 10% said neighborhoods schools were “predominantly black” and 33% said neighborhood schools are “racially mixed.” Among black residents, 39% said their neighborhood schools are “predominantly black”, 39% said their neighborhood schools are “racially mixed” and only 19% said neighborhood schools are “predominantly white.”

“In your neighborhood, would you say that the students in the public school system are: predominantly white, predominantly black, or racially mixed?”



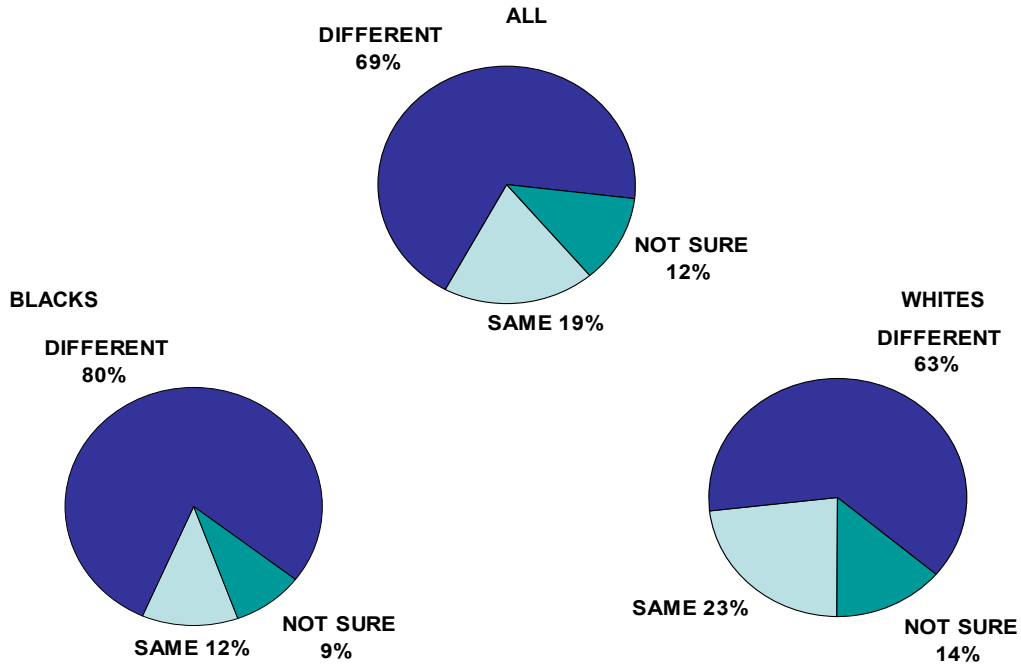
The racial view of the Duval County system as a whole is not that much different.

“Would you say that the students in the Duval County Public School system are predominantly white, predominantly black, or racially mixed?”



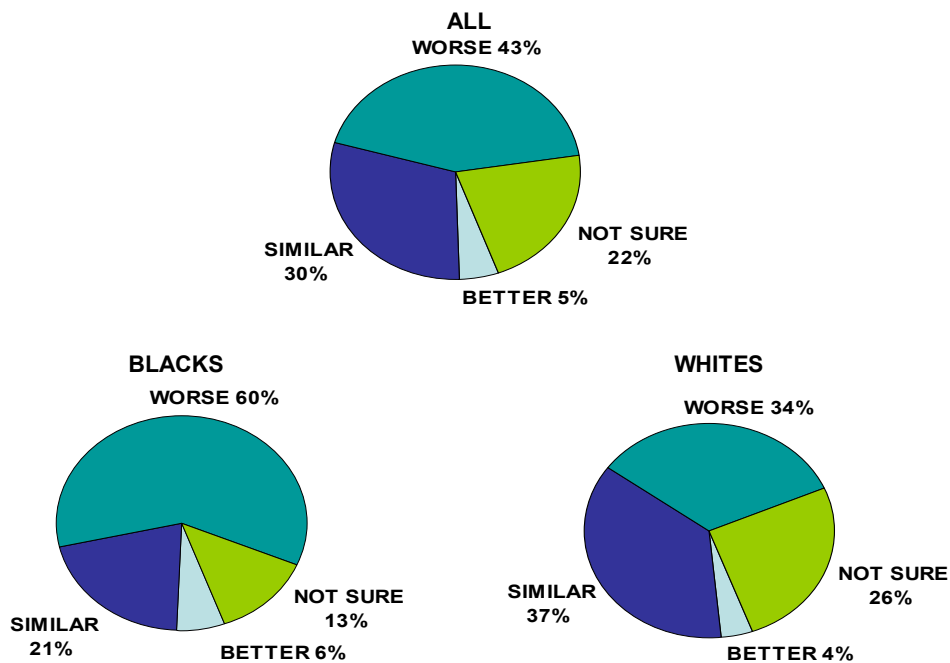
QUALITY OF EDUCATION – More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) said the quality of education in the Duval County public schools is very different from neighborhood to neighborhood. Only 19% said quality is about the same and 12% were unsure. Among black respondents, 80% were of the opinion that the quality of education differs.

Is quality of education the same or different from neighborhood to neighborhood?



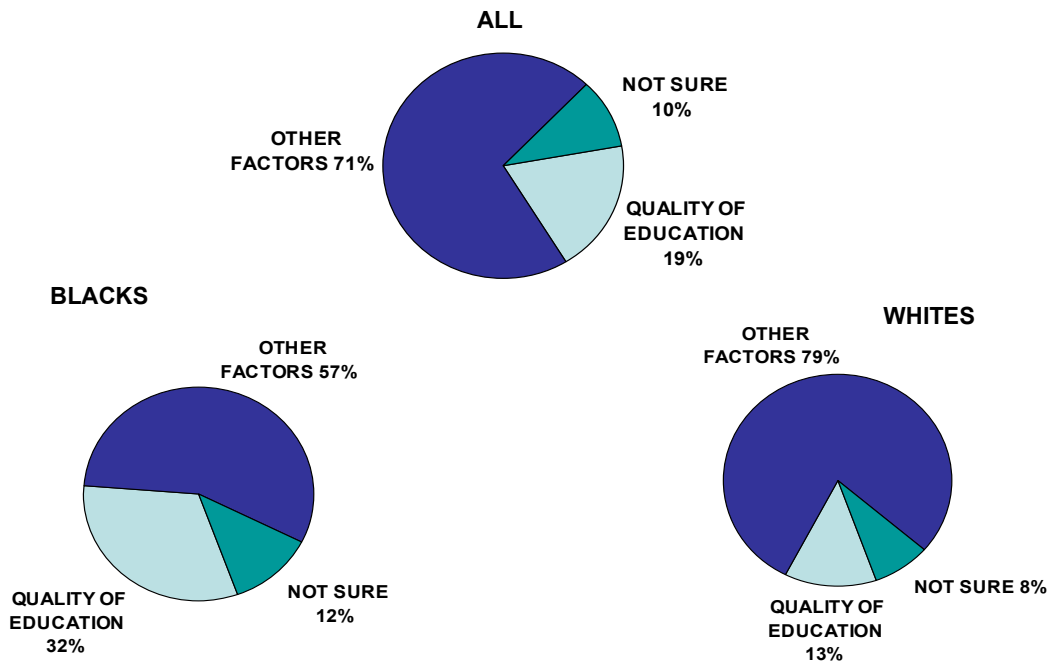
The difference, respondents generally said, is that the quality of education in schools where the students are predominantly black is “worse” than it is in schools where the students are predominantly white. Among blacks, 60% said the quality of education in predominantly black schools is worse.

Is quality of education in predominantly black county schools better, similar or worse than in predominantly white schools?



ACHIEVEMENT GAP -- When asked why there are achievement gaps between white and black students on standardized achievement tests, only 19% of respondents cited the difference in the quality of education the students received. The large majority (71%) attributed it to other factors. Blacks, however, were more likely to place the blame on education inequity (32%) than whites (13%)

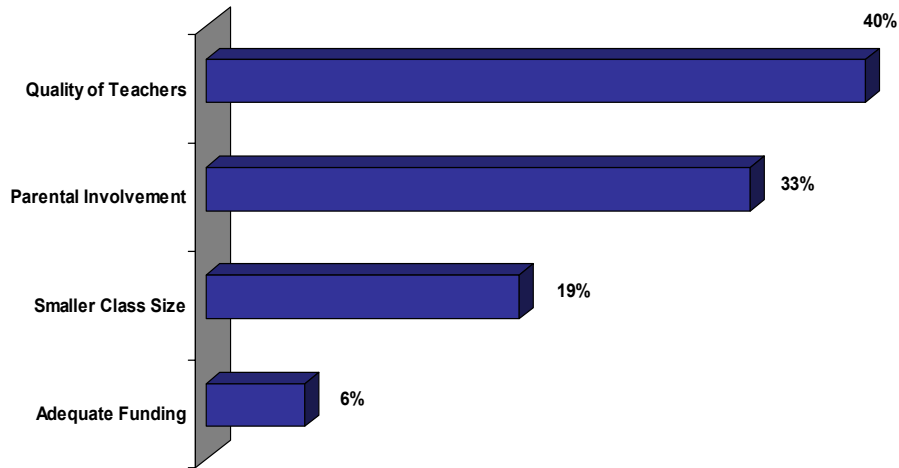
Primary Cause for Achievement Gap: Quality of Education or Other Factors?



IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION

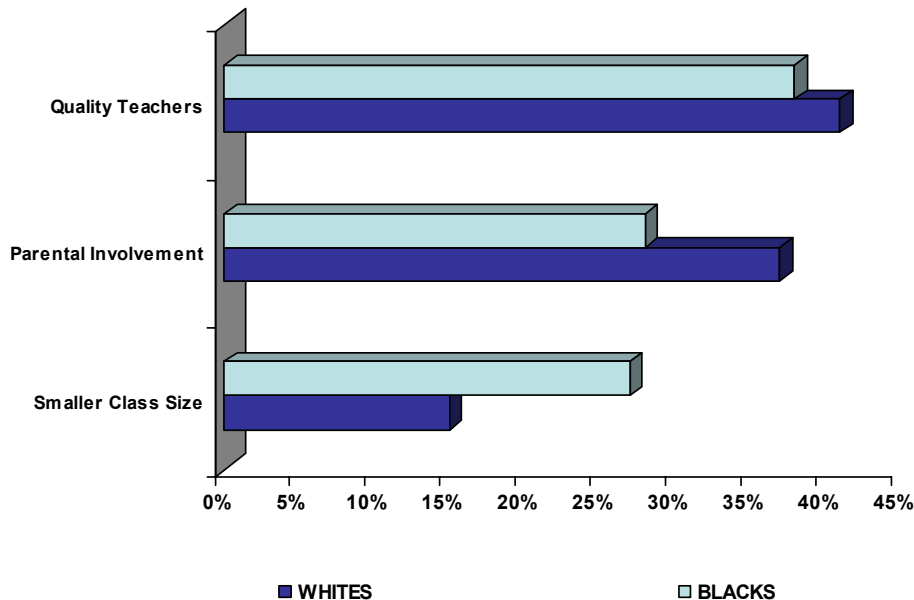
When offered a choice of four factors that influence the quality of education, Duval County residents felt that the quality of teachers (40%) and having more parental involvement (33%) are the two most important. Having smaller class sizes (19%) trailed and only 6% said adequate funding was most important.

“Which one of the following factors do you feel is most important to providing a quality education?”



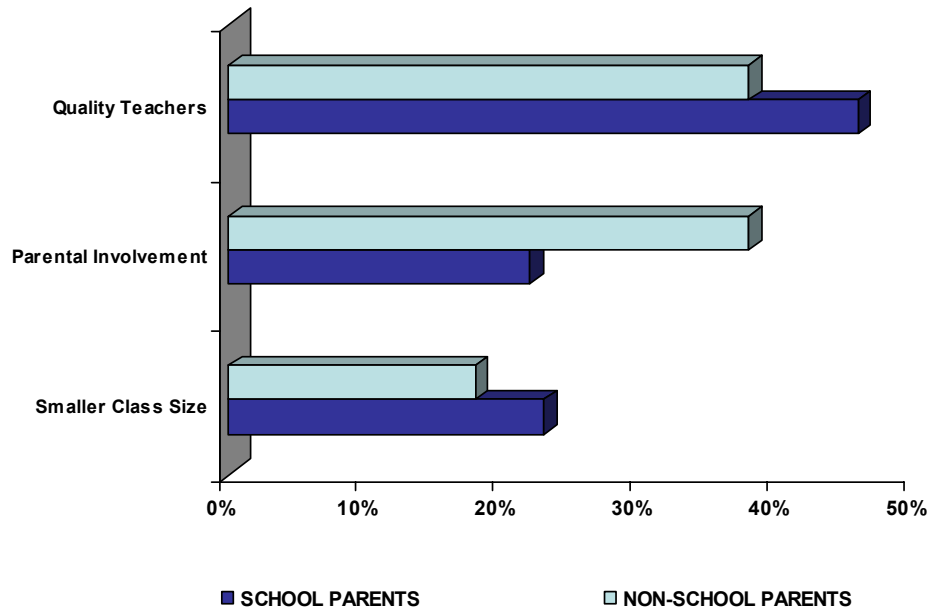
For blacks, however, class size is a significant issue. While only 15% of whites identified it as “most important” to providing a quality education, almost twice as many blacks (28%) cited it as the most important factor. This trend was also reflected in the results within the heavily black northwest region, with 26% citing class size.

MOST IMPORTANT EDUCATION FACTOR



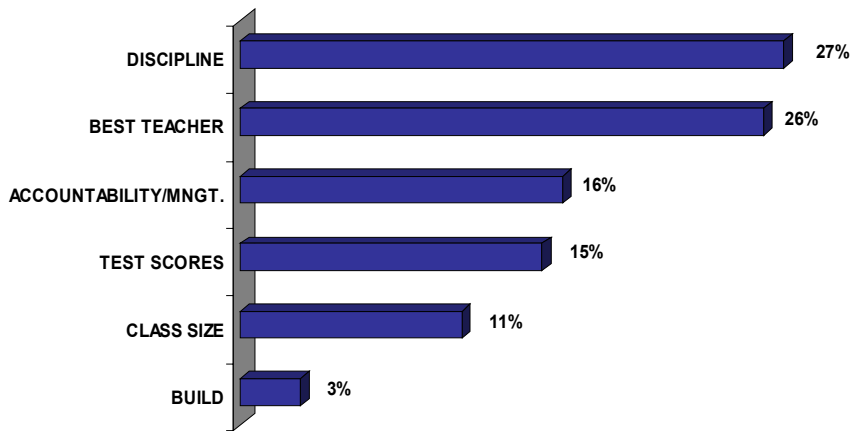
Public school parents (46%) were more likely to choose the quality of teachers than non-school parents (38%), and were also more likely to cite class size (23%-18%). Non-school parents (38%) were far more likely to name parental involvement than school parents (22%).

MOST IMPORTANT EDUCATION FACTOR



When residents, however, were asked what should be the top priority of the Duval County school system, reducing class size did not rank high. Improving discipline in the classroom and safety in the schools (27%) and increasing teacher pay to attract and retain the best teachers (26%) were named as the top two priorities for the Duval County public school system. These were followed by having more accountability and better management of financial resources (16%) and raising standards to improve test scores (15%). Reducing class size was named by only 11% and building new and improving existing facilities was named as the top priority by only 3%..

“Which one of the following do you feel should be the top priority of the Duval County public school system:”



Discipline was not the top choice of all groups. While it was ranked first by whites (30%) and non-school parents (29%), it did not score as well among blacks (21%) and school parents (20%). Blacks (25%) and school parents (25%) both chose improving teacher pay and attracting better teachers as their top priority. Reducing class size also rated higher among blacks (15%) and school parents (15%) than it did among whites (10%) and non-school parents (10%).

TOP PRIORITY FOR DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOLS		
	IMPROVING DISCIPLINE	IMPROVING TEACHER PAY
WHITES	30%	25%
BLACKS	21%	25%
PARENTS	20%	25%
NON-PARENTS	29%	26%

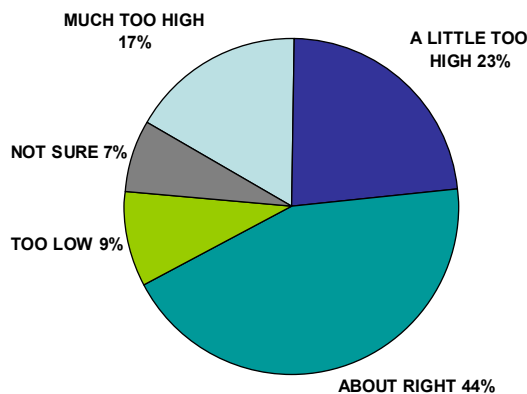
FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Not only is there general agreement that local public schools need improving, there also is relatively strong agreement (59%) that increased funding will be necessary for the Duval County public school system to become a top-rated system. Of all respondents, 59% agreed that increased funding was necessary. In all subgroups but one (registered Republican voters), more than 50 percent of the respondents agreed that increased funding was needed.

INCREASED FUNDING NECESSARY?	YES	NO	NOT SURE
COUNTY	59%	36%	5%
MEN	54%	41%	5%
WOMEN	64%	31%	6%
WHITES	52%	41%	7%
BLACKS	72%	25%	3%
SCHOOL PARENTS	70%	26%	3%
NON-PARENTS	55%	39%	6%
DEMOCRATS	68%	27%	5%
REPUBLICANS	47%	46%	8%
INDEPENDENTS	62%	33%	5%
NON-VOTERS	63%	36%	2%

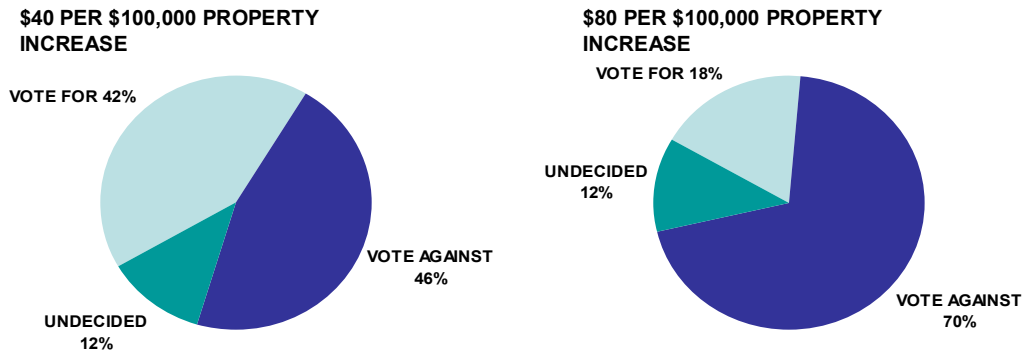
In contrast, however, respondents were divided when asked to evaluate local taxes in terms of the overall quality of education provided in the Duval County public schools. Overall, 40% felt taxes are currently “too high” and 44% said they are “about right.” Only 9% felt they are “too low.”

RATE LOCAL TAXES IN TERMS OF QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION



Similarly, when registered voters were asked how they would vote on a special ballot initiative to increase property taxes by \$40 per \$100,000 of assessed value to fund school facility needs, only 42% said they would vote “For” such a proposal and 46% said they would vote “Against” it. Opposition is strongest among Republicans (54%), men (52%), whites (48%), non-school parents (47%) and homeowners (48%). Opposition to an \$80 per \$100,000 property tax increase was overwhelming (70%), which underscores voter sensitivity to the size of any potential education tax plan.

**VOTER SUPPORT FOR PROPERTY TAX INCREASE
FOR FACILITY NEEDS**

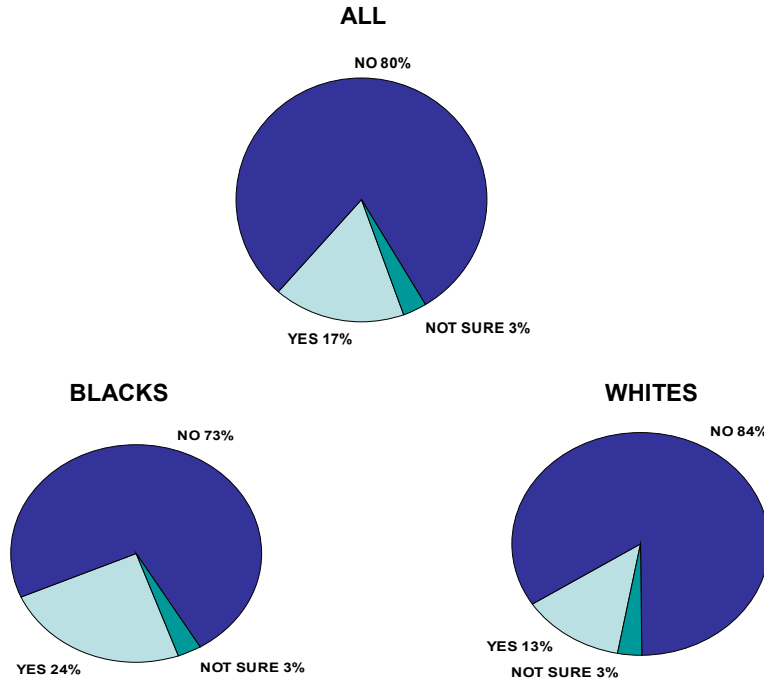


\$40 PER \$100,000 PROPERTY TAX INCREASE	“FOR”	“AGAINST”	UNDECIDED
COUNTY	42%	46%	12%
MEN	39%	52%	9%
WOMEN	46%	40%	14%
WHITES	40%	48%	12%
BLACKS	50%	40%	10%
SCHOOL PARENTS	45%	42%	13%
NON-PARENTS	42%	47%	11%
DEMOCRATS	55%	37%	8%
REPUBLICANS	29%	54%	17%
INDEPENDENTS	41%	49%	10%
HOMEOWNERS	41%	48%	11%
TENANTS/RENTERS	46%	41%	13%

Negative reaction to such a tax increase could be due to the fact that only 35% of residents felt that either many new schools are needed to replace aging facilities or that there are many renovation, repair and upgrade needs at Duval County public school facilities. The majority of residents (52%) felt that there was only need for some renovations, repairs and upgrades or felt that most public school facilities are in good shape. Even among school parents, only 38% said there was a need for many new schools, renovations or repairs.

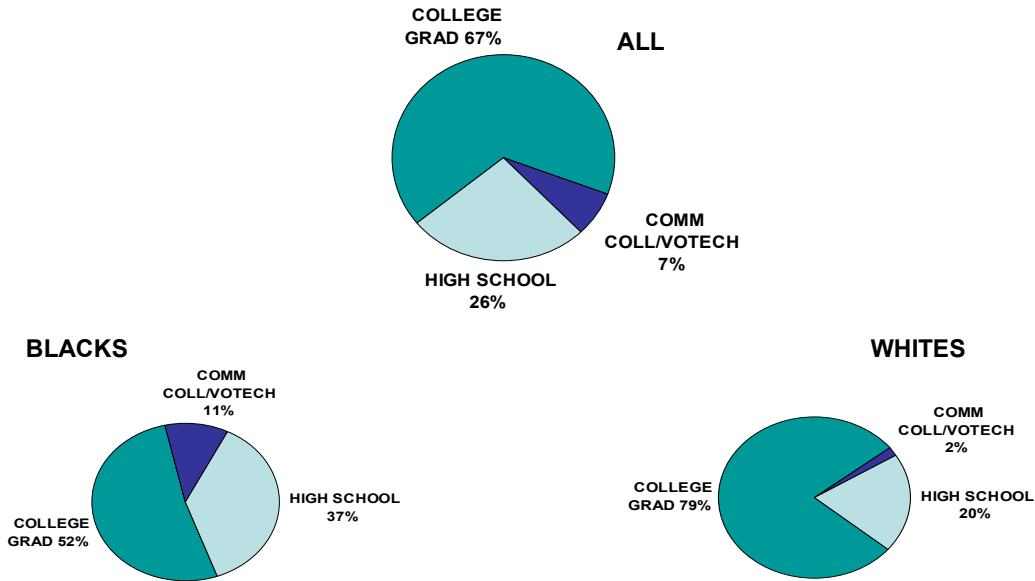
EXPECTATIONS – County residents (80%) overwhelmingly felt that in 10 years a high school diploma will not be sufficient to get a good job in the Jacksonville area. Only 17% felt a high school education would be enough to land solid employment. Blacks (24%) were more likely than whites (13%) to think that a high school diploma will be sufficient.

IS HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ENOUGH TO GET A GOOD JOB?



Duval County public school parents have high expectations for their children. Slightly more than two-thirds (67%) expect their children to at least earn a four-year college degree. White school parents (79%) are more likely to expect their child to complete at least four years of college than black school parents (52%).

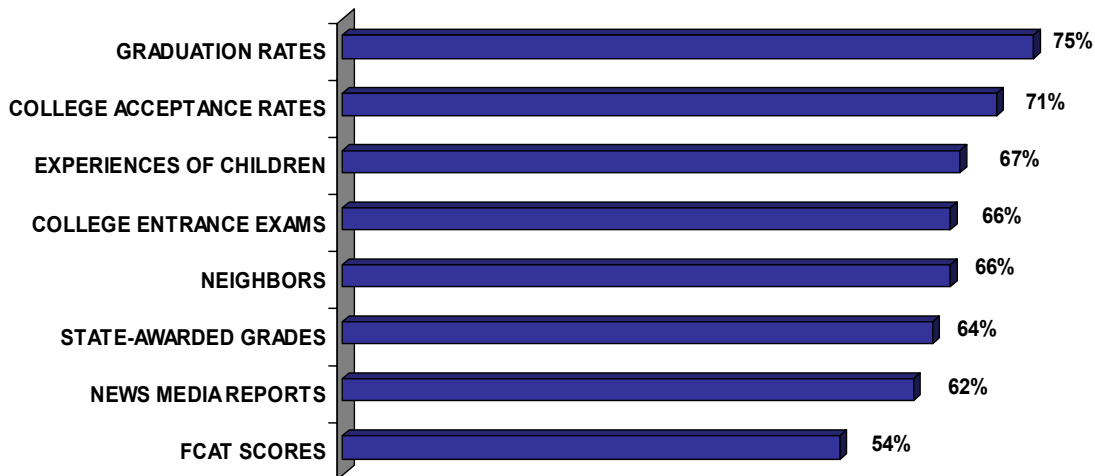
EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILD’S EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT:



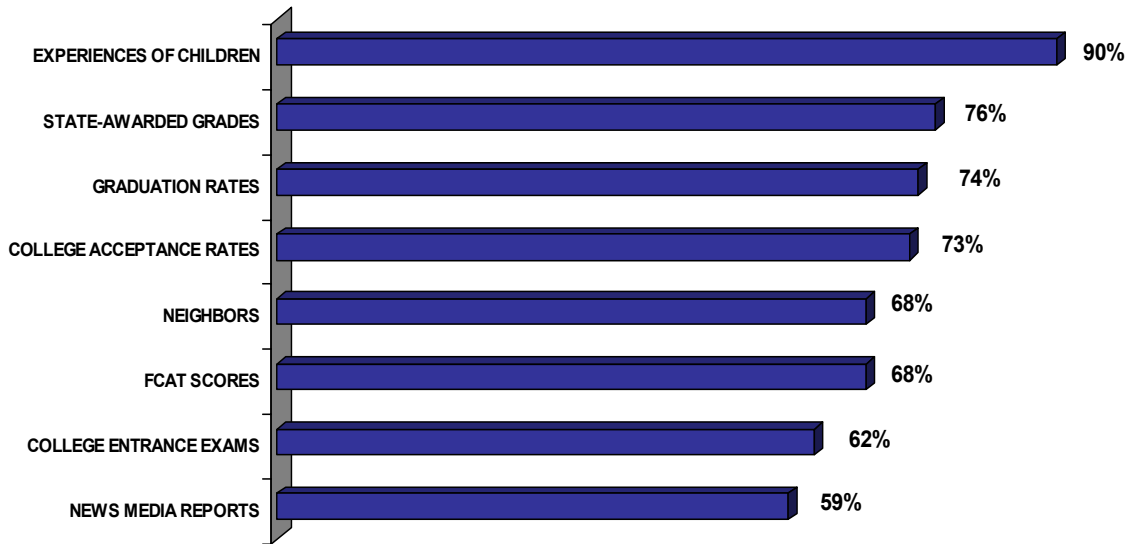
FORMING OPINIONS

When evaluating the quality of neighborhood schools, Duval County residents consider a wide variety of information sources. Graduation rates (75%) and college acceptance rates (71%) appear to carry the most weight, while news media stories (62%) and FCAT scores (54%) carry the least.

**FACTORS USED TO EVALUATE QUALITY OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS:
(ALL RESIDENTS)**



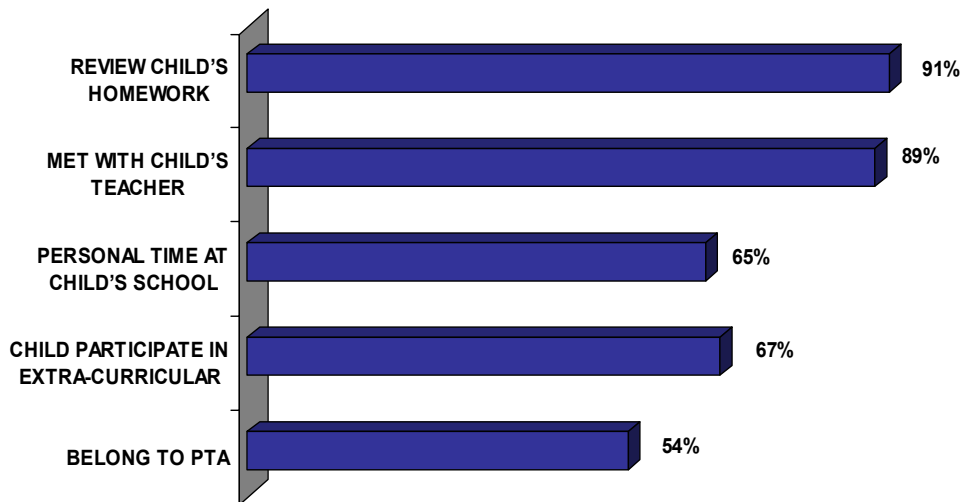
**FACTORS USED TO EVALUATE QUALITY OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS:
(PARENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS)**



Parents of public school students, however, rely most heavily on their own child’s experiences (90%) and pay more attention to FCAT scores (68%) and state-awarded school grades (76%). They pay less attention to the news media (59%).

And parents of public school students indicate they are actively involved in their children’s school lives. Among those county residents who have a child currently enrolled in a Duval County public school, the majority indicated that they participate in their child’s education.

Percentage of school parents involved in the following school related activities:



DUVAL COUNTY EDUCATION POLL RESULTS- JANUARY 2006

QUESTION: Which one of the following do you feel is most important to Jacksonville's future? (ORDER ROTATED)

35% - Having a top rated public education system
31% - Reducing the crime rate
13% - Attracting jobs and businesses
10% - Improving roads and better managing traffic
9% - Managing residential & commercial development
2% - Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: In terms of the overall quality of education provided in the Duval County public schools, do you feel your local taxes are:

Much too high	17%
A little too high	23%
About right	44%
Too low	9%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	7%

QUESTION: How important do you feel having a top-rated public school system is to the future of Jacksonville and Duval County? Is it:

Very important	88%
Somewhat important	10%
Not too important	2%
Not at all important	-
Not Sure (NOT READ)	-

QUESTION: How do you rate the overall performance of the Duval County public schools: excellent, good, fair or poor?

Excellent	5%
Good	29%
Fair	40%
Poor	19%
Undecided	7%

QUESTION: How do you rate the overall performance of the private schools in the area: excellent, good, fair or poor?

Excellent	19%
Good	41%
Fair	13%
Poor	3%
Undecided	24%

QUESTION: In order for the Duval County Public Schools to become a top-rated system, do you believe that increased funding is necessary, or not?

Yes	59%
No	36%
Not Sure	5%

QUESTION: Are you registered to vote in Duval County?

Yes	90%
No	10%

(REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY n=993) QUESTION: What is your current official party voter registration? Are you a registered:

Democrat	45%	(443)
Republican	39%	(390)
Independent or Other	16%	(160)

(REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY n=993) QUESTION: If a special ballot initiative were proposed by the Duval County School District to increase its debt to fund school facility needs, and that proposal increased the local property tax by \$40 per year for each \$100,000 of assessed value, would you vote for or against that proposal?

For	42%
Against	46%
Undecided	12%

(REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY n=993) QUESTION: If a special ballot initiative were proposed by the Duval County School District to increase its debt to fund school facility needs, and that proposal increased the local property tax by \$80 per year for each \$100,000 of assessed value, would you vote for or against that proposal?

For	18%
Against	70%
Undecided	12%

QUESTION: Which one of the following factors do you feel is most important to providing a quality education: (ORDER ROTATED)

Quality of Teachers	40%
Having more Parental Involvement	33%
Smaller Class Size	19%
Adequate Funding	6%
None/Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)	2%

QUESTION: In your opinion, is the primary purpose of public schools:

- 37% - to teach the basic subjects, such as English, math and science,
- 58% - or, to provide a balanced education in which the basics are only one factor?
- 5% - Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: In your neighborhood, would you say that the students in the public schools are: (ORDER ROTATED)

- 44% - Predominantly White
- 18% - Predominantly Black
- 35% - Racially Mixed (NOT READ)
- 3% - Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: And what about the county system as a whole? Would you say that the students in the Duval County public schools are: (ORDER ROTATED)

- 29% - Predominantly White
- 15% - Predominantly Black
- 31% - Racially Mixed (NOT READ)
- 24% - Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: Do you feel the quality of education in the Duval County public schools is pretty much the same from neighborhood to neighborhood, or is it very different from neighborhood to neighborhood?

Same	19%
Different	69%
Not Sure	12%

QUESTION: Do you believe the quality of education in the Duval County public schools where the students are predominantly black is better, similar or worse than the quality of education in the county schools where the students are predominantly white?

Better	5%
Similar	30%
Worse	43%
Not Sure	22%

QUESTION: Standardized test scores in the Duval County public schools show an achievement gap between white students and black students. Do you feel this difference in tests scores is primarily related to differences in the quality of education the students receive, or is it primarily the result of other factors?

Education	19%
Other Factors	71%
Not Sure	10%

QUESTION: Do you currently have at least one child:

- Enrolled in the Duval County public schools 23%
- Enrolled in a private school or home-schooled 7%
- Enrolled in both the public & private schools 2%
- or, do you have no children currently in school? 68%
- Refused (NOT READ) 1%

SCHOOL PARENTS ONLY: (n=345)

QUESTION: Do you belong to the PTA or any other Parent/School Advisory group?

Yes	54%
No	46%

QUESTION: Does your child participate in after-school athletics, arts or other extra-curricular programs, or not?

Yes	67%
No	33%

QUESTION: Most people have busy schedules and not enough time to do all the things they would like to. Have you been able to volunteer any of your personal time at your child's school this year, or not?

Yes	65%
No	35%

QUESTION: Have you had the chance to meet with any of your child's teachers this year, or not?

Yes	89%
No	11%

QUESTION: Do you feel it is necessary to review your child's homework, or not?

Yes	91%
No	9%

QUESTION: What is the highest level of education that you expect any of your children to complete? (NOT READ)

Won't finish high school	1%
Graduate high school	25%
Technical/Vocational Training	2%
Community college/2 yr AA degree	5%
Four year college/Bachelor's degree	53%
Master's/PhD/Law/Medical/Post Graduate degree	14%
Not Sure	1%

NON-SCHOOL PARENTS ONLY (n=755)

QUESTION: Which of the following best describes your experience with the Duval County schools:

- 38% - Previously had children enrolled in the Duval public schools
- 4% - Previously had children in local private school/none in public schools
- 13% - Previously had children in both Duval public and local private schools
- 45% - Have never had children enrolled in any local schools

ALL RESIDENTS:

QUESTION: Ten years from now, do you feel that a high school diploma, by itself, will be sufficient for most people to get a good job in the Jacksonville area, or not?

Yes	17%
No	80%
Not Sure	3%

QUESTION: Which one of the following do you feel should be the top priority of the Duval County public school system: (ORDER ROTATED)

Improve discipline in the classroom & safety in schools	27%
Increase teacher pay to attract & retain the best teachers	26%
More accountability & better management of financial resources	16%
Raise standards to improve test scores	15%
Reduce class size	11%
Build new and improve existing school facilities	3%
Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)	3%

QUESTION: What is your opinion of the current condition of the public school facilities in Duval County: (ORDER ROTATED)

- 17% - Many new schools are needed to replace aging facilities
- 18% - There are many renovation, repair and upgrade needs
- 29% - There are some renovation, repair and upgrade needs
- 23% - Most public schools facilities are in good shape
- 13% - Not Sure (NOT READ)

QUESTION: Do you own the home in which you live, or are you a tenant or renter?

Own Home	76%
Tenant/Renter	23%
DK/Refused	1%

(HOMEOWNERS ONLY n=839) QUESTION: How much impact do you feel the quality of local schools have on the property value of your home - a lot, some, not too much or none at all?

A Lot	37%
Some	35%
Not Too Much	19%
None	6%
Not Sure	3%

QUESTION: When you are evaluating the quality of education in your neighborhood schools, do you look at or consider any of the following:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
- FCAT (F-cat) scores?	54%	46%
- SAT or other college entrance exam scores?	66%	34%
- Graduation rates?	75%	25%
- College acceptance/scholarship rates?	71%	29%
- Grades awarded to the schools by the state?	64%	36%
- Personal experiences of your children in the schools?	67%	33%
- What your neighbors with children say about the schools?	66%	34%
- What you read or hear about in the news media?	62%	38%

QUESTION: If you could change just one thing about the Duval County public schools to make them better, what would that be?

More classroom discipline	18%
Improve financial management/administration	11%
More parental involvement	10%
Improve teacher pay	10%
Better quality teachers	10%
Smaller class sizes	9%
Higher academic standards	5%
Improve curriculum	3%
Improve safety in schools	3%
Address school equity issues	3%
Increase funding	2%
Less emphasis on FCATs	2%
Better facilities	2%
Others	6%
Not Sure/Nothing	8%

DEMOGRAPHICS :

AGE:	18-34	261	(24%)
	35-49	321	(29%)
	50-64	324	(30%)
	65+	188	(17%)
	Refused	6	

RACE/ETHNICITY:

White/Caucasian	705	(64%)
Black/African-American	303	(28%)
Hispanic/Latino	44	(4%)
Other	40	(4%)
Refused	8	

EDUCATION:

High school or less	407	(37%)
Vocational/Technical Training	63	(6%)
Some college	240	(22%)
College graduate	318	(29%)
Graduate degree	70	(6%)
Refused	2	

INCOME:

<\$25,000	154	(14%)
\$25,000-\$34,999	185	(17%)
\$35,000-\$49,999	203	(19%)
\$50,000-\$74,999	165	(15%)
\$75,000+	233	(21%)
Refused	160	(14%)

CHILD UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD?

Yes	407	(37%)
No	691	(63%)
Refused	2	

SEX:

Male	525	(48%)
Female	575	(52%)

ZIP CODE:

32202	7
32204	11
32205	42
32206	30
32207	48
32208	47
32209	59
32210	79
32211	49
32216	42
32217	29
32218	53
32219	13
32220	15
32221	25
32222	6
32223	36
32224	46
32225	64
32226	12
32227	7
32233	36
32234	8
32244	65
32246	50
32250	34
32254	21
32256	40
32257	50
32258	18
32266	10
32277	39
DK/Refused	9