



QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL INITIATIVE

SURVEY OF DUVAL COUNTY ADULT RESIDENTS

FEBRUARY 2011

**Conducted For The Community Foundation in
Jacksonville, Florida**

**Conducted By
Mason-Dixon Polling & Research
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QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL INITIATIVE

SURVEY OF DUVAL COUNTY ADULT RESIDENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

- Only 31% of Duval County residents rate the public schools as “excellent” or “good”, down from 34% in 2006
- 85% of adult residents feel having a top-rated public school system is “very important” to the future of Jacksonville and Duval County, similar to the 88% figure from 2006.
- A majority of residents (61%) continue to feel increased funding is necessary to develop a top-rated school system, but 60% of residents also say that their taxes are currently “too high” in regards to current education quality.
- Residents opinions about the direction the school system has taken over the past five years is extremely divided, with 27% saying the schools have improved at least somewhat, 29% believing they have declined at least somewhat and 35%.indicating that nothing has significantly changed,
- Duval County residents continue to feel the quality of education in predominantly black schools is worse than it is in predominantly white schools, with a significantly higher percentage of blacks (66%) feeling that way than whites (48%).
- Quality teachers and more parental involvement are still considered the two most important factors to providing a quality education. However, the engagement of parents is now viewed as more important than teacher quality.
- Improving classroom discipline and having more accountability in the management of financial resources are now considered top two priorities for the Duval County public school system. Increasing teacher pay and retention has dropped behind financial accountability as a priority.

METHODOLOGY

This survey of 1,100 adult residents of Duval County, Florida was commissioned by The Community Foundation, Inc. in Jacksonville, Florida. It was conducted by telephone from February 2 through February 8, 2011 by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington, D.C. This survey was patterned largely to compare resident views with those from a similar survey taken in February 2006.

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.

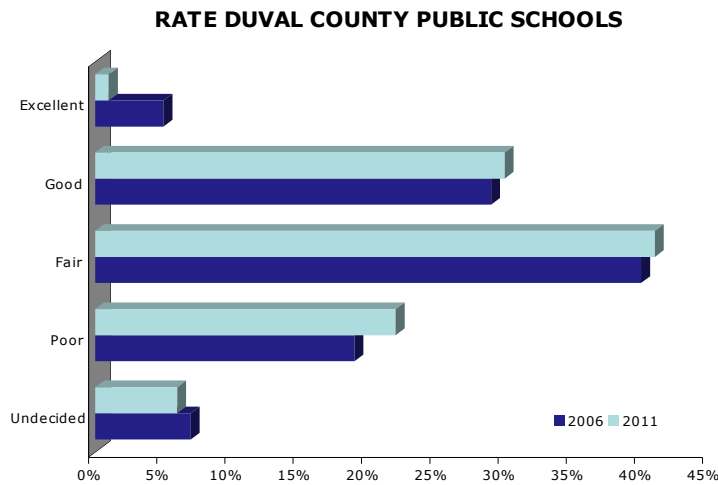
QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL INITIATIVE

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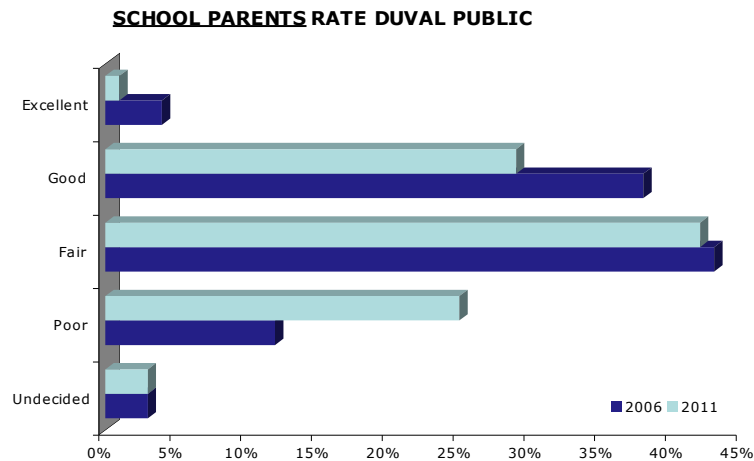
Executive Summary

RATING THE DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOLS

The Duval County public schools continue to get mixed ratings from local residents. Overall, only 31% of adults said the performance of the school system is “excellent” or “good”, while 41% said “fair” and 22% said “poor.” This indicates little change over the past five years in how the county schools are viewed.

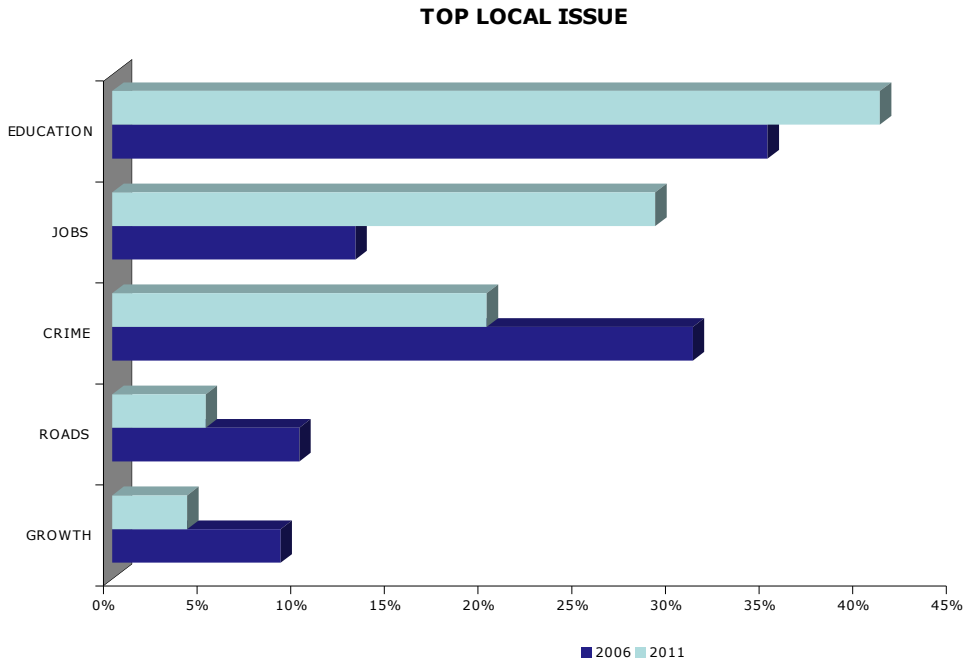


Residents with a child enrolled in the Duval County public schools rated their performance no better than those without a child in the system. Only 30% of school parents rated them as “excellent” or “good”, which is down from 42% in 2006. Overall, the schools continue to get a higher rating among African-Americans (40%) than among whites (25%), although the rating among blacks is down from 46% in 2006.

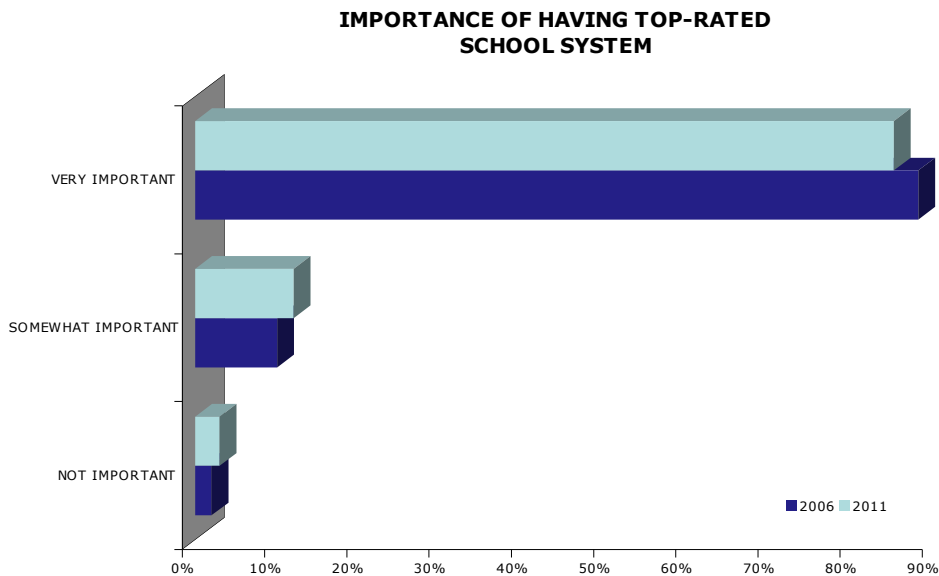


PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A PRIORITY

Given a choice of five major local issues – education, crime, economic development, roads and growth management, more residents (41%) still feel that having a top-rated public education system is most important to Jacksonville’s future, which is up from 35% in 2006. Attracting jobs (29%) has moved into second, now ahead of reducing crime (20%).



There continues to be almost universal agreement (85%) that having a top-rated public school system is “very important” to the future of Jacksonville and Duval County.



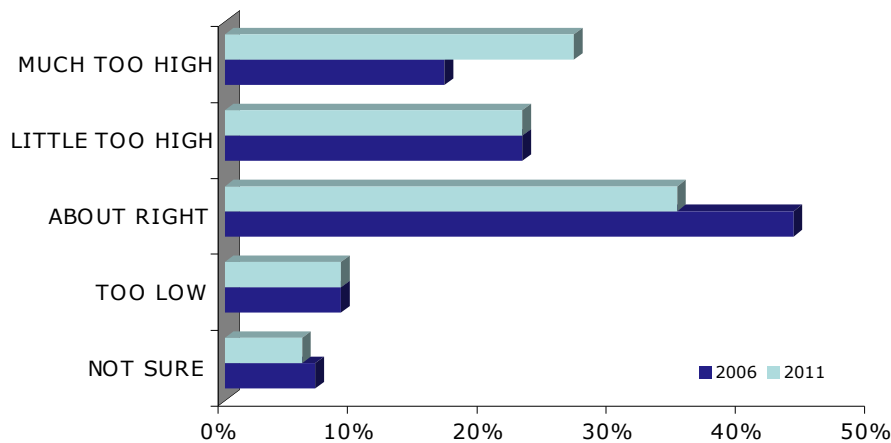
FINANCING PUBLIC EDUCATION

In addition to general agreement that local public schools need improving and that having better schools is important and desirable, there is also continued strong agreement (61%) that increased funding will be necessary for the Duval County public schools to become a top-rated system. In 2006, 59% felt increased funding was necessary.

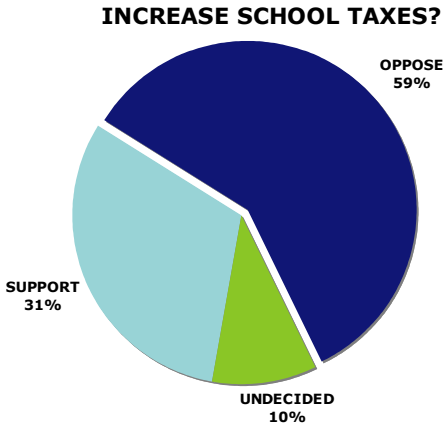
INCREASED FUNDING NECESSARY?	YES	NO	NOT SURE
COUNTY	61%	36%	3%
MEN	57%	41%	2%
WOMEN	65%	31%	4%
WHITES	53%	44%	3%
BLACKS	79%	17%	4%
SCHOOL PARENTS	70%	27%	3%
NON-PARENTS	58%	39%	3%
DEMOCRATS	77%	19%	4%
REPUBLICANS	43%	54%	3%
INDEPENDENTS	59%	41%	-
NON-VOTERS	56%	39%	5%

Despite this apparent consensus, getting Duval County to embrace a tax increase will be difficult in the current economic and political climate. Those that feel that their local taxes are “too high” given the quality of public schools have increased by 10 percentage points over the past five years (from 40% to 50%).

RATE LOCAL TAXES



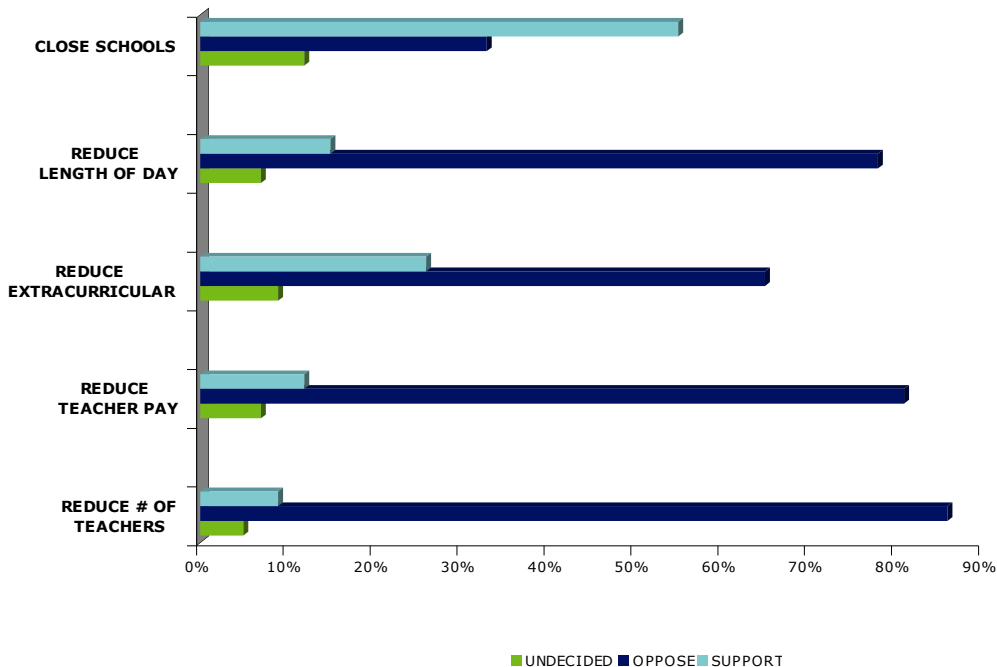
Asked directly about a school tax increase to address the current budget shortfall, a solid majority (59%) stated they would oppose it.



INCREASE SCHOOL TAXES?	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	UNDECIDED
COUNTY	31%	59%	10%
MEN	32%	59%	9%
WOMEN	31%	58%	11%
WHITES	30%	61%	9%
BLACKS	37%	49%	14%
SCHOOL PARENTS	34%	55%	10%
NON-PARENTS	30%	60%	10%
DEMOCRATS	40%	45%	15%
REPUBLICANS	25%	67%	8%
INDEPENDENTS	34%	63%	3%
NON-VOTERS	14%	77%	9%

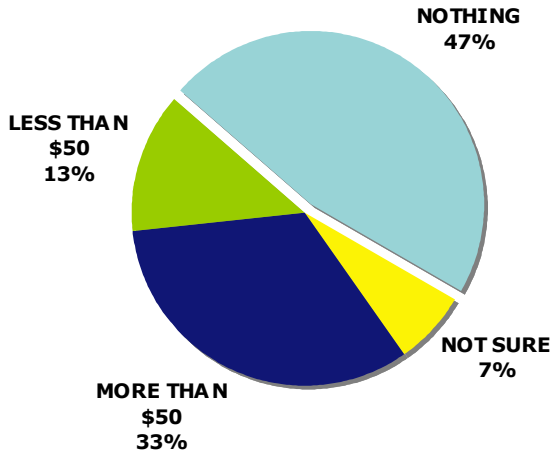
While strongly rejecting higher taxes to increase school funding, residents offer little support to alternative methods to significantly cut the school budget. A substantial number of residents oppose reducing the number of teachers (86%), reducing teacher pay and benefits (81%), cutting the length of the school day (78%) or reducing extracurricular activities (65%). The only cost-cutting move that a majority indicated they would support was closing schools with low enrollment (55%).

SCHOOL BUDGET ALTERNATIVES



When asked without prompting how much they would be willing to pay in additional local taxes to improve the public schools, 47% stated outright that they would not be willing to pay anything and an additional 13% named a figure that was less than \$50. Only 33% stated they would be willing to pay at least an extra \$50 per year to increase school funding.

AMOUNT OF ADDITIONAL TAX WILLING TO SPEND FOR SCHOOLS

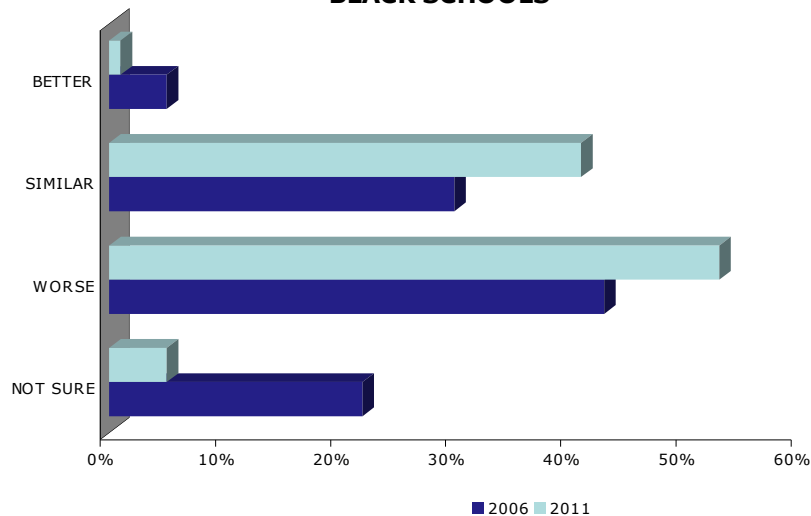


RACIAL INEQUITIES IN DUVAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A strong consensus remains 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. Overall, only 1% said the quality of education in predominantly African-American schools is better than in schools that are predominantly white, while 53% felt it was worse and 41% thought they were relatively similar. This represents a decline in the perception of education equality over the past five years.

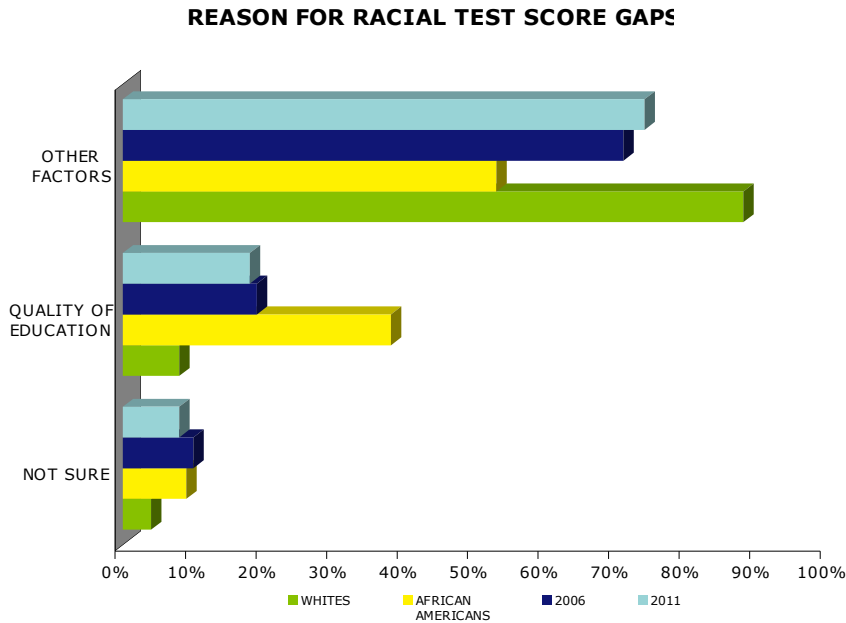
Among African-Americans, 66% feel the quality of education in predominantly black schools is worse (up from 60% in 2006).

QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN PREDOMINANTLY BLACK SCHOOLS



When asked why there are achievement gaps between white and black students on standardized achievement tests, the majority of county residents continue to put the blame on factors other than the quality of education in African-American schools.

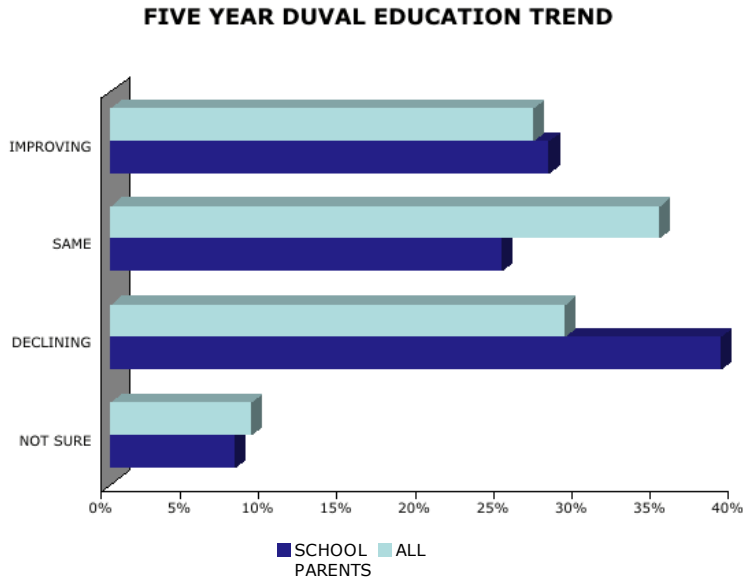
Only 8% of whites blame the gap on the quality of education, while 88% blame it on other factors. Among blacks however, 36% blame the quality of education and 53% attribute it to other factors.



When asked to specify what “other factor” that was most responsible for the racial gap, 60% said it was the lack of parental involvement and an additional 20% blamed it on a lack of motivation. The racial differences on this question were not that much different. Whites put slightly more blame on the lack of parental involvement (64%) than did African-Americans (46%), but 10% of blacks were not sure what to blame. This, along with a slightly higher percentage of blacks (20%) blaming a lack of resources, pre-school preparation or activities than whites (13%), accounts for the difference.

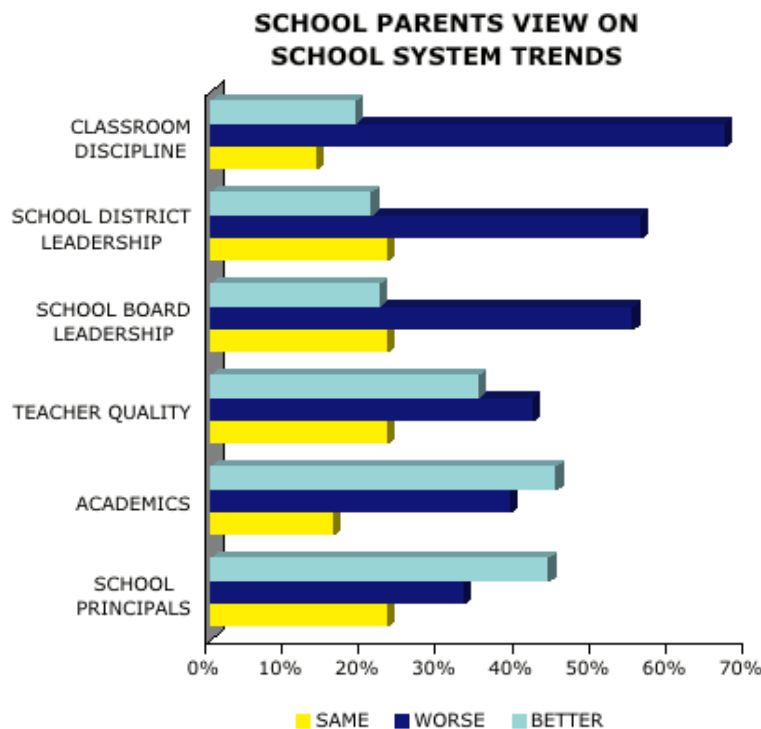
IMPROVING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Local residents have a mixed perception of the performance trend in Duval County public schools. Overall, 27% see improvement in the schools over the past five years, 29% feel they have declined and 35% believe nothing has changed significantly. Among those with a child in the public schools, however, there is a stronger perception of decline.



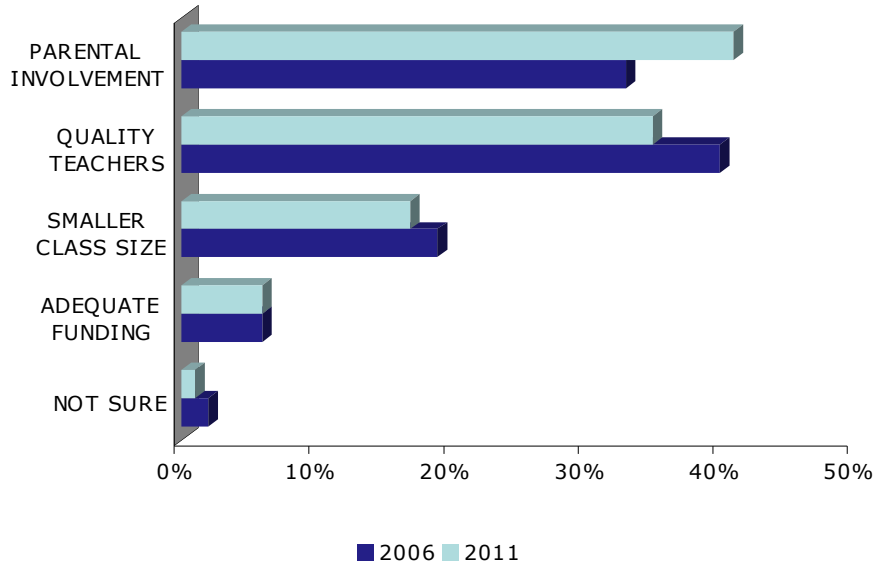
In terms of individual trends within the school system over the past five years, there is similar disagreement. Residents are also about equally split on teacher quality, the leadership of school principals and the emphasis on academics in the classroom. In several other areas, however, there is more general agreement that the situation has gotten worse since 2006. These areas are classroom discipline (65%), school district leadership (48%) and school board leadership (48%).

Those with a child in the public schools are a better source for closer judgment. School parents see academics and school principal leadership as getting better, teacher quality slightly worsening and a clear majority see classroom discipline and leadership from both the school districts and the school board as worsening.



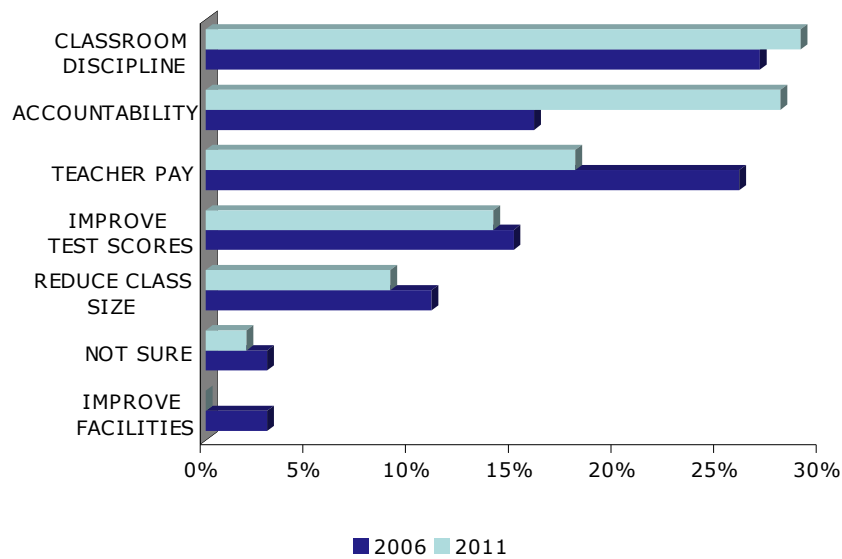
Duval County residents still feel that the quality of teachers and having more parental involvement are the two most important factors to providing a quality education, but they now put higher importance on parents than on teachers.

MOST IMPORTANT TO EDUCATION QUALITY



Jacksonville residents still want the county school system to make improving classroom discipline their top priority, but more of them are now calling for more accountability and management of financial resources and fewer want emphasis on increasing teacher pay and retaining teachers.

TOP SCHOOL SYSTEM PRIORITY

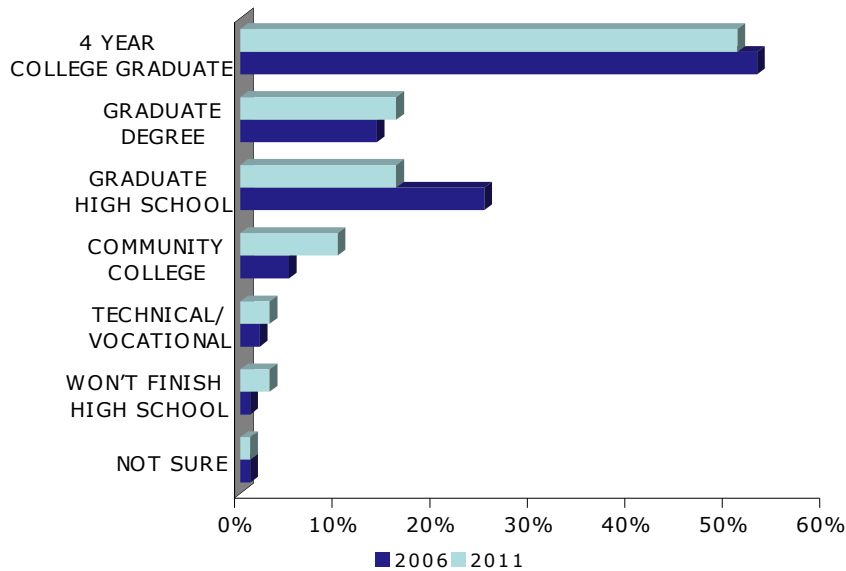


PARENTAL & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Among those county residents who have a child currently enrolled in a Duval County public school, the majority indicated that they were active and involved in their child’s education. Almost every parent (96%) said they had met with at least one of their child’s teachers. Additionally, 75% were involved in some type of school activity, 62% had volunteered at school and 56% had attended a PTA meeting.

Duval County public school parents also appear to have increasing expectations for their children. While the percentage expecting at least a four year college degree is about the same as it was five years ago, those expecting a high school diploma or less have dropped from 26% to 19%. Parents expecting technical/vocational training or a community college degree for their child have increased from 7% to 13%.

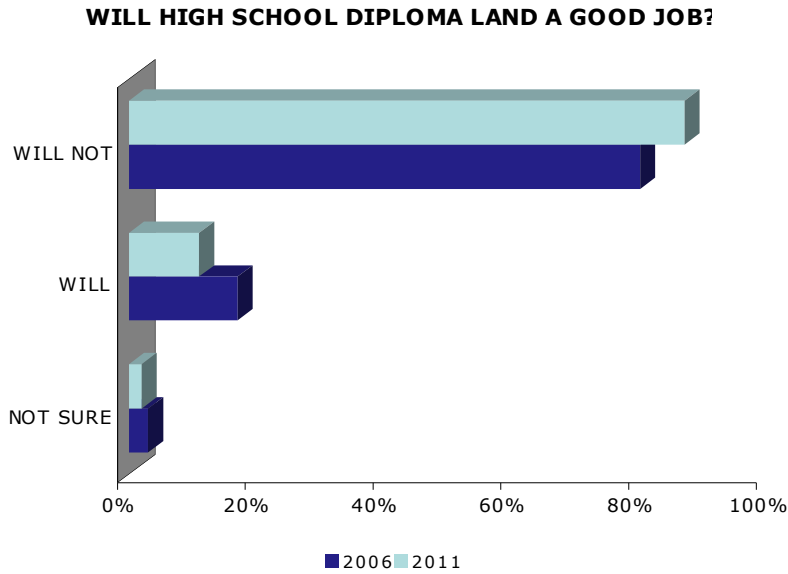
PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILD’S EDUCATION



There remains a sharp racial gap in parental expectations for their child’s education. While 94% of white school parents expect their child to go beyond high school (with 80% getting at least a four year degree), only 60% of African-American school parents think their child will go beyond high school.

This is actually worse than it was five years ago, when 63% of black school parents expected their child to continue their education after high school. Additionally, the percentage of black school parents expecting at least a four year college degree has fallen from 52% to 45%.

This could be largely driven by the fact that there is strong agreement that a high school diploma alone will not be enough to secure a good job in Jacksonville. Only 11% feel a high school education will get someone a good job ten years from now, while 87% say it will not. This sentiment has gotten stronger over the past five years.



The percentage of whites (11%) and African-Americans (10%) that feel a high school diploma will be sufficient is almost identical now. That was not the case five years ago, when 24% of blacks said a high school education would suffice compared to only 13% of whites.

Finally, residents are divided over whether or not people in the Jacksonville community are taking responsibility for ensuring quality education and paying attention to what the school board is doing. Only 12% feel the community is taking “a lot” of responsibility, while 48% say they are taking “some” responsibility and 36% believe that are taking “little” or “none”. In terms of following the school board, 51% agree that local residents are paying attention while 41% disagree.

DUVAL COUNTY EDUCATION POLL RESULTS - FEBRUARY 2011

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

	<u>2006</u>
41% - Having a top rated public education system	35%
29% - Attracting jobs and businesses	13%
20% - Reducing the crime rate	31%
5% - Improving roads and better managing traffic	10%
4% - Managing residential & commercial development	9%
1% - Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)	2%

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

		<u>2006</u>
Much too high	27%	17%
A little too high	23%	23%
About right	35%	44%
Too low	9%	9%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	6%	7%

QUESTION: In recent years, Duval County Public Schools have faced a serious budget shortfall. Please tell me if you would support or oppose each of the following strategies to address this shortfall:

	<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>UND</u>
- Reduce the number of teachers?	9%	86%	5%
- Reduce teacher pay & benefits?	12%	81%	7%
- Reduce extracurricular activities?	26%	65%	9%
- Reduce the length of the school day?	15%	78%	7%
- Close schools with low enrollment?	55%	33%	12%
- Increase school taxes?	31%	59%	10%

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

2006

Very important	85%	88%
Somewhat important	12%	10%
Not too important	2%	2%
Not at all important	1%	-
Not Sure (NOT READ)	-	-

QUESTION: What percentage of Duval County public school high school students do you think graduate on time in four years? (NOT READ)

Less than 60%	23%
60-69%	28%
70-79%	21%
80-89%	16%
90% or more	8%
Not Sure	4%

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

2006

Excellent	1%	5%
Good	30%	29%
Fair	41%	40%
Poor	22%	19%
Undecided	6%	7%

QUESTION: In the past five years, do you feel the overall performance of Duval County public schools has:

Improved a great deal	1%
Improved somewhat	26%
Remained about the same	35%
Declined somewhat	19%
Declined significantly	10%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	9%

QUESTION: For each of the following areas in the Duval County public schools, please tell me if you believe that over the past five years they have gotten better or worse:

	<u>BETTER</u>	<u>WORSE</u>	<u>SAME/DK</u>
- Teacher Quality?	33%	31%	36%
- Leadership from School Principals?	32%	35%	33%
- School District Leadership?	20%	48%	32%
- School Board Leadership?	21%	48%	31%
- Classroom Discipline?	12%	65%	23%
- Emphasis on Academics?	39%	36%	25%

QUESTION: What percentage of Duval County public school high school students do you think fail to graduate in four years? (NOT READ)

Less than 10%	4%
10-19%	16%
20-29%	23%
30-39%	23%
40% or more	30%
Not Sure	4%

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?

2006

Yes	61%	59%
No	36%	36%
Not Sure	3%	5%

QUESTION: Are you registered to vote in Duval County?

Yes	86%
No	14%

(REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY n=943) QUESTION: What is your current official party voter registration? Are you a registered:

Democrat	45%	(423)
Republican	37%	(354)
Independent or Other	18%	(166)

(REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY n=943) QUESTION: If you were required to pay additional school taxes, which one of the following areas would you primarily want the additional funding applied? (ORDER ROTATED)

- 27% - To add more technology in classrooms
- 24% - To increase the number of teachers
- 19% - To increase teacher pay and benefits
- 10% - To increase the length of the school day
- 3% - To improve school buildings and facilities
- 12% - Would not support more taxes and spending (NOT READ)
- 5% - Not Sure (NOT READ)

(REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY n=943) QUESTION: How much in additional local taxes are you willing to pay per year to improve Duval County public schools? (NOT READ)

Less than \$50	13%
\$50-\$99	11%
\$100-\$149	7%
\$150-\$199	11%
\$200+	4%
Not willing to pay higher taxes	47%
Not Sure	7%

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

		<u>2006</u>
Having more Parental Involvement	41%	33%
Quality of Teachers	35%	40%
Smaller Class Size	17%	19%
Adequate Funding	6%	6%
None/Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)	1%	2%

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?

		<u>2006</u>
Better	1%	5%
Similar	41%	30%
Worse	53%	43%
Not Sure	5%	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?

2006

Education	18%	19%
Other Factors	74%	71%
Not Sure	8%	10%

(IF "OTHER FACTOR" n=812) QUESTION: What factor do you feel is most responsible for the difference in test scores? (ORDER ROTATED)

Lack of parental involvement	60%
Lack of student motivation	20%
Lack of academic resources at home	8%
Ineffective preschool preparation	6%
Level of individual student intelligence	-
Lack of quality after school & extracurricular programs	1%
Other (NOT READ)	1%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	4%

QUESTION: Do you currently have at least one child:

- Enrolled in the Duval County public schools 24%
- Enrolled in a private school or home-schooled 5%
- Enrolled in both the public & private schools 2%
- or, do you have no children currently in school? 69%

SCHOOL PARENTS ONLY: (n=340)

QUESTION: In the past six months, in what ways have you been engaged in your child's schooling? Have you:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
- Attended a PTA meeting?	56%	44%
- Volunteered at a child's school?	62%	38%
- Met with a teacher?	96%	4%
- Been involved in other school activities?	75%	25%

QUESTION: Do any of the following barriers prevent you from being involved in your child's schooling?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
- Can't get time off from work?	36%	64%
- School does not enough opportunities for parental involvement?	18%	82%
- Process to get involved is too cumbersome?	14%	86%

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

	<u>2006</u>	
Won't finish high school	3%	1%
Graduate high school	16%	25%
Technical/Vocational Training	3%	2%
Community college/2 yr AA degree	10%	5%
Four year college/Bachelor's degree	51%	53%
Master's/PhD/Law/Medical/Post Graduate degree	16%	14%
Not Sure	1%	1%

NON-SCHOOL PARENTS ONLY (n=760)

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

- 33% - Previously had children enrolled in the Duval public schools
 - 7% - Previously had children in local private school/none in public schools
 - 10% - Previously had children in both Duval public and local private schools
 - 50% - Have never had children enrolled in any local schools
-

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

	<u>2006</u>	
Will	11%	17%
Will Not	87%	80%
Not Sure	2%	3%

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

2006

Improve discipline in the classroom & safety in schools	29%	27%
More accountability & better management of financial resources	28%	16%
Increase teacher pay to attract & retain the best teachers	18%	26%
Raise standards to improve test scores	14%	15%
Reduce class size	9%	11%
Build new and improve existing school facilities	-	3%
Other/Not Sure (NOT READ)	2%	3%

QUESTION: How much responsibility do you feel people in the Jacksonville community take for ensuring there are quality public schools in the area - a lot, some, a little or none at all?

A lot	12%
Some	48%
A little	30%
None	6%
Not Sure (NOT READ)	4%

QUESTION: Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Voters in the Jacksonville community pay attention to what the school board is doing by either attending school board meetings, watching them on television, reading about the school board in the newspaper, or following school board activities on the internet.

Strong Agree	17%
Somewhat Agree	34%
Somewhat Disagree	26%
Strong Disagree	17%
Not Sure	6%

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	16%
More parental involvement	13%
Improve financial management/administration	12%
Better quality teachers	11%
Smaller class sizes/more teachers	9%
Higher academic standards	7%
Better/new leadership in the school system	6%
Improve teacher pay	4%
More technology	3%
Increase funding	2%
Improve safety in schools	2%
Address school equity issues	2%
Improve curriculum	2%
Dress code	1%
Less emphasis on FCATs	1%
Better facilities	1%
More Charter schools/private school vouchers	1%
Longer school day	1%
Others	2%
Not Sure/Nothing	4%

DEMOGRAPHICS :

AGE :	18-34	284	(26%)
	35-49	314	(28%)
	50-64	287	(26%)
	65+	206	(19%)
	Refused	9	(1%)

RACE/ETHNICITY :

White/Caucasian	656	(60%)
Black/African-American	331	(30%)
Hispanic/Latino	56	(5%)
Other	40	(4%)
Refused	13	(1%)

EDUCATION :

High school or less	321	(29%)
Vocational/Technical Training	47	(4%)
Some college	251	(23%)
College graduate	362	(33%)
Graduate degree	118	(11%)
Refused	1	

INCOME :

<\$25,000	154	(14%)
\$25,000-\$34,999	145	(13%)
\$35,000-\$49,999	178	(16%)
\$50,000-\$74,999	186	(17%)
\$75,000+	262	(24%)
Refused	175	(16%)

CHILD UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD?

Yes	378	(34%)
No	722	(66%)

SEX :

Male	517	(47%)
Female	583	(53%)

ZIP CODE:

32202	6
32204	10
32205	42
32206	29
32207	47
32208	45
32209	58
32210	82
32211	45
32212	4
32216	38
32217	25
32218	57
32219	11
32220	13
32221	27
32222	8
32223	40
32224	9
32225	64
32226	18
32227	5
32233	31
32234	10
32244	74
32246	49
32250	34
32254	20
32256	73
32257	51
32258	24
32266	10
32277	41