The results of a statewide poll announced today indicate a strong preference on the part of most New Jerseyans for state financing of education. A substantial minority, however, favors retention of the present local property tax as the basis for school support. These findings emerge from a statewide telephone survey of 1225 adults in the Garden State conducted by the New Jersey Poll of the Eagleton Institute of Politics located at Rutgers University.

54% of those queried indicated that they would prefer state financing of schools while 22% favored the existing arrangement of supporting schools from local property taxes. 13% of Jersey citizens believe that the state and localities should share the tax burden while 11% expressed no opinion.

Respondents were also asked if they thought state financing might lead to a loss in local community control over education. This was thought to be a serious problem by 36% of the sample, more than one person in three. Of the remainder, 33% thought it would be a minor problem and 22% thought it would be no problem at all.

On the surface these results support an argument commonly made by analysts of New Jersey politics. The argument is that the state legislature would be unwilling to support a state takeover of public school financing because legislators fear that their constituents associate state financing with a loss of local control over schools and thus a legislator who supported state financing would be punished at the polls on this issue.

A more detailed analysis of the poll data shows that this conclusion is somewhat misleading. As might be expected respondents who thought local control...
would not be a problem prefer state financing by more than 6 to 1. But respondents
who feel local control would be a serious problem are evenly divided on the state
versus local financing. This means that half the people who feel that state financing
might cause a loss of local control would be a serious problem still prefer state financing.
What this means is that these people are more concerned about other than local control.
"My best guess is that it's the property tax," said John Blydenburgh, Director of
Eagleton's New Jersey Politics Center.

Poll results show some interesting differences in attitude between
Democrats and Republicans on the question of who should finance public schools.
Among Democrats samples, only 17% favored local financing, whereas 30% of the
Republicans supported this position.

When the sample is divided by income, another difference in attitude
about local financing becomes clear. Only 16% of the respondents with incomes under
$10,000 support local financing, while 26% of the respondents with incomes over
$10,000 support the same position. A similar split can be found dividing the sample
by home ownership, homeowners preferring the local taxes. The poll shows that the
type of New Jersey citizen most likely to favor local financing is a Republican home-
owner in an upper salary range.

According to Blydenburgh, "This is not a surprising finding. Local taxes
are property taxes, and these are the most favorable to the rich."

One possible result of state financing—a general increase in taxes—
does not seem to be feared by most respondents in the poll. Only 30% feel that state
assumption of the financing of education would mean a tax increase, while a clear
majority—56%—expressed no fear of a tax increase should state financing come into
effect.

The Fifth New Jersey Poll was conducted by telephone between Jan. 5 and 11 from the
Eagleton Institute. The results were tabulated by Opinion Research Corp. of Princeton,
N.J. The New Jersey Poll is supported by grants from the Wallace-Eljabar Foundation and
the Eagleton Institute of Politics.
TO: POLITICAL REPORTERS

FROM: JOHN C. BLYDENBURGH

RE: THE FIFTH NEW JERSEY POLL, RELEASE #4, WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 31, 1973

The data and questions on which this analysis is based are as follow.

"At present, elementary schools and high schools are funded primarily by local taxes. Some people have suggested that statewide taxes should replace local taxes in paying for education. Which level of government, state or local, do you feel should finance public school education?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>State</th>
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<th>Don't know/ No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
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<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Do you think you would pay more or less taxes for support of education if the state took over financing public schools, or do you think it would make no difference?"

"Some people have argued that if the state pays for public schools the local community would have less to say about how the schools are run. Do you think this is a very serious problem, a minor problem or no problem at all?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Serious Problem</th>
<th>Minor Problem</th>
<th>No Problem</th>
<th>Don't know, No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sample</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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