

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 8, 2018

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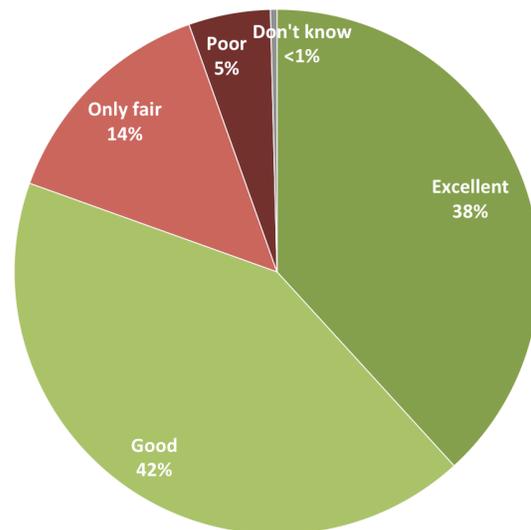
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Release available at: <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/state-of-the-garden-state-education-2018>. Find all releases at <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu>. Read more about the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll's "2018 State of the Garden State" series at <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/2018-state-of-the-garden-state-series/>. Follow the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RutgersEagletonPoll> and Twitter [@EagletonPoll](https://twitter.com/EagletonPoll).

PARENTS OFFER RINGING ENDORSEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM BUT BELIEVE STANDARDIZED TESTING HAS GONE OVERBOARD

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – The vast majority of parents who currently have children in the state's public school system are highly satisfied with the quality of education their child receives: 80 percent say their child's school is doing an "excellent" or "good" job. Public school parents are also quite positive about the quality of teachers and administrators, safety, school facilities and equipment, and the amount of individual attention their child gets. However, by a margin of 52 percent to 6 percent, more public school parents feel there is "too much" rather than "too little" standardized testing in their child's school. These are some of the main findings from a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll late last year, as part of the "2018 State of the Garden State" series.

Figure 1 | Public School Parents' Ratings of Child's School



"Quality education has always been a hallmark of New Jersey, and parents' ratings confirm why the state is repeatedly recognized at a national level for its schools," said Dr. Ashley Koning, assistant research professor and director of the

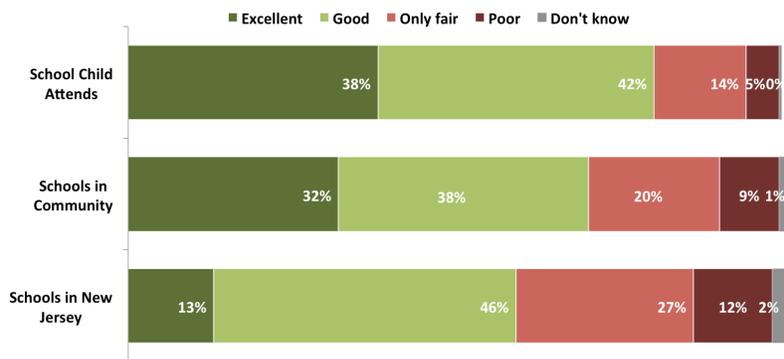
Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. “Yet behind these high marks, there are undoubtedly deeper differences by key factors like socioeconomic status and region, differences we know exist in New Jersey but can only be studied with much larger samples.”

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll contacted 1,203 adults by live callers on both landlines and cell phones from Nov. 15-27, 2017, including a subsample of 318 parents of children attending schools in New Jersey and 265 parents of children attending public schools in the state. The total sample has a margin of error of +/-3.0 percentage points; the parents of children in school subsample has a margin of error of +/-5.9 percentage points, and the public school parent subsample has a margin of error of +/-6.4 percentage points. Interviews were done in English and, when requested, Spanish.

Familiarity with the school spurs greater positivity

Statewide, 38 percent of public school parents say the specific school their oldest child attends is doing an “excellent” job, and another 42 percent say it is doing a “good” job; 14 percent say their child’s school is doing only a “fair” job, and just 5 percent rate their school’s performance as “poor.”

Figure 2 | Public School Parents’ Child, Community, and State School Ratings



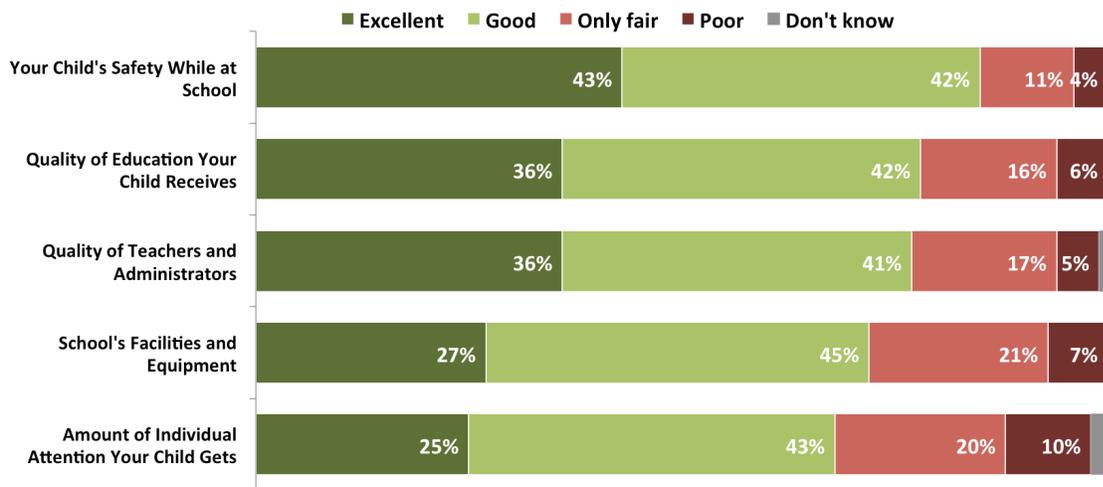
Public school parents have a similar take on schools in their community, overall: 70 percent rate their local schools as doing an “excellent” or “good” job, 20 percent say they are doing only a “fair” job, and just 9 percent say “poor.” Public school parents are much more critical when it comes to assessing schools throughout New Jersey. While a majority (59 percent) say schools across the state are doing an “excellent” or “good” job, this is far less than how these parents

rate schools closer to home. Public school parents are twice as likely to express a negative view about New Jersey schools, in general, than they are about their child’s own school.

Large majorities satisfied with key aspects of education

The Poll found high levels of parental satisfaction in all five aspects that it asked about regarding the school a parent’s child attends. More than eight in 10 public school parents (85 percent) rated their child’s safety at school as “excellent” or “good,” followed by just over three quarters who give such ratings to the quality of education their child is receiving (78 percent) and the quality of teachers and administrators (77 percent). Slightly fewer give positive ratings for their school’s facilities and equipment (71 percent) and the amount of individual attention their child is given (68 percent). Ratings are similar when parents with children in all types of school – whether public, private, charter, or other – are included.

Figure 3 | Public School Parents’ Ratings of Key Aspects of Child’s Education



Parents divided on need for standardized testing but not on the current amount

Standardized testing is particularly controversial among the state’s public school parents, who are strongly divided on whether students should be required to pass some sort of standardized test in order to graduate. While 55 percent believe it should be a graduation requirement, 44 percent do not. When public school parents are combined with parents who have children in other types of schools, this combined group is slightly more in favor of standardized testing (57 percent to 42 percent).

There is no such division on the amount of standardized testing being given in the public school system. The majority of parents – 52 percent – feel there is too much standardized testing in their child’s school. Just six percent believe there is too little testing, while the remaining 39 percent feel there is just the right amount. When parents with children in something other than public school are added to the mix, this combined group is slightly less likely than public school parents alone to feel there is too much standardized testing (44 percent) and instead slightly more likely to say it is just the right amount (46 percent).

Figure 4 | Whether Standardized Testing Should be a Graduation Requirement

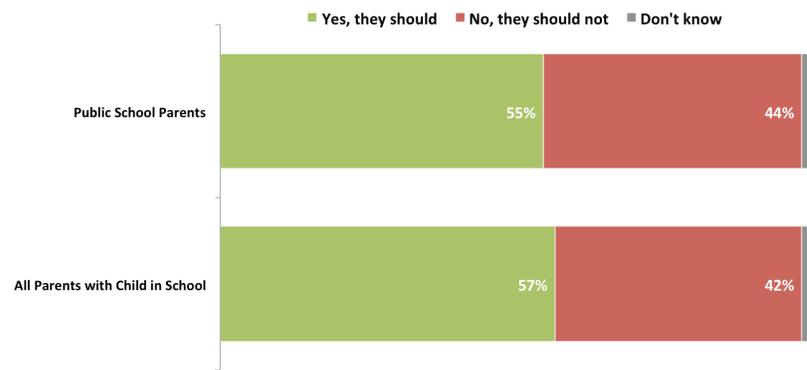
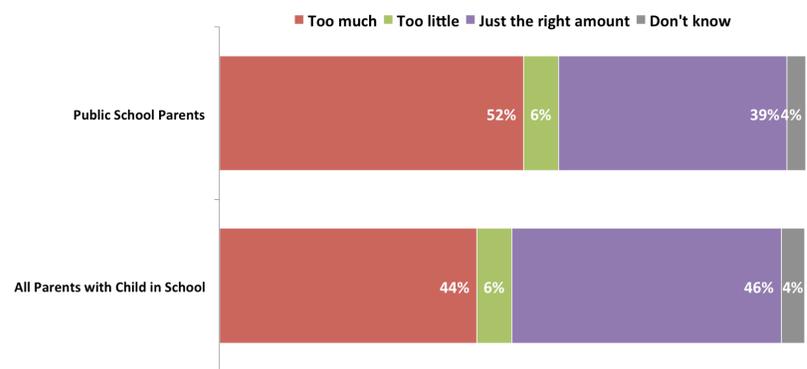


Figure 5 | Amount of Standardized Testing in Child’s School



“Governor Murphy has repeatedly promised to get rid of PARCC tests,” said Koning. “And while public school parents are somewhat divided on whether or not such testing should be required, they would certainly like to see less of it.”

Ratings among all New Jerseyans slightly lower than parents but still positive

In addition to parents, the entire statewide sample was asked to rate the jobs public schools are doing statewide and in their communities. The ratings given by the general public are slightly lower than the ratings given by parents with children in schools. Statewide, 12 percent of all New Jersey residents say the state’s public school system is doing an “excellent” job and 39 percent a “good” one. On the negative side, 27 percent believe New Jersey schools are doing an “only fair” job and 16 percent say they are “poor,” with the remainder offering no opinion.

New Jerseyans are more positive about schools in their own community, regardless of whether or not they have a child attending one of them: 25 percent say they are doing an “excellent” job and 36 percent a “good” one. On the other hand, 21 percent of residents believe their local school district is doing an “only fair” job, and 13 percent say “poor.”

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QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in the release for February 8, 2018 are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results.

Q. How would you rate the job the public schools are doing here in New Jersey – excellent, good, only fair or poor?

	All Parents with Children		
	Public School Parents	in School	All New Jersey Residents
Excellent	13%	13%	12%
Good	46%	43%	39%
Only fair	27%	27%	27%
Poor	12%	14%	16%
Don't know	2%	3%	6%
Unweighted N=	265	318	1195

Q. And how would you rate public schools in your community – excellent, good, only fair or poor?

	All Parents with Children		
	Public School Parents	in School	All New Jersey Residents
Excellent	32%	29%	25%
Good	38%	36%	36%
Only fair	20%	19%	21%
Poor	9%	13%	13%
Don't know	1%	2%	5%
Unweighted N=	265	318	1196

Q. Are you the parent or guardian of any children under 18 now living in your home?

	All New Jersey Residents
Yes	32%
No	68%
Unweighted N=	1197

[BEGIN PARENT SUBSAMPLE]

Q. Do you have any children currently in school, by which we mean Kindergarten through 12th grade, in New Jersey?

All New Jersey Residents	
Yes	83%
No	17%
Unweighted N=	376

Q. Do your children attend public school, private school, or a charter school? If you have children in each, just say so.

[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]*

All Parents with Children in School	
Public	83%
Private/religious	13%
Charter	5%
None of the above	1%
Unweighted N=	318

** Will exceed 100% due to multiple responses allowed*

[IF MULTIPLE SCHOOLS IN QD2B, SAY: “Now thinking only about your oldest child in the school system ...”]

Q. How would you rate the school your child attends – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

	Public School Parents	All Parents with Children in School
Excellent	38%	42%
Good	42%	39%
Only fair	14%	14%
Poor	5%	4%
Don't know	<1%	<1%
Unweighted N=	265	317

Q. And using the same scale of excellent, good, only fair or poor, how would you rate each of the following: [RANDOMIZE ORDER]

Public School Parents

	Your child's safety while at school	The quality of education your child receives	The quality of teachers and administrators in the school	The school's facilities and equipment	The amount of individual attention your child gets
Excellent	43%	36%	36%	27%	25%
Good	42%	42%	41%	44%	43%
Only fair	11%	16%	17%	21%	20%
Poor	4%	6%	5%	7%	10%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	263	263	263	264	263

All Parents with Children in School

	Your child's safety while at school	The quality of education your child receives	The quality of teachers and administrators in the school	The school's facilities and equipment	The amount of individual attention your child gets
Excellent	46%	40%	39%	31%	29%
Good	40%	40%	39%	43%	43%
Only fair	10%	14%	16%	19%	18%
Poor	4%	5%	5%	6%	8%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Unwght N=	316	316	316	317	316

Q. Do you think there is too much standardized testing in your child's school, too little, or just the right amount?

	Public School Parents	All Parents with Children in School
Too much	52%	44%
Too little	6%	6%
Just the right amount	39%	46%
Don't know	4%	4%
Unweighted N=	265	318

Q. Should students be required to pass some type of standardized testing in order to graduate, or not?

	Public School Parents	All Parents with Children in School
Yes, they should	55%	57%
No, they should not	44%	42%
Don't know	1%	1%
Unweighted N=	265	318

Methodology

The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted by telephone using live callers Nov. 15-27, 2017 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,203 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. The sample contains a subsample of 600 New Jersey adults, as reported on in this release. Respondents within a household are selected by asking randomly for the youngest adult male or female currently available. If the named gender is not available, the youngest adult of the other gender is interviewed. The poll was available in Spanish for respondents who requested it. This telephone poll included 516 landline and 687 cell phone adults, all acquired through random digit dialing. Distribution of household phone use in this sample is:

Cell Only:	31%
Dual Use, Reached on Cell:	26%
Dual Use, Reached on LL:	41%
Landline Only:	2%

The data were weighted to be representative of New Jersey adults. The weighting balanced sample demographics to population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form¹, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region, and phone use. The sex, age, education and race/ethnicity parameters were derived from 2015 American Community Survey PUMS data. The region parameter was derived from 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates based on total population. The phone use parameter derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.²³⁴ Weighting was done in two stages. The first stage of weighting corrected for different probabilities of selection associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns. This weighting also adjusts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample. The second stage of weighting balanced sample demographics to match target population parameters. Weights were trimmed at the 3rd and 97th percentile to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on the final results. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 1,203 New Jersey adults is +/-2.8

¹ Most of the survey had a split sample design, randomly assigning half of respondents to Form A (N=603) and half to Form B (N=600). Certain sets of questions are only asked to one half of the sample or the other.

² NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2011–2015; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010–2014; and infoUSA.com consumer database, 2011–2015.

³ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2014. National Center for Health Statistics. June 2015.

⁴ Blumberg SJ, Luke JV. Wireless substitution: Early release of estimates from the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2016. National Center for Health Statistics. May 2017.

percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.14, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 3.0 percentage points. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 47 and 53 percent (50 +/- 3.0) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

The simple sampling error for the subsample of 265 New Jersey public school parents is +/-6.0 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.14, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 6.4 percentage points. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey public school parents in this subsample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 43.6 and 56.4 percent (50 +/- 6.6) if all New Jersey public school parents had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

The simple sampling error for the subsample of 318 New Jersey parents with a child in school (regardless of school type) is +/-5.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect is 1.14, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 5.9 percentage points. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey parents with a child in school (regardless of school type) in this subsample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 44.1 and 55.9 percent (50 +/- 5.9) if all New Jersey parents with a child in school (regardless of school type) had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by Braun Research, Inc. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP). Dr. Cliff Zukin, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Public Policy and Senior Survey Advisor to ECPIP, assisted with this questionnaire and analysis. William Young assisted with analysis and preparation of this report. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request, and can also be accessed through our archives at eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

**Weighted Sample Characteristics
1,203 New Jersey Adults**

Male	49%	Democrat	39%	18-34	27%	HS or Less	34%	White	59%
Female	51%	Independent	43%	35-49	24%	Some College	30%	Black	12%
		Republican	18%	50-64	30%	College Grad	22%	Hispanic	18%
				65+	20%	Grad Work	14%	Other	10%