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PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

CALIFORNIA

# Californians & education

in collaboration with  
The William and Flora Hewlett  
Foundation

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PPIC

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INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

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# ABOUT THE SURVEY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey series provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 85<sup>th</sup> PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 180,000 Californians. This survey is part of a PPIC Statewide Survey series that is funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The series' intent is to inform state policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about a variety of K-12, higher education, environment, and population issues. This is the fourth PPIC Statewide Survey focusing on K-12 education issues.

According to the California Department of Education's *Education Data Partnership* website, California's K-12 public education system served nearly 6.3 million students in 1,052 school districts and 9,674 public schools during 2006-07. The public school student population is diverse (48% Latino, 29% white, 11% Asian, 8% black) and includes nearly 1.6 million English learners. The K-12 public education system is the single largest component of the California state budget. With the state currently facing a multi-billion dollar gap between spending and revenues, questions are being raised about spending reductions and revenue increases for the K-12 public education system and other budget areas.

Over the years, state policymakers have implemented a variety of efforts to improve K-12 education quality, including class size reduction, teacher training, student standards and testing, and facility upgrades. Other K-12 reforms under discussion today include student spending formulas, local control, and statewide data systems. Californians often rank K-12 education among their most important issues and a top priority for the governor and legislature. This survey presents the responses of 2,502 adult residents throughout the state on the following topics:

- Perceptions of California's public schools, including the quality of K-12 education; whether changes are needed to improve the state's K-12 education system; approval ratings of the governor and legislature on their handling of K-12 education; rankings of California's per-pupil spending and student test scores compared to other states; perceptions of student and teacher issues; and ratings of local schools and perceptions of their state funding levels.
- Fiscal attitudes, including spending priorities, concern about spending cuts in K-12 education, and willingness to pay higher taxes to maintain current K-12 funding levels; perceptions of the adequacy and efficiency of school funding; preferences regarding fundraising efforts and the control of state spending at local schools; and perceptions of resource equity.
- Policy preferences, including support for the high school exit exam; perceived concerns and support for programs to address the high school drop-out rate, English language learners, and teacher quality; curriculum preferences; the importance of a data system on resources and student performance; and parents' knowledge of the grading and test score systems.
- Variations in perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding California's K-12 public education system across the five major regions of the state (Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego Counties), among Asians, blacks, Latinos, and non-Hispanic whites, and across socioeconomic and political groups.

Copies of this report may be ordered online ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) or by phone (415-291-4400). For questions about the survey, please contact [survey@ppic.org](mailto:survey@ppic.org). View our searchable PPIC Statewide Survey database online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND EDUCATION School Quality, State Leaders Get Bad Grades as Budget Showdown Looms**

### **CALIFORNIANS WANT SCHOOLS SPARED FROM CUTS BUT RESIST HIGHER TAXES**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, April 30, 2008 — Californians rank jobs and the economy as their biggest worry, but they also see the quality of the public school system as a significant problem. A majority of residents believe that the state's schools need major changes, according to the fourth annual survey on K-12 education released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

But while Californians identify K-12 education as the area they most want spared from budget cuts, they are divided in their willingness to pay more taxes to maintain current school funding. As a showdown looms over the state budget, Californians' negative views of the public school system and lack of consensus on how to pay for it coincide with a sharp decline in their confidence that their elected officials can handle the challenges ahead.

"There's incredible concern about the budget crisis and its impact on schools," says PPIC president and CEO Mark Baldassare. "People are uneasy with the way we make decisions about education, but they haven't changed their views on how involved they should be in paying for it. That leaves the key question unanswered: How do we improve the quality of public schools?"

### **ECONOMY IS CALIFORNIANS' TOP WORRY, FOLLOWED BY SCHOOLS**

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger dubbed 2008 the "Year of Education." But that was before a national economic slump and a deteriorating state fiscal outlook prompted him to propose across-the-board spending cuts to balance the state budget. The state's residents feel the shift in the state's fortunes acutely, with 36 percent calling jobs and the economy the most important issue facing Californians, more than double the proportion (15%) who saw this as the No. 1 issue a year ago.

Education and schools rank as the second most important issue (12%), slightly higher than last year (9%) but far lower than April 2006 (24%). Immigration ranks third (11%) and gasoline prices fourth (10%).

More than half (53%) of the state's residents say the quality of K-12 public schools is a major problem, and nearly a third (31%) consider it somewhat of a problem. The responses were similar last year, when 52 percent characterized school quality as a big problem and 28 percent said it was somewhat of a problem. Among parents with children in public schools, 43 percent this year regard educational quality as a big problem, a finding identical to last year's.

Among all Californians, 59 percent say the school system needs major changes. This is a view shared across party lines, by 67 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of Republicans, and 52 percent of independents.

But when it comes to their own local schools rather than the system as a whole, Californians give higher grades. More than half (54%) give their public schools an A (18%) or B (36%). Public school parents are even more positive, with 27 percent giving their schools an A and 40 percent giving them a B.

### **CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNOR, LEGISLATURE PLUMMETS**

At a time when the governor and the legislature need to reach an agreement to resolve the state budget crisis, Californians' confidence in the state's leaders has declined, particularly in the area of K-12 education. Four in 10 Californians (41%) approve of Schwarzenegger's overall job performance, down 3 points since last month (44% approval) and a steep 16 points since December (57% approval). Just 25 percent approve of his handling of K-12 education, down 11 points since last April and the lowest point since we began asking this question in January 2005, when the governor's approval rating in this area stood at 34%.

The legislature fares worse in Californians' estimation. Just one in four Californians (26%) approve of the way lawmakers are doing their jobs overall, down 4 points since last month (30% approval) and 15 points since December (41% approval). Only 21 percent of Californians approve of the way the legislature is handling public schools, down 8 points from last April (29%).

### **RAISE TAXES? IT DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK, WHO HAS TO PAY**

A strong majority (60%) of Californians choose K-12 public education as the area they would like to protect from budget cuts, ahead of health and human services (18%), higher education (11%), and prisons and corrections (8%). This view holds true across political party lines, regions of the state, and among all racial and ethnic groups.

Where Californians are split is in their willingness to pay higher taxes to avoid proposed cuts in public school funding. Among all residents, 49 percent say they are willing to pay more, and 48 percent are not. Democrats (60%) are much more likely than independents (48%) or Republicans (33%) to agree to higher taxes. The divide is regional as well. A majority of San Francisco Bay Area residents (57%) are willing to pay more, but many in the Central Valley (52%) and Inland Empire (51%) are not.

"There is consensus on the problem and the need for resources," Baldassare says. "But there's no commitment to action."

Support for specific tax proposals also varies, depending on who would be most affected. An increase in the top rate of income tax for the wealthiest state residents gets strong support, with 67 percent in favor. But a sales tax increase that would be felt by all residents draws strong opposition, with 63 percent against such a tax.

Californians also expect money to be spent more wisely on schools. While a majority (63%) believe that more money would lead to better schools, only 8 percent feel that money alone will improve education. A large majority (85%) say educational quality would improve if the state simply made better use of the money it spends on schools now.

Considering Californians' negative views of state decisionmakers and positive views of their own public schools, it is no surprise that residents would prefer that spending decisions be made at the local level: 46 percent say local school districts should decide how state money is spent, and 34 percent say teachers and principals should. Just 15 percent say the state government should have most of the control.

But residents' willingness to spend more money on their local schools is limited. Most (65%) would support a hypothetical bond measure to pay for a local school construction project if their district put it on the ballot, a type of measure that requires a 55 percent "yes" vote to pass. But asked if they would

support a hypothetical proposal to raise property taxes to boost school funding, only 48 percent said yes — far short of the two-thirds majority required to pass a tax increase.

## **PERCEPTIONS AND GOALS: A RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVIDE**

While there's overall agreement that the public school system needs major changes, racial and ethnic groups differ strongly in their perceptions of school quality and their beliefs about the goals of K-12 education. Blacks (72%) and whites (60%) are much more likely than Latinos (42%) and Asians (38%) to say that educational quality is a big problem.

Perceptions of the key problems in education vary across racial and ethnic groups, as well. Californians were asked to assess the relative importance of three education issues: the high school dropout rate, teacher quality, and teaching children with limited English language skills. Overall, seven in 10 (69%) say the dropout rate is a big problem, followed by teaching children with limited English skills (46%) and teacher quality (28%). But there are striking differences among groups.

- Latinos (84%) and blacks (80%) are much more likely than whites (61%) and Asians (51%) to view the dropout rate as a serious problem.
- More than half of blacks (53%) and whites (52%) say that teaching English learners is a big problem, while far fewer Latinos (41%) and Asians (32%) agree.
- Blacks (47%) are far more likely than Asians (30%), whites (27%), and Latinos (26%) to see teacher quality as a big problem.

What's the most important goal of the public school system? It depends who you ask. College preparation is the top choice (35%) among adults overall, followed by preparation for the workforce (17%), and teaching the basics (15%) and teaching life skills (15%). But the results vary widely across demographic groups, with 61 percent of Latinos placing college preparation first, compared to 31 percent of Asians, 30 percent of blacks, and 21 percent of whites. Whites (22%) were as likely to list workforce preparation as the top goal.

## **SUPPORT FOR HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM BUT CONCERN ABOUT FAILURE RATE**

Since 2006, high school students have had to pass the California High School Exit Exam to graduate, and most adults support this requirement. The high level of support for the exit exam this year (72%) has been consistent since the first time PPIC asked the question, in 2002. But that support is coupled with rising concern about the higher failure rates of students in lower-income areas.

The exit exam, which includes math and English language arts, is first given to students in grade 10. Students who fail either or both portions have five more chances to take the exam. In each of the first two years that the test has been required, over 90 percent of high school seniors passed. But differences among racial and ethnic groups persist, and economically disadvantaged students are less likely to pass the exam than their wealthier counterparts.

More than eight in 10 Californians are very concerned (50%) or somewhat concerned (34%) about the differences in failure rates, higher than a year ago (44% and 35%, respectively). Blacks (77%) and Latinos (60%) are especially likely to say they are very concerned.

One proposal to address the problem is to provide students who fail the exam with smaller English and math classes taught by fully credentialed teachers. Two-thirds of adults (66%) say they support the idea even if it costs the state more money. But that support has declined by 6 points (72%) since last year. While Democrats (73%) and independents (63%) favor it, Republicans are evenly split (49% in favor, 48% opposed).

## MORE KEY FINDINGS

### ■ **Most Californians think schools in low-income areas have fewer resources** – Page 18

Nearly eight in 10 Californians (78%) say schools in low-income areas have less money for teachers and classroom materials than those in wealthier areas, a finding that holds true across all regions, demographic groups, and political parties. If new money were available, a majority would spend more of it on low-income schools (72%) and schools with many English language learners or students with disabilities (63%) than on other schools.

### ■ **Residents value data on student and school performance** – Page 25

Nearly nine in 10 residents (88%) say tracking performance is somewhat or very important, similar to last year's findings (90%). But support for this goal has slipped among parents (from 65% to 58%). While a solid majority of adults favor spending more money on a better data system, support has fallen in this area as well, from 66 percent to 59 percent in favor.

### ■ **Most say art and music are important** – Page 24

Strong majorities of Californians across political and demographic groups say the arts are very important (60%) or somewhat important (28%) in the school curriculum, which is in line with last year's findings. Blacks (68%) are more likely than whites (64%), Latinos (58%), or Asians (50%) to say that art and music are very important.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

This edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey is part of a series supported by funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The intent of this series is to inform state policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about a variety of K-12, higher education, environment, and population issues. Findings are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents. To account for the growing use of cell phones, this PPIC Statewide Survey for the first time incorporates interviews on cell phones along with those on landline phones. Interviews took place between April 8 and April 22, 2008. They were conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2% and for the 1,406 likely voters is +/- 3%. For more information on methodology, see page 29.

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which is now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year and has generated a database of responses from more than 180,000 Californians.

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This report will appear on PPIC's website ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) after 10 p.m. on April 30.

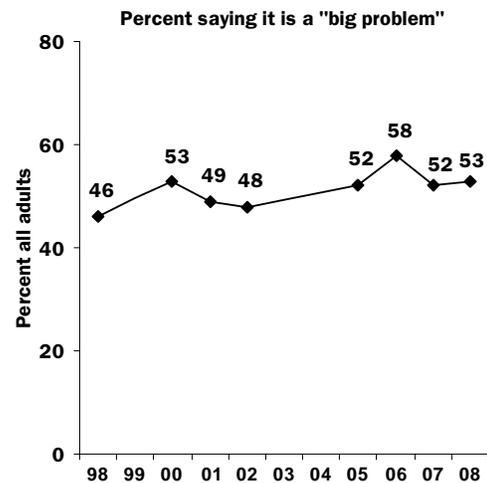
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# GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

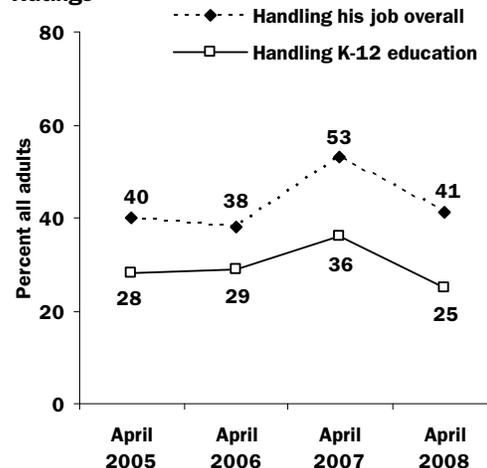
## KEY FINDINGS

- Facing the grim possibility of recession, Californians name jobs/the economy (36%) as the most important issue facing the state today, followed by education (12%), immigration (11%), and gas prices (10%). (page 8)
- Over half of Californians believe the quality of K-12 education in California is a big problem, and majorities of adults and likely voters believe major changes are needed in the state's K-12 system. (page 8)
- In terms of handling K-12 education, both the governor (25%) and state legislature (21%) receive low approval ratings, which have dropped about 10 points on this issue since last April. Overall job approval for both the governor and legislature has dropped at least 15 points since December. (page 9)
- Thirty-six percent of residents are aware that California's per-pupil spending is below the national average and 51 percent are aware that student test scores in the state are also below average. (page 10)
- Residents are more likely to call the high school drop-out rate (69%) a big problem than teaching English learners (46%) or teacher quality (28%); however, there are stark differences in perceptions across racial/ethnic groups. (page 11)
- Despite negative views of educational quality in California, 54 percent of all adults give their local public schools a grade of A (18%) or B (36%), and 67 percent of public school parents do so (27% A, 40% B). But half of residents and 57 percent of public school parents believe the current level of state funding for their local public schools is not enough. (page 12)

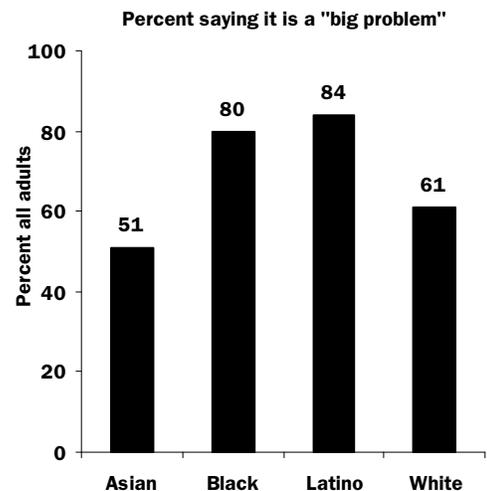
### Quality of California K-12 Public Education



### Governor Schwarzenegger's Approval Ratings



### High School Drop-Out Rate in California



## OVERALL CONDITIONS

Education continues to rate high on Californians' list of the major issues facing the state. Today, jobs and the economy have risen to the top of residents' concerns, with the proportion calling this the most important issue more than doubling in the past year (15% to 36%). Education and schools rank second (12%), slightly higher than April 2007 (9%), but much lower than April 2006 (24%). Other top issues named in this survey include immigration (11%) and gasoline prices (10%).

More than half of Californians think the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools is a big problem today (53%) and another three in 10 call it somewhat of a problem (31%). Last year, 52 percent of residents called it a big problem and another 28 percent somewhat of a problem. Among parents with children in public schools, 43 percent now say the quality of education is a big problem, identical to last year (43%). The percentage of Californians calling the quality of the state's schools a big problem has been at least 46 percent since this question was first asked in 1998, peaking at 58 percent in 2006.

Today, at least half of Democrats (62%), Republicans (56%), and independents (50%) say the quality of education is a big problem. Blacks (72%) and whites (60%) are much more likely than Latinos (42%) and Asians (38%) to hold this view. While many in each region call the quality of education a big problem, residents are more negative in the San Francisco Bay Area (61%) than in the Inland Empire (54%), Los Angeles (54%), Orange/San Diego counties (49%), and the Central Valley (49%). Immigrants (41%) are much less likely than those born in the United States (59%) to say that California's K-12 public schools are a big problem. Negative perceptions increase as age, education levels, and income levels rise.

**“How much of a problem is the quality of education in California’s K-12 public schools today?  
Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Big problem</b>	53%	38%	72%	42%	60%	43%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	31	41	25	38	27	39
<b>Not much of a problem</b>	12	12	2	18	9	16
<b>Don't know</b>	4	9	1	2	4	2

Nearly six in 10 Californians (59%) and 67 percent of likely voters believe the K-12 public education system in California is in need of major changes. Public school parents (56%) are somewhat similar to all adults in perceiving the need for major changes. The number of Californians calling for major changes is similar to last April (57%). Today, majorities of Democrats (67%), Republicans (64%), and independents (52%) say major changes are needed. More than half of residents in all regions want major changes, rising to nearly two in three in the Inland Empire (63%), Los Angeles (63%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (64%). Blacks (71%), whites (63%), and Latinos (57%) are considerably more likely than Asians (37%) to see a need for change. Negative views increase as age, education levels, and income levels rise.

**“Overall, do you think the K-12 public education system in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Major changes</b>	59%	67%	64%	52%	67%
<b>Minor changes</b>	30	24	27	36	25
<b>Fine the way it is</b>	8	6	7	8	5
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	2	4	3

## ELECTED OFFICIALS' APPROVAL RATINGS

Governor Schwarzenegger's ratings continue to slide, with four in 10 Californians (41%) approving of his job performance and nearly half (48%) disapproving. His overall approval has declined 16 points from December 2007 and is now the lowest it has been since May 2006 (36%). Californians are even more critical about his handling of the K-12 school system, with only 25 percent giving him positive marks while 56 percent disapprove. His ratings on this issue have dropped 11 points since last April and are at their lowest point since we began asking this question in January 2005 (34%).

While fewer than four in 10 in any party approve of the governor's performance on education, Democrats (18%) are far less approving than independents (30%) and Republicans (37%). Fewer than one in three across regions and racial/ethnic groups like the job he is doing in this area.

### "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>His job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	41%	33%	59%	46%	45%
	Disapprove	48	56	32	43	44
	Don't know	11	11	9	11	11
<i>The state's K-12 public education system?</i>	Approve	25	18	37	30	26
	Disapprove	56	67	43	52	56
	Don't know	19	15	20	18	18

How about the California Legislature? As with the slide in the governor's ratings, approval of the legislature has dropped 15 points since December 2007 and is 12 points lower than last April. Today, one in four Californians (26%) approve of the way that the legislature is handling its job. The last time the legislature's approval was this low was May 2006 (26%). Ratings on the legislature's handling of the state's K-12 public education system are even lower, with 21 percent approving and 61 percent giving negative marks. Approval of the legislature's performance on education is 8 points lower than last April and identical to what it was in April 2006 (21%).

Today, few Republicans (17%), Democrats (18%), or independents (24%) offer a positive assessment of the way the legislature is handling the state's public school system. About one in five residents in all regions approve. Latinos (31%) are more positive than Asians (26%), blacks (20%), and whites (15%) about the legislature's performance in this area. Approval drops as age, education levels, and income levels rise.

### "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Its job?</i>	Approve	26%	28%	18%	31%	22%
	Disapprove	58	58	68	52	66
	Don't know	16	14	14	17	12
<i>The state's K-12 public education system?</i>	Approve	21	18	17	24	14
	Disapprove	61	66	66	51	68
	Don't know	18	16	17	25	18

## STATE'S RELATIVE EDUCATION RANKINGS

Many Californians continue to perceive the state as ranking below the national average in per-pupil spending and student performance. Are they correct? According to *Rankings & Estimates* (National Education Association, 2007), California ranks 29<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states and the District of Columbia in per-pupil spending. Today, 36 percent of residents believe California's per-pupil spending is below average or near the bottom nationally, 29 percent think it is about average, and 26 percent say it is above average or near the top.

Over the past decade, the proportion of residents believing that state spending on education was below the national average had declined, but in the past year this belief has increased a slight 4 points. Today, Democrats (46%) are more likely than independents (34%) and Republicans (29%) to think California's per-pupil funding is below average or near the bottom. This perception of below-average spending is more widely held by blacks (43%) and whites (39%) than by Asians (32%) or Latinos (31%).

**"Where do you think California currently ranks in..."**

All Adults		Apr 98	Feb 00	Jan 02	Oct 02	Apr 05	Apr 06	Apr 07	Apr 08
<b>Per pupil spending for K-12 public schools? Compared to other states, is California's spending...?</b>	<b>Near the top</b>	5%	6%	6%	9%	9%	11%	12%	12%
	<b>Above average</b>	9	10	9	11	10	13	13	14
	<b>Average</b>	28	24	24	31	25	29	31	29
	<b>Below average</b>	27	29	28	23	26	20	19	20
	<b>Near the bottom</b>	20	22	20	14	18	11	13	16
	<b>Don't know</b>	11	9	13	12	12	16	12	9
<b>Student test scores for K-12 public schools? Compared to other states, are California's student test scores...?</b>	<b>Near the top</b>	2	-	2	3	3	3	2%	2
	<b>Above average</b>	8	-	6	8	8	8	8	8
	<b>Average</b>	32	-	29	33	31	32	34	32
	<b>Below average</b>	39	-	39	36	35	33	34	33
	<b>Near the bottom</b>	14	-	16	13	14	13	15	18
	<b>Don't know</b>	5	-	8	7	9	11	7	7

Perceptions of the state's relative ranking on student test scores are much more negative than perceptions of relative per-pupil spending. And according to the *Nation's Report Card, 2007* (National Assessment of Educational Progress), California ranks near the bottom nationally on reading and math scores for students in grades 4 and 8. Today, half of Californians (51%) say the state's test scores are below average or near the bottom nationally, while three in ten (32%) think they are average, and 10 percent put them above average. Californians have held similar beliefs each time we have asked this question since 1998.

A majority of Republicans (60%), Democrats (57%), and independents (52%) hold negative perceptions of California's student test scores. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (62%) and blacks (56%) are more negative than Latinos (38%) and Asians (32%). Perceptions of below average student test scores rise sharply with higher income levels.

Public school parents are similar to all Californians in their beliefs about per-pupil spending and student test scores: 27 percent say per-pupil spending is above average, 30 percent say it is average, and 35 percent say it falls short of the national average. As for student test scores, 11 percent of public school parents say California students rank above average, 38 percent say they are about average, and 46 percent say they are below average.

## TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Californians were asked to gauge the seriousness of three issues affecting the state's K-12 public education system: the high school drop-out rate, teaching children with limited English language skills, and teacher quality. Strong majorities of residents rate each of these issues as at least somewhat of a problem. Over two in three (69%) say the drop-out rate is a big problem, 46 percent say teaching English learners is a big problem, and just 28 percent say teacher quality is a big problem. These perceptions have held fairly steady over the past three years.

**“I’m going to read you a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about California’s K-12 public schools today. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem. How about...”**

	The high school drop-out rate?	Teaching children with limited English language skills?	Teacher quality?
<b>Big problem</b>	69%	46%	28%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	22	35	41
<b>Not really a problem</b>	4	16	26
<b>Don't know</b>	5	3	5

There is considerable variation across racial/ethnic groups regarding the perception of the seriousness of the high school drop-out rate. At least eight in 10 Latinos (84%) and blacks (80%) say it a big problem, but fewer whites (61%) and Asians (51%) hold this view. In all regions, nearly two in three believe the drop-out rate is a big problem, with residents of Los Angeles (78%) especially likely to hold this perception. Across parties, strong majorities say the drop-out rate is a big problem, including 63 percent of Republicans, 68 percent of independents, and 72 percent of Democrats. Among parents of public school children, 67 percent see the drop-out rate as a big problem in the state.

Racial/ethnic differences are also evident in the perception that teaching English learners is a big problem in the state: More than half of blacks (53%) and whites (52%) hold this view, but fewer Latinos (41%) and Asians (32%) do so. Republicans (52%) are somewhat more likely than Democrats (47%) or independents (41%) to hold this view. Across regions, fewer than half say teaching English learners is a big problem, with residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (43%) the least likely to hold this belief. This perception is also somewhat lower among public school parents (41%) than among all adults (46%).

**“How about teaching children with limited English language skills?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Big problem</b>	46%	32%	53%	41%	52%	41%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	35	42	30	37	33	39
<b>Not much of a problem</b>	16	18	14	20	13	18
<b>Don't know</b>	3	8	3	2	2	2

Among parents with children in public schools, 23 percent see teacher quality as a big problem in California. Democrats (32%) and Republicans (30%) are more likely than independents (24%) to think teacher quality is a big problem. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (47%) are much more likely than Asians (30%), whites (27%), and Latinos (26%) to hold this perception. Across regions, fewer than one in three residents say that teacher quality is a big problem.

## RATING LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

While many Californians express concern about the quality of the state’s K-12 public schools, eight in 10 (81%) give their local public schools grades of C or higher. Over half (54%) give schools an A or a B, 27 percent give them a C, and 14 percent give them a D or an F.

The percentage of adults giving A’s and B’s was similar last April and has been greater than 50 percent each time we have asked this question since 2005 (51% 2005, 55% 2006, 52% 2007, 54% today).

Today, public school parents (67%) are more likely than all adults (54%) to give a grade of A or B to their local public schools. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (39%) are much less likely than whites (52%), Asians (57%), and Latinos (59%) to give a positive assessment.

About half or more across California’s regions give their local schools an A or a B, with those in Orange/San Diego counties (58%) and the Central Valley (58%) being the most positive. Republicans (57%) are more likely than Democrats and independents (50% each) to offer a grade of A or B.

**“Overall, how would you rate the quality of public schools in your neighborhood today? If you had to give your local public schools a grade, would it be A, B, C, D, or F?”**

	All Adults	Region					Public School Parents
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
<b>A</b>	18%	16%	18%	19%	19%	20%	27%
<b>B</b>	36	42	30	34	39	30	40
<b>C</b>	27	24	26	26	26	33	21
<b>D</b>	10	8	16	11	8	8	7
<b>F</b>	4	5	4	4	2	6	4
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	6	6	6	3	1

While many Californians grade their local public schools positively, half (51%) think that the current level of state funding for their local public schools is too low. One in three (33%) say it is just enough and about one in 10 say it is more than enough (9%). The perception that state funding for public schools is insufficient has hovered around 50 percent since 2005 (51% 2005, 49% 2006, 48% 2007, 51% today).

Democrats (63%) are far more likely than Republicans (36%) or independents (44%) to say that state funding for local public schools is not enough. By region, residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) are the most likely to hold this view. Negative perceptions of state funding levels are higher among blacks (72%) and Latinos (61%) than among whites (46%) and Asians (37%). Among public school parents, 57 percent think the current level of state funding for local public schools is not enough.

**“Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?”**

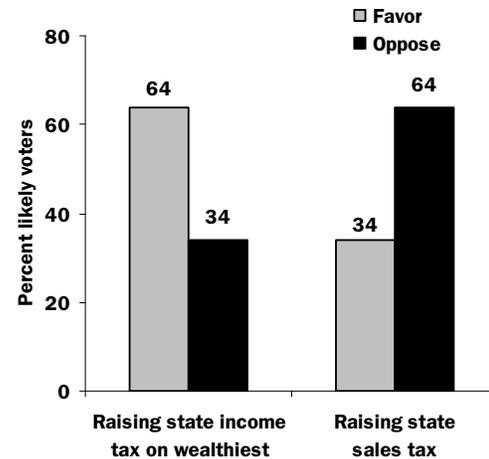
	All Adults	Region					Public School Parents
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
<b>More than enough</b>	9%	10%	7%	10%	11%	9%	6%
<b>Just enough</b>	33	38	29	32	37	31	34
<b>Not enough</b>	51	47	57	52	45	54	57
<b>Don't know</b>	7	5	7	6	7	6	3

# FISCAL ATTITUDES

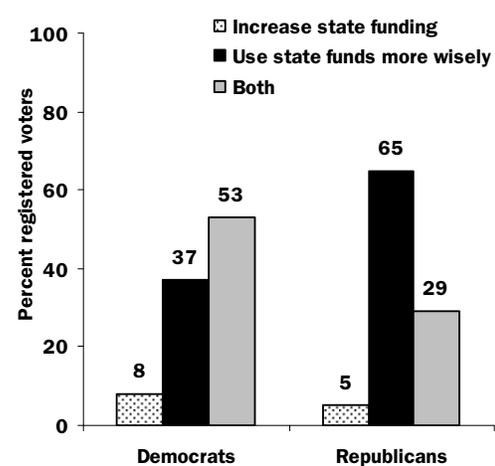
## KEY FINDINGS

- Californians agree that K-12 education is the major spending area they most want to protect from state budget cuts and are concerned that the state's budget gap will cause significant spending cuts. Most likely voters are in favor of raising income taxes on the wealthy to maintain current K-12 funding but most are opposed to raising the state sales tax to do so. (pages 14, 15)
- A majority of residents agree that additional state funding would lead to higher quality K-12 education (63%) and that better use of existing funds would also lead to higher quality (85%). When asked to choose between these options, 46 percent of residents say better use of existing funds, while 44 percent say a combination of the two is needed. Voters are deeply divided along party lines. (page 16)
- Most residents believe that either local school districts (46%) or teachers and principals (34%), not state government (15%), should decide how state funds are spent in local schools. Although a majority of likely voters would vote yes for a local school construction bond, about half would vote against raising property taxes for local schools. (page 17)
- Nearly eight in 10 Californians say the schools in lower-income areas lack the resources of other schools, with agreement across party lines. If new funding became available, majorities would support giving more of this funding to schools in lower-income areas (72%) and to schools with more English learners or students with disabilities (63%) than to other schools. (page 18)

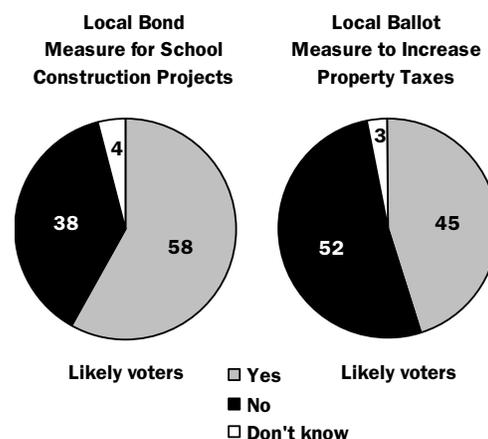
**Raising State Revenues to Maintain Current K-12 Funding**



**How to Improve the Quality of California's K-12 Public Schools**



**Support for Hypothetical Ballot Measures to Raise Funds for Local Schools**



## SPENDING PRIORITIES

A strong majority of Californians (60%) and likely voters (61%) agree that the one area of spending that they would most like to protect from budget cuts is the state’s K-12 public education system. Findings today are similar to January, when 57 percent of residents and likely voters put K-12 education at the top. Since we began asking this question in June 2003, K-12 public education has been consistently mentioned as the top area of the state budget to protect. Majorities of Democrats (64%), independents (62%), and Republicans (55%) say they most want to protect K-12 education. Majorities across racial/ethnic groups also name K-12 education, with blacks (65%), Latinos (61%), and whites (60%) more likely than Asians (52%) to agree. Across regions, strong majorities of residents want most to protect K-12 education. The preference to protect K-12 education spending increases with rising income levels.

**“Some of the largest areas for state spending are: K-12 public education, higher education, health and human services, and prisons and corrections. Thinking about these four areas of state spending, I’d like you to name the one you most want to protect from spending cuts.”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>K-12 public education</b>	60%	64%	55%	62%	61%
<b>Health and human services</b>	18	20	15	18	18
<b>Higher education</b>	11	11	10	12	10
<b>Prisons and corrections</b>	8	3	16	4	8
<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	4	4	3

In line with Californians’ preference to protect K-12 education, strong majorities of residents (56%) and likely voters (59%) say they are very concerned that the state’s budget gap will cause significant spending cuts in K-12 education. Sixty-three percent of public school parents express this high level of concern. Sixty-seven percent of Democrats say they are very concerned, compared to about half of independents (52%) and Republicans (48%).

Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (70%) are far more likely to say they are very concerned, followed by Latinos (58%), whites (55%), and Asians (49%). Across regions, residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (64%) are the most likely to say they are very concerned, followed by residents of Los Angeles (57%), the Central Valley (54%), Inland Empire (51%), and Orange/San Diego counties (49%). Women (61%) are much more likely than men (51%) to say they are very concerned, and majorities across all age, education, and income groups say they are very concerned.

**“How concerned are you that the state’s budget gap will cause significant spending cuts in K-12 public education?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asian	Black	Latino	White	
<b>Very concerned</b>	56%	49%	70%	58%	55%	63%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	30	39	27	33	29	29
<b>Not too concerned</b>	7	5	2	5	9	4
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	6	5	1	4	7	4
<b>Don't know</b>	1	2	-	-	-	-

## MAINTAINING CURRENT STATE FUNDING

With all budget areas facing significant spending cuts, we asked Californians whether they would be willing to pay higher taxes just to maintain current funding levels for K-12 public education. Residents are divided (49% yes, 48% no). Among likely voters, about half are opposed (52%) to increasing taxes to maintain current funding levels for K-12 education. Democrats (60%) are much more likely than independents (48%) to say they would be willing to pay more taxes to maintain the status quo, while a strong majority of Republicans (63%) say they would not be.

Across regions, a strong majority of residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) say they would be willing to pay more taxes to maintain current K-12 funding. In contrast, fewer than half in the Central Valley and Inland Empire (46% each), and Los Angeles and Orange/San Diego counties (47% each), are willing to pay more taxes for this purpose. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (55%) are somewhat more likely than blacks (50%) and Asians (49%) to say they would be willing to pay more to maintain current K-12 funding levels, while more whites (52%) say they are unwilling to do so. Among public school parents, about half (52%) say they would be willing to pay more just to maintain current funding levels for K-12 public education.

**“What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for K-12 public education. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for this purpose?”**

		Yes	No	Don't know
<b>All Adults</b>		49%	48%	3%
<b>Likely Voters</b>		45	52	3
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	60	38	2
	<b>Republican</b>	33	63	4
	<b>Independent</b>	48	49	3
<b>Region</b>	<b>Central Valley</b>	46	52	2
	<b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>	57	40	3
	<b>Los Angeles</b>	47	49	4
	<b>Orange/San Diego</b>	47	50	3
	<b>Inland Empire</b>	46	51	3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Asian</b>	49	46	5
	<b>Black</b>	50	47	3
	<b>Latino</b>	55	42	3
	<b>White</b>	44	52	4
<b>Public School Parents</b>		52	45	3

When residents are asked about specific ways to raise state revenues to maintain current K-12 funding, support varies widely, depending on the method. Sixty-seven percent of residents and 64 percent of likely voters would favor increasing the top rate of income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians. Strong partisan differences are evident and support for this proposal decreases as age, education, and income rise. When asked about raising the state sales tax to maintain current funding levels for K-12 education, 63 percent of all adults and 64 percent of likely voters are opposed. Strong majorities across all regional and demographic groups oppose this proposal.

### ADEQUACY AND EFFICIENCY OF STATE FUNDING

Most residents (63%) and likely voters (55%) agree that additional state funding would lead to higher quality K-12 education in California. Findings for all adult residents on this question have been nearly the same since we first asked this question two years ago (65% agree, 2006; 65% agree, 2007). Among public school parents today, 70 percent say additional funding would improve quality. Seven in 10 Democrats (73%) and nearly six in 10 independents (59%) agree, while Republicans are more likely to disagree (53%) than agree (44%). Strong majorities across regions agree that additional funding would lead to higher quality K-12 education. Across racial/ethnic groups, more than two in three Latinos (77%), Asians (74%), and blacks (68%) agree, while only 53 percent of whites agree. This belief declines with increases in age, education, and income.

**“In general, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Additional state funding would lead to higher quality K-12 education in California.”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Agree</b>	63%	73%	44%	59%	55%
<b>Disagree</b>	33	22	53	36	41
<b>Don't know</b>	4	5	3	5	4

An even higher proportion of residents (85%) and likely voters (86%) agree that better use of existing state funds would lead to higher quality K-12 education in California. This finding has remained consistently high since 2006, with more than eight in 10 residents agreeing (81% 2006, 84% 2007). Eighty-six percent of public school parents today agree that better use of existing state funds would lead to higher quality K-12 education. Across political groups, overwhelming majorities hold this view, and across regions and demographic groups, at least 79 percent agree.

**“In general, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
Better use of existing state funds would lead to higher quality K-12 education in California.”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Agree</b>	85%	85%	88%	83%	86%
<b>Disagree</b>	12	12	10	14	10
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	2	3	4

So what do Californians see as the best method for improving K-12 education quality? They are divided between using existing state funds more wisely (46%) and a dual approach: combining additional state funding with better fiscal management (44%). Only 8 percent believe increasing state funding alone would be the best way to improve K-12 quality. Partisan differences are evident, with 65 percent of Republicans preferring only to use funds more wisely, while about half of Democrats (53%) and independents (49%) prefer the combined approach.

## LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDING

Most Californians would support a hypothetical bond measure to pay for local school construction projects: 65 percent of residents and 58 percent of likely voters would vote yes if their local school district had this measure on the ballot, which requires a 55 percent majority to pass. Findings among residents are similar to last year (66% yes) but down from April 2005 (71% yes). Across political groups today, support is higher among Democrats (71%) and independents (63%) than among Republicans (52%). Support is high across all regions and demographic groups but declines with increasing age, education, and income.

Fewer residents (48%) and likely voters (45%) would support a hypothetical measure on their local ballot to increase property taxes to provide more funds for local public schools, which requires a two-thirds majority to pass. Findings among all adults today are similar to those in each of the four surveys since May 2004 in which we asked this question. Across parties, Democrats (56%) and independents (49%) are more likely to say they would vote yes on this measure, while 65 percent of Republicans would vote no. Across regions, more residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (55%) would vote yes, while more in Orange/San Diego counties (53%), the Inland Empire (51%), and Los Angeles (50%) would vote no; Central Valley residents are divided (49% yes, 48% no). Latinos (57%) and blacks (52%) are more likely to say they would vote yes and whites (53%) and Asians (51%) are more likely to say no. A strong majority of renters (57%) say they would vote yes, while 54 percent of homeowners say no. Support for raising property taxes to increase funding for schools declines as age and income rise.

Who should have the most control in deciding how the money from state government is spent in local public schools? Most residents prefer control at the local level: 46 percent name local school districts, 34 percent name teachers and principals, and only 15 percent say the state government. Findings are similar among public school parents. Across parties and regions of the state, most residents think local school districts should have the most control. Across racial/ethnic groups, Asians (50%), whites (49%), and Latinos (45%) say local school districts should have the most control, while blacks (43%) are more likely to say teachers and principals; notably, 24 percent of Latinos name state government.

**“Who do you think should have the most control in deciding how the money from state government is spent in local public schools?”**

		Local school districts	Teachers and principals	State government	Other/ Don't know
<b>All Adults</b>		46%	34%	15%	5%
<b>Likely Voters</b>		47	38	10	5
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	45	38	13	4
	<b>Republican</b>	48	35	12	5
	<b>Independent</b>	45	36	14	5
<b>Region</b>	<b>Central Valley</b>	45	30	17	8
	<b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>	48	37	10	5
	<b>Los Angeles</b>	42	34	20	4
	<b>Orange/San Diego</b>	47	35	12	6
	<b>Inland Empire</b>	49	34	14	3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Asian</b>	50	33	11	6
	<b>Black</b>	37	43	16	4
	<b>Latino</b>	45	28	24	3
	<b>White</b>	49	38	9	4
<b>Public School Parents</b>		48	32	16	4

## RESOURCE EQUITY

When it comes to the distribution of resources in California’s public schools, nearly eight in 10 residents (78%) and likely voters (77%) say that schools in lower-income areas of the state do not have the same amount of resources—including good teachers and classroom materials—as schools in wealthier areas. Findings are similar to last year (75%) and April 2005 (76%). Strong majorities across parties today say resources are not the same in lower-income areas, with Democrats (86%) and independents (76%) more likely than Republicans (65%) to agree. This perception is held by strong majorities across demographic groups and across regions—higher among blacks (86%) and Latinos (84%) than others and among San Francisco Bay Area residents (86%) than residents in other regions. Among public school parents, 79 percent agree. This belief declines as age increases.

**“Do you think that schools in lower-income areas of the state have the same amount of resources—including good teachers and classroom materials—as schools in wealthier areas?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes, same</b>	16%	11%	26%	19%	17%
<b>No, not the same</b>	78	86	65	76	77
<b>Don't know</b>	6	3	9	5	6

How should the state address this resource inequity? If new state funding should become available, 72 percent of residents, 66 percent of likely voters, and 72 percent of public school parents would like to see more money go to schools in lower-income areas to help pay for teachers and classroom materials. Support for providing new funding for schools in lower-income areas is similar to last year (74% yes). Today, strong majorities of Democrats (80%) and independents (74%) agree, and 54 percent of Republicans agree. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (85%) and Latinos (84%) are more likely to say new funding should be given to schools in lower-income areas, followed by Asians (75%) and whites (62%). Support for additional funding declines with increases in age, education, and income.

Majorities of residents (63%), likely voters (54%), and public school parents (68%) would like to see more funding going to schools with more English language learners or students with disabilities, if new state funding becomes available. Democrats (68%) and independents (60%) favor giving more money to these schools over other schools, while Republicans are divided (45% yes, 49% no). Strong majorities across regions favor additional funding for these schools. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (82%) are the most likely to say yes while whites (50%) are the least likely. Immigrants are far more supportive than U.S.-born residents (80% to 54%). Support for increased funding for these schools declines with higher age, education, and income.

**“If new state funding becomes available, should schools...”**

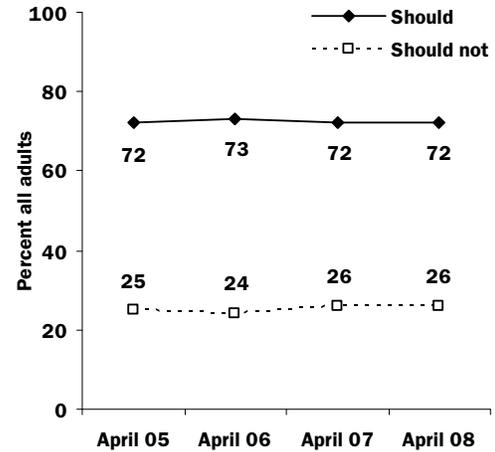
		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>...in lower-income areas get more of this funding than other schools to help pay for teachers and classroom materials, or not?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	72%	80%	54%	74%	66%
	<b>No</b>	25	18	40	24	30
	<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	6	2	4
<b>...with more English language learners or students with disabilities get more of this funding than other schools, or not?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	63	68	45	60	54
	<b>No</b>	32	27	49	35	41
	<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	6	5	5

# POLICY PREFERENCES

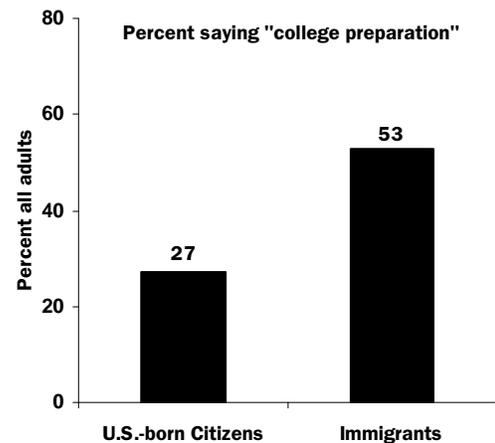
## KEY FINDINGS

- Residents continue to believe that high school students should have to pass an exit exam to graduate, but many are concerned about high failure rates in lower-income areas. (page 20)
- Most Californians, and black residents more than others, are very concerned about the drop-out rate in lower-income areas and support increasing school support staff to help struggling students. (page 21)
- Many residents are concerned that English learners have lower test scores than other students and support providing these students with more assistance, even if it means less assistance for other students. (page 22)
- Most Californians, and black and Latino residents more than others, are very concerned about teacher quality in lower-income areas. Seven in 10 adults support providing these teachers with additional training and development. (page 23)
- A plurality of Californians say that college preparation should be the most important goal of K-12 public schools, although this opinion varies across race/ethnicity. Six in 10 residents say it is very important to include arts and music in the curriculum. (page 24)
- About half of Californians believe it is very important for the state to collect and make available information about local schools, and six in 10 would support increased state funding for this endeavor. (page 25)
- Among public school parents, 76 percent know a lot (33%) or some (43%) about the grading and test score system at their local schools. Knowledge increases with higher income and computer ownership. (page 26)

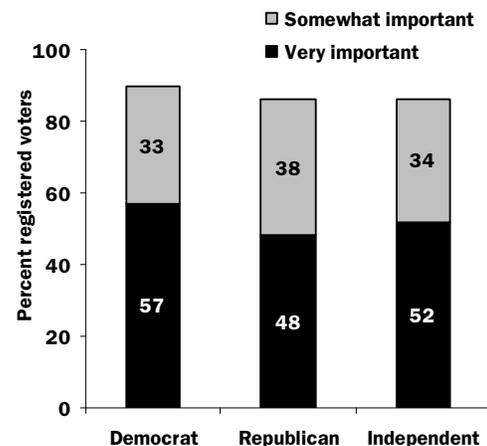
**Should Students Have to Pass Statewide Tests Before Graduating From High School?**



**Most Important Goal of California's K-12 Public Schools**



**Importance of Collecting/Making Available Information About Local Public Schools**



## CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL EXIT EXAM

To graduate from high school in California, students must not only meet their regular academic requirements but also pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). This exam, which includes testing in both mathematics and English language arts, was first required for the class of 2006. In general, California residents are highly supportive of an exit exam requirement (72% believe students should have to pass an exit exam), and similarly high percentages have expressed support each time this question has been asked in PPIC Statewide Surveys (74% 2002, 72% 2005, 73% 2006, 72% 2007).

Students first take the CAHSEE in grade 10, and if they fail the test (or the math or English portion of the test), they have five additional opportunities to take the test. When CAHSEE results for the class of 2007 were released last August, over 90 percent of grade 12 students had passed the exam. However, despite improvement among subgroups since 2006, there were still differences in pass rates across racial/ethnic groups and between economically disadvantaged students and others. In our current survey, over eight in 10 California residents say they are very (50%) or somewhat (34%) concerned that students in lower-income areas have higher failure rates than other students. Concern is especially pronounced among blacks and Latinos (77% and 60% very concerned, respectively) compared to whites and Asians (42% each). The percentage of adults saying they are very concerned has increased since last year (44% to 50%). Concern is similar among those who believe that students should have to take an exit exam (49% very concerned) and those who do not think they should (51% very concerned).

**“Students are first required to take the California High School Exit exam in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and, if they fail, can take the exam up to five more times. How concerned are you that students in lower-income areas have a higher failure rate on the California High School Exit Exam than other students?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Very concerned</b>	50%	42%	77%	60%	42%	53%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	34	45	18	30	36	33
<b>Not too concerned</b>	9	8	2	6	12	8
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	6	3	3	4	9	5
<b>Don't know</b>	1	2	-	-	1	1

A majority of residents (66%) and likely voters (59%) are in favor of providing students who initially fail the exam with smaller classes in English and math, taught by fully credentialed teachers, even if it costs the state more money. Support for this proposal among all adults has declined by 6 points since April 2007 and April 2006 (72% each). While Democrats (73%) and independents (63%) are in favor of it, Republicans are divided (49% favor, 48% oppose). Support is higher among Latinos (82%), blacks (80%), and Asians (69%) than among whites (55%) and declines sharply with higher age, education, and income.

**“For students who initially fail the California High School Exit Exam, would you favor or oppose requiring their local schools to provide them with smaller English and math class sizes taught by fully credentialed teachers until they pass the test, even if it costs the state more money?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Favor</b>	66%	73%	49%	63%	59%
<b>Oppose</b>	31	24	48	35	38
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	3	2	3

## HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUT RATE

California educators and legislators face a number of challenging issues in trying to address the high school drop-out rate. At the same time, state residents are concerned about at-risk students. In our survey, over eight in 10 Californians are very (53%) or somewhat (33%) concerned that students in lower-income areas of the state have a higher drop-out rate than other students. Concern was nearly identical last year (54% very, 34% somewhat concerned) and in 2006 (55% very, 31% somewhat concerned).

Across racial/ethnic groups today, blacks (79%) are far more likely than others to be very concerned (56% Latinos, 50% whites, 41% Asians). Strong majorities of residents across demographic and political groups are at least somewhat concerned, but Democrats (65%) are much more likely to be very concerned than independents (47%) or Republicans (44%). Over half of men and women, and residents across age, education, and income groups, are very concerned. Residents of Los Angeles (58%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) are more likely than residents in other regions to be very concerned.

### “How concerned are you that students in lower-income areas have a higher drop-out rate from high school than other students?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Very concerned</b>	53%	41%	79%	56%	50%	53%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	33	42	16	34	34	35
<b>Not too concerned</b>	8	8	3	5	10	8
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	5	4	2	5	6	4
<b>Don't know</b>	1	5	-	-	-	-

One idea for increasing graduation rates among students in lower-income areas is to provide more school support staff, such as mentors, counselors, and social workers. Sixty-eight percent of residents and 60 percent of likely voters would favor this idea, even if it cost the state more money. Seven in 10 residents supported this proposal last year (72%) and in April 2006 (71%). Across parties today, most Democrats (77%) and independents (64%) favor this proposal to help students who are at risk of dropping out, while Republicans are divided (51% favor, 47% oppose).

Across regions, over six in 10 residents favor increasing school support staff, and across racial/ethnic groups, over seven in 10 Latinos (84%), blacks (80%), and Asians (73%) favor this idea, compared to 57 percent of whites. The percentage favoring an increase in school support staff is higher among women than men (72% to 64%) and declines with higher age, education, and income. Seventy-four percent of public school parents favor this proposal. Of the 69 percent of residents who believe the drop-out rate is a big problem in California, 72 percent favor providing these students with more support staff. Of the 53 percent of residents who are very concerned that students in lower-income areas have a higher drop-out rate than other students, 80 percent favor this proposal, even if it costs the state more money.

### “One idea that has been suggested for improving the graduation rate among students in lower-income areas is to increase the number of school support staff, such as counselors, mentors, and social workers. Would you favor or oppose this idea, even if it cost the state more money?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Favor</b>	68%	77%	51%	64%	60%
<b>Oppose</b>	29	20	47	32	37
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	2	4	3

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

One in four of California’s public school students are English learners, and these students typically score lower than other students on standardized tests. About eight in 10 residents are very (42%) or somewhat (37%) concerned about the performance of California’s English learners, which is nearly identical to last April (44% very, 37% somewhat concerned) and April 2006 (43% very, 37% somewhat concerned).

Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (53%) and blacks (52%) are much more likely than whites (37%) and Asians (28%) to be very concerned about the test scores of English learners. Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area (46%) and Los Angeles (45%) residents are more likely to be very concerned than Inland Empire (40%), Central Valley (38%), and Orange/San Diego residents (37%). Immigrants (46%) are somewhat more likely than U.S.-born residents (40%), to be very concerned about English learners’ performance on standardized tests.

**“How concerned are you that English language learners in California’s schools today score lower on standardized tests than other students?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Very concerned</b>	42%	28%	52%	53%	37%	45%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	37	52	31	35	37	35
<b>Not too concerned</b>	11	11	6	7	14	10
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	8	6	10	5	10	8
<b>Don’t know</b>	2	3	1	-	2	2

Sixty-nine percent of residents and 62 percent of likely voters are in favor of providing extra assistance to English learners to help them improve their academic performance, even if it means these students receive more assistance than other students. Support was slightly higher among all adults (73%) and likely voters (67%) last April. Although majorities across political parties favor this proposal, support is greater among Democrats (72%) than among independents (66%) and Republicans (54%).

Majorities across regional and demographic groups are in favor of providing extra assistance to English learners, even if it means that they receive more assistance than other students. However, Latinos (87%) are far more likely than Asians (70%), whites (59%), and blacks (51%) to favor this idea, and support declines with higher age, education, and income. Eighty-five percent of immigrants favor this idea, compared to 61 percent of U.S.-born residents. Among the 46 percent of residents who believe teaching children with limited English language skills is a big problem, 66 percent favor the idea of giving these students more assistance. Of the 42 percent who are very concerned about the academic performance of English learners, 79 percent favor this idea.

**“To try to improve the academic performance of English language learners, would you favor or oppose providing extra assistance to these students, even if it means they receive more assistance than other students?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Favor</b>	69%	72%	54%	66%	62%
<b>Oppose</b>	28	24	43	31	35
<b>Don’t know</b>	3	4	3	3	3

## TEACHER QUALITY

Over eight in 10 Californians are very concerned (54%) or somewhat concerned (31%) about the shortage of good teachers in lower-income areas. Residents were just as concerned last year (54% very, 31% somewhat concerned) and in April 2006 (57% very, 29% somewhat concerned). Today, stark differences remain across racial/ethnic groups, with 82 percent of blacks and 66 percent of Latinos saying they are very concerned about this issue, compared to fewer than half of whites (46%) and Asians (41%).

Democrats (68%) are far more likely than independents (51%) or Republicans (36%) to express a high level of concern about this issue. Over half of men and women and residents across regions are very concerned, although the level of concern declines with higher age and income.

### “How concerned are you that schools in lower-income areas have a shortage of good teachers compared to schools in wealthier areas?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Very concerned</b>	54%	41%	82%	66%	46%	56%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	31	48	15	26	35	31
<b>Not too concerned</b>	8	4	1	6	10	8
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	5	2	2	2	7	4
<b>Don't know</b>	2	5	-	-	2	1

Seventy-two percent of residents and 65 percent of likely voters believe schools in lower-income areas should provide additional training and professional development to teachers, even if it costs the state more money. Support for this proposal was slightly higher last year (76% all adults, 71% likely voters) and in April 2006 (76% all adults, 69% likely voters). Majorities across political parties support additional training and development for teachers, but Democrats (80%) are the most likely to hold this view (68% independents, 54% Republicans).

Strong majorities across regions and demographic groups believe these schools should provide teachers with additional training and development. Across regions, residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (76%) and Los Angeles (75%) are more likely to hold this view, while across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (86%) are the most likely and whites (63%) the least likely to hold this view. And regardless of whether residents consider teacher quality to be a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem, over 70 percent support giving teachers in lower-income areas additional opportunities, even if it costs the state more money. Of those who are very concerned about teacher quality in lower-income areas, 85 percent favor this idea.

### “Should local schools in lower-income areas provide additional training and professional development to teachers, even if it costs the state more money?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes</b>	72%	80%	54%	68%	65%
<b>No</b>	25	17	42	27	32
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	4	5	3

## CURRICULUM

When asked to choose the most important goal of California’s K-12 public schools, a plurality of residents (35%) and public school parents (47%) say the most important goal is to prepare students for college. The percentage selecting college preparation as the most important goal was similar last year among all adults (32%) and public school parents (44%), but has increased since April 2006 (26% adults, 33% public school parents). Today, 17 percent say preparing students for the workforce should be the primary focus of schools, 15 percent say teaching the basics, 15 percent say teaching life skills, and 13 percent say schools should prepare students to be good citizens.

College preparation is the top choice or a close second of residents across most subgroups; however, opinions differ considerably across racial/ethnic groups. Sixty-one percent of Latinos say preparing students for college should be the most important goal, compared to far fewer Asians (31%), blacks (30%), and whites (21%). Whites are as likely to say workforce preparation (22%) as college preparation (21%). Immigrants (53%) are twice as likely as U.S.-born residents (27%) to say college preparation. Residents in Los Angeles (44%) are more likely to point toward college preparation than are residents in Orange/San Diego counties (35%), the Inland Empire (34%), Central Valley (33%), and San Francisco Bay Area (27%). The belief that college preparation should be the primary goal of California’s K-12 public education system declines with higher age, education, and income. Residents age 55 and older are more likely than others to say “teaching the basics” (23%).

### “In your opinion, what is the most important goal of California’s K-12 public education system?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Preparing students for college	35%	31%	30%	61%	21%	47%
Preparing students for the workforce	17	11	19	8	22	13
Teaching students the basics	15	15	20	6	19	12
Teaching students life skills	15	18	21	8	19	10
Preparing students to be good citizens	13	16	3	15	11	14
Other/All of the above (volunteered)	4	5	6	2	5	3
Don't know	1	4	1	-	3	1

When it comes to including art and music in the public school curriculum, vast majorities of Californians and residents across political and demographic groups agree that this is very or somewhat important, with at least 50 percent in each group saying very important and, at most, 15 percent saying not too important. The percentage of residents saying this is very important was similar last year (60%) and in April 2006 (58%). Blacks (68%) are more likely than whites (64%), Latinos (58%), or Asians (50%) to say that including art and music in the curriculum is very important.

### “How important to you is it that your local public schools include art and music as part of the curriculum”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Very important	60%	50%	68%	58%	64%	60%
Somewhat important	28	34	23	29	26	30
Not too important	11	14	9	13	10	10
Don't know	1	2	-	-	-	-

## DATA AND INFORMATION GATHERING

When asked about the state government developing a data system for tracking student and school performance, and where and how resources are allocated, residents express their support. Nearly nine in 10 say it is very (53%) or somewhat important (35%) for the state to collect and make available information about local K-12 public schools, including resources and student performance. Findings were similar last year (56% very, 34% somewhat important). Today, nearly six in 10 public school parents (58%) say this is very important, a 7 point decline from last year (65%). Some partisan differences emerge today, with 57 percent of Democrats saying data collection and dissemination is very important, compared to fewer independents (52%) and Republicans (48%).

Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (64%) and Latinos (62%) are more likely than whites (49%) and Asians (35%) to say data collection and dissemination is very important. Over half of men and women and residents across regions believe this objective is very important, although the belief that this goal is very important declines with age.

### “How important to you is it that the state collect and make available information about local K-12 public schools, including resources and student performance?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Very important</b>	53%	35%	64%	62%	49%	58%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	35	46	28	31	38	34
<b>Not too important</b>	10	15	7	7	11	7
<b>Don't know</b>	2	4	1	-	2	1

A majority of residents believe the state should support this data-gathering effort. Fifty-nine percent of residents and 50 percent of likely voters say they would like to see increased state funding for the development of such a data system. Just over six in 10 Democrats (63%) and about half of independents (52%) support this idea, while Republicans are slightly more likely to be opposed (46% favor, 50% oppose). Last year, residents (66%) and likely voters (57%) were more likely to favor increased funding for a data system.

Still, solid majorities today across regions support this idea. Latinos (77%) are much more likely than blacks (63%), Asians (56%), or whites (49%) to favor this idea, and support declines sharply with higher age, education, and income. Two in three public schools parents favor this idea.

### “Would you favor or oppose increased state funding for the development of a data system that maintains this type of information about the K-12 education system?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Favor</b>	59%	63%	46%	52%	50%
<b>Oppose</b>	36	32	50	43	45
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	4	5	5

## PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS AND LOCAL SCHOOLS

Thirty-three percent of public school parents say they know a lot about the grading and test score system used by their local public schools, 43 percent say they know something about this, and 22 percent say they know either very little (18%) or nothing (4%). In May 2004, 31 percent said they knew a lot and 38 percent said they knew something about the grading and test score system in their local schools.

White parents (53%) are more than twice as likely as Latino parents (21%) to say they have a lot of knowledge about the grading and test score system at their local public schools (sample sizes for Asian and black public school parents are too small to break out by themselves). U.S.-born parents (49%) are far more likely than immigrant parents (18%) to say they have a lot of knowledge of the grading system. Knowledge increases considerably with higher education and income levels among parents, and those who own computers are far more likely than those who do not to report a high level of knowledge. Of those public school parents who say it is very important for the state to collect and share information about local public schools, 37 percent say they have a lot of knowledge about the grading and test system and 41 percent say they have some knowledge. Parents who oppose increased state funding on an information system are more likely than those who favor it to say they already know a lot about their local schools.

**“Overall, how much would you say that you know about the student grading and test score system used by your local public schools?”**

Public School Parents Only	All Public School Parents	Household Income			Own a Computer	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	Yes	No
<b>A lot</b>	33%	19%	36%	53%	41%	16%
<b>Some</b>	43	43	49	38	43	44
<b>Very little</b>	18	30	12	6	12	33
<b>Nothing</b>	4	7	3	2	4	6
<b>Don't know</b>	2	1	-	1	-	1

Public school parents were also asked if they felt they had enough information about the student grading and test score system used by their local public schools. One in five say they had more than enough information (20%), half say they had just enough (50%), and about one in four say they didn't have enough (27%). Latino parents are more likely than white parents (31% to 21%) to say they do not have enough information. Having sufficient information increases with higher income and owning a computer.

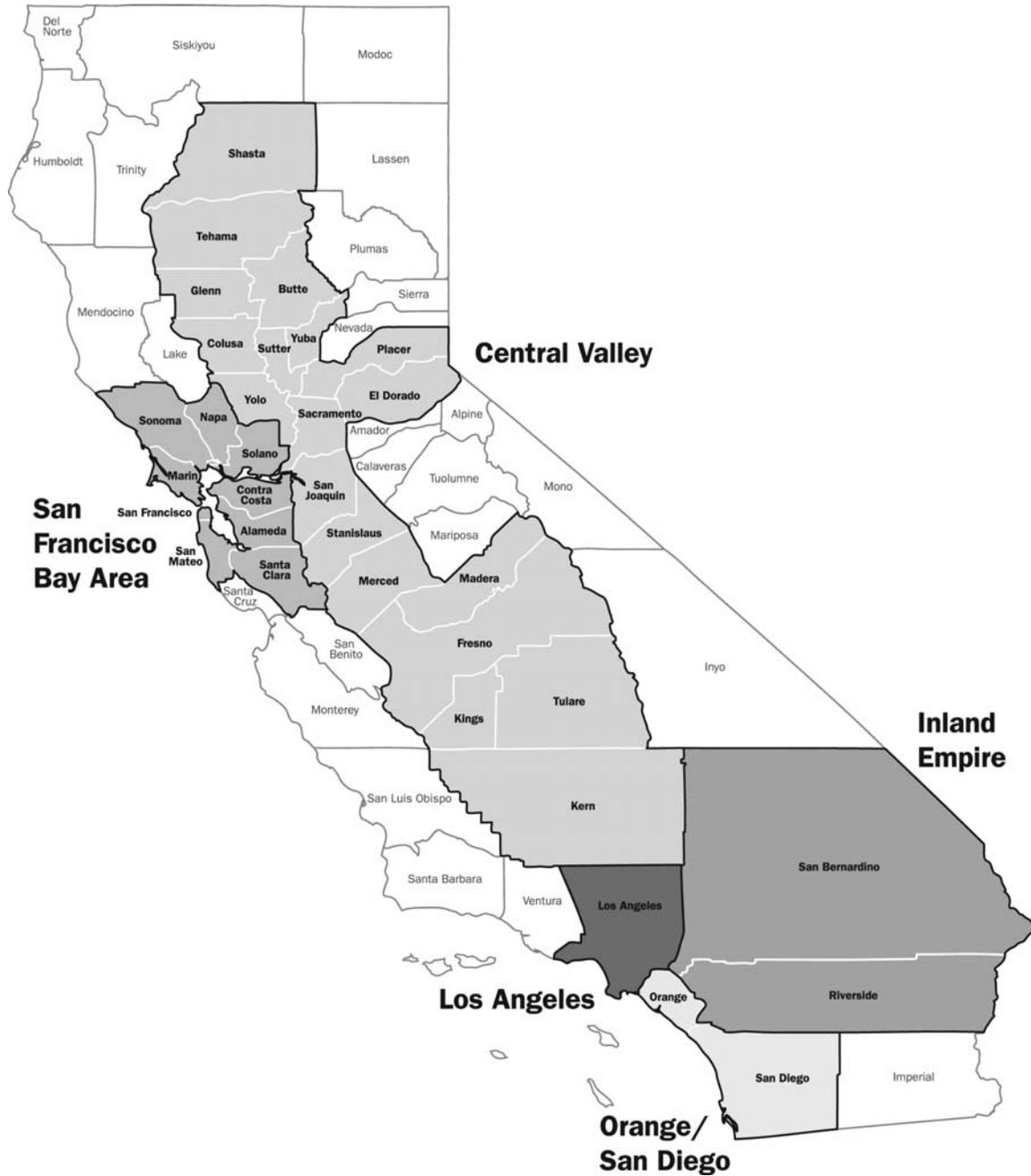
**“Do you feel you have more than enough, just enough, or not enough information about the student grading and test score system used by your local public schools?”**

Public School Parents Only	All Public School Parents	Household Income			Own a Computer	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	Yes	No
<b>More than enough</b>	20%	17%	17%	27%	21%	18%
<b>Just enough</b>	50	44	54	57	51	46
<b>Not enough</b>	27	34	26	16	25	32
<b>Don't know</b>	3	5	3	-	3	4



# REGIONAL MAP

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# METHODOLOGY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from Sonja Petek, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Dean Bonner and Jennifer Paluch. This survey was conducted with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of a three-year grant on K-12 and higher education, environment, and population issues. We benefited from discussions with Hewlett program staff and others; however, the survey methods, questions, and content of the report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare and the survey staff.

Findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents, including 2,251 interviewed on their landline telephones and 251 interviewed on their cell phones. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days from April 8 to 22, 2008. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection and the sample of telephone numbers was called up to six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender.

Cell phone interviews were included in this survey to account for the growing number of residents who use cell phones. These interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection and the sample of telephone numbers was called up to eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving). Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement for their time to help defray the potential cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who only have cell phone service and with adults who also have a landline telephone in their household.

Landline and cell phone interviewing was conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean, according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English speaking adults in California, followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages. *Accent on Languages* translated the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. translated the survey into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, and conducted all interviewing.

With assistance from Abt SRBI, we used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. Abt SRBI used data from the 2006 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) for the Pacific Census Division and from the January-July 2007 NHIS to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and compare it against landline and cell phone service reported in the survey. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any differences in demographics and telephone service.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,502 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the

1,962 registered voters, it is +/- 2.5 percent; for the 1,406 likely voters, it is +/- 3 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to five geographic regions accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” includes Riverside and San Bernardino counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego counties. Residents from other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters. However, sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately in tables and text.

We present specific results for respondents in four self-identified racial/ethnic groups: Asian, black, Latino, and non-Hispanic white. We also compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents (i.e., registered as “decline to state”). We also analyze the responses of likely voters—those who are the most likely to participate in the state’s elections. We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys.

# QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

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## CALIFORNIANS AND EDUCATION

April 8-22, 2008

2,502 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese

MARGIN OF ERROR +/-2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?

*[code, don't read]*

- 36% jobs, economy
- 12 education, schools
- 11 immigration, illegal immigration
- 10 gasoline prices
- 5 state budget, deficit, taxes
- 4 crime, gangs, drugs
- 4 housing costs, housing availability, subprime housing crisis
- 3 health care, health costs
- 3 environment, pollution
- 9 other
- 3 don't know

2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

- 41% approve
- 48 disapprove
- 11 don't know

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling the state's K-12 public education system?

- 25% approve
- 56 disapprove
- 19 don't know

4. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?

- 26% approve
- 58 disapprove
- 16 don't know

5. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling the state's K-12 public education system?

- 21% approve
- 61 disapprove
- 18 don't know

6. As you may know, the state government has an annual budget of around \$100 billion and currently faces a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues. Some of the largest areas for state spending are: *[rotate]* [1] K-12 public education, [2] higher education, [3] health and human services, *[and]* [4] prisons and corrections. Thinking about these four areas of state spending, I'd like you to name the one you most want to protect from spending cuts.

- 60% K-12 public education
- 18 health and human services
- 11 higher education
- 8 prisons and corrections
- 3 don't know

7. How concerned are you that the state's budget gap will cause significant spending cuts in K-12 public education?

- 56% very concerned
- 30 somewhat concerned
- 7 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

7a. What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for K-12 public education. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for this purpose?

- 49% yes
- 48 no
- 3 don't know

8. Next, how much of a problem is the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 53% big problem
- 31 somewhat of a problem
- 12 not much of a problem
- 4 don't know

9. Overall, do you think the K-12 public education system in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?

- 59% major changes
- 30 minor changes
- 8 fine the way it is
- 3 don't know

In general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? First,

**[rotate questions 10 and 11]**

10. Additional state funding would lead to higher quality K-12 education in California.

- 63% agree
- 33 disagree
- 4 don't know

Next,

11. Better use of existing state funds would lead to higher quality K-12 education in California.

- 85% agree
- 12 disagree
- 3 don't know

12. To significantly improve the quality of California's K-12 public schools, which of the following statements do you agree with the most? **[rotate responses 1 and 2]** [1] We need to use existing state funds more wisely, [2] We need to increase the amount of state funding, **[or]** [3] We need to use existing state funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding.

- 46% use funds more wisely
- 8 increase state funding
- 44 use funds more wisely and increase funding
- 2 don't know

Next, I'm going to read you a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about California's K-12 public schools today. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem.

**[rotate questions 13 to 15]**

13. How about teacher quality?

- 28% big problem
- 41 somewhat of a problem
- 26 not really a problem
- 5 don't know

14. How about the high school drop-out rate?

- 69% big problem
- 22 somewhat of a problem
- 4 not really a problem
- 5 don't know

15. How about teaching children with limited English-language skills?

- 46% big problem
- 35 somewhat of a problem
- 16 not really a problem
- 3 don't know

On another topic,

**[rotate questions 16 and 17]**

16. Where do you think California currently ranks in per pupil spending for K-12 public schools? Compared to other states, is California's spending near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?

- 12% near the top
- 14 above average
- 29 average
- 20 below average
- 16 near the bottom
- 9 don't know

17. Where do you think California currently ranks in student test scores for K-12 public schools? Compared to other states, are California's student test scores near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?

- 2% near the top
- 8 above average
- 32 average
- 33 below average
- 18 near the bottom
- 7 don't know

Next,

**[rotate blocks: 18-20, 21-22; 23-24; 25-26]**

18. Do you think that students should or should not have to pass statewide tests before they can graduate from high school, even if they have passing grades in their classes?

- 72% should
- 26 should not
- 2 don't know

19. Students are first required to take the California High School Exit exam in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and, if they fail, can take the exam up to five more times. How concerned are you that students in lower-income areas have a higher failure rate on the California High School Exit Exam than other students?

- 50% very concerned
- 34 somewhat concerned
- 9 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

20. For students who initially fail the California High School Exit Exam, would you favor or oppose requiring their local schools to provide them with smaller English and math class sizes taught by fully credentialed teachers until they pass the test, even if it costs the state more money?

- 66% favor
- 31 oppose
- 3 don't know

21. How concerned are you that students in lower-income areas have a higher drop-out rate from high school than other students?

- 53% very concerned
- 33 somewhat concerned
- 8 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

22. One idea that has been suggested for improving the graduation rate among students in lower-income areas is to increase the number of school support staff, such as counselors, mentors, and social workers. Would you favor or oppose this idea, even if it cost the state more money?

- 68% favor
- 29 oppose
- 3 don't know

23. How concerned are you that English language learners in California's schools today score lower on standardized tests than other students?

- 42% very concerned
- 37 somewhat concerned
- 11 not too concerned
- 8 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

24. To try to improve the academic performance of English language learners, would you favor or oppose providing extra assistance to these students, even if it means they receive more assistance than other students?

- 69% favor
- 28 oppose
- 3 don't know

25. How concerned are you that schools in lower-income areas have a shortage of good teachers compared to schools in wealthier areas?

- 54% very concerned
- 31 somewhat concerned
- 8 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

26. Should local schools in lower-income areas provide additional training and professional development to teachers, even if it costs the state more money?

- 72% yes
- 25 no
- 3 don't know

27. Next, please think about California's K-12 public education system more generally. In your opinion, what is the most important goal of California's K-12 public education system?

**[read list, rotate responses]**

- 35% preparing students for college
- 17 preparing students for the workforce
- 15 teaching students the basics
- 15 teaching students life skills
- 13 preparing students to be good citizens
- 2 all of the above (*volunteered*)
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 1 don't know

28. How important to you is it that your local public schools include art and music as part of the curriculum?

- 60% very important
- 28 somewhat important
- 11 not too important
- 1 don't know

29. Changing topics, how important to you is it that the state collect and make available information about local K-12 public schools, including resources and student performance?

- 53% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 10 not too important
- 2 don't know

30. Would you favor or oppose increased state funding for the development of a data system that maintains this type of information about the K-12 education system?

- 59% favor
- 36 oppose
- 5 don't know

31. Next, overall, how would you rate the quality of public schools in your neighborhood today? If you had to give your local public schools a grade, would it be A, B, C, D, or F?

18% A  
36 B  
27 C  
10 D  
4 F  
5 don't know

32. Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

9% more than enough  
33 just enough  
51 not enough  
7 don't know

**[rotate questions 33 and 34]**

33. If your local school district had a bond measure on the ballot to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?

65% yes  
30 no  
5 don't know

34. What if there was a measure on your local ballot to increase property taxes to provide more funds for the local public schools? Would you vote yes or no?

48% yes  
48 no  
4 don't know

35. Next, who do you think should have the most control in deciding how the money from state government is spent in local public schools—**[rotate order]** [1] the teachers and principals, [2] the local school districts, **[or]** [3] the state government?

46% the local school districts  
34 the teachers and principals  
15 the state government  
2 other (specify)  
3 don't know

36. Changing topics, do you think that schools in lower-income areas of the state have the same amount of resources—including good teachers and classroom materials—as schools in wealthier areas?

16% yes, same  
78 no, not the same  
6 don't know

37. If new state funding becomes available, should schools in lower-income areas get more of this funding than other schools to help pay for teachers and classroom materials, or not?

72% yes  
25 no  
3 don't know

38. If new state funding becomes available, should schools with more English language learners or students with disabilities get more of this funding than other schools, or not?

63% yes  
32 no  
5 don't know

**[q39 not asked]**

On another topic, here are some ideas that have been suggested to raise state revenues to maintain current funding for K-12 public education. For each of the following, please say if you favor or oppose the proposal.

**[rotate questions 40 and 41]**

40. How about raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians?

67% favor  
30 oppose  
2 don't know

41. How about raising the state sales tax?

35% favor  
63 oppose  
2 don't know

42. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 78% yes [ask q42a]
- 21 no [skip to q43]
- 1 don't know [skip to q43]

42a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 43% Democrat [skip to q44]
- 34 Republican [skip to q44]
- 4 another party (specify) [skip to q44]
- 19 independent [ask q43]

43. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 22% Republican party
- 47 Democratic party
- 22 neither (volunteered)
- 9 don't know

44. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 29% great deal
- 36 fair amount
- 27 only a little
- 8 none

45. Would you consider yourself to be politically:

**[read list, rotate order top to bottom]**

- 10% very liberal
- 19 somewhat liberal
- 32 middle-of-the-road
- 25 somewhat conservative
- 12 very conservative
- 2 don't know

**[d1-d4a: demographic questions]**

**[questions d4b and d4c asked of public school parents only]**

d4b. Overall, how much would you say that you know about the student grading and test score system used by your local public schools?

- 33% a lot
- 43 some
- 18 very little
- 4 nothing
- 2 don't know

d4c. Do you feel you have more than enough, just enough, or not enough information about the student grading and test score system used by your local public schools?

- 20% more than enough
- 50 just enough
- 27 not enough
- 3 don't know

**[d5-d17: demographic questions]**

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