



**PPIC  
STATEWIDE  
SURVEY**

APRIL 2005

**Special Survey on Education**

*in collaboration with*

**The William and Flora Hewlett  
Foundation**

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Institute of  
California**

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private operating foundation established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Institute is dedicated to improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC's research agenda focuses on three program areas: population, economy, and governance and public finance. Studies within these programs are examining the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including education, health care, immigration, income distribution, welfare, urban growth, and state and local finance.

PPIC was created because three concerned citizens – William R. Hewlett, Roger W. Heyns, and Arjay Miller – recognized the need for linking objective research to the realities of California public policy. Their goal was to help the state's leaders better understand the intricacies and implications of contemporary issues and make informed public policy decisions when confronted with challenges in the future. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

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## Preface

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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, the survey series has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 114,000 Californians.

This special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey—a survey on education—is the first in a three-year PPIC survey series made possible with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The intent of this special series is to inform state, local, and federal policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about a variety of education, environment, and population issues facing the state.

The current survey focuses in particular on public opinion about California’s K through 12 public education system which, according to recent statistics from the California Department of Education, includes 6.2 million students in 1,056 school districts and 9,087 public schools. Today’s student population is highly diverse—45 percent Latino, 34 percent white, 11 percent Asian, and 8 percent black—with more than 50 languages spoken throughout California’s schools.

K-12 public schools are the single largest component of the state budget. In 1988 voters passed Proposition 98 to provide schools with a minimum funding guarantee, and state policymakers have implemented a variety of efforts to improve the quality of schools, including class size reduction, teacher training, standards and testing, and school construction projects.

This special edition of our survey presents the responses of 2,502 adult residents throughout the state. With a large sample size and multilingual interviewing, we examine in detail the public’s perceptions of California’s public schools, preferences for state funding, and residents’ attitudes toward their local public schools. Because public education has been one of the most important concerns of state residents in recent years, we repeat some of our questions from earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys. More specifically, we examine the following issues:

- The public’s perceptions of California’s public schools, including the quality of public education and whether the quality of K-12 education is improving, the governor’s approval ratings with respect to his handling of educational issues, perceptions of the state compared to the nation regarding school spending and student test scores, what the public believes most needs improvement in public schools, support for state testing to pass each grade and graduate from high school, and the degree to which low-income parents, English learners, and parental attention are perceived as problematic.
- Preferences for state funding, including the priority for K-12 public schools in the state budget, willingness to increase state revenues for K-12 public schools, support for giving more state resources to school districts in lower-income areas, preferences for who makes the decisions about school funding, and reactions to proposed ballot measures on education issues.
- Residents’ attitudes toward their local public schools, including an overall grade for local public schools, perceptions of state funding, support for local school bonds and tax increases, involvement in local public schools, and parental involvement and expectations for their children.
- Variations in perceptions of California public schools, state funding preferences, and attitudes toward local public schools across the five major regions of the state (the Central Valley, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, the Inland Empire, and the Orange/San Diego County areas); between Asians, blacks, Latinos, and non-Hispanic whites; and across socioeconomic and political groups.

Copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail ([order@ppic.org](mailto:order@ppic.org)) or phone (415-291-4400). Copies of this and earlier reports are posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)). For questions about the survey, please contact [survey@ppic.org](mailto:survey@ppic.org).

## Regional Groupings Used in This Report



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## Contents

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<b>Preface</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Press Release</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Perceptions of California's Public Schools</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Preferences for State Funding</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Local Public Schools</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Survey Methodology</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Survey Questions and Results</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Survey Advisory Committee</b>	<b>27</b>



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## Press Release

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

### ***SPECIAL SURVEY ON EDUCATION***

## **CALIFORNIANS GIVE K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION POOR GRADES BUT HAVE GREAT EXPECTATIONS FOR THEIR KIDS**

### **Governor Also Gets Low Marks, But Mixed Support for Proposed Ballot Measures**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, April 28, 2005 — Years of self-proclaimed “education governors,” massive reforms, and increased spending have done little to assuage the public’s concern about the quality of public education, according to a new survey released by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This pessimism stands in sharp contrast to the soaring aspirations parents express for their own children’s educational attainment.

After seven years and three governors, the vast majority of Californians (82%) continue to believe the quality of education in California’s K through 12 public schools is at least somewhat of a problem. The number viewing K-12 quality as a **big** problem has actually grown, from 46 percent in 1998 to 52 percent today. Consistent with these feelings, residents are also less likely to perceive improvement in the quality of public schools. Today, just 19 percent say there has been progress along these lines, while 31 percent see a decline in educational quality. In 2001, 31 percent of state residents said K-12 quality was getting better and 22 percent said it was getting worse. One consequence of this negative assessment? Most Californians – including the parents of children who attend public schools – are more likely to say that private schools (60%) rather than public schools (24%) provide the best education.

“Concern about public education runs deep in California, and the perceived lack of progress, despite all the reform and rhetoric, only serves to heighten residents’ distrust of their government and disappointment in their elected officials,” says PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare.

### **Governor’s Ratings Slide, Support for His Education Proposals Mixed**

Today, 40 percent of Californians approve and 50 percent disapprove of the way Governor Schwarzenegger is handling his job overall, a substantial change since January when a strong majority (60%) approved of his performance. Schwarzenegger’s approval ratings have also dropped below a majority among likely voters (45% approve, 47% disapprove). On education, the governor’s disapproval ratings (51%) remain unchanged since January. As with his overall ratings, there are sharp partisan differences: A majority of Democrats (69%) and 50 percent of independents disapprove, while 50 percent of Republicans approve of the governor’s handling of education.

But the news is not all bad for the governor: One of the education-related ballot measures he favors currently enjoys majority support. Over half of likely voters (55%) say they favor a measure which would increase the amount of time required for a public school teacher to get tenure and make it easier to dismiss low-performing faculty. However, only 44 percent of likely voters currently support a Schwarzenegger-backed initiative aimed at limiting state spending and changing school funding requirements.

### **Protect State Education Funding, But Don’t Raise My Taxes**

By a wide margin, K-12 education ranks as a top state budget priority for Californians, with seven in 10 (72%) giving it a high priority in light of the state’s multibillion dollar budget gap. When Californians are asked which of the four major spending categories they most want to protect from budget cuts, K-12 public education receives the greatest support (54%), distantly followed by health and human services (22%), higher education

(12%), and corrections (7%). Half of residents (51%) – and 59 percent of public school parents – say their local public schools do not receive enough state funding.

Despite their concerns about funding for education, residents are unwilling to consider raising taxes to provide additional dollars for schools – unless someone else is paying. While large majorities – including majorities of likely voters – oppose raising the state sales tax (70%) or extending it to include services (60%) for this purpose, they do favor raising the income tax for the wealthiest Californians (63%) and assessing commercial properties according to their current market value (54%). At the local level, majorities say they would support a bond measure to fund school construction projects (71%) but would oppose a measure to increase property taxes to provide revenue for schools (51%).

Why the unwillingness to ante up? Most residents (59%) believe the quality of the state’s public education system can be improved by wiser use of current resources, rather than additional funding. One driver of the distrust residents express about how current resources are allocated? They don’t like who’s calling the shots. At the state level, Californians say they prefer to see Democrats in the legislature (38%), rather than Governor Schwarzenegger (24%) or GOP legislators (15%), making the tough calls on education spending. However, when asked whom they trust the most to make spending decisions for schools, only 12 percent of residents name state government. Instead, two in three residents believe principals and teachers at local schools (37%) or local school districts (31%) should make decisions about school fiscal policies. Ultimately, Californians themselves want to be the decisionmakers: 66 percent of residents say voters, not the governor and legislature (21%), should decide at the ballot box about major, long-term changes in the K-12 system.

### **Widespread Openness to Education Reforms, Alternatives**

When asked to specify the one thing that most needs improvement in California’s public schools, three suggestions top the list – class size (14%), curriculum (11%), and teacher quality (11%). There is consensus on the importance of these three areas – although the emphasis varies slightly – across age, education, income, racial and ethnic, political, and regional categories. Residents are also supportive of a number of current and proposed reforms:

- **Student Testing** – 72 percent support the policy that, beginning in 2006, requires students to pass a statewide test before they graduate from high school. The same percentage also supports statewide testing before students are promoted to the next grade.
- **Merit Pay** – 64 percent say it would be a good idea to increase teachers’ pay based on merit – such as how well their students perform on tests – instead of based on seniority or years of service.
- **School Choice** – 61 percent support allowing students to enroll in any public school they choose. ;Small Schools – 61 percent favor reorganizing high schools into smaller campuses with fewer students, even if it means increasing the cost per student.
- **Resource Equity** – 64 percent say school districts in lower-income areas should receive more resources from the state than other school districts, reflecting the widespread awareness (76%) that schools in lower-income areas of the state have fewer resources than those in wealthier areas.

### **Parental Involvement in Education Varies, Parental Aspirations About Education Universal**

In addition to agreement about the need for education reform, consensus exists about the importance of parental involvement and socioeconomic status. Eight in 10 Californians (78%) say parents who fail to pay attention to how their children are doing are a big problem in K-12 public education today, and a similar percentage think low parental income (79%) and children with limited English-language abilities (80%) are at least somewhat of a problem.

Despite the perceived importance of parental participation, many public school parents say they have not been involved in their local schools: 53 percent say they have participated in a fundraising activity for a local school in the past 12 months, while fewer than half say they have volunteered in a local school (48%) or belong to the PTA or a similar group (36%). There are big differences in participation across racial/ethnic and socioeconomic

groups, with white, higher-income, better-educated, and female parents more likely than Latino, lower-income, less-educated, and male parents to participate in these activities.

But many parents with children in K-12 public schools say they are actively involved in their child's education in terms of homework and teacher meetings: 77 percent say they help out with homework two or more nights each week, and 67 percent say they have initiated teacher meetings two or more times since the start of the school year. When it comes to these activities, parents in lower socioeconomic groups are at least as involved as other parents. For example, Latino parents are more likely than white parents (59% to 44%) to say they help with homework four or five nights a week.

Engaged or not, parental hopes for their children's education are stunning. Nine in 10 aspire to college graduation for their children, and 41 percent hope that their children will, in fact, earn a postgraduate degree. These expectations are high in all demographic groups, including those who did not attend college themselves (79%), those with incomes below \$40,000 (81%), Latinos (82%), and immigrants (83%). However, the proportion of parents saying they have what is needed to achieve the goal they have in mind is lower (under 50%) among those with lower levels of education and income.

### More Key Findings

- **Religious Schools Get Top Marks** (page 15)

Private religious schools (32%) are viewed as providing the best education in California today, followed by nonreligious private schools (28%), public schools (24%), and home schooling (8%). Conservatives (44%) favor parochial schools, while liberals (38%) prefer nonreligious private schools.

- **Residents Kinder to Their Local Schools** (page 13)

Many Californians have issues with the state's education system, but most are pleased with their local schools. Eight in 10 residents (78%) give their local schools passing grades.

- **Pessimism About State's Direction, Economy** (page 21)

In a major turnabout since January on two key barometers of economic well-being and consumer confidence, more residents today say the state is headed in the wrong direction (53% today, 41% January) and say they expect bad economic times in the next 12 months (51% today, 39% January).

### About the Survey

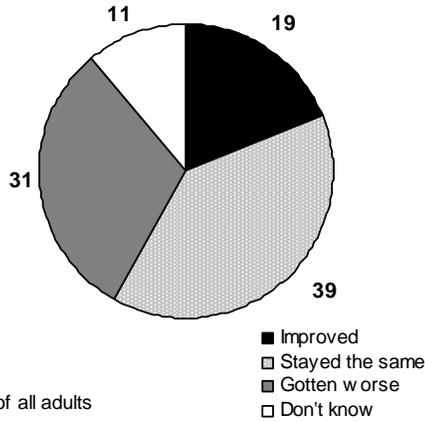
This survey on education – made possible by funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation – is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey. This is the first in a three-year series intended to raise public awareness, inform decisionmakers, and stimulate public discussions about a variety of education, environment, and population issues facing California. Findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents interviewed between April 4 and April 17, 2005. Interviews were conducted in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, or Chinese. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. For more information on methodology, see page 19.

Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998. His recent book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at [www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org).

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy through objective, nonpartisan research on the economic, social, and political issues that affect Californians. The institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office. This report will appear on [www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org) on April 28.

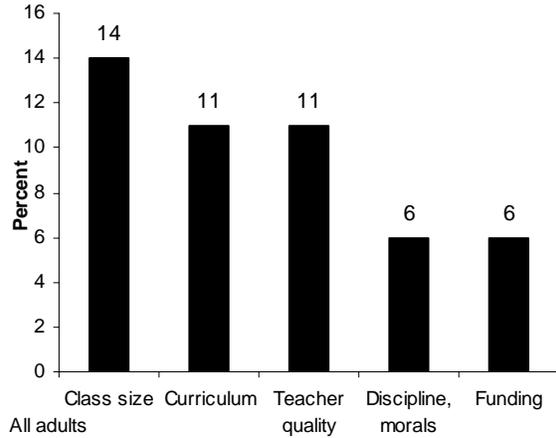
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**In the Past Two Years, the Quality of Education in California's K-12 Public Schools has...**



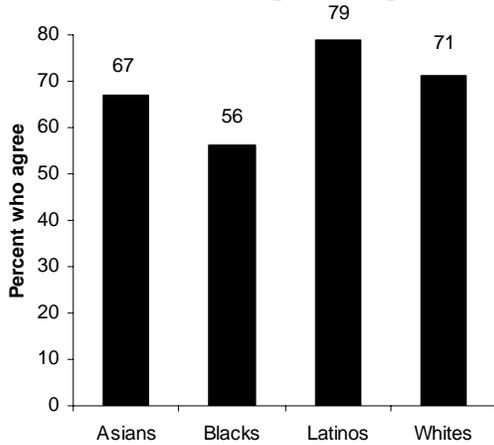
Percent of all adults

**What Most Needs Improvement in California's K-12 Public Schools**

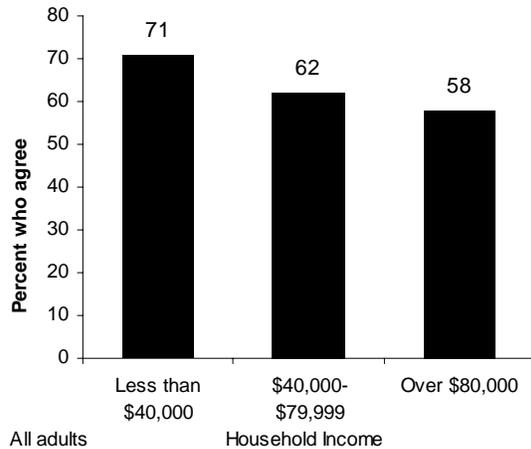


All adults

**Students Should Pass Statewide Tests Before Graduating from High School**

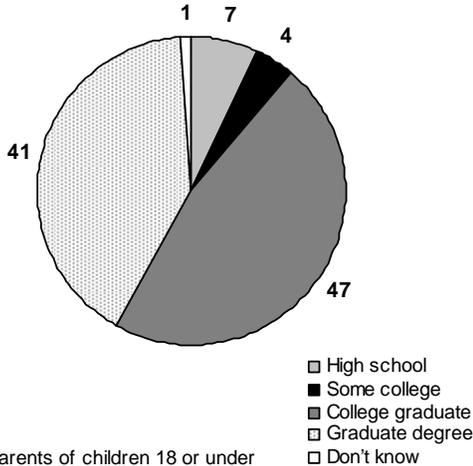


**School Districts in Lower-Income Areas Should Receive More Resources**



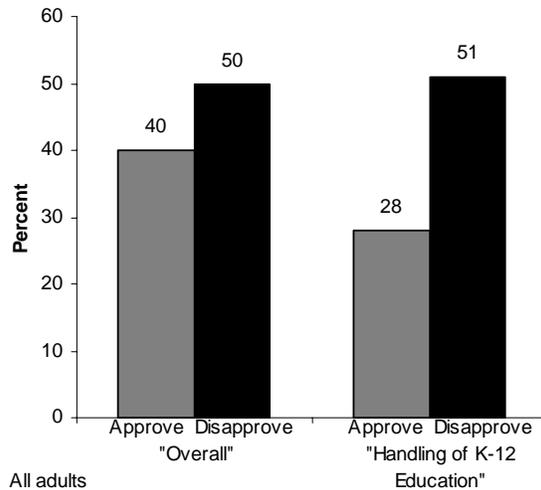
All adults

**Parental Expectation of Highest Grade Level Their Child Will Achieve**



Percent parents of children 18 or under

**Governor's Approval Ratings**



All adults

## Perceptions of California's Public Schools

### Overall Conditions of the State's Schools

Over the past few years, California residents have consistently named schools and education as one of the top state issues. When asked in the current survey to name the most important issue facing the state, residents ranked only jobs and the economy (22%) ahead of schools and education (15%). Fewer than 10 percent mention any other issue as most important. Schools are ranked as one of the top two issues across regions, political groups, and racial/ethnic and demographic categories.

After seven years and three governors, half of Californians continue to believe the quality of education in California's K through 12 public schools is a big problem (46% in May 1998, 52% today). Only 19 percent think the quality of K through 12 public schools has improved in the past two years, while 31 percent say it has gotten worse, and 39 percent say there has been no change. Although Californians are less likely today than in January 2000 (39%) to say the quality of schools has gotten worse, they are also slightly less likely to say schools have improved.

		May 98	Jan 00	Jan 01	Apr 05
<i>How much of a problem is the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools today?</i>	<b>Big problem</b>	46%	53%	52%	<b>52%</b>
	<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	33	30	32	<b>30</b>
	<b>Not much of a problem</b>	14	13	10	<b>12</b>
	<b>Don't know</b>	7	4	6	<b>6</b>
<i>In the past two years, do you think the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools has improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same?</i>	<b>Improved</b>	–	22	31	<b>19</b>
	<b>Stayed the same</b>	–	34	39	<b>39</b>
	<b>Gotten worse</b>	–	39	22	<b>31</b>
	<b>Don't know</b>	–	5	8	<b>11</b>

Residents in the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles are more likely than residents in the three other major regions to see the quality of education as a big problem. However, Los Angeles residents are the most likely to say the quality has improved and San Francisco Bay Area residents are the most likely to say it has gotten worse. Statewide, among residents with children in the public schools, 48 percent say the quality of education is a big problem, 40 percent say the quality of education has stayed the same, and equal proportions say things are better (27%) or worse (28%).

		All Adults	Region				
			Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
<i>How much of a problem is the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools today?</i>	<b>Big problem</b>	52%	48%	59%	55%	47%	49%
	<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	30	32	26	28	33	33
	<b>Not much of a problem</b>	12	14	9	11	16	13
	<b>Don't know</b>	6	6	6	6	4	5
<i>In the past two years, do you think the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools has improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same?</i>	<b>Improved</b>	19	19	15	23	20	16
	<b>Stayed the same</b>	39	45	33	40	36	42
	<b>Gotten worse</b>	31	28	37	27	29	31
	<b>Don't know</b>	11	8	15	10	15	11

## Relative Rankings of the State's Schools

Just as they have continued to see K-12 education quality as a big problem over the past seven years, significant proportions of Californians continue to believe the state's per pupil spending and student test scores lag behind the rest of the nation.

When residents are asked to evaluate the state's per pupil spending, 44 percent rank California as below average (26%) or near the bottom (18%), compared to other states. Twenty-five percent rate the state as average in spending, and only 19 percent think it is above average or near the top. The public's perceptions of spending have changed little over the last seven years. In April 1998, 47 percent ranked state spending as below average or near the bottom, 28 percent ranked it as average, and 14 percent thought it was above average or higher. Compared to respondents in October 2002, residents today are less likely to say the state is average (31% to 25%) and more likely to say the state is below average or near the bottom (37% to 44%) in spending.

Among people with children in the public schools, only 18 percent believe that per pupil spending is higher than average, 26 percent say it is average, and 44 percent say that spending is lower than average.

Democrats (55%) and liberals (54%) are more likely than Republicans (38%) and conservatives (34%) to rank per pupil spending in the state as lower than the national average. Blacks (52%) and whites (49%) are more likely than Latinos (34%) and Asians (31%) to believe the state spends less than the national average; and that perception is also higher among homeowners, older, and upper-income adults than among renters, younger, and lower-income adults.

		Apr 98	Feb 00	Jan 02	Oct 02	Apr 05
<i>Where do you think California currently ranks in per pupil spending for K through 12th grade public schools? Compared to other states, is California's spending...</i>	Near the top	5%	6%	6%	9%	9%
	Above average	9	10	9	11	10
	Average	28	24	24	31	25
	Below average	27	29	28	23	26
	Near the bottom	20	22	20	14	18
	Don't know	11	9	13	12	12
<i>Where do you think California currently ranks in student test scores for K through 12th grade public schools? Compared to other states, are California's student test scores...</i>	Near the top	2	–	2	3	3
	Above average	8	–	6	8	8
	Average	32	–	29	33	31
	Below average	39	–	39	36	35
	Near the bottom	14	–	16	13	14
	Don't know	5	–	8	7	9

When asked to rank students test scores against scores in other states, 49 percent of residents give ratings of below average or near the bottom. Three in 10 say that California is about average, and only 11 percent say their state's student test scores are above average or better. This perception has changed little since our April 1998 survey. Among people with children in the public schools, only 15 percent believe that test scores are higher than average, while 36 percent think they are average and 42 percent believe they are lower than average. In fact, based on the comparisons of state scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing in math, reading, and science in the 4th and 8th grades, California's students rank near the bottom in the nation.

## What Needs Improvement in Schools?

When asked to specify the one thing that most needs improvement in California's public schools, residents offer a long list of suggestions. However, three top the list—class size (14%), curriculum (11%), and teacher quality (11%)—which were also among the top three issues mentioned in a February 2002 survey. Parents whose children attend public schools also name class size (15%), curriculum (12%) and teacher quality (11%) as the three areas most in need of improvement. And there seems to be consensus on these three areas across age, education, and income categories.

However, there are variations across racial/ethnic, regional, and political groups. Among racial/ethnic groups, all are about equally likely (13-14%) to name class size as most needing improvement. However, Asians (19%) and blacks (17%) are almost twice as likely as whites (10%) and Latinos (8%) to say that curriculum is most in need of improvement. Asians and Latinos (7% each) are nearly twice as likely as whites (4%) and blacks (3%) to say that areas related to English language learning need improvement.

Residents in all but one region cite class size as most in need of improvement—Inland Empire residents are more likely to name teacher quality (15%). In naming areas for improvement, Republicans are most likely to name teacher quality (12%), while Democrats are most likely to name class size (16%). Also, Democrats (10%) are more than twice as likely as Republicans (4%) to name state or local funding. However, it is noteworthy that many issues other than the top three are seen as needing improvement.

**“People have different ideas about California's public schools. Of all the possible things you can think of, what one thing about California's K through 12th grade public schools do you think most needs improvement?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>Class size</b>	14%	13%	14%	14%	13%	15%
<b>Curriculum</b>	11	19	17	8	10	12
<b>Teacher quality</b>	11	12	8	11	11	11
<b>Student discipline, morals, values, and character</b>	6	6	5	5	6	4
<b>State or local funding</b>	6	4	8	5	7	6
<b>Bilingual education, English language learning, immigrants</b>	5	7	3	7	4	5
<b>Parents, parental involvement</b>	4	3	4	4	4	4
<b>Teachers' salaries</b>	4	2	4	1	6	3
<b>Teacher shortage</b>	4	4	5	6	3	6
<b>Bureaucracy, too much spending</b>	3	5	2	1	4	3
<b>Classroom materials</b>	2	2	7	3	2	2
<b>Safety, crime, drugs, gangs</b>	2	0	3	5	1	3
<b>Student testing, accountability</b>	2	1	0	0	3	2
<b>Valuing education</b>	2	1	3	4	2	3
<b>School construction, repair</b>	2	1	3	3	1	2
<b>Other</b>	14	10	12	14	15	12
<b>Don't know</b>	8	10	2	9	8	7

## Statewide Student Testing

Student testing is an important component of the state's standards and accountability system for public schools, and Californians remain highly supportive of statewide testing. Seven in 10 residents believe that students should have to pass statewide tests before they can graduate from high school and before they are promoted from grade to grade. There were similar levels of support in a January 2002 survey.

While support for a high school graduation test is strong in all regions and demographic groups, degree of support varies. For instance, support is much higher among Latinos (79%) than blacks (56%). Support is also much higher among non-citizens (83%) and naturalized citizens (74%) than among U.S.-born residents (69%). Republicans (75%) are more likely than Democrats (67%), and independents (70%), conservatives (74%), and moderates (76%) are more likely than liberals (66%) to support state testing for high school graduation. Adults who are teachers or who are closely related to a teacher are less likely than people in non-teacher families (67% to 74%) to think the statewide test should be required for graduation. People who think California ranks above average in student test scores are as supportive of the graduation test (71%) as those who think that California is below average in national rankings (73%). Seventy-four percent of public school parents support the high school graduation test.

**“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?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Should	72%	67%	56%	79%	71%	74%
Should not	25	27	41	18	26	23
Don't know	3	6	3	3	3	3

Equal proportions of all adults and public school parents believe that students should have to pass statewide tests in reading and math before being promoted from one grade level to the next. However, there are regional differences on this point: San Francisco Bay area residents (66%) are the least likely and Orange/San Diego County residents (77%) are the most likely to support it, followed by residents of the Inland Empire (75%), the Central Valley (73%), and Los Angeles (72%). As was true for graduation testing, blacks are less likely than Latinos to support statewide student testing for promotion, and there are partisan and ideological differences: Democrats and liberals are less likely and Republicans and conservatives are more likely to support state tests for grade promotions.

**“Do you think that students should or should not have to pass statewide tests in reading and math before they can be promoted, for example, from fourth to fifth grade, even if they have passing grades in their classes?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Should	72%	70%	62%	81%	69%	72%
Should not	26	27	36	17	28	26
Don't know	2	3	2	2	3	2

**Perceptions of Public School Parents and Students**

We asked Californians to rank three potential problems for California's public schools: parents who do not pay attention to how their children are doing in school, parents who have low incomes, and teaching children with limited English-language skills. Eight in 10 adults (78%), and a solid majority in all regions and political and demographic groups, say that parents who do not pay attention to how their children are doing is a big problem; and nearly all rank this issue as at least somewhat of a problem. The other problems are not ranked as nearly so severe. Eight in 10 residents think low parental income and student language abilities are at least somewhat of a problem. However, slightly less than a majority think that low-income parents (45%) and students' lack of English (44%) are big problems.

Public school parents are similar to all adults in their perception of problem seriousness. However, residents' perceptions do differ by household income, racial/ethnic group, and citizenship status. People with household incomes of \$80,000 or more rate teaching children with limited English as more of a problem (49%) than those who live in households with low parental income (34%). Conversely, people with household incomes of \$40,000 or less think low-income parents (54%) are a greater problem than teaching English-limited students (42%).

As for racial/ethnic differences, Latinos (56%) and blacks (61%) are much more likely than whites (38%) and Asians (39%) to think that low-income parents present a big problem for public schools. While all four groups rate teaching limited-English students as less severe, Asians (28%) are much less likely than Latinos (41%), blacks (43%), and whites (48%) to see this as a big problem. Both foreign-born citizens and non-citizens (38% each) are less likely than U.S.-born residents (46%) to say that teaching students with limited English ability is a big problem. However, non-citizens (58%) are more likely than foreign-born citizens (46%) or U.S.-born residents (42%) to believe low-income parents are a big problem for public schools.

**“How about parents who have low incomes? Is that a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not really a problem for California's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools today?”**

	All Adults	Household Income			Public School Parents
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Big problem</b>	45%	54%	44%	34%	46%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	34	30	35	36	33
<b>Not really a problem</b>	19	14	18	27	18
<b>Don't know</b>	2	2	3	3	3

**“How about teaching children with limited English-language skills? Is that a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not really a problem for California's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools today?”**

	All Adults	Household Income			Public School Parents
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Big problem</b>	44%	42%	44%	49%	41%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	36	35	37	34	37
<b>Not really a problem</b>	17	19	15	14	20
<b>Don't know</b>	3	4	4	3	2

## Governor's Overall Ratings and School Ratings

In January, Californians continued to give Governor Schwarzenegger's overall job performance a positive rating (60% approve, 33% disapprove), similar to those he received in our 2004 surveys. In this survey, for the first time, his overall approval rating has dropped below a majority among all adults (40% approve, 50% disapprove), registered voters (43% approve, 48% disapprove), and likely voters (45% approve, 47% disapprove).

There are wide partisan differences in these overall performance ratings. A solid majority of Republicans (71%) approve of Schwarzenegger's performance in office, while 68 percent of Democrats disapprove. It is significant for a GOP governor who previously enjoyed solid support from outside of his party base that 49 percent of independents now disapprove, compared to 40 percent who say they approve. Liberals (65%) mostly disapprove, a majority of conservatives (53%) approve, and moderates are evenly divided (45% approve, 45% disapprove). However, since the January survey, the governor's approval ratings have dropped across all these political groups.

There are also wide racial/ethnic differences. Although 50 percent of whites approve of the governor's overall performance, 72 percent of blacks and 69 percent of Latinos disapprove. Regional variations reflect the state's political geography, with San Francisco (56%) and Los Angeles (55%) giving the highest disapproval ratings and Orange/San Diego Counties (45%) and the Inland Empire, and the Central Valley (46% each) giving the highest approval ratings. There are also notable demographic differences: Approval ratings increase with income and are higher among men than women.

**"Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?"**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Race/Ethnicity				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Approve	40%	24%	71%	40%	46%	20%	25%	50%	45%
Disapprove	50	68	20	49	34	72	69	40	47
Don't know	10	8	9	11	20	8	6	10	8

On education, the governor's disapproval ratings (51%) are similar to those in January (51%). As with his overall ratings, there are sharp partisan differences. A majority of Democrats (69%) and 50 percent of independents disapprove, while 50 percent of Republicans approve of the governor's handling of education. Blacks (69%) and Latinos (61%) are much more likely than Asians (38%) and whites (46%) to disapprove of the governor's education performance. Women and younger residents are slightly more likely than men and older residents to disapprove of the governor's performance on education. A majority of public school parents and people with a public school teacher in the family (56% each) disapprove of the governor's handling of public schools.

**"Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling the state's kindergarten through 12th grade public education system?"**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Race/Ethnicity				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Approve	28%	14%	50%	28%	30%	17%	23%	32%	30%
Disapprove	51	69	29	50	38	69	61	46	52
Don't know	21	17	21	22	32	14	16	22	18

## Preferences for State Funding

### Spending Priorities

Seven in 10 Californians rank K-12 public education as a high priority for the state budget, and nearly half think it should be a very high priority. Although there is consensus about the priority for school spending across the state's regions and demographic groups, the level of support does vary across political, racial/ethnic, gender, and age groups and is given a somewhat higher priority among parents with public school children.

Democrats (79%) and independents (78%) feel more strongly than Republicans (61%) that spending for public education should be a *high* or *very high* priority. Blacks (84%) are the most likely to give K-12 education spending a high priority, followed by Latinos (73%), whites (71%), and Asians (63%). People 18 to 54 years of age (74%) support education spending more strongly than those age 65 and older (61%), and women (75%) are more supportive than men (68%). Seventy-eight percent of public school parents favor giving K-12 public education a high (21%) or a very high (57%) priority in the state budget.

**“The state government’s budget now faces a multibillion dollar gap between state spending and state revenue. On a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority—what priority should be given to spending for K through 12th grade public education?”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very high priority	48%	55%	35%	50%	46%
High priority	24	24	26	28	25
Medium priority	17	13	23	14	16
Low priority	5	3	8	3	5
Very low priority	4	2	5	2	4
Don't know	2	3	3	3	4

When Californians are asked which of the four major spending categories they most want to protect from budget cuts, K-12 public education is far above health and human services, higher education, and youth and adult corrections. All voter groups give relatively high standing to K-12 public education spending. There is also consensus across regions and racial/ethnic and demographic groups that K-12 public schools should be most protected from state budget cuts.

**“Name the one area of state spending that you most want to protect from spending cuts?”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
K-12 public education	54%	56%	55%	56%	57%
Health and human services	22	24	18	21	21
Higher education	12	11	13	11	11
Youth and adult corrections	7	5	9	7	7
Don't know	5	4	5	5	4

## Spending Perceptions

Although most residents rank school spending as a priority, 59 percent of Californians believe the quality of the state’s public education system can be improved by using the money now spent more wisely. These results mirror results in a 1998 *Los Angeles Times* statewide poll. However, there are large partisan differences: Republicans are much more likely (72%) than Democrats (49%) to hold this view. Nevertheless, even among parents with children in public schools, 56 percent think that we can improve the quality of public education by spending the money we have more wisely, while 35 percent believe that we will have to spend more money. Indeed, all regions, racial/ethnic groups, and demographic groups believe that spending the money we now have more wisely will lead to improvements in the California public education system.

**“Do you believe that we can improve the quality of California's K through 12th grade public schools by using the money we now spend more wisely, or are we going to have to spend more money to improve the quality of K through 12th grade public schools?”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Spend money more wisely</b>	59%	49%	72%	57%	60%
<b>Spend more money</b>	31	40	19	31	29
<b>Both (volunteered)</b>	7	10	6	9	9
<b>Don't know</b>	3	1	3	3	2

When asked whom they trust most to make decisions about spending to improve public schools, only 12 percent of residents and 11 percent of likely voters name the state government. Only the federal government is ranked lower. Instead, two in three residents believe principals and teachers at local schools (37%) or local school districts (31%) should make the decisions about school fiscal policies. Democrats and independents prefer the decisions made by principals and teachers, while Republicans equally favor those made by local school principals and teachers and by local school districts. There are no differences across voter groups when it comes to trust in the state government to make decisions about how to spend money on improving the quality of public education.

**“Whom do you trust the most to make decisions about how to spend money on improving the quality of education in California's K through 12th grade public schools ...”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Principals and teachers at local schools</b>	37%	42%	35%	40%	41%
<b>Local school districts</b>	31	32	34	25	32
<b>State government</b>	12	11	12	10	11
<b>Federal government</b>	7	5	4	9	4
<b>Someone else (specify)</b>	5	4	6	5	6
<b>Parents (volunteered)</b>	2	2	4	3	3
<b>None (volunteered)</b>	1	1	2	1	1
<b>Don't know</b>	5	3	3	7	2

**Tax Preferences**

Are Californians willing to raise state taxes to increase school funding? It depends on who would pay. Residents were asked about four measures to increase money for the state’s public schools—raising the income tax rate on the wealthiest Californians, revising Proposition 13 to tax commercial property at current market value, raising the state sales tax, and extending the state sales tax to services.

Raising the income tax rate on the wealthiest Californians and revising Proposition 13 to tax commercial property at current market value reflect ideas that have surfaced as potential ballot initiatives. They get majority support among registered voters and likely voters. Although the tax on the wealthiest Californians has strong support, the tax on commercial property reaches only a bare majority. Democrats and independents support both tax increases, but a slight majority of Republicans are opposed. There are also income differences: Sixty-nine percent of those with incomes under \$40,000 support raising the top rate for the wealthy, compared to 56 percent of those earning \$80,000 or more. Among people with children in the public schools, 66 percent support a tax on the wealthy and 55 percent support a tax increase on commercial property owners.

<i>Do you favor or oppose the following to raise state revenues to provide additional funding for California’s K-12 public schools ...</i>		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>... raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians?</i>	Favor	63%	76%	41%	66%	60%
	Oppose	34	22	54	31	37
	Don't know	3	2	5	3	3
<i>... having commercial properties taxed according to their current market value?</i>	Favor	54	64	43	52	53
	Oppose	38	29	51	42	41
	Don't know	8	7	6	6	6

In contrast, residents strongly oppose the two proposals that involve either raising or broadening the state sales tax to raise state revenues for K-12 public schools. There is majority opposition across voter groups, and consistent opposition across racial/ethnic, regional, and demographic groups, to these two state sales tax proposals. Among those with children in the public schools, 27 percent support a state sales tax increase and 38 percent favor extending the state sales tax to services.

<i>Do you favor or oppose the following to raise state revenues to provide additional funding for California’s K through 12 public schools ...</i>		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>... raising the state sales tax?</i>	Favor	28%	36%	26%	29%	31%
	Oppose	70	63	72	69	67
	Don't know	2	1	2	2	2
<i>... extending the state sales tax to services that are not currently taxed, such as legal and accounting services, auto repairs, and haircuts?</i>	Favor	36	37	32	37	32
	Oppose	60	59	64	59	64
	Don't know	4	4	4	4	4

### Fiscal Policymaking

Whose approach to funding California’s K-12 public schools do the people most prefer? More of them choose the Democrats in the legislature (38%) than either the governor (24%) or state Republican leaders (15%). Likely voters have similar preferences.

Two in three Democrats strongly prefer to have legislators from their party set the state’s fiscal policy on education, but Republicans are split between the governor (40%) and their party members in the legislature (32%). A plurality of independent voters prefer state Democratic legislators’ approach to school funding (32%), and they prefer Governor Schwarzenegger’s approach (25%) over the GOP legislators’ approach (14%). Residents of the Democratic-leaning San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles areas strongly prefer Democratic legislators’ approach rather than that of the governor or Republican legislators. In contrast, preferences are more evenly divided between the governor and Democratic legislators in the Central Valley, Orange/San Diego County, and the Inland Empire. One in six residents in these three regions opt for having schools’ budgets set by Republican legislators. For making school budget decisions, parents of public-school children pick Democratic legislators first (38%), followed by the governor (22%) and GOP legislators (16%).

**“When it comes to making budget choices this year for California’s K through 12th grade public schools, both in deciding how much Californians should pay in taxes and how much funding to provide, whose approach do you most prefer ...”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Governor Schwarzenegger's	24%	13%	40%	25%	25%
Democrats' in the legislature	38	68	7	32	39
Republicans' in the legislature	15	3	32	14	15
Other ( <i>specify</i> )	3	3	2	4	3
Don't know	20	13	19	25	18

As for making major, long-term changes in the state’s public education system, residents and voters overwhelmingly want to do the job themselves through the initiative process. Leaving the decisions up to voters rather than the governor and state legislature or the court system is the clear choice in all political parties and regions and among all racial/ethnic and demographic groups.

**“When it comes to making major, long-term changes in the state's K through 12th grade public education system, which approach do you most prefer ...”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Governor and legislature should pass new laws	21%	24%	26%	16%	25%
California voters should decide at the ballot box	66	64	66	71	65
Courts should decide through lawsuits	7	6	3	6	4
Other ( <i>specify</i> )	2	2	1	2	2
Don't know	4	4	4	5	4

## Resource Equity Issues

Californians are acutely aware of inequalities in school resources, with three in four saying schools in lower-income areas have fewer good teachers and classroom materials than those in wealthier areas.

This perception of inequality is held by solid majorities of Democrats (84%), Republicans (67%), and independents (77%) and of Latinos (78%), whites (77%), Asians (62%), and blacks (89%). More than seven in 10 people in all regions, demographic groups, and income levels believe that schools in low-income areas do not have the same amount of resources as schools in wealthier areas. The views of public school parents on this subject are nearly identical to those of all Californians.

**“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	Household Income			Public School Parents
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Yes, have the same amount of resources</b>	18%	19%	17%	18%	21%
<b>No, do not have the same amount of resources</b>	76	75	78	78	75
<b>Don't know</b>	6	6	5	4	4

Support for giving disadvantaged schools more resources is not, however, generally as high as the perception of inequalities. Nearly two in three Californians think schools in lower-income areas should get a larger share of state funding than schools in more affluent districts. This option is supported by a majority of Californians in all regions and demographic groups but has stronger support among Democrats (69%) and independents (63%) than among Republicans (52%). Although support for giving a greater share of state resources to schools in lower-income areas declines as income increases, a solid majority in the \$80,000 or more income group favor it. The proposal is less favored by whites (55%) than by Latinos (80%), blacks (68%), and Asians (66%). Parents of public school children are similar to all adults in favoring more resources for schools in lower-income areas (68% to 64%). Among those residents who think that school resources are unequal, 69 percent favor giving more to lower-income areas.

**“Should school districts in lower-income areas get more resources from the state than other school districts?”**

	All Adults	Household Income			Public School Parents
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Yes, should get more resources</b>	64%	71%	62%	58%	68%
<b>No, should not get more resources</b>	31	24	32	37	28
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	6	5	4

### Proposed Ballot Measures

An initiative currently proposed for a special election and favored by the governor would change school funding requirements and limit state spending. Among registered voters, 43 percent are in favor of it, 37 percent are opposed, and one in five is undecided. Currently, likely voters are similarly inclined. The initiative has solid support among Republicans (54% favor, 24% oppose); Democrats oppose it by a 10-point margin (37% favor, 47% oppose); and independents are evenly divided (41% favor, 42% oppose). Registered-voter support is higher in Orange/San Diego County (48%), the Central Valley (46%), and the Inland Empire (45%) than in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles (39% each). Support for this initiative is also stronger among men than women (49% to 38%) and among whites than Latinos (45% to 39%) and tends to increase with income. Among voters with children in public schools, 45 percent favor the measure and 40 percent oppose it. It is noteworthy that there are large proportions of undecided voters in all voter groups at this early stage.

**“The School Funding and State Spending Initiative would change state minimum school funding requirements under Proposition 98, limit state spending to the prior year total plus revenue growth, and continue prior year spending if the new state budget is delayed. It would also prohibit state special funds borrowing and require payment of local government mandates. Would you vote yes or no?”**

	Registered Voters	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes</b>	43%	37%	54%	41%	44%
<b>No</b>	37	47	24	42	36
<b>Don't know</b>	20	16	22	17	20

Another initiative that is also currently backed by the governor and proposed for a special election ballot would raise the amount of time required for a public school teacher to get tenure and make it easier to dismiss faculty who perform poorly. This ballot measure is supported by 54 percent and opposed by 39 percent of voters. It is supported by 67 percent of Republicans and 56 percent of independents but opposed by 50 percent of Democrats. Among likely voters, 55 percent support this proposed initiative, and a majority in all major regions say they would vote yes. Whites are more supportive than Latinos of this initiative (57% to 47%), and the measure has higher support in the upper-income voter group. Among parents with children in public schools, 57 percent support and 39 percent oppose the measure. At this point, relatively few voters in any of the voter groups are undecided.

**“The Public School Teachers Waiting Period for Permanent Status and Dismissal Initiative would increase the length of time required before a teacher becomes a permanent employee from two years to five years and authorize school boards to dismiss permanent teaching employees who have received two consecutive unsatisfactory performance evaluations. Would you vote yes or no?”**

	Registered Voters	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes</b>	54%	43%	67%	56%	55%
<b>No</b>	39	50	24	39	37
<b>Don't know</b>	7	7	9	5	8

## Local Public Schools

### Report Card

Many Californians are concerned about the state's education system, but most are pleased with their local schools. Eight in 10 residents give their local public schools passing grades of C or higher. About half suggest relatively high A or B grades for the quality of their local public schools. However, few are inclined toward the extremes of giving an A or an F to the quality of public schools in their neighborhoods.

Public school parents are more generous than Californians in general in their grading of local public schools: Six in 10 parents give A or B grades, while one in four suggests a C grade and just 5 percent assign local schools a grade of F.

Californians today suggest grades for their local public schools that are comparable to those presented in a national survey by the Gallup Organization in 2003: 48 percent of Americans gave A's or B's, 31 percent gave C's, and 15 percent gave D's or F's when asked to provide an overall grade for their local public schools.

Similar to today, results in a PPIC Statewide Survey in October 2002 found that 49 percent of residents gave A or B grades to their local public schools, 31 percent gave C's, and 14 percent gave D's or F's. Both the current survey and the October 2002 survey show signs of improvement since an August 2000 survey, when 39 percent gave grades of B or better, 30 percent gave C's, and 23 percent gave grades of D or lower.

The public's rating of their neighborhood schools improves slightly with higher income, college education, and homeownership. However, there are also significant differences by race/ethnicity and immigrant status. For instance, Latinos (57%) and Asians (56%) are far more likely than blacks (34%) and somewhat more likely than whites (50%) to give their local public schools a grade of B or higher. Moreover, non-citizens (63%) and naturalized citizens (55%) are both more likely than U.S.-born residents (48%) to give out grades of B or higher for the quality of their local public schools.

Across the state's regions, Orange/San Diego County residents (56%) are the most likely and San Francisco Bay Area residents (47%) the least likely to give their local public schools grades of B or higher. Still, most residents in all regions give their schools a C or higher, and very few rate them as F's.

There are no major differences across voter groups in local school ratings. Registered voters, likely voters, Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, and those who approve and disapprove of the governor give fairly similar grades for the quality of the public schools in their neighborhoods.

**“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	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<b>A</b>	17%	15%	11%	20%	16%	25%
<b>B</b>	34	41	23	37	34	37
<b>C</b>	27	27	35	25	27	23
<b>D</b>	9	5	13	9	9	9
<b>F</b>	4	1	15	5	3	5
<b>Don't know</b>	9	11	3	4	11	1

### Perceived Funding and Willingness to Pay

Even though most Californians express satisfaction with the quality of neighborhood schools, about half still believe the state government should be more generous in funding their local public schools. Six in 10 public school parents say there is not enough state funding for their local public schools, while three in 10 say there is just enough funding and only 5 percent say there is more than enough state funding. Across the state’s major regions, fewer than one in 10 residents believes there is more than enough funding, and about half of Californians say there is not enough funding from the state government. Still, there are currently fewer residents who believe that there is not enough money for their local public schools than in our past surveys, when at least six in 10 residents said that state funding was inadequate.

In light of the perception that state moneys are insufficient, are residents willing to support ballot measures that would increase local school funds? Seven in 10 residents and likely voters support a local bond to pay for school construction projects—the same level of support we found in our earlier surveys. However, fewer than half of all residents and likely voters say they would vote to increase property taxes to provide funds for local public schools. Opposition to raising property taxes is especially strong among GOP voters; however, support is weak across all voter groups. A two-thirds vote is required to pass a tax increase for local schools, while a 55 percent vote is needed to pass a local bond for school construction.

**“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	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
More than enough	7%	9%	5%	7%	9%	6%	5%
Just enough	32	33	28	29	38	39	30
Not enough	51	49	54	54	43	47	59
Don't know	10	9	13	10	10	8	6

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

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	71%	80%	59%	70%	68%
No	23	17	35	23	27
Don't know	6	3	6	7	5

**“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?”**

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	46%	52%	33%	49%	41%
No	51	44	64	46	55
Don't know	3	4	3	5	4

### Preferred Alternatives and Reforms

While most Californians give passing grades to their own local public schools, they also believe that there are better alternatives outside of the state’s K-12 public school system. Only one in four residents believes that the public schools generally provide the best education in California today, while six in 10 name either private religious schools (32%) or private nonreligious schools (28%) as their top choice. Another 8 percent of residents say home schooling offers the best education in the state.

As for the parents of public school children, a similar 28 percent say that the public schools generally provide the best education, while one in three name private religious schools and one in four name private nonreligious schools. Many self-described conservatives tend to favor private religious schools over other school choices, while liberals tend to choose private nonreligious schools over parochial schools and public schools. Preference for public schools is lower among upper-income than lower-income adults and lower among whites than among Latinos and Asians.

Three proposals for improving K-12 public schools receive broad support when residents are asked if the proposals are good ideas or bad ideas for improving the quality of education in their local public school districts. Two-thirds are in favor of increasing teachers’ pay based on merit rather than seniority—a reform promoted by Governor Schwarzenegger. Six in 10 favor allowing students to enroll in any public school of their choice and reorganizing high schools into smaller campuses with fewer students. For each of the three reforms, majority support is evident across major geographic regions and demographic groups, for Democrats and Republicans, and among public school parents.

“Which of the following do you think generally provides the best education?”

	All Adults	Ideology			Public School Parents
		Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	
Public schools	24%	27%	24%	19%	28%
Private schools that are religious	32	22	33	44	32
Private schools that are not religious	28	38	28	21	24
Home schooling	8	7	6	9	7
Other ( <i>specify</i> )	1	1	1	2	1
Don't know	7	5	8	5	8

“Is this a good idea or a bad idea for improving the quality of education in your local school district?”

		All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
			Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
<i>How about increasing teachers’ pay based on merit—such as how well their students perform on tests—instead of seniority or years of service?</i>	Good idea	64%	73%	54%	71%	60%	66%
	Bad idea	32	22	42	26	36	31
	Don't know	4	5	4	3	4	3
<i>How about allowing students to enroll in any public school they choose?</i>	Good idea	61	67	59	73	55	64
	Bad idea	36	27	41	26	41	33
	Don't know	3	6	0	1	4	3
<i>How about reorganizing high schools into smaller campuses with fewer students, even if it means increasing the cost per student?</i>	Good idea	61	57	62	63	61	66
	Bad idea	33	37	35	33	33	28
	Don't know	6	6	3	4	6	6

## Public School Parents and Local School Activities

Parents of children in K-12 public schools were asked about their participation in activities at the local public school in the past year. Many parents say they have not been involved in their local schools. We also find large differences in parental participation across racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

The most frequent type of involvement is participation in a school fundraising activity, which just over half of public school parents say they had done in the past year. Involvement in fundraising is considerably higher among white parents than Latino parents, among U.S. born citizens than among immigrants (65% to 38%), among parents with higher incomes, and among college graduates. Mothers are also more likely than fathers to have been involved in school fundraising. Participation in fundraising activities is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (65%) and lowest in Los Angeles County (47%), while more than half of parents in Orange/San Diego Counties (56%), the Central Valley (52%), and the Inland Empire (57%) say they have been involved in fundraising in the past 12 months.

Just under half of public school parents (48%) say they have volunteered their time in the local public schools, such as chaperoning a class field trip or helping out in the classroom, in the past 12 months. Again, participation is greater among white parents than among Latino parents, and among U.S.-born citizens than among those born elsewhere (58% to 35%), and it also increases with parental income and education. School volunteering is much more common among women than men. San Francisco Bay Area parents (56%) and Inland Empire parents (52%) are more likely to have volunteered their time at a local public school than those in the Central Valley (45%), Los Angeles County (45%), and Orange/San Diego Counties (43%).

One in three public school parents reports being a member of a school organization such as the Parent Teachers Association (PTA). Membership is higher among white parents than Latino parents and among U.S.-born residents than immigrants (44% to 24%). A majority of college graduates and those with incomes of \$80,000 or more say they belong to the PTA or another local school organization, compared to one in five of those with no college education and of those with incomes under \$40,000. Once again, mothers are more likely than fathers to participate in local school activities.

<i>Public School Parents: Percentage answering yes</i>		<b>In the past 12 months, have you participated in any fundraising activity for a local public school?</b>	<b>In the past 12 months, have you volunteered your time to work in a local public school, such as in the classroom, library, or on field trips?</b>	<b>Do you belong to the PTA or another local group that is working on school or education issues?</b>
<b>All Public School Parents</b>		53%	48%	36%
<b>Race/Ethnicity*</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	37	36	22
	<b>Whites</b>	70	58	47
<b>Household Income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	37	35	22
	<b>\$40,000 to \$79,999</b>	58	57	34
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	73	57	58
<b>Education</b>	<b>High school</b>	33	34	19
	<b>Some college</b>	65	51	37
	<b>College graduate</b>	74	65	57
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Mothers</b>	58	55	42
	<b>Fathers</b>	48	39	27

\*Sample sizes too small for Asians and blacks.

## Public School Parents and Educational Involvement

Many parents with children in K-12 public schools say they are actively involved in their child’s education, both in terms of homework and teacher meetings. It appears that parents in lower socioeconomic groups are at least as involved as other parents in these two activities in their child’s public school education. Once again, however, fathers lag behind mothers in educational involvement.

A slight majority of parents (54%) report they are helping a child with homework four or five nights a week. Another one in four pitch in with homework duties two or three nights a week. Twenty-two percent say they help out with homework only one night a week or never. It is interesting to note that frequent involvement in their child’s homework is greater among parents with no college education, and incomes under \$40,000, than among college graduates and those earning \$80,000 or more. Latino parents are also more likely than white parents (59% to 44%) to say they help with homework on four or five nights a week, and mothers are more likely than fathers to assist their children this often (59% to 47%).

Most parents also report that they have been in contact with their child’s teachers during the current school year. Two in three (67%) say they have initiated a meeting with their child’s teachers at least twice, and nearly three in 10 (28%) say they have done so four or more times. One in three parents reports having never asked for a teacher meeting or having done so only once since the beginning of the year. Less affluent parents are somewhat more likely than those with higher incomes to have initiated several meetings with teachers; however, there are no differences in teacher involvement with regard to parents’ level of education. Latino parents are slightly more likely than white parents to have arranged at least four meetings (32% to 26%), and mothers are more likely than fathers to be involved in such interactions (33% to 21%).

**“In a typical school week, how many nights do you help your youngest child with homework assignments?”**

Public School Parents	All Parents	Education			Household Income			Latinos
		High School	Some College	College Graduate	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
Never	13%	12%	13%	15%	12%	8%	18%	12%
One night	9	9	5	13	6	8	14	6
Two or three nights	23	20	26	25	22	22	28	23
Four or five nights	54	58	55	46	58	60	39	59
Other, Don't know	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	0

**“Since the start of the school year, how many times have you initiated meetings with your youngest child’s teachers?”**

Public School Parents	All Parents	Education			Household Income			Latinos
		High School	Some College	College Graduate	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
Never	19%	18%	20%	20%	19%	19%	22%	18%
Once	14	15	10	16	12	14	15	13
Two or three times	39	39	43	36	39	45	37	37
Four or more times	28	28	27	28	30	22	26	32

## Parental Hopes and Expectations

California parents have high hopes for their child’s education. Nine in 10 aspire to college graduation for their child, and 41 percent hope that their child will, in fact, earn a postgraduate degree. Parental hopes for their child’s college graduation are high in all demographic groups, including those who did not attend college themselves (79%), those with incomes below \$40,000 (81%), Latinos (82%), and immigrants (83%). However, parental education goals are even higher among U.S.-born residents (91%), college graduates, and those with incomes of \$80,000 or more, with about half wanting their child to receive a postgraduate degree. Among white parents, 47 percent want their child to get a college diploma, and 45 percent are hoping their child will go on to earn a postgraduate degree. For Latinos, 52 percent hope for a college diploma and 30 percent aspire to a postgraduate degree. Public school parents are similar to all parents in that most want their child to at least graduate from college.

Most parents are at least somewhat confident that they will have what is needed to achieve the education goal they have in mind for their youngest child, but only half are very confident (56%). Public school parents express similar levels of confidence in having what is needed as other parents. The proportion saying they are very confident that they have what they need drops to below half among parents with only a high school education (48%) and those with incomes below \$40,000 (46%). There are no large differences between U.S.-born residents (59%) and immigrants (51%), and a slim majority in all regions, and among both Latinos (52%) and whites (58%), say they are very confident that they have the resources needed for their child to reach their educational dream. Those who hope for postgraduate degrees for their child (61%) are more confident than those who hope for college graduation (53%).

“What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve?”

Parents of children 18 or under	All Parents	Education			Household Income			Public School Parents
		High School	Some College	College Graduate	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
High school graduate	7%	13%	3%	1%	11%	5%	3%	8%
Some college	4	5	6	1	5	5	2	5
College graduate	47	52	51	38	50	49	41	50
Graduate degree after college	41	27	38	58	31	40	52	36
Other, Don't know	1	3	2	2	3	1	2	1

“How confident are you that you will have what is needed for your youngest child to reach that grade level?”

Parents of children 18 or under	All Parents	Education			Household Income			Public School Parents
		High School	Some College	College Graduate	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	
Very confident	56%	48%	55%	66%	46%	53%	70%	52%
Somewhat confident	30	35	30	25	35	32	22	33
Not too confident	12	15	13	7	16	13	7	13
Not at all confident (volunteered)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Don't know	2	2	2	1	3	2	0	2

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## Survey Methodology

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The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, research director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance in research and writing from Douglas Strand, associate survey director and project manager for this survey, and Kristy Michaud, Jennifer Paluch, and Kimberly Curry, survey research associates. The survey was conducted with funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of a three-year grant on education, environment, and population issues. We benefited from discussions with Hewlett staff and their grantees and with colleagues at other institutions; however, the survey methods, questions, and content of the report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents interviewed between April 4 and April 17, 2005. Interviewing took place mostly on weekday and weekend evenings, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were 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 by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Interviews took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, or Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese). We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English speaking adults in California and is followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages noted above. Publication Services translated the survey into Spanish. Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. translated the survey into Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese and conducted the telephone interviewing.

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. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

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. The sampling error for the 1,912 registered voters is +/- 2.3 percent. The sampling error for the 1,405 likely voters is +/- 2.7 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. “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. “SF 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. These five regions represent the major population centers of the state, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population.

We present specific results for respondents in the four self-identified racial/ethnic groups of Asian, black, Latino, and non-Hispanic white. We also compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents. The “independents” category includes only those who are registered to vote 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 use earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys and a *Los Angeles Times* survey to analyze trends over time in California. We also compare PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses in a national survey by the Gallup Organization.



**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY ON EDUCATION**  
**APRIL 4—APRIL 17, 2005**  
**2,502 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS**  
**ENGLISH, SPANISH, CHINESE, KOREAN, AND VIETNAMESE**  
**MARGIN OF ERROR +/-2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

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1. What is the most important issue facing people in California today?

*[code, don't read]*

- 22% economy, jobs, unemployment
- 15 education, schools
- 7 illegal immigrants, immigration
- 6 crime, gangs
- 6 gasoline prices
- 6 state budget, deficit, taxes
- 5 housing costs, housing availability
- 4 health care, health costs
- 3 electricity costs, supply/energy crisis
- 2 environment, pollution
- 2 traffic, transportation
- 16 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

2. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

- 35% right direction
- 53 wrong direction
- 12 don't know

3. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

- 38% good times
- 51 bad times
- 11 don't know

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

- 40% approve
- 50 disapprove
- 10 don't know

5. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling the state's kindergarten through 12th grade public education system?

- 28% approve
- 51 disapprove
- 21 don't know

5a. The state government's budget currently faces a multibillion dollar gap between state spending and state revenue. On a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority—what priority should be given to spending for K through 12th grade public education?

- 4% very low priority
- 5 low priority
- 17 medium priority
- 24 high priority
- 48 very high priority
- 2 don't know

5b. Some of the largest areas for state spending are: *[rotate]* (1) K through 12th grade public education, (2) higher education, (3) health and human services, and (4) youth and adult corrections. I'd like you to name the one you most want to protect from spending cuts.

- 54% K through 12th grade public education
- 12 higher education
- 22 health and human services
- 7 youth and adult corrections
- 5 don't know

6. How much of a problem is the quality of education in California's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 52% big problem
- 30 somewhat of a problem
- 12 not much of a problem
- 6 don't know

I am going to read you a list of other problems people have mentioned when talking about California's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools today. For each, please tell me if you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem.

*[rotate questions 7 to 9]*

7. How about parents who have low incomes?

- 45% big problem
- 34 somewhat of a problem
- 19 not really a problem
- 2 don't know

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

- 44% big problem
- 36 somewhat of a problem
- 17 not really a problem
- 3 don't know

*[questions 9 and 10 were each asked of a random half sample of respondents]*

9. How about parents who don't pay attention to how their children are doing in school?

- 78% big problem
- 16 somewhat of a problem
- 4 not really a problem
- 2 don't know

10. Which of these two views is closest to your own view about California's K through 12th grade public schools: *[rotate]* (1) Having many immigrant children is more of a benefit because they educate others about different cultures *[or]* (2) Having many immigrant children is more of a burden because they have language and other difficulties that take up school resources.

- 50% more of a benefit
- 49 more of a burden
- 1 don't know

*[question 11 not asked]*

12. In the past two years, do you think the quality of education in California's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools has improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same?

- 19% improved
- 39 stayed the same
- 31 gotten worse
- 11 don't know

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

- 9% near the top
- 10 above average
- 25 average
- 26 below average
- 18 near the bottom
- 12 don't know

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

- 3% near the top
- 8 above average
- 31 average
- 35 below average
- 14 near the bottom
- 9 don't know

15. People have different ideas about California's public schools. Of all the possible things you can think of, what one thing about California's K through 12th grade public schools do you think most needs improvement?

*[code, don't read]*

- 14% class size
- 11 curriculum
- 11 teacher quality
- 6 discipline, morals
- 6 state or local funding
- 5 bilingual education, English language learning, immigrants
- 4 parents, parental involvement
- 4 teachers' salaries
- 4 teacher shortage
- 3 bureaucracy, too much spending
- 2 classroom materials
- 2 safety, crime, drugs, gangs
- 2 student testing, accountability
- 2 society valuing education
- 2 school construction, repair
- 14 other (*specify*)
- 8 don't know

*[questions 16 to 20 not asked]*

21. Do you believe that we can improve the quality of California's K through 12th grade public schools by using the money we now spend more wisely, or are we going to have to spend more money to improve the quality of K through 12th grade public schools?

- 59% spend money more wisely
- 31 spend more money
- 7 both (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

22. Who do you trust the most to make decisions about how to spend money on improving the quality of education in California's K through 12th grade public schools?

*[read rotated list, then ask: "or someone else"]*

- 37% principals and teachers at local schools
- 31 local school districts
- 12 state government
- 7 federal government
- 5 someone else (*specify*)
- 2 parents (*volunteered*)
- 1 none (*volunteered*)
- 5 don't know

Here are some ideas that have been suggested to raise state revenues to provide additional funding for California's K through 12th grade public schools. For each of the following, please say if you favor or oppose the proposal.

*[rotate questions 23 and 24]*

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

- 63% favor
- 34 oppose
- 3 don't know

24. How about raising the state sales tax?

- 28% favor
- 70 oppose
- 2 don't know

*[rotate questions 25 and 26]*

25. Under Proposition 13, residential and commercial property taxes are both strictly limited. What do you think about having commercial properties taxed according to their current market value?

- 54% favor
- 38 oppose
- 8 don't know

26. How about extending the state sales tax to services that are not currently taxed, such as legal and accounting services, auto repairs, and haircuts?

- 36% favor
- 60 oppose
- 4 don't know

27. 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? When I say statewide tests, I mean a test of knowledge and skills given to all high school students in the state.

- 72% should
- 25 should not
- 3 don't know

28. Do you think that students should or should not have to pass statewide tests in reading and math before they can be promoted, for example, from fourth to fifth grade, even if they have passing grades in their classes?

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

29. 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?

- 18% yes
- 76 no
- 6 don't know

30. Should school districts in lower-income areas get more resources from the state than other school districts?

- 64% yes
- 31 no
- 5 don't know

A number of proposals have been made to improve K through 12th grade public schools in California. For each of the following, please tell me if this is a good idea or a bad idea for improving the quality of education in your local public school district.

*[rotate questions 31 to 35]*

31. How about increasing teachers' pay based on merit—such as how well their students perform on tests—instead of seniority or years of service?

64% good idea  
32 bad idea  
4 don't know

32. How about allowing students to enroll in any public school they choose?

61% good idea  
36 bad idea  
3 don't know

*[questions 33 and 34 not asked]*

35. How about reorganizing high schools into smaller campuses with fewer students, even if it means increasing the cost per student?

61% good idea  
33 bad idea  
6 don't know

*[question 36 asked of a random half sample of respondents]*

36. On another topic, do you favor or oppose trying to make sure that a student can pray a spoken prayer during some official activities in public schools?

65% favor  
30 oppose  
5 don't know

*[question 37 not asked]*

38. 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?

17% A  
34 B  
27 C  
9 D  
4 F  
9 don't know

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

7% more than enough  
32 just enough  
51 not enough  
10 don't know

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

71% yes  
23 no  
6 don't know

41. 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?

46% yes  
51 no  
3 don't know

*[Responses recorded for questions 42, 43, and 46 are from parents of public school children only. All other responses are from all adults, except where noted.]*

42. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any fundraising activity for a local public school?

53% yes  
47 no

43. In the past 12 months, have you volunteered your time to work in a local public school, such as in the classroom, library, or on field trips?

48% yes  
52 no

*[questions 44 and 45 not asked]*

46. Do you belong to the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) or another local group that is working on school or education issues?

36% yes  
64 no

*[question 47 asked of a random half sample of respondents]*

47. In thinking about schools in California, which of the following do you think generally provides the best education: *[rotate]* (1) public schools, (2) private schools that are religious, (3) private schools that are not religious, *[or]* (4) home schooling?

- 32 private schools that are religious
- 28 private schools that are not religious
- 24% public schools
- 8 home schooling
- 1 other *(specify)*
- 7 don't know

48. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote?

- 77% yes *[ask q. 48a]*
- 23 no *[skip to q. 49a]*

48a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 43% Democrat *[ask q. 49b]*
- 34 Republican *[ask q. 49c]*
- 5 another party *(specify) [ask q. 50]*
- 18 independent *[ask q. 49a]*

49a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 22% Republican Party
- 41 Democratic Party
- 27 neither *(volunteered)*
- 10 don't know

*[go to q. 50]*

49b. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 58% strong
- 40 not very strong
- 2 don't know

*[go to q. 50]*

49c. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 54% strong
- 42 not very strong
- 4 don't know

50. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

- 28% great deal
- 39 fair amount
- 25 only a little
- 8 none

51. How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, seldom, or never?

- 53% always
- 17 nearly always
- 9 part of the time
- 4 seldom
- 17 never

52. Would you consider yourself to be politically... *[rotate]*

- 10% very liberal
- 23 somewhat liberal
- 28 middle-of-the-road
- 23 somewhat conservative
- 12 very conservative
- 4 don't know

*[questions 53 and 54 not asked]*

If Governor Schwarzenegger calls a special election, he may ask voters to vote on the following measures on the state ballot. For each one, please tell me whether you would vote yes or no.

*[rotate questions 54a and 55]*

54a. *[If registered to vote]* The School Funding and State Spending Initiative would change state minimum school funding requirements under Proposition 98, limit state spending to the prior year total plus revenue growth, and continue prior year spending if the new state budget is delayed. It would also prohibit state special funds borrowing and require payment of local government mandates. Would you vote yes or no?

- 43% yes
- 37 no
- 20 don't know

55. *[If registered to vote]* The Public School Teachers Waiting Period for Permanent Status and Dismissal Initiative would increase the length of time required before a teacher becomes a permanent employee from two years to five years and authorize school boards to dismiss permanent teaching employees who have received two consecutive unsatisfactory performance evaluations. Would you vote yes or no?

- 54% yes
- 39 no
- 7 don't know

*[questions 56 and 57 not asked]*

58. When it comes to making budget choices this year for California's K through 12th grade public schools, both in deciding how much Californians should pay in taxes and how much funding to provide, whose approach do you most prefer: *[rotate]* (1) Governor Schwarzenegger's, (2) the Democrats' in the legislature, *[or]* (3) the Republicans' in the legislature?

- 24% Governor Schwarzenegger's
- 38 Democrats' in the legislature
- 15 Republicans' in the legislature
- 3 other answer (*specify*)
- 20 don't know

59. And when it comes to making major, long-term changes in the state's K through 12th grade public education system, which approach do you most prefer: *[rotate]* (1) the governor and legislature should pass new laws, (2) the California voters should decide at the ballot box, *[or]* (3) the courts should decide through lawsuits.

- 21% the governor and legislature should pass new laws
- 66 California voters should decide at the ballot box
- 7 the courts should decide through lawsuits
- 2 other answer (*specify*)
- 4 don't know

*[D1 to D4b: demographic questions]*

*[Responses recorded for questions D4c and D4d are from parents of public school children only. All other responses are from all adults, except where noted.]*

D4c. In a typical school week, how many nights do you help your child with homework assignments—never, one night, two or three nights, or four or five nights?

- 13% never
- 9 one night
- 23 two or three nights
- 54 four or five nights
- 1 other, don't know

D4d. Since the start of the school year, how many times have you initiated any meetings with your child's teachers—never, once, two or three times, or four or more times?

- 19% never
- 14 once
- 39 two or three times
- 28 four or more times

D4e. *[If parent of child 18 or under]* What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve: some high school; high school graduate; some college; college graduate; or a postgraduate degree?

- 7% high school graduate
- 4 some college
- 47 college graduate
- 41 postgraduate degree
- 1 other, don't know

D4f. *[If parent of child 18 or under]* How confident are you that you will have what is needed for this child to reach that grade level—very confident, somewhat confident, or not too confident?

- 56% very confident
- 30 somewhat confident
- 12 not too confident
- 2 don't know

*[D5 to D13: demographic questions]*

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