



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A poll of New Yorkers confirms that too much emphasis placed on student testing

ALBANY, NY Feb 9, 2012 — Teachers and parents both know that a child is more than a test score. That is why more than 70% of public school parents reject a proposal to greatly increase the weight of a single state test score in evaluating teachers, according to a recent poll conducted by Hart Research.

The statewide poll, conducted January 20-23, was taken while discussions were ongoing between NYSUT and the State Education Department around teacher evaluation processes.

Gov. Cuomo has indicated he plans to mandate a statewide evaluation system if he believes significant progress is not made by later in the month. To date, nearly 400 school districts report progress in developing a new evaluation program, with another 100 school districts having already negotiated an implementation plan for evaluations.

The Hart Poll, conducted for NYSUT, confirms New Yorkers favor accountability in the classroom, but they have serious doubts about an overemphasis on student testing.

When asked about the basis for teacher evaluation, 62 percent of voters felt that a single state test score should account for no more than 20 percent of teacher evaluations, while only 28 percent agreed it should account for up to 40 percent. And among public school parents, some 72 percent agreed that no more than 20 percent of a teacher's evaluation should be tied to a single state test score.

“Public school parents and New Yorkers clearly want state test scores to be a factor, but only one factor when it comes to measuring teacher performance,” said Geoff Garin of Hart Research Associates. “They believe that you can't judge great teaching by a single snapshot, and worry that putting too much weight on one test could have a negative impact on student learning by promoting more teaching to the test.”

Other key findings from the poll include:

- 73% of public school parents rate the quality of local public schools in their area positively.
- 74% of public school parents gave positive ratings to the overall quality and performance of teachers in their local public schools.
- 64% of parents believe that there is already too much emphasis on standardized testing in the public schools.

Debra Calvino, 2010 New York State Teacher of the Year, is a 31-year math teacher at Valley Central High School in Orange County, and has committed her life to making sure students are not afraid of math. She and other teachers around the state are awaiting the outcome of the debate over teacher evaluation.

“I use data from tests to measure my students’ progress and I make sure that my students are actively involved in defining their own success,” said Calvino, “but test data isn’t the only measure I use because that doesn’t give a full picture of the student.”

Dick Iannuzzi, president of NYSUT, said defining excellence includes multiple measures. “Of course, student test scores have a place in teacher evaluation but the fairest, best approach to evaluating teachers should also include principal observation and a focus on the subject knowledge, creativity and expertise that bring learning to life.”

NYSUT, the state’s largest union, represents some 600,000 classroom teachers and other school employees; faculty and other professionals at the state’s community colleges, State University of New York and City University of New York, and other education and health professionals. NYSUT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

METHODOLOGY: Hart Research surveyed 773 registered voters in New York State by telephone, including 317 public school parents. The margin of error on results is +/- 4.0% for all voters and +/-5.6% for public school parents.

Interviews: 773 voters, including
317 public school parents
 Dates: January 20-23, 2012

[109]	All	Public
	<u>Voters</u>	<u>School</u>
Male	47	42
Female	53	58

FINAL

Study #10467
 NY State Education Survey
 January 20-23, 2012

Please note: all results are shown as percentages unless otherwise stated.

1. Are you currently registered to vote at this address?

Yes, registered.....	100	CONTINUE
No, not registered	-	TERMINATE
Not sure	-	

2. Are you registered to vote as a Democrat, a Republican, in some other party, or with no party affiliation?

	All <u>Voters</u>	Public School <u>Parents</u>	
Registered–Democrat	49	41	
Registered–Republican	25	33	CONTINUE
Registered–some other party	6	8	
Registered–no party affiliation.....	20	18	
Not sure.....	-	-	TERMINATE

3. Do you have any children age eighteen or under currently living in your household, of whom you are the parent or guardian, who attend a PUBLIC school in any grade between kindergarten and twelfth grade?

	All <u>Voters</u>	Public School <u>Parents</u>
Yes, have children who attend public school	25	100
No, do not have children who attend public school.....	75	-
Not sure/refused	-	-

4. How would you rate the quality of local public schools in your area—excellent, pretty good, fair, or poor?

	All <u>Voters</u>	Public School <u>Parents</u>
Total Excellent/Good	63	73
Excellent	21	28
Good	42	45
Only fair.....	25	21
Poor	7	5
Not sure	5	1

5. As you know, public schools conduct standardized tests that are intended to measure how well students are learning. In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on standardized testing in the public schools, not enough emphasis on testing, or about the right amount?

	All <u>Voters</u>	Public School <u>Parents</u>
Too much emphasis.....	53	64
Not enough emphasis.....	14	9
About the right amount.....	26	24
Not sure	7	3

6. How would you rate the overall quality and performance of teachers in your local public schools—excellent, good, just adequate, not so good, or poor?

	All <u>Voters</u>	Public School <u>Parents</u>
Total Excellent/Good	66	74
Excellent	22	33
Good	44	41
Just adequate	19	21
Not so good.....	5	2
Poor	2	2
Not sure	8	1

The state commissioner of education, John King, is now proposing to make some changes in teacher evaluations. . .

7. One proposed change concerns how much of a teacher's evaluation should be determined by student performance on the annual state test. Currently the law says that up to forty percent of a teacher's evaluation can be based on measures of student performance, but no more than twenty percent can be based on a single state test score. Commissioner King is proposing that forty percent of the evaluation be based on a single state test score. Do you think that the state test score should count for twenty percent or forty percent of teacher evaluations? **(IF RESPONDENT MAKES A CHOICE, ASK:)** Do you feel strongly or not strongly about that?

	All <u>Voters</u>	Public School <u>Parents</u>
Should Count For 20%	62	72
Feel strongly	54	64
Do not feel strongly	8	8
Should Count For 40%	28	21
Do not feel strongly	9	5
Feel strongly	19	16
Not sure	10	7