Mississippi State Poll: Disparities in Education Funding Put Children in Lower Income Communities at Disadvantage

- Three-quarters of Mississippians Call for Equal Preparation for Tested Children in Schools
- Mississippians Provide Only a Passing Grade for Public Education in the United States
- Large Majorities Would Make Move Based on Local School District Quality
- Most Mississippians Polled Make Connection Between Crime and Public School Dropout Rates
- Very Strong Support for Programs Such as Pre-K and Head Start

Jackson – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 283 adults. The Poll on public education quality, programming, testing, and funding was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014.

Mississippians surveyed provided only a passing grade for the quality of public education in the United States today. While 56.7% indicated the quality of public education was very good (6.7%) or good (49.8%), two-fifths, 39.7% suggested the quality was poor (33.7%) or very poor (6.0%).

Describing the quality of education in their own communities, Mississippians provided only a somewhat higher grade than they did for public schools nationally. Over one-half, 58.9% indicated the quality of education in their own community was very good (13.1%) or good (45.6%). Nearly one-third, 37.6%, indicated poor (25.8%) or very poor (11.7%).

When schools are considered or declared “failing”, most Mississippians hold the local school districts and school administrators responsible – 66.2% and 55.2% respectively. Fewer hold the teachers and the State responsible –
48.0% and 34.5% respectively. Some hold the students and funding or funders responsible – 36.7% and 22.1% respectively.

Three-fifths of Mississippians polled, 60.1%, indicated they would recommend graduation rates be used to measure school success. A similar percentage, 69.8%, suggested student test scores be used as a metric. Fewer suggested teacher qualification and accomplishments or scholarships awarded – 41.6% and 20.6% respectively.

Large majorities of respondents nationally agreed...
- They would make a move, with young children, based largely on local school district quality – 90.4%;
- They see a connection between crime and public school dropout rates – 89.4%;
- That, based on education funding levels, children in lower income communities are at an education disadvantage – 73.8%; and
- That, in a move, they would avoid a school district that didn’t fund Pre-K education – 62.1%.

Awareness of “Third Grade Gate”, the concept of testing third graders in public schools to ensure they meet specific standards before moving to fourth grade, is currently 48.1% nationally.

Support for “Third Grade Gate” was recorded at 67.1% -- 28.3% strongly and 38.9% somewhat among Mississippians polled.

Respondents were presented with the following question about preparation for testing: “Because of affordability and availability, some children have more years of public school preparation prior to Third Grade Gate or similar testing. How strongly would you agree or disagree that, for the testing to be fair and effective, all tested children should receive the same preparation. Just over three-quarters, 76.7%, suggested they strongly (42.4%) or somewhat agree (34.3%) with equitable preparation.

There exists very strong support for five public school programs nationally...
- Pre-K Education – 87.6%
- Head Start – 80.2%
- Testing at specific intervals – 83.7%
- Dropout / Student retention programs – 80.6%
- Common Core Testing – 53.7%

Strong agreement was found for current or potential public school initiatives...
- Students receiving Pre-K education tend to be more successful in school – 82.3%
- There is a role for public schools in supporting homeless children – 72.4%
- Testing concepts should be funded by the sponsoring State or authority – 78.1%

State Poll: Mississippians Say Poor Performing Schools Situated in Poorer Communities

- Two-Thirds of Mississippians Say Public Schools Significantly Underfunded
- Majorities of Mississippians Willing to Pay More Taxes to Better Fund Public Schools
- Only 27.4% Say Public Schools are Equitably Funded Across Jurisdictions
- Large Percentage of Mississippians See Public School Buildings as “Dangerously Neglected”
- Unfunded Mandates Should Be Funded By “Mandating Authority” According to Mississippians Surveyed
Jackson – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 283 adults. The Poll on public education quality, programming, testing, funding was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014.

Strong majorities of Mississippians surveyed, 67.3%, believe that public schools are significantly (32.7%) or somewhat (34.5%) underfunded.

Nearly two-thirds of Mississippians surveyed, 63.3%, indicated they were very or somewhat aware of local public school funding.

Respondents reported wanting to see the responsibility for funding local public schools shift somewhat from the local government and even state government to the federal government. Today, 21.0% of respondents suggested that most public school funding comes from the federal government. However, 30.2% suggested that most funding should come from the federal government.

While 14.2% indicated that most public school funding comes from local government today, just 12.1% suggest public school funding should come from the local government.

Importantly,
- Just 45.9% of Mississippians agreed their own state adequately funds public schools;
- Many are willing to pay somewhat more in taxes to better fund public schools – 63.7%;
- Only 27.4% agreed that public schools are equitably or evenly across jurisdictions;
- A strong majority, 69.8%, agreed that good preforming schools are generally better funded;
- A large majority, 86.1%, agreed that the better public schools do, the better the economy does;
- Nearly three-quarters, 72.2%, agreed that poor performing school are most likely to be situated in poorer communities;
- Nearly three-quarters, 70.8%, would prefer to see public school funds increased by moving tax funds from other less important programs before increasing taxes;
- Many, 68.3%, support consolidation of school districts to save money; and
- A majority, 63.3%, agreed that they seek out and support candidates who advocate for increased public school funding.

Respondents were presented with information on unfunded mandates: “Sometimes the Federal or State government makes new requirements for programs, services or testing on local public school systems without providing the funds for implementation. Some refer to these as “unfunded mandates” leaving the municipalities to find funds to meet these new requirements.” When asked who is MOST responsible for funding of unfunded mandates, 28.1% suggested the “mandating authority” while 24.9% suggested the federal government and 16.1% indicated the state government. Few, 4.6%, suggested the local government or school districts. Another 21.4% noted funding should come from a combination of sources.

When extrapolated on the total population, a large percentage, 21.0%, see the condition of public schools as either dangerously neglected (5.3%) or neglected (15.7%).

**Statewide Poll: Mississippians See Significant New Funding Required to Move Infrastructure to “Good” Status**

- Strong Majorities of Mississippians Say Parents Don’t Move to Towns/Cities With School Buildings in Disrepair
Similarly, Majorities Say Businesses Don’t Move to Towns/Cities with Infrastructure in Disrepair

Majorities Say They’ll Pay More in Taxes to Improve Infrastructure Safety and Quality

Large Majority Sees Increased, Long-Term Investment in Infrastructure for Economy to Grow and add Jobs

Compared to Five Years Ago, Mississippians See Infrastructure Decline

Jackson – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a statewide survey of 283 adults. The Poll, covering issues surrounding public infrastructure issues was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014.

Mississippians mostly think of roads, streets, bridges, water delivery systems, public school facilities and waste / drainage systems when they think of “infrastructure”.

Just over one-half, 53.4%, suggested they follow infrastructure issues very (8.9%) or somewhat closely (44.5%).

A large and growing percentage of Mississippians see their local infrastructure in dangerous disrepair – 33.8% today and 29.5% five years ago.

Similarly, a growing percentage of Mississippians see their national infrastructure in dangerous disrepair – 34.9% today and 29.2% five years ago.

Importantly,

- A large majority, 82.2%, agreed that we need increased, long-term investment in the national infrastructure in order for the national economy to grow and add new jobs;
- Many (82.9%) agreed that if it’s not an emergency, too many needed infrastructure improvements are “kicked down the road”;
- Most, 86.5%, agreed that businesses don’t move to towns/cities with infrastructure in disrepair;
- Inaction or failure to improve the infrastructure will make international competition in economic terms difficult according to 70.8%;
- While 58.7% are willing to pay more in taxes to improve the safety and quality of their respective community infrastructure, 74.0% would prefer to see funds moved from other programs or services;
- Parents don’t move to towns/cities with school buildings in disrepair according to 77.2% of those surveyed; and
- Impressively, 70.1% agreed that they and friends/neighbors can have an impact on improving public infrastructure.

ABOUT THE POLL: The Poll was conducted by The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government. Polling by the Center is conducted on a regular basis and may also include spontaneous polling on occurring events.

METHODOLOGY: The Poll sampled opinions of 283 Mississippians. The survey was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014. All surveys were conducted using an online survey instrument. The poll has a +/- 6.0 percent margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level on a composite basis.

ABOUT JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY: CHALLENGING MINDS, CHANGING LIVES
Jackson State University, founded in 1877, is a historically black, high research activity university located in Jackson, the capital city of Mississippi. Jackson State’s nurturing academic environment challenges individuals to change lives through teaching, research and service. Officially designated as Mississippi’s Urban University, Jackson State continues to enhance the state, nation and world through comprehensive economic development, health-care, technological and educational initiatives. The only public university in the Jackson metropolitan area, Jackson State is located near downtown, with five satellite locations throughout the area. For more information, visit www.jsums.edu or call 601-979-2121.
National Poll: Disparities in Education Funding Put Children in Lower Income Communities at Disadvantage

- Three-quarters of Americans Call for Equal Preparation for Tested Children in Schools
- Americans Provide Only a Passing Grade for Public Education in the United States
- Large Majorities Would Make Move Based on Local School District Quality
- Most Americans Polled Make Connection Between Crime and Public School Dropout Rates
- Very Strong Support for Programs Such as Pre-K and Head Start

Jackson, Miss. – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 908 adults. The Poll on public education quality, programming, testing, and funding was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014.

Americans surveyed provided only a passing grade for the quality of public education in the United States today. While 59.4% indicated the quality of public education was very good (9.5%) or good (49.9%), two-fifths, 38.1% suggested the quality was poor (30.8%) or very poor (7.3%).

Describing the quality of education in their own communities, Americans provided only a somewhat higher grade than they did for public schools nationally. Two-thirds, 67.9% indicated the quality of education in their own community was very good (14.8%) or good (53.1%). Nearly one-third, 29.5%, indicated poor (23.9%) or very poor (5.6%).

When schools are considered or declared “failing”, most Americans hold the local school districts and school administrators responsible – 61.2% and 52.6% respectively. Fewer hold the teachers and the State responsible – 42.7% and 40.3% respectively. Some hold the students and funding or funders responsible – 29.4% and 25.0% respectively.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans polled, 64.0%, indicated they would recommend graduation rates be used to measure school success. A similar percentage, 60.7%, suggested student test scores be used as a metric. Fewer suggested teacher qualification and accomplishments or scholarships awarded – 39.7% and 22.6% respectively.

Large majorities of respondents nationally agreed...
- They would make a move, with young children, based largely on local school district quality – 82.4%;
- They see a connection between crime and public school dropout rates – 81.6%;
- That, based on education funding levels, children in lower income communities are at an education disadvantage – 77.9%; and
- That, in a move, they would avoid a school district that didn’t fund Pre-K education – 62.7%.

Awareness of “Third Grade Gate”, the concept of testing third graders in public schools to ensure they meet specific standards before moving to fourth grade, is currently 37.7% nationally.

Support for “Third Grade Gate” was recorded at 59.5% -- 18.7% strongly and 40.8% somewhat among Americans polled.

Respondents were presented with the following question about preparation for testing: “Because of affordability and availability, some children have more years of public school preparation prior to Third Grade Gate or similar testing. How strongly would you agree or disagree that, for the testing to be fair and effective, all tested children should receive the same preparation. Nearly three-quarters, 73.9%, suggested they strongly (37.0%) or somewhat agree (36.8%) with equitable preparation.
There exists very strong support for five public school programs nationally...

- Pre-K Education – 85.7%
- Head Start – 84.1%
- Testing at specific intervals – 80.1%
- Dropout / Student retention programs – 77.6%
- Common Core Testing – 66.0%

Strong agreement was found for current or potential public school initiatives...

- Students receiving Pre-K education tend to be more successful in school – 81.3%
- There is a role for public schools in supporting homeless children – 71.9%
- Testing concepts should be funded by the sponsoring State or authority – 74.2%

“I am sure that this is not surprising,” said Dr. Daniel Watkins, dean of the College of Education and Human Development at JSU. “These results should call for a reevaluation of education funding and a collective will to address the issue.”

National Poll: Americans Say Poor Performing Schools Situated in Poorer Communities

- Most Americans Say Public Schools Significantly Underfunded
- Majorities of Americans Willing to Pay More Taxes to Better Fund Public Schools
- Only 33.0% Say Public Schools are Equitably Funded Across Jurisdictions
- Large Percentage of Americans See Public School Buildings as “Dangerously Neglected”
- Unfunded Mandates Should Be Funded By “Mandating Authority” According to Americans Surveyed

Jackson, Miss. – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 908 adults. The Poll on public education quality, programming, testing, funding was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014.

Strong majorities of Americans surveyed, 67.1%, believe that public schools are significantly (30.3%) or somewhat (36.8%) underfunded. This percentage is higher among those with children (70.1%).

Two-thirds of Americans surveyed, 64.5%, indicated they were very or somewhat aware of local public school funding.

Respondents reported wanting to see the responsibility for funding local public schools shift somewhat from the local government and even state government to the federal government. Today, 16.1% of respondents suggested that most public school funding comes from the federal government. However, 29.6% suggested that most funding should come from the federal government.

While 20.7% indicated that most public school funding comes from local government today, just 13.2% suggest public school funding should come from the local government.

Importantly,
• Just 51.3% of Americans agreed their own state adequately funds public schools;
• Many are willing to pay somewhat more in taxes to better fund public schools – 59.3%;
• Only 33.0% agreed that public schools are funded equitably or evenly across jurisdictions;
• A majority, 70.0%, agreed that good performing schools are generally better funded;
• A large majority, 78.3%, agreed that the better public schools do, the better the economy does;
• Nearly three-quarters, 71.2%, agreed that poor performing school are most likely to be situated in poorer communities;
• Three-quarters, 71.7%, would prefer to see public school funds increased by moving tax funds from other less important programs before increasing taxes;
• Many, 66.2%, support consolidation of school districts to save money; and
• A majority, 60.5%, agreed that they seek out and support candidates who advocate for increased public school funding.

Respondents were presented with information on unfunded mandates: “Sometimes the Federal or State government makes new requirements for programs, services or testing on local public school systems without providing the funds for implementation. Some refer to these as ‘unfunded mandates’ leaving the municipalities to find funds to meet these new requirements.” When asked who is MOST responsible for funding of unfunded mandates, 25.8% suggested the “mandating authority” while 25.5% suggested the federal government and 16.1% indicated the state government. Few, 4.7%, suggested the local government or school districts. Another 16.6% noted funding should come from a combination of sources.

When extrapolated on the total population, a large percentage, 23.8%, see the condition of public schools as either dangerously neglected (5.6%) or neglected (18.2%).

“This should not be,” said Dr. Daniel Watkins, dean of the College of Education and Human Development at JSU. “We are in a crisis when it comes to poor, urban and rural areas. When there’s a crisis, we should take drastic measures. We’ve done so in the past, we need to do so now.”

National Poll: Americans See Significant New Funding Required to Move Infrastructure to “Good” Status

➢ Strong Majorities of Americans Say Parents Don’t Move to Towns/Cities With School Buildings in Disrepair
➢ Similarly, Majorities Say Businesses Don’t Move to Towns/Cities with Infrastructure in Disrepair
➢ Majorities Say They’ll Pay More in Taxes to Improve Infrastructure Safety and Quality
➢ Large Majority Sees Increased, Long-Term Investment in Infrastructure for Economy to Grow and Add Jobs
➢ Compared to Five Years Ago, Americans See Infrastructure Decline

Jackson, Miss. – The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government has released a national survey of 908 adults. The Poll, covering issues surrounding public infrastructure issues was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014.

Americans mostly think of roads, streets, bridges, water delivery systems, public school facilities and waste / drainage systems when they think of “infrastructure”.
Just over one-half, 58.1%, suggested they follow infrastructure issues very (11.9%) or somewhat closely (46.2%).

A large and growing percentage of Americans see their local infrastructure in dangerous disrepair – 28.9% today and 25.4% five years ago.

Similarly, a growing percentage of Americans see their national infrastructure in dangerous disrepair – 38.2% today and 23.8% five years ago.

Importantly,

- A large majority, 80.2%, agreed that we need increased, long-term investment in the national infrastructure in order for the national economy to grow and add new jobs;
- Many (80.1%) agreed that if it’s not an emergency, too many needed infrastructure improvements are “kicked down the road”;
- Three-quarters, 78.6%, agreed that businesses don’t move to towns/cities with infrastructure in disrepair;
- Inaction or failure to improve the infrastructure will make international competition in economic terms difficult according to 78.6%;
- While 60.3% are willing to pay more in taxes to improve the safety and quality of their respective community infrastructure, 71.3% would prefer to see funds moved from other programs or services;
- Parents don’t move to towns/cities with school buildings in disrepair according to 69.6% of those surveyed; and
- Impressively, 65.5% agreed that they and friends/neighbors can have an impact on improving public infrastructure.

Americans see significant new funding required to get the infrastructure to where it could be considered “good”. Three-quarters, 75.7%, noted the investment required will be significant (39.0%) or somewhat more (36.7%).

“This is significant because if we wait, infrastructure will only get worse,” said Dr. Daniel Watkins, dean of the College of Education and Human Development at JSU. “We need the best minds to find solutions. Americans will pay for new innovative ideas.”

**ABOUT THE POLL:** The Poll was conducted by The Polling Center at Jackson State University’s Institute of Government. Polling by the Center is conducted on a regular basis and may also include spontaneous polling on occurring events.

**METHODOLOGY:** The Poll sampled opinions of 908 approximately proportional to state population contribution nationwide. The survey was conducted November 24 – December 5, 2014. All surveys were conducted using an online survey instrument. The poll has a +/- 3.5 percent margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level on a composite basis.

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