



**EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY ON LONG ISLAND:
PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR SOLUTIONS**

November 2008

**Report Prepared by
Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research**

INTRODUCTION

Since 2002, the Rauch Foundation, a Long Island-based family foundation focused on children and families, the environment, and leadership, has commissioned a series of public opinion surveys to assess the attitudes of Long Island's residents on the important issues facing them. As part of the Foundation's *Long Island Index* project, these surveys are intended to provide an awareness of the concerns and opinions of Long Island residents.

This survey was conducted by the Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research during the Fall of 2008. Telephone interviews were conducted with a randomly selected sample of 813 Long Island residents, with an additional randomly selected oversample of 202 Black and 200 Latino residents. Further information on the methodology, as well as the questionnaire and responses, is available in the Appendix to the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Long Island has schools that are among the best in the nation. It also contains some poorly performing schools. Moreover, the large number of school districts on Long Island exacerbates the problem by isolating failing schools in small, less well funded school districts. Failing school districts stand apart from others in terms of the wealth and race of their students. In general, Black and Latino children attend schools with poor academic records and a largely minority student body in areas characterized by higher poverty rates than schools attended by most Whites on Long Island. When coupled with a sharp degree of racially based residential segregation, this translates into considerable local educational inequality. These differences were brought into sharp relief in the 2007 *Long Island Index* which compared Long Island residents with those of Fairfax and Loudoun counties, Virginia. Despite minority populations of similar size in Virginia and Long Island, residents of the two Virginia counties rated their schools as more equal than did Long Island residents.

The current *Long Island Index* documents modest awareness of local educational inequities among Long Island residents. White Long Islanders have relatively little direct personal experience with diverse schools and a majority believes that children from different racial and socio-economic backgrounds receive the same quality of education (despite evidence to the contrary). Indeed, a majority of local residents believe a child from a low-income family receives the same or better educational quality as a child from a middle-income family, and that a Black or Latino student receives the same or better education than a White child.

Thus, one of the key findings to emerge from this report is that most Long Islanders are unaware of the magnitude of educational disparities across local school districts and the degree to which local schools are racially segregated. Just over a third believe that Black students attend majority Black schools, and four in ten believe Blacks students attend schools that are an even mix of Blacks and Whites. In reality, most Black and Latino students attend schools in districts in which the majority of students are Black or Latino. This misperception results in a belief among most local residents that enough is being done to integrate the schools.

On the other hand, a majority of local residents acknowledge that more is spent on some students than others, and about a half believe that there are inequities in local educational quality overall. Local opinion is thus characterized by some acknowledgement of local school inequality coupled with the view that such problems are not especially dire. There is majority support for solutions to school inequities such as the creation of magnet schools and consolidation of school districts to create greater school diversity. One of the most popular solutions is to pool commercial property taxes across school districts. But when modest

majority support for change is combined with the feeling that school inequities are not that big a problem, the demand for action is likely to be limited.

Throughout the poll there are clear differences among Black and White Long Islanders in their perception of school inequities, satisfaction with local schools, and the need for future action to deal with school disparities. Seven in ten Whites, over six in ten Latinos but fewer than a half of all Blacks rate local educational quality in their school district as good or excellent. Over four in ten Blacks believe that a lot more is spent on some students than others in local schools, a view that is endorsed by fewer Whites and Latinos.

Between 75% and 80% of Black residents support magnet schools, school consolidation, allowing children in failing districts to change schools, allowing White parents to send their children to more diverse schools outside their district, and encouraging the development of housing for lower income families in good school districts. In contrast, support for these various solutions is weaker among Whites, ranging from 57% to 64%. Latinos express stronger support than Whites for such solutions, but their support is not as strong as observed among Blacks. Overall, it is not surprising to find that Black and Latino Long Islanders, who may have the most to gain from increased school equality, are also most supportive of a range of policy solutions designed to reduce current educational inequities.

There is also more pronounced dissatisfaction with local schools and stronger support for action among residents of the high-need school districts. These districts are characterized by higher poverty rates and a much higher concentration of minority students than either average or low need districts. There is an almost 20 point gap in the percentage of residents in high- and low-need districts who rate the quality of local education as good or excellent. Residents of high-need school districts view local education as much poorer value than residents of low-need areas. When it comes to public education on Long Island, residents who live in school districts with a largely poor and minority student population are markedly less satisfied with the quality of education provided for children in their area.

The challenge that lies ahead is how to make Long Island a more inclusive place where all feel at home, all children have equal educational opportunities, and all residents are able to contribute to the growth of a vibrant local economy.

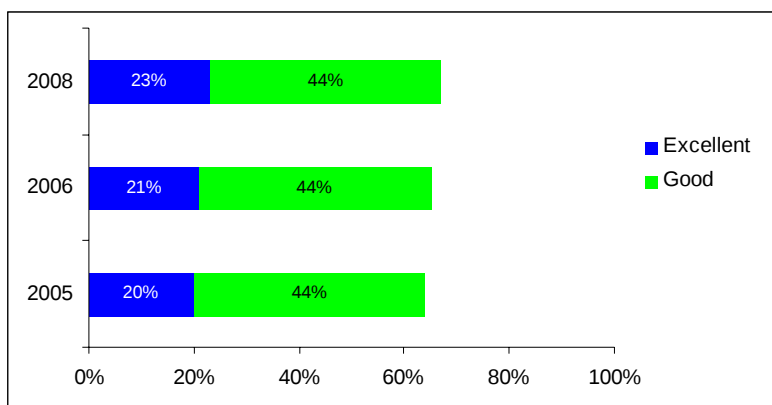
EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY ON LONG ISLAND: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR SOLUTIONS

CONTINUED SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS

Schools Get High Marks for Quality

Overall, Long Islanders are relatively satisfied with their public schools and are slightly more satisfied now than two years ago. Sixty-nine percent of local residents rated the quality of teachers in their public schools as good or excellent compared to 63% in 2006. Sixty-seven percent rated the quality of education received by students in their school district as good or excellent, a slight increase of 2 percentage points in the last two years. And over 60% agreed that a high school diploma from their local schools means that a student has learned the basics; a sentiment that was more common in Nassau (67%) than Suffolk County (58%). Nonetheless, there is some continued dissatisfaction with school leadership and governance. Just under a half of all residents (49%) rated school administration in their local district as good or excellent.

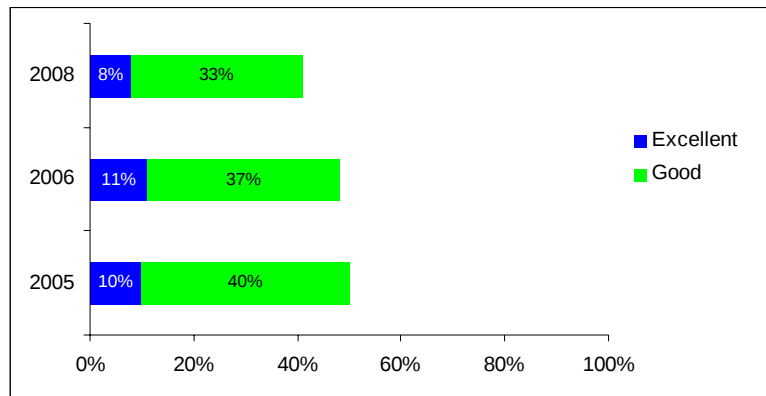
Figure 1: Quality of Education Received by Students (Q10)



Not All See Schools as Good Value

Residents see quality in their schools but are less sure about whether the high cost of local schools represents good value. When asked about the educational quality delivered by their schools in return for local taxes, only 41% of residents rate this as good or excellent value. This represents a clear decline since 2005 when 50% rated local school value as good or excellent.

Figure 2: Value of Local Education (Q11)

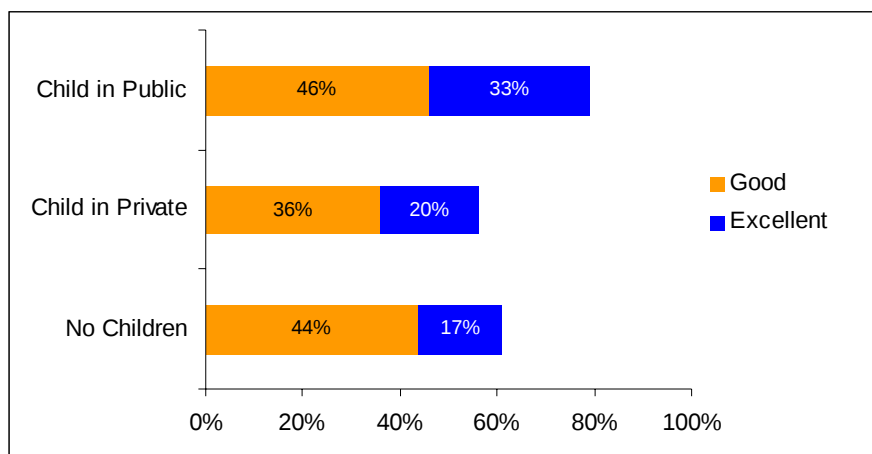


Parents Satisfied with Schools; See Greater Value

Parents with a child in the public schools are most satisfied with the quality of teachers-- 82% of parents rate teachers as excellent or good. They rate more highly than non-parents the quality of education in public schools – 80% of parents rate educational quality as excellent or good compared to 61% of residents without a school-age child. Parents are more likely than those without school-age children to believe that a high school diploma means that a child has learned the basics (72% vs. 58%). Parents also rate school administration more positively than non-parents: 62% of parents rate administration as good or excellent compared to 44% of those without school-age children.

Parents with a child in the public schools system are also somewhat more likely to rate the schools as good or excellent value (51%) than those without school-age children (37%). When taken together, these findings suggest that current involvement with the local schools increases support for them, although there is still a sizeable minority of parents (46%) who see the schools as fair or poor value.

Figure 3: Quality of Education by Parental Status (Q10)

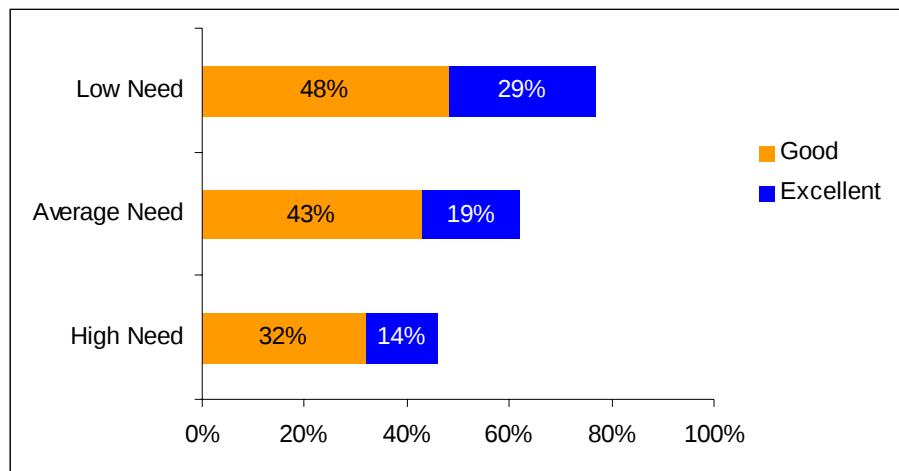


Not All Served Well

Although levels of satisfaction with local schools are generally high, they also vary across Long Island. There are clear differences in satisfaction with schools among residents of school districts rated as areas of high-, average-, and low-need by the State Education Department (SED). High-need school districts are characterized by higher poverty rates and a much higher concentration of minority students than either average or low need districts. In 2007, 41% of students in the high-need school districts were Black, 44% were Latino, and only 13% were White. In contrast, 81% of students in low-need areas are White, 4% are Black, and 9% are Latino. Low-need districts are also characterized by worse student outcomes. For example, in 2007 only 46% of students in high-need areas passed the 8th grade math test compared to 72% in average, and 84% in low need districts. (A further explanation of this designation is available in the Methodology section of this report.)

Perhaps not surprisingly, residents of high-need districts are less satisfied with their schools than those in low-need districts. There is an almost 20 point gap in the rated quality of education received by students in high- and low-need districts with 46% of residents of high-need districts rating the quality of education in their district as excellent or good compared to 77% of those in low-need districts. This is only slightly higher than in 2006 when 42% of residents in high-need school districts rated the quality of education received by students in the local public schools as excellent or good.

Figure 4: Quality of Education by Level of District Need (Q10)



Many fewer residents of high- than low-need districts rate the quality of teachers as excellent or good (75% in low need compared to 54% in high need). Residents of high-need school districts also view local education as much poorer value than residents of low-need areas. Twenty-nine percent of those in high-need districts rate the value of local public schools as excellent or good compared to 37% of those in average-need districts, and 47% in low-need areas. There are also modest differences in the rated quality of school administration by level of school district need. Fifty-two percent of residents in low-need, 49% of those in average-need, but only 39% of those in high-need districts rate their school administration as excellent or good.

Blacks and Whites differ most sharply in the perceived quality of education received by students in their local schools. 70% of Whites, 62% of Latinos, and only 48% of Blacks rate local educational quality as good or excellent. But Blacks' lower rating of educational quality is largely explained by the fact that they tend to live in high-need school districts. In further multivariate analyses (not included in this report), need level of the school district fully explained lower ratings of school quality among Blacks.

When school districts are broken down into those with a low, medium and high percentage of students who are eligible for a government-provided free lunch – an indicator of family wealth levels -- similar trends in satisfaction are observed. Residents in school districts with the highest percent of students eligible for a free lunch show the lowest levels of satisfaction with teachers, educational quality, and give a lower rating to school value. Overall, residents of high-need school districts and those with the highest poverty levels are less satisfied with their schools than residents of other areas.

When it comes to public education on Long Island, residents who live in school districts with a largely poor and minority student population are markedly less satisfied with the quality of education provided for children in their area. This lack of satisfaction stands out dramatically on Long Island, an area characterized by good to excellent schools where most residents complain about costs but not school quality.

PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL INEQUITIES

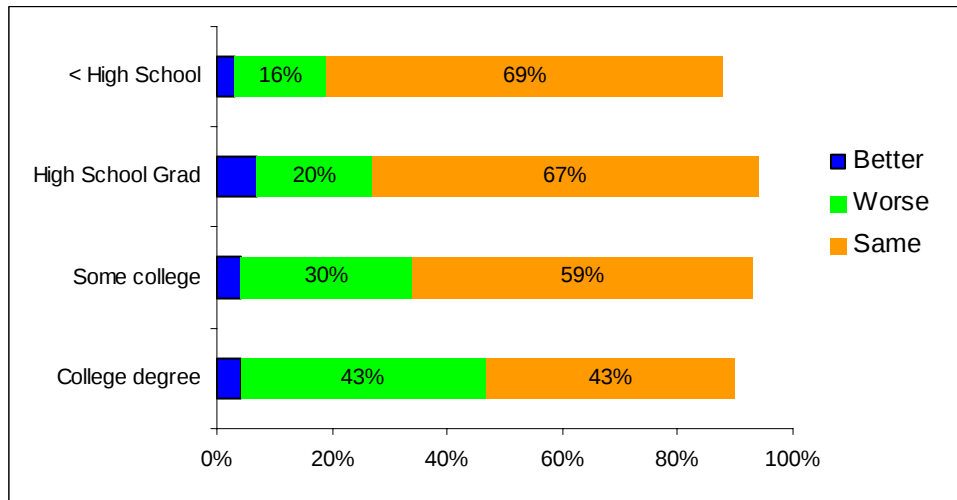
Majority Unaware of Educational Inequities

The current *Long Island Index* makes clear that local residents are not equally satisfied with the quality of their local schools. State data confirm the educational reality underlying such differing satisfaction levels. High-need school districts, with a predominantly Black and Latino student body, have far worse educational outcomes than average- or low-need districts. Moreover, evidence presented in the 2009 *Long Island Index* demonstrates marked disparities in school spending by level of community affluence, ranging from under \$18,000 per student in schools in the lowest 20% of communities by affluence compared to over \$25,000 per student in the top 20% most affluent communities.

Nonetheless, when Long Islanders are asked about educational inequities across school districts, a majority of local residents are unaware of the problem. Fifty-seven percent of local residents believe that a child from a low-income family receives the same or better educational quality as a child from a middle-income family. Only three in ten think that a child from a low-income family receives a worse education. This perception of broad educational equality across economic groups is held by a majority of Whites (57%) and Latinos (61%) but a minority of Blacks (39%).

A belief that students from different socio-economic backgrounds receive the same quality of education varies more markedly however with local residents' education level. Only 16% of Long Islanders without a high school diploma believe that a child from a low-income family receives a worse education than a middle-class child. In contrast, 43% of those with a college degree perceive educational inequities based on a student's economic background. This suggests that better informed local residents are aware of local educational disparities to some degree whereas less well educated individuals require more information about the problem.

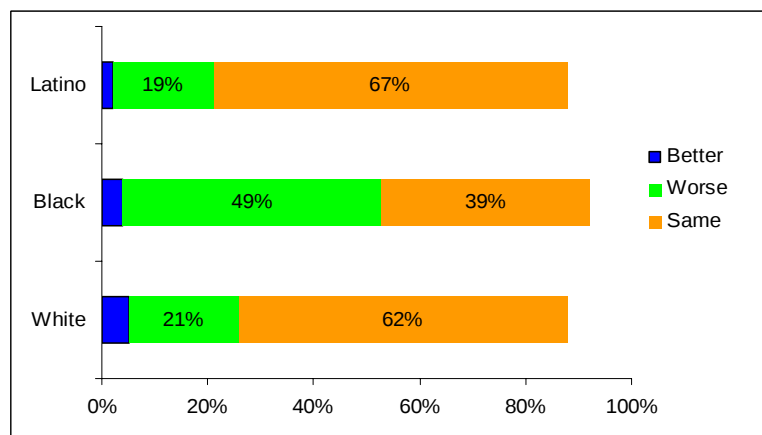
Figure 5: Perceived Equality of Education for Low versus Middle-Income Students (Q13)



Majority Reject Existence of Racial Inequality

Local residents are even more inclined to reject the existence of racial than income-based disparities in educational quality. Overall, 61% of local residents believe that a Black or Latino student receives the same or better education than a White child. Sixty-two percent of White residents and 67% of Latino residents believe Black and Latino children receive the same quality of education as Whites compared to 39% of Blacks. Unlike perceived economic inequities, better and less well educated residents are equally likely to deny the existence of racial disparities in educational quality. There are few differences by education background in the perceived quality of education received by White, Black and Latino students. Fifty-four percent of those with a college degree and 57% of those who lack a high school diploma believe educational quality on Long Island does not differ by student race or ethnicity.

Figure 6: Rated Educational Equality for Black/Latino versus White Students (Q14)



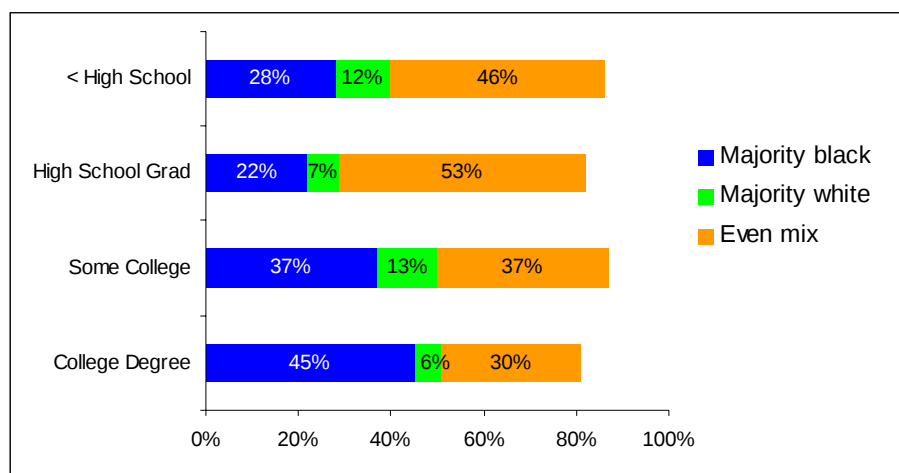
Modest Awareness of School Segregation

There are further racial differences in the perceived experiences of Black students on Long Island. Overall, Long Islanders hold mixed views on the racial composition of schools attended by local Black students. Four in ten think Black students attend schools that are a mix of Black and White students. Just over a third (34%) believe that Black students attend majority Black schools. In reality, most Black and Latino students attend schools in which the majority of students are Black or Latino. For example, in the 2005-2006 school year half

of Black students attended schools in which more than 95% of all students were non-White. For Latinos, half attended schools in which more than 88% of the students were non-White.

Perceptions of school racial composition vary by residents' race or ethnicity. Forty-seven percent of Black Long Islanders believe that most Black students on Long Island attend majority Black districts. In comparison, just over a third of Whites (35%) and under a quarter (23%) of Latinos believe this. Better educated Long Islanders are more likely to perceive local schools as racially segregated. Forty-five percent of local residents with a college degree said that most Blacks attended majority Black districts compared to only 28% of those without a high school diploma. Once again, less well educated local residents are more poorly informed and would likely benefit the most from information about the reality of school inequities on Long Island.

Figure 7: Perceived School Segregation by Respondent Education Level (Q15)

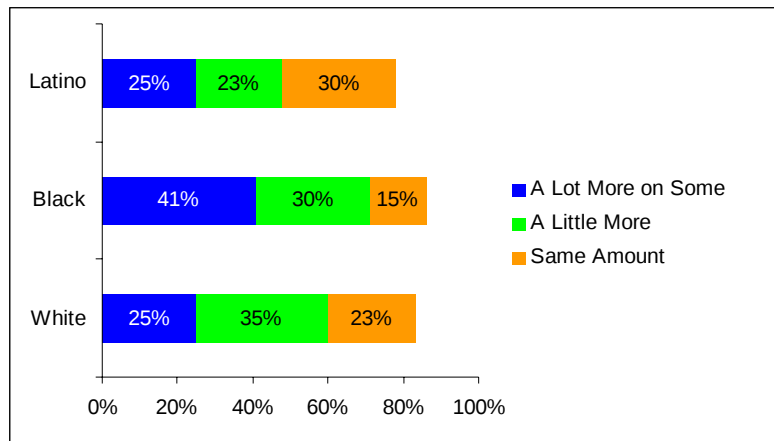


Awareness of Disparities in School Spending

Most Long Islanders perceive some degree of inequity in local school spending. Thirty-three percent of local residents believe a little more of local, state, and federal tax money is spent on some students and a little less on others and 26% believe a lot more is spent on some and a lot less on others. This results in almost 60% of Long Islanders who see local school spending as unequal. The reality is one of unequal school expenditures. As reported earlier, communities in the lowest 20th percentile of affluence spend roughly \$8,000 less per pupil than the most affluent 20th percentile.

Perceived inequity in school spending varies most markedly by race. There are differences across racial groups in the percent who believe the same is spent on each student (roughly 15% of Blacks, 30% of Latinos and 24% of Whites). 41% of Blacks believe that a lot more is spent on some students than others, compared to 25% of Latinos and 25% of Whites who believe this. Overall, a majority of Blacks, Whites and Latinos acknowledge that school spending is unequal but Blacks see differences in spending as more inequitable than do Whites and Latinos.

Figure 8: Perceived Inequities in School Spending (Q16)



Overall, Long Islanders are split on the question of local educational equality. Roughly 47% rate it as somewhat or very equal compared to 45% who see it as somewhat or very unequal. Some of these differing perceptions are political in nature: 57% of conservatives see school quality as equal compared to 41% of liberals. Perceived educational equality also varies with age, education, and race. Long Islanders aged 65 and older see public schools as more equal (56%) than do younger residents aged 18-29 (46%). Less well educated residents with less than a high school diploma rate school quality as more equitable (57%) than those with a college degree (38%). Whites are more likely than Blacks to see quality as equal (48% of Whites compared to 34% of Blacks).

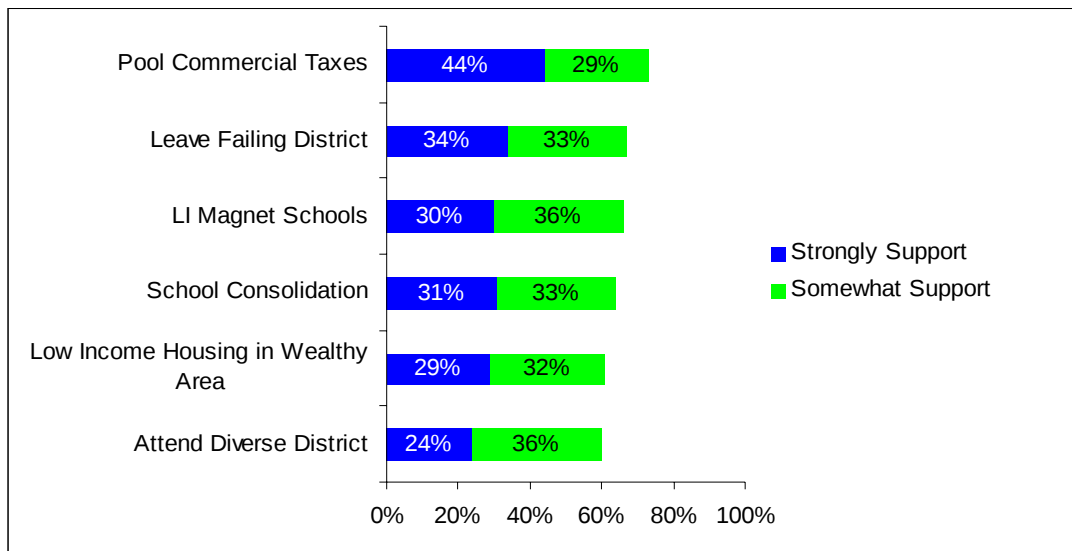
SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY POLICIES

A Majority of Long Islanders Support Solutions to School Inequities

Long Islanders are split in their awareness of educational inequities and segregation. Less well educated and older residents are much less likely to acknowledge these differences than young and better educated Long Islanders. Not surprisingly, this results in mixed support for solutions to address local educational inequities, although Long Islanders favor a number of solutions to educational inequities on average.

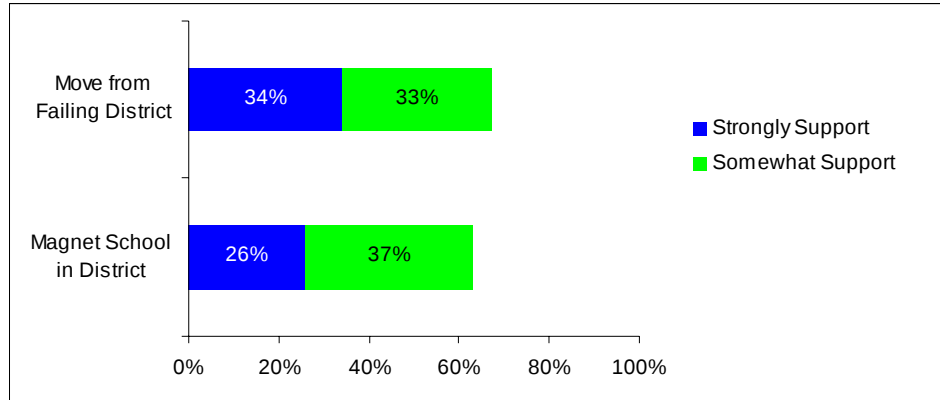
The most popular solution is to pool commercial property taxes across school districts. Almost three in four local residents support pooling such taxes so that they are distributed evenly across school districts. Most other solutions to school inequities were supported by roughly six in ten Long Island residents. Sixty-six percent supported the creation of magnet schools, 67% favored allowing a limited number of students in failing districts to move to adjacent districts if there is sufficient space. A comparable percentage (64%) supported school consolidation to allow students of all racial backgrounds to attend similar schools. Sixty-one percent of local residents supported the development of housing for lower income families in wealthier areas to allow their children to attend better schools. And 60% supported giving a limited number of White families the option of sending their child to a more diverse school district.

Figure 9: Support for Solutions to School Inequity (Q19, Q21, Q22, Q24, Q26, Q27)



Local residents even supported such solutions when they would occur within their own district. Sixty-four percent supported the movement of students from failing districts to their own; and 63% supported the creation of a magnet school within their own district.

Figure 10: Support for Solutions in Own School District (Q20, Q23)



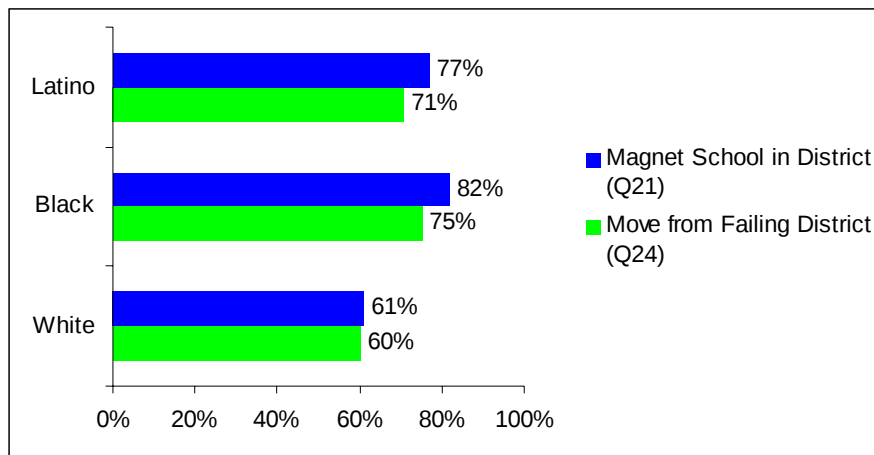
Racial Differences in Support of Solutions to School Inequities

Black and Latino local residents are more supportive than White Long Islanders of action to address school equities. Between 75% and 80% of Black residents somewhat or strongly support magnet schools, school consolidation, allowing children in failing districts to change schools, allowing White parents to send their children to more diverse schools outside their district, and encouraging the development of housing for lower income families in good school districts. In contrast, support for these various solutions is weaker among Whites, ranging from 57% to 64%. Latinos express stronger support than Whites for such solutions, but their support is not as strong as observed among Blacks, ranging from 62% to 77%. Whites, Blacks and Latinos are most supportive of pooling commercial property taxes, but even here Blacks are more supportive (87%) than Latinos (80%) or Whites (69%).

Table 1: Somewhat or Strongly Favor Solutions to School Inequities

	White	Black	Latino
Creation of magnet schools for talented students from different school districts (Q19)	63%	76%	75%
School consolidation to include diverse students in the same district (Q21)	61%	82%	77%
Allow children in failing districts to attend better schools nearby (Q22)	64%	79%	76%
Allow White parents to send children to diverse schools outside their district (Q24)	58%	77%	62%
Encourage housing for low and middle-income families in wealthier areas so that their children can attend better schools (Q26)	57%	84%	70%
Pool commercial property taxes across districts (Q27)	69%	87%	80%

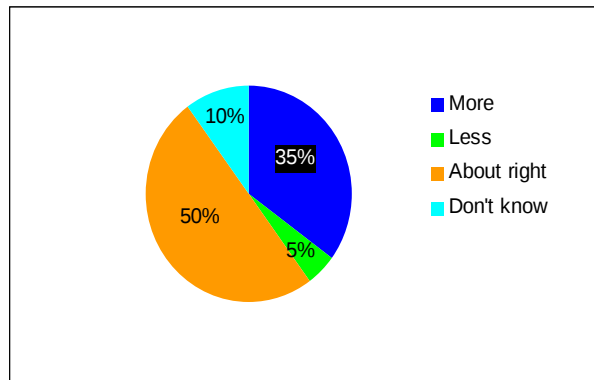
Overall, it is hardly surprising to find that Black and Latino Long Islanders, who may have the most to gain from increased school equality, are also most supportive of a range of policy solutions designed to reduce current educational inequities.

Figure 11: Somewhat or Strongly Support Solutions in Own School District (Q20, Q23)

Support for Status Quo on School Integration

Long Islanders' modest support for solutions to racial inequities in schools is tempered, however, by views on the need for such action. When asked whether more or less should be done to integrate the local public schools, roughly a third (35%) said more, 5% said less, and the majority (50%) felt that current efforts were about right. This is consistent with findings reported earlier that a majority of Long Islanders believe the current educational system is reasonably equitable. Local residents would likely have to be convinced of the magnitude of local inequities before providing strong support to efforts designed to integrate local school districts.

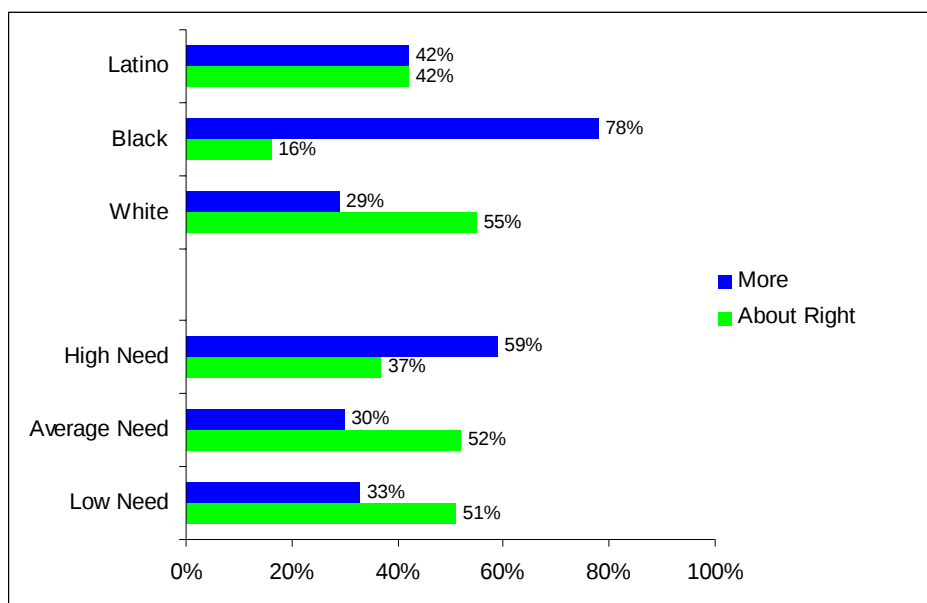
Figure 12: Need for Action to Integrate Schools (Q25)



In general, younger, less affluent, less well educated, politically liberal, Black, and Latino residents and those in high-need school districts were most supportive of a range of solutions to educational inequality on Long Island. For example, 76% of residents aged 18 to 34 supported the creation of magnet schools on Long Island, and 73% of this age group supported magnet schools within their own school district. In contrast, 57% of residents aged 65 or older supported magnet schools, and only 48% supported them in their school district. In general, younger Long Islanders aged 18 to 34 were somewhat more supportive than older age groups of all proposals to deal with school inequities. 82% of those in low income households earning under \$35,000 per year supported school consolidation compared to 58% of those in households earning over \$100,000 per year.

Similar differences emerge in the perceived need for more action to integrate local schools. Racial differences are enormous. Seventy-eight percent of Blacks and 42% of Latinos believe more needs to be done to integrate the schools, compared to 29% of Whites. A third of those in low-need but almost 60% of those in high-need school districts believe more action is needed on school integration.

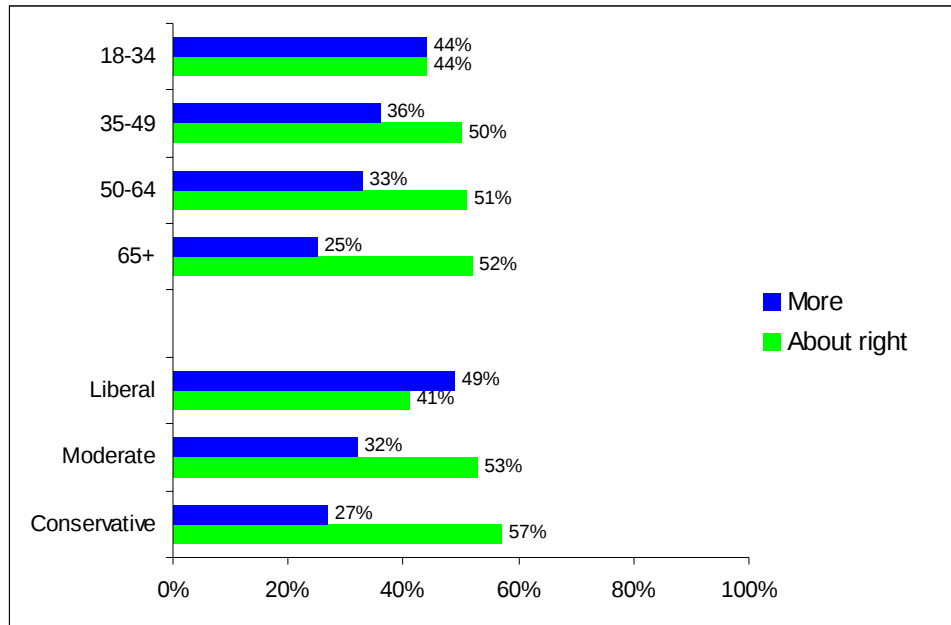
Figure 13: Need for Action to Integrate Schools (Q25)



There are differences in the perceived need for action by age and political viewpoint. Forty-four percent of those aged 18 to 34 think more should be done to integrate public schools compared to only 25% of those aged 65 or older. Political differences also surface on this

issue; 49% of liberals see the need for more action on school integration compared to only 27% of conservatives.

Figure 14: Need for Action to Integrate Schools (Q25)



Few White Long Islanders Attended Racially Diverse Schools

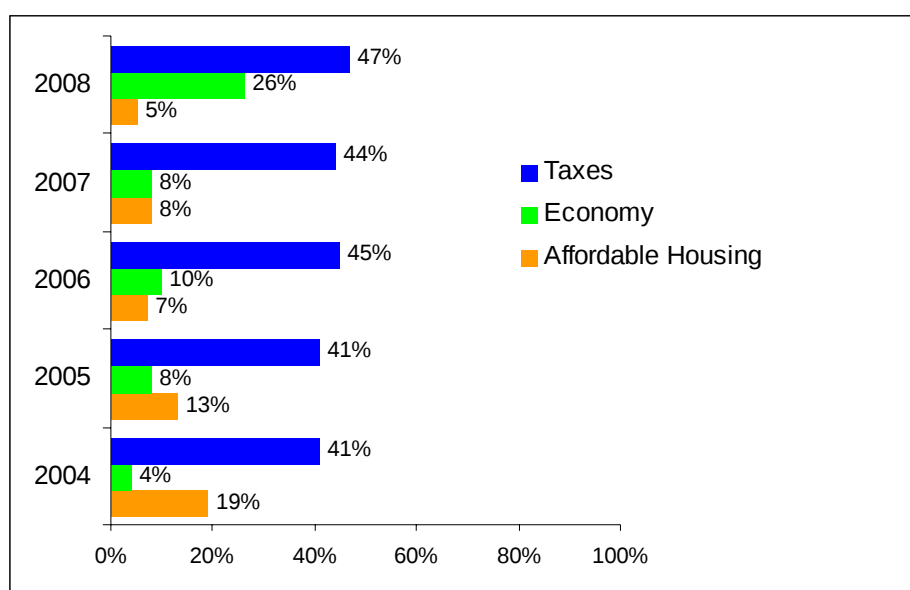
Long Islanders' educational experiences matched the current reality of marked school segregation. Overall, relatively few White Long Islanders (8%) had attended a school that was more than 50% non-White. In contrast, 63% of Black and 46% of Latino Long Islanders had attended a school in which 50% or more of the students shared their race or ethnicity. A small percent of Whites (2%), Blacks (6%) and Latinos (5%) had been bused to school at some point. A handful of White students (2%), and only slightly more Black (10%) and Latino (6%) Long Islanders had been sent to a school that was not closest to their home because it was more racially diverse.

TRACKING LONG ISLAND OPINION

Rising Concern about Taxes and the Local Economy

Local residents have been deeply concerned about high local taxes in all recent *Long Island Index* polls, but the level of concern about taxes and the economy has risen in response to the bleak national economic outlook. When asked about the most important problem facing residents of their county, just under a half (47%) of all Long Islanders mention high local taxes. This represents an increase over the last year when 44% named taxes as the most important problem, and almost 8% increase over 2005 (when taxes were named by 41%). General economic worries, including jobs and the cost of living, come in second place and are mentioned by one in four (26%) local residents; this represents a very substantial jump from 2007 when only 8% mentioned the same economic factors. When taken together, three in four local residents nominate an economic concern (including taxes) as the major local problem. This far exceeds 2007, when only 52% mentioned taxes or the economy.

Figure 15: Most Important Local Problem (Q2)



When asked directly to rate the severity of the tax problem, 83% of Long Island residents regard it as either an extremely or very serious problem, up 6 percentage points from 2004 (77%), and two points in the last year (from 81%). All residents view taxes as a serious problem but the perceived severity of the problem varies somewhat. Forty-eight percent of homeowners rated taxes as an extremely serious problem compared to 37% of non-homeowners, although over 80% of both groups viewed taxes as an extremely or very serious problem. Members of middle and higher income households are more likely than members of low income households, earning under \$35,000, to rate taxes as an extremely serious problem (31% of those earning under \$35,000 compared to more than 45% in all other income groups).

Long Islanders Divided on Whether Things Are Heading in the Right or Wrong Direction

A slightly greater number of Long Islanders say their county is heading in the right (47%) than wrong (43%) direction. This indicates a worsening view of local life since 2004 when 53% said their county was heading in the right direction. Perceptions are more positive in Suffolk than Nassau: 49% believe things are heading in the right direction in Suffolk compared to 45% in Nassau. Long Islanders aged between 35 and 49 hold the most negative view with 53% saying that their county is heading in the wrong direction. This is the age group most likely to have school age children. In contrast the youngest (aged between 18 and 34) and oldest residents (65 and up) hold the most sanguine view of local life with 56% of both age groups saying that their county was heading in the right direction.

Young People Moving

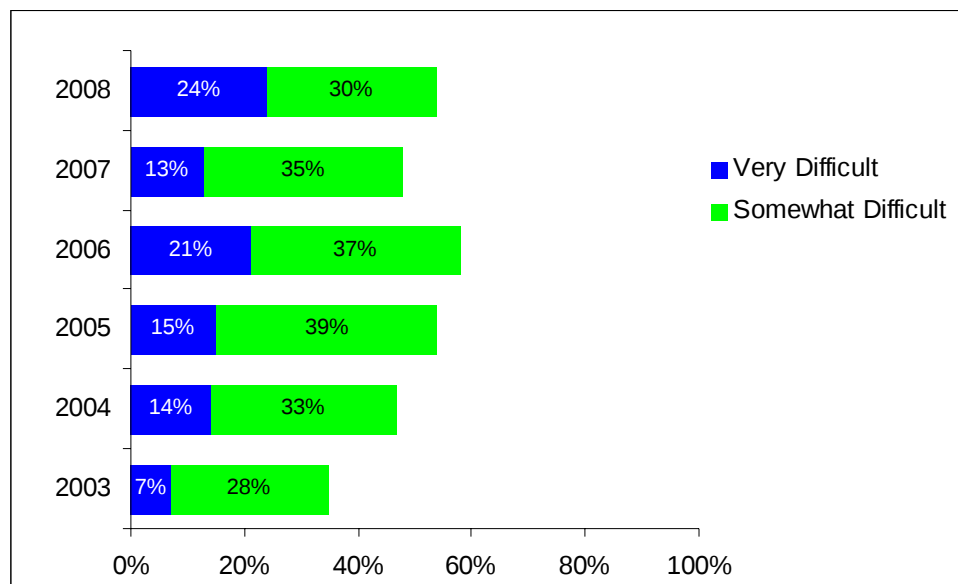
There is continued concern that young people will be forced to move away from Long Island because of the high cost of living. Overall, 77% of Long Islanders view this as an extremely or very serious problem, comparable to levels of concern expressed by local residents over the last few years. In addition, 76% of local residents are somewhat or very concerned that members of their own family will be forced to move away from Long Island. These levels have also been consistently high in *Long Island Index* polls conducted since 2004. Those aged between 35 and 64 are most concerned: roughly 80% indicate they are somewhat or very concerned about family members moving, compared to 63% of those aged 65 or older.

This concern is felt more acutely by those in lower income households; roughly 60% of those in households earning less than \$60,000 a year are very concerned that family members will be forced to leave compared to roughly 4 in ten of those in households earning more than \$100,000.

Housing Costs Remain High

Over half (53%) of all Long Islanders continue to report that it is somewhat or very difficult to meet their monthly rent or mortgage payments. This is slightly lower than 2006 when 58% reported that they had difficulty meeting their housing costs. But the total masks an increase in the number of local residents who say that they find it *very difficult* to meet their costs. Roughly one in four (23%) say this, the highest percentage yet in the *Long Island Index* series.

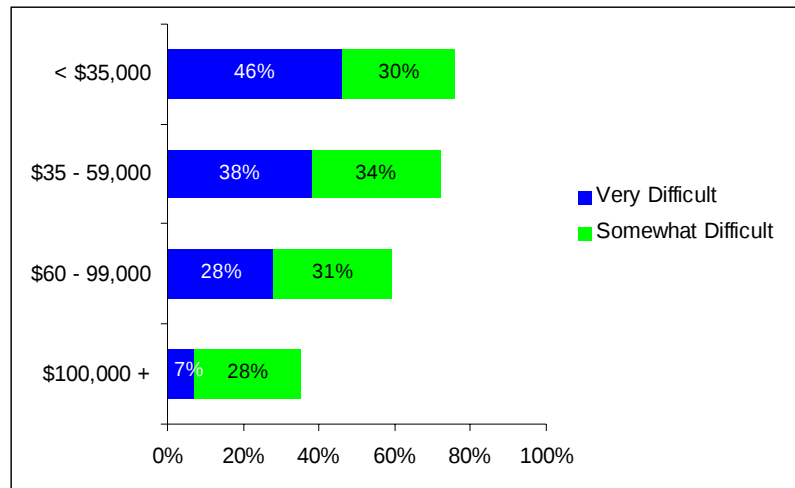
Figure 16: Difficulty Meeting Housing Costs (Q5)



Overall, those in the middle income range have experienced increasing difficulty in meeting their housing costs over the last year. In 2007, 21% of those in middle income range households (\$35-\$59,000) said it was very difficult to meet their housing costs. In the current *Index*, almost 40% of those in households earning between \$35,000 and \$59,000 report this, a dramatic increase. Only the highest income households, earning over \$100,000, are immune from housing cost woes; just over a third (35%) report that they have any difficulty meeting their housing costs.

The problem is especially severe for non-homeowners of whom 68% reported it was somewhat or very difficult to meet their monthly housing costs. The difficulties faced by non-homeowners have remained at these high levels since 2004.

Figure 17: Difficulty Meeting Housing Costs by Household Income (Q5)



Thinking of Leaving

A majority (50%) of local residents continue to say they are somewhat or very likely to move to an area with lower housing costs and property taxes in the next five years. This is the same percentage as in 2007, and a slight decline from 2005 when 54% thought they were likely to move. The desire to leave Long Island remains highest among younger people aged 18-34, 69% of whom say they are somewhat or very likely to leave in the next 5 years. Seniors are the least likely to say they will move; only 27% of those aged 65 and older thought they would move in the next five years. Members of low and medium income households were more likely to say they will leave than those in affluent households. Among residents of households with an annual income of less than \$35,000, 52% say they are likely to move in the next five years, 68% of those in households earning between \$35,000 and \$59,000 say they are likely to move, but only 43% of residents in households earning \$100,000 or more think they are likely to move. Finally, more Blacks and Latinos than Whites indicate that they are likely to move away from the area. Seventy percent of Blacks, and roughly 55% of Latinos say they are very or somewhat likely to move versus 46% of all Whites.

Long Island a Good Place to Live

Over 8 in 10 residents see Long Island as a good or excellent place to live. Over a third (36%) view it as excellent and another 45% see it as a good place to live. These numbers have changed very little from 2006. This positive view of Long Island is shared almost uniformly across all education, income, gender, and racial groups. Blacks rate Long Island somewhat less positively than Whites or Latinos; but 74% of Blacks still see it as a good or excellent place to live.

APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY

The Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research conducted this survey by telephone between September 15 and November 15, 2008. A list-assisted method of random-digit-dialing (RDD) was used to obtain phone numbers in the sample. Within selected households, individuals 18 years and over were selected at random for participation. Up to 7 contact attempts were made at each household phone number. In order to assure a representative sample, all households and individuals who were initially unwilling to participate in the survey were contacted again, and an attempt was made to persuade them to participate.

A total of 813 interviews were conducted in the general Long Island population, with 401 completed interviews with residents of Nassau County and 412 completed interviews with residents of Suffolk County. In addition, two separate oversamples were drawn, and interviews were conducted with 202 Black and 200 Latino residents of Long Island.

The results for Nassau and Suffolk Counties were tabulated both separately and jointly. The young adult oversamples of Long Island residents were included in all comparisons of responses by age.

Margin of error for the Long Island sample is +/- 3.4%.

The results were weighted on gender, age, educational attainment, Latino/Latino origin and race/ethnicity, based on the 2007 U.S. Census American Community Survey county level data. Weighting was done using an iterative process that has been developed to estimate joint weights for any number of demographic variables for which population percentages are known only individually, not jointly. The oversamples and main sample were combined and the oversamples underweighted based on raking the data to match overall demographic percentages to arrive at an overall estimate of the Long Island population.

Level of school district need is calculated by dividing a district's estimated poverty percent by its combined wealth ratio. School districts are then divided into 6 categories, three of which are relevant to Long Island (high need suburban, average need, and low need). Wealth statistics are based on a combination of property values and household income weighted by the number of pupils, which is also adjusted for students with special needs; poverty is based on the number of school-age children living below the federal poverty level (State Education Department 2004 *New York: The State of Learning. Statistical Profiles of Public School Districts*). There are ten high need districts on Long Island (Hempstead, Roosevelt, Freeport, Westbury, Amityville, Wyandanch, William Floyd, Brentwood, Central Islip, and Copiague).

Frequency Questionnaire

Hello, my name is (Interviewer's name) and I am calling from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. We are conducting a study regarding several quality of life issues here on Long Island.

Your telephone number was randomly dialed by a computer. I would like to talk to the person in your household who is over 18 and had the most recent birthday.

This survey only takes about 10 - 15 minutes to complete. We will skip over any questions you don't want to answer, and all answers will be kept confidential. You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to.

For your information, the study is funded by the Rauch Foundation. With your permission, let's begin...

NOTE: Percentages are based on the total of the 813 respondents in the main sample, the oversample of 202 Black respondents and 200 Latino respondents for a total of 1215 respondents.

Question Q01

For the first couple of questions we would like you to think about the OVERALL condition of your County. Generally speaking, do you think things in Nassau/Suffolk County today are headed in the right direction or in the wrong direction?

RESPONDENTS	Total %	White	Black	Latino
Right direction	47	46	51	52
Wrong direction	43	46	38	29
Don't know	9	8	9	18
Refused	0	0	1	1

[Note: Due to rounding, some totals may not add up to 100%]

Question Q02

Overall, what do you think is the MOST important problem facing residents of Nassau/Suffolk County today?
[Open-ended question, with recoded responses]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Economy/Costs of Living/Jobs/Poverty	26	26	21	31
Taxes/Property Taxes	47	53	31	27
Lack of Adequate and Affordable Housing	5	5	11	0
Environmental Issues	1	1	0	1
Roads/Traffic/Transportation	2	2	1	2
Education/Schools	2	1	4	5
Gangs/Violence/Crime/Law Enforcement/Safety	4	1	15	13
Overcrowding/Overpopulation/Overbuilding	1	1	1	0
Government/Corruption/Services	2	3	1	2
Immigrants/Illegal Aliens	3	3	4	2
Other	2	1	5	2
Don't know	5	4	6	14
Refused	0	0	1	1

Question Q03

In your view, how serious a problem are high property taxes in Nassau/Suffolk County?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Extremely serious	45	48	50	30
Very serious	38	39	30	41
Somewhat serious	12	10	12	19
Not very serious	2	2	2	1
Not at all serious	1	0	1	4
Don't know	2	1	5	3

Question Q04

[In your view], how serious is the problem of young people moving away from Nassau/Suffolk County because of the high cost of living?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Extremely serious	43	46	47	28
Very serious	34	35	29	35
Somewhat serious	15	13	16	19
Not very serious	4	2	6	8
Not at all serious	2	2	2	3
Don't know	2	1	1	7

Question Q05

In an average month, how difficult is it for you and your family living with you to pay the rent or mortgage? Would you say it is...

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Very difficult	24	19	30	44
Somewhat difficult	30	29	34	28
Not very difficult	19	20	12	14
Not at all difficult	26	30	21	12
Don't know	1	1	2	2
Refused	1	1	1	0

Question Q06

How concerned are you that the high cost of housing will force members of your family to move out of Nassau/Suffolk County?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Very concerned	50	51	51	46
Somewhat concerned	26	25	25	33
Not very concerned	11	10	11	10
Not at all concerned	12	12	12	11
Don't know	1	1	1	0
Refused	0	1	0	0

Question Q07

How likely is that you will move out of Nassau/Suffolk County to an area with lower housing costs and property taxes in the next 5 years?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Very likely	26	23	45	29
Somewhat likely	24	23	25	26
Not very likely	18	19	13	14
Not at all likely	30	33	16	28
Don't know	2	2	1	4

Question Q08

Turning now to public schools, how would you rate the quality of teachers in your local school district?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Excellent	29	27	19	35
Good	40	42	36	36
Fair	13	12	22	14
Poor	4	3	11	2
Don't know	15	16	12	12
Refused	1	1	0	1

Question Q09

How would you rate the quality of school administration in your local school district?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Excellent	14	13	15	23
Good	35	35	27	37
Fair	23	23	26	21
Poor	12	13	19	5
Don't know	15	17	13	12
Refused	0	0	0	1

Question Q10

How would you rate the quality of education received by students in your local school district?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Excellent	23	23	17	24
Good	44	47	31	38
Fair	16	14	26	23
Poor	4	3	13	4
Don't know	13	13	13	10
Refused	0	0	0	1

Question Q11

Please think about the quality of education provided by your local schools in return for the local property taxes. Would you say that the value local residents get back from property taxes in terms of quality of education is ...

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Excellent	8	8	7	10
Good	33	33	20	34
Fair	32	32	39	36
Poor	17	18	22	10
Don't know	10	9	12	10

Question Q12

Which statement is more accurate for the students graduating from your local public schools?

A high school diploma is no guarantee that the typical student has learned the basics. OR A high school diploma means that the typical student has at least learned the basics.

[FIRST TWO RESPONSE OPTIONS ROTATED]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
A high school diploma is no guarantee that the typical student has learned the basics.	31	32	34	24
A high school diploma means that the typical student has at least learned the basics	62	61	61	66
Don't know / Refused	7	6	5	11

Question Q13

In general, do you think a child from a LOW-INCOME family in Nassau/Suffolk County receives better, worse, or the same quality of education in the local public schools as a child from a MIDDLE-INCOME family?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Better	5	4	5	6
Worse	30	30	48	26
The Same	57	57	39	61
Don't know	8	8	9	7

Question Q14

In general, do you think a child from a BLACK or LATINO family in Nassau/Suffolk County receives better, worse, or the same quality of education in the local public schools as a child from a White family?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Better	4	5	4	2
Worse	23	21	49	19
The Same	61	62	39	67
Don't know	11	12	9	12
Refused	1	1	0	0

Question Q15

Do you think that most Black students on Long Island attend public schools which are majority Black, majority White, or that they attend schools which are an even mix of Black and White students.

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Majority Black	34	35	47	23
Majority White	9	9	9	7
Even mix of Black and White	40	37	34	58
Don't know	16	18	10	11
Refused	1	1	0	1

Question Q16

Which of the following statements best describes the amount of local, state, and federal tax money spent on each student attending public school in Nassau/Suffolk County?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Roughly the same amount is spent on each child in the county	24	23	15	30
A little more money is spent on some students and a little less on others	33	35	30	23
A lot more money is spent on some students and a lot less is spent on others	26	25	41	25
Don't know	17	17	14	21
Refused	0	0	0	1

Question Q17

Would you describe the quality of education for students attending public schools on Long Island as very equal across schools and school districts, somewhat equal, somewhat unequal, or very unequal?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Very equal	9	8	6	16
Somewhat equal	38	39	29	35
Somewhat unequal	31	32	37	23
Very unequal	14	12	26	17
Don't know	8	8	3	9

People have different views on integrating children from different economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds in the public schools. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Question Q18

Children who attend schools with a mix of students from different ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds are more prepared for the diverse settings of college and the workplace than children who attend segregated schools.

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly agree	44	43	63	37
Somewhat agree	35	36	18	35
Somewhat disagree	11	11	9	14
Strongly disagree	5	6	6	5
Don't know	4	4	4	9
Refused	1	1	0	0

There is some evidence that Black and Latino students attending Long Island public schools have lower levels of educational achievement than White, Anglo students. Several ideas have been put forward as a way to deal with this situation.

Question Q19

To what extent do you favor or oppose the creation of magnet schools that bring together talented students from different school districts on Long Island to provide in-depth instruction in science, math, or the arts?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly favor	30	26	45	40
Somewhat favor	36	37	31	35
Somewhat oppose	17	18	13	10
Strongly oppose	11	11	7	7
Don't know	7	7	4	8
Refused	1	1	0	1

Question Q20

To what extent would you favor or oppose the creation of a magnet school in your school district that would attract students from across Long Island, with some extra funds provided by the state?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly favor	26	23	45	33
Somewhat favor	37	36	35	35
Somewhat oppose	15	17	8	12
Strongly oppose	15	17	8	9
Don't know	7	7	4	11
Refused	1	1	0	1

Question Q21

To what extent do you favor or oppose the consolidation of school districts if it would help to include children of all racial and ethnic backgrounds in the same school district?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly favor	31	27	55	39
Somewhat favor	33	34	27	38
Somewhat oppose	13	15	8	6
Strongly oppose	16	18	7	9
Don't know	7	7	3	7
Refused	1	0	0	1

Question Q22

To what extent do you favor or oppose offering a limited number of children in failing school districts the chance to attend better schools in nearby districts where space is available?

[IF NECESSARY: in other parts of the country, no more than 100 Black and Latino students have been transferred to a school district.]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly favor	34	29	57	41
Somewhat favor	33	35	22	35
Somewhat oppose	14	16	11	6
Strongly oppose	13	15	8	7
Don't know	6	6	3	10
Refused	1	1	0	2

Question Q23

If there was enough room, how strongly would you support or oppose allowing some students from a nearby failing school district to attend schools in your school district?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly support	31	26	46	34
Somewhat support	33	34	29	37
Somewhat oppose	11	12	10	6
Strongly oppose	19	21	12	12
Don't know	6	6	3	10
Refused	1	1	0	2

Question Q24

To what extent do you favor or oppose offering a limited number of White parents the option of sending their child to a more racially diverse school outside their school district, including a magnet school?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly favor	24	21	47	22
Somewhat favor	36	37	30	40
Somewhat oppose	15	16	9	14
Strongly oppose	16	17	11	10
Don't know	8	8	4	12
Refused	1	1	0	2

Question Q25

On balance, do you think more should be done to integrate public schools on Long Island along racial and ethnic lines, less should be done, or are the current efforts about right?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
More	35	29	78	42
Less	5	6	2	2
About right	50	55	16	42
Don't know	10	10	4	12
Refused	1	1	1	2

Question Q26

To what extent do you favor or oppose encouraging the development of housing for lower-income families in middle class and wealthier neighborhoods so that their children can attend better schools.

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Strongly favor	29	22	61	43
Somewhat favor	32	35	23	27
Somewhat oppose	17	18	8	14
Strongly oppose	16	19	7	10
Don't know	5	5	1	6
Refused	1	1	0	1

Question Q27

Some school districts have a greater amount of money than others to spend on students because they contain more commercial property, which is taxed at a higher rate than residences. To what extent do you favor or oppose pooling commercial property taxes, so that they are distributed evenly across all school districts in your county?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Favor strongly	44	41	60	48
Favor somewhat	29	28	27	32
Oppose somewhat	11	13	3	5
Oppose strongly	10	12	7	5
Don't know	5	5	3	8
Refused	1	1	1	2

Question Q28

Are you Latino or Latino/Latina?

	Total
Yes	14
No	85
Refused	1

Question Q29

Do you consider yourself White, Black, Asian or something else?

	Total
White	90
Black/Black	2
Latino/Latino	1
Asian	2
Pacific Islander	0
Native American or Alaskan Native	1
Black and another category	1
Don't know	1
Refused	3

Question Q30

In the elementary, middle, and high schools that you attended as a child, roughly what percentage of the students were of the same race or ethnicity as you?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Between 90% and 100%	45	54	24	20
Between 75% and 90%	19	20	18	7
Between 50% and 75%	16	16	21	20
Between 25% and 50%	7	5	12	16
Or fewer than 25%	9	4	20	21
Don't know	3	2	4	12
Refused	1	0	1	5

Question Q31

When YOU were in grades K through 12, were you ever bused for racial reasons to a school that was not the one closest to your home?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Yes	3	2	6	5
No	94	97	92	81
Don't know	2	1	2	9
Refused	1	0	0	6

Question Q32

When YOU were in grades K through 12, were other children bused into your school for racial reasons?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Yes	8	9	10	7
No	85	87	84	76
Don't know	5	4	5	12
Refused	1	0	0	6

Question Q33

When YOU were in grades K through 12, did you choose or did your parents choose to send you to a school other than the one closest to your home because it was more racially diverse?

[IF NECESSARY: For example, some people elected to attend a magnet school such as New York City's High School for Music and Art, or something similar.]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Yes	4	2	10	6
No	93	96	87	79
Don't know	3	1	3	9
Refused	1	0	1	6

Q34 was asked only if the respondent said YES to any of the above three questions (Q31-Q33)

Question Q34

How positive or negative was your experience of attending a racially diverse school?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Very positive	41	36	49	59
Somewhat positive	41	43	39	18
Somewhat negative	4	3	3	5
Very negative	7	6	9	14
Don't know	7	10	0	5
Refused	1	2	0	0

Question 35

How long have you lived in Nassau/Suffolk County?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Under six months	1	1	2	1
Six months to a year	0	0	1	2
One year to two years	2	0	3	6
Between two and five years	5	2	7	11
Between five and ten years	9	7	16	17
Over 10 years	57	59	43	55
All my life	27	30	28	9

Question Q36

Overall, how would you rate Long Island as a place to live?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Excellent	36	39	23	34
Good	45	44	52	46
Fair	15	14	22	17
Poor	4	3	3	3

Question Q37

In general, when it comes to politics, do you think of yourself as a Liberal, a Moderate, or a Conservative?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Liberal	26	24	37	28
Moderate	36	39	30	27
Conservative	28	27	20	33
Don't know	9	8	10	9
Refused	2	2	4	3

Question Q38

In what year were you born?

[Open-ended question, with recoded responses]

	Total
18 to 34	24
35 to 49	31
50 to 64	26
65 or older	17
Refused	3

Question Q39

How many children under the age of 18 are currently living in your household?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
None	56	64	41	29
1 or more	44	36	59	71
Don't know	0	0	0	0
Refused	1	0	0	0

Q40 only asked of respondents with children under 18 in household

Question Q40

Do any of these children attend the local public schools?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Yes	35	28	45	60
No	9	8	14	11

Question Q41

Do you have ANY children over the age of 18?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
None	53	49	60	71
1 or more	46	51	38	28
Don't know	0	0	0	1
Refused	1	0	2	0

Q42 only asked of respondents with children over the age of 18

Question Q42

Did any of these children ever attend the local public schools?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Yes	39	45	30	19
No	7	7	7	9
Don't know	0	0	0	1
Refused	1	0	3	0

Question Q43

Do you own the home you are currently living in, are you renting, or do you have some other arrangement, such as living in a parent's home, a child's home, or somewhere else?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Own	73	82	50	55
Rent	14	9	24	35
Live with parents, in-laws, other relative	11	9	24	10
Other (specify)	1	1	1	1
Refused	0	0	1	0

Question Q44

How many people 18 years and older, including yourself, are currently living in your household?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
One	13	15	14	6
Two	51	56	33	32
Three	21	18	29	30
Four or more	14	10	24	33
Refused	1	1	1	0

Question Q45

What is the highest grade of school, year of college or highest degree that you have received?

[Open-ended question, with recoded responses]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
No High School diploma	11	8	13	34
High School graduate	29	29	29	32
Some college	24	24	33	19
Bachelor's Degree or higher	35	40	24	14
Don't know	0	1	0	0
Refused	0	0	1	0

Question Q46

Are you currently:

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Employed for wages full-time	46	45	48	54
Employed for wages part-time	11	12	7	14
Self-employed	9	9	7	6
Out of work for more than 1 year	3	3	1	1
Out of work for less than 1 year	2	2	3	3
Homemaker	4	4	3	5
Full-time student	4	1	17	7
Retired	19	22	12	6
Unable to work / permanently disabled	2	3	1	3

Question Q47

What is/was your occupation?

[Open-ended question, with recoded responses]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Professional / Manager / Owner	32	36	32	15
Teachers / Librarians / Professors	7	8	6	4
Sales / Clerical / Service Worker	26	28	24	20
Skilled Laborer / Tradesman	13	12	14	22
Semi- or Unskilled Laborer	7	6	3	20
Don't know	2	1	1	0
Refused	2	2	2	2

Question Q48

Which of the following income categories best describes the total 2007 household income of all members of your family living there before taxes. Stop me when I reach your income group. Was it ...

[Open-ended question, with recoded responses]

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Less than \$35,000	14	10	16	40
\$35,000 to less than \$80,000	26	26	33	25
\$80,000 to less than \$120,000	20	22	14	12
\$120,000 or more	22	25	16	11
Don't know / Refused	18	17	21	13

Question Q49

Are you married; not married but living with a partner; separated; divorced; widowed; or have you never been married?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Married	61	67	38	48
Not married, living with a partner	8	6	9	17
Separated	1	1	4	2
Divorced	5	5	8	4
Widowed	8	9	4	1
Never married	16	11	36	26
Refused	1	1	2	0

Question GENDER

What is the respondent's gender?

	Total	White	Black	Latino
Female	51	53	59	40
Male				