



"What in the world people are really thinking"

For Immediate Release

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***Majority of New Yorkers Support Increased School Aid Statewide;
Greater Aid for Neediest School Districts;
Increased State Taxes for Schools If Necessary,
Alliance For Quality Education/ Zogby International Poll Reveals***

(Utica, NY) – A plurality (65%) of New York likely voters would support a plan to increase state aid to public schools and be willing to support a tax increase to do so. Further, New York voters would support a plan that distributes aid to school districts based on need, with lower income districts receiving the greatest increase.

The recommendation for a statewide plan for school aid reform grew out of a Court of Appeals decision in June that requires the State to provide a sound basic education for all students. A public poll on what New Yorkers would support in a new school funding plan was conducted by Zogby International for the Alliance for Quality Education (AQE), a statewide coalition of more than 230 organizations dedicated to ensuring every child's right to a quality education.

A clear majority of voters within varied sub-groupings favor a plan that would increase school aid even if it meant raising state taxes, including Democrats (71%), Republicans (56%), and Independent voters (64%). Those most likely to favor such a plan include New York City residents (69%), 18-29 year-olds (73%), Hispanics (75%), African Americans (68%), Jews (72%), women (70%), and those with annual household income of \$50,000-\$74,999 (72%) and less than \$15,000 (76%).

"The state is mandating higher learning standards. The time for extra funding to help struggling schools meet those state standards is now," said Regina Eaton, AQE executive director. "As the Zogby poll shows, New Yorkers statewide see the need for more money to help our children succeed and would support making high need districts a priority. Our kids shouldn't have to wait another year to start receiving the kind of education that the constitution requires."

Zogby International conducted interviews of 700 likely voters chosen at random in New York State. All calls were made from Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y., from Wednesday, March 10 to Friday, March 12, 2004. The margin of error is +/- 3.8 percentage points. Slight weights were added to region, party, age, race, religion, and gender to more accurately reflect the voting population. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100. The complete report with cross tabulations and frequencies are available at www.aqeny.org.

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