



Date: March 25, 2002

To: Alliance For Quality Education

From: Patricia J. Malin
Senior Editor
(315) 624-0200, Ext. 229
E-mail: pat@zogby.com

RE: Results from Zogby New York poll

Methodology

Zogby International conducted a survey of 703 registered and likely voters in New York State, chosen at random. All calls were made from Zogby International headquarters in Utica, N.Y., from Friday, March 22 to Sunday, March 24, 2002. The margin of error is +/-3.8%. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. **Note:** percentages are rounded off to the nearest number and might not equal 100.

Narrative Summary

*1. As you may know, New York State is facing a budget shortfall this year. I'm going to mention some possible budget priorities for New York State. Which **one** of the following do you think should be the most important priority for state spending?*

Education	56%
Health care	22
Law enforcement	10
Services for seniors	5
Environment	2
Prison system	1
Other	3
Not sure	2

By a wide margin, education is the single biggest priority among New Yorkers. Health care (22%) is a distant second choice.

Putting an emphasis on education is a strong consideration in all regions, including 57% in New York City. Democrats are more likely than Republicans, 57%-48%, to consider education a priority. At least half of the respondents in all age groups say education is a priority, but interest declines with age, from 70% of those 18-29 to 49% of those 65+.

2. Which do you think is a more important priority for the state legislature this year, improving education or holding down taxes?

Improving education	64%
Hold down taxes	34
Not sure	3

Close to two-thirds of the state's voters say improving education is a more important goal than holding down taxes. Those in New York City (72%) are most likely to be concerned about improving education, as are Democrats (70%). A good majority in all age groups, including 70% of those 30-49, thinks education is important, although support declines slightly among retirees (55%).

Note that Republicans are evenly divided between "improving education" (50%) and "holding down taxes" (48%).

Upstaters (40%) and seniors 65+ (44%) and 70+ (44%) are also more likely to be concerned about holding the line on taxes.

3. In your opinion, should state aid to schools be decreased, increased, or maintained at its current level?

Increased	59%
Current level	34
Decreased	5
Not sure	2

A good majority would like to see an increase in state aid to schools. One-third thinks school aid should be maintained. Just 5% say school aid should be decreased.

A majority of voters in all regions, especially 72% of those in New York City, believes school aid should be increased. Democrats (67%) are much more likely than Republicans (47%),

and younger voters (73% of those 18-29) are much more likely than seniors (46% of those 65+), to support an increase .

Republicans (47%), senior citizens (46%) and Upstaters (40%) are more inclined to say school aid should be maintained at its current level.

Now I am going to describe a specific plan to improve schools in New York State. This plan would increase state aid to public schools so that every child receives a sound basic education. The plan would be funded by an increase in state taxes. The plan would distribute the money to school districts based on need, with low-income districts getting the biggest increases, and no district losing funding. The school aid formula would be simple and predictable rather than political.

4. Please tell me if you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose this plan.

Strongly favor	42%		
Somewhat favor	32	Favor	74%
Somewhat oppose	12		
Strongly oppose	11	Oppose	23
Not sure	4		

There is widespread support in all sub-groups for the plan to improve schools, especially among women (79%) and 18-29 year-old voters (82%). Two-thirds of Republicans and those 65+ also favor this complex plan. Half of those in the 25-34 age group say they “strongly favor” the plan.

Republicans (30%) are more likely to be opposed.

5. If a candidate for the legislature supports this proposal, would you be more likely or less likely to support the candidate, or it makes no difference to you?

More likely	51%
Less likely	12
No difference	32
Not sure	6

Half of the voters say they are more likely to support a candidate who supports this plan to improve schools. However, one-third believes it makes no difference in their support for a candidate. One in 10 voters are less likely to support a candidate who favors this proposal.

Voters in all three regions agree equally (51% average) that they would support such a candidate. A majority (56%) of Democrats and women – including 61% of women who work outside the home -- are likely to support this candidate. Respondents in the 30-49 age group are most likely to favor this type of candidate (60%).

Those in the 18-29 age group, who generally favor spending for education, are among the voters who say a candidate's position on this proposal makes no difference to them (37%). Republicans, as well (42%), say it makes no difference.

Those who say they would be less likely to support a candidate who favors this education proposal include Republicans (16%) and voters ages 50-64 (17%).

6. Because of the effects of last year's budget and this year's proposed freeze in state school aid, many school districts will be unable to pay their bills. They will have to lay off teachers and aides, cut important programs and increase class sizes. Some school districts might have to raise property taxes significantly. Which one of the following do you think is the best solution to the current crisis?

Additional one percent tax on incomes over \$100,000 to fund school aid	69%
Property tax increases	8
Layoffs of school staff and teachers	7
Cut important programs and increase class sizes	5
None of the above	9
Not sure	3

A significant majority overall favors an additional one percent tax on New Yorkers with a combined income of more than \$100,000 as a means to finance school aid. Very small percentages would favor layoffs and cuts in school programs. Nine percent would like to consider another alternative.

Three-quarters of Democrats, working women, voters 18-29 years-old, and those living in New York City, favor the tax on incomes over \$100,000. Support declines slightly among older age groups.

Respondents in the suburbs and Republicans (11% average) show a greater willingness to consider layoffs of staff and teachers. Just over one in ten college graduates and 50-64 year-olds (11% average) favor none of the available options.

7. I am going to describe two candidates for the state legislature. Based on the following information, please tell me which one you would rather support?

Candidate A opposes an increase in state school aid this year because New York State has lost significant revenues due to the tragedy of September 11 and the recession. Candidate A believes in improving education, but feels the state must limit spending in order to balance the budget and should cut taxes to revive our economy.

Candidate B supports an increase in state school aid to improve education, and to ensure that every child has a qualified teacher. If necessary, this candidate will support an additional 1% income tax on incomes over \$100,000 to increase state funding for schools. This will help school districts avoid teacher layoffs and limit local property tax increases.

Candidate A (opposes an increase in state school aid)	24%
Candidate B (supports an increase in state school aid)	74
Not sure	3

Solid majorities across the state and in every sub-group support Candidate B, the one who favors an increase in state school aid.

The supporters of Candidate B includes a 79% average of Democrats, women and voters in the 18-29 age group. Women who work outside the home (85%), in particular, favor the candidate who wants to increase school aid.

Candidate A, who opposes increased state aid, receives above average support from Republicans (36%) and men (30%).