



## COMMONWEALTH EDUCATION POLL

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*Conducted for the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute and  
sponsored in part by the Regional Educational Laboratory at AEL, Inc.  
Conducted by the VCU Center for Public Policy.*

Public Opinion in Virginia on Schools and Education  
April 2003

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This report presents the full results from the 2003 Commonwealth Education Poll conducted with 801 adults in Virginia between March 25-April 2, 2003. The poll was conducted for the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute in the VCU School of Education. It was also sponsored in part by the Regional Educational Laboratory at AEL, Inc. The survey was conducted by the VCU Center for Public Policy. The following topics are addressed:

- I. Overall Evaluation of Schools
- II. School Funding
- III. SOL's and SOL tests
- IV. Vouchers and School Choice
- V. No Child Left Behind Act
- VI. Method of the Commonwealth Education Poll
- VII. Questions Asked
- VIII. Tables of Results by Subgroups of Virginians

## **I. Overall Evaluation of Schools**

A majority of Virginians holds positive views of the overall quality of education in the state. Most view the quality of education provided in the state as good (51 percent) and another 15 percent say that it is excellent. Twenty-three percent think the education is fair and just 4 percent say it is poor. Similarly, schools in the respondents' community are thought to provide

either an excellent (22 percent) or good education (46 percent) by two thirds of Virginians. Two in ten say the education is fair and just 5 percent say schools in their community provide a poor education. Four in ten Virginians say the schools in their community have stayed about the same over the last five years while 32 percent say schools have gotten better and just 12 percent think they have gotten worse. These results are similar to findings from the Commonwealth Education Poll over the past four years. On the whole, the schools continue to be evaluated positively by a majority of Virginians and, most think they have either held their ground or gotten better in the past five years.

When asked about the most important problem facing schools in their community, no single problem area stood out. The most frequently given response referred to inadequate funding for the schools (18 percent) followed by concerns about overcrowded classrooms (14 percent), teacher quality (12 percent), and lack of discipline in the classroom (10 percent).

## **II. School Funding**

Virginians believe that funding for education makes a difference for the quality of education and most feel that current funding levels are too low. Most Virginians believe that the amount of money spent on the public schools affects the quality of education. Better than seven out of ten Virginians (73 percent) believe the amount of money spent has either a great deal or quite a lot of affect on the quality of students' education. Just two in ten believe that spending makes no difference or not too much difference on the quality of education. When it comes to spending in specific areas, a clear majority of Virginians believe that spending for teacher salaries (70 percent), instructional materials (66 percent), and for reduced class size (61 percent) is a big help for improving school performance. The one area asked about where Virginians see less impact on school performance is spending on building facilities; a third feel this spending is a big help and 42 percent think this is a medium help for improving school performance.

A clear majority of Virginians (at 64 percent) believe that current funding for schools in Virginia is not enough to meet their needs; just 27 percent think the funding is enough. When asked what would happen if state funding for education were cut, seven in ten said a state cut would bring major changes to schools in their community while just 22 percent think those schools would continue pretty much as they are now.

Public opinion on how to pay for increased education funding is less clear. When asked whether respondents would be willing to pay higher taxes in order to increase school funding, 61 percent were willing. Responses to another question on state funding for education that offered a choice between increased taxes or cuts to other programs suggest that public support for tax increases is soft. About a third of Virginians (32 percent) support a tax increase while the majority (53 percent) support cuts to other programs in this context. Forty-six percent of those who said they were willing to pay higher taxes in order to increase education funding preferred the tax increase over cuts to other programs. Forty-three percent of those willing to pay higher taxes preferred cutting other programs over state tax increases. Republicans were more likely to prefer cuts to other programs rather than tax increases by 60 to 28 percent. Democrats were split between the two choices with 43 percent preferring tax increases and 44 percent wanting cuts to other programs.

### **III. SOL's and SOL Tests**

One of the chief aims of the Standards of Learning (SOL) testing program was to improve accountability of the schools for achievement. A clear majority of Virginians agrees “the SOL tests hold schools accountable for student achievement”. Sixty-seven percent of Virginians agree that the tests hold schools accountable while 26 percent disagree.

Are the SOL test scores seen as an indicator of school performance? Overall, a clear majority of Virginians think they are. Nearly six in ten (58 percent) agree that the “SOL tests give helpful information about school performance” to parents; 34 percent disagree.

While public response to these two specific statements about SOL tests was quite positive, opinion is more mixed when it comes to a more general assessment of the SOL program's impact on education quality. Overall, 43 percent of Virginians say the SOL's have not helped improve the quality of education in the state, an approximately equal portion (42 percent) feel the SOL's have helped.

Interestingly, views about the SOL tests tend to vary with one's overall view that the SOL program has helped or not helped improve the schools. Those who feel the SOL's helped improve school quality, strongly endorse the idea that the SOL tests hold schools accountable. Nine in ten of this group strongly or somewhat agrees that the SOL tests hold schools accountable while just seven percent disagree. Among those who say the SOL's have not helped

improve education quality, opinion is not nearly as uniform. Almost half of this group (48 percent) strongly or somewhat agrees that the SOL tests hold schools accountable while 50 percent disagree.

"The SOL tests hold schools accountable for student achievement."				
	Agree strongly or somewhat	Disagree strongly or somewhat	Don't Know or No Answer	Number of cases
All	67%	26%	7%	801
SOL's Helped	90%	7%	4%	325
SOL's Not Helped	48%	50%	2%	350

Similarly, those who feel the SOL's have helped the schools are quite likely to endorse the idea that SOL tests give parents information about school performance. Among this group, 84 percent think the SOL tests give parents helpful information about school performance while just ten percent disagree. In contrast, those who think the SOL's have not helped, tend to disagree with this statement by a margin of 65 to 33.

"The SOL tests give parents helpful information about school performance."				
	Agree strongly or somewhat	Disagree strongly or somewhat	Don't Know or No Answer	Number of cases
All	58%	34%	8%	801
SOL's Helped	84%	10%	6%	325
SOL's Not Helped	33%	65%	2%	350

Student performance on the SOL tests has shown a strong improvement since the start of the testing program in 1998. Forty-five percent of Virginians are aware of this increase in test scores; 18 percent falsely believe test scores to have been stable over time and only 6 percent think test scores went down. Nearly three in ten (29 percent) had no information about SOL test score trends. Those with more direct experience with the schools are more likely to be aware of the increase in test scores. Parents with children in the public schools are more likely to be aware of the SOL test scores; 56 percent of this group correctly assessed the scores to have gone up over the past five years. Similarly, two thirds of respondents who either work for the schools or

who have a household member who works for the schools are aware of the increase in SOL test scores over the last five years.

State accreditation of schools is dependent on 70 percent or more of a student body passing the SOL tests on all subjects. The number of schools meeting this bar has increased over the past five years. Only a third of Virginians are aware of this increasing trend in accredited schools; a quarter falsely believe that the number of accredited schools has stayed the same and only 6 percent falsely believe this number has gone down. More than a third (36 percent) had no information about the number of accredited schools across the state.

#### IV. Vouchers and School Choice

School voucher proposals continue to be debated around the nation. Virginians are divided in their opinion about vouchers. A plurality of 47 to 44 percent are in favor of giving parents vouchers to pay for their child’s tuition at a private or parochial school of their choice. When asked their opinion of providing vouchers only for parents with children in schools that fail to meet state performance standards, opinion remained divided with a plurality (by 48 to 44 percent) opposed to the idea.

Vouchers are one of several proposals around the nation designed to increase school choice. The underlying reasons for public support of proposals increasing school choice are not entirely clear. Opinion in Virginia was closely divided when asked whether “parents need more school choice because the public schools aren’t providing a good education.” Fifty percent strongly or somewhat agree with this statement while 46 percent disagree, either strongly or somewhat. Reaction to this statement tracked closely with support or opposition to vouchers. Better than two thirds (69 percent) of those who support vouchers agree with this statement while 28 percent disagree. By contrast, only 31 percent of those opposed to vouchers agree while two thirds disagree.

"Parents need more school choice because the public schools aren't providing a good education."				
	Agree strongly or somewhat	Disagree strongly or somewhat	Don't Know or No Answer	Number of cases
All	50%	46%	5%	801
Favor vouchers	69%	28%	3%	363
Oppose vouchers	31%	66%	4%	361

School choice was more likely to be linked with accountability. Better than two thirds of Virginians (67 percent) agree, either strongly or somewhat, that “giving parents more school choice will help the public schools be held accountable for performance.” Twenty-eight percent strongly or somewhat disagree with this statement. Those in favor of vouchers were quite likely to agree with this statement; 87 percent agreed while only 10 percent disagreed that school choice helps accountability. Those opposed to vouchers were divided in response to this statement with 46 agreeing and 48 percent disagreeing.

"Giving parents more school choice will help the public schools be held accountable for performance."				
	Agree strongly or somewhat	Disagree strongly or somewhat	Don't Know or No Answer	Number of cases
All	67%	28%	5%	801
Favor vouchers	87%	10%	3%	363
Oppose vouchers	46%	48%	6%	361

## V. No Child Left Behind Act

It's too early to tell how the recent changes in federal law governing the schools under the No Child Left Behind Act will impact education in the state. Forty-two percent of Virginians think the increased involvement of the federal government in school decisions will help school performance; 22 percent think it will hurt and 29 percent expect it to make no difference in school performance.

## VI. Method of the Commonwealth Education Poll

The Commonwealth Education Poll is a public opinion survey of Virginia residents on education issues. The survey is conducted by telephone with a randomly-selected sample of adult Virginians.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone from the facilities of the Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. The interviewing is conducted by a staff of professionally trained, paid interviewers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing software.

The sample of telephone numbers was prepared by Genesys Sampling Systems of Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania, and was designed so that all residential telephones, including new and unlisted numbers, had a known chance of inclusion. The cooperation rate for the survey was 43% percent. Using the Council of American Survey Research Organization (CASRO) response

rate calculations, interviews were obtained with respondents in 37% percent of the known or assumed residential households in the sample.

The data were weighted to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection due to multiple telephone lines and multiple adults living in the household. In addition, the data were weighted on sex, race, age, and region of residence to reflect the demographic composition of the Virginia adult population. Percentages reported in the text and tables are weighted, while the number of cases shown in the tables for various subgroups is the actual number of respondents.

Questions answered by the full sample of adults are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus approximately 4 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples like the one used here, the results obtained should be no more than 4 percentage points above or below the figure that would be obtained by interviewing all adult Virginians with telephones. Where the answers of subgroups are reported, the sampling error would be higher. Because of nonresponse (refusals to participate, etc.), standard calculations of sampling error are apt to understate the actual extent to which survey results are at variance with the true population values. Surveys are also subject to errors from sources other than sampling. While every effort is made to identify such errors, they are often difficult or impossible to measure. Readers making use of the results are urged to be mindful of the limitations inherent in survey research.

## VII. Questions Asked

Commonwealth Education Poll

March 25-April 2, 2003

Number of Respondents: 801

### Overall Evaluation of Schools

1. First, thinking about the public schools in Virginia as a whole, would you say that they provide an excellent, good, fair, or poor education?

	2003	2002	2001
Excellent	15%	10%	11%
Good	51	50	47
Fair	23	26	26
Poor	4	5	4
Don't Know/No Answer	8	9	11

2. What about the public schools in your community-would you say that they provide an excellent, good, fair, or poor education?

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Excellent	22%	18%	18%	15%
Good	46	47	42	44
Fair	20	21	22	22
Poor	5	8	7	6
Don't Know/No Answer	7	6	10	12

3. Over the past five years, have the public schools in your community gotten better, worse, or stayed the same?

	2003	2002	2001	2000
Better	32%	30%	29%	33%
Worse	12	15	16	14



Stayed the same	40	37	35	34
Don't Know/No Answer	17	19	20	20

4. What do you see as the MOST important problem facing the public schools in your community? (Open-ended responses coded by interviewers at the time of the phone interview.)

Funding not enough	18%
Overcrowded classrooms	14
Teacher quality or not enough quality teachers	12
Discipline/lack of discipline in classroom	10
Violence/Gangs/Weapons at school	3
Security or safety from terrorism	1
Students not motivated to learn/lack of effort	2
Student drug use	2
Curriculum or instruction quality	5
Too much emphasis on SOL tests	4
Parents	2
Principals and superintendents—poor leadership, management	2
Buildings not safe or need repair	1
Other	10
Don't know	14
No answer	1

#### School Funding

5. In your opinion, how much does the amount of money spent on the public schools affect the quality of students' education—a great deal, quite a lot, not too much, or not at all?

	2003	2002
A great deal	42%	45%
Quite a lot	31	26
Not too much	18	19
Not at all	2	4
Don't Know/No Answer	7	5

6. Overall, do you think the funding for public schools in Virginia is enough to meet their needs, or not enough to meet their needs?

	2003	2002	2001
Enough	27%	23%	21%
Not enough	64	67	70
Don't Know/No Answer	9	9	10

7. Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that school funding could be increased?

	2003	2002	2001
Willing	61%	60%	57%
Not willing	34	34	36
Don't Know/No Answer	5	6	7

8. (ASK IF WILLING) What kind of tax increase do you think would be best-- sales tax, income tax, real estate property tax, or personal property tax?

Of Those Willing

	2003	2002	2001
Sales tax	54%	58%	47%
Income tax	14	14	16
Real estate property tax	13	10	16
Personal property tax	10	11	13
Don't Know/No Answer	10	6	9

9. Suppose state funding for education were cut, do you think the schools in your community would be able to continue pretty much as they are now, OR do you think this would bring major changes to the schools in your community?

Would continue as they are now	22%
Would bring major changes	70
Don't Know/No Answer	7

Next, please tell me how much you think spending in each of the following areas helps improve school performance. First,...

Question 10 to 13 were asked in random order.

10. Spending on salaries to keep and hire quality teachers? (Is spending in this area a big help, medium help, small help, or no help at all for improving school performance?)

Big help	70%
Medium help	18
Small help	4
No help at all	5
Don't Know/No Answer	3

11. Spending on instructional materials such as books, computers and library resources? (Is spending in this area a big help, medium help, small help, or no help at all for improving school performance?)

Big help	66%
Medium help	26
Small help	4
No help at all	2
Don't Know/No Answer	1

12. Spending to reduce the number of students in each classroom? (Is spending in this area a big help, medium help, small help, or no help at all for improving school performance?)

Big help	61%
Medium help	25
Small help	5
No help at all	4
Don't Know/No Answer	5

13. Spending on building facilities? (Is spending in this area a big help, medium help, small help, or no help at all for improving school performance?)

Big help	33%
Medium help	42
Small help	15
No help at all	5

Don't Know/No Answer	5
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14. The Virginia constitution requires the state to share the costs of public education with local governments. A report by the General Assembly's investigative agency said that the state is not paying as much for education as agreed to in the cost-sharing guidelines. This leaves local school districts paying more than expected. In order for the state to meet the education cost-sharing guidelines, would you prefer that the state increase taxes OR make cuts to other programs?

Increase taxes	32%
Make cuts to other programs	53
Don't Know/No Answer	14

#### SOL's and SOL tests

15. As you may know, there's been a lot of talk lately about the Standards of Learning (or SOL's) in Virginia schools. Overall, do you think the SOL's have helped or not helped improve the quality of schools in Virginia?

	2003	2002
Helped	42%	38%
Not Helped	43	44
Don't Know/No Answer	15	18

16. (IF HELPED) Would you say the SOL's have helped improve the quality of schools in Virginia a lot or a little?

#### OF THOSE SAYING HELPED

	2003	2002
A lot	57%	45%
A little	36	44
Don't Know/No Answer	7	4

#### Q15 and Q16 Combined:

	2003	2002
Helped a lot	24%	17%
Helped a little	15	17
Don't know how much helped	3	4
Not Helped	43	44
Don't know if helped or not helped	15	18

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Question 17 and 18 were asked in random order.

17. "The SOL tests hold schools accountable for student achievement."  
(Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?)

	2003	2002
Strongly agree	26%	29%
Somewhat agree	41	45
Somewhat disagree	15	11
Strongly disagree	11	6
Don't Know/No Answer	7	9

18. "The SOL tests give parents helpful information about school performance. "  
 (Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?)

Strongly agree	21%
Somewhat agree	37
Somewhat disagree	18
Strongly disagree	15
Don't Know/No Answer	8

19. The SOL tests have been given in Virginia since 1998. As far as you know, have test scores on the SOL's for students across the state gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same over the last five years?

Gone up	45%
Gone down	6
Stayed the same	18
Don't Know/No answer	30

20. The SOL tests are used to determine school accreditation. In order to be fully accredited by the state, 70 percent or more of a school's student body must pass the SOL tests on all subjects. As far as you know, has the number of accredited schools in Virginia gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same over the last five years?

Gone up	33%
Gone down	6
Stayed the same	25
Don't Know/No Answer	36

#### Vouchers and School Choice

Now on another topic.

21. Do you favor or oppose giving parents vouchers to pay for their child's tuition at a private, or parochial school of their choice?

Favor	47%
Oppose	44
Don't Know/No Answer	9

2001 Commonwealth Education Poll: Do you favor or oppose giving parents education tax credits, or vouchers, to pay for their child's tuition at a private, or parochial school of their choice?

	Virginia
Favor	50%
Oppose	40
Don't Know/No Answer	10

22. Suppose vouchers were only available for parents with children enrolled in schools that fail to meet state performance standards. Would you favor or oppose giving this group of parents vouchers to pay for their child's tuition at a private, or parochial school of their choice?

Favor	44%
Oppose	48

Don't Know/No Answer	9
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Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements?

Questions 23 and 24 were asked in random order.

23. "Parents need more school choice because the public schools aren't providing a good education." (Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?)

Strongly agree	22%
Somewhat agree	28
Somewhat disagree	25
Strongly disagree	21
Don't Know/No Answer	5

24. "Giving parents more school choice will help the public schools be held accountable for performance." (Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this statement?)

Strongly agree	33%
Somewhat agree	34
Somewhat disagree	15
Strongly disagree	13
Don't Know/No Answer	6

No Child Left Behind Act

25. In the past, state and local governments oversaw most decisions related to the schools. The federal government in Washington has recently passed a law called the No Child Left Behind Act that increases the federal government's role in decisions about the schools. Do you think the federal government's involvement in the schools will help, hurt, or make no difference in school performance?

Help	42%
Hurt	22
No difference	29
Don't Know/No Answer	7

## VIII. Tables of Results by Subgroups of Virginians

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q1 Thinking about the public schools in Virginia as a whole, would you say that they provide a(n):						
		Excellent education	Good education	Fair education	Poor education	Don't Know	No Answer	Number of cases
Total		15%	51%	23%	4%	7%	1%	801
Sex	Male	14%	54%	21%	4%	6%	1%	334
	Female	16%	49%	24%	3%	7%	1%	467
Race	White	14%	52%	23%	4%	6%	1%	622
	Black	15%	48%	26%	5%	7%		111
Region	Northwest	7%	50%	27%	5%	10%	0%	117
	Northern VA	25%	53%	11%	3%	8%	1%	207
	West	13%	51%	28%	3%	4%	1%	156
	South Central	14%	55%	22%	4%	4%	1%	143
	Tidewater	9%	47%	31%	3%	9%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	17%	59%	19%	2%	1%	1%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	20%	58%	19%	1%	1%	1%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	10%	53%	23%	6%	6%	1%	171
	35-50,000	14%	45%	23%	7%	12%		129
	50-69,000	20%	53%	22%	1%	3%		125
	70,000 and above	18%	51%	21%	1%	8%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	15%	50%	25%	5%	5%	0%	224
	Some college	13%	51%	25%	4%	6%	0%	212
	College grad and up	16%	53%	20%	2%	8%	2%	360
Age	18-29	13%	59%	19%	3%	6%		111
	30-44	15%	52%	23%	4%	6%	1%	264
	45-64	15%	50%	23%	4%	7%	1%	294
	65 and older	15%	42%	30%	4%	8%	0%	114
Place where live	Urban	15%	48%	23%	4%	8%	1%	163
	Suburban	20%	52%	19%	3%	6%	0%	297
	Rural/Small Town	9%	53%	26%	4%	7%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	20%	46%	25%	3%	5%	0%	204
	Republican	17%	55%	17%	5%	5%	1%	236
	Independent	10%	50%	28%	3%	8%	1%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q2 What about the public schools in your community-would you say that they provide a(n):						Number of cases
		Excellent education	Good education	Fair education	Poor education	Don't Know	No Answer	
Total		22%	46%	20%	5%	7%	1%	801
Sex	Male	21%	48%	19%	5%	6%	1%	334
	Female	23%	43%	20%	6%	7%	1%	467
Race	White	22%	47%	18%	5%	7%	0%	622
	Black	17%	45%	25%	8%	4%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	13%	47%	23%	6%	11%		117
	Northern VA	36%	43%	9%	3%	7%	1%	207
	West	15%	51%	23%	6%	4%	1%	156
	South Central	24%	43%	21%	7%	4%	1%	143
	Tidewater	15%	46%	27%	6%	7%	0%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	32%	49%	15%	4%	1%		233
School Employee in Household	Yes	36%	45%	15%	2%	3%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	12%	53%	20%	6%	9%	0%	171
	35-50,000	22%	38%	22%	10%	8%	1%	129
	50-69,000	22%	45%	24%	5%	4%	0%	125
	70,000 and above	31%	46%	14%	3%	6%	0%	251
Education	H.S. or less	15%	48%	24%	7%	5%	1%	224
	Some college	20%	49%	20%	6%	5%		212
	College grad and up	29%	42%	17%	4%	8%	0%	360
Age	18-29	20%	48%	19%	7%	6%		111
	30-44	24%	46%	18%	5%	7%		264
	45-64	24%	44%	21%	6%	4%	1%	294
	65 and older	16%	44%	25%	3%	10%	2%	114
Place where live	Urban	27%	35%	24%	5%	8%	1%	163
	Suburban	32%	46%	13%	4%	5%	0%	297
	Rural/Small Town	10%	52%	23%	7%	7%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	20%	45%	24%	6%	5%		204
	Republican	33%	44%	12%	6%	5%	1%	236
	Independent	15%	47%	23%	5%	9%	0%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q3 Over the past five years, have the public schools in your community gotten:					Number of cases
		Better	Worse	Stayed the Same	Don't Know	No Answer	
Total		32%	12%	40%	15%	2%	801
Sex	Male	33%	9%	43%	13%	2%	334
	Female	32%	14%	37%	17%	1%	467
Race	White	30%	12%	41%	15%	2%	622
	Black	43%	10%	33%	14%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	34%	7%	46%	13%	1%	117
	Northern VA	28%	9%	37%	23%	3%	207
	West	31%	16%	43%	8%	2%	156
	South Central	36%	11%	41%	11%	1%	143
	Tidewater	34%	15%	35%	16%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	44%	11%	35%	9%	1%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	47%	10%	36%	6%	1%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	32%	12%	41%	13%	2%	171
	35-50,000	36%	10%	35%	16%	3%	129
	50-69,000	41%	12%	33%	13%	1%	125
	70,000 and above	29%	11%	44%	15%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	39%	9%	40%	11%	1%	224
	Some college	27%	17%	42%	13%	1%	212
	College grad and up	32%	10%	38%	19%	2%	360
Age	18-29	31%	11%	45%	13%	1%	111
	30-44	38%	11%	32%	16%	2%	264
	45-64	29%	14%	44%	11%	2%	294
	65 and older	29%	9%	45%	17%	0%	114
Place where live	Urban	26%	10%	42%	20%	1%	163
	Suburban	32%	13%	37%	17%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	36%	10%	40%	12%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	39%	10%	35%	15%	1%	204
	Republican	34%	13%	38%	12%	3%	236
	Independent	27%	12%	45%	16%	1%	271



Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q5 In your opinion, how much does the amount of money spent on the public schools affect the quality of students' education?						Number of cases
		A great deal	Quite a lot	Not too much	Not at all	Don't know	No answer	
Total		42%	31%	18%	2%	6%	1%	801
Sex	Male	37%	35%	20%	3%	5%	1%	334
	Female	48%	28%	15%	1%	7%	0%	467
Race	White	41%	36%	16%	2%	5%	0%	622
	Black	50%	16%	22%	1%	10%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	36%	37%	16%	3%	8%		117
	Northern VA	42%	32%	19%	1%	5%	1%	207
	West	46%	28%	21%	0%	5%		156
	South Central	38%	29%	25%	2%	3%	2%	143
	Tidewater	46%	32%	10%	3%	9%		178
Children in Public School	Yes	44%	35%	14%	1%	5%	0%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	55%	33%	9%	2%	2%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	39%	26%	24%	1%	10%	1%	171
	35-50,000	40%	29%	21%	5%	5%		129
	50-69,000	46%	34%	15%	3%	2%	1%	125
	70,000 and above	47%	36%	13%	1%	3%	0%	251
Education	H.S. or less	34%	31%	22%	2%	10%	1%	224
	Some college	46%	28%	18%	3%	5%	1%	212
	College grad and up	46%	35%	14%	1%	3%	0%	360
Age	18-29	40%	33%	19%	2%	7%		111
	30-44	46%	30%	18%	1%	4%	1%	264
	45-64	45%	34%	16%	3%	2%		294
	65 and older	29%	29%	21%	2%	16%	2%	114
Place where live	Urban	44%	28%	22%	2%	4%		163
	Suburban	44%	34%	15%	2%	5%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	40%	32%	18%	2%	7%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	50%	24%	17%	2%	7%	1%	204
	Republican	39%	37%	17%	2%	4%	1%	236
	Independent	40%	35%	19%	2%	4%		271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q6 Overall, do you think the funding for public schools in Virginia is enough to meet their needs, or not enough to meet their needs?				Number of cases
		Enough	Not enough	Don't know	No answer	
Total		27%	64%	8%	1%	801
Sex	Male	36%	57%	7%	0%	334
	Female	18%	71%	9%	1%	467
Race	White	28%	63%	8%	1%	622
	Black	20%	71%	9%		111
Region	Northwest	33%	59%	5%	3%	117
	Northern VA	32%	60%	8%	0%	207
	West	23%	70%	6%	1%	156
	South Central	30%	61%	8%	0%	143
	Tidewater	17%	70%	12%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	20%	75%	5%	0%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	21%	72%	6%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	33%	58%	8%	2%	171
	35-50,000	28%	67%	5%	0%	129
	50-69,000	23%	72%	4%	1%	125
	70,000 and above	24%	66%	9%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	29%	61%	9%	1%	224
	Some college	27%	66%	6%	0%	212
	College grad and up	25%	66%	8%	1%	360
Age	18-29	34%	58%	6%	2%	111
	30-44	22%	69%	8%	0%	264
	45-64	28%	65%	6%	1%	294
	65 and older	29%	57%	13%	1%	114
Place where live	Urban	26%	63%	10%	1%	163
	Suburban	27%	66%	7%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	27%	63%	8%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	21%	72%	6%	1%	204
	Republican	32%	57%	10%	1%	236
	Independent	27%	64%	8%	1%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q7 Would you be willing or not willing to pay higher taxes so that school funding could be increased?				Number of cases
		Willing	Not willing	Don't know	No answer	
Total		61%	34%	3%	2%	801
Sex	Male	57%	39%	3%	1%	334
	Female	65%	30%	4%	2%	467
Race	White	61%	35%	3%	1%	622
	Black	68%	27%	3%	2%	111
Region	Northwest	53%	40%	4%	3%	117
	Northern VA	61%	36%	2%	0%	207
	West	62%	31%	5%	1%	156
	South Central	62%	32%	2%	4%	143
	Tidewater	64%	33%	3%		178
Children in Public School	Yes	72%	24%	2%	2%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	75%	21%	2%	2%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	52%	42%	3%	3%	171
	35-50,000	60%	36%	2%	1%	129
	50-69,000	74%	23%	2%		125
	70,000 and above	70%	27%	2%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	52%	43%	4%	1%	224
	Some college	61%	33%	5%	2%	212
	College grad and up	67%	30%	2%	1%	360
Age	18-29	60%	33%	6%	1%	111
	30-44	70%	26%	2%	1%	264
	45-64	60%	36%	2%	2%	294
	65 and older	45%	48%	4%	3%	114
Place where live	Urban	68%	28%	3%	1%	163
	Suburban	66%	31%	2%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	55%	38%	4%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	69%	27%	2%	2%	204
	Republican	61%	36%	3%	1%	236
	Independent	60%	35%	3%	2%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q8 IF WILLING: What kind of tax increase do you think would be best?					Number of cases	
		Sales tax	Income tax	Real estate property tax	Personal property tax	Don't know		No answer
Total (OF THOSE WILLING)		54%	14%	13%	10%	8%	2%	490
Sex	Male	58%	16%	12%	7%	3%	4%	193
	Female	51%	12%	13%	12%	12%	1%	297
Race	White	53%	15%	13%	7%	10%	2%	378
	Black	57%	10%	12%	20%	2%		77
Region	Northwest	48%	14%	21%	2%	14%		65
	Northern VA	57%	15%	11%	8%	6%	3%	128
	West	50%	15%	10%	14%	9%	2%	98
	South Central	57%	14%	12%	9%	7%	1%	86
	Tidewater	54%	11%	13%	13%	8%	2%	113
Children in Public School	Yes	56%	12%	13%	10%	6%	3%	168
School Employee in Household	Yes	67%	8%	5%	9%	8%	3%	91
Family Income	Under 35,000	44%	11%	18%	13%	13%	1%	89
	35-50,000	59%	7%	16%	9%	7%	1%	78
	50-69,000	52%	12%	9%	17%	6%	3%	93
	70,000 and above	57%	17%	13%	4%	6%	2%	177
Education	H.S. or less	55%	10%	13%	12%	9%	0%	122
	Some college	53%	18%	11%	9%	8%	2%	126
	College grad and up	54%	13%	14%	9%	7%	3%	238
Age	18-29	45%	15%	18%	10%	12%		71
	30-44	56%	13%	12%	11%	6%	2%	185
	45-64	56%	11%	14%	9%	6%	3%	177
	65 and older	54%	20%	4%	6%	14%	1%	50
Place where live	Urban	56%	17%	8%	11%	7%	1%	109
	Suburban	51%	13%	15%	10%	8%	3%	196
	Rural/Small Town	56%	12%	12%	8%	9%	1%	185
Party Identification	Democrat	52%	14%	12%	14%	7%	2%	142
	Republican	54%	15%	15%	5%	9%	2%	141
	Independent	55%	13%	13%	11%	7%	1%	163

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q9 Suppose state funding for education were cut, do you think the schools in your community would ...continue as now, or would this bring major changes?				Number of cases
		Continue as they are now	Bring major changes	Don't know	No answer	
Total		22%	70%	6%	1%	801
Sex	Male	25%	69%	4%	2%	334
	Female	20%	71%	8%	1%	467
Race	White	25%	69%	6%	1%	622
	Black	15%	78%	6%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	29%	64%	6%	1%	117
	Northern VA	21%	68%	9%	2%	207
	West	21%	71%	6%	2%	156
	South Central	23%	73%	4%		143
	Tidewater	22%	73%	4%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	22%	72%	5%	0%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	24%	74%	2%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	25%	68%	5%	1%	171
	35-50,000	20%	72%	7%	1%	129
	50-69,000	15%	80%	5%		125
	70,000 and above	22%	73%	4%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	27%	64%	9%	0%	224
	Some college	18%	77%	3%	2%	212
	College grad and up	23%	70%	6%	2%	360
Age	18-29	21%	74%	5%		111
	30-44	22%	71%	5%	2%	264
	45-64	21%	72%	5%	2%	294
	65 and older	27%	62%	10%	1%	114
Place where live	Urban	12%	79%	6%	3%	163
	Suburban	25%	68%	6%	2%	297
	Rural/Small Town	25%	69%	6%	0%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	16%	79%	4%	1%	204
	Republican	32%	61%	5%	1%	236
	Independent	20%	72%	6%	2%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q10 How much of a help is spending on salaries to keep and hire quality teachers for improving school performance?						Number of cases
		Big help	Medium help	Small help	No help at all	Don't know	No answer	
Total		70%	18%	4%	5%	3%	0%	801
Sex	Male	68%	20%	4%	5%	2%	0%	334
	Female	72%	17%	3%	4%	3%	0%	467
Race	White	71%	20%	3%	4%	2%	0%	622
	Black	68%	12%	5%	9%	6%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	65%	19%	5%	5%	6%		117
	Northern VA	74%	18%	3%	3%	3%		207
	West	67%	21%	4%	5%	2%	2%	156
	South Central	73%	16%	5%	5%	2%		143
	Tidewater	70%	19%	3%	6%	3%		178
Children in Public School	Yes	73%	19%	4%	4%	0%		233
School Employee in Household	Yes	75%	16%	3%	2%	3%	0%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	60%	22%	6%	4%	7%	1%	171
	35-50,000	71%	18%	6%	4%	2%		129
	50-69,000	74%	14%	6%	6%		0%	125
	70,000 and above	76%	18%	1%	4%	1%		251
Education	H.S. or less	63%	18%	6%	8%	5%	1%	224
	Some college	75%	17%	3%	2%	2%	0%	212
	College grad and up	72%	20%	2%	4%	2%	0%	360
Age	18-29	67%	20%	5%	6%	1%		111
	30-44	72%	18%	2%	5%	2%	0%	264
	45-64	71%	20%	4%	4%	1%		294
	65 and older	65%	17%	4%	3%	10%	0%	114
Place where live	Urban	74%	15%	5%	4%	2%		163
	Suburban	72%	19%	4%	4%	2%	0%	297
	Rural/Small Town	67%	20%	3%	6%	4%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	74%	15%	4%	5%	2%		204
	Republican	69%	22%	4%	3%	2%	1%	236
	Independent	71%	18%	3%	5%	3%	0%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q11 How much of a help is spending on instructional materials such as books, computers and library resources for improving school performance?						Number of cases
		Big help	Medium help	Small help	No help at all	Don't know	No answer	
Total		66%	26%	4%	2%	1%	0%	801
Sex	Male	63%	28%	5%	3%	1%	0%	334
	Female	69%	25%	3%	2%	2%		467
Race	White	62%	30%	4%	2%	1%		622
	Black	78%	12%	4%	2%	2%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	59%	33%	5%	2%	1%		117
	Northern VA	67%	25%	5%	2%	2%		207
	West	71%	25%	2%	2%			156
	South Central	69%	22%	4%	4%	1%	1%	143
	Tidewater	63%	28%	4%	3%	3%		178
Children in Public School	Yes	71%	23%	3%	2%	0%		233
School Employee in Household	Yes	74%	22%	3%		1%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	70%	26%	1%	1%	1%		171
	35-50,000	66%	25%	2%	5%	1%		129
	50-69,000	72%	19%	4%	2%	2%		125
	70,000 and above	64%	28%	6%	0%	1%		251
Education	H.S. or less	67%	25%	2%	4%	2%	1%	224
	Some college	72%	23%	5%	0%	0%		212
	College grad and up	62%	29%	5%	2%	1%		360
Age	18-29	71%	24%	2%	2%	1%		111
	30-44	70%	22%	6%	2%	1%		264
	45-64	63%	29%	4%	3%	1%		294
	65 and older	55%	34%	3%	2%	4%	2%	114
Place where live	Urban	67%	23%	7%	2%	1%		163
	Suburban	65%	26%	5%	2%	1%		297
	Rural/Small Town	66%	27%	2%	2%	2%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	73%	20%	4%	2%	1%		204
	Republican	62%	29%	4%	4%	1%		236
	Independent	64%	27%	5%	2%	2%		271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q12 How much of a help is spending to reduce the number of students in each classroom for improving school performance?						Number of cases
		Big help	Medium help	Small help	No help at all	Don't know	No answer	
Total		61%	25%	5%	4%	4%	1%	801
Sex	Male	52%	29%	9%	4%	3%	2%	334
	Female	68%	21%	2%	4%	5%	0%	467
Race	White	63%	25%	5%	3%	3%	1%	622
	Black	55%	25%	6%	5%	8%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	56%	29%	6%	4%	4%	0%	117
	Northern VA	60%	30%	3%	3%	2%	2%	207
	West	61%	24%	5%	3%	5%	1%	156
	South Central	62%	21%	7%	6%	3%	1%	143
	Tidewater	63%	21%	6%	3%	5%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	62%	23%	6%	5%	3%	1%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	71%	20%	6%	3%			123
Family Income	Under 35,000	52%	37%	2%	4%	5%	0%	171
	35-50,000	60%	21%	6%	8%	6%		129
	50-69,000	68%	18%	7%	5%	2%		125
	70,000 and above	69%	23%	5%	2%	1%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	51%	25%	7%	6%	9%	2%	224
	Some college	62%	27%	6%	3%	1%	1%	212
	College grad and up	68%	25%	4%	3%	1%	0%	360
Age	18-29	53%	30%	8%	7%	3%		111
	30-44	64%	25%	4%	2%	2%	1%	264
	45-64	63%	23%	6%	5%	3%	0%	294
	65 and older	57%	24%	4%	2%	9%	3%	114
Place where live	Urban	61%	20%	9%	4%	4%	1%	163
	Suburban	66%	25%	3%	3%	2%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	56%	27%	6%	5%	5%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	64%	22%	4%	4%	4%	1%	204
	Republican	63%	26%	5%	3%	2%	1%	236
	Independent	59%	28%	6%	4%	4%	0%	271



Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q13 How much of a help is spending on building facilities for improving school performance?					No answer	Number of cases
		Big help	Medium help	Small help	No help at all	Don't know		
Total		33%	42%	15%	5%	4%	1%	801
Sex	Male	33%	42%	17%	5%	2%	1%	334
	Female	34%	43%	12%	5%	6%	0%	467
Race	White	30%	47%	14%	5%	4%	1%	622
	Black	44%	31%	12%	8%	5%		111
Region	Northwest	27%	49%	12%	6%	6%	0%	117
	Northern VA	33%	45%	16%	3%	3%	0%	207
	West	26%	44%	21%	4%	4%		156
	South Central	45%	35%	12%	4%	3%	1%	143
	Tidewater	35%	40%	10%	8%	5%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	40%	40%	13%	3%	4%		233
School Employee in Household	Yes	39%	43%	14%	2%	2%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	40%	39%	11%	6%	5%		171
	35-50,000	31%	44%	16%	4%	5%		129
	50-69,000	32%	39%	17%	9%	3%		125
	70,000 and above	34%	46%	15%	4%	1%		251
Education	H.S. or less	35%	36%	12%	8%	8%	1%	224
	Some college	41%	37%	17%	2%	3%	1%	212
	College grad and up	28%	51%	15%	4%	2%		360
Age	18-29	35%	45%	13%	3%	2%	1%	111
	30-44	34%	42%	15%	4%	5%	0%	264
	45-64	32%	43%	16%	7%	1%	0%	294
	65 and older	30%	40%	12%	7%	10%	1%	114
Place where live	Urban	37%	45%	10%	6%	3%		163
	Suburban	34%	40%	17%	4%	4%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	30%	45%	15%	6%	4%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	38%	41%	11%	5%	4%	1%	204
	Republican	35%	42%	16%	4%	3%		236
	Independent	28%	47%	16%	6%	3%	0%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q14 ... In order for the state to meet the education cost-sharing guidelines, would you prefer that the state increase taxes or make cuts to other programs?				Number of cases
		Increase taxes	Make cuts to other programs	Don't know	No answer	
Total		32%	53%	9%	5%	801
Sex	Male	34%	52%	8%	5%	334
	Female	30%	53%	11%	6%	467
Race	White	32%	52%	9%	6%	622
	Black	35%	52%	10%	2%	111
Region	Northwest	30%	56%	8%	6%	117
	Northern VA	31%	56%	8%	5%	207
	West	34%	49%	14%	4%	156
	South Central	37%	51%	7%	4%	143
	Tidewater	30%	52%	11%	7%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	37%	49%	8%	6%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	45%	42%	9%	4%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	27%	55%	14%	3%	171
	35-50,000	29%	62%	6%	3%	129
	50-69,000	36%	48%	10%	5%	125
	70,000 and above	39%	52%	4%	5%	251
Education	H.S. or less	26%	53%	13%	7%	224
	Some college	29%	57%	10%	4%	212
	College grad and up	39%	50%	7%	5%	360
Age	18-29	40%	50%	6%	4%	111
	30-44	32%	55%	8%	5%	264
	45-64	33%	56%	6%	5%	294
	65 and older	23%	49%	20%	8%	114
Place where live	Urban	29%	60%	9%	2%	163
	Suburban	36%	49%	8%	7%	297
	Rural/Small Town	31%	52%	11%	6%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	43%	44%	9%	4%	204
	Republican	28%	60%	7%	6%	236
	Independent	30%	56%	9%	4%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q15 Overall, do you think the SOL's have helped or not helped improve the quality of schools in Virginia?				Number of cases
		Helped	Not helped	Don't know	No answer	
Total		42%	43%	13%	2%	801
Sex	Male	46%	41%	12%	1%	334
	Female	38%	45%	14%	3%	467
Race	White	39%	46%	12%	3%	622
	Black	51%	35%	11%	2%	111
Region	Northwest	40%	44%	11%	5%	117
	Northern VA	39%	41%	17%	2%	207
	West	37%	50%	11%	1%	156
	South Central	53%	38%	6%	2%	143
	Tidewater	41%	43%	14%	2%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	43%	49%	6%	2%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	46%	48%	4%	2%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	47%	36%	13%	5%	171
	35-50,000	43%	42%	15%	1%	129
	50-69,000	39%	51%	8%	2%	125
	70,000 and above	41%	44%	13%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	49%	37%	12%	2%	224
	Some college	42%	45%	11%	2%	212
	College grad and up	37%	47%	14%	3%	360
Age	18-29	41%	45%	13%	0%	111
	30-44	38%	48%	11%	3%	264
	45-64	45%	42%	10%	2%	294
	65 and older	47%	32%	16%	4%	114
Place where live	Urban	43%	39%	15%	2%	163
	Suburban	39%	46%	12%	3%	297
	Rural/Small Town	43%	43%	11%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	44%	44%	10%	2%	204
	Republican	40%	46%	11%	4%	236
	Independent	42%	42%	14%	2%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q15 and Q16 COMBINED Have SOL's helped or not helped?					Number of cases
		Helped a lot	Helped a little	Don't know how much helped	Not helped	Don't Know if helped or not	
Total		24%	15%	3%	43%	15%	801
Sex	Male	26%	17%	3%	41%	13%	334
	Female	22%	14%	3%	45%	17%	467
Race	White	24%	13%	2%	46%	15%	622
	Black	22%	25%	5%	35%	13%	111
Region	Northwest	19%	17%	4%	44%	16%	117
	Northern VA	22%	12%	4%	41%	20%	207
	West	25%	9%	3%	50%	13%	156
	South Central	30%	22%	1%	38%	9%	143
	Tidewater	23%	17%	2%	43%	16%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	27%	13%	3%	49%	8%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	28%	17%	1%	48%	6%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	32%	14%	1%	36%	18%	171
	35-50,000	20%	17%	5%	42%	16%	129
	50-69,000	25%	11%	2%	51%	10%	125
	70,000 and above	23%	17%	2%	44%	15%	251
Education	H.S. or less	33%	13%	3%	37%	14%	224
	Some college	22%	17%	3%	45%	13%	212
	College grad and up	19%	15%	3%	47%	17%	360
Age	18-29	20%	18%	4%	45%	14%	111
	30-44	22%	13%	2%	48%	14%	264
	45-64	27%	16%	2%	42%	12%	294
	65 and older	28%	15%	4%	32%	21%	114
Place where live	Urban	21%	19%	3%	39%	17%	163
	Suburban	22%	15%	2%	46%	15%	297
	Rural/Small Town	27%	13%	4%	43%	14%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	19%	22%	3%	44%	12%	204
	Republican	25%	13%	2%	46%	15%	236
	Independent	26%	13%	3%	42%	16%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q17 "The SOL tests hold schools accountable for student achievement."						Number of cases
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No answer	
Total		26%	41%	15%	11%	6%	1%	801
Sex	Male	27%	44%	14%	9%	6%	1%	334
	Female	26%	37%	16%	13%	7%	1%	467
Race	White	26%	39%	16%	11%	7%	1%	622
	Black	25%	46%	11%	10%	5%	2%	111
Region	Northwest	26%	37%	13%	13%	8%	3%	117
	Northern VA	24%	40%	15%	12%	9%		207
	West	27%	37%	15%	12%	7%	1%	156
	South Central	30%	44%	16%	5%	2%	2%	143
	Tidewater	25%	44%	14%	13%	4%		178
Children in Public School	Yes	32%	37%	12%	15%	3%	1%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	29%	41%	16%	11%	2%	0%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	30%	35%	16%	10%	6%	3%	171
	35-50,000	25%	42%	17%	10%	6%	1%	129
	50-69,000	28%	39%	16%	11%	6%	1%	125
	70,000 and above	26%	42%	15%	12%	5%		251
Education	H.S. or less	32%	38%	14%	9%	5%	2%	224
	Some college	23%	42%	14%	14%	6%	1%	212
	College grad and up	24%	42%	16%	11%	7%	0%	360
Age	18-29	23%	42%	19%	12%	4%		111
	30-44	23%	45%	13%	13%	5%	1%	264
	45-64	29%	37%	15%	12%	5%	1%	294
	65 and older	32%	35%	14%	4%	12%	2%	114
Place where live	Urban	27%	39%	13%	15%	5%	1%	163
	Suburban	26%	44%	15%	9%	5%	0%	297
	Rural/Small Town	26%	38%	16%	12%	7%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	26%	46%	12%	10%	5%	1%	204
	Republican	28%	42%	16%	10%	3%	1%	236
	Independent	26%	36%	18%	11%	9%	0%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q18 "The SOL tests give parents helpful information about school performance."						
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No answer	Number of cases
Total		21%	37%	18%	15%	7%	1%	801
Sex	Male	23%	41%	17%	12%	6%	1%	334
	Female	20%	32%	19%	18%	8%	2%	467
Race	White	20%	36%	20%	15%	8%	1%	622
	Black	26%	39%	12%	16%	6%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	22%	34%	15%	17%	6%	6%	117
	Northern VA	16%	39%	19%	15%	10%	0%	207
	West	20%	29%	22%	18%	9%	1%	156
	South Central	22%	45%	18%	9%	5%	0%	143
	Tidewater	26%	35%	16%	18%	5%		178
Children in Public School	Yes	24%	36%	20%	19%	1%	1%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	22%	32%	25%	20%	1%		123
Family Income	Under 35,000	36%	26%	14%	11%	9%	3%	171
	35-50,000	16%	43%	17%	18%	6%	1%	129
	50-69,000	19%	41%	22%	16%	2%	0%	125
	70,000 and above	20%	37%	19%	16%	7%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	34%	30%	15%	13%	7%	1%	224
	Some college	18%	42%	16%	16%	7%	1%	212
	College grad and up	14%	38%	22%	17%	8%	1%	360
Age	18-29	29%	30%	24%	12%	5%		111
	30-44	16%	44%	17%	18%	4%	1%	264
	45-64	23%	34%	18%	18%	6%	1%	294
	65 and older	22%	33%	15%	9%	19%	3%	114
Place where live	Urban	23%	35%	17%	17%	7%	1%	163
	Suburban	16%	44%	20%	14%	6%	0%	297
	Rural/Small Town	25%	31%	18%	16%	8%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	19%	39%	17%	19%	7%		204
	Republican	21%	40%	18%	14%	5%	1%	236
	Independent	23%	31%	20%	16%	9%	2%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q19 As far as you know, have test scores on the SOL's for students across the state gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same over the last 5 years?					Number of cases
		Gone up	Gone down	Stayed about the same	Don't know	No answer	
Total		45%	6%	18%	29%	1%	801
Sex	Male	44%	6%	20%	28%	2%	334
	Female	46%	5%	17%	31%	1%	467
Race	White	45%	5%	18%	30%	1%	622
	Black	46%	11%	19%	23%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	40%	6%	19%	31%	3%	117
	Northern VA	38%	2%	17%	42%	1%	207
	West	44%	10%	16%	27%	3%	156
	South Central	53%	5%	21%	21%	1%	143
	Tidewater	51%	8%	19%	22%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	56%	6%	17%	20%	2%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	66%	0%	20%	13%	1%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	38%	5%	27%	28%	2%	171
	35-50,000	39%	6%	22%	32%	1%	129
	50-69,000	49%	9%	15%	25%	2%	125
	70,000 and above	57%	2%	16%	24%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	41%	11%	22%	24%	1%	224
	Some college	37%	5%	24%	33%	1%	212
	College grad and up	54%	2%	12%	30%	2%	360
Age	18-29	31%	10%	25%	34%		111
	30-44	46%	5%	17%	30%	2%	264
	45-64	55%	5%	13%	25%	2%	294
	65 and older	40%	5%	24%	30%	1%	114
Place where live	Urban	40%	7%	22%	30%	1%	163
	Suburban	51%	4%	14%	30%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	42%	7%	20%	29%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	48%	8%	19%	25%	1%	204
	Republican	46%	4%	18%	29%	2%	236
	Independent	43%	6%	19%	31%	1%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q20 As far as you know, has the number of accredited schools in Virginia gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same over the last 5 years?					Number of cases
		Gone up	Gone down	Stayed about the same	Don't know	No answer	
Total		33%	6%	25%	34%	2%	801
Sex	Male	30%	7%	27%	33%	3%	334
	Female	35%	5%	24%	35%	2%	467
Race	White	33%	5%	25%	36%	2%	622
	Black	40%	8%	27%	23%	3%	111
Region	Northwest	24%	6%	24%	44%	2%	117
	Northern VA	27%	4%	20%	48%	2%	207
	West	31%	6%	31%	28%	3%	156
	South Central	41%	8%	30%	19%	2%	143
	Tidewater	39%	5%	25%	28%	2%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	40%	6%	24%	28%	1%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	56%	3%	21%	20%	0%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	27%	4%	36%	30%	3%	171
	35-50,000	28%	9%	30%	33%	1%	129
	50-69,000	36%	8%	27%	28%	2%	125
	70,000 and above	41%	4%	19%	34%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	31%	7%	31%	29%	3%	224
	Some college	25%	6%	29%	38%	2%	212
	College grad and up	40%	4%	19%	35%	2%	360
Age	18-29	26%	8%	32%	34%		111
	30-44	32%	6%	28%	32%	2%	264
	45-64	43%	5%	16%	33%	2%	294
	65 and older	24%	3%	30%	39%	4%	114
Place where live	Urban	25%	6%	27%	39%	3%	163
	Suburban	41%	4%	18%	35%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	29%	7%	31%	31%	3%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	35%	7%	30%	28%	0%	204
	Republican	33%	4%	25%	35%	4%	236
	Independent	32%	7%	24%	36%	1%	271



Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q21 Do you favor or oppose giving parents vouchers to pay for their child's tuition at a private, or parochial school of their choice?				Number of cases
		Favor	Oppose	Don't know	No answer	
Total		47%	44%	7%	2%	801
Sex	Male	45%	47%	5%	2%	334
	Female	48%	41%	9%	2%	467
Race	White	47%	44%	6%	2%	622
	Black	43%	45%	9%	3%	111
Region	Northwest	54%	36%	7%	2%	117
	Northern VA	48%	46%	5%	1%	207
	West	39%	47%	11%	3%	156
	South Central	40%	50%	6%	4%	143
	Tidewater	52%	41%	7%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	48%	40%	9%	2%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	35%	60%	3%	1%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	47%	42%	9%	1%	171
	35-50,000	47%	43%	7%	3%	129
	50-69,000	52%	41%	6%	2%	125
	70,000 and above	49%	49%	2%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	41%	46%	11%	3%	224
	Some college	54%	33%	10%	2%	212
	College grad and up	46%	50%	3%	2%	360
Age	18-29	48%	40%	10%	2%	111
	30-44	54%	35%	7%	3%	264
	45-64	40%	54%	4%	1%	294
	65 and older	41%	49%	7%	3%	114
Place where live	Urban	47%	45%	4%	3%	163
	Suburban	49%	45%	5%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	43%	43%	10%	3%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	42%	52%	5%	1%	204
	Republican	56%	35%	6%	2%	236
	Independent	43%	48%	7%	2%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q22 Suppose vouchers were only available for parents with children enrolled in schools that fail to meet state performance standards ...would you favor or oppose this?				Number of cases
		Favor	Oppose	Don't know	No answer	
Total		44%	48%	6%	3%	801
Sex	Male	41%	50%	5%	3%	334
	Female	46%	45%	6%	3%	467
Race	White	43%	49%	5%	3%	622
	Black	47%	43%	9%	2%	111
Region	Northwest	45%	45%	6%	4%	117
	Northern VA	50%	45%	3%	2%	207
	West	37%	49%	11%	4%	156
	South Central	43%	48%	6%	3%	143
	Tidewater	42%	51%	5%	2%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	45%	46%	5%	5%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	29%	67%	2%	2%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	49%	40%	9%	2%	171
	35-50,000	41%	46%	5%	8%	129
	50-69,000	42%	55%	1%	2%	125
	70,000 and above	47%	51%	1%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	38%	48%	10%	4%	224
	Some college	48%	42%	7%	3%	212
	College grad and up	45%	51%	2%	2%	360
Age	18-29	45%	44%	9%	3%	111
	30-44	51%	42%	3%	4%	264
	45-64	40%	55%	4%	1%	294
	65 and older	36%	50%	10%	3%	114
Place where live	Urban	46%	47%	5%	2%	163
	Suburban	47%	48%	4%	2%	297
	Rural/Small Town	40%	48%	8%	4%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	36%	56%	4%	3%	204
	Republican	51%	41%	5%	3%	236
	Independent	45%	48%	4%	3%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q23 "Parents need more school choice because the public schools aren't providing a good education."						Number of cases
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	No answer	
Total		22%	28%	25%	21%	4%	1%	801
Sex	Male	21%	29%	27%	19%	3%	1%	334
	Female	22%	26%	23%	22%	5%	2%	467
Race	White	20%	28%	27%	21%	3%	1%	622
	Black	29%	27%	21%	17%	5%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	20%	36%	23%	16%	3%	1%	117
	Northern VA	17%	24%	28%	27%	5%		207
	West	19%	28%	31%	16%	3%	3%	156
	South Central	19%	32%	21%	21%	5%	1%	143
	Tidewater	32%	25%	20%	19%	3%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	17%	28%	29%	23%	1%	2%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	10%	25%	29%	36%		1%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	24%	33%	22%	15%	5%	1%	171
	35-50,000	25%	31%	25%	16%	3%		129
	50-69,000	23%	26%	26%	22%	3%	1%	125
	70,000 and above	19%	25%	25%	28%	2%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	23%	27%	26%	15%	6%	2%	224
	Some college	26%	32%	21%	20%	2%		212
	College grad and up	18%	25%	27%	25%	4%	1%	360
Age	18-29	18%	39%	23%	19%	2%		111
	30-44	25%	25%	32%	15%	3%	1%	264
	45-64	21%	23%	22%	31%	3%	1%	294
	65 and older	22%	32%	18%	17%	9%	3%	114
Place where live	Urban	25%	34%	23%	16%	2%		163
	Suburban	20%	23%	25%	27%	4%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	21%	29%	27%	17%	5%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	17%	26%	28%	24%	4%	1%	204
	Republican	23%	32%	24%	19%	2%	0%	236
	Independent	23%	25%	26%	22%	4%	0%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q24 "Giving parents more school choice will help the public schools be held accountable for performance."					No answer	Number of cases
		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know		
Total		33%	34%	15%	13%	4%	2%	801
Sex	Male	33%	34%	16%	13%	3%	1%	334
	Female	34%	33%	15%	12%	4%	2%	467
Race	White	29%	36%	16%	14%	4%	1%	622
	Black	47%	27%	13%	8%	3%	2%	111
Region	Northwest	36%	36%	13%	10%	4%	2%	117
	Northern VA	37%	25%	18%	18%	1%	0%	207
	West	28%	40%	15%	10%	5%	3%	156
	South Central	28%	41%	16%	8%	4%	2%	143
	Tidewater	36%	32%	13%	14%	4%	1%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	36%	35%	15%	12%	2%		233
School Employee in Household	Yes	21%	27%	27%	22%	1%	2%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	32%	40%	9%	9%	7%	3%	171
	35-50,000	39%	29%	21%	7%	2%	1%	129
	50-69,000	32%	39%	17%	10%	2%		125
	70,000 and above	34%	30%	14%	19%	2%	1%	251
Education	H.S. or less	36%	35%	12%	9%	5%	3%	224
	Some college	33%	39%	13%	10%	4%	1%	212
	College grad and up	31%	30%	19%	17%	2%	1%	360
Age	18-29	30%	37%	15%	12%	5%		111
	30-44	38%	36%	16%	8%	2%	1%	264
	45-64	32%	29%	16%	20%	1%	1%	294
	65 and older	29%	34%	12%	9%	10%	6%	114
Place where live	Urban	40%	26%	16%	11%	5%	1%	163
	Suburban	32%	33%	14%	17%	2%	1%	297
	Rural/Small Town	30%	37%	15%	10%	4%	2%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	31%	32%	18%	15%	4%	0%	204
	Republican	36%	35%	13%	11%	4%	1%	236
	Independent	32%	34%	17%	13%	3%	1%	271

Commonwealth Education Poll 2003

		Q25 Do you think the federal government's involvement in the schools will help, hurt, or make no difference in school performance?					Number of cases
		Help	Hurt	Make no difference	Don't know	No answer	
Total		42%	22%	29%	6%	1%	801
Sex	Male	45%	25%	25%	4%	2%	334
	Female	39%	19%	33%	8%	1%	467
Race	White	37%	24%	31%	6%	2%	622
	Black	57%	12%	24%	6%	1%	111
Region	Northwest	38%	27%	29%	4%	2%	117
	Northern VA	39%	22%	31%	7%	1%	207
	West	37%	24%	29%	8%	3%	156
	South Central	52%	22%	20%	5%		143
	Tidewater	43%	17%	33%	5%	2%	178
Children in Public School	Yes	45%	17%	31%	5%	2%	233
School Employee in Household	Yes	41%	28%	26%	4%	1%	123
Family Income	Under 35,000	42%	20%	27%	9%	2%	171
	35-50,000	48%	15%	28%	8%	2%	129
	50-69,000	42%	22%	31%	5%		125
	70,000 and above	40%	26%	31%	2%	2%	251
Education	H.S. or less	45%	16%	30%	8%	1%	224
	Some college	46%	22%	23%	8%	2%	212
	College grad and up	36%	26%	33%	4%	2%	360
Age	18-29	50%	11%	29%	9%	1%	111
	30-44	46%	20%	27%	4%	2%	264
	45-64	34%	29%	33%	3%	1%	294
	65 and older	35%	26%	27%	12%	1%	114
Place where live	Urban	44%	18%	31%	6%	2%	163
	Suburban	38%	23%	33%	4%	2%	297
	Rural/Small Town	45%	23%	23%	8%	1%	332
Party Identification	Democrat	53%	16%	24%	5%	2%	204
	Republican	40%	24%	29%	5%	2%	236
	Independent	35%	26%	31%	8%	1%	271