

Contact:

PATRICK MURRAY

732-263-5858 (office)

732-979-6769 (cell)

pdmurray@monmouth.edu

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For more information:

Monmouth University Polling Institute

West Long Branch, NJ 07764

www.monmouth.edu/polling

NEW JERSEY SUPPORTS EDUCATION REFORMS

Public likes merit pay, limited tenure, vouchers, charter schools

Most New Jerseyans support education reforms proposed by Governor Chris Christie, such as tenure reform and voucher programs, according to the latest *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll*. The public also supports some form of merit pay based on student performance, but is uncertain that current state tests are the best ways to determine that.

Teacher compensation has been one of the main sticking points in the current debate on education reform in New Jersey. Currently, 38% of New Jerseyans say that public school teachers are paid too little. This compares to 15% who say they are paid too much and 41% who say they are being paid about the right amount for the job they do. These findings are every similar to the results of a state poll conducted in 1992.

Governor Christie wants teacher salaries to be based on student performance and classroom evaluations rather than simply a teacher's academic credentials and years of experience. The public agrees with the governor, to a point. About one-third (32%) say that performance-based metrics should weigh more heavily in determining teacher compensation. However, nearly half (47%) feel that performance and experience should be given equal weight in determining an individual teacher's salary. Another 18% feel that years of experience and academic degrees should be the most important factor in teacher pay.

Under one proposal, a major component in determining teachers' performance would be how well their students do on the state "ASK" tests. While most New Jerseyans support the use of student performance in setting salaries, few are confident that the current tests are particularly good measurement tools. Just 1-in-3 say the standardized tests used in New Jersey schools do an excellent (6%) or good (29%) job at accurately measuring students' abilities. Another 39% say they do an only fair job and 20%

say they do a poor job. The findings are nearly identical when asked if these tests measure how well teachers are doing – 4% excellent, 27% good, 41% only fair, and 21% poor. These findings are similar for parents of public school students and other New Jersey residents alike.

“Democratic leaders in the legislature have put the kibosh on merit pay, but the New Jersey public does not feel this is such a bad idea. The sticking point is how to measure teacher and student performance,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

Another contentious issue is tenure reform. After working in a New Jersey public school for three years, a teacher is either given tenure or let go. The poll described tenure for teachers as being “basically given a permanent job unless they engage in serious misconduct.” More than half (52%) of New Jerseyans disapprove of this practice compared to 42% who approve of it. There is a clear partisan divide on this issue with 53% of Democrats approving of the current tenure policy and 69% of Republicans disapproving. Most independents also disapprove (54%).

Despite the political divide on the current tenure policy, more than 3-in-4 (77%) New Jerseyans of every partisan stripe, would support changing it to a limited tenure system which would evaluate teachers on a regular basis. A teacher who fails an evaluation would be given up to three years to regain their tenure or they could be fired if they do not improve. Only 18% of Garden State residents oppose this proposed change. Importantly, even among those who approve of the current lifetime tenure policy, an overwhelming 73% would support this change.

“It appears that New Jerseyans want some type of job protection for public school teachers, but broadly support modifications to the current system,” said Murray.

Another proposed change in education policy would be to provide vouchers for low-income students to attend a public or private school of their choice. A majority of 55% support “tax funded vouchers” compared to just 34% who oppose it. This is nearly identical to voucher support levels measured in a 2004 state poll.

When asked about the impact of vouchers on New Jersey’s education system, 27% say that vouchers would serve to strengthen public schools and 25% say they would weaken public schools, with another 42% saying that vouchers would have no impact on public schools. Seven years ago, slightly more (32%) New Jerseyans said vouchers would improve public schools while 26% – similar to the current poll – said vouchers would weaken them.

Charter school expansion is another area that Chris Christie has emphasized in his reform agenda. The first charter school in the state opened its doors 14 years ago. Currently, 65% of New Jerseyans have heard about the state’s charter schools, which is up from 56% seven years ago.

There is some confusion over what a charter school is. Among those who say they are aware of New Jersey’s charter schools, only 36% know they are technically public schools. More (40%) believe

they are actually private schools, and another 24% say they do not know whether charters are public or private. Among those who say they know a great deal about charter schools, 50% say that charter schools are public, 33% say they are private, and 17% say they do not know.

Furthermore, about half (49%) say they do not know whether charter school students are required to take the state's standardized tests. Another 41% correctly say that they must, while 10% believe that charters are exempt from this requirement. Among those who say they know a great deal about charter schools, 55% say that charter schools must use the state's standardized tests, 10% say they do not have to, and 36% do not know.

Among those who are aware of New Jersey's charter schools, 39% say they provide a better education than traditional public schools compared to just 10% who say they do a worse job. Another 39% say charters provide the same standard of education. In 2004, 44% said charters did a better job, 11% said they did a worse job, and 26% said they did about the same as traditional public schools in educating students.

Public opinion on the impact of charter schools on traditional public schools is similar to vouchers. About 1-in-5 (20%) say charters actually strengthen public schools compared to 22% who say charters weaken them, with another 51% saying they have no impact on the quality of traditional public schools. Seven years ago, 14% said charters strengthened public schools to 24% who said charters weakened them.

Accountability has been one of the major issues in the charter schools debate, since charter schools are overseen by the state and not by individual school districts. Just over half (51%) of those familiar with charter schools say that better measures are needed to hold these schools accountable for the education they provide, while 28% say that appropriate measures are already in place. Another 21% have no opinion. This is comparable to New Jersey opinion about accountability for public schools in general.

Six-in-ten (63%) Garden State residents say their own local schools need more accountability – which is up from 55% in a 2006 poll – compared to just 29% who say adequate oversight is already in place – which is down from 39% five years ago. Among those who are familiar with charter schools, 33% say both their local public schools and charter schools need more accountability, 17% say public school oversight is adequate but charters need more accountability, 19% say charter oversight is adequate but public schools need more accountability, and 7% think both public and charter schools have adequate accountability.

Another potential change for the education system would be to move school board elections from April to November. Half (51%) of New Jerseyans have no opinion on this issue. Among the remainder, support (39%) outnumbers opposition (11%) by nearly 4 to 1.

Overall, ratings of the state’s education system have remained stable over the past 15 years, with a majority rating New Jersey’s public schools as either excellent (13%) or good (43%). Another 31% rate them as only fair and 10% say they are poor.

Some supporters of these education reforms say they will help lessen disparities in student performance based on wealth and race. The public is not particularly convinced this would happen. While 71% of New Jerseyans agree that it is very important to close the achievement gap between white and minority students, just 25% feel that the proposed reforms in New Jersey would accomplish that. Another 11% feel that they would actually widen the achievement gap and 41% say these reforms would have no impact.

The *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll* was conducted by telephone with 802 New Jersey adults from August 3 to 8, 2011. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the NJ Press Media newspaper group (Asbury Park Press, Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

Disclosure note: Monmouth University poll director Patrick Murray is the parent of a New Jersey charter school student.

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. In general, how would you rate the job the public schools are doing here in New Jersey – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Excellent | 13% | 14% | 13% | 12% | 23% | 12% | 14% | 12% |
| Good | 43% | 44% | 43% | 41% | 57% | 40% | 44% | 42% |
| Only fair | 31% | 31% | 30% | 34% | 11% | 35% | 31% | 31% |
| Poor | 10% | 8% | 11% | 10% | 4% | 11% | 10% | 10% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 5% | 3% | 1% | 4% |

| TREND: | Aug 2011 | Dec 2010 | Aug 2009 | Aug 2004 | Sep 2003 | Apr 2001 | Sep 1999 | Sep 1998 | Feb 1996 | Sep 1993 | Jan 1992 | Mar 1989 | Oct 1987 | Aug 1985 | Oct 1983 | Mar 1982 | Sep 1980 | Apr 1978 |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Excellent | 13% | 12% | 12% | 13% | 15% | 12% | 11% | 11% | 10% | 7% | 9% | 7% | 11% | 9% | 8% | 8% | 8% | 6% |
| Good | 43% | 41% | 43% | 40% | 39% | 49% | 41% | 42% | 42% | 32% | 33% | 40% | 42% | 36% | 40% | 35% | 38% | 27% |
| Only Fair | 31% | 31% | 27% | 24% | 25% | 25% | 31% | 28% | 28% | 33% | 32% | 34% | 29% | 31% | 32% | 34% | 39% | 30% |
| Poor | 10% | 10% | 10% | 13% | 10% | 7% | 9% | 9% | 11% | 22% | 20% | 14% | 10% | 14% | 12% | 13% | 10% | 30% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 5% | 7% | 10% | 11% | 7% | 9% | 9% | 9% | 6% | 6% | 5% | 8% | 11% | 8% | 9% | 5% | 7% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 2864 | 900 | 800 | 802 | 802 | 802 | 804 | 804 | 801 | 800 | 800 | 1000 | 800 | 802 | 603 | 395 | 1207 |

* 1978 to 2004 trend source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

2. Do you think appropriate measures are in place to hold your own local schools accountable for how well they educate students or are better measures needed?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Appropriate measures in place | 29% | 32% | 27% | 32% | 47% | 26% | 25% | 30% |
| Better measures needed | 63% | 60% | 65% | 65% | 47% | 66% | 70% | 62% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 8% | 8% | 3% | 6% | 8% | 5% | 8% |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| TREND: | August 2011 | Oct 2006 |
| Appropriate measures in place | 29% | 39% |
| Better measures needed | 63% | 55% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 7% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 803 |

3. In your opinion, do you think public school teachers are paid too much, too little, or about the right amount?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Too much | 15% | 3% | 20% | 24% | 7% | 16% | 12% | 15% |
| Too little | 38% | 55% | 32% | 22% | 54% | 35% | 40% | 37% |
| About the right amount | 41% | 37% | 42% | 47% | 34% | 42% | 41% | 41% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 5% | 7% | 7% | 6% | 7% | 6% | 7% |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| TREND: | August 2011 | January 1992* |
| Too much | 15% | 15% |
| Too little | 38% | 36% |
| About the right amount | 41% | 48% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 1% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 743 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

4. Do you think salaries should be: Mostly tied to a teacher's years of experience and formal education or Mostly tied to how well their students do and classroom evaluations, or a combination of both? [FIRST TWO STATEMENTS WERE ROTATED] [IF "COMBINATION": Should more weight be put on a teacher's experience and education or on how well their students do and classroom evaluations, or should they be weighted equally?]

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|--|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Mostly experience/degree | 13% | 15% | 11% | 10% | 23% | 11% | 9% | 13% |
| Both, but experience/degree more important | 5% | 5% | 6% | 5% | 7% | 5% | 7% | 5% |
| Both, equally | 47% | 54% | 49% | 37% | 41% | 48% | 52% | 46% |
| Both, but performance more important | 13% | 10% | 13% | 18% | 10% | 13% | 8% | 14% |
| Mostly on performance | 19% | 14% | 18% | 29% | 12% | 20% | 21% | 19% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 2% | 3% | 1% | 7% | 3% | 3% | 3% |

5. After working in a New Jersey public school for three years, a teacher is either given tenure or let go. A teacher who gets tenure after this trial period is basically given a permanent job unless they engage in serious misconduct. Do you approve or disapprove of giving school teachers tenure?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Approve | 42% | 53% | 40% | 30% | 57% | 40% | 45% | 41% |
| Disapprove | 52% | 42% | 54% | 69% | 38% | 54% | 48% | 54% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 5% | 6% | 2% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 5% |

6. One proposal currently being discussed would grant teachers limited tenure, which means they would be evaluated regularly even after getting tenure. If they fail an evaluation, they would be given up to three years to improve and regain their tenure. However, they could also be fired during this time if they do not improve. Do you approve or disapprove of this proposal?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Approve | 77% | 79% | 76% | 83% | 71% | 79% | 82% | 76% |
| Disapprove | 18% | 18% | 20% | 14% | 23% | 17% | 14% | 20% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 4% | 3% | 4% | 3% | 6% | 4% | 5% | 4% |

[QUESTIONS 7 AND 8 WERE ROTATED]

7. What kind of job do you think the standardized tests used in New Jersey schools do at accurately measuring students' abilities – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Excellent | 6% | 6% | 5% | 6% | 3% | 6% | 4% | 6% |
| Good | 29% | 32% | 27% | 33% | 17% | 31% | 32% | 29% |
| Fair | 39% | 37% | 42% | 38% | 50% | 38% | 38% | 39% |
| Poor | 20% | 19% | 20% | 19% | 24% | 19% | 25% | 19% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 7% | 6% | 1% | 7% |

8. What kind of job do you think the standardized tests used in New Jersey schools do at accurately measuring the job teachers are doing – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Excellent | 4% | 3% | 5% | 1% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 4% |
| Good | 27% | 31% | 25% | 27% | 19% | 28% | 28% | 27% |
| Fair | 41% | 42% | 40% | 42% | 44% | 40% | 42% | 41% |
| Poor | 21% | 19% | 23% | 24% | 29% | 20% | 23% | 21% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 8% | 6% | 7% | 5% | 7% | 7% | 4% | 8% |

9. A few years ago, New Jersey allowed groups and individuals to start charter schools. These are schools which serve a town or district but operate independently of the local school district. Have you read or heard anything about these charter schools, or not? [If YES: Have you heard a great deal, some, or only a little?]

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| YES, Great deal | 22% | 19% | 24% | 22% | 34% | 20% | 26% | 21% |
| YES, Some | 22% | 26% | 18% | 26% | 23% | 22% | 17% | 23% |
| YES, Only a little | 21% | 22% | 20% | 24% | 17% | 22% | 17% | 22% |
| NO, have not heard anything | 34% | 32% | 38% | 27% | 26% | 35% | 40% | 32% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% | 0% | 1% |

| TREND: | August 2011 | August 2004* |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| YES, Great deal | 22% | 16% |
| YES, Some | 22% | 24% |
| YES, Only a little | 21% | 16% |
| NO, have not heard anything | 34% | 42% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 2% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 800 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

[Question 10 was asked only of those aware of charter schools, moe= ± 4.1%]

10. Do you think charter schools do a better, worse or about the same job as traditional public schools in educating students?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | CHARTER AWARENESS | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little |
| Better than traditional | 39% | 35% | 39% | 47% | 16% | 44% | 43% | 38% | 51% | 37% | 29% |
| Worse than traditional | 10% | 9% | 11% | 9% | 16% | 9% | 5% | 12% | 13% | 11% | 7% |
| About the same | 39% | 45% | 38% | 31% | 50% | 37% | 45% | 37% | 32% | 40% | 44% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 12% | 10% | 12% | 13% | 18% | 10% | 7% | 13% | 4% | 12% | 20% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 168 | 265 | 131 | 114 | 455 | 97 | 484 | 208 | 198 | 178 |

| TREND: | August 2011 | August 2004* |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Better than traditional | 39% | 44% |
| Worse than traditional | 10% | 11% |
| About the same | 39% | 26% |
| (VOL) Depends | n/a | 6% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 12% | 14% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 483 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

[Question 11 was asked only of those aware of charter schools, moe= ± 4.1%]

11. Do you think the growth of charter schools has improved or weakened traditional public schools in New Jersey, or has it made no difference?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | CHARTER AWARENESS | | |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little |
| Improved public schools | 20% | 24% | 18% | 18% | 10% | 22% | 32% | 17% | 27% | 17% | 15% |
| Weakened public schools | 22% | 20% | 26% | 18% | 37% | 20% | 17% | 24% | 29% | 23% | 15% |
| Made no difference | 51% | 50% | 50% | 55% | 45% | 51% | 47% | 51% | 42% | 55% | 56% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 6% | 6% | 9% | 7% | 7% | 3% | 8% | 2% | 5% | 14% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 168 | 265 | 131 | 114 | 455 | 97 | 484 | 208 | 198 | 178 |

| TREND: | August 2011 | August 2004* |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Improved public schools | 20% | 14% |
| Weakened public schools | 22% | 24% |
| Made no difference | 51% | 52% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 7% | 10% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 483 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

[Question 12 was asked only of those aware of charter schools, moe= ± 4.1%]

12. Do you think appropriate measures are in place to hold charter schools accountable for how well they educate students or are better measures needed?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | CHARTER AWARENESS | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little |
| Appropriate measures in place | 28% | 29% | 28% | 31% | 15% | 30% | 32% | 27% | 34% | 27% | 23% |
| Better measures needed | 51% | 47% | 56% | 46% | 58% | 49% | 55% | 50% | 55% | 51% | 46% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 21% | 24% | 17% | 24% | 27% | 21% | 14% | 23% | 11% | 22% | 31% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 168 | 265 | 131 | 114 | 455 | 97 | 484 | 208 | 198 | 178 |

[Question 13 was asked only of those aware of charter schools, moe= ± 4.1%]

13. Do you happen to know if charter schools are public schools or private schools? If you do not know, just tell me.

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | CHARTER AWARENESS | | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little |
| Yes, Public | 36% | 40% | 37% | 33% | 42% | 35% | 45% | 35% | 50% | 35% | 24% |
| Yes, Private | 40% | 40% | 39% | 43% | 31% | 41% | 36% | 41% | 33% | 41% | 45% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 24% | 20% | 24% | 24% | 27% | 24% | 20% | 25% | 17% | 24% | 31% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 168 | 265 | 131 | 114 | 455 | 97 | 484 | 208 | 198 | 178 |

[Question 14 was asked only of those aware of charter schools, moe= ± 4.1%]

14. To the best of your knowledge, are charter school students required to take the same standardized tests as public school students, or don't they have to? If you do not know, just tell me.

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | CHARTER AWARENESS | | |
|------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little |
| Take same tests | 41% | 38% | 44% | 44% | 35% | 42% | 46% | 40% | 55% | 37% | 31% |
| Do not take same tests | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 49% | 52% | 46% | 46% | 55% | 48% | 44% | 50% | 36% | 53% | 58% |
| Unwtd N | 584 | 168 | 265 | 131 | 114 | 455 | 97 | 484 | 208 | 198 | 178 |

15. Another suggested change for education in New Jersey is to give vouchers to parents in low-income areas. These vouchers could be used to send a child to any public or private school. Have you read or heard anything about school vouchers, or not? [YES: Have you heard a great deal, some, or only a little?]

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|-----------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| YES, Great deal | 14% | 12% | 15% | 15% | 24% | 13% | 11% | 15% |
| YES, Some | 19% | 16% | 20% | 23% | 24% | 18% | 15% | 20% |
| YES, Only a little | 19% | 20% | 17% | 25% | 19% | 19% | 22% | 18% |
| NO, have not heard anything | 46% | 52% | 47% | 36% | 32% | 49% | 50% | 45% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |

| TREND: | August 2011 | August 2004* |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| YES, Great deal | 14% | 16% |
| YES, Some | 19% | 22% |
| YES, Only a little | 19% | 14% |
| NO, have not heard anything | 46% | 46% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 1% | 2% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 800 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

16. Would you support or oppose using tax funds to pay for a voucher program so children living in low-income areas can go to a different school?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | VOUCHER AWARENESS | | | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|---------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little | Nothing |
| Support | 55% | 62% | 56% | 45% | 52% | 56% | 60% | 54% | 56% | 58% | 49% | 58% |
| Oppose | 34% | 26% | 35% | 45% | 39% | 33% | 31% | 35% | 41% | 36% | 40% | 29% |
| (VOL) Depends | 5% | 7% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 4% | 6% | 2% | 4% | 8% | 6% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 5% | 5% | 4% | 5% | 3% | 6% | 5% | 5% | 0% | 2% | 3% | 7% |

| | | |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| TREND: | August 2011 | August 2004* |
| Support | 55% | 54% |
| Oppose | 34% | 37% |
| (VOL) Depends | 5% | 4% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 5% | 6% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 800 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

17. Do you think a voucher program would improve or weaken public schools in New Jersey, or would it make no difference?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | | VOUCHER AWARENESS | | | |
|------------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|-------------------|------|--------|---------|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No | Great deal | Some | Little | Nothing |
| Improve public schools | 27% | 28% | 26% | 27% | 21% | 28% | 29% | 27% | 38% | 22% | 24% | 27% |
| Weaken public schools | 25% | 18% | 27% | 31% | 36% | 23% | 22% | 26% | 40% | 28% | 25% | 18% |
| Make no difference | 42% | 46% | 43% | 38% | 37% | 43% | 43% | 41% | 20% | 45% | 43% | 48% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 8% | 4% | 4% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 6% | 1% | 5% | 7% | 6% |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| TREND: | August 2011 | August 2004* |
| Improve public schools | 27% | 32% |
| Weaken public schools | 25% | 26% |
| Make no difference | 42% | 33% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 6% | 8% |
| Unwtd N | 802 | 800 |

* Source: Eagleton/Rutgers Poll

18. Black and Hispanic students generally score lower on standardized tests than white students. In your opinion, how important do you think it is to close this academic achievement gap between these groups of students? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|----------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Very important | 71% | 77% | 70% | 63% | 72% | 70% | 74% | 70% |
| Somewhat important | 18% | 15% | 19% | 25% | 16% | 19% | 19% | 18% |
| Not too important | 4% | 4% | 3% | 6% | 5% | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| Not important at all | 4% | 3% | 4% | 4% | 2% | 4% | 4% | 4% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 3% | 2% | 3% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 0% | 4% |

19. Do you think the proposed education reforms in New Jersey will help close this achievement gap, make it even wider, or have no impact on the gap?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Close gap | 25% | 23% | 24% | 30% | 18% | 26% | 23% | 25% |
| Make gap wider | 11% | 13% | 11% | 6% | 13% | 11% | 13% | 11% |
| No impact | 41% | 38% | 45% | 42% | 49% | 40% | 47% | 40% |
| (VOL) Depends | 7% | 11% | 5% | 5% | 6% | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| (VOL) Don't know | 16% | 15% | 15% | 17% | 15% | 16% | 11% | 17% |

20. School board elections are currently held in the spring. Would you favor or oppose moving them to November so they are held at the same time as other elections, or do you have no opinion on this?

| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
|------------|------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Favor | 39% | 38% | 41% | 37% | 40% | 38% | 42% | 38% |
| Oppose | 11% | 11% | 9% | 10% | 13% | 10% | 7% | 12% |
| No opinion | 51% | 50% | 50% | 52% | 47% | 51% | 51% | 51% |

The *Monmouth University/NJ Press Media Poll* was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on August 3 to 8, 2011 with a statewide random sample of 802 adult residents, including 640 contacted on a landline telephone and 162 on a cell phone. Sampling and interviewing services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

| POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted) | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 34% Dem | 49% Male | 30% 18-34 | 64% White |
| 21% Rep | 51% Female | 39% 35-54 | 13% Black |
| 45% Ind | | 31% 55+ | 15% Hispanic |
| | | | 8% Asian/Other |

| | MARGIN OF ERROR | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------|------|------|-------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| | TOTAL | PARTY ID | | | TEACHER HOUSEHOLD | | CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL | |
| | | Dem | Ind | Rep | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Unweighted N | 802 | 237 | 363 | 168 | 140 | 639 | 140 | 657 |
| moe | 3.5% | 6.4% | 5.2% | 7.6% | 8.3% | 3.9% | 8.3% | 3.8% |

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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