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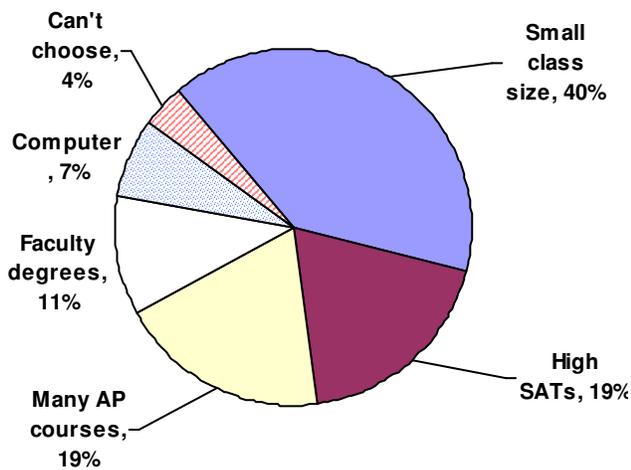
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## WHAT NEW JERSEY PARENTS WANT IN A HIGH SCHOOL

*Small class size trumps high test scores*

A recent Monmouth University Poll for New Jersey Monthly magazine asked Garden State parents to rate the importance of five different factors that can impact the quality of their child’s high school experience.

**Parents: Most Important High School Quality**



A majority of parents rate all five factors as very important to their child’s success in high school. The leading factors are: a high school that offers many advanced placement courses – 74% say this is very important – and a high school with small class sizes (71%). These are followed by having computers in every classroom (65%) and students scoring highly on the SAT (64%). Just over half say that having a faculty where the majority hold advanced degrees such as masters and doctorates is very important (54%).

When asked to select which of these five factors is most important to their child’s success in high school, New Jersey parents’ top choice is small class size (40%). High SAT scores and

many AP offerings tie for second at 19% each. Having faculty with advanced degrees comes in at 11% and computers in every classroom rounds out the list at 7%.

Each of these five factors was used in ranking New Jersey's high schools for the September "Top Schools" issue of *New Jersey Monthly*. The data for these rankings were compiled by the Monmouth University Polling Institute. The final analysis found that high SAT scores were the strongest indicator of overall ranking while small class size had the lowest correlation.

According to institute director Patrick Murray, "Many parents want their children to have an intimate learning environment. But when ranking the state's high schools, class size seems to be less related to a school's overall performance than other factors."

This poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute by telephone with 245 New Jersey parents from July 11 to 13, 2006. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 6.3$  percent. These poll results are featured in the September 2006 issue of *New Jersey Monthly* magazine.

**DATA TABLES**

*The questions referred to in this release are as follows:*

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

1. Now think about when your children are ready for high school. How important is it to your child's success that his or her HIGH SCHOOL has the following qualities? How about [READ ITEM] – is that very, somewhat, or not too important to your child's success?

| <b>July 2006<br/>New Jersey Parents</b>                   | <b>Very<br/>Important</b> | <b>Somewhat<br/>Important</b> | <b>Not too<br/>Important</b> | <b>Don't<br/>Know</b> | <b>(n)</b> |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Offers many advanced placement courses for college credit | 74%                       | 22%                           | 4%                           | 0%                    | (245)      |
| Has small class sizes                                     | 71%                       | 24%                           | 4%                           | 1%                    | (245)      |
| Has computers in every classroom                          | 65%                       | 25%                           | 9%                           | 1%                    | (245)      |
| Students have high average SAT scores                     | 64%                       | 27%                           | 7%                           | 2%                    | (245)      |
| The majority of faculty have advanced graduate degrees    | 54%                       | 37%                           | 9%                           | 0%                    | (245)      |

2. And which of these is most important?

| <b>July 2006<br/>New Jersey Parents (n=245)</b> |     |
|---|-----|
| Small class sizes                               | 40% |
| High average SAT scores                         | 19% |
| Many advanced placement classes                 | 19% |
| Majority of faculty have advanced degrees       | 11% |
| Computers in every classroom                    | 7%  |
| (VOL) Can't choose                              | 4%  |

Results for this poll are based on telephone interviews conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on July 11-13, 2006 with a statewide random sample of 802 adult residents, of which 245 identified themselves as parents of a minor child (under age 18). For results based on this sub-sample of parents, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 6.3 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.

*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 which affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.*

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