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# The 2nd Annual New Education Majority Poll

Black and Latino Parents and Families  
on Education and Their Children's Future

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For Media and Other Inquiries:

Shin Inouye, Director of Media and Communications, The Education Fund

Tyler Lewis, Director of Messaging and Project Management, The Education Fund

**202-869-0398**

**[www.NewEducationMajority.org](http://www.NewEducationMajority.org)**

**#NewEdMajority**

## About The Leadership Conference Education Fund

The Leadership Conference Education Fund builds public will for laws and policies that promote and protect the civil and human rights of every person in the United States. In so doing, we also seek to promote an appreciation for the rich diversity of the country, and attitudes that are accepting of our differences and similarities. We were founded in 1969 as the education and research arm of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (then called the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights), the nation’s premier civil and human rights coalition of more than 200 national organizations.

### **Acknowledgements**

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# Introduction

This is a critically important year for public education in the United States. In 2017, the federal government and every state will decide if they truly believe that all children can learn.

States are developing plans *right now* for how they will make sure their schools are doing their job well and educating all children. These plans are part of their obligations under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), enacted in December 2015 as the latest reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The U.S. Department of Education will review the state plans and decide whether to approve them based on their compliance with the legal requirements and the purpose of ESSA.

These plans are an opportunity for a state to make a clear declaration about its belief in the education of all children and a commitment to ensuring children get the education they deserve. States are required to explain to everyone — parents, educators, and the U.S. Department of Education — how they will remove barriers to educational success and create fair education systems for all children in their state.

What's clear about the process so far is that states are still not responsive to the needs and desires of all parents, families and communities. States are still developing plans and policies that preserve institutional inequalities and impede educational success for children, particularly children of color.

More importantly, states are developing plans and policies and maintaining state educational systems that fly in the face of the actual desires of parents of color — the new majority of public school parents — and their hopes and desires for their children's futures.

That's why we've developed the "New Education Majority" poll. It's an annual poll, now in its second year, that captures the beliefs of Black and Latino parents and families and reveals the actual perspectives, aspirations, and concerns that they have about their children's education and the education system itself.

What we've found again this year is that Black and Latino parents and families have high expectations of their children and want schools to have them too. They endorse many

kinds of supports and resources, but prioritize the retention of quality teachers, access to books and computers, and the opportunity for children to take challenging classes.

These are the very things that we know lead to successful futures for children. They are also the very things that Black and Latino children are too often denied in schools.

And again this year, Black and Latino parents and families are concerned about the insufficient and unfair funding for the schools their children attend. Perhaps as a reaction to increasing racist and hateful rhetoric in America, there is also a pronounced awareness of racial inequality in schools and a growing concern about the quality of education their children actually receive as compared to the education that White children receive.

These findings should inform education policy, particularly as states continue to implement ESSA — a civil rights law enacted to ensure that all children get a high-quality education.

It is our hope that the “New Education Majority” poll changes assumptions about what Black and Latino parents and families value and leads policymakers to put these parents, and their priorities, at the center of decisions about education policy so that greater opportunities for Black and Latino children to learn and thrive lead to a strong future for them, their communities and our nation.



Wade Henderson  
President and CEO

# Poll Summary

On behalf of The Leadership Conference Education Fund, Anzalone Liszt Grove Research recently conducted its second annual survey of the views of Black and Latino parents and family members.<sup>1</sup> Despite constituting a majority of U.S. public school students, children of color and their families are still largely underrepresented in debates on education policy and changes to the educational system — and rarely are their desires and aspirations reflected in policies that affect them.<sup>2</sup> This annual survey seeks to enrich discussions on education policy and practice by amplifying the voices of Black and Latino parents and families.

The findings in this year’s survey largely validate what was found in the first year of research. Perceptions of racial disparities remain strong, and Black and Latino parents and family members continue to place a high premium on high expectations and academic rigor for their children.

## Key Findings

### **Perceptions of racial disparities remain strong among Black and Latino parents and families, and in some cases are even more pronounced than last year.**

- There is an overwhelming sense of racial inequity in school funding. Among African Americans, the already strong sense of racial inequity in both funding and school quality continues to rise.
- The lack of funding for students of color is seen as the biggest cause of racial disparities in education, and racism has risen to become the second biggest driver among both Black and Latino parents and families.
- Parents and family members of color whose child’s teachers are mostly White are more likely to believe schools are “not really trying” to educate students of color than those with mostly Black or mostly Latino teachers.

### **Black and Latino parents and families continue to place a premium on high expectations and academic rigor for their children.**

- These parents and family members prioritize high-quality and well-equipped teachers, the fair treatment of students, and the opportunity for students to take challenging classes above all else.
- Both Black and Latino parents and families overwhelmingly believe that students today should be challenged more in school than they currently are.

<sup>1</sup> This summary is based on the results of a national survey of N=1,200 Black and Latino parents (N=600 Black and N=600 Latino or Hispanic parents or family members actively involved in the upbringing of a child between the ages 5-18) conducted by Anzalone Liszt Grove Research on behalf of The Leadership Conference Education Fund. The survey was conducted by telephone, including both landlines and cell phones, using bilingual professional interviewers in both English and Spanish. Thirty (30) percent of the Latino sample were interviewed in Spanish. Interviews were conducted March 1-9, 2017. The margin of error for each sample is plus or minus 4.0 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

<sup>2</sup> Black, Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander and Native American children constitute a majority of American public school children, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13\\_203.50.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_203.50.asp).

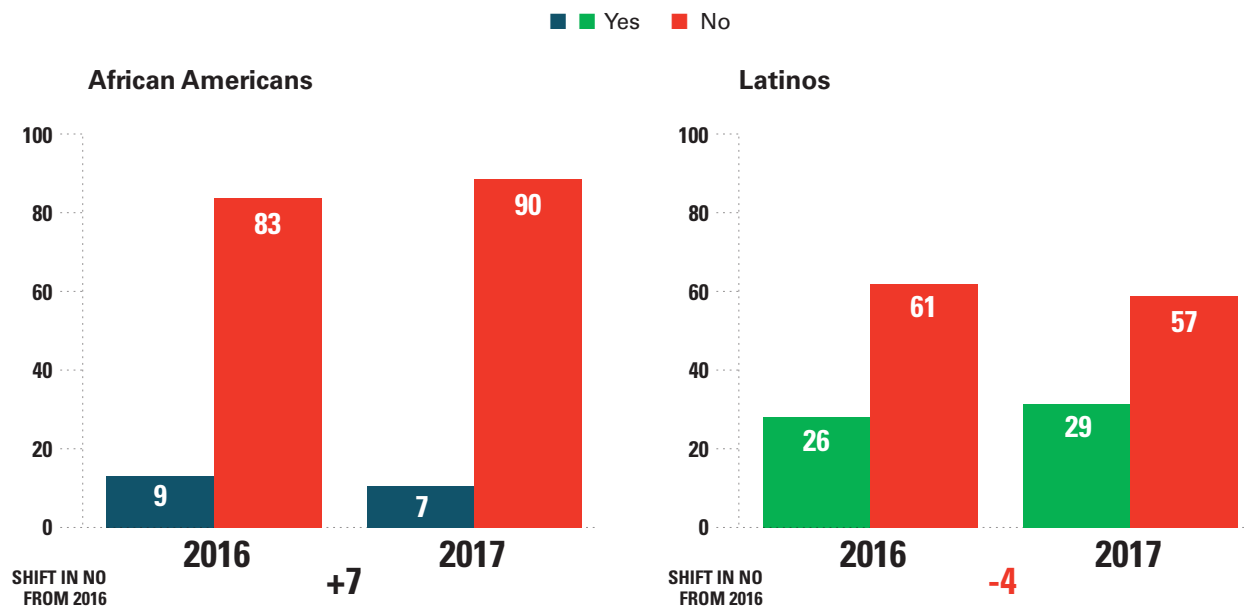
# Clear Sense of Racial Inequity in Education

## Black and Latino parents and families still overwhelmingly see racial inequity in school

**funding.** Nine out of 10 Black parents and families believe schools in Black communities are underfunded compared to White communities, and Latino parents and families are twice as likely to see racial inequity in funding as to believe funding between Latino and White communities is equal (29 percent same amount of funding vs. 57 percent NOT the same amount).

### FUNDING DISPARITY BY RACE

*“Do you think schools in (Black / Latino or Hispanic) communities receive the same amount of funding as schools in White communities?”*

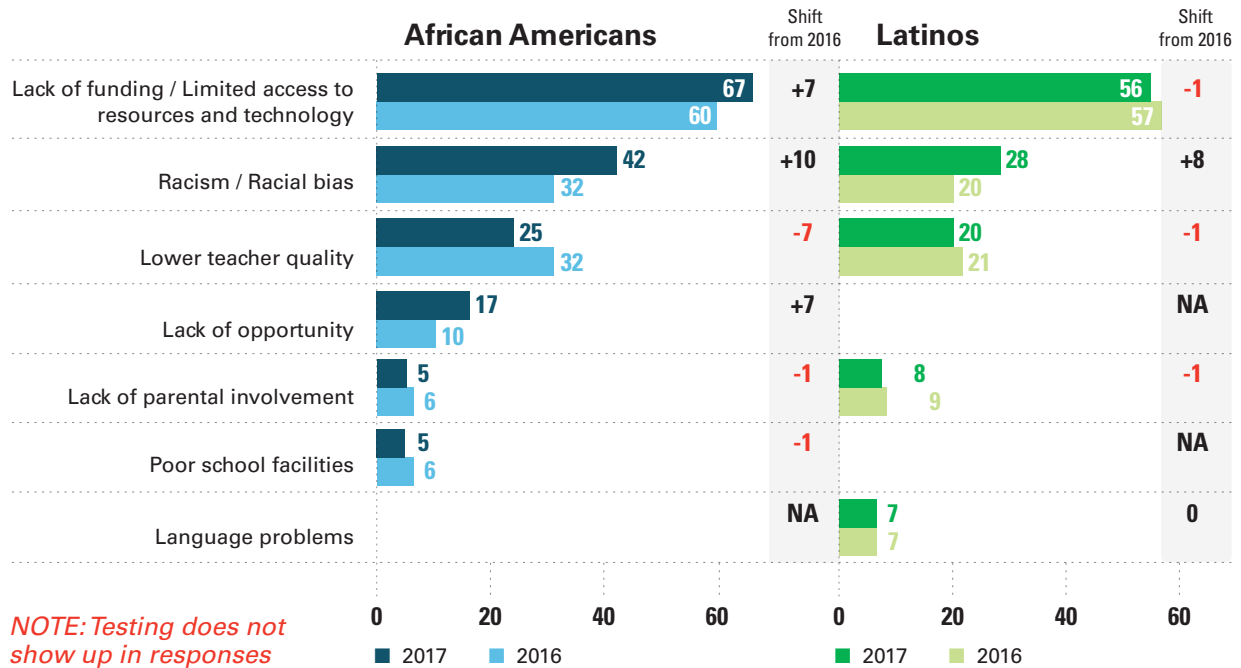


**The lack of funding for students of color is seen as the biggest cause of racial disparities in education, as it was last year.** In open-ended responses, a lack of funding and resources is cited as the biggest reason for racial disparities in education among both Black (67 percent) and Latino (56 percent) parents and families who see racial inequities in education quality.

## Clear Sense of Racial Inequity in Education

**Racism has risen this year to being seen as the second biggest driver of racial inequities in education.** The share citing racism in an open-ended question on what is driving racial differences in school quality rose by 10 points (to 42 percent) among Black parents and families since last year and by 8 points among Latino parents and families (to 28 percent).

*“Why do you think that (Black / Latino or Hispanic) students don’t receive as good an education as White students?” (Open-ended) (Multiple responses accepted)*

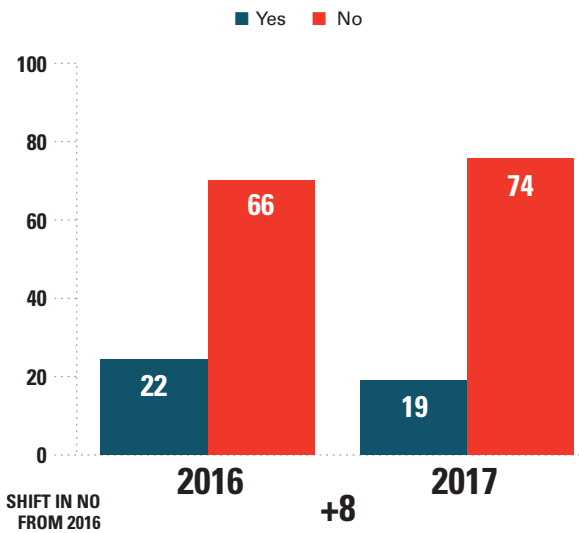


## Clear Sense of Racial Inequity in Education

**Among Black parents and families, the already strong sense of racial inequity in both funding and school quality has grown.** Nearly three quarters (74 percent) of Black parents and families believe that the education Black students receive is worse than what White students receive, an 8-point increase from last year. There was also a 7-point increase (to 90 percent) in their belief that school funding was unequal between Black and White communities.

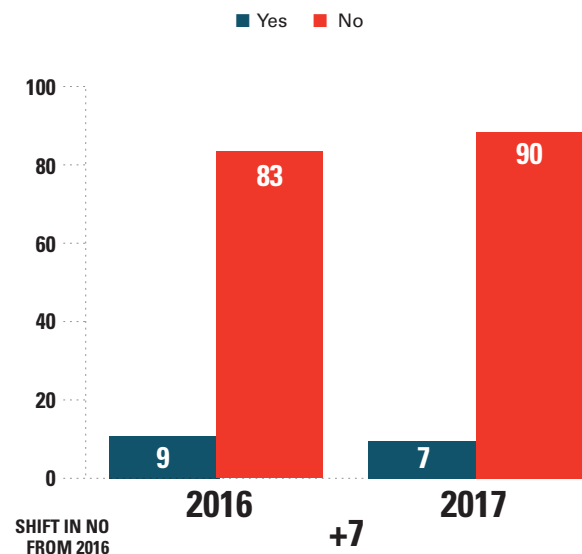
### INEQUITY IN QUALITY OF EDUCATION

*"In general, do you think the education Black students receive in U.S. schools is as good as the education White students receive?"*



### FUNDING DISPARITY BY RACE

*"Do you think Black communities receive the same amount of funding as schools in White communities?"*



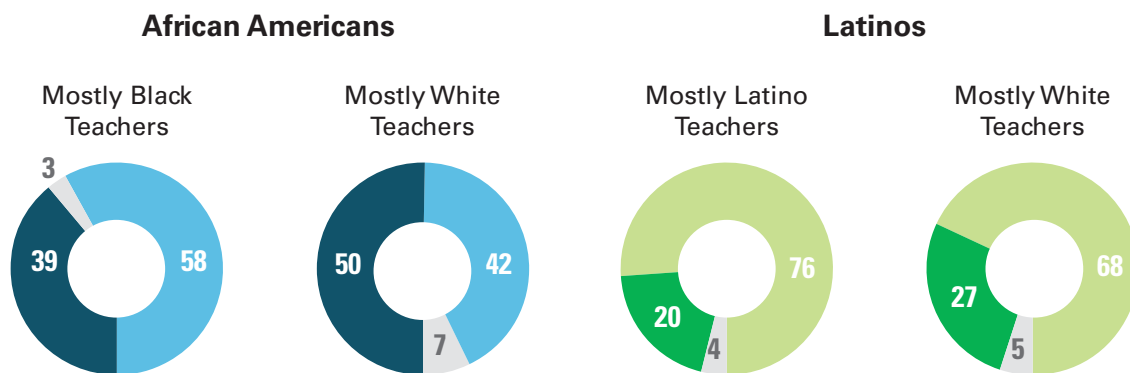


## Clear Sense of Racial Inequity in Education

**Parents and family members of color whose child’s teachers are mostly White are more likely to believe schools are “not really trying” to educate students of color than those with mostly Black or mostly Latino teachers.** Among Black parents and family members whose child’s teachers are mostly White, only 42 percent believe that schools are trying their best to educate Black students, 16 points below the share of those whose children have mostly Black teachers. This trend holds among Latinos, with those with mostly White teachers 8 points less likely to say schools are trying their best than those with mostly Latino teachers.

*“Please tell me which of the following comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.”*

- Schools in the U.S. are not really try to educate Black / Latino students.
- Schools in the U.S. are trying their best to educate Black / Latino students, even if they often leave many behind.



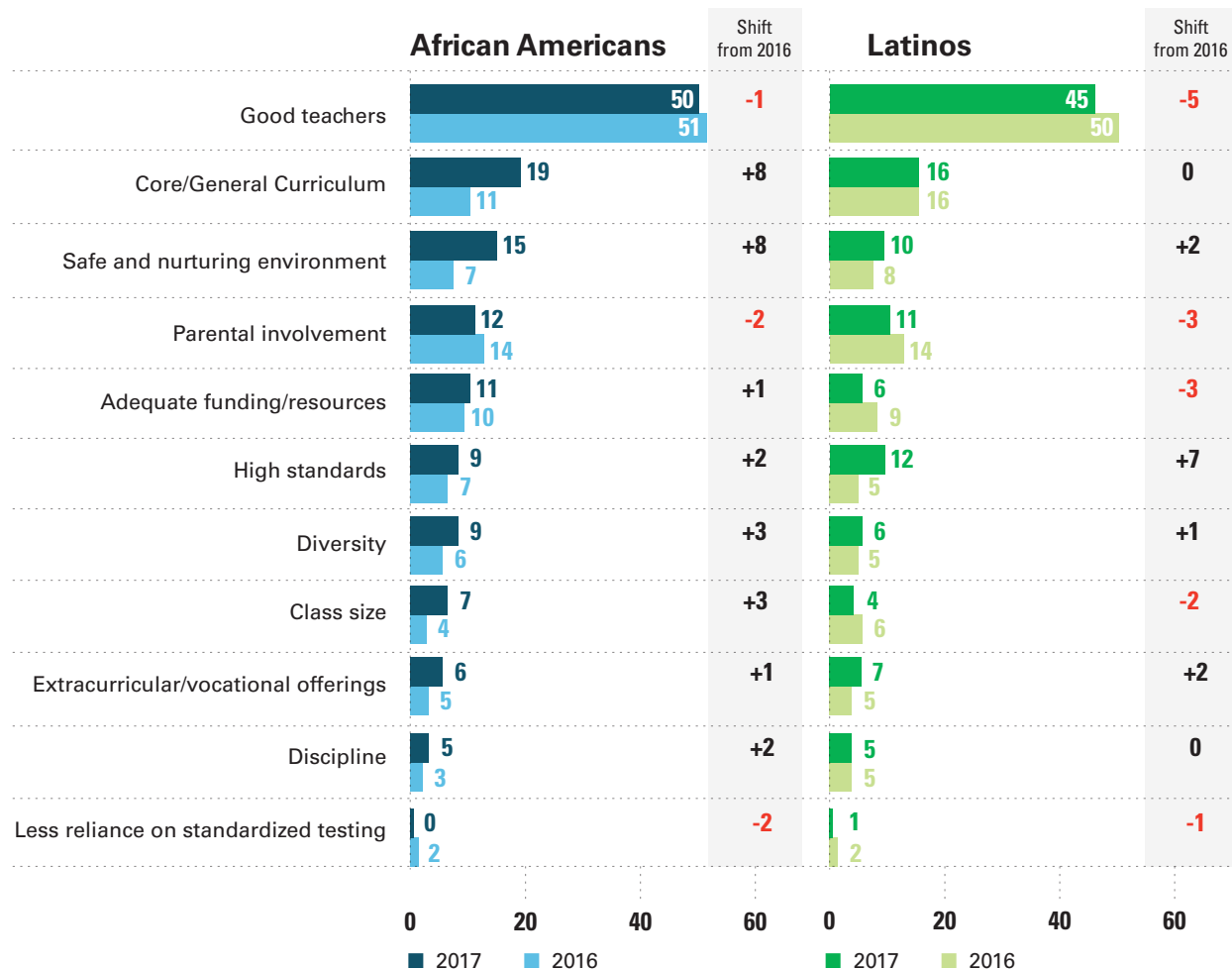
**Parents and family members whose children attend schools with mostly White students are much more likely to rate their child’s school as excellent.** Sixty-one percent of Black parents and family members whose child attends a school with mostly White students rate their child’s school as excellent, compared to only 14 percent of Black parents and family members whose child attends a school with mostly Black students. Although this dynamic is less pronounced with Latino parents and family members, it persists in this community as well (42 percent excellent in mostly White schools / 29 percent excellent in mostly Latino schools).

**Overall attitudes towards the education system have improved among Latino parents and family members.** While Latinos do see racial inequities in schools, three-quarters of Latinos (75 percent) believe that U.S. public schools are doing a good job in preparing Latino students for success in the future, a 10-point increase from last year. The improvement in attitudes from last year is most pronounced among Spanish-dominant Latinos. Perceptions of disparity (both on race and income) have also reduced among Latino parents and family members, and a slim majority (52 percent) now believe that the education Latino students receive in the U.S. is as good as the education White students get. Latino parents and family members who did not attend school in the United States are most likely to say the education for Latino students is as good as education for White students.

# Academic Rigor and High Expectations Are Prioritized

**Black and Latino parents and family members strongly believe that great schools need great teachers.** In an open-ended question, both African Americans and Latinos continue to overwhelmingly cite good teachers as the most important quality of a great school. Among African Americans, the importance of a strong curriculum and a safe environment both gained ground this year, while high standards saw the biggest increase with Latinos.

*“What do you think is the most important characteristic to make a great school?” (Open-ended)*



## Academic Rigor and High Expectations Are Prioritized

### Black and Latino parents and family members prioritize fair treatment for students and strong academics.

From a range of options, both Black and Latino parents and families place especially strong emphasis on schools having sufficient teaching materials, high-quality teachers, and students leaving prepared for success. Priorities for Black and Latino parents and family members have changed remarkably little from last year.

### There is an overwhelming desire for students to be challenged more in school so they can be successful later in life.

Nearly 9 in 10 Black parents and families believe that students should be challenged more in school (89 percent), rather than that they currently work hard enough and don't need to be challenged more (9 percent). Similarly, 81 percent of Latino parents and families believe students should be challenged more. There was very little change in parents and family members' views on this from last year.

### When it comes to priorities for school funding, strong academics and resources again top the list.

For both communities, access to books and computers, the opportunity to take challenging classes, and the retention of quality teachers are top priorities, with extracurricular activities, vocational classes, and after school programs seen as less vital.

#### BEST USES FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOOL FUNDING

■ One of the most important    ■ Very Important

	African Americans		Shift from 2016	Latinos		Shift from 2016
Ensure there are enough books and instructional materials for each student	38	97	NA	28	92	NA
Ensure students have access to computers and other technology in school	35	94	+1	24	88	+3
Ensure students have the opportunity to take challenging classes, including AP courses and courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics	32	91	NA	25	93	NA
Increase teacher pay in order to attract and retain quality teachers	29	84	0	21	84	-1
Ensure students have the opportunity to take classes in music, art, and other extracurricular activities	24	79	0	19	82	0
Ensure students can stay after school for programs until parents can pick them up	22	78	NA	21	75	NA
Expand vocational classes like auto mechanics, culinary arts, cosmetology, and construction	20	79	+10	14	73	+6
Ensure students have the opportunity to participate in after school programs	16	76	+4	16	80	0

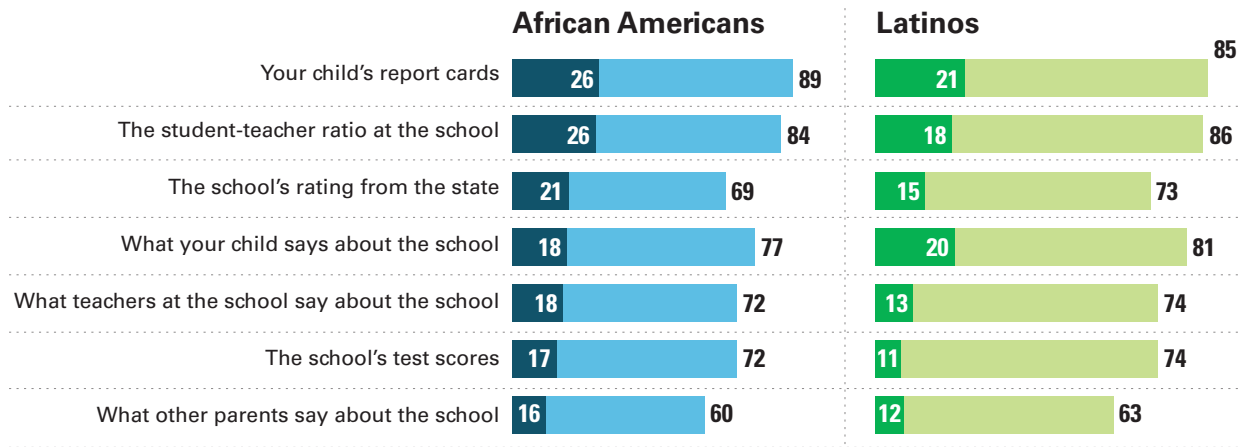
## Academic Rigor and High Expectations Are Prioritized

**For both groups, their child’s report cards and the student-teacher ratio are seen as the most important pieces of information to determine school quality.** What their child says about the school is also seen as important. While not a top priority, solid majorities of Black parents and families and Latino parents and families see the school’s rating from the state (69 percent and 73 percent) as very important.

### IMPORTANCE OF INFO TO DETERMINE SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

*“Is this one of the most important pieces of information in determining if a school is effectively educating your child, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?”*

■ One of the most important    ■ Very Important



# Recommendations for Education Policy and Practice

The “New Education Majority” national poll was commissioned to explore how Black and Latino parents and families view the American education system’s success in educating their children. It is meant to start a conversation about education policy changes that are truly reflective of what Black and Latino parents and families want, rather than to find out what Black and Latino parents think about the policies that currently dominate education policy debates.

It is our view that the findings of the “New Education Majority” poll should be a clarion call for advocates and policymakers who must come to terms with the fact that for any education policy to be successful, it must be responsive to the needs of the children who make up a majority of public school students in America.

Toward that end, we offer the following recommendations:

- Remedy longstanding disparities in resources between schools and districts with more Black and Latino children and those with more White children.
- Open decisionmaking processes to Black and Latino families in ways that allow them to meaningfully participate so that their voices are heard, especially decisions regarding priorities and funding.
- Integrate implicit bias and cultural responsiveness training into teacher preparation and professional development to ensure every educator is committed to the success of Black and Latino children.
- Prepare, hire, support and retain strong Black and Latino teachers.
- Remove barriers to participation and success in advanced courses for Black and Latino children.
- Inventory resource distribution in schools and districts, including strong teachers and rigorous courses, to ensure Black and Latino children have their fair share.
- Implement the Every Student Succeeds Act in a way that breaks down systemic barriers that have impeded Black and Latino children’s success and increases educational opportunity for all underserved children in the state by:
  - Ensuring Black and Latino parents are engaged and consulted in the development and implementation of state, district and school plans, including by ensuring Black and Latino parents are represented in state parent advisory groups and committees;
  - Designing accountability systems that focus on high academic achievement, especially for Black and Latino children, and that clearly communicate how successfully schools are educating Black and Latino children; and
  - Supporting and improving any school where Black or Latino children are not being effectively educated and ensuring that access to strong teachers and rigorous courses are at the forefront of improvement strategies.



The Leadership  
Conference  
Education Fund

1620 L Street, NW  
Suite 1100  
Washington, DC  
20036

202.466.3434 voice  
202.466.3435 fax  
[www.leadershipconferenceeducationfund.org](http://www.leadershipconferenceeducationfund.org)

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