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# ***New Education Majority:***

## *Attitudes and Aspirations of Parents and Families of Color*



**April 2016**

# Background and Methodology

## **BACKGROUND**

For the first time in American history, the majority of students in the public school system are students of color. These students are the “new education majority.” Despite constituting a majority of U.S. public school students, children of color and their families are still largely underrepresented in the debate on educational opportunity and equality. This in-depth study, the first of its kind since President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December, seeks to enrich discussions on education policy and practice by amplifying the voices of parents and families of the “new education majority.”

## **METHODOLOGY**

A survey of N=400 African American and N=400 Latino or Hispanic parents or family members actively involved in the upbringing of a child between the ages 5-18 was conducted by telephone, including both landlines and cell phones, using bilingual (English and Spanish) professional interviewers. Interviews were conducted March 14-20, 2016. The margin of error for the each sample is plus or minus 4.9% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

## Demographics of Audiences

Demographics	%African Americans	%Latino or Hispanic
<b>Gender</b>		
Men/Women	<b>36/64</b>	<b>44/56</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Under 20K	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>
20K-40K	<b>24</b>	<b>30</b>
40K-75K	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>
75K+	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Children in HH</b>		
Kids Living at Home	<b>73</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Relationship to Child</b>		
Parents	<b>65</b>	<b>71</b>
Grandparents	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Other</b>		
Interview conducted in Spanish		<b>18</b>
Parent or parents born outside US		<b>62</b>

## Key Findings

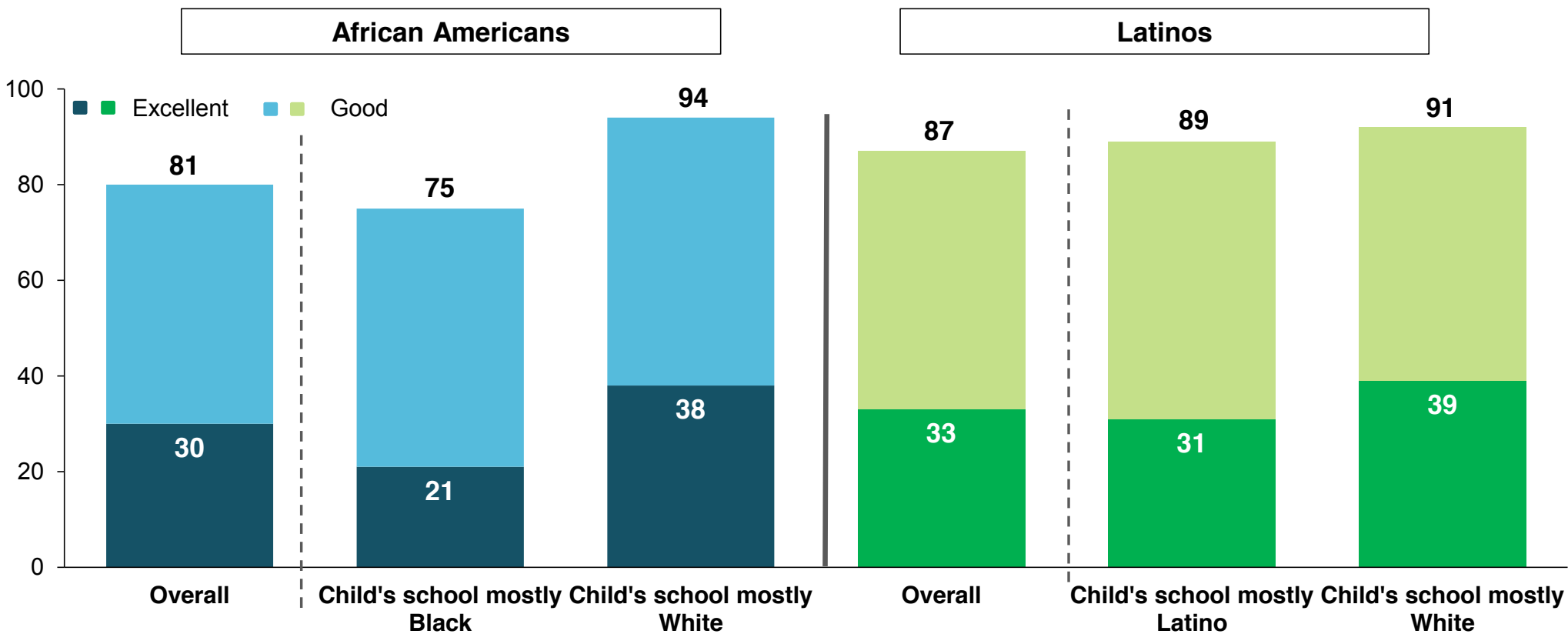
- New education majority parents and families are well aware of the impact that racial inequities in education have on children of color.
- New education majority parents and families want a public education system that provides academic rigor, safety, and great teachers above all.
- New education majority parents and families want schools to be rigorous and set high expectations for African-American and Latino students, and they want expectations to be just as high for students from low-income families.
- New education majority parents and families believe they have a great deal of power to change the education system and are willing to do their part, but they also want all levels of government to step up to address funding and other disparities that hurt African-American and Latino students.

# RACIAL INEQUITIES IN SCHOOLS

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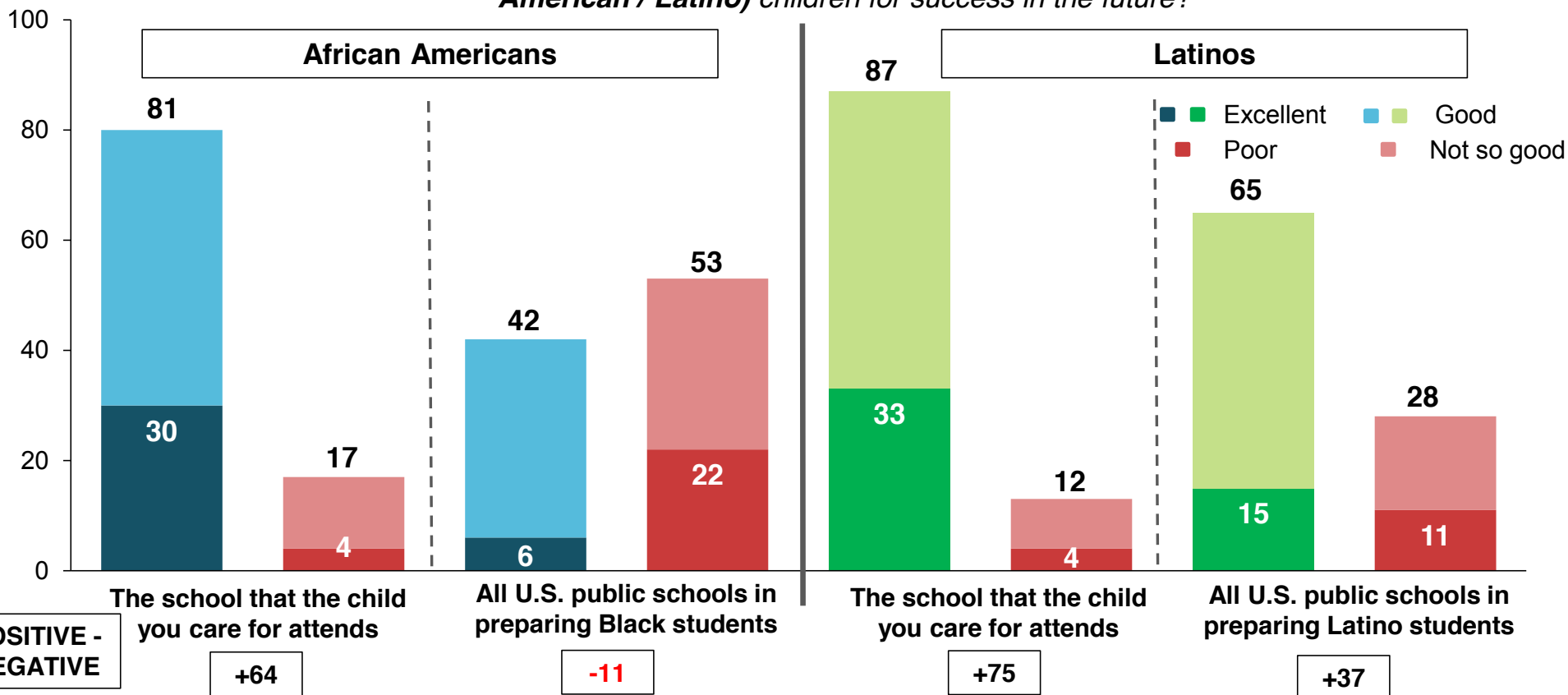
Over 80% in both communities rate the school their child attends positively, though just a third rate it as “excellent.” Ratings are higher among those whose children attend mostly White schools, especially among African Americans.

Thinking specifically about ***the school that the child you care for attends***, how good of a job does it do preparing children for success in the future?



Ratings for how U.S. public schools prepare African-American and Latino children are significantly lower than ratings for their own child's school. This is especially true among African Americans, a majority of whom rate the education provided to Black children negatively.

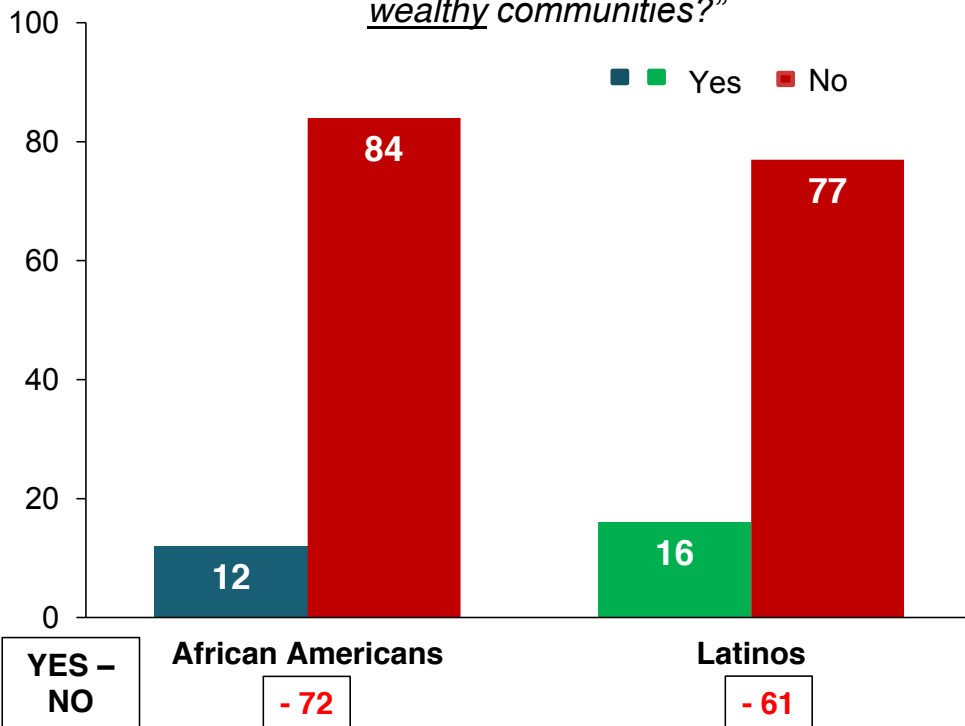
*"How good of a job does (your child's school / all public schools in the U.S.) do in preparing (African-American / Latino) children for success in the future?"*



Both African Americans and Latinos overwhelmingly see school funding disparities by both income and race, and African Americans are just as likely to see funding disparities by race as by income.

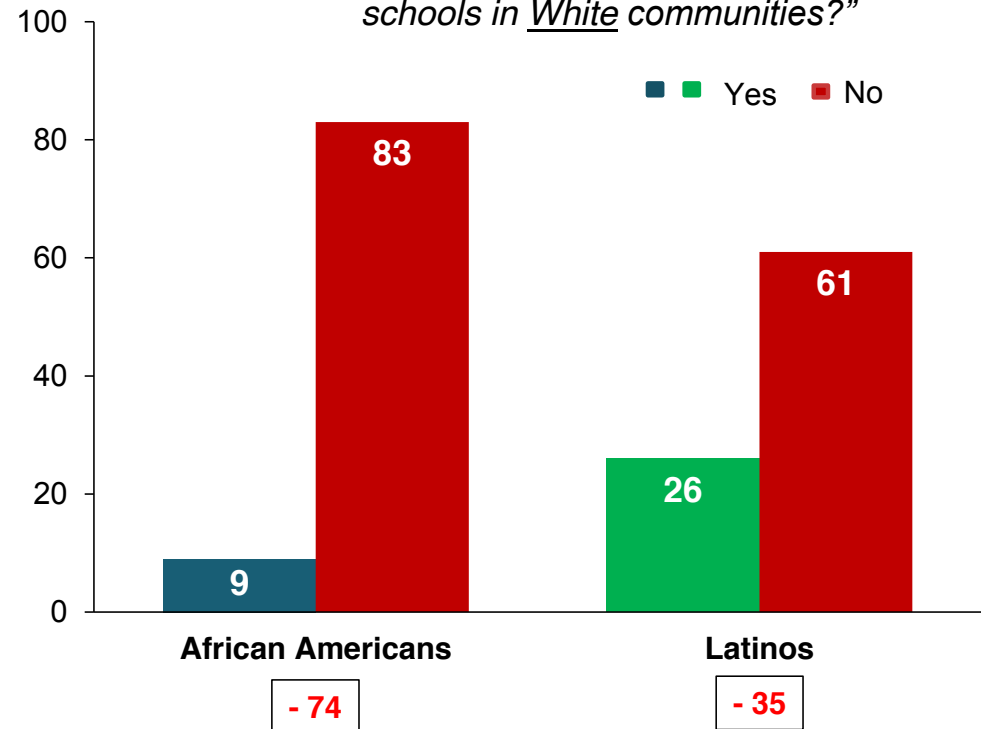
### FUNDING DISPARITY BY INCOME

*“Do you think schools in low-income communities receive the same amount of funding as schools in wealthy communities?”*



### FUNDING DISPARITY BY RACE

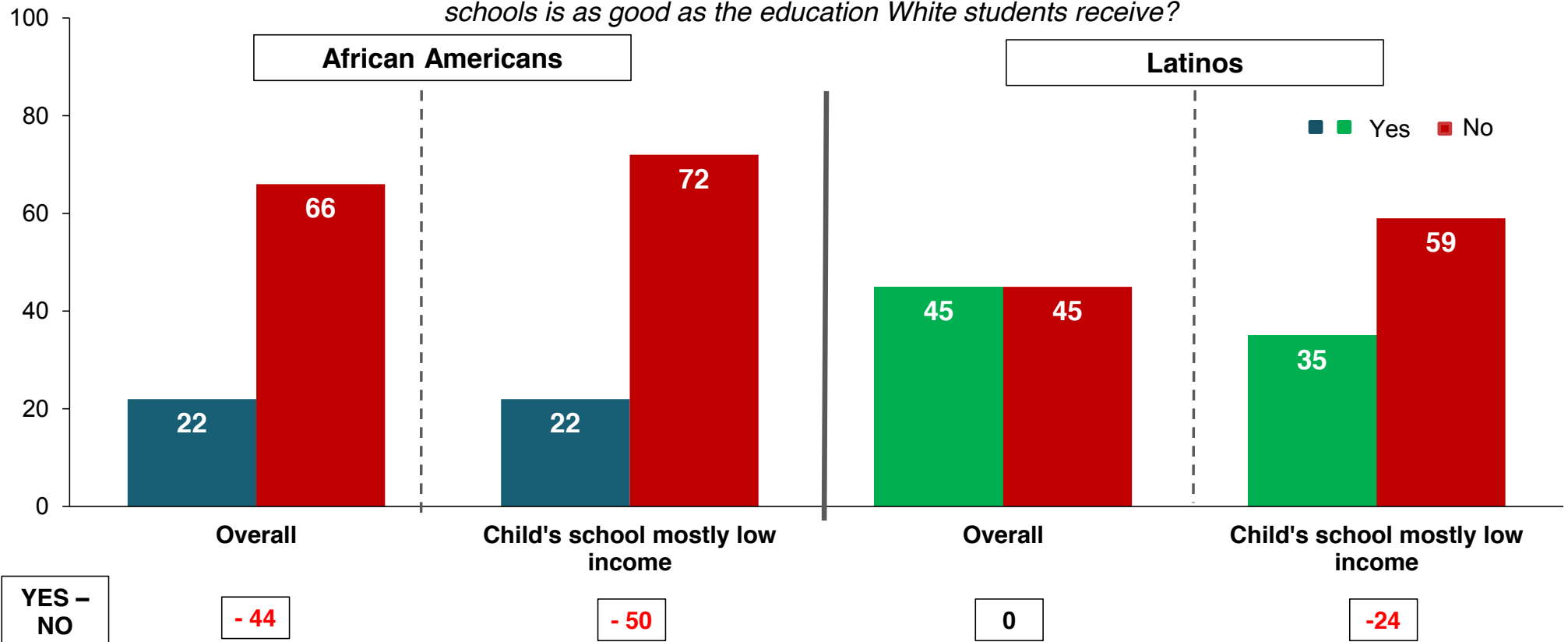
*“Do you think schools in (AA / Latino or Hispanic) communities receive the same amount of funding as schools in White communities?”*





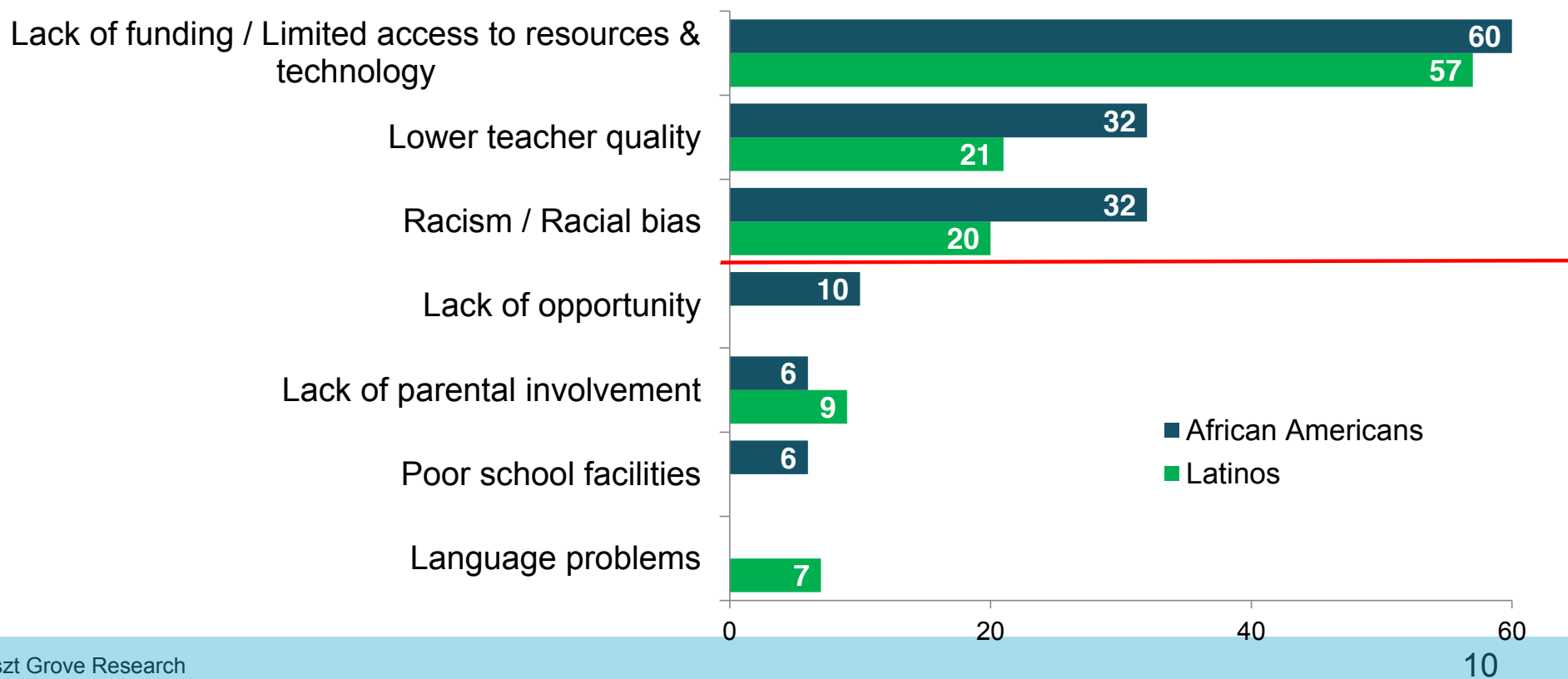
Neither community believes the education that students from their community receive is as good as the education that White students receive, and African Americans are especially likely to see inequity in education quality. The sense of these racial disparities is even more pronounced among those with children in schools that are mostly lower income.

*In general, do you think the education (African-American / Latino or Hispanic) students receive in U.S. schools is as good as the education White students receive?*



Among those who see racial disparities in education, both communities cite a lack of funding as the biggest cause. Lower teacher quality and racism are also seen as culprits, especially among African Americans.

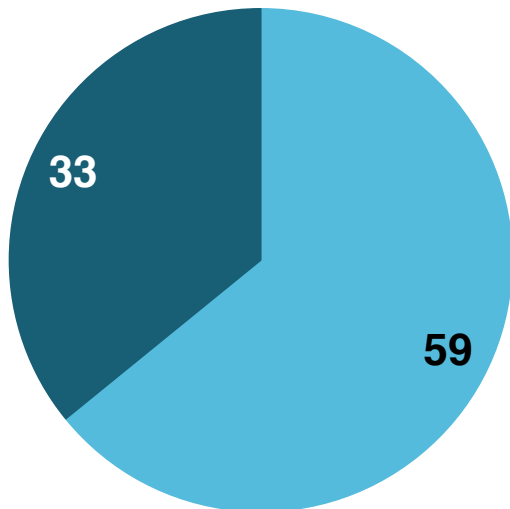
*“Why do you think that (African-American / Latino or Hispanic) students don’t receive as good an education as White students?” [OPEN-ENDED] [MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED]*



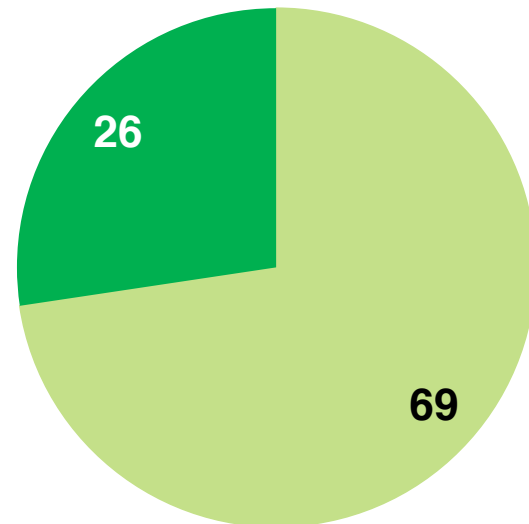
Despite the racial inequities they see in education, strong majorities say that schools in the U.S. are trying their best to educate African-American and Latino children. That said, a third of African Americans and a quarter of Latinos do not believe schools are really trying to educate students in their communities.

*“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 trying 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



**African Americans**



**Latinos**



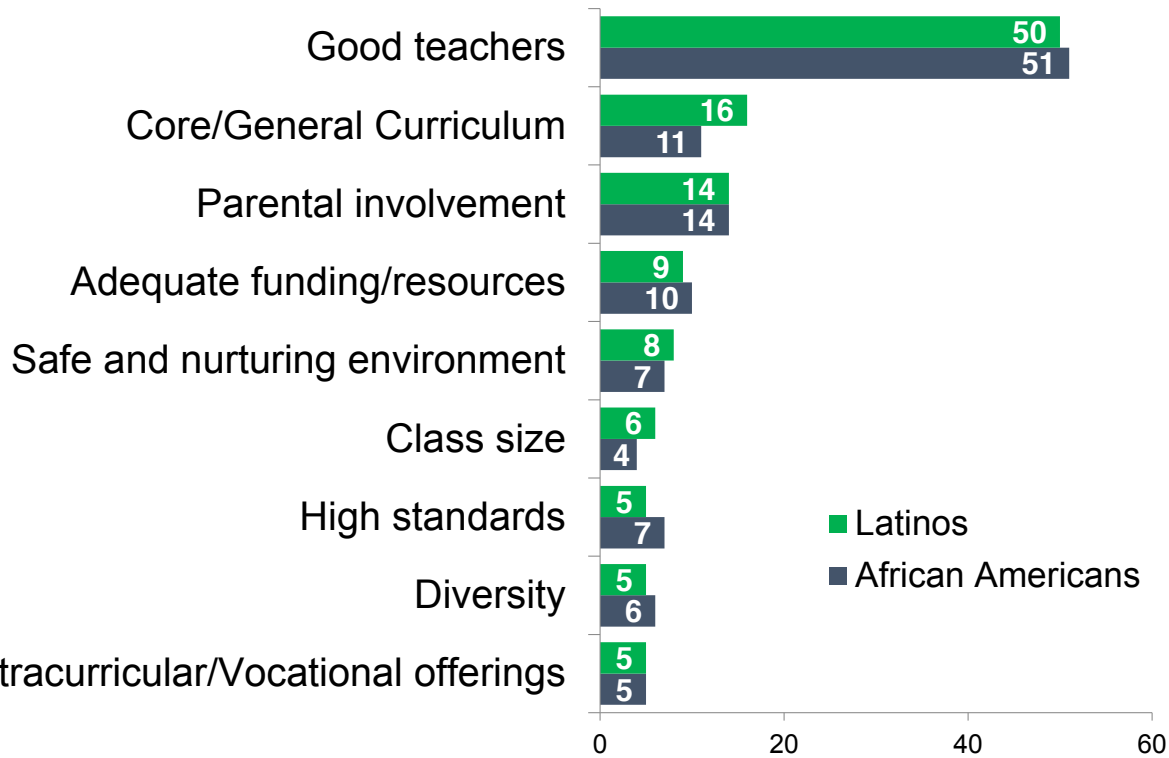
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ACADEMICS, SAFETY AND TEACHER QUALITY ARE  
PRIORITIZED

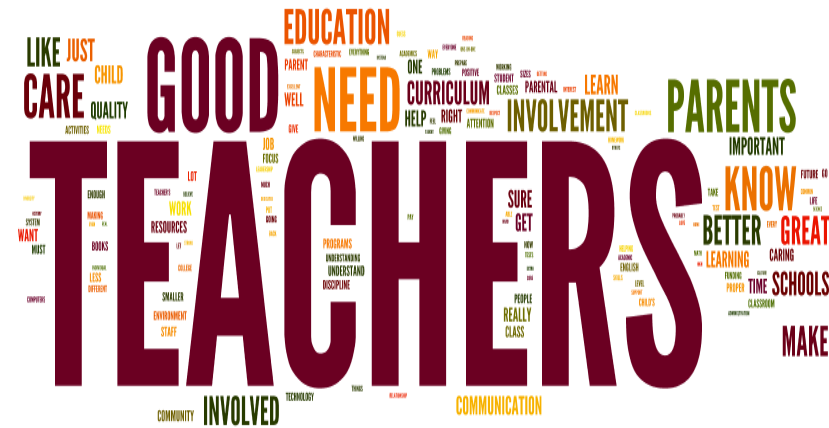
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Both African Americans and Latinos overwhelmingly cite good teachers as the most important quality of a great school in an open-ended question.

“What do you think is the most important characteristic to make a great school?” [OPEN-ENDED]



\*2% said less reliance on standardized testing



New majority parents and families prioritize strong academics. While all school characteristics tested are viewed as very important to a great school, academic qualities (along with school safety) such as having the right teaching materials and ensuring students leave school prepared join teacher quality at the top.

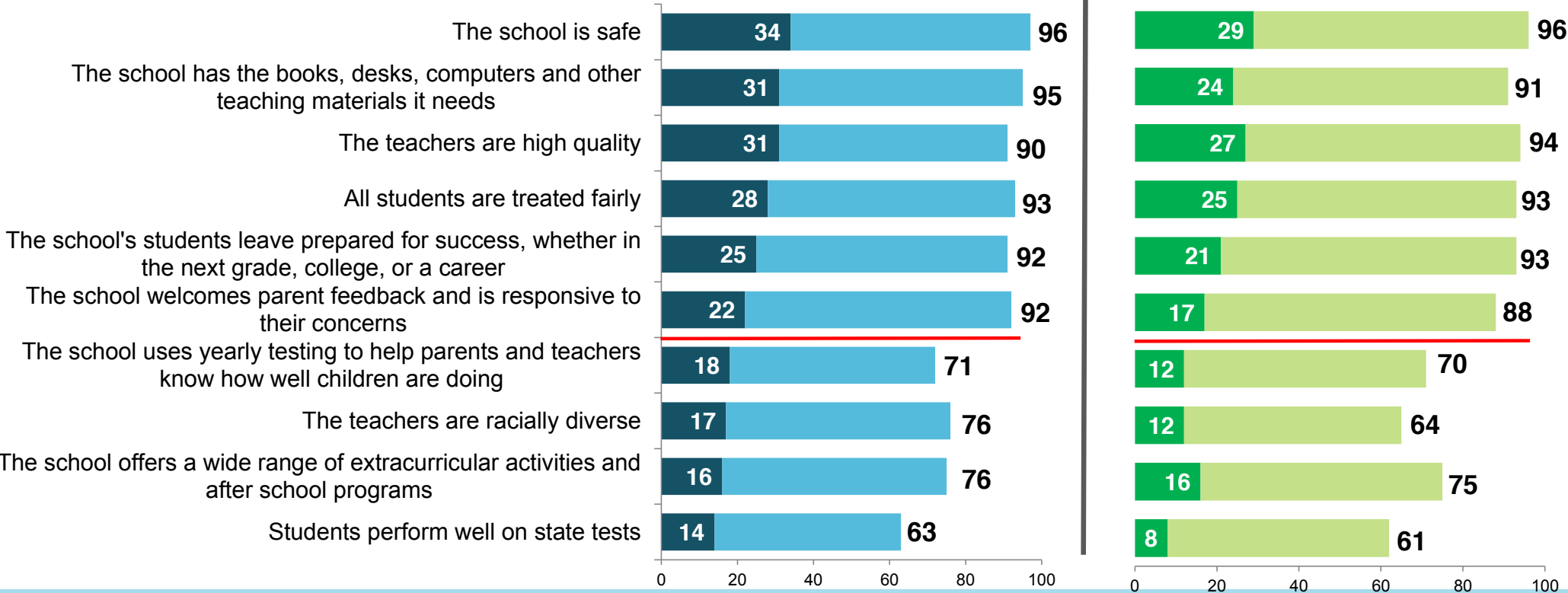
**IMPORTANCE OF QUALITIES TO MAKE A GREAT SCHOOL**

*“Is the characteristic one of the most important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to have a great school?”*

■ One of the most important ■ Very important

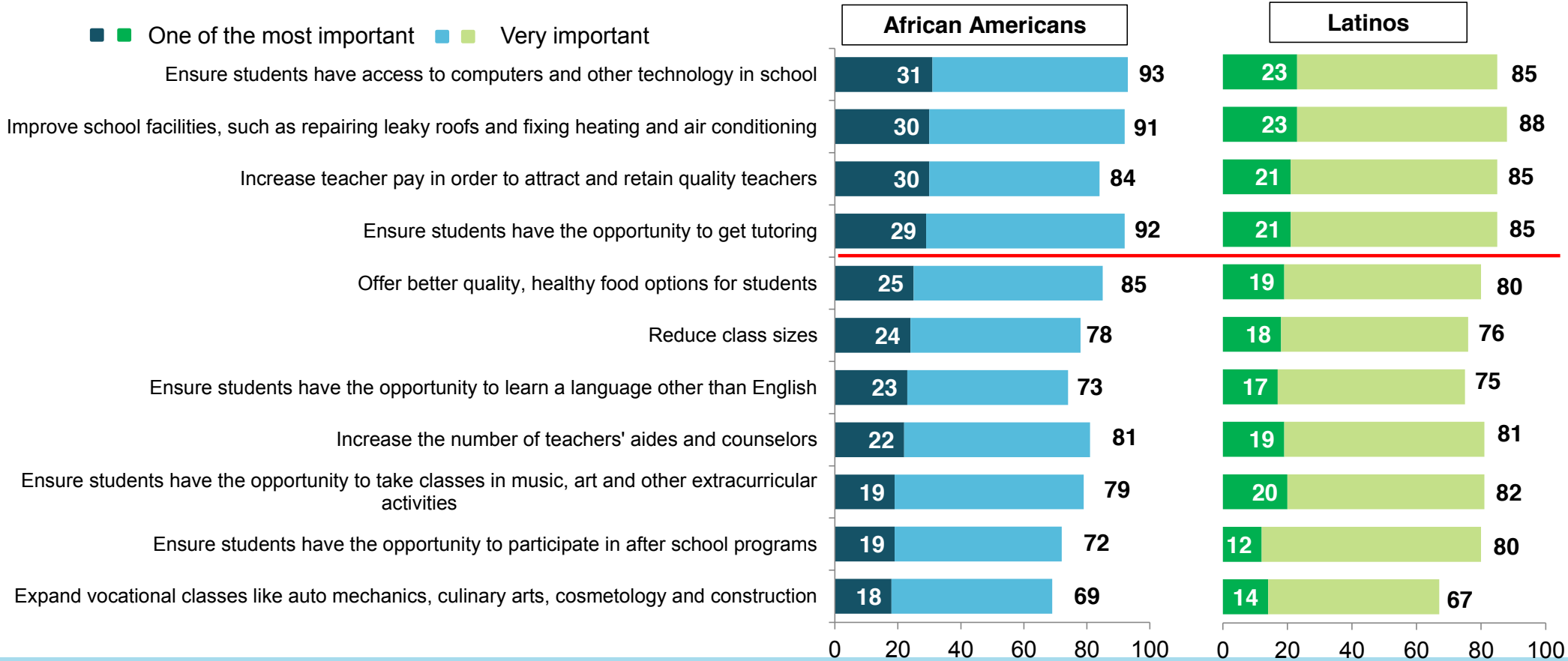
**African Americans**

**Latinos**



This focus on academics is also evident in the best uses of additional funding. All potential funding uses we tested were important but attracting and retaining quality teachers and ensuring that students have access to computers, better school facilities, and tutoring come out on top.

**BEST USES FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOOL FUNDING**



# DESIRE FOR MORE RIGOR AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS

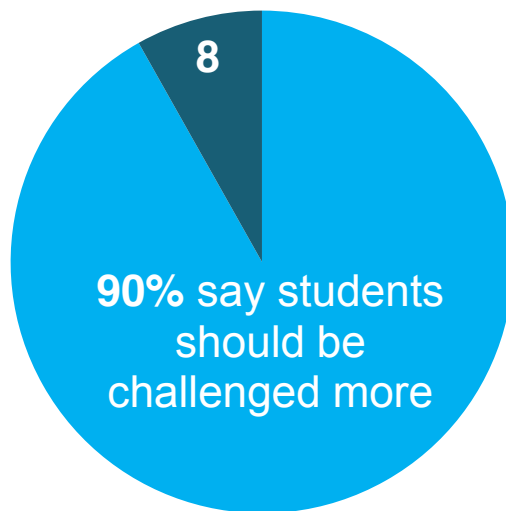
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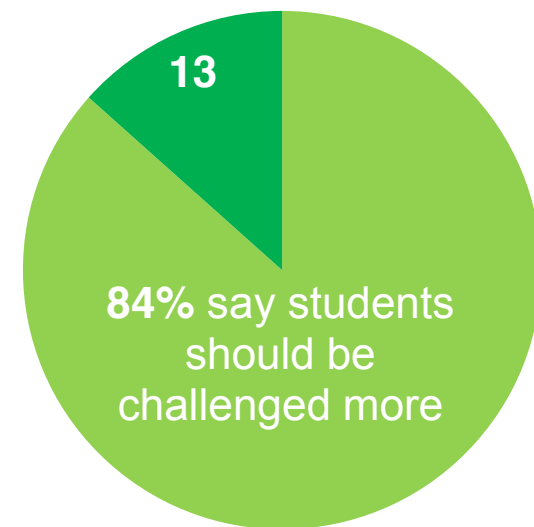
Both African Americans and Latinos overwhelmingly believe that students today should be challenged more in school than they currently are.

*"Which of the following do you agree with more, even if neither are exactly right?"*

- ■ Students today work hard enough and don't need to be challenged more in school
- ■ Students today should be challenged more in school to help ensure they are successful later in life



**AFRICAN AMERICANS**



**LATINOS**

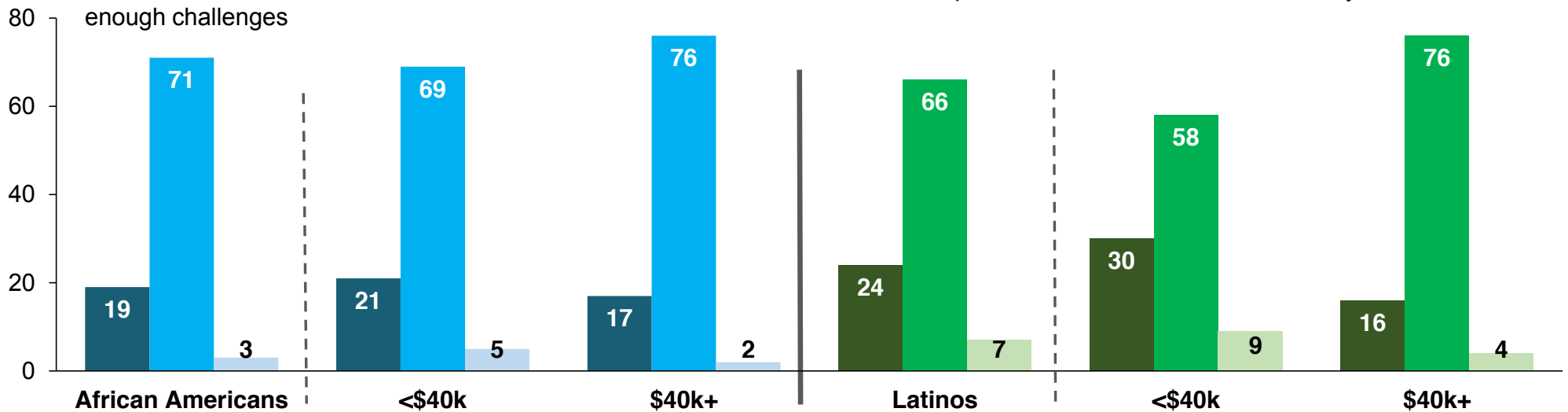
90% of both African Americans and Latinos believe that expectations for low-income students should be either the same or higher than those of other students.

**APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF EXPECTATIONS FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS**

**African Americans**

**Latinos**

- Teachers should hold black / Latino students from low-income families to higher expectations because a good education is the best path out of poverty
- Teachers should hold all their students to the same level of expectations
- Teachers should hold black / Latino students from low-income families to lower expectations because their lives already have enough challenges





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# ENACTING CHANGE

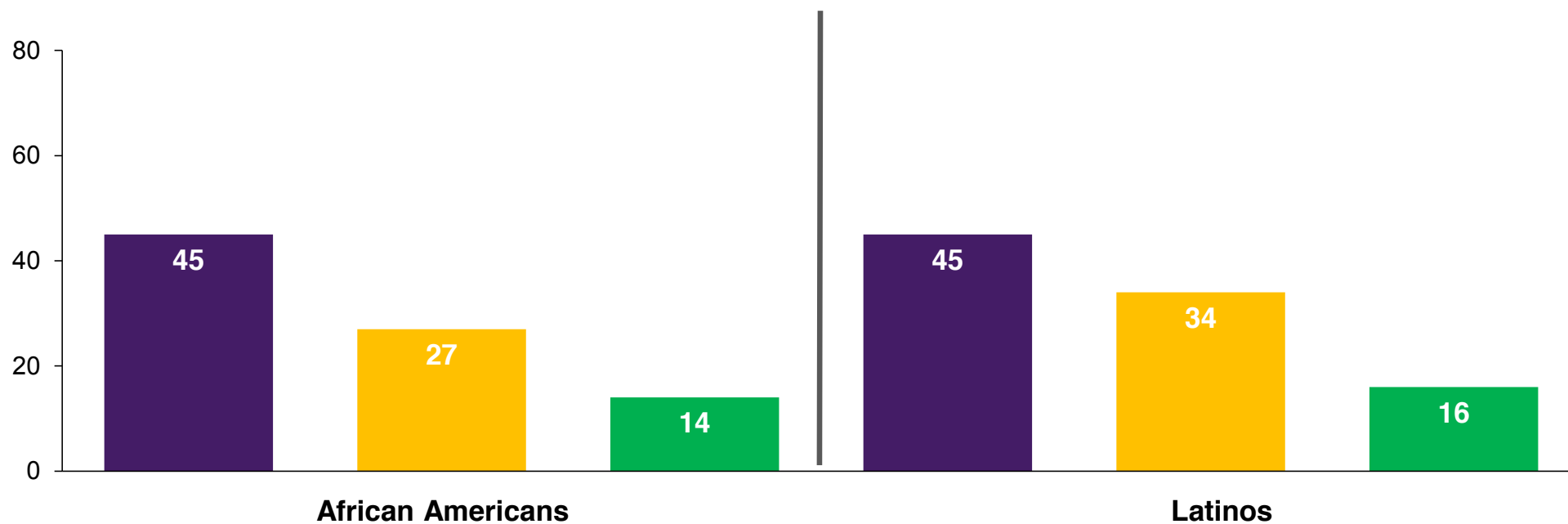
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Both African Americans and Latinos believe that when low-income students succeed, it is because of the support they receive at home. The student's own hard work is seen as the next biggest reason, with few citing schools as the driving factor in a low-income student's success.

### BIGGEST FACTOR IN SUCCESS FOR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS

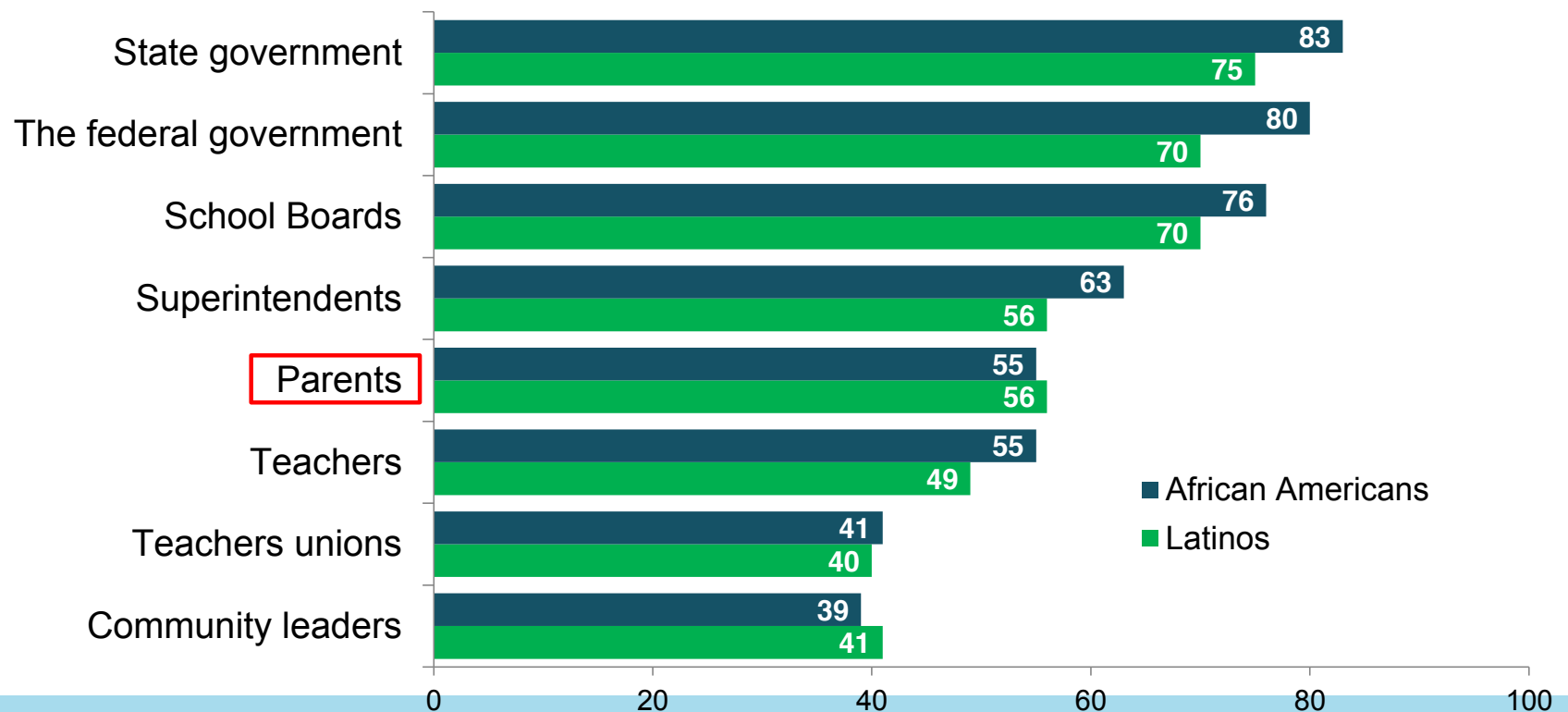
*"For (Black / Latino or Hispanic) students from low-income families who made it to college, which of the following do you think was the most important factor in their success?"*

■ The support they received from their family   ■ Their own hard work   ■ The education they received at school



Strong majorities of both African-American and Latino parents and family members believe parents have “a lot of power” to bring change to schools in the U.S. They also believe that government at all levels needs to step up to address funding and other inequities that harm African-American and Latino communities.

**PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PUBLIC EDUCATION: % A LOT OF POWER TO CHANGE SCHOOLS**



## Conclusion

The results of the “New Education Majority” poll suggest education policymakers and advocates should take into account the perspectives of new education majority parents by

- Meaningfully engaging them in education policy discussion, debate, and practice to ensure that policy truly reflects the needs of new education majority students and the expectations of communities of color; and
- Developing policy that meaningfully addresses the concerns that new education majority parents and families have about the quality of their children’s school and teachers, the inequitable distribution of resources, and the expectations that the school has of their children’s capacity to excel.