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Stockton-Zogby Poll: Support for NJ Colleges, But More Funding Wanted

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Galloway, NJ - Majorities of parents of high school students in southern New Jersey say state funding of higher education in New Jersey is unsatisfactory and that more funding is needed, according to a poll commissioned by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

The poll finds strong support for colleges and universities in New Jersey, particularly for four-year public colleges. An overwhelming majority of parents say they expect their children to go to college.

The results closely mirror the findings of an identical survey conducted by Stockton College in 2010.

"These two surveys, which produced very similar findings, show the depth of commitment that New Jersey parents have for higher education," said Daniel J. Douglas, Director of the Hughes Center.

"Parents of high school students overwhelmingly expect their children to go to college. And they think the state should be providing more resources for higher education," Douglas said.

The Stockton-Zogby poll conducted telephone surveys of parents of children in grades 9-12. The poll surveyed 800 parents across New Jersey, 600 parents in Atlantic and Ocean counties, and 600 parents in Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem counties. (Statewide results are included in a separate release.)

Strong majorities say the level of state funding for higher education is unsatisfactory.

State funding	Atlantic-Ocean		Cape-Cumb-Glou-Salem	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
Satisfactory	26	26	30	27
Unsatisfactory	59	61	52	57

Eighty-two percent in Atlantic-Ocean and 78 percent in the southern regions say more state funding for higher education should be provided.

Funding level	Atlantic-Ocean		Cape-Cumb-Glou-Salem	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
More	77	82	72	78
Current	15	12	17	11
Less	2	2	4	4

Sixty-two percent of those who want more funding in Atlantic-Ocean would make trade-offs in funding cuts for other programs (including programs for road improvements, small businesses, and the underprivileged) or pay higher taxes (21 percent). In the four southernmost counties, 63 percent are willing to make trade-offs for more college funding.

As in 2010, parents cited K-12 education and higher education among their top three state budget priorities.

Budget priorities	Atlantic-Ocean		Cape-Cumb-Glou-Salem	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
K-12 education	62	57	62	60
Higher education	57	55	54	55
Health care	38	33	35	31

In percentages virtually the same as in 2010, parents in southern New Jersey overwhelmingly say college is important or very important (93 percent in Atlantic-Ocean, 95 percent in the

southernmost counties) and that their children are likely to go to college (96 percent in Atlantic-Ocean, 97 percent in the southernmost counties).

A strong majority expect their children to attend college in New Jersey – 78 percent in Atlantic-Ocean (81 percent in 2010) and 79 percent in Cape May –Cumberland-Gloucester-Salem counties (77 percent in 2010).

All of the state’s colleges are highly rated, with four-year public colleges receiving the highest percentage of positive ratings.

Positive ratings for colleges	Atlantic-Ocean		Cape-Cumb-Glou-Salem	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
Two-year county colleges	56	55	56	59
Four-year public colleges	69	69	63	68
Four-year private colleges	60	62	54	54

Among other findings:

- Seventy-one percent in Atlantic-Ocean say their children are more likely to go to a four-year college than to a two-year county college (24 percent). In the southernmost counties, 67 percent say their children are more likely to attend a four-year college versus 30 percent choosing a two-year college. The percentages are all within a percentage point of the results in 2010.
- Of those expecting their children to go to a four-year college, 55 percent in Atlantic-Ocean say the children will likely go to a public college with 25 percent likely to go to a private institution. In Cape May-Cumberland-Gloucester-Salem counties, the split is 58 percent public and 28 percent private. While the percentages in Atlantic-Ocean are about the same as in 2010, the split in the southern counties in 2010 was 61 percent public and 18 percent private.
- Cost is the main factor in choosing a public college over private college for 72 percent in Atlantic-Ocean (74 percent in 2010) and for 70 percent in the southernmost counties (73 percent in 2010).

Parents agree that the quality of education is better at four-year colleges than at two-year colleges.

Better quality	Atlantic-Ocean		Cape-Cumb-Glou-Salem	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
Better at four-year	60	59	65	58
Better at two-year	33	35	29	35

Parents also feel that better jobs are obtained by those with degrees from four-year colleges than from two-year county colleges.

Better jobs	Atlantic-Ocean		Cape-Cumb-Glou-Salem	
	2010	2012	2010	2012
Four-year	78	77	77	75
Two-year	17	19	19	23

Majorities feel educational quality is better at four-year public colleges (51 percent in both regions) versus four-year private colleges (36 percent in both regions). The trend was the same in 2010, although the new results show a shift of six percentage points in favor of public colleges in Atlantic-Ocean.

The sampling margin of error is +/- 4.1 percentage points in the regional polls.