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Andrew Smith

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Large Gaps in What People Know About Local Schools

By

*Andrew E. Smith, Ph.D., UNH Survey Center: (603)
862-2226*

*Doug Hall, New Hampshire Center for Public Policy
Studies: (603) 798-5028*

*Jon Greenberg, New Hampshire Public Radio: (603)
223-2435*

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**To view a more detailed analysis, go to
www.unh.edu/survey-center/ed102401.pdf**

DURHAM, N.H. -- A University of New Hampshire Survey Center poll finds that the majority of state residents do not know how well their schools perform. About half the people in school districts that perform significantly below average on statewide tests think their schools are doing a good to excellent job. When asked specifically about their local schools' performance on statewide tests, the uncertainty increases. Only about a quarter of state residents have an accurate understanding of test performance.

Some of the key findings of the survey include:

Residents with a college education or higher are most likely to be informed about their local schools, most likely to have a positive opinion about their schools and most likely to live in school districts with above average performance.

Residents in school districts that perform significantly below average on statewide tests are the least likely to know the level of their schools' performance. Only 14 percent of residents in poor performing school districts accurately assessed local school performance.

Newspapers play a critical role in informing the public about its schools. About 40 percent of respondents said newspapers are their primary source of information.

About half the state's residents say their local schools

almost always or usually spend tax dollars wisely. About a third believe that tax money is spent wisely only sometimes or rarely.

These findings are based on the most recent Granite State Poll conducted by the University of New Hampshire Survey Center between Aug. 10 and Aug. 15, 2001.

A random sample of 400 adults from throughout New Hampshire was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, statewide estimates will be accurate to +/-4.9%. Results reported for subgroups have potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

The survey was conducted on behalf of a partnership of organizations that includes the [Survey Center](#), [New Hampshire Public Radio](#), [New Hampshire Public Television](#), the [New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies](#), the [New Hampshire Historical Society](#), the New England Center for Civic Engagement, [Leadership New Hampshire](#), and the [New Hampshire Humanities Council](#).

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