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THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS.  
VOLUME II, BETWEEN CITIZENS AND SCHOOLS.

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STANFORD, PROJECT CAST,

FROM A 1964 NATIONAL QUOTA-PROBABILITY SAMPLE OF  
INTERVIEWS WITH 1,500 CITIZENS 21 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER,  
MAJOR VARIABLES WERE DEFINED RELATING TO COMMUNICATION  
BETWEEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES. PRIMARY CONTENT  
OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS STUDIED WAS FINANCIAL SUPPORT  
FOR SCHOOLS. FOR PURPOSES OF CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS,  
RESPONDENTS WERE RELATED POSITIONALLY TO THREE ROLE SETS  
WITHIN A CONTEXT OF CONSUMER ROLES--(1) PARENTAL STATUS  
(PRESCHOOL PARENTS, PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS, PRIVATE SCHOOL  
PARENTS, POSTSCHOOL PARENTS, AND NONPARENTS), (2) UTILITY  
(OPINION OF EDUCATIONAL VALUE RECEIVED IN RETURN FOR TAXES  
PAID), AND (3) ADULT'S OWN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE. SIX OUT OF  
SEVEN CITIZENS INTERVIEWED THOUGHT CHILDREN WERE NOT GETTING  
ALL THEY SHOULD OUT OF EDUCATION, EITHER FOR EVENTUAL  
ECONOMIC BENEFITS OR FOR SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL  
COMPETENCIES. COMMUNICATION BY MEDIATING AGENCIES WAS FOUND  
TO BE RELATIVELY INEFFECTIVE. NEWSPAPERS WERE MOST  
SUCCESSFUL, FOLLOWED BY TELEVISION, RADIO, SCHOOL BOARD,  
PARENT ORGANIZATION, AND CITIZENS' COMMITTEE. WHILE PUBLIC  
SCHOOL PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN SCHOOL AFFAIRS MORE THAN OTHER  
PARENTAL STATUS GROUPS, OVERALL CITIZEN PARTICIPATION WAS  
LOW, THREE OUT OF FOUR RESPONDENTS SAYING NOTHING COULD  
INCREASE THEIR INTEREST IN SCHOOL MATTERS. ELEVEN SUGGESTIONS  
ARE MADE FOR INCREASING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS IN  
SECURING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, WITH SPECIAL  
EMPHASIS ON FORMALITY, CONTENT, AND TIMING. THIS IS PART II  
OF A SERIES. RELATED DOCUMENTS INCLUDE EA 001 091, EA 001  
093, EA 001 094, AND EA 001 095. (JK)

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*By*

**RICHARD F. CARTER AND STEVEN H. CHAFFEE**

**VOLUME II**



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Volume II

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by

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Stanford University  
Stanford, California

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	i
CHAPTER	
I    INTRODUCTION	1
II   EDUCATIONAL VALUES	14
III  MEDIATING AGENCIES	44
IV   PARTICIPATION	68
V    EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES	95
VI   THE UTILITY OF SCHOOLS	114
VII  INFLUENCES OF THE CITIZEN'S EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE	141
VIII CONCLUDING VIEWS	180
APPENDIX A    QUESTIONNAIRE	206
APPENDIX B    ADDITIONAL TABLES	217

## Preface

In our first study of the relations between citizens and their schools (Voters and Their Schools), we found that few citizens had direct contact with schools. The use of indirect contacts was more frequent. Some of these were through mediating agencies, especially newspapers.

This sample of a national sample of citizens was designed to obtain further information on the use of mediating agencies -- the mass media, parent organizations, citizens committees, and school boards.

Our ability to gather data on a nationwide scale was greatly enhanced by the opportunity to participate in an "amalgam study" conducted by the National Opinion Research Center. We would like to thank Paul Sheatsley and his colleagues for their invaluable assistance in formulating and carrying out the study.

At Stanford, we received helpful advice from many of our colleagues. In particular, we would like to thank Chilton R. Bush, Wilbur Schramm, Nathan Maccoby, and James E. Brinton.

The considerable task of processing the data was greatly facilitated by W. Lee Ruggels and Maxwell McCombs.

Several preliminary studies contributed to our final study. These were conducted by Donald Kenny, Mark Lewis, Kent C. Myers, John R. Toscano, Ray L. Sweigert, Jr., Douglas Fuchs, Robert Ellis, and Patricia Roach.

Our energetic secretarial staff included Joan Reynertson, Linda Miller, Gracie Barron, Cynthia Stabb, Brenda Cook, and Dana Morris.

We would also like to acknowledge the administrative direction of William R. Odell.

RFC  
SHC

## Chapter I

### Introduction

Changes have historically shaped and reshaped our public educational institutions. More pupils have had to be taught; more has had to be taught as subject matter; more decisions on educational policy have had to be made.

In these changes, educational institutions have been largely shaped by their environments. Although these institutions exist in greater number and size, theirs is a history of evolution more than of growth. Like many other societal institutions, they have not expanded on the basis of stipulated growth principles. Rather, they have expanded in response to particular demands.

In the wake of curricular expansion, however, some revisions have been made in an attempt to achieve order and structure. Courses and sequences have been revised. Teaching methods have been overhauled. Pupils have been regrouped. New forms and levels of administration have been introduced.

But what has happened in the wake of expansion in educational policy making? Have there been revisions in policy-making procedures? Are there revisions commensurate with the curricular revisions? Are there structural changes that improve citizen participation in policy-making procedures equal to the improvement resulting from curriculum changes?

The answer to this last question has to be, "No." Yet citizen participation in educational policy-making is still not predominantly influenced by state and national sources. This is supposed to be the last vestige of local democracy

## The Citizen as Reviewer

What is the nature of educational policy making at the local level? Well, much of it has been preempted, and assigned to the administration. The voice of the citizen is heard on these matters only in the election of the board of control (if it is elected), which may review administrative actions.

But not all policy making has been preempted. In a large majority of school districts, citizens still vote on educational issues that necessitate financial expenditures. Both the quantity and quality of citizen voices indicate that there has been little effective revision in educational policy making.

On the average, about one-third of our citizens vote in school financial elections.<sup>1</sup> Rather dismayingly, financial support is voted more often if voter turnout is low. For evidence on the quality of participation, we need only examine the altered role of the citizen in educational policy making.

When direct democracy could no longer handle even local problems of decision making, two major changes occurred. Both deprived the citizen of most of his voice in the initiation of policy changes, by assigning him the review roles cited above -- voting on board membership and financial measures.

Although the citizen still has a powerful voice as a voter, his position is one of isolation. He is effectively cut off from the total process of decision making. It is not surprising, then, if he speaks irrelevantly when the occasional opportunity to be heard presents itself. For example, when a sample of registered voters was asked what information was wanted during a bond issue campaign (related only to building plans), the most frequently requested item was information on the curriculum, or some aspect of it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard F. Carter and William G. Savard. Influence of Voter Turnout on School Bond and Tax Elections. Cooperative Research Monograph No. 5, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., 1961.

<sup>2</sup>Richard F. Carter. Voters and Their Schools. Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1960. See Chapter VI.

## Modes of Communication

Decision making requires useful information at appropriate times. Direct democracy, when it functioned, had the advantage of increasing the likelihood that timing could be controlled and that information could be jointly screened for its usefulness. These qualities have been lost for the most part in today's school-community relations.

What substitutes for relevance of timing and content? It depends in part on which functional equivalent is being utilized. Three modes of communication have developed to replace the town meeting as a forum of educational policy:

1. School officials have attempted to provide information to citizens. Typically, they divide their attention between regular reports of school activities and pre-election reports of school needs. Departures from this pattern usually involve the emphasis on school needs in the regular reports as well as before elections.

2. Certain persons and organizations have served as channels for the flow of information between school and community. These mediating agencies might be individual school personnel or civic leaders. More often they are the mass media, school boards, parent organizations and citizens' committees. One of the mass media, the newspaper, predominates as a channel.<sup>3</sup>

Since these agencies are the focus of this study, we shall defer to our concluding chapter a discussion of their potential in controlling the relevance of timing and content.

3. There is a great deal of informal communication, initiated casually, about the schools. We have completed an extensive study of this mode of communication.<sup>4</sup> Our conclusion was that

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Richard F. Carter, Bradley S. Greenberg, and Alvin Haimson. Informal Communication About Schools. Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1966.



it affords little control on either timing or content, precisely because it lacks formality.

But the mode of communication contributes only a small part to determinations of relevant timing and content. All of these modes have one characteristic in common. They operate as channels only when a citizen elects to participate -- to read school bulletins, to attend to one of the mediating agency reports, to talk with someone else informally.

Both timing and content relevance depend for the most part on when the individual citizen becomes interested in some aspect of the schools and on what he is interested in. One man's relevance is not another's, and the school's relevance is not the same as the citizen's.

#### The Citizen as Consumer

Since the citizen is removed from the immediate context of formal decision making, his interests can not be expected to match those of school officials. At least, not often. Policies do not stir his interest as children and taxes do. In his role as reviewer, he has consumer interests. These govern his participation and communication, and his voting behavior. To better understand what he does and why he does it, we need to take a look at this consumer orientation.

As a consumer, the citizen occupies a difficult and frustrating position. Because he evaluates the educational product of the schools, he looks for indexes of product value. But in many instances, he must wait for such evidence until the child has completed his education -- or, even longer, until the child has demonstrated the value of his education. Yet he must review performance -- so he feels -- and make his voting decision before a final evaluation can be made.

In our previous work, we found that school performance was most criticized in areas relating to the child's capability to

stand on his own in a competitive society.<sup>5</sup> The child's economic and psychological competence were judged the least satisfactory, in comparison with their importance. Occupational opportunities, directly and through college entrance, were also major concerns.

These "product-centered" concerns were expressed by all types of citizens, not just public school and preschool parents. They were also expressed by postschool, private school, and nonparents. Differences in criticisms were found in other areas -- such as academic content and student behavior.<sup>6</sup>

With a final evaluation of the child's competence available only in the future, the citizen turns to other, more immediate, indicators of educational performance. But these signs are viewed in a context of apprehension, for the present indications are not secure predictors of the child's future competence.

There is no present corollary of economic success, of a happy family life, of a satisfying occupation, or of a meaningful role in society.

There is no means known sufficient to insure any of these desired ends for all children. What is assumed is that some means are necessary for any child to have a chance of attaining these ends.

So one of the more immediate signs that the citizen looks for is the inclusion in the school curriculum and services of those areas which, through experience, have tended to lead toward achieving desired ends.

Thus, reading, writing, and arithmetic are considered necessities -- the "fundamentals." This term is appropriate to the significance of these language skills, which constitute much of social communication in any society. Without competence in them, the child has less chance of gaining many desired ends. The educational structure of a society, through which he must progress, is itself largely constituted on these elementary skills.

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<sup>5</sup>Carter, Voters and Their Schools, op. cit., Chapters I and III.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Chapter III.

The inclination to examine schools, to make sure that the essential elements are there, takes other forms. If there must be certain content in the curriculum, there must be assurance that the teacher can provide it. If certain content must be learned, the child must study (or study harder) to learn it. Teacher and pupil behaviors are signs to be watched.

What does this tell us of the consumer orientation? It suggests that evaluation of the schools in those terms will yield a view that emphasizes the "indispensable" aspects of education. The inclusion of special curriculum and service content which might be sufficient for some children to achieve desired ends is not so favorably evaluated. In previous work, for instance, we found evidence that cultural aspects of the curriculum -- art and music -- were seen as overemphasized in relationship to their importance.<sup>7</sup>

The effect of this kind of evaluation is to restrain the schools from venturing into educational improvement through the introduction of new content.

But this kind of evaluation -- of what is indispensable -- is not too helpful to the citizen who is concerned with the educational product. It is somewhat like using a warning light where a ruler would be more helpful.

Another warning light is based on the citizen's expectation that schools can, and should, be administered on "sound business and moral principles." Any sign to the contrary -- by whomever sighted -- may be regarded as evidence of poor management and, therefore, poor products.

These warning light methods of evaluation fall short, from the citizen's point of view, because the average school product is most affected by curriculum management. The citizen wants individual assessments. Further, institutions (e.g., of higher learning) are joining in the demand for finer product grading. Since acceptance by a college or employer plays a major role in the attainment of desired ends, the child needs a ruler applied to him (in a way that differs from its historic use).

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

Grades completed has been a useful measure in the past. Now, however, the citizen wants to assess the child in more sophisticated ways. These reflect current assumptions as to what is necessary for advancement through educational experience. The consumer orientation shows in two areas:

1. The citizen has become very aware of the implications of test scores and course grades. His concern is such that the number of grades completed in any accredited school is no longer satisfactory as a measure of accomplishment. Social institutions do not recognize equality of grades completed. He can not either.

2. The citizen is aware of a new vocational dilemma. From his point of view, the high school education can not be the same for all students. Because higher education has become more demanded as a vocational requisite, the child who is to go on must prepare himself primarily for entrance. But the child who is not to go on must prepare himself vocationally at the high school level.

Where before the consumer orientation focused attention on a common indispensable -- the fundamentals -- now the consumer orientation focuses on many indispensables, differing according to the vocational route perceived for the child.

There is still, however, one remaining constant effort of the consumer orientation. The view that the citizen takes of schools is still such that educational change is constrained by the demands of the consumer. The difference is that now there are competing demands. Demands differ according to the directions that are perceived for the child. They also differ according to the scores attained by the child in the pre-adult competition.

#### National Demands

In addition, there is a new set of consumer demands predicated on the highly visible competition between societies. Here special competences useful to the society are reviewed by the citizen consumer. Previous work shows that this aspect of the consumer orientation is important for those without active participation

in school affairs but who talk a lot about educational matters.

The evidence we have suggests that national educational criticisms -- and demands -- pervade the local scene, but have little direct effect on policy determination through voting on financial issues. However, like emphasis on fundamentals, they have a broad appeal and serve local critics as content for rationalizations. Those citizens who take a view of local schools that is not based on individual child performance (e.g., nonparents) find them particularly useful.<sup>9</sup>

Those who would speak out against local school needs risk unpopularity. They must invoke the "ultimate good" of the public. Their intention has to be that obvious.

### Consumer Roles

With these comments on the consumer orientation, we are now ready to consider the primary consumer roles -- and the kinds of persons who take differing views of educational policy, who participate differently, and who vote differently.

To be constrained, by the nature of policy making, to a consumer's role is one thing. To actively take one is another. Our research deals with this activity -- its scope and its forms. And we have viewed such activity in three different relationships, corresponding to the bases for consumer roles: parental status, utility of schools, and the adult's own educational experience.

Parental status represents the personal investment of the adult in local schools. Nonparents are differentiated from parents. Parents with children in school are differentiated from those whose children are not in school. Within each of the latter, further distinction is made. We distinguish between public school and private school parents, and we distinguish between preschool and postschool parents.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

The roles follow from parental status. The investment in an individual child is not there for the nonparent. It is in the past for the postschool parent and in the future for the preschool parent. It is in the present for the public and private school parents.

We would expect activity most often among those with a present or future investment. We would expect greater knowledge among present or past investors. However, we are less concerned with specific expectations on our part than with fully describing the scope and form of activity on school matters for the adults in each of these roles.

The concept of utility is the basis for a set of roles relative to criticism. We have viewed criticism as having two roots: protest against school policies and protest against the economic burden of schools.

We want to distinguish between those who criticize both the schools and the tax burden and those who criticize neither. We also want to distinguish those who criticize one but not the other. They do not have the same opinions nor equal participation.<sup>10</sup>

The adult's own educational experience is the basis for the third set of roles. We are concerned with the level achieved and the satisfaction of the adult with his own education. We could expect to find differences according to the level of education attained. For instance, knowledge should increase with level of education. We would also expect satisfaction with one's education to make a difference here and there, regardless of level attained.

Moreover, satisfaction is likely to mediate the effect of level attained. Higher education should produce more participation, but its character may depend on the adult's satisfaction with his own education.

We consider these bases -- parental status, utility, and own educational experience -- to represent criteria against which school policies can be reviewed. Further, they represent criteria that are available to all adults who have any interest at all

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Chapters III and IV.

in the schools.

The educational experience of the child now in school, as seen by the parent, is not taken as a basis for a consumer role in this study. It is not general. And there is the problem of more than one child in school for a given parent (i.e., which child's experience is to account for the parent's behavior?).

What we have done is to look at views of the child's experience, and to relate them to the adult's own educational experiences and his expectations for the child. In this restricted way, we are viewing it as another evaluation of schools. It is not studied as a potential basis for activity in school policy making -- although it may well be one.

#### Use of this Study

To conclude this section, we should point to an alternative use of the results we shall report based on these consumer roles. Our view has been to show the extent to which the scope and form of activity are dependent upon citizen interest as evoked in these consumer roles. We shall state in our concluding chapter that this is not a productive interest, that another mode of citizen participation in policy making should be found. But until another mode is adopted, these results should be useful to those concerned with school-community relations who want to locate the kinds of persons that presently comprise the interested citizenry.

#### Methods

We first began this study with a large pretest (850 cases) in a northwestern city during early 1961. In addition to the improvement of items, we obtained two useful findings from analysis of the results. It appeared that the general state of participation regarding mediating agencies was low. It also appeared that certain kinds of participation (e.g., use of television and radio) were unique to the community.

Both findings led us to choose a national sample as the next

step in this study. Clearly, we needed to sample a large number of school districts if we were to get a better picture of the kinds of participation relating to mediating agencies. Not only mass media but boards of education and parent groups could be expected to differ from community to community.

Also, because it was becoming clear that our major finding was to be lack of participation -- particularly in regard to policy making -- our estimates should be as accurate as possible.

We were able to join a national sample interview during the spring of 1964. With the aid of the interviewing agency, we made another questionnaire pretest, followed by interviews with 1500 citizens 21 years of age or older. (See Appendix A for questionnaire used.)

The sample used was a quota-probability type. Geographical localities, then blocks, were sampled by strict probability methods. Within the blocks, interviewers selected respondents by quota. Quotas were set for age, sex, and employment. Within sex quotas, men were stratified by age quotas; women were stratified by employment quotas.

No callbacks were made for not-at-homes who might have been eligible as quota members. No attempt was made to reinterview refusals.

Several characteristics of the sample need to be kept in mind when considering the results. Both affect the distribution of responses to single questions (the "marginals").

Our previous work on citizen values and participation based estimates on registered voters, not on all those 21 and over.<sup>11</sup> Because we make frequent reference to the earlier results, it must be noted that the earlier estimates may differ. Particularly, those estimates of participation can be expected to be higher than for this sample.

In checking the distribution of this sample with the 1960 census figures, we found that the present sample has a significant bias against rural residents.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.



This latter characteristic might also be expected to affect some reported relationships, as well as the marginals. The availability of some mediating agencies could depend on district size. On the other hand, previous work indicates little difference for voter turnout by district size.<sup>12</sup>

Coding of the responses was carried out during the summer of 1964. Reliabilities were calculated for the codes assigned responses to open end questions. These are reported in Appendix B, Tables B.4 and B.5. We entered the codes on IBM cards, and then conducted the analyses reported here.

In Chapters II, III, and IV, we have reported the results of two kinds of analyses: the marginal distributions of answers to single questions, and, the distributions of these answers according to parental status of the respondent.

In the first instance, the reporting of marginals, we have aimed at providing an estimate of the amount and kinds of participation in school matters through the use of mediating agencies. This, we felt, had to be viewed in the context of the values held for education in general and the local schools in particular.<sup>13</sup> These too are reported.

The tabulations by parental status reflect our first set of consumer roles. At the beginning of Chapter II, the demographic characteristics of those in each parental role are reviewed -- based on analyses reported more fully in Appendix B.

Chapter V contains the results of our analyses of the adult's view of his own education and, where applicable, of his child's education. The impact of one's own educational experience has long been assumed to affect current educational views, but with the exception of level of education, these experiences have not been researched.

In Chapter VI, the second of the consumer roles -- utility of the local schools -- is presented in a series of tabulations,

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<sup>12</sup> Carter and Savard, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup>As noted in Voters and Their Schools, op. cit., values and participation necessarily go hand in hand, each affecting the other.

with adults sorted by views of local schools and the perceived burden of taxation. This report is preceded by a description of the demographic characteristics of adults in each of the roles.

Chapter VII presents the analyses of adults sorted by the level of education attained and the perceived quality of their experience. This too is preceded by a demographic description of those in each consumer role.

In these results chapters, we have made tests of significance for many of the relationships stated. For significant relationships a symbol in parentheses, following the statement, records the level of significance. Relationships significant at the level of  $p$  less than .05 are symbolized by: (\*), those significant at the level of  $p$  less than .01 are symbolized by: (\*\*). A two-tailed normal curve approximation to the binomial, corrected for continuity where appropriate, has been used.

In a final chapter, having summarized the state of citizen participation in educational policy making, we have concluded that effective mediation is impossible of fulfillment -- given consumer interests and the nature of existing agencies. The needs for relevant timing and content are not met by them.

We then look at some ways of coping with consumer interests. Finally, we take a new point of view. We present some proposals for achieving more effective relations between citizens and schools.

## Chapter II

### Educational Values

In this chapter, we shall examine some of the benefits that citizens expect from education, their evaluations of local schools, and their opinions on a variety of issues concerning public education and its support.

The results afford us an opportunity to view the scope of the citizen's consumer orientation, its major dimensions and its impact on educational values and evaluations.

We shall also be analyzing differences in these citizen views according to parental role. Five role types have been identified for this study: parents of public school children, parents whose children have not yet entered school, parents of private school children (including parochial), parents whose children have finished school, and respondents without children.

Table B.1, in Appendix B, contains a full demographic profile of each of these types. Here, we shall describe each group briefly as an introduction to this and the following two chapters.

Public School Parents. This is the largest of the five groups, comprising 37% of the sample. It includes all respondents with a child in public schools, except those who also have a child in private school.

These respondents are more often female (57%), middle-aged, moderately well-educated, and of above average income. The great majority are Protestant and attended public schools themselves. Their occupational, political, and regional distributions are very close to the national averages. They tend to reside in fast-growing areas near metropolitan centers.

Preschool Parents. This very young (84% are under 30) group comprises 12% of the sample. They are generally well-educated although still in the low-middle income range. The proportions of Roman Catholics and former private school students is above average, suggesting that some will be sending their children to

private schools in future years.

The majority live in the Middle West and West, but not in fast-growing or even heavily urban areas.

Private School Parents. This group is small (7% of the sample), and consists mostly of Roman Catholics (85%) living in cities of low growth rate. A majority attended private schools themselves.

They are mostly middle-aged whites of Northern European origin. Politically, they are strongly Democratic. Three-fourths of them live in Northeastern or Middle West states. Since respondents with any child in a private school were included in this category, some may also have a child in public school.

Postschool Parents. A large group (29% of the sample) and older (the majority are over 60), this type of parent no longer has a direct investment in the public schools.

Their incomes tend to be low, as is their educational level. Heavily Protestant, they tend to live outside the urban areas. A large proportion are widowed and/or no longer working.

Nonparents. This last 15% of the sample is well-educated, but not of high income. Most of these respondents are males, and not middle-aged. Barely half are married.

A relatively large proportion are non-whites. They tend to be of either very high or very low occupational prestige groups. They include the lowest proportion of Democrats, and are found usually in urban areas of moderate growth.

#### What Education Can Accomplish

In our previous work, we looked at the goals held for education in terms of what schools were doing for children.<sup>1</sup> Here we are looking at the perceptions of what education can accomplish for the nation and for the adult, as well as for the child.

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<sup>1</sup>References here and subsequently to previous work on educational values are, unless otherwise noted, to Voters and Their Schools, op. cit.

We found in the earlier work two indications of important goals perceived for education. We asked the importance of a number of educational functions. We were told the most important were: grounding in the basic skills, teaching children how to get along with others, learning the fundamentals, and learning loyalty to their country.

However, we also asked about the performance of each educational function. Analyzing the discrepancy between perceived importance and performance, two other important functions appeared: to achieve means of obtaining economic goals and to achieve psychological stability.

These results prompted us to ask in this study about the accomplishments of education, rather than seeking reactions to a listing of educational functions as seen by professional educators. Tables 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3 show the responses to our questions.

In Table 2.1, we see that improving the nation and the person economically are seen as the major accomplishments of education,

Table 2.1. What Education can Accomplish for the Nation as a Whole.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	Percent Mentioning:	
	<u>Specific goal</u>	<u>Something in category</u>
Negative affect toward education or schools		
Education can accomplish nothing for nation	1%	
Schools are failing to meet nation's goal(s)	6%	7%
Schools are pursuing improper goal(s)	3%	
General positive affect toward education		
Stronger or better nation through education	21%	
General pro-education or pro-schools statement	29%	42%
General improvement through education	7%	
Miscellaneous general responses	4%	

## Preparation: Acquiring basic skills

Preparation for future, for today's world	6%	
Develop reasoning ability	5%	
Develop self-discipline, self-reliance	3%	
Learn personal care, hygiene	2%	
Increase intelligence	2%	21%
Improve self-expression	2%	
Increase ambition	2%	
Develop self-knowledge	2%	
Prepare for higher education	1%	

## Preparation: Acquiring social competence

Learn to understand others	10%	
Foster brotherhood	8%	
Create better citizens	6%	
Learn to appreciate life, understand world	6%	32%
Become better parent or spouse	2%	
Increase public affairs participation	2%	
Learn to share, cooperate	1%	
Miscellaneous	1%	

## Increase knowledge

Knowledge in general	10%	
Public affairs knowledge	10%	
Academic: science, humanities, social studies	8%	
Fundamentals: the 3 Rs	5%	
Ethics, religion	5%	34%
Semi-professional training (teachers, nurses, etc.)	4%	
Professional training (medicine, law, dentistry)	2%	
Arts, music	1%	
Miscellaneous	2%	

## Improve nation economically

Reduce unemployment; train for jobs	37%	
Improve economy; more jobs; less poverty	12%	
Improve national capacity; outdo other nations	9%	52%
Equalize economic opportunity	2%	
Miscellaneous	1%	

## Improve person economically

Higher standard of living	35%	
Better life in general	5%	
Personal advancement	4%	41%
Increase leisure; easier work	3%	

## Improve society

Better government or leadership	8%	
Reduce intergroup conflict	8%	
Reduce international conflict	7%	
Better society in general	6%	32%
Reduce crime, delinquency	3%	
Achieve democracy, patriotism	3%	
Reduce interpersonal conflict	2%	
Miscellaneous	1%	
	<u>314%</u>	<u>261%</u>
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "What can education accomplish for the nation as a whole?" Columns total to more than 100%, and columns for specific goals total to more than 100% of their respective general category percentages, because some respondents mentioned more than one goal.

with respect to the nation as a whole. There is also a generalized positive attitude toward education for its benefits to the nation, consistent with previous findings that education is valued as an important attribute in our society.<sup>2</sup>

Table 2.2. What Education can Accomplish for the Adult as an Individual.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	Percent mentioning:	
	<u>Specific goal</u>	<u>Something in category</u>
Negative affect toward education or schools		
Education can accomplish nothing for me	17%	
Schools are pursuing improper goal(s)	3%	20%
Schools are failing to meet goal(s)	1%	

<sup>2</sup>Chilton R. Bush and Paul J. Deutschmann. The Interrelationships of Attitudes Toward Schools and Voting Behavior in a School Bond Election. Department of Communication and Journalism, Stanford University, 1955.

## General positive affect toward education

General improvement through education	9%	11%	
General pro-education statement	3%		
Preparation: Acquiring basic skills			
Improve self-expression	6%	17%	
Develop reasoning ability	3%		
Preparation for future, for today's world	2%		
Increase self-confidence	2%		
Increase ambition	2%		
Learn to handle personal business	1%		
Increase intelligence	1%		
Develop self-knowledge	1%		
Preparation for higher education	1%		
Develop self-discipline, self-reliance	1%		
Miscellaneous	1%		
Preparation: Acquiring social competence			
Become better parent or spouse	15%	31%	
Learn to appreciate life, understand world	7%		
Make friends, personal contacts	5%		
Learn to understand others	4%		
Create better citizens	2%		
Increase public affairs participation	1%		
Foster brotherhood	1%		
Learn competitiveness	1%		
Miscellaneous	1%		
Increase knowledge			
Knowledge in general	16%	35%	
Public affairs knowledge	8%		
Semi-professional training (teachers, nurses, etc.)	7%		
Humanities, social studies	5%		
Sciences	4%		
Arts, music	2%		
Fundamentals; the 3 Rs	2%		
Professional training (medicine, law, dentistry)	2%		
Ethics, religion	1%		
Miscellaneous	1%		
Improve person economically			
Prepare for or obtain job; better job	47%		64%
Higher standard of living	30%		
Increase leisure; easier work	4%		
Better life in general	3%		
Individual advancement	1%		
Miscellaneous	1%		



## Improve society

Better society in general	4%	
Reduce conflict (interpersonal, inter- group or international)	<u>1%</u>	5%
	230%	<u>183%</u>
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "What do you feel more education could accomplish for you, as an individual?" Columns total to more than 100%, and columns for specific goals total to more than 100% of their respective general category percentages, because some respondents mentioned more than one goal.

Table 2.2 shows that economic self-improvement is also the most frequent benefit education is seen to give the adult. Secondly, education is seen to increase knowledge for the adult and to help him acquire social competences -- particularly to become a better parent or spouse.

In our earlier work, the consumer orientation's impact on product evaluation had made economic capability one of several important goals education serves for children. For the nation and the adult citizen, here, it is the most important.

And now we find again, in Table 2.3, that economic capability is seen as an important benefit. Again, it is one of several perceived for the child. The two accomplishments most often mentioned are acquiring basic skills and social competences. If we take all three categories of increasing knowledge, this would be the most important benefit of education seen for the child.

Table 2.3. What Education can Accomplish for the Child in Public School.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	Percent mentioning:	
	<u>Specific goal</u>	<u>Something in category</u>
Negative affect toward education of schools		
Schools are failing to meet goal(s)	12%	
Schools are pursuing improper goal(s)	5%	20%
Education can accomplish nothing for schoolchild	4%	

### Improve person economically

Prepare for or obtain job, better job	25%	
Higher standard of living	10%	
Better life in general	4%	37%
Personal advancement	2%	
Equalize opportunity	2%	
Miscellaneous	1%	

### Improve society

Reduce interpersonal conflict	5%	
Reduce intergroup or international conflict	4%	
Reduce crime, delinquency	2%	13%
Achieve democracy, patriotism	1%	
Better society in general	1%	
Miscellaneous	1%	
	<u>270%</u>	<u>221%</u>
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "What are the main things you feel education is accomplishing for the children in public schools?" Columns total to more than 100%, and columns for specific goals total to more than 100% of their respective general category percentages, because some respondents mentioned more than one goal.

Interestingly, although the citizen is concerned about competences of the child to succeed in a very competitive society and world, our sample members are not particularly interested in having the child learn to be competitive. That is, it is not seen as an important goal in itself.

Several comparisons can be made among the three tables.

Looking at the total number of benefits seen, more are listed for the nation than for the child, and more for the child than for the adult. The visibility of benefits for the nation may be peculiar to the post-Sputnik era.

Previous findings that people generally take a positive view of education but become more negative in their assessments with regard to particulars, are substantiated in part by the differences between the general negative and positive comments. The accomplishments for the nation are regarded positively more often than negatively (for general comments), while for the child general views tend more toward the negative. The contrast is ever

stronger between the nation and the adult himself.

Acquiring basic skills seems to be an accomplishment achieved for the child more often than it is for the nation of the individual adult. This is also true for acquiring social competences and increasing knowledge. Much of the greater benefit seen for increased knowledge among children is due to the perception that the fundamentals will do them more good.

Economic benefits of education are more often seen for the nation and the adult than for the child. In part, this may simply reflect the fact that the child still has a vocational choice to make -- so basic grounding is preferred for its utility. The adult and the nation have somewhat more specific needs for technical competences.

When we view how persons of different parental status see the benefits for the nation, in Table 2.4, there are few differences. Generally, parents of preschool children see more benefits; parents of postschool children see fewer.

Public school parents do not make many generalized positive comments regarding benefits for the nation. But this may simply reflect better specific knowledge, perhaps by projection from what they see accomplished for their children.

Private school parents tend to make more general statements of positive or negative benefits (\*). This may reflect less knowledge of specific accomplishments.

That parents of preschool children are more likely to see benefits for the nation than parents of postschool children is most evident when the perceived accomplishment is increasing knowledge (\*\*). The former, lacking the experience of the latter, may impute more value to increased knowledge per se.

In viewing benefits for the adult, the distinction between pre- and postschool parents still holds, as shown in Table 2.5. The preschool parents see more accomplishments for the adult through education. The preschool parents are more likely to perceive that education can accomplish something for the adult in each category except improving society.

Table 2.4. What education can Accomplish for the Nation as a Whole, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Negative affect	10%	8%	12%	6%	5%	7%
General positive affect	33%	46%	46%	45%	39%	42%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	24%	20%	18%	23%	22%	21%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	33%	29%	30%	35%	34%	32%
Increase knowledge	33%	31%	36%	44%	33%	34%
Improve nation economically	52%	53%	49%	52%	52%	52%
Improve person economically	40%	40%	44%	38%	43%	41%
Improve society	$\frac{35\%}{260\%}$	$\frac{27\%}{254\%}$	$\frac{28\%}{263\%}$	$\frac{35\%}{279\%}$	$\frac{35\%}{263\%}$	$\frac{32\%}{261\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* Cell entries are percentages mentioning listed goal category. Goal categories correspond to those in Table 2.1. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one goal.

The postschool parents are especially notable for their negative views on education's benefits for the adult. Perhaps because of their relatively higher age, they are more pessimistic about economic benefits. The preschool parents, being younger, might undertake further schooling.

In Table 2.6, we see a contrast in total educational benefits for the child between preschool and private school parents. Preschool parents see the most benefits; private school parents see the least.

Table 2.5. What Education can Accomplish for the Adult as an Individual, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Negative affect	22%	39%	21%	5%	10%	20%
General positive affect	14%	12%	8%	10%	11%	11%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	19%	15%	17%	24%	15%	17%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	25%	23%	36%	40%	35%	31%
Increase knowledge	35%	29%	36%	43%	35%	35%
Improve person economically	66%	49%	60%	75%	71%	64%
Improve society	$\frac{6\%}{187\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{173\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{183\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{199\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{183\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{183\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* Cell entries are percentages mentioning listed goal category. Goal categories correspond to those in Table 2.2. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one goal.

Preschool and public school parents are most likely to see educational benefits in the categories of basic skills (\*\*), social competences (\*), and academic knowledge for the child (\*).

Benefits in non-academic knowledge are most frequently seen by private school parents. The benefits of fundamentals are most often seen by preschool parents.

Postschool parents are very high on education being able to improve the child economically (\*\*), in contrast to their less frequent perceptions of economic improvement for adults.

Table 2.6. What Education can Accomplish for the Child in Public School, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Negative affect	23%	22%	25%	22%	15%	20%
General positive affect	14%	16%	11%	13%	16%	15%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	43%	38%	43%	51%	54%	46%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	37%	35%	36%	42%	40%	38%
Increase knowledge: fundamentals	15%	10%	9%	17%	14%	13%
Increase knowledge: academic	24%	21%	24%	27%	27%	25%
Increase knowledge: non-academic	11%	16%	18%	14%	15%	14%
Improve person economically	34%	44%	23%	34%	35%	37%
Improve society	$\frac{17\%}{218\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{213\%}$	$\frac{12\%}{201\%}$	$\frac{12\%}{232\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{229\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{221\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\*Cell entries are percentages mentioning listed goal category. Goal categories correspond to those in Table 2.3. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one goal.

Nonparents are most likely to see education as improving society (\*). Previous work has shown that nonparents are concerned with school performance in controlling the behavior of children.

Looking at this group of three tables together, these inferences can be drawn:

1. Preschool parents see more educational benefits for the nation, adult, and child. Since they have not yet had a child in

school, this is probably expectation -- although, because they are young, it could be based on their own recent educational experience.

2. Public school parents are generally low on negative views of what education can accomplish. This is consistent with earlier findings that public school parents tend to be less critical of school performance in most areas.

3. In general, there is a good deal of homogeneity of perceptions as to what education can accomplish for the nation. There is somewhat less agreement on what it can accomplish for the adult, but the differences are largely between preschool and post-school parents -- and these may be due to age differences. With regard to what education can accomplish for the child, there are different emphases according to parental status.

#### Teaching and Administration

Table 2.7 shows that the quality of instruction in local public schools is generally well regarded. Only 6% say that the instruction is "somewhat bad" and less than half of 1% say that it is "very bad."

Public school parents are most likely to say that instruction is "very good" (\*\*). However, if we control for the proportion of each group that does not know the quality of instruction, there is much less difference in evaluations by parental status.

The local public schools are also generally regarded as being well run, as shown in Table 2.8. Favorable opinions are more frequent among those parents who have had some experience with how their schools are administered (\*\*). The preschool parents and nonparents may simply be apprehensive, for neither have as much likelihood of experience.

Table 2.7. Perceived Quality of Instruction in Local Public Schools, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Instruction is</u>	<u>Non-Parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Very good	37%	44%	43%	36%	50%	44%
Somewhat good	42%	37%	37%	43%	43%	41%
Somewhat bad	5%	7%	9%	7%	5%	6%
Very bad	1%	**	1%	**	**	**
Don't know	$\frac{15\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{12\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{10\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$
	(N=226)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1498)

\* In response to the question, "Generally speaking, would you say the quality of instruction in the local public schools is very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table 2.8. Perceived Quality of Administration in Local Public Schools, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Local public schools are run</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Very well	35%	49%	45%	28%	46%	43%
Somewhat well	40%	35%	41%	46%	45%	41%
Somewhat poorly	8%	6%	4%	8%	6%	6%
Very poorly	2%	1%	3%	**	1%	1%
Don't know	$\frac{15\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{18\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "Generally speaking, do you think the local public schools are run very well, somewhat well, somewhat poorly, or very poorly?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.



## Reaction to Innovations

Nearly half of the sample did not report any innovation in the local schools that they thought either good or bad, as shown in Table 2.9. The type of innovation most often noted is curricular. Half of those reporting any reaction focus on a change in the academic curriculum.

Overall, public school and private school parents are most likely to know of some innovation for which they have an evaluation (\*\*). And, in comparison to the other parental groups, they are more likely to have a favorable reaction to an innovation (\*\*).

Except for administrative and non-academic innovations, our sample members tend to regard most innovations favorably, particularly those in the curricular area. However, nonparents are not quite as happy with innovations (usually additions) in facilities as are the other groups.

Innovations in community relations -- when tried and noted, which is infrequently -- are generally well received.

Private school parents are distinctly favorable to curricular innovations. Their ratio of favorable to unfavorable responses is much higher than that for any other group.

Table B.6 in Appendix B provides a complete breakdown of responses to innovations. Innovations in administration that draw the most criticism have to do with segregation (or integration) and transportation. Classroom innovations (e.g., more space) are well received, but buildings and grounds are not. In the non-academic area, extracurricular activities are favorably viewed, but innovations in religious areas (additions or subtractions) are overwhelmingly viewed unfavorably.

Table 2.9. Evaluations of Innovations in Local Public Schools,  
by Parental Status.\*

<u>Area of innovation and direction of evaluation</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
No innovation mentioned	53%	56%	44%	51%	38%	48%
Administration:						
favorable	3%	4%	3%	6%	5%	4%
unfavorable	8%	7%	6%	8%	6%	7%
Facilities:						
favorable	5%	7%	6%	9%	8%	7%
unfavorable	7%	4%	5%	8%	5%	5%
Teaching:						
favorable	6%	4%	5%	4%	10%	7%
unfavorable	4%	3%	1%	4%	5%	3%
Academic:						
favorable	18%	11%	31%	12%	28%	20%
unfavorable	4%	3%	1%	3%	5%	4%
Non-academic:						
favorable	3%	4%	6%	2%	7%	5%
unfavorable	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%
Community relations:						
favorable	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%
unfavorable	**	1%	**	**	1%	1%
	<u>118%</u>	<u>111%</u>	<u>114%</u>	<u>113%</u>	<u>126%</u>	<u>119%</u>
Overall evaluations:						
None	53%	56%	44%	51%	38%	48%
favorable	34%	30%	49%	30%	50%	39%
unfavorable	23%	22%	14%	26%	24%	23%
	<u>110%</u>	<u>108%</u>	<u>107%</u>	<u>107%</u>	<u>112%</u>	<u>110%</u>

(N=227) (N=428) (N=107) (N=181) (N=557) (N=1500)

\* In response to the questions, "Have the local public schools tried anything new recently, that impressed you as being very good? What is that?" and "Have the local public schools tried anything new recently, that impressed you as being very bad? What is that?" Cell entries are percentages mentioning innovations in listed areas. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one innovation.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

### Pride in Schools

In previous work we had found that most of the pride in schools focused on facilities, teaching, and on schools in general. Table 2.10 shows that these same aspects are evident here as sources of pride among citizens.

Table 2.10. Aspects of Local Public Schools in which Pride is Taken, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Aspect of Schools</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Schools in general	15%	24%	21%	9%	19%	19%
Administration	9%	9%	5%	9%	14%	11%
Facilities	15%	17%	19%	21%	24%	20%
Teaching	19%	21%	18%	19%	37%	26%
Academic content	18%	13%	11%	12%	21%	16%
Non-academic content	5%	6%	4%	6%	8%	6%
Students	5%	11%	8%	6%	12%	10%
Community relations	3%	3%	4%	2%	6%	4%
No pride in any aspect of schools	<u>38%</u> <u>127%</u>	<u>35%</u> <u>139%</u>	<u>42%</u> <u>132%</u>	<u>47%</u> <u>131%</u>	<u>22%</u> <u>163%</u>	<u>33%</u> <u>145%</u>
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Is there anything about the local public schools that you are particularly proud of? What is that?" Cell entries are percentages mentioning pride in the listed aspect of schools. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one aspect in which they took pride.

The curriculum, student achievement, and administration are somewhat less likely to be objects of pride.

Public school parents show pride in more aspects of schools

than the other groups (\*\*). This is partly because more of them have pride in at least one aspect than members of other groups, but also in part because they have pride in more than one aspect.

For the total sample, some two-thirds find pride in at least one aspect of the local schools.

Parental group differences in pride are colored by the greater likelihood that public school and postschool parents are proud of something. Both have -- or have had -- an investment in the public school product and experience with schools.

But there are some differences of note.

Pride in the schools in general is expressed most often by postschool parents (\*\*) and least frequently by preschool parents (\*\*).

Private school and preschool parents have more pride in facilities than in teaching, in contrast to the other three groups, who take more pride in teaching than in facilities (\*\*).

Public school and postschool parents, in line with their investment, have the most pride in students (\*\*).

A complete listing for sources of pride is given in Table B.6, Appendix B.

#### Nonachievement by Students

Some 85% of those we interviewed think that some type of child is not getting as much out of school as he should, as shown in Table 2.11. Those of low ability and the culturally deprived are the two major groups seen as not getting enough.

That high ability children are not often seen as achieving less than they might is of some interest. There might simply be less concern. But, on the other hand, it may be more obvious that low ability children are not getting enough.

Many respondents volunteered comments on the source of fault for low achievement. The child himself is most frequently blamed. The parent comes next. The schools are less often blamed than either.

A complete breakdown of perceived nonachievers is reported in Table B.7, Appendix B.

Table 2.11. Types of Children Perceived as Not getting Enough Out of School.\*

<u>Type of child</u>	<u>Percentage mentioning</u>
None; don't know; all are getting enough	15%
General identifications:	
Some (unspecified) children	3%
A specific child	2%
All children	1%
Low ability; retarded	21%
Orphans	6%
Special ability; high I.Q.; "creative"; "exceptional"	4%
Specific age group (e.g. "teenagers", "young ones")	4%
Physically impaired	4%
School type (e.g. "urban" or "rural", schools, "public schools")	3%
Socioeconomic group (other than poor)	1%
Miscellaneous	6%
Culturally deprived:	
Poor; underprivileged; low socioeconomic groups	13%
Negroes	6%
Other minorities	2%
Source of fault:**	
Child at fault: lazy, unmotivated	36%
Child at fault: undisciplined; play too much	4%
Parents at fault: poor example; fail to encourage	27%
Schools at fault: poor teachers or other personnel	10%
Schools at fault: poor facilities or lack programs	9%
Schools at fault: reason unspecified	1%
	<u>178%</u>

(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Do you feel that some children are getting less out of education than they should? What children are these?" Totals to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one type of child.

\*\* Although the question did not call for assignment of blame, many respondents volunteered comments of this sort, so a separate listing was made of sources of fault for the child's difficulties.

In Table 2.12 we find few differences of any size among parent groups on which children are not getting enough out of school. However, private and public school parents are least likely to point to the culturally deprived as nonachievers (\*\*).

Table 2.12. Types of Children Perceived as Not Getting Enough Out of School, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Type of child</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
None; don't know; no identification**	44%	48%	49%	43%	44%	45%
General identifi- cations	39%	39%	41%	45%	46%	42%
Culturally deprived	$\frac{26\%}{109\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{106\%}$	$\frac{16\%}{106\%}$	$\frac{20\%}{108\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{105\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{106\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* Cell entries are percentages mentioning listed type of child. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one type of child.

\*\* Includes respondents who perceived that some children were not getting enough out of school, but who did not identify except to assign fault for this problem. See Table 2.13.

In specifying the source of fault, there are some differences by parental status, as we see in Table 2.13. Private school parents are more likely than the others to blame the parent. Preschool parents are more likely than the others to blame the child.

Nonparents and preschool parents, who are without experience of children in school, are more likely to find schools at fault (\*). Postschool and private school parents are least likely to blame the schools (\*\*). Public school parents take the middle view.

Table 2.13. Perceived Source of Fault for Non-Achievement, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Source of fault</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
No fault mentioned	35%	39%	36%	35%	36%	36%
Parents at fault	25%	24%	34%	28%	27%	27%
Child at fault	39%	40%	42%	46%	40%	40%
School at fault	$\frac{20\%}{119\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{114\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{123\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{130\%}$	$\frac{18\%}{121\%}$	$\frac{18\%}{121\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Do you feel that some children are getting less out of education than they should? What children are these?" Cell entries are percentages mentioning that the fault for non-achievement was due to the listed source. Columns total more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one source of fault.

#### Grading and Standards

In general, as shown in Table 2.14, our sample members favor grading pupils to encourage competition. Some 55% said this is "very important."

Private school and preschool parents are less inclined to emphasize the importance of grading to encourage competition (\*).

The majority of the sample favors the idea of having national standards for what is taught in the schools, as shown in Table 2.15. Some 25% take a negative view of this, however, including 12% who take a strongly unfavorable view.

There are no large differences by parental status. Private school parents have slightly stronger feelings in favor of national standards for what is taught.

Table 2.14. Perceived Importance of Grading Pupils to Encourage Competition, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Importance of grading</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Very important	58%	58%	48%	49%	55%	55%
Somewhat important	27%	27%	36%	35%	28%	29%
Not very important	9%	6%	9%	9%	8%	8%
Not important at all	5%	6%	6%	7%	8%	6%
Don't know	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{**}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$
	(N=226)	(N=426)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1496)

\* In response to the question, "How important do you think it is for the schools to grade students' work, so that children compete with each other?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table 2.15. Reaction to National Standards for What is Taught in Schools, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Reaction would be</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Strongly favorable	38%	38%	42%	36%	38%	38%
Somewhat favorable	34%	30%	33%	39%	34%	33%
Somewhat unfavorable	13%	13%	15%	14%	12%	13%
Strongly unfavorable	10%	11%	8%	10%	14%	12%
Don't know	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$
	(N=226)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "What would be your reaction to a plan to have national standards for what is taught in schools?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.



Nationwide testing of high school student achievement is quite highly endorsed by the sample members, as shown in Table 2.16. Some 80% give a favorable response, and nearly half give a strongly favorable response.

Nonparents take the most favorable view (\*). Perhaps they see testing as a means of evaluating the school product, when they have no child of their own in school on which to base an evaluation.

Postschool parents are more likely than the others to react unfavorably to achievement testing of high school students (\*\*). The difference is provocative. Does their experience lead them to seek other means as more relevant to the evaluation needed?

Table 2.16. Reaction to Nationwide Achievement Testing of High School Students, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Reaction would be</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Strongly favorable	57%	44%	50%	48%	51%	49%
Somewhat favorable	25%	31%	27%	38%	32%	31%
Somewhat unfavorable	8%	8%	15%	9%	10%	9%
Strongly unfavorable	6%	9%	6%	4%	4%	6%
Don't know	4%	8%	2%	1%	3%	5%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1498)

\* In response to the question, "What would be your reaction to nationwide achievement testing of high school students?" Cell entries are percentages giving listed responses.

For testing of elementary students, the reaction is not quite so favorable, as shown in Table 2.17. On the other hand, there are few strongly unfavorable reactions.

Nonparents and private school parents are most likely to

favor elementary student testing.

Postschool parents are not so much opposed to it as they are reluctant to give it strong endorsement.

Table 2.17. Reaction to Nationwide Achievement Testing of Elementary School Students, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Reaction would be</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Strongly favorable	46%	36%	46%	41%	41%	41%
Somewhat favorable	27%	33%	26%	33%	34%	32%
Somewhat unfavorable	14%	15%	21%	19%	14%	15%
Strongly unfavorable	9%	8%	5%	6%	8%	8%
Don't know	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$
	(N=223)	(N=422)	(N=106)	(N=180)	(N=554)	(N=1485)

\* In response to the question, "What would be your reaction to nationwide achievement testing of elementary school students?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Reaction is very favorable to testing new teachers on the subjects they will teach, as shown in Table 2.18. Over three-fourths of the sample members strongly favor this proposal.

Private school parents are the most favorable; postschool parents are the least favorable (\*). Again, the postschool parents may be dubious about the relevance of this criterion for evaluating the educational product.

Private school parent interest in new teachers' abilities is consistent with their concern for national standards on what is taught in the schools, as seen previously (Table 2.15).

Table 2.18. Reaction to Testing New Teachers on Subjects They Will Teach, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Reaction would be</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Strongly favorable	77%	73%	84%	80%	78%	77%
Somewhat favorable	14%	16%	12%	13%	13%	14%
Somewhat unfavorable	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%
Strongly unfavorable	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{**}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{100\%}$
	(N=223)	(N=422)	(N=106)	(N=180)	(N=554)	(N=1485)

\* In response to the question, "What would be your reaction to a plan to test all new teachers on the subjects they expect to teach?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

### Financial Support for Schools

The next three tables show reactions to questions on financial support for local schools.

In Table 2.19, we see that our respondents generally favor the national government making more money available to local schools for expansion of current programs. Of those favorable, two-thirds are strongly favorable.

There is also a tendency for those opposed to this proposal to take a strong stand. The polarization of opinions is most noticeable among nonparents and public school parents.

Preschool parents, who stand to gain the most, take the most favorable view (\*). Postschool parents, who have nothing to gain, take the least favorable view (\*).

Table 2.19. Reaction to National Government Making Money Available to Local Schools for Expanded Program, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Reaction would be</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Strongly favorable	54%	43%	52%	50%	52%	49%
Somewhat favorable	22%	22%	25%	30%	23%	24%
Somewhat unfavorable	10%	13%	10%	9%	8%	10%
Strongly unfavorable	12%	15%	9%	8%	14%	13%
Don't know	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$
	(N=226)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=555)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "What would be your reaction if the national government made a rather large amount of money available to local school districts for expanded programs in education?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed responses.

As Table 2.20 shows, our sample members generally favor a proposal to invest more money than now needed, in order to obtain better education in the future. Extreme opinions against this proposal are less frequent than for the previous proposal.

As with the previous proposal, the preschool parents like it best (\*), the postschool parents least (\*\*)-- and again for the same reasons. Education in the future has an obvious return for the preschool parents, but not for the postschool parents.

If more money is needed for public schools, the first preference is for state sources, as shown in Table 2.21. Local sources come next. National sources come last, and by an appreciable margin -- this despite the fact that the principle of further national funding was strongly endorsed (see Table 2.19).

This order of preference holds for all parent groups. The distaste for national sources is most frequent among postschool parents (\*\*). Preschool parents, relative to the other groups, rate national sources higher and state or local sources lower.

Table 2.20. Reaction to Proposal to Invest More Money in Public Education than Now Needed to Obtain Better Education in Future, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Reaction would be</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Strongly favorable	44%	33%	46%	48%	44%	41%
Somewhat favorable	26%	30%	29%	30%	31%	30%
Somewhat unfavorable	14%	18%	14%	14%	16%	16%
Strongly unfavorable	10%	12%	6%	5%	7%	8%
Don't know	$\frac{6\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=554)	(N=1496)

\* In response to the question, "What would be your reaction to a proposal to invest more money in public education than is needed right now, in order to stimulate growth toward a better education in the future?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed responses.

Table 2.21. Preferred Sources for Any More Money for Public Schools, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Source preferred</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Local	49%	53%	50%	46%	52%	50%
State	65%	64%	59%	58%	61%	61%
National	24%	21%	29%	30%	29%	27%
Private	**	1%	**	**	**	**
Don't know	$\frac{4\%}{142\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{148\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{141\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{140\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{147\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{144\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=555)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "If more money has to be found for public schools in general, would you prefer to see it come from local, state or national sources?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one source.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

With regard to the postschool parents, there may be a conservatism factor here, in addition to the obvious factor of return for investment. Their views pertain to preferred sources as well as to potential cost. Age, too, suggests such a conservatism factor.

### Summary

The consumer orientation emerges in this chapter as the basis for citizen values and evaluations.

For all citizens, it is evident in these findings:

Many of the benefits seen to derive from education are economic -- for the nation, the individual, and the child.

Other important benefits are those competences, social and intellectual, that are held to be necessary for success in a competitive society.

There is widespread concern with establishing standards against which pupil and teacher performance can be assessed.

Citizens are receptive to proposals for national investment of educational monies, even though their preference for financial support is state sources.

There is sufficient apprehension about the educational product that six out of seven citizens interviewed think some kind of child is not getting all he should out of his education.

And there are additional evidences of the consumer orientation in the values and evaluations of parent groups:

Preschool parents favor investments by the federal government and see many benefits from education, because their rewards are before them. At the same time, they are apprehensive of the current quality of education, often finding the school at fault in their evaluations.

Postschool parents expect less from education and show less favor for investments. They take a dim view of testing proposals, perhaps because this testing would not assess the product to their satisfaction. Of advanced age, they appear to be more conservative.

Private school parents see fewer benefits from public education for the child, which may explain why they are private school parents. They like curriculum innovations and testing teachers. They are more likely than others to blame the parent for nonachievement.

Nonparents see society as benefitting from education. With no children of their own, they like achievement testing as a way of evaluating the educational product.

Public school parents are optimistic about education's benefits and take fewer negative views of local schools. They have the most pride in their schools. They know more about innovations.

## Chapter III

### Mediating Agencies

Our primary reason for this study was that so little was known about the role of various mediating agencies in relations between citizens and their schools. How do citizens regard school boards, parent groups, citizens committees, and the mass media? What little was known pointed to the need for such a study.

In our earlier work, we found that only newspapers, among potential mediating agencies, were much used for learning about school matters. Local boards of education, for example, were not reported to be useful for this purpose. But when we asked about preferred means, the boards of education were more popular than newspapers. Generally, citizens wanted news sources closer to the schools.

Further, although 31% of the citizens surveyed had received information about a then-current bond issue from school or school-related sources, only 7% had conveyed information to someone connected with the schools.

Previous results, together with more recent work on informal communication about schools, suggest that most of the communication between citizens and schools is dependent upon the (consumer) interests of the citizens.<sup>1</sup> There is little to suggest that mediating agencies can serve as anything except surrogates of the schools. They appear to substitute as a source of information for interested citizens, not to mediate between them and the schools.

Clearly, more knowledge is needed on these mediating agencies. How do citizens view their usefulness to them? What do they think of their personnel and functions? Are they seen as useful for dissemination of information from schools to citizens? As

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<sup>1</sup>Carter, Greenberg, and Haimson, op. cit.



useful for the feedback of citizen views to the schools? How fair are mediating agency reports about the schools? Do citizens see the board or the administration as dominating policy locally? Who dominates parent groups? These are some of the questions we set out to answer.

### School Boards

About two-thirds of our respondents report that they do not know any local school board members, as shown in Table 3.1. This lack of knowledge is most evident among preschool parents (\*\*).

Table 3.1. Opinions of Local School Board Personnel, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Evaluation of personnel</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Favorable	19%	20%	20%	13%	21%	19%
Neutral	4%	5%	8%	6%	5%	5%
Unfavorable	10%	9%	11%	6%	12%	10%
Don't know	<u>67%</u> <u>100%</u>	<u>66%</u> <u>100%</u>	<u>61%</u> <u>100%</u>	<u>75%</u> <u>100%</u>	<u>62%</u> <u>100%</u>	<u>66%</u> <u>100%</u>
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "What is your opinion of the local school board? What about the people on the board?" Cell entries are percentages giving responses coded in the listed categories.

All parent groups generally take a favorable view of the board personnel they know, on the average expressing favorable evaluations twice as often as unfavorable evaluations.

Somewhat more, about half, of the sample members have an opinion of the functions undertaken by the board, as shown in Table 3.2. This may reflect citizen projection, of course, in that they may guess at the functions of the board rather than the

personnel when citizens view only the results of board action -- not the process. That they do view only the results is evident: We were unable to list specific functions because citizens rarely cited them.

Nonparents and preschool parents are least likely to evaluate a board function (\*\*).

Of those evaluating functions, private school and preschool parents have somewhat higher ratios of unfavorable to favorable comments.

Table 3.2. Opinions of Local School Board Functions, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Evaluation of function</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Favorable	18%	22%	19%	15%	27%	22%
Neutral	12%	21%	21%	17%	20%	19%
Unfavorable	7%	9%	13%	9%	11%	10%
Don't know	$\frac{63\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{48\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{47\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{59\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{42\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{49\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "What is your opinion of the local school board? What about the things they (the people on the board) do?" Cell entries are percentages giving responses coded in the listed categories.

Considering what they know about board personnel and functions, our respondents are remarkably ready to say something about the balance of power between the board and the school administration. We see in Table 3.3 that three-fourths of them make such an evaluation. Surprisingly, it is the private school (as well as preschool) parents who are reluctant to claim sudden acquisition of knowledge (\*\*). Nonparents, to now less knowledgeable, have more to say than the private school parents -- to now more knowledgeable.

The administration is seen to hold the balance of power by public school, postschool, and nonparents. We might attribute the first two views to experience, but not those of the nonparents.

Private school and preschool parents see the board as holding the balance of power. These same groups had proportionately more unfavorable comments to make about board functions (Table 3.2).

Six out of seven who make assessments see either the board or the administration as dominant.

Table 3.3. Perceived Balance of Power between School Board and Administration, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Dominant element</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
School board	30%	27%	29%	30%	31%	30%
About even	10%	11%	12%	7%	11%	11%
School administration	34%	35%	26%	29%	39%	35%
Don't know	$\frac{26\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{27\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{34\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$
	(N=226)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=555)	(N=1496)

\* In response to the question, "Who would you say has more to say about what goes on in the schools -- the local school administration or the local school board?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Although only one-third of the respondents were able to evaluate board personnel, we see in Table 3.4 that two-thirds of them have an opinion on the representativeness of their local board. The opinion is generally favorable.

Public school and postschool parents are more likely to see the local board as "very representative" (\*\*).

Considering the proportion who give no view, preschool

parents are rather prone to assess the board as not representative (\*\*).

Nonparents are also likely not to make an evaluation, in contrast to their willingness to evaluate the balance of power between the board and the administration (\*\*).

Table 3.4. Perceived Representativeness of Local School Board, by Parental Status.\*

<u>School board is</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Very representative	16%	27%	24%	12%	29%	24%
Somewhat representative	27%	27%	27%	26%	32%	29%
Not very representative	9%	7%	13%	13%	12%	10%
Not representative at all	6%	3%	3%	6%	4%	4%
Don't know	$\frac{42\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{36\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{43\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{23\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=180)	(N=555)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "How representative of the people you know would you say the local school board is? Is it very representative, somewhat representative, not very representative, or not representative at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Perceptions of the balance of power between the school board and the administration vary with evaluations of board personnel and functions, as shown in Table 3.5. Those who make no evaluation of either (probably the less knowledgeable) see the board as dominant. This view is also taken by those who evaluate both personnel and functions negatively.

The administration is most likely to be seen as dominant by those who evaluate either board personnel or functions

Table 3.5. Perceived Balance of Power between School Board and School Administration, by Opinions of Board Personnel and Functions.\*

Dominant element	<u>Evaluations of Board Personnel and Functions</u>							
	<u>Negative:</u> <u>both</u>		<u>Negative:</u> <u>personnel</u>		<u>Negative:</u> <u>function</u>			
	<u>either</u>	<u>both</u>	<u>either</u>	<u>both</u>	<u>either</u>	<u>both</u>		
School board	48%	33%	34%	32%	24%	26%	34%	27%
About even	2%	12%	10%	11%	15%	17%	17%	6%
Administration	46%	41%	44%	37%	40%	44%	42%	24%
Don't know	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{12\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{20\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{43\%}{100\%}$
	(N=50)	(N=85)	(N=86)	(N=289)	(N=136)	(N=181)	(N=143)	(N=526)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these variables are based, see Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

favorably, but not both. If the person evaluates both personnel and functions favorably, or one of these aspects negatively, or has a neutral view of one or both, the administration is somewhat more likely to be seen as dominant than is the school board.

The perception that board and administration are "about even" in power is related to positive evaluations of board personnel and/or functions. This suggests that an equitable balance of power is considered the optimum situation.

Perceptions of board representativeness are closely related to the evaluations of board personnel and functions, as shown in Table 3.6. If a negative view is taken of both board personnel and functions, the board is seen as less representative than if only one aspect is unfavorably evaluated. Similarly, if both personnel and functions are favorably rated, the board is seen as more representative than if only one aspect is favorably evaluated. Those who take a neutral view of personnel and/or functions fall between the negative and favorable evaluators in perceptions of representativeness.

Negative views of personnel are more likely to be reflected in opinions of nonrepresentativeness than negative views of functions. This difference does not hold for favorable views.

In Table 3.7, we see that if either board or administration is perceived as dominant, then the board members are seen as less representative -- than if the balance of power is seen as about even. This again suggests that equitable power relations between board and administration are favorably regarded.

#### Parent Organizations

Turning now to opinions of local parent organizations, we see in Table 3.8 that 74% of the sample does not evaluate the personnel in these organizations. Even among public school parents, the "don't know" rate is a rather high 64%. Nonparents and preschool parents are least likely to make an evaluation (\*\*).

The public school parents, who comprise most of the membership of such organizations, naturally take a more favorable view

Table 3.6. Perceived Representativeness of Local School Board, by Opinions of Board Personnel and Functions.\*

School board is	Evaluations of Board Personnel and Functions							
	Negative: both	Negative: personnel	Negative: functions	Neutral: either	Favorable: personnel	Favorable: functions	Favorable: both	Don't know: both
Very representative	2%	8%	11%	30%	41%	44%	57%	7%
Somewhat representative	36%	29%	43%	35%	36%	35%	32%	18%
Not very representative	44%	39%	19%	7%	7%	5%	5%	6%
Not representative at all	14%	12%	9%	1%	2%	1%	1%	6%
Don't know	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{12\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{18\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{27\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{63\%}{100\%}$
	(N=50)	(N=85)	(N=88)	(N=289)	(N=135)	(N=181)	(N=143)	(N=526)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these variables are based, see Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Table 3.7. Perceived School Board Representativeness, by Perceived Balance of Power between School Board and Administration.\*

<u>School board is</u>	<u>Element Perceived as Dominant</u>				<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>School board</u>	<u>About even</u>	<u>Administration</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
Very representative	24%	45%	28%	11%	24%
Somewhat representative	35%	30%	35%	12%	29%
Not very representative	12%	8%	13%	5%	10%
Not at all representative	6%	2%	5%	2%	4%
Don't know	$\frac{23\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{70\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$
	(N=443)	(N=158)	(N=523)	(N=371)	(N=1495)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these variables are based, see Tables 3.3 and 3.4. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Table 3.8. Opinions of Local Parent Organization Personnel, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Evaluation of personnel</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Favorable	7%	12%	16%	11%	23%	15%
Neutral	2%	5%	5%	3%	4%	4%
Unfavorable	5%	8%	8%	4%	9%	7%
Don't know	$\frac{86\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{75\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{71\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{82\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{64\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{74\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "What is your opinion of the local (neighborhood) parents organization? What about the people in it?" Cell entries are percentages giving responses coded in the listed categories.



of the personnel (\*\*). However, their experience with parent groups also brings more negative ideas about the members (\*). Nevertheless, the unfavorable-to-favorable evaluation ratio for personnel is lowest for public school parents.

Viewing this ratio for other groups, we see that nonparents and postschool parents take the most critical view of parent organization members. The nonparents may simply not hear many favorable things about organization members. The postschool parents, however, appear to have had some bad experiences with such organizations.

As with school boards, the functions of parent organizations are more likely to be evaluated than the personnel. As shown in Table 3.9, over half have some evaluation to make of a parent organization function.

Table 3.9. Opinions of Local Parent Organization Functions, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Evaluation of functions</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Favorable	20%	32%	42%	21%	45%	34%
Neutral	11%	11%	6%	9%	11%	10%
Unfavorable	8%	8%	14%	7%	15%	11%
Don't know	$\frac{61\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{49\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{38\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{63\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{29\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{45\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "What is your opinion of the local (neighborhood) parents organization? What about the things they (the people in the organization) do?" Cell entries are percentages giving responses coded in the listed category.

Preschool and nonparents are least likely to have an opinion, again (\*\*).

Favorable evaluations of parent group functions are more frequent than of personnel -- again, as they were for boards.

Postschool parents have the highest ratio of favorable to unfavorable evaluations, in contrast to their views on personnel. Nonparents have the lowest ratio.

Only a fifth of the respondents (a third of those with an opinion) see one group as dominating parent organizations, as shown in Table 3.10. Parents, rather than school personnel, are more often perceived as dominating these organizations.

Private school parents are most likely to perceive some group as dominating parent organizations (\*). Preschool and non-parents are most likely to have no opinion. Public school parents tend to see no particular group as dominant.

Table 3.10. Perceived Domination of Local Parent Organization by One Group, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Dominant group</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Parents	9%	9%	19%	13%	14%	12%
Teachers	3%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%
Administrators	3%	3%	5%	5%	4%	4%
No one group	28%	41%	41%	28%	51%	41%
Don't know	$\frac{57\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{45\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{31\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{52\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{28\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{40\%}{100\%}$
	(N=225)	(N=420)	(N=105)	(N=179)	(N=547)	(N=1476)

\* In response to the question, "Do you feel that the parents organization is dominated by any one group of persons? (If yes) Who are they -- parents, teachers, or administrators?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Only 35% of our sample members belong -- or have belonged -- to an organization that they consider to be concerned with public schools, as shown in Table 3.11. Most of these memberships are in parent organizations. A very few are in youth groups, and 7%

report membership in an adult group they think is concerned with public schools.

As we might expect, public school parents report more membership in such organizations (\*\*). Private school and postschool parents are also relatively high, the latter because previous memberships are included.

Table 3.11. Membership in Local Organization Interested in Public Schools, by Parental Status.\*

Type of organization	Non-parent	Post-school	Private school	Pre-school	Public school	Total sample
Parent group: PTA, fathersclub, etc.	6%	27%	32%	4%	53%	31%
Youth group: 4-H Scouts, YMCA, etc.	**	**	2%	**	**	1%
Adult group: service fraternal, church, political, etc.	12%	9%	8%	4%	5%	7%
None	$\frac{87\%}{105\%}$	$\frac{68\%}{104\%}$	$\frac{64\%}{106\%}$	$\frac{92\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{45\%}{103\%}$	$\frac{65\%}{104\%}$
	(N=226)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "Are you now, or have you been a member of any organizations concerned with public schools? Which ones?" Cell entries are percentages citing membership in the listed type of organization. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents were members of more than one type of organization.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Preschool and nonparents, those least likely to evaluate parent organization functions and personnel, rarely report memberships.

Nonparents are more likely to report membership in an adult group concerned with public schools than membership in a parent organization. Such memberships may, in part, reflect a need for

some substitute activities in place of parenthood.

Only private school parents show an appreciable membership in youth groups. This may indicate concern with a specific child, rather than a more general concern with public education.

Preschool parents are rarely members of any organization concerned with public schools, even though involvement with public education is ahead of them (\*\*).

In Table 3.12, we see that those who evaluate parent organization personnel or functions negatively are more likely to see some group as dominating these organizations (\*\*). And if both personnel and functions are viewed negatively, the tendency is greater (\*\*). (This finding is similar to that for school boards -- see Table 3.5 -- where negative views were correlated with the perception that the balance of power favored one element.)

School people, rather than parents, are seen to dominate parent organizations by those who view personnel and functions negatively. This holds even if we control for differences in the proportion making some evaluation. The finding suggests dissatisfaction with parent organizations as an agency for feedback from parents to schools.

Citizens who belong to a group concerned with schools are more likely than nonmembers to see one element as dominating parent organizations, as shown in Table 3.13 (\*\*). This is only partly an artifact of the greater frequency with which these "experienced" respondents give an evaluation.

Parent group members are more likely to see themselves, not the school people, as dominant (\*). That is, if they see any element as dominant. This may indicate that experience in a parent organization reduces the tendency to view it unfavorably as an effective agency for feedback.

Although many communities have -- or have had -- citizens' committees, awareness of their personnel and functions is very low, as shown in Table 3.14. As with other agencies, functions are evaluated more often than personnel, and the majority of such views are favorable.

The number of citizens with views on citizens' committees is

Table 3.12. Perceived Domination of Local Parent Organization by One Group by Opinions of Local Parent Organization Personnel and Functions.\*

Dominant group	Evaluations of Parent Organization Personnel and Functions							
	Negative: both	Negative: personnel	Negative: functions	Neutral: either	Favorable: personnel	Favorable: functions	Favorable: both	Don't know: both
Parents	45%	18%	21%	14%	13%	12%	10%	6%
Teachers	3%	8%	4%	1%	**	2%	2%	2%
Administrators	12%	8%	6%	5%	2%	2%	3%	3%
No one group	26%	40%	43%	46%	68%	62%	70%	23%
Don't know	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{26\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{26\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{34\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{18\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{22\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{66\%}{100\%}$
	(N=49)	(N=45)	(N=107)	(N=166)	(N=56)	(N=328)	(N=169)	(N=554)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these variables are based, see Tables 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table 3.13. Perceived Domination of Local Parent Organization by One Group, by Membership in Local Organization Interested in Public Schools.\*

<u>Dominant element</u>	<u>Organization Membership</u>		
	<u>None</u>	<u>Parents group**</u>	<u>Other group**</u>
Parents	9%	17%	14%
Teachers	2%	2%	3%
Administrators	3%	3%	4%
No one group	37%	58%	44%
Don't know	$\frac{49\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{20\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{35\%}{100\%}$
	(N=952)	(N=465)	(N=112)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these variables are based, see Tables 3.10 and 3.11. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* The "parents group" and "other group" categories are not independent, since some respondents were members of both types of group. The "other group" category includes both youth groups and adult groups.

Table 3.14. Opinions of Local Citizen Organization Personnel and Functions.\*

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Functions</u>
Favorable	2%	6%
Neutral	**	1%
Unfavorable	1%	1%
Don't know; no such organization	$\frac{97\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{92\%}{100\%}$
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Aside from the parents organization, is there, or has there been, any active citizens group in the community, organized to act on public school problems? What group is that? What is your opinion of this group? The people in it? The things they do?" Cell entries are percentages giving responses coded in the listed categories.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

too low to permit any useful analysis of views by parental status.

### Comparisons Among Agencies

Table 3.15 shows that the newspaper is considered the most helpful means for citizens to find out what is going on in their local schools. Local school people -- teachers and administrators -- follow in perceived helpfulness as disseminators.

The least helpful agencies are citizens' committees and school boards. In the middle are parent organizations, television, and radio.

Evaluations of newspapers decline regularly from most to least helpful. There is some indication of polarity of opinion in the ratings of other mediating agencies, however. More persons evaluate them as "not helpful at all" than see them as "not very helpful."

In Table 3.16, we see that the perceived helpfulness of the various agencies in telling the schools what the public thinks (feedback) takes much the same order as the perceptions for dissemination (Table 3.15). An exception is that the school board is seen as more helpful for feedback. Newspapers and parent organizations are still seen as more useful feedback agencies than the school board, however.

Two general differences should be noted between the dissemination and the feedback ratings of these agencies. More respondents fail to evaluate them with respect to feedback; those who do rate them see them as less helpful for feedback than for dissemination. Thus, these agencies tend to be seen as one-way mediators -- from schools to citizens, but not vice-versa.

The mediating agencies are generally considered fair in their reporting about local schools, as shown in Table 3.17. Newspapers get the best and the worst of it, perhaps because newspapers have other functions that are incompatible with being an educational mediating agency.

If we control for the proportion making no evaluation, then the parent organizations and local teachers are rated the fairest.

Table 3.15. Perceived Helpfulness of Various Agencies in Disseminating Information about Local Schools.\*

Evaluation	Agency							
	Newspapers	Television	Radio	School board	Parent Organization	Citizens' committee	Local teachers	School administration
Very helpful	34%	15%	13%	12%	17%	3%	23%	19%
Helpful	25%	16%	19%	17%	19%	3%	20%	20%
Fairly helpful	18%	13%	17%	15%	13%	2%	12%	13%
Not very helpful	11%	16%	15%	14%	10%	1%	9%	9%
Not helpful at all	6%	21%	17%	18%	13%	1%	12%	13%
Don't know or doesn't apply	$\frac{6\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{28\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{90\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{26\%}{100\%}$
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "I'd like your opinion on various sources of information about school affairs. How helpful would you say the newspapers have been in helping you learn what's going on in the local public schools?" This question was repeated for each of the agencies. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.



Table 3.16. Perceived Helpfulness of Various Mediating Agencies in Feedback of Information to Local Schools.\*

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Mediating Agency</u>					
	<u>Newspapers</u>	<u>Television</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>School board</u>	<u>Parent organization</u>	<u>Citizens' committee</u>
Very helpful	17%	8%	8%	10%	15%	3%
Helpful	21%	14%	15%	20%	22%	3%
Fairly helpful	18%	13%	15%	14%	13%	1%
Not very helpful	19%	19%	18%	11%	8%	1%
Not helpful at all	8%	18%	16%	9%	7%	1%
Don't know or doesn't apply	$\frac{17\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{28\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{28\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{36\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{35\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{91\%}{100\%}$
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "How helpful would you say the newspapers have been in giving the local schools an idea of what the public is thinking about the schools?" This question was repeated for each of the mediating agencies. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Table 3.17. Perceived Fairness of Various Agencies in Reporting on Local Public Schools.\*

<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Agency</u>							
	<u>Newspapers</u>	<u>Television</u>	<u>Radio</u>	<u>School board</u>	<u>Parent organization</u>	<u>Citizens' Local teachers' administration</u>	<u>School</u>	
Very fair	33%	23%	24%	26%	31%	4%	33%	29%
Somewhat fair	46%	31%	33%	33%	26%	4%	28%	30%
Not very fair	7%	4%	5%	6%	4%	1%	4%	5%
Not fair at all	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	**	1%	1%
Don't know or doesn't apply	$\frac{12\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{40\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{37\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{38\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{91\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{34\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{35\%}{100\%}$
	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "How fair do you feel the reports are that you get from newspapers about the local public schools?" This question was repeated for each of the agencies. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

The administration gets a better rating on fairness than either the school board or radio and television. This suggests some of the same preference found in earlier studies for direct contact with school officials.

Table 3.18 is primarily designed to show parental group differences in viewing the dissemination function of these agencies. But it also gives a review of the helpfulness of each agency. Newspapers, it should be noted, are the only agency considered either "helpful" or "very helpful" by at least half the citizens interviewed.

Generally, preschool parents see these agencies as least helpful for dissemination -- commensurate with their lack of knowledge about schools.

Table 3.18. Perceived Helpfulness of Agencies in Disseminating Information, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Agency</u> <u>Perceived helpful</u>	<u>Non-</u> <u>parent</u>	<u>Post-</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Private</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Pre-</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Public</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>sample</u>
Newspapers	62%	56%	64%	57%	60%	59%
Television	37%	30%	39%	30%	27%	31%
Radio	35%	30%	29%	22%	35%	32%
School board	27%	27%	31%	19%	36%	29%
Parent organization	21%	27%	32%	20%	54%	36%
Citizens' committee	5%	4%	1.0%	3%	8%	6%
Local teachers	33%	34%	42%	32%	61%	43%
School administration	34%	32%	34%	25%	57%	39%
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=180)	(N=555)	(N=1496)

\* Cell entries are percentages responding "very helpful" or "helpful" to the question, "How helpful would you say the newspapers have been in helping you learn what's going on in the local public schools?" This question was repeated for each of the agencies.

The greater participation of public school parents shows in their higher ratings of those agencies close to the schools -- school boards and parent organizations -- and of teachers and administrators (\*\*).

The perceived usefulness of the mass media differs for private school and nonparents, depending on the medium. Private school parents rate newspapers and television higher than other groups. Nonparents -- together with public school parents -- give radio its highest ratings (\*).

Public school parents give television its lowest rating for helping to disseminate information (\*).

In Table 3.19, we see that only newspapers and parent organizations are considered by more than a third of the sample to be at least "helpful" in the feedback of information to schools.

Preschool parents often give the lowest evaluations of the agencies -- for feedback as they do for dissemination. Public school parents are not so favorable toward the agencies for feedback -- with the exception of the parent organization (\*\*), to which many of them belong.

Nonparents are highest in evaluating the mass media, particularly radio (\*). This reflects their lack of more direct contact with schools.

Citizens' committees are rated most highly as feedback agencies by the private school parents -- who also rated them most highly for dissemination (\*).

Table 3.20 shows that, in general, there is little perception of unfairness of agency reports about schools. No agency is evaluated as "not very fair" or worse by as much as 10% of the sample.

If we recall the number of persons who could not evaluate each of these agencies, then television, radio, and particularly school boards get the worst of it in ratings of unfairness.

The differences between groups in their assessments of agency unfairness are relatively small. If we look down the columns of Table 3.20, we do see that preschool parents, private school

Table 3.19. Perceived Helpfulness of Mediating Agencies in Feedback of Information, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Mediating agency perceived helpful</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Newspapers	42%	39%	42%	34%	37%	38%
Television	27%	25%	23%	20%	20%	22%
Radio	30%	25%	18%	18%	24%	23%
School board	33%	29%	28%	21%	36%	30%
Parent organization	32%	32%	34%	35%	49%	37%
Citizens' committee	6%	5%	10%	4%	7%	6%
	(N=218)	(N=415)	(N=106)	(N=179)	(N=539)	(N=1457)

\* Cell entries are percentages responding "very helpful" or "helpful" to the question, "How helpful would you say the newspapers have been in giving the local schools an idea of what the public is thinking about the schools?" This question was repeated for each of the mediating agencies.

Table 3.20. Perceived Unfairness of Agencies in Reporting Local Schools, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Agency perceived unfair</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Newspapers	9%	7%	11%	12%	10%	9%
Television	7%	5%	2%	6%	6%	6%
Radio	7%	4%	6%	9%	7%	6%
School board	7%	6%	1.2%	8%	9%	8%
Parent organization	7%	4%	8%	6%	5%	5%
Citizens' committee	1%	1%	3%	1%	**	1%
Local teachers	7%	6%	5%	9%	4%	5%
School administration	8%	5%	7%	9%	6%	6%
	(N=226)	(N=428)	(N=106)	(N=179)	(N=556)	(N=1495)

\* Cell entries are percentages responding "not very fair" or "not fair at all" to the question, "How fair do you feel the reports are that you get from newspapers about the local public schools?" This question was repeated for each of the agencies.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

parents and nonparents tend generally to be more critical of agency fairness.

### Summary

Overall, citizens know relatively little about local mediating agencies, make relatively little use of them, and only occasionally have anything specific to say about them.

Board of education personnel and functions are little known. Very general characterizations of good or bad, based on perceived results rather than operations of the board, prevail. Those who do have an opinion about the balance of power between the board and the administration tend to see one as prevailing over the other. Only one out of seven sees an even balance. The less knowledgeable think the board has the balance of power. Those who take a favorable view of board personnel and functions are more likely to see an even balance. And those who see an even balance see the board members as more representative of the citizenry.

Parent organization personnel and functions are even less known than the board's. Again, evaluations are general. But only one of three with an opinion sees one element as dominant -- usually the parents. Those with negative views on personnel and functions are likely to see school people as dominating. Citizens who are, or have been, parent organization members tend to see parents as dominating.

Citizens' committees are practically unknown. Only 3% express an opinion of their personnel, 7% of their functions.

In disseminating information about schools to citizens, only newspapers are seen as helpful by half of those interviewed. Direct contacts with school personnel are seen as helpful by over half of the public school parents.

In the feedback of information from citizens to schools, only newspapers and parent organizations are seen as helpful by a third of those interviewed. The school board is somewhat more

useful for feedback than dissemination, particularly in comparison to the mass media.

Generally, mediating agencies are valued more for dissemination than for feedback. There is relatively little criticism of them for fairness of reports. Newspapers are most often criticized.

The picture of citizen views and use of mediating agencies by parental status reinforces an earlier inference that these are dictated by consumer interests. We can also add something now about the accommodation of these interests.

Preschool parents do not know much about mediating agencies and are least likely to use them. They have some negative opinions of them however, compared to other parental groups. Their future involvement in school matters seems nurtured by apprehension and little else.

Postschool parents, through their experiences, tend to know more about mediating agencies. But, since their involvement is past, their use is relatively low.

Private school parents take a number of negative views of mediating agencies. They tend to be unfavorable toward board functions, to see domination of parent organizations by one element, and to see unfairness in mediating agency reports. They make relatively high use of newspapers.

Nonparents do not know much about mediating agencies but, unlike preschool parents, make some use of them. Particularly, they attend more to all the mass media -- newspapers, radio, and television. Although not often members of parent organizations, they belong to other adult groups concerned with school matters more often than do parents.

Public school parents generally know the most about mediating agencies and are usually the most favorable toward their personnel and functions. They accommodate their interests through parent organizations and direct contacts with school people. They also find the school board more helpful than other groups do.

## Chapter IV

### Participation

Our previous estimates of citizen participation in school affairs have been sobering. But until this study we were still unsure of how much these previous estimates were inflated -- for they were high, we knew. We had been interviewing registered voters, whom we could reasonably expect to have more interest in public affairs than the members of this more representative adult sample.

One good estimate that we possessed prior to this study was the record of voting in school financial elections during the period between 1948 and 1959. The average turnout was found to be about 36% of those eligible.<sup>1</sup>

But there are other important aspects of participation. We shall preface this chapter with a brief report of participation levels among registered voters, taken from our previous studies.

Using the criterion of at least "sometimes," these levels of participation were observed in three cities:

57% said they had visited a school or attended a school function;

38% said they had attended meetings of school organizations;

45% said they had talked to a school person recently; and,

56% said they had talked to a neighbor recently about the local schools.

Up to 60% said they were unable to evaluate local performances on a number of school functions, services, and curricular areas. In one elementary district, only 1% could identify the local superintendent and two of the five board members.

In the district where we pretested this study, we asked six questions about facts emphasized for a forthcoming tax election.

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<sup>1</sup>Carter and Savard, op. cit.



The questions employed multiple choice responses. The number of correct responses was less than chance would predict if respondents had guessed. Many simply acknowledged their ignorance.

The study of registered voters in these cities revealed these feelings about the efficacy of participation in school affairs:

36% said they thought citizens did not have much say in school matters;

49% said that voting seemed to be the only voice they had;

24% said school officials did not seem to care what they thought; and,

43% said educational policy was sometimes too complicated for them to understand.

Among registered voters, the potential for participation appeared to be higher than the observed levels. Some 70% thought themselves to be the same type of person as one they believed to take an active interest in school affairs.

Participation was found to be related to parental status. Public school parents participated more. They perceived a definite responsibility to participate. And of those who did participate, 59% attributed their interest to parenthood.

#### Perceived Efficacy

In Table 4.1, we see how the sample members view the efficacy of participation in school affairs. Compared with earlier results for registered voters, this more representative group shows less efficacy for three of four questions.

Here 33% of those interviewed do not think public school officials care much what people like them think. In our earlier voter study, the figure was 24%.

Here 46% feel that voting is the only way that people like themselves have anything to say about how their schools are run. The previous result was 49% for registered voters. (The fact of their registration may account for the tendency of some of those interviewed in the previous studies to view this condition as efficacious.)

Here 46% agree that people like themselves do not have much to say about what schools do. The previous result was 36% agreement.

Table 4.1. Perceived Efficacy of Participation in School Affairs, by Parental Status.\*

Statement agreed with	Non-parent	Post-school	Private school	Pre-school	Public school	Total sample
"I don't think public school officials care much what people like me think."	35%	40%	22%	34%	27%	33%
"Voting is the only way that people like me have anything to say about how their schools are run."	47%	58%	41%	41%	38%	46%
"People like me don't have much to say about what the schools do."	54%	63%	34%	39%	35%	46%
"Sometimes educational policy seems so complicated that a person like me can't really tell what's going on."	57%	64%	42%	50%	51%	55%
	(N=226)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=554)	(N=1496)

\* Respondents were asked, "These next statements were made by some of the people interviewed in previous surveys. Would you agree or disagree with these statements?" Cell entries are percentages agreeing with the listed statement.

Here 55% think that sometimes educational policy seems so complicated that persons like themselves can't really tell what's going on. Before, 43% said this.

Postschool parents, who are low in educational attainment, are least likely to see efficacy in participation. Nonparents, who are relatively well educated, follow in lack of efficacy.

Although they are not on the average well educated, private school parents perceive the highest level of efficacy on three of the four items. The exception is voting as one's only voice.

Public school parents are most likely to think that voting is not their only voice. Their organizational memberships and direct contacts, seen in the previous chapter, provide other means for them.

Table 4.2 gives a summary statement of the relationship between parental status and perceived efficacy. Private school and public school parents see more efficacy than the others (\*\*). Postschool parents see the least (\*\*).

Table 4.2. Perceived Efficacy of Participation in School Affairs (Scale), by Parental Status.\*

<u>Degree of efficacy</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
High	19%	16%	29%	26%	28%	23%
Medium high	21%	17%	27%	23%	28%	23%
Medium	21%	15%	21%	20%	18%	19%
Medium Low	15%	23%	16%	18%	12%	16%
Low	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{29\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* The efficacy scale is constructed from the four items listed in Table 4.1, which yield a Guttman scale with reproducibility of .92, and scalability coefficients of .81 for items and .57 for individuals. Cell entries are percentages of respondents at the listed level of this scale.

## Interest and Activity

When asked what might be done to increase their interest in local public schools, as reported in Table 4.3, 51% respond "nothing." An additional 17% say only their being a different kind of person -- such as a public school parent -- would have any impact on their interest.

Table 4.3. Perceived Source of Increased Interest in Local Public Schools, by Parental Status.\*

What would increase interest	Non-parent	Post-school	Private school	Pre-school	Public school	Total sample
Nothing; don't know	44%	62%	51%	28%	53%	51%
Couldn't be more interested; don't want to be	7%	6%	8%	2%	12%	8%
Being a different person (younger, a parent, etc.)	24%	13%	15%	56%	4%	17%
Change in or by schools (e.g. new programs)	7%	10%	9%	4%	8%	8%
Change in or by self (e.g. effort)	2%	2%	6%	3%	3%	5%
Change facilitated by other people (e.g. publicity)	16%	9%	8%	12%	16%	13%
Miscellaneous	4%	1%	4%	3%	3%	3%
	<u>104%</u>	<u>103%</u>	<u>101%</u>	<u>108%</u>	<u>104%</u>	<u>105%</u>
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Is there anything you can think of that would increase your interest in the local public schools? What is that? (If appropriate) Who could do that?" Cell entries are percentages coded in the listed categories. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one source of increased interest.

Greater interest, should there be any, is seen to depend more on the behavior of others than on the citizens themselves. Some 21% give a change made by schools or other people as a basis for increased interest. Only 5% say they might increase their interest by their own effort.

More information is most often suggested. (See Table B.8, Appendix B, for a complete listing.)

Preschool parents are most likely to see some way of increasing their interest, largely because of their prospective parental role (\*\*).

Postschool parents, whose period of greatest interest is past, are least likely to see a way open for increasing their interest (\*\*). Private school and public school parents are also more likely than not to see no way open. But for these latter groups, part of this is due to their current involvement being sufficient.

Citizens who have a higher sense of efficacy for participation are more likely to perceive some manner in which their interest could be increased, as shown in Table 4.4 (\*\*).

Those with a high efficacy level are also more likely to be at a participation level such that they feel they could not be more interested than they are -- or, perhaps, they do not want to be more involved than they are.

Efficacy has little relationship to any particular means of increasing interest.

Some 25% of those interviewed had talked with someone associated with the schools in the last several weeks, as shown in Table 4.5. This contrasts with the estimate of 45% found among registered voters.

These conversations are more likely to have been with a teacher than with a school official or someone else associated with the schools. Private school and public school parents are most likely to converse with teachers (\*\*). The focus is on pupils and courses. (See Table B.9, Appendix B, for a listing of topics by conversants.)

Public school parents are most likely to converse with a

Table 4.4. Perceived Source of Increased Interest in Local Public Schools, by Perceived Efficacy of Participation in School Affairs (Scale).\*

<u>What would increase interest</u>	<u>Efficacy</u>					<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Med-low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Med-high</u>	<u>High</u>	
Nothing; don't know	61%	52%	55%	47%	43%	51%
Couldn't be more interested; don't want to be	3%	3%	5%	11%	15%	8%
Being a different person (younger, a parent, etc.)	15%	18%	14%	19%	17%	17%
Change in or by schools (e.g. new programs)	8%	9%	7%	5%	10%	8%
Change in or by self (e.g. effort)	3%	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Change facilitated by other people (e.g. publicity)	11%	13%	14%	12%	14%	13%
Miscellaneous	$\frac{2\%}{103\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{102\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{103\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{102\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{107\%}$	$\frac{3\%}{105\%}$
	(N=288)	(N=246)	(N=274)	(N=346)	(N=346)	(N=1500)

\* For the questions on which these variables are based, see Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3. Cell entries are percentages coded in the listed categories. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one source of increased interest.

school official (\*\*). This accords with the finding in the previous chapter that direct contact with school personnel is a helpful mode for public school parents.

Some 34% had talked recently with another citizen (other than a school person) about the local schools, as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5. Talking with School People, by Parental Status.\*

<u>School person talked with</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
School official	5%	4%	5%	6%	17%	9%
Teacher	10%	8%	18%	9%	19%	13%
Other person connected with schools	6%	6%	7%	4%	9%	7%
None	$\frac{82\%}{103\%}$	$\frac{84\%}{102\%}$	$\frac{76\%}{106\%}$	$\frac{84\%}{103\%}$	$\frac{62\%}{107\%}$	$\frac{75\%}{104\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the questions, "During the last week or two, have you talked with any public school official or teacher about school matters? Can you recall talking to anyone else recently about the local public schools? Who?" Cell entries are percentages mentioning talking with the type of school-connected person listed. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents talked with more than one type of person.

Table 4.6. Talking with Citizens about Local Schools, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Type of person talked with</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Relative (spouse, child, in-law)	3%	6%	6%	10%	12%	8%
Friend	9%	6%	15%	8%	15%	11%
Other: neighbor, business or casual contact	17%	15%	25%	24%	28%	22%
None	$\frac{75\%}{104\%}$	$\frac{77\%}{104\%}$	$\frac{61\%}{107\%}$	$\frac{64\%}{106\%}$	$\frac{55\%}{111\%}$	$\frac{66\%}{107\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Can you recall talking to anyone else (other than a public school official or teacher) recently about the local public schools? Who?" Cell entries are percentages mentioning talking with the type of person listed. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned talking with more than one type of person.

This contrasts with the estimate of 56% obtained for registered voters.

Public school and private school parents are again highest in conversations (\*\*). Preschool parents are also relatively high in such conversations, perhaps in anticipation of their future parental status (\*\*). They might talk more with school people if channels were available.

The patterns of activity differ somewhat by parental status. Public school and private school parents converse more with friends, neighbors, and other casual contacts (\*\*). Public school and preschool parents talk more with relatives (\*\*).

Of those interviewed, 39% had attended some public school activity since the beginning of the school year (we interviewed in the spring), as shown in Table 4.7. Attendance for registered voters was previously estimated at 57%.

Somewhat more citizens attend student events than adult meetings. However, public school parents are more likely to attend adult meetings than student events (\*\*).

Public school parents account for much of the attendance at all events (\*\*). Preschool and postschool parents account for the least (\*\*). The former might well benefit from attendance. The schools might well benefit from attendance by the latter.

Looking now at a summary of participation by parental status, in Table 4.8, we see that the public school parents are much more likely than the other groups to have participated in more than one manner (\*\*). They are followed by the private school parents.

Participation by postschool parents is the lowest (\*\*), recalling the comment that once children are out of school their parents become fathers and mothers again.<sup>2</sup>

The total sample figures show that 43% of the sample engaged in none of the three forms of participation and that 72% either had not participated or had in only one way. Only 9% had participated in all three ways -- talking with school people, talking

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<sup>2</sup>Voters and Their Schools, op. cit.



Table 4.7. Attendance at School Activities, Programs and Meetings, by Parental Status.\*

Type of event	Non-parent	Post-school	Private school	Pre-school	Public school	Total sample
Adult meeting (e.g. PTA, fund-raising group)	9%	6%	13%	4%	50%	23%
Observe student event (e.g. athletic game, recital, play, class)	17%	15%	22%	14%	46%	27%
Private participation (e.g. adult class, parent conference)	2%	1%	1%	1%	6%	3%
None	$\frac{77\%}{105\%}$	$\frac{82\%}{104\%}$	$\frac{72\%}{108\%}$	$\frac{83\%}{102\%}$	$\frac{30\%}{132\%}$	$\frac{61\%}{114\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Have you attended any public school activities, programs, or meetings since the beginning of the school year? What was that?" Cell entries are percentages attending the listed type of event. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents had attended more than one type of event. See Table B.10, Appendix B, for a further breakdown.

with other citizens about the schools, and attending a school function since the beginning of the school year.

In Table 4.9, participation is viewed by efficacy level and the possibility that interest could be increased. Among those whose interest could be increased (a relatively small group), participation is already rather frequent -- whether they have a sense of efficacy or not. This suggests that these citizens have a commitment, which is reflected in participation already and which could lead to further participation.

Only those citizens who see no way to increase their interest

Table 4.8. Participation in School Affairs (Scale), by Parental Status.\*

<u>Number of kinds of participation</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Three	4%	5%	8%	4%	17%	9%
Two	12%	9%	15%	12%	32%	19%
One	26%	24%	38%	33%	31%	29%
None	<u>58%</u> 100%	<u>62%</u> 100%	<u>39%</u> 100%	<u>51%</u> 100%	<u>20%</u> 100%	<u>43%</u> 100%
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* Three kinds of participation in school activities were included in constructing this scale: talking with school people, talking with citizens about schools, and attendance at school events. For detailed analysis and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7, respectively. These items form a Guttman scale with a reproducibility of .92, and scalability coefficients of .72 (items) and .47 (individuals). Cell entries are percentages of respondents at each level of the participation scale.

Table 4.9. Participation in School Affairs (Scale), by Perceived Source of Increased Interest, and Efficacy.\*

<u>Interest-Efficacy type</u>	<u>Percentage Participating in at least one way</u>	
High efficacy, interest could be increased	71%	(N=188)
High efficacy, interest could not be increased	70%	(N=504)
Low efficacy, interest could be increased	64%	(N=208)
Low efficacy, interest could not be increased	39%	(N=600)
Total sample	57%	(N=1500)

\* Participation includes any one of the three kinds of participation involved in the scale of Table 4.8: talking with school people, talking with citizens about schools, and attendance at school events. High efficacy includes all respondents who were scored as "medium high" or "high" on the efficacy scale in Table 4.2. All other respondents are scored as "low efficacy." The category "interest could be increased" includes all respondents who said that something other than their becoming a different person could increase their interest in schools; see Table 4.3.

and who also perceive little efficacy are significantly lower in participation (\*\*). This is a large group, however -- 40% of the total sample.

### Voting

Some 40% of those interviewed say they voted in most or all of the elections held in their school district in recent years, as shown in Table 4.10. This is probably inflated, given the national average of 36% for voter turnout -- and this sample includes some not registered and/or not eligible to vote.

Most of the parental group differences are accounted for by the fact that preschool and nonparents are more likely to have been too young to vote in some of these elections (\*\*).

Table 4.10. Voting Behavior in School Elections, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Eligibility and voting</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Voted in most or all elections	33%	43%	44%	19%	46%	40%
Voted in some or few elections	8%	12%	16%	4%	10%	10%
Eligible to vote, but did not vote	9%	9%	6%	11%	8%	8%
Not eligible to vote	42%	27%	27%	54%	30%	34%
Don't know about eligibility, did not vote	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{12\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=554)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "Have there been any school elections -- school board, or school bond or tax elections -- in recent years in which you were eligible to vote? (If yes) Did you vote in all of them, most of them, some of them, a few, or none at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

If we look at the ratio of "voted in most or all elections" to "voted in some or a few elections" in Table 4.10, public school parents are slightly more likely to be regular voters than private school or postschool parents.

In Table 4.11, we see that voting behavior -- like other forms of participation -- is related to perceived efficacy or, in the absence of efficacy, to a perception that one's interest could be increased.

Table 4.11. Voting Behavior in School Elections, by Perceived Source of Increased Interest, and Efficacy.\*

Eligibility and voting	Low efficacy, interest could not be increased	Low efficacy, interest could be increased	High efficacy, interest could not be increased	High efficacy, interest could be increased
Voted in most or all elections	30%	41%	48%	48%
Voted in some or few elections	11%	9%	10%	8%
Eligible to vote, but did not vote	10%	10%	6%	9%
Not eligible to vote	39%	32%	29%	28%
Don't know about eligibility, did not vote	$\frac{10\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$
	(N=598)	(N=207)	(N=503)	(N=188)

\* For the marginal distribution and questions on which the voting behavior measure is based, see Table 4.10. For a description of the efficacy-interest typology, see Table 4.9. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

### Roles for Participation

We turn now to tables reporting perceived roles for interest in school activities and finances, and adherence to these roles.

Although citizen participation is not a widespread phenomenon, 93% of those interviewed perceive a role for interest in school activities, as shown in Table 4.12. Some 72% see the wife as having this role; 18% see both the wife and husband as having it. In our previous work, the figures were 57% for the wife, 24% for both.

Public school and preschool parents are most likely to see the wife in this role (\*\*). Postschool and private school parents are most likely to see both in this role (\*\*). Nonparents are distinguished primarily for not perceiving a role as often as the others (\*\*).

Table 4.12. Perceived Role Responsibility for Interest in School Activities, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Spouse more interested</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Wife	66%	69%	69%	71%	79%	72%
Husband	3%	2%	3%	6%	2%	3%
Both equal	16%	22%	25%	16%	16%	18%
Neither one	2%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Don't know	$\frac{13\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{100\%}$
	(N=224)	(N=423)	(N=107)	(N=180)	(N=555)	(N=1489)

\* In response to the question, "Of the couples you know, does the husband or the wife usually take the more active interest in school activities?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

The perceived role for interest in school finances is somewhat different, as shown in Table 4.13. Some 33% perceive this role for the wife, 26% for the husband, and 25% for both. This compares with previous results of 20% for the wife, 16% for the husband, and 48% for both. Registered voters, it can be seen, are more likely to see a role for both husband and wife relative to activities and finances.

Nonparents are highest again on not seeing any role (\*\*). But they are also most likely to see the husband as having this role (\*\*). Public school, preschool, and postschool parents all ascribe the role to the wife most frequently. Private school parents tend to divide the role about equally among wife, husband, or both.

Table 4.13. Perceived Role Responsibility for Interest in School Financial Matters, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Spouse more interested</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Wife	24%	32%	31%	33%	36%	33%
Husband	34%	21%	31%	30%	23%	26%
Both equal	17%	27%	29%	20%	28%	25%
Neither one	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Don't know	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$
	(N=223)	(N=421)	(N=106)	(N=180)	(N=554)	(N=1484)

\* In response to the question, "Of the couples you know, does the husband or the wife usually take the more active interest in school financial matters?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Generally, families tend to follow the role prescription for interest in activities, as shown in Table 4.14. This is particularly true if the role is seen for both.

Table 4.14. Role Conformance for Interest in School Activities.\*

<u>Perceived role/family conformance</u>	<u>Proportion</u>
Role pertains to respondent:	
Respondent conforms	19%
Spouse takes more interest	2%
Both take equal interest	9%
Neither takes interest	3%
Role pertains to spouse:	
Spouse conforms	19%
Respondent takes more interest	3%
Both take equal interest	8%
Neither takes interest	2%
Role pertains to both equally:	
Both conform	10%
Respondent takes more interest	2%
Spouse takes more interest	2%
Neither takes interest	1%
Role pertains to neither:	
Both take equal interest	**
Respondent takes interest	**
Spouse takes interest	**
Neither takes interest	1%
Don't know role or conformance; not applicable (unmarried)	$\frac{18\%}{100\%}$

(N=1500)

\* In response to the question, "Of the couples you know, does the husband or the wife usually take the more active interest in school activities? (If currently married) And who usually takes more interest in school activities in your family -- you, or your (spouse)?" Percentages of respondents giving each combination of responses are listed.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Role conformity for financial interest is even stronger than it is for activity interest, as shown in Table 4.15.

For both kinds of interest, when there is deviation from the prescribed role it is toward both assuming the role when it is seen for only one.

Table 4.15. Role Conformance for Interest in School Financial Matters.\*

<u>Perceived role/family conformance</u>	<u>Proportion</u>
Role pertains to respondent:	
Respondent conforms	20%
Spouse takes more interest	2%
Both take equal interest	5%
Neither takes interest	3%
Role pertains to spouse:	
Spouse conforms	13%
Respondent takes more interest	2%
Both take equal interest	3%
Neither takes interest	1%
Role pertains to both equally:	
Both conform	18%
Respondent takes more interest	1%
Spouse takes more interest	1%
Neither takes interest	1%
Role pertains to neither:	
Both take equal interest	**
Respondent takes interest	**
Spouse takes interest	**
Neither takes interest	1%
Don't know role or conformance; not applicable (unmarried)	<u>29%</u> 100%
(N=1500)	

\* In response to the question, "Of the couples you know, does the husband or the wife usually take the more active interest in school financial matters? (If currently married) Who usually takes more interest in school financial matters in your family -- you, or your (spouse)?" Percentages of respondents giving each combination of responses are listed.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.



Nonparents are least likely to perceive a role for interest in activities, as noted before and now evident again in Table 4.16 (\*\*). This is partly due to the higher proportion of unmarried persons in this group. Generally, in viewing this and the following table, one should keep in mind the different proportions perceiving any role.

Table 4.16. Role Conformance for Interest in School Activities, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Perceived role/ conformance</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role(s)	20%	45%	62%	40%	63%	49%
Spouse without role takes interest	6%	11%	11%	9%	8%	9%
Both take interest but only one has role	8%	13%	20%	25%	21%	17%
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	10%	6%	1%	15%	1%	6%
No role perceived; don't know; not married	$\frac{56\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{25\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{6\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* For more detailed analysis of the marginal distributions and the questions on which the role conformance typology is based, see Table 4.14. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed combination of responses.

Public school and private school parents, the most involved, are most likely to see some role and to follow it (\*\*). Post-school and private school parents are most likely to see the role

for one, but to have the other take it.

Preschool parents are most likely to see the role for one but to have both take it (\*\*). But they are also least likely to take an interest when a role is perceived. Nonparents too show more of this latter behavior.

Some facilitation may be needed for bringing preschool and nonparents into school activities. We can recall their general patterns of less knowledge, communication, and participation.

In comparison with the number perceiving a role for activity interest, more citizens fail to see a role for interest in finances, as shown in Table 4.17. On the other hand, the role perceived is more often followed for finances than for activities.

As with interest in activities, preschool parents are most likely to have both, or neither, take an interest in finances rather than the one who is perceived to have the role (\*\*).

Private school parents are most likely to follow the role prescription. Public school parents follow in conformance.

In Table 4.18, we see how participation varies according to conformance to perceived activity roles. Participation is highest by those in families where both take an interest but only one is perceived to have the role (\*\*). This is consistent with previous data on the relationship.

Following any role prescription, or deviation with one taking a role seen for the other, are both related to higher participation levels than is no role being perceived or no interest taken.

Table 4.19 gives similar results for role conformance in relation to participation for interest in finances. Participation is highest where both spouses take an interest (\*\*).

#### Tax Burden

Asked about the burden of their taxes in relation to what they get in return, citizens tend toward a favorable view, as shown in Table 4.20. A majority say their taxes are not very much of a burden.

Table 4.17. Role Conformance for Interest in School Financial Matters, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Perceived role/ conformance</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role(s)	22%	46%	73%	48%	65%	52%
Spouse without role takes interest	5%	9%	6%	8%	6%	7%
Both take interest but only one has role	4%	6%	8%	12%	11%	8%
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	6%	3%	**	12%	1%	4%
No role perceived; don't know; not married	$\frac{63\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{36\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{20\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{17\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{29\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* For more detailed analysis of the marginal distributions and the questions on which the role conformance typology is based, see Table 4.15. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed combination of responses.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table 4.18. Participation in School Affairs, by Role Conformance in School Activities.\*

<u>Perceived role/conformance</u>	<u>Percentage participating in at least one way</u>	
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role(s)	63%	(N=729)
Spouse without role takes interest	60%	(N=135)
Both take interest but only one has role	70%	(N=253)
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	29%	(N=84)
No role perceived; don't know; not married	38%	(N=299)
Total sample	57%	(N=1500)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.9 (Participation) and 4.14 (Role Conformance in School Activities).

Table 4.19. Participation in School Affairs, by Role Conformance in School Financial Matters.\*

<u>Perceived role/ conformance</u>	<u>Percentage participating in at least one way</u>	
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role(s)	63%	(N=776)
Spouse without role takes interest	60%	(N=106)
Both take interest but only one has role	72%	(N=123)
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	36%	(N=53)
No role perceived; don't know; not married	42%	(N=442)
Total sample	57%	(N=1500)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.9 (Participation) and 4.15 (Role Conformance in School Financial Matters).

Preschool and nonparents show the least awareness, possibly because they are less aware of any return for their taxes (\*\*).

Why the nonparents are not so critical is an interesting question. The answer may be greater resources. Or taxation may be less obvious to those who are single and live in rented facilities.

Postschool and private school parents are the most critical of the tax burden (\*\*). Both groups may see a lack of return. There are also the factors of older age for postschool parents and added educational expenses for private school parents.

Table 4.20. Perceived Burden of Taxes, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Tax load is</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Great burden	12%	18%	16%	9%	9%	12%
Somewhat a burden	29%	28%	34%	24%	27%	28%
Not very much of a burden	23%	28%	30%	25%	34%	29%
No burden at all	25%	21%	16%	27%	27%	24%
Don't know	$\frac{11\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{4\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=106)	(N=181)	(N=556)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "How about your tax load in relation to what you get in return -- would you say it is a great burden, somewhat of a burden, not very much of a burden, or no burden at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

In Table 4.21, we see that the amount of participation is greater among citizens who perceive taxes as less of a burden (\*\*). The greater incidence of public school parents among high participators is perhaps responsible for this relationship. Those who have no opinion about the tax load show much less

participation than those who have an opinion (\*\*). So there may well be some participation -- in protest -- based on the perception of a tax burden.

Table 4.21. Participation in School Affairs, by Perceived Burden of Taxes.\*

Tax load is	Percentage participating in at least one way	
Great burden	48%	(N=185)
Somewhat a burden	55%	(N=411)
Not very much of a burden	62%	(N=435)
No burden at all	63%	(N=361)
Don't know	39%	(N=104)
Total sample	57%	(N=1496)

\* For marginal distributions and the question on which the perceived tax burden item is based, see Table 4.20. Construction of the participation item is described in Table 4.9.

Citizens who feel the tax burden is rather heavy are less likely to vote or to vote regularly, as shown in Table 4.22. This behavior is much to the benefit of school districts in their financial elections. It is also consistent with previous findings.<sup>3</sup>

Those who conform to a role perceived for interest in school finances and those who see no role are more likely to see taxes as a burden than those who deviate from a perceived role, as shown in Table 4.23 (\*).

<sup>3</sup>Carter and Savard, op. cit. They report that even as turnout goes up the likelihood persists that favorable votes will exceed unfavorable votes.

Table 4.22. Voting Behavior in School Elections, by Perceived Burden of Taxes.\*

<u>Eligibility and voting</u>	<u>Tax load is</u>					<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>Great burden</u>	<u>Somewhat a burden</u>	<u>Not very much a burden</u>	<u>No burden at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
Voted in most or all elections	35%	43%	44%	41%	18%	40%
Voted in some or few elections	15%	12%	10%	7%	4%	10%
Eligible to vote, but did not vote	12%	8%	7%	9%	8%	8%
Not eligible to vote	30%	32%	32%	33%	52%	34%
Don't know about eligibility, did not vote	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{10\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{18\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$
	(N=185)	(N=411)	(N=434)	(N=361)	(N=104)	(N=1495)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.10 and 4.20. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Table 4.23. Perceived Burden of Taxes, by Role Conformance in School Financial Matters.\*

<u>Perceived role/conformance</u>	<u>Percentage calling tax load "great burden" or "somewhat of a burden"</u>	
Spouse(s) takes interest in conformance with role(s)	43%	(N=776)
Spouse without role takes interest	34%	(N=106)
Both take interest but only one has role	32%	(N=123)
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	32%	(N=53)
No role perceived; don't know; not married	39%	(N=442)
Total sample	40%	(N=1500)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.15 and 4.20.

The males may account for this. They are probably less likely to perceive a role. But if they do, and they perceive it for the husband, they may be sensitive to the financial condition of the family.

### Summary

Citizen participation in school affairs is low. It is lower than previous estimates obtained from registered voters. It is low by any standard, but especially when we consider the values expressed for education.

To some extent, participation is lacking because a sense of efficacy is lacking. However, the two may be parallel conditions for many citizens. Both may well derive from a lack of open channels to the schools.

Yet three out of four say that nothing could increase their interest in school matters -- some because they are already involved to their satisfaction. For those who think they might be more interested, the stimulus is usually expected to come from someone else.

There is evidence that a commitment to parental interest exists for some of the citizens, who participate even though they feel little sense of efficacy. Their interest could be increased, they say.

Contrary to participation levels, roles for participation are widely recognized for interest in school activities and finances. Interest in school activities is seen to be the role of the wife by 72%, the role of both by 18%. Interest in financial matters is seen to be the role of the wife by 33%, the role of the husband by 26%, and the role of both by 25%.

Most citizens say they follow the role prescription, particularly if it is for both to be interested.

Deviation from a prescribed role -- if it is toward both taking the role -- results in more participation.

Participation is greater among citizens who do not see taxes as too much of a burden for what they get in return. But those



who do think taxes a burden are more likely to participate than those with no opinion.

A majority think taxes are not too much of a burden -- given what they get in return. Those citizens who conform to a prescribed role for participation or who see none are more likely to think their taxes a burden than those who deviate from a prescribed role.

The low participation levels suggest that a strong interest is necessary to bring citizens to a level of involvement that overcomes the psychological distance between them and the schools. The differences by parental status in participation only emphasize this point.

Preschool parents, who in a few years will come into a high participation group, already give evidence of high interest in schools. Unfortunately, there are few modes of participation open to them. They perceive above-average efficacy in participation, complain little about taxes, conform rather well to perceived roles for interest, and frequently say that their interest could be increased. They discuss schools fairly often with other citizens, but rarely with school people. And they are unlikely to vote in school elections or attend school events.

Postschool parents, by contrast, are very low in both interest and participation -- except that they vote often. The quality of this vote is suggested by the fact that they most frequently term their taxes a "great burden." They are least likely to discuss schools, attend school events, or see any way to increase their interest. Despite their previous contact with schools, they see the least efficacy in participation of any group.

Nonparents, a heterogeneous group, are difficult to characterize. They indicate more potential interest than the average, and a moderate level of efficacy, but are low in all kinds of participation -- including voting. They appear not to take an interest and they rarely perceive such a role. But they do not complain more about taxes.

Parents of school children (public or private school) not

only participate more than other citizens, they also indicate that participation seems more efficacious to them as an influence on school policy. They are more likely than others to discuss schools, to attend adult or student events, to vote in school elections, and to take an interest in school affairs in conformance with their perceived role.

Public school and private school parents differ substantially in only two ways, so far as participation is concerned. The public school parents are much more likely to attend public school events, and the private school parents (who support two sets of schools) see their taxes as more of a burden, compared with what they get in return.

## Chapter V

### Educational Experiences

Part of the consumer orientation to public schools is the fact that each adult has had some measure of education himself. For most citizens, this experience occurs in public schools. Wherever the locus of the educational experience -- local or not, public or private -- there remain the fruits of that experience, which now serve as criteria against which to assess current educational performance.

In our pretest, we viewed the relationship between opinions of one's own educational experience and opinions of the education the child was currently getting. Those preliminary results, although not conclusive, suggested the further work reported in this chapter.

To give us a better picture of the possible impact of one's own educational experience, we have included several analyses according to the parental roles.

#### Own Education

About half the citizens think that their education prepared them "well" or "very well," as shown in Table 5.1. Since the educational product is viewed in a comparative context, we could hardly expect many more than half to be well satisfied with their own education.

Relatively few citizens take a dim view of their own education. Only 13% say that it prepared them "not very well" or "not well at all."

Private school parents take the most favorable view (\*) of the educational preparation afforded them (which was also evident in Chapter II). On the basis of level attained, this was not to be expected, since they did not complete as many grades in school,

on the average, as several other parental groups.

Table 5.1. Perceived Value of Own Education, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Education prepared respondent</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Very well	27%	38%	35%	24%	28%	31%
Well	21%	16%	24%	23%	20%	20%
Fairly well	38%	30%	33%	33%	39%	35%
Not very well	6%	11%	7%	13%	9%	9%
Not well at all	5%	5%	1%	6%	3%	4%
Don't know	<u>3%</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=106)	(N=180)	(N=557)	(N=1497)

\* In response to the question, "As you look back on your own education, how well did school prepare you, generally? Do you feel it prepared you very well, well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Preschool parents are least favorable toward their educational preparation (\*\*). On the average, they are more educated and more recently educated. The latter may have something to do with their opinions. They have just entered the job market, and may face some difficulties if their educational preparation is not in line with requirements of their first work.

Postschool parents tend to go both ways. They are likely to be very favorable or very unfavorable as they evaluate their own education. Regret, given their low educational attainment, may account for some of the negative feelings.

There is a general feeling among citizens that they could have done better in school, as shown in Table 5.2. Some 65%

say they could have done "better" or "very much better." More say "very much better" than any other response.

Table 5.2. Perception that One Could Have Done Better in School, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Respondent could have done</u>	<u>Non-parent</u>	<u>Post-school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre-school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Very much better	28%	27%	31%	38%	40%	34%
Better	30%	28%	36%	34%	32%	31%
Somewhat better	20%	17%	19%	17%	14%	17%
Not much better	14%	15%	6%	8%	9%	11%
No better at all	7%	11%	8%	3%	4%	6%
Don't know	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{**}{100\%}$	$\frac{**}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$
	(N=227)	(N=427)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1499)

\* In response to the question, "Do you think in school you could have done very much better, better, somewhat better, not very much better, or no better at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Public school and preschool parents are most likely to think they could have done better (\*\*). Postschool and nonparents are the least likely to think so (\*\*).

Given the low educational attainment of postschool parents, it is perhaps surprising that they feel they could not have done better. But it is consistent for those postschool parents who feel they were well prepared -- given what they perceive to have been needed.

For those citizens who feel they could have done better -- or at least somewhat better -- the fault is generally seen to be with the person himself. Some 71% feel this way, as shown in

Table 5.3.

The next most frequent locus of the fault is a combination of the schools and the person himself. Only 6% who feel they could have done better blame the schools alone.

Family or money problems are seen as the difficulty by only 4% of those who feel they could have done better. Postschool parents give this reason more than other groups, reflecting the rougher path to extended education in earlier years (\*\*).

To a greater extent than other groups, private school parents tend to blame themselves alone (\*). They may therefore want their children in private school, where they see discipline to be stricter -- and children constrained to work harder.

Table 5.3. Perceived Locus of Fault among Those Who Feel They Could Have Done Better in School, by Parental Status.\*

<u>Fault lies with</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
Self	69%	69%	82%	70%	70%	71%
Schools	10%	6%	1%	8%	6%	6%
Self and schools	16%	12%	12%	19%	18%	16%
Family or money problems	4%	7%	2%	1%	4%	4%
Miscellaneous	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	**	4%	2%	1%	1%	2%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=176)	(N=320)	(N=93)	(N=165)	(N=490)	(N=1244)

\* In response to the question (asked of those who said they could have done at least "somewhat better" in school), "Was the problem mainly with you, or mainly with the schools?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Public school and preschool parents are more likely than

other groups to assign blame to themselves and the schools jointly (\*).

Looking at either case in which the schools receive blame, we see that nonparents, public school, and preschool parents are more likely to put the blame on the schools (\*\*).

It is reasonable to expect that citizens would see greater value in more education. Table 5.4 shows that this is the case. Those with more education think themselves better prepared. However, the relationship appears mainly in the extreme categories -- those with less than an 8th grade education and those with a college degree (\*\*). In the middle categories, which include most citizens, there is relatively little difference by educational attainment.

Thus it seems unlikely that the differences noted for the value of the citizen's own education by parental status (see Table 5.1) can be accounted for by the level attained by each parent group.

Table 5.4. Perceived Value of Own Education, by Extent of Education.\*

<u>Education prepared respondent</u>	<u>Highest grade completed in school</u>					
	<u>Less than 8</u>	<u>8th</u>	<u>9-11</u>	<u>12th</u>	<u>13-15</u>	<u>16th</u>
Very well	26%	35%	27%	28%	35%	42%
Well or fairly well	43%	50%	57%	62%	55%	51%
Not very well or not well at all	28%	14%	16%	10%	10%	6%
Don't know	<u>3%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>1%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=189)	(N=178)	(N=320)	(N=436)	(N=193)	(N=173)

\* Extent of education is the response to the question, "What was the highest grade or year you completed in school?" For the marginal distribution and question on perceived value of own education, see Table 5.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Those who finished the 8th grade are rather favorable toward the value of their education, in comparison with those in adjacent categories -- above or below (\*). This probably represents the impact of older postschool parents noted before. If they obtained an 8th grade education in those days, it was more likely to suffice for the jobs they then undertook.

The dropouts -- those who did not finish a given segment, not reaching the 8th, 12th, or 16th grade -- are less likely to be satisfied with their education than those who completed the segment. The difference is greatest among citizens who dropped out of grade school or out of college.

High school and college dropouts are more likely to think they could have done better, as shown in Table 5.5 (\*\*). This does not hold for grade school dropouts, who are less likely to have quit for scholastic reasons.

Some of the high school dropouts are not so sure they could have done better in school.

Grade school dropouts are the most sure that they could have done no better (\*\*).

Table 5.5. Perception that One Could Have Done Better in School, by Extent of Education.\*

Respondent could have done	Less than 8	Highest grade completed in school				
		8th	9-11	12th	13-15	16th
Very much better	29%	32%	41%	33%	39%	22%
Better or somewhat better	42%	45%	41%	54%	47%	57%
Not much better or no better at all	26%	22%	18%	12%	14%	21%
Don't know	3%	1%	**	1%	**	**
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=189)	(N=178)	(N=320)	(N=437)	(N=194)	(N=173)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.2 and 5.4. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.



High school and college dropouts who feel they could have done better in school are the most likely to blame themselves, as shown in Table 5.6 (\*\*). Grade school dropouts tend to place more blame than others on neither themselves nor schools, but on such things as family and financial problems (\*\*).

There are no differences to speak of by grades completed in blaming the schools alone. But some blame is assigned jointly to schools and themselves by citizens who finished a given segment, compared with the dropouts (\*\*). Having obtained a degree (or certificate), those who encountered difficulty later might well be at a loss to know who to blame.

Table 5.6. Perceived Locus of Fault Among Those Who Feel They Could Have Done Better in School, by Extent of Education.\*

<u>Fault lies with</u>	<u>Highest grade completed in school</u>					
	<u>Less than 8</u>	<u>8th</u>	<u>9-11</u>	<u>12th</u>	<u>13-15</u>	<u>16th</u>
Self	58%	74%	76%	69%	78%	64%
Schools	5%	5%	6%	6%	8%	9%
Self and schools	12%	15%	13%	21%	10%	20%
Other source	20%	4%	5%	2%	2%	5%
Don't know	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{**}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{2\%}{100\%}$
	(N=143)	(N=137)	(N=265)	(N=388)	(N=170)	(N=139)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.3 and 5.4. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Citizens who think they could have done better are more likely to feel that their educational preparation was poorer, as

shown in Table 5.7 (\*\*).

Table 5.7. Perceived Value of Own Education, by Perception that One Could Have Done Better in School.\*

<u>Education prepared respondent</u>	<u>Respondent could have done</u>		
	<u>Very much better</u>	<u>Better or somewhat better</u>	<u>Not much better or no better at all</u>
Very well or well	40%	51%	67%
Fairly well	38%	39%	21%
Not very well or not well at all	21%	9%	12%
Don't know	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{1\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{**}{100\%}$
	(N=502)	(N=715)	(N=264)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed responses.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

In Table 5.8, we see that those who blame themselves for not doing as well as they could have still feel that education did pretty well by them (\*\*). (Looking at it another way, they may be willing to accept the blame if there is little of it.)

Citizens who blame the schools -- alone or jointly -- for their not doing better are most likely to think that their education did not prepare them very well (\*\*). If they blame the schools alone, the relationship is stronger.

The few citizens whose satisfaction with their own education is low and who see the difficulty to be family or financial problems take a more favorable view of their preparation than those who blame the schools.

Table 5.8. Perceived Value of Own Education, by Perceived Locus of Fault Among Those Who Feel They Could Have Done Better in School.\*

<u>Education prepared respondent</u>	<u>Fault lies with</u>			
	<u>Self</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Self and Schools</u>	<u>Other source</u>
Very well or well	54%	21%	29%	38%
Fairly well	36%	38%	47%	38%
Not very well or not well at all	9%	40%	23%	24%
Don't know	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>**</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=877)	(N=80)	(N=197)	(N=66)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.1 and 5.3.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

### Child's Education

Evaluations of how their children are now doing in school, shown in Table 5.9, are generally more favorable than citizen views of their own education. Two-thirds say their children are doing "well" or "very well." This contrasts with about half who felt they did well.

Of course the parent -- or the child -- may later re-evaluate the child's educational experience. At a later date these evaluations might parallel the parent's present evaluation of his own education more closely.

Citizens with more education themselves are likely to evaluate their children's educational performance somewhat higher, but the relationship is small. We might expect it to be stronger, since parents with more education themselves should, on the average, be somewhat more likely to have children who do better in school.

Table 5.9. Evaluation of How Child is Doing in School, by Extent of Parent's Education.\*

<u>Child is doing</u>	<u>Respondent parent completed</u>			<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>12 years</u>	<u>More than 12 years</u>	
Very well	43%	41%	48%	44%
Well	20%	27%	23%	23%
Fairly well	27%	24%	24%	25%
Not very well	7%	7%	3%	6%
Not well at all	<u>3%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=538)	(N=489)	(N=336)	(N=1363)

\* In response to the question, "How well do you feel (child) is doing in school -- very well, well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

Evaluations of whether the child could be doing better in school, as shown in Table 5.10, are evenly distributed from "very much better" to "no better at all." There is only a slight tendency toward perceptions that the child could do somewhat better.

Parents with less education themselves are more likely to feel that the child could be doing better, but the relationship is not strong (\*).

Interestingly, there is no sign of high expectation among those with more education, who might be expected to think that their children could be doing even better than they are.

Parents who think their children could be doing better are most likely to blame the child, as shown in Table 5.11. They do not blame the child as often as they blamed themselves for their own shortcomings, however. Moreover, one-fifth say they do not

Table 5.10. Perception that Child Could be Doing Better in School, by Extent of Parent's Education.\*

<u>Child could do</u>	<u>Respondent parent completed</u>			<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>12 years</u>	<u>More than 12 years</u>	
Very much better	19%	19%	14%	18%
Better	30%	27%	29%	29%
Somewhat better	20%	24%	26%	23%
Not very much better	13%	13%	11%	12%
No better at all	<u>18%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>18%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=538)	(N=489)	(N=336)	(N=1363)

\* In response to the question, "In your opinion, could (child) be doing very much better, better, somewhat better, not very much better, or no better at all?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

Table 5.11. Perceived Locus of Fault Among Those Who Feel Child Could be Doing Better, by Extent of Parent's Education.\*

<u>Source of fault</u>	<u>Respondent parent completed</u>			<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>12 years</u>	<u>More than 12 years</u>	
Child	51%	58%	51%	54%
School	8%	7%	6%	7%
Child and school	18%	18%	18%	18%
Don't know	<u>23%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>21%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=461)	(N=405)	(N=282)	(N=1148)

\* In response to the question (asked of respondents who felt their child could do at least somewhat better in school), "Is the problem mainly with the child, or mainly the school?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

know who to blame here -- a difficulty they did not have for themselves. (They might just be reluctant to blame themselves.)

Again, the school is more likely to be blamed jointly with the child, rather than by itself.

High school graduates are somewhat more likely to blame the child alone (\*). There are no differences in assigning blame to the school.

About two-thirds of the children are expected by their parents to go to college, and about three-fifths are expected to finish college, as shown in Table 5.12. (Unless the attrition rate in higher education decreases, these aspirations will lead to disappointment in many cases.)

As we might expect, those who themselves have had more education think that their children will go farther in school (\*\*). The relationship is quite strong.

Table 5.12. Expected Extent of Child's Education, by Extent of Parent's Education.\*

<u>Child expected to complete</u>	<u>Respondent parent completed</u>					<u>Total sample</u>
	<u>8 years or less</u>	<u>9-11 years</u>	<u>12 years</u>	<u>13-15 years</u>	<u>16+ years</u>	
Less than 12 years	3%	2%	**	**	**	1%
12 years	56%	46%	26%	13%	10%	32%
Some college	4%	7%	8%	14%	7%	8%
College degree	36%	43%	64%	68%	70%	56%
Post-graduate	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>13%</u>	<u>3%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=234)	(N=299)	(N=485)	(N=197)	(N=135)	(N=1350)

\* In response to the question, "How far in school do you expect (child) to go?" Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response or its equivalent. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Parents who expect their children to go farther in school tend to think their children are doing relatively well now in school, as shown in Table 5.13 (\*\*).

The reality of the situation might well reside in the converse of this relationship. Parents who see their children to be doing well now in school expect them to go on for a college degree.

An alternative explanation might be that those parents who expect their children to go on, having more education themselves, are likely to have children capable of going on and doing well.

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Table 5.13. Evaluation of How Child is Doing in School, by Expected Extent of Child's Education.\*

<u>Child is doing</u>	<u>Child expected to complete</u>		
	<u>High school or less</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>College degree</u>
Very well	30%	43%	52%
Well	22%	26%	23%
Fairly well or worse	48%	31%	25%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=452)	(N=106)	(N=796)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.9 and 5.12. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Only cases where both questions were answered are included in this table. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

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Parents with lower expectations for their children are somewhat more likely to think they could be doing better, as shown in Table 5.14 (\*\*).

If the child's performance determined parent expectations, then we might expect relatively high satisfaction with how the child is doing among parents who expect the child to complete college. Table 5.14 does not give much support for that view.

Table 5.14. Perception that Child Could be Doing Better in School, by Expected Extent of Child's Education.\*

<u>Child could do</u>	<u>Child expected to complete</u>		
	<u>High school or less</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>College degree</u>
Very much better	21%	12%	17%
Better or somewhat better	53%	58%	50%
Not very much or no better	$\frac{26\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{30\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$
	(N=449)	(N=105)	(N=784)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.10 and 5.12. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Only cases where both questions were answered are included in this table. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

Among parents who feel their children could be doing better, those with lower expectations are more likely to blame the children, as shown in Table 5.15.

The school, both singly and jointly, is more likely to be assessed the blame by parents who have high expectations -- among those who feel their children could be doing better (to whom this tabulation is restricted) (\*\*).

We see in Table 5.16 that those parents who feel their own education prepared them "very well" are more likely to think that the education of their children is coming along "very well" (\*\*). To a lesser extent, parents who take a dim view of their own education also make less favorable evaluations of how their children are doing now (\*\*).

This is consistent with earlier work that showed a tendency for adults to view school performance today as they view school



## 5.18 (\*\*).

Those parents who blamed family or financial difficulties for their not doing better are also likely to blame the child now (\*). Perhaps they think the child has an opportunity they did not. Few cases are involved, however.

Parents who blame the schools, wholly or in part, for not doing well themselves are also more likely than other parents to blame the schools now for the child not doing better (\*\*).

Table 5.18. Perceived Locus of Fault Among Those Who Feel Child Could be Doing Better, by Perceived Locus of Fault Among Those Who Feel They Could Have Done Better.\*

<u>Fault for child not doing better lies with</u>	<u>Fault for respondent not doing better lies with</u>			
	<u>Self</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Self and school</u>	<u>Other</u>
Child	59%	39%	39%	58%
School	5%	11%	10%	8%
Child and school	16%	26%	26%	17%
Don't know	<u>20%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>24%</u>	<u>17%</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=745)	(N=46)	(N=175)	(N=36)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 5.6 and 5.11. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Only cases where both questions were answered are included in this table. Each child of a respondent is represented in this table, so respondents with more than one child in school are represented more than once.

### Summary

As a factor in the citizen's consumer orientation, his own educational experiences play these parts:

About half think that their education prepared them pretty

well. Dropouts and preschool parents are not so favorable. Private school parents are more favorable.

The majority feel that they could have done better in school. High school and college dropouts feel this more strongly. Among parental groups, public school and preschool parents feel this more strongly. This "regret" among present and future public school parents may impel many to give support.

Citizens blame themselves largely for their failure to do better. Private school parents are most likely to do so, which may account for their placing their children under stricter discipline.

High school and college dropouts blame themselves for not doing better. Grade school dropouts are more likely than the others to blame family or financial problems.

Citizens who obtained a degree (or certificate), at whatever level, are more likely to blame the schools jointly with themselves. They may have expected more for their accomplishment.

Citizens who do blame the schools alone for their not doing better tend to think they were less well prepared by their education.

The citizen's views of his child's educational experiences play these parts in his consumer orientation:

Citizens who now have children in school are generally satisfied with their performance -- more so than with their own. With time, and dropouts, the views may change.

Parents are not as likely to say their children could be doing better as they were to say they could have done better themselves. This too may change when the children leave school to enter the marketplace.

Parents with less education themselves are more likely to think the children could be doing better. This may be sheer hope, in recognition of education's importance.

As they blamed themselves for their own shortcomings, so do parents tend to blame their children for not doing better. But not to the same degree. And a fifth of them say they do not know who to blame -- perhaps shielding some feelings of guilt.

Parents have high expectations for their children, which may lead to disappointment later. This may not affect the schools too much, however, since they tend to blame the child now, and themselves for their own disappointments.

Parents with more education see their children as going farther, as doing well now in school, and as not likely to be doing much better. But among those who do think their children could be doing better, parents with high expectations tend to blame the schools for their children's shortcomings.

Parent evaluations of their children's experiences tend to parallel their evaluations of their own, even to blaming the same sources when there are disappointments.

## Chapter VI

### The Utility of Schools

In this chapter we view citizen values toward education and participation in the context of utility for the consumer. This carries forward, in expanded form, an analysis undertaken in our previous work.

The previous analysis considered utility as the interaction of two factors: evaluation of the schools and evaluation of economic conditions. In that analysis, however, we looked only at those who held strong opinions on both factors -- omitting a majority of the registered voters interviewed.

We found that those with a high sense of utility (those favorable to the schools who saw economic conditions as good) were most likely to participate actively in school affairs.

We also found that those unfavorable to the schools, but who saw economic conditions as good (we called them "the grumblers"), were not likely to participate actively, but they were very communicative. This group was most highly tuned to national criticisms of education. They also tended to hear more bad things about local schools -- particularly on such topics as students, administration, and curriculum.

Here we are using a different set of questions to obtain citizen evaluations of the local schools. We are using only one question specifically directed toward the tax burden, relative to what the citizen feels he gets in return. And, we are using the whole sample, not just those with strong feelings.

Each sample member has been assigned to one of four groups, according to his responses. These four utility roles are used to categorize the respondents throughout this chapter. Before turning to the analyses of educational values and participation, we shall describe the demographic characteristics of the group members. Complete demographic profiles of the four types are presented in Table B.2, Appendix B.

Unfavorable, High Burden. This group contains 25% of those interviewed. They are a possible source of opposition to school financial measures, since they are critical of the local schools and consider their taxes burdensome.

This group contains the highest proportions of older people (62% are over 40), of Roman Catholics (35%), and of less educated citizens (51% did not complete high school). They are also the most likely to be Republicans (31%), to have low prestige occupations, and to have attended parochial schools (18%).

Typically, they live in the Northeastern part of the country, usually in metropolitan or suburban areas of low growth rate. Although they do not differ markedly from other groups in marital status, they are the least likely to have children in public schools now (they are older).

Nevertheless, this group does have some heterogeneity. Some 38% have children in public school; more than three out of four attended public school themselves; one in five is a college graduate.

But for one reason or another (e.g. age, parental status, religion, or educational experience), they have a negative view of education and its product. And, as we have seen, these factors can account for their views on schools and the taxes that support them.

Unfavorable, Low Burden. Comprising 26% of the sample, these citizens (the "grumblers") are critical of local schools but do not see their taxes as too much of a burden.

They are younger and better educated. They are the most likely to be professionals (16%) and Democrats (49%), and to live in fast-growing communities in the Eastern and Western coastal areas.

Although not markedly Roman Catholic, relatively less of them attended public schools. They are least likely to be married, and only 40% have children in the public schools.

This appears to be an important group to consider -- not only because of their negative opinions on local schools. The

kinds of people they represent are those who will increase in number in coming years.

Favorable, High Burden. This comparatively small group (15% of those interviewed) differs from the previous groups in several important respects. Predominantly middle-aged, of low to moderate income and education, they more frequently have children in public school (48%) and have themselves attended public school (82%).

They typically live in rural areas and small cities of the South and Midwest, and are least likely to hold white collar jobs. This group has the highest proportions of Negroes (17%), farmers (14%), and members of the smaller Protestant churches.

These citizens have reason to support public education, but find economic pressures onerous.

Favorable, Low Burden. Making up the largest of the four groups (27% of the sample), these citizens are most likely to support school financial measures.

They stand out from the other groups in several key characteristics. Highly educated (31% attended college), they are the most likely to have children in public school (57%), to have attended public school themselves (84%), to hold white collar jobs, to earn higher incomes, and to live in urban or metropolitan areas.

They typically live in the West and South, deriving from British or Northern European ancestry. Some 90% are white, and only 19% are Roman Catholics.

They tend to be middle-aged citizens living in communities of moderate growth rate.

#### What Education Can Accomplish

The total number of benefits seen for the nation from education increases slightly with both favorable attitude and perception of a lesser tax burden, as shown in Table 6.1. Citizens with the lowest degree of utility (Unfavorable, High Burden) see the fewest benefits -- even to the nation.

Those citizens with negative opinions of local schools tend to answer this question negatively (\*). But those with favorable opinions are not more likely to give general positive benefits. They see specific benefits, particularly acquiring social competences (\*\*).

Table 6.1. What Education can Accomplish for the Nation as a Whole, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Negative affect	11%	7%	8%	5%
General positive affect	41%	42%	43%	42%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	17%	22%	22%	24%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	27%	30%	36%	38%
Increase knowledge	31%	34%	33%	39%
Improve nation economically	50%	51%	54%	52%
Improve person economically	38%	41%	46%	42%
Improve society	$\frac{26\%}{241\%}$	$\frac{35\%}{262\%}$	$\frac{32\%}{274\%}$	$\frac{34\%}{276\%}$
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* Evaluation of schools is a Guttman scale (based on the items in Tables 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10) with a reproducibility of .93, and scalability of .73 (persons) and .78 (items). For marginal distributions and the questions on which the other items are based, see Table 2.1 (What Nation can Accomplish) and 4.20 (Perceived Tax Burden). Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

The grumblers (Unfavorable, Low Burden) see benefits from acquiring basic skills and increasing knowledge, almost to the same extent as those with favorable opinions. Their view is that the benefits may be lost, given school performance.

The grumblers are also most likely to see the improvement of society as an accomplishment for education.

Economic improvement for the nation, directly or through the individual citizen, is most often seen as a benefit from education by hard pressed citizens (Favorable, High Burden).

The total number of benefits to the adult citizen from education is greater for those citizens to whom taxes are less of a burden, as shown in Table 6.2. There is the possibility that the perceived burden of taxes is itself based in part on such perceived benefits.

Table 6.2. What Education can Accomplish for the Adult as an Individual, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Negative affect	29%	20%	16%	15%
General positive affect	9%	11%	12%	14%
Preparation: Acquiring basic skills	18%	17%	15%	16%
Preparation: Acquiring social competence	28%	30%	31%	33%
Increase knowledge	29%	36%	32%	41%
Improve person economically	57%	64%	66%	67%
Improve society	<u>3%</u> 173%	<u>6%</u> 184%	<u>5%</u> 167%	<u>8%</u> 184%
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.2 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.



Again, those unfavorable to local schools make more negative comments on benefits -- especially those who regard their taxes as burdensome (\*\*).

There is here a slight tendency for those with favorable opinions of local schools to see more general positive benefits.

Citizens who do not see their taxes as a burden are more likely to think that increased knowledge is a benefit for the adult (\*\*).

Those with a low sense of utility (Unfavorable, High Burden) fall short in seeing economic benefits from education (\*).

Both favorability toward local schools and perception of less burdensome taxes are related to total benefits seen for the child, as shown in Table 6.3. Favorability has the stronger relationship.

Those with a low sense of utility make the most negative comments (\*). But, as before, negative comments tend to go along with an unfavorable opinion of local schools (\*\*).

There are few differences by utility group on perceiving benefits from increased knowledge -- either the fundamentals or academic.

On acquiring basic skills and social competences, and on increasing nonacademic knowledge, those favorable to local schools see more benefits from education for the child (\*\*). For citizens with less burdensome taxes, basic skills are more often seen as a benefit (\*\*).

The grumblers are most likely to see economic benefits for the child (\*). They did not show such a high sensitivity to economic benefits for themselves or the nation.

Since citizens favorable to the schools, regardless of tax burden, are more likely to focus on preparation as benefitting the child, we might infer that the public school parents (who are more likely to be favorable) base their view of education's ultimate value on what the child is now obtaining in school.

Table 6.3. What Education can Accomplish for the Child in Public School, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Goal Category</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Negative affect	30%	22%	12%	13%
General positive affect	14%	16%	14%	15%
Preparation: Acquiring basic skills	40%	46%	49%	55%
Preparation: Acquiring social competence	32%	33%	44%	48%
Increase knowledge: fundamentals	13%	11%	11%	14%
Increase knowledge: academic	24%	23%	26%	25%
Increase knowledge: non-academic	12%	12%	20%	17%
Improve person economically	34%	41%	38%	35%
Improve society	$\frac{10\%}{209\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{217\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{229\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{236\%}$
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.3 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

#### Student Nonachievement

In Table 6.4, we see that favorability makes some difference in which types of children are seen as not getting enough out of school. Perceived tax burden makes very little difference.

The proportion in each group making no identification is

about the same. Citizens unfavorable to local schools are more likely to make general identifications, while those favorable to the schools are more likely to see the culturally deprived child as not getting enough out of school (\*).

Table 6.4. Types of Children Perceived As Not Getting Enough Out of School, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Type of child</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
None; don't know; no identification**	45%	46%	46%	45%
General identifications	46%	43%	40%	40%
Culturally deprived	$\frac{17\%}{108\%}$	$\frac{16\%}{105\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{107\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{106\%}$
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.11, 2.12 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages mentioning the listed type of child. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one type of child.

\*\* Includes respondents who perceived that some children were not getting enough out of school, but who did not identify except to assign fault for this problem. See Table 6.5.

Looking at the source of fault seen for student nonachievement, in Table 6.5, we get a mixed picture.

Those who see taxes as a burden are less likely to cite any source of fault, perhaps because they are less educated (\*).

Citizens favorable to the schools are more likely to blame the parents or the child himself (\*\*). The grumblers too take this view (\*\*).

Citizens who blame the schools are most likely to be from the low utility group.

Table 6.5. Perceived Source of Fault for Non-Achievement, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Source of fault</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
No fault mentioned	39%	36%	38%	30%
Parents at fault	20%	26%	29%	34%
Child at fault	36%	40%	42%	43%
School at fault	<u>22%</u> 117%	<u>18%</u> 120%	<u>12%</u> 121%	<u>17%</u> 124%
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.13 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages mentioning that the fault for non-achievement was due to the listed source. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one source of fault.

### Standards and Support

One possible reason for wanting national educational standards is that they might afford a means for evaluating the school product. Table 6.6 shows how these groups view such proposals.

Citizens show little difference, by utility groups, in their views of national curriculum standards or national testing of elementary school students -- Parts A and C.

For testing high school students, citizens who find taxes burdensome are less likely to favor such a proposal (\*). The difference (in Part B) is not large, but it suggests that it is not the taxpayer element that wants more extensive grading of students.

Table 6.6. Opinions on National Educational Standards, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Reaction to proposal for</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
A. National curriculum standards:				
Favorable	72%	73%	72%	70%
Unfavorable	22%	22%	25%	28%
Don't know	<u>6%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>2%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
B. National testing of high school students:				
Favorable	78%	84%	79%	82%
Unfavorable	15%	13%	18%	16%
Don't know	<u>7%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>2%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
C. National testing of elementary school students:				
Favorable	73%	74%	73%	74%
Unfavorable	21%	23%	24%	24%
Don't know	<u>6%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>2%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.15, 2.16, 2.17 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

However, there are several proposals for grading that do appeal to burdened taxpayers -- and to critics of local schools. Table 6.7 reports these views.

In Part A, we see that critics of local schools and those who see taxes as burdensome are both more likely to think it

important to grade pupils to encourage competition (\*). Perhaps they feel local grading policy is more important to the evaluation of the school product than nationwide grading policies.

In Part B, both also feel more strongly about testing new teachers on the subject matter they will teach. This proposal is more often appealing to critics of local schools, who can be expected to be concerned with curriculum matters (\*).

Table 6.7. Opinions on Grading and Testing, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>A. Importance of grading pupils to encourage competition:</b>				
Very important	60%	56%	57%	50%
Somewhat important or less	39%	42%	42%	49%
Don't know	1%	2%	1%	1%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>B. Reaction to testing new teachers on subject matter they will teach:</b>				
Strongly favorable	82%	79%	77%	74%
Somewhat favorable or less	16%	19%	21%	24%
Don't know	2%	2%	2%	2%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.14, 2.18 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Turning to educational financing, three proposals are reviewed in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8. Opinions on Education Financing, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>A. Reaction to national government funds for local schools:</b>				
Favorable	73%	73%	74%	74%
Unfavorable	23%	23%	23%	24%
Don't know	4%	4%	3%	2%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>B. Reaction to investing more money than needed now, to stimulate educational growth:</b>				
Favorable	66%	73%	69%	76%
Unfavorable	29%	23%	27%	21%
Don't know	5%	4%	4%	3%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>C. Preferred source for additional funds for public schools:**</b>				
Local	48%	54%	50%	59%
State	71%	61%	63%	55%
National	24%	25%	29%	29%
Don't know	7%	5%	4%	3%
	<u>150%</u>	<u>146%</u>	<u>146%</u>	<u>146%</u>
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.19, 2.20, 2.21 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents named more than one preferred source.

Part A shows that neither favorability nor perception of tax burden makes a difference in reactions to national funds for local schools.

Part B shows a different picture for the investing of money now to stimulate educational growth. The citizens who are less

concerned with their tax burden are more likely to endorse this proposal (\*\*). To a lesser degree, those favorable to local schools are also more likely to endorse this proposal.

Part C shows different preferences for additional fund sources, by both favorability and perceived tax burden.

Citizens with favorable opinions of their schools prefer local and national sources more, and state sources less.

Those for whom taxes are burdensome prefer local sources less and state sources more (\*\*). There are no differences in views on national sources by perceived tax burden.

### Mediating Agencies

Evaluations of local school board personnel and functions go along with opinions of the local schools, as shown in Table 6.9, Part A. Those with unfavorable opinions of the schools are less likely to know about board personnel and functions (\*\*). So, to a lesser extent, are those to whom taxes are not burdensome.

In Part B, we see that citizens who have favorable opinions of their schools also tend to see their board members as more representative (\*\*). The grumblers are least likely to see them as representative.

In Part C, the favorably inclined citizens are seen to perceive the administration as more often dominant in policy making -- or to see an equal balance of power between administration and board (\*\*).

Citizens for whom taxes are a burden are more likely to see the administration as dominant. Perhaps they regard this perceived condition as a poor one.

Citizens who take negative views of their schools are also likely to say they do not know about representativeness and dominance, as they were with regard to board personnel and functions (\*\*).



Table 6.9. Opinions of Local School Board, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>A. Evaluation of board:**</b>				
Negative to personnel	12%	12%	7%	6%
Negative to function	14%	12%	7%	5%
Neutral description	18%	19%	22%	20%
Favorable to Personnel	15%	14%	28%	25%
Favorable to function	14%	14%	32%	32%
Don't know	38%	40%	22%	28%
	<u>111%</u>	<u>111%</u>	<u>118%</u>	<u>116%</u>
<b>B. Perceived representativeness:</b>				
Very or somewhat representative	47%	43%	69%	65%
Not very or not at all representative	20%	20%	8%	9%
Don't know	33%	37%	23%	26%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>C. Dominant element in policy-making:</b>				
School board dominates	30%	32%	29%	29%
Administration dominates	34%	32%	42%	38%
About even	8%	9%	11%	16%
Don't know	28%	27%	18%	17%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents evaluated more than one aspect of the school board.

In Table 6.10, Part A, we see that citizens favorable to the schools are more likely to evaluate favorably parent organization personnel and functions -- particularly the latter (\*\*).

Part B shows that those favorable to the schools see no one element dominating parent organizations (\*\*). Those unfavorable are distinguished for not knowing -- as they are, in Part A, for not knowing about personnel and functions (\*\*).

Part C shows that parent organization membership is related primarily to favorable opinions of local schools (\*\*), but also to perceptions that taxes are not burdensome (\*\*). The high utility group (Favorable, Low Burden) is highest in parent organization membership.

Citizens favorable to the schools are more likely to see various agencies as helpful in disseminating information about schools to the public, as shown in Table 6.11.<sup>1</sup> In part, this simply reflects a greater degree of participation.

Generally, the low utility group (Unfavorable, High Burden) finds the various agencies not to be helpful, especially those directly associated with the schools.

Citizens favorable to the schools but hard pressed by taxes are most likely to find the mass media and school boards helpful. The high utility group (Favorable, Low Burden) sees the parent organizations and school people as most helpful.

Overall, the closer the agency is to the schools, the more helpful it is viewed for dissemination by those with favorable opinions of the schools. The same general pattern holds for feedback usefulness, as shown in Table 6.12.

The only difference of note for feedback is that the citizens hard pressed by taxes but favorable to the schools do not rate their school board as helpful for feedback as for dissemination.

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1

In this and the following five tables, percentages are expressed in deviations from the overall average to facilitate comparisons.

Table 6.10. Opinions of Local Parents Group, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>A. Evaluation of parents group:**</b>				
Negative to personnel	6%	9%	6%	5%
Negative to function	10%	14%	10%	11%
Neutral description	13%	7%	14%	13%
Favorable to personnel	12%	13%	18%	20%
Favorable to function	27%	28%	42%	44%
Don't know	<u>45%</u>	<u>43%</u>	<u>29%</u>	<u>27%</u>
	113%	114%	119%	120%
<b>B. Dominant element in group:</b>				
Parents dominate	11%	13%	12%	10%
School persons dominate	7%	6%	4%	4%
Neither dominates	33%	40%	59%	55%
Don't know	<u>49%</u>	<u>41%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>31%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>C. Current or past membership in a parents group:</b>				
	24%	27%	32%	44%
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents evaluated more than one aspect of parents group.

Table 6.11. Perceived Helpfulness of Agencies in Disseminating Information about Schools to Public, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Newspapers	-6%	-6%	+11%	+7%
Television	-1%	-1%	+7%	-3%
Radio	-7%	-3%	+12%	+3%
School board	-11%	-6%	+17%	+11%
Parents group	-11%	-8%	+9%	+15%
Citizens' committee	-2%	--	+3%	+2%
Local teachers	-15%	-4%	+8%	+18%
School administration	-13%	-7%	+15%	+17%
	(N=369)	(N=390)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who see the listed agency as "very helpful" or "helpful" in disseminating information, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.15 and 6.1.

Table 6.12. Perceived Helpfulness of Mediating Agencies in Feedback of Information to Schools from Public, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Mediating agency</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Newspapers	-4%	-3%	+8%	+6%
Television	-4%	--	+9%	+1%
Radio	-7%	+1%	+8%	+5%
School board	-13%	-7%	+13%	+18%
Parents group	-15%	-6%	+8%	+21%
Citizens' committee	-2%	--	+1%	+4%
	(N=362)	(N=378)	(N=222)	(N=391)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who see the listed agency as "very helpful" or "helpful" in feedback of information, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.16 and 6.1.

Perceptions of unfairness among agencies occur more often among citizens unfavorable to local schools, as shown in Table 6.13. Perception of a tax burden tends to accentuate these perceptions of unfairness for all agencies except newspapers, parent groups, and citizen committees.

It appears that bias, when perceived, is seen as favoring the schools.

The next three tables show the lack of awareness of the various agencies -- for dissemination, feedback, and fairness.<sup>2</sup>

Table 6.13. Perceived Unfairness of Agency Reports to Public about Schools, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

Agency	Unfavorable to schools		Favorable to schools	
	High burden	Low burden	High burden	Low burden
Newspapers	+2%	+3%	-3%	-1%
Television	+2%	--	-2%	-2%
Radio	+2%	--	--	-2%
School board	+4%	+2%	-3%	-3%
Parents group	+1%	+1%	--	-1%
Citizens' committee	--	+1%	-1%	--
Local teachers	+5%	+3%	-1%	-3%
School administration	+4%	+2%	-3%	-2%
	(N=369)	(N=391)	(N=228)	(N=400)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who see the listed agency as "not very fair" or "not fair at all" in its reports to the public, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.17 and 6.1.

Lack of awareness about agency dissemination helpfulness is

<sup>2</sup> Since citizens who say they do not know about the tax burden are not included, and many of the excluded cases would also fail to evaluate the agencies, the average scores for the rows in the tables are less than zero.

generally greater with low utility, as shown in Table 6.14.

Citizens favorable to local schools but pressed by taxes again show more exposure to the mass media. Otherwise, the high utility group is most aware.

Table 6.14. Non-Awareness of Agencies for Disseminating Information about Schools, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Newspapers	+1%	--	-3%	-3%
Television	+2%	-1%	-4%	-2%
Radio	+3%	-2%	-7%	-3%
School board	+2%	+3%	-6%	-9%
Parents group	+9%	--	-3%	-10%
Citizens' committee	+3%	--	-3%	-3%
Local teachers	+6%	-4%	-4%	-13%
School administration	+5%	-2%	-7%	-14%
	(N=369)	(N=390)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who respond "don't know" or "doesn't apply" regarding the listed agency's helpfulness in disseminating information, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.15 and 6.1.

In Table 6.15, we see much the same situation. Those unfavorable and those seeing taxes as burdensome are less aware of agency feedback helpfulness. Exceptions to this trend occur for television among citizens feeling a tax burden (whether favorable or not), and for radio (if favorable).

Table 6.15. Non-Awareness of Mediating Agencies for Feedback of Information to Schools, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Mediating agency</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Newspapers	--	-2%	-6%	-8%
Television	-8%	-3%	-10%	-9%
Radio	+6%	-4%	-12%	-9%
School board	+3%	-2%	-9%	-10%
Parents group	+10%	+1%	-8%	-15%
Citizens' committee	+2%	-2%	-3%	-4%
	(N=362)	(N=378)	(N=222)	(N=391)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who respond "don't know" or "doesn't apply" regarding the listed agency's helpfulness in feedback of information from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.16 and 6.1.

Lack of awareness about agency fairness is greatest in the low utility group (Unfavorable, High Burden), as shown in Table 6.16.

The burden of taxes makes little difference in awareness of agency fairness among those favorable to the schools, except with respect to the parent organization and several mass media. As before, the high utility group is most aware of the parent organization -- because of higher participation levels. The hard pressed citizen who likes the local schools is most aware of the mass media, here television and radio -- and also probably because of higher use.

**Table 6.16. Non-Awareness of Agency Fairness in Reports to Public, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\***

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Newspapers	+1%	--	-2%	-3%
Television	+2%	+2%	-7%	-2%
Radio	+5%	--	-10%	-5%
School board	+6%	+2%	-9%	-10%
Parents group	+11%	+3%	-7%	-17%
Citizens' committee	+4%	+1%	-4%	-3%
Local teachers	+2%	-4%	-14%	-14%
School administration	+6%	-3%	-15%	-14%
	(N=369)	(N=391)	(N=228)	(N=400)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who respond "don't know" or "doesn't apply" regarding the listed agency's fairness, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.17 and 6.1.

### Participation

Those citizens with favorable opinions are likely to have voted in more elections, as shown in Table 6.17, Part A (\*\*).

Those who see taxes as burdensome are likely to vote less regularly than citizens for whom taxes are not so much of a burden (\*).

Thus it would appear that the "protest vote" is more occasional than regular. The larger difference is among those unfavorable to the schools, where the protest vote might be expected.

Both those favorable to the schools and those seeking taxes



as less of a burden are more likely to converse with a school person, a neighbor, or some other citizen about the schools, as shown in Parts B and C (\*\*). The perceived burden of taxation accounts for somewhat more of this conversational activity than favorability toward schools.

For attendance at a school activity, however, favorability is a more important factor than perceived tax burden, as shown in Part D.

Looking at Part E (i.e., considering any aspect of participation), favorability also plays a larger part. The high utility group (Favorable, Low Burden) dominates participation figures (\*\*).

Table 6.17- Participation in School Affairs, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

Mode of participation	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
A. Voting in school elections:				
Has not voted	50%	54%	42%	44%
Voted in few or some	14%	8%	11%	9%
Voted in most or all	36%	38%	47%	47%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
B. Conversation with school teacher or administrator	16%	26%	22%	35%
C. Conversation with other citizen about schools	29%	33%	32%	42%
D. Attendance at school activity	29%	33%	44%	56%
E. At least one of B, C, or D above (conversation or school activity)	50%	55%	58%	69%
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages mentioning the listed kind of participation.

It should be noted that citizens who feel taxes are burdensome tend to participate less, except for voting.

The fact that these relationships are reversed gives greater emphasis to the fairly small differences in Part A. What we see as a protest vote is more striking in this larger context. It also points up a critical difference between formal participation (i.e., voting) of citizens and informal participation (for which citizens more favorable to the schools select themselves as participants).

Efficacy of participation is considerably higher among citizens who like the local schools and those who see taxes to be less of a burden, as shown in Table 6.18, Part A (\*\*).

We also see in Part B that neither utility factor affects citizen perceptions of potential greater interest in local schools.

Table 6.18. Perceived Efficacy and Potential Interest in School Affairs, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>A. Efficacy:</b>				
Low efficacy	73%	53%	50%	38%
High efficacy	27%	47%	50%	62%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>B. Potential interest:</b>				
Nothing could increase interest	74%	72%	72%	73%
Interest could be increased	26%	28%	28%	27%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=227)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.9 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages in the listed category.

Role conformance for interest in school activities is not much affected by favorability or perceived tax burden, as shown in Table 6.19. However, nonconformance is affected.

Citizens favorable to the schools are more likely to disregard the role perceived for one, with both taking interest (\*\*).

Those unfavorable are more likely to disregard a perceived role, with neither taking an interest in school activities (\*\*).

The grumblers are least likely to come from families where both take an interest in disregard of a role perceived for one spouse.

Table 6.19. Role Conformance for Interest in School Activities, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Perceived role/ conformance</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Spouse(s) take interest in confor- mance with role(s)	48%	49%	50%	52%
Spouse without role takes interest	8%	10%	8%	11%
Both take interest but only one has role	16%	13%	13%	21%
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	8%	7%	3%	3%
No role perceived, not married; don't know	$\frac{20\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{100\%}$
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.14, 4.16 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed combination of responses.

For interest in school finances, as shown in Table 6.20, the picture is somewhat different. Role conformance is greater among citizens favorable to the schools (\*\*) and, to a lesser extent, those who see taxes as burdensome.

Those unfavorable are still more likely to disregard a perceived role with neither taking an interest (\*\*). But now only the high utility group members are likely to disregard the role seen for one, with both taking an interest.

Table 6.20. Role Conformance for Interest in School Financial Matters, by Evaluation of Schools and Perceived Tax Burden.\*

<u>Perceived role/ conformance</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role	52%	44%	61%	59%
Spouse without role takes interest	8%	9%	4%	6%
Both take interest but only one has role	8%	8%	4%	10%
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	4%	7%	1%	2%
No role perceived; not married; don't know	$\frac{28\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{32\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{30\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{23\%}{100\%}$
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.15, 4.17 and 6.1. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed combination of responses.

### Summary

Our index of utility combines a focus on product quality with

a focus on product cost (evaluation of local schools and perceived tax burden). Generally, it does not account for differences in opinions and participation as well as does parental status. But it does show regular relationships with many variables. And, a few behaviors are better accounted for by utility categories.

High utility citizens have these characteristics:

They see more benefits from education for the nation, the adult, and the child. They are least likely to see no benefits from education.

They see academic knowledge and basic competences as helpful preparation, and thus as the chief benefits of education.

They tend to blame the parent and/or the child for non-achievement, rather than the schools.

They take a favorable view of putting more money into education now in order to improve its quality. They prefer local and national sources for any funds, and tend to dislike state sources.

They are more likely to be -- or to have been -- parent organization members.

They have the most direct contact with schools, and they make more use of agencies close to the schools (school boards and parent organizations).

They show the most awareness of agency helpfulness and fairness.

They participate more, in conversations and attendance, and find participation more efficacious than others.

They tend to follow role prescriptions for participation, and when they do deviate it is often toward greater participation.

Low utility citizens, who take a dim view of the schools and of their taxes, are usually at the other end of the scale on the above characteristics. In addition, they have several other characteristics of note:

They make occasional votes of protest -- voting being the only form of participation on which they are not lowest.

They view favorably the grading of pupils to encourage competition and the testing of new teachers on the subject matter they will teach.

They tend more to blame schools for student nonachievement.

The "grumblers" (Unfavorable, Low Burden) view the fundamentals as important benefits from education. They see economic benefits for the child from education -- but not so much for themselves or the nation.

They are least aware of school board personnel and functions, and least likely to see the board as representative.

They particularly like the proposal to have national achievement testing of high school students.

The "hard-pressed" (Favorable, High Burden) see the fewest total benefits for adults from education. They also have these important characteristics:

They are least likely to blame the schools for student nonachievement.

They are most likely to see the board as representative, but also to see the administration as dominating the board. They see the board as a helpful agency in disseminating information to the public -- but not so helpful in the feedback of information.

They are most likely to find the mass media useful to them for dissemination and feedback, having indirect contacts with schools in comparison to the high utility citizens' direct contact.

They perceive economic benefits from education, more often vote in financial elections, and more often follow the role prescription for interest in school finances.

Finally, there are a few findings that are not related to the utility index as a whole, but to one of its two parts:

Those who have a favorable view of the local schools are more likely to take a favorable view of board and parent organization personnel and functions.

Citizens with an unfavorable view of the local schools tend to see more unfairness in agency reports about schools -- suggesting that the perceived bias is in favor of the schools.

Since the utility groups show no difference in their potential interest in school affairs, it appears that attempts to increase participation will not founder on negative evaluations of the schools nor on perceived tax burden.

## Chapter VII

### Influences of the Citizen's Educational Experience

One factor that seems certain to influence the citizen's view of schools and his relations with them is his own educational experience. For some, the school years may be the only direct contact they have had with schools -- local or otherwise.

We would expect education to be a highly salient factor if only because the questions in our survey dealt with education. More education implies greater knowledge of some areas, and thus greater likelihood of answering some questions. And more education is accorded a higher status in many eyes.

A person's educational experience may differ in countless ways. For our analysis, we selected two dimensions, which might be called "quantity" and "quality" of education. The first is simply the number of years of formal schooling completed. Our sample divides fairly equally into three levels: those who completed at least one year of college, those who completed only high school, and those who did not complete 12 years.

The "quality" of a person's education might be evaluated in many ways. We left this up to the respondent, asking, "As you look back on your own education, how well did school prepare you, generally? Do you feel it prepared you very well, well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?" Those who answered "very well" or "well" were classified as "high satisfaction" respondents, and the remainder (except for a few cases who gave no response) as "low satisfaction" cases.

In previous work, we studied values and participation levels in relation to educational attainment. We found that registered voters with more education were slightly more critical of local schools, particularly if they were young.

Those with more education were more critical of the discrepancy between importance and performance in local schools with regard to fundamentals and basic subjects in the curriculum.

On participation, the more educated felt it more efficacious; they participated directly in school affairs more often; they were more likely to see a role for interest in school activities and finances -- but not follow it; they perceived more pressure to be involved; and they were more communicative.

In this earlier work, however, we discriminated only between those who had completed high school and those who had not. Here we can also distinguish among those who did or did not finish high school, and between those who went on to college and those who did not.

Our only previous work on satisfaction with one's own educational experience related responses only to satisfaction with the child's experience -- among those with a child in public school. In this chapter, we shall be looking at an entirely new set of relationships.

We view satisfaction here as primarily a mediator of effects due to educational attainment. We expected some differences in the effects of attainment level according to the citizen's satisfaction with his own experience.

But we will also be looking for instances of direct relationships between satisfaction and citizen values and participation.

Our two factors, then, yield a six-fold typology, with both "low" and "high" satisfaction citizens at each of three educational levels. Although there is some correlation between the level attained and satisfaction, it is far from perfect (See Chapter V).

Before turning to the analyses in this chapter, we shall report the demographic characteristics of each group. The complete profiles are found in Table B.3, Appendix B.

Low Education, Low Satisfaction. This is the largest of the six groups, comprising 24% of the citizens interviewed. These respondents did not complete 12 years of school, and feel that



education prepared them "fairly well" at best.

Characteristically, they are old (46% are over 50), male (54%), of low income (58% earn less than \$5,000 annually), and do not have children in the public schools now (62%).

This group has the highest proportions of widowed (12%), Negro (15%), Democrats (53%), and those engaged in low prestige occupations. They most commonly live in rural areas or small towns of low growth rate, and disproportionately in Southern or Southeastern states.

High School Graduate, Low Satisfaction. This group, 14% of the total, consists of high school graduates who do not feel that their education prepared them very well.

They are usually female (61%), young (32% are 30 or under), and have children in public school now (54%). They are most likely to be married (90%), and to live in small cities of high growth rate.

This group is generally in the middle range of income and occupational prestige. Geographically, it is predominantly Midwestern.

The high incidence of public school parents in this category may account for some instances of curvilinearity in the tables that follow.

College, Low Satisfaction. Despite relatively high level training, this 10% of the citizens interviewed consider their education as inadequately preparing them.

They are predominantly young, male (59%), and with high incomes (62% are above \$7,000 annually). But a third are engaged in "blue collar" occupations.

These citizens are least likely to be Democrats (33%), Roman Catholics (18%), or to have attended parochial schools (11%). A majority have children in public schools now (52%). They typically live in fast-growing urban areas, especially in the West.

Low Education, High Satisfaction. A comparatively large group (21% of the total), these citizens feel their schooling prepared them well even though they did not complete high school.

These are older citizens (53% are over 50), with low income (35% are under \$3,000 annually), and typically without children in public school now (61%).

They are likely to be Democrats (52%) and blue collar workers (only 12% are professional, business, or managerial). They are evenly distributed geographically, but are least likely to be found in suburban areas.

High School Graduate, High Satisfaction. This 15% of the sample is largely female (68%), and many have children now in public school (52%).

Their income level tends to be high, although their occupational level is not. Roman Catholics (33%) and Democrats (51%) are relatively common. Typically, they reside in a slow-growing city or suburb of the Northeast.

Compared to the other High Satisfaction groups, these citizens are younger and more likely to have children in public school. Thus, this category too may produce curvilinearity in relationships where parental status is a dominant factor.

College, High Satisfaction. Comprising 15% of the citizens interviewed, this group is middle-aged, male (54%), and overwhelmingly white (94%).

They are at the top in occupational prestige and income. A third earn more than \$10,000 annually; 40% are professionals. And 36% attended private or parochial schools. They are the most likely to claim British or Northern European ancestry (77%).

They tend to reside in metropolitan areas, and are least common in the South. The parental role is not particularly dominant in this group; only 41% have children in public schools.

Compared to the other group with college training, this more satisfied group does not differ in level of income. But it includes more older citizens, whites, Democrats, Roman Catholics, and white collar workers.

One important correlate of high satisfaction, at every level of education, is the proportion of private school attendance (private plus parochial). Regardless of the number of years

schooling, the High Satisfaction group consistently has a greater proportion of Roman Catholics and other respondents who attended a private school.

### What Education Can Accomplish

The higher the level of education, the more likely citizens are to name more benefits for the nation from education, as shown in Table 7.1. There is only a slight tendency for the more satisfied to name more benefits.

Differences in negative responses to this question are primarily among those with some college education. If their education was less satisfactory, they are more likely to make negative comments on what education can accomplish for the nation.

There is a trend toward fewer general positive responses among those with more education, regardless of satisfaction (\*\*). However, this may reflect the more educated citizens' ability to answer the question.

More educated citizens are more likely to see acquiring both basic skills and social competences as educational benefits for the nation (\*\*). Satisfaction makes little difference on these.

If they are satisfied with their own education, more educated citizens tend to see more benefits through increasing knowledge (\*\*). Among citizens not so satisfied, high school graduates are most likely to see this as a benefit (\*\*).

National economic improvement as a benefit is generally seen more frequently by the less educated (\*\*). This trend is more evident among those less satisfied.

But if economic improvement is seen for the individual rather than directly for the nation, the picture is different. Now the more educated see economic improvement as a benefit more often -- especially if satisfied with their own education (\*).

The view that education can improve society as a whole is more often taken by those with more education (\*\*). The relationship is stronger among those less satisfied with their own education.

**Table 7.1. What Education can Accomplish for the Nation as a Whole, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\***

<u>Goals Category</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Negative affect	8%	7%	10%	7%	7%	5%
General positive affect	46%	39%	37%	44%	42%	35%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	17%	25%	23%	16%	26%	28%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	25%	34%	41%	27%	36%	40%
Increase knowledge	27%	40%	38%	29%	34%	46%
Improve nation economically	60%	50%	43%	53%	53%	45%
Improve person economically	33%	46%	42%	39%	44%	49%
Improve society	<u>25%</u> 239%	<u>33%</u> 274%	<u>45%</u> 279%	<u>31%</u> 246%	<u>33%</u> 275%	<u>40%</u> 288%
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.1, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

Citizens with more education are likely to see more benefits for the adult from education, as shown in Table 7.2. The difference is greater among those less satisfied with their own education.

It is rather surprising that college trained citizens who are more satisfied see fewer benefits than those who are less satisfied. (They also make a few more negative comments.)

Citizens with less than a high school education give more negative responses to this question, regardless of satisfaction (\*\*). But this may be an artifact of age -- these groups containing older persons who do not see any likelihood of further educational experiences.

Table 7.2. What Education can Accomplish for the Adult as an Individual, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Goals Category	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Negative affect	25%	10%	10%	30%	16%	14%
General positive affect	8%	10%	15%	10%	13%	16%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	12%	23%	24%	13%	23%	16%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	25%	35%	40%	27%	37%	34%
Increase knowledge	26%	38%	48%	22%	42%	49%
Improve person economically	69%	68%	60%	63%	59%	60%
Improve society	<u>3%</u> 168%	<u>7%</u> 191%	<u>10%</u> 207%	<u>5%</u> 170%	<u>6%</u> 196%	<u>6%</u> 195%
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.2, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

Citizens more satisfied with own education, regardless of

level, tend to make more negative responses about what education can accomplish for them as adults. They probably feel they have had enough.

Those with more education are more likely to make a general positive response to this question (\*\*). This tendency contrasts with the lesser frequency with which they give general positive comments on benefits for the nation.

Citizens with more education -- if they are not satisfied with their own education -- are more likely to see acquiring basic skills and social competences as educational benefits for the adult (\*). However, among those satisfied with their education, high school graduates are most likely to see these benefits for the adult (\*\*).

Increasing knowledge as benefit for the adult is more frequently seen by those of higher education (\*\*).

There is a tendency for those with more education who are less satisfied with their own education to see fewer benefits for the adult in the economic realm (\*). There is little relationship between education and perceptions of economic benefits among those satisfied with their own education.

Among citizens with less than college training, those less satisfied are more likely to perceive economic benefits as education's contribution to the adult (\*\*). They could use such benefits.

There is a slight relationship between level of education and improving society as benefit for the individual, among those who are less satisfied with their own education (\*\*).

On benefits for the child from education, the more educated see more benefits, as shown in Table 7.3. Among the college trained, the more satisfied see more benefits.

Among less satisfied citizens, the more educated give more negative responses to this question of what can be accomplished for the child. Level of education makes no difference among the satisfied citizens.

Responses of generally positive benefit are little affected

Table 7.3. What Education can Accomplish for the Child in Public School, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Goals Category	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Negative affect	17%	20%	24%	21%	20%	20%
General positive affect	14%	15%	16%	16%	12%	12%
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	40%	54%	53%	38%	53%	55%
Preparation: acquiring social competence	38%	39%	40%	32%	40%	44%
Increase knowledge: fundamentals	10%	13%	16%	10%	14%	19%
Increase knowledge: academic	20%	28%	29%	22%	26%	28%
Increase knowledge: non-academic	14%	11%	11%	18%	12%	19%
Improve person economically	49%	32%	25%	41%	32%	28%
Improve society	$\frac{10\%}{212\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{226\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{229\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{209\%}$	$\frac{16\%}{225\%}$	$\frac{15\%}{240\%}$
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.3, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

by either educational level or satisfaction. There is a slight interaction, however. More educated citizens give more positive responses if less satisfied with their own education, while the opposite is true among those more satisfied.

Citizens with at least a high school education are more likely to see the acquisition of basic skills as a benefit for the child, regardless of satisfaction with their own education (\*).

Among those satisfied with their education, the more educated are more likely to see acquiring social competences as a benefit for the child (\*\*). Among those not satisfied, level of education makes no difference.

Citizens less satisfied with their education place more value on acquiring social competences -- if they have less than a high school education. Among the college educated, the more satisfied citizens see this as a benefit.

The more educated citizens tend to see more benefits for the child from increased knowledge of fundamentals (\*\*). This is irrespective of satisfaction with their own education. A similar evaluation is made of the benefits from increasing academic knowledge.

Less educated citizens, particularly those dissatisfied with their own education, are most likely to mention economic benefits for the child (\*\*).

And, again, there is a slight tendency for the more educated citizens to view an improved society as a benefit for the child -- as they also see it for the nation and the adult (\*\*).

#### Teaching and Administration

Neither educational level nor satisfaction makes much difference in evaluations of local teaching and administration, as shown in Table 7.4. There is only a slight tendency for the more educated to be more critical.

The most favorable evaluations of both come from the high school graduates satisfied with their own education.



Table 7.4. Perceived Quality of Instruction and Administration in Local Public Schools, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>A. <u>Instruction is</u></b>						
Very good or somewhat good	84%	84%	85%	85%	89%	83%
Somewhat bad or very bad	6%	9%	7%	5%	6%	6%
Don't know	$\frac{10\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{10\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{5\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{100\%}$
<b>B. <u>Local public schools are run</u></b>						
Very well or somewhat well	85%	82%	84%	85%	86%	80%
Somewhat poorly or very poorly	6%	9%	7%	8%	7%	9%
Don't know	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{9\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{7\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{11\%}{100\%}$
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.7, 2.8, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

### Reaction to Innovations

More educated citizens are likely to make more evaluations of innovations, as shown in Table 7.5, in the section on "overall evaluations" (\*\*). They also give more favorable responses to innovations (\*\*). And, if they are dissatisfied with their own education, they make more negative comments on innovations (\*).

Satisfaction affects favorable evaluations, overall, only among citizens with some college training.

Table 7.5. Evaluations of Innovations in Local Public Schools, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Area of innovation and Direction of evaluation	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>Administration:</b>						
favorable	2%	5%	3%	4%	5%	7%
unfavorable	7%	6%	6%	6%	9%	6%
<b>Facilities:</b>						
favorable	7%	11%	4%	7%	6%	7%
unfavorable	4%	6%	6%	4%	6%	7%
<b>Teaching:</b>						
favorable	3%	7%	10%	4%	9%	12%
unfavorable	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%
<b>Academic:</b>						
favorable	13%	22%	32%	11%	24%	30%
unfavorable	2%	5%	9%	4%	3%	6%
<b>Non-academic:</b>						
favorable	4%	6%	8%	4%	2%	6%
unfavorable	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	2%
<b>Community relations:</b>						
favorable	2%	1%	3%	4%	3%	3%
unfavorable	**	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
	<u>110%</u>	<u>122%</u>	<u>130%</u>	<u>112%</u>	<u>121%</u>	<u>125%</u>
<b>Overall evaluations:</b>						
None	57%	42%	40%	54%	45%	35%
favorable	30%	42%	48%	31%	44%	54%
unfavorable	19%	24%	27%	22%	24%	24%
	<u>106%</u>	<u>118%</u>	<u>115%</u>	<u>107%</u>	<u>113%</u>	<u>113%</u>
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.9, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents gave more than one answer.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

The focus of the negative criticisms among the more educated is on academic innovations and new facilities (\*\*). Academic innovations, however, are also the focus of favorable evaluations among the more educated (\*\*).

It appears that the more educated simply concern themselves with the curriculum more than the less educated.

Innovations in facilities are viewed favorably most often by high school graduates dissatisfied with their own education (\*\*). They may see such innovations as providing opportunities they missed.

Favorable reactions to teaching innovations increase with both level of education (\*\*) and satisfaction.

#### Pride in Local Schools

The more educated tend to find more aspects of the local schools in which to take pride, as shown in Table 7.6. And, restricting our examination to those who do take some pride, the more educated are somewhat more likely to find specific sources of pride.

The dissatisfied and the less educated are more likely to take pride in the schools in general (\*), rather than in a specific aspect.

High school graduates show a small, but consistent, tendency to take less pride in the administration. More satisfied citizens show a slight tendency toward greater pride in the administration.

High school graduates are also least likely to take pride in school facilities. We also see that less satisfied citizens are more likely to take pride in facilities.

Citizens with less than a high school education are the least likely to take pride in teaching -- perhaps because they take less pride in anything. The more satisfied tend to take more pride in teaching (\*).

Among satisfied citizens, pride in academic content increases

with educational level (\*\*). Among dissatisfied citizens, the same trend is found, but high school graduates show the most pride (\*\*).

Pride in students increases with educational level (\*\*). Among more educated citizens, it also increases with satisfaction.

Table 7.6. Aspects of Local Public Schools in which Pride is Taken, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

<u>Aspect of Schools</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Schools in general	22%	19%	19%	20%	14%	18%
Administration	10%	9%	10%	12%	9%	14%
Facilities	22%	20%	24%	21%	16%	18%
Teaching	23%	26%	26%	26%	32%	29%
Academic content	11%	25%	23%	9%	18%	23%
Non-academic content	6%	7%	7%	5%	8%	6%
Students	8%	7%	12%	6%	12%	15%
Community relations	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	5%
No pride in any aspect of schools	<u>33%</u> 139%	<u>31%</u> 148%	<u>27%</u> 151%	<u>35%</u> 138%	<u>39%</u> 152%	<u>26%</u> 154%
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.10, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

### Nonachievement by Students

Citizens with more education identify more students as not getting enough out of school, as shown in Table 7.7. Perhaps for this reason, all identifications increase with level of education (\*\*).

Among the more educated citizens, those satisfied with their own education are more likely to see the culturally deprived as not getting enough out of school (\*).

Table 7.7. Types of Children Perceived as Not Getting Enough out of School, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Type of child	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
None; don't know; no identification**	52%	38%	37%	55%	42%	35%
General identifications	35%	53%	52%	33%	44%	52%
Culturally deprived	<u>18%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>24%</u>
	105%	107%	110%	104%	107%	111%
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.11, 2.12, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages mentioning the listed type of child. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one type of child.

\*\* Includes respondents who perceived that some children were not getting enough out of school, but who did not identify except to assign fault for this problem. See Table 7.8.

The more educated citizens are more likely to blame someone for student nonachievement, as shown in Table 7.8 (\*\*). They tend

to blame parents and schools more often than the less educated citizens do (\*\*). The latter tend more toward blaming the child. But the high school graduates, who are most likely to have a child in public school now, are most likely to blame the child.

Among citizens with a high school education or less, the less satisfied blame the schools more often.

Table 7.8. Perceived Source of Fault for Non-Achievement, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Source of fault	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
No fault mentioned	40%	30%	32%	41%	34%	26%
Parents at fault	20%	28%	31%	24%	25%	38%
Child at fault	39%	41%	33%	41%	41%	37%
School at fault	$\frac{12\%}{111\%}$	$\frac{25\%}{124\%}$	$\frac{25\%}{121\%}$	$\frac{8\%}{114\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{121\%}$	$\frac{27\%}{128\%}$
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.13, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages mentioning that the fault for non-achievement was due to the listed source. Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents mentioned more than one source of fault.

### Standards and Finances

Looking at opinions on national educational standards, in Table 7.9, we see that the more educated citizens uniformly take a less favorable view of all three proposals (\*\*).

In several instances, high school graduates take the most favorable view of testing proposals. But this may be accounted for by the smaller proportion of those with no opinion -- compared to the lowest educational level.

**Table 7.9. Opinions on National Educational Standards, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\***

<u>Reaction to proposal for</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>A. National curriculum standards:</b>						
Favorable	75%	72%	58%	77%	71%	65%
Unfavorable	16%	27%	39%	18%	28%	33%
Don't know	<u>9%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>B. National testing of high school students:</b>						
Favorable	80%	82%	77%	81%	85%	78%
Unfavorable	13%	17%	21%	11%	14%	19%
Don't know	<u>7%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>8%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>3%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>C. National testing of elementary school students:</b>						
Favorable	75%	73%	65%	76%	78%	66%
Unfavorable	18%	26%	33%	18%	20%	31%
Don't know	<u>7%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>3%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(N=364)	(N=213)	(N=146)	(N=337)	(N=217)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.15, 2.16, 2.17, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

Grading pupils to encourage competition is most often seen as important by the less educated (\*\*) and the more satisfied (\*), as shown in Table 7.10, Part A.

In Part B, we see that high school graduates most strongly favor the testing of new teachers on the subject matter to be taught (\*\*).

**Table 7-10. Opinions on Grading and Testing, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\***

	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than</u> <u>12 years</u>	<u>High</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>college</u>	<u>Less than</u> <u>12 years</u>	<u>High</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>college</u>
<b>A. Importance of grading pupils to encourage competition:</b>						
Very important	60%	51%	37%	70%	57%	40%
Somewhat important or less	37%	49%	62%	29%	41%	59%
Don't know	<u>3%</u>	<u>**</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>B. Reaction to testing new teachers on subject matter they will teach:</b>						
Strongly favorable	77%	80%	73%	76%	83%	74%
Somewhat favorable or less	20%	19%	25%	20%	16%	25%
Don't know	<u>3%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>1%</u>	<u>1%</u>
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=366)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.14, 2.18, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Turning now to educational financing, we see in Part A of Table 7.11 that the less educated citizens take the most favorable view of the national government placing more money in the local schools' hands (\*\*).

However, the more educated are somewhat more favorable toward the investment of more money than now needed to stimulate educational growth (see Part B).



Table 7.11. Opinions on Educational Financing, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>A. Reaction to national government funds for local schools:</b>						
Favorable	77%	78%	56%	80%	74%	63%
Unfavorable	17%	19%	41%	17%	22%	36%
Don't know	<u>6%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>1%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>B. Reaction to investing more money than needed now to stimulate educational growth:</b>						
Favorable	66%	72%	72%	72%	75%	73%
Unfavorable	24%	25%	25%	22%	23%	26%
Don't know	<u>10%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>2%</u>	<u>1%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>C. Preferred source for additional funds for public schools:**</b>						
Local	45%	45%	62%	45%	52%	63%
State	57%	66%	54%	66%	64%	63%
National	29%	24%	28%	25%	25%	21%
Don't know	<u>11%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>4%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>3%</u>	<u>3%</u>
	142%	139%	148%	142%	144%	150%
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.19, 2.20, 2.21, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents named more than one preferred source.

More educated citizens have a higher preference for local

sources also, as seen in Part C (\*\*). With regard to state and national sources, preferences are not so regular.

State funds are preferred by high school graduates less satisfied with their own education, but otherwise by those more satisfied (\*\*). On the other hand, less satisfied citizens prefer national sources -- except among high school graduates (\*).

The less educated have fewer opinions on all financial proposals.

### Mediating Agencies

In Table 7.12, there is again a tendency for the more educated to make some evaluation, here of local school board characteristics (\*\*). In several instances, high school graduates are less likely to make evaluations than those who did not finish high school (even though public school parents, with their greater participation, are most frequent among high school graduates).

Part A shows that more educated citizens tend to make more negative comments on both board personnel and functions -- particularly personnel (\*\*). However, we see that the more educated also take more favorable views of personnel (\*). With regard to board functions, the more educated are more favorable if dissatisfied with their own education but less favorable if satisfied.

Among satisfied citizens, educational attainment makes very little difference in perceptions of board representativeness (see Part B). But among the dissatisfied, both favorable and unfavorable views increase with more education -- due, undoubtedly, to the differences in evaluations made (\*\*). The trend toward unfavorable views is stronger.

Generally, citizens satisfied with their own education see board members as more representative (\*\*).

More educated citizens more often see the administration as dominating policy making (see Part C), while less educated citizens see the board as dominant more often (\*\*). Satisfaction makes no difference.

Table 7.12. Opinions of Local School Board, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>A. Evaluation of board:**</b>						
Negative to Personnel	7%	9%	15%	7%	7%	14%
Negative to Function	8%	9%	13%	10%	8%	11%
Neutral description	26%	15%	15%	17%	21%	18%
Favorable to personnel	15%	19%	21%	16%	21%	26%
Favorable to function	19%	22%	27%	23%	22%	21%
Don't know	37%	40%	26%	38%	34%	25%
	<u>112%</u>	<u>114%</u>	<u>117%</u>	<u>111%</u>	<u>103%</u>	<u>115%</u>
<b>B. Perceived representativeness:</b>						
Very or somewhat representative	47%	49%	54%	57%	56%	59%
Not very or not at all representative	11%	16%	23%	14%	11%	15%
Don't know	42%	35%	23%	29%	33%	26%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>C. Dominant element in policy-making:</b>						
School board dominates	32%	27%	27%	35%	27%	25%
Administration dominates	31%	37%	42%	31%	37%	41%
About even	10%	9%	11%	10%	14%	11%
Don't know	27%	27%	20%	24%	22%	23%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=143)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents evaluated more than one aspect of the school board.

Local parent organization characteristics are most often evaluated by the more educated, as shown in Table 7.13 (\*).

While the more educated took a dimmer view of board personnel than functions, here we see in Part A that they are more likely to take a negative view of parent organization functions than of personnel. The relationship is strongest among those dissatisfied with their own education.

Educational level makes little difference with respect to favorable evaluations of personnel. However, for functions, citizens with less education who are satisfied tend to be more favorable.

No matter what the degree of satisfaction, more educated citizens tend to see the parents as the dominant element (\*\*)-- if there is one (see Part B).

Among satisfied citizens, the less educated are more likely to see no element as dominating (\*\*).

Current or past membership in a parent organization increases regularly with educational attainment (\*\*). And, among college trained citizens, the less satisfied show more membership (see Part C). The more membership with more education may account for the views seen in Part A.

Given the greater proportion of public school parents among the high school graduates, their relative lack of membership is worthy of note. In our previous work, we found some reluctance among the less educated to participate in parent organizations.

Less educated citizens find television and radio more useful as ways of finding out about the schools, as shown in Table 7.14. High school graduates are most likely to find newspapers useful.

Uniformly, citizens more satisfied with their own education find all of the mass media more useful than those less satisfied.

The school board is seen as least useful for dissemination by high school graduates, among those dissatisfied with their education. Among those satisfied, it is seen as least useful by the college trained.

Table 7.13. Opinions of Local Parents Group, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
A. Evaluation of parents group:**						
Negative to personnel	5%	7%	10%	5%	6%	10%
Negative to function	4%	12%	21%	7%	13%	16%
Neutral description	10%	13%	11%	11%	8%	14%
Favorable to personnel	15%	14%	16%	17%	14%	16%
Favorable to function	34%	32%	34%	37%	33%	27%
Don't know	<u>45%</u> 113%	<u>36%</u> 114%	<u>32%</u> 124%	<u>37%</u> 114%	<u>40%</u> 114%	<u>34%</u> 117%
B. Dominant element in group:						
Parents dominate	9%	14%	17%	5%	12%	19%
School persons dominate	4%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Neither dominates	44%	43%	44%	47%	44%	35%
Don't know	<u>43%</u> 100%	<u>37%</u> 100%	<u>34%</u> 100%	<u>42%</u> 100%	<u>38%</u> 100%	<u>40%</u> 100%
C. Current or past membership in a parents group:						
	22%	35%	49%	23%	36%	41%
	(N=367)	(N=214)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

\*\* Columns total to more than 100% because some respondents evaluated more than one aspect of parents group.

Table 7.14. Perceived Helpfulness of Agencies in Disseminating Information about Schools to Public, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Newspapers	-4%	+2%	-10%	+2%	+9%	+4%
Television	--	-4%	-15%	+8%	+6%	-5%
Radio	+2%	-4%	-11%	+7%	+5%	-5%
School board	+1%	-4%	+2%	+3%	+3%	-2%
Parents group	--	+1%	-4%	+2%	+5%	-3%
Citizens' committee	-1%	+1%	+2%	-3%	--	+6%
Local teachers	-3%	+1%	+6%	+3%	+3%	+3%
School administration	--	-3%	+7%	+4%	+7%	+1%
	(N=356)	(N=209)	(N=143)	(N=301)	(N=211)	(N=216)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who see the listed agency as "very helpful" or "helpful" in disseminating information, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.15, 5.1 and 5.5.

High school graduates, regardless of satisfaction with their own education, take the most favorable view of parent organizations as a means of disseminating information. The college educated take the least favorable view, also regardless of satisfaction.

We should note that the college educated are more likely to be -- or to have been -- members of these organizations. But there are more current parents of public school children who are high school graduates. So the latter find them currently more useful, despite proportionately less membership overall.

Favorable views of citizens' committees increase with educational attainment, and somewhat more among those more satisfied

with their own education. (The differences are relatively large in the latter case, given the small number of citizens who have any familiarity with citizens' committees.)

Preferences for direct contact with school people increase with educational level among those dissatisfied with their own education, but not among the satisfied citizens.

With one exception, all the mass media are seen as more helpful for the feedback of information to the schools by less educated citizens, as shown in Table 7.15. The exception is the dissatisfied high school graduate group, who are more likely to see newspapers as helpful than do citizens who did not finish high school.

Table 7.15. Perceived Helpfulness of Mediating Agency in Feedback of Information to Schools from Public, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Mediating agency	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Newspapers	--	+6%	-15%	+9%	--	-1%
Television	+5%	--	-10%	+7%	+3%	+3%
Radio	+4%	-1%	-12%	+10%	+1%	-5%
School board	--	-1%	+5%	+3%	+2%	+3%
Parents group	-2%	--	+3%	+1%	+1%	+5%
Citizens' committee	-1%	--	+5%	-3%	--	+5%
	(N=350)	(N=211)	(N=142)	(N=303)	(N=213)	(N=219)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who see the listed agency as "very helpful" or "helpful" in feedback of information, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.16, 5.1 and 5.5.

As with dissemination, all the mass media are judged more useful for feedback by those more satisfied with their own education.

Among dissatisfied citizens, college trained persons see the school board as most useful for feedback.

Both educational attainment and satisfaction bring small increases in the perceived helpfulness of parent organizations for feedback.

Educational attainment, but not satisfaction, is related to views that citizens' committees are useful for feedback. There is no difference according to satisfaction -- whereas there is for dissemination.

We see in Table 7.16 that there are few large differences by educational attainment or satisfaction in perceptions of agency fairness.

Dissatisfied citizens with college training do find relatively high amounts of unfairness in newspapers, however.

Table 7.16. Perceived Unfairness of Agency Reports to Public about Schools by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Agency	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Newspapers	-1%	--	+6%	-1%	+2%	--
Television	-2%	+1%	-1%	+1%	--	-2%
Radio	--	+1%	--	-1%	+2%	-1%
School board	-2%	+3%	+4%	-1%	-1%	--
Parents group	-2%	+4%	+3%	-1%	-1%	+2%
Citizens' committee	-1%	-1%	+2%	-1%	--	+1%
Local teachers	-4%	+3%	+4%	-2%	+2%	--
School administration	-1%	+1%	+4%	-2%	+2%	+2%
	(N=366)	(N=213)	(N=145)	(N=311)	(N=218)	(N=219)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who see the listed agency as "not very fair" or "not fair at all" in its reports to the public, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.17, 5.1 and 5.5.



Generally, those with more education see more unfairness in agency reports, particularly if they are less satisfied with their own education. This reaction could be viewed the other way: Citizens dissatisfied with their own education find more unfairness in agency reports about schools, particularly if they are more educated.

Less educated citizens are most often unaware of the helpfulness of agencies for dissemination of information, as shown in Table 7.17.

High school graduates, rather than the college trained, are most aware of the mass media as helpful. For the other agencies, the college trained are most aware.

Table 7.17. Non-Awareness of Agencies for Disseminating Information about Schools, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Agency	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Newspapers	+5%	-3%	-1%	--	-4%	-3%
Television	+4%	-5%	-4%	--	--	-2%
Radio	+1%	-5%	+3%	+2%	-3%	-2%
School board	+1%	-3%	-8%	+3%	-2%	-7%
Parents group	+4%	-3%	-7%	+5%	-3%	-5%
Citizens' committee	+3%	-1%	-4%	+7%	-2%	-9%
Local teachers	--	-5%	-12%	+2%	-1%	-9%
School administration	--	-6%	-12%	-1%	-3%	-8%
	(N=366)	(N=213)	(N=145)	(N=311)	(N=218)	(N=219)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who respond "don't know" or "doesn't apply" regarding the listed agency's helpfulness in disseminating information, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3-15, 5-1 and 5-5.

For the feedback of information to the schools, less educated citizens are again least aware of the helpfulness of the mediating agencies, as shown in Table 7.18.

The more educated citizens are here more generally knowledgeable than they were for dissemination. Only on radio -- and newspapers, among the dissatisfied -- do they yield to high school graduates.

There is greater awareness of the mass media for feedback among more satisfied citizens with a high school education or less.

Table 7.18. Non-Awareness of Mediating Agencies for Feedback of Information to Schools, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

<u>Mediating agency</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Newspapers	+5%	-8%	-7%	-2%	-4%	-9%
Television	+2%	-8%	-11%	-2%	-4%	-8%
Radio	+4%	-10%	-2%	-2%	-6%	-5%
School board	+2%	-5%	-7%	+1%	-4%	-9%
Parents group	+3%	-6%	-8%	+3%	-4%	-5%
Citizens' committee	+1%	-2%	-5%	+5%	-4%	-7%
	(N=350)	(N=211)	(N=142)	(N=303)	(N=213)	(N=219)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who respond "don't know" or "doesn't apply" regarding the listed agency's helpfulness in feedback of information. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3.16, 5.1 and 5.5.

In Table 7.19, we see that awareness of fairness -- or bias -- in agency reports tends to go with more education. Exceptions occur for radio and television, the latter only among the satisfied.

Among citizens with less than a high school education, there is more sensitivity to fairness among the satisfied (except for radio). This also holds pretty well for the college trained (exceptions are television and citizens' committee).

Among high school graduates, citizens less satisfied with their own education seem to be more aware of the fairness of agency reports about schools. There are two exceptions here also, television and citizens' committee.

Table 7-19. Non-Awareness of Agency Fairness in Reports to Public, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Agency	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than High 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Newspapers	+7%	-4%	-2%	+1%	-2%	-6%
Television	+3%	+2%	-1%	-5%	+1%	+2%
Radio	-1%	-2%	+4%	-3%	-2%	+1%
School board	+7%	-7%	-9%	+2%	-4%	-5%
Parents group	+6%	-7%	-11%	+3%	-3%	-4%
Citizens' committee	+4%	+1%	-4%	+5%	-1%	-7%
Local teachers	+1%	-10%	-17%	-2%	-8%	-9%
School administration	+3%	-10%	-17%	+1%	-8%	-6%
	(N=366)	(N=213)	(N=145)	(N=311)	(N=218)	(N=219)

\* Cell entries are deviations of the percentage of the subgroup's members who respond "don't know" or "doesn't apply" regarding the listed agency's fairness, from the percentage for all sample members. For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 3-17, 5-1 and 5-5.

## Participation

Participation in school affairs generally increases with more education, as shown in Table 7.20. This is true for voting, conversations, and attendance at some school activity (\*\*).

For voting (see Part A), the college trained citizens more satisfied with their own education tend to vote more frequently than the dissatisfied.

For conversations (Parts B and C), satisfaction makes little difference by itself or in mediating the effect of educational level.

For activity attendance (Part D), satisfaction increases attendance only among those with less than a high school education (\*). High school graduates and college trained citizens attend activities more often if they are dissatisfied with their own education.

Part E summarizes the participation reports for conversations and attendance, and shows the strong effect of educational level on these participation modes (\*\*).

More educated citizens are much more likely to see some efficacy in participation, as shown in Table 7.21, Part A (\*\*). Among the less educated, more satisfaction with their own education is slightly related to higher efficacy.

Both educational attainment and satisfaction are related to potential interest in school affairs (see Part B). The more educated and the less satisfied citizens are more likely to think their level of interest could be raised (\*\*).

Only two trends of note are found on role conformance for interest in school activities, as shown in Table 7.22.

The less educated citizens are more likely not to see a role prescription for interest, particularly the less satisfied of them (\*\*).

The tendency for both members of a family to take an interest when the role is seen only for one occurs more among high school graduates and college trained (\*\*).

Table 7.20. Participation in School Affairs, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Mode of participation	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
A. Voting in school elections:						
Has not voted	58%	47%	44%	54%	47%	36%
Voted in few or some	10%	13%	6%	13%	9%	6%
Voted in most or all	<u>32%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>44%</u>	<u>58%</u>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
B. Conversation with school teacher or administrator	16%	27%	41%	13%	26%	41%
C. Conversation with other citizen about schools	17%	43%	50%	20%	40%	54%
D. Attendance at school activity	25%	48%	55%	32%	43%	49%
E. At least one of B, C, or D above (conversation or school activity)	38%	69%	76%	45%	63%	75%
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages mentioning the listed kind of participation.

Table 7,21. Perceived Efficacy and Potential Interest in School Affairs by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
A. Efficacy:						
Low efficacy	71%	54%	27%	68%	46%	30%
High efficacy	$\frac{29\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{46\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{73\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{32\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{54\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{70\%}{100\%}$
B. Potential Interest:						
Nothing could increase interest	76%	69%	61%	81%	78%	67%
Interest could be increased	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{31\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{39\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{22\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{33\%}{100\%}$
	(N=366)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages in the listed category.

Table 7.22. Role Conformance for Interest in School Activities, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Perceived role/ conformance	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than</u> <u>12 years</u>	<u>High</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>college</u>	<u>Less than</u> <u>12 years</u>	<u>High</u> <u>school</u>	<u>Some</u> <u>college</u>
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role(s)	46%	50%	48%	51%	50%	47%
Spouse without role takes interest	9%	9%	8%	11%	8%	8%
Both take interest but only one has role	13%	23%	23%	12%	20%	20%
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	7%	5%	7%	5%	5%	6%
No role perceived; not married; don't know	$\frac{25\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{13\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{14\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{21\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{17\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{19\%}{100\%}$
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.14, 4.16, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed combination of responses.

There are some different trends on role conformance for interest in school finances, as shown in Table 7.23.

Dissatisfied, less educated citizens are still less likely to see a role prescription (\*\*). But among those satisfied, the more educated are less likely to see a role prescription.

High school graduates are most likely to follow the role prescription perceived (\*). Among dissatisfied citizens, those with less than a high school education are least likely; among the satisfied, the college trained are least likely.

More educated citizens tend to come from families where the

role perceived for one is disregarded, with both taking an interest in school finances (\*). The relationship is stronger among citizens dissatisfied with their own education.

Table 7.23. Role Conformance for Interest in School Financial Matters, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

Perceived role/ conformance	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Spouse(s) take interest in conformance with role(s)	46%	57%	53%	55%	56%	47%
Spouse without role takes interest	7%	5%	6%	9%	7%	9%
Both take interest but only one has role	8%	11%	14%	6%	7%	8%
Role perceived, but neither takes interest	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%
No role perceived; not married; don't know	$\frac{35\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{24\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{23\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{27\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{27\%}{100\%}$	$\frac{32\%}{100\%}$
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.15, 4.17, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed combination of responses.

More educated citizens are less likely to see taxes as burdensome, as shown in Table 7.24, particularly if they are satisfied with their own education (\*\*).

Dissatisfaction with their own education leads to a perception



of a greater burden from taxes among the more educated, i.e. high school graduates and college trained (\*\*).

Table 7.24. Perceived Burden of Taxes, by Extent of and Satisfaction with Own Education.\*

<u>Tax load is</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Less than 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
Great burden or somewhat of a burden	43%	44%	36%	45%	38%	29%
Not very much or no burden at all	51%	52%	55%	50%	53%	64%
Don't know	<u>6%</u> 100%	<u>4%</u> 100%	<u>9%</u> 100%	<u>5%</u> 100%	<u>9%</u> 100%	<u>7%</u> 100%
	(N=366)	(N=214)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* For marginal distributions and the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 4.20, 5.1 and 5.5. Cell entries are percentages giving the listed response.

### Summary

The quantity and quality of citizens' education, as expected, play an important part in how they view public education and in their participation.

Citizens with more education are more likely to have these views and participations:

They see more benefits from education -- for the nation, the adult, and the child.

They tend to see these kinds of benefits: acquiring basic skills and social competences, improving society, and acquiring knowledge and the fundamentals (for children).

They have more opinions on local schools, mediating agencies,

and educational proposals.

They take more pride in their local schools, and take more pride in students.

They are concerned with curriculum, both praising and criticizing academic innovations. They also tend to like teaching innovations but not innovations in facilities.

They are more likely to blame parents and schools for student nonachievement.

They like the idea of "stimulus funds" -- investing money now to improve later education. They tend to favor local sources for additional funds.

They make more negative evaluations of board personnel and functions, especially personnel (but also make more favorable evaluations). They see the administration as more often dominant in policy making.

They make more negative evaluations of parent organization personnel and functions, especially functions. They see the parents as more often dominating parent organizations. They are more likely to be -- or to have been -- parent organization members (even though relatively few are currently public school parents).

They are the most likely to see citizens' committees as helpful in the dissemination and feedback of information between schools and citizens.

They have higher levels of participation -- in voting, conversations, and activity attendance -- and see more efficacy in their participation.

They are more likely to think their interest could be increased in some way.

They sometimes disregard a role prescription for one family member to be interested in school matters, instead having both take an interest.

They see their taxes as less burdensome, for what they get in return, even though they pay higher taxes.

Citizens with less education are not merely the opposite of

the more educated. They have these distinctive characteristics as well:

They see more economic benefits for the nation as a whole and for the child from education. They are more likely not to see any benefits from education for adults like themselves.

They tend to blame the child for nonachievement.

They like proposals for national standards, and favor grading pupils to encourage competition.

They tend to favor national sources for additional funds.

They see the board as dominating educational policy making.

They find radio and television helpful for the dissemination and feedback of information between school and citizens. They are least aware of agencies available for dissemination and feedback assistance.

By itself, satisfaction does not have the impact that educational attainment does. But citizens who feel that their own education was satisfactory do have some different views and participations:

They are less likely to see benefits from education for adults like themselves.

They like innovations in teaching. They take pride in teaching and in the local administration.

They see the culturally deprived as not getting enough out of education (except citizens with less than a high school education).

They think it important to grade pupils in order to encourage competition.

They tend to prefer state sources for additional funds.

They are more likely to see their local school board as representative.

They find the mass media helpful for the dissemination and feedback of information between schools and citizens.

Dissatisfied citizens have a few important characteristics also:

They are more likely to see economic benefits for themselves from education (if they are more educated).

They tend to blame the child more for nonachievement (if they are less educated).

They tend to prefer national sources for additional funds.

They think that their interest in schools could be increased.

The impact of the amount of citizen education often varies according to the satisfaction with that education. These relationships can be found among those dissatisfied with their education:

The less educated see more economic benefits from education for themselves and for children.

The more educated see fewer benefits for the child.

The more educated see more value in direct contacts with school people for the dissemination of information from the schools.

The more educated see more unfairness in reports about schools -- biased toward the schools, we assume, given their dissatisfaction.

The less educated are less likely to see a role prescription for interest in school matters.

On the other hand, these relationships hold only among those satisfied with their own education:

The more educated see economic benefits for the individual as beneficial for the nation.

The more educated see benefits from increased knowledge for the nation.

The more educated take more pride in the academic content of local schools.

Finally, high school graduates have some distinctive characteristics of their own:

They are more favorable to instruction and administration in the local schools (if satisfied with their own education).

They like innovations in facilities (if dissatisfied with their own education).

They tend, however, to take less pride in administration and facilities.

They are likely to blame the child more often for nonachievement.

They favor proposals for national testing of high school students and for testing new teachers on the subject matter they will teach.

They prefer state sources for additional funds (if dissatisfied with their own education).

They find newspapers and parent organizations helpful for the dissemination of information about schools. They are most aware of the mass media for their usefulness in dissemination.

They are more likely to follow perceived role prescriptions for interest in school matters.

They are also likely to be public school parents -- which may account for many of these characteristics.

## Chapter VIII

### Concluding Views

Except for an occasional vote in review of school policy, citizens can be seen as standing in an informal relation to -- rather than in a formal relationship with -- their schools.

The nature of their informal relation to schools is determined by the interests of the citizens. Their interests dictate the extent and the type of their relations. And these interests are consumer interests.

To know the present condition of school-community relations requires that we know the implications of this consumer orientation. In this study, we have seen many of them. We shall summarize what we have found before turning to the question of what can be done about improving the present condition.

#### A summary

Like everyone else, the citizens we interviewed do not know of any way to assure success for their children. But they do think that certain benefits of education are essential for children to have a chance of competing successfully when they leave school.

Those benefits are the basic competences -- intellectual and social -- which are seen to prepare the child for any path he may choose, and economic benefits that will directly follow on educational achievement.

Because they themselves may not have received all the benefits to be reaped from more education, many citizens feel they could have done better in school. Particularly, those who dropped out of high school or college feel this way.

To "finish" one's education is important. It is important

enough that those citizens who did finish high school or college (or even grade school) and who are not now satisfied with their educational preparation are more ready to blame the schools for this difficulty. They expected more than they got.

These expectations, based on the value of the educational product, go farther. Many more children are expected to finish college than will do so. Highly educated parents with children expected to go on to college but who are not doing too well now, tend to blame the schools for this fault.

And there are apprehensions. Citizens must often wait years to get an assessment of the educational product. So most of them favor proposals for national standards -- for curriculum, testing of pupils, and especially testing of new teachers on the subjects they will be teaching.

Although generally satisfied with how things are going in the local schools, six out of seven think some children are not getting as much out of school as they might.

The consumer orientation is already obvious. It becomes even more evident when we see the differences in citizen interests according to parental status, views of the local schools' utility, and educational experience.

### Parental Status

We looked at the differences in citizen interests for five categories: preschool parents, postschool parents, private school parents, nonparents, and public school parents. Some of the more significant characteristics of each consumer view are summarized here.

Preschool parents. Of all groups, they are the most apprehensive of the quality of current educational products. They tend to blame the schools for student nonachievement and to take negative views of mediating agencies, even though using the latter less often.

They are interested in school affairs and talk about them,

but not to school people. They attend school events infrequently and vote less often (to some extent because they are young and have not been eligible).

They are not very happy with their own education, even though it has been more recent than for other groups.

Since their children are not yet in school, they favor investments that would improve the future educational product.

Postschool parents. They see fewer benefits from education -- for children as well as themselves. They do not favor greater investments in education. They see taxes as burdensome.

Proposals for national educational standards do not appeal to them.

They do not participate in school affairs, see little efficacy in participation, find little use in mediating agencies, show little interest in school matters, but they vote often in school elections.

Private school parents. They tend to like their own education, and blame themselves for any shortcomings in preparation. They see fewer benefits from public education for the child. They like the idea of testing new teachers, and they like curriculum innovations.

These appear to be bases for their sending children to private schools -- under more disciplined conditions. Because they support two school systems, they feel taxes are high for what they get in return.

They view mediating agencies rather negatively, especially board functions. They think parent organizations are dominated by some element. They see more unfairness in reports on school matters by mediating agencies.

They see the newspaper as quite useful in getting information to and from the schools. They participate and feel that their participation is efficacious.

Nonparents. Having no children, they are likely to see benefits for society as a whole from education. They like testing proposals, perhaps to have a way of evaluating the educational product.



They know relatively less about school board and parent organization personnel and functions. They make use of the mass media to inform themselves. Although they do not belong to parent organizations, some belong to adult groups that they consider to be interested in education.

They show some interest in their schools but do not participate actively.

Public school parents. They are optimistic about education, seeing many possible benefits. They view their local schools favorably, taking pride in them.

They know more about what is going on about innovations. They know more about mediating agencies and they like the personnel and functions of boards and parent organizations. They find the board helpful.

Their contacts with schools are more direct -- with school people or with agencies close to the school, like the board and parent organizations.

They participate actively and find it efficacious.

#### Utility

Views on the product quality (evaluation of local schools) and on product cost (burden of taxes for what is received) allow a comparison of four consumer types with respect to the utility of the schools.

High utility. These citizens, who like their local schools and who do not find taxes burdensome, tend to see more benefits from education. Particularly, they see benefits from basic work that will prepare the child. When students do not achieve to their potential, these citizens blame the parent or the child.

They would like more money invested in public education, preferring national and local sources.

They participate actively, often directly with school personnel. They make use of mediating agencies for the dissemination and feedback of information about schools. They tend to follow the role prescriptions for interest in school matters, deviating

only to participate, more than called for in the perceived role.

Low Utility. These citizens, who dislike the local schools and who also think that their taxes are burdensome, have a few unique characteristics in addition to the general mirror image they present to the high utility citizens.

Although they are generally low on participation, they do show more activity in one form of participation: voting. But the activity is occasional, suggesting that the "protest vote" is not a constant factor in school-community relations.

They like grading pupils to encourage competition and testing new teachers. And, when students are seen to fall short, they tend to blame the schools.

Grumblers. These citizens dislike the local schools but do not feel their taxes are burdensome. They, like the low utility citizens, would also like to see some testing. But they focus on testing high school students for achievement.

They tend to put the fundamentals high on the scale of education's benefits. They see economic benefits for the child from education, but not so often for themselves or the nation.

They are relatively unaware of the board -- its personnel, functions, or representativeness.

Hard-pressed. These citizens like the local schools but feel their taxes are burdensome. They see fewer benefits for adults like themselves from education. But they do see economic benefits from education.

They are not likely to blame the schools for student non-achievement. They vote in financial elections and follow the role prescription for interest in school finances. They support the schools even if it hurts.

Their exposure to schools is usually indirect, unlike the high utility citizens. They make more use of the mass media, especially radio and television.

They look on the board kindly, seeing it as representative and useful for dissemination of information from the schools to citizens. It is not seen as quite so useful for feedback, however.

This may be because they view it as dominated by the administration.

### Educational Experiences

Citizens bring to their current evaluations and participations the experiences of their own education. Both the quantity and the quality of this experience can affect their interests.

Educational attainment. More educated citizens see more benefits from education, particularly in the basic competences -- intellectual and social. The less educated are more sensitive to economic benefits -- except for themselves.

The more educated have opinions of educational proposals more often. They take more pride in schools and, relatively, in students.

Concern with the curriculum is greater among the more educated citizens. They take more favorable -- and more unfavorable -- views of innovations in the academic curriculum. Less educated citizens are more concerned with national standards and grading practices than with the content of the curriculum.

More educated citizens tend to blame the parent or the school for student nonachievement. The less educated tend to blame the child.

Stimulus funds, to improve future public education, are favored by the more educated. They prefer local sources for increased funds. The less educated prefer national sources for increased funds.

More educated citizens are more aware of school board personnel and functions, taking favorable and unfavorable views of them. They make more unfavorable comments on board personnel. They also tend to see the administration as dominating the board, while the less educated see the board as dominant.

Parent organizations are also better known to the more educated. They are more likely to be -- or to have been -- members of these organizations (even though having a lower proportion of public school parents). Their negative views of such organizations focus on functions, in contrast to their views of board

personnel.

Citizens committees are more likely to be seen as useful for dissemination and feedback by the more educated. The less educated like radio and television for these functions.

The more educated participate more often; they see their participation as efficacious; their interest could be increased in school affairs.

More educated citizens are more likely to disregard a role prescription for one family member to have an interest in school affairs, with both family members taking an interest.

Although they pay higher taxes, the more educated citizens find their taxes less of a burden.

Satisfaction with education. By itself, citizens' satisfaction with their own educational experience does not make too much of an impact. But there are some distinctive characteristics.

The more satisfied citizens are less likely to see benefits from education for adults like themselves. The less satisfied -- if more educated -- see economic benefits from education.

The more satisfied like innovations in teaching methods. They also take more pride in teachers -- and in the administration.

Culturally deprived students are seen by the more satisfied to be getting less than they should from their education.

More satisfied citizens tend to think pupils should be graded in order to stimulate competition.

For increased funds for public education, the more satisfied prefer state sources. The less satisfied prefer national sources.

More satisfied citizens tend to see the board as representative. They also make more use of the mass media.

The interest of dissatisfied citizens in the local schools could be increased.

Dissatisfied citizens tend to blame the child for nonachievement.

Quantity and Quality. The impact of educational attainment is sometimes affected by the perceived quality of that experience. These relationships were found:

Citizens with more education, but who are dissatisfied, see fewer benefits from education. They see more bias (in favor of the schools) in reports about schools. They also tend to have more direct contacts with school personnel.

Citizens with less education, and who are dissatisfied, see more economic benefits for themselves and for children from education. They are less likely to see a role for interest in school affairs.

Citizens with more education, and who are satisfied, see more economic benefits for the nation from education. They also see more benefits for the nation from increased knowledge. And, they take relatively high pride in the academic content of the curriculum.

High school graduates. Because there are more public school parents among citizens who finished high school, some of our results do not show regular relationships between educational attainment and citizen views and participation. The middle group, of high school graduates, has these distinct characteristics:

They are more favorable to local school instruction and administration -- if satisfied with their own education. If dissatisfied, they favor innovations in facilities (perhaps they regret not having better facilities themselves).

However, they are somewhat unlikely to take pride in either the administration of local schools or in facilities.

Student nonachievement is blamed on the child.

They would like testing of high school student achievement and testing of new teachers.

They tend to prefer state sources for any new funds -- if dissatisfied with their own education.

They are aware of mediating agencies available for their use. They make the most use of newspapers and parent organizations. They tend to follow role prescriptions for their interest in school affairs.

#### Use of Mediating Agencies

We knew from our previous work that participation in school

affairs is low among citizens. But the previous estimates, based on registered voters, proved to be optimistic in comparison with the figures obtained in this study among all citizens 21 and over.

Even with the several consumer interests available for implementation through participation, many citizens do not participate. It isn't that they do not see a role for their interest; most citizens do. It seems that active participation needs a very good reason -- such as a commitment on behalf of a child now in school.

That such a reason has already been found -- or can not be found -- is evident in the finding that four out of five citizens say nothing could increase their interest in school affairs.

Knowing that relatively few citizens stand in close relation to the schools, we were looking in this study for information on the perception and use of mediating agencies. These agencies afford an opportunity for the uncommitted, infrequent participator to still apply his consumer criteria to school matters.

Mediating agencies were viewed as a potential means of reducing the widening gap between citizens and schools. We have summarized some results that show differences in use of these agencies by various consumer interests. What we have not summarized are the findings that bear on this possible mediating role. Here they are:

Of all the agencies available for aiding citizens to learn what is going on in the local schools, only the newspaper is seen as helpful by as many as half the citizens interviewed.

Of all the agencies that might help the schools find out what citizens think of their schools, only the newspaper and parent organization are seen as helpful by as many as one-third of the citizens.

In general, citizens know little about mediating agency usefulness, make little use of them, and only occasionally have anything specific to say about two of the more important agencies: school boards and parent organizations.

Board personnel and functions are little known. Evaluations of both tend to be made on the basis of perceived results (not of

who they are or what they try to do). Two-thirds of the citizens think either the board or the administration dominates policy making. The less knowledgeable think it is the board.

Those citizens who evaluate board personnel and functions favorably tend to see an even balance between board and administration. And those who see an even balance think the board is more representative of the citizenry.

Parent organization personnel and functions are even less known than the board's. However, only one-third see a dominant element in these organizations, usually the parents. Citizens who take a negative view of organization personnel and functions tend to think the schools dominate such groups. Members of such organizations think the parents dominate.

Citizens committees are nearly unknown. Only 3% evaluate their personnel; 7% evaluate their functions.

With one exception all mediating agencies are valued more for their dissemination usefulness than for their feedback usefulness. The exception is the school board.

There is relatively little criticism of mediating agencies for unfairness of their reports. What criticism there is tends toward accusations of a pro-school bias, especially for agencies closest to the schools.

Citizens who like the job their local schools are doing also tend to like the personnel and functions of the board and of the parent organizations. This could be expected, since they base the latter evaluations on the former.

The results summarized here and in previous sections suggest that mediating agencies are not often useful in the absence of opportunities for active participation. The same citizens who participate actively are the ones who make use of the mediating agencies.

There is one exception of note. The mass media (newspapers, radio, and television) are sometimes used by citizens who do not have high levels of active participation.

We said at the beginning of this chapter that citizens stand in relation to, not in relationship with, their schools. We can

modify that statement now: Citizens, with varying consumer interests, stand in distant relation to their schools.

Further, there appears to be no agency that is currently bridging the gap between citizens and their schools.

Any program of improved communication in school-community relations should take cognizance of the consumer orientation of citizens and the unfulfilled need for mediation between citizens and schools. Somewhat different programs might result from emphasis on one or the other of these factors. We shall discuss both, beginning with the consumer orientation.

### Coping with consumers

Although dealing with many varied consumers poses a difficult problem in planning an improved communication program, it should be pointed out that there are some fortuitous factors that favor the schools in these consumer orientations:

For the most part, citizens blame themselves for their own educational shortcomings and their children or themselves for their children's shortcomings. Their regret for not doing better may even add to their willingness to support the schools now.

The general apathy of citizens with regard to school matters leads to a select group voting on many financial issues -- those with an investment to be protected. Protest votes are occasional, not usual.

Even as more citizens do vote in school financial elections, there is a greater likelihood that those committed -- and favorable -- will turn out.

An important group of citizens, those hard-pressed by taxes but who think the schools are doing all right, is clearly betting on education to improve their children's future.

Yet even with the aid of these fortuities, there remains a problem of securing support for public education. To some, it is a problem of survival. Their problem is not one of issues, but of people -- and of consumer interests.

We shall discuss a number of ways of coping with these people and their interests in the remainder of this section. But we



are going to have reservations about many of these ways, about whether they should be used at all and about their probable success. The reason for this is simple: We have reservations about leaving the situation as it is, as a problem of consumer interests rather than one of issues. But we shall come to this again in the final section. For now, here are some ways of coping with consumer interests. Many have been tried -- but not always correctly or for the right reasons.

1. Issue regular reports to citizens. They may not be useful in changing any citizen attitudes toward the schools. They will probably have no use -- in the present context -- for informing citizens about educational issues. But these are apprehensive consumers. They expect regular reports on the conduct of the schools. If they do not receive reports, they may very likely change their attitudes -- against the schools.

Citizens need reassurance, given their anxieties. Further, if the situation becomes stressful for them, they may introduce all sorts of irrelevancies into their opinions on specific financial issues. If the management is suspect, so is the product.

2. Bargain -- in the open. Under present conditions, any discussion between citizens and schools is not to establish values through reaching an understanding about a situation. It is simply a confrontation of values, subject to bargaining.

When representatives of citizens (e.g. school boards) present citizen values, they should do so in the open. For, to apprehensive citizens, the first question is whether they have been heard.

Bargaining, although expedient under present conditions, has the unfortunate byproduct of reinforcing the various consumer orientations in school-community relations. Communication is turned away from securing understanding, toward achieving acquiescence from consumer groups to school policy -- or, even worse, to designing school policy that will win acceptance from consumer groups.

3. Conduct research on consumers. This suggestion is usually put another way: Conduct research on school policy among citizens. But the outcome is the same. We learn much more about consumers than we do about educational issues.

Given the nature of polling techniques most often used, what is learned about educational issues is the mere likelihood of acceptance in subsequent bargaining situations. The technique is much more productive of information on consumers. Schools can learn which citizens possess attributes likely to be useful in decisions on how to allocate resources for winning acceptance.

Citizens may not look too kindly on this more useful side of public polling, however. They could reasonably expect that it was their views, not their identities, that were to be researched. They might even consider that they had presented a mandate to be carried out by the schools.

4. Have teachers talk with parents. This could well narrow the gap between one group of citizens and the schools. That is, it could if they were to converse successfully. What is the likelihood of their doing so? What criteria should be used to define success?

If we take the gross criterion -- that the parent is more likely to acquiesce to school policy -- the prospect is not good. The parent who does not already agree with school policy comes to such a meeting with an alien point of view. He (or she) has unfulfilled expectations for the child. He may have some guilt feelings for his own part in the child's nonachievement. Apart from an occasional catharsis, what can we reasonably expect to be the outcome?

If we take any finer criterion -- such as an increased understanding of school policy by the parent -- the prospect is much worse. Can we expect all teachers, or even a majority of them, to accomplish this difficult communication task when the parent has not come to the meeting for this purpose?

Can we reasonably expect anything more from such a conference than an occasional improvement in the child's learning situation? What about the effect on teachers from conferences

where other purposes are entertained?

5. Arrange contacts with neglected groups. Several kinds of citizens have some interest in school matters, but are not now using available contacts with the schools. Specially designed approaches might work better than a general communication program for these groups:

Preschool parents, who will be the public school parents of tomorrow, are apprehensive and distrustful of school quality. And they are not being reached until they become public school parents. A special program for them seems indicated.

Postschool parents, the public school parents of yesterday, are not particularly interested in school matters any more. But they still vote. Programs that would sustain their interest after their children leave school might alleviate the conservative nature of their vote.

Nonparents have some interest in school matters, but get their information from adult organizations and the mass media. Special programs for adult organizations (service and civic clubs) could perhaps improve the quality of information they possess about schools. (In Volume I, we have discussed the possibility of controlling the rumors that seem to be characteristic of this group.)

6. Improve contacts with specific groups. There are not only some sins of omission (see 5, above), there are also some sins of commission. Many communication techniques backfire because they are used too broadly or are directed at an inappropriate audience.

Given the variety of consumer interests, it is unlikely that any one communication technique will work for all citizens and all situations. Particular groups will want particular content at particular times from particular sources.

Both this and the last suggestion have the drawback of reinforcing the existing divisions of consumer interest. As things stand, however, such views are more promising than an undifferentiated approach to communicating with the public.

7. Establish contact with latent supporters. There is one group of citizens who are potential supports but who do not now have much contact with the schools. These citizens see no efficacy in their participation but they do think that their interest could be increased.

This contact must be initiated by the schools. These citizens do not see themselves as capable of establishing the contact (therefore, the lack of efficacy). Not only must the schools facilitate this contact, they will also have to find some way to reinforce it -- to supply the means that will make this contact satisfying.

8. Campaign selectively. In the absence of a severe controversy, any campaign mounted by -- or for -- the schools will tend to increase the proportion of favorable voters.

Because the location of favorable voters is relatively easy (public school parents are a good bet), these campaigns are often successful in winning acquiescence to school policy. However, such campaigns may themselves generate conflict in the community, with accompanying resentment of manipulative tactics.

This technique has a companion, that of preying upon the anxieties of the consumer who has an investment in the schools (the public school parent).

The combination of campaign manipulation and fear arousal can be expected to stir up some suspicions about the management of the schools. Hence, apprehensions about the quality of the product may be quickened.

9. Make greater use of citizens' committees. The use of ad hoc committees of citizens, usually initiated by the schools, has been tried frequently in recent years. The results have not been good, if we take the criterion of citizen acceptance of school policy.<sup>1</sup>

Financial elections are no more likely to pass with a citizens' committee working than without one. Indeed, there are some

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<sup>1</sup>Based on the work of Kenny: Donald Kenny. A Functional Analysis of Citizens' Committees During School Financial Elections. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, 1961.

boomerangs. They can evoke dormant interests unfavorable to the schools by widespread, uniformed communication efforts.

There is a basic fallacy in the use of citizens' committees. They are formed to try to accomplish what school officials (the administration and school board) have not been able to accomplish. That they should not succeed should be of little surprise.

10. Make greater use of the mass media. Some important kinds of citizens use the mass media primarily for information about schools. To obtain more use seems attractive. To get more information to the mass media seems the obvious technique.

However, the mass media have other purposes than serving as a mediator between the schools and citizens. And several of these purposes diminish their usefulness.

The media rely on competition as a means of attracting audiences, and their coverage of school matters may suffer for it (in the eyes of the schools). They also see themselves as watchdogs of public monies and morals, with consequent tribulations for the schools.

Yet the informational services of the mass media could be more used. The schools can make a practice of accommodating the particular needs of the mass media. Further, they can reinforce such informational services by rewarding the media for their help -- through public recognition.

11. Teach about schools in school. For all their years in schools, citizens are poorly prepared to take an interest in school affairs that will be meaningful to them and productive for the schools. Students should learn about schools and how school policy is determined just as they would learn about any other important civic agency.

Particularly, students should learn something about the functions of various school-related groups (e.g., the school board and parent organizations). Then, in the future, they may be able to see what members of these agencies are doing -- or could be doing -- rather than seeing only an undifferentiated image of school policy.

But this means of coping with consumer interests has the same drawback as the others. It leaves the situation as it is -- consumers in distant relation to the schools. What might be done to alter the situation?

### Communication and Understanding

In our introductory comments, we pointed out that the only formality in relations between citizens and schools is to be found in the occasional review of policy, by voting. As a result, most citizen participation (including that relative to policy) is informal. Such informality yields irrelevance of timing and of content in citizen communication.

Both content and timing are usually determined by citizen interests. There are few instances in which citizens contribute anything to policy except a consumer's veto.

This kind of situation can be - and has been - lived with. But is there something better? Would it not be better, for example, to decide issues on the basis of an optimum educational policy rather than on the basis of consumer demand? Can the schools find support for more than survival? Could they find support that would give impetus to educational progress?

Nine years ago we began our work on support for public education. We began with the hypothesis (and implicit hope) that public understanding leads to support for public education.

We found some evidence for this hypothesis. But we found it for the degree of understanding among informed observers in school districts, not among the citizens as a whole. From what we have seen of citizen participation, there is little to suggest that we would find support related to understanding among citizens generally.

In part, we say this because of the low level of citizen participation -- and, hence, of citizen knowledge. However, we also have in mind a more specific definition of understanding than is often used. (For example, it is not unusual to hear understanding inferred as a condition whenever school policies go unchallenged.)

If we examine the concept of understanding, we can show this specific meaning. We can also show how only relevant communication contributes to understanding. Then, finally, we can consider several aspects of formality which can increase the relevance of communication between citizens and schools.

### Understanding

In our earlier work, we arrived at this definition of the concept of understanding:

...A common perception among a group of people of the existing situation.<sup>2</sup>

The most important implication of this definition is the removal of the notion of "agreement." We did not want to confuse understanding with vague notions of value consensus -- particularly with reference to what should be done about a given situation.

Communication ought to be able to lead to understanding without consequent agreement on what should be done. People who understand a situation should still be able to disagree on what to do about that situation.

Given the definition of understanding relative to a situation, the functions of communication involved are to provide descriptions of situations and to provide an exchange of information that makes it possible for two or more persons to have the same situation in mind.

Relevance criteria apply to these two functions. Relevance of content determines the adequacy -- and the effectiveness -- of situational description. Relevance of timing determines the effectiveness of transmission efforts.

These aspects of relevance are necessary to effective communication. It does no good to transmit information to citizens

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<sup>2</sup>Richard F. Carter. "Communication, Understanding, and Support for Public Education," in Paris-Stanford Studies in Communication (ed., Wilbur Schramm). Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1962.

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who are not ready to attend to a message about a given situation. Given their consumer orientations, they may not pay any attention. Or, if they do, they may try to interpret the situation in terms of their interests, and not try to understand the situation for what it is.

Similarly, it does no good to describe a situation in less than complete terms. That is, the situation should have all of its relevant aspects described. Motives are often suspect when incomplete descriptions are made. Generally, incomplete descriptions invite idiosyncratic completion.

With our commitment to democratic procedures it becomes important that we consider means by which understanding -- not fearful acquiescence -- can achieve support for public education. And given the onerous problems of dealing with disparate consumer interests, it would indeed be helpful to formulate procedural guidelines that would increase the relevancy of communication between citizens and schools -- and, hopefully, decrease irrelevancy.

#### Formality and Timing

We shall begin by dismissing the possibility of regular, direct, mass participation by citizens in educational policy making. It seems obviously unworkable.

But this does not mean we need abandon the assets of regularity. Regularity of communication serves relevance insofar as it appoints a time for transmission. Procedures are still available that would achieve the same relevance of timing.

The basic problem is that when the schools are ready to talk, the citizens are not ready to listen -- with respect to a given situation. The reverse is also critical. When the citizens are ready to talk, the schools are not ready to listen (or do not appear to be receptive -- see the results on perceived efficacy in Chapter IV).

The question is therefore: What procedures can be used to bring together the citizens and the schools so that both are



prepared to communicate about the same situation at the same time

As things stand, when both are now talking with each other at the same time it may well be the case that they are not interested in the same situation. This is exemplified by the one formal procedure used to any extent by citizens: voting. It is in voting on specific bond issues for building needs that we find irrelevant voices raised. These voices inquire about curriculum, not building needs.

In Volume I, we suggested one kind of formality to displace the informality characteristic of citizen communication.<sup>3</sup> We suggested that policy determination by school officials, since it implies change, ought to be carried out through a set of procedures which -- in effect -- institutionalizes change in policy (or innovation).

Such a set of procedures would have the property of appointing a time for communication for each situation. Let's take an example of a sequence of procedures for a given innovation:

1. Announcement of the possibility of a change and solicitation of opinions relevant to that change.

2. A report of the discussion on initiating that change and the decision reached, along with information on the proposed time for reviewing the results of that change.

3. An announcement of the discussion that will evaluate the results of the change, soliciting relevant opinions.

4. A report on the discussion evaluating the results and the decision reached. If a second review is planned, then the time for it could be announced.

Because there may be more than one change -- or contemplated change -- in the works at once, any given message from the schools might contain more than one of these elements, but referring to different innovations.

This kind of standard procedure recognizes that policy initiation and review are not likely to occur at the same point in

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<sup>3</sup>Carter, Greenberg, and Haimson, op. cit.

time. And it invites comment relevant to the appropriate state of innovation. It can avoid erroneous expectations and, perhaps, citizen desires to be heard on the initiation question when the discussion is already at the review stage.

There will probably be no great increase in citizen participation. However, the nature of policy determination will be more visible. Those who are interested will be able to follow it more easily.

Such a standard procedure poses a formidable reporting task, for the schools can not reasonably expect mediating agencies to do the job. The mass media, particularly, are characteristically more concerned with decisions than with the preparation for decisions -- unless controversy accompanies discussion.

The schools can help the mass media -- and other mediating agencies -- by holding to a standard procedure. Then the correct timing is evident. But schools must do much of this reporting themselves.

Finally, they must also provide access to the citizens who have something relevant to say. Here we might recall the consumer orientation for a suggestion on implementing more formal procedures.

It will probably be easier to formulate the procedures from the point of view of the schools -- as we did above. But it will probably be more effective to express these procedures from the point of view of the citizens.

The schools can examine the kinds of situations they communicate with citizens on, and formulate their procedural needs. But then they should write a "Handbook for Citizens." This handbook, distributed to every citizen (and new citizen) would talk about the kinds of situations citizens will be (or could be) interested in, and inform citizens about the procedures that they can follow in order to be heard, or, in order to learn about the schools.

Two helpful things might follow on such an approach.

First, any person who represents the schools (e.g. a teacher or board member) could, on reading such a handbook, see just

what is expected of him by citizens. They are relieved of undefined responsibilities to "communicate more" with citizens. But, at the same time, they are made aware of their responsibilities as communicators.

Second, those persons and institutions who are concerned about fair democratic procedures can come to the aid of the schools in enforcing relevancy. As long as there are specified opportunities to be heard, it is possible to impose sanctions against irrelevancy. Thus, for example, dreaded "last minute attacks" might be abhorred by those who are the intended converts.

### Formality and Content

Everyone, it seems, deplors the lack of effective communication. Sometimes -- and erroneously -- the perceived lack can be seen to indicate simply a failure to achieve agreement on what should be done. But even when understanding is the goal, communication still falls short.

We tend to regard such failure to achieve understanding as a problem of "different meanings." What was intended was not successfully conveyed. But is any language so prolific in significations as English really so weak? The fault may lie instead with the communicator's descriptive capability, not with the difficulties of common language usage. "Meaning" problems may, in fact, be disguised description problems.

What does it take to describe a situation? If we knew that, we could tell if a communicator had included all the elements of a situation that are relevant -- and hence needed for a complete description. We would also know more about enforcing content relevance, at least to the extent of knowing when to demand more information to obtain a complete description, and perhaps enough to lay out some formal guidelines for maintaining content relevance in discussion of educational issues.

To see what is relevant content for a discussion, we must first examine what is relevant in any situation -- and thus

eligible for inclusion in a description of the situation. This calls for a theoretical analysis.

We have answered this question of what is relevant in a given situation.<sup>4</sup> There are three kinds of relevance for a given situation, each of which constitutes material necessary to a complete description of the situation:

1. There is situational relevance. This refers to the objects that have psychological significance to the individual viewing the situation. We commonly say that to understand each other, people must be talking about the same objects.

2. There is pertinence. This refers to the relationship between objects on a common attribute. For example, we are concerned about the comparability of objects on some dimension. Each object has some degree of pertinence, based on the extent to which it possesses the common attribute.

3. There is saliency. This refers to the relationship between the individual and each object, regardless of attribute. Through experience, the individual comes to have some degree of "closeness" to the object, which is not due to the attribute which makes the objects stand in pertinent relation to the given situation. (It is this aspect of relevance which leads to hidden motives being questioned.)

For an individual to describe a given situation completely, then, he must report the two objects, the attribute that makes them pertinent, the objects' pertinence values, and his saliency values for the two objects. This gives seven elements to be reported. In addition, the individual may report -- and often does -- the discrimination he makes between the two objects. For example, he may say that one object is preferable, assuming that he is talking about alternative choices.

For understanding to occur, one must make a report to someone else -- so that they may achieve coorientation. That is, he undertakes to make it possible for them to see the same

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<sup>4</sup>See: Carter, Greenberg, and Haimson, op. cit.

situation.

Content relevance implies that understanding can occur only when one person describes a situation with sufficient fullness that another person will -- in effect -- see the same situation. Content relevance, like understanding, focuses on the situation.

Now it is patently obvious that such full reports are not common. The most frequent behavior is to report not the whole situation, but the discrimination made of the objects in the situation -- with or without identification of the objects and the attribute involved. "I prefer this alternative" or "I prefer this alternative because it is less costly" are examples of typical reports of situations.

Unless formal guidelines for reporting are adopted, it seems unlikely that we shall attain much improvement in the relevance of content. But such guidelines are not likely to be adopted by the average citizen. However, even though he may not use them, he could still profit from their use by those who report to him. He could better understand if the situation were clearer to him.

In the previous section, we suggested formal procedures for the timing of reports. Now we have, through the criteria of relevance, formal guidelines for the content of reports.

What remains is to suggest a way of implementing the content guidelines.

The key to such implementation can be found in the unique human capability for suspending action. If needed, humans can return to the same situation at a later point in time in order to describe it more fully. They are not restricted to situations as they occur. They can work with "structured situations" of their own making.

Persons who want to make a joint decision, based on understanding, can employ coorientation techniques until they see the same situation. Then they can decide whether agreement on what to do is possible. They can refuse to bow to authority relationships and voting mechanisms as substitutes for effective communication.

Who is to establish coorientation, then? And who is to govern the procedures? For the most part, it will have to be school officials -- in their own interest. But there will be instances in which mediation would be helpful. There will be educational issues which involve complex situations and aroused citizens.

The kind of mediation that is not needed is that which commonly serves to govern the confrontation of values (e.g. as in industry-labor relations): The kind of mediation needed is that which establishes coorientation by enforcing relevance.

This latter mediation is difficult. It requires that the mediating agency be in coorientation with both the schools and the citizens. It also requires that the mediating agency be free from any biasing association -- for example, with the schools. For the situation is to be objectively viewed and described.

For complex situations, it appears that no existing agency is qualified for this mediation role. Even if one were to adopt the procedures necessary for the role, its objectivity would be open to challenge.

One possibility emerges: the select committee. A small number of citizens, chosen for their intelligence and objectivity, could employ the criteria of relevance to arrive at an accurate description of the situation, based on an achieved coorientation with both schools and citizens.

Their report of the situation would serve to define the limits of the situation. Thus, no credence need be paid to irrelevant considerations that later arise. Their report would not define the direction that schools and citizens should take. Rather, it would make clear what the alternatives are and allow an informed decision to be made by an understanding citizenry.

### In Conclusion

We have been discussing relevance of timing and content, and how formal procedures might improve relations between citizens and schools. Implicitly, we have been discussing the relevance

of procedures as well.

Given our democratic values and our dedication to democratic means for implementing those values, the democratic procedure is the preferred procedure. And sometimes, as we have suggested here, it is the most effective procedure.

**Appendix A**

**Questionnaire**



1. What do you feel education can accomplish, for the nation as a whole? (PROBE: What are some of the main things education can do for all the people in this country?)
2. What do you feel more education could accomplish for you, as an individual? (PROBE: What are some of the main things more education could do for you, personally?)
3. What are the main things you feel education is accomplishing for the children in public schools? (PROBE: What else does education do for the children in public schools?)
4. Do you feel that some children are getting less out of education than they should? Yes (ASK A) (1), No (2), Don't know (3).
  - A. IF YES: What children are these? (Any other kinds of children you feel are getting less out of education than they should?)
5. Is there anything about the local public schools that you are particularly proud of? (IF YES) What is that?
6. Have the local public schools tried anything new recently, that impressed you as being very good? (IF YES) What is that?
7. Have the local public schools tried anything new recently, that impressed you as being very bad? (IF YES) What is that?
8. Generally speaking, would you say the quality of instruction in the local public schools is very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad, or very bad?
9. Generally speaking, do you think the local public schools are run very well, somewhat well, somewhat poorly or very poorly?
10. How about your tax load in relation to what you get in return--would you say it is a great burden, somewhat of a burden, not very much of a burden, or no burden at all?
11. If more money has to be found for public schools in general, would you prefer to see it come from local, state, or national sources? CIRCLE AS MANY AS APPLY.
12. What would be your reaction to a plan to have national standards for what is taught in schools? Strongly favorable (1), Somewhat favorable (2), Somewhat Unfavorable (3), Strongly Unfavorable (4), Don't know (5).
13. What would be your reaction to nationwide achievement testing of
  - A. high school students? Strongly favorable (1), Somewhat favorable (2), Somewhat Unfavorable (3), Strongly Unfavorable (4), Don't know (5).

- B. elementary school students? Strongly Favorable (1), Somewhat Favorable (2), Somewhat Unfavorable (3), Strongly Unfavorable (4), Don't know (5).
14. What would be your reaction to a plan to test all new teachers on the subjects they expect to teach? Strongly favorable (1), Somewhat Favorable (2), Somewhat Unfavorable (3), Strongly Unfavorable (4), Don't know (5).
15. What would be your reaction if the national government made a rather large amount of money available to local school districts for expanded programs in education? Strongly favorable (1), Somewhat Favorable (2), Somewhat Unfavorable (3), Strongly Unfavorable (4), Don't know (5).
16. What would be your reaction to a proposal to invest more money in public education than is needed right now, in order to stimulate growth toward a better education in the future? Strongly Favorable (1), Somewhat Favorable (2), Somewhat Unfavorable (3), Strongly Unfavorable (4) Don't know (5).
17. How important do you think it is for the schools to grade students' work, so that children compete with each other? Is it very important to grade their work, somewhat important, not very important, not important at all?
18. What is your opinion of the local (neighborhood) parents' organization? (PROBE: What about the people in it?) (PROBE: What about the things they do?)
19. Do you feel that the parents' organization is dominated by any one group or persons? Yes (ASK A) (1), No (2), Don't know (3).
- A. IF YES: Who are they--parents, teachers, or administrators?
20. Aside from the parents' organization, is there, or has there been, any active citizens' group in the community, organized to act on public school problems? Yes (ASK A) (1), No (SKIP TO Q. 21) (2), Don't know (SKIP TO Q. 21) (3).
- A. IF YES: What group is that? IF "PTA," RECORD AND ASK FOR OTHER. IF ONLY "PTA" MENTIONED IN "A", SKIP TO Q. 21. IF OTHER GROUP MENTIONED IN "A", ASK "B" AND "C":
- B. What is your opinion of this group? (PROBE: The people in it?) (PROBE: The things they do?)
- C. Is there (Was there) any organized opposition group, opposed to (Group referred to in "A")? Yes (ASK D-E) (1), No (SKIP TO Q. 21) (2), Don't know (SKIP TO Q. 21) (3).

IF "YES" TO C:

- D. What group is (was) that?
- E. What is your opinion of that group? (PROBE: The people in it?) (PROBE: The things they do did?)
21. What is your opinion of the local school board? (PROBE: What about the people on the board?) (PROBE: What about the things they do?)
22. How representative of the people you know would you say the local school board is? Is it very representative, somewhat representative, not very representative, or not representative at all?
23. Who would you say has more to say about what goes on in the schools--the local school administration or the local school board? ("ADMINISTRATION" REFERS TO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE)
24. I'd like your opinion on various sources of information about school affairs. How helpful would you say the newspapers have been in helping you learn what's going on in the local public schools? REPEAT FOR ITEMS "B" THROUGH "I".
- A. Newspapers. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).
- B. Television. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).
- C. Radio. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).
- D. School Board. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).
- E. Parent Organization. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).
- F. Citizens' Committee (IF NONE MENTIONED IN Q. 20, CIRCLE CODE 7). Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6), Doesn't Apply (7).
- G. Opposition Organization (IF NONE MENTIONED IN Q. 20-C, CIRCLE CODE 7). Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6), Doesn't Apply (7).

- H. Local Teachers. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).
- I. School Administration. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6), Doesn't Apply (-).

25. Now looking at it the other way, how helpful would you say the newspapers have been in giving the local schools an idea of what the public is thinking about the schools? REPEAT FOR ITEMS "B" THROUGH "G". DO NOT ASK "H" AND "I", AND DO NOT ASK "F" - "G" IF CODE 7 IS CIRCLED.

- A. Newspapers. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).
- B. Television. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).
- C. Radio. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).
- D. School Board. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).
- E. Parent Organization. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).
- F. Citizens' Committee. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).
- G. Opposition Organization. Very Helpful (1), Helpful (2), Fairly Helpful (3), Not Very Helpful (4), Not Helpful at All (5), Don't Know (6).

Now I have just one more question about these sources of information:

26. How fair do you feel the reports are that you get from newspapers about the local public schools? REPEAT FOR ITEMS "B" THROUGH "I".
- A. Newspapers. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).
  - B. Television. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).

- C. Radio. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).
- D. School Board. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).
- E. Parent Organization. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).
- F. Citizens' Committee (IF NONE MENTIONED IN Q. 20, CIRCLE CODE 6). Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5), Doesn't Apply (6).
- G. Opposition Organization (IF NONE MENTIONED IN Q. 20-C, CIRCLE CODE 6). Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5), Doesn't Apply (6).
- H. Local Teachers. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).
- I. School Administration. Very Fair (1), Somewhat Fair (2), Not Very Fair (3), Not Fair at All (4), Don't Know (5).

27. When you think about public school matters, do you think of yourself as any of these--

ASK ALL THREE BEFORE GOING ON TO "A" OR Q. 28.

A parent? Yes (1) (ASK A), No (2), DK (3). A taxpayer? Yes (1) (ASK A), No (2), DK (3). A civic-minded person? Yes (1) (ASK A), No (2), DK (3).

ASK FOR EACH "YES":

A. As a (parent, taxpayer, civic-minded person), how strong is your concern about public school matters--would you say it is very strong, strong, fairly strong, not very strong, or not strong at all? REPEAT FOR EACH ITEM CODED "YES" ABOVE.

Parent. Very strong concern (1), Strong (2), Fairly strong (3), Not very strong (4), Not strong at all (5), Don't Know (6).

Taxpayer. Very strong concern (1), Strong (2), Fairly strong (3), Not very strong (4), Not strong at all (5), Don't Know (6).

Civic-minded Person. Very strong concern (1), Strong (2), Fairly strong (3), Not very strong (4), Not strong at all (5), Don't Know (6).

28. These next statements were made by some of the people interviewed in previous surveys. Would you agree or disagree with these statements?
- A. I don't think public school officials care much what people like me think. Agree (1), Disagree (2), Don't Know (3).
  - B. Voting is the only way that people like me have anything to say about how their schools are run. Agree (1), Disagree (2), Don't Know (3).
  - C. People like me don't have much say about what the schools do. Agree (1), Disagree (2), Don't Know (3).
  - D. Sometimes educational policy seems so complicated that a person like me can't really tell what's going on. Agree (1), Disagree (2), Don't Know (3).
29. During the last week or two, have you talked with any public school official or teacher about school matters? CIRCLE AS MANY AS APPLY. Yes, official (ASK A) (1), Yes, teacher (ASK A) (2), No, neither (3).
- A. IF YES: What did you talk to (him)(her) about?
30. Can you recall talking to anyone else recently about the local public schools? Yes (ASK A) (1), No (2).
- A. IF YES: Who? (Anyone else?)
31. Have you attended any public school activities, programs, or meetings since the beginning of the school year? Yes (ASK A) (1), No (2).
- A. IF YES: What was that? (Any others?)
32. Have there been any school elections--school board, or school bond or tax elections--in recent years in which you were eligible to vote? Yes (ASK A) (1), No (2), Don't Know (3).
- A. IF YES: Did you vote in all of them, most of them, some of them, a few, or none at all? All of them (1), Most of them (2), Some of them (3), A few (4), None at all (5).
33. Are you now, or have you been a member of any organizations concerned with public schools? Yes, now (ASK A) (1), Yes, have been (ASK A) (2), No (3).
- A. IF YES: Which ones? RECORD NAMES OF ORGANIZATIONS. IF "PTA", INDICATE WHETHER ELEMENTARY OR HIGH SCHOOL.

34. Is there anything you can think of that would increase your interest in the local public schools? (What is that?) (IF APPROPRIATE, ASK: Who could do that?)

35. A. Are you married, widowed, divorced, separated, or were you never married? Married (1), Widowed (2), Divorced (3), Separated (4), Never married (SKIP TO Q. 37) (5).

B. How many children have you had? IF NONE, SKIP TO Q. 37.

C. How many of the children are in elementary school or high school now? IF NONE, SKIP TO Q. 37.

36. ASCERTAIN NAME, SEX, AND AGE OF EACH CHILD NOW IN SCHOOL, AND RECORD BELOW, STARTING WITH OLDEST. IF MORE THAN FOUR CHILDREN NOW IN SCHOOL, USE CONTINUATION SHEET.

THEN ASK "A" - "F" FOR CHILD 1, REPEAT FOR CHILD 2, ETC.

Child 1. NAME. Boy (1), Girl (2), Age.

A. Is (child) attending public school, private, or parochial school? Public (1), Private (2), Parochial (3).

B. What grade is (child) in now? ENTER NUMERICAL GRADE OR "K" FOR KINDERGARTEN.

C. How well do you feel (child) is doing in school--very well, well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all? Very (1), Well (2), Fairly (3), Not very (4), Not at all (5).

D. In your opinion, could (child) be doing very much better, better, somewhat better, not very much better, or no better at all? Very much (1\*), Better (2\*), Somewhat (3\*), Not very (4), No better (5).

\*IF 1-2-3 CIRCLED, ASK E:

E. Is the problem mainly the child, or mainly the school? Child (1), School (2), Both (3) DK (4).

F. How far in school do you expect (child) to go? ENTER TOTAL NUMBER OF YEARS. COMPLETE COLLEGE = 16.

37. A. Of the couples you know, does the husband or the wife usually take the more active interest in school activities?

B. ASK ONLY IF CURRENTLY MARRIED. IF NOT, CIRCLE CODE 6 WITHOUT ASKING. And who usually takes more interest in school activities in your family--you, or your (spouse)?

- (A) Other People. Husband (1), Wife (2), Both equal (3), Neither one (4), Don't Know (5), Not married (6).
- (B) Own Family. Husband (1), Wife (2), Both equal (3), Neither one (4), Don't Know (5), Not married (6).
38. A. And how about school financial matters -- of the couples you know, does the husband or the wife usually take the more active interest in school financial matters?
- B. ASK ONLY IF CURRENTLY MARRIED. IF NOT, CIRCLE CODE 6 WITHOUT ASKING. Who usually takes more interest in school financial matters in your family--you, or your (spouse)?
- (A) Other People. Husband (1), Wife (2), Both equal (3), Neither one (4), Don't Know (5), Not married (6).
- (B) Own Family. Husband (1), Wife (2), Both equal (3), Neither one (4), Don't Know (5), Not married (6).
39. A. What was the name of the last school you attended?
- B. And what was the highest grade or year you completed in school? ENTER TOTAL NUMBER OF REGULAR SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED.
- C. Did you ever go to parochial or private school? Yes, parochial (ASK D) (1), Yes, other private (ASK D) (2), No (3).
- D. IF YES: For how many years?
40. As you look back on your own education, how well did school prepare you, generally? Do you feel it prepared you very well, well, fairly well, not very well, or not well at all?
41. Do you think in school you could have done very much better, better, somewhat better, not very much better, or no better at all? Very much better (ASK A) (1), Better (ASK A) (2), Somewhat better (ASK A) (3).
- A. IF VERY MUCH, BETTER, OR SOMEWHAT: Was the problem mainly with you, or mainly with the schools? With respondent (1), With schools (2), With both (3), Other (specify) (4), Don't Know (5).
51. A. Do you work full-time, work part-time, keep house, or what?
- B. IF CURRENTLY MARRIED: And does your (spouse) work full-time, part-time, or what?



- (A) Respondent. Work full-time (ASK Q. 52) (1), Work part-time (ASK Q. 52) (2), Temporarily not working (ASK Q. 52) (3), Retired (ASK Q. 52) (4), Keep house (5), Student (6), Other (specify) (7).
- (B) Spouse. Work full-time (ASK Q. 52) (1), Work part-time (ASK Q. 52) (2), Temporarily not working (ASK Q. 52) (3), Retired (ASK Q. 52) (4), Keep house (5), Student (6), Other (specify) (7).
52. IF WORKING, RETIRED, OR TEMPORARILY NOT WORKING: What kind of work (do, did) you do? OCCUPATION: INDUSTRY:
53. IF SPOUSE WORKING, RETIRED, OR TEMPORARILY NOT WORKING: What kind of work (do, did) (he, she) do? OCCUPATION: INDUSTRY:
54. What country did most of your ancestors come from?
55. In politics, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent? Republican (ASK A) (1), Democrat (ASK A) (2), Independent (ASK B) (3), None, don't know (ASK B) (4), Other (specify) (ASK B) (5).
- A. IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT: Do you consider yourself to be a liberal or a conservative (Republican, Democrat)?
- B. IF INDEPENDENT, OTHER, OR NONE, DON'T KNOW: Do you consider yourself to be a liberal or a conservative?
56. And what is your religious preference? IF PROTESTANT, ASK FOR DENOMINATION. Protestant: Baptist (11), Methodist (12), Episcopalian (13), Presbyterian (14), Lutheran (15), Congregationalist (16), Fundamentalist (17), Other Protestant (specify) (18), Protestant, no denomination (19), Roman Catholic (20), Jewish (30), Other non-Protestant (40), None (50)
57. And your approximate age?
58. Into which one of the groups on this card did your total family income fall last year, before taxes? A. Under \$2,000 (0), B. \$2,000 to \$2,999 (1), C. \$3,000 to \$3,999 (2), D. \$4,000 to \$4,999 (3), E. \$5,000 to \$5,999 (4), F. \$6,000 to \$6,999 (5), G. \$7,000 to \$7,999 (6), H. \$8,000 to \$9,999 (7), I. \$10,000 to \$14,999 (8), J. \$15,000 or over (9), Don't Know, Refused. ESTIMATE:

FILL IN FOLLOWING ITEMS IMMEDIATELY AFTER LEAVING RESPONDENT.

- A. RESPONDENT'S SEX: Male (1), Female (2).
- B. RACE: White (5), Negro (6), Other (specify) (7).

- C. MARITAL STATUS: (Q. 35-A). Married (1), Widowed (2), Divorced (3), Separated (4), Never married (5).
- D. YEARS OF SCHOOLING: (Q. 39-B)
- F. RESPONDENT'S ADDRESS: (Street address), (City, State)
- G. INTERVIEWER'S SIGNATURE:
- H. DATE OF INTERVIEW:

Appendix B

Additional Tables

Table B.1. Demographic Profiles of Parental Status Categories.\*

<u>Description</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
<b>Age:</b>						
30 and under	40%	**	11%	84%	16%	23%
31-40	13%	1%	40%	16%	42%	22%
41-60	24%	46%	45%	**	40%	35%
Over 60	23%	53%	4%	**	2%	20%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Education:</b>						
Some college	33%	16%	27%	31%	25%	24%
High school graduate	28%	16%	36%	41%	35%	29%
Less than 12 years	39%	68%	37%	28%	40%	47%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Family income:</b>						
Under \$3,000	31%	32%	4%	10%	13%	20%
\$3-5,000	17%	22%	11%	23%	17%	19%
\$5-7,000	24%	17%	25%	37%	23%	23%
\$7-10,000	16%	16%	41%	19%	26%	22%
Over \$10,000	12%	13%	19%	11%	21%	16%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Sex:</b>						
Male	59%	53%	49%	48%	43%	48%
Female	41%	47%	51%	52%	57%	52%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Marital status:</b>						
Married	50%	75%	96%	97%	93%	82%
Widowed	5%	21%	1%	**	3%	8%
Divorced	4%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Separated	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Never married	40%	**	**	**	**	6%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Religion:</b>						
Roman Catholic	25%	21%	85%	31%	17%	26%
Baptist	15%	23%	5%	20%	23%	20%
Methodist	14%	12%	3%	13%	16%	13%
Lutheran	8%	9%	**	14%	10%	9%
Other Protestant	29%	30%	5%	19%	27%	26%
Jewish	4%	2%	1%	1%	4%	3%
Other	**	1%	1%	**	2%	1%
None	5%	2%	**	2%	1%	2%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table B.1, cont.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
<b>School attended:</b>						
Public school only	78%	82%	43%	76%	88%	80%
Parochial school(s)	16%	11%	55%	17%	7%	14%
Private school(s)	5%	7%	1%	6%	4%	5%
Private and parochial	1%	**	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Race:</b>						
White	80%	90%	96%	88%	87%	87%
Negro	19%	10%	3%	11%	12%	12%
Other	1%	**	1%	1%	1%	1%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Occupation of main earner:</b>						
Professional	16%	12%	13%	16%	13%	13%
Business-managerial	9%	11%	12%	6%	13%	11%
Clerical-sales	18%	14%	17%	18%	13%	15%
Craftsman-foreman	14%	19%	25%	22%	21%	20%
Farmer	4%	12%	3%	5%	8%	8%
Operative-protective	15%	12%	19%	19%	16%	15%
Labor-service	16%	12%	11%	13%	14%	13%
Not ascertained	8%	8%	**	1%	2%	5%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Political:</b>						
Democrat	41%	48%	60%	49%	44%	47%
Republican	29%	31%	12%	21%	30%	28%
Independent	23%	17%	23%	23%	21%	21%
Other; none; don't know	7%	4%	5%	7%	5%	4%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>National origin:</b>						
Northern Europe and Canada	59%	67%	73%	63%	64%	64%
Southern Europe; Near East; Russia	11%	10%	18%	12%	10%	11%
Other	5%	**	3%	2%	2%	2%
U.S.A.; don't know	25%	23%	6%	19%	23%	22%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table B.1, cont.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Non- parent</u>	<u>Post- school</u>	<u>Private school</u>	<u>Pre- school</u>	<u>Public school</u>	<u>Total sample</u>
<b>Residential region:</b>						
Northeast	22%	21%	40%	20%	23%	23%
East Coast and Appalachia	12%	12%	8%	12%	10%	11%
Deep South	12%	15%	6%	8%	13%	13%
Middle West	28%	28%	35%	31%	30%	30%
West	26%	24%	11%	29%	24%	23%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential urbanism:</b>						
Rural, small town	22%	29%	7%	19%	24%	23%
Suburban town	8%	10%	6%	11%	12%	10%
Small city	15%	20%	21%	22%	26%	22%
Urban	20%	17%	27%	26%	17%	19%
Metropolitan	35%	24%	39%	22%	21%	26%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential growth rate, 1950-60:</b>						
Less than 5%	32%	34%	44%	33%	26%	32%
5% to 31%	42%	40%	33%	41%	43%	40%
More than 32%	26%	26%	23%	26%	31%	28%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=227)	(N=428)	(N=107)	(N=181)	(N=557)	(N=1500)

\* Respondents are classified according to the school status of their children. The "private school" category means one or more children in private or parochial school. Cell entries are percentages identifying themselves in the listed demographic category, except that interviewers classified respondents by sex and race. Occupations were coded according to U.S. Census Bureau categories. Residential categories consist of the following:

Northeast: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania; New England states

East Coast and Appalachia: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee

Deep South: South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Arkansas

Middle West: Ohio to North and South Dakota; Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and states within these limits

West: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas and all areas west of these

Rural or small town: Places of less than 10,000 population, not in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in 1960 Census.

## Table B.1, cont.

Suburban town: Places of less than 10,000 population, in Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in 1960 Census

Small city: Places of 10,000 to 50,000 population

Urban: Places of 50,000 to 250,000 population

Metropolitan: Places of more than 250,000 population

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table B.2. Demographic Profiles of Utility Categories.\*

<u>Description</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>Age:</b>				
30 and under	17%	29%	16%	20%
31-40	21%	21%	25%	24%
41-60	38%	31%	37%	39%
Over 60	24%	19%	22%	17%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Children in public school:</b>				
None	62%	60%	52%	43%
One	16%	16%	20%	20%
Two or more	22%	24%	28%	37%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Education:</b>				
Some college	19%	25%	21%	31%
High school graduate	30%	29%	30%	28%
Less than 12 years	51%	46%	49%	41%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Family income:</b>				
Under \$3,000	20%	21%	21%	17%
\$3-5,000	20%	18%	21%	16%
\$5-7,000	25%	24%	26%	22%
\$7-10,000	22%	24%	18%	26%
Over \$10,000	13%	13%	14%	19%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Sex:</b>				
Male	49%	50%	48%	50%
Female	51%	50%	52%	50%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Marital status:</b>				
Married	82%	81%	85%	84%
Widowed	10%	7%	8%	7%
Divorced	1%	3%	1%	3%
Separated	2%	2%	2%	2%
Never married	5%	7%	6%	4%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>



Table B.2, cont.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>Religion:</b>				
Roman Catholic	35%	23%	26%	19%
Baptist	18%	22%	18%	23%
Methodist	10%	14%	13%	16%
Lutheran	10%	10%	9%	9%
Other Protestant	23%	23%	30%	27%
Jewish	1%	3%	2%	4%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%
None	2%	4%	1%	1%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>School attended:</b>				
Public schools only	77%	78%	82%	84%
Parochial school(s)	18%	15%	15%	10%
Private school(s)	5%	7%	3%	5%
Private and parochial	**	**	**	1%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Race:</b>				
White	88%	88%	83%	90%
Negro	12%	10%	17%	9%
Other	**	2%	**	1%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Occupation of main earner:</b>				
Professional	10%	16%	10%	15%
Business-managerial	10%	9%	10%	13%
Clerical-sales	15%	15%	14%	16%
Craftsman-foreman	22%	21%	22%	16%
Farmer	6%	7%	14%	9%
Operative-protective	18%	13%	13%	16%
Labor-service	13%	13%	12%	12%
Not ascertained	6%	6%	5%	3%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Political:</b>				
Republican	31%	26%	27%	29%
Democrat	46%	49%	46%	46%
Independent	18%	21%	24%	22%
Other; none;				
Don't know	5%	4%	3%	3%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table B.2, cont.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Unfavorable to schools</u>		<u>Favorable to schools</u>	
	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>	<u>High burden</u>	<u>Low burden</u>
<b>National origin:</b>				
Northern Europe and Canada	64%	64%	64%	70%
Southern Europe; Near East; Russia	12%	11%	9%	10%
Other	3%	3%	2%	1%
U.S.A.; don't know	21%	22%	25%	19%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential region:</b>				
Northeast	32%	20%	22%	19%
East Coast and Appalachia	10%	14%	10%	10%
Deep South	12%	11%	13%	15%
Middle West	27%	29%	37%	29%
West	19%	26%	18%	27%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential urbanism:</b>				
Rural, small town	21%	24%	28%	25%
Suburban town	12%	12%	8%	8%
Small city	21%	21%	23%	22%
Urban	17%	18%	21%	21%
Metropolitan	29%	25%	20%	24%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential growth rate, 1950-60:</b>				
Less than 5%	42%	27%	31%	32%
5% to 31%	36%	39%	42%	41%
More than 32%	22%	34%	27%	27%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=369)	(N=392)	(N=228)	(N=401)

\* See Table 6.1 for description of the Evaluation of Local Schools scale. Respondents were classified as "high burden" if they perceived their tax load as "a great burden" or "somewhat a burden" (see Table 4.20 for marginal distributions and question). Cell entries are percentages identifying themselves in the listed demographic category. See Appendix Table B.1 for explanation of categories.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table B.3. Demographic Profiles of Education-Satisfaction Categories.\*

<u>Description:</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Under 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Under 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>Age:</b>						
30 and under	14%	32%	30%	15%	30%	29%
31-50	40%	53%	51%	32%	52%	43%
Over 50	46%	15%	19%	53%	18%	28%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Children in public school:</b>						
None	62%	46%	48%	61%	48%	59%
One	12%	21%	22%	17%	20%	19%
Two or more	26%	33%	30%	22%	32%	22%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Family Income:</b>						
Under \$3,000	32%	9%	6%	35%	8%	7%
\$3-5,000	26%	15%	12%	19%	22%	10%
\$5-7,000	21%	31%	20%	21%	28%	20%
\$7-10,000	15%	29%	30%	17%	24%	30%
Over \$10,000	6%	16%	32%	8%	18%	33%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Sex:</b>						
Male	54%	39%	59%	52%	32%	54%
Female	46%	61%	41%	48%	68%	46%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Marital status:</b>						
Married	78%	90%	87%	80%	83%	81%
Widowed	12%	2%	1%	11%	6%	6%
Divorced	2%	2%	1%	3%	3%	2%
Separated	3%	1%	**	3%	1%	1%
Never married	5%	5%	11%	3%	7%	10%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Religion:</b>						
Roman Catholic	24%	22%	18%	29%	33%	26%
Baptist	29%	18%	12%	25%	14%	12%
Methodist	10%	14%	22%	12%	13%	13%
Lutheran	10%	14%	7%	4%	7%	10%
Other Protestant	23%	27%	36%	25%	24%	29%
Jewish	1%	3%	3%	1%	4%	6%
Other	**	1%	**	1%	2%	1%
None	3%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table B.3, cont.

<u>Description:</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Under 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Under 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>School attended:</b>						
Public schools only	86%	85%	78%	83%	77%	64%
Parochial school(s)	11%	13%	11%	14%	19%	20%
Private school(s)	3%	1%	10%	3%	4%	14%
Private and parochial	**	1%	1%	**	**	2%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Race:</b>						
White	85%	90%	89%	86%	89%	94%
Negro	15%	8%	11%	13%	11%	6%
Other	**	2%	**	1%	**	**
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Occupation of main earner:</b>						
Professional	4%	12%	31%	3%	8%	40%
Business-manAGERIAL	7%	12%	14%	9%	11%	15%
Clerical-sales	6%	14%	20%	12%	24%	23%
Craftsman-foreman	20%	22%	13%	23%	26%	8%
Farmer	13%	5%	5%	11%	5%	3%
Operative-protective	22%	18%	12%	18%	10%	5%
Labor-service	22%	10%	3%	18%	11%	3%
Not ascertained	6%	7%	2%	6%	5%	3%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Political:</b>						
Democrat	53%	39%	33%	52%	51%	42%
Republican	22%	30%	32%	30%	27%	32%
Independent	17%	25%	33%	15%	20%	24%
Other; none; don't know	8%	6%	2%	3%	2%	2%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>National origin:</b>						
Northern Europe and Canada	57%	73%	71%	56%	66%	77%
Southern Europe						
Near East; Russia	9%	11%	10%	12%	13%	11%
Other	3%	3%	2%	5%	2%	2%
U.S.A.; don't know	31%	13%	17%	27%	19%	10%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Table B.3, cont.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Low satisfaction</u>			<u>High satisfaction</u>		
	<u>Under 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>	<u>Under 12 years</u>	<u>High school</u>	<u>Some college</u>
<b>Residential region:</b>						
Northeast	19%	24%	20%	20%	34%	26%
East Coast and Appalachia	13%	8%	12%	12%	8%	11%
Deep South	17%	8%	7%	16%	11%	6%
Middle West	30%	34%	26%	28%	28%	32%
West	21%	26%	35%	24%	19%	25%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential urbanism:</b>						
Rural, small town	32%	18%	18%	26%	22%	14%
Suburban town	10%	11%	9%	8%	12%	10%
Small city	18%	30%	26%	20%	18%	24%
Urban	16%	18%	22%	18%	24%	21%
Metropolitan	24%	23%	25%	26%	24%	31%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>Residential growth rate, 1950-60:</b>						
Less than 5%	37%	31%	29%	33%	36%	23%
5% to 31%	38%	36%	38%	43%	38%	49%
More than 32%	25%	33%	33%	24%	26%	28%
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
	(N=367)	(N=215)	(N=146)	(N=312)	(N=219)	(N=220)

\* Respondents are classified as "high satisfaction" if they said that education had prepared them "well" or "very well" (See Table 5.1 for marginal distributions and question). Cell entries are percentages identifying themselves in the listed demographic category. See Appendix Table B.1 for explanation of categories.

\*\* Less than 0.5%.

Table B.4. Coding Reliabilities for What Education Can Accomplish.\*

<u>Category</u>	<u>Reliability</u>		
	<u>For nation</u>	<u>For adult</u>	<u>For child</u>
Negative affect	.89	.97	.96
General positive affect	.74	.81	.87
Preparation: acquiring basic skills	.89	.87	.89
Preparation: acquiring social competence	.89	.87	.87
Increase knowledge	.84	.90	**
Increase knowledge: fundamentals	**	**	.99
Increase knowledge: academic	**	**	.88
Increase knowledge: non-academic	**	**	.93
Improve national economically	.86	**	**
Improve person economically	.77	.91	.92
Improve society	.77	.91	.96

\* Inter-coder reliability was estimated by comparing coding responses into the listed categories, between each of four coders on 100 questionnaires. The reliability coefficients in this table were computed by dividing the number of inter-coder agreements by the total possible number of agreements. For the questions on which these items are based, and subcategories under each of these general categories, see Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

\*\* This category was not used in coding responses to this question.

Table B.5. Coding Reliabilities for Sources of Price and Types of Innovations.\*

<u>Category</u>	<u>Reliability</u>
Administration	.94
Facilities	.97
Teaching	.98
Academic	.98
Non-academic	.99
Community relations	.99
Miscellaneous	.99
General	.98

\* Inter-coder reliability was estimated as described in the footnote to Table B.4. For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.9 and 2.10. For the subcategories under each of these general categories, see Table B.6.

Table B.6. Evaluation of Innovations and Sources of Pride in Local School.\*

<u>Aspect of schools evaluated</u>	<u>Innovations</u>		<u>Sources of pride</u>
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	
<u>General</u>			
Schools in general	19	3	251
"Local" or "public" nature	5	2	64
Progress or change	12	6	34
<u>Administration</u>			
Administration or policy (general)	3	1	82
Racial integration or segregation	15	36	21
Expenditures	8	21	17
Equality of opportunity	5	2	23
Transportation	2	25	25
Scheduling or calendar	14	3	2
Promotion or grading system	29	24	16
Mergers, districting	12	10	5
<u>Facilities</u>			
Buildings, grounds, appearance	9	33	185
Nearness; presence or lack	21	7	68
Classroom equipment or space	29	0	82
<u>Teaching</u>			
Teachers in general; number of	19	14	288
Teacher methods or qualities	49	31	149
<u>Academic</u>			
Scholastic standing or quality	14	7	72
Specific curricular area	291	57	194
Special programs	33	4	25
<u>Non-academic</u>			
Extracurricular activities	27	12	63
Teaching (or lack of) religion	6	52	8
<u>Students</u>			
Achievement or ability	8	4	111
Effort, deportment, appearance	5	6	28
Students in general	3	1	9



Table B.6, cont.

<u>Aspect of schools evaluated</u>	<u>Innovations</u>		<u>Sources of pride</u>
	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	
<u>School-Community relations</u>			
Parent or citizen participation	8	3	10
School role in community	6	1	13
Channels of communication	26	2	31
Relations in general	3	1	5

\* For the questions on which these items are based, see Tables 2.9 and 2.10. Cell entries are frequencies with which the listed type of response was given.

Table B.7. Children Who Are Not Getting Enough Out of School.\*

<u>Response category</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Don't know	87
All children are getting enough	138
None are getting enough	18
Some children (unspecified)	44
Respondent's own child	24
Other specific child	7
Certain age groups (unspecified)	2
Sex group (boys or girls)	5
Young children (first few years)	8
Elementary school	9
Junior high school	10
High school	12
Teenagers	18
Older children	3
Children too young for their grade	7
Lazy, unmotivated children	404
Children who don't want to attend school	70
Children who don't see value of education	70
Drop-outs or about to drop out	77
Problem children, undisciplined	34
Children who play too much	45
Children who lack parental encouragement	349
Transient families	13
Members of large families	6
Children from broken homes, orphans	91
Students in overcrowded schools	84
Schools lacking needed programs	53
Schools or teachers too lenient	18
Schools with poor teachers or administrators	104
Schools of a particular type	61
Retarded, low I.Q.	316
Other I.Q. groups	103
Talented, creative children	7
"Special", "exceptional" or "underachiever"	22
Poor, underprivileged	201
Other socioeconomic groups	27
Minority groups	22
Negros (no reason given)	58
Negros (fault of society or schools)	37
Negros ("their own fault")	6
Foreign born, foreign speakers	17
American Indians	5
White children	12

\* For the question on which this item is based, see Table 2.11. Entries are the frequencies with which the listed type of response was given.

Table B.8. Perceived Sources of Increased Interest, by Subcategories.\*

<u>What would increase interest</u>	<u>Frequency of response</u>
<u>Being a different person</u>	
If member of family were in school	239
Being a different age	16
More time available	37
<u>Change in or by schools</u>	
Improvement of school personnel	29
Improvement of school programs, curriculum	29
Better schools in general	13
More or nearer schools	11
Improved school facilities	10
Scandal or glaring fault in schools	10
Adult education program	9
If schools gave religious training	7
<u>Change in or by self</u>	
Personal initiative	16
Membership in school organization	13
To support school financial program	10
To oppose school financial program	6
<u>Change facilitated by others</u>	
Publicity, information	64
More or better organizations	51
Better parent-teacher relations	26
Schools soliciting interest or participation	26
More active or responsive school board	20
More channels for public opinion	20

\* For the question on which this item is based, see Table 4.3.

Table B.9. Topics of Conversations with School Officials and Teachers.\*

<u>Topic talked about</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Conversations with officials:	
School administrative policy	41
School curriculum	32
Respondent's child	19
Students in general	16
Competence of teachers	15
School event	11
Parental role in education	5
School board, elections	2
Conversations with teachers:	
Respondent's child	76
School curriculum	57
Students in general	34
School administrative policy	31
Competence of teachers	20
Topics unrelated to schools	13
School event	9
Parental role in education	6
Conversations with officials and teachers:	
School administrative policy	8
Respondent's child	6
Students in general	6
School curriculum	3

\* For the questions on which this item is based, see Table 4.5. Entries are the frequencies with which a conversation concerning the listed topic was reported.

Table B.10. Attendance at School Activities, by Type of Event.\*

<u>Type of event</u>	<u>Percentage attending</u>
None	59%
Parents meeting	23%
Student performance	18%
Athletic event	9%
Open house	7%
Student meeting	7%
Fund-raising event	4%
Graduation exercises	4%
Class visit, parent conference	2%
Respondent taking class	<u>1%</u>
	134%

\* For the question on which this item is based, see Table 4.7. Column totals to more than 100% because some respondents attended more than one type of event.