

November 29, 2012

To: Interested Parties

Fr: Anzalone Liszt Research

Re: New York City Voters Overwhelmingly Support New Teacher Evaluation System

On behalf of StudentsFirstNY, Anzalone Liszt Research recently conducted a poll of N=600 registered voters in New York City.¹ The poll demonstrates that New York City voters overwhelmingly want a deal to establish a new teacher evaluation system. This strong support for a new teacher evaluation system stems from voters' recognition of the importance of teacher quality and their dissatisfaction with the city's current method of evaluating teachers. Below are key findings from the poll:

- New Yorkers strongly support a new teacher evaluation system.** Four-out-of-five New York City voters (80%) support a new teacher evaluation system based on both classroom observations and test scores, with 56% supporting such a system strongly. After voters hear a detailed description of the plan (below), support remains strong, with 74% continuing to back such a plan and just 17% opposing it. Among parents of children in the city's public schools, support for the plan following a description is just as strong (73%), with just under half (49%) backing it strongly.

Q13. Would you support or oppose a new teacher evaluation system based on classroom observations by principals and other teachers in addition to test scores?

NYC Registered Voters Overall:	80% Support / 11% Oppose
Parents of Children in NYC Public Schools:	89% Support / 6% Oppose

Q15. As you may know, Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature recently created a new teacher evaluation system in which teachers are rated as highly effective, effective, developing, or ineffective. Teachers are given feedback and help if needed, but teachers who are rated as ineffective for two consecutive years can be dismissed. Sixty percent of each teacher's evaluation score will be based on subjective measures like classroom observation, with the other forty percent based on student test scores and other measures of student performance.

After hearing that, do you support or oppose this new teacher evaluation system?

NYC Registered Voters Overall:	74% Support / 17% Oppose
Parents of Children in NYC Public Schools:	73% Support / 18% Oppose

When presented with a balanced debate, with statements from both supporters and opponents of a new teacher evaluation system (below), voters favor the new system by a 48-point margin (69% support / 21% oppose), with over two-thirds continuing to support it. Intensity is clearly on the side of supporters as well, with nearly four times as many voters *strongly* supporting a new evaluation system (44%) as *strongly* opposing it (12%).

¹ Anzalone Liszt Research conducted a poll of N=600 registered voters in New York City. Interviews were conducted November 11-15, 2012, with 452 conducted over landlines and 148 conducted over cell phones. Respondents were selected at random, with interviews apportioned geographically based on past voter turnout. Expected margin of sampling error for is ±4.0% with a 95% confidence level

Q17. Let me give you a little more information about what supporters and opponents might say about the new system and get your reaction...

Supporters say quality teachers are the most important part of a good education, and we need a meaningful evaluation system to recognize and retain excellent teachers, help teachers who are struggling, and make sure kids get quality teachers every year. A strong evaluation system is good for students, and city schools will lose three hundred million dollars in state funding without it.

Opponents say that teacher evaluation systems force teachers to focus too much on test preparation and not enough on providing students with a rich education. Opponents say it's unfair to blame teachers for challenges like poverty and broken families, and that too much testing ends up punishing the teachers who take on the hardest challenges.

After hearing that, do you support or oppose this new teacher evaluation system?

NYC Registered Voters Overall: 69% Support / 21% Oppose

Parents of Children in NYC Public Schools: 75% Support / 21% Oppose

Following a debate, parents of children in New York City public schools are even more supportive of a new teacher evaluation system than voters overall (75% support a new system after a balanced debate). Support for the system also transcends both geographic and demographic lines, as over 60% of voters in each borough and across every major demographic group support a new teacher evaluation system after hearing statements from both supporters and opponents. Even among households with a teacher, a new evaluation system is supported by a 26-point margin (58% support / 32% oppose) after a debate.

- **Increase in funding has significant impact on enthusiasm for the plan.** Voters were already strongly behind a new teacher evaluation plan even before hearing about the \$300 million in additional funding it would create for city schools, but once they hear about the funding increase, strong support for the plan rises by 10 points, from 43% to 53%.
- **New Yorkers firmly back a teacher evaluation plan that includes student feedback.** Three-quarters (75%) of voters say they would support including feedback from students, in addition to classroom observation and test scores, in teacher evaluations.
- **Having a quality teacher in every classroom is seen as most important factor in providing a good education.** We asked respondents to rate twelve different factors on a zero-to-ten scale in terms of how important each was to providing a quality public education. Of the twelve items tested, “having a quality teacher in every classroom” emerged as the most important, with 74% of voters rating it a ten in terms of importance. The only other item that received a ten from over 60% of voters was “making sure students learn the skills they need to exceed after graduation.” Teacher quality is also much more important to voters than class size, as the percentage of voters rating “having a quality teacher in every classroom” a ten is 25 points above the share who give “having

smaller class sizes” the same rating (49%). And “having a quality teacher in every classroom” is especially important to parents of children in New York City public schools, with 78% of them rating it as a ten, making it the most important factor for this group as well.

- **New Yorkers have little faith in the city’s current method of evaluating teachers.** Just over half of New York City voters (55%) believe the city currently has a teacher evaluation system in place, and of those, only 13% say that it is working well, while 77% say that it needs improvement.
- **New York City voters will hold Albany responsible if it fails to follow through.** More than seven in ten New Yorkers (71%) agreed that officials up in Albany have a responsibility to make sure a deal gets done and New York City doesn’t lose the \$300 million for its schools.