

COMD 210 – Spring 2025

Bringing awareness to K-12 Education concerns: What does the public have to say?

Faculty Mentor: Travis Brodbeck ‘17 G’18



Background

Each Spring semester, the Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) in partnership with the Siena College Office of Academic Community Engagement (ACE) partner to offer a hands-on undergraduate course in community-based public opinion research. Students not only learn about **qualitative and quantitative research methods, but they also practice it.**

Each year, the course investigates a new topic and partners with a new organization or community group. In 2025, the class investigated issues in K-12 education, with an focus on public education. The students conducted a literature review, interviewed stakeholders including teachers, parents, and administrators, and wrote a public opinion survey administered to a representative sample of New York state residents. The findings are shared publicly so that policymakers, education leaders, and other key stakeholders can make data-driven decisions to improve education in their communities.

Literature Review

The following topics were investigated by reading scholarly articles:

- Origins of U.S. Public Education (Jefferson, 1779; Hatch 2015)
- Media’s Education Failure Narrative (Tell, 2021; Bierbaum, 2021)
- Education Politics and Policies (Galey, 2015; Collins & Rechhow, 2024)
- Funding and Financing (Kenyon & Reschovsky, 2014; Scafidi & Wearne, 2021)
- Violence and Safety (Mancini et al, 2020; Hilaire et al, 2022)
- Disparities and Equity (Islam & Shapla, 2021; Moore et al, 2024)
- Curriculum Decisions (Plutzer & Berkman, 2008; Hodge et al, 2023)
- Mental Health (Elbedour et al, 2020, Kolb, 2024)

Qualitative Interviews

To contextualize the literature, students invited and interviewed teachers and administrators from public and private schools across the region.

	Total	Private	Public
Teachers	4	1	3
Administrators	2	1	1
Principals	2	1	1
Superintendents	1	0	1

Results

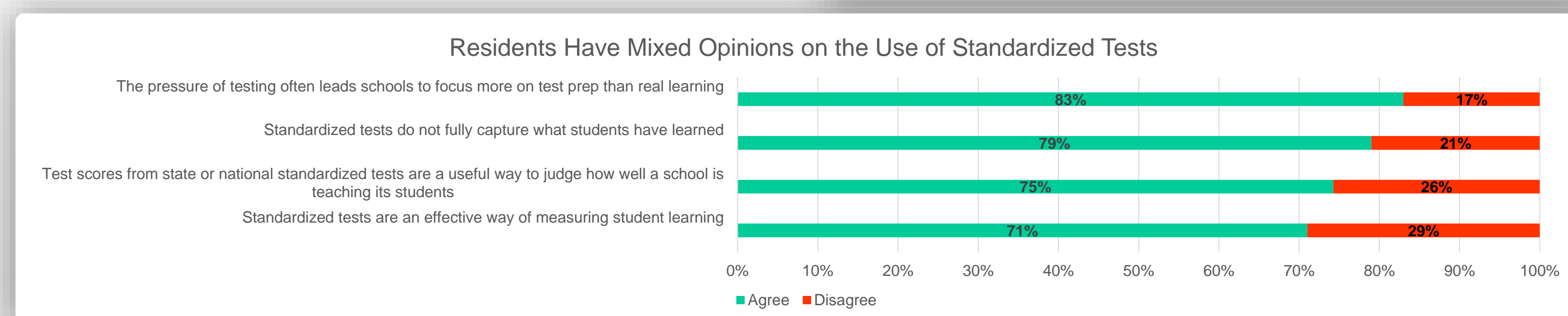
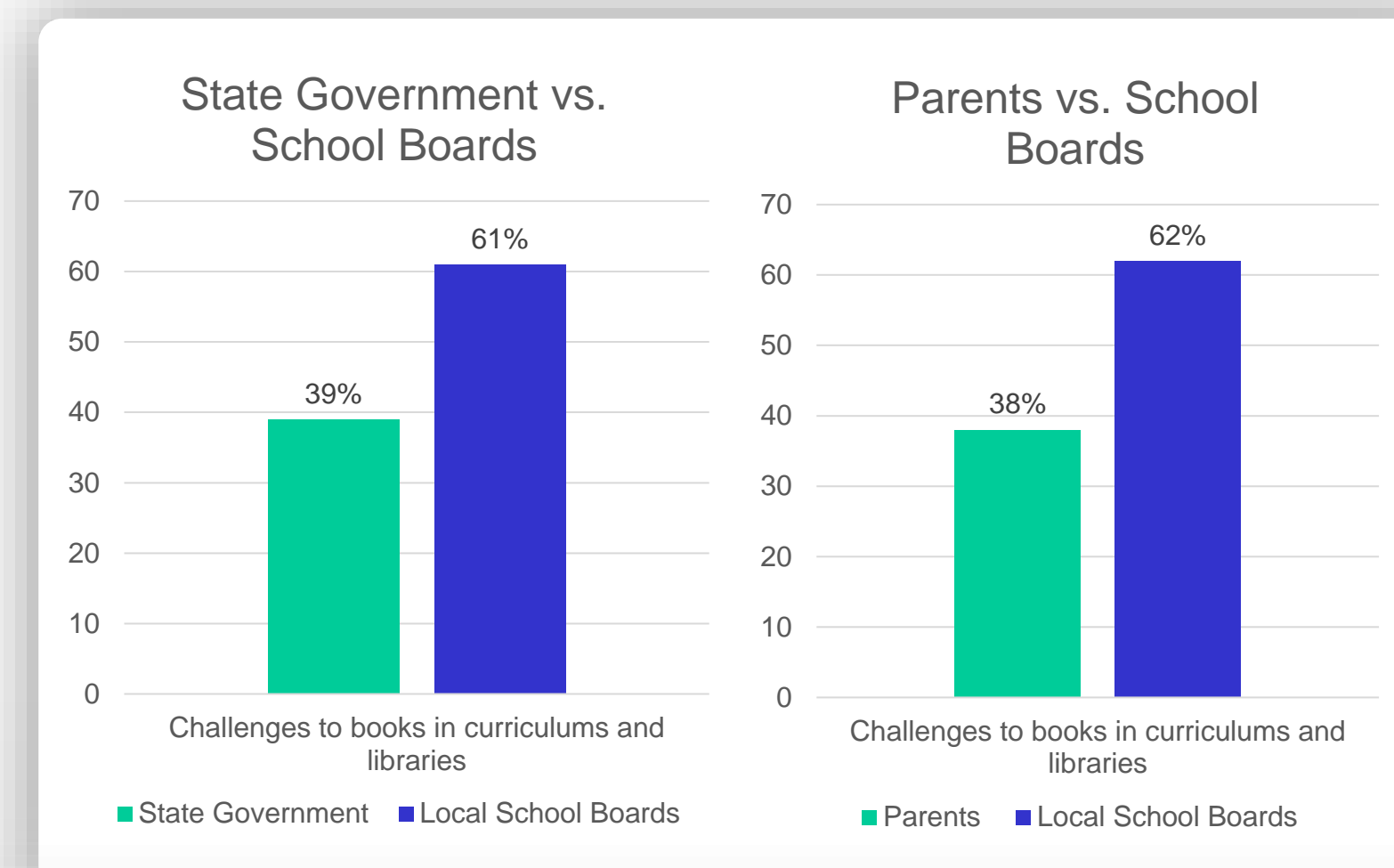
The results of the surveys were weighted and presented into the form of crosstabs. available at the following link: <https://scri.siena.edu/comd210/>

Siena College Poll Conducted by the Siena College Research Institute																										
April 10 - 22, 2025																										
801 New York State Residents																										
MOE +/- 4.1%																										
Q1KEY: To begin, we would like you to think about the future of young people, including teenagers, in your neighborhood or area where you live. For each of the following life events, how likely do you think it is that a typical young person in your neighborhood will experience each of the following. Is it very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely, or not at all likely? (ROTATE SERIES Q1-Q14)																										
Q1: How likely do you think it is that a typical young person - Graduate from high school																										
	Gender						Age			Region		Child in HH		Religion				Income		Ethnicity				Party		
	Total	M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	NYC	Subs	Upst	Yes	No	Cath	Jewish	Prot	Other	<\$50K	\$50K-\$100K	\$100K+	White	Afr Amer/Black	Latino	Dem	Rep	Ind/Oth	
Very likely	56%	56%	57%	49%	58%	53%	71%	50%	70%	55%	64%	51%	57%	68%	60%	53%	46%	57%	72%	62%	46%	42%	60%	64%	51%	
Somewhat likely	34%	35%	34%	41%	33%	33%	27%	37%	23%	38%	30%	37%	35%	27%	34%	35%	42%	35%	24%	32%	41%	44%	33%	27%	38%	
Total likely	90%	91%	91%	90%	91%	86%	98%	87%	93%	93%	94%	88%	92%	95%	94%	88%	88%	92%	96%	94%	87%	86%	93%	91%	89%	
Not very likely	7%	8%	5%	7%	5%	33%	2%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	9%	13%	6%	3%	5%	9%	13%	6%	5%	9%	
Not at all likely	2%	1%	3%	3%	5%	1%	0%	4%	0%	2%	2%	3%	3%	0%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	4%	1%	1%	3%	2%	
Total unlikely	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	14%	2%	12%	7%	7%	7%	12%	13%	8%	5%	6%	12%	13%	8%	6%	13%	14%	7%	8%	11%	
Unsure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Q2: How likely do you think it is that a typical young person - Attend a college or university																										
	Gender						Age			Region		Child in HH		Religion				Income		Ethnicity				Party		
	Total	M	F	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	NYC	Subs	Upst	Yes	No	Cath	Jewish	Prot	Other	<\$50K	\$50K-\$100K	\$100K+	White	Afr Amer/Black	Latino	Dem	Rep	Ind/Oth	
Very likely	39%	38%	39%	38%	47%	31%	36%	40%	46%	33%	54%	29%	43%	55%	40%	33%	23%	43%	57%	40%	31%	30%	43%	40%	29%	
Somewhat likely	45%	43%	46%	45%	40%	44%	53%	42%	46%	48%	34%	51%	42%	39%	45%	48%	49%	45%	39%	46%	46%	45%	43%	43%	53%	
Total likely	84%	81%	85%	83%	87%	75%	89%	82%	92%	81%	88%	80%	85%	94%	85%	81%	72%	88%	96%	86%	77%	75%	86%	86%	82%	
Not very likely	12%	13%	11%	11%	9%	19%	9%	12%	6%	15%	9%	14%	12%	5%	13%	12%	20%	9%	2%	10%	12%	20%	9%	11%	11%	
Not at all likely	5%	5%	4%	6%	4%	7%	2%	6%	2%	4%	3%	5%	3%	2%	2%	8%	8%	3%	0%	4%	11%	4%	4%	1%	7%	
Total unlikely	17%	18%	15%	17%	13%	26%	11%	18%	8%	19%	11%	19%	15%	7%	15%	20%	28%	12%	3%	14%	23%	24%	13%	12%	18%	
Unsure	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	

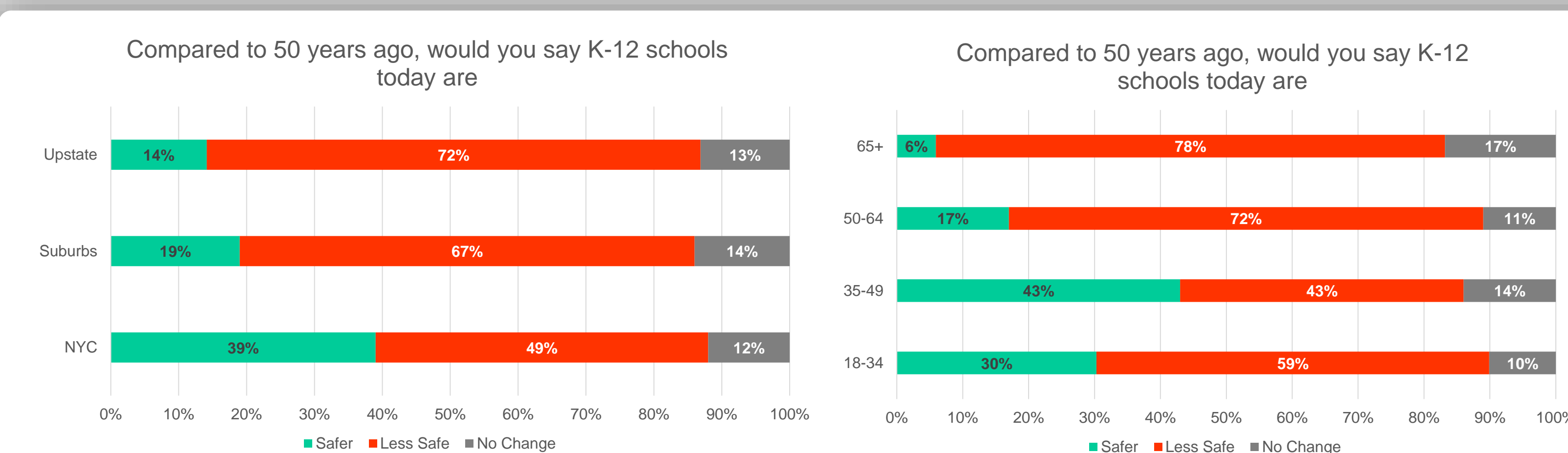
Findings

- 6 in 10 New Yorker’s, 59%, say their local schools are doing a good or excellent job.
- A majority, 56%, believes schools should prioritize equipping students with life skills.
- By 48-20%, state residents believe private schools provide higher quality education.
- Sixty-one percent of New Yorkers’ feel K-12 schools are less safe than 50 years ago.
- At least two-thirds thinking school day cell phone bans will be good for K-12 schools.

The survey asked the same question twice, with differing response categories: “*Which of the following comes closest to your view on challenges to books in curriculums and libraries around the nation even if neither exactly fits?*” In both questions, 6 in 10 NYer’s support local school board control.



When asked to consider the safety of schools, a regional and age gap presents itself. NYC residents feel schools are safer today than residents of the suburbs or upstate New York; similarly, younger residents feel schools are safer today than older residents.



Methodology

The Siena College Research Institute (SCRI) conducted this survey online from April 10 to April 22, 2025, with a sample of 801 New York State residents. Respondents were recruited through Cint’s non-probability, pre-recruited panel, and SCRI paid \$1 for each completed interview.

The survey was administered in English using the Voxco web platform. Adults not currently residing in New York State were screened out. To ensure representativeness, demographic quotas were set for region, age, race/ethnicity, and gender using the Cint Marketplace system.

Post-stratification weighting was applied to age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, political party, and region, based on U.S. Census Bureau benchmarks. The effective sample size, adjusted for design effects using Kish’s approximation, yields a modeled margin of error of $\pm 4.1\%$. Following Pew Research Center guidance, this margin reflects the use of a non-probability sample and is based on a 50% proportion for communication purposes.

SCRI implemented data quality measures, including repeated factual questions and a honeypot item to detect inattentive or automated respondents. Surveys failing any of these checks were excluded from analysis and weighting.

The survey questions, including their exact wording and ordering, are available at the following link: <https://scri.siena.edu/comd210/>

As with all survey research, this study is subject to limitations. The survey was conducted online and was only accessible to individuals with internet access. As such, the findings may not be fully generalizable to individuals or households without reliable internet connectivity.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the students who presented these findings publicly on May 6, 2025 and to SCRI and ACE for their support!

