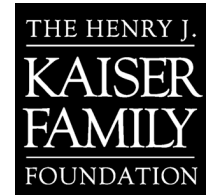


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Summary and Chartpack



Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation

# NATIONAL SURVEY OF LATINOS: EDUCATION

January 2004

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## Methodology

The Pew Hispanic Center/Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education* was conducted by telephone between August 7 and October 15, 2003 among a nationally representative sample of 3,421 adults, 18 years and older, who were selected at random. Representatives of the Pew Hispanic Center and The Kaiser Family Foundation worked together to develop the survey questionnaire and analyze the results. International Communications Research of Media, PA conducted the fieldwork in either English or Spanish, based on the respondent's preference.

The sample design employed a highly stratified disproportionate RDD sample of the 48 contiguous states. The results are weighted to represent the actual distribution of adults throughout the United States.

Of those who were interviewed, 1,508 identified themselves as being of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent (based on the question "Are you, yourself of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central or South American, Caribbean or some other Latin background?") and throughout this summary they will be referred to interchangeably as either "Latinos" or "Hispanics."

Latinos were classified into two groups: foreign-born Latinos and native-born Latinos. Foreign-born Latinos are those who were born outside of the fifty states as well as those who were born on the island of Puerto Rico, a commonwealth associated with the United States. Although individuals born in Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens by birthright, they were included among the foreign-born because, like immigrants from Latin America, they were born into a Spanish-dominant culture and because on many points their attitudes, views and beliefs are much closer to Hispanics born abroad than to Latinos born in the fifty-states, even those who identify themselves as being of Puerto Rican origins. Native-born Latinos are those who say they were born in the United States.

Interviews were also conducted with 1,193 non-Latino whites and 610 non-Latino African Americans. The terms "white" and "African American" are used throughout this summary to refer to non-Latino whites and non-Latino African Americans.

Because of the nature of the survey, some questions were only asked of parents who currently have children in school. Of the total 3,421 adults interviewed, 1,268 reported that they are parents of children who are in Kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

The sample size and margin of sampling error for these groups is shown in the table below:

|                                     | Unweighted Number of Respondents (n) | Margin of Sampling Error  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                        | 3421                                 | +/-2.43 percentage points |
| Total Latinos                       | 1508                                 | 3.03                      |
| Foreign-Born Latinos                | 829                                  | 4.07                      |
| Native-Born Latinos                 | 677                                  | 4.53                      |
| Non-Latino Whites                   | 1193                                 | 3.19                      |
| Non-Latino African Americans        | 610                                  | 4.69                      |
| <b>Total Parents</b>                | 1268                                 | 4.11                      |
| Latino Parents                      | 650                                  | 4.46                      |
| Non-Latino White Parents            | 343                                  | 5.81                      |
| Non-Latino African American Parents | 240                                  | 7.48                      |

Note that sampling error may be larger for other subgroups and that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Copies of topline results (#3032) and copies of this summary document (#3031) are available online at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org) and [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org).

*The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit, private operating foundation focusing on the major health care issues facing the nation. The Foundation is an independent voice and source of facts and analysis for policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.*

*The Pew Hispanic Center, based in Washington, DC, is a non-partisan research center supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts of Philadelphia. The Center is a project of the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication. Copies of the Center's publications are available at [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org).*

## **Summary of Findings for the Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Latinos: Education**

School- and college-aged young people (ages 5 to 24) make up 37% of the Hispanic population compared to 27% of the non-Hispanic population<sup>1</sup>. Over the next 25 years, this segment of the Latino population is projected to increase by 82%<sup>2</sup>. Given these realities, it is hardly surprising that Latinos consistently cite education as their top policy concern and that Latinos' educational outcomes are a matter of national significance. Moreover, these demographic developments are taking place against the backdrop of major changes in the nation's K-12 system as states and school districts apply the sweeping new federal requirements embodied in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act).

In its second annual National Survey of Latinos, the Pew Hispanic Center and the Kaiser Family Foundation extensively explored Latinos attitudes towards public schools and a variety of education issues. Substantial comparison samples of whites and African Americans were similarly polled. The survey reveals a diversity of opinion among the nation's major ethnic and racial groups. Within the Hispanic population, some sharp contrasts are evident between the native and foreign born.

Throughout the survey, Latinos demonstrate an overarching faith in their local schools and in educational personnel and institutions overall. Hispanic immigrants—the foreign born—profess particularly positive attitudes and a sense of optimism that distinguishes them from Hispanics born in the United States—the native born—as well as from whites and African Americans. Latino parents also appear eager to engage the educational system and to take responsibility for ensuring their children's success. But, the survey also reveals their concerns that the educational system does not always treat Latino students fairly. Substantial numbers of Latinos, for example, worry Hispanic students lag because teachers are not able to bridge cultural divides in their classrooms, and yet Latinos are equally willing to assume some of the blame for not pushing their children hard enough.

Latinos emerge from the survey as willing participants in the reforms legislated in the NCLB Act that President George W. Bush has advocated as the core of his education agenda. Indeed, by some measures, Latinos are more willing to embrace such reforms than whites or African Americans, offering stronger support for the use of standardized testing as a measure of achievement. However, on the controversial issue of how to deal with schools that repeatedly fail to meet performance standards, most Latinos favor helping schools improve but still requiring students to continue to attend while most whites favor letting parents move their children elsewhere, which is a key element of the Bush education agenda. The survey also reveals considerable lack of knowledge about the NCLB Act itself. Large numbers of Latinos, whites and African Americans alike say they are not aware of the fact that a major education reform has been enacted and lack information on key policy issues such as vouchers and charter schools.

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<sup>1</sup> March 2002 Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

<sup>2</sup> Projections by the Pew Hispanic Center

Language, not surprisingly, stands out as a critical topic. Latinos, like nearly all Americans, insist that the schools should teach English to students who are immigrants or the children of immigrants. But, there is also a strong view among Latinos, especially the foreign born, that the schools should help such students maintain their family's native tongue when it is a language other than English. Non-Hispanics are much less likely to support such efforts and are more likely than Latinos to blame lack of proficiency in English for lagging Latino educational achievement.

On civil rights issues in the education arena, Latinos hold diverse views. While the foreign born strongly favor affirmative action in university admissions programs, fewer native-born Latinos agree. Meanwhile, on the question of whether racially and ethnically integrated schools are beneficial for students, the native born are more likely to see integration as a worthwhile objective than the foreign born.

In this survey, Latinos appear distinctly optimistic and eager to engage American institutions. Despite evidence from achievement tests, high school dropout rates and levels of college completion showing that Latinos overall are not doing as well as whites in the U.S. education system<sup>3</sup>, Hispanics do not emerge from this survey as a disgruntled population that views itself as greatly disadvantaged or victimized. Moreover, Latinos distinguish themselves from whites and African Americans on a range of education issues, and this survey points to distinctly Latino views on complex questions like the appropriate uses of standardized testing. As the Latino share of the school-age population continues to grow and as schools implement the many policy changes envisioned in the NCLB Act, these views may become increasingly important in shaping the nation's educational future.

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<sup>3</sup> The Pew Hispanic Center

## **Section 1: Attitudes towards Education and Assessment of Schools Today**

*In general, Latinos, especially the foreign born, are more positive about public schools and more optimistic that schools are improving than either whites or African Americans. Latinos are also upbeat about their dealings with teachers and school administrators. However, a sizeable minority of Latinos takes a negative view of the state of public education. Although there is no strong consensus on the most important problems facing the schools, Latinos are most likely to cite security issues such as violence and drugs, while whites focus on funding issues and African Americans cite a wide range of concerns.*

*The vast majority of Latinos, whites and African Americans place a high value on a college education. While costs of education is named most often by all groups, Latinos, especially the foreign born, are more likely than whites and African Americans to say that discrimination and the desirability of staying close to family are major reasons why young people fail to finish college.*

*Latinos, whites and African Americans are nearly unanimous in wanting the schools to teach English to children who are immigrants or the children of immigrants. But, Latinos, especially the foreign-born, also want the schools to help such students maintain their native language while fewer – but still a majority – of whites agree. Only foreign-born Latinos believe the schools are currently doing a good job of teaching English to children from immigrant households, and both whites and African-Americans say that a poor mastery of English is an important factor in educational achievement problems for Latinos.*

### **RATINGS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Latinos, especially the foreign born, give good ratings to public schools. However, there is a sizeable minority that would give public schools an average or below average rating. (chart 1)**

- When asked to give public schools the sort of letter grades that students generally receive, most Latinos would give the public schools in their community (63%) and nationwide (52%) an ‘A’ or ‘B.’
- Fewer Latinos, but still about three in ten, would give the schools in their community (29%) and nationwide (38%) a ‘C’, ‘D’, or ‘F.’
- Foreign-born Latinos are notably positive about the public schools, being considerably more likely to give a grade of ‘A’ to the schools in their community (33%) and to schools nationwide (22%) compared to native-born Latinos (16% and 7%).

**Whites and African Americans are more negative about public schools than Latinos and are less likely to give public schools good ratings. Of the three groups, African Americans are the least positive about the schools in their communities, while whites give schools nationwide the lowest rating. (chart 1)**

- Whites (26%) and African Americans (36%) are much less willing than Latinos (52%) to give an ‘A’ or ‘B’ to public schools nationwide.
- Whites are only slightly less likely than Latinos to give the public schools in their communities an ‘A’ or ‘B’ (58% vs. 63%). However, less than half of African Americans are willing to give the schools in their communities these grades (48%).

**Most Latinos say that schools are either getting better or are staying about the same, however, a small minority feels the schools are getting worse. (chart 2)**

- Nearly half (45%) of Latinos feel that schools have improved in the past five years, and foreign-born Latinos (50%) are more positive than native-born Latinos (39%). Meanwhile, 29% of all Latinos say that schools have stayed about the same and 21% say they have gotten worse.

**Whites and African Americans are less optimistic than Latinos about the progress that is being made in schools. (chart 2)**

- Far fewer whites (25%) and African Americans (31%) say that schools have improved in the last five years, compared to Latinos (45%).
- Whites (30%) and African Americans (35%) are more likely than Latinos (21%) to say that schools have gotten worse.

**Security issues such as drugs, violence and gang activity are cited most often by Latinos as the most important problems facing their community schools. (chart 3)**

- About one in four (24%) Latinos (29% of the foreign born, 18% of the native born) report the most important problem facing their community schools is a security issue, such as gangs, violence or drugs.
- However, 15% of all Latinos say that the most important problem in their community schools is a problem with teachers, 10% say it is a funding problem, 9% say it is a problem with the children in the schools, and 7% say it is a problem with the curriculum.

**Lack of adequate funding is cited most often by whites as the most important problem facing their community schools, while African Americans cite several problems— security issues, funding shortfalls, teacher quality, undisciplined children—in almost equal measure. (chart 3)**

- Nearly one in four (24%) whites say that the most important problem facing their community schools is a problem with funding, compared to 10% of Latinos.
- Conversely, 11% of whites say that the most important problem facing their community schools is a security issue, compared to 24% of Latinos.
- African Americans give about the same importance to security issues (17%), funding (16%), children’s attitudes and behavior (15%), and the quality of teachers and teaching (14%).

**Most Latinos say that the schools attended by primarily Latino children are comparable to those attended by primarily white or African American children. However, a sizable portion says that schools attended primarily by Latinos and those attended primarily by African Americans are worse than those schools attended primarily by whites.**

- Latinos (53%) are more likely to say that schools attended primarily by Latinos are comparable to those attended by primarily whites than to say either that they are worse (28%) or better (13%).
- However, even more Latinos (71%) say that schools attended primarily by Latinos are comparable to those attended by primarily African Americans. Few Latinos say either that such schools are worse (9%) or better (14%) than those schools attended primarily by African Americans.

**African Americans are more likely than Latinos to say that whites attend better schools.**

- Nearly half of African Americans (46%) say that schools attended primarily by African Americans are worse than those attended by whites, while 38% say they are comparable and 10% say they are better.
- More than a third of African Americans (36%) say that schools attended by Latinos are worse than those attended by whites, but more (45%) say they are comparable (7% say they are better).
- African Americans see little differences between schools attended primarily by Latinos and those attended primarily by African Americans. Three-quarters of African Americans (77%) say these schools are about the same, while only 9% say

schools attended by primarily by Latinos are better and 8% say they are worse than those attended primarily by African Americans.

**Nearly half of whites say that schools attended primarily by Latinos and African Americans are comparable to schools attended primarily by whites.**

- Whites (46%) are more likely to say that schools attended primarily by Latinos are comparable to those attended by primarily whites than to say either that they are worse (27%) or better (6%).
- Whites (45%) are also slightly more likely to say that schools attended primarily by African Americans are comparable to those attended by primarily whites than to say either that they are worse (38%) or better (5%).
- Even more whites (62%) say that schools attended primarily by Latinos are comparable to those attended by primarily African Americans. Few whites say either that such schools are worse (7%) or better (12%) than those schools attended primarily by African Americans.

**PARENTS' EXPERIENCES AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL**

**Most Latino parents who have a child in kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade report positive views of their children's teachers and the experiences they have had with school officials. (chart 4)**

- Most Latino parents say that their child's teachers have a good understanding of their child's academic strengths and weaknesses (80%) and overall development and happiness (76%).
- Parents are positive about the experiences that they have had with school officials—53% of Latino parents say it was a “very good” experience and 37% say it was a “somewhat good” experience.
- Whites and African Americans largely share these positive views with Latinos although African Americans are somewhat less enthusiastic with 39% saying they have had “very good” experiences with school officials compared to 49% of whites.



**Most Spanish-dominant Latino parents report that schools tend to be accommodating in communicating with them in Spanish about their child’s performance. However, there is still a large portion that cannot get report cards or standardized test scores in Spanish. (chart 5)**

- Most Latino parents whose primary language is Spanish and who have limited proficiency with English report that they can get report cards (72%) and standardized test scores (66%) in Spanish. Even more report being able to talk to a school official in Spanish to discuss their child’s performance (87%) or get a teacher that can speak Spanish with them (84%).

**Most parents—Latinos, whites and African Americans alike— say that they have a lot of influence over their child’s education. (chart 6)**

- The vast majority of Latino parents (79%) feel that they have “a lot” of influence over their child’s education and there is no difference between the native and foreign born on this score. A similar share of African Americans express this view (76%) while somewhat fewer whites (61%) say they have “a lot” of influence.

**Foreign-born Latinos are less likely than other parents to say that they know a lot about the curriculum and academic goals in their child’s grade. (chart 7)**

- About two-thirds of native-born Latino (66%), white (67%) and African American (68%) parents say that they know “a lot” about the curriculum and academic goals of their child’s grade. Less than half (43%) of foreign-born Latino parents express the same view.

**In general, Latino parents are actively involved in their child’s education. Most say that they take part in activities at their child’s school and typically help their child with homework. A significant portion also reports meeting with their child’s teacher regularly. (charts 8, 9, 10)**

- The majority of Latinos say that they have attended a PTA meeting (74%), participated in a fundraiser (63%), or volunteered (55%) at their child’s school.

- Foreign-born parents are less likely than native-born parents to report participating in a fundraiser (57% vs. 75%) or volunteering (47% vs. 71%) at their child's school, but they are more likely to report having attended a PTA meeting (77% vs. 67%).
- Latino parents say that they help their children with their homework often—59% say they help their child nearly every day and 28% say they help once or twice a week.
- Latino parents report that they meet with their child's teachers often—42% say they meet with them once a month and 44% say they meet with them a few times a year.

**Although white parents also say that they are active at their child's school, they are likely to report helping their child with their homework and meeting with their teacher less often than Latino or African American parents. (charts 8, 9, 10)**

- White (72%) and African American (64%) parents are more likely than Latino (55%) parents to say that they have volunteered at their child's school. White (75%) and African American (71%) parents are also more likely than Latino (63%) parents to say that they have participated in a fundraising activity at their child's school.
- White parents are less likely to report that they have attended a PTA meeting at their child's school (59%), compared to Latino (74%) and African American (71%) parents.
- White parents report helping their children with their homework less often than Latino and African American parents. Almost half (48%) of white parents say that they help their children with their homework nearly every day, compared to about six in ten Latino (59%) and African American (61%) parents.
- White parents report meeting with their child's teacher less often than Latino and African American parents. Less than three in ten (27%) white parents say they meet with their child's teacher about once a month, compared to 42% of Latino parents and 46% of African American parents.

## **PERCEIVED REASONS LATINO STUDENTS ARE NOT DOING AS WELL AS THEIR WHITE PEERS**

**Latinos do not focus on any single reason why Latino children are not doing as well academically as their white peers. Many Latinos say that schools, teachers, parents, and the students themselves are all part of the problem. (chart 11)**

- Latinos say that major reasons Latino students do not perform as well as their white peers include:
  - Too many Latino parents neglect to push their kids to work hard (53% say this is a major reason).
  - The school is often too quick to label Latino kids as having behavior or learning problems (51%).

- Too many white teachers do not know how to deal with Latino kids because they come from different cultures (47%).
- Latino students have weaker English language skills than white students (47%).
- Schools that have mostly Latino students have fewer good teachers (44%).
- Because of racial stereotypes, teachers and principals have lower expectations for Latino students (43%).

**Whites and African Americans are most likely to identify weaker English language skills as a major reason behind poor Latino academic performance. (chart 11)**

- Nearly six in ten whites (58%) and African Americans (59%) say that a major reason that Latino students are not doing as well as white students academically is because Latino students have weaker English language skills than white students. About half (47%) of Latinos agree.
- Compared to Latinos, whites are less likely to point to other factors such as poor performance by schools, teachers or parents to explain the performance gap.
- African Americans tend to agree with Latinos in finding multiple reasons for why Latinos are not doing as well as white students.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Most Latinos feel that young people starting out today have little chance of success without a college degree. Knowing this, it is not surprising that nearly all Latino parents say it is very important to them that their children go to college. (charts 12 and 13)**

- Nearly all (95%) Latino parents say that it is “very” important to them that their children go to college.
- The majority (54%) of Latinos say that young people have little chance of success without a college degree. However, a sizeable portion (43%) say that young people starting out today can succeed with just a high school degree because success depends on a number of different factors.
- Native-born Latinos are more likely to say that young people need a college degree to succeed than foreign-born Latinos (60% and 51%).

**Although the vast majority of white parents say that it is very important to them that their children go to college, they are less likely to feel this way than Latino and African American parents. (charts 12 and 13)**

- Nearly eight in ten (78%) white parents say that it is “very” important to them that their child gets a college education. However, Latino and African American parents are even more likely to feel this way (95% and 94%).
- Although majorities of Latinos (54%) and whites (54%) say that young people have little chance of success without a college degree, African Americans are more likely to have this opinion (64%).

**When asked about the reasons people do not go to college or fail to finish college, Latinos, whites and African Americans alike focused on issues involving money. However, there are contrasting views regarding other factors such as discrimination and the desirability of staying close to family. (chart 14)**

- A large majority of Latinos say that the cost of tuition (77%) and the need to work and earn money (77%) are major reasons why people do not go to college or fail to finish once they have started. Whites and African Americans responded similarly on tuition (82% and 82%) and on the need to work (73% and 76%).
- A majority of Latinos (58%), whites (64%), and African Americans (71%) say that receiving a poor high school education is a major reason people do not get a college degree.
- Nearly half (48%) of Latinos say that a major reason people fail to get a college degree is because they do not feel they need one to be successful compared to 33% of whites and 35% of African Americans.
- Four in ten (40%) Latinos say that discrimination is a major reason people do not get a college degree. Latinos who were not born in the United States are more likely to feel this way than Latinos who were born in the United States (46% vs. 32%). Among African Americans 34% cite discrimination, while 13% of whites see it as a major factor in keeping people from going to college.
- Latinos (33%) are almost twice as likely as whites (17%) to say that staying close to family instead of going away to school is a major reason why people do not get a college degree (24% of African Americans say the same). Foreign-born Latinos are even more likely to say this (36%) than native-born Latinos (29%).

## LANGUAGE

**Latinos, like nearly all Americans, agree that teaching English to the children of immigrant families is an important goal. (chart 15)**

- The vast majority of Latinos (92%) say that teaching English to the children of immigrant families is a “very” important goal, and another 7% say it is a “somewhat” important goal. Whites and African Americans hold almost identical views.
- Foreign-born Latinos support this goal with greater intensity than any other group with 96% saying it is “very” important.

**The vast majority of Latinos, especially the foreign born, and of African Americans think that it is important for public schools to help students from immigrant families maintain their family’s native tongue. Fewer—but still a majority—of whites support this goal. (chart 15)**

- Almost nine in ten (88%) Latinos and eight in ten African Americans (79%), say that it is important for public schools to help students from immigrant families maintain their native tongue, including over two-thirds (67%) of Latinos who say that it is “very” important and another 21% who say that it is “somewhat” important.
- Foreign-born Latinos are even more likely than native-born Latinos to say it is important for schools to help kids maintain their family’s native tongue (93% vs. 81%). Among the foreign born, 74% say that it is “very” important compared to 55% of the native born.
- Fewer—but still a majority—of whites (57%), say it’s important for public schools to help kids maintain their family’s native tongue. However, four in ten (41%) whites say this goal is “not too” or “not at all important.”

**Only foreign-born Latinos take a clearly positive view of how well public schools are teaching English to children who are immigrants or whose parents are immigrants. Among native-born Latinos, whites and African Americans, near majorities rate the schools as doing a “fair” or “poor” job on this score.**

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of foreign-born Latinos say the public schools are doing an “excellent” (37%) or “good” (36%) job of teaching English to children who are immigrants or whose parents are immigrants. About four in ten native-born Latinos hold similar views with 12% saying the schools are doing an “excellent” and 31% saying they are doing a “good” job.

- Half of native-born Latinos (50%) say the schools are doing a “fair” or “poor” job compared to a quarter (24%) of the foreign born.
- Among whites, about one-third say the schools are doing an “excellent” (4%) or good (30%) job of teaching English to students who are immigrants or the children of immigrants, while 47% say the schools are doing a “fair” or “poor” job.
- Four in ten African Americans say the schools are doing an “excellent” (10%) or “good” (31%) job, while 44% say the schools are doing a “fair” or “poor” job.

## **Section 2: Views on Politics and Policy**

*President Bush gets mixed ratings for his handling of education issues at the time of this survey. Foreign-born Latinos view him more favorably on this score than whites or African Americans. Democrats are more likely to be viewed by African Americans as the party that can be trusted to improve the schools, holding a slight edge among whites as well. Many Latinos decline to choose between the parties, but among those who do, they are more likely to pick Democrats than Republicans.*

*Despite enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, large majorities of Latinos, whites and African Americans alike said they were not aware that the government in Washington had recently enacted major education reforms. Nonetheless, Latinos generally support two of the major principles underlying the legislation: federal requirements that states set performance standards for schools and the use of standardized testing to measure student progress.*

*Opinions are considerably divided on one of the key controversies expected to develop as the new law is implemented in the next few years: whether to help failing schools improve but require students to continue to attend or allow parents to pull out and move their children to another school. However, there is a clear consensus in all groups supporting the law's requirement that teachers must be highly qualified in the subjects they teach. Regarding two other policy options that arise out of No Child Left Behind—government vouchers and charter schools—attitudes among Latinos and others are more fragmented because of a widespread lack of knowledge about either of the programs. On other policy matters, about two-thirds of Latinos support measures that ensure that an equal amount of money is spent on each student regardless of whether they live in a rich or a poor school district and favor university admissions programs that give special consideration to minority students.*

### **POLITICS**

**Latinos give President Bush mixed ratings on education, and among them foreign-born Latinos view him more favorably. (charts 16)**

- Slightly more than half of Latinos (53%) say that President Bush has done a “fair” or “poor” job handling the issue of education and schools, while 41% say that he has done an “excellent” or “good” job.

- Whites (59%) and African Americans (78%) are more likely than Latinos to say that President Bush has done a “fair” or “poor” job. They are less likely to say he has done an “excellent” or “good” job (34% and 17%).
- The positive views of President Bush’s performance on education among Latinos are driven by the foreign born. More foreign-born Latinos (47%) say President Bush has done an “excellent” or “good” job on education than the native born (33%).

**When asked whether they trust the Republicans or the Democrats to do a better job improving education and the schools, more than four in ten Latinos chose not to pick either party. However, those Latinos that chose are more likely to say they trust the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. (chart 17)**

- Over four in ten (42%) Latinos choose not to pick one political party over the other on the issue of education, citing a variety of reasons such as not knowing which is better or feeling that the two parties are the same. Still, nearly four in ten (39%) Latinos say that they trust the Democratic Party to do a better job of improving education and the schools, while about half as many (19%) favor the Republican Party on this issue.
- The high percentage of Latinos who do not choose between political parties is driven by the views of the foreign born. About half (49%) of foreign-born Latinos do not choose between the Democrats and Republicans, saying either that they do not know which party would do a better job when it comes to improving education and the schools (26%), that both parties are about the same (10%) or that they do not trust either party (12%). This contrasts with the views of the native born (29% do not choose a party citing any of these reasons).

**African Americans overwhelmingly prefer the Democratic Party to the Republican Party when it comes to education and the schools. Whites, meanwhile, are divided in their partisan preferences but give the Democrats a slight edge. (chart 17)**

- By a nearly five-to-one margin African Americans report trusting the Democratic Party (62%) over the Republican Party (13%) to improve education. One in four (25%) did not choose between political parties.
- The Democratic Party holds a slim advantage among whites (39%) compared to the Republican Party (32%) on education. However, just over one in four (27%) did not choose either Republicans or Democrats.



## **THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT**

**Large majorities of Latinos, whites and African Americans alike say they are unaware of whether or not an education reform bill was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush. In fact, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 launched sweeping reforms for public education from kindergarten through high school. (chart 18)**

- When asked, more than eight in ten Latinos (87%), whites (81%) and African Americans (85%) said that they did not know whether an education reform bill had been passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush.
- Parents with kids in school are not any more aware of the No Child Left Behind Act than parents without children in school.

**Nonetheless, Latinos generally endorse two pillars of the No Child Left Behind Act: a federal requirement that states set strict performance standards for public schools and the use of standardized testing to measure students' progress. (chart 19)**

- Over two-thirds (67%) of Latinos agree that the federal government should require states to set strict performance standards for public schools. About two in ten (21%) disagree and 12% say they do not know if states should set strict performance standards for public schools.
- Whites (73%) and African Americans (69%) support a federal requirement for state performance standards in education by about the same measure as Latinos.
- About six in ten Latinos say that they are “very” (19%) or “somewhat” (42%) confident that standardized tests are an accurate indicator of a student’s progress and abilities. However, one in three (33%) Latinos do not agree and are not confident that standardized tests are an accurate indicator of a student’s progress and abilities.
- Whites (53%) and African Americans (55%) express confidence in standardized tests at slightly lower levels than Latinos.

**Latinos broadly support the alternatives offered by the No Child Left Behind Act for dealing with schools that fail to meet performance standards. However, they are divided over the key policy choices regarding schools that repeatedly fail to meet standards. (charts 20 and 21)**

- The vast majority of Latinos agrees that federal or state funds should be provided to help a failing school improve its performance (93%); that parents with children in a failing school should have the option of sending their children to

another school (87%); and that a community group, a private company, or the state should be able to take over if a school fails to improve for several years (73%). These views mirror the responses offered by whites and African Americans.

- Latinos are divided over the more difficult policy choices that can arise in dealing with schools that repeatedly fail to meet standards. When forced to choose, native-born Latinos split over whether to help failing schools improve but require students to continue to attend regardless of performance (50%), or whether to give parents the choice to send their children elsewhere even if that means closing down some schools (47%).
- Foreign-born Latinos favor (69%) helping a school that repeatedly fails and keeping students enrolled, rather than giving parents the choice of going elsewhere and risk closing the school (28%).

**Whites do not agree with Latinos on this issue. When forced to choose, most felt that parents should be given the option to move their children out of repeatedly failing schools regardless of if that school would stay open or not. African Americans tend to say that keeping a school open should be the top priority, but, like native-born Latinos, they are divided on this issue. (chart 21)**

- Six in ten (60%) whites say that if a school repeatedly fails to meet performance standards, the top priority should be giving parents the choice to send their children elsewhere, even if that means closing down some schools, compared to 35% of all Latinos and 43% of African Americans.
- On the other hand, about one-third (35%) of whites say that if a school repeatedly fails to meet performance standards, the top priority should be helping the school improve while requiring students to continue attending regardless of its performance, compared to 62% of all Latinos and 53% of African Americans.

**Latinos, like whites and African Americans, support provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act that require all teachers to be highly qualified in the subjects they teach, even if implementing this policy means that class sizes get larger. (chart 22)**

- Nearly eight in ten Latinos (78%), whites (75%) and African Americans (79%) say that a school's top priority should be ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified in their subjects even if that means that class sizes will be larger.
- Conversely, around two in ten Latinos (19%), whites (21%) and African Americans (16%) say that a school's top priority should be keeping class size down even if it means hiring teachers who are not highly qualified in the subjects that they teach.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

### **Latinos hold more positive views about standardized tests than either whites or African Americans, and feel that they are not biased against minority students. (chart 23)**

- As mentioned before, over six in ten (62%) Latinos are confident that standardized tests are an accurate indicator of a student's progress and abilities, while somewhat fewer whites (53%) and African Americans (55%) express such confidence.
  - There are no significant differences between native-born and foreign-born Latinos on this point.
- Most Latinos (58%) also believe that, in general, standardized tests are an unbiased measure of a student's ability. However, about one quarter (24%) of Latinos feel that these tests are biased against non-white students.
  - More native-born Latinos (62%) say the tests are unbiased than the foreign born (55%). Nearly one in five (19%) foreign-born Latinos volunteer that they do not know whether or not the tests are biased.
- African Americans are almost evenly split on the bias issue with 45% saying standardized tests are not biased against non-white students and 41% saying that they are. Whites say the tests are unbiased by a margin of two-to-one (60% vs. 27%).

### **All groups draw distinctions among the various uses of standardized testing, generally favoring pedagogical goals more than administrative or budgetary applications. Foreign-born Latinos favor the most widespread uses of standardized testing and are often its most enthusiastic supporters. (chart 24)**

- More than eight in ten Latinos (88%), whites (84%) and African Americans (83%) support the use of standardized testing to identify areas where students need extra help and to identify areas in which teachers need to improve their teaching skills.
- More Latinos (81%) are supportive than whites (68%) or African Americans (68%) about the use of standardized tests to ensure that students meet national academic standards.
- When it comes to the use of standardized tests to determine whether or not students are promoted or can graduate, foreign-born Latinos (81%) are more likely to be supportive than the native born (65%). Fewer whites (52%) and African Americans (52%) support this use.

- Differences among groups are also evident in views on the uses of standardized tests to rank or rate schools with 74% of foreign-born Latinos and 61% of the native born saying the tests should be used for such purposes compared to 51% of whites and 49% of African Americans.
- On the use of standardized tests to determine the level of funding received by individual schools, 68% of foreign-born Latinos and 46% of the native born offered positive views, compared to 31% of whites and 36% of African Americans.
- Across all groups, comparatively smaller shares supported granting employers access to standardized test results when a student seeks employment. Foreign-born Latinos (61%) were more likely to endorse such use compared to 42% of the native born, 32% of whites and 36% of African Americans.

**Most Latino parents do not know how standardized test scores in their child’s school compare to the test scores in other schools in their district or state. (chart 25)**

- Less than four-in-ten Latino parents know how the standardized test scores in their child’s school compare to scores at other schools in their district (38%) or other schools in their state (31%).
  - Foreign-born Latino parents are significantly less likely than the native born to know how scores in their child’s school compare to scores at other schools in their district (33% vs. 47%) or in their state (28% vs. 36%).

**White parents, and to a lesser extent African American parents, are more likely than Latino parents to know how their child’s test scores compare to scores at other schools in their district or state. (chart 25)**

- Six in ten (60%) white parents and 48% of African American parents say that they know how the test scores in their child’s school compare to the test scores in other schools in their district, versus 38% of Latinos.
- Over half (53%) of white parents and 37% of African American parents say that they know how the test scores in their child’s school compare to the test scores in other schools in their state, versus 31% of Latino parents.

**Most parents who know how the standardized test scores in their child’s school compare to the standardized test scores in other schools in their district or state report getting this information from their child’s school. (chart 25)**

- Among Latino parents who know how test scores at their child’s school compare to other schools in their district or state, 71% get this information from their child’s school. Much smaller minorities of this group of Latino parents report getting this information about test scores from the media (17%) or the Internet (5%).

- Majorities of whites and African Americans who know how scores at their child's school compare also say they get such information from the school.

## **OTHER POLICY ISSUES**

### ***Budget Problems***

**Like most Americans, Latinos are concerned that federal and state budget problems will seriously affect education programs.**

- Most Latinos (54%) say that they are “very” concerned that federal and state budget problems will seriously affect education programs. Another 27% say that they are “somewhat” concerned.
- Similar shares of whites (51% “very,” 30% “somewhat”) share those concerns. More African Americans express these worries (69% “very,” 18% “somewhat”).

### ***Equal Money for All Students***

**Latinos tend to support measures that ensure that an equal amount of money is spent on each student, regardless of whether the student lives in a rich or a poor school district, even if this means that money is taken from rich school districts and given to poor ones. (chart 26)**

- About two-thirds (65%) of Latinos say that they support measures to ensure that an equal amount of money is spent on each student. Less than one in ten (8%) Latinos voices opposition to measures that would ensure an equal amount of money was spent on all students, but about one in four (24%) says that they do not know enough about this subject to have an opinion.
  - Whites and African Americans express virtually the same views.
- When asked if they would still support measures to ensure that an equal amount of money was spent on each student if it would mean taking money from rich school districts and giving it to poor ones, the majority of Latinos (54%) still backed these measures.

### *Vouchers*

**Latinos are more likely to say that they support rather than oppose government vouchers that would allow parents to send their children to private or religious schools or to a public school of their choice. However, Latinos are even more likely to say that they do not know if they would support vouchers because they have not heard enough about them to have an opinion. (chart 27)**

- About four in ten (42%) Latinos support the government offering parents vouchers to send their children to private or religious schools or to a public school of their choice, while just over one in ten (12%) Latinos say that they would oppose government vouchers. However, 46% of Latinos say that they do not know if they would support government vouchers because they have not heard enough about them to have an opinion.
  - Whites and African Americans express views that are somewhat less favorable: 35% of whites and 39% of African Americans support vouchers; 39% of whites and 40% of African Americans say they do not know enough to have an opinion; 26% of whites and 21% of African Americans oppose vouchers.
- Latino support for government vouchers was cut in half (20%) when Latinos were asked if they would still support government vouchers if it could mean, less money for public schools in their area.

### *Charter School Program*

**A large majority of Latinos say that they do not know enough about the charter school program to have an opinion about it. However, among those with an opinion, Latinos are more likely to favor rather than oppose a charter school program that permits some public schools to function independently from the local school district as long as they meet state standards. (chart 28)**

- Two-thirds (67%) of Latinos do not know enough about the charter school program to have an opinion about it.
- One in four (25%) Latinos favors a charter school program, compared to 8% who oppose it.
- Whites and African Americans share almost identical views with native-born Latinos as three in ten favor a charter school program, about one in ten opposes it and about six in ten do not know enough to have a position. Fewer foreign-born Latinos support charter schools (21%) and more do not know enough to have a position (73%).

### *Affirmative Action*

**Latinos, especially the foreign born, favor university admissions programs that give special consideration to Latinos, African Americans, and other minority groups. However, four in ten native-born Latinos oppose such programs. (chart 29)**

- Over two-thirds (68%) of all Latinos favor university admissions programs that give special consideration to Latinos, African Americans, and other minority groups. This includes 45% of Latinos who say they “strongly” favor these programs.
- Foreign-born Latinos are more likely to favor these programs than native-born Latinos (75% vs. 57%).
- A substantial share of native-born Latinos, 40%, say they oppose such programs.

**African Americans are equally as likely to favor these admission programs as Latinos. Most whites oppose such programs and about four in ten say they “strongly” oppose them. (chart 29)**

- About two-thirds (64%) of African Americans favor admissions programs that give special consideration to minority groups, and a third (32%) oppose such programs.
- More than two-thirds of whites (68%) oppose such programs and this includes 43% who say they “strongly” oppose these programs. Among whites, 27% say they favor admissions programs that give special consideration to minority groups, including 9% who “strongly” favor these programs.

### *Racial Integration*

**Latinos are split on whether racially integrated schools are better for kids or if they do not make much of a difference. (chart 30)**

- The majority of native-born and foreign-born Latinos take opposite views of the benefits of racially integrated schools. Among the native born, 51% say integrated schools are better for students compared to 38% of the foreign born. Meanwhile 39% of the native born say integration does not make much of a difference compared to 52% of the foreign born.

**Whites and African Americans are more positive about racially integrated schools than Latinos. (chart 30)**

- Majorities of whites (60%) and African Americans (54%) say that racially integrated schools are better for kids.
- About one-third of whites (31%) and African Americans (34%) say that racially integrated schools do not make much of a difference, and about one in ten whites (7%) and African Americans (10%) says that they are worse for kids, coinciding with 7% of Latinos.

**Most Latinos who think that racially integrated schools are better for kids say that the government should ensure racial integration.**

- Of the 44% of Latinos who think that racial integration in schools is better for kids, three in four (75%) say that the government should make sure schools are racially integrated.

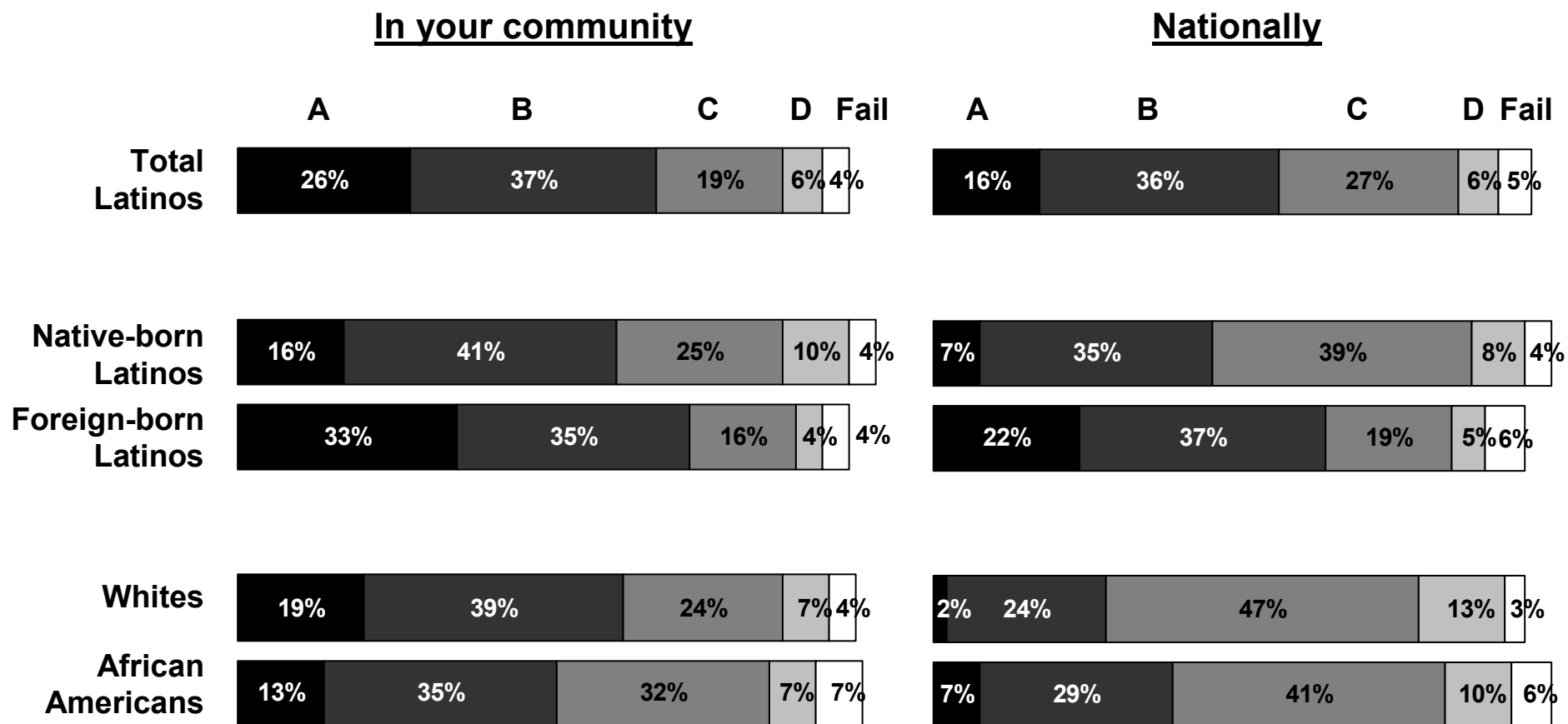


**ATTITUDES TOWARDS  
EDUCATION AND  
ASSESSMENT OF  
SCHOOLS TODAY**

Chart 1

# Ratings of Schools

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or Fail. Suppose the public schools were graded in the same way. What grade would you give schools...



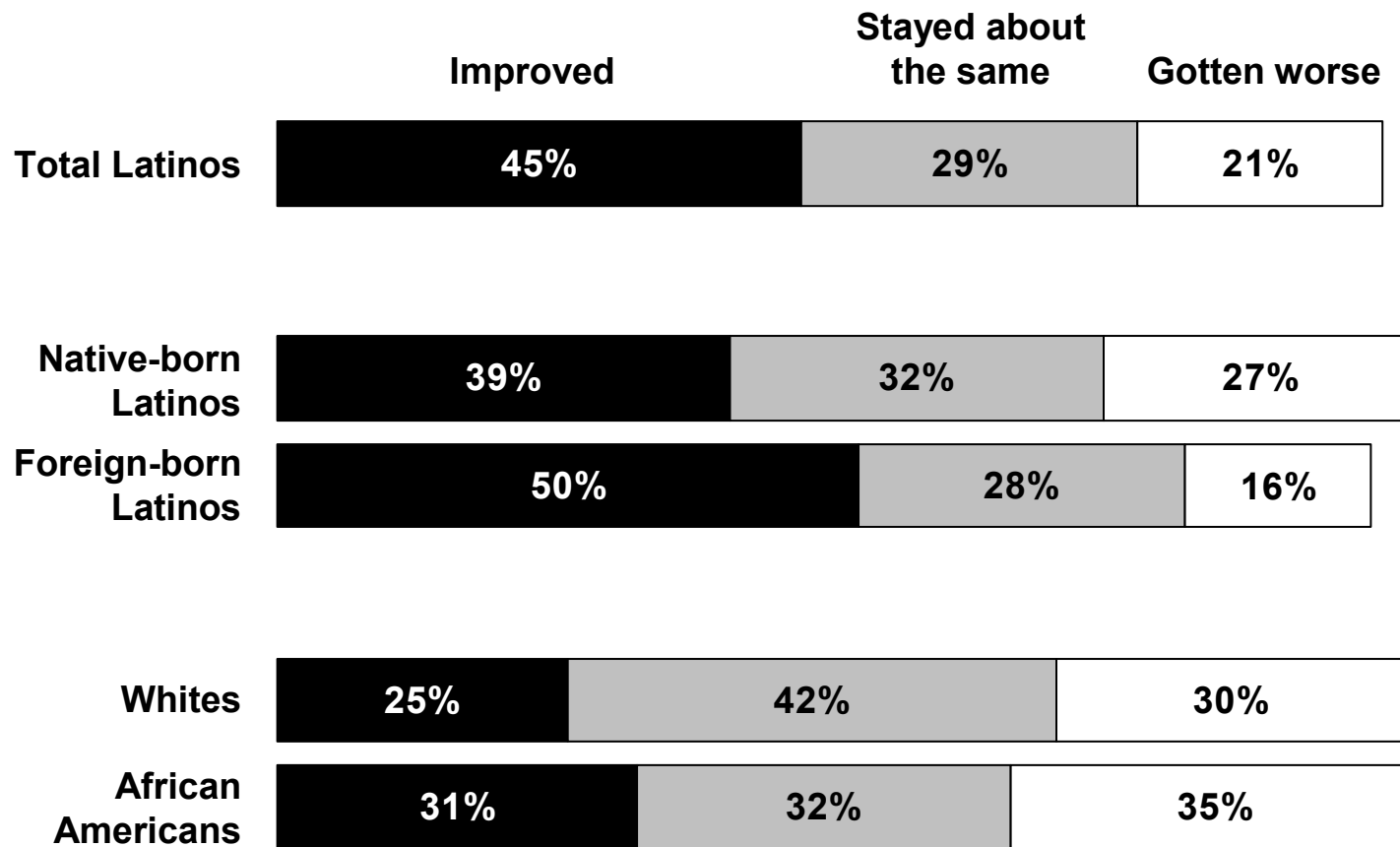
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 2

# Progress of Schools

Compared to five years ago, would you say that in general schools have...



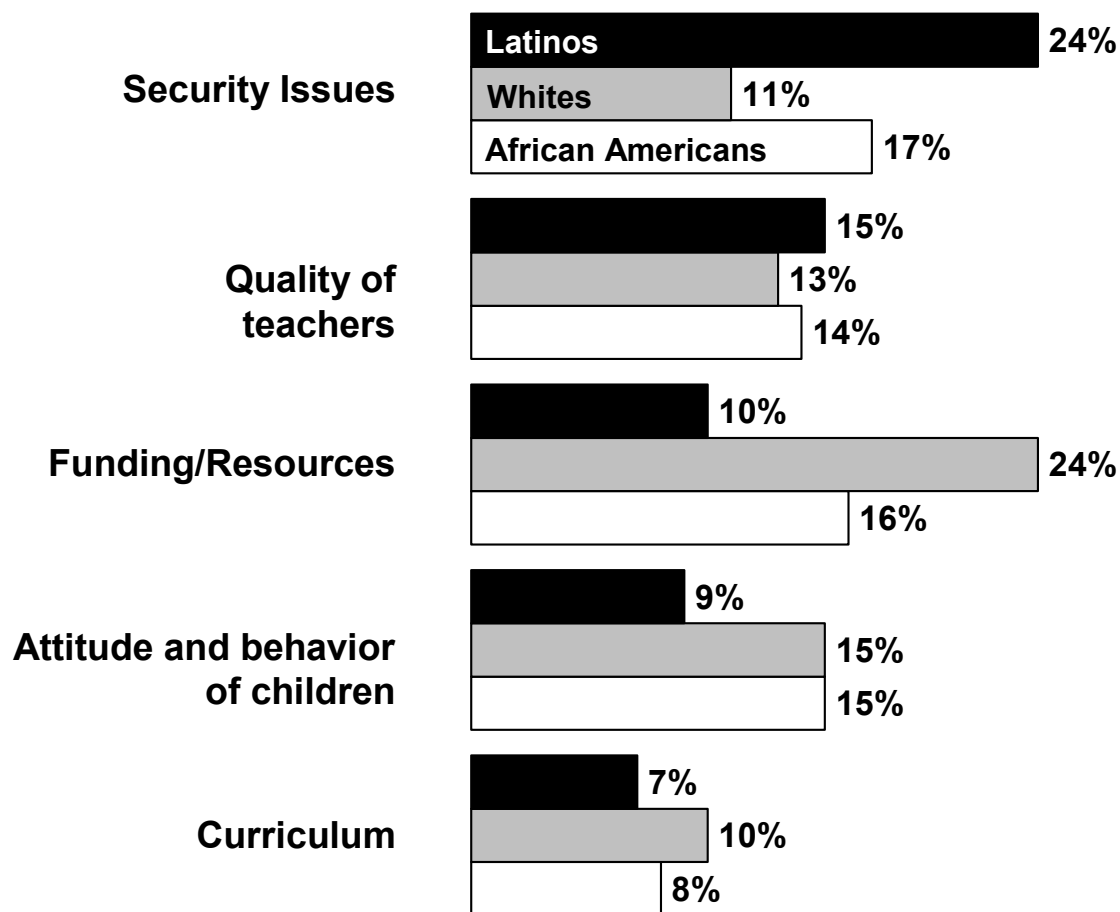
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 3

# Most Important Problem Facing Community Schools

What do you think is the most important problem facing the schools in your community today?



Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 4

# Teachers and School Officials

Among Latino Parents...

Percent who say that their child's teacher has a good understanding of their child's...

Academic strengths and weaknesses

80%

Overall development and happiness

76%

Rating of experience when parents have had contact with school officials

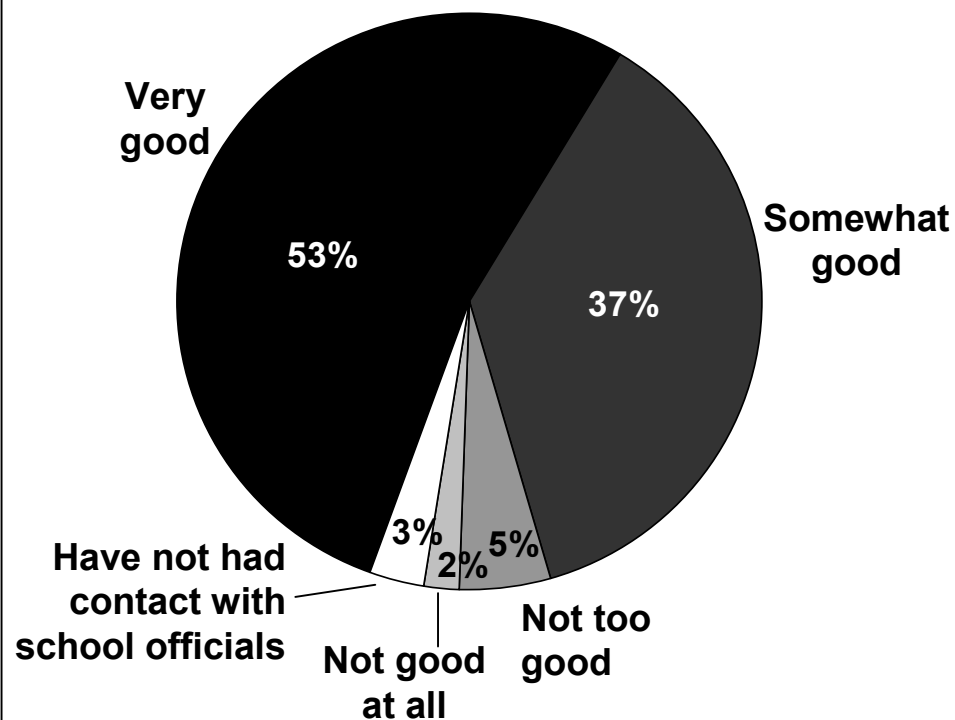


Chart 5

# Accommodating Spanish Speaking Parents

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Percent of Spanish-dominant Latino parents who say that they can request...

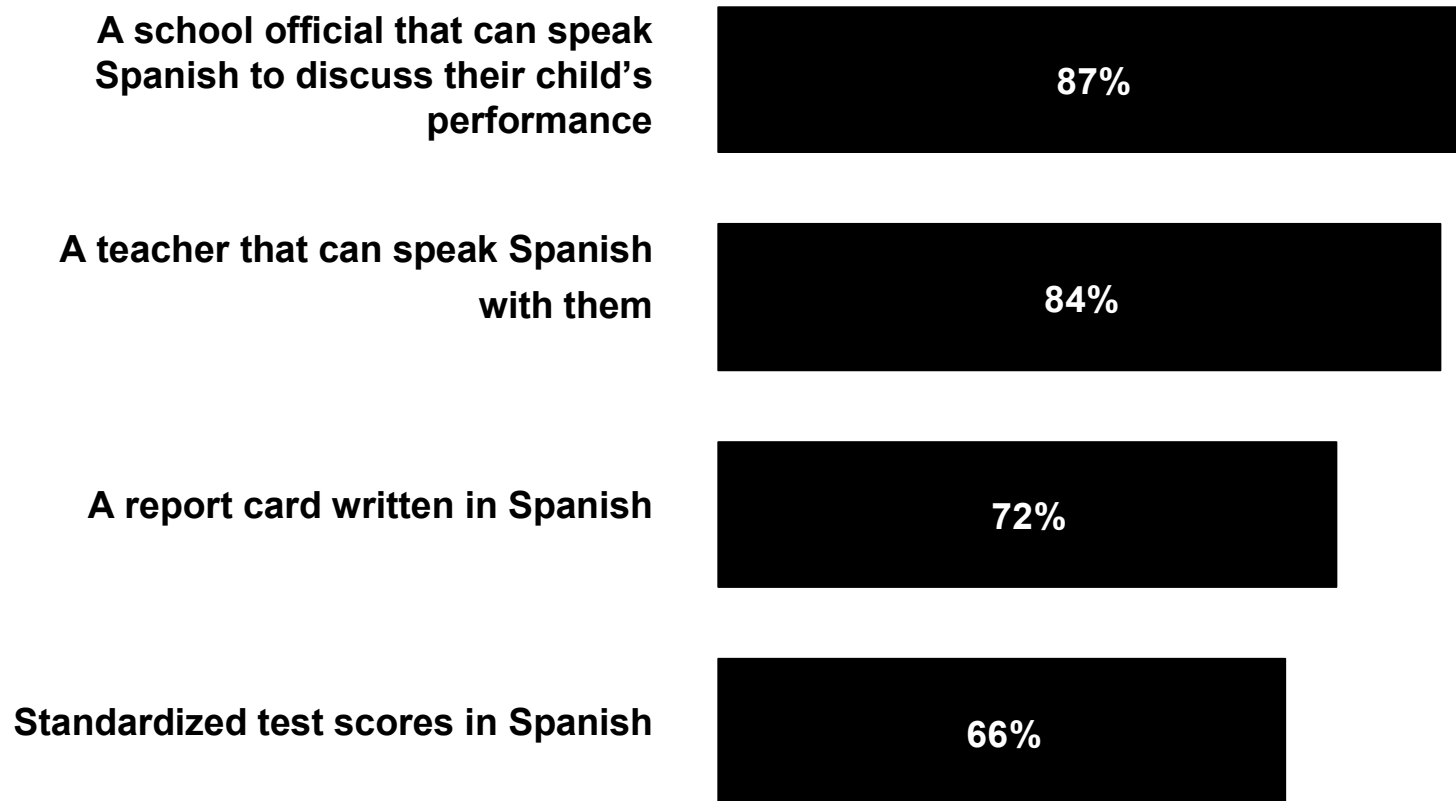
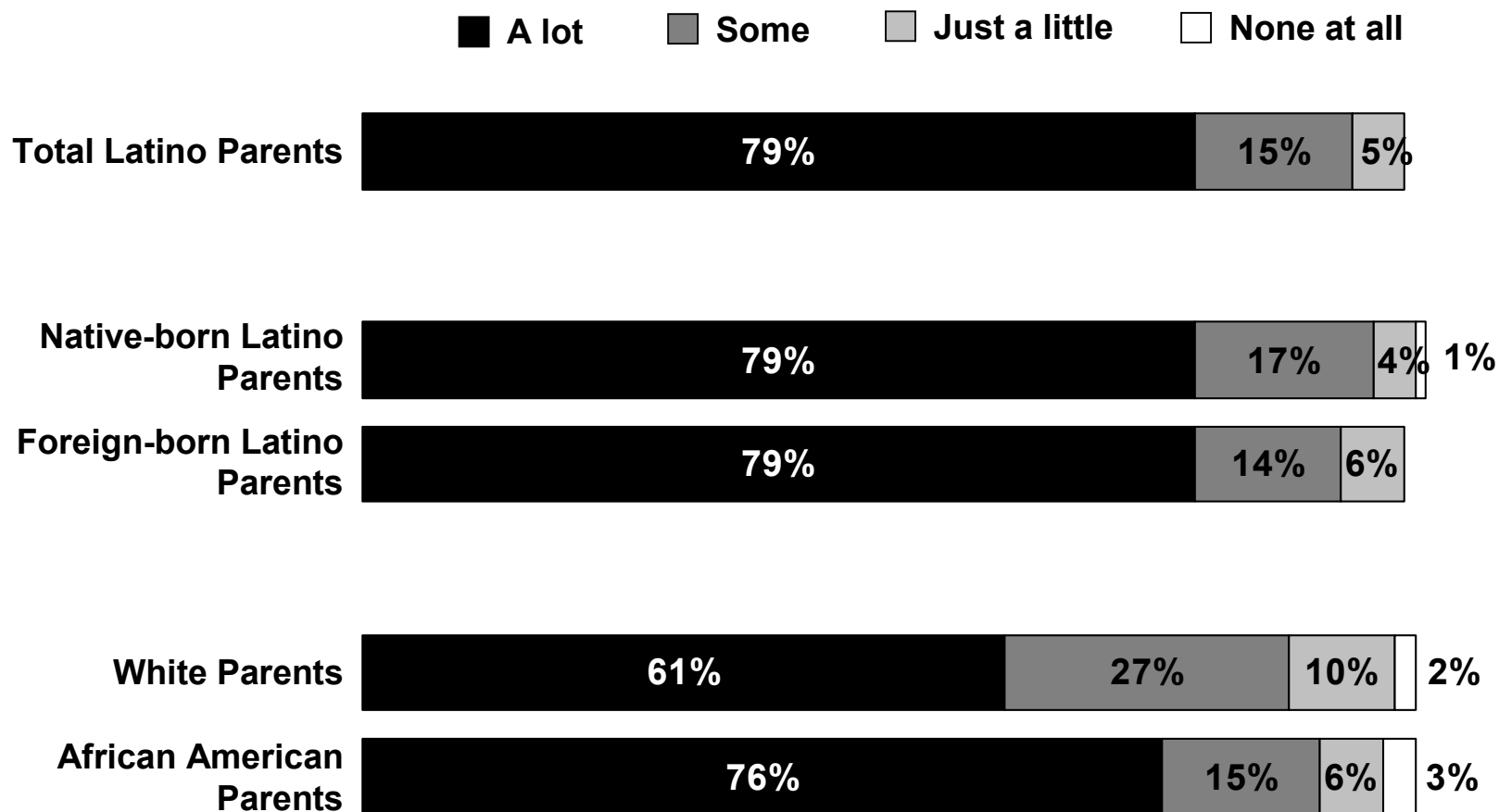


Chart 6

# Perceived Influence Over Child's Education

How much influence parents say that they have over their child's education...



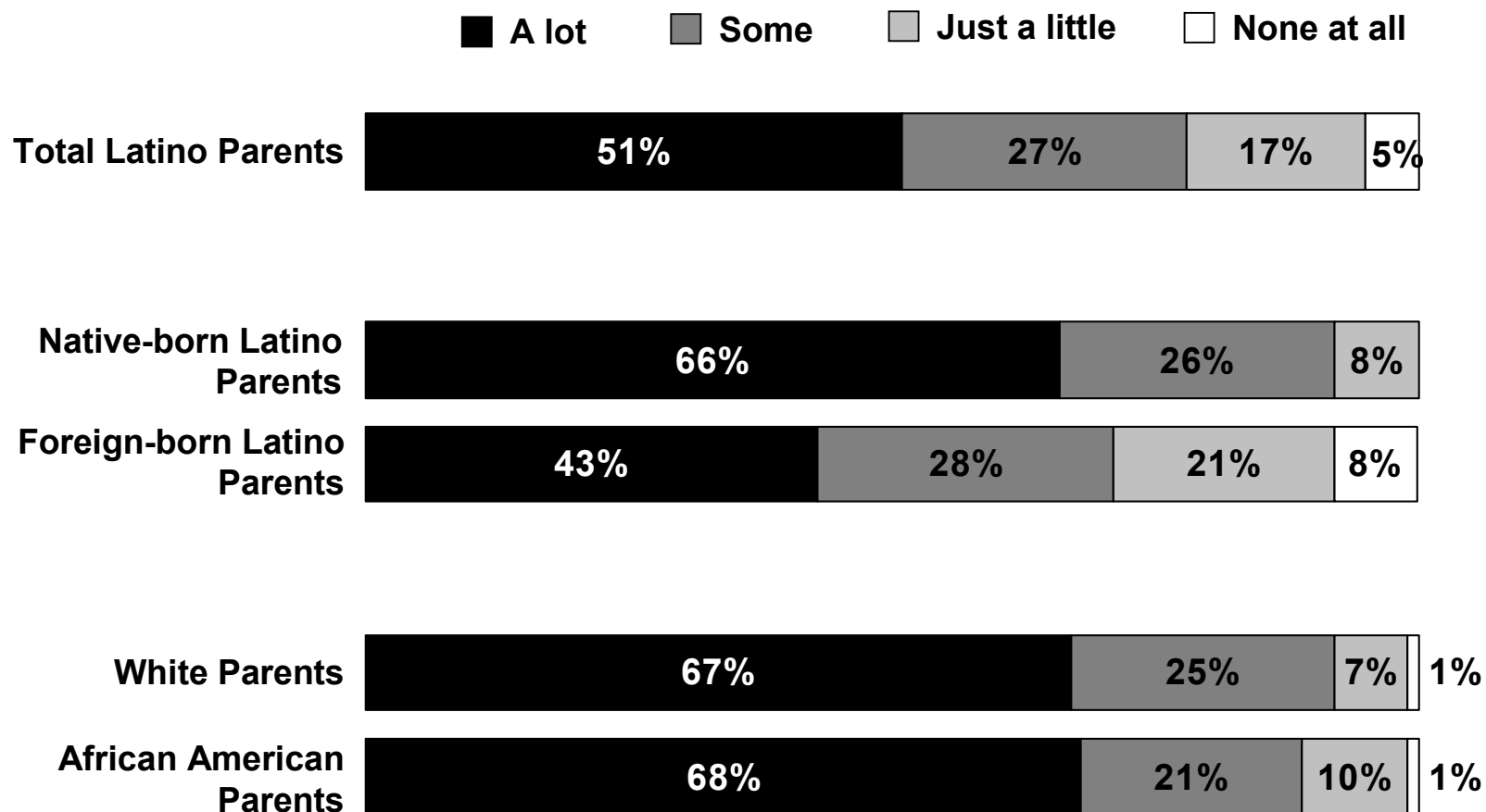
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 7

# Knowledge of Child's Curriculum

How much parents say that they know about the curriculum and academic goals of their child's grade...



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)



Chart 8

## Involvement in School Activities

Percentage of parents with children in Kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade who say that they have...

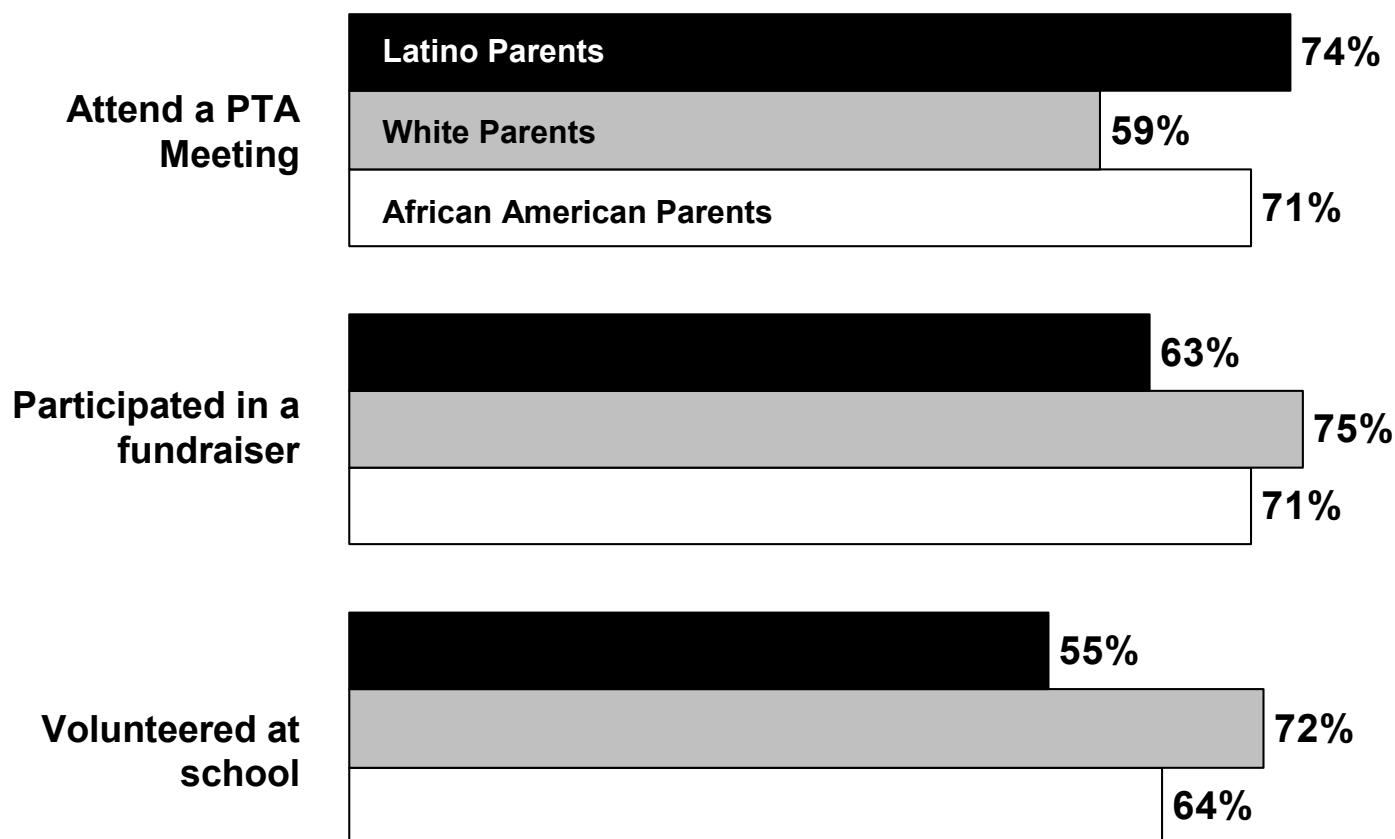
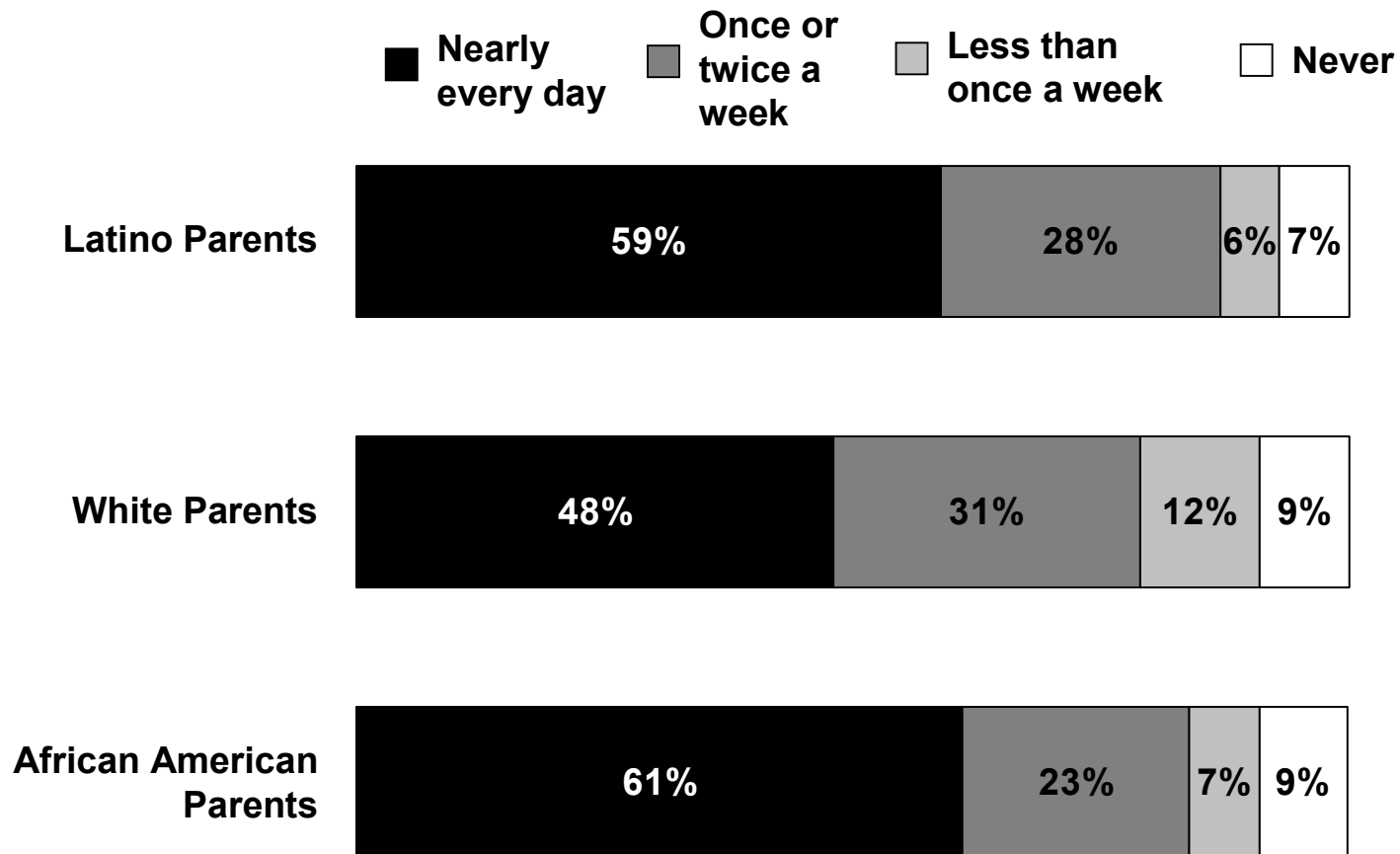


Chart 9

# Involvement with Child's Homework

How often parents say that they help their child with their homework...



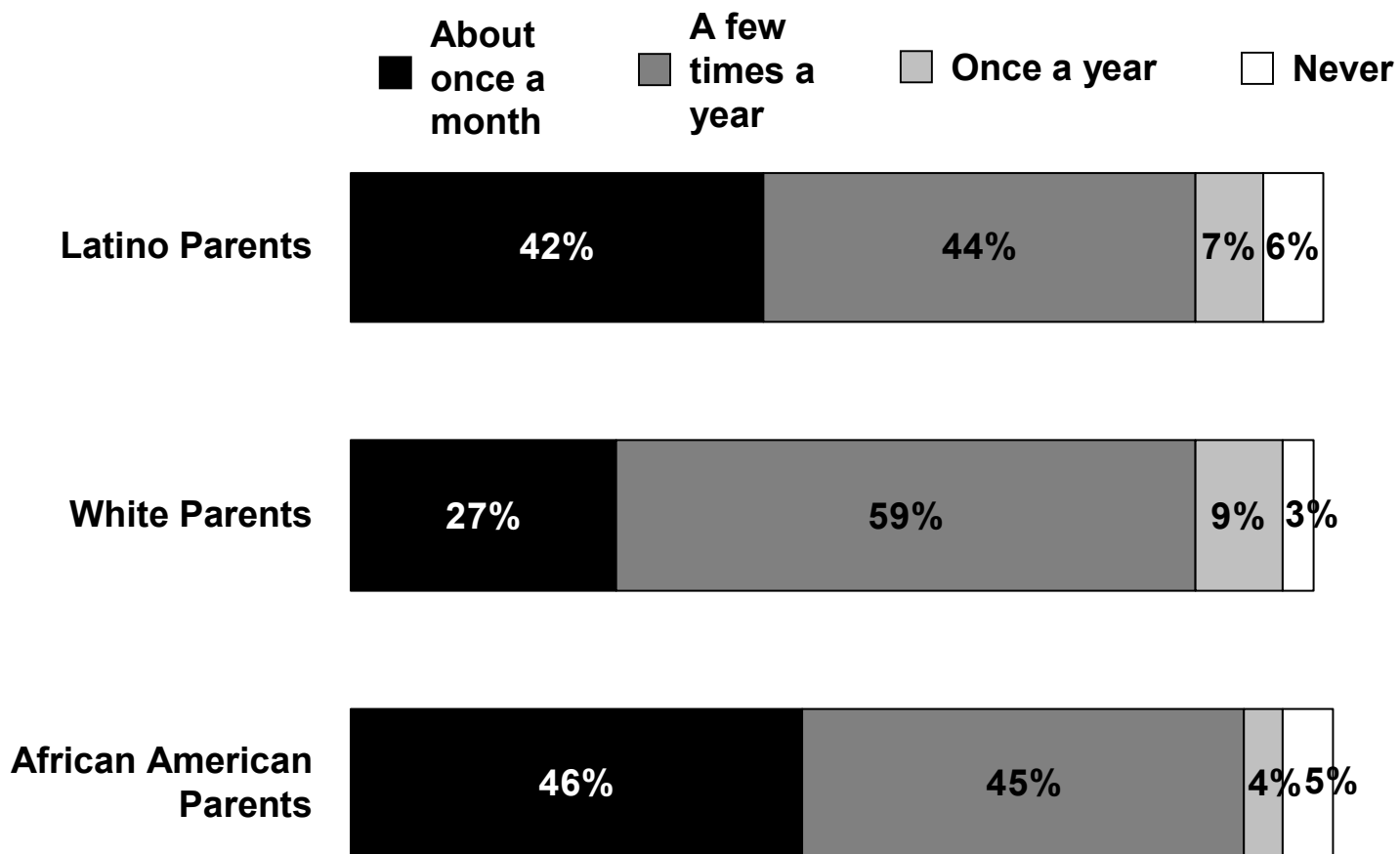
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 10

# Involvement with Child's Teacher

How often parents report that they meet with their child's teacher...



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 11

# Perceived Challenges for Latino Students

Percentage who say each of the following is a major reason why Latino students are not doing as well as white students...

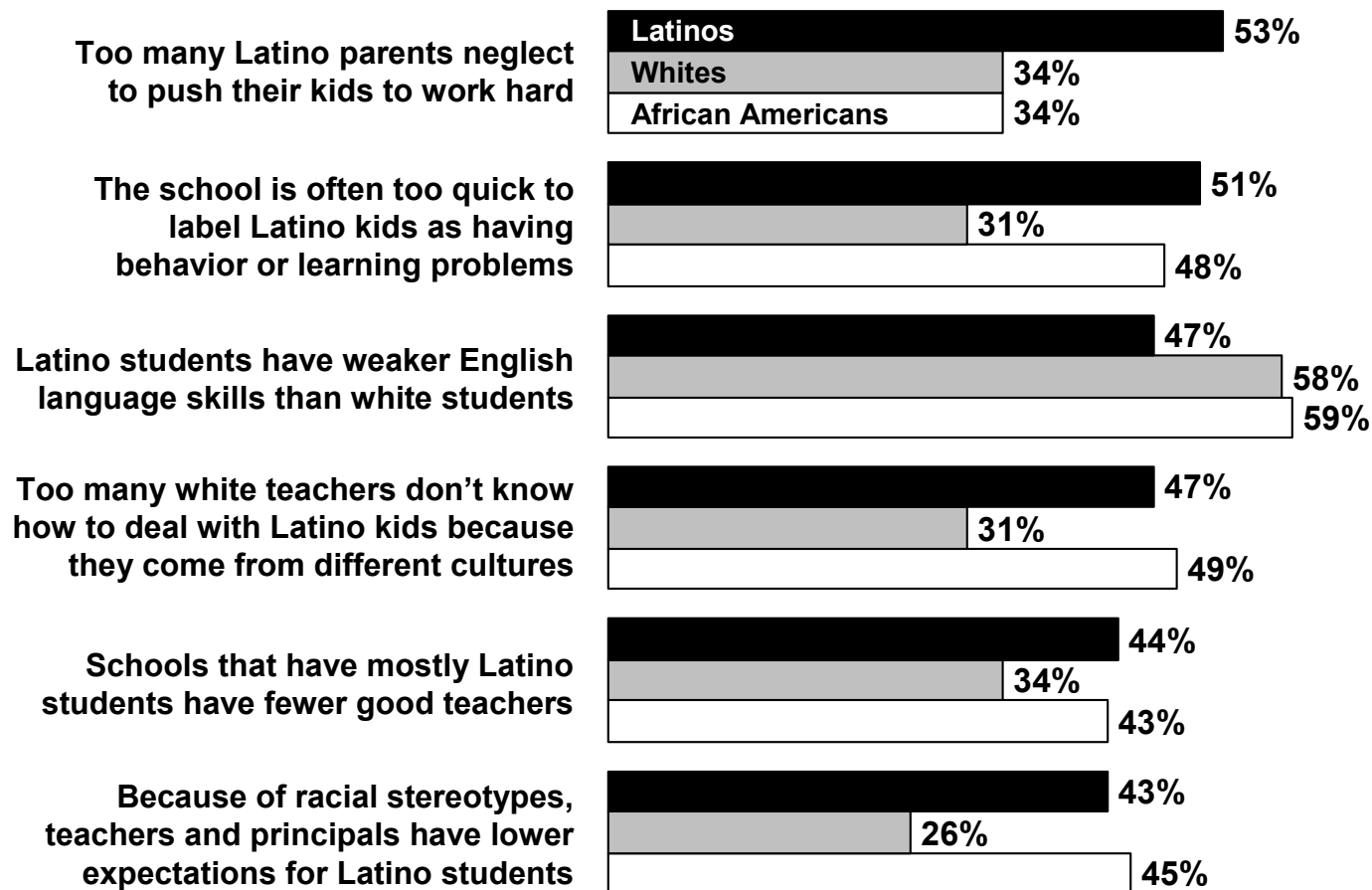
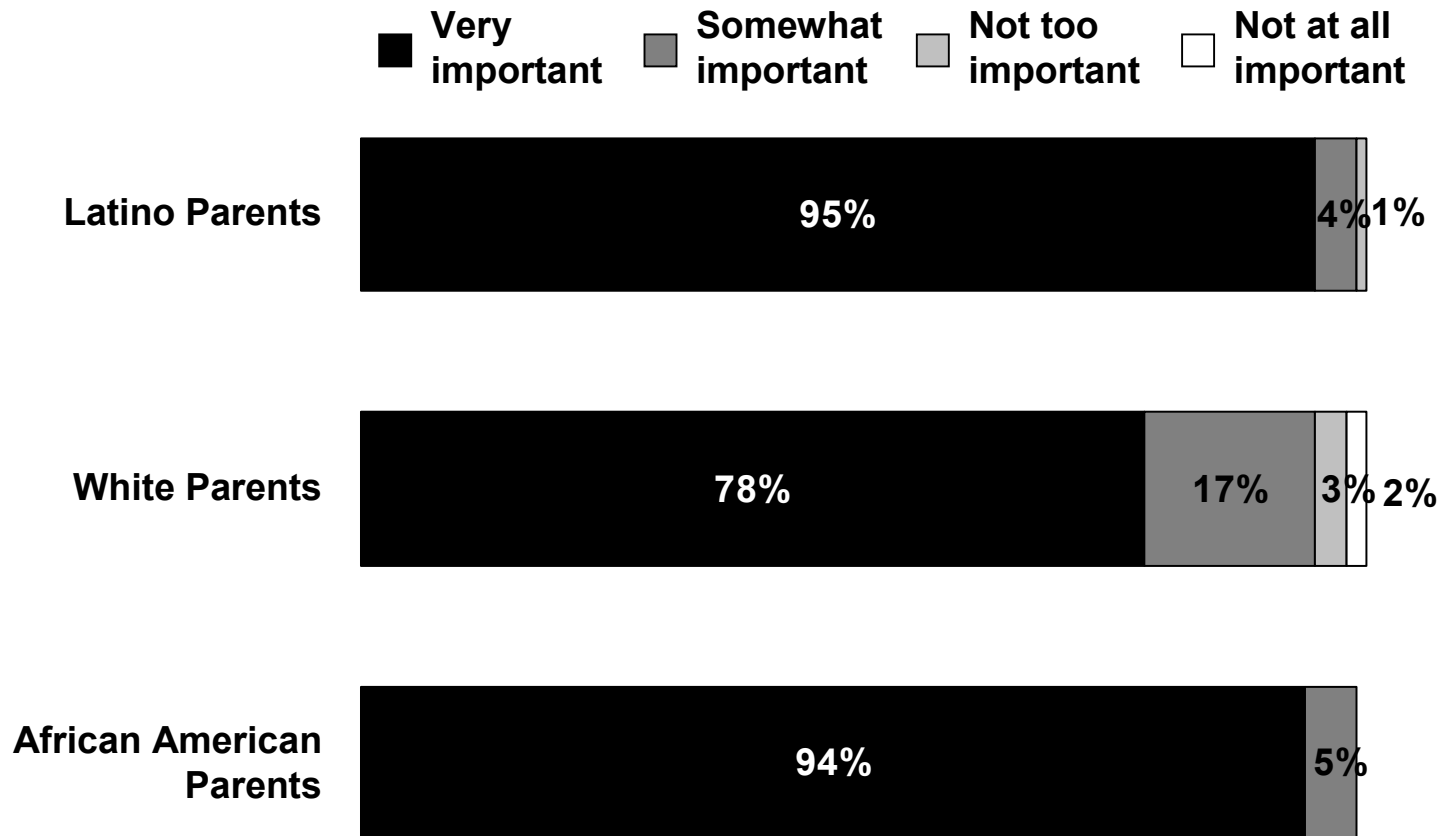


Chart 12

# Importance of a College Education for Parents

How important is it for parents that their child gets a college education...



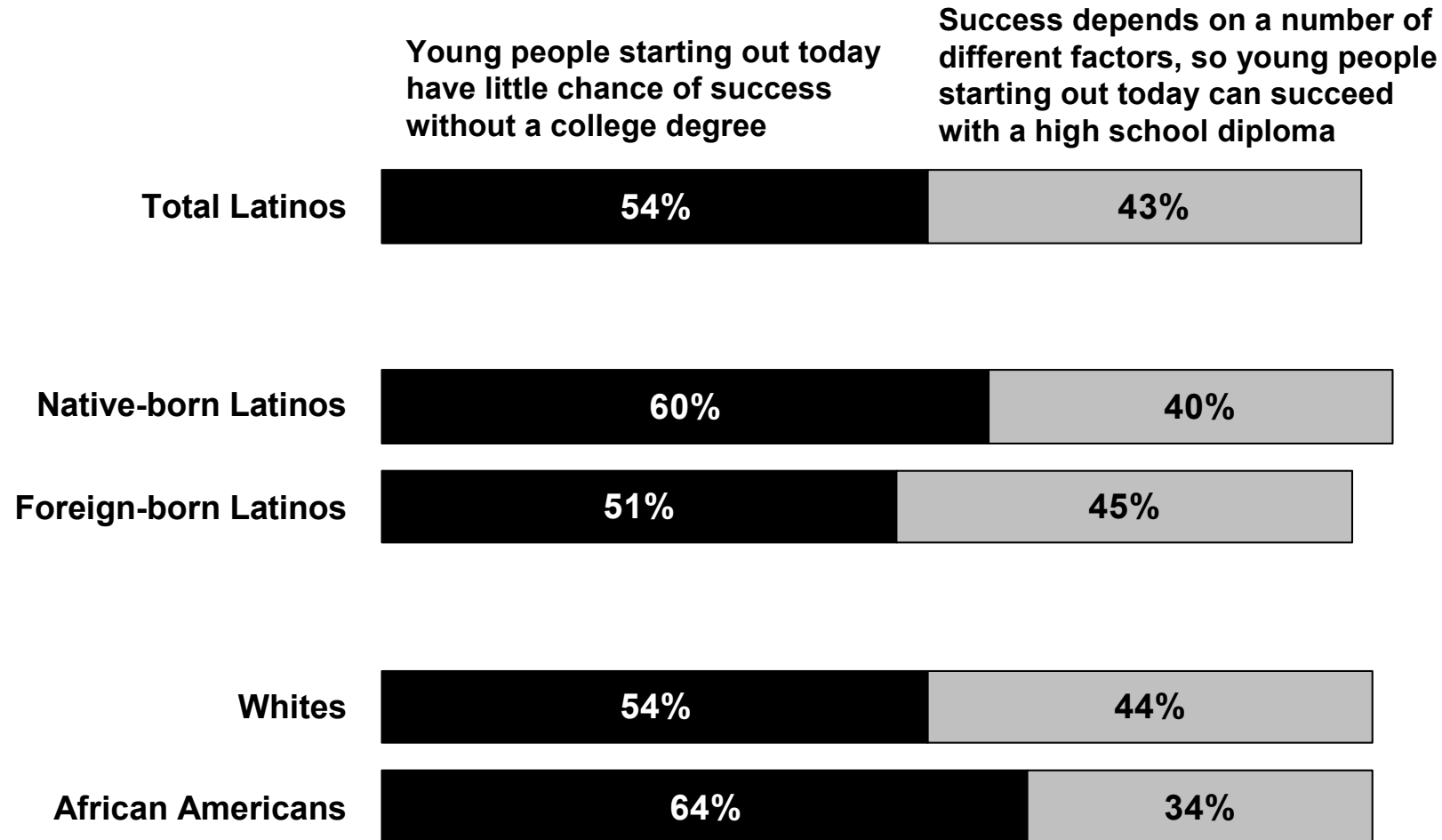
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 13

# Importance of a College Education for Success

Which comes closer to your view...



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 14

# Obstacles to Higher Education

Percentage of Latinos who say that each of the following is a major reason why people do not go to college or fail to finish college if they start...

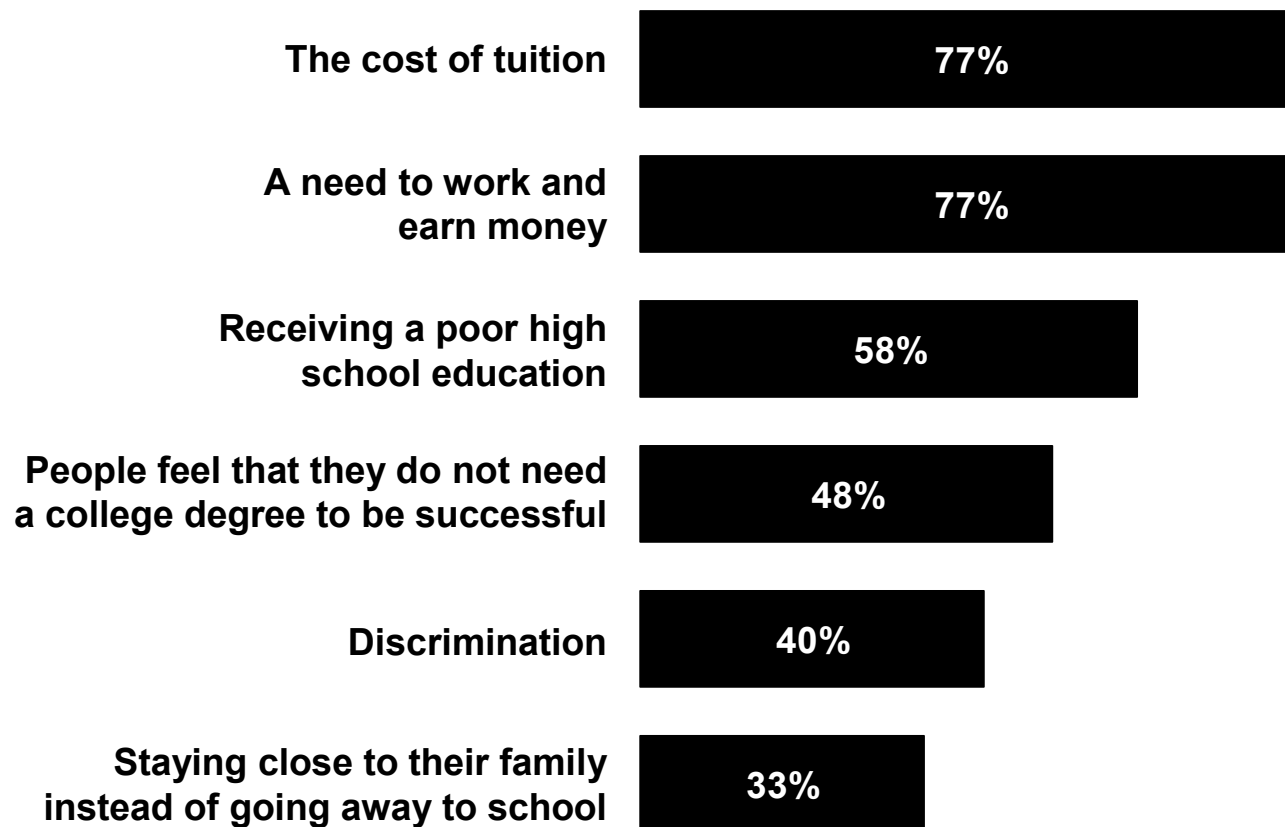
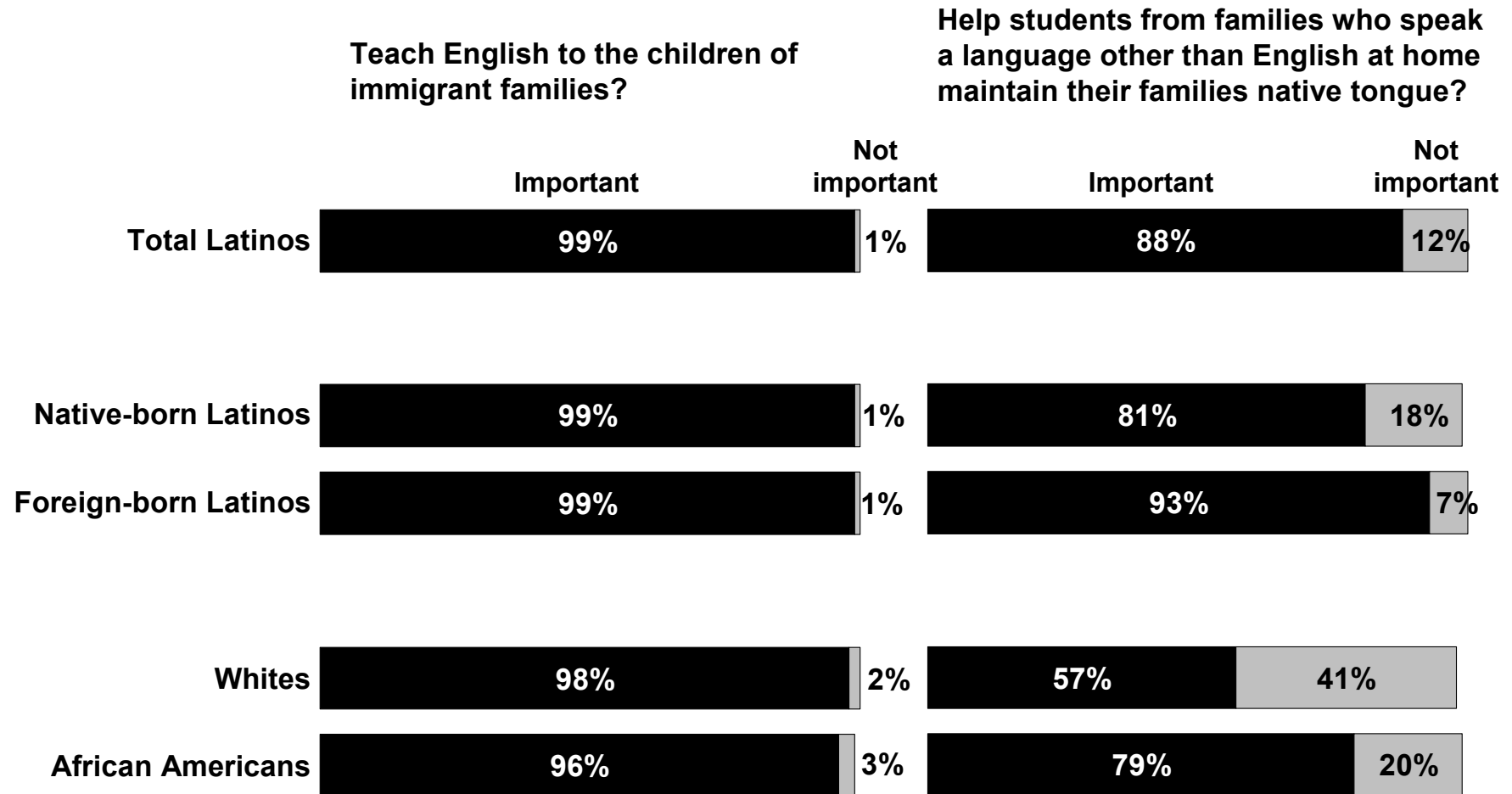


Chart 15

# Language

How important is it for public schools to...



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

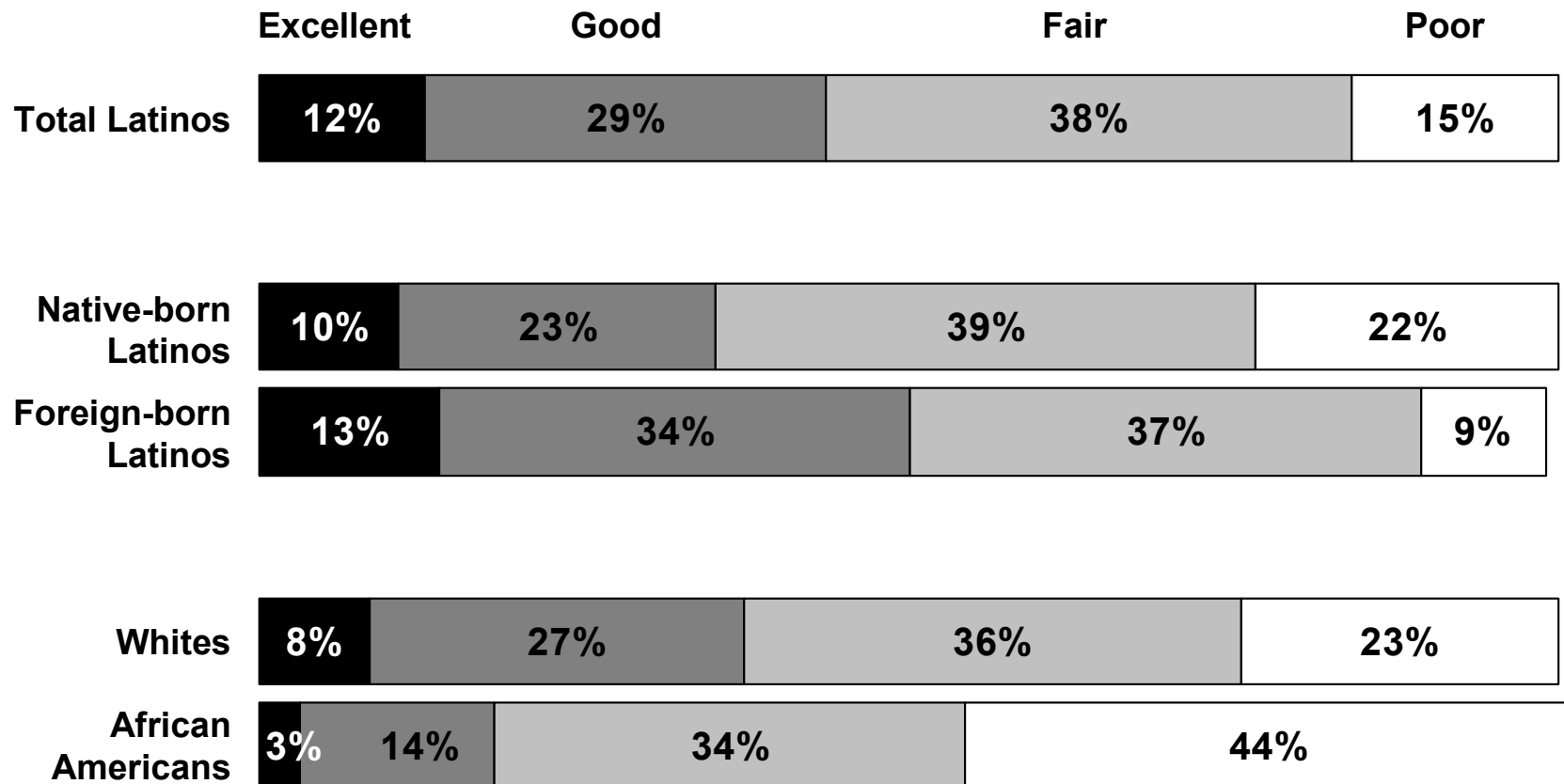


# **VIEWS ON POLITICS AND POLICY**

Chart 16

# President Bush and Education

How good a job would you say President Bush has done handling the issue of education and schools...



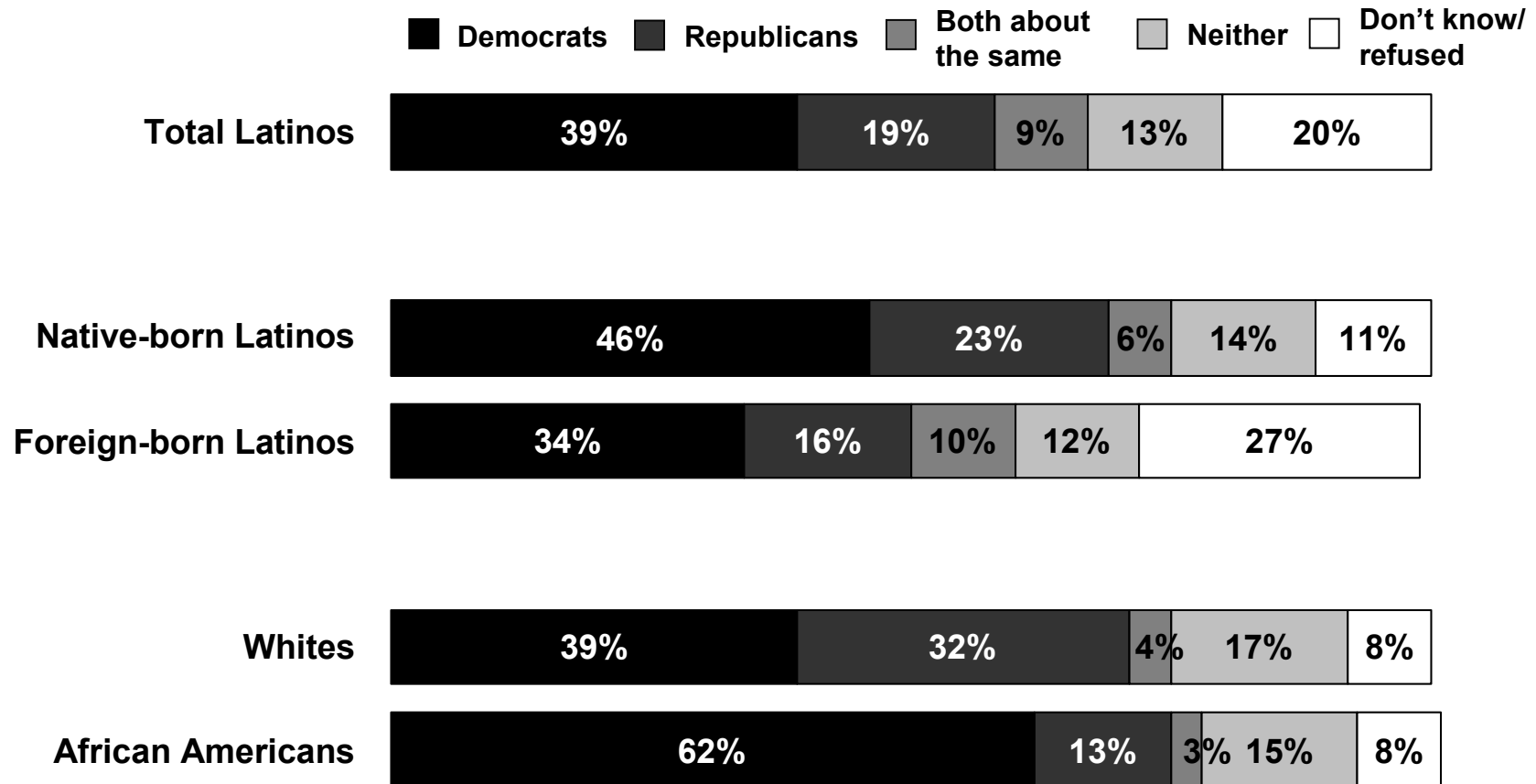
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 17

# Political Parties and Education

Which political party– the Democrats or the Republicans– do you trust to do a better job improving education and the schools?



Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 18

# Awareness of Education Reform

To the best of your knowledge, has an education reform bill been passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush, or not, or don't you know?

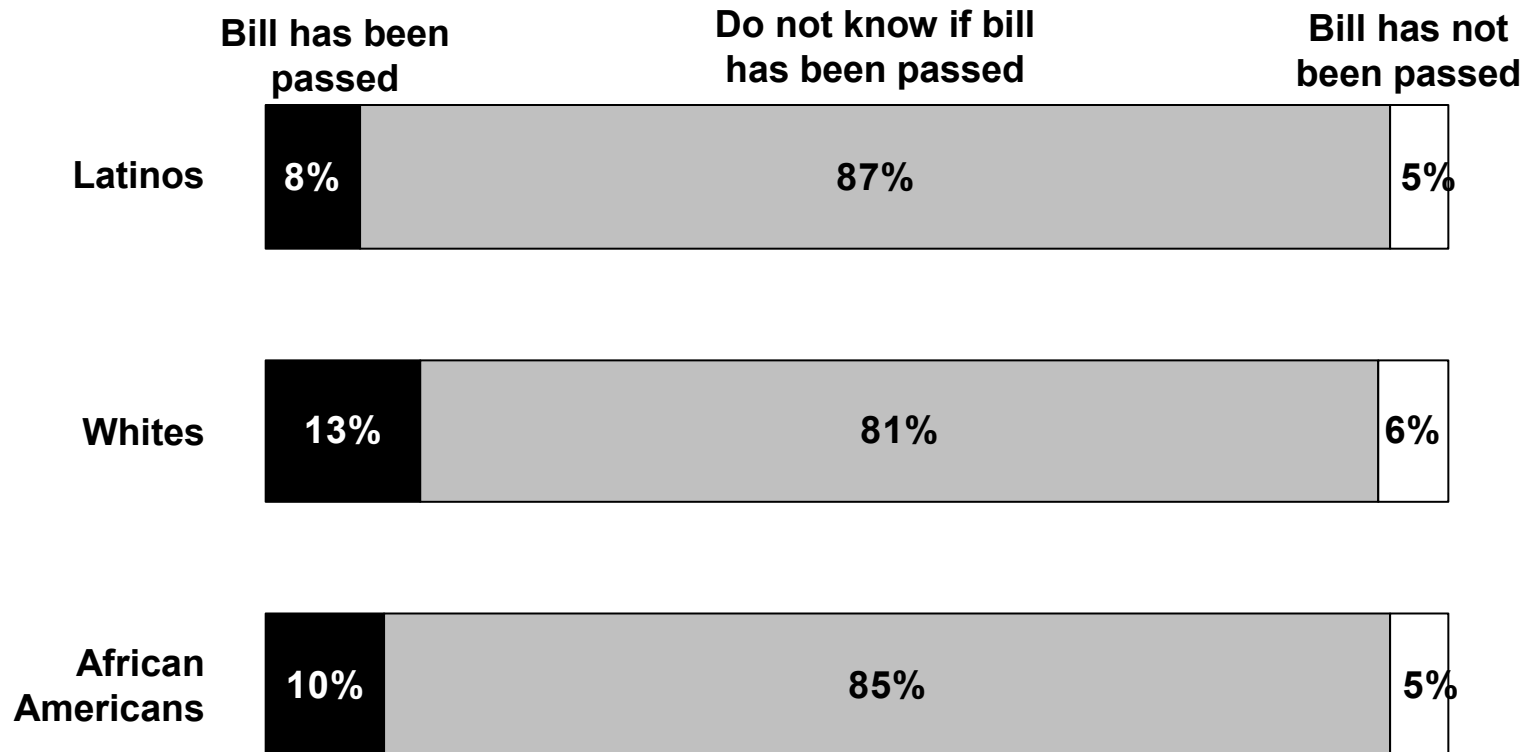
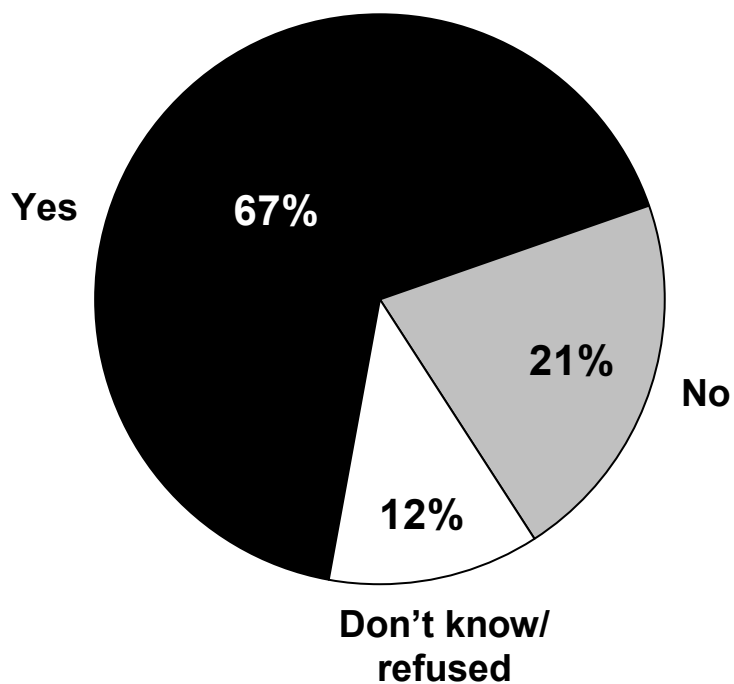


Chart 19

# Principles of No Child Left Behind

Among Latinos...

Should the federal government require states to set strict performance standards for public schools...



How confident are you that standardizes tests are an accurate indicator of a student's progress and abilities...

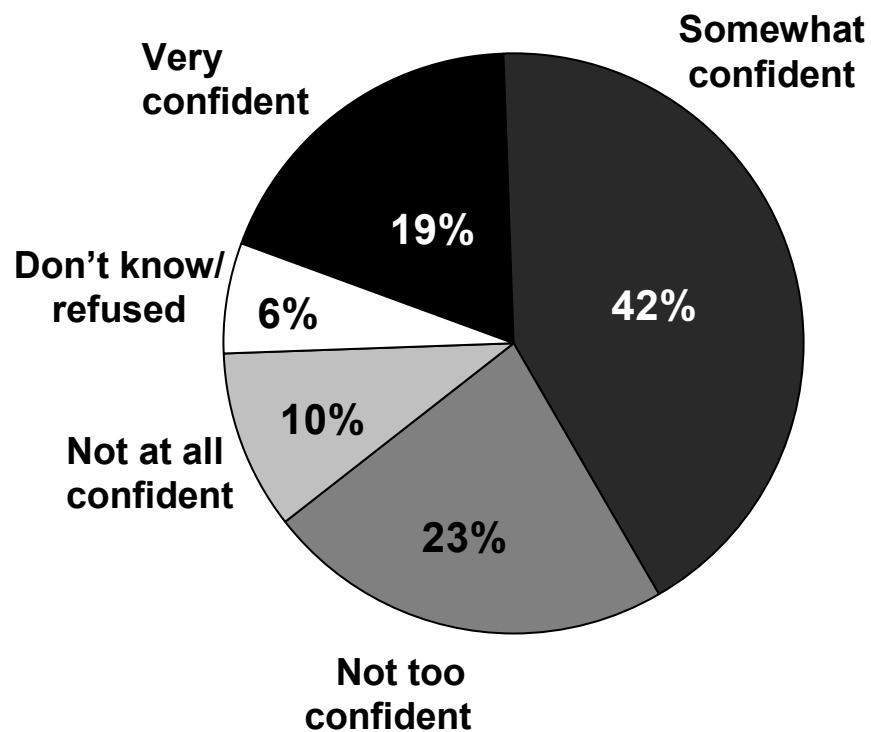


Chart 20

## Failing to Meet Performance Standards

---

Among Latinos, the percent who agree that each of the following should happen when a school fails to meet performance standards...

Federal or state funds should be provided to help the school improve its performance

93%

Parents should have the option of sending their children to another school

87%

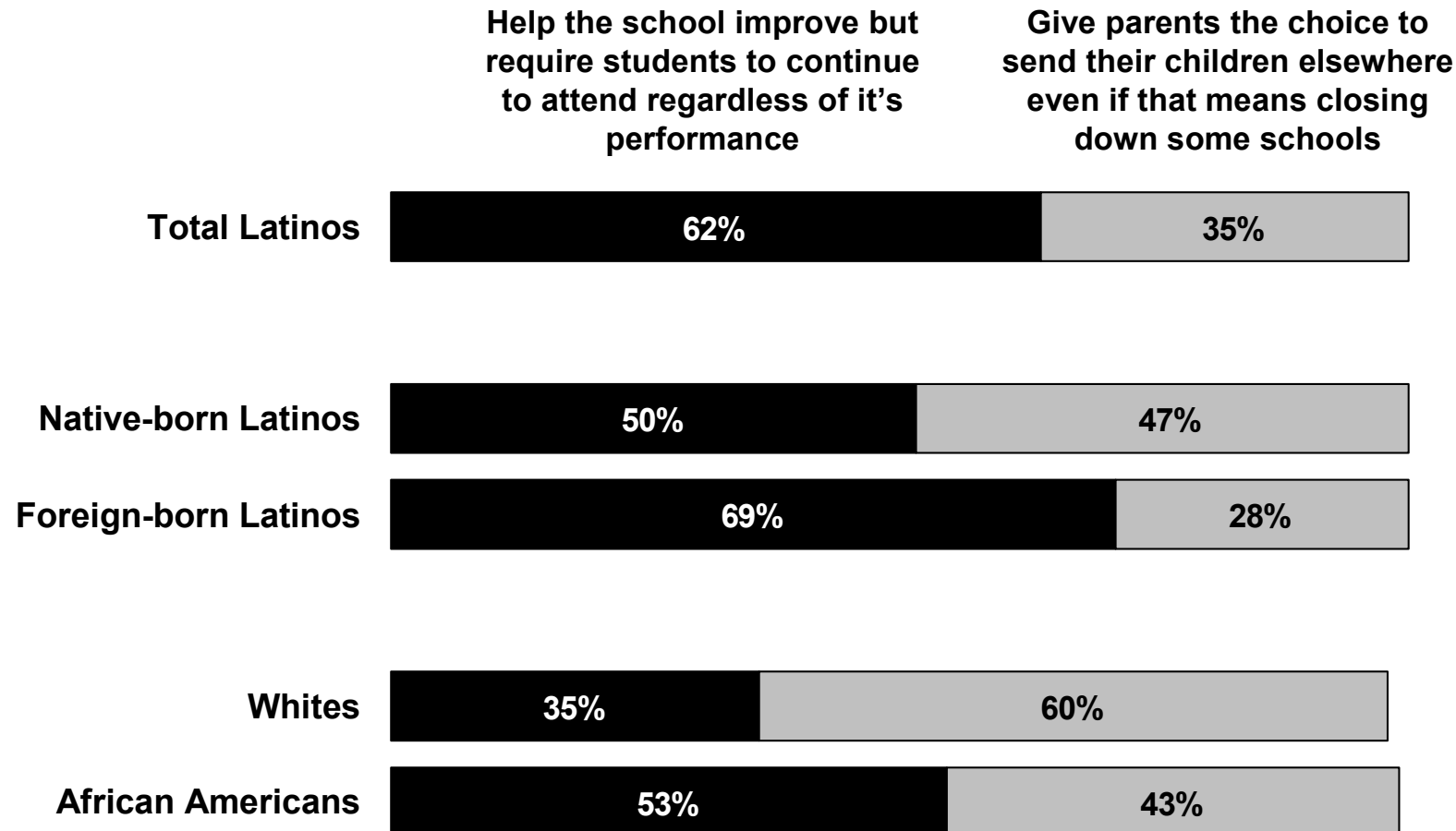
A community group, a private company or the state should be able to take over if a school fails to improve over several years

73%

Chart 21

## Failing to Meet Performance Standards

If a school repeatedly does not meet performance standards, do you think that the top priority should be...



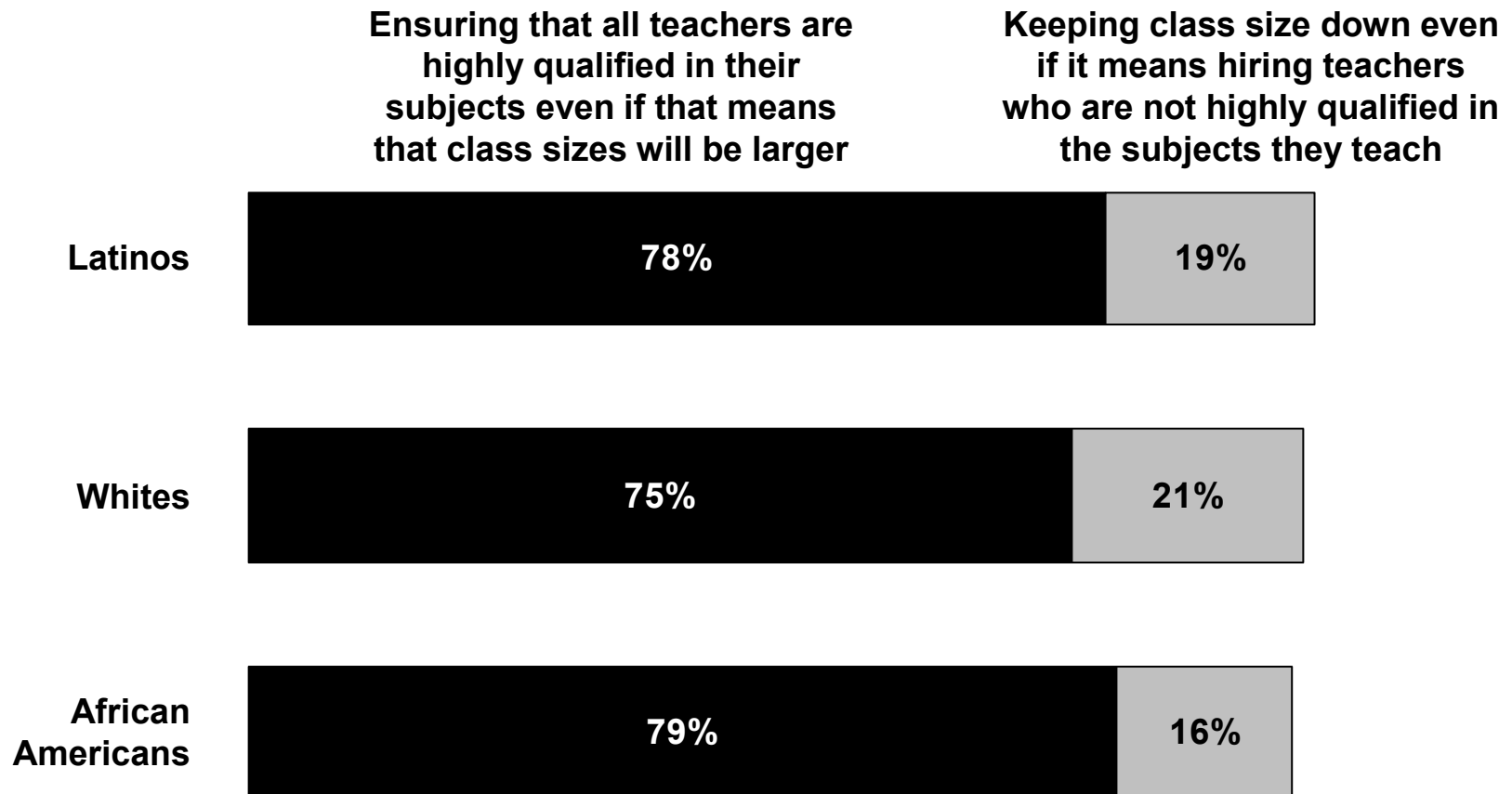
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 22

# Teacher Shortages and Classroom Size

Which of these options should be schools' top priority?



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

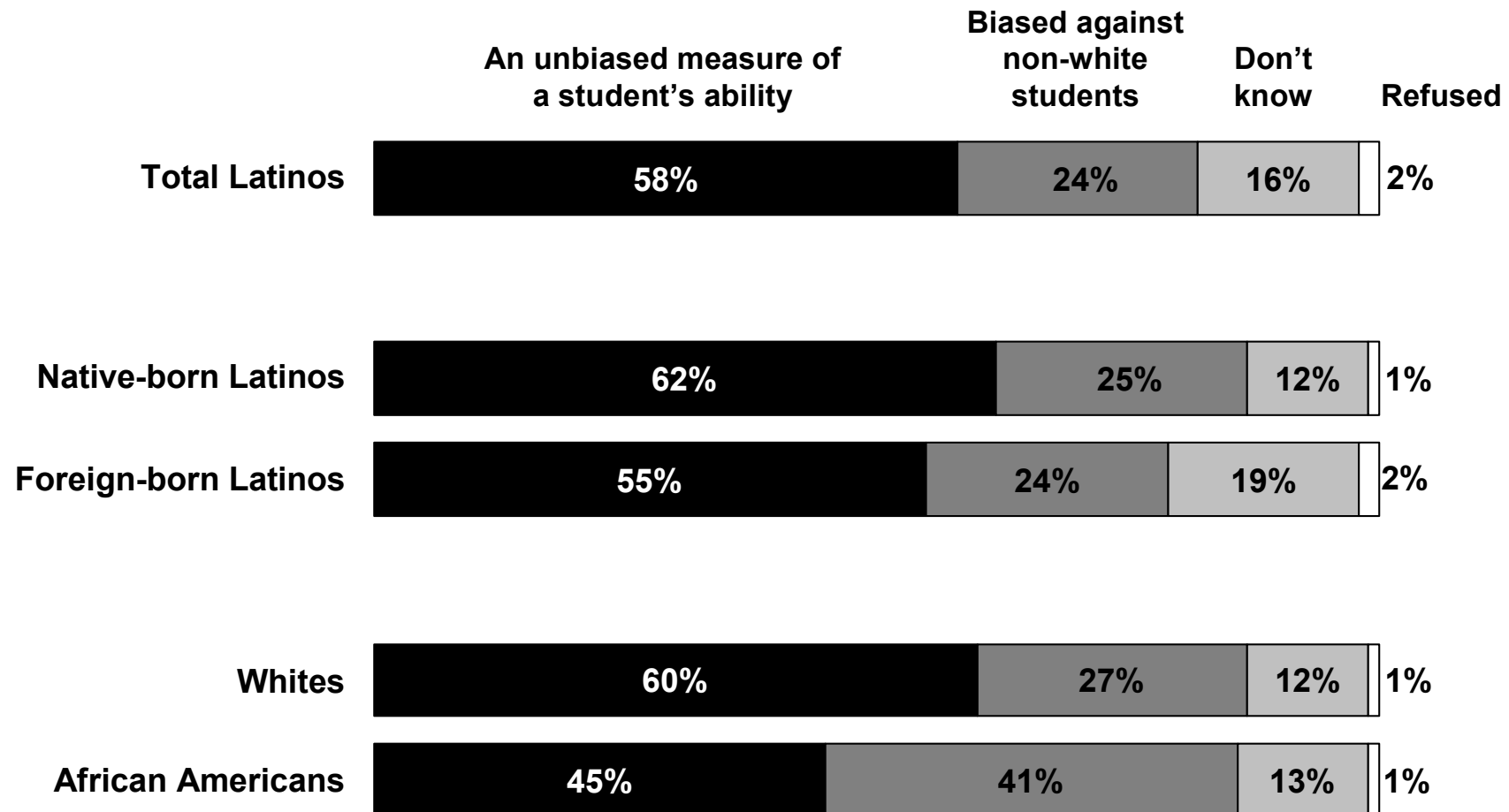
Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)



Chart 23

# Attitudes Toward Standardized Tests

In general, do you think standardized tests are...

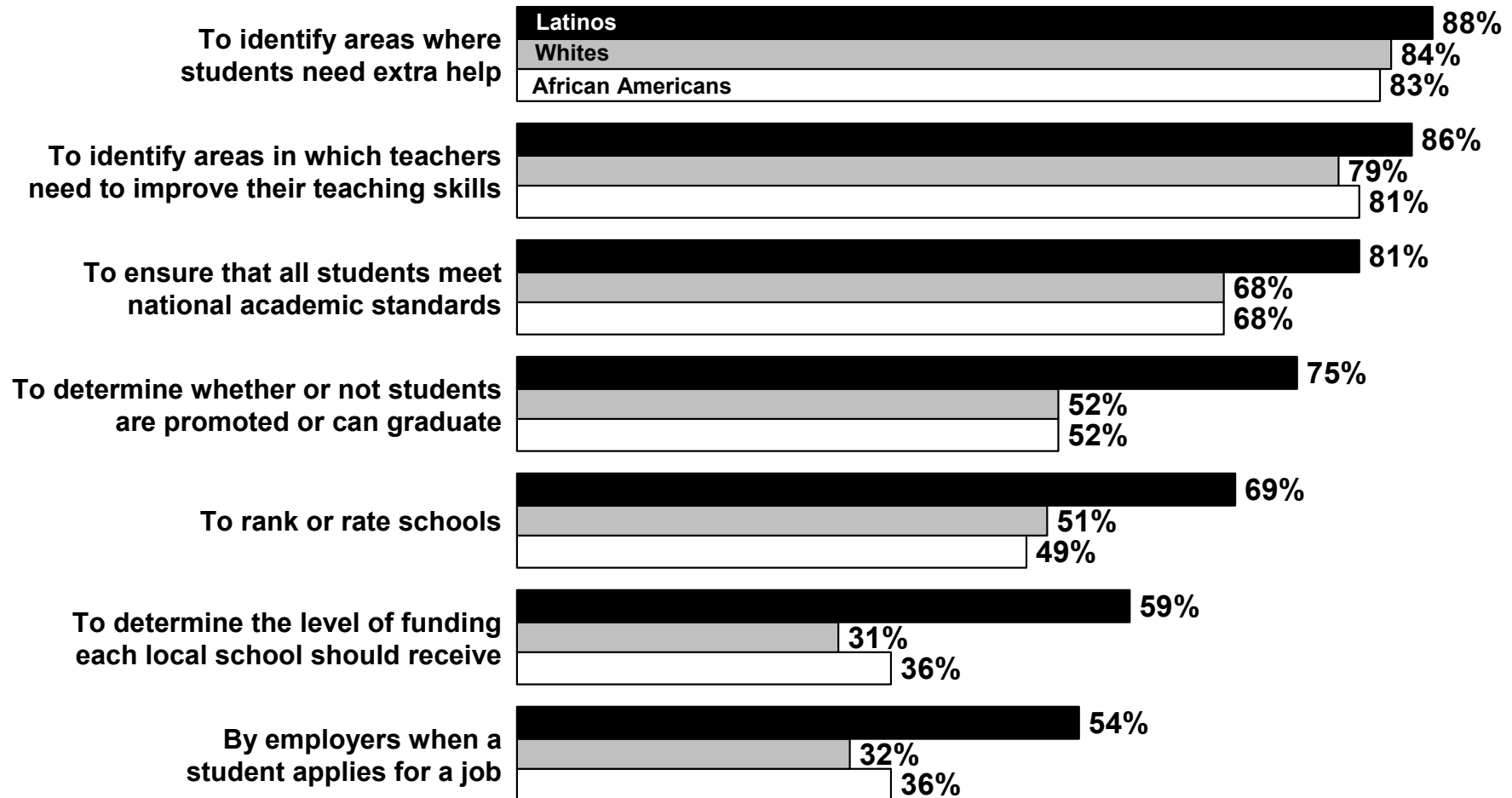


Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 24

# Standardized Testing

Percent who agree that standardized testing should be used...

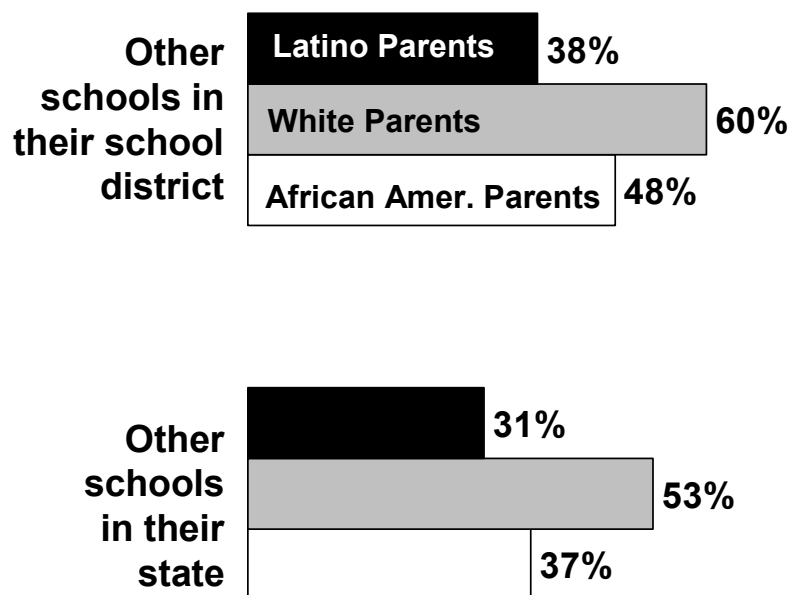


Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 25

# Comparing Standardized Test Scores

Percent of parents who report knowing how standardized test scores in their child's school compare to...



Of the 59% of parents who report knowing how test scores compare, percent who get this information from...

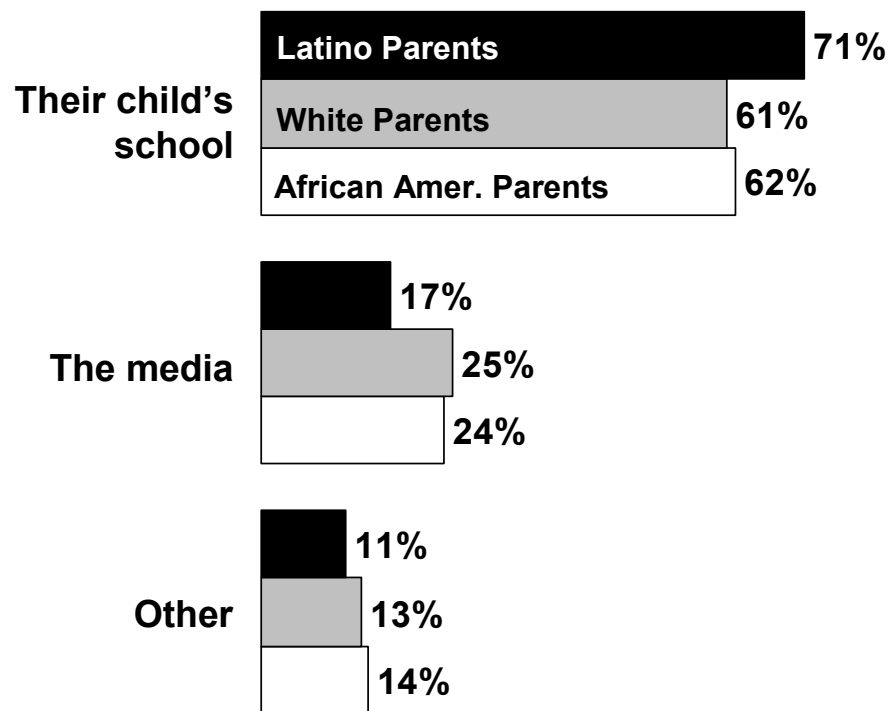


Chart 26

# Equal Money for All Kids

Do you support or oppose measures to ensure that an equal amount of money is spent on each student regardless of whether they live in a rich or a poor school district, or don't you know enough to have an opinion?

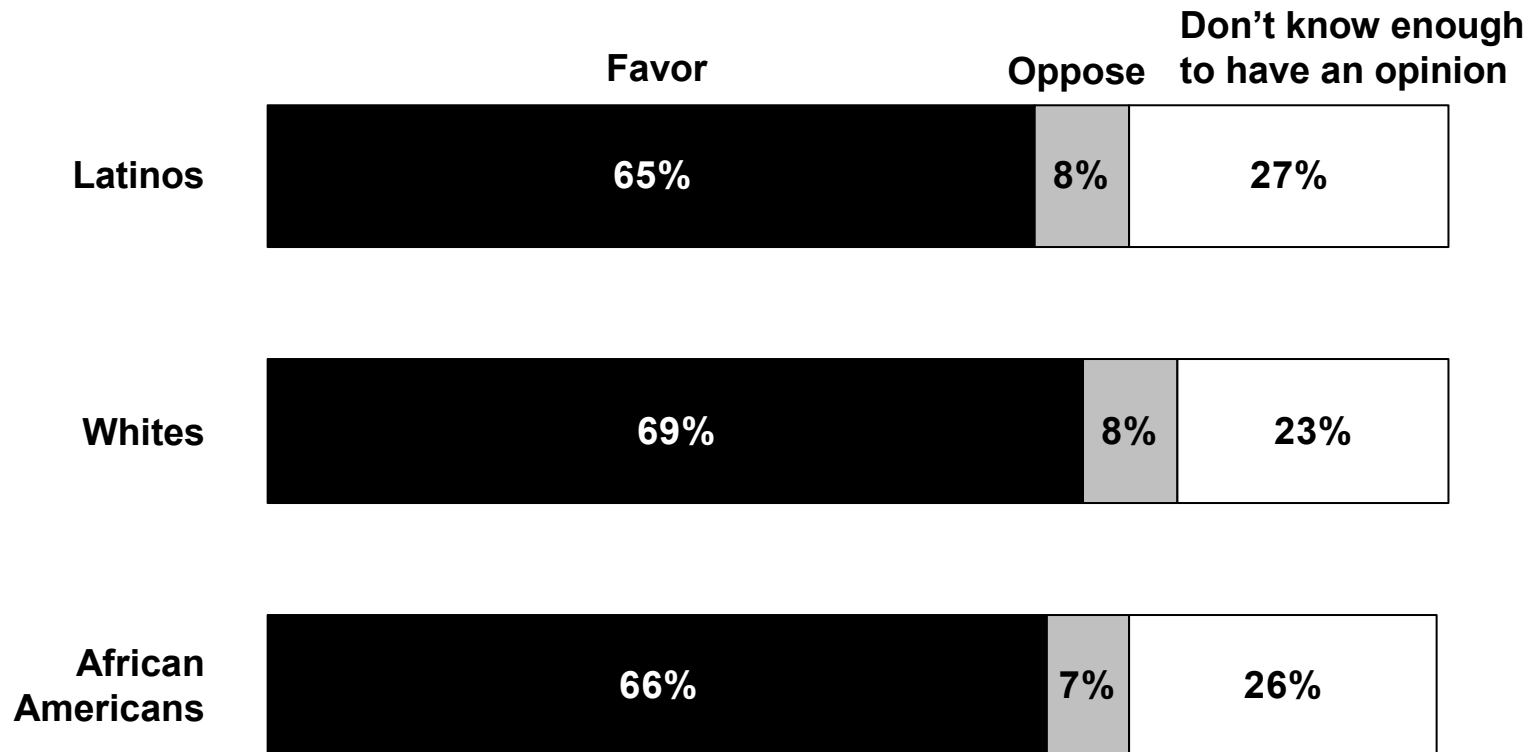
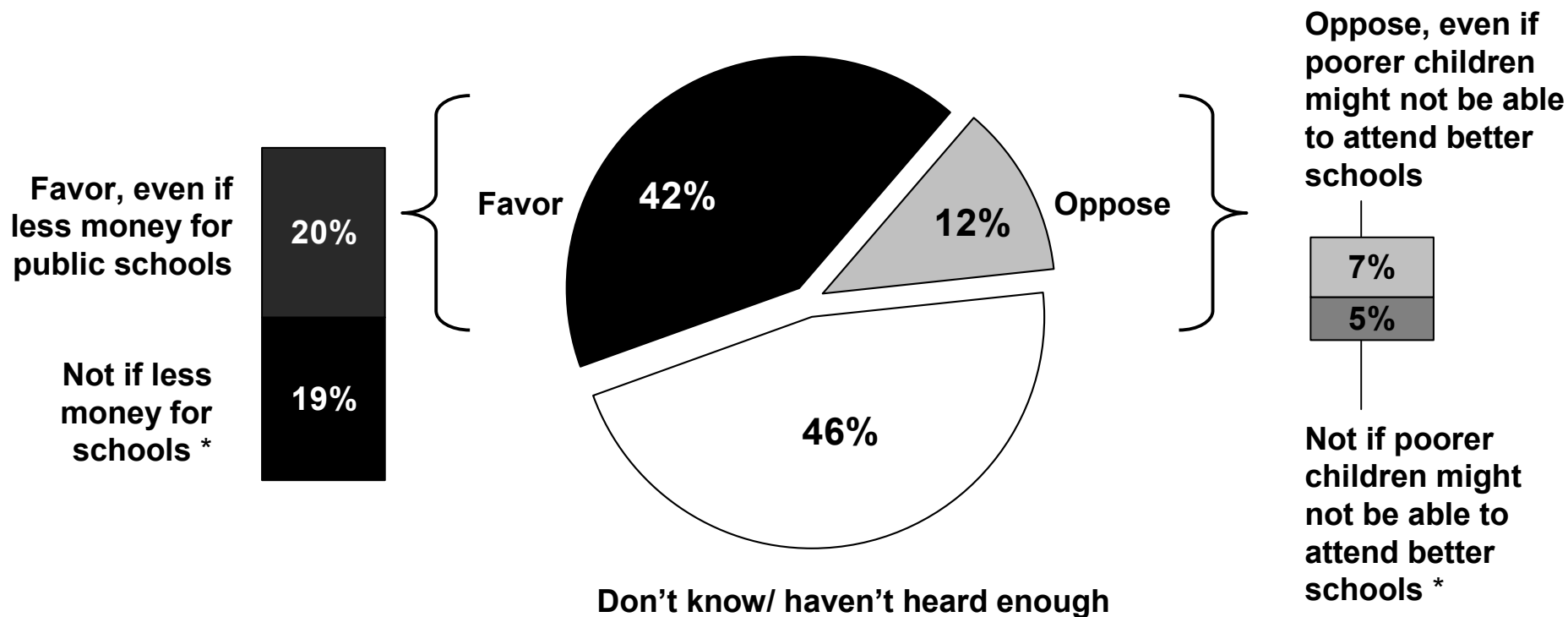


Chart 27

# Vouchers

**Among Latinos: Do you favor or oppose the government offering parents vouchers to send their children to private or religious schools or to a public school of their choice, or haven't you heard enough about that to have an opinion?**



\* Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 28

# Charter School Program

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**Among Latinos: The charter school program permits some public schools to function independently from the local school district as long as they meet state standards. Do you favor or oppose the charter school program, or don't you know enough to have an opinion?**

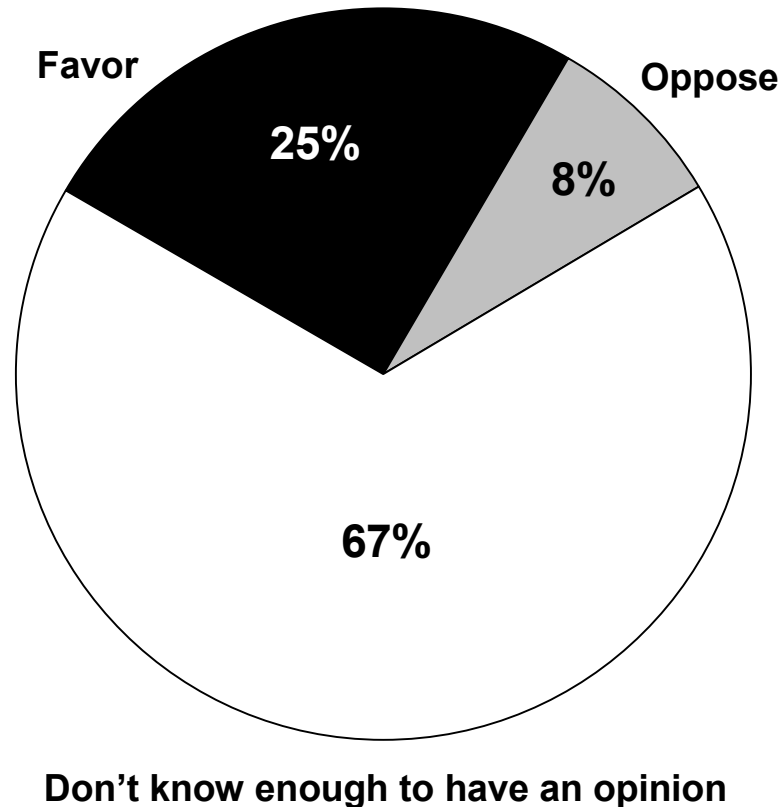
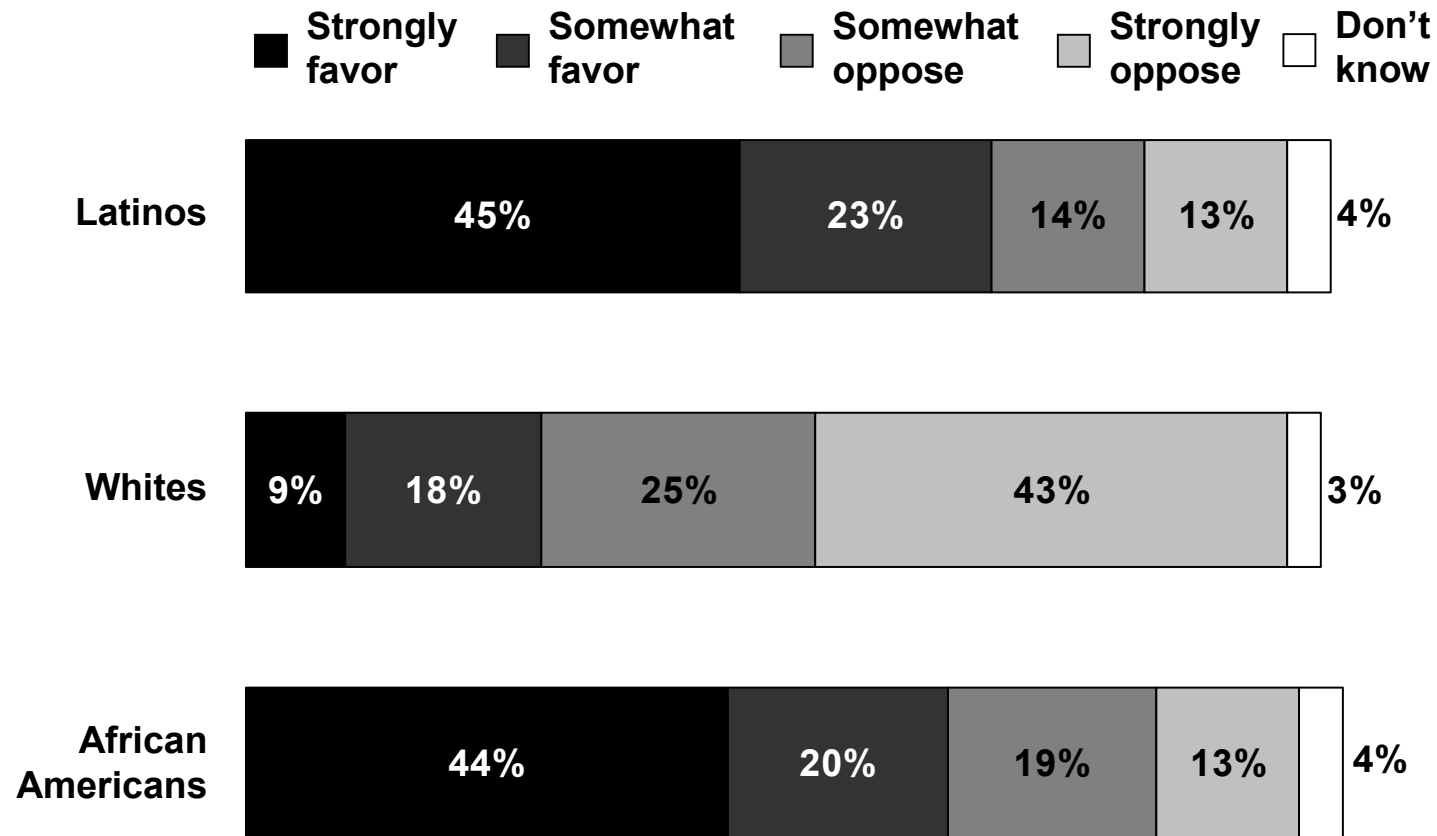


Chart 29

# Affirmative Action

Do you favor or oppose university admissions programs that give special consideration to Latinos, African Americans and other minority groups?

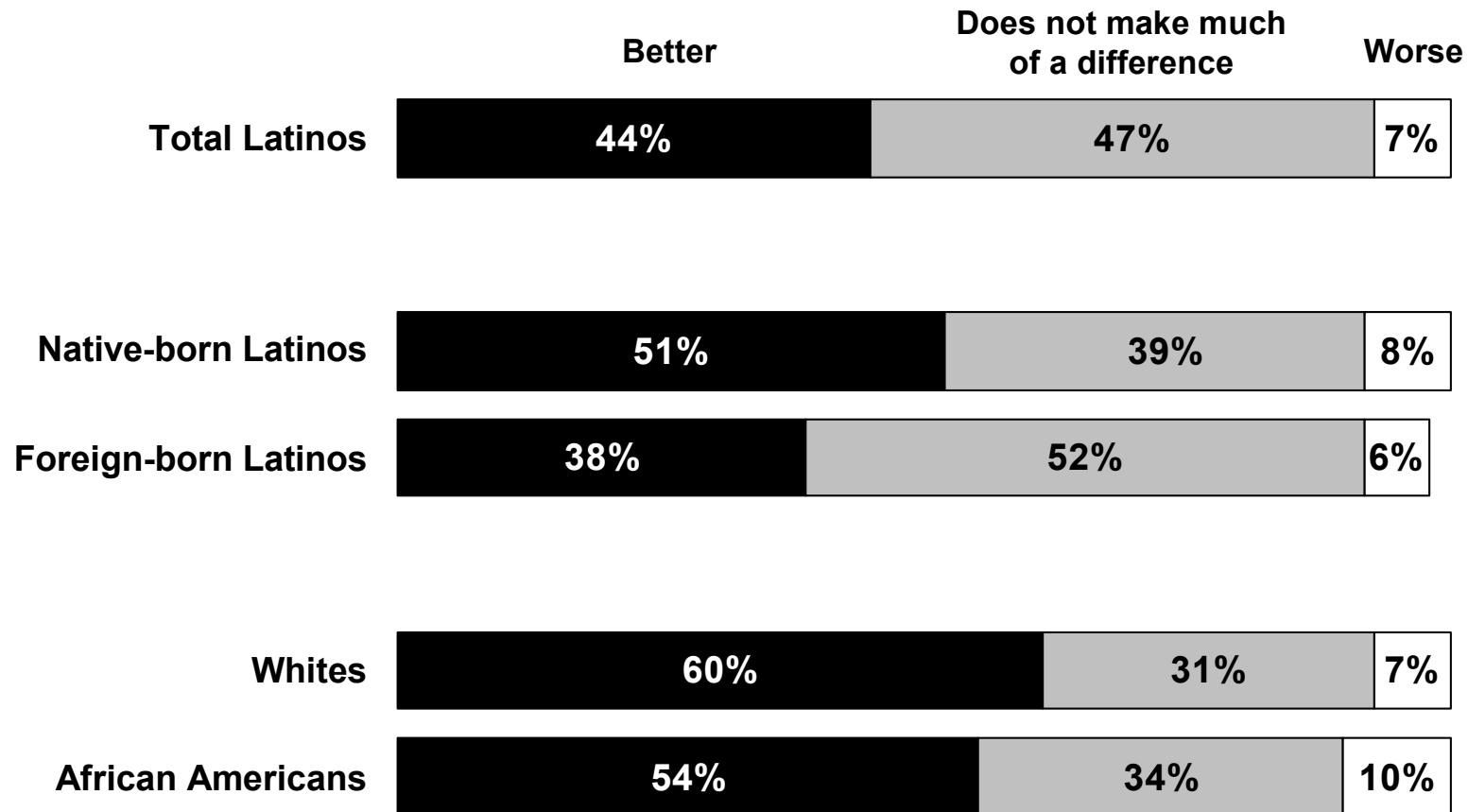


Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)

Chart 30

# Racial Integration

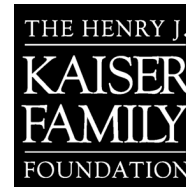
Do you think racially integrated schools are better for kids, worse for kids, or doesn't it make much of a difference?



Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown

Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Latinos: Education*, January 2004 (conducted August – October 2003)





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