



For release... **Tuesday, June 1, 2010** ... 5 pp.

Contact: Peter Woolley 973.670.3239

Like Governor, NJEA's rating slips...

The New Jersey Educational Association (NJEA) is losing some ground in public opinion according to the most recent poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™. A third of voters (33%) have a favorable opinion of the statewide teachers' union, including 15% who have a "very favorable" opinion of it. But 44% have an unfavorable opinion of the association, including one-quarter (26%) whose view is "very unfavorable." This is changed from the previous measurement, released March 30, where 35% had a favorable opinion and an equal share, 35%, had an unfavorable opinion of the NJEA.

"It is unusual for any one interest group to be front and center for such a sustained time in state politics," said Peter Woolley, a political scientist and director of the poll. "It is even more unusual that a candidate, party or interest group investing so much in advertising and organizing would lose ground."

While the governor is well-known to New Jersey voters, two other key players in the education budget battles are not: two-thirds have not heard of, or have no opinion of, Commissioner for Education Bret Schundler; 90% have not heard of, or have no opinion of, the outspoken leader of the teachers' union, Barbara Keshishian.

On a number of key issues supported by the NJEA, the public tends to agree. However, voters in public employee households tend to differ from other voters on almost every question. For example, 51% of all voters agree that two to three years is enough time to evaluate a new teacher for tenure, while 40% say it's not enough time. But public employee households by a margin of 2-to-1 (63-31) say it's enough time while other voters split on the issue (47-43).

Similarly, 53% of voters agree one pay scale for all teachers is best, while 38% say teachers of some subjects, like science and math, should be paid more. Voters in public employee households by 2-to-1 agree it should be one pay scale for all, while other voters agree by just a 5-to-4 margin.

A similar question finds voters split: 40% say one pay scale is the best way to make sure superintendents and principals do not unfairly assign salaries and award pay increases, while 43% agree that one pay scale means that the most valuable teachers will be treated unfairly when it comes to salaries and pay increases. But public employee

households again say one pay scale is fairer (52-38), while other voters tend to say it treats the best teachers unfairly (44-35).

The public leans (46%-41%) in favor of providing school vouchers to low-income students in failing public school districts to go to private school. But voters in public employee households oppose the proposal by a margin of 5-to-4 while other voters favor the idea by the same margin.

One thing voters of all kinds agree on, however, concerns the salaries of school administrators rather than teachers. Four of five (79%) say school superintendents making over \$200,000 dollars in salary "are overpaid considering what other important public employees make," while 13% say "they deserve their pay for the great responsibility they undertake."

The Fairleigh Dickinson University poll of 654 registered voters statewide was conducted by telephone from May 19, 2010, through May 23, 2010, and has a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points.

*Methodology, questions, and tables on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032*

Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from May 19, 2010, through May 23, 2010, using a randomly selected sample of 654 registered voters statewide. The margin of error for a sample of 654 randomly selected respondents is +/- 4 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers. PublicMind interviews are conducted Opinion America Group (formerly TMR, Inc.) of Cedar Knolls, NJ with professionally trained interviewers using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This technique gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. Results are mathematically weighted to match known demographics of gender, age, and race.

Question: Have you heard of [rotate list]? If you haven't just tell me. [If yes, ask:] Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ...? Would that be very or somewhat?						
[ask ½ sample at random]	Haven't heard of	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ no opinion	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
Barbara Keshishian (n=385)	85%	2%	3%	5%	2%	2%
Bret Schundler (n= 326)	46%	7%	13%	20%	8%	5%

Question: And have you heard of the NJEA?		
	current	March
Yes	74%	70%
No	26%	30%

The NJEA is the public teachers' union. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the NJEA? Would that be very or somewhat?					
	Very Favorable	Somewhat favorable	Unsure/ Mixed	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable
All	15%	18%	23%	18%	26%
<i>men</i>	12	16	16	23	33
<i>Women</i>	17	20	30	13	20
<i>Democrats</i>	23	23	27	13	14
<i>independents</i>	8	10	21	18	43
<i>Republicans</i>	6	14	18	23	39
<i>Non-public union household</i>	9	18	26	18	28
<i>Public union household</i>	31	20	12	17	20
March 30 All	17%	18%	30%	16%	19%

Question: Currently, when hiring new teachers, schools districts must decide to offer a kind of job protection, called tenure, by the end of the third year of employment. Some people say 2 to 3 years is.... Others say 2 to 3 years is... *ROTATE*

...plenty of time in which to evaluate a new teacher.
 ...not enough time to evaluate a new teacher.

Which comes closer to your position?

	All	Party ID			Public employee household	
		Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	No	Yes
Plenty	51%	60	31	47	47	63
Not enough	40%	32	59	43	43	31
Don't know/Both/ neither	9%	7	9	11	10	6

Question: Currently, everyone hired in the public schools is paid the same according to a scale that takes into account college degrees and years of employment. Some people say one pay scale for everyone is... Others say one pay scale for everyone is... *ROTATE*

... the best way to make sure that superintendents and principals do not unfairly assign salaries and award pay increases.
means that the most valuable teachers are treated unfairly when it comes to salaries and pay increases.

Which comes closer to your opinion?

	All	Party ID			Public employee household	
		Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	No	Yes
Best way	40%	42	36	39	35	52
Treats people unfairly	43%	42	40	45	44	38
Don't know/Both/Neither	18%	16	24	16	20	10

Question: Still, thinking about the pay scale... Some people say... Others say... *ROTATE*

...we need to pay high school teachers of some subjects, like science and math, more than we pay other kinds of teachers.
 ...we need to have one pay scale because all teachers in all subjects are important in a school system.

Which comes closer to your position?

	All	Party ID			Public employee household	
		Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	No	Yes
Pay more to some	38%	40	37	37	40	32
Same for all	53%	53	51	51	49	62
Don't know/Both/Neither	9%	7	11	12	11	5

Question: In New Jersey, a number of school superintendents—people in charge of school districts—make over two hundred thousand dollars a year in salary. Some people say... Others say... *ROTATE*

...they deserve their pay for the great responsibility they undertake.
 ...they are overpaid considering what other important public employees make.

Which comes closer to your position?

	All	Party ID			Public employee household	
		Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	No	Yes
Deserve	13%	17	10	8	12	15
Don't deserve	79%	76	82	84	79	81
Don't know/Both/Neither	8%	6	9	8	9	3

Question: New Jersey is considering providing money-that is school vouchers-to low-income kids in bad public school districts to go to private schools if they want. How much have you heard or read about this proposal...READ?

		Public employee household	
	All	No	Yes
A great deal	22%	18	37
Some	27%	27	29
Just a little	21%	23	17
Nothing	30%	33	17

Question: Do you favor or oppose providing school vouchers to low income students in failing public school districts to go to private school if they want?

		Party ID			Public employee household	
	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	No	Yes
Favor	46%	48	47	45	49	37
Oppose	41%	39	34	46	38	50
Don't know	13%	13	18	9	13	12

Question Wording and Order

Questions: US 1,2; NJ1-NJ8 released previously.

NJ2. Have you heard of [rotate list; ask ½ sample at random]? If you haven't just tell me. [If yes, ask:] Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of ...? Would that be very or somewhat?

Bret Schundler
Barbara Keshishian

NJ9. And have you heard of the NJEA?

NJ10. [ASK ALL] The NJEA is the public teachers' union. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the NJEA? Would that be very or somewhat?

NJ11. Currently, when hiring new teachers, schools districts must decide to offer a kind of job protection, called tenure, by the end of the third year of employment. Some people say 2 to 3 years is.... Others say 2 to 3 years is...

ROTATE

...not enough time to evaluate a new teacher.
...plenty of time in which to evaluate a new teacher.

Which comes closer to your position?

Not enough
Plenty
Both
Neither
Don't know

NJ12. Currently, everyone hired in the public schools is paid the same according to a scale that takes into account college degrees and years of employment. Some people say one pay scale for everyone is... Others say one pay scale for everyone is...

ROTATE

... the best way to make sure that superintendents and principals do not unfairly assign salaries and award pay increases.
...means that the most valuable teachers are treated unfairly when it comes to salaries and pay increases.

Which comes closer to your opinion?

Best way
Treats people unfairly
Both
Neither
Don't know

NJ13. Still, thinking about the pay scale... Some people say... Others say...

ROTATE

...we need to pay high school teachers of some subjects, like science and math, more than we pay other kinds of teachers.

...we need to have one pay scale because all teachers in all subjects are important in a school system.

Which comes closer to your position?

Pay more to some

Same for all

Both

Neither

Don't know

NJ14. In New Jersey, a number of school superintendents—people in charge of school districts—make over two hundred thousand dollars a year in salary. Some people say... Others say...

ROTATE

...they deserve their pay for the great responsibility they undertake.

...they are over paid considering what other important public employees make.

Which comes closer to your position?

Deserve

Don't deserve

Both

Neither

Don't know

NJ15 New Jersey is considering providing money-that is school vouchers-to low-income kids in bad public school districts to go to private schools if they want. How much have you heard or read about this proposal...READ?

A great deal

Some

Just a little or

None

NJ16. Do you favor or oppose providing school vouchers to low-income students in failing public school districts to go to private school if they want?

Favor

Oppose

DK

Ref.