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Re: *Analysis of Findings: Survey of Adults in Oakland, California with an Oversample of Parents of School-Aged Children*

Introduction & Methodology

the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend is pleased to present to the **Center for Education Reform (CER)** this analysis of findings from a recent telephone survey of 400 adult (18+) residents of Oakland, California with an oversample of 100 parents of school-aged children enrolled in Oakland schools. When combining the oversample with the 106 parents interviewed as part of the main sample, a total of 206 surveys of parents were collected.

The survey was fielded February 2-6, 2007¹ at a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility using bi-lingual live callers. All respondents had the option of taking survey in either English or Spanish. Eighty respondents in the main sample and 56 in the oversample chose to take the survey in Spanish.

The sample was drawn utilizing a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) method where phone numbers are generated by a computer to ensure that every household in Oakland, CA had an equal chance to be surveyed. Sampling controls were used to ensure that a proportional and representative number of people were interviewed from such demographic groups as age, gender, race and ethnicity, and region.

The survey was 16 questions in length including five demographic inquiries and one open-ended question. The final questionnaire was approved by an authorized representative of CER prior to fielding.

The margin of error for the main sample is calculated at $\pm 4.9\%$ at the 95% confidence level, meaning that the results obtained would differ by no more than 4.9 percentage points in either direction if the entire adult population of the Oakland, CA were to be surveyed. The margin of error for parents of school-aged children is $\pm 6.8\%$. Margins of error for subgroups are higher.

¹ Interviewing did not occur on Sunday, February 4, 2007 because of the Super Bowl.

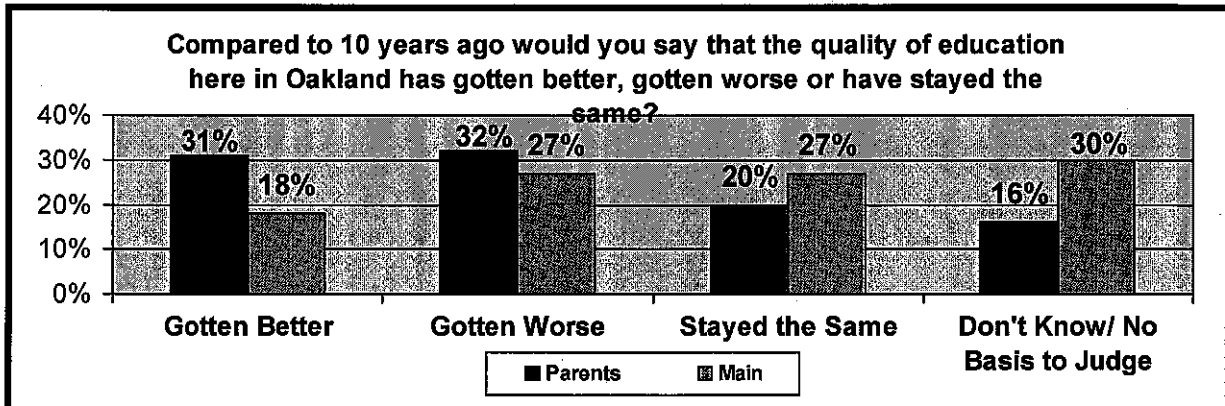
Analysis of Findings

A Decade of Decline? Many Say Oakland's Education System Doesn't Make the Grade.

Oakland residents rendered a split decision regarding the change in the quality of education in the city over the past decade. Nearly one third (32%) of respondents reported that the scholastic opportunities offered to children had "gotten worse"—14 points higher than those who said it had "gotten better" over the same time period. Another 20% felt the status quo had been maintained.

It is also important to note that fully three-in-ten (30%) said they had "no basis to judge" or "didn't know" – a number nearly equal to those who observed a down-turn in education. This preponderance of shrugged shoulders regarding Oakland's schools suggests either an arms-length relationship between the citizenry and its schools, or a lack of demonstrable progress. However, because respondents were asked to assess change over a ten year time frame, those newer to Oakland may have felt unqualified to answer the question, which would account for some of the "don't knows".

As indicated by the following chart, parents with children aged 6 to 18 currently enrolled in local schools were less critical of the quality of education in the city over the past decade. Parents were more positive than the overall population surveyed, and less tentative in reserving judgment. In fact, they were 13 points more likely than adults generally to say that city schools had improved in the past 10 years (31%-18%), and five points less likely to believe that schools had "gotten worse." Still, they were split evenly on the "for better or for worse" question, and 69% of parents surveyed refused to acknowledgement improvement in the schools.



- ✓ **There was a notable gender gap among parents, as dads were more likely than moms to say Oakland schools had worsened over the last 10 years (33%-21%). Moms were more likely than dads to report schools had gotten better (34%-27%) or stayed the same (30%-21%). Interestingly, this divide between the sexes was virtually absent in the overall sample of adults.**

- ✓ In the main sample, race was a significant factor in determining how respondents perceived a change in the quality of education: Whites were more likely than any other ethnic group to report a down-turn since 1997 or so (43% compared to 27% for all other groups). Blacks, Hispanics and Asians were three-times more likely than Whites to say it had improved (23%-7%). There was not a significant difference along racial lines among parents.
- ✓ Spanish speaking respondents overall were more apt than those who took the survey in English to feel they had “no basis to judge” the state of the school system (31%-24%).
- ✓ Respondents aged 35-44 (both parents and residents overall) were more likely than most to be optimistic about Oakland schools. Among the general Oakland population, those aged 45 to 54 and 65+ were more inclined than others to see a decrease in educational quality. Younger parents (aged 18-34) were more apt than older ones to agree that schools were declining.
- ✓ In the main sample, residents of the Northwest region of the city were 8 points more likely than most to observe a decline in scholastic prowess over the past decade (40%-32%).
- ✓ Parents whose children attended charter or private schools were more apt than those who sent their kids to traditional public schools to declare the quality of education had worsened over the past decade (41%-23%) – perhaps explaining their decision not to send their children to Oakland public schools.

Key Education Influentials Largely Unrecognized by Oakland Residents; Local Officials Given More Credit for School Improvements than BayCES.

Oakland residents need a back-to-basics education about who and what are responsible for governing the city’s schools. When queried about the influence of six individuals or organizations on improving Oakland’s public school system, many had little to say. In fact, a significant portion of respondents were unable or unwilling to acknowledge a link between improvements in Oakland schools for each of the listed actors and organizations. This reinforces the notion that residence in Oakland guarantees neither insight into, nor accolades for, its educational system.

Overall, Former Oakland Mayor (and current California Attorney General) Jerry Brown was given the most credit his role in improvements to Oakland’s public schools system, followed by the Oakland School Board. Interestingly, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation – one of only two organizations tested that did NOT have “Oakland” in the name - was given slightly more applause for its work on behalf of Oakland’s schoolchildren than the current mayor, Ron Dellums or former Oakland Unified School District Superintendent Randy Ward. The Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (BayCES) fared most poorly.

There were very few differences between the main sample and parents of school-aged children regarding their assessments of the named organizations and individuals. Those gradations were primarily in intensity, not general opinion.

Please tell me how important you think each individual or organization has been in improving the education in Oakland's public schools: very, somewhat, just a little bit or not at all important?					
	Net Very/ Somewhat Important	Net Just a little bit/ Not at all Important	Heard Of/ No Opinion	Never Heard of	Don't Know
Former Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown	46%	28%	7%	3%	16%
Oakland School Board	42%	27%	9%	3%	19%
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	36%	9%	9%	19%	27%
Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums	34%	18%	18%	4%	25%
Former Oakland Unified School District Superintendent Randy Ward	33%	18%	24%	12%	13%
Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools	23%	8%	12%	31%	25%

Former Mayor Jerry Brown. Given the many years Jerry Brown, former California governor, two-term mayor of Oakland, and current State Attorney General, has spend in public service, it is not surprising that he enjoyed the highest level of support among the adults surveyed for improving schools in Oakland. A full 46% of respondents in the main sample felt he was "very" (17%) or "somewhat important" (29%) to the progress. At the same time, however, a sizable 27% felt that his work was less than influential. Another 16% claimed ignorance.

Because only 3% claimed to be unaware of the former mayor and 7% had heard of him but had no opinion on his influence over the improvement of public schools, some of this praise may be attributed to his name recognition rather than any specific accomplishment attributable to his acumen.

- ✓ **Parents were more inclined that the main sample to indicate the former mayor was "unimportant" to the improvement of Oakland schools (36%-28%).**
- ✓ **Race played a key role in respondents' evaluation of Brown. Among all adults surveyed, Hispanics were more likely than any other ethnic group to report they "didn't know" how to rate the former mayor (30%), while Whites were 14 points more likely than others to view Mayor Brown's contributions as "important" (59%-45%). Black respondents were more likely than all others to deem Mayor Brown as not especially critical to the status of Oakland schools (36%-28%).**

- ✓ Among parents, both Whites and Asians stood out as more likely than most to rate Brown positively with respect to the public schools.
- ✓ **Age also impacted respondents' assessments.** Among Oakland adults overall, those 35-44 and 55-64 were more likely than other respondents to say Jerry Brown did not play a large role in bettering Oakland schools. However, those 45-54 were more apt than most to view him as important to educational improvement. There were no differences with respect to age among parents.

Oakland School Board. The Oakland School Board also received positive reviews regarding its work to advance the quality of education in Oakland, with 42% of respondents judging it “very” or “somewhat important” (21% each) to this endeavor. This is a fairly low rating given the fact that the main (perhaps sole) purpose of any school board is to provide an area’s children with quality education. In fact, it should be almost tautological that the school board is important in improving schools.

The fact that only 42% of Oakland residents deem it so hints at either a general dissatisfaction with the Oakland School Board or an indictment that its performance is less than arresting. In contrast, only 13% of Oakland dwellers reported it was “just a little bit” important and 14% saw it as “not at all” influential. Nearly two-in-ten (19%) remained unsure as to the extent of the board’s role in providing Oakland’s schoolchildren with a quality education.

- ✓ **While similar numbers of parents and Oakland adults reported that the school board was essential to the betterment of public schools (42%-46%), parents agreed more strongly than those in the main sample, as 30% said the school board was “very important” and only 21% of the main sample reported the same.**
- ✓ Asian residents in the main sample were 15 points more likely than other residents to give the local body credence for its work to better the public schools (57%-42%).
- ✓ Among parents, Spanish speaking individuals were 9 points more likely than English speakers to report that the school board had been influential in improving Oakland Schools (52%-43%). Similarly, Hispanics parents were more apt than most to attribute positive changes to the board. Among Oakland adults generally, neither group stood apart from respondents overall.
- ✓ **Men were 8 points more likely than women to believe that their city’s school board was not responsible for any improvements seen in Oakland schools (32%-24%). A similar difference was observed among dads and moms (37% v. 28%).**
- ✓ In the greater population of adults, residents of southern Oakland were 11 points more apt than adults who live in other areas to view the school board as pivotal to the betterment of education (53%-42%).

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Interestingly, even though the Gates foundation bears nothing in its name identifying it with the city of Oakland, 36% of respondents reported that it was integral to the improvement of the public schools there. Nearly two-in-ten (19%) assigned the philanthropic organization a “very important” role and 17% felt it played a “somewhat” critical part. These residents may specifically be aware of the large donations the Foundation has gifted to area schools or may simply recognize its name and hold it in generally high esteem.

Just 9% indicated that the Gates Foundation did not have a meaningful impact on Oakland schools and 27% said they “didn’t know” how influential the foundation had been. Two-in-ten (19%) were unfamiliar with it entirely.

- ✓ **Parents were more likely than respondents overall to view the Foundation as unimportant to scholastic improvement (16%-9%). Moms and dads were also 9 points less likely than adults generally to deem the philanthropic organization as “important” (27%-36%).**
- ✓ Among respondents in the main sample, 45-54 year olds, Whites, and those residing in the Central and Northwest regions of the city were more likely than most to say that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation played an important role in the improvement of Oakland Schools. No such differences were found among parents.

Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums. The current Mayor of Oakland, Ron Dellums, who was elected in November 2006 and officially took office in January of 2007. New to this job, he represented the area in the U.S. Congress for 28 years. Roughly one-third of those surveyed (34%) gave him some credit for improvements in education (21% saw him as “very important” and 13% as “somewhat”). Only 18% deemed Dellums unimportant, and a matching 18% were familiar with Dellums but had no opinion of his role in schools. An additional one-quarter (25%) admitted that they are in the dark with respect to Dellums and his performance in this regard.

- ✓ There were no differences between parents of school-aged children and adults generally regarding Dellums’ role in Oakland schools.
- ✓ **Groups more likely to view Mayor Ron Dellums as important to the improvement of Oakland Schools (34% overall):** included Blacks, 45-54 year olds and those who lived in the Southern portion of Oakland
- ✓ **Groups more likely to view Mayor Ron Dellums as unimportant to the betterment of public schools (35% overall):** included Whites, Asians and those who live in the central portion of Oakland.
- ✓ Spanish-speaking parents were more likely than English-speaking moms and dads to have difficulty determining Mayor Dellums role. There were no differences according to preferred language in the main sample.

Former Oakland United School District Superintendent Randy Ward.

Despite his title, the outgoing superintendent of schools, Randy Ward, was met with mixed reviews on the question of whether his performance had a positive impact of the quality of education; 33% of respondents noted his contributions. An additional 18% felt he failed to make a significant mark during his tenure. Almost one quarter (24%) were unsure and 13% had heard of Mr. Ward but were unable to form an opinion, denoting a general lack of familiarity with the former official.

- ✓ There were no differences between parents of school-aged children and adults generally regarding Wards' part in improving Oakland schools.
- ✓ Among Oakland residents overall, groups more likely than most to be unsure of Ward's role in improving education in Oakland included 35-44 year olds, Hispanics, Spanish speaking individuals, Northeast residents.
- ✓ Among parents, moms were 7 points more likely than dads to say that Ward had positive impact on local schools (40%-33%). There were no differences between men and women in the main sample.
- ✓ Also in the parent sample, Whites were 9 points more likely than others to give Ward credit for bettering education in Oakland (46%-37%). Conversely, Black parents were more likely than others to deem Superintendent Ward unimportant. A similar pattern was not observed among Oakland residents generally.

Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (BayCES). BayCES was the most "unknown" entity of the six tested in this series, with 68% of participants reporting they had never heard of the group (31%), or that they knew of the Coalition but had no opinion of it (12%), or that they simply "did not know" (25%). As a result, BayCES received the lowest overall importance score with just 23% of respondents suggesting that the organization had a meaningful role in the positive development of the public schools, compared to 8% who said it held an unimportant position.

Among parents, respondents were slightly more likely than residents generally to deem BayCES important (29%-23%), and simultaneously more inclined to view them as unimportant to Oakland schools (14%-8%). This is likely reflective of a generally greater level of familiarity with the organization among those with children, even though 29% of parents claimed they were unaware of BayCES and parents were only slightly less likely to say they "don't know" (21%-25%).

Clearly, BayCES is **not** inexorably linked with improvement in scholastic opportunities for Oakland's school children in the minds of the city's residents. Despite some positive press coverage and recognition of the group among education insiders, to the general public it is still an unknown.

- ✓ No demographic groups in the main sample were more likely than most to deem BayCES either important or unimportant.
- ✓ In the parent sample, Whites were more likely than other moms and dads to be ignorant of BayCES's contributions to Oakland schools.

- ✓ Also, Spanish speaking parents were more likely than their English language counterparts to view BayCES as an instrument of positive change in the public schools.

Oakland Residents Lack Knowledge of the BayCES Basics.

Most Oakland residents – included parents of school-aged children --are a “blank slate” with respect to BayCES. After rating the group’s importance in bringing improvement to the local education system, respondents were asked directly how familiar they were with the organization. Oakland residents were nearly 5 times more likely to say they were unacquainted with BayCES than they were to claim some level of knowledge (73%-15%). **In fact, 61% of adults surveyed noted that they were “not at all familiar” with the educational organization.** An additional 12% were unsure.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences between parents and adults in Oakland generally on this question (69% of parents said they were unfamiliar with BayCES). Though fewer parents (52% v. 61%) than adults generally were completely ignorant of BayCES, suggesting those naturally more “tuned in” to the school system are only marginally more apt to recognize the organization that runs a segment of Oakland’s learning institutions.

Considering how many residents and parents alike admitted total ignorance of the organization, the fact that previously 23% deemed it “important” to improvement in local schools may be a result of respondents giving an unknown organization the benefit of the doubt because its name contained the feel-good phrase “equitable schools.”

- ✓ Respondents in the main sample, 45-54 were more likely than all others to say that they were familiar with BayCES.
- ✓ Men were more likely than women to admit to being unaware of the organization (77%-68%). The same was true for moms and dads in the parent sample.
- ✓ Hispanics (79%) and Asians (78%) were more likely than Whites (71%) or Blacks (67%) to be unfamiliar with BayCES. There were no differences by race in the parent sample.

Invisible Institution: A Majority Unable to Explain BayCES.

When asked in an open-ended fashion to describe BayCES in their own words, a majority of Oakland residents (62%) did not even hazard a guess. This percentage was even higher among parents, 69% of who responded with “don’t know.” These numbers are extraordinarily high and underscore the widespread lack of knowledge about anything related to education among Oakland dwellers. Typically in a question like this, survey respondents will at least attempt to give some answer – even repeating back some part of the question like “schools” or “a coalition.”

Among Oakland adults generally who offered any explanation of BayCES, the most common response regarded benefits to education in Oakland (17%). However, these answers were more general than in-depth and for the most part did not reveal a complex understanding of the organization's purpose. Five percent listed positive attributes of BayCES and 4% simply parroted that it was an organization.

Parents' responses mirrored those given by adults generally, denoting a similar lack of in-depth understanding.

"How would you describe Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools or BayCES? What first springs to mind when I say it? Anything else? "
(Open Ended)

Top Coded Response Categories

Main Sample (N=400)	
17%	<u>BENEFITS TO EDUCATION (NET)</u>
7%	IMPROVING SCHOOLS/ EDUCATION
5%	EQUALIZING EDUCATION
5%	<u>POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES (NET)</u>
1%	VERY IMPORTANT
1%	GOOD INTENTIONS
4%	<u>TYPE OF ORGANIZATION (NET)</u>
2%	ORGANIZATION
1%	GROUP OF SCHOOLS
2%	<u>FINANCES (NET)</u>
1%	FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS
1%	EQUALIZING RESOURCES BETWEEN SCHOOLS
1%	<u>NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES (NET)</u>
1%	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
*	UNFORTUNATE
*	<u>MISCELLANEOUS (NET)</u>
2%	SEEN/HEARD THE NAME
4%	NEVER HEARD OF
62%	DON'T KNOW/ NO ANSWER

Parents (N=206)	
18%	<u>BENEFITS TO SCHOOLS (NET)</u>
9%	IMPROVING SCHOOLS/ EDUCATION
4%	SCHOOLS/EDUCATION
7%	<u>TYPE OF ORGANIZATION (NET)</u>
4%	ORGANIZATION
2%	PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1%	PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN
3%	<u>POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES (NET)</u>
2%	POSITIVE
1%	GOOD IDEA
1%	<u>NEGATIVE ATTRIBUTES (NET)</u>
1%	DOING A POOR JOB
*	<u>FINANCES (NET)</u>
69%	DON'T KNOW/ NO ANSWER

The lack of familiarity with BayCES can be regarded more as an opportunity than an obstacle for CER as it tries to educate adults in Oakland on charter schools and other educational options for students. There are few, if any, preconceived notions to battle or misinformation to overcome. Though the Coalition sometimes receives favorable press coverage and seems to be highly regarded (if misunderstood) among educational elites, it is not an untouchable organization by any means. Basic facts and figures will play a key role and have the potential to make a big impact among these uninformed Oaklanders.

Once Explained, BayCES Attains a Six-to-One Favorable Rating.

After being given the chance to explain BayCES in their own words, all respondents were read the following short explanation of the organization and then asked to give it a thumbs up or down: *“As you might know, The Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (BayCES) is a nonprofit organization that has helped the Oakland Unified School District to create and fund many local public schools. BayCES schools serve a smaller number of students than traditional public schools and are often focused on a particular type of education, like technology or the arts.”*

Based on what you've heard today or other knowledge do you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of the Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools?		
Main	Parents	
59%	64%	TOTAL FAVORABLE (NET)
25%	35%	STRONGLY FAVORABLE
34%	29%	SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE
10%	10%	TOTAL UNFAVORABLE (NET)
6%	5%	SOMEWHAT UNFAVORABLE
4%	5%	STRONGLY UNFAVORABLE
20%	16%	NO OPINION (VOLUNTEERED)
1%	*	DON'T KNOW (VOLUNTEERED)
11%	8%	REFUSED (VOLUNTEERED)

Those few sentences were enough to lead 59% of all adults and 64% of parents to grant the group a favorable rating. Approximately one-in-five (20% of the main sample and 16% of parents) still had no opinion.

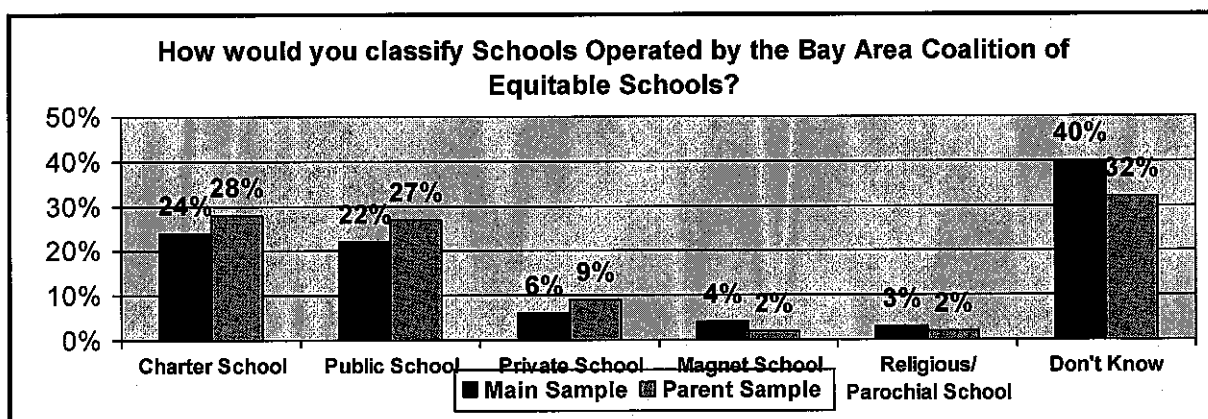
Not only were parents slightly more apt to support BayCES generally, they also held that position with greater intensity—parents were 10 points more likely than respondents overall to say they “strongly” favored the organization (35%-25%).

- ✓ Among Oakland residents generally and parents specifically, Hispanics and those interviewed in Spanish were more likely than most to hold BayCES in high regard after hearing the description.
- ✓ **Familiarity with BayCES bred content rather than contempt, as parents who originally said they were in familiar with organization were 13 points more likely than all parents to favor of it (78%-65%). Although this represents a small percentage of the total sample, this finding indicates that the information available to Oakland parents has been positive in nature.**

Four-in-Ten Unable to Classify BayCES—“Charter” Edges Out “Public” as Most Popular Guess.

Given the admitted ignorance about BayCES, it is not surprising that only 22% of Oakland adults overall and 27% of parents were able to properly identify the schools operated by the Coalition as public schools. Another 24% of adults generally and 28% of parents misidentified the schools as charters – a concern noted by CER based on anecdotal evidence that many regarded the schools as part of the charter system. Other options such as private or religious schools received just single-digit mentions.

Overall, the most common answer was “I don’t know.” Forty percent of Oakland adults and 32% of parents admitted they could not even guess as to how to classify BayCES schools. This differential reinforces that slightly higher (though still somewhat dismal) awareness of BayCES among parents of school-aged children in Oakland.



- ✓ Among Oakland adults generally and parents, age played a role in the ability to identify BayCES schools. In the main sample, seniors (65+) were more likely than others to say they “I don’t know” and 35-44 year olds were more apt to identify BayCES schools as public. Parents aged 45-54 years old were more likely than other moms and dads to be unsure.
- ✓ In the main sample, Central Oakland residents stood out as particularly unable to classify BayCES (55%-40%).
- ✓ **Parents of younger children (aged 5-12) and those whose children attend private schools were more likely than other parents to not know how to categorize BayCES schools.**
- ✓ Hispanic parents were more apt than others to say that BayCES were public schools (51%-27%) and Spanish speakers were similarly more likely than English speakers to know that BayCES schools were public (48%-19%). Parents who took the survey in English were 11-points more likely than their Spanish-speaking counterparts to misidentify the schools as charters (31%-20%) – indicating that fluency in English is definitely NOT a qualification for understanding BayCES. Whites parents were more apt than most to say they didn’t know.

In previous surveys of both adults nationwide² and residents of California³, there was widespread confusion on how to classify charter schools, with only 20% and 29%, respectively knowing that they were part of the public school system. Though that particular question was not asked in this survey, it is likely that Oakland adults would be similarly befuddled. As such, it is likely that those who classified BayCES schools as charters in this survey do not possess a complete understanding of what that means.

Conclusions and Strategic Recommendations

Oakland Needs an Education About Its School System. Adults and parents alike in Oakland have at best a cursory understanding of the state of the education system in their city. There was little agreement among respondents with respect to the direction of their public schools over the last decade, with many completely unable or unwilling to offer any assessment. Further, the names of most of the area's key education players were met with ignorance or indifference when respondents were queried on their respective roles in improving the school system.

As the **Center for Education Reform** promotes alternatives to traditional education generally and charter schools specifically in the city, it must first take steps to impart the basic ABC's of Oakland's public school system to residents and engage them in the quest to improve the opportunities granted to school children. Simultaneously, **CER** can "set residents straight" on BayCES with facts and figures and educate them on the benefits of true charter schools.

BayCES's Reputation in Oakland is Largely Undefined. Only a small minority of survey respondents was aware of BayCES, an organization which runs over 20 schools in the city, with parents just as ignorant as adults overall. At first brush, the Coalition was regarded favorably by a majority of respondents, but the description was very basic and admittedly positive, containing mentions of smaller class sizes and a focus on technology.

As such, **CER** is not tasked with combating widespread misinformation or misperceptions of BayCES, but rather has the opportunity to inform Oakland residents about the group. **CER** must make the first move to inform Oakland residents on how BayCES differs from charter schools in form, function and results. Otherwise, residents may confuse the two, or worse, think that BayCES is a substitute for charter education.

² The nationwide telephone survey of 800 adults was conducted January 5-11, 2005 by the polling companyTM, inc. for the Center for Education Reform. The margin of error for the survey is +3.5% at a 95% confidence interval.

³ A statewide telephone survey of 700 adults was conducted January 5-11, 2005 by the polling companyTM, inc. for the Center for Education Reform. The margin of error for the survey is +3.7% at a 95% confidence interval.

Identify and Message to Key Groups. Those who have the most invested in Oakland's public schools – the parents of enrolled children – are among the most important targets of CER's campaign. While parents were slightly more informed than adults overall about the school system, they were still shockingly disconnected. Reach parents when they are most likely to be thinking about public education, on the radio during drop off and pick up times and on billboards near schools. Hold community meetings regarding the state of Oakland school system and come armed with information regarding charter schools and BayCES.

Hispanics and Spanish speaking residents in both the main and parents sample were more likely than others to admit to being "in the dark" concerning Oakland schools. However, they were more likely than other ethnic groups or English speakers to favor BayCES after being read the short description of the organization. Hispanics have high regard for community resources and leaders, so reaching them may be most effective through pastors, teachers, and civic volunteers. Harnessing members of those groups as spokespersons can be highly effective in reaching this demographic. Breaking the language barrier by providing print and media ads in Spanish will also be imperative to reaching Hispanic parents.