

**EXCLUSIVE**

## **New Yorkers giving public schools higher marks than nine years ago**

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Tara Engberg for News

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A new poll found New Yorkers - particularly low-income residents - give city schools higher marks than they did nine years ago.

The Unheard Third poll, commissioned this summer by the [Community Service Society of New York](#), also found New Yorkers see the schools as in need of further improvement.

"What I hear I is, 'Yes, the schools have improved, but there's still a lot of room for improvement,'" the advocacy group's vice president for policy, [Nancy Rankin](#), said yesterday.

"The other thing that comes out is that there is an appetite to invest more in education. People see some payoff, but they want to invest more."

The poll, which asked 1,400 New Yorkers to assign an A to F grade, found the schools on average were awarded a C+ now. In 2002, the poll found schools earned a C-.

Low-income New Yorkers' perceptions about city schools improved dramatically. In the new poll, 40% gave the public schools an A or a B. In 2002, just 25% did.

Two-thirds of New Yorkers said they were willing to pay more in taxes to improve graduation rates. More than one-third reported being very willing to do so.

Mayoral spokeswoman [Julie Wood](#) said the city was more focused on test results and graduation rates as a measure of progress than on polls.

"Of course, we're pleased that parents feel schools have gotten better, and we agree with them that there is room for more improvement, which is why we're continuing to raise the bar and set high standards for our students and teachers," she said.

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