

History Education in Massachusetts
Schools:
A Pioneer Institute Survey of
Educators, Parents & Legislators

May 2018
ΔΑΠΑ Research Inc.

Stakeholders

- All surveys completed May 19-May 28, 2018
- Total Package:
 - Parents: 500 by RDD
 - Teachers: 150 by list
 - Legislators: 25 by personal interview



Massachusetts Parents

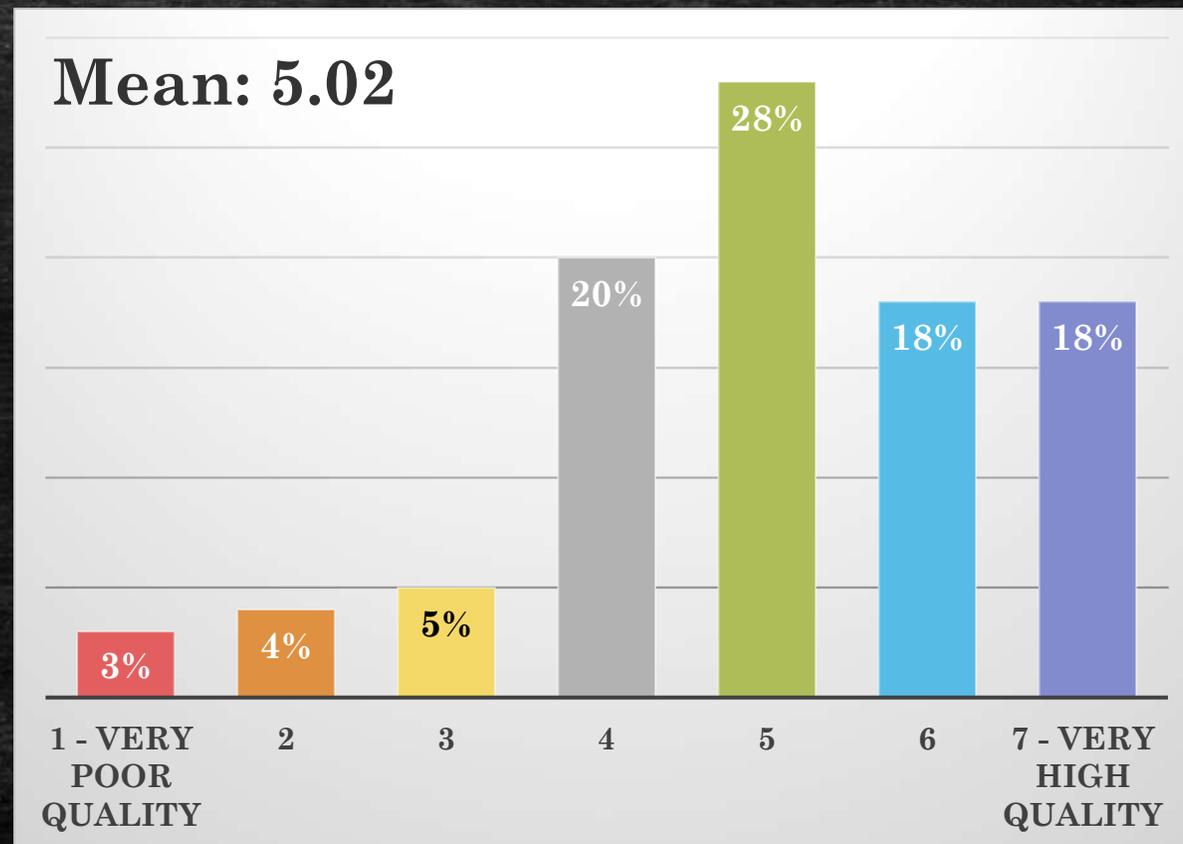
- 500 Respondents; MoE +/- 4.4 percentage points
- Surveys Completed: May 19-May 25, 2018

Survey Demographics

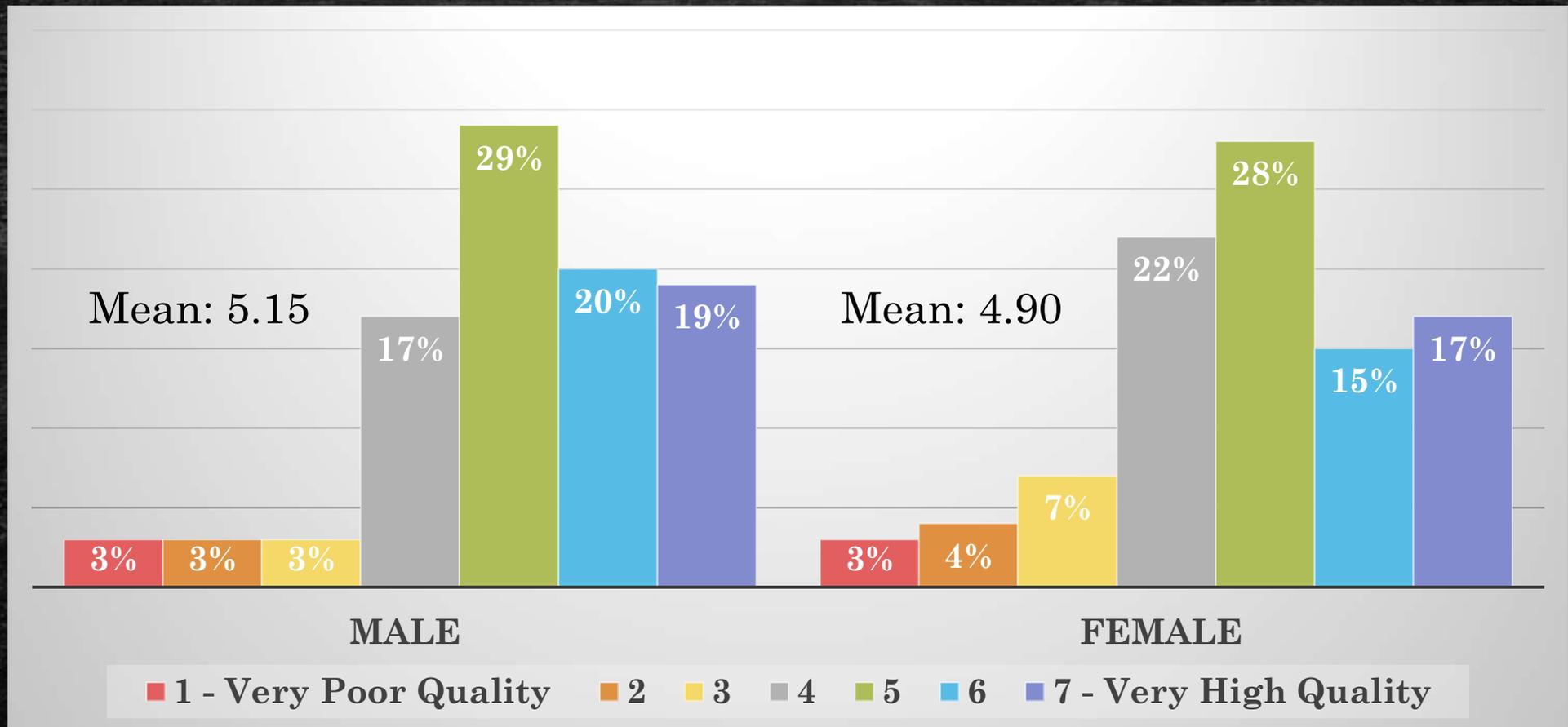
- Gender: 46% Male; 54% Female
- Area Code: 24% Worcester/West; 34% Northeast; 8% Suffolk; 34% SE Mass/Cape
- Party Registration/ID: 35% Democrat; 16% Republican; 45% Independent/Unenrolled
- All respondents have children under the age of 18 in their household
- All respondents are either “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to vote in the November 2018 general election

Quality of Public Schools in MA

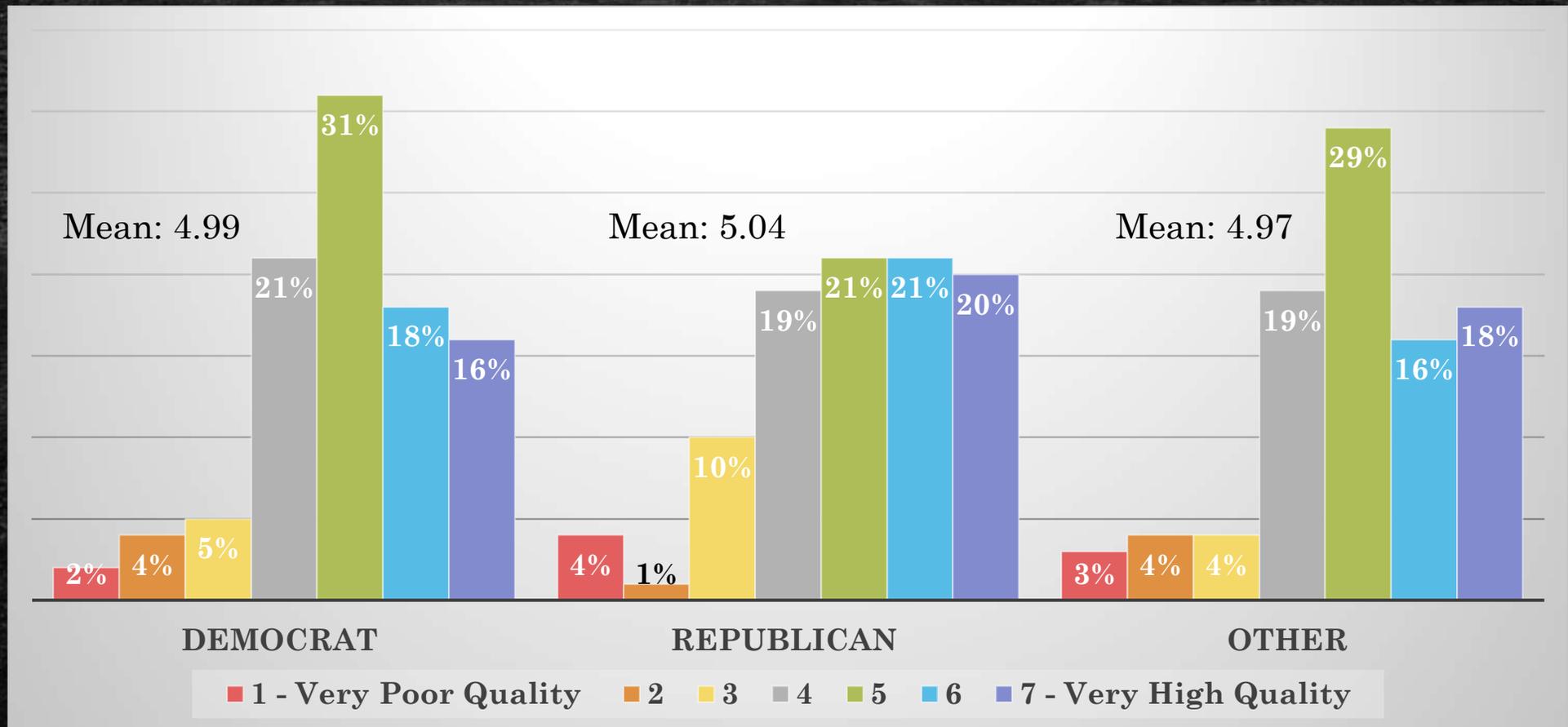
On a scale of 1-7, where “1” means “very poor quality” and “7” means “very high quality”, which scale represents your view of the overall quality of the public schools here in Massachusetts – not necessarily your own local schools, but all public schools across the state?



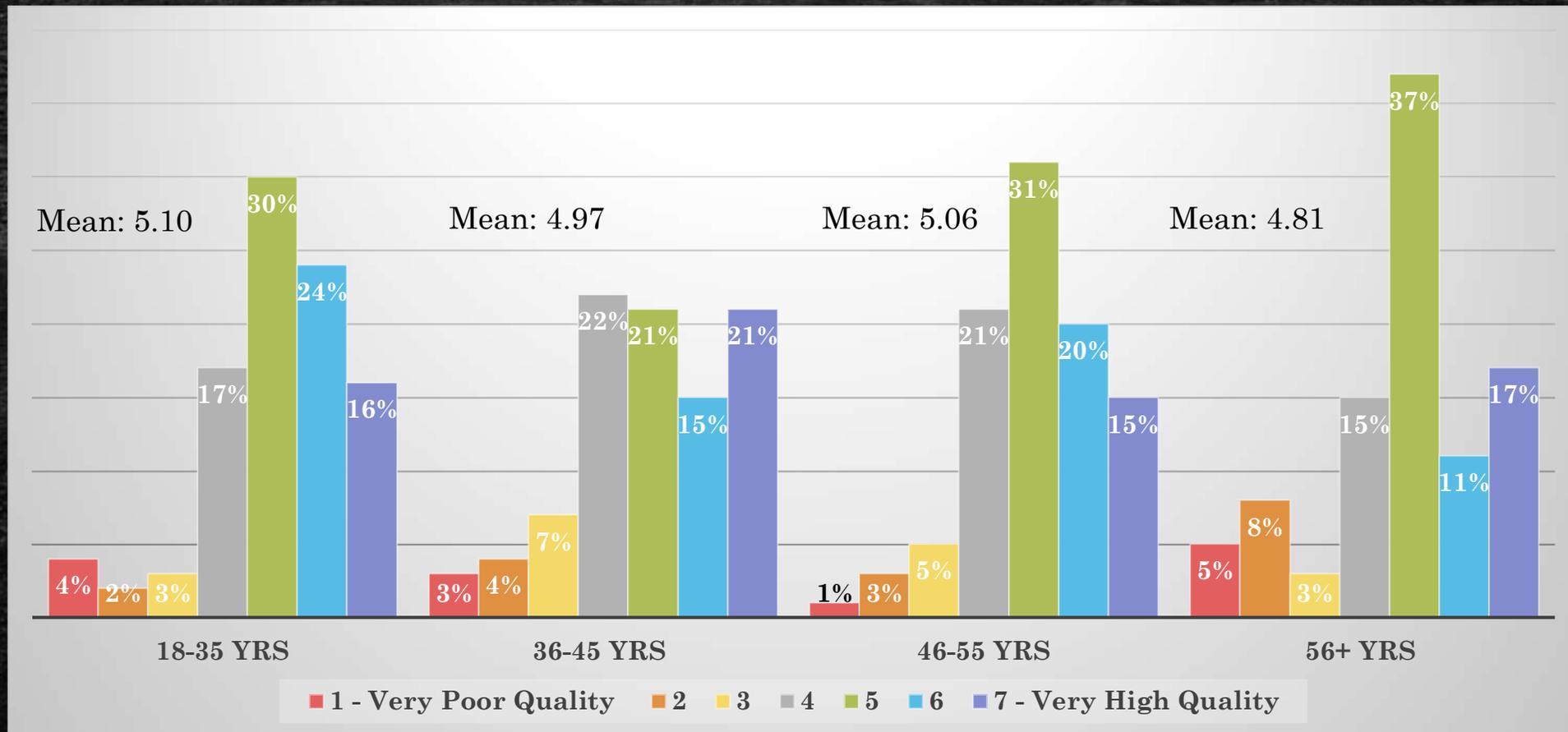
Parents By Gender: Quality of Public Schools



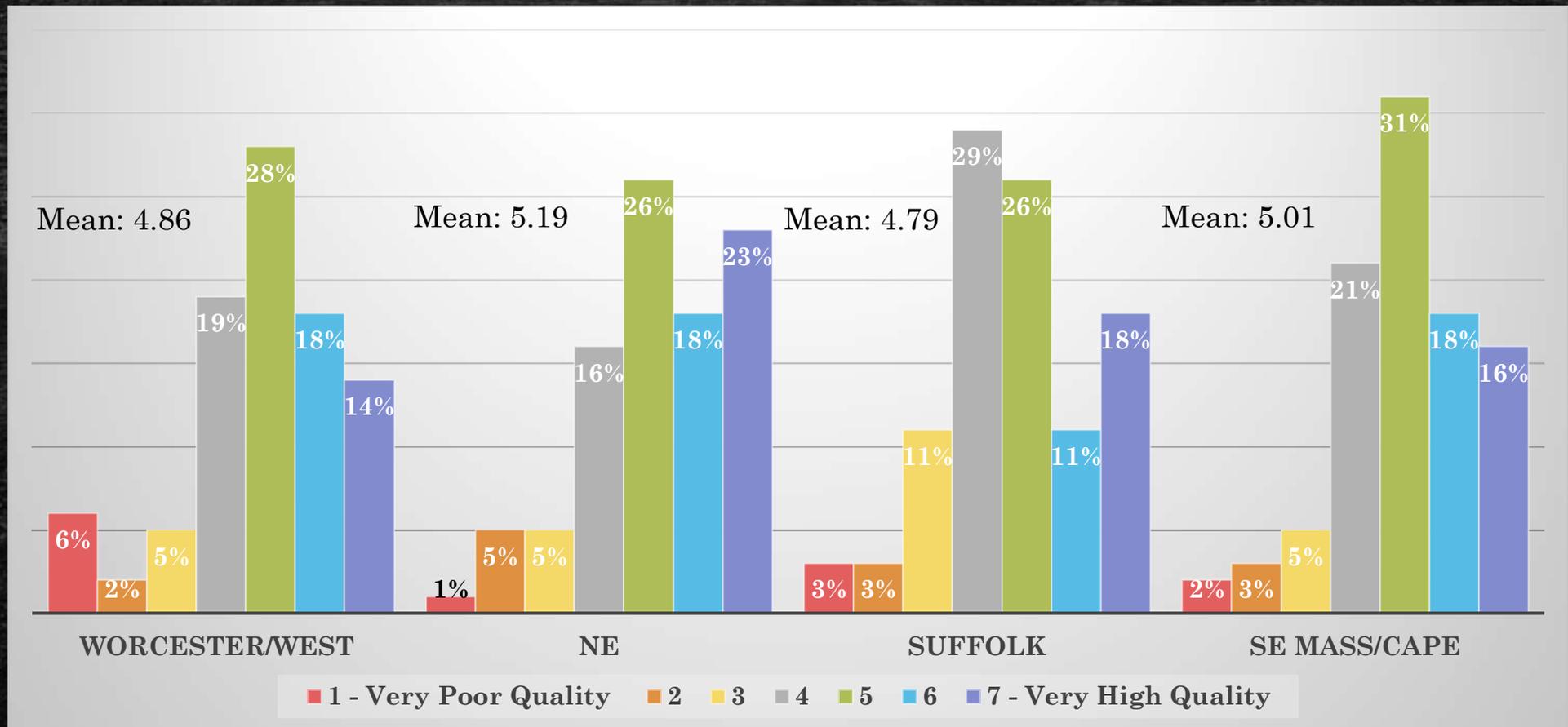
Parents By Party ID: Quality of Public Schools



Parents By Age: Quality of Public Schools



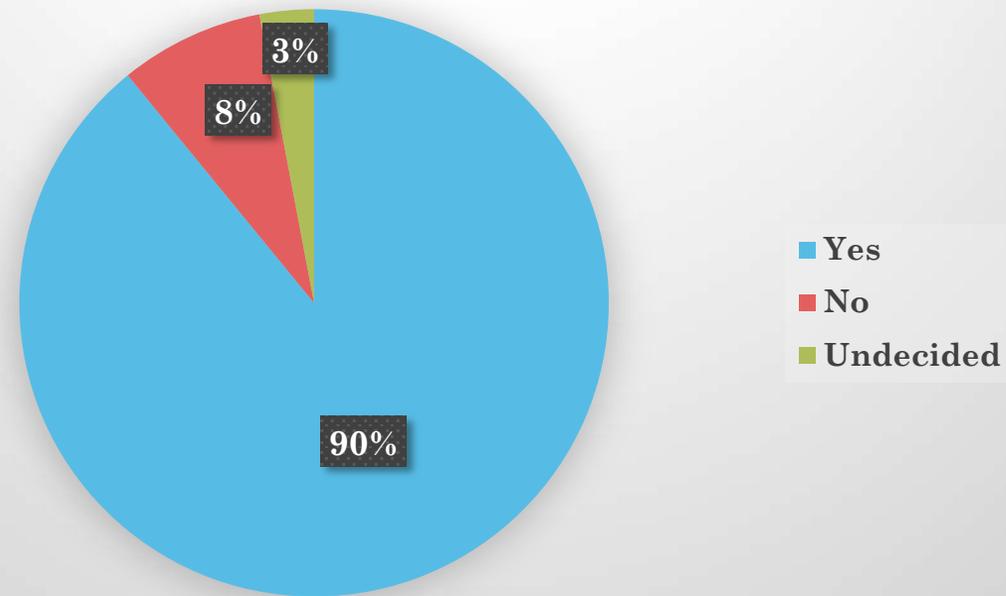
Parents By Area: Quality of Public Schools



History Education in MA

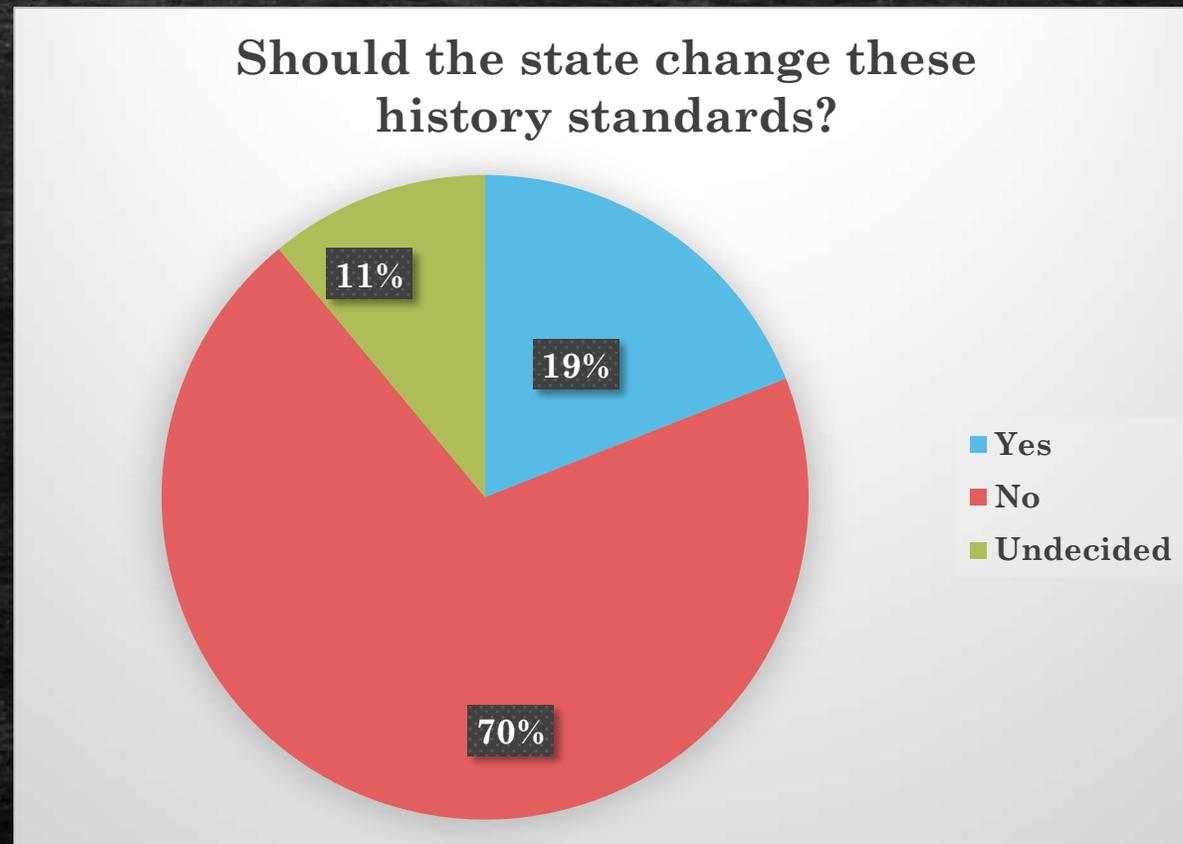
In the wake of state education reform legislation enacted in 1993, the performance of MA public school students has improved dramatically. Under reform, students are required to demonstrate basic knowledge of English, math and science to graduate from high school, but the law also requires MA student to study things like the nation's founding documents.

Do you think all MA public school students should study our nation's founding and history?



K-12 History Standards in MA

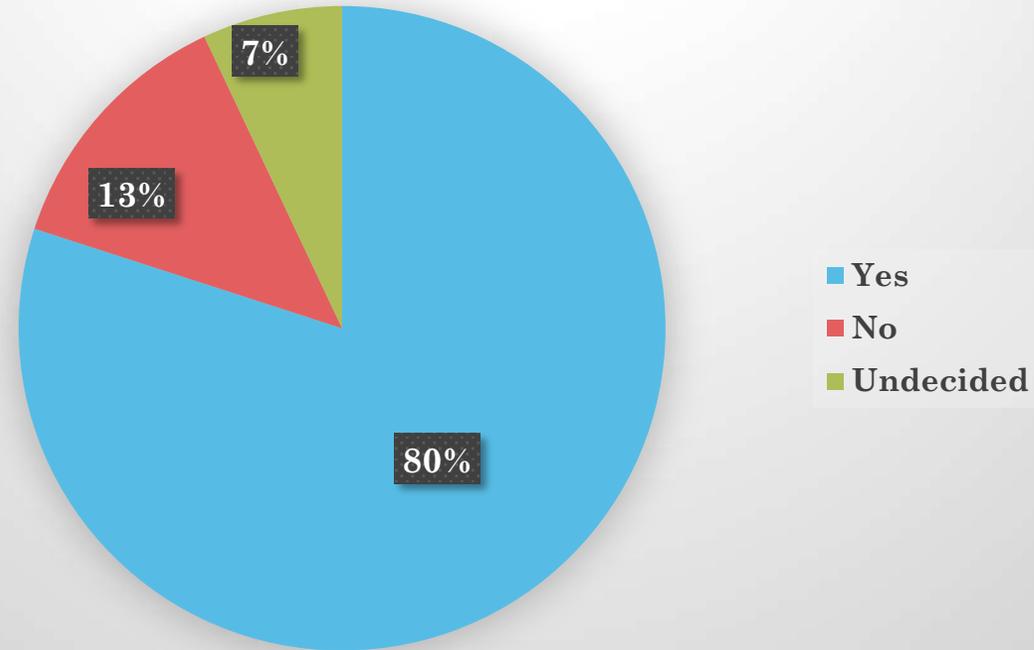
The current
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History Education in MA

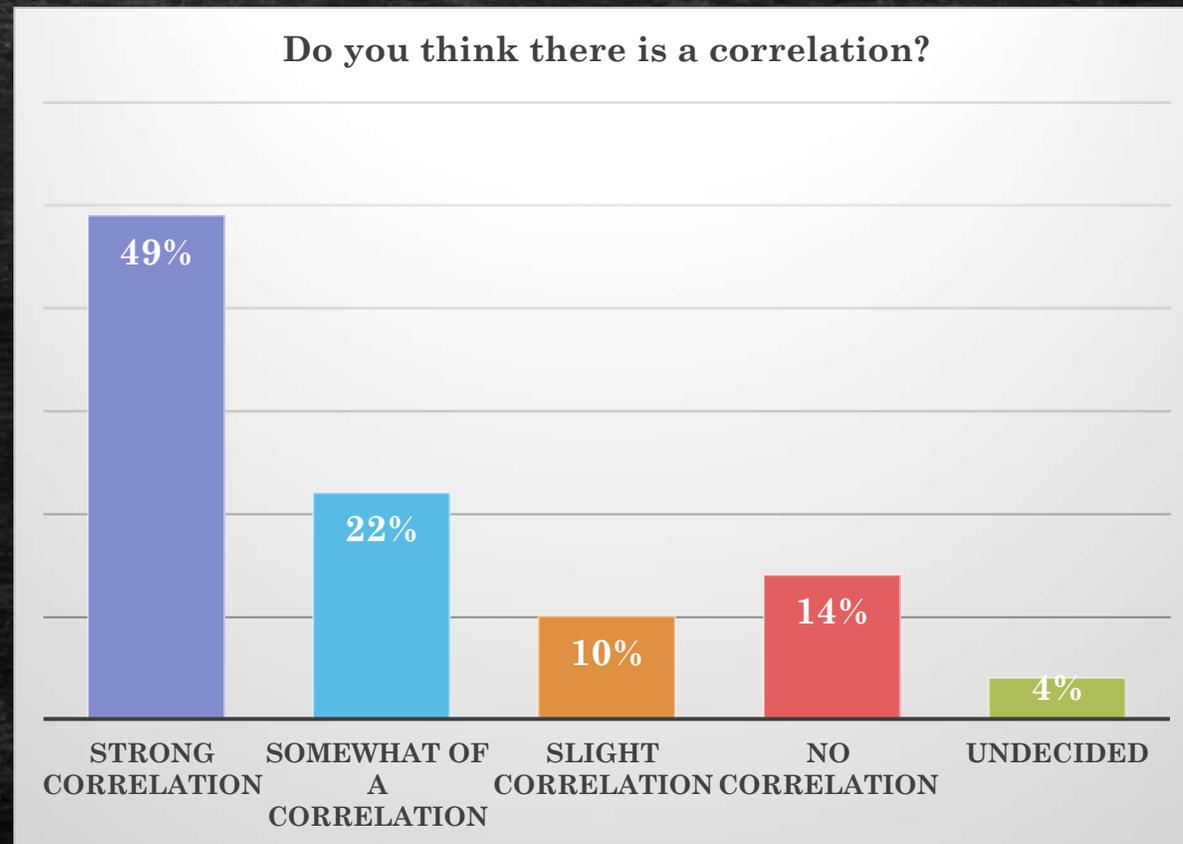
In recent years, middle school social studies departments have been eliminated in MA and the courses are taught by English, math and science teachers. In high schools, history and social science electives are being replaced by other subjects.

Do you believe MA should focus more attention on US history education?



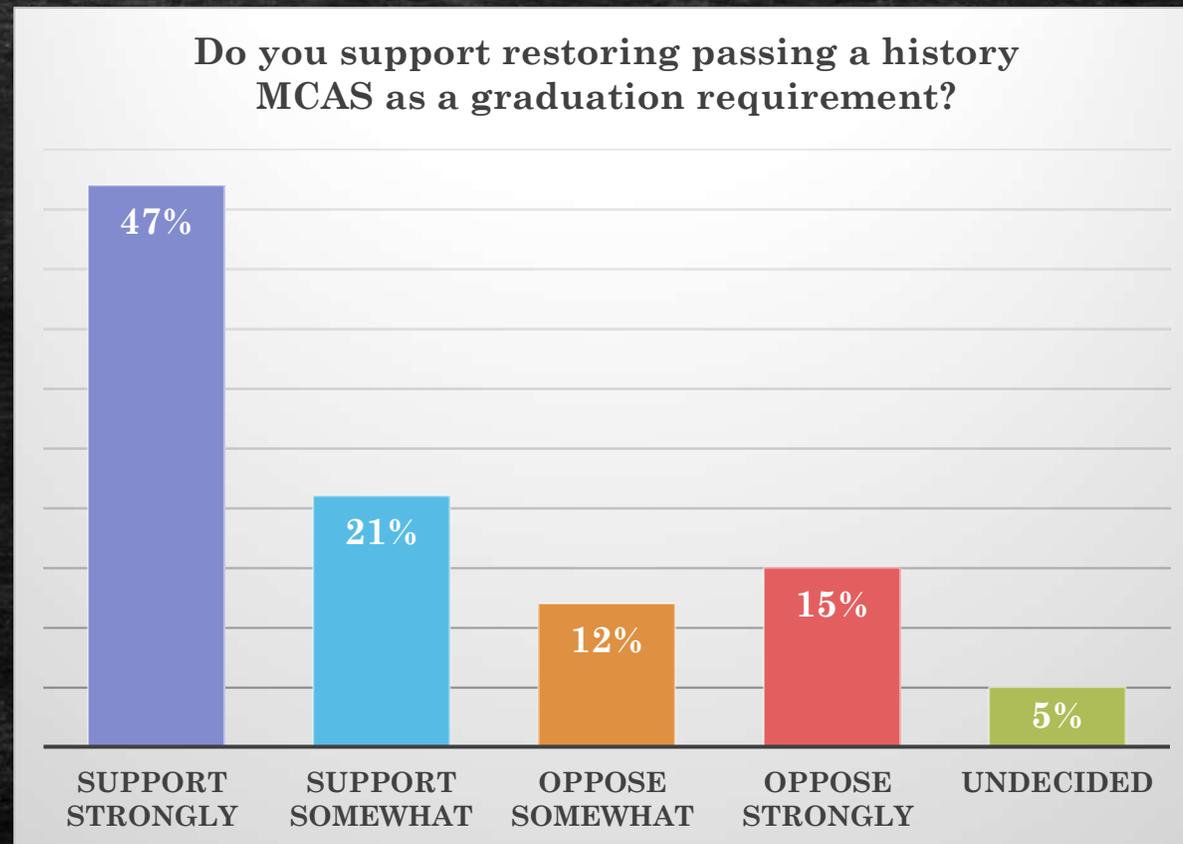
Required Testing Subjects

Do you think there is a correlation between Massachusetts students not having to pass a history test and the fact that they don't do as well in history as they do in English, math and science?



US History as MCAS Requirement

For the class of 2012, US history was scheduled to join English, math and science as subjects in which students would have to pass an MCAS test to graduate from high school. But in 2009 the Commissioner of Education recommended, and the state Board of Elementary Education agreed, to postpone the US history graduation requirement.





Massachusetts Teachers

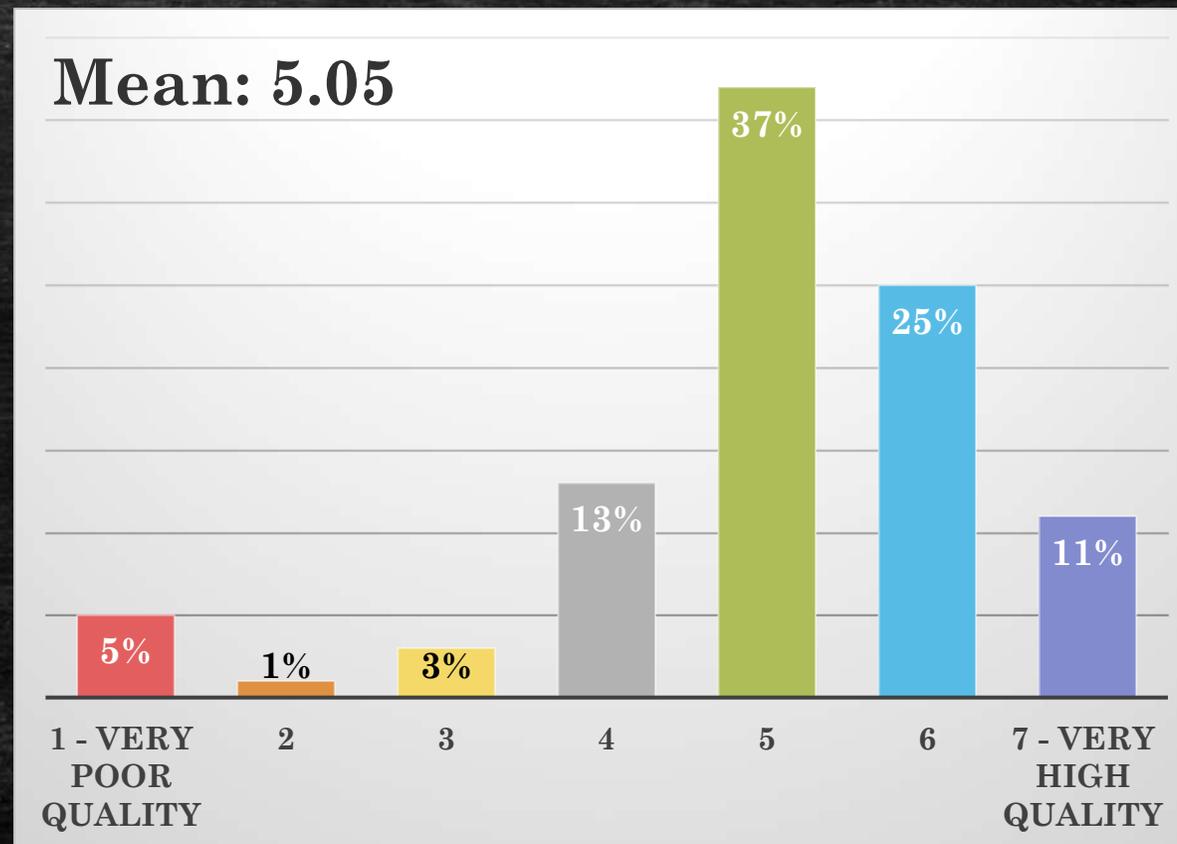
- 150 Respondents; MoE +/- 8 percentage points
- Surveys Completed: May 18-May 26, 2018

Survey Demographics

- Gender: 27% Male; 73% Female
- Grade Level Taught:
 - 1st – 4th → 30%
 - 5th – 8th → 37%
 - 9th – 12th → 26%
- Area Code: 31% Worcester/West; 31% Northeast; 7% Suffolk; 30% SE Mass/Cape
- Party Registration/ID: 31% Democrat; 11% Republican; 53% Independent/Unenrolled
- 15% of respondents have children under the age of 18 in their household

Quality of Public Schools in MA

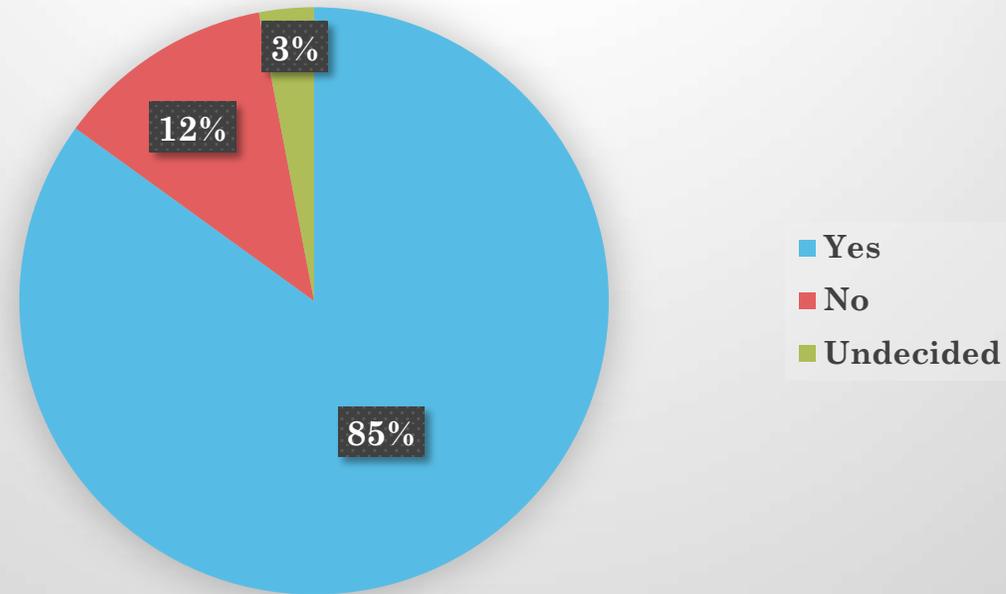
On a scale of 1-7, where “1” means “very poor quality” and “7” means “very high quality”, which scale represents your view of the overall quality of the public schools here in Massachusetts – not necessarily your own local schools, but all public schools across the state?



History Education in MA

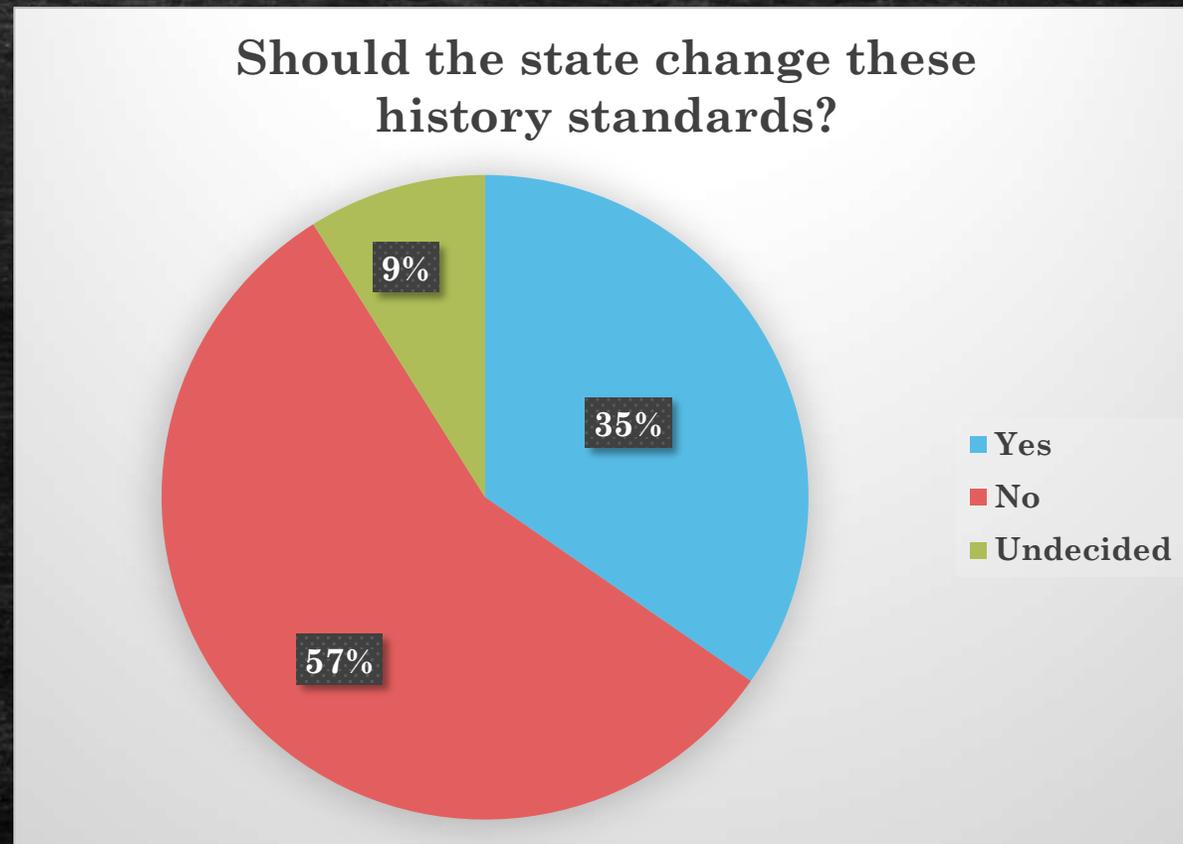
In the wake of state education reform legislation enacted in 1993, the performance of MA public school students has improved dramatically. Under reform, students are required to demonstrate basic knowledge of English, math and science to graduate from high school, but the law also requires MA student to study things like the nation's founding documents.

Do you think all MA public school students should study our nation's founding and history?



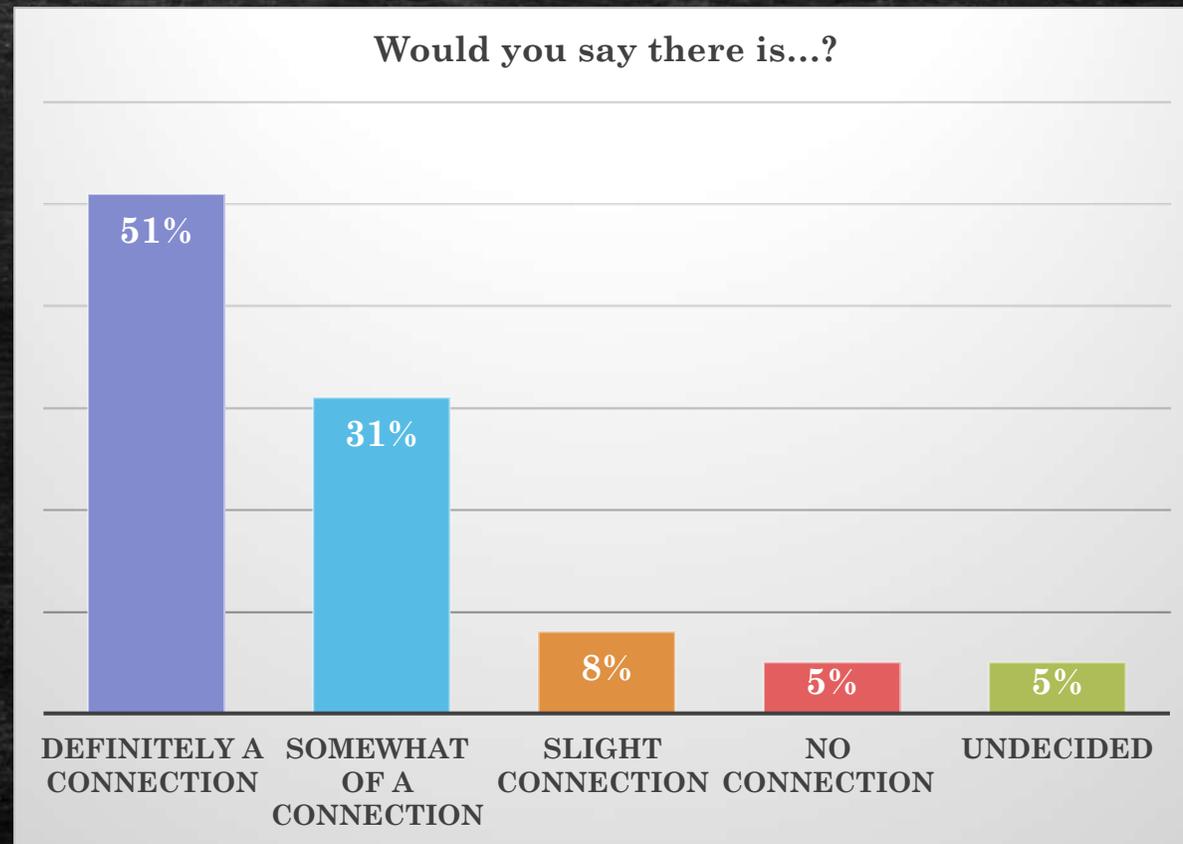
K-12 History Standards in MA

The current Massachusetts K-12 US history standards have been rated among the best in the country.



Required Testing Subjects

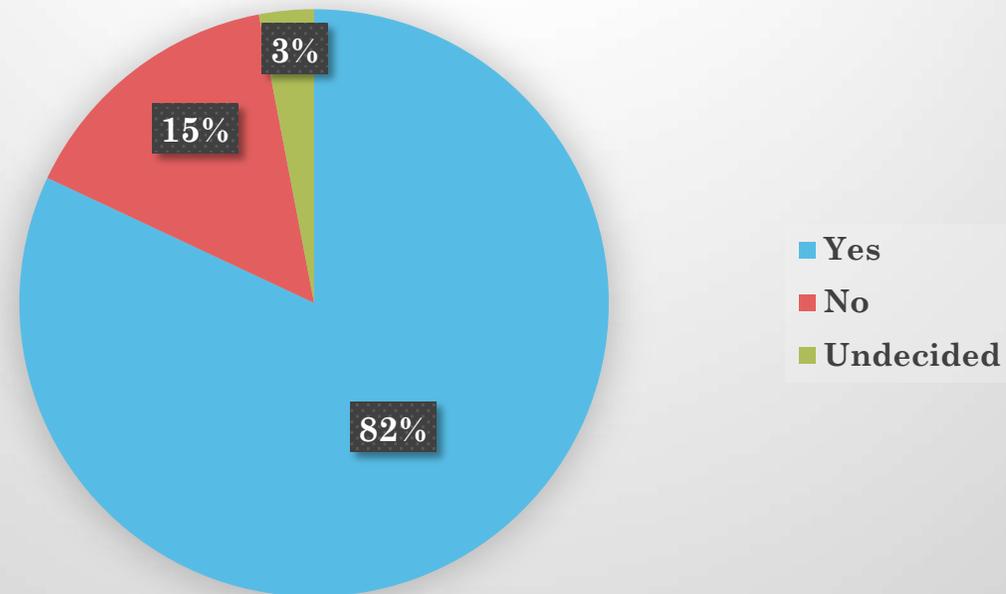
MA is one of only nine states that doesn't require students to demonstrate knowledge of history or civics to graduate from high school. In your experience as a teacher, do you find that there is a connection between subjects that are tested and those that are taught in our schools?



Focus on History Education

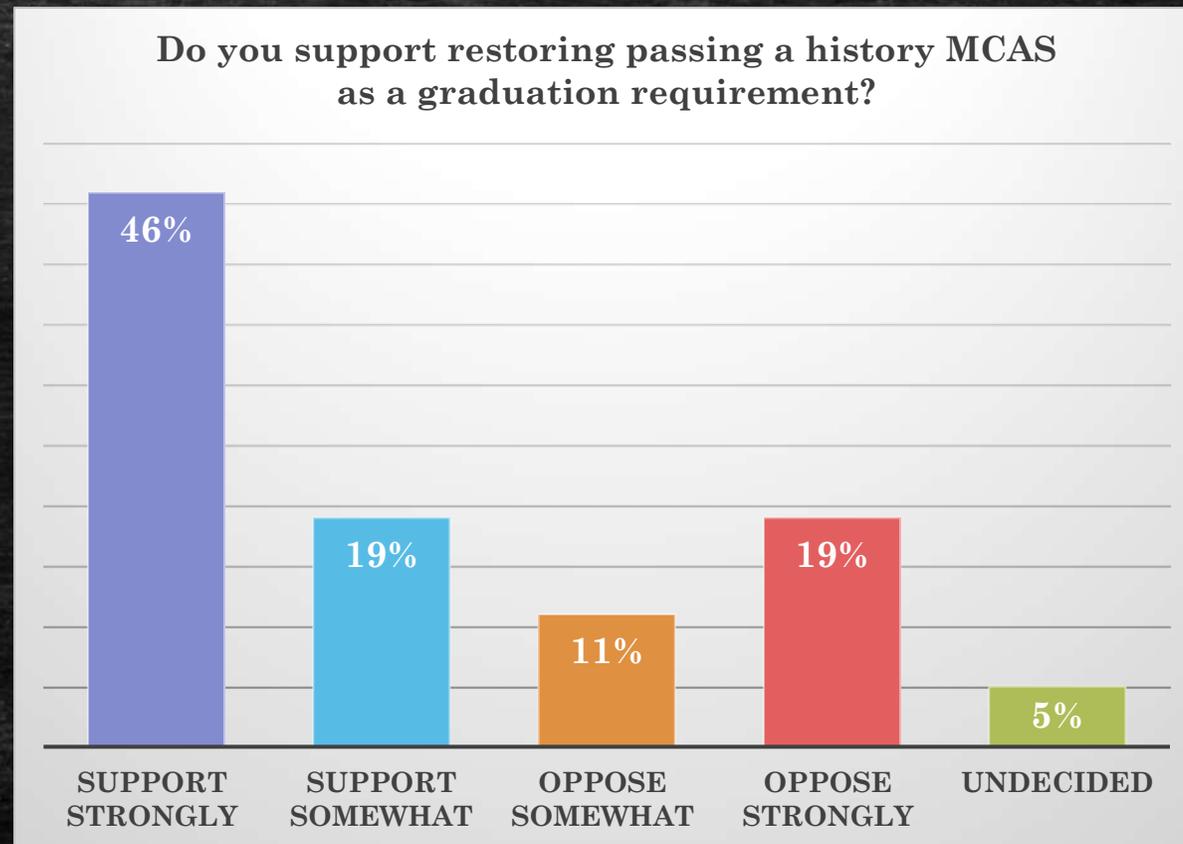
In recent years, MA students have performed very well on national and international English, math and science tests. But in national competitions that test knowledge of US history, MA students have never finished among the top 10 states.

Should the commonwealth focus more attention on educating students in US history?



US History as MCAS Requirement

For the class of 2012, US history was scheduled to join English, math and science as subjects in which students would have to pass an MCAS test to graduate from high school. But in 2009 the Commissioner of Education recommended, and the state Board of Elementary Education agreed, to postpone the US history graduation requirement.





Massachusetts Legislators

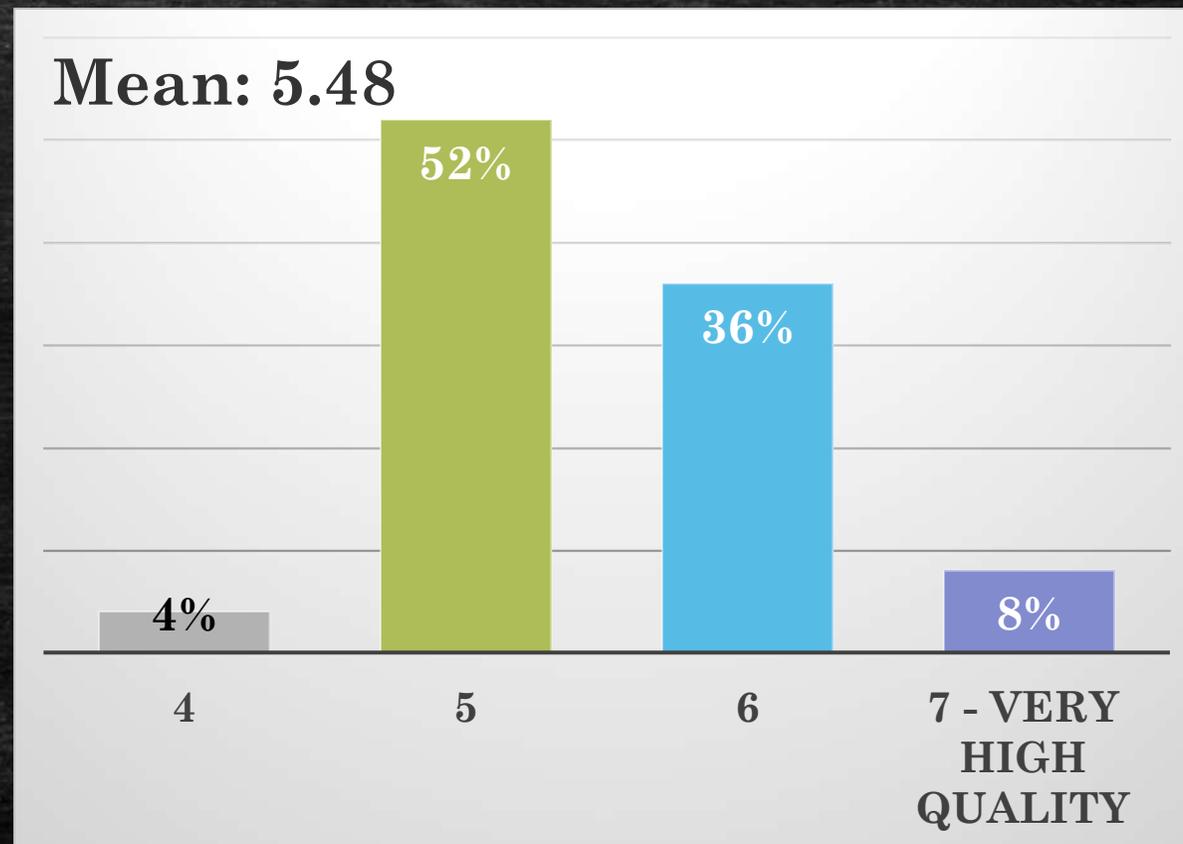
- 25 Respondents
- Surveys Completed: May 17-May 28, 2018

Survey Demographics

- All respondents are elected legislators in Massachusetts
- 80% State Representatives; 20% State Senators
- Gender: 72% Male; 28% Female
- 80% Democrat Legislator; 20% Republican Legislator
- 28% of respondents have children under the age of 18 in their household

Quality of Public Schools in MA

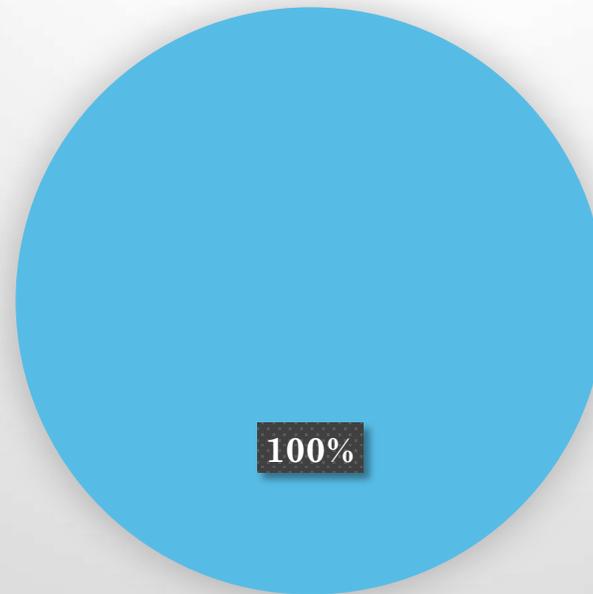
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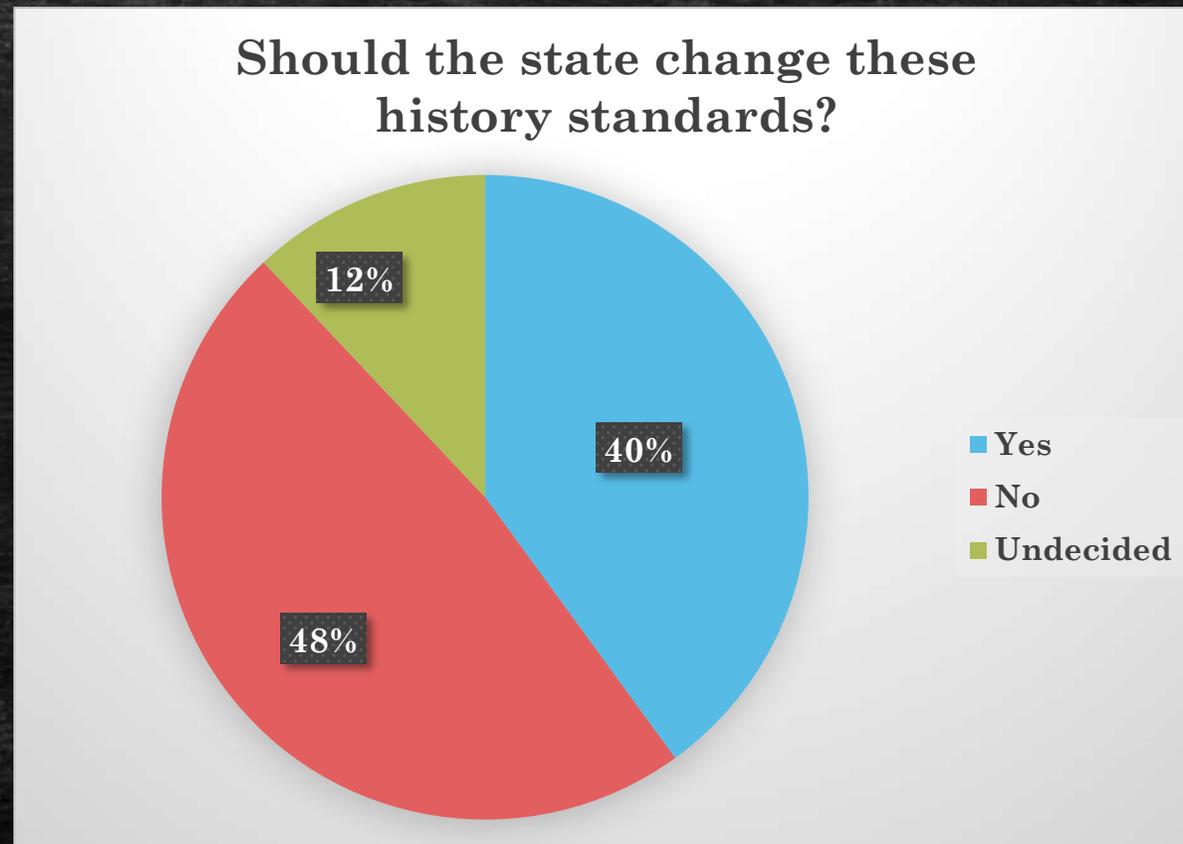
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K-12 History Standards in MA

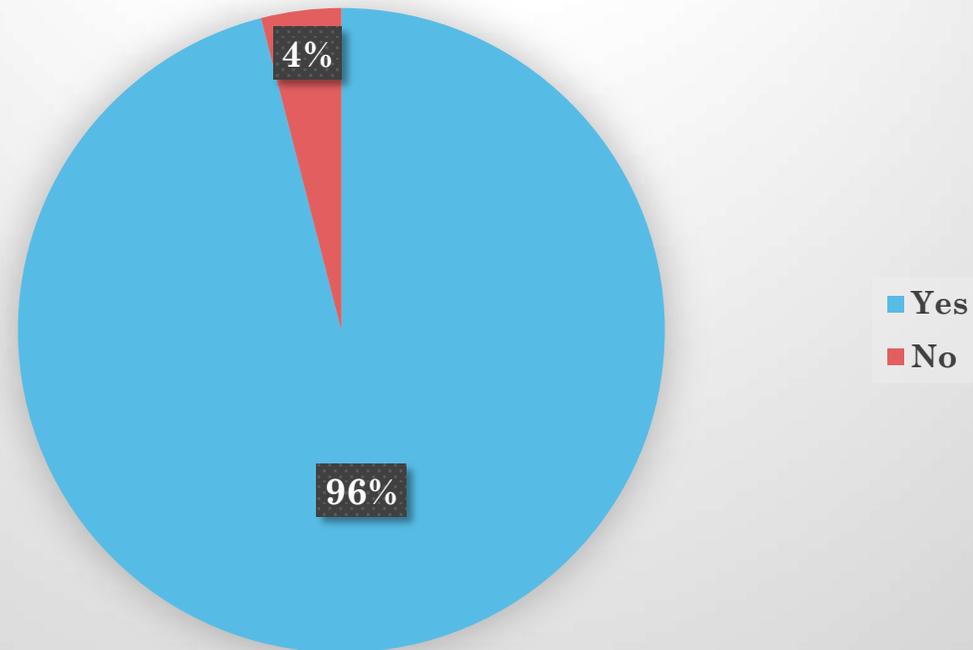
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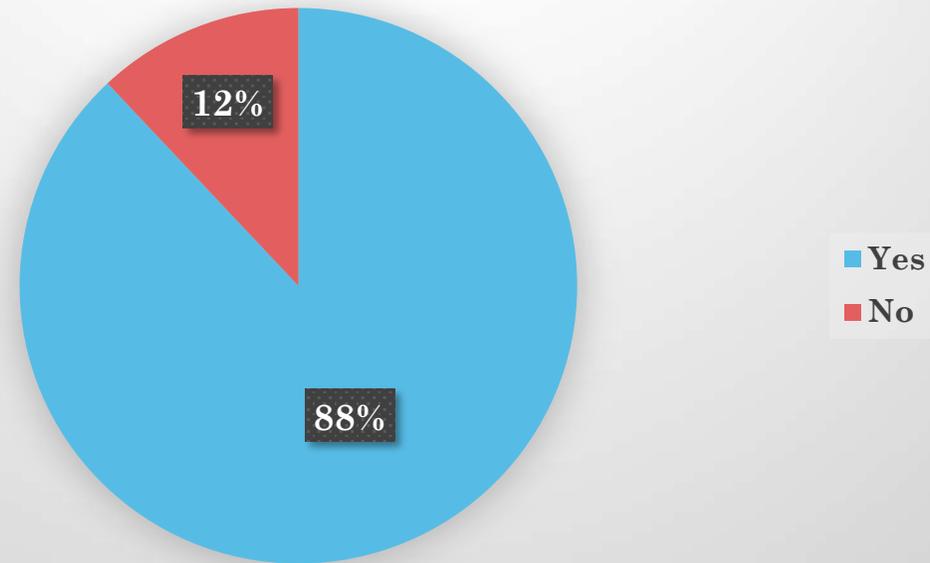
Should MA focus more attention on US history education?



US History Graduation Requirement

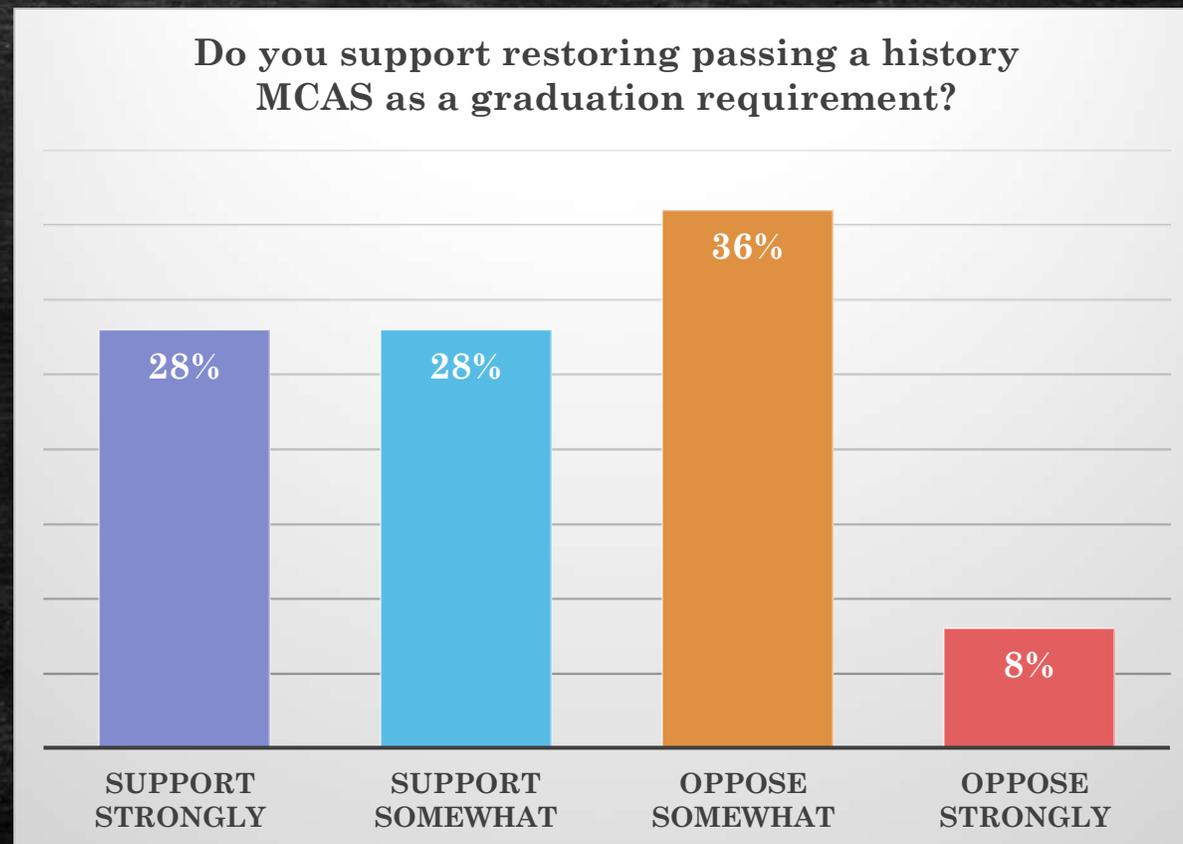
When the commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education postponed the US history graduation requirement in 2009, they cited the \$2.4 million annual cost of administering the test.

Do you think the money to administer the test could be found within the \$9.5 billion annual taxpayer investment in public education?



US History as MCAS Requirement

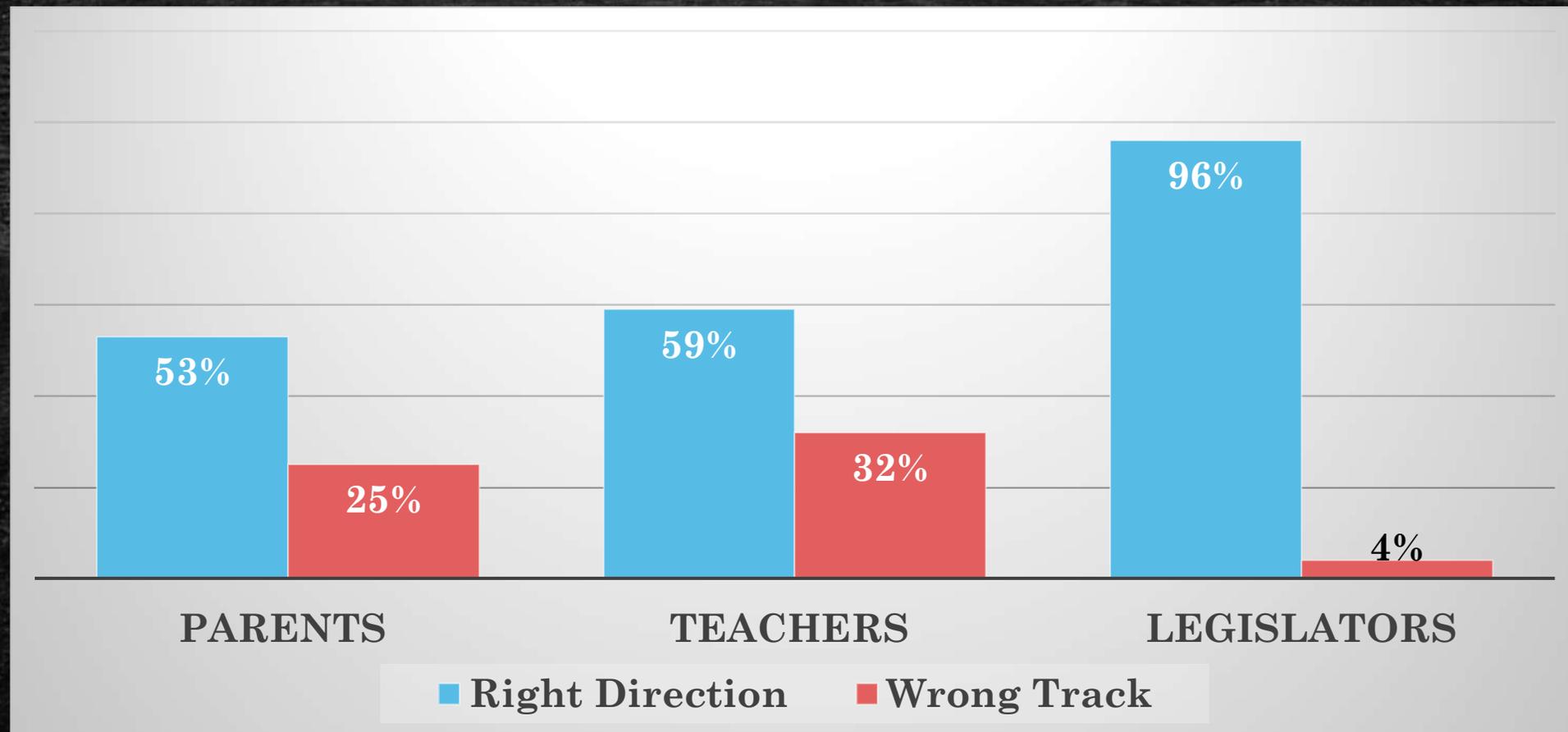
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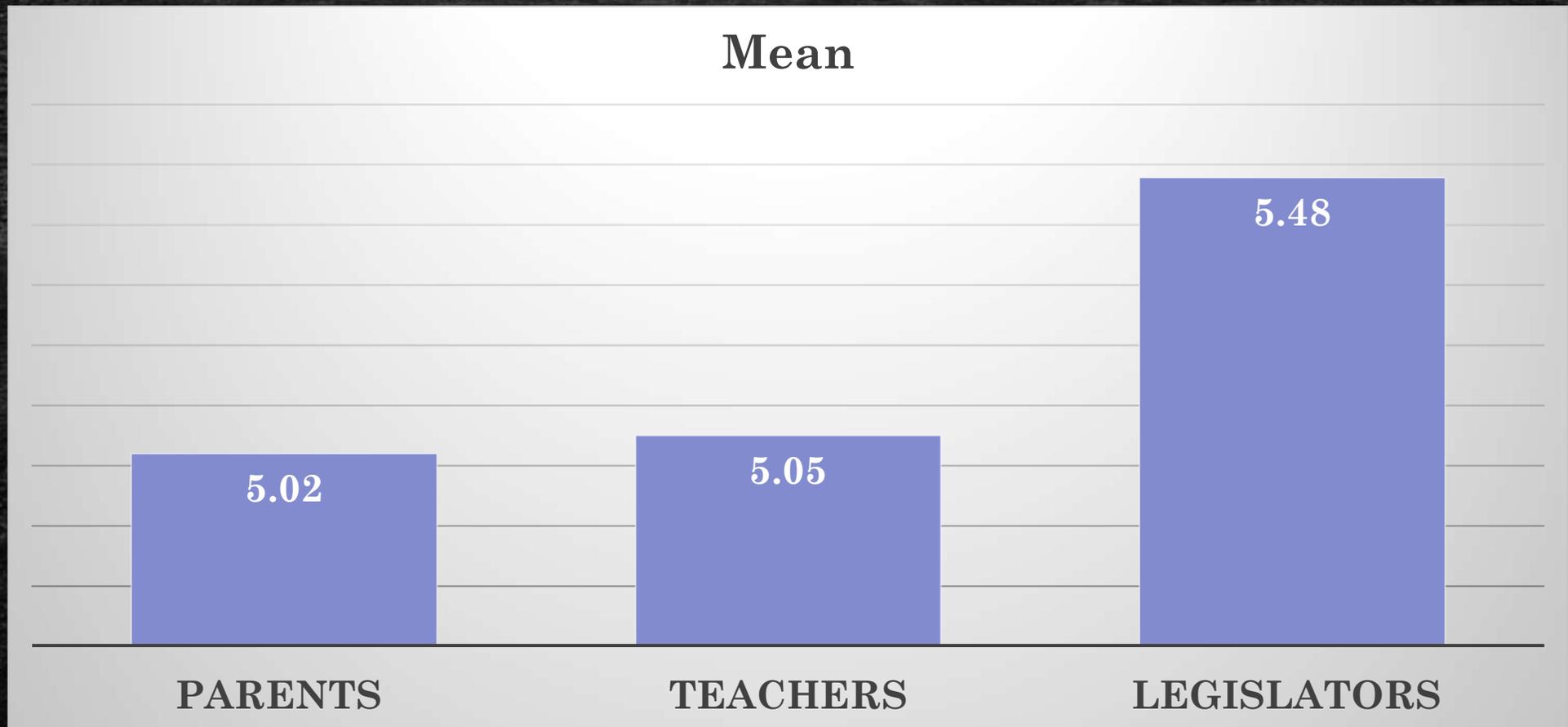
Common Questions

Comparing Parents, Teachers & Legislators

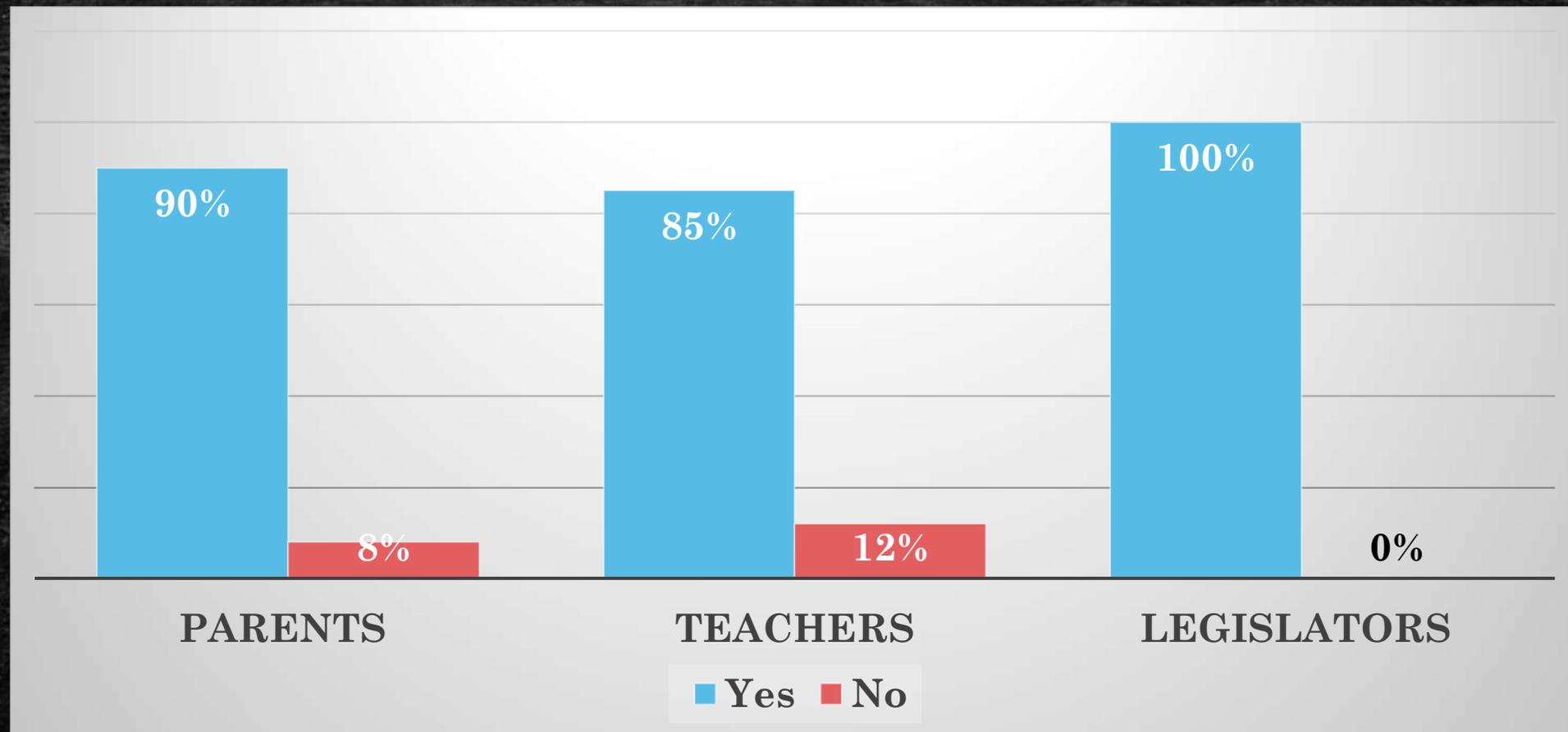
MA: Right Direction or Wrong Track?



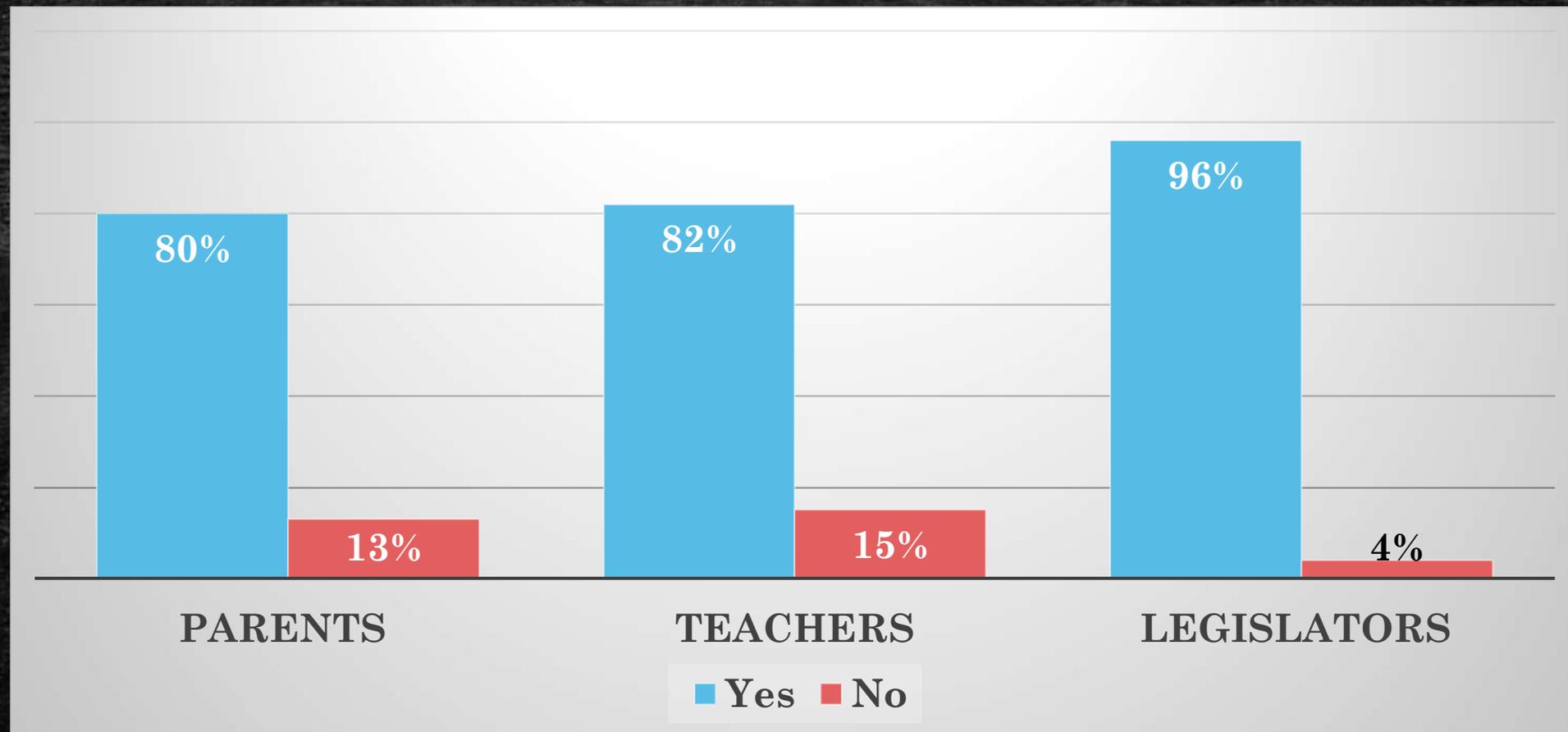
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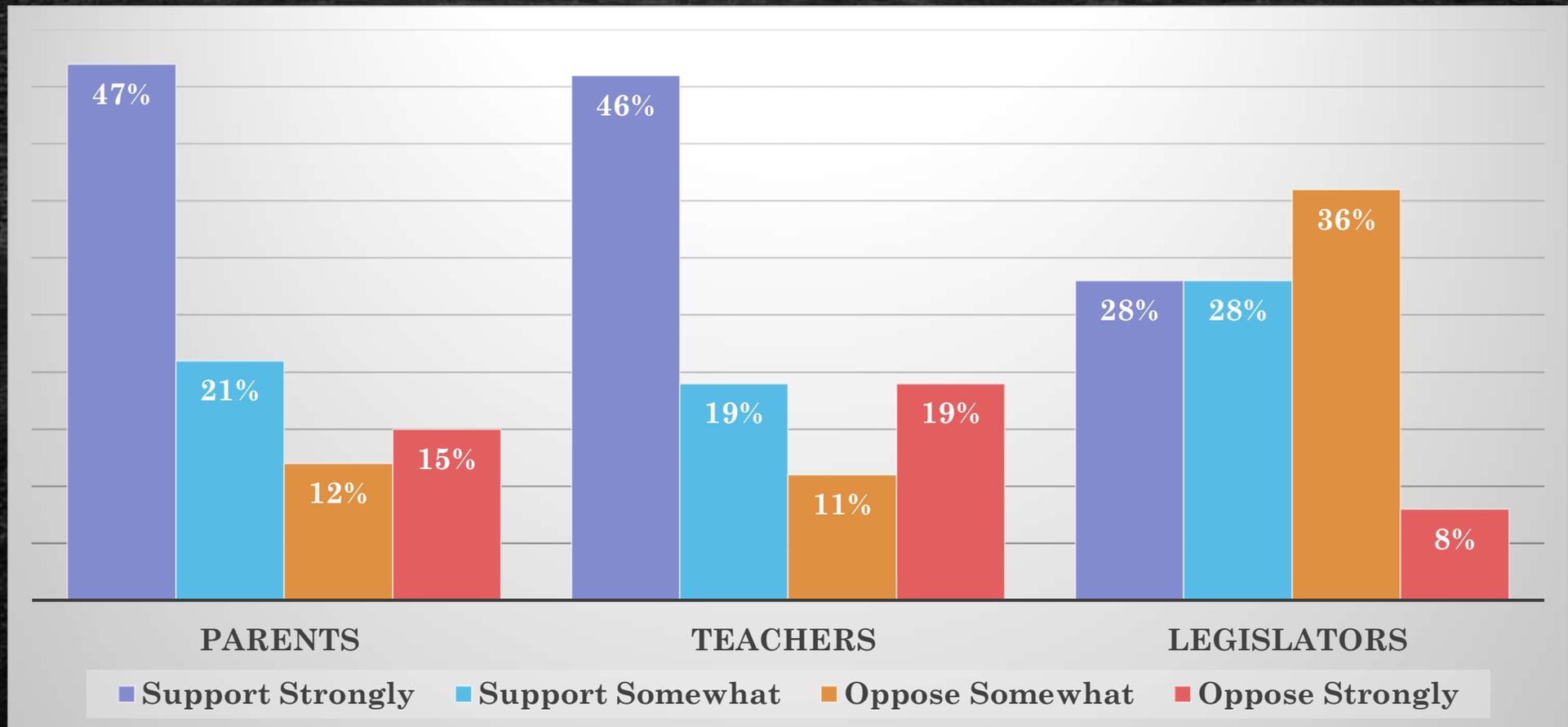
Should all MA public school students study history?



Should MA focus more attention on history education?



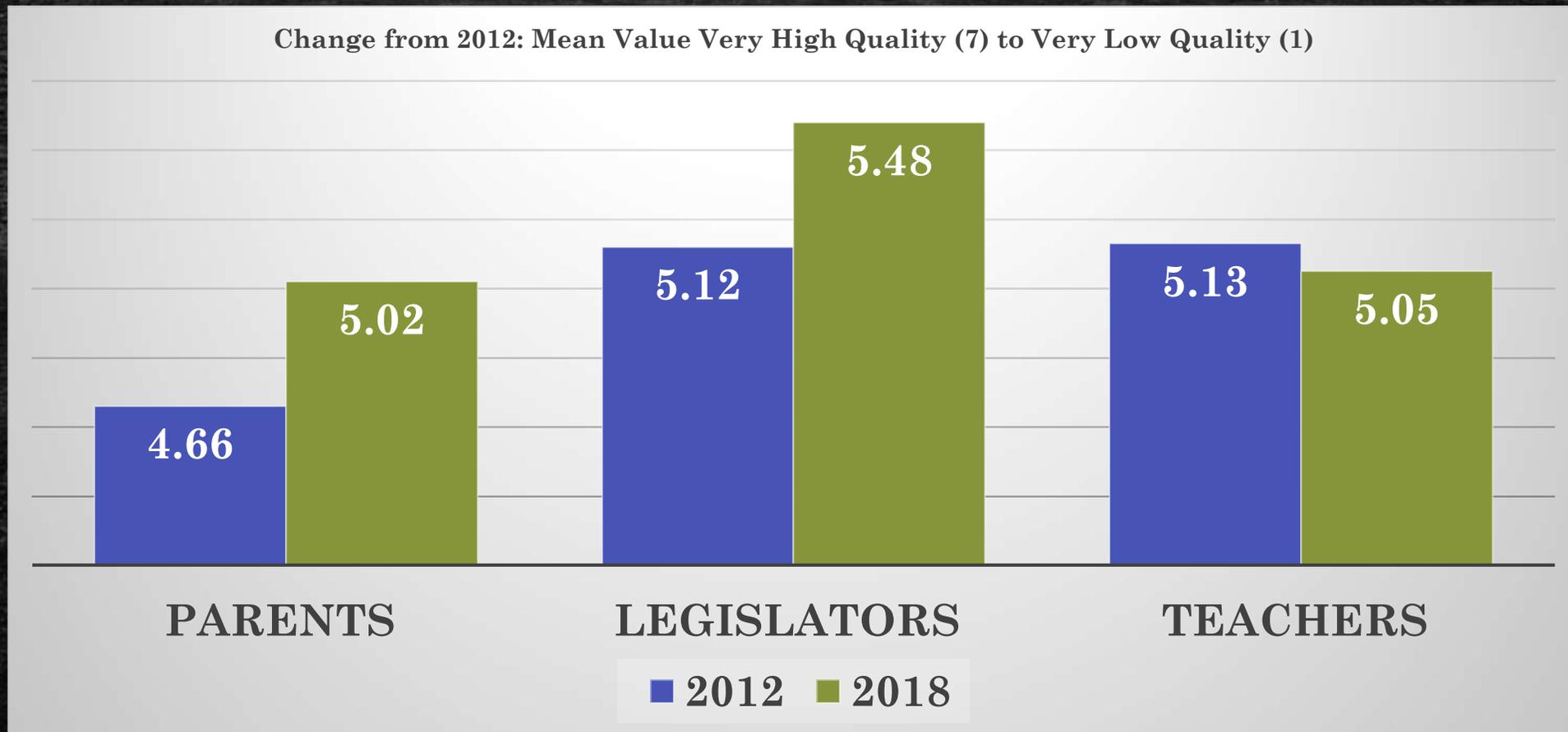
Should MA restore a history MCAS as a graduation requirement?



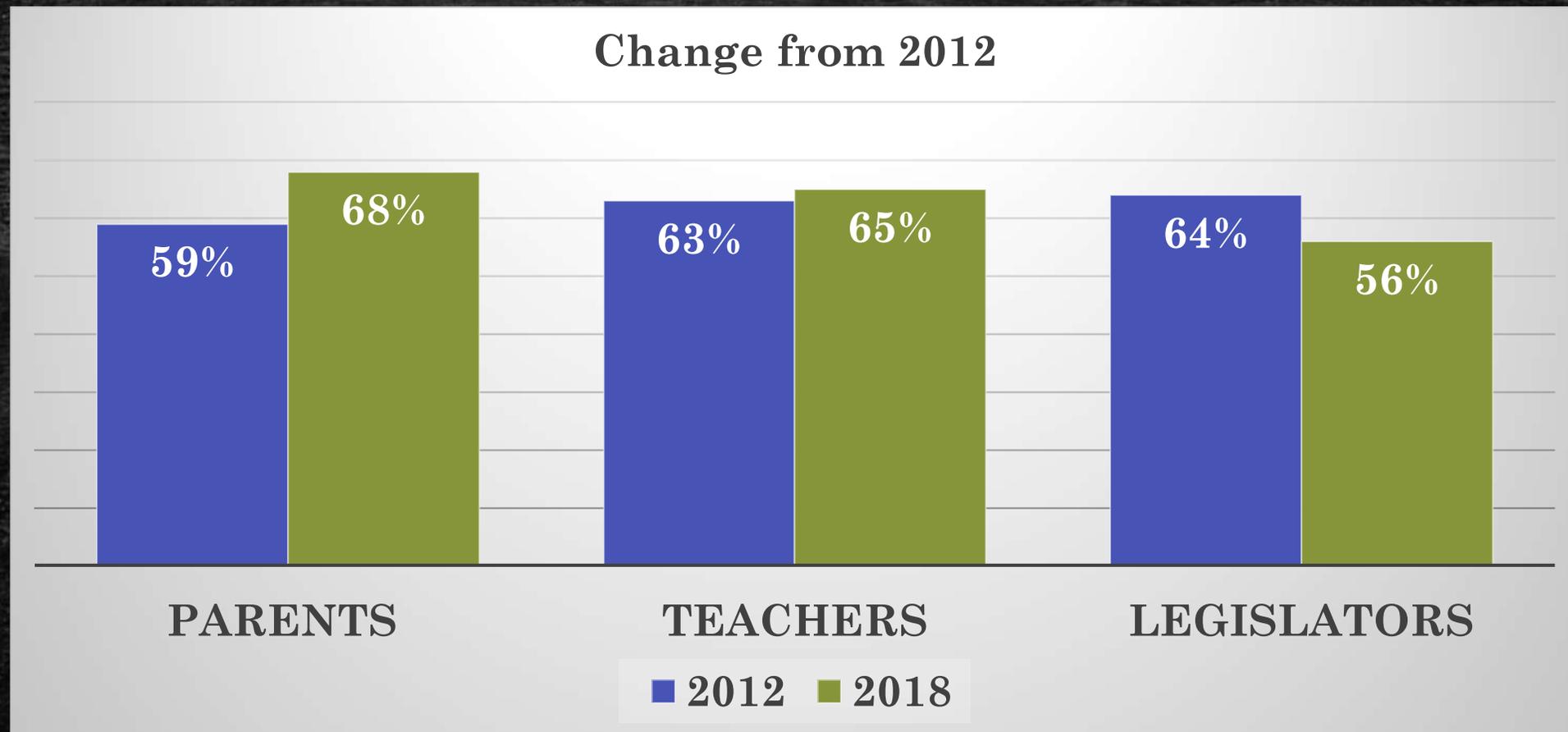
Significant Changes from 2012



Parents, Legislators More Bullish, Teachers Less So



All Support MCAS, Though Legislators Wane



Conclusions

- Parents, teachers, & legislators give high marks to education in MA
- Students should study U.S. history → 85% to 100%
- More focus on history needed → 80% to 96%
- Strong correlation between testing and outcomes
- 56%-68% support history MCAS to graduate
- There is money in the MA state budget to administer this test (\$2.4 million) → 88%