



ATLANTA REGIONAL COUNCIL
for HIGHER EDUCATION

GEORGIA VOTERS: VIEWS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Results from a statewide poll on Georgia's colleges and universities and issues that affect them

About the poll

Data in this report are from a poll conducted for the Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education (ARCHE) by the research firm Infosurv between November 11 and December 2, 2008.

The poll included 600 online interviews of randomly selected registered voters in Georgia. The sample reflected the total population of registered voters based on age, gender, race and geography. The margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 4.0 percent for questions reporting the full sample. For more information, please see page 14.

This report includes respondents' views on quality of institutions, importance of higher education, funding priorities, tuition and financial aid, research, and college plans and outcomes.

Quality of institutions

Quality and access important, but quality is more important

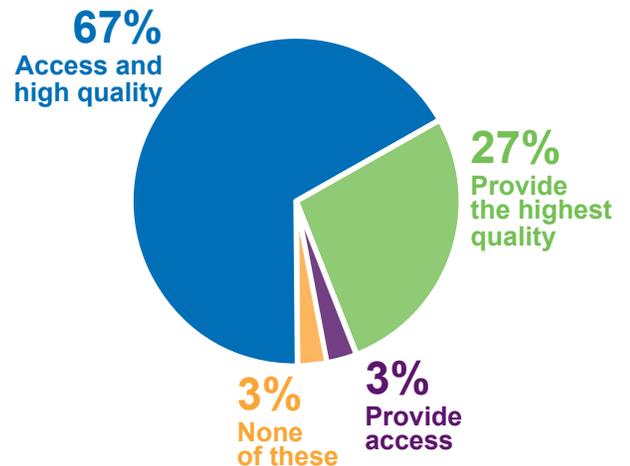
Which of the following statements comes *closest* to your own view?

Access and high quality are both important and should be provided through Georgia's network of public and private four-year colleges.

It is more important to **provide the highest quality** education even if that means that all Georgians who want to attend a four-year college cannot do so.

It is more important to **provide access** to all Georgians who want to attend a four-year college even if that means lowering the quality of education.

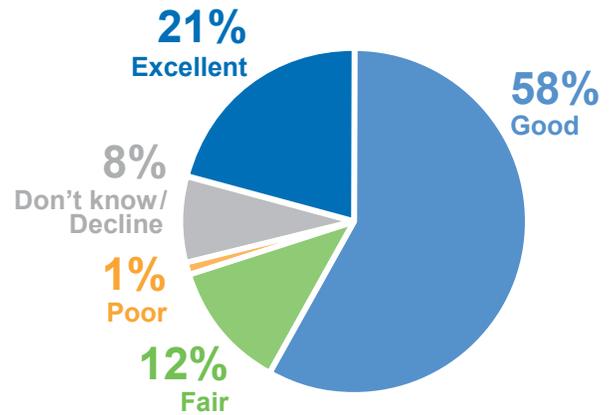
None of these statements reflects my view.





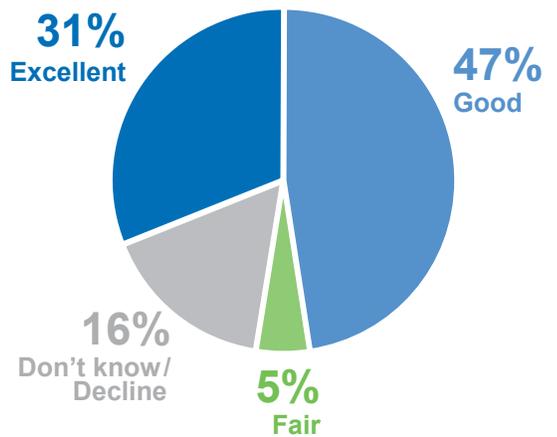
Public 4-year colleges and universities get high marks for quality...

Overall, how would you rate the quality of public four-year colleges and universities in the state of Georgia?



...as do private 4-year institutions

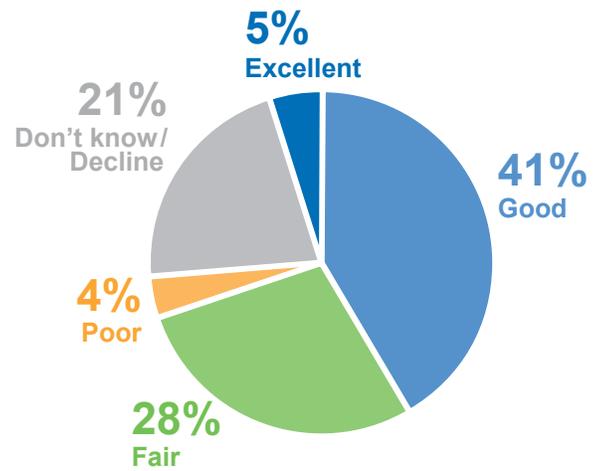
Overall, how would you rate the quality of private four-year colleges and universities in the state of Georgia?





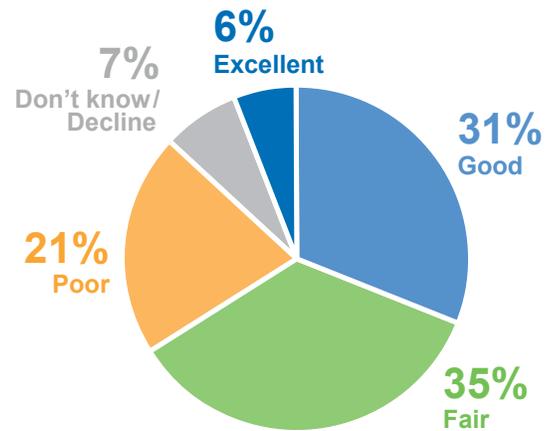
Views on 2-year college quality are generally good...

Overall, how would you rate the quality of public two-year colleges in the state of Georgia?



...while views on K-12 school quality are mixed

Overall, how would you rate the quality of K-12 public schools in the state of Georgia?





Importance of higher education

Higher ed is very important to life success...

How important do you think a college education is in order for a person to succeed in life today?



...and economic growth

How important do you think Georgia's colleges and universities are to economic growth in the state?



...and improving quality of life

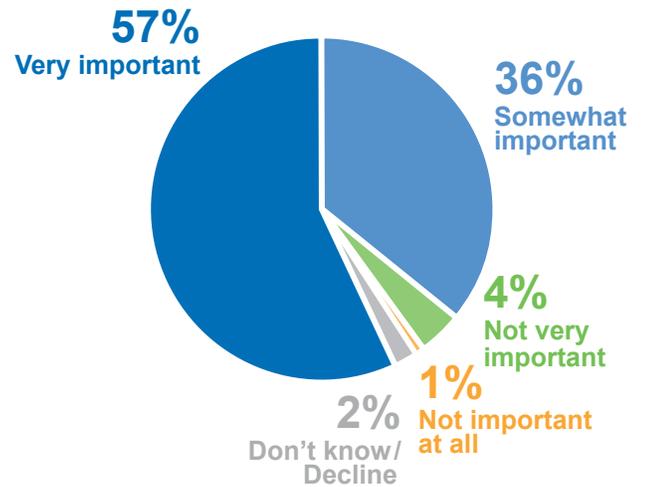
How important do you think Georgia's colleges and universities are to improving the quality of life for Georgia residents?





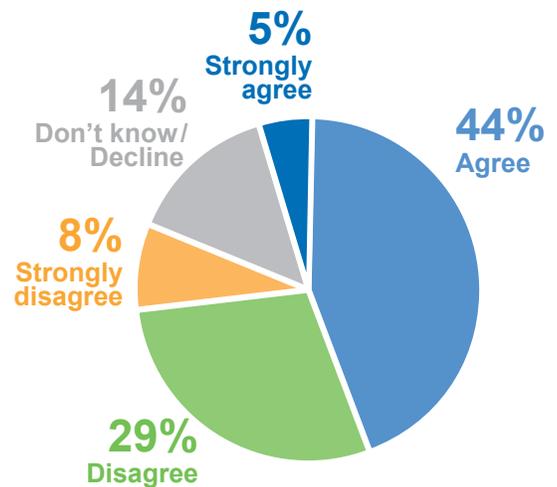
Georgia's status as a national higher ed leader matters...

How important do you think it is that Georgia be a national leader in the quality of its colleges and universities?



...but only half say the state is now a leader

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with this statement: Georgia is a national leader in the quality of its colleges and universities.

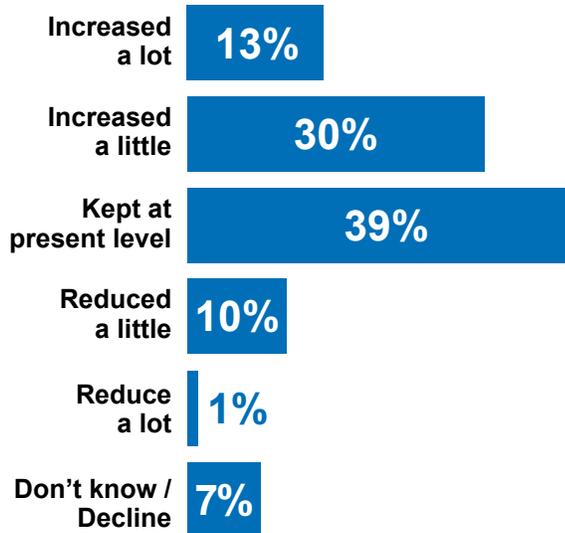




Funding priorities

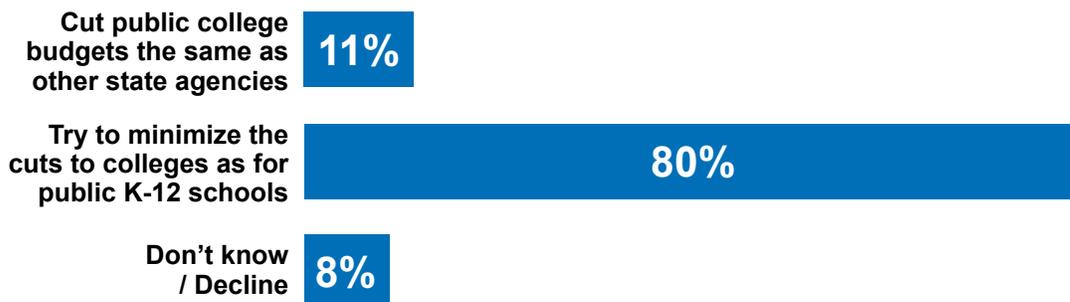
Georgia voters say: Maintain or increase higher ed funding...

Given the current economic downturn, do you believe spending on colleges and universities by state government in Georgia should be _____.



...or at least minimize budget cuts

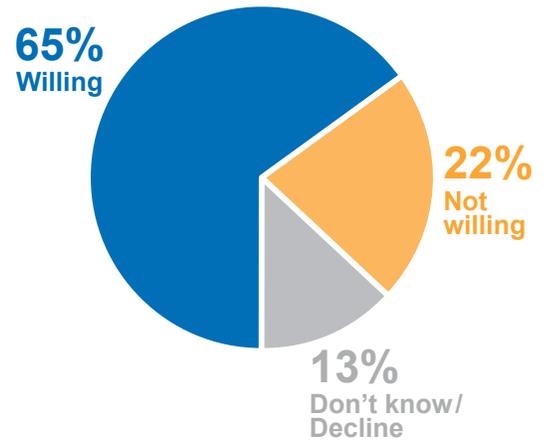
During today's difficult economic times, Georgia is cutting the state budget in a variety of ways. In view of this, do you believe state government in Georgia should cut public college and university budgets the same amount as other state agencies (6% at time poll was conducted) or try to minimize the cuts to colleges like it is doing for public K-12 schools (4% at time poll was conducted)?





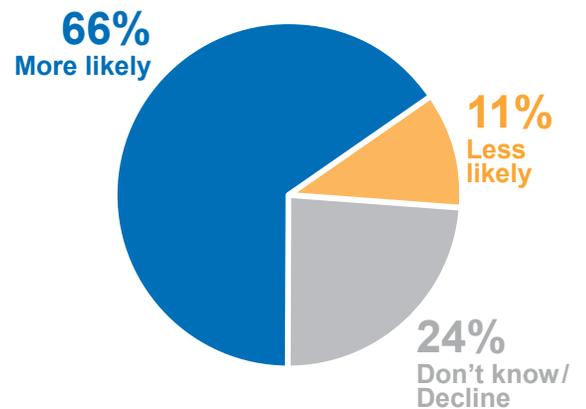
Most voters are willing to pay more in taxes to enhance quality...

Would you be willing to pay \$1 per week more in taxes if you were certain that all the money would be spent to enhance the quality of education for students attending Georgia colleges and universities?



...and they favor candidates who support higher ed funding

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a political candidate for office in Georgia if he or she supported increased state funding for higher education?



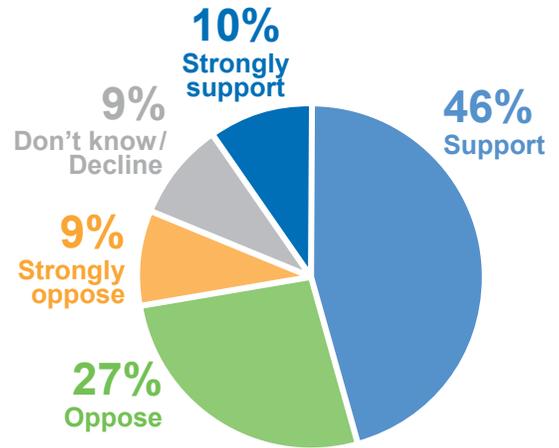


Tuition and financial aid

A majority support tuition increase for academic programs, student aid

Currently, Georgia has the lowest tuition costs for four-year public colleges of any state in the southeastern U.S.

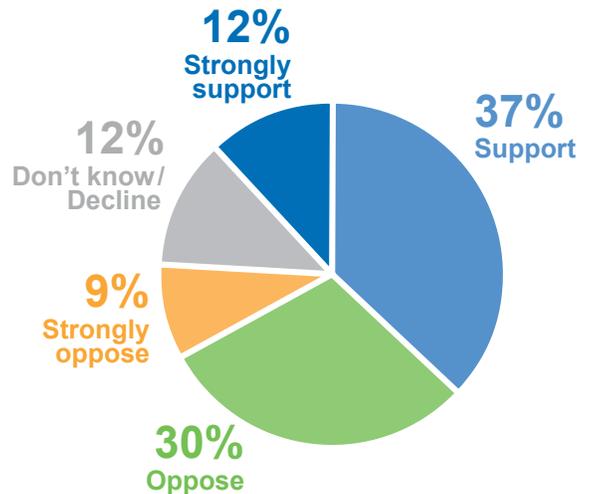
In view of this, would you support or oppose increasing Georgia’s public four-year college tuition to bring it up to the level of other southeastern states to better support academic programs, provided a portion of additional tuition revenues is used to provide financial aid to needy students from low- and middle-income families?



Half agree: Suspend fixed tuition to avoid program cuts

Georgia’s public colleges have a program known as “fixed for four” which sets tuition students are charged at the level of their freshman year (so they don’t see any tuition increase for four years). This gives students certainty as to the amount of their tuition. It also means the colleges are significantly limited in their ability to raise additional revenue as their costs increase over the four years.

Given that Georgia is currently reducing state funding to public colleges, would you support or oppose suspending the “fixed for four” program so that tuition revenue can be raised to avoid academic program cuts that may lower educational quality?

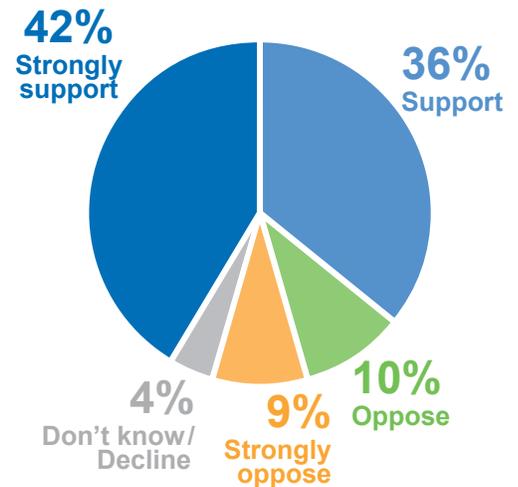




Voters support new funding for need-based student aid

Currently, Georgia has one of the smallest programs in America providing state-funded financial aid to college students based on their financial need (as opposed to the HOPE scholarship program, which is based on grades).

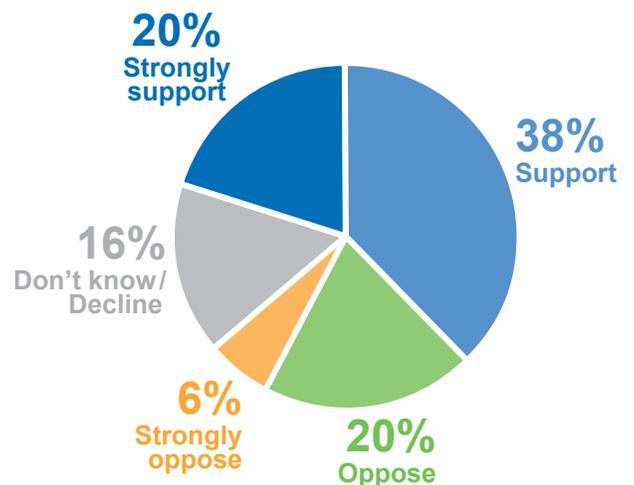
In view of this, would you support or oppose using a portion of state lottery surplus funds to create a need-based financial aid program for low and middle-income college students to supplement the HOPE scholarship?



Most favor linking private college HOPE to public tuition

In 1996, the amount of the HOPE scholarship for students attending private colleges in Georgia was approximately equal to tuition and fees at the University of Georgia. Today, the amount of a HOPE scholarship for students at private colleges equals just over half the tuition and fees at UGA.

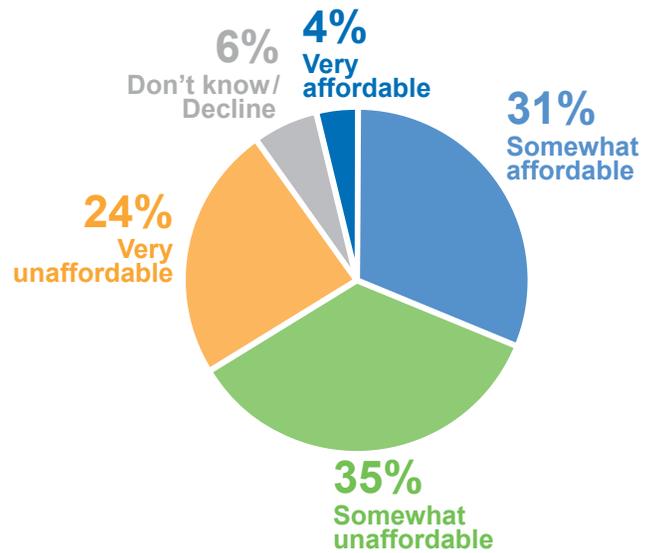
In view of this, would you support or oppose indexing the amount of the HOPE scholarship for students at private colleges to keep pace with tuition and fee levels at Georgia's public four-year colleges?





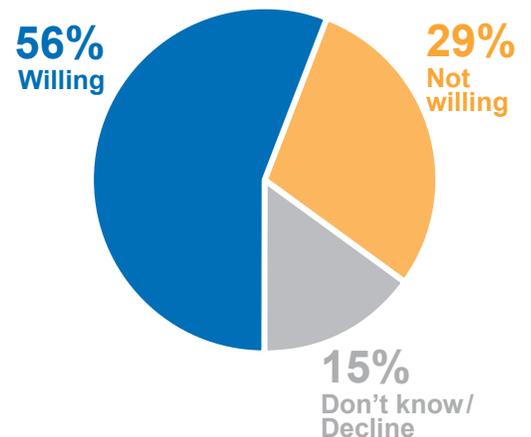
More than half think college in Georgia is unaffordable without HOPE

How affordable or unaffordable do you think a college education is today in Georgia for someone who does not receive the HOPE scholarship?



Most say they're willing to pay more in taxes for need-based student aid

Would you be willing to pay \$1 per week more in taxes if you were certain that all the money would be spent to provide additional financial aid to low- and middle-income college students in Georgia based on their financial need?





Research

Scientific research is very important...

In America today, how important do you think scientific research is?



...and Georgia should prepare more students to conduct research

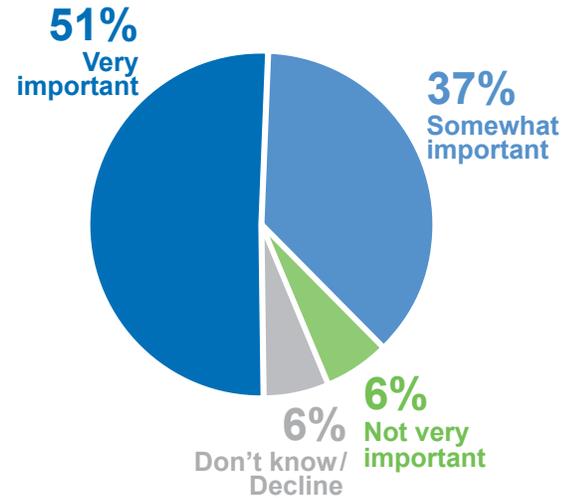
How important do you think it is for Georgia to educate more college and university students so they are prepared to conduct medical, health and scientific research?





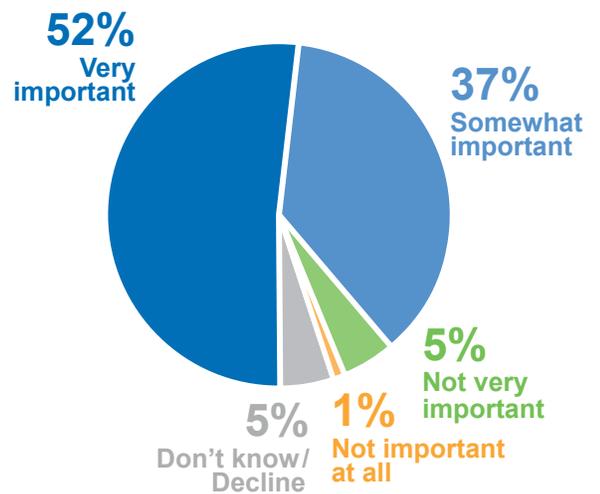
Scientific research is important to Georgia's economy...

How important do you think scientific research is to the Georgia economy?



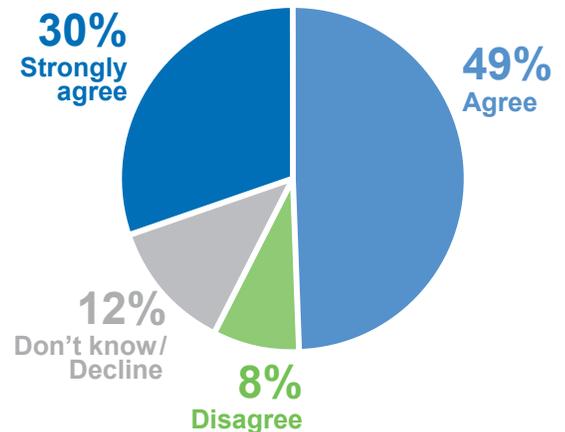
...and is worth the state's investment

In terms of helping create new high-paying jobs in Georgia, how important do you think it is for the state to invest in scientific research?



...including incentives to attract new labs and companies

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement: Georgia should offer financial incentives to attract new scientific research labs and companies.





College plans and outcomes

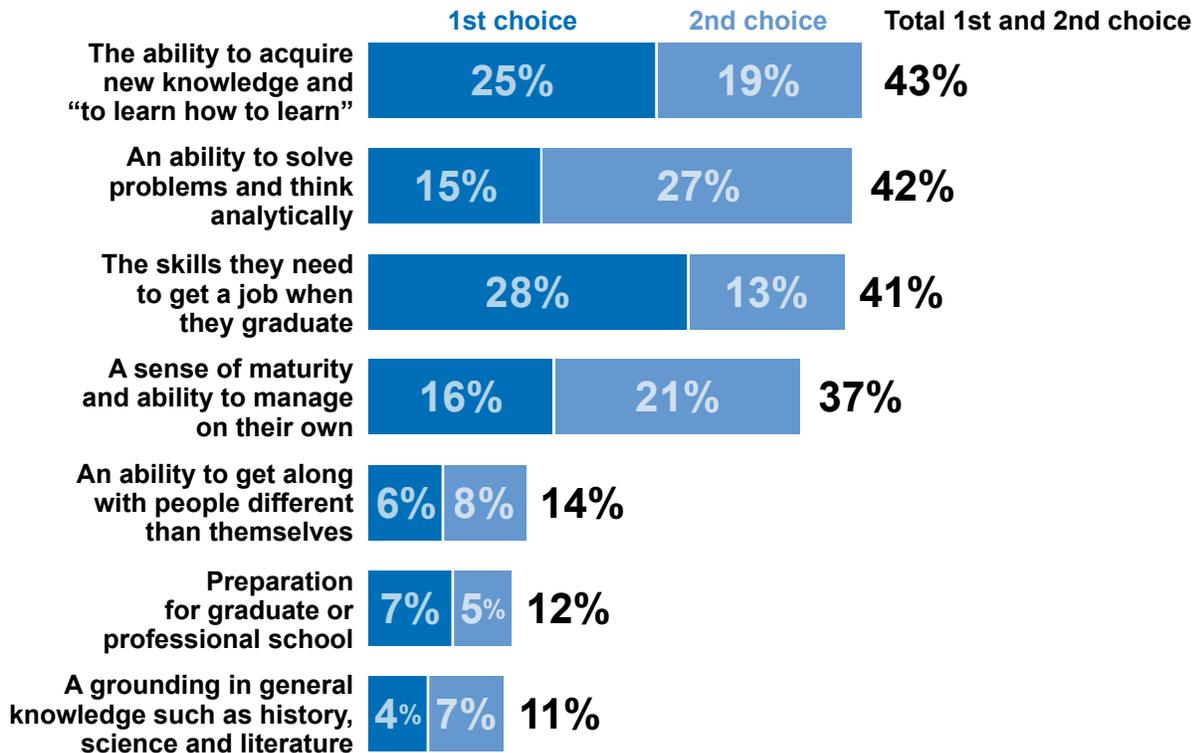
Parents: Children are likely to go to college, probably in Georgia

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely	Don't know/decline
How likely is it that your oldest child not yet in college will attend a four-year college or university after graduating high school?	85%	10%	1%	4%
How likely is it that this oldest child will attend a four-year college or university within the state of Georgia?	53%	41%	1%	5%

Note: Asked only of those respondents with children of high school age or younger in the household.

Top outcomes: Learning to learn, problem solving, job skills

Below are several outcomes that students can gain from attending college. Please rank these in order of importance. (Note: Shown here are 1st and 2nd choices of those responding.)





Methodology and sources

Data in this report are from a poll conducted for ARCHE by the Atlanta-based research firm Infosurv between November 11 and December 2, 2008. The poll included 600 online interviews of randomly selected registered voters in Georgia. The sample reflected all registered voters in the state based on age, gender, race and residence (Atlanta metro area and Georgia). For a sample of this size, the margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 4.0 percent for questions reporting the full sample. Although sampling error is only one source of potential survey error, precautions have been taken to minimize other sources of error for this survey.

Some charts or tables in this report may not total 100 percent because of rounding. In certain pie charts, some response options may not be shown if these account for less than .5 percent of total responses to that question. In certain bar charts, the “don’t know/decline to answer” results are not shown if those responses account for less than 3 percent of total responses to that question.

Questions accompanying charts in this report are worded as used in the poll.

ARCHE brings together 19 of the Atlanta region’s public and private colleges and universities. The organization builds awareness of the size, scope, impact and value of higher education and helps its members share strengths through cooperative programs such as cross registration for courses and library sharing. Founded in 1938, ARCHE’s membership also includes six affiliated libraries and 14 corporate and nonprofit community partners. For more information on ARCHE and its members or to view other research reports, visit www.atlantahighered.org.

Polling was conducted by the Atlanta-based online survey research firm, Infosurv. Since its inception in 1998, Infosurv has served hundreds of clients across a wide variety of industries and geographies including 300+ Fortune 500 corporations, government agencies, national associations, smaller companies and non-profit organizations. For more information, visit www.infosurv.com.

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, a public service and outreach unit of the University of Georgia, consulted with ARCHE in developing the polling questions and analyzing results. For more information on the Institute, visit www.cviog.uga.edu.

For more information on this report, contact ARCHE at arche@atlantahighered.org or 404.651.2668.