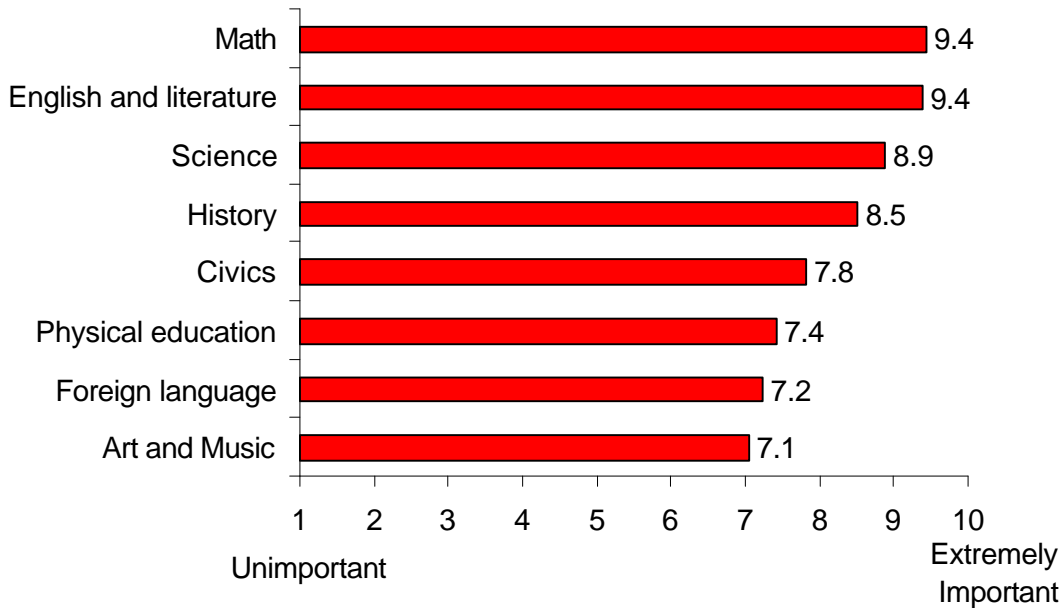


GEORGIANS ON EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY

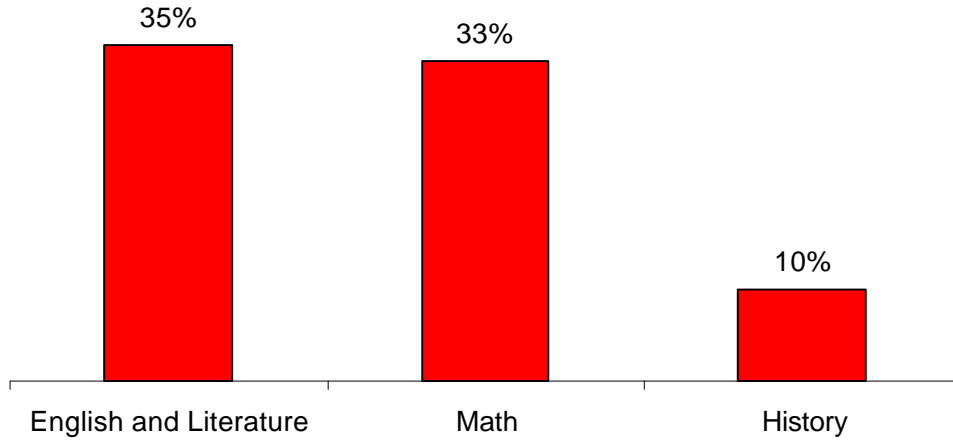
The most recent Peach State Poll asked Georgians to rank several subjects on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being extremely unimportant and 10 being extremely important. Not surprisingly, all of the subjects submitted for consideration are seen as important but math and English and literature were at the top of the class.

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being extremely important and 1 being unimportant, how important are the following subjects for Georgia's high school students?



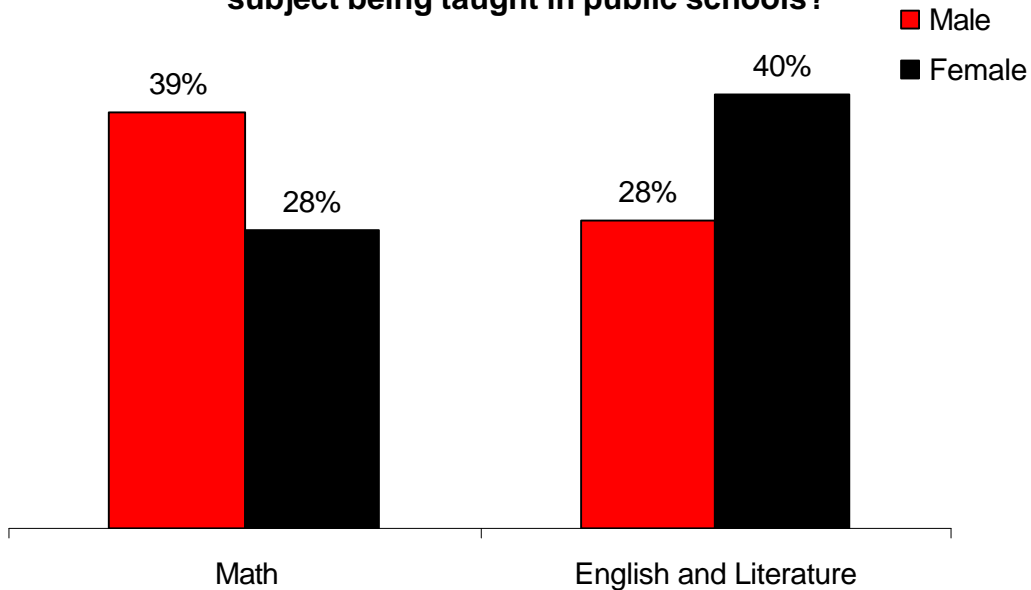
We then asked respondents what they believed was the *single* most important subject being taught in public schools. Thirty-five percent of Georgians believe English and literature to be the most important subject while 33 percent indicated math. History placed third, with 10 percent of the population signifying history as the single most important subject.

What would you say is the single most important subject taught in our public schools?



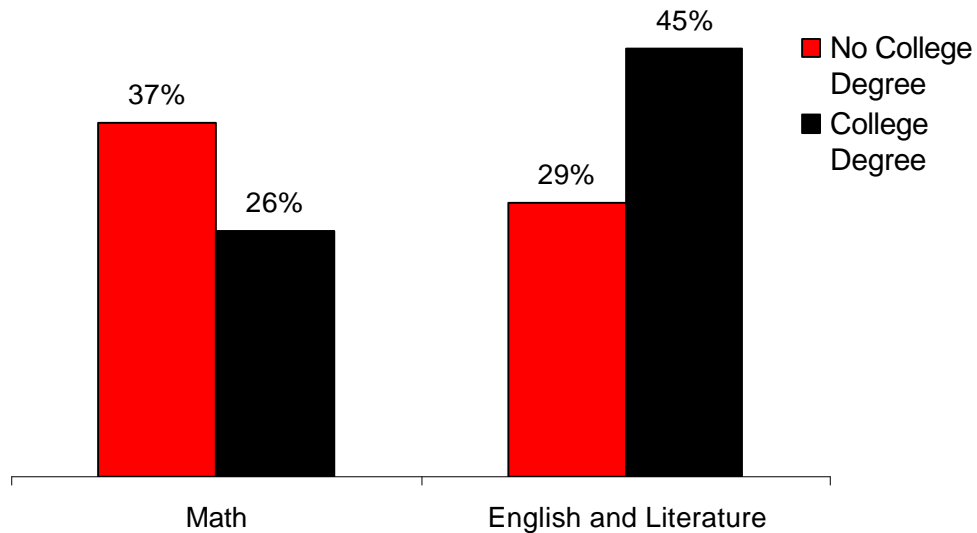
While Georgians responses overall are fairly equally split between English and math, this pattern changes slightly when you examine perceptions of men as compared with women. Men are more likely to see math as the most important subject area whereas women are more likely to place importance on English and literature.

What would you say is the single most important subject being taught in public schools?



Georgian’s opinions of the most important subject matter also vary by level of education. Those who have a college education are much more likely to choose English and literature while those who do not have a college degree are more likely to indicate math as the most important subject area.

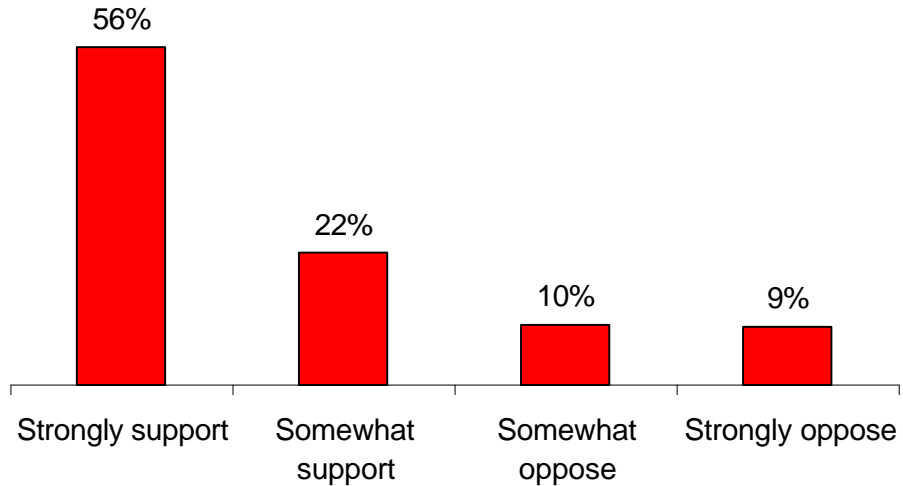
What would you say is the single most important subject taught in our public high schools?



When considered among other subject areas, foreign language courses do not rank very highly in terms of importance among the public despite the fact that 69 percent of Georgians took a foreign language course in high school. Regardless of the generally low importance ratings of foreign language when compared with other subject areas, Georgians seem to feel that foreign language is an important part of elementary and high school curricula.

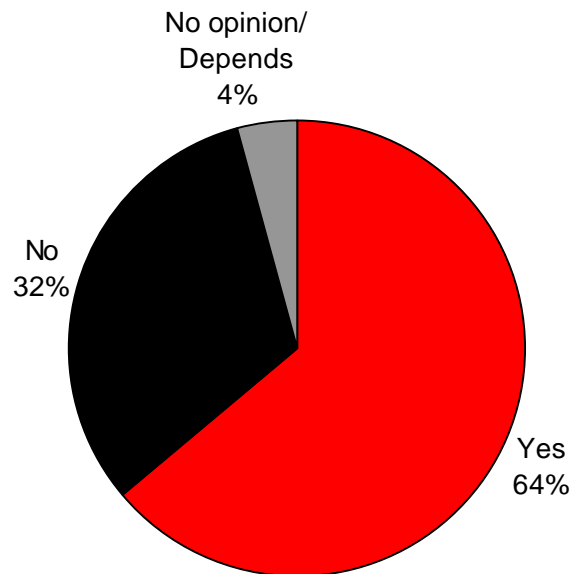
We asked Georgians the following question: “It’s been shown that the capacity to learn a foreign language is greatest when children are very young. Given this, would you support or oppose teaching foreign languages as a standard part of the curriculum in Georgia’s public elementary schools?” Seventy-eight percent of Georgians responded that they either strongly supported or somewhat supported foreign language courses being taught in public elementary schools.

Would you support or oppose teaching foreign languages as a standard part of the curriculum in Georgia's public elementary schools?

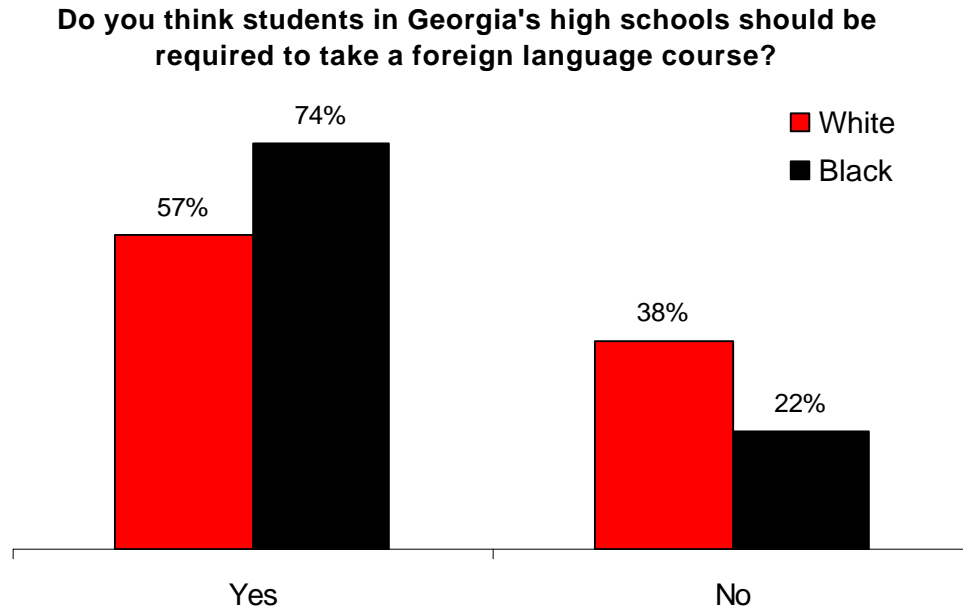


Support for foreign language extends into high school core curricula as well. A majority of Georgians, 67 percent, support foreign language courses as a part of the required curriculum for Georgia's high school students.

Do you think students in Georgia's high schools should be required to take a foreign language course?

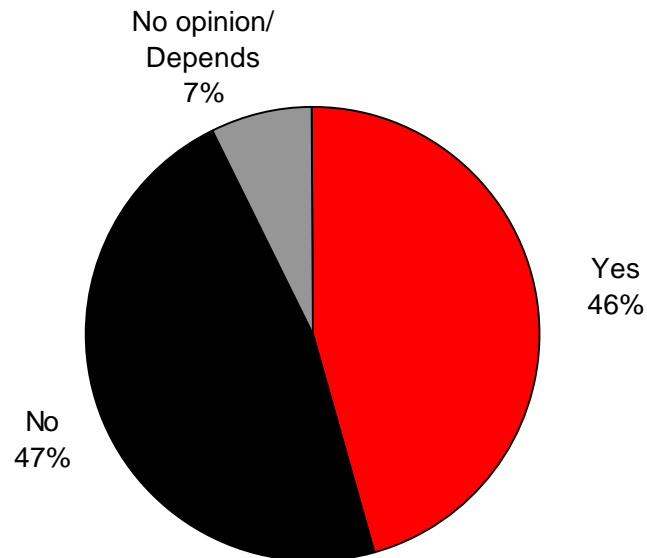


The latest Peach State Poll also found that Black respondents are much more likely to favor foreign language courses in high school than are White respondents. In fact, three out of every four Black respondents (75 percent) believe that foreign language courses should be required of Georgia's high school students, whereas only 57 percent of Whites shared the same conviction.



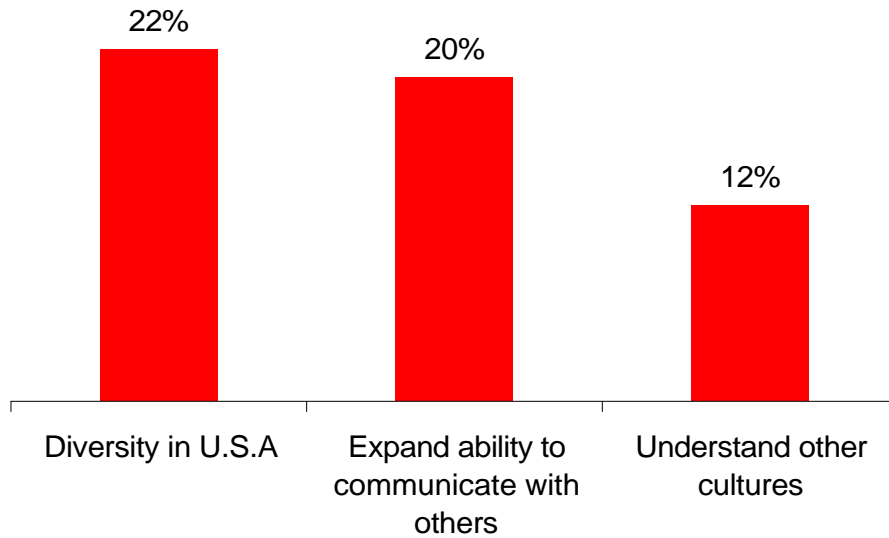
While Georgians appear very interested in foreign language for elementary and high school students, they do not seem as concerned about foreign languages at the collegiate level. The people of Georgia are almost equally divided on whether or not college students should have to take a foreign language course to graduate. This pattern is similar among different races and education levels.

Do you think students in state colleges and universities should be required to take a foreign language course in order to graduate?



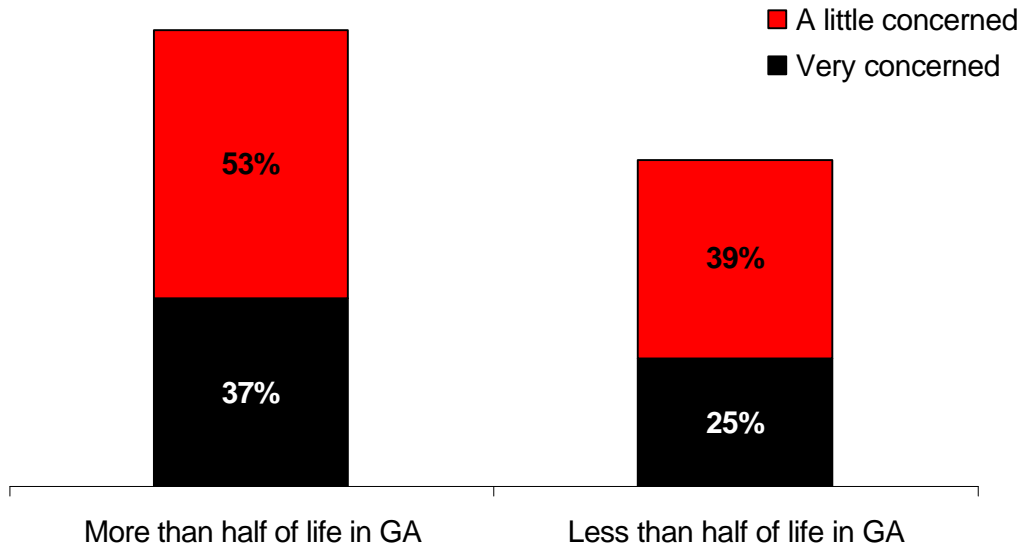
It is clear that Georgians feel that foreign language should be a part of the public school curriculum. When asked to identify the most compelling reason for learning a foreign language, 22 percent of Georgians cited the increasing diversity in the United States as the most compelling reason, followed by increased ability to communicate with others (20 percent) and the ability to understand other cultures (12 percent). Conspicuously absent from the list of responses was a concern for functioning in a global economy.

What, in your opinion, is the most compelling reason to learn a foreign language?



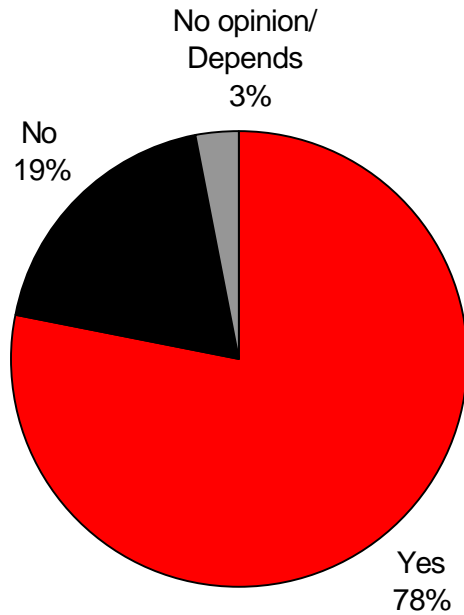
Georgians, generally, are interested in preserving and propagating state history, and this position increases with the duration of time lived in the state. Eighty-one percent of Georgians report being very concerned or a little concerned that Georgians today do not know much about the state's history. Respondents who have spent half of their life or more in Georgia show much higher levels of concern than those respondents who have spent less than half of their life in Georgia.

How concerned are you that Georgian's today don't know much about the state's history?



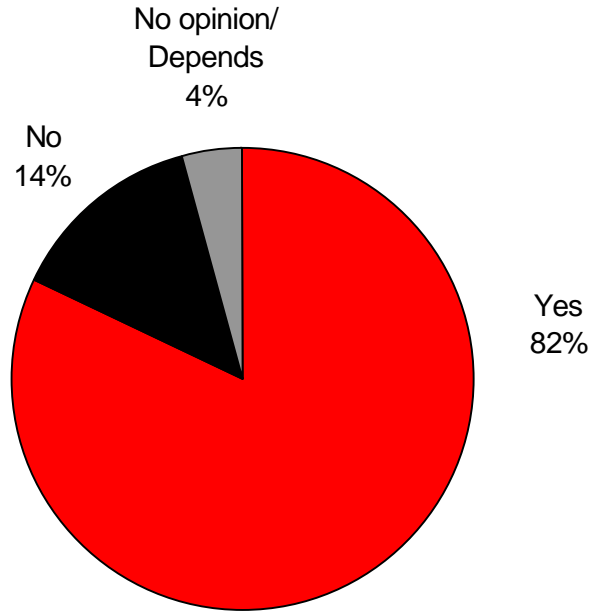
When asked if high school students should be required to take a course on state history, an overwhelming majority (80 percent) of Georgians said yes.

Should students in Georgia's high schools be required to take courses on Georgia's state history?



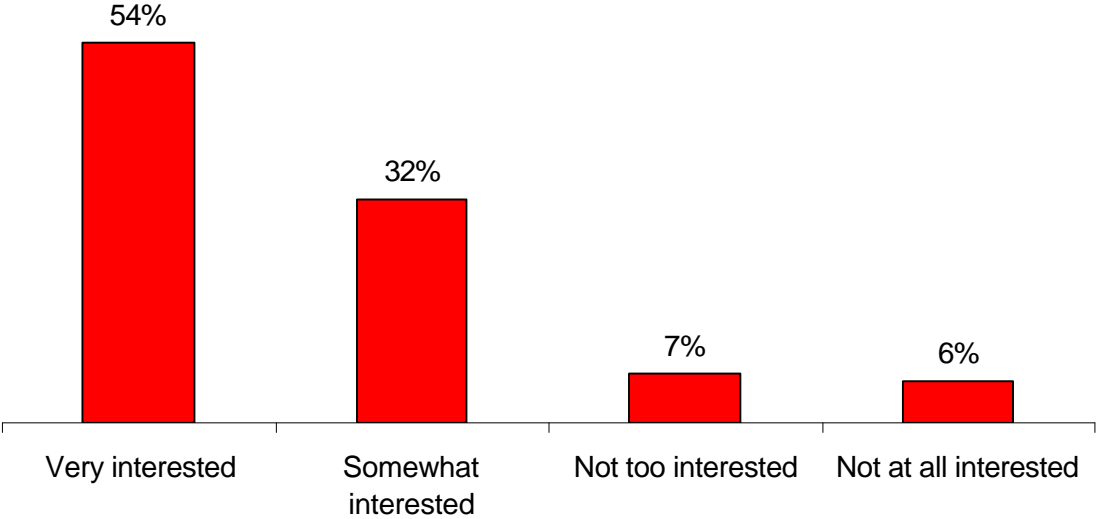
Georgians also expressed a high level of interest in a state history museum. Although many states have a museum devoted to the state's history, Georgia is not among them. Eighty-two percent of those surveyed indicated that they believed that Georgia should have such a museum.

Do you think Georgians should have a state history museum?



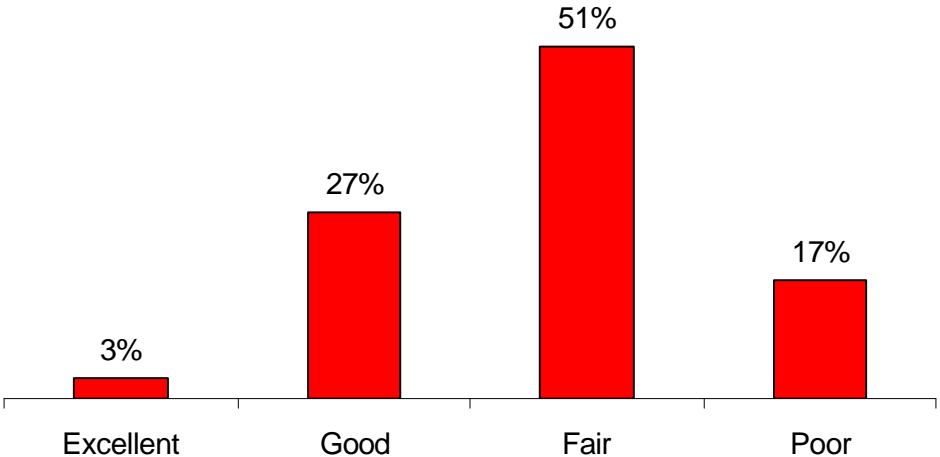
In addition, a majority of Georgians expressed an interest in visiting a state museum if one were to be built. Fifty-four percent of Georgians indicated that they would be very interested in visiting such a museum, and 32 percent said they would be somewhat interested.

If the state invested in a museum dedicated to the study of Georgia's history, how interested would you be in visiting such a museum?



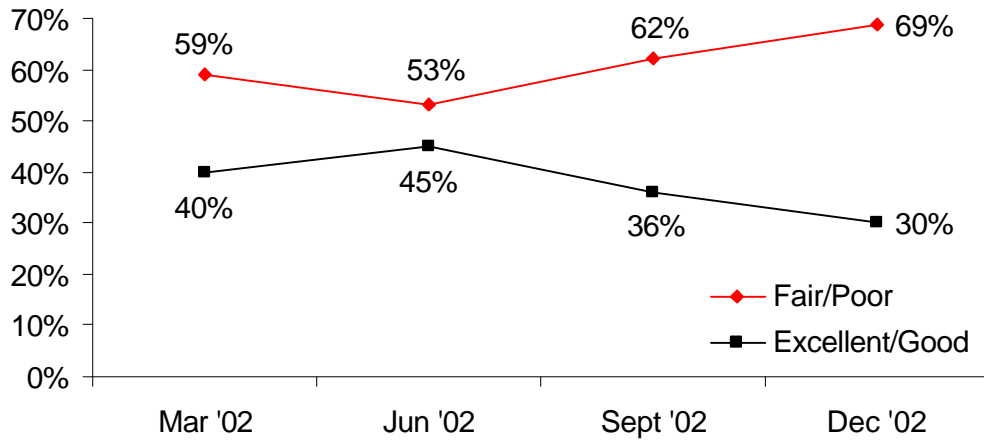
Like most citizens around the country, the state of the economy is on the minds of Georgians. Only 3 percent of Georgians would say that economic conditions within the state are excellent. The majority (51 percent) of respondents indicated that economic conditions in Georgia are fair.

How would you rate economic conditions in Georgia today? (December 2002)



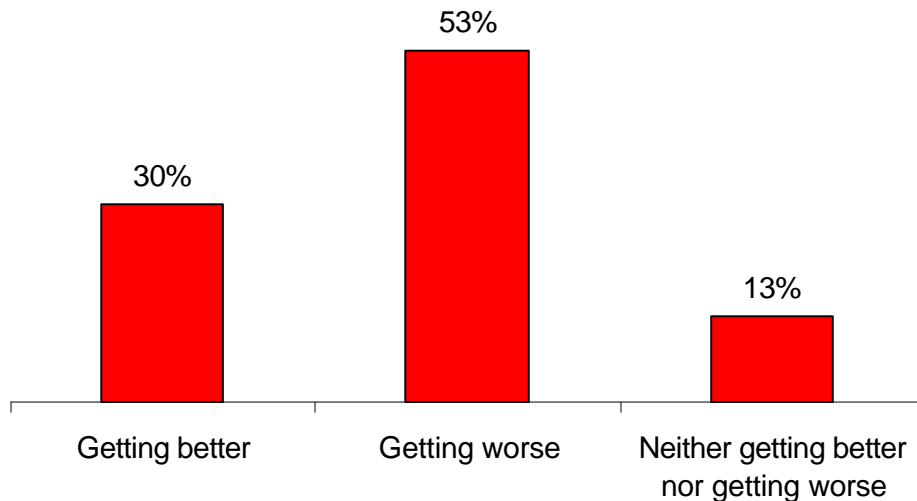
The level of negativity concerning the state of the economy appears to be steadily increasing. When compared with previous Peach State Polls, the number of Georgians reporting fair or poor economic conditions has increased while the number of those reporting excellent or good economic conditions has decreased.

How would you rate economic conditions in Georgia today?



It would appear that Georgians are not very optimistic about the future state of the economy. Fifty-three percent of Georgians feel that economic conditions within the state of Georgia are getting worse, 30 percent believe they are getting better, and 13 percent state that economic conditions are getting neither better nor worse.

Do you think economic conditions in the state of Georgia are getting better or getting worse



The data presented in this report are taken from a Peach State Poll conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government between December 13 and December 21, 2002. The poll included 800 telephone interviews of randomly selected adults in Georgia. For a sample of this size, the margin of error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 3.5 percent. Although sampling error is only one source of potential survey error, all precautions have been taken to minimize other sources of error for this survey.

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government, a public service and outreach unit of the University of Georgia, has as part of its mission to provide policymakers with systematic, objective research to inform policy decisions. In accordance with that mission, the Peach State Poll aims to give voice to the public on important policy matters and issues pertaining to political, social, and economic life in Georgia.

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