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Educational Needs, Aspirations, and Expectations for Young People in Michigan

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In today's changing economy and global competition, the demand for a better educated workforce has been increasing. Since the 1970's, new structures of work have emerged that require a highly skilled labor force. What do Michigan residents think about future educational needs of young people? What level of education do they expect their children will most likely attend? Using data from the State of State Survey (SOSS), we examined parents' aspirations and expectations for their youth's educational futures. Specifically, this brief examines whether parents' aspirations and expectations for their youth's educational futures vary by race and ethnicity, education attainment, family income, marital status, and rural/urban residential location.

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Established in 1989 at Michigan State University, the Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI) is committed to the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge to serve the needs of Latino Communities in Michigan and the Midwest. JSRI was established to honor the legacy of the Latino Research Pioneer Julian Samora, who was also a co-founder of the National Council of La Raza, the nation's largest Latino civil rights organization.

Commensurate with the land grant philosophy of Michigan State University, JSRI is committed to engaged scholarly activities that are responsive to the needs of Latinos, are collaborative with university and local communities, and ultimately enhance the capacity and well being of Latinos in Michigan and the Midwest.

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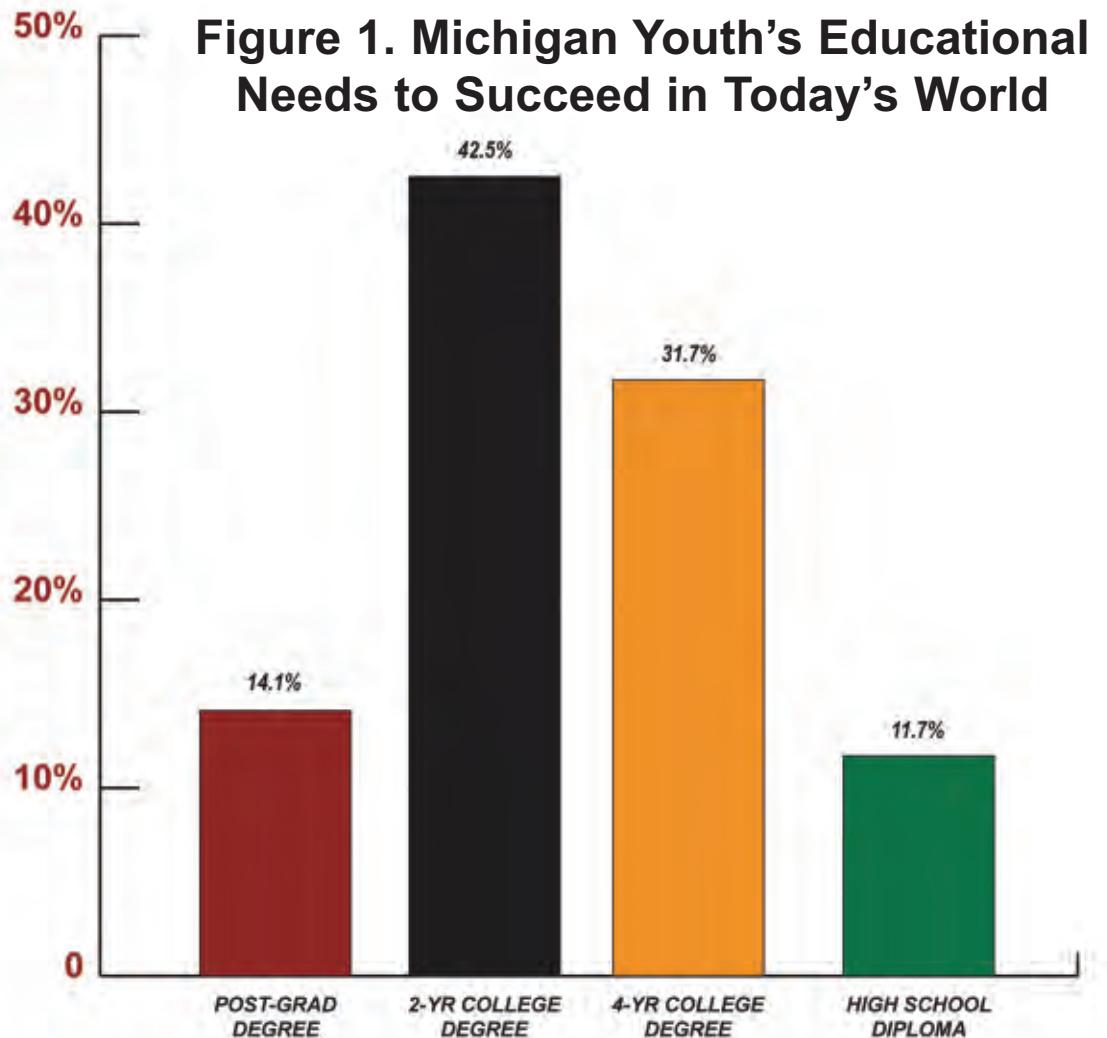


INTRODUCTION

In today's changing economy and global competition, the demand for a better educated workforce has been increasing. Since the 1970's, new structures of work have emerged that require a highly skilled labor force. What do Michigan residents think about future educational needs of young people? What level of education do they expect their children will most likely attend? Using data from the State of State Survey (SOSS), we examined parents' aspirations and expectations for their youth's educational futures. Specifically, this brief examines whether parents' aspirations and expectations for their youth's educational futures vary by race and ethnicity, education attainment, family income, marital status, and rural/urban residential location.

THE SURVEY

This study relies on data from the 2006 State of the State Survey (SOSS-43) in Michigan conducted by the Institute for Public Policy and Social Research at Michigan State University. The SOSS-43 is a random digit dialing (RDD) telephone survey of the Michigan adult population and was supplemented with a sample of Hispanics/Latinos in Michigan. The survey was conducted from Aug. 10 through Oct. 21 for the main portion of the survey, and from Sept. 18 through Nov. 13 for the supplemental Hispanic/Latino sample. Using a stratified and disproportionate sampling design by regions of the state, 1563 interviews were completed¹. Parents with children ages 13-17 are included in the analysis.



This study relies on data from the 2006 State of the State Survey in Michigan conducted at Michigan State University.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Educational Needs

Almost 86% of Michigan parents with children ages 13-17 reported that their children needs at least a college-level education in order to succeed in today's world. Respondents indicated that young people will respectively need a four-year college degree (31.7%), a two-year college degree (42.5%), or a post-college education (11.7%) in order to succeed in today's world. Only 14% of respondents indicated that a high-school degree was sufficient for contemporary youth to succeed in today's world (Fig. 1).

2. Parents' Educational Aspirations for their Children

Figure 2 displays the results for parents' educational aspirations for their children. About one-third of parents with children ages 13-17 years reported that a large or four-year college education will best meet their children future educational needs. About 36% of parents indicated that their children will need a small college education. Almost 24% of parents indicated that a community or junior college education will best meet their children's future educational needs (Fig. 2).

3. Parents' Expectations for their Children's Educational Futures

Figure 3 displays the results for parents' educational expectations for their children educational futures. About 38% of parents indicated that their children will most likely attend a large or four-year college, a small college (public or private) (28%) or a community or junior college (30%) (Fig. 3).

4. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures and Race/Ethnicity

Figure 4 displays the results for parents' aspirations for their children's educational futures by respondent's race/ethnicity. White parents (47.5%) were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to indicate that a small college would best meet their children future educational needs. African-American parents (60%) were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to indicate that a large or four-year college education would best meet their children educational futures.

Figure 2. Parents' Educational Aspirations for Michigan Youth, Ages 13-18

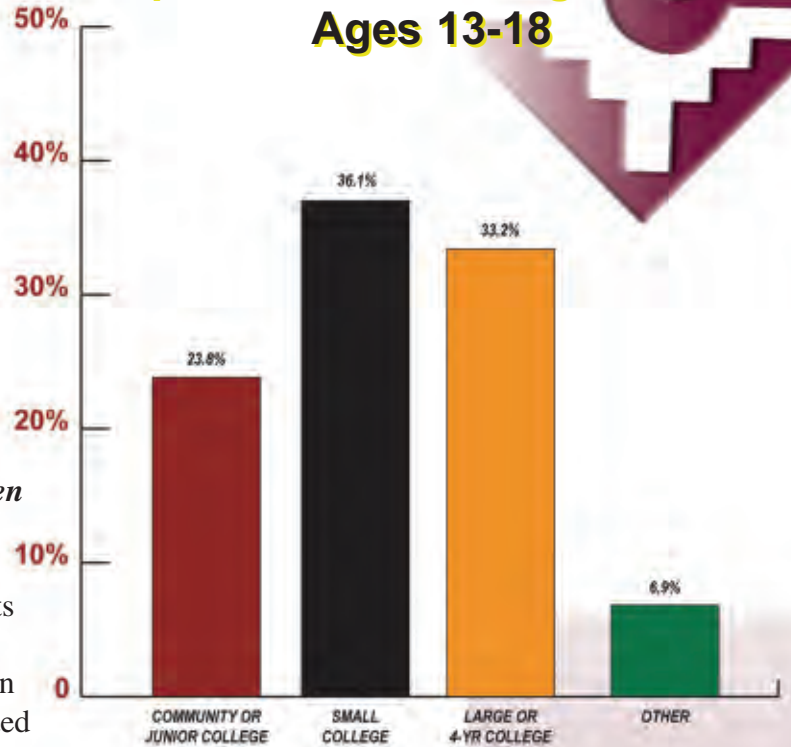


Figure 3. Parents' Educational Expectations for Michigan Youth, Ages 13-18

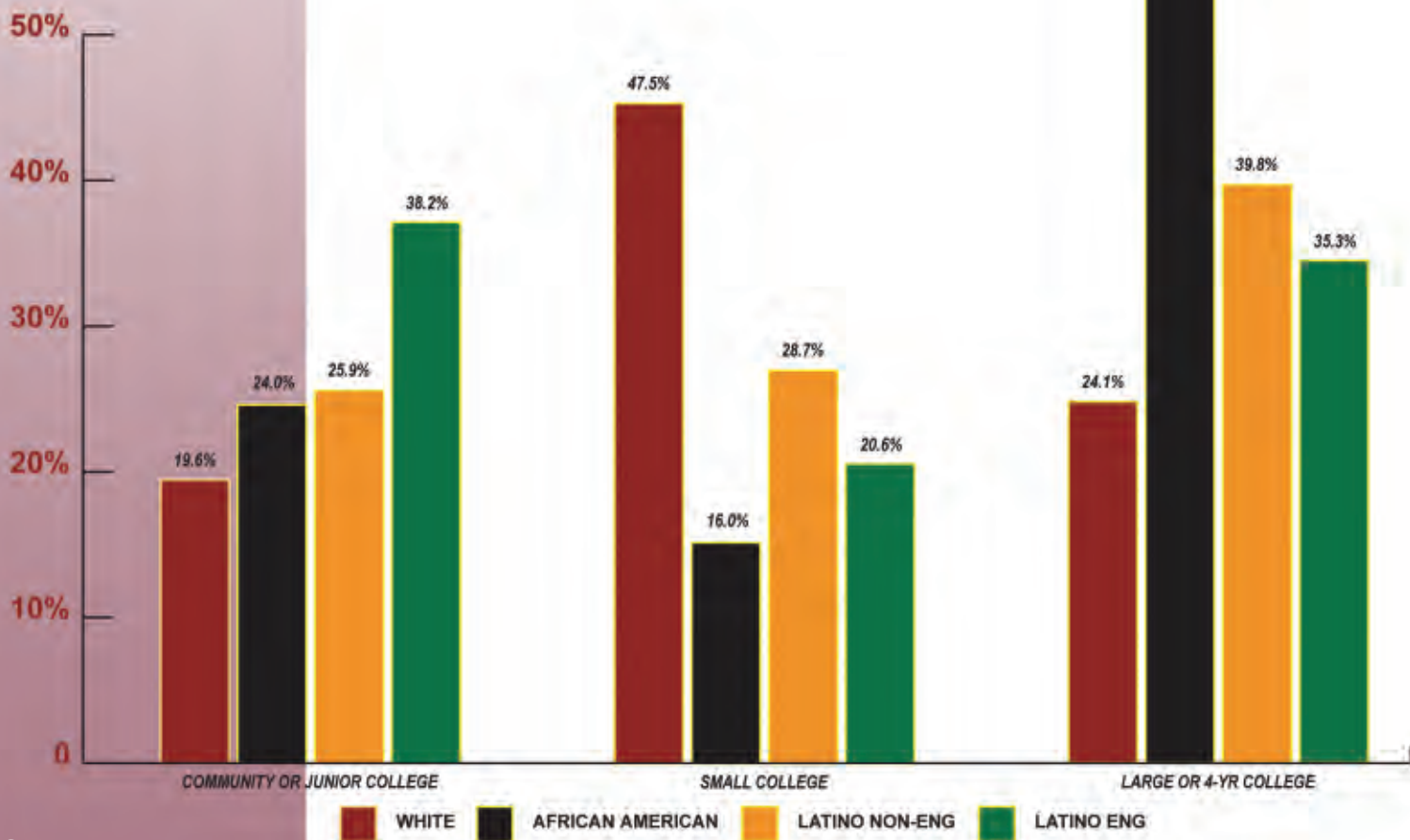


Latino-English speaking parents (38%) were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to report that a community or junior college education would meet their children educational needs. About 24% of Latino not-English speakers indicated that a large or four-year college would meet the educational needs of their children (Fig. 4).

5. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures and Educational Attainment

Figure 5 displays the results for parents' aspirations for their children's educational futures by educational attainment. Parents with a high-school education were more likely than others to indicate that a small college (public or private) will best meet their children future educational needs. Almost 45% of parents with a high-school education indicated that a small college will best meet their children future educational needs, compared to almost 43% of those with less than high school education, 20% of those with some college, and 38.1% of those with college education, respectively. Respondents with some college level of education were more likely than others to indicate that a large or four year college education will best meet their children future educational needs. About 43% of respondents with some college level of education indicated that a large or four year college education will best meet their children future educational needs, compared with 28% of those with less than high school education, 30% of those with a high school education, and 28% of those with a college education (Fig. 5).

Figure 4. Parents' Educational Expectations for Michigan Youth, Ages 13-18, by Race and Ethnicity



6. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures and Household Income

Figure 6 displays the results for parents' aspirations for their children's educational futures by respondent's family income. Thirty percent of parents in middle-income range (\$30,000-\$49,999) and 29% of parents on the lower-income range (less than \$30,000) indicated that a small college will best meet their children's future educational needs, compared to 14% of those in upper-income range (\$50,000 or greater). Respondents in the middle-income range were less likely than those in other income groups to indicate that a large or 4-year college education will best meet their children's future educational needs. About 13% of parents in middle-income range indicated that a large or 4-year college education will best meet their children's future educational needs, compared to 41% of those in lower-income range, and 42% of those in the upper-income range, respectively (Fig. 6).



7. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures and Rural/Urban Residence

Figure 8 displays the results for parents' aspirations for their children's educational futures by respondent's rural/urban residence. Residents in metropolitan non-core areas were more likely than those in large metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas to indicate that a small college will best meet their children's future educational needs. Almost 53% of residents in metropolitan non-core areas indicated that a small college will best meet their children's future educational needs, compared to about 28% of those in non-metropolitan areas, and almost 39% of those in large metropolitan areas. Parents in large metropolitan areas (38%) were more likely than those metropolitan non-core areas (28%) and those in non-metropolitan areas (27%) to report that a large or 4-year college education will best meet their children's future educational needs. Parents in metropolitan non-core areas (17%) were less likely than those in large metropolitan areas (26%) and those in non-metropolitan areas (26%) to report that a community or junior college will best meet their children's future educational needs (Fig. 7).

Figure 5. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures by Educational Attainment

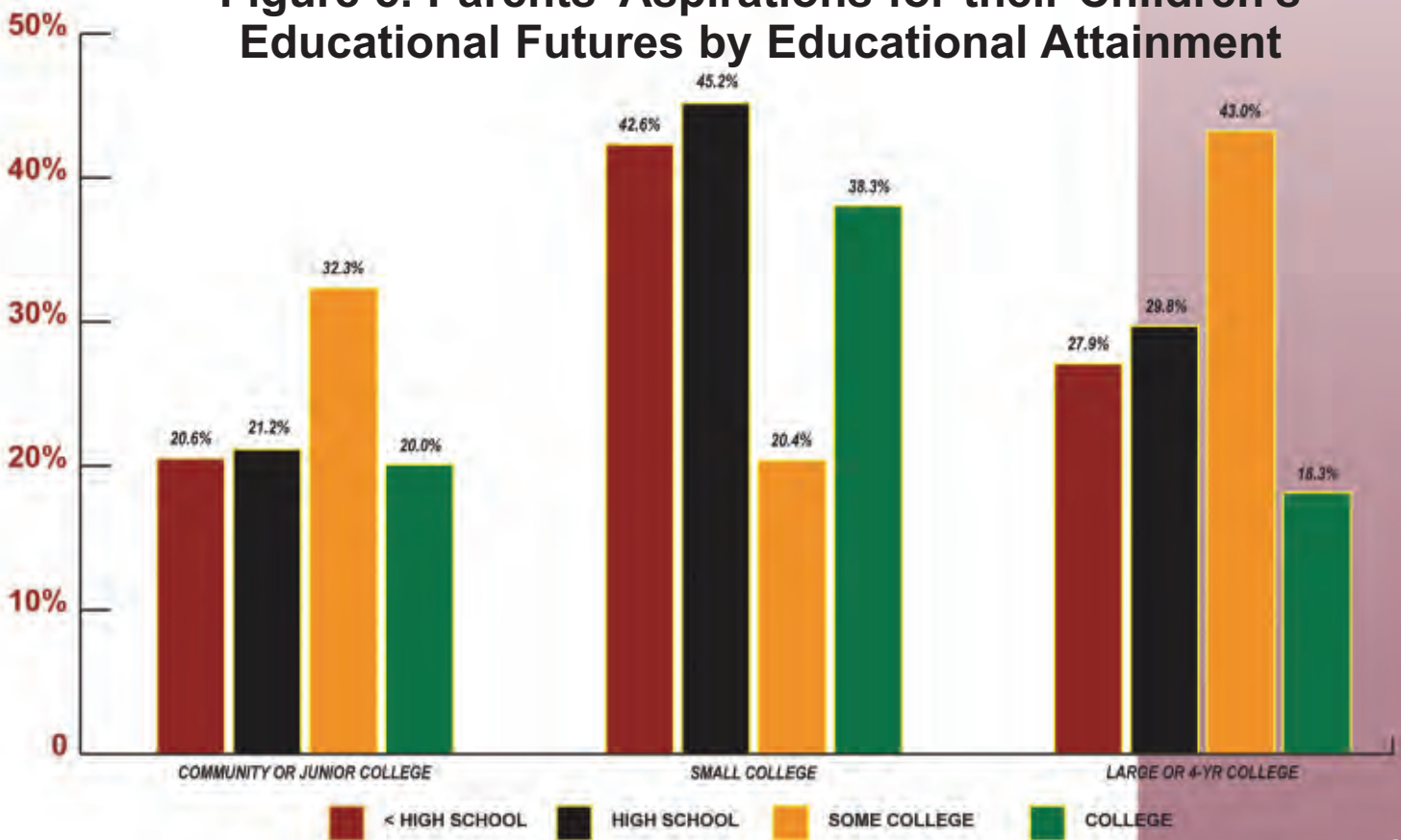




Figure 6. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures by Household Income

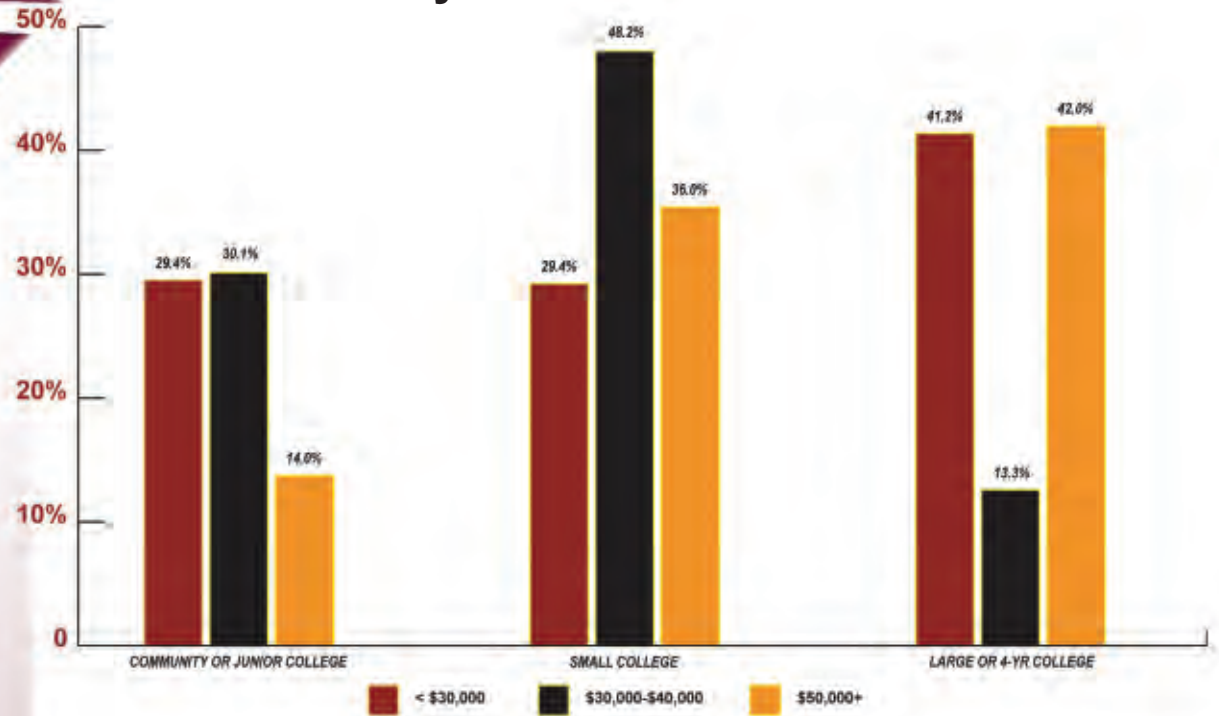
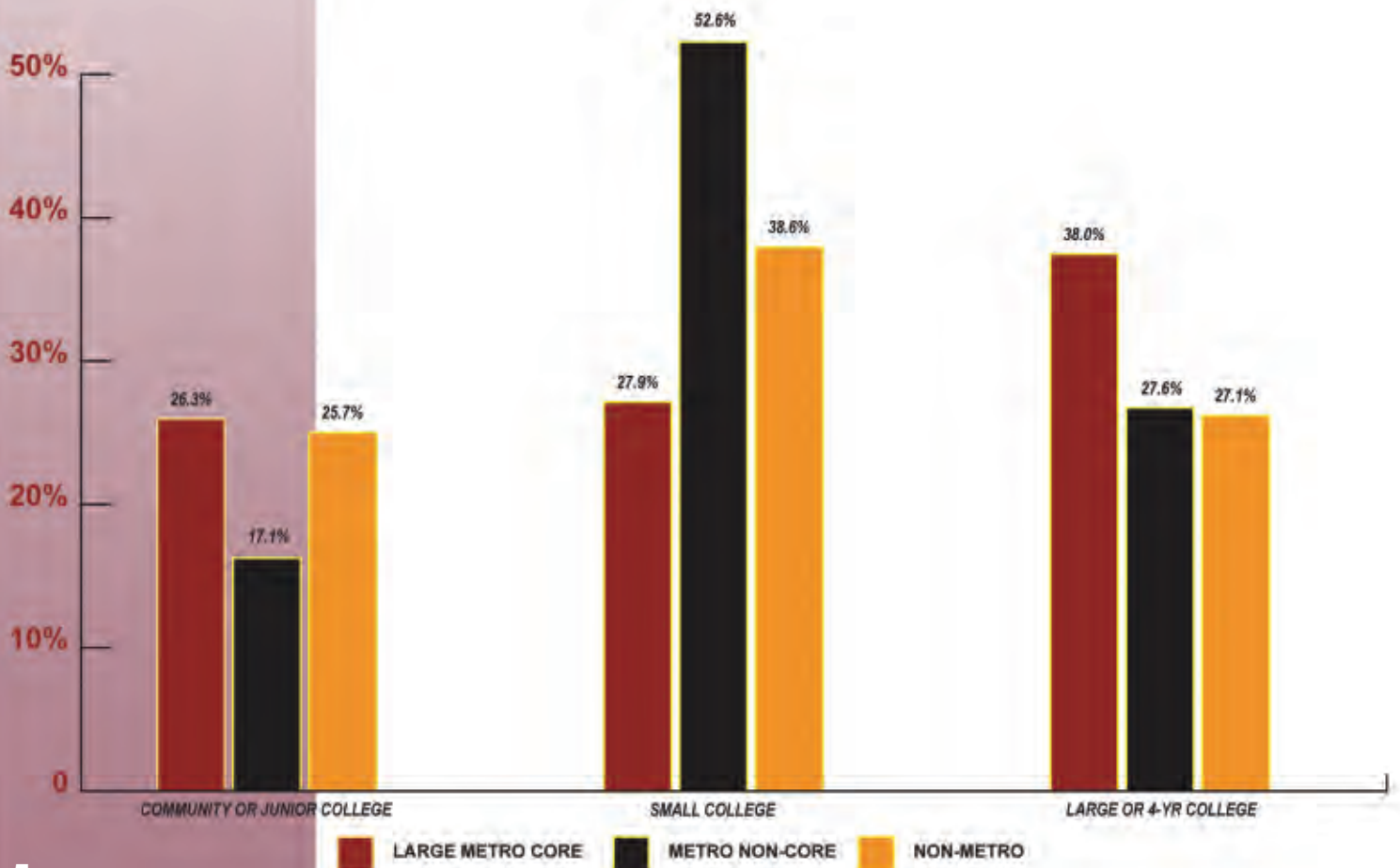


Figure 7. Parents' Aspirations for their Children's Educational Futures by Metro and Non-Metro Location



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report summarizes the results of parents' educational needs, aspirations, and expectations for youth in Michigan. More than 7 out of 10 Michigan parents with children ages 13-17 years indicated that young people needs at least a two-year college in order to succeed in today's world. More than half Michigan parents indicated that at least a four-year college will best meet the educational needs of their children. About one-third of parents with children ages 13-17 years reported that a large or four-year college education will best meet their children future educational needs and 38% of parents expected their children to attend a large or four-year college.

This report also examines how parents' educational aspirations for young people vary by race/ethnicity, educational levels, family income, and metro/nonmetro residential location. We found that White respondents were more likely than other-racial/ethnic groups to indicate a small college will best meet young people's future educational needs. Blacks were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to indicate that a large or four-year college education is what is needed for young people's future educational needs. Latino-English speaking parents were more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to indicate that a community or junior college education would meet children's future educational needs.

Respondents with a high-school education were more likely than others to suggest that a small college education will best meet children's future educational needs. Comparatively, respondents with some college level of education were more likely than others to point out that a large or four-year college education will best meet children's future educational needs.

Middle-income parents were more likely than lower-income and upper-income parents to report that a small college education will best meet children's future educational needs. Parents in the lower-income and upper-income range were more likely than those in the middle-income range to report that a large or four year college education will best meet children's future educational needs.

Parents living in metropolitan non-core areas were more likely than those living in large metropolitan and those living in non-metropolitan areas to report that a small college education will best meet children's future educational needs. Parents living in large metropolitan areas were more likely than those living in metropolitan non-core areas and those living in non-metropolitan areas to indicate that a large or four year college education will best meet children's future educational needs.

The findings in this report suggest a continuing need for investment in higher education for Michigan youth. Education policy-makers and other stakeholders should ensure that Michigan young people have access to higher education opportunities. That will require continuing to support institutions of higher education and provide scholarship/fellowship funding opportunities for higher education. The differences in educational aspirations across various social contexts suggest that education policies should ensure that young people from different social backgrounds and geographical areas have an opportunity to access higher education.





SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Q1.** In order to succeed in today's world, do you think a young person needs at least a high school diploma, a two-year college degree, a four-year college degree, or a post-graduate degree?
- Q2.** Thinking about your [children] between the ages of 13 and 17, which of the following do you think would best meet your [children]'s future educational needs? A community or junior college in Michigan, a small private college in Michigan, a small public college in Michigan, a large public college in Michigan, or a 4-year college in another state?
- Q3.** Which of the following [children] most likely to attend a community or junior college in Michigan, a small private college in Michigan, a small public college in Michigan, a large public college in Michigan, or a 4-year college in another state?

REFERENCES

Hembroff L. A. and Silver, B. D. (2007). *Methodological Report: Michigan State University State of the State Survey [MSU SOSS-43]*, East Lansing: Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, Office for Survey Research, Michigan State University.

ENDNOTES

1 To ensure representation of the major regions within Michigan, the sample was stratified into six regions, each consisting of a set of contiguous counties, plus the city of Detroit. The grouping of counties corresponds to that used by the Michigan State University Extension service (MSUE). For developing statewide results, weights are constructed to make the overall representative of the state adult population (Hembroff and Silver, 2006). For purposes of this article, we used *weighted* data.