

Old Dominion University

**ODU Digital Commons**

---

Life in Hampton Roads Survey Report

Social Science Research Center

---

2018

## **Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #1: Regional, City and Neighborhood Quality of Life**

Social Science Research Center, Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ssrc\\_lihr](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ssrc_lihr)



Part of the [Community-Based Research Commons](#), [Place and Environment Commons](#), [Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons](#), [Regional Sociology Commons](#), and the [Social Statistics Commons](#)

---

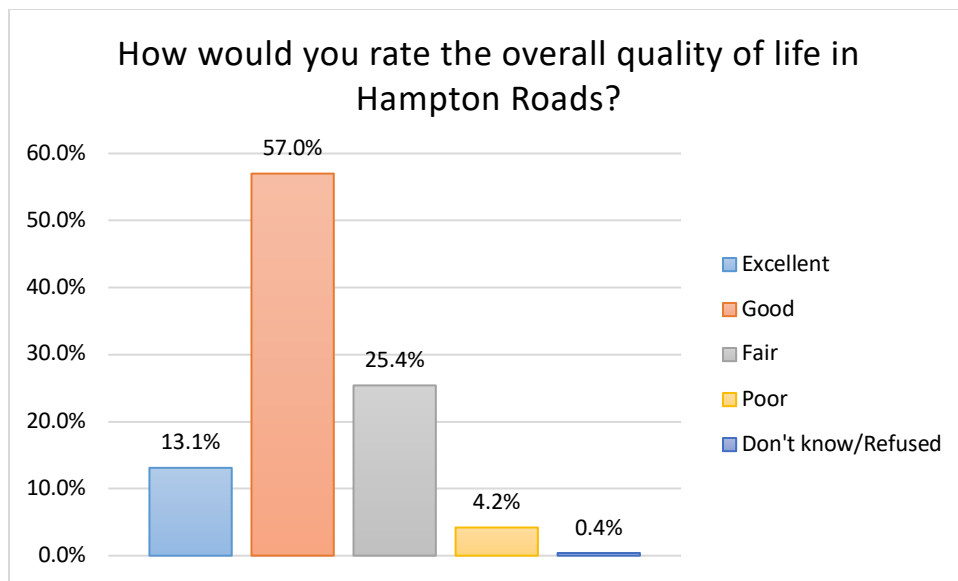
## Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #1

### Regional, City and Neighborhood Quality of Life

The Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center is proud to release the first part of the 2018 Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) Survey Report. LIHR has been conducted by the Social Science Research Center with support from the Old Dominion University Office of Research and the College of Arts and Letters since 2010 and is now in its ninth year. Release #1 focuses on regional quality of life and perceptions of the local public school system. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show comparisons in responses over time. Responses were weighted by city population, race, age, gender and phone usage (cell versus land-line) to be representative of the Hampton Roads region. Subsequent releases will focus on politics, economics, health, transportation, and flooding and sea level rise. For additional information on survey methodology, and analyses of other issues, please see the SSRC website at [www.odu.edu/ssrc](http://www.odu.edu/ssrc).

### Overall Quality of Life

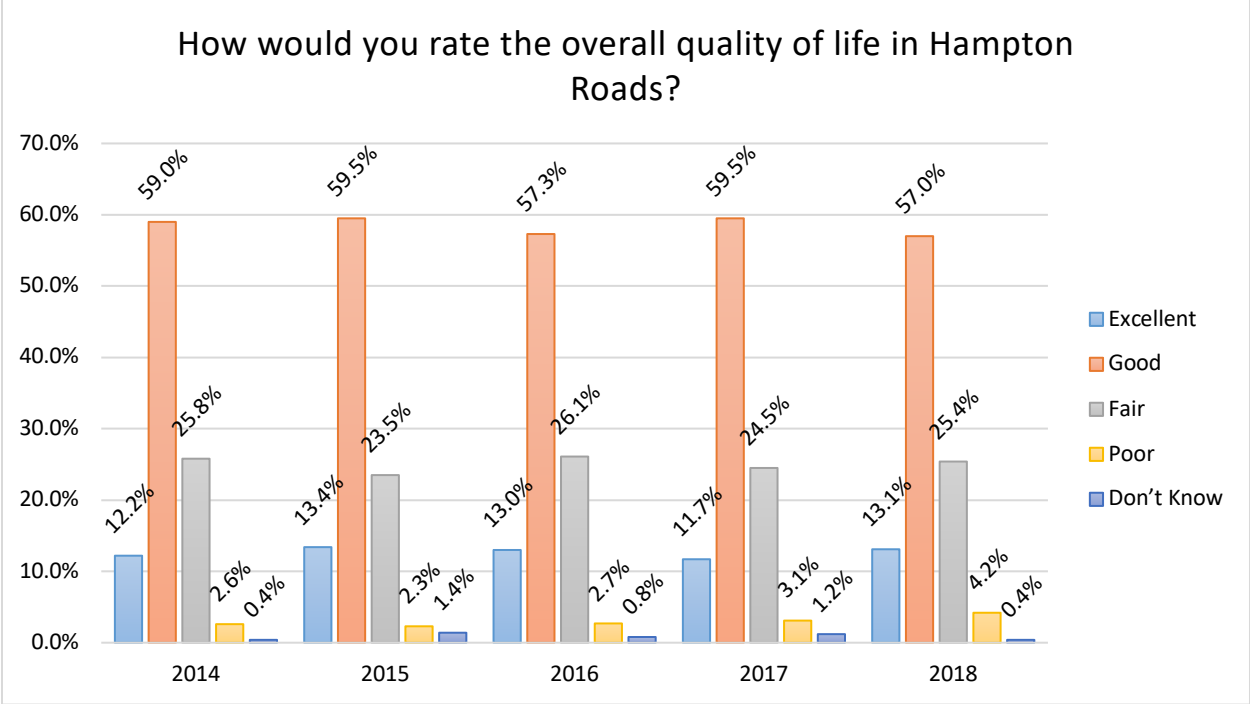
The overall quality of life in Hampton Roads has remained steady. The 2018 Life in Hampton Roads (LIHR) survey continues to show a generally good regional quality of life. The majority of those interviewed (70.1%) reported that the overall quality of life in Hampton Roads was excellent or good while 29.6 percent found it to be fair or poor. The portion of respondents rating regional quality of life as good or excellent is slightly lower than last year's portion (71.2%).



### Quality of Life in Hampton Roads

Over the last several years, quality of life has remained relatively consistent in Hampton Roads. In 2014, 71.2 percent of respondents rated the quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good. In

2015, 72.9 percent of respondents rated quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good, in 2016, 70.3 percent, and in 2017, 71.2 percent. In 2018, there was a slight decrease in the percentage of respondents who rated quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good (70.1%). Focusing on the other end of the spectrum, ratings of the quality of life as poor has been consistently low (always less than 5%) though it did see an increase from 3.1 percent in 2017 to 4.2 percent in 2018.



### Home Ownership in Hampton Roads

Respondents were asked whether or not they own or are in the process of buying their home, rent, or have some other arrangement. Similar to past years, the majority of residents reported that they own or are in the process of buying their home (67.7%), marking the highest percentage in the past five years. Another 28.8 percent indicated that they rent, while only 1.8 percent reported having another arrangement.

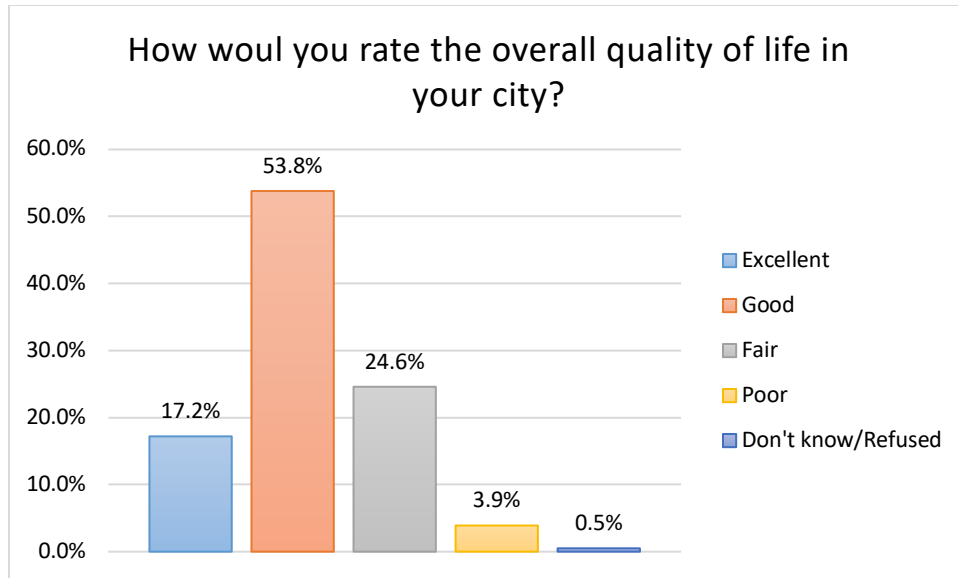
Home Ownership	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Own or in the process of buying	65.6%	65.5%	64.3%	65.1%	67.7%
Rent	31.9%	30.6%	32.7%	30.6%	28.8%
Other arrangement	2%	3.1%	2.2%	3.8%	1.8%
Don't know/Refused	0.6%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%	1.6%

## Neighborhood and City Quality of Life Ratings

The 2018 Life in Hampton Roads survey examined sub-regional measures of neighborhood and city quality of life and also examined relevant measures at the city level. Although such analyses have significant value, they should also be understood in the context of the much greater uncertainty associated with inferences from sub-population analyses. The maximum margin of error, including design effects from weighting, for the entire sample of LIHR is 4.5 percent (95% confidence level). Thus, only quite large differences between subsample groups are statistically significant and the margin of error for individual cities will be much larger.

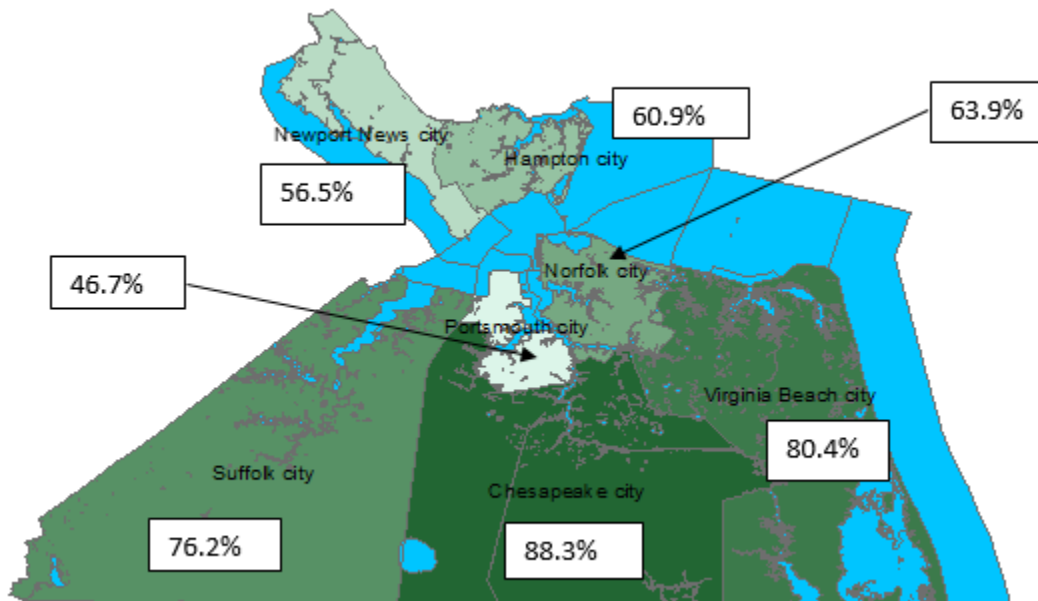
## City Quality of Life

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of life for their city of residence. Seventy-one percent of respondents reported the quality of life in their city as excellent or good (17.2% and 53.8%, respectively). Another 28.5% rated the quality of life in their city as either fair (24.6%) or poor (3.9%).



Perceptions of city quality of life varied significantly across the Hampton Roads region ( $p < .05$ ). At the top end, 88.3 percent of respondents from Chesapeake rated the quality of life in their city as good or excellent, as did 80.4 percent of respondents from Virginia Beach. Suffolk was slightly lower, with 76.2 percent rating city quality of life as good or excellent. Norfolk and Hampton ranked somewhat lower, at 63.9 percent and 60.9 percent respectively. Finally, Newport News and Portsmouth ranked substantially lower at 56.5 percent and 46.7 percent, respectively. Residents in some cities appear to have substantially higher perceptions of quality of life than others. Although the rankings within the top group (Chesapeake, Virginia Beach, and Suffolk) and the bottom group (Newport News and Portsmouth) cannot be known with statistical confidence, we can be confident that the top group and bottom group are different, and the observed rankings are broadly consistent with patterns we have seen in previous survey years.

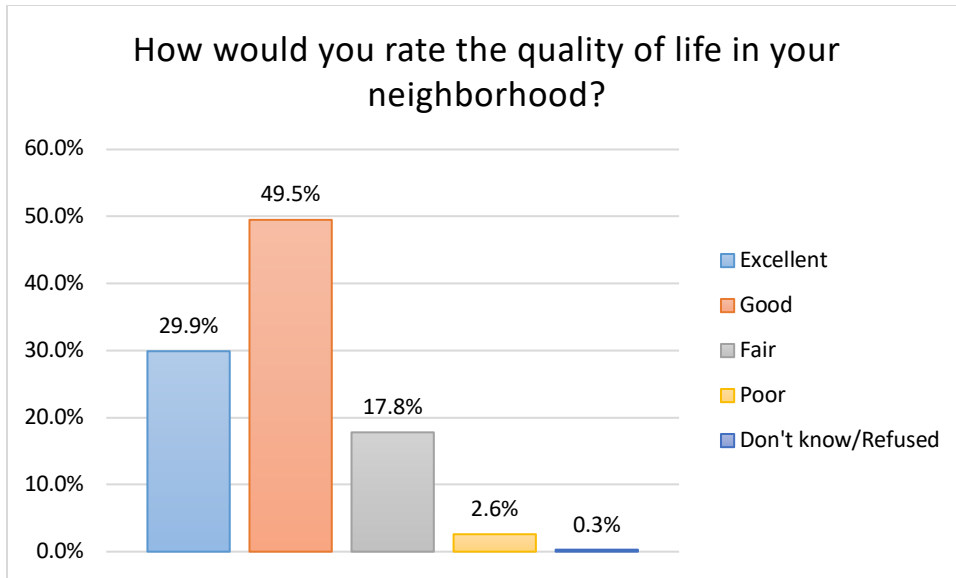
## % Rating City Quality of Life Good or Excellent



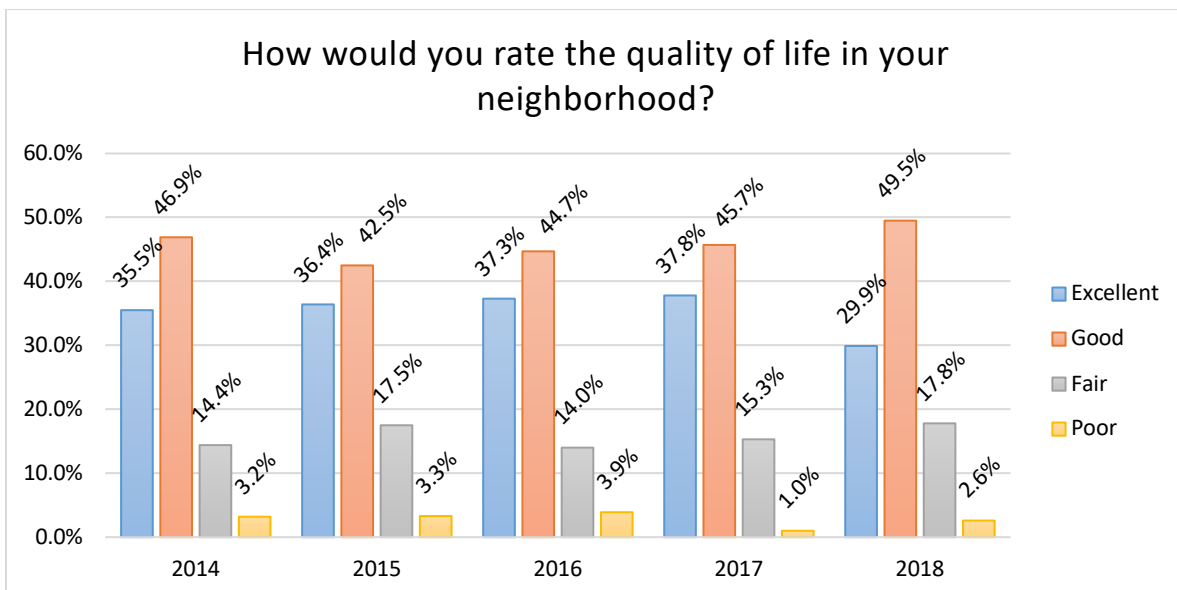
\*\*p<.000 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

### Neighborhood Quality of Life

Overall, respondents reported very high ratings for quality of life in their neighborhood. The majority of respondents (79.4%) rated the quality of life in their neighborhood as either excellent or good. In contrast, only 20.4 percent of respondents rated the quality of life in their neighborhood as fair or poor. Overall, quality of life was rated the highest (excellent and good) for respondent's neighborhood (79.4%), followed by city of residence (71.0%), and finally Hampton Roads as a whole (70.1%).



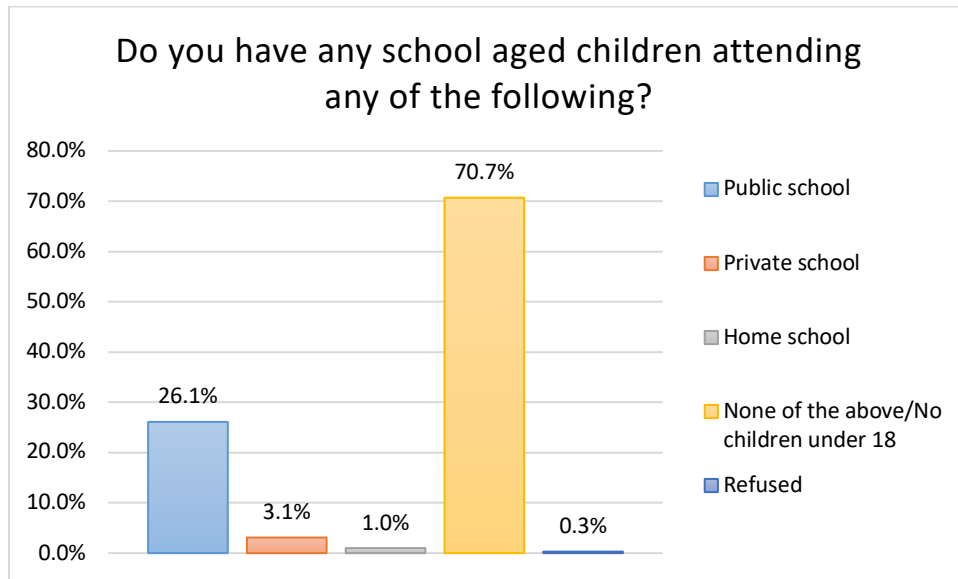
Across years, a strong majority of respondents rated the quality of life in their neighborhoods as good or excellent. While the total percentage of respondents that rated the quality of life in their neighborhoods as good or excellent remained similar to previous years, there was a considerable decrease in respondents who rated the quality of life in their neighborhoods as excellent (29.9%). This percentage had seen small increases in each of the previous four years (35.5%, 36.4%, 37.3%, and 37.8%, respectively). Additionally, 2018 saw a slight increase in respondents rating the quality of life in their neighborhood as poor (2.6%) compared to only 1.0 percent in 2017.



In summary, the overall quality of life in Hampton Roads remains relatively consistent with past years. Over 70 percent rate the overall quality of life in Hampton Roads as excellent or good. Although there were some differences between cities in the reported quality of life, respondents reported a higher quality of life in their neighborhoods compared to the city or region as a whole.

### Perceptions of Public School Systems

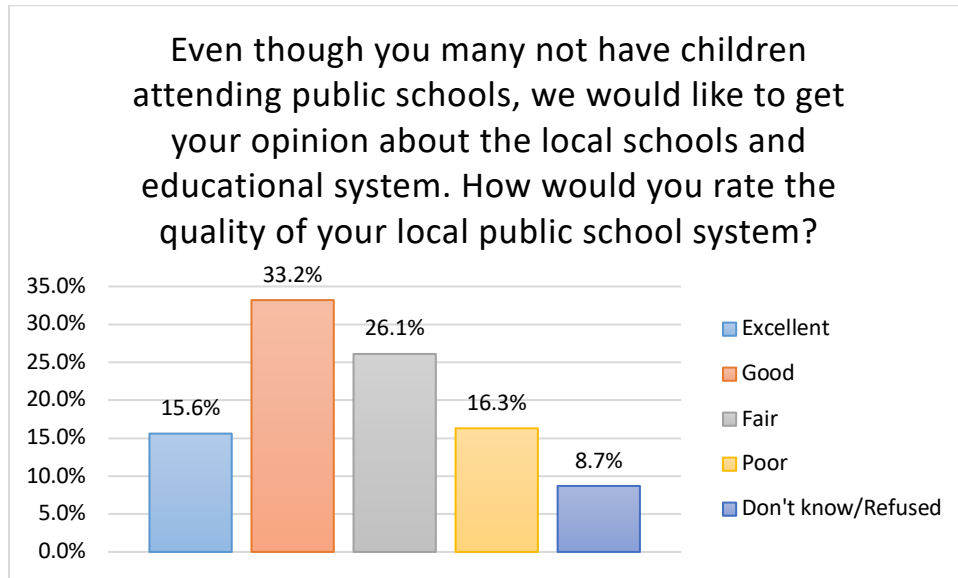
We wanted to inquire if parents were choosing public school, private school, or home schooling for their children. Most (70.7%) of our respondents did not have children, or had children who were over 18 years old and not in school. About one-quarter of respondents indicated that they have children enrolled in public school (26.1%). Only 3.1 percent of the respondents indicated that they have children who are enrolled in private school. Home school was the least frequent type of school at a mere 1.0 percent.



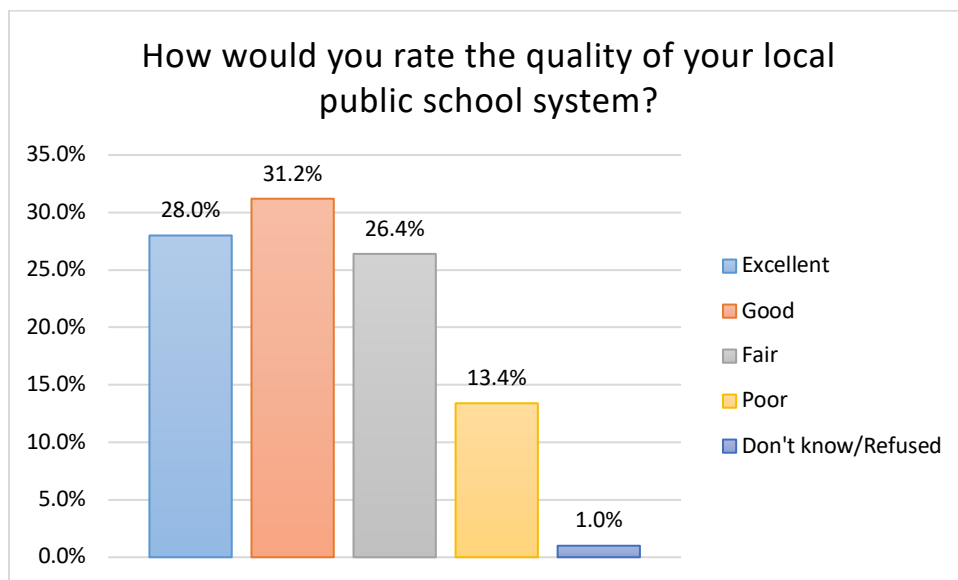
For respondents who previously told us that they did not have school-aged children, we asked, “Even though you may not have children attending public schools, how would you rate the quality of your local public school system?” Less than half (48.8%) of these respondents rated the public school system as excellent (15.6%) or good (33.2%), while others rated the school system as fair (26.1%) or poor



(16.3%). It is worth noting that a slightly higher percentage of these respondents without school-aged children rated the public school systems as poor than excellent.

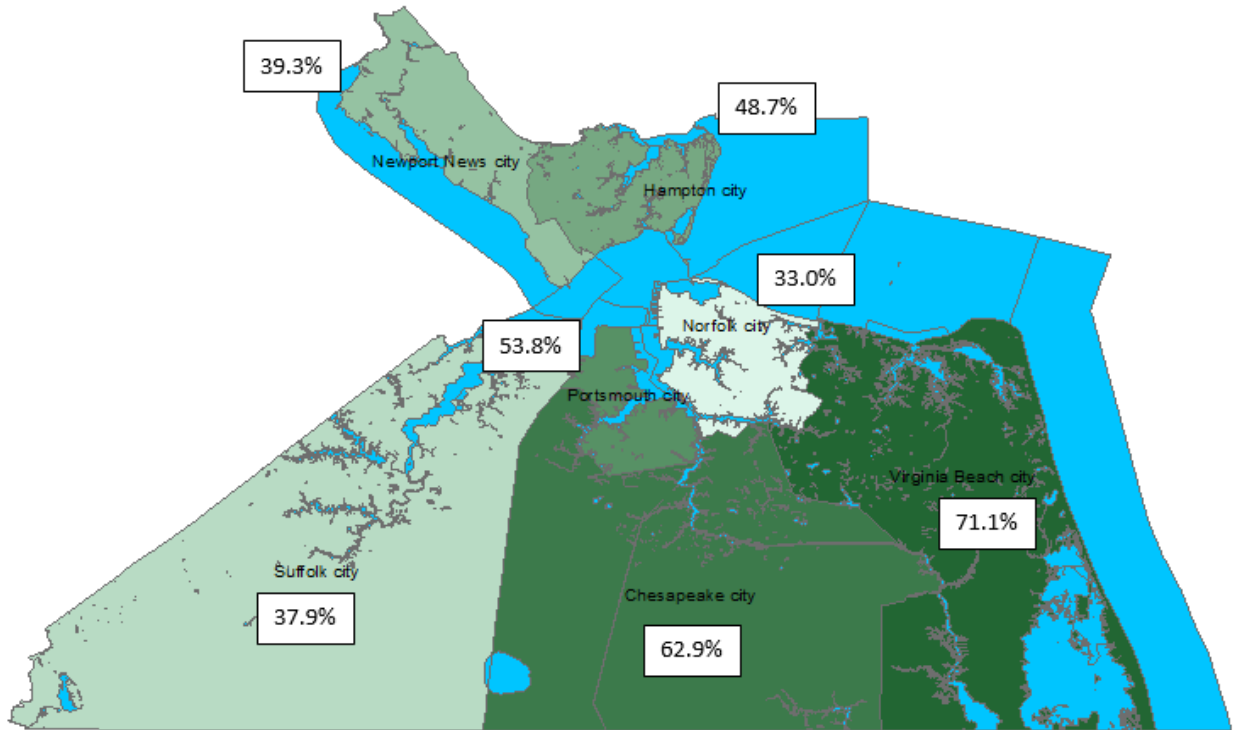


Those respondents who do have school-aged children rated the public schools more favorably than those without children in local schools, particularly those rating them as excellent. While the majority (59.2%) of respondents with school-aged children rated the public school system as excellent (28.0%) or good (31.2%), others rated the school system as fair (26.4%) or poor (13.4%).



There were significant differences in ratings of the local public school systems by city. Virginia Beach had the highest percentage of residents rating the local public school systems as excellent or good (71.1%), followed by Chesapeake (62.9%) and Portsmouth (53.8%). At the other end of the spectrum, Newport News (39.3%), Suffolk (37.9%) and Norfolk (33.0%) had the lowest percentage of residents ranking the local public school systems as excellent or good.

## % Rating Local Public School System Good or Excellent



\*\*p<.000 statistically significant, 2-tailed test

---

All Life in Hampton Roads Data Analyses will be placed on the Social Science Research Center website as they are released (<http://www.odu.edu/al/centers/ssrc>). Follow-up questions about the 2018 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

Randy Gainey, PhD  
Faculty Director  
The Social Science Research Center  
Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice  
Old Dominion University  
757-683-4794 (office)  
[rgainey@odu.edu](mailto:rgainey@odu.edu)

Or

Tancy Vandecar-Burdin, PhD  
Associate Director  
The Social Science Research Center  
Old Dominion University  
757-683-3802 (office)  
[tvandeca@odu.edu](mailto:tvandeca@odu.edu)