

## Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #3

### Declining Health and Diminishing Education?

*This report examines regional and sub-regional measures of health and education perceptions from the 2014 Life In Hampton Roads survey (LIHR 2014) conducted by the Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center. 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).*

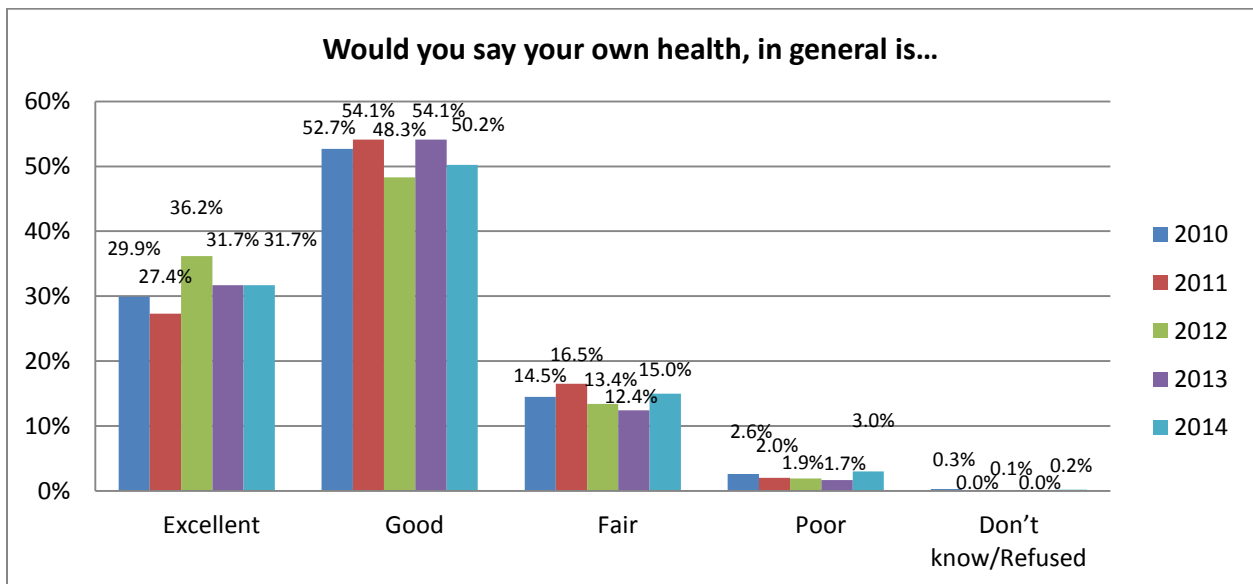
Hampton Roads is made up of seven independent cities full of people whose health and education are vital to ensuring that the community thrives. According to the Life in Hampton Roads survey conducted by Old Dominion University's Social Science Research Center, 81.9 percent of Hampton Roads residents indicated that their general health was good (50.2%) to excellent (31.7%). While this includes a large portion of residents, it is the lowest percentage of good to excellent ratings recorded since the Life in Hampton Roads survey began in 2010. Obesity, diabetes, and cancer are considered to be the three major health challenges facing residents. Other health concerns include drug and alcohol use, poor nutrition, and access to healthcare. Exposure to ticks was also measured by the survey and nearly a quarter (22.6%) of people who have ever been diagnosed with a tick-borne disease were diagnosed in the past 12 months, with some parts of the region much more vulnerable than others. Our analysis also reveals a decrease in the quality of local public schools reported by residents. In fact, the data recorded for 2014 was the lowest since 2010. When controlling for individual cities Virginia Beach (75.3%), Chesapeake (66.9%), and Newport News (57.5%) residents reported being the most satisfied with the quality of their local public schools.

The 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey asked 853 residents of the Hampton Roads area about their general health, major health challenges to the area, tick exposure, video game usage, and opinions about local public school systems. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show variations 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. Details of survey

methodology are included in the 2014 LIHR demographics and methodology section ([www.odu.edu/ssrc](http://www.odu.edu/ssrc)). The margin of error for the 2014 LIHR survey is 3.7 percent (95 percent confidence interval).

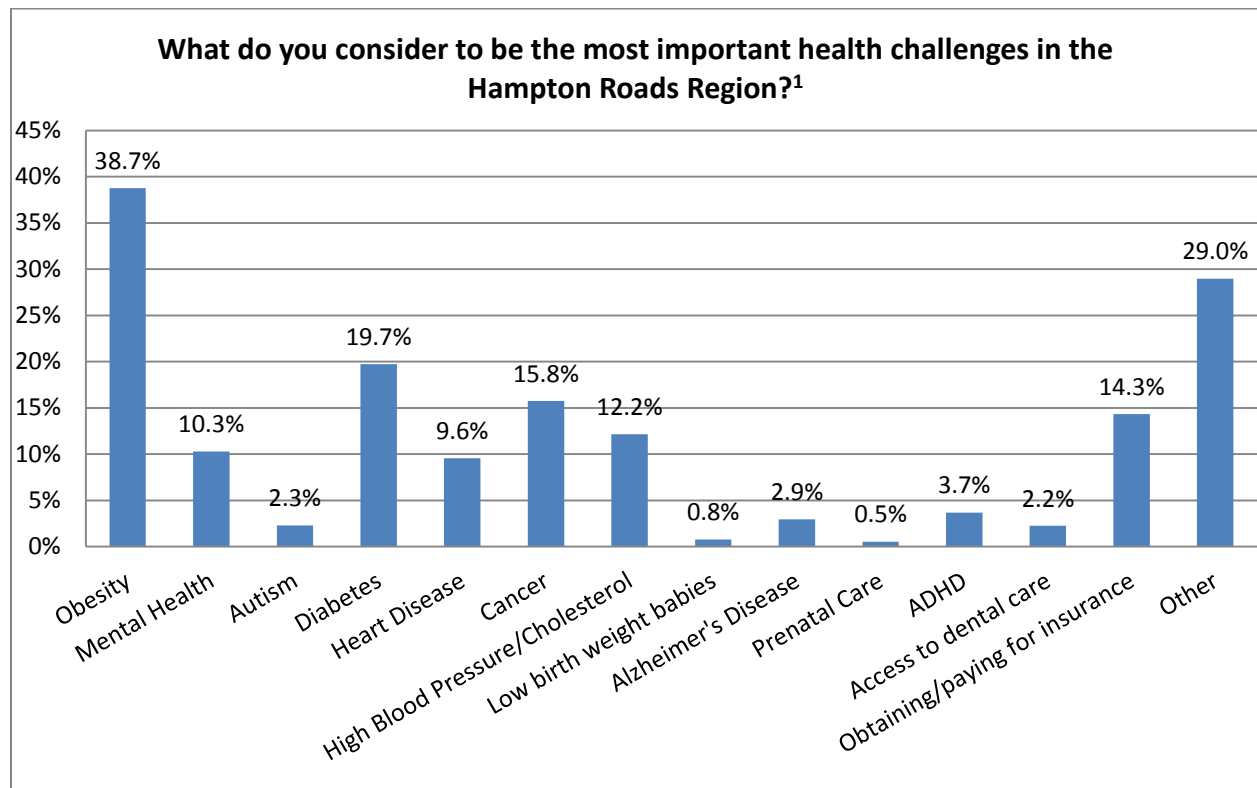
## General Health and Health Challenges

For the 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey respondents were asked to rate their own health, in general as well as provide their opinion on what the biggest health challenges facing Hampton Roads. A majority of residents (81.9%) considered their health to be good or excellent (50.2% and 31.7% respectively). However, this is a lower percentage than was reported in 2013 (85.8%) and the lowest proportion of good to excellent ratings health rating since 2011 (81.5%). When looking at individual cities Chesapeake (88.9%), Virginia Beach (82.1%), and Norfolk (81.5%) had the greatest proportion of residents who report their health as good or excellent.



Hampton Roads' residents were also asked to provide what they believed to be the two most important health challenges to the area. Response options included include obesity, mental health, autism, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure/cholesterol, low birth weight babies, Alzheimer's disease, prenatal care, ADHD, access to dental care, and obtaining/paying for insurance. Respondents were also given an 'Other' option for providing a challenge not previously listed. Out of the challenges

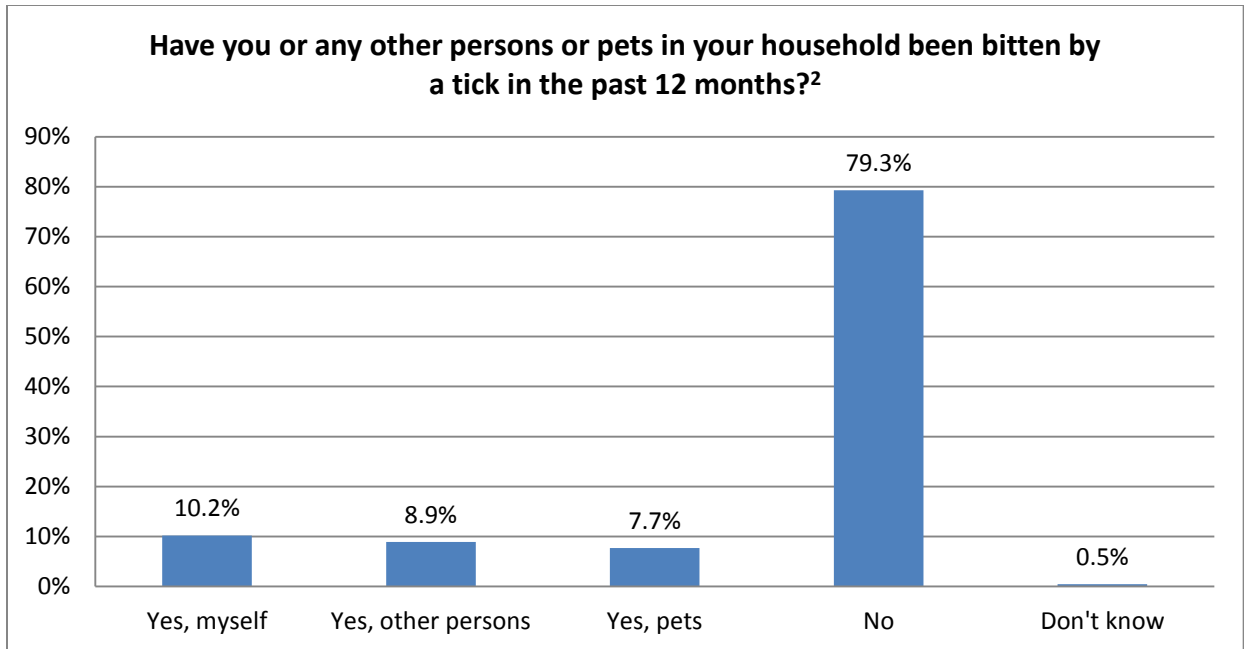
listed obesity (38.7%), diabetes (19.7%), and cancer (15.8%) were the most selected health challenges facing citizens of Hampton Roads. Over a quarter (29%) of respondents selected other challenges and provided a wide range of concerns including drugs, alcohol and tobacco use, poor nutrition, and access to good affordable healthcare.



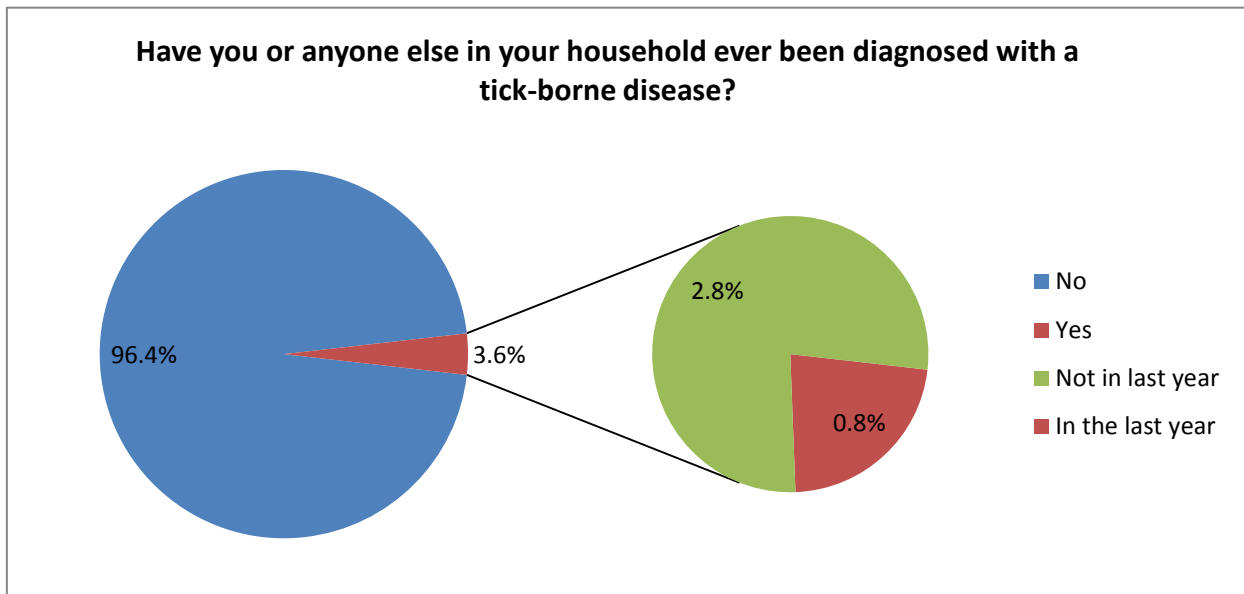
<sup>1</sup>Percentage do not add up to 100 because respondents were asked to provide two health challenges

## Tick Exposure

One of the faculty members at Old Dominion University submitted survey questions to gauge how Hampton Roads residents' have been affected by ticks. Respondents were asked if any people or pets in their household had been bitten by a tick in the past 12 months. Only 10.2 percent of respondents reported being bitten by a tick in the past 12 months and 8.9 percent of respondents said they knew of other people in the household who had been bitten. Additionally, 7.7 percent of residents said they had pets that were bitten by ticks in the past 12 months. Just 3.6 percent of respondents reported ever being diagnosed with a tick-borne disease. It is interesting to note that 22.6 percent of people who disclosed ever having a tick-borne disease were diagnosed within the past 12 months.



<sup>2</sup>Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could provide more than one choice.



Data from the Life in Hampton Roads survey also provided estimates of tick exposure by city.<sup>1</sup> People and pets residing in the Norfolk (9.8%) households were the least affected by ticks followed by Portsmouth (14%) and then Virginia Beach (19.4%). Chesapeake (22.8%) and Hampton (22%)

<sup>1</sup> Total tick exposure was calculated by subtracting the percentage of people who said 'No' or 'Don't know' when asked if any people or pets in their household have been bitten by a tick from 100 percent.

households encountered ticks to a fairly substantial degree, while Newport News (30.6%) and Suffolk (32.0%) faced the highest rates of tick encounters. In the past 12 months, Suffolk (22%) respondents were most likely to be bit or bitten by a tick, while pets in Newport News (13%) were the most likely to be bitten by a tick.<sup>2</sup>

	Chesapeake	Hampton	Newport News	Norfolk	Portsmouth	Suffolk	Virginia Beach
Yes, myself	13.2%	8.5%	14.8%	3.9%	10.5%	22.0%	9.0%
Yes, other persons	11.0%	14.6%	9.3%	3.9%	10.5%	16.0%	7.8%
Yes, pets	7.4%	9.8%	13.0%	2.6%	8.8%	12.0%	7.5%
Don't know	0.7%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
No	76.5%	75.6%	69.4%	90.2%	86.0%	68%	80.2%
Total percentage with tick encounter	22.8%	22.0%	30.6%	9.8%	14.0%	32.0%	19.4%

## Video Game Usage

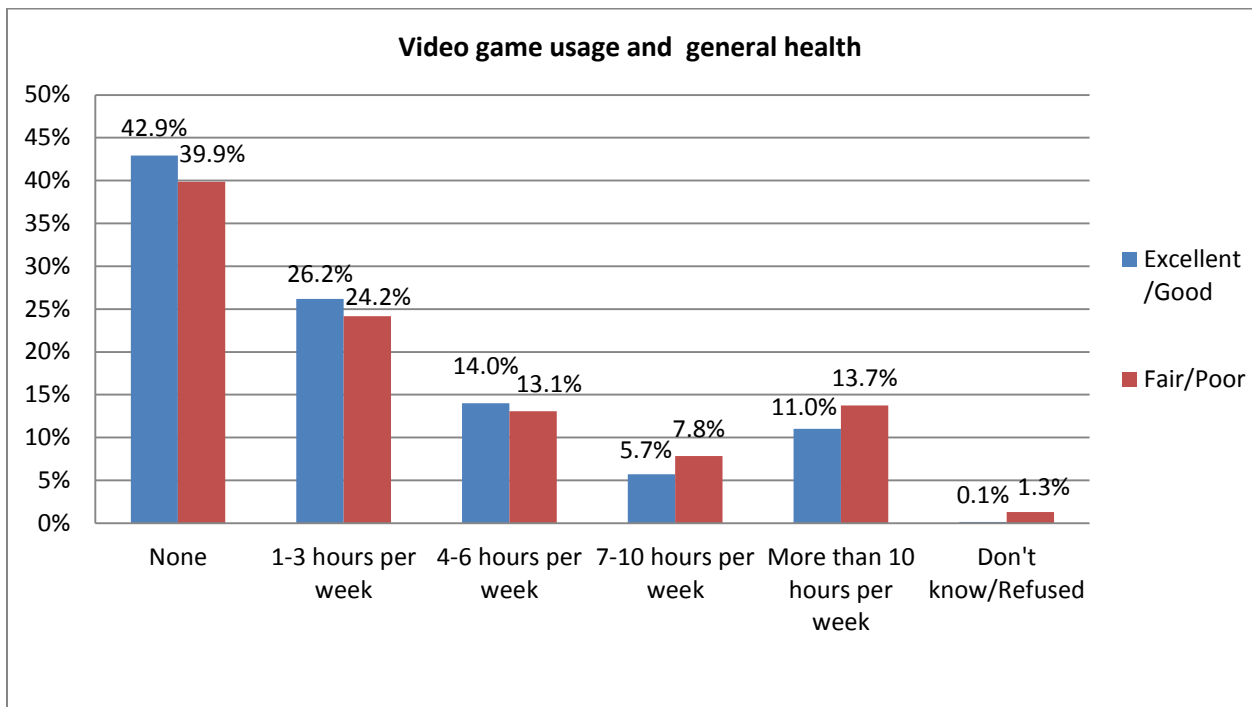
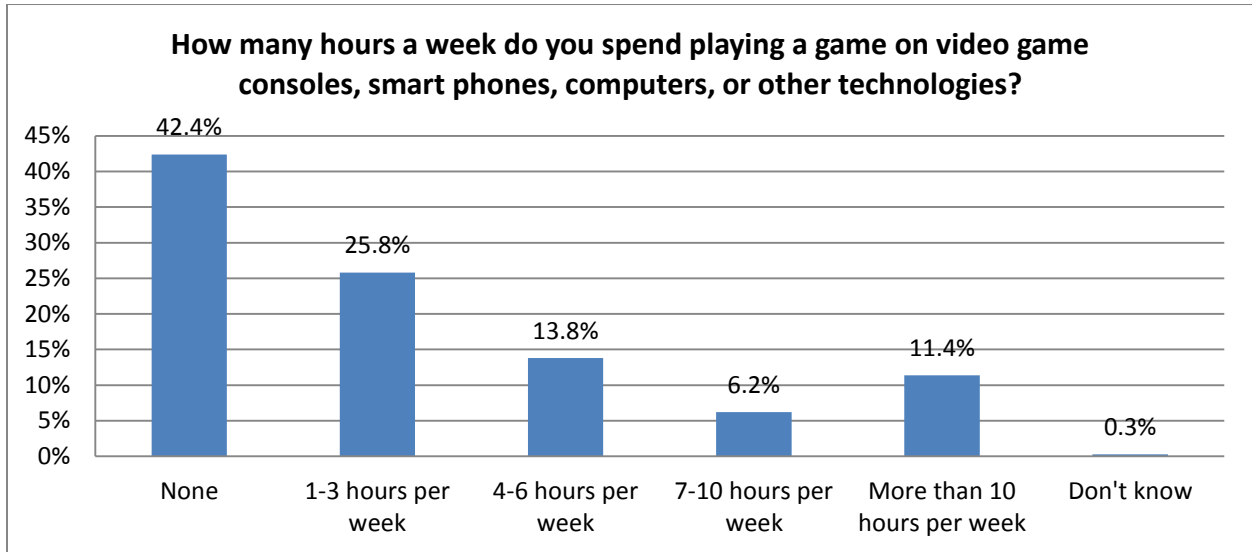
The 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey also asked residents about their video game usage and health. The data shows that a majority (42.4%) of respondents report not spending any time playing a game on video game consoles, smart phones, computers, or other technologies. Just over a quarter (25.8%) of respondents said they play games between one and three hours per week. Twenty percent of residents indicated they play video games between 4 and 10 hours per week. It is worth pointing out that 11.4 percent of adults in Hampton Roads play video games more than 10 hours per week.

Comparing general health ratings to the various amounts of time spent playing video games provided some interesting results. A greater proportion of respondents reported having good to excellent health when playing video games between zero and six hours per week while people who played seven or more hours of video games per week had a greater portion of fair to poor general health ratings. This pattern is driven by responses from younger adults. Among those 49 and younger, there was a 10.8

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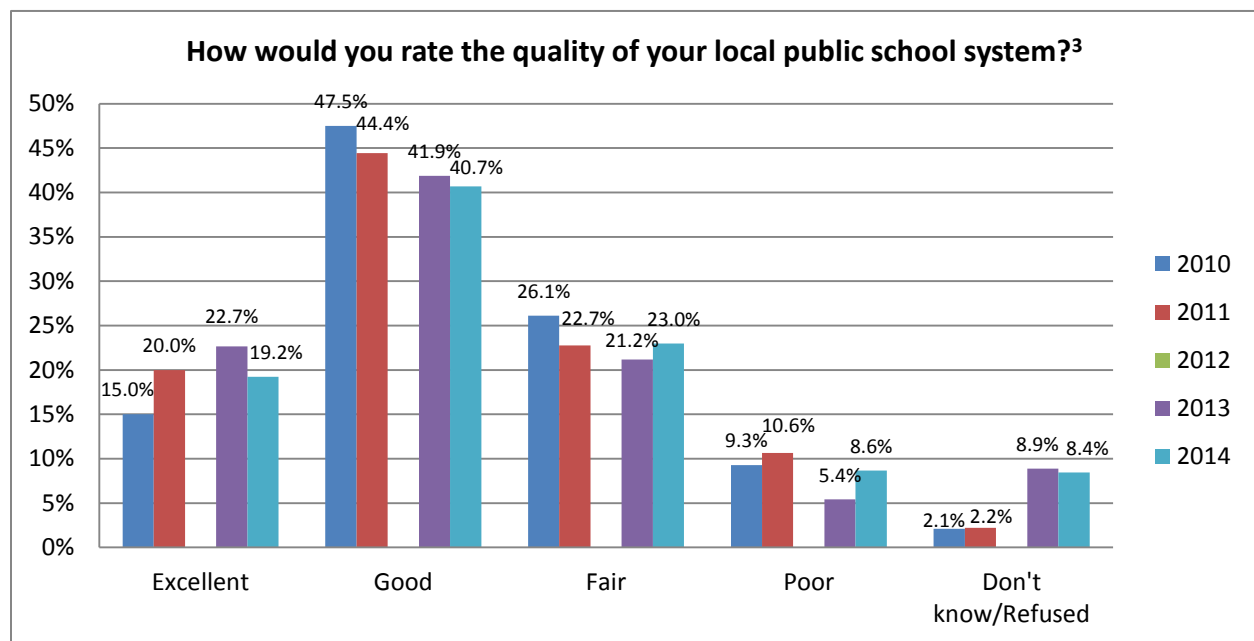
<sup>2</sup> The total portion of tick encounters

percent (statistically significant) drop in the portion rating their health excellent or good among heavy game players (7 hours or more). Among respondents aged 50 or older, there was a 3.3 percent (not statistically significant) *increase* in rated health among heavy game players.



## Perception of Local Public School Systems

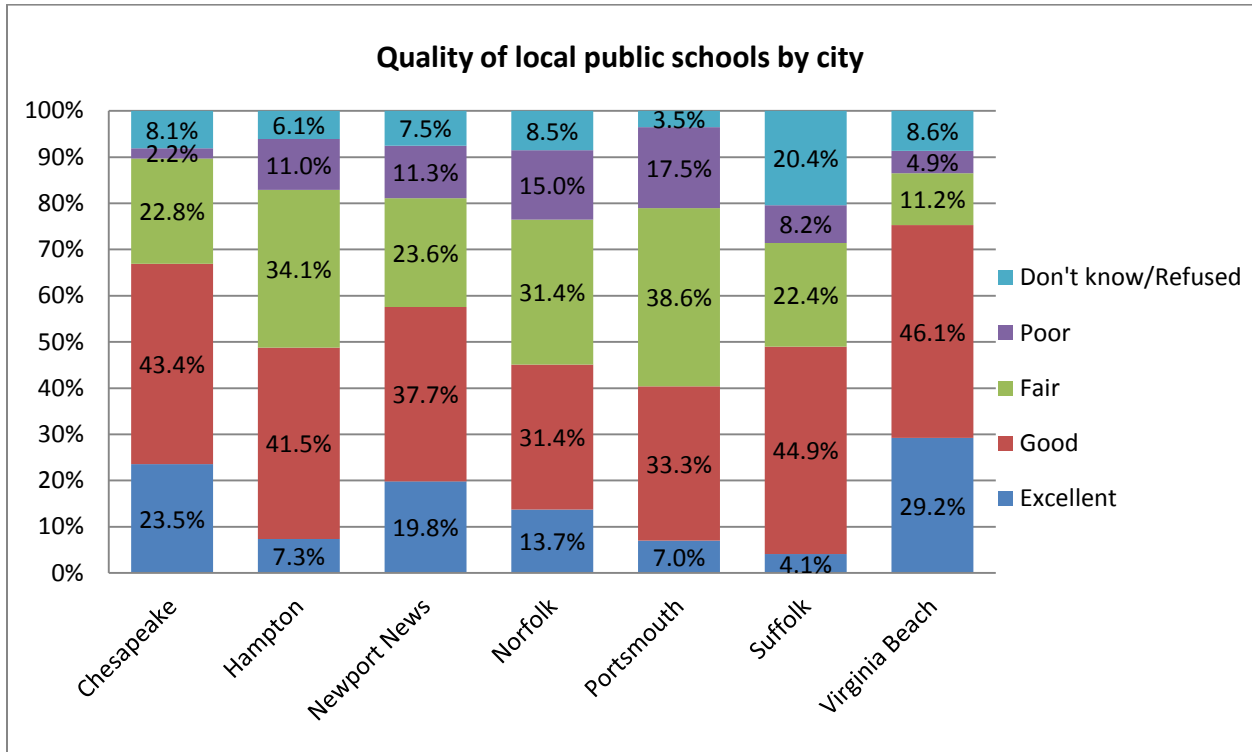
Another goal of the 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey was to measure the perception of the quality of the local public schools, colleges and universities. For 2014, 59.9 percent of those surveyed rated the quality of the local public school system as good (40.7%) or excellent (19.2%). Compared to 2013 results, this is a 4.7 percent decrease in good (41.9%) to excellent (22.7%) ratings. Additionally, 2014 also had the smallest percentage of good (40.7%) and excellent (19.2%) ratings when compared to the data from previous years, which suggests residents have worsening perceptions about the quality of Hampton Roads' public schools.



<sup>3</sup> 2012 data is omitted because it only asked this question to respondents with students in public and/or private school. All other years asked this question to whole sample.

Analyzing the quality of local public schools by city shows an interesting correlation between individual cities and the quality of their local public school system. Virginia Beach (29.2%) had the greatest percentage of excellent ratings, followed by Chesapeake (23.5%) and then Newport News (19.8%). Conversely, Portsmouth (56.1%), Norfolk (46.4%), and Hampton (45.1%) had the greatest portion of poor to fair ratings. In other words, residents of Virginia Beach (75.3%), Chesapeake (66.9%), and Newport News (57.5%) were more likely to view their local public schools as good or excellent,

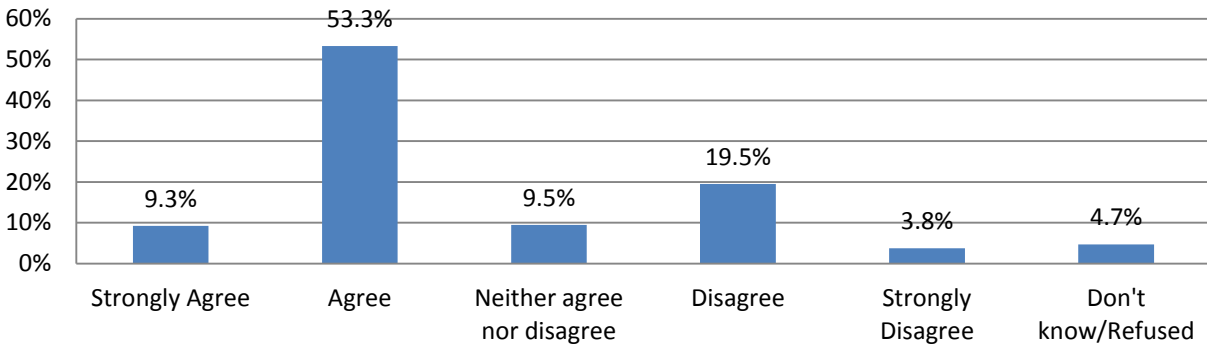
especially compared to the percent of good to excellent ratings Portsmouth (40.3%), Norfolk (45.1%), and Hampton (48.8%) received.



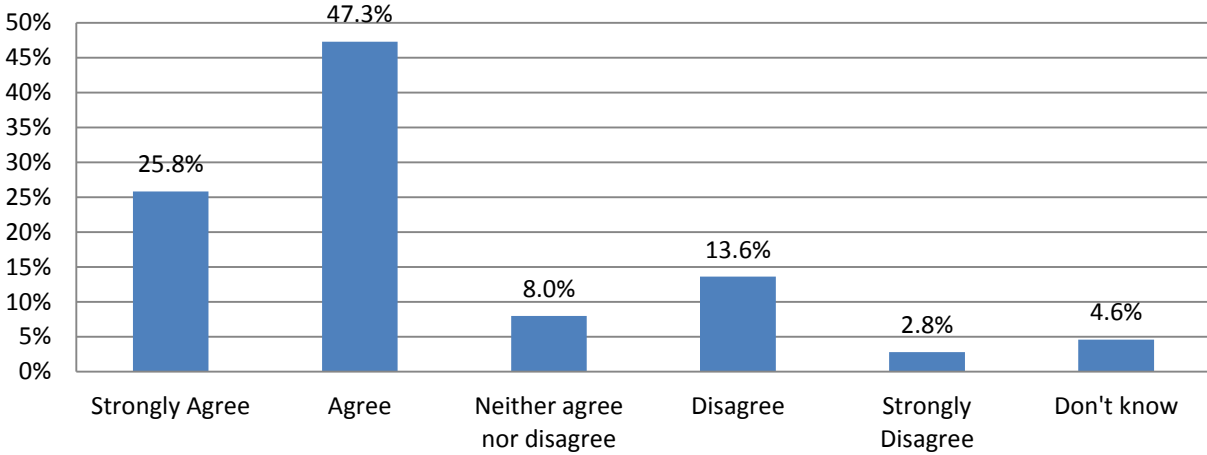
The 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey also questioned if local schools and guidance counselors prepared students for success in a career or college. A majority (62.6%) of Hampton Roads residents agree (53.3%) to strongly agree (9.3%) that students graduate from local schools ready for success in a career or college. Residents who indicated they had a child in public or private school had overwhelming support (73.1%) for the notion that school counselors/guidance counselors play an important role in preparing students for success in college or a career. When asked about the quality of colleges and universities in Hampton Roads, 80.8 percent of residents gave a good (56.2%) to excellent (24.6%) rating.



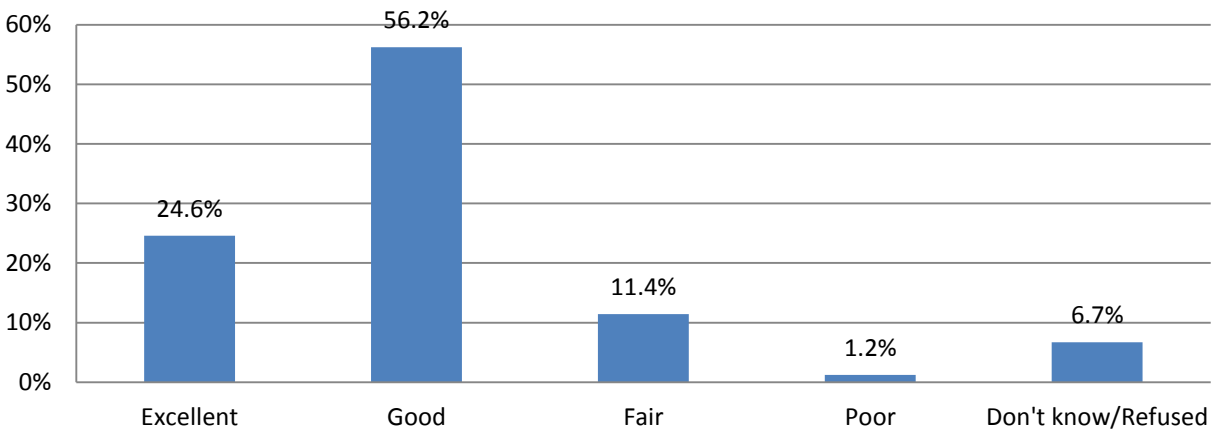
**Students graduate from our local schools ready for success in a career or college.**



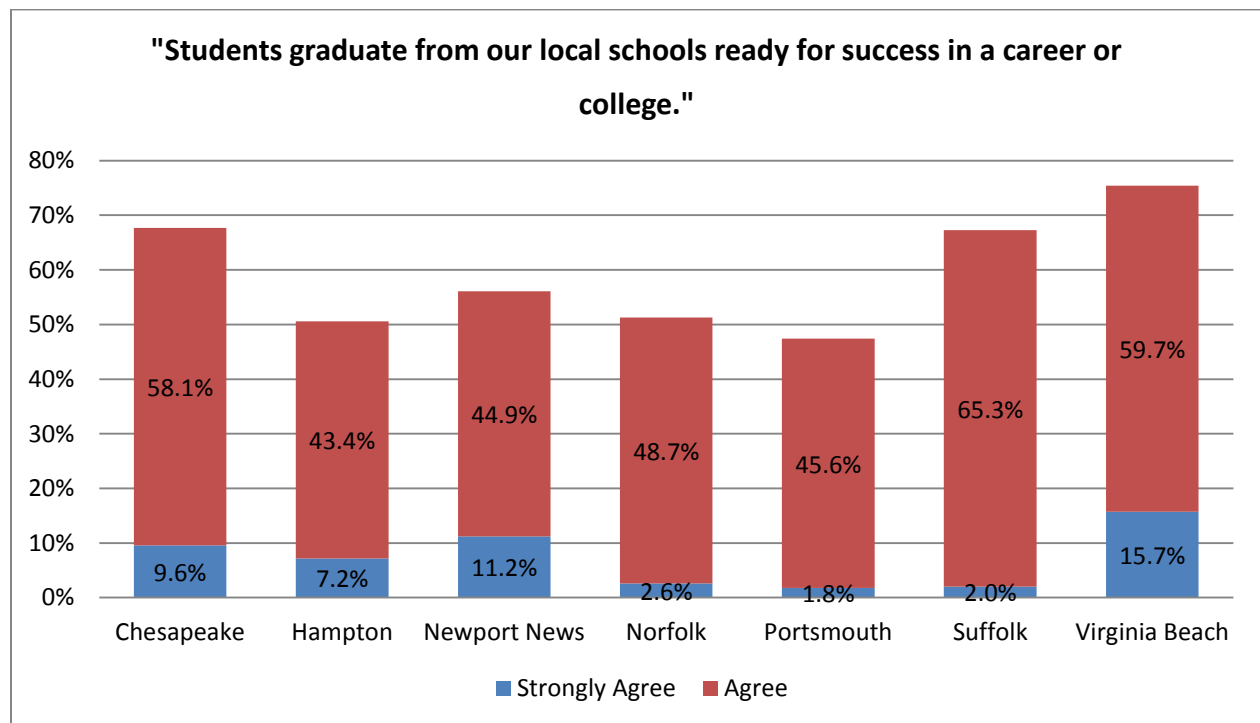
**School counselors/guidance counselors play an important role in preparing students for success in college or a career.**



**How would you rate the quality of Colleges and Universities in Hampton Roads?**



As with our measure of school quality, opinions concerning whether local schools prepare students for success in career or college vary substantially across cities. At the upper end Virginia Beach schools receive the highest ratings with 75.4 percent agreeing (59.7%) or strongly agreeing (15.7%) that students graduate ready for success. Slightly (but not statistically significantly) lower are Chesapeake (67.7%) and Suffolk (67.3%). Substantially and significantly lower are Newport News (56.1%), Norfolk (51.3%), Hampton (50.6%) and Portsmouth (47.4%).



Summary: The 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey describes a region with a high percentage of people with good to excellent general health; however, this portion may be declining. The three largest health challenges Hampton Roads residents listed include obesity, diabetes, and cancer. Several respondents also provided other health concerns such as drug and alcohol use, poor nutrition, and access to healthcare. The LIHR survey also gauges how exposure to ticks has affected people within the seven cities. Controlling for individual cities it appears that Suffolk (32%) and Newport News (30.6%) residents have been exposed to ticks more often than residents elsewhere in Hampton Roads. On the other end of the spectrum, Norfolk (9.8%) and Portsmouth (14%) residents were the least affected by ticks. Turning to

video game usage and general health, the survey found that individuals who play more than 6 hours of video games per week report were more likely to report having poor to fair overall health. Analysis related to local public schools shows a decrease in quality by residents. In fact, the data recorded for 2014 was the lowest since 2010. Out of all of Hampton Roads Virginia Beach (75.3%), Chesapeake (66.9%), and Newport News (57.5%) residents reported being the most satisfied with the quality of their local public schools.

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All Life In Hampton Roads Data Analyses will be placed on the Social Science Research Center website as they are released ([www.odu.edu/ssrc](http://www.odu.edu/ssrc)). Follow-up questions about the 2014 Life in Hampton Roads survey should be addressed to:

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