

Optimistic Views Expressed in Poll on Race Relations

A majority of teachers and students—both black and white—have a moderately approving if not overly optimistic view of race relations at Hamilton High school.

A questionnaire completed for 'The Times by 1,700 of the school's 2,350 students and 83 of the school's 99 teachers contained two questions on these issues.

Here are the questions and the way students and teachers responded:

1. How would you describe race relations among students at Hamilton High?

	Students	Teachers
Excellent	8%	6%
Good	43	52
Fair	37	40
Poor	12	1
Other	0	1

Students and teachers are in rather close agreement on this issue, except that a slightly higher degree of optimism is reflected in the teacher response. A higher percentage of black students checked the "excellent" and "good" categories than white students.

2. Are you satisfied with the racial makeup of Hamilton High?

	Students	Teachers
Yes	57%	79%
No	22	10
Unsure	21	7
Other	0	4

The large "yes" response from teachers seems attributable not only to acceptance of racially mixed student body, but also to steps taken by the school to halt the rapid rise in black enrollment and decline in white enrollment.

The white student majority that answered "yes" was slightly larger than the black student majority.

Of those students who said "no" or "unsure," there was a rather consistent difference in the way blacks and whites phrased their explanations. Blacks saw the issue chiefly as one of increasing black enrollment, but not driving whites from the school. Whites, however, saw the issue chiefly in terms of removing blacks from the school.