Poll

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1991 poll.

Also, voters are more likely to see drugs as an extremely serious problem this year than last year. In the 1991 poll, 67 percent said drugs are an extremely serious problem, compared with 59 percent in the 1990 poll.

Crime, too, appears to be more serious to voters, with 60 percent of the respondents in 1991 saying crime is an extremely serious problem, compared with 47 percent in the 1990 poll.

Blacks, by a 12-point margin, are more likely to see drugs as an extremely serious problem than whites, the poll shows. Gaston said that is primarily because drug dealing and use is more visible in the black neighborhoods than in white neighborhoods, where drug use and dealing is more clandestine.

Bunny Purvis, head of the School Board’s I Care program, said it’s not surprising that drugs are high on voters’ lists of problems every year.

“It’s an ongoing problem that you’re not going to solve and be over with,” she said.

Although drug abuse among the parish’s students in grades 7-12 is down, that doesn’t take into consideration

teen-agers who have dropped out of school.

“They see the Mercedes and they see the gold flashing,” Purvis said, referring to the trappings of some drug dealers. “Why should they pass algebra II when they can go out and make more than you and I make in a month in one day?”

Poll results show voters in north central Louisiana and in the Orleans metro area are slightly more concerned about drugs, with 80 percent and 77 percent respectively saying drugs are an extremely serious problem.

Seventy-four percent of the voters aged 50 and older think drugs are an extremely serious problem, poll results show. Seventy-five percent of the voters whose incomes are less than $15,000 said drugs are an extremely serious problem.

Those voters who did not graduate from high school are more likely to see drugs as an extremely serious problem, poll results show.

Also, Democrats responding to the poll were more likely to say drugs are an extremely serious problem than were Republicans and independents.