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# **Educating California's Children and Youth: A Summary of the Findings from a Survey of Voters about K-12 Schools**

conducted by the

***Berkeley IGS Poll***

on behalf of

***EdSource***

September 2017



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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from a statewide survey of California registered voters conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) on behalf of EdSource. The survey was administered by appending a series of questions about K-12 schools onto the Fall 2017 *Berkeley IGS Poll*, a non-partisan statewide poll conducted periodically by IGS through its newly established Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research.

Data collection was completed August 27-September 5, 2017 in English and Spanish using the YouGov online panel among a total of 1,200 California registered voters. The sample included a statewide sample of 1,000 California registered voters, and an oversampling of 200 voters in California who were the parents of children under age 18.

Eligible voters were selected using YouGov's proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking demographic and regional targets, so that the characteristics of those polled approximate the profile of the state's overall registered voter population. After survey administration, YouGov applied statistical weights to align the statewide voter sample and the parent oversample to their proper population proportions, and, following this, to a wide range of political, demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

IGS and EdSource were jointly responsible for developing all questions included in the poll. Copies of the questions included in this report can be found in the Appendix at the back of this report.



## FINDINGS IN BRIEF

### **Voters endorse the state’s policy of putting less emphasis on standardized test scores when evaluating the public schools**

By a two-to-one margin (57% to 29%) California voters support recent changes in state policy putting less emphasis on standardized test scores when evaluating the performance of the state’s public schools.

*Table 1\**

When voters are asked how much importance California should attach to each of eight characteristics when evaluating the performance of the schools, the largest proportions consider the following things to be of high importance: creating a safe and positive school environment (74%), increasing graduation rates (65%), preparing students to enter the workforce directly after high school (62%), and preparing students for college (61%). Majorities also rate greater parental involvement in their child’s school (58%) and increasing attendance rates (53%) as being highly important, while just 33% say this with regard to obtaining higher scores on standardized tests.

*Table 2*

### **Broad support for more detailed reporting of how districts are spending state funds**

There is broad agreement among voters that when giving school districts greater decision-making powers over how they spend state funds, the state should also require them to provide more detailed reporting of how they spend these funds, especially with regard to funds devoted to improving the academic performance of the state’s low-income students and English-learners. Three in four voters (75%) agree with taking this policy approach, while just 11% disagree.

*Table 3*

### **Devote more school funds for vulnerable student populations**

Greater than six in ten voters consider it very important for the schools to provide more funding to address the needs of homeless students (64%), as well as special education students (63%). About half also say this with regard to addressing the needs of foster children (50%) and English-learners (49%), while one in three (35%) feel it is very important for the state to spend more to address the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students.

*Table 4*

### **Voters concerned about impact of federal government’s stricter immigration policies on students whose families are threatened with deportation**

The poll finds that 60% of the state’s registered voters and 67% of the parents of a school-age child are very or somewhat concerned about the impact of the federal government’s stricter immigration enforcement policies is having on students whose families are threatened with deportation.

*Table 5*

In addition, a 55% majority favors the public schools devoting more resources -- such as counseling, trauma and mental health referrals, assistance in getting health care, translation or legal services -- to support these students. Parents are even more likely to endorse this policy, with 64% in favor and 23% opposed.

*Table 6*

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*\* refers to table or tables within the report where the findings are reported in greater detail.*

**About four in ten consider student bullying and harassment serious problems**

About four in ten voters (38%) and parents (42%) feel that bullying, school fights and other forms of intimidation or violence are a “very serious” problem for the students attending the public schools in their community, and another four in ten consider this a “somewhat serious” problem. Similar proportions also think the online harassment of students through social media is a serious problem for the students in their local schools.

*Tables 7-8*

**Preparing non-college bound students for the workforce considered very important**

Having the public schools put greater emphasis on preparing high school students who may not end up going to college to be successful in the workforce is considered very important to 69% of the state’s voters, and another 24% consider it “somewhat important.” When asked to assess the job the local public schools in their community are doing in this area, 28% say the schools are doing an excellent or good job, while 26% believe they are doing a fair job, and 28% think their performance is poor or very poor.

*Tables 9-10*

**Seven in ten voters believe low-income families have little choice over the schools their kids can attend; Majority supports offering these families tax credits or vouchers to attend private schools if they don’t like their public school options**

Seven in ten (69%) believe low-income families don’t have much choice about which schools their kids can attend. Just 10% see them as having many choices and 16% feel they have some choices. This contrasts sharply with voter perceptions of the choices available to middle-income, and especially upper-income families, whom 81% believe have lots of choices.

*Table 11*

This is leading many voters to support the idea of providing government subsidies, such as tax credits or vouchers, to low-income families to enable them to send their kids to a private or religious school if they don’t like their public school. A 55% majority of registered voters supports this proposal, while 34% are opposed. Support for offering low-income families subsidies to send their kids to a private or religious school is bipartisan, and increases to 69% among the parents of school-age children.

*Table 12*

**Voters much more divided about whether school vouchers and tax credits should be made available to all parents, regardless of income**

Opinions are much more divided, and become more partisan, when voters are asked whether government subsidies, such as tax credits and vouchers, should be offered to all parents, regardless of income. Statewide, 46% favor this idea, but 43% are opposed. While Republicans are highly supportive, narrow pluralities of Democrats and non-partisans are opposed.

*Table 13*



**About half believe it's very important for the state to offer more financial aid to qualified students from low-income families to attend state colleges and universities; About four in ten say this with regard to students from middle-income families**

About half of the state's voters (48%) and parents (50%) feel it is very important for the state to offer more tuition assistance, loans and other forms of financial aid to qualified students from low-income families so they can attend the state's public universities and colleges. When asked the same question with regard to qualified students from middle-income families, about four in ten voters (40%) and parents (44%) say this is very important.

*Tables 14-15*



## **THE FINDINGS**

## **1. Voters endorse policy of putting less emphasis on standardized test scores when evaluating public schools**

In recent years California has been relying less on standardized test scores as the main way to evaluate the performance of the public schools. When California voters are asked their opinions of this change in policy, they are highly supportive. By a two-to-one margin (57% to 29%) registered voters agree that the state should put less emphasis on test scores and more emphasis on other things like school attendance, suspension and graduation rates, and how well schools are preparing students for college and the workforce.

Among voters who are parents of a school-age child, 60% back this idea, while 27% are opposed.

Majorities or pluralities of voters across all major subgroups of the voting population support this policy change, with registered Democrats (71%), white non-Hispanic parents (73%) and voters living in parts of Northern California outside the San Francisco Bay Area (72%) most supportive.

**Table 1**

**California should rely less on standardized test scores as the main way to evaluate public school performance and put more emphasis school attendance, suspension and graduation rates, how well schools are preparing students for college and the workforce, and other things**

	Agree %	Disagree %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>(1,200)</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	71	18	(588)
Republicans	44	43	(318)
No party preference/others	47	33	(294)
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	61	26	(336)
South Coast	56	33	(183)
Other Southern California	52	29	(201)
Central Valley	56	31	(221)
San Francisco Bay Area	54	27	(207)
Other Northern California	72	21	(52)*
<b>Total parents of a school-age child</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>(415)</b>
Elementary school parent	61	24	(285)
Secondary school parent	56	30	(199)
Public school parent	61	26	(341)
Private/religious school parent	59	30	(98)*
White non-Hispanic parent	73	23	(173)
Latino parent	55	29	(182)

\* small sample base

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.

## **2. Schools characteristics that voters feel are most important when evaluating the performance of public schools**

Voters in the survey were read a list of eight school characteristics and asked how much importance California should attach to each were evaluating the performance of public schools.

“Creating a safe and positive school environment” was rated highest, with 74% of voters attaching high importance to this school characteristic.

Three other school characteristics were considered to be of high importance to greater than six in ten voters statewide. These includes: “higher graduation rates” (65%), “preparing students to enter the workforce directly after high school” (62%), and “preparing students for college” (61%). Majorities also rated two other school characteristics highly in this setting: “encouraging greater parental involvement in their child’s school” (58%) and “higher attendance rates” (53%).

By contrast, just one in three voters (33%) consider “higher student scores on standardized tests” to be of high importance when evaluating the performance of the state’s public schools.

The views of parents are generally similar to those of the overall statewide electorate on these measures.

**Table 2**  
**How much importance should California give to each of the following when evaluating the performance of its public schools**

	Total registered voters			Parents of school-age children		
	High importance %	Mod. importance %	Low importance %	High importance %	Mod. importance %	Low importance %
Creating a safe and positive school environment	74	18	5	71	23	4
Higher graduation rates	65	27	4	61	29	8
Preparing students to enter the workforce directly after high school	62	27	7	54	31	12
Preparing students for college	61	31	6	64	25	8
Encouraging greater parental involvement in their child's school	58	30	7	53	34	9
Higher attendance rates	53	35	8	53	35	9
Higher student scores on standardized tests	33	38	24	40	36	19
Lower suspension rates	29	37	25	36	35	21

*Note: Differences between 100% and sum of percentages for each item equal proportion with no opinion.*

### **3. Broad support for more detailed reporting of how districts are spending funds**

As a result of recent reforms, school districts in California have been given more decision-making powers over how they can spend state funds. There is broad agreement among voters that when giving school districts this greater decision-making authority, the state should also require districts to provide more detailed reporting of how they spend these funds, especially with regard to the additional funds that some districts receive to improve the academic performance of the state's low-income students and English-learners. Three in four voters (75%) agree with taking this approach, while just 11% disagree.

There is strong bipartisan agreement with the view that school districts should be required to provide more detailed reporting about how it spends state moneys.

Parents of school-age children are also supportive, with 78% in agreement and 12% disagreeing. Support is strongest among white non-Hispanic parents, 87% of whom agree with this requirement.



**Table 3**  
**School districts should provide more details and reports about how they are spending state especially with regard to the additional funds the state provides to improve the academic performance of low-income students and English-learners**

	Agree %	Disagree %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>11</b>	<i>(1,200)</i>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	83	6	<i>(588)</i>
Republicans	67	19	<i>(318)</i>
No party preference/others	68	12	<i>(294)</i>
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	78	10	<i>(336)</i>
South Coast	75	11	<i>(183)</i>
Other Southern California	71	13	<i>(201)</i>
Central Valley	72	10	<i>(221)</i>
San Francisco Bay Area	75	13	<i>(207)</i>
Other Northern California	77	8	<i>(52)*</i>
<b>Total parents of a school-age child</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>12</b>	<i>(415)</i>
Elementary school parent	79	11	<i>(285)</i>
Secondary school parent	82	10	<i>(199)</i>
Public school parent	80	10	<i>(341)</i>
Private/religious school parent	72	18	<i>(98)*</i>
White non-Hispanic parent	87	9	<i>(173)</i>
Latino parent	77	12	<i>(182)</i>

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

#### **4. Devote more school district funds for vulnerable student populations**

Voters also attach high importance to devoting more funds for vulnerable student populations. Greater than six in ten voters statewide consider it “very important” for the school districts to provide more funding to address the needs of homeless students (64%), while another 27% consider this “somewhat important.”

The distributions are similar when voters are asked about special education students, with 63% describing it very important and 30% somewhat important to provide more funds to address their needs.

About half of the state’s voters also think it is very important for the school districts to provide greater funding for foster children (50%) and English-language learners (49%). In each case another one in three say this is somewhat important.

When voters are asked about the importance of increasing funding for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, 35% consider this very important and 27% say it is somewhat important.

The views of parents are generally similar to those of the overall electorate, although a somewhat larger proportion of parents (57%) than voters overall (49%) believes it is very important to provide more funds for English-learners.

**Table 4**  
**Importance of public schools devoting more funds to address**  
**the needs of each of the following types of students**

	Total registered voters			Parents of school-age children		
	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Not important %	Very important %	Some-what important %	Not important %
Homeless students	64	27	5	64	31	3
Special education students	63	30	5	62	32	6
Foster children	50	36	10	53	36	8
English-language learners	49	35	13	57	32	9
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students	35	27	30	40	25	24

*Note: Differences between 100% and sum of each item's percentages equal proportion with no opinion.*

**5. Most voters express concerns about the impact that federal immigration policies are having on students whose families are threatened with deportation**

The poll finds that six in ten (60%) of the state's registered voters are very or somewhat concerned about the federal government's stricter immigration enforcement policies and the impact it is having on public school students whose families are threatened with deportation.

Views about this are highly partisan. While over eight in ten Democrats (83%) are very or somewhat concerned about this, among Republicans, just 26% say this.

Parents are somewhat more concerned about this than the overall voting public, with 67% very or somewhat concerned. Concern for the fears and anxieties faced by students whose families may be threatened with deportation are particularly high among elementary school parents (74%), Latino parents (71%) and public school parents (70%).

**Table 5**  
**Degree of concern about federal government’s stricter immigration enforcement policies causing fear and anxiety among public school students whose families may be threatened with deportation**

	Very/somewhat concerned	Not too/not at all concerned	(n)
	%	%	
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>(1,200)</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	83	13	(588)
Republicans	26	68	(318)
No party preference/others	54	35	(294)
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	68	25	(336)
South Coast	56	33	(183)
Other Southern California	53	43	(201)
Central Valley	53	38	(221)
San Francisco Bay Area	66	28	(207)
Other Northern California	57	40	(52)*
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>(415)</b>
Elementary school parent	74	22	(285)
Secondary school parent	61	33	(199)
Public school parent	70	25	(341)
Private/religious school parent	62	34	(98)*
White non-Hispanic parent	62	34	(173)
Latino parent	71	25	(182)

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

## **6. Majority supports devoting more school resources to supporting students whose family members are threatened with deportation**

By a 55% to 32% margin, voters favor the public schools in their community devoting more resources -- such as counseling, trauma and mental health referrals, assistance in getting health care, translation or legal services -- to support students whose families are threatened with deportation.

Opinions about this divide sharply along partisan lines. While 78% of Democrats are in favor, just 22% of Republicans support this policy.

Parents back the idea of having their local schools provide additional resources to students whose families are threatened with deportation nearly three to one (64% to 23%). The subgroups of the parent population most likely to show support are Latino parents (72%) and the parents of elementary school students (72%).

**Table 6**  
**Opinions of the public schools devoting more resources to supporting students whose family members are threatened with deportation**

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>(n)</b>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>(1,200)</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	78	11	(588)
Republicans	22	70	(318)
No party preference/others	48	34	(294)
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	66	24	(336)
South Coast	56	29	(183)
Other Southern California	47	41	(201)
Central Valley	48	41	(221)
San Francisco Bay Area	58	28	(207)
Other Northern California	32	47	(52)*
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>(415)</b>
Elementary school parent	72	16	(285)
Secondary school parent	56	30	(199)
Public school parent	68	19	(341)
Private/religious school parent	55	35	(98)*
White non-Hispanic parent	59	32	(173)
Latino parent	72	13	(182)

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

## **7. Most consider bullying and other forms of intimidation and violence to be a serious problem to the public school students in their community**

About four in ten voters (38%) believe that bullying, school fights and other forms of intimidation or violence is a very serious problem to the students attending the public schools in their community, and another four in ten (39%) describe the problem as somewhat serious. Just 15% say it is not a serious problem.

Parents hold similar views, with 42% considering bullying of students a very serious problem, 40% somewhat serious, and 14% not serious.

The segments of the voting public most likely to believe bullying is a very serious problem to the students in their local schools are families with annual incomes of less than \$20,000 (49%), voters in the Central Valley (47%), Latino parents (48%) and elementary school parents (46%).



**Table 7**  
**Seriousness of the problem of bullying, school fights and other forms of intimidation or violence to students attending public schools in your community**

	Very serious %	Somewhat serious %	Not serious %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<i>(1,200)</i>
<u>Household income</u>				
Less than \$20,000	49	35	9	<i>(136)</i>
\$20,000-\$39,999	40	43	11	<i>(187)</i>
\$40,000-\$59,999	45	33	16	<i>(172)</i>
\$60,000-\$99,999	37	40	14	<i>(272)</i>
\$100,000 or more	28	39	25	<i>(276)</i>
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	40	42	13	<i>(336)</i>
South Coast	34	32	21	<i>(183)</i>
Other Southern California	39	45	11	<i>(201)</i>
Central Valley	47	28	14	<i>(221)</i>
San Francisco Bay Area	35	43	15	<i>(207)</i>
Other Northern California	26	52	18	<i>(52)*</i>
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>14</b>	<i>(415)</i>
Elementary school parent	46	37	14	<i>(285)</i>
Secondary school parent	37	42	17	<i>(199)</i>
Public school parent	44	38	15	<i>(341)</i>
Private/religious school parent	36	52	10	<i>(98)*</i>
White non-Hispanic parent	34	45	18	<i>(173)</i>
Latino parent	48	36	11	<i>(182)</i>

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

## **8. Similar proportions also see online harassment as a very serious problem**

Voters were also asked about the seriousness of the problem of online harassment through social media to the public school students in their local community. The results are similar, with 37% of registered voters describing the problem as very serious, and 39% saying it is somewhat serious. Just 12% feel it is not a serious problem.

The subgroups more likely to consider the problem very serious are Latino parents (49%), the parents of elementary school students (48%), and voters living in households with incomes of less than \$20,000 (49%).

**Table 8**  
**Seriousness of the problem of problem of harassment through online social media to students in the public schools in your community**

	Very serious %	Somewhat serious %	Not serious %	<i>(n)</i>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>12</b>	<i>(1,200)</i>
<u>Household income</u>				
Less than \$20,000	49	33	8	<i>(136)</i>
\$20,000-\$39,999	37	39	11	<i>(187)</i>
\$40,000-\$59,999	36	45	11	<i>(172)</i>
\$60,000-\$99,999	35	42	13	<i>(272)</i>
\$100,000 or more	27	38	18	<i>(276)</i>
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	43	37	11	<i>(336)</i>
South Coast	32	36	16	<i>(183)</i>
Other Southern California	35	34	14	<i>(201)</i>
Central Valley	41	36	12	<i>(221)</i>
San Francisco Bay Area	30	49	8	<i>(207)</i>
Other Northern California	29	38	24	<i>(52)*</i>
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15</b>	<i>(415)</i>
Elementary school parent	48	29	14	<i>(285)</i>
Secondary school parent	36	43	17	<i>(199)</i>
Public school parent	46	32	14	<i>(341)</i>
Private/religious school parent	34	49	12	<i>(98)*</i>
White non-Hispanic parent	36	40	19	<i>(173)</i>
Latino parent	49	29	12	<i>(182)</i>

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

**9. Seven in ten voters say it's very important to put more emphasis on preparing non-college bound high school students for the workforce**

Nearly seven in ten voters statewide (69%) believe it is very important for the state's public schools to put greater emphasis on preparing non-college bound high school students to be successful in the workforce. Another 24% of voters consider this somewhat important, while just 3% say it is not important.

Views about this are bipartisan and include large majorities of voters in all major regions of the state. For example, nearly equivalent proportions of Democrats (71%) and Republicans (72%) consider this very important. In addition, about two in three or more voters in each of the six major geographic regions maintain that putting greater emphasis on this is very important.

Six in ten parents of school-age children (61%) also consider this to be very important, and 33% say it is somewhat important. Among the parents of high school students, 64% believe placing greater emphasis on preparing non-college bound high school students to be successful in the workforce and 30% say it is somewhat important.

**Table 9**  
**Importance of the public schools in your community putting greater emphasis on preparing high school students not going to college to be successful in the workforce**

	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Not important %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>3</b>	<i>(1,200)</i>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	71	25	3	<i>(588)</i>
Republicans	72	21	3	<i>(318)</i>
No party preference/others	62	24	3	<i>(294)</i>
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	70	22	3	<i>(336)</i>
South Coast	68	25	3	<i>(183)</i>
Other Southern California	65	28	3	<i>(201)</i>
Central Valley	71	18	4	<i>(221)</i>
San Francisco Bay Area	67	26	4	<i>(207)</i>
Other Northern California	69	31	**	<i>(52)*</i>
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<i>(415)</i>
Elementary school parent	62	33	3	<i>(285)</i>
Secondary school parent	64	30	4	<i>(199)</i>
Public school parent	66	30	2	<i>(341)</i>
Private/religious school parent	43	44	9	<i>(98)*</i>
White non-Hispanic parent	62	35	2	<i>(173)</i>
Latino parent	60	33	3	<i>(182)</i>

\* small sample base \*\* less than ½ of 1%

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.

## **10. Mixed views about the job the public schools are doing in preparing non-college bound students for the labor force; parents somewhat more upbeat**

Voters offer a mixed assessment when asked to assess how well the local public schools in their community are doing in preparing students who may not end up going to college for the workforce. About one in four voters (28%) believe their local schools are doing an excellent or good job in this area, another 26% rate them as doing a fair job, while 28% believe they are performing poorly. Another 18% have no opinion.

Registered Republicans are more critical in their assessments of the job the public school are doing in this area than others, with 44% believing their local schools are doing a poor or very poor job in preparing non-college bound students for the workforce.

Parents of school-age children are more likely than the overall electorate to give their local schools a positive assessment. Nearly half of the parents (46%) say their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing non-college bound students for the workforce.

However, the higher ratings given by parents is derived mostly from the more positive assessments of elementary school parents than high school student parents. Among elementary school parents 55% rate their local schools as doing an excellent or good job, while just 22% offer a poor or very poor job assessment. Parents of students in high school are more divided, with 38% giving the schools a positive rating and 32% a negative rating.

**Table 10**  
**Job the public schools in your community are doing in preparing students who may not end up going to college to enter the workforce after they graduate**

	Excellent /good job %	Fair job %	Poor/very poor job %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	(1,200)
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	34	32	19	(588)
Republicans	21	21	44	(318)
No party preference/others	24	22	27	(294)
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	32	23	26	(336)
South Coast	23	26	28	(183)
Other Southern California	31	20	30	(201)
Central Valley	25	30	29	(221)
San Francisco Bay Area	27	33	25	(207)
Other Northern California	36	23	36	(52)*
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	(415)
Elementary school parent	55	18	22	(285)
Secondary school parent	38	27	32	(199)
Public school parent	47	26	23	(341)
Private/religious school parent	49	15	30	(98)*
White non-Hispanic parent	42	26	27	(173)
Latino parent	51	23	21	(182)

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

## **11. Seven in ten voters believe low-income families do not have many choices about the schools their children can attend**

Voters hold widely divergent views when asked about the choices available to upper-income, middle-income and low-income families when deciding where to send their kids to school. Most voters believe that low-income families don't have many choices, with about seven in ten voters (69%) saying this. Just 10% see them as having many choices and 16% say they have some choices.

By contrast, when asked about the choices available to upper-income families, eight in ten (81%) believe they have lots of choice, while 11% think they have some choices and only 4% think they don't have many choices at all. When asked about the choices available to middle-income families, the dominant view, held by 72%, is that they have "some choices" about where they can send their kids to school.

The parents of school-age children also see big disparities between the choices available to low-income, middle-income and upper-income families about where to send their kids to school. A majority (58%) maintains that low-income families don't have many choices, while just 17% think they have lots of choices and 22% see them as having some choices. By contrast, three in four parents (76%) believe upper-income families have lots of choices about where to send their kids to school, while most (63%) think middle-income families have some choices.



**Table 11**  
**Perceptions of the choices available to low-income, middle-income, and upper-income families when deciding where to send their children to school**

	Total registered voters			Parents of school-age children		
	Lots of choices %	Some choices %	Not much choice %	Lots of choices %	Some choices %	Not much choice %
Choices available to . . .						
Low-income families	10	16	69	17	22	58
Middle-income families	13	72	11	23	63	12
Upper-income families	81	11	4	76	16	6

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of each item's percentages equal proportion with no opinion.*

## **12. A majority of voters favors offering tax credits or vouchers to low-income parents for sending their children to private or religious schools**

The belief that low-income families have few choices about the schools their children can attend is leading many voters to support the proposal to offer these families government subsidies, such as tax credits or vouchers, to enable them to send their kids to a private or religious school if they don't like their public school. This proposal is backed by the state's registered voters by a five-to-three margin (55% to 34%).

Views about offering school choice to low-income parents are bipartisan, with Republicans supporting this by a 57% to 37% margin, and Democrats favoring it 55% to 34%. In addition, 50% or more of voters in each of the state's five most populated regions favor this policy, and fewer than four in ten are opposed.

Parents of school-age children are even more supportive of this policy than the overall electorate. Nearly seven in ten parents (69%) favor offering government subsidies, such as tax credits or vouchers, to low-income parents to enable them to send their kids to private or religious schools, while just 23% are opposed. The subgroups most supportive of this policy are elementary school parents (75%) and Latino parents (72%).

**Table 12**  
**Provide government subsidies, such as tax credits or vouchers, to low-income parents to use to send their children to a private or religious school if they don't like their public school choices.**

	Favor %	Oppose %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>(1,200)</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	55	34	(588)
Republicans	57	37	(318)
No party preference/others	52	29	(294)
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	58	30	(336)
South Coast	54	33	(183)
Other Southern California	58	30	(201)
Central Valley	50	39	(221)
San Francisco Bay Area	55	35	(207)
Other Northern California	43	45	(52)*
<b>Total parents of a school-age child</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>(415)</b>
Elementary school parent	75	16	(285)
Secondary school parent	63	31	(199)
Public school parent	69	22	(341)
Private/religious school parent	71	26	(98)*
White non-Hispanic parent	65	30	(173)
Latino parent	72	16	(182)

\* small sample base

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.

### **13. Voters more divided about offering school vouchers and tax credits to all parents, regardless of income**

While a majority of voters lends their support to offering low-income parents tax credits and vouchers to send their kids to a private or parochial school, they are much more divided when asked whether these kinds of government subsidies should be offered to all parents, regardless of income. According to the survey, fewer than half of voters statewide (46%) favor the idea, while 43% are opposed.

Opinions about offering all parents this option are highly partisan. Republicans are highly supportive, favoring the policy 59% to 36%. However, narrow pluralities of Democrats and non-partisan voters oppose the idea.

There are also regional differences in views about this proposal. Support for offering school vouchers and tax credits to all parents is greatest among voters in Los Angeles County, where 53% are in favor and 38% are opposed. By contrast, voters in the San Francisco Bay Area oppose the idea by a 50% to 41% margin. Voters in the state's other major regions are about evenly divided.

The parents of school-age children are more supportive of the idea of offering government subsidies to all parents than the overall electorate, with greater than six in ten parents (63%) favoring this proposal, and just 28% opposed.

**Table 13**  
**Provide government subsidies, such as tax credits or voucher, to all parents,  
regardless of income that they could use to send their children to a private or  
religious school if they don't like the public school choices available to their children**

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	
	%	%	<i>(n)</i>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>	<i>(1,200)</i>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	43	48	<i>(588)</i>
Republicans	59	36	<i>(318)</i>
No party preference/others	41	43	<i>(294)</i>
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	53	38	<i>(336)</i>
South Coast	44	46	<i>(183)</i>
Other Southern California	46	43	<i>(201)</i>
Central Valley	46	41	<i>(221)</i>
San Francisco Bay Area	41	50	<i>(207)</i>
Other Northern California	40	48	<i>(52)*</i>
<b>Total parents of a school-age child</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>28</b>	<i>(415)</i>
Elementary school parent	66	24	<i>(285)</i>
Secondary school parent	63	33	<i>(199)</i>
Public school parent	63	27	<i>(341)</i>
Private/religious school parent	67	31	<i>(98)*</i>
White non-Hispanic parent	60	33	<i>(173)</i>
Latino parent	66	26	<i>(182)</i>

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

**14. Half believe it's very important for the state to offer more financial aid to students from low-income families to attend the state's colleges and universities**

About half of the state's registered voters (48%) say it is very important for the state to offer more tuition assistance, loans and other forms of financial aid to qualified students from low-income families to attend the state's public universities and colleges. Another 31% feel this is somewhat important, while just 14% consider this as unimportant.

Registered Democrats are much more likely than Republicans to attach high importance to this. Among Democrats 64% consider this very important, compared to just 24% among the state's Republicans. Regionally, larger proportions of voters in Los Angeles County (55%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (52%) feel this is very important compared to voters in other parts of the state.

The parents of school-age children hold similar views to those of the overall electorate about this, with 50% considering this very important and 32% somewhat important. Public school parents (55%) are more apt to attach high importance to this than private school parents (32%).

**Table 14**  
**Importance for the state to offer more tuition assistance, loans and financial aid to**  
**qualified students from low-income families to attend the state's**  
**public colleges and universities**

	<b>Very important %</b>	<b>Somewhat important %</b>	<b>Not important %</b>	<b>(n)</b>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>(1,200)</b>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	64	28	4	(588)
Republicans	24	41	28	(318)
No party preference/others	42	28	17	(294)
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	55	28	12	(336)
South Coast	45	31	19	(183)
Other Southern California	38	43	10	(201)
Central Valley	45	30	15	(221)
San Francisco Bay Area	52	28	12	(207)
Other Northern California	33	36	21	(52)*
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>(415)</b>
Elementary school parent	54	32	8	(285)
Secondary school parent	50	30	16	(199)
Public school parent	55	31	7	(341)
Private/religious school parent	32	36	29	(98)*
White non-Hispanic parent	44	38	14	(173)
Latino parent	54	28	10	(182)

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

**15. Four in ten say it's very important for the state to offer and financial aid to students from middle-income families to attend state colleges and universities**

About four in ten voters (40%) consider it very important for the state to offer more tuition assistance, loans and other forms of financial aid to qualified students from middle-income families to attend the state's public colleges and universities. Another four in ten (41%) consider this somewhat important.

Partisanship also plays a role in voter opinions about this, with 53% of Democrats considering it very important, compared to only 23% among Republicans.

The opinions of parents are generally similar to those of the overall electorate on this question, with 44% saying it is very important, and 39% considering it somewhat important. Public school parents (48%) are somewhat more likely than private school parents (38%) to believe it is very important for the state to increase the amount of financial aid it provides to students from middle-income families.



**Table 15**  
**Importance for the state to offer more tuition assistance, loans and financial aid to**  
**qualified students from middle-income families to attend the state's**  
**public colleges and universities**

	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Not important %	(n)
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>12</b>	<i>(1,200)</i>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	53	38	5	<i>(588)</i>
Republicans	23	45	25	<i>(318)</i>
No party preference/others	34	40	12	<i>(294)</i>
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	44	41	11	<i>(336)</i>
South Coast	38	41	15	<i>(183)</i>
Other Southern California	38	43	10	<i>(201)</i>
Central Valley	38	38	12	<i>(221)</i>
San Francisco Bay Area	42	38	12	<i>(207)</i>
Other Northern California	25	52	13	<i>(52)*</i>
<b>Total parents of school-age child</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>10</b>	<i>(415)</i>
Elementary school parent	44	38	10	<i>(285)</i>
Secondary school parent	46	42	9	<i>(199)</i>
Public school parent	48	37	7	<i>(341)</i>
Private/religious school parent	38	44	18	<i>(98)*</i>
White non-Hispanic parent	43	41	13	<i>(173)</i>
Latino parent	46	38	8	<i>(182)</i>

\* *small sample base*

*Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportions with no opinion.*

## SURVEY QUESTIONS

8. How would you rate the job the public schools in your community are doing in preparing students who may not end up going to college to enter the workforce after they graduate from high school?

- 1  Excellent
- 2  Good
- 3  Fair
- 4  Poor
- 5  Very poor
- 6  No opinion

9. How important do you feel it is for the public schools be put greater emphasis on preparing high school students who may not end up going to college to be successful in the workforce?

- 1  Very important
- 2  Somewhat important
- 3  Not important
- 4  No opinion

10. How important do you feel it is for community colleges and other institutions to offer more vocationally-oriented apprenticeship programs and coursework that may not lead to a college degree, but prepare students for specific jobs?

- 1  Very important
- 2  Somewhat important
- 3  Not important
- 4  No opinion

11. In recent years California has been relying less on standardized test scores as the main way to evaluate the performance of the public schools, and putting more emphasis on things like school attendance, suspension and graduation rates, how well schools are preparing students for college and the workforce, among other things. Do you agree or disagree with this approach?

- 1  Agree strongly
- 2  Agree somewhat
- 3  Disagree somewhat
- 4  Agree strongly
- 5  No opinion

12. How much importance should California be giving to each of the following when evaluating the performance of its public schools? (RANDOMIZE DISPLAY ORDER CATEGORIES)

13. Which of these do you think is most important?

	High importance	Moderate importance	Lower importance	No Opinion	Most important
a. Higher graduation rates.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
b. Lower suspension rates.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
c. Higher attendance rates .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
d. Preparing students for college .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
e. Preparing students to enter the workforce directly after high school .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
f. Creating a safe and positive school environment.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 6
g. Encouraging greater parental involvement in their child’s school.....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 7
h. Higher student scores on standardized tests	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 8

14. As a result of recent reforms, school districts in California have been given more decision-making powers over how they can spend state funds. Some are now calling for the districts to provide more details and issue more reports about how they are spending these funds, especially with regard to funding intended to improve the academic performance of low-income students and English learners. Do you agree or disagree with requiring these additional reporting requirements?

- 1  Agree strongly
- 2  Agree somewhat
- 3  Disagree somewhat
- 4  Disagree strongly
- 5  No opinion

15. How serious of a problem do you think the shortage of public school teachers is in California?

- 1  Very serious
- 2  Somewhat serious
- 3  Not serious
- 4  No opinion

16. How serious of a problem do you feel bullying, school fights and other forms of intimidation or violence are to the kids attending public schools in your community?

- 1  Very serious
- 2  Somewhat serious
- 3  Not serious
- 4  No opinion

17. How serious of a problem do you feel harassment through on-line social media is to the kids attending public schools in your community?

- 1  Very serious
- 2  Somewhat serious
- 3  Not serious
- 4  No opinion

18. How concerned are you that the federal government's stricter immigration enforcement policies are causing fear and anxiety among children attending public schools in your community who may be threatened with deportation, or who have family members who are threatened with deportation?

- 1  Very concerned
- 2  Somewhat concerned
- 3  Not too concerned
- 4  Not at all concerned
- 5  No opinion

19. Do you favor or oppose the public schools in your community devoting more resources to supporting children whose family members are threatened with deportation? This could include providing counseling, trauma and mental health referrals, assistance in getting health care, translation or legal services.

- 1  Favor strongly
- 2  Favor somewhat
- 3  Oppose somewhat
- 4  Oppose strongly
- 5  No opinion

20. How important is it for the public schools to devote more funds to support the particular needs of the following types of students: (RANDOMIZE DISPLAY ORDER OF CATEGORIES)

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not important</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
a. gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
b. homeless students .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
c. special education students .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
d. English language learners .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
e. foster children .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

21. How much choice do you feel the following types of families have when deciding where to send their kids to school?

	<u>A lot of choices</u>	<u>Some choices</u>	<u>Not much choice</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
a. Upper income families .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
b. Middle income families .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
c. Low income families .....	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

22. Do you favor or oppose offering low-income parents government subsidies such as tax credits or vouchers that they could use to pay for tuition to send their kids to a private or religious school, if they don't like the public school choices available to their kids?

- 1  Favor strongly
- 2  Favor somewhat
- 3  Oppose somewhat
- 4  Oppose strongly
- 5  No opinion

23. Do you favor or oppose offering all parents, regardless of income, government subsidies such as tax credits or vouchers that they could use to pay for tuition to send their kids to a private or religious school, if they don't like the public school choices available to their kids?

- 1  Favor strongly
- 2  Favor somewhat
- 3  Oppose somewhat
- 4  Oppose strongly
- 5  No opinion

24. How important is it for California to offer more tuition assistance, loans, and other forms of financial aid to qualified students from low-income families to attend the state's public universities and colleges?

- 1  Very important
- 2  Somewhat important
- 3  Not important
- 4  No opinion

25. How important is it for California to offer more tuition assistance, loans, and other forms of financial aid to qualified students from middle-income families to attend the state's public universities and colleges?

- 1  Very important
- 2  Somewhat important
- 3  Not important
- 4  No opinion