**Findings from a nationwide survey of 1,000 likely 2022 voters
with oversamples of 100 African American, 100 Latinx, 100 AAPI, 100 Native American,
and 100 parents of school-age children who are likely 2022 voters**

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# Methodology

- Lake Research Partners and Chesapeake Beach Consulting designed and administered this survey that was conducted by phone from April 14 – 22, 2021. The survey reached a total of 1,000 likely 2022 voters nationwide with oversamples of 100 African American, 100 Latinx, 100 Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI), 100 Native American, and 100 parents of school-age children who are likely 2022 voters. The Native American and parents of school-aged children oversamples were completed online.

  - Of the phone completes, 432 interviews were completed using landlines, 543 were completed using cell phones, and 325 were completed using text-to-online.

  - Parents of school-age children are defined as those with children between the ages of 5 and 17 or who have children in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade.

  - Battleground voters throughout this report are defined as likely 2022 Senate battleground voters in the following states: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Florida, Iowa, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

- The sample for the base and African American, Latinx, and AAPI oversamples was drawn from listed clusters from TargetSmart and screened to be likely 2022 voters. The sample for the Native American and parents of school-aged children oversamples was drawn from an online panel and screened to be likely 2022 voters. The base sample was weighted slightly by region, age, race, race by gender, party identification, and education; the African American oversample was weighted slightly by age and education; the Latinx oversample was weighted slightly by gender, region, party identification, and education; the AAPI and Native American oversamples were weighted slightly by gender, region, age, party identification, and education; and the parents of school-aged children oversample was weighted slightly by gender, region, age, race, party identification, and education. All oversamples were then weighted down into the base to reflect their actual proportion of likely 2022 voters nationwide.

- The overall margin of error for the entire sample is +/- 3.1. The margin of error is higher among subgroups.

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# *Overall Summary Findings*

- **Voters are significantly more likely to have a positive view of public education when they think of schools locally as opposed to nationally.** They are also most likely to see their local school board as doing a good job on the issue of public education, as opposed to politicians at the state or national levels.

- **Learning loss among students is a huge issue for voters as we continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic,** and it is the biggest problem for nearly every subgroup we break out.

- Additionally, voters say **the top challenge their local public schools have faced during the pandemic is students having quality broadband and internet access at home to attend school online.**

- **Support for increased funding for public education is strong** and there is a political incentive for elected officials to support increased funding.

- **Voters are opposed to taking away taxpayer dollars from public education to go toward private school vouchers**, and there are political consequences for elected officials if they have supported this.

- **There is broad overall support for personalized learning and increasing access to internet and broadband;** support is especially elevated among African American and Latinx voters.

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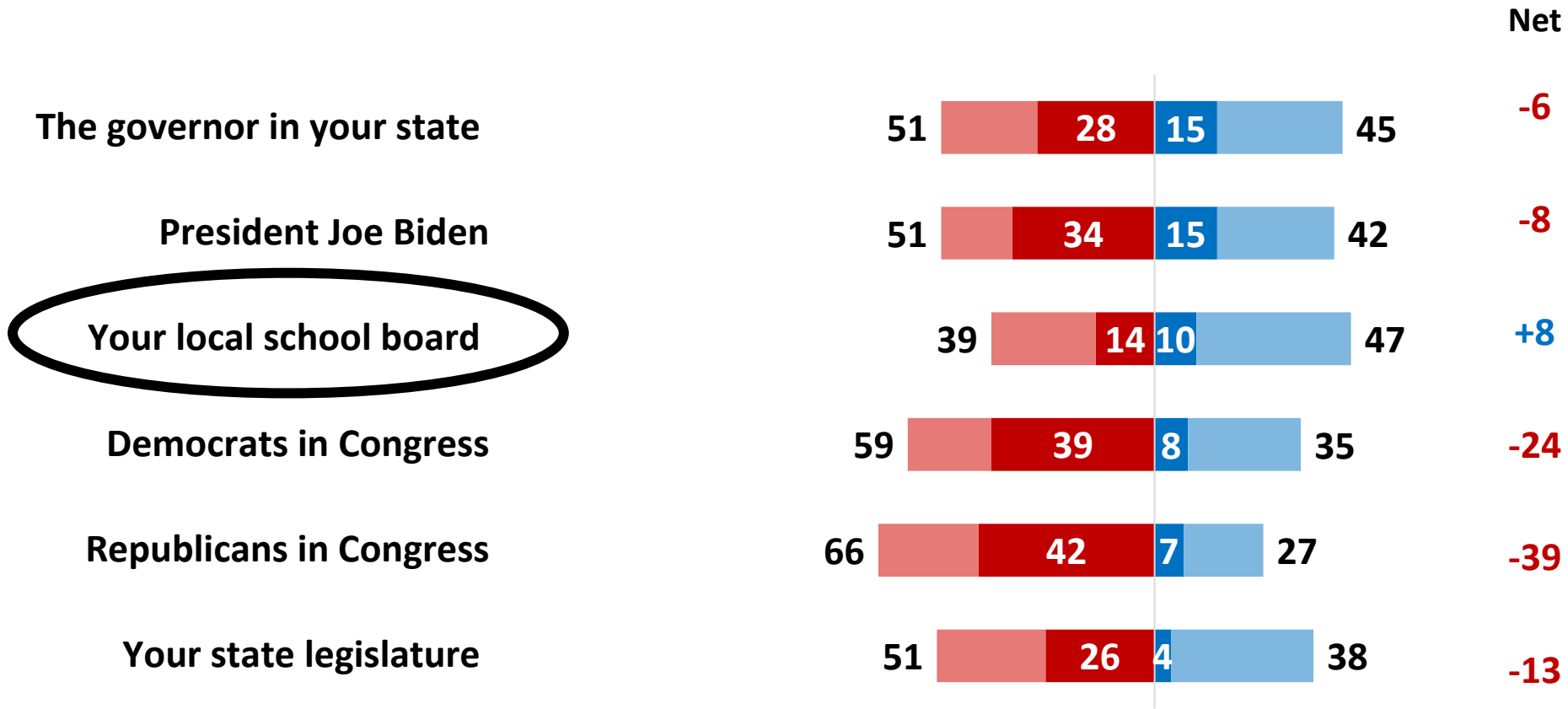
# *Current State of Public Education*

- A plurality (43%) of parents of school-aged children say their children are currently attending school in-person. A third (33%) say their children are attending school both online and in-person and 22% say they are attending school online through a video conferencing tool.

    - Those most likely to say their children are attending school in-person include battleground voters (52%), Republicans (59%), voters in rural areas (59%), and voters in the South (50%).

    - Independents (48%) and voters in urban areas (44%) are most likely to say their children are attending school both online and in-person.

    - African American voters (32%) and voters in the Northeast (31%) are most likely to say their children are attending school online.

- A solid plurality (46%) of parents say their children <u>do not</u> like attending school online and struggle with not being in a classroom setting. Sixteen (16) percent say their children like attending school online and benefit from the virtual platform at home. A quarter (25%) say their children like attending school in-person but benefit from the increased online content. About one-in-eight (13%) say online schooling does not have either a positive or negative impact on their children's experience attending school. Parents in both urban and rural areas are likely to say their children do not like attending school online.

Consistent with 2020 findings, voters are much more likely to rate the public schools in their own community positively than they are public schools nationally, although intensity is low.
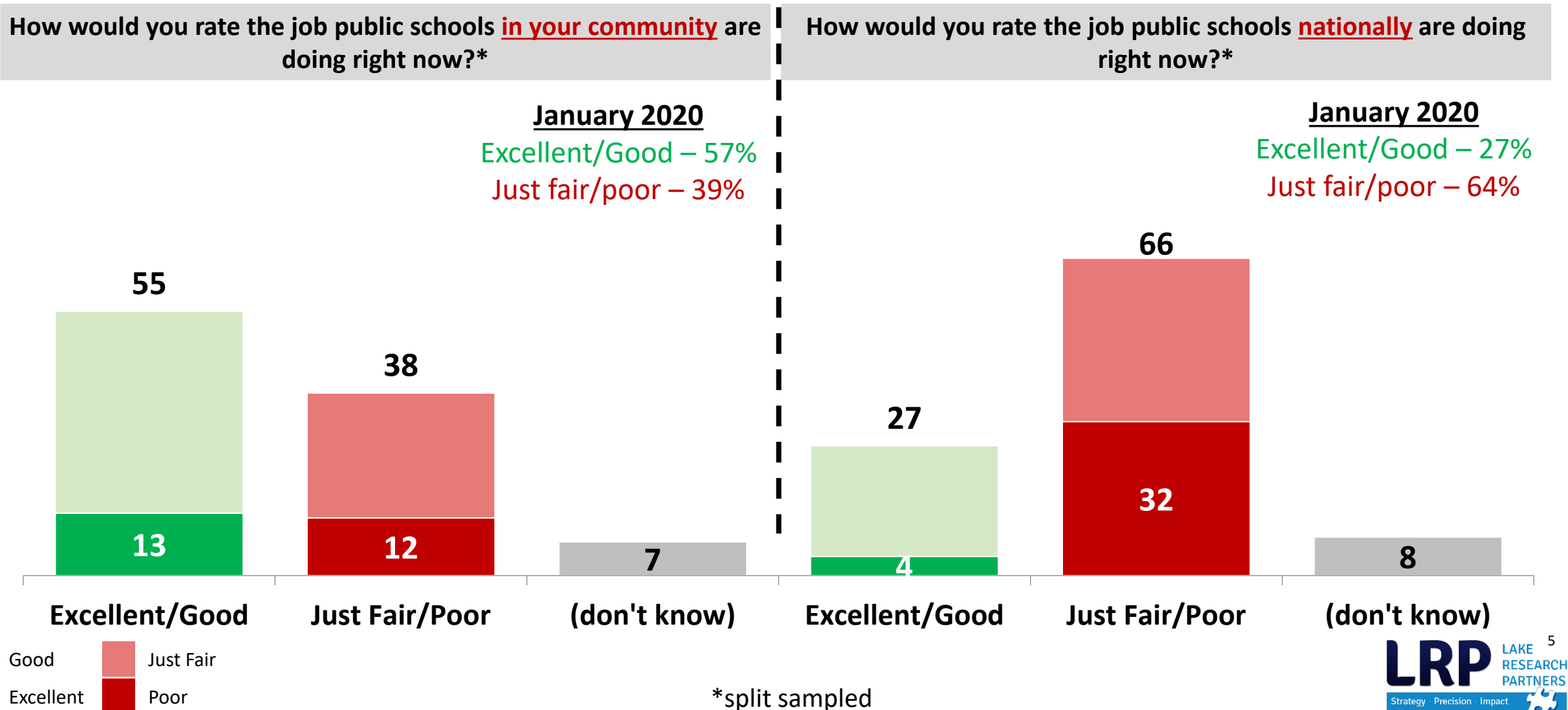
# Voters are most willing to say their local school board is either doing an excellent or good job on the issue of public education, although intensity is weak. Voters are net negative in their perception of national and state-level elected officials on the issue of public education, especially Democrats and Republicans in Congress.

Now let me read you a list of people and groups. For each one, please tell me if you think that person or group is doing an excellent, good, just fair, or poor job on the issue of public education.*

**Net**

| | | Net |
|---|---|---|
| The governor in your state | 51  28  15  45 | **-6** |
| President Joe Biden | 51  34  15  42 | **-8** |
| Your local school board | 39  14 10  47 | **+8** |
| Democrats in Congress | 59  39  8  35 | **-24** |
| Republicans in Congress | 66  42  7  27 | **-39** |
| Your state legislature | 51  26  4  38 | **-13** |

Good
Excellent
Just fair
Poor

*all entities split sampled

# *Education Priorities*

- Of the public education issues tested, voters are most likely to say that **learning loss among students due to the COVID-19 pandemic** and **not teaching real-world skills** are very big problems in public education today.

  - **Learning loss among students due to COVID-19 pandemic**: 65% very big problem, 88% say it is a problem; 51% extremely important that we address it, 83% say it is important. Voters across party identification see this as a very big problem including 61% of Democrats, 64% of Independents, and 71% of Republicans.

  - **Not teaching real-world skills**: 53% very big problem, 81% total problem; 45% extremely important that we address it, 80% say it is important.

- Nearly three-quarters of voters (74%) say **lack of personalized learning focused on individual needs** is a problem, including 38% who say it is a very big problem. Voters also see this as an important issue to address (32% say extremely important issue, 72% say either an extremely or very important issue).

- Though voters are less likely to see **ensuring public schools are safe** and the **lack of quality teachers** as very big problems in public education today, these issues rise to the top as being important to address.

  - **Ensure public schools are safe**: 54% say it is extremely important to address, 88% say it is important.

  - **Lack of quality teachers**: 48% say it is extremely important to address, 83% say it is important.

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# *Support for Increased Access to Internet and Broadband*

- **A solid majority of voters see lack of adequate broadband and internet access outside of school buildings as a problem –** 65% say it is a problem, including 34% who say it is a *very* big problem.
  - African American voters (47%), voters in the South (40%), and Democrats and Independents (40%) are most likely to say it is a *very* big problem. Sixty-two (62) percent of voters in rural areas see this as a problem and 38% see it as a *very* big problem.

- A solid majority of voters also see the lack of adequate broadband and internet access outside of school building as an important issue to address as well – 64% say it is important, including 33% who say it is *extremely* important to address.
  - African American voters (49%), Democrats (44%), Latinx voters (43%), and mothers of school-aged children (42%) are most likely to say it is an *extremely* important issue to address.

- Nearly four-in-five voters (79%) think it is either extremely (42%) or very (36%) important that **students have easier access to technology and broadband, both in school and out.**
  - Voters across demographics think it is important that students have easier access to technology and broadband by wide margins. Rural voters respond more strongly when technology and broadband are defined as "necessary for real-world learning."
  - Voters across party identification also think it is important that students have easier access to technology and broadband (89% of Democrats say it is either extremely or very important compared to 70% of Independents and 73% of Republicans). A straightforward ask without making the connection to real-world learning is stronger among Republicans.

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**Lack of broadband and internet access is both more of a problem for voters AND a more important issue to address in April 2021 than in January 2020, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Intensity has increased since 2020. Those more likely to see access to internet and broadband as a very big problem in 2021 include 2022 Senate battleground voters, voters over 50, voters in the South, Independents, college-educated voters, voters in rural areas, and parents of elementary-aged children.**



Lack of adequate broadband and internet access outside of school buildings*^

| Problem | | Important Issue to Address | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 |

Problem 2020: Problem 47 (19 intensity), Not a Problem 45 (26 intensity)
Problem 2021: Problem 65 (34 intensity), Not a Problem 26 (12 intensity)
Important Issue 2020: Important 50 (20 intensity), Not important 47 (12 intensity)
Important Issue 2021: Important 64 (33 intensity), Not important 32 (7 intensity)

*Darker colors indicate intensity*

*split sampled question
^In 2020, statement asked as "Lack of adequate internet access outside of school"

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# Challenges in the COVID-19 Environment

- The top challenge for local public school districts during the pandemic has been students having quality broadband and internet access at home to attend school online. African American voters (65%) and Democrats (52%) are most likely to say this has been very challenging.

**Students having quality broadband and internet access at home to attend school online**

28    12    39    66
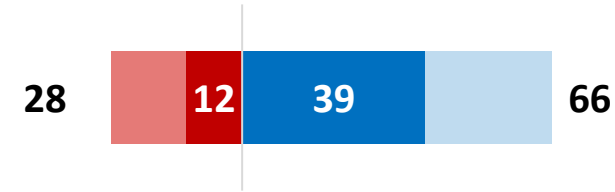
- Other top challenges voters say public schools have faced during the pandemic include: retaining teachers and preventing them from leaving the profession, teachers having access to adequate resources and support to effectively teach their students virtually, and students, teachers, and other school employees having access to counseling and mental health resources.

**Retaining teachers and preventing teachers from leaving the profession**

25    12    35    63

**Teachers having access to adequate resources and support to effectively teach their students virtually**

26    13    34    65

**Students having access to counseling and mental health resources**

25    13    34    64

**Teachers and other school employees having access to counseling and mental health resources**

25    12    33    59

Somewhat challenging    A little challenging

Very challenging    Not challenging at all

*All statements split sampled

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**Over three-quarters of voters say that the COVID-19 pandemic makes them think ensuring students have easier access to technology and broadband should be more of a priority, and half say it should be much more of a priority. Every demographic and political group think it should be more of a priority. Those most likely to say it should be much more of a priority include subgroups of Democrats and voters of color.**

Does the COVID-19 pandemic make you think that ensuring students have easier access to technology and broadband should be more of a priority, less of a priority, or does it not make a difference?
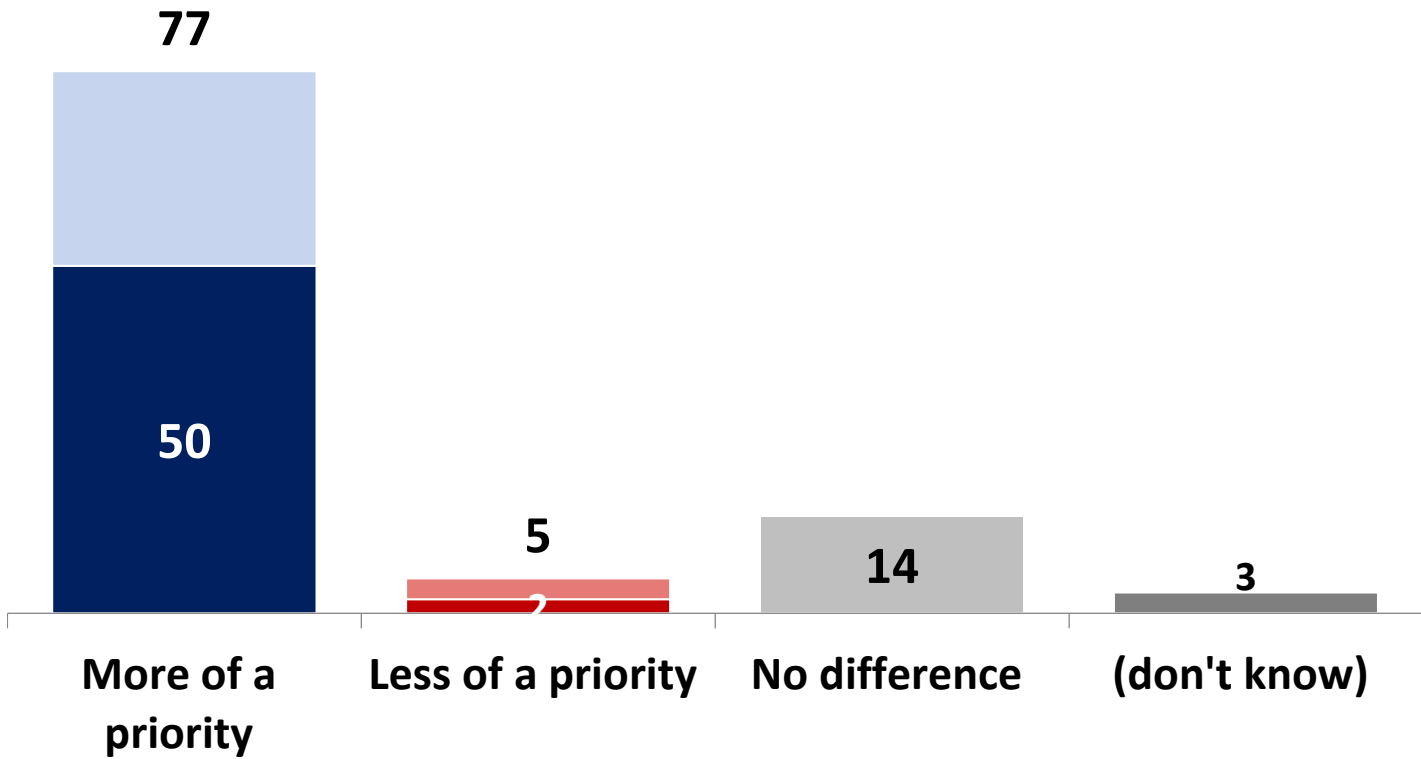


**Most likely to say much more of a priority (50%)**
- Strong Democrats – 73%
- College-educated Latinx voters – 69%
- Democratic women – 69%
- African American voters – 68%
- Parents of color – 66%
- Women of color – 64%

**Most likely to say no difference (14%)**
- Parents of children in private/religious schools – 29%
- Independent men – 26%
- Republican men – 25%
- West South Central residents – 25%
- Strong Republicans – 23%
- Residents who live in a rural area – 23%

Chart values: More of a priority = 77 (Much more 50), Less of a priority = 5 (2), No difference = 14, (don't know) = 3

Legend:
- Somewhat of a priority
- Much more of a priority
- Somewhat less of a priority
- Much less of a priority

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# *Support for Increased Funding*

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- **A solid majority (59%) of voters think funding for public schools should be increased.** Of those who believe it should be increased, more than eight-in-ten (86%) would support an increase in funding *even if it meant they would pay more in taxes*. Voters across demographics support increasing funding for public schools by wide margins – especially voters of color and Democrats.

- Over two-in-five voters (44%) are more likely to vote for an elected official if they support increasing funding for public schools. About one-third (34%) say it would not make a difference in their vote.

  - Probing a tax increase does increase opposition, but still more people would vote for the candidate who supports increased funding.

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When initially asked if they support allocating public taxpayer dollars to school vouchers which pay for students to attend private or religiously affiliated schools, a slim plurality (49%) of voters oppose and about two-in-five (42%) favor. Intensity is slightly higher in opposition to taxpayer dollars going to school vouchers.

Some states are considering allocating public taxpayer dollars to school vouchers, which pay for students to attend private or religiously affiliated schools. Do you favor or oppose states funding school vouchers like this?
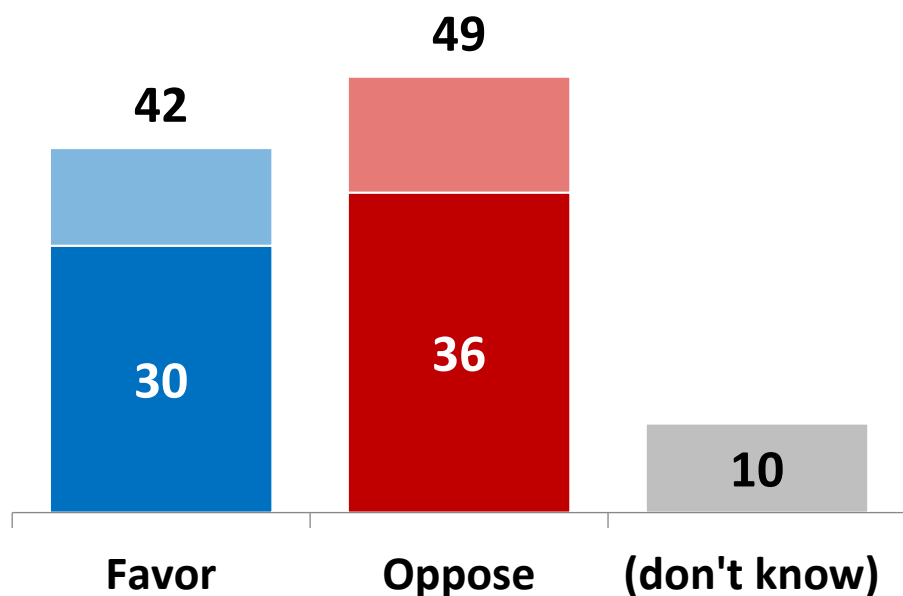
| | Favor | Oppose | Margin (oppose – favor) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Battleground Voters | 39 | 51 | +12 |
| Parent of School-Age | 44 | 44 | 0 |
| Men | 42 | 50 | +8 |
| Women | 42 | 47 | +6 |
| Under 50 | 42 | 48 | +6 |
| Over 50 | 42 | 49 | +8 |
| College | 42 | 52 | +10 |
| Non-College | 42 | 46 | +4 |
| White | 42 | 49 | +6 |
| Black | 32 | 56 | +24 |
| Latinx | 38 | 50 | +11 |
| AAPI | 30 | 52 | +22 |
| Native American | 48 | 45 | -3 |
| Democrat | 22 | 69 | +47 |
| Independent | 44 | 45 | +1 |
| Republican | 63 | 28 | -35 |
| Urban | 40 | 50 | +10 |
| Suburban | 40 | 49 | +9 |
| Rural | 45 | 47 | +1 |

Favor: 42 (30)
Oppose: 49 (36)
(don't know): 10

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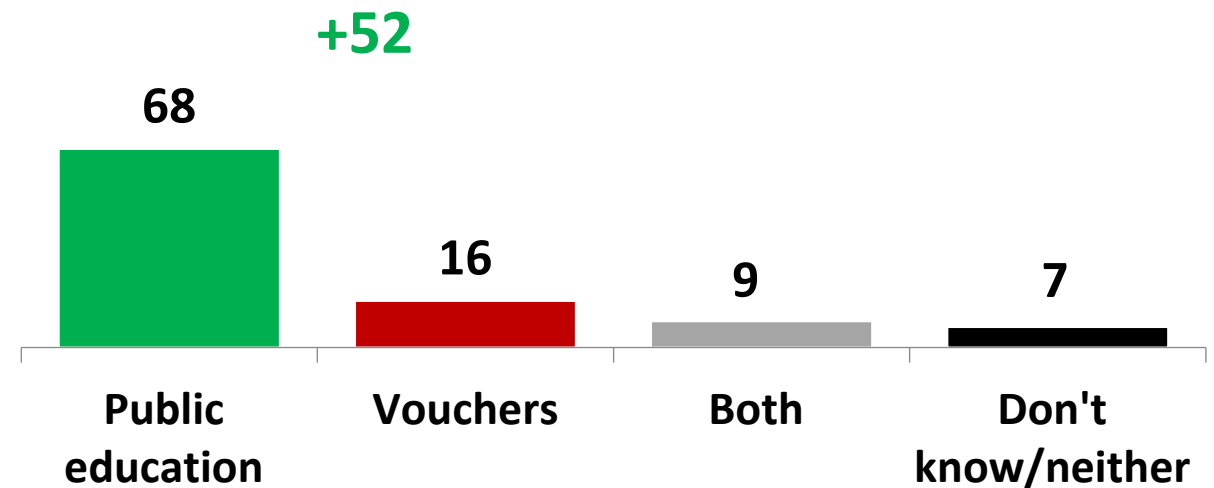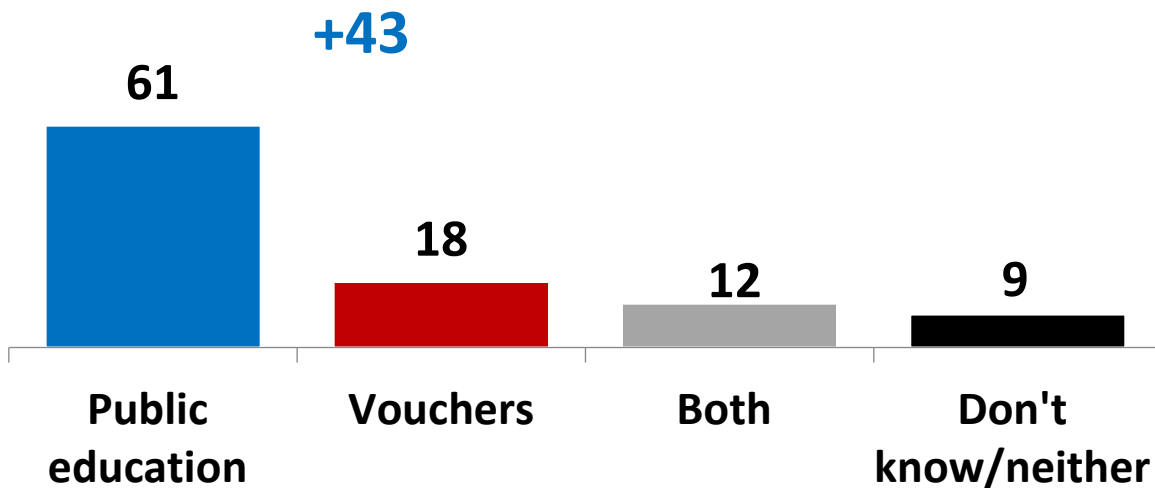Strategy · Precision · Impact

# When asked if taxpayer dollars are better spent on school vouchers OR improving public education, voters overwhelmingly agree it is better to allocate funds to improving public education and schools.

Do you think taxpayer dollars are better spent on…*

School vouchers that allow public dollars to pay for private or religiously affiliated schools?

| Improving public education and schools | Improving public education and schools so all children have access to a quality education |
|---|---|

**+43**

61
18
12
9

**+52**

68
16
9
7

| Public education | Vouchers | Both | Don't know/neither | Public education | Vouchers | Both | Don't know/neither |

*split sampled question

14

# *School Vouchers*

- **There are political consequences if an elected official comes out in favor of taking taxpayer dollars away from public schools to put toward funding vouchers.** Half (50%) of voters are <u>less</u> likely to vote for an elected official who supports taking taxpayer dollars away from public schools to put toward funding vouchers that help parents pay to send their children to private or religiously affiliated schools (35% say they are <u>much less</u> likely).

  - Those who are least likely to support an elected official who supports vouchers include voters in 2022 Senate battleground states (less likely – more likely margin: +32), African American voters (+45), AAPI voters (+36), Democrats (+61), and voters in urban areas (+34).

- Maintaining funding for public education is a core value for voters and they are willing to hold an elected official accountable if they come out in favor of taking funds away from public education to put toward vouchers.

# Demographics of Likely 2022 Voters

## GENDER

46%   54%
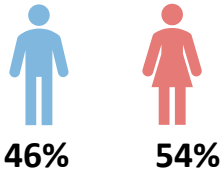
## AGE

| | |
|---|---|
| Under 30 | 14% |
| 30-39 | 15% |
| 40-49 | 15% |
| 50-64 | 25% |
| 65+ | 27% |

## CHILDREN UNDER 18

| | |
|---|---|
| Yes | 28% |
| Yes – school-aged | 24% |
| No | 71% |

## AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD

| | |
|---|---|
| 0-4 years | 25% |
| 5-12 years | 45% |
| 13-17 years | 29% |
| (don't know) | 1% |

## RACE/ETHNICITY

| | |
|---|---|
| White | 74% |
| Black | 9% |
| Latinx | 8% |
| Asian/Pacific Isl. | 3% |
| Native American | 2% |
| Middle Eastern | 1% |
| (other) | 3% |
| (don't know/ref) | 2% |

## MARITAL STATUS

| | |
|---|---|
| Married | 56% |
| Unmarried w/ partner | 5% |
| Single | 16% |
| Separated/Divorced | 8% |
| Widowed | 8% |

## GRADE LEVEL OF CHILDREN

| | |
|---|---|
| Pre-K | 17% |
| K - 5th grade | 47% |
| 6th - 8th grade | 29% |
| 9th - 12th grade | 30% |
| (not in school yet) | 8% |

## EDUCATION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1-11th grade | 2% | |
| HS/GED | 12% | |
| Vocational or Technical | 4% | **54%** |
| Some College | 21% | |
| Associate Degree | 15% | |
| 4-year/Bachelor's | 24% | **43%** |
| Grad or Advanced Degree | 19% | |

## TYPE OF SCHOOL

| | |
|---|---|
| Public school | 77% |
| Public charter | 6% |
| Public magnet | 2% |
| Private school | 10% |
| Parochial/religious | 3% |
| Home school | 6% |

## AREA LIVE IN

| | |
|---|---|
| Urban | 39% |
| Suburban | 27% |
| Rural | 30% |

## PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Democrat 41%

Independent 13%

Republican 37%
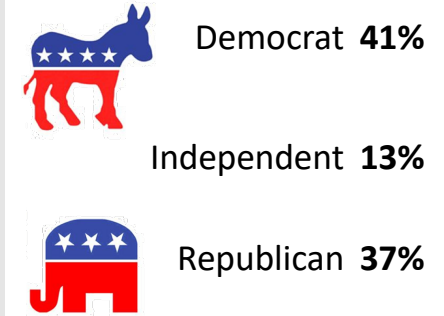
## REGION

| | |
|---|---|
| New England | 5% |
| Middle Atlantic | 12% |
| East North Central | 16% |
| West North Central | 7% |
| South Atlantic | 21% |
| East South Central | 6% |
| West South Central | 9% |
| Mountain | 8% |
| Pacific | 16% |

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