

TEXAS

K-12 & SCHOOL CHOICE SURVEY

What do voters say about
K-12 education?

Polling Paper No. 14

Paul **DiPerna**

APRIL 2013

With questions on state performance, education spending, grades and preferences for different types of schools, and views on charter schools, parent trigger policy, tax-credit scholarships, education savings accounts, school vouchers

The Friedman Foundation
for Educational Choice
edchoice.org



Survey Project & Profile

Title:	Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey
Survey Organization:	Braun Research, Inc. (BRI)
Survey Sponsor:	The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice
Release Partner:	Texas Public Policy Foundation
Interview Dates:	March 19 to 27, 2013
Interview Method:	Live Telephone 70% landline and 30% cell phone
Interview Length:	12 minutes (average)
Language(s):	English, Spanish
Sample Frame:	Registered Voters
Sampling Method:	Dual Frame; Probability Sampling; Random Digit Dial (RDD)
Population Samples:	TEXAS = 613 Dallas-Ft. Worth = 185 Houston = 143
Margins of Error:	TEXAS = ± 4.0 percentage points Dallas-Ft. Worth = ± 7.2 percentage points Houston = ± 8.2 percentage points
Response Rates:	Landline (LL) = 13.0% Cell Phone = 11.9%
Weighting?	Yes (Age, Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Region, and Landline/Cell)
Oversampling?	No

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The author is responsible for overall polling design; question wording and ordering; this paper's analysis, charts, and writing; and any unintentional errors or misrepresentations.

Survey Demographics

Percent (%) of State Sample	
K-12 Parent	34
Democrat	30
Republican	29
Independent	26
Urban	27
Suburban	33
Small Town	24
Rural	15
18 to 24	14
25 to 34	17
35 to 44	19
45 to 54	20
55 to 64	15
65 & Over	15
Hispanic	27
Not Hispanic	73
Asian	3
Black	13
Mixed Race	2
Native American	1
White	76
Catholic	29
Jewish	0
Mormon	1
Muslim	1
Protestant	39
Other	14
None	14
Under \$20,000	13
\$20,000 to \$39,999	19
\$40,000 to \$59,999	14
\$60,000 to \$79,999	12
\$80,000 to \$99,999	9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	14
\$150,000 or more	8
< HS Graduate	9
HS Graduate	20
Tech, Trade, Vocational	3
Some College	26
≥ College	42
Male	50
Female	50

April 23, 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

5	Texas's K-12 Profile
7	Overview
8	Key Findings
18	Survey Snapshots
44	Methods Summary
44	<i>Sample Design</i>
45	<i>Contact Procedures</i>
46	<i>Call Dispositions and Response Rates</i>
47	<i>Weighting Procedures and Analysis</i>
48	About Us, Acknowledgements
52	Survey Questions & Results

Texas's K-12 Profile

Average State Rank on NAEP ¹	26
High School Graduation Rate ²	78.9%
# Regular Public School Students ³	4,779,980
# Charter School Students ⁴	155,735
# Private School Students ⁵	213,581
% Regular Public School Students ⁶	92.8%
% Charter School Students ⁶	3.0%
% Private School Students ⁶	4.1%
# School Districts ⁷	1,031
# Regular Public Schools ³	8,697
# Charter Schools ⁴	594
# Private Schools ⁵	1,365
Online Learning Climate ⁸	Weak
% Free and Reduced-Price Lunch ⁷	50%
% Individualized Education Program (IEP) ⁷	9%
% English Language Learners (ELL) ⁷	15%
\$ Revenue Per Student ⁹	\$10,318
\$ "Total" Per Student Spending ⁹	\$11,100
\$ "Current" Per Student Spending ⁹	\$8,788
\$ "Instructional" Per Student Spending ⁹	\$5,308

Texas Profile Notes

1. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Average of four rankings (rounded upward to nearest single digit) based on 2011 state scale scores for fourth-grade reading (#36); fourth-grade math (#24); eighth-grade reading (#36); eighth-grade math (#10).
URL: nationsreportcard.gov/data_tools.asp
2. Reported high school graduation rates, determined by the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) on the National Center for Education Statistics section on the U.S. Department of Education website. Data for 2009-2010 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013309/tables/table_01.asp
3. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD). Data for the 2010-2011 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch
4. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD). Data for the 2010-2011 school year. This represents a low estimate for charter school enrollment. Data obtained for only 513 out of 594 charter schools.
URL: nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch
5. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey (PSS). Data for 2009–2010 school year. This count excludes schools with less than 5 students.
URL: nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/privateschoolsearch
6. Percentages are meant for general impressions only. Due to rounding, percentage totals may be slightly greater or less than 100%.
7. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD). Data for the 2010-2011 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states
8. Author rating (Weak, Moderate, or Strong), based on John Watson, Amy Murin, Lauren Vashaw, Butch Gemin, and Chris Rapp, *Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning: An Annual Review of State-Level Policy and Practice*, (Evergreen Education Group, 2012), Table 1, p. 15.
URL: kpk12.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/KeepingPace2012.pdf
9. Stephen Q. Cornman, Jumaane Young, and Kenneth C. Herrell, Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2009–10 (Fiscal Year 2010) (NCES 2013-305). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics (November 2012).
URL: nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013305.pdf

Overview

The “Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey” project, commissioned by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (BRI), measures Texas registered voters’ familiarity and views on a range of K-12 education topics and school choice reforms. We report response levels and differences of voter opinion, as well as the intensity of those responses.

Where do Texans stand on important issues and policy proposals in K-12 education? We try to provide some brief observations and insights in this memo.

A randomly selected and statistically representative sample of Texas voters recently responded to 20 substantive questions and 11 demographic questions. A total of 613 telephone interviews were conducted in English and Spanish from March 19 to 27, 2013, by means of both landline and cell phone. Statistical results were weighted to correct for known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the statewide sample is ± 4.0 percentage points.

In this project we also included one split-sample experiment. A split-sample design is a systematic way of comparing the effects of two or more alternative wordings for a given question. In this case, the purpose is to see if providing a new piece of information about education spending can significantly influence opinion on the topic — a salient issue in Texas’s state politics and representing an undercurrent in education policy discussions.

Our polling paper has four sections. The first section summarizes key findings. We call the second section “Survey Snapshots,” which offers charts highlighting the core findings of the project. The third section describes the survey’s methodology, summarizes response statistics, and presents additional technical information on call dispositions for landline and cell phone interviews. The fourth section displays the survey questions and results (“topline numbers”), allowing the reader to follow the interview as it was conducted, with respect to question wording and ordering.

Key Findings

- ▶ **Nearly three out of four registered voters in Texas (74%) are paying attention to issues in K-12 education. Roughly one-quarter of voters (25%) said they pay “very little” or no attention.**

See Question 1

Voters who said they pay “a lot” of attention (45%) to K-12 education issues outnumber those who said they pay no attention (9%) by five-to-one.

Parents of school-age children are clearly engaged.¹ About half of parents (64%) in the survey said they pay “a lot” of attention to education issues, a figure that is nearly twice as large as the proportion of non-parents (35%) giving the same response.

Middle-age voters (ages 35 to 54) pay closer attention to these issues than younger voters (age 18 to 34) and older voters (age 55 or older). About 55% of middle-age voters are engaged on K-12 education issues, saying they pay “a lot” of attention. By comparison, 32% of younger voters and 44% of older voters indicated the same level of interest.

- ▶ **Texans are significantly more likely to think that K-12 education has gotten off on the “wrong track” (55%), compared to the one-third of voters (33%) who say it is heading in the “right direction.”**

See Question 2

Among the observed demographic groups, parents of children who are out of high school (60%), Independents (65%), middle-age voters (59%), and older voters (63%) are the most likely to hold a negative view on the direction of K-12

¹ For this paper, the term “Parents” refers to those respondents who said they have one or more children in preschool through high school. “Non-Parents” may have children, but none are in this specific grade range.

education in Texas. Younger voters are relatively more optimistic, but still less than half (43%) say things are moving in the “right direction.”

- ▶ **More than half of respondents give negative marks to the state’s public school system (54% said “fair” or “poor”; 42% said “good” or “excellent”).**

See Question 3

Republican responses are significantly different than both Democrats and Independents. The Republicans are clearly more positive in their views. Greater than half of Democrats (58%) and Independents (62%) gave negative ratings to the state’s system for public schools, greater than the proportion of Republicans (42%) saying the same. Conversely, 38% of Democrats and 36% of Independents described the public school system as “good” or “excellent.” But a solid majority of Republicans (55%) offered positive ratings.

In terms of ideology, liberal responses differ from conservatives. Almost seven out of ten liberals (66%) gave negative ratings, which is greater than the proportion of conservatives (47%) saying the same. Conversely, 28% of liberals described the public school system as “good” or “excellent.” But a significantly higher proportion of conservatives (49%) offered these positive ratings. Political moderates were not significantly distinguishable from either ideology.

One other demographic stands out. Younger voters (50%) are more likely to have a positive view of the public school system, compared to middle-age voters and older voters (38% each). Nearly six out of ten middle-age voters (58%) and older voters (59%) give the public school system a negative rating.

- ▶ **Based on open-end survey responses, Texas voters do not know how much is spent per student in the public schools. There is very low awareness about public spending on K-12 education.**

See Question 4

Approximately \$8,788 is spent on each student in Texas’s public schools, and only 10% of respondents could estimate the correct per-student spending range for the state (this dollar figure reflects “current expenditures” per student).

Nearly 49% of respondents thought that \$8,000 or less is being spent per student in the state’s public schools. Another 27% of voters said they “don’t know” and did not offer a spending number.

When considering “total expenditures” per student (\$11,100 in 2009-2010), which is another definition for educational spending, voter estimates appear even more dramatically off-target.²

Fully three-quarters of the survey respondents (75%) either underestimated educational spending per student (for either definition), or they could not give an answer or guess. No matter how one defines expenditures (per student), voters are poorly uninformed about how money is spent on K-12 education.

- ▶ **When given the latest per-student spending information, voters are significantly less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is “too low,” compared to answering without having such information.**

See Questions 5A and 5B

In an experiment, we asked two slightly different questions about the level of public school funding in Texas. On version 5A, 52% of voters said that public school funding is “too low.” However, on version 5B, which included a sentence

² “Current Expenditures” data include dollars spent on instruction, instruction-related support services, and other elementary/secondary current expenditures, but exclude expenditures on long-term debt service, facilities and construction, and other programs. “Total Expenditures” includes the latter categories.

See Stephen Q. Cornman, Jumaane Young, and Kenneth C. Herrell, *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2009–10 (Fiscal Year 2010)* (NCES 2013-305). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics (November 2012). URL: nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013305.pdf

referring to data on per-student funding in Texas (\$8,788), the proportion of voters saying “too low” shrank by eleven percentage points to 41%, effectively a 21% reduction.

It seems that voters are likely to change their views on public school funding—at least for those who believe it is “too low”—if given accurate per-student spending information. This implication that opinion can turn on a single piece of data is important when considering political sound bites that focus on aggregate levels of public spending rather than how the money is allocated and spent per student.

- ▶ **Voters are much more likely to give grades A or B to private/parochial schools in their local areas, compared to regular public schools and charter schools. When considering only those respondents who offered a grade, private schools (82% give an A or B) fare even better than regular public schools (50% give an A or B).**

See Questions 6A and 6B

Approximately 64% of voters give an A or B to local private/parochial schools, while 48% give an A or B to regular public schools and 45% give an A or B to charter schools. Only 5% of voters give a D or F grade to private schools. Slightly more give low marks to charters (8%). This figure jumps a bit to 18% for public schools. It should be noted that a higher proportion of voters did not express a view for private schools (23%) or charter schools (33%), compared to the proportion that did not grade public schools (4%).

Voters are nearly 2.5 times more likely to give an A to private/parochial schools (33%) compared to the proportion of responses giving an A to public schools (14%).

- ▶ **When asked for a preferred school type, 47% of Texans would choose a private school first. A regular public school option is the second-most frequently cited preference (34%). There is a disconnect**

between voters' school preferences and actual enrollment patterns in the state. Voters show a diverse range of schooling preferences.

See Questions 7 and 8

Approximately 4% of Texas's K-12 student population attend private schools, but in our survey interviews, 47% of respondents would select a private school as a first option. About 93% of the state's students attend regular public schools, but a much lower percentage of voters (34%) would choose a regular public school as a first choice. Approximately 3% of Texan students attend a charter school, but more than twice that proportion in our survey (8%) would like to send their child to a charter school. Another 8% of all voters said he/she would opt to homeschool their child.

In a follow-up question, respondents in our survey prioritize "better education/quality" (13%) as the key attribute they are looking for in the selection of their preferred school. The second-most cited attribute is a statistical tie among "class size," "individual attention," "academics/curriculum," and "teachers." (each response garnering about 9% of the overall total) Some caution is warranted when analyzing this item in the questionnaire. These characteristics appear to be a higher priority over others on the list. However, any of these qualities may or may not attract more urgency as a second or third priority, which we do not explore in this survey.

- ▶ **Texas voters are much more likely to favor charter schools (63%), rather than oppose such schools (22%). The net support for charter schools is large (+41 percentage points). Approximately 42% of voters say they are familiar with charter schools.**

See Questions 9 and 10

Texas registered very large positive net support (+41 points) favoring charter schools. The intensity is also positive (+16 points). In other words, voters are more likely to say they "strongly favor" charter schools (25%) compared to those who said they "strongly oppose" (9%) such schools.

When looking at various demographics, there are very few discernible differences among groups. Nearly all groups show at least 60% support for charter schools, the lone exceptions being parents with children past high school (59%) and low-income voters (57%). The groups most likely to favor charters are voters living in Dallas/Ft. Worth (68%), conservatives (67%), suburbanites (66%), middle-income voters (68%), high-income voters (67%), and Latinos (68%). The groups more inclined to oppose charters are parents whose children are small-town voters (29%), Democrats (30%), and liberals (31%).³

The most intense support for charter schools is found among Republicans, conservatives, and middle-age voters. The least intensity of support comes from Democrats.

Roughly 15% of voters did not express an opinion about charter schools.

- ▶ **Voters overwhelmingly support the policy of “tax-credit scholarships.” The percentage of those who favor (72%) is more than triple the number of people who say they oppose such a school choice reform (20%).**

See Questions 11 and 12

The net support is very large, roughly +52 percentage points. Likewise, the intensity of support is strong (+30 points) – more than three times as many respondents (43%) say they “strongly favor” tax-credit scholarships, compared to those who “strongly oppose” (13%).

There is majority support for tax-credit scholarships across all observed demographics. Support does not dip below 63% for any group. The observed demographic groups who are most likely to favor the policy include those living in

³ For this paper, “low-income” refers to respondents with annual household incomes less than \$40,000; “middle-income” refers to respondents with annual household incomes at least equal to \$40,000 but less than \$80,000; “high-income” refers to respondents with annual household incomes at least equal to or greater than \$80,000.

the Houston area (79%), Republicans (84%), conservatives (81%), young voters (78%), middle-income voters (77%), and Latinos (79%). Those groups that are more likely to oppose include parents whose children are past high school (27%), Independents (26%), liberals (29%), and older voters (26%).

Generally speaking, there is intense support across all observed demographics. Republicans, conservatives, and Latinos show the most intense support for tax-credit scholarships.

Eight percent of respondents did not express an opinion.

In a follow-up and open-ended question, we asked for the reason why a respondent chose his/her view regarding school vouchers. Most frequently, he/she said some combination of “choice,” “freedom,” or “flexibility.” Nearly one-fifth of the respondents (18%) mentioned one or more of these terms.

► **Voters clearly prefer universal access to tax-credit scholarships, compared to eligibility that is based solely on financial need.**

See Questions 13 and 14

Nearly three out of four voters (74%) said they agree with the statement that “tax-credit scholarships should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs.” Greater than half of respondents (55%) “strongly agree” with this statement. About two out of 10 (23%) disagree with this statement; 12% said they “strongly disagree.”

Close to four out of 10 Texas voters (38%) said they agree with the statement that “tax-credit scholarships should only be available to families based on financial need.” Approximately 21% of all respondents “strongly agree” with this statement. More than half (58%) said they disagree with means-testing school tax-credit scholarships, and 34% said they “strongly disagree.”

- ▶ **Texas voters support an “education savings account” system (called an “ESA”). The percentage of those who favor ESAs (61%) is much greater than the proportion who say they oppose this type of public policy (29%). The net support is substantial (+32 points), and the intensity is positive (+17 points).**

See Question 15

Among observed demographics, support is highest among parents (71%), small town voters (70%), younger voters (68%), high-income voters (70%), and Latinos (72%). The groups that expressed the greatest opposition to ESAs are parents whose children are past high school (35%), rural voters (37%), and older voters (37%).

Ten percent of respondents did not express an opinion about ESAs.

- ▶ **Nearly two out of three Texans (66%) said they support school vouchers, compared to just 27% of voters who said they oppose such a school choice system. The margin of support is almost ten times the survey’s margin of error: +39 percentage points. Approximately 39% of respondents said they were at least somewhat familiar with school vouchers.**

See Questions 16 and 17

The intensity for vouchers is positive (33% “strongly favor” vs. 18% “strongly oppose”). Most likely to support vouchers are Houston voters (71%), parents (70%), urban voters (71%), small town voters (71%), younger voters (74%), low-income voters (71%), and Latinos (80%). Despite general positive support across groups, there are several groups that are significantly more inclined to oppose vouchers, including parents whose children are past high school (38%), rural voters (34%), and older voters (38%).

There is some variation when it comes to the intensity of support for school vouchers. The most intense support comes from parents of children in preschool

through high school, low-income voters, and Latinos. Older voters are the least enthusiastic about vouchers.

Nearly 7% of respondents did not express an opinion about school vouchers.

- ▶ **A parent trigger policy garners solid support in Texas. Close to 56% of Texas voters favor some form of parent trigger accountability, compared to 31% of voters who said they oppose the idea. The net support is +25 percentage points, and the positive intensity is +10 points. About 13% of respondents did not express an opinion.**

See Questions 18 and 20

The demographic groups most likely to support a parent trigger option are parents (63%), suburban voters (66%), middle-age voters (61%), and middle-income voters (64%). A couple groups in particular appear more inclined than others to oppose a parent trigger policy: parents whose children are past high school (37%) and rural voters (41%).

Parents of children in preschool through high school, self-identified liberals, and suburbanites show the most enthusiasm for the parent trigger. A number of groups show about the same tepid support for this policy, including: non-parents, urban voters, older voters, low-income voters, and Latinos.

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked “if the state designated a public school as ‘low-performing’ or ‘failing,’ who do you feel should be held most responsible” for the designation. Voters were split. Most were inclined to assign fault with either the district superintendent and administration (28%) or the school board (25%). One out of five voters (20%) said the school’s principal and administration. Just 15% indicated teachers were most responsible.

- ▶ **When considering the various actions that could occur from a parent trigger policy, more than one-third of voters (37%) said that offering a**

voucher or scholarship (to enroll in another school) was the best form of accountability action to serve affected students and families.

See Question 19

About one out of three Texans preferred offering vouchers or scholarships to students. The next two accountability actions were a statistical tie between dismissing and replacing the principal, staff, or teachers (22%) and converting the school into a public charter school (18%). Only 8% of voters expressed a preference for closing a school and relocating enrolled students.

The demographic groups most likely to support a “voucher/scholarship option” are Dallas-Ft. Worth voters (47%), parents of children in PK-12 (41%), non-parents (42%), urban voters (49%), low-income voters (45%), and Latinos (48%).

Compared to others, the groups relatively more likely to support dismissal and replacement of school staff are suburban voters (28%) and rural voters (27%).

Houston voters (24%) and younger voters (23%) stated the highest levels of support for converting a low-performing school into charter school.

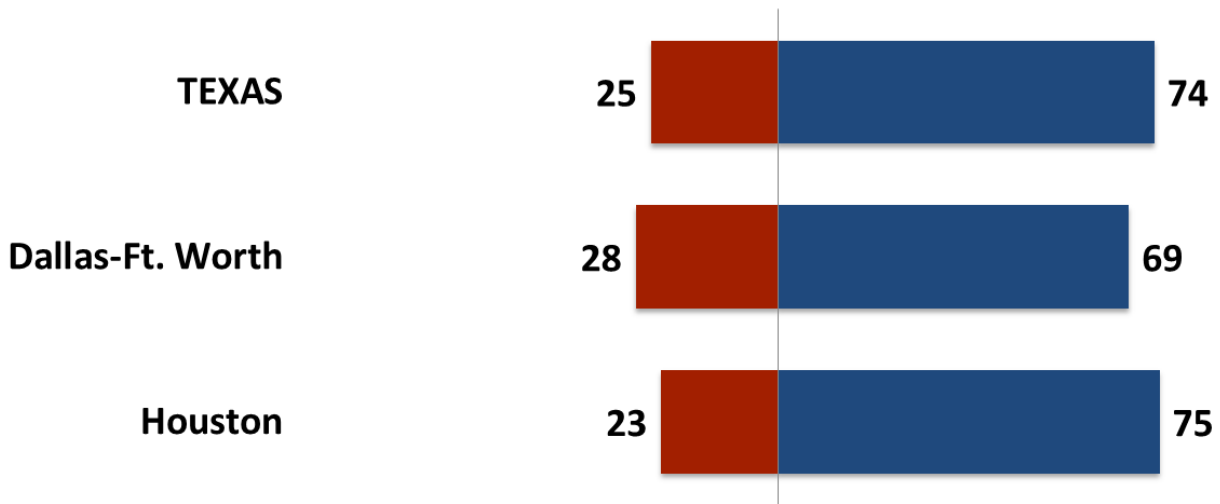
About 16% of respondents did not express a preference.



Survey Snapshots

Q1. How much attention do you pay to issues involving K-12 education?

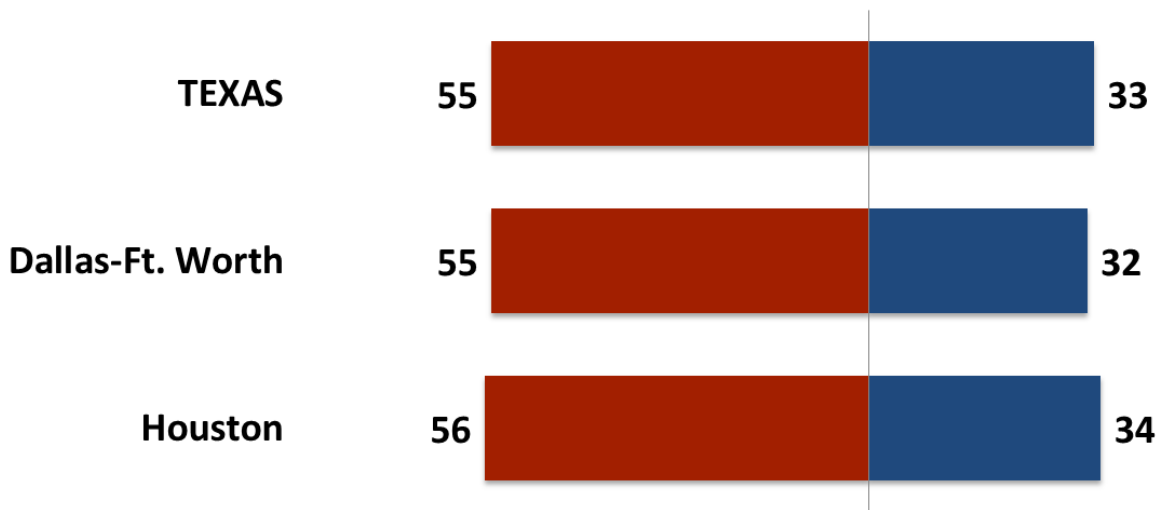
■ Very Little/None ■ Some/A Lot



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q1.*

Q2. Do you feel things in Texas's K-12 education system are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

■ Wrong Track ■ Right Direction



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q2.*

Q2. Do you feel things in Texas’s K-12 education system are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

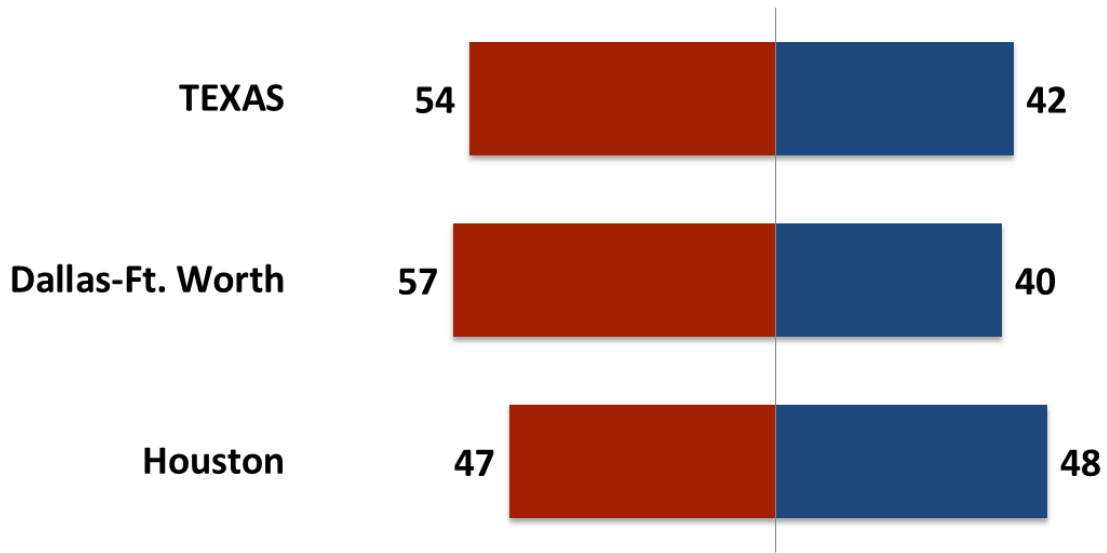
	Right Direction %	Wrong Track %	Net	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	33	55	- 22	613
Parent	30	58	- 28	209
Non-Parent	35	53	- 18	402
COMMUNITY				
Urban	35	57	- 22	165
Suburban	31	55	- 24	204
Small Town	37	50	- 13	146
Rural	30	55	- 25	92
PARTY ID				
Democrat	38	50	- 12	181
Republican	36	49	- 13	176
Independent	26	65	- 39	161
IDEOLOGY				
Liberal	38	56	- 18	95
Conservative	34	53	- 19	252
Moderate	34	54	- 20	227
AGE GROUP				
18 to 34	43	41	+ 2	189
35 to 54	30	59	- 29	237
55 & Over	28	63	- 35	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Under \$40,000	37	55	- 18	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	37	53	- 16	158
\$80,000 & Over	27	58	- 31	192
RACE/ETHNICITY				
Black	52	41	+ 11	77
Hispanic	35	53	- 18	167
White	27	60	- 33	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q2.

Q3. How would you rate Texas's public school system?

Fair/Poor Good/Excellent



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q3.

Q3. How would you rate Texas's public school system?

	Good/Excellent %	Fair/Poor %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	42	54	- 12	- 6	613
Parent	44	53	- 9	- 1	209
Non-Parent	41	55	- 14	- 8	402
COMMUNITY					
Urban	37	59	- 22	- 12	165
Suburban	42	53	- 11	- 7	204
Small Town	50	49	+ 1	+ 4	146
Rural	40	58	- 18	- 6	92
PARTY ID					
Democrat	38	58	- 20	- 2	181
Republican	55	42	+ 13	+ 1	176
Independent	36	62	- 26	- 16	161
IDEOLOGY					
Liberal	28	66	- 38	- 13	95
Conservative	49	47	+ 2	+ 2	252
Moderate	40	56	- 16	- 6	227
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	50	45	+ 5	+ 5	189
35 to 54	38	58	- 20	- 10	237
55 & Over	38	59	- 21	- 13	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	41	55	- 14	- 7	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	40	55	- 15	- 3	158
\$80,000 & Over	40	57	- 17	- 8	192
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Black	37	61	- 24	- 3	77
Hispanic	46	54	- 8	even	167
White	41	54	- 13	- 11	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the combined percentages of "fair" and "poor" responses from the combined percentages of "good" and "excellent" responses. The difference indicates the enthusiasm behind the positive or negative ratings.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q3.

Q4. How much do you think is spent per year on each student in Texas's public schools? Your estimate (to the nearest thousand dollars) will represent the combined expenditures of local, state, and federal governments.

- Less Than \$4,000
- \$4,001 - \$8,000
- \$8,001 - \$12,000
- \$12,001 - \$16,000
- Over \$16,000



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q4.*

Q5. (Split A) Do you believe that public school funding in Texas is at a level that is:

- Too High
- About Right
- Too Low



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q5A.*

Q5. (Split B) According to the most recent information available, in Texas \$8,788 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in Texas is at a level that is:

- Too High
- About Right
- Too Low

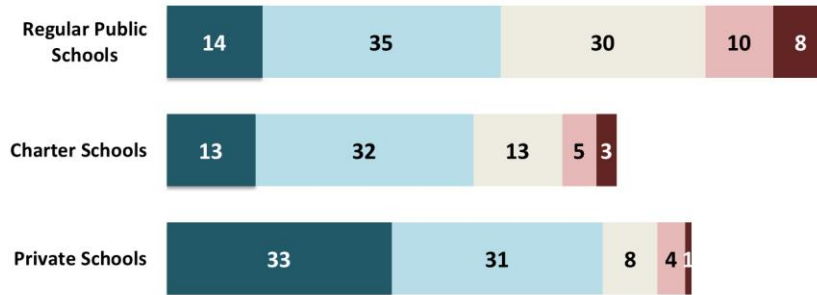


FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q5B.*

Q6. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...



(% of all responses)



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q6.

Q6. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...



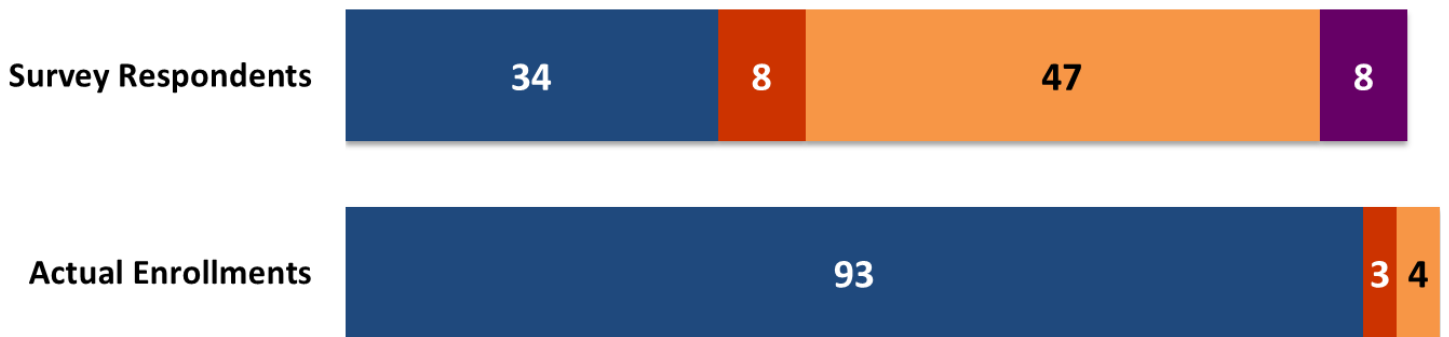
(% of only responses giving grades)



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q6.

Q7. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

- Regular Public School
- Charter School
- Private School
- Homeschool



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q7.*

Q8. What is the most important characteristic or attribute that would cause you to choose a [INSERT SCHOOL TYPE FROM PREVIOUS QUESTION] for your child? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

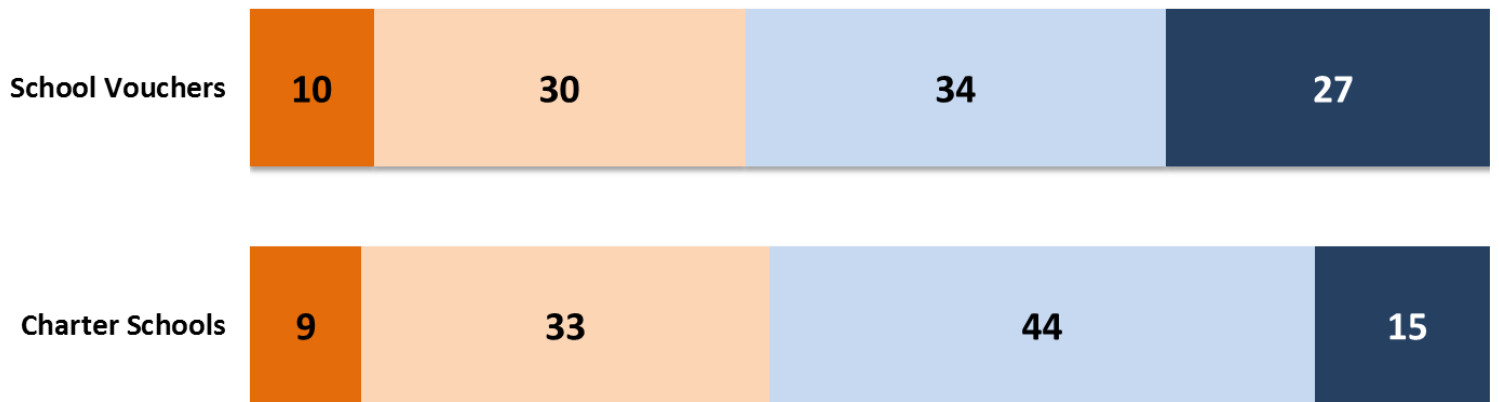
Top 15 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	101
BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING	73
CLASS SIZE / STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	59
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	59
ACADEMICS / CURRICULUM	57
SOCIALIZATION / PEERS / OTHER KIDS	33
ENVIRONMENT / CULTURE / COMMUNITY	30
RELIGION / RELIGIOUS REASONS	20
COST / TUITION / AFFORDABILITY	19
DISCIPLINE / STRUCTURE	19
DIVERSITY / VARIETY	18
PARENTS / PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	14
ALMA MATER / SOCIAL NETWORK	12
OPPORTUNITIES / CHOICES	11
PUBLIC SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS	11

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q8.

Q9 Q16.
How familiar are you with [Charter Schools /
School Vouchers] in K-12 Education?

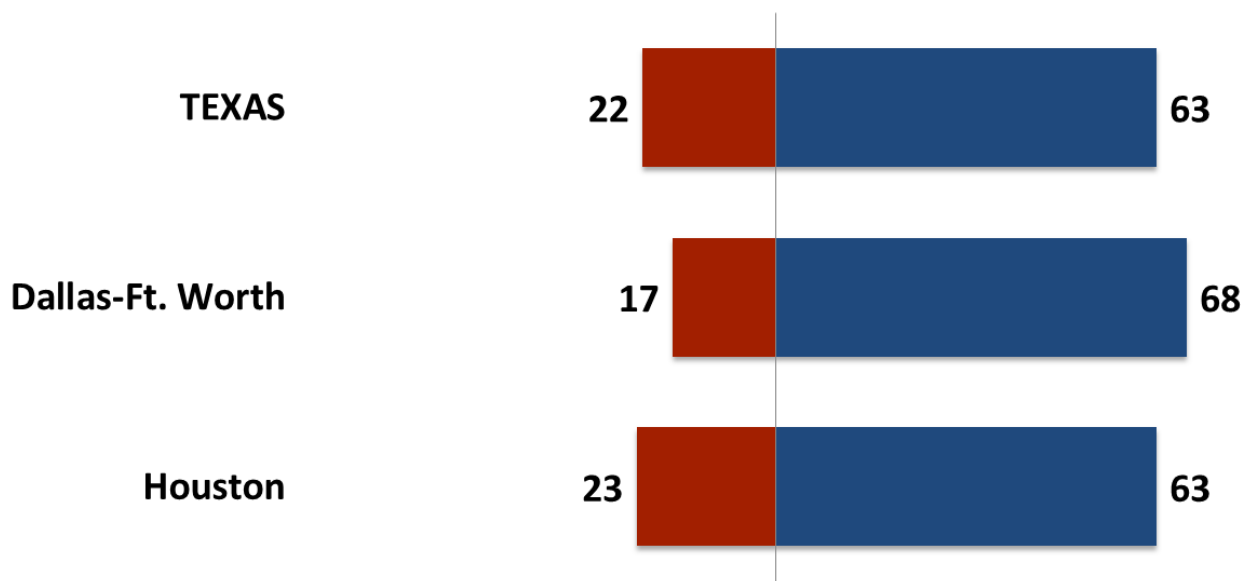
- Very Familiar
- Somewhat Familiar
- Not That Familiar
- Never Heard Of / Don't Know



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q9, Q16.

Q10. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

■ Oppose ■ Favor



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q10.

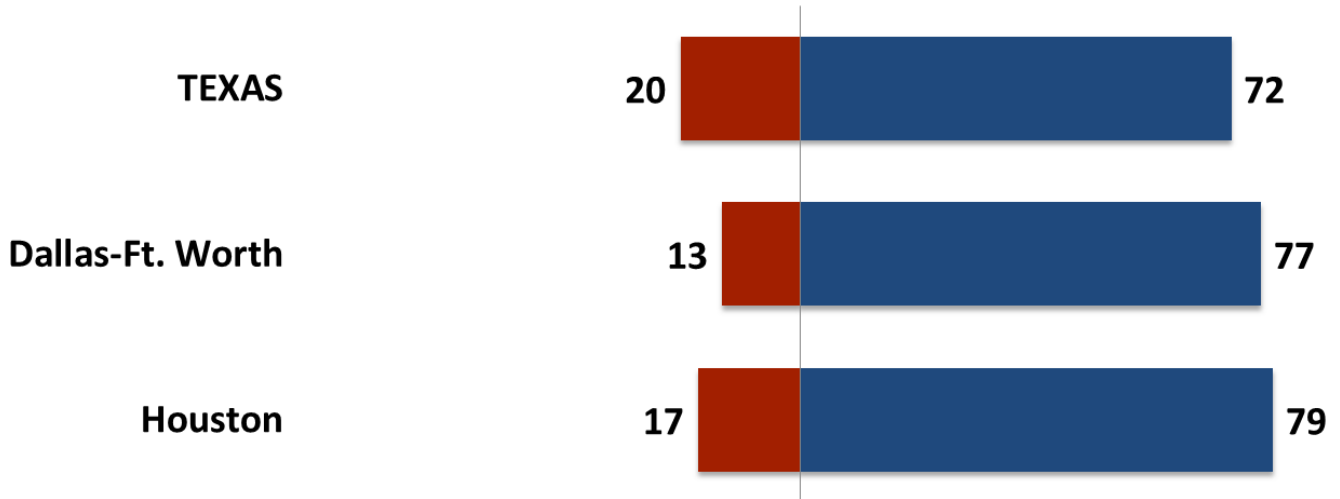
Q10. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	63	22	+ 41	+ 17	613
Parent	65	24	+ 41	+ 21	209
Non-Parent	62	21	+ 41	+ 15	402
COMMUNITY					
Urban	64	24	+ 40	+ 17	165
Suburban	66	18	+ 48	+ 19	204
Small Town	61	29	+ 32	+ 10	146
Rural	61	17	+ 44	+ 24	92
PARTY ID					
Democrat	62	30	+ 32	+ 7	181
Republican	63	16	+ 47	+ 21	176
Independent	64	18	+ 46	+ 23	161
IDEOLOGY					
Liberal	64	31	+ 33	+ 15	95
Conservative	67	20	+ 47	+ 23	252
Moderate	61	19	+ 42	+ 13	227
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	61	20	+ 41	+ 10	189
35 to 54	65	20	+ 45	+ 25	237
55 & Over	62	26	+ 36	+ 14	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	57	27	+ 30	+ 14	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	68	19	+ 49	+ 18	158
\$80,000 & Over	67	18	+ 49	+ 19	192
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Black	66	25	+ 41	+ 19	77
Hispanic	68	26	+ 42	+ 18	167
White	61	20	+ 41	+ 17	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q10.

Q11. A “tax credit” allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A “tax-credit scholarship system” allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system?



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q11.

Q11. A “tax credit” allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A “tax-credit scholarship system” allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	72	20	+ 52	+ 30	613
Parent	75	20	+ 55	+ 35	209
Non-Parent	71	20	+ 51	+ 27	402
COMMUNITY					
Urban	71	19	+ 52	+ 29	165
Suburban	71	24	+ 47	+ 26	204
Small Town	74	15	+ 59	+ 35	146
Rural	75	21	+ 54	+ 28	92
PARTY ID					
Democrat	74	19	+ 55	+ 35	181
Republican	84	14	+ 70	+ 43	176
Independent	63	26	+ 37	+ 16	161
IDEOLOGY					
Liberal	69	29	+ 40	+ 21	95
Conservative	81	14	+ 67	+ 44	252
Moderate	70	22	+ 48	+ 23	227
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	78	12	+ 66	+ 39	189
35 to 54	73	22	+ 51	+ 28	237
55 & Over	66	26	+ 40	+ 23	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	72	15	+ 57	+ 26	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	77	18	+ 59	+ 35	158
\$80,000 & Over	72	24	+ 48	+ 32	192
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Black	67	20	+ 47	+ 25	77
Hispanic	79	13	+ 66	+ 40	167
White	71	23	+ 48	+ 27	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q11.

Q12. What is the most important reason that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to tax-credit scholarships? Please use a few words, or a very short phrase.

Top 15 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

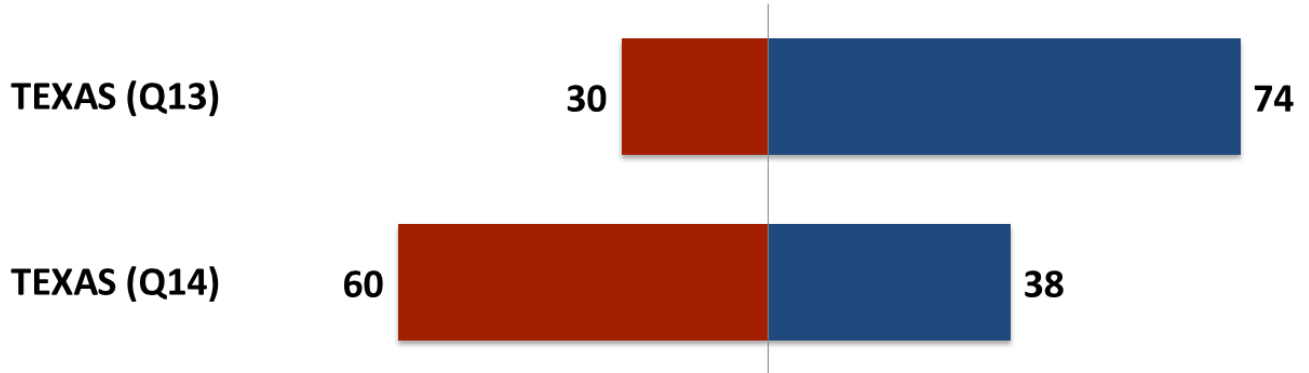
CHOICE / FLEXIBILITY / FREEDOM	99
COST / TUITION / AFFORDABILITY	63
BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	48
SCHOLARSHIPS: POSITIVE MENTIONS	26
OPPORTUNITIES	21
HELPS CHILDREN	20
HURTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	16
BAD IDEA	15
UNFAIR	15
ENGAGES BUSINESS	12
FUNDS / RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ONLY	12
WILL IMPROVE SCHOOLS	12
GOOD USE OF TAX MONEY	11
GOVERNMENT: NEGATIVE MENTIONS	11
PRIVATE SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS	10

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q12.

Q13. Some people believe that tax-credit scholarships should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

■ Disagree ■ Agree

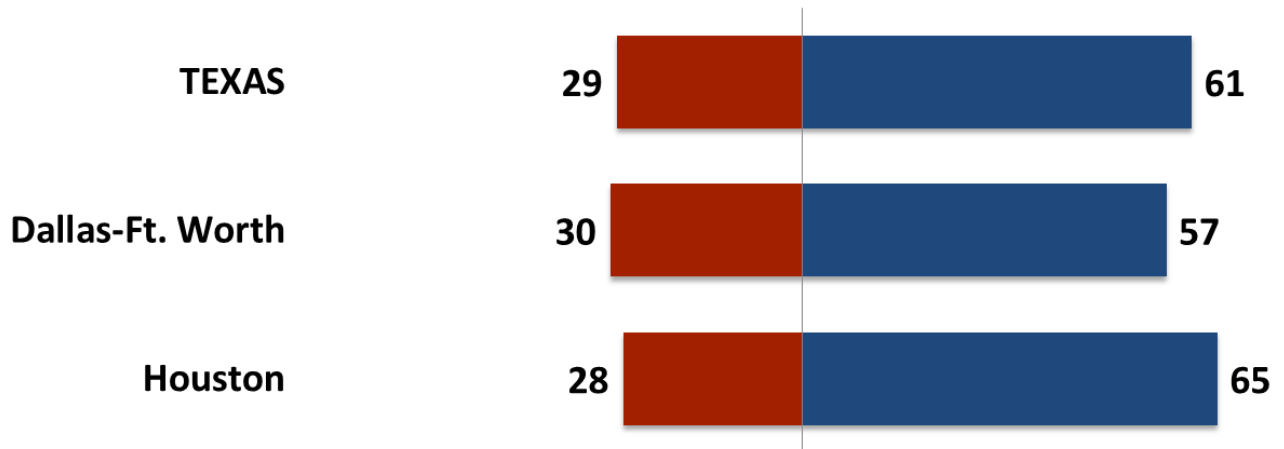
Q14. Some people believe that tax-credit scholarships should only be available to families based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q13 and Q14.

Q15. An "education savings account" - often called an "ESA" - allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses. Parents can then use these funds to pay for private school tuition, virtual education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of "savings account system"?

■ Oppose ■ Favor



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q15.

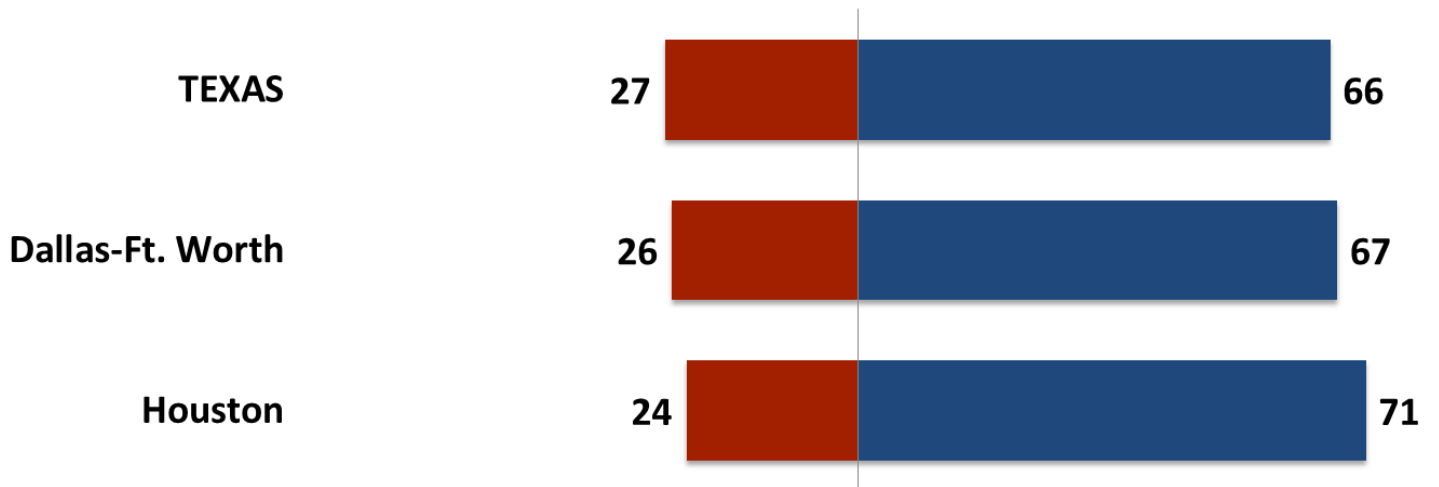
Q15. An "education savings account" - often called an "ESA" - allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses. Parents can then use these funds to pay for private school tuition, virtual education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of "savings account system"?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	61	29	+ 32	+ 17	613
Parent	71	23	+ 48	+ 24	209
Non-Parent	57	32	+ 25	+ 13	402
COMMUNITY					
Urban	60	32	+ 28	+ 19	165
Suburban	61	26	+ 35	+ 21	204
Small Town	70	24	+ 46	+ 19	146
Rural	54	37	+ 17	+ 1	92
PARTY ID					
Democrat	65	27	+ 38	+ 21	181
Republican	61	27	+ 34	+ 18	176
Independent	63	24	+ 39	+ 20	161
IDEOLOGY					
Liberal	59	30	+ 29	+ 15	95
Conservative	61	30	+ 31	+ 16	252
Moderate	64	27	+ 37	+ 20	227
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	68	24	+ 44	+ 30	189
35 to 54	65	26	+ 39	+ 14	237
55 & Over	50	37	+ 13	+ 6	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	59	29	+ 30	+ 18	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	62	27	+ 35	+ 20	158
\$80,000 & Over	70	25	+ 45	+ 18	192
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Black	54	38	+ 16	+ 16	77
Hispanic	72	24	+ 48	+ 26	167
White	57	29	+ 28	+ 12	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q15.

Q17. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system?



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q17.

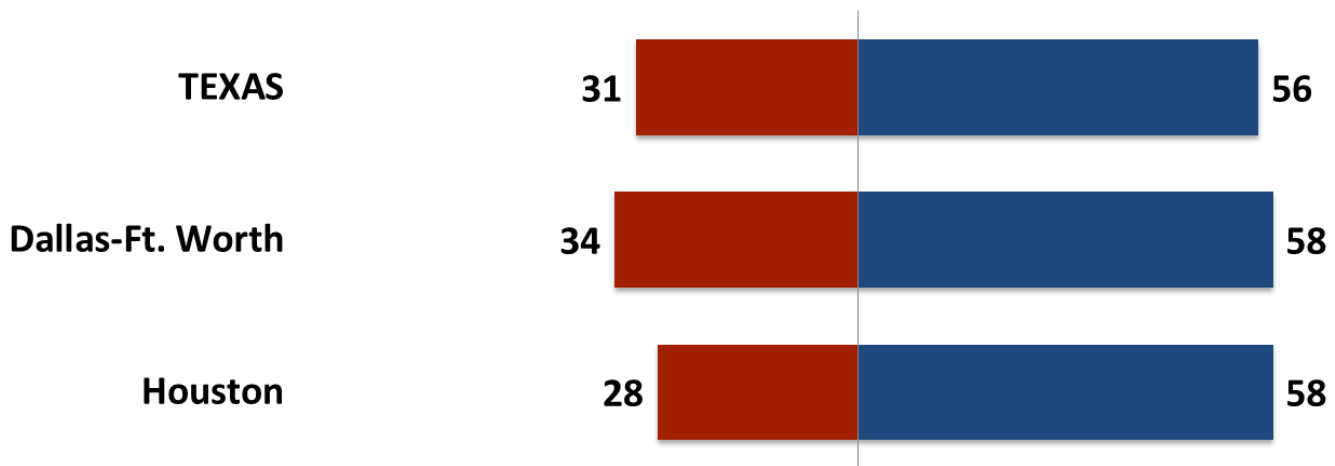
Q17. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	66	27	+ 39	+ 15	613
Parent	70	27	+ 43	+ 23	209
Non-Parent	64	28	+ 36	+ 11	402
COMMUNITY					
Urban	71	25	+ 46	+ 12	165
Suburban	65	29	+ 36	+ 12	204
Small Town	71	23	+ 48	+ 22	146
Rural	55	34	+ 21	+ 15	92
PARTY ID					
Democrat	67	28	+ 39	+ 13	181
Republican	66	25	+ 41	+ 15	176
Independent	67	25	+ 42	+ 20	161
IDEOLOGY					
Liberal	69	30	+ 39	+ 12	95
Conservative	65	28	+ 37	+ 17	252
Moderate	65	27	+ 38	+ 15	227
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	74	19	+ 55	+ 21	189
35 to 54	66	26	+ 40	+ 21	237
55 & Over	57	38	+ 19	even	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	71	22	+ 49	+ 25	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	60	29	+ 31	+ 11	158
\$80,000 & Over	68	28	+ 40	+ 11	192
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Black	71	25	+ 46	+ 23	77
Hispanic	80	17	+ 63	+ 26	167
White	60	32	+ 28	+ 9	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates the enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q17.

Q18. A parent trigger policy allows parents of children at a low-performing public school to petition for some form of accountability action to take place. If parents representing more than half of the school’s students sign the petition, then the local school board governing that school would take one of the following actions: convert the school into a public charter school; dismiss and replace the principal; dismiss and replace staff or teachers; or close the school and relocate enrolled students. In general, do you favor or oppose a “parent trigger policy”?



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q18.

Q18. A parent trigger policy allows parents of children at a low-performing public school to petition for some form of accountability action to take place. If parents representing more than half of the school's students sign the petition, then the local school board governing that school would take one of the following actions: convert the school into a public charter school; dismiss and replace the principal; dismiss and replace staff or teachers; or close the school and relocate enrolled students. In general, do you favor or oppose a "parent trigger policy"?

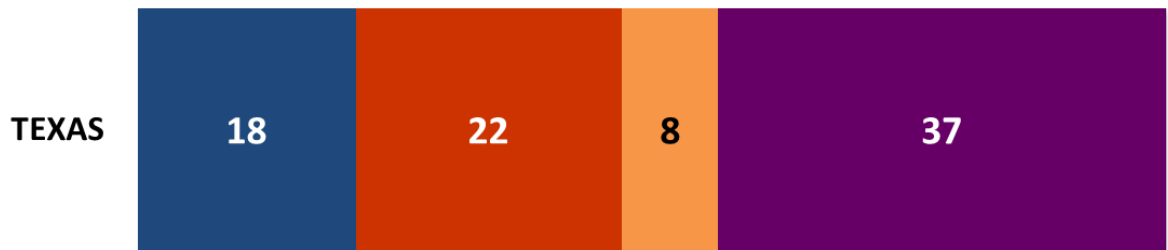
	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL RESPONDENTS	56	31	+ 25	+ 10	613
Parent	63	27	+ 36	+ 24	209
Non-Parent	52	34	+ 18	+ 3	402
COMMUNITY					
Urban	49	35	+ 14	+ 4	165
Suburban	66	27	+ 39	+ 18	204
Small Town	56	27	+ 29	+ 8	146
Rural	44	41	+ 3	+ 4	92
PARTY ID					
Democrat	57	35	+ 22	+ 5	181
Republican	53	33	+ 20	+ 8	176
Independent	57	26	+ 31	+ 14	161
IDEOLOGY					
Liberal	62	32	+ 30	+ 22	95
Conservative	55	33	+ 22	+ 6	252
Moderate	56	30	+ 26	+ 8	227
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	59	31	+ 28	+ 11	189
35 to 54	61	30	+ 31	+ 13	237
55 & Over	46	33	+ 13	+ 5	181
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	47	34	+ 13	+ 4	197
\$40,000 to \$79,999	64	27	+ 37	+ 13	158
\$80,000 & Over	60	31	+ 29	+ 12	192
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Black	48	39	+ 9	+ 6	77
Hispanic	55	34	+ 21	+ 2	167
White	57	29	+ 28	+ 14	345

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates the enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q18.

Q19. Considering the previous questions, which one of the following accountability actions do you feel would best serve students and families?

- **Convert the school into a public charter school**
- **Dismiss and replace the principal, staff, or teachers**
- **Close the school and relocate enrolled students**
- **Supply a voucher or scholarship to parents to enroll their child in another school, either private or public**



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q19.

Q20. In practice most budgeting, personnel, and curriculum decisions are made by a school board and district leaders. On the other hand, school principals and teachers are responsible for implementing these decisions and the quality of instruction. If the state designates a public school as “low-performing” or “failing,” who do you feel should be held most responsible for that designation?

- **School Board**
- **District Superintendent and Administration**
- **School's Principal and Administration**
- **School's Teachers**



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q20.

Methods Summary

The “Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey” project, commissioned by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (BRI), interviewed a statistically representative sample of registered voters in the state of Texas. Methodology included probability sampling and random-digit dial. The statewide sample includes a total of **613** telephone interviews completed in English and Spanish from March 19 to 27, 2013, by means of both landline and cell phone. Statistical results were weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies.

The margin of sampling error for the statewide sample is ± 4.0 percentage points.

BRI’s live callers conducted all phone interviews. For this entire project, a total of **8,059** calls were made in Texas. Of these calls, **2,120** were unusable phone numbers (disconnected, fax, busy, non-residential, or non-answers, etc.); **4,216** were usable numbers but eligibility unknown (including refusals and voicemail); **105** cell phone numbers were usable but not eligible for this survey; **38** people did not complete the survey. The average response rate of the landline interviews was **13.0%**. The average response rate of the cell phone interviews was **11.9%**.

Details on call dispositions, landline and cell phone response rates, and weighting are discussed in the following sections.

Sample Design

A combination of landline and cellular random-digit-dial (RDD) samples was used to represent registered voters in Texas who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to BRI specifications.

SSI starts with a database of all listed telephone numbers, updated on a four- to six-week rolling basis, 25 percent of the listings at a time. All active blocks—contiguous groups of 100

phone numbers for which more than one residential number is listed—are added to this database. Blocks and exchanges that include only listed business numbers are excluded.

Numbers for the landline sample were drawn with equal probabilities from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted from March 19 to 27, 2013. As many as eight attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. The sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Each phone number received at least one daytime call.

We have noticed over the last several years response rates have been declining for consumer polls. Generally, running surveys over a longer period of time will boost these response rates. However, lower response rates do not lead to lower reliability of the data. For example, polls with a sample size of 1,200 respondents run over a two-day period with response rates of 3% or 4% have been acceptable for public release.

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% Confidence Interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample—the one around 50%. The overall margin of error for this survey is $\pm 4.0\%$. This means that in 95 of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 4.0 percentage points away from their true values in the population.

It is critical to note that the margin of sampling error (MSE) is higher when considering the number of respondents for a given demographic subgroup. For example, the MSE for a subgroup of 150 respondents is ± 8.0 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, question wording, ordering, and other practical difficulties when conducting surveys may introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion research.

Call Dispositions and Response Rates

Texas Statewide Call Dispositions					
<u>SUMMARY</u>			<u>DETAIL</u>		
Landline	Cell Phone		Landline	Cell Phone	
4,712	3,347	Total	1,132	912	Disconnected
4,712	3,347	Released	9	2	Fax
0	0	Unreleased	45	20	Government/Business
3,526	2,413	Usable	-	0	Non Cell Phone
1,186	934	Unusable	0	-	Non Landline
3,236	1,618	Qualified	1,186	934	Unusable
68.7%	71.7%	Est. Usability	879	41	No Answer
100.0%	67.0%	Est. Eligibility	46	1	Busy
13.0%	11.9%	Est. Response	839	42	Usability Unknown
			421	192	Complete
			17	21	Break-Off
			438	213	Usable/Eligible
			892	732	Refused
			36	21	Language Barrier
			636	809	Voice Mail
			487	437	Call Back-Retired
			112	54	Strong Refusal
			0	0	Privacy Manager
			2,163	2,053	Usable/Eligible Unknown
			-	-	Under 18
			-	-	Not Registered in State
			-	105	Terminate
			0	105	Usable/Ineligible
			13.0%	11.9%	Response Rate

Weighting Procedures and Analysis

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. In this study, the sample demographics were balanced to population parameters. Using weighting targets, the sample was balanced to reflect the targeted population representation by Age, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Region. The weighted and unweighted results are available on request.

All weighting measures are based on 2010 Census Bureau statistics for the state of Texas.

Special note: We calculated age distributions from date-of-birth information on file from the state's respective registered voter database, as supplied by Aristotle International.

About the Author

Paul DiPerna (paul@edchoice.org) is Research Director for the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice in Indianapolis. He joined the foundation in September 2006. DiPerna's research interests include surveys and polling on K-12 education and school choice policies. His other responsibilities include directing and managing all research projects commissioned by the foundation. DiPerna has traveled to 25 states for his work, making numerous presentations on survey findings and giving talks discussing school choice policies for audiences including public officials, policy professionals, the media, academics, and advocates.

Previously, DiPerna served as the assistant director for the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. His six years at Brookings included projects evaluating the federal Blue Ribbon Schools Program and analyzing student achievement in charter schools. DiPerna was a research analyst for the first five issues of the Brown Center Report on American Education (2000-2004). He also managed and coordinated the activities of the National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education (2001-2005).

A native of Pittsburgh, DiPerna earned an M.A. in political science from the University of Illinois (2000) and B.A. from the University of Dayton (1996).

Acknowledgements

A number of people made significant contributions during the course of this survey project. Our friends at the Texas Public Policy Foundation and Texas Association of Non-Public Schools have given us invaluable insights and context at the local/state level. We would like to thank the team at Braun Research who assisted in project development, and for their excellent work in conducting the interviews and collecting the data. I appreciate the time and commitments from Paul Braun, Cynthia Miller, and Dave Oshman. Finally, we are of course grateful to the respondents who generously agreed to participate in our survey interviews.

About the Survey Organization

Braun Research, Inc. (BRI)

The Braun Research network of companies, founded in 1995, combined employ 41 full-time and more than 187 part-time employees engaged in data collection via telephone, and internet for various survey research firms, government and advertising agencies, local community organizations, local and national business groups, foundations, universities and academic entities, as well as religious organizations. In 18 years, Braun Research has conducted more than 8,800 research projects by telephone, internet, and mail worldwide.

Nationally-known research firms have hired Braun Research, including the Gallup Organization, the Pew Research Center, the Eagleton Poll, Mathematica Policy Research, and *The Washington Post*. Braun Research has worked for the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, as well as other government agencies including the United States Departments of the Treasury and Defense, and the Center for Disease Control.

Braun Research is a well-respected firm employing techniques and standards approved by various survey research academic organizations and other affiliations including those with whom Braun is an active member, including AAPOR (American Association for Public Opinion Research), MRA/CMOR (Market Research Association/Council on Marketing and Opinion Research), and CASRO (Council on American Survey Research Organizations).

Braun's services on behalf of other research firms are up to standards required by various professional associations where Braun enjoys membership, and in some cases, participates actively. Paul Braun is a member of the MRA/CMOR committees on response rate improvement and in launching a seal of quality for the industry. Paul Braun is recognized as a leader in the field by colleagues who asked him to serve on these committees. He has served as President of the New Jersey Chapter of AAPOR.

About the Survey Sponsor

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice

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Our authors take full responsibility for research design, analysis, charts, and any unintentional errors or misrepresentations. They welcome any and all questions related to methods and findings.

About the Survey Release Partner

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The Foundation is guided by these principles:

- Liberty
- Personal Responsibility
- Free Enterprise

Texas K-12 & School Choice Survey “Toplines”

Interview Dates:	March 19 to 27, 2013
Sample Frame:	Registered Voters
Sample Sizes:	TEXAS = 613 Dallas-Ft. Worth = 185 Houston = 143
Margins of Error:	TEXAS = ± 4.0 percentage points Dallas-Ft. Worth = ± 7.2 percentage points Houston = ± 8.2 percentage points

Displayed numbers in tables are percentages, unless otherwise noted.

Due to rounding, percentage totals for a given question may be slightly greater or less than 100%.

“For this brief interview, if you are completely unsure about your answer or have no feelings for an answer, you can say ‘I Don’t Know.’” [ENTER AS “DK”]

1. How much attention do you pay to issues involving K-12 education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	A Lot	Some	Very Little	None	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	45	29	15	9	2
Dallas-Ft. Worth	44	25	19	9	3
Houston	44	31	15	7	2

2. Do you feel things in Texas’s K-12 education system are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Right Direction	Wrong Track	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	33	55	12
Dallas-Ft. Worth	32	55	13
Houston	34	56	10

3. How would you rate Texas's public school system?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	7	35	41	13	4
Dallas-Ft. Worth	7	33	46	11	3
Houston	13	34	36	12	5

4. How much do you think is spent per year on each student in Texas’s public schools? Your estimate (to the nearest thousand dollars) will represent the combined expenditures of local, state, and federal governments.

[OPEN-END. BASED ON RESPONSE, SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE, OFFERING RANGE CATEGORIES. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Less than \$4,000	\$4,001 – \$8,000	\$8,001 – \$12,000	\$12,001 – \$16,000	Over \$16,000	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	26	23	10	6	10	27
Dallas-Ft. Worth	25	28	6	5	9	27
Houston	24	24	16	3	8	25

5. *(Split A)* Do you believe that public school funding in Texas is at a level that is:

[ROTATE “TOO HIGH” AND “TOO LOW”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	13	29	52	7
Dallas-Ft. Worth	13	24	50	13
Houston	12	24	62	2

5. **(Split B)** According to the most recent information available, in Texas \$8,788 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in Texas is at a level that is:

[ROTATE “TOO HIGH” AND “TOO LOW”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	14	38	41	8
Dallas-Ft. Worth	15	42	34	10
Houston	10	38	48	4

6. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...

[GRADE OPTIONS: A, B, C, D, or F]

[ROTATE “REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS,” “PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

TEXAS	A	B	C	D	F	DK/Ref (VOL.)
Regular Public Schools	14	35	30	10	8	4
Charter Schools	13	32	13	5	3	33
Private Schools	33	31	8	4	1	23

7. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Charter School	Homeschool	Private School	Regular Public School	Virtual School	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	8	8	47	34	1	2
Dallas-Ft. Worth	11	6	53	27	1	2
Houston	5	10	47	36	1	1

8. What is the most important characteristic or attribute that would cause you to choose a **[INSERT SCHOOL TYPE FROM PREVIOUS QUESTION]** for your child? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

[OPEN-END. IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

Top 15 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

TEXAS	
BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	101
BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING	73
CLASS SIZE / STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	59
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	59
ACADEMICS / CURRICULUM	57
SOCIALIZATION / PEERS / OTHER KIDS	33
ENVIRONMENT / CULTURE / COMMUNITY	30
RELIGION / RELIGIOUS REASONS	20
COST / TUITION / AFFORDABILITY	19
DISCIPLINE / STRUCTURE	19
DIVERSITY / VARIETY	18
PARENTS / PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	14
ALMA MATER / SOCIAL NETWORK	12
OPPORTUNITIES / CHOICES	11
PUBLIC SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS	11
OTHER RESPONSES	20
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	30

“For the remainder of this interview, if you are completely unsure about your answer or have no feelings for an answer, feel free to say ‘I Don’t Know.’” [ENTER AS “DK”]

9. How familiar are you with “charter schools” in K-12 education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not That Familiar	I Have Never Heard of “Charter Schools”	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	9	33	44	13	2
Dallas-Ft. Worth	9	35	43	12	1
Houston	5	38	45	10	2

10. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	25	38	13	9	15
Dallas-Ft. Worth	30	38	11	6	15
Houston	28	35	13	10	15

11. A “tax credit” allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A “tax-credit scholarship system” allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	43	30	7	13	8
Dallas-Ft. Worth	46	32	6	7	10
Houston	48	32	9	8	4

12. What is the most important reason that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to tax-credit scholarships? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

[OPEN-END. IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

Top 15 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

TEXAS	
CHOICE / FLEXIBILITY / FREEDOM	99
COST / TUITION / AFFORDABILITY	63
BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	48
SCHOLARSHIPS: POSITIVE MENTIONS	26
OPPORTUNITIES	21
HELPS CHILDREN	20
HURTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	16
BAD IDEA	15
UNFAIR	15
ENGAGES BUSINESS	12
FUNDS / RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ONLY	12
WILL IMPROVE SCHOOLS	12
GOOD USE OF TAX MONEY	11
GOVERNMENT: NEGATIVE MENTIONS	11
PRIVATE SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS	10
NOT FAMILIAR / NEED MORE INFORMATION	5
OTHER RESPONSES	51
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	60

13. Some people believe that tax-credit scholarships should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	55	19	11	12	4
Dallas-Ft. Worth	59	16	12	11	3
Houston	56	19	11	9	4

14. Some people believe that tax-credit scholarships should only be available to families based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	21	17	24	34	4
Dallas-Ft. Worth	22	20	24	29	6
Houston	22	15	27	33	4

15. An "education savings account" – often called an ESA – allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses. Parents can then use these funds to pay for private school tuition, online education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of “savings account system”? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	34	27	11	18	11
Dallas-Ft. Worth	41	16	12	18	13
Houston	34	31	12	17	7

16. How familiar are you with “school vouchers” in K-12 education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not That Familiar	I Have Never Heard of “School Vouchers”	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	10	30	34	26	1
Dallas-Ft. Worth	7	32	40	21	< 1
Houston	15	32	27	26	1

17. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools.

If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	33	33	9	18	7
Dallas-Ft. Worth	30	37	8	18	7
Houston	34	36	9	15	6

18. A parent trigger policy allows parents of children at a low-performing public school to petition for some form of accountability action to take place. If parents representing more than half of the school’s students sign the petition, then the local school board governing that school would take one of the following actions: convert the school into a public charter school; dismiss and replace the principal; dismiss and replace staff or teachers; or close the school and relocate enrolled students. In general, do you favor or oppose a “parent trigger policy”? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	29	27	12	19	13
Dallas-Ft. Worth	33	25	10	23	9
Houston	32	26	12	16	14

19. Considering the previous questions, which one of the following accountability actions do you feel would best serve students and families?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	TEXAS	Dallas-Ft. Worth	Houston
Convert the school into a public charter school	18	14	24
Dismiss and replace the principal, staff, or teachers	22	22	24
Close the school and relocate enrolled students	8	4	6
Supply a voucher or scholarship to parents to enroll their child in another school, either private or public	37	47	32
DK/Ref (VOL.)	16	13	15

20. In practice most budgeting, personnel, and curriculum decisions are made by a school board and district leaders. On the other hand, school principals and teachers are responsible for implementing these decisions and the quality of instruction.

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	TEXAS	Dallas-Ft. Worth	Houston
The School Board	25	25	29
The District Superintendent and Administration	28	25	22
The School’s Principal and Administration	20	19	20
The School’s Teachers	15	21	13
DK/Ref (VOL.)	12	10	17

“Now the following questions should be pretty quick, and for statistical purposes only....”

21. Are you currently the parent or guardian of a child who lives with you, and who is in any grade from preschool through high school?

[IF NEEDED: IF CHILD IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED OR ENTERING PRESCHOOL IN THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR, ENTER "YES"]

[IF NEEDED: IF YOUNGEST CHILD JUST GRADUATED IN 2012, ENTER "NO"]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Yes	No < PS	No > HS	No Children	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	34	7	24	35	< 1

22. Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

[Code for Democrat, Republican, Independent, Libertarian, Other, or “DK”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other	Libertarian (VOL.)	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	30	29	26	10	2	4

23. How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as liberal (or progressive), moderate, or conservative? [Rotate Liberal and Conservative]

[Code only for Liberal (or Progressive), Moderate, Conservative, or “DK”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Liberal or Progressive	Moderate	Conservative	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	16	37	41	6

24. How would you best describe where you live?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	27	33	24	15	1

25. Which of the following age categories do you fall in?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 & Over	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	31	39	30	1

26. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino origin, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Hispanic	Not Hispanic	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	27	73	< 1

27. Which of the following best describes your race?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	American Indian, Native American	Asian, Pacific Islander, Asian American	Black, African American	Mixed Race	White	Other	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	1	3	13	2	76	6	< 1

28. Which of the following best describes you?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Single / Never Married	Single / With Partner	Married	Divorced	Widowed	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	19	9	54	11	6	1

29. What is your religion, if any? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]

[IF GIVEN SPECIFIC PROTESTANT DENOMINATION, SIMPLY CODE PROTESTANT]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Catholic	Jewish	Mormon	Muslim	Protestant	Other	None	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	29	< 1	1	1	39	14	14	3

30. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? [DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

- None (Grades 1-8)
- High School Incomplete (Grades 9-11)
- High school Graduate (Grade 12 or GED Certificate)
- Technical, Trade, or Vocational School (AFTER High School)
- Some College (Associate’s Degree, No 4-Yr Degree)
- College Graduate (Bachelor’s Degree or Other 4-Yr Degree)
- Post-Graduate Training or Professional Schooling After College (Toward a Master's Degree, Ph.D.; Law, Medical School)

	Grades 1 to 8	Grades 9 to 11	HS Graduate	Technical/ Vocational	Some College	College Graduate	Post- Graduate	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	2	7	20	3	26	27	15	1

31. Please stop me when I read the category that best describes your current annual household income, before taxes?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 & Over	DK/Ref (VOL.)
TEXAS	32	26	31	11

32. [CODE GENDER OF RESPONDENT; DO NOT ASK, UNLESS GENDER IS IN QUESTION]

	Male	Female
TEXAS	50	50

[PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AVAILABLE TO INTERVIEWERS ANYTIME A RESPONDENT ASKS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE SURVEY SPONSOR OR FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION]

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that studies attitudes toward K-12 education issues facing the states and the country. The Foundation has no connection to the government, political parties, or any campaigns. Reports about its surveys are made available free of charge on their website [EdChoice dot ORG](http://EdChoice.org).