

SCHOOL CHOICE

SURVEY

IN THE STATE

SURVEY

## Rhode Island's Opinion on K-12 Education and School Choice



### Public Opinion in Rhode Island:

Many agree with the concept of school choice. Some disagree. But everyone needs more information. As the public debate continues to grow louder about how best to provide a quality education to all Rhode Island children, it is critical to know the facts and to have a good understanding of public opinion.

This statistically representative sample of 1,200 likely Rhode Island voters illustrates public opinion on a range of K-12 education issues including school choice.

By:

Paul DiPerna

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice

April 2009

This poll released jointly by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, Rhode Island Scholarship Alliance, Agudath Israel of America, Black Alliance for Educational Options, Catholic School Office—Diocese of Providence, and the National Catholic Educational Association

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The Friedman Foundation is committed to research that adheres to high scientific standards. Matters of methodology and transparency are taken seriously.

All individuals have opinions, and many organizations (like our own) have philosophical or mission orientations. Scientific methods, if designed well and followed closely, should neutralize these opinions and orientations. Research rules and methods minimize bias. We believe rigorous procedural rules of science prevent a researcher's motives, and an organization's particular orientation, from pre-determining results.

If research adheres to scientific standards, its findings can be relied upon no matter who has conducted it. If rules and methods are neither specified nor followed, then the biases of the researcher or an organization may become relevant, because a lack of rigor opens the door for those biases to affect the results.

We are committed to sound research and to provide quality information in a transparent and efficient manner. We welcome any and all questions related to our methodology and work.

# **Rhode Island's Opinion on K-12 Education and School Choice**

By:

**Paul DiPerna**

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice

Poll conducted by:

**Strategic Vision**

April 2009

## About the Author

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DiPerna has presented research at the American Sociological Association annual conference, and has published articles in *Education Next*, *First Monday*, the *Washington Examiner*, and the *Journal of Information Technology Impact*. He recently authored a chapter in the *Handbook of Research on Web Log Analysis*, published by Idea Group Publishing.

## About Strategic Vision



Strategic Vision is an Atlanta-headquartered public relations and public affairs agency with a division that specializes in polling. The public affairs team is knowledgeable about politics, issues, and current events throughout the nation. Strategic Vision operates nationally, and its polls have been used by MSNBC, FOX News Channel, *Newsweek*, Bloomberg News, *Time Magazine*, BBC, ABC News, Scripps Howard, the *Washington Times*, and *USA Today*. The company's polls have been cited as some of the most accurate by National Journal's Hotline and Survey USA.

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## Executive Summary

This statistically representative survey of 1,200 likely Rhode Island voters illustrates public opinion on a wide range of K-12 education issues. The underlying theme of the Friedman Foundation's *Survey in the State* series is to measure voter attitudes toward public institutions and policies, innovative ideas, and the state's K-12 education system.

Rhode Islanders have shared with us their views about "school choice," which includes school vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, charter schools and virtual schools. Rhode Island is the tenth state to be surveyed in our series since the launch in December 2007.

Public opinion does not sync with Rhode Islanders' school enrollment practices. Survey interviews highlight a wide disconnect between parental schooling preferences and actual school enrollments. Fifty-six percent of parents said they would like to send their child to a private school. This is the highest level we have seen in our series. In reality, however, only 11 percent of Rhode Island's K-12 students attend private schools. Thirteen percent of Rhode Island parents said they would like to send their child to a charter school. According to the Center for Education Reform, 11 charter schools currently serve 2,894 students in Rhode Island, or approximately 2 percent of the state's estimated K-12 student population. Seventeen percent of Rhode Island parents said they would choose a regular public school for their child. Approximately 87 percent of Rhode Island's K-12 students attend regular public schools.<sup>1</sup> As we survey one state to the next, we continue to see the implication that states do not have sufficient school choice systems in place to match parents' schooling preferences.

A total of 1,200 phone interviews were conducted by Strategic Vision between January 23 and 25, 2009. The margin of error for the full sample of likely voters is  $\pm 3$  percentage points; the margin of error is higher when considering the number of respondents for a given demographic subgroup.

### Key findings include:

- **Rhode Island's Democrats (D), Republicans (R), and Independents (I) find common ground on school choice topics.** Voters who identify themselves differently in terms of political affiliation are likely to share common views on school choice policies. Solid levels of support exist for the **Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit** (D: 51 percent | R: 53 percent | I: 54 percent), **charter schools** (D: 53 percent | R: 53 percent | I: 56 percent), and **school vouchers** (D: 52 percent | R: 47 percent | I: 54 percent).
- **Thirty-one percent rate Rhode Island's public school system as "good" or "excellent."** We consistently see this middling figure across the states. Recent state surveys using the same question indicate modest satisfaction levels with state-run public school systems. We have not yet seen a satisfaction rate greater than 50 percent.
- **Rhode Islanders are content with current levels of public school funding.** Two out of three voters (66 percent) say Rhode Island's level of public school funding is either "about right" or "too high." Since 85 percent of the survey's respondents actually underestimate the actual per-pupil funding in Rhode Island public schools (\$13,336), the previously mentioned 66 percent figure is likely a low estimate.

- **Nearly a third of Rhode Island voters (29 percent) say “poor student discipline and self-control” and “poor school safety” are the biggest challenges confronting Rhode Island’s public school system.** About one quarter of voters (26 percent) say “lack of accountability” is a major issue.
  
- **More than eight out of ten Rhode Islanders (83 percent) prefer choosing a school for their child among options that include private schools, charter schools, virtual schools, and homeschooling.** This high figure is consistent with previous state surveys asking the same question, most recently in Vermont (89 percent), Oregon (87 percent), Montana (90 percent), and Maryland (82 percent).
  
- **Rhode Island voters like private schools.** When asked “what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?,” **55 percent** of respondents said they would prefer private schools – the highest level yet in our polling series. This finding is consistent with other recent state surveys: Vermont (44 percent), Oregon (44 percent), Montana (38 percent), and Maryland (45 percent).
  
- **A majority of Rhode Island voters (53 percent) support Rhode Island’s three-year old Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit (CSTC) system.** Rhode Islanders appear to have an open mind on this state policy, despite low levels of information (only **45 percent** say they are familiar with CSTC). Favorability is a consistent finding regardless of respondents’ income levels. **Fifty-five percent** of Rhode Islanders with household incomes under \$50,000 are supportive of CSTC.
  
- **Fifty-two percent of Rhode Island’s likely voters support school vouchers.** More than half of interviewed voters say they are favorable toward a school voucher approach for helping families pay for their child’s school tuition. Young Rhode Islanders, in the 18 to 25 age group, are most familiar with vouchers (**73 percent**) and among the most favorable (**55 percent**). Likewise, Rhode Islanders with household incomes under \$25,000 are similarly familiar (**69 percent**) and favorable (**54 percent**).
  
- **Rhode Islanders with either personal or familial ties to labor/teacher unions (U) share similar opinions when compared with “non-union” voters (NU).** They rate the state’s school system as “good” or “excellent” at equally modest levels (U: 31 percent | NU: 31 percent). They prefer private schools over other school types (U: 51 percent | NU: 57 percent). Both groups have substantial proportions favoring the **Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit** (U: 50 percent | 56 percent), **charter schools** (U: 53 percent | 55 percent), and **school vouchers** (U: 50 percent | 53 percent).

<sup>1</sup> Rhode Island regular public school and private school enrollments obtained using the Common Core of Data (CCD) and Private School Universe Survey (PSS) table-building tools found on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) website: <http://nces.ed.gov>; Rhode Island’s charter school information obtained on the Center for Education Reform’s website: <http://www.edreform.com>.



## Methodology

This survey provides a statistical representation of the views of likely voters in Rhode Island. We obtained a total of 1,200 completed interviews. The sample's statistical significance and probability are sufficient for assessment and decision-making purposes. The margin of sampling error at the conventional 95 percent confidence level is  $\pm 3$  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 polls.

Strategic Vision conducted phone interviews using a random sample of registered Rhode Island voters from its call center. Random Digit Dial samples were produced by Survey Sampling International (SSI) using a sampling frame that includes all active telephone area codes and exchanges in the United States.

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.

Strategic Vision's live callers conducted all phone interviews from January 23 to 25, 2009. A total of 2,347 calls were made in Rhode Island. Of these calls, 98 were disconnected, non-residential, or non-answers; 557 were refusals; 369 did not qualify as likely voters; 123 did not complete the survey. The response rate for this survey was 60.7%.

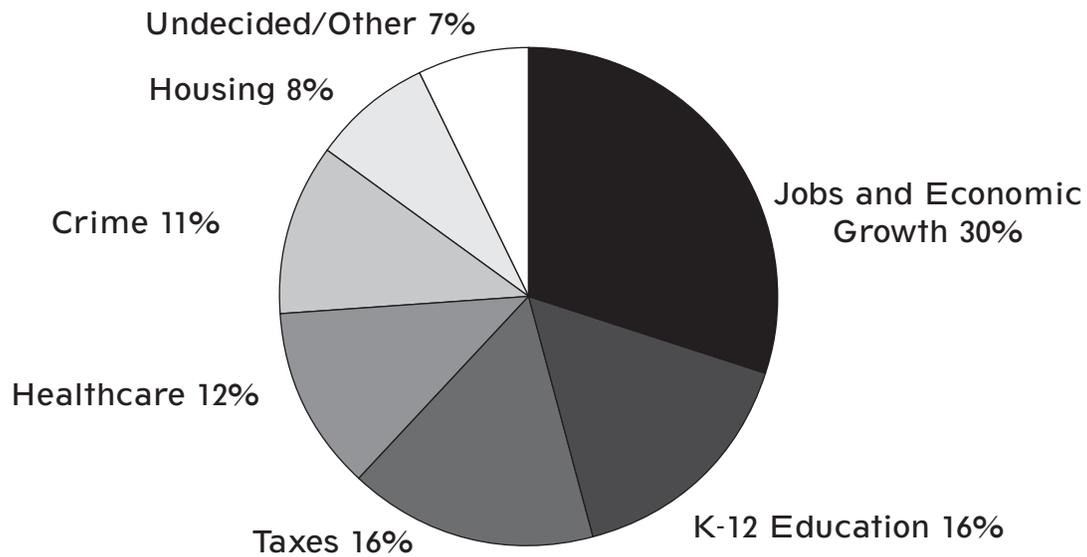
A set of screening questions was used to determine past voting behavior and likely voting in 2010. Respondents were asked whether they had voted in the 2008 election and were planning to vote in the next election in 2010. Respondents who satisfied both these criteria were classified as "likely voters" and were included in the survey. Respondents who either did not vote in 2008 or were not likely to vote in the next election were not included.

**The author of this report takes sole responsibility for any errors or misrepresentations.**

## Toplines & Findings

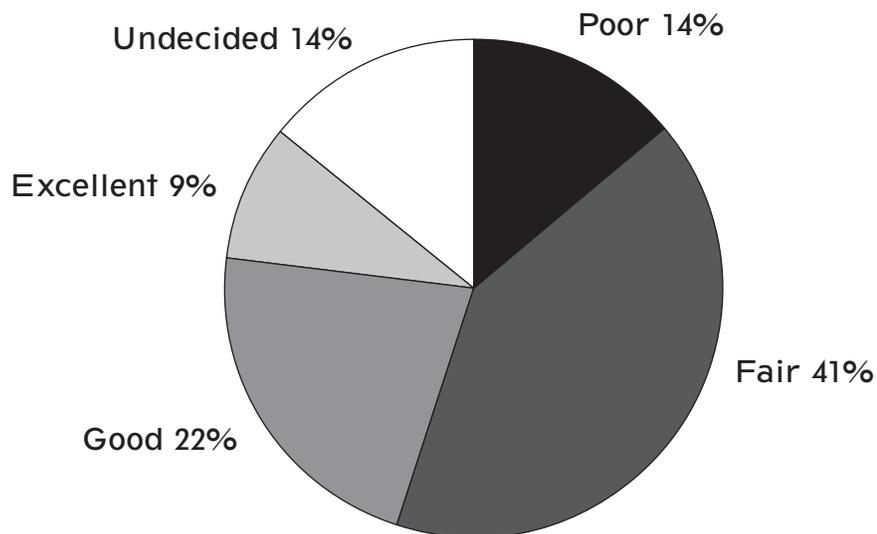
The following are the questions asked in the interview (in order) and the results of the survey.

1. I am going to name several issues facing the State of Rhode Island, and I would like you to select the one that is most important to you. \_\_\_\_\_



The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

2. How would you rate Rhode Island's public school system? \_\_\_\_\_

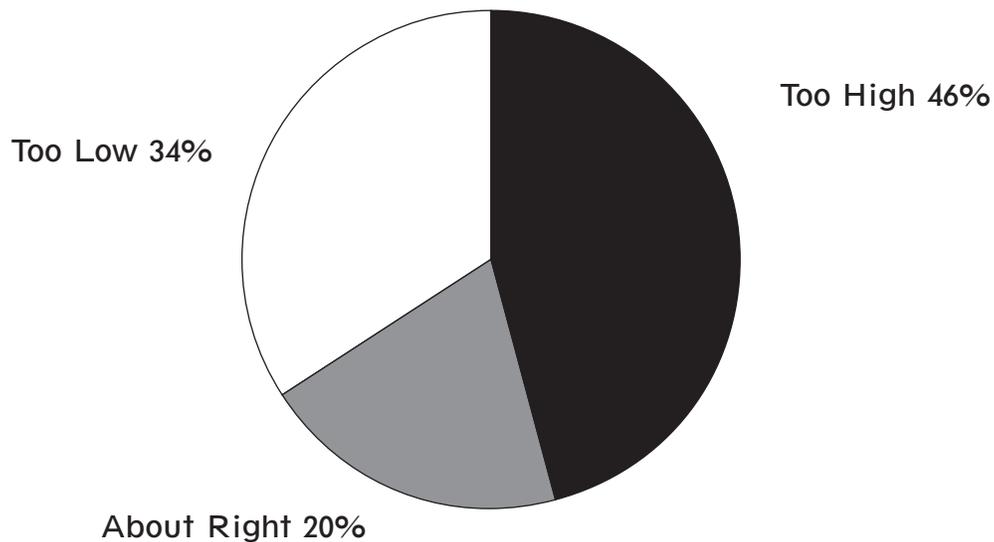


**Demographic Perspectives**

**K-12 PARENTS (n=1,067)**

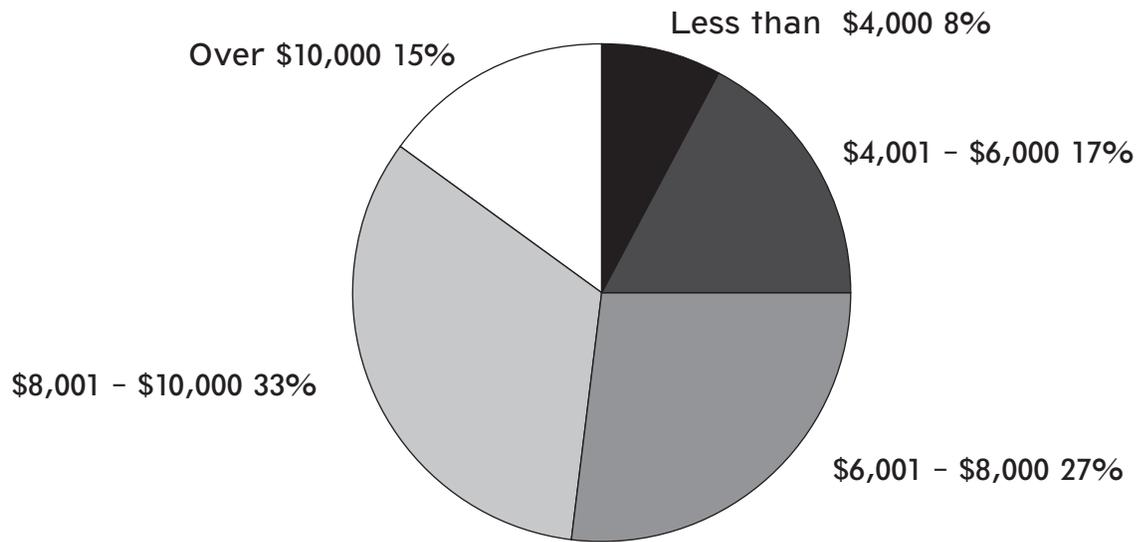
- 30% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 56% prefer private schools
- 17% prefer regular public schools
- 13% prefer charter schools
- 12% prefer homeschooling
- 47% are familiar with virtual schools; 32% favor virtual schools
- 45% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 53% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 57% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 60% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 64% are familiar with school vouchers; 52% favor school vouchers

3. Do you believe that public school funding in Rhode Island is at a level that is: \_\_\_\_\_



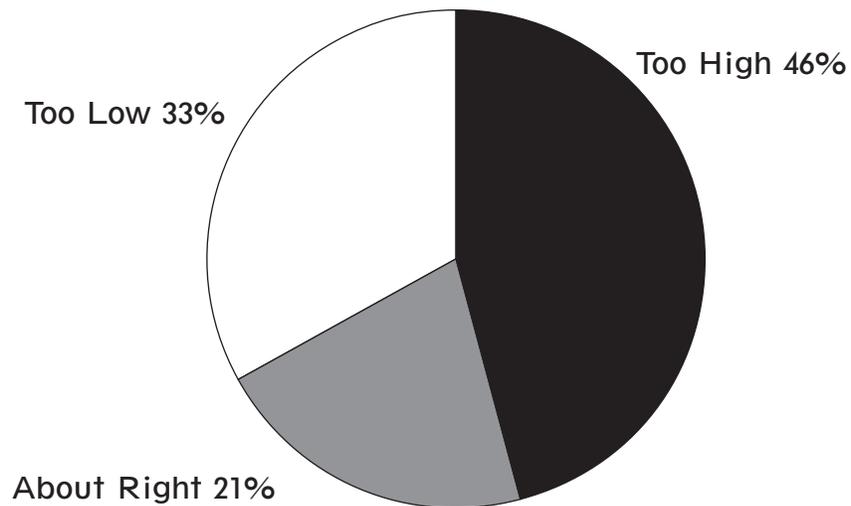
4. Approximately how much do you think is currently spent on each student in Rhode Island's public schools? Your estimate will represent the combined expenditures of local, state, and federal governments.

Actual 2006 school year figure: 13,336\*



\*National Center for Education Statistics, "Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2005-06," published April 2008. Calculated by dividing Rhode Island's total expenditures (Table 8) by Rhode Island's fall 2005 student membership (Table 3).

5. Do you believe that the average salary for Rhode Island public school teachers is:



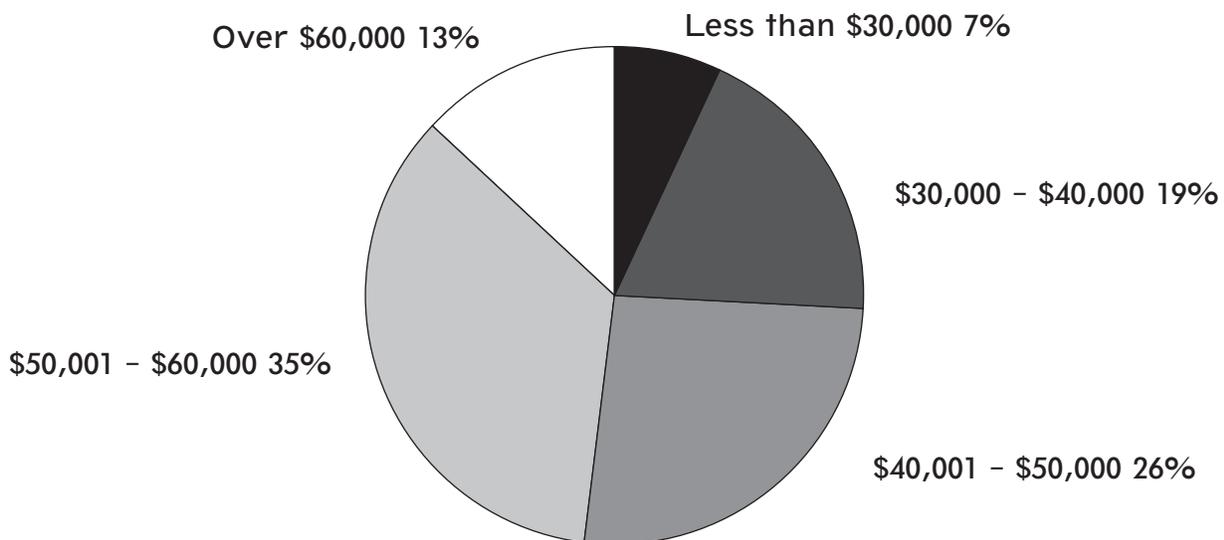
**Demographic Perspectives**

**PROVIDENCE COUNTY (n=469)**

- 30% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 53% prefer private schools
- 18% prefer regular public schools
- 13% prefer charter schools
- 13% prefer homeschooling
- 48% are familiar with virtual schools; 32% favor virtual schools
- 44% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 52% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 58% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 59% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 63% are familiar with school vouchers; 52% favor school vouchers

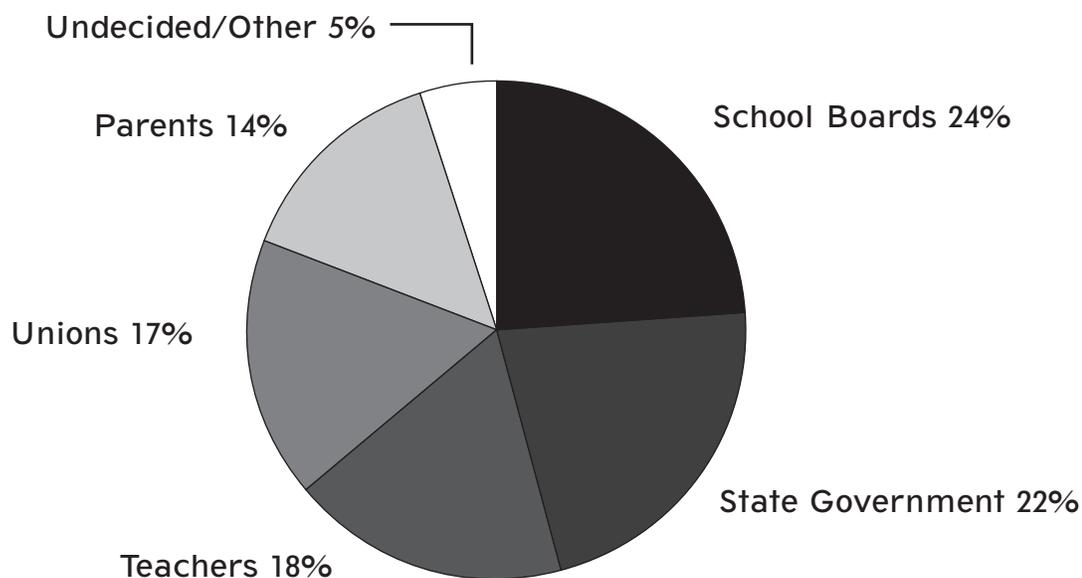
6. Approximately how much do you think is the average salary for Rhode Island's public school teachers?

**Actual 2006 school year figure: \$54,730\***



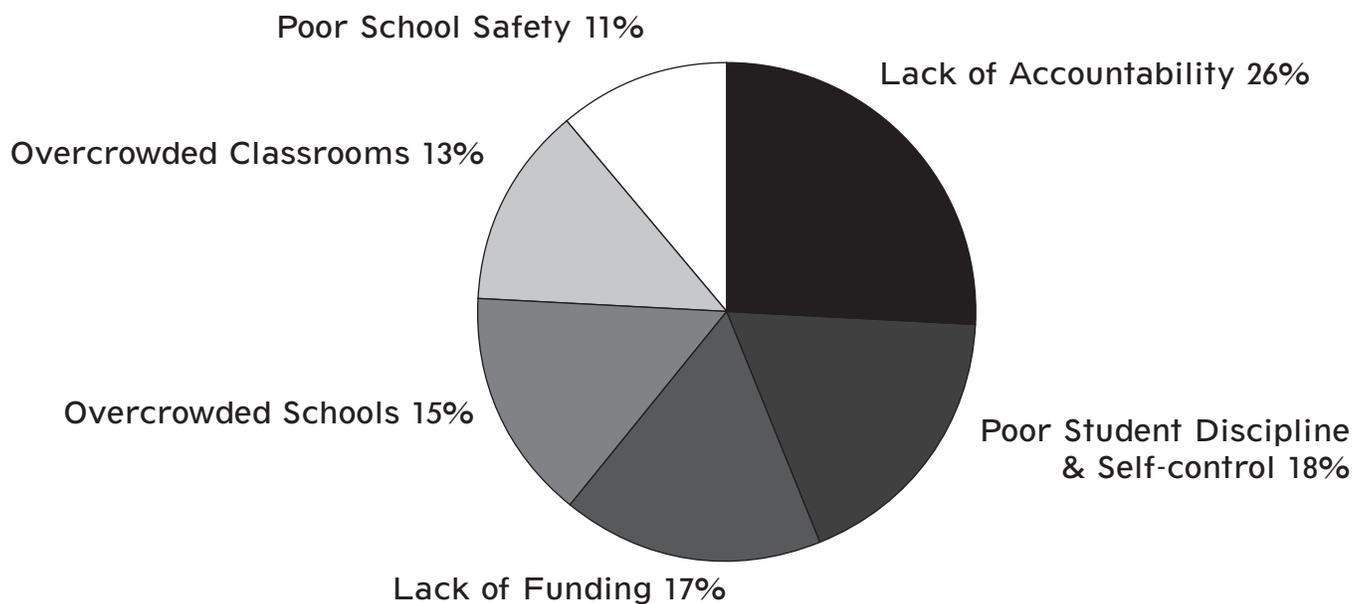
\*National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 2007, published March 2008.

7. Who has the greatest influence on Rhode Island's public school system?



The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

8. What do you see as the biggest challenge confronting Rhode Island's public school system?

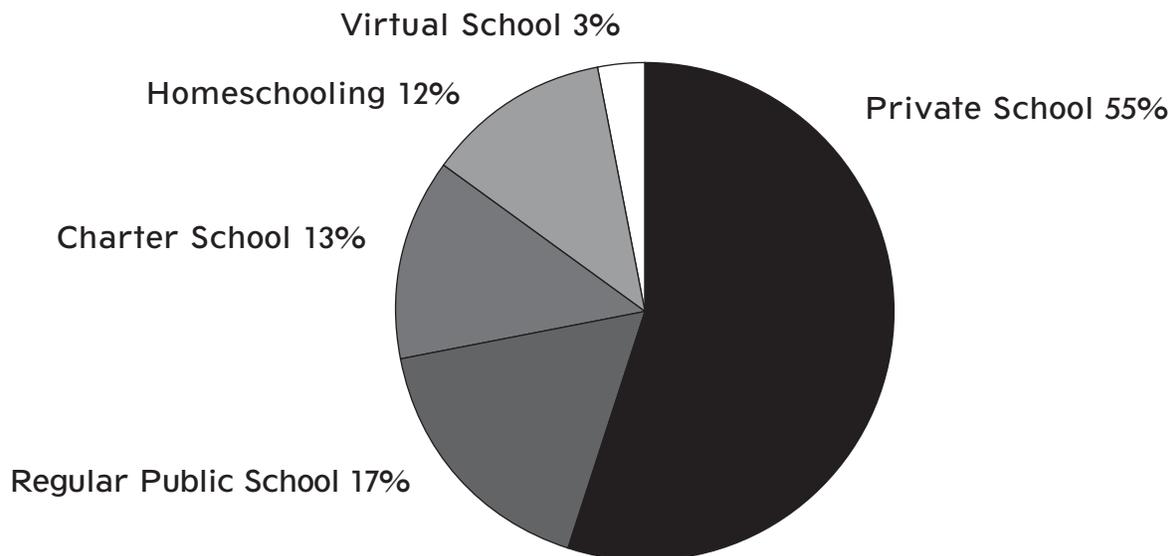


**Demographic Perspectives**

**PROVIDENCE CITY (n=269)**

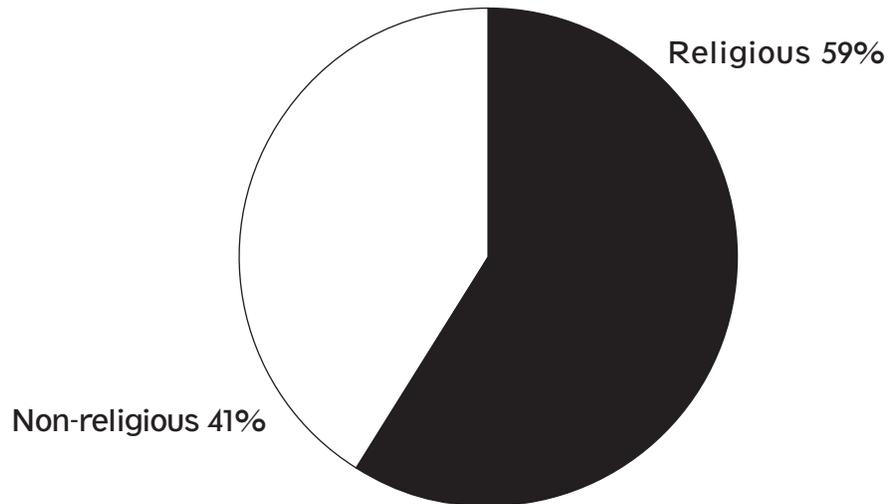
- 30% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 53% prefer private schools
- 18% prefer regular public schools
- 13% prefer charter schools
- 13% prefer homeschooling
- 48% are familiar with virtual schools; 32% favor virtual schools
- 44% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 52% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 58% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 59% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 63% are familiar with school vouchers; 52% favor school vouchers

9. 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? \_\_\_\_\_



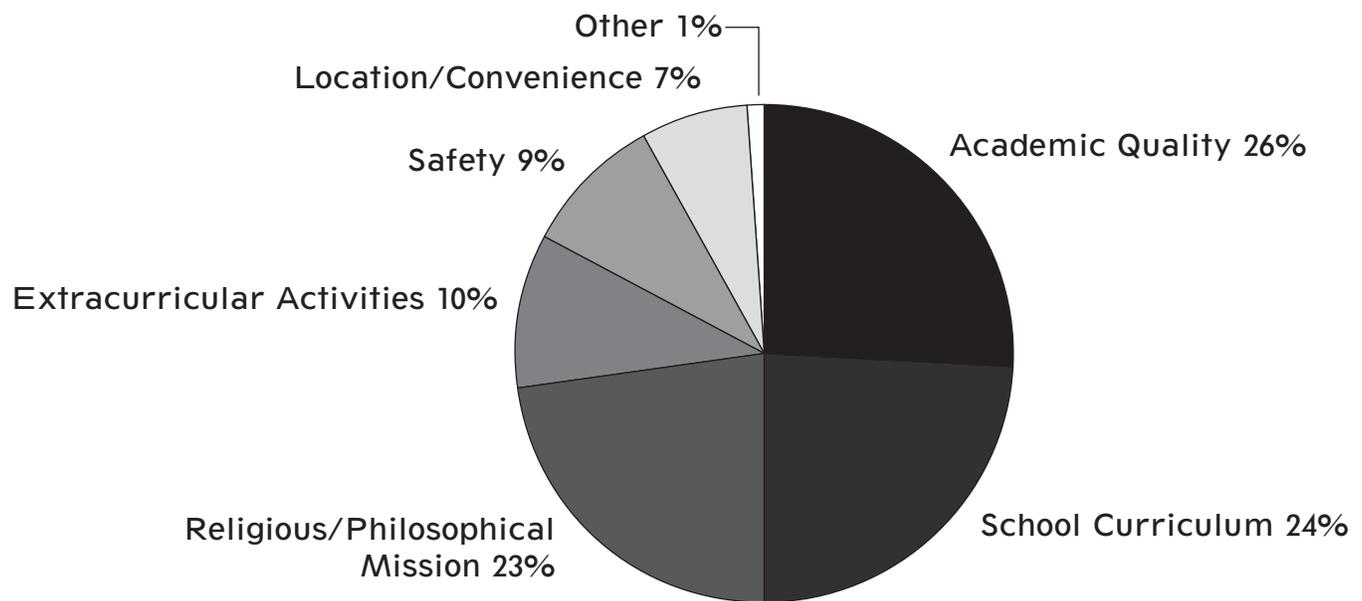
The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

10. [If "Private School" from Question 9] Please specify the type of Private School.



The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

11. Why would you select [answer from question 9] for your child?



The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

## Demographic Perspectives

**KENT (n=180)**

- 32% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 58% prefer private schools
- 16% prefer regular public schools
- 11% prefer charter schools
- 12% prefer homeschooling
- 51% are familiar with virtual schools; 31% favor virtual schools
- 44% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 56% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 54% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 59% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 54% are familiar with school vouchers; 56% favor school vouchers

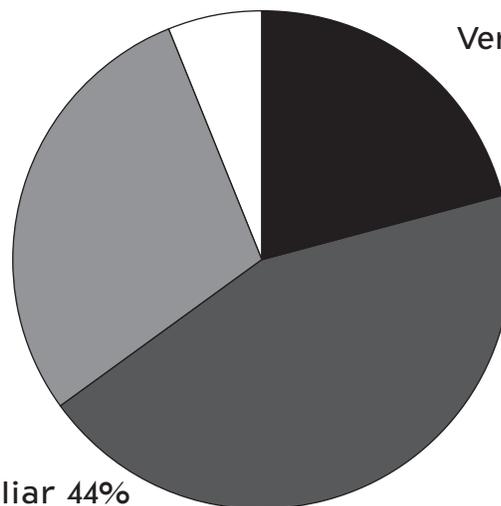
## 12. How familiar are you with charter schools in K-12 education?

I Have Never Heard of "Charter Schools" 6%

Not That Familiar 29%

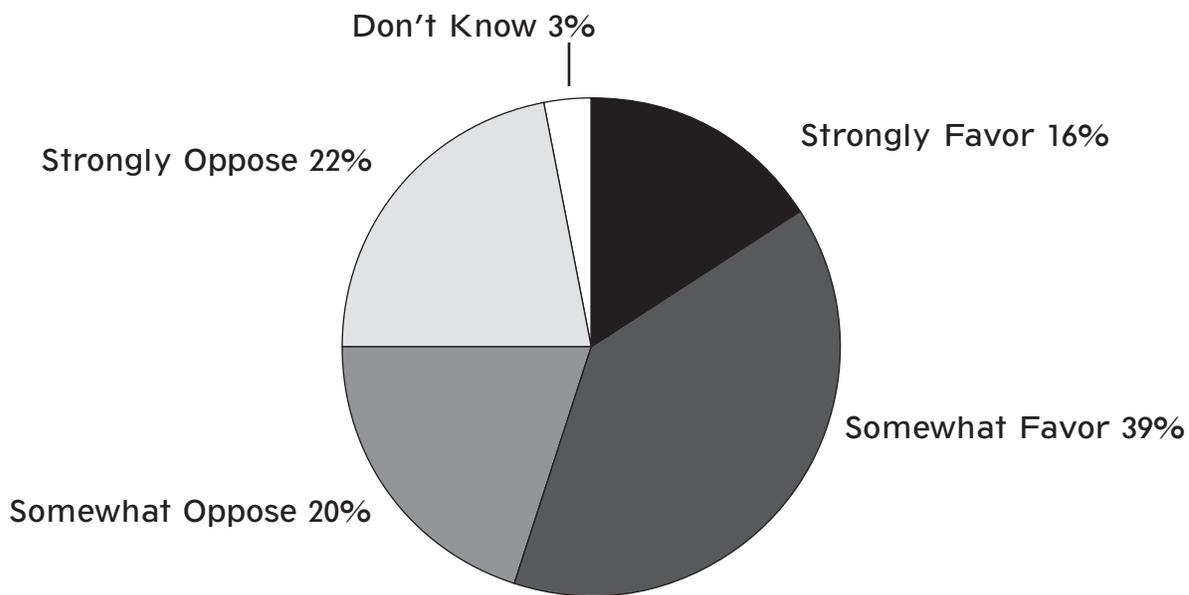
Somewhat Familiar 44%

Very Familiar 21%

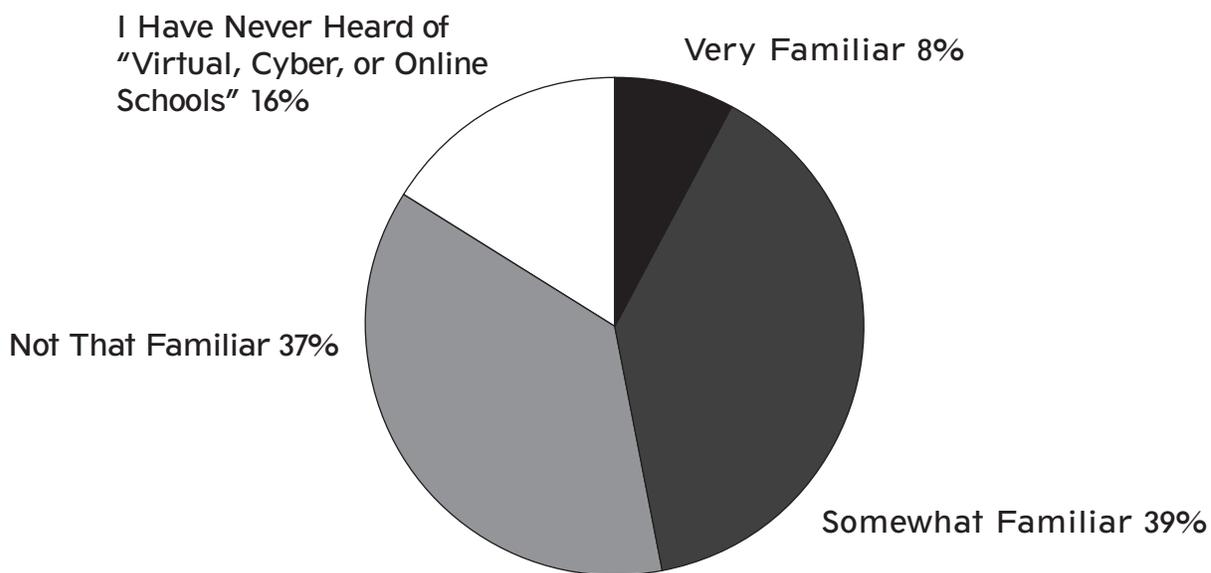


The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

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



14. How familiar are you with "virtual schools" in K-12 education? These schools are sometimes called "cyber schools" and "online schools".



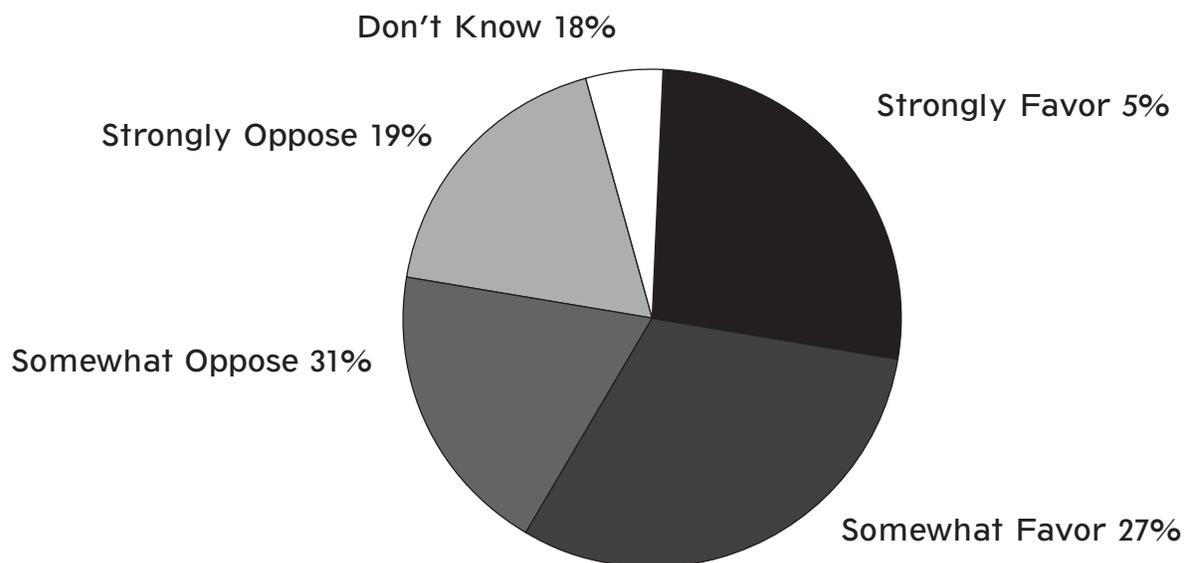
The order of the possible responses was rotated to avoid bias.

## Demographic Perspectives

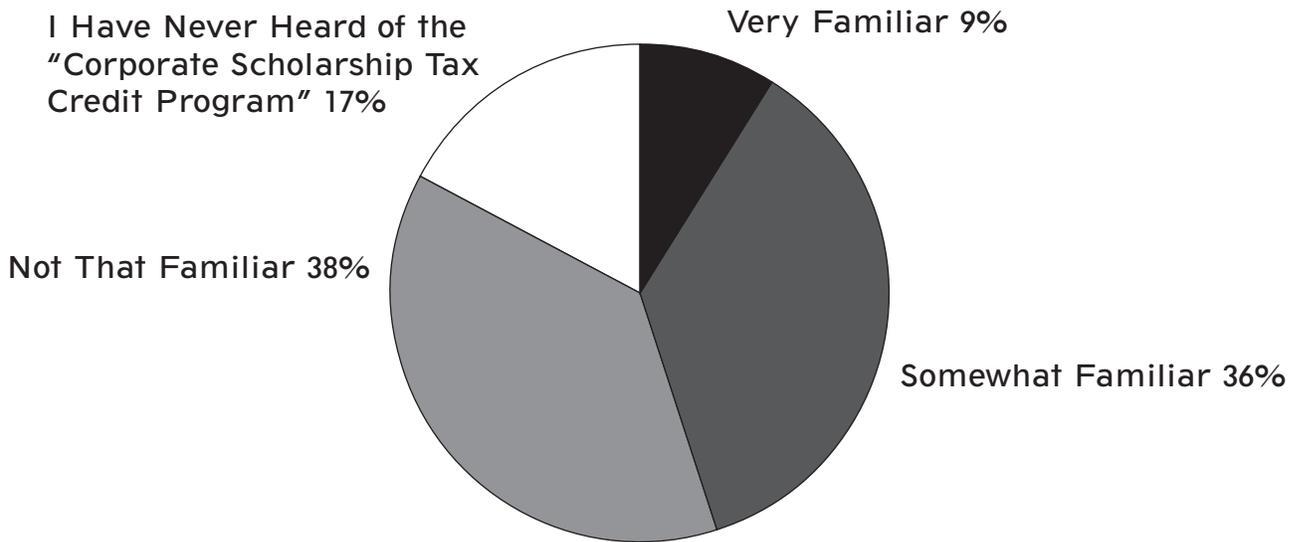
**WASHINGTON (n = 135)**

- 32% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 52% prefer private schools
- 22% prefer regular public schools
- 12% prefer charter schools
- 10% prefer homeschooling
- 51% are familiar with virtual schools; 29% favor virtual schools
- 41% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 57% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 57% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 57% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 68% are familiar with school vouchers; 51% favor school vouchers

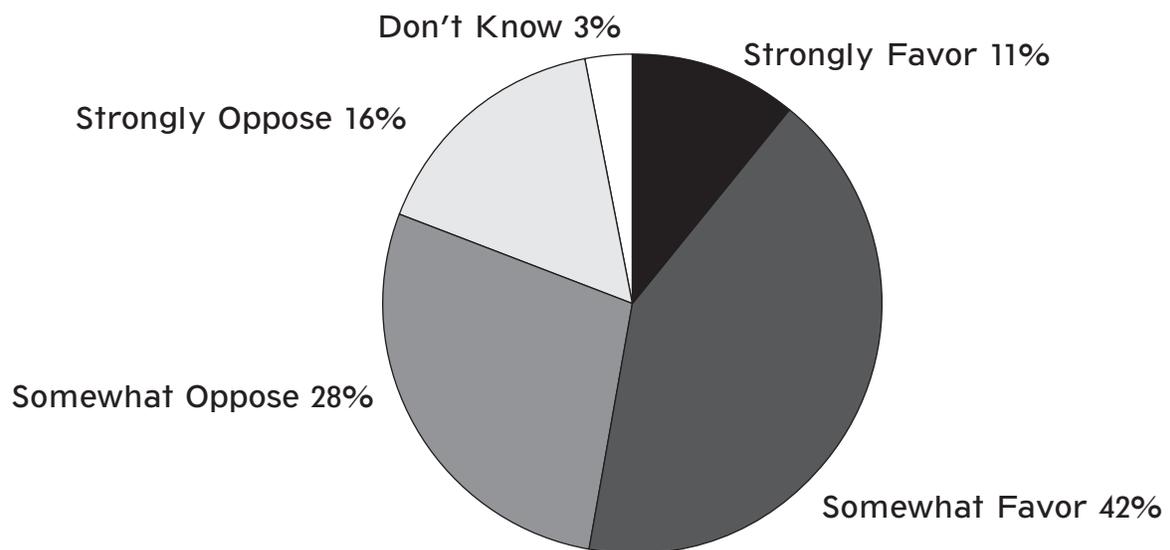
15. Virtual schools can be public or private schools that allow elementary, middle, and high school students to work with their curriculum and teachers over the Internet, rather than a traditional classroom. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of idea? \_\_\_\_\_



16. Rhode Island is one of several states that gives tax credits to businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships to low-income families. This policy is called the "Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit Program". How familiar are you with this program?



17. In general, do you favor or oppose such a program?

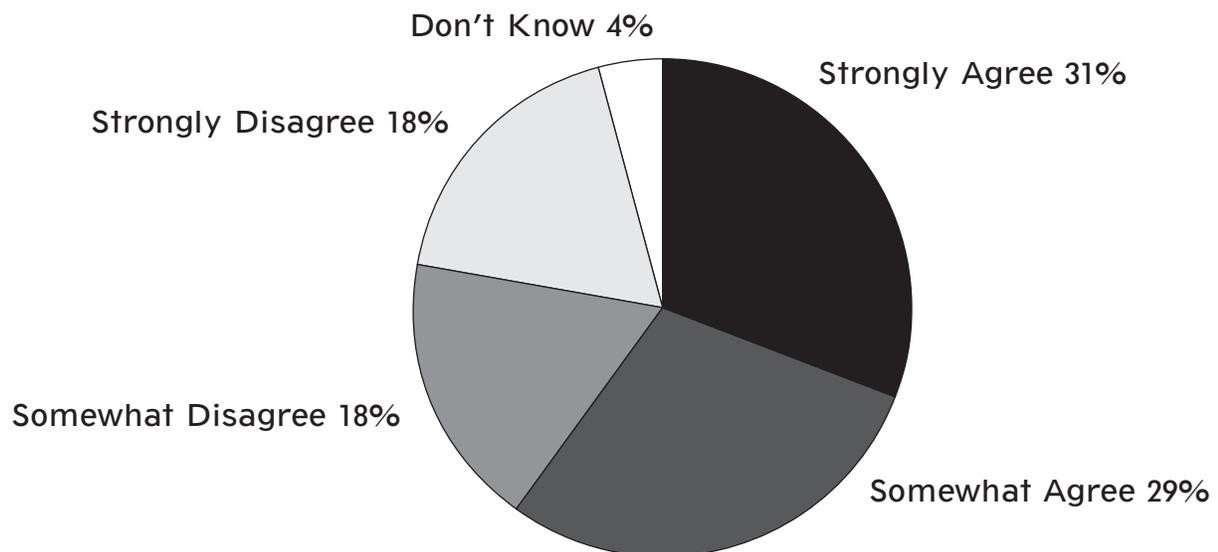


**Demographic Perspectives**

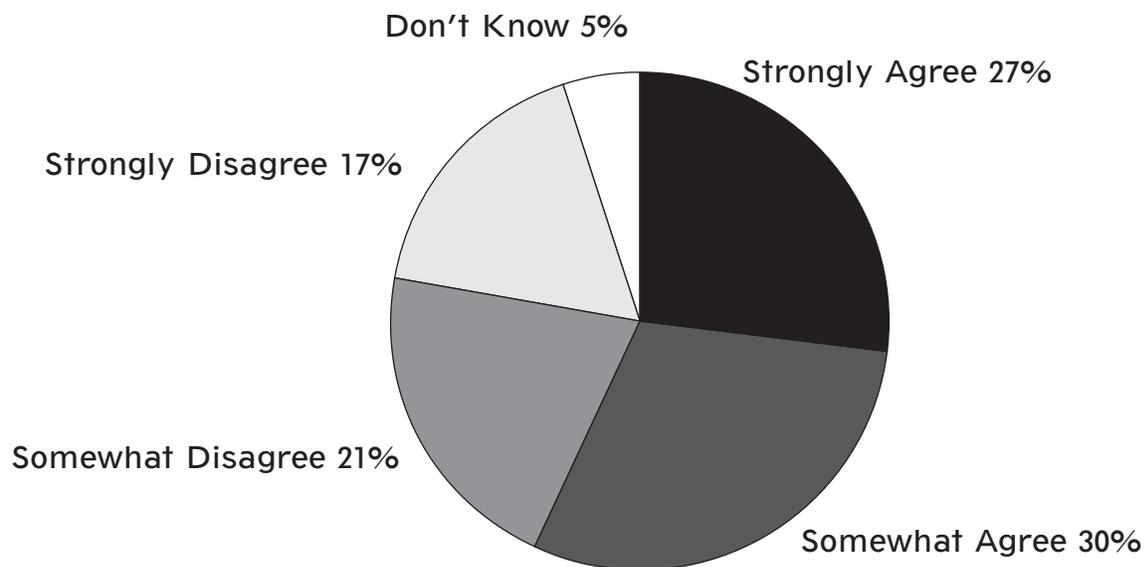
**DEMOCRATS (n=385)**

- 25% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 54% prefer private schools
- 19% prefer regular public schools
- 14% prefer charter schools
- 12% prefer homeschooling
- 45% are familiar with virtual schools; 31% favor virtual schools
- 44% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 51% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 55% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 60% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 65% are familiar with school vouchers; 52% favor school vouchers

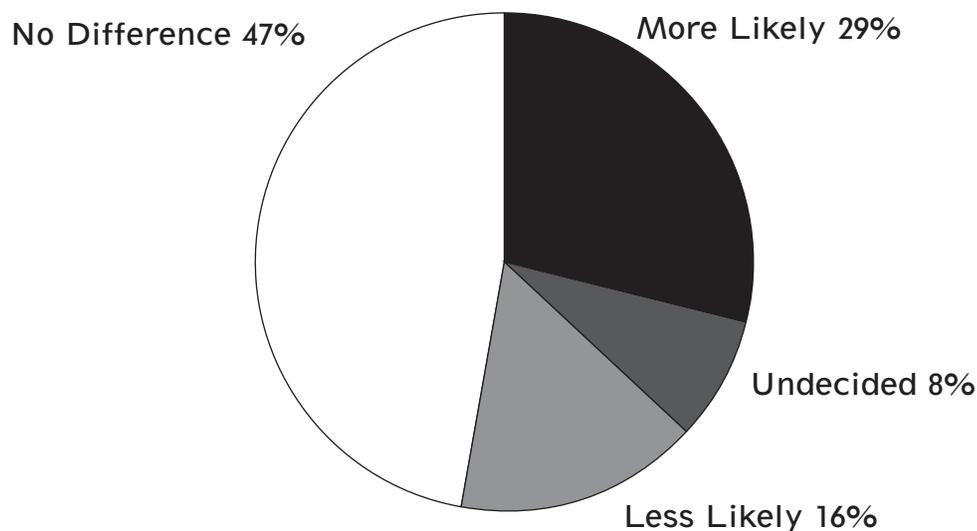
18. Some people believe that tax-credit scholarships should be available to students based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? \_\_\_\_\_



19. 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?



20. Thinking ahead to the next election, when a candidate for Governor, State Senator or Representative supports tax-credit scholarships, would that make you more likely to vote for them, less likely to vote for them, or make no difference whatsoever in your selection of candidates?



## Demographic Perspectives

### **INDEPENDENTS (n=624)**

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- 34% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 55% prefer private schools
- 16% prefer regular public schools
- 13% prefer charter schools
- 12% prefer homeschooling
- 47% are familiar with virtual schools; 33% favor virtual schools
- 44% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 54% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 57% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 60% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 63% are familiar with school vouchers; 54% favor school vouchers

## Demographic Perspectives

### **REPUBLICANS (n=143)**

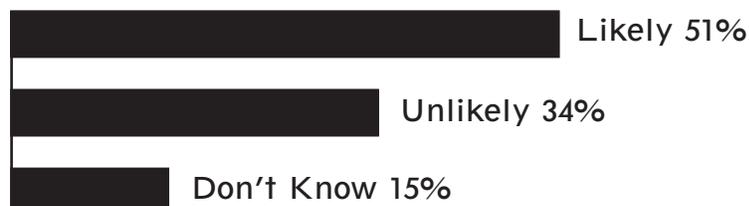
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- 35% rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"
- 55% prefer private schools
- 20% prefer regular public schools
- 10% prefer charter schools
- 10% prefer homeschooling
- 49% are familiar with virtual schools; 30% favor virtual schools
- 46% are familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 52% favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit
- 54% agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships
- 60% agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships
- 61% are familiar with school vouchers; 46% favor school vouchers

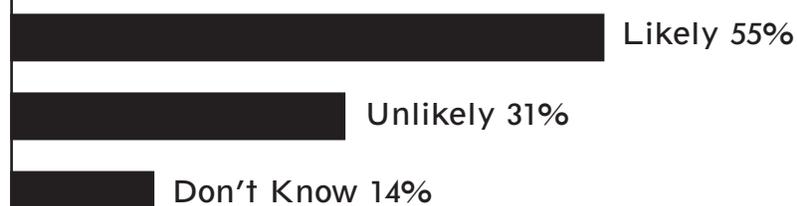
## Forecasting Questions

*"In this section, I would like to know if you think the following statements are 'likely' or 'unlikely' to happen as a result of the 'Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit Program,' which is currently in its second full year. If you are unsure, feel free to say 'I don't know.'" (questions 21 - 28 rotated to avoid bias)*

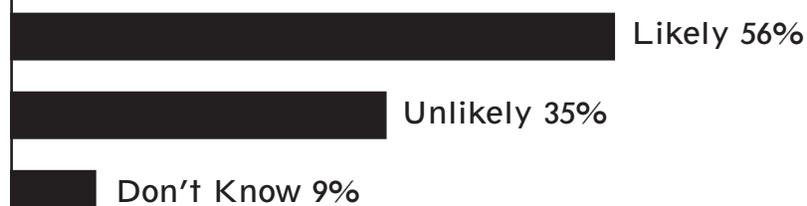
21. Parents will have more options.



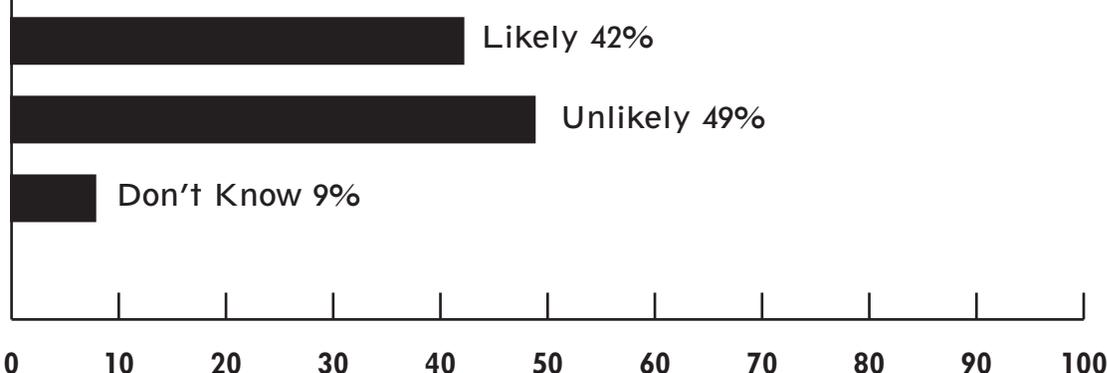
22. Parents will need better information for decisions.



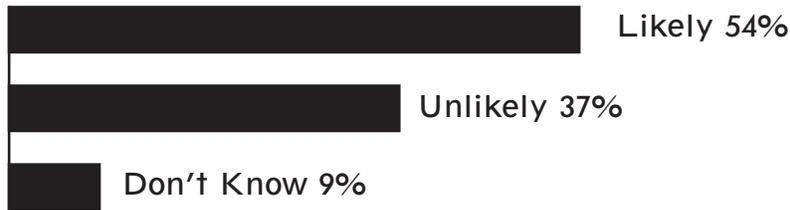
23. Public schools and private schools will compete for students.



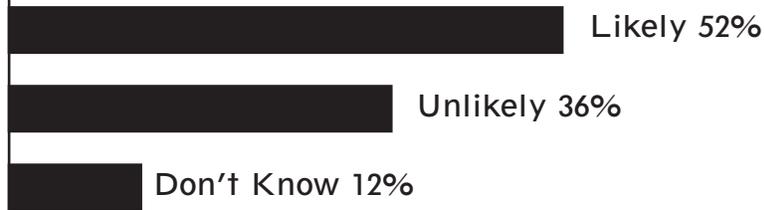
24. Private schools will not be accountable.



25. Parents will have more power.



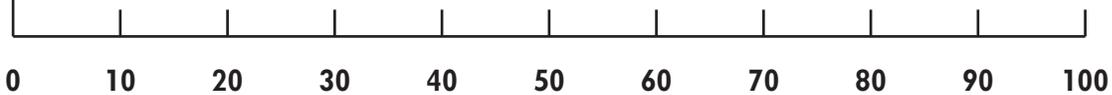
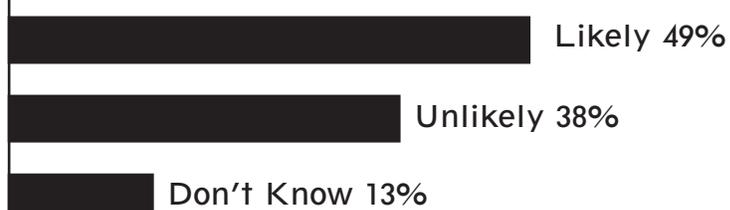
26. There will be less overcrowding in public schools.



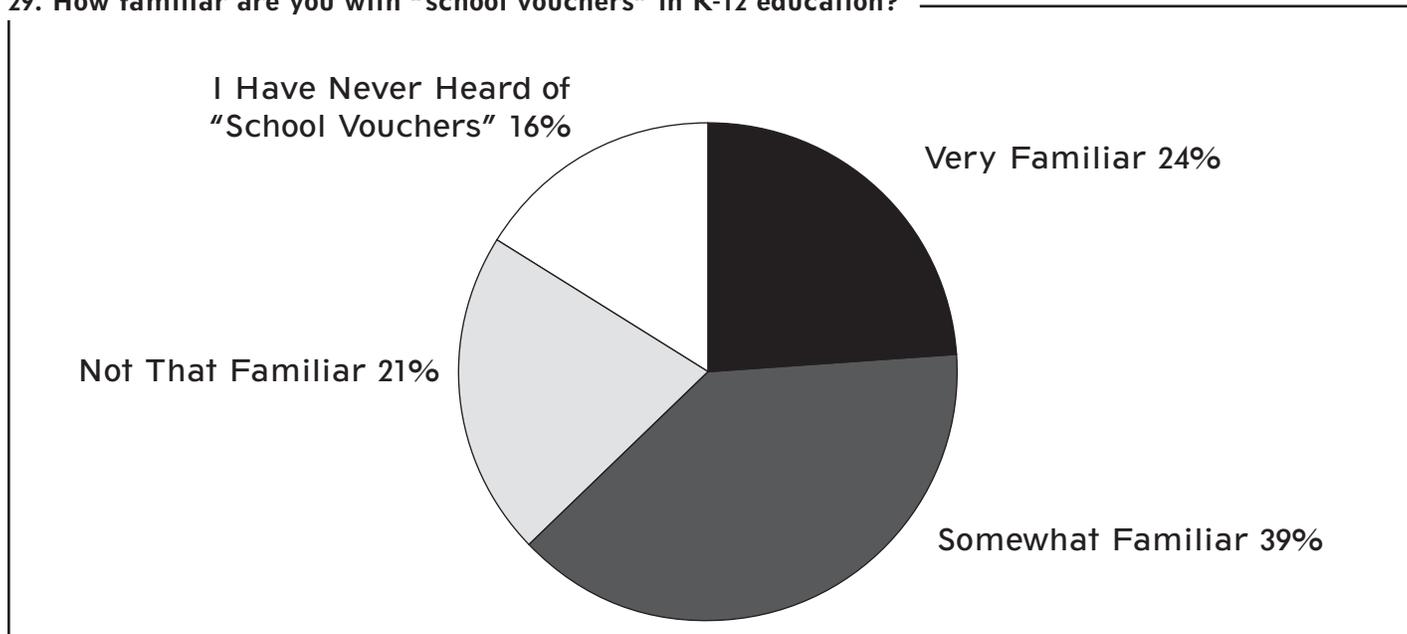
27. Public schools will close.



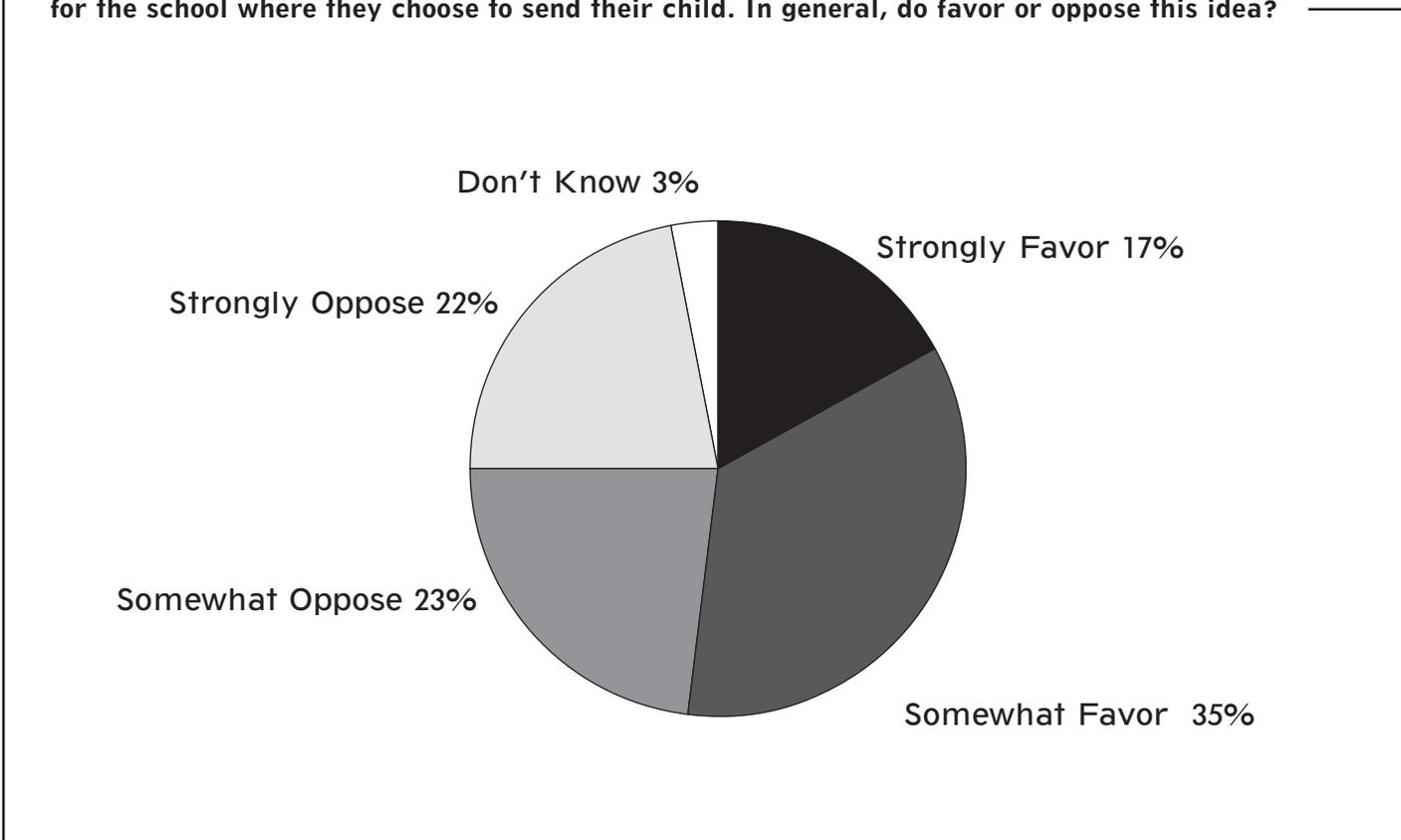
28. Public schools and private schools will have incentives to improve.



29. How familiar are you with "school vouchers" in K-12 education?



30. School vouchers allow parents the option of sending their children to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private/independent. 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 help pay tuition for the school where they choose to send their child. In general, do favor or oppose this idea?



## Community Identification

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	Urban (n = 286)	Suburban (n = 360)	Small Town (n = 483)	Rural (n = 71)
Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"	33	31	30	31
Prefer private schools	53	56	56	56
Prefer regular public schools	14	16	20	18
Prefer charter schools	18	11	12	11
Prefer homeschooling	14	14	10	10
Familiar with virtual schools	44	46	49	49
Favor virtual schools	40	29	29	31
Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	47	43	43	55
Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	49	53	55	59
Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships	55	58	57	58
Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships	62	59	60	58
Familiar with school vouchers	65	62	62	69
Favor school vouchers	55	51	52	49

## Race/Ethnicity Identification

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	African American (n = 84)	Asian (n = 36)	Hispanic (n = 133)	Native American (n = 12)	White (n = 923)
Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"	32	33	33	17	31
Prefer private schools	62	67	55	50	54
Prefer regular public schools	16	11	22	8	17
Prefer charter schools	12	14	11	17	13
Prefer homeschooling	11	3	10	17	13
Familiar with virtual schools	45	58	44	33	47
Favor virtual schools	30	25	28	50	33
Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	42	50	43	50	45
Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	55	36	53	50	53
Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships	60	64	60	75	57
Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships	59	56	53	84	59
Familiar with school vouchers	63	64	63	50	64
Favor school vouchers	56	56	53	33	52

## Religious Identification

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	Protestant (n = 287)	Catholic (n = 757)	Jewish (n = 24)	None (n = 72)
Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"	28	32	33	31
Prefer private schools	56	55	54	49
Prefer regular public schools	14	17	17	24
Prefer charter schools	14	13	17	10
Prefer homeschooling	14	12	0	13
Familiar with virtual schools	50	45	46	49
Favor virtual schools	33	32	25	32
Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	45	46	46	46
Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	53	54	58	56
Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships	59	57	54	50
Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships	58	60	58	64
Familiar with school vouchers	64	64	67	51
Favor school vouchers	55	52	33	57

## Union Ties

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	Union Ties (n=349)	No Union Ties (n=839)
Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"	31	31
Prefer private schools	51	57
Prefer regular public schools	16	17
Prefer charter schools	14	12
Prefer homeschooling	14	11
Familiar with virtual schools	48	46
Favor virtual schools	35	31
Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	41	47
Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	50	55
Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships	58	57
Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships	62	59
Familiar with school vouchers	65	62
Favor school vouchers	50	53

## State Government Ties

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	State Employee Ties (n = 252)	No State Employee Ties (n = 936)
Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"	31	31
Prefer private schools	54	55
Prefer regular public schools	18	17
Prefer charter schools	14	13
Prefer homeschooling	12	12
Familiar with virtual schools	42	48
Favor virtual schools	34	32
Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	43	46
Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	50	54
Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships	57	57
Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships	68	58
Familiar with school vouchers	62	64
Favor school vouchers	57	51

## Age Groups

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	18 - 25 (n=96)	26 - 35 (n=228)	36 - 45 (n=276)	46 - 55 (n=240)	56 - 65 (n=192)	Over 65 (n=168)
<b>Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"</b>	30	27	29	32	31	29
<b>Prefer private schools</b>	50	53	64	51	56	51
<b>Prefer regular public schools</b>	20	16	15	15	20	20
<b>Prefer charter schools</b>	13	14	9	17	10	16
<b>Prefer homeschooling</b>	15	14	9	14	9	12
<b>Familiar with virtual schools</b>	51	42	45	56	40	49
<b>Favor virtual schools</b>	35	35	26	38	28	32
<b>Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit</b>	46	46	42	47	47	43
<b>Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit</b>	52	49	56	56	51	52
<b>Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships</b>	56	53	58	58	57	61
<b>Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships</b>	60	63	58	58	62	59
<b>Familiar with school vouchers</b>	73	64	59	64	61	64
<b>Favor school vouchers</b>	55	50	53	49	55	53

## Family Income Groups

(expressed by percentage of respondents)

	Under \$25,000 (n = 108)	\$25,000 - \$49,999 (n = 240)	\$50,000 - \$74,999 (n = 385)	\$75,000 - \$150,000 (n = 276)	Over \$150,000 (n = 191)
Rate the state's public school system as "good" or "excellent"	30	35	29	33	29
Prefer private schools	57	52	53	58	57
Prefer regular public schools	18	18	19	16	15
Prefer charter schools	6	17	13	14	11
Prefer homeschooling	14	12	12	9	15
Familiar with virtual schools	40	48	44	52	49
Favor virtual schools	31	36	32	29	32
Familiar with the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	45	48	43	44	46
Favor the Corporate Scholarship Tax Credit	54	55	52	52	53
Agree in principle with universal eligibility of scholarships	59	55	59	57	54
Agree in principle with financial need-based eligibility of scholarships	55	59	61	58	67
Familiar with school vouchers	69	67	61	62	60
Favor school vouchers	54	53	52	54	47

# Demographics

## ARE YOU CURRENTLY THE PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF ANY SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN IN GRADES K-12?

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Yes	89%
No	11%

## DO YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS MOST CLOSELY REFLECT THOSE OF A:

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Democrat	32%
Libertarian	1%
Republican	12%
Other Party Affiliation	3%
Independent/No Party Affiliation	52%

## BASED ON ZIP CODE RESPONSE, CITY OR STATE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION:

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Providence County	39%
Providence City	22%
Kent	15%
Washington	11%
Newport	8%
Bristol	4%

## HOW WOULD YOU BEST DESCRIBE WHERE YOU LIVE?

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Urban	24%
Suburban	30%
Small Town	40%
Rural	6%

## IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING AGE CATEGORIES DO YOU FALL IN?

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18 - 25	8%
26 - 35	19%
36 - 45	23%
46 - 55	20%
56 - 65	16%
Over 65	14%

## ARE YOU:

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African American	7%
Asian	3%
Hispanic	11%
Native American	1%
White	77%
Other	1%

**WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION, IF ANY?**

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Catholic	63%
Jewish	2%
Baptist	6%
Lutheran	5%
Methodist	4%
Other Protestant	9%
Other Religion	5%
None	6%

**IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES DOES YOUR TOTAL FAMILY INCOME FALL?**

---

Under \$25,000	9%
\$25,000-\$49,999	20%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	32%
\$75,000 - \$150,000	23%
Over \$150,000	16%

**ARE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY AN EMPLOYEE OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND?**

---

Yes	21%
No	78%
Don't Know	1%

**ARE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR FAMILY A UNION (TEACHER OR LABOR) MEMBER?**

---

Yes	29%
No	70%
Don't Know	1%

**ARE YOU:**

---

Male	48%
Female	52%



# THE FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR Educational *Choice*

Milton and Rose D. Friedman established the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice in 1996. We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization addressing the Friedmans' long-standing concern about the urgent challenges facing America's elementary and secondary education systems. The foundation's philosophy asserts that the best way to improve the quality of education is to enable all parents to have unfettered free choice of the schools that their children attend. The Friedman Foundation conducts research and outreach projects to educate the general public and to amplify the call for systemic reform through school choice.

**Dr. Milton Friedman, Founder**

Nobel Laureate and Founder of the Friedman Foundation

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As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, we rely solely on the generous support of our donors to continue promoting the Friedman's vision for school choice throughout the country. Please send your tax-deductible gift today and help interject liberty and choice into our education system.

Giving parents the freedom to choose the school that works best for their children is our goal, and with your help we can make it happen.



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