



Memorandum

To: Interested Parties
From: Beck Research LLC
Date: January 22, 2015

Re: School Choice Survey Research Results

Our recent national survey among likely 2016 November voters demonstrates that school choice has incredible support across the nation. This survey demonstrates that voters strongly welcome greater school choice. Voters back the concept of school choice by a wide 69%-to-27% margin and support a series of more specific school choice proposals. More than three out of four (76%) support charter schools. Four out of five voters (83%) support Special Needs Scholarships and strong majorities support Education Saving Accounts, Scholarship Tax Credit Programs and Opportunity Scholarships, also known as school vouchers. In addition, most voters (83%) back providing vouchers in some form, including 39% who think vouchers should be available to all students regardless of their parents' income.

The survey fielded January 14-18, 2015 among a total of 1,800 likely November 2016 voters. The project consists of two parts: a national survey among 800 voters and a series of 10 over samples (100 per state). The ten states are Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, Tennessee and Wisconsin. The base sample margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

The oversample was "case weighted" back into the national, base interviews so that the number of voters in each state is proportional. Therefore, the analysis contained herein represents N=1800 interviews, even though it only appears as N=800.

- **Over two-thirds support the concept of school choice.** When asked, "Generally speaking, would you say you favor or oppose the concept of school choice? School choice gives parents the right to use the tax dollars associated with their child's education to send their child to the public or private school which better serves their needs," fully 69% support school choice, including 45% who strongly support it, while 27% oppose it. School choice support has strong support across partisan lines; 60% of Democrats, 67% of Independents and 81% of Republicans back it.

- **Special needs scholarships enjoy incredible support.** Special need scholarships have the strongest support among the tested programs; a majority *strongly* supports special needs scholarships (83% total support, 14% oppose).
- **Public charter schools are very popular.** “Public charter schools, which are independently managed public schools that receive taxpayer dollars and are open to all students,” are supported by 76% of voters with just 20% opposed. Voters, regardless of their party, are attracted to public charter schools and support is high among all groups (73% of Democrats, 77% of Independents, and 79% of Republicans support)
- **A wide range of school choice programs enjoy strong support.** Opportunity Scholarships, also known as school vouchers, are supported by 63% with 34% who oppose the program, while Scholarship Tax Credit Programs and Education Savings Accounts also are supported by at least two-thirds of voters.

Support for School Choice (Support – Oppose)	
Special Needs Scholarships	83% - 14%
Public Charter Schools	76% - 20%
Scholarship Tax Credit Programs	70% - 26%
Education Savings Accounts	66% - 29%
Opportunity Scholarships/vouchers	63% - 34%

A majority of Democrats (53%) support Opportunity Scholarships/school vouchers, while Independents (62% support) and Republicans (75% support) are even more enthusiastic.

- **School choice provides an immediate solution for American students.** In terms of messaging, the top three arguments are fairly consistent. Each focuses on immediate student benefits of Opportunity Scholarships or school vouchers. By large margins, respondents found the arguments in favor of school choice persuasive.
 - *“Too many students are stuck in failing schools and need help right now. If K to 12 students are not receiving a quality education in their neighborhood public school, parents should have the opportunity to get them a quality education at another school”* (50% very convincing, 77% very or somewhat convincing).
 - *“Opportunity scholarship programs give children from low income families a way out of failing schools so they are not forced to wait indefinitely for their local schools to improve. Students should not be sentenced to a poor*

education based upon their zip code” (49% very convincing, 77% very or somewhat convincing).

- *“Vouchers provide an immediate path for children from low income families in failing schools to access a better education. Studies show that children in these programs have higher graduation rates, higher academic achievement and parents are more satisfied with their child's school” (43% very convincing, 76% very or somewhat convincing).*
- **Most want vouchers available to all, regardless of income.** In addition, 83% of voters think some sort of vouchers and tax credit scholarships should be available in some form, but only 39% think they should be available to all students regardless of household income, and 32% say vouchers should be available to middle class and low income families. Few voters (12% of likely voters) think vouchers should be restricted to low income families.
- **Voters agree that greater school choice is a positive force.** There is strong agreement that "choice and competition among schools improves education" (65% agree), compared to 27% who say "choice and competition among schools hurts education." A majority of voters (54%) agree that "giving parents more choices of schools will improve the education system" while just 37% say "giving parents more choices of schools does not impact the quality of education."

American Federation for Children Frequency Questionnaire

January 14-18, 2015
800 Likely Voters (1800 Unweighted)

Q.5 Are you registered to vote?

	Total
Yes	100
No	-
(Don't know/refused)	-
(ref:SCREEN2)	

Q.6 Many people weren't able to vote in the 2012 election for president between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. How about you? Were you able to vote, or for some reason were you unable to vote?

	Total
Voted	98
Not registered in 2012/Ineligible/too young	2
Did not vote	-
(Can't remember/Don't know)	-
(Refused)	-
(ref:VOTE12)	

Q.7 Even though it's a long way off, what are the chances that you will vote in the November 2016 election for President, Congress and other offices?

	Total
Almost certain	92
Probably	8
50-50	-
Will not vote	-
(Don't know/refused)	-
(ref:WILLVTE2)	

Q.10 Do you think of yourself as a Democrat or Republican?

	Total
Strong Democrat	22
Weak Democrat	11
Independent-lean Democrat	11
Independent	12
Independent-lean Republican	13
Weak Republican	7
Strong Republican	23
(Don't know/Refused)	2
(ref:PTYID1)	

[262 Respondents]

Q.13 (ASK IF DEMOCRATIC IN PTYID1) I'm going to read a list of possible candidates for the Democratic nomination for President in 2016. I know it is a long way off, but please tell me, if the 2016 Democratic Presidential primary or caucus in your state were being held today, for whom would you vote?

	Total
Hillary Clinton	65
Elizabeth Warren	10
Joe Biden	7
Bernie Sanders	2
Jim Webb	1
Martin O'Malley	1
(None)	1
(Other)	0
(Don't know/refused)	13
(ref:DEM16)	

[237 Respondents]

Q.14 (ASK IF REPUBLICAN IN PTYID1) I'm going to read a list of possible candidates for the Republican nomination for President in 2016. I know it is a long way off, but please tell me, if the 2016 Republican Presidential primary or caucus in your state were being held today, for whom would you vote?

	Total
Mitt Romney	32
Jeb Bush	18
Rand Paul	9
Ted Cruz	6
Scott Walker	6
Chris Christie	5
Bobby Jindal	3
(None)	3
(Other)	2
(Don't know/refused)	18
(ref:REP16)	

Q.15 Now I'd like to get your opinion on the quality of public schools, and by that I mean grades K-through-12, not colleges and universities. First, would you say that public schools in America as a whole are providing an excellent, good, average, not-so-good, or poor quality of education?

	Total
Excellent	4
Good	24
Average.....	37
Not-so-good	18
Poor.....	14
(Don't know/refused)	3
Total Excellent/good	28
Total Not so good/poor	32
Excellent/good - Not so good/poor	-4
(ref: SCHQUAL)	

Q.16 Now thinking about the issues facing YOUR LOCAL public schools, which of the following is the BIGGEST source of the problems?

	Total
Not enough funding and money.....	25
Too much bureaucracy and wasteful spending.....	20
Lack of discipline	13
Too much student testing.....	9
Overcrowded classrooms and schools	8
Too few quality teachers.....	7
Poor academic performance	6
Violence and illegal drugs	4
(Don't know/refused)	8
(ref: CRISIS)	

Q.17 I am now going to read you some statements. As I read each pair, please tell me which statement comes closer to your own view.

	1st Stmt Much	1st Stmt Smwt	2nd Stmt Smwt	2nd Stmt Much	DK/ Ref	Total 1st Stmt	Total 2nd Stmt	1st - 2nd
17 Giving parents more choices of schools will improve the education system.								

OR

Giving parents more choices of schools does not impact the quality of education.	34	19	16	21	9	54	37	17
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18 Choice and competition among schools improves education.

OR

Choice and competition among schools hurts education.	39	26	11	16	8	65	27	38
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19 We need to make major changes to the ways that public schools are run.

OR

We only need to make minor changes to the ways that public schools are run. (ref:CONTPAIR)	48	14	17	15	6	62	32	29
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Q.20 Generally speaking, would you say you favor or oppose the concept of school choice? School choice gives parents the right to use the tax dollars associated with their child's education to send their child to the public or private school which better serves their needs.

	Total
Strongly support.....	45
Somewhat support	24
Somewhat oppose	9
Strongly oppose	18
(Don't know/Refused).....	4
Total Support	69
Total Oppose	27
Support - Oppose (ref:INTVOTE)	42

Q.21 I am going to read you a list of specific education proposals for K through twelve schools. For each, please tell me if you support or oppose that proposal.

	Strng Supp	Smwt Supp	Smwt Opp	Strng Opp	DK/ Ref	Total Supp	Total Opp	Supp - Opp
[400 Respondents]								
21 (SPLIT A) Opportunity scholarships, also known as school vouchers, which allow eligible students to receive publically funded scholarships to attend a private school of their parents' choice.....	39	23	12	22	3	63	34	29
22 Scholarship tax credit programs which give families access to private schools by allowing companies or individuals donate to non-profit organizations which award scholarships to eligible students to attend private schools.	36	34	9	17	4	70	26	44
23 Education savings accounts, which use state funds to create a personal account for parents to fund education expenses, including tuition, tutoring, testing fees and books.....	39	27	12	18	4	66	29	37
24 Special needs scholarships, which allow children with disabilities or special needs to attend a private school of their parents' choice.....	57	26	7	8	3	83	14	68
26 Public charter schools, which are independently managed public schools that receive taxpayer dollars and are open to all students. (ref:INTBAT)	43	33	8	12	4	76	20	56

Q.27 Regardless of your position on vouchers or charter schools, what do you think is the BEST reason to increase school choice in America?

	Total
QUALITY OF EDUCATION.....	36
Chance to achieve better education/strive to be better	16
Quality of education (general).....	11
Best education for children.....	4
Help special needs students.....	2
Children's individual growth	2
Make schools perform better/student achievement	2
One size doesn't fit all	1
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.....	18
Gives parents choices	11
Parental involvement helps students learn	2
Do not have to send child to bad school.....	2
Gives low-income parents opportunity for life	2
To go to school near to where they live	1
Makes parents more aware of education	1
Easier for parents.....	0
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	15
Give students the option to choose according to interest	5
Better/ More teachers	4
More opportunities (general).....	2
It will have better funding	2
Decrease class size	1
Better college preparation	1
Better career preparation	1
Education should be broad based	0
More science and math.....	0
Decrease dropout rate.....	0
More art and music.....	0
Increased teacher's pay	0
Neighborhood schools do not expose students to different environments	0
GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT	11
Give parents freedom to choose what they want.....	10
Less government interference.....	1
Government should help special needs/handicapped students.....	0
Government shouldn't tell students where to go to school	0
COMPETITIONS PROMOTES EXCELLENCE	10
Competition makes schools better.....	4
Competition promotes excellence	3
Promotes fairness	2
Higher standards for schools	1
Get American schools back on track	1
Puts pressure on schools.....	0
Creates an open market	0

NEGATIVES.....	8
Should not have school choice	4
Nothing positive/general negative	2
People should go to public school	1
Waste of money	1
Public funds shouldn't be used on private schools	1
Doesn't benefit the middle or low income/ Applicable only to the rich.....	0
Part of Republican agenda/against Republican agenda.....	0
OTHER.....	1
Best way to allow Christians to send their children to religious schools	1
Will get rid of unions.....	0
DON'T KNOW.....	15
(ref:OPEN1)	

Q.28 Vouchers and tax credit scholarships are typically only available to low income or middle class families. Which of the following is closest to your personal belief?

	Total
They should be available to all students regardless of the income of their parents	39
They should be available to low income and middle class families	32
They should be restricted to low income families	12
They should not be offered at all	14
(Don't know/refused)	2
Income based.....	44
Available any income.....	83
(ref:VCHER3)	

Q.29 Now, let me read you a series of reasons to support opportunity scholarship programs or school vouchers. Please tell me whether this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing or not at all convincing reason to support opportunity scholarship programs.

	Very Conv	Smwt Conv	A Little Conv	Not at All	DK/ Ref	Very/ Smwt Conv	Little/ Not Conv
29 Opportunity scholarship programs benefit those children most in need. Most of the programs across the country help children from low income families.....	30	40	11	17	2	69	28
[400 Respondents]							
30 (SPLIT C) Opportunity scholarship programs give children from low income families a way out of failing schools so they are not forced to wait indefinitely for their local schools to improve. Students should not be sentenced to a poor education based upon their zip code.	49	28	5	16	1	77	22
31 Opportunity scholarship programs provide the most freedom to parents to find innovative schools or learning environments customized to each child's needs - in contrast with the current, quote, "one size fits all" education system.....	30	34	11	23	2	64	34
32 Vouchers provide an immediate path for children from low income families in failing schools to access a better education. Studies show that children in these programs have higher graduation rates, higher academic achievement and parents are more satisfied with their child's school.	43	33	10	13	1	76	23
[400 Respondents]							
33 (SPLIT C) Well designed opportunity scholarships or voucher programs include strong accountability measures to ensure high student achievement as well as careful financial oversight and administration.....	27	41	11	18	3	68	29
[400 Respondents]							
34 (SPLIT D) Too many students are stuck in failing schools and need help right now. If K to 12 students are not receiving a quality education in their neighborhood public school, parents should have the opportunity to get them a quality education at another school.....	50	27	5	16	2	77	21

	Very Conv	Smwt Conv	A Little Conv	Not at All	DK/ Ref	Very/ Smwt Conv	Little/ Not Conv
[400 Respondents] 35 (SPLIT D) Increasing school choice helps communities by breaking the current public school monopoly and increasing incentives to improve. More school choice increases competition and improves the quality of all schools.	34	35	10	20	2	69	29
[400 Respondents] 36 (SPLIT C) Public charter schools have more freedom to innovate and provide more specialized education to students, which raises student achievement. If a public charter school does not perform, the school is held accountable and may be closed.	40	32	10	17	2	71	27
[400 Respondents] 37 (SPLIT D) Some of the nation's biggest school districts, such as New York City, Washington, DC, and Milwaukee, have embraced public charter schools and public school charter students outperform their traditional public school counterparts. Underperforming charter schools are closed. In Washington, DC, public school charters serve a majority of public school students and public school charter students outperform their peers and boast a graduation rate that is twenty-percent higher than traditional public schools.	36	35	9	17	3	71	26
[400 Respondents] 38 (SPLIT D) On the college level, many students combine government scholarships with private funding to receive high quality education through Pell Grants and other scholarships to attend an institution of higher education that may be a public, private or religious college. It is time to extend this model to improve K through 12 education.	26	38	11	22	3	64	33
[400 Respondents] 39 (SPLIT C) The average cost per typical student is lower for voucher and public charter school students. These programs help save taxpayers money and use vital education spending in a more efficient manner while better student achievement. (ref:CONV)	28	36	10	23	3	64	34

Q.40 Now let me read you a series of statements that some people who oppose school choice programs make. For each statement, please tell me whether this description raises very serious doubts, serious doubts, minor doubts or no real doubts in your own mind about these school choice programs.

	Very Ser Dbts	Ser Dbts	Minor Dbts	No Real Dbts	DK/ Ref	Total Ser Dbts	Minor/ No Dbts
[400 Respondents] 40 (SPLIT A) Vouchers take money from public schools and give it to private and religious schools and are a violation of the separation of church and state. Taxpayers should not have to pay for the religious education of other students.	19	22	20	34	5	41	54
[400 Respondents] 41 (SPLIT B) Vouchers are a plot by wealthy corporate interests to privatize public education.....	10	21	30	31	7	32	62
42 Private schools do not have the same accountability or standards as public schools. We need more transparency in public schools, not a separate system that is exempt from the rules.....	14	25	24	31	6	39	55
43 Vouchers only work to move motivated students and parents out of public schools and into private ones. This further diminishes the quality of public schools, leaving the schools in a worse situation than they were before.	15	26	26	28	5	41	54
[400 Respondents] 44 (SPLIT A) Vouchers are not realistic in many parts of the country, especially rural areas where students must travel farther to school. Vouchers spread scarce resources too thin and damage existing schools.	15	28	26	25	6	43	51
[400 Respondents] 45 (SPLIT B) Vouchers allow students to attend private religious schools that teach creationism, focus on religious studies and oppose homosexuality. (ref:DOUBT)	16	20	23	37	5	35	60

Q.46 After hearing more, would you say you favor or oppose the concept of school choice? School choice gives parents the right to use the tax dollars associated with their child’s education to send their child to the public or private school which better serves their needs.

	Total
Strongly support.....	46
Somewhat support	24
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose	17
(Don't know/Refused).....	3
Total Support	70
Total Oppose	27
Support - Oppose	43
(ref:SCVOTE)	

Q.49 Finally, a few more questions for statistical purposes. Thinking in political terms, would you say that you are Conservative, Moderate, or Liberal?

	Total
Liberal.....	22
Moderate	32
Conservative	39
(Prefer not to indicate)	7
(ref:IDEO1)	

Q.50 What is the last year of schooling that you have completed?

	Total
1 - 11th grade.....	3
High School graduate	17
Non-college post H.S.....	1
Some college.....	28
College graduate	28
Post-graduate school.....	19
(Don't know/Refused).....	4
(ref:EDUC)	

Q.51 Do you personally work or did you work in the field of public school education, that is grades K through twelve? (IF YES) Are you an administrator, teacher or do you work in the field in some other capacity?

	Total
Yes, teacher.....	6
Yes, retired teacher	3
Yes, administrator.....	1
Yes, retired administrator	0
Yes, other	6
No	84
Total Yes.....	16
(ref:TEACHER)	

Q.52 Are you married, single, separated, divorced, or widowed?

	Total
Married	60
Single	16
Separated/Divorced.....	11
Widowed.....	7
(Don't know/Refused).....	5
(ref:MARITAL)	

Q.53 Do you have any children 18 years of age or younger living in your household? (IF NO: Do you have any grandchildren 18 years of age or younger?)

	Total
Yes, children 18 or younger.....	29
Yes, grandchildren 18 or younger.....	15
No children or grandchildren 18 or younger	52
(Don't know/refused)	4
Total Children/Grandchildren	44
(ref:CHILD)	

[356 Respondents]

Q.54 (IF CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN IN CHILD2) Do your (children/grandchildren) attend public schools, charter schools, private or religious schools, or do you have (children/grandchildren) attending both public and private schools? If the children are too young to attend school, please say so.

	Total
Public schools	57
Private schools	8
Charter schools	2
Religious schools	2
Both public and private.....	12
(Home schooling)	3
(Other)	1
(Kids are too young to attend school).....	13
(Don't know/Refused).....	2
Total Public	69
Total Not Public	28
(ref:SCHOOL)	

Q.55 What is your race?

	Total
White	71
Black.....	11
Hispanic.....	10
Native American.....	1
Asian.....	2
(Other)	1
(Don't know/refused)	6
(ref:RACE)	

Q.57 Last year, that is in 2014, what was your total family income from all sources, before taxes? Just stop me when I get to the right category.

	Total
Less than \$25,000	13
\$25,000 to under \$50,000	19
\$50,000 to under \$75,000	17
\$75,000 to under \$100,000	12
\$100,000 to under \$150,000	10
\$150,000 or more	9
(Don't know/refused)	20
(ref:INCOME)	

Q.4 Respondent Gender

	Total
Male	48
Female	52
(ref:GENDER)	

Q.8 Are you or any member of your household or immediate family employed in advertising, public relations, marketing or the media?

	Total
Yes	-
No	100
(ref:JOB)	

Q.9 We need to talk to a mix of people. In what year were you born?

	Total
18 - 24	6
25 - 29	7
30 - 34	8
35 - 39	10
40 - 44	6
45 - 49	7
50 - 54	8
55 - 59	8
60 - 64	9
65 and over	29
(No answer)	2
(ref:AGE)	