



Memorandum

To: American Federation for Children
From: Beck Research LLC
Date: January 10, 2017

Re: School Choice Survey Research Results

Our third annual national survey among likely 2018 November voters demonstrates that school choice continues to enjoy strong and consistent support across the nation. Voters remain committed to school choice and back many forms of educational choice. The concept of school choice is supported by a wide 68%-to-28% margin. All seven types of school choice receive majority support, including 83% for special needs scholarships, 74% for public charter schools, and 73% for scholarship tax credits. A federal scholarship tax credit receives strong support with 72% of voters backing the potential proposal while President-Elect Donald Trump's \$20 billion school choice is supported by 51% of voters with 35% against and 14% undecided or unable to answer.

The survey fielded January 2-5, 2017 among a total of 1,100 likely November 2018 voters. The national survey among 800 voters was supplemented with 200 additional Latino voters and 100 additional Millennials¹. Interviews were conducted via live callers on landline and cell phones. The base sample margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

- **Support for school choice remains strong and steady; 68% 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 68% support school choice, including 40% who strongly support it. This is almost identical to our findings from the last two years.

Support for School Choice (Support – Oppose)	
January 2017	68% - 28%
January 2016	70% - 24%
January 2015	69% - 27%

¹ Millennials are defined as likely voters born after 1981. The 2016 and 2015 survey waves were among 2016 likely voters.

Latinos and Millennials support school choice by a wider margin. Three-quarters of Latinos support the concept of school choice (75% to 19%), compared to 76% to 21% last year. African-American support also remains high with 72% supporting the concept. Millennial support is virtually unchanged from last year with three-quarters backing school choice (75% support, 22% oppose) and Millennials remain the most robust of the four generations.

Despite a divisive, partisan environment, school choice maintains majority support across partisan lines. Support among Republicans has grown to 84% from 80% last year while Democratic support has declined. A majority of Democrats (55%) continue to back school choice, but support is down from 65% last year and 60% in 2015. White, liberal Democrats account for much of the decrease. Independents preference remains steady with 67% supporting the concept of school choice.

- For the second year, school choice proposals all enjoy majority support.** Support for various school choice programs is consistent over the past two years. Special needs scholarships continue to have extremely strong support; 83% support special needs scholarships, including a majority (55%) that strongly support these programs. Three-quarters continue to support public charter schools (74%) and scholarship tax credits (73%) while Education Savings Account (ESA) support has grown by a small amount to 69%. A slim majority (51%) support for “school vouchers to allow individual parents to use public funds to pay for tuition at private or religious schools.”

Support for Individual School Choice Proposals (Support – Oppose)			
	2015	2016	2017
Special Needs Scholarships	83% - 14%	83% - 14%	83% - 13%
Public Charter Schools	76% - 20%	75% - 22%	74% - 22%
Scholarship Tax Credit Programs	70% - 26%	74% - 23%	73% - 23%
Education Savings Accounts	66% - 29%	65% - 29%	69% - 24%
Opportunity Scholarships	63% - 34%	65% - 32%	58% - 38%
Virtual learning	N/A	55% - 42%	59% - 37%
School vouchers	49% - 49%	53% - 46%	51% - 47%

As we found last year, Millennials outperform all adults on each of these proposals. In particular, Millennials are particularly enthusiastic about ESAs with 80% backing these accounts. Among Latinos, support for ESA has increased to 76%, up from 71% last year.

- Opportunities exist on the federal level.** This year’s poll also explored support for two potential school choice proposals that may be introduced in Congress. A federal scholarship tax credit receives strong support with 72% of voters backing the potential proposal while

President-Elect Donald Trump's \$20 billion school choice is supported by 51% of voters with 35% against and 14% undecided or unable to answer the question.

- **Almost all voters want vouchers in some form.** Finally, we probed eligibility for vouchers in two different ways. First, we found consistent results with our previous construction of this question: 90% of voters think some sort of vouchers and tax credit scholarships should be available in some form, including 34% who think they should be available to all students regardless of household income. However, when we altered the language and allowed multiple responses, 92% think some form of vouchers should be available with only 8% say that no students should be eligible. With this formulation, 63% think that all students should be eligible.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Appendix A

School Choice Support by Key Demographics		
	2017	2016
Total Likely Voters	68 - 28	70 - 24
Men	66 - 29	68 - 28
Women	69 - 26	71 - 22
Democrats	55 - 40	65 - 30
Independents	67 - 28	66 - 25
Republicans	84 - 13	80 - 17
Liberals	48 - 47	61 - 34
Moderates	67 - 30	64 - 30
Conservatives	82 - 12	81 - 13
Millennials	75 - 22	75 - 20
Generation X	69 - 26	68 - 28
Baby Boomers	64 - 33	71 - 25
Silent Generation	65 - 26	63 - 25
Non-College	80 - 17	79 - 17
College Graduates	73 - 24	71 - 24
White	65 - 31	68 - 26
African-Americans	72 - 19	76 - 20
Latinos	75 - 19	76 - 21
Union households	67 - 29	N/A
Parents	74 - 23	74 - 23
Public School Parents	70 - 25	70 - 24
Teachers	60 - 37	70 - 26