



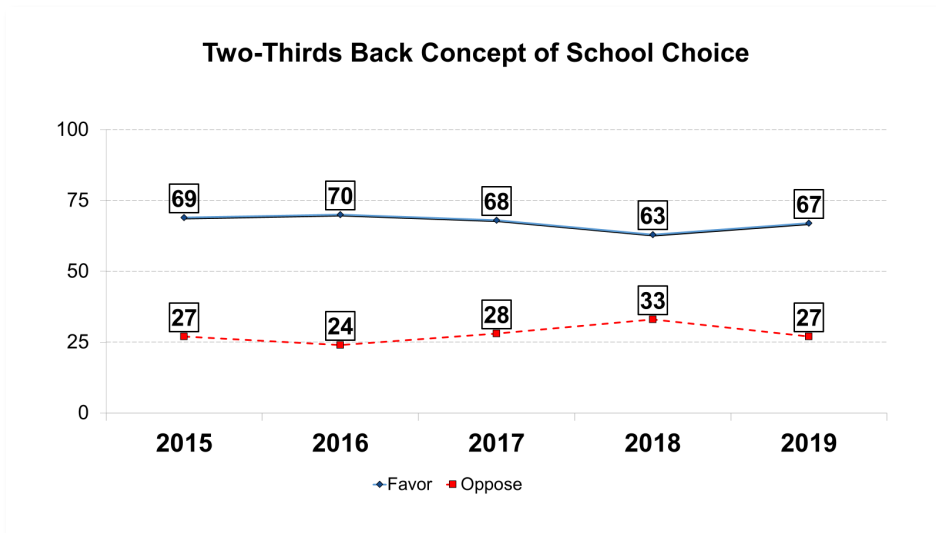
Memorandum

To: American Federation for Children
From: Beck Research LLC
Date: January 17, 2019

Re: Fifth Annual School Choice Survey Research Results

Voters remain very supportive of school choice and over the past five years enthusiasm has grown for educational choice programs. Our fifth annual national survey among likely 2020 General Election voters demonstrates that the concept of school choice enjoys strong support across the country. This year, the concept of school choice is favored by an 67%-to-27% margin, which closely mirrors our first survey in 2015 (69% to 27%), suggesting the public’s entrenched comfort with this policy. Support for Education Savings Accounts (ESA) continues to climb; this year, over three-quarters of voters (78%) support ESAs, compared to a 66% to 29% split back in 2015. A federal scholarship tax credit and other school choice proposals also maintain high levels of support. It’s not surprising that supporting school choice makes voters more likely to vote for a Member of Congress or state legislator; 59% say they are more likely to back someone who supports school choice.

- **Over the past five years, support for school choice remains high; two-thirds back school choice.** When asked, "Generally speaking, would you say you favor or oppose the concept of school choice?" and given the following definition, "School choice gives parents the right to use the tax dollars designated for their child’s education to send their child to the public or private school which best serves their needs," two-thirds (67%) favor school choice, including 40% who strongly support it.



Nationally a broad coalition continues to back school choice. Latinos remain the most supportive of school choice, with 73% backing the broad concept of school choice and just 19% opposed. Two-thirds of whites (68%) and African-Americans (67%) support school choice.

Support has inched up across self-identified partisanship. This year four out of five Republicans (80%) and 69% of Independents now support school choice, up 5 and 7 percentage points respectively. Democratic support slightly increased this year as well -- 56% of Democrats favor school choice, up two points from 2018.

Similarly, two-thirds (64%) of suburban voters, including 63% of suburban women and 51% of suburban Democrats, favor school choice. Suburban women and suburban Democrats are disproportionately undecided on school choice. Suburban Independents favor school choice by a two-to-one margin (65% to 30%).¹ The strength of school choice in suburbia coupled with very high support in rural/exurban areas (68% favor) demonstrates that these proposals have appeal across America.

Support is high across the age groups or generations, but Millennials continue to be the most robust backers; fully 75% of Millennials support school choice, with 21% opposed. Parents and grandparents, including those with children in traditional public schools, now back school choice by a 3-to-1 ratio (72% to 23%).

- **Support also rose for specific types of school choice.** Support increased for each of the seven specific school choice proposals tested this year. None of the yearly gains are large, and some programs, such as Special Needs Scholarships, retain amazing levels of support, but support has trended upwards or remained stable as we look back across the five years of results.

Support for Individual School Choice Proposals (Support – Oppose)					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Special Needs Scholarships	83% - 14%	83% - 15%	83% - 13%	83% - 14%	86% - 12%
Military vouchers	N/A	N/A	N/A	77% - 20%	79% - 18%
Education Savings Accounts	66% - 29%	65% - 29%	69% - 24%	75% - 19%	78% - 16%
Public Charter Schools	76% - 20%	75% - 21%	74% - 22%	72% - 25%	74% - 22%
Scholarship Tax Credit	70% - 26%	74% - 23%	73% - 23%	65% - 30%	68% - 28%
Virtual learning	N/A	55% - 42%	59% - 37%	55% - 40%	60% - 37%
School vouchers	49% - 49%	53% - 46%	51% - 47%	47% - 49%	53% - 44%

- **A more concrete federal tax credit earns equal support.** A federal opportunity scholarship tax credit also has strong support with two-thirds supporting the federal initiative (69% support, 26% oppose), up net 4 points from last year. The generic posing of this proposal is backed by an almost identical 68% to 28%. The

¹ The sample size is not sufficient to examine suburban Republican voters.

federal scholarship tax credit enjoys bipartisan support, with 61% of Democrats, 70% of Independents, and 76% of Republicans favoring the possible measure.

- **Education Savings Accounts continue to build momentum.** Support for Education Savings Accounts (ESA) has increased for the third year; 78% now support ESAs, up 12-points since 2015. Democrats now back ESAs by a 73%-to-21% margin, up from 63% to 33% in 2015, which represents a 23-point shift towards supporting the proposal. Support among African-Americans has grown 13 points with 86% supporting ESA. Other key demographics remain strong backers of ESAs, including Millennials (84%), Republicans (85%), Independents (78%), and Latinos (84%).
- **Most parents prefer private schools over public.** Fully 58% of survey respondents report that their children currently attend traditional public school, but only 35% report that public schools are their first choice of school (an additional 12% of parents say that their children attend a combination of public and private schools). In contrast, 59% of parents indicate that they would prefer for their child to attend a different type school (29% religious school, 18% private non-religious and 11% charter school).
- **American parents are willing to sacrifice for their child to attend a private school for free.** American parents (and grandparents) are willing to take action so their children could attend a private school for free. Almost 3 in 5 parents picked three or more from a list of possible personal sacrifices “to send (their) child to a private school for free.” The most popular actions during this first week in January mirrors common New Year’s resolutions: cutting all eating out and take-out from restaurants for a year (62%) and stop drinking coffee or caffeine for a year (62%). In addition, about half of the parents indicate that they are willing to drive their child 25 miles each way to school (49%), move 10 miles away (46%) or change jobs (41%). Only 13% wouldn’t be willing to take one of the actions to enroll their child in private school for free.
- **Voters want their elected officials to get behind school choice.** It’s not surprising that a strong majority of voters want elected officials to take a stand on school choice. Three out of five voters are more likely to support a Member of Congress or state legislator who supports expanding school choice, including 21% who are much more likely to vote someone who supports choice. Latinos are even more likely to back a school choice candidate; 71% say they are more likely to vote for a school choice candidate, including 35% who are much more likely.

Looking back over the past five years, overall support for school choice has held steady and, in some cases, grown in popularity. Choice has strong appeal across many target demographics and continues to enjoy a bipartisan base of support. School choice’s strong consistency of support signals that candidates should embrace these education proposals in 2020 and beyond. We look forward to hearing your thoughts. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Methodology

The survey fielded January 6-10, 2019, among a total of 1,200 likely November 2020 voters. The national survey among 800 voters was supplemented with 150 additional African-American voters, 150 additional Latino voters, and 100 additional Millennials. Millennials are defined as likely voters born after 1981.

Interviews were conducted via live callers on landline and cell phones and in English and Spanish. 58% of the interviews were conducted via cell phone. The base sample margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

Appendix A

School Choice Support by Key Demographics (% Favor – % Oppose)					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Likely Voters	69 - 27	70 – 24	68 - 28	63 – 33	67 - 27
Men	67 - 30	68 – 28	66 - 29	64 - 31	69 - 28
Women	71 - 24	71 – 22	69 - 26	62 - 34	66 - 27
Democrats	60 - 37	65 – 30	55 - 40	54 – 43	56 - 36
Independents	67 – 27	66 – 25	67 - 28	62 - 33	69 - 28
Republicans	81 - 16	80 – 17	84 - 13	75 - 21	80 - 16
Millennials	79 - 19	75 – 20	75 - 22	64 - 31	75 - 21
Generation X	64 - 33	68 – 28	69 - 26	60 - 37	67 - 28
Baby Boomers	68 - 29	71 – 25	64 - 33	64 - 33	64 - 31
Silent Generation	67 - 23	63 – 25	65 - 26	64 – 27	63 - 29
White	68 - 28	68 – 26	65 - 31	61 – 34	68 - 28
African-Americans	78 - 20	76 – 20	72 - 19	66 – 29	67 - 25
Latinos	68 - 25	76 – 21	75 - 19	72 – 26	73 - 19
Large Metro	70 - 27	73 - 23	65 - 28	56 - 40	66 - 28
Small Metro	64 - 31	68 - 27	70 - 25	62 - 34	69 - 26
Suburban	72 - 24	71 - 22	68 - 29	64 - 31	64 - 29
Exurban	66 - 29	66 - 28	68 - 27	70 - 23	69 - 25
Rural	75 - 21	70 - 21	67 - 30	67 – 28	68 - 28
Parents	72 - 25	74 – 23	74 - 23	64 - 33	72 - 23
Public School Parents	69 - 27	70 – 24	70 - 25	63 - 34	69 - 25