

Californians and Public Education

Views from the 2020 PACE/USC Rossier Poll

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Executive Summary

With important state and national elections looming, where do California voters stand on some of the major education policy issues of the day? This report examines findings from the 2020 PACE/USC Rossier poll of California voters. The poll represents the views of 2,000 registered California voters across a range of topics from early childhood education to higher education. Based on these results, we have identified five key findings:

Finding 1: There is growing pessimism about the direction of California and its public schools.

Voters gave California schools the lowest grade in at least half a decade, with a commensurate decline in the proportion of voters indicating that California schools were improving. Parents' views dipped especially sharply. More generally, voters expressed growing disapproval of Governor Gavin Newsom and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

Finding 2: Voters have strong concerns about both gun violence in schools and the affordability of higher education and prioritize K-12 and higher education over early childhood.

We asked several questions about voters' priorities, and education rated highly (just after the economy and taxes). As in prior surveys, voters' top education policy issues were gun violence in schools and college affordability, and they rated K-12 and higher education issues as more important than early childhood education issues.

Finding 3: Voters express negative opinions about higher education, especially the fairness of private college admissions.

We found that voters have serious concerns about the fairness of private college admissions, and they are evenly split on the fairness of admissions at California public universities. Voters oppose admissions preferences for several groups that featured prominently in recent high-profile scandals (athletes, children of university alumni, and children of donors).

Finding 4: Voters support an increase in educational spending and multiple approaches to paying for that spending.

California voters consistently express support for increased educational spending (including, for example, for teacher salaries and early childhood education). They are strongly in favor of the proposed \$15 billion facilities bond measure that will be on the March 2020 ballot, and they also support proposed changes to Proposition 13 that are likely to appear on the November 2020 ballot (though to a lesser degree). There are sharp partisan splits on support for spending increases.

Finding 5: Voters are concerned about teacher shortages and are strongly in favor of increasing teacher salaries.

When asked about the relative importance of 12 education issues, California voters placed teacher shortages third. Large majorities of California voters, regardless of party affiliation or demographics, support increasing teacher salaries.

Introduction

2020 represents an important year in national and state politics. At the federal level, there is tremendous attention on partisan control of the White House and both houses of Congress. In California, voters will have a chance to express their opinion about the direction of the state as Governor Newsom enters his second year. There are also important ballot measures at play—measures that could profoundly affect educational spending in the state.

It is in this context that we commissioned our annual PACE/USC Rossier poll of California voters, seeking to gain clarity on the major education issues of the day. As in prior years, we wrote the poll with both new and legacy questions to understand trends in voters' opinions. Here, we present what we view as the most important results of the poll, focusing on five major findings. Full results, including toplines and crosstabs, can be found on the PACE website,¹ and a note on methodology can be found in the Appendix.

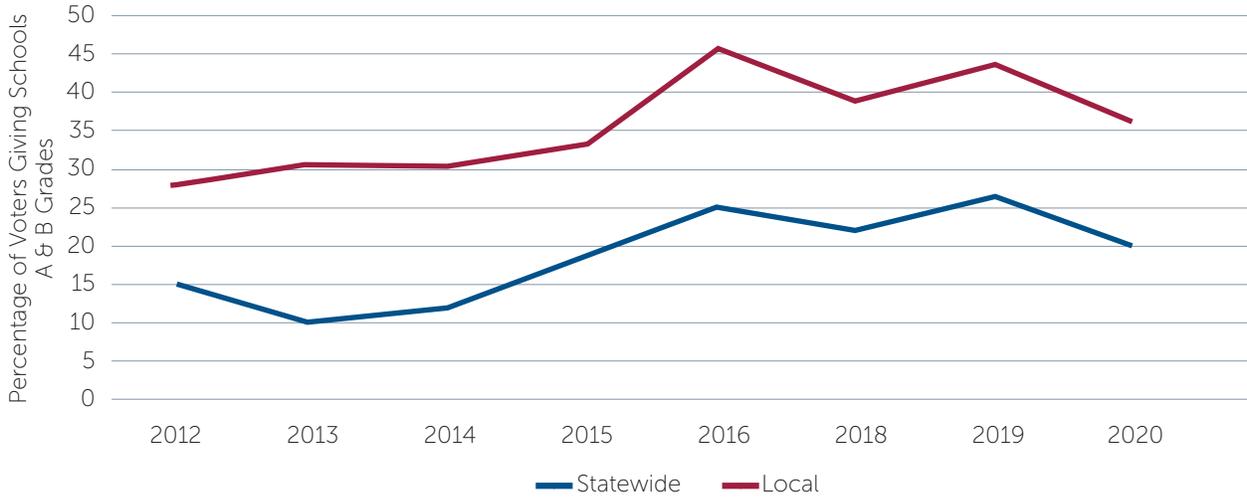
Findings

Finding 1: There is growing pessimism about the direction of California and its public schools.

In prior years, the PACE/USC Rossier poll has shown a rising trend in voters' optimism about the performance of California's schools. Last year, we noted that voters' ratings of schools had ticked up after a dip the previous year and that more California voters thought schools were getting better. Unfortunately, these trends have reversed. As shown in Figure 1, the 2020 poll shows that just 20 percent of California voters give the state's schools an A (2 percent) or B (18 percent) grade. This is a sharp decline from last year when 26 percent gave schools a grade of A (7 percent) or B (19 percent). In fact, the last time voters graded California's schools so harshly was 2015. We found similar results when we asked voters about their local public schools, with just 36 percent giving local public schools an A (9 percent) or B (27 percent), which is below last year (43 percent) and lower than every year since 2015.

¹ <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/pace-and-usc-rossier-polls-2020>

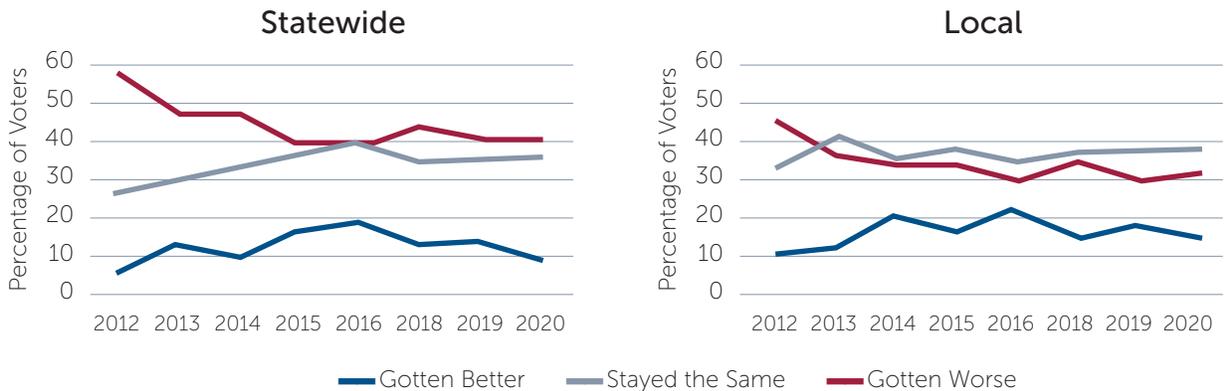
Figure 1. Voters’ Perceptions of California Public Schools Over Time



Note: “Don’t know” responses are not reported here. Poll was not administered in 2017.

This increasing pessimism is also apparent when we asked voters whether the state’s schools (or their local public schools) are getting better or getting worse (see Figure 2). While the percentage of voters indicating California’s schools were getting worse did not change from last year (41 percent), the percentage indicating schools were getting better declined from 14 percent to 10 percent. Similarly, the percentage responding that the local public schools were getting worse stayed relatively constant (32 percent this year, 31 percent in 2019), but the percent responding they were getting better declined from 19 percent to 15 percent. This share of voters who believe California schools are getting better is the lowest since 2012, when the state was teetering on the brink of fiscal catastrophe.

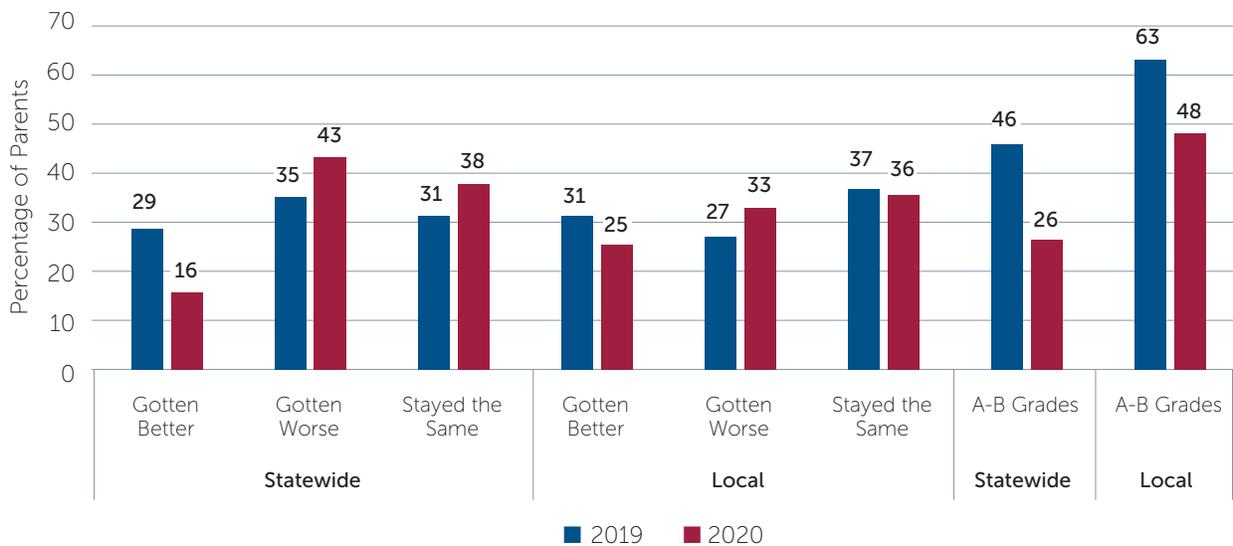
Figure 2. Voters’ Perceptions of Change in Quality of California Public Schools



Note: “Don’t know” responses are not reported here. Poll was not administered in 2017.

The increasing pessimism is especially sharp among parents. As shown in Figure 3, last year, 46 percent of parents gave California’s schools an A (19 percent) or B (27 percent) grade compared to 26 percent this year (4 percent A, 22 percent B). Last year, 63 percent of parents gave local public schools an A (26 percent) or B (37 percent) grade. This year, it was just 48 percent (12 percent A, 36 percent B). The same trends are apparent on the getting better/worse questions. Last year, for example, 29 percent of parents said California’s schools were getting better, but this year, only 16 percent reported the same. Exploring the reasons for this sharp rise in negativity among California’s parents may be important for California policymakers.

Figure 3. Parents’ Perceptions of California Public Schools, 2019 vs. 2020



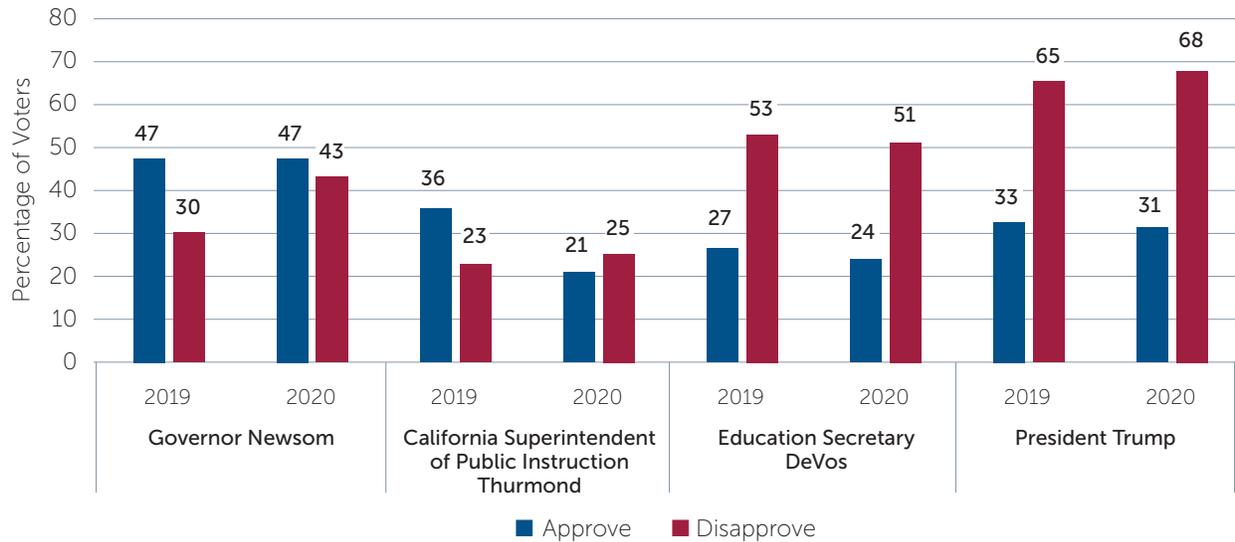
Note: “Don’t know” responses are not reported here.

We also see evidence of increased negativity in voters’ ratings of California’s elected officials. As shown in Figure 4, approval ratings for Governor Newsom dipped considerably, from +18 last year² (47 percent approve to 30 percent disapprove) to +4 percent this year (47 percent approve, 43 percent disapprove). Similarly, approval ratings for State Superintendent of Public Instruction Thurmond dipped from +12 (36 percent approve, 23 percent disapprove) to -4 (21 percent approve, 25 percent disapprove).³ Voters express far greater disapproval of President Trump (-37; 31 percent approve, 68 percent disapprove) and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos (-27; 24 percent approve, 51 percent disapprove), and these figures have not changed much.

² Actual figures may not always agree with the numbers reported due to rounding.

³ One caveat is that last year’s poll was conducted just weeks after the new California state officials had taken office.

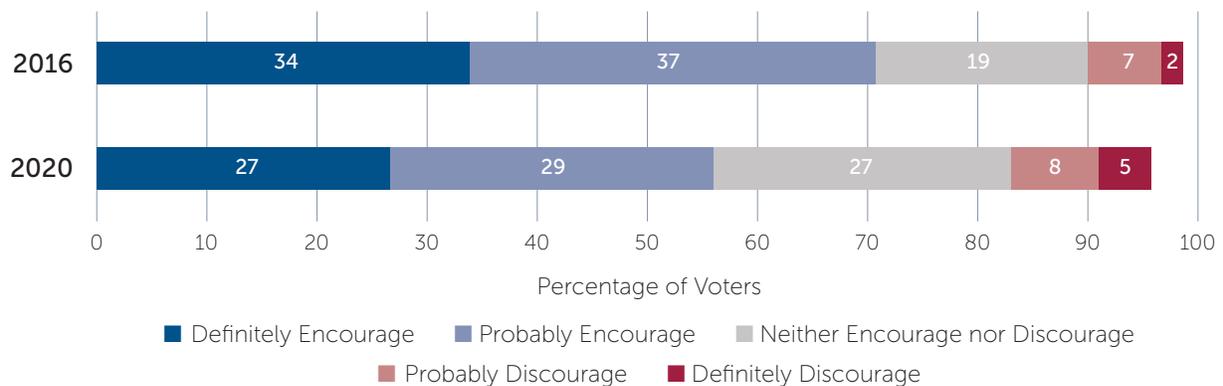
Figure 4. Approval and Disapproval Ratings of Elected Officials, 2019 vs. 2020



Note: "Don't know" responses are not reported here.

Finally, voters expressed increased pessimism on certain issues. For example, when asked whether they would encourage a young person to become a teacher, 56 percent said they definitely (27 percent) or probably (29 percent) would encourage it, versus 13 percent who said they definitely (5 percent) or probably (8 percent) would *not* encourage it. When we last asked this question in 2016, 71 percent of voters said they definitely (34 percent) or probably (37 percent) would encourage it and just 9 percent said they definitely (7 percent) or probably (2 percent) would not encourage it (see Figure 5). This is a sharp decline in just a few years, though there is still majority support for encouraging young people to become teachers.

Figure 5. Whether Voters Would Encourage Young People to Become Teachers, 2016 vs. 2020

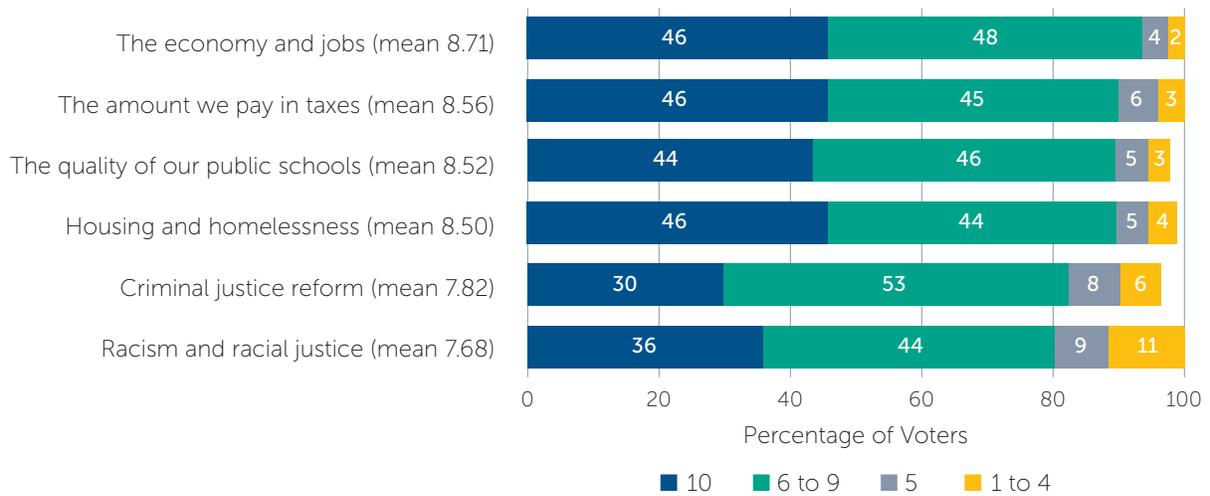


Note: "Don't know" responses are not reported here.

Finding 2: Voters have strong concerns about both gun violence in schools and the affordability of higher education and prioritize K-12 and higher education over early childhood.

Voters continue to believe that education is an important issue facing the state and express clear and consistent priorities from year to year. As shown in Figure 6, when we asked voters to indicate the importance of six major issues facing the state, education ranked third, behind “the economy and jobs” and “the amount we pay in taxes.” The differences were small, however—on a 1-10 scale, the mean scores were 8.71 for “the economy and jobs,” 8.56 for “the amount we pay in taxes,” and 8.52 for “the quality of our public schools.” There were important differences among groups, however. For example, Democrats rated “housing and homelessness” the highest (mean = 8.76), Republicans rated “the amount we pay in taxes” the highest (mean = 9.06), and Independents rated “the economy and jobs” the highest (mean = 8.56). Two groups that did rate education the highest were African American voters (mean = 9.10) and 18- to 24-year-olds (mean = 8.88).

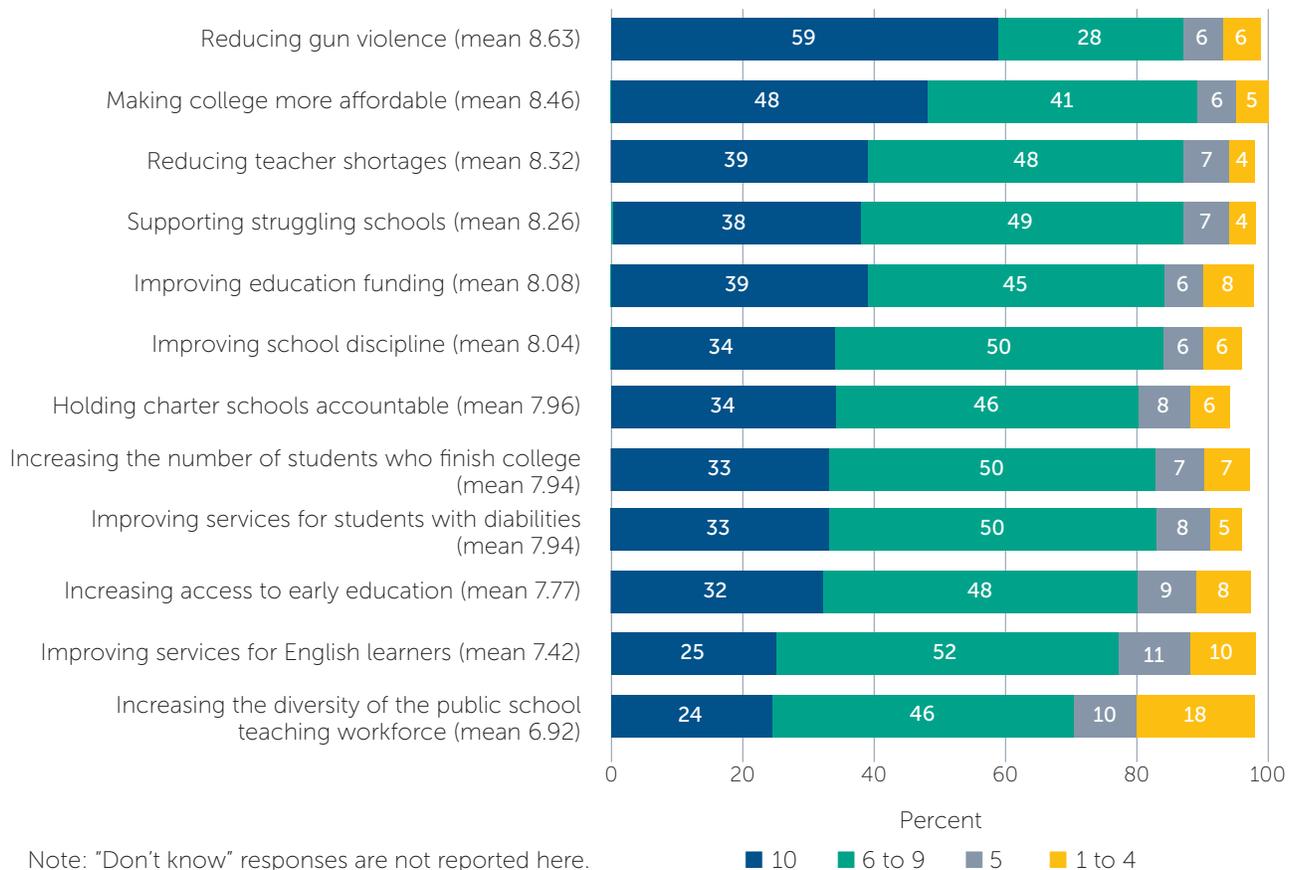
Figure 6. Importance of Issues for California Voters



Note: “Don’t know” responses are not reported here.

We also asked voters their opinions on the relative importance of 12 educational issues facing the state.⁴ Though the particular list of issues changed somewhat from last year, the top three issues ranked the same—reducing gun violence in schools, making college more affordable, and reducing teacher shortages. A full 59 percent of California voters rated gun violence in schools a 10 on the 1-10 importance scale. Gun violence was the top-rated issue overall (mean = 8.63) as well as for Democrats (9.18), white voters (8.55), Latinx voters (8.99), and African American voters (9.61). College affordability ranked second overall (8.46), but it was the top-ranked issue for ages 18-29 (9.01) and 30-39 (8.75). (See Figure 7 for responses overall, and Table 1 for means broken down by party and demographics.)

Figure 7. Importance of Education Issues for California Voters



⁴ On this item, voters were randomly assigned to receive a subset of the issues. Since voters were randomly assigned, item means remain comparable.

Table 1. Mean Priority on Educational Issues for Different Groups of Voters

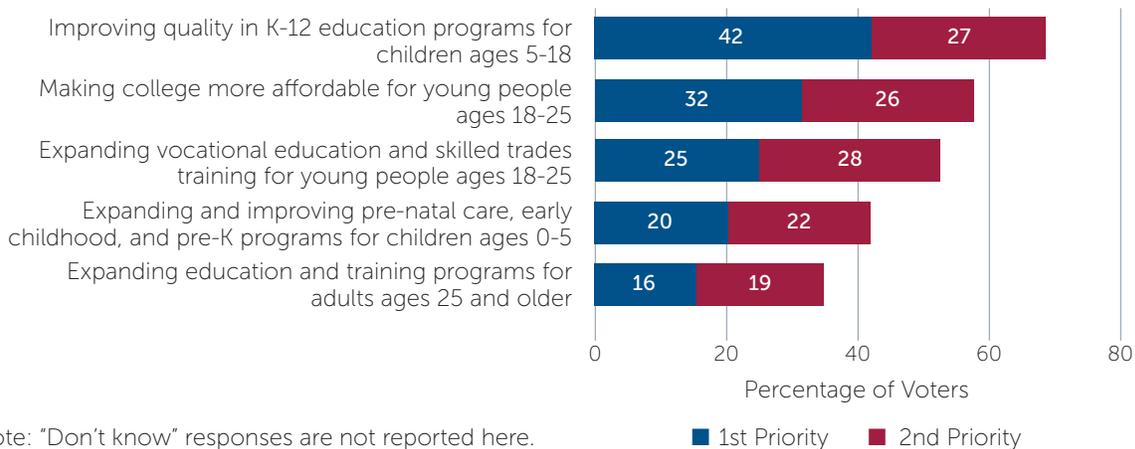
	Party				Race/ethnicity				
	All	Democrat	Republican	Independent	White	Latinx	African American	Asian American	Other
Reducing gun violence	8.63	9.18	7.96	8.31	8.55	8.99	9.61	7.86	7.89
Making college more affordable	8.46	8.91	7.87	8.27	8.36	8.75	9.16	8.26	7.88
Reducing teacher shortages	8.32	8.70	7.81	8.14	8.19	8.64	8.61	8.02	8.42
Supporting struggling schools	8.26	8.70	7.74	7.98	8.04	8.77	9.14	7.74	8.03
Improving education funding	8.08	8.71	7.19	7.83	7.84	8.60	8.86	7.76	7.71
Improving school discipline	8.04	7.92	8.46	7.77	7.91	8.31	8.34	7.83	8.30
Holding charter schools accountable	7.96	8.40	7.43	7.69	7.95	8.08	8.31	7.67	7.80
Increasing the number of students who finish college	7.94	8.44	7.32	7.70	7.74	8.49	8.24	7.55	7.64
Improving services for students with disabilities	7.94	8.31	7.46	7.73	7.81	8.46	8.71	7.10	7.29
Increasing access to early education	7.77	8.26	7.05	7.58	7.56	8.23	8.16	7.50	7.79
Improving services for English learners	7.42	7.83	6.79	7.24	7.11	8.10	7.46	7.46	6.71
Increasing the diversity of the public school teaching workforce	6.92	7.77	5.67	6.61	6.44	7.76	8.52	6.82	6.41

With regard to voters' top-ranked concern, gun violence, we also asked about potential solutions to the gun violence problem. Again, the results were largely consistent with those from last year. Voters are especially supportive of expanding mental health services in their local communities (89 percent in favor, 7 percent oppose), and there is majority support for practicing active shooter drills more often (76 percent support, 17 percent oppose), prohibiting the sale and ownership of assault rifles and other high-capacity firearms (72 percent support, 24 percent oppose), installing metal detectors in schools (69 percent support, 25 percent oppose), and hiring armed security in schools (66 percent support, 27 percent oppose). In contrast, there is sharp opposition to allowing teachers to carry guns in the classroom (31 percent support, 63 percent oppose).

Finally, we asked voters to rate the importance of five priorities for educational spending (see Figure 8). Again, though the list of response options changed slightly from last year's poll, the top-ranked priorities remained the same. Voters prioritize improving quality in K-12 education first, with 42 percent of all respondents ranking this item a

highest priority. Coming in second and third, as they did last year, are college affordability (32 percent ranked as a highest priority) and vocational education (25 percent as a highest priority). The two lowest priorities were 0-5 education and care (20 percent as a highest priority) and adult education (16 percent as a highest priority). K-12 educational quality was the top priority for voters of all political parties and all racial/ethnic groups. Only younger voters ages 18-29 prioritized college affordability most.

Figure 8. Voter Budget Priorities from Cradle-to-Career

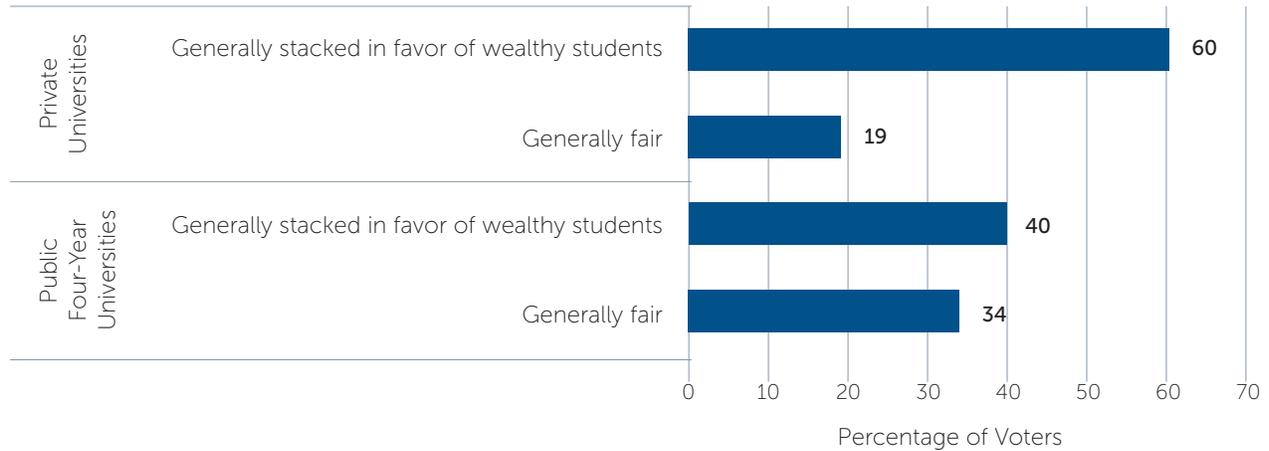


Finding 3: Voters express negative opinions about higher education, especially the fairness of private college admissions.

As shown above in Figure 8, college affordability is a major concern for California voters—one of the top issues for all groups and the single most important issue for younger voters. We asked several new questions this year focused on higher education, as affordability and a number of high-profile scandals have kept higher education in the news over the last year. Based on responses to these questions, there are a number of ways in which voters expressed their concerns about higher education issues.

We asked voters whether they think that college admissions is “generally a fair process that relies on reasonable measures of student performance and effort” or if it is “generally stacked in favor of students from wealthier families.” We split the sample and asked this question about both private universities and California’s public four-year universities. Voters overwhelmingly believe that private university admissions is stacked in favor of wealthy students (60 percent)—few rate it as a fair process (19 percent). Voters are also ambivalent about the fairness of the admissions process for California’s public four-year universities—just 34 percent of voters say admissions in public universities is fair, while 40 percent say it is stacked in favor of wealthy students. (See Figure 9 for responses overall, and Table 2 for means broken down by party and demographics.)

Figure 9. Voter Perspectives on the Fairness of College Admissions



Note: "Don't know" and "Neither" responses are not reported here.

Table 2. Perceived Fairness of College Admissions, by Party and Race/Ethnicity

		Party			Race/ethnicity					
		All	Democrat	Republican	Independent	White	Latinx	African American	Asian American	Other
Private Universities	Generally stacked in favor of wealthy students	60%	66%	54%	58%	58%	63%	72%	60%	65%
	Generally fair	19%	19%	22%	18%	19%	21%	11%	24%	17%
Public 4-Year Universities	Generally stacked in favor of wealthy students	40%	42%	34%	40%	39%	43%	36%	38%	31%
	Generally fair	34%	34%	38%	30%	34%	34%	39%	36%	24%

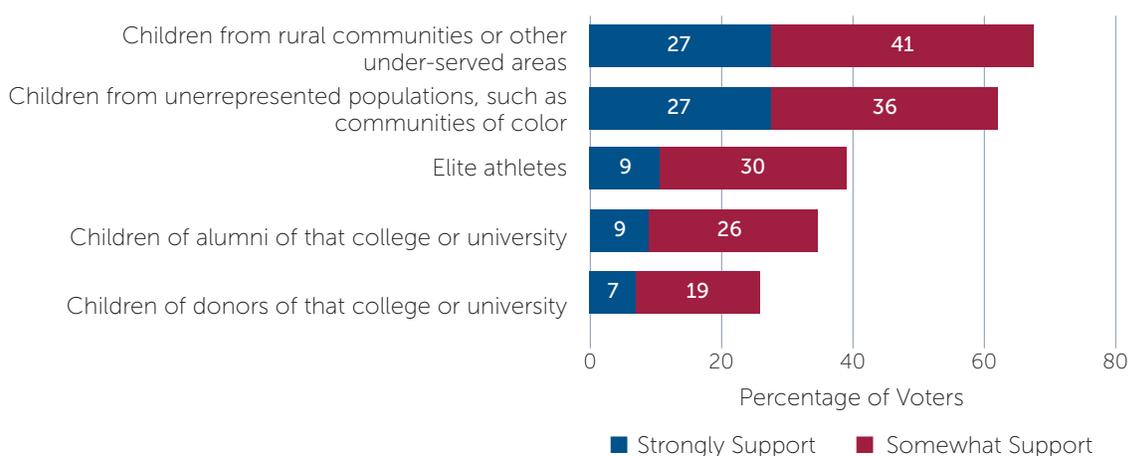
Voters were also asked whether they supported or opposed college admissions preferences for various groups, an important issue given the high-profile college admissions scandals.⁵ As shown in Figure 10, voters expressed strong support, as they did last year, for admissions preferences for children from rural communities or under-served areas (68 percent in favor, 24 percent oppose), and children from underrepresented populations, such as students from racial/ethnic subgroups (63 percent support, 28 percent oppose). However, their attitudes towards other admissions preferences ticked sharply downward since last year.⁶ For elite athletes, voters oppose admissions preferences (39 percent support, 51 percent oppose), compared to last year when it was

⁵ Taylor, K. and Medina, J. (April 26, 2019). College Admissions Scandal, New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/college-admissions-scandal>

⁶ We made several slight modifications to the question from last year, though the questions are broadly similar. Thus, the responses are not perfectly comparable from year to year.

44 percent in favor, 47 percent opposed. For children of alumni, voters oppose admissions preferences (35 percent in support, 55 percent opposed); last year it was 46 percent in support, 44 percent opposed. For children of donors, voters strongly oppose admissions preferences (26 percent in support, 65 percent opposed), compared to 36 percent support last year and 54 percent opposed. These sharp changes suggest that admissions scandals may be having an effect on voter support for certain admissions preferences.

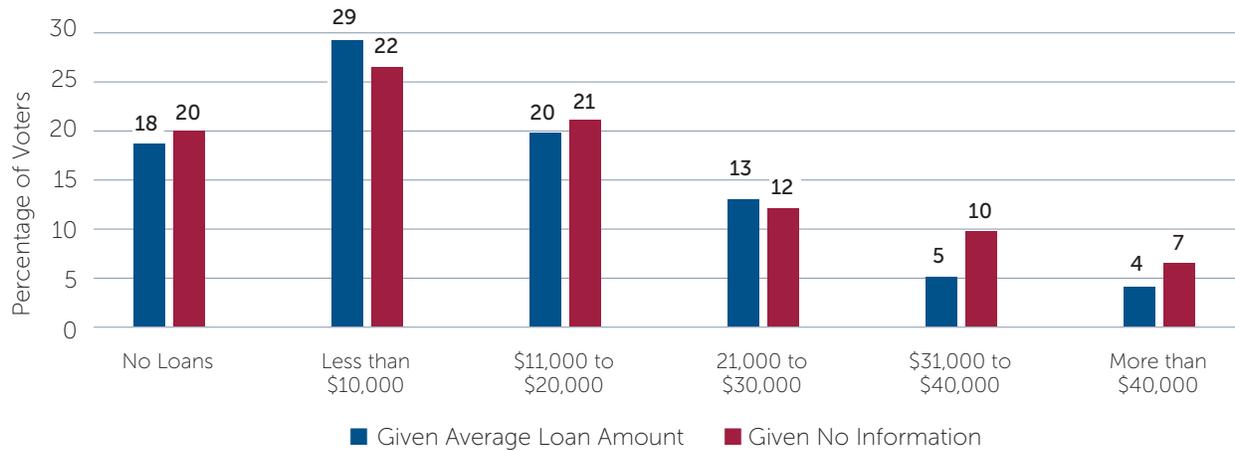
Figure 10. Voters’ Opinions on Giving Preference in College Admissions



Note: Other response options are “Strongly Oppose”, “Somewhat Oppose”, and “Don’t know.”

Finally, voters express limited support for taking on large amounts of college debt. When given no information about actual student debt loads, 63 percent of voters say that it is only reasonable to take on less than \$20,000 in loans for a four-year college degree. When told that the average debt load for a college graduate is actually \$29,000,⁷ that number jumps to 67 percent (see Figure 11). It is important to note that, for both sets of respondents, nearly 65 percent of voters said that a reasonable student loan amount is less than \$20,000, well under the national average of about \$29,000. Female voters are more concerned about college debt than male voters. For instance, when given no information about debt loads, 56 percent of male voters indicate less than \$20,000 of debt is reasonable versus 68 percent of female voters.

⁷ Hess, A (May 20, 2019). Here’s how much the average student loan borrower owes when they graduate. CNBC Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/05/20/how-much-the-average-student-loan-borrower-owes-when-they-graduate.html>

Figure 11. Voters' Opinions on Reasonable Student Loan Amounts

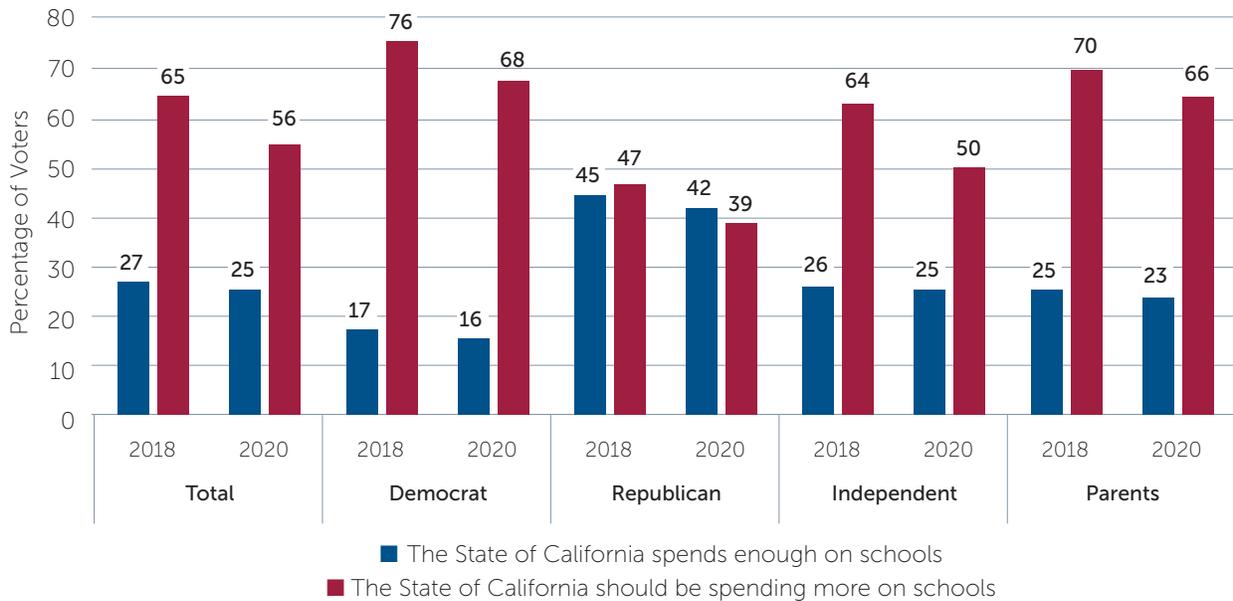
Note: "Don't know" responses are not reported here.

Finding 4: Voters support an increase in educational spending and multiple approaches to paying for that spending.

As shown in Figure 6, voters' top two concerns are "the economy and jobs" and "the amount we pay in taxes," with "quality of our public schools" coming in third. Despite their concern about taxes, a variety of evidence from this year's poll suggests that voters support increasing educational spending.

We asked voters whether they think California schools currently have the money they need or whether the state should be spending more. As shown in Figure 12, just 25 percent of California voters said the state spends enough on schools, versus 56 percent who said California should be spending more on schools. While this support for increased spending is strong, it is somewhat weaker than the last time we asked this question in 2018. That year, 65 percent of voters said the state should be spending more and 27 percent said the state spent enough. There is a sharp partisan split on educational spending—Democrats favor increased spending by 68 percent to 16 percent, while Republicans believe the state spends enough by a margin of 42 percent to 39 percent.

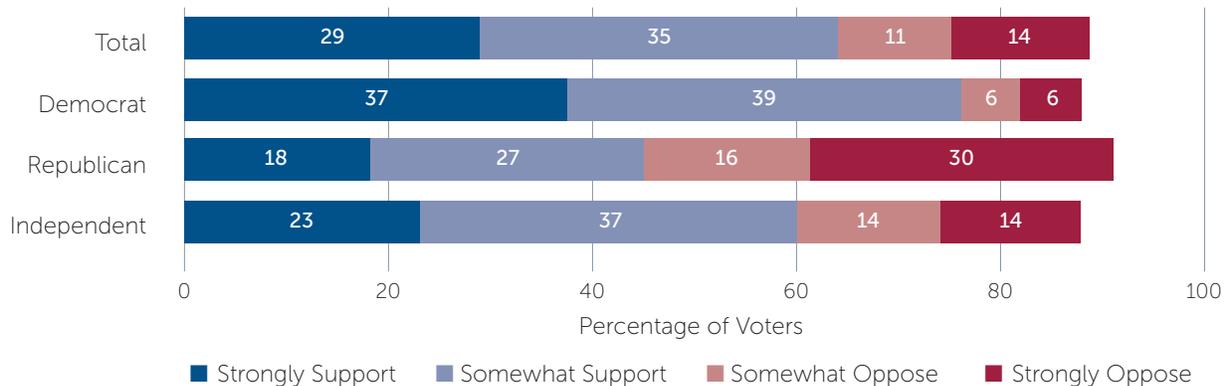
Figure 12. Voters' Opinions on School Spending by Group, 2018 vs. 2020



Note: "Don't know" and "Neither" responses are not reported here.

Voters also support specific ballot measures planned for 2020 aimed at increasing education spending, though the level of support varies considerably across the two measures. Support for the \$15 billion bond measure⁸ on the March ballot is quite strong—64 percent of voters strongly support or somewhat support the measure versus just 25 percent in opposition. Democrats and Independents are especially supportive of the bond measure. Democrats support the measure 76 percent to 12 percent, while Independents support it 60 percent to 28 percent. Republicans are split on the measure, with 45 percent support against 46 percent opposition (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Voters' Support of \$15 Billion School Bond, by Party

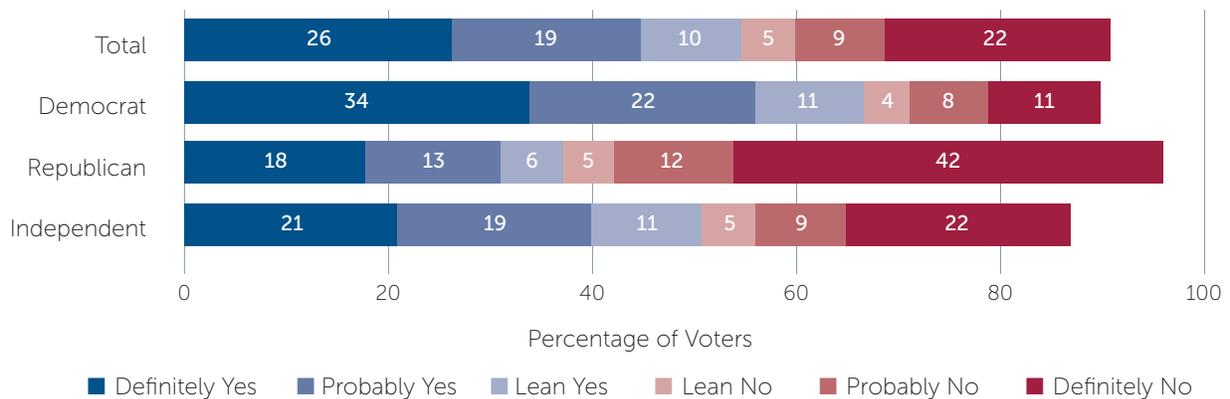


Note: "Don't know" responses are not reported here.

⁸ <https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/propositions/13/index.htm>

In contrast, support for the so-called “split roll” measure planned for the November ballot is considerably weaker. Under that proposal, voters will be asked to consider whether property taxes for businesses would be re-assessed each year to reflect current property values instead of being based on the initial purchase price as they are now. Property taxes for homeowners would continue to be assessed on the purchase price. It has been estimated that this change could generate as much as \$11 billion in new revenue for state and local governments, including at least 40 percent dedicated to public schools. As shown in Figure 14, overall, 45 percent of voters say they definitely (26 percent) or probably (19 percent) will vote yes on the measure. Another 10 percent of voters lean toward voting yes. On the other side, 31 percent of voters say they definitely (22 percent) or probably (9 percent) will vote no, and another 5 percent lean toward voting no. While these results do indicate majority support for this ballot measure, the results are quite a bit weaker than for the bond measure. Opposition to the split roll is strongest among Republicans (37 percent support, 59 percent oppose); voters 65+ (44 percent support, 46 percent oppose); and voters in the San Diego media market (46 percent support, 46 percent oppose).

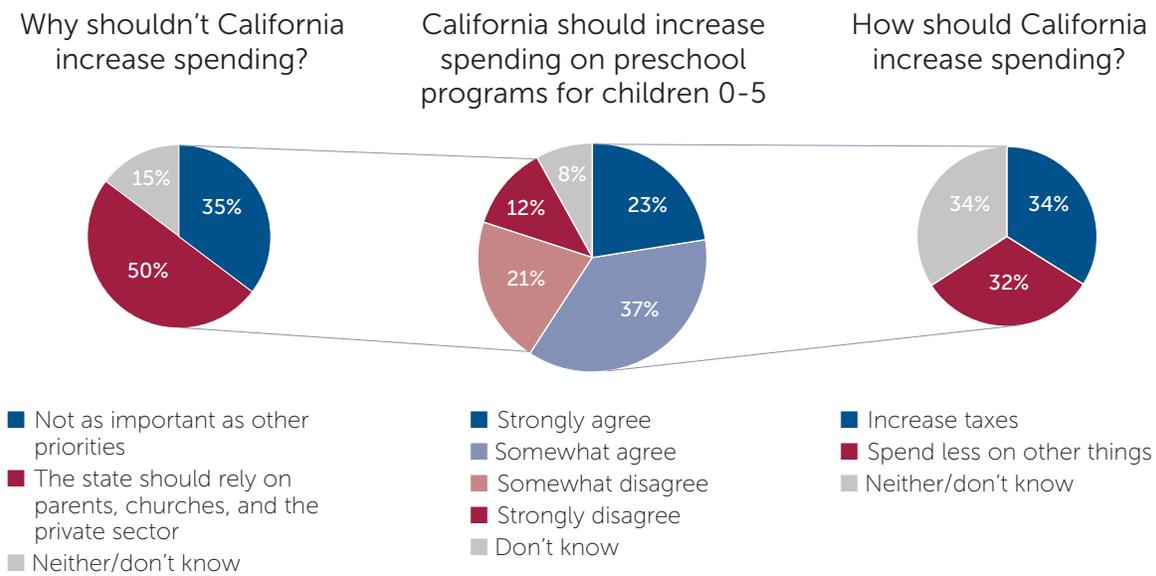
Figure 14. Voters’ Views on the Proposition 13 “Split-roll” Ballot Measure



Note: “Don’t know” responses are not reported here.

We also asked specifically about spending on early childhood education. Again, a majority of voters think California should boost spending in this area, with 60 percent supporting increased spending (23 percent strongly) versus just 33 percent opposed (12 percent strongly). Voters who supported increased spending were split on where those funds should come from—34 percent said the state should increase taxes and 32 percent said the state should spend less on other things. Half of those who oppose increased spending believe that the state should leave the education of young children to parents, churches, and the private sector rather than expending public resources (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Voters' Perspectives on Spending for Early Childhood Education



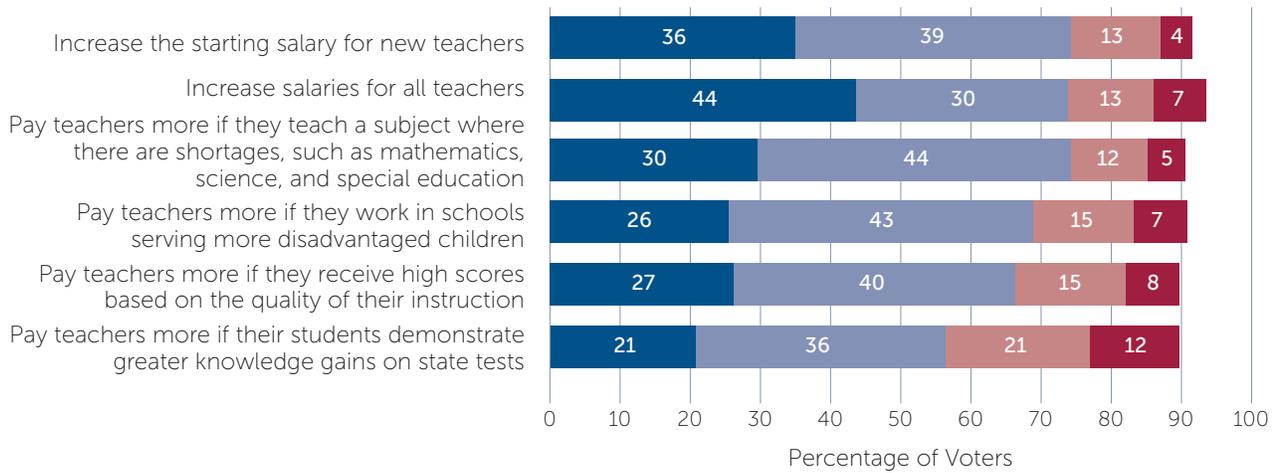
Finding 5: Voters are concerned about teacher shortages and are strongly supportive of increasing teacher salaries.

As shown in Figure 7, teacher shortages are one of the major concerns of California voters (ranking third on our list of 12 education priorities). A full 39 percent of California voters rate this issue a 10 on a 1-10 importance scale, with African American and Latinx voters especially concerned about shortages (48 percent and 45 percent rating this issue a 10, respectively).

Over the past several years, there has been a great deal of attention to teacher salaries, including prominent teacher strikes in California and around the country.⁹ In this context, it makes sense that voters support efforts to increase teacher pay. In particular, voters seem supportive of policies that raise teacher salaries across the board, with relatively less support for more targeted teacher salary policies. For instance, as shown in Figure 16, 75 percent of voters support increasing the salary for beginning teachers (versus 17 percent who oppose) and 74 percent support increasing salaries for all teachers (versus 20 percent who oppose). Support for increasing salaries for all teachers is strong among voters from all parties and all racial/ethnic subgroups—even 60 percent of Republican voters support increasing salaries for all teachers.

⁹ Richards, E. (June 18, 2019). Strikes, pay raises and charter protests: America's teachers' exhausting, exhilarating year. USA Today. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/education/2019/06/18/teacher-pay-raises-strike-last-day-of-school-summer/1437210001/>

Figure 16. Voters' Views on Raising Teacher Salaries

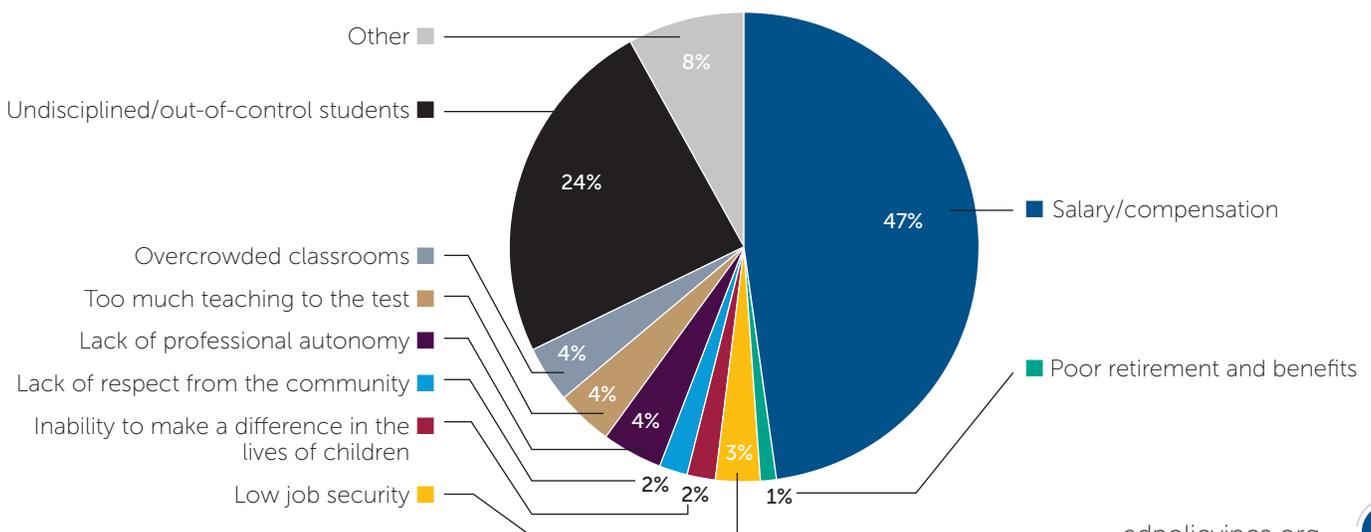


Note: "Don't know" responses are not reported here.

Legend: Strongly Support, Somewhat Support, Somewhat Oppose, Strongly Oppose

Teacher salaries also loom large in voters' opinions about whether young people should become teachers. For those voters who indicated they would discourage a young person from becoming a teacher (13 percent, as seen in Figure 5), we asked them what aspects of teaching would lead them to that recommendation. As shown in Figure 17, salary/compensation was the top answer, drawing 47 percent of respondents (the next highest-rated reason was undisciplined/out-of-control students at 24 percent). Clearly, voters believe that teacher salaries are an important issue and that low salaries, in particular, are a barrier to becoming a teacher. It is important to note that of the 56 percent of voters who *would* encourage a young person to become a teacher (see Figure 5), 70 percent say they would do so because of "the ability to make a difference in the lives of children," but only 5 percent report that it is due to salary and compensation.

Figure 17. Why Voters Discourage Young People from Becoming Teachers



Conclusion

The results of the 2020 PACE/USC Rossier poll offer valuable findings that could inform ongoing policy discussions in Sacramento. With regard to the upcoming ballot initiatives, there is room for cautious optimism. But support is not strong enough, especially for changes to property tax policy established by Proposition 13, to assume the measures will pass easily. The findings also suggest that Democratic leaders and candidates are in line with the general public on certain issues—especially raising teacher salaries and addressing college affordability—but how to pay for those policies may not be straightforward. Finally, the findings indicate growing pessimism about the performance of California’s schools and its leaders. If this pessimism continues to trend in the wrong direction, it may pose electoral consequences for both the officials themselves and the ambitious educational policies they are proposing.

Appendix: Methodology for PACE/USC Rossier 2020 Poll

- Tulchin Research surveyed 2,000 registered California voters online.
- Voters used a variety of preferred internet-connected devices, including desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones, to complete the survey. In the case of each device, the layout of question presentation was altered slightly to accommodate screen real estate.
- Tulchin Research controlled and weighted the data based on party, age, ethnicity, gender and geography to obtain percentages for these demographics that matched the population of registered California voters.
- The survey was completed in English.
- The survey was administered from January 3rd to 10th, 2020.
- Tulchin Research used an online panel provider to obtain our sample. Panelists were recruited from a reputable panel provider and invited to complete surveys typically by email notification in exchange for minimal monetary compensation (i.e., \$0.50-\$0.75), in the form of redeemable points. The panel provider ensures panelist identity and that IP addresses are legitimate from people wishing to become panelists. Also, panelists are screened for completing a large number of surveys and showing undesirable behavior such as inconsistent responding or “speeding” through surveys.
- The margin of error for the entire survey is estimated to be +/- 2.19 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval.
- Some questions in the poll were administered to roughly equal halves of the samples, (i.e., split samples, which produce larger margins of error).

Author Biographies

Morgan Polikoff, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Education at the USC Rossier School of Education. Dr. Polikoff uses quantitative methods to study the design, implementation, and effects of standards, assessment, and accountability policies. Recent work has investigated teachers' instructional responses to content standards and critiqued the design of school and teacher accountability systems. Ongoing work focuses on the implementation of Common Core standards and the influence of curriculum materials and assessments on implementation. Dr. Polikoff is the 2017 AERA Early Career Award winner and is a co-editor of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. His research is currently supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Institute of Education Sciences, among other sources. Dr. Polikoff received his doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education in 2010, with a focus on education policy and his bachelor's degree in mathematics and secondary education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2006.

Heather Hough, PhD, is the Executive Director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Prior to serving in this role, she led the partnership between PACE and the CORE Districts. Her recent work has focused on using research to strengthen state structures supporting continuous improvement and advance policies that support the whole child. Dr. Hough has worked in a variety of capacities to support policy and practice in education, including as an Improvement Advisor at the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and a researcher at the Public Policy Institute of California, the Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University, and the Center for Education Policy at SRI International. Dr. Hough holds a Ph.D. in education policy and a Bachelor of Arts degree in public policy from Stanford University.

Julie A. Marsh, PhD, is a Professor of Education Policy at the University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, a faculty director of PACE, and a co-director of the USC Rossier Center on Education Policy, Equity and Governance. Dr. Marsh specializes in research on K-12 policy and governance, blending perspectives in education, sociology, and political science. Her work has focused on accountability and instructional policy, with particular attention to the process and politics of adoption and implementation, and the ways in which policies shape practice in urban settings. One cross-cutting focus of this work relates to how teachers and administrators use data to inform their practice. A second major strand of her research examines educational governance and efforts to decentralize and democratize decision-making. Dr. Marsh is a co-editor of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. Prior to coming to USC in July 2010, she was at the RAND Corporation for eight years, where she last served as senior policy researcher. She received a Ph.D. in education administration and policy analysis from Stanford University, a master's degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley, and bachelor's degree in American studies from Stanford University.

David Plank, PhD, is a Senior Fellow at Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE). Previously, he was the executive director of PACE. Before joining PACE, Dr. Plank was a professor at Michigan State University, where he founded and directed the Education Policy Center. He was also on the faculties at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Texas at Dallas, where he taught courses and conducted research in the areas of educational finance and policy. Dr. Plank is the author or editor of six books, including the *AERA Handbook on Educational Policy Research*. He has published widely in a number of different fields, including economics of education, history of education, and educational policy. His current interests include the role of the state in education and the relationship between academic research and public policy. In addition to his work in the United States, he has extensive international experience having served as a consultant to international organizations including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Ford Foundation, as well as to governments in Africa and Latin America. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1983.

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE)

Improving education policy and practice and advancing equity through evidence

PACE is an independent, non-partisan research center led by faculty directors at Stanford University, the University of Southern California, the University of California Davis, the University of California Los Angeles, and the University of California Berkeley. Founded in 1983, PACE bridges the gap between research, policy, and practice, working with scholars from California's leading universities and with state and local decision makers to achieve improvement in performance and more equitable outcomes at all levels of California's education system, from early childhood to postsecondary education and training. We do this through:

- 1 bringing evidence to bear on the most critical issues facing our state;
- 2 making research evidence accessible; and
- 3 leveraging partnership and collaboration to drive system improvement.



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