



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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TSTA bipartisan poll: spend Rainy Day money on schools; stop ESAs; and reduce impact of high stakes testing on A-F school grading system

Most Texas voters — Republicans, Democrats and independents — believe the Legislature should spend part of the Rainy Day Fund to increase funding for public schools, according to a statewide poll conducted for the Texas State Teachers Association by a respected bipartisan polling team.

The poll also indicates significant bipartisan opposition to two other major legislative issues: education savings accounts and the A-F grading system for school accountability.

The TSTA poll was led by Keith Frederick, who has conducted polls for Democratic candidates in Texas for more than a decade, and Jan van Lohuizen, who has conducted polls for numerous statewide and national Republican officeholders. TSTA surveyed a representative statewide sample of 750 registered Texas voters and an oversample of 418 Texas Republican Primary voters.

“Texans of both political parties value their neighborhood public schools,” said TSTA President Noel Candelaria. “They expect legislators to do a better job of providing educators the resources needed for student success, resist efforts to divert education tax dollars to unaccountable privatization schemes, and reduce the disruption and stress felt by students, parents and educators due to high stakes testing.”

Key findings of the survey include:

- 83% of Texas voters — 79% of Republican voters — have a positive opinion of teachers in their local schools;
- By a 55%-34% margin — 54%-35% among Republican Primary voters — Texas voters believe inadequate state education funding causes increases in local school property taxes;
- 71% of Texas voters — a 56%-39% majority of Republican Primary voters — believe the Legislature should tap into the Rainy Day Fund for public schools;
- 73% of Texas voters — 64% of Republican Primary voters — believe the state should increase per pupil spending;
- 66% of Texas voters — 73% of Republican Primary voters — believe high stakes testing should be scrapped;
- Likewise, by a 57%-38% margin — a 61%-33% margin among Republican Primary voters — Texans oppose an A-F grading system based mostly on standardized test scores;
- 82% of Texas voters — 78% of Republican Primary voters — believe that “any private or religious school that receives state tax dollars should be held accountable to the same standards as neighborhood public schools”;
- Only 25% of Texas voters — and 28% of Republican voters — favor legislation to create Education Savings Accounts that would allow a few parents to use state tax dollars to pay for private, religious or home school expenses with little or no accountability;
- By a 49-39% margin, Texas voters oppose phasing out the state’s main business tax, and only 44% of Republican primary voters favor that proposal.