

2020: Texans *trust* Teachers

RAISE | Poll
YOUR HAND TEXAS
FOUNDATION

The inaugural statewide poll of Texans' attitudes toward public education

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Teachers *trusted* but undervalued

Texans express strong support for teachers and significant concerns about challenges facing the profession

Texans express broad levels of trust and confidence in the state's public school teachers – in significantly higher numbers than national figures. At the same time, they see teachers as undervalued in society. Respondents highlight test pressures, low pay, and discipline as major challenges for teachers.

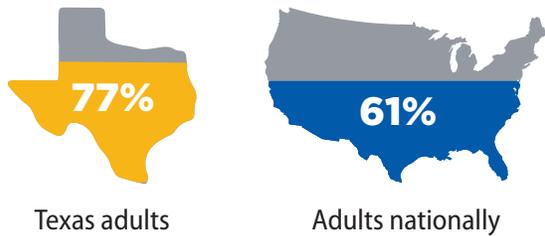
While there are concerns about the quality of education that their schools provide, the more closely connected Texans are to a school, the higher they rate it. School funding is seen as the biggest problem facing their local public schools.

The Raise Your Hand Texas® Foundation Poll is a new statewide initiative modeled after the longstanding national PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools and provides comparisons to several questions from the 2019 national poll.

Attitudes on Public School Teachers

Survey results underscore the public’s regard for teachers, their perceived importance in school quality, and concerns about their working conditions. Seventy-seven percent of Texans express trust and confidence in the state’s public school teachers — well higher than the national figure, 61 percent.

Trust and Confidence in Teachers



Ninety-three percent of Texans, moreover, call teacher quality extremely or very important in school quality overall, and 37 percent call it the single most important factor. It ranks alongside a safe and secure learning environment in importance, with all other items in the single digits.

Seventy-one percent see teachers as undervalued in society. As many (70 percent) say their pay is too low. Test pressures and lack of discipline are seen as top challenges in their work.

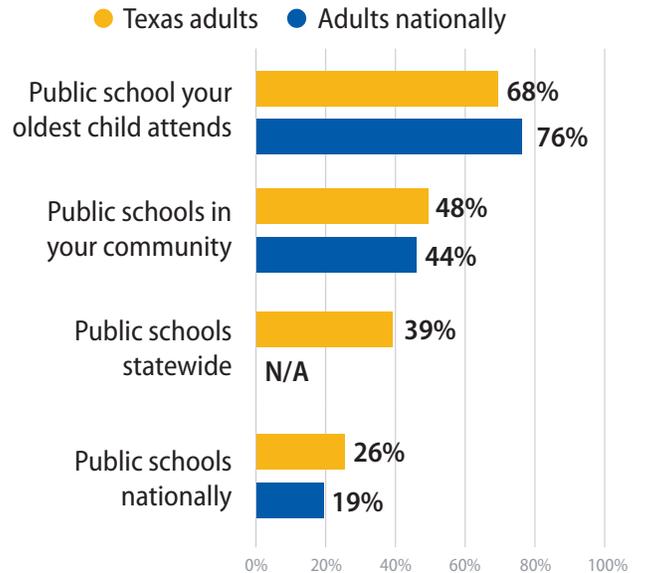
Sixty-six percent of Texans give an A or B grade to the public school teachers in their communities, and 58 percent give an A or B to teachers across the state.

Attitudes on Public Schools

When rating public schools as a whole, the more closely connected respondents are to a school, the higher they rate it. Twenty-six percent of Texans give an A or B to schools nationally.

That number increases to 39 percent when considering schools statewide. Forty-eight percent of Texans give an A or B to schools in their communities, rising to 68 percent giving an A or B to the public school their oldest child attends. PDK national responses reflect a similar pattern.

A or B Grade for Public Schools



► **Two Big Concerns for Texans**

60% are *not confident state standardized tests effectively measure student learning.*

59% believe their community public schools have *too little money.*

When addressing specific concerns about public schools, Texans express skepticism about standardized testing. Another is funding — about two-thirds say the state is providing too little money to its public schools.

About 6 in 10 (62 percent) say they'd prefer a political candidate who supports higher

school funding over one who wants to hold it steady or reduce it. And perhaps surprisingly for this traditionally tax-averse state, 62 percent say they would support raising taxes to try to improve the public schools in their community — although just 15 percent offer strong support.

Views on a variety of issues facing schools are sharply divided among some groups, including by political party preference and ideology. That said, there are areas of agreement. Large majorities across these groups express trust and confidence in public school teachers. Very similar shares of Democrats, Republicans, and independents give A or B grades to their community's public schools. And 8 in 10 across the board consider it extremely or very important to teach students self-management, interpersonal skills, and decision-making.

About the Poll

The Raise Your Hand® Texas Foundation Poll was produced for the Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation, a nonprofit working to strengthen and support public education in the state, by Langer Research Associates, a New York firm with a specialty in polling on public attitudes on education. Langer Research Associates conducts the annual national PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools.

The Raise Your Hand survey was conducted in English and Spanish among a random sample of 1,161 Texas adults via the Ipsos KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based

online survey panel. Results have a 3.6-point error margin for the full sample.

The full survey report follows, in nine sections: Rating the Schools, What Matters in School Quality, The Role of Testing, School Accountability, Attitudes Toward Teachers, School Funding, Wraparound Services, School Diversity, and Personal Connections.

All poll questions are listed by section within the report. The survey methodology is included at the end. Topline results are available at **[RaiseYourHandTexas.org/2020Poll](https://www.RaiseYourHandTexas.org/2020Poll)**



Rating the Schools

Several school and teacher ratings are strong among K-12 public school parents, a group with the most current, direct experience with the schools, as well as a particular interest in their success. Seventy-one percent of Texas public school parents give their local public school teachers an A or B grade, 68 percent give an A or B to their own child's school, and 66 percent give an A or B to public school teachers statewide.

However, fewer parents, 56 percent, give an A or B to their community's public schools overall (as do 48 percent of all Texans). And just 48 percent of parents give an A or B to the public schools statewide, dropping to 39 percent among all adults.

The public schools nationally fare least well, with A or B grades from just 33 percent of Texas public school parents and 26 percent of all Texans. That's a pattern seen in national PDK polls as well: Local schools are rated better than all schools more broadly.

As mentioned, ratings of one's own community's public schools reflect one example of partisan agreement in the survey's results. Fifty-one percent of Democrats, 50 percent of Republicans and 45 percent of independents all give their local public schools an A or B grade.

Texas public school parents are somewhat more critical than all Americans of their own child's school; 68 percent give A or B grades in Texas compared with 76 percent of parents nationally. At the same time, Texans are a bit more complimentary toward the nation's

schools overall, by seven points among all adults and seven points among public school parents.

In another question, most Texans don't rate the state's schools better than the public schools nationally: Thirty percent say Texas schools are better, but 53 percent say they're about the same. Seventeen percent say Texas schools as a group are worse than the nation's schools.

Among groups, Texans in the top income bracket give higher ratings to the public schools in their community. Fifty-seven percent of those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more give their local schools an A or B, dropping to 44 percent of those who earn less (with virtually identical results in the \$50,000-\$99,999 and under \$50,000 brackets). There's no such gap in ratings of the schools statewide.

There also are differences by educational attainment (which is related to income). Fifty-eight percent of college graduates give their community's schools an A or B, compared with 44 percent of those without a four-year college degree. This is reversed in ratings of the state's schools overall: Just 3 in 10 college graduates give the state's public schools an A or B, compared with 42 percent of those without a degree.

Among other differences, 58 percent of rural residents and 52 percent of suburbanites give their community's schools an A or B, compared with 43 percent of city dwellers.

The Questions

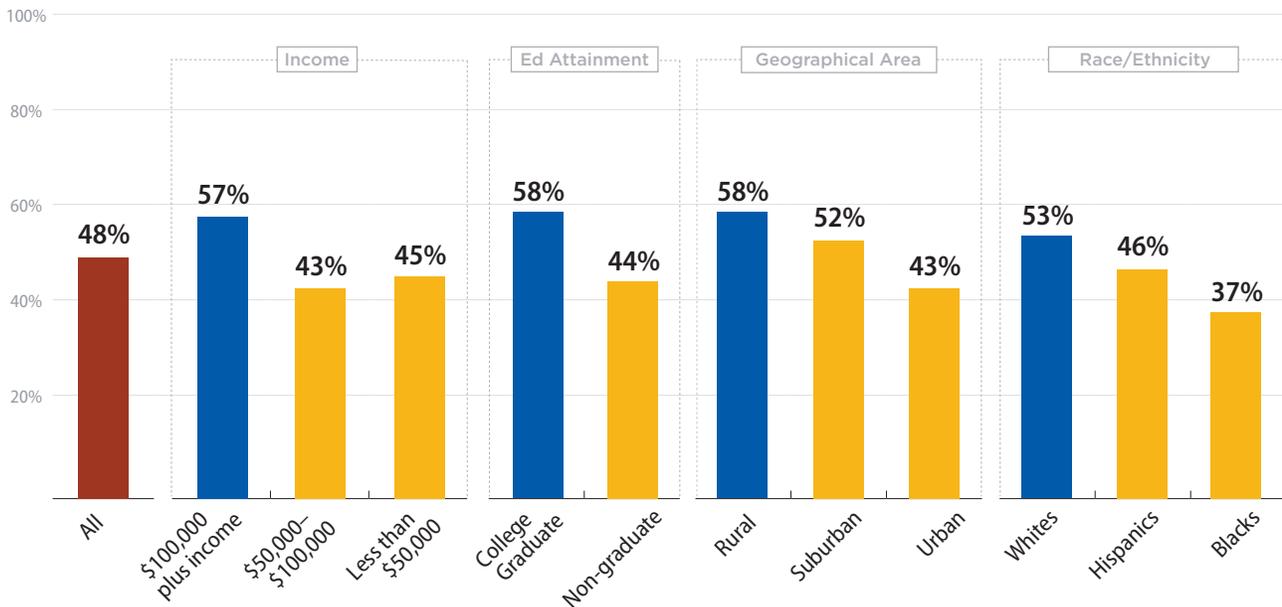
- Q.** Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Using the same scale, what grade would you give the public schools in your community?
- Q.** How about the public schools in the state as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools in Texas?
- Q.** How about the public schools in the nation as a whole? What grade would you give the public schools nationally?
- Q.** Using the A, B, C, D, Fail scale again, what grade would you give the school your oldest child attends?
- Q.** How do you think the quality of public school education in Texas compares with the quality of public school education in the rest of the country?
- Q.** How well do you think the public schools in your community do each of those things — provide a good education, produce a well-prepared workforce, and prepare students to be good citizens?
- Q.** Which of these do you think should be the main goal of a public school education — to prepare students academically, to prepare students for work, or to prepare students to be good citizens?

The urban/suburban/rural pattern is similar for public schools statewide, with an A or B from 47 percent in rural areas and 43 percent in the suburbs versus 34 percent in urban areas. And local school ratings are especially

low among blacks, with 37 percent giving their community’s public schools an A or B grade. It’s 46 percent among Hispanics and 53 percent among whites.

Ratings for Public Schools in Your Community

% who give A or B grade

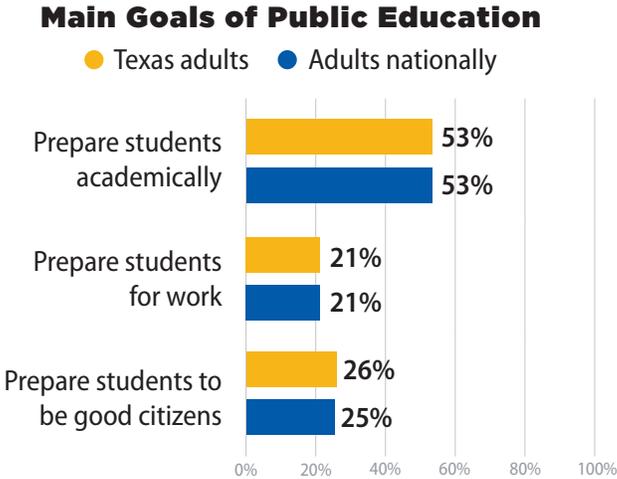


Partisan differences emerge in views of the state’s schools versus those nationally. Four in 10 Republicans say the quality of public schools is better in Texas than nationally, compared with 30 percent of independents and just 19 percent of Democrats. Similarly, 38 percent of conservatives say Texas schools are better, versus 25 percent of moderates and 20 percent of liberals. Twenty-eight percent of liberals say the quality of the state’s schools is worse than the public schools nationally, 9 and 19 points higher, respectively, than the share of moderates and conservatives who hold this view.

Overall, these and other results show room for improvement in perceptions of the performance of the state’s public schools. On one hand, a vast 89 percent of Texans say their schools do at least somewhat well at providing students with a good education. But only about half as many, 44 percent, say the schools do extremely or very well at this core function (51 percent of parents); the other half, 45 percent, say the schools do somewhat well. This leaves 10 percent who say the schools do not do so well or not well at all in educating students.

Further, just 32 percent of all Texans (and 42 percent of parents) rate the schools highly on preparing students to be good citizens. And it’s similar on producing a well-prepared workforce.

As to which of these is most important, Texans divide. Fifty-three percent say preparing students academically should be the main goal of a public school education, but nearly as many select one of two other directions. Twenty-six percent say preparing students to be good citizens should be the main goal, and 21 percent put a priority on preparing students for work. Results are similar among parents, as well as similar to findings nationally in a PDK poll in April 2019.



What Matters in School Quality

What factors make schools successful? The Raise Your Hand survey asked about two groups of items – the inputs that might indicate school quality and outcomes that could matter.

Two items stand out in terms of inputs: Providing a safe and secure learning environment, seen as the single most important factor in overall school quality by 42 percent of Texans, and teacher quality, called the top factor by 37 percent. Eight other items, ranging from full-day pre-kindergarten to specialized career-focused classes, all receive just single-digit mentions.

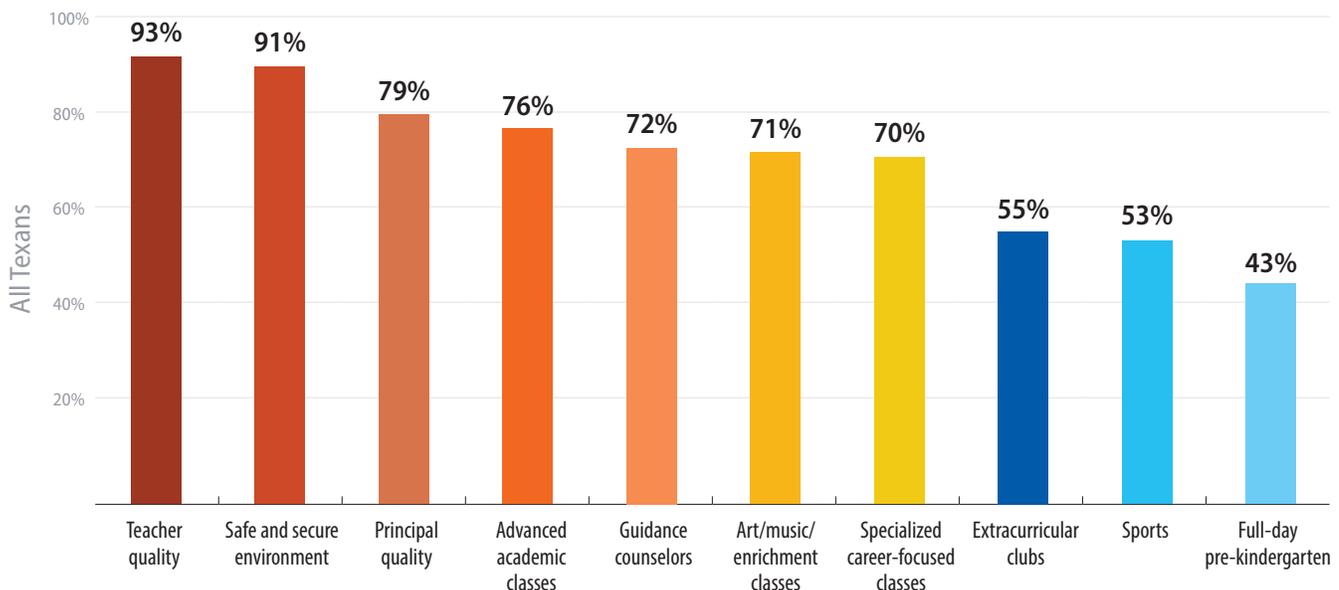
That’s not to say other items don’t matter – just that they’re not top of the list. About 9 in 10 Texans call both teacher quality and a secure

environment extremely or very important in school quality. But anywhere from 70 to 79 percent – still substantial majorities – say the same about career-focused classes; arts, music, and enrichment classes; access to guidance counselors; advanced academics; and the quality of the school principal. Even as the top items stand out, all of these matter as well in school quality.

Three remaining items score lower as highly important in school quality: offering extracurricular clubs, offering sports, and full-day pre-K. One of these, sports, is seen as highly important by more public school parents (62 percent) than by Texans generally (53 percent).

What Makes School Quality: Inputs

% who say these factors are extremely or very important



Further, some of these numbers rise sharply when we include those who see various items as important, albeit not “extremely” or “very important.” Full-day pre-K is an example; on a five-point scale, a combined total of 76 percent see pre-K as extremely or very important (43 percent) or just “important” (33 percent). Only 24 percent consider it not so important or not important at all.

While views on the importance of teacher quality and a safe and secure learning environment are broadly based, arts, music, and enrichment classes are more apt to be seen as highly important by liberals (81 percent) and moderates (73 percent) versus conservatives (60 percent). Also, Texans in urban and suburban areas are 18 and 14 points more apt than those who live in rural areas to rate these classes as highly important.

Partisan and ideological gaps also appear in views of the importance of full-day pre-K classes in school quality. Fifty-three percent of Democrats and 44 percent of independents call these classes highly important, versus 29 percent of Republicans. It’s 52 percent among liberals and 47 percent among moderates, dropping to 32 percent of conservatives. There are differences by race and ethnicity as well; 60 percent of blacks and 52 percent of Hispanics call full-day pre-K highly important, compared with 33 percent of whites.

In another result, 65 percent overall think pre-K classes improve students’ readiness to learn, again with greater skepticism among Republicans and conservatives. Other gaps exist as well, with women, blacks and Hispanics more apt than men or whites to see this benefit of pre-K.

The Questions

- Q.** How important is each of these in school quality – having advanced academic classes; having art, music, and other enrichment classes; having extracurricular clubs; having specialized career-focused classes; offering full-day pre-kindergarten; the quality of the teachers; offering sports; access to guidance counselors; having a safe and secure learning environment; and the quality of the principal? Which one of those is the single most important?
- Q.** Now thinking about outcomes, how important is each of these in school quality – how well the school prepares students to do well on standardized tests; how well the school helps students learn self-management, interpersonal skills, and decision-making; how well the school prepares students for college; how well the school prepares students for jobs; how well the school prepares students for military service; and how well the school helps students like their school experience? Which one of those is the single most important?
- Q.** How much do you think pre-kindergarten programs help students enter kindergarten ready to learn?

Among other items tested for their perceived importance in school quality, seeing career-focused classes as highly important peaks at 78 percent among blacks, compared with two-thirds of whites. Hispanics are in the middle, at 72 percent. And 8 in 10 adults in Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, and East Texas see advanced academic classes as highly important, compared with 66 percent in West Texas, with the rest falling in between.

In terms of outcomes that can be seen as indicators of school quality, one scores far and away in the top slot: Teaching students self-management, interpersonal, and decision-making skills. Fifty-three percent of Texans call this the single most important outcome in school quality, another result that's similar among Republicans, Democrats, and independents alike.

That's followed, distantly, by two other items – preparation for jobs, seen as the most important outcome by 20 percent, and preparation for college, 17 percent. Three others – helping students like their school experience, helping them do well on standardized tests, and preparing them for military service – score in single digits as the single most important outcomes.

The top three most important items also prevail in being seen as extremely or very important, with each placed there by 72

▶ **Top Measure of Quality**

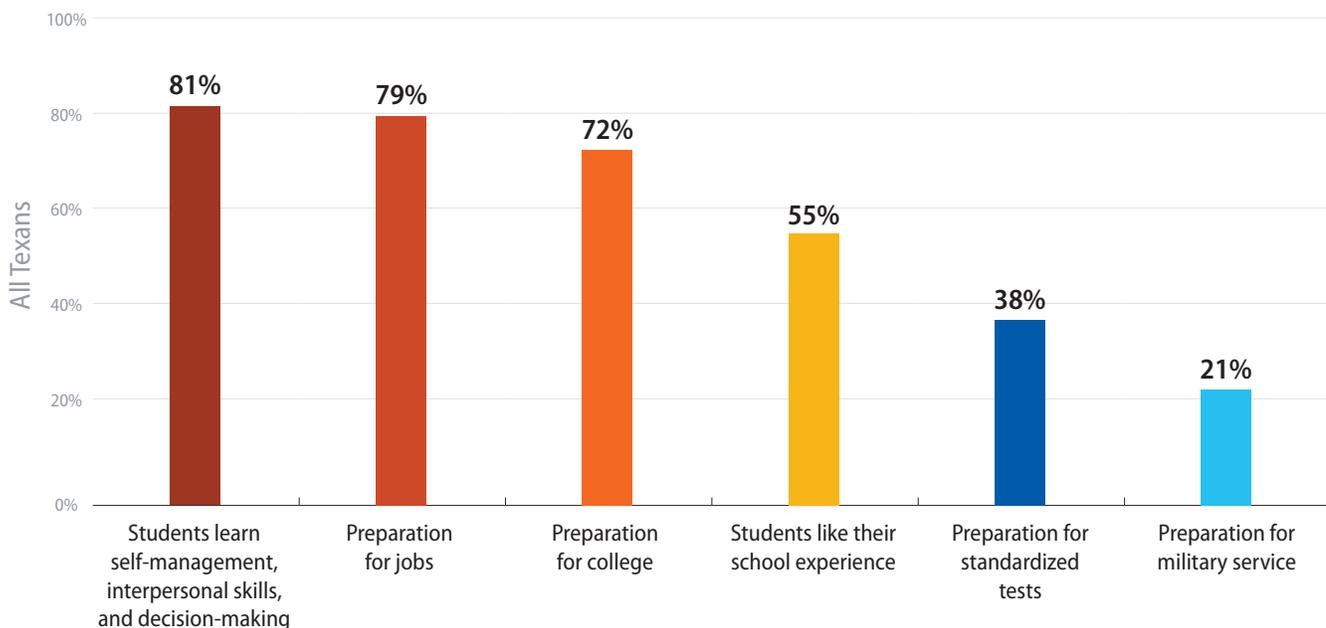
One indicator of school quality scores far and away in the top slot: *Teaching students self-management, interpersonal, and decision-making skills.*

percent or more. A smaller majority, 55 percent, rate helping students like their school experience as highly important. This falls to 38 percent for standardized test performance and 21 percent for preparation for military service.

Public school parents differ to some degree on standardized tests. Forty-seven percent of parents call this highly important in school quality, nine points more than all Texans. Still, even among parents, test prep lags other concerns as a sign of school quality.

Measuring School Quality: Outcomes

% who say these factors are extremely or very important



The Role of Testing

Other results also mark skepticism about the role of testing in public schools. Just 37 percent of Texans express confidence that state standardized tests effectively measure how well students are learning, including a mere 6 percent who are very confident of this. Confidence in these tests reaches 50 percent among parents, with just 9 percent very confident.

Further, in a lopsided result, 85 percent of all adults say a student's improvement on standardized tests over time is a better gauge of learning than his or her grade at any individual point in time. Nearly as many parents, 79 percent, agree.



believe *improvement* on standardized tests over time better measures learning than a single score.

As things stand, 93 percent of adults in the state see pressure to have their students do well on standardized tests as a challenge facing teachers today, and 53 percent call it a major challenge – placing it alongside disciplinary issues as the most-cited major challenge that teachers face.

Indeed, Texans overall and K-12 public school parents alike divide about evenly on whether teachers focus more on helping students get good grades on tests or helping them “reach their full potential as learners,” test scores aside.

Moreover, among people who think teachers focus mainly on tests, nearly all – 93 percent – say that’s because the system requires them to do this, not because it’s the way they prefer to teach. Among those who think teachers focus mainly on learning potential, by contrast, 55 percent say it’s because that’s how they prefer to teach.

The Questions

- Q. Now thinking about state standardized tests, how confident are you that state standardized tests effectively measure how well a student is learning?
- Q. When thinking about standardized testing, which of these do you think is the better way to measure how well a child is learning – his or her score on a single standardized test at one point in time or whether his or her scores on standardized tests improve over time?
- Q. Which one of these do you think teachers focus on more – helping students get good grades on tests or helping students reach their full potential as learners?
- Q. Which of these do you think is the main reason that teachers focus more on helping students get good grades – because it’s the way they prefer to teach; or because it’s the way the system requires them to teach?
- Q. Which of these do you think is the main reason that teachers focus more on helping students reach their full potential as learners – because it’s the way they prefer to teach; or because it’s the way the system requires them to teach?

School Accountability

Texas grades its public schools on the A-F scale, largely based on state standardized test scores. Those grades are not very widely followed; about half of public school parents, 51 percent, say they're aware of the state grades for any of their community's public schools, and this falls to 39 percent among all adults.

Among those who are aware of the grades, nearly 9 in 10 find them helpful. Many fewer say they're very helpful, 38 percent of all such parents and 35 percent of all such Texans.

There's a gap in confidence in these grades. Given the information that they're largely based on standardized test scores, 60 percent of public school parents say they're confident that these grades accurately represent school quality (15 percent very confident). At the same time, among all Texans, overall confidence declines to 49 percent (with only 8 percent very confident). That partially

► Accuracy of Accountability Ratings

50% are *not confident* A-F ratings accurately represent school quality.

The Questions

- Q.** The state grades all public schools on an A, B, C, D, Fail scale. Do you happen to know the A-F grades for any of your community's public schools?
- Q.** Do you find the letter grade for your local public schools helpful or not helpful in understanding the school's quality?
- Q.** The state letter grades for local public schools are based primarily on standardized test scores. How confident are you that state letter grades on the quality of local public schools accurately represent the quality of those schools?

reflects the gap in awareness, since people who are aware of the state's letter grades are 10 points more apt than others to express confidence in them.

Among other differences, Texans with no more than a high school education are more likely to have confidence in the state's letter grades; 59 percent are very or somewhat confident these grades reflect school quality, compared with 42 percent of adults with at least some college experience. By race or ethnicity, it's 63 percent among blacks and 57 percent among Hispanics, versus 38 percent among whites.

Attitudes Toward Teachers

As mentioned in the introduction, Texas teacher ratings stand out in the high level of their A and B grades, their rankings for importance in overall school quality, and other gauges as well.

These include their 77 percent trust-and-confidence ratings – higher than comparative scores in seven national PDK polls from 2010 to 2018 – and the view among 71 percent of Texans that public school teachers are undervalued in society today.

Notably, trust and confidence in teachers commands large majorities across partisan lines, including 85 percent of Democrats, 76 percent of independents, and 73 percent of Republicans.

Seventy percent of all Texans also say that teachers' salaries in their communities are too low.

That's similar to the 66 percent who said the same in the national PDK poll in 2018 – the most in PDK polls that have asked the question dating to 1969.



Views on teacher pay are partisan, albeit with majority agreement across the board. Fifty-seven percent of Republicans and 58 percent of conservatives say teachers' salaries are too low, rising to three-quarters of all other Texans (Democrats and independents, liberals and moderates alike).

Among other differences, 82 percent of blacks say their local teachers are underpaid, versus about 7 in 10 whites and Hispanics.

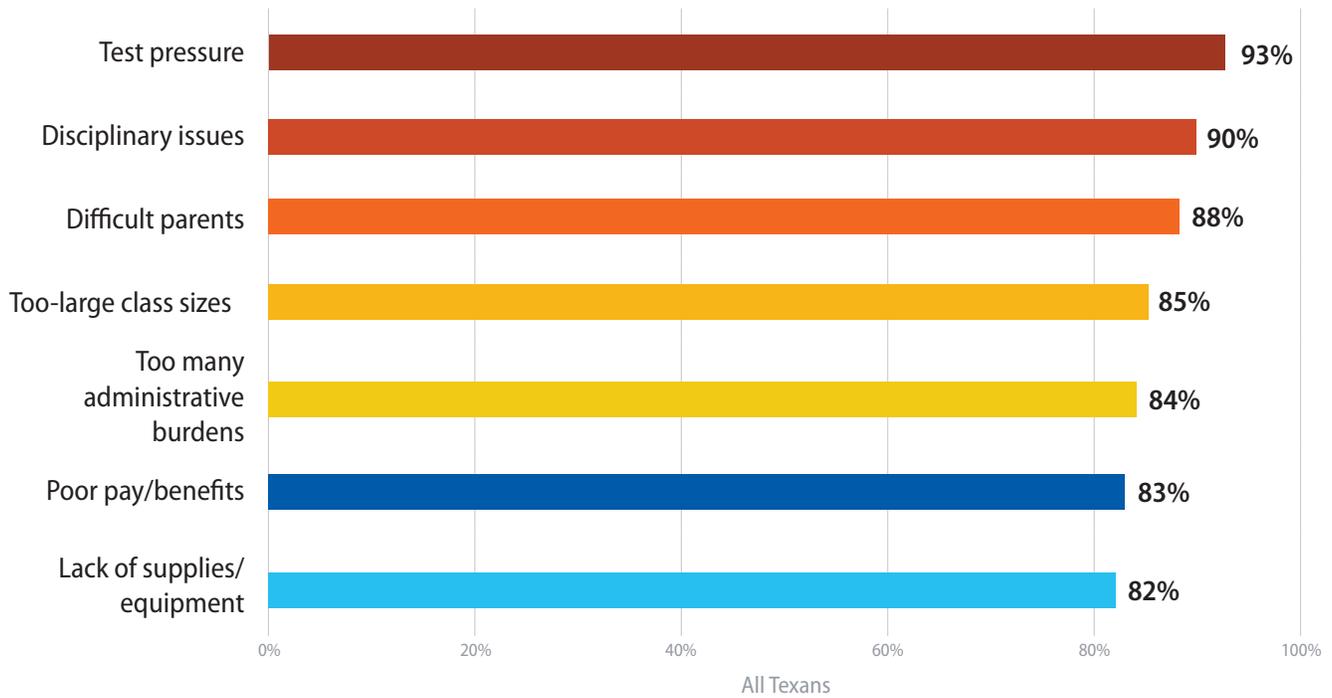
Age also is a factor: Eighty percent of adults younger than 30 say teachers' salaries are too low, dropping to 62 percent of seniors.

There are broad perceptions of the challenges facing teachers. Anywhere from 82 to 93 percent of Texans see each of seven items as more than a minor challenge; tops as "major" challenges are pressure to have students do well on standardized tests (seen as a major challenge for teachers by 53 percent of Texans), disciplinary issues (52 percent), and poor pay and benefits (46 percent).

Forty-four percent cite "difficult parents" as a major challenge for teachers; 39 percent, too-large class sizes; 38 percent, lack of supplies and equipment; and 33 percent, administrative burdens.

Challenges Facing Teachers

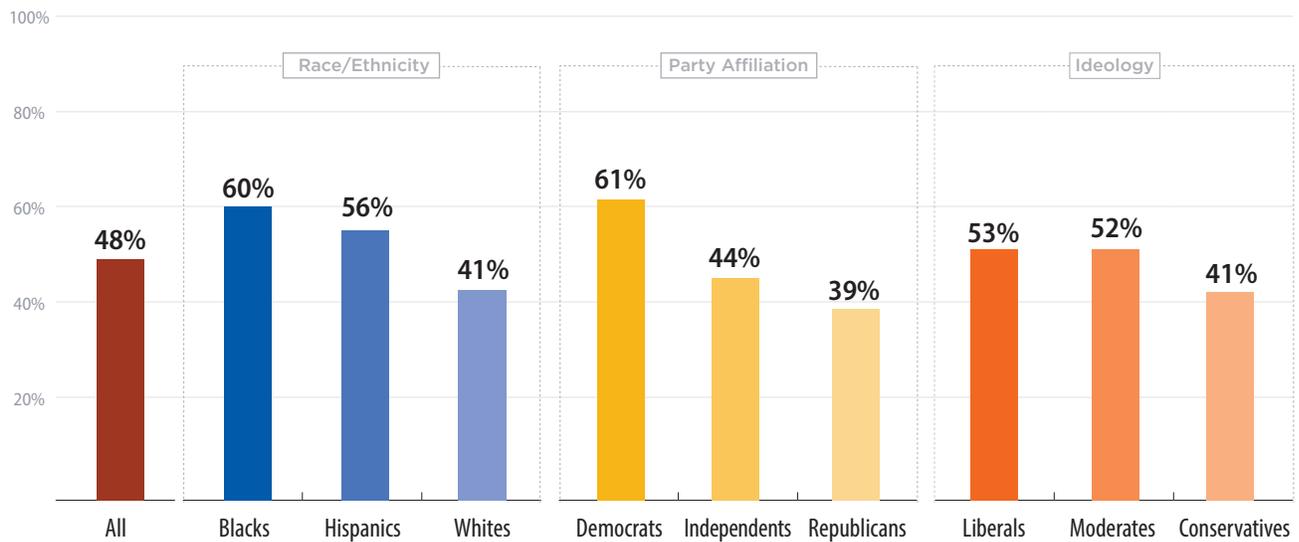
% who identify these as a challenge or major challenge



The Questions

- Q.** Thinking about public school teachers in Texas, using the A, B, C, D, Fail scale, what grade would you give them as a group?
- Q.** What grade would you give the public school teachers in your own community?
- Q.** Overall, do you have trust and confidence in the men and women who are teaching children in the public schools?
- Q.** Do you feel that public school teachers are undervalued, overvalued, or valued appropriately in society today?
- Q.** Do you think salaries for teachers in your community are too high, too low, or just about right?
- Q.** Would you like to have a child of yours take up teaching in the public schools as a career?
- Q.** Why would you not like to have a child of yours take up teaching – what's the main reason?
- Q.** How big of a challenge do you think these are for teachers today – pressure to have their students do well on standardized tests; lack of supplies and equipment; too-large class sizes; too many administrative burdens; disciplinary issues; difficult parents; and poor pay and benefits?

Would You Want Your Child to Be a Public School Teacher?



Low pay and other challenges may impact the attractiveness of the profession. Texans divide, 48-52 percent, on whether or not they'd like a child of theirs to take up teaching in the public schools as a career. That's similar to the 2018 national PDK result, which marked the first time since the early '80s that fewer than half the public liked the idea of their child becoming a teacher.

Among those who do not want their child to become a teacher, about a quarter of Texans overall (26 percent) and public school parents (27 percent) cite inadequate pay and benefits as the main reason, by far the most frequent response in this open-ended question. That's very similar to the national result, 29 percent, in the 2018 PDK poll.

Inadequate pay is followed distantly by the difficulty and stress of the job, cited by 9 percent of Texans, as well as lack of student discipline and lack of respect for teachers, mentioned by 8 percent. Among other reasons, 5 percent cite lack of advancement opportunities and better career options, and 4 percent cite either lack of interest/affinity or safety concerns.

Blacks and Hispanics are among the most apt to say they'd like a child of theirs to take up teaching, at 60 and 56 percent, respectively – versus just 41 percent among whites.

Regionally, this view peaks at 58 percent in the South/Southwestern portion of the state, while bottoming out at 42 percent in West and East Texas and 43 percent in Houston.

Opinions on whether parents would like their child to become a teacher are highly partisan. The profession is more attractive to Democrats (61 percent say they'd like a child of theirs to take up teaching) and liberals (53 percent), compared with 39 percent of Republicans and 41 percent of conservatives.

► Top Reasons Texans Wouldn't Want Their Child to Be a Public School Teacher

1. Inadequate pay
2. Difficult/stressful job
3. Student behavior
4. Not respected/valued

School Funding

The majority view that teachers are underpaid is reflected in concerns about school funding and support for higher taxes. Regarding funding levels, 59 percent of Texans say the schools in their community have too little money (nearly identical to national PDK results), and 64 percent say the state, in particular, is providing too little school funding.

In a test, half the sample was asked about state funding after first being informed that Texas ranks in the bottom 10 states in spending per pupil. Sixty-nine percent said state funding is too low, not a significant difference from the 64 percent who said so without this information.

Views on funding are related to attitudes on school quality at the state level. Among those who think Texas schools are worse than public schools nationally, 76 percent say funding for

their local schools is too low, compared with 60 percent of those who think they're the same quality and 49 percent who view Texas schools as better.

Compared with Democrats and independents, Republicans are 23 and 15 points less apt to say funding in their communities' schools is too low. Similarly, just 46 percent of conservatives think their local public schools are underfunded, 18 and 26 points lower than the share of moderates and liberals who say the same.

Among other differences, 71 percent of blacks say their local public schools are underfunded, compared with 58 percent of Hispanics and 57 percent of whites. By age, 67 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds think their schools' funding is too low, versus 45 percent of seniors.

The Questions

- Q.** What do you think of the funding level for public schools in your community – they have the right amount of money; they have too much money; or they have too little money?
- Q.** Would you support or oppose raising taxes to try to improve the public schools in your community? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?
- Q.** If taxes were raised, how confident are you that the increased funding would improve the public schools in your community – very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?
- Q.** Thinking about state funding, what do you think of the level of funding the state is providing for the public schools in Texas – the state is providing the right amount of money; the state is providing too much money; or the state is providing too little money?
- Q.** Thinking about state funding, Texas has been ranked among the bottom 10 states on spending per pupil in its public schools. What do you think of the level of funding the state is providing for the public schools in Texas – the state is providing the right amount of money; the state is providing too much money; or the state is providing too little money?
- Q.** What kind of candidate for political office are you most likely to support – one who supports increased funding for public schools; one who supports decreased funding for public schools; or one who supports maintaining the current level of funding for public schools?
- Q.** How important to you is a candidate's position on public school funding?
- Q.** What do you think are the biggest problems facing the public schools in your community?

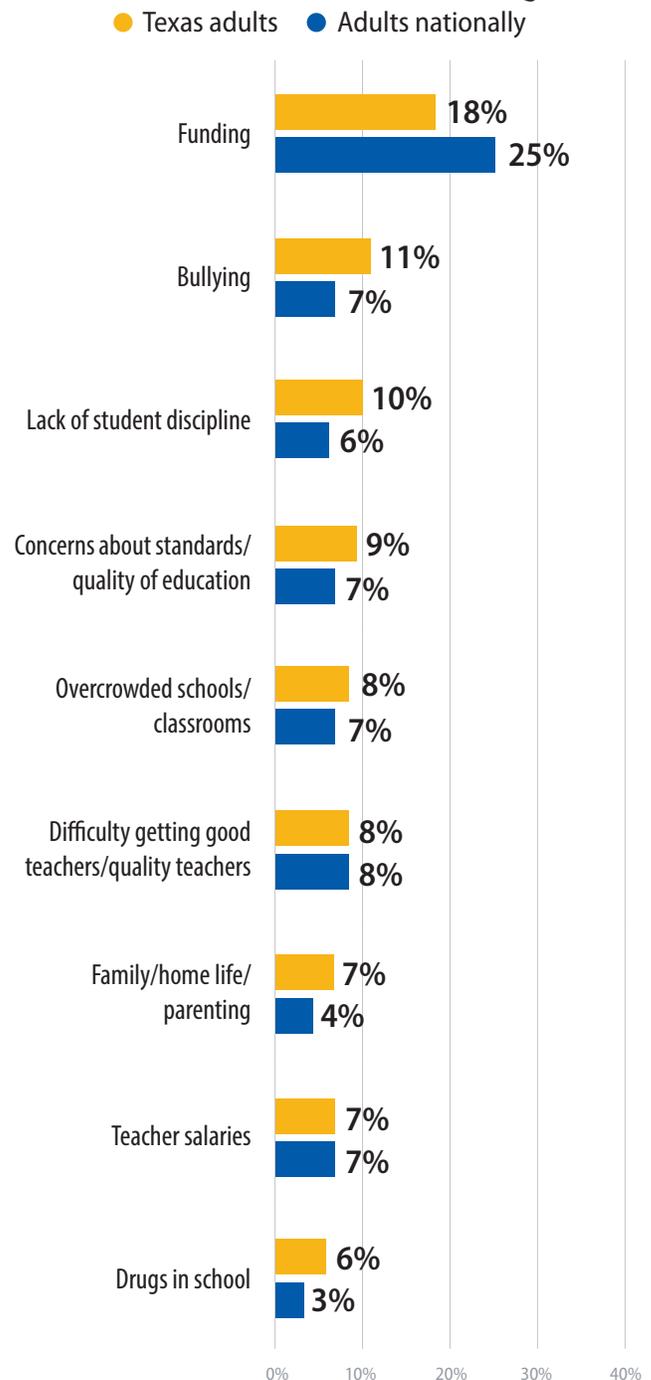
In an open-ended question about the biggest problems facing the public schools today, inadequate financial support is mentioned most often, by 18 percent of all Texans and essentially the same share of public school parents, 17 percent. That’s less than the share of adults across the country to cite lack of funding as the schools’ top problem, 25 percent in the 2019 national PDK poll (the 18th consecutive year in which funding topped the list). That said, funding concerns significantly outpace the next most-cited problems in Texas: bullying, students’ lack of discipline, and concerns about the quality of education, mentioned by 9 to 11 percent of Texans.

As noted in the introduction to this report, 62 percent of Texans say they’d support raising taxes to try to improve the public schools in their community. That’s even though many fewer, 42 percent, express confidence that if funding were increased, the schools, in fact, would improve. Still, there is a strong relationship between these views. Of those who think more funding would improve the schools, 93 percent support raising taxes. Among those who are skeptical that improvements would be forthcoming, support for higher taxes drops to 40 percent.

In any case, while support is broad overall, it’s not strong. Just 15 percent of Texans strongly support raising taxes to try to improve the schools – including only 28 percent of those who express confidence that increased funding would have a positive effect.

Notably, as well, support for higher taxes peaks, at 70 percent, among people who give their community’s schools an A or B grade, and it’s lowest among those who give their local schools a D or F grade – just 48 percent in this group would raise taxes to try to improve their community’s schools.

Biggest Problems Facing the Public Schools in Your Community



Partisanship and ideology are the biggest factors in views on raising taxes. It's supported by 75 percent of Democrats and 63 percent of independents, compared with 48 percent of Republicans; and by 81 percent of liberals and 66 percent of moderates, versus 48 percent of conservatives. Conservatives are the most skeptical that if school funding were increased, the schools, in fact, would improve.

Also as mentioned, 62 percent of Texans say they're most likely to support a candidate for political office who favors increased funding for the public schools over one who'd cut school funding (favored by just 5 percent) or keeping it steady (29 percent). This was another question on which views among Texans closely resemble national PDK poll results in April 2019.

Among Republicans and conservatives alike, 45 percent say they'd prefer a candidate who favors increased school funding; this rises to

61 percent of independents and 82 percent of Democrats, and likewise to 70 percent of moderates and 79 percent of liberals.

Half of all Texans also say a candidate's position on school funding is extremely or very important to them – more than the level nationally, 41 percent. Among those who prefer a candidate who'd boost school funding, 63 percent call it highly important, compared with just 25 percent of those who prefer a candidate who'd hold spending level or reduce it.

In all, 40 percent both say they'd prefer a candidate who favors higher school spending and call it highly important. That compares with 10 percent who both favor a candidate who'd maintain or cut school funding, and also call it a highly important issue.

Wraparound Services

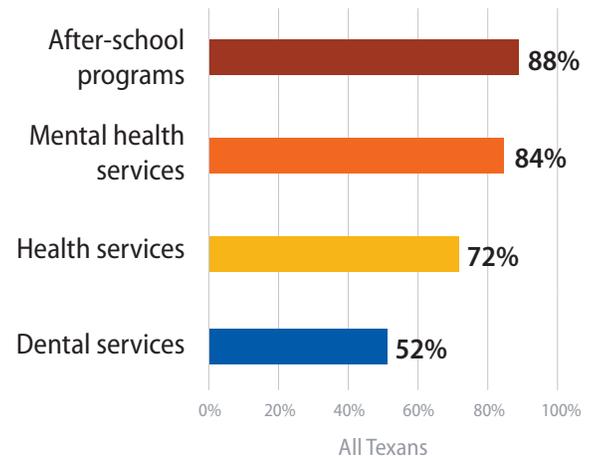
The Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation survey tested public support for wraparound services – additional, non-educational services that are intended to give support to students who don’t have access to these services elsewhere. Most such programs generally are popular – but with far less strength of support than has been found in PDK polls nationally and in two other states, Georgia and New York.

Specifically, 88 percent of Texans support providing after-school programs to students who don’t have access to them otherwise, and 84 percent say the same about mental health services. It’s still a substantial majority, 72 percent, for health services, with a sharp drop for school-provided dental services, supported by 52 percent.

Far fewer Texans, however, “strongly” support any of these, peaking at 42 percent for mental health services and 37 percent for after-school programs, and dropping to 27 percent for health services and 18 percent for dental services. Strong support for these programs was 30 to 40 points higher in national PDK polling.

Support for Wraparound Services

% who believe these programs should be provided



There are differences in strength of sentiment among groups. Women are 17 points more apt than men to strongly favor after-school programs for students in need, 45 versus 28 percent, and this view is 19 points higher among 18- to 39-year-olds compared with older adults. Further, 54 percent of black Texans and 43 percent of Hispanics strongly back after-school programs, compared with 26 percent of whites. And it’s 46 percent among Democrats and 38 percent among independents, compared with 24 percent among Republicans.

Support for mental health services follows a similar pattern. Strong support is at a low of 23 percent among Republicans, compared with 44 percent of independents and 55 percent of Democrats. It's 29 points lower among whites than blacks (with Hispanics in between), and 22 points lower among seniors compared with those under 40.

There are large gaps among groups on whether health and dental services should be provided at all. In the biggest differences, 89 percent of blacks and 82 percent of Hispanics think health services should be provided to students who can't get them elsewhere, compared with 59 percent of whites. (Fifty-one percent

of blacks feel this way strongly, declining to 34 percent of Hispanics and just 16 percent of whites.) Blacks and Hispanics also are about 30 points more apt than whites to favor providing dental services.

There are related differences by income. Eight in 10 Texans earning less than \$50,000 think health services should be offered, compared with 63 percent of those earning \$100,000 or more.

And 64 percent of those earning less than \$50,000 favor the provision of dental services for students who don't have them elsewhere, versus 39 percent in the highest income bracket.

The Question

- Q.** Some public schools may offer something called “wrap-around” services that are intended to give students support to succeed at school. Do you think public schools should or should not provide these services to students who don't have access to them somewhere else — health services; dental services; mental health services; and after-school programs?

School Diversity

Two questions touched on the issue of school diversity, with results very similar to views nationally. Fifty-four percent of Texans (and about as many parents) call it extremely or very important that their community's schools have a mix of students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds; the result was nearly identical in a national PDK poll in 2017. Forty-nine percent say it's that important to have a mix of economic backgrounds, as did 45 percent nationally. (The numbers rise to roughly three-quarters if we add those who say these types of diversity are important, but not extremely or very important.)

Perceptions of racial and ethnic diversity as highly important peak among blacks, at 76 percent, compared with 60 percent among Hispanics and 43 percent of whites. These gaps are reflected at the regional level, with 63 percent of those in the South and Southwest viewing racial diversity as highly important, versus 49 to 53 percent in Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, South Central, and West Texas, versus 46 percent in East Texas.

Racial differences also are sharp when it comes to perceptions of economic diversity. Seven in 10 black Texans think economic diversity in the schools is highly important, compared with 55 percent of Hispanics and 39 percent of whites. Differences among income groups are much more muted, with 54 percent of Texans earning less than \$50,000 seeing economic diversity as highly important, along with 49 percent of those in the \$50,000-\$99,999 bracket and 43 percent of those earning \$100,000 or more.

Younger adults (age 18 to 39) are more apt than seniors to see both racial/ethnic and economic diversity as highly important. And partisanship plays a substantial role in these views. Seventy-one percent of Democrats call racial and ethnic diversity highly important in public schools, compared with 55 percent of independents and 35 percent of Republicans. Similarly, Democrats are 11 points more apt than independents and 32 points likelier than Republicans to see economic diversity as very or extremely important.

The Questions

Q. How important is it to you that the public schools in your community have a mix of students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds?

Q. How important is it to you that the public schools in your community have a mix of students from different economic backgrounds?

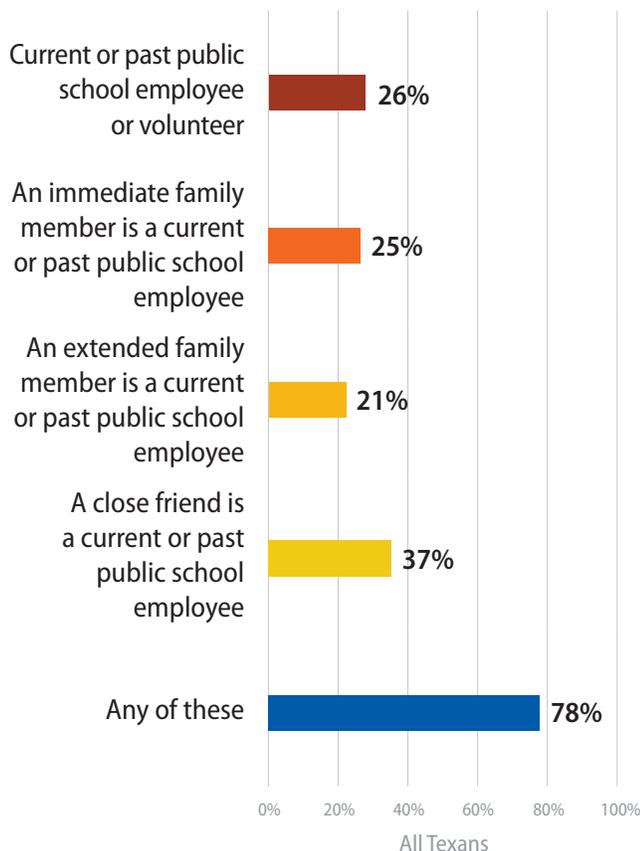
Personal Connections

A final result shows the extent of Texans' personal connections with public schools. Twenty-six percent identify themselves as current or past public school employees or volunteers; 25 percent say an immediate family member is a current or past employee; 21 percent say the same about extended family; and 37 percent about close friends. In all, a remarkable 78 percent report at least one of these personal connections.

There are a few attitudinal differences. Among Texans who have at least some personal connection to the public schools, 60 percent give teachers statewide an A or B grade, versus 50 percent of those with no personal connection. Sixty-eight percent of those with some personal connection give their own community's public school teachers an A or B, a slight nine points more than those with no public school connections.

Personal Connections to Public Schools

% who are or have close friends or relatives working in public schools



Additionally, those who've personally worked or volunteered at a public school are 14 to 18 points more likely than those with no personal connection to rate several items as highly important in school quality — art, music, and other enrichment classes; access to guidance counselors; extracurricular clubs; and the availability of school sports. In the largest difference, Texans who have personally worked or volunteered in public schools are 19 points more apt than others to see full-day pre-K as highly important in school quality.

The Question

Q. Do you or any of your close friends or relatives work in the public schools?

Survey Methodology

The 2020 Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation Poll was conducted using the nationally representative Ipsos KnowledgePanel®, in which participants are randomly recruited via address-based sampling to participate in survey research projects by responding to questionnaires online. Households without internet connections are provided with a web-enabled device and free internet service.

The survey was designed to consist of approximately 1,000 adults in Texas and an oversample of up to 150 additional K-12 public school parents for more granular analysis of this population. The full sample was weighted to reflect the correct proportion of K-12 parents.

The questionnaire was pretested Nov. 15-17, 2019, and fieldwork was conducted Nov. 21-Dec. 4, 2019, in English and Spanish. After initial invitations, reminder emails were sent on the third and sixth days of the field period, with additional reminders sent to the parent oversample and black respondents on days nine and 12. Out of 2,344 panel members invited to participate, completed, qualified surveys were provided by 1,183. Participants completed the survey in a median time of 13 minutes. Because of a scripting error, Q28-29 were refiled Dec. 4-16, 2019, with 1,062 completed interviews. All topline results and questions can be accessed at RaiseYourHandTexas.org/2020Poll.

In quality control, the fastest 2 percent of respondents in total completion time were flagged for possible inattention; these 22 cases were deleted. The final sample included 1,161 general population adults, including an oversample of 131 K-12 public school parents for a total of 376 parents. Data were weighted via iterative proportional fitting to the following

benchmark distributions of general population adults from the U.S. Census Bureau's March 2018 Current Population Survey Supplement.

- Gender (male, female) by age (18-29, 30-44, 45-59, 60+)
- Race/ethnicity (white, black, other, Hispanic, 2+ races)
- Education (less than high school, high school, some college, bachelor's or higher)
- Household income (\$0-\$24,999, \$25K-\$49,999, \$50K-\$74,999, \$75K-\$99,999, \$100K-\$149,999, \$150K+)
- Marital status (married, not married)
- Language proficiency (English-proficient Hispanic, bilingual Hispanic, Spanish-proficient Hispanic, non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic nativity (U.S.-born Hispanic, not U.S.-born Hispanic, non-Hispanic)

A post-weight to recent estimates of political party identification in the Texas general population was applied (27 percent Democrats, 27 percent Republicans, 43 percent independents). Data also were weighted to correct for the parent oversample.

General population weights were trimmed at 2 percent and 98 percent of their distribution (minimum 0.154, maximum 3.705). Given oversampling, the survey has a design effect due to weighting of 1.59, for a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.6 percentage points for the full sample and 6.4 points for public school parents. Error margins are larger for subgroups.

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