

NORTH CAROLINA

K-12 & SCHOOL CHOICE SURVEY

What do voters say about
K-12 education?

Polling Paper No. 11

Paul **DiPerna**

SEPTEMBER **2012**

With questions on state performance, education spending and taxes, charter schools, virtual schools, tax-credit scholarships, education savings accounts, and school vouchers

The Friedman Foundation
for Educational Choice
edchoice.org 

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Survey Project & Profile

Title:	North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey
Survey Organization:	Braun Research, Inc. (BRI)
Survey Sponsor:	The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice
Release Partner:	Civitas Institute
Interview Dates:	June 18 to 24, 2012
Interview Method:	Live Telephone 70% landline and 30% cell phone
Interview Length:	12 minutes (average)
Language(s):	English
Sample Frame:	Registered Voters
Sampling Method:	Dual Frame; Probability Sampling; Random Digit Dial (RDD)
Sample Sizes:	NORTH CAROLINA = 601 Charlotte = 164; Raleigh-Durham = 183
Split Sample Sizes:	“Split A” = 302; “Split B” = 299
Margins of Error:	NORTH CAROLINA = ± 4.0 percentage points Charlotte = ± 7.6 percentage points Raleigh-Durham = ± 7.2 percentage points Each Split Sample = ± 5.6 percentage points
Response Rates:	Landline (LL) = 17.0% Cell Phone = 16.5%
Weighting?	Yes (Age, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Region)
Oversampling?	No

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The author is responsible for overall polling design; question wording and ordering; this paper’s analysis, charts, and writing; and any unintentional errors or misrepresentations.

Survey Demographics

Percent (%) of State Sample	
K-12 Parent	31
Democrat	37
Republican	28
Independent	26
Urban	17
Suburban	27
Small Town	31
Rural	24
18 - 29	20
30 - 39	16
40 - 49	19
50 - 64	26
65 & Over	19
Hispanic	4
Not Hispanic	94
Asian	2
Black	21
Mixed Race	2
Native American	1
Other	2
White	71
Catholic	12
Jewish	1
Mormon	0
Muslim	0
Protestant	57
None	14
Under \$25,000	14
\$25,000 - \$49,999	27
\$50,000 - \$74,999	22
\$75,000 - \$124,999	18
\$125,000 - \$200,000	7
Over \$200,000	3
< HS Graduate	4
HS Graduate	28
Tech, Trade, Vocational	2
Some College	28
≥ College	38
Male	48
Female	52

September 13, 2012

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North Carolina's K-12 Profile

Average State Rank on NAEP ¹	22
High School Graduation Rate ²	80.2%
# Regular Public School Students ³	1,436,162
# Charter School Students ⁴	44,829
# Private School Students ⁵	96,096
# Home School Students ⁶	79,693
% Regular Public School Students ⁷	86.6%
% Charter School Students ⁷	2.7%
% Private School Students ⁷	5.8%
% Home School Students ⁷	4.8%
# School Districts ⁸	115
# Regular Public Schools ⁸	2,512
# Charter Schools ⁸	100
# Private Schools ⁹	695
Online Learning Climate ¹⁰	Weak
% Free and Reduced-Price Lunch ¹¹	49%
% Individualized Education Program (IEP) ¹¹	12%
% English Language Learners (ELL) ¹¹	7%
\$ Revenue Per Student ¹²	\$9,101
\$ "Total" Per Student Spending ¹²	\$9,729
\$ "Current" Per Student Spending ¹²	\$8,518

North Carolina Profile Notes

1. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Average of four rankings (rounded upward to nearest single digit) based on 2011 state scale scores for fourth-grade reading (#23); fourth-grade math (#12); eighth-grade reading (#33); eighth-grade math (#21).
URL: nationsreportcard.gov/data_tools.asp
2. Reported “four-year cohort graduation rate” (i.e. high school graduation rate) by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), NCDPI News Release (August 12, 2012). Data for 2011-2012 school year.
URL: www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2012-13/20120802-02
3. Highlights of the North Carolina Public School Budget, February 2012, page 1.
URL: www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/fbs/resources/data/highlights/2012highlights.pdf
4. Highlights of the North Carolina Public School Budget, February 2012, page 229.
URL: www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/fbs/resources/data/highlights/2012highlights.pdf
5. North Carolina Department of Administration, North Carolina Private School Statistics (2012).
URL: www.ncdnpe.org/documents/11-12CSSStats.pdf
6. North Carolina Department of Administration, North Carolina Home School Statistical Summary (August 2012), page 3.
URL: www.ncdnpe.org/documents/11-12CSSStats.pdf <http://www.ncdnpe.org/documents/hhh237.pdf>
7. Percentages are meant for general impressions only. Due to rounding, percentage totals may be slightly greater or less than 100%.
8. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), Facts and Figures: 2011-12.
URL: www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/fbs/resources/data/factsfigures/2011-12figures.pdf
9. North Carolina Department of Administration, North Carolina Private School Statistics (2012).
URL: www.ncdnpe.org/documents/11-12CSSStats.pdf
10. Author rating (Weak, Moderate, or Strong), based on John Watson, Amy Murin, Lauren Vashaw, Butch Gemin, and Chris Rapp, *Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning: An Annual Review of State-Level Policy and Practice*, (Evergreen Education Group, 2011), Table 2.
URL: kpk12.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/KeepingPace2011.pdf
11. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD). Data for the 2009-2010 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states
12. Frank Johnson, Lei Zhou, and Nanae Nakamoto, *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2008–09 (Fiscal Year 2009)* (NCES 2011-329). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics (June 2011).
URL: nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011329.pdf

Overview

The “North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey” project, commissioned by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (BRI), measures North Carolina registered voters’ familiarity and views on a range of K-12 education topics and school choice reforms. We report response *levels* and *differences* (often using the terms “net” or “spread”) of voter opinion, and the *intensity* of responses.

Where do North Carolinians stand on important issues and policy proposals in K-12 education? We try to provide some observations and insights in this paper.

A randomly selected and statistically representative sample of North Carolina voters recently responded to 20 substantive questions and 11 demographic questions. A total of 601 telephone interviews were conducted in English from June 18 to 24, 2012, by means of both landline and cell phone. Statistical results were weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the statewide sample is ± 4.0 percentage points.

In this project we included several split-sample experiments. A split-sample design is a systematic way of comparing the effects of two or more alternative wordings for a given question. The purpose is to see if particular wording, or providing a new piece of information, can significantly influence opinion on a given topic. We were particularly interested in how wording can affect responses to questions on education spending, taxes, and school choice policies—all salient issues in North Carolina state politics and policy discussions.

Our polling paper has four sections. The first section summarizes key findings. We call the second section “Survey Snapshots,” which offers charts highlighting the core findings of the project. The third section describes the survey’s methodology, summarizes response statistics, and presents additional technical information on call dispositions for landline and cell phone interviews. The fourth section presents our questionnaire and results (“topline numbers”), essentially allowing the reader to follow the actual interview as it was conducted, with respect to question wording and ordering.

Key Findings:

- **Nearly four out of five registered voters in North Carolina (78%) are paying attention to issues in K-12 education. About one-fifth of voters (21%) said they pay “very little” or no attention.**

See Question 1

Voters who said they pay “a lot” of attention (46%) to K-12 education issues outnumber those who said they pay no attention (6%) by more than seven-to-one.

Middle-age and older voters (ages 30 to 49, and 50 and older, respectively) clearly pay closer attention to these issues than younger voters. Almost half of voters 30 and older (48%) are engaged on K-12 education issues, saying they pay “a lot” of attention. By comparison, about one-third of younger voters (34%), age 18 to 29, said the same.

- **North Carolinians are more likely to think that K-12 education is on the “wrong track” (55%) compared to heading in the “right direction” (29%).**

See Question 2

Several demographics stand out. Parents (35%) are more likely than non-parents (25%) to see things going in the right direction, thought the levels are still very low.¹ Suburban and small-town voters (32% each group) are more positive than rural voters (22%). Democrats (34%) are significantly more likely to think things are going in the right direction compared to Republicans (23%). African Americans (36%) are more upbeat than whites (24%).

- **Voters give relatively low marks to the state’s public school system (45% said “good” or “excellent”; 52% said “fair” or “poor”).**

¹ For this paper, the term “parents” refers to those respondents who said they have one or more children in preschool through high school. Non-parents may have children, but none are in this specific grade range.

See Question 3

Parents are more likely to express positive ratings (51%) when compared to non-parents. The eastern region of the state (33%) is significantly less likely to give “good” or “excellent” marks for public schools, compared to the Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham regions (48% in each region).

Republican responses are significantly different than both Democrats and Independents. About half of Democrats (50%) and Independents (53%) gave positive ratings to the state’s public school system, which is much greater than the proportion of Republicans (32%) saying the same. Conversely, 47% of Democrats and 44% of Independents described the public school system as “fair” or “poor.” But nearly two-thirds of Republicans (65%) offered negative ratings.

- **Based on survey responses, North Carolina voters do not know how much is spent per student in public schools. There is an awareness gap.**

See Question 4

Approximately \$8,518 is spent on each student in North Carolina’s public schools, and only 8% of respondents could estimate the correct per-student spending range for the state (this dollar figure reflects “current expenditures” per student). More than one-fourth of all respondents (26%) thought that less than \$4,000 is being spent per student in the state’s public schools. Another 45% of voters said they “don’t know” and did not offer a spending number.²

² “Current Expenditures” data include dollars spent on instruction, instruction-related, support services, and other elementary/secondary current expenditures, but exclude expenditures on long-term debt service, facilities and construction, and other programs. “Total Expenditures” data include dollars spent on instruction, instruction-related, support services, and other elementary/secondary current expenditures, plus expenditures on long-term debt service, facilities and construction, and other programs. The latter may include expenditures for community services, adult education, community colleges, private schools, and other programs that are not considered expenditures on public K-12 education.

When considering “total expenditures” per student (\$9,729 in 2008-2009), which is another definition for educational spending, voter estimates are still off-target.

Of the 334 respondents who offered an estimate or guess to this question, approximately 8 of 10 voters (80%) either underestimated “total” educational spending per student, or they could not give an answer or guess. No matter how one defines expenditures (per student), voters are woefully uninformed about how money is spent in K-12 education.

- **When given the latest per-student spending information, voters are less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is “too low,” compared to answering without having such information.**

See Questions 5A and 5B

We asked two slightly different questions about the level of public school funding in North Carolina. On version 5A, 66% of voters said that public school funding is “too low.” However, on version 5B, which included a sentence referring to data on per-student funding in North Carolina (\$8,518), the proportion of voters saying “too low” shrank by 16 percentage points, effectively a 24% reduction.

Voters are likely to change their views on public school funding—at least when initially saying it is “too low”—if given accurate per-student spending information. The implication that opinion can turn on a single piece of data is important for political sound bites that focus on aggregate levels of public spending rather than how the money is allocated and spent per student.

- **Although taxes can be a source of public school funding, a plurality of voters (46%) would prefer state taxes to decrease, rather than “stay**

See Frank Johnson, Lei Zhou, and Nanae Nakamoto, *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2008–09 (Fiscal Year 2009)* (NCES 2011-329). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics (June 2011).

URL: nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/2011329.pdf

about the same” or increase. Likewise, a plurality of voters (49%) said they prefer to decrease local taxes.

See Questions 6A and 6B

In the statewide sample, more than half of voters want taxes to stay the same or decrease at both the state and local levels. That said, some majorities emerge among demographic groups that would like to see increased taxes. Urban and suburban voters are much more likely to want increased state taxes (61% and 53%, respectively) compared to small-town and rural voters (38% and 28%, respectively). A majority of Democrats (53%) want to see higher state taxes, but Republicans clearly do not (26%). Younger voters (64%) also favor higher state taxes, but middle-age (41%) and older (34%) voters do not share their enthusiasm. African Americans (53%) are significantly more likely to want higher states taxes compared to whites (38%).

Comparatively speaking, it is even less popular to want higher local taxes. No majorities exist favoring increased local taxes, but there are some significant relative differences. Urban voters (49%) are more likely to want higher local taxes compared to small-town (29%) and rural (30%) voters. To no surprise, Democrats (48%) are more likely to want higher local taxes than Republicans (26%). In stark contrast to the question on state taxes, we see middle-age (38%) and older (39%) voters more likely to want higher local taxes than younger voters (18%).

- **Voters are more likely to give grades A or B to private/parochial schools in their areas, compared to other types of schools.**

See Questions 7A, 7B, and 7C

Approximately 59% of voters give an A or B to private schools, 49% give an A or B to regular public schools, and 53% give an A or B to charter schools. Only 14% of

voters give a D or F grade to their local public schools. Even fewer give low grades to charter schools (6%) and private/parochial schools (4%).

Voters are more than twice as likely to give an A to private/parochial schools (26%) when compared to the proportion of responses giving an A to public schools (11%).

- **When asked for a preferred school type, North Carolinians would choose a private school (39%) first. A regular public school option is the second-most frequently cited preference (34%). As a result, there is a major disconnect between voters' school preferences and actual enrollment patterns in the state.**

See Questions 8 and 9

Approximately 6% of North Carolina's K-12 student population attends private schools, but in our survey interviews, 39% of respondents would select a private school as a first option. Nearly 87% of the state's students attend regular public schools, but a substantially lower percentage of voters (34%) would choose a regular public school as their first choice. A sizeable proportion of North Carolina voters (15%) would like to send their child to a charter school. About 11% of voters said he/she would opt to homeschool their child.

In a follow-up question, respondents in our survey prioritize a "better education" (17%) and "individual attention" (15%) as the key attributes they are looking for in the selection of their preferred school. The third-most important attribute, as suggested by about 10% of all respondents, is "class size."

Some caution. These characteristics appear to be a higher priority over others on the list. However, any of these qualities may or may not attract more urgency as a second or third priority, which we do not explore in our survey.

- **North Carolina voters are much more likely to favor charter schools (65%), rather than oppose such schools (15%). The net support for**

charter schools is very large (+50 percentage points). Approximately 46% of voters are familiar with charter schools.

See Questions 10 and 11

North Carolina registered a large positive net support (+50 net) favoring charter schools. The enthusiasm is also very positive (+24 intensity). In other words, voters are more likely to say they “strongly favor” charter schools (29%) compared to those who said they “strongly oppose” (5%) such schools.

Charter schools enjoy majority support across all examined demographic groups. However, where a voter lives can point to some differences in support levels. For example, suburban voters (72%) are significantly more favorable toward charter schools than voters living in small towns (62%) and rural areas (61%).

Democrats significantly differ from Republicans, although both groups overwhelmingly support charter schools (62% and 71%, respectively). Approximately 71% of parents favor charter schools. About half of lower-income households (less than \$25,000) support charters, but they are significantly less likely to support charters than higher-income households.

Intensity of support for charters is greatest among parents, urban and suburban voters, Republicans, middle-age voters, households earning \$50,000 or more, and whites. There is relatively weaker intensity (but still positive) among small-town voters, younger voters (age 18 to 29), and households earning less than \$25,000.

Nearly half of voters (46%) say they are at least “somewhat familiar” with charter schools. There is potential to broaden awareness and possibly expand support for charters. The association between charter school familiarity and favorability is positive in direction, though fairly modest in size ($r=.214$, $p < .01$).

- **North Carolinians admitted they are not that familiar with virtual schools (75% unfamiliar), and at least for now, they are less likely to be supportive of these schools (36% favor vs. 46% oppose).**

See Questions 12 and 13

The strongly held negative views exceed the strongly positive views by nearly 15 percentage points, and so intensity is clearly negative. This is understandable though, possibly pointing to a skepticism of the unfamiliar.

Several demographic groups stand out in their views on virtual schools. Parents are evenly split on virtual schools (41% favor vs. 40% oppose). Suburban voters are also divided (43% favor vs. 43% oppose), but are more likely to support virtual schools than voters in other kinds of communities. Democrats (43%) are significantly more likely to support these schools than Republicans (30%) or Independents (38%). Conversely, those who self-identify in the latter two political categories are also much more likely to oppose virtual schools.

- **Voters strongly support “tax-credit scholarships.” The percentage of those who favor (63% or 65%, depending on the question version) is more than double the number of people who said they oppose the policy (25% and 23%, respectively). No matter the wording of the question, we measure very positive reactions (+38 net and +42 net).**

See Questions 14A and 14B

Based on our split-sample experiment results, it appears adding definition and context for voters does not affect the view of the average North Carolina voter.

On Q14A, parents, suburban, and middle-age voters overwhelmingly support tax-credit scholarships (76%, 78%, and 73%, respectively). Of all observed demographic groups, older voters and rural voters are relatively most likely to oppose tax-credit scholarships (33% each oppose). However, even these groups

still support tax-credit scholarships by wide margins (older voters: +21 percentage points; rural voters: +15 percentage points).

- **North Carolina voters support an “education savings account” system (called an “ESA”). The percentage of those who favor ESAs (56%) is much larger than the proportion who said they oppose (28%) the policy. The net support is large (+28 net) with some enthusiasm (+18 intensity). Similar results occur for the alternative question describing “empowerment scholarship accounts.” However the intensity goes down by 11 percentage points in the alternative question (+5 intensity).**

See Question 15A, 15B, and 16

Intense positive support is pretty strong for version A—about 32% said they “strongly favor” ESAs while 14% said they “strongly oppose” (+17 intensity). By contrast, the different wording for version B—describing “empowerment scholarship accounts”—produced more negative reactions (28% “strongly favor” vs. 23% “strongly oppose”). Still, the overall intensity remained positive (+5 intensity) for version B.

Among observed demographic groups on version A, net support is highest among parents (+55 net), Republicans (+41 net), and middle-age voters (+50 net). These same demographic groups also stand out on their responses to version B. For example, about 72% of parents favor such a policy on version A, and similarly 69% said they favor the ESA definition provided in version B.

Enthusiasm for ESAs is highest among:

Parents (+34 intensity for version A; +20 intensity for version B);

Charlotte residents (+23 intensity for version A; +12 intensity for version B);

Suburbanites (+28 intensity for version A; +10 intensity for version B);

Middle-age voters (+24 intensity for version A; +20 intensity for version B);

African Americans (+23 intensity for version A; +16 intensity for version B).

In a follow-up and open-ended question, we asked for the reason why a respondent chose his/her view regarding ESAs. Most frequently, he/she said some combination of “choice,” “freedom,” or “flexibility.” More than one-fifth of the respondents (21%) would said one or more of these terms.

- **Voters clearly prefer universal access to ESAs, compared to access that is based solely on financial need.**

See Questions 17 and 18

Nearly two of three voters (65%) said they agree with the statement that “ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs.” About 4 of 10 respondents (42%) “strongly agree” with this statement. Almost 3 of 10 (28%) disagree with this statement; 18% said they “strongly disagree.”

More than one-third of North Carolinians (35%) said they agree with the statement that “ESAs should only be available to families based on financial need.” Only 17% of all respondents “strongly agree” with this statement. More than half (59%) said they disagree with means-testing ESAs, and 36% said they “strongly disagree.”

- **Nearly 6 of 10 North Carolina voters (57%) said they support school vouchers, compared to 32% of voters who said they oppose such a school choice system. The margin of support is more than six times the survey’s margin of error: + 25 percentage points. About one-third of respondents (36%) said they were familiar with school vouchers.**

See Questions 19 and 20

The levels of support for vouchers vary a bit among demographic groups, but with the exception of a few groups, net favorability is in double digits.

Net support for school vouchers is highest among parents (+37 net), Charlotte residents (+29 net), urban voters (+41 net), Republicans (+39 net), young voters (+48 net), middle-age voters (+35 net), households earning less than \$50,000 (+41 net), and African Americans (+41 net). Despite positive net support, there are some groups that are significantly less inclined than others to support vouchers, including parents whose children are past high school age (+9 net), rural voters (+6 net), older voters (+11 net), and households earning more than \$125,000 (+3 net).

Enthusiasm for this kind of policy is highest among parents (+22 intensity), Charlotte residents (+16 intensity), Greensboro residents (+18 intensity), urban voters (+26 intensity), suburban voters (+16 intensity), small-town voters (+17 intensity), Republicans (+25 intensity), young voters (+27 intensity), middle-age voters (+19 intensity), and households earning less than \$50,000 (+23 intensity).

In North Carolina, there does not appear to be an association between familiarity with school vouchers and favorability toward the school choice policy. The correlation between school voucher familiarity and favorability is positive in direction, though weak in size ($r=.082$, $p < .05$).

Survey Snapshots

Q1. How much attention do you pay to issues involving K-12 education?

■ **Very Little/None** ■ **Some/A Lot**

NORTH CAROLINA

21

78

Charlotte

20

80

Raleigh-Durham

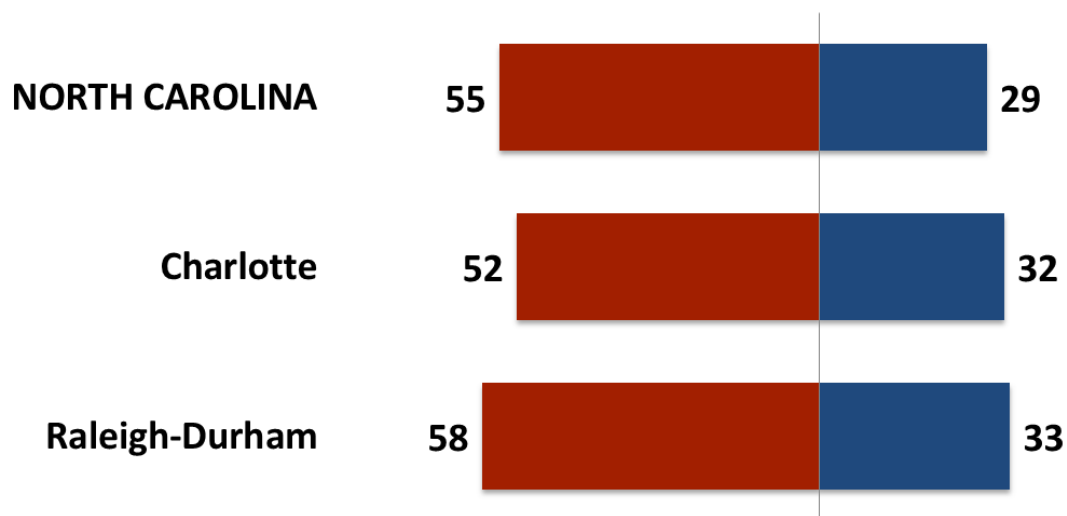
18

82

FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q1.*

Q2. Do you feel things in North Carolina's K-12 education system are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

■ **Wrong Track** ■ **Right Direction**



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q2.*

Q2. Do you feel things in North Carolina's K-12 education system are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

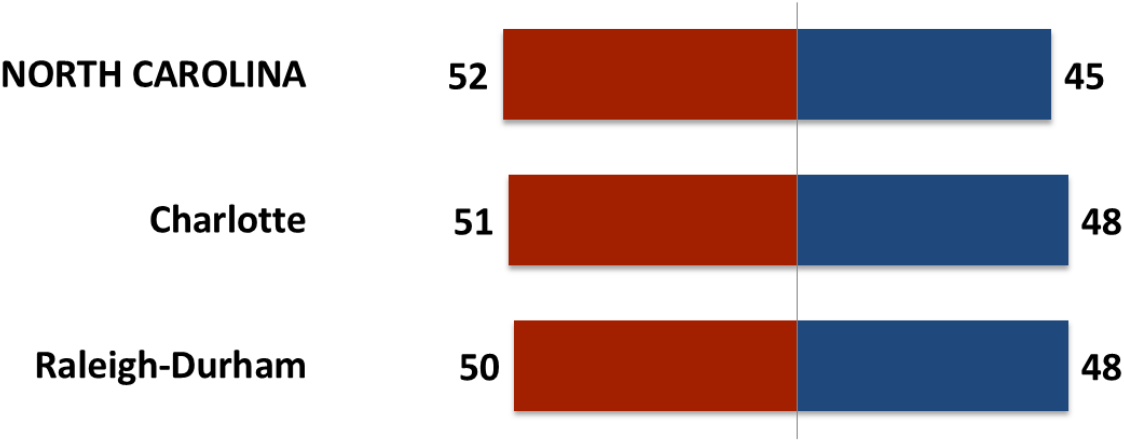
	Right Direction %	Wrong Track %	Net	N=
ALL VOTERS	29	55	- 26	601
Parent	35	53	- 18	205
Non-Parent	25	57	- 32	391
COMMUNITY				
Urban	27	53	- 26	99
Suburban	32	55	- 23	160
Small Town	32	51	- 19	189
Rural	22	63	- 41	142
PARTY ID				
Democrat	34	50	- 16	219
Republican	23	64	- 41	165
Independent	29	55	- 26	154
AGE GROUP				
18 – 29	35	45	- 10	117
30 – 49	28	53	- 25	212
50 & Over	27	60	- 33	265
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Under \$25,000	27	53	- 26	84
\$25,000 - \$49,999	29	53	- 24	159
\$50,000 - \$74,999	34	50	- 16	130
\$75,000 - \$124,999	21	66	- 45	108
\$125,000 & Over	41	48	- 7	59
RACE/ETHNICITY				
African American	36	51	- 15	127
White	24	59	- 35	412

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q2.

Q3. How would you rate North Carolina's public school system?

Fair/Poor Good/Excellent



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q3.

Q3. How would you rate North Carolina's public school system?

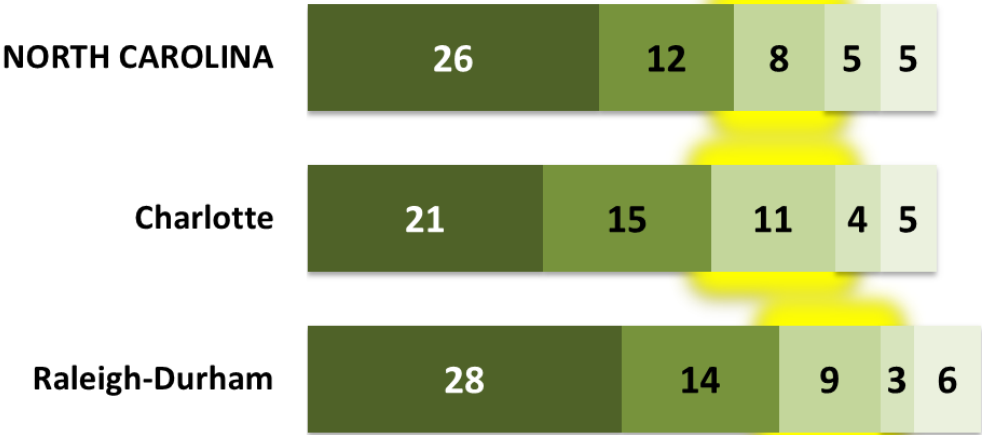
	Good/Excellent %	Fair/Poor %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	45	52	- 7	- 5	601
Parent	51	46	+ 5	- 1	205
Non-Parent	42	54	- 12	- 8	391
COMMUNITY					
Urban	39	56	- 17	- 9	99
Suburban	45	52	- 7	- 8	160
Small Town	48	49	- 1	+ 2	189
Rural	49	50	- 1	- 10	142
PARTY ID					
Democrat	50	47	+ 3	- 5	219
Republican	32	65	- 33	- 11	165
Independent	53	44	+ 9	- 3	154
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	40	56	- 16	- 2	117
30 – 49	49	49	even	- 3	212
50 & Over	46	51	- 5	- 8	265
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	46	47	- 1	- 3	84
\$25,000 - \$49,999	44	53	- 9	- 3	159
\$50,000 - \$74,999	47	50	- 3	- 13	130
\$75,000 - \$124,999	44	56	- 12	- 2	108
\$125,000 & Over	58	39	+ 19	even	59
RACE/ETHNICITY					
African American	49	50	- 1	- 3	127
White	43	53	- 10	- 7	412

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the combined percentages of "fair" and "poor" responses from the combined percentages of "good" and "excellent" responses. The difference indicates the enthusiasm behind the positive or negative ratings.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q3.

Q4. How much do you think is spent per year on each student in North Carolina's public schools? Your estimate (to the nearest thousand dollars) will represent the combined expenditures of local, state, and federal governments.

- Less Than \$4,000
- \$4,001 - \$8,000
- \$8,001 - \$12,000
- \$12,001 - \$16,000
- Over \$16,000



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q4.*

Q5. (Split A) Do you believe that public school funding in North Carolina is at a level that is:

- Too High
- About Right
- Too Low



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q5A.

Q5. (Split B) According to the most recent information available, in North Carolina \$8,518 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in North Carolina is at a level that is:

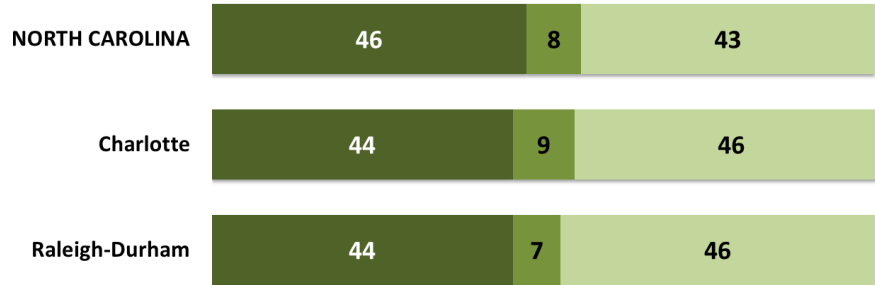
- Too High
- About Right
- Too Low



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q5B.

Q6. (Split A) Do you think that state taxes to fund public schools in North Carolina should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

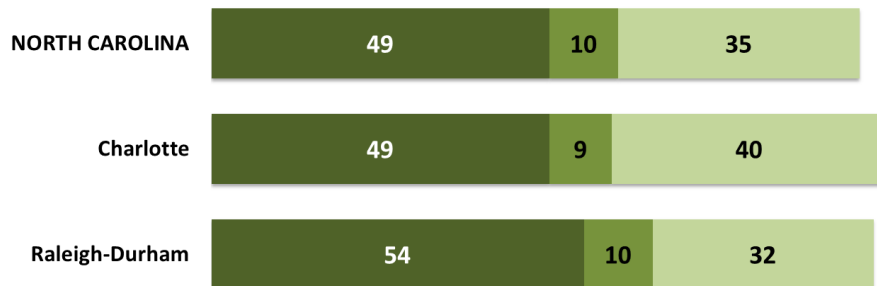
- Decrease
- Stay About The Same
- Increase



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q6A.

Q6. (Split B) Do you think that local taxes to fund public schools in your school district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

- Decrease
- Stay About The Same
- Increase

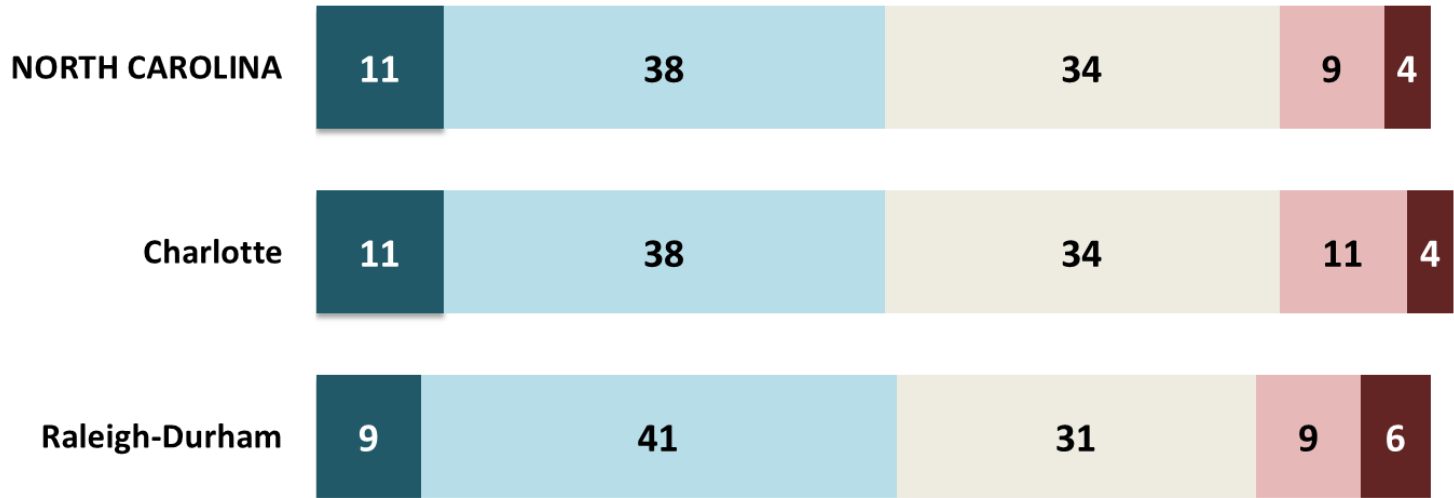


FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q6B.

Q7A. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...



REGULAR PUBLIC / DISTRICT SCHOOLS

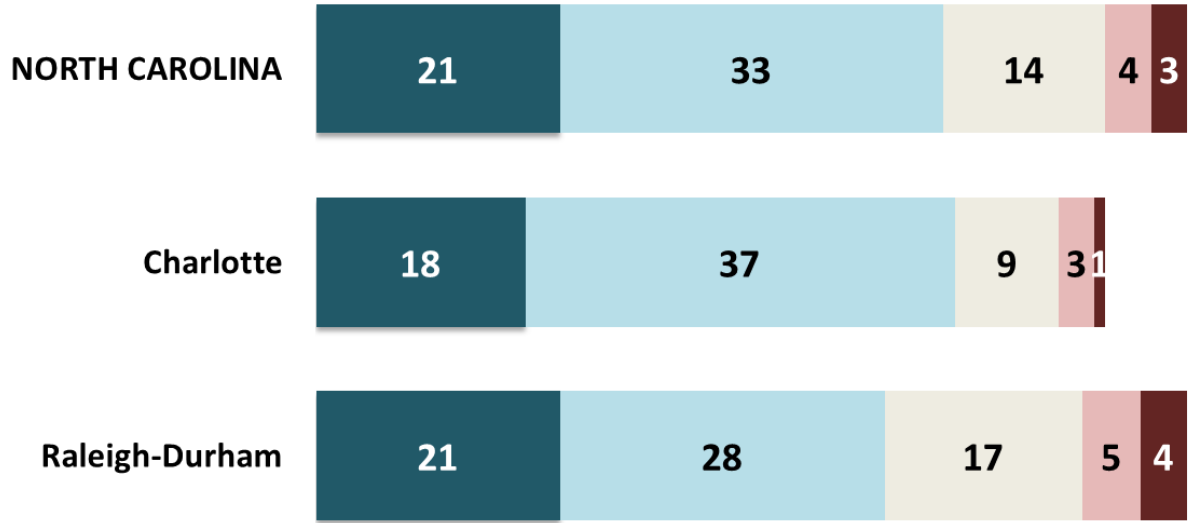


FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q7A.

Q7B. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...



CHARTER SCHOOLS

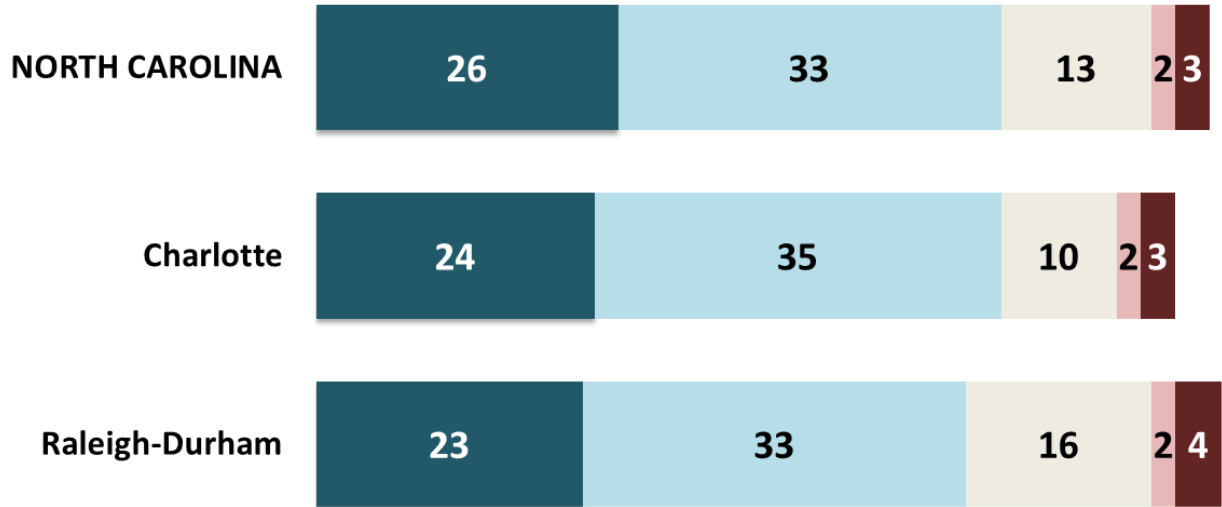


FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q7B.

Q7C. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...



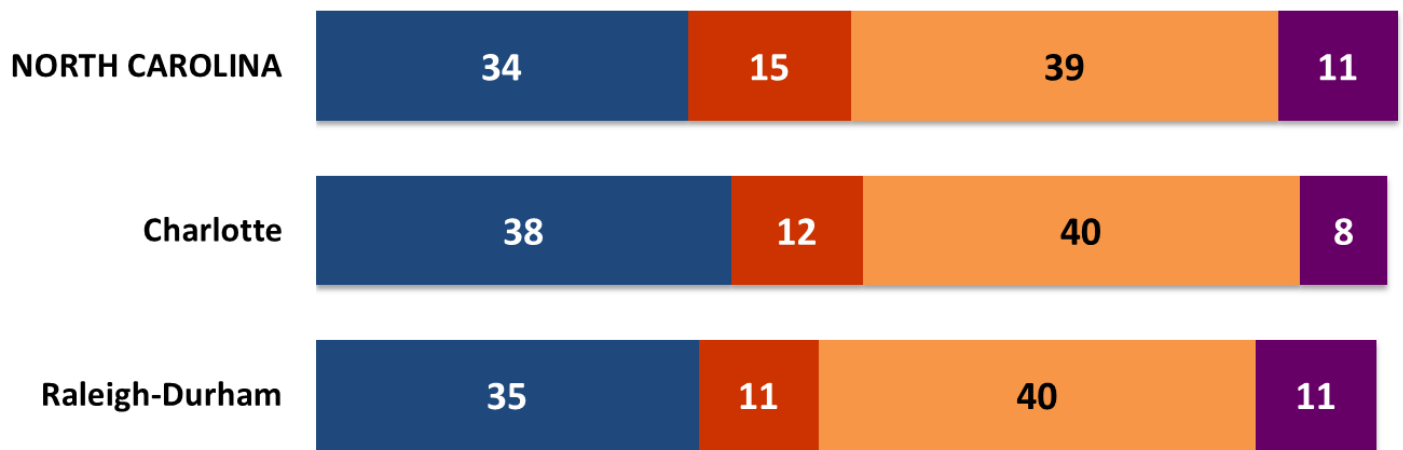
PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q7C.

Q8. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

- Regular Public School
- Charter School
- Virtual School
- Private School
- Homeschool



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q8.*

Q8. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

	Charter School	Homeschool	Private School	Regular Public School	N=
	%	%	%	%	
ALL VOTERS	15	11	39	34	601
Parent	13	13	40	32	205
Non-Parent	16	10	38	34	391
COMMUNITY					
Urban	21	10	44	23	99
Suburban	12	6	52	28	160
Small Town	13	12	32	43	189
Rural	17	16	27	37	142
PARTY ID					
Democrat	14	7	43	35	219
Republican	17	11	39	30	165
Independent	18	16	34	30	154
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	20	11	35	34	117
30 – 49	10	11	45	32	212
50 & Over	17	9	36	35	265
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	10	14	40	35	84
\$25,000 - \$49,999	19	13	35	32	159
\$50,000 - \$74,999	15	11	42	30	130
\$75,000 - \$124,999	14	7	39	39	108
\$125,000 & Over	16	7	33	41	59
RACE/ETHNICITY					
African American	10	7	51	30	127
White	16	12	38	32	412

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q8.

Q9. What is the most important characteristic or attribute that would cause you to choose a [INSERT SCHOOL TYPE FROM PREVIOUS QUESTION] for your child? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

Top 15 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	101
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	89
CLASS SIZE / STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	60
BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING	49
DISCIPLINE / STRUCTURE	31
DIVERSITY / VARIETY	27
CURRICULUM / ACADEMICS	25
SAFETY / LESS DRUGS, VIOLENCE, BULLYING	25
SOCIALIZATION / PEERS / OTHER KIDS	25
RELIGION / RELIGIOUS REASONS	21
ENVIRONMENT / CULTURE / COMMUNITY	19
ALMA MATER / SOCIAL NETWORK	18
STANDARDS / MORE CHALLENGING	18
MORALS / VALUES / ETHICS	15
RESOURCES / FUNDING	13

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q9.

Q10 Q12 Q19.

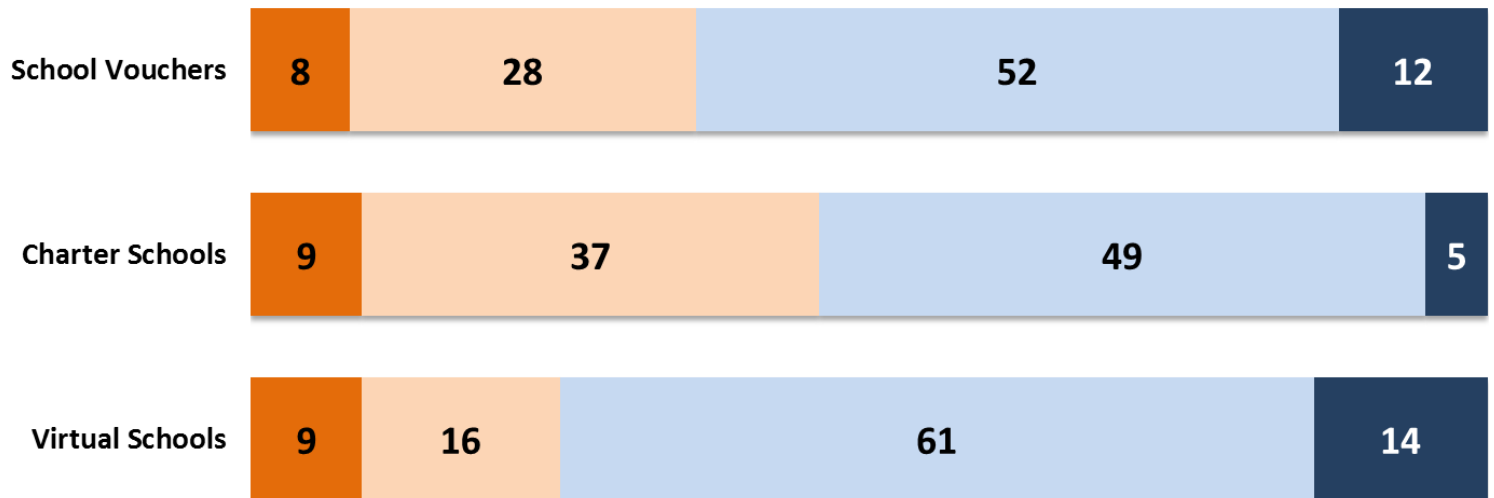
How familiar are you with [Charter Schools / Virtual Schools / School Vouchers] in K-12 Education?

Very Familiar

Somewhat Familiar

Not That Familiar

Never Heard Of / Don't Know



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q10, Q12, Q19.

Q10. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

■ Oppose ■ Favor

NORTH CAROLINA

15 65

Charlotte

13 68

Raleigh-Durham

13 62

FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q11.

Q11. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	65	15	+ 50	+ 24	601
Parent	71	13	+ 58	+ 25	205
Non-Parent	62	17	+ 45	+ 23	391
COMMUNITY					
Urban	67	14	+ 53	+ 29	99
Suburban	72	13	+ 59	+ 30	160
Small Town	62	14	+ 48	+ 18	189
Rural	61	19	+ 42	+ 22	142
PARTY ID					
Democrat	62	16	+ 46	+ 24	219
Republican	71	14	+ 57	+ 28	165
Independent	65	13	+ 52	+ 24	154
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	61	9	+ 52	+ 24	117
30 – 49	71	12	+ 59	+ 28	212
50 & Over	62	20	+ 42	+ 22	265
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	50	16	+ 34	+ 16	84
\$25,000 - \$49,999	71	11	+ 60	+ 26	159
\$50,000 - \$74,999	68	16	+ 52	+ 29	130
\$75,000 - \$124,999	69	15	+ 54	+ 26	108
\$125,000 & Over	61	18	+ 43	+ 15	59
RACE/ETHNICITY					
African American	62	9	+ 53	+ 19	127
White	67	18	+ 49	+ 27	412

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey* , Q11.

Q13. Virtual schools can be run publicly or privately, allowing students to work with their curriculum and teachers over the internet – in combination with, or in place of, traditional classroom learning. In general, do you favor or oppose virtual schools?

■ Oppose ■ Favor

NORTH CAROLINA

46



36

Charlotte

47



34

Raleigh-Durham

46



39

FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q13.*

Q14. *(Split A)* Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. This policy supports a “tax-credit scholarship system.” In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system?

■ Oppose ■ Favor

NORTH CAROLINA

25 63

Charlotte

20 71

Raleigh-Durham

31 61

FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q14A.

Q14. *(Split B)* A “tax credit” allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A “tax-credit scholarship system” allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system?

■ Oppose ■ Favor

NORTH CAROLINA

23 65

Charlotte

20 67

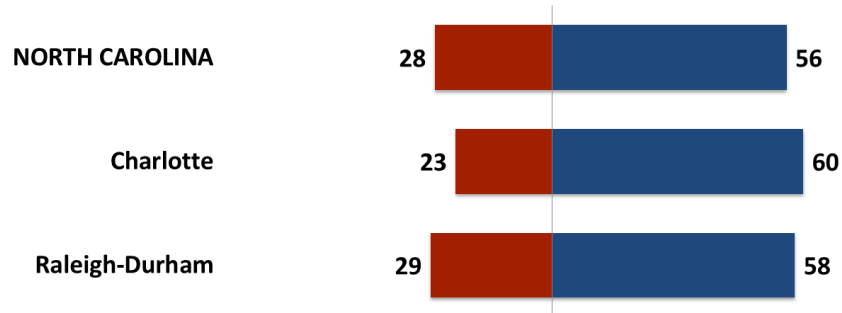
Raleigh-Durham

25 63

FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q14B.

Q15. *(Split A)* An "education savings account" -- often called an "ESA" -- allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses. Parents can then use these funds to pay for private school tuition, virtual education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of "savings account system"?

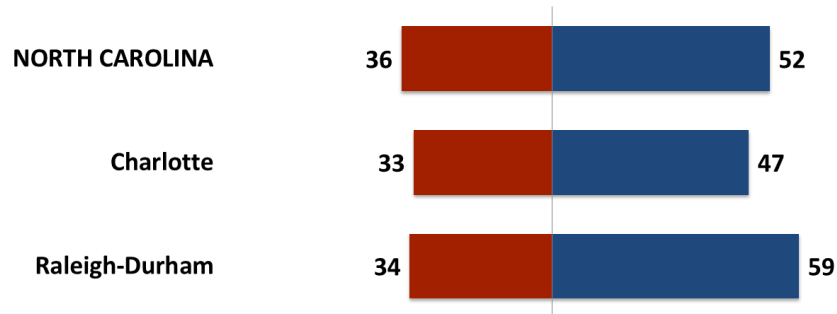
■ Oppose ■ Favor



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q15A.

Q15. *(Split B)* An "empowerment scholarship account" -- often called an "ESA" -- allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment reflecting a percentage of per-student state funding. It has been proposed that, on average, \$4,700 would be provided for each eligible student in North Carolina. Parents can then use an ESA debit card to pay for private school tuition, virtual education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of "scholarship account system"?

■ Oppose ■ Favor



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q15B.

Q16. What is the most important reason that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to ESAs? Please use a few words, or a very short phrase.

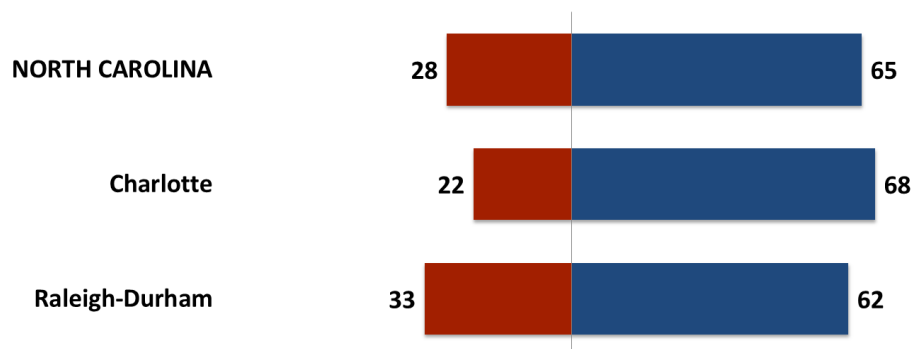
Top 12 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

CHOICE / FLEXIBILITY / FREEDOM	108
HURTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	49
ABUSE / FRAUD	44
HELPS LESS FORTUNATE	34
GOOD USE OF TAX MONEY	33
BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	19
ACCESS / AVAILABILITY	16
PUBLIC SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS	13
HELPS CHILDREN	12
BAD IDEA	11
FAIR / EQUALITY	11
SHOULD PAY OUT OF POCKET	11

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q16.

Q17. Some people believe that ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

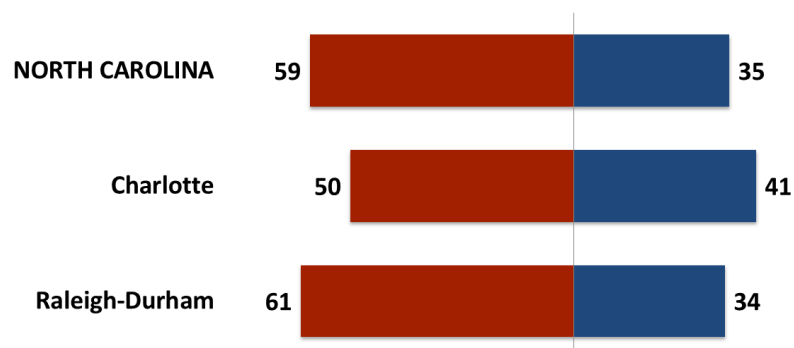
■ Disagree ■ Agree



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q17.

Q18. Some people believe that ESAs should only be available to families based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

■ Disagree ■ Agree



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q18.

Q20. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system?

■ Oppose ■ Favor

NORTH CAROLINA

32

57

Charlotte

31

60

Raleigh-Durham

36

53

FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q20.

Q20. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	57	32	+ 25	+ 14	601
Parent	66	28	+ 38	+ 22	205
Non-Parent	53	34	+ 19	+ 10	391
COMMUNITY					
Urban	65	24	+ 41	+ 26	99
Suburban	57	37	+ 20	+ 16	160
Small Town	61	28	+ 33	+ 17	189
Rural	45	39	+ 6	+ 2	142
PARTY ID					
Democrat	55	34	+ 21	+ 15	219
Republican	65	26	+ 39	+ 25	165
Independent	51	38	+ 13	even	154
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	64	16	+ 48	+ 27	117
30 – 49	64	29	+ 35	+ 19	212
50 & Over	50	40	+ 10	+ 8	265
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	66	22	+ 44	+ 29	84
\$25,000 - \$49,999	64	24	+ 40	+ 20	159
\$50,000 - \$74,999	51	40	+ 11	+ 5	130
\$75,000 - \$124,999	55	37	+ 18	+ 12	108
\$125,000 & Over	51	48	+ 3	+ 12	59
RACE/ETHNICITY					
African American	66	25	+ 41	+ 28	127
White	56	34	+ 22	+ 10	412

NOTE: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its registered voter population size in the state and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. Reference to whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Based on Gallup's "Positive Intensity Score," Intensity is measured by subtracting the percentage of "strongly oppose" responses from the percentage of "strongly favor" responses. The difference indicates the enthusiasm behind the support or opposition for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q20.

Methods Summary

The “North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey” project, commissioned by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (BRI), interviewed a statistically representative sample of registered voters in the state of North Carolina. Methodology included probability sampling and random-digit dial. The statewide sample includes a total of **601** telephone interviews completed in English from June 18 to 24, 2012, by means of both landline and cell phone.

The margin of sampling error for the statewide sample is ± 4.0 percentage points.

BRI’s live callers conducted all phone interviews. For this entire project, a total of **5,656** calls were made in North Carolina. Of these calls, **1,324** were unusable phone numbers (disconnected, fax, busy, non-residential, or non-answers, etc.); **2,775** were usable numbers but eligibility unknown (including refusals and voicemail); **60** cell phone numbers were usable but not eligible for this survey; **22** people did not complete the survey. The average response rate of the landline interviews was **17.0%**. The average response rate of the cell phone interviews was **16.5%**.

Details on each sample’s call dispositions, landline and cell phone response rates, and weighting are discussed in following sections.

Sample Design

A combination of landline and cellular random-digit-dial (RDD) samples was used to represent registered voters in North Carolina who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) according to BRI specifications.

SSI starts with a database of all listed telephone numbers, updated on a four- to six-week rolling basis, 25 percent of the listings at a time. All active blocks—contiguous groups of 100 phone numbers for which more than one residential number is listed—are added to this database. Blocks and exchanges that include only listed business numbers are excluded.

Numbers for the landline sample were drawn with equal probabilities from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but was drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

Contact Procedures

Interviews were conducted from June 18 to 24, 2012. As many as eight attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. The sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Each phone number received at least one daytime call.

We have noticed over the last several years response rates have been declining for consumer polls. Generally, running surveys over a longer period of time will boost these response rates. However, lower response rates do not lead to lower reliability of the data. For example, polls with a sample size of 1,200 respondents run over a two-day period with response rates of 3% or 4% have been acceptable for public release.

The survey's margin of error is the largest 95% Confidence Interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample—the one around 50%. The overall margin of error for this survey is ± 4.0 percent. This means that in 95 of every 100 samples drawn using the same methodology, estimated proportions based on the entire sample will be no more than 4.0 percentage points away from their true values in the population.

It is critical to note that the margin of sampling error (MSE) is higher when considering the number of respondents for a given demographic subgroup. For example, the MSE for a subgroup of 150 respondents is ± 8.0 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, question wording, ordering, and other practical difficulties when conducting surveys may introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion research.

Call Dispositions and Response Rates

North Carolina Statewide Call Dispositions				
<u>SUMMARY</u>			<u>DETAIL</u>	
Landline	Cell Phone		Landline	Cell Phone
3,642	2,014	Total	534	564
3,642	2,014	Released	66	1
0	0	Unreleased	156	3
2,886	1,446	Usable	-	0
756	568	Unusable	0	-
2,466	1,098	Qualified	756	568
73.3%	71.6%	Est. Usability	726	14
90.2%	76.0%	Est. Eligibility	87	0
17.0%	16.5%	Est. Response	813	14
			420	181
			13	9
			433	190
			603	256
			11	3
			561	623
			259	279
			156	21
			3	0
			1,593	1,182
			-	27
			47	33
			47	60
			17.0%	16.5%
			Response Rate	

Weighting Procedures and Analysis

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. In this study, the sample demographics were balanced to population parameters. The sample was balanced to reflect the targeted population representation by Age, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Region. The weighted and unweighted results are available on request.

All weighting measures are based on 2010 Census Bureau statistics for the state of North Carolina. Weighting targets have been imposed for Age, Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Region.

Special note: We calculated age distributions from date-of-birth information on file from the state's respective registered voter database, as supplied by Aristotle International.

About the Author

Paul DiPerna (paul@edchoice.org) is Research Director for the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice in Indianapolis. DiPerna joined the Foundation in September 2006, and his research includes surveys and polling on K-12 education issues. He also manages and edits all other research projects commissioned by the Foundation. DiPerna previously served as assistant director for the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution, working there for more than six years. He was a research analyst for the first five issues of the Brown Center Report on American Education (2000-2004), and managed the activities of the National Working Commission on Choice in K-12 Education (2001-2005). DiPerna has presented research at the American Sociological Association annual meeting, and he has written or co-authored articles for *Education Week*, *The Huffington Post*, *Washington Examiner*, *First Monday*, and *Education Next*. In 2008, he authored a textbook chapter in the “Handbook of Research on Web Log Analysis.”

A native of Pittsburgh, DiPerna attended the University of Dayton as an undergraduate and received an M.A. in political science from the University of Illinois.

Acknowledgements

Paul DiPerna would like to thank a number of people who provided time, comments, and assistance throughout the course of this survey project. This would not have been possible without the opportunities provided by Robert Enlow, Leslie Hiner, and Carey Folco. Our release partners at the Civitas Institute gave us invaluable insights and context at the local/state level. Bob Luebke and Francis DeLuca provided critical input and feedback at various stages of this project. We would like to thank the team at Braun Research who assisted in project development, and for their excellent work in conducting the interviews and collecting the data. I appreciate the time and commitments from Paul Braun, Cynthia Miller, Dave Oshman, and Richard Kuchinsky. Finally, we are of course grateful to the respondents who generously agreed to participate in our survey interviews.

About the Survey Organization

Braun Research, Inc. (BRI)

The Braun Research network of companies, founded in 1995, combined employ 44 full-time and more than 450 part-time employees engaged in data collection via telephone, and internet for various survey research firms, government and advertising agencies, local community organizations, local and national business groups, foundations, universities and academic entities, as well as religious organizations. In 17 years, Braun Research has conducted more than 8,400 research projects by telephone, internet, and mail worldwide.

In addition to the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, other nationally-known research firms have hired Braun Research, including the Gallup Organization, the Pew Research Center, the Eagleton Poll, Mathematica Policy Research, and *The Washington Post*. Braun Research has worked for the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, as well as other government agencies including the United States Departments of the Treasury and Defense, and the Center for Disease Control.

Braun Research is a well-respected firm employing techniques and standards approved by various survey research academic organizations and other affiliations including those with whom Braun is an active member, including AAPOR (American Association for Public Opinion Research), MRA/CMOR (Market Research Association/Council on Marketing and Opinion Research), and CASRO (Council on American Survey Research Organizations).

Braun's services on behalf of other research firms are up to standards required by various professional associations where Braun enjoys membership, and in some cases, participates actively. Paul Braun is a member of the MRA/CMOR committees on response rate improvement and in launching a seal of quality for the industry. Paul Braun is recognized as a leader in the field by colleagues who asked him to serve on these committees. He has served as President of the New Jersey Chapter of AAPOR.

About the Survey Sponsor

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and nonpartisan organization, solely dedicated to advancing Milton and Rose Friedman's vision of school choice for all children. First established as the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation in 1996, the Foundation continues to promote school choice as the most effective and equitable way to improve the quality of K-12 education in America. The Foundation is dedicated to research, education, and outreach on the vital issues and implications related to choice and competition in K-12 education.

Commitment to Methods & Transparency

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice is committed to research that adheres to high scientific standards, and matters of methodology and transparency are taken seriously at all levels of our organization. We are dedicated to providing high-quality information in a transparent and efficient manner.

All individuals have opinions, and many organizations (like our own) have specific missions or philosophical orientations. Scientific methods, if used correctly and followed closely in well-designed studies, should neutralize these opinions and orientations. Research rules and methods minimize bias. We believe rigorous procedural rules of science prevent a researcher's motives, and an organization's particular orientation, from pre-determining results. If research adheres to proper scientific and methodological standards, its findings can be relied upon no matter who has conducted it. If rules and methods are neither specified nor followed, then the biases of the researcher or an organization may become relevant, because a lack of rigor opens the door for those biases to affect the results.

Our authors take responsibility for research design, analysis, charts, and any unintentional errors or misrepresentations. They welcome any and all questions related to methods and findings.

About the Survey Release Partner

Civitas Institute

The vision of the Civitas Institute is of a North Carolina whose citizens enjoy liberty and prosperity derived from limited government, personal responsibility and civic engagement. The mission of the Civitas Institute is to facilitate the implementation of conservative policy solutions to improve the lives of all North Carolinians. Towards that end, Civitas provides research, information and training to:

- empower citizens to become better civic leaders and more informed voters;
- educate emerging public leaders, enabling them to be more effective in the democratic process; and
- inform elected officials about citizen-based, free-market solutions to problems facing North Carolinians.

North Carolina K-12 & School Choice Survey Questionnaire & Topline Results

Interview Dates:	June 18 to 24, 2012
Sample Frame:	Registered Voters
Sample Sizes:	NORTH CAROLINA = 601 Charlotte = 164; Raleigh-Durham = 183
Split Sample Sizes:	“Split A” = 302; “Split B” = 299
Margins of Error:	NORTH CAROLINA = ± 4.0 percentage points Charlotte = ± 7.6 percentage points; Raleigh-Durham = ± 7.2 percentage points Each Split Sample = ± 5.6 percentage points

Displayed numbers in tables are percentages, unless otherwise noted.

Due to rounding, percentage totals for a given question may be slightly greater or less than 100%.

“For this brief interview, if you are completely unsure about your answer or have no feelings for an answer, you can say ‘I Don’t Know.’” [ENTER AS “DK”]

1. How much attention do you pay to issues involving K-12 education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	A Lot	Some	Very Little	None	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	46	33	15	6	< 1
Charlotte	42	38	11	9	0
Raleigh-Durham	46	36	14	9	< 1

2. Do you feel things in North Carolina's K-12 education system are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Right Direction	Wrong Track	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	29	55	16
Charlotte	32	52	16
Raleigh-Durham	33	58	10

3. How would you rate North Carolina's public school system?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	5	40	41	11	3
Charlotte	11	37	41	10	1
Raleigh-Durham	1	46	41	9	2

4. How much do you think is spent per year on each student in North Carolina's public schools? Your estimate (to the nearest thousand dollars) will represent the combined expenditures of local, state, and federal governments.

[OPEN-END. BASED ON RESPONSE, SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE, OFFERING RANGE CATEGORIES. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS "DK"]

	Less than \$4,000	\$4,001 – \$8,000	\$8,001 – \$12,000	\$12,001 – \$16,000	Over \$16,000	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	26	12	8	5	5	45
Charlotte	21	15	11	4	5	44
Raleigh-Durham	28	14	9	3	6	40

5. (*Split A*) Do you believe that public school funding in North Carolina is at a level that is:

[ROTATE “TOO HIGH” AND “TOO LOW”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	9	20	66	6
Charlotte	11	23	60	6
Raleigh-Durham	8	13	72	7

5. (*Split B*) According to the most recent information available, in North Carolina \$8,518 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in NORTH CAROLINA is at a level that is:

[ROTATE “TOO HIGH” AND “TOO LOW”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Too High	About Right	Too Low	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	14	27	50	9
Charlotte	15	30	49	6
Raleigh-Durham	13	32	45	11

6. **(Split A)** Do you think that state taxes to fund public schools in North Carolina should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

[ROTATE BY REVERSE TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Increase A Lot	Increase Some	Stay About The Same	Decrease Some	Decrease A Lot	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	7	37	8	4	42	3
Charlotte	6	39	9	6	37	2
Raleigh-Durham	9	37	7	4	40	3

6. **(Split B)** Do you think that local taxes to fund public schools in your school district should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?

[ROTATE BY REVERSE TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Increase A Lot	Increase Some	Stay About The Same	Decrease Some	Decrease A Lot	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	6	29	10	5	44	7
Charlotte	7	33	9	5	44	3
Raleigh-Durham	7	25	10	4	50	4

7. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...

[GRADE OPTIONS: A, B, C, D, or F]

[RANDOMIZE “REGULAR PUBLIC SCHOOLS,” “CHARTER SCHOOLS,” “PRIVATE OR PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

(a) Regular Public Schools (or District Schools)

	A	B	C	D	F	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	11	38	34	9	4	4
Charlotte	11	38	34	11	4	2
Raleigh-Durham	9	41	31	9	6	4

7. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...

(b) Charter Schools

	A	B	C	D	F	Does Not Apply	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	21	33	14	4	3	7	21
Charlotte	18	37	9	3	1	9	23
Raleigh-Durham	21	28	17	5	4	6	20

7. In thinking about the schools in your area, what grade would you give...

(c) Private or Parochial Schools

	A	B	C	D	F	Does Not Apply	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	26	33	13	2	3	4	20
Charlotte	24	35	10	2	3	7	20
Raleigh-Durham	23	33	16	2	4	4	18

8. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

[RANDOMIZE RESPONSES TO AVOID BIAS]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Charter School	Homeschool	Private School	Regular Public School	Virtual School	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	15	11	39	34	< 1	2
Charlotte	12	8	40	38	0	3
Raleigh-Durham	11	11	40	35	0	2

9. What is the most important characteristic or attribute that would cause you to choose a **[INSERT SCHOOL TYPE FROM PREVIOUS QUESTION]** for your child? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

[OPEN-END. IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

**Top 15 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample.
Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.**

NORTH CAROLINA

BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	101
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	89
CLASS SIZE / STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO	60
BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING	49
DISCIPLINE / STRUCTURE	31
DIVERSITY / VARIETY	27
CURRICULUM / ACADEMICS	25
SAFETY / LESS DRUGS, VIOLENCE, BULLYING	25
SOCIALIZATION / PEERS / OTHER KIDS	25
RELIGION / RELIGIOUS REASONS	21
ENVIRONMENT / CULTURE / COMMUNITY	19
ALMA MATER / SOCIAL NETWORK	18
STANDARDS / MORE CHALLENGING	18
MORALS / VALUES / ETHICS	15
RESOURCES / FUNDING	13
OTHER RESPONSES	26
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	30

“For the remainder of this interview, if you are completely unsure about your answer or have no feelings for an answer, feel free to say ‘I Don’t Know.’” [ENTER AS “DK”]

10. How familiar are you with “charter schools” in K-12 education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not That Familiar	I Have Never Heard of “Charter Schools”	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	9	37	49	2	3
Charlotte	8	34	51	4	3
Raleigh-Durham	11	36	48	1	3

11. Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools? **[PROBE:]**
Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	29	36	10	5	20
Charlotte	27	41	9	4	20
Raleigh-Durham	26	36	9	5	25

12. How familiar are you with “virtual schools” in K-12 education? These schools are sometimes called "cyber schools" and "online schools."

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not That Familiar	I Have Never Heard of “Virtual Schools”	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	9	16	61	11	4
Charlotte	9	15	58	13	5
Raleigh-Durham	9	17	62	9	4

13. Virtual schools can be run publicly or privately, allowing students to work with their curriculum and teachers over the internet – in combination with, or in place of, traditional classroom learning. In general, do you favor or oppose virtual schools? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	10	27	22	24	18
Charlotte	7	27	22	25	20
Raleigh-Durham	12	27	19	27	14

14. **(Split A)** Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. This policy supports a “tax-credit scholarship system.” In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	25	38	12	13	12
Charlotte	20	51	11	10	9
Raleigh-Durham	24	36	14	17	9

14. **(Split B)** A “tax credit” allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. Some states give tax credits to individuals and businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A “tax-credit scholarship system” allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. In general, do you favor or oppose a tax-credit scholarship system? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	29	36	11	12	11
Charlotte	35	31	9	11	13
Raleigh-Durham	27	36	12	13	12

15. **(Split A)** An "education savings account" – often called an ESA – allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses. Parents can then use these funds to pay for private school tuition, online education programs, private tutoring or saving for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of “savings account system”? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	32	25	14	14	15
Charlotte	32	29	15	8	17
Raleigh-Durham	32	26	11	18	13

15. **(Split B)** An “Empowerment Scholarship Account” – often called an ESA – allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school and receive a payment reflecting a percentage of per-student state funding. It has been proposed that, on average, \$4,700 would be provided for each eligible student in North Carolina. Parents can then use an ESA debit card to pay for private school tuition, virtual education programs, private tutoring or save for future college expenses. In general, do you favor or oppose this kind of “scholarship account system”? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	28	24	13	23	12
Charlotte	27	20	17	15	21
Raleigh-Durham	34	25	11	23	21

16. What is the most important reason that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to ESAs? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

[OPEN-END. IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

Top 12 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

NORTH CAROLINA

CHOICE / FLEXIBILITY / FREEDOM	108
HURTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	49
ABUSE / FRAUD	44
HELPS LESS FORTUNATE	34
GOOD USE OF TAX MONEY	33
BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	19
ACCESS / AVAILABILITY	16
PUBLIC SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS	13
HELPS CHILDREN	12
BAD IDEA	11
FAIR / EQUALITY	11
SHOULD PAY OUT OF POCKET	11

NOT FAMILIAR / NEED MORE INFORMATION	14
OTHER RESPONSES	48
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	58

17. Some people believe that ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	42	23	10	18	7
Charlotte	45	24	6	16	10
Raleigh-Durham	44	18	14	20	5

18. Some people believe that ESAs should only be available to families based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat agree/disagree?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	17	18	22	36	7
Charlotte	16	24	17	33	9
Raleigh-Durham	19	15	20	41	5

19. How familiar are you with “school vouchers” in K-12 education?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not That Familiar	I Have Never Heard of “School Vouchers”	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	8	28	52	10	2
Charlotte	6	32	52	10	1
Raleigh-Durham	9	28	52	9	4

20. A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools.

If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a “school voucher” to pay partial or full tuition for their child’s school. In general, do you favor or oppose a school voucher system? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	31	26	15	17	11
Charlotte	36	24	14	17	10
Raleigh-Durham	22	31	14	22	11

“Now the following questions should be pretty quick, and for statistical purposes only....”

21. Are you currently the parent or guardian of a child who lives with you, and who is in any grade from preschool through high school?

[IF NEEDED: IF CHILD IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED OR ENTERING PRESCHOOL IN THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR, ENTER "YES"]

[IF NEEDED: IF YOUNGEST CHILD JUST GRADUATED IN 2012, ENTER "NO"]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Yes	No <PS	No >HS	No Children	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	34	3	26	36	1
Charlotte	34	5	27	34	1
Raleigh-Durham	42	3	22	33	0

22. Generally speaking, do you usually consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

[Code for Democrat, Republican, Independent, Libertarian, Other, or “DK”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other	Libertarian (VOL.)	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	37	28	26	6	1	4
Charlotte	33	34	20	5	2	6
Raleigh-Durham	41	21	34	3	0	1

23. (***Split A***) How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as liberal, progressive, moderate, or conservative? [**Rotate Liberal and Conservative**]

[Code only for Liberal, Moderate, Conservative, or “DK”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	21	39	31	9
Charlotte	22	37	29	12
Raleigh-Durham	21	40	32	8

23. **(Split B)** How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as liberal, progressive, moderate, or conservative? **[Rotate Progressive and Conservative]**

[Code only for Progressive, Moderate, Conservative, or “DK”]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Progressive	Moderate	Conservative	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	14	44	32	10
Charlotte	19	43	32	6
Raleigh-Durham	11	50	32	8

24. How would you best describe where you live?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Urban	Suburban	Small Town	Rural	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	17	27	31	24	2
Charlotte	16	34	29	20	1
Raleigh-Durham	17	31	25	26	1

25. Which of the following age categories do you fall in?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	18 – 29	30 – 39	40 – 49	50 – 64	65 & Over	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	20	16	19	26	19	1
Charlotte	17	22	21	23	17	0
Raleigh-Durham	18	19	24	21	14	4

26. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent, or not?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Hispanic	Not Hispanic	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	4	94	2
Charlotte	3	97	1
Raleigh-Durham	6	91	2

27. Which of the following describes your race?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	American Indian, Native American	Asian, Pacific Islander, Asian American	Black, African American	Mixed Race	White	Other	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	1	2	21	2	71	2	1
Charlotte	< 1	4	16	1	77	0	1
Raleigh-Durham	2	2	29	2	61	3	2

28. What is your religion, if any? **[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]**

[IF GIVEN SPECIFIC PROTESTANT DENOMINATION, SIMPLY CODE PROTESTANT]

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Catholic	Jewish	Mormon	Muslim	Protestant	Other	None	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	12	1	< 1	< 1	57	14	14	2
Charlotte	17	1	0	0	55	15	10	2
Raleigh-Durham	11	< 1	1	0	57	13	17	2

29. What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? **[DO NOT READ CATEGORIES]**

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

None (Grades 1-8)

High School Incomplete (Grades 9-11)

High school Graduate (Grade 12 or GED Certificate)

Technical, Trade, or Vocational School (AFTER High School)

Some College (Associate’s Degree, No 4-Yr Degree)

College Graduate (Bachelor’s Degree or Other 4-Yr Degree)

Post-Graduate Training or Professional Schooling After College (Toward a Master's Degree, Ph.D.; Law, Medical School)

	Grades 1 to 8	Grades 9 to 11	HS Graduate	Technical/ Vocational	Some College	College Graduate	Post- Graduate	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	< 1	4	28	2	28	24	14	2
Charlotte	< 1	5	28	2	28	21	14	2
Raleigh-Durham	< 1	2	29	1	27	26	14	1

30. Would you tell me into which of the following categories your total family income falls?

[IF DEPENDS, PROBE ONCE. IF STILL DEPENDS, ENTER AS “DK”]

	Under \$25,000	\$25,000 – \$49,999	\$50,000 – \$74,999	\$75,000 – \$124,999	\$125,000 – \$200,000	Over \$200,000	DK/Ref (VOL.)
NORTH CAROLINA	14	27	22	18	7	3	11
Charlotte	9	26	28	16	11	1	9
Raleigh-Durham	12	29	17	20	7	5	11

31.[CODE GENDER OF RESPONDENT; DO NOT ASK, UNLESS GENDER IS IN QUESTION]

	Male	Female
NORTH CAROLINA	48	52
Charlotte	57	43
Raleigh-Durham	52	48

[PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AVAILABLE TO INTERVIEWERS ANYTIME A RESPONDENT ASKS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE SURVEY SPONSOR OR FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION]

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