

ALASKA

K-12 & SCHOOL CHOICE SURVEY

What do voters say about
K-12 education?

Polling Paper No. 3

Paul **DiPerna**

OCTOBER **2011**

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

The Friedman Foundation
for Educational Choice
edchoice.org



Survey Project & Profile

Title:	Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey
Survey Organization:	Braun Research Incorporated (BRI)
Sponsor:	The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice
Interview Dates:	September 10 to 18, 2011
Interview Method:	Live Telephone 75% landline and 25% cell phone
Avg Interview Length:	10 minutes (approx.)
Language(s):	English
Sample Frame:	Registered Voters
Sampling Method:	Dual Frame; Probability Sampling; Random Digit Dial (RDD)
Sample Size:	ALASKA=1,006
Split Sample Sizes:	“Split A”=490; “Split B”=516
Margin of Error:	± 3.1 percentage points for the ALASKA sample ± 5.4 percentage points for the Anchorage sample ± 4.4 percentage points for “Split A” sample ± 4.3 percentage points for “Split B” sample
Weighting?	Yes (Gender, Race, Age, Education Level, Hispanic Origin, County)
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

	STATE %
K-12 Parent	38
Democrat	17
Independent	38
Republican	30
Liberal	16
Moderate	37
Conservative	36
Urban	24
Suburban	21
Small Town	29
Rural	23
Alaska Native	13
Asian	5
Black	4
Hispanic	3
White	72
Catholic	15
Jewish	1
Muslim	< 1
Protestant	38
None	26
18-29	26
30-39	16
40-49	23
50-64	25
65 & Over	9
Under \$25,000	13
\$25,000 - \$49,999	18
\$50,000 - \$74,999	19
\$75,000 - \$124,999	23
\$125,000 - \$200,000	8
Over \$200,000	3
< HS Graduate	9
HS Graduate	34
Some College	34
≥ College	23
Male	50
Female	50

October 27, 2011

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Alaska's K-12 Profile

Average State Rank on NAEP¹	37
High School Graduation Rate²	73%
# Regular Public School Students³	130,662
# Charter School Students⁴	5,196
# Private School Students⁵	3,521
% Public School Students⁶	93.8%
% Charter School Students⁶	3.7%
% Private School Students⁶	2.5%
# School Districts³	53
# Regular Public Schools³	516
# Charter Schools³	24
# Private Schools⁵	57
Virtual Schools Climate⁷	Moderate
% Free and Reduced-Price Lunch³	34%
% Individualized Education Program (IEP)³	14%
% English Language Learners (ELL)³	9%
\$ Revenue Per Student⁸	\$17,319
\$ Per Student Spending⁸	\$15,353

Alaska 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 2009 state scale scores for 4th grade reading (#44); 4th grade math (#36); 8th grade reading (#39); 8th grade math (#30).
URL: nationsreportcard.gov/data_tools.asp
2. Reported high school graduation rates, determined by the Average Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) on the National Center for Education Statistics section on the U.S. Department of Education website. Data for 2008-2009 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/ccd
3. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD). Data for the 2008-2009 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states
4. 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/ccd/schoolsearch
5. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Private School Universe Survey (PSS). Data for 2009–2010 school year.
URL: nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/index.asp
6. Percentages are meant for general impressions only. State-level data on home-school students are generally unreliable, and this subpopulation of students could not be included in this table. Due to rounding, percentage totals may be slightly greater or less than 100%.
7. 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, 2010), Table 2.
URL: www.kpk12.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/KeepingPaceK12_2010.pdf
8. 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
“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.

Overview

The “Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey” project, commissioned by The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research Incorporated (BRI), measures Alaska registered voters’ familiarity and views on a range of K-12 education issues and school choice reforms. We report response *levels* and *differences* (we use the term “net score” or “net”) of voter opinion, and the *intensity* of responses. Where do the voters stand on important issues and policy proposals in K-12 education? We provide some observations and insights in the following pages of this paper.

A randomly selected and statistically representative sample of Alaska voters recently responded to 18 substantive questions and 10 demographic questions (see pages 48 – 78). The next section summarizes our key findings.

A total of 1,006 telephone interviews were conducted in English from September 10 – 18, 2011, by means of both landline and cell phone. Statistical results were weighted to correct for known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the total sample of interviews is ± 3.1 percentage points. Margin of error for the Anchorage sample (within the statewide sample) is approximately ± 5.4 percentage points.

In this project we included four 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.

This polling paper has four sections. The first section summarizes key findings. We call the second section “Survey Snapshots,” which offers charts illustrating the core findings of the survey. 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. We have set out to

give a straight-forward analysis, going light on editorial commentary, and letting the charts and numbers communicate the major findings.

Key Findings

- ▶ **The vast majority of Alaska’s voters (73%) are paying attention to issues in K-12 education. Only 8% of voters say they pay no attention.¹**

See Question 1

In the state, those Alaskans who say they pay “a lot” of attention to K-12 education issues outnumber those who say they pay no attention by a 4-to-1 ratio. Voters living in the Anchorage metro area show similar tendencies.

- ▶ **Alaskans are more likely to think that K-12 education is heading in the “right direction” (46%) compared to being on the “wrong track” (39%).**

See Question 2

However, the views of demographic groups vary. Considering the right direction-wrong track net scores, there is a range of opinion from very positive to mildly negative. Those voters who are generally upbeat about the direction of K-12 education in Alaska live in small towns (+10 net), consider themselves Democrats (+17 net) or Independents (+11 net), fall in the 18-29 age group (+13 net), or have household earnings in the lower income brackets. The more divided subgroups include Republicans (-1 net), older voters age 50 & over (-5 net), middle income households (-4 net), and those who self-identify as Alaska Native (-3 net).

¹ This particular “leadoff” question is based on a very similar question in the national survey recently conducted by *Education Next*-PEPG/Harvard. See William Howell, Paul E. Peterson, and Martin West, “The Public Weighs in on School Reform,” *Education Next* 11, no. 4 (2011): 10-22.

- ▶ **Alaska voters are divided in the way they rate the state’s public school system (48% say “good” or “excellent”; 47% say “fair” or “poor”). Anchorage is less positive (42%) and considerably more negative (54%) than the state overall.**

See Questions 3A and 3B

In the split-sample experiment, while examining an alternative question (3B), we notice a peculiar finding. Three out of five voters (60%) say they are at least “somewhat satisfied” with Alaska’s public school system. This proportion is significantly greater than the percentage of voters who give the state a “good” or “excellent” rating (48%), and it is much larger than the percentage of respondents saying the state is going in the “right direction” (46%). Conversely, almost half of voters (47%) rate the state’s public school system as “fair” or “poor,” but only less than a third of voters (32%) say they are dissatisfied. The implication is that there is probably a segment of the voting population that is content with (at best) a “fair” public school system, and suggests possibly low expectations.

- ▶ **Generally speaking, Alaska voters have no idea how much is spent in the public schools. There is a huge information gap.**

See Question 4

Less than 1 out of 10 respondents (7%) could estimate the correct per-student spending range in Alaska. The state spends more than \$15,000 for each student in the public schools, but nearly a quarter of those interviewed thought that the state spent less than \$4,000 per student. This is a pattern we have seen in our other state surveys. Typically, just 1 out of 10 people in a given state will know (or guess) the correct range of public spending on K-12 education.

So voters tend to be way off the mark. This suggests policymakers should be cautious to pander to populist impulses on blanket increases in school funding. Compared with responses given on Question 4, better-informed voters could have

very different reactions to proposals for increased education funding. In fact, this is what we observe in a follow-up split-sample experiment.

- ▶ **When given the latest per-student spending information, voters are more likely to say public school funding is at a level that is “about right” or “too high” 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 Alaska. On version 5A, 40% of voters said that public school funding is “too low”. However on version 5B, which included a sentence offering the most recent data on per-student funding in Alaska (\$15,353 in 2009), the proportion of voters saying “too low” shrank by 14 percentage points, effectively a 35% reduction.

Again comparing the split-sample questions, respondents answering version 5B and having the funding information were more likely to say the level of public school funding is “about right” (46% vs. 38%) or “too high” (20% vs. 14%). It seems Alaskans are likely to change their views on public school funding 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 the levels of public spending rather than how the money is allocated and spent.

- ▶ **When asked for a preferred school type, Alaska voters express a gaping disconnect between their preferred school type and actual enrollment patterns.**

See Question 6

Less than 3% of Alaska’s K-12 student population attend private schools, but in our survey interviews, nearly a third of voters (30%) would select a private school as a first option. Approximately 94% of the state’s students attend regular public schools, but a much lower percentage of voters (39%) would chose a regular public school as their first choice. Almost 4% of the student population are attending

charter schools, but 15% of Alaska voters would like to send their child to a charter school. About 1 voter for every 10 (11%) said he/she would opt to homeschool their child. The results suggest the capability to choose a desired school type is highly constrained in Alaska.

Some demographic preferences stand out. The groups of voters who are more attracted to regular public schools tend to be younger (age 18-29), registered Democrats, Alaska Native, or Asian American. Groups are not significantly different on their preference for private schools. Rural voters are more than twice as likely to want to homeschool, compared to other residential communities; Republicans are three times more likely than Democrats. The middle age group (age 30-49) is twice as likely to prefer a charter school compared to those under age 30. The lowest income group is the least likely to want to send their child to a charter school. More than 1 out of 5 Alaska Native voters prefer charter schools.

- ▶ **Nearly one out of five voters in our survey prioritize a “better/quality education” as the key attribute they are looking for in the selection of a school. The second most important attribute, as suggested by 14% of all voters, is “individual/one-on-one attention.” Survey results indicate “socialization” (10%) is ranked third.**

See Question 7

Often discussed school characteristics such as “class size” (6%), “better teachers” (5%), diversity (3%), discipline (2%), and safety (1%) are all less likely to be a first priority for Alaskans. That said, any of these qualities may or may not garner more urgency as a second or third priority, which we do not explore in our survey.

- ▶ **Alaska voters are much more likely to favor charter schools (72%), rather than oppose such schools (11%).**

See Questions 8, 9A, 9B

We asked a slightly modified version of the charter school question (9B) that left out a clause depicting charter schools having the ability to control choosing “staff and curriculum,” and for this alternate definition, we modified the wording relating to “regulations.” The results do not change in a substantial way. No matter the wording, voters overwhelmingly support charter schools.

Alaska registered a very large positive net score (+61 net) supporting charter schools. The intensity of this support is also very strongly positive (+30 intensity). Considering either of the alternate definitions, charter schools clearly resonate with Alaska voters.

There may be opportunity to grow support for charters. The level of familiarity with charters (52%) is moderate, and it may actually understate the potential voter support if a “charter school” is better understood. The association between charter school familiarity and favorability is positive in direction and moderate in size (Q9A: $r=.181, p < .01$; Q9B: $r=.334, p < .01$).

- ▶ **Despite low familiarity, Alaskans view virtual schools favorably. Nearly half of voters (48%) favor virtual schools compared to those who say they oppose them (39%) as a school option.**

See Questions 10 and 11

We detect little intensity (-1 net) on virtual schools at this time. The “strongly” held views toward virtual schools, either favorable or in opposition, basically cancel each other out. This is pretty understandable because it is a relatively new policy idea, and less understood.

In terms of net scores, several demographic groups stand out in their views on virtual schools. Urban and rural voters are more likely to support this kind of school type than suburban and small town voters. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to favor virtual schools. Middle age voters (age 30-49) appear more neutral and skeptical than those who are younger (age 18-29) and older (age 50 & over). There is a lot of net support (+14 net) and intensity (+15 intensity) among low-income voters who earn less than \$25,000. Alaska Natives and Latinos are more likely to favor virtual schools than whites and African Americans.

Like charter schools, there is potential to grow support for virtual schools. Right now, relatively few people in Alaska (38%) say they are familiar with virtual schools. The association between virtual school familiarity and favorability is positive in direction and modest in size ($r=.194, p < .01$).

Bearing in mind the open responses to Question 7, and the relatively high value placed on “socialization,” it is worth future study to explore to what extent voters value the social benefits of more traditional schooling. It is possible that a perception exists that virtual schools may be lacking desired social benefits and qualities. This may be driving some of the relatively subdued reaction toward virtual schools.

- ▶ **No matter how we asked the question about tax-credit scholarships, at least 64% of voters say they favor such a system, compared to 21% (at most) who say they oppose.**

See Questions 12A and 12B

Although the two versions of this question did not elicit significant differences in terms of favor-oppose net scores, one version did generate more intensity.

Respondents to Question 12A were more likely to be “strongly” favorable toward tax-credit scholarships, than “strongly” opposed, by a 4-to-1 ratio. The net intensity score was +24 percentage points. However, in the alternate Question

12B, the inserted definition for “tax credit” and/or further description of a “tax-credit scholarship system” slightly increased the strong negative reactions.

In either case, the bottom line is the same – Alaskans definitely like the idea of tax-credit scholarships.

- ▶ **Alaskans clearly support an “education savings account” system (also called “ESA”) The percentage of those who favor the policy (61%) is more than double who say they oppose (27%).**

See Question 13

Alaska registered a large positive net score (+24) supporting ESAs. The conviction behind this support is also strongly positive (+18 intensity).

Demographic differences do emerge, particularly in the intensity of the responses. No matter the political party identification, all show support for ESAs. However, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to favor the policy (+39 net vs. +23 net), and the former is much more enthusiastic about the policy idea (+25 intensity vs. +1 intensity). A similar divergence is observed combining younger and middle age voters (age 18-29 and age 30-49) and comparing this group with older voters (age 50 & over). Those earning less than \$75,000 are also substantially more supportive and have more intense feelings regarding ESAs compared to wealthier Alaskans. Alaska Natives, African Americans, and Latinos all have greater intensity than whites and Asian Americans.

- ▶ **Alaska voters give clear, strong support for school vouchers.**

See Questions 14 – 16

More than twice as many voters say they favor a school voucher system (64%) than oppose the idea (29%). The large net score (+35) indicates Alaskans are much more likely to support such a policy. The intensity score (+16) is similar to the results on the tax-credit scholarship and ESA questions.

All demographic groups considered in this paper register supportive views on school vouchers, never dipping below the level of 57% favorable. However, we do detect some subtle differences in terms of net favorability and intensity. Republicans are more likely to support school vouchers than Democrats, and both Republicans and Independents are more intensely positive in support. Younger and middle age voters (age 18-29 and age 30-49) are more likely to support vouchers than older voters (age 50 & over), and the younger and middle age voters' views are more intensely positive.

Those earning less than \$50,000 are substantially more supportive and have more intense feelings regarding school vouchers compared to those voters earning \$50,000 or more. Alaska Natives and whites are most passionate and positive about their view on school vouchers.

Roughly equal numbers of Alaskans know about school vouchers and virtual schools (38% saying they are at least “somewhat familiar” with each policy idea). So there is potential to broaden awareness and possibly expand support for school vouchers. The association between virtual school familiarity and favorability is positive in direction, though modest in size ($r=.120$, $p < .01$).

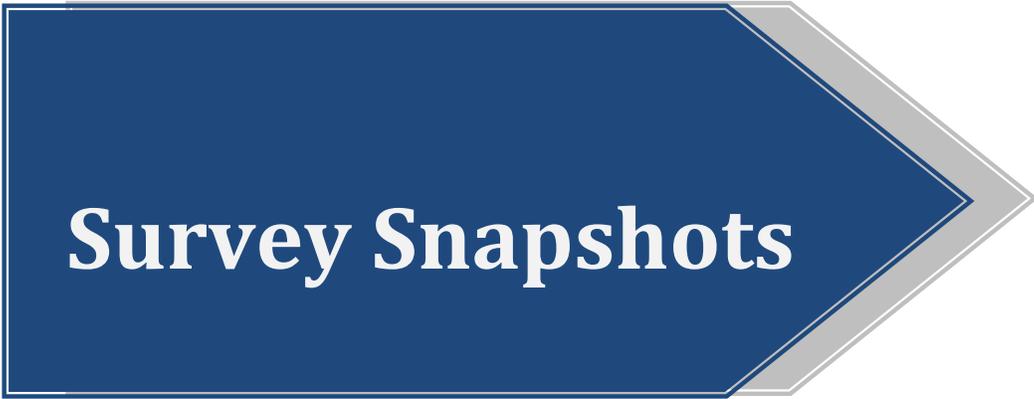
In a follow-up question, we asked for the reason why a respondent chose his/her view regarding school vouchers. The term “choice” is overwhelmingly the keyword when it comes to vouchers. Approximately 1 out of 3 respondents (32%) offered “choice” as a reason. Other positive reasons include “good idea” (5%), “helps less fortunate” (5%), and “better education” (5%). The most cited negative responses include “takes away from school system” (7%), “bad idea” (3%), and “worry voucher will be spent properly” (3%).

- ▶ **Alaskans support a constitutional amendment that would allow school vouchers (54% favor vs. 37% oppose).**

See Questions 17 – 18

The net score (+17) indicates Alaskans are much more likely to favor a constitutional amendment than oppose it. However, the intensity score (+4) is somewhat tenuous, indicating that Alaskans are about just as likely to have strong positive or negative feelings. In Anchorage, the intensity score is actually negative (-8). Among Anchorage voters who have strong feelings on this question, they are more likely to have a negative opinion.

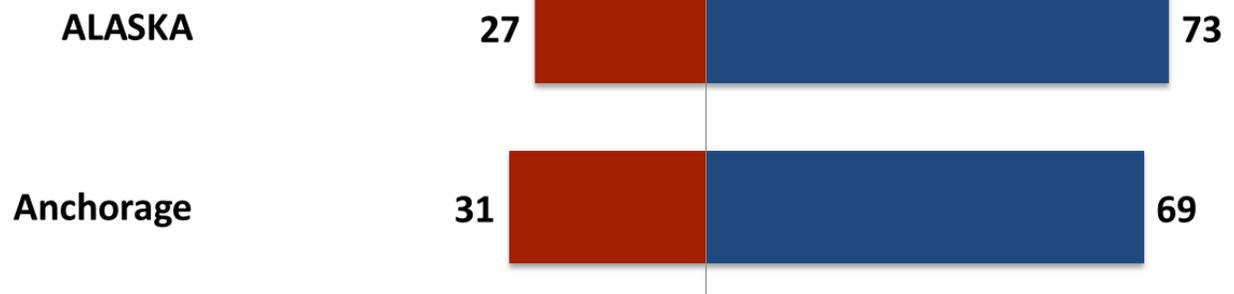
We asked for the reason why the respondent chose his/her view regarding a proposed constitutional amendment. Like the previous school voucher question, the term “choice” is by far the biggest reason for positive opinions on the constitutional amendment. Approximately 3 out of 10 respondents (31%) offered “choice” as a reason. Other positive reasons include “good idea” (4%), “better education” (3%), and “helps less fortunate” (5%). The most cited negative responses include “worry voucher will be spent properly” (9%) and “takes away from school system” (5%). Interestingly, about 5% of voters said this was “not a constitutional problem.”



Survey Snapshots

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

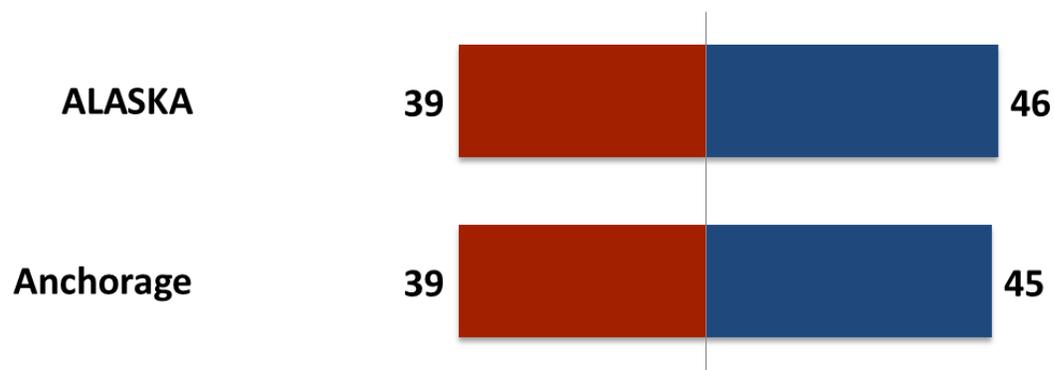
■ Very Little/None ■ Some/A Lot



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

Q2. Do you feel things in Alaska's K-12 public 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, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q2.*

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

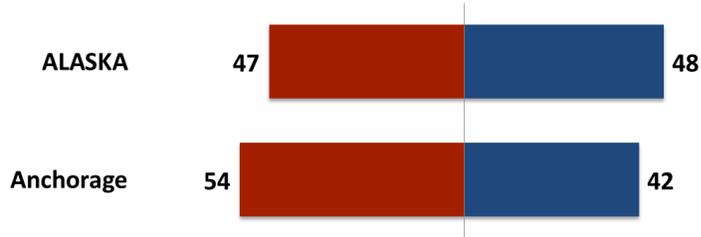
	Right Direction %	Wrong Track %	Net %	N=
ALL VOTERS	46	39	+ 7	1,006
COMMUNITY				
Urban	47	41	+ 6	246
Suburban	45	41	+ 4	211
Small Town	46	36	+ 10	289
Rural	45	39	+ 6	232
PARTY ID				
Republican	44	45	- 1	303
Independent	50	39	+ 11	378
Democrat	50	33	+ 17	169
AGE GROUP				
18 – 29	54	31	+ 13	258
30 – 49	44	40	+ 4	397
50 & Over	41	46	- 5	345
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Under \$25,000	56	33	+ 13	133
\$25,000 - \$49,999	47	35	+ 12	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	43	46	- 3	193
\$75,000 - \$124,999	41	46	- 5	235
\$125,000 & Over	47	41	+ 6	108
RACE/ETHNICITY				
Alaska Native	43	46	- 3	128
Asian	78	19	+ 59	48
Black	40	28	+ 12	37
Hispanic	55	36	+ 19	32
White	44	40	+ 4	726

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. Reference to Whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Reference to Blacks includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic components of the self-identified black population. Reference to Hispanics includes self-identification as “Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent.”

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

Q3. (Split A) How would you rate Alaska's public school system?

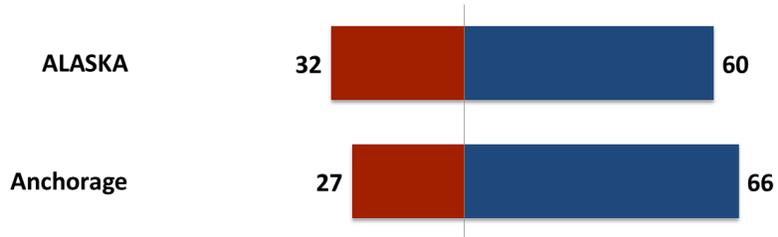
Fair/Poor Good/Excellent



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q3A.

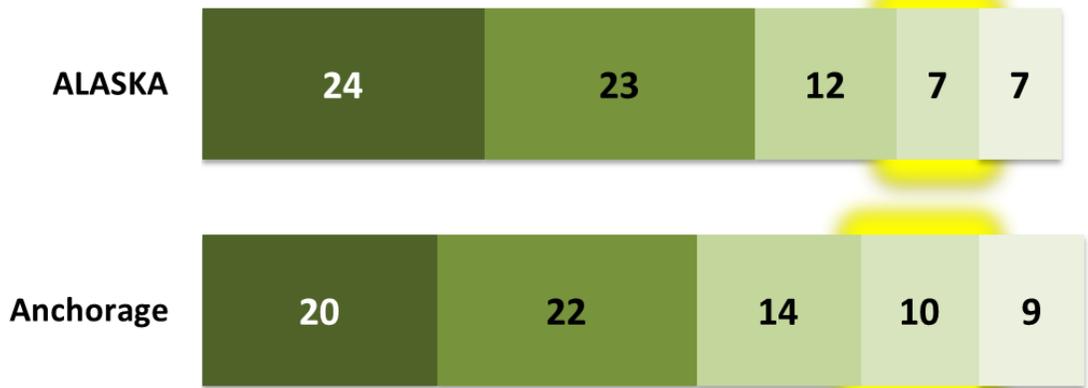
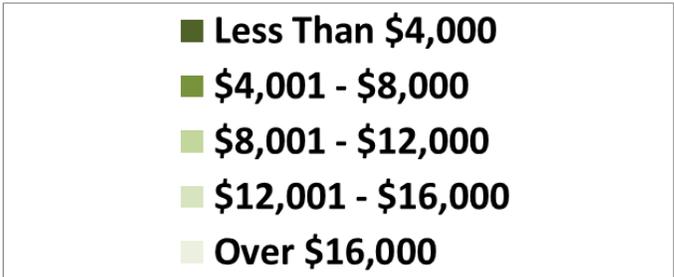
Q3. (Split B) How would you rate Alaska's public school system?

Dissatisfied Satisfied



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q3B.

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



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

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

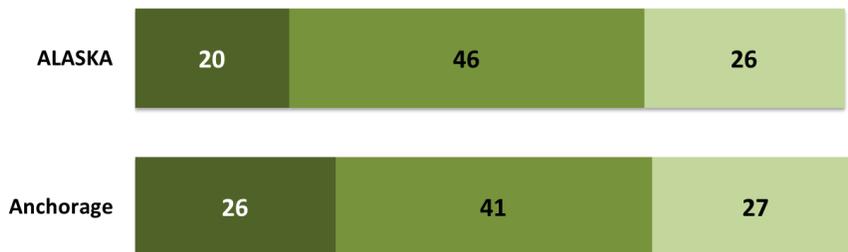
- Too High
- About Right
- Too Low



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

Q5. (Split B) According to the most recent information available, in Alaska \$15,353 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in Alaska is at a level that is:

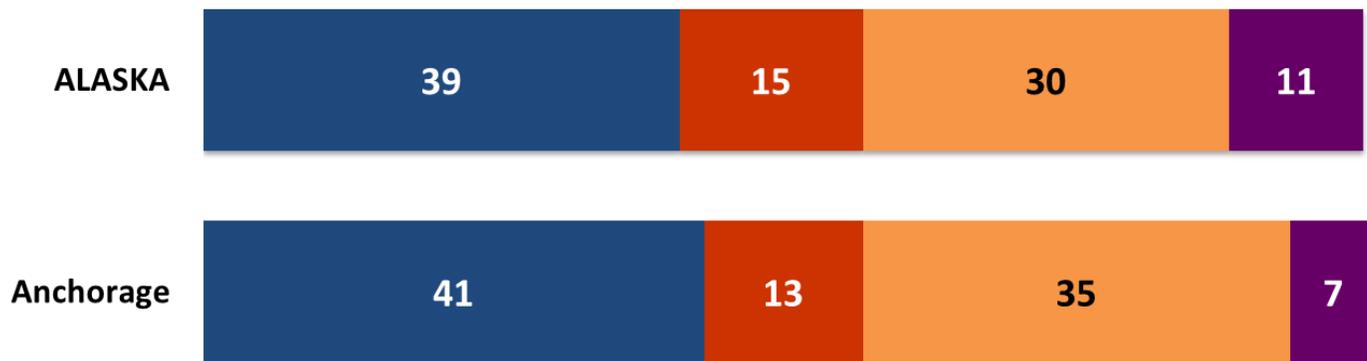
- Too High
- About Right
- Too Low



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

Q6. 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, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q6.*

Q6. 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	30	39	1,006
COMMUNITY					
Urban	12	6	34	42	246
Suburban	13	13	33	37	211
Small Town	18	12	28	39	289
Rural	17	16	26	38	232
PARTY ID					
Republican	17	16	35	32	303
Independent	17	11	31	38	378
Democrat	12	5	28	49	169
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	9	12	30	47	258
30 – 49	19	12	30	35	397
50 & Over	16	11	32	38	345
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	8	12	34	38	133
\$25,000 - \$49,999	18	7	28	42	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17	14	30	36	193
\$75,000 - \$124,999	18	15	29	36	235
\$125,000 & Over	16	8	38	33	108
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Alaska Native	23	4	21	46	128
Asian	2	3	23	72	48
Black	7	2	31	46	37
Hispanic	16	20	17	46	32
White	15	13	33	37	726

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. Reference to Whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Reference to Blacks includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic components of the self-identified black population. Reference to Hispanics includes self-identification as “Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent.”

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q6.

Q7. 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 20 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	193
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	139
SOCIALIZATION	96
MY CHILD ATTENDS / I ATTENDED THIS TYPE	56
CLASS SIZE	55
BETTER TEACHERS	46
CURRICULUM	45
COST / TUITION	36
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	34
DIVERSITY	31
PREFER PUBLIC SCHOOL	25
RELIGION	23
DISCIPLINE	18
OPPORTUNITIES	15
CONVENIENCE	15
VALUES	13
ENVIRONMENT	13
AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOL	11
SAFETY	11
FREEDOM	7

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q7.

Q8 Q10 Q14.

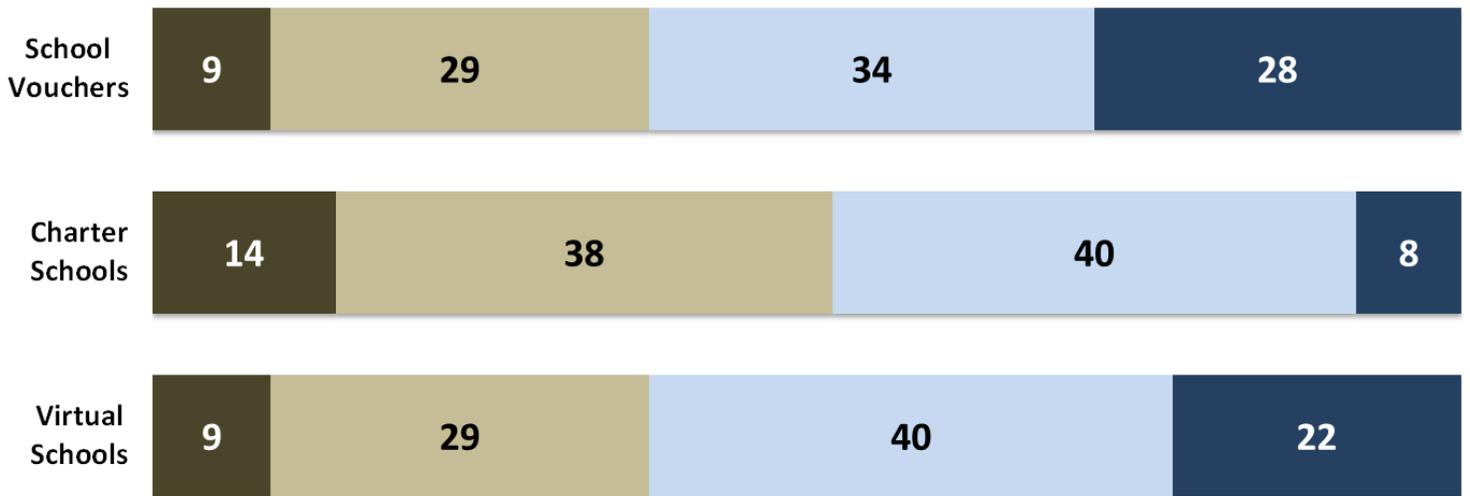
How familiar are you with [Charter Schools / Virtual Schools / School Vouchers] in K-12 Education?

■ Very Familiar

■ Somewhat Familiar

■ Not That Familiar

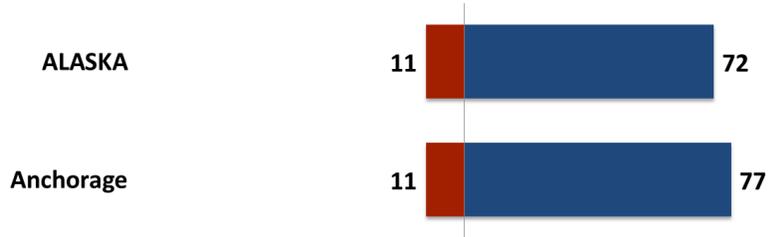
■ Never Heard Of / Don't Know



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q8, Q10, Q14.

Q9. (Split A) 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?

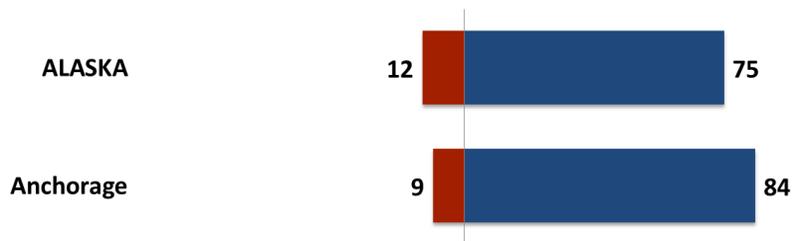
■ Oppose ■ Favor



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q9A.

Q9. (Split B) In Alaska, charter schools are public schools that have some more control over their own budget, but are subject to similar regulations placed on regular public schools. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

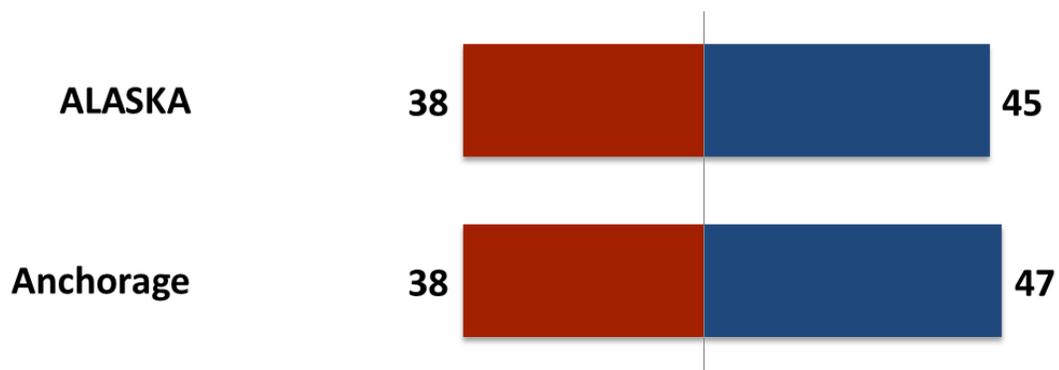
■ Oppose ■ Favor



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q9B.

Q11. 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?

■ Oppose ■ Favor



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

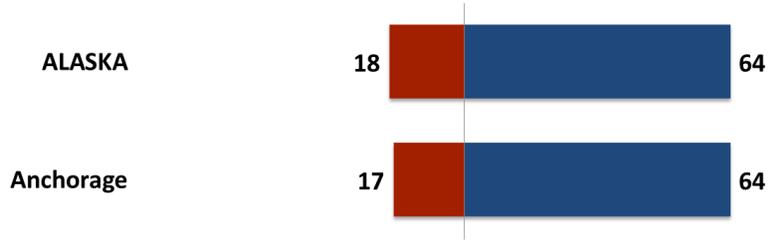
Q11. Virtual schools can be run publicly or privately, allowing students to work with their curriculum and teachers over the internet – in combination with, or in place of, traditional classroom learning. In general, do you favor or oppose virtual schools? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	45	38	+ 7	- 1	1,006
COMMUNITY					
Urban	50	31	+ 19	+ 10	246
Suburban	39	48	- 9	- 14	211
Small Town	43	44	- 1	- 4	289
Rural	47	32	+ 15	even	232
PARTY ID					
Republican	45	41	+ 4	- 7	303
Independent	46	36	+ 10	+ 1	378
Democrat	51	38	+ 13	+ 5	169
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	49	40	+ 9	even	258
30 – 49	43	41	+ 2	- 5	397
50 & Over	45	35	+ 10	+ 2	345
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	50	36	+ 14	+ 15	133
\$25,000 - \$49,999	48	37	+ 11	+ 2	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	45	40	+ 5	- 12	193
\$75,000 - \$124,999	43	41	+ 2	- 3	235
\$125,000 & Over	47	35	+ 12	even	108
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Alaska Native	57	30	+ 27	+ 10	128
Asian	48	33	+ 15	- 9	48
Black	35	46	- 11	- 10	37
Hispanic	71	15	+ 56	+ 2	32
White	43	40	+ 3	- 2	726

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. Reference to Whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Reference to Blacks includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic components of the self-identified black population. Reference to Hispanics includes self-identification as "Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent." 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 how passionate the support or opposition is for a given policy or proposal.

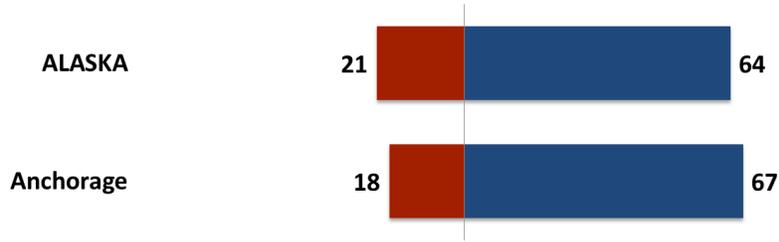
SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q11.

Q12. (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?



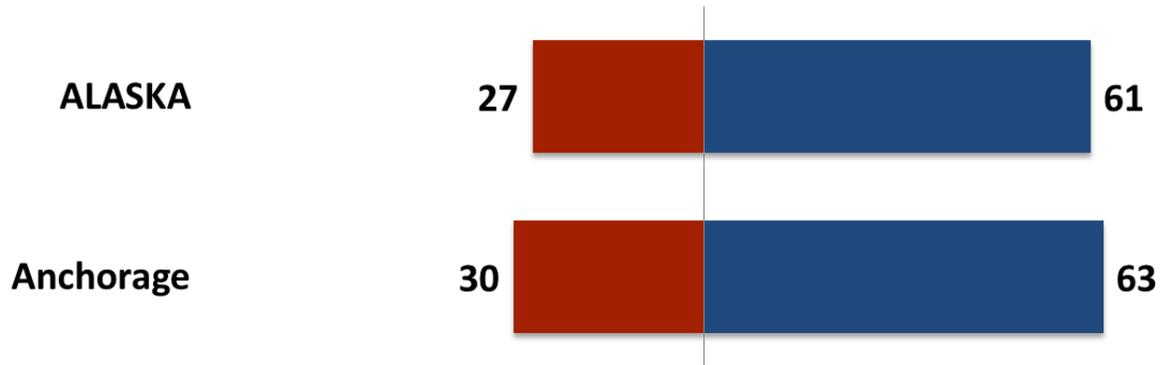
FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q12A.

Q12. (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?



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q12B.

Q13. An "education savings account" allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into an 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"? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?



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

Q13. An "education savings account" allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into an 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"? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

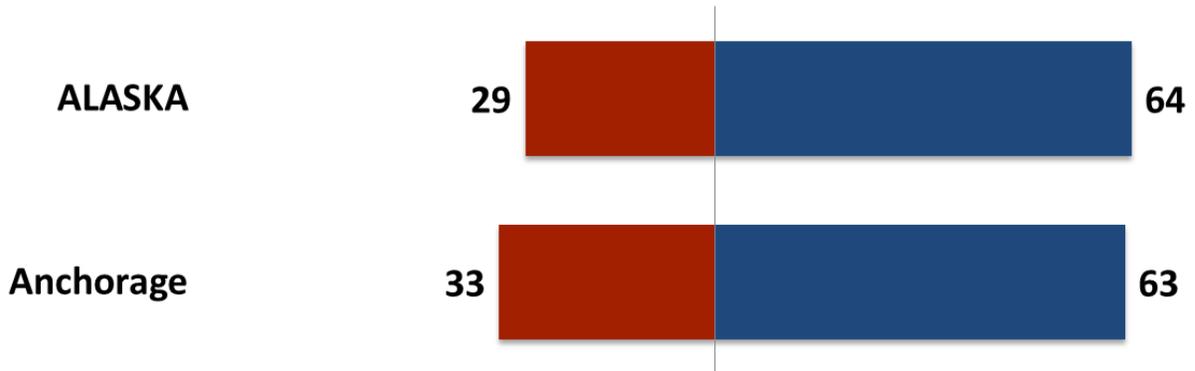
	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	61	27	+ 24	+ 18	1,006
COMMUNITY					
Urban	64	28	+ 36	+ 22	246
Suburban	64	28	+ 36	+ 15	211
Small Town	57	27	+ 30	+ 17	289
Rural	61	28	+ 33	+ 18	232
PARTY ID					
Republican	65	26	+ 39	+ 25	303
Independent	60	28	+ 32	+ 17	378
Democrat	56	33	+ 23	+ 1	169
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	67	21	+ 46	+ 27	258
30 – 49	62	25	+ 37	+ 21	397
50 & Over	55	35	+ 20	+ 7	345
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	51	24	+ 27	+ 25	133
\$25,000 - \$49,999	71	21	+ 50	+ 30	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	65	26	+ 39	+ 26	193
\$75,000 - \$124,999	63	26	+ 37	+ 15	235
\$125,000 & Over	69	28	+ 41	+ 16	108
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Alaska Native	63	27	+ 36	+ 30	128
Asian	61	34	+ 27	- 8	48
Black	78	17	+ 61	+ 43	37
Hispanic	91	7	+ 84	+ 49	32
White	58	29	+ 29	+ 15	726

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. Reference to Whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Reference to Blacks includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic components of the self-identified black population. Reference to Hispanics includes self-identification as "Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent." 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 how passionate the support or opposition is for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q13.

Q15. 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



FRIEDMAN FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL CHOICE, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey, Q15.*

Q15. 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?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	64	29	+ 35	+ 16	1,006
COMMUNITY					
Urban	63	31	+ 32	+ 13	246
Suburban	63	31	+ 32	+ 14	211
Small Town	64	29	+ 35	+ 16	289
Rural	65	26	+ 39	+ 19	232
PARTY ID					
Republican	69	26	+ 43	+ 25	303
Independent	61	31	+ 30	+ 16	378
Democrat	59	34	+ 25	+ 3	169
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	73	25	+ 48	+ 23	258
30 – 49	63	27	+ 36	+ 18	397
50 & Over	57	36	+ 21	+ 9	345
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	73	23	+ 50	+ 40	133
\$25,000 - \$49,999	75	20	+ 55	+ 27	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	55	39	+ 16	+ 7	193
\$75,000 - \$124,999	65	31	+ 34	+ 16	235
\$125,000 & Over	61	34	+ 27	+ 7	108
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Alaska Native	69	22	+ 47	+ 21	128
Asian	73	24	+ 49	+ 4	48
Black	57	31	+ 26	+ 9	37
Hispanic	67	32	+ 35	- 7	32
White	61	32	+ 29	+ 16	726

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. Reference to Whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Reference to Blacks includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic components of the self-identified black population. Reference to Hispanics includes self-identification as “Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent.” 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 how passionate the support or opposition is for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q15.

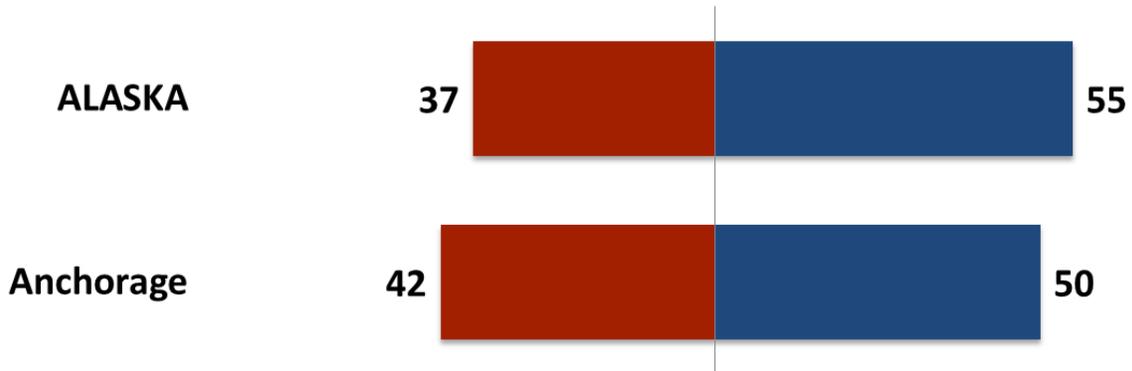
Q16. What is the most important reason that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to school vouchers? Please use one word, or a very short phrase.

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

CHOICE	325
TAKES AWAY FROM SCHOOL SYSTEM	67
GOOD IDEA	53
HELPS LESS FORTUNATE	49
BETTER EDUCATION	47
BAD IDEA	25
COST	24
WORRY VOUCHER WILL BE SPENT PROPERLY	24
AGAINST GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT	20
POSITIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS	20
FUNDS SHOULD ONLY GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS	18
RELIGIOUS REASONS	16
NEGATIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS	12
WASTE OF TAX MONEY	11
WILL IMPROVE SCHOOLS	10

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

Q17. A proposal has been made that would amend Alaska's constitution to allow state and local tax money to be allocated directly to parents, who could then use the money to send 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 this kind of constitutional amendment? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?



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

Q17. A proposal has been made that would amend Alaska's constitution to allow state and local tax money to be allocated directly to parents, who could then use the money to send 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 this kind of constitutional amendment? [PROBE:] Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

	Favor %	Oppose %	Net	Intensity	N=
ALL VOTERS	55	37	+ 18	+ 4	1,006
COMMUNITY					
Urban	51	39	+ 12	- 10	246
Suburban	52	40	+ 12	+ 4	211
Small Town	54	40	+ 14	+ 4	289
Rural	59	31	+ 28	+ 13	232
PARTY ID					
Republican	64	31	+ 33	+ 20	303
Independent	47	43	+ 14	- 2	378
Democrat	53	40	+ 13	- 14	169
AGE GROUP					
18 – 29	62	28	+ 34	+ 7	258
30 – 49	60	33	+ 27	+ 13	397
50 & Over	44	49	- 5	- 10	345
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$25,000	75	21	+ 54	+ 12	133
\$25,000 - \$49,999	63	25	+ 38	+ 13	180
\$50,000 - \$74,999	43	47	- 4	- 8	193
\$75,000 - \$124,999	54	42	+ 12	+ 8	235
\$125,000 & Over	50	42	+ 8	even	108
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Alaska Native	58	37	+ 21	+ 22	128
Asian	62	36	+ 26	- 15	48
Black	46	41	+ 5	- 4	37
Hispanic	37	33	+ 4	- 6	32
White	54	38	+ 16	+ 1	726

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. Reference to Whites refers to the non-Hispanic component of the self-identified white population. Reference to Blacks includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic components of the self-identified black population. Reference to Hispanics includes self-identification as "Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin or descent." 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 how passionate the support or opposition is for a given policy or proposal.

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q17.

Q18. What is the most important reason that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to a proposed constitutional amendment? Please use a few words, or a very short phrase.

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

CHOICE	307
WORRY VOUCHER WILL BE SPENT PROPERLY	88
NOT A CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM	51
TAKES AWAY FROM SCHOOL SYSTEM	42
GOOD IDEA	39
WASTE OF TAX MONEY	34
BETTER EDUCATION	31
AGAINST GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT	30
HELPS LESS FORTUNATE	28
FUNDS SHOULD ONLY GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS	28
BAD IDEA	18
RELIGIOUS REASONS	15
NEGATIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS	14
COST	13
POSITIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS	10

SOURCE: Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Alaska K-12 & School Choice Survey*, Q18.

Methods Summary

The “K-12 & School Choice Survey ” project, commissioned by The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research Incorporated (BRI), interviewed registered voters in Alaska. A total of **1,006** telephone interviews were conducted in English from September 10 – 18, 2011, by means of both landline and cell phone. Statistical results were weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the total sample of interviews is ± 3.1 percentage points.

BRI’s live callers conducted all phone interviews. For this entire project, a total of **8,198** calls were made in Alaska. Of these calls **1,861** were unusable phone numbers (disconnected, fax, busy, non-residential, or non-answers, etc.); **4,014** were usable numbers but eligibility unknown (including refusals and voicemail); **120** cell phone numbers were usable but not eligible for this survey; **58** people did not complete the survey. The average response rate of the landline interviews was **19.6%**. The average response rate of the cell phone interviews was **18.2%**.

Details on each state’s sample 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 Alaska 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 September 10 – 18, 2011. As many as 8 attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. 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 survey 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%-4% have been acceptable to use 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 is 3%. 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 3 percentage points away from their true values in the population.

It is critical to note that the 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

Full dispositions for all sampled landline and cell phone numbers are located below.

Alaska Call Dispositions					
<u>SUMMARY</u>			<u>DETAIL</u>		
Landline	Cell Phone		Landline	Cell Phone	
5,913	2,285	Total	1,207	287	Disconnected
5,913	2,285	Released	153	1	Fax
0	0	Unreleased	204	5	Government/Business
4,346	1,991	Usable	-	1	Non Cell Phone
1,567	294	Unusable	3	-	Non Landline
3,844	1,403	Qualified	1,567	294	Unusable
68.3%	87.0%	Est. Usability	879	29	No Answer
94.2%	70.2%	Est. Eligibility	89	1	Busy
19.6%	18.2%	Est. Response	968	30	Usability Unknown
			753	256	Complete
			31	27	Break-Off
			784	283	Usable/Eligible
			1,207	715	Refused
			12	2	Language Barrier
			743	515	Voice Mail
			508	303	Call Back-Retired
			75	23	Strong Refusal
			1	0	Privacy Manager
			2,546	1,558	Usable/Eligible Unknown
			-	83	Under 18
			48	37	Not Registered in State
			48	120	Usable/Ineligible
			19.6%	18.2%	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 and Education. The weighted and unweighted results are available on request.

Weighting targets are imposed for sex, age, ethnicity, and level of education for the state of Alaska. Gender and ethnicity were based on Census Bureau figures from Table 4b of “Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008 – Detailed Tables.”²

Table 4c of the above cited report describes the age distributions, but these do not match our questionnaire coding scheme for respondent’s age. We calculated age distributions from date-of-birth information on file from the state’s respective registered voter database, as supplied by Aristotle International.

Level of education is based on voting-age population distributions as reported by the Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2008 3-year estimates. We adjusted college graduate weighting targets for the state where required based on the 2008 Census figures on registered voters (Table 5 of the above cited), noting that the percentage of college graduates is higher for registered voters compared with all adults (32.1% vs. 27.5%, respectively).

² U.S. Census Bureau, “Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008 - Detailed Tables,” URL: www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/p20/2008/tables.html

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 published articles in *Education Next*, *First Monday*, *Huffington Post*, and *Washington Examiner*. 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 invaluable 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. Jeff Reed provided critical input at various stages of this project. Our release partners at the Alaska Policy Forum gave us invaluable insights and feedback at the local/state level. We would also 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, Dave Oshman, Natalie Meade, Shayne Poole, Elaine Karnes, and Rich Kuchinsky. We are very grateful to the citizens of Alaska, 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 60 full-time and over 600 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 15 years, Braun Research has conducted more than 7,000 research projects by telephone, internet, and mail worldwide.

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) and 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

Alaska Policy Forum

The Alaska Policy Forum is an independent, nonpartisan research and educational organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Alaska residents by promoting sound solutions to state and local policy questions. We provide public policy analysis of state and local issues from a free-market perspective. The Forum is funded by the generosity of charitable donations from Alaskans just like you, and does not accept any government grants or public funding of any kind.



Alaska K-12 Survey Questionnaire & Topline Results

Interview Dates:	September 10 to September 18, 2011
Sample Frame:	Registered Voters
Sample Sizes:	ALASKA=1,006; Anchorage= 332
Split Sample Sizes:	“Split A”=490; “Split B”=516
Margin of Error:	± 3.1 percentage points for the ALASKA sample ± 5.4 percentage points for the Anchorage sample ± 4.4 percentage points for “Split A” sample ± 4.3 percentage points for “Split B” sample

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%.

[INTRODUCTION]

Hello, I am _____ calling for Braun Research Inc. in Princeton, New Jersey. We are conducting a telephone opinion survey and would like to know your opinions on some important issues. We are not selling anything or asking for donations. May I please speak to someone who is registered to vote and is at home right now?

[IF ASKED FOR TIME:]

The survey should take approximately 8 to 10 minutes.

[IF ASKED FOR SPONSOR:]

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice is the sponsor of this survey.

“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.)
ALASKA	36	37	19	8	< 1
Anchorage	31	38	22	9	0

2. Do you feel things in Alaska’s K-12 public 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.)
ALASKA	46	39	15
Anchorage	45	39	16

3. *(Split A)* How would you rate Alaska’s public school system?

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

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	7	41	37	10	5
Anchorage	8	34	39	15	3

3. *(Split B)* How satisfied are you with Alaska’s public school system?

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

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	17	44	23	9	8
Anchorage	11	55	20	7	7

4. How much do you think is currently spent on each student in Alaska'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. 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.)
ALASKA	24	23	12	7	7	27
Anchorage	20	22	14	10	9	25

5. **(Split A)** Do you believe that public school funding in Alaska 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.)
ALASKA	14	38	40	8
Anchorage	19	38	33	10

5. **(Split B)** According to the most recent information available, in Alaska \$15,353 is being spent each year per student attending public schools. Do you believe that public school funding in Alaska 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.)
ALASKA	20	46	26	8
Anchorage	26	41	27	6

6. 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.)
ALASKA	15	11	30	39	< 1	3
Anchorage	13	7	35	41	0	3

7. 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 20 | Specific impressions offered by respondents in the statewide sample. Numbers represent counts (n), not percentages.

ALASKA

BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY	193
INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE	139
SOCIALIZATION	96
MY CHILD ATTENDS / I ATTENDED THIS TYPE	56
CLASS SIZE	55
BETTER TEACHERS	46
CURRICULUM	45
COST / TUITION	36
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	34
DIVERSITY	31
PREFER PUBLIC SCHOOL	25
RELIGION	23
DISCIPLINE	18
OPPORTUNITIES	15
CONVENIENCE	15
VALUES	13
ENVIRONMENT	13
AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOL	11
SAFETY	11
FREEDOM	7

OTHER RESPONSES	54
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	61

“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”]

8. 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.)
ALASKA	14	38	40	6	2
Anchorage	13	47	33	5	2

9. **(Split A)** 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.)
ALASKA	35	37	7	4	17
Anchorage	35	42	9	2	12

9. **(Split B)** In Alaska, charter schools are public schools that have some more control over their own budget, but are subject to similar regulations placed on regular public schools. 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.)
ALASKA	33	42	6	6	13
Anchorage	36	48	3	6	7

10. 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.)
ALASKA	9	29	40	21	1
Anchorage	5	25	48	21	1

11. 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.)
ALASKA	18	28	20	19	16
Anchorage	17	30	21	17	15

12. **(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.)
ALASKA	32	33	10	8	18
Anchorage	25	39	9	8	18

12. **(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.)
ALASKA	30	34	7	14	15
Anchorage	31	36	6	12	14

13. An "education savings account" allows parents to withdraw their child from a public district or charter school, and receive a payment into an 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"?
[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.)
ALASKA	33	28	12	15	12
Anchorage	33	30	14	16	7

14. 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.)
ALASKA	9	29	34	27	1
Anchorage	8	33	34	25	1

15. 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.)
ALASKA	35	28	10	19	7
Anchorage	36	27	10	23	4

16. What is the most important **reason** that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to school vouchers? 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.

ALASKA

CHOICE	325
TAKES AWAY FROM SCHOOL SYSTEM	67
GOOD IDEA	53
HELPS LESS FORTUNATE	49
BETTER EDUCATION	47
BAD IDEA	25
COST	24
WORRY VOUCHER WILL BE SPENT PROPERLY	24
AGAINST GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT	20
POSITIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS	20
FUNDS SHOULD ONLY GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS	18
RELIGIOUS REASONS	16
NEGATIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS	12
WASTE OF TAX MONEY	11
WILL IMPROVE SCHOOLS	10
<hr/>	
OTHER RESPONSES	136
DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	158

17. A proposal has been made that would amend Alaska's constitution to allow state and local tax money to be allocated directly to parents, who could then use the money to send 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 this kind of constitutional amendment? **[PROBE:]** Would you say strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?

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

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	29	25	12	25	8
Anchorage	23	27	11	31	7

18. What is the most important **reason** that would cause you to choose your previous response relating to a proposed constitutional amendment? Please use a few words, 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.

ALASKA

	CHOICE	307
WORRY VOUCHER WILL BE SPENT PROPERLY		88
NOT A CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEM		51
TAKES AWAY FROM SCHOOL SYSTEM		42
	GOOD IDEA	39
	WASTE OF TAX MONEY	34
	BETTER EDUCATION	31
AGAINST GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT		30
	HELPS LESS FORTUNATE	28
FUNDS SHOULD ONLY GO TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS		28
	BAD IDEA	18
	RELIGIOUS REASONS	15
NEGATIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS		14
	COST	13
POSITIVE REMARKS / PUBLIC SCHOOLS		10
<hr/>		
	OTHER RESPONSES	101
	DK / NO RESPONSE / REFUSED	158

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

19. Are you currently the parent or guardian of a child who lives with you, and who is in any grade from Pre-School through High School?

[IF NEEDED: IF CHILD IS GOING INTO PRESCHOOL IN THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR, ENTER "YES"]

[IF NEEDED: IF CHILD JUST GRADUATED IN 2010, ENTER "NO"]

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

	Yes	No	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	38	62	0
Anchorage	34	66	0

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

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

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

	Democrat	Republican	Independent	Other	Libertarian (VOL.)	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	17	30	38	6	1	9
Anchorage	16	27	37	5	1	13

21. How would you describe your views on most political matters? Generally, do you think of yourself as liberal, 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	Other	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	16	37	36	3	9
Anchorage	17	37	33	4	9

22. 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.)
ALASKA	24	21	29	23	3
Anchorage	56	28	9	3	4

23. 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.)
ALASKA	26	16	23	25	9	1
Anchorage	30	14	21	24	12	0

24. 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.)
ALASKA	3	95	2
Anchorage	6	94	< 1

25. Which of the following describes your race?

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

	Alaska Native	American Indian, Native American	Asian, Pacific Islander, Asian American	Black, African American	White	Other	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	13	1	5	4	74	2	1
Anchorage	10	1	9	8	66	5	1

26. 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	Muslim	Protestant	Other	None	DK/Ref (VOL.)
ALASKA	15	1	< 1	38	14	26	5
Anchorage	18	< 1	< 1	36	12	28	6

27. 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.)
ALASKA	3	6	29	5	33	16	7	1
Anchorage	7	5	32	3	30	16	7	0

28. 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.)
ALASKA	13	18	19	23	8	3	16
Anchorage	12	22	18	19	9	3	17

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

	Male	Female
ALASKA	50	50
Anchorage	52	48

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

The Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that studies attitudes toward K-12 education issues facing the states and the country. The Foundation has no connection to the government, political parties, or any campaigns. Reports about its surveys are made available free of charge on their website *EdChoice dot ORG*.