

Methods & About Us

The “Schooling in America Survey” project, funded and developed by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice and conducted by Braun Research, Inc. (BRI), interviewed a statistically representative national sample of adults (age 18+) in the 50 U.S. states and District of Columbia. Methodology included probability sampling and random-digit dial. The unweighted national sample includes a total of 1,002 General Population telephone interviews completed in English or Spanish from April 22 to May 12, 2015, 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 national sample is ± 3.1 percentage points.

During our study, we oversampled Latinos in the 50 U.S. states and District of Columbia to bring total Latinos to N=532 (comprised of n=125 from the national sample dialing and n=407 from oversample dialing). We offered respondents the option of whether to progress through the interview in either English or Spanish. Results for Latinos and other demographics based on race and ethnicity will be released at a later date.

For this entire project, a total of 19,600 calls were made. BRI’s live callers conducted all phone interviews.

National sample:

- 10,600 in total – 6,300 landline; 4,300 cell
- Of these calls 3,776 (2,633 landline, 1,143 cell) were unusable phone numbers (disconnected, fax, busy, non-residential, or non-answers, etc.);
- 5,752 (3,043 landline, 2,709 cell) were usable numbers but eligibility unknown (including refusals and voicemail);
- 42 (6 landline, 36 cell) phone numbers were usable but not eligible for this survey; and
- 25 (14 landline, 11 cell) people did not complete the survey.
- The average response rate of the landline interviews was **13.5%**.
- The average response rate of the cell phone interviews was **13.5%**.

Latino oversample

- 9,000 in total – 5,400 landline; 3,600 cell
- Of these calls 3,172 (2,256 landline, 916 cell) were unusable phone numbers (disconnected, fax, busy, non-residential, or non-answers, etc.);
- 4,930 (2,621 landline, 2,309 cell) were usable numbers but eligibility unknown (including refusals and voicemail);
- 477 (258 landline, 219 cell) phone numbers were usable but not eligible for this survey; and
- 14 (11 landline, 3 cell) people did not complete the survey.
- The average response rate of the landline interviews was **10.7%**.
- The average response rate of the cell phone interviews was **13.1%**.

Details on call dispositions, landline and cell phone response rates, and weighting are discussed in the following sections.

Sample Design

A combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples was used to represent the General Population (adults age 18+ in the 50 U.S. states and District of Columbia) who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) provided both samples 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 April 22 to May 12, 2015. 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 the 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.

The Hagan-Collier Method guided respondent selection. Respondents in the landline sample were chosen by asking for the youngest adult male who is now at home. If the youngest male was not home, then the next step would be to request an interview with the youngest female at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, as long as that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The survey's margin of sampling error (MSE) is the largest 95% Confidence Interval for any estimated proportion based on the total sample – the one around 50%. The national sample's margin of error for this survey is $\pm 3.1\%$. 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 3.1 percentage points away from their true values in the population. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance do not address any potential design effect due to weighting.

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

We use the American Association for Public Opinion Research’s “Response Rate 3” (AAPOR RR3) for computing response rates for landline and cell phone proportions of the sample. The response rate is the percentage of known or assumed residential households for which a completed interview was obtained.

National Sample Call Dispositions					
<u>SUMMARY</u>			<u>DETAIL</u>		
Landline	Cell Phone		Landline	Cell Phone	
6,300	4,300	Total	1,327	972	Disconnected
6,300	4,300	Released	3	0	Fax
0	0	Unreleased	133	87	Government/Business
4,502	3,220	Usable	0	0	Cell Phone
1,798	1,080	Unusable	.	.	Landline
4,467	2,966	Qualified	1,463	1,059	Unusable
71.5%	74.9%	Est. Usability	1,047	82	No Answer
99.0%	92.0%	Est. Eligibility	126	2	Busy
13.5%	13.5%	Est. Response	1,173	84	Usability Unknown
			601	401	Complete
			14	11	Break-Off
			615	412	Usable/Eligible
			528	302	Refused
			89	55	Language Barrier
			1,217	1,315	Voice Mail
			1,083	942	Call Back-Retry
			114	89	Strong Refusal
			12	6	Privacy Manager
			3,043	2,709	Usable/Eligible Unknown
			6	36	Under 18
			6	35	Usable/Ineligible
			13.5%	13.5%	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.

Research provides evidence that participation in surveys tends to vary for different subgroups of the population. Subgroup participation and cooperation may also vary because of substantive interest regarding a survey's topics and questions. To compensate for these known and potential biases, the sample data are weighted for analysis.

We weighted overall national sample results based on Landline/Cell Phone usage first, and then Age, Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Region. All weighting measures are based on Census Bureau statistics for the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

For the total Latino sample results, we weighted to general population statistics (U.S. Census) for total Latinos and weighted on Age, Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Region. Please note that we could not use the dual method for weighting Latinos as some phone usage (i.e., landline-only and dual-usage) statistics do not exist for this population. When reporting race, age, gender, etc., only “wireless only” and “wireless mostly” are reported. Also, since ‘Latino’ is an ethnicity and not a race, we can include ‘race’ as a weighting factor for Latinos, but Latinos are the ethnicity, which cannot serve as a weighting factor.

Weighted and unweighted results are available on request.

Weighting Results for National Sample

	Pre-Weight	Post-Weight	Census Target
AGE			
18 - 24	10.2%	13.2%	13.1%
25 - 34	10.8%	17.0%	17.5%
35 - 44	12.4%	17.7%	17.5%
45 - 54	19.2%	18.8%	19.2%
55 - 64	19.1%	15.5%	15.6%
65+	24.1%	16.8%	17.2%
[Refused]	4.4%	1.0%	.
HISPANIC			
Yes	12.5%	14.2%	14.2%
No	87.5%	85.8%	85.8%
RACE			
Asian [or Pacific Islander]	3.3%	4.8%	4.9%
Black [or African American]	10.3%	11.8%	12.0%
White	72.3%	74.3%	74.7%
[Other]	11.2%	7.5%	8.5%
[DK]	1.0%	0.6%	.
[Refused]	2.0%	1.0%	.
GENDER			
[Male]	49.5%	48.5%	48.5%
[Female]	50.5%	51.5%	51.5%
CENSUS REGION/DIVISION			
NORTHEAST	18.8%	18.1%	18.3%
MIDWEST	21.3%	21.3%	21.7%
SOUTH	36.9%	37.2%	37.0%
WEST	23.1%	23.3%	23.0%

About the Author

Paul DiPerna is Research Director for the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice. He joined the Foundation in September 2006. Paul's research interests include surveys and polling on K–12 education and school choice policies. He has developed and reported more than 25 state polls, four national polls, and other survey projects over the last six years. He is also responsible for directing and managing all research projects commissioned by the foundation. Paul has traveled to 28 states for his work. He presents survey research findings and discusses school choice policies for audiences including public officials, policy professionals, academics, and advocates.

Previously, Paul served as the assistant director for the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. His six years at Brookings included projects evaluating the federal Blue Ribbon Schools Program and analyzing student achievement in charter schools. Paul was a research analyst for the first five issues of the Brown Center Report on American Education (2000–2004). He also managed and coordinated the activities of the National Working Commission on Choice in K–12 Education (2001–2005).

A native of Pittsburgh, Paul earned an M.A. in political science from the University of Illinois (2000) and B.A. from the University of Dayton (1996).

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About the Survey Organization

Braun Research, Inc.

The Braun Research network of companies, founded in 1995, combined employ 39 full-time and more than 236 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 20 years, Braun Research has conducted almost 10,000 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.

The work we accomplish for other research firms requires us to perform all work up to standards required by the various research organizations where we enjoy membership and in some cases participate actively. Paul Braun is recognized as a leader in the field by colleagues who asked him to serve on these committees. For example, Paul Braun is a member of the MRA/CMOR committees on response rate improvement and in launching a seal of quality for the industry. He has served as President of the New Jersey Chapter of AAPOR, and he is currently serving on AMEC in North America.

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 (The 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).

About the Survey Sponsor and Developer

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