



**2015**  
**Schooling in America Survey**  
**Findings**

**Released: June 30, 2015**

# ***Issue Priority***

**Nearly one out of five respondents (17%) said “education” was the most important issue facing the country right now, trailing only “economy and jobs” (31%) as a first priority.**

- What else is important? Nearly 13% of respondents indicated “healthcare” as a critical issue for the United States.
- Independents (40%) are more likely to be concerned about the economy and jobs, compared with Democrats (30%) and Republicans (29%).<sup>1</sup>

Certain demographic subgroups significantly differ from one another when saying education is a top priority:

- Urbanites (23%) are more likely to say education is a priority than people living in small town (13%) and rural (12%) communities.
- A higher proportion of Democrats (20%) are focused on education than Republicans (14%) and Independents (12%).
- More young adults (24%) put education at the top of their agenda for the country, compared with middle-age adults (15%) and seniors (13%).
- Middle-income earners (23%) are more likely to indicate education is a top priority for the country than low-income earners (14%).

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<sup>1</sup> We are at least 95 percent confident of any noted significant differences comparing subgroups to the national average or between two or more subgroups. Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its adult population size in the United States and the unweighted sample size obtained in this survey. **We advise strong caution** when interpreting results for subgroups with relatively small sample sizes (for example,  $n \leq 100$ ). When I refer to subgroup sample sizes – for example in forthcoming tables – those numbers represent the unweighted number of interviews.

## ***Direction of K–12 Education***

**Americans are much more likely to think K–12 education has gotten off on the “wrong track” (60%), compared with about one-third of adults (32%) who say it is heading in the “right direction.” That is nearly identical to last year’s results (58% wrong track vs. 33% right direction).**

We observe negative attitudes about the direction of K–12 education across most demographics. Most subgroup margins are greater than -20 percentage points. However, some key differences stand out when making comparisons within certain demographic categories, or comparing a subgroup to the national average:

- Two subgroups are significantly more likely to say “right direction” than the national average: Urbanites (40%) and Democrats/Leaners (38%).
- Two subgroups are significantly more likely to say “wrong track” than the national average: seniors (69%) and Republicans/Leaners (69%).
- Urbanites (40%) are more likely to say “right direction” than counterparts in small town (27%) and rural (26%) areas.
- Democrats (38%) are significantly more positive than Independents (27%).
- Democrats/Leaners (38%) are more positive than Republicans/Leaners (25%).
- Young adults (38%) and middle-age adults (36%) are more likely to be positive than seniors (22%).

All subgroup margins are negative. The largest are among: seniors (-47 points), Republicans/Leaners (-44), Republicans (-41 points), rural residents (-41 points), and small town residents (-39 points).

# ***Federal Government Performance***

**The country is decidedly pessimistic about federal involvement in K–12 education. Nearly three-quarters of Americans have a dim view of the federal government’s performance in K–12 education (77% say “fair” or “poor”). Only 20 percent of respondents said “good” or “excellent.”**

That prevailing negative attitude cuts across all demographics. Subgroup margins are overwhelmingly negative—all but three wider than -50 percentage points. The largest margins are among Republicans/Leaners (-71 points) and Independents (-69 points). Intensities are also negative across the board. The largest are among Republicans/Leaners (-50 points), Republicans (-48 points), and rural residents (-44 points).

Not surprisingly, views about the federal government’s involvement significantly differ along partisan lines: Democrats (25%) are significantly more likely to give positive ratings than Republicans (15%) and Independents (14%). Likewise, Democrats/Leaners (26%) are more positive than Republicans/Leaners (12%).

# Education Spending

**Nearly \$10,700 is spent on each student in America’s public schools, on average, and less than one out of six respondents (14%) could estimate the correct per-student *spending range* for the national average.**

- About 21% of respondents believed \$4,000 or less was being spent per student in the nation’s public schools. Another 23% of the national sample either said they “don’t know” or could not offer a spending number.
- When considering “total expenditures” per student (\$12,178 in 2011–12), which is another government definition for spending in K–12 education, it is even more likely Americans’ estimates are dramatically further off target.<sup>2</sup> Respondents tended to underestimate rather than overestimate.
- Two out of three respondents (67%) either underestimated educational spending per student (with a cautious definition citing “current expenditures”), or they could not give an answer or guess.

When given an actual per-student spending statistic, Americans are less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is “too low.”

- In a split-sample experiment, we asked two slightly different questions. On version 6A, 60% of respondents said that public school funding was “too low.” (up from 56% in 2014) However, on version 6B, which included a sentence referring to data on per-student funding in America (\$10,667), the proportion saying “too low” shrank by 11 percentage points to 49%. (up from 47% in 2014)

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<sup>2</sup> “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” includes the latter categories.

See Stephen Q. Cornman, *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2011–12 (Fiscal Year 2012)* (NCES 2014-30). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics (January 2015).

URL: [nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014301.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014301.pdf)

## ***Grades, Preferences for Types of Schools***

Americans are much more likely to give grades A or B to private/parochial schools in their communities, compared with their local public schools. When considering only those respondents who actually gave a grade, the local private schools (83% gave an A or B) fare even better than public schools (46% gave an A or B).

- When considering *all responses*, we see approximately 44% of voters give an A or B to local public schools; 58% give an A or B to local private/parochial schools; and 36% give those high grades to public charter schools. Only 4% of respondents would give a D or F grade to private schools; 19% gave the same low grades to public schools; and 8% suggested low grades for charter schools.
- It is important to highlight that much higher proportions of respondents did not express a view for private schools (31%) or charter schools (43%), compared with the proportion that did not grade public schools (6%).
- When examining *only those responses giving grades* to different school types in their communities, we observed approximately 46% of the national sample gave an A or B to local public schools; 83% graded an A or B to local private/parochial schools; and 63% gave an A or B to charter schools. Only 4% of respondents gave a D or F grade to private schools; 14% gave low grades to charter schools; and 10% assigned poor grades to area public schools.

When asked for a preferred school type, a plurality of Americans chose a private school (41%) as a first option for their child. A little more than one-third of respondents (36%) would select a regular public school. Nearly equal proportions would select a public charter school (12%) or opt to homeschool their child (9%).

- Those private preferences signal a glaring disconnect with actual school enrollment patterns in the United States. The reality check is profound. About 85% of K–12 students attend public schools across the country. Only about 8% of students enroll in private schools. Roughly 5% of students currently go

to public charter schools. It is estimated that just under 3% of the country's students are homeschooled.

In a follow-up question, more respondents in our survey prioritized “better education/quality” (17%) than any other coded response to explain why they selected a certain school type. Other school attributes cited as important include “individual attention/one-on-one” (11%) and “better teachers/teachers/teaching” (11%).

Prominently cited school characteristics for choosing a specific school type:<sup>3</sup>

Public District School (N = 349)

- 16% DIVERSITY / VARIETY
- 16% SOCIALIZATION / PEERS / OTHER KIDS
- 11% BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY
- 11% BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING
- 11% PUBLIC SCHOOL: POSITIVE MENTIONS

Private School (N = 416)

- 24% BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY
- 17% INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE
- 13% CLASS SIZE / STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO

Public Charter School (N = 107)

- 17% INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE
- 14% BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY
- 14% BETTER TEACHERS / TEACHERS / TEACHING

Home School (N = 95)

- 13% INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION / ONE-ON-ONE
- 8% BETTER EDUCATION / QUALITY
- 8% OUTCOMES / RESULTS / GRADUATION RATE
- 8% SAFETY / LESS DRUGS, VIOLENCE, BULLYING

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<sup>3</sup> For observed subgroups on this question and in tables, we provide the total number of *unweighted* interviews (N). However, all percentages reflect the count of coded responses divided by the total number of *weighted* interviews. Unweighted N's are provided so the reader can roughly estimate and judge the reliability of reported percentages.

# ***Charter Schools***

**Charter schools are supported by a substantial number of Americans. A solid majority (53%) said they favor charter schools, whereas 27 percent of respondents said they oppose charters. Support has dipped since last year, although opposition is basically unchanged (2014: 61% favor vs. 26% oppose). The margin of support for charter schools is large (+26 points). Americans are almost twice as likely to express intensely positive responses toward charters (21% “strongly favor” vs. 12% “strongly oppose”).**

- We asked a pair of questions about public charter schools. The first question inquired an opinion without offering any definition. On this baseline question, 42% of respondents said they favored charters and 21% said they opposed them. (2014: 46% favor vs. 22% oppose) In the follow-up question, respondents were given a definition for a charter school. With this basic context, support rose 11 points to 53%, and opposition increased six points to 27%.
- The proportion of “don’t know” responses shrinks by 16 points (34% to 18%) when comparing the baseline item to the definition item. Based on responses to the former, the subgroups having the highest proportions either saying they have never heard of or “don’t know” about charter schools are: young adults (43%), small town residents (41%), and low-income earners (41%).

Positive views on charter schools span all observed demographics. Subgroup margins are substantially large in the positive direction—all wider than +20 percentage points—except for three subgroups: Democrats (+12 points), Democrats/Leaners (+14 points) and seniors (+19 points). The largest margins are among Republicans/Leaners (+37 points), Independents (+36 points), Republicans (+35 points), and young adults (+33 points).

- Republicans (60%) and Independents (58%) are significantly more likely to indicate support for charter schools than Democrats (47%). Likewise,

Republicans/Leaners (60%) are more positive than Democrats/Leaners (47%) and the national sample average (53%).

- Democrats (35%) are significantly more negative on charter schools than Republicans (25%), Independents (22%), and the national average (27%).

Intensities are also positive nearly across the board. The largest are among Republicans (+17 points), Republicans/Leaners (+17 points), and low-income earners (+16 points). The net intensity among Democrats is essentially zero or even—the proportions of strongly opposed and strongly favorable cancel each other out.

- Republicans (29%) and Republicans/Leaners (28%) stand out as most likely to say they “strongly favor” charter schools.

# ***School Vouchers***

**Approximately six out of 10 Americans (61%) say they support school vouchers, compared with 33% who said they oppose such a school choice system. The levels are essentially unchanged since last year. (2014: 63% favor vs. 33% oppose) The margin of support (+28 points) is nearly 10 times the survey's margin of error. Respondents were more likely to express an intensely favorable view toward vouchers (34% "strongly favor" vs. 21% "strongly oppose").**

- Similar to the previous pair of charter school questions, our interviewers asked baseline and follow-up questions about school vouchers. In the first question, respondents were asked for their views on vouchers without a definition or any other context. On this baseline question, 39% of the general population said they favored vouchers, and 26% said they opposed such an education policy. (2014: 43% favor vs. 21% oppose) In the follow-up question, using a basic definition for a school voucher system, support rose 22 points to 61%, and opposition increased seven points to 33%.
- The opinion change on vouchers – from baseline to follow-up – more than doubles the positive margin, from +13 points to +28 points. The intensity for vouchers also shifts in the positive direction, from +4 points to +13 points.
- We estimate 35% of respondents were initially unfamiliar with school vouchers. The proportion of “don't know” responses shrinks by 29 points (35% to 6%) when comparing the baseline item to the definition item. On the former, the subgroups having the highest proportions either saying they have never heard of or “don't know” about school vouchers are young adults (47%) and low-income earners (41%).

Like charter schools, all demographics express positive views on vouchers. Subgroup margins are substantially large in the positive direction—greater than +20 percentage

points for most subgroups. The largest margin is among young adults (+40 points). The smallest margin is among seniors (+7 points).

- A surprising finding that goes against conventional wisdom is suburbanites (65%) say they are significantly more supportive of vouchers than urbanites (54%).
- Republicans (64%) and Independents (66%) are significantly more likely to indicate support for school vouchers than Democrats (54%). Likewise, Republicans/Leaners (65%) are more positive than Democrats/Leaners (56%).
- Young adults (67%) and middle-age adults (65%) are more favorable toward school vouchers than seniors (49%).
- Low-income earners (66%) are significantly more supportive than high-income earners (56%).
- Seniors (42%) are significantly more negative on school vouchers than young adults (27%), middle-age adults (30%), and the national average (33%).

Intensities are also positive nearly across the board. The largest are among school parents (+25 points) and middle-age adults (+22 points). The lowest intensities are found among: seniors (-2 points), Democrats (+5 points), Democrats/Leaners (+6 points), and high-income earners (+4 points).

- School parents (42%) and middle-age adults (41%) are most likely to say they “strongly favor” school vouchers.
- Seniors (30%) and high-income earners (29%) have the largest proportions saying they “strongly oppose” school vouchers.

In a follow-up question, we learned the most common reasons for supporting school vouchers are “access to schools having better academic outcomes” (38%) and “more freedom and flexibility for parents” (28%). We also asked a similar follow-up to those respondents opposed to school vouchers. By far the most common reason for opposing school vouchers is the belief they “divert funding away from public schools” (57%).

# ***Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)***

**Six out of 10 Americans (62%) say they support an “education savings account” system (“ESA”). The margin of support is large (+34 points) and less one-third of respondents (28%) said they oppose ESAs. The support level and margin have increased since last year (2014: 56% favor vs. 34% oppose) Americans are twice as likely to express an intensely favorable view toward ESAs (32% “strongly favor” vs. 16% “strongly oppose”).**

All demographics are supportive of ESAs. With only a few exceptions, subgroup margins are greater than +30 percentage points. The largest margins are among: young adults (+59 points), low-income earners (+47 points), school parents (+44 points), urbanites (+44 points), and Independents (+40 points). By far, the smallest margin is among seniors (+4 points).

- Urbanites (69%) are significantly more favorable toward ESAs than small town residents (54%).
- Young adults (75%) are significantly more supportive of ESAs than middle-age adults (65%) and seniors (45%). The twenty point gap between middle-age adults and seniors is also a significant difference.
- Low-income earners (70%) are more likely to support ESAs than middle-income earners (55%) and high-income earners (61%).
- Seniors (41%) are significantly more negative on ESAs than young adults (16%), middle-age adults (26%), and the national average (28%).

Intensities are also positive for nearly all demographic subgroups across the board. Young adults (+32 points) clearly stand out as most intensely positive. On the other end of the spectrum, seniors (-5 points) are the only subgroup to express a negative intensity.

- Independents (39%) and young adults (39%) have the greatest proportions saying they “strongly favor” ESAs.
- Seniors (27%) have the largest proportion saying they “strongly oppose” ESAs.

A split sample experiment in the follow-up question reveals Americans are inclined toward universal access to ESAs rather than means-tested eligibility based solely on financial need.

- In Split A, approximately two out of three respondents (66%) said they agree with the statement that “ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of incomes and special needs.” About 45% “strongly agree” with that statement. Fewer than three out of 10 voters (27%) disagree with that statement; 16% said they “strongly disagree.”
- In the comparison sample, Split B, respondents were asked if they agree with the statement “ESAs should only be available to families based on financial need.” About one-third (36%) agreed with that statement, while 17% said “strongly agree.” More than half (56%) said they disagree with means-testing ESAs, and 33% said they “strongly disagree.”

# ***Tax-Credit Scholarships***

**Americans are more than twice as likely to support a tax-credit scholarship program than they are to oppose one. Six out of 10 respondents (60%) said they supported the reform, whereas 29 percent said they oppose tax-credit scholarships. The result is slightly decreased since last year (2014: 64% favor vs. 25% oppose). The margin is +31 percentage points. The general public is almost twice as likely to express intensely positive responses toward tax-credit scholarships (28% “strongly favor” vs. 16% “strongly oppose”).**

With only two exceptions, observed subgroup margins are greater than +20 percentage points. The largest margins are among: young adults (+52 points), urbanites (+48 points), low-income earners (+45 points), Republicans/Leaners (+41 points), and Republicans (+39 points). Once again when it comes to a school choice reform, seniors show the smallest margin of support (+8 points).

- Urbanites (72%) are significantly more favorable toward tax-credit scholarships than suburbanites (57%), small town residents (50%), and the national sample average (60%).
- Republicans (64%) are more supportive than Democrats (54%). Similarly, Republicans/Leaners (65%) are significantly different than Democrats/Leaners (57%).
- Young adults (72%) are significantly more supportive of tax-credit scholarships than middle-age adults (61%), seniors (47%), and the national average (60%). Middle-age adults are also significantly more favorable to scholarships compared with seniors.
- Seniors (39%) are significantly more negative than young adults (20%), middle-age adults (28%), and the national average (29%).

Net intensities are positive for all observed demographic subgroups, except seniors (-2 points). Subgroups that are most intensely positive include: young

adults (+24 points), school parents (+22 points), urbanites (+22 points), and low-income earners (+20 points).

- Urbanites (38%) have the greatest proportion saying they “strongly favor” tax-credit scholarships.
- Seniors (23%) have the largest proportion saying they “strongly oppose” tax-credit scholarships.

# ***Standardized Testing***

**More than two out of five Americans (43%) believed students spend at least 16 or more days of the school year – nearly 10% of the academic year – on standardized testing activities. That figure is essentially unchanged since last year (42% in 2014).**

- High-income earners (49%) are significantly more likely to say “16 or more school days” than low-income earners (38%).
- Seniors (25%) are significantly more likely than young adults (11%) and middle-age adults (12%) to say they “don’t know” or are unsure about responding to this question.

**A plurality of Americans (42%) said the amount of time spent on standardized testing is “too high,” compared with 19% who said “too low.” Since last year, those numbers have increased and decreased, respectively (2014: 36% too high vs. 24% too low).**

- Views on testing diverge greatly among income groups. High-income earners (58% too high vs. 14% too low) are much more likely to say “too high” than low-income earners (30% too high vs. 25% too low), middle-income earners (43% too high vs. 20% too low), and the national sample average.
- Nearly half of school parents (47%) said the amount of time spent on standardized testing is “too high;” however, that level is not significantly different compared with non-schoolers (40%) or the national average (42%). Among school parents, the “too high” sentiment is more than twice as high as the proportion who said “too low” (19%).
- A plurality of middle-age adults believe American schools spend too much time on testing (45% too high vs. 20% too low). This subgroup’s “too high” response is significantly greater than seniors’ (37%).

## ***State Accountability and Intervention***

**When asked about what state government should do to intervene, if at all, in low-performing schools, the highest proportion of respondents (41%) said supplying vouchers/scholarships to affected families would be a useful state intervention. Significantly smaller proportions believed converting district schools to charter schools (26%), dismissing the school personnel (25%), or closing the school (18%) would be useful to affected students and families.<sup>4</sup>**

- Republicans (33%) are significantly less likely than Democrats (44%) and Independents (44%) to say the school choice option is more useful. That is a surprising finding. In this circumstance, Republicans and Democrats switch their relative positions with respect to advancing vouchers, scholarships, or ESAs. It is also noteworthy that Democrats are more likely to say school choice is more useful to affected families than other interventions.
- Young adults (52%) are much more likely to say the school choice option is more useful than middle-age adults (39%) and seniors (35%).
- Low-income earners (47%) are significantly more likely to say the school choice option is more useful than high-income earners (36%).
- High-income earners (27%) are significantly more likely to rate the school choice option a “1” (“least useful”) than low-income earners (16%), middle-income earners (17%), and the national average (19%).
- Nearly half of school parents (49%) rate the school closure/reassignment option a “1” (“least useful”), which is significantly higher than the levels observed for non-schoolers (38%) and the national average (41%).

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<sup>4</sup> We asked respondents to rate four types of potential accountability actions where the state could intervene in a low-performing school. Ratings were based on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where a “1” reflected a least useful action to be taken by the state, and a “5” reflected a most useful action.

# ***Common Core State Standards***

**Half of respondents (50%) said they support the Common Core State Standards (Common Core) compared with 40 percent who said they oppose this approach to developing and implementing state-level academic standards. Sentiment has not changed since last year (2014: 50% favor vs. 41% oppose). The margin is +10 percentage points. Net intensity goes in the negative direction (19% strongly favor vs. 24% strongly oppose).**

- Impressions toward the baseline question sends a more mixed message. Without any context or definition, 40% of Americans say they support Common Core, whereas the proportion in opposition is nearly equal (39%). Support on the baseline has climbed six points since last year (2014: 34% support vs. 39% oppose). The protocol used for this set of Common Core questions is similar to the approach used for the voucher and charter school question pairs.
- In the second/follow-up question – providing additional context to the purpose and origins of the Common Core – respondents increased their support by 10 points to 50%, and opposition increased by one point to 40%.
- We estimate one-fifth of respondents (20%) were initially unfamiliar with Common Core. That result is down from 26% in 2014. The proportion of “don’t know” responses shrinks by 11 points down to 9% when comparing the baseline and context items.
- School parents, suburbanites, and high-income earners are significantly more likely than the national average to express a view about Common Core on the baseline question.

Compared with responses to the school choice questions, demographic subgroup margins are smaller in size, except among Democrats (+28 points), Democrats/Leaners (+26 points), and urbanites (+25 points). Negative margins are observed among rural residents (-6 points), Republicans/Leaners (-4 points), and Republicans (-3 points).

- Democrats (60%) are significantly more supportive of Common Core than Republicans (43%), Independents (50%), and the national average (50%). Similarly, Democrats/Leaners (59%) are more positive than Republicans/Leaners (43%).
- Urbanites (57%) are more likely to support Common Core than rural residents (43%). Conversely, small town residents (44%) and rural residents (49%) are more significantly opposed to Common Core, compared with urbanites (32%).

Intensities are mostly negative across observed demographic subgroups. The largest positive intensities are among Democrats (+7 points) and Democrats/Leaners (+5 points). The largest negative are found among: Republicans/Leaners (-16 points), Republicans (-14 points), high-income earners (-13 points), and rural residents (-11 points).

- Democrats (24%) and Democrats/Leaners (23%) are most likely to say they “strongly favor” the Common Core.
- Rural residents (33%), Republicans/Leaners (31%), high-income earners (31%), and Republicans (30%) are most likely to say they “strongly oppose” Common Core.

## ***Political Signals***

**A candidate for public office is more likely to win over voters with affirming positions on ESAs and school vouchers compared with a “pro” position on Common Core (30%, 29%, and 18%, respectively). Support significantly varies within certain demographic categories: Age, political party allegiance, and household income earnings.**

- If an American has a particular view on ESAs, she or he is more than twice as likely to vote for the pro-ESA candidate (30% “more likely” vs. 14% “less likely”). Well above half of respondents (53%) signaled that an ESA position would not make or break her/his vote, saying “no difference.” (2014: 27% more likely vs. 19% less likely; 51% no difference)

### **Support for a pro-ESA candidate, by subgroup**

|               | <u>More Likely to Vote</u> | <u>Margin</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Age 18 to 34  | 40%                        | +32 points    |
| Low-income    | 37%                        | +28 points    |
| School Parent | 37%                        | +24 points    |
| Independent   | 33%                        | +20 points    |
| Age 35 to 54  | 31%                        | +18 points    |
| Democrat      | 31%                        | +15 points    |
| Republican    | 28%                        | +12 points    |
| High-income   | 28%                        | +9 points     |
| Middle-income | 26%                        | +8 points     |
| Age 55+       | 21%                        | even          |

- Americans are more likely to vote for a pro-voucher candidate, rather than oppose one (29% “more likely” vs. 21% “less likely”). Just less than half of

respondents (45%) said that vouchers are not a make-or-break issue. (2014: 27% more likely vs. 16% less likely; 53% no difference)

### Support for a pro-voucher candidate, by subgroup

|               | <u>More Likely to Vote</u> | <u>Margin</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Republican    | 36%                        | +19 points    |
| Age 18 to 34  | 33%                        | +18 points    |
| Low-income    | 31%                        | +17 points    |
| School Parent | 34%                        | +13 points    |
| Independent   | 31%                        | +9 points     |
| Age 35 to 54  | 29%                        | +9 points     |
| Middle-income | 26%                        | +2 points     |
| High-income   | 31%                        | even          |
| Democrat      | 24%                        | -1 point      |
| Age 55+       | 24%                        | -4 points     |

- Americans are slightly less likely to vote for a pro-Common Core candidate, rather than support one (18% “more likely” vs. 23% “less likely”). A majority of respondents (54%) said Common Core did not make a difference. (2014: 16% more likely vs. 24% less likely; 56% no difference)

### Support for a pro-Common Core candidate, by subgroup

|               | <u>More Likely to Vote</u> | <u>Margin</u> |
|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Democrat      | 21%                        | +3 points     |
| Age 18 to 34  | 24%                        | +2 points     |
| Low-income    | 19%                        | -1 point      |
| Independent   | 20%                        | -2 points     |
| Age 55+       | 17%                        | -4 points     |
| Middle-income | 18%                        | -7 points     |
| High-income   | 20%                        | -9 points     |
| Age 35 to 54  | 14%                        | -10 points    |

|               |     |            |
|---------------|-----|------------|
| School Parent | 17% | -13 points |
| Republican    | 15% | -14 points |

On the final substantive question in our survey, we conducted a third split-sample experiment. To one-half of the national sample, we asked, “How influential to you is a teachers’ union endorsement of a candidate for state office?” A clear plurality (46%) said the union has a positive influence. One-quarter (25%) said the teachers’ union has a negative influence. However, Americans are barely more likely to say the union signal has a “strong positive influence” (18%), compared with a strong negative influence” (15%). One out of five respondents (19%) said the endorsement “does not matter to me.”

- Democrats (62%), Democrats/Leaners (60%), and urbanites (59%) have the highest proportions saying a teachers’ union endorsement has a positive influence, and each group is significantly higher than the national sample average.
- Republicans/Leaners (42%), Republicans (39%), small town residents (37%), and seniors (34%) have the highest proportions saying it has a negative influence, and each group is significantly higher than the national sample average.

To the other half of the national sample, we asked “How influential to you is a parent advocacy organization’s endorsement of a candidate for state office?” A slightly larger proportion (50%) said the organization would have a positive influence. Only 16% said such a group would have a negative influence. Roughly one out of four respondents said the endorsement “does not matter to me.”

- Democrats (59%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (43%) to say a parent advocacy organization’ endorsement has a positive influence. Likewise, Democrats/Leaners (57%) are significantly more likely than Republicans (44%) to say a parent advocacy organization’ endorsement has a positive influence.