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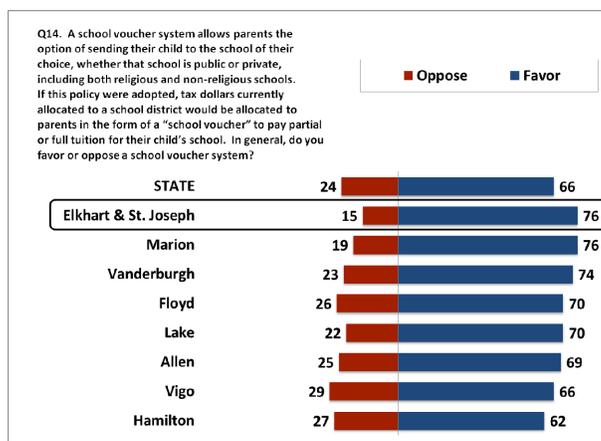
## Poll: Robust Majorities of Elkhart and St. Joseph Voters Support School Vouchers, Charter Schools

INDIANAPOLIS – Voters in Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties are in favor of school vouchers and charter schools, and prefer a broad range of options when it comes to educating their children, according to regional survey data recently released by the Indianapolis-based Foundation for Educational Choice.

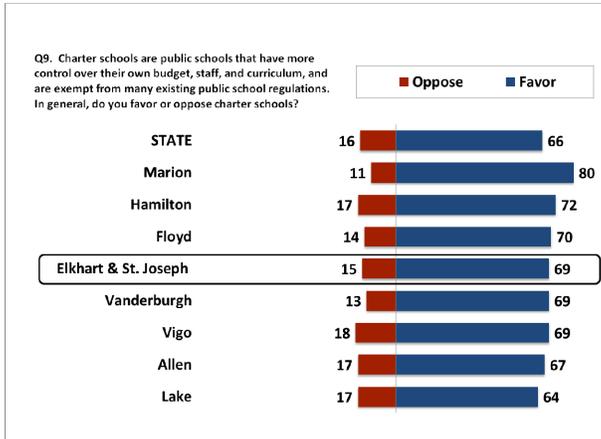
The public opinion findings—emerging from the “Indiana K-12 & School Choice Survey” project—also reveal that Elkhart-St. Joseph voters are unaware of how much is spent in public schools; most respondents substantially underestimated per-student spending.

### *Highlights of the Elkhart-St. Joseph regional survey results:*

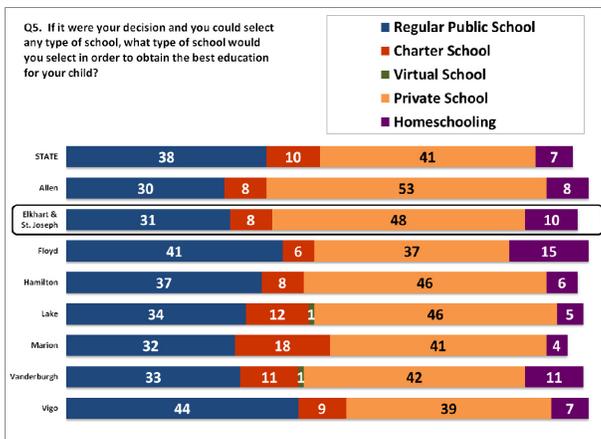
- ▶ There is strong support for school vouchers in the Elkhart-St. Joseph region. In the regional sample, a very large gap exists between those who favor school vouchers (76%) and those who oppose school vouchers (15%) – equal to 61 percentage points.



- ▶ Elkhart-St. Joseph voters are also more likely to favor charter schools (69%), rather than oppose such schools (15%). The gap between those who favor and those who oppose is 54 percentage points.

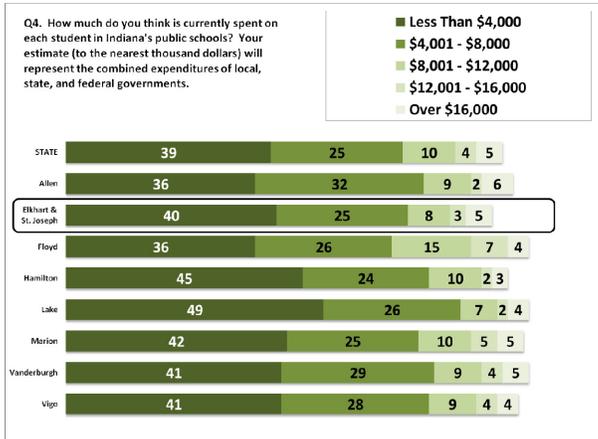


- ▶ When asked for a preferred school type, there is a stark disconnect between Elkhart-St. Joseph voters' first choices and actual school enrollment patterns. About 15% of the region's K-12 student population attends private schools, but in the survey, 48% of voters would select a private school as their first option. Approximately 84% of the county's students attend regular public schools, but a much lower percentage of voters (31%) would choose a regular public school as their first choice. Less than 1% of the region's student population attend public charter schools, but 8% of Elkhart-St. Joseph voters would like to send their child to a charter school. Another 10% of voters find homeschooling the most attractive option.



- ▶ Elkhart-St. Joseph voters are under-informed with regard to how much is spent in the public schools. Roughly two out of three respondents (65%) underestimated per-student spending in the public schools. According to financial information the state provided the U.S. Department of Education for the 2007-2008 school year, total per-student spending on average was \$8,867 to \$10,164, depending on the spending definition used by the U.S.

Department of Education. Four out of ten voters (40%) thought the correct range was less than \$4,000 per student. Another 25% of voters said it was in the \$4,001-\$8,000 spending range. There is a clear lack of awareness and understanding about how much money is spent to educate students in Indiana. Only 8% identified the correct spending range.



Paul DiPerna, Research Director for the Foundation for Educational Choice, discussed how the survey data reveal a penchant for a range of school options. “These results point to a big disconnect between Hoosiers’ schooling preferences and actual school enrollments,” said Mr. DiPerna. “Based on these survey results, there is little doubt that Elkhart and St. Joseph voters support school vouchers and charter schools. Those who ‘strongly favor’ outnumber those who ‘strongly oppose’ by 5-to-1 on the school voucher question, and by 11-to-1 on the charter school question. There is a lot more positive intensity for both of these school choice policies.”

These are findings from a Braun Research, Inc. poll conducted for the Foundation for Educational Choice from November 12-17, 2010. For the survey, a statistically representative, randomly selected sample of 367 registered voters across Elkhart and St. Joseph counties was interviewed by Braun Research via live telephone interviewing on landlines and cell phones. Statistical results were weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the Elkhart-St. Joseph regional sample of interviews is  $\pm 5.4$  percentage points. 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*.

Please visit our website to view the full survey release: [www.EdChoice.org/IN-Survey](http://www.EdChoice.org/IN-Survey).

#### *About the Foundation for Educational Choice*

The 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.