



Californians & Education

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CONTENTS

Press Release	3
Perceptions and Attitudes	6
Funding and Policy Preferences	13
Regional Map	20
Methodology	21
Questionnaire and Results	23

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The PPIC Statewide Survey provides a voice for the public and likely voters—informing policymakers, encouraging discussion, and raising awareness on critical issues of the day.

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News Release

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PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND EDUCATION

Californians Are Divided on Charter Schools

LACK OF STATE K–12 FUNDING RAISES CONCERN, MOST SAY TEACHER SALARIES ARE TOO LOW

SAN FRANCISCO, April 24, 2019—Californians have a split opinion on charter schools, with roughly equal shares supporting and opposing them. And while most believe that parents in low-income areas should have the option of sending their children to charter schools, there is a high level of concern that charter schools take state funding away from traditional public schools. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

Californians hold mixed views on charter schools, with 49 percent of adults in favor and 46 percent opposed. Support is somewhat higher among public school parents, with 59 percent in favor and 38 percent opposed. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (51%) and whites (50%) are more likely than Asian Americans (43%) and African Americans (36%) to favor charter schools in general.

Overwhelming majorities (75% adults, 81% public school parents) say it is very important or somewhat important for parents in low-income areas to have the option of sending their children to charter schools. However, 64 percent of adults and 75 percent of public school parents say they are very concerned or somewhat concerned about charters diverting state funding away from traditional local public schools. Majorities of adults across all regions express this view, with those in Los Angeles (71%) being the most likely to express concern.

“Charter public schools get mixed reviews,” said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. “Many Californians say it is important to have the option of a charter school, but there are concerns about the fiscal impacts on traditional public schools.”

Following last month’s passage of Senate Bill 126, which requires more transparency in charter school operations, nine in ten adults say it is very or somewhat important for charter schools to operate with the same transparency and accountability as traditional public schools.

This survey is the first time PPIC has used a fully online survey methodology. This approach allows the survey to examine more issues and go into greater depth than telephone polling, while maintaining PPIC’s high standards for quality and rigor. PPIC will continue to use telephone polling for the bulk of its survey work for the foreseeable future, given current limits in random probability samples for large online surveys in California and the reliability and proven track record of live telephone interviews. For details, see the methodology section of the survey report or this recent [blog post](#).

Most Want Governor to Make K–12 Education a Priority

Three-quarters of Californians (75% adults, 76% likely voters) say Governor Newsom should place a very high priority (34% adults, 36% likely voters) or a high priority (41% adults, 40% likely voters) on the state’s K–12 public education system. At least seven in ten adults across all regions and across age,

education, income, and racial/ethnic groups say K–12 should be a high or very high priority. Most Californians (55% adults, 60% likely voters) would like Newsom to change to different K–12 policies, rather than continue those of his predecessor, Jerry Brown. Solid majorities of Republicans (77%) and independents (61%) want a change, compared to less than half of Democrats (46%).

Majorities of Californians support Newsom’s K–12 budget proposals to allocate \$3 billion in one-time spending to pay down the California State Teachers’ Retirement System’s (CalSTRS) unfunded liabilities (58% of adults approving) and provide \$576 million to expand special education services and programs (70%). However, Democrats and independents are more likely than Republicans to approve.

“Most Californians say Governor Newsom should place a high priority on K–12 public education, but there are deep partisan divides on whether new policies are needed and which ones,” Baldassare said.

Most Support Governor’s Preschool and Kindergarten Proposals

Asked how important preschool is to academic success, an overwhelming majority of adults say it is either very important (46%) or somewhat important (32%). Solid majorities of adults (63%) and public school parents (81%) think the state should fund voluntary preschool for all four-year-olds.

In his proposed budget, Newsom allocates \$125 million to expand full-day, full-year preschool to all eligible low-income four-year-olds and \$750 million in one-time funds to increase full-day kindergarten programs. Both proposals are favored by majorities of Californians, with 64 percent supporting the preschool spending plan and 65 percent supporting the kindergarten proposal. As with the K–12 proposals noted above, Democrats and independents are more likely than Republicans to approve.

“Early childhood education is important to most Californians, and solid majorities support the governor’s spending plans to expand preschool and full-day kindergarten,” Baldassare said.

Solid Majorities Support Teachers’ Strikes for Higher Pay

As teachers in multiple school districts across the state have gone on strike seeking higher pay, 61 percent of adults and 58 percent of public school parents say teachers’ salaries in their community are too low. Solid majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (70% of adults) and Los Angeles (65%) hold this view, as do more than half of adults in the Inland Empire (58%), Central Valley (53%), and Orange/San Diego (53%). Solid majorities approve of public school teachers striking for higher pay (61% adults, 70% public school parents). At least half of adults in all regions approve, with Los Angeles (70%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (62%) expressing the highest levels of support.

Nearly half of adults (48%) and a majority of public school parents (57%) say a teacher shortage is currently a big problem in California’s K–12 schools. Far fewer Californians (31%) and public school parents (32%) believe that teacher quality is a big problem.

“Majorities say that teachers’ salaries are too low and that they support teachers’ striking for more pay,” Baldassare said. “Californians are more concerned about teacher shortages than quality.”

Most Support “Split Roll” Property Tax, Bond Measure to Fund Schools

A ballot measure eligible for the 2020 ballot would amend Proposition 13 to tax commercial (but not residential) properties at their current market rate, creating a “split roll” property tax system. Asked about a potential ballot measure that would make this change and direct some of the new revenue to K–12 public schools, majorities of adults (56%) and likely voters (54%) approve. In PPIC’s January survey, which did not mention directing the revenue to any specific purpose, 47 percent of adults and 49 percent of likely voters approved.

Today, most adults (62%) and likely voters (57%) say they would vote yes on a state bond measure to pay for school construction projects. However, when asked about a state ballot measure that would

lower the threshold—from two-thirds to 55 percent—for passing local parcel taxes for public schools, less than half of Californians (44% adults, 39% likely voters) approve.

“Majorities of California likely voters favor a state bond and higher taxes on commercial properties to raise school revenues, while lowering the local tax threshold receives less support,” Baldassare said.

Asked to name the biggest issue facing the state’s K–12 public schools, adults (18%) and public school parents (25%) are most likely to say lack of funding, followed by large class sizes (11% adults, 16% public school parents), standards/quality of education (10% adults, 7% public school parents), limited/poor curriculum (9% adults, 9% public school parents), and low teacher pay (5% adults, 1% public school parents). Most (56% adults, 59% likely voters, 63% public school parents) think the level of state funding for local public schools is not enough. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (67%) are the most likely to say this, followed by Latinos (61%), Asian Americans (54%), and whites (52%).

Parents Value College, Worry about Affordability

Asked to name the most important goal for California’s K–12 public schools, roughly a quarter of all adults say teaching students life skills (26%), and a quarter say preparing students for college (24%). Among public school parents, however, 44 percent say preparing students for college is most important—far more than any other goal.

An overwhelming majority of parents want their youngest child to get a college degree. Nearly one-half of California parents (46%) say they hope their youngest child obtains a graduate degree after college, and another third (33%) hope their youngest child attains at least a four-year college degree. However, a strong majority say they are either very worried (45%) or somewhat worried (34%) about being able to afford a college education for their youngest child.

“Many parents say that the goal of K–12 public education should be college and, while most want their children to go to college, they worry about being able to afford the costs,” Baldassare said.

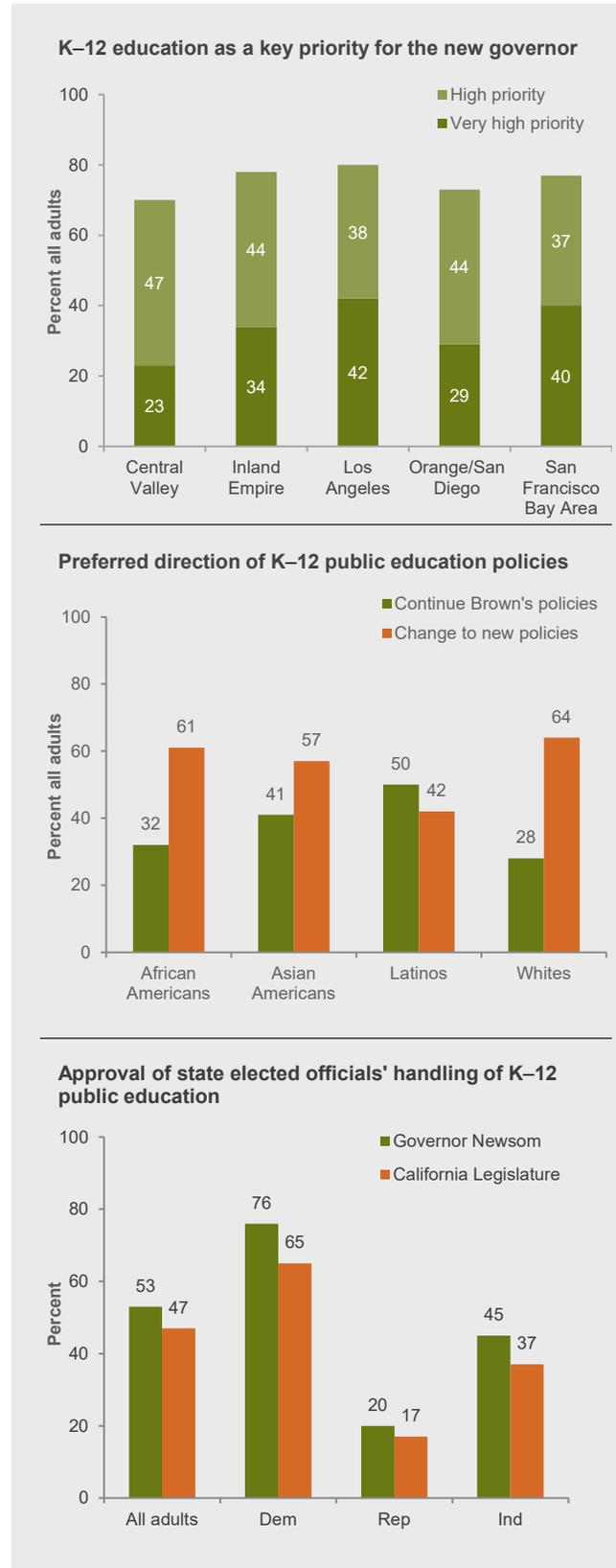
More Key Findings

- **Californians are concerned about college readiness for students in low-income areas.—page 8**
Many adults (43%) and public school parents (56%) say they are very concerned that students in low-income areas are less likely than other students to be ready for college when they finish high school.
- **Many worry about federal immigration enforcement’s effect on students.—page 12**
Solid majorities of Californians (61% adults, 71% public school parents) are either very concerned or somewhat concerned that increased federal immigration enforcement efforts will affect undocumented students and their families in their local public schools.
- **Possibility of mass shooting at local schools causes widespread concern.—page 12**
More than two-thirds of Californians (70% adults, 80% public school parents) are very concerned or somewhat concerned about the threat of mass shooting in their local schools.
- **Opinions are mixed on local revenue measures to support public schools.—page 16**
A majority of adults (60%) and likely voters (56%) would vote yes on a local bond measure for school construction. However, support for a potential local parcel tax for public schools is below the two-thirds threshold needed to pass (46% adults, 44% likely voters).
- **Most support Common Core and the state’s K–12 school funding formula.—page 18**
Majorities of Californians approve of the Common Core State Standards (51% adults, 70% public school parents) and the Local Control Funding Formula (67% adults, 77% public school parents).

Perceptions and Attitudes

Key Findings

- Three in four Californians think the state’s K–12 public education system should be a high or very high priority for the new governor. Fifty-five percent want to see the new governor mostly change to different policies, with Californians divided on the current direction of the state’s K–12 public education system. *(page 7)*
- Eighteen percent of Californians say a lack of funding is the biggest problem facing their local public schools. Parents say preparing students for college is the most important goal of K–12 schools, and most want their child to get a four-year college degree or a graduate degree after college. *(page 8)*
- About six in ten Californians say that the state’s per pupil spending is about average or below average compared to other states, and about four in ten adults think student test scores are below average (32%) or near the bottom (11%). *(page 9)*
- Four in ten Californians (38%) and half of public school parents (49%) give their local public schools a positive grade of A or B. Majorities say their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job preparing students for college (55%); fewer than half say the same about preparing students for jobs and the workforce (48%). *(page 10)*
- Six in ten Californians think teacher salaries are too low. Six in ten support public school teachers striking for higher pay. *(page 11)*
- Six in ten Californians are concerned about the impact that increased federal immigration enforcement may have on students in their local public schools. Seven in ten are concerned about the threat of a mass shooting in their local public schools. *(page 12)*



Priority and Overall Direction of State K–12 Policy

Three in four California adults (75%) and likely voters (76%) say the state’s kindergarten-through-12th-grade public education system should be a high or very high priority for the new governor of California; fewer than one in ten say it should be a low or very low priority. More than two in three Democrats (85%), independents (74%), and Republicans (67%) say that the K–12 public education system should be at least a high priority. At least seven in ten across regions and across age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups say the state’s K–12 public education system should be a high or very high priority.

“In thinking about priorities for the new governor of California, do you think that the state’s kindergarten through 12th grade public education system should be a very high priority, high priority, medium priority, low priority, or very low priority?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very high priority	34%	41%	27%	31%	36%
High priority	41	44	40	43	40
Medium priority	19	14	24	22	20
Low priority	3	1	5	2	3
Very low priority	1	–	2	1	–
Don’t know	2	–	2	–	–

Californians are divided on whether the state’s K–12 public education system is going in the right direction (46% adults, 45% likely voters) or the wrong direction (49% adults, 52% likely voters). Democrats (65%) are far more likely than independents (34%) and Republicans (20%) to say it is going in the right direction. About half of adults in Orange/San Diego (51%) and Los Angeles (49%) say it is going in the right direction, compared to fewer elsewhere (45% Central Valley, 44% San Francisco Bay Area, 37% Inland Empire). Majorities of Latinos (60%) and fewer African Americans (49%), Asian Americans (45%), and whites (36%) hold positive views. Six in ten public school parents (59%) say the system is going in the right direction.

Majorities of California adults and likely voters want Governor Newsom to change to different policies, while about four in ten want him to continue Governor Brown’s policies for K–12 public schools. Majorities of Republicans (77%) and independents (61%)—and fewer Democrats (46%)—want to see change, as do majorities across regions (63% Inland Empire, 59% Orange/San Diego, 57% San Francisco Bay Area, 55% Central Valley, 54% Los Angeles). Latinos (42%) are less likely than other racial/ethnic groups (57% Asian Americans, 61% African Americans, 64% whites) to want change. Half of public school parents (49%) would prefer to see change.

“When it comes to K–12 public schools in California, would you rather see Gavin Newsom as the new governor generally continue Jerry Brown’s policies or mostly change to different policies?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Continue Jerry Brown’s policies	38%	50%	20%	32%	37%
Change to different policies	55	46	77	61	60
Don’t know	7	4	4	7	4

In Governor Newsom’s first few months in office, 53 percent of adults and 54 percent of likely voters approve of his handling of K–12 public education. Forty-seven percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters approve of the state legislature’s handling of K–12 public education. Opinions are divided along party lines.

Important Issues and Goals

When asked to name the most important issue facing California’s K–12 public schools today, California adults (18%) and public school parents (25%) are most likely to mention lack of funding, followed by large class sizes, concerns about standards/quality of education, limited/poor curriculum, and low teacher pay. Lack of funding is one of the top mentions across racial/ethnic groups. Residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (26%) and Los Angeles (21%) are more likely than those living in other regions to name lack of funding. Democrats (28%) are most likely to mention lack of funding, while Republicans most often name limited/poor curriculum (15%) and quality of education (15%).

“What do you think is the most important issue facing California’s K–12 public schools today?”

Top five issues mentioned	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Lack of funding	18%	15%	30%	19%	15%	25%
Large class sizes	11	13	8	12	10	16
Concerns about standards/quality of education	10	5	11	7	13	7
Limited/poor curriculum	9	5	9	7	10	9
Low teacher pay	5	5	6	4	4	1

In response to a subsequent question, 38 percent of adults and 26 percent of public school parents see the quality of education as a big problem in California’s public schools today. Majorities of Republicans (55%)—and fewer independents (47%) and Democrats (34%)—hold this view. More than four in ten are very concerned that schools in lower-income areas have a shortage of good teachers compared to schools in wealthier areas (46% adults, 54% public school parents); similar shares are very concerned that students in lower-income areas are less likely than other students to be ready for college when they finish high school (43% adults, 56% public school parents). Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans are the most likely to be very concerned about a shortage of good teachers (68%) and about college readiness (59%).

Californians are divided on the most important goal of California’s K–12 public schools: 26 percent say teaching life skills and 24 percent say preparing students for college. Forty-four percent of public school parents say that the most important goal is preparing students for college. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (42%) are the most likely to hold this view. In response to a separate question, about eight in ten parents say they hope their youngest child attains a four-year college degree (33%) or a graduate degree after college (46%). About eight in ten parents also say they are very worried (45%) or somewhat worried (34%) about being able to afford a college education for their youngest child.

“In your opinion, what is the most important goal of California’s K–12 public schools?”

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Teaching students life skills	26%	27%	31%	19%	28%	24%
Preparing students for college	24	25	14	42	12	44
Preparing students for the workforce	16	12	16	12	19	14
Teaching students the basics	14	9	14	10	19	7
Preparing students to be good citizens	13	5	22	12	12	10
Other (volunteered)	6	16	2	4	8	2
Don't know	1	6	–	–	1	–

California’s Rankings

California ranked 32nd out of the 50 states in expenditures for public K–12 education per student, according to the National Education Association’s *Rankings and Estimates* report (2018). About two in three California adults (64%) and public school parents (67%) say that the state’s per pupil spending for K–12 public schools is average or below average compared to other states. About one in four say that California is either above average or near the top (23% adults, 26% public school parents), and fewer say it is near the bottom (10% adults, 7% public school parents). Majorities of Democrats (66%), independents (59%), and Republicans (55%) say that state spending is average or below average. Majorities across racial/ethnic groups also say it is average or below average (77% African Americans, 69% Latinos, 60% Asian Americans, 58% whites). Majorities across regions say that state spending is average or below average (71% Central Valley, 64% Los Angeles, 62% Inland Empire, 61% Orange/San Diego, 59% San Francisco Bay Area).

“Where do you think California currently ranks in per pupil spending for K–12 public schools? Compared to other states, is California’s spending near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?”

	All adults	Party			Public school parents
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Near the top	8%	5%	17%	12%	6%
Above average	15	16	15	16	20
Average	35	36	26	31	41
Below average	29	30	29	28	26
Near the bottom	10	11	12	11	7
Don’t know	2	1	1	1	1

California ranks below average or near the bottom in English and math test scores for grades 4 and 8, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2017). Forty-three percent of adults and 31 percent of public school parents say the state’s K–12 student test scores are below average or near the bottom compared to other states, while about four in ten say they are average (42% adults, 49% public school parents) and fewer say they are above average or near the top (12% adults, 19% public school parents). Republicans (64%) are more likely than independents (50%) and Democrats (42%) to say below average or near the bottom. A majority of African Americans (51%) and fewer whites (47%), Asian Americans (44%), and Latinos (34%) say below average or near the bottom. Fewer than half across regions say below average or near the bottom (46% Los Angeles, 43% Inland Empire, 41% Orange/San Diego, 40% San Francisco Bay Area, 39% Central Valley).

“Where do you think California currently ranks in student test scores for K–12 public schools? Compared to other states, are California’s student test scores near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?”

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Near the top	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%
Above average	10	3	13	13	6	15
Average	42	38	41	48	39	49
Below average	32	41	35	26	34	23
Near the bottom	11	10	9	8	13	8
Don’t know	3	8	1	2	4	1

Local Public Schools

Four in ten Californians (38%) and half of public school parents (49%) give their local schools an A or a B. Positive perceptions differ across parties with nearly half of Democrats (46%) giving an A or B, compared to fewer Republicans (36%) and independents (32%). Fewer African Americans (19%) have positive perceptions, compared to whites (37%), Latinos (40%), and Asian Americans (45%). About four in ten across regions—except in the San Francisco Bay Area (34%)—give grades of A or B. The grades for local public schools in our survey are similar to those of adults nationwide in the May 2018 Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research survey (10% A, 33% B, 38% C, 11% D, 8% Fail).

“Overall, how would you rate the quality of public schools in your neighborhood today? If you had to give your local public schools a grade, would it be A, B, C, D, or F?”

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
A	8%	2%	12%	10%	7%	10%
B	30	17	33	30	30	39
C	39	40	39	40	39	39
D	14	21	9	14	15	8
F	6	13	6	5	5	4
Don't know	3	8	1	1	4	–

When asked about how their local public schools are doing in preparing students for college, 55 percent of adults (7% excellent, 48% good) and seven in ten public school parents (7% excellent, 64% good) give positive ratings. At least half have rated their schools positively since April 2013. Today, Orange/San Diego residents (65%) are the most likely—and San Francisco Bay Area residents (46%) are the least likely—to rate their schools positively. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (37%) are the least likely to have a positive view about college preparation (52% whites, 58% Asian Americans, 60% Latinos). When asked about how their public schools are doing in preparing students for jobs and the workforce, fewer than half of adults (5% excellent, 43% good) and two in three public school parents (7% excellent, 57% good) express positive opinions. African Americans (35%) are the least likely to hold a positive view, followed by whites (44%), Asian Americans (54%), and Latinos (54%).

“Are your local public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in...?”

		All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
			African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Preparing students for college	Excellent	7%	3%	4%	7%	6%	7%
	Good	48	34	54	53	46	64
	Not so good	35	42	37	33	36	26
	Poor	7	12	4	5	7	2
	Don't know	3	8	1	1	5	1
Preparing students for jobs and the workforce	Excellent	5	3	3	6	5	7
	Good	43	32	51	48	39	57
	Not so good	41	36	40	40	41	35
	Poor	8	20	5	5	10	1
	Don't know	3	9	1	1	5	–

School Teachers

The issue of teacher salaries has been in the news recently, as teachers in multiple school districts across the state have gone on strike in protest of their salaries. About six in ten Californians (61%) and public school parents (58%) think salaries for teachers in their community are too low; three in ten say they are just about right. Democrats (77%) are far more likely than Republicans (41%), and much more likely than independents (58%), to say salaries are too low. Majorities across regions say salaries are too low, with those in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles most likely to say this. Three in four African Americans (76%)—compared to about six in ten Asian Americans (64%), whites (61%), and Latinos (58%)—say salaries are too low. While majorities across age, education, and income groups say salaries are too low, Californians age 18 to 34 (66%) are more likely than Californians age 35 and older (58%) to hold this view. The share of adults in our survey who think that salaries are too low is similar to that of adults nationwide (66%) in the May 2018 Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research survey.

“Do you think salaries for teachers in your community are too high, too low, or just about right?”

	All adults	Region					Public school parents
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Too high	6%	6%	7%	5%	7%	5%	6%
Too low	61	53	58	65	53	70	58
Just about right	30	38	30	27	36	20	34
Don't know	4	2	5	2	4	4	1

Six in ten Californians and seven in ten public school parents support public school teachers striking for higher pay. While at least half across regions support striking, support is highest in Los Angeles. Across parties, Democrats (80%) are far more likely than independents (55%), and more than twice as likely as Republicans (37%), to hold this view. African Americans (78%) are the most likely to support teacher strikes, followed by Latinos (69%), Asian Americans (57%), and whites (53%). Support for teachers striking for higher pay decreases with rising age and income, while about six in ten across education groups and among men and women support teachers striking for higher pay.

“In general, do you support or oppose public school teachers striking for higher pay?”

	All adults	Region					Public school parents
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Support	61%	50%	58%	70%	56%	62%	70%
Oppose	36	48	41	28	41	32	30
Don't know	3	3	1	1	3	6	–

About half of adults (48%) and nearly six in ten public school parents (57%) say a teacher shortage is a big problem in California’s K–12 public schools today. About one in ten (11% adults, 8% public school parents) say this is not really a problem. Democrats (62%) are more than twice as likely as Republicans (28%) to say this is a big problem; 45 percent of independents hold this view. More than half of San Francisco Bay Area (56%) and Los Angeles (54%) residents say a teacher shortage is a big problem, compared to about four in ten in the Inland Empire (39%), Central Valley (40%), and Orange/San Diego (44%). Fewer Californians (31%) and public school parents (32%) view teacher quality as a big problem. There is partisan agreement, with just three in ten Democrats (32%) and Republicans (29%) as well as 39 percent of independents saying teacher quality is a big problem. About one in three or fewer across regions view teacher quality as a big problem. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (46%) are the most likely to call teacher quality a big problem (32% Latinos, 30% Asian Americans, 27% whites).

Immigration and School Safety

Six in ten Californians are concerned (30% very, 31% somewhat) that increased federal immigration enforcement efforts will impact undocumented students in their local public schools and their families. Seventy-one percent of public school parents are concerned (33% very, 38% somewhat). Latinos (39%) are the most likely to be very concerned, compared to fewer Asian Americans (29%), African Americans (26%), and whites (24%). Democrats (41%) are more than twice as likely as Republicans (15%) to be very concerned; 24 percent of independents are very concerned. About one in three residents are very concerned in Los Angeles (34%), the San Francisco Bay Area (33%), and the Inland Empire (31%), while fewer are very concerned in Orange/San Diego (27%) and the Central Valley (24%).

In 2018, California attorney general Xavier Becerra released a policy guide for school officials laying out how they can protect students from immigration enforcement on school grounds. Do Californians support public school districts designating themselves “sanctuary safe zones” to indicate that they will protect undocumented students and their families from federal immigration enforcement efforts? Most Californians (57%) favor this idea; public school parents (75%) are even more supportive. Democrats (79%) are far more likely than independents (48%) and Republicans (15%) to favor this idea.

“How concerned are you that increased federal immigration enforcement efforts will impact undocumented students and their families in your local public schools?”

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Very concerned	30%	26%	29%	39%	24%	33%
Somewhat concerned	31	27	38	38	25	38
Not too concerned	19	26	24	13	22	16
Not at all concerned	17	20	8	9	26	12
Don't know	2	1	1	1	3	–

Twenty years after the Columbine school shooting, seven in ten Californians are concerned (37% very, 33% somewhat) about the threat of a mass shooting in their local schools. Eight in ten public school parents are concerned (50% very, 30% somewhat). Democrats (41%) are somewhat more likely than independents (33%), and far more likely than Republicans (16%), to be very concerned. Latinos (54%) are much more likely than African Americans (36%), Asian Americans (35%), and whites (24%) to be very concerned.

Two in three Californians (67%) and public school parents (66%) oppose allowing more teachers and school officials to carry guns in schools. An overwhelming majority of Democrats (83%) and two in three independents (67%) are opposed, compared to four in ten Republicans (42%). Majorities across regions and demographic groups are opposed.

“How concerned are you about the threat of a mass shooting in your local schools? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?”

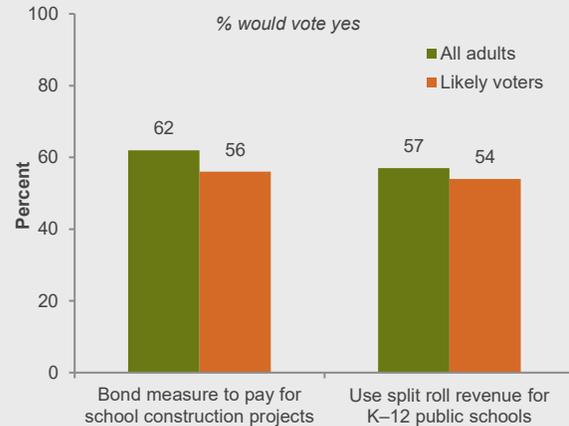
	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Very concerned	37%	36%	35%	54%	24%	50%
Somewhat concerned	33	30	39	28	35	30
Not too concerned	21	26	22	13	27	13
Not at all concerned	8	7	3	5	13	6
Don't know	1	1	–	–	1	–

Funding and Policy Preferences

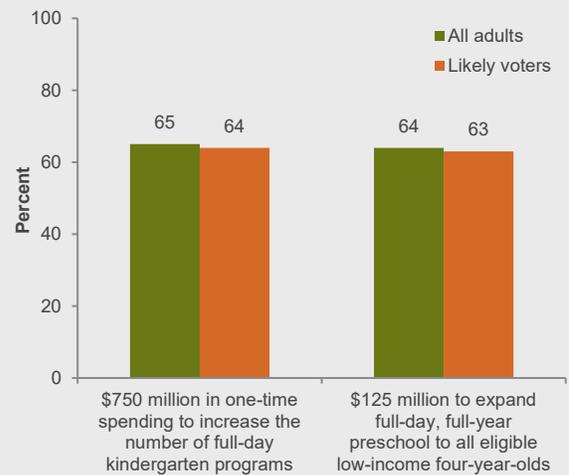
Key Findings

- Majorities of adults (56%) and likely voters (59%) say the current level of state funding for their local public schools is not enough. Majorities support a state bond for school construction projects as well as a proposal to tax commercial properties at market value and direct some of the revenues to K–12 public schools. Four in ten favor replacing the two-thirds vote requirement for local parcel taxes with a 55 percent majority. *(page 14)*
- A majority of adults (58%) and likely voters (60%) favor the governor’s proposal to allocate \$3 billion in one-time spending to pay down unfunded liabilities in CalSTRS. Seven in ten favor the governor’s proposal to expand special education services and programs. *(page 15)*
- A majority of adults (60%) and likely voters (56%) would vote yes on a local bond measure for school construction. Support for a local parcel tax for public schools is below the two-thirds threshold needed to pass (46% adults, 44% likely voters). *(page 16)*
- Two in three have heard at least a little about charter schools, and Californians are divided in their views on charters (49% favor, 46% oppose). Two in three say they are concerned about charter schools taking away state funding that is available for traditional public schools. *(page 17)*
- A slim majority of Californians (51%) are in favor of the Common Core State Standards. Two in three support the Local Control Funding Formula. *(page 18)*
- A majority of Californians say the state should fund voluntary preschool, and eight in ten say that preschool affordability is a problem. Forty-six percent say preschool is very important to K–12 success. *(page 19)*

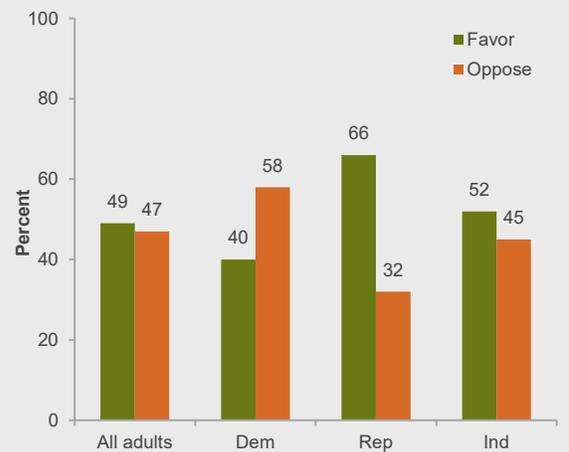
Support for state ballot measures for K–12 public schools



Support for Governor Newsom’s budget proposals



Support for California’s charter schools



State Funding for Local Public Schools

A majority of Californians (56%) and likely voters (59%) think the current level of state funding for their local public schools is not enough. Six in ten public school parents (63%) hold this view. Responses were similar last April (59% adults, 60% likely voters, 66% public school parents), and at least half of adults have said state funding is not enough dating back to April 2008. Today, Democrats (68%) are more likely than independents (58%)—and far more likely than Republicans (42%)—to say their local schools do not get enough state funding. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (67%) are the most likely to hold this view, followed by Latinos (61%), Asian Americans (54%), and whites (52%). Majorities across regions and demographic groups say state funding is inadequate.

“Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More than enough	8%	5%	20%	12%	13%
Just enough	32	26	37	28	27
Not enough	56	68	42	58	59
Don't know	3	2	1	3	2

A ballot measure eligible for the 2020 ballot would tax commercial properties according to their current market value but would not lift Proposition 13’s limits on residential property taxes—creating a “split roll” property tax system. When asked about a potential state ballot measure that would make this change and direct some of the new tax revenue to state funding for K–12 public schools, 56 percent of adults and 54 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes. Democrats (71%) are far more likely than independents (56%) and Republicans (26%) to say they would vote yes. Regionally, support ranges from a high of 62 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area to a low of 47 percent in Orange/San Diego. Majorities of Latinos (67%), African Americans (56%), and Asian Americans (54%) say they would vote yes, compared with fewer whites (48%). Renters (65%) are more likely than homeowners (49%)—and public school parents are more likely than adults (67% to 56%)—to say they would vote yes. In our January survey, which did not mention directing revenue to any specific purpose, 47 percent of adults and 49 percent of likely voters were in favor of the general idea of having commercial properties taxed according to their current market values.

Six in ten adults (62%) and likely voters (57%) say they would vote yes on a state bond measure to pay for school construction projects. Democrats (79%) are much more likely than independents (55%) and Republicans (34%) to support a state school bond.

When asked about a state ballot measure to replace the two-thirds vote requirement with a 55 percent majority vote to pass local parcel taxes for local public schools, 44 percent of adults and 39 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes. A majority of Democrats (58%) would vote yes, compared to four in ten independents (40%) and two in ten Republicans (18%). Support is highest among Latinos (58%) and lowest among whites (34%; 44% African Americans, 44% Asian Americans).

“What if there was a state ballot measure to replace the two-thirds vote requirement with a 55 percent majority vote for voters to pass local parcel taxes for their local public schools? Would you vote yes or no?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	44%	58%	18%	40%	39%
No	53	41	81	57	60
Don't know	3	1	1	2	1

Governor’s Budget Proposals

In his 2019–20 budget, Governor Newsom proposes increased spending for early childhood and K–12 education. His plan would allocate \$3 billion in one-time spending to pay down unfunded liabilities in the California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS). After reading a brief description of this proposal, 58 percent of adults and 60 percent of likely voters support it. Across parties, Democrats (75%) are much more likely than independents (58%)—and far more likely than Republicans (38%)—to favor it. At least half across regions support this proposal, with residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (62%) the most likely to hold this view. Majorities across demographic groups are in favor.

“Governor Newsom’s budget proposal allocates \$3 billion in one-time spending to pay down unfunded liabilities in the California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS). Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	58%	75%	38%	58%	60%
Oppose	36	22	58	38	37
Don’t know	6	3	4	3	3

Governor Newsom also proposes allocating \$750 million in one-time spending to increase the number of full-day kindergarten programs. After reading a brief description of the governor’s kindergarten proposal, about two in three adults (65%) and likely voters (64%) are in favor. Most Democrats (83%) and independents (63%) support it, compared to fewer Republicans (40%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (77%) and African Americans (72%) are more likely to favor this proposal than Asian Americans (58%) and whites (56%). Majorities across regions and demographic groups are supportive. Public school parents are much more likely than adults overall to favor this proposal (80% to 65%).

The governor’s spending plan would allocate \$125 million to expand full-day, full-year preschool to all eligible low-income four-year-olds. After reading a brief description, six in ten adults (64%) and likely voters (63%) are in favor. Across parties, most Democrats (81%) and independents (64%) support this proposal, compared to fewer Republicans (37%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (78%) are the most likely to favor this proposal (70% African Americans, 58% Asian Americans, 54% whites). Majorities across regions and demographic groups are in favor. Public school parents are more likely than adults overall to support this proposal (76% to 64%).

Governor Newsom also proposes allocating \$576 million to expand special education services and programs. After reading a brief description, seven in ten adults and likely voters (70% each) are in favor of this proposal. Majorities of Democrats (86%), independents (60%), and Republicans (52%) support it. More than six in ten across regions and demographic groups are in favor. Public school parents are more likely than adults overall to support this proposal (82% to 70%).

“Governor Newsom’s budget proposal allocates \$576 million dollars to expand special education services and programs. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”

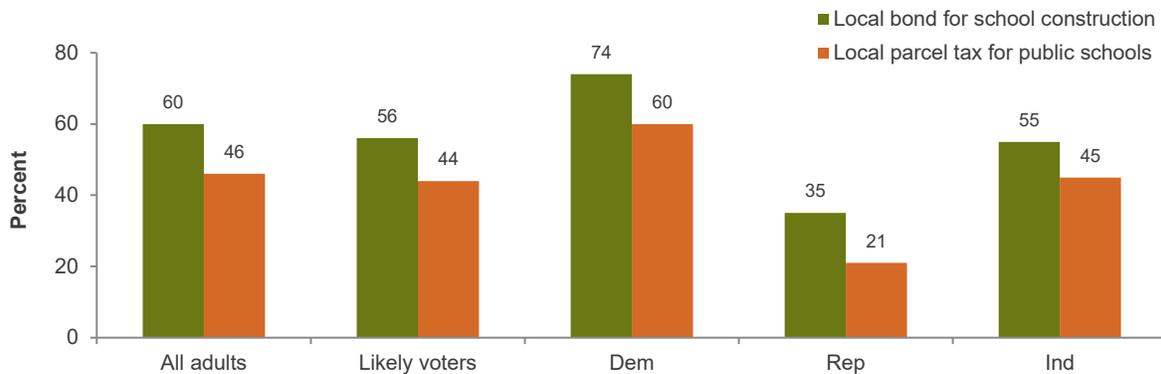
	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	70%	86%	52%	60%	70%
Oppose	27	13	45	37	29
Don’t know	4	1	3	3	1

Raising Revenues for Local Public Schools

In the November 2018 election, Californians passed more than 90 local school bond measures, totaling \$15 billion, and 10 local parcel tax measures. A majority of adults (60%) and likely voters (56%) today say they would vote yes if their local school district had a bond measure on the ballot to pay for construction projects (local school bonds require a 55% majority to pass). A majority of Democrats (74%) and independents (55%) would vote yes, compared to fewer Republicans (35%). Majorities across regions would vote yes (51% Orange/San Diego, 56% Central Valley, 57% San Francisco Bay Area, 62% Inland Empire, 67% Los Angeles), as would majorities across age, education, and income groups. Support is highest among Latinos (74%) and lowest among whites (46%; 62% African Americans, 64% Asian Americans).

Forty-six percent of adults and forty-four percent of likely voters say they would vote yes on a local parcel tax to fund public schools (local parcel taxes require a two-thirds majority to pass). A majority of Democrats (60%) would vote yes on a parcel tax, while fewer independents (45%) and Republicans (21%) would do so. Regionally, support is highest in the Inland Empire (52%), followed by Los Angeles (50%), the San Francisco Bay Area (45%), Orange/San Diego (42%), and the Central Valley (37%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (58%) are the most likely to say they would vote yes (51% African Americans, 46% Asian Americans, 34% whites). Renters (57%) are much more likely than homeowners (38%) to say they would vote yes.

Would vote yes on local school funding measures



In order to spend more money on students who need extra support, should local public schools spend less money on students with fewer needs or raise more money for schools through taxes? A slim majority of Californians (51%) say spend less money (45% raise more money). Majorities of Republicans (74%) and independents (55%) prefer to spend less money on students with fewer needs, while a majority of Democrats (59%) prefer to raise more money through taxes. At least half in the San Francisco Bay Area (50%), the Central Valley (52%), Orange/San Diego (53%), and the Inland Empire (55%) prefer to spend less money, while a slim majority of residents in Los Angeles (51%) prefer to raise more money through taxes. Adults nationwide in the May 2018 Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research survey were divided on this question (49% spend less, 49% raise more money through taxes).

“If your local public schools were to spend more money on students who need extra support, which of these would you prefer?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Spend less money on students with fewer needs	51%	38%	74%	55%	54%
Raise more money for schools through taxes	45	59	22	43	44
Don't know	4	3	5	2	2

California’s Charter Schools

Two in three Californians say they have heard a lot (16%) or a little (51%) about charter schools. Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups have heard at least a little about them, with college graduates (21%), those with annual incomes of \$80,000 or more (20%), and those age 55 and older (20%) the most likely to say they have heard a lot. Notably, 38 percent of public school parents say they have heard nothing at all about them.

Californians are divided on whether they generally favor (49%) or oppose (46%) charter schools. Public school parents (59%) are more likely to favor charter schools than adults overall. Republicans (66%) and independents (52%) are much more likely than Democrats (40%) to support charter schools. Half of Latinos (51%) and whites (50%) are in favor, compared to fewer Asian Americans (43%) and African Americans (36%). Majorities in the Inland Empire (60%) and Orange/San Diego (56%)—but fewer than half in the Central Valley (49%), Los Angeles (49%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (37%)—are in favor.

“The state created charter schools to offer parents an alternative to traditional public schools. These schools are expected to meet basic state requirements, but are exempt from many state laws and regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?”

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Favor	49%	36%	43%	51%	50%	59%
Oppose	46	56	55	44	44	38
Don't know	5	8	2	5	6	3

However, most Californians (75%) and public school parents (81%) say it is very or somewhat important for parents in lower-income areas to have the choice of sending their children to charter schools instead of traditional local public schools. African Americans (52%) are the most likely to say this is very important. Following the passage of SB 126, which requires more transparency in charter school operations, nine in ten say it is very or somewhat important for charter schools to operate with the same transparency and accountability as traditional public schools.

Two in three Californians (64%) say they are very (28%) or somewhat (36%) concerned about charter schools taking away state funding from traditional local public schools. Three in four public school parents (75%) are very (32%) or somewhat (43%) concerned. Majorities across regions express concern, with Los Angeles residents (71%) the most likely to say they are concerned. Democrats (43%) are much more likely than independents (27%) and Republicans (16%) to say they are very concerned. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (37%) are the most likely to say they are very concerned.

“How concerned are you about charter schools taking away state funding that is available for traditional local public schools? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?”

	All adults	Region					Public school parents
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Very concerned	28%	20%	29%	32%	24%	33%	32%
Somewhat concerned	36	35	36	39	38	30	43
Not too concerned	23	29	25	20	21	25	19
Not at all concerned	10	15	9	7	15	6	5
Don't know	3	2	2	2	3	5	1

Common Core and Local Control Funding Formula

Nearly nine years after the state’s adoption of the Common Core State Standards, 64 percent of Californians have heard of these standards (19% a lot, 45% a little). After reading a brief description of the policy, 51 percent of adults say they favor Common Core—an increase of 8 percent from April 2017. Seven in ten public school parents are in favor. Across parties, Democrats (63%) are much more likely than independents (47%)—and far more likely than Republicans (32%)—to be in favor. Regionally, majorities of residents in Los Angeles (58%), the Inland Empire (56%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (54%) support Common Core, while just over four in ten in the Central Valley and Orange/San Diego (44% each) hold this view. Latinos (64%) are somewhat more likely than Asian Americans (55%)—and much more likely than African Americans (44%) and whites (40%)—to be in favor. Those age 35 to 54 (60%) are much more likely than those age 18 to 34 (45%) and those 55 and older (48%) to favor it. Those earning over \$80,000 (48%) are slightly less likely to support Common Core than those earning under \$40,000 (55%) or \$40,000 to \$79,000 (54%).

“The Common Core State Standards are a single set of K–12 English language arts and math standards that most states, including California, have voluntarily adopted. From what you’ve read and heard, do you favor or oppose the Common Core education standards?”

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Favor	51%	44%	55%	64%	40%	70%
Oppose	41	50	39	27	52	27
Don't know	8	7	6	9	8	3

Six years after the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) was enacted, the share of Californians who have heard about it remains low (5% a lot, 22% a little). Forty percent of public school parents have heard about the policy (9% a lot, 31% a little). After reading a brief description, two-thirds of adults (67%) favor the LCFF, while 77 percent of public school parents hold the same view. Strong majorities of Democrats (79%) and independents (70%) are in favor, compared to half of Republicans (50%). Latinos (76%) and Asian Americans (75%) are the most likely to favor the LCFF, compared to fewer whites (57%) and African Americans (54%). Solid majorities across regions and across age, education, and income groups support the LCFF.

“The Local Control Funding Formula provides additional funding to school districts that have more English language learners and lower-income students and gives flexibility over how state funding is spent. Do you favor or oppose this policy?”

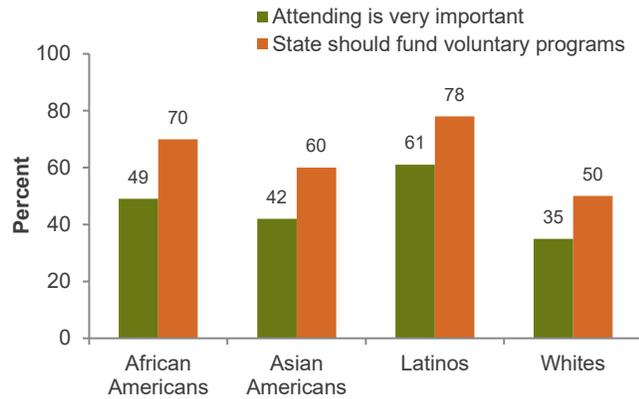
	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public school parents
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Favor	67%	54%	75%	76%	57%	77%
Oppose	28	36	23	20	36	21
Don't know	5	10	2	4	7	2

As the state implements the LCFF, 47 percent of adults and 60 percent of public school parents are confident that local school districts that receive additional funding will direct those funds to support English language learners and lower-income students. Three in four adults (74%) and nearly nine in ten public school parents (87%) think the academic achievement of English language learners and lower-income students will improve because of LCFF implementation. But most expect performance to improve only somewhat (63% adults, 72% public school parents); few expect performance to improve a lot (11% adults, 15% public school parents).

Early Childhood Education

Governor Newsom has emphasized early childhood education as a priority for his administration. Nearly eight in ten adults say that attending preschool is important (46% very, 32% somewhat) to a student’s success in kindergarten through grade 12. This represents a decline since April 2017 (89%). Today, a solid majority of Democrats (60%) say preschool is very important, compared to fewer independents (41%) and Republicans (28%). Regionally, Los Angeles residents (57%) are the most likely to hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (61%) are more likely than African Americans (49%), Asian Americans (42%), and whites (35%) to say preschool is very important. Those with a high school diploma or less (54%) are much more likely than those with some college (39%) and college graduates (42%) to say so. Those earning less than \$40,000 annually (54%) are more likely than those with higher incomes to hold this view (42% \$40,000 to \$79,000, 41% \$80,000 or more). Notably, 88 percent of public school parents feel preschool is important (61% very, 27% somewhat).

Opinions on preschool education



“How important is attending preschool to a student's success in kindergarten through grade 12?”

	All adults	Region					Public school parents
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Very important	46%	40%	47%	57%	37%	43%	61%
Somewhat important	32	33	33	27	34	34	27
Not too important	14	19	12	10	16	14	10
Not at all important	7	7	9	5	12	6	2
Don't know	1	1	–	1	1	3	–

A strong majority of adults (63%) and public school parents (81%) think the state government should fund voluntary preschool for all four-year-olds in California. Regionally, Los Angeles residents (75%) are the most likely to say so, compared to at least half elsewhere. Democrats (80%) are far more likely than independents (58%) and Republicans (31%) to say the state should fund preschool. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (78%) are the most likely to hold this view (70% African Americans, 60% Asian Americans, 50% whites). Younger Californians (68% 18 to 34, 69% 35 to 54) are much more likely than older Californians (53% 55 and older) to say the state should fund preschool. Those with incomes under \$40,000 (73%) are much more likely than those with higher incomes (64% \$40,000 to \$79,000, 56% \$80,000 or more) to say so.

“Do you think that the state government should or should not fund voluntary preschool programs for all four-year-olds in California?”

	All adults	Region					Public school parents
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Should	63%	59%	67%	75%	53%	58%	81%
Should not	33	39	31	23	42	37	18
Don't know	4	2	2	2	6	5	1

Regional Map



Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from survey research associate, Alyssa Dykman, project manager for this survey, associate survey director Dean Bonner, and survey research associate Rachel Ward. The Californians and Education survey is supported with funding from the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation, the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, and the Stuart Foundation. It is the 15th annual PPIC Statewide Survey on K–12 education since 2005. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC’s survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,512 California adult residents. The median time to complete the survey was 17 minutes. Interviews were conducted from April 5–15, 2019.

The survey was conducted in English and Spanish by Ipsos, an international market and opinion research organization, using its online research panel KnowledgePanel. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability-based sampling and include both those with Internet access and those without. KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel. KnowledgePanel is primarily recruited using address-based sampling (ABS) methodology, which improves population coverage, particularly for hard-to-reach individuals such as young adults and minority subgroups. ABS-recruited Latinos are supplemented with a dual-frame random digit dialing (RDD) sampling methodology that targets telephone exchanges associated with areas with a higher concentration of Latinos to provide the capability to conduct representative online surveys with Latinos, including those who speak only Spanish. KnowledgePanel’s recruitment was originally based on a national RDD frame and switched to the primarily ABS-based methodology in 2009. KnowledgePanel includes households with landlines and cell phones, including those with cellphones only and those without phones. ABS allows probability-based sampling of addresses from the US Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File (DSF). The DSF-based sampling frame used for address selection is enhanced with a series of refinements—such as the appendage of various ancillary data to each address from commercial and government data sources—to facilitate complex stratification plans. Taking advantage of such refinements, quarterly samples are selected using a stratified sampling methodology that aims to retain the representativeness of the panel. KnowledgePanel continually recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition.

To qualify for the survey, a panel member must be 18 years of age or older and reside in California. A total of 1,586 respondents completed the survey out of 2,975 panelists who were sampled, for a response rate of 53%. To ensure the highest data quality, we flagged respondents who sped through the survey, which we defined as completing the survey in one fourth of the overall median time (less than 4.12 minutes). We also flagged respondents if their self-reported age or gender did not match the data stored in their profile. A total of 74 cases were removed after this review process, resulting in 1,512 total qualified and valid cases.

Accent on Languages, Inc., translated new survey questions into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever.

Ipsos uses the US Census Bureau’s 2013–2017 American Community Survey’s (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of

registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The sample of Californians is first weighted using an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for any differences in the probability of selecting various segments of the KnowledgePanel sample. This base weight is further adjusted using an iterative proportional fitting (raking) procedure that aligns sample demographics to population benchmarks from the 2013–2017 ACS data as well as party registration benchmarks from the California Secretary of State’s voter registration file.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ± 3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,512 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.5 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,289 registered voters, the sampling error is ± 3.6 percent; for the 1,035 likely voters, it is ± 4.0 percent; for the 393 parents, it is ± 6.6 percent; for the 278 public school parents, it is ± 7.8 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 42 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 15 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, and current interest in politics.

The percentages presented in the report tables and in the questionnaire may not add to 100 due to rounding.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.

Questionnaire and Results

CALIFORNIANS AND EDUCATION

April 5–15, 2019

1,512 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR ±3.5% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE
 PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the state's kindergarten through 12th grade public education system?

53% approve
 38 disapprove
 9 don't know

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling the state's kindergarten through 12th grade public education system?

47% approve
 46 disapprove
 8 don't know

3. Thinking about the kindergarten through 12th grade public education system overall in California today, do you think it is generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

46% right direction
 49 wrong direction
 5 don't know

4. In thinking about priorities for the new governor of California, do you think that the state's kindergarten through 12th grade public education system should be a [rotate order] very high priority, high priority, medium priority, low priority, [or] very low priority?

34% very high priority
 41 high priority
 19 medium priority
 3 low priority
 1 very low priority
 2 don't know

5. When it comes to K–12 public schools in California, would you rather see Gavin Newsom as the new governor generally continue Jerry Brown's policies or mostly change to different polices?

38% continue Jerry Brown's policies
 55 change to different policies
 7 don't know

Next,

6. What do you think is the most important issue facing California's K–12 public schools today?

[open-ended, code]

18% lack of funding
 11 large class sizes
 10 concerns about standards/quality of education
 9 limited/poor curriculum
 5 low teacher pay
 4 quality of teachers
 4 teacher retention/shortage
 2 bullying
 2 English learners/immigration
 2 inequities
 2 lack of discipline/behavior of children
 2 safety/security
 2 too much bureaucracy
 2 too much testing
 17 other
 10 don't know

7. In your opinion, what is the most important goal of California’s K–12 public schools— [rotate] (1) preparing students for college; (2) preparing students for the workforce; (3) teaching students the basics; (4) teaching students life skills; [or] (5) preparing students to be good citizens?

- 24% preparing students for college
- 16 preparing students for the workforce
- 14 teaching students the basics
- 26 teaching students life skills
- 13 preparing students to be good citizens
- 6 other
- 1 don’t know

8. How much of a problem is the quality of education in California’s K–12 public schools today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 38% big problem
- 53 somewhat of a problem
- 7 not a problem
- 3 don’t know

[rotate questions 9 and 10]

9. How concerned are you that California’s K–12 public schools in lower-income areas have a shortage of good teachers compared to schools in wealthier areas? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this issue?

- 46% very concerned
- 39 somewhat concerned
- 11 not too concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- 1 don’t know

10. How concerned are you that California’s K–12 public school students in lower-income areas are less likely than other students to be ready for college when they finish high school? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this issue?

- 43% very concerned
- 41 somewhat concerned
- 12 not too concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- 1 don’t know

[rotate questions 11 and 12]

Changing topics,

11. Where do you think California currently ranks in per pupil spending for K–12 public schools? Compared to other states, is California’s spending near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?

- 8% near the top
- 15 above average
- 35 average
- 29 below average
- 10 near the bottom
- 2 don’t know

12. Where do you think California currently ranks in student test scores for K–12 public schools? Compared to other states, are California’s student test scores near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?

- 2% near the top
- 10 above average
- 42 average
- 32 below average
- 11 near the bottom
- 3 don’t know

13. Next, overall, how would you rate the quality of public schools in your neighborhood today? If you had to give your local public schools a grade, would it be A, B, C, D, or F? Think of grades A to F as a scale where A is the best and F is failing.

- 8% A
- 30 B
- 39 C
- 14 D
- 6 F
- 3 don't know

[rotate questions 14 and 15]

14. Are your local public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in preparing students for college?

- 7% excellent
- 48 good
- 35 not so good
- 7 poor
- 3 don't know

15. Are your local public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in preparing students for jobs and the workforce?

- 5% excellent
- 43 good
- 41 not so good
- 8 poor
- 3 don't know

[rotate questions 16 to 18]

16. Do you think the current level of resources for low-income students in your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

- 10% more than enough
- 37 just enough
- 49 not enough
- 3 don't know

17. Do you think the current level of resources for English language learners in your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

- 15% more than enough
- 43 just enough
- 38 not enough
- 3 don't know

18. Do you think the current level of resources for students with disabilities in your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

- 10% more than enough
- 44 just enough
- 41 not enough
- 5 don't know

On another topic,

19. Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

- 8% more than enough
- 32 just enough
- 56 not enough
- 3 don't know

20. As you may know, under Proposition 13, residential and commercial property taxes are both strictly limited. What if there was a state ballot measure to have commercial properties taxed according to their current market value and direct some of this new tax revenue to state funding for K–12 public schools? Would you vote yes or no?

- 56% yes
- 42 no
- 2 don't know

21. What if there was a state ballot measure to replace the two-thirds vote requirement with a 55 percent majority vote for voters to pass local parcel taxes for their local public schools? Would you vote yes or no?

- 44% yes
- 53 no
- 3 don't know

22. If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?

- 62% yes
- 35 no
- 3 don't know

Next,

[rotate questions 23 and 24]

23. Governor Newsom's budget proposal allocates \$3 billion in one-time spending to pay down unfunded liabilities in the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS). Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 58% favor
- 36 oppose
- 6 don't know

24. Governor Newsom's budget proposal allocates \$750 million in one-time spending to increase the number of full-day kindergarten programs. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 65% favor
- 32 oppose
- 3 don't know

[rotate questions 25 and 26]

25. Governor Newsom's budget proposal allocates \$576 million to expand special education services and programs. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 70% favor
- 27 oppose
- 4 don't know

26. Governor Newsom's budget proposal allocates \$125 million to expand full-day, full-year preschool to all eligible low-income four-year-olds. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 64% favor
- 33 oppose
- 3 don't know

[rotate questions 27 and 28]

27. If your local school district had a bond measure on the ballot to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?

- 60% yes
- 36 no
- 5 don't know

28. What if there was a measure on your local ballot to increase local parcel taxes to provide more funds for the local public schools? Would you vote yes or no?

- 46% yes
- 51 no
- 3 don't know

29. If your local public schools were to spend more money on students who need extra support, which of these would you prefer *[rotate]*—[spend less money on students with fewer needs] or [raise more money for the schools through taxes]?

- 51% spend less money
- 45 raise taxes
- 4 don't know

Following is a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about teachers in California's K–12 public schools today. Please answer if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not really a problem.

[rotate questions 30 and 31]

30. How about teacher quality?

- 31% big problem
- 53 somewhat of a problem
- 14 not really a problem
- 2 don't know

31. How about a shortage of teachers?

- 48% big problem
- 38 somewhat of a problem
- 11 not really a problem
- 2 don't know

Next,

32. Do you think salaries for teachers in your community are too high, too low, or just about right?

- 6% too high
- 61 too low
- 30 just about right
- 4 don't know

33. In general, do you support or oppose public school teachers striking for higher pay?

- 61% support
- 36 oppose
- 3 don't know

34. Next, how much, if anything, have you heard about California's charter schools, publically funded schools typically run by organizations under a contract? Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

- 16% a lot
- 51 a little
- 32 nothing at all
- 2 don't know

35. The state created charter schools to offer parents an alternative to traditional public schools. These schools are expected to meet basic state requirements, but are exempt from many state laws and regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

- 49% favor
- 46 oppose
- 5 don't know

36. How important is it for charter schools to operate with the same transparency and accountability as traditional local public schools? Is this very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 61% very important
- 26 somewhat important
- 8 not too important
- 3 not at all important
- 2 don't know

37. How important is it for parents in lower-income areas to have the choice of sending their children to charter schools instead of traditional local public schools? Is this very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 36% very important
- 39 somewhat important
- 18 not too important
- 6 not at all important
- don't know

38. How concerned are you about charter schools taking away state funding that is available for traditional local public schools? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 28% very concerned
- 36 somewhat concerned
- 23 not too concerned
- 10 not at all concerned
- 3 don't know

Changing topics,

39. Next, how much, if anything, have you heard about the Common Core State Standards, a new set of English and math standards that the state began implementing in recent years? Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

- 19% a lot
- 45 a little
- 35 nothing at all
- 1 don't know

40. The Common Core State Standards are a single set of K–12 English language arts and math standards that most states, including California, have voluntarily adopted. From what you’ve read and heard, do you favor or oppose the Common Core education standards?

- 51% favor
- 41 oppose
- 8 don’t know

On another topic,

41. How much, if anything, have you heard about the Local Control Funding Formula, a policy enacted in recent years that changes the way K–12 public school districts are funded in California? Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

- 5% a lot
- 22 a little
- 71 nothing at all
- 1 don’t know

42. The Local Control Funding Formula provides additional funding to school districts that have more [rotate] [English language learners] [and] [lower-income students] and gives local school districts more flexibility over how state funding is spent. In general, do you favor or oppose this policy?

- 67% favor
- 28 oppose
- 5 don’t know

43. As the state implements the Local Control Funding Formula, how confident are you that local school districts which receive additional funding will spend that money on programs and support for [rotate in same order as Q42] [English language learners] [and] [lower-income students]? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

- 6% very confident
- 41 somewhat confident
- 36 not too confident
- 13 not at all confident
- 4 don’t know

44. As the state implements the Local Control Funding Formula, do you think the academic achievement of [rotate in same order as Q42] [English language learners] [and] [lower-income students] will or will not improve?

- 11% improve a lot
- 63 improve somewhat
- 21 will NOT improve
- 4 don’t know

45. [public school parents only] The Local Control Funding Formula requires school districts to seek input from parents in developing and revising their accountability plans for how to allocate resources. Has your child’s school or school district provided you with information about how to become involved, or not?

- 50% yes
- 49 no
- 2 don’t know

46. [public school parents only] And how likely are you to participate in the process of revising and updating your local school district’s accountability plan? Are you very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

- 14% very likely
- 46 somewhat likely
- 29 not too likely
- 11 not at all likely
- don’t know

47. [public school parents only] Do you feel you can easily find information about the quality of your child’s school?

- 69% yes
- 31 no
- 1 don’t know

48. [public school parents only] Next, how much, if anything, have you heard about the California School Dashboard, a new online tool which uses multiple measures to evaluate how the state’s K–12 schools are performing? Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

- 12% a lot
- 41 a little
- 47 nothing at all
- don’t know

On another topic,

49. How concerned are you that increased federal immigration enforcement efforts will impact undocumented students and their families in your local public schools? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 30% very concerned
- 31 somewhat concerned
- 19 not too concerned
- 17 not at all concerned
- 2 don’t know

50. Do you favor or oppose your public school district designating itself as a sanctuary “safe zone” to indicate it will protect its undocumented students and their families from federal immigration enforcement efforts?

- 57% favor
- 41 oppose
- 3 don’t know

Next,

51. How concerned are you about the threat of a mass shooting in your local schools? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 37% very concerned
- 33 somewhat concerned
- 21 not too concerned
- 8 not at all concerned
- 1 don’t know

52. Do you favor or oppose allowing more teachers and school officials to carry guns in schools?

- 30% favor
- 67 oppose
- 3 don’t know

53. On another topic, do you think that the state government should or should not fund voluntary preschool programs for all four-year-olds in California?

- 63% should
- 33 should not
- 4 don’t know

54. How important is attending preschool to a student’s success in kindergarten through grade 12—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 46% very important
- 32 somewhat important
- 14 not too important
- 7 not at all important
- 1 don’t know

[rotate questions 55 and 56]

55. How much of a problem is the quality of preschool education in California today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 20% big problem
- 49 somewhat of a problem
- 27 not much of a problem
- 5 don’t know

56. How much of a problem is the affordability of preschool education in California today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 33% big problem
- 47 somewhat of a problem
- 16 not much of a problem
- 3 don’t know

57. How concerned are you that children in lower-income areas are less likely than other children to be ready for kindergarten? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this issue?

- 30% very concerned
- 40 somewhat concerned
- 18 not too concerned
- 10 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

On another topic,

58. [parents only] I have a question about four school types. [rotate] One is (1) traditional public schools. Another is (2) charter schools, which are publicly funded but run outside of the public school system. The third is (3) religious or parochial schools. And the fourth is (4) private schools. Imagine you could send your youngest child to any one of these four kinds of schools and cost and location were not an issue. All things equal, which would you pick?

- 37% public school
- 11 charter school
- 15 religious school
- 35 private school
- 2 other
- don't know

59. [parents only] Next, what do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve: some high school; high school graduate; two-year community college graduate or career technical training; four-year college graduate; or a graduate degree after college?

- 4% some high school
- 8 high school graduate
- 8 two-year community college graduate or career technical training
- 33 four-year college graduate
- 46 a graduate degree after college
- don't know

60. [parents only] How worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?

- 45% very worried
- 34 somewhat worried
- 14 not too worried
- 6 not at all worried
- 1 don't know

61. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 70% yes [ask q61a]
- 29 no [skip to q62b]

61a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

- 44% Democrat [ask q62]
- 25 Republican [skip to q62a]
- 2 another party (specify) [skip to q63]
- 29 independent [skip to q62b]

62. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 59% strong
- 41 not very strong
- don't know

[skip to q63]

62a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 60% strong
- 39 not very strong
- 1 don't know

[skip to q63]

62b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 27% Republican Party
- 57 Democratic Party
- 8 neither (volunteered)
- 3 don't know

63. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:

[read list, rotate order top to bottom]

11%	very liberal
20	somewhat liberal
42	middle-of-the-road
18	somewhat conservative
8	very conservative
1	don't know

64. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

16%	great deal
35	fair amount
31	only a little
19	none
—	don't know

[d1-d15 demographic questions]

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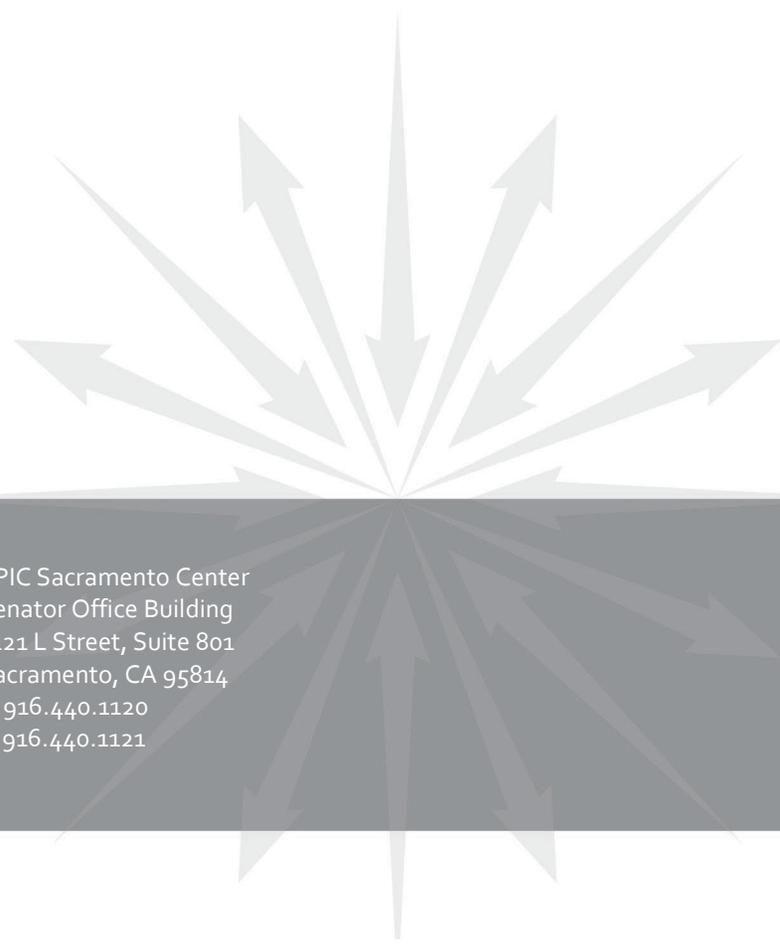
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