

To: Interested Parties

From: GBA Strategies

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New Poll Results on Charter Schools

Introduction

With the number of charter schools rapidly increasing across the country, a new survey shows that Americans embrace proposals to reform the way charter schools are authorized and managed. The public overwhelmingly supports initiatives to strengthen charter school accountability and transparency, improve teacher training and qualifications, prevent fraud, serve high-need students and ensure that neighborhood public schools are not adversely affected.

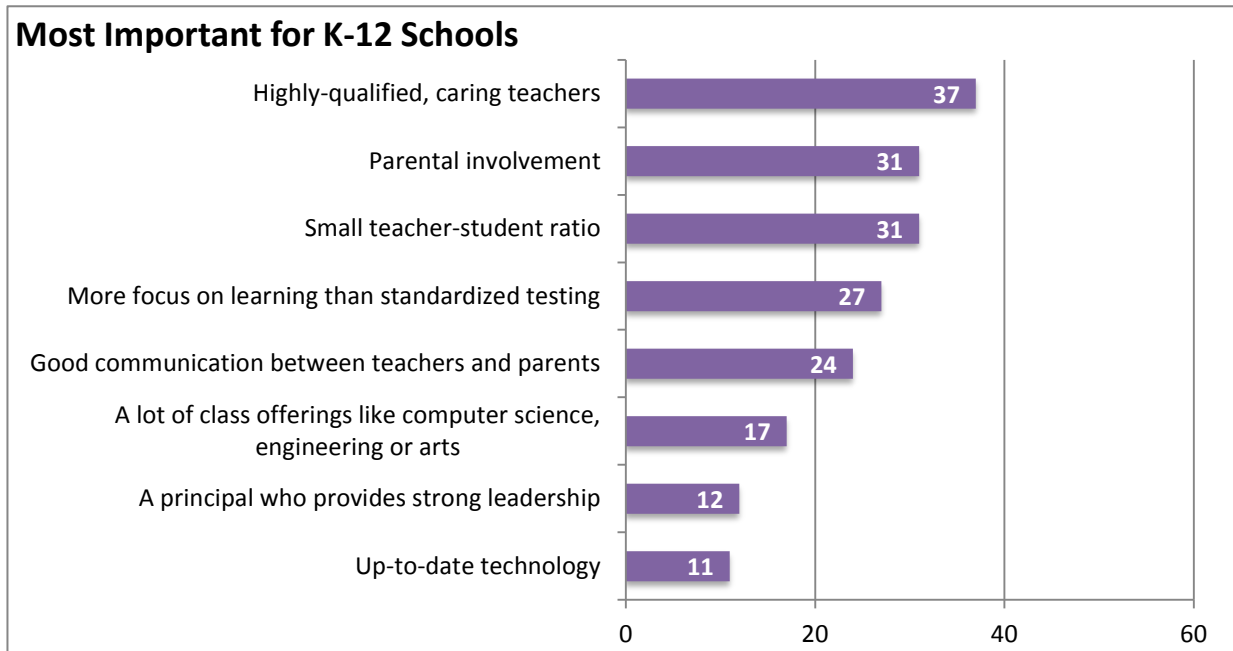
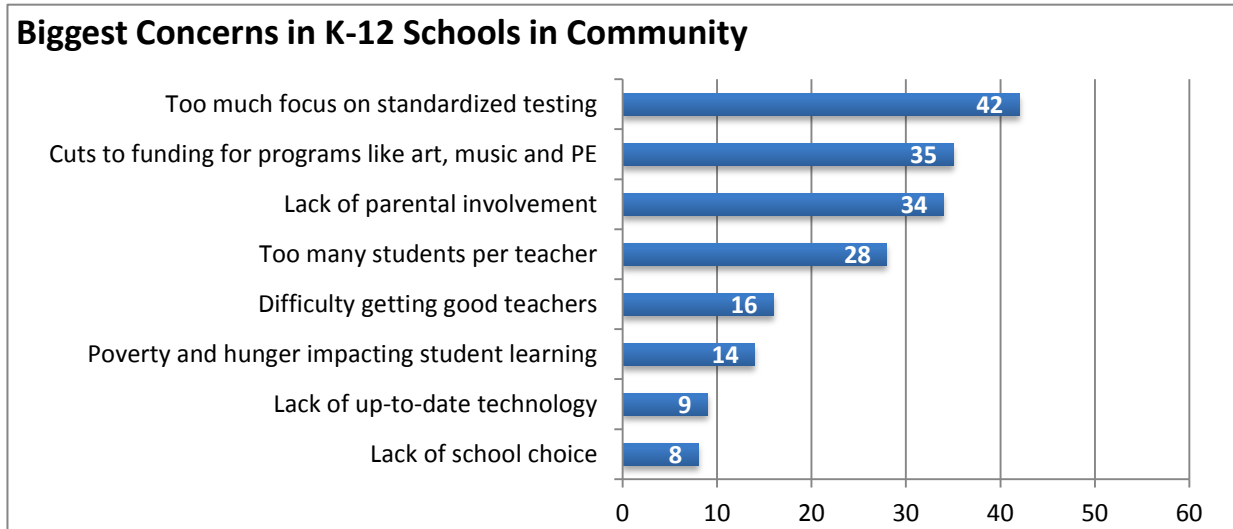
The poll also shows incredibly strong support for the concept of Community Schools, which would serve as community hubs integrating high-quality curriculum with after-school and summer enrichment programs.

The following are key findings from the national poll of 1,000 registered voters, which was conducted January 5th – 11th, 2016:

Key Findings

- **Voters offer public schools and public school teachers very high ratings.** Sixty-four percent of voters rate the quality of education at public schools in their neighborhood excellent or good, while just 29 percent rate them fair or poor. Voters are more likely to say public schools in their neighborhood are getting better (30 percent) than getting worse (17 percent), while a 43 percent plurality are not seeing much change either way. By 8:1, voters are more likely to have favorable than unfavorable views of public school teachers (72 percent favorable – 9 percent unfavorable).
- **School Concerns: the over-reliance on standardized testing, lack of parental involvement and cuts to programs like music, arts and PE are top concerns, but lack of school choice does not register as a top concern.** Voters focus on too much focus on standardized tests, cuts to school funding, lack of parental involvement, and class size as the biggest problems facing K-through-12 education. Lack of school choice ranks dead last on their list of concerns.

- **Making a Good School: highly qualified, caring teachers are the most important to creating a great K-through-12 school.** Parental involvement, smaller classrooms and more focus on learning than standardized testing are also important.



- **Voters overwhelmingly favor charter school reform proposals.** Large majorities of voters back proposals to strengthen transparency and accountability, teacher training and qualifications, implement anti-fraud measures, ensure high-need students are served and making sure neighborhood public schools are not adversely affected.

	Total Support %
Transparency & Accountability	
Require companies and organizations that manage charter schools to open board meetings to parents and the public, similar to public school board meetings	92
Require companies and organizations that manage charter schools to release to parents and the public how they spend taxpayer money , including their annual budgets and contracts	90
Require state officials to conduct regular audits of charter schools' finances to detect fraud, waste or abuse of public funds	88
Protect Neighborhood Schools	
Ensure that neighborhood public schools do not lose funding when new charter schools open in their area	78
Before any new charter school is approved, conduct an analysis of the impact the school will have on neighborhood public schools	74
Protect Taxpayer funds	
Require charter schools to return taxpayer money to the school district for any student that leaves the charter school to return to a neighborhood public school during the school year	80
Stop the creation of new charter schools if charter school authorizers have not shown the ability to prevent fraud and mismanagement	76
Require new charter schools to be operated by non-profit organizations , not for-profit companies	70
Prohibit charter school board members and their immediate families from financially benefiting from their schools .	67
High quality education for every child	
Require all teachers who work in taxpayer funded schools, including neighborhood public schools and charter schools, to meet the same training and qualification requirements	89
Require charter schools to serve high-need students such as special education students, at the same level as neighborhood public schools.	80
Require charter schools to use enrollment and registration policies that encourage special needs students to enroll at the same level as neighborhood public schools.	77

In addition, there is support for charter school reforms across parties and by both supporters and opponents of charter schools.

Require companies and organizations that manage charter schools to open board meetings to parents and the public, similar to public school board meetings		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	90	9
Independents	90	8
Republicans	95	5
People Who Favor Charter Schools	89	11
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	95	3
Require companies and organizations that manage charter schools to release to parents and the public how they spend taxpayer money, including their annual budgets and contracts		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	88	10
Independents	91	8
Republicans	89	11
People Who Favor Charter Schools	92	8
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	94	6
Require state officials to conduct regular audits of charter schools' finances to detect fraud, waste or abuse of public funds		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	91	8
Independents	86	12
Republicans	89	8
People Who Favor Charter Schools	87	11
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	94	5
Ensure that neighborhood public schools do not lose funding when new charter schools open in their area		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	83	15
Independents	76	20
Republicans	73	25
People Who Favor Charter Schools	74	22
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	86	13
Before any new charter school is approved, conduct an analysis of the impact the school will have on neighborhood public schools		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	82	17
Independents	73	24
Republicans	67	27
People Who Favor Charter Schools	68	30
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	87	11
Require charter schools to return taxpayer money to the school district for any student that leaves the charter school to return to a neighborhood public school during the school year		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	84	13
Independents	78	19
Republicans	77	20
People Who Favor Charter Schools	74	24
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	92	5

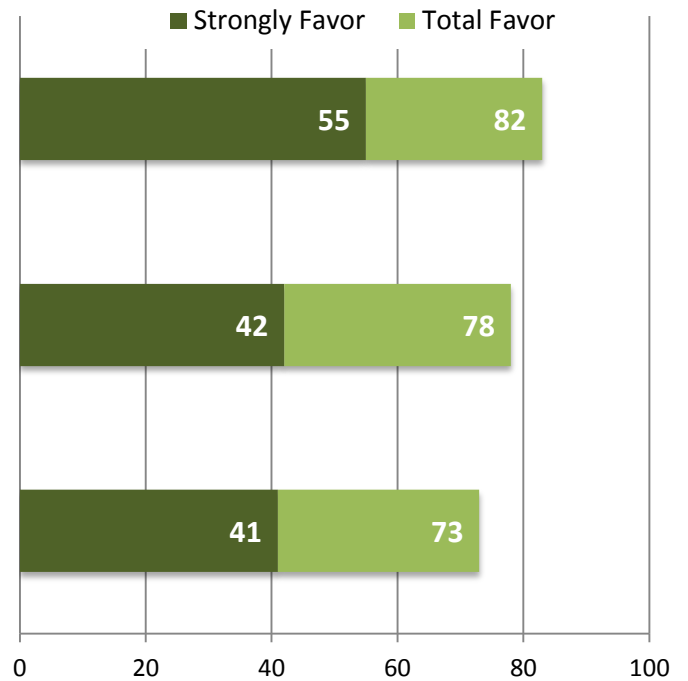
Stop the creation of new charter schools if charter school authorizers have not shown the ability to prevent fraud and mismanagement		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	76	19
Independents	75	20
Republicans	79	17
People Who Favor Charter Schools	72	23
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	88	9
Require new charter schools to be operated by non-profit organizations, not for-profit companies		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	73	22
Independents	67	26
Republicans	70	25
People Who Favor Charter Schools	66	30
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	72	22
Prohibit charter school board members and their immediate families from financially benefiting from their schools.		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	67	28
Independents	67	27
Republicans	67	28
People Who Favor Charter Schools	65	29
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	80	18
Require all teachers who work in taxpayer funded schools, including neighborhood public schools and charter schools, to meet the same training and qualification requirements		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	92	6
Independents	86	12
Republicans	89	10
People Who Favor Charter Schools	85	14
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	97	2
Require charter schools to serve high-need students such as special education students, at the same level as neighborhood public schools.		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	85	10
Independents	80	15
Republicans	74	26
People Who Favor Charter Schools	71	25
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	92	6
Require charter schools to use enrollment and registration policies that encourage special needs students to enroll at the same level as neighborhood public schools.		
	Favor	Oppose
Democrats	84	13
Independents	72	21
Republicans	76	20
People Who Favor Charter Schools	78	18
People Who Oppose Charter Schools	73	21

- Voters are excited about Community Schools concept.** Voters particularly like the concept of community schools that would integrate a dynamic curriculum with after school and summer enrichment programs. Other ideas for innovating public school options, such as specialty curricula, also generate significant support.

Under this proposal, schools would serve as community hubs, providing health and social services, youth and community development, parental education, as well as academics for students. Community schools integrate high-quality dynamic curriculum with after-school and summer enrichment programs, ensuring that every student and their family gets the opportunity to succeed no matter what zip code they live in

Under this proposal, school districts would receive grants to establish and operate new schools that offer a special curriculum or program capable of attracting students from different backgrounds. Examples include schools that emphasize specific subjects such as math, science, technology, or arts. Other schools may emphasize a certain instructional approach such as bilingual schools

Under this proposal, instead of automatically attending a school in the neighborhood where a family lives, students can apply to various schools in their city or county. Students rank the schools that they want to attend, and they are assigned to a school based on different criteria, including where they live, if they have a sibling at the school, if their neighborhood school is failing, or the results of a lottery



Methodology

GBA Strategies conducted a national poll of 1,000 registered voters January 5th – 11th, 2016 on behalf of In the Public Interest and the Center for Popular Democracy. The sample is subject to a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

The sample was pulled from a national voter file and phone numbers were selected randomly, providing a statistically representative sample. The poll was administered by professional interviewers via telephone with respondents being reached on cell phones and landlines.