

THE OHIO POLL*

FOR RELEASE

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EDUCATION STILL TOPS LIST AS OHIO'S MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM

Cincinnati, OH--Ohioans continue to cite education far above other problems facing the state. Majorities of state residents support giving parents vouchers to pay for their child's tuition at the public, private, or parochial school of their choice. However, Ohioans are more likely to support giving vouchers for use at public schools of choice than other types of schools.

These findings are based on the latest Ohio Poll, conducted by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. The Ohio Poll is sponsored by the University of Cincinnati.

EDUCATION REMAINS AT THE TOP OF OHIOANS' MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM LIST

The Ohio Supreme Court is expected to rule next year on the question of whether or not state lawmakers have met the Court's 1997 mandate to fix Ohio's system of paying for public education. The latest Ohio Poll finds that as Ohioans await the decision, education continues to dominate the list of citizen concerns about their state.

At the present time, 35 percent of state residents identify education as the most important problem facing Ohio. Other problems, including crime (8%), the economy (8%), taxes (5%) and road conditions (4%) were mentioned less frequently.

In each Ohio Poll conducted since the Ohio Supreme Court's 1997 ruling which found Ohio's public school funding system to be unconstitutional, Ohioans have cited education far more frequently than other problems as the most important problem facing their state.

As has been found in previous polls, Ohioans continue to frequently cite funding (14%) and quality issues (9%) as more specific concerns about education in Ohio.

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During the last few years, national attention has focused on Ohio's experimentation with two education alternatives: vouchers and charter schools. The latest Ohio Poll also asked state residents their opinions on these education alternatives.

MAJORITIES SUPPORT VOUCHERS AS EDUCATION ALTERNATIVE . . .

Ohio is one of several states, including Florida, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, where legislative and/or legal battles have occurred in recent years over tuition voucher programs. The constitutionality of Ohio's experimental voucher program is currently under consideration in federal court. The program provides vouchers for children from low income Cleveland families to attend private and religious schools.

In the latest Ohio Poll, residents were asked if they favor or oppose giving parents tax money to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the public school, private school, or parochial school of their choice.

Sixty-three percent of Ohioans favor giving parents tax money to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the public school of their choice, 33 percent oppose, and four percent don't know.

Fifty-four percent of Ohioans favor giving parents tax money to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the church related, or parochial school of their choice, 44 percent oppose, and two percent don't know.

Fifty-two percent of Ohioans favor giving parents tax money to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the private, non-religious school of their choice, 45 percent oppose, and two percent don't know.

. . . AND MANY OHIOANS HAVE NOT HEARD OR READ ABOUT CHARTER SCHOOLS IN OHIO

In 1997 Ohio lawmakers authorized the establishment of the state's first independent schools funded by tax dollars. These schools, which are also known as charter schools, are now permitted in Ohio's urban school districts. Any district designated by the state as being in severe academic distress will also be eligible for charter schools beginning next year.

Ohio residents were asked if they have heard or read anything about the charter schools that have been established in Ohio. At this time, about one-third of Ohioans have heard or read about charter schools, while 67 percent have not.

Although many Ohio residents have not heard or read about Ohio's charter schools, those with an awareness of the schools are more likely to say such schools provide a higher quality of education than say charter schools provide a lower quality of education when compared to Ohio's public schools.

Forty-three percent of state residents who are aware of charter schools say such schools provide a higher quality of education than Ohio's public schools, 10 percent say charter schools provide a lower quality of education, 34 percent say charter schools and Ohio's public schools provide the same quality of education, and 13 percent don't know.

SUB-GROUP ANALYSIS

College graduates, residents with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more per year and Republicans are among those more likely to cite education as Ohio's most important problem.

African-Americans cite crime (25%) more frequently than education (20%) as Ohio's most important problem.

Majorities of Ohioans in most demographic and geographic sub-groups favor giving parents vouchers to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the public school of their choice. Ohioans 65 years of age and older and residents of the Columbus area are among those less likely to support public school vouchers.

African-Americans, Catholics, residents of the Cleveland area and residents between the ages of 30 and 45 are among those more likely to favor giving parents vouchers to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the private, non-religious school of their choice. Residents of the Columbus area are more likely than other Ohioans to oppose private school vouchers.

African-Americans, Catholics and residents with household incomes of less than \$20,000 per year are among those more likely to favor giving parents tax money to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education at the church related, or parochial school of their choice.

Awareness of Ohio's charter schools tends to be higher among college graduates.

Ohio Poll Methodology

These findings are based on the most recent Ohio Poll conducted by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati from October 13 through November 2, 1999.

A random sample of 870 adults from throughout the state was interviewed by telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to plus or minus 3.3 percent.

In addition to sampling error, there are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects which can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Results reported for subgroups have a potential for somewhat larger variation than those for the entire population.

Respondents to the Ohio Poll were asked:

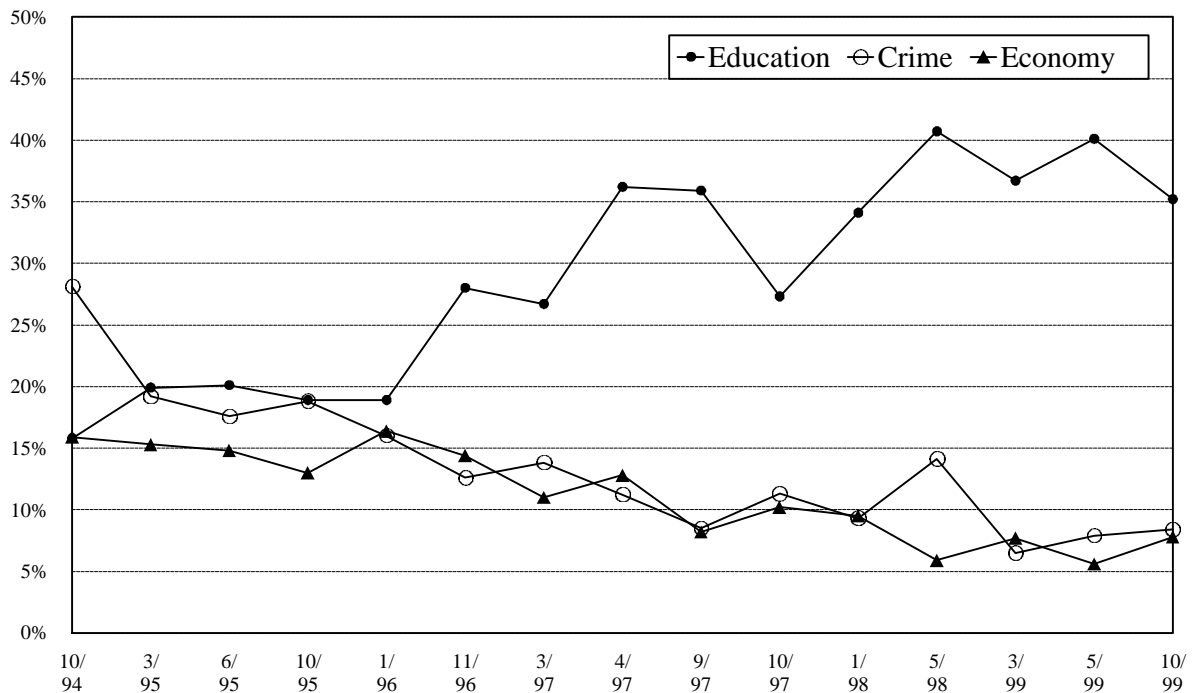
- "There are many problems facing the state of Ohio today. In general, what do you think is the most important problem facing the state of Ohio today?"
- "Please think about the issue of giving parents tax money to pay for part or all of their child's elementary and secondary education. Do you favor or oppose giving parents education tax credits, or vouchers, to pay for their child's tuition . . .
 - a. at the public school of their choice?"
 - b. at the private, non-religious school of their choice?"
 - c. at the church related, or parochial school of their choice?"
- "Several charter schools have been established in the state of Ohio. Have you heard or read anything about these charter schools?"
- "Thinking about the quality of education offered by charter schools in the state of Ohio . . . overall, do you think charter schools offer a higher quality education than Ohio's public schools, the same quality education as the public schools, or a lower quality education than Ohio's public schools?"

Most Important Problem Facing Ohio*

	<u>Percent</u>
Education (Total)	35%
Education funding issues	14
Education quality issues	9
Education (in general)	7
Violence in schools	2
Other education issues	3
Crime	8
Economy/unemployment	8
Taxes	5
Road conditions	4
Drug & alcohol abuse	3
Environmental problems/pollution	3
Health care problems	2
Problems of the poor/homeless	2
Other	20
Don't know	10

(N=865)

Most Important Problem Facing Ohio



Favor or Oppose Giving Parents Education Vouchers to Pay For Tuition*

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
At public school of choice	63%	33%	4%	(N=850)
At parochial school of choice	54	44	2	(N=852)
At private school of choice	52	45	2	(N=851)

Heard or Read About Ohio's Charter Schools*

	<u>Percent</u>
Yes	33%
No/Don't know	67
	(N=863)

Quality of Education Provided by Charter Schools Compared to Ohio's Public Schools*

	<u>Percent</u> <u>(All adults)</u>	<u>Percent</u> <u>(Adults who have heard</u> <u>of charter schools)</u>
Higher quality education	14%	43%
Same quality education	11	34
Lower quality education	3	10
Don't know	4	13
Haven't heard of charter schools	68	---
	(N=846)	(N=270)

*Rounded percentages.

Detailed Ohio Poll demographic tables are available online at the Institute for Policy Research World Wide Web site: <http://www.ipr.uc.edu/>. If you do not have online access but would like detailed tables, please call the IPR at 513/556-5028.

Most Important Problem Facing Ohio

	<u>Education</u>	<u>Crime</u>	<u>Economy/ Unemployment</u>	<u>Taxes</u>	<u>Road Conditions</u>
STATEWIDE	35%	8%	8%	5%	4%
Male	30	6	8	6	7
Female	40	11	8	3	1
African-American	20	25	10	2	0
White male	32	6	9	4	7
White female	43	9	6	3	1
18 to 29	31	11	6	4	6
30 to 45	38	11	6	2	4
46 to 64	36	7	12	2	2
65 and over	36	4	8	7	3
Less than high school	16	10	9	6	3
High school graduate	33	9	7	4	4
Some college	40	9	8	2	2
College graduate	49	6	8	4	4
Household income less than \$20,000	24	10	11	2	1
Household income \$20,000 to \$39,999	32	11	9	4	3
Household income \$40,000 to \$59,999	37	7	7	3	5
Household income \$60,000 or more	47	9	5	4	4
Registered to vote	39	8	9	4	4
Not registered to vote	27	12	5	3	3
Democrat	32	10	9	4	3
Independent	30	7	7	2	2
Republican	46	7	7	3	5
Liberal	35	8	3	6	3
Moderate	39	9	9	3	3
Conservative	37	8	8	3	4
Protestant	36	9	9	4	4
Catholic	41	7	5	5	5
Union household	39	9	11	7	2
Non-union household	35	9	7	3	4
Cincinnati area	37	9	5	3	5
Cleveland area	40	8	3	6	2
Columbus area	33	7	8	3	8
Dayton area	36	12	4	2	3
Other area	29	8	17	6	3
Northeast Ohio	38	8	6	8	3
Northwest Ohio	29	9	13	1	3
Central Ohio	35	7	8	2	6
Southeast Ohio	29	7	16	5	7
Southwest Ohio	37	11	5	2	4
Children in public schools	39	12	9	2	3
Children in private/parochial schools	41	4	1	3	0
No children in school	25	14	6	4	3
No children	35	7	8	4	4

**Favor or Oppose Giving Parents Education Vouchers to Pay For Tuition
at Public School of Choice**

	<u>Favor</u> 63%	<u>Oppose</u> 33%	<u>Don't Know</u> 4%
STATEWIDE			
Male	64	33	2
Female	62	32	6
African-American	68	25	7
White male	64	34	2
White female	61	34	5
18 to 29	73	24	3
30 to 45	64	31	5
46 to 64	61	37	2
65 and over	51	44	5
Less than high school	67	27	7
High school graduate	61	35	4
Some college	67	29	4
College graduate	59	38	3
Household income less than \$20,000	67	29	4
Household income \$20,000 to \$39,999	61	35	4
Household income \$40,000 to \$59,999	64	32	4
Household income \$60,000 or more	61	37	2
Registered to vote	61	36	3
Not registered to vote	70	25	5
Democrat	62	35	4
Independent	59	32	9
Republican	64	33	3
Liberal	65	32	3
Moderate	59	36	4
Conservative	65	32	3
Protestant	59	37	4
Catholic	70	26	3
Union household	59	36	5
Non-union household	64	32	3
Cincinnati area	73	24	3
Cleveland area	60	35	5
Columbus area	53	44	4
Dayton area	71	28	2
Other area	66	29	5
Northeast Ohio	60	35	5
Northwest Ohio	67	28	5
Central Ohio	51	46	4
Southeast Ohio	69	27	4
Southwest Ohio	72	26	2
Children in public schools	68	28	4
Children in private/parochial schools	75	25	0
No children in school	74	21	5
No children	57	39	4

**Favor or Oppose Giving Parents Education Vouchers to Pay For Tuition
at Private School of Choice**

STATEWIDE	<u>Favor</u> 52%	<u>Oppose</u> 45%	<u>Don't Know</u> 2%
Male	53	47	1
Female	52	44	4
African-American	68	27	5
White male	52	47	1
White female	51	45	3
18 to 29	52	47	1
30 to 45	60	39	2
46 to 64	53	45	1
65 and over	39	54	7
Less than high school	49	44	6
High school graduate	53	44	3
Some college	52	46	1
College graduate	55	44	1
Household income less than \$20,000	52	44	4
Household income \$20,000 to \$39,999	51	48	1
Household income \$40,000 to \$59,999	54	45	1
Household income \$60,000 or more	54	44	2
Registered to vote	52	46	2
Not registered to vote	56	41	3
Democrat	53	43	4
Independent	48	49	3
Republican	52	48	1
Liberal	51	47	1
Moderate	53	45	3
Conservative	54	44	2
Protestant	49	48	3
Catholic	61	37	2
Union household	47	49	4
Non-union household	54	44	2
Cincinnati area	55	44	1
Cleveland area	60	39	1
Columbus area	39	60	2
Dayton area	56	41	4
Other area	50	46	4
Northeast Ohio	57	41	3
Northwest Ohio	50	47	4
Central Ohio	40	59	1
Southeast Ohio	52	46	2
Southwest Ohio	55	43	1
Children in public schools	61	38	1
Children in private/parochial schools	77	23	0
No children in school	68	32	0
No children	44	53	3

**Favor or Oppose Giving Parents Education Vouchers to Pay For Tuition
at Parochial School of Choice**

STATEWIDE	<u>Favor</u> 54%	<u>Oppose</u> 44%	<u>Don't Know</u> 2%
Male	53	46	1
Female	55	41	4
African-American	67	29	4
White male	52	48	0
White female	54	42	4
18 to 29	55	45	0
30 to 45	60	38	2
46 to 64	56	43	1
65 and over	40	52	8
Less than high school	59	35	6
High school graduate	55	42	3
Some college	53	47	0
College graduate	53	46	1
Household income less than \$20,000	65	32	2
Household income \$20,000 to \$39,999	50	49	1
Household income \$40,000 to \$59,999	52	46	1
Household income \$60,000 or more	54	45	0
Registered to vote	54	44	2
Not registered to vote	57	40	3
Democrat	54	43	3
Independent	49	45	6
Republican	55	45	0
Liberal	51	48	1
Moderate	55	43	2
Conservative	59	39	2
Protestant	51	47	2
Catholic	66	32	2
Union household	50	48	2
Non-union household	56	42	2
Cincinnati area	57	43	0
Cleveland area	60	38	2
Columbus area	42	56	1
Dayton area	55	40	5
Other area	52	44	4
Northeast Ohio	57	41	3
Northwest Ohio	55	43	2
Central Ohio	42	57	1
Southeast Ohio	54	42	4
Southwest Ohio	56	42	1
Children in public schools	62	37	1
Children in private/parochial schools	80	20	0
No children in school	74	26	0
No children	45	52	3

Heard or Read About Ohio's Charter Schools

	<u>Yes</u> 33%	<u>No/Don't Know</u> 67%
STATEWIDE		
Male	35	65
Female	32	68
African-American	34	66
White male	36	64
White female	32	68
18 to 29	25	75
30 to 45	39	61
46 to 64	38	62
65 and over	30	70
Less than high school	12	88
High school graduate	30	70
Some college	34	66
College graduate	60	40
Household income less than \$20,000	29	71
Household income \$20,000 to \$39,999	30	70
Household income \$40,000 to \$59,999	38	62
Household income \$60,000 or more	46	54
Registered to vote	38	62
Not registered to vote	23	77
Democrat	32	68
Independent	28	72
Republican	41	59
Liberal	29	71
Moderate	40	60
Conservative	36	64
Protestant	33	67
Catholic	42	58
Union household	34	66
Non-union household	35	65
Cincinnati area	43	57
Cleveland area	36	64
Columbus area	26	74
Dayton area	31	69
Other area	31	69
Northeast Ohio	34	66
Northwest Ohio	40	60
Central Ohio	26	74
Southeast Ohio	13	87
Southwest Ohio	39	61
Children in public schools	40	60
Children in private/parochial schools	45	55
No children in school	30	70
No children	32	68

**Quality of Education Provided by Charter Schools Compared to Ohio's Public Schools
(All Adults)**

	<u>Higher</u> 14%	<u>Same</u> 11%	<u>Lower</u> 3%	<u>Don't Know</u> 4%	<u>Have Not Heard of Charter Schools</u> 68%
STATEWIDE					
Male	16	11	3	3	67
Female	12	10	3	5	69
African-American	10	14	4	5	67
White male	16	12	3	4	65
White female	12	11	3	5	69
18 to 29	10	9	2	5	75
30 to 45	17	12	4	4	62
46 to 64	16	14	3	4	64
65 and over	11	9	3	6	71
Less than high school	9	1	1	1	88
High school graduate	15	8	2	2	72
Some college	15	12	2	5	67
College graduate	15	25	8	11	41
Household income less than \$20,000	7	14	2	5	72
Household income \$20,000 to \$39,999	16	7	2	3	71
Household income \$40,000 to \$59,999	19	10	1	6	63
Household income \$60,000 or more	12	19	7	5	57
Registered to vote	15	13	4	5	63
Not registered to vote	11	8	1	3	77
Democrat	13	11	4	4	68
Independent	12	8	3	3	74
Republican	17	14	3	6	61
Liberal	14	10	3	1	71
Moderate	15	13	4	8	61
Conservative	17	12	3	3	65
Protestant	12	12	4	4	69
Catholic	21	12	2	6	59
Union household	15	12	4	2	67
Non-union household	14	11	3	5	67
Cincinnati area	21	10	5	5	58
Cleveland area	13	13	5	4	65
Columbus area	8	12	2	4	76
Dayton area	16	8	1	4	72
Other area	13	9	2	6	71
Northeast Ohio	13	12	5	3	67
Northwest Ohio	17	11	1	9	61
Central Ohio	8	13	1	4	74
Southeast Ohio	4	5	1	1	89
Southwest Ohio	20	9	4	5	62
Children in public schools	16	15	2	7	61
Children in private/parochial schools	39	2	3	0	56
No children in school	17	6	2	2	73
No children	11	11	4	4	70

Most Important Problem Facing Ohio

	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1994</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>June</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1995</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>Nov.</u> <u>1996</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>April</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>Sept.</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1997</u>	<u>Jan.</u> <u>1998</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1998</u>	<u>March</u> <u>1999</u>	<u>May</u> <u>1999</u>	<u>Oct.</u> <u>1999</u>
Education	15.8%	19.9%	20.1%	18.9%	18.9%	28.0%	26.7%	36.2%	35.9%	27.3%	34.1%	40.7%	36.7%	40.1%	35.2%
Crime	28.1	19.2	17.6	18.8	16.0	12.6	13.8	11.2	8.5	11.3	9.3	14.1	6.5	7.9	8.4
Economy/Unemployment	15.9	15.3	14.8	13.0	16.4	14.4	11.0	12.8	8.2	10.2	9.5	5.9	7.7	5.6	7.8
Taxes	4.4	2.7	4.1	4.3	4.8	4.7	3.3	3.3	3.7	4.6	5.5	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.5
Road conditions	1.7	2.3	2.2	2.9	2.4	1.4	4.3	3.1	4.3	3.5	3.0	2.6	5.2	3.2	4.0
Drug & Alcohol abuse	6.0	5.5	5.2	4.4	4.9	9.9	7.3	4.4	7.4	5.8	4.3	4.9	4.8	4.9	3.2
Environmental problems	1.4	1.7	2.1	1.5	1.5	1.4	2.0	2.0	3.1	4.0	3.4	1.5	1.4	2.2	2.8
Health care problems	3.9	2.6	1.8	2.8	2.2	1.6	1.7	1.3	1.6	1.4	1.0	0.8	1.8	1.3	2.5
Poverty/Homelessness	2.1	3.2	2.5	2.6	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.2	2.6	3.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.5
Welfare problems	2.3	6.4	5.2	5.3	3.4	2.4	3.6	3.0	3.3	3.1	2.5	1.9	1.6	1.1	0.8
Other	9.4	11.3	12.0	15.6	13.3	13.3	16.5	13.2	15.8	14.3	16.9	13.6	18.8	17.3	19.1
Don't know	7.6	9.8	10.4	10.0	12.9	7.4	5.9	7.3	5.8	8.8	9.2	8.8	10.3	11.4	10.2