



TEXAS PUBLIC EDUCATION PERCEPTIONS POLL

January 2019



KEY FINDINGS FROM THE 2019 PUBLIC EDUCATION PERCEPTIONS POLL

Media coverage and political rhetoric surrounding the need to focus on education issues has ramped up over the last year. But are Texans in agreement? What do they think needs the most immediate attention? And who do they think is responsible for addressing the issues they care most about?

Raise Your Hand Texas® commissioned a statewide poll of Texans' perspectives and expectations heading into the 2019 legislative session. The survey reveals Texans strongly believe our students and teachers need more support and that our state leaders bear the greatest responsibility for strengthening our public schools.

- 1 Texans say education is the most important issue for the governor and the Texas Legislature to address this year.** According to respondents, the top three education priorities this legislative session are:
 1. School funding
 2. Teacher pay
 3. High-stakes standardized testing
- 2 Most Texans believe the governor and legislature bear the greatest responsibility for improving public education, above any other federal or local group.**
- 3 Texans have a favorable impression of their local public schools.** More than half of Texans give the public school nearest them and schools in their community a grade of an “A” or “B.” Their impressions drop significantly when asked about schools throughout Texas and across the nation.
- 4 Texans rate their local teachers highly.** A supermajority (68 percent) give their local teachers a grade of either “A” or “B,” while only 3.5 percent of respondents give teachers in their community an “F” grade.
- 5 Texans think the state needs to invest more in public education, and they don’t believe funding should be tied to a standardized test.** A strong majority say not enough money is being spent on education. Nearly 93 percent believe programs receiving public dollars must be academically and financially accountable and transparent to taxpayers. More than 70 percent oppose high-stakes standardized testing as a measure of accountability for public schools. Nearly 80 percent oppose tying public school funding increases to student performance on standardized tests, where higher test scores mean more money for a school.
- 6 Most Texans mistakenly believe the state covers a significantly larger share of education funding than it actually does.** A majority (54.3 percent) think state and local property taxes cover equal shares or the state covers the majority of funding. In actuality, the state is projected to only cover 38 percent of school funding in 2019, while local property taxes are projected to cover 62 percent.
- 7 Most Texans support full-day pre-K for at-risk students, and believe the state should fund it.** A supermajority (82.5 percent) of respondents believe pre-K levels the playing field for school readiness. Nearly 80 percent believe at-risk students should have access to full-day pre-K, rather than half-day pre-K. More than 70 percent say the state, rather than local communities, should fund full-day pre-K.
- 8 Texans value teachers and overwhelmingly want teachers to be paid more.** When asked what they value most about Texas public schools, Texans most often respond with:
 1. Teachers and staff
 2. Quality/focus on students
 3. Cost and accessibility

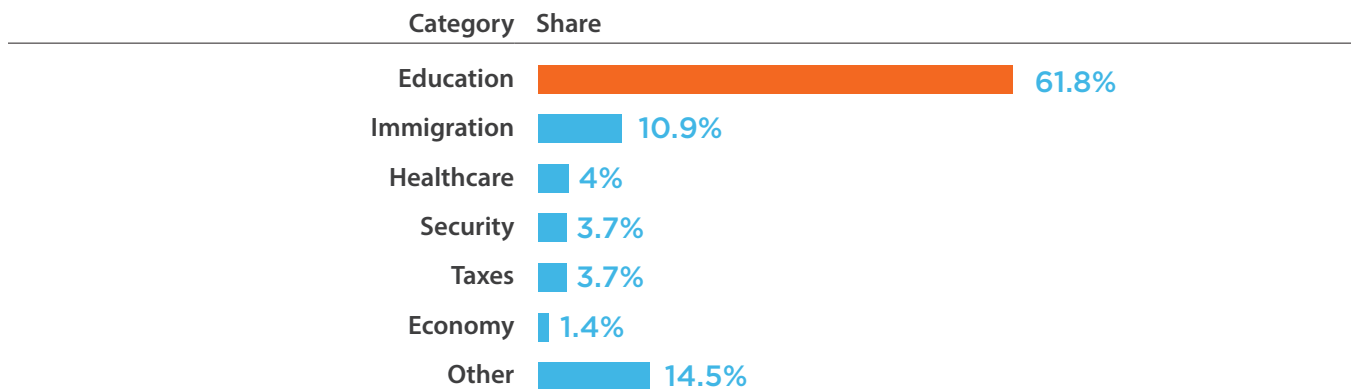
More than 85 percent of respondents believe teachers should be paid more. When asked about their greatest concerns about Texas public schools, Texans cite the following:

 1. Poor teaching
 2. Lack of funding and teacher pay
 3. Too much focus on high-stakes standardized testing

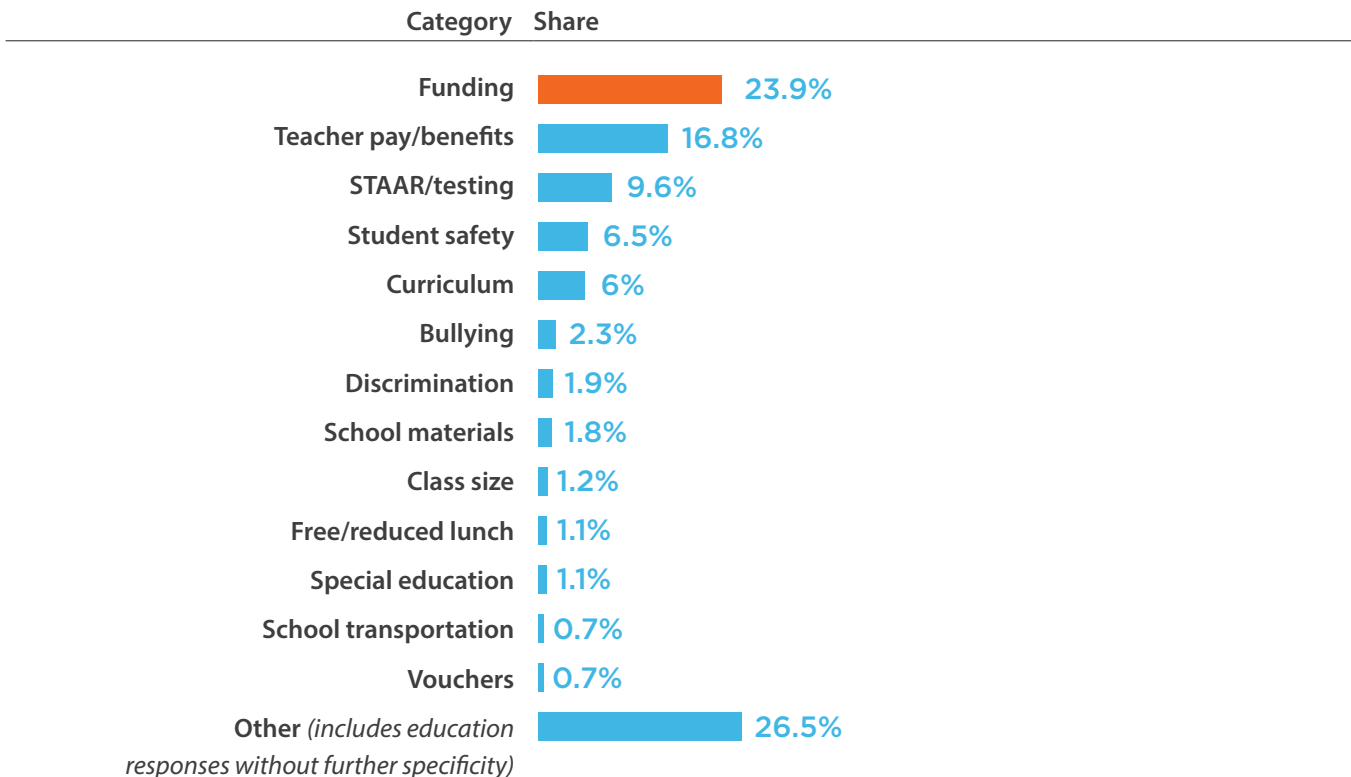
POLLING RESULTS

On Texas Public Schools and Educators

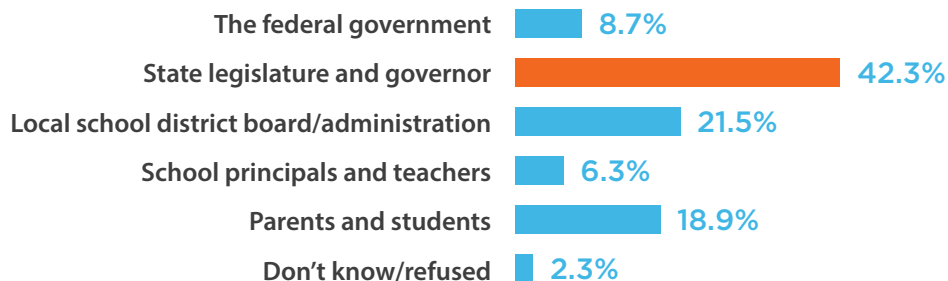
1. What is the most important issue for the governor and new legislature to address this year? (*open-ended*)



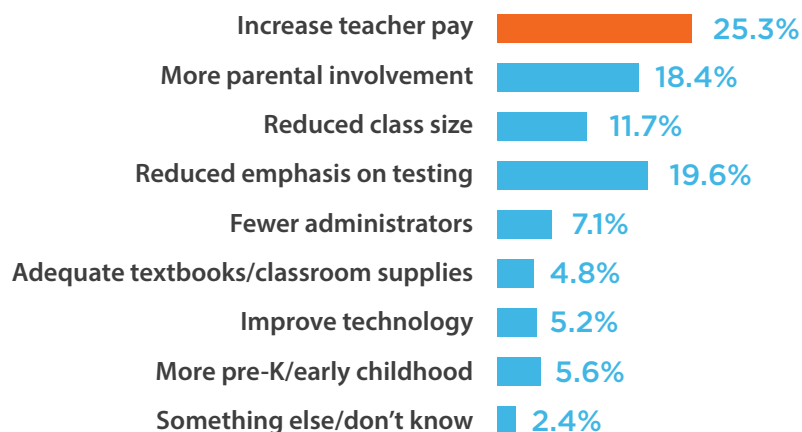
2. Among the education responses, the top categories are: (*open-ended*)



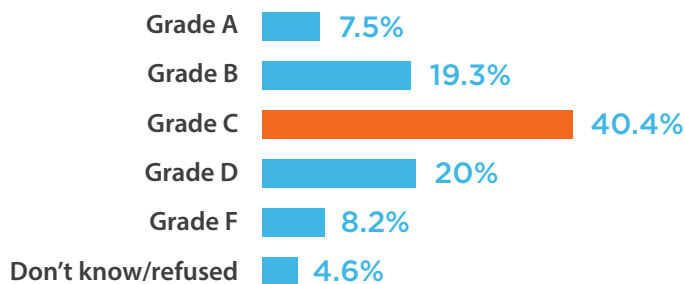
3. Who do you think bears responsibility for improving public education?



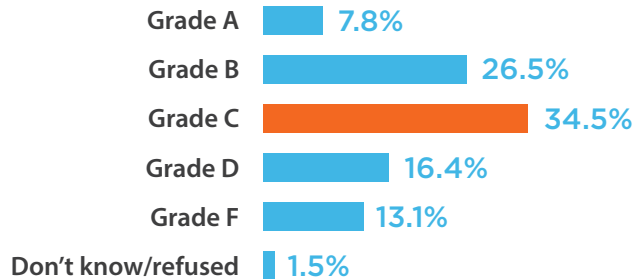
4. Which of the following do you think is the most important first step to improve the quality of Texas public schools?



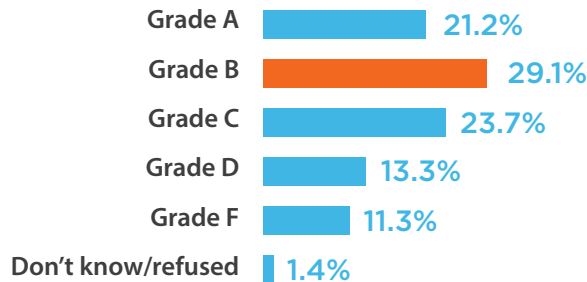
5. On a scale of A to F, with A being exemplary in terms of preparing students for college and a career, and F being failing, what grade would you give public schools nationally?



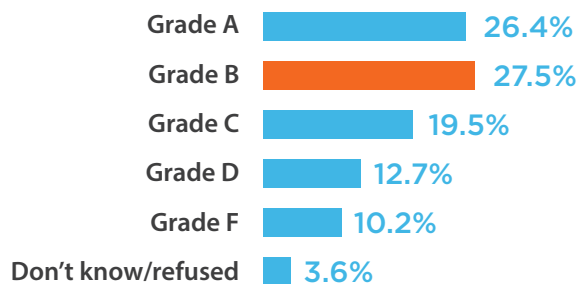
6. On a scale of A to F, with A being exemplary in terms of preparing students for college and a career, and F being failing, what grade would you give Texas public schools?



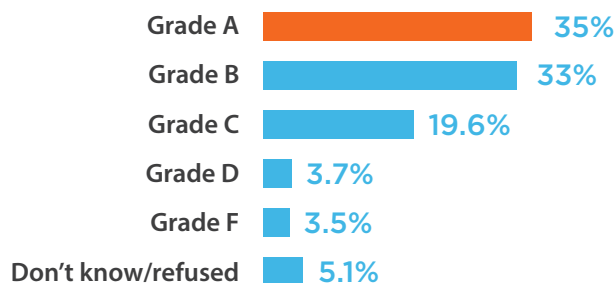
7. On a scale of A to F, with A being exemplary in terms of preparing students for college and a career, and F being failing, what grade would you give the public schools in your community?



8. On a scale of A to F, with A being exemplary in terms of preparing students for college and a career, and F being failing, what grade would you give the public school nearest you (the school in your neighborhood or the one your child attends)?

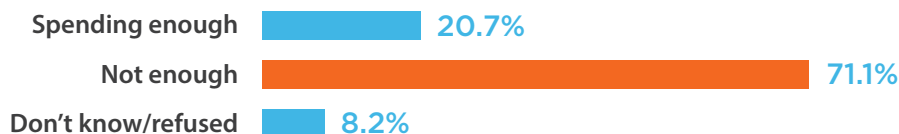


9. On a scale of A to F, with A being exemplary, and F being failing, if you were to grade the teachers in your local community, what grade would you give them?



► School Funding

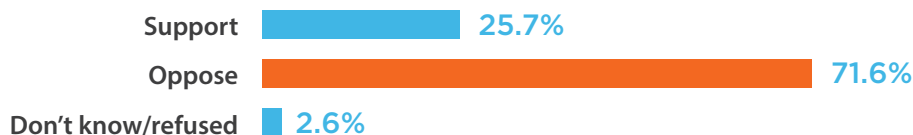
10. Do you believe there is or is not enough money being spent on education here in the state of Texas?



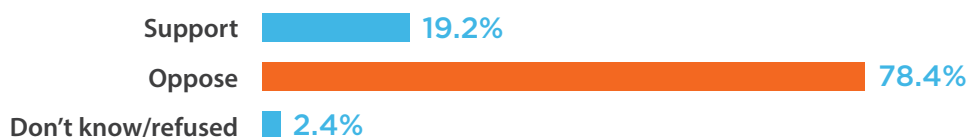
11. Do you believe education programs receiving taxpayer dollars must be academically and financially accountable and transparent to taxpayers?



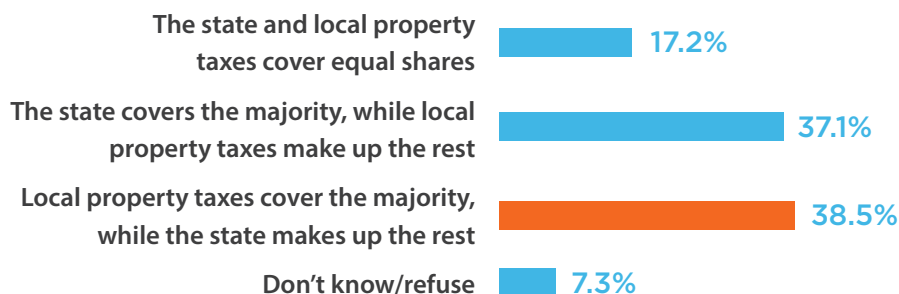
12. Do you support or oppose standardized testing like STAAR as a measure of accountability for our public schools?



13. Do you support or oppose increases in public school funding tied to student performance on state standardized tests, where higher test scores means more money for a school campus?

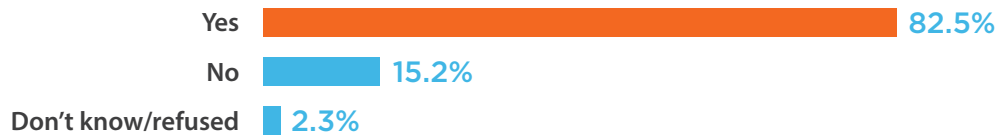


14. When it comes to covering the costs of funding our public schools, what do you think is the current mix between state share and the share paid by local property taxes?

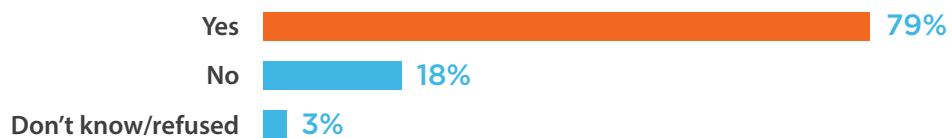


► *Pre-Kindergarten*

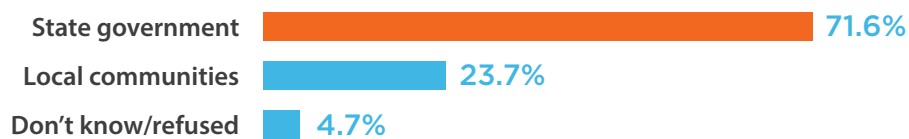
15. Do you believe high-quality school district pre-K for at-risk students can help level the playing field for school readiness?



16. Do you believe at-risk students should have access to a full-day (6 hours) of high-quality pre-K versus a half-day (3 hours)?



17. If the state authorizes full-day pre-K, who should fund the expansion of district pre-K to full-day: The state government or local communities?

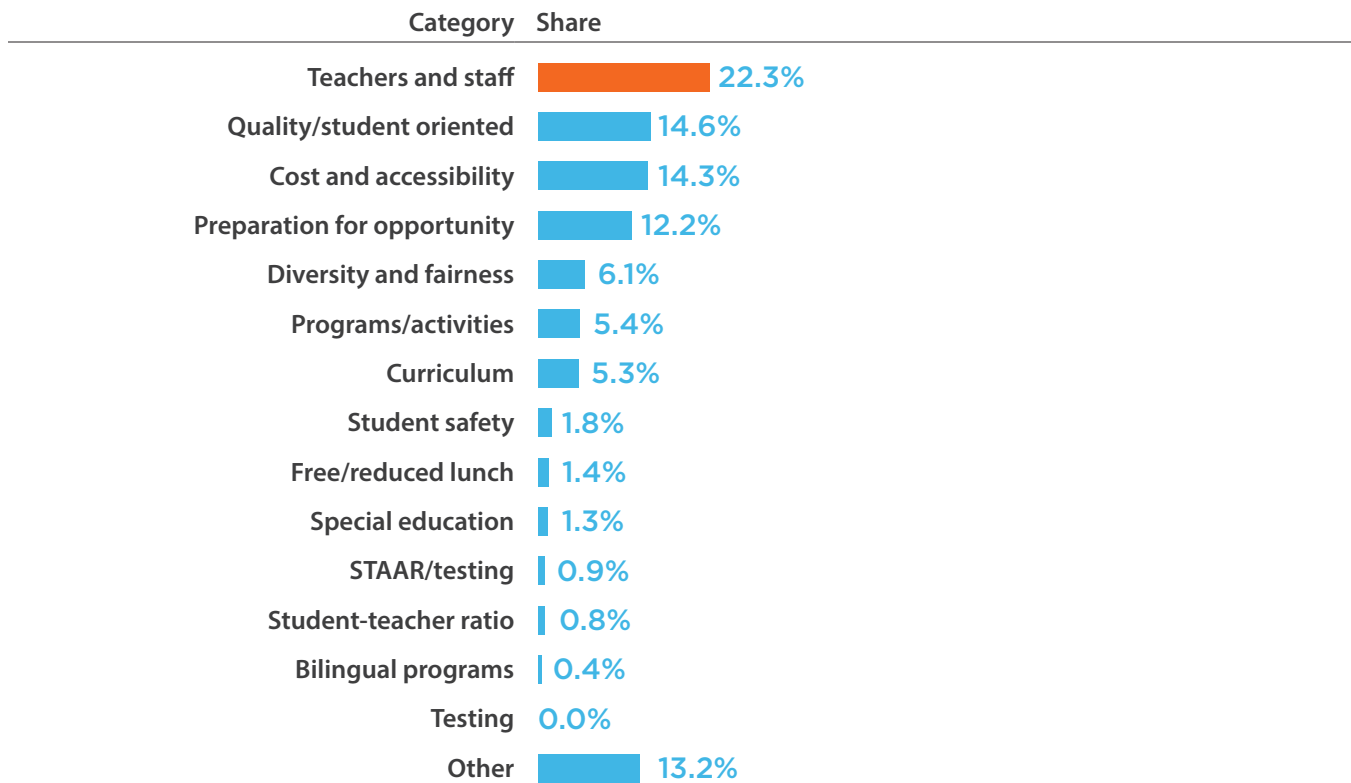


► *Teachers*

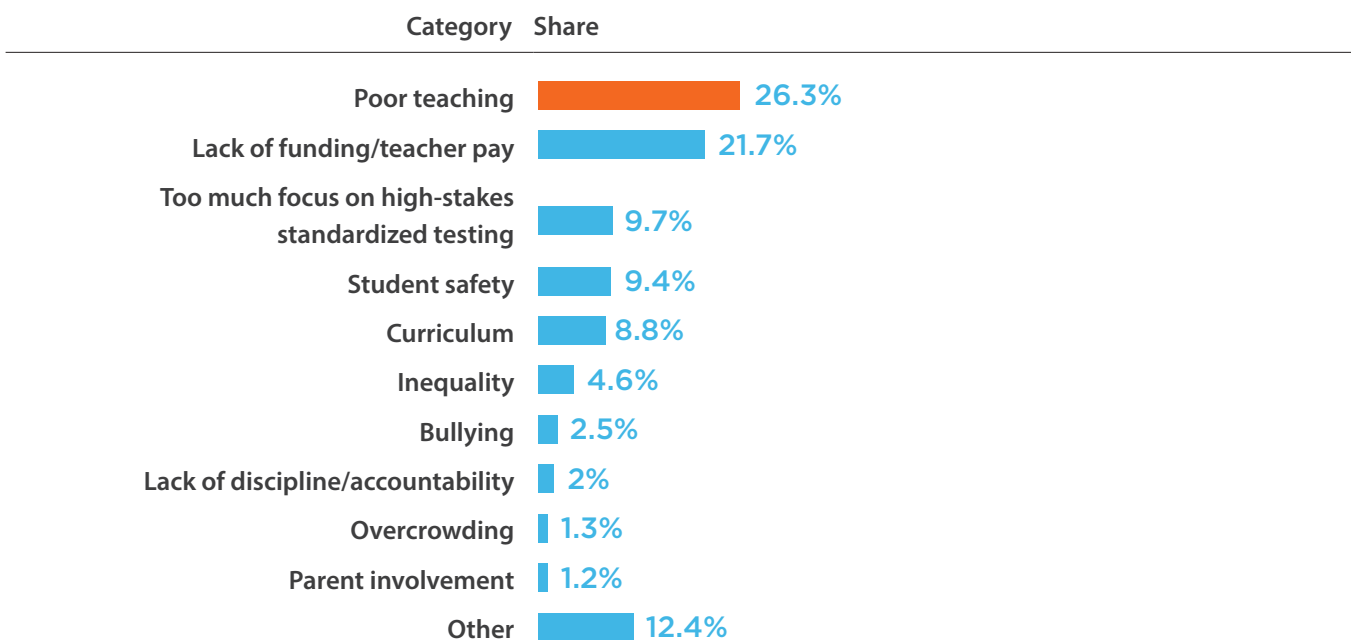
18. Do you think the state should pay teachers more?



19. What do you value most about Texas public schools? (*open-ended*)



20. What is your greatest concern about Texas public schools? (*open-ended*)



METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted January 2–6, 2019, by Outreach Strategists. Live callers were utilized over these five days, and the instrument was delivered in English. The calls were split between landlines (48 percent) and cell phones (52 percent).

The 1,046 sample has a margin of error (MoE) of 3.03 percent, and is weighted to reflect the demographics of likely voters for the 2020 general election.

The margin of sampling error describes how close a survey result is to the true population value. Polling surveys only reach a sample of the overall population, so they do not “perfectly” match the result if everyone in the population was actually interviewed.

Here, the margin of error of plus or minus 3.03 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level means if this survey was fielded 100 times, the polling results would be within 3.03 percentage points of the total population 95 of those times. This is an industry standard threshold for public opinion research.

Due to length, split samples were utilized within the instrument and the margins of error for these samples are slightly greater.

- Sample A (Q10, 11; 13-17; 19, 20) has 527 respondents with a MoE of +/- 4.27 percent
- Sample B (Q12) has 519 respondents with a MoE of +/- 4.30 percent
- All other questions (Q1-9; 18) has 1,046 respondents with a MoE of +/- 3.03 percent

ABOUT THE SAMPLE

Gender

Female	55%
Male	45%

Age

18-34	21%
35-44	16%
45-54	18%
55-64	23%
65+	20%

Race

White	64%
Black	9%
Asian	1%
Hispanic	23%
Other	3%

Party

Republican/ Lean Rep	42%
Democrat/ Lean Dem	32%
Independent	21%
Some Other Party	5%

Region/Market

Dallas	30%
Houston	27%
San Antonio	11%
Austin	9%
South	6%
Rest of State	17%



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