



STATEWIDE SURVEY SHOWS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FOR REFORMING THE SBOE CURRICULUM REVISION PROCESS IN TEXAS

Texans Also Support Comprehensive Sex Ed, Anti-bullying Policies and Reject Vouchers

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A new statewide survey shows Texans overwhelmingly support reforming the way the state sets requirements for curriculum and textbooks in public schools and reject key "culture war" positions the right has taken regarding public education.

"The future of education in Texas stands at a crossroads," said Kathy Miller, president of the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund, which commissioned the survey. "Texans want a cease-fire in the divisive 'culture war' battles that have dominated education issues in our state and think what our schoolchildren learn should be based on the knowledge and expertise of teachers and scholars, not the personal agendas of politicians on the State Board of Education."

The May survey by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research reveals attitudes of likely voters in Texas on key issues involving what public schools should teach students:

- 72 percent of likely Texas voters want teachers and scholars, not politicians, to be responsible for writing curriculum requirements for public schools.
- The overwhelming support for putting experts in charge of writing curriculum standards is bipartisan (84 percent of Democrats, 63 percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Independents) and evident in all of the state's major urban regions.
- Texas voters have complex views regarding the intersection of religion and education, with 68 percent saying separation of church and state is a key constitutional principle but 49 percent saying religion should have more influence in public schools.
- Support for more religion in public schools, however, should not suggest that Texas voters also back the positions of social conservatives on hot-button "culture war" issues.
 - 80 percent of likely Texas voters agree that high school classes on sex education should teach "about contraception, such as condoms and other birth control, along with abstinence."
 - 88 percent of likely Texas voters think public schools should be required "to protect all children from bullying, harassment, and discrimination in school, including the children of gay and lesbian parents or teenagers who are gay."
 - 55 percent of likely Texas voters oppose using publicly funded vouchers that allow some students to attend private and religious schools.

The survey data suggest that Texas voters take a common-sense approach to issues involving education, said Anna Greenberg of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner.

"Texas voters – regardless of political affiliation or ideological views – agree that politics has no place in developing public school curricula," Greenberg said. "Voters show strong support for ensuring that teachers and scholars can determine curriculum standards for public schools that provide a high quality education and prepare students for the future, without interference from partisan state board members."

The May 4-12 survey came as the State Board of Education neared a final decision in its controversial debate over new social studies curriculum standards. The social studies debate followed similarly divisive battles over curriculum standards for science and language arts.

The survey of 972 likely voters in Texas has a margin of error of +/- 4 percent. The survey included an oversample of likely voters aged 18-29 and those living in the seven fastest-growing counties: Collin, Comal, Fort Bend, Hays, Montgomery, Rockwall and Williamson). The full survey report is available at www.tfn.org/educationsurvey.

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The Texas Freedom Network Education Fund is a nonpartisan research and citizen education organization focusing on public education, religious freedom and civil liberties.