

School Funding and Education Policy in Ohio:

A Public Opinion Survey

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Executive Summary

A randomized statewide telephone survey of 777 Ohio adult residents was conducted on March 26th – April 12th, 2007, asking the respondents a variety of questions concerning their opinions about education policy and the funding of public schools. Highlights of the findings are summarized in this section. The full report, including data tables and charts, follows.

Support for proposed education policies of Governor Strickland

Increased funding for poor schools and universal pre-school programs: The governor's proposal to increase funding for the poorest public school districts by 6% over two years had 68.8% support, with 18.5% opposed, and 12.5% having no opinion. Support was strongest among Democrats at 80% (Republicans at 36%), and was most strongly supported by 18-24 year olds at 84%. His proposal to provide universal pre-school programming enjoyed 64.1% support, with 25% opposed. Democrats were the strongest supports at 82%, with Republicans at 49%. Young people were also the strongest supporters, with 84% of 18-24 year olds approving of universal pre-school programs.

Charter schools and vouchers: 42.3% supported limiting the operation of charter schools to non-profit entities, while 35.5% were opposed, and 21.2% had no opinion. Democrats and Independents support this by an average of 48%, while 38% of Republicans approved. Less support was expressed for restricting the voucher program to the Cleveland schools, with only 33% in favor, 42% opposed, and 25% having no opinion. Only 22% of Republicans were in favor, while 39% of Democrats and 27% of Independents were supportive.

Exempting the first \$25,000 in home value from property taxes for senior citizens: This was supported by 75% of respondents, with support increasing with age, from 52% of 18-24 year olds, to 82% among those aged 45-54 and those over 65.

Opinions concerning alternative school funding policy reforms

Proposed state constitutional amendment to provide full funding for public schools: A coalition of education advocacy groups has proposed amending the Ohio Constitution through a ballot initiative for which signatures are currently being gathered. The proposed amendment requires creation of a special commission by the state school board to determine the full cost of providing a high quality education for every school district. The legislature would then be required to fully fund the commission's recommendations. A property tax reduction for senior citizens is included in of the amendment. This proposal was supported or strongly supported by 63% of respondents, with 19% opposed, and 18% having no opinion. Majorities of Democrats (69%), Republicans (59%), and Independents (67%) supported the proposal.

Cap property taxes and have the state pay the balance of costs for public education: A solid majority of respondents supported this idea, with 67% in favor, 16% opposed, and 17% having no opinion. Political affiliation and other demographic factors were not significant influences on opinion about this issue.

Legalize casino gambling and slots, and use money for public education: Ohioans were split on this issue, with 48% expressing support, 46% being opposed, and only 6% having no opinion. Support was highest among younger respondents, with 52% of 18-24 year olds in favor, and 62% of 25-34 year olds. Only 44% of 45-54 year olds and those over 65 expressed support. Support also declined as education level rose, with 55% of those without a high school diploma in favor, and only 21% of those with a terminal advanced degree being in favor.

Support was strongest among Democrats at 58%, and weakest among Republicans at 37%, with 51% of Independents being in favor. An interesting note about this question is that this question had the lowest level of “no opinion” responses, ranging from 3% - 9%. The casino/slots initiative that was defeated by voters in November 2006 may have had some affect on this outcome.

Property taxation, H.B. 920, and property assessment: Respondents seem to favor keeping the existing system of voter-approval of school funding levies in place, along with keeping the system of having counties assess property value every three years. 70% of respondents support continuing to vote on property tax levies to support schools, with 22% opposed, and 8% having no opinion. When asked whether the property tax freeze provisions of H.B. 920 should be phased out to allow taxes to rise with inflation, 61% of respondents were opposed to the change, while 22% were in favor, and 17% were not sure or had no opinion. 79% support the existing system of counties assessing property value every three years, with 8% favoring the state conducting assessments, and 11% responding with “Don’t know.”

Consolidating school districts to save tax dollars: Respondents were divided about the idea of consolidating school districts to save money, with 44% in favor, 43% opposed, and 13% having no opinion. When asked if respondents favored having their own school district consolidated to reduce their property tax, opposition rose to 49%, with 41% being in favor, and 10% having not opinion.

Which institution should have primary responsibility for determining the level of funding for public education? Ohioans support the status quo, with 39% saying that local school boards should be the primary institution deciding the level of spending for schools. The second highest level of support (28%) was for the special commission mentioned in the earlier question concerning the proposed constitutional amendment. The state school board came in third at 18%. The lowest levels of support were for the state legislature at 9%, the governor at 6%, and the Ohio Supreme Court at 2%. This finding reinforces the importance Ohioans place on local control of public schools.

Respondent opinion concerning revenue and spending in their own school districts

Levels of funding for individual school districts: Respondents were asked about the adequacy of funding for their school district, and then asked about specific spending categories. When asked about overall funding for their school district, 27% said it was “adequate,” while 20% said it was “too high” or “high,” and 30% said it was “low” or “too low” (23% responded “I don’t know.”) Responses to questions concerning property tax support and state funding support indicate a decline, with 26% of respondents rating property tax support as “adequate,” and only 15% rating state funding levels for their district as “adequate.” Not surprisingly, 50% of respondents thought the amount of their property tax is “too high” or “high,” while only 7% thought it was “low” or “too low” (17% said “I don’t know.”) By contrast, 49% of respondents thought the level of state support was “low” or “too low,” while only 7% thought it was “too high” or “high” (29% said “I don’t know”).

Levels of spending by individual school districts: Respondents were asked to rate the level of spending for each of the following categories: administrators, teachers, school materials and books and supplies, busing and transportation, sports, other extracurricular activities, and buildings and maintenance. Those respondent with “adequate” formed the largest bloc of opinion, ranging from 32% for spending on administrators, to 57% for spending on buses and transportation. The most significant ratings of “too high” and “high” were for spending on administrators at 44%, and spending on sports at 24%. The areas where respondents thought spending was “too low” or “low” that were most significant were for teachers at 42%, school materials and books and supplies at 37%, other extracurricular activities at 33%, and buildings and maintenance at 27%.

Respondent demographics

The demographics of the respondent pool are as follows:

- * 64% male, 36% female

- * the ages of respondents by category were 18-24 year olds at 5.8%; 25-34 year olds at 11.2%; 35-44 year olds at 21%; 45-54 year olds at 24%; 55-64 year olds at 16.1%; and those over 65 at 21.9%.

- * the race of respondents were 91.7% Caucasian; 5.3% African-American; 0.3% Hispanic-American; 0.5% Asian-American, and more than one of the above categories at 2.3%.

- * the level of education of respondents by category was 3.7% with terminal advanced degrees (Ph.D., J.D, etc.); 12.4% with Master's degrees; 24.3% with Bachelor's degrees; 28.9% with some college or technical school; 26.6% with a high school diploma; and 4.1% did not finish high school.

- * the annual household income of respondents was as follows: above \$100,000/year, 14.9%; \$80,001-\$100,000/year, 11.1%; \$54,001-\$80,000/year, 12%; \$50,001-\$65,000/year, 16.3%; \$40,001-\$50,000/year, 9.4%; \$30,001-\$40,000/year, 11.7%; \$20,001-\$30,000/year, 13.5%; less than \$20,000/year, 11.1%.

- * the occupations of respondents was as follows: office work/clerical, 11.8%; construction/trades, 4.1%; farmwork, 0.9%; factory/industrial, 3.9%; homemaker, 9%; teacher, 7.9%; manager, 5.1%; government or nonprofit sector, 2.7%; attorney, 1.2%; medical, 6.3%; retired, 23.9%; other, 23.3%.

- * the political affiliation of respondents reported as 35.3% Republican; 34.3% Democrat; 19% Independent; and 11.4% Other.

- * respondents were asked if they have school aged children, if yes, how many, and whether they attend public or private school. 35.9% reported having school aged children, of whom 44.4% had one, 37.9% had two, 11.9% had three, and 5.7% had four or more. Of this subgroup with school aged children, 83% sent their kids to public schools, 14.9% sent their kids to private schools, and 2.1% sent kids to both types of school.

Introduction

This report is a summary of a statewide survey of Ohio adult residents concerning a variety of issues related to school funding and education policy in Ohio. The report includes survey results from specific questions concerning proposed policies of Governor Ted Strickland, as well as policy options that have been discussed as part of the ongoing debate about reforming the system of school funding in Ohio.

The poll was conducted over a three week period, from March 26th through April 12th, 2007. Students from Baldwin-Wallace College were hired to conduct the poll, which was financially supported by a grant from the Baldwin-Wallace College Gund Student Research Grant program, and from a start-up grant for the Public Interest Research Center provided by the Murphy Foundation. An average of ten students per night used the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system of the Baldwin-Wallace College Public Interest Research Center.

The survey instrument was designed by Tom Sutton, Ph.D., principal investigator, and was reviewed by Baldwin-Wallace College colleagues Robert Janke, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education, and Mark Mattern, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science and co-director of the Public Interest Research Center. Their helpful comments resulted in significant improvements to the survey instrument. Any remaining errors or imperfections are solely the responsibility of the author.

The sample

A random-digit-dial telephone list for the state of Ohio was purchased from GoLeads (Omaha, NE), a professional vendor of telephone number databases. The survey was completed by 777 respondents, with a margin of error of 3.6% at the 95% confidence level. Some categories may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The survey captured the following demographic information about the respondents: gender, age, race, household income, occupation, if they have school-aged children (and how many), if the respondent is a registered voter, and political affiliation. The only factors to have a statistical significant effect on respondent answers to questions concerning education policy were the political affiliation, age, and level of education of respondents. Other demographic factors, such as whether the respondent had school-aged children, were statistically significant on two or fewer questions.

The respondent pool was 64% male and 36% female. The respondents' age, race, education, household income, and occupations, as well as whether they have school-aged children are provided below:

Demographic Detail of Respondents

Table 1: Age range

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 24	44	5.7	5.8	5.8
	25 - 34	85	10.9	11.2	16.9
	35 - 44	160	20.6	21.0	37.9
	45 - 54	183	23.6	24.0	61.9
	55 - 64	123	15.8	16.1	78.1
	65 or older	167	21.5	21.9	100.0
	Total	762	98.1	100.0	
Missing	System	15	1.9		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 2: Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Caucasian	692	89.1	91.7	91.7
	African-American	40	5.1	5.3	97.0
	Hispanic	2	.3	.3	97.2
	Asian-American	4	.5	.5	97.7
	More than one of the above	17	2.2	2.3	100.0
	Total	755	97.2	100.0	
Missing	System	22	2.8		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 3: Level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Did not finish high school	31	4.0	4.1	4.1
	High school diploma/G.E.D.	202	26.0	26.6	30.7
	Some college or technical school	220	28.3	28.9	59.6
	Bachelor's degree	185	23.8	24.3	83.9
	Master's degree	94	12.1	12.4	96.3
	MBA, JD, MD, or other terminal professional degree	18	2.3	2.4	98.7
	Ph.D./Ed.D.	10	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	760	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	17	2.2		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 4: Annual household income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than \$20,000	72	9.3	11.1	11.1
	\$20,001 - \$30,000	88	11.3	13.5	24.6
	\$30,001 - \$40,000	76	9.8	11.7	36.3
	\$40,001 - \$50,000	61	7.9	9.4	45.7
	\$50,001 - \$65,000	106	13.6	16.3	62.0
	\$65,001 - \$80,000	78	10.0	12.0	74.0
	\$80,001 - \$100,000	72	9.3	11.1	85.1
	Above \$100,000	97	12.5	14.9	100.0
	Total	650	83.7	100.0	
Missing	System	127	16.3		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 5: Occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Office work/Clerical	88	11.3	11.8	11.8
	Construction/Trades	31	4.0	4.1	15.9
	Farmwork	7	.9	.9	16.8
	Factory/Industrial	29	3.7	3.9	20.7
	Homemaker	67	8.6	9.0	29.7
	Teacher	59	7.6	7.9	37.6
	Manager	38	4.9	5.1	42.6
	Government or nonprofit sector	20	2.6	2.7	45.3
	Attorney	9	1.2	1.2	46.5
	Medical	47	6.0	6.3	52.8
	Retired	179	23.0	23.9	76.7
	Other	174	22.4	23.3	100.0
	Total	748	96.3	100.0	
	Missing	System	29	3.7	
Total		777	100.0		

Table 6a: Do you have school-aged children?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	261	33.6	35.9	35.9
	No	467	60.1	64.1	100.0
	Total	728	93.7	100.0	
Missing	System	49	6.3		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 6b: If yes, how many?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	116	14.9	44.4	44.4
	2	99	12.7	37.9	82.4
	3	31	4.0	11.9	94.3
	4 or more	15	1.9	5.7	100.0
	Total	261	33.6	100.0	
Missing	System	516	66.4		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 6c: Do your children attend public or private school?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Public School	234	30.1	83.0	83.0
	Private School	42	5.4	14.9	97.9
	Both	6	.8	2.1	100.0
	Total	282	36.3	100.0	
Missing	System	495	63.7		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 7: What is your political affiliation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Republican	257	33.1	35.3	35.3
	Democrat	250	32.2	34.3	69.6
	Independent	138	17.8	19.0	88.6
	Other	83	10.7	11.4	100.0
	Total	728	93.7	100.0	
Missing	System	49	6.3		
Total		777	100.0		

The sample of respondents included 91.4% (710) who indicated that they are registered voters, of whom 657, or 92.5%, had voted in a school levy election at least once in the past five years.

Survey Results

The survey asked questions concerning respondents' views of revenue and spending for their own school districts, and then asked a series of questions concerning a variety of school funding reform plans, including a number of policy initiatives introduced by Ohio Governor Ted Strickland. The results concerning Governor Strickland's policy initiatives will be reported first, followed by the policy reform options, and will conclude with the data collected concerning participant views of spending and revenue for their individual school districts. Cross-tabulations of responses based on demographic factors found to be statistically significant,

using the Chi-square formula at $P < .01$ confidence level are reported. Statistically significant cross-tabulations at $P < .05$ confidence level are reported with an “*”.

I. Respondent views of education policy proposals introduced by Governor Strickland

The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of support for proposals introduced by Ohio Governor Strickland concerning school funding and education policy. The specific policies asked about in the survey are to increase state funding for poorer school districts by 6%, provide universal pre-school programming, prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools and restrict school vouchers to Cleveland, and help older homeowners by exempting the first \$25,000 of property value from taxation.

Increasing funding for poorer school districts by 6% over two years (survey question 14a)

The general response was favorable, with 68.8% in favor, 18.5% against, and 12.5% having no opinion. Political affiliation, age, and income also had statistically significant effects on opinion. For political affiliation, the proposal was supported by 36% of Republicans, 80% of Democrats, 68% of Independents, and 16% of those identified as “Other.” Support for increasing funding for poorer school districts was highest among 18-24 year olds at 84%, and lowest among those aged 55-64 at 63%. The level of support declines steadily between these two groups, and then bumps up to 66% among those aged 65 and over.

increase funding for poorer school districts by 6%

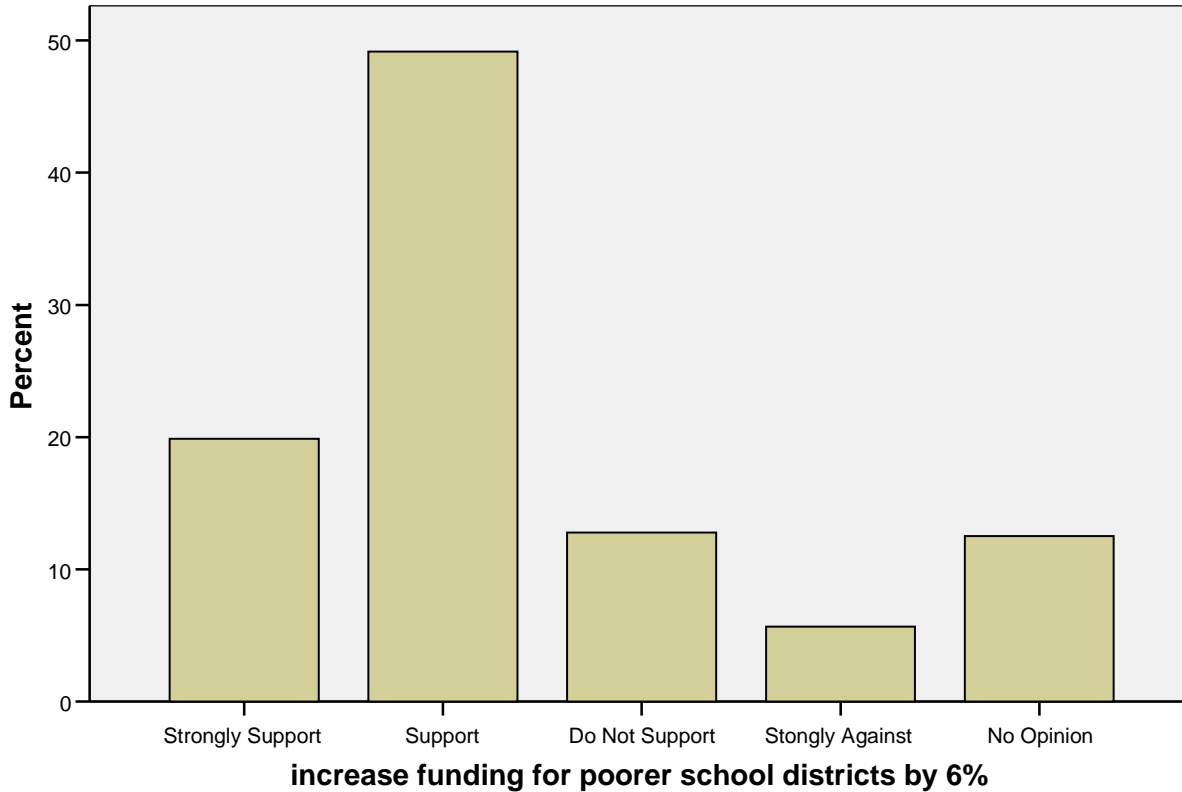


Table 8a: Increase funding for poorer school districts by 6%

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	154	19.8	19.9	19.9
	Support	381	49.0	49.2	69.0
	Do Not Support	99	12.7	12.8	81.8
	Strongly Against	44	5.7	5.7	87.5
	No Opinion	97	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	775	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.3		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 8b: Support for 6% increase in funding for poor school districts, by political affiliation

Political Affiliation	Support	Do not support	No Opinion
Republican	36%	52%	11%
Democrat	80%	10%	10%
Independent	68%	20%	12%
Other	16%	46%	38%

Table 8c: Support for 6% increase in funding for poor school districts, by age

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	84%	7%	9%
25-34	78%	11%	11%
35-44	72%	16%	12%
45-54	66%	23%	11%
55-64	63%	27%	10%
65 or older	66%	18%	16%

Table 8d: Support for 6% increase in funding for poor school districts, by annual household income

Annual household income	Support	Do not support	No opinion
less than \$20,000	63%	17%	20%
\$20,000 - \$40,000	72%	12%	16%
\$40,001 - \$65,000	66%	27%	7%
\$65,001 - \$80,000	55%	14%	31%
\$80,001 - \$100,000	76%	18%	6%
above \$100,000	69%	21%	10%

Provide universal pre-school programming for all Ohio children (survey question 14b)

A majority of Ohioans support universal pre-school programming, with 64.1% in favor, 25% opposed, and 10.4% having no opinion. There is a significant difference in support based on political affiliation, with 82% of Democrats in support, versus 49% of Republicans. Independents and “other” came in with majority support for universal pre-school programming at 66% and 60% respectively. Another interesting trend was the support based on age, which trended downward as age increased. 84% of 18-24 year olds support universal pre-school programming. This declined to 58% of respondents aged 65 and older, which may be explained by generational differences concerning whether children should attend pre-school or stay home prior to kindergarten, as well as whether respondents have children in the home currently.

provide universal pre-school programming

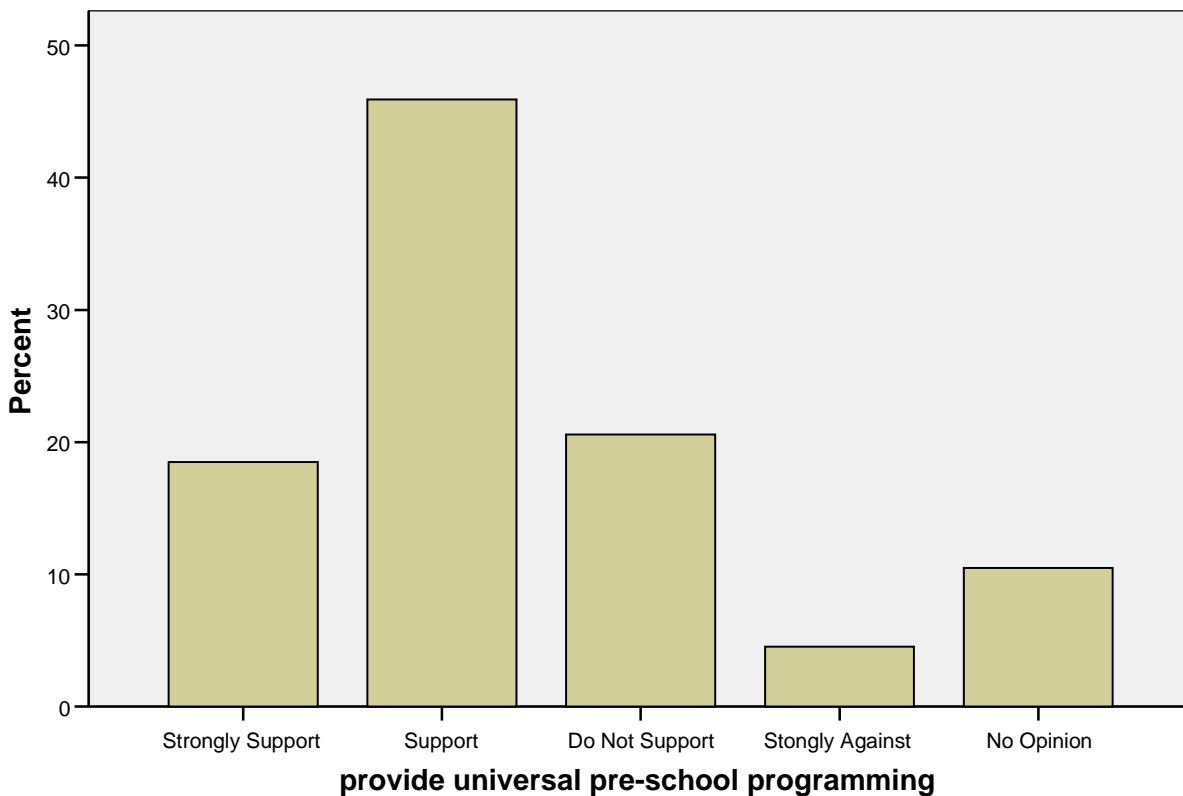


Table 9a: Provide universal pre-school programming

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	143	18.4	18.5	18.5
	Support	355	45.7	45.9	64.4
	Do Not Support	159	20.5	20.6	85.0
	Strongly Against	35	4.5	4.5	89.5
	No Opinion	81	10.4	10.5	100.0
	Total	773	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4	.5		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 9b: Support for universal pre-school programming, by political affiliation

Political Affiliation	Support	Do not support	No Opinion
Republican	49%	41%	10%
Democrat	82%	10%	8%
Independent	60%	27%	13%
Other	66%	22%	12%

Table 9c: Support for universal pre-school programming, by age

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	84%	4%	12%
25-34	74%	20%	6%
35-44	69%	22%	9%
45-54	61%	31%	18%
55-64	59%	32%	9%
65 or older	58%	27%	15%

Preventing for-profit companies from operating charter schools (survey question 14c)

Governor Strickland proposed that for-profit companies be prevented from operating state-supported charter schools. Respondents favored this proposal, with 42.3% in favor, 35.5% opposed, and 21.2% having no opinion. Political affiliation, age, and level of education were all statistically significant effects on opinion about this issue. Favoring the proposal were Democrats (49%) and Independents (47%), with only 38% of Republicans in support, and 37% of “other” in support. Support was highest among 18-24 year olds at 52%, and among the 55-64 year old bracket at 50%. Support in the age brackets from 25-54 hovered at 42%, while those 65 and older were the lowest at 38%. The majority of support based on education level came from those with a Master’s degree at 55%, and those who did not finish high school at 52%. The lowest level of support came from those with a high school degree at 36% and those with a terminal advanced degree at 39%. It should be noted that for each of these categories the percentage of respondents answering “no opinion” was high, with a range of 13% - 31%, and averaging 22%. Recent news stories that raised questions about the effectiveness of charter schools, as well as the ties between private charter school operators and the prior administration of Governor Bob Taft may have had influences on opinion concerning this question.

prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools

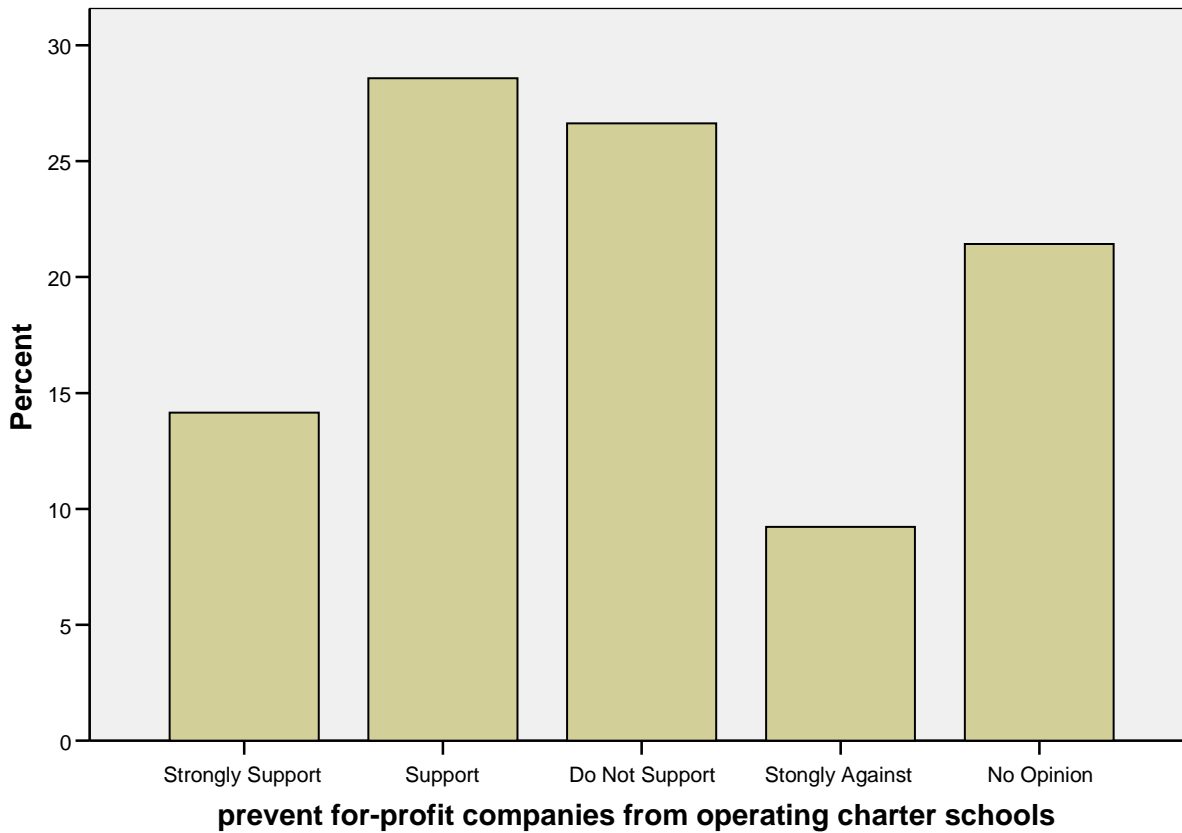


Table 10a: Prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	109	14.0	14.2	14.2
	Support	220	28.3	28.6	42.7
	Do Not Support	205	26.4	26.6	69.4
	Strongly Against	71	9.1	9.2	78.6
	No Opinion	165	21.2	21.4	100.0
	Total	770	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	7	.9		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 10b: Prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools, by political affiliation

Political Affiliation	Support	Do not support	No Opinion
Republican	38%	45%	17%
Democrat	49%	25%	26%
Independent	47%	37%	16%
Other	37%	40%	23%

Table 10c: Prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools, by age

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	52%	23%	25%
25-34	42%	29%	29%
35-44	41%	34%	25%
45-54	43%	44%	13%
55-64	50%	34%	16%
65 or older	38%	38%	24%

Table 10d: Prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools, by level of education

Level of education	Support	Do not support	No opinion
did not finish high school	52%	26%	22%
H.S. diploma/GED	36%	33%	31%
some college/tech.school	41%	42%	17%
Bachelor's degree	46%	38%	16%
Master's degree	55%	31%	14%
JD, MD, MBA, Ph.D.	39%	32%	29%

Restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district (survey question 14d)

Governor Strickland also proposed that the state voucher program be restricted to the Cleveland City Schools, and not be allowed to expand to other districts across Ohio. This policy was opposed by 42% of respondents, and supported by 33%, with 25% having no opinion. Support based on political affiliation trended positive from Republicans at 22% to Democrats at 49%, with Independents at 45%. "Other" had only 27% support, but also had 38% with no opinion.

Age and education were also significant influences on opinion. Supported declined and then rose, with 41% of 18-24 year olds supporting, declining to 28% of 35-44 year olds, and then rising to 39% of 55-64 year olds. Only 31% of those 65 or older expressed support for restricting vouchers to the Cleveland district. The highest level of support based on education was among people with Master's degrees at 52%, while the lowest was among those with terminal degrees at 25%.

restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district

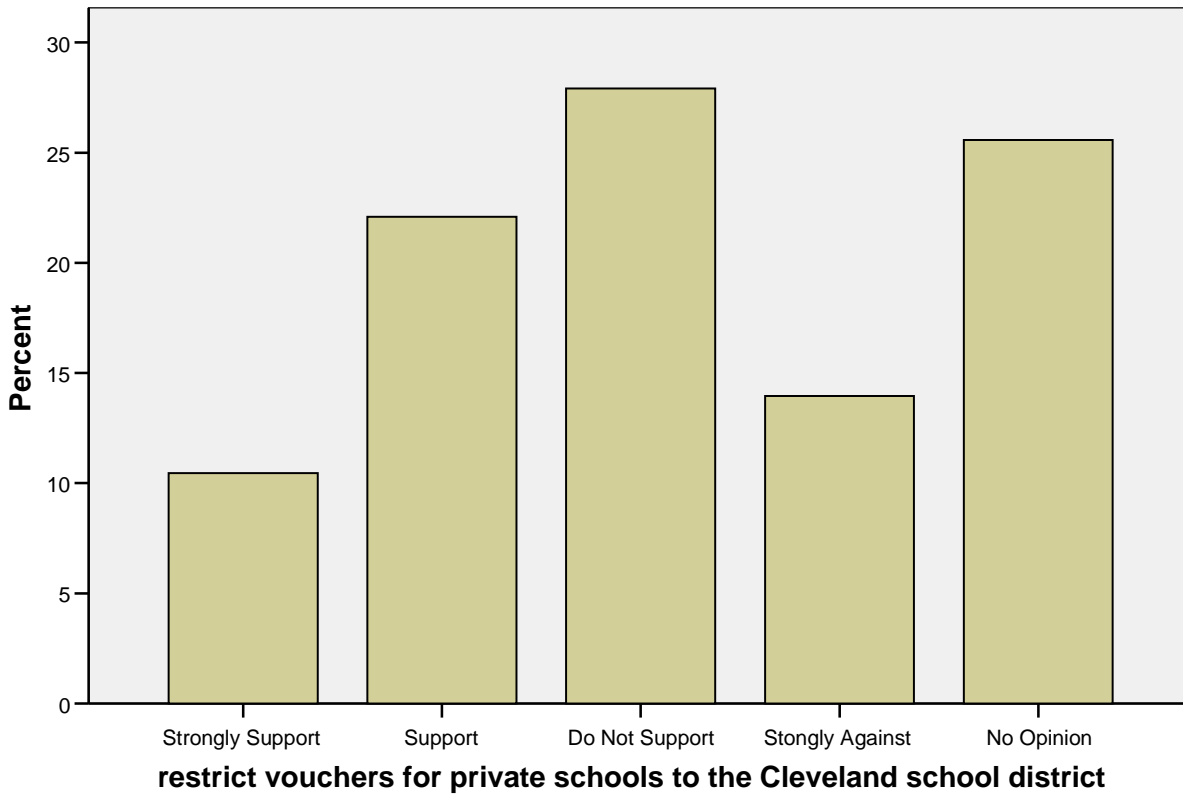


Table 11a: Restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	81	10.4	10.5	10.5
	Support	171	22.0	22.1	32.6
	Do Not Support	216	27.8	27.9	60.5
	Strongly Against	108	13.9	14.0	74.4
	No Opinion	198	25.5	25.6	100.0
	Total	774	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.4		
	Total	777	100.0		

Table 11b: Restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district, by political affiliation

Political Affiliation	Support	Do not support	No Opinion
Republican	22%	56%	22%
Democrat	39%	35%	26%
Independent	45%	37%	18%
Other	27%	35%	38%

Table 11c: Restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district, by age*

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	41%	25%	34%
25-34	30%	37%	33%
35-44	28%	46%	26%
45-54	33%	44%	23%
55-64	39%	43%	18%
65 or older	31%	42%	37%

* significant at P<.05 confidence level

Table 11d: Restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district, by level of education

Level of education	Support	Do not support	No opinion
did not finish high school	39%	29%	32%
H.S. diploma/GED	30%	37%	33%
some college/tech.school	28%	47%	25%
Bachelor's degree	31%	46%	23%
Master's degree	52%	36%	12%
JD, MD, MBA, Ph.D.	25%	50%	25%

Exempting the first \$25,000 in property value from taxation for older homeowners (survey question 14e)

This was a popular proposal of Governor Strickland, indicated by support of 75% of respondents. Age was the only significant demographic influence. Support rose based on age, from a low of 52% among 18-24 year olds, to a high of 82% among those 45-54 and among those 65 and older. Clearly the trend shows the influence of the degree to which people see this policy potentially providing them with a benefit now or in the near future.

Exempt first \$25,000 in property value from taxation for older home owners

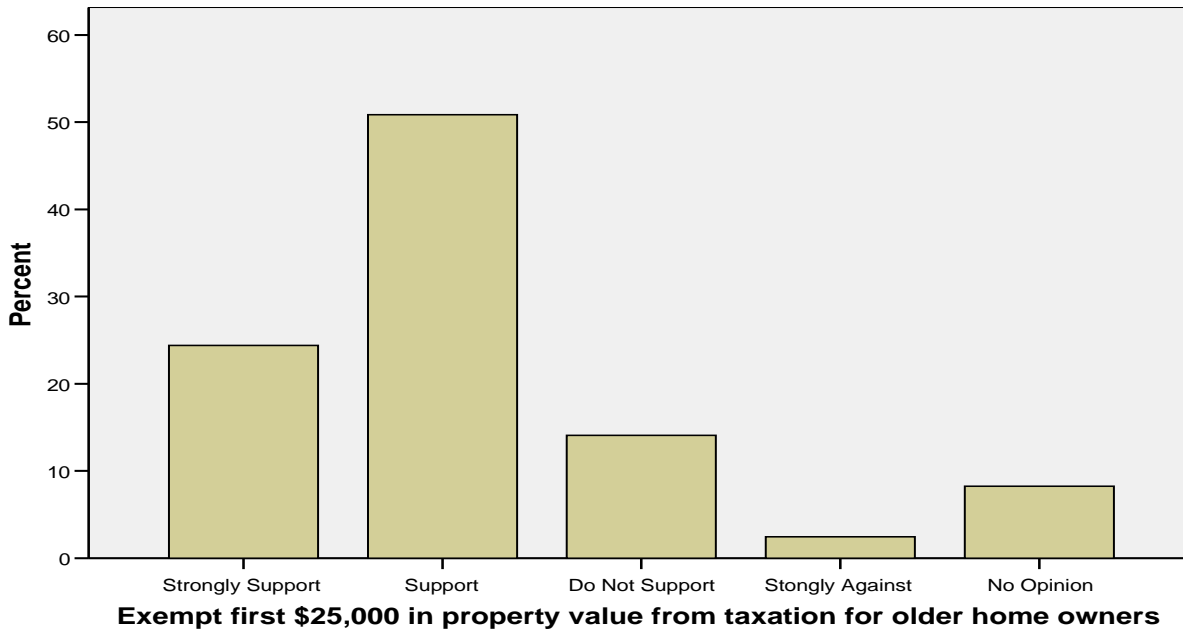


Table 12a: Exempt first \$25,000 in property value from taxation for older home owners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	189	24.3	24.4	24.4
	Support	394	50.7	50.8	75.2
	Do Not Support	109	14.0	14.1	89.3
	Strongly Against	19	2.4	2.5	91.7
	No Opinion	64	8.2	8.3	100.0
	Total	775	99.7	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.3		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 12b: Exempt first \$25,000 in property value from taxation for older home owners, by age

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	52%	20%	28%
25-34	68%	19%	13%
35-44	69%	23%	8%
45-54	82%	14%	4%
55-64	80%	17%	3%
65 or older	82%	11%	7%

II. Respondent opinion concerning alternative school funding policy reforms

A series of questions were asked concerning school funding policy reforms. These included levels of support for continued voter approval of tax levies for property tax support of schools, changing property tax assessments, phasing out the inflationary freeze provisions of H.B. 920, and placing a cap on property tax millage and having the state pay the balance of school expenditures. Respondents were asked about the idea of legalizing casino and slots gambling and using some of the proceeds to support public education. Additional questions concerned a proposed constitutional amendment that would set up a commission to determine the true cost of a quality public education and require the legislature to fund the recommendation, and whether respondents supported combining school districts to save money. A question concerning which entity (e.g., the governor, school boards, etc.) should have the ultimate authority to determine the appropriate level of spending for public education rounded out this portion of the survey.

Should voters continue to approve renewing or increasing property taxes to pay for school expenses? (survey question 11)

A solid majority of 70% of respondents answered “yes,” that voters should continue to have the power to vote on school levies. Only 22% said “no,” and 8% had no opinion. There were no statistically significant demographic or political factors that influenced respondent opinion on this question.

Should voters continue to approve renewing or increasing property taxes to pay for school expenses?

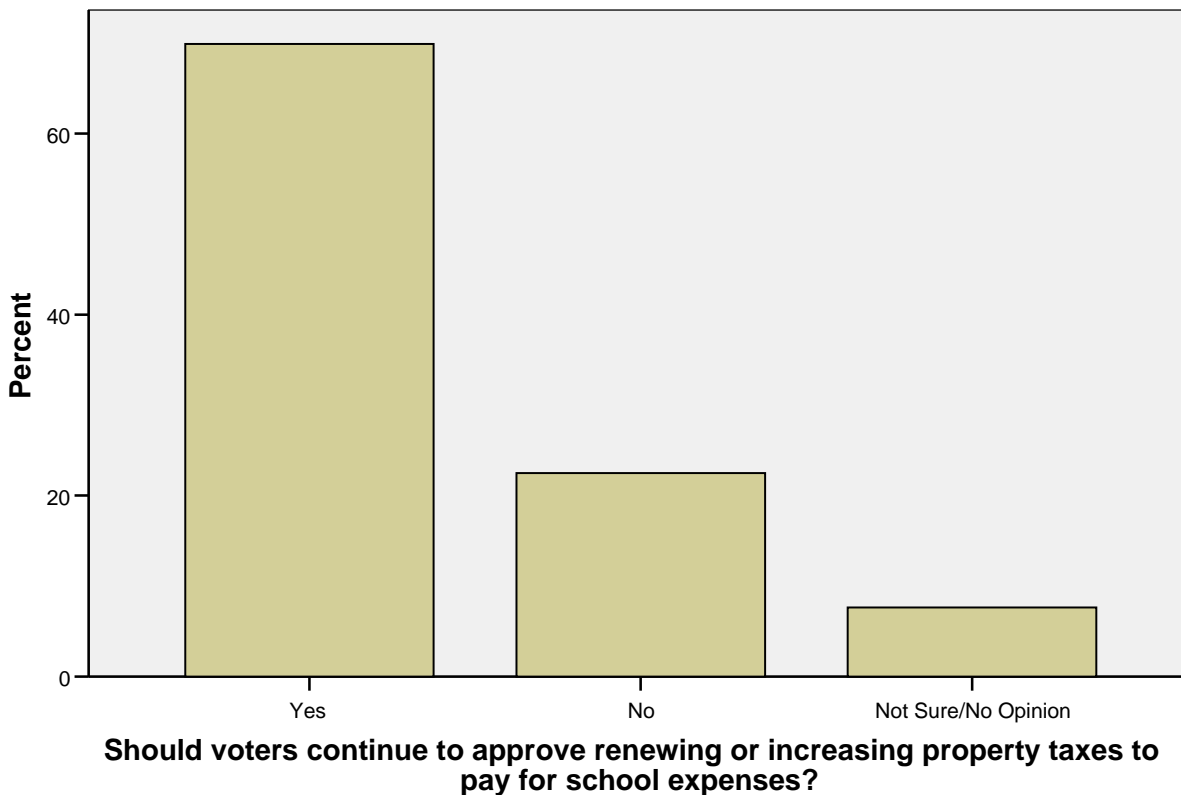


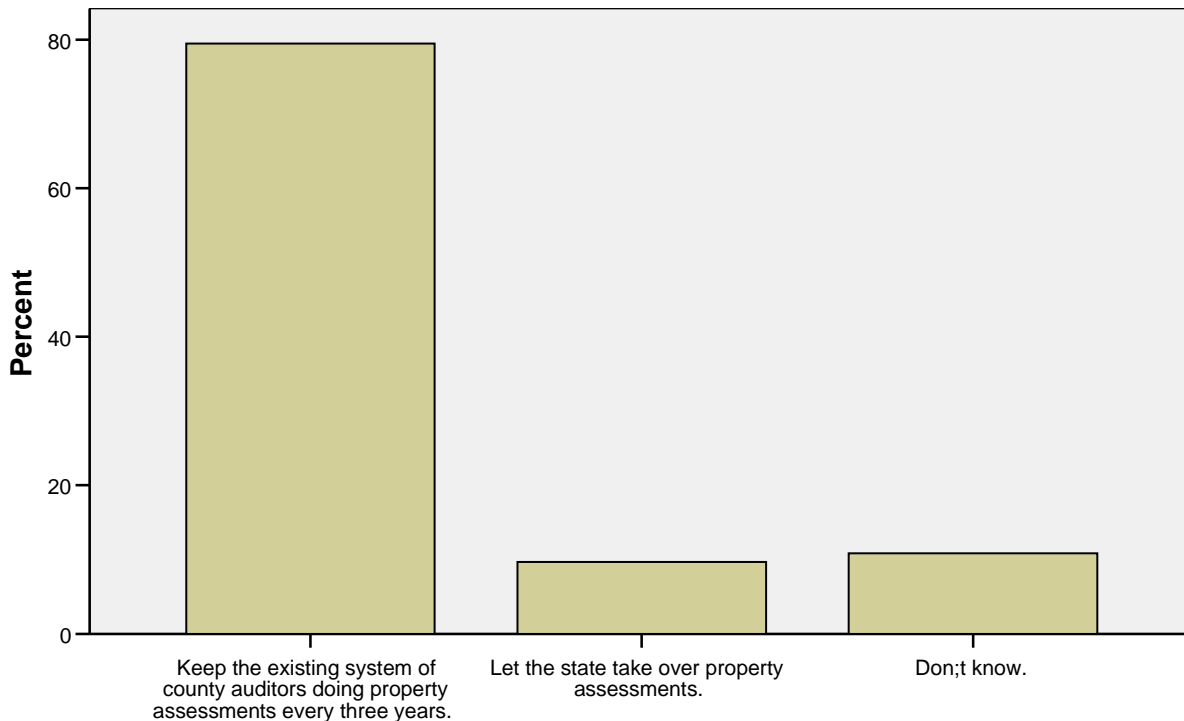
Table 13: Should voters continue to approve renewing or increasing property taxes to pay for school expenses?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	541	69.6	69.9	69.9
	No	174	22.4	22.5	92.4
	Not Sure/No Opinion	59	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	774	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.4		
Total		777	100.0		

Should the state take over property assessment, or should counties continue to be responsible for assessing property value? (survey question 13)

The current system in Ohio requires all counties to assess property value every three years. Ohioans appear satisfied with this system, with 79% agreeing to keep this as a county responsibility, 8% saying the state should handle property assessment, and 11% responding “Don’t know.” There were no demographic or political factors that had a statistically significant influence on respondents’ views concerning this question.

Should the state take over property assessment, or should counties continue to be responsible?



Should the state take over property assessment, or should counties continue to be responsible?

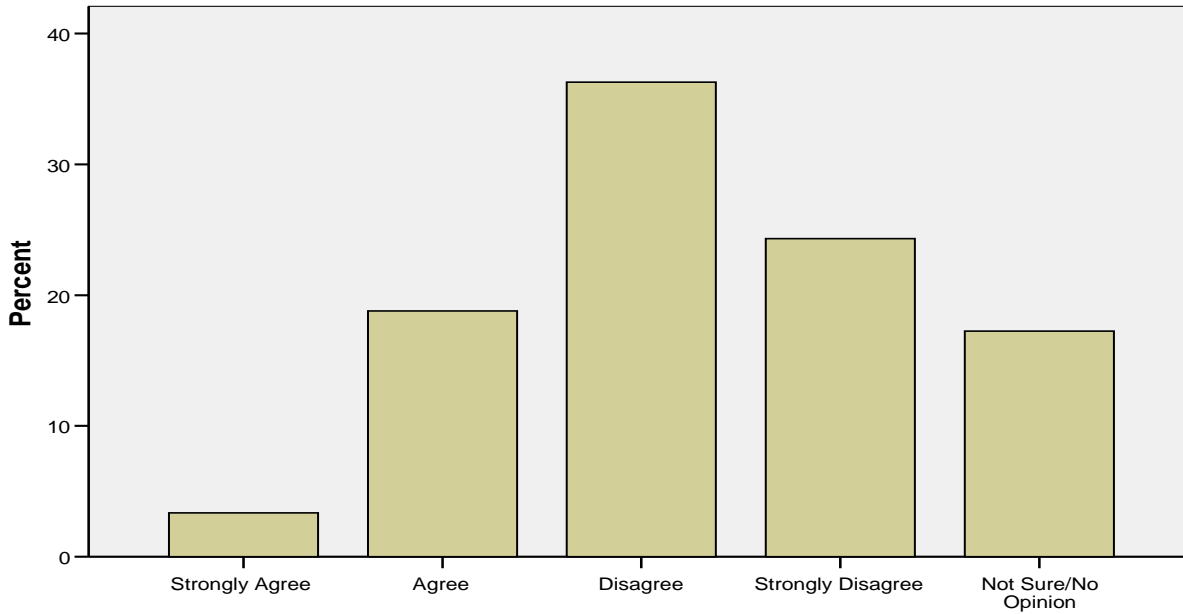
Table 14: Should the state take over property assessment, or should counties continue to be responsible?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Keep the existing system of county auditors doing property assessments every three years.	617	79.4	79.5	79.5
	Let the state take over property assessments.	75	9.7	9.7	89.2
	Don't know.	84	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	776	99.9	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.1		
Total		777	100.0		

Should the H.B. 920, which freezes the level of property taxes collected for schools, be phased out to allow property taxes to rise with the rising value of property? (survey question 12)

A solid majority of Ohioans do not want to phase out H.B. 920. 61% of respondents disagree with phasing out H.B. 920, while only 22% want to see this change, and 17% were not sure or had no opinion. Age and education level appeared to have statistically significant effects on respondent views at the $P < .05$ level. The level of support fluctuates between 63% for those over 65 and those 45-54, and 72% for those 55-64. However, the percentages for those who shift from “No opinion” to “Do not support” rise with age, from 11% “Do not support” and 21% “no opinion” for 18-24 year olds, to 19% “do not support” and 9% “no opinion” for those aged 55-64. A similar pattern is found for education level, with support ranging from 65% for those who did not finish high school, to 70% for those with a high school degree, and the rest with college and advanced degrees falling between these two figures. However, the indicator for “do not support” rises from 6% for those without a high school degree, to 20% for those with a Bachelor’s degree. The figure then drops to 17% “do not support” for those with a Master’s degree, and then leaps up to 44% for those with a terminal advanced degree.

Phase out HB 920, allow property taxes to rise with inflation



Phase out HB 920, allow property taxes to rise with inflation

Table 15a: Phase out HB 920, allow property taxes to rise with inflation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	26	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Agree	146	18.8	18.8	22.1
	Disagree	282	36.3	36.3	58.4
	Strongly Disagree	189	24.3	24.3	82.8
	Not Sure/No Opinion	134	17.2	17.2	100.0
	Total	777	100.0	100.0	

Table 15b: Phase out HB 920 to allow property taxes to rise with inflation, by age*

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	68%	11%	21%
25-34	69%	12%	19%
35-44	70%	16%	14%
45-54	63%	20%	17%
55-64	72%	19%	9%
65 or older	63%	15%	22%

Table 15c: Phase out HB 920 to allow property taxes to rise with inflation, by level of education*

Level of education	Support	Do not support	No opinion
did not finish high school	65%	6%	29%
H.S. diploma/GED	70%	10%	20%
some college/tech.school	66%	17%	17%
Bachelor's degree	67%	20%	13%
Master's degree	69%	17%	14%
JD, MD, MBA, Ph.D.	50%	44%	6%

Proposed constitutional amendment to fund schools (survey question 15)

A coalition of education advocacy groups led by the Coalition to Fund Adequacy and Equity for Ohio Schools is gathering signatures to place a proposed amendment to the Ohio Constitution on the ballot in November, 2007. The proposed amendment provides the state school board with the ability to create a commission to determine the actual cost of a quality public education, which would then have to be funded based on their recommendations by the Ohio General Assembly. The amendment also includes provisions for a property tax reduction for senior citizens.

Amendment supporters should be encouraged by the response, with 63% of those polled indicating support for the proposed amendment, 19% opposed, and 18% having no opinion. Age, political affiliation, and level of education were significant influences on respondent opinion. The amendment was strongly supported by 18-24 year olds at 75%, but then had its lowest level of support among the 25-34 year old bracket at 54% (this bracket also had 28% responding with “no opinion”.) The other age groups ranged from 61% of 35-44 year olds in support, to 68% of 55-64 year olds.

Political affiliation showed stronger support among Democrats (69%) and Independents (67%), but still majority support among Republicans (59%) and “other” (63%). The “no opinion” choice was lower for political affiliation, ranging from 15% for Republicans to 19% for “other”.

The trend of support based on education level tended to move upwards with level of education. The lowest level of support was among those who did not finish high school, at 52%, and the highest at 68% among those with a Master's degree. A curious finding is that support drops to 50% among those with a terminal advanced degree, where opposition was expressed by 39% of these respondents.

Opinion concerning proposed constitutional amendment

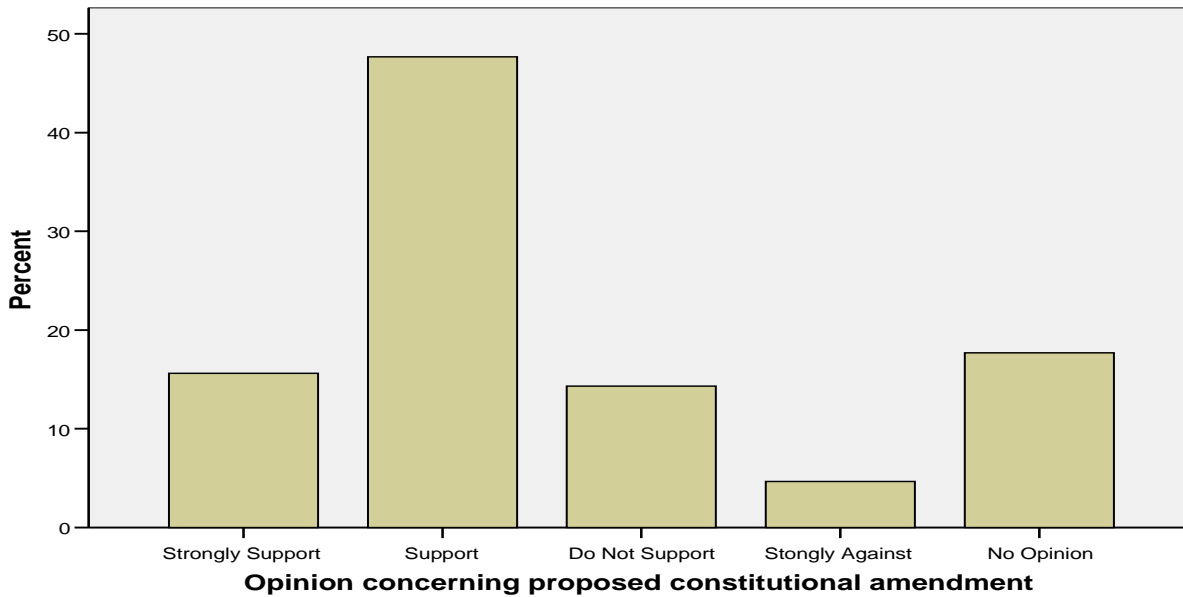


Table 16a: Opinion concerning proposed constitutional amendment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	121	15.6	15.6	15.6
	Support	369	47.5	47.7	63.3
	Do Not Support	111	14.3	14.3	77.6
	Strongly Against	36	4.6	4.7	82.3
	No Opinion	137	17.6	17.7	100.0
Total		774	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.4		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 16b: Support for proposed constitutional amendment, by age

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	75%	9%	16%
25-34	54%	18%	28%
35-44	61%	19%	20%
45-54	62%	22%	16%
55-64	68%	19%	13%
65 or older	66%	20%	14%

Table 16c: Support for proposed constitutional amendment, by political affiliation*

Political Affiliation	Support	Do not support	No Opinion
Republican	59%	26%	15%
Democrat	69%	15%	16%
Independent	67%	15%	17%
Other	63%	18%	19%

Table 16d: Support for proposed constitutional amendment, by level of education*

Level of education	Support	Do not support	No opinion
did not finish high school	52%	26%	22%
H.S. diploma/GED	64%	17%	19%
some college/tech.school	66%	20%	14%
Bachelor's degree	62%	19%	19%
Master's degree	68%	13%	19%
JD, MD, MBA, Ph.D.	50%	39%	11%

Placing a cap on property taxes, and having the state pay the balance of the cost of public education (survey question 16)

A solid majority of Ohioans support this policy option, with 67% expressing support, and 16% being opposed, while 17% had no opinion. There were no statistically significant demographic factors influencing opinion on this question. Clearly, respondents believe their tax burden would be eased by this option. It must be noted that the ways in which the state might raise taxes to pay for the increased share was not explored in the survey. This needs to be factored into analysis of this finding.

cap property taxes, have state pay balance of costs for education

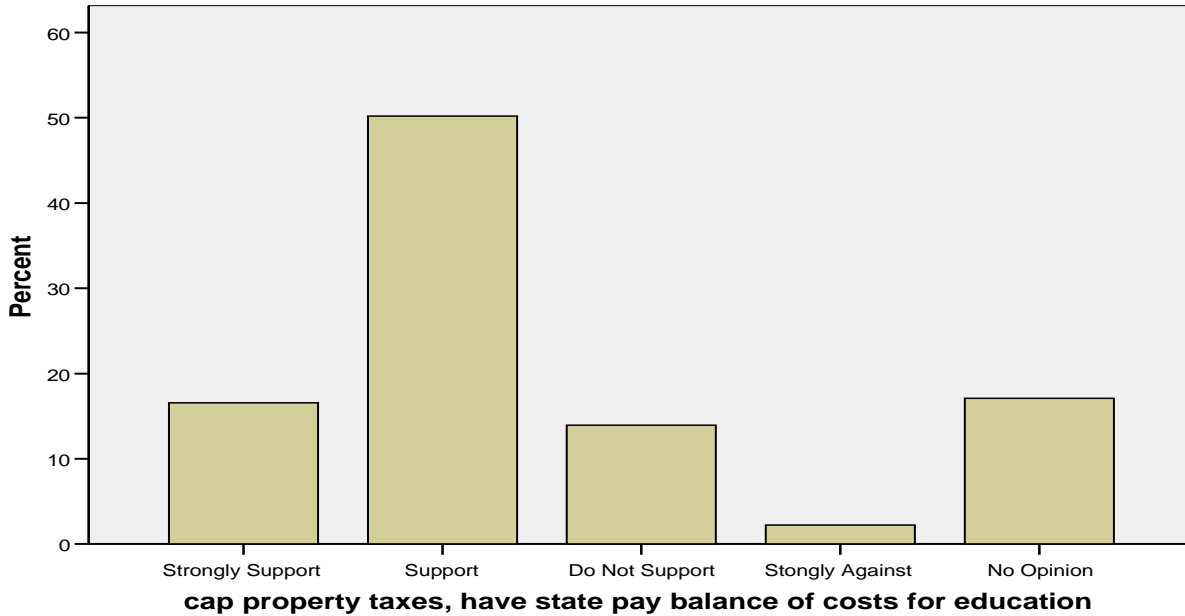


Table 17: cap property taxes, have state pay balance of costs for education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	127	16.3	16.6	16.6
	Support	385	49.5	50.2	66.8
	Do Not Support	107	13.8	14.0	80.7
	Strongly Against	17	2.2	2.2	82.9
	No Opinion	131	16.9	17.1	100.0
	Total	767	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	10	1.3		
	Total	777	100.0		

Legalize casino gambling and slots and use part of the proceeds to fund public education (survey question 17)

Ohioans are split on this policy option, with 48% expressing support, 46% being opposed, and only 6% having no opinion. Age, political affiliation, and level of education were all statistically significant factors influencing respondent views. Support was highest among younger respondents, with 52% of 18-24 year olds in support, and 62% of 25-34 year olds. Support drops to 44% among 45-54 year olds and those over 65, with 55-64 year olds at 46%.

Political affiliation is the strongest indicator of influence on this question. Legalizing gambling to fund education was supported by 58% of Democrats, and only 37% of Republicans. Independent support was at 51%, and “other” at 48%.

Support generally declines as education levels rose. 55% of those who did not finish high school supported this idea, as did 58% of those with a high school diploma. Support drops steadily, to 43% among those with a

Bachelor’s degree, 36% among those with a Master’s degree, and 21% among those with a terminal advanced degree. An interesting note is that of all the policy option questions, legalized gambling had the lowest level of “no opinion” responses, ranging from 3% - 9%. The issue’s defeat last fall (2006) as a ballot initiative may have had some affect on this outcome.

legalize casino gambling & slots, use \$ for education

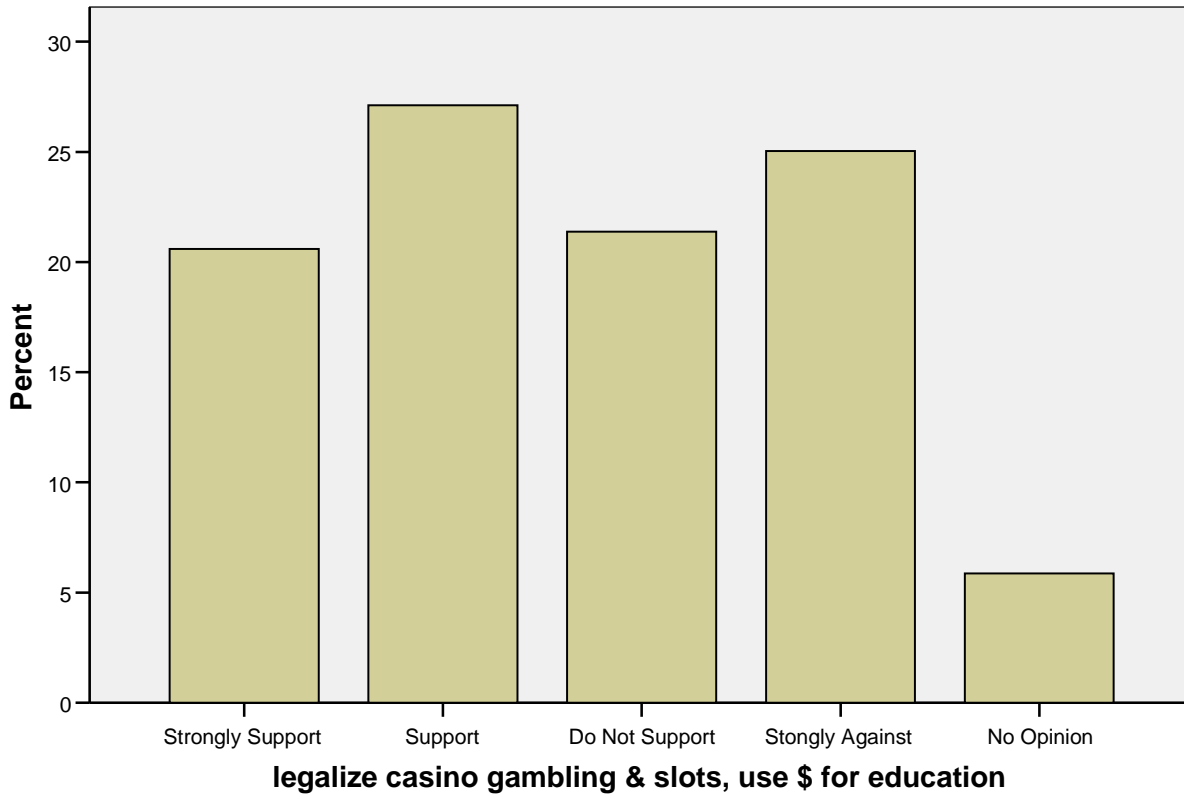


Table 18a: legalize casino gambling & slots, use \$ for education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Support	158	20.3	20.6	20.6
	Support	208	26.8	27.1	47.7
	Do Not Support	164	21.1	21.4	69.1
	Strongly Against	192	24.7	25.0	94.1
	No Opinion	45	5.8	5.9	100.0
	Total	767	98.7	100.0	
Missing	System	10	1.3		
Total		777	100.0		

Table 18b: Legalize casino gambling & slots, use \$ for education, by age*

Age	Support	Do not support	No opinion
18-24	52%	39%	9%
25-34	62%	35%	3%
35-44	49%	44%	7%
45-54	44%	48%	8%
55-64	46%	51%	3%
65 or older	44%	52%	4%

Table 18c: Legalize casino gambling & slots, use \$ for education, by political affiliation

Political Affiliation	Support	Do not support	No opinion
Republican	37%	60%	3%
Democrat	58%	36%	6%
Independent	51%	43%	6%
Other	48%	45%	7%

Table 18d: Legalize casino gambling & slots, use \$ for education, by level of education*

Level of education	Support	Do not support	No opinion
did not finish high school	55%	42%	4%
H.S. diploma/GED	58%	37%	5%
some college/tech.school	50%	42%	8%
Bachelor's degree	43%	53%	4%
Master's degree	36%	56%	8%
JD, MD, MBA, Ph.D.	21%	75%	4%

Consolidation of school districts to save tax dollars (survey questions 18a and 18b)

Ohioans were divided on this question, with 44% favoring the idea, 43% being opposed, and 13% having no opinion. Opposition actually grew in the next question, “Would you favor your school district being consolidated if it lowered your property tax?” Respondents prefer to keep their own school districts, with 41% supporting this option, and 49% being opposed, and 10% having no opinion.

Do you favor combining smaller school districts in Ohio as a way to save money?

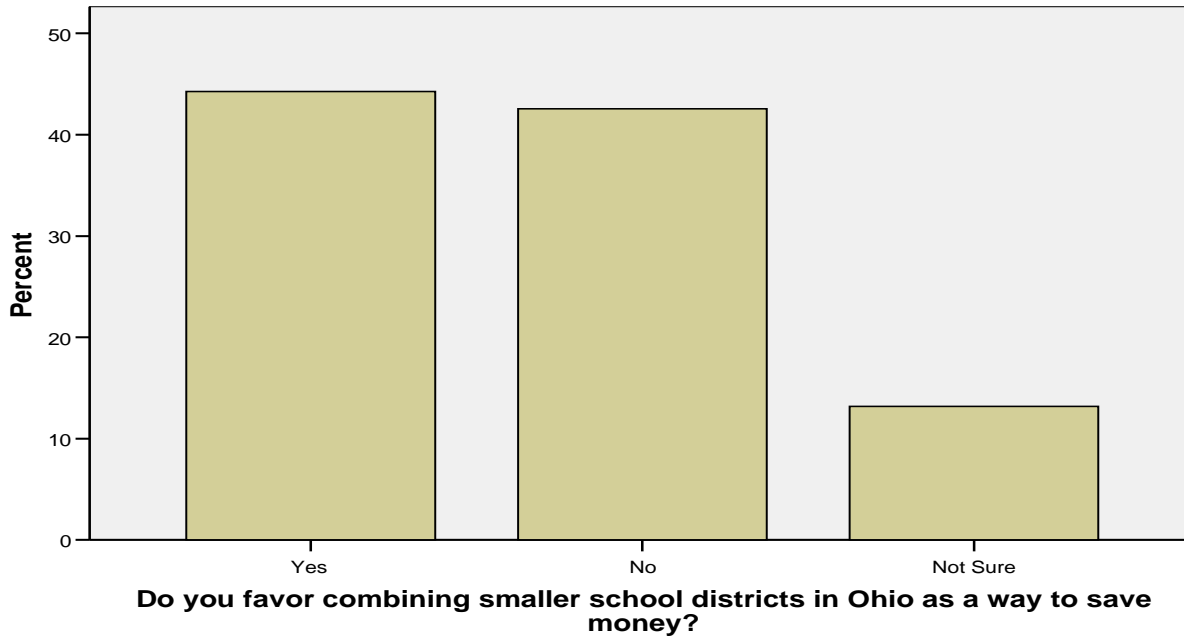


Table 19: Do you favor combining smaller school districts in Ohio as a way to save money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	339	43.6	44.3	44.3
	No	326	42.0	42.6	86.8
	Not Sure	101	13.0	13.2	100.0
	Total	766	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	11	1.4		
Total		777	100.0		

Would you favor your school district being consolidated if it lowered your property tax?

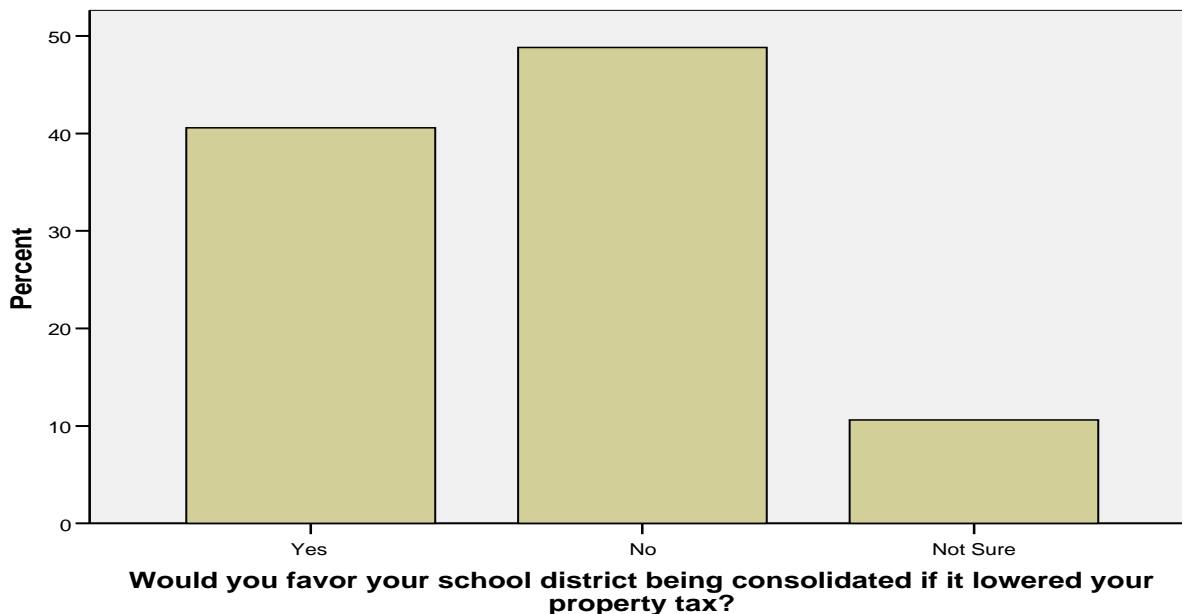


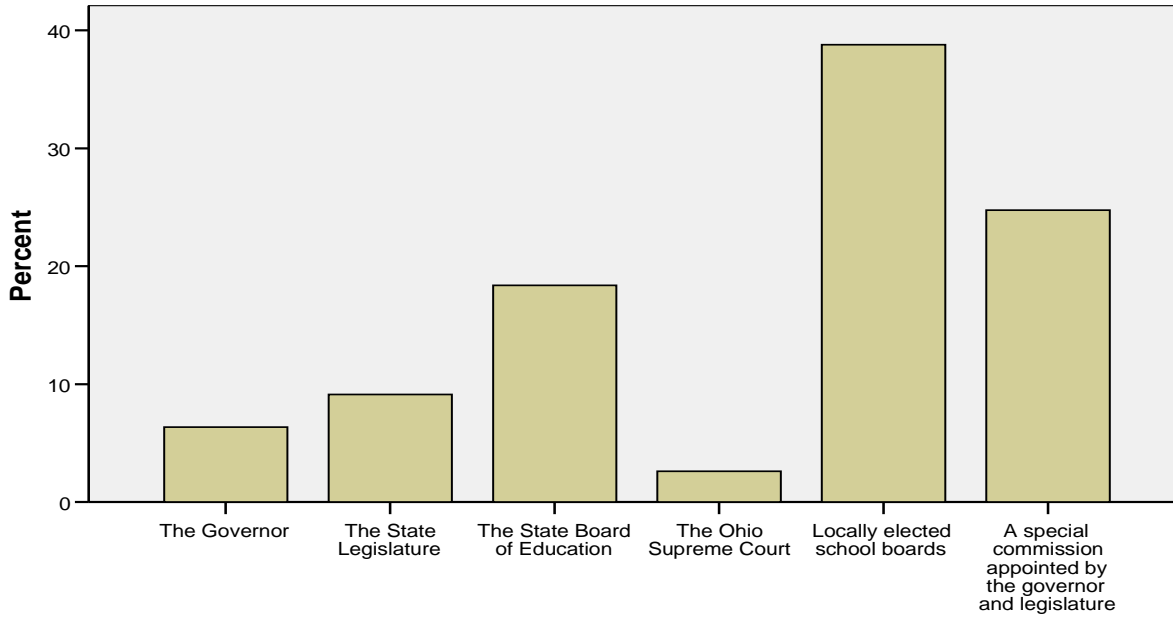
Table 20: Would you favor your school district being consolidated if it lowered your property tax?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	310	39.9	40.6	40.6
	No	373	48.0	48.8	89.4
	Not Sure	81	10.4	10.6	100.0
	Total	764	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	13	1.7		
Total		777	100.0		

Which institution should have primary authority to determine the appropriate level of spending for public education? (survey question 20)

Ohioans support the status quo, with 39% supporting local school boards being the primary institution deciding the level of spending for schools. Interestingly, the special commission idea drawn from the proposed constitutional amendment received the second highest level of support at 28%, followed by the state board of education at 18%. The lowest levels of support were for the state legislature (9%), the governor (6%), and the Ohio Supreme Court (2%).

In your opinion, which institution should have the primary authority to determine the appropriate level of spending for public education?



In your opinion, which institution should have the primary authority to determine the appropriate level of spending for public education?

Table 21: In your opinion, which institution should have the primary authority to determine the appropriate level of spending for public education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	The Governor	44	5.7	6.4	6.4
	The State Legislature	63	8.1	9.1	15.5
	The State Board of Education	127	16.3	18.4	33.9
	The Ohio Supreme Court	18	2.3	2.6	36.5
	Locally elected school boards	268	34.5	38.8	75.3
	A special commission appointed by the governor and legislature	171	22.0	24.7	100.0
	Total	691	88.9	100.0	
Missing	System	86	11.1		
Total		777	100.0		

Part III: Respondent opinion concerning revenue and spending in their own school districts

Funding support for local school districts (survey questions 1 – 3)

Respondents provided very mixed answers to questions concerning their perceptions about levels of funding support for their individual school districts.

For the question, “the total funding level for my school district is...” 27% rated this “adequate,” 20% rated this as “too high” or “high;” 30% rated overall funding support as “low” or “too low,” and 23% said “I don’t know.”

For the question concerning level of property tax funding, 50% of respondents thought this was “too high” or “high,” while only 7% thought property tax support was “low” or “too low.” 17% said “I don’t know” to this question.

The responses to this question show the contrast in opinion concerning levels of support. 49% of respondents thought state support for their district was “low” or “too low,” while only 7% thought it was “high” or “too high,” and 15% thought that state support was “adequate.” This question also had a large “I don’t know” response rate at 29%. Respondents may well have questioned their own level of knowledge about the details of state support for local school districts, which is technical information not typically known by most residents.

Table 22: Perceptions concerning levels of overall funding, state funding, and property tax funding for respondents’ school districts

School district funding source	Too high	High	Adequate	Low	Too low	I don’t know
The total funding level for my school district is...	13.5%	6.3%	27%	10.8%	19.6%	22.8%
The total level of property tax funding for my school district is...	35.1%	14.8%	25.9%	3.2%	4.0%	17%
The level of state funding for my school district is...	3.2%	3.5%	15.2%	17.1%	31.7%	29.3%

Opinion concerning school district spending (survey questions 4 – 10)

Perceptions concerning school district spending were mixed. Those responding “adequate” tended to form the largest bloc of opinion, ranging from 32% rating administrator spending as “adequate,” to 56.6% rating spending on busing and transportation as “adequate.” The most significant areas of spending rated as “too high” and “high” were spending for administrators at 44%, and spending on sports at 24%. The areas where respondents thought spending was “too low” or “low” that were most significant were for teachers at 42%, school materials and books at 37%, other extracurricular activities at 33%, and buildings and maintenance at 27%.

Table : Perceptions concerning levels of spending for education in respondents’ school districts

Category of spending	Too high	High	Adequate	Low	Too low	I don’t know
Administrators	32.4%	11.9%	32.3%	2.2%	2.7%	18.6%
Teachers	3.9%	2.7%	40.6%	15.4%	26.6%	10.9%
School materials, books, supplies	4%	4.3%	36.4%	15.3%	21.2%	18.9%
Busing and transportation	7.9%	4.9%	56.6%	7.1%	8.2%	15.3%
Sports	15.1%	8.8%	44.5%	7.5%	9.5%	14.7%
Other extracurricular activities	4.8%	4.9%	36.4%	15.6%	17.3%	20.9%
Buildings and maintenance	9.2%	7.7%	42.3%	10.6%	16.3%	13.9%

Appendix: School Funding Survey

Hi, my name is _____, and I am a student at Baldwin-Wallace College. We are doing a survey concerning how public schools are funded in Ohio. Could you take ten minutes to answer a few questions? Thanks!

I. The following questions ask for your opinion about the amount of funding your district receives. Please provide one of the following responses to each of the following statements:

a. too high b. high c. adequate d. low e. too low f. I don't know

1. The total funding level for my school district is...
2. The total level of property tax funding for my school district is...
3. The level of state funding for my school district is...

II. The following questions ask for your opinion about how your school district spends tax dollars. A series of categories of spending are listed. Do you think spending on each category is

a. too high b. high c. adequate d. low e. too low f. I don't know

4. school administrators;
5. teachers;
6. school materials, books and supplies;
7. busing and transportation;
8. sports;
9. other extracurricular activities;
10. buildings and maintenance.

III. The following questions concern policies that affect the way school districts are funded in Ohio. Each policy will be briefly explained, and followed with a question asking your opinion.

11. The Ohio Constitution includes an amendment called House Bill 920 that freezes property taxes at the level approved by local voters, so that the tax does not rise with inflation. School districts need to ask for new tax dollars to pay rising costs, as well as to provide new services. Should voters continue to be able to approve renewing or increasing property taxes to pay for school expenses?

- a. yes b. no c. not sure/no opinion

12. One reform measure that would reduce the number of times school districts ask for money from voters would be to phase out House Bill 920 and allow property taxes to rise with inflation. This would mean that rising costs due to inflation would be paid for out of property taxes that rise with inflation. What is your opinion?

- a. strongly agree b. agree c. disagree d. strongly disagree e. not sure/no opinion

13. Property value is currently assessed every three years by the auditors of each county in Ohio. Should the state take over property assessment, or should counties continue to be responsible?

- a. Keep the existing system of county auditors doing property assessments every three years.
b. Let the state take over property assessments.
c. don't know.

Please provide one of the following responses to each of the following statements:

- a. strongly support b. support c. do not support d. strongly against e. no opinion

14. Governor Strickland has proposed to increase state funding for poorer school districts by about 6%, provide universal pre-school programming, prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools and restrict school vouchers to Cleveland, and help older homeowners by exempting the first \$25,000 of property value from taxation. What is your opinion on each part of the plan?

14a. increase funding for poorer school districts by 6%

14b. provide universal pre-school programming

14c. prevent for-profit companies from operating charter schools

14d. restrict vouchers for private schools to the Cleveland school district

14e. exempt first \$25,000 in property value from taxation for older homeowners

15. A coalition of education groups is trying to put an amendment to the Ohio Constitution on the ballot in November. If approved, the amendment would require the State Board of Education to determine the cost of a good education for every student in Ohio, and then require the state legislature to provide the funding. The proposal also includes a cap on the level of property taxes paid by senior citizens. What is your opinion?...

16. One suggested reform is to limit the amount of property tax levied by school districts and have the state pay the balance of costs for public education. What is your opinion?...

17. Another suggested reform is to legalize casino gambling and/or slot machines in Ohio, and then require part of the revenue to be dedicated to pay for public schools. What is your opinion?...

18a. Several states have saved tax dollars by consolidating school districts. Do you favor combining smaller school districts in Ohio as a way to save money?

- a. yes b. no c. not sure

18b. Would you favor your school district being consolidated if it lowered your property tax?

- a. yes b. no c. not sure

19. Which of the following groups, if any, should be exempt from property tax increases?

- a. low income property owners
- b. senior citizen homeowners, regardless of income
- c. low and moderate income senior citizen homeowners
- d. single parents
- e. none of the above

20. In your opinion, which institution should have the primary authority to determine the appropriate level of spending for public education?

- a. the governor
- b. the state legislature
- c. the state Board of Education
- d. the Ohio Supreme Court
- e. locally elected school boards
- f. a special commission appointed by the governor and the legislature

IV. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS:

21. What is the name of your home school district?

22. What is your gender? a. male b. female

23. Which range includes your age?

- a. 18 – 24
- b. 25 – 34
- c. 35 – 44
- d. 45 - 54
- e. 55 - 64
- f. 65 or older

24a. Do you have school-aged children? a. yes b. no

24b. If yes, how many?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4 or more

25c. Do your children attend public or private school?

- a. public school
- b. private school
- c. both

26. What racial category best describes you?

- a. Caucasian
- b. African-American
- c. Hispanic
- d. Asian-American
- e. more than one of the above

27. Are you a registered voter?

- a. yes
- b. no

28. If you are registered, have you voted in a school levy election in the past five years?

- a. yes
- b. no

29. What is your political affiliation?

- a. Republican
- b. Democrat
- c. independent
- d. other

30. annual household income:

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. < \$20,000 | d. \$40,001 - \$50,000 | g. \$80,001 - \$100,000 |
| b. \$20,000 - \$30,000 | e. \$50,001 - \$65,000 | h. above \$100,000 |
| c. \$30,001 - \$40,000 | f. \$65,001 - \$80,000 | |

31. What is your level of education?

- a. did not finish high school
- b. high school diploma/G.E.D.
- c. some college or technical school
- d. bachelor's degree
- e. master's degree
- f. MBA, JD, MD, or other terminal professional degree
- g. Ph.D./Ed.D

32. What is your occupation?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| a. office work/clerical | e. homemaker | i. attorney |
| b. construction/trades | f. teacher | j. medical |
| c. farmwork | g. manager | k. retired |
| d. factory/industrial | h. government or nonprofit sector | l. other |

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. All answers will be kept confidential. The results of the survey will be released in a report concerning the opinion of Ohioans about school funding policy in early May. If you have questions about the survey, you can call the survey director, Dr. Thomas C. Sutton, at 440-826-2460. Thanks again for your participation.