



Magellan Strategies

Colorado Public Education Survey Key Findings Part 1

Magellan Strategies and Chalkbeat Colorado are pleased to present this key findings document from an online public education issues survey of 882 Colorado registered voters. The interviews were conducted from April 26th through May 1st, 2022. This survey has a +/- 3.3% margin of error at the 95 percent confidence interval.

The survey data were weighted to be representative of the voter registration demographics within the state of Colorado. The survey questions were developed in collaboration with [Chalkbeat Colorado](#). We sincerely appreciate their thoughts and insights regarding important topics related to public education in Colorado.

Local School District Job Approval

- ◆ Among all respondents, 40% approve and 42% disapprove of the job their local school district is doing educating students. One in five respondents did not have an opinion on this question. Voter population subgroups with higher approval ratings for their school district included all Democrats (52% approve), Democrats aged 45-64 (62%), suburban men (47%), households with a student attending a public school (54%), and voters in the new 8th Congressional District (52%), El Paso County (48%) and Weld County (53%).
 - ◆ Population subgroups with higher disapproval ratings for their school district included all Republicans (57% disapprove), urban women (53%), rural voters (53%), voters in the First Congressional District (Denver) (61%), and Larimer County (50%).
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Local Teacher Image Rating

- ◆ Among all respondents, 58% had a favorable opinion, and 22% had an unfavorable opinion of the teachers in their local school district. Reviewing responses by party affiliation, the survey finds Democratic voters with a 70% teacher favorability rating, unaffiliated voters with a 56% favorability rating, and Republican voters with a 49% teacher favorability rating. Among households with a student attending a public

school, 74% have a favorable opinion of their local teachers. Among households without a student, the local teacher favorability rating is 54%.

Colorado Public Schools Heading in the Right Direction or Off on the Wrong Track?

A plurality of respondents, 44%, think public schools in their area are off on the wrong track, only 28% think they are headed in the right direction, and 28% did not have an opinion. The table below shows responses by voter subgroup.

	All Voters	Men	Wom	Unaf	Dem	Rep	18-44	45-64	65+	18 in HH	No 18 HH
Wrong Track	44%	42%	46%	42%	30%	62%	44%	49%	36%	53%	40%
Right Direct.	28%	28%	28%	29%	35%	18%	25%	27%	35%	31%	26%

The survey included a follow-up, open-ended question asking respondents to describe the reasons why they believed public schools were headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track. The responses present a challenging environment for Colorado teachers and professional educators to navigate.

Among Democratic voters, there is a deep frustration with public schools being underfunded and that teachers are undervalued and underpaid. In addition, these voters strongly believe conservative politicians are interfering with school administrations, firing superintendents, and pushing a political agenda. There is also a heightened concern among Democratic voters there is too much of a focus on standardized testing.

Republican voters believe most public schools are indoctrinating students with liberal ideology, "wokeism," teaching Critical Race Theory, and radical social justice and environmental ideals. Furthermore, they are enraged about student sexual orientation and identification issues. Republicans do not believe public schools focus enough on teaching "the basics" of reading, writing, math, and critical thinking.

Depending on their age or political leanings, unaffiliated voters echo the same concerns as Democratic and Republican voters. Older Unaffiliated voters are likely to be more conservative, and younger ones tend to be more Democratic. Finally, many respondents mentioned concerns about a lack of discipline in classrooms.

Do Local School Districts Manage and Spend Taxpayer Money Wisely?

- ◆ Among all respondents, only 31% think their local school district spends taxpayer money wisely, 42% do not, and 27% did not have an opinion. The responses to this question are not surprising and concerning for school districts. School districts have a hard enough time communicating with student parents and non-parents in their



communities about their policies, procedures, and events. Educating and informing their communities about how well they efficiently spend their financial resources can be overlooked or omitted from school district communications.

How Colorado Voters Think Public Education is Funded

- ◆ The survey asked voters how public education is funded in Colorado. We included this question to see how prevalent the idea of marijuana sales tax funding was top of mind and to discover what people believed. Among all respondents, 52% mentioned the word "taxes" or "property taxes." Other common responses were "state and federal funding" and grants. To our surprise, "marijuana sales tax" was mentioned by less than 3% of all respondents.

Opinion of School Districts Having the Financial Resources to Provide a Good Education

- ◆ Forty-three percent of respondents think Colorado school districts have the financial resources needed to provide students with a good education, 49% do not, and 8% are undecided. Among respondents with a student in their household, 56% said school districts have the financial resources to provide a good education. However, only 37% believe school districts have the financial resources to provide a good education among households without a student.

Will Additional Funding Result in a Better Education for Students?

- ◆ Among all respondents, 56% think additional funding for public education will improve students' education. Thirty-seven percent do not believe this, and 7% do not have an opinion. Among younger voters aged 18-34, 65% believe additional funding will lead to a better education compared to 48% of seniors aged 65 or older. The difference of opinion by party affiliation on this question is vast. A whopping 85% of Democratic voters believe additional funding will lead to a better education, compared to 51% of unaffiliated voters and just 36% of Republicans.

Voter Opinion of Different Ballot Measure Options to Fund Public Education

- ◆ Among all respondents, 45% said they would vote for a modest tax increase to fund school building maintenance needs compared to 57% supporting a tax increase to fund teacher salaries. Forty-three percent of respondents believe marijuana sales tax can be used for teacher salaries, and 32% do not. Furthermore, 64% of respondents are more likely to vote for a statewide ballot measure to fund a specific education need like teacher salaries. However, only 27% of respondents are more likely to vote for a ballot measure that lets the school district decide how to spend the funding.



Voter Opinion of the Relevance of a School Board Candidate's Views on COVID Policies

- ◆ Among all respondents, 48% say a school board candidate's COVID policies such as wearing masks, remote learning, and vaccination requirements are less important to them now. However, a nearly equal number of voters, 45%, say those things still matter to them when deciding on a school board candidate.

Opinion of Universal Preschool Program for All or Families With Risk Factors

- ◆ Colorado voter opinion is evenly split over the question of providing 10 hours of preschool a week to every 4-year-old in the state (49% support) or providing more than 10 hours to a week of preschool to children with risk factors such as teen parents or language delays (41% support). Not surprisingly, respondents that likely have a risk factor support that option overwhelmingly. This includes households with an income of less than \$75,000 (57% support), Hispanic respondents (72% support) and African Americans (66% support), and respondents without a 4-year college degree (60% support).

Opinion of Providing Parents With Education Tax Dollars Because of "Learning Loss"

- ◆ Respondents were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the viewpoint of providing parents with education tax dollars for tutoring or tuition for another school to address the problem of "learning loss" caused by remote learning during COVID. Just 34% of Colorado voters agree with this viewpoint, and 60% disagree.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted by sending an MMS text message to registered voters in Colorado, inviting them to participate in an online survey. The survey response data was weighted to reflect the voter registration demographics for the state of Colorado. The interviews were conducted from April 26th through May 1st, 2022. This survey has a +/- 3.3% margin of error at the 95 percent confidence interval.

The survey topline, crosstabs, verbatim responses, and presentation can be downloaded at <https://magellanstrategies.com/blog/> by clicking on the Colorado Public Education Spring 2022 Survey, Part 1 post.





Magellan Strategies

Colorado Public Education Survey Topline Results

Magellan Strategies are pleased to present the topline results of an online survey of 882 Colorado registered voters. The interviews were conducted from April 26th through May 1st, 2022. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.3% at the 95 percent confidence interval. The survey data was weighted to be representative of the voter registration demographics within the state of Colorado. The survey questions were developed in collaboration with [Chalkbeat Colorado](#). We sincerely appreciate their thoughts and insights regarding important topics related to public education in Colorado.

T1. First, could you please verify that you are registered to vote in Colorado?

Yes..... 100%

T2. Do you approve or disapprove of the job your local school district is doing educating students?

Total Approve	40%
Total Disapprove.....	42%
Unsure or No Opinion	18%
Strongly Approve	10%
Somewhat Approve.....	30%
Strongly Disapprove.....	23%
Somewhat Disapprove	19%

T3. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the teachers in your local school district?

Total Favorable	58%
Total Unfavorable	22%
Unsure or No Opinion	20%
Very Favorable	24%
Somewhat Favorable	34%
Very Unfavorable	9%
Somewhat Unfavorable	13%

T4. Do you think the public schools in your area are heading in the right direction, or do you feel they are off on the wrong track?

Wrong Track	44%
Right Direction	28%
Unsure or No Opinion	28%

T5. Please describe the reasons why you think public schools in your area are headed in the right direction.

**Verbatim responses attached in separate document.*

T6. Please describe the reasons why you feel the public schools in your area are off on the wrong track.

**Verbatim responses attached in separate document.*



T7. Among the following challenges facing public schools in Colorado, please choose up to three that you think school districts should be addressing the most.

Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	48%
Preparing students for the workforce	48%
Increasing teacher pay, keep up inflation, cost of living .	48%
Student mental health	33%
Preparing students for college	25%
Address student “learning loss” created during COVID ..	25%
Teacher mental health.....	16%
Improve student safety measures in school buildings.....	8%
Declining student enrollment.....	4%
Other challenge not mentioned.....	25%
Unsure or No Opinion	1%

T8. Do you think your local school district manages its financial resources efficiently and spends taxpayer money wisely?

Total Yes	31%
Total No.....	42%
Unsure or No Opinion	27%
Yes, Definitely.....	7%
Yes, Probably	24%
No, Definitely Not	20%
No, Probably Not.....	22%

T9. Please describe how you think public education is funded in Colorado.

**Verbatim responses attached in separate document.*



T10. Do you think school districts in Colorado have the financial resources needed to provide students with a good education?

Total Yes43%
Total No.....49%
Unsure or No Opinion8%

Yes, Definitely.....19%
Yes, Probably24%

No, Definitely Not18%
No, Probably Not.....31%

T11. Do you think additional funding for public education in Colorado will result in a better education for students?

Total Yes56%
Total No.....37%
Unsure or No Opinion7%

Yes, Definitely.....34%
Yes, Probably22%

No, Definitely Not14%
No, Probably Not.....23%

T12. Would you vote for a modest property tax increase to fund school building maintenance and improvements in your local school district?

Total Yes45%
Total No.....46%
Undecided9%

Yes, Definitely.....24%
Yes, Probably21%

No, Definitely Not27%
No, Probably Not.....19%



T13. Would you vote for a modest property tax increase to fund raising teacher salaries in your local school district?

Total Yes	57%
Total No.....	37%
Undecided	6%
Yes, Definitely.....	35%
Yes, Probably	22%
No, Definitely Not	24%
No, Probably Not.....	13%

T14. Please indicate if you think the following statement is true or false. School district revenue from marijuana sales taxes can be used to pay teacher salaries.

True	43%
False	32%
Unsure or No Opinion	25%

T15. Would you support or oppose a statewide ballot measure to fund public education that would keep a portion of future TABOR refunds?

Total Support	41%
Total Oppose	30%
Unsure or No Opinion	29%
Strongly Support.....	24%
Somewhat Support.....	17%
Strongly Oppose	23%
Somewhat Oppose.....	7%

T16. When considering a statewide ballot measure to fund public education in Colorado, are you more likely to vote for a ballot measure that requires funds to be spent on a specific education need like recruiting and retaining teachers? Or are you more likely to vote for a ballot measure that lets the school district decide how the funding would be spent?

Funding specific education needs	64%
Allowing districts to decide how funding is spent....	27%
Unsure or No Opinion	9%



T17. When you consider candidates in future school board elections, will you judge them based on their COVID policies, such as wearing masks, remote learning, and vaccination requirements, or are those things less important to you now?

COVID policies are less important now48%
COVID policies still matter to me.....45%
Unsure or No Opinion7%

T18. Please indicate how much trust you have in the following groups to address public education in Colorado. A lot, some, a little bit, do not trust at all.

Ranked by A Lot and Some Trust Combined

Teacher Unions.....51%
Your Local School Board.....49%
Governor’s Office46%
State Board of Education41%
Democrats40%
State Legislature38%
Republicans37%

A. Republicans

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....37%

A Lot of Trust11%
Some Trust26%
A Little Bit of Trust22%
Do Not Trust at All.....41%

B. Democrats

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....40%

A Lot of Trust14%
Some Trust26%
A Little Bit of Trust15%
Do Not Trust at All.....45%



C. Your Local School Board

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....49%

A Lot of Trust8%

Some Trust.....41%

A Little Bit of Trust27%

Do Not Trust at All.....24%

D. Teacher Unions

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....51%

A Lot of Trust21%

Some Trust.....30%

A Little Bit of Trust14%

Do Not Trust at All.....35%

E. The State Board of Education

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....41%

A Lot of Trust6%

Some Trust.....35%

A Little Bit of Trust28%

Do Not Trust at All.....31%

F. The State Legislature

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....38%

A Lot of Trust4%

Some Trust.....34%

A Little Bit of Trust28%

Do Not Trust at All.....34%



G. The Governor’s Office

A Lot and Some Trust Combined.....	46%
A Lot of Trust	14%
Some Trust.....	32%
A Little Bit of Trust	17%
Do Not Trust at All.....	37%

T19. Colorado is in the process of designing a Universal Preschool Program funded in part by a nicotine tax voters approved in 2020. The program’s mission is to provide at least 10 hours a week of high-quality preschool for every 4-year-old in the state. However, total funding for the program may be limited and not able to meet that goal.

Knowing this, do you think the program should pay for 10 hours a week for every 4-year-old, regardless of a child’s socioeconomic circumstances, or should the program prioritize and provide more than 10 hours for children with certain risk factors, such as those with teen parents or those who have language delays?

Provide 10 hours all children, regardless circumstance ..	49%
Prioritize children with risk factors.....	41%
Unsure or No Opinion.....	10%

T20. Some people believe the “learning loss” among Colorado students due to remote learning and COVID education policies justify giving tax dollars directly to parents to pay for tutoring, tuition at another school, or other educational needs. Do you agree or disagree with this viewpoint?

Total Agree	34%
Total Disagree.....	60%
Unsure or No Opinion.....	6%
Strongly Agree.....	13%
Somewhat Agree	21%
Strongly Disagree.....	43%
Somewhat Disagree	17%

T21 – T31 WILL BE RELEASED AT A LATER DATE.



And now we have a few questions for statistical purposes only.

T32. Are you a parent or guardian of one or more students that attend a school or are homeschooled in kindergarten through 12th grade?

Total Yes30%
No70%

Yes, One Student14%
Yes, More than One Student16%

T33. If you have more than one student, please answer the following question for the oldest student in your household.

Does your student attend: (Among respondents that have a child attending grades kindergarten through 12th, 269n)

Public School72%
Charter School10%
Homeschooled.....9%
Private School5%
Other4%

T34. Which gender do you most identify with?

Female50%
Male49%
Identify Differently1%

T35. Are you between the ages of:

18 to 3429%
35 to 4418%
45 to 5415%
55 to 6416%
65 or Older22%



T36. Which race or ethnicity do you most identify with?

White or Caucasian.....	67%
Hispanic or Latino.....	20%
Black or African American	5%
Asian or Asian American.....	3%
Other	5%

T37. Are you married or single?

Married.....	58%
Single.....	39%
Prefer Not to Say	3%

T38. For statistical and weighting purposes only, are you registered to vote as an Unaffiliated voter, a Democrat, a Republican, or are you registered with another party?

Unaffiliated.....	45%
Democrat.....	28%
Republican.....	25%
Other party	2%

T39. How likely are you to vote in this year's November election? Are you:

Extremely Likely.....	92%
Very Likely.....	6%
Somewhat Likely.....	2%
Unlikely	0%

T40. How would you describe the area where you currently live?

Suburban Area	39%
City or Urban Area.....	36%
Rural Area.....	12%
Small Town.....	11%
Prefer Not to Say	2%



T41. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Did Not Complete High School	1%
High School Graduate, GED	6%
Technical, Vocational School Training.....	3%
Attended Some College, No Degree.....	17%
Associates Degree, Two-Year College	9%
Bachelor’s Degree, Four-Year College.....	38%
Masters, Ph.D., Other Professional Degree.....	24%
Prefer Not to Say	2%

T42. Last year, what was your total family income before taxes?

Less than \$30,000	6%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	11%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	16%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	11%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	7%
More than \$150,000	19%
Prefer Not to Say	14%

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