



Magellan Strategies

Colorado Public Education Opinion Survey Topline Results

Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the topline results of an online survey of 1,550 Colorado registered voters. The interviews were conducted from September 7th to 26th, 2023. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.5% at the 95 percent confidence interval. The survey data were weighted to be representative of the voter registration demographics for the state of Colorado. In addition, survey data was weighted to be demographically representative of a Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) state region or a combination of individual regions. Magellan Strategies paid for this survey.

Survey Focus and Objectives

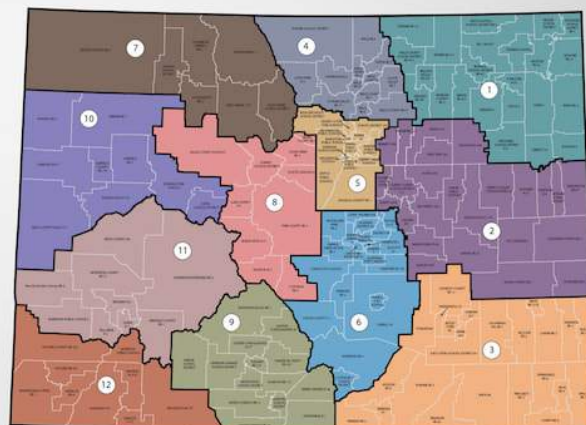
The issue of public education nationally and in Colorado continues to be at the top of voter’s minds, regardless of having a student in school. This survey attempts to measure and understand the opinions of Coloradan student parents and non-parents regarding a wide range of public education issues and their local school district.

Moreover, our clients are Colorado school districts, professional educators, and school board members. We hope this information helps them better understand how voters in their communities think about their local school district’s education programs, initiatives, and culture.

Sample Sizes and Margins of Error for Adjusted CASB Survey Regions

Districts by CASB Region

- Metro Region 5, 209n, +/- 6.8% MoE
- Weld-Lar. Region 4, 190n, +/- 7.1% MoE
- El Paso Region 6, 192n, +/- 7.0% MoE
- Mountain Region 8, 134n, +/- 8.4% MoE
- Western Slope Reg. 7, 10,11, 319n, +/- 5.5% MoE
- Southwest Regions 9, 12, 245n, +/- 6.3% MoE
- Eastern Plains, Regions 1, 2, 3, 261n, +/- 6.0% MoE



Key Findings

- Among all respondents, 39% approve of the job their local school district is doing educating students, 44% disapprove, and 17% do not have an opinion. Regions where a majority or plurality of respondents approve of the job their school district is doing in educating students include the Southwest Region (51% approve), the Weld-Larimer Region (50% approve), and the El Paso Region (48% approve).
- Regions where a plurality of respondents disapprove of the job their school district is doing include the Metro Region (48% disapprove). Respondents in the Western Slope and Eastern Plains regions were evenly split on this question.
- A majority of Coloradans, 56%, have a favorable opinion of the teachers in their local school district. Across every region, a majority have a favorable opinion of teachers. One interesting finding is a plurality of Republican voters, 40%, have an unfavorable opinion of teachers and 37% a favorable opinion. Republicans are the only voter subgroup where a plurality has an unfavorable opinion of teachers.
- Fifty percent of respondents think their local school district does not have the financial resources to provide students with a good education, and 37% think they do. We are curious how opinions of school district funding may change if Proposition HH is approved.
- A clear majority, 61%, think additional funding for public education in Colorado will improve students' education. Voter subgroups where this viewpoint is strongest include voters aged 18 to 44 (67%), Democrats (90%), and women (70%). Again, we find Republican voters being the only voter subgroup where a substantial majority disagree with this viewpoint (63%).
- Unfortunately, only 32% of respondents think their local school district manages its financial resources efficiently and spends taxpayer money wisely, and a plurality of 46% do not. However, a 49% plurality of respondents in the Southwest Region and 45% of respondents in the Eastern Plains Region do think their school district does spend taxpayer money wisely. One key finding is a plurality of respondents, 49%, who have a student in their household think their school district does not manage its financial resources efficiently.
- Among all respondents, 32% think the public schools in their area are headed in the right direction, and 47% feel they are off on the wrong track. These opinion measurements are similar to our April 2022 education survey, where 28% said public schools in their area are headed in the right direction, and 44% felt they were off on the wrong track. We provide a complete analysis of the reasons why respondents think their local school district is headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track in this document.

- Coloradans think the most important attributes and characteristics in developing great schools are having a safe and secure learning environment and teaching students collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. In addition, attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing.
- Only 11% of respondents were very familiar, and 27% were somewhat familiar with Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes and programs. Among households with a student, 47% were very or somewhat familiar with CTE programs. After respondents were informed about CTE classes and programs, 58% said they would have a much more favorable opinion of their local school district if they offered those classes and programs.
- Among all respondents, 21% said it is very important, and 43% somewhat important to earn an undergraduate degree from a four-year college or university. However, a whopping 45% of respondents said it is very unaffordable, and 28% somewhat unaffordable for a Colorado resident to earn an undergraduate degree from a public, state-supported Colorado college or university like the University of Colorado or Colorado State University.
- Concerns about student debt are significant among all respondents. Thirty-two percent think the average amount of student debt a Colorado resident has upon graduation from a public, state-supported school is more than \$50,000. Another 17% think the average amount is \$40,000 to \$50,000.
- Respondents were asked if their local high schools should put greater importance on teaching students CTE programs or preparing for college to attain a four-year degree. A strong majority of 61% said CTE programs should have greater importance, and just 19% said preparing for college should have greater importance. Reasons why respondents answered this question are provided later in this document.

Following are the responses to each question in the order they were asked.

T1. First, could you please verify that you are at least 18 years old and a full-time resident of Colorado?

Yes 100%

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

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Approve	39%	33%	48%	50%	37%	44%	51%	43%
Total Disappr.	44%	48%	34%	37%	44%	45%	39%	46%
No Opinion	17%	19%	18%	13%	19%	11%	10%	11%
Strongly Appr.	11%	9%	12%	18%	7%	14%	18%	12%
Smwt. Approve	28%	24%	36%	32%	30%	30%	33%	31%
Str. Disapprove	24%	27%	17%	18%	23%	21%	19%	21%
Smwt. Disappr.	20%	21%	17%	19%	21%	24%	20%	25%

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

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Favorable	56%	55%	60%	59%	58%	60%	61%	59%
Total Unfavorable	21%	20%	20%	24%	24%	22%	24%	29%
No Opinion	23%	25%	20%	17%	18%	18%	15%	12%
Very Favorable	27%	27%	28%	29%	19%	25%	30%	23%
Somewhat Favorable	29%	28%	32%	30%	39%	35%	31%	36%
Very Unfavorable	8%	10%	5%	7%	7%	6%	7%	8%
Somewhat Unfav.	13%	10%	15%	17%	17%	16%	17%	21%

T4. Do you think your local school district has the financial resources needed to provide students with a good education?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Yes	37%	36%	34%	45%	40%	39%	34%	31%
Total No	50%	49%	52%	51%	53%	53%	58%	59%
No Opinion	13%	15%	14%	4%	7%	8%	8%	10%
Yes, Definitely	20%	21%	16%	24%	25%	13%	15%	11%
Yes, Probably	17%	15%	18%	21%	15%	26%	19%	20%
No, Definitely Not	25%	29%	19%	24%	19%	24%	22%	24%
No, Probably Not	25%	20%	33%	27%	34%	29%	36%	35%

T5. Do you think additional funding for public education in Colorado will result in a better education for students?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Yes	61%	60%	67%	59%	60%	56%	68%	58%
Total No	34%	35%	30%	37%	34%	36%	29%	37%
No Opinion	5%	5%	3%	4%	6%	8%	3%	5%
Yes, Definitely	36%	37%	30%	39%	44%	30%	40%	31%
Yes, Probably	25%	23%	37%	20%	16%	26%	28%	27%
No, Definitely Not	14%	11%	15%	18%	17%	14%	8%	12%
No, Probably Not	21%	24%	15%	19%	17%	22%	21%	25%

T6. Do you think your local school district manages its financial resources efficiently and spends taxpayer money wisely?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Yes	32%	28%	29%	36%	38%	33%	49%	45%
Total No	46%	47%	50%	48%	40%	48%	32%	43%
No Opinion	22%	25%	21%	16%	22%	19%	19%	12%
Yes, Definitely	9%	8%	7%	11%	14%	7%	13%	13%
Yes, Probably	23%	20%	22%	25%	24%	26%	36%	32%
No, Definitely Not	20%	22%	16%	18%	18%	22%	15%	18%
No, Probably Not	26%	25%	34%	30%	22%	26%	17%	25%

T7. 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?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cnty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Right Direction	32%	31%	32%	37%	33%	33%	47%	35%
Total Wrong Track	47%	46%	47%	46%	55%	53%	38%	55%
No Opinion	21%	23%	21%	17%	12%	14%	15%	10%
Defin. Right Direction	8%	7%	8%	14%	9%	7%	14%	8%
Prob. Right Direction	24%	24%	24%	23%	24%	26%	33%	27%
Definitely Wrong Track	26%	27%	23%	27%	23%	27%	21%	25%
Probably Wrong Track	21%	19%	24%	19%	32%	26%	17%	30%

T8. Please describe the reasons why you think public schools in your area are headed in the right direction. (Asked only to respondents who think their public schools are headed in the right direction)

T9. Please describe the reasons why you feel the public schools in your area are off on the wrong track. (Asked only to respondents who feel their public schools are off on the wrong track)

Metro Area Region Top Three Themes Why 31% Think Schools Are in the Right Direction

- Focus on Quality Education:** Responses indicate that public schools in the area prioritize providing a well-rounded, high-quality education. This includes updating the curriculum to reflect state standards and current events, equipping students with both intellectual and practical life skills, and preparing students for varied post-secondary pathways, including college and career readiness. The importance of technology and contemporary subjects such as science, technology, and critical theory was also mentioned.
- Support and Resources for Teachers and Students:** Many respondents highlighted the significance of resources in terms of materials and human capital. There's a mention of the importance of teacher compensation, training, and the need for more teachers. Additionally, students' inclusivity, safety, and well-being were emphasized, showcasing a commitment to creating a nurturing learning environment.
- Adapting to Challenges and Forward-Thinking Initiatives:** A recurring theme is the ability of schools to adapt to challenges, whether it be the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic or financial constraints. Initiatives such as expanding options for students to

learn trades while still in school, offering diverse classes like robotics and web design, and focusing on increasing graduation rates show progressive steps being taken. There's also an emphasis on value-based education, promoting open-mindedness, and valuing every individual in the school system.

Metro Area Region Top Three Themes Why 46% Think Schools Are on the Wrong Track

1. **Funding and Resource Allocation:** Many respondents expressed concerns over the unequal distribution of resources and funding to schools. Specifically, they mentioned that lower-income schools or schools in certain districts receive less financial support than others. Respondents highlighted the importance of prioritizing funds to hire and retain quality teachers. There was a call for more finances to be directed to teachers so they have the necessary resources. Some also pointed out that there seems to be an excessive amount spent on administrators or upper-level management, while teachers are underpaid and schools lack resources.
2. **Political and Social Agendas in Schools:** Many respondents believe schools focus too much on political or social issues, such as gender identity and Critical Race Theory (CRT). They feel these issues overshadow basic education essentials like math, science, history, and English. Concerns were raised about "woke" ideologies and the belief that political opinions and certain ideologies are being imposed on students. Some respondents mentioned that schools should focus more on teaching students primary education and less on political issues or topics they consider divisive.
3. **Quality of Education and Curriculum Concerns:** Many respondents are worried about the overall decline in education quality. They highlighted issues like students not meeting grade-level reading, writing, math, and science standards. There were concerns about the current education system not preparing students for the real world or college. Respondents felt that schools are not emphasizing core skills and foundational subjects enough. Concerns were also raised about the lack of discipline, order, and focus on testing over genuine learning. The idea that the education system does not cater to the current needs of students and doesn't encourage curiosity and critical thinking was also mentioned.

While these are the top three themes, it's important to note that respondents also mentioned other concerns, such as safety issues in schools, behavior management, over-reliance on standardized tests, lack of support services, and more.

El Paso Region Top Three Themes Why 32% Think Schools Are in the Right Direction

1. **Dedicated and Caring Educators:** Many respondents praised teachers' and school staff's dedication, hard work, and care. They believe that despite challenges like limited resources or external pressures, educators are making significant efforts to

provide quality education. Phrases like "teachers are dedicated and hard-working," "teachers care enough," and "caring professionals" underscore this sentiment.

2. **Focus on Student Needs and Well-Being:** A number of responses highlighted the schools' efforts in adapting to the changing needs of students, focusing on mental wellness, and ensuring equity and personalization in learning. There was also mention of schools not bowing to external political pressures, which could be seen as prioritizing students' well-being over politics. Comments like "schools begin to personalize systems," "we are focusing on mental wellness," and "putting students first" emphasize this theme.
3. **Curriculum and Educational Improvements:** Several respondents noted positive changes in the curriculum, efforts to keep up with technology, increasing test scores, and ensuring relevance in teaching. They appreciated schools that shared curriculum with parents, offered appropriate curriculum, and made vocational education available. Statements like "making classrooms smaller," "teaching history accurately," and "they are currently teaching history accurately" further bolster this theme.

While there were comments regarding politics in schools, they were diverse in nature and didn't emerge as a unified theme.

El Paso Region Top Three Themes Why 47% Think Schools Are on the Wrong Track

1. **Political and Social Indoctrination Concerns:** Many respondents expressed concerns about the perceived influence of certain political and social ideologies in schools, specifically mentioning "woke" culture, critical race theory (CRT), LGBTQ+ curricula, and various forms of what they deem as indoctrination. Respondents also voiced concerns about teachings related to gender identity and pronouns. Some believe schools should stick to traditional educational topics and avoid becoming platforms for particular ideologies, especially those they think don't belong in a school setting.
2. **Focus on Basics and Academic Rigor:** Respondents frequently highlighted that schools are not adequately teaching the basics or foundational subjects like reading, writing, mathematics, and history. They feel that the academic standards have declined, with numerous mentions of students graduating without essential skills, such as basic math or reading abilities. There's a concern about the quality and substance of the curriculum and an emphasis on returning to a traditional or "classical" education approach. Additionally, concerns were raised about the limited focus on STEM, civics, and financial education.
3. **Administrative and Financial Mismanagement:** Several responses expressed dissatisfaction with the school board's decisions and actions, including perceived

mismanagement of funds, prioritizing administrative salaries over classroom resources, and not directing adequate funds to teachers. There's a sentiment that the system is too "top-heavy," with too much emphasis on non-educator pay and insufficient support for teachers, who some believe are underpaid for their work. Concerns were also raised about transparency, especially regarding how funds are spent, with some respondents feeling that money is not being used effectively to improve the quality of education.

While these are the top three themes, it's essential to note that the responses also touched on other areas of concern, such as the influence of religious groups, school safety, teacher preparedness, and issues related to student behavior and motivation.

Weld-Larimer Region Top Three Themes Why 37% Think Schools Are in Right Direction

1. **Dedicated Educators and Quality of Teaching:** Many respondents emphasized the hard work, dedication, and quality of the teachers in their districts. This includes teachers' commitment to improvement, dedication despite challenges, and the belief that they provide the best possible education for their students.
2. **Focus on Holistic Student Well-Being:** Respondents frequently mentioned the emphasis on mental health, inclusiveness, student autonomy, and the overall well-being of the students. This theme encompasses responses related to mental health resources, whole student education, emphasis on inclusiveness, and nurturing a strong community spirit in schools.
3. **Resources and Curriculum:** Many comments revolved around the availability of resources, both in terms of academic and extracurricular options, as well as the direction of the curriculum. This includes mentions of diverse subjects, laptop availability, literacy curriculum, technical and traditional teachings, and schools adapting to ensure students experience high-quality education.

Weld-Larimer Region Top Three Themes Why 46% Think Schools Are on Wrong Track

1. **Focus on Social and Political Issues:** Many respondents expressed concerns that schools spend too much time on what they perceive as "woke" agendas, identity politics, LGBTQ+ topics, equity, and "social justice" education. They often mentioned a desire for schools to return to "basics" or traditional education methods and exclude topics they see as divisive or politically motivated.
2. **Resource Allocation and Management Concerns:** Numerous responses cited concerns about how funds are allocated, with critiques on administrative overhead, teacher salaries, wasteful spending, and emphasis on particular programs or extracurriculars at the expense of academic subjects. There is a sentiment that

schools might be prioritizing the wrong areas financially and not using funds to directly benefit students' academic growth.

3. **Quality of Core Education and Instructional Methods:** Respondents expressed frustrations about the perceived decline in emphasis on foundational subjects like reading, writing, math, and science. Some mentioned new teaching methods (like changes in how math is taught) and the incorporation of technology in classrooms as problematic. There's a desire for a stronger focus on basic academics, with some mentioning the importance of practical skills and vocational training.

Mountain Region Top Three Themes Why 33% Think Schools Are in the Right Direction

1. **Strong Leadership and Quality Staff:** Many responses mentioned the presence of good leadership, dedicated and committed staff, good teachers, and initiatives to improve teacher retention and pay as reasons for positivity towards public schools.
2. **Curriculum and Educational Approaches:** Responses highlighted standards-based grading, emphasis on basic life skills, inclusive and challenging environments, and initiatives like character building, critical thinking skills, and environmental education as positive developments in schools.
3. **Community and Resources Management:** The active involvement of schools in the community, positive reports from local newspapers, wise financial management, and the ability to create programs tailored to students' unique needs were noted as indicators that schools are moving in the right direction.

Mountain Region Top Three Themes Why 55% Think Schools Are on the Wrong Track

1. **Educational Priorities and Curriculum Concerns:** Many respondents feel schools have moved away from teaching foundational subjects like math, reading, writing, science, and history. They believe there's too much emphasis on "test scores" and not enough on developing "critical thinking" and "life skills." They also perceive a shift towards what they describe as "social engineering," "indoctrination," or "political agendas" rather than traditional learning.
2. **Teacher and Administrative Issues:** There are concerns about the motivation, qualification, retention, and compensation of teachers. Respondents feel teachers are underpaid, overburdened with paperwork, or sometimes lack the necessary credentials. Many also cited issues with school boards, administrators, and the overall management of the school system. The role and influence of teachers' unions are also highlighted, with some believing they have too much control over education decisions.

3. **Social and Political Concerns in Education:** A significant number of responses mention concerns about the integration of contemporary social and political issues into the school curriculum, especially topics related to gender and sexuality, diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), Critical Race Theory (CRT), and other "woke" ideas. Some believe these topics distract from core education, while others see them as inappropriate or even a form of "indoctrination."

Western Slope Top Three Themes Why 33% Think Schools Are in the Right Direction

1. **Quality of Education and Resources:** Many respondents emphasized the positive impact of test scores, college preparation programs, academic programs, and the curriculum's breadth that prepares students for their future. They also noted the extra support provided for students with learning disabilities and the effort teachers put in, often beyond their paid hours, to ensure students succeed. Several respondents also mentioned the importance of innovative teaching practices and the efforts to keep schools open during challenging times.
2. **Teacher and Community Dedication:** A recurring theme was the dedication, commitment, and hard work of the teachers and administrators in the district. Respondents believe that the teachers are doing their best with the resources they have and often go above and beyond for their students. Additionally, community involvement and support were highlighted, with many noting parents and the broader community's active roles in the education system.
3. **Inclusivity and Respect for Diversity:** Respondents frequently pointed out the schools' efforts to promote inclusivity and recognize individual needs. They mentioned programs and practices that advocate for marginalized groups and highlighted the value of having an environment where students can form their own opinions and are taught to empathize and advocate. The emphasis on equity, inclusivity, and the recognition of the diverse needs of students was seen as an indicator of the schools heading in the right direction.

Western Slope Top Three Themes Why 53% Think Schools Are on the Wrong Track

1. **Funding and Resource Allocation Concerns:** Many respondents expressed concerns about how funds are allocated in their local schools. They highlighted issues such as insufficient funding for academic resources, teacher salaries, and educational supplies. Some mentioned there is a disproportionate focus on areas like sports facilities while neglecting basic academic and instructional needs. Additionally, concerns were raised about the lack of support for special education students and those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
2. **Curriculum and Teaching Concerns:** A significant number of respondents voiced concerns about the current curriculum in public schools. This theme encompasses

a range of issues: "Teaching to the test" and overemphasizing standardized testing. Insufficient focus on fundamental subjects such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and history. Perceived inclusion of political or controversial subjects, with mentions of "woke culture," Critical Race Theory (CRT), and discussions related to gender and sexuality. Lack of comprehensive and inclusive history education and a need for more critical thinking and real-world skills. Concerns about teachers pushing personal beliefs onto students.

3. **Administration and Governance Concerns:** Several responses pointed to issues at the administrative or governance level. This includes concerns about school board decisions, with some feeling that boards are not acting in the best interests of students. Issues with teacher turnover, lack of qualified teachers, and a reliance on substitutes. Beliefs that political agendas or personal opinions are influencing schools lead to tensions between educators, parents, and administrators. Challenges with transparency, discipline, and management in schools.

While these are the top three themes, it's important to note that the responses encompass a wide range of individual concerns and viewpoints, reflecting diverse perspectives on public education in the respondents' areas.

Southwest Region Top Three Themes Why 33% Think Schools Are in the Right Direction

1. **Dedication and Effort of Educators:** Many respondents praised the dedication, hard work, and passion of the teachers and administrators in their local public schools. They also appreciated the tireless efforts made by educators to improve the quality of education and the care they show toward their students.
2. **Educational Outcomes and Quality:** Several respondents mentioned positive educational outcomes such as high test scores, student achievements, and innovative programs. There was also a frequent mention of the schools providing a balanced and factual curriculum, which keeps politics and ideologies out of education.
3. **Community Involvement and Values:** Many respondents felt that their local schools were deeply connected to their communities, with local administrators who understand and cater to the unique needs of their areas. There were mentions of schools involving the community in decisions, schools steering clear of controversial movements, and a general sentiment that schools reflected the values and priorities of the local community.

While these are the top three themes, there were other prevalent sentiments, such as the emphasis on real-world skills, schools offering diverse programs to cater to various learning needs, and the importance of truth and fact-based learning.

Southwest Region Top Three Themes Why 38% Think Schools Are on the Wrong Track

1. **Curriculum and Educational Focus Concerns:** Many respondents expressed concerns about the school curriculum, explicitly mentioning the inclusion of political, social, or "woke" agendas. They felt schools were straying from basic academic focuses such as math, science, and history. There's also a sentiment that schools are pushing ideologies or beliefs onto students that should be taught by parents or not at all, including topics like gender affirmation and critical race theory.
2. **Lack of Adequate Resources and Teacher Support:** Several respondents mentioned issues like underfunding, lack of resources for facility maintenance, low salaries for teachers, and challenges in recruiting and retaining quality teachers. There were also concerns about a lack of attention to student's individual needs and inadequacies in addressing special education or disabilities. Furthermore, there's a sentiment that poor leadership, both at the administrative and school board levels, negatively impacts the schools.
3. **Safety, Discipline, and Student Behavior Concerns:** Numerous respondents raised issues related to safety in schools, citing incidents like drug use, vaping, bullying, and lack of discipline. They felt schools were not adequately addressing these problems, leading to a disruptive learning environment. Moreover, there's a feeling that students are not adequately prepared for the real world or higher education upon graduating.

These themes provide an overview of the general sentiments of the respondents, though it's essential to note that a variety of opinions and concerns are expressed in the responses.

Eastern Plains Top Three Themes Why 35% Think Schools Are in the Right Direction

1. **Quality of Education and Curriculum:** Improved test scores, focus on core subjects like reading, math, and English. Incorporation of technology and other resources to enhance learning. New and impactful programs like Capturing Kids Heart focus on reading and writing. Curriculum adjustments like the inclusion of job placement and college education insights. The focus is on quality instruction and intervention.
2. **Community and Leadership Involvement:** Presence of involved and dedicated school personnel, from custodians to superintendents. Strong leadership at district levels, with positive mentions of superintendents and school boards. Active community engagement, transparency in board/faculty decisions, and inclusiveness in meetings. Recognition of the school's responsiveness to community needs and concerns.
3. **School Environment and Culture:** Improvement in school culture, fewer behavioral issues, and greater emphasis on values. Positive feedback about the attitude and behavior of students suggests a supportive and constructive school environment.

Initiatives to promote student well-being, such as anti-bullying efforts and programs that foster empathy and responsibility. Presence of extracurricular activities, sports, and clubs that contribute to a holistic student experience. Appreciation for small class sizes, especially in rural districts, leads to more personalized and tailored instruction.

It's important to mention some contrasting views related to political and cultural beliefs, with some responders appreciating the more conservative values in education while others favoring more inclusive and egalitarian approaches.

Eastern Plains Top Three Themes Why 35% Think Schools Are on the Wrong Track

1. **Resource Allocation and Prioritization:** Concerns over the misuse of funds, such as constructing a new stadium, while neglecting building repairs and academic needs and diverting resources away from academic programs (like music) in favor of sports. Neglecting student needs, especially those with special requirements or learning disabilities. Teachers are being underpaid, overworked, and inadequately supported. High turnover rates among school administrators and staff affect consistency and quality of education. Focus on non-educational matters over core academic subjects.
2. **Political and Social Agendas in Curriculum:** A significant number of responses mentioned concerns about introducing topics they view as "woke" or "liberal," like critical race theory, gender identity, and other social justice issues. Accusations of schools pushing specific political ideologies, both conservative and liberal. Calls for a return to a more "traditional" curriculum, emphasizing basics like reading, writing, arithmetic, and civics. Concerns over the removal or distortion of American history lessons.
3. **Overall Quality of Education and School Environment:** Schools' excessive focus on standardized testing at the expense of genuine learning and life skills. Students are being promoted despite not meeting academic benchmarks. Issues related to student behavior, bullying, drugs, and the perceived absence of consequences. Lack of qualified staff, with instances of uncertified or underqualified individuals teaching classes. Teachers are more focused on paychecks rather than genuinely caring for the students. A general sentiment is that the U.S. education system is falling behind internationally and is not adequately preparing students for real-world challenges.

T10. Among the following challenges facing public schools in Colorado, please choose three that you think school districts should address the most.

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	49%	46%	54%	54%	51%	51%	53%	51%
Increasing teacher pay to keep up with inflation & the rising cost of living	48%	47%	46%	51%	52%	53%	56%	46%
Preparing students for the workforce	44%	40%	47%	48%	45%	52%	46%	59%
Student mental health	34%	35%	35%	31%	26%	31%	36%	30%
Improving safety measures in school buildings	24%	30%	18%	14%	9%	14%	16%	15%
Addressing learning loss caused by COVID	22%	21%	24%	23%	27%	15%	16%	21%
Preparing students for college	18%	17%	14%	18%	28%	18%	20%	20%
Teacher mental health	18%	19%	18%	16%	22%	15%	17%	13%
Declining student enrollment	6%	9%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	5%
Another challenge not mentioned	23%	24%	18%	24%	27%	23%	20%	23%
No Opinion	2%	1%	3%	3%	0%	4%	1%	0%

Following is a summary of the 23% who submitted a response to “another challenge not mentioned.”

Curriculum and Educational Content:

- Teaching relevant material.
- Focus on fundamentals such as reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- Educating students on critical thinking, life skills, and financial basics.
- Addressing inclusivity and representation in history.
- Bringing back art, music, vocational education, and student-led learning.

Political and Social Concerns in Education:

- Concerns about teachers pushing political agendas and personal ideologies.
- Keeping politics and religion out of the classroom.
- Avoiding "woke" education.
- Respecting parental input in children's education.

Student Safety and Well-being:

- Addressing bullying and ensuring the safety of students from violence, including gun violence.
- Addressing and preventing sexual assault.
- Improving mental health support for both students and teachers.
- Ensuring environments are conducive to learning, such as providing proper HVAC systems.

Support for Diverse Learning Needs:

- Assisting in the integration and acceptance of children with disabilities.
- Providing more resources and education for special needs students.
- Training teachers to understand and support students with learning or mental disabilities.
- Addressing issues related to student behavior and offering support for teachers in managing classroom discipline.

(Note: These themes capture the overarching sentiments found within the responses. The actual prioritization may vary depending on the demographics and specific concerns of the responding community.)

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools.

Statewide Results	Very and Somewhat Combined	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	No Opinion
A safe and secure learning environment	98%	88%	10%	1%	0%	1%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	98%	87%	11%	2%	0%	0%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	97%	83%	14%	2%	0%	1%
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	97%	86%	11%	3%	0%	0%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	96%	75%	21%	2%	1%	1%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	95%	66%	29%	4%	0%	1%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	94%	69%	25%	4%	1%	1%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	94%	62%	32%	5%	1%	0%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	93%	54%	39%	6%	0%	1%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	91%	62%	29%	7%	2%	0%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	89%	49%	40%	10%	1%	0%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	87%	70%	17%	8%	4%	1%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	75%	33%	42%	19%	5%	1%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	71%	24%	47%	23%	5%	1%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (Metro Region)

Metro Area – Region 5	Very and Somewhat Combined	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	No Opinion
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	99%	90%	9%	1%	0%	0%
A safe and secure learning environment	99%	91%	8%	0%	0%	1%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	97%	84%	13%	2%	0%	1%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	96%	65%	31%	4%	0%	0%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	96%	75%	21%	2%	0%	2%
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	95%	83%	12%	5%	0%	0%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	95%	53%	42%	5%	0%	0%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	95%	59%	36%	5%	0%	0%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	92%	65%	27%	6%	1%	1%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	92%	64%	28%	5%	3%	0%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	89%	46%	43%	10%	0%	1%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	87%	72%	15%	8%	4%	1%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	73%	31%	42%	20%	6%	1%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	68%	22%	46%	26%	5%	1%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (El Paso Region)

El Paso Cnty. & South Region 6	Very and Somewhat Combined	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	No Opinion
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	98%	86%	12%	2%	0%	0%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	98%	73%	25%	2%	0%	0%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	98%	84%	14%	1%	0%	1%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	97%	82%	15%	2%	1%	0%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	96%	64%	32%	3%	0%	1%
A safe and secure learning environment	95%	87%	8%	3%	0%	2%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	95%	76%	19%	2%	2%	1%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	94%	64%	30%	6%	0%	0%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	90%	55%	35%	8%	0%	2%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	87%	60%	27%	12%	1%	0%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	85%	67%	18%	10%	3%	2%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	84%	48%	36%	14%	2%	0%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	80%	40%	40%	17%	1%	2%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	74%	25%	49%	23%	1%	2%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (Weld-Larimer Region)

<u>Weld-Larimer-St. Vrain Region 4</u>	<u>Very and Somewhat Combined</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Too Important</u>	<u>Not Important at All</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	100%	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%
A safe and secure learning environment	100%	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	98%	74%	24%	1%	1%	0%
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	98%	88%	10%	2%	0%	0%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	97%	86%	11%	3%	0%	0%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	96%	76%	20%	4%	0%	0%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	94%	55%	39%	6%	0%	0%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	94%	66%	28%	5%	1%	0%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	92%	71%	21%	6%	0%	2%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	91%	54%	37%	8%	1%	0%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	91%	61%	30%	8%	1%	0%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	89%	70%	19%	9%	2%	0%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	77%	30%	47%	18%	4%	1%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	77%	29%	48%	18%	5%	0%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (Mountain Region)

Mountain Region 8	Very and Somewhat Combined	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	No Opinion
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	100%	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	97%	79%	18%	2%	1%	0%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	97%	67%	30%	1%	0%	2%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	93%	73%	20%	7%	0%	0%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	97%	83%	14%	2%	1%	0%
A safe and secure learning environment	96%	85%	11%	2%	2%	0%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	96%	70%	26%	4%	0%	0%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	94%	50%	44%	5%	1%	0%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	91%	63%	28%	9%	0%	0%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	91%	55%	36%	6%	2%	1%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	84%	73%	11%	13%	3%	0%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	83%	31%	52%	15%	2%	0%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	80%	52%	28%	18%	1%	1%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	71%	20%	51%	23%	6%	0%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (Western Slope)

<u>Western Slope Regions 7, 10, 11</u>	<u>Very and Somewhat Combined</u>	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not Too Important</u>	<u>Not Important at All</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	98%	88%	10%	1%	0%	1%
A safe and secure learning environment	96%	85%	11%	2%	1%	1%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	95%	82%	13%	2%	0%	3%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	95%	73%	22%	3%	0%	2%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	95%	69%	26%	3%	1%	1%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	94%	81%	13%	3%	2%	1%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	94%	71%	23%	4%	0%	2%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	93%	62%	31%	3%	1%	3%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	93%	64%	29%	4%	2%	1%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	92%	52%	40%	6%	1%	1%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	90%	62%	28%	6%	3%	1%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	88%	68%	20%	4%	6%	2%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	79%	37%	42%	15%	4%	2%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	77%	24%	53%	17%	4%	2%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (Southwest Region)

Southwest Regions 9, 12	Very and Somewhat Combined	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	No Opinion
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	100%	88%	12%	0%	0%	0%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	98%	88%	10%	1%	0%	1%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	98%	85%	13%	0.5%	0.5%	1%
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	97%	75%	22%	3%	0%	0%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	97%	80%	17%	2%	1%	0%
A safe and secure learning environment	95%	82%	13%	4%	0%	1%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	95%	66%	29%	4%	1%	0%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	93%	69%	24%	4%	2%	1%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	92%	66%	26%	5%	1%	2%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	91%	60%	31%	7%	0%	2%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	91%	57%	34%	9%	0%	0%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	89%	70%	19%	7%	3%	1%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	77%	29%	48%	20%	3%	0%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	70%	31%	39%	21%	9%	0%

T11. Please indicate the importance of the following school attributes and characteristics in developing great schools. (Eastern Plains Region)

Eastern Plains Regions 1, 2, 3	Very and Somewhat Combined	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Too Important	Not Important at All	No Opinion
Offering students Career Technical Education (CTE) programs to prepare them for a job right after high school and give them an advantage as they pursue post-secondary education.	99%	84%	15%	0%	0%	1%
Having excellent teacher-parent communication	98%	77%	21%	1%	1%	0%
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	98%	88%	10%	2%	0%	0%
Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers	97%	87%	10%	1%	1%	1%
A safe and secure learning environment	97%	85%	12%	3%	0%	0%
Offering advanced science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classes and programs	92%	59%	33%	6%	1%	1%
Teaching basic subjects like reading, math, and writing	98%	88%	10%	2%	0%	0%
Teaching collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills	96%	83%	13%	3%	0%	1%
Having small class sizes and student-to-teacher ratios	94%	56%	38%	4%	1%	1%
Providing work-based learning opportunities for students, like internships and job shadowing	94%	74%	20%	5%	0%	1%
A welcoming environment for all students with different backgrounds	90%	64%	26%	6%	3%	1%
Providing students opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom, like field trips and outdoor education	90%	57%	33%	8%	1%	1%
Providing music, visual arts, performing arts, and other creative class offerings	88%	55%	33%	9%	2%	1%
A modern building equipped with state-of-the-art technology	76%	24%	52%	19%	5%	0%
Offering competitive individual and team sports and athletics	73%	37%	36%	22%	4%	1%

T12. How familiar are you with the Career and Technical Education classes and programs offered by many Colorado school districts? Professional educators refer to these classes as “CTE Programming.” Are you:

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Very & Somewhat Familiar	38%	37%	38%	41%	38%	41%	47%	44%
Very Familiar	11%	11%	10%	9%	9%	8%	10%	16%
Somewhat Familiar	27%	26%	28%	32%	29%	33%	37%	28%
Not Too Familiar	29%	27%	30%	30%	20%	35%	25%	34%
Not Familiar at All	27%	31%	27%	27%	38%	19%	23%	19%
No Opinion	6%	5%	2%	2%	4%	5%	5%	3%

T13. Does your local school district offer students Career and Technical Education classes and programs?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Yes	29%	28%	30%	34%	21%	26%	35%	33%
No	3%	2%	5%	3%	8%	4%	8%	15%
Don't Know	52%	55%	45%	53%	55%	53%	45%	39%
No Opinion	16%	15%	20%	10%	16%	17%	12%	13%

T14. Career and Technical Education (CTE) are programs where the school district partners with local industry leaders to provide students with opportunities to advance their post-secondary education, earn industry certificates, and provide work-based learning opportunities in several career “pathways.” These programs give students a competitive advantage as they enter college, the military, or start a career in the following areas:

- Arts & Media Design
- Criminal Justice & Public Safety (Fire, Law Enforcement, EMS)
- Health Sciences, Nursing, Behavioral & Mental Health
- Hospitality, Food Production & Education
- Construction, Manufacturing & Skilled Trades (Such as Welding)
- Automotive Technology, Collision Repair & Refinishing
- STEM Education & Information Technology
- Business & Marketing

Knowing this, would you have a more favorable opinion of your local school district if they offered CTE classes and programs?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Favorable	86%	86%	84%	89%	92%	85%	85%	87%
No, Does Not Change Opinion	9%	10%	9%	9%	4%	10%	8%	11%
No Opinion	5%	4%	7%	2%	4%	5%	7%	2%
Yes, Much More Favorable	58%	58%	63%	57%	59%	58%	60%	62%
Yes, Somewhat More Favorable	28%	28%	21%	32%	33%	27%	25%	25%

T15. As you might be aware, more than 100 school districts in Colorado have transitioned to a four-day school week. Knowing this, how would you rate the quality of education for students who attend schools with a four-day school week?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Excel. & Good Combined	30%	27%	28%	32%	20%	38%	43%	53%
Excellent	16%	15%	11%	19%	8%	22%	24%	32%
Good	14%	12%	17%	13%	12%	16%	19%	21%
Only Fair	13%	12%	12%	16%	18%	14%	14%	20%
Poor	14%	14%	18%	13%	15%	11%	14%	10%
No Opinion	43%	47%	42%	39%	47%	37%	29%	17%

T16. Many school districts in Colorado will eventually have to address the issue of declining student enrollment. For example, some elementary schools designed to hold 400 to 450 students today have just 300 students.

Unfortunately, many smaller elementary schools have limited access to special classes like art, music, and physical education, and grade levels may be combined into one classroom. In addition, the cost per student to operate schools with smaller enrollments is more than the cost of operating schools with full or nearly full enrollments. This creates a tough decision for school districts, where the merging or closing of schools needs to be considered.

Knowing this, do you think school districts should do everything possible to keep all schools open, or should districts consider merging or closing schools with smaller enrollment numbers?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Schools Open	43%	39%	51%	50%	35%	50%	51%	47%
Total Close Schools	52%	56%	42%	44%	61%	45%	42%	44%
No Opinion	5%	5%	7%	6%	4%	5%	7%	9%
Definitely Keep Schools Open	22%	19%	24%	27%	19%	31%	30%	27%
Probably Keep Schools Open	21%	20%	27%	23%	16%	19%	21%	20%
Definitely Merge & Close Schools	17%	19%	10%	13%	19%	17%	10%	10%
Probably Merge & Close Schools	35%	37%	32%	31%	42%	28%	32%	34%

T17. We are now going to describe two different kinds of high schools. After reading about each, please indicate which one you prefer your student attend.

“High School A” is a smaller school which allows for staff to have a better relationship with every student and provides more opportunities for participation in sports and other activities because, with a smaller student body, there is not as much competition. However, High School A offers limited courses and fewer activities like the student newspaper, art shows, debate club, and musical/theatre performances.

“High School B” is a large school that offers a broader range of student courses and activities. However, the size of High School B makes it more difficult for staff to have close relationships with every student. Knowing this, which High School would you want your student to attend?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total High School A	52%	51%	48%	49%	45%	57%	55%	67%
Total High School B	41%	42%	45%	41%	51%	35%	40%	29%
No Opinion	7%	7%	7%	10%	4%	8%	5%	4%
Definitely High School A	26%	28%	21%	21%	19%	31%	27%	38%
Probably High School A	26%	23%	27%	28%	26%	26%	28%	29%
Definitely High School B	11%	10%	14%	11%	20%	8%	6%	11%
Probably High School B	30%	32%	31%	30%	31%	27%	34%	18%

T18. How important is it to earn an undergraduate degree from a four-year college or university?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Very & Somewhat Combined	64%	68%	68%	65%	66%	58%	62%	54%
Very Important	21%	23%	21%	22%	26%	16%	16%	12%
Smwt. Important	43%	45%	37%	43%	40%	42%	46%	42%
Not to Import.	25%	23%	25%	21%	48%	27%	27%	27%
Not Imprt. at All	8%	7%	10%	10%	5%	11%	8%	16%
No Opinion	3%	2%	7%	4%	1%	4%	3%	3%

T19. How affordable is it for a Colorado resident to earn an undergraduate degree from a public, state-supported Colorado college or university like the University of Colorado or Colorado State University?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Affordable	16%	14%	19%	14%	23%	17%	19%	10%
Total Unaffordable	73%	76%	64%	78%	61%	68%	67%	79%
No Opinion	11%	10%	17%	8%	16%	15%	14%	11%
Very Affordable	2%	3%	1%	2%	4%	2%	1%	1%
Somewhat Afford.	14%	11%	18%	12%	19%	15%	18%	9%
Very Unaffordable	45%	47%	38%	45%	36%	44%	42%	55%
Somewhat Unaff.	28%	29%	26%	33%	25%	24%	25%	24%

T20. What do you think is the average amount of student debt a Colorado resident has when they graduate from a public, state-supported Colorado college or university?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
\$10,000 or Less	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
\$10,000 - \$20,000	7%	7%	4%	9%	2%	4%	7%	5%
\$20,000 - \$30,000	14%	15%	15%	13%	12%	14%	16%	10%
\$30,000 - \$40,000	18%	17%	21%	16%	18%	23%	17%	20%
\$40,000 - \$50,000	17%	16%	17%	21%	15%	17%	22%	17%
More than \$50,000	32%	34%	30%	31%	42%	25%	21%	36%
No Opinion	10%	9%	12%	10%	11%	16%	15%	11%

T21. Which of the following do you think should have greater importance for high school students in your school district? Learning and obtaining industry training and certifications through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs or preparing for college to attain a four-year degree?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso City and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
CTE Programs	61%	57%	65%	62%	55%	63%	62%	74%
Preparing for College	19%	21%	17%	16%	32%	19%	22%	12%
No Opinion	20%	22%	18%	22%	13%	18%	16%	14%

T22. Please describe the reasons why you think CTE programs are more important.

1. **Affordability and Debt Concerns:** Many respondents expressed concerns about the high cost of college education, leading students to incur significant debt. They emphasized that not all well-paying jobs require a college degree, and CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs offer students opportunities to earn a stable income without accumulating crippling debt. These programs provide more immediate and affordable paths to skilled professions.
2. **Practical Skills and Immediate Employment Opportunities:** Respondents frequently highlighted that CTE programs offer hands-on, practical skills that prepare students directly for the workforce. They mentioned that many students graduating from college find it hard to secure jobs related to their degrees, whereas CTE programs can provide direct pathways to stable, high-demand careers. This theme also emphasized the importance of offering alternatives to college, as CTE can provide skills that are immediately applicable in the job market.
3. **College Isn't for Everyone:** Many respondents noted that a four-year college education might not suit everyone's goals, interests, or learning styles. They mentioned that CTE programs offer flexibility, allowing students to explore various professions and determine if college is the right choice for them. Additionally, the societal push for all students to attend college regardless of their individual aptitudes or interests has led to an oversaturation of certain degrees in the job market, making CTE an important alternative route for career preparation.

Other points that were frequently mentioned but didn't make the top three themes include concerns about the perceived decline in the quality of college education and indoctrination, the aging population of tradespeople leading to a shortage in these roles, and the importance of providing equal opportunities for students from all backgrounds.

T23. Please describe the reasons why you think college and a four-year degree are more important.

1. **Career Opportunities and Economic Stability:** Many respondents mentioned that a four-year degree leads to more diverse and stable career pathways, higher-paying jobs, and overall better quality of life. The perception is that there are more job opportunities available for those with a college degree and that these positions often come with better salaries and benefits.
2. **Personal Development and Critical Thinking:** Several respondents emphasized the personal growth, maturity, and critical thinking skills that are developed during the undergraduate years. College is seen as an essential experience that helps young adults become well-rounded, independent individuals, capable of understanding complex issues and thinking critically.
3. **Societal Expectations and Future Readiness:** A recurring theme was the societal expectation and increasing demand for degrees in many professions. Respondents believe that in a rapidly changing world, a college education equips individuals to handle "complex" societal issues and offers a competitive edge. Additionally, there's a belief that having a degree can provide security and assurance in an unpredictable job market.

Other mentions included the value of lifelong learning, the cultural and intellectual enrichment college provides, and the importance of education in fostering responsible and informed citizens.

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

T24. Are you a parent or guardian of one or more students attending a school or who is homeschooled in kindergarten through 12th grade?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Total Have Student	35%	34%	38%	41%	29%	34%	32%	36%
Yes, One Student	16%	16%	14%	20%	15%	13%	14%	17%
Yes, More than One	19%	18%	24%	21%	14%	21%	18%	19%
No	65%	66%	62%	59%	71%	66%	68%	64%

T25. If you have more than one student, please answer the following question for the oldest student in your household. Does your student attend:

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Public School	67%	68%	59%	60%	61%	72%	83%	73%
Charter School	11%	10%	16%	14%	4%	8%	7%	5%
Private School	9%	8%	9%	18%	16%	4%	2%	5%
Homeschooled	6%	4%	11%	5%	9%	12%	4%	11%
Other	7%	10%	5%	3%	10%	4%	4%	6%

T26. Which gender do you most identify with?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Female	51%	51%	51%	51%	46%	50%	50%	50%
Male	49%	49%	49%	49%	53%	50%	50%	50%
Identify Differently	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

T27. Are you between the ages of:

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
18-34	31%	32%	31%	31%	25%	25%	23%	26%
35-44	18%	19%	17%	18%	18%	17%	17%	16%
45-54	15%	15%	14%	15%	16%	14%	14%	14%
55-64	14%	14%	15%	14%	17%	16%	16%	17%
65 or Older	22%	20%	23%	22%	24%	28%	30%	27%

T28. Which race or ethnicity do you most identify with?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
White	82%	82%	69%	87%	89%	88%	82%	83%
Hispanic	9%	9%	12%	6%	1%	3%	8%	8%
Black	4%	5%	7%	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Asian	1%	<1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%
Other	4%	4%	12%	3%	8%	8%	9%	8%

T29. Are you married or single?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Married	59%	55%	68%	64%	66%	64%	66%	59%
Single	37%	42%	28%	30%	29%	32%	29%	35%
Prefer Not to Say	4%	3%	4%	6%	5%	4%	5%	6%

T30. For statistical and weighting purposes only, are you registered to vote as an Unaffiliated voter, a Democrat, or a Republican, or are you registered with another party, or are you not registered to vote?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Unaffiliated	47%	48%	48%	49%	51%	48%	46%	41%
Democrat	27%	32%	20%	24%	25%	18%	24%	15%
Republican	24%	19%	30%	26%	22%	32%	29%	43%
Other Party	1%	0.5%	1%	0.5%	1%	1%	0.5%	0.5%
Not Registered	1%	0.5%	1%	0.5%	1%	1%	0.5%	0.5%

T31. How would you describe the area where you currently live?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
City or Urban Area	33%	42%	39%	26%	8%	9%	2%	3%
Suburban Area	41%	51%	37%	44%	5%	9%	3%	4%
Small Town Area	14%	4%	10%	21%	57%	46%	41%	32%
Rural Area	10%	1%	12%	6%	29%	35%	54%	60%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	1%

T32. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Did Not Complete HS	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	2%	3%
Graduated High School	8%	7%	14%	5%	4%	10%	7%	13%
Vocational School	3%	2%	5%	2%	3%	7%	6%	5%
Some Coll. No Degree	15%	14%	18%	14%	11%	17%	16%	17%
Associate Degree	8%	7%	10%	9%	3%	10%	9%	16%
Bachelor's Degree	32%	30%	29%	40%	42%	33%	26%	27%
Masters-Ph.D.	30%	36%	22%	26%	36%	21%	24%	17%
Prefer Not to Say	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%

T33. Last year, what was your total family income before taxes?

	Statewide	Metro Area Region 5	El Paso Cty. and South Region 6	Weld/ Larimer St. Vrain Region 4	Mtn. Counties Region 8	Western Slope Region 7,10,11	Southwest Region 9, 12	Eastern Plains Region 1,2,3
Less than \$30,000	6%	4%	8%	6%	3%	7%	10%	9%
\$30,000 - \$49,999	10%	10%	14%	5%	4%	10%	17%	16%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	13%	11%	18%	14%	16%	17%	16%	16%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	13%	12%	10%	18%	12%	15%	14%	15%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	13%	14%	9%	15%	12%	11%	9%	9%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	10%	11%	8%	12%	7%	7%	9%	6%
\$150,000 - \$200,000	9%	9%	12%	8%	14%	7%	7%	6%
More than \$200,000	15%	19%	8%	13%	17%	11%	6%	8%
Prefer Not to Say	11%	10%	14%	10%	15%	15%	12%	16%

Survey Methodology

This survey utilized MMS text data collection method to interview residents, inviting them to participate in the online survey. The survey data were weighted to be representative of the voter registration demographics for Colorado and each of the CASB regions. The interviews were conducted from September 7th - 26th, 2023. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 2.5% at the 95 percent confidence interval. For any questions regarding this survey please contact David Flaherty by email at DFlaherty@MagellanStrategies.com or Ryan Winger at RWinger@MagellanStrategies.com.