

MEMORANDUM

To: Interested Parties
From: Wes Anderson
Date: January 4th, 2016
Re: Mississippi Statewide School Choice Survey

KEY FINDINGS

Fielded November 17th through the 19th, this Mississippi statewide survey which was conducted for Empower Mississippi shows strong support for school choice throughout the state. This was a telephone survey of 800 likely voters and was stratified to reflect historic voter trends. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.46%.

Key Findings:

- **Voters overwhelmingly support greater educational choice by a 78-17 margin, including 53% who strongly support it.** This cuts across all racial/party lines. White voters favor school choice 81-15, while African Americans favor it 73-21.
“As you may know, school choice gives parents the right to use the tax dollars associated with their child’s education to send their child to the public or private school which best serves their needs. In general, do you favor or oppose the idea of school choice?”
- **When voters were asked if they would be more or less likely to support a candidate for the state legislature who supports school choice, 69% said more likely and 16% said less likely.** Republicans support a school choice candidate by a 75-12 margin, while African Americans favor school choice candidates 69-18.
- **By a 57-30 margin, voters favor charter schools.** Republicans favor charter schools 66-31, while African Americans favor charters 57-42. Those most likely to have school-age children, 55 and under, support charters 61-28.
- **When asked where charters should be offered, 57% said the entire state compared to 18% who said just failing school districts.** Republican voters believe charters should be in the entire state by a 62-17 margin, and African Americans favor the entire state by a 53-17 margin.
- **By a 56-34 margin, voters support education scholarship accounts (ESA).** The numbers were very similar between racial/party lines. Republican voters favor ESAs 58-32, while African Americans favor ESAs 56-38. Again, the strongest support came from those 55 and under, who favored ESAs 61-33.
- **When asked who should be eligible for ESAs, 58% said all students.** This is compared to just 5% who said it should be limited to students who attend a failing school. The opinion that all students should be ESA eligible cut across racial demographics as 56% of African Americans said all students should be eligible.

This survey shows the extent to which Mississippi voters want more educational options for their children and grandchildren. Mississippians have clearly concluded that the status quo is just not acceptable. They believe that the one-size-fits-all approach of the traditional public schools system is no longer sufficient for educating Mississippi’s children. Support for greater educational choice stretches across the state and cuts across all major demographics. The results are clear, Mississippi voters want a statewide school choice program.

METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted by OnMessage Inc. in Mississippi. Telephone interviews were conducted on November 17-19, 2015. This survey consists of 800 likely voters and was stratified to reflect historic voter trends. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.46%.