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Mississippi Voters Strongly Favor Increasing Public School Funding and Raising Teacher Pay

Education Funding Tops Road & Bridge Repair as Top Policy Concern for First Time

JACKSON—Results of the latest Millsaps College/Chism Strategies State of the State Survey show that Mississippi voters support increasing funding for public schools, raising teacher pay, and earmarking a higher share of future state lottery proceeds for public education. They also remain divided about the state's trajectory and strongly disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature, less than a month before primary elections are held for all statewide and state legislative offices on August 6.

According to the survey, increasing public education funding has surpassed fixing roads and bridges in the state as the top priority among voters. Nearly 70% say that funding for Mississippi's public schools is too low, and a majority would use additional state funds to give teachers a pay raise or hire more teachers to reduce class size. 70% believe the \$1,500 pay raise passed during the 2019 legislative session helps but is insufficient in size. Over half of voters would use proceeds from the state lottery—which will be up and running soon—to finance these spending increases.

Meanwhile, voters are split on the state's direction with 41% saying that Mississippi is headed in the right direction while 40% say it is heading in the wrong direction, divided across lines of race and partisanship on how they view the state. Just 25% approve of the performance of the state legislature while 47% disapprove.

"We believe it is significant that education funding has surpassed fixing roads and bridges for the first time in two years of conducting the State of the State Survey, and that large swaths of the public are united in increasing education funding and improving teacher pay in the midst of a major state election year," said Dr. Nathan Shrader, chair of the Department of Government and Politics and director of American Studies at Millsaps College. "This particular State of the State Survey was focused largely on exploring how Mississippians perceive some of the challenges facing public education in our state. We also found that voters want to maintain accountability for students, but have mixed feelings about things such as public charter schools and vouchers for private and religious schools."

Among the other findings of the July 2019 State of the State Survey:

- The state legislature's overall net approval/disapproval rating is -22%, but this improves to -9% when voters rate the performance of *their own* members of the legislature.
- Mississippians have more positive impressions of the quality of the public schools in their own communities (47% excellent/good; 27% poor/failing) than they do of public schools overall in the state (30% excellent/good; 32% poor/failing).
- 60% support the Third Grade Reading Gate program requiring students to pass a state reading exam before moving on to the fourth grade. Just 26% oppose this.
- Over 60% back requiring students to pass a state exam before graduating from high school while 29% are opposed.
- 43% support the formation of public charter schools (which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school boards where they exist), while 42% oppose them.
- A quarter of voters support without limitation allowing parents to receive government money or vouchers to send their kids to private or religious schools while 31% are opposed to this outright. A plurality of 37% say that they support the idea, but only in limited cases involving children with disabilities.
- Nearly three quarters feel that if a family does receive a voucher to pay for tuition at private or religious schools that the schools and students should be held to the same standards for testing and accountability a public schools and public school students.
- This quarter we recorded an uptick in the share of voters who say that "protecting traditional family values" as their most important policy priority. In the past seven quarters, support for this as the top priority averaged 8% but was at 17% this quarter.

The State of the State Survey involves a partnership between the Millsaps College Department of Government and Politics, the Institute for Civic and Professional Engagement at Millsaps, and Chism Strategies. The survey was conducted on June 25-27 with a sample size of 614, with 50% of interviews conducted via cell phone and 50% via landline. The survey has a Margin of Error of +/- 3.95%. Results were weighted to reflect the likely voter turnout for the 2019 Mississippi elections.

Attached:

- A) Weighted Toplines
- B) Summary Analysis
- C) Crosstabs

Weighted Toplines

Do you believe Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?	
Q01 Direction	%
1 Right direction	41.0%
2 Wrong direction	40.3%
3 Unsure	18.7%
Grand Total	100.0%

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?	
Q02 Priority	%
1 Reducing the size of state government	6.1%
2 Fixing roads and bridges	19.5%
3 Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that promise to create jobs	8.0%
4 Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	18.2%
5 More funding for public schools	22.8%
6 More funding for universities and community colleges	4.1%
7 Protecting traditional family values	16.5%
8 Some other issue	3.4%
9 Don't know	1.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature?	
Q03 Legislature	%
1 Approve	24.9%
2 Disapprove	47.2%
3 Unsure	28.0%
Grand Total	100.0%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of your own members of the Mississippi State Legislature?	
Q04 Members	%
1 Approve	33.3%
2 Disapprove	42.4%
3 Unsure	24.3%
Grand Total	100.0%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall</i> here in Mississippi?	
Q05 Overall	%
1 Excellent	5.1%
2 Good	25.1%
3 Only fair	36.5%
4 Poor	15.8%
5 They are failing our students	15.9%
6 Unsure	1.6%
Grand Total	100.0%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools overall <i>in your community</i> ?	
Q06 Community	%
1 Excellent	18.0%
2 Good	28.7%
3 Only fair	24.7%
4 Poor	13.7%
5 They are failing our students	13.4%
6 Unsure	1.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?	
Q07 Funding	%
1 Too high	7.9%
2 Too low	67.7%
3 About right	16.4%
4 Unsure	8.0%
Grand Total	100.0%

If the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority?	
Q08 Top	%
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	36.0%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	25.7%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	11.7%
4 More computer equipment for students	5.7%
5 More lab and science equipment	4.6%
6 School building repairs and renovations	7.1%
7 Unsure	9.1%
Grand Total	100.0%

What would be your second choice if the state provided more money for public schools?	
Q09 Second	%
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	23.4%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	22.6%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	15.6%
4 More computer equipment for students	10.4%
5 More lab and science equipment	7.9%
6 School building repairs and renovations	12.7%
7 Unsure	7.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

Earlier this year the state legislature passed a \$1,500 pay raise for Mississippi's school teachers. This is the first raise in 5 years and will bring the average pay up to 87% of neighboring states average. How would you characterize this payraise?	
Q10 Raise	%
1 Raise helps but is not enough	69.3%
2 Raise is all the state can afford	17.3%
3 Raise was unnecessary	3.9%
4 Unsure	9.6%
Grand Total	100.0%

If the state decided to increase overall funding for public schools, what would be your preferred method for getting the necessary funds?	
Q11 Funds	%
1 Increase income tax rates for higher earners	9.2%
2 Raise state gasoline tax	3.1%
3 Enact higher tax rates on corporations	14.3%
4 Earmark state lottery proceeds	52.1%
5 Repeal corporate tax cuts	7.4%
6 Do not support increasing funding	7.7%
7 Unsure	6.3%
Grand Total	100.0%

The state legislature recently passed a law requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the 4th grade. Do you support or oppose this new law or are you unsure?	
Q12 Reading Exam	%
1 Support	59.8%
2 Oppose	26.4%
3 Unsure	13.8%
Grand Total	100.0%

Mississippi law allows for the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school board. Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools to receive public funds?

Q13 Charter Schools	%
1 Support	43.0%
2 Oppose	42.4%
3 Unsure	14.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

Do you support a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school?

Q14 Grad Exam	%
1 Support	61.0%
2 Oppose	28.8%
3 Unsure	10.2%
Grand Total	100.0%

Do you support or oppose parents receiving government money or "vouchers" to send their children to private or religious schools?

Q15 Vouchers	%
1 Support without limitation	24.9%
2 Support, but only in limited cases involving disabilities	37.4%
3 Oppose	30.7%
4 Unsure	7.0%
Grand Total	100.0%

If a family receives a state government "voucher" to pay tuition at private or church school, do you believe those schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as public schools?

Q16 Standards	%
1 Yes, standards should be the same	73.2%
2 No, they are private schools	19.7%
3 Unsure	7.1%
Grand Total	100.0%

Age	
Q17 Age	%
1 18 to 34	10.4%
2 35 to 44	21.6%
3 45 to 54	20.0%
4 55 to 64	23.0%
5 65 or older	25.0%
Grand Total	100.0%

Ethnicity	
Q18 Ethnicity	%
1 African American	33.0%
2 Asian American	0.4%
3 Non-Hispanic White	65.0%
4 Hispanic or Latino	0.2%
5 Other	1.4%
Grand Total	100.0%

Gender	
Q19 Gender	%
1 Male	45.0%
2 Female	55.0%
Grand Total	100.0%

Education	
Q20 Education	%
1 Less than high school education	5.2%
2 High school graduate	17.4%
3 Attended college but did not graduate	18.3%
4 Graduated from two-year college	14.8%
5 Graduated from four-year college	24.7%
6 Advanced degree	19.5%
Grand Total	100.0%

Party	
Q21 Party	%
1 Strong Republican	32.9%
2 Lean Republican	18.7%
3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	18.4%
4 Lean Democrat	9.0%
5 Strong Democrat	20.9%
Grand Total	100.0%

***Millsaps College/Chism Strategies State of the State Survey
Summary Analysis
July 9, 2019***

Mississippians are evenly divided on the state’s direction with less than one month before the primary election and about four months before statewide and legislative elections take place. The data show an uptick in voters who say the state is heading in either the right or wrong direction since our April 2019 survey, with 4% more believing the state is heading in the right direction and an increase of 5% who see it moving in the wrong direction. With 41% saying that the state is heading in the right direction, this is the largest share of voters to describe the state’s direction in a positive manner since September 2018. There was a corresponding decrease in those who are unsure about the state’s direction, which may have occurred as voters are beginning to pay attention to the campaigns for various state positions as we head towards the August 6 primary election.

Do you believe that Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Date of Poll	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure	Net Right/Wrong Direction
17-Sep	37%	40%	23%	-3%
18-Jan	42%	36%	22%	6%
18-Apr	44%	37%	20%	7%
18-Jul	35%	29%	37%	6%
18-Sep	43%	30%	27%	13%
19-Jan	36%	42%	22%	-6%
19-Apr	37%	35%	28%	2%
19-Jul	41%	40%	19%	1%
Average	39%	36%	25%	3%

There are clear differences within the Mississippi electorate regarding the state’s direction and how optimistic or pessimistic voters are about the state’s direction. A majority of white voters (+21%) but only a fifth of the African Americans (-41%) say we are headed in the right direction. Partisanship also has a substantial impact on how voters view the state’s trajectory, as 71% of Strong Republican voters say the state is heading in the right direction compared to just 13% of Strong Democrats who feel the same way. The table below shows the differences between how various segments of the electorate view the state’s trajectory at this moment in time.

Do you believe that Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction? (July 2019)

Type of Voter	Right Direction	Wrong Direction	Unsure	Net Right/Wrong Direction
Republican	60%	18%	22%	42%
Democratic	12%	73%	15%	-61%
Independent	27%	51%	23%	-24%
Men	46%	39%	16%	7%
Women	36%	42%	22%	-6%
African American	21%	62%	17%	-41%
White	51%	30%	20%	21%

Increased funding for public schools tops infrastructure repair for the first time in eight quarters as the top policy priority. For the first time in two years of Millsaps College/Chism Strategies State of the State Surveys, public school funding nudges out fixing the state's roads and bridges as the top priority that voters want Mississippi's elected leaders to address. 23% of voters responded that increasing funding for public school is their top priority, 20% said it was fixing roads and bridges, 18% said making healthcare more accessible and affordable is most important, and 17%--an increase of six points since April--say protecting traditional family values is the most important priority for them.

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?

Policy Priority	17-Sep	18-Jan	18-Apr	18-Jul	18-Sep	19-Jan	19-Apr	19-Jul	Running Average
Reducing the size of state government	16%	11%	12%	8%	12%	11%	9%	6%	11%
Fixing roads and bridges	27%	23%	29%	25%	27%	28%	25%	20%	26%
Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that create jobs	13%	10%	9%	12%	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%
Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	14%	21%	14%	18%	18%	18%	18%	18%	17%
More funding for public schools	14%	19%	20%	22%	20%	21%	20%	23%	20%
More funding for universities and community colleges	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Protecting traditional family values	6%	7%	11%	8%	8%	8%	11%	17%	10%
Other	7%	6%	2%	4%	4%	4%	5%	2%	4%

Voters are split across lines of party, race, gender, and even education level as to what the top priority should be for lawmakers in Jackson. There are also divisions within voters who affiliate with the various political parties. For example, 25% of Republican Leaners say that their top priority is more funding for public schools while just 13% of Strong Republicans agree. Meanwhile, 36% of Democratic Leaners say that more funding for public schools is their top priority, which is shared by just 25% of Strong Democrats. Nearly 40% of Strong Democrats prioritize making healthcare more accessible and affordable while 29% of Democratic Leaners rank this as their top policy priority.

Top Policy Priority by Type of Voter

Type of Voter	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Strong Republicans	Protect family values	Fix roads & bridges	Public school funding
Republican Leaners	Public school funding	Protect family values	Fix roads & bridges
Independents	Fix roads & bridges	Public school funding	Healthcare access & affordability
Democratic Leaners	Public school funding	Healthcare access & affordability	Fix roads & bridges
Strong Democrats	Healthcare access & affordability	Public school funding	Fix roads & bridges
Men	Fix roads & bridges	Public school funding	Protect family values (tied with #2)
Women	Public school funding	Healthcare access & affordability	Fix roads & bridges
African American	Healthcare access & affordability	Public school funding	Fix roads & bridges
White	Fix roads & bridges	Public school funding (tied with #1)	Protect family values

A plurality of those with less than a high school education makes health care accessibility and affordability their top concern (30%), which tapers off as a likely top priority as the electorate's education levels increase (down to just 16% of those with advanced degrees). Support for protecting traditional family values as a top priority is considerably higher among those who attended but did not graduate from college (22%) and those who graduated from two-year colleges (23%) than among the rest of the electorate. The most highly educated members of the electorate strongly favor increased funding for public schools as their top priority (39%) while four-year college graduates are split between funding public schools (23%) and fixing roads and bridges (22%).

In the midst of an important election year, the State Legislature as a whole remains very unpopular, although voters award better marks to the legislators in their own districts than for the body itself.

The Mississippi Legislature is -22% underwater with just about a month to go before the primary elections take place. Presently, 47% disapprove of the legislature while just 25% approve. These numbers are very close to where the legislature stood in January at the start of the legislative session. The legislature is particularly unpopular among those with an advanced degree (-49%), those who attended college but did not graduate (-28%), four year college graduates (-23%), Independents (-40%), Strong Democrats (-57%), Democratic Leaners (-62%), voters 35 to 44 (-41%), those 45 to 54 (-34%), voters 55 to 64 (-28%), African American voters (-42%), and women in the electorate (-28%). The legislature's only favorable marks come from Strong Republicans (+17%), a position not shared by Republican Leaners (-15%).

Mississippi State Legislature Approval Rating

Date of Poll	Approve	Disapprove	Unsure	Net Approve/Disapprove
17-Sep	27%	45%	28%	-18%
18-Jan	26%	38%	36%	-12%
18-Apr	30%	41%	26%	-11%
18-Jul	22%	35%	43%	-12%
18-Sep	32%	34%	34%	-2%
19-Jan	24%	46%	30%	-22%
19-Apr	26%	43%	31%	-17%
19-Jul	25%	47%	28%	-22%
Average	27%	41%	32%	-15%

Voters have slightly more positive views when asked if they approve or disapprove of their own members of the Mississippi State Legislature, with 33% approving and 42% disapproving for a net approve/disapprove rating of -9%. This may indicate that voters are more likely to cast their negative feelings towards the body in general and less likely to place blame on the shoulders of the members they personally elect. One datapoint worth noting is that nearly a quarter of voters said that they are unsure if they approve or disapprove of the performance of their own members of the legislature. This may be interpreted by some legislators as a sign that they need to continue introducing themselves to voters in their districts if 24% cannot reach a conclusion about their performance with just a month left before the primary election.

Mississippians believe that the public schools in their own communities are of a higher quality than the public schools overall in the state. 30% of voters say that the public schools in Mississippi are excellent or good, 37% say they are only fair, and 32% rate them as either poor or failing. These numbers improve when voters are asked to consider the quality of the public schools where they live, as 47% describe their local schools as excellent or good, 25% say they are only fair, and 27% believe the schools in their communities are poor or failing for a net positive approval rating of schools in one's own community of 20%.

The voters most likely to have school-age children or to have children who recently graduated tended to give the lowest positive evaluations and highest negative evaluations of the schools as a whole. Just 26% of voters 35 to 44 and 29% of those 45 to 54 say that the public schools in Mississippi are excellent/good. Meanwhile, 38% of the 35 to 44-year olds and 34% of the 45 to 54 year olds evaluate them as poor/failing. These numbers improve when the same voters were asked to evaluate the schools in their own communities: 49% of 35 to 44-year olds rate these schools as excellent/good and just 25% a poor/failing. 44% of 45 to 54-year olds evaluate these schools as excellent/good compared to 33% who rate them as poor/failing.

Both white and African American respondents were more likely to provide higher evaluations to the public schools in their own communities than those overall in Mississippi, although white voters said that the schools in their own communities were of excellent quality (23% of white voters compared to just 9% of African American voters). Just 26% of African American voters say that the schools overall in Mississippi are excellent/good, compared to 32% of white voters. When considering the public schools in their own communities, 37% of African Americans say that they are excellent/good, compared to 52% of white voters who say the same about their community's public schools.

How would you describe the quality of the public schools...?

Overall in Mississippi	Sep-17	Jul-19	Net Change
Excellent	3%	5%	2%
Good	25%	25%	0%
Only Fair	31%	37%	6%
Poor	17%	16%	-1%
Failing	18%	16%	-2%
Unsure	6%	2%	-4%
In Your Community			
Excellent	11%	18%	7%
Good	32%	29%	-3%
Only Fair	26%	25%	-1%
Poor	16%	14%	-2%
Failing	12%	13%	1%
Unsure	3%	2%	-1%

The comparative table above demonstrates that there has been a slight uptick between now and our September 2017 State of the State Survey among those who say that the quality of the public schools are excellent in the entire state (+2%) and in their own communities (+7%). Overall, the results of the September 2017 and July 2019 surveys demonstrate that the attitudes of Mississippi voters pertaining to the quality of the public schools in the state overall and in their communities have changed relatively little in the past two years.

Mississippi voters overwhelmingly believe that public school funding is too low. Nearly 70% of voters say that funding is too low compared to just 8% who say it is too high. Another 16% think that funding levels are about right at the moment. Voters across the political spectrum agree that funding is too low: Strong Republicans (54%), Republican Leaners (62%), Independents (65%), Democratic Leaners (84%), Strong Democrats (83%), African Americans (74%), white voters (65%), women (70%), and men (61%). Majorities of voters of all age groups and various levels of education all concur that education funding is too low in the Magnolia State.

When asked “if the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority,” 36% of all respondents indicated that giving teachers a pay raise would be their preferred expenditure. Another 26% said that they would prefer to hire more teachers to reduce class size, 12% favor restoring art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget, 7% would prefer spending the money on school building repairs and renovations, 6% want more computer equipment for students, 5% support more lab and science equipment, and 9% were unsure. A plurality of voters in just about every demographic group measured by the State of the State Survey supported giving teachers a pay raise as their top choice for how to spend additional state money for public schools.

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?

	Sep-17	Jul-19	Net Change
Too high	10%	8%	-2%
Too low	56%	68%	12%
About right	21%	16%	-5%
Unsure	13%	8%	-5%

Compared to our September 2017 State of the State Survey, the share of Mississippi voters who believe that the level of funding for our state’s public schools is too low has experienced a net change of +12%. During this time the share who say that funding levels are too high has decreased (-2%), as has the share of those who think that funding levels are about right (-5%). The September 2017 survey was conducted near the midterm point for all statewide officeholders and all members of the Mississippi House and Senate. Given that primary elections are scheduled for August 6, 2019 and the general election is set for November 5, 2019, it would appear as if voter dissatisfaction with education funding levels will likely continue playing a pivotal role in the dynamics of the current election cycle here in Mississippi.

Nearly 70% of Mississippians say that the \$1,500 pay raise for public school teachers passed during the 2019 legislative session helps but is not enough. This was the first pay raise given to public school teachers in Mississippi in five years. Despite legislation passed by the Mississippi House of Representatives in March to increase teacher pay by \$4,000 over two years,¹ the final amount came out to \$1,500. Just 17% of respondents said that the raise of \$1,500 was all the state can afford while 4% think that any raise at all was unnecessary. Large majorities are in agreement that the raise helps, but it is not enough, especially those with less than a high school education (70%), high school graduates (63%), those who attended but didn't graduate from college (68%), two year college graduates (57%), four year college graduates (66%), those with advanced degrees (88%), Democrats (81%), Independents (68%), Republicans (62%), African American voters (73%), white voters (69%), women (73%), and men (64%). Voters in all age groups range from 60% to 81% support for a higher teacher pay raise.

Most Mississippians would like to earmark state lottery proceeds for public education in order to increase funding for the schools. Although over 52% of voters prefer using state lottery proceeds for education funding over other forms of revenue increases, the law enacted during the 2018 Special Session of the Mississippi Legislature makes it unlikely that schools will be the primary beneficiaries of future lottery revenue. The next most popular choices for how to generate additional revenue for public schools included enacting higher tax rates on corporations (14%) and increasing income rates for higher earners (9%). The least popular option was raising the state gasoline tax (3%).

According to the *Clarion-Ledger*, “For the next decade, up to \$80 million a year from lottery proceeds will go toward working on state roads and bridges or to match federal infrastructure money. Any revenue above \$80 million would go to public education, the Education Enhancement Fund.”² Projections indicate that the new lottery is “expected to net the state about \$40 million the first year, then \$80 million to \$100 million a year thereafter,”³ meaning that the legislature would need to act in order to divert or redirect a larger portion of lottery revenues to public education in Mississippi.

Mississippi voters support Third Grade Reading Gate and state graduation exams for students. Nearly 60% of respondents favor the Third Grade Reading Gate program that was recently passed by the legislature requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the fourth grade. Just 26% are opposed to the law while 14% remain unsure. A similar share of the electorate supports a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school. Overall, 61% support graduating exams while 29% are opposed and 10% say they are unsure.

¹ Harrison, Bobby. “Pressure is on Mississippi lawmakers to pass a teacher pay raise.” *Mississippi Today*; March 15, 2019. <https://www.sunherald.com/news/politics-government/article228004599.html>

² Pender, Geoff. “Mississippi Lottery Start Dates Announced.” *Clarion-Ledger*; June 28, 2019. <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/politics/2019/06/28/mississippi-lottery-start-dates-ticket-sales-announced-powerball/1599073001/>

³ Ibid

Looking more closely at the electorate, there is a considerable racial divide as just 38% of African American voters back the Reading Gate and 47% favor the state graduation exams. White voters overwhelmingly support both, as 70% favor the Reading Gate and 68% are supportive of graduation exams. The Third Grade Reading Gate is the most popular among two-year college graduates (+42%), four-year college graduates (+37%), those with advanced degrees (+37%), voters over 45 (+37%), male voters (+47%), Independents (+44%) and Republicans (+48%). Democrats are less likely to support the Reading Gate (+3%) as are voters with less than a high school education (+9%).

Those most likely to support a state graduation exam are two year college graduates (+36%), those who attended but did not graduate from college (+35%), Republican Leaners (+47%), Strong Republicans (+36%), Independents (+44%), voters 18 to 34 (+36%), voters 55 to 64 (+35%), voters 65 and older (+35%), white voters (+44%), and men (+45%). Those least likely to support the graduation exam include African American voters (+8%), Democratic Leaners (+16%), and Strong Democrats (+12%).

A plurality of Mississippi voters chart a middle course on whether parents should receive government money or vouchers to send their children to private or religious schools.

Although just 25% support vouchers without limitation and 31% oppose them completely, over 37% support allowing them to be used in limited cases involving disabilities. White voters tend to be more supportive of vouchers without limits (28%) than are African American voters (17%) and for a limited use of vouchers in cases involving disabilities (supported by 40% of white voters and 33% of black voters). Nearly 40% of African American voters are completely opposed to vouchers, a position shared by just 26% of white Mississippi voters. Looking at partisanship, Strong Republicans are the most likely to support vouchers (33%) compared to Strong Democrats who are the most likely to oppose them (42%). A plurality of Independents (37%), Republican Leaners (37%), and Democratic Leaners (50%) support a limited application of vouchers in cases involving children with disabilities.

One area of broad agreement, however, is that over 73% believe that if a family receives a state government voucher to pay tuition at a private or religious school then the schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as the public schools. Just 20% said that these schools should not be subject to the same standards as they are private, not public institutions.

Mississippi voters are split down the middle on whether or not they support the current state law allowing for the formation of charter schools.

43% support allowing for charter schools—or public schools not managed by the local school board—while 42% oppose the existing law and another 15% are unsure. The racial divide on the question of charter schools is far more pronounced than the electorate as a whole, with +9% net support among white voters and -17% net opposition among African Americans. Male voters are more supportive (+8%) than are women within the electorate (-12%). There are also partisan differences on this question, as Republicans tend to support the current charter school law (+18%) while Independents (-3%) and Democrats (-43%) are opposed.

Crosstab: Education

Do you believe Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q01 Direction						
1 Right direction	36%	47%	39%	46%	39%	32%
2 Wrong direction	45%	31%	43%	29%	43%	51%
3 Unsure	18%	22%	18%	25%	18%	18%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q02 Priority						
1 Reducing the size of state government	9%	8%	5%	5%	6%	2%
2 Fixing roads and bridges	18%	25%	21%	25%	22%	13%
3 Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that promise to create jobs	3%	8%	8%	6%	13%	8%
4 Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	30%	23%	21%	22%	14%	16%
5 More funding for public schools	15%	14%	17%	15%	23%	39%
6 More funding for universities and community colleges	6%	4%	2%	1%	5%	8%
7 Protecting traditional family values	6%	14%	22%	23%	13%	11%
8 Some other issue	6%	3%	3%	1%	4%	3%
9 Don't know	6%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q03 Legislature						
1 Approve	27%	31%	23%	28%	26%	14%
2 Disapprove	39%	41%	51%	31%	49%	63%
3 Unsure	33%	28%	26%	41%	25%	23%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of your own members of the Mississippi State Legislature?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q04 Members						
1 Approve	33%	33%	30%	35%	36%	29%
2 Disapprove	39%	43%	47%	28%	43%	47%
3 Unsure	27%	24%	23%	37%	21%	24%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall</i> here in Mississippi?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q05 Overall						
1 Excellent	12%	7%	3%	3%	6%	3%
2 Good	30%	29%	29%	23%	23%	27%
3 Only fair	24%	39%	28%	37%	37%	42%
4 Poor	12%	11%	18%	20%	16%	13%
5 They are failing our students	18%	11%	19%	16%	16%	14%
6 Unsure	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools overall <i>in your community</i> ?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q06 Community						
1 Excellent	12%	19%	12%	19%	19%	20%
2 Good	42%	34%	29%	20%	29%	31%
3 Only fair	15%	24%	26%	24%	26%	26%
4 Poor	18%	13%	15%	24%	9%	10%
5 They are failing our students	9%	9%	16%	12%	15%	13%
6 Unsure	3%	1%	3%	1%	2%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q07 Funding						
1 Too high	9%	8%	10%	11%	6%	3%
2 Too low	61%	56%	63%	65%	69%	79%
3 About right	12%	20%	19%	17%	18%	12%
4 Unsure	18%	16%	8%	8%	6%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q08 Top						
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	48%	34%	34%	34%	29%	42%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	24%	22%	20%	25%	29%	24%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	9%	8%	12%	16%	15%	13%
4 More computer equipment for students	6%	13%	3%	1%	6%	3%
5 More lab and science equipment	3%	3%	8%	3%	5%	8%
6 School building repairs and renovations	3%	10%	10%	3%	7%	8%
7 Unsure	6%	9%	13%	17%	10%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What would be your second choice if the state provided more money for public schools?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q09 Second						
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	21%	26%	23%	22%	25%	26%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	27%	20%	24%	26%	23%	20%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	15%	8%	18%	11%	16%	18%
4 More computer equipment for students	18%	12%	8%	9%	8%	13%
5 More lab and science equipment	6%	8%	9%	6%	10%	7%
6 School building repairs and renovations	6%	18%	10%	16%	10%	11%
7 Unsure	6%	8%	8%	11%	7%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Earlier this year the state legislature passed a \$1,500 pay raise for Mississippi's school teachers. This is the first raise in 5 years and will bring the average pay up to 87% of neighboring states average. How would						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q10 Raise						
1 Raise helps but is not enough	70%	63%	68%	57%	66%	88%
2 Raise is all the state can afford	6%	18%	17%	27%	22%	8%
3 Raise was unnecessary	3%	5%	6%	10%	3%	2%
4 Unsure	21%	14%	9%	6%	8%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state decided to increase overall funding for public schools, what would be your preferred method for getting the necessary funds?						
%	Q20 Education					
	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
Q11 Funds						
1 Increase income tax rates for higher earners	24%	9%	6%	5%	5%	12%
2 Raise state gasoline tax	3%	6%	3%	4%	5%	3%
3 Enact higher tax rates on corporations	6%	12%	15%	14%	15%	18%
4 Earmark state lottery proceeds	33%	44%	54%	49%	56%	50%
5 Repeal corporate tax cuts	0%	7%	10%	6%	5%	12%
6 Do not support increasing funding	3%	10%	7%	10%	10%	5%
7 Unsure	30%	11%	6%	11%	5%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The state legislature recently passed a law requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the 4th grade. Do you support or oppose this new law or are you unsure?						
%	Q20 Education					
Q12 Reading Exam	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
1 Support	33%	51%	60%	67%	63%	63%
2 Oppose	24%	28%	28%	25%	26%	26%
3 Unsure	42%	21%	13%	9%	11%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Mississippi law allows for the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school board. Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools to receive public funds?						
%	Q20 Education					
Q13 Charter Schools	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
1 Support	39%	35%	42%	48%	43%	32%
2 Oppose	24%	39%	38%	32%	47%	62%
3 Unsure	36%	26%	20%	19%	10%	7%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school?						
%	Q20 Education					
Q14 Grad Exam	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
1 Support	52%	58%	61%	61%	64%	63%
2 Oppose	27%	32%	26%	25%	30%	31%
3 Unsure	21%	10%	13%	14%	6%	7%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support or oppose parents receiving government money or "vouchers" to send their children to private or religious schools?						
%	Q20 Education					
Q15 Vouchers	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
1 Support without limitation	15%	25%	28%	30%	25%	18%
2 Support, but only in limited cases involving disabilities	36%	32%	36%	30%	43%	39%
3 Oppose	33%	35%	27%	31%	22%	40%
4 Unsure	15%	8%	9%	9%	10%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If a family receives a state government "voucher" to pay tuition at private or church school, do you believe those schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as public schools?						
%	Q20 Education					
Q16 Standards	1 Less than high school education	2 High school graduate	3 Attended college but did not graduate	4 Graduated from two-year college	5 Graduated from four-year college	6 Advanced degree
1 Yes, standards should be the same	76%	67%	81%	73%	70%	76%
2 No, they are private schools	6%	19%	13%	22%	26%	17%
3 Unsure	18%	14%	7%	5%	4%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Crosstab: Party

Do you believe Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q01 Direction	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Right direction	71%	48%	27%	10%	13%
2 Wrong direction	12%	25%	51%	76%	70%
3 Unsure	18%	26%	23%	14%	16%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q02 Priority	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Reducing the size of state government	11%	5%	3%	0%	2%
2 Fixing roads and bridges	22%	19%	26%	16%	19%
3 Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that promise to create jobs	12%	16%	6%	7%	3%
4 Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	9%	11%	18%	29%	38%
5 More funding for public schools	13%	25%	25%	36%	25%
6 More funding for universities and community colleges	4%	3%	3%	5%	7%
7 Protecting traditional family values	27%	20%	14%	2%	2%
8 Some other issue	3%	2%	6%	3%	2%
9 Don't know	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q03 Legislature	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Approve	43%	25%	18%	7%	9%
2 Disapprove	26%	40%	58%	69%	66%
3 Unsure	31%	34%	24%	24%	25%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of your own members of the Mississippi State Legislature?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q04 Members	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Approve	51%	36%	23%	19%	18%
2 Disapprove	24%	35%	59%	55%	54%
3 Unsure	26%	28%	18%	26%	28%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall</i> here in Mississippi?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q05 Overall	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Excellent	7%	1%	5%	5%	4%
2 Good	34%	28%	20%	19%	22%
3 Only fair	32%	40%	32%	48%	36%
4 Poor	15%	14%	18%	16%	16%
5 They are failing our students	10%	14%	23%	12%	21%
6 Unsure	3%	3%	2%	0%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall in your community</i> ?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q06 Community	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Excellent	28%	15%	14%	10%	10%
2 Good	31%	35%	28%	33%	24%
3 Only fair	20%	22%	23%	31%	32%
4 Poor	10%	14%	18%	16%	16%
5 They are failing our students	10%	13%	16%	10%	16%
6 Unsure	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q07 Funding	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Too high	11%	7%	10%	3%	3%
2 Too low	54%	62%	65%	84%	83%
3 About right	27%	24%	17%	3%	3%
4 Unsure	9%	8%	8%	9%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q08 Top	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	39%	29%	30%	41%	36%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	21%	23%	18%	33%	32%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	12%	18%	14%	5%	12%
4 More computer equipment for students	5%	7%	4%	5%	5%
5 More lab and science equipment	7%	5%	9%	0%	3%
6 School building repairs and renovations	8%	7%	9%	9%	6%
7 Unsure	10%	12%	15%	7%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What would be your second choice if the state provided more money for public schools?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q09 Second	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	24%	21%	24%	26%	27%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	22%	24%	20%	24%	25%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	13%	14%	13%	17%	17%
4 More computer equipment for students	12%	8%	13%	9%	10%
5 More lab and science equipment	8%	13%	10%	3%	7%
6 School building repairs and renovations	14%	12%	11%	16%	10%
7 Unsure	8%	10%	10%	5%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Earlier this year the state legislature passed a \$1,500 pay raise for Mississippi's school teachers. This is the first raise in 5 years and will bring the average pay up to 87% of neighboring states average. How would you characterize this payraise?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q10 Raise	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Raise helps but is not enough	65%	59%	68%	81%	81%
2 Raise is all the state can afford	24%	24%	14%	9%	10%
3 Raise was unnecessary	5%	7%	7%	3%	1%
4 Unsure	7%	11%	12%	7%	9%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state decided to increase overall funding for public schools, what would be your preferred method for getting the necessary funds?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q11 Funds	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Increase income tax rates for higher earners	5%	8%	12%	10%	10%
2 Raise state gasoline tax	6%	5%	2%	3%	3%
3 Enact higher tax rates on corporations	10%	5%	18%	21%	23%
4 Earmark state lottery proceeds	56%	56%	48%	47%	42%
5 Repeal corporate tax cuts	5%	8%	8%	9%	10%
6 Do not support increasing funding	12%	12%	8%	5%	1%
7 Unsure	8%	7%	6%	5%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The state legislature recently passed a law requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the 4th grade. Do you support or oppose this new law or are you unsure?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q12 Reading Exam	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Support	73%	65%	67%	43%	36%
2 Oppose	19%	24%	23%	33%	40%
3 Unsure	9%	12%	11%	24%	24%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Mississippi law allows for the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school board. Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools to receive public funds?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q13 Charter Schools	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Support	53%	46%	40%	17%	25%
2 Oppose	31%	32%	43%	69%	58%
3 Unsure	16%	22%	17%	14%	17%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q14 Grad Exam	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Support	64%	70%	67%	52%	49%
2 Oppose	28%	23%	23%	36%	37%
3 Unsure	9%	8%	10%	12%	13%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support or oppose parents receiving government money or "vouchers" to send their children to private or religious schools?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q15 Vouchers	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Support without limitation	33%	30%	25%	10%	13%
2 Support, but only in limited cases involving disabilities	33%	40%	37%	50%	34%
3 Oppose	29%	20%	31%	33%	42%
4 Unsure	7%	10%	8%	7%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If a family receives a state government "voucher" to pay tuition at private or church school, do you believe those schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as public schools?					
%	Q21 Party				
Q16 Standards	1 Strong Republican	2 Lean Republican	3 Neither Democrat nor Republican	4 Lean Democrat	5 Strong Democrat
1 Yes, standards should be the same	66%	75%	73%	84%	80%
2 No, they are private schools	30%	19%	19%	7%	7%
3 Unsure	5%	6%	8%	9%	13%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Crosstab: Age

Do you believe Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q01 Direction	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Right direction	39%	29%	41%	36%	50%
2 Wrong direction	32%	52%	39%	51%	30%
3 Unsure	29%	19%	21%	13%	20%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q02 Priority	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Reducing the size of state government	4%	4%	3%	6%	7%
2 Fixing roads and bridges	13%	16%	17%	23%	28%
3 Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that promise to create jobs	10%	10%	11%	9%	7%
4 Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	17%	17%	18%	20%	22%
5 More funding for public schools	29%	33%	22%	19%	13%
6 More funding for universities and community colleges	6%	4%	4%	2%	5%
7 Protecting traditional family values	12%	14%	22%	16%	14%
8 Some other issue	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%
9 Don't know	4%	0%	0%	3%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q03 Legislature	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Approve	26%	17%	19%	23%	32%
2 Disapprove	42%	58%	53%	51%	37%
3 Unsure	32%	25%	28%	26%	31%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of your own members of the Mississippi State Legislature?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q04 Members	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Approve	29%	27%	25%	36%	40%
2 Disapprove	43%	47%	46%	46%	35%
3 Unsure	28%	26%	30%	18%	25%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall</i> here in Mississippi?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q05 Overall	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Excellent	10%	4%	5%	4%	4%
2 Good	22%	22%	24%	28%	31%
3 Only fair	30%	35%	36%	42%	34%
4 Poor	22%	21%	12%	9%	16%
5 They are failing our students	13%	17%	22%	17%	12%
6 Unsure	3%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools overall <i>in your community</i> ?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q06 Community	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Excellent	23%	17%	18%	17%	15%
2 Good	25%	32%	26%	29%	33%
3 Only fair	17%	26%	23%	30%	24%
4 Poor	25%	8%	16%	9%	16%
5 They are failing our students	7%	17%	17%	14%	10%
6 Unsure	3%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q07 Funding	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Too high	9%	4%	9%	8%	9%
2 Too low	74%	75%	75%	63%	56%
3 About right	9%	11%	10%	23%	24%
4 Unsure	9%	10%	6%	7%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q08 Top	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	41%	39%	40%	32%	30%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	17%	26%	20%	30%	24%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	14%	14%	14%	10%	12%
4 More computer equipment for students	4%	4%	9%	4%	5%
5 More lab and science equipment	4%	8%	0%	6%	6%
6 School building repairs and renovations	9%	6%	6%	8%	9%
7 Unsure	10%	2%	12%	9%	15%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What would be your second choice if the state provided more money for public schools?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q09 Second	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	17%	29%	25%	20%	26%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	25%	23%	25%	22%	22%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	13%	15%	16%	22%	9%
4 More computer equipment for students	13%	14%	6%	11%	9%
5 More lab and science equipment	9%	4%	7%	10%	11%
6 School building repairs and renovations	16%	11%	14%	10%	13%
7 Unsure	7%	5%	8%	5%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Earlier this year the state legislature passed a \$1,500 pay raise for Mississippi's school teachers. This is the first raise in 5 years and will bring the average pay up to 87% of neighboring states average. How would you characterize this payraise?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q10 Raise	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Raise helps but is not enough	68%	81%	66%	74%	60%
2 Raise is all the state can afford	12%	14%	17%	16%	23%
3 Raise was unnecessary	10%	1%	4%	3%	7%
4 Unsure	10%	5%	13%	8%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state decided to increase overall funding for public schools, what would be your preferred method for getting the necessary funds?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q11 Funds	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Increase income tax rates for higher earners	6%	9%	8%	10%	8%
2 Raise state gasoline tax	3%	2%	2%	3%	7%
3 Enact higher tax rates on corporations	13%	11%	19%	20%	11%
4 Earmark state lottery proceeds	58%	57%	51%	46%	44%
5 Repeal corporate tax cuts	6%	12%	9%	4%	6%
6 Do not support increasing funding	4%	6%	7%	10%	10%
7 Unsure	10%	2%	4%	7%	13%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The state legislature recently passed a law requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the 4th grade. Do you support or oppose this new law or are you unsure?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q12 Reading Exam	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Support	52%	64%	61%	61%	57%
2 Oppose	35%	32%	23%	23%	23%
3 Unsure	13%	5%	16%	16%	20%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Mississippi law allows for the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school board. Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools to receive public funds?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q13 Charter Schools	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Support	36%	43%	42%	33%	42%
2 Oppose	42%	47%	46%	49%	37%
3 Unsure	22%	11%	13%	18%	21%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q14 Grad Exam	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Support	62%	59%	59%	63%	61%
2 Oppose	26%	34%	31%	28%	26%
3 Unsure	12%	7%	10%	10%	13%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support or oppose parents receiving government money or "vouchers" to send their children to private or religious schools?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q15 Vouchers	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Support without limitation	25%	24%	27%	21%	25%
2 Support, but only in limited cases involving disabilities	38%	38%	41%	37%	33%
3 Oppose	25%	31%	29%	37%	30%
4 Unsure	13%	7%	4%	5%	12%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If a family receives a state government "voucher" to pay tuition at private or church school, do you believe those schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as public schools?					
%	Q17 Age				
Q16 Standards	1 18 to 34	2 35 to 44	3 45 to 54	4 55 to 64	5 65 or older
1 Yes, standards should be the same	64%	71%	76%	75%	76%
2 No, they are private schools	25%	24%	18%	18%	13%
3 Unsure	12%	5%	6%	7%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Crosstab: Ethnicity

Do you believe Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q01 Direction	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Right direction	21%	57%	51%	17%	37%
2 Wrong direction	62%	24%	30%	67%	37%
3 Unsure	17%	19%	20%	17%	27%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q02 Priority	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Reducing the size of state government	2%	0%	8%	0%	3%
2 Fixing roads and bridges	17%	33%	21%	0%	27%
3 Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that promise to create jobs	6%	29%	9%	0%	10%
4 Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	28%	14%	14%	33%	22%
5 More funding for public schools	26%	14%	21%	33%	14%
6 More funding for universities and community colleges	6%	0%	3%	0%	3%
7 Protecting traditional family values	8%	5%	20%	17%	19%
8 Some other issue	3%	5%	3%	17%	2%
9 Don't know	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q03 Legislature	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Approve	14%	38%	30%	0%	24%
2 Disapprove	56%	38%	42%	67%	51%
3 Unsure	30%	24%	28%	33%	25%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of your own members of the Mississippi State Legislature?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q04 Members	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Approve	23%	52%	38%	17%	30%
2 Disapprove	51%	24%	38%	67%	43%
3 Unsure	25%	24%	25%	17%	27%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall</i> here in Mississippi?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q05 Overall	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Excellent	4%	5%	5%	17%	5%
2 Good	22%	38%	27%	0%	35%
3 Only fair	41%	24%	34%	50%	30%
4 Poor	13%	14%	18%	17%	10%
5 They are failing our students	19%	14%	14%	17%	17%
6 Unsure	2%	5%	1%	0%	3%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools overall <i>in your community</i> ?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q06 Community	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Excellent	9%	10%	23%	17%	14%
2 Good	28%	52%	29%	17%	35%
3 Only fair	34%	24%	19%	17%	24%
4 Poor	13%	10%	15%	50%	8%
5 They are failing our students	14%	5%	12%	0%	17%
6 Unsure	2%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q07 Funding	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Too high	7%	5%	8%	0%	11%
2 Too low	74%	52%	65%	67%	59%
3 About right	7%	33%	21%	17%	21%
4 Unsure	13%	10%	7%	17%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q08 Top	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	34%	24%	37%	67%	29%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	31%	19%	22%	0%	17%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	8%	5%	14%	0%	25%
4 More computer equipment for students	7%	14%	5%	0%	0%
5 More lab and science equipment	5%	24%	4%	17%	3%
6 School building repairs and renovations	8%	0%	7%	0%	11%
7 Unsure	6%	14%	11%	17%	14%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

What would be your second choice if the state provided more money for public schools?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q09 Second	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	23%	10%	24%	0%	33%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	25%	33%	22%	33%	16%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	12%	10%	15%	33%	16%
4 More computer equipment for students	13%	24%	9%	33%	8%
5 More lab and science equipment	7%	10%	9%	0%	11%
6 School building repairs and renovations	15%	5%	11%	0%	11%
7 Unsure	5%	10%	10%	0%	5%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Earlier this year the state legislature passed a \$1,500 pay raise for Mississippi's school teachers. This is the first raise in 5 years and will bring the average pay up to 87% of neighboring states average. How would you characterize this payraise?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q10 Raise	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Raise helps but is not enough	73%	62%	69%	83%	62%
2 Raise is all the state can afford	12%	19%	20%	17%	21%
3 Raise was unnecessary	3%	5%	4%	0%	13%
4 Unsure	13%	14%	7%	0%	5%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If the state decided to increase overall funding for public schools, what would be your preferred method for getting the necessary funds?					
%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q11 Funds	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Increase income tax rates for higher earners	15%	5%	5%	17%	5%
2 Raise state gasoline tax	3%	14%	3%	0%	8%
3 Enact higher tax rates on corporations	16%	24%	12%	17%	19%
4 Earmark state lottery proceeds	47%	24%	56%	33%	40%
5 Repeal corporate tax cuts	6%	10%	8%	17%	6%
6 Do not support increasing funding	2%	10%	10%	0%	13%
7 Unsure	11%	14%	5%	17%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The state legislature recently passed a law requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the 4th grade. Do you support or oppose this new law or are you unsure?

%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q12 Reading Exam	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Support	38%	48%	70%	50%	70%
2 Oppose	39%	29%	20%	33%	19%
3 Unsure	23%	24%	10%	17%	11%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Mississippi law allows for the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school board. Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools to receive public funds?

%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q13 Charter Schools	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Support	33%	14%	47%	0%	32%
2 Oppose	50%	52%	38%	67%	44%
3 Unsure	17%	33%	14%	33%	24%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school?

%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q14 Grad Exam	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Support	47%	57%	68%	33%	71%
2 Oppose	39%	33%	24%	50%	22%
3 Unsure	15%	10%	8%	17%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support or oppose parents receiving government money or "vouchers" to send their children to private or religious schools?

%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q15 Vouchers	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Support without limitation	17%	24%	28%	17%	27%
2 Support, but only in limited cases involving disabilities	33%	38%	40%	50%	29%
3 Oppose	39%	29%	26%	17%	35%
4 Unsure	10%	10%	7%	17%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

If a family receives a state government "voucher" to pay tuition at private or church school, do you believe those schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as public schools?

%	Q18 Ethnicity				
Q16 Standards	1 African American	2 Asian American	3 Non-Hispanic White	4 Hispanic or Latino	5 Other
1 Yes, standards should be the same	77%	67%	72%	83%	71%
2 No, they are private schools	11%	24%	23%	17%	19%
3 Unsure	13%	10%	5%	0%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Crosstab: Gender

Do you believe Mississippi is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q01 Direction	1 Male	2 Female
1 Right direction	46%	36%
2 Wrong direction	39%	42%
3 Unsure	16%	22%
Grand Total	100%	100%

What should be the top priority for Mississippi's elected leaders working in Jackson?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q02 Priority	1 Male	2 Female
1 Reducing the size of state government	9%	3%
2 Fixing roads and bridges	23%	20%
3 Giving tax incentives and grants for companies that promise to create jobs	12%	7%
4 Making healthcare more accessible and affordable	15%	22%
5 More funding for public schools	18%	25%
6 More funding for universities and community colleges	3%	5%
7 Protecting traditional family values	18%	14%
8 Some other issue	2%	4%
9 Don't know	1%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Mississippi State Legislature?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q03 Legislature	1 Male	2 Female
1 Approve	30%	20%
2 Disapprove	47%	48%
3 Unsure	22%	32%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of your own members of the Mississippi State Legislature?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q04 Members	1 Male	2 Female
1 Approve	40%	28%
2 Disapprove	41%	43%
3 Unsure	19%	29%
Grand Total	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools <i>overall</i> here in Mississippi?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q05 Overall	1 Male	2 Female
1 Excellent	5%	5%
2 Good	26%	27%
3 Only fair	34%	37%
4 Poor	17%	15%
5 They are failing our students	17%	15%
6 Unsure	2%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%

How would you describe the quality of the public schools overall <i>in your community</i> ?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q06 Community	1 Male	2 Female
1 Excellent	19%	16%
2 Good	29%	30%
3 Only fair	23%	26%
4 Poor	13%	14%
5 They are failing our students	14%	13%
6 Unsure	2%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Thinking about the entire state, how would you describe the level of funding for our public schools?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q07 Funding	1 Male	2 Female
1 Too high	9%	7%
2 Too low	61%	70%
3 About right	23%	13%
4 Unsure	8%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%

If the state provided more money for public schools, which of the following would be your top priority?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q08 Top	1 Male	2 Female
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	36%	34%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	21%	26%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	9%	15%
4 More computer equipment for students	5%	5%
5 More lab and science equipment	6%	5%
6 School building repairs and renovations	9%	6%
7 Unsure	13%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%

What would be your second choice if the state provided more money for public schools?		
%	Q19 Gender	
Q09 Second	1 Male	2 Female
1 Giving teachers a pay raise	21%	27%
2 Hiring more teachers to reduce class size	20%	25%
3 Restore art, foreign language, and other courses cut from the budget	16%	13%
4 More computer equipment for students	11%	10%
5 More lab and science equipment	12%	6%
6 School building repairs and renovations	11%	13%
7 Unsure	8%	7%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Earlier this year the state legislature passed a \$1,500 pay raise for Mississippi's school teachers. This is the first raise in 5 years and will bring the average pay up to 87% of neighboring states average. How would you characterize this payraise?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q10 Raise	1 Male	2 Female
1 Raise helps but is not enough	64%	73%
2 Raise is all the state can afford	20%	16%
3 Raise was unnecessary	7%	3%
4 Unsure	9%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%

If the state decided to increase overall funding for public schools, what would be your preferred method for getting the necessary funds?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q11 Funds	1 Male	2 Female
1 Increase income tax rates for higher earners	9%	8%
2 Rase state gasoline tax	5%	3%
3 Enact higher tax rates on corporations	13%	15%
4 Earmark state lottery proceeds	52%	49%
5 Repeal corporate tax cuts	6%	8%
6 Do not support increasing funding	10%	6%
7 Unsure	5%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%

The state legislature recently passed a law requiring third grade students to pass a state reading exam before moving to the 4th grade. Do you support or oppose this new law or are you unsure?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q12 Reading Exam	1 Male	2 Female
1 Support	67%	54%
2 Oppose	20%	31%
3 Unsure	14%	15%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Mississippi law allows for the formation of charter schools, which are publicly funded but not managed by the local school board. Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools to receive public funds?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q13 Charter Schools	1 Male	2 Female
1 Support	49%	33%
2 Oppose	41%	45%
3 Unsure	11%	22%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Do you support a requirement that students pass a state exam before graduating from high school?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q14 Grad Exam	1 Male	2 Female
1 Support	68%	56%
2 Oppose	23%	33%
3 Unsure	8%	12%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Do you support or oppose parents receiving government money or "vouchers" to send their children to private or religious schools?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q15 Vouchers	1 Male	2 Female
1 Support without limitation	29%	21%
2 Support, but only in limited cases involving disabilities	35%	38%
3 Oppose	31%	31%
4 Unsure	5%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%

If a family receives a state government "voucher" to pay tuition at private or church school, do you believe those schools should be subject to the same testing and accountability standards as public schools?

%	Q19 Gender	
Q16 Standards	1 Male	2 Female
1 Yes, standards should be the same	74%	73%
2 No, they are private schools	21%	17%
3 Unsure	5%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%