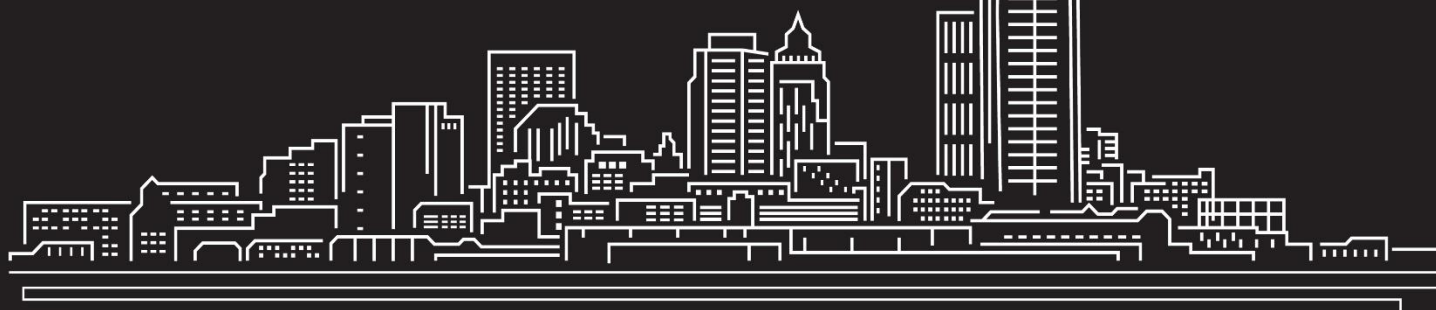


SOONER SURVEY



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Education Reforms Supported

School choice, open-transfer, streamlining certification, prioritizing pace over grade level, and funding current-year students are all strongly supported.

By Pat McFerron, President

Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates

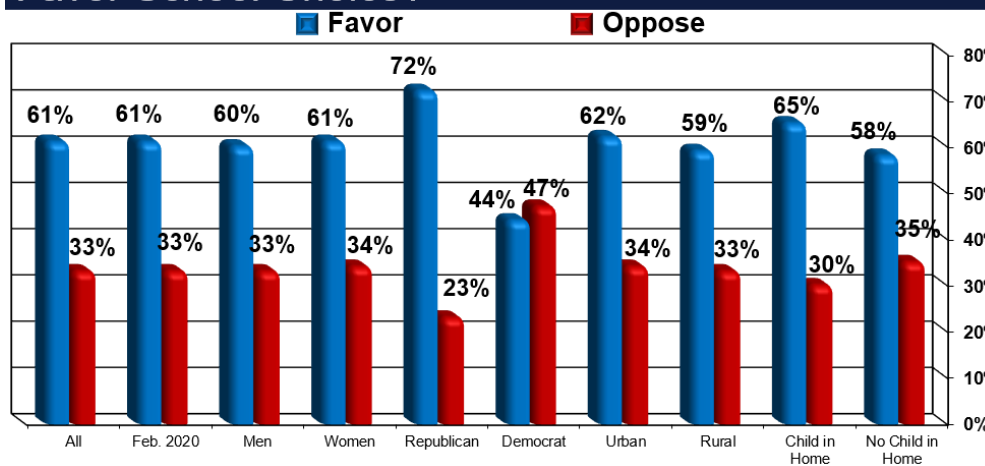
 @McFerron

Our recent study of voters shows them ready to make significant changes in our school system. Routinely, we see super-majorities of voters embracing school reforms. It might be easy to say that these reforms are just born out of frustration during Covid, but the reality is in at least one instance this study reaffirms previously recorded support.

While 2020 has ushered in many changes, one constant is that voters in Oklahoma continue to support school choice, including allowing parents to use tax

dollars to send their children to private schools. In a study asked in early February before Covid was a household word, 61% of Oklahomans supported this concept – identical to the percentage supporting it today.

Favor School Choice?



Despite not seeing any change in the overall numbers, even this bedrock issue of school choice has not been immune from the growing partisan divide. It

looks as though the pandemic has strengthened the resolve of Republicans who now support school-choice by better than a three-to-one margin, while the issue divides Democrats more than we have ever seen. In February, there was still strong Republican support

SOONER SURVEY

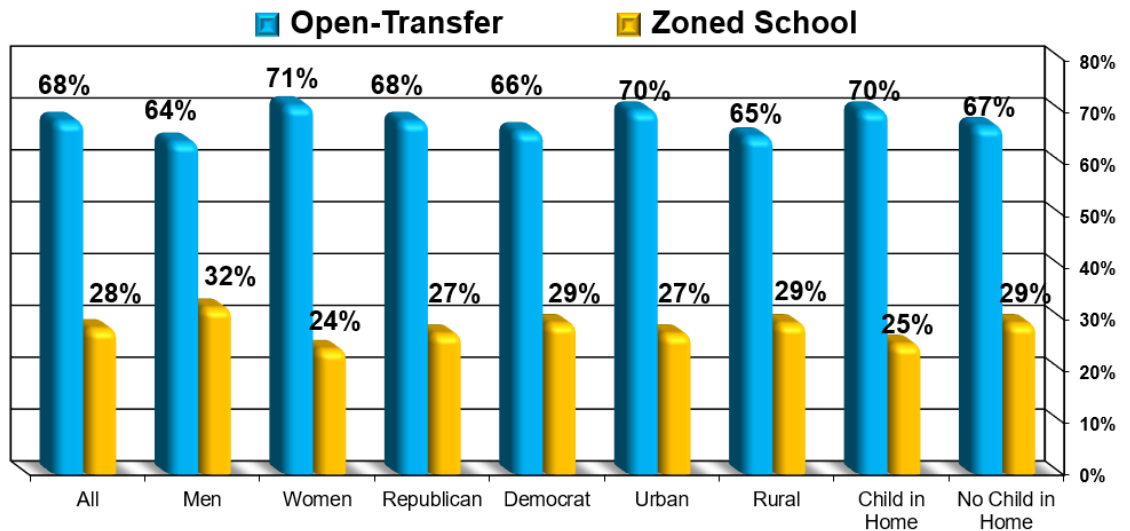
(66% favor / 30% oppose), but it is now even stronger – and stronger still among those Republicans who vote in primary elections (74% favor).

Consistent with past studies, we see both those living in the two great metro areas and those in the 71 most rural counties not that much different. We do see those with a child in the home being the most supportive.

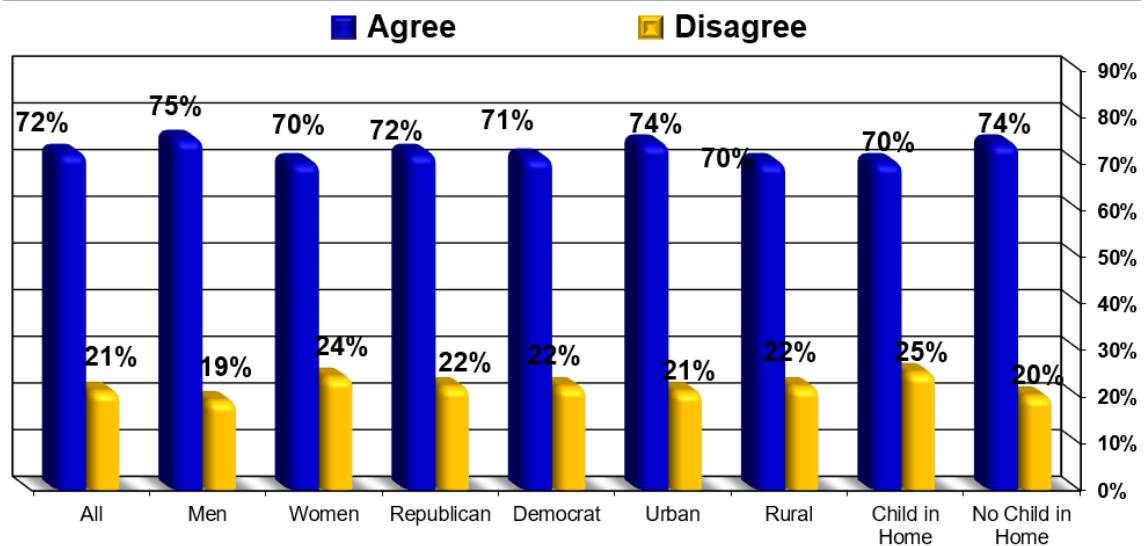
Moving to a more specific type of school choice, we see strong support for open transfer to any public school, as long as the receiving public school has room. On this issue, we see very little difference between Republicans and Democrats, and women lead the charge in support as do those with a child living in the home. Clearly, Oklahomans want parents in charge of where their children are educated.

Another reform we looked at is a move away from grade levels and time spent in a classroom to one of mastering concepts. We actually looked at this in two different ways and see solid support. It should be noted this has not been greatly discussed, so these numbers, unlike those for basic school choice, could change as a public discussion is held. When

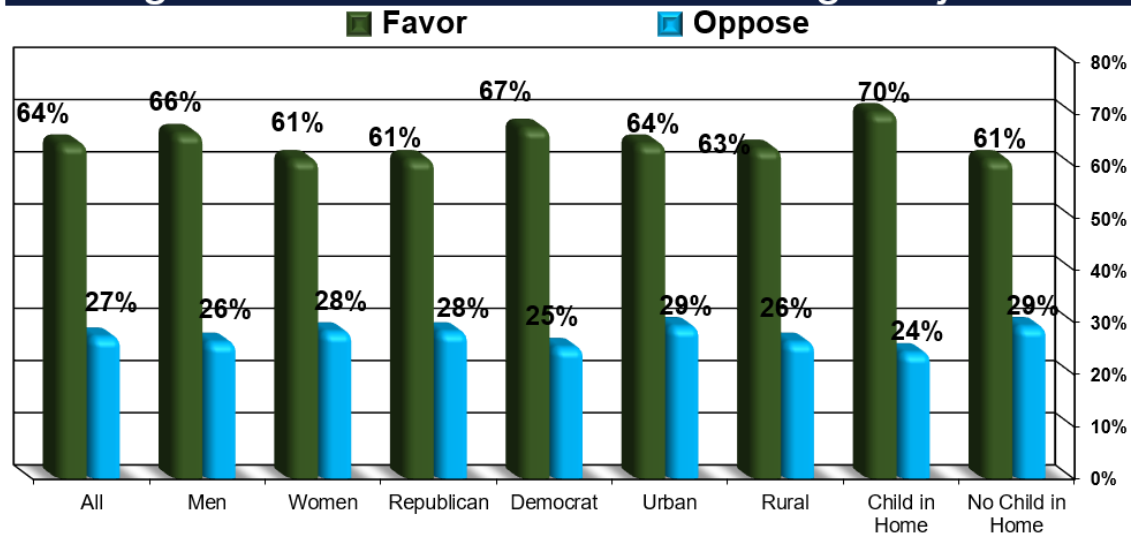
Opinion on Public Schools / Transfers?



Learn at Own Pace Rather than Grade Levels?



Moving from Grade Levels to Mastering Subjects?

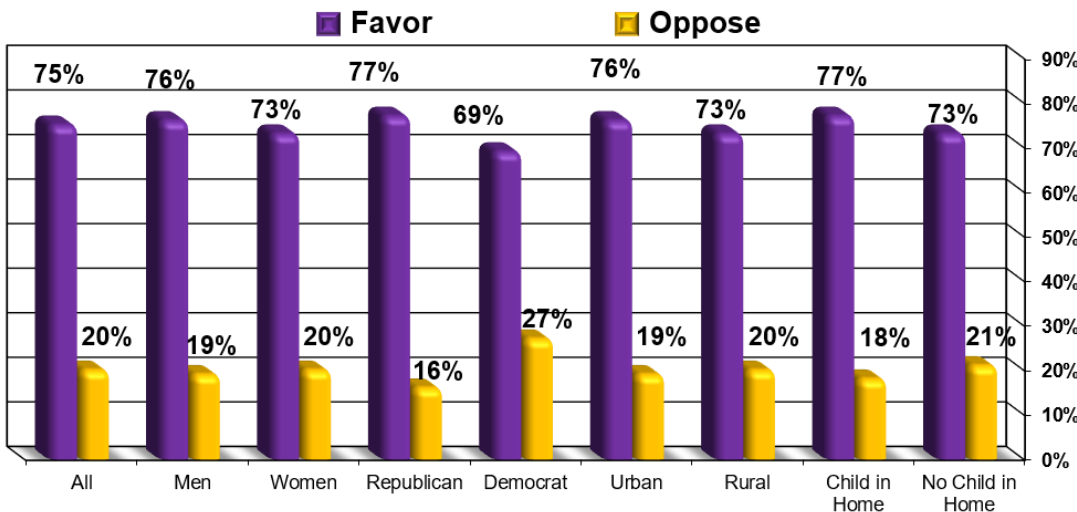


SOONER SURVEY QUESTIONS

first asked if students should be able to focus on “mastering subjects” instead of progressing through grade levels, we have phenomenal support from 72% of

A more mundane reform we tested deals with changing how schools are funded. This question looked at moving from calculating the number of students

Funding Based on Number of Current Year Students?

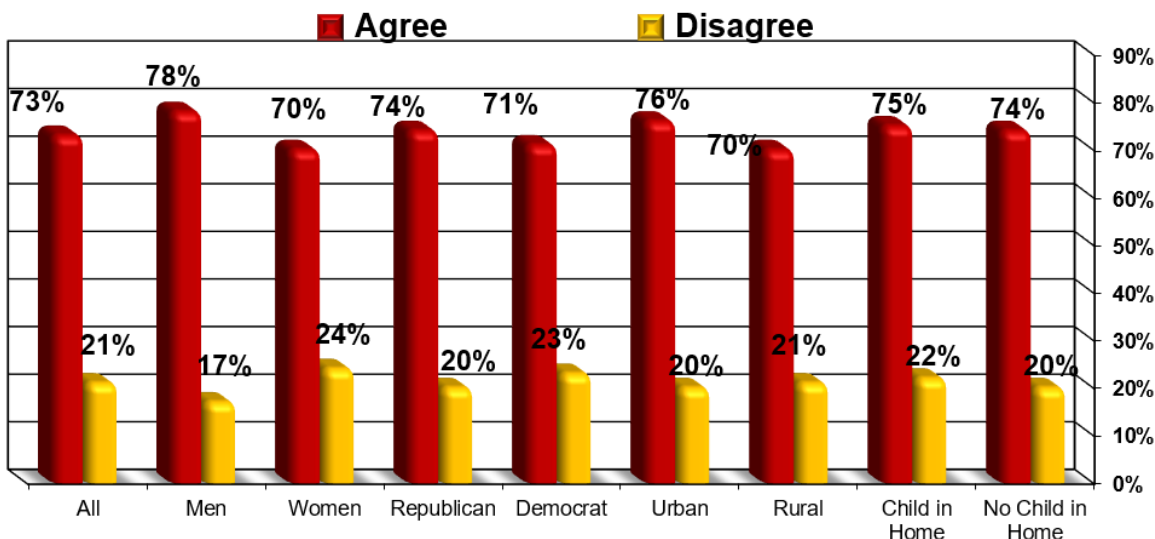


voters and Republicans and Democrats have almost identical numbers. Most striking is that among the, admittedly small, subgroup of those in teacher families (12% of the sample), 84% are supportive. When asked a different way, this time with it the move away from grade levels up front, support drops but is still 64% with Democrats being more supportive (67% favor / 25% oppose) than are Republicans (61% favor / 28% oppose). Those under 45 years of age (70% support) and those with a child in the home (70% support) are the strongest advocates.

served from the highest out of the last three years to one using only the current year’s number of students. This reform is really a no-brainer for most voters with three-quarters being supportive. Among Republicans support expands even more. Even among registered Democrats, however, there is a 42-point advantage for proponents. Both urbanites and rural dwellers are also supportive. Again, we see those with a child in the

home leading the charge for this reform as do those under the age of 45. The final reform we examined was for finding a way to streamline the ability of professionals to become certified teachers. Again, almost three-quarters of voters are supportive, and the partisan divide is rather minimal. In contrast to some other reforms, however, here those who are tied to teachers’ unions or associations are among the least supportive. This reform is especially supported by younger and more affluent voters.

Streamline Teacher Certification for Professionals



While these reforms may or may not be discussed during the upcoming legislative session, one thing is clear: Voters are now focused on reforming public education. They embrace fundamental reforms more now than at any time we have been polling – something that now dates back more than 30 years.

SOONER SURVEY

1. School choice gives parents the right to use tax dollars raised for their child's education to send their child to the school of their choice whether it is public, private, online, or charter which best serves their needs. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose the concept of school choice for Oklahoma? (After response, ask:) Would you say you strongly (favor / oppose) or only somewhat (favor / oppose)?
40% Strongly Favor
21% Somewhat Favor
9% Somewhat Oppose
24% Strongly Oppose
6% (Do not read) Undecided
2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements (Randomize series)
2. Education should be flexible so students can learn at their own pace with a focus on mastering subjects rather than progressing through grade levels.
72% Agree
21% Disagree
6% (Do not read) Undecided
3. Oklahoma should develop a streamlined pathway to allow certified professionals to become teachers as a second career.
74% Agree
20% Disagree
6% (Do not read) Undecided
4. Which statement comes closest to your beliefs? (Rotate)
68% Oklahoma should allow students to open-transfer to any public school district that best meets their needs as long as the receiving school has capacity
28% Oklahoma should require public school students to attend the school zoned for their neighborhood
5% (Do not read) Undecided
5. Oklahoma's education system is currently organized around grade levels and is based on hours and minutes of instruction in a school year. Would you favor or oppose Oklahoma transitioning away from this system to one that focuses on mastering concepts and skills regardless of time, place, and pace.
64% Favor
27% Oppose
9% (Do not read) Undecided
6. As you may know, Oklahoma's school districts currently receive their funding based on the highest number of students they have served during any of the past three school years. This means that districts with shrinking enrollments are receiving funds for students they are not serving and that those with growing populations are getting less per student than they would otherwise. Would you favor or oppose legislation that funded schools based on the number of students they are serving during that particular school year?
75% Favor
19% Oppose
6% (Do not read) Undecided

This edition of Sooner Survey was conducted September 20-24, 2020. The study of 500 registered voters in Oklahoma were collected by live agents on mobile (50%) and landline (26%) telephones and through our text-to-web CAWI system (25%). The confidence interval associated with this sample is that 95% of the time the results are within 4.3% of the true values.



During his more than 25 years with Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates, Pat McFerron supervised polling and telephone voter contact programs in more than 40 states - including polling for numerous successful presidential, gubernatorial, U.S. Senate, congressional and legislative clients throughout the nation. McFerron also oversees marketing research projects for CHS clients who range from Fortune 100 companies to non-profits, universities, and entrepreneurial start-ups.