

To: All Interested Parties

Re: **Poll Highlights: Pennsylvania voters overwhelmingly reject school vouchers; Support Continued Federal/State Investments in Public Schools; Support Passage of Gov. Shapiro's Education Budget**

OVERVIEW & SURVEY METHODOLOGY

OCTOBER 9, 2025

Susquehanna Polling and Research, Inc., **rated the #1 most accurate polling firm in the USA** by Real Clear Politics for its 2020 presidential polling in numerous battleground states, and more recently **rated #2 in the USA for a composite ranking of national polls from 2014-2022¹**, today releases its latest Pennsylvania Statewide Voter Attitude Survey on behalf of the Pennsylvania State Education Association, testing attitudes and opinions towards school vouchers, federal/state funding for education initiatives, Governor Shapiro's education budget initiatives and other education policy issues. The poll is a random sample of 704 likely Pennsylvania voters, weighted to state Census data and balanced by geographic region, age, political party affiliation and other factors. Conducted September 22-28 using live telephone agents, the poll has a margin of error of +/-3.7% at the 95% confidence level.

CONCLUSION 1: PA VOTERS RESOUNDINGLY REJECT SCHOOL CHOICE/TUITION VOUCHERS

In a series of related questions, Pennsylvanians categorically reject the merits of several school choice/voucher initiatives proposed by state lawmakers in Harrisburg. Consider the following:

- When asked, by a 56:39 margin Pennsylvania likely voters **oppose** giving taxpayer dollars to parents to pay for tuition at private or religious K-12 schools (Q7).
- After hearing arguments on both sides, by a 52:36 margin (Q8) Pennsylvania likely voters **oppose** a multi-million dollar scholarship program allowing students in low-income families living in underperforming school districts to attend private or religious schools. Instead, 52% of likely voters **agreed** with the statement: *"Opponents [of school vouchers] say courts have already ruled that Pennsylvania's public schools are constitutionally underfunded. Shifting millions in tax dollars to private or religious schools would drain already scarce resources from the public schools that ninety percent of kids attend. Instead of [school vouchers], we should fully fund our public schools, reduce class size and increase parental involvement."*
- After being told the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled the state's school funding system to be unconstitutional (Q9), a combined 53% of Pennsylvania likely voters said they **favor** a: *"multi-year plan to increase public school funding to the most underfunded schools"* as a way to address the inadequacy in funding. In comparison, only 35% support: *"school vouchers to give parents a chance to leave a failing school or find a school that is a better fit for their child."*
- When told about the pros/cons of President Trump's newly-created tuition voucher program (Q10) providing federal tax credits for donations to Scholarship Granting Organizations [which in turn provide scholarships to eligible students], 50% of Pennsylvania likely voters **oppose** the new program on the grounds that it: *"shifts federal funds away from public schools and towards private/religious schools."* Only 32% prefer the new tuition program on the basis that it: *"empowers parents by giving them more educational options for their children, including private and religious schools."*

¹ <https://www.realclearpolitics.com/rpc-pollster-scorecard/>

CONCLUSION 2: PA VOTERS SUPPORT FEDERAL/STATE INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

Pennsylvania likely voters reject the basic premise that public schools have adequate funding to properly prepare students, and at the same time, most don't want federal funding cut and/or reduced for educational programs and services. Consider the following:

- By a 59:26 margin, most Pennsylvania likely voters **disagree** with the premise (Q11) that: *"local public schools have enough funding to properly prepare students."* This includes a 43% plurality of Republicans, 74% of Democrats and 58% of Independents.
- When it comes to \$740 million in federal funding that Pennsylvania receives annually for free and reduced meals (Q3), only 10% of Pennsylvania likely voters support **reducing** funding. Instead, 41% want funding increased, while 45% say funding should be kept the same.
- When it comes to \$578 million in federal funding that Pennsylvania receives annually for Title I programs that help economically-disadvantaged students (Q4), only 13% of Pennsylvania likely voters support **reducing** funding. Instead, 42% want funding increased while 40% say funding should be kept the same.
- When it comes to \$428 million in federal funding that Pennsylvania receives annually for students with special needs (Q5), only 3% of Pennsylvania likely voters want funding **reduced**. Instead, a majority of 55% want funding **increased** while 37% say funding should be kept the same.

CONCLUSION 3: PA VOTERS SUPPORT PASSAGE OF SHAPIRO'S EDUCATION BUDGET INITIATIVES

In a series of related questions, most Pennsylvania voters say they support passage of Gov. Shapiro's education budget initiatives, while at the same time, rejecting arguments by those that believe it's important to take the time to negotiate an affordable budget for taxpayers *"even if it means that school districts are delayed in getting school funding."* Consider the following:

- When Pennsylvanians are told that Gov. Shapiro's 2025-26 Budget proposal includes \$526 million increase in "adequacy funding" for the state's most underfunded schools, as well as both a \$75 million increase in basic education funding and \$40 million increase for special education (Q12), 69% of Pennsylvania likely voters say they agree the state legislature should pass the Governor's [education] Budget proposal. This includes 51% of Republicans, 87% of Democrats and 71% of Independents.
- After voters are told the state is 3 months overdue in passing a state budget and after hearing arguments on both sides (Q13), a 48% plurality of Pennsylvania likely voters believe the budget should be passed [now] by **agreeing** with the statement that: *"Too many schools are underfunded and cannot afford to wait to receive the funding that their students count on to be successful."* Only 35% agreed with the alternative argument that: *"It's important to take the time to negotiate a budget that is affordable to Pa. taxpayers even if that means school districts are delayed in their school funding."*

In other related results:

- When asked to rate the quality of public schools [in local communities], 19% rate them as "excellent", 39% rate them "good", 25% rate them "fair" while 10% rate them "poor". (Q1)
- From a list of eight, teacher and staff shortages (45%) and "students falling behind academically" (37%) rate as the two biggest issues facing public schools according to likely voters. Rating third highest is "student behavior and discipline" (35%), followed by "student mental health and wellness" (25%), "student safety and school

shootings” (23%), “diversity, equity and inclusion in public schools” (11%), “federal funding cuts to schools that allow transgender and female students to compete together in sports” (9%) and “federal funding cuts to schools requiring COVID vaccinations (6%).” (Q2)
