Views on Education in California During the Coronavirus Pandemic

An EdSource Poll

From August 29-September 7, 2020, FM3 completed 834 online interviews with California voters on behalf of EdSource. The sample included 634 voters statewide and an oversample of 200 voters who are parents or guardians of a child under age 19. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is $+/-3.5 \%$ at the $\mathbf{9 5 \%}$ confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to $\mathbf{1 0 0 \%}$.

These first questions are to ensure that this survey captures a representative sample of California voters.

1. Do you have any children in the following age groups living at home? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)
Parents

Only | All |
| :---: |
| Voters |

(IN PARENT OVERSAMPLE ONLY, TERMINATE ALL WHO ARE CODE 1 OR 6 IN QX. PARENT SAMPLE IN REST OF SURVEY IS Q1 CODES 2-5)
(ASK Q2 IF CODES 2-5 IN Q1)
2. What grade are your children in? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)
Pre-K ..... 8\%
K-3 ..... 23\%
Grades 4-5 ..... 18\%
Grades 6-8 ..... 24\%
Grades 9-12 (high school) ..... 35\%
College ..... 34\%
Kids not in school yet ..... 11\%
(ASK Q3 IF CODES 2-5)
3. What kind of school do your children attend? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

Public school------------------------------------82\%

Private or parochial school --------------- 14\%
Another kind of school ---------------------5\%
4. Which of the following best describes the type of college your child attends? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

> Community college/junior college ------- 29\%
> Public 4-year college/university ---------- $24 \%$
> Private 4-year college/university ------------------- $11 \%$
> Another type of college -----
(ASK Q5-6 IF CODES 2-5 IN Q1)
5. Do you have a child with special needs?

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yes ------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------- 15\% } \\
& \text { Prefer not to say }
\end{aligned}
$$

6. Has your child's 2020-2021 academic year started yet?

> Started --------------------------------------------------------------------------7\% Not started y\%t Don't know/Prefer not to say----

These next questions are about some issues facing California's education system.
7. First, what is the biggest issue facing California's education system right now? (OPEN-ENDED)

|  | Parents Only | All Voters |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Funding/Budget/Lack of supplie |  | 22\% |
| Teacher pay | -5\% | -7\% |
| COVID-19/School closures/Getting students back on campus- | -- 31\% | -33\% |
| Poor education quality/Teachers unions/ |  |  |
| Lack of quality teachers - | - 15\% | -13\% |
| Challenge of distant learning/Kids being at home/Toll on working parents | --- 21\% | $-13 \%$ |
| Overcrowded classrooms | --4\% | --4\% |
| Regional inequality/Underserved distric | ---- 5\% | 10\% |
| Partisan/Liberal indoctrination in schools/ |  |  |
| Political agendas being taught-------------- | ---- 7\% | ----6\% |
| Other | -- 5\% | ----7\% |
| Don't know/Not sure | -- 2\% | ---2\% |
| Refused/NA/Nothing ---- | ---0\% | ----0\% |

8. Next, here are some different public organizations and individuals who are involved in public education. For each one, please indicate whether you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or strongly disapprove of how they have handled education issues during the coronavirus pandemic.
(RANDOMIZE)
[ ]a. Governor Gavin Newson

[ ]b. Your local school board
All voters -----------------------------------12\% ----- 30\%----- 13\% ------17\%-----27\% 43\% 30\%
Parents only ----------------------------------12\% -----35\%------13\% -----20\% ------19\% 48\% 33\%
[ ]c. Your local school district's
superintendents


[ ]d. College and university leaders
All voters
9\% -----31\%----- 17\% -----21\%-----21\% 41\% 38\%
[ ]e. Parents only -------------------------------- 7\% ----- 28\%----- 15\% -----21\% -----28\% 36\% 36\%
Here is a bit more information. Last spring nearly all California schools moved to distance learning to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Distance learning means that students and teachers are in different locations, and it often requires students to access instruction through video, online applications, or other methods rather than going into school in person.
9. Next, in mid-July Governor Newsom issued an executive order requiring distance learning in schools that are located in counties that are on the State's COVID-19 monitoring list. The majority of counties are on that list. Do you support or oppose this decision?

10. Next, which of the following statements comes closest to your personal opinion:
[ ] To effectively fight the pandemic, local school districts in consultation with local health officials, should be the ones to decide if schools will offer in-person instruction or adopt distance learning


OR
[ ] To effectively combat the pandemic, the state government in consultation with state health officials, should establish rules for when schools will be allowed to offer in-person instruction


Don't know


11. Next, how much additional funding do schools need to be able to offer high-quality distance learning: a great deal, some, a little, or no additional funding?

| Parents <br> Only | All Voters |
| :---: | :---: |
| GREAT/SOME NEED -------- $\mathbf{6 8 \%}$ | --67\% |
| Great need--------------------------48\%-- | --- 50\% |
| Some need---------------------------20\%-- | - 17\% |
| LITTLE/NO REAL NEED ----- 25\% | ---23\% |
|  | ----6\% |
| No need-------------------------------20\%-- | - 17\% |
| DK------------------------------------ 7\%-- | -10\% |

12. How much additional funding do schools need to be able follow all the health practices recommended by local and state guidelines for in-person instruction such as social distancing and temperature checks: a great deal, some, a little, or no additional funding?

13. Next, in May, the House of Representatives approved the Heroes Act which includes an additional \$100 billion in aid for public schools nationally, but the President has opposed this aid. How important is it that the federal government provide additional funds to assist schools and colleges get through the coronavirus pandemic?

| Parents Only | All Voters |
| :---: | :---: |
| EXT/VERY IMPORTANT---- $\mathbf{5 9 \%}$ | -66\% |
| Extremely important--------------47\%--- | - 53\% |
| Very important ---------------------13\%--- | - 13\% |
| SMWT/NOT IMPORTANT --- 37\%- | --31\% |
| Somewhat important---------------11\%-- | ---9\% |
| Not important-------------------------26\%-- | -- $22 \%$ |
| ' ${ }^{\text {d }}$ know -------------------------- 4 | ---3\% |

14. Next, do you think public schools are more or less likely to receive additional funding if in November Joe Biden wins the Presidential election or do you think who wins the Presidential election will not make a difference for school funding?

|  | Parents Only | All <br> Voters |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| TOTAL MORE LIKELY ------- 57\%---------63\% |  |  |
| Much more likely ----------------------------------------------- $21 \% ~$Somewhat more likely |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| No difference -----------------------23\% ----------18\% |  |  |
| TOTAL LESS LIKELY ---------12\% ---------10\% |  |  |
| Somewhat less likely -------------- 1\%--------------2\% |  |  |
| Much less likely -------------------11\% -----------9\% |  |  |
| Don't know | - 8\% | --8\% |

15. While downplaying the health risks students and staff face, President Trump says all children should quickly return to school for in-person instruction. How much do you support or oppose this position?

16. This year, in order to receive state funds, public schools are required-to keep attendance and cover the academic content that as rigorous as what is normally required. How fair or unfair do you think it is for schools to be held to the same standards right now as they were pre-pandemic?

17. How fair or unfair do you think it is to hold students to the same academic standards right now as they were pre-pandemic?

|  | Parents Only | All <br> Voters |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| TOTAL FAIR ------------ 50\%--------46\% |  |  |
| Very fair ---------------------30\%----------26\% |  |  |
| Somewhat f | -20\% | -- 20\% |

TOTAL UNFAIR--------- 48\%---------51\%
Somewhat unfair -----------23\%---------24\%
Very unfair -------------------25\%---------27\%
Don't know
2\%------------3\%

The next questions are about distance learning. As mentioned earlier, distance learning is when students and teachers are in different locations, and students to access instruction through video, online applications, or other methods rather than going into school in person.
18. (T-PPIC) How would you rate the job being done by public schools in your area to adjust school operations and instruction in response to the pandemic?

|  | Parents Only | All <br> Voters |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| EXCELLENT/GOOD-------- 45\%-------40\% |  |  |
| Excellent -----------------------15\%---------12\% |  |  |
| Good-------------------------------29\%----------29\% |  |  |
| FAIR/POOR-------------------43\%-------36\% |  |  |
| Fair--------------------------------------------22\% |  |  |
| Poor-------------------------------18\%---------14\% |  |  |
| Don't know | - 12\% | -- 24\% |

19. Next, most schools will offer distance learning for at least a part of this year. How prepared do you think most schools in the state generally are to offer high-quality education through distance learning?

|  | Parents Only | All Voter |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| TOTAL PREPARED--------- 41\%-------39\% |  |  |
| Very prepared ------------------- 6\%----------4\% |  |  |
| Somewhat prepared ------------35\%--------35\% |  |  |

TOTAL UNPREPARED ---- 54\% -------- $\mathbf{5 4 \%}$
Somewhat unprepared ----------21\% --------- $25 \%$
Very unprepared -----------------32\% --------- 28\%
Don't know
6\%-----------8\%
20. And how prepared do you think public schools in your school district are to offer high-quality education through distance learning?

| Parents | All |
| :---: | :---: |
| Only | $\underline{\text { Voters }}$ |


| Very prepared -------------------------------------------------3\% |
| :---: |
|  |  |

TOTAL UNPREPARED ---- 40\% -------- $\mathbf{4 2 \%}$
Somewhat unprepared ----------17\% --------- 21\%
Very unprepared -----------------23\% --------- 21\%
Don’t know -----------------------10\% --------- 16\%
21. How do you think distance learning compares to in-class learning? Is it (ROTATE: [ ] better, [ ] worse, OR [ ] the same)?

|  | Parents Only | All <br> Voters |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| TOTAL BETTER ---------3\% ---------2\% |  |  |
| Much better ----------------- 2\%-----------1\% |  |  |
| Somewhat better------------- 1\%-----------1\% |  |  |
| The same --------------------11\%----------8\% |  |  |
| TOTAL WORSE -------- 75\%--------75\% |  |  |
| Somewhat worse ------------27\%--------31\% |  |  |
| Much worse -----------------48\% ---------44\% |  |  |
| Don't know | --11\% | -- 15\% |

## (ASK Q22-Q32 OF PARENTS WITH KIDS IN PRE-K-12 ONLY)

22. Next, here are some activities your child may do during distance learning. For each one, please indicate if during distance learning you would like them to spend most of their time this way, some of their time, a little of their time, or none of their time this way. (RANDOMIZE)

A
MOST SOME LITTLE NONE DK
[ ]a. Being taught by a teacher in real time -----------------------------------------------1\% $1 \%$
[ ]b. Interacting with peers in discussions or on group projects ----------25\%----54\%----13\% ----- 6\%---3\%
[ ]c. Receiving one-on-one tutoring or other help from a teacher or school staff member

27\%----45\%---- 18\% ----- 8\%--- 2\%
[ ]d. Completing assignments----------------------------------------------------------------14\% $10 \%$

23. How many days each week would you like to be contacted by your child's teacher via email, telephone or another form of communication?

> 4-5 days per week ------------------------- 17\%
> 2-3 days per week --------------------------- 21\%
> Once a week ---------------------------------- 49\%
> Less than once a week--------------------10\%
> Don't know ---------------------------------------3\%
24. Did your child participate in distance learning last spring? If so, how effective was distance learning for your child last spring: Very, somewhat, not too, or not at all effective?

| VERY/SMWT EFFECTIVE----------34\% |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |
| NOT TOO/AT ALL EFFECTIVE-------------------------27\% |
|  |  |
|  |
| id not participate -------------------------10\% |
|  |

25. Did your school provide you with any of the following in the summer or fall? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

| Acess to free or discounted internet---- $12 \%$ Access to a WiFi hotspot------------------- 18\% |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

26. Next, here are some challenges you and your family may face with distance learning. For each one,
please indicate if this was a major challenge, a minor challenge, or not a challenge for you. (RANDOMIZE)
Don’t know ---------------------------------------1\%

| MAJOR | MINOR NOT A |  | TOTAL |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| CHALL | CHALL | CHALL | $\underline{\text { DK }}$ | $\underline{\text { CHALL }}$ |

[ ]a. A space for your child to focus and learn without interruptions 22\% -----31\% ----- 46\%------- 1\%
(SPLIT SAMPLE A ONLY)


[ ]d. Poor quality of instruction------------------------------------- 23\% -----31\% -----39\%------7\% 54\%
[ ]e. Your child had difficulty finding assignments



| MAJOR | MINOR NOTA |  |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| CHALL | CHALL | CHALL | DK | CHALL |

(SPLIT SAMPLE B ONLY)

[ ]h. Not enough instructional time with a teacher ---------------- $39 \%----35 \%----23 \%-----3 \% \quad 74 \%$
[ ]i. Your child had difficulty understanding assignments-------------------------------------------------------------------3\%


(RESUME ASKING ALL PARENTS WITH KIDS IN PRE-K-12 ONLY)
27. How easy or difficult will it be for you to manage distance learning for your child this year?

28. What do you see as the biggest challenge to successful distance learning experience for you and your child?
Poor quality of instruction -----------------------------14\%
Child too young to benefit substantially from distance learning$15 \%$
A lack of other educational supports your child receives in school ..... 15\%
A lack of childcare ..... -3\%
A lack of interaction with other children ..... 30\%
Other (Specify ..... 17\%
Don't know ..... 7\%
29. Was there anything that worked really well in distance learning last spring? (OPEN-ENDED)
Accessible teachers \& staff (Status updates, contact via email, etc.) ..... 7\%
Great teachers (Organized, accommodating, great effort, etc.) ..... 9\%
Flexibility/Schedule ..... 4\%
Eliminates commute/Always on time ..... 4\%
Small zoom classroom size/1 on 1 sessions ..... 4\%
Comfortable \& safe learning environment/More time w/family ..... 7\%
Breakout rooms (for student socializing) ..... -2\%
Assignments/Test/Home-based projects ..... -4\%
General support distant learning ..... 11\%
Negative feedback ..... $15 \%$
Nothing/None/No ..... 31\%
Other ..... -5\%
Don't know/Not sure/Unsure ..... 2\%
Refused/NA/No opinion ..... 5\%
30. Here are some consequences that people have said may follow if students are required to spend most of the school year in distance learning. How concerned are you about each one: extremely concerned, very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not concerned? (RANDOMIZE)

| EXT | VERY | SMWT | NOT |  | EXT/ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| CONC | CONC | CONC | CONC | (DK/NA) | VERY |

[ ]a. Learning loss for all or most students -------------- 51\%----- 21\% -----17\% ------ 9\%------1\% 73\%
[ ]b. Learning loss for more vulnerable children, including those experiencing homelessness, hunger, or home instability---------57\%----- 22\% -----10\% ------ 7\%------3\% 80\%
[ ]c. Lack of social interaction for children-------------47\%-----------------1\% $23 \%-1 \%$
[ ]d. Children's mental health will be negatively
affected---------------------------------------------------------------------21\% $21 \%$
[ ]e. Teachers and staff will be laid off-----------------31\%---------------23\% ------22\% $52 \%$
[ ] f. Parents won't be able to go back to work ---------- 35\%----- 26\% -----19\% -----18\%-----1\% $62 \%$
[ ]g. Parents' mental health will be negatively

| 24\%----- 20\% -----30\% ----- 25\%------ 1\% 44\% |  |
| :---: | :---: |

31. Next here are some steps that could be taken to make schools safer for in-person instruction before a vaccine is available. How important is it to you that each step be taken at your child's school: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important? (RANDOMIZE)

|  |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { EXT } \\ & \text { IMP } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { VERY } \\ & \text { IMP } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { SMWT } \\ & \text { IMP } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { NOT } \\ & \text { IMP } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | DK | $\begin{aligned} & \text { EXT/ } \\ & \text { VERY } \end{aligned}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| [ ]a. | Providing classes outdoor | 20\% | 18\% | 26\% | 30\% | 6\% | 38\% |
| [ ]b. | Daily temperature checks for teachers, staff, and kids | $37 \%$ | $-18 \%$ | $-19 \%$ | $25 \%$ |  | 55\% |
| [ ]c. | Option to switch back to distance learning if necessary | $40 \%$ | $23 \%$ | $16 \%$ | $21 \%-$ |  | 62\% |
| [ ]d. | Reduced schedule with your child only going to school in-person part-time | $26 \%$ | $17 \%$ | $-25 \%$ | $30 \%$ |  | 43\% |
| [ ]e. | Smaller class sizes-------------------- | 43\%- | 19\% | -19\% | 18\% | 1\% | 62\% |
| [ ]f. | Fewer children on the bus through social distancing $\qquad$ | $27 \%-$ | $-19 \%$ | $-10 \%$ |  |  | 46\% |
| [ ] g. | Fewer children in the cafeteria ----------- | 33\%- | 21\% | -16\% | 27\%- | 2\% | 54\% |
| [ ]h. | Temporary elimination of music classes - | 9\%- | --7\% | -16\% | 57\%- | 1\% | 16\% |
| [ ]i. | Temporary elimination of contact sports---- | 22\%- | 16\% | -20\% -- | 38\%- | 3\% | 38\% |

32. What strategies does your family intend to use to help manage distance learning this year? (ACCEPT MULTIPLE RESPONSES)

Band together with other parents to form learning pods or groups --- $15 \%$
Hire a tutor or teacher to supplement learning---------------------------15\%
Enroll child in a supplemental tutoring program ------------------------11\%
Enroll child in a program or center to supervise distance learning -----3\%
Hire a caregiver to supervise distance learning ----------------------------7\%
Enlist the help of other family members to
supervise distance learning --------------------------------------------------33\%
Don’t know --------------------------------------------------------------------------43\%
(ASK Q33 OF ALL RESPONDENTS)
33. Next, some people have raised concerns that some of strategies to help manage distance learning, like forming learning pods and hiring tutors, are easier for higher-income families to do and could widen achievement gaps between higher-income and lower-income students. How concerned are you about learning pods widening achievement gaps?

34. Are you considering moving your child from a public school to a private school, a parochial school or charter school, as a result of pandemic related issues?

| No <br> Child doesn't attend public sch Child not school age $\qquad$ |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

35. Are you considering moving your family to access different school options for your child?

| 't attend publi |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

## (ASK Q36-Q43 IF PARENT OF CHILD IN COLLEGE)

36. If you have college age children, are they returning or have they returned to campus this fall for in-person classes?

37. Have your child's college studies for the coming semester been interrupted or affected by the coronavirus pandemic?

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yes ------------------------------------------------ 68\% } \\
& \text { No --------------------------------------------- 21\% } \\
& \text { Not in college last spring---------------------6\% } \\
& \text { Prefer not to say ------------------------------6\% }
\end{aligned}
$$

38. Were your child's college studies interrupted in any way last spring by the coronavirus pandemic?

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yes ---------------------------------------------- 63\% } \\
& \text { No ----------------------------------------------15\% } \\
& \text { Not in college last spring----------------- 17\% } \\
& \text { Don't know/Prefer not to say---------------5\% }
\end{aligned}
$$

39. Was your child originally planning to live on or near the campus this fall? If so, are they now going to live on or near campus this fall?

40. How do you think distance learning compares to in-class learning for college students? Is it (ROTATE: [ ] better, [ ] worse, OR [ ] the same)?
TOTAL BETTER ..... 7\%
Much better ..... 6\%
Somewhat better ..... 1\%
The same ..... 28\%
TOTAL WORSE ..... 56\%
Much worse ..... 25\%
Somewhat worse ..... 32\%
Don't know ..... 9\%
41. If college campuses continue to have to use distance learning for the next year, would you want your child to attend/transfer to a more affordable alternative institution?

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yes ----------------------------------------------30 } \\
& \text { No ------------------------------------------------ 43\% } \\
& \text { Don't know ----------------------------------- 27\% }
\end{aligned}
$$

42. Has the economic crisis caused by the pandemic impacted your or your child's ability to pay for college?

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yes -------------------------------------------39 } \\
& \text { No ---------------------------------------------47 } \\
& \text { Don't know/Prefer not to say-------------13\% }
\end{aligned}
$$

43. Next, some people have suggested that if colleges are offering classes remotely, students should be given a tuition discount, while others say that colleges continue to face high costs to maintain technology and facilities and pay staff and cannot afford to provide discounted tuition. Do you think students taking classes remotely should be given a discount on tuition, or should they pay full tuition like they normally would for in-person classes?

|  |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |

44. Are you, or is anyone in your household, currently or formerly employed as a teacher or an employee in California public schools?

| es, both self and household member ----3 |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

45. Are you or is anyone in your household a member of a labor union or an employee association?

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { Yes, self only ------------------------------ 10\% } \\
& \text { Yes, household member only ------------ 10\% } \\
& \text { Yes, both self and household member ----3\% } \\
& \text { No -----------------------------------------------7 } \\
& \text { Prefer not to say -------------------------------3\% }
\end{aligned}
$$

46. How would you describe yourself politically: Are you very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

| ery conhat conservative |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

47. Do you live in a city, a suburban area, a small town or a rural area?

A city ----------------------------------------38
A suburban area ---------------------------- 41\%
A small town---------------------------------11\%
A rural area----------------------------------------1\%
Prefer not to say ------------------------------3\%
48. What was the last level of school you completed?

| than 4 years of college ge graduate (4 year college) |
| :---: |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

49. With which ethnic group do you identify yourself: Hispanic or Latino, White or Caucasian, Black or African American, Asian or Pacific Islander, or some other ethnic or racial background?

50. Please select the category indicating the total combined income for all the people in your household before taxes in 2019:

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { \$30,000 and under ----------------------------7\% } \\
& \text { \$30,001 - \$60,000 ---------------------------15\% } \\
& \text { \$60,001 - \$90,000 -------------------------17 17 } \\
& \text { \$90,001 - \$150,000 -------------------------21\% } \\
& \text { More than } \$ 150,000 \text {------------------------ 25\% } \\
& \text { Prefer not to say ----------------------------14\% }
\end{aligned}
$$

51. What is your gender?

Male-----------------------------------------------45\%
Female --------------------------------------------48\%

Prefer not to say -------------------------------4\%

## REGISTRATION:

| AGE |  |
| :---: | :---: |
|  |  |
| 25-29---------------------------------7\% |  |
| 30-34----------------------------------10 |  |
| 35-39-------------------------------10\% |  |
| 40-44-----------------------------------7\% |  |
| 45-49-----------------------------------1\% |  |
| 50-54------------------------------11\% |  |
| 55-59----------------------------------10 |  |
| 60-64-------------------------------------1\% |  |
| 65-74--------------------------------18\% |  |
| 75+------------------------------------8\% |  |
|  | -0\% |

Democrat ----------------------------------------45\%
Republican -----------------------------------25
No Party Preference ----------------------- 20\%
Other -------------------------------------------10\%
REGION

LA Area ----------------------------- 21\%
Bay Area ---------------------------- 21\%
San Diego ------------------------------9\%
Sac'to/North ----------------------- 10\%
Central Valley --------------------- 12\%

