



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: ROBERT BLIZZARD – PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2015
RE: COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS (CIS) SWING STATE POLL RESULTS

METHODOLOGY

On behalf of Communities In Schools, Public Opinion Strategies recently conducted a survey of 1,200 likely voters in eight key 2016 battleground swing states – Florida, Ohio, Virginia, Iowa, New Hampshire, Colorado, Nevada and North Carolina. The survey was completed online, October 27-November 2, 2015, and has a margin of error of + 2.8%.

Throughout the survey, voters were asked to rate the influence of education and other domestic issues on their potential voting decisions; highlight specific education issues they wish to hear about from the leading Republican and Democratic candidates; decide which party might do the best job in addressing those issues; and suggest an education question they'd liked posed to the candidates in upcoming debates.

KEY POINTS

- ***In these battleground states, the race for President is a dead heat.*** In a generic ballot for President, 41% of voters preferred the eventual Republican nominee compared to a nearly identical 40% who say they would prefer the eventual Democratic nominee – a statistical dead heat. Currently, Independents back the GOP candidate by a five-point margin.
- ***This data clearly indicates a real opportunity for leadership on the issue of K-12 public education.*** While nearly two-thirds of voters in these swing states think fixing K-12 public education is a top priority, only one-third have heard the major Presidential candidates talk about the issue.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Improving K-12 public education ranks in the top four of priorities for the President and Congress to address. When asked how important each of the following nine domestic priorities are for the President and Congress to address – “Improving K-12 public education” ranks in the top four – narrowly surpassing immigration reform and entitlement reform:

Issue	% Say Should be a Priority
Improving the economy and creating jobs	90%
Reducing the national debt	76%
Holding down federal government spending	75%
Improving K-12 public education	68%
Reforming Social Security and Medicare	67%
Fixing the nation’s immigration and border security problem	66%
Fixing the Affordable Care Act, known as ObamaCare	64%
Improving higher education	61%
Cutting federal taxes	56%

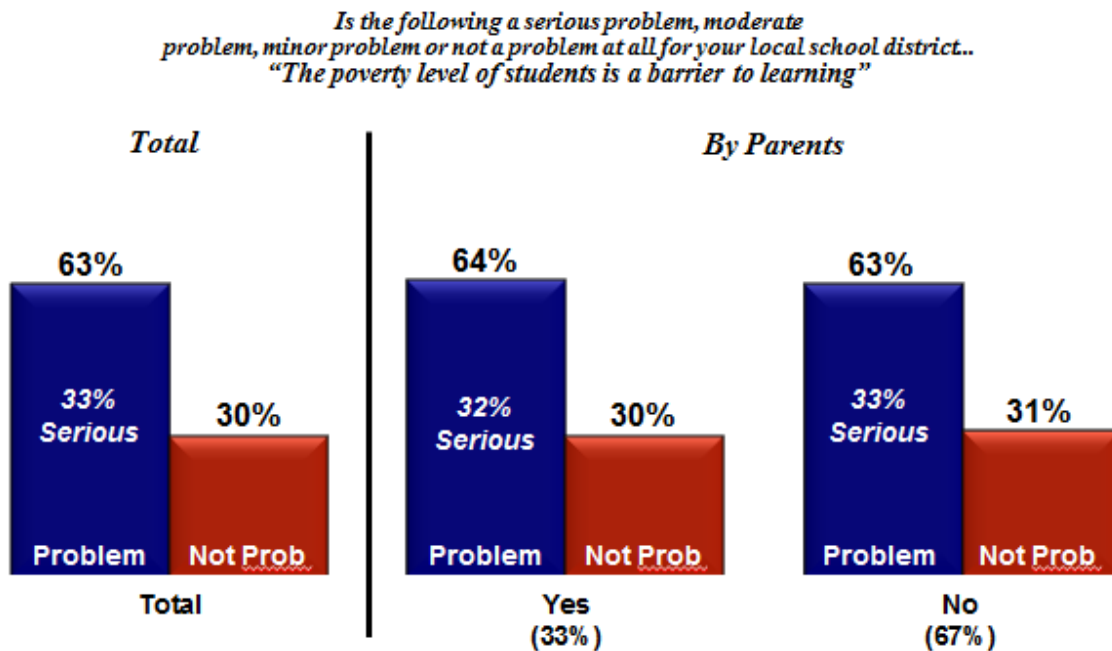
Yet, the issue clearly isn’t getting as loud a voice in the Presidential campaign. When asked whether they’ve heard any of the major candidates for President, either Republicans or Democrats, talk about the following issues – “improving K-12 public education” ranks dead last:

Issue	% Heard Candidate Discuss
Fixing the nation’s immigration and border security problem	81%
Improving the economy and creating jobs	73%
Fixing the Affordable Care Act, known as ObamaCare	69%
Reducing the national debt	59%
Holding down federal government spending	59%
Cutting federal taxes	58%
Reforming Social Security and Medicare	54%
Improving higher education	44%
Improving K-12 public education	36%

Further, a plurality of swing state voters say they haven't heard ANY of the leading prospective candidates for the White House discuss K-12 public education issues. Fully 43% of all voters in these swing states say they haven't heard from any of the prospective candidates on K-12 public education issues. Specifically on the left, Democratic voters seem to recall hearing more from Hillary Clinton (33%) than Bernie Sanders (21%). And, on the right, more voters have heard from Jeb Bush (18%) on K-12 education issues than either Donald Trump (15%) or Ben Carson (14%).

Swing state voters are looking to ensure equity in K-12 public education. In fact, fully three-quarters of swing voters (76%) believe it should be a top priority to "make sure all children in my community have an equal opportunity to get a good education, no matter their economic circumstances." Further, Republicans (67%), Independents (77%) and Democrats (84%) all believe this should be a priority for Washington lawmakers.

Nearly two-thirds of swing state voters believe poverty is a barrier to learning. By a 63%-30% margin, voters in key 2016 battleground states believe that "the poverty level of students is a barrier to learning." In fact, both parents and non-parents in these states agree:



In addition, the key target audiences in the upcoming election, non-Minority Women (61%-30%), Independent voters (59%-32%), and especially Hispanics (81%-17%), believe that poverty is a serious problem.

Finally, on specific issues, swing state voters believe there's room for leadership on K-12 issues. While Republicans are viewed as better equipped to reform teacher tenure laws to make it easier to remove ineffective teachers and Democrats hold the edge on issues of college affordability and early childhood education. Neither party is perceived to hold a clear and large advantage on issues such as implementing higher standards and helping students succeed academically.

Issue	GOP Better	DEM Better	Both	Neither
Reform teacher tenure laws to make it easier to remove ineffective teachers in my local schools	30%	16%	19%	13%
Ensure college is affordable for all high school graduates	11%	40%	17%	15%
Increase access to early education for children in my community	12%	36%	22%	11%
Implement higher academic standards to ensure schools are preparing kids to succeed in my community	21%	21%	25%	14%
Ensure local schools use methods that effectively measure how students in our community are performing academically	19%	23%	23%	15%