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Key Findings

California’s K–12 public schools returned to more normal conditions this spring for students, teachers, and parents as COVID rates declined and mask mandates were lifted. Still, there are lingering questions about state mandates for COVID vaccinations in local public schools, and concerns about how to best address the educational inequities clearly in evidence during the pandemic. Strong revenue growth at the state level is providing a positive fiscal outlook for local school districts this year; however, declining enrollment raises questions about future finances.

These are the key findings of a statewide survey on K–12 education conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California from March 30 to April 13, 2022:

- **About four in ten Californians think the quality of education in the state’s K–12 public schools has gotten worse over the past few years.** Almost half of parents say they would send their child to a private school or a religious school if cost and location were not an issue.

- **Solid majorities of adults and public school parents approve of Governor Newsom’s handling of the K–12 public education system.** Majorities also say the K–12 public education system today is generally going in the right direction, with partisans deeply divided.

- **More than four in ten parents say their child has fallen behind academically during the pandemic.** They are divided on whether the biggest challenge for students is catching up academically or dealing with the pandemic’s social-emotional impacts. Most approve of no longer requiring masks in schools and support requiring COVID vaccines for teachers and students.

- **Half of adults and about six in ten public school parents give A or B grades for the quality of public schools in their neighborhood today.** Majorities say that their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing students for college and the workforce.

- **About six in ten adults and public school parents think that salaries for teachers are too low in their community.** A strong majority also say that schools in lower-income areas should pay higher salaries to attract and retain teachers, even if it costs the state more money.

- **Half of Californians say the level of state funding for their local public schools is not enough.** Majorities of likely voters would vote yes on state and local bond measures for school construction projects while a majority would vote no on a local parcel tax for school funding.

- **Most Californians believe that preschool is important for student success in K–12 schools and think the affordability of preschool education is a problem in California today.** Overwhelming majorities say the state should fund voluntary preschool for all four-year-olds in California.
Solid majorities of adults (60%) and public school parents (73%) approve of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the state’s K–12 public education system. Similar shares of adults approved last April, while public school parents were somewhat less likely to approve. Majorities have approved of the governor’s handling of education since 2019. Today, majorities of Democrats (83%) and independents (53%) approve, while 78 percent of Republicans disapprove. Regionally, approval of the governor’s handling of K–12 education is higher in coastal areas (66% Los Angeles, 63% San Francisco Bay Area, 61% Orange/San Diego) than in inland areas (53% Inland Empire, 51% Central Valley). At least half across demographic groups approve of Governor Newsom’s handling of K–12 education. Fifty-six percent of adults and 71 percent of public school parents approve of the state legislature’s handling of K–12 education; last April, views were similar among adults (54%), but public school parents were much less likely to approve (52%).

Majorities of adults (57%) and public school parents (70%) also believe the state’s K–12 public education system is going in the right direction. Public school parents were somewhat less likely to hold this view last year (61%). Today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats say K–12 education is going in the right direction, while most Republicans and half of independents think it is going in the wrong direction. Majorities in Los Angeles (63%), the San Francisco Bay Area (58%), and Orange/San Diego (57%) say right direction, while Central Valley (51% right direction, 46% wrong direction) and Inland Empire residents (49% right direction, 48% wrong direction) are divided. Across racial/ethnic groups, solid majorities of Latinos (66%), African Americans (65%), and Asian Americans (61%) believe the state’s K–12 public education system is going in the right direction, while whites are divided (46% right direction, 49% wrong direction).
Most adults and public school parents believe California's K–12 public education system is going in the right direction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<th>Wrong direction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=307 public school parents).

While most adults and public school parents say the quality of K–12 public education is a problem, a majority think it is somewhat of a problem (52% adults, 54% public school parents) rather than a big problem (32% adults, 22% public school parents). Fourteen percent of adults and 23% of public school parents say it is not much of a problem. The perception that quality is a problem was similar among adults last April but more prevalent among public school parents (24% big, 61% somewhat). Today, most Republicans say education quality is a big problem, while a majority of Democrats and independents think it is somewhat of a problem. Overwhelming majorities across the state’s regions and demographic groups believe the quality of public education is a problem; more see it as somewhat of a problem than as a big problem.
### Most Californians believe the quality of K–12 public education is at least somewhat of a problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Big problem</th>
<th>Somewhat of a problem</th>
<th>Not much of a problem</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).
COVID-19 and K–12 Schools

As the end of the 2021–22 school year approaches, majorities of both parents of school-age children and public school parents say their youngest school-age child has not fallen behind academically during the pandemic (54% parents of school-age children, 53% public school parents). More than four in ten say their youngest child has fallen behind academically, but these parents are more likely to say their youngest has fallen behind a little (25% parents of school-age children, 26% public school parents) than a lot (19% parents of school-age children, 20% public school parents). Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (38%) are much less likely to say their child has fallen behind than are Latinos (52%). (Sample sizes for Asian American and African American parents of school-age children are too small for separate analysis.) Parents in households with higher educational attainment and higher incomes are also much less likely to say their child has fallen behind academically than parents who are not college graduates and have lower incomes.

Forty-seven percent of adults say catching up academically will be the biggest challenge for public school students in their community in the next school year; fewer say dealing with the social-emotional impacts of the pandemic (33%) or readjusting to regular school schedules and routines (18%) will be the biggest challenge. Public school parents are more divided on this question (45% catching up, 40% social/emotional impacts, 14% schedules). A majority of Republicans and a plurality of independents think catching up academically will be the biggest challenge, while Democrats are divided between academics and social-emotional impacts. Four in ten or more across the state’s major regions and demographic groups say...
catching up academically will be the biggest challenge. The share saying catching up academically will be the biggest challenge is much higher among homeowners (53%) than among renters (40%).

A plurality of adults and public school parents say catching up academically will be the biggest challenge for public school students in the next year

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Catching up academically</th>
<th>Dealing with the social-emotional impacts</th>
<th>Readjusting to regular school schedules and routines</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=307 public school parents).

As of March 11, students in California’s schools are no longer required to wear masks, although the state strongly recommends masking. Solid majorities of adults (32% strongly, 29% somewhat) and public school parents (43% strongly, 31% somewhat) support the state’s decision to no longer require masks in schools; fewer than four in ten oppose the decision. There is partisan agreement on this question, with a majority of Republicans, independents, and Democrats supporting the state’s decision, although Republicans are far more likely to be strongly supportive. Across racial/ethnic groups, most African Americans, Latinos, and whites support the decision, while a majority of Asian Americans oppose it. Majorities across regions as well as age, education, gender, homeownership, and income groups support the decision to no longer require masks in schools. Most Californians also agree that COVID vaccines should be required for teachers (71% adults, 68% public school parents) and for students in California schools if they are approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (68% adults, 66% public school parents).
## Majorities support the state’s decision to no longer require masks in schools

<table>
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<th>Somewhat oppose</th>
<th>Strongly oppose</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public school parents</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
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</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).
Local Public Schools

Majorities of adults and public school parents say their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job preparing students for college (adults: 10% excellent, 54% good; public school parents: 14% excellent, 63% good). Responses for adults were similar last April (7% excellent, 55% good) but positive views were somewhat lower among public school parents a year ago (7% excellent, 64% good). Today, majorities across demographic groups and regions hold a positive view. When asked how local public schools are doing in preparing students for jobs and the workforce, a majority of adults (6% excellent, 49% good) and public school parents (10% excellent, 56% good) express positive opinions. The shares with this view are similar to a year ago (adults: 6% excellent, 48% good; public school parents: 5% excellent, 59% good). About half or more across demographic groups and regions hold positive views.

*Most adults say their local public schools are doing at least a good job of preparing students for college and the workforce*

![Chart showing percentage of adults and public school parents who think local public schools are doing an excellent or good job preparing students for college and the workforce.]

About half of adults (50%) and public school parents (49%) say the current level of resources for lower-income students is not enough, and similar shares said this last April. Today, 65 percent of African Americans say these resources are inadequate, compared to fewer in other racial/ethnic groups. The share saying resources are not enough decreases with rising age. When asked about the current level of resources for English language learners, 35 percent of adults and 31 percent of public school parents say it is not enough. Similar shares said this a year ago. Today, African Americans are most likely among racial/ethnic groups to say current resources are not enough. Views vary across regions: 29 percent in Orange/San Diego say English language learner funding is not enough, compared to 42 percent in the Inland Empire. Views are mixed when it comes to resources for special education students: 46 percent of adults
and 45 percent of public school parents say the current level is not enough. African Americans (58%) are again most likely across racial/ethnic groups to say this. The share saying these resources are inadequate decreases with rising age. Nearly half or more across regions hold this view, with the exception of Orange/San Diego residents (36%).

**Half or fewer say current resources for lower-income students, special education students, and English language learners aren't enough**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Level of resources for special education students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults).

As asked to rate the quality of public schools in their neighborhood with a letter grade, half of adults and about six in ten public school parents would give an A or B (adults: 12% A, 38% B; public school parents: 14% A, 49% B). Shares among all adults were somewhat similar a year ago (adults: 9% A, 32% B), but public school parents were less likely to give an A in April 2021 (6% A, 44% B). Across racial/ethnic groups today, half or more Latinos (54%) and whites (50%) would give an A or B, compared to fewer Asian Americans (46%) and far fewer African Americans (36%). This share varies across age, education, and income groups. Positive views of local schools are higher in Los Angeles and Orange/San Diego than elsewhere.
### Half of adults and most public school parents would give their local schools an A or B

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<th></th>
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<th>B</th>
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**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).
School Teachers

About six in ten adults (62%) and public school parents (62%) say teacher salaries in their communities are too low. The share saying pay is too low has remained similar since 2019. Today, nearly three in four Democrats (73%) and two in three independents (66%) say teacher salaries are too low, compared to fewer Republicans (44%). African Americans are much more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to say this. Majorities across regions say teacher pay is too low, ranging from 56 percent in the Inland Empire to 69 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### Solid majorities of adults and public school parents say teacher salaries are too low

<table>
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<td>6</td>
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**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=307 public school parents).

When asked how big of a problem a shortage of teachers is, nearly all adults and public school parents say it is at least somewhat of a problem (adults: 52% big, 39% somewhat; public school parents: 49% big, 44% somewhat). The share saying it is a big problem has been on an upward trend since 2020. Half or more across racial/ethnic and income groups say it is a big problem. The share saying it is a big problem increases with educational attainment and declines with increasing age. Majorities across regions say shortages are a big problem, with the exception of 44% in Orange/San Diego. By comparison, far fewer say that teacher quality is a big problem (28% adults, 27% public school parents), with majorities saying it is somewhat of a problem (54% adults, 54% public school parents).
When asked about how state and local governments should attract new K–12 public school teachers, half of Californians would prefer increasing the minimum starting salary, a quarter would prefer providing forgivable loans for teacher education, and fewer would prefer providing housing assistance (12%) or reducing the requirements needed to get teaching credentials (10%). Among racial/ethnic groups, African Americans are the most likely—and Asian Americans are the least likely—to favor increasing starting salaries. About half or more across age, gender, education, and income groups and across the state’s regions say this.

About two in three adults and public school parents say local schools in lower-income areas should pay higher salaries to attract and retain teachers (66% adults, 64% public school parents), and three in four say schools should provide additional training and professional development (75% adults, 77% public school parents) even if it costs the state more money. Solid majorities across demographic groups and regions express support for both of these actions.
## Half of Californians would prefer increasing minimum starting salaries over other options to attract new K–12 public school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Increase minimum starting salary</th>
<th>Provide forgivable loans</th>
<th>Provide housing assistance</th>
<th>Reduce some requirements needed to get teaching credential</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>All adults</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
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<td>Public school parents</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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<td>Republicans</td>
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<td>Independents</td>
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<td>Inland Empire</td>
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<td>Orange/San Diego</td>
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<td>SF Bay Area</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>Less than $40,000</td>
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<td>$40,000 to $79,999</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).

## Funding for Public Schools

As state policymakers work on the budget for fiscal year 2023 and make decisions regarding the state
budget surplus, about half of Californians and nearly six in ten public school parents say state funding for local public schools is not enough. Nearly four in ten Californians and one in three of both parents with school-age children and public school parents say there is just enough funding. Findings have been similar throughout the pandemic. Partisans are divided, with six in ten Democrats and about half of independents saying not enough, compared to about four in ten Republicans. More than four in ten across regions say there is not enough funding; women (54%) are more likely than men (44%) to hold this view. Six in ten African Americans (60%) say state funding for local public schools is not enough, compared to fewer Latinos (52%), whites (49%), and Asian Americans (40%).

Half of Californians think the current level of state funding for local public schools is not enough

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Not enough</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Likely voters</td>
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</table>

**Source:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).

The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) allows local school districts increased spending flexibility and provides additional funding to districts with more English language learners and lower-income students. However, nine years after it was enacted, relatively few Californians say they have heard a lot (4%) or a little (19%) about the policy. Despite limited knowledge of the LCFF, overwhelming shares of Californians and public school parents support the policy after reading a brief description. Since we first asked about this policy in 2014, at least 65 percent have favored the policy. Today, strong majorities across regions and demographic groups favor the LCFF. While there is majority support across parties, Democrats (88%) and independents (73%) are far more likely than Republicans (51%) to support the policy.
When asked about their views on funding sources for schools, Californians express higher support for construction bonds than local parcel taxes. A hypothetical state bond measure to pay for school construction projects would garner the support of more than six in ten Californians, three in four public school parents, and a majority of likely voters. Support is similar for local bond measures to pay for school construction projects, which require 55 percent support to pass. About half or more across regions and demographic groups support both of these hypothetical bond measures. However, there are partisan differences: about three in four Democrats and majorities of independents express support, compared to fewer than four in ten Republicans. Among adults and likely voters, support for increasing local parcel taxes falls short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<th>Oppose</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public school parents</td>
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<td>66</td>
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**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, 1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).
Majorities would vote "yes" on state school construction bonds, while fewer would vote "yes" on a local parcel tax measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>State bond for construction projects</th>
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<td>44%</td>
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<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
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SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).
Early Childhood Education

As Governor Newsom seeks to build upon the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and expand the state’s Transitional Kindergarten program to include more children, most Californians and public school parents think attending preschool is at least somewhat important for success in kindergarten through grade 12. Views on attending preschool have been similar in recent years among Californians and public school parents. Today, solid majorities across parties say attending preschool is important, although Democrats (57%) are much more likely than independents (41%) and Republicans (34%) to say it is very important. Overwhelming majorities across regions and demographic groups think preschool is at least somewhat important. It is noteworthy that the share saying it is very important is much higher among African Americans and Latinos than among Asian American and whites.

Most Californians think attending preschool is at least somewhat important for student success in kindergarten through grade 12

<table>
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<td>Whites</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=307 public school parents).

Kindergarten readiness—especially among certain student groups—has been a concern among policymakers in recent years. When asked about the readiness of lower-income students, Californians (25% very, 48% somewhat) and public school parents (26% very, 49% somewhat) are concerned. Majorities across parties and two in three or more across regions and demographic groups are concerned about the readiness of lower-income students for kindergarten. When asked about the readiness of students who speak English as a second language, strong majorities of Californians (20% very, 48% somewhat) and public school parents (24% very, 48% somewhat) are concerned. Majorities across parties and six in ten or more across regions and demographic groups are concerned about the readiness of English language learners. On both questions, findings today are similar to those in recent years.
About eight in ten Californians say that the affordability of preschool education is at least somewhat of a problem in California today (37% big, 42% somewhat). By comparison, about two in three perceive the quality of preschool education as a problem (15% big, 49% somewhat).

Given the share of Californians who view attending preschool as important and concerns about readiness and affordability, do Californians think that the state government should fund voluntary preschool programs—such as Transitional Kindergarten—for all four-year olds in California? An overwhelming majority of Californians (72%) and public school parents (76%) support this policy. Last April, 68 percent of Californians and 82 percent of public school parents supported this policy. Today, at least six in ten adults across regions and demographic groups express support. There is a partisan divide in support for this policy (84% Democrats, 70% independents, 48% Republicans).

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults).
Strong majorities of adults, likely voters, and public school parents believe the state should fund voluntary preschool for all four-year-olds in California

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<td>3%</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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<td>Inland Empire</td>
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<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<td>SF Bay Area</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td>Men</td>
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<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,059 likely voters, n=307 public school parents).
Regional Map

This map highlights the five geographic regions for which we present results; these regions account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. Residents of other geographic areas (in gray) are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, likely voters, and parents, but sample sizes for these less-populous areas are not large enough to report separately.
Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California. Coauthors of this report include survey analyst Rachel Lawler, who was project manager for this survey, associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner, and survey analyst Deja Thomas. The Californians and Education survey is supported with funding from the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation, the Sobrato Family Foundation, and the Stuart Foundation. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC’s survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,591 California adult residents. The median time to complete the survey was 20.2 minutes. Interviews were conducted from March 30–April 13, 2022.

The survey was conducted by Ipsos, using its online KnowledgePanel, in English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified or traditional), Vietnamese, and Korean according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English-speaking adults in California, followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability-based sampling and include both those with internet access and those without. KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel. KnowledgePanel members are primarily recruited using address based sampling (ABS) methodology, which improves population coverage, particularly for hard-to-reach populations such as young adults and minority groups. ABS-recruited Latinos are supplemented with a dual-frame random digit dialing (RDD) sampling methodology that targets telephone exchanges associated with areas with a higher concentration of Latinos to provide the capability to conduct representative online surveys with Latinos, including those who speak only Spanish. KnowledgePanel’s recruitment was originally based on a national RDD frame and switched to the primarily ABS-based methodology in 2009. KnowledgePanel includes households with landlines and cell phones, including those with cellphones only and those without phones. ABS allows probability-based sampling of addresses from the US Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File (DSF). The DSF-based sampling frame used for address selection is enhanced with a series of refinements—such as the appendage of various ancillary data to each address from commercial and government data sources—to facilitate complex stratification plans. Taking advantage of such refinements, quarterly samples are selected using a stratified sampling methodology that aims to retain the representativeness of the panel. KnowledgePanel recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition.

To qualify for the survey, a panel member must be age 18 or older and reside in California. A general population sample of Californians was selected using Ipsos’s PPS (probability proportional to size) sampling procedure to select study-specific samples. Briefly, to select such samples, the panel is first weighted to population benchmarks and those panel weights are used as the measure of size for a PPS sample selection that yields a fully representative sample. A total of 1,633 respondents completed the survey out of 2,990 panelists who were sampled, for a response rate of 55 percent. To ensure the highest data quality, we flagged respondents who sped through the survey, which we defined as completing the survey in one-fourth of the overall median time (less than 5.04 minutes). We also flagged respondents if their self-reported age or gender did not match the data stored in their profile. A total of 42 cases were removed after this review process, resulting in 1,591 total qualified and valid cases.
Accent on Languages, Inc., translated new survey questions into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Ipsos translated all survey questions into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

Ipsos uses the US Census Bureau’s 2016–2020 American Community Survey’s (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The sample of Californians is first weighted using an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for any differences in the probability of selecting various segments of the KnowledgePanel sample. This base weight is further adjusted using an iterative proportional fitting (raking) procedure that aligns sample demographics to population benchmarks from the 2016–2020 ACS data as well as party registration benchmarks from the California Secretary of State’s voter registration file.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ±3.3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,591 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.3 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,356 registered voters, the sampling error is ±3.5 percent; for the 1,059 likely voters, it is ±3.9 percent; for the 424 parents of children under 18 is ±6.1 percent; for the 342 parents of school-aged children it is ±6.9 percent; and for the 307 public school parents it is ±7.2 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 42 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 15 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters and parents are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, and current interest in politics.
Sample sizes and margins of error for each subgroup are presented in the table below.

The percentages presented in the report tables and in the questionnaire may not add to 100 due to rounding.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier online surveys. Numerous questions were adapted from recent national surveys by Education Next, Gallup, the Kaiser Family Foundation, the National Parents Union, Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research, and the PACE/USC Rossier School of Education. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.
Unweighted N-size and margin of error

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2022. Survey was fielded from March 30–April 13, 2022 (n=1,591 adults, n= 1,059 likely voters).
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Questions and Responses

March 30–April 13, 2022
1,591 California adult residents; 1,059 California likely voters; 424 parents; 342 parents with school-age children;
307 public school parents:
English, Spanish, Chinese (simplified or traditional), Vietnamese, Korean

Margin of error ±3.3% at 95% confidence level for the total sample, ±3.9% for likely voters, ±6.1% for parents,
±6.9% for parents with school-aged children, ±7.2 for public school parents.
Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the state’s kindergarten through 12th grade public education system?

   60% approve
   36% disapprove
   4% don’t know

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling the state’s kindergarten through 12th grade public education system?

   56% approve
   40% disapprove
   4% don’t know

3. [likely voters only] In thinking about the 2022 governor’s election, how important to you are the candidate’s positions on K–12 public education—very important, somewhat important, or not too important?

   51% very important
   39% somewhat important
   10% not too important
   – don’t know

4. Thinking about the kindergarten through 12th grade public education system overall in California today, do you think it is generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

   57% right direction
   39% wrong direction
   4% don’t know

Next,

5. What do you think is the most important issue facing California’s K–12 public schools today? [open-ended, code]

   10% concerns about curriculum
   9% lack of funding
   7% COVID-19/distance learning/school re-openings/masks/vaccines
   6% concerns about standards/quality of education
5% concerns about political ideology influencing education
4% large class sizes
4% quality of teachers
4% teacher retention/shortage
3% low teacher pay
2% inequities
2% lack of discipline/behavior of children
2% safety/security
22% other (specify)
20% don’t know

6. In your opinion, what is the most important goal of California’s K–12 public schools? [rotate 1-5]

27% teaching students life skills
24% preparing students for college
17% teaching students the basics
15% preparing students to be good citizens
11% preparing students for the workforce
5% other (specify) (volunteered)
1% don’t know

7. How much of a problem is the quality of education in California’s K–12 public schools today?

32% big problem
52% somewhat of a problem
14% not much of a problem
1% don’t know

8. Over the past few years, do you think the quality of education in California’s K–12 public schools has improved, gotten worse, or stayed the same?

13% improved
42% gotten worse
42% stayed the same
3% don’t know

On another topic,

(questions 9 and 10 not asked)

11. [parents of school-age children only] Do you think your youngest school-aged child has fallen behind academically during the pandemic? (If yes, ask: “Do you think they have fallen behind a lot or only a little?”)

19% yes, a lot
25% yes, a little
2% yes, don’t know (volunteered)
54% no
– don’t know
12. Which of these do you think will be the biggest challenge for public school students in your community as we emerge from the pandemic: [rotate] [1] catching up academically, [2] dealing with the social-emotional impacts of the pandemic, [or] [3] re-adjusting to regular school schedules and routines?

47% catching up academically  
33% dealing with the social-emotional impacts  
18% re-adjusting to regular school schedules and activities  
1% don’t know

Next,

13. Currently, do you support or oppose the state’s decision to no longer require masks in schools?

32% strongly support  
29% somewhat support  
25% somewhat oppose  
12% strongly oppose  
1% don’t know

14. [parents of school-age children only] Thinking about your youngest school-aged child, have they been vaccinated against COVID-19, or do you plan to get them vaccinated?

64% yes, they have already been vaccinated  
4% yes, I plan to get them vaccinated right away  
11% yes, I plan to get them vaccinated, but not right away  
21% no, I will not get them vaccinated  
– don’t know

[rotate questions 15 and 16]

15. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: If a vaccine against COVID-19 is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for school-age children, it should be required for all students in California schools, with allowable medical exemptions such as those for students who are allergic to components of the vaccine.

43% strongly agree  
25% somewhat agree  
11% somewhat disagree  
21% strongly disagree  
1% don’t know

16. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: The COVID-19 vaccine should be required for all teachers in California schools, with allowable medical exemptions such as those for teachers who are allergic to components of the vaccine.

50% strongly agree  
21% somewhat agree  
10% somewhat disagree
18% strongly disagree
– don’t know

Changing topics,

[rotate questions 17 and 18]

17. How concerned are you that California’s K–12 public schools in lower-income areas have a shortage of good teachers compared to schools in wealthier areas? Are you...

49% very concerned
36% somewhat concerned
10% not too concerned
3% not at all concerned
1% don’t know

18. How concerned are you that California’s K–12 public school students in lower-income areas are less likely than other students to be ready for college when they finish high school? Are you...

45% very concerned
40% somewhat concerned
12% not too concerned
3% not at all concerned
1% don’t know

19. Next, how much, if anything, have you heard about students who are English language learners in California?

20% a lot
44% a little
35% nothing at all
– don’t know

20. How concerned are you about improving student outcomes for English language learners in California today? Are you...

26% very concerned
47% somewhat concerned
20% not too concerned
6% not at all concerned
1% don’t know

21. In thinking about priorities for the kindergarten through 12th grade public education system in California, do you think that efforts to improve student outcomes for English language learners should be a...? [rotate order top to bottom]

16% very high priority
39% high priority
38% medium priority
22. How important is improving student outcomes for English language learners for California’s future economic wellbeing and quality of life?

- 47% very important
- 42% somewhat important
- 8% not too important
- 2% not at all important
- 1% don’t know

23. If it means less funding for other school districts, do you think school districts that have more English language learners should or should not get more funding from the state?

- 57% should
- 40% should not
- 3% don’t know

24. To try to improve the academic performance of English language learners, would you favor or oppose providing extra assistance to these students, even if it means they receive more assistance than other students?

- 70% favor
- 28% oppose
- 2% don’t know

25. How concerned are you that students in lower-income areas have fallen further behind academically than students in wealthier areas during the COVID-19 pandemic? Are you...

- 40% very concerned
- 42% somewhat concerned
- 13% not too concerned
- 4% not at all concerned
- 1% don’t know

26. How concerned are you that students who are English language learners have fallen further behind academically than English-speaking students during the COVID-19 pandemic? Are you...

- 29% very concerned
- 49% somewhat concerned
- 16% not too concerned
- 5% not at all concerned
- 1% don’t know

[rotate questions 25 and 26]
27. Where do you think California currently ranks in per pupil spending for K–12 public schools? Compared to other states, is California’s spending near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?

11% near the top  
22% above average  
39% average  
19% below average  
7% near the bottom  
3% don’t know

28. Where do you think California currently ranks in student test scores for K–12 public schools? Compared to other states, are California’s student test scores near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?

3% near the top  
14% above average  
44% average  
27% below average  
9% near the bottom  
3% don’t know

29. Next, overall, how would you rate the quality of public schools in your neighborhood today? If you had to give your local public schools a grade, would it be A, B, C, D, or F? Think of grades A to F as a scale where A is the best and F is failing.

12% A  
38% B  
34% C  
11% D  
3% F  
2% don’t know

[rotate questions 30 and 31]

30. Are your local public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in preparing students for college?

10% excellent  
54% good  
28% not so good  
5% poor  
3% don’t know

31. Are your local public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in preparing students for jobs and the workforce?

6% excellent
49% good
34% not so good
8% poor
3% don't know

On another topic,

32. Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?
11% more than enough
37% just enough
49% not enough
3% don't know

33. If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?
63% yes
35% no
2% don’t know

34. Generally speaking, if the state ballot had a $15 billion bond measure to pay for the construction and modernization of public preschools, K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities, would you vote yes or no?
64% yes
34% no
2% don’t know

[rotate questions 35 and 36]

35. If your local school district had a bond measure on the ballot to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?
61% yes
37% no
3% don’t know

36. What if there was a measure on your local ballot to increase local parcel taxes to provide more funds for the local public schools? Would you vote yes or no?
44% yes
54% no
2% don’t know

37. Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea for local school districts to issue bonds to pay for school construction projects at this time?
50% good idea
46% bad idea
4% don’t know

[rotate questions 38 to 40]

38. Do you think the current level of resources for lower-income students in your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

10% more than enough
37% just enough
50% not enough
3% don’t know

39. Do you think the current level of resources for English language learners in your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

12% more than enough
49% just enough
35% not enough
4% don’t know

40. Do you think the current level of resources for special education students in your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

8% more than enough
42% just enough
46% not enough
3% don’t know

Following is a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about teachers in California’s K–12 public schools today. Please answer if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem.

[rotate questions 41 and 42]

41. How about teacher quality?

28% big problem
54% somewhat of a problem
16% not really a problem
2% don’t know

42. How about a shortage of teachers?

52% big problem
39% somewhat of a problem
7% not really a problem
1% don’t know

Next,
43. Do you think salaries for teachers in your community are too high, too low, or just about right?

4% too high
62% too low
31% just about right
3% don’t know

44. How would you MOST prefer that the state and local governments attract new K–12 public school teachers: [rotate] [1] increase the minimum starting salary; [2] provide forgivable loans for teacher education; [3] provide housing assistance such as mortgage guarantees [or] [4] reduce some of the requirements needed to get a teaching credential?

50% increase the minimum starting salary
25% provide forgivable loans for teacher education
12% provide housing assistance such as mortgage guarantees
10% reduce some of the requirements needed to get a teaching credential
1% other (specify) (volunteered)
2% don’t know

[rotate questions 45 and 46]

45. Should local schools in lower-income areas pay higher salaries to attract and retain teachers, even if it costs the state more money?

66% yes
31% no
2% don’t know

46. Should local schools in lower-income areas provide additional training and professional development to teachers, even if it costs the state more money?

75% yes
23% no
2% don’t know

47. How important is it to you that the public schools in your community have a mix of teachers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds? Is this...

26% extremely important
29% very important
25% somewhat important
10% not so important
9% not important at all
1% don’t know

On another topic,

48. How much, if anything, have you heard about the Local Control Funding Formula, a policy enacted in recent years that changes the way K–12 public school districts are funded in California?
4% a lot
19% a little
75% nothing at all
1% don't know

49. The Local Control Funding Formula provides additional funding to school districts that have more [rotate] [English language learners] [and] [lower-income students] and gives local school districts more flexibility over how state funding is spent. In general, do you favor or oppose this policy?

75% favor
22% oppose
3% don't know

50. As the state implements the Local Control Funding Formula, do you think the academic achievement of [rotate in same order as Q49] [English language learners] [and] [lower-income students] will or will not improve? (If improve, ask: “Do you think it will improve a lot or somewhat?”)

13% improve a lot
45% improve a little
12% improve, but not sure how much (volunteered)
25% will not improve
4% don't know

(questions 51 and 52 not asked)

53. On another topic, do you think that the state government should or should not fund voluntary preschool programs, such as transitional kindergarten, for all four-year-olds in California?

72% should
26% should not
3% don't know

(question 54 not asked)

55. How important is attending preschool to a student’s success in kindergarten through grade 12?

47% very important
30% somewhat important
15% not too important
6% not at all important
2% don’t know

[rotate questions 56 and 57]

56. How much of a problem is the quality of preschool education in California today?

15% big problem
49% somewhat of a problem
32% not much of a problem
5% don’t know

57. How much of a problem is the *affordability* of preschool education in California today?

37% big problem
42% somewhat of a problem
15% not much of a problem
4% don’t know

[rotate questions 58 and 59]

58. How concerned are you that children in lower-income areas are less likely than other children to be ready for kindergarten? Are you...

25% very concerned
48% somewhat concerned
18% not too concerned
8% not at all concerned
1% don’t know

59. How concerned are you that students who speak English as a second language are less likely than other children to be ready for kindergarten? Are you...

20% very concerned
48% somewhat concerned
22% not too concerned
9% not at all concerned
1% don’t know

Changing topics,

60. How important to you is it that your local public schools include career technical or vocational education as part of the curriculum?

56% very important
33% somewhat important
7% not too important
3% not at all important
1% don’t know

61. Next, if you had to choose, which do you think is more important for young people to succeed today – [rotate] [1] earning a college degree from a well-respected university [or] [2] obtaining the knowledge or skills needed to do a specific job?

26% earning a college degree
61% obtaining knowledge or skills
12% neither (volunteered)
1% don’t know
62. In general, how well do you think your local public schools prepare someone for a well-paying job in today’s economy?

7% very well
37% somewhat well
41% not too well
12% not at all well
2% don’t know

On another topic,

63. [parents only] Thinking about four school types... [rotate] One is [1] traditional public schools. Another is [2] charter schools, which are publicly funded but run outside of the public school system. The third is [3] religious or parochial schools. And the fourth is [4] private schools. Imagine you could send your youngest child to any one of these four kinds of schools and cost and location were not an issue. All things equal, which would you pick?

34% public school
18% charter school
18% religious school
30% private school
– don’t know

64. [parents only] Next, what do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve?

3% some high school
7% high school graduate
17% two-year community college graduate or career technical training
29% four-year college graduate
44% a graduate degree after college
– don’t know

65. [parents only] How worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child?

38% very worried
35% somewhat worried
18% not too worried
8% not at all worried
1% don’t know

Changing topics,

66. How big of a problem is racism in the U.S. today? Is it a...

49% big problem
32% somewhat of a problem
13% small problem
6% not a problem at all
1% don’t know

67. Thinking about your own experience, have you ever experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity? *(If yes, ask: “Would you say regularly or from time to time?”)*

4% yes, regularly
28% yes, from time to time
3% yes, don’t know (volunteered)
64% no
1% don’t know

68. In general, do you think the criminal justice system in the United States is biased against African Americans, or do you think the criminal justice system treats people equally regardless of race?

61% criminal justice system is biased against African Americans
37% criminal justice system treats people equally regardless of race
2% don’t know

On another topic,

69. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the issue of jobs and the economy?

54% approve
42% disapprove
4% don’t know

70. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

40% good times
57% bad times
4% don’t know

On another topic, California uses the direct initiative process, which enables voters to bypass the legislature and have issues put on the ballot—as state propositions—for voter approval or rejection.

71. *(likely voters only)* In general, do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives?

67% good thing
31% bad thing
2% don’t know

72. *(likely voters only)* Generally speaking, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today?

6% very satisfied
57% somewhat satisfied
35% not satisfied
2% don’t know

73. [likely voters only] Do you think the citizens’ initiative process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?

33% major changes
48% minor changes
15% fine the way it is
4% don’t know

74. [likely voters only] Overall, how much would you say that the initiative process in California today is controlled by special interests—a lot, some, or not at all?

56% a lot
39% some
2% not at all
3% don’t know

75. [likely voters only] Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: The ballot wording for citizens’ initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes.

45% strongly agree
46% somewhat agree
6% somewhat disagree
2% strongly disagree
2% don’t know

76. [likely voters only] Reforms have been suggested to address issues that arise in California’s initiative process. Would you favor or oppose having an independent citizens’ initiative commission that would hold public hearings on initiatives and then make ballot recommendations in the official voter guide?

77% favor
20% oppose
3% don’t know

On another topic,

77. As you may know, the 1973 Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade established a woman’s constitutional right to have an abortion. Would you like to see the Supreme Court overturn the Roe v. Wade decision, or not?

25% yes, overturn Roe versus Wade
72% no, not overturn Roe versus Wade
3% don’t know

Changing topics,

78. As you may know, Joe Biden has nominated Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve on the U.S. Supreme
Court. From what you have seen and heard so far, do you think the U.S. Senate should or should not confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court?*

50% should confirm/should have confirmed
19% should not confirm/should not have confirmed
29% have not heard enough to have an opinion (volunteered)
1% don’t know

*Note: Language updated to “As you may know, the Senate voted to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. From what you have seen and heard so far, do you think the U.S. Senate should or should not have confirmed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court?” on April 8, 2022.

Next,

79. How much, if at all, has your life been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak?

32% a lot
40% some
21% just a little
7% not at all
– don’t know

80. How worried, if at all, are you that you or someone in your family will get sick from the coronavirus? Are you...

21% very worried
37% somewhat worried
27% not too worried
14% not at all worried
– don’t know

81. Do you feel that worry or stress related to coronavirus has had a negative impact on your mental health, or not? (If yes, ask: “Was that a major impact or a minor impact?”)

16% yes, major impact
24% yes, minor impact
2% yes, don’t know (volunteered)
57% no
1% don’t know

81a. Have you personally received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or not?

83% yes
17% no [skip to q82]
– don’t know [skip to q82]

81b. How many COVID-19 vaccine doses have you received, including any booster doses? Have you received 1, 2, or 3 shots?
3% one
27% two
70% three
– don’t know

82. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

86% yes [ask q82a]
14% no [skip to q82b]

82a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

46% Democrat [ask q83]
25% Republican [ask q83a]
3% another party (specify) [skip to q84]
26% decline-to-state/independent [skip to 83b]

[likely voters only]
47% Democrat [ask q83]
27% Republican [ask q83a]
2% another party (specify) [skip to q84]
24% decline-to-state/independent [skip to 83b]

83. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

59% strong
41% not very strong
– don’t know

[skip to q84]

83a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

56% strong
44% not very strong
– don’t know

[skip to q84]

83b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

37% Republican Party
59% Democratic Party
3% neither (volunteered)
– don’t know

84. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: [read list, rotate order top to bottom]
11% very liberal
23% somewhat liberal
38% middle-of-the-road
20% somewhat conservative
9% very conservative
1% don’t know

**85. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?**

21% great deal
39% fair amount
30% only a little
11% none
– don’t know

[d1–d15 demographic questions]

**Authors**

**Mark Baldassare** is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is a leading expert on public opinion and survey methodology, and has directed the PPIC Statewide Survey since 1998. He is an authority on elections, voter behavior, and political and fiscal reform, authoring ten books and numerous reports on these topics. He often provides testimony before legislative committees and state commissions, and regularly hosts PPIC’s Speaker Series, a public forum featuring in-depth interviews with state and national leaders. Previously, he served as PPIC’s director of research. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine, where he held the Johnson Chair in Civic Governance. He has conducted surveys for the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Dean Bonner** is associate survey director and research fellow at PPIC, where he coauthors the PPIC Statewide Survey—a large-scale public opinion project designed to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political attitudes at work in California elections and policymaking. He has expertise in public opinion and survey research, political attitudes and participation, and voting behavior. Before joining PPIC, he taught political science at Tulane University and was a research associate at the University of New Orleans Survey Research Center. He holds a PhD and MA in political science from the University of New Orleans.

**Rachel Lawler** is a survey analyst at the Public Policy Institute of California, where she works with the statewide survey team. Prior to joining PPIC, she was a client manager in Kantar Millward Brown’s Dublin, Ireland office. In that role, she led and contributed to a variety of quantitative and qualitative studies for both government and corporate clients. She holds an MA in American politics and foreign policy from the University College Dublin and a BA in political science from Chapman University.

**Deja Thomas** is a survey analyst at the Public Policy Institute of California, where she works with the statewide survey team. Prior to joining PPIC, she was a research assistant with the social and demographic trends team at
the Pew Research Center. In that role, she contributed to a variety of national quantitative and qualitative survey studies. She holds a BA in psychology from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

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