



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA



STATEWIDE SURVEY · APRIL 2025

PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Education

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Supported with funding from the Arjay R. and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, and the Windy Hill Fund

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Key Findings

California voters signaled their funding priorities by passing a \$10 billion state bond for education facilities last November. California's K–12 public schools are expanding their reach with universal transitional kindergarten and dual enrollment in high schools. But K–12 schools face many challenges, including lagging student test scores, declining school enrollment and chronic absenteeism. Meanwhile, a series of executive orders by the Trump administration is creating uncertainty about education policies and funding, as well as concern about the impact of increased immigration enforcement on students and their families.

These are the key findings of the *Californians and Education* survey on state policy direction, local public schools, K–12 funding, and early childhood education that was conducted on March 27 to April 4, 2025.

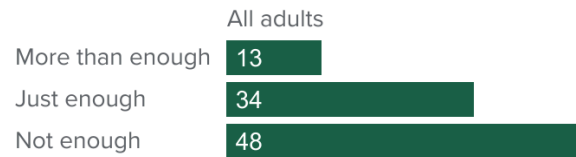
- **Seventy-one percent of California adults and 74 percent of public school parents are opposed to the executive order by President Trump to close down the US Department of Education.** Sixty-five percent of Californians and 71 percent of public school parents say that they support the executive order requiring that transgender athletes compete on teams that match the sex they were assigned at birth, not the gender they identify with. Sixty-six percent of adults and 74 percent of public school parents are very or somewhat concerned about increased federal immigration enforcement efforts on undocumented students in their local public schools, and majorities are in favor of their local school district designating itself as a sanctuary “safe zone.”
- **Forty-five percent of Californians think that the state’s K–12 public education system is headed in the right direction.** Half of adults believe that major changes are needed in the state’s K–12 system, and that the quality of education has gotten worse in the past few years. Californians rank five goals as very high or high priorities for K–12 public schools: teaching students the basics (91%), teaching life skills (79%), preparing students to be engaged citizens (67%), preparing students for the workforce (66%), and preparing students for college (57%). About half approve of the way that Governor Newsom, the state legislature, and superintendent of public instruction Tony Thurmond are handling the state’s K–12 public education system.
- **Most Californians and public school parents give their local public schools passing grades.** Majorities say that their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing students for college, jobs and the workforce, and engaged citizenship. Almost half think that teachers’ salaries as compared to their cost of living are a big problem. About one in three say they are very concerned about the threat of mass shootings at their local public schools.

Most Californians give their local public schools a passing grade



➤ **Forty-eight percent of adults think that there is not enough state funding for their local public schools.** Majorities of likely voters would vote “yes” on state and local school bond measures. Two-thirds of adults are in favor of the Local Control Funding Formula, which provides additional funding for school districts with more English language learners and lower-income students. About six in ten are very or somewhat concerned about declining student enrollment affecting their local public schools’ funding. A majority of likely voters are opposed to providing parents with tax-funded vouchers to send their children to their choice of a public, private, or parochial school.

About half say the current level of state funding for their local public schools is not enough



➤ **About two in three Californians think that the state government should fund voluntary preschool programs, such as transitional kindergarten, for all four-year-olds in California.** Seven in ten are very concerned or somewhat concerned that children in lower-income areas are less likely than others to be ready for kindergarten. Four in ten think that the affordability of preschool education is a big problem, compared to 15 percent who say that the quality of preschool education is a big problem. Forty-five percent of adults and 56 percent of public school parents say that attending preschool is very important to a student’s success in kindergarten through grade 12.

K–12 Policy Direction and State Approval Ratings

We gauged the perceptions of California adults and public school parents regarding the state’s K–12 policy direction and their approval of the way that the state’s elected officials are handling the state’s K–12 public education system. We also examined Californians’ concerns and levels of support for three recent executive orders that have consequences for state education policy and public school students.

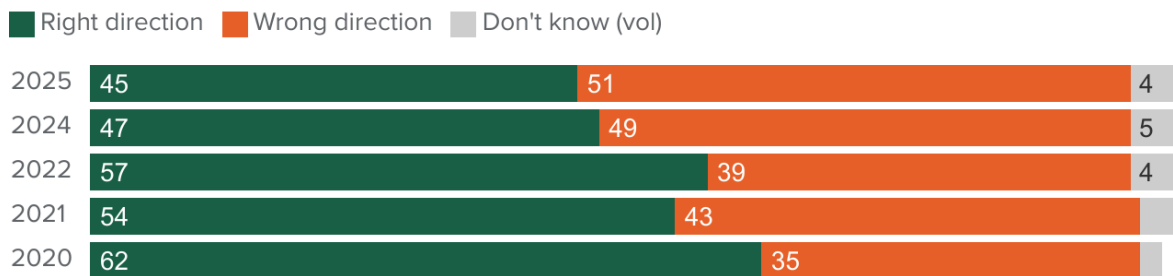
Changing Federal Landscape. President Trump issued an executive order to close the US Department of Education. Seventy-one percent of adults and 74 percent of public school parents oppose closing down the department; majorities across state regions and demographic groups are opposed, while partisans are divided (91% Democrats, 31% Republicans, 72% independents). President Trump also issued an executive order to ban transgender participation in sports in educational institutions. Sixty-five percent of adults and 71 percent of public school parents support requiring transgender athletes to compete on teams that match the sex they were assigned at birth, not the gender they identify with; majorities across the state’s regions and demographic groups are in support, while partisans are divided (49% Democrats, 91% Republicans, 71% independents).

President Trump issued an executive order to step up federal immigration enforcement that has implications for undocumented residents, including public school students and their families. Sixty-six percent of adults and 74 percent of public school parents are very concerned or somewhat concerned about the impact of increased immigration enforcement on undocumented students in their local public schools as well as on the families of these students. Sixty-three percent of adults and 72 percent of public school parents are in favor of their local public school district designating itself as a sanctuary “safe zone” to indicate that it will protect undocumented students and their families from immigration enforcement, and 69 percent of adults and 74 percent of public school parents are in favor of their local public schools requiring staff to keep

information about the immigration status of students and their families confidential. Majorities across the state’s regions and demographic groups hold these views, while partisans are divided.

California K–12 Public Education System. Fewer than half of adults (45%) and likely voters (46%)—compared to 56 percent of public school parents—think that the state’s K–12 public education system is generally going in the right direction today. The perception that the system is generally going in the right direction is below 50 percent across state regions and age and income groups, but it varies across racial/ethnic groups (50% Asian Americans, 49% Latinos, 45% African Americans, 39% whites). There is also a partisan divide: 65 percent of Democrats think the K–12 public education system is generally going in the right direction today, compared to 16 percent of Republicans and 38 percent of independents. A similar share of adults said that the state’s K–12 public education system was generally headed in the right direction last year, while majorities said the state’s K–12 system was headed in the right direction in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Less than a majority say California's K–12 public education system is headed in the right direction

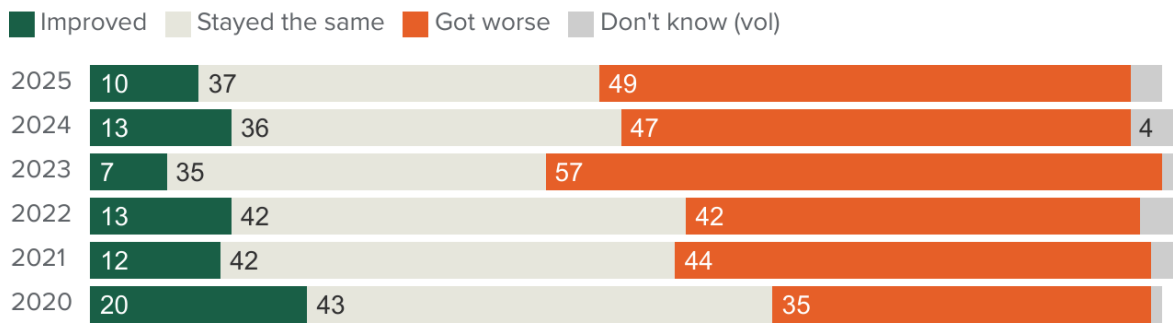


SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Surveys, 2020-2025.

Half of adults and 44 percent of public school parents think that “major changes” are needed in the state’s K–12 public education system. About four in ten are very concerned that schools in lower-income areas have a shortage of good teachers compared to wealthier areas; somewhat similar shares are very concerned that public school students in lower-income areas are less likely than others to be ready for college.

About one in three adults and 25 percent of public school parents view the quality of education in California’s K–12 public schools today as a big problem. Half of adults and 41 percent of public school parents think that the quality of education has gotten worse over the last few years. Pluralities hold this view across the state’s regions and demographic groups. Partisan perceptions vary: 75 percent of Republicans think educational quality has worsened, compared to 50 percent of independents and 35 percent of Democrats. Over the past several years, pluralities have said that education quality has gotten worse.

Nearly half of adults think the quality of education in California's K–12 public schools has gotten worse



SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Surveys, 2020-2025.

Just 19 percent of adults and 23 percent of public school parents say that California ranks “near the top” or “above average” in student test scores compared to other states. Thirty-nine percent of adults and 49 percent of public school parents view the state as “average” in this domain. Thirty-eight percent of adults and 28 percent of public school parents say the state is “below average” or “near the bottom.” Partisans vary in their perceptions of the state’s ranking in student test scores. Lagging student test scores compared to national averages have been found in [recent reports](#).

Most Important Goals. What is the most important goal for California’s K–12 public schools? California adults most often choose teaching students the basics (40%), followed by teaching life skills (21%), preparing them for college (16%), preparing them to be engaged citizens (11%), and preparing them for the workforce (8%). Importantly, public school parents most often choose preparing for college (32%), followed by teaching the basics (25%) and teaching life skills (23%) as the top goal. Majorities of adults rate all five goals as “very high” or “high” priorities for California’s K–12 public schools: teaching the basics (91%), teaching life skills (79%), preparing students to be engaged citizens (67%), preparing students for the workforce (66%), and preparing students for college (57%). Public school parents (72%) are more likely than adults to say that preparing students for college is a very high or high priority.

State Approval Ratings. Approval levels of the way state elected officials are handling K–12 public education are aligned with divided views about the direction of the state K–12 public education system. Fifty percent of adults and 51 percent of likely voters approve of Governor Newsom’s handling of the state’s K–12 public education system. Similarly, 48 percent of adults and likely voters approve of the California legislature’s handling of the system. California Superintendent of Public Instruction Thurmond receives a 47 percent approval rating from both adults and likely voters for his handling of the K–12 public education system. Partisans are divided. Public school parents give higher approval ratings than adults to the governor (58%), state legislature (56%), and superintendent of public instruction (59%). Approval ratings were similar a year ago.

Half of Californians approve of the way Newsom, state legislature, and Tony Thurmond are handling the K–12 public education system

% approve

	Governor Newsom	California Legislature	State Superintendent of Public Instruction Thurmond
All adults	50	48	47
Likely voters	51	48	47
Public school parents	58	56	59
Democrats	73	68	68
Republicans	13	16	17
Independents	44	39	38
Central Valley	42	44	44
Inland Empire	45	43	43
Los Angeles	56	53	55
Orange/San Diego	50	49	44
SF Bay Area	55	49	47
Men	50	48	47
Women	50	47	47
African Americans	58	51	54
Asian Americans	59	56	53
Latinos	53	51	51
Whites	43	42	42
Less than \$40,000	48	51	47
\$40,000 to \$79,999	49	46	46
\$80,000 or more	52	49	49

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

Local Public Schools

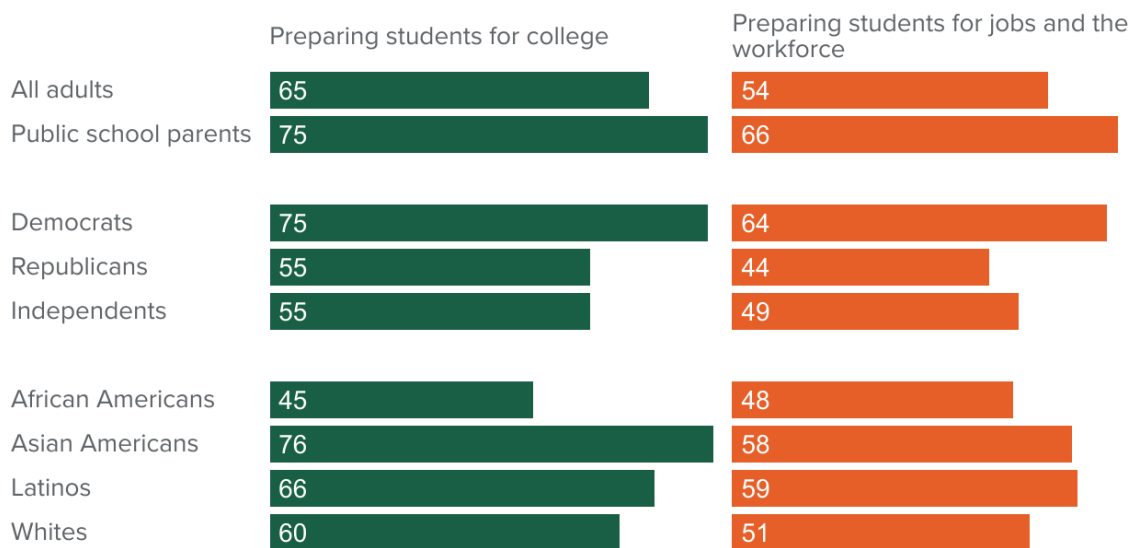
Californians give passing grades to the quality of their local public schools; most give grades of B (36% adults, 37% public school parents) or C (33% adults, 29% public school parents), while relatively few give an A (12% adults, 17% public school parents). Most say their grade is primarily based on their own experience (41% adults, 62% public school parents), their family or friends (27% adults, 23% public school parents), or their consumption of news media (20% adults, 9% public school parents).

Majorities of adults and public school parents say their local public schools are doing an excellent or good job of preparing students for college (adults: 9% excellent, 56% good; public school parents: 11% excellent, 64% good). Adults and public school parents held similar views last April. Today, majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups hold a positive view—with the exception of African Americans (46%). More than half of adults (6% excellent, 48% good) and two-thirds of public school parents (10% excellent, 56% good) say their local schools are doing well at preparing students for jobs and the workforce. About half or more across demographic groups and regions hold this positive view, while partisans are divided.

A majority of adults (55%) and public school parents (70%) also say that their local schools are doing an excellent or a good job in preparing students to be engaged citizens. Democrats (62%) are more likely than independents (50%) and Republicans (47%) to say this.

Majorities say local schools are doing well at preparing students for college and preparing students for the workforce

% excellent/good job at . . .



SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

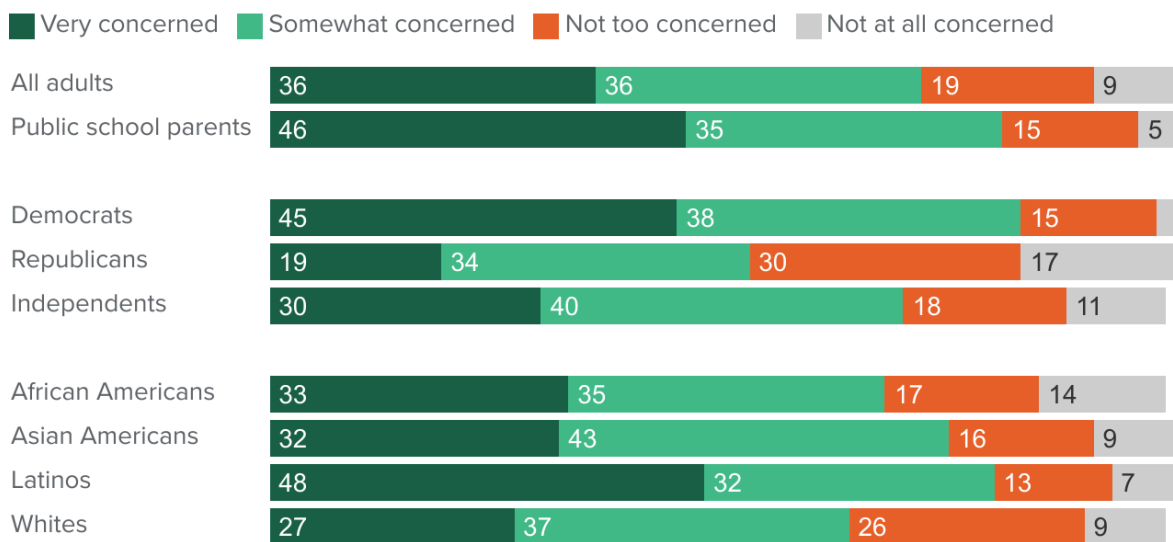
Most Californians express concern about issues related to English language learners. About seven in ten adults and public school parents express concern about improving outcomes for English language learners; nearly all (85% adults, 86% public school parents) say it is important for California’s future economic well-being to improve outcomes for these students. Two-thirds favor providing extra assistance to English language learners. Californians are more divided on whether districts with more English language learners should receive more funding from the state or not (adults: 52% should, 46% should not; public school parents: 58% should, 41% should not).

An overwhelming majority of adults and public school parents are very concerned or somewhat concerned about the threat of mass shootings in local schools. Seven in ten or more Democrats and independents are concerned, compared to about half of Republicans. Solid majorities across regions and demographic groups express concern. Overwhelming majorities of adults and public school parents support having one or more

armed police officers on duty when school is in session (adults: 35% strongly, 36% somewhat; public school parents: 47% strongly, 29% somewhat). Solid majorities across parties, regions, and most demographic groups support this.

A majority of adults (55%) and close to half of public school parents (47%) are very concerned or somewhat concerned about chronic absenteeism (defined as absence on 10% or more of school days). Similarly, about half of adults (48%) and most public school parents (54%) are concerned about the threat posed by wildfires to their local schools.

Overwhelming majorities of adults are concerned about the threat of a mass shooting in their local schools



SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

Nearly all adults and public school parents say teacher shortages are at least somewhat of a problem (adults: 50% big, 37% somewhat; public school parents: 43% big, 45% somewhat). Fewer than half of residents in Los Angeles and Orange/San Diego say teacher shortages are a big problem, compared to majorities in other regions. Across parties and demographic groups, Democrats and African Americans are most likely to think this is a big problem.

Nearly all Californians say teacher salaries compared to the cost of living are a problem in the state (adults: 48% big, 38% somewhat; public school parents: 39% big, 49% somewhat). More than four in ten across parties, regions, and demographic groups see this as a big problem, with the exception of Republicans (33%). Far fewer say that teacher quality is a big problem (33% adults, 28% public school parents), while almost half say it is somewhat of a problem (46% adults and public school parents). Fewer than four in ten across parties, regions, and demographic groups say teacher quality is a big problem in the state.

Strong majorities of adults (66%) and public school parents (69%) approve of teachers' unions. With the exception of Republicans (37%), six in ten or more across parties, regions, and demographic groups approve of teachers' unions.

Half say a teacher shortage and teachers' salaries are a big problem in the state; a third say the same of teacher quality

% big problem

	Teacher quality	Teacher shortage	Teachers' salaries compared to cost of living
All adults	33	50	48
Likely voters	33	51	51
Public school parents	28	43	39
Democrats	30	63	63
Republicans	35	37	33
Independents	36	46	43
Central Valley	35	55	42
Inland Empire	28	53	46
Los Angeles	33	48	46
Orange/San Diego	37	45	44
SF Bay Area	31	58	59
Men	34	49	45
Women	32	51	50
African Americans	38	60	57
Asian Americans	37	52	51
Latinos	33	53	48
Whites	30	46	45
Less than \$40,000	34	51	46
\$40,000 to \$79,999	34	51	48
\$80,000 or more	32	50	49

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

K–12 Education Funding

About half of adults (48%) and public school parents (50%) say the current level of funding for their local public schools is not enough, while a third or more (34% adults, 40% public school parents) say it is just enough, and about one in ten (13% adults, 9% public school parents) say it is more than enough. California ranked 17th out of the 50 states in per student expenditures for public K–12 education, according to the National Education Association’s [Ranking and Estimates report](#). Asked where they think California currently ranks in per pupil spending for K–12 public schools, adults are most likely to say it has an average ranking

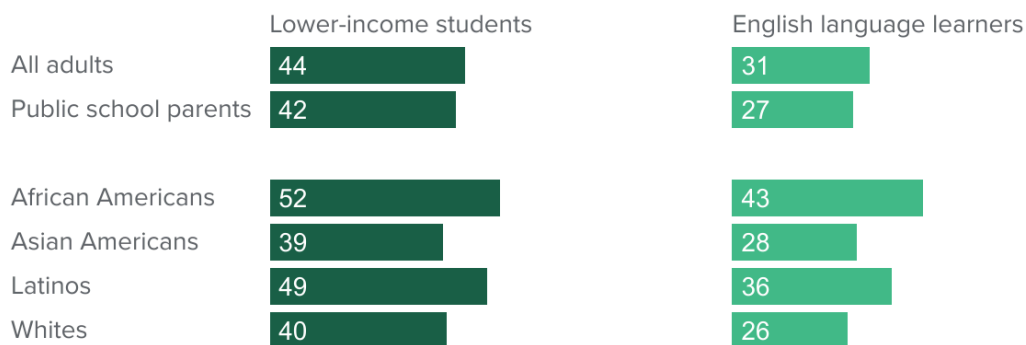
(36%). Nearly four in ten say it is near the top (14%) or above average (24%), and fewer than a quarter say it is below average (18%) or near the bottom (5%). About half have said the state has an average ranking since 2020, while a majority expressed this view in 2019.

When it comes to the current level of resources for lower-income students in their local public schools, about four in ten adults (44%) and public school parents (42%) say it is not enough. Similar shares say it is just enough (39% adults, 46% public school parents) and one in ten say it is more than enough (12% adults, 11% public school parents). Overall views were similar a year ago. Across regions and demographic groups today, African Americans (52%), adults 18 to 34 (52%), and those with incomes under \$40,000 are the most likely to say that the resource level for lower-income students is not enough.

About three in ten Californians say the current level of resources for English language learners is not enough (31% adults, 27% public school parents). Half of adults (50%) and six in ten public school parents (60%) say there are just enough resources, and fewer say the level is more than enough (14% adults, 11% public school parents). Views overall were similar a year ago. Today, about four in ten or more across parties, demographic, and regional groups say resource levels for English language learners are just enough.

Four in ten or fewer say the current level of resources is not enough for students with lower incomes or whose first language is not English

% not enough



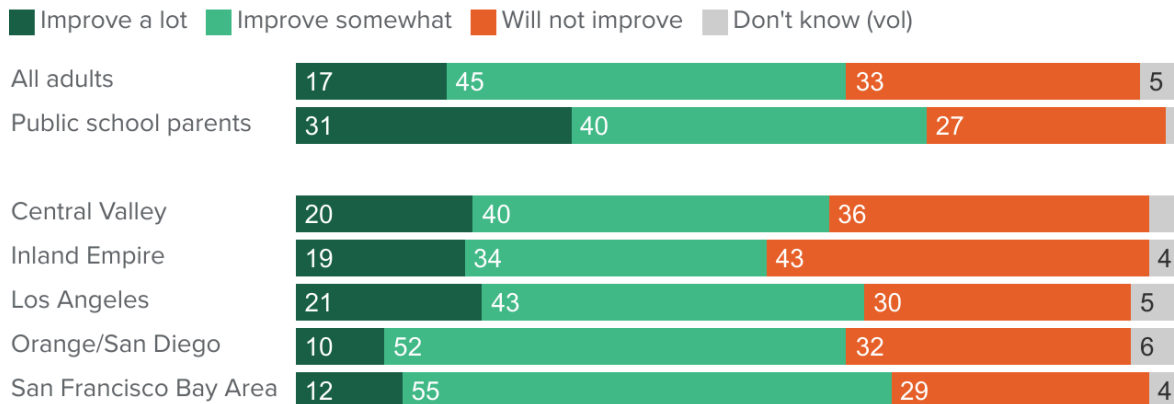
SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

After reading a brief description of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)—which provides additional funding to school districts that have more English language learners and lower-income students and gives local school districts more flexibility in spending state funding—strong majorities of adults (66%) and public school parents (73%) are in favor. Support for the LCFF was similar a year ago, and majorities have supported this since PPIC first asked about it in April 2014. Still, most say they have heard nothing at all about the LCFF (78% adults, 67% public school parents).

Most adults and public school parents say the LCFF will improve academic achievement of English language learners and lower-income students either a lot (17% adults, 31% public school parents) or somewhat (45% adults, 40% public school parents). Similar shares expressed these views a year ago. Today, most Democrats and independents say it will help improve academic achievement, while most Republicans

say it will not. Majorities across demographic and regional groups say the LCFF will improve academic outcomes.

A solid majority think the Local Control Funding Formula will improve academic achievement of English language learners and lower-income students



SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

Nearly two in three public school parents (64%) say their school district has not provided them with information about how to become involved with developing and revising the accountability plans for allocating resources that is required by the LCFF.

In November 2024, California voters passed Proposition 2 (58.7% yes), a \$10 billion initiative aimed at supporting construction projects by public schools and community colleges. Today, majorities of adults (58%), likely voters (55%), and public school parents (74%) say they would vote yes on a state ballot measure to pay for school construction projects. Majorities of adults (57%), likely voters (52%)—and two in three public school parents (68%)—would support a local school construction bond, which would require 55 percent support to pass. Asked about a local parcel tax increase to create more funds for local public schools—which would require two-thirds support to pass—majorities of adults (52%) and likely voters (53%) say they would vote no, and fewer than two-thirds of public school parents (57%) express support.

Half of adults (50%) and a solid majority of public school parents (62%) would favor tax-funded vouchers that would allow them to send their children to any public, private, or parochial school they choose; however, a majority of likely voters are opposed (54%). Most Republicans support vouchers, while most Democrats and independents are opposed.

Sixty-one percent of adults and 68 percent of public school parents say they are very concerned or somewhat concerned that declining school enrollment will affect funding for their local public schools. Majorities of Democrats and independents say this, while a majority of Republicans say they are not too concerned or not at all concerned. Majorities across demographic, regional, and partisan groups express concern, including two in ten or more who are very concerned.

About six in ten Californians are concerned about declining enrollment affecting funding for their local public schools

	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not too concerned	Not at all concerned
All adults	22	39	25	12
Likely voters	24	37	26	11
Public school parents	26	42	23	8
Democrats	31	42	20	5
Republicans	12	31	31	25
Independents	20	37	31	11
Central Valley	21	42	25	11
Inland Empire	26	36	26	11
Los Angeles	25	37	24	13
Orange/San Diego	18	37	28	15
SF Bay Area	25	42	21	10
Men	21	38	27	13
Women	24	40	23	11
African Americans	31	35	22	9
Asian Americans	19	45	23	11
Latinos	28	41	20	9
Whites	17	36	31	15
Less than \$40,000	31	38	19	10
\$40,000 to \$79,999	21	40	26	11
\$80,000 or more	20	38	28	13

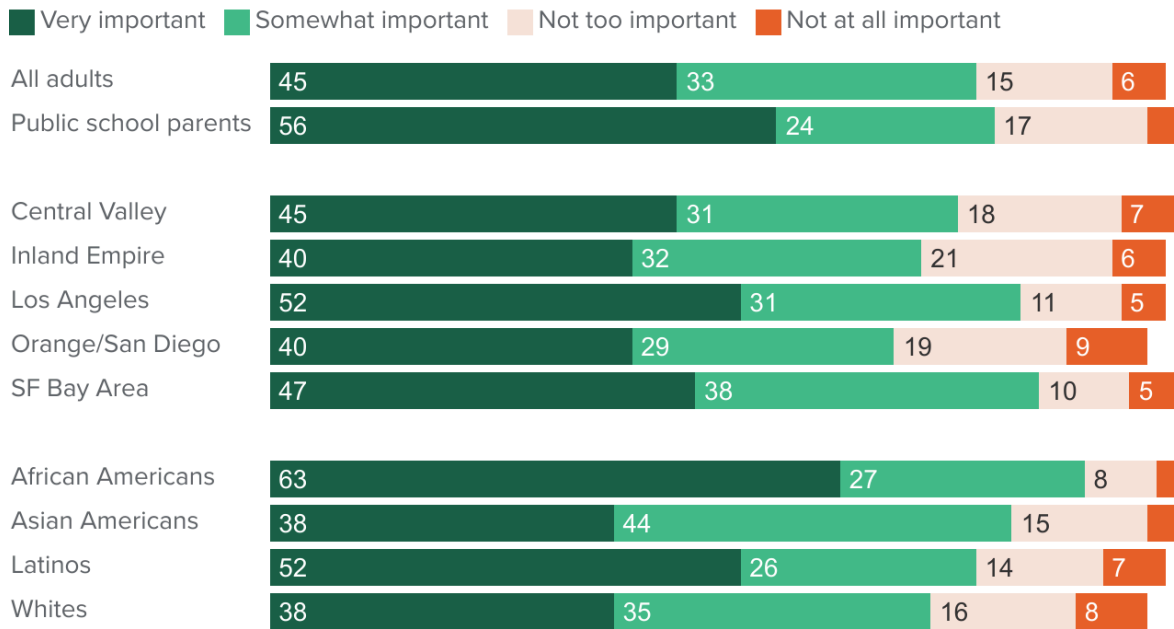
SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

Early Childhood Education

As part of a multiyear plan under [AB 130](#), transitional kindergarten in California’s public schools will be available to all four-year-olds for the 2025–26 school year. As they have in surveys dating back to [2006](#), more than three in four Californians continue to say that preschool is important to a student’s success in kindergarten through grade 12. Today, one in five Californians say it is not too or not at all important. Notably, public school parents are more likely than adults overall to say attending preschool is very important. About seven in ten or more across parties, regions, and demographic groups view preschool as

important, but there are some subgroup differences. Democrats (54%) are much more likely than independents (40%) or Republicans (33%) to say preschool is very important. African Americans and Latinos are more likely than Asian Americans and whites to hold this view. Interestingly, those with a high school diploma or less (53%) are more likely than those with some college (43%) and college graduates (39%) to say attending preschool is very important.

Most Californians think attending preschool is important

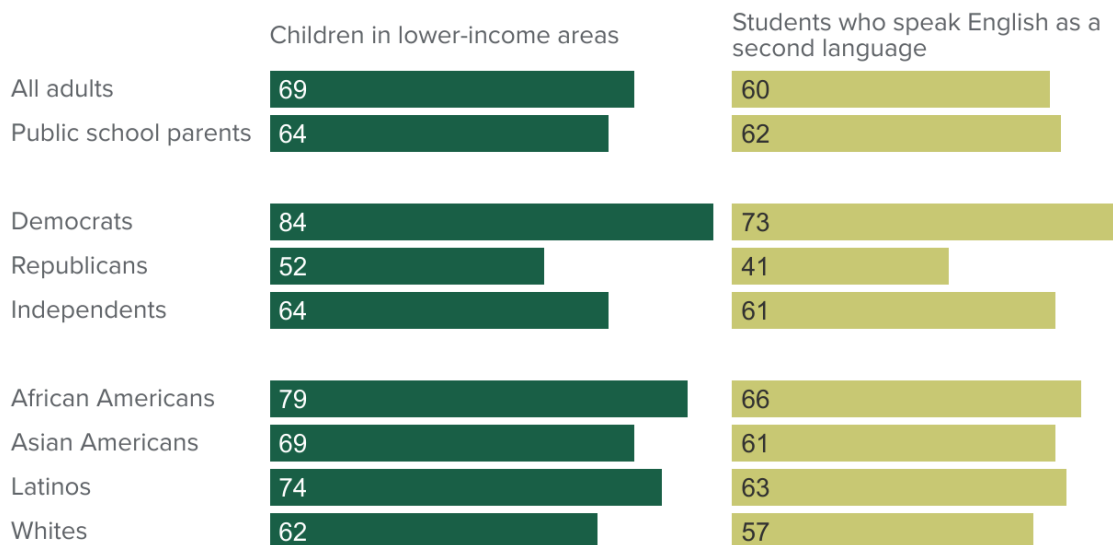


SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

As California expands transitional kindergarten as part of the state’s early childhood education system, how do Californians perceive the readiness for kindergarten of students in lower-income areas and those who speak English as a second language? Most are concerned about both groups, but concern about students in lower-income areas is somewhat higher. And while partisans are divided, solid majorities of Californians across regions and demographic groups are at least somewhat concerned about the kindergarten readiness of students in lower-income areas. Six in ten adults—with partisans divided—and majorities across regions and demographic groups are concerned about students who are English language learners being ready for kindergarten. Concern about the readiness of both groups of students has held steady in recent years.

Most Californians worry whether students in lower-income areas and students who are English language learners are ready for kindergarten

% very or somewhat concerned



SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 public school parents).

While universal transitional kindergarten is likely to help address the affordability of a preschool education, eight in ten Californians today say that affordability is a big problem (39%) or somewhat of a problem (41%). Public school parents hold similar views (36% big problem, 47% somewhat of a problem). At least three in four across parties, regions, and demographic groups view the affordability of preschool education as at least somewhat of a problem. Concern about the quality of preschool education is less prevalent among all adults (15% big problem, 49% somewhat of a problem) and public school parents (14% big problem, 52% somewhat of a problem). But majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups say the quality of preschool is a problem. On both questions, perceptions today are similar to findings from recent years.

How do Californians feel about the state funding preschool programs such as transitional kindergarten? Two-thirds or more of adults, likely voters, and public school parents think the state should fund voluntary preschool programs for all four-year-olds in California. Notably, more than six in ten have held this view since we first asked this question in [April 2014](#). Today, solid majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups—with the exception of Republicans—support state funding for preschool. Democrats and independents are far more likely than Republicans to think the state should fund preschool programs. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans and Latinos are more likely than Asian Americans and whites to hold this view; those with varying levels of education are similarly likely to express support (69% high school or less, 66% some college, 67% college graduate).

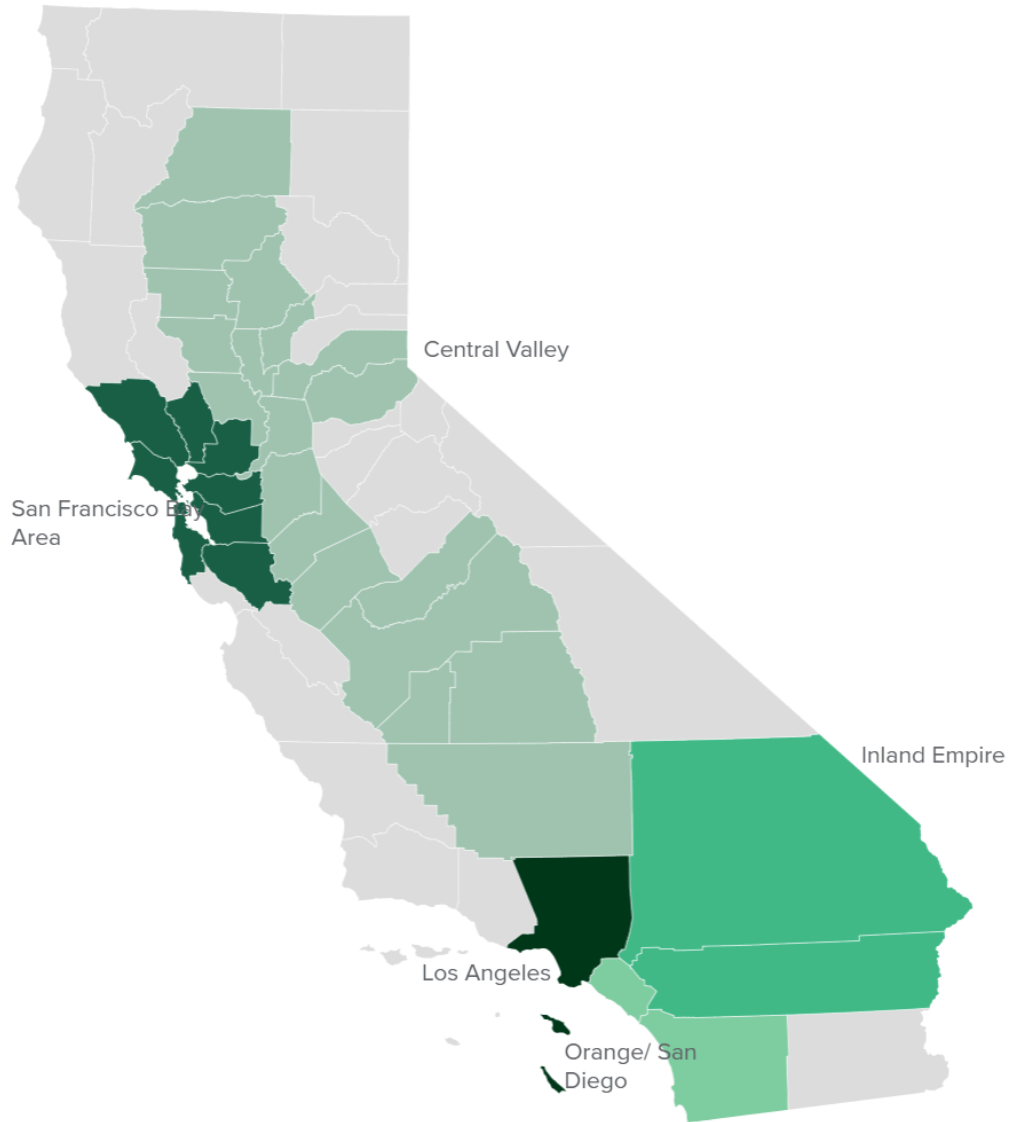
A strong majority of Californians think the state should fund voluntary preschool programs for all four-year-olds in California

	Should	Should not	Don't know (vol)
All adults	68	30	3
Likely voters	69	29	2
Public school parents	75	24	1
Democrats	83	16	1
Republicans	44	55	1
Independents	65	30	4
Central Valley	62	36	2
Inland Empire	71	28	1
Los Angeles	73	25	2
Orange/San Diego	64	31	4
SF Bay Area	69	29	2
Men	65	32	3
Women	70	27	3
African Americans	80	16	3
Asian Americans	66	31	3
Latinos	75	24	2
Whites	60	37	3
Less than \$40,000	72	25	3
\$40,000 to \$79,999	69	28	3
\$80,000 or more	66	33	1

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, April 2025. Survey was fielded from March 27-April 4, 2025 (n=1,591 adults, n=1,094 likely voters, and n=279 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, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less-populous areas are not large enough to report separately.



Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey on Education was launched in [April 2006](#). The coauthors of the 2025 report include survey director Mark Baldassare, who holds the Miller Chair in Public Policy; associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner; survey analyst Lauren Mora; and survey analyst Deja Thomas, who was the project manager for this survey. The Californians and Education survey this year is supported with funding from the Arjay R. and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, and the Windy Hill Fund. 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 amount of time taken to complete the survey was 19 minutes. Interviews were conducted from March 27–April 4, 2025.

The survey was conducted by Ipsos, using its online KnowledgePanel, in English and Spanish according to respondents' preferences. 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 1,642 respondents completed the survey out of 2,972 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 4.7 minutes). We also flagged respondents if their self-reported age or gender did not match the data stored in their profile. A total of 51 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 uses the US Census Bureau’s 2019–2023 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 2019–2023 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 ± 3.1 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 3.1 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 ± 3.3 percent; for the 1,094 likely voters, it is ± 3.6 percent; for the 355 parents of children under 18 it is ± 6.0 percent; for the 298 parents of school-aged children it is ± 6.5 percent; and for the 279 public school parents it is ± 6.8 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 40 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for 36 percent 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 16 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 5 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 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.

Numerous questions were adapted from the national surveys by the Pew Research Center, Education Next, Gallup, the Kaiser Family Foundation, the National Parents Union, Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research, YouGov, NPR/Ipsos, Ipsos/Reuters, CBS News/YouGov, the PACE/USC Rossier School of Education, and the USC/ Understanding America Study. 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

Group	Unweighted N-size	Margin of Error
All adults	1,591	3.1%
Likely voters	1,094	3.6%
Parents	355	6.0%
Parents of school-aged children	298	6.5%
Public school parents	279	6.8%
Democrats	635	4.9%
Republicans	317	6.5%
No party preference/ Independents	357	6.4%
Central Valley	311	6.7%
Inland Empire	190	9.2%
Los Angeles	373	6.0%
Orange/San Diego	255	7.5%
SF Bay Area	320	7.3%
Men	804	4.5%
Women	787	4.2%
African Americans	136	10.8%
Asian Americans	195	8.5%
Latinos	466	5.5%
Whites	731	4.4%
Less than \$40,000	283	7.1%
\$40,000 to \$79,999	349	6.4%
\$80,000 or more	892	4.1%
All likely voters	1,094	3.6%
Parents	193	8.0%
Parents of school-aged children	157	8.8%
Public school parents	143	9.2%
Democrats	527	5.4%
Republicans	270	7.0%
No party preference/ Independents	259	7.4%
Central Valley	199	8.1%
Inland Empire	121	11.5%
Los Angeles	244	7.5%
Orange/San Diego	182	8.6%
SF Bay Area	250	7.8%
Men	571	5.2%
Women	523	5.1%
Latinos	225	7.9%
Whites	606	4.8%
Other	263	7.6%
Less than \$40,000	123	11.1%
\$40,000 to \$79,999	214	8.1%
\$80,000 or more	717	4.4%

Questions and Responses

March 27–April 4, 2025

1,591 California adult residents

English, Spanish

Margin of error $\pm 3.1\%$ at 95% confidence level for total sample

Percentages may not add 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?

50% approve

46% 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?

48% approve

48% disapprove

5% don’t know

3. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that California Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Thurmond, is handling the state’s K–12 public education system?

47% approve

47% disapprove

4% have not heard enough about him to have an opinion (*volunteered*)

3% 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?

45% right direction

51% 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?

12% lack of funding

9% concerns about curriculum

9% concerns about standards/quality of education

6% concerns about political ideology influencing education

5% teacher retention/shortage

- 3% federal government influence, federal funding cuts to education
- 3% inadequate preparation for college/life
- 3% large class sizes
- 3% quality of teachers
- 3% safety/security
- 2% bullying
- 2% lack of discipline/behavior of children
- 2% low teacher pay
- 2% lack of classroom resources or supplies
- 16% other (*specify*)
- 20% don't know

6. In your opinion, what is the most important goal of California's K–12 public schools?

[rotate top to bottom/bottom to top with "other" always last]

- 40% teaching students the basics including math, reading, and writing
- 21% teaching students life skills
- 16% preparing students for college
- 11% preparing students to be engaged citizens
- 8% preparing students for the workforce
- 4% other (*specify*)
- 1% don't know

How much of a priority do you think each of the following should be for California's K–12 public schools?

[rotate questions 7 to 11 and rotate responses top to bottom/bottom to top]

7. Preparing students for college

- 25% very high priority
- 32% high priority
- 35% medium priority
- 5% low priority
- 1% very low priority
- 1% don't know

8. Preparing students for the workforce

- 26% very high priority
- 40% high priority
- 26% medium priority
- 5% low priority
- 1% very low priority
- 1% don't know

9. Teaching students the basics including math, reading, and writing

63% very high priority
28% high priority
6% medium priority
1% low priority
1% very low priority
1% don't know

10. Teaching students life skills

43% very high priority
36% high priority
16% medium priority
4% low priority
1% very low priority
1% don't know

11. Preparing students to be engaged citizens

32% very high priority
35% high priority
26% medium priority
6% low priority
2% very low priority
1% don't know

12. How much of a problem is the quality of education in California's K-12 public schools today?

35% big problem
49% somewhat of a problem
13% not much of a problem
3% don't know

13. 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?

10% improved
49% gotten worse
37% stayed the same
3% don't know

14. Overall, do you think the K-12 public education system in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?

50% major changes
40% minor changes
7% fine the way it is
3% don't know

Changing topics,

[rotate questions 15 and 16]

15. 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...

44% very concerned
38% somewhat concerned
12% not too concerned
4% not at all concerned
2% don't know

16. 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...

39% very concerned
42% somewhat concerned
13% not too concerned
5% not at all concerned
2% don't know

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

22% a lot
48% a little
30% nothing at all
1% don't know

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

23% very concerned
47% somewhat concerned
21% not too concerned
7% not at all concerned
2% don't know

19. 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 top to bottom/bottom to top]

14% very high priority
40% high priority
33% medium priority

8% low priority
3% very low priority
2% don't know

20. How important is improving student outcomes for English language learners for California's future economic well-being and quality of life?

42% very important
43% somewhat important
10% not too important
3% not at all important
1% don't know

21. 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?

52% should
46% should not
2% don't know

22. 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?

66% favor
32% oppose
2% don't know

Next,

[rotate questions 23 and 24]

23. 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?

14% near the top
24% above average
36% average
18% below average
5% near the bottom
3% don't know

24. 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
16% above average
39% average
28% below average
10% near the bottom
3% don't know

25. 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
36% B
33% C
11% D
6% F
3% don't know

26. Is the grade you just gave to your local public schools based mainly on your own experiences, on what you've learned from friends and family, or on what you have seen or heard in news media, on the internet, from social media, on podcasts or other things you have read, watched, or listened to? [If a mix, ask: "if you had to pick one, which would you consider your main source of information?"]

41% own experience
27% family or friends
20% what you have seen, read, or heard in news media
6% what you have read online
2% what you have seen from social media
1% what you have heard on podcasts
2% other (*specify*)
– don't know

[rotate questions 27 through 29]

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

9% excellent
56% good
27% not so good
5% poor
3% don't know

28. 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
48% good
34% not so good
8% poor
3% don't know

29. Are your local public schools doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job in preparing students to be engaged citizens?

6% excellent
49% good
35% not so good
6% poor
3% don't know

Next,

30. Do you think the current level of state funding for your local public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

13% more than enough
34% just enough
48% not enough
4% don't know

31. If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?

58% yes
39% no
3% don't know

[rotate questions 32 and 33]

32. If your local school district had a bond measure on the ballot to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?

57% yes
40% no
3% don't know

33. 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?

45% yes
52% no
2% don't know

Onto another topic,

[rotate questions 34 and 35]

34. 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?

12% more than enough
39% just enough
44% not enough
4% don't know

35. 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?

14% more than enough
50% just enough
31% not enough
5% don't know

Following are 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 36 through 38]

36. How about teacher quality?

33% big problem
46% somewhat of a problem
20% not really a problem
2% don't know

37. How about a shortage of teachers?

50% big problem
37% somewhat of a problem
11% not really a problem
2% don't know

38. How about teacher salaries compared to the cost of living in California?

48% big problem
38% somewhat of a problem
13% not really a problem
2% don't know

39. Do you approve or disapprove of teachers' unions?

66% approve
30% disapprove
4% don't know

40. [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?

41% public school
10% charter school
14% religious school
36% private school
– don't know

41. The state created charter schools to offer parents an alternative to traditional public schools. These schools are expected to meet basic state requirements but are exempt from many state laws and regulations. In general, do you favor or oppose charter schools?

55% favor
41% oppose
4% don't know

42. A community school is a public school that has community partnerships that support improved academic outcomes, whole-child engagement, and family development. Community school strategies include integrated support services, family and community engagement, collaborative leadership practices for educators and administrators, and extended learning time and opportunities.

Do you favor or oppose community schools?

83% favor
14% oppose
3% don't know

43. Do you favor or oppose providing parents with tax-funded vouchers to send their children to any public, private, or parochial school they choose?

50% favor
47% oppose
3% don't know

On another topic,

44. How much, if anything, have you heard about the Local Control Funding Formula, a policy that changes the way K–12 public school districts are funded in California?

3% a lot
17% a little

78% nothing at all
1% don't know

45. 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?

66% favor
30% oppose
4% don't know

46. As the state implements the Local Control Funding Formula, do you think the academic achievement of [rotate in same order as Q45] [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?")

17% improve a lot
45% improve somewhat
33% will not improve
5% don't know

47. [public school parents only] The Local Control Funding Formula requires school districts to seek input from parents in developing and revising their accountability plans for how to allocate resources. Has your child's school or school district provided you with information about how to become involved, or not?

35% yes
64% no
1% don't know

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

68% should
30% should not
3% don't know

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

45% very important
33% somewhat important
15% not too important
6% not at all important
1% don't know

[rotate questions 50 and 51]

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

15% big problem
49% somewhat of a problem
31% not much of a problem
5% don't know

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

39% big problem
41% somewhat of a problem
16% not much of a problem
4% don't know

[rotate questions 52 and 53]

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

22% very concerned
47% somewhat concerned
19% not too concerned
10% not at all concerned
2% don't know

53. 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...

18% very concerned
42% somewhat concerned
26% not too concerned
12% not at all concerned
2% don't know

54. 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?

23% earning a college degree
75% obtaining knowledge or skills
1% neither (*volunteered*)
1% don't know

55. In general, how well do you think your local public schools prepare someone for a well-paying job in today's economy?

5% very well
38% somewhat well
41% not too well

13% not at all well
3% don't know

56. 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
34% somewhat important
7% not too important
2% not at all important
1% don't know

Onto another topic,

[rotate questions 57 through 63]

57. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to learn about the California Constitution?

47% very important
37% somewhat important
13% not too important
3% not at all important
1% don't know

58. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to learn about the US Constitution?

67% very important
25% somewhat important
5% not too important
2% not at all important
– don't know

59. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to learn about how California elections and the voter registration system work?

53% very important
34% somewhat important
9% not too important
3% not at all important
1% don't know

60. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to learn about the US leadership role in the world?

44% very important
41% somewhat important

10% not too important
3% not at all important
1% don't know

61. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to learn about how to evaluate and discuss the pros and cons of different political viewpoints?

49% very important
33% somewhat important
11% not too important
5% not at all important
1% don't know

62. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to learn about how to find information and detect disinformation online about local, state, and federal elections?

54% very important
32% somewhat important
9% not too important
4% not at all important
1% don't know

63. How important do you think it should be for students in your local public schools to do community service outside of their classwork?

31% very important
46% somewhat important
17% not too important
6% not at all important
1% don't know

Changing topics,

64. How concerned are you about the impacts of increased federal immigration enforcement efforts on undocumented students and their families in your local public schools? Are you...

40% very concerned
26% somewhat concerned
17% not too concerned
16% not at all concerned
1% don't know

65. Do you favor or oppose your public school district designating itself as a sanctuary "safe zone" to indicate it will protect its undocumented students and their families from federal immigration enforcement efforts?

63% favor
35% oppose
2% don't know

66. Do you favor or oppose your local public schools requiring staff to keep information about the immigration status of students and their family members completely confidential?

69% favor
30% oppose
2% don't know

To what extent do you support or oppose the following policies?

[rotate questions 67 and 68]

67. Closing down the US Department of Education

14% strongly support
13% somewhat support
18% somewhat oppose
53% strongly oppose
1% don't know

68. Requiring that transgender athletes compete on teams that match the sex they were assigned at birth, not the gender they identify with

45% strongly support
20% somewhat support
16% somewhat oppose
17% strongly oppose
2% don't know

Next,

69. How concerned are you about the threat of a mass shooting in your local schools? Are you...

36% very concerned
36% somewhat concerned
19% not too concerned
9% not at all concerned
– don't know

70. Do you support or oppose having one or more armed police officers on duty whenever school is in session?

35% strongly support
36% somewhat support
17% somewhat oppose

11% strongly oppose
1% don't know

71. How concerned are you about the threat of wildfires at your local public schools? Are you...

18% very concerned
32% somewhat concerned
31% not too concerned
20% not at all concerned
– don't know

72. [parents of school-aged children] Next, what do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve?

1% some high school
6% high school graduate
21% two-year community college graduate or career technical training
32% four-year college graduate
39% a graduate degree after college
– don't know

73. [parents of school-aged children] Next, how worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child?

37% very worried
32% somewhat worried
22% not too worried
9% not at all worried
– don't know

74. According to the California Department of Education, a “chronic absentee” is defined as a student who is absent on 10% or more of the total schooldays in the school year. How concerned are you about chronic absenteeism in your local public schools? Are you...

19% very concerned
36% somewhat concerned
30% not too concerned
13% not at all concerned
2% don't know

75. How concerned are you about declining school enrollment affecting funding for your local public schools?

22% very concerned
39% somewhat concerned
25% not too concerned
12% not at all concerned
2% don't know

76. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

85% yes [ask q76a]

15% no [skip to q77b]

76a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

47% Democrat [ask q77]

23% Republican [skip to q77a]

2% another party (please specify) [skip to q78]

28% decline-to-state/independent [skip to q77b]

[likely voters only]

48% Democrat [ask q77]

25% Republican [skip to q77a]

2% another party (please specify) [skip to q78]

25% decline-to-state/independent [skip to q77b]

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

61% strong

39% not very strong

– don't know

[skip to q78]

77a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

60% strong

40% not very strong

– don't know

[skip to q78]

77b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

31% Republican Party

62% Democratic Party

6% neither

1% don't know

78. Would you consider yourself to be politically: [rotate order top to bottom]

12% very liberal
22% somewhat liberal
39% middle-of-the-road
19% somewhat conservative
8% very conservative
1% don't know

79. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

26% a great deal
39% a fair amount
24% only a little
11% none
– don't know

[d1–d15 demographic questions]

Authors

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Acknowledgments

This survey was supported with funding from the Arjay R. and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, and the Windy Hill Fund.

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