



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** INTERESTED PARTIES  
**FROM:** ROBERT BLIZZARD  
**RE:** TENNESSEE STATEWIDE POLL RESULTS

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*On behalf of SCORE, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a Tennessee statewide survey of 500 registered voters (moe + 4.4%), September 23-25, 2019. The purpose of this memo is to review the key findings from the survey.*

## KEY FINDINGS

### ***Overall***

- There is clear support among all voter groups for robust accountability in K-12 education.
- Voters see the need for education beyond high school with strong support for various forms of postsecondary education.
- Public school choice is a popular concept among all voters in all regions of the state.

### ***There's optimism in Tennessee as both the Governor and the Legislature enjoy high marks.***

- Fully 58% of Tennesseans believe things in the state are headed in the right direction versus just 32% who say they are off on the wrong track.
- Voters across the state strongly approve of the job Lee is doing as Governor, as fully 61% approve of his job performance versus just 22% who disapprove.
- And, a strong majority of voters approve of the job the State Legislature is doing in Nashville by a 53%-31% margin.

### ***Education continues to be near the top of the issue agenda for voters, and voters are looking for more accountability in the school system.***

- Voters say health care (18%) and education (15%) should be the top priorities for the Governor and State Legislature, followed by jobs and the economy (12%), gun rights and the Second Amendment (9%), immigration (8%), the opioid crisis (7%), and several other important issues.
- By a 79%-17% margin, voters favor more accountability in schools – including assigning letter grades to schools, state intervention, teacher evaluation, and transparency.
- By a 53%-22% margin, voters are less likely to support a State Legislator who “voted to reduce accountability in schools.”

### ***There's significant support for more public school choice in Tennessee.***

- Public charter schools are viewed positively by a two-to-one margin (44% favorable-24% unfavorable).
- And, by a 75%-20% margin, Tennessee voters support public school choice that gives parents more choices in where their child can attend school.

***Not only is student testing viewed as very important, but Tennessee voters are strongly supportive of using year-to-year academic growth of students as part of evaluating teacher and school performance.***

- Fully 85% of Tennessee voters believe it is important to test students from grades three through eleven each year to know if they are meeting state standards.
- More than three-quarters (77%) support using student academic growth for accountability so parents and communities know how well schools are performing, and 54% support the policy of using student academic growth in part to measure teacher achievement.
- By a 49%-30% margin, voters are more likely to support a State Legislator who “voted in support of measuring the academic progress of students through annual testing.” And, by a 38%-27% margin, voters are more likely to support a State Legislator who “voted in support of Tennessee’s current teacher evaluation system.”

***Tennessee voters have very positive views of various forms of postsecondary education to prepare the next generation for a career.***

- Most voters believe colleges and universities in Tennessee properly prepare students for success in the workforce (58% yes-34% no), and most voters (52%) say the purpose of college or postsecondary education is to prepare students for a career.
- There’s a very strong sentiment that a degree from a community college is valuable (93% yes-6% no), and voters view vocational training (89% favorable-3% unfavorable), community college (91% favorable-3% unfavorable), and career and technical education (82% favorable-3% unfavorable) all positively.
- The Tennessee Promise is also viewed favorably by voters by a 46%-6% margin.
- By an 87%-7% margin, voters are more likely to support a State Legislator who “voted to make college more affordable for Tennessee students.” And, by an 82%-7% margin, voters are more likely to support a State Legislator who “voted to make college more accessible and affordable for all students.”