



EPIC-MRA WEDNESDAY POLLING MEMO

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Michigan Survey on Education Issues – Part 2

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800 sample – Conducted September 14-20, 2011 – 3.2% error rate

This EPIC-MRA survey is an in-depth poll of voter opinion about education issues. This second and final release focuses on local public schools and education in Michigan, as well as other topics. The survey was commissioned by the Michigan Education Association.

Highlights of key findings on local public schools in Michigan

52% offers negative rating of “education quality” of most public schools

62% gave positive rating for their own local public school district

62% said state & local taxes for schools “about right,” 33% said “too high”

51% majority said their local public schools gets “too little funding”

45% said teacher pay “about right,” 32% “too little,” 13% “too much”

44% said teacher benefits “about right,” 28% “too much,” 15% “too little”

47-46% has unfavorable opinion of Obama

44-40% has unfavorable opinion of Snyder; 59-36% negative job rating

Voters have unfavorable opinion of “Republicans in the Michigan Legislature” (47-34%); “Democrats in the Michigan Legislature” (42-36%); and the “Tea Party movement” (47-32%).

Voters have favorable opinion of “Michigan Education Association” (41-38%), and the “Michigan State Chamber of Commerce” (31-18%), with 44% unsure of their opinion of the “Michigan Chamber.”

52% said Michigan seriously off on wrong track

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer

- Market
- Research
- Analysis

Public school districts in Michigan get 52% negative job rating for “education quality”

Survey respondents were asked the following question.

“Thinking about the quality of education provided in most local public school districts in Michigan, would you offer a positive rating of excellent or pretty good, or a negative rating of only fair or poor for the education quality provided?”

6% Excellent
 36% Pretty good
42% TOTAL POSITIVE
 32% Just fair
 20% Poor
52% TOTAL NEGATIVE
 6% Undecided/Refused

Democrats are split in their rating of most local public school districts in Michigan, Independent voters offer solid negative ratings, while Republicans offer negative ratings by a narrow majority, as shown below.

All respondents	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
				Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
42% Positive	48%	37%	40%	50%	46%	36%	37%	37%	43%
52% Negative	48%	59%	53%	48%	48%	60%	57%	55%	50%
6% Undecided	4%	4%	7%	2%	6%	4%	6%	8%	7%

More than 6-in-10 give positive rating for education quality in their local public schools

Survey respondents were asked the following question about the quality of education in their local public school district.

“How about in the local public school district where you live -- would you offer a positive rating of excellent or pretty good, or a negative rating of only fair or poor for the quality of education provided by your local public school district?”

24% Excellent
 38% Pretty good
62% TOTAL POSITIVE
 21% Just fair
 14% Poor
35% TOTAL NEGATIVE
 3% Undecided/Refused

Solid majorities of Democrats, Independents and Republicans offer a positive rating for the quality of education in their local public school district.

All respondents	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
				Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
62% Positive	64%	58%	64%	66%	63%	56%	61%	63%	65%
35% Oppose	34%	37%	33%	32%	35%	40%	34%	34%	32%
3% Undecided	2%	5%	3%	2%	2%	4%	5%	3%	3%

More than 6-in-10 voters say state and local school taxes “about right” or “too low”

Survey respondents were asked the following question about the state and local taxes they pay to fund local public schools.

“Thinking about the state and local taxes you pay to fund the programs and services of your local public school district, would you say the taxes you pay are too high, too low or about right for what you get back in programs and services? [IF TOO HIGH, ASK, ASK] Would that be much or somewhat?”

15% Much too high
 18% Somewhat too high
33% TOTAL TOO HIGH
 55% About the right amount
 7% Too low
62% TOTAL ABOUT RIGHT/TOO LOW
 5% Undecided/Refused

Republicans say taxes are “too high” by the highest percentage, followed by Independents and then Democrats. Voters from all three groups say by a majority that taxes are “about right,” as indicated below.

All respondents	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
				Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
33% Too high	28%	34%	39%	28%	28%	36%	30%	39%	39%
55% About right	57%	56%	52%	54%	60%	54%	58%	53%	51%
7% Too low	11%	7%	6%	15%	7%	7%	6%	3%	8%
5% Undecided	4%	3%	3%	3%	5%	2%	6%	5%	2%

Majority says there is too little school funding to provide a quality education

Respondents were asked the following question about the funding provided to their local public schools.

“Overall, including all state and local funds, does your local public school district have too much, too little, or about the right amount of funding it needs to provide a quality education? [IF TOO MUCH/TOO LITTLE, ASK] Would that be much or somewhat [TOO MUCH/TOO LITTLE]?”

5% Much too much funding
 4% Somewhat too much funding
9% TOTAL TOO MUCH
 35% About the right amount of funding
 26% Somewhat too little funding
 25% Much too little funding
51% TOTAL TOO LITTLE
 5% Undecided/Refused

Democrats say by the highest percentage that there is too little funding, followed by Independent voters and then Republicans. GOP women say there is too little funding by 20 points more than GOP men (43 to 23%).

All respondents	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
				Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
9% Too much	2%	7%	18%	4%	0%	7%	8%	21%	16%
33% About right	24%	42%	41%	27%	22%	40%	44%	49%	34%
51% Too little	70%	46%	33%	65%	74%	48%	44%	23%	43%
5% Undecided	4%	5%	8%	4%	4%	5%	4%	7%	7%

Largest percentage said teachers and school employees paid “about the right amount”

Respondents were asked the following question about the “salary and wages” paid to public school employees.

“Do you think school teachers and other school employees who work in your local public school district are paid too much, too little, or about the right amount? **[IF TOO MUCH/TOO LITTLE, ASK]** Would that be much or somewhat?”

4% Much too much
 9% Somewhat too much
13% TOTAL TOO MUCH
 45% About the right amount
 17% Somewhat too little
 15% Much too little
32% TOTAL TOO LITTLE
 10% Undecided/Refused

A narrow majority of Democrats say teachers and school employees are paid “too little,” while a bare majority of Independents and a solid plurality of Republicans said they are paid about the “right amount.”

All respondents		Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
					Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
13%	Too much	4%	14%	23%	4%	3%	14%	14%	26%	20%
45%	Right amount	38%	50%	49%	44%	33%	51%	49%	49%	49%
32%	Too little	51%	26%	17%	47%	55%	25%	27%	14%	19%
10%	Undecided	7%	10%	11%	5%	9%	10%	10%	10%	13%

While Republican legislative leaders and many GOP members of the Legislature claim that teachers are overpaid, that does not represent the opinions of Republican voters, especially Republican women. It is also not a reflection of strong Republicans who have a favorable opinion of the Tea Party, who say by only 30 percent that teachers and school employees are paid “too much,” with 49 percent saying they are paid about the “right amount” and 13 percent saying “too little.” Moderate Republicans who have a favorable opinion of the Tea Party are almost identical in their views, with 29 percent saying “too much,” 47 percent saying “about right,” and 13 percent saying “too little.”

Largest percentage of respondents say teacher and school staff benefits “about right”

Respondents were also asked the following question about the health insurance, retirement and other benefits that are part of a total compensation package.

“Do you think the benefits local public school teachers and other public school employees receive in your area are too much, too little, or about the right amount? **[IF TOO MUCH/TOO LITTLE, ASK]** Would that be much or somewhat?”

12% Much too much
 16% Somewhat too much
28% TOTAL TOO MUCH
 44% About the right amount
 9% Somewhat too little
 6% Much too little
15% TOTAL TOO LITTLE
 13% Undecided/Refused

A majority of Democrats and solid plurality of Independents say benefits are “about right,” while Republicans say by the highest percentage benefits are “too high.”

		Dem	Dem	Ind	Ind	Gop	Gop
		Men	Wom	Men	Wom	Men	Wom
All respondents							
28%	Too much	13%	12%	27%	32%	48%	41%
44%	Right amount	52%	49%	57%	34%	35%	36%
15%	Too little	25%	28%	10%	14%	6%	8%
13%	Undecided	11%	11%	6%	20%	11%	15%

Proposals to make teachers and other public employees pay a higher percentage of their monthly health insurance premiums and also receive less in employee benefits is not even a reflection of a majority of Republican voters saying that benefits are “too high.”

It is also NOT a reflection of the opinions of strong Republicans who have a favorable opinion of the Tea Party movement. These GOP voters say “too high” by 48 percent, “about right” by 31 percent, “too little” by 7 percent with 13 percent unsure. Moderate GOP voters with a favorable opinion of the Tea Party said “too high” by 53 percent, “about right” by 31 percent, “too little” by 2 percent, with 13 percent unsure.

Only Mich Chamber and MEA get more favorable than unfavorable ratings

Respondents were also asked the following questions about individuals, organizations and groups.

“Now, I would like to read a list of several political figures, organizations and groups. For each one, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or group. If you do not recognize the name, please tell me. The first name is _____? Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of (him/her/that group/organization)? [IF FAVORABLE/UNFAVORABLE, ASK] Would that be very or generally?”

		<u>DON'T</u>	<u>VERY</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>VERY</u>	<u>REF</u>
		<u>RECOG</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>UNFAV</u>	<u>UNDEC</u>
Sept	Barack Obama	---	22%	46%	47%	30%	7%
Apr	Barack Obama	---	22%	44%	49%	30%	7%
Sept	Rick Snyder	---	11%	40%	44%	27%	16%
Apr	Rick Snyder	---	10%	41%	43%	28%	16%
Sept	Republicans in the Michigan Legislature	1%	8%	34%	47%	26%	18%
Apr	Republicans in the Michigan Legislature	---	8%	35%	47%	24%	18%
Sept	Michigan Chamber of Commerce	7%	6%	31%	18%	7%	44%
Apr	Michigan Chamber of Commerce	4%	8%	45%	16%	6%	35%
Sept	Democrats in the Michigan Legislature	1%	10%	36%	42%	17%	21%
Apr	Democrats in the Michigan Legislature	---	9%	35%	47%	16%	18%

		<u>DON'T</u> <u>RECOG</u>	<u>VERY</u> <u>FAVOR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> <u>FAVOR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> <u>UNFAV</u>	<u>VERY</u> <u>UNFAV</u>	<u>REF</u> <u>UNDEC</u>
Sept	The Tea Party movement	2%	12%	32%	47%	33%	19%
Apr	The Tea Party movement	---	---	---	---	---	--- NA
Sept	Michigan Education Association, the MEA	3%	14%	41%	38%	21%	18%
Apr	Michigan Education Association, the MEA	2%	14%	42%	44%	22%	12%

The Tea Party movement was not tested in April in a favorability battery, so no comparison can be made.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce dropped by 14 points from the 45% favorable rating it received in April, to 31% now, and the undecided percentage increased by 9 points from 35% in April to 44% now.

The unfavorable rating for Democrats in the Michigan Legislature dropped by 5 points, from 47% in April to 42% now.

The MEA dropped 6 points from a 44% unfavorable rating in April, to 38% now.

An 85% majority of Democrats have a favorable opinion of President Obama, while a 51 to 39% narrow majority of Independent voters and 89% of Republicans have an unfavorable opinion of him.

A 72% majority of Democrats have an unfavorable opinion of Governor Snyder, while 47 to 37% of Independent voters and 67% of Republicans have a favorable opinion of Snyder.

A 77% majority of Democrats and a 48 to 28% plurality of Independents have an unfavorable opinion of Republicans in the Michigan Legislature, with 64% of Republicans having a favorable opinion of GOP legislators.

A 28 to 24% narrow plurality of Democrats have an unfavorable opinion of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, while a 27 to 20% plurality of Independents and a 39 to 9% plurality of Republican voters have a favorable opinion of the Chamber, with 40% of Democrats and 47% each of Independents and Republicans saying they are unsure of their opinion relative to the Michigan Chamber.

A 68% majority of Democrats have a favorable view of Democrats in the Michigan Legislature, while a 43 to 28% plurality of Independents, and 72% of Republicans have an unfavorable opinion of Dem Legislators.

A 76% majority of Democrats and a 49 to 30% plurality of Independents have an unfavorable opinion of the Tea Party movement, while a 61 to 14% majority of Republicans have a favorable opinion of the Tea Party.

A 59 to 21% majority of Democrats have a favorable opinion of the MEA, while a 42 to 37% plurality of Independents and a narrow 52 to 25% majority of Republicans have an unfavorable opinion of the MEA.

