

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project
FROM: Hart Research Associates and Ferguson Research
DATE: August 25, 2014
RE: Findings from a Survey on School Nutrition Among Parents in South Carolina

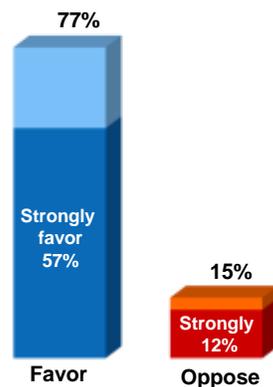
The Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project commissioned Hart Research Associates and Ferguson Research to conduct a statewide survey of public school parents who are registered voters in South Carolina. We conducted 505 interviews between June 24 and 29, 2014. The survey has a margin of error of +/- 4.4% for the full sample, with higher tolerances for subgroups of the sample.

This memo is a brief review of the survey's key findings.

More than three in four parents in South Carolina support the current nutrition standards for the national school meal program. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of parents say they are in favor of the standards after hearing a description of them, including a solid 57% majority who strongly favor the rules. Just 15% of parents say they oppose the standards.

More than three in four parents favor school meal standards, and a majority do so strongly.

Do you favor or oppose requiring schools to meet these nutrition standards* for school meals?



* Description prior to question:

"The national school meals program provides lunches and breakfasts to many school children across the country, and provides them for free or at a reduced cost to children from low-income families.

In this program, the federal government reimburses school districts for the costs of meals that meet certain nutrition standards, such as **providing fruits and vegetables, limiting the use of salt, and following age-appropriate calorie limits.**

Individual school districts have the flexibility to build on the requirements, as long as the meals meet basic, minimum standards.

To be clear, this school lunch is a full meal that can only be purchased as a full meal—it does not include extra items that can be purchased individually for additional money."

Support for the standards is high across-the-board, with strong majorities of mothers (80%) and fathers (73%), and lower- (91%), middle- (68%), and upper-income parents (77%) endorsing them. Support is particularly high among African-American parents—who, at 93%,

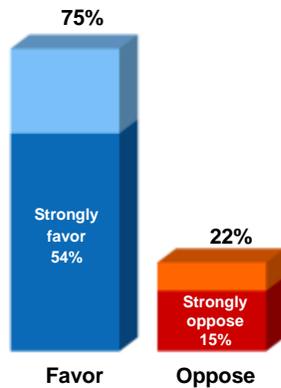
nearly unanimously favor the standards—but is also quite strong among white parents, of whom 73% say they favor the standards.

Support for the meal standards crosses political lines. In South Carolina, there is strong agreement across the political spectrum on this issue: 64% of Republicans, 81% of independents, and 90% of Democrats say they favor these standards. The level of GOP support is key in South Carolina, where Republican-leaning parents outnumber Democratic-leaning ones by a 12 percentage point margin.

Three-quarters of parents endorse nutrition standards for food served outside the school meal. As with meal standards, three quarters (75%) of parents favor standards for the foods sold a la carte, in school stores, and in school vending machines.

Parents strongly endorse Smart Snacks standards.

*Do you favor or oppose requiring schools to meet nutrition standards for the foods and beverages sold a la carte and in vending machines?**



* Information prior to question:
"Starting this July, all foods sold a la carte or in school stores and school vending machines will have to meet basic minimum nutrition standards, such as limiting calories, fat content, and sodium in the foods while encouraging more fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy items. Individual school districts will have the flexibility to build on the standards if they wish to, as long as they meet basic, minimum standards."

Again, support is very high across the parent population, including by political affiliation: 66% of Republicans, 75% of independents, and 90% of Democrats say they are in favor.

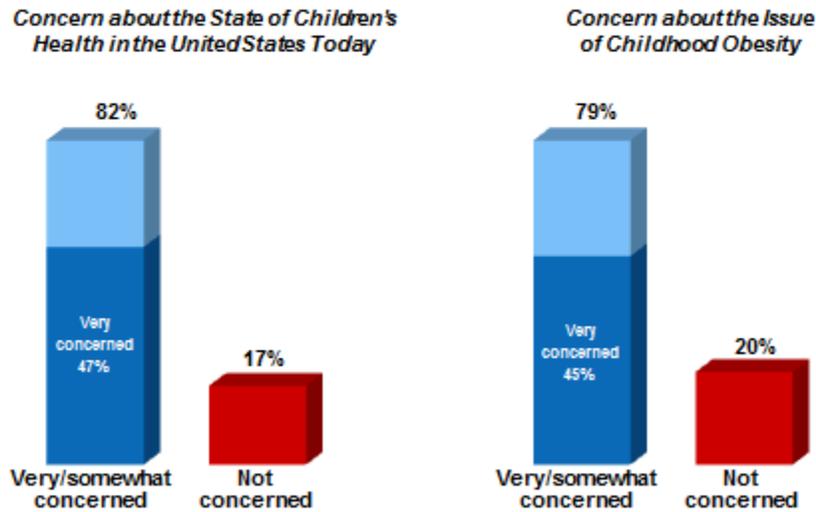
Their support may stem, in part, from their perceptions about the lack of nutritional value in the foods that were available from these sources until July of this year. Just one-fifth (20%) of parents say that food sold a la carte in the cafeteria is totally or mostly healthy, and only one in 10 parents say food sold in school stores (11%) or in vending machines (10%) is totally or mostly healthy.

Hart Research / Ferguson Research

More broadly, the large majority of parents express concern about children’s health and childhood obesity. It is important to put the results of the survey questions about food standards into the context of parents’ broader attitudes about children’s health.

More than four in five parents (82%) say that they are concerned about the state of children’s health in the U.S. today—including 47% who are very concerned. Similarly, 79% say they are concerned about childhood obesity specifically (and 45% are very concerned).

South Carolina parents are highly concerned about children’s health and obesity issues.



This telephone poll was conducted among 505 parents who are registered to vote. A sample list was purchased from a third party vendor, and respondents were screened to ensure that interviewees are registered to vote, are parents, and have children in public schools.