



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

**FROM: BILL McINTURFF/ELIZABETH HARRINGTON – PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
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**RE: KEY FINDINGS – LOUISIANA STATEWIDE TELEPHONE SURVEY OF REGISTERED VOTERS
AND PUBLIC/CHARTER SCHOOL PARENTS**

DATE: OCTOBER 12, 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Nearly all voters (96%) and public school parents (97%) believe serving nutritious foods in schools is important in helping ensure that children are prepared to learn and do their best in school.
- More than seven in ten voters (75%) and public school parents (78%) in the state support requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school meals.
 - There is a majority of support among voters across all income levels and ethnic groups.
- The majority of voters and public school parents agree that schools should be required to serve nutritious food options such as fruits, vegetables, and whole-grains with every school meal.
- More than two-thirds of voters (68%) and public school parents (74%) in the state support requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school snacks (food sold in school stores, food and drink vending machines, and a la carte items in the cafeteria).
 - There is a majority of support among voters across all income levels and ethnic groups.
- Two-thirds of voters (66%) and public school parents (66%) believe that for school fundraisers held on campus during the school day the sale of food that does not meet national nutritional standards should be limited to five times a year or less.
- A majority of voters (56%) and public school parents (51%) say they prefer that public schools use activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons in fundraising efforts.

KEY FINDINGS:

Nearly all voters (96%) and public school parents (97%) believe serving nutritious foods in schools is important in helping ensure that children are prepared to learn and do their best in school. Respondents also overwhelmingly believe it is important for children to have enough time during the lunch period to eat their lunches (97% – All Voters, 99% – Public School Parents).

- Respondents were asked *“Do you think that serving nutritious foods in schools is...very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all in helping to ensure that children are prepared to learn and do their best in school?”*

Public School Parents	All Voters	
97%	96%	TOTAL IMPORTANT
2%	4%	TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT
82%	77%	Very important
15%	19%	Somewhat important
2%	3%	Not that important
*	1%	Not important at all
1%	*	Don't Know

- Respondents were asked *“Do you think that children having enough time during the lunch period to eat their lunches is...very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all?”*

Public School Parents	All Voters	
99%	97%	TOTAL IMPORTANT
1%	3%	TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT
79%	69%	Very important
20%	28%	Somewhat important
1%	2%	Not that important
*	1%	Not important at all
*	*	Don't Know

More than seven in ten voters (75%) and public school parents (78%) in the state, support requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school meals.

- Respondents were read the following information and question: *“The national school meals program provides breakfasts and lunches 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 school meals meet basic, minimum standards. To be clear, this applies to the school meal which 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.*

Do you favor or oppose requiring public schools to meet these national nutrition standards for school meals? And do you strongly (favor/oppose) or just somewhat (favor/oppose) requiring public schools to meet these national nutrition standards for school meals?"

Public School Parents	All Voters	
78%	75%	TOTAL FAVOR
21%	22%	TOTAL OPPOSE
55%	53%	Strongly Favor
23%	22%	Somewhat Favor
8%	7%	Somewhat Oppose
13%	15%	Strongly Oppose
1%	3%	Don't Know

- Majorities of women (79%), men (70%), public school moms (83%), and public school dads (72%) support the school meals standards.
- There is a majority of support among voters in all income levels (Under \$40K – 78%, \$40K-\$80K – 75%, Over \$80K – 76%).
- There is a majority of support among White (70%) and African American (87%) voters.

More than seven in ten public school parents (76%) in the state report that their children participate in the school meals program.

- More than half of public school parents (54%) report their child/children eat lunch that is prepared by the school four to five days per week, 22% report it is one to three days per week, and 23% say their child/children never eats lunch prepared by the school.
- Public school parents whose children participate more often in the school meals program are also supportive of requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school meals.

<i>Public School Parents</i>		
<i>Favor/Oppose requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school meals By Child Participation Levels in Meals Program</i>		
	<u>Eat School Meal 3 Days or Less/Week</u>	<u>Eat School Meal 4-5 Days/Week</u>
Favor	78%	77%
Oppose	20%	23%

Majorities of voters and public school parents believe schools should be required to serve more nutritional food options with every school meal.

- We tested different things public schools are required to offer or serve with every school meal. Respondents were asked whether they thought public schools should be required to do each or not. The table below shows the percentage of voters and public school parents who said yes public schools should be required to do each with every school meal.

Solid majorities of voters and public school parents *strongly* believe that schools should do each of these things.

<i>Schools Should Do/Offer With Every School Meal</i>	<u>Public School Parents</u>	<u>All Voters</u>
<i>% Yes</i>		
Include a serving of fruits or vegetables	99%	96%
Offer free water	92%	93%
Limit the amount of salt	80%	77%
Provide foods made from whole-grains	76%	73%

More than two-thirds of voters (68%) and public school parents (74%) in the state support requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school snacks (food sold in school stores, food and drink vending machines, and a la carte items in the cafeteria).

- Respondents were read the following information and question: *“Thinking now about food available to students that is not a part of the public school meals program...In many schools, there is also food available to students that is not a part of the public school meals program. This includes food that is sold in school stores, food and drink vending machines, and a la carte items, such as a slice of pizza, a container of yogurt, or a piece of fruit. There are national Smart Snacks nutritional standards that provide for more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy items. There are calorie caps on the food sold in school stores, food and drink vending machines, and a la carte items.*

Do you favor or oppose requiring public schools to meet these national nutrition standards for food sold in school stores, food and drink vending machines, and a la carte items? And do you strongly (favor/oppose) or just somewhat (favor/oppose) requiring public schools to meet these national nutrition standards for food sold in school stores, food and drink vending machines, and a la carte items?”

Public School Parents	All Voters	
74%	68%	TOTAL FAVOR
24%	30%	TOTAL OPPOSE
45%	43%	Strongly Favor
29%	25%	Somewhat Favor
9%	11%	Somewhat Oppose
15%	19%	Strongly Oppose
2%	1%	Don't Know

- Majorities of women and men support the school snack standards, though women (74%) are more supportive than men (63%). This stronger support among women is also reflected among public schools parents (moms – 79%/dads – 68%).
- There is a majority of support among voters in all income levels (Under \$40K – 70%, \$40K-\$80K – 71%, Over \$80K – 69%).
- There is a majority of support among White (65%) and African American (76%) voters.
- A majority of voters (61%) and public school parents (66%) favor the national nutritional standards for both school meals and school snacks.

Two-thirds of voters (66%) and public school parents (66%) believe that for school fundraisers held on campus during the school day the sale of food that does not meet national nutritional standards should be limited to five times a year or less.

- Respondents were read the following information and question: *“Now thinking just about the types of school fundraisers that sell food...The national nutritional standards required for public*

school meals and snacks also apply to the food sold at fundraisers that happen on the school grounds during the school day. However, individual states can allow OCCASIONAL school fundraisers that do NOT have to meet these nutritional standards. This means the food sold at these occasional school fundraisers does NOT have to meet the same national nutritional standards as meals and snacks. In a given school year, how often do you think public schools should be able to have fundraisers that sell food that does NOT have to meet the national nutritional standards?"

Frequency Schools Can Sell Non-Nutritional Foods at Fundraisers	Public School Parents	All Voters
Daily	7%	7%
Weekly	13%	11%
10 Times A Year	12%	14%
5 Times A Year	34%	30%
Once A Year	24%	25%
Never	8%	11%

A majority of voters (56%) and public school parents (51%) say they prefer that public schools use activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons in fundraising efforts.

- We read respondents different types of events/fundraisers public schools could do to raise money. Respondents were asked to select the top two to three choices they most preferred.

School Fundraising Efforts	Public School Parents	All Voters
Activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons	51%	56%
Auctions of items donated by families or businesses such as event tickets or gift baskets	39%	36%
Sales of food meant to be taken home such as cookie dough or popcorn	29%	26%
Bake sales held on school grounds during the school day	20%	24%
Sales of non-food items such as wrapping paper or garden plants	26%	23%
Asking for donations without selling anything	18%	21%
Sales of ready-to-eat food such as pizza, doughnuts, or candy held on school grounds during the school day	12%	11%

METHODOLOGY:

Public Opinion Strategies and Hart Research Associates conducted a statewide telephone survey of N=600 registered voters (420 land/180 cell). Of this statewide sample, N=140 were parents of children in K-12 public/charter schools. In order to have a large enough sample size to examine attitudes among the population of public/charter school parents who are registered voters, we also conducted an oversample of N=61 additional interviews among registered voters who are parents or guardians of children in K-12 public/charter schools.

In total, we interviewed N=661 registered voters in Louisiana including N=201 public/charter school parents.

The sample was drawn from the state voter file proportional to the statewide registered voter population. Quotas were set by specific demographics such as region, age, gender, and ethnicity based on data from the U.S. Census and the voter file in order to ensure the samples are representative statewide.

The survey was conducted September 29-October 3, 2015. The margin of error on the sample of N=600 registered voters is $\pm 4.0\%$ and the margin of error on the sample of N=201 public/charter school parents is $\pm 6.9\%$.

<i>Sample Sizes For Different Audiences Highlighted In This Memo</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
Registered Voters	N = 600
Public/Charter School Parents	N = 201
Men Voters	N = 288
Women Voters	N = 312
Republican Voters	N = 178
Independent Voters	N = 142
Democratic Voters	N = 236
Voters Living in New Orleans DMA	N = 209
Voters Living in Baton Rouge DMA	N = 116
Voters Living in Lafayette/Lake Charles DMA	N = 118
Voters Living in Shreveport DMA	N = 70
Voters Living in Alexandria/Monroe DMA	N = 87
Voters with HH Income Under \$40K	N = 170
Voters with HH Income \$40K - \$80K	N = 155
Voters with HH Income Over \$80K	N = 209
White Voters	N = 390
African American Voters	N = 174
Public/Charter School Moms	N = 109
Public/Charter School Dads	N = 92
Public/Charter School Parents Whose Children Eat School Provided Meals 3 Days or Less/Week	N = 90
Public/Charter School Parents Whose Children Eat School Provided Meals 4-5 Days/Week	N = 109