Tennessee Statewide
Survey of Registered Voters & Parents
September 1-5, 2021

PREPARED BY:
Robert Blizzard, Partner
On behalf of TN SCORE, Public Opinion Strategies completed a survey among 500 registered voters and 300 public school parents in Tennessee.

Half of the interviews were conducted via cell phone, with the other half among landline telephones.

The survey was conducted September 1-5, and has a margin of error of +4.38% for the sample of registered voters and a margin of error of +5.66% for the oversample of public school parents.
An overwhelming majority of parents believe Tennessee children are starting the school year academically behind.

Do you believe children here in Tennessee are beginning the school year academically behind?

Among Parents

- **Parents:** 79% Yes, 15% No
- **Urban (17%):** 83% Yes, 16% No
- **Suburban (54%):** 90% Yes, 8% No
- **Rural (29%):** 56% Yes, 11% No
- **<2nd Grade (40%):** 78% Yes, 10% No
- **3-6 Grade (33%):** 78% Yes, 21% No
- **7-8 Grade (22%):** 80% Yes, 20% No
- **9-12 Grade (52%):** 72% Yes, 20% No
And, nearly half of parents believe their own kids are starting school year academically behind. (More than half of suburban parents.)

Among Parents

Do you believe your children are beginning the school year academically behind?

- Yes
- No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban (21%)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban (50%)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<td>Rural (29%)</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;2nd Grade (39%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>3-6 Grade (46%)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>7-8 Grade (19%)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12 Grade (51%)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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</table>
Most parents believe the current school year is going well so far.

Among Parents:

- **Parents**: 77% think the school year is going well, 22% do not.
- **Urban (21%)**: 89% think it's going well, 11% do not.
- **Suburban (50%)**: 72% think it's going well, 25% do not.
- **Rural (29%)**: 75% think it's going well, 25% do not.
- **<2nd Grade (40%)**: 79% think it's going well, 19% do not.
- **3-6 Grade (40%)**: 73% think it's going well, 26% do not.
- **7-8 Grade (20%)**: 79% think it's going well, 20% do not.
- **9-12 Grade (52%)**: 72% think it's going well, 27% do not.

How well do you think the current school year is going for you and your children?
As we’ve seen previously, voters and parents place high importance on testing students to know if they are meeting standards.

Generally speaking, how important is it to test students from grades three through eleven each year to know if they are meeting the state's education standards in reading, writing, and math?

- **Registered Voters**
  - Dec. 2013: 91% Very Important, 7% Not Important
  - Dec. 2014: 92% Very Important, 7% Not Important
  - Apr. 2015: 83% Very Important, 15% Not Important
  - Dec. 2015: 89% Very Important, 10% Not Important
  - Nov. 2016: 90% Very Important, 10% Not Important
  - Apr. 2019: 87% Very Important, 13% Not Important
  - Sep. 2019: 85% Very Important, 15% Not Important
  - Sep. 2021: 88% Very Important, 12% Not Important

- **Parents**
  - Oct. 2020: 81% Very Important, 19% Not Important
  - Sep. 2021: 88% Very Important, 12% Not Important

**POS**
And, voters and parents believe it is very important to test students with the annual state assessment.

As you know, the annual state assessment gives teachers, parents, and students information on how much students have learned in the previous year. How important is it to test students from grades three through twelve to know if they are meeting the state's education standards in reading, writing, and math?
There’s much stronger support for using academic growth of students to “know how well schools are performing.”

As you may know, Tennessee uses year-to-year student academic growth for school accountability so that parents and communities know how well schools are performing. Do you favor or oppose this policy?
Tennesseans – across party lines – strongly believe that public schools do NOT receive enough funding.

Do you believe Tennessee's public schools receive enough funding, or not?

- Registered Voters: 26% Yes, receive enough funding, 65% Do not receive enough funding
- GOP: 35% Yes, receive enough funding, 53% Do not receive enough funding
- IND: 26% Yes, receive enough funding, 68% Do not receive enough funding
- DEM: 12% Yes, receive enough funding, 82% Do not receive enough funding
- Parents: 18% Yes, receive enough funding, 71% Do not receive enough funding
In terms of funding priorities, voters say raise teachers pay, while a plurality of parents want improved workforce readiness for students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%Important</th>
<th>RV</th>
<th>GOP (49%)</th>
<th>IND (19%)</th>
<th>DEM (30%)</th>
<th>White (78%)</th>
<th>AF AM (16%)</th>
<th>Urban (34%)</th>
<th>Subur-ban (42%)</th>
<th>Rural (24%)</th>
<th>Parents N=300</th>
<th>&lt;2nd Grade (40%)</th>
<th>3-6 Grade (40%)</th>
<th>7-8 Grade (20%)</th>
<th>9-12 Grade (52%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A pay increase for teacher</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<td>Improve workforce readiness for high school students</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>Additional and updated technology</td>
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<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide parents more public-school choices to send their children to school</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Better support students with special learning needs</td>
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<td>High poverty schools</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>Rural schools</td>
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