Trending Among Voters: Education

As a research and advocacy organization, SCORE frequently checks the pulse of voters regarding various education issues. From public opinion surveys to focus groups, understanding what is on the minds of Tennesseans is important as we work to improve education for all students in our state. You can reference a few of our previous public opinion surveys here.

SCORE’s most recent public opinion survey was conducted March 29-April 1 by our partner, Public Opinion Strategies. We surveyed 500 registered Tennessee voters from across the state and asked them about the most important and talked about education issues in 2019.

The survey found that education continues to be a top issue among voters in Tennessee. When asked what is the top issue facing Tennessee, education was second in the minds of voters. Tennesseans placing a high priority on education policy is understandable given the tremendous progress our state has made over the past ten years, including the designation as fastest-improving state in student achievement from 2011-2015.

School choice is one of the most-discussed policy areas of 2019, and voters are clearly paying attention. After defining a public charter school as “public schools operated by independent, nonprofit governing bodies that receive state and local funding similar to other public schools,” the survey asked whether voters have a favorable or unfavorable view of public charter schools. Voters have an overall favorable impression: 51% of voters having a favorable view of public charter schools and 35% having an unfavorable one.

With new leadership in Tennessee following the 2018 election cycle, voters' impressions are always an interesting data point. Governor Lee began his term with a focus on education, and his first major policy proposal was the Governor’s Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) act, followed by the Future Workforce Initiative. When voters were asked if their state legislator supported Gov. Lee’s education policies would it make them more or less likely to support them, the results were overwhelming: 57% said it would make them more likely, 14% said less likely, and 18% said no impact.

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