



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

**FROM: BILL McINTURFF/ELIZABETH HARRINGTON – PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
JAY CAMPBELL – HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES**

**RE: KEY FINDINGS – NORTH CAROLINA STATEWIDE TELEPHONE SURVEY OF REGISTERED
VOTERS AND PUBLIC/CHARTER SCHOOL PARENTS**

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Nearly all public school parents (95%) and voters (96%) 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 nine in ten public school parents (95%) and voters (96%) also believe it is important for schools to provide nutrition education as part of the school curriculum.
- More than eight in ten public school parents (84%) and voters (84%) in the state support requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school meals.
 - There is a majority of support among Republican (77%), Independent (84%), and Democratic (90%) voters.
 - There is a majority of support among voters across media markets (Charlotte – 84%, Raleigh – 81%, Winston-Salem/Greensboro – 88%, Balance – 85%).
 - There is a majority of support among voters across all income levels and ethnic groups.
- The majority of public school parents and voters agree that schools should be required to serve nutritious food options such as fruits, vegetables, and whole-grains with every school meal.
- More than seven in ten of public school parents (77%) and voters (75%) 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 Republican (63%), Independent (77%), and Democratic (83%) voters.

- There is a majority of support among voters across media markets (Charlotte – 77%, Raleigh – 72%, Winston-Salem/Greensboro – 78%, Balance – 77%).
- There is a majority of support among voters across all income levels and ethnic groups.
- A majority of public school parents (50%) and voters (56%) say they prefer that public schools use activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons in school fundraising efforts.

KEY FINDINGS:

Nearly all public school parents (95%) and voters (96%) 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 (99% – Public School Parents, 97% – All Voters).

- 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	
95%	96%	TOTAL IMPORTANT
4%	4%	TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT
74%	79%	Very important
21%	17%	Somewhat important
3%	3%	Not that important
1%	1%	Not important at all
--	*	Don't Know
1%	--	Refused

- 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
73%	69%	Very important
26%	28%	Somewhat important
--	3%	Not that important
1%	*	Not important at all
*	*	Don't Know

More than nine in ten public school parents (95%) and voters (96%) believe it is important for schools to provide nutrition education as part of the school curriculum.

- Respondents were asked “How important do you think it is for schools to provide nutrition education as part of the school curriculum... very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not important at all?”

Public School Parents	All Voters	
95%	96%	TOTAL IMPORTANT
5%	4%	TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT
71%	71%	Very important
24%	25%	Somewhat important
4%	3%	Not that important
1%	1%	Not important at all

More than eight in ten public school parents (84%) and voters (84%) 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	
84%	84%	TOTAL FAVOR
15%	15%	TOTAL OPPOSE
53%	59%	Strongly Favor
31%	25%	Somewhat Favor
5%	7%	Somewhat Oppose
10%	8%	Strongly Oppose
--	1%	Don't Know
1%	*	Refused

- There is a majority of support among Republican (77%), Independent (84%), and Democratic (90%) voters.

- Majorities of women (87%), men (81%), public school moms (85%), and public school dads (82%) support the school meals standards.
- There is a majority of support among voters across media markets (Charlotte – 84%, Raleigh – 81%, Winston-Salem/Greensboro – 88%, Balance – 85%).
- There is a majority of support among voters in all income levels (Under \$40K – 84%, \$40K-\$80K – 83%, Over \$80K – 85%).
- There is a majority of support among White (82%) and African American (91%) voters.

More than six in ten public school parents (62%) in the state report that their children participate in the school meals program.

- Over a third of school parents (36%) report their child/children eat lunch that is prepared by the school four to five days per week, 26% report it is one to three days per week, and 38% 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 more 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 1-3 Days/Week</u>	<u>Eat School Meal 4-5 Days/Week</u>
Favor	77%	87%
Oppose	22%	13%

Majorities of public school parents and voters believe schools should be required to serve 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 public school parents and voters who said yes public schools should be required to do each with every school meal.

<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	96%	95%
Offer free water	94%	92%
Limit the amount of salt	78%	81%
Provide foods made from whole-grains	73%	75%

More than seven in ten of public school parents (77%) and voters (75%) 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	
77%	75%	TOTAL FAVOR
23%	24%	TOTAL OPPOSE
50%	51%	Strongly Favor
27%	24%	Somewhat Favor
9%	12%	Somewhat Oppose
14%	12%	Strongly Oppose
*	1%	Don't Know

- There is a majority of support among Republican (63%), Independent (77%), and Democratic (83%) voters.
- Majorities of women (79%), men (72%), public school moms (76%), and public school dads (76%) support the school meals standards.
- There is a majority of support among voters across media markets (Charlotte – 77%, Raleigh – 72%, Winston-Salem/Greensboro – 78%, Balance – 77%).
- There is a majority of support among voters in all income levels (Under \$40K – 78%, \$40K-\$80K – 70%, Over \$80K – 78%).
- There is a majority of support among White (72%) and African American (85%) voters.
- A majority of public school parents (73%) and voters (70%) favor the national nutritional standards for both school meals and school snacks.

A majority of public school parents (50%) and voters (56%) say they prefer that public schools use activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons in fundraising efforts. The least preferred fundraising efforts were sales of ready-to-eat food.

- 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.

<i>School Fundraising Efforts</i>	<u>Public School Parents</u>	<u>All Voters</u>
Activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons	50%	56%
Auctions of items donated by families or businesses such as event tickets or gift baskets	35%	32%
Sales of non-food items such as wrapping paper or garden plants	20%	27%
Asking for donations without selling anything	34%	25%
Sales of food meant to be taken home such as cookie dough or popcorn	21%	19%
Bake sales held on school grounds during the school day	15%	15%
Sales of ready-to-eat food such as pizza, doughnuts, or candy held on school grounds during the school day	13%	10%

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=136 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=75 additional interviews among registered voters who are parents or guardians of children in K-12 public/charter schools.

In total, we interviewed N=675 registered voters in North Carolina including N=211 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 October 13-15, 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=211 public/charter school parents is $\pm 6.7\%$.

<i>Sample Sizes For Different Audiences Highlighted In This Memo</i>	<i>Sample Size</i>
Registered Voters	N = 600
Public/Charter School Parents	N = 211
Men Voters	N = 288
Women Voters	N = 312
Republican Voters	N = 173
Independent Voters	N = 172
Democratic Voters	N = 216
Voters Living in Charlotte DMA	N = 165
Voters Living in Raleigh DMA	N = 183
Voters Living in Winston-Salem/Greensboro DMA	N = 105
Voters Living in Balance/Other DMAs	N = 147
Voters with HH Income Under \$40K	N = 190
Voters with HH Income \$40K - \$80K	N = 161
Voters with HH Income Over \$80K	N = 187
White Voters	N = 420
African American Voters	N = 138
Public/Charter School Moms	N = 128
Public/Charter School Dads	N = 83
Public/Charter School Parents Whose Children Eat School Provided Meals 1-3 Days/Week	N = 57
Public/Charter School Parents Whose Children Eat School Provided Meals 4-5 Days/Week	N = 74