



TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

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

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Nearly all public school parents (96%) and voters (95%) 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 (96%) and voters (93%) also believe it is important for schools to provide nutrition education as part of the school curriculum.
- More than seven in ten public school parents (77%) and voters (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 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.
- Seven in ten public school parents (70%) and a majority of voters (69%) 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 public school parents (66%) and voters (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 public school parents (54%) and voters (54%) 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 public school parents (96%) and voters (95%) 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 (95% – Public School Parents, 95% – 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 | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 96% | 95% | TOTAL IMPORTANT |
| 4% | 5% | TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT |
| 72% | 72% | Very important |
| 24% | 23% | Somewhat important |
| 3% | 4% | Not that important |
| 1% | 1% | Not important at all |
| * | * | 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 | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 95% | 95% | TOTAL IMPORTANT |
| 5% | 5% | TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT |
| 62% | 61% | Very important |
| 33% | 34% | Somewhat important |
| 4% | 4% | Not that important |
| 1% | 1% | Not important at all |

More than nine in ten public school parents (96%) and voters (93%) also 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 | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 96% | 93% | TOTAL IMPORTANT |

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|
| 4% | 7% | TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT |
| 59% | 62% | Very important |
| 37% | 31% | Somewhat important |
| 3% | 6% | Not that important |
| 1% | 1% | Not important at all |

More than seven in ten public school parents (77%) and voters (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 | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 77% | 78% | TOTAL FAVOR |
| 20% | 20% | TOTAL OPPOSE |
| 46% | 48% | Strongly Favor |
| 31% | 30% | Somewhat Favor |
| 9% | 10% | Somewhat Oppose |
| 11% | 10% | Strongly Oppose |
| 3% | 2% | Don’t Know |

- Majorities of women (82%), men (74%), public school moms (83%), and public school dads (68%) support the school meals standards.
- There is a majority of support among voters in all income levels (Under \$40K – 80%, \$40K-\$80K – 83%, Over \$80K – 76%).
- There is a majority of support among White (76%) and African American (91%) voters.

Seven in ten public school parents (71%) in the state report that their children participate in the school meals program.

- Nearly four in ten public school parents (39%) report their child/children eat lunch that is prepared by the school four to five days per week, 32% report it is one to three days per week, and 29% 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.

| Public School Parents | | |
|---|---|---|
| Favor/Oppose requiring public schools to meet the national nutrition standards for school meals By Child Participation Levels in Meals Program | | |
| | <u>Eat School Meal 1-3 Days/Week</u> | <u>Eat School Meal 4-5 Days/Week</u> |
| Favor | 82% | 83% |
| Oppose | 17% | 14% |

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

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

| <i>Schools Should Do/Offer With Every School Meal</i> % Yes | <u>Public School</u> <u>Parents</u> | <u>All Voters</u> |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Include a serving of fruits or vegetables | 92% | 94% |
| Offer free water | 90% | 89% |
| Limit the amount of salt | 76% | 76% |
| Provide foods made from whole-grains | 73% | 75% |

Seven in ten public school parents (70%) and a majority of voters (69%) 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 | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 70% | 69% | TOTAL FAVOR |
| 30% | 30% | TOTAL OPPOSE |
| 46% | 45% | Strongly Favor |
| 24% | 24% | Somewhat Favor |
| 13% | 14% | Somewhat Oppose |
| 17% | 16% | Strongly Oppose |
| -- | 1% | Don't Know |

- Majorities of women (74%), men (63%), public school moms (75%), and public school dads (61%) support the school meals standards.
- There is a majority of support among voters in all income levels (Under \$40K – 73%, \$40K-\$80K – 71%, Over \$80K – 67%).
- There is a majority of support among White (69%) and African American (73%) voters.
- A majority of public school parents (66%) and voters (64%) favor the national nutritional standards for both school meals and school snacks.

Two-thirds of public school parents (66%) and voters (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 | 16% | 11% |
| Weekly | 3% | 7% |
| 10 Times A Year | 13% | 14% |
| 5 Times A Year | 31% | 29% |
| Once A Year | 24% | 24% |
| Never | 11% | 13% |

A majority of public school parents (54%) and voters (54%) 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.

| School Fundraising Efforts | Public School Parents | All Voters |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Activity-based fundraisers such as car washes or walk-a-thons | 54% | 54% |
| Auctions of items donated by families or businesses such as event tickets or gift baskets | 38% | 34% |
| Asking for donations without selling anything | 32% | 25% |
| Sales of non-food items such as wrapping paper or garden plants | 26% | 25% |
| Bake sales held on school grounds during the school day | 16% | 20% |
| Sales of food meant to be taken home such as cookie dough or popcorn | 19% | 19% |
| 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=800 registered voters (560 land/240 cell). Of this statewide sample, N=175 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=27 additional interviews among registered voters who are parents or guardians of children in K-12 public/charter schools.

In total, we interviewed N=827 registered voters in Ohio including N=202 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 15-19, 2015. The margin of error on the sample of N=800 registered voters is $\pm 3.5\%$ and the margin of error on the sample of N=202 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 = 800 |
| Public/Charter School Parents | N = 202 |
| Men Voters | N = 384 |
| Women Voters | N = 416 |
| Republican Voters | N = 295 |
| Independent Voters | N = 141 |
| Democratic Voters | N = 311 |
| Voters Living in Toledo DMA | N = 75 |
| Voters Living in Cleveland DMA | N = 266 |
| Voters Living in Dayton DMA | N = 87 |
| Voters Living in Columbus DMA | N = 166 |
| Voters Living in Cincinnati DMA | N = 121 |
| Voters Living in Balance/Other DMAs | N = 85 |
| Voters with HH Income Under \$40K | N = 233 |
| Voters with HH Income \$40K - \$80K | N = 224 |
| Voters with HH Income Over \$80K | N = 250 |
| White Voters | N = 648 |
| African American Voters | N = 104 |
| Public/Charter School Moms | N = 110 |
| Public/Charter School Dads | N = 92 |
| Public/Charter School Parents Whose Children Eat School Provided Meals 1-3 Days/Week | N = 67 |
| Public/Charter School Parents Whose Children Eat School Provided Meals 4-5 Days/Week | N = 76 |