

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Global Strategy Group & The Strategy Group
RE: **Louisiana Statewide Survey Results**
DATE: May 7, 2010

Despite generally positive feelings about public school teachers overall, voters in Louisiana are concerned about the quality of public schools and students' preparation by their teachers for college or a career, according to a survey of 600 registered voters in Louisiana conducted April 30 to May 2. As a result, Louisiana voters support a series of reforms aimed at improving teacher performance through professional development assistance and an updated method of evaluation.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

- **Voters Are Concerned About the Quality of Public Schools and Their Failure to Improve**
Nearly two-thirds of voters say the overall quality of public schools in Louisiana is either “not so good” (39%) or “poor” (25%). In addition, nearly three quarters say the quality of their local public schools has either stayed the same (46%) or gotten worse (26%) in the past few years.
- **Voters Lack Confidence That Public Schools Provide Adequate Preparation for Students**
A plurality of Louisiana voters (45%) say they are not confident about how prepared local public school students are for college or a career. Just 15% are “very confident” that local schools are adequately preparing students, while another 39% are somewhat confident.
- **Nearly Half of Voters Are Unsatisfied With Teacher Preparation of Students for the Future**
In addition, voters' opinions of the job local public school teachers are doing to prepare students for college or a career are split, with nearly half saying teacher performance in this area is either “not so good” (34%) or “poor” (10%). Just 8% of voters say public school teachers do an “excellent” job preparing students.
- **There Is Widespread Belief That Some Current Public Schools Teachers Are Ineffective**
More than three-fourths of voters (78%) believe it is likely there are ineffective public school teachers in the state of Louisiana who should be removed from the job, including 42% who describe it as *very* likely. In addition, 72% say it is likely there are ineffective public school teachers in their local community.
- **Voters Say Improving Teacher Performance Is the Best Way to Improve Education Overall**
Of seven offered options, “holding teachers more accountable for their students' progress” was picked by more voters (22%) than any other as having the greatest ability to improve public education. The second most favored option was “providing more support and professional development for teachers” (18%).

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- **Two-Thirds of Voters Support Modifying the Current Method of Teacher Evaluation**
Given voters' concerns about ineffective public school teachers, it is not surprising that voters are alarmed by current statistics about the results of teacher performance evaluations in the state. After hearing that the state's current method of evaluation results in a rating of "satisfactory" for 99% of the state's teachers, 66% of voters say the evaluation method needs to be changed. Less than one quarter of the electorate (23%) believes the current method is accurate and valid.
- **Majority of Voters Supports More Frequent Evaluations That Include Student Performance**
A sizeable majority of voters (59%) would like to see teachers evaluated more often than every three years, as is currently done. In addition, by a nine-point margin (52%-43%), voters support adding student performance and test scores as one component of teacher evaluation, in addition to the current components of in-class observation and peer review.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This memorandum summarizes results from a telephone poll of 600 randomly selected registered voters in Louisiana. Interviewing was conducted April 30-May 2, 2010. Special care was taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of the actual electorate are properly represented. The estimation error associated with a sample of 600 is 3.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that in 95 of 100 cases, the results of this poll are within 3.9 points, plus or minus, of the results that would have been obtained if all registered voters had been interviewed.