

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Brian Nienaber

**Re:** Key findings on top issues for the state legislature, literacy, school choice, and educational scholarship accounts from a statewide survey of likely voters in Georgia

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The Tarrance Group is pleased to present GeorgiaCAN with these findings from a survey of voter attitudes in the state of Georgia. These key findings are based on telephone interviews with N=500 “likely” registered voters throughout the state. Responses to this survey were gathered February 21-23, 2023 and the margin of error associated with a sample of this type is + 4.5% in 95 out of 100 cases.

**The overall electorate rates improving education as one of their top issues on which they want the state legislature to focus.** As seen below, improving education is second only to crime/public safety for Republican voters and for Democratic voters. Improving education in the top issue for Independents.

	<b>All voters</b>	<b>GOP voters</b>	<b>IND voters</b>	<b>DEM voters</b>
Crime/public safety	29%	34%	18%	28%
Improving education	20%	17%	21%	23%
Healthcare	15%	8%	14%	23%
Cutting state income taxes	12%	15%	18%	5%
Promoting economic growth	10%	13%	10%	7%
Transportation	4%	3%	1%	6%

**This interest in improving education is heightened when voters are informed about the literacy crisis facing the state.** Voters were informed that recent national testing showed that more than two-thirds of 4th and 8th graders in Georgia are not proficient in reading.

This information leads fully 61% of voters to select that is extremely important to make drastic changes in the how reading is taught in Georgia. Another 25% of voters say it is very important to make these drastic changes, so fully 86% of voters think making these changes are extremely or very important.

Majorities of Republicans (57%), Independents (62%), and Democrats (64%) say making this change is extremely important. There is similarly strong support across the demographic spectrum with majorities of men (54%), women (67%), 18-44 year olds (61%), 45-64 year olds (60%), seniors (62%), white voters (56%), and African Americans (68%) all rating this change as extremely important to them.

**Voters are strongly supportive of school choice.** Voters were asked whether they would “*favor or oppose expanding educational options by allowing a child’s state education dollars to follow that student to the school that best fits their needs, whether that is public, private, magnet, charter, virtual or homeschool?*”

Overall, 73% of voters favor this proposed school choice program, including 54% of voters who strongly favor it. In contrast, just 24% of voters oppose this proposed school choice program. As seen below, support for this proposal crosses geographic, racial, age, and political lines as white Democrats are the only major demographic group below with majority opposition.

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Oppose</b>
All	73%	4%	24%
Greater Atlanta	73%	2%	24%
Non-metro GA	72%	5%	23%
All White	69%	4%	27%
White Men	67%	5%	28%
White Women	71%	3%	27%
African American	78%	2%	20%
18-44	74%	3%	22%
45-64	70%	4%	26%
65+	74%	4%	22%
GOP	80%	4%	16%
ALL DEM	62%	3%	35%
White DEM	38%	3%	59%
Minority DEM	74%	4%	22%
All IND	81%	2%	16%
White IND	76%	1%	23%
Minority IND	85%	3%	12%
All Parent	75%	5%	20%
Public School Parent	73%	4%	23%

**Educational scholarship accounts also enjoy broad and intense support from voters.** Voters were read this description of ESAs: *An Education Scholarship Account, also known as an ESA, allows parents to use the state funding that would have gone to their child's public school to instead purchase the education that best meets their child's needs. They could spend this money on private school tuition, online education programs, tutoring, curriculum, therapies and other direct education needs of that child.*

Overall, 64% of voters favor ESAs after this description, including 39% of voters who strongly favor them. Just 34% of voters oppose ESAs after this description. As seen below, as with school choice, there is broad and diverse coalition of voters who favor ESAs.

	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>Oppose</b>
All	64%	2%	34%
Greater Atlanta	68%	2%	30%
Non-metro GA	60%	2%	38%
All White	62%	1%	36%
White Men	66%	2%	32%
White Women	58%	1%	41%
African American	64%	2%	34%
18-44	70%	2%	28%
45-64	58%	1%	41%
65+	63%	2%	35%
GOP	76%	2%	23%
ALL DEM	48%	1%	51%
White DEM	25%	1%	74%
Minority DEM	59%	2%	39%
All IND	72%	3%	25%
White IND	63%	1%	36%
Minority IND	81%	5%	15%
All Parent	74%	4%	22%
Public School Parent	71%	3%	26%

This data makes clear that voters rate improving education as a top issue on which the state legislature should focus. In assessing educational policy areas in need of intervention, voters have a strong interest in improving literacy through changes in how reading is taught. Voters also strongly support improving education through expanded school choice options as well as the creation of educational scholarship accounts to expand educational choices for parents. These are meaningful and impactful ways to improve education in the state with policies that enjoy strong support among voters.