

# PUBLIC VIEWS

## K-12 EDUCATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA

**FEATURING THE 2010 ASBSD/ZOGBY POLL OF SOUTH DAKOTA VOTERS**

Associated School Boards of South Dakota  
September 2010

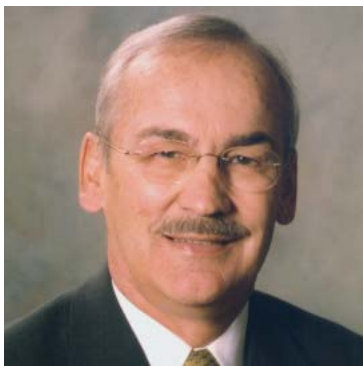




# INTRODUCTION



SUSAN HUMISTON  
PRESIDENT



WAYNE LUEDERS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## START WITH THE PREMISE THAT ALL STUDENTS CAN LEARN.

When we accept that simple statement as an undeniable truth, the next challenge is to build school systems that can ensure every student receives a high quality education that prepares him or her for the challenges of the next generation.

That's the hard part.

Fortunately, those that came before us handed down an inspiring commitment to America's children: A free system of schools open to all. We refer to it as "The Promise of Public Education."

In South Dakota, we're blessed with committed students, caring parents and dedicated educators. It's why we have a strong system of public schools and why so many of our students perform well academically.

We can all be proud of our public schools, but we can do better. We can help struggling students and identify ways to raise the bar for all students.

But our schools can't do it alone. Delivering on the promise of public education requires the support of our communities and a host of stakeholders.

Putting the "public" back in public education is one reason why Associated School Boards of South Dakota decided to develop *Public Views: K-12 Education in South Dakota*.

At the core of *Public Views* is a public opinion poll. Conducted every two years, the ASBSD/Zogby Poll of South Dakota vot-

ers provides a window into how South Dakotans view the state's public schools and how likely voters feel about a range of issues facing our K-12 school districts.

*Public Views* is modeled after the PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward Public Schools, a respected annual national poll that has been in operation for more than four decades. For *Public Views 2010*, we've included some comparisons to national sentiment.

To ensure the poll can be trusted as a reliable research tool and policy guide, we enlist the services of the respected Zogby International Polling firm.

ASBSD and Zogby work together to develop polling questions, which include a core set of questions we ask every year and a few questions about education issues currently being discussed. In cases when a question was asked in both 2008 and 2010, we included the results of the 2008 poll - just look for the columns marked "Trend 2008 Poll" (polling data from 2008 is representative to the entire sample of likely voters from that year).

ASBSD also offers our view of how voter perceptions may be interpreted (we've clearly marked those sections as commentary). We invite everyone to read the results and draw your own conclusions.

Thank you for taking time to read *Public Views*. We hope, at the very least, you become more aware of education issues. Most importantly, thank you for joining us in a conversation about the direction of our state's public schools. Together, we can continue to strive toward delivering on the promise of public education.

*Public Views 2010: K-12 Education in South Dakota*, featuring the 2010 ASBSD/Zogby Poll of South Dakota Voters, is available for download on ASBSD's website by visiting [www.asbsd.org/advocacy](http://www.asbsd.org/advocacy) and clicking on the "Public Views" link. To read more about national education issues, visit Phi Delta Kappa on their website at [www.pdkintl.org](http://www.pdkintl.org).

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Commentaries, comparisons and at-a-glance statistics were written and compiled by ASBSD. They are for informational purposes only and were not part of the 2010 ASBSD/Zogby International Poll of South Dakota voters.

# OVERVIEW

## REGARDLESS OF THE ISSUE, SOUTH DAKOTANS STRONGLY SUPPORT PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS.

The 2008 ASBSD/Zogby Poll of South Dakota voters revealed praise for K-12 schools and a clear expression of the challenges facing the state's school districts. Two years later, likely voters expressed remarkably consistent opinions. In every question asked in both 2008 and 2010, the public's opinion varied by just a few percentage points.

The clear trend in public opinion is understandable on issues related to education quality. The most widely used measures of student achievement - assessment scores and graduation rates - continue to reflect a successful public school system.

However, the environment in which our public schools operate is much different today compared to when the 2008 ASBSD/Zogby poll was released.

With the election of a new president has come a new set of federal education priorities. President Obama is already leaving his mark on education policy, but the most significant shifts in federal education law are only starting to take shape.

In the past two years, our nation has been struggling to recover from the largest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Across the nation, state governments have been dealing with dramatic budget shortfalls that threaten funding for elementary and secondary education.

South Dakota has not been immune to the effects of the Great Recession, and neither have the state's public schools. Even after receiving more than \$100 million in emergency education aid from the federal government, lawmakers have frozen school funding and eliminated a host of vital K-12 programs and services.

Despite the grim economic news, South Dakotans' opinions on school funding have remained relatively unchanged since 2008. The strong show of support for public schools comes when the state's public schools may need it the most.

At a time when state officials are considering a 10 percent reduction in state spending, the 2010 ASBSD/Zogby Poll suggests the electorate is standing behind South Dakota's school districts. Decreasing education funding is viewed as enormously unpopular. Instead, likely voters believe that the state needs to invest additional resources in our state's public schools.

## ABOUT ASBSD

Associated School Boards of South Dakota is a 501(c)3 private, non-profit association serving South Dakota school board members and the school districts they govern.

### ASBSD'S VISION

South Dakota students are positioned to individually excel and responsibly contribute in the 21st Century. School board members are engaged local leaders who embrace their role in providing responsive, transformative education systems that maximize South Dakota's investment in public education.

### ASBSD'S MISSION

ASBSD advances public education by empowering local school board leaders and advocating for a thriving public education system.

### ASBSD'S BELIEFS

- All students can learn.
- All students can achieve.
- Learning is a journey that never ends.
- Every student has a right to a holistic high-quality public education.
- Public education is essential for a free, self-governing society.
- Local governance is vital for effective, efficient and innovative public school districts.
- High quality public education is an investment.

### ASBSD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ASBSD is governed by locally elected school board members from across South Dakota. Directors are elected by school boards, and represent four geographic regions and five school district size categories.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Susan Humiston, Edgemont	Neil Putnam, Mitchell
PRESIDENT	FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT
Bev Banks, Belle Fourche	Duane Alm, Aberdeen
SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT	PAST PRESIDENT

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Anita Peterson, Haakon  
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Jan Jungemann, Douglas  
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Melissa Whipple-Riley, Todd County

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Kevin Watts, Miller Area  
LeRoy Hellwig, Sisseton  
Duane Alm, Aberdeen

# HIGHLIGHTS

## EDUCATION QUALITY

- ▶▶ South Dakotans believe K-12 public school districts are doing a good job. An overwhelming majority of those polled are confident that students are receiving a quality education.
- ▶▶ Teacher quality ranks high atop the list of factors that voters weigh when determining whether children are receiving a quality education – much higher than other measurements of school success, including testing results and graduation rates.
- ▶▶ When asked to grade schools based on the quality of education students receive, most give schools in their community an A or B.
- ▶▶ Voters polled say a lack of funding and difficulty hiring teachers are the biggest challenges their local district faces.

## DECISION MAKING

- ▶▶ Those polled trust local school boards to make decisions that impact public schools.
- ▶▶ South Dakota voters believe the primary function of school boards is to ensure a school district provides a quality education.
- ▶▶ Voters overwhelmingly believe local school boards are best positioned to make decisions about when it may be time to consolidate or merge with another school district.
- ▶▶ Most South Dakotans agree that school districts should invest in training to help school board members become more effective in their positions.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

- ▶▶ South Dakota voters believe K-12 education funding should be increased.
- ▶▶ A great majority of South Dakotans agree that additional funding will result in a better education for students.
- ▶▶ South Dakota voters overwhelmingly chose K-12 education when asked to identify what they believe should be the top priority in the state budget.
- ▶▶ Likely voters disagree with the state's recent decision to use emergency federal education aid to balance the state's budget.
- ▶▶ Those polled are concerned that K-12 education spending, as a percent of the state budget, has decreased in the past decade.
- ▶▶ Voters expressed support for two possible initiated measures that would deliver increased funding to schools.

## EDUCATION POLICY

- ▶▶ Despite having a generally unfavorable view of the No Child Left Behind Act, South Dakota voters believe it is likely that South Dakota school districts can meet the 100 percent student proficiency goals that are central to the law.
- ▶▶ South Dakotans are supportive of tying teacher salary to student academic performance.
- ▶▶ Those polled do not support state adoption of voluntary pre-kindergarten standards.
- ▶▶ Likely voters are supportive of state efforts to adopt common standards for core academic subjects.

## ABOUT THE 2010 ASBSD/ZOGBY POLL OF SOUTH DAKOTA VOTERS

### OVERVIEW

Zogby International was commissioned by ASBSD to conduct a telephone survey of 500 likely South Dakota voters. The survey was conducted Sep. 9-11, 2010.

### MARGIN OF ERROR

The margin is +/- 4.5 percentage points. Margins of error are higher for sub-groups. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent.

### QUESTIONS

The survey featured 37 questions, including demographic questions, that were developed jointly by ASBSD and Zogby International. For questions with several possible answers, response options were rotated.

### SAMPLE

Participants were randomly drawn from telephone CDs of a national listed sample.

### SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

#### AFFILIATION

- ▶▶ 44% Republican
- ▶▶ 34% Democratic
- ▶▶ 22% Independent

#### AGE GROUP

- ▶▶ 18-24: 6.1%
- ▶▶ 25-34: 20.1%
- ▶▶ 35-54: 35.7%
- ▶▶ 55-69: 25.4%
- ▶▶ 70+: 12.4%

#### GENDER

- ▶▶ 51% Female
- ▶▶ 49% Male

#### CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18

- ▶▶ 60% do not have children under age 18 living at home
- ▶▶ 40% have children under age 18 living at home
- ▶▶ 31% enroll their children in public K-12 schools

# EDUCATION QUALITY

TABLE 1: CONFIDENCE

How confident are you that children enrolled in South Dakota K-12 public schools are receiving a quality education?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>84.3</b> PERCENT CONFIDENT			
<b>13.3</b> PERCENT NOT CONFIDENT			
VERY CONFIDENT	32.5	32.9	41.1
SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	51.8	59.0	46.7
NOT VERY CONFIDENT	8.4	5.6	7.5
NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT	4.9	2.5	2.5
NOT SURE	2.4	-	2.2
<b>TOTAL CONFIDENT</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>91.9</b>	<b>87.8</b>
<b>TOTAL NOT CONFIDENT</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>10.0</b>

TABLE 2: DETERMINING QUALITY

Which two of the following factors have the greatest influence on your perception of the quality of K-12 public schools? (choose up to two)

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>57.7</b> PERCENT QUALITY TEACHERS			
<b>32.5</b> PERCENT COLLEGE READINESS			
STUDENT TESTING RESULTS	28.9	24.0	22.9
STUDENT GRADUATION RATES	26.0	27.1	20.4
STUDENTS ARE PREPARED FOR COLLEGE	32.5	33.0	32.4
QUALITY OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS	57.7	58.5	53.4
QUALITY OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS	8.4	7.3	9.3
SCHOOL BOARD LEADERSHIP	10.7	11.4	3.0
OTHER/NONE OF THESE	5.7	8.4	4.7
NOT SURE	2.2	1.5	2.6

\* Some choices were eliminated from question used in 2008.

## ASBSD COMMENTARY

### LOCAL CONTROL IS ALIVE, WELL AND WORKING.

South Dakotans continue to harbor high esteem for their public schools and the men and women who govern them.

Nearly 85 percent of those polled are confident students enrolled in the state’s public schools are receiving a quality education and more than 75 percent of South Dakotans give their local public school a grade of an ‘A’ or ‘B’ (Table 1, Table 3).

Students are performing and schools are serving their purpose, which helps explain why 75 percent of South Dakotans continue to trust locally elected school boards to make decisions that impact our education systems (Table 5).

For all the confidence South Dakotans have in their public schools, likely voters are astutely aware of the challenges facing the state’s school districts.

Nearly 50 percent of those polled recognize a lack of funding as the biggest challenge facing our public schools and voters are becoming increasingly aware of the difficulties schools are have hiring and keeping quality teachers (Table 4).

For years, education and business leaders have tried without success to convince state policy makers that school funding and teacher shortages are challenges worth a state-level solution. It’s clear the average South Dakota voter agrees.

South Dakotans value classroom educators. Those polled cited teacher quality as the single greatest influence on their perception of the quality of our state’s schools (Table 2).

The challenge going forward is ensuring our state can maintain a quality teaching force - a task that will only get more difficult in the next decade as a third of South Dakota’s teaching force enters retirement. A long-term solution will only come when more lawmakers come around to recognizing the problem.

TABLE 3: GRADING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If you had to give a letter grade to the K-12 public schools in your community based on the quality of education the children enrolled are receiving, would you give them an A, B, C, D, or F?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>77.0</b> PERCENT GIVE AN A OR B			
<b>4.2</b> PERCENT GIVE D OR F			
GIVE SCHOOLS AN 'A'	24.3	27.5	29.2
GIVE SCHOOLS A 'B'	52.7	60.5	47.5
GIVE SCHOOLS A 'C'	15.4	7.4	16.5
GIVE SCHOOLS A 'D'	3.8	2.8	2.1
GIVE SCHOOLS A 'F'	0.4		1.8
NOT SURE	3.3	1.8	2.9
<b>TOTAL A OR B</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>88.0</b>	<b>76.7</b>
<b>TOTAL D OR F</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.9</b>

TABLE 4: CHALLENGES

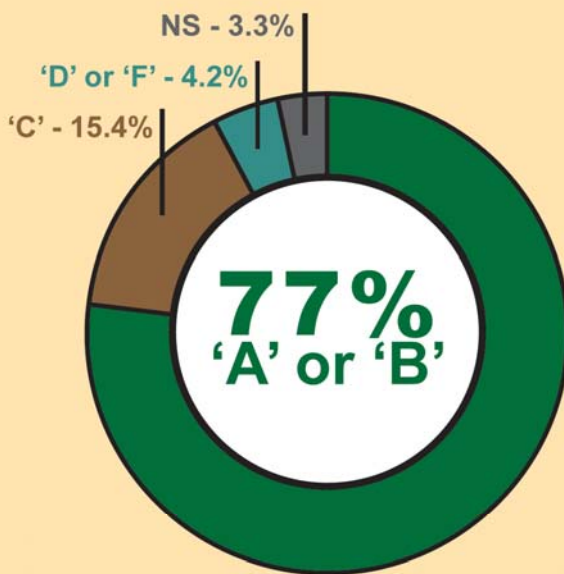
Which two of the following do you think are the biggest challenges facing K-12 public schools in your community? (choose up to two)

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>47.1</b> PERCENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT			
<b>40.9</b> PERCENT HIRING TEACHERS			
FINANCIAL SUPPORT	47.1	55.7	45.6
HIRING QUALITY TEACHERS	40.9	42.1	32.3
STUDENT DISCIPLINE	23.9	22.3	17.7
EDUCATION QUALITY	11.9	12.7	6.0
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	37.6	29.7	31.9
STUDENT SAFETY/HEALTH	5.2	7.6	3.5
OTHER/NONE OF THESE	4.1	4.4	7.5
NOT SURE	1.8	-	3.5

\* Some choices were eliminated from question used in 2008.

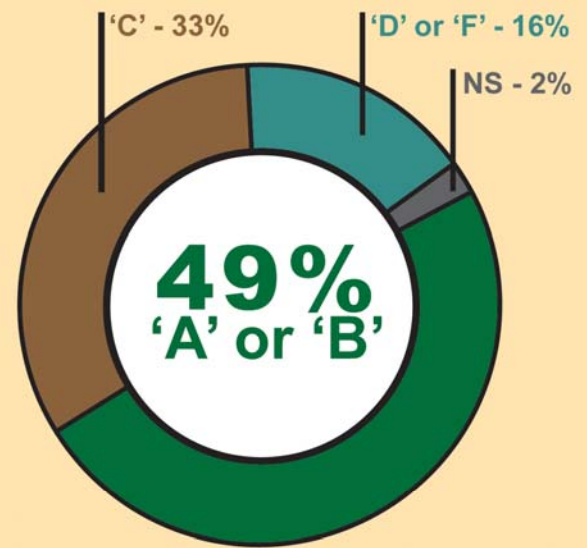
SOUTH DAKOTA COMPARED TO THE NATION

SD: ASBSD/ZOGBY POLL



If you had to give a letter grade to the K-12 public schools in your community based on the quality of education the children enrolled are receiving, would you give them an A, B, C, D, or F?

US: PDK/GALLUP POLL



What grade would you give the public schools [in your community]: A, B, C, D, or FAIL? (Table 9, PDK/Gallup 2010)

# DECISION MAKING

TABLE 5: TRUST

Which of the following do you trust the most to make decisions that impact the education of students in the K-12 public school district in your community?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>74.5</b> PERCENT LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD			
LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD	74.5	73.5	77.7
STATE LEGISLATURE	5.5	5.0	7.2
STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH	4.0	4.3	4.0
OTHER/NOT SURE	16.0	17.1	11.0

TABLE 6: SCHOOL BOARD PRIORITY

Which of the following do you think should be the highest priority for your local school board?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>66.0</b> PERCENT QUALITY EDUCATION			
<b>21.3</b> PERCENT ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS			
PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS	66.0	68.7	68.6
GOVERN IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE LAW	4.3	2.5	6.2
REPRESENT TAXPAYERS	6.8	5.6	6.8
ADVOCATE FOR STUDENTS	21.3	23.2	15.8
OTHER/NOT SURE	1.6	-	2.6

TABLE 7: CONSOLIDATION

Which of the following do you think should be responsible for deciding when school districts need to merge or consolidate?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>72.0</b> PERCENT LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD			
LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD	72.0	72.5	75.3
STATE LEGISLATURE	11.5	12.4	11.0
STATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH	4.2	4.8	2.8
OTHER/NOT SURE	12.3	10.4	10.8

TABLE 8: SCHOOL BOARD TRAINING

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that school districts should invest in training school board members to become more effective in their positions?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>84.4</b> PERCENT AGREE			
<b>13.5</b> PERCENT DISAGREE			
STRONGLY AGREE	48.7	50.2	57.3
SOMEWHAT AGREE	35.7	29.2	28.9
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	6.6	11.1	7.1
STRONGLY DISAGREE	6.9	5.2	5.0
NOT SURE	2.0	4.3	1.8
<b>TOTAL AGREE</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>79.4</b>	<b>86.2</b>
<b>TOTAL DISAGREE</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>

## SOUTH DAKOTA COMPARED TO THE NATION

### SD: ASBSD/ZOGBY POLL

South Dakotans overwhelmingly trust local school boards to make decisions that impact K-12 public schools in their communities. About 75 percent of South Dakotans polled showed more confidence in local school boards compared to the policy making branches of state government. The belief in local decision making was reaffirmed when 72 percent of those polled said they believe local school boards should be responsible for deciding when school districts need to consolidate.

### US: PDK/GALLUP POLL

Those questioned by PDK/Gallup were more likely to assign responsibility for public schools to state governments. When PDK/Gallup asked which unit of government is most responsible for deciding what should be taught in schools, 43 percent replied the state, compared to 28 percent who felt local school boards should be responsible. Similarly, 45 percent felt the state should hold schools accountable and just 35 percent felt that was the responsibility of the local school board (Table 2, PDK/Gallup 2010).

# EDUCATION FUNDING

**TABLE 9: STATUS OF SCHOOL FUNDING**

Do you think public school funding in South Dakota should be increased or decreased, or do you think it is just about right?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>61.5</b> PERCENT INCREASE K-12 FUNDING			
INCREASE FUNDING	61.5	68.5	65.7
DECREASE FUNDING	2.8	-	1.7
FUNDING IS ABOUT RIGHT	29.9	27.0	26.6
NOT SURE	5.7	4.4	6.0

**TABLE 10: DOES MONEY MATTER?**

If additional funding were to be allotted to K-12 public education, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that it will result in better education for students in your community?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>76.8</b> PERCENT AGREE			
<b>22.3</b> PERCENT DISAGREE			
STRONGLY AGREE	39.3	44.8	42.7
SOMEWHAT AGREE	37.5	35.6	35.9
SOMEWHAT DISAGREE	11.7	10.1	12.5
STRONGLY DISAGREE	10.6	9.6	7.1
NOT SURE	0.8	-	1.8
<b>TOTAL AGREE</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>80.4</b>	<b>78.5</b>
<b>TOTAL DISAGREE</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>19.6</b>

**TABLE 11: STATE BUDGET PRIORITY**

When it comes to how state government spends your tax dollars, which one or two of the following areas do you think should be the highest priority? (choose up to two)

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>69.3</b> PERCENT K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION			
<b>29.4</b> PERCENT HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES			
K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION	69.3	75.0	73.1
STATE UNIVERSITIES	4.8	7.6	11.3
HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES	29.4	24.1	29.9
POST-HIGH SCHOOL TECHNICAL EDUCATION	6.6	6.5	8.9
MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS	10.6	6.3	8.4
AGRICULTURE	18.5	24.0	12.9
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	17.2	13.9	17.0
LAW ENFORCEMENT	5.9	6.4	7.9
ROADS/TRANSPORTATION	19.2	18.2	6.2
OTHER/NOT SURE	2.3	0.8	2.4

\* To ensure results of this question were not influenced by a series of K-12 education questions, this question was asked first.

**TABLE 12: EDUJOBS AID**

Recently, Congress approved and the President signed legislation delivering emergency aid to state government and schools. With passage of that bill, South Dakota will receive more than \$26 million in new federal education aid. In your opinion, should the state use the education aid to help balance the state's budget, or should local school districts receive the education aid directly?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>78.0</b> PERCENT DIRECTLY TO SCHOOLS			
BALANCE THE STATE BUDGET	16.3	12.6	N/A
DIRECTLY TO K-12 SCHOOLS	78.0	80.0	N/A
OTHER/NOT SURE	5.7	7.4	N/A

## SOUTH DAKOTA COMPARED TO THE NATION

### ASBSD/ZOGBY & PDK/GALLUP POLLS

Both the ASBSD/Zogby and PDK/Gallup polls show the public believes that additional investments in K-12 education will yield better academic results for students.

Nearly 77 percent of South Dakota voters agreed (Table 10), and more than two-thirds of those polled by PDK/Gallup said the amount of money spent on a public school student's education will affect the quality of his or her education "a great deal" or "quite a lot." (Table 13, PDK/Gallup 2010).

TABLE 13: SHARE OF STATE BUDGET

Since 1998, the percentage of South Dakota’s state budget devoted to K-12 public education funding has decreased from 39 percent to 31 percent. Knowing this, are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned that the percentage of the state budget spent on K-12 education has decreased?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>80.9</b> PERCENT CONCERNED			
<b>18.0</b> PERCENT NOT CONCERNED			
VERY CONCERNED	44.4	47.3	43.5
SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	36.5	36.0	39.3
NOT VERY CONCERNED	12.3	11.8	8.6
NOT AT ALL CONCERNED	5.7	4.9	6.4
NOT SURE	1.1	-	2.1
<b>TOTAL CONCERNED</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>83.3</b>	<b>82.8</b>
<b>TOTAL NOT CONCERNED</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>15.0</b>

TABLE 14: INITIATED MEASURE A

If you had the opportunity to vote on a statewide initiated measure that would require the state to gradually restore the percentage of the state budget devoted to K-12 education back to 39 percent without raising taxes, would you most likely support or oppose the initiated measure?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>77.4</b> PERCENT SUPPORT			
SUPPORT THE MEASURE	77.4	81.8	N/A
OPPOSE THE MEASURE	15.5	10.7	N/A
NOT SURE	7.2	7.6	N/A

TABLE 15: INITIATED MEASURE B

One research study concluded that South Dakota needs to provide approximately \$133 million in additional funding to adequately fund the state’s public schools. If you had the opportunity to vote on an initiated measure that would increase the state’s sales tax to help fund schools, would you support or oppose the measure?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>55.1</b> PERCENT SUPPORT			
SUPPORT THE MEASURE	55.1	53.2	N/A
OPPOSE THE MEASURE	35.8	36.6	N/A
NOT SURE	9.1	10.1	N/A

## ASBSD COMMENTARY

### DESPITE THE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES, LIKELY VOTERS REMAIN SUPPORTIVE OF INCREASED SCHOOL FUNDING

More than 60 percent of South Dakota voters believe K-12 funding should be increased and less than 3 percent of the state’s likely voters believe funding for K-12 education should be decreased (Table 9).

When asked to prioritize how their tax dollars are spent, 70 percent of the responses singled-out K-12 education - more than double the responses any other area of the state’s budget received (Table 11).

The 2010 polling results trend closely with results from 2008, a time when the state’s budget was under much less stress than it is today. Voters are sending a clear message to lawmakers: Even in tough economic times, funding for our public schools must be a higher priority.

On two different fronts, South Dakotans demonstrated displeasure with how funding for the state’s public schools has been addressed.

Nearly 80 percent of voters disagreed with the state’s recent decision to use emergency federal education aid to balance the state’s budget (Table 12). And more than 80 percent of South Dakotans are concerned that the share of the state budget devoted to K-12 education has declined since 1998 (Table 13).

South Dakota voters would do things differently, if they had the chance.

Despite a tough economy, 77 percent of likely voters said they would support an initiated measure to gradually restore K-12’s share of the state budget without raising taxes (Table 14) and more than 55 percent of those polled said they would support increasing the state’s sales tax if they knew the revenue would go to K-12 schools (Table 15).

It couldn’t be clearer: South Dakotans believe in investing in our state’s public school students. Why? Perhaps its because more than 75 percent agree that investing in our public K-12 schools means a higher quality education for our state’s children (Table 10).

# EDUCATION POLICY

TABLE 16: VIEW OF NCLB

The No Child Left Behind Act is a federal education bill passed by Congress in 2001 that has since been implemented in South Dakota. From what you know or have heard about the Act, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion about it, or are you not familiar enough to form an opinion?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>28.6</b> PERCENT FAVORABLE			
<b>46.2</b> PERCENT UNFAVORABLE			
VERY FAVORABLE	6.7	2.6	9.2
SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE	21.9	27.8	20.0
SOMEWHAT UNFAVORABLE	25.3	26.7	21.1
VERY UNFAVORABLE	20.9	22.4	28.6
NOT FAMILIAR	25.1	20.5	20.6
NOT SURE	0.2	-	0.5
<b>TOTAL FAVORABLE</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>30.4</b>	<b>29.2</b>
<b>TOTAL UNFAVORABLE</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>49.7</b>

TABLE 17: NCLB ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

According to the No Child Left Behind Act, 100 percent of K-12 public school students must be proficient their corresponding reading and math levels by the end of the 2013-14 school year. Do you think it is very likely, somewhat likely, not very likely or not at all likely that this could be achieved in the public schools in your community?

	STATE TOTALS		
	LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
<b>71.4</b> PERCENT LIKELY			
<b>26.7</b> PERCENT NOT LIKELY			
VERY LIKELY	22.8	21.2	28.3
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	48.6	59.3	37.3
NOT VERY LIKELY	16.7	13.4	20.8
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	10.0	6.0	12.1
NOT SURE	1.8	-	1.5
<b>TOTAL LIKELY</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>80.5</b>	<b>65.6*</b>
<b>TOTAL NOT LIKELY</b>	<b>26.7*</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>32.9*</b>

\*Totals marked with an "\*" were incorrectly totaled in the original release of Public Views 2010 and have been corrected in the version posted on ASBSD.org.



TABLE 18: PERFORMANCE PAY

In your opinion, how closely should a teacher's salary be tied to his or her students' academic performance?

	69.6 PERCENT TIED	28.6 PERCENT NOT TIED	STATE TOTALS		
			LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
VERY CLOSELY TIED			18.9	8.0	N/A
SOMEWHAT CLOSELY TIED			50.7	59.0	N/A
NOT VERY CLOSELY TIED			12.3	14.0	N/A
NOT AT ALL TIED			16.3	17.2	N/A
NOT SURE			1.8	1.8	N/A
<b>TOTAL CLOSELY TIED</b>	<b>69.6</b>			<b>57.0</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>TOTAL NOT CLOSELY TIED</b>		<b>28.6</b>		<b>31.2</b>	<b>N/A</b>

TABLE 19: PRE-K STANDARDS

Academic standards are intended to ensure students build and master concepts in a logical order. Currently, South Dakota does not have academic standards for pre-kindergarten programs. Do you believe South Dakota should develop standards for voluntary pre-kindergarten education?

	51.9 PERCENT NO	STATE TOTALS		
		LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
YES		44.0	45.2	N/A
NO		51.9	51.9	N/A
NOT SURE		4.1	3.0	N/A

TABLE 20: COMMON CORE STANDARDS

South Dakota education officials are discussing whether our state should join several other states in adopting common learning standards in math and English language arts. If common standards are adopted, it will mean that students in South Dakota are learning the same math and English language arts concepts in the same grades as students in some other parts of the country. Do you think it would be a good idea for South Dakota to adopt the common standards?

	62.3 PERCENT GOOD IDEA	STATE TOTALS		
		LIKELY VOTERS (%)	K-12 PARENTS (%)	TREND 2008 POLL
YES, IT'S A GOOD IDEA		62.3	63.4	N/A
NO, IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA		25.1	23.6	N/A
NOT SURE		12.6	13.0	N/A

## ASBSD COMMENTARY

### SOUTH DAKOTANS EMBRACE SOME CURRENT NATIONAL ISSUES, REJECT MAJOR FEDERAL POLICY.

The Obama Administration and Congress are laying the groundwork to rewrite the nation's signature education policy, and it's clear that South Dakotans believe the federal government needs to chart a new course.

Nearly 50 percent of the state's likely voters hold an unfavorable view of the No Child Left Behind Act, the education reform package passed in 2001. However, nearly a decade after the law passed, one-quarter of South Dakota's likely voters said they don't know enough about the law to form an opinion (Table 16).

Despite their dislike of No Child Left Behind, South Dakotans believe one of the law's more controversial provisions is achievable. In yet another display of their confidence in the state's public schools, nearly 70 percent of likely voters think the state's students are likely to meet the 100 percent proficiency targets enacted as a part of No Child Left Behind (Table 17).

When asked their opinion of three other education policy areas, South Dakotans expressed support for two reforms proposed by President Obama and showed resistance to one policy that has been pushed by Gov. Mike Rounds.

Almost 70 percent of South Dakotans believe a teacher's salary should be tied in some way to student performance. The state's likely voters aren't entirely sold on performance pay, though - 50 percent of those polled said teacher salary should only be "somewhat closely tied" to student outcomes (Table 18).

The President has also strongly encouraged the adoption of common standards in core academic subjects. More than 60 percent of those polled believe its a good idea to adopt uniform standards in math and English language arts (Table 20).

Though several South Dakota communities are currently working to launch standards-based pre-kindergarten, South Dakotans don't believe it's a good idea for the state to establish voluntary standards for pre-kindergarten programs (Table 19).

# K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

**PERFORMANCE**

**STATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: 2003-2010 (ALL GRADES)**

READING		MATH	
YEAR	% STUDENTS PROFICIENT	YEAR	% STUDENTS PROFICIENT
2003	71%	2003	59%
2004	77%	2004	71%
2005	82%	2005	74%
2006	83%	2006	73%
2007	83%	2007	75%
2008	84%	2008	76%

READING		MATH	
YEAR	% STUDENTS PROFICIENT	YEAR	% STUDENTS PROFICIENT
2009	75%	2008	75%
2010	76%	2010	76%

Notes: State assessments have changed since 2003. According to state law, 100% of South Dakota students must be proficient in reading and math by the end of the 2013-14 school year.

**ENROLLMENT**

**ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL DATA: 2000-2009**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
FALL ENROLLMENT	129,093	126,990	125,612	124,988	123,058	121,327	120,682	120,277	121,089	121,015
KINDERGARTEN CLASS	8,984	9,060	8,784	8,907	9,004	9,331	9,506	9,870	10,061	10,558
SENIOR CLASS	9,298	9,341	9,554	9,484	9,311	8,898	8,803	8,964	8,731	8,703
SCHOOLS	749	753	744	732	721	710	718	697	705	707
SCHOOL DISTRICTS*	176	176	176	174	172	168	168	168	165	161

CHANGE IN FALL ENROLLMENT 2000-2009 -6%

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS 2000-2009 -6%

Notes: For the 2010-11 school year, there are 152 school districts operating in South Dakota, a decrease of 14% since 2000.

**SCHOOL FUNDING**

**PER-STUDENT FUNDING AND AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY: 1998-2009**

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
FUNDING PER STUDENT	3,440	3,541	3,605	3,666	3,776	3,889	3,968	4,087	4,238	4,365	4,529	4,642
% CHANGE		2.9%	1.8%	1.7%	3.0%	3.0%	2.0%	3.0%	3.7%	3.0%	3.8%	2.5%
AVG. TEACHER SALARY	27,839	28,386	29,072	30,265	31,383	32,414	33,236	34,039	34,673	35,378	36,697	37,917
% CHANGE		2.0%	2.4%	4.1%	3.7%	3.3%	2.5%	2.4%	1.9%	2.0%	3.7%	3.3%

AVERAGE YEARLY PERCENT CHANGE, FUNDING PER STUDENT, 1998-2009 3.2%

AVERAGE YEARLY PERCENT CHANGE, AVERAGE TEACHER SALARY, 1998-2009 3.3%

Notes: "Funding Per Student" is the annual amount of the per-student allocation in South Dakota's state aid to education funding formula. Data is presented is the most recent available from the South Dakota Department of Education.



# PUBLIC VIEWS

## K-12 EDUCATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA

FEATURING THE 2010 ASBSD/ZOGBY POLL OF SOUTH DAKOTA VOTERS

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