



CYGNAL

Survey of North Carolina School Board Members

North Carolina Statewide

Conducted April 25 – May 3, 2023

n=112

SB Member Screener

1. Are you currently a member of a North Carolina School Board?

| | Freq. | % |
|--------|-------|--------|
| Yes | 112 | 100.0% |
| No | 0 | 0.0% |
| Unsure | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

RD/WT

2. Generally speaking, would you say education in North Carolina is headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track?

| | Freq. | % |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Right direction</u> | <u>54</u> | <u>48.2%</u> |
| Definitely the right direction | 4 | 3.6% |
| Mostly the right direction | 50 | 44.6% |
| <u>Wrong track</u> | <u>53</u> | <u>47.3%</u> |
| Mostly the wrong track | 34 | 30.4% |
| Definitely the wrong track | 19 | 17.0% |
| Unsure | 5 | 4.5% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Top Challenges

3. Of the following options, what do you think is the biggest challenge facing public schools today?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|-------|--------|
| Education has become too politicized | 36 | 32.1% |
| Teacher shortages and lack of staff | 26 | 23.2% |
| Unequal school funding across districts | 17 | 15.2% |
| There is a lack of support and respect for teachers | 8 | 7.1% |
| Inappropriate topics like sexual orientation and gender fluidity | 8 | 7.1% |
| Schools are not safe and there is too much violence in schools | 5 | 4.5% |
| Not enough counseling or mental health support for students | 4 | 3.6% |
| Schools are teaching Critical Race Theory | 2 | 1.8% |
| Class sizes are too large | 2 | 1.8% |
| Parents do not have enough say over what their children are taught | 1 | 0.9% |
| School boards are actively banning books from the curriculum and removing books from school libraries | 1 | 0.9% |
| Too much standardized testing | 1 | 0.9% |
| Parents trying to take control of schools | 1 | 0.9% |
| Unsure | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |



Thinking about issues relating to controversial books and curriculum in our public schools...

Objectionable Books Response

4. When parents flag a book from the public school library as inappropriate due to language, violence, or sexual content, which of the following responses offers the best way to address the problem of what to do with objectionable material?

| | Freq. | % |
|--|-------|--------|
| Remove the book immediately | 10 | 8.9% |
| Limit access to the book | 15 | 13.4% |
| Convene a review committee to resolve the matter | 81 | 72.3% |
| Allow the book to remain indefinitely | 5 | 4.5% |
| Unsure | 1 | 0.9% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Objectionable Books Policy

5. In general, should books flagged by parents as inappropriate due to language, violence, or sexual content remain in a public school library?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|-------|--------|
| All objectionable books should be removed | 30 | 26.8% |
| No objectionable books should be removed | 15 | 13.4% |
| Objectionable books should be removed from elementary school libraries only | 12 | 10.7% |
| Schools should purchase additional books that provide multiple points of view | 29 | 25.9% |
| Unsure | 26 | 23.2% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Objectionable Books View

6. When parents flag instructional materials as inappropriate due to language, violence, or sexual content, which of the following responses best represents your views about the objectionable material and use in the standard curriculum?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|-------|--------|
| Teachers should offer alternative assignments to students whose parents object | 91 | 81.3% |
| Teacher decisions about curriculum are absolute and final | 4 | 3.6% |
| Students should be removed from the classroom whenever parents object to lessons or units | 7 | 6.3% |
| Unsure | 10 | 8.9% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Objectionable Books Curriculum

7. Should books or instructional materials flagged by parents as inappropriate due to language, violence, or sexual content be used in the standard curriculum?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|-------|-------|
| All objectionable books or instructional materials should be removed | 35 | 31.3% |
| Teachers should have sole discretion to determine which books and instructional materials to use in their classroom | 5 | 4.5% |



| | | |
|---|-----|--------|
| Principals should work with teachers to ensure that their curriculum offers multiple points of view | 63 | 56.3% |
| Unsure | 9 | 8.0% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Thinking now about how schools should handle topics such as sexual preference and gender identity...

Sex Ed Focus

8. When it comes to teaching children about sexual preference and gender identity, do you think the public schools give these topics...?

| | Freq. | % |
|----------------------|-------|--------|
| Too much time | 46 | 41.1% |
| Not enough time | 7 | 6.3% |
| Right amount of time | 24 | 21.4% |
| Unsure | 35 | 31.3% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Parents of Transgender Students

9. Information related to a child's gender identity is highly personal and sensitive information. School districts have struggled with the best way to address this issue and the needs of parents and children. In your opinion, which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion on how schools should inform parents about a student's gender identity?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|-------|--------|
| Do not tell parents because the parents may not support a child's decision to transition | 1 | 0.9% |
| Parents have a legal right to all medical and psychological information about their child | 94 | 83.9% |
| Unsure | 17 | 15.2% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Teacher's Political Opinions

10. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Teachers share their personal beliefs in the classroom in an attempt to influence the beliefs of their students.

| | Freq. | % |
|--|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Agree</u> | <u>45</u> | <u>40.2%</u> |
| Strongly agree | 18 | 16.1% |
| Somewhat agree | 27 | 24.1% |
| <u>Neither agree nor disagree</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>10.7%</u> |
| <u>Disagree</u> | <u>52</u> | <u>46.4%</u> |
| Somewhat disagree | 19 | 17.0% |
| Strongly disagree | 33 | 29.5% |



| | | |
|--------|-----|--------|
| Unsure | 3 | 2.7% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Teacher's Political Opinions Solutions

11. In your opinion, what should be done about teachers who share their personal beliefs in the classroom in an attempt to influence the beliefs of their students?

| | Freq. | % |
|--|-------|--------|
| Prohibit discussion of certain topics and issues | 19 | 17.0% |
| Publish teacher lesson plans online | 11 | 9.8% |
| Place cameras in the classroom | 3 | 2.7% |
| Require teachers to show no preference for certain ideas | 64 | 57.1% |
| Unsure | 15 | 13.4% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Classroom Politization

12. In your opinion, in the past five years, has the classroom instruction in the local kindergarten through 12th-grade schools become more or less political?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>More political</u> | <u>93</u> | <u>83.0%</u> |
| Much more political | 64 | 57.1% |
| Somewhat more political | 29 | 25.9% |
| <u>Neither more nor less political</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>10.7%</u> |
| <u>Less political</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1.8%</u> |
| Somewhat less political | 1 | 0.9% |
| Much less political | 1 | 0.9% |
| Unsure | 5 | 4.5% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Classroom Politization Blame

13. In your opinion, who is more responsible for politicizing education?

| | Freq. | % |
|--|-------|--------|
| Democrats and liberals are more responsible | 34 | 30.4% |
| Republicans and conservatives are more responsible | 33 | 29.5% |
| Both equally responsible | 35 | 31.3% |
| Neither are responsible | 2 | 1.8% |
| Unsure | 8 | 7.1% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |



Thinking now about a parent's role in their child's education...

Determinant of Child's Education

14. In your opinion, which of the following options is best suited to determine how and where a child is educated?

| | Freq. | % |
|--------------------------|-------|--------|
| Local school board | 30 | 26.8% |
| Parents/Guardians | 56 | 50.0% |
| School Principal | 5 | 4.5% |
| State Board of Education | 16 | 14.3% |
| State Legislature | 0 | 0.0% |
| Unsure | 5 | 4.5% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Education Reform Level

15. When you think about education and the public schools today, do you feel that the public education system is working reasonably well, needs some changes and improvements, needs major reforms, or needs a complete overhaul?

| | Freq. | % |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|
| Is working reasonably well | 21 | 18.8% |
| Needs some changes and improvements | 50 | 44.6% |
| Needs major reforms | 25 | 22.3% |
| Needs a complete overhaul | 16 | 14.3% |
| Unsure | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Teacher v Parent Trust

16. If you heard there was a disagreement on an education issue between teachers and a group of parents, would you generally have more confidence in the teachers or in the parent group to have the right position on the issue?

| | Freq. | % |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------|
| More confidence in teachers | 42 | 37.5% |
| More confidence in parents | 11 | 9.8% |
| Same confidence in both | 47 | 42.0% |
| Unsure | 12 | 10.7% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

Now thinking about the school board...

Curriculum Complaints Last 12 Months

17. During the last 12 months, has an adult voiced concerns about instructional materials or library books that they find objectionable?

| | Freq. | % |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| No | 35 | 31.3% |
| Fewer than ten complaints | 50 | 44.6% |



| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--------|
| More than ten complaints | 11 | 9.8% |
| More than twenty complaints | 13 | 11.6% |
| Unsure | 3 | 2.7% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

School Board Parent Complaints

18. During your term on the school board, have parental complaints about instructional materials increased, decreased, or remained the same?

| | Freq. | % |
|-------------------|-------|--------|
| Increased | 49 | 43.8% |
| Decreased | 6 | 5.4% |
| Remained the same | 47 | 42.0% |
| Unsure | 10 | 8.9% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

School Board Authority

19. Do you believe that school boards should...

| | Freq. | % |
|--|-------|--------|
| Have more authority over curriculum and instruction matters | 61 | 54.5% |
| Have less authority over curriculum and instruction matters | 13 | 11.6% |
| Have no authority over curriculum and instruction matters | 14 | 12.5% |
| Have total authority over curriculum and instruction matters | 10 | 8.9% |
| Unsure | 14 | 12.5% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

School Board Grade

20. The grade I would assign that best reflects the quality of the work of the school board would be:

| | Freq. | % |
|--------|-------|--------|
| A | 21 | 18.8% |
| B | 55 | 49.1% |
| C | 23 | 20.5% |
| D | 4 | 3.6% |
| F | 3 | 2.7% |
| Unsure | 6 | 5.4% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

21. Are you female or male?

| | Freq. | % |
|--------|-------|--------|
| Female | 56 | 50.0% |
| Male | 56 | 50.0% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |



22. What age range do you fall within?

| | Freq. | % |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Under 50</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>18.8%</u> |
| 18 - 34 | 2 | 1.8% |
| 35 - 49 | 19 | 17.0% |
| <u>50 and Over</u> | <u>91</u> | <u>81.3%</u> |
| 50 - 64 | 49 | 43.8% |
| 65+ | 42 | 37.5% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

23. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, or Independent?

| | Freq. | % |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Republican</u> | <u>45</u> | <u>40.2%</u> |
| Strongly Republican | 20 | 17.9% |
| Mostly Republican | 25 | 22.3% |
| <u>Independent</u> | <u>23</u> | <u>20.5%</u> |
| <u>Democratic</u> | <u>40</u> | <u>35.7%</u> |
| Mostly Democratic | 19 | 17.0% |
| Strongly Democratic | 21 | 18.8% |
| Unsure | 4 | 3.6% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

24. And thinking about your views toward politics and government, would you say you are...

| | Freq. | % |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Conservative</u> | <u>49</u> | <u>43.8%</u> |
| Very conservative | 22 | 19.6% |
| Somewhat conservative | 27 | 24.1% |
| <u>Moderate</u> | <u>41</u> | <u>36.6%</u> |
| <u>Liberal</u> | <u>18</u> | <u>16.1%</u> |
| Somewhat liberal | 13 | 11.6% |
| Very liberal | 5 | 4.5% |
| Unsure | 4 | 3.6% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

25. Do you consider the area where you live to be more rural, suburban, or urban?

| | Freq. | % |
|----------|-------|-------|
| Rural | 76 | 67.9% |
| Suburban | 29 | 25.9% |



| | | |
|-------|-----|--------|
| Urban | 7 | 6.3% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

26. What is your primary source for news?

| | Freq. | % |
|---|-------|--------|
| National broadcast television news (i.e. NBC, ABC, CBS) | 35 | 31.3% |
| Local broadcast television news | 24 | 21.4% |
| Cable news | 17 | 15.2% |
| Social media | 5 | 4.5% |
| Newspaper | 7 | 6.3% |
| Talk radio | 3 | 2.7% |
| Other websites | 13 | 11.6% |
| Unsure | 8 | 7.1% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

27. What annual household income range do you fall within out of the following options?

| | Freq. | % |
|---------------------|-------|--------|
| Less than \$40,000 | 1 | 0.9% |
| \$40,000 - \$69,999 | 18 | 16.1% |
| \$70,000 - \$99,999 | 21 | 18.8% |
| \$100,000 or more | 61 | 54.5% |
| Unsure | 11 | 9.8% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

28. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity?

| | Freq. | % |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|
| White or Caucasian | 70 | 62.5% |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 0 | 0.0% |
| Black or African American | 29 | 25.9% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other | 7 | 6.3% |
| Unsure | 6 | 5.4% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

29. Thinking back, who did you vote for in the 2020 election for President?

| | Freq. | % |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|
| Republican Donald Trump | 49 | 43.8% |
| Democrat Joe Biden | 44 | 39.3% |
| Another candidate | 6 | 5.4% |
| Did not vote | 1 | 0.9% |
| Unsure | 12 | 10.7% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |



30. What's the highest level of education you have completed?

| | Freq. | % |
|--|------------------|---------------------|
| <u>No degree</u> | <u>19</u> | <u>17.0%</u> |
| Some high school | 0 | 0.0% |
| High school diploma/GED | 2 | 1.8% |
| Technical Certification | 2 | 1.8% |
| Some college or Associate's Degree | 15 | 13.4% |
| <u>At least College</u> | <u>89</u> | <u>79.5%</u> |
| Four-year undergraduate or Bachelor's Degree | 34 | 30.4% |
| Graduate degree or further | 55 | 49.1% |
| Unsure | 4 | 3.6% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

31. Age + Income

| | Freq. | % |
|------------------|-------|--------|
| <65 \$40k-\$70k | 12 | 10.7% |
| <65 \$70k-\$100k | 11 | 9.8% |
| <65 \$100k+ | 39 | 34.8% |
| 65+ <\$40k | 1 | 0.9% |
| 65+ \$40k-\$70k | 6 | 5.4% |
| 65+ \$70k-\$100k | 10 | 8.9% |
| 65+ \$100k+ | 22 | 19.6% |
| Unsure | 11 | 9.8% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

32. Gender + Age

| | Freq. | % |
|-----------|-------|--------|
| F 18 - 34 | 1 | 0.9% |
| F 35 - 49 | 10 | 8.9% |
| F 50 - 64 | 27 | 24.1% |
| F 65+ | 18 | 16.1% |
| M 18 - 34 | 1 | 0.9% |
| M 35 - 49 | 9 | 8.0% |
| M 50 - 64 | 22 | 19.6% |
| M 65+ | 24 | 21.4% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

33. Race + Gender

| | Freq. | % |
|--------------|-------|-------|
| White Female | 32 | 28.6% |
| White Male | 38 | 33.9% |
| Black Female | 16 | 14.3% |
| Black Male | 13 | 11.6% |



| | | |
|--------------|-----|--------|
| Other Female | 2 | 1.8% |
| Other Male | 5 | 4.5% |
| Unsure | 6 | 5.4% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

34. Gender + Education

| | Freq. | % |
|-------------------------|-------|--------|
| Female At least College | 45 | 40.2% |
| Female No degree | 7 | 6.3% |
| Male At least College | 44 | 39.3% |
| Male No degree | 12 | 10.7% |
| Unsure | 4 | 3.6% |
| Total | 112 | 100.0% |

METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted April 25 – May 3, 2023, with 112 North Carolina school board members. North Carolina school board members were interviewed via email invitation.

ABOUT THE FIRM

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