

Omnibus Poll

Just prior to the 2010 midterm elections, the Center for School, Health and Education commissioned [Lake Research Partners](#) to conduct a poll to gauge the understanding of registered voters about school-based health centers and the connection between health, learning and educational success. The survey was conducted October 31st through November 2nd, 2010.¹

Key Findings

- Registered voters see a strong connection between health and learning and being successful in school. Additionally, voters embrace the goal of helping children stay healthy to give them an equal chance to succeed in school. This provides an opening for the centers.
- Registered voters also feel that improving school meals can improve the health of children.
- Registered voters lean toward favoring school based health centers, with only a quarter expressing opposition. Except for conservatives and tea party supporters, every political and demographic subgroup favors the centers.
- Registered voters find a message about school based health centers providing support through crisis intervention, bullying mediation, and violence and suicide prevention to be convincing.
- Despite the economy, registered voters prove open to increasing taxes that would be earmarked for school based health centers and in similar numbers as 2006. A majority of them say they would favor requiring taxpayers to pay ten dollars more per year in federal taxes that would be earmarked for school based health centers. However, they give less of a margin of support when it comes to requiring states to set aside funds for school based health centers perhaps due to the status of state budgets at this point in time.
- As we have seen in other research, the American public realizes the need for a focus on health, wellness, and community prevention. Additionally, we have seen broad support for specific initiatives focused on improving the health of the country, especially those that target children and going through the schools to reach them.² These attitudes can prove beneficial to school based health centers in the discussion for the need for centers.
- Democrats, voters under 30, younger women, unmarried women, lesser educated voters show the most consistent support throughout, while men, especially older men, Republicans, and tea party supporters show more opposition.

Summary Findings

The 2010 Mid-Term Election

This past Election Day more than half of the electorate supported the Republican candidate in their Congressional district over the Democratic candidate by a margin of 51 percent to 46 percent.

- Voters most likely to vote for Republican candidates for Congress were age 55 and older (56 percent), men age 55 and older (58 percent), college men (56 percent), whites (59 percent), white men (61 percent), married men (59 percent), and married women (57 percent).
- Voters most likely to vote for Democratic candidates for Congress were under age 30 (65 percent), aged 30-39 (53 percent), women under age 55 (56 percent), college women (50 percent), African-Americans (91 percent), Latinos (62 percent), unmarried women (66 percent), unmarried men (52 percent), and union households (56 percent).

The economy dominated voters concerns. Nearly one third of voters said the economy was the most important issue for them this Election Day (32 percent). The economy proved three times as salient as any other issue. Following distantly, voters cite jobs as their most important issue (10 percent), followed by health care (9 percent), Social Security and retirement security (7 percent), the federal budget deficit (6 percent), education (6 percent), and moral values (5 percent). Taxes, Medicare and prescription drugs, immigration, abortion, the environment, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, terrorism and national security, and the mortgage crisis and home foreclosures fall below the 5 percent threshold.

- In the election, education was particularly important to voters under 30 (14 percent), Democrats (11 percent), liberals (11 percent), African-American women (11 percent), single voters (11 percent), and working mothers (11 percent).
- Among voters who said education was the most important issue for them on Election Day nearly three-quarters voted for a Democratic Congressional candidate (72 percent), while 23 percent voted for a Republican candidate. Democrats actually lost the voters who said the economy was the most important issue: 55 percent voted for a Republican candidate, 42 percent voted for a Democrat.

President Obama's job performance is negative. A majority of voters overall give President Obama a fair (19 percent) or poor (38 percent) rating, while 42 percent give Obama a positive job rating (15 percent excellent; 27 percent good).

- Obama is solidly positive among Democratic voters (80 percent excellent or good, 14 percent just fair, 5 percent poor). A majority of independents rate Obama's job performance as negative (65 percent fair or poor, 38 percent poor), while only three in ten independents have a positive view of his job (34 percent). Republican voters have solidly negative job ratings for Obama (92 percent fair or poor, 72 percent poor).

Over six in ten Republicans and Tea Party supporters reported being more enthusiastic about this year's election compared to past elections. Sixty percent of Republicans and 65 percent of Tea Party supporters said they were more enthusiastic. A majority of independents report being either less enthusiastic or feeling no different from past elections (20 percent less enthusiastic; 37 percent no different). In contrast, two-thirds of Democrats report feeling less enthusiastic (25 percent) or feeling no different from past elections (39 percent).

- Parents express less enthusiasm than voters overall. Among parents, 40 percent said they were more enthusiastic, while an additional 40 percent say there was no difference in their level of enthusiasm (19 percent less enthusiastic).

The Connection between Health and Learning

Voters see a strong connection between health and learning and being successful in school. Eighty percent of voters say there is at least some connection between the health of our nation's children and their learning and being successful in school (80 percent connection, 54 percent strong connection). Less than two in ten feel there is not a connection (18 percent no connection, 7 percent no connection at all).

- Pluralities of every demographic subgroup see a strong connection between health and learning. Voters who tend to feel this most strongly include, voters with a college education (63 percent), Democrats (64 percent), independents (59 percent), especially independent men (66 percent), mothers (59 percent), have children between the ages of 0 and 5 (61 percent), and live in the Mountain region (59 percent).

Additionally, voters strongly feel that improving school meals can improve the health of children. Nearly eight in ten voters agree that improving the quality of schools meals can improve the health of our children and their learning and being successful in school (79 percent agree, 63 percent strongly agree). Again less than two in ten disagree with this statement (18 percent disagree, 12 percent strongly disagree).

- Majorities of voters across nearly all demographic groups strongly agree with the link between quality school meals and the health of children, with the exception of Republican men (41 percent strongly agree).

School Based Health Centers

When voters hear a description of school based health centers they tend to favor the centers (mean 6.3 on a ten point scale where 0 is strongly oppose and 10 is strongly favor, 28 percent give it a “10”).³ A quarter of voters come down on the negative side (25 percent give it between a 0 and 4).

- Democrats prove the most favorable toward school based health centers, followed by independent voters (mean 8.0, 43 percent “10” and mean 6.0, 23 percent “10”). Republicans tend to be more neutral in their assessment (mean 5.2, 18 percent “10”). Only 7 percent of Democrats give the centers a 0-4, while 26 percent of independents and 38 percent of Republicans feel similarly.
- **Nearly every demographic and political subgroup net favors the centers, except for voters who identify as conservative and tea party supporters.** Those voters who are most favorable include voters under the age of 30 (41 percent give it a “10”), younger women under 55 (34 percent), voters with a high school education (33 percent), strong Democrats (50 percent), liberal voters (47 percent), African-American voters (62 percent), unmarried women (37 percent), mothers (33 percent).
- Groups that tend to show more opposition include men (30 percent give it a “0-4”), voters ages 65-69 (30 percent) and 70-74 (37 percent), older men (32 percent), college educated men (33 percent), Republicans (38 percent), tea party supporters (45 percent), independent men (32 percent), conservatives (45 percent), married men (33 percent), fathers (30 percent), and voters with children between the ages of 6-12 (31 percent), but even in most of these cases a larger number support the centers.
- Among those voters who favor school based health centers (rate them a 6-10), 60 percent voted for the Democratic candidate and 37 percent voted for the Republican candidate. In contrast, voters who are neutral or oppose the centers cast their vote for the Republican candidate (66 percent Republican candidate to 30 percent Democratic candidate among neutral; 87 percent to 10 percent among oppose).

Voters embrace the goal of helping children stay healthy to give them an equal chance to succeed in school. Nearly three-quarters of voters say the goal to help children stay healthy and give them an equal chance to succeed in school is personally important to them (72 percent important, 48 percent very important). About a quarter of

voters say this is less important (10 percent a little important, 16 percent not important at all).

- Every demographic and political subgroup says this is an important goal, except for tea party supporters who split in the importance of this goal.
- Even two-thirds of independents and Republicans say this goal is important to them (66 percent important, 38 percent very important for independents and 64 percent, 38 percent for Republicans). Democrats overwhelmingly believe this is an important goal (91 percent, 72 percent).
- Those voters who are most likely to feel this is a very important goal include women (54 percent), voters with a post-graduate degree (54 percent), Democrats (72 percent), liberal and moderate voters (69 percent and 60 percent respectively), unmarried women (70 percent), mothers (57 percent), public school parents (57 percent), voters in the Northeast and the West (54 percent for each).

Additionally, **voters find convincing a message about school based health centers providing support through crisis intervention, bullying mediation, and violence and suicide prevention.** Voters react favorably to the following message “Students today need help more than ever dealing with everything going on around them. School-based health centers can provide this support through crisis intervention, bullying mediation, and violence and suicide prevention. The centers can identify problems and provide an intervention for distress that otherwise might go undetected or lead to bigger problems” with 63 percent of voters saying it is a convincing message (34 percent very convincing). A third of voters find this message less convincing (36 percent less convincing, 23 percent not convincing at all).

- While majorities of Democrats and independents find the message convincing, half of Republicans say it is less convincing. Democrats – 84 percent convincing, 49 percent very convincing; independents – 59 percent convincing, 30 percent very convincing; Republicans – 46 percent convincing, 23 percent very convincing.
- Those voters who are most convinced by the message are women (39 percent very convincing), younger women (44 percent), voters with a high school education (42 percent), non-college educated women (42 percent), Democrats (49 percent), liberals (58 percent), unmarried women (40 percent), and women without children (40 percent).

Given the tough economic times, it is surprising that support for increasing taxes that would be earmarked for school based health centers continues to have similar support as it did in 2006. A majority of voters say they would favor requiring taxpayers to pay ten dollars more per year in federal taxes that would be earmarked for school based health centers (53 percent favor, 34 percent strongly). The support is similar to what we found in 2006 (52 percent, 38 percent).

- Not surprisingly, Democrats prove more favorable toward a tax increase than independents or Republicans (with Republicans expressing opposition) -- Democrats – 73 percent favor, 50 percent strongly to 24 percent oppose; independents – 49 percent, 26 percent to 43 percent oppose; Republicans – 44 percent, 27 percent to 54 percent oppose. Additionally strong opposition among independents and Republicans outnumbers those in strong support (32 percent strongly oppose for independents and 44 percent strongly oppose for Republicans).
- Voters who tend to be most supportive of a tax increase include, voters ages 30-39 (45 percent) and over 75 (41 percent), younger women (41 percent), college educated women (40 percent), Democrats (50 percent), liberals (57 percent), moderates (39 percent), unmarried women (53 percent), mothers (44 percent), and voters in the West (41 percent).
- Older voters 50-74, Republicans, conservatives, and rural voters are the only groups who tend to net oppose a tax increase. Those who are most opposed include men (39 percent strongly oppose), voters age 50-64 (41 percent), older men (42 percent), Republicans (44 percent), conservatives (50 percent), married men (43 percent), fathers (43 percent), grandfathers (40 percent), union households (42 percent), and tea party supporters (57 percent).
- Voters under 40 show an increase in support (+10 points), while voters 40-64 are less supportive (-8 points). Strong Democrats and weak Republicans also show an increase in support (+9 points and +6 points respectively), as do Republican women (+7 points). Unmarried women increase their support (+13 points), while married women drop slightly (-5 points), as do fathers (-6 points). Voters in the Northeast and West increase in support (+9 points and +8 points respectively), while voters in the South are slightly less supportive (-5 points).

Voters give less of a margin of support when it comes to requiring states to set aside funds for school based health centers, perhaps due to the budget problems most states have been facing with service cuts and layoffs. When posed as states specifically setting aside funds for school based health centers, half of voters say they favor this as a way to fund the centers (50 percent, 39 percent strongly favor), with 45 percent opposed (31 percent strongly opposed). Additionally, support has declined over time for this proposal (63 percent favor, 48 percent strongly in 2007 and 65 percent, 47 percent in 2006).

- While Democrats support this measure in similar numbers as they did for the tax increase, independents and Republicans come out opposed to this funding mechanism -- Democrats – 70 percent favor, 48 percent strongly favor; independents – 43 percent, 37 percent; Republicans – 36 percent, 30 percent. Under this scenario, 52 percent of independents and 62 percent of Republicans come out in opposition (29 percent and 49 percent strongly oppose respectively).

- Voters who are most supportive of states setting aside funds for the centers include, younger women (45 percent), voters with a high school education (54 percent), non-college educated women (44 percent), Democrats (48 percent), liberals (56 percent), unmarried women (46 percent), and rural voters (45 percent).
- Voters who are most opposed include, voters over 55 (36 percent strongly opposed), especially older men (39 percent), college educated voters (38 percent), Republicans (49 percent), conservatives (56 percent), married men (36 percent), grandfathers (43 percent), tea party supporters (55 percent), and voters who live in suburban areas (41 percent).
- Every demographic subgroup shows a decrease in support except for voters under 30 (+2 points from 2006). Additionally, every demographic group shows a double-digit decline in support except for younger women (-5 points), unmarried women (-2 points), voters with a high school education (-8 points) and voters with some college education (-9 points), non-college women (-8 points), weak Democrats (-8 points), strong Republicans (-8 points), and voters in the South (-8 points).

¹ Lake Research Partners designed and administered this pre-election and election night omnibus survey, which was conducted by phone using professional interviewers. The survey reached a total of 1,200 likely, registered voters nationwide. The sample consisted of 1,000 interviews among voters who were reached on landline phones and an oversample of 200 interviews among voters reached on cell phones. The survey was conducted October 31st through November 2nd, 2010.

Telephone numbers for the base sample was drawn from a listed voter sample and the cell phone oversample was drawn from a listed sample. The sample was stratified geographically based on the proportion of likely voters in each region. Data were weighted to reflect the aggregated "national" Congressional vote as reported in the 2010 exit polls, as well as by gender, party identification, ideology, marital status, race, region, and probability of selection and phone usage.

² Lake Research Partners (LRP) designed and administered this survey that was conducted online between September 24-October 1, 2010 for Herndon Alliance. The survey reached a total of 950 adults nationwide, with an oversample of 100 Latinos. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.2%.

³ Now let me read you a description of a school-based health center. The primary purpose of a school based health center is to promote the health and educational success of children and adolescents. The centers provide services for students ranging from primary health care, dental services, physical exams and immunizations, to health education and counseling. The centers also can help intervene with challenges in the school such as improving food quality, bullying, suicide, and drop-out prevention. They are usually operated by a community health organization, hospital, or health department, and are staffed by a team of medical and mental health professionals.