



To: Allen Sanchez, President & CEO, St. Joseph Community Health
From: Brian Sanderoff, President
Matt Hughes, Senior Vice President
Re: Early Childhood Education Survey
Date: September 27th, 2011

METHODOLOGY

This study, conducted by Research & Polling, Inc., was commissioned by St. Joseph Community Health. The objective of the study was to measure public opinion regarding early childhood education programs in New Mexico. A random sample of 603 adult residents in New Mexico was interviewed by telephone between August 24th and Sept 5th, 2011. A sample size of 603 provides a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 4.0%.

KEY FINDINGS

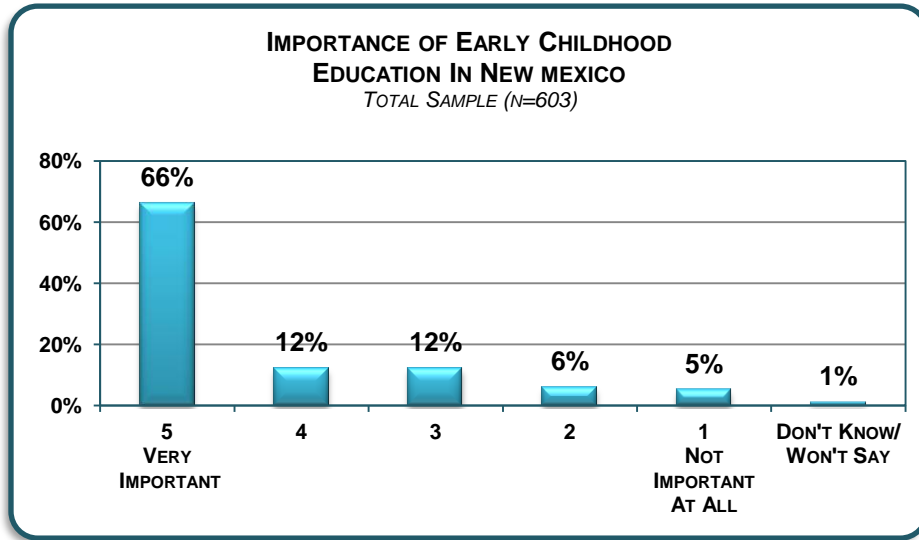
The results of a statewide telephone survey among a random sample of 603 adult residents in New Mexico show a perceived need for greater state involvement in early childhood education programs. Approximately four-in-five (78%) residents statewide feel early childhood education for children under the age of 5 is important, with 66% saying early childhood education is *very important*. Given the perceived importance of early childhood education, it is not surprising that seven-in-ten of the residents surveyed support the State of New Mexico dedicating more funds to early childhood education programs.

Not only do the large majority of residents support more early childhood education programs, most feel an appropriate way to fund such programs is through use of the State's Land Grant Permanent Fund. In fact, after being informed of how the State Permanent Fund is currently used for education and the current amount being distributed, 71% of residents say they would support allocating an additional 1.5% of the Permanent Fund to be used for early childhood education programs, with just 14% saying they are opposed to the idea.

Using the Permanent Fund to pay for early childhood education programs would require an amendment to the State's constitution that would have to be approved by the voters. To this end, the vast majority (80%) of residents surveyed believe the state legislature should pass a resolution that would put an early childhood funding amendment to the voters and let them decide whether or not the Permanent Fund should be used to support early childhood education programs.

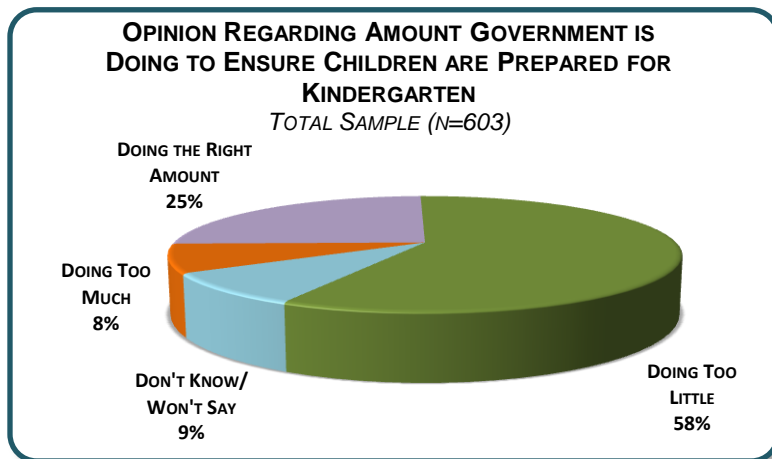
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Question: Early childhood education provides young children the skills they need to be ready to learn before they enter kindergarten. Overall how important do you feel the issue of early childhood education for children under the age of 5 is in New Mexico. Please use a 5-point scale where 5 is very important and 1 is not important at all.



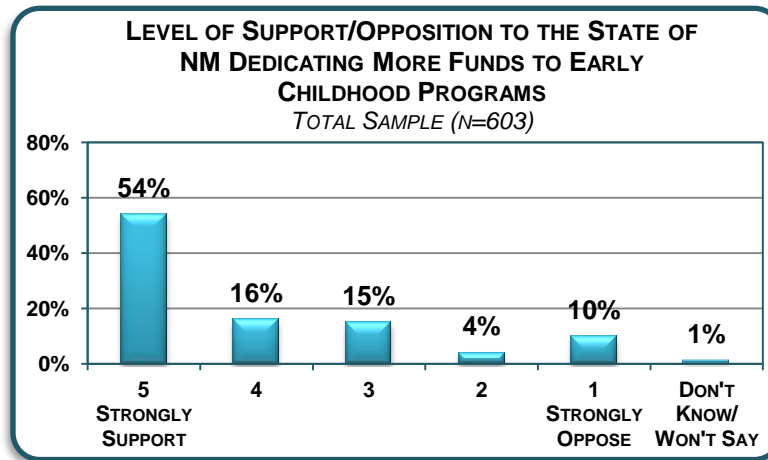
As shown above, over three-quarters (78%) of residents believe early childhood education for children under the age of five in New Mexico is important, with two-thirds who rate it as *very important*. Approximately one-in-ten residents do not feel this issue is important (11%).

Question: Overall, do you think New Mexico's state government is doing too much, the right amount, or too little to ensure that children enter kindergarten prepared with the skills they need to do their best in school?



Residents were asked if they believe New Mexico's state government is doing *too much*, *the right amount*, or *too little* to overall ensure that children enter kindergarten prepared with the skills they need to do their best in school. As shown in the graph above, nearly three-fifths of residents (58%) feel that New Mexico's state government is doing *too little*, while one-quarter feel that it is doing *the right amount*. Just 8% of residents feel state government is doing *too much* to ensure that children are prepared for kindergarten.

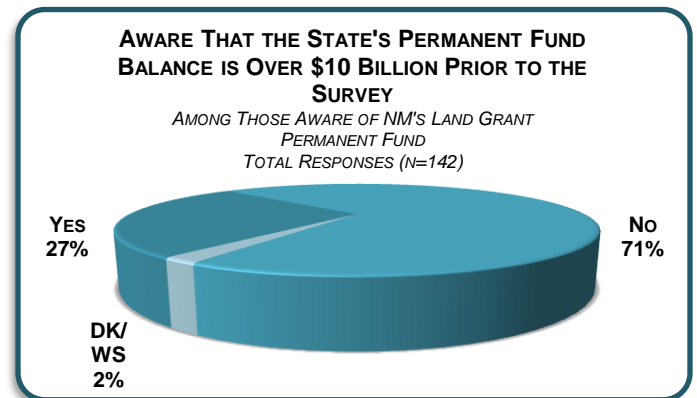
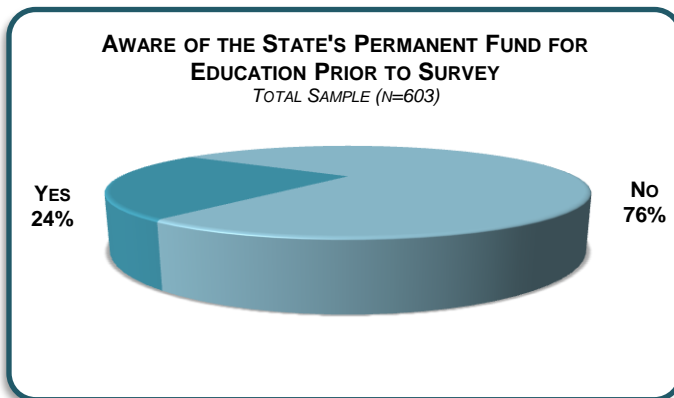
Question: Using a 5-point scale where 5 is strongly support and 1 is strongly oppose, please rate your level of support or opposition to the State of New Mexico dedicating more funds to early childhood programs.



When asked to rate their level of support for or opposition to the State of New Mexico dedicating more funds to early childhood programs, seven-in-ten residents support this measure, with the majority who *strongly support* (54%) dedicating more funds for this purpose. Fourteen percent of residents oppose the state dedicating more funds to early childhood programs (10% *strongly oppose*).

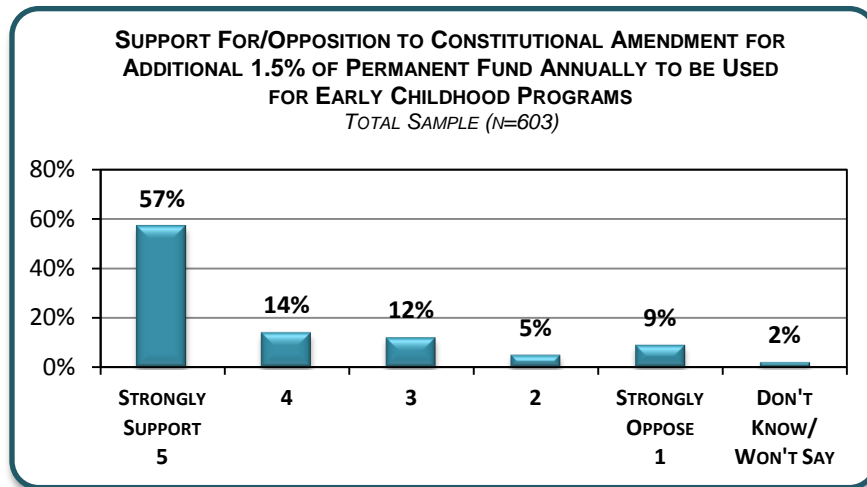
Question: New Mexico's Land Grant Permanent Fund was established in 1910 to ensure every child in the state has access to public education. Money is added to the Permanent Fund through the leases and sale of public lands, royalties collected on gas and oil production, as well as investment income including interests, dividends, and capitals gains. The current balance of the permanent fund is over \$10 billion dollars. Prior to this survey were you aware of the state's permanent fund for education?

Question: Prior to the survey were you aware that the current balance of the permanent fund is over \$10 billion?



Overall, most New Mexico residents are not well informed about the New Mexico Land Grant Permanent Fund. After being given a brief explanation of the Fund, just under one-quarter of residents (24%) surveyed say they were aware of the state's permanent fund for education prior to the survey. Furthermore, just 27% of those who say they know about the fund are aware that the current balance of the permanent fund is over \$10 billion.

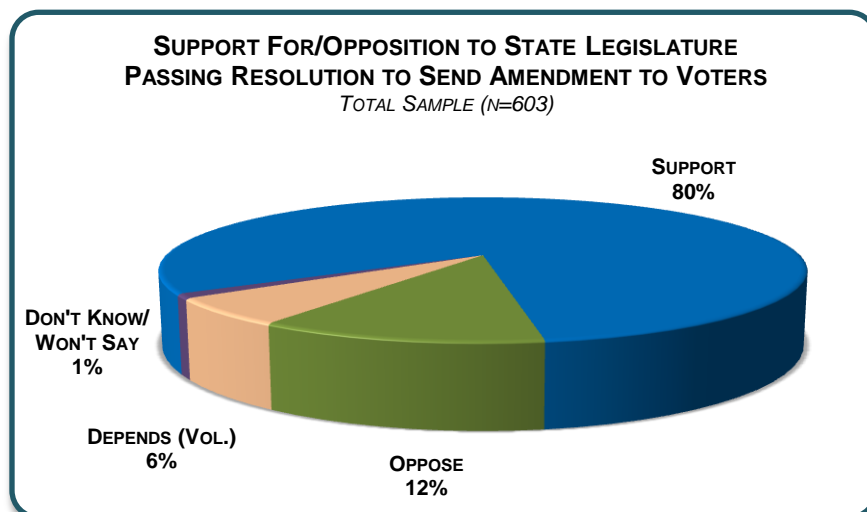
Question: On average, the New Mexico Land Grant Permanent fund grows at approximately 11% a year. Each year, approximately 5.5% of the fund is distributed to public K-12 schools and higher education schools. A proposal has been made to distribute an additional 1.5% of the fund annually to pay for early childhood education services in New Mexico. This would require a constitutional amendment that would have to be approved by voters. Using a 5-point scale where 5 is strongly support and 1 is strongly oppose, please rate your level of support or opposition to a constitutional amendment that would distribute an additional 1.5% of the Permanent Fund annually to be used for early childhood programs.



Residents were informed of the average growth rate and current distribution of education funding of the Permanent Fund and asked to rate their level of support or opposition to a constitutional amendment that would dedicate an additional 1.5% of the fund to be used for early childhood programs in the state.

As shown above, when asked their level of support for or opposition to a constitutional amendment that would distribute an additional 1.5% of the Permanent Fund annually to be used for early childhood programs, approximately seven-in-ten residents (71%) would support this measure (combined ratings of 4 or 5), with the majority (57%) who say they would *strongly support* this constitutional amendment. Fourteen percent of residents say they would oppose the constitutional amendment to distribute an additional 1.5% of the Permanent Fund annually for early childhood programs.

Question: In order to amend the constitution, a bill (resolution) must be passed by the New Mexico legislature and then approved by the majority of voters in an election. Do you support or oppose the state legislature passing a bill (resolution) that would send this early childhood funding amendment to the voters?



Four-fifths of residents say they support the state legislature passing a bill (resolution) that would send the early childhood funding amendment to the voters. Just 12% oppose, while 6% volunteer that it depends.

Question: Now, I am going to read you a list of items that may or may not be an issue facing New Mexico children. Using a 5-point scale, where a score of 5 means it is a very serious problem and a score of 1 means it is not a problem at all, please rate how much of a problem you feel each one is:

SERIOUSNESS OF VARIOUS ISSUES FACING NEW MEXICO CHILDREN (SUMMARY TABLE)							
TOTAL SAMPLE (N=603) RANKED BY HIGHEST "VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM"							
	VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM 5	4	3	2	NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL 1	DK/ WS	MEAN †
CHILD POVERTY RATE	40%	27%	22%	5%	3%	3%	4.0
CHILDREN'S ACHIEVEMENT IN SCHOOL	37%	24%	24%	9%	3%	3%	3.9
CHILDREN ENTERING SCHOOL PREPARED TO LEARN	33%	24%	23%	9%	6%	4%	3.7
CHILDHOOD NUTRITION	31%	24%	26%	9%	8%	2%	3.6
ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR CHILDREN	31%	18%	25%	11%	12%	3%	3.5
AFFORDABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5	27%	21%	23%	11%	9%	8%	3.5
AVAILABILITY OF PARENT EDUCATION OR COACHING PROGRAMS	24%	23%	23%	11%	9%	11%	3.5
AVAILABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 5	19%	19%	27%	15%	12%	7%	3.2

† The mean score is derived by taking the average score based on the 5-point scale. The Very serious problem response is assigned a value of 5; the Not a problem at all response is assigned a value of 1. The Don't Know/Won't Say responses are excluded from the calculation of the mean.

Residents were asked to rate how serious of a problem various items are that may or may not be an issue facing New Mexico children (using a 5-point scale, where a score of 5 means *very serious problem* and a score of 1 means *not a problem at all*). The child poverty rate is rated highest (among the items tested in the survey), with two-thirds of residents who feel this is a serious problem facing New Mexico children (40% *very serious problem*). Other issues in which the majority of residents believe is a problem in the state include: children's achievement in school (61%), children entering school prepared to learn (57%), and childhood nutrition (55%).

Approximately two-fifths (38%) of residents rate the availability of early childhood education programs as being a serious problem, however nearly half (48%) believe affordability of these programs is an issue. Approximately half (47%) of the residents surveyed also believe the availability of parent education or coaching programs is an issue in the state.