

All4Ed organization: A majority of voters, regardless of party, support public education.

All4Ed conducted a poll that found a majority of all voters, Republican and Democrat, support public education. By category, 68% of all voters, 82% of Democrat voters, and 58% of Republican voters support public education.

A dive into the data is in the [report](#).

Opinion at ED: Voters' Views on Education in 2024

Executive Summary

For further details on our poll results, view the main poll results web page. You can also read our blog posts summarizing key poll results on [school choice](#), [vouchers](#), and [safe and inclusive schools](#). The full range of topics covered in the poll include:

- Education in the 2024 election
- Education institutions and the federal role
- Education funding
- Voter attitudes on vouchers
- The cost and role of higher education
- The role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in education
- Voter sentiments on what safe and welcoming schools mean

Dive into the report

As soon as November's election results became clear, pundits, policy wonks, practitioners, and the public at large began to [speculate](#) whether a Trump administration will mean severe cuts to public education funding; elimination of federal guidance, civil rights oversight, key programs and personnel; or even outright closing the U.S. Department of Education. But what do voters actually think about the state of public schools, the federal role in education, and what needs to change—or be preserved?

A national debate about the future of education is happening in an information vacuum, without considering what the public wants and needs from our education system. That's why All4Ed commissioned an education election exit poll to learn what voters believe about public schools, federal education policy and spending, and ideas to improve education for our nation's students.

With President Trump's return to the White House, and with Republican majorities in both chambers of the U.S. Congress, the exact implications on education are unknown. But thanks to these findings, we do know three overarching asks from voters for federal policymakers to support our young people in the years ahead:

1. **A majority of voters, regardless of party, support public education** and would choose to use federal funding on public schools over voucher programs.
2. **Most voters do not want to abolish the U.S. Department of Education.** More Democrats *and* Republican voters oppose eliminating the Department of Education.
3. **Voters, regardless of party or demographic, support connecting education to jobs and careers**, including providing high school students with [pathways](#) that give them choices for college- and career-oriented options after graduation. (For more, see “What are college and career pathways?” below.)

What are college and career pathways?

Policies that develop, sustain, and expand access to college and career pathways in high schools (1) create opportunities for meaningful educational paths that engage students as partners in their learning, (2) provide access to advanced academic content and early college credit, (3) foster work-based skills and experiences so students make real-world connections to what is happening in the classroom, and (4) support students and families with counseling and navigational supports along the way. For a comprehensive description of key elements needed for equitable and effective pathways, read All4Ed’s [Pathways to Progress: A Federal Roadmap for College and Career Pathways](#).

Methodology

All4Ed worked with Lake Research Partners and the Tarrance Group to design and administer an online survey from October 30–November 5, 2024. The survey reached a total of 1,000 voters nationwide, with oversampling of Black, Latino, Asian American, and Indigenous voters (100 voters each), young voters aged 18–24 years (100 voters), 200 business leaders, and 200 educators.¹ The margin of error for the total sample is +/-3.1 percentage points. The margin of error for race and ethnicity samples, age samples, business leaders, and educators is +/-9.8 percentage points.

*In a split-sampled test, a random half of the survey respondents gets one version of a question while the other half of the survey respondents gets a different version of the question. This enables us to isolate a word or phrase to understand its impact on a concept by comparing the results of the two questions across the population.

Key Findings

How Did Voters Perceive Education in the 2024 Election?

Nearly half of voters heard only a little or nothing at all about education from either candidate, though voters remember hearing more from Kamala Harris (38 percent of voters) than Donald Trump (26 percent). What they did hear made voters slightly more likely to vote for Harris than for Trump. However, nearly as many voters said what they heard made no difference in their likelihood of voting for either candidate. Education messages that broke

through to voters include college affordability, education funding, and eliminating the U.S. Department of Education.

Although the two issues are interrelated, **voters trust Democrats more than Republicans on all education issues, while they trusted Republicans more on the economy.** Voters, and particularly educators, trust Democrats more when it comes to higher education, including job skills and career training during and after high school, and lowering college costs, as well as addressing the mental health of young people.

Overall, voters—whether they cast their ballot for Trump or Harris—wanted to hear more about education this election season. Fifty-five percent of voters said they heard too little about education, and that number was even higher among certain groups, including parents of public-school students.

55% of voters

56% of Harris voters

54% of Trump voters

wanted to hear more about education in the 2024 election.

Voters Support Public Schools and Public Education

Voters view public schools, including their local public school, more favorably than charter, private, or religious schools. Public schools are viewed most favorably by Democrats and Harris voters, as well as Black voters, parents, and public-school parents. Republicans and Trump voters are most favorable toward private and religious schools. However, **over two-thirds of voters prefer increasing public school funding over increasing funding for vouchers, including majorities of Republican and Trump voters.**

When asked to choose, majorities of Democratic and Republican voters prefer increasing funding for public schools over private school vouchers.

We should increase funding to give parents vouchers so they can send their child to the school that best meets their needs.

We should increase funding to improve public schools so that they better meet the needs of students for the jobs and careers of the future.

Voters also strongly support funding a broad federal education agenda that includes:

- Creating a welcoming environment for all students no matter their race or zip code
- Public K–12 schools
- Preparing middle and high school students for work and college
- Early childhood education
- Teacher salaries
- Providing reliable high-speed internet in low-income and rural communities

Voters are Skeptical of the Federal Government's Role but not the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Most voters have a favorable view of the U.S. Department of Education, though it is in a lower tier of education institutions with teachers' unions and labor unions, religious schools, charter schools, and local school boards (52–58 percent favorability). In a sign of the realignment in the Republican voting coalition as non-college-educated voters become more numerous, Republican voters are net-positive toward labor unions but less favorable to teachers' unions. That said, all these institutions have higher favorability with voters than either presidential candidate.

A majority of voters oppose eliminating the U.S. Department of Education (58 percent) and 40 percent are *strongly* opposed, while only 29 percent support such a move. Support for eliminating the department is concentrated among subgroups of men—especially fathers and Republican men. The strongest opponents of eliminating the department are Democrats, Black voters, older voters, and Harris voters. And slightly more Republican voters oppose eliminating the department than favor it (44 percent of Republican voters opposing versus 39 percent supporting). Trump voters are evenly split on the issue.

However, apart from providing internet access, voters give the federal government a poor rating across most dimensions of education, including making college and job training more accessible and affordable; reducing student loan debt; supporting educators; helping students recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; supporting students' mental health; and preparing students for college and the workforce. Republicans are consistently more likely than Democrats to give a negative rating, and independent voters tend to resemble Republicans.

A majority of voters support maintaining the U.S. Department of Education, and a higher share of both Democratic and Republican voters support keeping the department.

Voters Support Education Spending....with Caveats

A majority of voters would rather increase federal education funding than decrease or keep it the same; however, voters are tax sensitive. Only 39 percent of voters would still want to increase funding if it meant they paid more in taxes, and the most tax sensitive voters are Trump voters, women, mothers, and Latino voters. While most Democrats and many independents accept the premise that federal funding for education should be increased, a significant number of Republicans would prefer to keep federal spending on education the same or at a lower level. A majority of voters believe it is somewhat or very important to increase federal funding for all areas of education *except* for spending on private colleges and universities.

Similarly, a plurality of voters (37 percent) would not want their state to decrease education spending if a budget deficit threatened funding for public schools; they would

rather increase taxes on wealthy corporations and households. Voters are more opposed to decreases in state spending on public schools when it is framed as “cutting funding” instead of “tightening our belts.” Using language like “cutting funding” pushes voters toward other options such as increasing taxes on the wealthy or cutting funding from other programs instead of education.

That said, the notion of efficiency, in general, has wide appeal. **Voters respond to messages about focusing on reducing waste and using existing education funding more efficiently rather than spending more money;** 68 percent agree with this statement, and 34 percent strongly agree.

VOTERS WANT OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS FOR CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

Support for job skills and career training is a notable bright spot, and it is popular across party lines and demographics. Favorability for these programs is among the top tier of all institutions surveyed (84 percent or more of voters view these institutions very favorably or somewhat favorably), and that support is bipartisan. For example, 84 percent of Democrats, 81 percent of independents, and 86 percent of Republicans hold favorable views toward community and technical colleges.

While technical and career training options are universally popular, there is a strong partisan divide around views of four-year higher education. More than three-quarters of Democratic voters hold favorable views of two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and public colleges and universities. However, while 83 percent of Republican voters and 92 percent of independent voters view two-year colleges favorably, favorability drops to 38 percent and 34 percent for four-year colleges and universities and public colleges and universities, respectively, among Republican voters, and favorability drops to 33 percent and 23 percent, respectively, among independent voters.

Voters are sensitive to college costs, and most do not view postsecondary degrees as worth the cost. There is a 15-percentage-point decline, from 45 percent to 30 percent, in the share of voters who believe a four-year degree is worth it compared to the share who believe the degree is worth it *for the cost*. Voters see the value of community college for the cost as closer to its overall value, though less than half of voters believe a community college degree is worth it, whether or not cost is considered. A majority of voters disagree that a four-year degree is needed to get a good job.

On the other hand, **voters overwhelmingly agree there is a need to expand options for quality and affordable college and training**, provide lifelong learning options, and rethink the nation’s approach to education to adapt to the jobs of tomorrow; roughly 90 percent of voters agree with these statements.

75% of voters believe it is very or extremely important for public schools to focus on providing students with **career-connected learning**.

Voters' strong beliefs in providing people with options are mirrored in their views on high schools. **Voters across party lines and demographics recognize value in providing high school students with pathways that give them choices for college and career options after graduation.** Three-quarters of voters believe it is very or extremely important for K–12 schools to provide career and skills opportunities, particularly by providing career-connected learning and developing partnerships with colleges and employers, so that students have opportunities to thrive after high school. Similarly, 65 percent of voters believe it is very or extremely important to provide students with the opportunity to earn college credit while they are still in high school. And when asked what would help students the most after high school, 35 percent of voters prefer a *combination* of work-based learning, college credit, career counseling, and workforce credentials—a higher share than those who prefer options solely focused on careers (24 percent prefer connecting students to paid on-the-job programs, and 18 percent prefer job training and technical skills).

When asked to pick what would best support students after high school, more voters choose a combination of college and career options over one or the other.

Conclusion

As the Trump administration and the 119th Congress begin their work and refine their education agenda, All4Ed urges them to consider what the public wants from the nation's education system.

Most voters support public education and prefer using federal funds for public schools over voucher programs, regardless of their political affiliation. Most voters do not want to abolish the U.S. Department of Education, and a greater share of Democrats *and* Republicans support keeping the department over eliminating it. And most voters, across demographic and party lines, want programs that strengthen connections between education and careers and jobs training, like [college and career pathways](#) and [career-connected high schools](#).

These findings provide a common ground from which policymakers, advocates, educators, and students and families can join together to preserve what is working in our education system and to strengthen it for our nation's young people and our collective future.

Notes

ⁱ The survey also oversampled voters in ten states: Alabama, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Oklahoma, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and West Virginia (200 voters each) and California (600 voters). The margin of error for state oversamples is +/-6.9 percentage points, except the margin of error for the California sample is +/-4.0 percentage points.

The base sample was weighted slightly by age, gender, region, race and ethnicity, party identification, educational attainment, urbanicity, marital status, marital status by gender, the

ballot, ballot by gender, and ballot by gender and race in accordance with Edison exit polls. The additional oversamples by race and age were weighted by gender, age, and the ballot and weighted down to an effective sample of 1,000 to reflect their actual proportion of 2024 voters nationwide. State and occupational samples were kept separate from the base sample. State samples were weighted by gender, region, age, race and ethnicity, and the ballot.

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[Graph](#)