



MEMORANDUM

January 2, 2014

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: PAUL GOODWIN
Goodwin Simon Strategic Research

RE: Findings from a Statewide Voter Survey on Education Policy Issues

Last month, Goodwin Simon Strategic Research completed a statewide telephone survey of 807 likely November, 2014 voters, including an oversample of 200 Latino voters. The survey was conducted on behalf of Parent Revolution.

The California State Legislature adopted the landmark "Parent Trigger" (or "Parent Empowerment") law in 2010 to allow parents at consistently failing schools to re-organize that school if a majority of parents sign a valid petition. Five schools have been re-organized under the law.

Wide Majorities Support the Parent Trigger Law and Especially Among Latino Voters

The survey finds overwhelming support for the Parent Trigger law, with more than 80% of voters agreeing that parents should have the ability to force districts to re-organize a school that has been consistently failing its students. These numbers are even higher among Latino voters.

- Specifically, **82% overall** and **88% of Latino voters** agree that *if a school has been failing for four years in a row or more, parents at that school should have the power to force the school district to make changes at that school.*
- **76%** of all voters and **82%** of Latino voters oppose weakening or repeal of the Parent Trigger law; in fact, **30%** overall and **42%** of Latino voters want it expanded so it is easier for parents to re-organize failing schools. Just **16%** overall and 12% of Latino voters favor repeal of the Parent Trigger law.
- **61%** overall and **73% of Latino voters** say they support the law when it was described as follows: *The Parent Trigger law affects public schools in California that have failed to meet academic standards for at least four years in a row. The law says that if*

51 percent of the parents at a failing school sign a petition, then parents at this school would have the right to replace the principal, replace some or all of the teachers, or re-organize the school under a nonprofit management system.

Two of Three Voters Call for Major Change in State Education System

Support for the Parent Trigger law is boosted by widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo in education in California. Two out of three voters believe that California's public school system needs *major* changes (45%) or a *complete overhaul* (22%) with just 31% who believe our public schools need only *minor* changes. Responses from Latino voters are identical to those from the larger sample.

91% Want a Children-First Agenda for Our Schools

More than nine out of ten voters (91%) agree that California's school system should be based on a Children First agenda, in which *every decision about our schools is based on what is best for the children in the classroom, not what is best for the adults who work for the schools.* This includes 72% who *strongly* agree with this statement.

But By Two to One, Voters Believe California Public Schools Instead Put the Needs of Adults First Over Students

Support for the Parent Trigger law is also strengthened by a sense among voters that children do NOT come first in our current school system. In fact, 53% of all voters say our public school system in California puts the needs of teachers and administrators first. Just 26% say our public school system puts the needs of children first.

Voters Want Parents to Have More Power Over Schools

The Parent Trigger law gives parents with children trapped in failing schools the power to make changes at those schools. But do voters want parents to have more power? The survey finds that voters overwhelmingly agree that parents should have **more power**, and also that they believe parents to be qualified to make such decisions.

- Three out of four (74%) of all voters (and 83% of Latino voters) think **parents should have MORE power over what happens in local public schools.**
- Three out of four (73%) of all voters believe **parents to be qualified to make major decisions about their children's schools, including 76% of Latino voters.**

Methodology: Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted a telephone survey of 807 likely November 2014 voters in California between December 8 and December 15, 2013, using both land line numbers (80%) and wireless numbers (20%). The maximum sampling error for the main sample of 603 voters is +/- 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The comparable figure for results for 304 Latino voters (including an oversample of 204 additional Latino voters) is +/- 5.6 percentage points. Fifteen percent of the interviews with Latinos were completed in Spanish.