

RESEARCH  
& POLLING  
INC



*Public Education Survey  
October 2009*

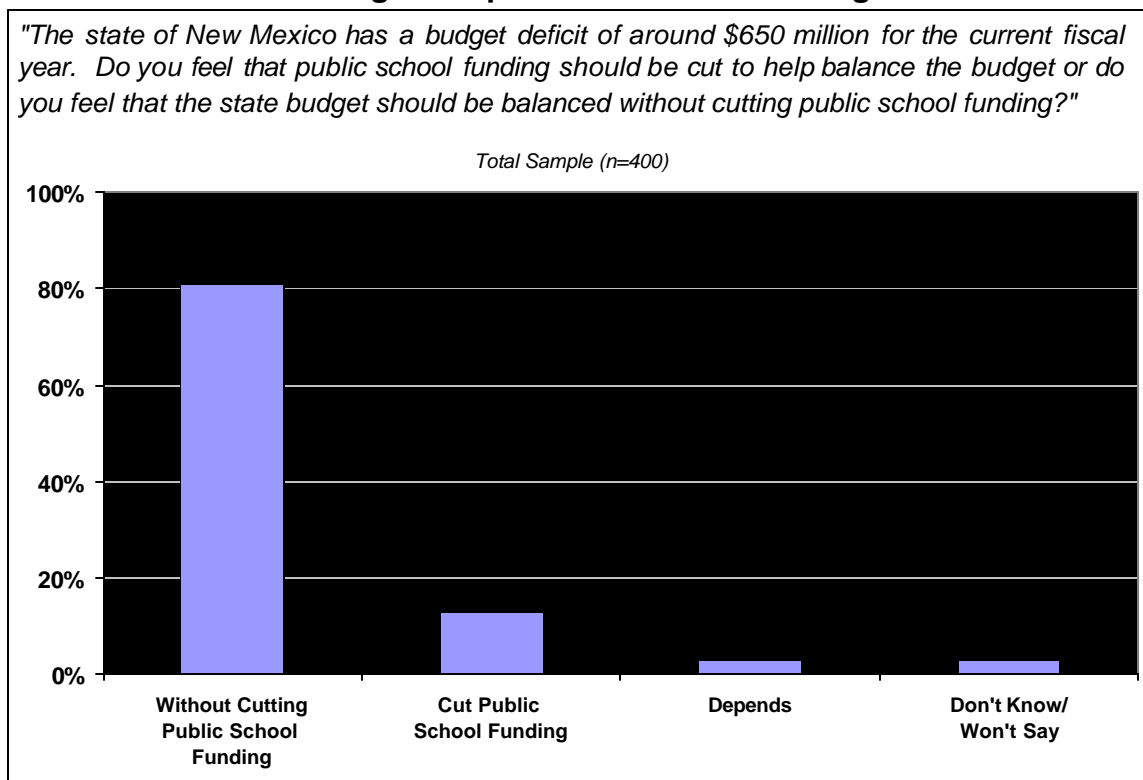
## Methodology

This study, conducted by Research & Polling, Inc., was commissioned by the New Mexico Education Partners, a coalition of organizations that includes AFT New Mexico, NEA-New Mexico, the New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators, the New Mexico PTA, and the New Mexico School Boards Association. The objective of the study was to measure public opinion regarding public school funding issues in the State of New Mexico. A statewide random sample of 400 registered voters was interviewed by telephone between October 13<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A sample size of 400 provides a maximum margin of error of plus or minus 4.9%. The demographics of the survey sample is representative of registered voters statewide. Demographics of the sample can be found on page 5.

## Summary Results

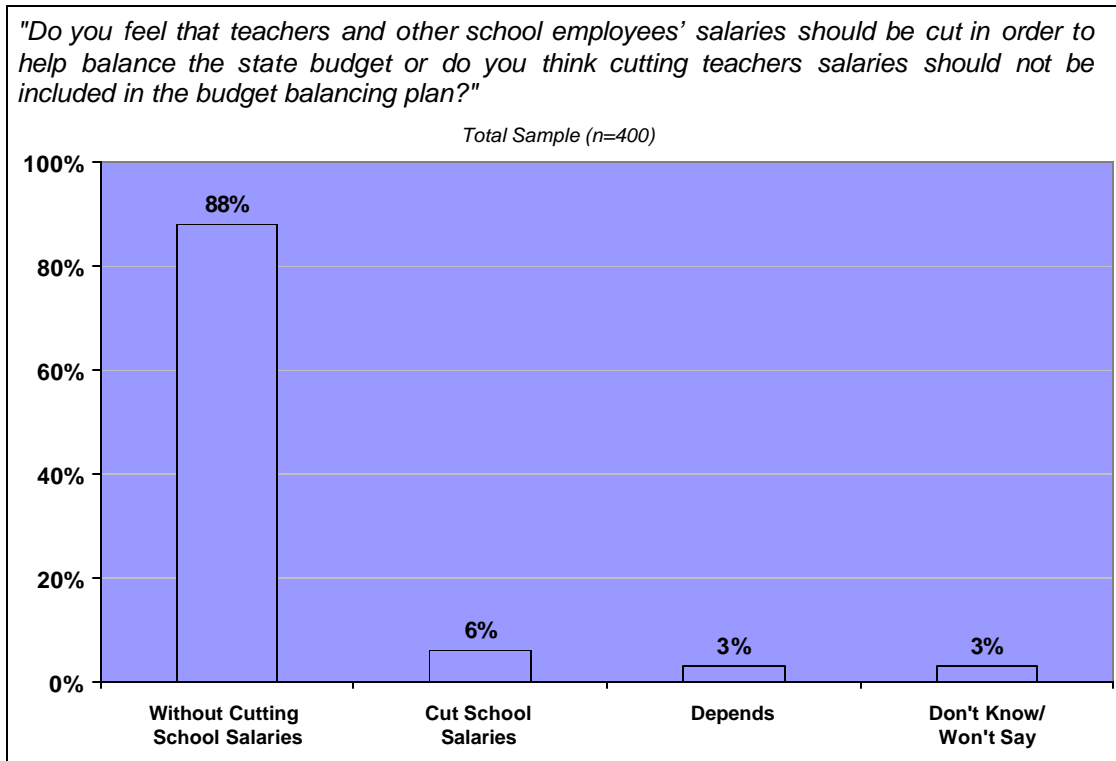
Voters were informed that the State of New Mexico has a budget deficit of around \$650 million for the current fiscal year. They were then asked if they feel public school funding should be cut to help balance the budget, or if the state budget should be balanced without cutting public school funding.

### Voter Opinions on Decreasing Public School Funding to Help Balance the State Budget



Overall, there appears to be very little voter support for reducing school funding to help balance the budget. As shown above, approximately four-in-five voters (81%) prefer balancing the budget without cutting school funding. Just 13% believe the public school funding should be cut to help balance the budget, while 3% say it depends and 3% have not formed an opinion on the issue.

### Voter Opinion on Reducing School Employee Salaries to Help Balance the State Budget



In a similar question, nearly nine-in-ten voters (88%) say they do not believe that cutting teacher and other school employee salaries should be included in the budget balancing plan. In comparison, just 6% believe that teachers and other school salaries should be cut to help balance the state budget.

**Support or Oppose Various Proposals That Could Be Considered to  
Increase Public School Revenue  
(Summary Table)**

*Ranked by Highest Percentage "Support"  
Total Sample (n=400)*

	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Depends</i>	<i>Don't Know/ Won't Say</i>
In order to increase revenues for the public schools, do you support or oppose increasing taxes on tobacco and alcohol products?	70%	27%	2%	1%
In order to increase revenues for public schools, do you support or oppose increasing taxes on out-of-state corporations that do business in New Mexico?	61%	32%	2%	5%
New Mexico has two permanent investment funds, in which some of the revenue is used each year to fund education. Do you support or oppose taking more money out of the permanent funds each year to help fund public schools?	55%	31%	4%	10%
In 2003, the Legislature reduced state income taxes for New Mexico households. In order to increase revenues for public schools, do you support or oppose rolling back the tax cuts for higher income New Mexicans?	49%	43%	1%	7%
In order to increase revenues for public schools, do you support or oppose increasing gross receipts taxes (sales tax) by three-quarters of one percent?	44%	48%	3%	4%

Voters were asked if they either support or oppose various proposals that could be considered to increase revenue for public schools.

As shown in the table above, voters show the highest levels of support for increasing taxes on tobacco and alcohol products as a way to increase funding for public schools. In fact, seven-in-ten voters say they would support raising taxes on alcohol and tobacco to increase school revenues, compared to 27% who are opposed to the idea.

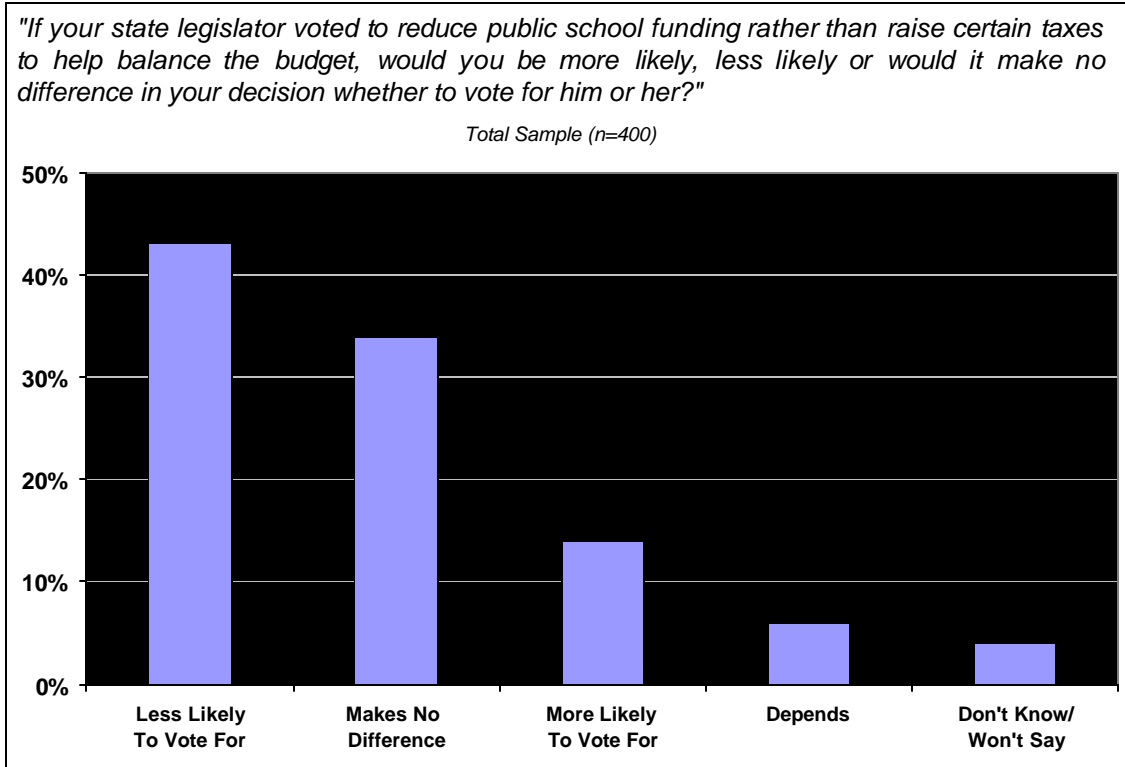
The majority of voters (61%) also support increasing taxes on out-of-state corporations that do business in New Mexico as a way to increase school funding, while 32% are opposed to the idea.

The majority of voters (55%) say they would support taking more money out of the permanent investments funds in the state as a way to increase revenues for public schools. However, 31% are opposed to taking more money out of the permanent funds, while 14% either say it depends or have no opinion on the issue.

Voters are polarized on the issue of rolling back the 2003 tax cuts for higher income New Mexicans as a way to increase revenue for public schools. While 49% support a roll back in the tax cuts for higher income residents, 43% are opposed to the idea and 8% either have no opinion or say it depends.

Voters are also divided on the idea of increasing gross receipts tax to increase school funding. Forty-eight percent of voters say they are opposed to increasing the gross receipts taxes (sales taxes) by three-quarters of one percent as a way to increase funding for public schools, while 44% support the idea.

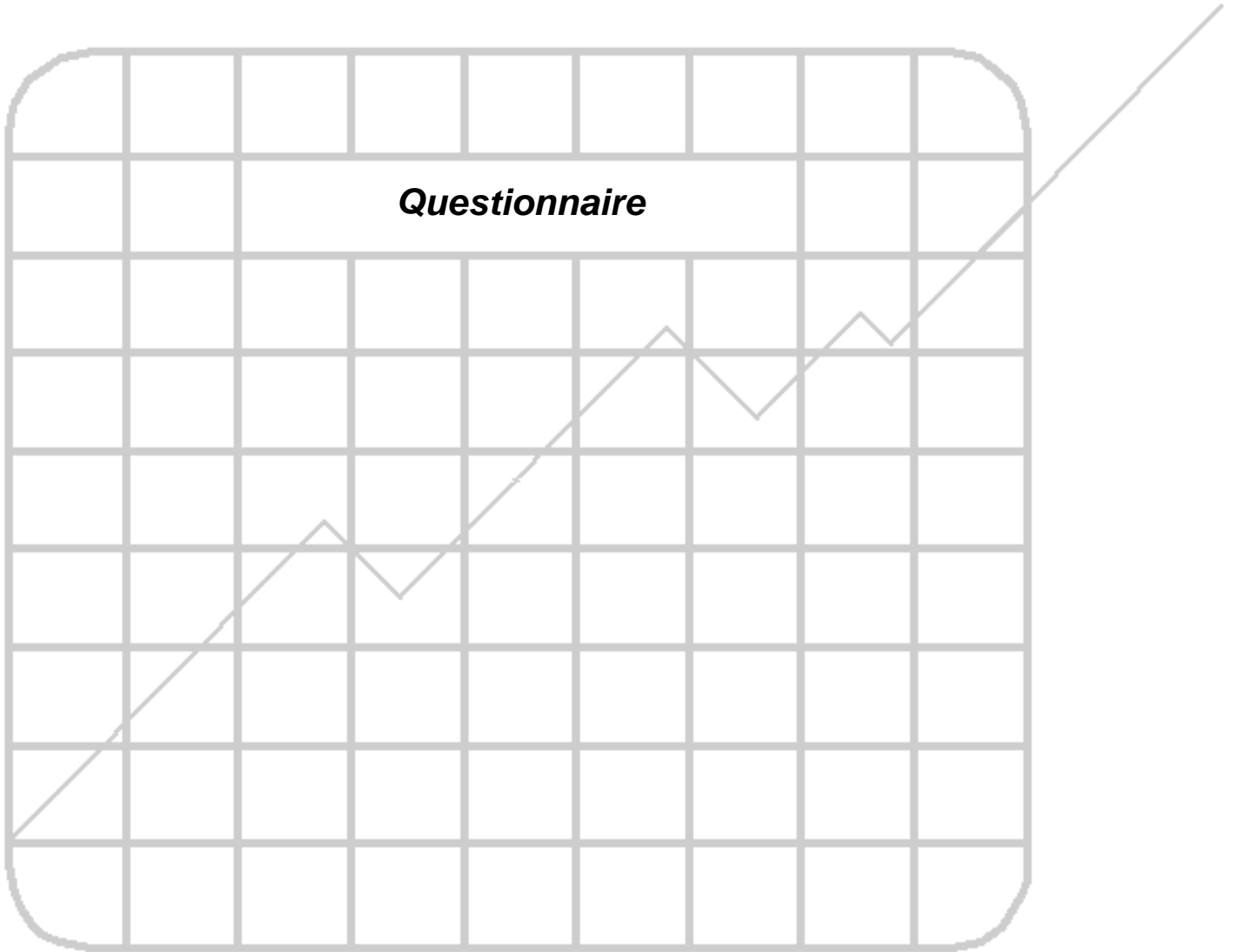
### Likelihood of Voting For Legislator Who Reduced School Funding Rather Than Raise Taxes to Help Balance Budget



The plurality of voters (43%) say they would be *less likely* to vote for their state legislator if he/she voted to reduce public school funding rather than raise taxes to help balance the budget, though 34% say it *would not make a difference* in their opinion. Just 14% of voters say they would be *more likely* to support a legislator who voted to reduce school funding rather than raise certain taxes to help balance the budget.

### Demographics of the Sample (Registered Voters Only)

Political Affiliation	
Democrat	50%
Republican	34%
Independent/DTS/Other	16%
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	33%
Anglo	60%
Other	6%
Gender	
Male	47%
Female	53%



Public Education Survey  
FINAL  
October 2009  
n=400 Statewide voters

Hello. My name is **YOUR NAME** from Research & Polling, Inc., an independent public opinion research company. We are conducting a brief public opinion study concerning an important issue in your area. I assure you we are not selling anything, and we would greatly appreciate your opinions.

**A. Are you registered to vote in New Mexico?**

1. Yes, registered voter
2. No, not a registered voter/don't know/won't say *(Ask to speak to a registered voter in the household and repeat intro – If no registered voter THANK & TERMINATE)*

**1. The state of New Mexico has a budget deficit of around \$650 million for the current fiscal year. Do you feel that public school funding should be cut to help balance the budget or do you feel that the state budget should be balanced without cutting public school funding?**

1. Cut public school funding
2. Without cutting public school funding
3. Depends
4. Don't know/won't say

**2. Do you feel that teachers and other school employees' salaries should be cut in order to help balance the state budget or do you think cutting teachers salaries should not be included in the budget balancing plan?**

1. Cut school salaries
2. Without cutting school salaries
3. Depends
4. Don't know/won't say

I'd like to read to you a few different proposals that could be considered to increase revenue for public schools. For each one, please tell me whether you support or oppose it.

(RANDOMIZE)

*Don't Know/  
Support    Oppose Depends    Won't Say*

3. In order to increase revenues for public schools, do you support or oppose increasing gross receipts taxes (sales tax) by three-quarters of one percent? .....1.....2.....3.....4

4. In 2003, the Legislature reduced state income taxes for New Mexico households. In order to increase revenues for public schools, do you support or oppose rolling back the tax cuts for higher income New Mexicans? .....1.....2.....3.....4

5. In order to increase revenues for the public schools, do you support or oppose increasing taxes on tobacco and alcohol products? .....1.....2.....3.....4

6. In order to increase revenues for public schools, do you support or oppose increasing taxes on out-of-state corporations that do business in New Mexico? .....1.....2.....3.....4

7. New Mexico has two permanent investment funds, in which some of the revenue is used each year to fund education. Do you support or oppose taking more money out of the permanent funds each year to help fund public schools? .....1.....2.....3.....4

8. If your state legislator voted to reduce public school funding rather than raise certain taxes to help balance the budget, would you be more likely, less likely or would it make no difference in your decision whether to vote for him or her?

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. More likely to vote for | 4. Depends              |
| 2. Make no difference      | 5. Don't know/won't say |
| 3. Less likely to vote for |                         |

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE; WE ARE ALMOST DONE. NOW, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES ONLY.**

9. Into which age category do you fit? (READ CATEGORIES)

- |                   |                            |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. 18 to 34 years | 4. 65 years or older       |
| 2. 35 to 49 years | 5. Won't say (DO NOT READ) |
| 3. 50 to 64 years |                            |

**10. Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? (READ CATEGORIES)**

- |                         |                                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Less than \$20,000   | 4. \$60,000 to \$79,999             |
| 2. \$20,000 to \$39,999 | 5. \$80,000 and over                |
| 3. \$40,000 to \$59,999 | 6. Won't say ( <i>DO NOT READ</i> ) |

**11. Do you consider yourself to be:**

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Hispanic               | 4. Native American Indian           |
| 2. Anglo/Caucasian        | 5. Or of other descent?             |
| 3. Black/African-American | 6. Won't say ( <i>DO NOT READ</i> ) |

**12. What is the highest level of education you have attained? (READ CATEGORIES)**

1. Some high school
2. High school graduate
3. Some college/associate degree/vocational certificate
4. College graduate (4 years)
5. Graduate work or degree
6. Won't say (*DO NOT READ*)

**13. Are you a registered Democrat, Republican, Independent or other?**

- |               |                                  |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Democrat   | 3. Independent/D-T-S/other       |
| 2. Republican | 4. Won't say ( <i>SEE LIST</i> ) |

**THIS CONCLUDES OUR SURVEY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. HAVE A GOOD DAY.**

*NOTE TO INTERVIEWER, WAS RESPONDENT:*

1. Male
2. Female

Respondent's Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer Code \_\_\_\_\_

**POLLER ENTER COUNTY:** \_\_\_\_\_