MEMORANDUM

From: Kevin Cokley, Director of Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis
Re: IUPRA poll results: Texas voters’ attitudes about education
Date: May 5, 2016

Summary of Findings:
Over a period of two weeks the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis (IUPRA) enlisted the polling firm Customer Research International to conduct a statewide poll among registered voters in Texas on voters’ attitudes about education.¹ The results are as follows:

Grading Public Schools

There are racial and ethnic differences among Texas voters in views about the quality of public schools.

The majority of Latino (62%) and White voters (59%) gave public schools in their communities a grade of A or B while less than half of Black voters (47%) gave public schools in their communities a grade of A or B.

- The majority of Republicans (61%), Democrats (55%), and Independents (52%) also gave public schools in their communities a grade of A or B.

Common Core

There are racial and ethnic differences among Texas voters in views about the Common Core.

We found that 54% of Black voters favor the Common Core while less than half of Latino voters (47%) and White voters (33%) favor Common Core.

- There are also significant political party differences in views about the Common Core, with 55% of Democrats favoring it compared to only 42% of Independents and 26% of Republicans.
Religion in Public Education

There is general agreement across racial and ethnic groups that religion or religious-based explanations be discussed in public education.

We found that 69% of Black voters, 61% of White voters, and 54% of Latino voters favored including religion or religious-based explanations in public education.

- There is also general consensus across political parties, with a majority of Republicans (77%), Independents (55%), and Democrats (51%) favoring religion or religious-based explanations being discussed in public education.

Discussion of Race and Racism in Public Education

There is strong support across racial and ethnic groups for discussing race and racism in public education.

The majority of Black (85%), White (78%), and Latino voters (73%) favor discussing race and racism in public education.

- There is also general consensus across political parties, with a majority of Democrats (84%), Independents (73%), and Republicans (72%) favoring race and racism being discussed in public education.

Charter Schools

There is general support across racial and ethnic groups for the formation of charter schools.

The majority of White (59%), Black (56%), and Latino (52%) voters across racial and ethnic groups favor the formation of charter schools.

- There are also significant political party differences, with 65% of Republicans and 60% of Independents favoring the formation of charter schools compared to 49% of Democrats.

Tax Credit for Private Schools

There is strong support across racial and ethnic groups to offer a tax credit for donations that pay for scholarships to send children of low-income parents to private schools.

The majority of Black (80%), Latino (77%), and White (68%) voters across racial and ethnic groups favor a tax credit to support low-income parents sending their children to private schools.
There is also general consensus across political parties, with a majority of Independents (78%), Democrats (74%), and Republicans (71%) favoring a tax credit to support low-income parents sending their children to private schools.

*Government Helps Pay Tuition for Private Schools*

There is support across racial and ethnic groups to allow families with children in public schools to enroll their children in private schools with government helping pay the tuition.

Most Black (65%), Latino (65%), and White voters (51%) support allowing families with children in public schools to enroll their children in private schools with government helping to pay the tuition.

- There is also general consensus across political parties, with a majority of Democrats (60%), Independents (59%), and Republicans (52%) supporting allowing families with children in public schools to enroll their children in private schools with government helping to pay the tuition.

*Single-Sex Schools*

Across racial and ethnic groups, there is opposition to single-sex schools.

The majority of Latino (60%), White (53%), and Black voters (51%) oppose single-sex schools.

- There is also general opposition across political parties, with a majority of Democrats (55%) and Republicans (55%) opposing single-sex schools compared to 49% of Independents who oppose single-sex schools.

*Racially Disproportionate School Suspensions*

Across racial and ethnic groups, there is opposition to policies that prevent racially disproportionate school suspensions.

The majority of Black (65%), White (63%), and Latino (59%) voters oppose policies that prevent schools from expelling or suspending Black and Latino students at higher rates than other students.

- There is also general opposition across political parties, with a majority of Republicans (70%), Democrats (65%), and Independents (59%) opposing policies that prevent schools from expelling or suspending Black and Latino students at higher rates than other students.
There is a concern for quality public education for all students among Texas citizens. Recent court cases related to school finance (e.g., *Texas Taxpayer and Student Fairness Coalition vs. Williams*) underscore the debate in Texas about how to address educational disparities. Across race, ethnicity, and political party, Texas voters support including religion or religious-based explanations in public education, discussing race and racism in public education, the formation of charter schools, providing tax credit for private school, and government helping pay tuition for private schools. Additionally, across race, ethnicity and political party, Texas voters oppose single-sex schools and policies that prevent racially disproportionate school suspensions. However, there are significant differences across race, ethnicity, and political party in views about the quality of public schools and Common Core standards.

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1 Methodology: From March 16-31, 2016, Customer Research International was contracted by IUPRA and completed 1011 telephone interviews with registered voters in Texas, including an oversample of 254 Black voters. Asian American voters were also polled, but their numbers were too small to report. Interviews were conducted on landlines and cell phones. The margin of error is +/- 3.08% at a 95% confidence level. Voter sample included geographic representation from Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Waco, Rio Grande Border, East Texas, and West Texas.