

TENNESSEE VOTERS

(Ask for name on list.)

Hello, my name is _____, calling from Selzer & Company, a national public opinion research company. We're conducting a short survey about some issues here in Tennessee. I'm not selling anything and this will take only a few moments of your time. **(Work for male-female split.)**

- A. First, did you vote in the general election last month or did not have a chance to make it to the polling place?

100 Yes, voted **Continue**
- No, did not vote **Terminate**
- Not sure

1. Let me begin with a question about what issues are important to you. From the list I'm going to read, please tell me which one or two are the most important—that is, which one or two would you want state government to improve in the next couple of years? **(Rotate list. Multiple responses accepted, so total will exceed 100%.)**

5 Improving public mass transportation
44 Improving public education
54 Making health care more affordable
14 Cleaning up rivers, lakes and streams
19 Attracting new business to the state
21 Providing property tax relief
7 Improving state colleges and universities
1 None (VOL)
1 Not sure

2. How long have you lived in Tennessee?

- Less than a year
5 One to four years **Ask b**
3 Five to nine years
12 10 to 19 years

36 20 years or more
44 All of life **Skip to Q.3**
- Not sure

- b. I'm going to mention some reasons people choose to live where they do. Please tell me if this was a major factor in your thinking about where you now live or not. Just answer yes or no. **(Mark all that apply. Multiple responses accepted, so total will exceed 100%.)**

51 Convenient to work
29 The best schools
57 The overall feel of the neighborhood or area
26 Outdoor and recreation opportunities
34 Low taxes
39 To be near family
4 Not sure

3. In general, do you think things in the state of Tennessee are headed in the right direction, or have they gotten off on the wrong track?
- 62 Right direction
30 Wrong track
8 Not sure
4. When you think just about what's happening with public education in Tennessee, do you think things are generally headed in the right direction or have they gotten off on the wrong track?
- 44 Right direction
47 Wrong track
9 Not sure
5. Statewide, what grade would you give the quality of public education from kindergarten through 12th grade—A, B, C, D, or F?
- 4 A
31 B
40 C
16 D
4 F
5 Not sure
6. Based just on what you happen to know, do you think Tennessee taxpayers are or are not getting their money's worth from public schools?
- 36 Are getting their money's worth
57 Are not getting their money's worth
7 Not sure
7. I'm going to mention some things some people have said are causing problems in public education. For each, please tell me your opinion—is it a big problem, a little problem, or not really a problem, as you see it.
- | | <u>Big Problem</u> | <u>Little Problem</u> | <u>Not really a Problem</u> | <u>Not Sure</u> |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| A. Students are distracted from their school work by extracurricular activities | 27 | 33 | 37 | 3 |
| B. Salaries are not high enough to attract and retain excellent teachers | 59 | 19 | 20 | 2 |
| C. State standards for high school graduation are too low so students don't get a very good education | 38 | 31 | 25 | 6 |
| D. Many students have problems at home that keep them from being good learners in school | 70 | 24 | 4 | 2 |
| E. Schools are not safe places to learn | 29 | 34 | 34 | 3 |
| F. Teachers are not good enough | 23 | 34 | 38 | 5 |
| G. Students do not try hard enough to get a good education | 49 | 32 | 15 | 4 |
| H. Parents are not committed enough to their children's education | 71 | 19 | 8 | 2 |

8. I want to mention some educational initiatives that may be considered by the state legislature next year. For each, please tell me if you favor or oppose the proposal. **(Rotate list.)**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Not sure</u>
A. Increase the requirements for high school graduation so students will be better prepared for college and jobs	79	18	3
B. Set an expectation that all high school graduates will get additional training or schooling after high school	75	21	4
C. Create academic equality throughout the state so that every student has the same access to advanced courses and academic support regardless of where they live	90	8	2
D. Link increases in teacher salaries to performance goals set by the state; if students improve, teachers will be paid more	70	27	3
E. Expand pre-school programs so all children in Tennessee have access to pre-school and kindergarten	87	11	2
F. Create charter schools to generate competition among schools for the best students	42	51	7

9. I want to change the subject now to teacher compensation. In general, do you think public school teachers in Tennessee should be paid more than they are right now, paid less, or are they paid about the right amount? **(If paid more, ask:)** Are you thinking teachers should be paid a lot more or a little more than they are now?

- 43 Should be paid a lot more
- 27 Should be paid a little more
- 2 Should be paid less
- 28 Paid about the right amount

10. In order to pay for some of the instructional and student/teacher measurement ideas you just rated, do you think the better route is to divert money from other areas in the existing budget, or to add new money to the education budget?

- 44 Divert money from other areas
- 43 Add new money
- 13 Not sure

(Alternate the order of Q.11 and Q.12 every other interview.)

11. Now, I'm going to read some statements of fact that indicate Tennessee needs to invest more than it does now in public education. For each statement, please tell me if it does or does not make you feel more favorable toward increasing spending to pay for improvements in public education in Tennessee or not—just answer yes or no.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
A. Tennessee is one of the nation's lowest states in terms of the percent of its adult population that has graduated from college	67	22	11
B. Tennessee state standards for what public school students are expected to learn in school are repeatedly rated by independent agencies as the lowest in the nation	62	27	11
C. About half of Tennessee's high school graduates who enter public colleges must enroll in remedial courses to prepare them for college courses because their high school education was deficient	70	23	7
D. Two years of vocational training or college has become the minimum to enter jobs that pay enough to sustain a family	68	29	3

12. Now, I'm going to read some statements of fact that indicate Tennessee does not need to invest more than it does now in public education. For each statement, please tell me if it does or does not make you feel more opposed toward increasing spending to pay for improvements in public education in Tennessee or not—just answer yes or no.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
A. When adjusted for annual weeks of work, and accounting for benefits, Tennessee public school teachers are compensated about the same as individuals in private sector jobs with comparable training and education	39	52	9
B. Tennessee public school teacher retirement pensions and health benefits are better than most private sector pensions and health benefits	34	48	18
C. Tennessee teachers have substantial job security and are virtually never laid off or fired	52	40	8
D. Tennessee has one of the highest sales tax rates in the country at 7%, plus a 2.75% local option sales tax	67	25	8

13. I'm going to mention some people or organizations that are involved in public education in Tennessee. For each, please tell me how much confidence you have in this group or organization—a great deal of confidence, some confidence, or not very much confidence. **(Rotate list.)**
14. Which one of these should be held most accountable for improving the quality of education in Tennessee? **(Read list if necessary. Accept only one answer.)**

	-----Q.13-----				Q.14
	A great Deal	Some	Not very Much	Not Sure	Most Accountable
A. Your local school board	26	40	31	3	16
B. Public school teachers	46	42	10	2	11
C. School superintendents	25	48	22	5	6
D. Principals	38	44	14	4	3
E. The state governor	41	39	18	2	14
F. The state legislature	13	51	31	5	12
G. The state board of education	20	51	23	6	20
H. Teacher union leaders	12	36	41	11	3
I. The federal government	13	39	46	2	10
Not sure (VOL)					5

15. Getting close to the end now, I'm going to mention a few proposals that could be considered by the state legislature. For each, please tell me if you favor or oppose the proposal.

	Favor	Oppose	Not Sure
A. Return the state to its former practice of electing local school superintendents	73	22	5
B. Allow state money to be used to help pay for private school so parents can choose where to send their children	38	60	2
C. Raise state or local taxes so that schools get more money per pupil to spend on education	37	59	4
D. Expand the number of charter schools	46	47	7
E. Require school districts to take responsibility for basic skills by making them pay for remedial courses their graduates need once they are in college	57	38	5

The following questions are asked just to see what cross-section of Tennesseans we interviewed.

100a. What is your age? **(WRITE IN ACTUAL AGE:)** _____

b. **(CODE PROPER CATEGORY:)**

- 4 Under 25
- 17 25 to 34
- 18 35 to 44
- 20 45 to 54
- 21 55 to 64
- 20 65 and over
- Refused/not sure

101. What is the last grade of school you've completed?

- 5 Less than high school graduate
- 29 High school graduate
- 26 Some college or 2-year degree
- 23 College degree
- 16 Graduate schooling or degree
- 1 Refused/not sure

102a. Do you happen to have children under age 18 living in your household?

- | | | |
|-------|------------------|--------------|
| 36 | Yes | Ask b |
| <hr/> | | |
| 63 | No | Ask c |
| 1 | Refused/not sure | |

b. Are any of your children enrolled in public schools in Tennessee, grades kindergarten through 12th?
(Asked only of those who said they have children under age 18 living at home; n=181.)

- | | | |
|-------|----------|----------------------|
| 67 | Yes | Skip to Q.103 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 33 | No | Ask c |
| - | Not sure | |

c. Do you anticipate having children enrolled in public schools in Tennessee within the next five to ten years? (Asked of those who said they do not have children under age 18 living at home or, if they do, who do not have children enrolled in K-12 public schools in Tennessee; n=480.)

- 19 Yes
- 79 No
- 2 Not sure

103. In politics, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

- 32 Republican
- 29 Democrat
- 34 Independent
- 5 Not sure

104. How would you describe the area where you live—an urban center or major city in the state, a suburb, a small city, a town, or a rural area?

- 16 Urban center/major city
- 21 Suburb
- 18 Small city
- 13 Town
- 31 Rural area
- 1 Not sure

105. Is your household income above or below \$40,000 per year?

Above **ASK b**
Below **ASK c**

b.	Is it above or below \$60,000 per year?	36	Above (\$60,000+)
		23	Below (\$40,000-59,999)
c.	Is it above or below \$20,000 per year?	23	Above (\$20,000-39,999)
		9	Below (<\$20,000)
		9	Refused/not sure

106. **(Code, do not ask:)** Respondent sex:

50 Male
50 Female

107. **(County code from sample.)**

108. (Zone: 1=west; 2=central; 3=east.)

Thank you for your time. We truly appreciate your help.