

coalition of advocates

FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MASBO | MREA | MTSBA | MQEC | SAM



A VISION FOR THE SUCCESS OF MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Education has a bold challenge ahead of them - rethink and develop a comprehensive vision for the future success of Montana's public schools, focused on a goal of success for each child in every public school in Montana.

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), Montana Rural Education Association (MREA), Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA), Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC) and School Administrators of Montana (SAM) are united by our shared commitment to this important goal.

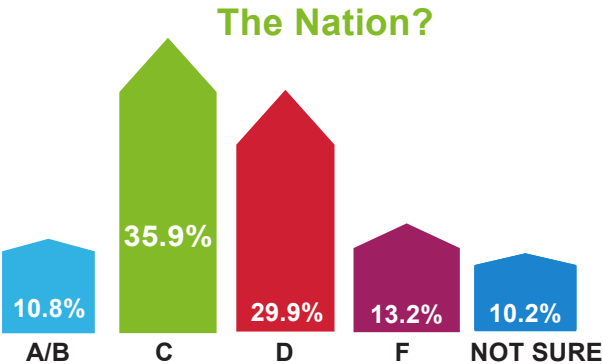
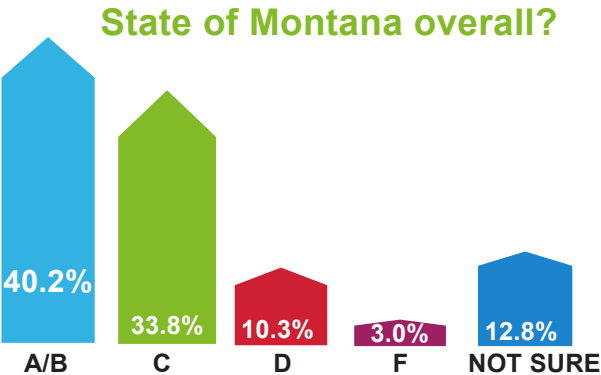
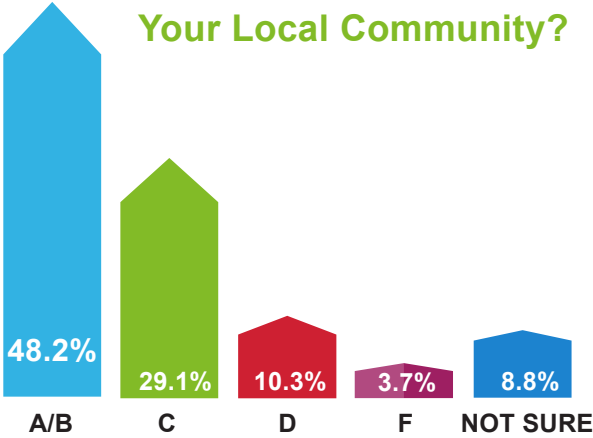
There have certainly been some bumps and bruises along the way, particularly over the last 2-3 years as schools have overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the K-12 Vision Project continues with a new infusion of energy, fueled by an increased awareness of how important our public schools and school communities are and will increasingly be to children and families struggling with high inflation, economic challenges, and looking for help in getting society back on track. The need for strong, capable, innovative public schools has never been more critical and we must lead a resurgence of hope and optimism regarding the future of our great state and the children we serve together.

Developed and sustained by the cumulative work of over 500 teachers, elected trustees, superintendents, principals, and school business officials from across the state of Montana, the K-12 Vision Project has created an inspiring vision, aligned with the guarantees afforded children under our Constitution and providing actionable steps to achieve goals that will strengthen the bonds between schools and communities, trustees, staff, and families, all united by our shared interest in the best interests of each child in every public school.

This booklet shows polls that prove that Montanans trust their public schools and those who work for them.

THE CLOSER PEOPLE ARE TO THEIR SCHOOLS, THE MORE THEY TRUST AND LIKE THEM.

WHAT GRADE, A through F, would you give public schools in:



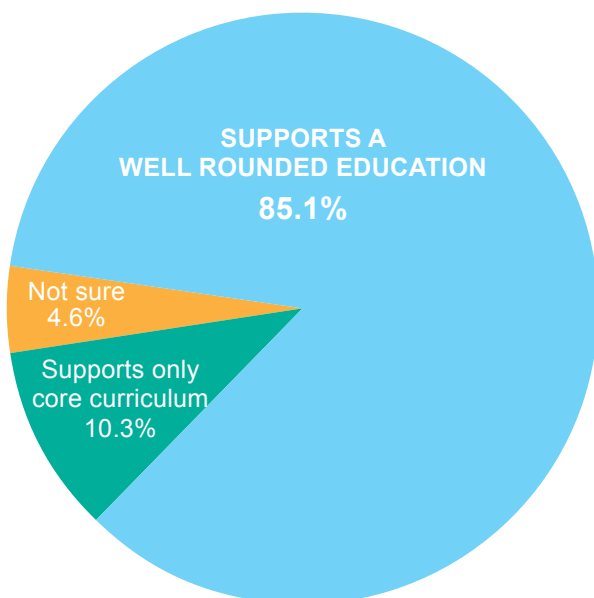
LEADING A PATH OF SUCCESS

"When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it." - Henry Ford

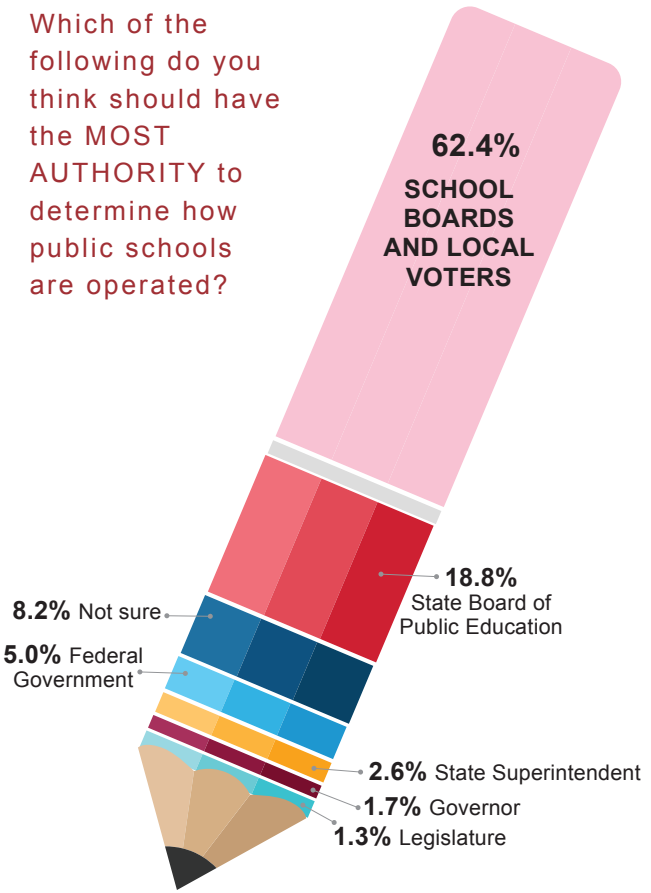
The Great Work of Montana's public schools has never shined brighter.

As reflected in the results of our recently completed poll of Montana voters, Montanans recognize and appreciate the value of Montana's public schools. We are proud to have consistently maintained that support over the course of the last decade and we are intent upon continuing to further build support and earn the trust of Montanans into the future.

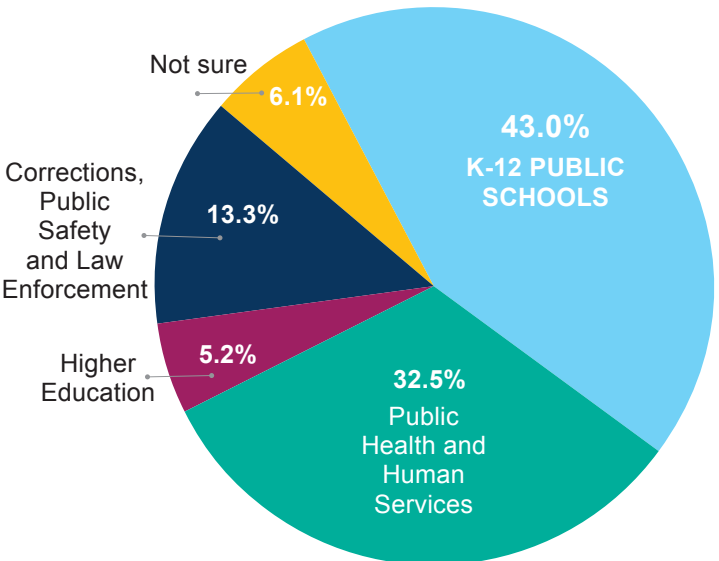
IN YOUR OPINION, SHOULD PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROVIDE A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION to all children, including items such as all-day kindergarten, gifted and talented, music, art, physical education, technology, and advanced placement courses or should public schools provide only core curriculum (math, English, science, social studies)?



Which of the following do you think should have the MOST AUTHORITY to determine how public schools are operated?



When it comes to how state government spends your tax dollars, which of the following areas do you think should be the HIGHEST PRIORITY?



VOTERS AGREE - ELECTED TRUSTEES AND LOCAL VOTERS SHOULD BE MAKING KEY DECISIONS ABOUT CHILDREN

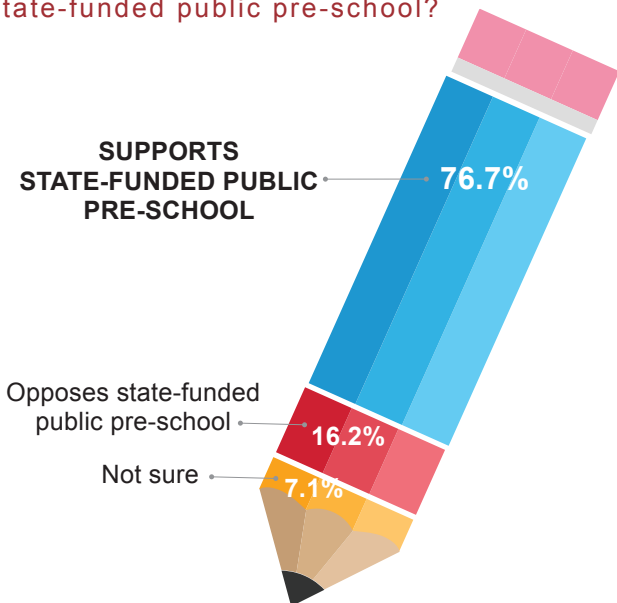
WORKING TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN

We see signs of a growing understanding, support for locally-controlled decisions, and an increase in civility and decorum at school board meetings that is in line with the strong tradition of interdependent reliance that comes from Montana's rural traditions.

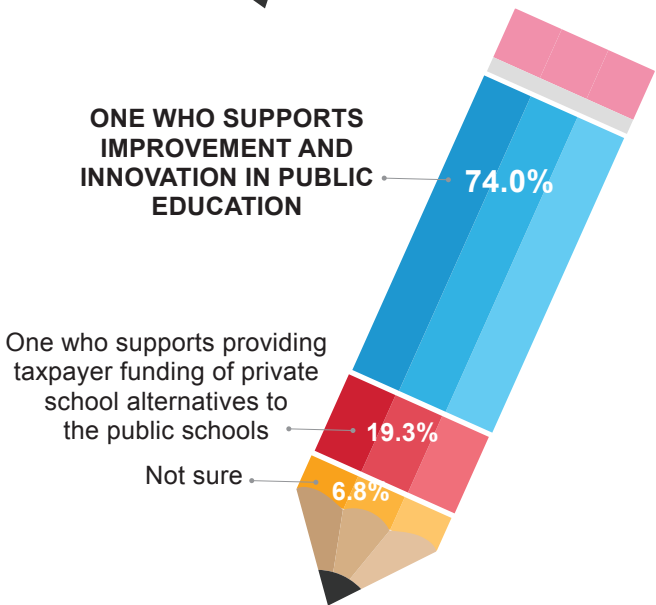
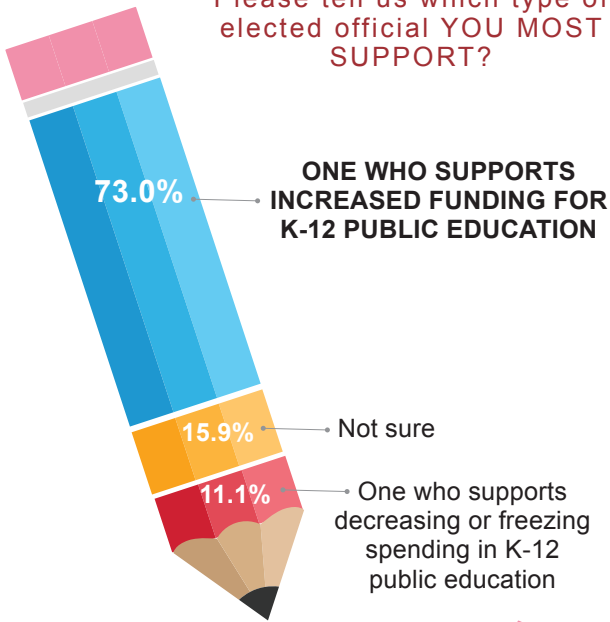
Montana's public schools prioritize safety for the 150,000+ children and their families we serve. Local school boards are also protective of the health and safety of over 22,000 dedicated educators and leaders who operate our public schools on a daily basis across Montana.

Montana's public schools are keeping communities safe and are providing safe and effective learning environments in each community in the state. We have done so through locally crafted solutions that meet the specific and unique needs of each community, working with students and families to ensure that opportunities to learn together are sustained.

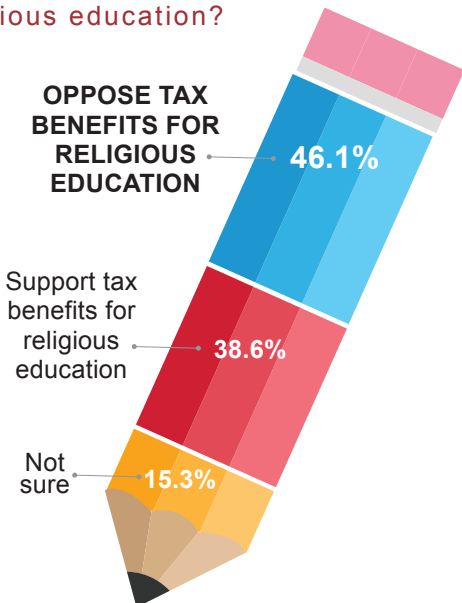
DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE state-funded public pre-school?



Please tell us which type of elected official YOU MOST SUPPORT?



DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE TAX BENEFITS (e.g., vouchers, tax credits) for religious education?



Who among the following public employees and officials DO YOU TRUST the most when it comes to deciding what is best academically for students in Montana's public schools?



65.3%
**TEACHERS, LOCALLY ELECTED
SCHOOL BOARDS, AND
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

11.5% State Board of Public Education

11.2% Not Sure

4.8% State Superintendent of Public Instruction

4.6% U.S. Department of Education

1.6% Governor

.5% Legislators

.3% Congress

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT - THE BENEFITS OF A STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN EACH COMMUNITY

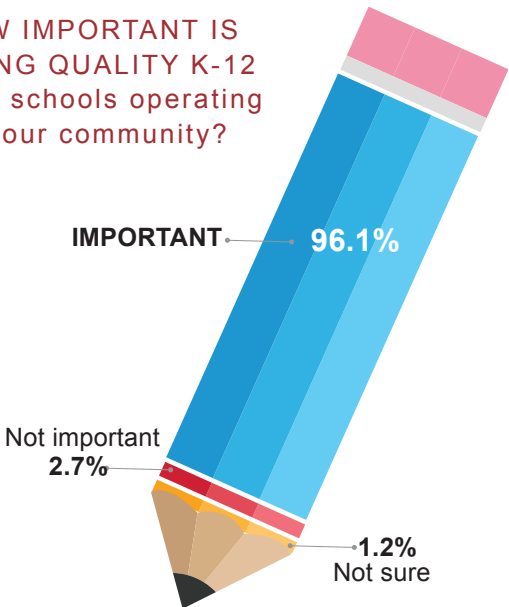
The presence of a vibrant public school in each community provides invaluable benefits. Everyone's lives are fundamentally enriched by their community public schools. In addition to developing the full potential of each child and creating a bright future for Montanans everywhere, quality schools provide tangential benefits for each community.

- **Montana's public schools employ over 22,000 full-time equivalent staff**

who serve over 150,000 children in schools throughout Montana each day, developing students for a lifetime of success as Montana's future labor force. In addition to the direct benefits to children and their families, expenditures of each public school provide reverberating benefits to each community.

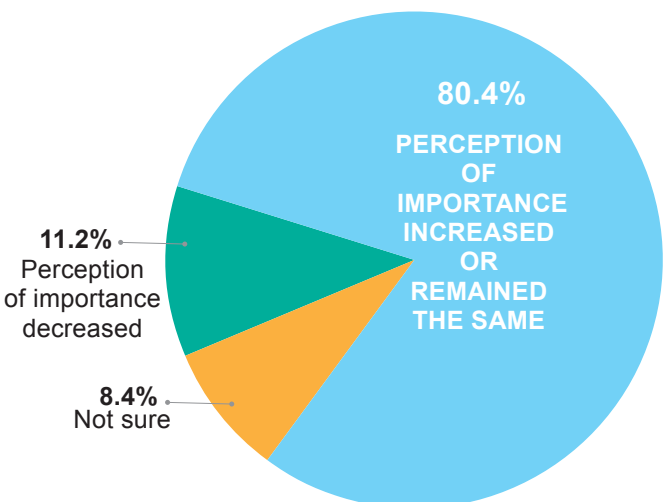
- The National Bureau of Economic Research has found that for every dollar spent on public schools in an area, **home values increased** by \$20. These benefits accrue to all homeowners in a community, regardless of whether they have children in the public school system.

HOW IMPORTANT IS
HAVING QUALITY K-12
public schools operating
in your community?



- Direct expenditures by schools on local businesses for services, goods, and supplies necessary to operate the school are estimated at over **\$300 million annually**.
- **Wages paid to school employees are spent within the community**, becoming income for businesses who then spend that income on worker wages, services, and building and distributing profit.
- The perpetuation of this cycle provides benefits at five-fold the original expenditures attributable to the presence of a public school in the community. With total public school expenditures of approximately \$2 billion per year, that translates into **\$10 billion in total economic benefit to the people of Montana** or approximately \$10,000 for each Montanan. Public schools provide value added benefits while creating our future Montana leaders and entrepreneurs.

THINKING ABOUT HOW IMPORTANT K-12 public schools are to your community, have your experiences over the last year increased or decreased your perception regarding the importance of having quality K-12 public schools operating in your community?



THE IMPORTANCE OF STRIVING FOR UNITY, COURAGE AND FOCUS DURING POLARIZED TIMES

There is little surprise that the characteristics of grit, determination, commitment, and independence are equally applicable when describing Montana's public schools, our children, and Montanans alike. Montana's public schools are a natural reflection of and intrinsically linked to the communities they serve. We are in this together.

There may only be seven people per square mile across the expanse of our great state, but when we care for one another, when we are loyal to a fault, and we lead rather than follow, we cannot help but succeed. We are better together than we are alone and the combined power of our efforts to serve children is greater than the sum of our individual parts when we pull together.

These shared commitments of Montanans and their public schools are what have sustained and will continue to nurture the endurance, resilience, unity, courage, and focus that will allow us to prevail during these challenging times. While others elsewhere may choose to give into the temptation to fight with one another, Montanans will do better, standing tall for what we believe in but also leaving ourselves open to the positions of others who may have different points of view.

We will find a way to respectfully disagree when necessary, recognizing and delivering on our debt of civility and respect for the individual dignity of each other. This is the Montana way and we can remain "The Last Best Place" if we honor and abide by this simple but powerful practice of decency.



WHO IS THE COALITION OF ADVOCATES FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

The Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools is a partnership of public education advocates focused on ensuring success for each child in every public school, in furtherance of the Peoples' goal under Article X, Section 1 "to develop the full educational potential of each person."

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coalitionofmtk12advocates.org