



National Parents Union Survey

N=1,528 parents of public school students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade

Field Dates: September 7-11, 2026

Margin of Error: $\pm$ 2.6 percentage points

HOW STATES ARE HANDLING K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION

1. [QK12StateApprove] Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way your state is handling K-12 public education? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT APPROVE	72%
STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT DISAPPROVE	26%
Strongly approve	24%
Somewhat approve	48%
Somewhat disapprove	20%
Strongly disapprove	6%
Unsure	2%

2. [QStateDoingWellOE] Thinking about K-12 public education in your state, what is one thing that you think is working well? [OPEN END]

3. [QStateImproveOE] What aspect of K-12 public education in your state do you think needs the most improvement, or would be most important to improve on? [OPEN END]

4. [QHB - Handling Battery] Thinking about each of the following aspects of K-12 public education in your state, please indicate if you think your state [SHOW IN ORDER CORRESPONDING WITH RESPONSE OPTIONS: is already handling it well enough, needs to improve on it a little, or needs to improve on it a lot.] [DISPLAY EACH ITEM ON SEPARATE PAGE] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Is already handling this well enough | 2. Needs to improve on this a little | 3. Needs to improve on this a lot | 4. Unsure |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|

	Is already handling this well enough	Needs to improve on this a little	Needs to improve on this a lot	Unsure
Technology use in schools	46%	32%	19%	3%
Teaching reading	37%	35%	25%	3%
Being transparent about school performance	35%	37%	25%	3%
School safety	36%	35%	28%	1%
Ensuring all kids have access to a high quality education	31%	35%	32%	2%
Supporting students' individual learning needs	26%	41%	31%	2%
Recruiting and retaining good teachers	27%	35%	35%	2%
Preparing students for the future	26%	36%	36%	2%
Supporting students' mental health needs	22%	38%	36%	4%
School funding	22%	34%	40%	4%

5. [QBigIdeas] A group of independent organizations has proposed the following list of “big ideas” for education policy leaders to focus on as ways of improving K-12 public education.

Just based on the way they are described, which 1 to 3 do you see as the most important? Select up to three responses. [RANDOMIZE 1-10] [SELECT UP TO 3]

Safe Schools, Safe Kids	57%
Great Teachers, Great Schools / Classrooms	56%
Graduates Ready for the Real World and the Workforce	46%
Fair and Full Funding for Every Student	40%
A Public School That Fits Your Kid	22%
Connected Classrooms, Protected Kids	22%
No More Bad Schools	12%
AI Works for Kids	10%
Student Bill of Rights	10%
A Reading Moonshot	6%
Unsure	1%

QUALITY, SUPPORTS, OPTIONS, FUNDING, AND LITERACY

6. [QEAT - Education Quality, Access and Transparency Policies Battery] Would you support or oppose policymakers doing each of the following regarding K-12 public schools? [DISPLAY EACH ITEM ON SEPARATE PAGE] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

1. Strongly
support

2. Somewhat
support

3. Somewhat
oppose

4. Strongly
oppose

5. Unsure

STRONG. STRONG.
/ SOME. / SOME. Strongly Some. Some. Strongly
SUPPORT OPPOSE support support oppose oppose Unsure

Setting a goal for at least 80% of public school students to be able to read at grade level by the time they are in fourth grade	94%	4%	71%	23%	3%	1%	1%
Ensuring all public schools have enough counselors or mental health professionals so that support is available for students when they need it	93%	5%	70%	23%	4%	2%	2%
Establishing salary and benefit incentives to attract and keep good teachers in public schools, especially in high need schools and hard-to-fill roles	93%	5%	65%	28%	3%	1%	2%
Requiring all school districts to adopt and implement high-quality instructional materials, with instructional coaching to help teachers implement those materials in a way that works for their students	92%	5%	60%	32%	4%	1%	2%
Establishing a state-funded public school infrastructure bond program to help schools in low income communities fix problems with aging school buildings	91%	6%	62%	30%	4%	2%	2%
Publish a statewide “report card” for all K-12 public schools in the state so parents can compare schools and see how their child’s school is doing	87%	10%	52%	34%	7%	3%	3%
Requiring every new public school teacher in the state to have a paid full year of practice as an apprentice teacher before solo teaching	84%	11%	47%	37%	9%	2%	5%
Allowing open enrollment in all public schools, meaning parents could send their child to a public school of their choice instead of one assigned based on their home address	85%	13%	55%	29%	9%	3%	3%
Increasing the number of non-traditional public schools (e.g., public charter schools and magnet schools) to offer more options for students	77%	17%	37%	40%	12%	5%	7%

7. [QRCInclude] If your state were to publish a statewide “report card” with information and ratings for all K-12 public schools in the state so that parents see how public schools compare to each other, what information about schools would be helpful for you as a parent? (Select all that apply.) [SELECT MULTIPLE] [RANDOMIZE 1-11]

School ratings based on academic performance	54%
Information about classes and programs offered at each school	50%
How schools spend their funding	45%
Information about services your children are entitled to	43%
Information about teachers' qualifications	43%
School ratings based on students' outcomes after graduation	37%
The public school options available for your children	37%
School ratings based on student experience surveys	37%
School ratings based on their special education services for students with disabilities	34%
School ratings based on surveys measuring parents' satisfaction	33%
How much per-pupil funding different schools receive	29%
Something else	1%
Nothing	1%
Unsure	2%

8. [QImpFocus] If you had to choose, which of the following K-12 public education goals would you say should be more important for policymakers to focus on? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

Ensuring every child can attend a public school that works best for them, whether that is their neighborhood's assigned school or a different public school	55%
Ensuring every neighborhood has a good public school by investing in improving schools that are underperforming academically	43%
Unsure	3%

9. [QUR - Underperformance Response Battery] Do you think policymakers should or should not do each of the following when a school has had low performance or poor academic outcomes multiple years in a row? [DISPLAY EACH ITEM ON SEPARATE PAGE] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE RESPONSES 1-2]

	1. Should	2. Should not	3. Unsure
	Should	Should not	Unsure
Provide increased funding to the school to cover supports like training for teachers, tutoring programs for students, or hiring more academic support staff	90%	5%	5%
Bring in experts with experience improving school performance to provide guidance to the school	88%	5%	7%
Offer the option and transportation for students at underperforming public schools to transfer to other public schools if they choose	75%	13%	12%
Increase state oversight of the school	69%	14%	17%
Give funding directly to students' families to pay for private tutoring or additional educational supports outside of school	55%	30%	16%
Close the school and send students to other schools in the area that have better outcomes	35%	46%	19%

- | | |
|--|-----|
| "Providing the schools our kids deserve" | 85% |
| "No more bad schools" | 12% |
| I cannot choose | 3% |

1. Very effective 2. Somewhat effective 3. Not that effective 4. Not at all effective 5. Unsure

Establishing a “Right to Read” that guarantees public school students will be provided tutoring paid for by the state if they are not able to read at grade level by the end of fourth grade

90% 53% 37% 5% 1% 4%

Provide literacy coaches in every elementary school to train teachers in the science of reading and effective methods for teaching students to read

90% 50% 40% 4% 1% 4%

Establishing a tutoring corps through Americorps or state service commissions with training and stipends for retired teachers, college students, and paraprofessionals to tutor students in reading

86% 42% 45% 6% 1% 7%

- [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT SUPPORT 76%

STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	17%
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Strongly support	44%
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Strongly support	11%
Somewhat support	32%

Somewhat support	52%
Somewhat oppose	9%

Somewhat oppose	3%
Strongly oppose	7%

Strongly oppose	1%
Unsure	8%

13. [QSafetyImprove] Which of the following, if any, do you think would help improve school safety the most? Choose up to two responses. [RANDOMIZE 1-8] [SELECT UP TO TWO]

Better physical security (e.g., cameras, locked entrances)	35%
More counselors or mental health support for students	33%
Anti-bullying programs	32%
More school resource officers or police on campus	29%
Limits on students' use of technology during school	15%
Anonymous reporting systems for threats	14%
Allowing trained staff to carry guns on campus	14%
Stricter background checks for gun purchases	14%
Something else	1%
Nothing	1%
Unsure	2%

PREPARING FOR THE WORKFORCE AND REAL WORLD

14. [QPathwayPlans] Would you want your children's schools to offer personalized plans for students starting in middle school to help them explore future career and college pathways and identify things they can do in high school to prepare for their next steps? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

Yes	89%
No	4%
Unsure	7%

15. [QHCS - Help with Chance of Success Battery] How much do you think K-12 public schools offering each of the following would help students have a better chance of achieving success after they graduate from high school? [DISPLAY AS GRID, OVER 2 PAGES] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

1. Would help a lot	2. Would help some	3. Would not help much	4. Would not help at all	5. Unsure
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	WOULD HELP A LOT/SOME	Would help a lot	Would help some	Would not help much	Would not help at all	Unsure
Internship or apprenticeship opportunities	94%	60%	33%	3%	1%	2%
Having guidance counselors in every middle school and high school to offer guidance on future pathways and career options	93%	60%	33%	3%	1%	3%
Dual-enrollment courses that allow high school students to earn college credit	92%	62%	30%	4%	1%	3%
Opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials through career and technical education classes	92%	60%	32%	3%	1%	4%
Digital literacy training on how to use technology, the internet, and AI effectively and safely	85%	46%	39%	8%	3%	3%

16. [QSkills - Important Skills Battery] How important do you think it is for K-12 students to develop strong skills in each of the following areas in order to be prepared for future careers and adult life? [DISPLAY AS GRID, OVER 2 PAGES] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-5, 5-1]

	1. Absolutely essential	2. Very important	3. Somewhat important	4. Not too important	5. Not important at all	6. Unsure	
	ESSENTIAL / VERY IMPORTANT	Absolutely essential	Very important	Somewhat important	Not too important	Not important at all	Unsure
Reading	93%	70%	24%	4%	1%	*%	1%
Critical thinking	90%	59%	31%	7%	1%	*%	1%
Managing their budget or finances	89%	54%	34%	9%	1%	*%	1%
Managing their emotions	88%	52%	35%	9%	2%	*%	1%
Math	86%	53%	33%	12%	1%	*%	1%
Interpersonal skills	86%	50%	36%	11%	1%	*%	2%
Using computer technology	83%	47%	36%	14%	2%	*%	1%
Using artificial intelligence (AI) tools	47%	19%	28%	29%	14%	7%	3%

17. [QServiceYear] Would you support or oppose your state offering every public high school graduate the opportunity to complete a paid year of community service after high school — for which they would be paid a living allowance or stipend by the state, similar to the way Americorps volunteers are? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	81%
STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	11%
Strongly support	42%
Somewhat support	39%
Somewhat oppose	7%
Strongly oppose	4%
Unsure	8%

18. [QHSRequirement] Would you support or oppose requiring public school students to complete at least one of the following in order to graduate from high school, if they were allowed to choose which one fit their goals: *a full semester of an internship or apprenticeship OR a full semester of college credit OR a full semester of service (e.g., volunteer service or ROTC)*? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	75%
STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	17%
Strongly support	36%
Somewhat support	38%
Somewhat oppose	10%
Strongly oppose	7%
Unsure	8%

TECHNOLOGY AND SCHOOLS

Shifting to a different topic...

19. [QLaptopPref] In grade levels in which students are allowed to use school laptops during the school day, which of the following would you prefer schools do? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

Keep laptops stored on a classroom cart, and only allow students to take them to their desks at specific times during the school day	58%
Allow students to keep laptops at their desks throughout the school day	38%
Unsure	4%

20. [QK2BanLimit] In grades kindergarten through 2nd grade, what do you think public schools' policy should be on screen time kids have for learning activities during the school day? (*This includes any time looking at something on a computer, tablet, or screen for learning, whether they are being shown something by a teacher or using the technology themselves.*) [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]

They should ban screen time	11%
They should limit screen time, but not ban it entirely	78%
They should allow unlimited screen time	7%
Unsure	4%

21. [QAIFeeling] Thinking about ways artificial intelligence (AI) tools could be used in K-12 public education, do you think . . . ? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]

The potential benefits outweigh the potential downsides	21%
There are about equal potential benefits and downsides	47%
The potential downsides outweigh the potential benefits	23%
Unsure	9%

[IF SAYS ABOUT EQUAL OR UNSURE, ASK:]

22. [QAIFeelingFollowUp] Even if you see both potential benefits and downsides of ways AI tools could be used in K-12 public education, if you had to say one way or the other, which would you lean toward saying is more likely to be the case? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

	(n=858)
The potential benefits outweigh the potential downsides	45%
The potential downsides outweigh the potential benefits	31%
Cannot say	24%

- [QAIFeeling - Combined] Thinking about ways artificial intelligence (AI) tools could be used in K-12 public education, do you think . . . ?

The potential benefits outweigh the potential downsides	46%
The potential downsides outweigh the potential benefits	41%
Cannot say	13%

23. [QST - School Technology Battery] Would you support or oppose each of the following policies? [DISPLAY EACH ITEM ON SEPARATE PAGE] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

1. Strongly support	2. Somewhat support	3. Somewhat oppose	4. Strongly oppose	5. Unsure				
		STRONG. / SOME. SUPPORT	STRONG. / SOME. OPPOSE	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Unsure
Banning tech companies from using or harvesting children’s online data		86%	10%	67%	18%	6%	4%	4%
Providing high speed internet at home for public school students whose families would not otherwise be able to afford it		85%	10%	56%	28%	8%	3%	5%
K-12 public schools teaching students about AI safety		85%	10%	52%	33%	6%	4%	5%
Prohibiting public schools from buying technology that is not proven to be safe and effective for learning		81%	12%	51%	30%	9%	4%	6%
Requiring a federal agency to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of education technology for use in public schools		79%	14%	41%	37%	9%	4%	8%
Requiring all public school teachers to be trained in digital and AI literacy and responsible technology use		79%	14%	40%	39%	9%	5%	7%
Requiring all smartphones to include a built-in “school mode” that allows schools to limit distractions		78%	16%	44%	34%	9%	7%	6%
K-12 public schools teaching students ways to use AI tools effectively		77%	17%	36%	41%	11%	6%	6%
Banning students from using AI chatbots during the school day		71%	21%	42%	29%	15%	6%	8%
Establishing an AI Education Trust Fund, paid for by a 3% tax on large AI companies and distributed based on enrollment and areas of need, to be used to update education systems and better equip students to succeed in a workplace impacted by AI		66%	20%	30%	35%	12%	8%	14%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Now, a few more questions for statistical purposes . . .

24. [QBirthYear] Which range of years includes the year you were born? [TERMINATE IF MORE THAN 1 YEAR OFF RANGE INDICATED BASED ON QAGE]

1903 – 1927	-
1928 – 1945	*%
1946 – 1964	1%
1965 – 1980	32%
1981 – 1996	61%
1997 – 2012	6%

25. [QPartyID] Do you consider yourself a...? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

Democrat	35%
Republican	35%
Independent	25%
Member of another party	1%
Unsure	4%

[IF INDEPENDENT, MEMBER OF ANOTHER PARTY, OR UNSURE (QParty=3-5), ASK]

26. [QPartyLeanView] Even if neither political party perfectly represents your views, who do you agree with more often on issues that are important to you? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

	(n=437)
Democrats	24%
Republicans	19%
Both equally often	35%
Unsure	22%

[QPartyConsolidated] QPartyID and QPartyLeanView

Total Democratic+Democratic-leaning Independents	43%
Total Republican+Republican-leaning Independents	41%
Total Independent	17%

27. [QIdeology] Regardless of how you typically vote, would you say you consider yourself to be...? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-5, 5-1]

VERY/SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE	31%
VERY/SOMEWHAT LIBERAL	26%
Very conservative	13%
Somewhat conservative	19%
Moderate	39%
Somewhat liberal	15%
Very liberal	11%
Unsure	4%

28. [QEmployment] What is your current employment status?

Employed full-time	66%
Employed part-time	8%
Freelance, contract, or temporary work	3%
Unemployed and looking for work	5%
Unemployed and not currently looking for work	2%
Stay-at-home parent or caregiver	11%
Full time student	*%
Retired	2%
Something else (Please specify)	2%
Prefer not to say	*%

29. [QIncomeHH] Which range includes your total annual household income, before taxes?

Less than \$30,000 per year	20%
\$30,000 to \$49,999 per year	14%
\$50,000 to \$74,999 per year	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999 per year	13%
\$100,000 to \$124,999 per year	13%
\$125,000 or more per year	19%
Prefer not to say	*%

30. [QState] In which state do you live?

States in the Northeast	15%
States in the Midwest	18%
States in the South	41%
States in the West	26%

31. [QUrbanRural] How would you describe the area in which you live? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

City	34%
Suburb near a city	39%
Small town not near a city	8%
Rural or country area	18%

SCREENERS AND INITIAL DEMOGRAPHICS FOR QUOTAS (ASKED AT BEGINNING OF SURVEY)

32. [QIntro] Echelon, a public opinion research firm, is conducting a survey about current issues and would like to get your opinions. This survey is being conducted for research purposes only, and your individual responses will remain completely confidential. This survey usually takes about 15 minutes to complete.

In order for us to get accurate measures of people's opinions, we ask that survey participants read all questions carefully, and take the time to answer each question as thoughtfully and thoroughly as you can. Are you willing to do that?

I am willing to do that		100%
I am not willing to do that	TERMINATE	-
I can't promise either way	TERMINATE	-
I don't want to participate in this survey	TERMINATE	-

33. [QAge] What is your age? [OPEN END] [TERMINATE IF UNDER 18]

18 - 34	20%
35 - 49	64%
50 - 64	15%
65+	1%

34. [QIndustry] Do you or does anyone in your household work in any of the following industries? [SELECT MULTIPLE] [RANDOMIZE 1-8]

Healthcare		10%
Education or early childhood development		7%
Food service or the restaurant industry		7%
Sales		5%
Technology		5%
Journalism or the media	TERMINATE	-
Market research	TERMINATE	-
Public relations	TERMINATE	-
None of these		70%

35. [QRegVote] Are you currently registered to vote? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

Yes	89%
No	11%
Unsure	1%

36. [QParentalScreener] Are you the parent or guardian of a child or children in any of the following groups? Select all that apply, if any. (If applicable, please respond based on your child's grade level in the 2026–2027 school year.) [SELECT MULTIPLE]

A child in preschool or younger (not yet in kindergarten)	19%
A child in grades kindergarten through 12th grade	100%
A child who has already completed high school	16%
I do not have any children in those groups	TERMINATE -
Prefer not to say	TERMINATE -

[IF DOES NOT HAVE A CHILD IN GRADE SCHOOL [Option 2 NOT selected on QParentalScreener], TERMINATE.]

37. [QGender] Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?
[RANDOMIZE 1-2]
- | | |
|----------------|-----|
| Woman | 55% |
| Man | 45% |
| Some other way | - |
38. [QRace] What is your race or ethnicity? [SELECT MULTIPLE] [RANDOMIZE 1-6]
- | | |
|---|-----|
| White | 63% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 23% |
| Black or African American | 15% |
| Asian | 7% |
| Native American or Alaska Native | 2% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 1% |
| Other race or ethnicity | *% |
- [QRaceRecode] Recoded Race/Ethnicity
- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| White, non-Hispanic | 55% |
| Hispanic | 23% |
| Black, non-Hispanic | 11% |
| AAPL, non-Hispanic | 7% |
| Other/2+ races, non-Hispanic | 3% |
39. [QEducation] What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- | | |
|---------------------|-----|
| High school or less | 33% |
| Some college | 17% |
| Associate degree | 13% |
| Bachelor's degree | 22% |
| Graduate degree | 15% |
| Prefer not to say | *% |
40. [QKidNumber] How many children do you have who are currently in grades kindergarten through 12th grade? (In the 2026–2027 school year)
- | | | |
|------------|-----------|-----|
| 0 | TERMINATE | - |
| 1 | | 49% |
| 2 | | 36% |
| 3 | | 10% |
| 4 | | 3% |
| 5 | | 1% |
| 6 | | *% |
| 7 | | - |
| 8 | | *% |
| 9 | | *% |
| 10 or more | | *% |
41. [QHomeScreener] Where do your children who are in grades kindergarten through 12th grade live?
- | | |
|---|-------------|
| Full-time with me in my home | 94% |
| Split between my home and the home of another parent or family member | 6% |
| Not with me | TERMINATE - |
42. [QPublicScreener] What type of school do your children who are in grades kindergarten through 12th grade attend? (In the 2026–2027 school year)
- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Public school | 100% |
| Private school | TERMINATE - |
| Homeschool | TERMINATE - |
| Prefer not to say | TERMINATE - |

43. [QKidsGradeLevels] Please select the current grade level (in the 2026-2027 school year) of your child who is in grade school (K-12).

Kindergarten	12%
1st grade	11%
2nd grade	11%
3rd grade	13%
4th grade	13%
5th grade	13%
6th grade	14%
7th grade	13%
8th grade	13%
9th grade (Freshman)	14%
10th grade (Sophomore)	14%
11th grade (Junior)	13%
12th grade (Senior)	14%

44. [QMarital] What is your current marital status?

Single, never married	20%
Married	56%
Living with a partner	12%
Separated	3%
Divorced	8%
Widowed	2%
Prefer not to say	-

METHODOLOGY

Echelon Insights conducted a survey on behalf of the National Parents Union to understand K-12 parents' views on current topics. This survey was fielded online from September 7-11, 2026 in English among a sample of 1,528 parents of public school students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade nationwide using non-probability sampling.

The sample was drawn from the Cint/Lucid sample exchange based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education quota targets for parents of public school students derived from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) American Community Survey - Education Tabulation, a tabulation of 5-year data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Measures taken to ensure data quality included measures to prevent duplicate responses, questions designed to disqualify inattentive respondents, and the removal of respondents from the data file who answered more than one-third of the questions they were asked in less than one-third of the median response time per question.

The sample was weighted to population benchmarks for parents of public school students derived from the American Community Survey - Education Tabulation on gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and region, as well as on the following interactions derived from American Community Survey data on parents of school-age children: gender by education (college / non-college), gender by race (white / non-white), and race (white / non-white) by education (college / non-college). The sample was also weighted on gender among those who self-identified as registered voters to reflect benchmark data on voter registration among parents of school-age children from the US Census Bureau's November 2024 Current Population Survey Voting and Registration Supplement.

Calculated as it would be for a random sample and adjusted to incorporate the effect of weighting, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.6 percentage points. This estimate of precision does not account for other potential sources of error that can occur in online surveys with non-probability samples, such as non-coverage due to the survey being conducted online.