



## **Texas Voter Poll Reveals Strong Support for Public Schools and Rigorous Accountability Standards at a Time of Deep Concern for the Future of Texas**

*Nearly half of voters are concerned about the prospects for future generations while strong majorities support elevated academic standards to prepare more students for college or career.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Sept. 14, 2023**

**AUSTIN, TX** — An increasing number of Texas voters have significant worries about the future of Texas with nearly half believing that Texas children today will have less opportunity to succeed than prior generations, according to the [7th Texas Voter Poll](#), conducted at the end of August by Baseline & Associates for Texas 2036, a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy organization.

The share of voters who believe children today will have worse opportunities has jumped 17 points from our last measure of this voter attitude in January 2022. Close to a third of voters, or 30%, thought children today will have more opportunities to succeed, down 11 points from January 2022.

At the same time, Texas voters also overwhelmingly support elevating public education standards to ensure more high school graduates are ready for college or a career.

These attitudes of Texas voters, among initial findings from Texas 2036's 7th Texas Voter Poll, take on added significance as Texas lawmakers gear up for an education-focused special session this fall.

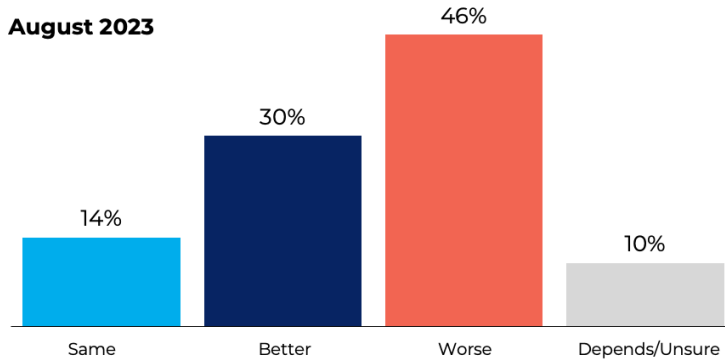
### **Top Five Initial Texas Voter Poll Findings**

1. **46% of Texas voters believe children today will have worse opportunities to succeed while 30% believe they will have better opportunities.** *That's a reversal from the January 2022 poll results when 41% believed children will have better opportunities and 29% believed they will have worse opportunities.*

## Do you believe that Texas children today will have the same opportunities, better opportunities or worse opportunities to succeed than previous generations have had?

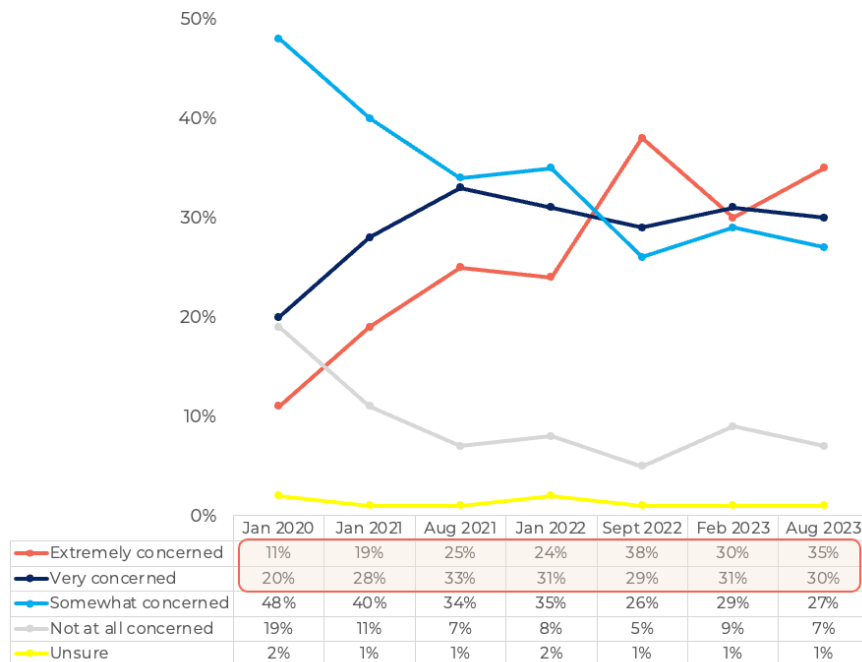
Texas voters' outlook on children's opportunities worsens by 17 points since Jan. 2022, with only one out of three Texas voters currently forecasting better opportunities for future generations of Texans.

**August 2023**



- 65% of Texas voters are either extremely or very concerned about the state's future.** While a slight improvement from what we recorded in September 2022, the current figure is 10 points higher than what we measured in January 2022 and 34 points higher than what we measured in January 2020 before the pandemic hit.

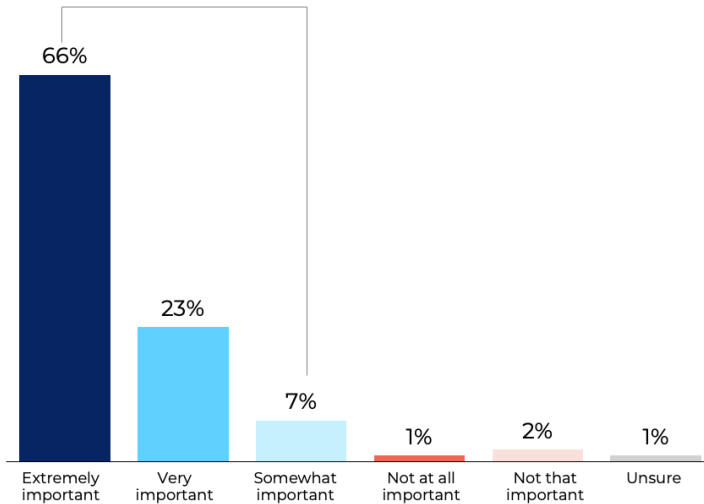
## Which best describes your level of concern regarding the future of Texas?



3. **96% of Texas voters agree that the strength of a community's public education system is important**, with 89% indicating that it's extremely or very important.

**Which best describes how important it is for your community to have a good public school system?**

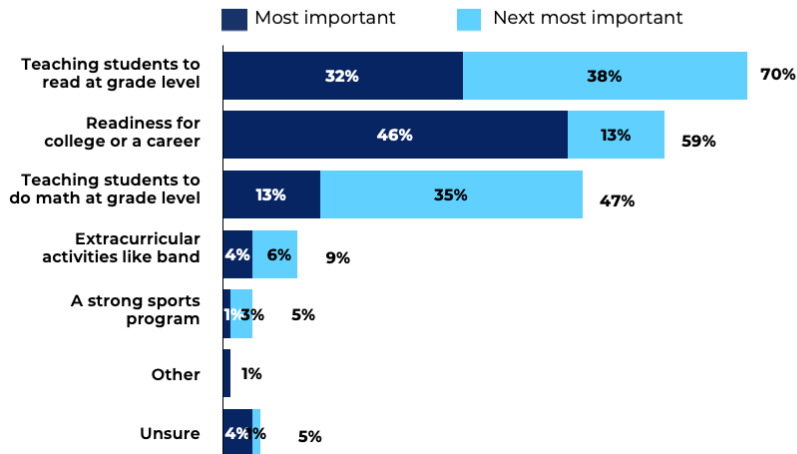
**96%**



4. **70% of Texas voters selected teaching students to read at grade level as the most or next most important element of a good school.** College or career readiness was cited by 59% of voters as a leading element of a good school. Teaching students to do math at grade level was named an important element by 47% of voters.

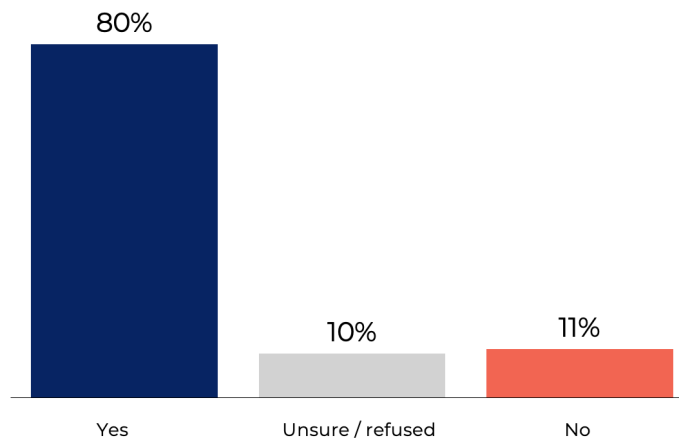
Other items were rated as much less important for a school to be a good one. Extracurricular activities were identified as an important element by 9% of voters while a strong sports program was named by 5% of voters.

**Which of the following is the most (and next most) important element of a good school?**



5. **80% of Texas voters expressed support for the Texas Education Agency’s proposed initiative to elevate the standards for school ratings.** Under this new framework, the benchmark to attain an "A" rating would rise substantially, requiring 88% of students to graduate prepared for either college or a career.

**For the first time since the state began rating high schools on an A to F scale, the Texas Education Agency has proposed increasing the standards that determine a school's rating. Under this new scoring system, the threshold to receive an “A” rating would increase from 60% of students graduating ready for college or a career to 88%. Do you support this update?**



*\* Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.*

### **Voters back rigorous accountability measures**

"As we prepare for a fall special session on education issues, it's clear that Texas voters value a high-quality public education system and want state leaders to pursue strategies that will lead to improved student outcomes, especially in key areas like reading, math, and college and career readiness," said **Mary Lynn Pruneda, senior policy advisor at Texas 2036.** "Texas voters overwhelmingly support the Texas Education Agency's recent changes to increase the rigor of our college and career readiness indicators."

Earlier this year, TEA proposed raising the college and career readiness standards for Texas high schools from 60% success resulting in an 'A' to 88% success resulting in an 'A.' 80% of Texas voters support this move, with just 11% opposing.

When survey participants were further queried on what proportion of high school students should graduate ready for college or a career for a school to earn an 'A,' the average response was a high bar of 87% – with a significant majority of 64% of respondents setting the standard at 90% and above. Just 7% of voters identified a 69% success or below standard – the tier that would include the current 60% standard – as appropriate.

Pruneda added, "The recent changes proposed by TEA to the college and career readiness indicators make the system better align with how parents and voters want school accountability

to work. When you ask Texas voters if they want a rigorous school accountability system, the results are overwhelmingly ‘yes’.”

### **Reading, math performance standards**

Voters also told us that they believe that current accountability measures on student readiness, reading and math scores are not rigorous enough. For instance, for schools with 52% of students reading at grade level — the statewide average for “meets grade level expectations” in Spring 2023 STAAR results — 33% of voters would give them a failing grade and 85% would rate them a ‘C’ or below.

For schools where 43% of students are at grade level in math — the statewide average for “meets grade level expectations” in Spring 2023 STAAR results — 46% of Texas voters would issue a failing grade and 88% would rate the school a ‘C’ or below. For the 2021-2022 school year, [87% of Texas school districts were rated ‘A’ or ‘B’ by TEA](#) despite outcomes that were generally lower than those from the 2022-2023 school year. [On Tuesday, TEA announced a delay in the release of A-F scores for the 2022-2023 school year.](#)

"Texans have been telling us for years that they are concerned for our collective future," said **Holly Heard, vice president of data and analytics at Texas 2036**. "Texans love their public schools. They want those schools to have stronger and more rigorous accountability standards because they want to give their children a better future. Texas 2036 will keep working to provide the support for data-driven policy solutions to help make Texas the best place to live, work and raise a family."

### **About the Texas Voter Poll**

The poll, conducted by Baseline and Associates, surveyed 1,000 registered Texas voters between Aug. 22 and 29, 2023. The poll has a margin of error of +/- 3.1% and utilized a multi-platform approach including phone interviews (52%), SMS (13%), and online surveys (35%). For detailed poll results, please visit [www.texas2036.org/poll](http://www.texas2036.org/poll).

### **About Texas 2036**

Texas 2036 is a nonprofit public policy organization committed to building long-term, data-driven strategies to ensure Texas’ prosperity up to its bicentennial and beyond. Our solutions are nonpartisan, grounded in thorough research, and focus on critical issues that matter most to all Texans.

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