

STATEWIDE TEXAS EDUCATION SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Introduction

Education is the foremost issue in the minds of Texas adults according to a recent survey commissioned by the Texas Public Education Reform Foundation (TPERF). The survey measured general and specific attitudes about standardized school testing, and measured specific attitudes about the TAAS and TAKS tests before and after giving respondents detailed information about the TAKS test.

The TPERF is a non-profit corporation formed in 2001 to advance the cause of education reform in Texas. TPERF is committed to meeting every Texas child's need for the best and highest quality of education possible so that upon graduation, Texas children will be prepared for higher education and productive citizenship.

Key Findings

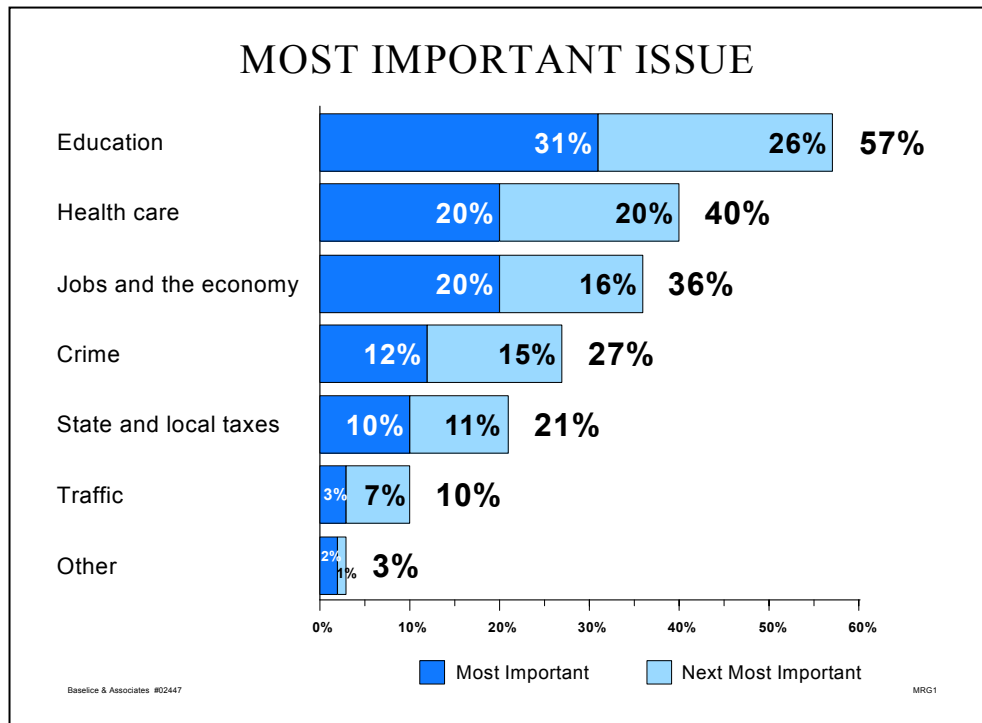
1. Education is the issue Texans select more than any other issue (57%) for the Texas Legislature to address.
2. Approximately five out of eight adults (64%) favor Texas public schools administering such tests as the TAAS, with more than half of those respondents (40%) strongly in favor of it. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents oppose the use of standardized testing in public schools, with 20% of all adults in strong opposition.
3. A majority (82%) of Texas adults say that students should not be promoted to the next grade unless they have the necessary knowledge and skills.
4. After hearing several statements about introducing the new TAKS test in greater detail, the level of voters who favor standardized testing in the Texas public school system increases to 71%, while opposition decreases to 20%. More than half of all respondents (53%) remain supportive of standardized testing throughout the survey, 11% switch to favor such tests, 9% end up undecided, while only 2% switch to oppose the tests. Just 14% remain opposed throughout the survey.

Base1ice & Associates, Inc. conducted survey research of the attitudes and opinions of adults in Texas. This survey was conducted among 808 randomly selected adults on August 4-6, 2002. The margin of error for a sample of this size is $\pm 3.5\%$ at the .95 test level. The results are rounded to the nearest whole percent.*

*Note: Due to rounding, the information on the following tables may not add up to exactly 100%.

Most Important Issue

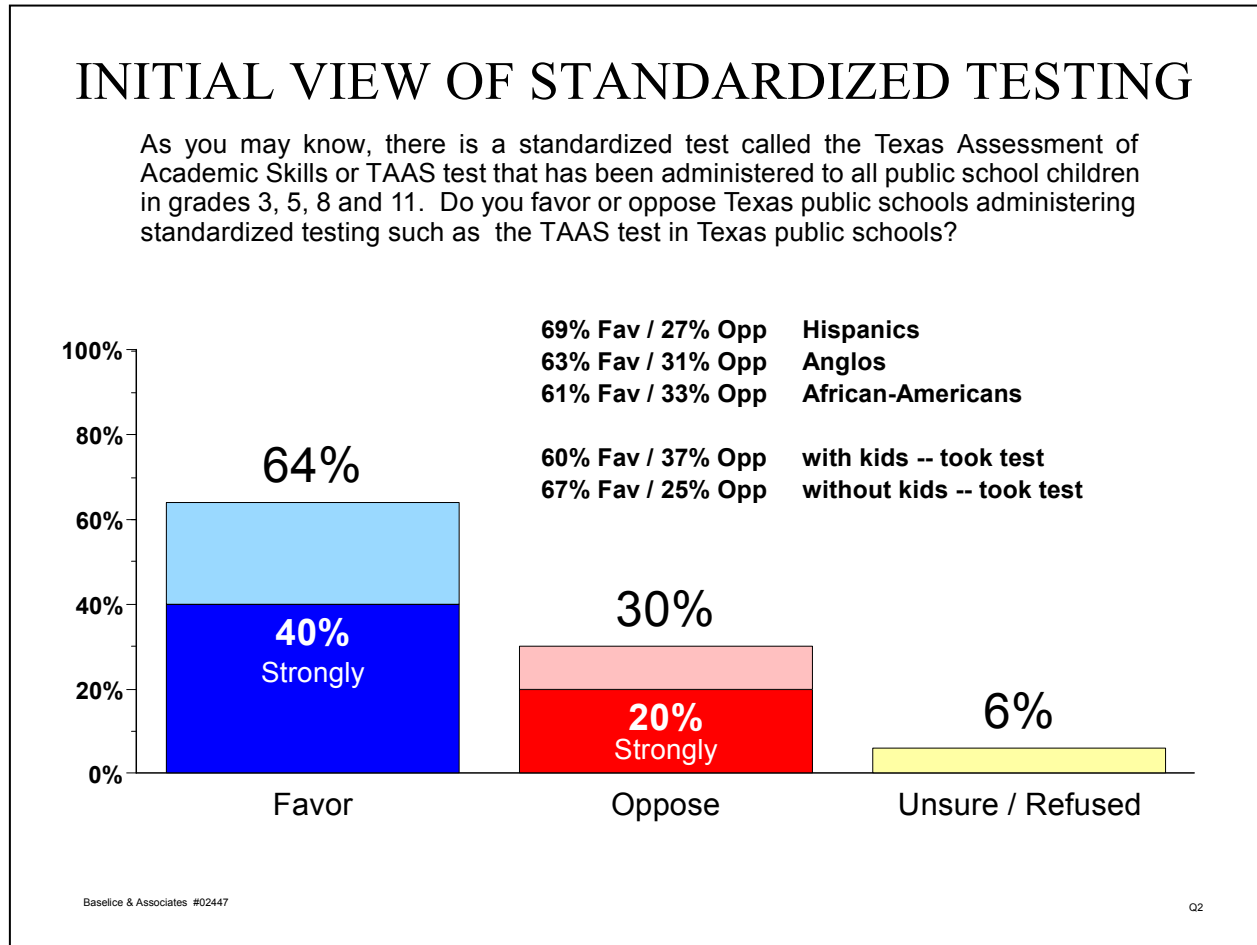
Respondents select education (57% combined) as the most important issue for the Texas Legislature to address. Health care (40%) and jobs and the economy (36%) are also chosen next most as important issues. Crime (27%) and state and local taxes (21%) are selected fourth and fifth most often, followed by traffic at 10%.



- Adults in the Austin/Waco/Bryan (40%) and East Texas (40%) media markets choose jobs and the economy as at above average rates, while respondents in the West Texas media markets (47%) are more apt to be concerned with health care.
- Age and gender have a particular impact on responses to this question. Females under 45 (71%) are more likely than average to select education as the most important issue facing them. Males under 45 (42%) choose jobs and the economy as their biggest concern, males 45 or older (28%) believe state and local taxes are of most importance, and seniors (49%) are more likely to select health care.
- Adults who have children under 18 (70%) tend to choose education as the issue of most importance to them at above average levels. Furthermore, females with children who have taken the TAAS test (64%) select education as their main concern, while males with children who have taken the TAAS test (28%) believe state and local taxes are a priority issue. Males without children who have taken the TAAS test (41%) are most concerned with jobs and the economy.
- African-American and Hispanic females are both concerned with education (63%) and health care (47%) at above average rates, whereas Anglo males (28%) choose state and local taxes at an above average rate.

Administering Standardized Tests

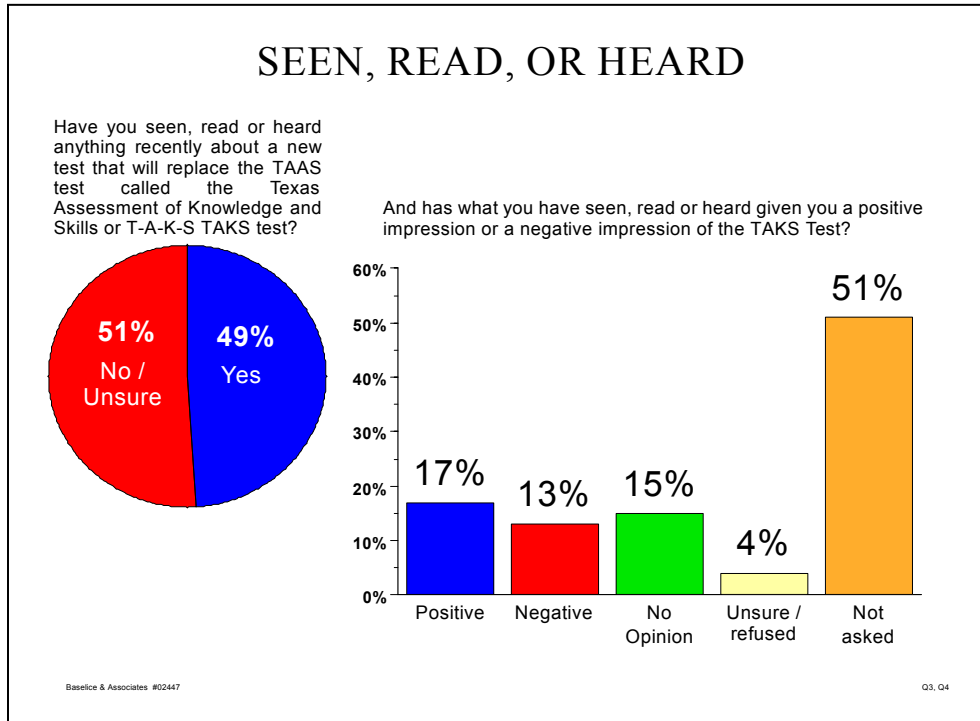
Approximately five out of eight adults (64%) favor Texas public schools administering such tests as the TAAS, with more than half of those respondents (40%) strongly in favor of it. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents oppose the use of standardized testing in public schools, with 20% of all adults in strong opposition.



- Males under 45 (70%) are more likely than average to favor standardized testing, whereas respondents between the ages 45 and 64 (35%) are more likely to oppose the issue.
- Males without children who have taken the TAAS (71%) favor such tests at above average rates. Females with children who have taken the TAAS test before (39%) are likely to oppose standardized testing in Texas public schools at an above average rate.
- More than 62% of African-Americans, 66% of Anglo females and 73% of Hispanic females favor the administering of standardized tests.

Seen, Read, or Heard

Approximately half of the adult respondents (49%) have seen, read, or heard something with regards to the new TAKS test, while the other half (51%) have not. Seventeen percent (17%) of all adults have seen, read, or heard something about the TAKS test and have a positive impression of it. An additional 15% of respondents have no opinion of the TAKS test, and 4% of respondents are unsure how they feel about it.

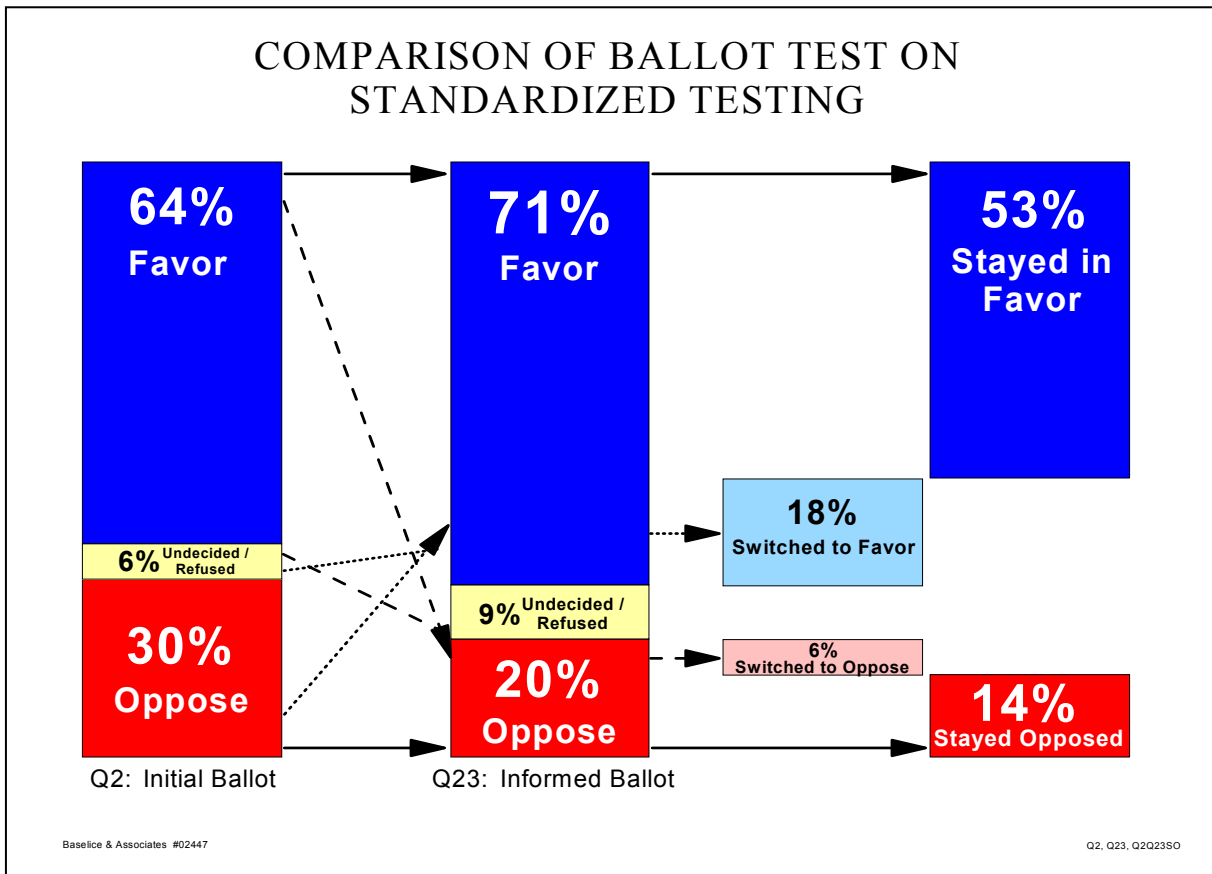


- Adults in the West Texas media markets (67%) are more likely than average to have seen, read, or heard about the TAKS test, and have above average positive impressions of the test (28%).
- Males under 45 (41%) are less apt than average to recall having seen, read, or heard about the TAKS, whereas males 45 or older (54%) are more apt than average to recall something.
- Parents who have children who have taken the TAAS test (61%) are more likely than adults without children that have taken the TAAS test (40%) to recall information about the new TAKS test.
- Female college graduates (26%), college graduates 45 or older (27%), females with children who have taken the TAAS test (25%), and Hispanic females (23%) are respondents who have an above average positive impression of the TAKS test.

Standardized Testing Ballot Comparison

After hearing several statements about introducing the new TAKS test in greater detail, the level of voters who favor standardized testing in the Texas public school system increases to 71%, while opposition decreases to 20%.

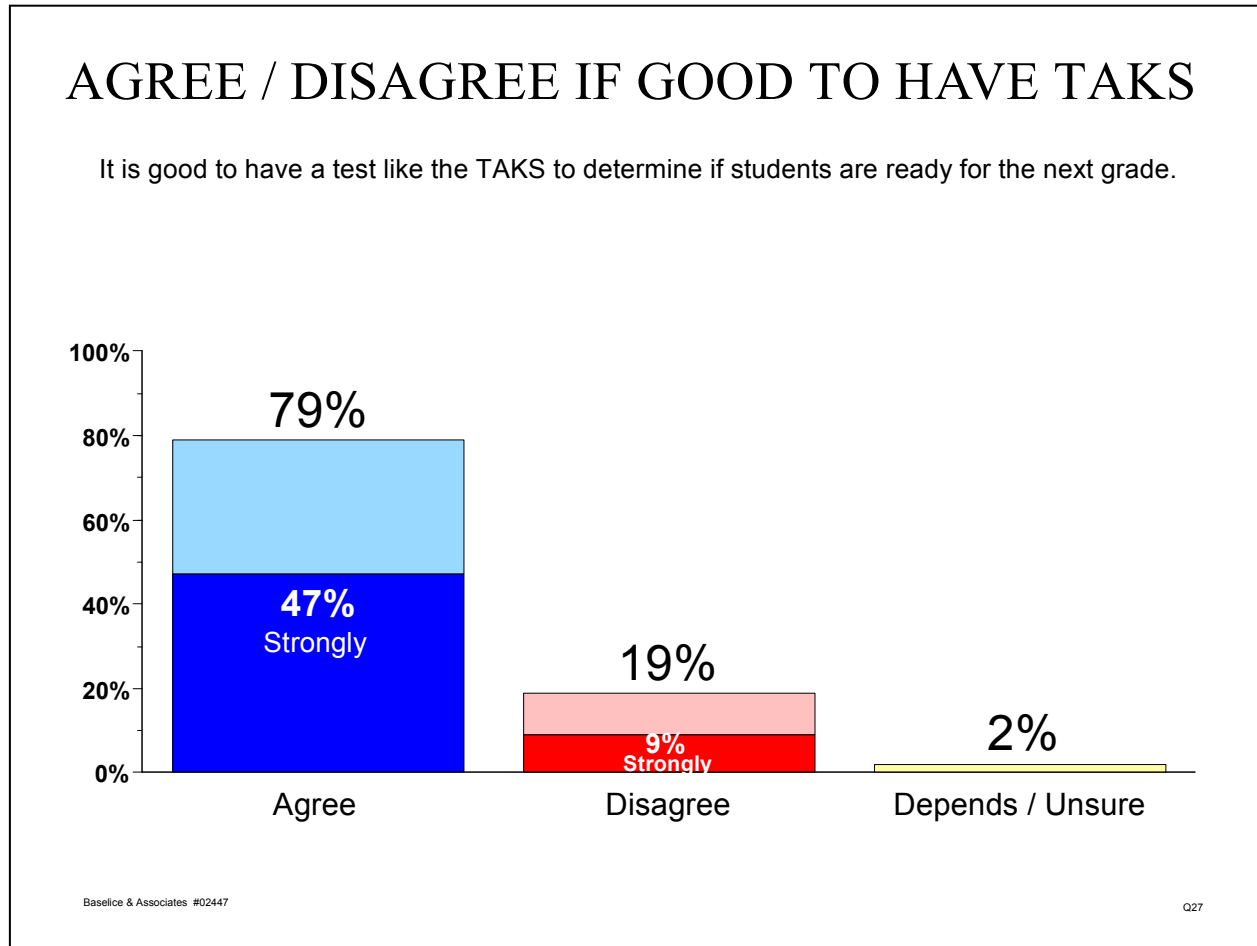
More than half of all respondents (53%) remain supportive of standardized testing throughout the survey, 11% switch to favor such tests, 9% end up undecided, while just 2% switch to oppose the tests and 14% remain opposed throughout the survey.



- Seventy-one percent (71%) of adults with children who have taken the TAAS test favor standardized testing on the informed ballot.
- Subgroups who remain in favor of standardized testing within the public school system on both the initial and informed ballot tests at above average rates include males under 45 (63%), respondents 18-44 without a college degree (60%), males with children who have not taken the TAAS (59%), and Hispanic females (64%).
- Adults in the Austin/Waco/Bryan media markets (20%) are the most apt to stay opposed to standardized testing.
- African-American females (23%) switch to favor testing at above average rates.

Viewpoint of TAKS Test

Approximately seven out of nine adults (79%) agree that the TAKS test is a good way to gauge if children are ready for the next grade level, with more than half of those respondents (47%) strongly in agreement. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents disagree with this statement, with 9% of all adults in strong disagreement.



- Males without children who have taken the TAAS test (83%) are among the most likely of respondents to agree that the TAKS test is a good determinant for children moving into new grade levels.
- African-American males (85%) and Hispanic females (84%) are slightly more apt than Anglos (78%) to agree with this statement.
- Females with children who have taken the TAAS (22%) disagree with the statement that the TAKS is a good gauge of a child's readiness to enter the next grade, but even 77% of these respondents agree.