

Harstad Poll Summary

A coalition of groups supporting public education came together to research the voters' views on public education in South Dakota. The groups and percentage of investment in the poll are as follows: South Dakota Education Association 51%; South Dakota United Schools Association 21%; Cowboy Caucus PAC 16%; and the South Dakota Democratic Party 12%. These groups commissioned a scientific poll of 503 likely voters to measure voter attitudes about public education. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their attitudes toward public schools, teacher pay, funding for public schools and various tax proposals.

South Dakota voters have a positive view of public schools in general and are even more positive about of their local public schools. Sixty three percent of the respondents give South Dakota Public Schools an A or B grade. A similar questions was asked of the voters in 2012 and 67 percent gave public schools an A or B grade. The current number is down slightly but within the margin of error so the change is statistically insignificant.

South Dakotans have an even more positive view of their local public schools. Seventy-two percent of the respondents give their local schools an A or B grade. This number is essentially unchanged since a similar question was asked in June of 2012.

Voters also give high marks to South Dakota's public school teachers. Seventy percent of the respondents say that teachers are doing an excellent or good job educating students. However, 79 percent of the respondents believe that teacher pay falls short of where it should be to recruit and retain teachers and that number is increasing. A poll conducted in 2012 showed that only 63 percent of likely voters believed that teacher pay was falling short.

A growing number of South Dakotans also want more money for public schools. Seventy three percent of the respondents believe that school funding should be increased. That is up 11 percent from 2012 when 63 percent of likely voters said funding for public schools should be increased.

When presented with various tax options as possibilities to fund increases for public schools, voter responded positively. When asked whether or not they would support a corporate profits tax to help fund public schools, 53 percent of the respondents said definitely yes or probably yes. An option that received the most positive response was increasing state taxes on corporations heard quartered in other states at 70 percent followed by taxing the income on people making over \$500,000 a year at 59 percent, increasing the summer sales tax by one penny at 56 percent, the corporate profits tax again at 53 percent, and lastly at state tax on car rentals, hotels and motels at 51 percent.

Taking a look at how voters feel about policy makers, 54 percent of the voters view Governor Dugaard positively compared to President Obama who received a 35 percent positive rating. Local school district officials were a little higher at 59 percent; this may be attributed to the respondent's high marks for their local schools. The South Dakota State Legislature received a favorability rating of 46 percent which is considered quite well in the Country's current political climate.

When asked to rate the job performance of various groups involved in education in South Dakota the respondents once again gave classroom teachers the highest marks with 77 percent saying that teachers were doing an excellent or good job. School administrators who manage the schools' budgets had 44 percent of the respondents believing they were doing an excellent or good job. Finally, when asked to rate the job state legislators were doing with school funding, only 19 percent of the respondents rated their job performance as excellent or good.

In conclusion, voters have a very positive view of South Dakota public schools and public school teachers. There is growing concern regarding the funding of public schools and voters are signaling that they are open to new tax or revenue sources to increase funding for public education.



South Dakota Statewide Survey – June 2015

Hello, may I speak with *[FIRST NAME ONLY]* please?

Hello, my name is _____. First, I'm not selling anything or asking for money. I'm calling from Harstad Research, the national public opinion research firm. We are doing a survey here in South Dakota, and would like to ask your opinion on some interesting local issues. *[Only if R asks:]* Your phone number was selected at random from a list of voters and this survey is being conducted for research purposes only.

SCREENER

- A. Do you or does anyone in your household happen to work for a radio station, a newspaper, or a TV station?
- | | | |
|---------------------|------|--------------------|
| No | 100% | |
| Yes | - | ⇒ <i>Terminate</i> |
| Refused/DK/NS | - | ⇒ <i>Terminate</i> |

[Ask everyone]

- B. Next year there will be an election for President and Senate. What is the chance that you will vote in this election – will you definitely vote, probably vote, are the chances 50-50, or will you probably not vote? *[n=503]*
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Definitely vote | 78% | |
| Probably vote..... | 18% | |
| 50-50 chances | 4% | |
| Probably not | - | ⇒ <i>Terminate</i> |
| Refused/DK/NS | - | ⇒ <i>Terminate</i> |
- C. Sex *[Do not ask] [n=503]*
- | | |
|-------------|-----|
| Male..... | 47% |
| Female..... | 53% |

Preliminary

1. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else? *[If Democrat, ask:]* Would you call yourself a strong Democrat, or a not very strong Democrat? *[If Republican, ask:]* Would you call yourself a strong Republican, or a not very strong Republican? *[If Independent, ask:]* Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party, closer to the Republican Party, or do you think of yourself as strictly Independent? *[n=503]*

Democrat	33%
Independent.....	20%
Republican.....	43%
Strong Democrat	16%
Not strong Democrat	10%
Independent / lean Democrat	7%
Strictly Independent.....	13%
Independent / lean Republican.....	5%
Not strong Republican	14%
Strong Republican	25%
Other party.....	5%
DK/NS / Refused	6%

[Ask everyone]

2. I'm going to read you the names of several people and groups. I'd like you to rate your feelings toward each one as very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or very negative. If you don't know the name, just say so. *[Ask "a" & "b" first in order, then randomize c-g]*
[n=503]

	<u>V / S</u> <u>Pos</u>	<u>V / S</u> <u>Neg</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>Positive</u>	<u>Smwht</u> <u>Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Smwht</u> <u>Negative</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>Negative</u>	<u>DK/NS</u>
a. Barack Obama.....	35	47	17%	18%	16%	12%	35%	2%
b. Dennis Daugaard.....	54	21	26%	29%	18%	13%	8%	6%
c. Your local school district....	59	16	27%	32%	18%	9%	6%	7%
d. The South Dakota state legislature	46	23	10%	36%	26%	14%	9%	5%

Now I am going to read you an initiative that may be on the ballot next election. After I'm done reading it, I'll ask how you'd vote on it if the election were held today.

3. An Act to establish a corporate profits tax to create a fund for the purpose of providing great public schools for all South Dakota students. The money in the fund shall be distributed to the kindergarten through 12th grade public schools — through the Department of Education. The first \$250,000 of profits of every corporation would be exempt from the tax. The tax rate imposed on 'C' Corporations would be 6 percent on taxable income over \$250,000 per year.

If the election were today, how would you vote on this – would you definitely vote yes for the corporate profits tax for South Dakota's public schools, probably vote yes for it, probably vote no against it, or definitely vote no against it? *[n=503]*

Vote yes.....	53%
Vote no	34%
Definitely vote yes	14%
Probably vote yes	39%
Probably vote no.....	20%
Definitely vote no	14%
DK/NS.....	12%

Preliminary

Switching tracks....

4. What grade would you give to public schools in South Dakota — an A, B, C, D, or Fail grade?

	June 2015	June 2012
	<i>[n=503]</i>	<i>[n=602]</i>
Grade A / B.....	63%	67%
Grade C / D / F	31%	28%
A	9%	16%
B	54%	51%
C	23%	23%
D	6%	3%
Fail.....	2%	2%
DK/NS.....	6%	4%

5. And what grade would you give to your local public schools — an A, B, C, D, or Fail grade?

	June 2015	June 2012
	<i>[n=503]</i>	<i>[n=602]</i>
Grade A / B.....	72%	71%
Grade C / D / F	24%	26%
A	25%	28%
B	46%	43%
C	17%	18%
D	5%	5%
Fail.....	3%	2%
DK/NS.....	4%	3%

6. Generally speaking, do you think FUNDING for public schools in South Dakota should be increased, kept at the same level, or decreased?

	June 2015	June 2012
	<i>[n=503]</i>	<i>[n=602]</i>
Increased.....	73%	62%
Kept the same	20%	29%
Decreased	2%	4%
DK/NS.....	4%	5%

7. Do you think the pay for public school teachers in South Dakota is excessive, is at about the right level, or falls short of what it ought to be? *[If “falls short,” ask:]* And do you think teacher pay falls a little short, somewhat short, or far short of what it ought to be? *[Rotate follow-up answer choices top-to-bottom, bottom-to-top]*

	June 2015	June 2012
	<i>[n=503]</i>	<i>[n=602]</i>
Teacher pay falls short	79%	63%
Teacher pay is excessive	*%	2%
Teacher pay is about the right level.....	17%	29%
Teacher pay falls a little short.....	11%	9%
Teacher pay falls somewhat short.....	27%	24%
Teacher pay falls far short.....	41%	30%
DK/NS.....	4%	6%

Preliminary

[Ask of a random ½, Form X]

8. Now I am going to read you the names of a few groups involved in education in South Dakota and ask you to rate how good of a job they are doing.

[Read, randomize] – are they doing an excellent, good, just fair, or poor job? [n=277]

Ranked by Excellent/Good	Excellent /Good	Fair /Poor	Excellent	Good	Just Fair	Poor	DK/NS
b. The classroom teachers	77	17	27%	50%	15%	1%	6%
a. The school administrators who manage the schools' budgets.....	44	47	8%	36%	29%	18%	10%
c. The state legislature as far as funding the public schools	19	77	2%	17%	42%	35%	4%

[Ask of everyone]

9. Let me read you some other possible measures to increase funding for the public schools. After I read each one, I'll ask you how you would vote on it if it were on the ballot.

[One / another] measure would [Read, randomize] and the revenue would go to the public schools – would you definitely vote yes, probably vote yes, probably vote no, or would you definitely vote no? [n=503]

Ranked by Vote Yes	Vote Yes	Vote No	Def. Yes	Prob Yes	Prob No	Def. No	DK/NS
b. Increase state taxes on big corporations that operate in South Dakota but are headquartered in other states	71	26	26%	44%	16%	10%	4%
d. Start an income tax on people making over 500 thousand a year	59	38	23%	35%	19%	19%	3%
a. Increase the state's sales tax by one cent per dollar -- just during the summer months	56	41	20%	36%	23%	18%	3%
c. Increase the state tax on car rentals, hotels and motels.....	51	45	12%	39%	32%	13%	5%

Preliminary

Our last few questions are about you and your family and are for statistical purposes only.

D1. May I ask how old you are? [n=503]

18 to 29 years.....	11%
30 to 34 years.....	9%
35 to 39 years.....	9%
40 to 44 years.....	6%
45 to 49 years.....	8%
50 to 54 years.....	8%
55 to 59 years.....	9%
60 to 64 years.....	14%
65 to 69 years.....	6%
70 to 74 years.....	6%
75 to 79 years.....	7%
80 years or older.....	7%
Refused/DK/NS	-

D2. Do you happen to live with any children age 18 or younger, or not? [Include kids at home part-time / weekends / partial custody] [n=503]

Yes, live with children age 18 or younger.....	34%
No, do not live with children 18 or younger	65%
DK/NS.....	1%

[Ask if live with children age 18 or younger in D2]

D2a. And do any of those children in your home attend kindergarten through 12th grade? [n=503]

Yes, child/children attend K thru 12th grade	28%
No, child/children do not attend K thru 12th grade.....	6%
DK/NS	*%

Do not live with children 18 or younger in D2 / not asked question 66%

D3. For each of the following descriptions I read, please tell me if this applies to you personally or to someone in your household. Someone who [Read each item and ask:] — does that apply to you, someone in your household, or not? [Do not randomize] [Single response only, if applies to respondent and someone else in household then please record under 'applies to respondent'] [n=503]

	Total Applies	Applies to Resp.	Applies to HH	Does Not Apply	DK/NS
a. Works at a public school	17	8%	9%	82%	1%
b. Lives or works on a farm or ranch.....	23	16%	8%	76%	1%

D4. What is the last grade or level of school you have completed? [Read list if necessary] [n=503]

Less than high school degree.....	3%
High school graduate.....	21%
Some college - but less than two years of college	13%
Some college - two years or more/AA degree.....	19%
College graduate/bachelors degree/BA/BS.....	26%
Postgraduate courses/Masters or Doctoral degree	16%
DK/NS.....	1%

Preliminary

D5. Party registration from South Dakota voter file [n=503]

Democrat	33%
Republican.....	49%
Rest	18%

Thank you for taking our survey, your answers have been extremely helpful.

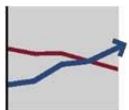
Methodology

The June 2015 South Dakota Statewide Voter Survey was conducted by HARSTAD STRATEGIC RESEARCH, INC, the national public opinion research firm in Boulder, Colorado. The results of this survey are based upon 503 random telephone interviews among likely November 2016 voters in South Dakota. Sample was obtained using a statewide voter list. Interviews were conducted by live interviewers reaching land lines and cell phones from June 2-7, 2015. This random sample of 503 has a worst-case 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 4.4% about any one reported percentage.

South Dakota Voter Survey on Public Schools

503 Likely Voters in November 2016

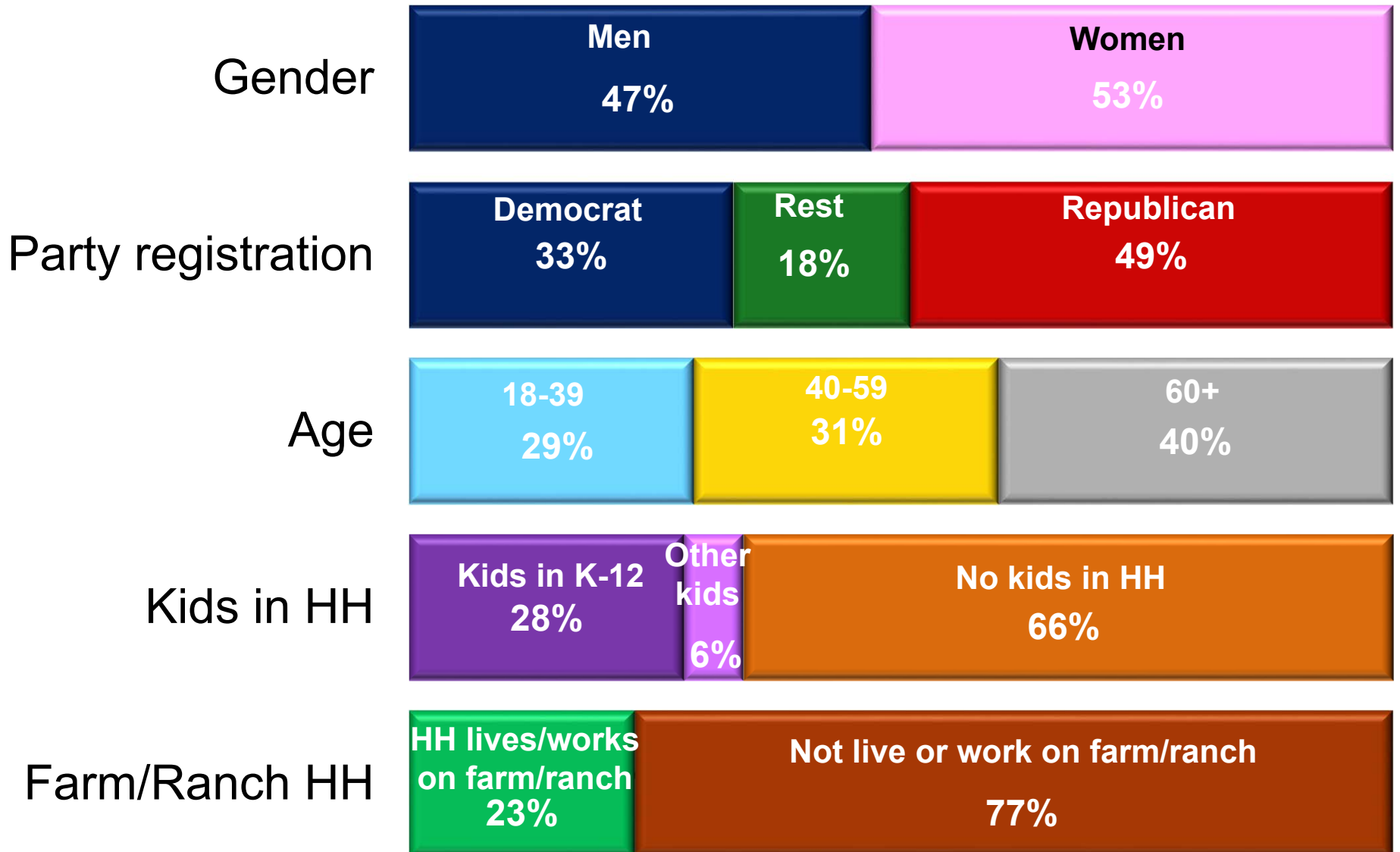
June 2 to 7, 2015



**HARSTAD STRATEGIC
RESEARCH, INC.**

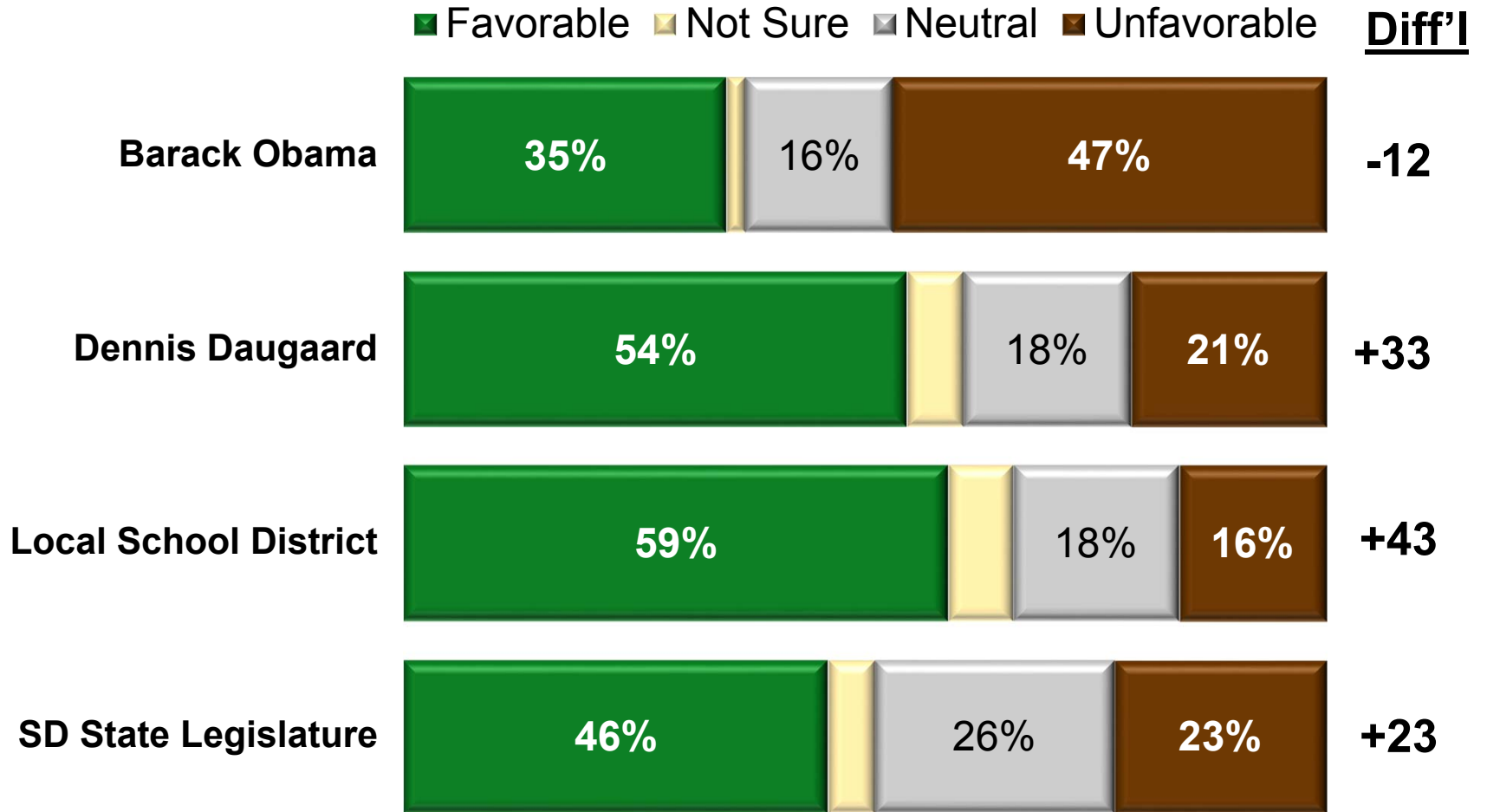
**503 Likely 2016 Voters
Statewide in South Dakota
June 2-7, 2015**

Composition of the South Dakota 2016 Voter Sample



Feelings toward selected officeholders and relevant entities

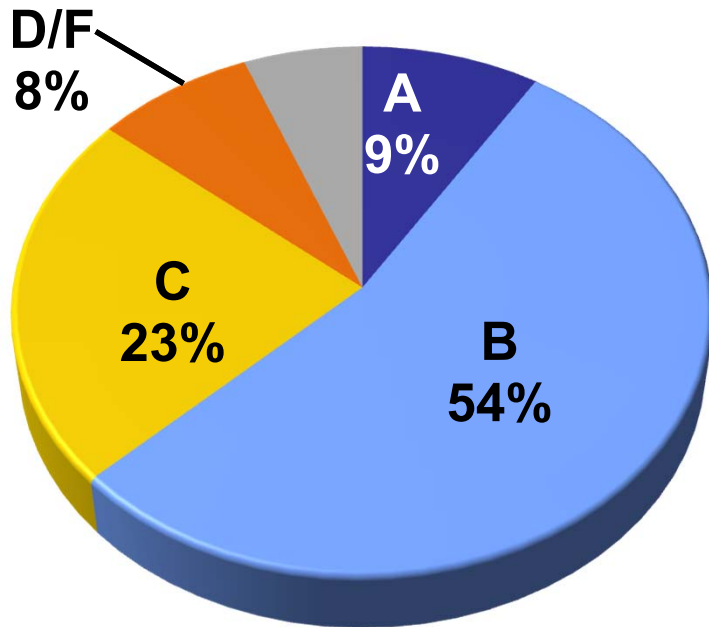
Q2. Rate your feelings towards these different officeholders or entities.



Majorities of voters grade the public schools with an A or B, especially at their local level

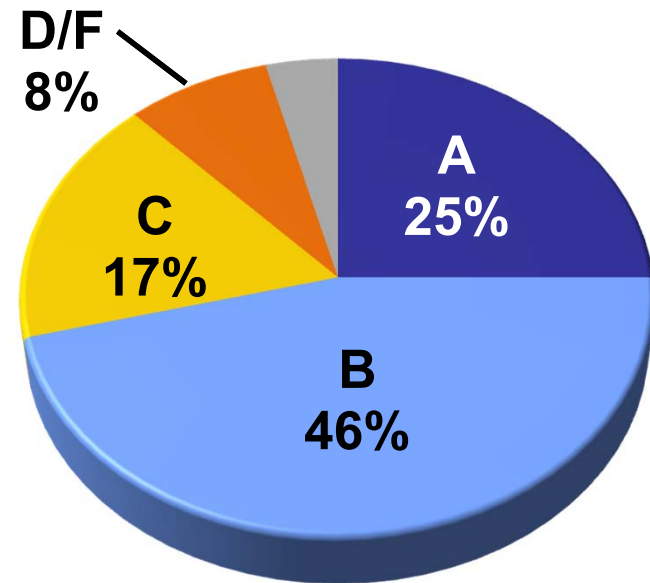
Q4 and Q5. What grades, respectively, would you give South Dakota public schools and your local public schools – an A, B, C, D, or Fail grade?

South Dakota Public Schools



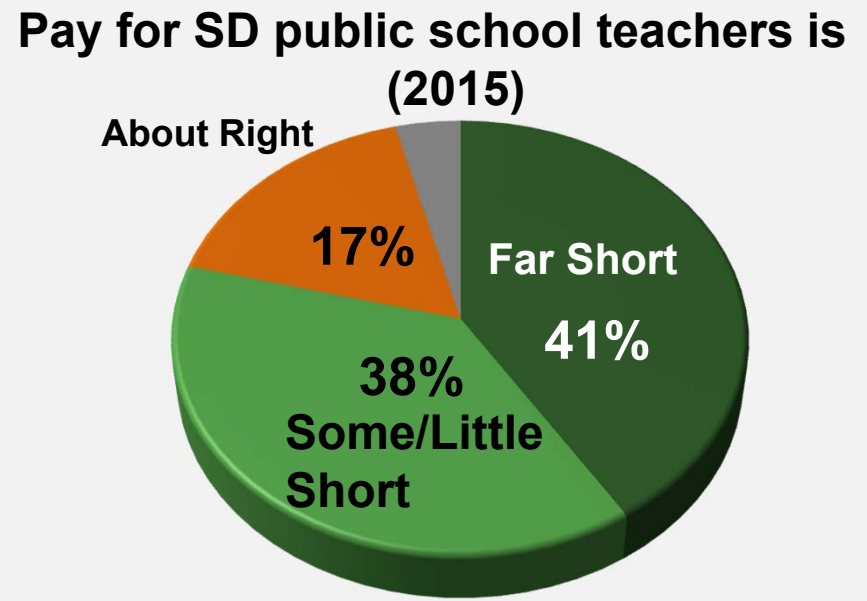
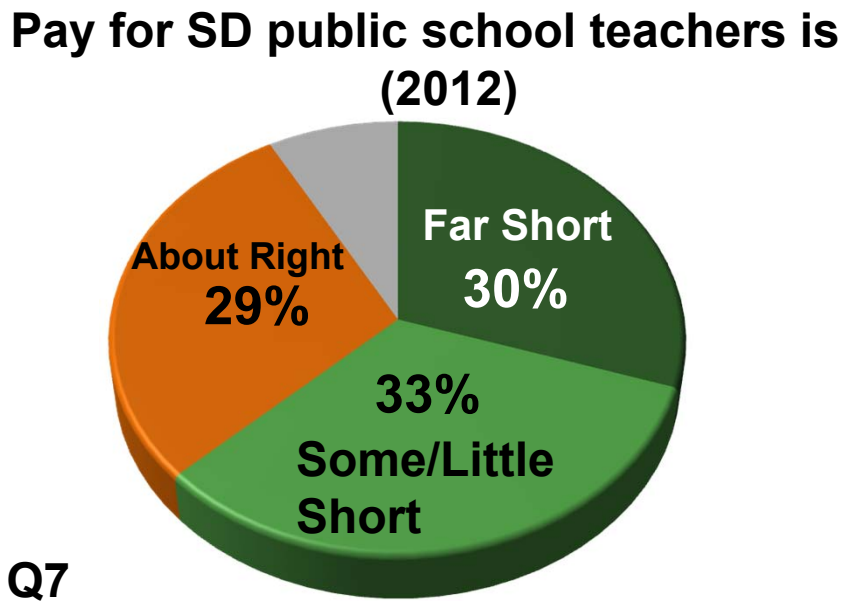
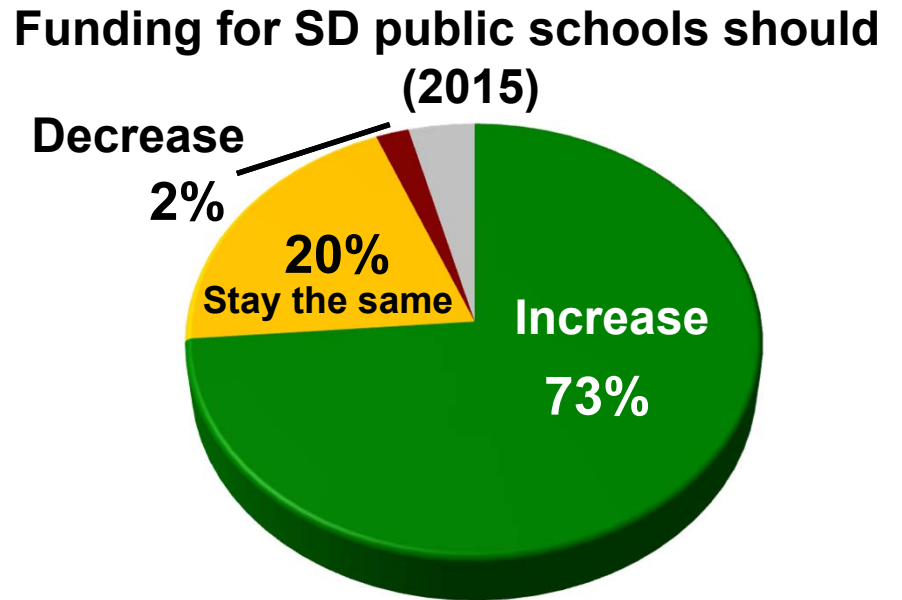
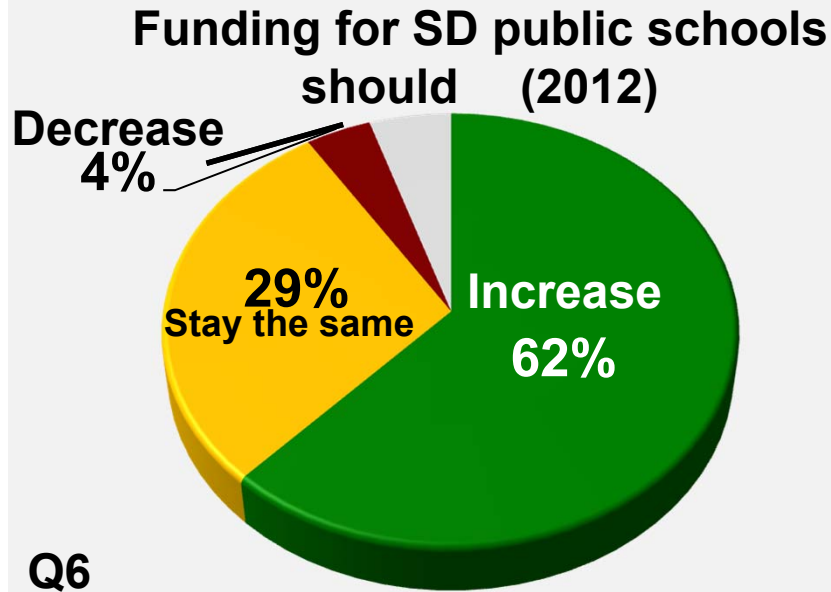
K-12 Public School Parents:
12% A, 54% B, 25% C, 7% D-F

Your Local Public Schools



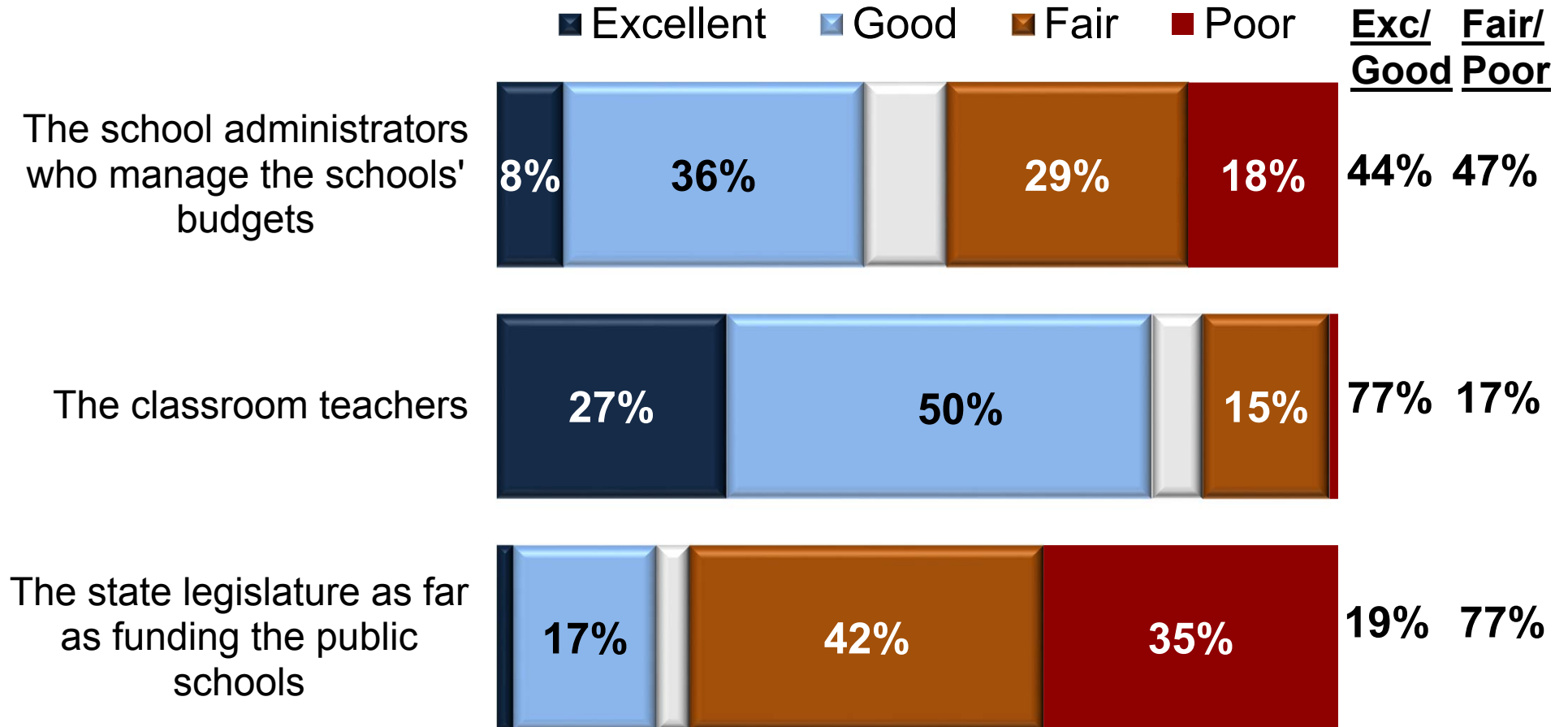
K-12 Public School Parents:
31% A, 46% B, 16% C, 7% D-F

Overwhelming majorities of SD voters believe current levels of public school funding and teacher pay are inadequate



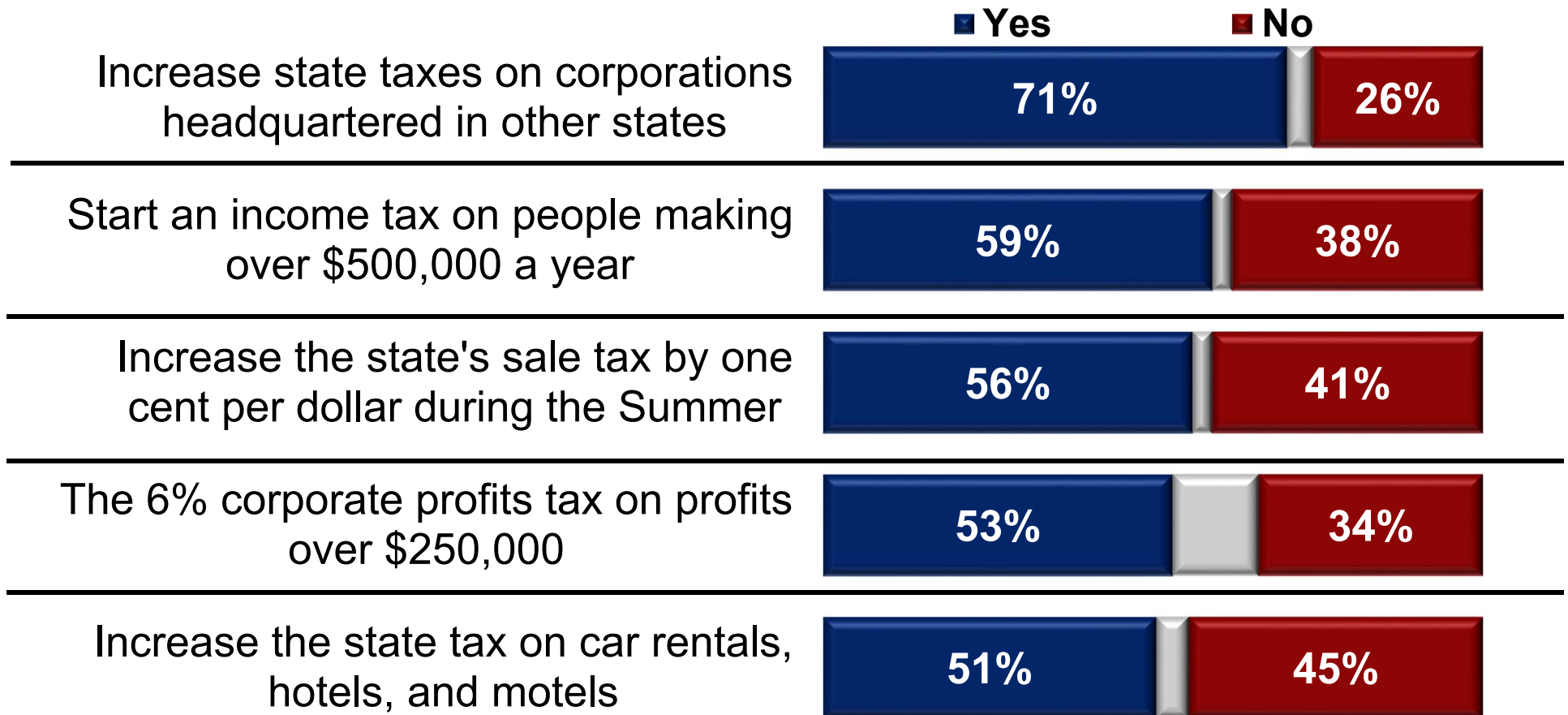
Voters assess the performance of teachers, school administrators, and the state legislature in sharply different terms

Q 8. Now I am going to read you the names of a few groups involved in education in South Dakota and ask you to rate how good of a job they are doing.



Widely divergent majorities express initial support for various other tax increases for public schools

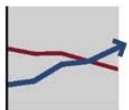
Q 9. Let me read you some other possible measures to increase funding for public schools. After I read each one, I'll ask you how you would vote on it:



South Dakota Voter Survey on Public Schools

503 Likely Voters in November 2016

June 2 to 7, 2015



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**503 Likely 2016 Voters
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