Methodology

• Survey conducted May 17-19, 2016 via landlines and cell phones

• Total of 400 Delaware registered voters (500 unweighted)

• Oversamples:
  – City of Wilmington (30 interviews weighted, 85 interviews unweighted)
  – New Castle Non-Wilmington (206 interviews unweighted, 205 interviews weighted)
  – Kent County (70 interviews weighted, 104 interviews unweighted)
  – Sussex County (95 interviews weighted, 105 interviews unweighted)

• Margin of error:
  – **Weighted**: 400 interviews +/-4.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level
Key Findings – Views of Public Schools

- Voters give DE public schools mixed ratings, and most feel things haven’t changed in recent years – for better or worse. At the same time, there is no sense of crisis or urgency. There is a clear danger of voters moving toward acceptance of an average (or worse) public education as the new normal in Delaware.

- There are clear concerns about the state of public education across the state, but Sussex residents and parents with kids in public schools are more likely to offer positive assessments while voters in the City of Wilmington and self-ID Republicans are most likely to give public schools a failing grade.

- Voters believe Delaware schools are not meeting the needs of students in several areas (particularly preparing them for college or a career), as well as not meeting the needs of key groups (parents, teachers, minority students, students living in poverty).

- By more than 2-to-1, voters believe DE schools are failing to meet students individual needs, instead relying on a one-size fits all approach.
Key Findings – Policies and Politics

- Majorities believe we spend too little on public education in Delaware and that elected officials need to pay more attention to public schools.

- There is strong support for a broad range of policies to improve public education in Delaware. Proposals to hold back students who don’t meet academic standards and to make voluntary pre-kindergarten available for all students receive the strongest support.

- Voters believe it is critical that schools in high-need communities provide non-academic supports (counselors, social workers, etc.) and strongly support proposals to boost these schools with extra funding and expert teachers.

- With projected deficits in the state budget hanging over all legislative discussions, it is important to note that broad majorities support raising taxes on individuals making more than $250,000 a year, sharing support services across school districts, and using technology to employ open resources over textbooks in the classroom.
Key Findings – Vision Coalition Core Areas

- The core areas for achieving academic success identified in the Student Success 2025 report all attract broad support, but three clearly emerge as the most effective and most convincing across geographic and demographic lines:
  - Postsecondary Success
  - Early Learning
  - Personalized Learning
- Postsecondary success scores highest overall and across most of the state, but early learning is top priority for core Democratic audiences – self-ID Democrats, African Americans, and City of Wilmington.
- When asked what will ultimately have the greatest impact on improving public education, access to high quality early learning is the top choice, followed by personalized learning, higher standards for teachers and fair and efficient funding.
Geographic, Partisan Differences Emerge on Public Schools in DE

On a traditional scale of A to F, what grade would you give public schools in Delaware?

Statewide Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A/B Grade</th>
<th>C Grade</th>
<th>D/F Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest of New Castle</td>
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<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td>AA</td>
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Higher Ratings for Local Schools, but Still More Negative Than Positive

What grade would you give the public schools in your community?

### Community School Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Wilmington</th>
<th>Rest of New Castle</th>
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<td>D/F</td>
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</table>

### Community School Grading Graph

- A/B Grade: 43
- C Grade: 30
- D/F Grade: 19

### Community School Grading Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Wilmington</th>
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Most View Public Education in Delaware as Stagnant

Generally speaking, do you think that public education in Delaware is getting better, getting worse or not changing one way or the other?

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Total Better</th>
<th>Not Changing</th>
<th>Total Worse</th>
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<td>AA</td>
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</table>
Performance of Delaware Public Schools
Providing non-academic support such as counselors, social workers, and family support specialists

Providing a well-rounded education

Preparing students for college

Preparing students for a career

Delaware Public Schools Underperforming in Preparing Students

Now I am going to read you a few ways public schools can prepare students. For each one, please rate the job Delaware’s public schools are doing on that issue.
Now I am going to read you some groups of people who are involved in Delaware’s public schools. For each one, please rate the job Delaware’s public schools are doing in meeting that group’s needs as a whole.
Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

(1st Statement) Delaware schools do a **good job of focusing on students as individuals** and trying to meet their unique needs.

(2nd Statement) Delaware schools **rely too much on one-size-fits-all solutions** and do not focus enough on students’ individual needs.
Majority Believe We Spend Too Little on DE Public Education…

In your view, do you think we spend too much, too little, or about the right amount on public education in Delaware?

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Too Much</th>
<th>About the Right Amount</th>
<th>Too Little</th>
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...And that Elected Officials Need to Focus More on Education

Q Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

(1st Statement) Our elected officials in Dover understand the importance of public education in Delaware and give it the attention it deserves.

(2nd Statement) Our next Governor and state legislature must do more to focus on improving public education in Delaware.

Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

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Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Which of the following statements do you agree with more?
At Least 2-in-3 in Every Region Say Elected Officials Must Do More

Overall: 29

Overall: 68

At Least 2-in-3 in Every Region Say Elected Officials Must Do More

Agree Much More
- Electeds Doing Well
- Electeds Must Do More

Agree Total More
- Electeds Doing Well
- Electeds Must Do More

Wilmington
- Electeds Doing Well 19
- Electeds Must Do More 76

Rest of New Castle
- Electeds Doing Well 17
- Electeds Must Do More 60

Kent
- Electeds Doing Well 15
- Electeds Must Do More 70

Sussex
- Electeds Doing Well 23
- Electeds Must Do More 67
Voters Decry Lack of Information on Education Funding

Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

(1st Statement) As a Delaware voter, I can find the information I need about how tax dollars are spent in our education system so I can make an informed decision when I vote.

(2nd Statement) It is too hard to find information about how tax dollars are spent in our education system, and we need to do more to make information available so voters can make informed decisions.

Agree Much More       Total Agree

1st Statement:
- Agree Much More: 27
- Total Agree: 69

2nd Statement:
- Agree Much More: 18
- Total Agree: 52
Voters See Need for More Support for Students in High-Need Communities

Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

(1st Statement) Schools in high-need communities should focus their resources on traditional academic support for students rather than trying to meet students' non-academic needs.

(2nd Statement) It is important that schools in high-need communities provide non-academic supports for students such as counselors, social workers, health services, and family support specialists.

Which statement do you agree with more?
Strongly Support | Total Support
---|---
Prevent students from advancing to the next grade until they meet academic standards or attend summer school | 66 | 89
Make voluntary pre-kindergarten available for all students | 65 | 86
Give high-needs schools extra support in the form of teams of expert teachers | 55 | 88
Raise starting salaries for teachers and provide more opportunities for them to advance their careers without leaving the classroom to go into an administrative role | 55 | 81
Provide extra funding to schools dealing with students from low-income families | 54 | 81
Require higher levels of education and practical experience for child care and early childhood providers | 50 | 83
Make a major new investment in wireless and broadband technology in Delaware | 45 | 81
Reassess statewide property values to ensure more consistent and accurate funding for schools | 36 | 67
Provide extra funding to schools dealing with students whose first language is not English | 36 | 62
As you may know, the State of Delaware currently faces a budget deficit and must cut spending, increase revenue, or find some combination of the two to balance the state budget. Please tell me whether you would approve or disapprove of each of the following proposals to help balance the state budget.

1. Raise taxes on individuals making more than $250,000 a year
   - Strongly Approve: 25
   - Total Approve: 53
   - Total Disapprove: 74

2. Share services such as transportation, technology, and personal development across several school districts
   - Strongly Approve: 19
   - Total Approve: 47
   - Total Disapprove: 80

3. Use technology to deliver open educational resources rather than textbooks
   - Strongly Approve: 27
   - Total Approve: 41
   - Total Disapprove: 71
As you may know, the State of Delaware currently faces a budget deficit and must cut spending, increase revenue, or find some combination of the two to balance the state budget. Please tell me whether you would approve or disapprove of each of the following proposals to help balance the state budget.

- Lay off teachers and increase class sizes
- Create a dedicated state property tax to fund schools
- Raise taxes on businesses
- Close or consolidate schools with declining enrollment
Student Success 2025 - Core Areas
An increasing number of jobs require at least one year of education after high school, plus concrete work experience, and our schools must do a better job of helping students identify and prepare for the path that is right for them. We must deeply integrate our public schools with local colleges and employers, allowing students to gain professional experience and build relationships before they graduate high school.
Effective early childhood education is essential to academic success. By the time a child celebrates his or her fifth birthday, nearly 90 percent of intellect, personality, and social skills are already developed. That's why it's so important to identify issues and address them early. When children arrive in kindergarten ready to learn, they are more likely to thrive in school and future endeavors. Delaware has built a quality system and must continue to invest to ensure children succeed later in life.
Personalized Learning Addresses Concerns About One-Size-Fits-All Approach

For each statement, please tell me whether you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or not at all convincing strategy for improving public education in Delaware.

Research proves what parents already know - *every child learns in a different way*. Advancements in technology play a key role in allowing students to drive their own learning at a pace that works for them and *equipping teachers with tools to provide support*. We need to create a curriculum and teaching approach that puts *more focus on individualized learning and outcomes* instead of a one-size-fits-all approach.
For each statement, please tell me whether you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or not at all convincing strategy for improving public education in Delaware.

Research proves that committed teachers and effective school leaders are the two most important in-school factors contributing to student achievement. That's why we need more rigorous training and certification for new teachers, continuing development for current teachers, renewed focus on finding and developing dynamic principals, and an evaluation system that combines student performance with feedback from parents and other teachers.
Decision making in Delaware schools is complicated and divided. The governor, the legislature, state and local boards, all play a role in deciding what happens in our schools. We must break down these artificial barriers and take advantage of our small size to measure performance consistently across all districts and charter schools, share data and best practices, and ensure those charged with running our schools are working together to support all students and increase collaboration and performance across the state.
For each statement, please tell me whether you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, a little convincing, or not at all convincing strategy for improving public education in Delaware.

Delaware's funding formula for schools was developed during World War II and doesn't reflect the state's current needs. We should modernize school funding by matching funding to individual students' needs, establishing consistent revenue through rolling property reassessments, giving individual schools more flexibility in how funds are spent, and cutting waste by sharing services across schools and districts.