



2025

16th Annual Volume

# The Great Work of Montana's Public Schools

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[coalitionofmtk12advocates.org](http://coalitionofmtk12advocates.org)



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## EXPLANATION OF OUR POLLING

Each year, the Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools conducts a comprehensive poll of likely voters to gauge public sentiment on key issues affecting Montana's public schools. This annual effort ensures a broad understanding of the priorities and concerns of Montanans, aligning with the People's goal under Article X, Section 1 to develop the full educational potential of each person.

The 2025 survey explored a range of topics, starting with public perceptions of school quality. Respondents were asked to grade public schools in their community, the state, and the nation. Local schools received the highest ratings, with 47% assigning an A or B, compared to 40% for state schools and 25% for schools nationwide. This reflects the trend that the closer people are to their schools, the more they trust and value them.

The survey also examined priorities for state spending, with 40% of respondents identifying K-12 public schools as the top priority, followed by public health and human services at 36%. Additionally, 73% of respondents expressed support for legislators who advocate for increased funding for public education, and 74% favored those who promote improvement and innovation in public schools.

When asked about the scope of education, 86% of respondents supported providing a well-rounded education, including early childhood education, arts, physical education, and technical training, while only 11% favored focusing solely on core curriculum. This aligns with the Coalition's vision of fostering the full potential of every child.

Trust in decision-making was another key focus. Teachers, locally elected school boards, principals, and superintendents were the most trusted to decide what is best for students, with 45% of respondents favoring them. Similarly, 32% believed local school boards should have the most authority in determining how schools are operated.

On the topic of local school levy elections, 30% somewhat supported them, and 21% strongly supported them, though 22% noted their stance depended on the issue.

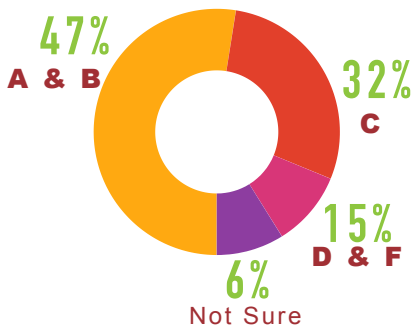
Finally, the survey captured shifting opinions on the experiences and perceptions of K-12 public schools. Over the past year, 24% of respondents reported their perceptions are more positive, while 54% said their opinion stayed the same.

This annual poll underscores the commitment of Montana’s public education advocates to understanding and addressing the needs of students, families, and communities, ensuring that public schools remain a cornerstone for developing the full educational potential of every person.

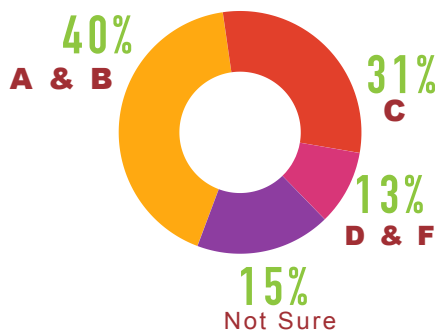
## The closer people are to their schools, the more they trust and like them.

WHAT GRADE, A through F, would you give public schools in:

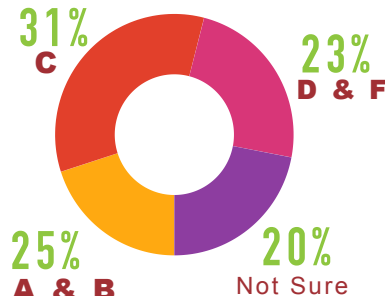
### Your community?



### State of Montana?



### The nation?

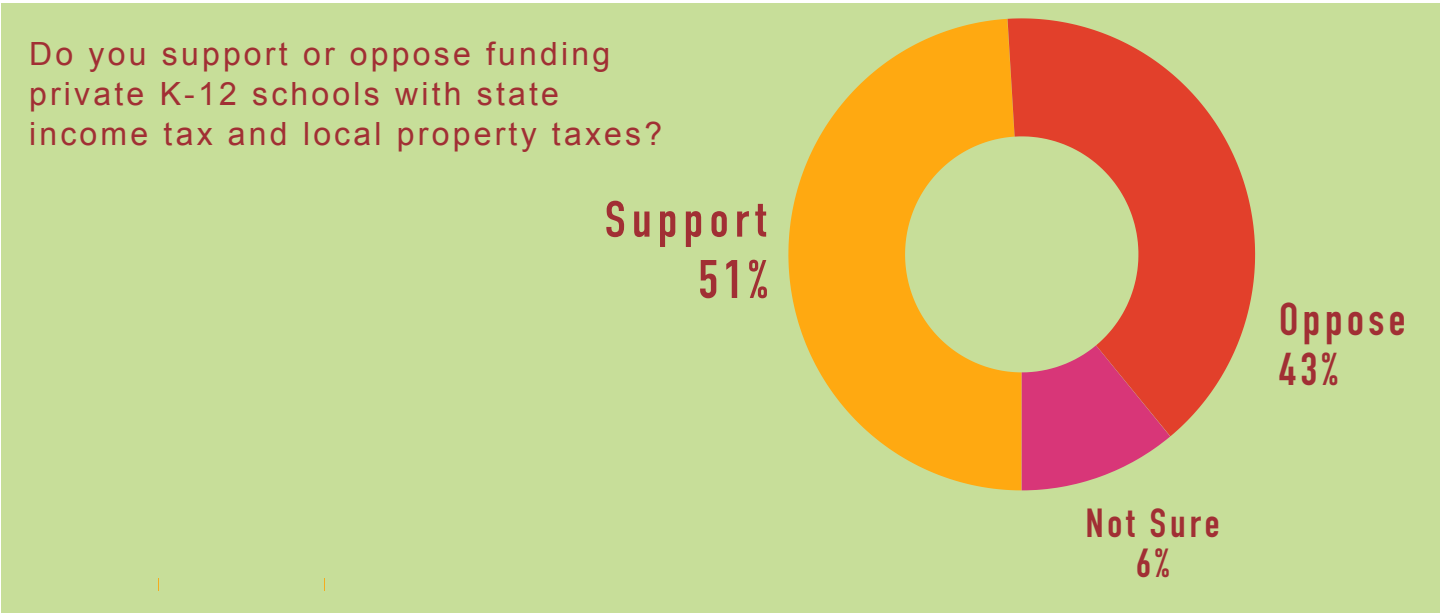


# SPOTLIGHT ON MONTANA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Did you know that Montana’s public schools operate with remarkable efficiency? The state spends approximately \$2,700 less per pupil compared to the national average, translating to over \$400 million in annual savings for property taxpayers. This prudent financial management stands out even more when looking at neighboring states. For instance, Wyoming spends over \$800 million more per student each year than Montana.

Despite this lower level of funding, Montana's public schools boast student achievement levels that many envy across the nation. This efficiency reflects the core values Montanans hold dear—family, community, and personal growth. Our educators, families, and communities work hand in hand, rolling up their sleeves to create expanded opportunities for every child.

In Montana, we build the future one student at a time, honoring the deep trust that local communities place in their schools to cultivate a system of education that nurtures the full potential of each individual. Our commitment to fundamental values like belonging, financial security, and respect drives our shared vision for education. We not only uphold the promise of equal educational opportunity but also honor the rich cultural histories of our American Indian colleagues.



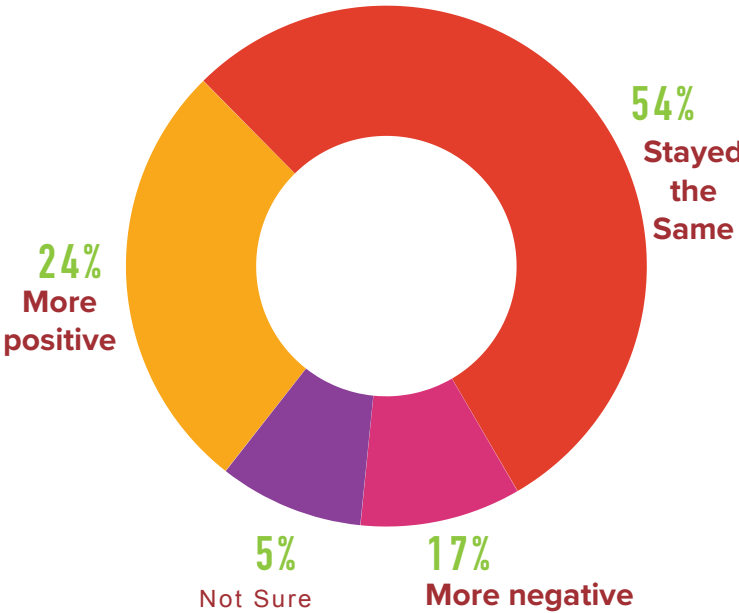


Montana’s public schools foster creativity and imagination, encouraging students to express themselves freely while promoting a sense of harmony and well-being. Our close-knit community thrives on loyalty, trustworthiness, and compassion. We believe in personal responsibility, ensuring that basic needs are met, and empowering our children to grow into confident, responsible citizens.

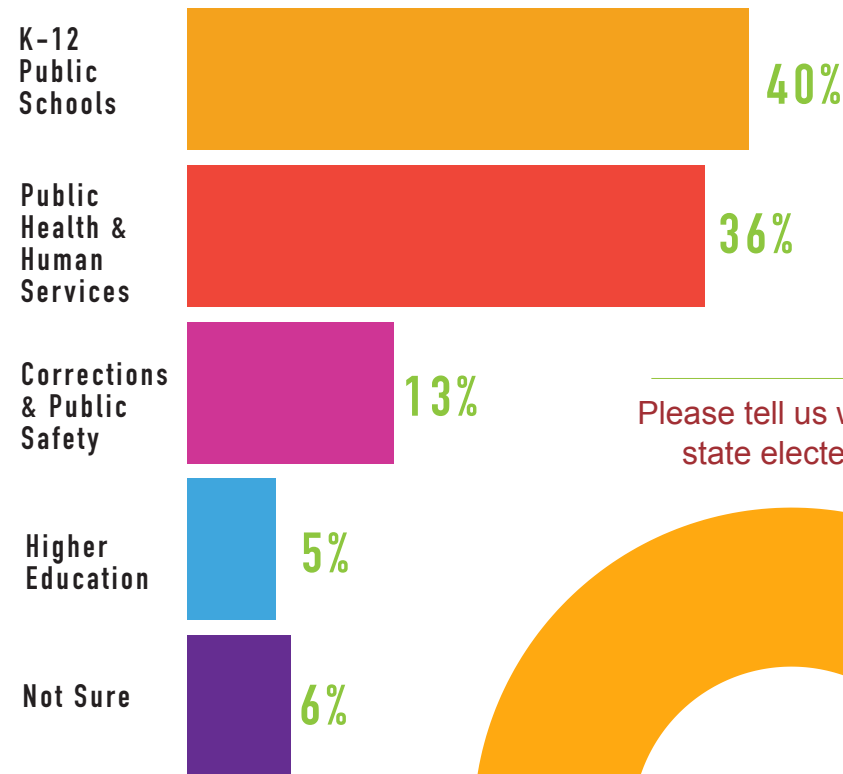
Every day, in partnership with parents, we prioritize the best interests of our students—those whom families hold most dear. Through experiences that inspire and engage, we pave the way for employment security and a future of endless possibilities. Together, we are crafting a vibrant, enriching educational landscape that reflects the true essence of being a Montanan.

Join us as we continue to support our public schools, ensuring that every child in Montana receives the quality education they deserve, rooted in values that unite us all.

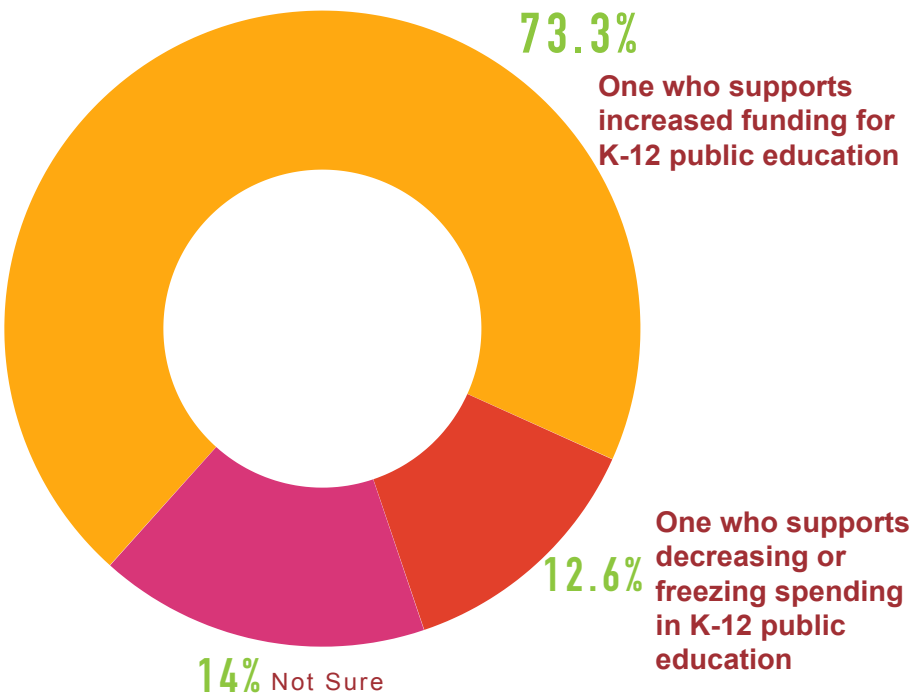
Thinking about the past year, has your opinion about the importance of quality K-12 public schools in your community become more positive, stayed the same, or become more negative?



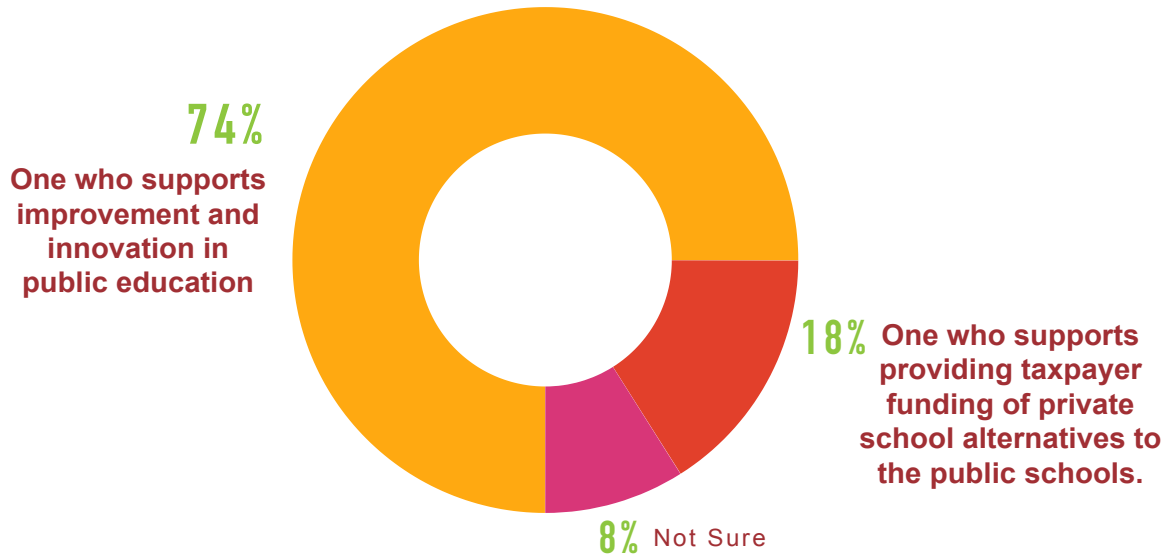
When it comes to how state government spends your tax dollars, which of the following areas do you think should be the highest priority?



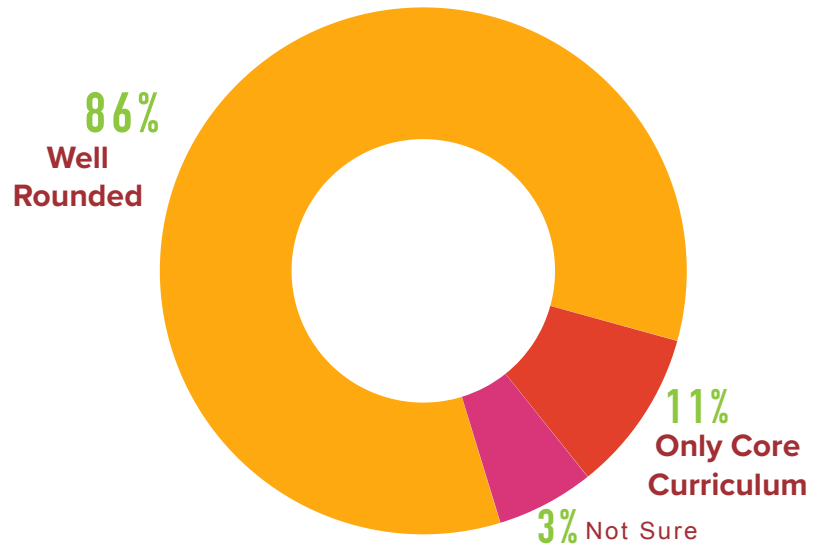
Please tell us which type of legislator or other state elected official you most support?



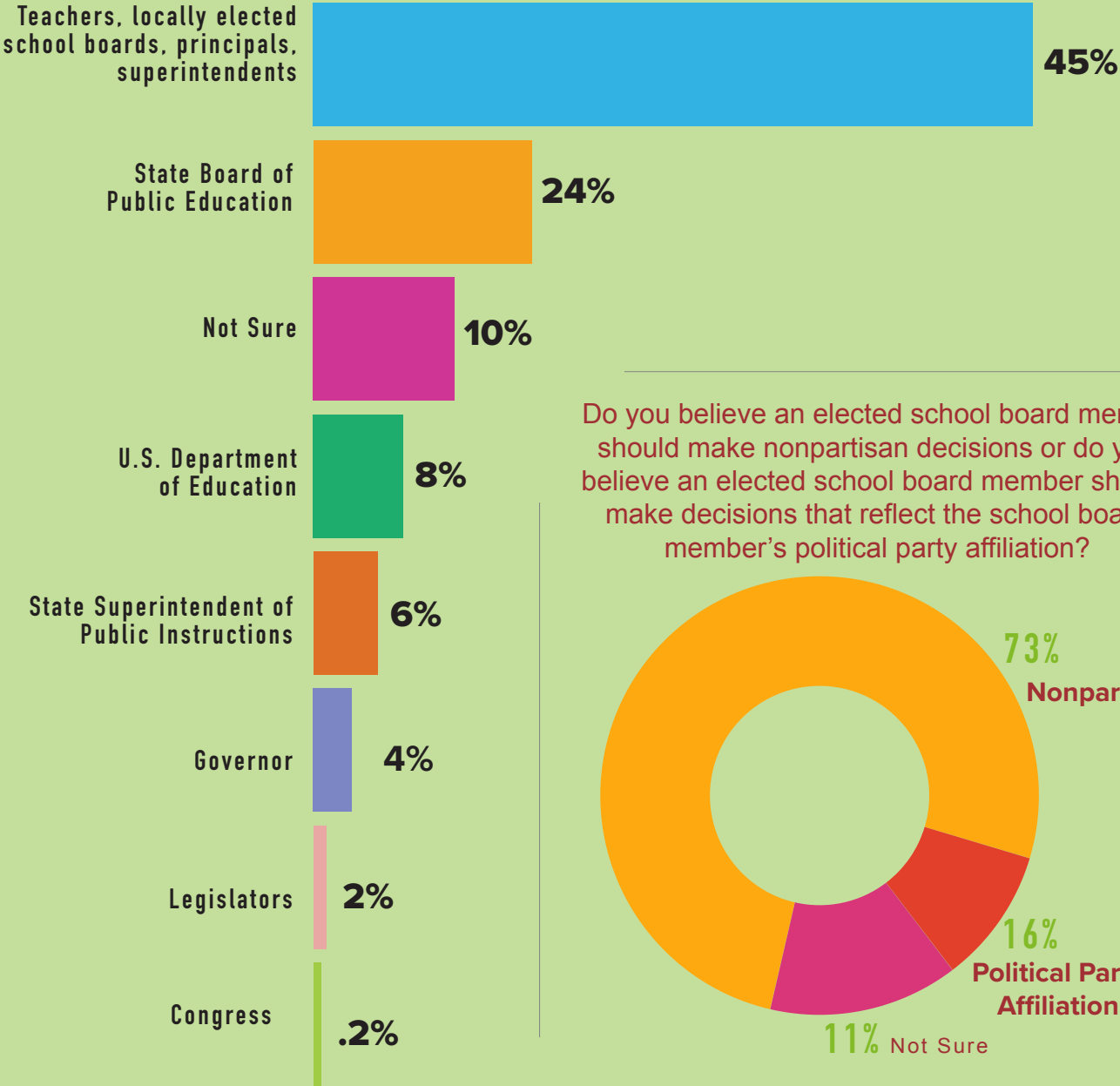
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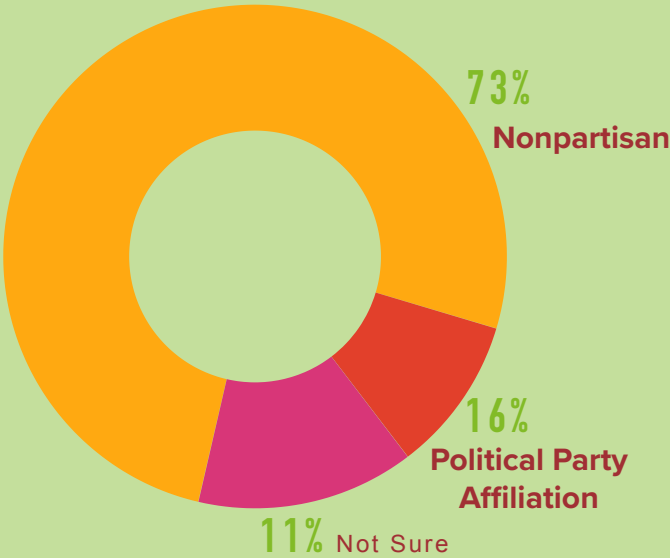
In your opinion, should public schools provide a well-rounded education to all children, including items such as early childhood education beginning at age 4, gifted and talented, music, art, physical education, technology, career and technical education and advanced placement courses or should public schools provide only core curriculum (math, English, science, social studies)?



Who among the following public employees and officials do you trust the most when it comes to deciding what is best academically for students in Montana's public schools?

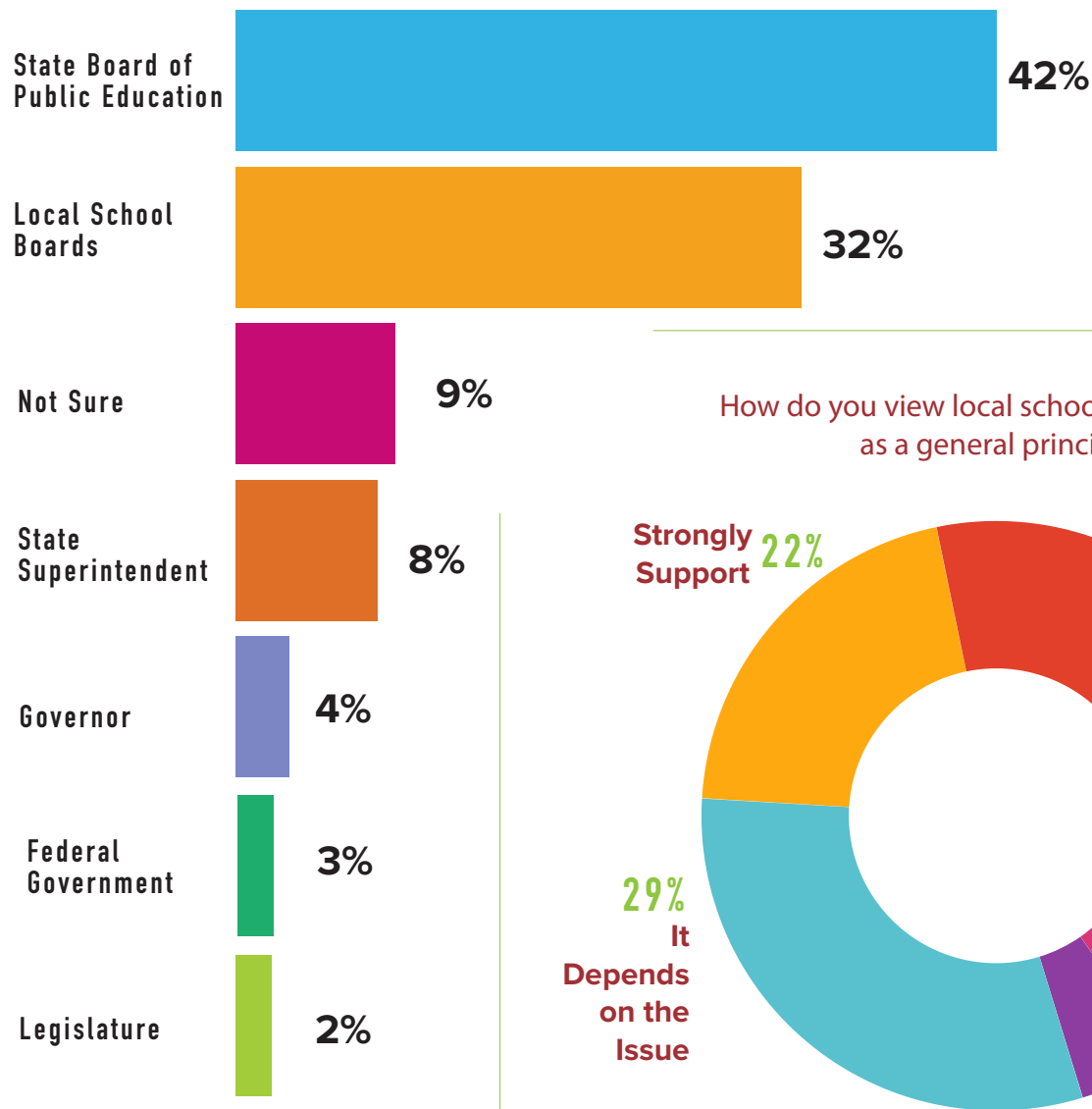


Do you believe an elected school board member should make nonpartisan decisions or do you believe an elected school board member should make decisions that reflect the school board member's political party affiliation?

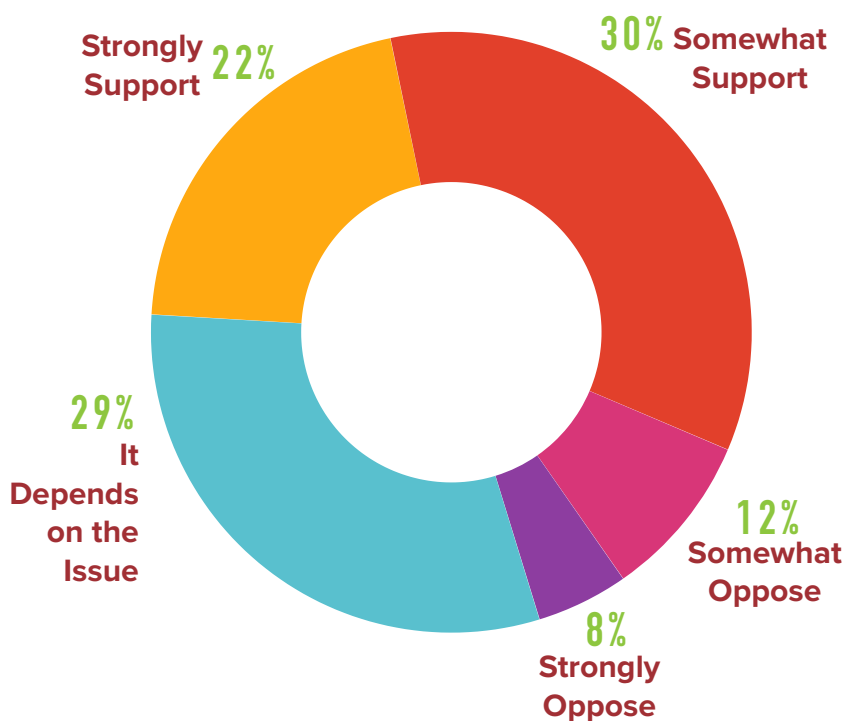




Which of the following public officials do you think should have the most authority to determine how public schools are operated?



How do you view local school levy elections as a general principle?



## WHO IS THE COALITION OF ADVOCATES FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

The Coalition of Advocates for Montana's Public Schools is a partnership of public education advocates focused on ensuring success for each child in every public school, in furtherance of the Peoples' goal under Article X, Section 1 "to develop the full educational potential of each person."



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