

The State of Education in Illinois 2024-2025 Report

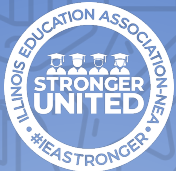
March 26, 2025



ILLINOIS
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION



Overview



- **Despite what is happening nationally, public schools remain a top priority for Illinoisans.**
 - We should be investing more in our public schools, our students and our educators – not less.
 - All children have a right to a public education.
 - Shortages are a serious concern.
- **However, educators are not getting the support they need.**
 - It is harder to be a teacher and paraprofessional.
 - The tiered pension system is unfair.
 - Adjunct professors are not being treated fairly.
- **What can we do to make it better? The public supports:**
 - More funding for schools, teachers, and paraprofessionals;
 - Fair retirement benefits;
 - Teachers and parents leading in the classroom without input from politicians;
 - School board elections free from national political influence;
 - Equal pay for equal work for adjunct professors.

Poll details



Conducted by:

- Jill Normington of Normington Petts
- Pat Brady of Next Generation Strategies

Sample:

- 1,000 adults (not just voters) in Illinois

Dates:

- January 27-30, 2025 (2024-2025 school year)

Margin of error:

- +/- 3.1% with 95% confidence

Data weighted:

- U.S. Census data for Illinois

Previous waves were:

- 2018-2019 school year
- 2019-2020 school year
- 2020-2021 school year
- 2021-2022 school year
- 2022-2023 school year
- 2023-2024 school year

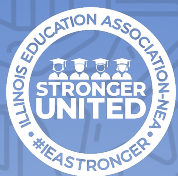
Illinoisans strongly believe in our students' right to a public education.



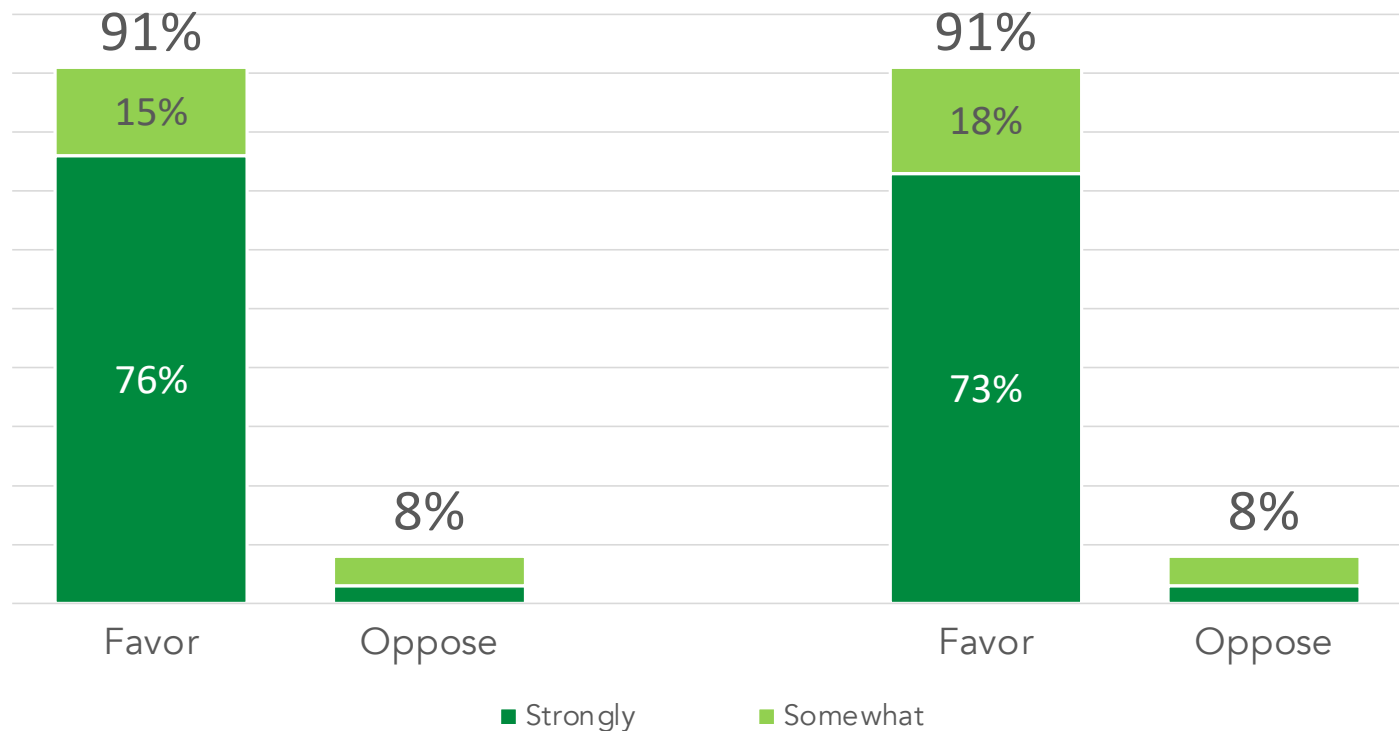
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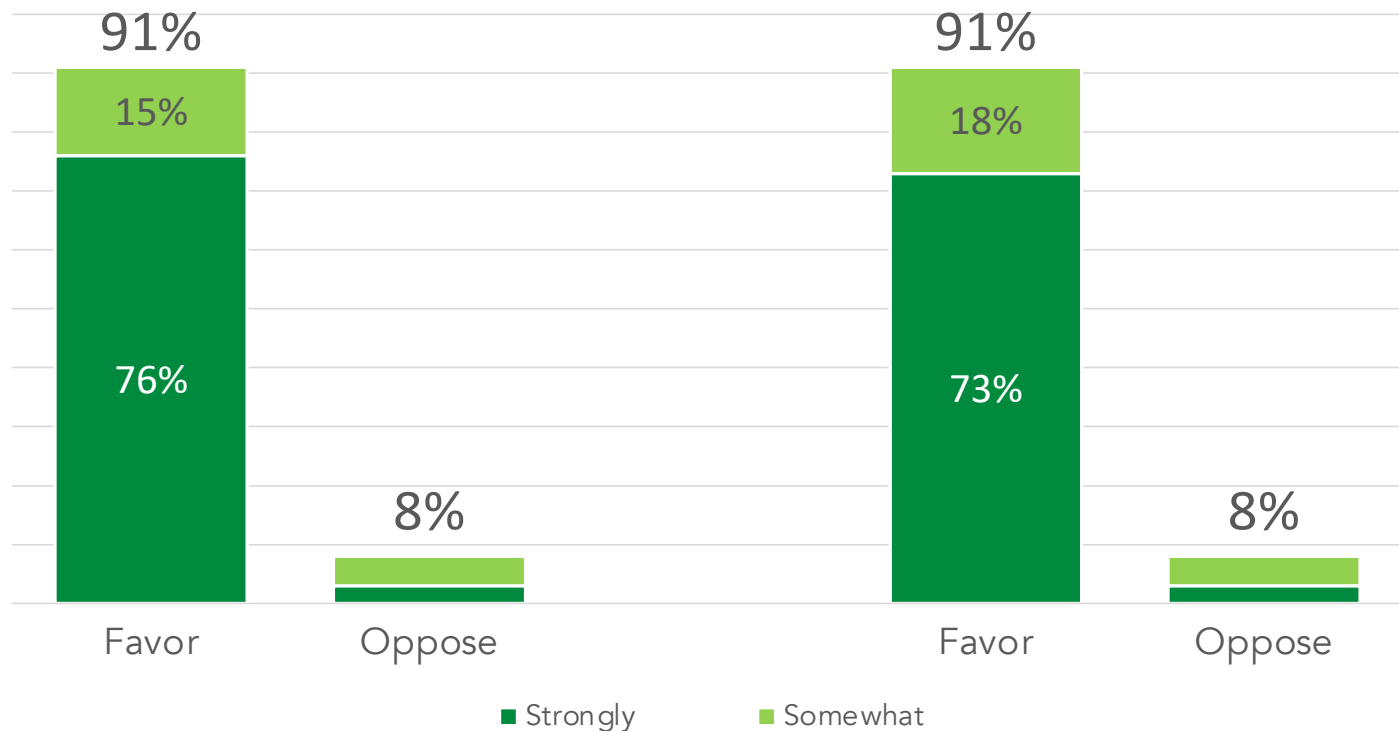
There is a consensus that children, including those with disabilities, have a right to public education.



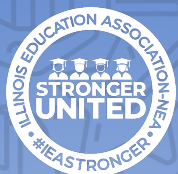
"Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement that every child in Illinois has the right to an education at a public school?"



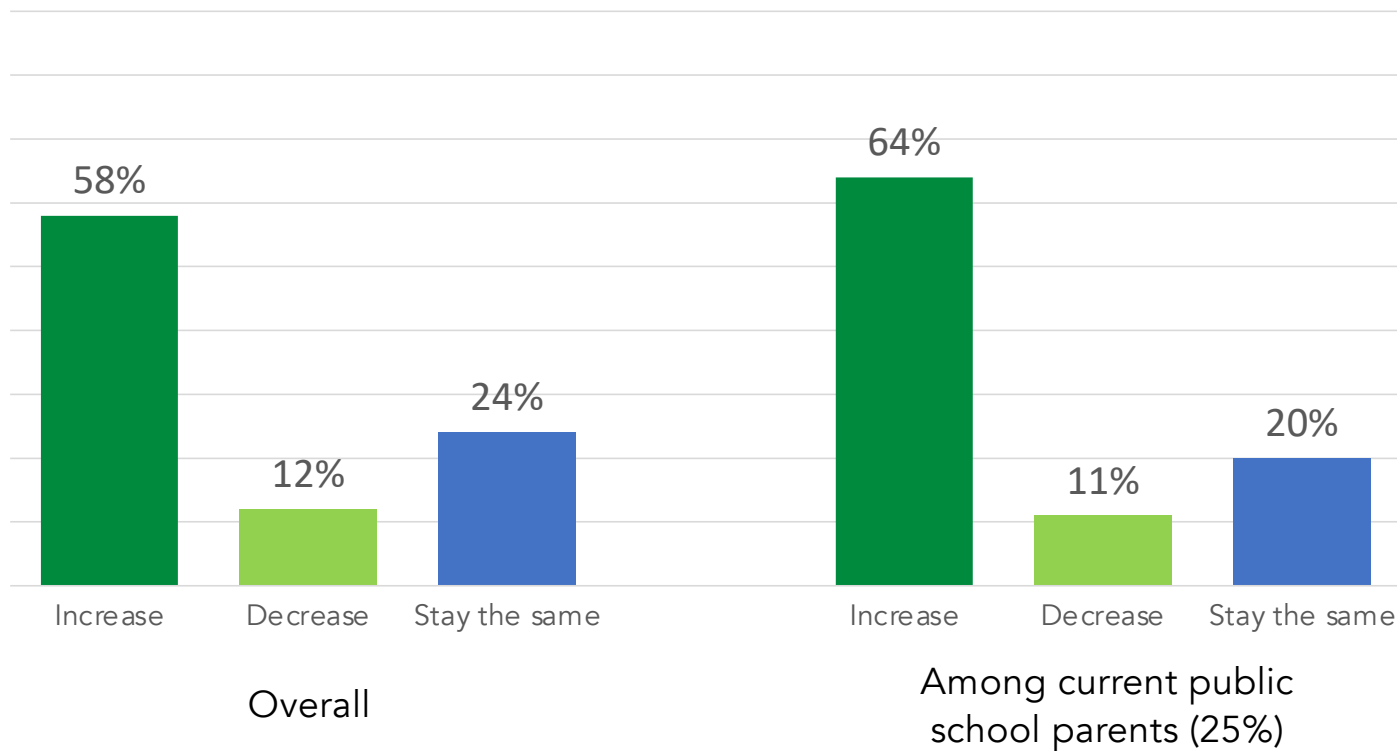
"And do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement that every child **with a disability** in Illinois has the right to an education at a public school?"



**Illinoisans
roundly
support better
funding for
public
education.**



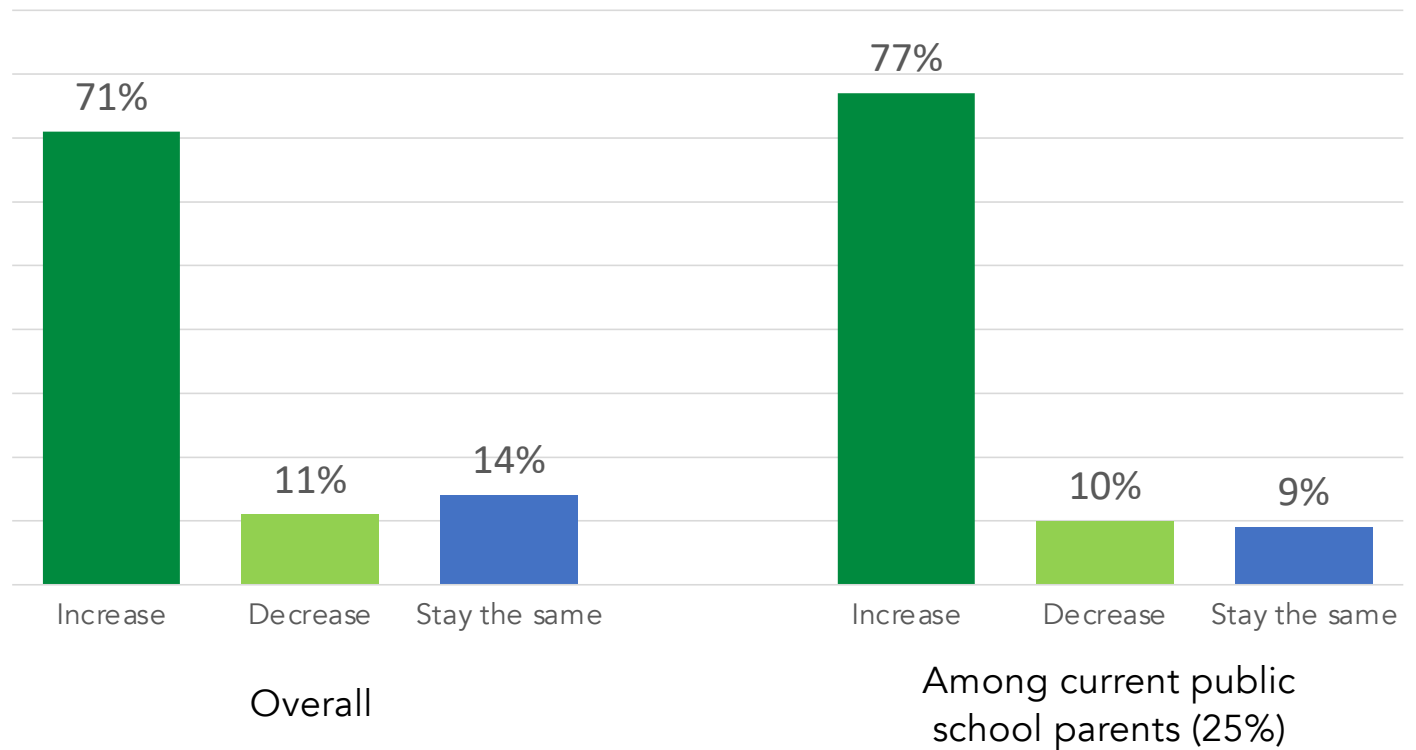
“Do you think funding for public schools in Illinois should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?”



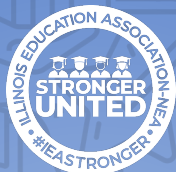
When informed that more than 4 in 5 Illinois schools are underfunded, support for more money increases.



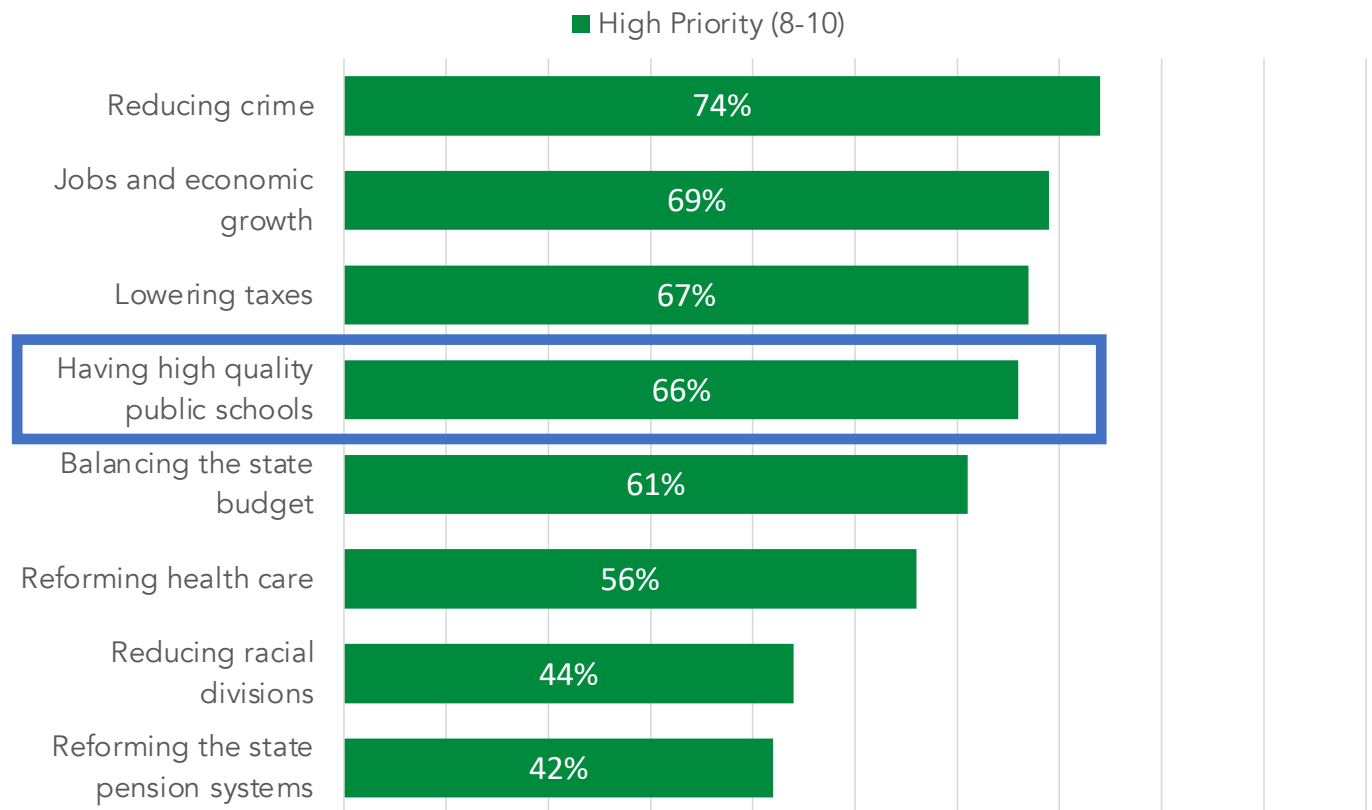
"As you may know, 80% of Illinois public schools are not funded at the level required by the evidence-based model. This funding model was designed to prioritize state funding for students with the most need and school districts with the lowest local funding, allocating resources based on research-based best practices in education. Right now, just 20% of schools are fully funded. Having heard that, do you think funding for public schools in Illinois should increase, decrease, or stay about the same?"



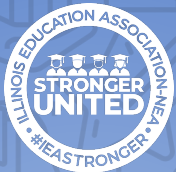
High-quality schools are one of the public's top concerns, on par with economic priorities.



"Now, I am going to read you a list of priorities for Illinois. Please tell me how important each one is to you, personally, on a scale of zero to ten where a zero means not a priority at all and ten means it is your top priority."



Illinois receives nearly \$2 billion dollars in federal money, which is used to support students and fund thousands of jobs.



ILLINOIS FEDERAL FUNDS:

- **IDEA: \$641.5 million**
- **Title 1: \$794.5 million**
- **PELL Grants: \$1.1 billion**
- **Funds 17,000 jobs**

More than 1
million Illinois
public school
students rely
on funding
from the U.S.
Department of
Education.



More than
1,000
school districts and
educational entities in Illinois
receive **Title 1 money**



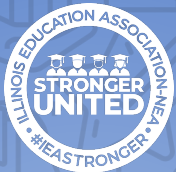
Helping
960,095
students in our state

More than
1,000
educational entities also
receive funding
through the **Individuals with
Disabilities Education Act**



At least
295,261
Illinois students benefit
from these funds

Additionally,
USED funding
helps students
from pre-k all
the way
through higher
education.



And more than
28,000
students in
Illinois are
**enrolled in Head
Start**

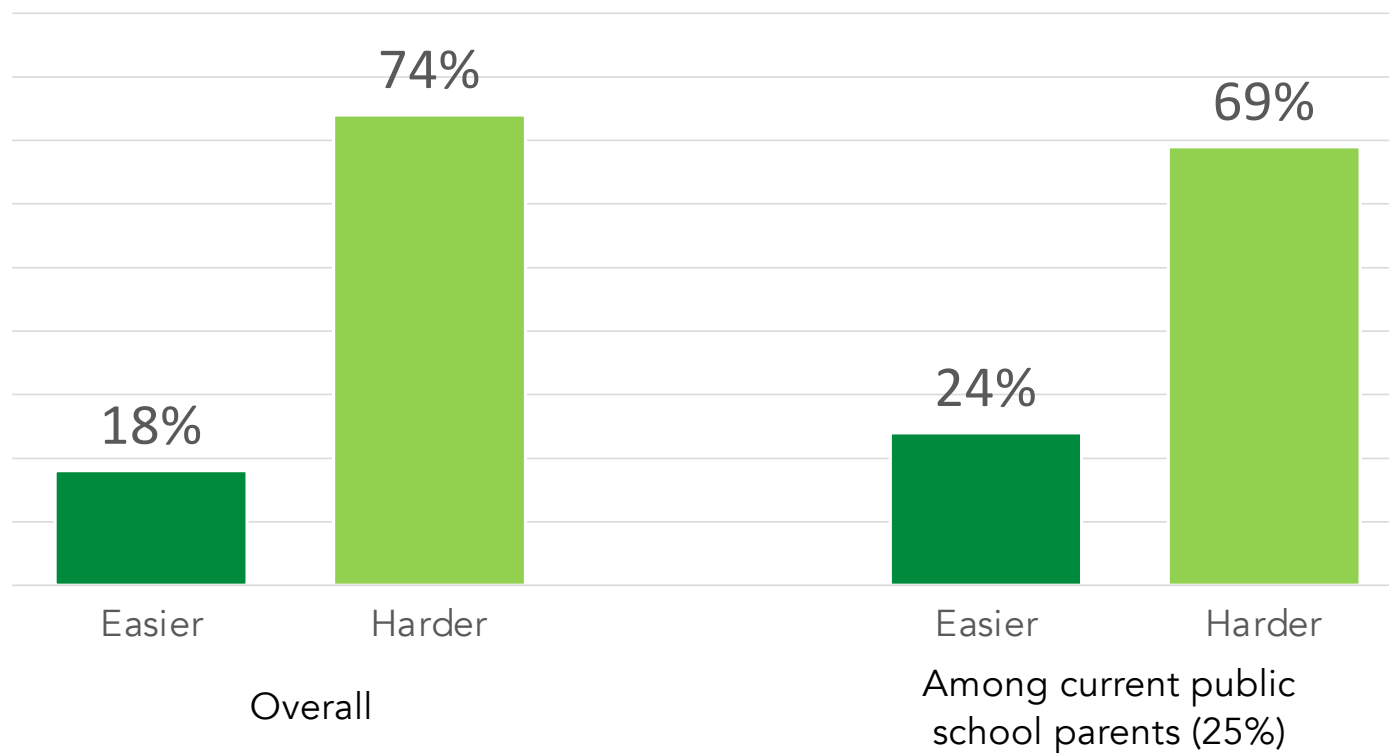
Another
264,460
Illinois college
students
receive Pell grants

Illinoisans believe teaching is getting harder, and shortages are a real concern.

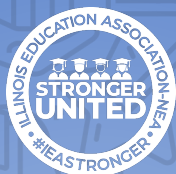
**Three in four
Illinoisans
believe
teaching
continues to
get harder.**



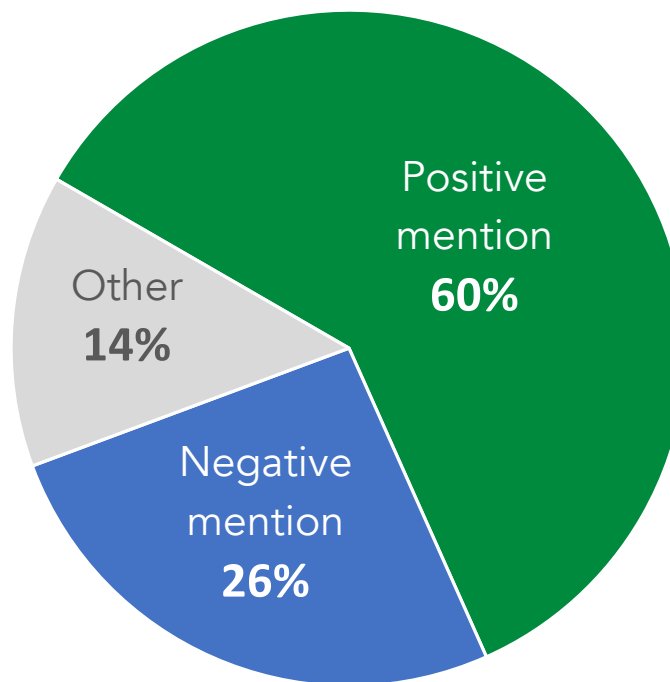
“Thinking about public school teachers in Illinois over the last few years or so, do you think that teaching has been much easier, somewhat easier, somewhat harder, or much harder for teachers compared to before that?”



A strong majority of Illinoisans view teachers as hardworking, underpaid and dedicated.



"I want you to think about Illinois public school teachers and tell me the one word or phrase that first comes to mind."



Top Positive Words

Underpaid

Dedicated

Hardworking

Overworked

Caring

Overwhelmed

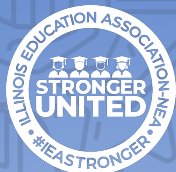
Underappreciated

Excellent

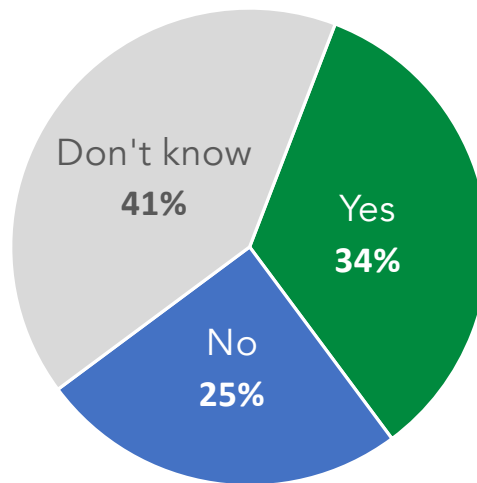
Educated

Quality

Only a third are aware of teacher shortages, but those who are aware are very worried.

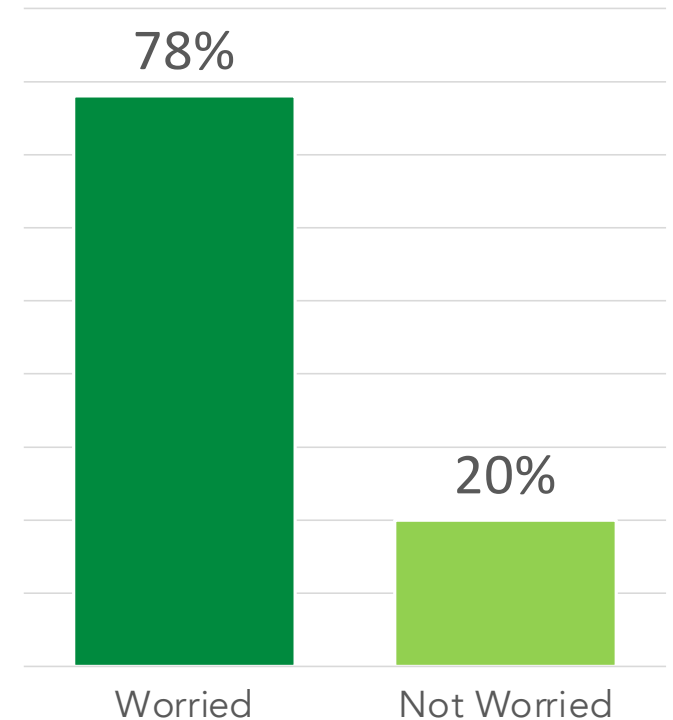


"As far as you know, is your community school district currently experiencing teacher shortages?"



n=341

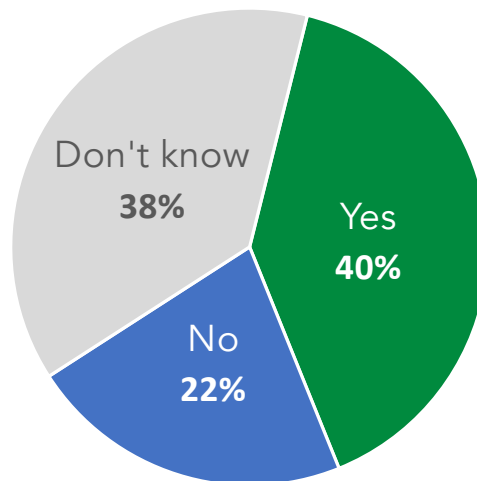
*Among those saying Yes:
"How worried are you about these shortages?"*



**Paraprofessional
shortages are
viewed similarly.**

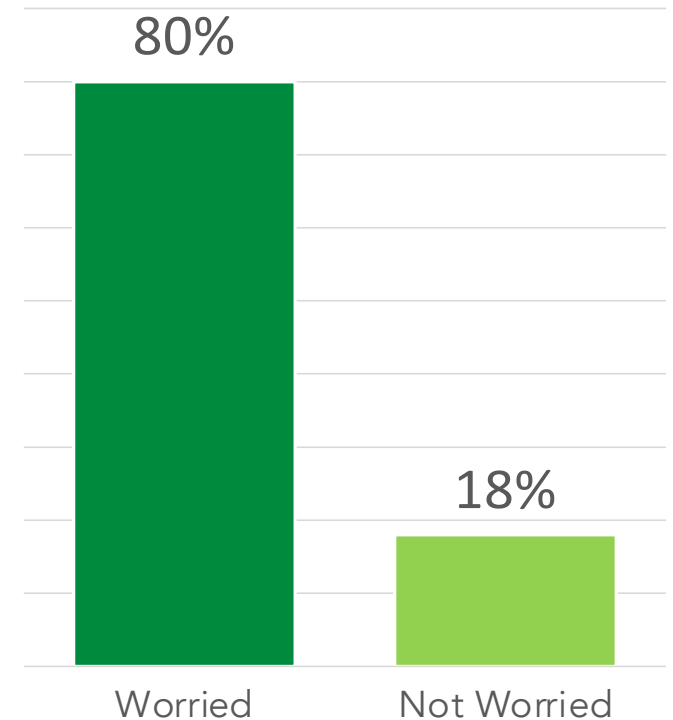


"As far as you know, is your community school district currently experiencing staffing shortages for support roles like paraprofessionals, bus drivers, nurses, librarians, and custodians?"



n=404

Among those saying Yes:
"How worried are you about these shortages?"

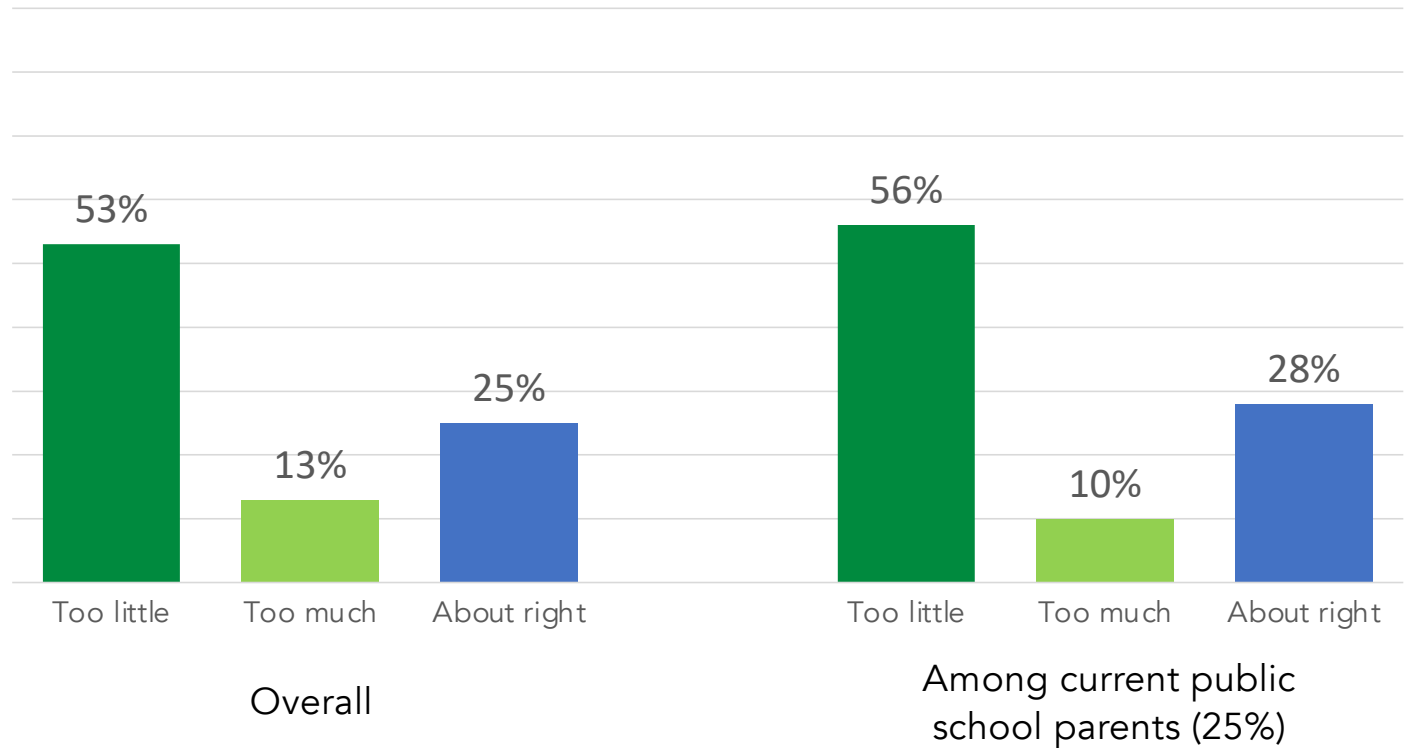


Illinoisans support investing in public education. More school funding, better pay, and fairer pensions for educators are a priority for the public.

**The public
thinks teachers
are paid too
little. Public
school parents
are even more
emphatic.**



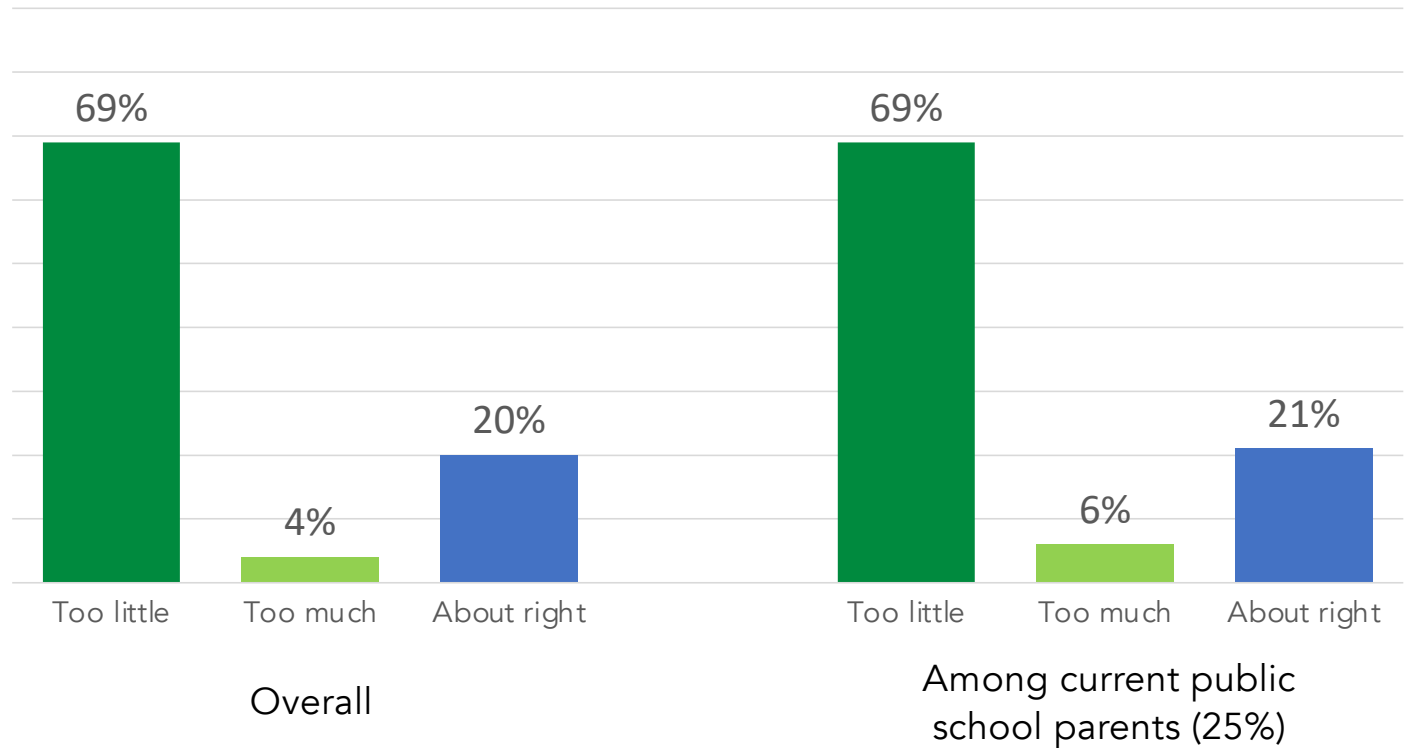
“Do you think that public school teachers in your community are paid too little, too much, or about right?”



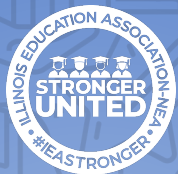
Respondents believe paraprofessionals deserve better pay too.



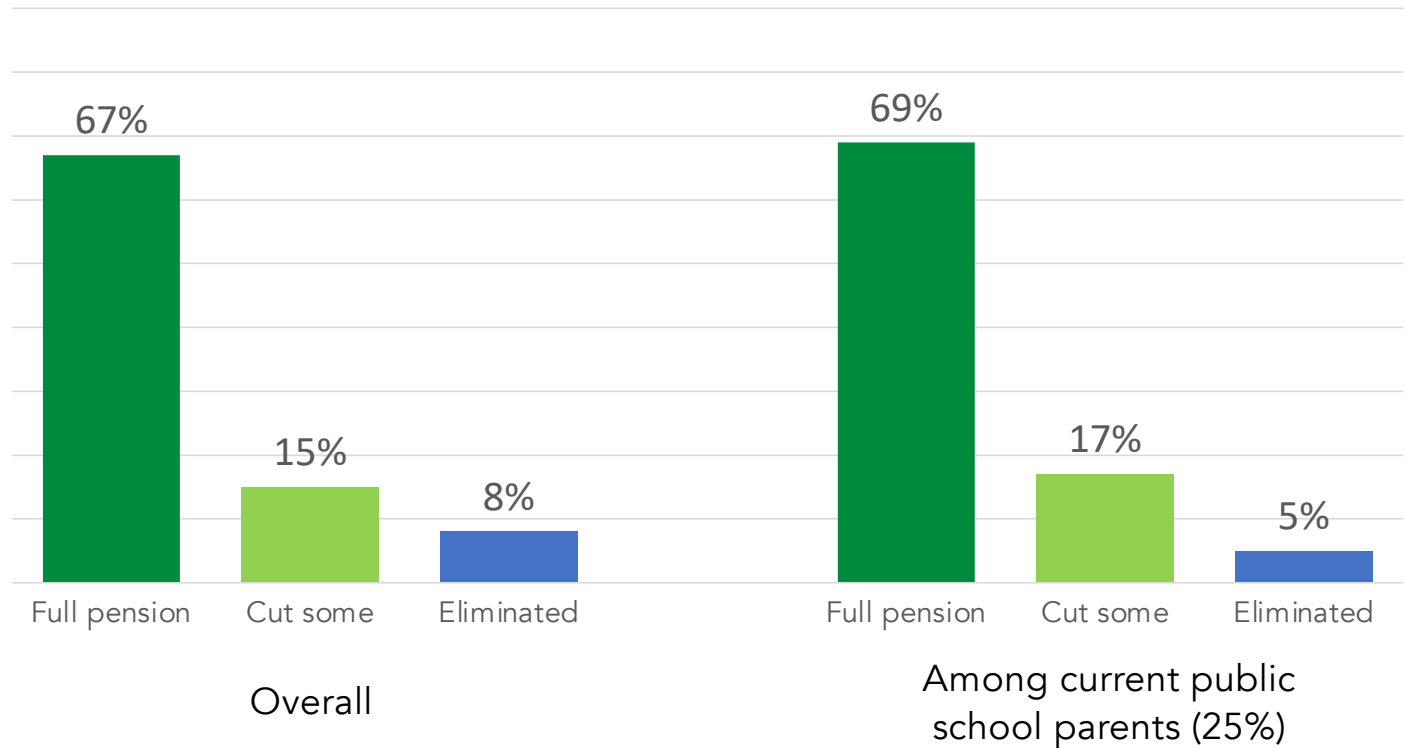
“As you may know, public schools in Illinois have support staff in classrooms called paraprofessionals. These paraprofessionals work with students with disabilities and behavior challenges. They get paid an average of \$15 an hour. Do you think that paraprofessionals in your community are paid too little, too much, or about right?”



There is very little support for depriving teachers of their pensions.



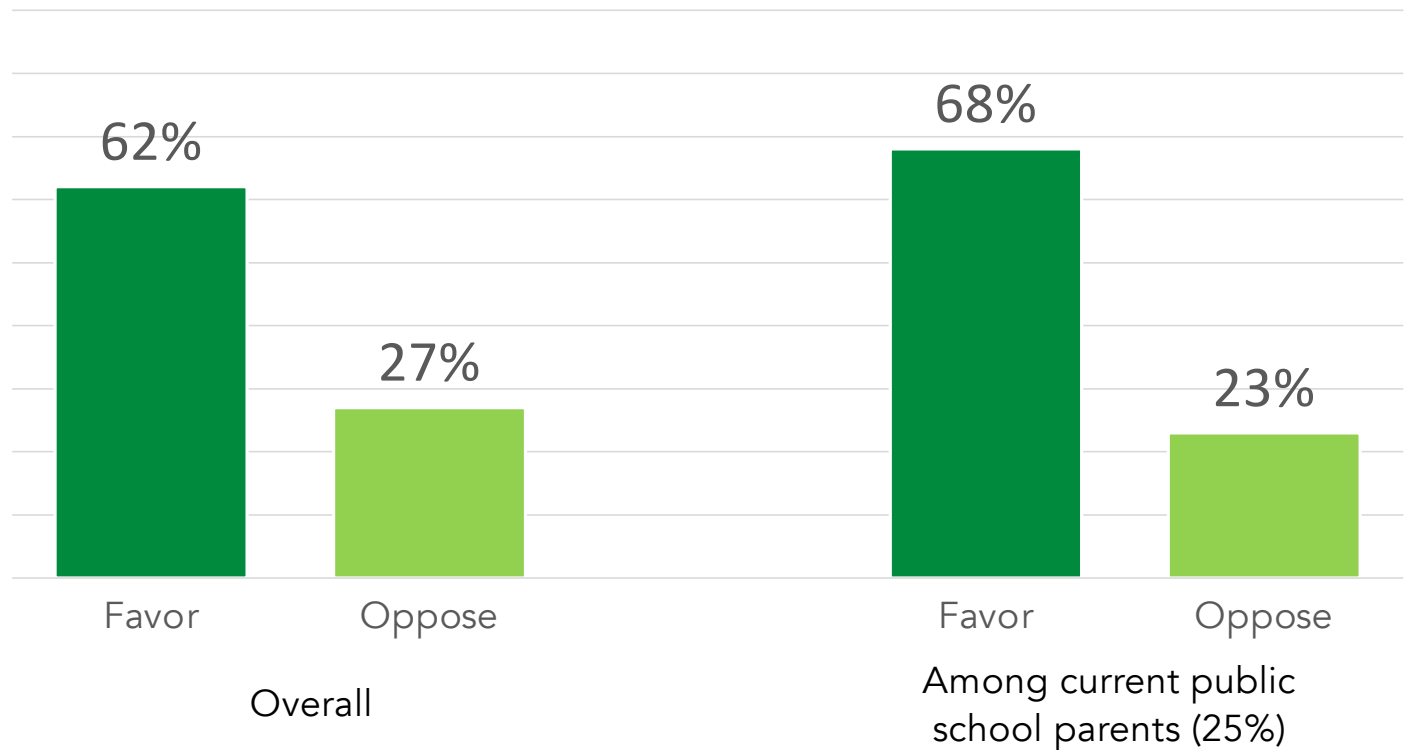
"As you may know, teachers in Illinois do not pay into Social Security and therefore do not collect when they retire. Do you think that Illinois teachers should receive their full pension, see their pensions cut some, or see their pensions eliminated?"



**And Illinoisans
want to see a
fairer pension
system.**



“Right now, the teacher pension system in Illinois is divided into two tiers. Tier One is for teachers hired before 2011 and Tier Two is for those who began working as teachers in 2011 or more recently. Tier One teachers are eligible for their full pension at age 60 or at age 55 if they have been teachers for 35 years. Tier Two teachers are required to work until the age of 67 to get their full pension benefits. All teachers pay 9% of their salary into the pension system. Would you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose changes to the teacher pension system that would allow Tier Two teachers to retire before age 67 and still receive their full benefits?”



The public supports adjunct professors earning the same as those with tenure.



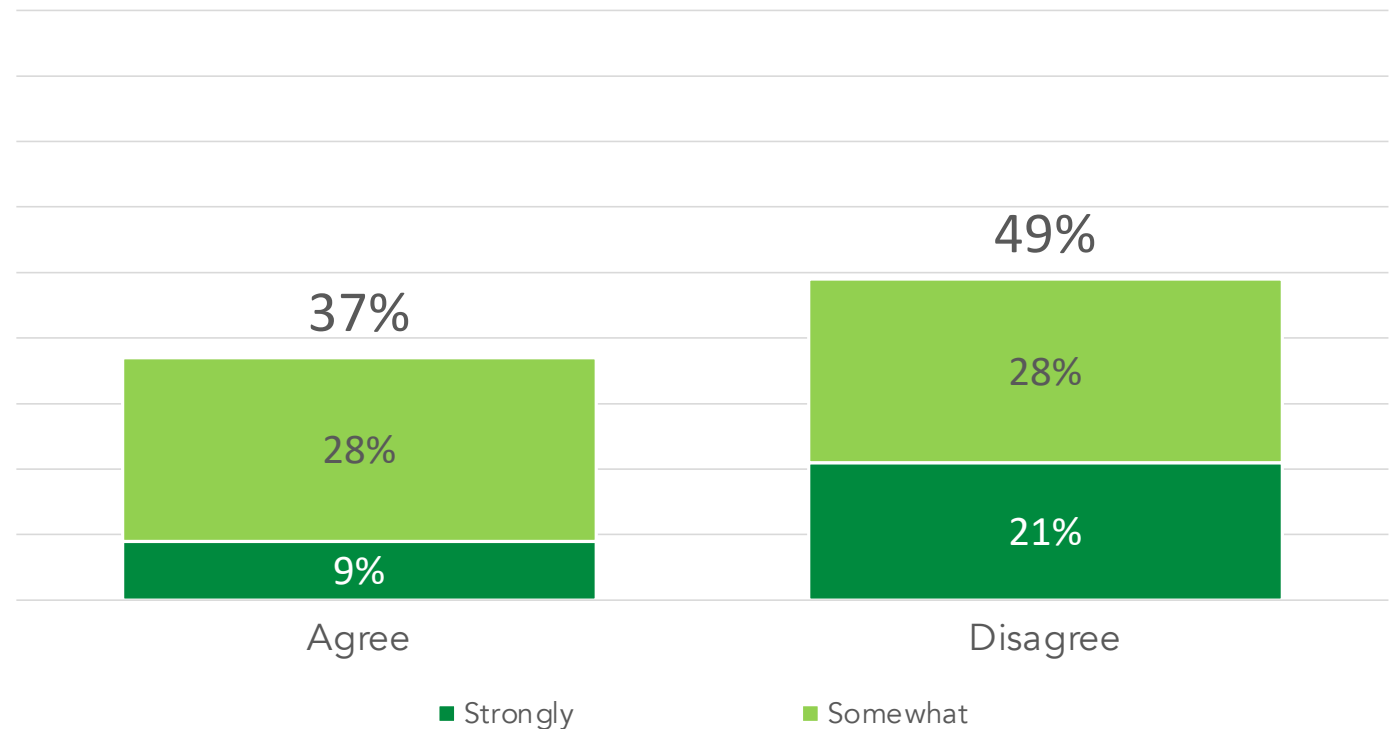
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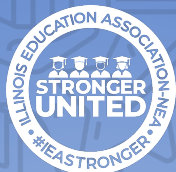
Illinoisans are
opposed to
adjunct
professors
earning less
than tenured
professors.



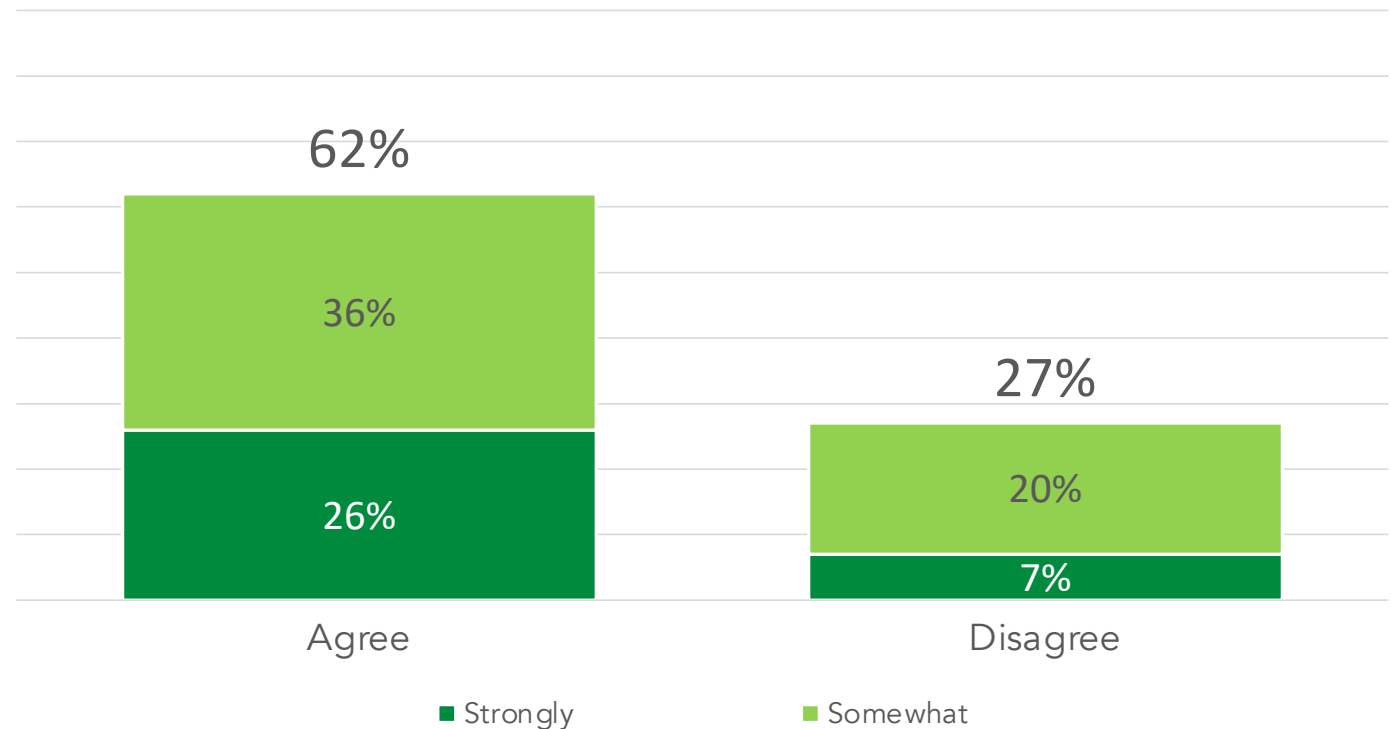
"As you may know, an adjunct professor teaches at a college or university part-time. Adjunct professors often teach the same classes as tenured professors, but adjuncts make a lot less money and do not have benefits despite usually having the same education and experience. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree **that adjunct professors should make less than tenured professors?**"



And they particularly believe they should be paid the same for teaching the same classes.

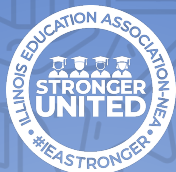


Some people say that adjunct professors who teach the same college courses that are taught by tenured professors should be paid the same amount. They say that students pay the same amount of money for the course no matter who teaches it. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree **that adjunct professors should be paid the same amount as tenured professors when they teach the same college courses?**

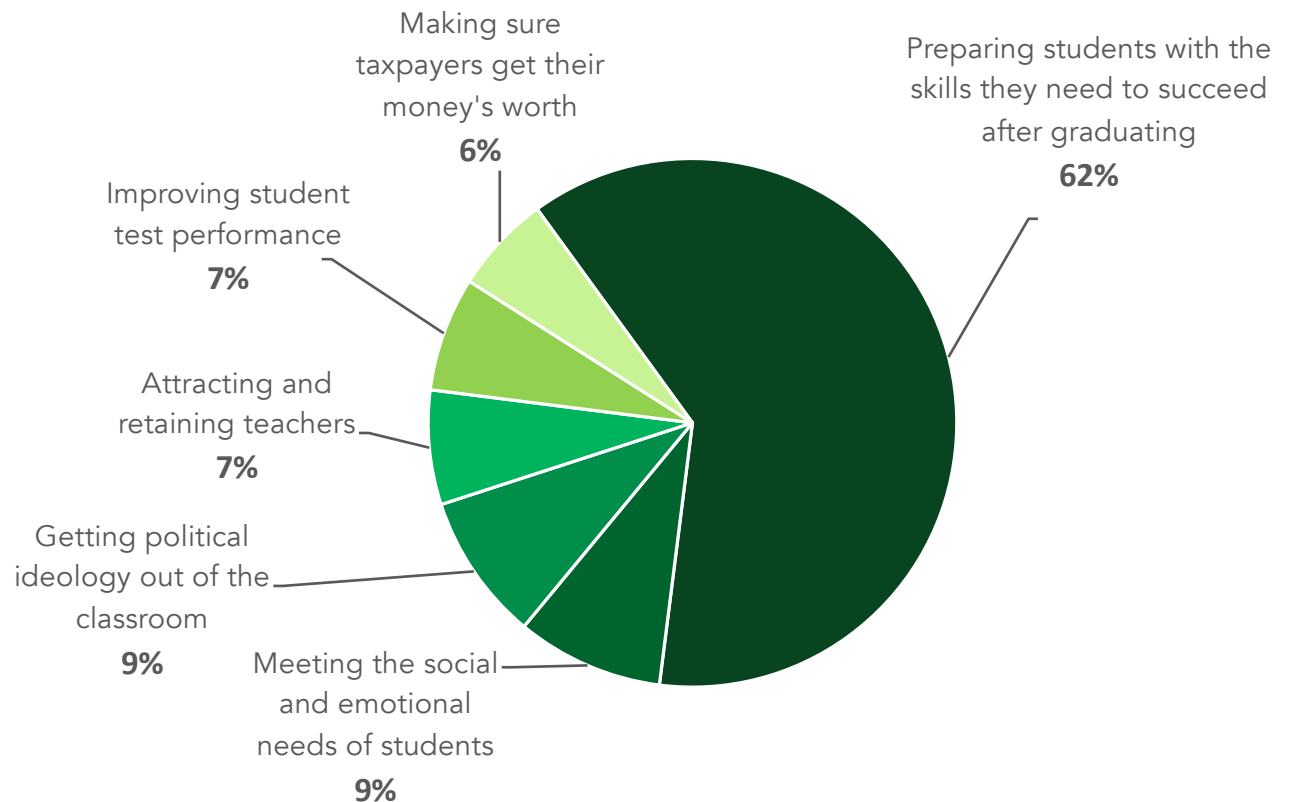


Illinoisans want teachers and families leading in education without outside political influence.

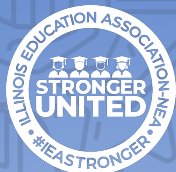
By a huge margin, Illinoisans want school boards to focus on preparing students.



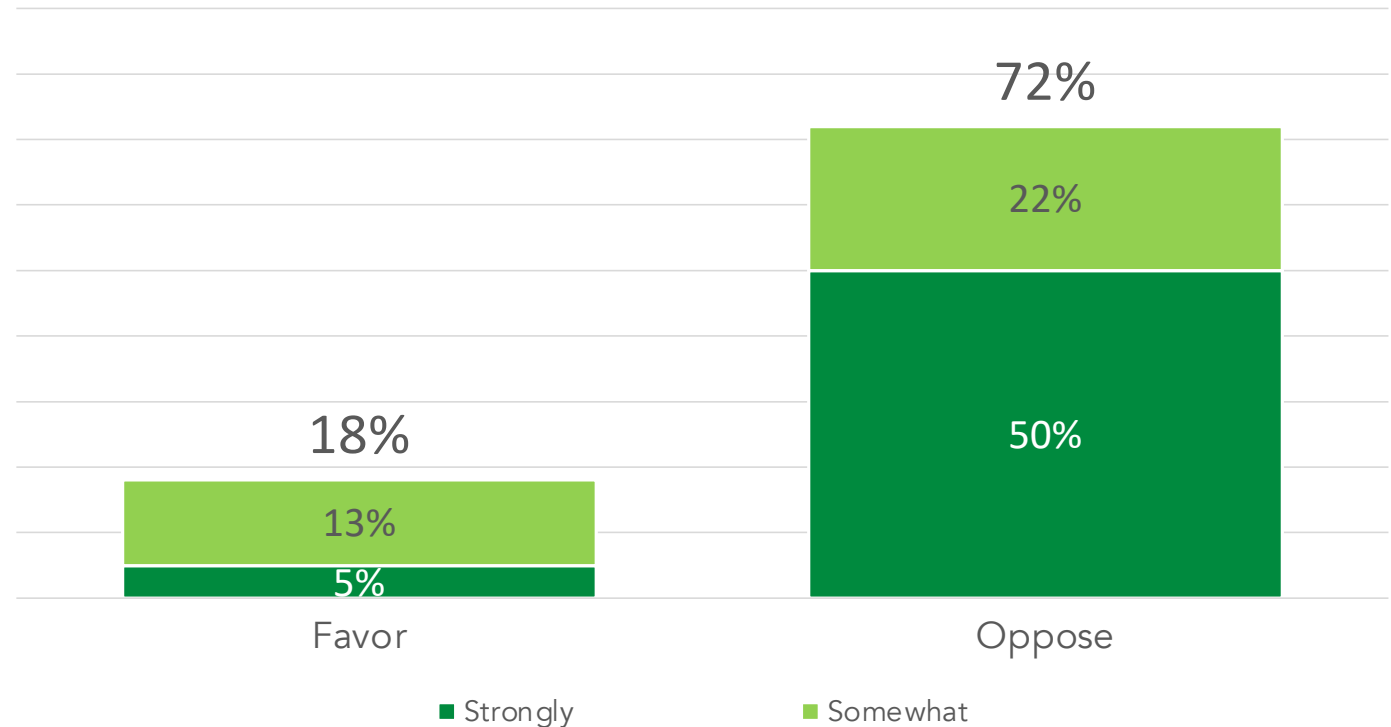
As you may know, Illinois public schools are governed by local school boards. People running for school board often focus on different things and have different priorities. What do you think is **MOST** important for a school board member to prioritize?



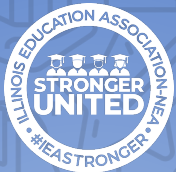
Almost three in four oppose national political influence in school board elections.



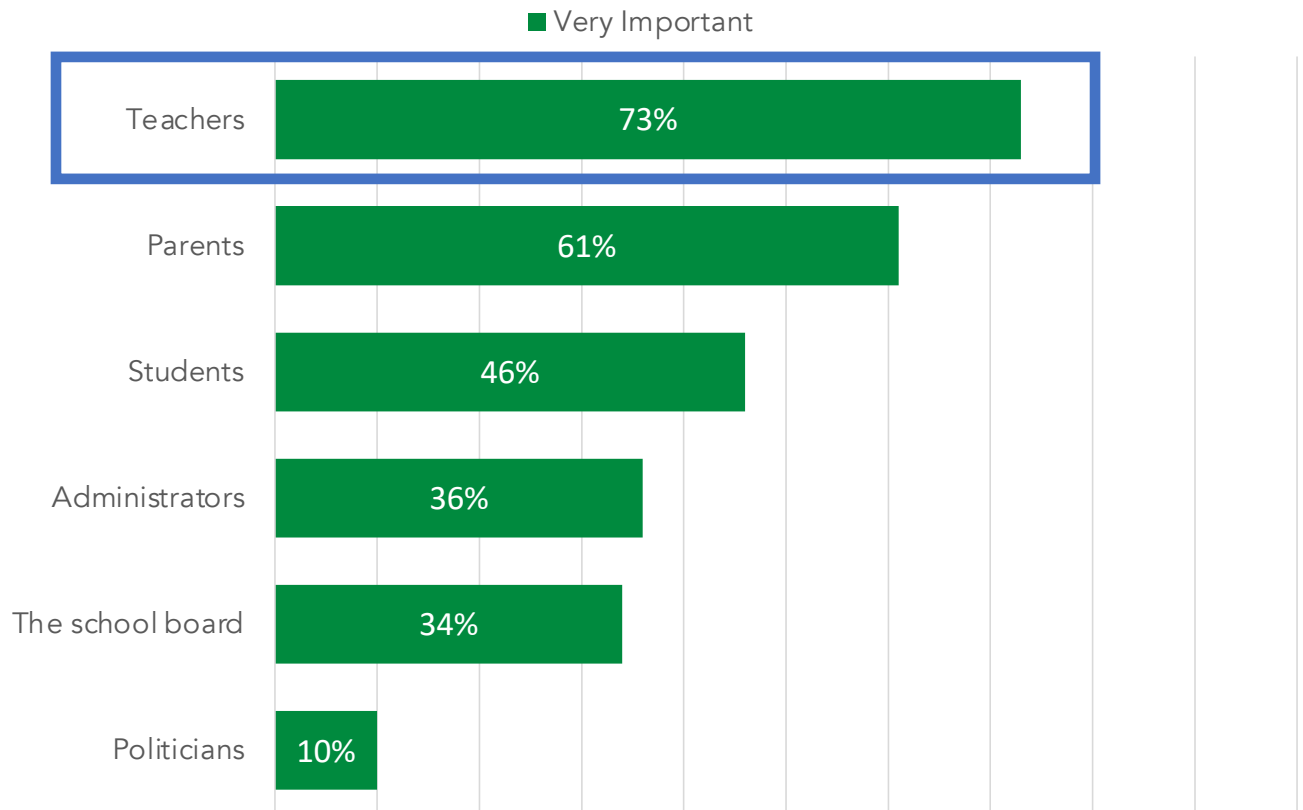
“Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the fact that national political groups can spend money in your local school board elections?”



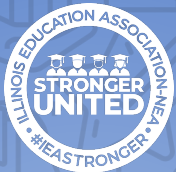
Teachers' and parents' voices are the most important. Illinoisans also value the voices of students in their own education.



“Please say how important it is for each of these groups to have a strong voice in how public schools in Illinois are run. Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not important at all for them to have a strong voice in how public schools in Illinois are run?”



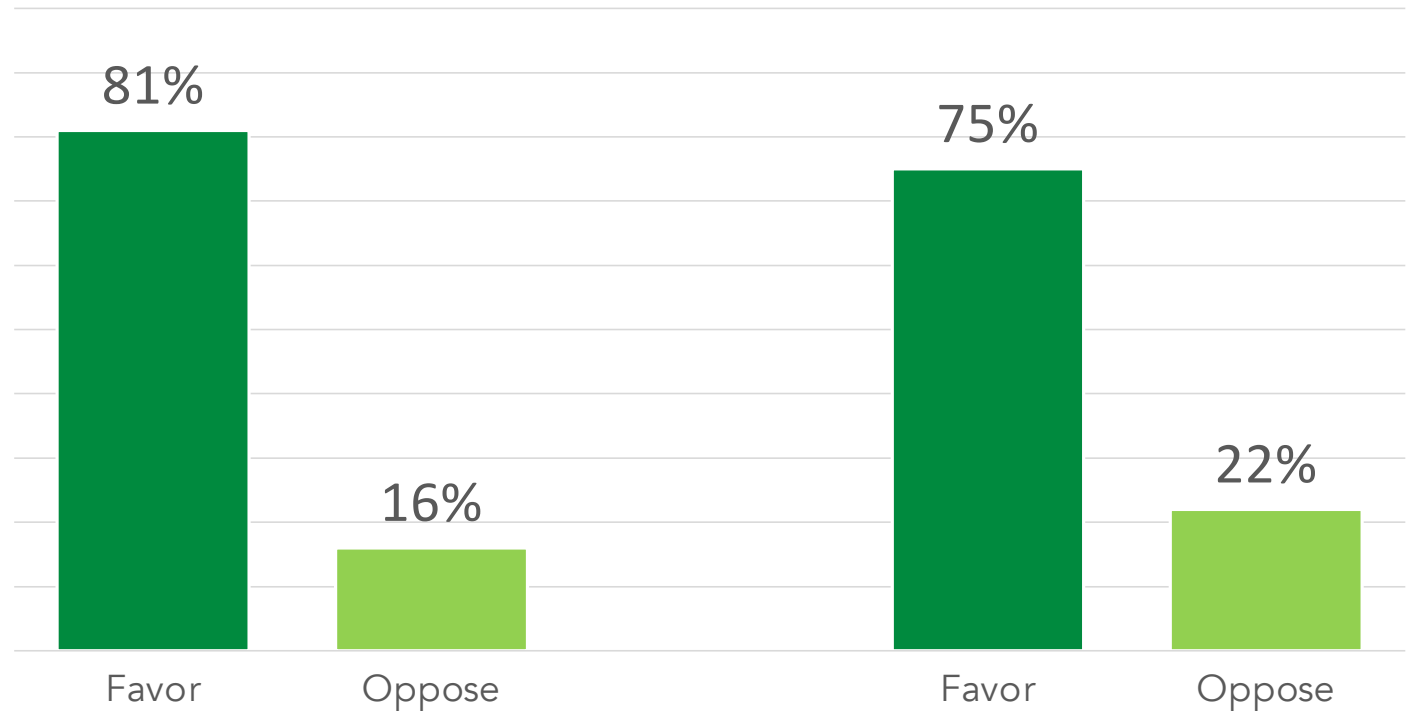
**Illinoisans want
fact-based U.S.
history taught
in high school.**



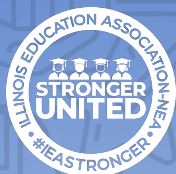
"Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose teaching Illinois high school students about:"

**Slavery in the United States
and its impacts?**

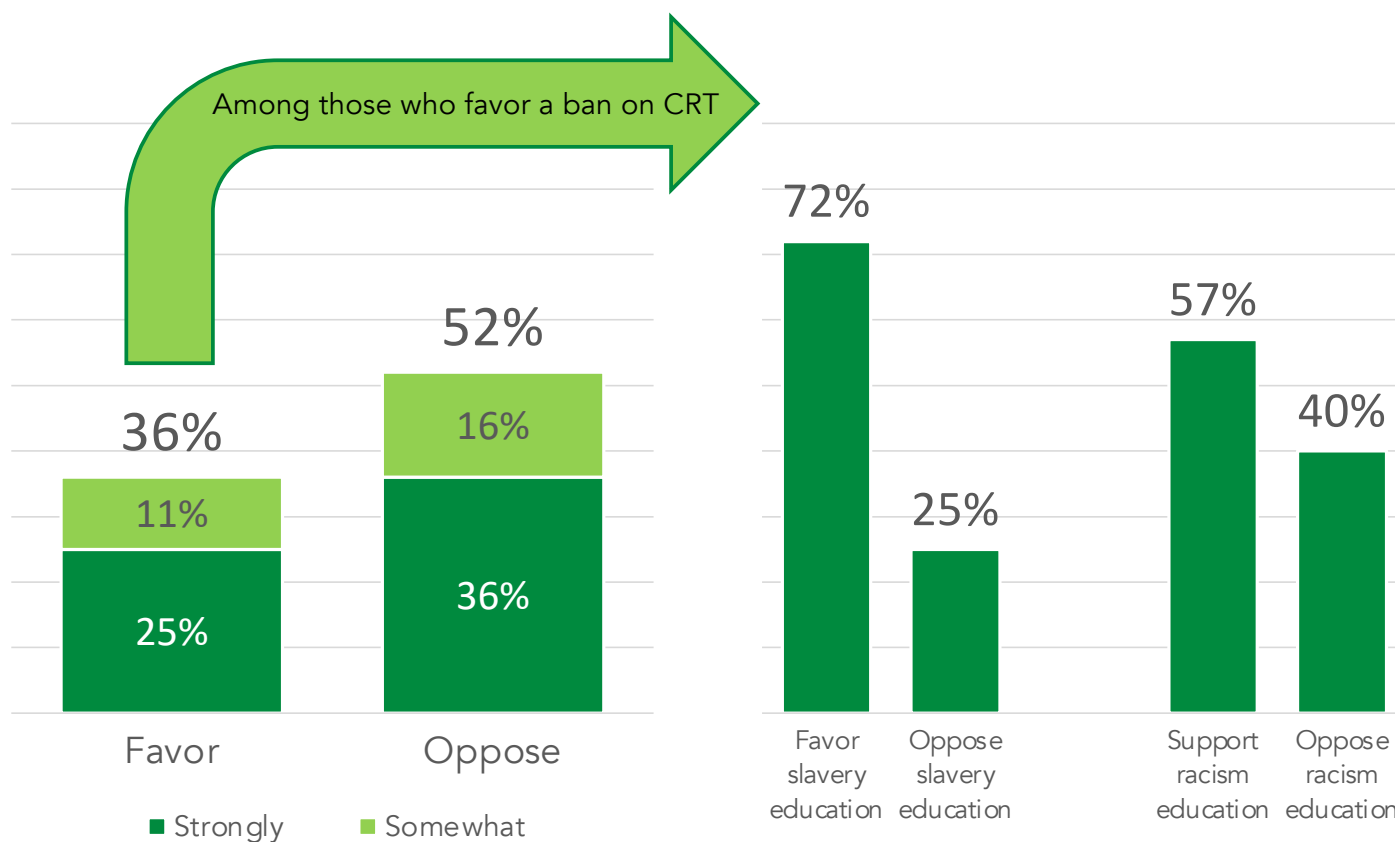
**Racism and its impact in the
United States?**



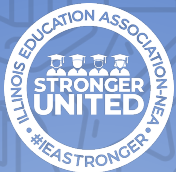
Those who want to ban CRT actually favor teaching about racism and slavery.



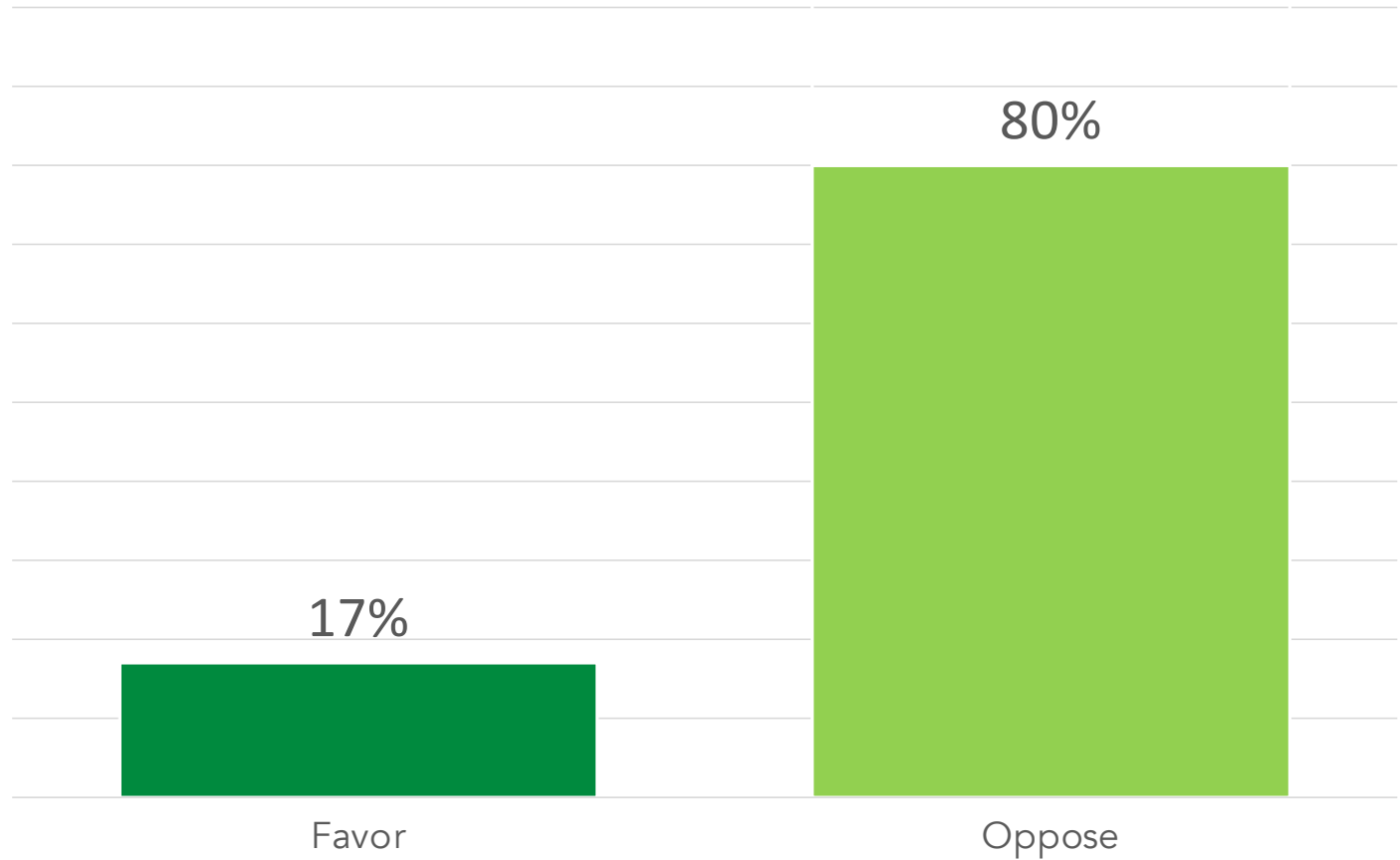
"Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose an Illinois state law that bans the teaching of critical race theory in public schools?"

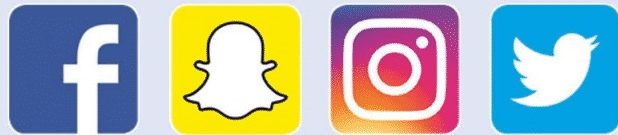


There is strong
opposition to
banning books
in school
libraries.



"Do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose **banning books from Illinois school libraries?**"





@IEANEA

