



# Public Education Issues In Texas

Conducted by The Texas Poll  
for the Texas Association of School Boards

July 2010

*The Texas Poll*  
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## **Summary of Findings**

Eighty-eight percent of Texans agree that Texas' public schools need more money from the state, a 12-point increase from March 2004, according to The Texas Poll.

Only 10 percent disagree that schools need more money and 2 percent don't know.

Among the 51 percent of Texans polled who have children attending public schools, 89 percent believe Texas' schools need more money from the state. Even an overwhelming majority of Texans 60 years of age and older – 66 percent – say the state should provide more funding to schools.

Texans also say they are willing to pay higher taxes in order get more funding for public schools. The Poll asked if they would support higher taxes to help fund new school buildings, higher teacher salaries and smaller classes.

Sixty-eight percent favor higher taxes for new school buildings, an increase of 13 points from 2004. Only 28 percent oppose paying higher taxes for new school buildings. Among Texans who have children in public schools, 71 percent favor higher taxes for new school buildings and 27 percent oppose. Texans who are 60 years and older are least likely to support higher taxes for new buildings, but 51 percent favor and 38 percent oppose.

Texans are also more supportive of higher taxes for increased teacher salaries – 82 percent – compared with 14 percent who oppose and 4 percent who don't know. The percentage of Texans who favor higher taxes for teacher salaries increased 6 points from 2004. Eighty-five percent of Texans with children in public schools favor higher taxes for increasing teacher salaries. A majority in all age, ethnicity and gender groups support higher taxes for higher teacher salaries.

Seventy-one percent of Texans say they favor paying higher taxes if it means smaller classes and 24 percent oppose. In 2004, 73 favored higher taxes to fund smaller classes and 22 percent opposed. In the most-recent poll, 75 percent of Texans with children in public schools would pay higher taxes to get smaller classes, and 22 percent oppose. A majority in all age, ethnicity and gender groups also support higher taxes for smaller classes.

Meanwhile, 72 percent of Texans have been inside a public school in the past 12 months. Among Texans with children in school, 95 percent have been inside a public school in the past year.

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The top reasons Texans have gone inside a public school is for parent-teacher conferences or to talk to a teacher and to drop off a child – both 11 percent. Ten percent went to a public school for graduation and 7 percent went inside school to pick up a child. Other responses included: employed at school (6 percent); visit child/grandchild (5 percent); family night (4 percent); band concert (4 percent); open house (4 percent); sporting event (4 percent); attend a school play (3 percent); lunch with child (3 percent); meeting with principal (2 percent); PTA meeting (2 percent); school function (2 percent); student orientation (2 percent); volunteer (2 percent); vote (2 percent); ARD meeting (1 percent); and school board meeting (1 percent).

A majority of Texans – 60 percent – also agree that Texas public schools are better than schools in other states. Thirty-three percent disagree with the statement and 7 percent don't know. The percentage of residents who agree that Texas public schools are better is even higher among Texans with children in public schools – 64 percent – compared with 31 percent who disagree and 5 percent who don't know.

Sixty-three percent of Texans agree that Texas public schools are doing a good job educating a challenging student population. One-third – 33 percent – disagree with the statement. Among Texans with children in public schools, 64 percent agree that Texas public schools are doing a good job in educating a challenging student population, and 32 percent disagree.

Most Texans – 81 percent – also agree that Texas public schools are burdened with federal requirements. Only 12 percent disagree and 7 percent don't know. Texans with children in public schools feel even stronger that school are burdened with federal requirements – 87 percent – compared with 9 percent who disagree and 4 percent who don't know.

Fifty-nine percent of Texans say Texas public schools are doing an excellent or good job in preparing students to succeed, compared with 40 percent who say fair or poor. Only 1 percent of Texans say they don't know. Sixty-three percent of residents with children in public schools say Texas is doing an excellent or good job of preparing students to succeed, compared with 35 percent who say fair or poor and 2 percent who don't know.

The July 2010 Texas Poll was conducted from July 19-24. The Poll surveyed 1,000 adult Texans by telephone in a random sample of active telephone exchanges statewide. Margin of error for whole sample,  $\pm 3$  percentage points; slightly larger for subgroups. Responses are given in percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number.

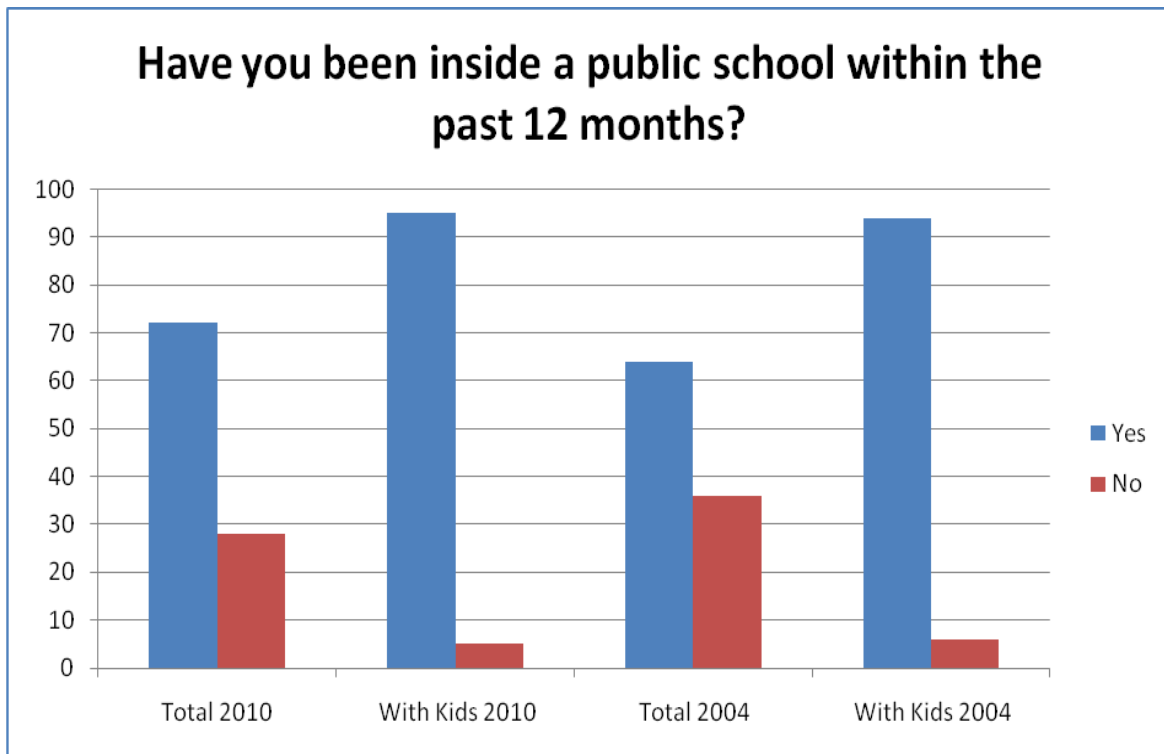
**Ty Meighan**  
**Texas Poll Director**

## Overall Results

### 1. Have you been inside a public school in the past 12 months?

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Yes	72	95
No	28	5

	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=332)</u>
Yes	64	94
No	36	6



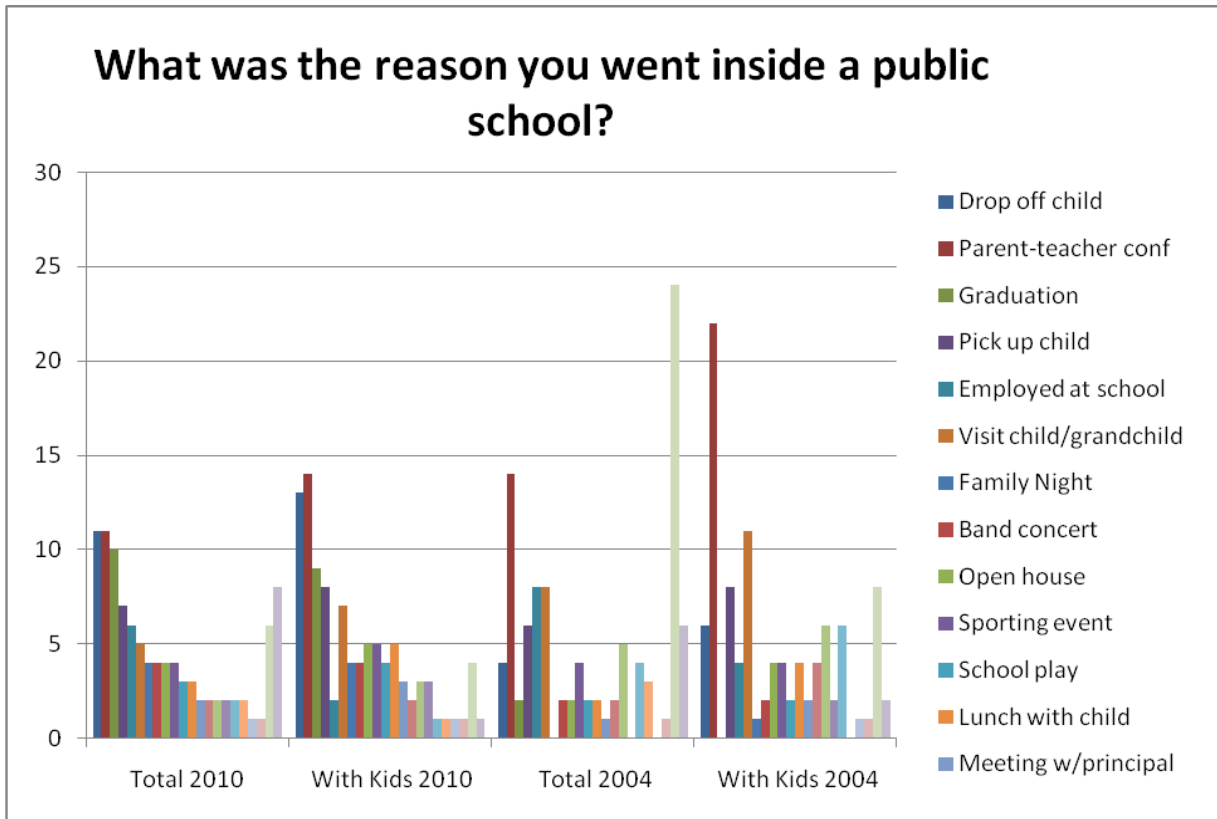
## 2. What was the reason you went inside the public school? (*Open-ended*)

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Drop off child	11	13
Parent-teacher conference/ talk to teacher	11	14
Graduation	10	9
Pick up child	7	8
Employed at school	6	2
Visit child/grandchild	5	7
Family night	4	4
Band concert	4	4
Open house	4	5
Sporting event	4	5
School play	3	4
Lunch with child	3	5
Meeting w/principal	2	3
PTA meeting	2	2
School function	2	3
Student Orientation	2	3
Volunteer	2	1
Vote	2	1
ARD meeting	1	1
School board meeting	1	1
Other*	6	4
No Answer	8	1

\*various responses, none which equals 1 percent

	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=332)</u>
Parent-teacher conference/ talk to teacher	14	22
Visit child/grandchild	8	11
Employed at school	8	4
Pick up child	6	8
School function	5	6
Drop off child	4	6
Sporting event	4	4
Volunteer	4	6
Vote	3	--
Attend school play	2	2
Lunch with child	2	4
Open house	2	4
PTA meeting	2	4
Band concert	2	2
Graduation	2	--
School board meeting	1	1
Meeting w/principal	1	2
ARD meeting	--	1
Family night	--	1
Student Orientation	--	2
Other*	24	8
No Answer	6	2

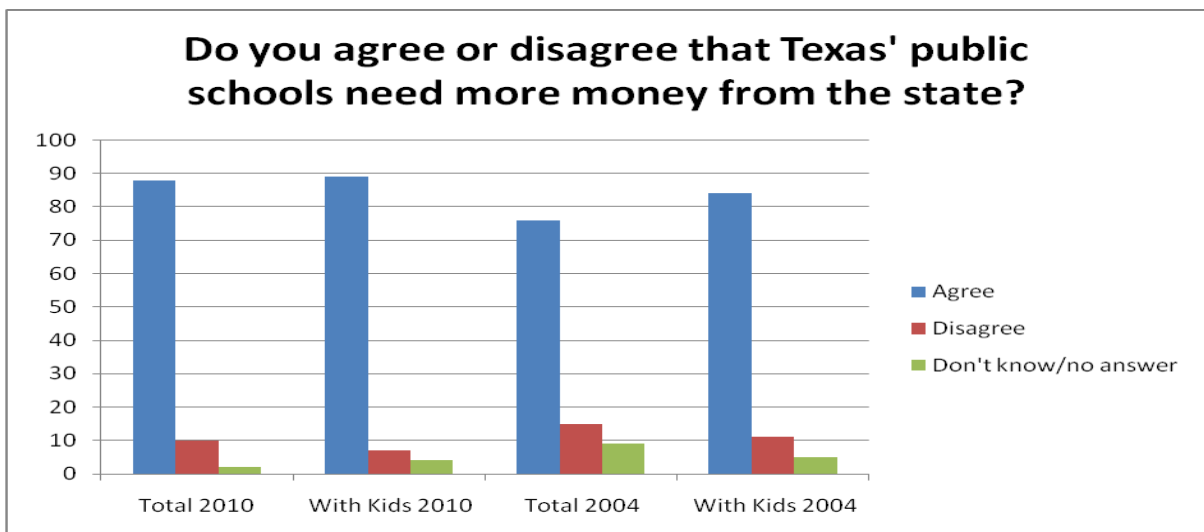
\*various responses, none which equals 1 percent



### 3. Do you agree or disagree that Texas' public schools need more money from the state?

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Agree	88	89
Disagree	10	7
Don't know/no answer	2	4

	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=332)</u>
Agree	76	84
Disagree	15	11
Don't know/no answer	9	5

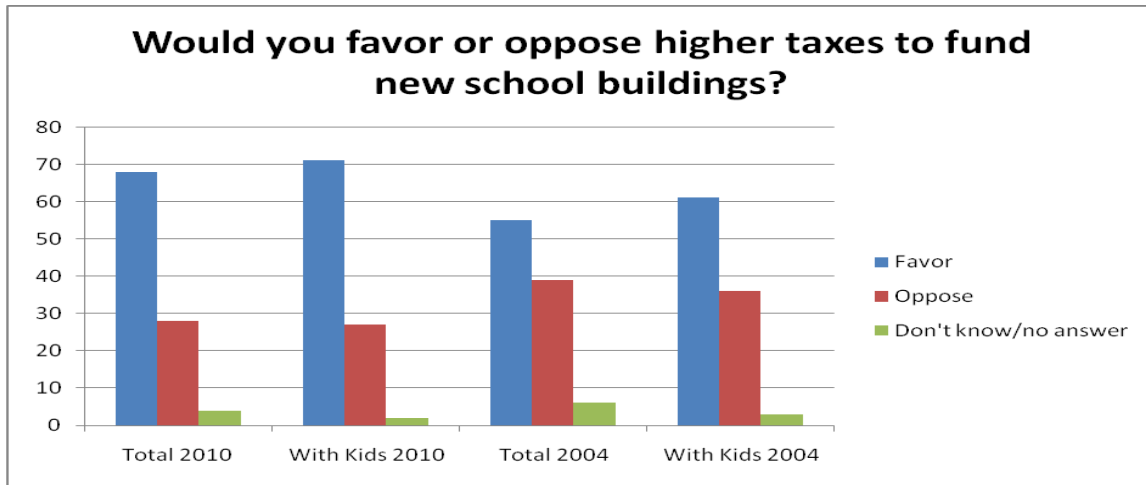


## Would you favor or oppose higher taxes to help fund the following in Texas public schools:

### 4. New school buildings

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Favor	68	71
Oppose	28	27
Don't know/no answer	4	2

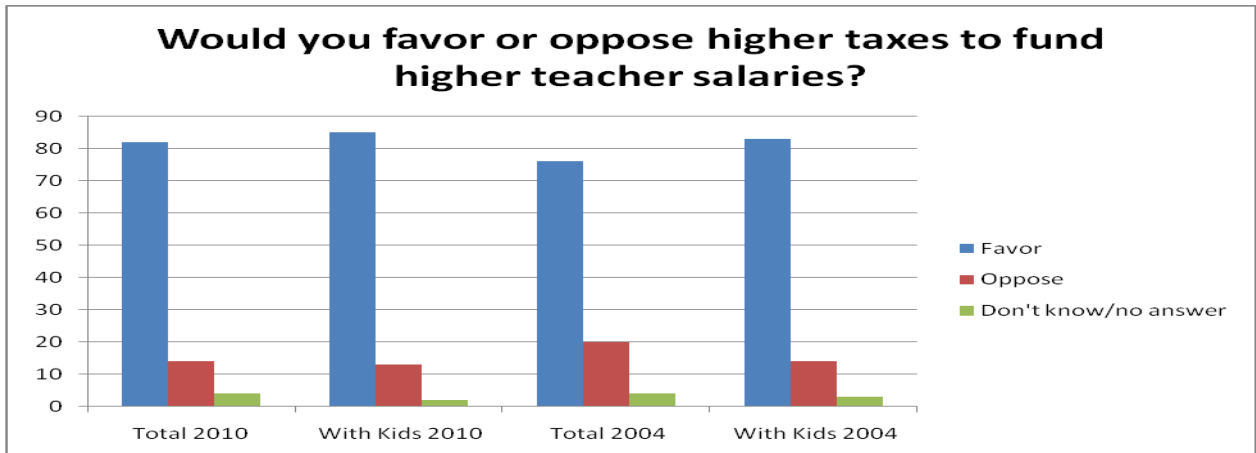
	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=332)</u>
Favor	55	61
Oppose	39	36
Don't know/no answer	6	3



### 5. Higher teacher salaries

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Favor	82	85
Oppose	14	13
Don't know/no answer	4	2

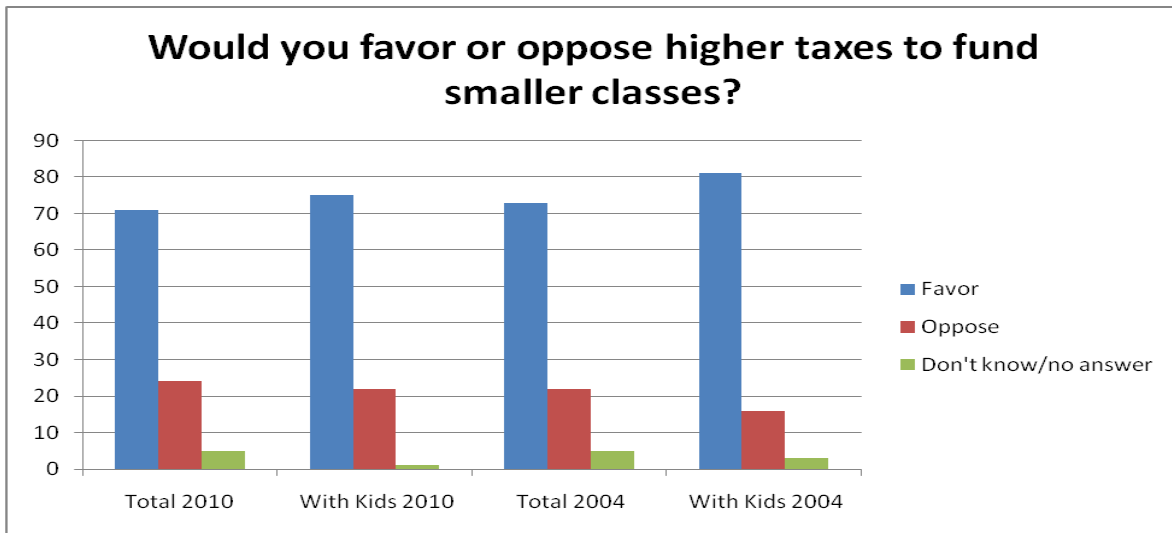
	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=332)</u>
Favor	76	83
Oppose	20	14
Don't know/no answer	4	3



**6. Smaller classes**

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
<b>Favor</b>	71	75
<b>Oppose</b>	24	22
<b>Don't know/no answer</b>	5	1

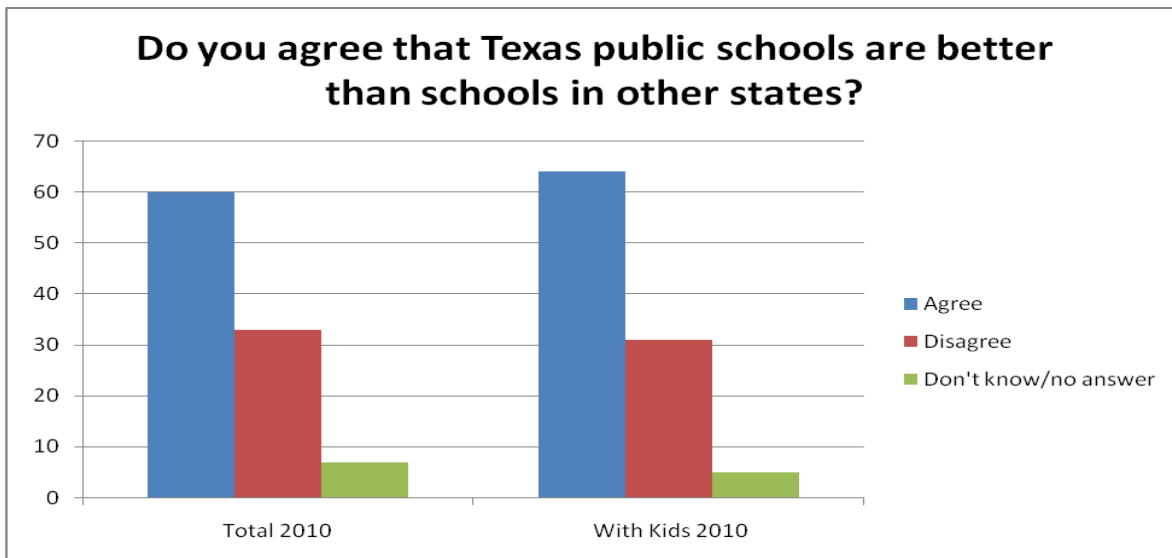
	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=332)</u>
<b>Favor</b>	73	81
<b>Oppose</b>	22	16
<b>Don't know/no answer</b>	5	3



**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

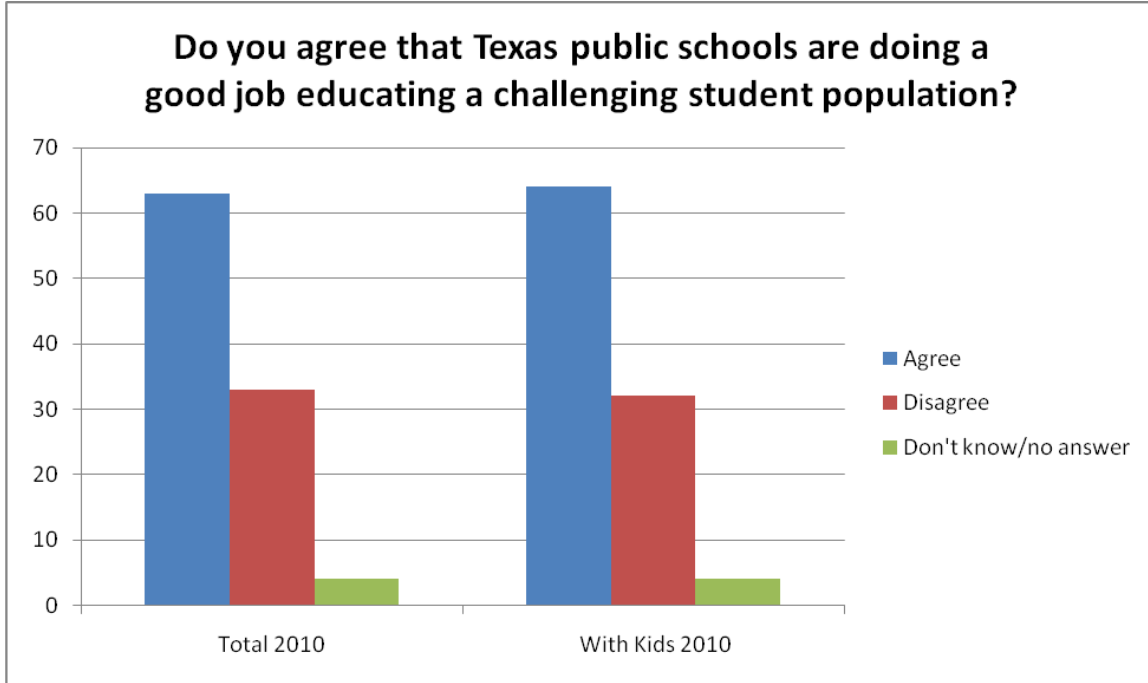
**7. Texas public schools are better than schools in other states.**

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
<b>Agree</b>	60	64
<b>Disagree</b>	33	31
<b>Don't know/no answer</b>	7	5



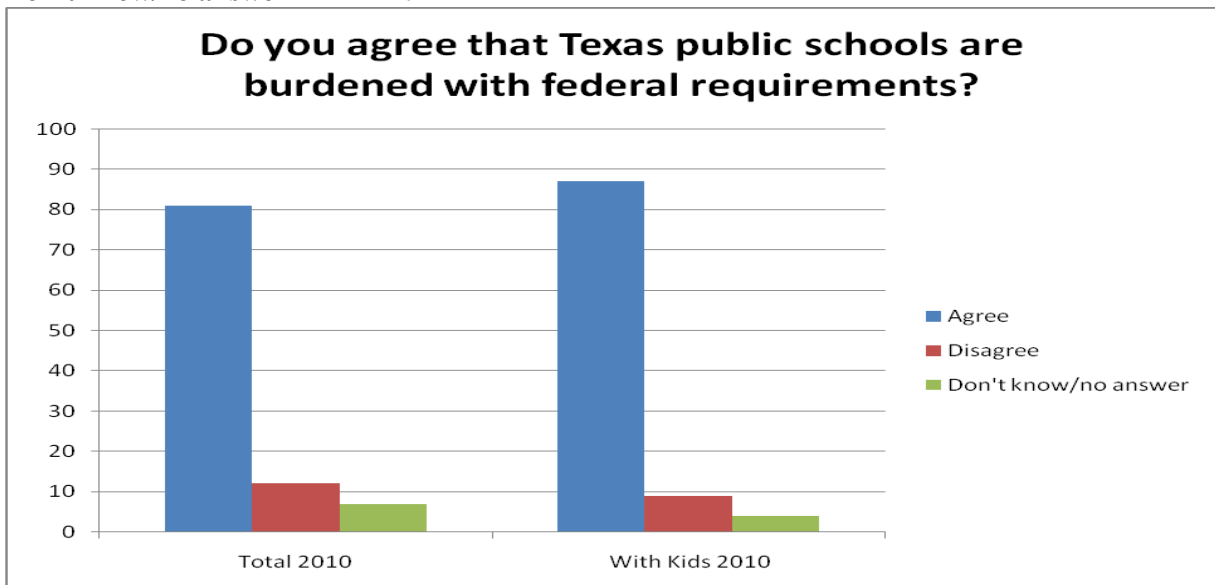
**8. Texas public schools are doing a good job educating a challenging student population.**

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Agree	63	64
Disagree	33	32
Don't know/no answer	4	4



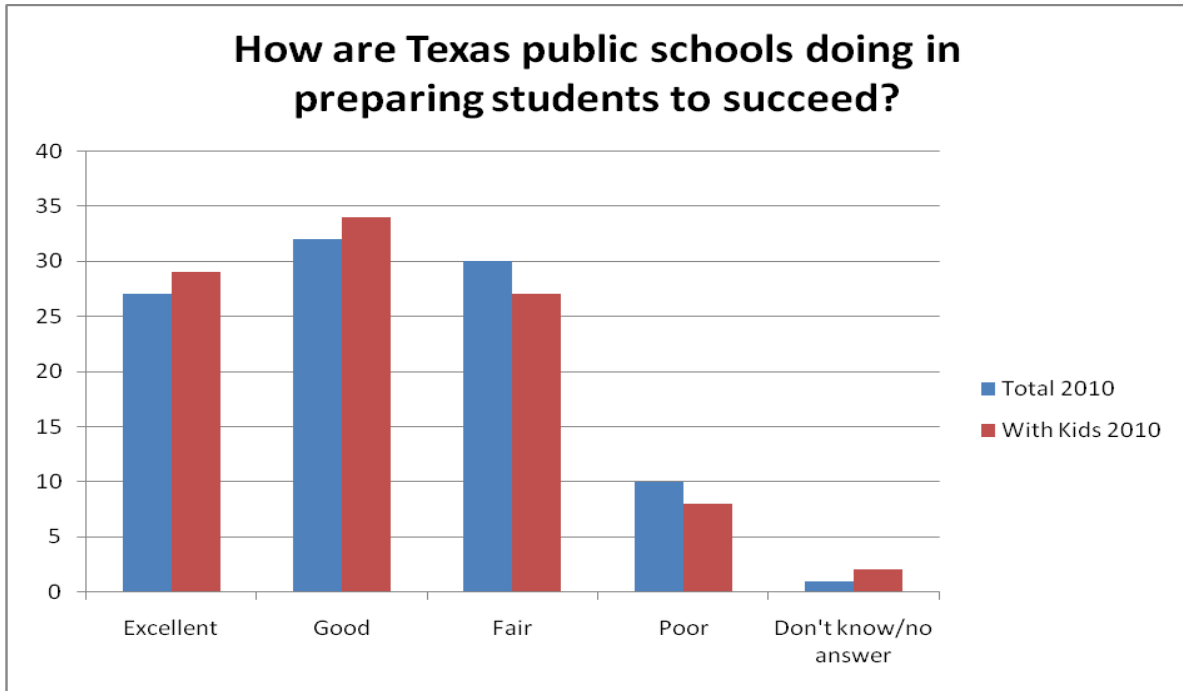
**9. Texas public schools are burdened with federal requirements.**

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Agree	81	87
Disagree	12	9
Don't know/no answer	7	4



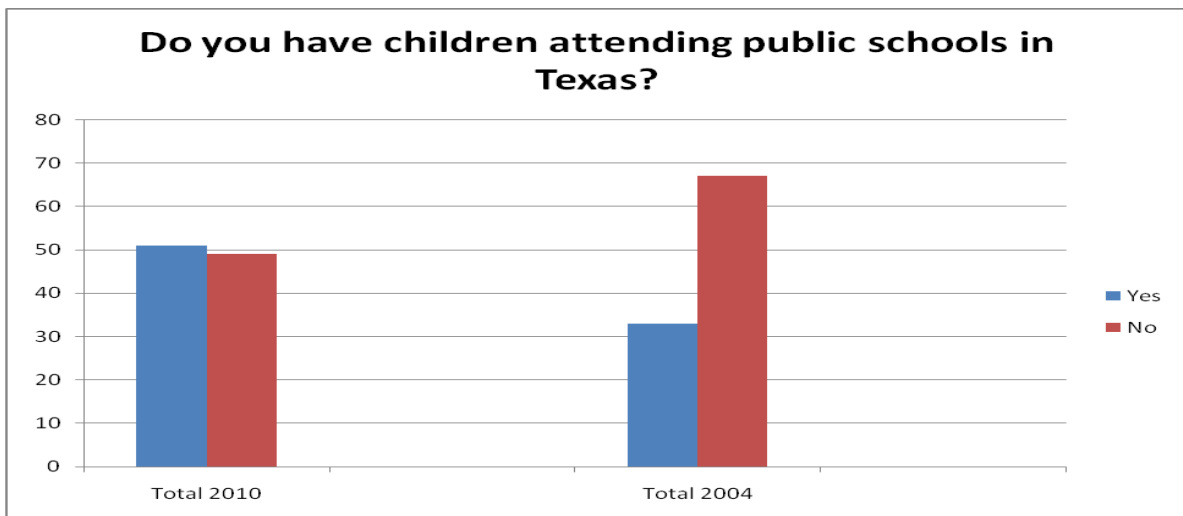
**10. How are Texas public schools doing in preparing students to succeed – excellent, good, fair or poor?**

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>Texans w/children in school (N=511)</u>
Excellent	27	29
Good	32 <u>59 (excellent/good)</u>	34
Fair	30	27
Poor	10 <u>40 (fair/poor)</u>	8
Don't know/no answer	1	2



**11. Do you have children attending public schools in Texas?**

	<u>July 2010 % (N=1,000)</u>	<u>March 2004 % (N=1,000)</u>
Yes	51	33
No	49	67



**Demographics**  
**of**  
**Questions**

## **QUESTION 1**

**Have you been inside a public school in the past 12 months?**

	<b><u>Yes</u></b>	<b><u>No</u></b>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>28</b>

### **Age**

18-29	65	35
30-39	78	22
40-49	76	24
50-59	66	34
60 and older	49	51

### **Race/Ethnicity**

Hispanic	68	32
Anglo	63	37
Black	67	33

### **Gender**

Male	73	27
Female	80	20

## **QUESTION 3**

**Do you agree or disagree that Texas' public schools need more money from the state?**

	<b><u>Agree</u></b>	<b><u>Disagree</u></b>	<b><u>DK</u></b>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

### **Age**

18-29	91	5	4
30-39	87	7	6
40-49	83	9	8
50-59	78	12	10
60 and older	66	25	9

### **Race/Ethnicity**

Hispanic	93	5	2
Anglo	84	7	9
Black	94	1	5

### **Gender**

Male	81	14	5
Female	93	2	5

## QUESTION 4

Would you favor or oppose higher taxes to help fund the following in Texas public schools: **NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4</b>

### Age

18-29	75	22	3
30-39	71	24	5
40-49	59	34	7
50-59	52	38	10
60 and older	51	38	11

### Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	77	19	3
Anglo	61	31	8
Black	64	35	1

### Gender

Male	63	30	7
Female	74	21	5

## QUESTION 5

Would you favor or oppose higher taxes to help fund the following in Texas public schools: **HIGHER TEACHER SALARIES**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>

### Age

18-29	86	10	4
30-39	90	8	2
40-49	81	14	5
50-59	73	20	7
60 and older	62	31	7

### Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	89	10	1
Anglo	81	26	3
Black	77	21	2

### Gender

Male	80	15	5
Female	84	12	4

## QUESTION 6

Would you favor or oppose higher taxes to help fund the following in Texas public school: **SMALLER CLASSES**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	74	21	5
30-39	79	17	4
40-49	73	25	2
50-59	69	25	6
60 and older	61	32	7

### Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	76	22	2
Anglo	71	19	10
Black	69	26	5

### Gender

Male	71	28	1
Female	74	22	4

## QUESTION 7

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Texas public schools are better than schools in other states.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7</b>
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	56	31	13
30-39	63	28	9
40-49	61	31	8
50-59	58	40	2
60 and older	55	42	3

### Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	66	27	7
Anglo	63	30	7
Black	54	39	7

### Gender

Male	58	36	6
Female	65	27	8

## QUESTION 8

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Texas public schools are doing a good job educating a challenging student population.**

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>

### Age

18-29	58	34	8
30-39	69	26	5
40-49	59	38	3
50-59	56	41	3
60 and older	51	43	6

### Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	69	27	4
Anglo	67	30	3
Black	53	42	5

### Gender

Male	60	37	3
Female	68	28	4

## QUESTION 9

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Texas public schools are burdened with federal requirements.**

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>

### Age

18-29	73	15	12
30-39	87	6	7
40-49	85	11	4
50-59	80	13	7
60 and older	75	10	15

### Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic	82	12	6
Anglo	83	11	6
Black	79	13	8

### Gender

Male	81	12	7
Female	82	11	7

## QUESTION 10

How are Texas public schools doing in preparing students to succeed – Excellent, good, fair or poor?

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>DK</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<b><u>Age</u></b>					
18-29	26	28	34	10	2
30-39	30	35	28	6	1
40-49	26	31	29	9	5
50-59	28	30	30	10	2
60 and older	23	25	35	10	7
<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b>					
Hispanic	31	33	27	8	1
Anglo	29	35	28	6	2
Black	21	26	37	15	1
<b><u>Gender</u></b>					
Male	24	33	31	11	1
Female	32	32	27	8	1

## QUESTION 11

Do you have children attending public schools in Texas?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<b>TOTAL %</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>
<b><u>Age</u></b>		
18-29	31	69
30-39	67	33
40-49	54	46
50-59	21	79
60 and older	4	96
<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b>		
Hispanic	52	48
Anglo	51	49
Black	54	46
<b><u>Gender</u></b>		
Male	52	48
Female	51	49

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF ENTIRE SAMPLE

	<u>Total%</u>
<b><u>Age</u></b>	
18-29	16
30-39	20
40-49	26
50-59	24
60 and older	14
<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b>	
Hispanic	26
Anglo	59
Black	10
Asian	3
Other	2
<b><u>Gender</u></b>	
Male	44
Female	56