

Issue Brief:

Education & the 2024 Election



**How Utah voters prioritize
education issues**



October 2024



For more information about this survey or the work of Sutherland Institute, contact us:

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Y² Analytics conducted the survey highlighted in this report.

METHODOLOGY DETAILS

n = 560 likely Utah voters and 610 Utah school teachers

Online interviews fielded Aug. 10 – Sept. 5, 2024

Margin of error +- 4.1

For this survey, likely Utah voters were sampled from the Utah state voter file and teachers were sampled from a list of public school teachers in Utah. Survey invitations were sent via email and text message, and interviews were completed online. The data were weighted to reflect the demographics of likely voters in the Utah 2024 general election, specifically in regard to gender, age, race, political party registration, and probability of voting in the election.

Before drawing the sample, a model of general election turnout was estimated using age, party registration status, length of registration, permanent absentee status, and past election turnout. This model produces a sampling pool of registered voters that can be randomly sampled based on their likelihood of voting. A Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) sample was drawn using this predicted turnout estimate such that voters with a higher probability of voting have a higher probability of being selected in the sample. Thus, the final sample accurately approximates a population of general election voters.

The visuals in this issue brief were constructed from average responses given to a series of questions. For more information about survey methodology, please contact Kyrene Gibb or Quin Monson at:

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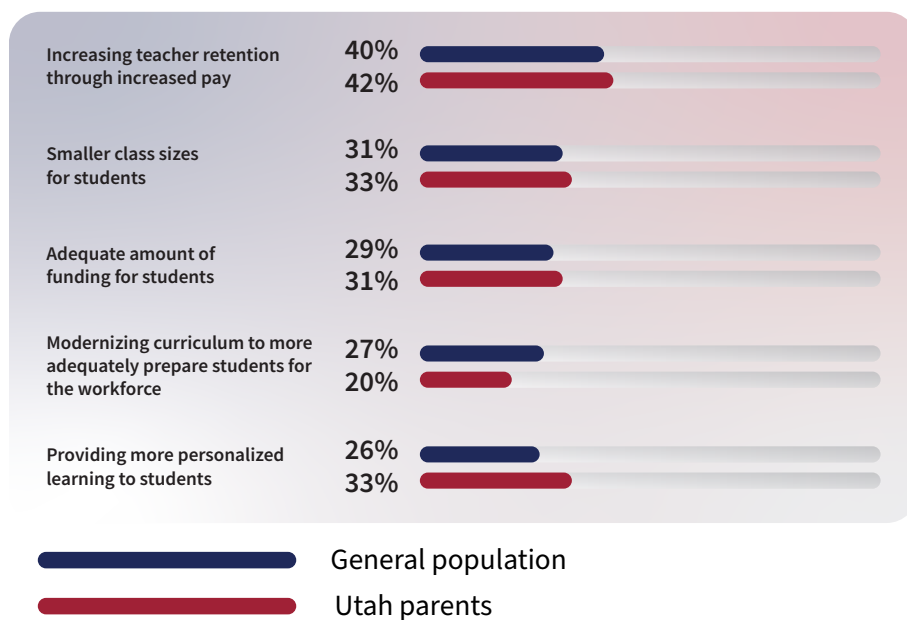


How Utah voters rank their education priorities

Sutherland Institute partners with Y² Analytics to regularly survey likely voters in Utah about key policy and political issues. This issue brief provides an overview of likely voter sentiment toward different education policy issues in the state.

METHODOLOGY: 560 Utah likely voters and 610 Utah teachers were selected and then interviewed online between Aug. 10 and Sept. 5, 2024. Data were weighted to reflect demographics of likely voters in the Utah 2024 general election, with a margin of error of +/- 4.1 percentage points.

Likely voters in Utah rank their top two education priorities as increasing teacher retention through more pay and smaller class sizes for students



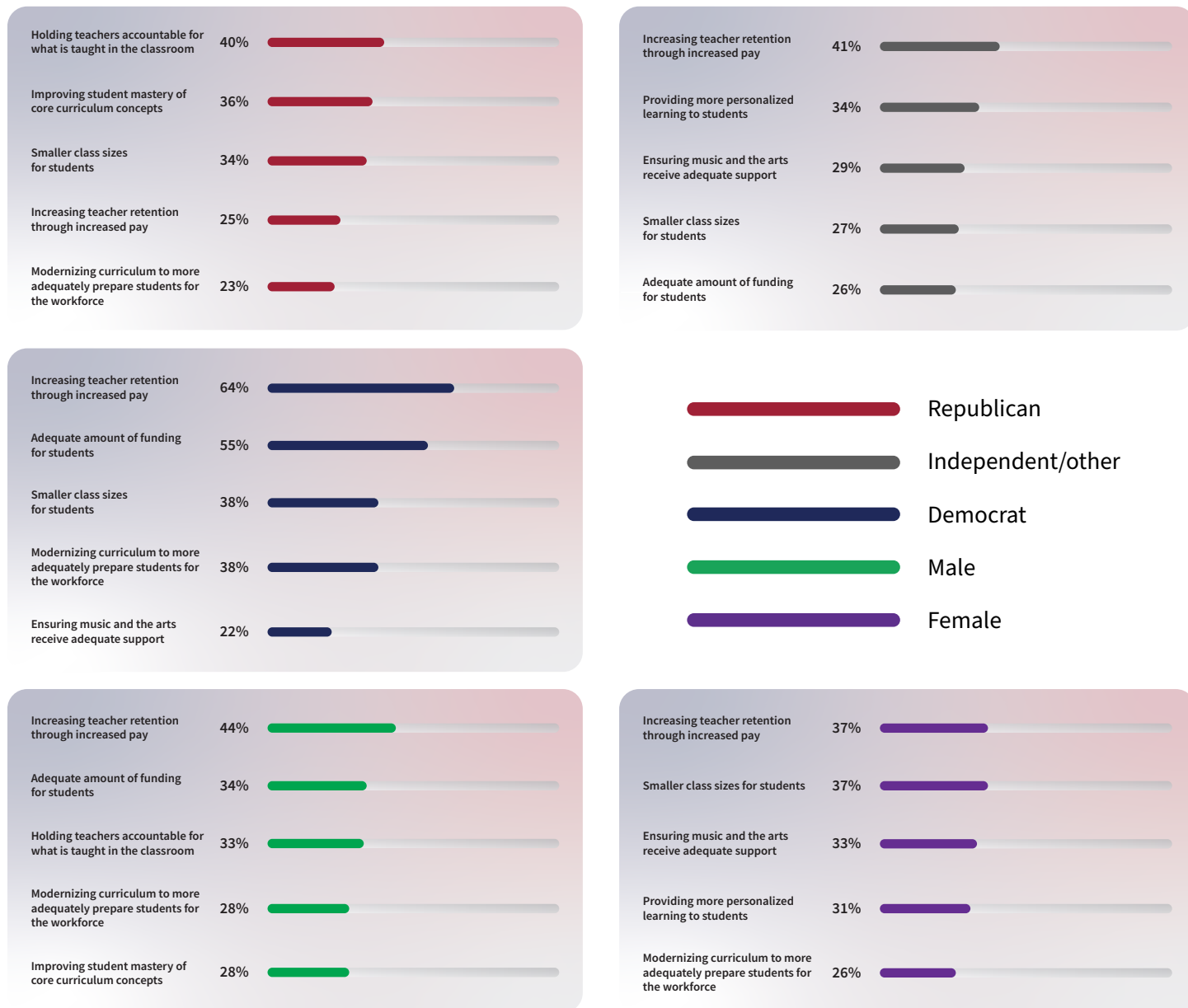
Utah likely voters responded that their top five education priorities are: *increasing teacher retention through increased pay, smaller class sizes for students, adequate amount of funding for students, modernizing curriculum to more adequately prepare students for the workforce, and providing more personalized learning to students.*

For comparison, we looked at how parents viewed the general population's top five priorities. Parents of Utah students aren't too far off in terms of their support for those top-ranking priorities of the general population. In fact, a slightly higher percentage of Utah parents than the general population

said their priorities were *higher pay to retain teachers, smaller class sizes for students, adequate amount of funding for students, and providing more personalized learning to students*. In fact, these four were listed among Utah parents' top five priorities as well.

One difference between the top five priorities for the general population and those of Utah parents was that parents ranked among their top issues *ensuring music and the arts receive adequate support* rather than *modernizing curriculum for today's workforce*, a topic that 20% of parents still said was a priority for them. All this suggests that immediate stakeholders, or parents with students in the public education system, share some important views with the general populace as to what matters most in education.

Education priorities based on voters' political party and gender



Among the different political parties and between the genders, at least one topic was shared in their top five priorities. Democrats, Republicans and independents all ranked in their top five priorities *increasing teacher retention through increased pay* and *smaller class sizes for students*, though with varying degrees of support. Democrats and independents both listed *adequate amount of funding* and *adequate support for music and arts* in their top five. Both Republicans and Democrats ranked *modernizing curriculum to more adequately prepare students for the workforce* in their top five.

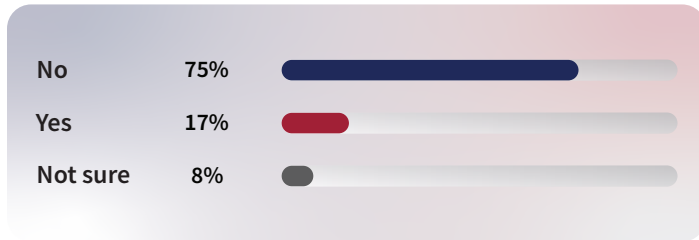
Only Republicans listed *holding teachers accountable for what they teach in the classroom* and *improving student mastery of core curriculum concepts* in their top five. Only independents had *providing personalized learning to students* in their top five.

In their top-ranked priorities, men and women had in common both *increasing teacher retention through increased pay* and *modernizing curriculum to more adequately prepare students for the workforce*.

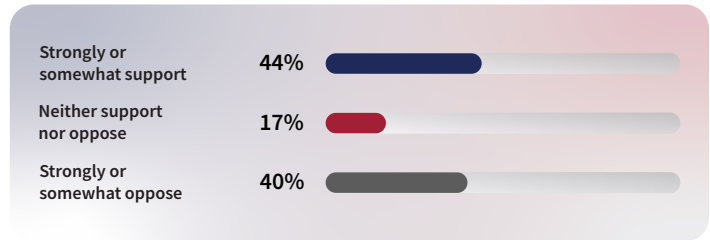
It's clear that *increasing teacher retention through increased pay* is important to many Utahns regardless of gender or politics.

How voters feel about the Utah Fits All Scholarship program

Are you aware of the Utah Fits All Scholarship Program?

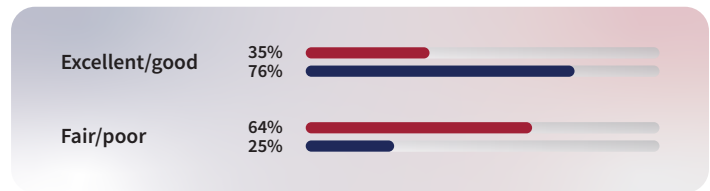
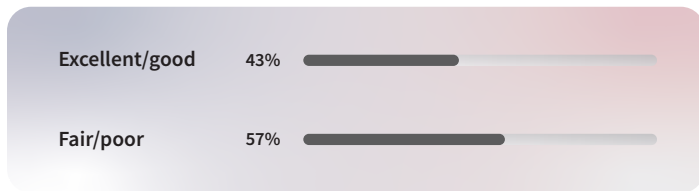


Do you support or oppose the Utah Fits All Scholarship Program?



While Utah is considered a leader in the nation for recently creating a universal education choice program, the overwhelming majority (75%) of Utah likely voters are not aware of the new Utah Fits All Scholarship program, which was passed in the 2023 Utah legislative session. Among those respondents that were provided a definition of the program, more Utahns support the program than oppose it, but not by much.

How Utahns describe the quality of Utah public education



General population

Parents
Teachers

Among the general population, 43% said that Utah's public education is excellent or good. When it comes to parents, 35% of parents rate public education this way. However, an overwhelming majority of teachers (76%) feel public education is excellent or good. Majorities of both the general population and parents feel that education is fair or poor.

Obviously, the biggest difference in perception of the quality of education is seen between parents and teachers. The reason for this significant difference of opinion is unclear, which suggests it ought to be an issue that policymakers and education leaders study and consider.



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