



# Parent Advocate

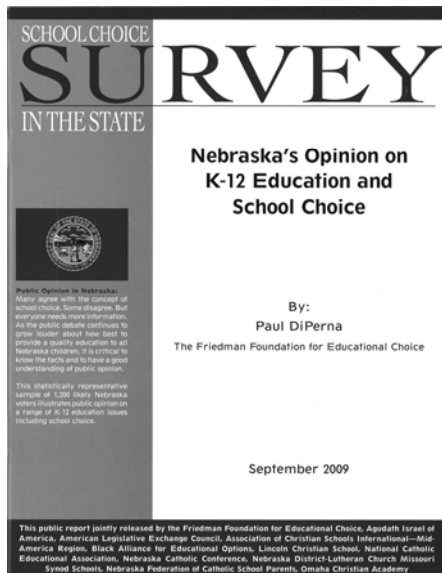
## STRONG SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL CHOICE IN STATEWIDE SURVEY

More than eight of 10 likely voters in Nebraska would send their children to private schools (48%), charter schools (11%), virtual /online schools (5%) or home school settings (20%) if they could, according to a newly released statewide survey on K-12 education and school-choice. Eighty-four percent of respondents would choose “other than” traditional public schools.

On September 17, at an Omaha press conference, 11 organizations, including the Nebraska Catholic Conference and its program affiliate, the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents, joined in releasing the results of the statewide survey, which was commissioned by the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice. Other in-state release partners are Lincoln Christian School, the Nebraska District Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Schools, and Omaha Christian Academy. Representatives from each of the in-state release partners attended the press conference. Also attending were the three Diocesan Superintendents of Catholic Schools, members of the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents board, several Catholic school administrators and parents.

Nationally-based release partners for the Nebraska report, which is the 13<sup>th</sup> in a series commissioned by the Friedman Foundation, are: Agudath Israel of America, Association of Christian Schools International-Mid America Region, American Legislative Exchange Council, Black Alliance for Educational Choice (BAEO), and the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA).

**According to Paul DiPerna, analyst and author of the survey report, “there is a wide disconnect**



**between what the voters would like to see in terms of school choice options and what the system is able to provide. In the case of Nebraska, the results are clear: voters want more access and schooling options. The support of school choice concepts such as tax credits, vouchers...is significant and cuts across numerous demographic groups.”**

The telephone survey, which was conducted last April by the Atlanta-based Strategic Vision polling firm, had 1,200 respondents with a margin of error of plus or minus three per-

cent. Here are some of its findings:

- Although not quite 12 percent of the K-12 students in Nebraska attend private schools, 44 percent of the K-12 parents responding to the survey indicated that they would prefer to educate their children in a private school, while only 21 percent expressed a preference for public schools. Nearly 88 percent of Nebraska’s K-12 students now attend public schools.
- **A strong majority of likely voters expressed support for a state-tax-credit system to stimulate voluntary contributions to private-school scholarship programs. Fifty-five percent of the respondents supported the concept of a scholarship tax-credit, while 41 percent were opposed.**
- Support also was strong—**57 percent**—for a scholarship tax-credit system based on financial need. Thirty-nine percent opposed.
- School vouchers were supported by 55 percent of the Nebraska voters surveyed.
- Majorities of Democrats, Republicans and Independents showed strong support for a tax-credit



scholarship program and vouchers.

The strong, majority support for the scholarship tax-credit concept is encouraging news for NFCSP's efforts to gain advancement of **LB 67** (scholarship tax credit legislation) from the Legislature's Revenue Committee to the full body of senators. The bill is being carried over to 2010.

"We would like Nebraskans to view these results in the context of the academic achievement goals for Nebraska students announced recently in conjunction with the P-16 Initiative. Many recognize that facilitating, promoting, and enhancing educational choices for parents and families would contribute in a significant way to ensuring high quality education for young Nebraskans, instilling in them the knowledge and abilities they need to succeed. Nebraskans and their policy makers cannot ignore the need to improve student achievement, and one way we can address this is to ensure Nebraska families have educational options," said Jeremy Murphy, Associate Director for Education Issues for the Nebraska Catholic Conference and Secretary

of the Nebraska Federation of Catholic School Parents board.

Brian Neesen, co-owner of Granite Transformations for Kitchens and Baths in Omaha said, "As a business owner, I am aware of the importance of education and the strong foundation it establishes for success in the real world. Exercising parental choice in education is vital to realizing this in all educational systems. Our collective future depends upon our children's success in school."

The public-release press conference was covered by the *Omaha World Herald*, *The Catholic Voice* and KETV Channel 7. In addition, the Associated Press provided a story on the survey-release, which was picked up by several daily newspapers and electronic media outlets. NET Radio also covered the story.

To view the press release, a two-page summary of the survey report and/or a copy of the report in full, visit [www.nebcathcon.org](http://www.nebcathcon.org) or [www.friedmanfoundation.org](http://www.friedmanfoundation.org)

## NEBRASKA FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

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