
What Do Polls Show North Carolinians Think about North Carolina Public Schools?

Carolina Poll

The Carolina Poll is a telephone survey of North Carolinians (18 or older) covering a variety of topics. Since the early 1980s, it has been conducted twice a year by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The data are weighted by household size to restore equal representation to members of large households. In addition to sampling error, any survey contains unknown levels of error from other sources, such as question wording, question order, respondent misunderstandings, refusal rates, and other practical difficulties of measuring public opinions.

Survey Date: October 1979

Do you have an opinion about how your local schools are doing? If Yes: Do you think they're doing . . . a good job . . . or a poor job?

1.50%	No Answer
43.30%	Spontaneous Good
27.10%	Spontaneous Poor
11.30%	Forced Good
6.40%	Forced Poor
10.50%	No Opinion

The Fall 1979 Carolina Poll was conducted in October 1979. A random sample of 612 (weighted sample size: 596) adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed by telephone. The sampling error is plus or minus 4 to 5 percent for the total sample.

Survey Date: April 1985

Question: 1f. Would you please tell me now important you think it is on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is a very important and 1 is not important.—improving education

0.50%	Not Important
0.30%	2
0.70%	3
0.60%	4
4.20%	5
2.30%	6
7.30%	7
15.00%	8
12.60%	9
56.40%	Most Important

The Spring 1985 Carolina Poll was conducted in April 1985. A random sample of 607 (weighted sample size: 596) adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed by telephone. The sampling error is plus or minus 4 to 5 percent for the total sample.

Survey Date: March 1997

Thinking about kindergarten through 12th grade, do you think the education children receive in North Carolina public schools is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

8.50%	Excellent
38.00%	Good
30.30%	Fair
19.30%	Poor
3.90%	Don't know/no answer

The Spring 1997 Carolina Poll was conducted between March 22 and 27, 1997. A random sample of 727 (weighted sample size: 723) adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed by telephone. The sampling error is plus or minus 3.8 percent for the total sample.

Survey Date: October 1997

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools where you live?

14.90%	A
34.40%	B
25.00%	C
7.00%	D
4.60%	Fail
14.00%	Don't Know/ No Answer

Do you favor or oppose allowing students and parents to choose a private school to attend at public expense?

38.10%	Favor
51.80%	Oppose
10.10%	Don't Know/ No Answer

The Fall 1997 Carolina Poll was conducted between November 1 and November 9, 1997. A random sample of 771 (weighted sample size: 766) adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed by telephone. The sampling error is plus or minus 3.7 percent for the total sample.

Survey Date: March 2000

Do you favor or oppose using public funds to help students pay for private schools?

33.10%	Favor
55.10%	Oppose
4.80%	It Depends [Volunteered]
7.00%	Don't Know, No Answer

In order to improve the public school system, some people think the focus should be on reforming the existing system. Others believe the focus should be on finding an alternative system. Still others think no major changes are necessary. Which would you support—reforming the existing system, finding an alternative system, or no major changes?

62.10%	Reforming Existing System
18.80%	Finding Alternative System
12.70%	No Major Changes Are Necessary
6.40%	Don't Know, No Answer

And now on another topic. . . . Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools where you live: A, B, C, D or Fail?

16.6%	A
35.7%	B
25.7%	C
8.7%	D
4.5%	Fail
8.8%	Don't Know; No Answer

The Spring 2000 Carolina Poll was conducted between March 25 and April 2, 2000. A random sample of 656 (weighted sample: 652) adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed by telephone. The sampling error is plus or minus 4.0 percent for the total sample.

Survey Date: Fall 2001

What grade would you give your local schools—A, B, C, D, or Fail?

18.8%	A
39.0%	B
22.2%	C
5.8%	D
5.1%	F
8.1%	Don't know/ No answer

The Fall 2001 Carolina Poll was conducted between October 7 and October 11, 2001. A random sample of 650 (weighted sample 648) adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed by telephone by students enrolled in journalism and political science classes and trained in survey procedures. The sampling error is plus or minus 3 percent for the total sample, larger for comparisons between groups.

The 1993 North Carolina Education Poll

The Gallup Organization and Phi Delta Kappa, a national fraternity of educators, conduct an annual poll of opinion on education and education issues in the United States. In 1993, with the cooperation of Phi Delta Kappa and in conjunction with the N.C. Education Policy Research Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Gallup Organization replicated the national poll in North Carolina and added several questions to be asked only in the N.C. poll.

Students are often given the grade of A,B,C,D, or Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves in your community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here?

8%	A
34%	B
36%	C
12%	D
4%	F
6%	Don't know

The poll was conducted in June 1993. A random sample of 803 adult North Carolinians (age 18 and older) was interviewed. The sampling error is plus or minus 3 percent.

—Joanne Scharer