



MEMO TO: Doug Russell, Chairman
Missouri Republican Party

FROM: Sandy Koller

DATE: December 5, 2005

SUBJECT: Education Survey Analysis Summary Memo

Public Pulse Research, LLC, conducted a survey of 600 registered voters in Missouri for Missouri Republican Party on November 30 and December 1, 2005. These results have a 95% level of statistical significance (which means these results have a 95% likelihood of being within the margin of error) and margin of error of + /- 4.0%. Respondents were selected randomly from a list of registered voters in the state.

The survey tested several issues related to the Governor Blunt's proposal to require at least 65% of all public school expenditure to be spent on classroom-related items such as teacher salaries, school supplies and books. Preliminary results show very strong support for the proposal, even after arguments against it are explained.

On November 4, 2005, Governor Blunt unveiled his proposal. During the ensuing three weeks, the plan was attacked by school administrators, newspaper editorial pages, Attorney General Nixon and a number of Democratic state legislators. Despite these attacks, the idea is strongly endorsed by a majority of Missourians across geographic, partisan, racial and ideological groupings.

The survey was comprised of 41% Democrats, 39% Republicans and 17% Independents. The sample was 52% female and contained a representative geographic distribution of the state. The survey was made up of 83% Caucasians, 13% African-Americans and 5% Hispanic, Asian-Americans or others. 21% were between the ages of 18 – 34, 27% between 35 – 49, 31% between 50 – 64 and 20% were aged 65 or older.

Initially, a "Cold" ballot question was asked about the proposal without prejudicing the answer with any arguments for or against. The question that was asked and the results it produced are as follows:

"Generally speaking, would you favor or oppose a plan that would require public school districts to spend at least 65% of their budget directly on classroom instruction?"

Strongly Favor	51%		
Somewhat Favor	26%	Favor	77%
Don't Know / Not Sure	8%		
Somewhat Oppose	7%	Oppose	15%
Strongly Oppose	8%		
Refused	0%		

Next, a battery of statements in support and opposition to the proposal were asked. Respondents were asked if this new information would make them more likely or less likely to support the proposal. Among the anti-plan messages tested were:

1. The loss of local control due to state-imposed mandates; and
2. The exclusion of librarians, nurses and guidance counselors from the definition of "classroom instruction."

After this pro- and con-battery was concluded, respondents were then asked their opinion on the proposal. This test, called the "Informed" ballot, yielded the following results:

"Based on everything you know, if a proposal were placed on the ballot requiring school districts spend 65% of their taxpayer funds directly on classroom instruction, would you vote for or against the proposal?"

Strongly For	43%		
Somewhat For	33%	For	76%
Don't Know / Not Sure	6%		
Somewhat Against	6%	Against	18%
Strongly Against	12%		
Refused	0%		

Clearly, the arguments for and against the proposal changed few minds. From a "Cold" support of 77% to an "Informed" support of 76% there is statistically no change based on the positioning of the issue. Equally important is the strength of the issue's popularity among a large number of key subgroups. The table below looks at the total percent support of the proposal among a number of key segments.

INFORMED BALLOT

<u>Survey Subgroup</u>	<u>% Favoring Proposal</u>
Republicans	81%
Democrats	74%
Independents	73%
18 – 34 Year Olds	85%
35 – 49 Year Olds	75%
50 – 64 Year Olds	76%
Seniors	73%
Caucasians	75%
African-Americans	87%
Men	74%
Women	79%
St. Louis ADI	81%
Kansas City ADI	73%
Springfield ADI	73%
Mid Missouri ADI	69%

The Our Students First education plan is an issue that works extremely well across-the-board. Despite a steady barrage of opposition immediately following the Governor's announcement of the policy, the underlying public support for the idea is overwhelming. In essence, the opposition has fought fiercely to change the tide of public opinion and has met with very limited success. This is a reform that will resonate with the public and provide a good contrast with any political candidate who opposes it.