



Attitudes Toward Science Education: Key Findings From A National Survey.

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Achieve

Project #12162

Methodology



On behalf of Achieve Inc., Public Opinion Strategies and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research is pleased to present the key findings from a national survey of N=800 registered voters.

The survey was conducted February 22-26, 2012 and has a margin of error of $\pm 3.46\%$.





Achieve



Attitudes Toward Science Education



Attitudes Toward Science Education



After taking care of the nation's financial health, voters say a world class education in math and science is next most important in improving America's competitiveness with other countries.





And, which one or two of the following do you think will be the most important to improving America's economic competitiveness with other countries?



Attitudes Toward Science Education



A quality science education ranks first among Democratic voters, second among Independents and third among Republicans as most important to improving the country's economic competitiveness.

% by Party	 (29%)	Independent (37%)	 (32%)
Addressing America's budget deficit & government's fiscal house in order.	59%	42%	36%
Making sure American students receive a world-class education in math and science.	24%	38%	48%
Investing more in new technology and clean domestic energy.	9%	27%	32%
Reducing taxes and regulatory burdens on American businesses.	33%	16%	11%
Improving trade practices to ensure fair trade with other countries.	15%	17%	20%

And, which one or two of the following do you think will be the most important to improving America's economic competitiveness with other countries?



Attitudes Toward Science Education



There are also some differences in opinion by level of education and ethnicity, but not by parental status.

% by Education & Ethnicity	Less than College Education (55%)	College+ Education (44%)	White (73%)	African American (12%)	Parents (34%)	Non-Parents (66%)
Addressing America's budget deficit & government's fiscal house in order.	45%	45%	50%	21%	47%	44%
Making sure American students receive a world-class education in math and science.	32%	44%	33%	53%	38%	37%
Investing more in new technology and clean domestic energy.	21%	27%	23%	24%	22%	24%
Reducing taxes and regulatory burdens on American businesses.	20%	18%	22%	10%	19%	19%
Improving trade practices to ensure fair trade with other countries.	17%	19%	16%	29%	16%	19%

And, which one or two of the following do you think will be the most important to improving America's economic competitiveness with other countries?

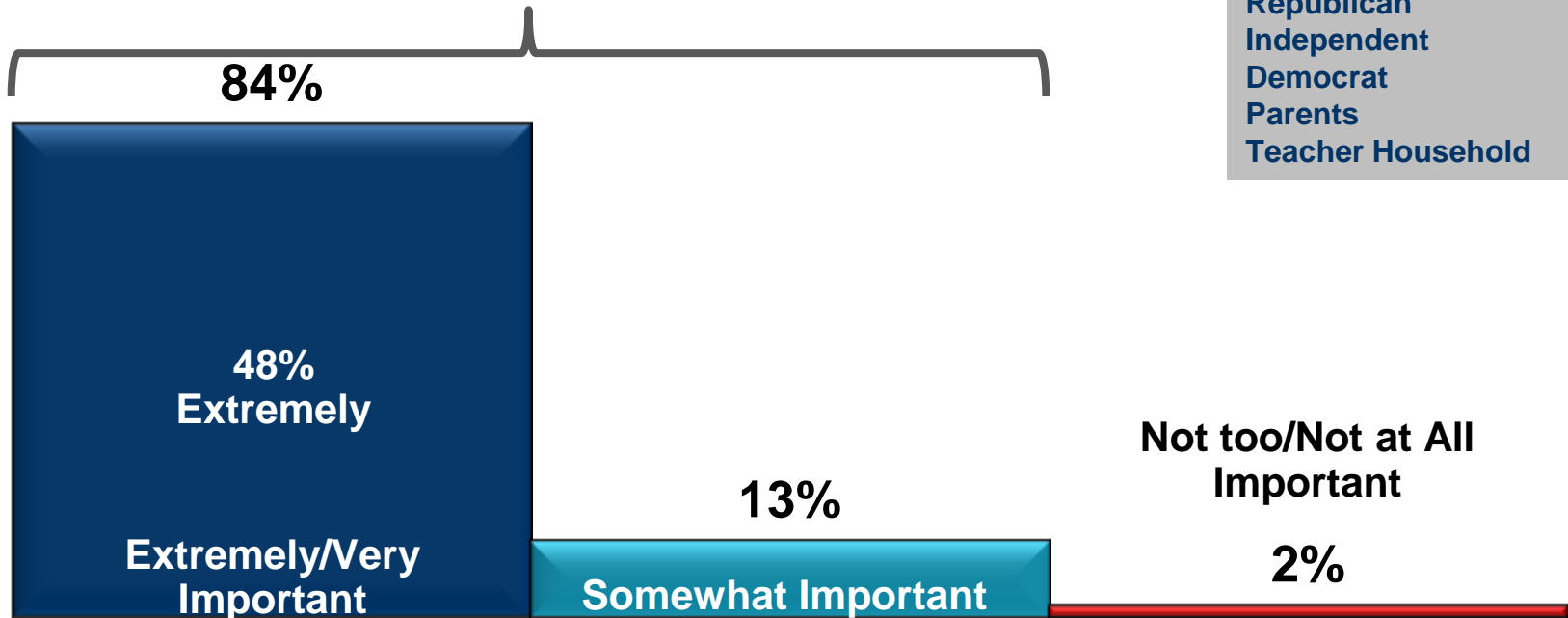


Attitudes Toward Science Education



Voters are virtually unanimous: Improving the quality of science education in our public schools is important to our country's ability to compete globally.

97%



	<u>% Extremely Important</u>
Republican	40%
Independent	47%
Democrat	55%
Parents	46%
Teacher Household	47%

How important do you think improving the quality of science education in our public schools is to our country's ability to compete globally? Is it...extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not that important, or not at all important?

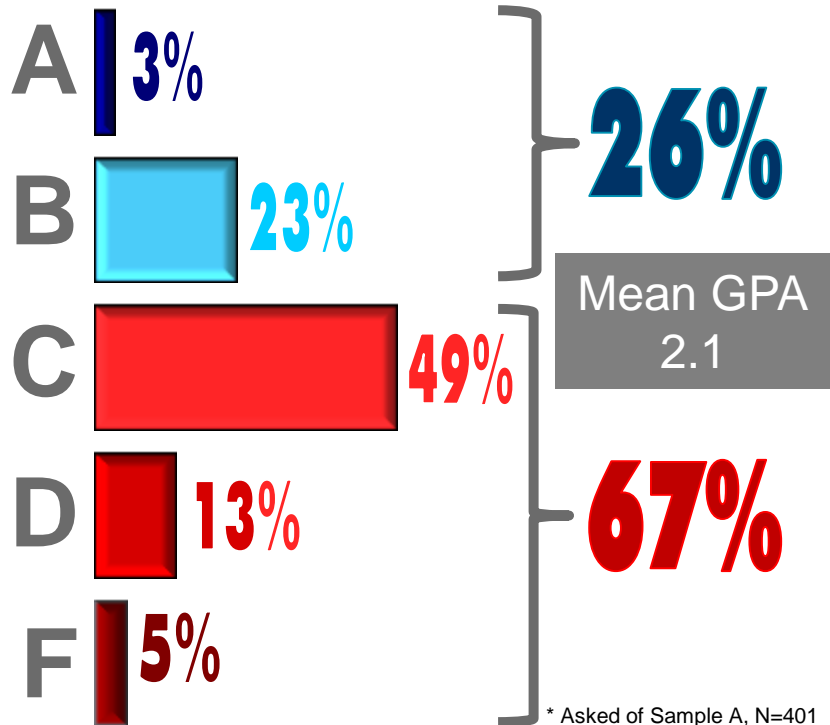


Attitudes Toward Science Education



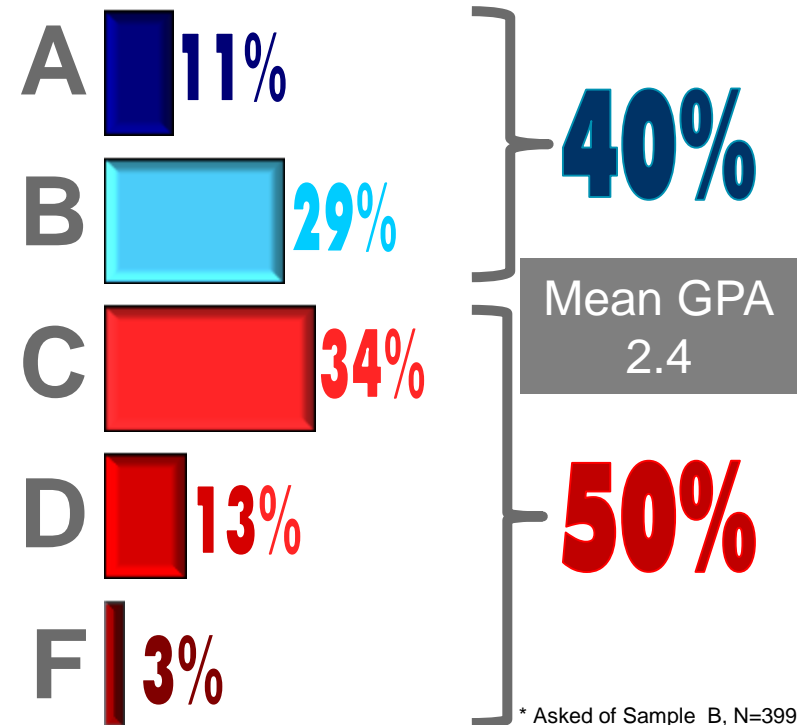
The majority of voters would grade the quality of science education in our public schools – whether nationally or in their own area – a “C” or below.

Science Education in Nation’s Schools



Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and F to rate the quality of their work at school, and public schools are sometimes graded in the same manner. What grade would you give for the quality of science education being taught in our nation's public schools?

Science Education in Local Schools



Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and F to rate the quality of their work at school, and public schools are sometimes graded in the same manner. What grade would you give for the quality of science education being taught in the public schools where you live?

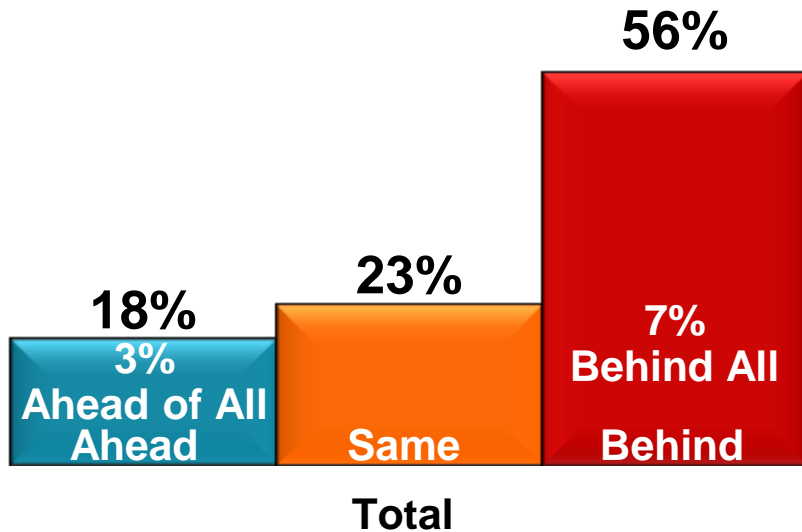


Attitudes Toward Science Education



Indeed, most voters say the quality of science education in the United States ranks behind other countries.

U.S. Science Education Vs. Other Countries



Voter Sub-Groups	Ahead	Same	Behind
Male	22%	25%	52%
Female	15%	22%	60%
18-44	19%	24%	56%
45+	18%	24%	56%
Northeast	19%	21%	59%
Midwest	18%	25%	56%
South	19%	24%	54%
West	16%	24%	57%
White	18%	25%	54%
African American	19%	16%	62%
Less Than College	23%	22%	52%
College+	12%	25%	61%
Republican	18%	27%	52%
Independent	18%	24%	55%
Democrat	18%	20%	62%
Parents	18%	23%	56%
Non-Parents	18%	24%	56%
Teacher Household	15%	32%	52%
Union Household	15%	27%	57%

And, thinking some more about our country's public education – when it comes to the quality of science education, where do you think the United States ranks, compared to the list of countries we mentioned earlier – that is, China, the European Union, Japan, India and Russia. Do you think the United States ranks ahead of all, ahead of most, about the same as most, behind most, or behind all?





Attitudes Toward New Science Standards



Attitudes Toward New Science Standards



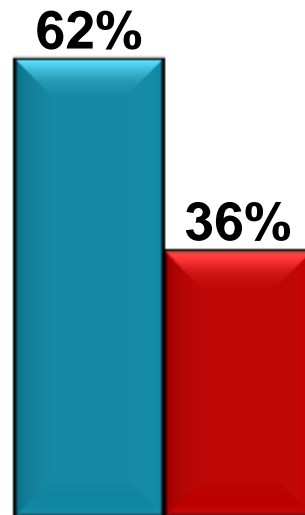
As we have seen before with English and math standards, the majority of voters say it is better for states to have the same standards at each grade level in science.

It is better for all states to have the SAME STANDARDS at each grade level in science so students across the country have to meet the same expectations.

...Or...

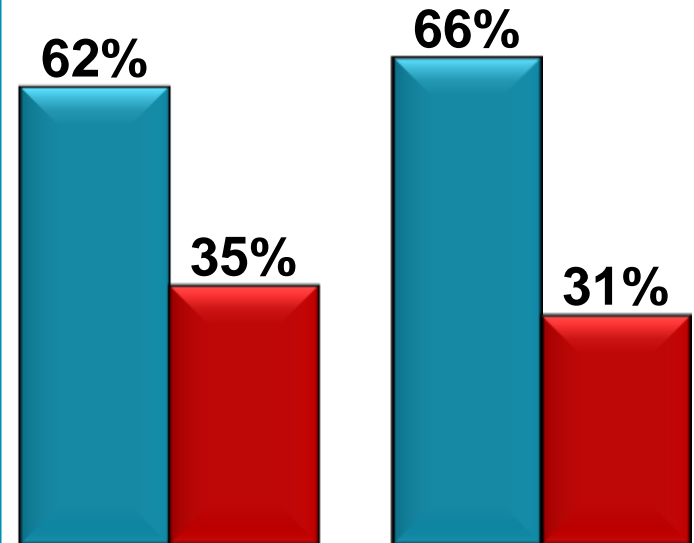
It is better for all states to have their OWN STANDARDS at each grade level in science so each state can be sure that the standards reflect their own priorities.

Science Standards



Total
Feb. 2012

English & Math Standards



Total
May 2010

Total
Aug. 2011

May 2010 data: <http://www.achieve.org/AchievingthePossible>
Aug 2011 data: <http://www.achieve.org/publicperceptionccss>

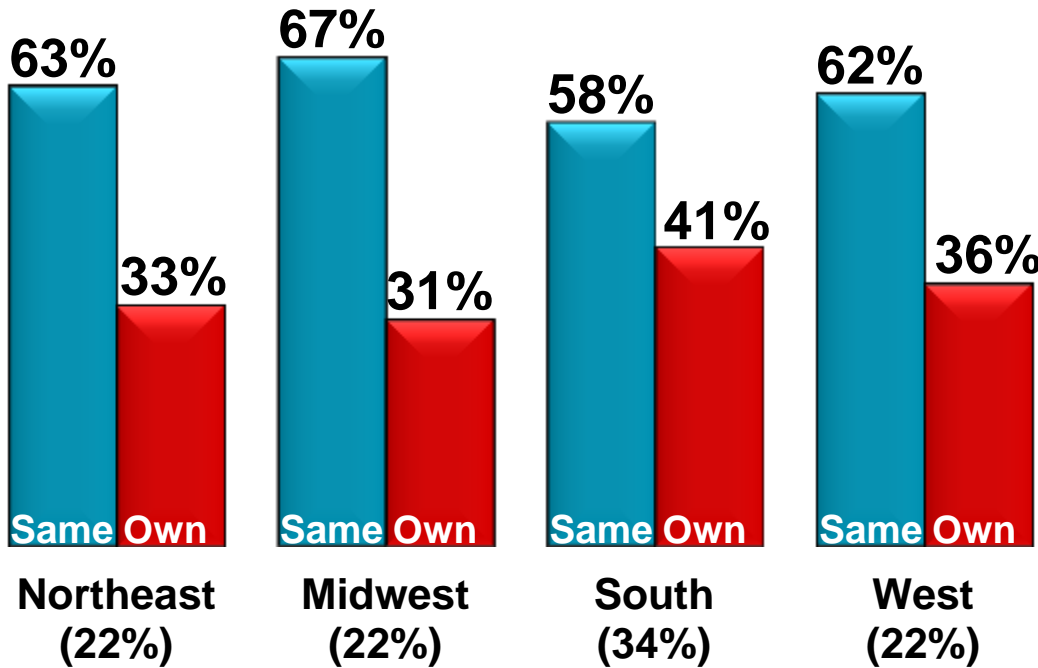


Attitudes Toward New Science Standards

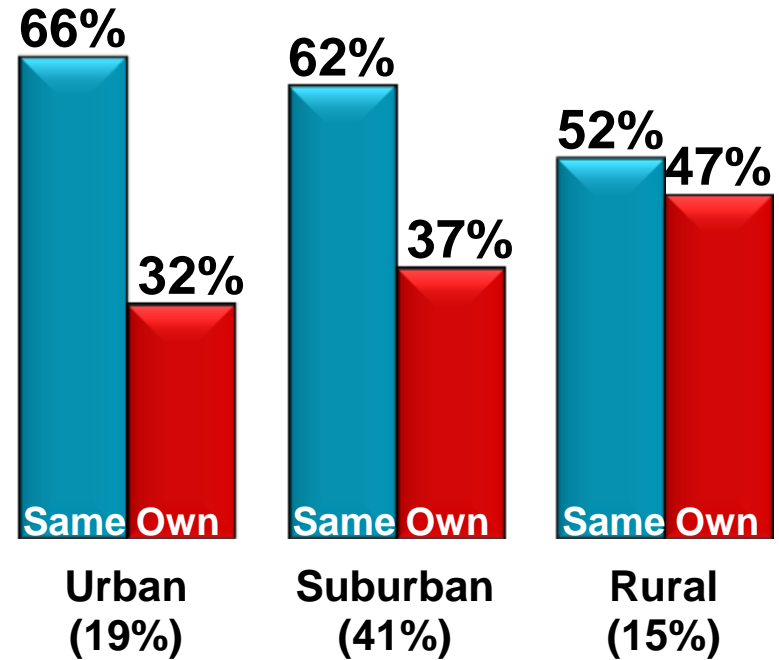


There is broad agreement across the country that common standards are better. However, rural voters are more divided.

By Region



By Area Type



Currently, each state establishes its own education standards in science. I am going to read you two statements, and please tell me which comes closer to your point of view on this. It is better for all states to have the SAME STANDARDS at each grade level in science so students across the country have to meet the same expectations? ...Or... It is better for all states to have their OWN STANDARDS at each grade level in science so each state can be sure that the standards reflect their own priorities?



Attitudes Toward New Science Standards



Respondents were provided with the following information about new science standards and asked if they would favor or oppose their implementation.

Currently, a group of states are developing a new set of educational standards for science for students in grades K through twelve. These new standards have been set to internationally competitive levels in science. This means that students may be more challenged by the material they study.

In addition to learning science content, students will be required to apply their knowledge and understand how science concepts fit together.

Knowing this, do you favor or oppose implementing these new standards for science?

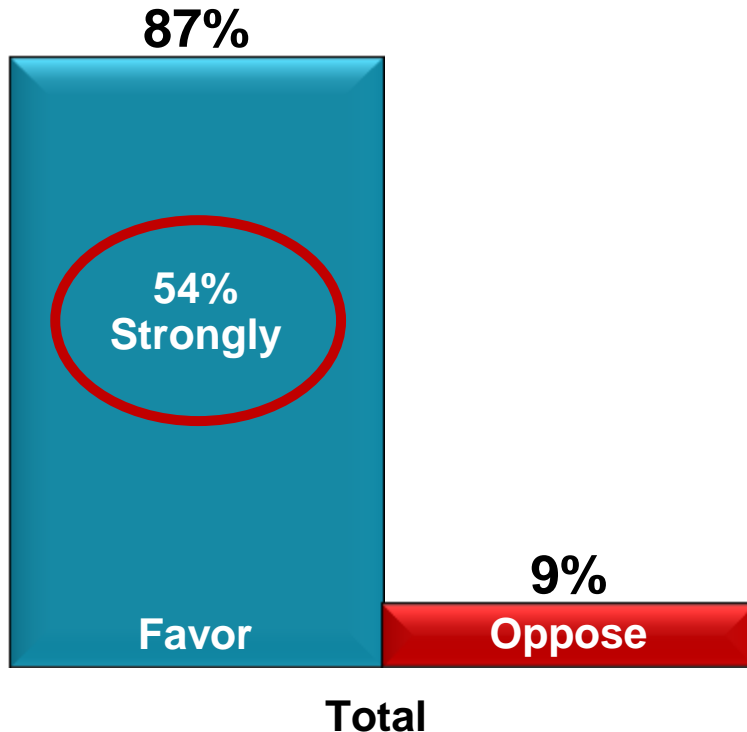


Attitudes Toward New Science Standards



There is broad support for these new science standards.

New Science Standards



Voter Sub-Groups	Strongly Favor	Total Favor
Male	53%	85%
Female	55%	89%
18-44	55%	89%
45+	53%	84%
Northeast	62%	86%
Midwest	52%	88%
South	49%	87%
West	55%	87%
White	52%	86%
African American	55%	91%
Less Than College	49%	87%
College+	60%	87%
Republican	49%	85%
Independent	54%	86%
Democrat	60%	91%
Parents	52%	89%
Non-Parents	54%	86%
Teacher Household	54%	81%
Union Household	53%	88%





The Bottom Line



The Bottom Line



- **Voters believe a quality science education is critical to our country's ability to compete globally.**
- **They are underwhelmed by the quality of science education in public schools today, with most viewing it as lagging other nations.**
- **The majority of voters believe it is better for states to have common standards, and they favor developing new science standards that would be more challenging.**





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