To: Interested Parties

From: GBA Strategies
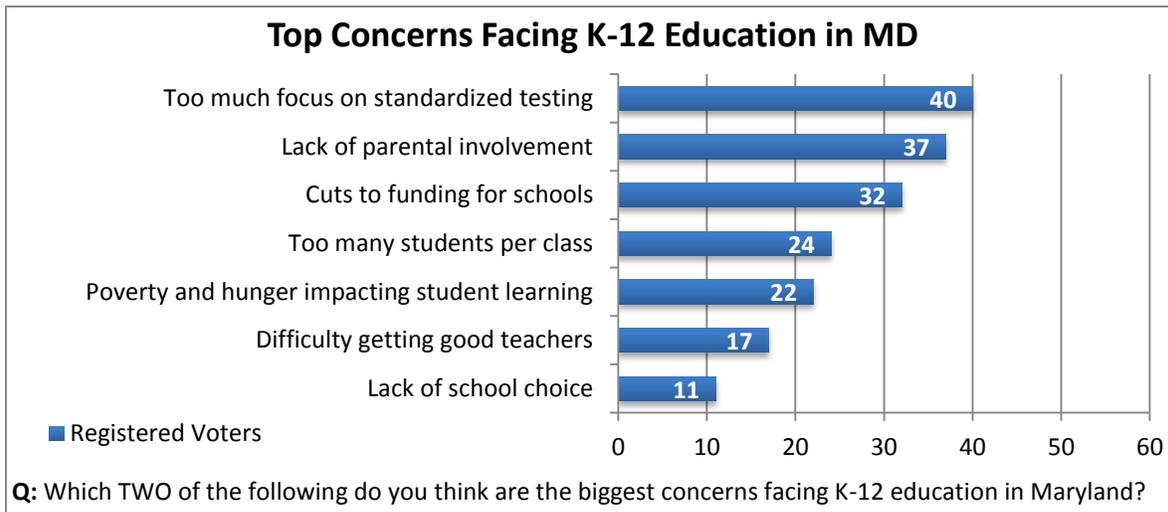
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Survey Analysis: Maryland Voters on Testing

A new survey[1] by GBA Strategies shows that Maryland voters are incredibly concerned about the over-emphasis on standardized testing in Maryland public schools. Voters believe too much time is spent on standardized testing and it is taking away from teaching time. The following are key findings from the survey:

Key Findings from the Survey

➢ **Concerns about the over-reliance on standardized testing are incredibly high**. It is the number one concern among voters when it comes to K-12 education, followed by concerns about lack of parental involvement and funding cuts. The over-emphasis on standardized testing is either the #1 or #2 concern for Republicans, Independents and Democrats. Lack of school choice is not a top concern for registered voters and placed below each of the other six options.

Top Concerns Facing K-12 Education in MD

Concern	Registered Voters
Too much focus on standardized testing	40
Lack of parental involvement	37
Cuts to funding for schools	32
Too many students per class	24
Poverty and hunger impacting student learning	22
Difficulty getting good teachers	17
Lack of school choice	11

Q: Which TWO of the following do you think are the biggest concerns facing K-12 education in Maryland?

[1] GBA Strategies administered this survey of 600 Maryland registered voters on behalf of the Maryland State Education Association. This survey was conducted May 12th-17th, 2015 and reached respondents on both landline and cell phones. The survey results carry a margin of error +/-4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval. The survey also included an oversample of 300 MSEA members for some questions, which carries a +/-5.7 percentage point margin of error at the 95 percent confidence interval.

➢ **Nearly two-thirds of voters say too much time is spent on standardized testing**. Not only do parents and voters of all political stripes agree that too much time is spent on standardized testing, but the people who work in K-12 schools overwhelmingly agree (95 percent of MSEA members say too much time is spent on standardized testing).

	Do you think there is too much time spent on standardized testing, not enough time spent on standardized testing, or the right amount of time spent on standardized testing in Maryland public schools?		
	Too much time	Not enough time	About the right amount of time
Total	64	9	17
Democrats	63	11	19
Independents	73	5	15
Republicans	62	7	14
Parents	67	9	20
MSEA Members	95	1	4

➢ **Voters think we should focus on letting teachers teach**. When voters hear arguments on either side of the testing debate, voters across party lines land squarely on the side of reducing standardized testing and letting teachers teach.

	Which statement comes closer to your own view?	
	Too much emphasis on standardized testing takes away precious teaching time. We should focus on letting teachers teach.	In order to improve schools, we need to focus on measureable outcomes. Testing is an important tool to measure how well schools are doing, so we can help them improve.
Total	69 percent agree	27 percent agree
Democrats	72	26
Independents	68	27
Republicans	70	26
Parents	69	27

➢ **Voters endorse an agenda to reform standardized testing policy in Maryland**.
Seventy percent favor limiting the amount of time schools spend administering
standardized tests and 68 percent favor limits on time spent preparing for the tests.

Limit the amount of time schools spend preparing students for standardized tests per year.		
	Total Favor	**Total Oppose**
Total	68	24
Democrats	71	24
Independents	68	22
Republicans	63	26
Limit the amount of time schools spend administering standardized tests per year.		
	Total Favor	**Total Oppose**
Total	70	25
Democrats	73	23
Independents	67	27
Republicans	71	22
Lower the number of locally-required standardized tests, which are given in addition to the new Common Core related state test.		
	Total Favor	**Total Oppose**
Total	61	29
Democrats	68	25
Independents	55	32
Republicans	56	33
Place a moratorium on the use of student standardized test scores in teacher evaluations for 3 years.		
	Total Favor	**Total Oppose**
Total	55	36
Democrats	59	34
Independents	51	40
Republicans	55	35