

May 20, 2010

## Curriculum and Church/State Separation in Texas Statewide Survey Results

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research

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A recent survey<sup>1</sup> conducted for the Texas Freedom Network finds that Texas voters want experts, not politicians, to make decisions about public school curricula and textbook content. Voters also believe that separation of church and state is a core principle of the American Constitution.

### Key Findings

**Texas voters believe the public school curriculum should be set by teachers and scholars, not politicians.** Nearly three-quarters of Texas voters (72 percent) say that teachers and academic scholars should be responsible for writing curriculum standards and textbook requirements for Texas' public schools. Only 19 percent prefer that an elected school board decide curriculum.

**Support for teachers and experts making curriculum decisions is broad, extends across partisan lines, and includes parents of young children.** Self-identified Republicans (63 percent) and political independents (76 percent) agree that politicians should not decide the content of children's education. Overall, 78 percent of parents prefer that teachers and scholars make curriculum decisions, with 69 percent feeling that way strongly.

**The majority of Texas voters believe that separation of church and state is a key principle of the Constitution.** Sixty-eight percent of likely voters agree that it is a core principle, including 51 percent who strongly agree. Only one-quarter of voters (26 percent) disagree that the separation of church and state is a key principle of the Constitution.

**Agreement about the separation of church and state as a core tenet of the Constitution extends across party lines.** Nearly 6-in-10 Republicans (59 percent) believe in the importance of this principle, as well as 76 percent of Democrats and 74 percent of political independents.

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<sup>1</sup> Greenberg Quinlan Rosner designed and administered a representative statewide survey of 601 likely voters (2010 general election), and supplemented the base sample with a web oversample of 219 young likely voters (ages 18-29; total N=292) and a phone oversample of 152 suburban/exurban likely voters (total N=241). The margin of sampling error for the total sample is +/- 4.0 percentage points. The survey was conducted May 4 – 12, 2010.

## Appendix A: Selected Data Tables

■ **Table 1:** Teachers, not politicians, should write curriculum requirements

	Total	Democrats	Independents	Republicans	Parents
Teachers/Academic scholars - Strongly	64	76	68	53	69
Teachers/Academic scholars - Not so strongly	9	8	8	10	9
Elected state school board - Not so strongly	5	2	6	7	5
Elected state school board - Strongly	13	9	12	17	11
Neither/Don't know/Refused	9	4	6	14	6
<b>Teachers/Academic scholars - Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Elected state school board - Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>

*\* Who do you think should be responsible for writing curriculum standards and textbook requirements for Texas' public schools: Teachers and academic scholars or An elected state school board? Do you feel that way strongly or not so strongly?*

■ **Table 2:** Separation of church and state is a key principle of the Constitution

	Total	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
Strongly Agree	51	60	55	43
Somewhat Agree	16	16	19	16
Somewhat Disagree	7	6	7	9
Strongly Disagree	19	15	11	25
Don't know/Refused	6	3	8	7
<b>Total Agree</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Total Disagree</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>34</b>

*\* Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Separation of church and state is a key principle of our Constitution."*