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## **Survey Shows Parents Support Pinellas' Property Tax Renewal for Schools and Oppose Early Release Wednesday**

*One-third of survey respondents also say they don't feel they have a voice when decisions are made by the school district that impact children's education.*

LARGO, Fla. (May 15, 2012) – The Voice of Parents for Pinellas Students (P4PS) recently released the results of a survey conducted in March 2012 by dewey & associates, a Tampa Bay management and strategy consulting practice. The survey canvassed parents and non-parent taxpayers in Pinellas County on key education issues.

P4PS, a collaboration between the Pinellas County Council of Parent Teacher Associations and the Pinellas Education Foundation, was created to give parents a voice in Pinellas County public education. The goal of the initiative is to survey parents periodically on education issues and present the findings to the community and school administration.

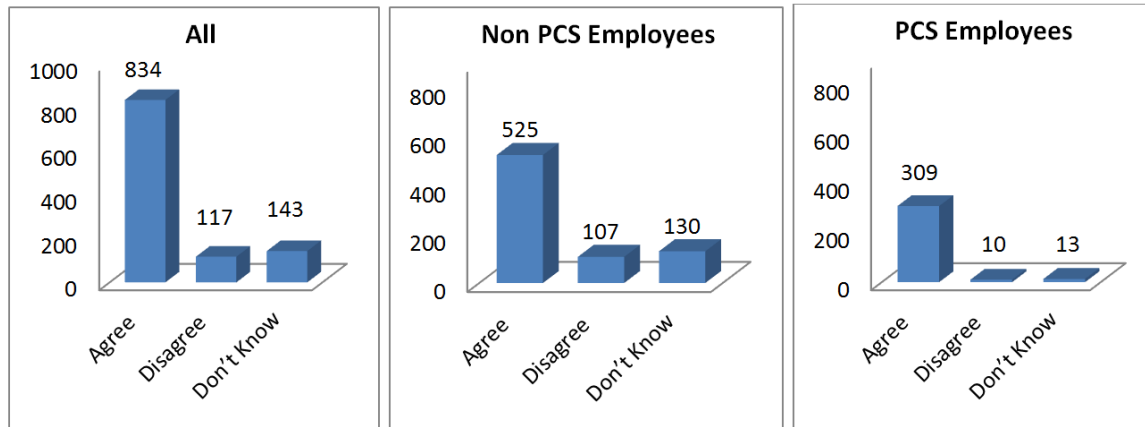
Approximately 80% of the 1,091 survey respondents were Pinellas parents, a group that according to results, feels it doesn't have a strong enough role in decision making for schools.

Six questions and/or statements were presented to respondents on topics ranging from the half-mill property tax increase to Early Release Wednesday to schools effectively preparing students for post-high school education.

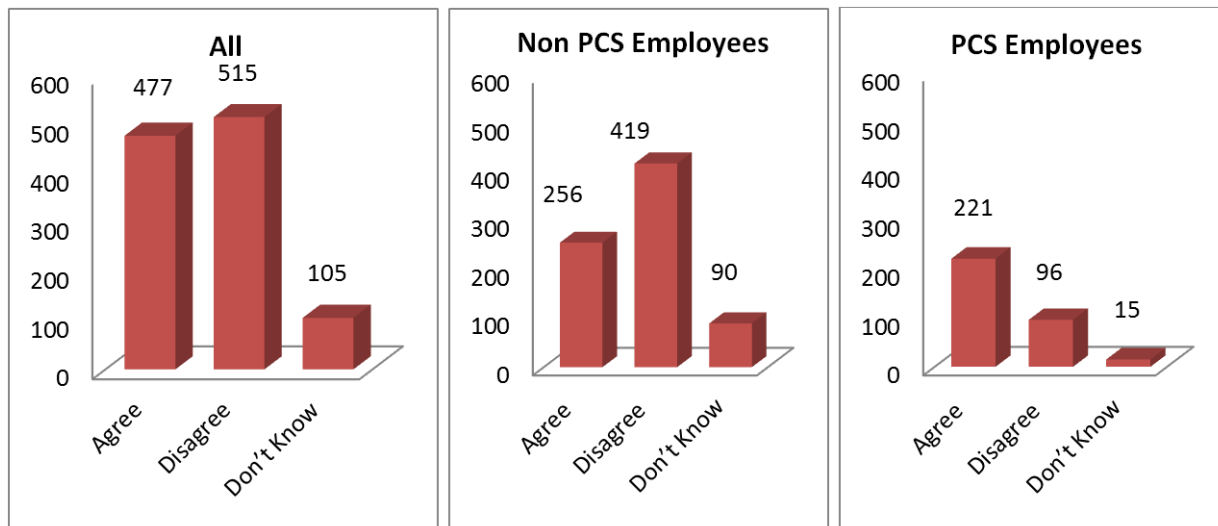
While respondents were divided on certain issues, the continuation of the half-mill property tax increase that would bring in about \$28 million each year, beginning in the 2012-2013 fiscal year was overwhelmingly supported by the group.

"I am excited to see such support for the property tax renewal, considering these very challenging economic times," said Pinellas Schools Superintendent Dr. John Stewart, noting he welcomes more input from parents and taxpayers through P4PS. "The district is always interested in the opinions of our families, employees, and community partners."

Approximately three-quarters (76 percent) of respondents plan to vote yes (agree) on the measure, which will mostly provide funding for teachers, technology as well as art, music and reading programs.



Meanwhile, most parents and non-parent taxpayer respondents oppose early release Wednesday – a recent change to close schools one hour early every Wednesday to provide more planning time for teachers -- by a margin of 47 percent compared to 43 percent who favor it, with 10 percent undecided, according to the P4PS survey. The margin opposing early release Wednesday increases substantially after removing school employees from the survey results. In that group, 54 percent oppose it and 33 percent favor it.



“If these survey respondents had their way, Pinellas schools would receive \$28 million per year from the renewal of property tax for schools, and early release Wednesday would be abolished,” said Mary Bartholf, PCCPTA President.

P4PS is planning another survey in July, which will include issues important in the upcoming school board election. “Our hope is that school officials will consider the opinions in our surveys during any decision-making that impacts children’s education,” Bartholf said.

To view the complete report, visit [www.voiceofP4PS.org](http://www.voiceofP4PS.org).

**About the Pinellas County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (PCCPTA)**

The mission of the PCCPTA is to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. As the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the nation, PTA reminds our country of its obligations to children and provides parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child while providing the best tools for parents to help their children be successful students. PCCPTA does not work alone. PTA collaborates on projects that benefit children, including this P4PS campaign.