MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: NEIL NEWHOUSE/JARRET LEWIS/JAMIE WADOVICK
PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES
CC: SHANNON JONES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROUNDWORK OHIO
DATE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
SUBJECT: OHIO STATEWIDE SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS

METHODOLOGY
On behalf of Groundwork Ohio, Public Opinion Strategies conducted a statewide survey of 1,000 registered voters, with an additional oversample of 458 parents of children under the age of 12. The survey was conducted August 19-27, 2020 and has a confidence interval of ±3.10 percentage points.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Ohioans recognize how critical education in the first few years of a child’s life is to their development.
   - Nearly seven-in-ten (69%) Ohioans, including 73% of women, 70% of parents and 62% of Independent voters recognize the most important years for developing a child’s capacity to learn occur before the age of five.
   - Fully 60% percent of Ohioans agree that more should be done to ensure children begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best, including women (63%), seniors (58%) and suburban voters (58%).

2. A majority of Ohio voters believe that not many early learning programs are affordable for lower- and middle-income families.
   - A majority of Independent voters (61%), suburban voters (56%), women (54%) and seniors (53%) believe that only some or very few early learning programs in Ohio are affordable for lower- and middle-income families.

3. Ohioans overwhelmingly believe that making sure children get a strong start in life through quality early learning programs (95% important) and helping provide childcare for working parents (89% important) are important goals for Ohio.
   - Making sure children get a strong start in life through quality early learning programs is viewed as important among women (97%), seniors (97%), Independent voters (95%), and suburban voters (95%).
And, women (91%), seniors (90%), Independent voters (88%), and suburban voters (88%) largely believe in the importance of helping provide child care for working parents.

4. More than three-quarters of Ohioans support a proposal to provide an additional $350 million in funding over the next ten years for early learning programs for low- and moderate-income families with children under the age of three.

Survey respondents were shown the following proposal:

A plan that helps communities across the state of Ohio provide better early learning programs to low-and moderate-income parents of children from birth to age three. This plan would make an additional $350 million dollars available over the next 10 years to assist low- and moderate-income families with children under three years old, allowing them to access early learning through child care for infants and toddlers, preschool programs, home visiting and parent education.

- Ohio voters overwhelmingly expressed support for the proposal by a 78%-14% margin.

- Women (80%), seniors (77%), suburban voters (77%) are all strong supporters of this proposal.

- Support for this proposal cuts across party lines, with 90% of Democrats, 73% of Independents and 71% of Republicans all in support.

- At least 75% of voters in every single media market across Ohio support this proposal.

- Parents are strong supporters of this proposal. Fully 83% of all parents with kids under eighteen and 86% of parents with kids under twelve support this proposal.

5. Fully 62% of Ohio voters would be more likely to vote for an elected official in Ohio who supports this proposal.

- Majorities of college-educated women (66%), suburban voters (61%), Independents (57%) and seniors (54%) would be more likely to vote for an elected official in Ohio who supports this proposal.

- A majority of Republican voters (51%) would be more likely to vote for an elected official who supports this proposal, compared to 15% who would be less likely.
6. When asked why they support it, Ohio voters say it will help children at a time when their brains are developing the most, it will aid poorer families, and it will have economic benefits for Ohio’s future.

- Supporters of this proposal believe “children learn the most during early years.” They worry that since “children develop the most in the first five years,” they will “get left behind” if they are not properly educated. And, there are concerns from Ohio’s voters about the societal and economic consequences of children missing out on learning at this developmental stage.

- Ohioans focus on how this proposal will help working parents at a time when we need to get our economy back on track, pointing out how “parents can go to work” while their children “learn basic skills.” These voters note that “due to the coronavirus” many Ohioans “have been stranded with needing childcare” and “this would help these families get back on their feet economically.”

- Other Ohioans believe “educational funding is never a waste because it is an investment in our future.” They believe this program will create “a better working pool of people, and a more productive society.” These voters believe that these “kids are our future business leaders, our future doctors, lawyers, teachers” and “if we cannot invest in them now, they cannot invest financially or economically in America later.”

**BOTTOM LINE**
Ohioans are acutely aware of how important early learning is for children, especially for children under five, which is why a majority of voters in Ohio believe more should be done to ensure children begin kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best.

When it comes to additional funding for early learning programs, it is simple for Ohioans. Nearly eighty percent of Ohioans support the proposal for an additional funding of $350 million in early learning programs for low- and moderate-income families over the next 10 years. And among the strongest supporters are several key voting groups. Women and suburban voters are a foundation for support, as they overwhelmingly back this proposal (80% support among women and 77% support among suburban voters) And, women, especially college educated women (65%), are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports this proposal.

Put simply, the vast majority of Ohioans view this proposal as a way to invest in Ohio’s children and set them up successfully for the future and for the good of Ohio.