

Comparing Region 8 to Statewide Library Survey Results

Region 8 is a largely Republican area covering almost all of the Upper Peninsula and part of Emmett County, and Alpena and Crawford Counties, with an N=40 sample points represented in the statewide survey.

A 71% majority of all respondents in the statewide poll offered a positive rating for the job being done by local public libraries providing programs, services and a diverse, quality collection of books and other materials for their library patrons. In Region 8, a 77% to 8% majority of respondents offered the same response - 6 points higher than the statewide results.

An 83% majority of all respondents statewide would support state legislation that would protect the right of the public to read what they wish to read in local public libraries and not have books banned. In Region 8, a 70% to 18% majority of respondents offered the same response - 13 points lower than the statewide results.

A 90% majority of all respondents statewide said that “descriptions and depictions of slavery should never be banned.” In Region 8, an identical 90% majority of respondents agreed.

An 89% majority of all respondents statewide said that “discussions about race” should never be banned. In Region 8, 85% of respondents agreed.

An 88% majority of all respondents statewide said “criticisms of people and events in U.S. history” should never be banned. In Region 8, 85% of respondents agreed.

An 87% majority of all respondents statewide said “political ideas you disagree with” should never be banned. In Region 8, 83% of respondents agreed.

Opposition to book banning about “books with discussions about sex, gender identity or sexual orientation” was not as strong, but it was still opposed by two-thirds of Michigan voters. A 67% majority of all respondents statewide said that “books with discussions about sex, gender identity or sexual orientation” should never be banned, with 21% saying they should “sometimes be banned” and only 9% saying they should “always be banned.” In Region 8, a 65% majority of respondents agreed that such books should never be banned.

Groups and elected leaders and candidates who claim that “anyone who opposes removing objectionable material is just pushing a woke ideology that is trying to indoctrinate our children with ideas about LGBTQ, transgender youth and promoting lifestyles that they should not be exposed to,” were only supported by 15% of the statewide electorate (17% in Region 8).

A 77% solid majority of all respondents statewide said that they instead support a statement saying that “local public libraries should have a diverse collection of books and reading materials that represents the community and the world around them.” In Region 8, 73% of respondents agreed.

An 80% majority of all respondents statewide said they agree more with the statement that said, “individual parents can set rules for their own children, but they do not have the right to decide for other parents what books are available to their children.” Only 15% agreed with the statement that “parents have a right NOT to have their children exposed to objectionable books at the library and should be able to join with other parents to have those books removed from the library.” In Region 8, 78% of respondents agreed that a few parents should not be able to decide for all parents and everyone else.

A 75% majority of all respondents statewide agreed with a statement saying that “we need to protect the ability of young people to have access to books from which they can learn about and understand different perspectives and help them grow into adults who can think for themselves.” Only 17% agreed with the statement that “we need to protect young people from books that they might find upsetting or that reflect ideologies and lifestyles that are outside of the mainstream.” In Region 8, 73% of respondents agreed with the first statement, with 20% agreeing with the second.

A 74% majority of all respondents statewide agreed the most with the statement that “books that contain sexual content or discuss issues like gender identity and sexual orientation are tools for understanding complex issues, and young people should have access to them, but at an age-appropriate level.” Another 21% said they agreed more with the statement that “books that contain sexual content or discuss issues like gender identity and sexual orientation should NOT be in local public libraries where young people can access them against their parents’ wishes.” In Region 8, 65% of respondents agreed more with the first statement, while 30% agreed with the second.

A 71% majority of all respondents statewide said, “book banning is un-American, infringes on our freedoms, and harms our democracy.” Another 21% said they most agree with the statement that says “books that are anti-American, anti-police, or hostile to basic family values do not belong on the shelves of our local public libraries. In Region 8, 60% of

respondents said book banning is un-American, with only 25% saying that books critical of American ways should be removed.

If members of Congress, State Senators or State Representatives vote in favor of book banning legislation, a 57% majority of all respondents statewide said they would be less likely to vote for that person (38% much less likely), 29% said it would not influence them one way or the other, with only 9% saying they would be more likely to vote for that person. In Region 8, a 48% plurality of respondents said they would be less likely to vote for a legislator who supports book banning (40% much less likely), with only 15% saying they would be more likely to vote for that legislator.

A 60% majority of all respondents statewide said that “local library boards” (33%) or “librarians” (27%) should be making the decisions about which books and other reading materials should be included in public library collections. Another 9% said members of the local community should make the decisions, 7% said state legislators and other elected officials should decide, with 10% undecided and 14% citing other groups. In Region 8, 53% of respondents said, “local library boards” (30%) or “librarians” (23%) should make decisions about books to keep or ban.

A 70% majority of all respondents statewide said librarians are very capable (33%) or mostly capable (37%) of deciding which books and reading materials should be included in library collections. In Region 8, an identical 70% of respondents said librarians are very capable (40%) or mostly capable (30%) of deciding which books to keep or ban.

A 70% majority of all respondents statewide said they had seen, heard or read “a lot” (38%) or “some” (32%) about book banning efforts, with 29% saying they heard “only a little” (16%) or “nothing at all” (13%). In Region 8, 62% of respondents said they had seen, heard or read “a lot” (40%) or “some” (22%) about book banning efforts, with 38% saying they heard “only a little” (23%) or “nothing at all” (19%).

A 42% plurality of all respondents statewide said that there is “absolutely no time when a book should be banned from local public libraries,” with another 45% plurality saying, “there are rare times when it may be appropriate to ban books from public libraries,” and only 9% saying “there are many inappropriate books that should be banned from local public libraries.” In Region 8, 47% of respondents said there is no time when books should be banned, 23% said

there are rare times, with 13% saying there are many inappropriate books that should be removed.

Statewide, 39% of all respondents said they use programs or services a few times a month or more often, while in Region 8, 40% of respondents offered a similar response.

In other survey results, a 46% plurality of all respondents statewide said Michigan is “headed in the right direction,” 37% said things have “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track,” with 17% “undecided.” In Region 8, 38% of respondents said Michigan is headed in the right direction with 42% saying it was off on the wrong track.

A 51% to 39% narrow majority of all respondents statewide said they had an unfavorable opinion of Joe Biden, while a 63% to 33% solid majority gave Biden a negative job rating as President. In Region 8, a 65% to 27% solid majority of respondents had an unfavorable opinion of Joe Biden, and a 75% to 25% majority offered a negative job rating for Biden.

A 54% to 37% majority of all respondents statewide had a favorable opinion of Gretchen Whitmer, with a 52% to 44% majority offering a positive job rating for her. In Region 8, a 48% to 35% plurality had a favorable opinion of her, and a 50% to 47% bare majority offered a negative rating for Whitmer.

A 58% to 32% solid majority of all respondents statewide had an unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump, including 49% very unfavorable. In Region 8, a 48% to 35% plurality of respondents had a favorable opinion of Trump.

A 42% to 33% plurality of all respondents statewide had an unfavorable opinion of State Legislative Republicans, while a 42% to 36% plurality had a favorable opinion of State legislative Democrats. In Region 8, a 48% to 25% plurality had a favorable opinion of State Legislative Republicans, while a 48% to 27% plurality had an unfavorable opinion of State Legislative Democrats.

Finally, a 33% to 19% plurality of all respondents statewide had a favorable opinion of community activist groups in general, with 42% undecided. In Region 8, a 28% to 23% plurality of respondents had a favorable opinion of Community Activist Groups, with 47% undecided.

Statewide, 41% of all respondents identified as Democrats, 39% as Republicans, with 20% Independents or other parties. In Region 8, 53% of respondents identified as Democrats, 25% as Republicans, with 22% Independents or other parties.