

Comparing Region 9 to Statewide Library Survey Results

Region 9 is an area in Southeast Michigan covering Wayne County (minus Detroit), and Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw and St. Clair Counties, with an N=251 sample points represented in the statewide survey.

A 79% 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 broad ranging quality collection of books and other materials for their library patrons. In Region 9, a 77% majority of respondents offered the same response.

A 91% majority of all respondents statewide said that “descriptions and depictions of slavery should never be banned.” In Region 9, a 94% majority agreed.

A 91% majority of all respondents statewide said that “discussions about race” should never be banned. In Region 9, 94% of respondents agreed.

A 91% majority of all respondents statewide also said “criticisms of people and events in U.S. history” should never be banned. In Region 9, 92% of respondents agreed.

An 88% majority of all respondents statewide said “political ideas you disagree with” should never be banned. In Region 9, 89% 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 68% majority of all respondents statewide said that “books with discussions about sex, gender identity or sexual orientation” should never be banned, with 18% saying they should “sometimes be banned” and 11% saying they should “always be banned.” In Region 9, an identical 68% majority agreed that such books should never be banned, 19% said they sometimes should be banned, with 10% saying they should always be banned.

An 85% majority of statewide respondents oppose legislation (80% strongly), that would hold librarians criminally liable for what some people deem to be objectionable books or materials contained in library collections. In Region 9, an 88% majority offered the same opinion, including 82% who strongly oppose such legislation.

A 66% majority of statewide respondents say that the boards that govern the operation of local public libraries should be non-partisan, with 27% saying it doesn’t really matter if library boards are aligned with partisan political parties. In Region 9, 69% said governing boards should be non-partisan with 26% saying it doesn’t matter.

When asked where respondents say children and teenagers are able to get materials that are objectionable, 57% of statewide respondents said on the internet, with 25% saying from social media. In Region 9, 61% said on the internet, with 25% saying on social media.

An 85% 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 13% 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 9, 86% agreed that a few parents should not be able to decide for all parents and everyone else.

An 82% 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 15% 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 9, an identical 82% of respondents agreed with the first statement, with 15% agreeing with the second.

A 77% 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 9, 80% agreed more with the first statement, while 18% agreed more with the second.

A 73% majority of all respondents statewide said, “book banning is un-American, infringes on our freedoms, and harms our democracy.” Another 24% 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 9, an 80% majority of respondents said book banning is un-American, with 19% saying that books critical of American ways should be removed.

If elected officials supported legislation that would allow or require books to be banned from your local public library, a 63% majority of all respondents statewide said they would be less likely to vote for that person (46% much less likely), 28% said it would not influence them one way or the other, with only 5% saying they would be more likely to vote for that person. In Region 9, a 67% majority said they would be less likely to vote for an elected official who supports book banning (49% much less likely), with 4% saying they would be more likely to vote for that person.

A 75% majority of all respondents statewide said librarians are very capable (45%) or mostly capable (30%) of deciding which books and reading materials should be included in library collections. In Region 9, a 76% majority of respondents said librarians are very capable (47%) or mostly capable (29%) in deciding which books to keep or ban.

A 50% bare majority of all respondents statewide said that there is “absolutely no time when a book should be banned from local public libraries,” with another 39% saying, “there are rare times when it may be appropriate to ban books from public libraries,” and only 8% saying “there are many inappropriate books that should be banned from local public libraries.” In Region 9, 52% of respondents said there is no time when books should be banned, 40% said there are rare times, with 6% saying there are many inappropriate books that should be removed.

Statewide, 42% of all respondents said they use programs or services a few times a month or more often, while in Region 9, a 46% plurality offered the same response.

In other survey results, a 50% bare majority of all statewide respondents said Michigan is “headed in the right direction,” 31% said things have “pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track,” with 19% “undecided.” In Region 9, a 52% majority said Michigan is headed in the right direction with 28% saying it was pretty seriously off on the wrong track.

Statewide, a 78% solid majority said IMLS federal funding for libraries should remain in the federal budget. In Region 9, an 81% majority offered the same opinion.

Statewide, an 82% majority said it is important (40% critically important), for state government to replace federal library funding if it is no longer part of the federal budget. In Region 9, an 86% majority offered the same opinion (39% critically important).

A 54% to 38% majority of all respondents statewide said they had an unfavorable opinion of Donald Trump, while a 61% to 36% majority gave Trump a negative job rating as President. In Region 9, a 59% majority had an unfavorable opinion of Trump with 31% having a favorable

opinion of him. A 67% majority offered a negative job rating for Trump with 29% offering a positive job rating.

A 59% to 33% majority of all respondents statewide had a favorable opinion of Gretchen Whitmer, with a 56% to 42% majority offering a positive job rating for her. In Region 9, a 60% to 31% majority had an favorable opinion of her, and a 60% to 37% majority offered a positive job rating for Whitmer.

Statewide, 41% of respondents said they do not recognize Dana Nessel, 25% said they have a favorable opinion of Nessel, 17% have an unfavorable opinion, with 17% undecided. In Region 9, 39% said they do not recognize Nessel, 28% have a favorable opinion of Nessel, 16% have an unfavorable opinion of her, with 17% undecided.

A 38% to 30% plurality of respondents statewide had an unfavorable opinion of State Legislative Republicans, while a 40% to 32% plurality had a favorable opinion of State legislative Democrats. In Region 9, a 44% to 23% plurality had an unfavorable opinion of State Legislative Republicans, while a 41% to 30% plurality had a favorable opinion of State Legislative Democrats.

Finally, a 41% to 21% plurality of respondents statewide had a favorable opinion of community activist groups in general, with 33% undecided. In Region 9, a 43% plurality of respondents had a favorable opinion of Community Activist Groups, with 22% having an unfavorable opinion of them.

Statewide, 10% said they consider themselves part of the LGBTQ community. In Region 9, 11% offered the same response.

Statewide, 44% of all respondents identified as Democrats, 38% as Republicans, with 15% Independents or other parties. In Region 9, 48% of respondents identified as Democrats, 31% as Republicans, with 17% Independents or other parties.