



National Parents Union Survey Topline

N=1,036 parents of public school students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade

Sample from online web panels

Field Dates: May 1–3, 2023

Margin of sampling error: ± 3.9 percentage points

ASSESSING K-12 EDUCATION NOW VS. IN THE PAST

Forty years ago, in 1983, a report titled “A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform” was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. The report asserted that the United States education system was not adequately preparing students for future success, and therefore putting the future of the nation at risk. The commission issued a call to action to improve education.

Even if you are not familiar with the report, the next few questions will ask you to reflect on what you know about the past and present of the American public education system.

1. [QBWToday] Over the past 40 years, do you think the overall quality of K-12 public education in the United States has . . . ? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-5, 5-1]

IMPROVED A LOT/LITTLE	43%
GOTTEN A LOT/LITTLE WORSE	43%
1. Improved a lot	21%
2. Improved a little	22%
3. Stayed about the same	12%
4. Gotten a little worse	22%
5. Gotten a lot worse	22%
6. Unsure	1%

2. [QChanges] Which of the following statements do you agree with more, even if neither perfectly describes your views?

In the past few decades, K-12 public education in the United States has generally . . . [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

1. Kept up with the times by evolving to reflect the skills students need for future success in a changing world	40%
2. Fallen behind the times by not evolving to reflect the skills students need for future success in a changing world, or by not making the right kind of changes	54%
3. Unsure	6%

3. [Enough Battery] For each of the following, please indicate if it is something you think K-12 public schools in the US [SHOW HALF IN REVERSE ORDER: need to do more to accomplish, do well enough now and should continue, or should not put into effort into doing.] [DISPLAY AS GRID, OVER 3 PAGES] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3,3-1]

1. Schools need to do more to accomplish this 2. Schools do this well enough now and should continue 3. Schools should not put effort into doing this 4. Unsure

	1. Schools need to do more to accomplish this	2. Schools do this well enough now and should continue	3. Schools should not put effort into doing this	4. Unsure
1. Ensure all students have the opportunity to get a high-quality education, regardless of where they live or their financial situation	65%	28%	4%	3%
2. Ensure college-bound students and students who choose a different pathway have equally good opportunities to prepare for their future while in high school	64%	28%	5%	2%
3. Ensure all students with learning disabilities receive the support they need to get a high-quality education	62%	31%	4%	3%
4. Use curriculum and teaching practices based on research about how students learn best	63%	28%	5%	4%
5. Handle behavioral and disciplinary issues using practices based on research about child development and psychology	62%	26%	8%	5%
6. Offer a variety of educational options for families to decide which will best meet their child's needs	61%	28%	7%	4%
7. Ensure students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds have equal opportunity to get a high-quality education	58%	34%	6%	2%
8. Have school schedules and calendars reflect research on how and when kids learn best	57%	32%	6%	6%
9. Provide opportunities for additional learning time, such as after school or summer academic programs	56%	36%	6%	3%
10. Ensure all students have access to technology that supports their learning (e.g., laptops or other educational technology)	53%	39%	5%	2%
11. Have teachers whose backgrounds reflect the diversity of their school's students and community	47%	36%	10%	6%

US VS OTHER COUNTRIES

4. **[COMPARISON BATTERY]** Five years ago, an academic exam was administered to 15-year-old students in industrialized countries around the world to compare countries' average test scores. Where do you think the United States ranked among other countries in the following areas? (Just your best guess.) **[DISPLAY AS GRID]** **[RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER]** **[RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]**

1. Near the top 2. In the middle 3. Near the bottom 4. Unsure

	1. Near the top	2. In the middle	3. Near the bottom	4. Unsure
1. Reading	24%	47%	26%	3%
2. Science	20%	47%	29%	3%
3. Math	20%	42%	34%	3%

5. **[QCompete]** How much do you think the quality of the American public school system affects the United States' ability to compete economically with other countries? **[RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]**

1. A lot	62%
2. A little	29%
3. Not at all	4%
4. Unsure	5%

6. **[QChanceComp]** Do you think the American public school system is giving kids today a better chance, a worse chance, or about the same chance of achieving future career success as kids in other industrialized countries have? **[RANDOMIZE 1-3, 3-1]**

1. Better chance	27%
2. About the same chance	38%
3. Worse chance	30%
4. Unsure	5%

LITERACY AND UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS

Now, thinking about K-12 public schools in the US today . . .

7. [LITERACY POLICY EFFORTS BATTERY] Would you support or oppose the government doing each of the following related to public school students' literacy? [DISPLAY AS GRID, OVER 2 PAGES] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

	1. Strongly support	2. Somewhat support	3. Somewhat oppose	4. Strongly oppose	5. Unsure			
	STRONGLY/ SOMEWHAT SUPPORT		STRONGLY/ SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	1. Strongly support	2. Somewhat support	3. Somewhat oppose	4. Strongly oppose	5. Unsure
1. Require public schools to assess each student's reading level to identify whether they need additional support	91%	7%	65%	26%	5%	2%	2%	
2. Provide more funding and resources to public schools to support struggling readers	90%	8%	63%	27%	4%	3%	2%	
3. Require public schools to teach children to read using methods based on research about how children learn	89%	7%	56%	33%	6%	2%	4%	
4. Set a national goal for all public school students to be able to read at grade level by the time they are in third grade	87%	10%	58%	29%	6%	4%	3%	
5. Hold public schools accountable if third grade students are not able to read at grade level	79%	15%	47%	32%	12%	4%	5%	
6. Provide money to parents of public school students whose schools do not offer tutoring in reading so they can pay for private tutoring	76%	19%	43%	33%	12%	7%	5%	

8. [QSupportUnderperforming] A school may be considered “chronically underperforming” if it has low performance or poor academic outcomes multiple years in a row. Do you think the government [SHOW HALF IN REVERSE ORDER TO MATCH SCALE: should do more, does about the right amount, or does too much] to try to help chronically underperforming schools improve? [RANDOMIZE 1-3, 3-1]

- 1. Should do more to try to help 64%
- 2. Does about the right amount to try to help 22%
- 3. Does too much to try to help 9%
- 4. Unsure 5%

9. [ADDRESSING UNDERPERFORMANCE BATTERY] How effective, if at all, do you think each of the following would be a way to improve performance at chronically underperforming schools? [DISPLAY AS GRID, OVER 2 PAGES] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

1. Very effective 2. Somewhat effective 3. Not too effective 4. Not at all effective 5. Unsure

	VERY/ SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	NOT TOO/ NOT AT ALL EFFECTIVE	1. Very effective	2. Somewhat effective	3. Not too effective	4. Not at all effective	5. Unsure
1. Get teachers' input on school improvement plans	89%	8%	56%	33%	5%	3%	3%
2. Get input from students and their families on school improvement plans	89%	9%	54%	35%	6%	3%	2%
3. Hire more teachers and educational support staff	88%	9%	56%	32%	6%	3%	3%
4. Require schools to be transparent and share information about their performance with teachers and students' families	87%	9%	54%	33%	6%	3%	4%
5. Provide more after school and summer learning programs at schools	87%	9%	52%	35%	8%	2%	3%
6. Require schools to provide an individualized learning plan for each student	86%	9%	52%	35%	6%	3%	4%
7. Offer the option and transportation for students to transfer to higher performing public schools if they choose	81%	14%	47%	34%	9%	5%	5%
8. Give funding directly to students' families to pay for private tutoring or additional educational supports outside of school	70%	23%	38%	32%	13%	9%	8%

10. [QFocusResources] When allocating resources to support students at underperforming schools, which of the following approaches do you think would be more helpful?

[RANDOMIZE 1-2]

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Provide support for all students at underperforming schools | 65% |
| 2. Provide support only for students who have below-average grades or scores at underperforming schools | 30% |
| 3. Unsure | 5% |

11. [QUnderperformingLimit] Which of the following statements comes closer to your view on how the government should handle chronically underperforming schools, even if neither is exactly right? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. The government should do whatever it takes to keep underperforming schools open and continue providing extra funding and support until they improve | 61% |
| 2. There should be a limit to how long the government will continue providing extra funding and support to an underperforming school before closing it down if it does not improve | 32% |
| 3. Unsure | 7% |

12. [QSpending] On average, how much do you think K-12 public schools currently spend PER STUDENT in one school year? (Just your best guess.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Less than \$4,000 per student | 23% |
| 2. \$4,000 to \$7,999 per student | 22% |
| 3. \$8,000 to \$11,999 per student | 18% |
| 4. \$12,000 to \$15,999 per student | 14% |
| 5. \$16,000 to \$19,999 per student | 6% |
| 6. \$20,000 or more per student | 6% |
| 7. Unsure | 11% |

COVID EFFECTS AND TESTING

Now, thinking about K-12 public schools and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic . . .

13. [PROBLEMS BATTERY] How much of a problem, if at all, do you think each of the following are in the United States today? [DISPLAY AS GRID] [RANDOMIZE ITEM ORDER] [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

1. A crisis 2. A major problem, but not a crisis 3. A minor problem 4. Not a problem at all 5. Unsure

	CRISIS/ MAJ. PROB.	MIN. PROB./NOT PROB. AT ALL	1. A crisis	2. A major problem, but not a crisis	3. A minor problem	4. Not a problem at all	5. Unsure
1. K-12 students experiencing mental health challenges	76%	21%	34%	42%	17%	4%	3%
2. K-12 students still being behind academically after the COVID-19 pandemic	71%	26%	27%	43%	23%	3%	3%

14. [QStatewideTest] There has been some debate about whether or not schools should administer statewide academic tests this school year. Even if neither one perfectly describes your views, which of the following statements do you agree with more? [RANDOMIZE 1-2]

1. Even though we are in challenging times, we should continue to assess how well students are learning using statewide tests so that we can compare results to previous years and schools can identify areas in which students may be falling behind or need support. 69%
2. Since we are in challenging times, we should take a break from statewide testing this year so that teachers and students have one less thing to worry about. 26%
3. Unsure 5%

15. [QPostProb_Academic] A report on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a test taken by students across the United States, found that:
- Average math and reading scores declined significantly between 2019 and 2022.
 - About two-thirds of fourth and eighth grade students were NOT proficient in reading and math skills for their grade level based on NAEP standards

After reading that information, how much of a problem, if at all, do you think that K-12 students still being behind academically after the COVID-19 pandemic is in the United States? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1, SAME ORDER AS QProb_Academic]

A CRISIS/A MAJOR PROBLEM, BUT NOT A CRISIS	81%
A MINOR PROBLEM/NOT A PROBLEM AT ALL	17%
1. A crisis	34%
2. A major problem, but not a crisis	47%
3. A minor problem	15%
4. Not a problem at all	2%
5. Unsure	2%

Moving on to a different topic . . .

16. [QFamilyFinancial] How would you describe your family’s financial situation?

[RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. We are able to pay for basic necessities and have some money left over to save, invest, or afford non-essential things we want | 41% |
| 2. We are just able to pay for basic necessities | 40% |
| 3. We struggle to pay for basic necessities | 18% |
| Unsure | 1% |

17. [QCTCPayment] As you may know, from July 2021 through December 2021, some families received a monthly payment from the IRS through an expanded Child Tax Credit. Did your family receive these monthly payments?

- | | |
|-----------|-----|
| 1. Yes | 62% |
| 2. No | 34% |
| 3. Unsure | 4% |

18. [QCTCSupportOppose] Would you support or oppose the federal government reinstating the Child Tax Credit to give eligible families monthly checks of \$300 per month per child under the age of 6 and \$250 per child ages 6-17? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT SUPPORT | 81% |
| STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT OPPOSE | 14% |
| 1. Strongly support | 54% |
| 2. Somewhat support | 26% |
| 3. Somewhat oppose | 8% |
| 4. Strongly oppose | 7% |
| 5. Unsure | 5% |

19. [QCTCHelp] How much would it help your family’s financial situation if you were to receive a Child Tax Credit giving you monthly checks of \$300 per month per child under the age of 6 and \$250 per child ages 6-17? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-3, 3-1]

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| WOULD HELP A LOT/LITTLE | 86% |
| 1. Would help a lot | 58% |
| 2. Would help a little | 27% |
| 3. Would not really make a difference | 11% |
| 4. Unsure | 3% |

DEMOGRAPHICS

Now I would like to ask you some questions for statistical purposes . . .

20. [QBirthYear] Which range of years includes the year you were born? [TERMINATE IF MORE THAN 1 YEAR OFF RANGE INDICATED BASED ON QAGE]

1.	1903 - 1927	-
2.	1928 - 1945	-
3.	1946 - 1964	3%
4.	1965 - 1980	40%
5.	1981 - 1996	55%
6.	1997 - 2012	1%

21. [QParty] Regardless of how you typically vote, would you say you consider yourself a ... ? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-5, 5-1]

	STRONG/NOT VERY STRONG REPUBLICAN	27%
	STRONG/NOT VERY STRONG DEMOCRAT	44%
1.	Strong Republican	16%
2.	Not very strong Republican	12%
3.	Independent	25%
4.	Not very strong Democrat	14%
5.	Strong Democrat	30%
6.	A member of another party	*%
7.	Unsure	3%

IF INDEPENDENT, UNSURE, OR MEMBER OF ANOTHER PARTY [QParty=3, 6, OR 7], ASK:

22. [QPartyLean] Which of the following statements would you say best describes you? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

	TOTAL VOTES FOR REPUBLICANS	(n=312) 22%
	TOTAL VOTES FOR DEMOCRATS	27%
1.	I almost always vote for Republican candidates	6%
2.	I vote for Republicans more often than I vote for Democrats	16%
3.	I vote for Democrats more often than I vote for Republicans	20%
4.	I almost always vote for Democratic candidates	7%
5.	I vote equally for Democrats and Republicans	20%
6.	Unsure	32%

PartyConsolidated: QParty + QPartyLean

1.	Republican	34%
2.	Democrat	52%
3.	Independent/Other/Unsure - No lean	15%

ASK ALL:

23. [QIdeology] Regardless of how you typically vote, would you say you consider yourself to be...? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-5, 5-1]

VERY/SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE	28%
VERY/SOMEWHAT LIBERAL	27%
1. Very conservative	16%
2. Somewhat conservative	12%
3. Moderate	42%
4. Somewhat liberal	13%
5. Very liberal	14%
6. Unsure	4%

24. [QEmployment] What is your current employment status?

1. Employed full-time	65%
2. Employed part-time	7%
3. Freelance, contract, or temporary work	2%
4. Furloughed or placed on temporary leave by my employer	-
5. Unemployed and looking for work	4%
6. Unemployed and not currently looking for work	1%
7. Stay-at-home parent or caregiver	15%
8. Full time student	1%
9. Retired	3%
10. Something else (Please specify)	2%
11. Prefer not to say	*%

25. [QIncome] Which range includes your annual household income?

1. Less than \$30,000 per year	18%
2. \$30,000 to \$49,999 per year	19%
3. \$50,000 to \$74,999 per year	20%
4. \$75,000 to \$125,000 per year	25%
5. More than \$125,000 per year	17%
6. Prefer not to say	1%

26. [QState] In what state do you live?

1. States in the Northeast	15%
2. States in the Midwest	19%
3. States in the South	41%
4. States in the West	25%

27. [QUrbanRural] How would you describe the area in which you live? [RANDOMIZE SCALE 1-4, 4-1]

1. City	37%
2. Suburb near a city	38%
3. Small town not near a city	7%
4. Rural or country area	18%

28. [QMarital] What is your current marital status?

1. Single, never married	10%
2. Married	78%
3. Living with a partner	6%
4. Separated	1%
5. Divorced	5%
6. Widowed	1%
7. Prefer not to say	*%

SCREENERS AND INITIAL DEMOGRAPHICS (ASKED AT BEGINNING OF SURVEY)

29. [QIndustry] Do you or does anyone in your household work in any of the following industries? [SELECT MULTIPLE] [RANDOMIZE 1-8]

1. Technology		4%
2. Sales		4%
3. Healthcare		8%
Education or early childhood		
4. development		6%
5. Journalism or the media	TERMINATE	-
Food service or the restaurant		
6. industry		6%
7. Market research	TERMINATE	-
8. Public relations	TERMINATE	-
9. None of these		76%

30. [QParent Screener] Are you the parent or guardian of a child or children currently in grades kindergarten through 12th grade (2022–2023 school year)?

1. Yes		100%
2. No	TERMINATE	-
3. Prefer not to say	TERMINATE	-

31. [QHome Screener] Where do your children who are in grades kindergarten through 12th grade live?

1. Full-time with me in my home		95%
2. Split between my home and the home of another parent or family member		5%
3. Not with me	TERMINATE	-

32. [QPublic Screener] What type of school do your children who are in grades kindergarten through 12th grade attend?

1. Public school		100%
2. Private school	TERMINATE	-
3. Homeschool	TERMINATE	-
4. Prefer not to say	TERMINATE	-

33. [QKidNum] How many children do you have in public school in grades kindergarten through 12th grade?

1.	1	46%
2.	2	36%
3.	3	12%
4.	4	3%
5.	5	1%
6.	6	1%
7.	7	*%
8.	8	*%
9.	9	*%
10.	10 or more	*%

34. [QKidGrade_1A] IF QKidNum=1: Please select your child's current grade level (2022-2023 school year).

IF QKidNum=2-10+: Please select the current grade level (2022-2023 school year) of each of your children, in birth order from oldest to youngest: [REPEAT FOR EACH CHILD, INCLUDE CHILD TEXT]

[QKidGrade_1B] First Child

[QKidGrade_2] Second Child

[QKidGrade_3] Third Child

[QKidGrade_4] Fourth Child

[QKidGrade_5] Fifth Child

[QKidGrade_6] Sixth Child

[QKidGrade_7] Seventh Child

[QKidGrade_8] Eighth Child

[QKidGrade_9] Ninth Child

[QKidGrade_10] Tenth Child

1.	Kindergarten	18%
2.	1st grade	10%
3.	2nd grade	12%
4.	3rd grade	14%
5.	4th grade	13%
6.	5th grade	14%
7.	6th grade	13%
8.	7th grade	15%
9.	8th grade	13%
10.	9th grade (Freshman)	13%
11.	10th grade (Sophomore)	14%
12.	11th grade (Junior)	11%
13.	12th grade (Senior)	15%

35. [QGender] Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?

[RANDOMIZE 1-2]

1. Man	44%
2. Woman	56%
3. Some other way	*%

36. [QRace] What is your race or ethnicity? [SELECT MULTIPLE] [RANDOMIZE 1-6]

1. White	64%
2. Hispanic or Latino	14%
3. Black or African American	22%
4. Asian	7%
5. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3%
6. Native American or Alaska Native	1%
7. Something else (Please specify)	1%

37. [QEducation] What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. High school or less	35%
2. Some college	21%
3. Associate degree	10%
4. Bachelor's degree	21%
5. Graduate degree	13%
6. Prefer not to say	*%

38. [QAge] What is your age?

[OPEN-END, TERMINATE IF UNDER 18]

1. 18-29	6%
2. 30-39	39%
3. 40-49	37%
4. 50-64	17%
5. 65+	1%

METHODOLOGY

Echelon Insights conducted a survey on behalf of the National Parents Union to understand K-12 parents' views on current topics related to public education. The survey was fielded online from May 1-3, 2023 in English among a sample of 1,036 parents of public school students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade nationwide using non-probability sampling.

The sample was drawn from the Lucid sample exchange based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education quota targets for parents of public school students derived from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) American Community Survey - Education Tabulation, a tabulation of 5-year data from the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

Data quality measures included the use of an attentiveness check where respondents were directed to select a particular response and measures to prevent duplicate responses. Respondents who completed the survey in less than one-third of the median interview time for the full sample were removed from the data file.

The sample was weighted to population benchmarks for parents of public school students derived from the American Community Survey - Education Tabulation on gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and region.

Calculated as it would be for a random sample and adjusted to incorporate the effect of weighting, the margin of sampling error is ± 3.9 percentage points. This estimate of precision does not account for other potential sources of error that can occur in online surveys with non-probability samples, including, but not limited to, non-coverage due to the survey being conducted online, or possible failure to correct for ways people who have agreed to join an online panel or take online surveys might not be representative of the general population (e.g., on measures that are not included as weighting variables).