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# 2018 SCHOOLING IN AMERICA

Public Opinion on K–12 Education, Parent  
and Teacher Experiences, Accountability,  
and School Choice

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**Paul DiPerna**  
**Michael Shaw**



## ABOUT EDCHOICE

EdChoice is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society. EdChoice believes that families, not bureaucrats, are best equipped to make K–12 schooling decisions for their children. The organization works at the state level to educate diverse audiences, train advocates and engage policymakers on the benefits of high-quality school choice programs. EdChoice is the intellectual legacy of Milton and Rose D. Friedman, who founded the organization in 1996 as the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice.

The contents of this publication are intended to provide empirical information and should not be construed as lobbying for any position related to any legislation.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From walkouts to *Janus v. AFSCME* to ballot measures, teachers and K–12 education made lots of news over the past year.

Public school teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their salaries and treatment by elected officials by staging mass walkouts and protests in a number of states, such as Arizona, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Kentucky, to name a few. Meanwhile, a number of reformers were reflecting inwardly and asking hard questions about the state of education reform, including current and future challenges. It is not a stretch to say there's plenty of frustration and angst among both groups these days.<sup>i</sup>

Specific events and developments fueled “Year of the Teacher” headlines in 2018. Education itself ranked as the second-highest issue in gubernatorial races, according to the Wesleyan Media project that tracked election campaign advertisements across the country.<sup>ii</sup> Teachers were commended as heroes in communities hit by recent natural disasters, staffing school buildings as shelters and recovery centers in places like North Carolina, Florida, and Puerto Rico.<sup>iii</sup>

A landmark decision by the U.S. Supreme Court—*Janus v. AFSCME*—prohibited mandatory union

agency fees, affecting teachers and other public-sector employees in a number of states. The ruling further energized teachers' unions and their members. Prompted by the spring walkouts, elementary and secondary education teachers ran for public office in record numbers—with overall mixed results.<sup>iv</sup>

In November, the country's voters appeared to send mixed signals. Peering through the kaleidoscope of state elections as a whole, it is challenging to interpret how Americans felt about K–12 education matters and reforms. Voters passed ballot measures in places like Indianapolis, Denver, and Maryland to give raises to public school teachers, fund infrastructure improvements, and improve school safety, among other measures. A modification to Arizona's education savings account program was voted down, though it remains unclear where voters stand on the program itself because the ballot language may have appeared to be wonky and confusing. Reformers were heartened by some victories in gubernatorial races in Arizona, Colorado, Tennessee, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Florida. But on most other matters it is nearly impossible to say to what extent those election results can be tied to any one issue idea or champion.

Surveys and polls allow us to ask people directly about a single subject or issue, providing a clearer understanding about their individual views and

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<sup>i</sup> Jay P. Greene (2018, August 21), Ed Reform Political Judgment Often Wrong (Blog post), Jay P. Greene's Blog, retrieved from <https://jaypgreene.com/2018/08/21/ed-reform-political-judgement-often-wrong>; Rick Hess (2017, April 25), Letters to a Young Education Reformer [Blog post], retrieved from [https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick\\_hess\\_straight\\_up/2017/04/letters\\_to\\_a\\_young\\_education\\_reformer.html](https://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rick_hess_straight_up/2017/04/letters_to_a_young_education_reformer.html); Michael J. Petrilli (2018, July 12), Where Education Reform Goes from Here [Blog post], retrieved from <https://www.educationnext.org/where-education-reform-goes-here>; Paul Hill (2018, November 16), It's Time to Rebuild the Sensible Center on Education Reform [Blog post], retrieved from <https://www.crpe.org/thelens/its-time-rebuild-sensible-center-education-reform>

<sup>ii</sup> Wesleyan Media Project, 2018: The Health Care Election, Table 11: Top Five Issues/Mentions in Gubernatorial Advertising (9/18 to 10/15), retrieved from <http://mediaproject.wesleyan.edu/releases/101818-tv>

<sup>iii</sup> Justin Parmenter (2018, September 14), Here's What Hurricane Florence is Teaching My Kids [Blog post], retrieved from [educationpost.org/heres-what-hurricane-florence-is-teaching-my-kids](http://educationpost.org/heres-what-hurricane-florence-is-teaching-my-kids); Freida Frisaro and Tamara Lush (2018, October 26), ‘How Can I Be Effective?’: Teachers Suffering after Michael, *Associated Press*, retrieved from <https://apnews.com/d4f29532d69d450fa413a6c12b6aab5e>; Nicole Acevedo (2018, August 13), In Puerto Rico, New School Year Begins after Hurricane Maria, Big Changes to Education System, *NBC News*, retrieved from <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/puerto-rico-crisis/puerto-rico-new-school-year-begins-after-hurricane-maria-big-n899866>

<sup>iv</sup> Education Week (2018), Over 170 Teachers Ran for State Office in 2018. Here's What We Know About Them [Data set], retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/teachers-running-for-state-office.html>; Katie Reilly (2018, November 9), Most Teachers Running for Office Lost on Tuesday. Here's Why Educators Are Celebrating the 2018 Midterms Anyway, *Time*, retrieved from <http://time.com/5447995/teacher-education-2018-midterm-elections>

attitudes that they may or may not be considering when casting ballots at election time.

We have administered this survey for six years, and we have asked many of the same questions about K–12 education issues so that we can understand and track how public opinion changes—or doesn't change—over time. Each year, we also probe deeper with a separate set of questions aimed at understanding how a particular group or demographic views K–12 education in America.

This year, we feature survey results based on an online survey administered to current public school teachers: What do they think about K–12 education, their profession, and possible reforms? To what extent do teachers, parents, and the general public, share common or contrasting views on K–12 education matters, such as funding, accountability, testing, and choice-based reforms?

This is the first time we surveyed teachers for our annual public opinion poll. By conducting online interviews of 777 current public school teachers, we wanted to gain better insights into what generated the maelstrom of attention this year.

Of course there are other education stakeholders in addition to those who teach in nation's classrooms. In a separate, mixed-mode survey, we obtained responses from a large sample of the general public (N=1,803), including parents of school-age children (N=533). The public elects school boards and statewide office holders who guide school districts and statewide policymaking, accountability, regulations, and improvement initiatives. Parents arguably have the most at stake when it comes to assessing the schooling system in which their children often spend more time than they do at home.

We report out school parents' experiences, views, and attitudes, along with those of current public school teachers. Each year, our survey asks questions on topics that we hope can help provide all of us with the necessary context to dig beneath the headlines and social media threads.

The *2018 Schooling in America Survey* explores four general research questions:

1. What are parents' experiences in K–12 education and local schooling?
2. What are public school teachers' professional experiences and preferences in K–12 education?
3. How does the general public—as well as teachers and parents—view state accountability systems in K–12 education?
4. What are the levels, margins, and intensities of support and opposition for different types of K–12 educational choice policies, including education savings accounts, school vouchers, public charter schools, and tax-credit scholarships?

The following are key takeaways from this year's survey. We came across surprises, continuations of trends, and some consistency with public rhetoric and media reports:

**Public school teachers as a group appear to have reservations about their jobs and the profession. They trust parents less than students and principals. They also have greater concerns about standardized testing than parents and the general public.**

- Current public school teachers' indicate unease and discontent with their profession, as measured by Net Promoter Score (NPS).
- Majorities of teachers say they trust their students and principals, but they are less inclined to trust their students' parents and public officials or government agencies.
- More than half of teachers think too much time is spent on standardized testing, compared to roughly one-third of parents and the general public.

**Parents are doing more to help their kids, but they're still not accessing the schooling types they would prefer.**

- On average, majorities of parents express satisfaction with their own schooling experiences.
- Compared to two years ago, parents appear to be doing more to accommodate and support their children's education.
- Huge gaps exist between parents' schooling preferences and actual school type enrollment patterns.

**Support for school choice remains high. Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are much more popular than any other program among most groups, including teachers. People still are largely unaware how much we spend on K-12 education.**

- Support for choice-based reforms remains high for education savings accounts, school vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and charter schools.
- Public school teachers support education savings accounts in larger numbers compared to their support for other types of school choice reforms.
- Americans' support for education savings accounts and school vouchers jumps at least 20 percentage points when respondents are given descriptions of those reforms. Opposition also increases but at much smaller proportions.
- Among the general public, the net positive intensity for education savings accounts is more than twice as large as the intensity for school vouchers and three times as large as charter schools.

- Americans do not know how much we spend on average per student in public K-12 education. The United States spends more than \$11,000 on each student in America's public schools, but a majority of our survey respondents underestimated per-student funding by at least \$3,000.
- Americans' views on public spending on K-12 education are significantly affected when given a federal government statistic about national average per-student spending in public schools. With that information, the general public is much less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is "too low" compared to uninformed respondents.

**There is some agreement about K-12 accountability—but otherwise differences abound regarding who should design the system, who should administer it, what it should measure and who should be held accountable.**

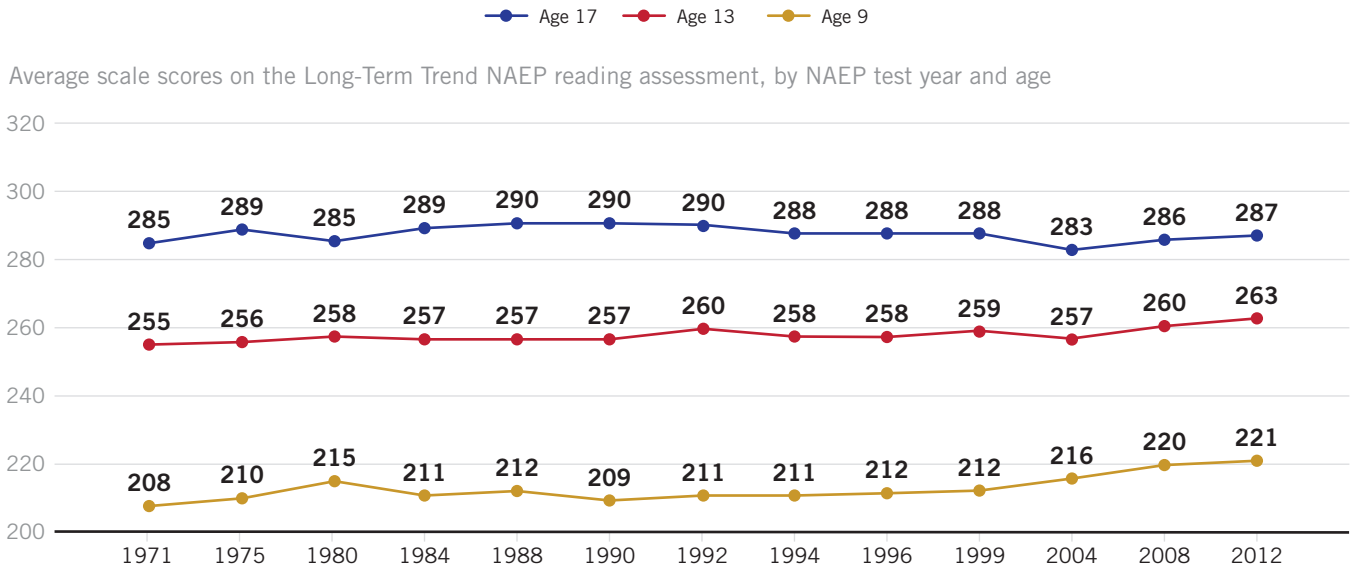
- Surprising numbers of public school teachers and parents say they are unsure if their state uses grades or ratings for accountability purposes.
- Keep matters as local as possible when it comes to the issue of education accountability—that is the general message from public school teachers, parents, and the public. Survey respondents most often said teachers should be empowered to develop and implement accountability systems.
- Public school teachers, parents, and the general public seem to agree that ensuring minimum standards in reading and math, and identifying schools for assistance should be the broad purpose of a state accountability system, compared to other listed objectives.

- Public school teachers hold their local school districts most responsible for walkout, protests, and strikes. A slightly smaller majority say state government is to blame. On the other hand, survey responses suggest the public faults teachers' unions more than any other stakeholder.
- There is no consensus on who should be held most responsible nor what is most important for evaluation in a state accountability system. Large majorities of public school teachers, school parents, and the general public avoided putting any listed items in their "top two" rankings.

# K-12 EDUCATION PROFILE AND CONTEXT

## Long-Term Trend NAEP Reading Score Changes Over Time, By Year and Age

Reading scores peaked for 17-year-olds around 1990, although younger students have seen gains since that time.

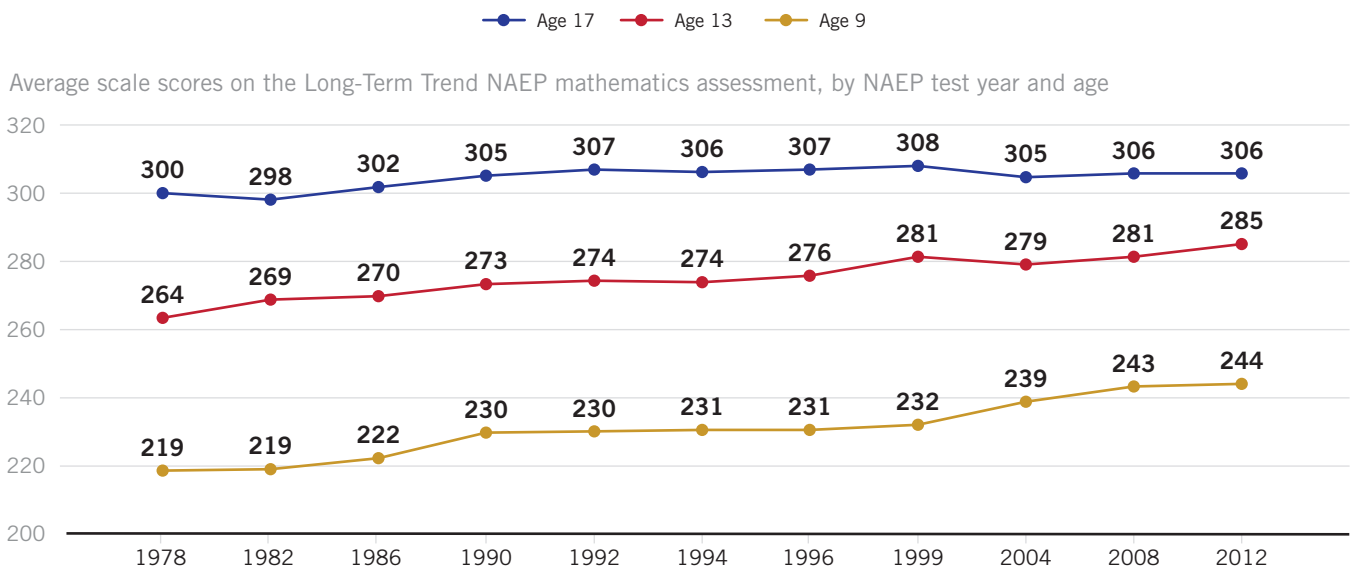


Notes: The NAEP Long-Term Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. The original assessment format score was used for years 1978–1999, while the new format was used for the subsequent years.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend Reading [Data set], retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ltrdata>

## Long-Term Trend NAEP Math Score Changes Over Time, By Year and Age

Math scores have grown overall, although gains have not accelerated as quickly for 17-year-olds.

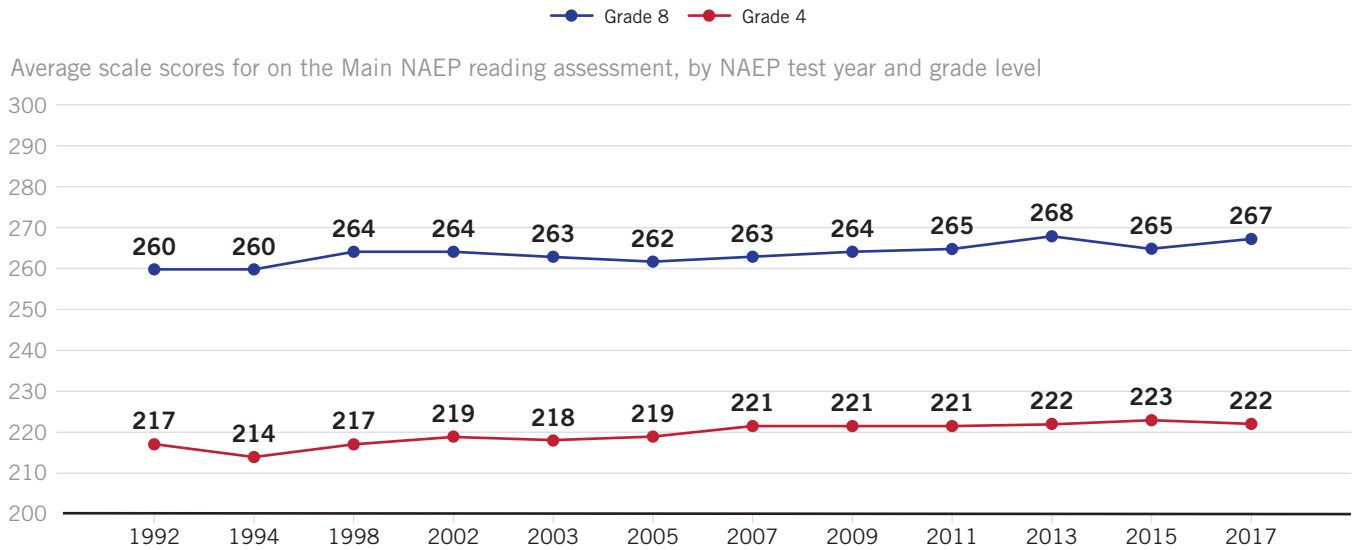


Notes: The NAEP Long-Term Mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 500. The original assessment format score was used for years 1978–1999, while the new format was used for the subsequent years.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend Mathematics [Data set], retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ltrdata>

## Main NAEP Reading Score Changes Over Time, By Year and Grade Level

Reading scores have gained modestly for elementary and middle school students.

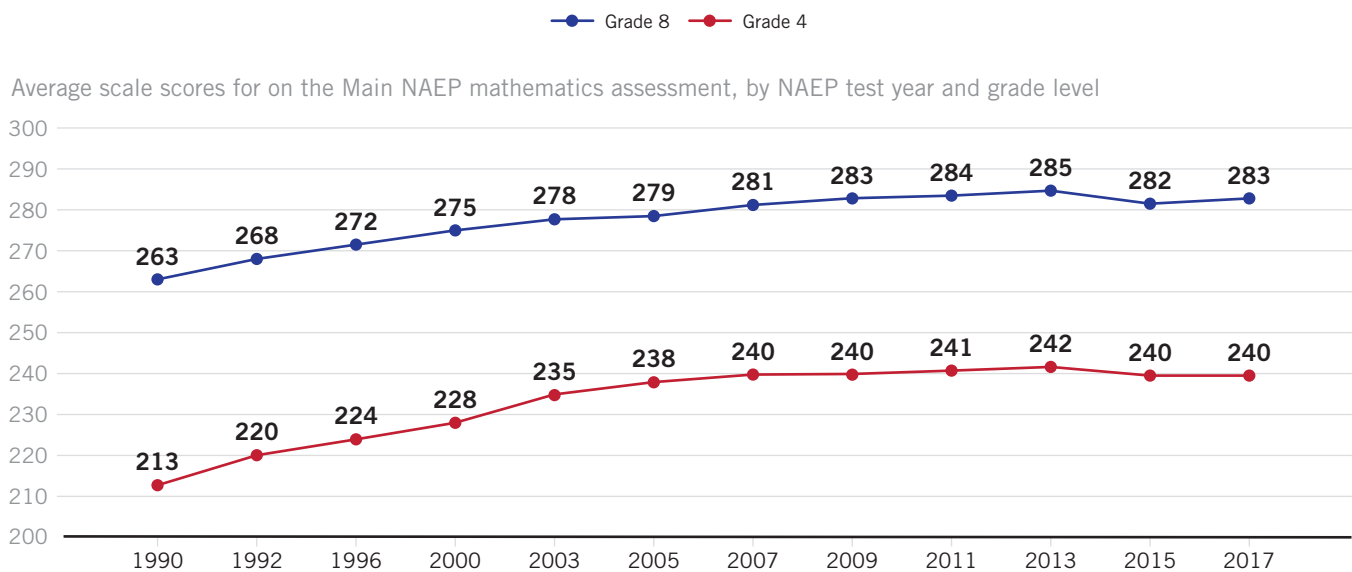


Note: The NAEP Long-Term Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend Reading [Data set], retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ltrdata>

## Main NAEP Math Score Changes Over Time, By Year and Grade Level

Math scores have risen steadily for elementary and middle school students.



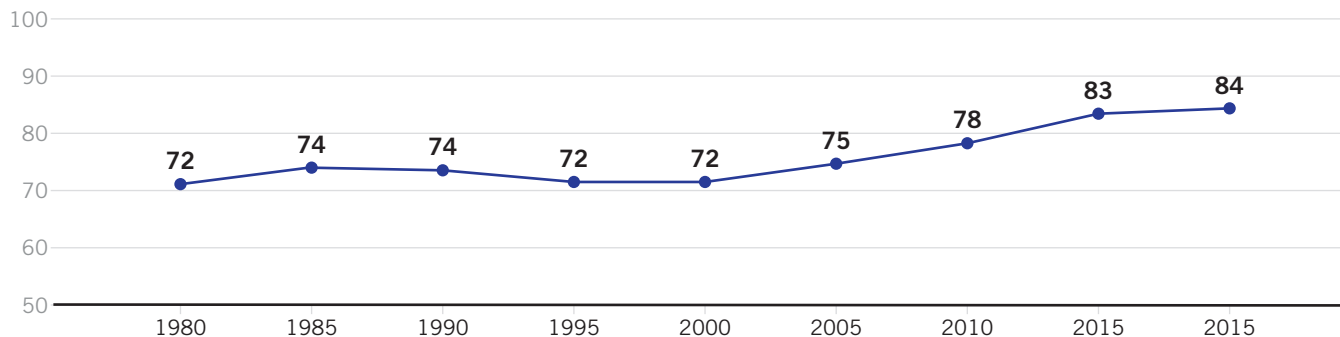
Note: The NAEP Long-Term Math scale ranges from 0 to 500.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Long-Term Trend Math [Data set], retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/ltrdata>

## National Average High School Graduation Rate Trend Since 1980

*While dipping in the 1990s, and again briefly in 2006, graduation rates have risen steadily over the past decade.*

SY1980 through SY2013: Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR); SY14 through SY15: Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR)



Note: AFGR was used for the years 1969–70 through 2013–14, whereas ACGR was used from 2014–15 through 2015–16 due to data limitations.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Table 219.10. High school graduates, by sex and control of school: 1869-70 through 2025-26 [web page], last modified May 2018, retrieved [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_219.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_219.10.asp); National Center for Education Statistics, Table 219.46. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by selected student characteristics and state: 2010-11 through 2015-16 [Web page], last modified December 2017, retrieved [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_219.46.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_219.46.asp)

## Additional Information about American K–12 Education

PISA Reading Mean Score Comparison: U.S. vs. OECD <sup>i</sup> .....	497 vs. 493
PISA Math Mean Score Comparison: U.S. vs. OECD <sup>i</sup> .....	470 vs. 490
PISA Science Mean Score Comparison: U.S. vs. OECD <sup>i</sup> .....	496 vs. 493
# Public School Students (excluding Charter School Students) <sup>ii</sup> .....	47,269,856
# Public Charter School Students <sup>iii</sup> .....	2,845,322
# Private School Students <sup>iii</sup> .....	5,750,520
# Home School Students <sup>iv</sup> .....	1,690,000
% Public School Students (excluding Charter School Students) <sup>v</sup> .....	82%
% Public Charter School Students <sup>v</sup> .....	5%
% Private School Students <sup>v</sup> .....	10%
% Home School Students <sup>v</sup> .....	3%
# Public School Districts <sup>vi</sup> .....	13,584
# Public Schools (excluding Charter Schools) <sup>vii</sup> .....	98,277
# Public Charter Schools <sup>viii</sup> .....	6,855
# Private Schools <sup>vi</sup> .....	34,576
# Education Savings Account Programs <sup>ix</sup> .....	5
# School Voucher Programs <sup>ix</sup> .....	26
# Tax-Credit Scholarship Programs <sup>ix</sup> .....	23
% Free and Reduced-Price Lunch <sup>x</sup> .....	52%
% Individualized Education Program (IEP) <sup>x</sup> .....	13%
% Limited Eng. Proficient (LEP)/Eng. Language Learners <sup>x</sup> .....	10%
\$ Revenue Per Student <sup>xi</sup> .....	\$13,722
\$ “Total” Per Student Spending <sup>xii</sup> .....	\$12,796
\$ “Current” Per Student Spending <sup>xi</sup> .....	\$11,454
\$ “Instructional” Per Student Spending <sup>xi</sup> .....	\$6,953

# Notes

i. Organization for Economic Co-operation (2016), *PISA 2015 Results in Focus*, p. 5, retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2015-results-in-focus.pdf>

ii. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 216.20. Number and enrollment of public elementary and secondary schools, by school level, type, and charter and magnet status: Selected year, 1990-91 through 2015-16 [web page], last modified August 2017, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_216.20.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_216.20.asp)

iii. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 205.80. Private elementary and secondary schools, enrollment, teachers, and high school graduates, by state: Selected years, 2005 through 2015 [web page], last modified June 2017, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16\\_205.80.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_205.80.asp)

iv. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 206.10. Number and percentage of homeschooled students ages 5 through 17 with a grade equivalent through 12th grade, by selected child, parent, and household characteristics: Selected years, 1999 through 2016 [web page], last modified February 2018, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_206.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_206.10.asp)

v. Authors' calculations: National Center for Education Statistics

vi. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 214.10. Number of public school districts and public and private elementary and secondary schools: Selected years, 1869-70 through 2015-16 [web page], last modified September 2017, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_214.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_214.10.asp)

vii. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 216.10. Public elementary and secondary schools, by level of school: Selected years, 1967-68 through 2015-16 [web page], last modified August 2017, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_216.10.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_216.10.asp)

viii. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 216.90. Public elementary and secondary charter schools and enrollment, by state: Selected years, 2000-01 through 2015-16 [web page], last modified August 2017, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_216.90.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_216.90.asp)

ix. Not included in these counts are Nevada's Education Savings Accounts, which has not to-date secured funding and is thus not operational, as well as Puerto Rico's voucher, which is scheduled to launch next school year. EdChoice, Fast Facts [web page], retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/resource-hub/fast-facts>

x. National Center for Education Statistics, The Condition of Education, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cgf.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp)

xi. National Center for Education Statistics (2018), *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2014-15 (Fiscal Year 2015): First Look* (NCES 2018-301), p. 10, retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2018/2018301.pdf>

xii. National Center for Education Statistics, Table 236.75. Total and current expenditures per pupil in fall enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by function and state or jurisdiction: 2014-15 [web page], last modified October 2017, retrieved from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17\\_236.75.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_236.75.asp)

# INTRODUCTION

In many ways, 2018 became the “Year of the Teacher.” Protests and walkouts punctuated legislative sessions across state capitals at the beginning of the year, bringing national attention to issues including teacher pay and pension funding. Job satisfaction, or lack thereof, was on display for the nation.

In late June, the U.S. Supreme Court prohibited mandatory union agency fees, a decision that affected teachers and other public-sector employees in many states and energized teachers’ unions and their members across America.

Following that ruling, and possibly because of it, evidence of declining union membership began to surface.<sup>1</sup> Prompted by the walkouts, elementary and secondary education teachers ran for public office in record numbers—with overall mixed results.<sup>2</sup> Teachers also made headlines as heroes in communities hit by recent natural disasters, staffing school buildings as shelters and recovery centers in places like North Carolina, Florida, and Puerto Rico.<sup>3</sup>

As other national polling shows, public regard for teachers and their profession is high.<sup>4</sup> That support was high enough that teachers and education leaders defeated incumbent politicians in places like Wisconsin and Oklahoma. Voters also passed ballot measures in places like Indianapolis, Denver, and Maryland to give raises to public school teachers, fund infrastructure improvements, and improve school safety, among other measures.<sup>5</sup> Education itself ranked as the second-highest issue in gubernatorial races, according to the Wesleyan Media project that tracked election campaign advertisements across the country.<sup>6</sup>

Given that teachers are so influential and trusted, we wanted to find out what they think about K–12 education, their profession, and possible reforms. Those questions form the basis for this year’s *Schooling in America Survey*. This is the first time we have surveyed teachers for our annual public

opinion project. We conducted online interviews of 777 current public school teachers—not charter or private school teachers or those who have taught in the past—to better understand their views on some of the hot education topics that took center stage this year.

We recognize that there are education stakeholders beyond those who teach in America’s classrooms. The general public elects school boards and statewide office holders who guide school districts and statewide policymaking, accountability, regulations, and improvement initiatives.

Each year our survey asks questions on topics that should be relevant and help us dig beneath the headlines of K–12 education. That’s why we also report the views of various demographic subgroups on a range of reforms relating to educational choice. Parents have the most at stake in assessing a system that often has their children spending more time with teachers during the week than with themselves. In this year’s report, we focus on chronicling school parents’ experiences, views, and attitudes, along with those of current public school teachers.

The *2018 Schooling in America Survey* explores four general research questions:

1. What are parents’ experiences in K–12 education and local schooling?
2. What are public school teachers’ professional experiences and preferences in K–12 education?
3. How does the general public—as well as teachers and parents—view state accountability systems in K–12 education?
4. What are the levels, margins, and intensities of support and opposition for different types of K–12 educational choice policies, including education savings accounts, school vouchers, public charter schools, and tax-credit scholarships?

# Report Road Map and Organization

We want to analyze how various influencer groups feel about K–12 education issues, but we also want to make sure we understand a broader public opinion landscape. The road map for this report winds around the often controversial topic of education accountability, which, as we have learned this year, can mean different things to different people.<sup>7</sup>

Policymakers design state accountability systems intended to benefit students, parents, schools, and the greater public good. They establish minimum academic standards and benchmarks that, if schools aren't meeting for families, can prompt local or state intervention. Part I of the report describes school parents' experiences, views, and preferences generally so we have context before observing their opinions about fundamental questions regarding accountability in K–12 education.

Teachers may be most directly impacted by accountability frameworks and policies, which can affect what they teach, how much they are paid, and what sanctions the schools in which they work may face for low performance. In Part II we describe how current public school teachers view their profession in 2018 and what levels of trust they have for various stakeholders in K–12 education, some of whom are responsible for designing the standards and rules teachers must follow.

Part III takes a close look at public opinion on the basic questions we should be asking about accountability in K–12 education. We highlight and compare the responses of public school teachers, parents, and the general public. We report their attitudes about state accountability systems regarding their purpose, development, implementation, responsibility, and what should be the priority for evaluation.

Finally, in Part IV, we analyze the public's views toward educational choice policies, which we have done since the dawn of this survey. By having education funding follow students, choice-based reforms represent another form of accountability.

Other polls in 2018 have examined some of the same issues, though with different research designs and question wording and ordering. We encourage you to compare the Schooling in America Survey results with those other surveys—such as the EdNext Poll and PDK Poll—so you can arrive at your own interpretations about public opinion on key K–12 education issues today.<sup>8</sup>

The *2018 Schooling in America Survey* questionnaire with topline results are publicly available and posted separately at [www.edchoice.org/2018SIASurvey](http://www.edchoice.org/2018SIASurvey). That document allows the reader to follow the survey interview and to consider question wording, ordering, and overall design.

## METHODS AND DATA

The 2018 Schooling in America Survey project is sponsored and developed by EdChoice. Braun Research, Inc., interviewed a statistically representative national sample of 1,803 adults (ages 18+) in the United States and District of Columbia.

We employed a mixed mode approach—telephone and online—to administer survey questionnaires and completing interviews. Data collection methods included probability sampling and random-digit dial for the phone-based interviews. The unweighted national phone sample includes a total of 801 interviews completed in English or Spanish from September 25 to October 1, 2018, via both landline and cell phone. For the online survey administration, Braun Research randomly selected individuals from an opt-in, non-probability online panel. The unweighted national online sample includes a total of 1,002 interviews completed in English or Spanish from September 25 to October 2, 2018. Statistical results were weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies based on certain demographic information provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The margin of sampling error for the total national sample is  $\pm 2.3$  percentage points.<sup>9</sup>

In the fall of 2018, we also conducted an online survey of current public school teachers—a completely separate sample from the previously mentioned national sample. Braun Research also randomly selected teachers from an opt-in, non-probability online panel. The unweighted online teacher sample includes a total of 777 interviews completed in English from September 25 to October 7, 2018. Statistical results for the teachers sample also were weighted based on certain demographic information provided by the U.S. Department of Education. The margin of sampling

error for the current public school teachers sample is  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points.

We included several split-sample experiments. An experimental design allows us to compare the effects of two or more alternative wordings for a given subject and question. The purpose of the experiments was to see if providing a new piece of information—or alternative wording—can significantly influence opinion on certain survey topics. We developed a “composite” average for one of these experiments regarding the type of

**TABLE 1A** Summary Statistics for General Population Sample (N=1,803), Compared to U.S. Census

	Unweighted Count (N)	Unweighted Online %	Unweighted Phone %	Weighted Total %	Census %
<b>AGE GROUP</b>					
18 to 34	523	31.4	26.1	30.1	30.6
35 to 54	597	34.9	30.9	34.4	34.8
55 and Over	661	33.9	40.2	34.2	34.6
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
< College Graduate	1,143	67.4	58.1	70.7	72.9
≥ College Graduate	653	32.6	40.8	29.8	27.2
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	935	55.1	47.8	48.3	48.6
Female	868	44.9	52.2	51.7	51.4
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>					
Asian/Pacific Islander	42	2.7	2.2	4.1	5.5
Black/African American	202	13.3	10.4	11.9	12.1
Hispanic/Latino	189	7.9	13.7	15.4	15.0
Native American	23	1.0	1.6	1.3	0.8
White, Not Hispanic	1,283	74.5	67.0	71.2	65.4
Two or More	51	2.0	3.7	2.8	2.1
Other	79	1.9	4.4	4.4	4.2
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast	342	19.0	19.0	18.1	18.1
Midwest	394	21.9	21.8	21.4	21.3
South	699	39.7	37.6	37.0	37.3
West	368	19.5	21.6	23.3	23.3

Note: Counts for Native American, Two or More, and Other reflect weighted subsample sizes.  
Sources: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018); 2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, accessed October 10, 2018 U.S. Census Bureau, retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts>

school someone would select to provide the best education to their child. We are able to maintain trend observations because at least one question version for each topic has been used in previous administrations of the Schooling in America Survey.

Table 1 displays the summary statistics and weighting results for the total national sample. Summary statistics for the public school teachers sample is located at the beginning of Part II.

For more information about our survey specifications and methods, see Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## Ground Rules

We offer some brief ground rules on our reporting protocol before describing the survey results.<sup>10</sup> Generally, we note the raw response levels for the total national sample on a given question for each survey topic. Several questions had multiple versions for experimental purposes. In one of those cases we focus on the composite response levels and differences based on the averaging of responses to each version of the question. In the forthcoming analyses, we also examine the response differences or margins within a given population or demographic subgroup. If noteworthy, we also discuss the “strongly” held positive or negative responses to a question. Sometimes we refer to the difference between strong positive and strong

**TABLE 1B** Additional Summary Statistics for General Population Sample

	Unweighted Count (N)	Unweighted Total %	Weighted Total %
<b>COMMUNITY TYPE (SELF ID)</b>			
Urban	442	24.5	25.3
Suburban	735	40.8	38.1
Small Town/Rural	606	33.6	35.1
<b>GENERATION</b>			
Millennial	571	31.7	30.8
Generation X	461	25.6	26.8
Baby Boomer	550	30.5	29.0
Silent	132	7.3	6.5
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
< \$40,000	706	39.2	43.3
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	570	31.6	30.3
≥ \$80,000	436	24.2	21.5
<b>POLITICAL PARTY (SELF ID)</b>			
Democrat	606	33.6	34.4
Republican	512	28.4	27.4
Independent	497	27.6	26.1

Note: Counts for Native American, Two or More, and Other reflect weighted subsample sizes.  
Sources: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018); 2015 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, accessed October 10, 2018

negative responses as the “net intensity” or simply intensity. We do not infer nor mean to imply causality with any of the observations in this report.<sup>11</sup>

Survey results are organized and presented by general topic, and for each topic there is a certain sequence for describing findings. First, we note the raw response levels for the national sample on a given question. Second, we consider the national sample’s margin, strong response levels, and the net intensity computed from the latter. Third, for those questions that we have asked in previous years, we briefly note the year-to-year trend lines. Fourth, if we detect statistical significance when comparing demographic subgroups on a given item, then we report those subgroup results that have the largest/smallest margins and intensities. Any noted subgroup comparisons/differences are statistically significant with 95 percent confidence, unless otherwise clarified in the narrative. Lists of subgroups with respect to margins and intensities are meant to be suggestive for further exploration and research beyond this project.

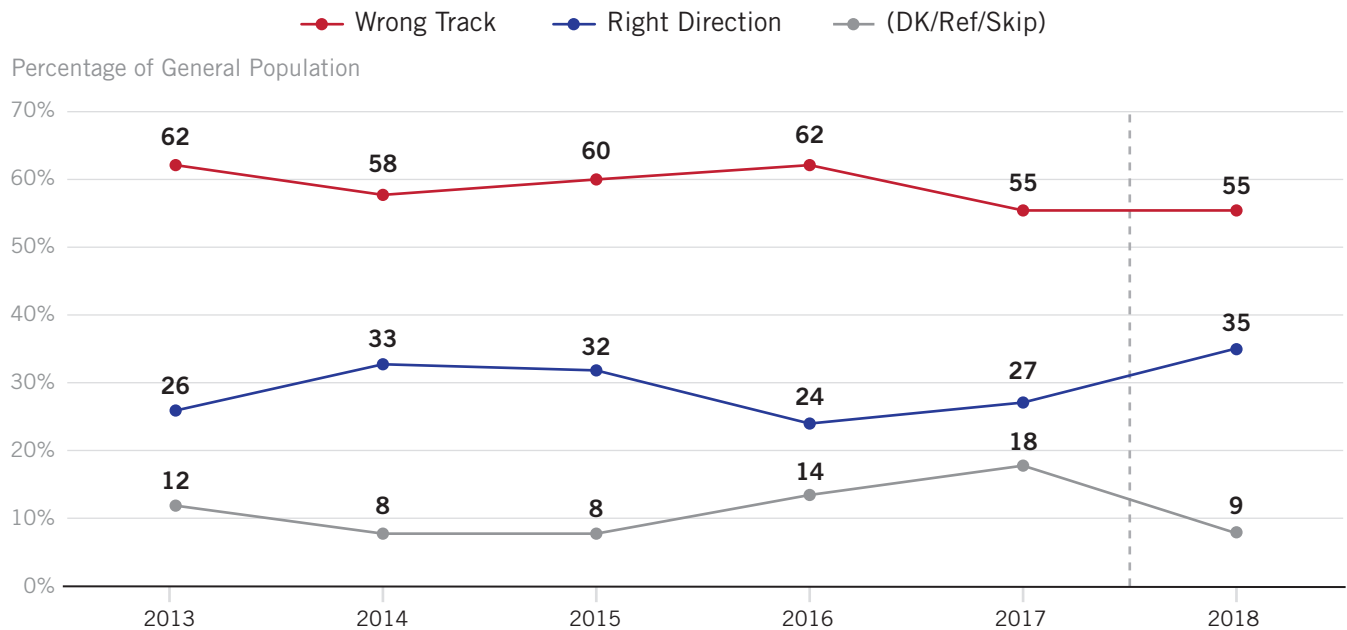
We organized our results in four parts: (I) parents’ local schooling experiences and preferences; (II) public school teachers’ views of their profession, trust in other stakeholders, and recent public developments; (III) the public’s views of fundamental questions regarding state accountability systems; and (IV) educational choice policies and reforms. The report appendices detail the survey’s methods, summarize response statistics, and provide additional technical information on call dispositions for landline and cell phone interviews and weighting.

Before we move into the four parts of this report, let’s begin with an examination of how the public views the national direction of K–12 education and education spending to bring some more context to this year’s teacher walkouts and elections.

**FIGURE 1**

The Public's Views on the Direction of K–12 Education, 2013–2018

*About a third of Americans believe K–12 education is heading in the right direction—an eight-point increase since last year. More than half still say K–12 is on the wrong track.*



Notes: Phone-only survey results shown for 2013–2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. Responses within parentheses were volunteered. "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question. Sources: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q1; EdChoice, *Schooling in America Survey* (2016–2017); Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Schooling in America Survey*, 2013–2015.

## Perceived National Direction of K–12 Education

More than half of Americans (55%) say they think K–12 education is on the “wrong track,” a decrease of 7 percentage points since 2016. Conversely we have seen an increase in those who say things are going in the “right direction,” jumping up 11 points to 35 percent over the last two years.<sup>12</sup> See Figure 1.

Parents were marginally more likely (41%) than the public to say K–12 education is headed toward the right direction, although parenting status indicated differences in attitudes. The general population’s attitudes seem to mirror the parents we surveyed. Parents currently with school-aged children were more positive (41% right direction) than those whose children are out of school (32%). These results may reflect a generational split. Millennials (37%) and Generation X (40%) were more likely to say education is moving in the right direction than Baby Boomers (30%). See Appendix 7.

Other demographic comparisons are worth noting. Democrats (56%) and Independents (60%) were more likely than Republicans (48%) to say K–12 education is on the wrong track. College graduates (61%) were more likely to express negative views than those without a four-year college degree (53%). Middle-income households (61%) said “wrong track” more often than low-income earners (50%) and high-income earners (58%).

## Views on Spending in K–12 Education

On average, the United States spends nearly \$11,500 on each student in America’s public schools, based on a cautious spending statistic termed “current expenditures. Fifty-five percent of our survey respondents who answered this question said the U.S. spends \$5,000 or less per student. Nearly four-fifths of our survey respondents (78%) offered answers substantially underestimating per-student funding at \$10,000 or less.<sup>13</sup> One person out of the 1,575 respondents could estimate/guess the correct current per-pupil spending statistic (within a six dollars).

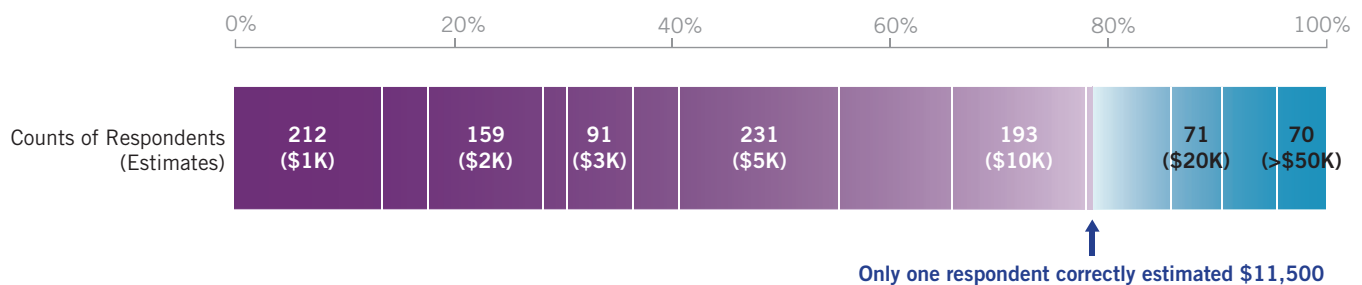
If instead of “current expenditures” we use “total expenditures” per student (\$12,796 in 2014–15)—a more expansive federal government definition for K–12 education spending that includes capital costs and debt repayment—the proportion of the general public likely to underestimate per-pupil spending goes up another three percentage points (81%). See Figure 2. An additional 228 respondents either said they were unsure, refused to answer, or skipped this question.

Given an actual per-student spending statistic, Americans are much less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is “too low.” In a split-sample experiment, we asked two slightly different questions. On the baseline version, 62 percent of

**FIGURE 2**

### The Public's Awareness of K–12 Education Spending

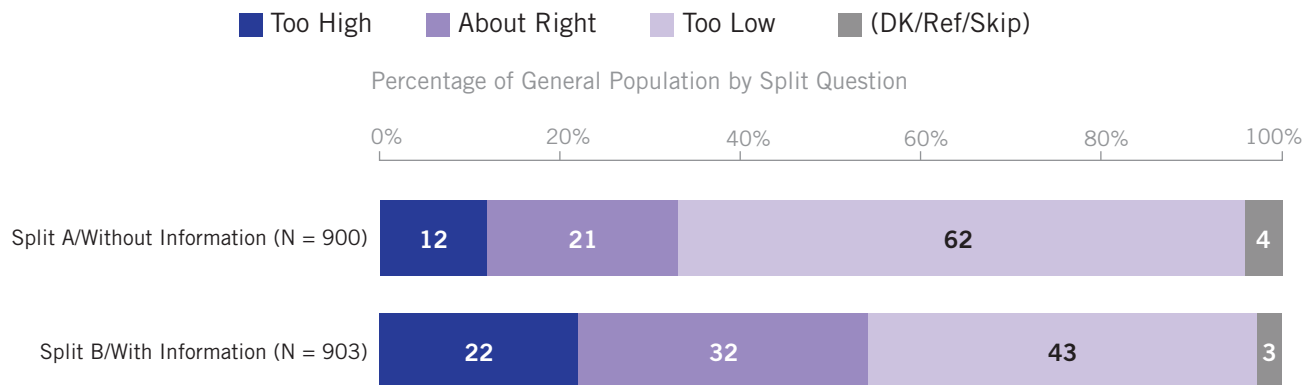
*The general public does not know how much we spend in K–12 education on a per-student basis. Fifty-five percent of respondents offering an answer said the U.S. spends \$5,000 or less per student, less than half of reported 2014–15 spending (\$11,454).*



Notes: Responses of "Don't Know" and "Refusal" not shown. For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question, which is also not shown.  
Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q13.

**FIGURE 3****How Information Affects Americans' Views on K–12 Education Funding**

*When given an actual per-student spending statistic, Americans are less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is “too low.” The proportion giving that response shrinks from 62 percent to 43 percent between the two question versions—a decrease of 19 percentage points.*



**Q14-Split A. Do you believe that public school funding in the United States is at a level that is:**

**Q14-Split B. According to the most recent information available, on average \$11,454 is being spent per year on each student attending public schools in the United States. Do you believe that public school funding in our country is at a level that is:**

*Notes:* Responses within parentheses were volunteered. "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.

*Source:* EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q14A and 14B.

respondents said public school funding was “too low” (up slightly from 54% last year). However, on the version where we included a statistic for average national public per-pupil spending (\$11,454 in 2014–15), the proportion that said spending was “too low” shrank dramatically by 19 percentage points to 43 percent. By comparison, 38 percent of respondents last year (and in 2016) said funding was “too low” on the fact-based question. See Figure 3.

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# PART I

## Parents' Schooling Experiences and Preferences

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## What Sacrifices Do Parents Make?

More parents of school-age children (“school parents”) report that they have made certain material and financial sacrifices for their children’s education. In this year’s survey, we returned to questions that we asked two years ago, asking school parents if they have made certain provisions related to work, residence, or loan financing in order to provide a good education for their children.

Reported activity levels surpassed what we observed of school parents in our 2016 national survey.<sup>14</sup> Most notably, Figure 4 shows nearly twice the number of current school parents (40%) reported having taken an additional job compared to one out of five school parents (22%) in 2016. This year, parents (30%) also are more likely to have said they changed jobs, compared to the 17 percent saying the same two years ago. Similarly, we have seen increases in the proportions of school parents saying they have moved to be closer to their child’s school (29% in 2018 vs. 21% in 2016) and among those saying they have taken out a new loan in the past (20% in 2018 vs. 13% in 2016). It would be conjecture to speculate why these substantial increases have occurred since 2016; we will consider further exploring these questions in a future project to better understand why more parents say they are making sacrifices for their children’s education during a period of time when the economy has been robust and generally improved.

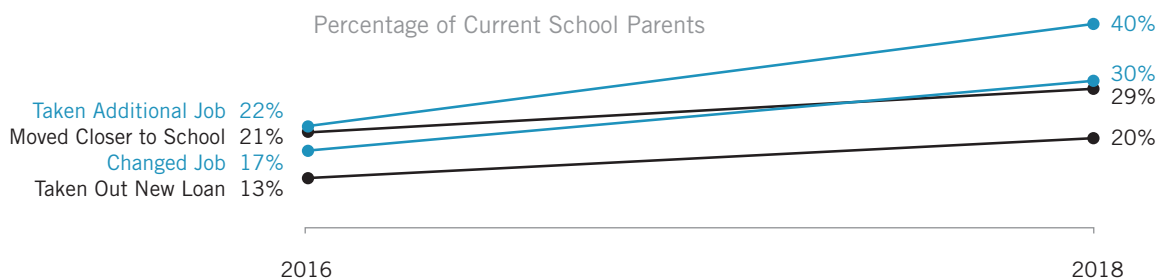
## How Do Parents Accommodate Their Children’s Schooling Needs

Based on a range of seven indicators, school parents are proactively accommodating their children’s education at the same or higher levels than what we observed in 2016. As shown in Figure 5, several differences stand out compared to two years ago. Nearly one-third of school parents (32%) say they have paid for their children’s school transportation for at least four months of a school year. That represents a 17 point increase since 2016. We also see increases in the proportions of parents saying they have significantly changed their daily routine (54% in 2018 vs. 41% in 2016); have a family member or a friend look after their child (63% in 2018 vs. 52% in 2016 ); have had family or a friend help transport a child (58% in 2018 vs. 50% in 2016); and those who said they have paid for before- or after-care services (42% in 2018 vs. 34% in 2016). Other areas of parental involvement show similar levels of activity regarding helping with homework (at least weekly) and having paid for tutoring.

**FIGURE 4**

What Parents Have Done to Support Their Children’s K–12 Education, 2016 and 2018

*Compared to two years ago, there are now nearly twice as many school parents saying they have taken an additional job or changed a job to support their children’s education.*



Notes: Phone-only survey results shown for 2016. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. Responses within parentheses were volunteered. For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.

Sources: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q11; EdChoice, 2016 Schooling in America Survey.

# School Type Enrollments and Satisfaction

While parents have had differing levels of experiences with the four types of schooling we asked about—public schools, charter schools, private schools, and home schooling—they are generally satisfied with their individual schooling experiences. This make sense and is consistent with other similar lines of questioning in survey research. The general public may have lukewarm perceptions of certain schooling sectors, but people tend to favor their own choices or more local establishments despite not sharing similar levels of favorability toward those subjects that are less proximate or at larger scale.

For example, pollsters have observed a “local bias” when respondents say they like their local representative in the U.S. Congress, compared to favorability toward Congress more generally.<sup>15</sup> We

observe a similar finding for comparing individual schooling experiences to grading their local schools or expressing preferences for a particular school type.

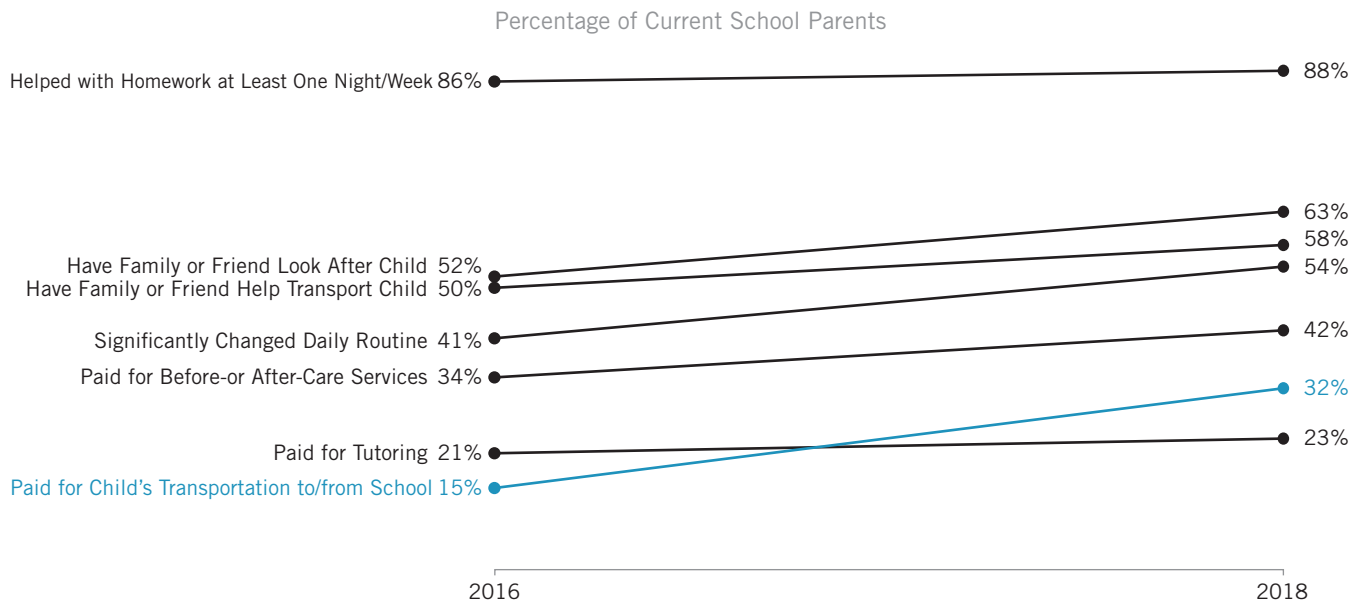
The vast majority of parents’ experiences occur in public district schools, with almost nine out of 10 parents surveyed (89%) having children who attended public school at least one year. This proportion is similar to what we see reported in U.S. Department of Education data.<sup>16</sup> Figure 6 displays parents’ schooling experiences by type based on survey responses.

Current school parents are much more likely to say they have been satisfied than dissatisfied across all types of schools. Satisfaction with district schools, private schools, and homeschooling dipped since last year, though there has been a 14 percentage point decrease among current school parents in satisfaction with private schools. Parents who have homeschooled their children expressed the

**FIGURE 5**

What Parents Have Done to Accomodate Their Children’s K–12 Education, 2016 and 2018

*Substantially more parents now say they have paid for their child’s transportation for at least four months of a school year.*

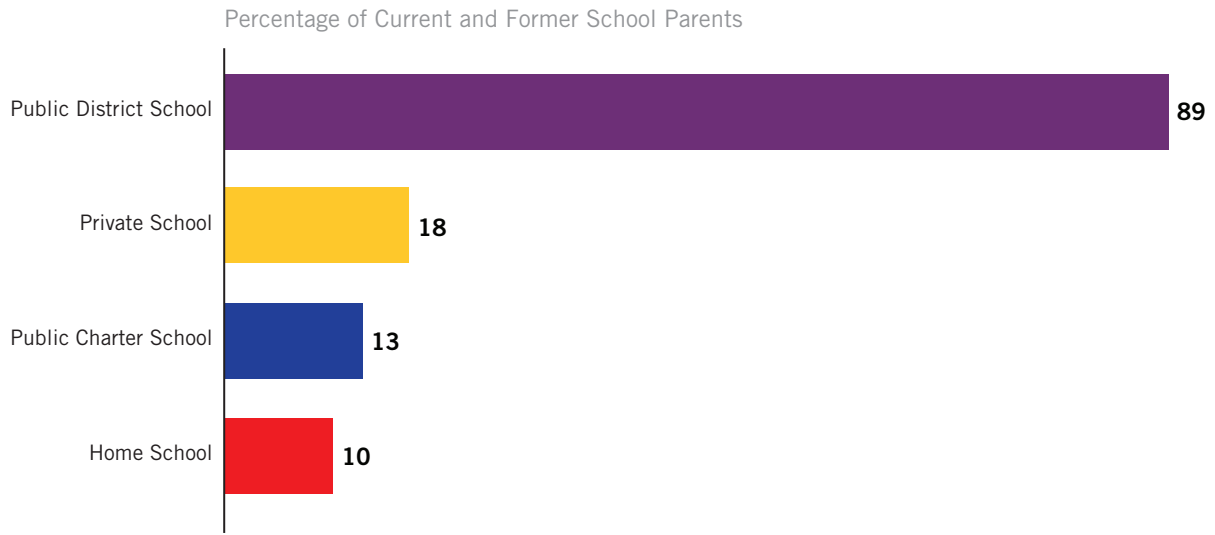


Notes: Phone-only survey results shown for 2016. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.

Sources: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q12; EdChoice, 2016 Schooling in America Survey.

**FIGURE 6****School Types Children Have Attended for at Least One Year**

*The vast majority of parents in our survey have enrolled their children in public district schools.*



Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q3, Q5, Q7, Q9.

highest levels of satisfaction (86%) among the four school types. The private school and charter school satisfaction margins (+58 points and +53 points, respectively) were greater than the margin observed for district schools (+33 points), although the homeschooling satisfaction margin (+69 points) dwarfed the other three sectors. Parents were more than twice as likely to say they were “very satisfied” with charter schools and private schools (43% and 47%, respectively), than district schools (26%). See Figure 7.

## Grading Local Schools

Parents of school-age children are more likely to give A and B grades to private schools in their local area than to give the same grades to local public district and charter schools. Figure 8 shows the breakdown of current parents’ assigned letter grades for the schools in their communities. Of those giving grades, three-fourths (75%) of parents gave their local private schools an A or B grade; about six of 10 (62%) gave local charter schools such high marks; and a little more than half (53%) graded local district schools A or B. Larger proportions of parents did not give grades to charter schools (14%) and private schools (13%) compared to the

local public schools (<2%). The greater tendency for non-grading is likely to occur either because charter schools or private schools are not located in their communities, or they lack familiarity or exposure to those sectors.

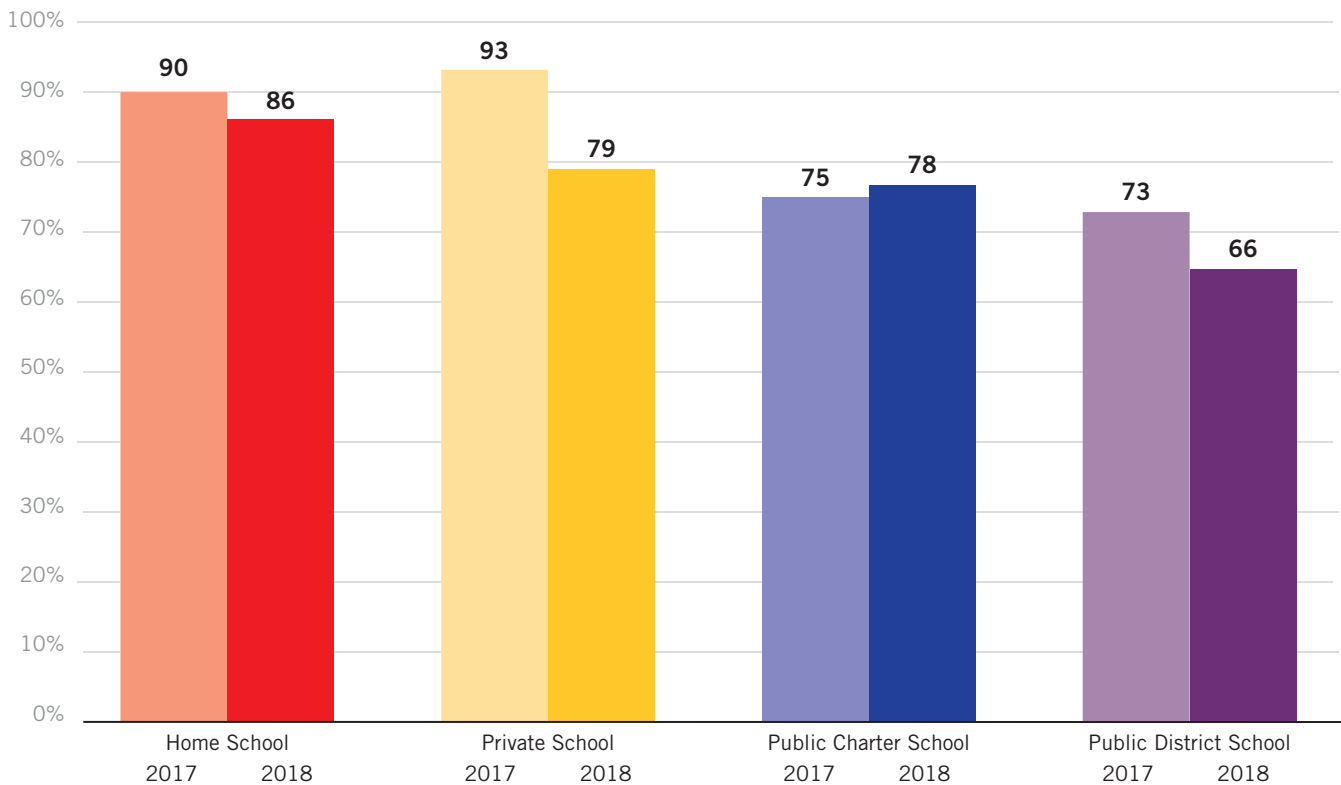
## School Type Preferences

A plurality of current and former school parents (40%) said they would send their child to a private school if it was their decision. Just more than one-third of parents (36%) would select a public district school. Nearly equal proportions said they prefer a public charter school (13%) or want to homeschool their child (10%). Those results reflect the composite average of two question versions in a split-sample experiment.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 9 illustrates that parents’ preferences do not align with American students’ actual enrollment patterns. In our survey, parents exhibit a diverse array of schooling preferences. However, current student enrollments do not show the same diversity. About 82 percent of K–12 students attend public district schools in the United States. Only 10 percent of students enroll in private schools. Roughly five percent of students currently go

**FIGURE 7****Parents' Satisfaction with Schools, 2017 and 2018***Parent satisfaction has dropped across school sectors since last year, except for charter schools.*

Percentage of Current and Former School Parents Saying They Have Been "Very" or "Somewhat" Satisfied



Notes: Phone-only survey results shown for 2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question. Sample sizes vary by school type and by year: Home School (2017, N = 47; 2018, N = 126); Private School (2017, N = 122; 2018, N = 188); Public Charter School (2017, N = 59; 2018, N = 166); Public District School (2017, N = 485; 2018, N = 825).

Sources: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25-October 7, 2018), Q4, Q6, Q8, Q10; EdChoice, *2017 Schooling in America Survey*

to public charter schools. It is estimated that approximately 3 percent of the nation's students are homeschooled.

In the split-sample experiment we do not observe stark differences of parents' schooling preferences. In the alternate version, the inserted language "financial costs and transportation were of no concern" does not appear to affect opinions on any school type. Our prior surveys have shown larger effects on school type preferences.<sup>18</sup> See Figure 10. This is the sixth year in a row we have asked parents about their school type preferences, using the same question wording each year to allow for analyzing trends. Since 2014, similar proportions of current school parents have said they prefer public district schools, private schools, and homeschooling. The percentage of parents choosing public charter

school decreased four points since last year's high of 16 percent. See Figure 11.

We asked survey respondents a follow-up question for the main reason they chose a certain type of school. Respondents choosing private school, public charter school, or homeschooling were more likely to prioritize "individual attention/one-on-one/class size/student-teacher ratio" than those selecting public district school. More than one-quarter of private school and charter school choosers gave that reason. Respondents that preferred district schools would most frequently say some aspect of "socialization" was a key reason for making their selection. We encourage readers to cautiously interpret these results because sample sizes were relatively small for the charter school and homeschool-choosing respondents. See Table 2.

**TABLE 2****Top Five Reasons for Choosing a Specific School Type**

Percentage of General Population by Preferred School Type

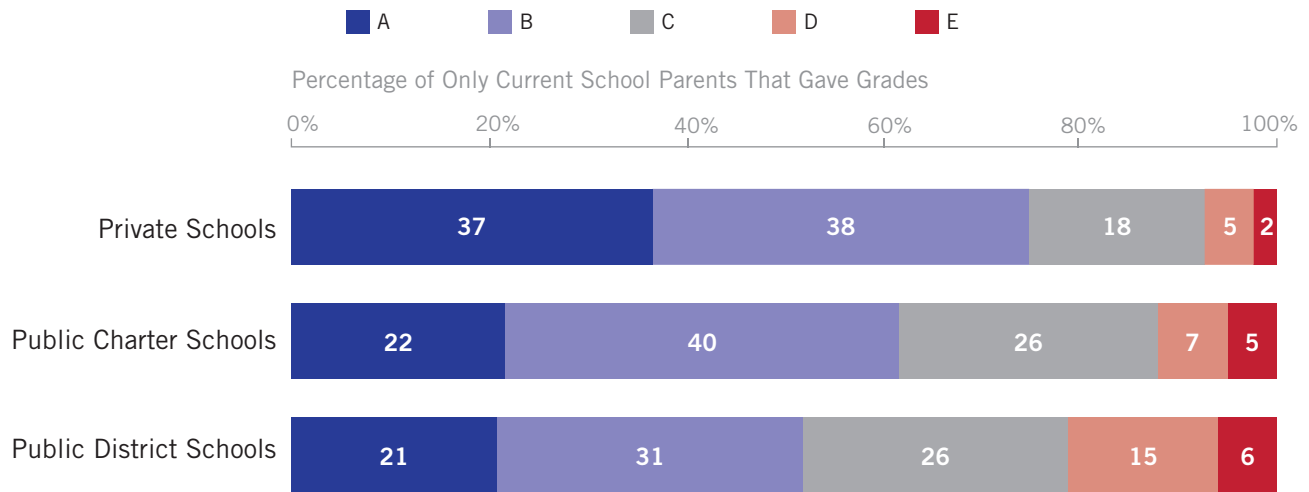
<b>Public District School (N=614)</b>	
Socialization / Peers / Other Kids	15%
Better Education / Quality	13%
Diversity / Variety	11%
Cost / Tuition / Affordability	7%
Teachers / Teaching / Way They Teach	7%
<b>Private School (N=723)</b>	
Better Education / Quality	18%
Individual Attention / One-on-One	16%
Class Size / Student-Teacher Ratio	12%
Religion / Religious Reasons	9%
Teachers / Teaching / Way They Teach	9%
<b>Public Charter Schools (N=207)</b>	
Individual Attention / One-on-One	15%
Better Education / Quality	14%
Academics / Curriculum / Courses	12%
Class Size / Student-Teacher Ratio	12%
Teachers / Teaching / Way They Teach	9%
<b>Home School (N=198)</b>	
Safety / Less Drugs, Violence / Bullying	24%
Better Education / Quality	12%
Individual Attention / One-on-One	11%
Academics / Curriculum / Courses	9%
Teaching / Way They Teach	6%

*Notes:* Lists cite the total number of unweighted interviews (N) per school type grouping. However, all percentages reflect the count of coded responses divided by the total number of weighted interviews. Unweighted N's are provided so the reader can roughly assess the reliability of reported percentages.

*Source:* EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q17.

**FIGURE 8****How Current School Parents Grade Their Local Schools**

Current school parents are much more likely to rate their local private schools with an "A" or "B" (75%) compared to ratings of public district schools (53%).

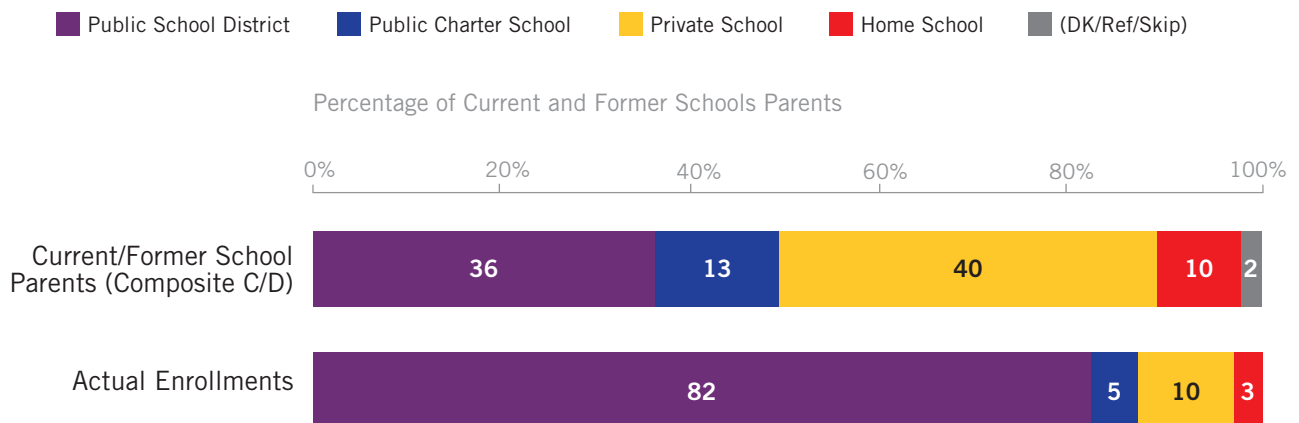


Notes: Volunteered "Don't Know" and "Not Applicable" responses not shown nor reflected in this chart. Sample sizes vary by school type: Private Schools (N = 346); Public Charter Schools (N = 330); Public District Schools (N = 520).

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q15.

**FIGURE 9****Parents' Schooling Preferences by School Type**

More than eight out of 10 American students attend public district schools, but only about one-third of parents said they would prefer a district school.



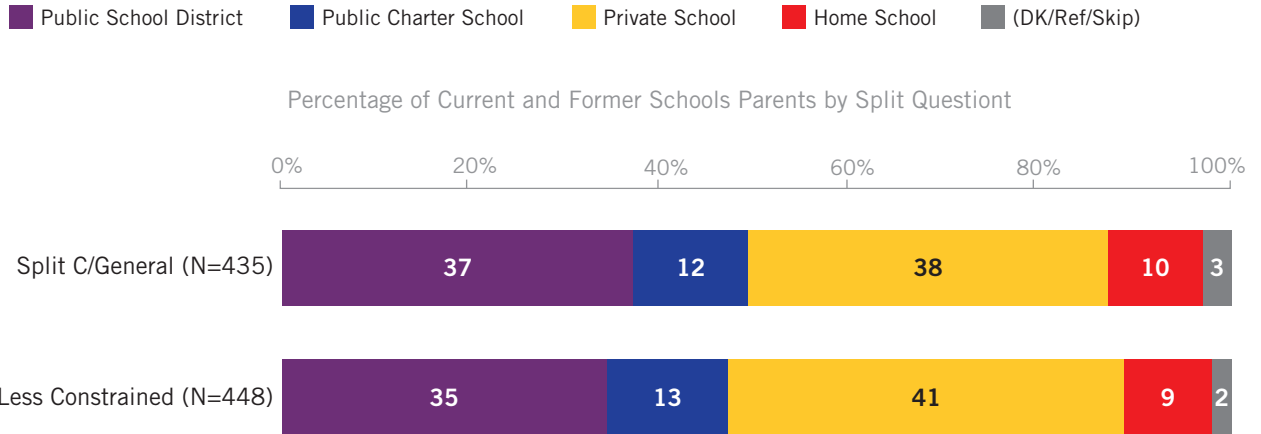
Notes: The percentages in this chart reflect a composite that averages split sample responses to two slightly different versions of this question (16C/D). Responses within parentheses were volunteered: "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question. For enrollment data sources, see Additional Information about American K–12 Education on p.7

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q16C and Q16D.

**FIGURE 10**

**Comparing Parents' Schooling Preferences Based on Question Wording**

*When parents are given question wording that discounts "financial costs and transportation," this year's preference boost for private schools (+3 points) appears more muted than last year (+ 10 points).*



**Q16-Split C. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?**

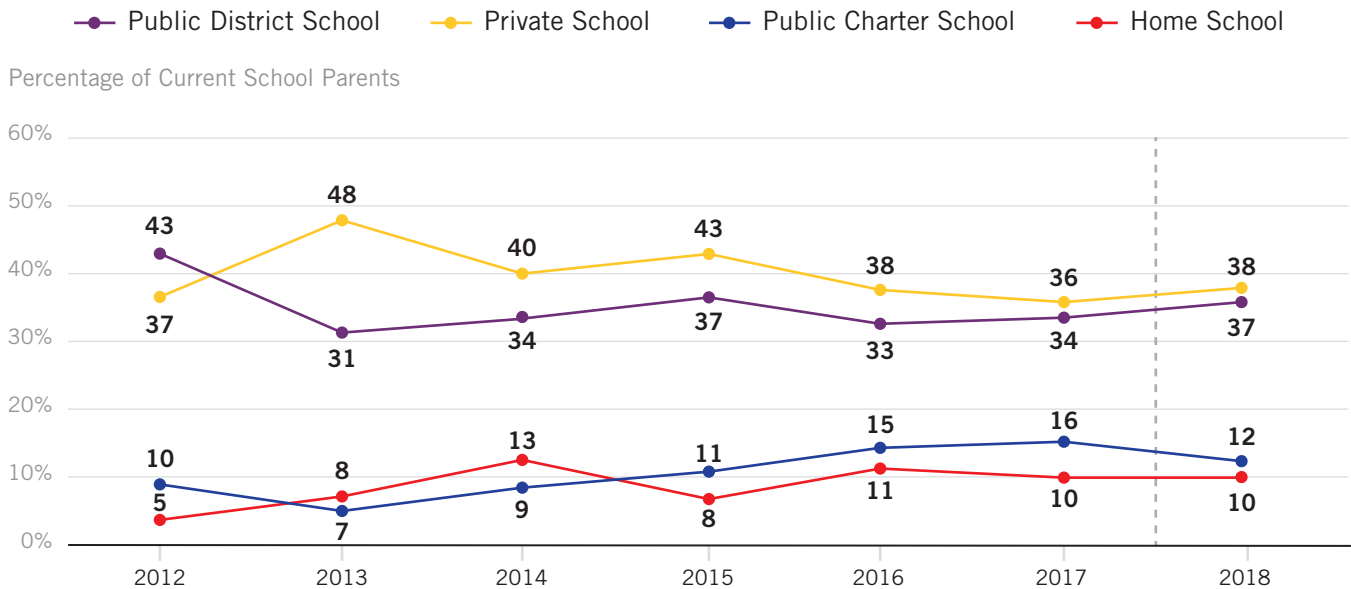
**Q16-Split D. If it were your decision and you could select any type of school, and financial costs and transportation were of no concern, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?**

*Notes:* The percentages in this chart reflect a composite that averages split samples' responses to two slightly different versions of this question (16C/D). Responses within parentheses were volunteered: "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question. For enrollment data sources, see Additional Information about American K–12 Education on p.7  
*Source:* EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q16C and Q16D.

**FIGURE 11**

**Current School Parents' Preferences for School Type, 2012–2018**

*Similar proportions of school parents prefer public district schools and private schools, and that finding has changed little in the past five years.*



*Notes:* Split samples used for 2016, 2017, and 2018. Trends are still based on same wording. Phone-only survey results shown for 2013–2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. "Don't Know" and "Refusal" not shown. For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question, which is not shown.  
*Sources:* EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q16C; EdChoice, Schooling in America Survey, 2016–2017; Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, Schooling in America Survey, 2013–2015.

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# **PART II**

## Teachers' Professional Experiences and Preferences

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**TABLE 3A**

Summary Statistics for Current Public School Teachers Sample (N = 777),  
Compared to U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Benchmarks

	Unweighted Cost (N)	Unweighted Online %	Weighted Online %	NCES Benchmark %
<b>AGE GROUP</b>				
Under 30	108	13.9	15.0	15.0
30 to 39	261	33.6	28.5	28.5
40 to 49	218	28.1	27.4	27.4
50 to 59	145	18.7	21.5	21.5
60 and Over	45	5.8	7.6	7.6
<b>GENDER</b>				
Male	197	25.4	23.4	23.4
Female	580	74.6	76.6	76.6
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>				
Asian/Pacific Islander	33	4.3	3.9	2.5
Black/African American	60	7.7	7.1	6.7
Hispanic/Latino	61	7.9	8.8	8.8
Native American	8	1.0	0.9	0.4
Two or More	24	3.1	2.8	1.4
White (*Includes Hispanic)	650*	83.7*	85.0*	80.1
<b>REGION</b>				
Northeast	160	20.6	18.1	20.3
Midwest	171	22.0	21.3	21.9
South	305	39.3	37.3	32.2
West	141	18.1	23.3	25.3

Sources: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 1987-88 through 2011-12; "Private School Teacher Data File," 1987-88 through 2011-12; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015-16. For Region: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2011-12, accessed October 10, 2018, retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/SASS>

It has been an eventful year for America’s teachers. Walkouts, protests, looming retirement and pension pressures, and a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision affecting public employee unions are eye-opening developments that make a survey of teachers timely.<sup>19</sup>

It would be an understatement to say that this year has been an intense one for advocates of public school educators in states like Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. The slogan (and hashtag) “Red for Ed” became a symbol for the current mood among teachers and union activists.<sup>20</sup> In April, Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association, told ABC News in an interview:

“This is not unpredictable. They [public school teachers] understand the only power they have is to bring those voices together, to stand together and what they’re saying is, ‘We no longer have any faith in politicians. We have not seen that you have been doing your jobs, that you have been taking care of education, that you have been taking care of our safety, that you’ve been taking care of basic justice. And so we’ll take matters into our own hands...’”<sup>21</sup>

The 2018 walkouts and protests—and media coverage of those events—likely captured only a limited snapshot of public school teachers’ views—and only on certain issues. Surveys and polling can

**TABLE 3B**

Additional Summary Statistics for Current Public School Teachers

	Unweighted Count (N)	Unweighted Online%	Weighted Online%
<b>AGE GROUP</b>			
18 to 34	243	31.3	29.7
35 to 54	427	60.0	53.5
55 and Over	107	13.8	16.9
<b>COMMUNITY TYPE (SELF ID)</b>			
Urban	153	20.0	19.3
Suburban	366	47.1	47.2
Small Town/Rural	258	33.2	33.5
<b>CURRENTLY TEACHING WHICH GRADE(S)</b>			
Kindergarten to 5th Grade	388	49.9	50.1
6th Grade to 8th Grade	229	29.5	29.6
9th Grade to 12th Grade	245	31.5	31.1
<b>GENERATION</b>			
Millennial	320	41.2	38.1
Generation X	329	42.3	42.1
Baby Boomer	125	16.1	19.4
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>			
< \$40,000	111	14.3	14.6
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	386	49.7	49.1
≥ \$80,000	276	35.5	35.8
<b>LENGTH OF TEACHING</b>			
≤ 3 Years	111	14.3	14.3
4 to 9 Years	253	32.6	30.6
≥ 10 Years	409	52.6	54.5
<b>POLITICAL PARTY (SELF ID)</b>			
Democrat	285	36.7	36.2
Republican	242	31.1	31.4
Independent	206	26.5	26.2

Sources: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 1987-88 through 2011-12; "Private School Teacher Data File," 1987-88 through 2011-12; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2015-16. For Region: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), "Public School Teacher Data File," 2011-12, accessed October 10, 2018, retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/SASS>

provide a broader and deeper approach to better understand teacher perspectives. As they often do, Education Next included teachers in their annual poll in 2018. They found that:

- more than 70 percent of teachers supported increasing salaries, substantially higher than the general public;
- more than half of teachers opposed laws mandating agency or union representation fees;
- about three out of 10 teachers supported school vouchers or charter schools, differing from substantially higher levels of support among the general public.<sup>22</sup>

Although the annual PDK Poll did not survey teachers this year, it did focus part of its survey on the teaching profession. At the outset of this year's report, the authors write:

“Two-thirds of Americans say teachers are underpaid, and an overwhelming 78% of public school parents say they would support teachers in their community if they went on strike for more pay...Even as most Americans continue to say they have high trust and confidence in teachers, a majority also say they don't want their own children to become teachers, most often citing poor pay and benefits as the primary reason for their reluctance.”<sup>23</sup>

Near the end of the 2017–18 school year, Educators for Excellence (E4E) and the Gotham Research Group conducted their own online survey among a nationally representative sample of 1,000 full-time public district and charter school teachers. Some of their topics and questions were similar to questions in our survey. It is well worth directly quoting about a dozen of E4E's key findings:<sup>24</sup>

- “Teachers across the board agree that they would like to spend more time collaborating with peers and on classroom instruction. Teachers consistently say that they want to spend less time on administrative paperwork and in staff meetings.”
- “The vast majority of teachers wish there were more opportunities to further their career and professional skills while remaining in the classroom, and nearly all teachers believe that they should be compensated for taking on leadership roles in addition to classroom responsibilities.”
- “Nearly half of teachers feel pressure to become administrators in order to advance their careers.”
- “Eight out of 10 teachers surveyed said they were somewhat or very likely to remain a classroom teacher for the remainder of their career, which means that 20 percent are considering a career change.”
- “When asked what would motivate them most to stay in the classroom, teachers cite higher salaries as the number one priority. Further, they show significant support for incentivizing hard-to-staff positions and teacher leaders.”
- “Where most teachers (58 percent) do not believe there should be a tradeoff between salaries and pensions, if pushed to decide, they would prefer higher salaries over larger pensions.”
- “Teachers report that they would be most motivated to strike for financial reasons, such as pay cuts or reductions to benefits, including retirement benefits. However, a full third of teachers say they would very likely strike over concerns about inadequate resources for their students or decreases in school funding.”
- “Teachers state loudly and clearly that they want more opportunities to influence policy. And they feel that their influence on policy decreases the further the entity is away from the classroom...”
- “When it comes to evaluating school effectiveness, measurements of student academic growth were again the most valued among teachers. Teachers also say measures of school climate and culture are essential for developing a full picture of a school's effectiveness, in addition to feedback from students.”
- “The farther teachers get from their schools and districts—such as at the state or national level—the less valued they feel.”

- “Eighty-five percent of all educators believe unions are essential or important, as do three-quarters of teachers who are nonunion members.”
- “Despite the absence of strong feelings about the impact of *Janus v. AFSCME*, teachers are clear about the importance of collective bargaining and their vulnerability in school politics in the absence of unions. When asked if they would be likely to actively opt in to their union if they were not automatically enrolled, eight out of 10 said they would be likely to do so. But for nonunion members currently paying fair-share fees, six out of 10 would be likely to opt out of paying any fees.”
- “School choice is a nuanced issue among teachers. The majority oppose alternatives to district public schools, but teachers are supportive of school choice options provided the alternatives do not shift funds away from public schools and the alternatives guarantee against discrimination of students. In fact, only six percent of teachers said they opposed any form of school choice.”

For the first time, our Schooling in America Survey includes a large sample of public school teachers. This year’s survey provides additional attention and a spotlight on how the country’s teachers view their careers, accountability and testing issues, and educational choice policies. Because our survey was administered later in the year, we also have the first snapshot of what public school teachers (and the general public) think about the landmark *Janus v. AFSCME* ruling that was issued in June.

In Part II of our report, we provide some of the results based on 777 completed online interviews of current public school teachers. We also report the opinions and attitudes of educators in Parts III and IV for comparisons with school parents and the general public.

## Outlook on the Teaching Profession

About mid-way through the online questionnaire, we wanted to learn more about public school educators’ impressions of the profession generally based on their own work experience. We adapted the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a way to measure enthusiasm for the teaching profession.<sup>25</sup>

First, some brief background about NPS. To generate an NPS, a survey poses a single question to a person to determine to what degree she or he would “recommend” a product or organization. The person answering is asked to give a rating on a scale of zero to 10.<sup>26</sup>

- A “Promoter” is someone who gives a nine or 10. This person shows a high degree of loyalty, commitment, and enthusiasm.
- A “Passive” is someone who answers with a seven or eight. This profile can be described as being satisfied and content, but not someone who would go out of her/his way to boost a brand, product, or organization.
- “Detractors” are those people who responded in the range of zero to six. This group is unhappy and ready to move away from a brand, product, or organization.

The NPS is the difference when subtracting the Detractors from the Promoters. It is essentially an index that ranges from -100 to 100 that organizations often use to measure the willingness of its stakeholders to recommend a product, service, organization, or person to others. NPS can be used as a proxy for gauging a population’s relative satisfaction, loyalty, or commitment.

Like we have in previous surveys of military service members and state legislators, we adapted the standard NPS question for teachers and used the following wording: “On a scale from zero to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend teaching in a public school to a friend or colleague?”

The NPS results shocked us, even given the highly visible educator discontent in 2018.

Three-fourths of teachers in our survey (74%) are non-Promoters under the NPS rubric. Our survey generated an NPS of -17 among all teacher respondents. In previous surveys, we have reported scores of +45 for active-duty military service members and +41 for state legislators. In our survey's public school teacher sample, there were 199 Promoters (26%), 247 Passives (32%), and 327 Detractors (42%).<sup>27</sup>

Some people may be skeptical of the NPS to gauge professional enthusiasm or loyalty. As an alternative approach, we can simply look at the mean score for this question. On the zero to 10 rating scale, the mean score for teachers is 6.49. By comparison, the mean scores for active-duty military and state legislators are 8.41 and 8.19, respectively. The underlying message remains the same as the NPS comparisons: The mean values appear to indicate public school teachers are less likely to recommend public school teaching to friends or colleagues, compared to military and legislators making similar judgments about their professions. The negative scores using the NPS framework—even across teacher subgroups—suggest the 2018 protests, walkouts, and general angst may reflect deeper issues and challenges within the profession—perhaps beyond teacher pay and school funding—that frustrate a large swath of public school educators across the country. See Table 4.

## Rating Trustworthiness of Stakeholders

Who do public school teachers trust? We asked teachers to what extent they trust various stakeholders in K–12 education. Proximity appears to matter. Figure 12 shows majorities have “complete” or “a lot of” trust in their school's principal (57%) and their students (52%). Less than half say they trust their teachers' union leadership (46%), superintendent (41%), or their students' parents (36%). Governing and oversight institutions garner even less trust among teachers. Roughly one-third or less of teachers signal trust in their school board (35%), state department of education (28%), or the federal department of education (25%). The results imply there may be opportunities for school leaders to have a more prominent role and function to address teachers' concerns and frustrations.

Generally the teachers who were younger, Millennial, or having at least a few years of experience were more likely to trust stakeholders than the overall teacher average. That was a fairly consistent comparative finding even when levels of trust were low. They have relatively higher levels of trust in their students, students' parents, school principal, and teachers' union, compared to the overall teacher average. K–5 teachers gave similar above-average trust ratings, except for teachers' union leadership.

Teachers who were in urban schools, or who were male, tended to be more trusting of governing bodies like the local school boards and state or federal government education agencies.

**TABLE 4**

Selected Demographics Among Public School Teachers by Net Promoter Score (NPS) Groups, 2018  
 "On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend teaching in a public school to a friend or colleague?"

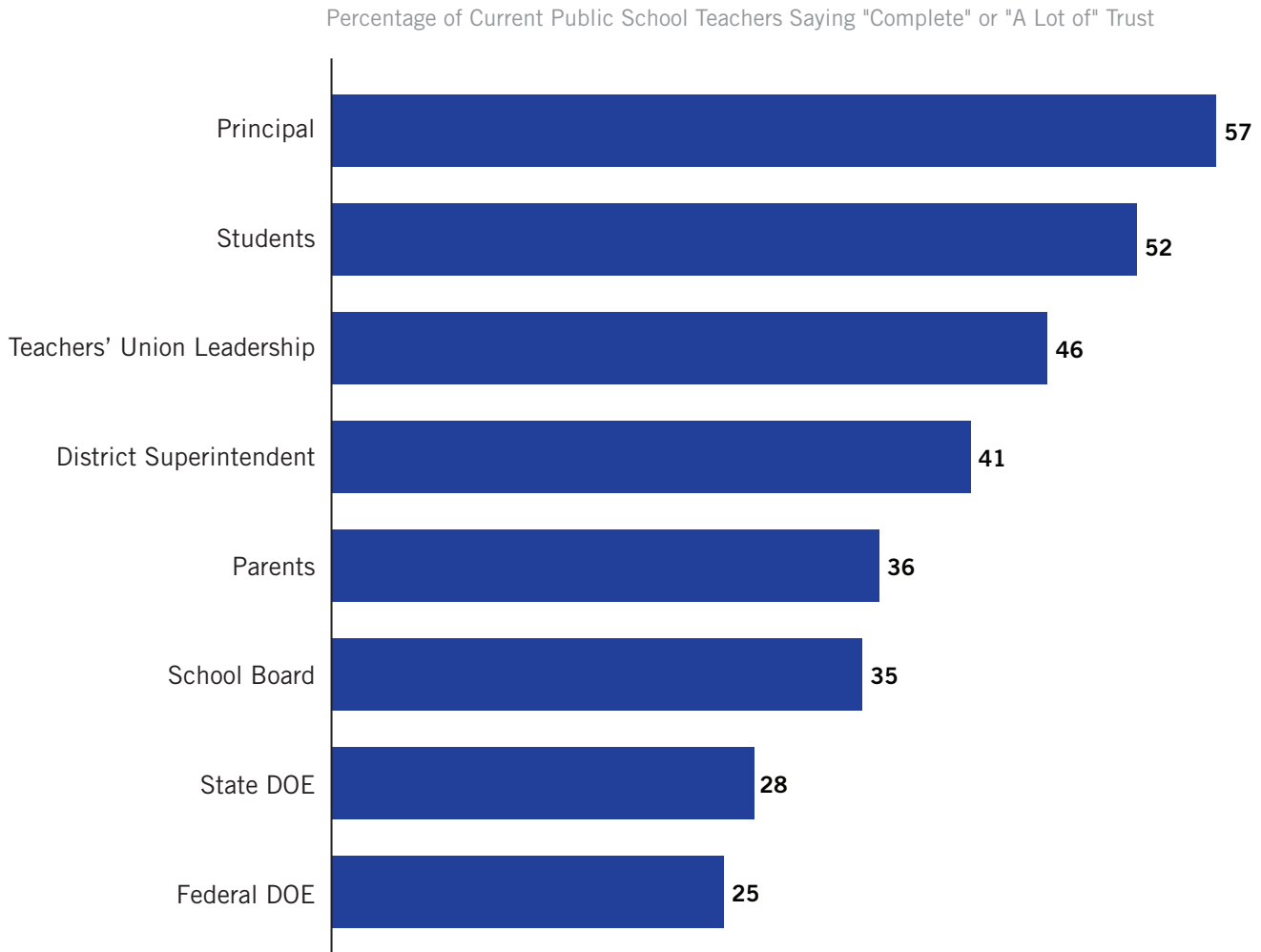
	% Promoter (9 or 10)	% Passive (7 or 8)	% Detractor (0 to 6)	NPS	Mean Score	N=
<b>CURRENT PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS</b>	26	32	42	-17	6.49	777
<b>AGE GROUP</b>						
18 to 34	28	32	40	-12	6.89	243
35 to 54	24	33	42	-18	6.44	427
≥ 55	25	27	48	-23	5.96	107
<b>COMMUNITY TYPE (SELF ID)</b>						
Urban	31	29	40	-9	6.82	153
Suburban	24	33	43	-19	6.43	366
Small Town/Rural	25	32	42	-18	6.40	258
<b>CURRENTLY TEACHING WHICH GRADE(S)</b>						
Kindergarten to 5th Grade	28	32	39	-11	6.62	388
6th Grade to 8th Grade	22	32	45	-23	6.28	229
9th Grade to 12th Grade	26	30	44	-18	6.51	245
<b>GENDER</b>						
Female	24	34	43	-19	6.40	580
Male	32	27	42	-10	6.80	197
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>						
< \$40,000	21	31	48	-27	6.28	111
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	26	36	39	-13	6.65	386
≥ \$80,000	27	27	46	-18	6.36	276
<b>LENGTH OF TEACHING</b>						
≤ 3 Years	24	39	37	-13	6.97	111
4 to 9 Years	29	32	40	-11	6.78	253
≥ 10 Years	24	30	45	-21	6.23	409
<b>REGION</b>						
Northeast	25	30	45	-21	6.42	160
Midwest	27	37	36	-9	6.78	171
South	26	30	44	-19	6.36	305
West	26	31	43	-17	6.51	141

Notes: We measure an NPS Score by subtracting the percentage of "Detractor" responses from the percentage of "Promoter" responses. The difference indicates loyalty and commitment within a specific population for the job of public school teacher.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q29.

**FIGURE 12****Public School Teachers' Trust in K–12 Education Stakeholders**

*More than half of public school teachers say they trust their students and school principal. There is much less trust in state and federal departments of education (DOE).*



Source: EdChoice, 2018 *Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q31.

## Assigning Responsibility for School Disruptions from Teacher Walkouts or Strikes

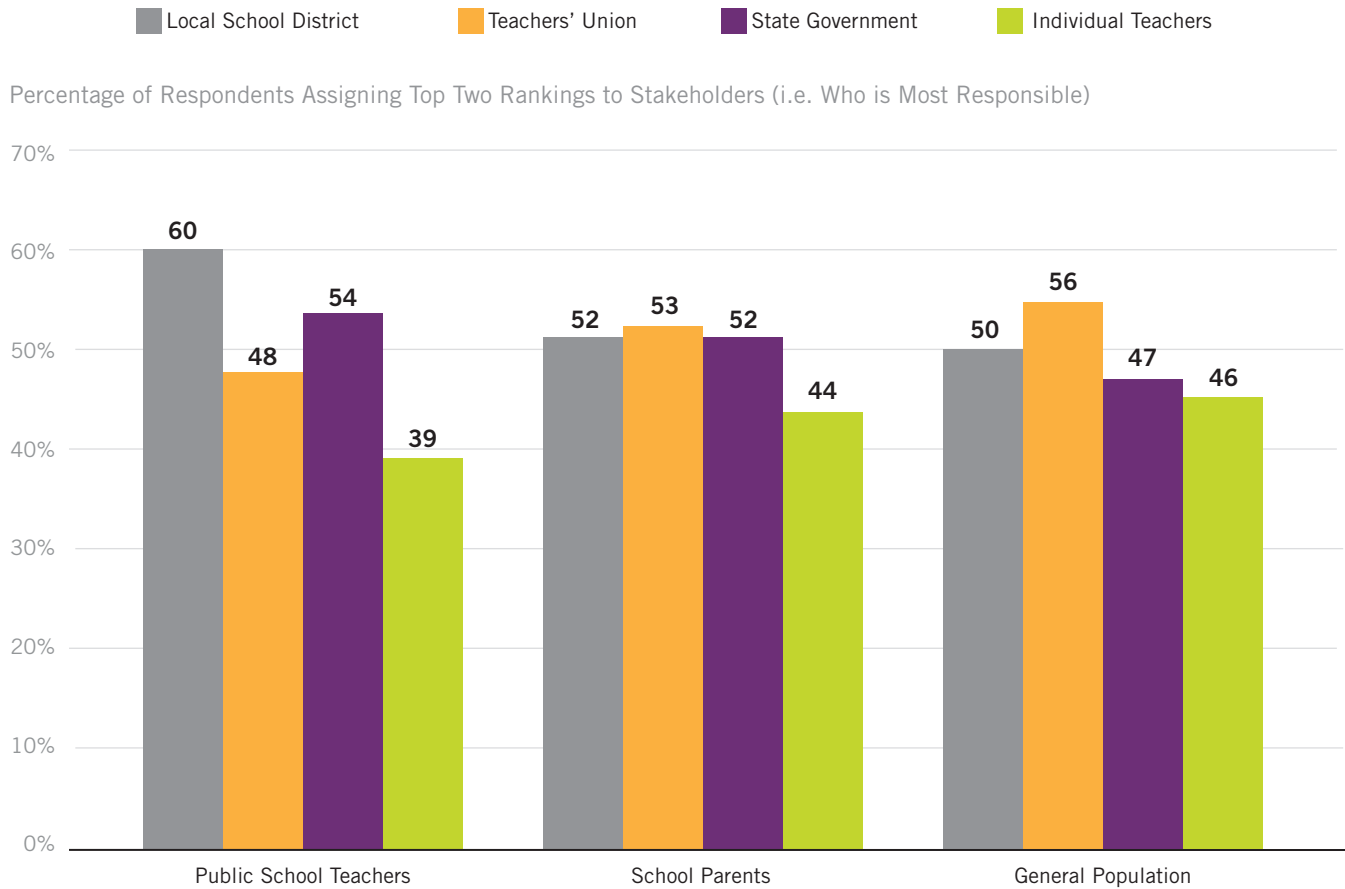
Who was responsible for any school disruptions resulting from teacher walkouts or strikes? We asked a version of that question to not only the 777 current public school teachers in our survey, but also the general public sample, which included 300 parents of school-age children. All

survey respondents were asked to rank-order stakeholders—“individual teachers,” “local school district,” “state government,” and “teachers’ union”—from most responsible to least responsible.

We aggregated the #1 and #2 rankings (or “top two”) of each stakeholder and present the results in Figure 13. Minorities of teachers, school parents, and the general public blame individual teachers. They tend to assign responsibility to the governing entities or even the teachers’ union. A

**FIGURE 13****Who is Most Responsible for School Disruptions from Teacher Walkouts?**

*Teachers, parents, and the general public all assign the least amount of responsibility to individual teachers for the recent teacher walkouts. Teachers are more likely to assign responsibility to the school district, whereas the public is more likely to say the teachers' union is responsible.*



Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q32.

majority of teachers indicate the school district (60%) is responsible for any disruptions, and state government (54%) is not far behind in its culpability. Slight majorities of school parents say the same but are more likely to include the teachers' union as a responsible party. The general public is more likely to assign responsibility to the teachers' union (56%) than the other three listed stakeholders, although the differences are not that large.

## Views on Public-Sector Union Agency Fees and *Janus v. AFSCME*

On June 27, 2018, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, affecting how public-sector employee unions operate and generate revenue in the future. The 5-4 court majority cited infringement of the First Amendment to effectively end the 40-year practice of public-sector unions collecting “agency” fees

from non-members. Many “right-to-work” states had already disallowed this practice, but the new ruling made it illegal to collect non-member fees across the nation.<sup>28</sup>

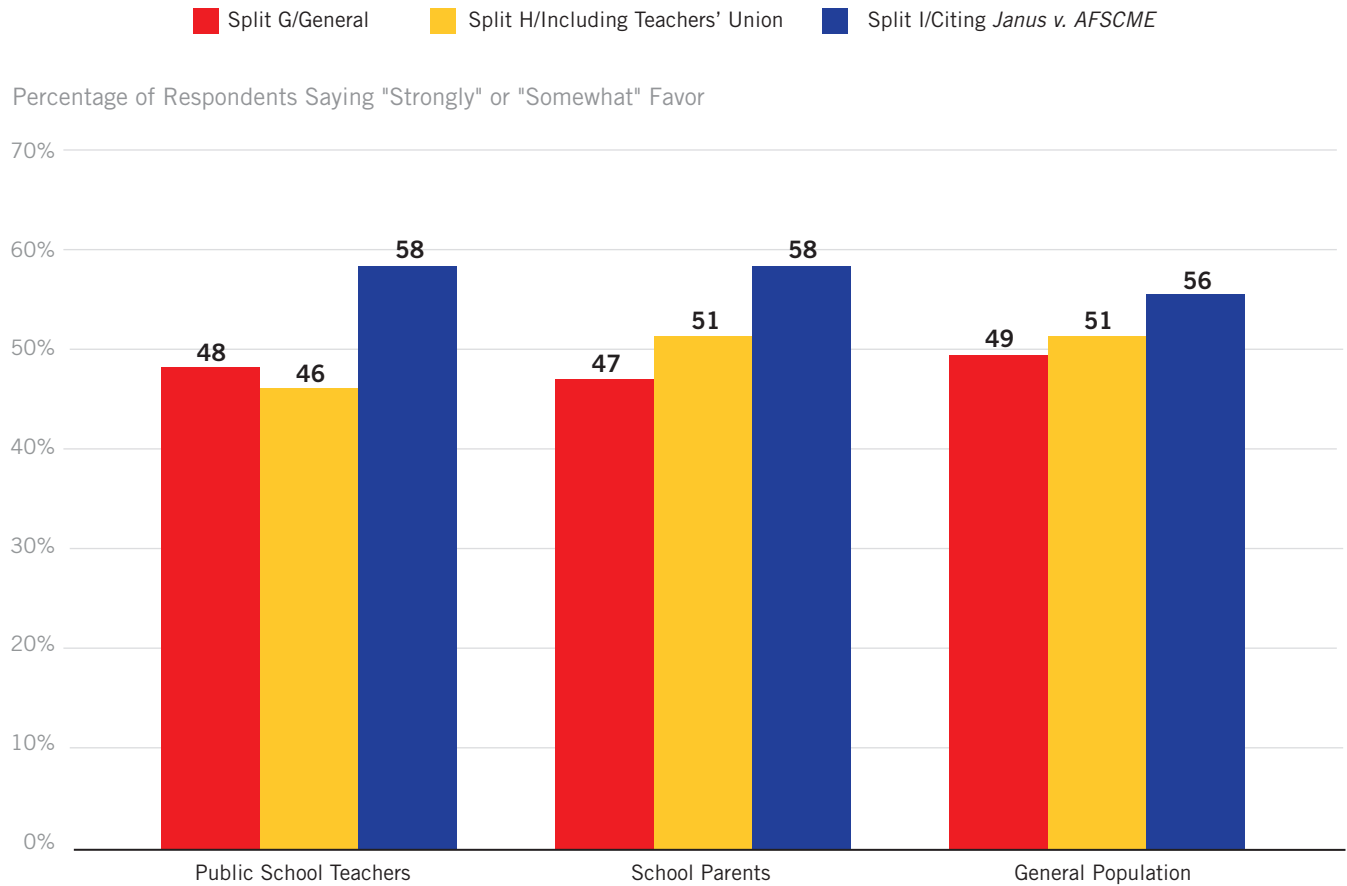
What do teacher, parents, and the general public think about union agency fees in general, and the *Janus* decision in particular? To find out, we conducted a split-sample experiment to see how respondents reacted to three slightly differently worded questions about the prohibition of public-sector unions collecting mandatory agency fees from non-members. One question was fairly general. A second question used identical wording, but it also made explicit reference to teachers’ unions. A third question built upon the latter’s wording and included a lead reference to the recent *Janus* decision. By adding language in a step-wise fashion, we can see if the additional references affect opinion one way or the other when comparing split-question results to each other.

We expected the views of teachers to differ markedly between school parents and the general public, if not on the more general items, then at the very least on the split-question mentioning the *Janus* decision. Such differences did not materialize. Teacher responses were very similar to those of school parents and the general public on the general question, support for prohibiting mandatory agency fees hovering just below 50 percent. Teacher support dipped only a couple points to 46 percent when the question included a reference that connected teachers’ unions to public-sector unions. Support among parents and the general public increased marginally by several points.

What is the clearest result from this wording experiment? The explicit mention of the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision boosted support for prohibiting the collection of agency fees of non-members. And surprisingly to us, public school teachers appear to be most affected by that explicit reference. Their support for the fee-collection ban jumped up to 58 percent with the *Janus* wording. See Figure 14.

**FIGURE 14****Views on Public-Sector Union Fees and *Janus v. AFSCME***

Teachers, parents, and the general public change opinion in the favorable direction when given more specific information about the U.S. Supreme Court's 2018 *Janus* decision that banned agency fees for public sector employees regardless of union membership. Favorability for prohibiting such fees increased by +11 points among current public school teachers and +11 points among current school parents.



**Q42-Split G.** Some states prohibit public-sector unions from collecting fees from public employees who they represent but who do not choose to join the union. In general, do you favor or oppose this prohibition?

**Q42-H.** Some states prohibit public-sector unions—including teachers' unions—from collecting fees from public employees who they represent but who do not choose to join the union and pay dues. In general, do you favor or oppose this prohibition?

**Q42-I.** The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled in *Janus v. AFSCME* that prohibit public-sector unions—including teachers' unions—from collecting fees from public employees who they represent but who do not choose to join the union and pay dues. In general, do you favor or oppose this prohibition?

Source: EdChoice, 2018 *Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q42.



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# **PART III**

## Accountability in K–12 Education

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We appear to be at another inflection point regarding how states pursue accountability in K–12 education. In 2015, the federal government returned substantial autonomy back to the states with the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the latest iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. States now have more flexibility in terms of who or what they will hold accountable, and how they will operationalize a statewide accountability system. We are at the dawn of a new era, and implementation is only now beginning in the states.

In April 2018, EdChoice hosted a series of eight focus groups over the course of a week to understand what policy influencers think about accountability in K–12 education—the past, present, and future. We brought many different voices into these conversations to discuss different contexts and approaches for public policy and private entrepreneurship on the subject of accountability in K–12.<sup>29</sup>

Those focus group sessions inspired us to include a group of questions about accountability in this year’s Schooling in America Survey. We wanted to learn what school parents, public school teachers, and the general public think should be fundamental values and goals fortifying a state accountability

system: What should be the purpose? Who should have the most say regarding development? Who should have the most control when it comes to implementation? Who should be held most accountable? What should be evaluated in a statewide accountability system? The questions are fairly basic, and we asked respondents to rank-order and compare options with each other.


We believe policymakers—as well as their confidants and influencers—should be asking these kinds of questions well before making decisions about accountability system design, frameworks, grading or rating rubrics, budgets, implementation, etc. In the following sections we provide snapshots about what we learned about the public’s views and priorities when it comes to state K–12 accountability systems.

## What Should Be The Purpose of Accountability?

Ensuring minimum standards for math and reading is a desirable goal for a state accountability system, based on the responses from public school teachers, school parents, and the general public. Approximately six out of 10 in each of those groups believe the purpose of accountability should

**TABLE 5**

What Should Be the Purpose of State Accountability Systems?

 Item on which public school teachers are more likely to differ with parents and the public

Percentage of Respondents Assigning Top Two Rankings to Items (i.e. What is Most Important)

	% Public School Teachers (N=777)	% School Parents (N=300)	% General Population (N=1,002)
Ensure minimum standards of reading and math learning	60	56	58
Identify low-performing schools for additional assistance	62	50	50
Create transparent record of school performance	34	39	38
Reward high-performing schools	26	32	31
Penalize low-performing schools	18	19	20

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q33.

prioritize math and reading standards ahead of the other four given items. Those proportions are based on the total respondents of each group ranking a given purpose as either #1 or #2 out of five choices, from most to least important. Public school teachers say an accountability system should help low-performing schools much more frequently than school parents (62% vs. 50%, respectively). It is also clear that teachers, parents, and the general public would all like to see an accountability system emphasize assistance and improvement for low-performing schools rather than issuing penalties or sanctions on those schools. See Table 5.

## Who Should Have The Most Say Regarding System Development?

It is probably not a shock that public school teachers and parents say that they should be the ones who have the most say when it comes to developing an accountability system. Nearly two out of three teachers ranked their peer group ahead of six other stakeholders, and they did so at least twice as frequently. By contrast roughly one-third of teachers highly ranked parents and


school principals. About half of surveyed school parents highly ranked parents and teachers (53% and 51%, respectively). The general public also wants teachers and parents to have the most say in accountability system development. The public highly ranks those two stakeholder groups much more frequently than principals, superintendents, school boards and government agency officials at the state and federal levels. See Table 6.

## Who Should Have The Most Control Regarding Implementation?

When it comes to opinions on control and implementation, we observe a little more response parity compared to the previous question. Public school teachers continue to highly rank their peer group (56%) more than any other stakeholder. Four out of 10 teachers (41%) think principals should have substantial control implementing accountability measures. School parents view the roles of teachers and parents with about equal weight at the top (41% each), more so than the other five stakeholders. The general public is also more likely to say teachers (39%) and parents (36%) should be leading

**TABLE 6**

Who Should Have the Most Say in Developing a State Accountability System?

 Item on which public school teachers are more likely to differ with parents and the public

Percentage of Respondents Assigning Top Two Rankings to Stakeholders (i.e. Who Should Have the Most Say?)

	% Public School Teachers (N=777)	% School Parents (N=300)	% General Population (N=1,002)
Teachers	66	51	49
Parents	32	53	47
Principals	37	22	21
School District Superintendents	20	17	20
School Boards	18	21	16
State Government Officials	15	18	22
Federal Government Officials	13	16	15

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q34.

implementation of a state accountability system. About one-quarter of the general public highly ranks principals, superintendents, school boards, and state government officials. Teachers, parents, and the public share commonly held dim views about the implementation role of federal officials. See Table 7.

## Who Should We Hold Most Accountable?

Perhaps one of the major surprises based on this part of the interview is the lack of clear emphasis on who should be held most accountable in a state accountability system. Sixty percent or more of public school teachers, parents of school-age children, and the general public spread their lower rankings (#3 to #7) across each of the seven listed stakeholder groups. There appears to be no strong

**TABLE 7**

Who Should Have the Most Control in Implementing a State Accountability System?

■ Item on which public school teachers are more likely to differ with parents and the public

Percentage of Respondents Assigning Top Two Rankings to Stakeholders (i.e. Who Should Have the Most Control?)

	% Public School Teachers (N=777)	% School Parents (N=300)	% General Population (N=1,002)
Teachers	56	41	39
Parents	23	41	36
Principals	41	25	25
School District Superintendents	25	22	25
School Boards	21	22	26
State Government Officials	19	24	27
Federal Government Officials	13	21	19

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q35.

**TABLE 8**

Who Should Be Held Most Accountable in a State Accountability System?

■ Item on which public school teachers are more likely to differ with parents and/or the public

Percentage of Respondents Assigning Top Two Rankings to Stakeholders (i.e. Who Should be Held Most Accountable?)

	% Public School Teachers (N=777)	% School Parents (N=300)	% General Population (N=1,002)
School Districts	33	36	39
State Government Officials	29	33	33
School Boards	21	26	30
Teachers	25	25	23
Parents	24	21	18
Students	27	16	18
Principals	20	20	19
Schools	21	19	18

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q36.

agreement on whom to focus accountability efforts. That said, we do observe pluralities of teachers (33%), parents (36%), and Americans (39%) saying the school district should be held most accountable in a state accountability system, relative to other stakeholders. Response patterns are generally similar across teachers, parents, and the public. The widest variation appears to be on the view of holding local school boards accountable. Three out of 10 in the general public highly rank school boards as priority, but by comparison only 21 percent of teachers highly rank school boards. These results reflect a stark contrast to the predominant view of state accountability today, which focuses mostly on school-level accountability. See Table 8.

## What Should We Be Evaluating For Accountability?

Another unexpected result: We did not see a large proportion preferring any particular outcome to be the focus of a state accountability system. No more than 40 percent of public school teachers, school parents, or the general public highly ranked any of the 10 listed items for what should be evaluated in a state accountability system. In other words, survey respondents varied quite a bit in what they deemed most important for what accountability systems should track and measure. Pluralities of teachers (35%), parents (38%), and the public (36%) put school safety in the top two of their rankings. Slightly lower proportions of respondents highly ranked student achievement and student attainment. Between approximately 10 percent and 20 percent of respondents said each of the other seven outcomes should be high priority for

**TABLE 9**

What Should Be Evaluated in a State Accountability System?

■ Item on which public school teachers are more likely to differ with parents and/or the public

Percentage of Respondents Assigning Top Two Rankings to Items (i.e. What Should Be Evaluated?)

	% Public School Teachers (N=777)	% School Parents (N=300)	% General Population (N=1,002)
School Safety	35	38	36
Student Achievement (such as test scores in math and reading)	24	29	32
Student Attainment (such as high school graduation, college enrollment)	27	24	28
Student Behavior (such as suspensions, absenteeism, tardiness, truancy)	22	17	16
Social/Emotional Learning	21	19	14
Course Offerings	17	17	19
Student/Teacher/Parent Satisfaction	15	15	14
Financial Proficiency	12	15	13
School Characteristics (such as waiting lists, vacancy rates, student and teacher retention)	12	11	11
Computer Proficiency	8	11	13

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q37.

a state accountability system. Again, the takeaway is that there is little consensus and clarity among teachers, parents, or the general public on what should be evaluated in state accountability. See Table 9.

## Accountability A–F Grades/Ratings

There are sizable proportions of public school teachers and parents of school-age children who do not know if their state uses A–F grading or ratings as part of their accountability system. Nearly 20 percent of teachers and 30 percent of school parents said they were “unsure” about such ratings. Although those two groups appear to be more informed than the general population (37% said “unsure”), it is surprising to us that teachers are so unaware. These numbers may imply that accountability ratings are not being effectively communicated. We should view these numbers as a floor for how well these ratings are communicated to key stakeholders and the public at large. On the question about whether or not the respondent’s home state has a state accountability system that uses A–F grades/ratings, it will be worth further exploring to see to what extent those saying “yes” or “no” are correct. The proportion who are incorrect, plus this

proportion of “unsure” respondents, will give further evidence on the stickiness of accountability grades and ratings. See Figure 15.

## Standardized Testing

A majority of public school teachers believe too much time is spent on standardized testing. More than half of teachers (52%) offered this view, which is significantly higher than school parents (36%) and the general public (36%) saying the same. Parents and teachers clearly have differences of opinion on this question. Nearly two out of three parents (64%) say the amount of time spent on testing is “too low” or “about right.” Less than half of teachers (48%) give those responses. See Figure 16.

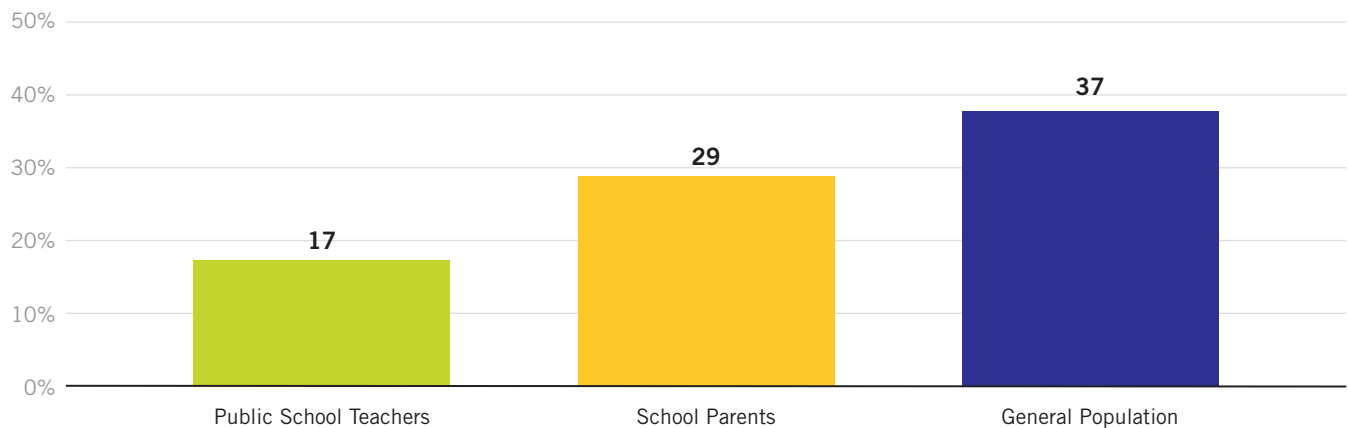
The disconnect between teachers and parents may stem in part from perception, lack of information, or both of those things. We asked respondents to estimate the amount of time spent on standardized testing preparation and administration, and teachers were much more likely to say 11 or more school days (59%), which is higher than school parent and general population average responses (50% and 46%, respectively). Nearly two out of five teachers said 16 or more school days—the equivalent of more than three full weeks of school. See Figure 17.

**FIGURE 15**

Awareness of Home State's Use of A–F Grades or Other Ratings for Accountability

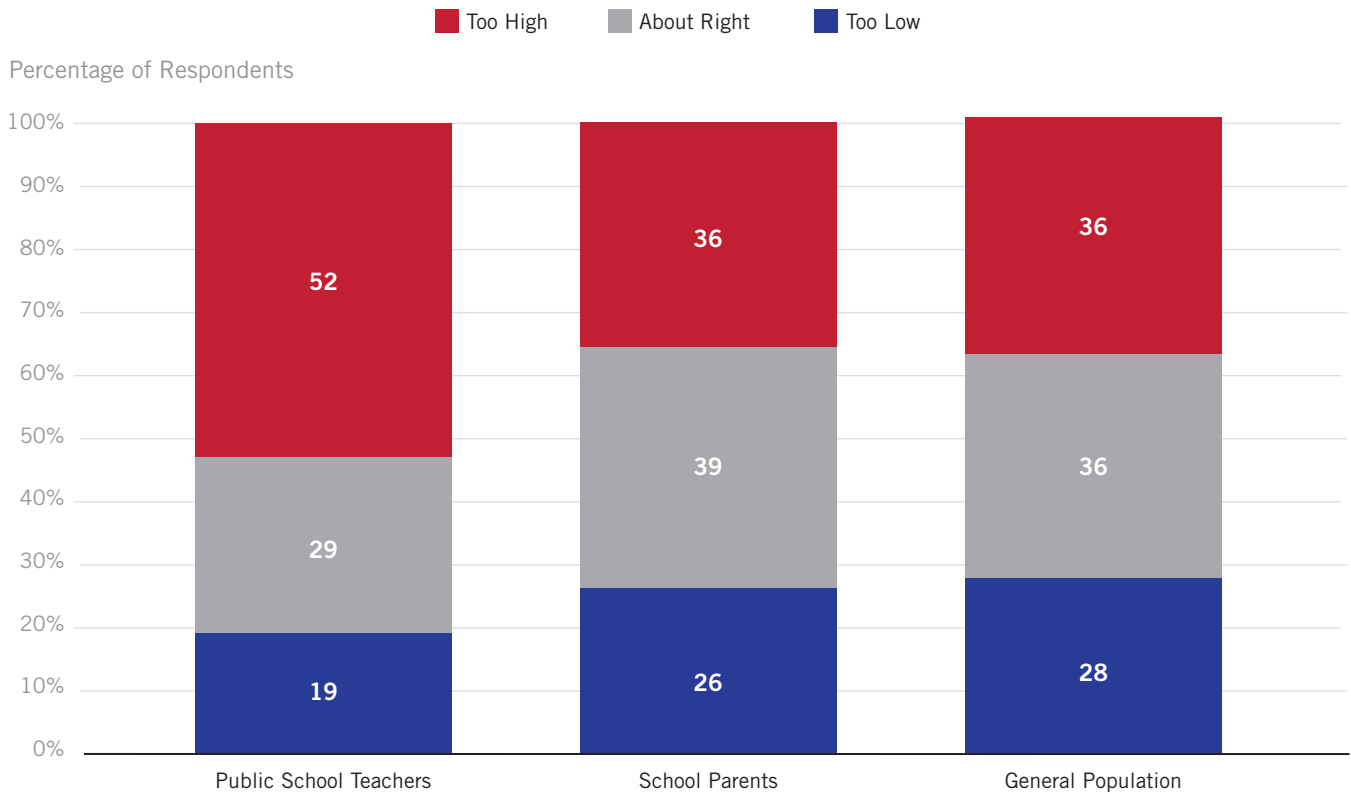
*Almost one in five teachers are unsure whether their home state uses A–F grades or other ratings for a statewide accountability system. Parents and the public are even more likely to be unaware.*

Percentage of Respondents Saying “Unsure”

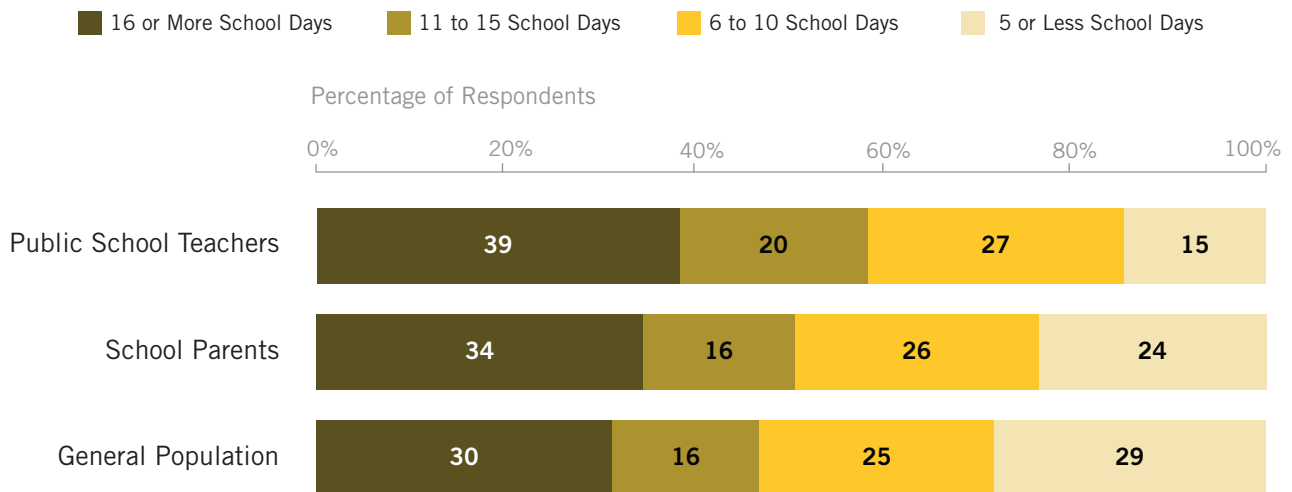


Note: “Yes” and “No” responses not shown.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2017), Q38.

**FIGURE 16****Views on Time Spent on Standardized Testing***Teachers are more likely to say than parents or the public that there is too much time spent on standardized testing activities.*

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q40.

**FIGURE 17****Estimating Time Spent Preparing/Taking Standardized Tests***Six out of 10 public school teachers say their students spend at least 16 or more school days - at least three full weeks - preparing for or taking standardized tests. Half of parents estimate the same amount of time.*

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018) Q39.



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# **PART IV**

## Educational Choice Policies and Reforms

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# How we describe various educational choice policies in our descriptive survey questions:

## Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

An "education savings account" in K–12 education—often called an ESA—establishes for parents a government-authorized savings account with restricted, but multiple uses for educational purposes. Parents can then use these funds to pay for: school tuition, tutoring, online education programs, therapies for students with special needs, textbooks or other instructional materials, or future college expenses.

## School Vouchers

A school voucher system allows parents the option of sending their child to the school of their choice, whether that school is public or private, including both religious and non-religious schools. If this policy were adopted, tax dollars currently allocated to a school district would be allocated to parents in the form of a "school voucher" to pay partial or full tuition for the child's school.

## Tax-Credit Scholarships

A tax credit allows an individual or business to reduce the final amount of a tax owed to government. In a "tax-credit scholarship system," a government gives tax credits to individuals or businesses if they contribute money to nonprofit organizations that distribute private school scholarships. A nonprofit organization gives a scholarship to a qualifying student who would like to enroll in a private school of their choice, including both religious and non-religious schools. The student's parent then uses the scholarship to pay partial or full tuition for the chosen private school.

## Public Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations.

## Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

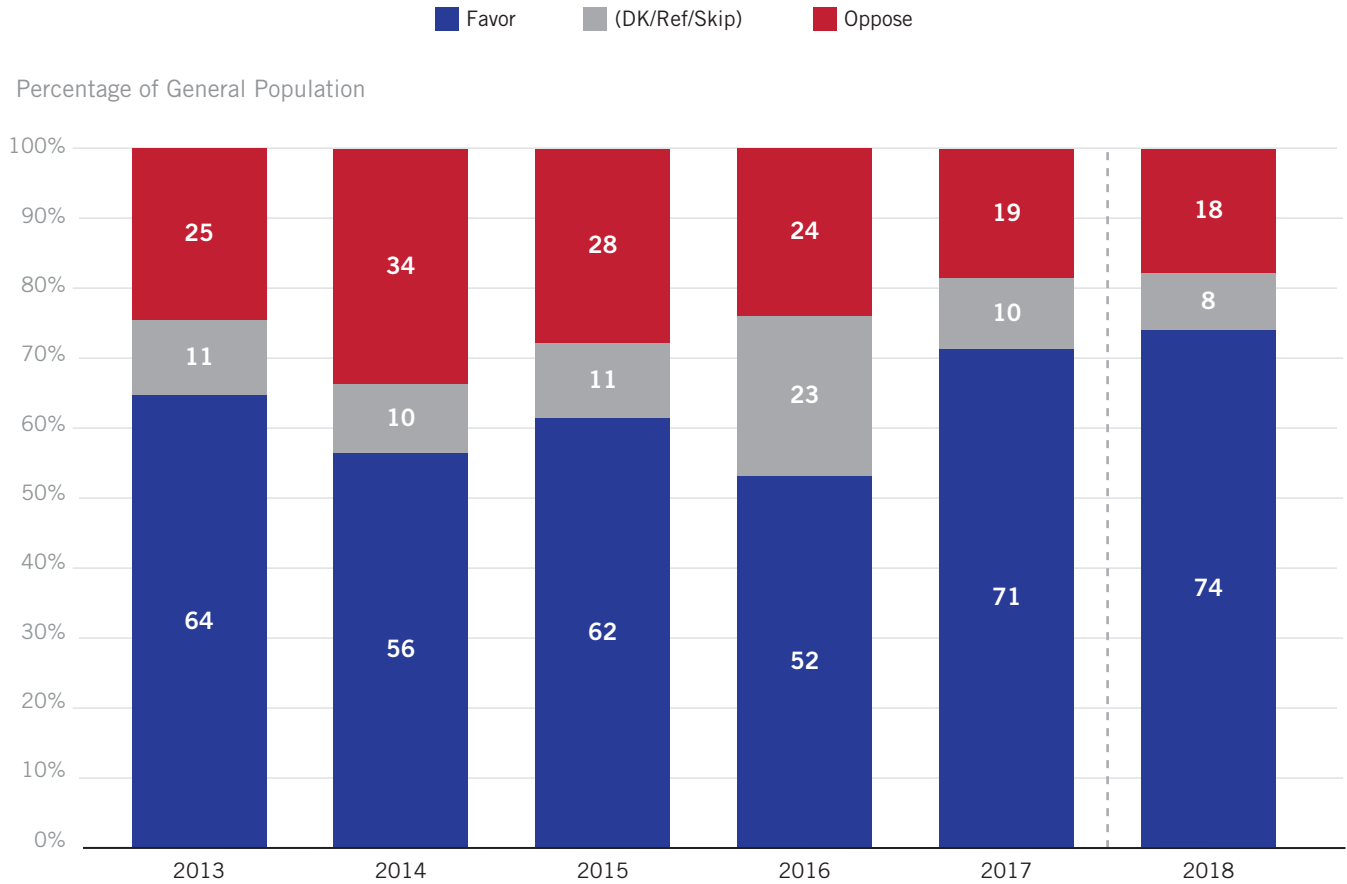
When given a description of ESAs, Americans are four times more likely to support this choice-based education reform (74%) than oppose it (18%). This support level is the highest we have seen in the six years we have polled about ESAs. Likewise, the proportion of those who oppose ESAs is at its lowest level during this time period. Both the margin (+56) and intensity (+27) of support have increased since last year. Current public school teachers and parents of school-age children indicate similar levels of support for ESAs (78% and 76%, respectively). Over the last two years ESA support continues to be above 70 percent. Prior to 2017, support for ESAs hovered between half and two-thirds of respondents. ESA support is higher than any of the school choice types asked in our survey. See Figure 18. Our first question about ESAs asked for an opinion without offering any description. On this baseline question, 52 percent of respondents said they favored ESAs and 10 percent said they opposed the idea.<sup>30</sup> In a follow-up question, interviewers gave respondents a description for an ESA program. With this context, support rose by 22 points, and opposition rose 8 points. Those responding "don't know" or "no answer" decreased by 29 points (38% to 9%). See Figure 19.

We followed up to see why respondents oppose or support ESAs. Access to schools that have better academics (28%) and more freedom and flexibility for parents (28%) were the top two reasons, although reasons varied for other respondents. See Figure 20.

Respondents who oppose ESAs have varying reasons, too. The top two reasons—diverting funding from public schools (27%) and causing fraudulent behavior (20%)—are consistent with last year's results. However, the proportion of those concerned about diverting public school funding fell by six percentage points, down from 33 percent in 2017. See Figure 21.

**FIGURE 18****The Public's Views on ESAs, with Description, 2013–2018**

*Americans' support of ESAs is at its highest point in six years, with respondents four times more likely to favor than oppose such a program.*

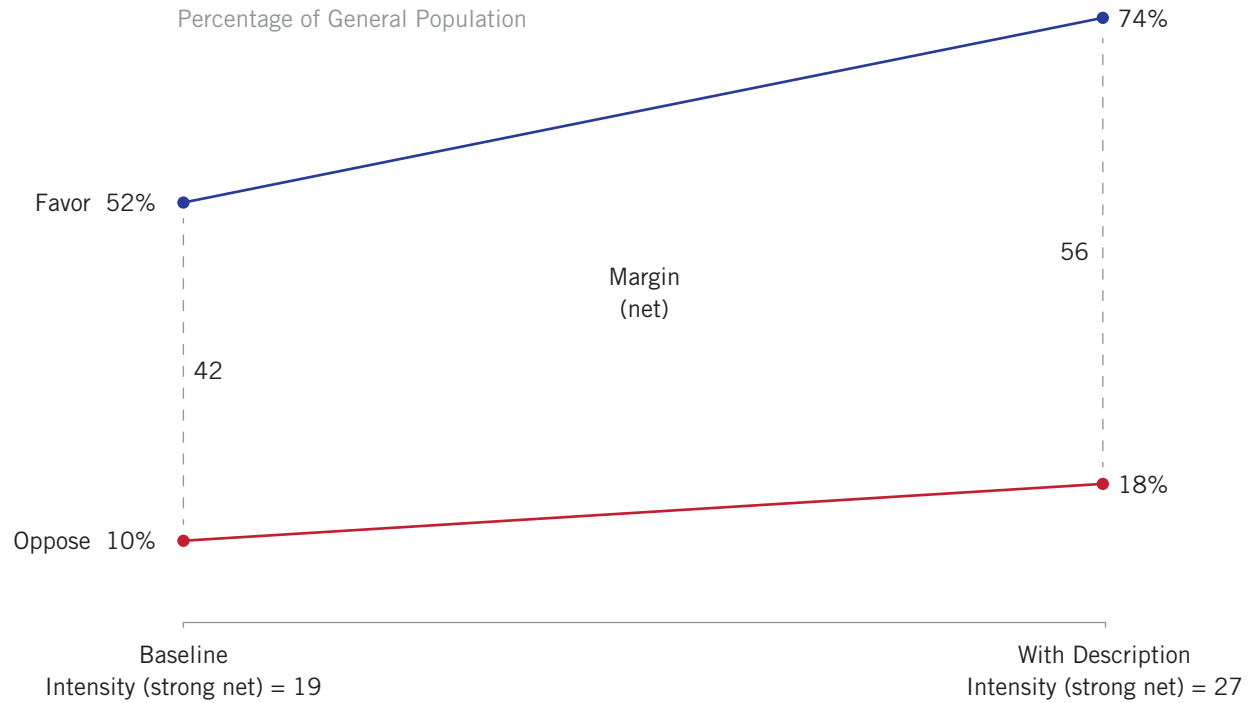


*Notes:* From 2013 to 2015 we slightly changed question wording to more accurately reflect the features of an ESA program and to avoid the inclusion of potentially loaded words or limiting ESA uses. Phone-only survey results shown for 2013–2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. Responses within parentheses were volunteered. "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.

*Sources:* EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q23; EdChoice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2016–2017* (partial samples of General Population); Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2013–2015*.

**FIGURE 19****The Public's Views on ESAs: Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions**

*When given context about ESA's, support increased by 22 points and opposition increased by 8 points. The net positive margin increased by 14 points.*



*Notes: All statistical results reported in this figure and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth. Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q23.*

In a split-sample experiment, we observe that Americans preferred universal access to ESAs much more than means-tested eligibility based solely on financial need. See Figure 22.

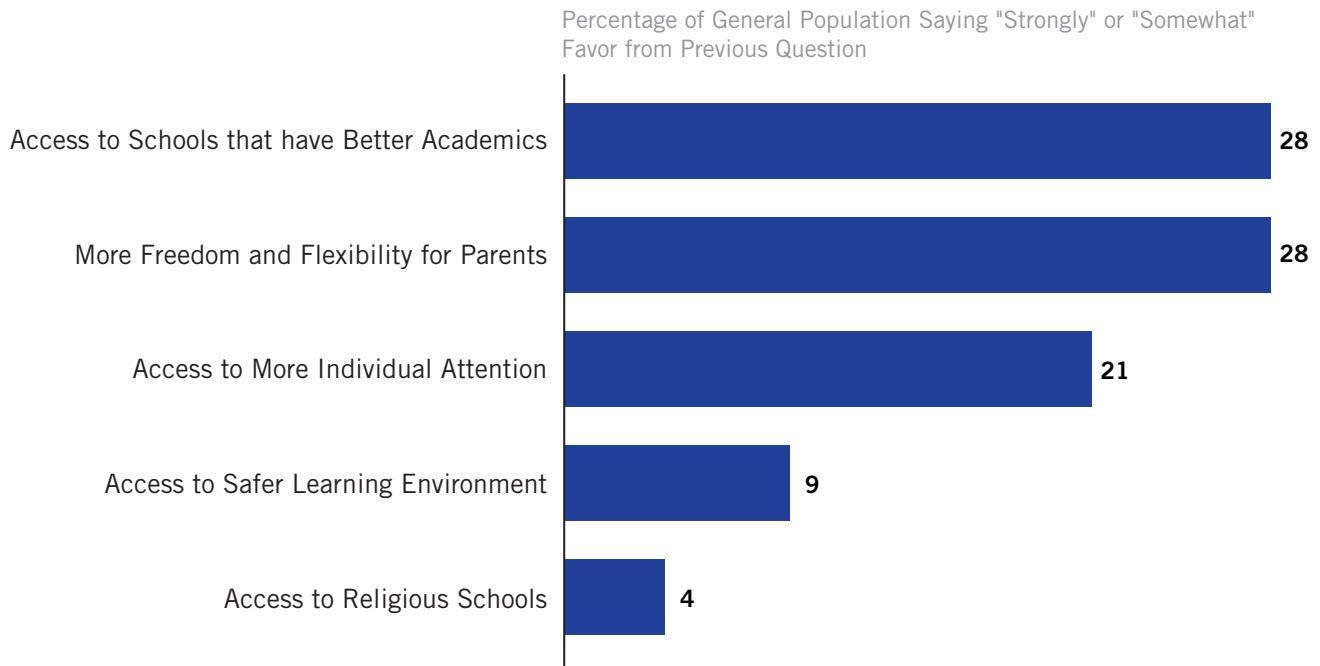
- In Split E, nearly three-fourths (74%) of respondents said they agree with the statement, “ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of income and special needs.” Of those agreeing, 39 percent said they “strongly agree.” About one-fifth (22%), disagreed with universal access for ESAs, and less than one in 10 (7%) “strongly” disagreed.
- The comparison sample, Split F, produced lower levels of support and higher levels of opposition for means-tested ESAs. Half (50%) of those in this sample agreed with the statement, “ESAs should be available only to families based on

financial need.” Close to half (46%) disagreed with this statement, and about one in five (19%) strongly disagreed with this stipulation.

When given a description of ESAs, at least six out of 10 within observed demographic subgroups expressed support for ESAs, with most subgroups showing support of at least 70 percent. Those expressing the highest levels of support include African Americans (79%), Independents, high-income earners, current public school teachers, and those in the 35-to-54 age group (both show 78% support).<sup>31</sup> These subgroups, as well as those living in the Northeast, middle-income earners, urbanites, and Generation Xers all expressed the largest margins of support (+60 points and higher). See Appendix 8.

**FIGURE 20****The Most Important Reason for Supporting ESAs**

*More than half of supporters either said access to schools that have better academics or increased freedom and flexibility for parents was the most important reason they favor ESAs.*



*Notes:* Volunteered responses not shown. "Don't Know," "Refusals," nor skips reflected in this chart.

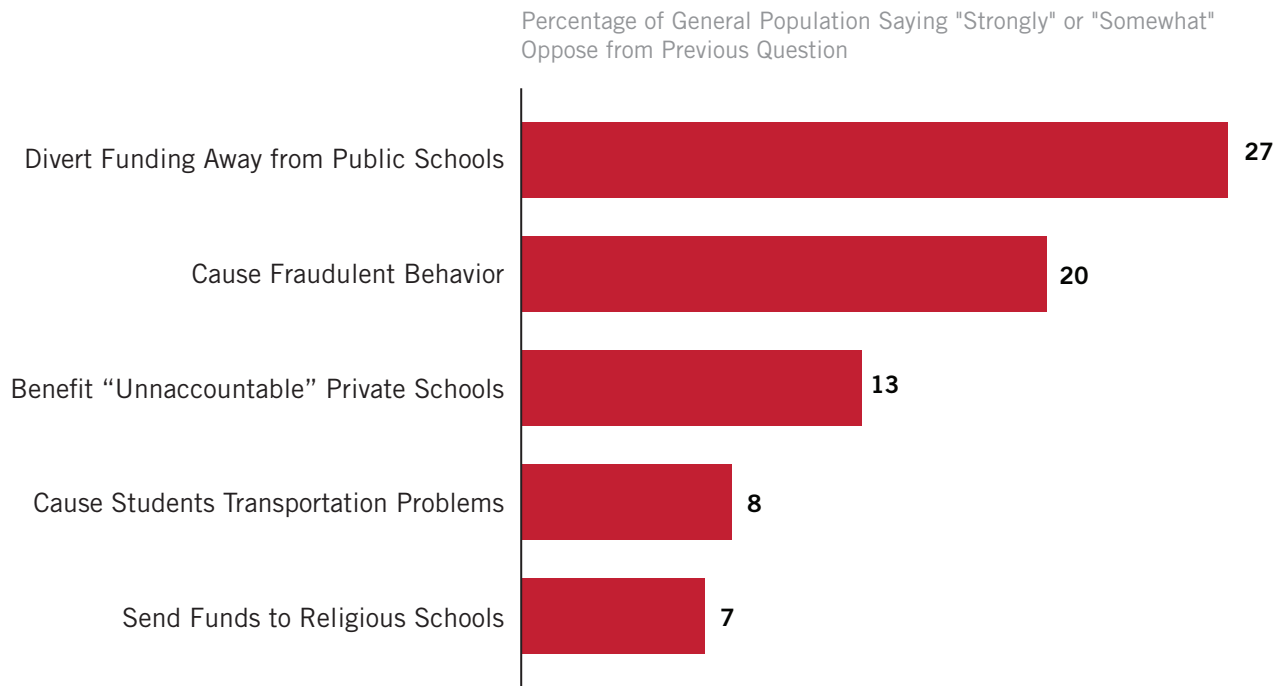
*Source:* EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q24.

## School Vouchers

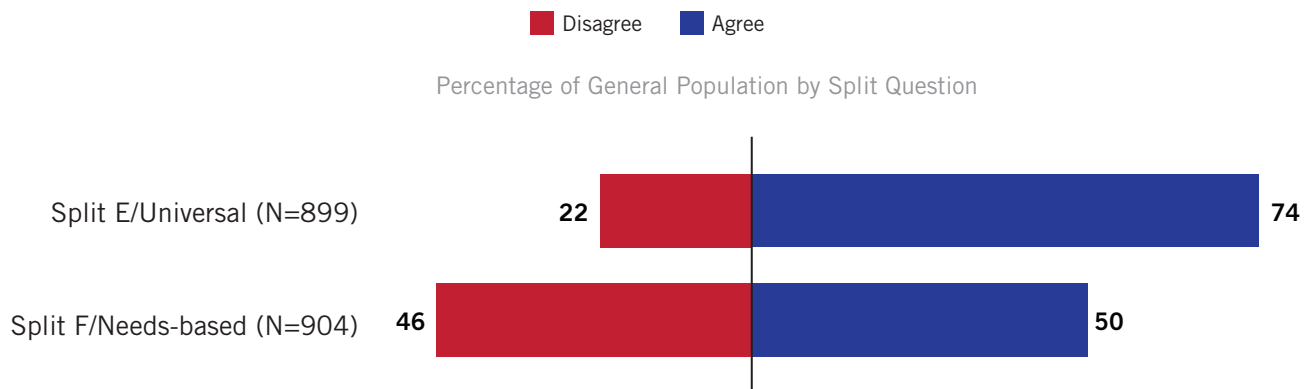
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents support school vouchers, compared to one out of three (30%) who oppose them. The large margin of support (+34) indicates Americans are twice as likely to support as oppose vouchers. The net positive intensity (+11 point) is unchanged from 2017, with more than one-fourth of respondents (27%) indicating strong support for vouchers (vs. 16% “strongly oppose”) when given a description of a school voucher system. Since 2013, support for school vouchers has ebbed and flowed between the mid-50s and low-60s. Opposition has hovered around 30 percent during this time. In two years, support for vouchers has increased seven points and opposition has increased by two points. See Figure 23.

Like our series of questions on ESAs, we asked respondents a general baseline question followed by a descriptive question about school vouchers. In the first question, we asked for views on vouchers without any other context—less than half (44%) said they supported a voucher system and about one in five (22%) opposed vouchers. When provided a follow-up question with a basic description for vouchers, support increased by 20 points (64%), while opposition increased by eight points (30%). The proportion of those unsure about vouchers fell dramatically from 34 percent to 7 percent once they were provided a description. See Figure 24.

Aside from those in the Silent Generation, majorities within demographic subgroups said they support school vouchers. Younger Americans are more likely to favor vouchers than our country’s seniors. Many demographic subgroups showed

**FIGURE 21****The Most Important Reason for Opposing ESAs***More than one out of four of those who oppose ESAs do so because they believe it would take funds away from public schools.*

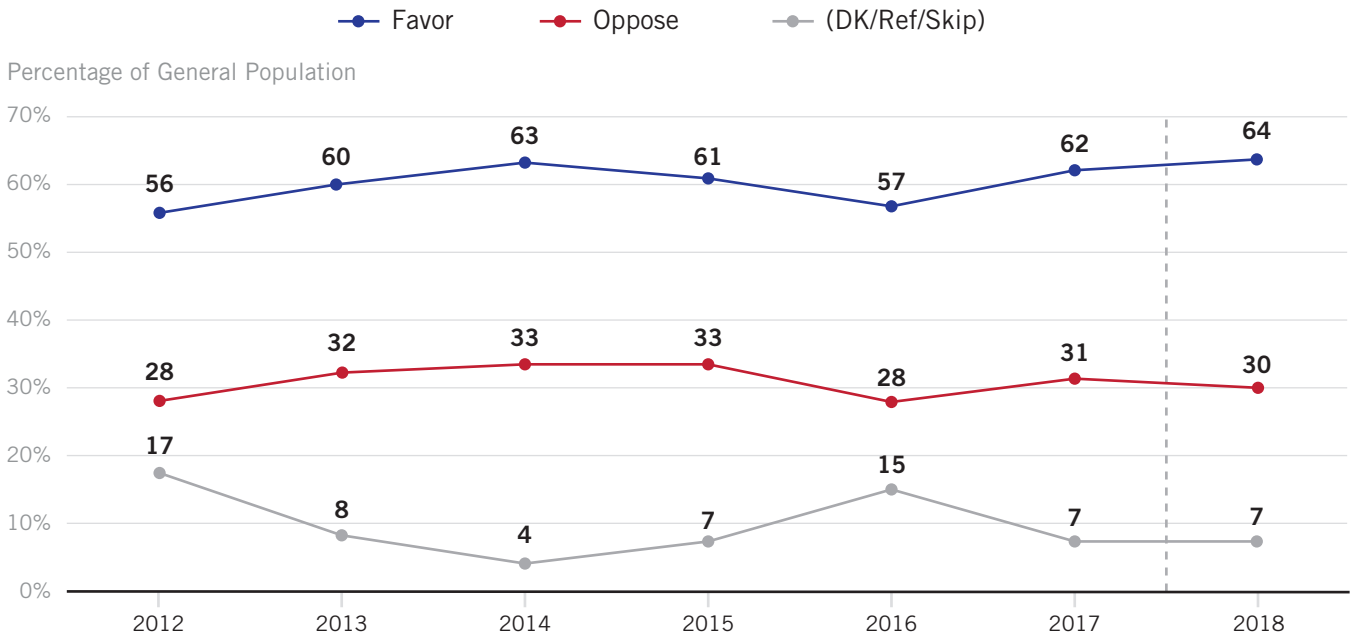
Notes: Volunteered responses not shown. "Don't Know," "Refusals," nor skips reflected in this chart.  
 Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q25.

**FIGURE 22****Comparing Views for Different Approaches to ESA Eligibility***Our question wording experiment continues to indicate Americans are much more likely to favor universal ESA eligibility than limited, needs-based eligibility.*

**Q26-Split E.** Some people believe that ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of income and special needs. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

**Q26-Split F.** Some people believe that ESAs should be available only to families based on financial need. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

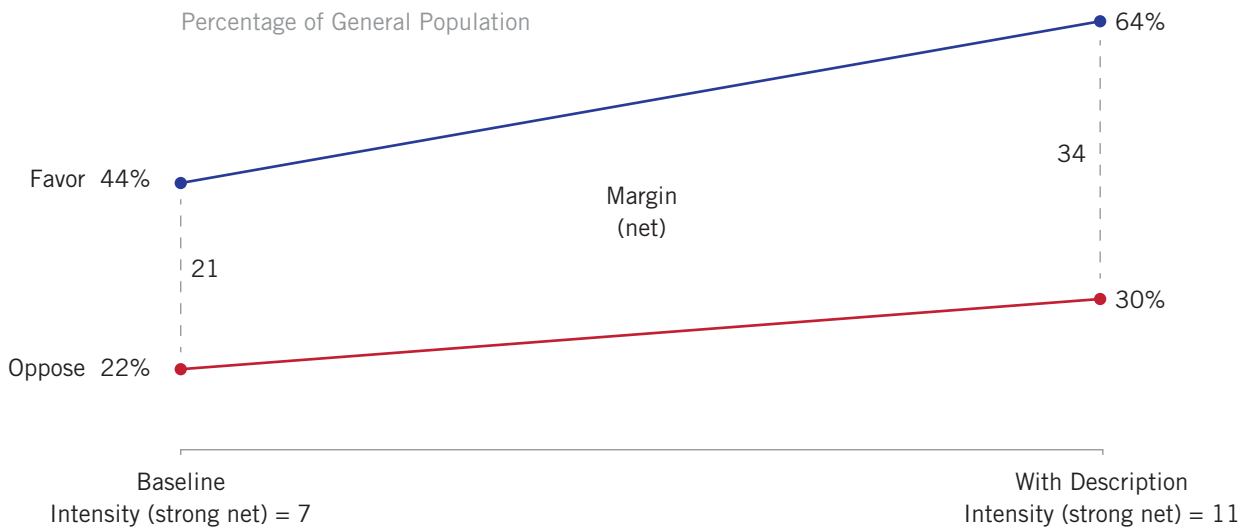
Notes: Volunteered responses not shown. "Don't Know," "Refusals," nor skips reflected in this chart.  
 Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q26E and Q26F.

**FIGURE 23****The Public's Views on School Vouchers, with Description, 2012–2018***Over the last six years Americans have consistently supported school vouchers at a level twice that of the opposition.*

Notes: Phone-only survey results shown for 2012–2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. Responses within parentheses were volunteered. "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.  
 Sources: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q21; EdChoice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2016–2017*; Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2013–2015*.

**FIGURE 24****The Public's Views on Vouchers: Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions**

*When given a description about school vouchers, support increased by 20 points and opposition increased by 8 points. The net positive margin increased by 13 points.*



Notes: All statistical results reported in this figure and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.  
 Source: EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q20 and Q21.

high levels of support, ranging from 65 percent to 70 percent. College graduates and current public school teachers demonstrated relatively lower levels of support. Urbanites (+24 points), African Americans (+23 points), Republicans (+20 points), and current school parents (+20 points) expressed highest net intensity. Current public school teachers (-1 points) and the Silent Generation (-10 points) registered the most negative intensities.<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 9.

## Tax-Credit Scholarships

Two out of three Americans (66%) express support for tax-credit scholarships, compared to about one in four (24%) who oppose them. Ten percent of respondents did not express an opinion on tax-credit scholarships.

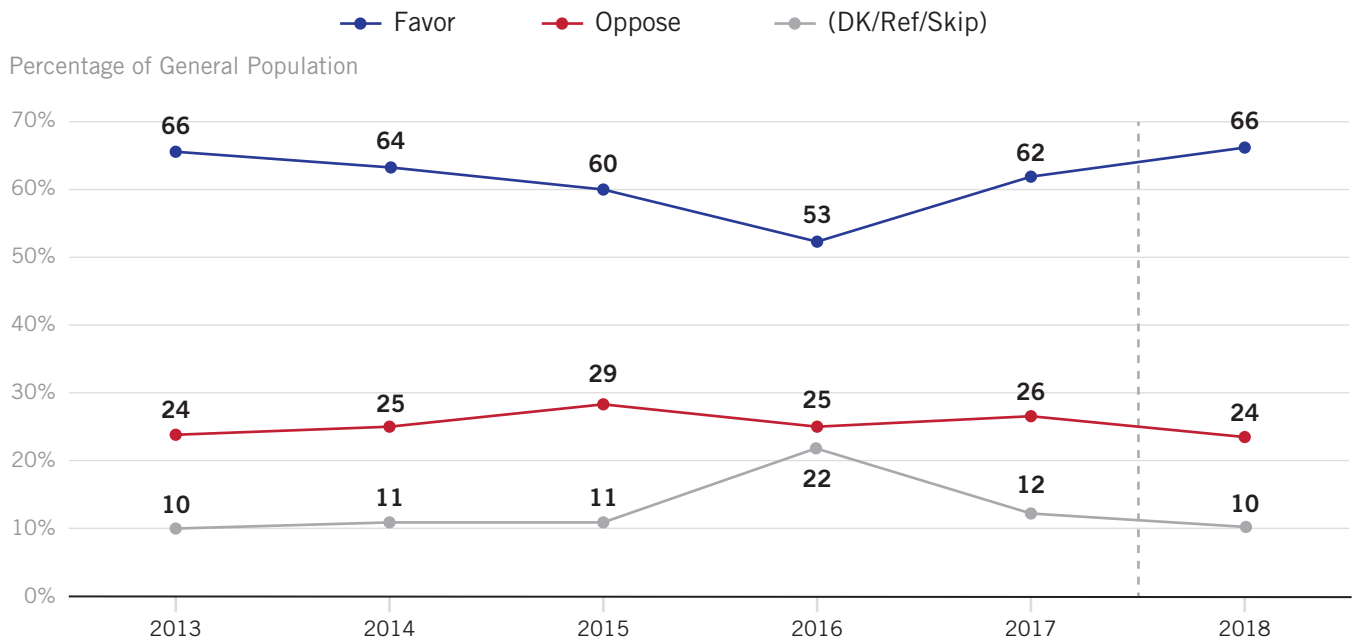
Figure 25 shows the six-year trend lines on our tax-credit scholarship question. The results this year are nearly identical to the first time we asked this question in 2013. The margin of support has hovered between +28 points (in 2016) and +42 points (this year and 2013). Generally, Americans have been at least twice as likely to support tax-credit scholarships than to oppose them. Since 2016, public support is up 13 percentage points and opposition is down one point.

In past years, support for tax-credit scholarships has been slightly more than for school vouchers and even a bit more compared to charter schools. That is true this year, as well, though the differences are within the margins of error and not statistically significant. All demographic subgroups are at least +30 percentage points or greater in their margin of support. Republicans (+52 points), Northeasterners (+51 points), middle-income earners (+50 points), and middle-age (+48 points), as well as those in

**FIGURE 25**

The Public's Views on Tax-Credit Scholarships, with Description, 2013–2018

*Public support for tax-credit scholarships appears to have bounced back to the levels and wider margins observed before 2016.*



*Notes:* We used slightly different question wording in 2013, 2014, and 2015, compared with the question version used in 2016, 2017, and 2018. Phone-only survey results shown for 2013–2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. Responses within parentheses were volunteered. "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.

*Sources:* EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q27; EdChoice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2016–2017*; Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2013–2015*.

Generation X (+50), signal the biggest margins of support for tax-credit scholarships. A number of demographics register net intensities around +20 points. See Appendix 10.

## Public Charter Schools

Six out of 10 Americans (61%) say they support public charter schools, while 29 percent say they oppose charters. The wide margin of support indicates a favorability twice as large as the opposition stated for both our baseline (+28 points) and descriptive (+33) charter school questions. We observed the same proportions of support and opposition for charter schools as in 2017. Like tax-credit scholarships, support for charter schools has remained relatively stable in recent years, save for a dip in 2015. Other national polls have seen a similar dip-then-rebound in recent years.<sup>33</sup> See Figure 26. On an initial baseline question, 53 percent said they

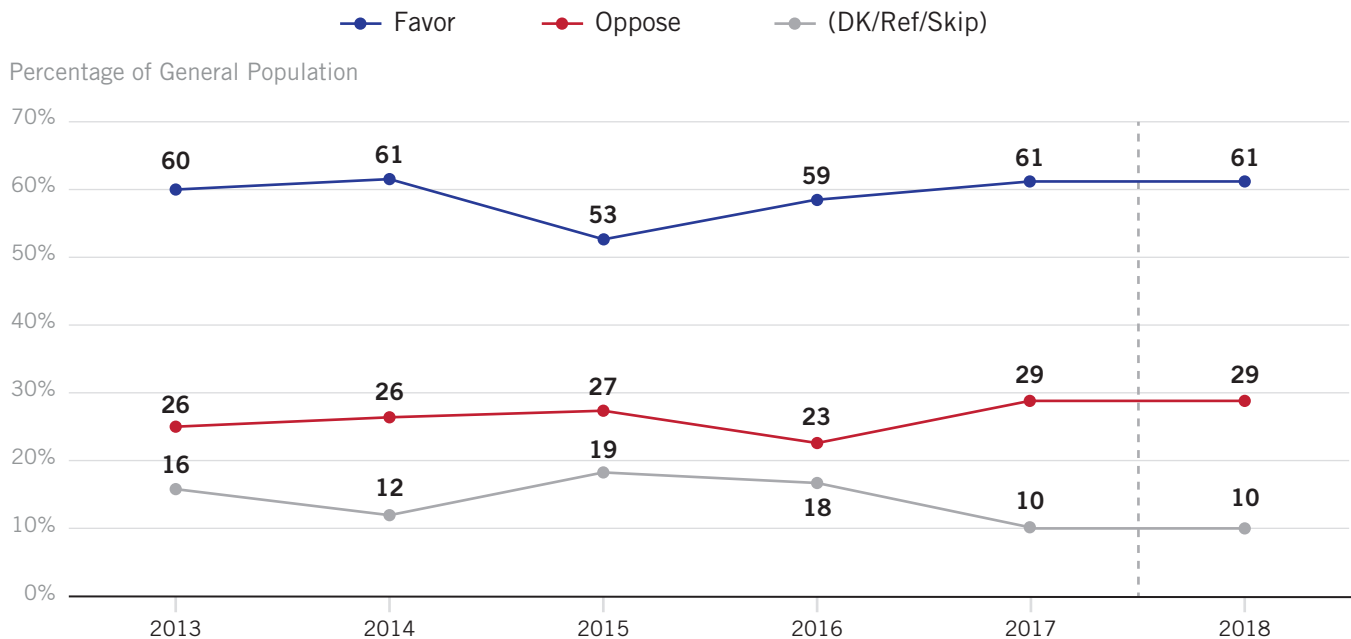
avored charter schools, and 25 percent said they opposed them. When given a follow-up question with a basic description for a public charter school, support increased by eight points (61%), and opposition increased four points to 29 percent. See Figure 27.

All observed demographic subgroups supported charter schools, although to varying degrees. African Americans, current school parents, middle-income earners, 35–54 age group, and Gen Xers were the most likely to favor charter schools. At least two out of three in each of those groups expressed support. Positive margins of support ranged from a high of +49 points among African Americans to a low of +15 points among current public school teachers. The latter and the Silent Generation were the least likely to support charter schools and the only groups exhibiting negative net intensities. African Americans, current school parents, southerners, and Generation X appear to be the most enthusiastic about charter schools based on net intensity.<sup>34</sup> See Appendix 11.

**FIGURE 26**

The Public's Views on Public Charter Schools, with Description, 2013–2018

*Support for charter schools has hovered around 60 percent over the past six years, with the noted exception of 2015.*



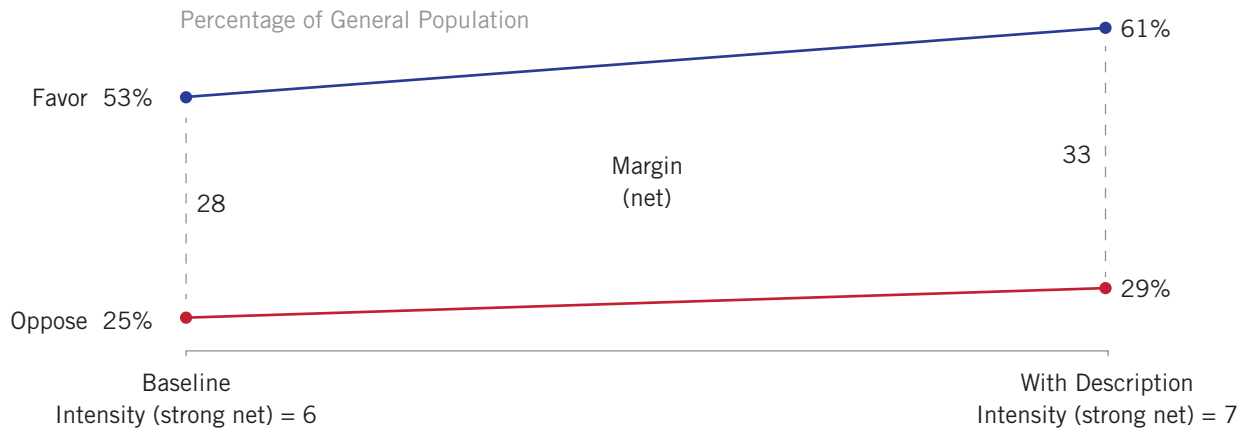
*Notes:* Phone-only survey results shown for 2013–2017. Mixed-mode results (online and phone) shown for 2018. Responses within parentheses were volunteered. "DK" means "Don't Know." "Ref" means "Refusal." For the online survey, the respondent was permitted to skip the question.

*Sources:* EdChoice, *2018 Schooling in America Survey* (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q19; EdChoice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2016–2017*; Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, *Schooling in America Survey, 2013–2015*.

**FIGURE 27**

The Public's Views on Charter Schools: Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions

When given a description about charter schools, support increased by 8 points and opposition increased by 4 points. The net positive margin increased by 5 points.



Notes: All statistical results reported in this figure and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q18 and Q19.

# APPENDIX 1

## Survey Project and Profile

<b>Title:</b>	2018 Schooling in America Survey
<b>Survey Funder:</b>	EdChoice
<b>Survey Data Collection and quality control:</b>	Braun Research, Inc. (BRI)
<b>Interview Dates:</b>	September 25 to October 7, 2018
<b>Sample Frames:</b>	“General Population”—National sample of adults (age 18+) living in the U.S., including the District of Columbia “Current Public School Teachers” – National sample of public district school teachers currently teaching full-time in one or more grades K–12
<b>Sampling Method:</b>	Phone: Dual Frame, Probability-based, Random Digit Dial (RDD) Online: Non-probability-based opt-in panel
<b>Language(s):</b>	English, Spanish
<b>Interview Method:</b>	<b>Mixed Mode</b> Live Telephone for General Population, N=801 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cell Phone = 70%</li><li>• Landline = 30%</li></ul> Online for General Population, N=1,002 Online for Current Public School Teachers, N=777
<b>Interview Length:</b>	Phone: 15 minutes (average) Online: 21 minutes (average)
<b>Sample Size and Margin of Error:</b>	General Population, Total (N=1,803): ± 2.3 percentage points <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phone (N=801): ± 3.1 percentage points</li><li>• Online (N=1,002): ± 3.5 percentage points</li></ul> Current Public School Teachers (N=777): ± 3.5 percentage points
<b>Response Rate:</b>	General Population, Cell Phone = 3.1% General Population, Landline = 0.9% General Population, Online = 5.0% Current Public School Teachers, Online = 27.9%
<b>Weighting?</b>	Yes General Population (combined phone and online): Age, Census Division/Region, Gender, Ethnicity, Race, Education, Phone Usage, Mode Current Public School Teachers (online): Age, Census Division/Region, Gender, Ethnicity, Race
<b>Oversampling?</b>	No
<b>Project Contact:</b>	Paul DiPerna, paul@edchoice.org

The authors are responsible for overall survey design; question wording and ordering; this report’s analysis, charts, and writing; and any unintentional errors or misrepresentations.

EdChoice is the survey’s sponsor and sole funder at the time of publication.

## APPENDIX 2

### Additional Information About Survey Methods

#### ***Phone Interviews***

Braun Research’s live callers conducted all interviews via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using a survey instrument developed and scripted by the authors.

For the phone portion of this project to achieve the national sample Braun Research made 52,900 total phone calls by landline phone (31,700) and cell phone (21,200). Of these calls 10,013 (6,829 landline; 3,184 cell phone) were unusable phone numbers (disconnected, fax, busy, or non-answers, etc.); 210 (124 landline; 86 cell phone) phone numbers were usable but not eligible for this survey; and 41,818 (24,486 landline; 17,332 cell phone) phone numbers were usable numbers but eligibility unknown (including callbacks, refusals and voicemail). Fifty-eight people (21 landline; 37 cell phone) did not complete the survey.

Appendix 3 displays the phone sample dispositions and response rates.

#### ***Phone Sample Design***

Survey Sampling International, LLC (SSI) used a combination of landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) samples to represent the General Population (adults age 18+ in the United States and District of Columbia) who have access to either a landline or cellular telephone. SSI provided both samples according to BRI specifications.

SSI starts with a database of all listed telephone numbers, updated on a four- to six-week rolling basis, 25 percent of the listings at a time. All active blocks—contiguous groups of 100 phone numbers for which more than one residential number is listed—are added to this database by SSI. Blocks and exchanges that include only listed business numbers are excluded.

SSI draws numbers for the landline sample with equal probabilities from active blocks (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) that contained three or more residential directory listings. The cellular sample was not list-assisted, but drawn through a systematic sampling from dedicated wireless 100-blocks and shared service 100-blocks with no directory-listed landline numbers.

#### ***Contact Procedures***

Braun Research conducted live telephone interviews from September 25 to October 1, 2018. Their callers made as many as eight attempts to contact every sampled phone number. The sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative subsamples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents. Each phone number received at least one daytime call.

The Hagan-Collier Method guided respondent selection. Braun Research recruited respondents in the landline sample by asking for the youngest adult male who is now at home. If the youngest male was not home, then the next step would be to request an interview with the youngest female at home. Regarding the cell sample, Braun Research callers interviewed the person who answered the phone, as long as that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

Response rates have been declining for surveys and polls since the 1990s. Generally, running a survey over a longer period of time will boost response rates to some degree. Affirming prior research, Pew Research recently published a report that concluded a lower response rate is not a reliable indicator for bias or skewing of survey results.<sup>i</sup>

In addition to sampling error, question wording, ordering, and other practical difficulties when conducting surveys may introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion research.

## ***Online Interviews***

Braun Research programmed and hosted the web-based surveys. Fulcrum assisted with recruitment and providing the panel sample.<sup>ii</sup> For the General Population online sample, panel administrators initially emailed 21,800 adults from September 25 to October 2, 2018. For the Current Public School Teachers sample, administrators emailed 4,500 individuals from September 25 to October 7, 2018. All of these contacts were randomly selected from the opt-in non-probability online pool of panelists – General Population: 1,605 individuals clicked into the survey and 411 of those people terminated as disqualified; Current Public School Teachers: 1,636 individuals clicked into the survey and 624 of those people terminated as disqualified. Appendix 4 displays the online sample dispositions and response rates.

## ***Contact Procedures***

Contacts with potential respondents generally function differently than by other modes like phone or mail. Braun Research creates and develops the survey instrument and gives it a title. For this project, the online panel connector (Fulcrum) takes that survey and, via a link, reaches out to its partners—who are online panel suppliers—to offer opportunities to participate. These online panel partners decide whether to participate and offer to their panelists based on their panel composition, survey topic and screening questions. The panel companies present these opportunities, generally in the form of an online dashboard or mobile app. The platform serves as a direct-to-consumer model - the link is created, sent out, and the panelist clicks on the survey if he/she wants to participate or not. Rather than sending email invitations to initiate contacts, most online panel companies use a dashboard-type platform and process, whereby panelists visit these dashboards (or apps) to see the latest survey offerings.

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<sup>i</sup> Scott Keeter, Nick Hatley, Courtney Kennedy, and Arnold Lau (2017, May 15), What Low Response Rates Mean for Telephone Surveys, retrieved from Pew Research Center website: <http://www.pewresearch.org/2017/05/15/what-low-response-rates-mean-for-telephone-surveys>; Robert M. Groves and Emilia Peytcheva (2008), The Impact of Nonresponse Rates on Nonresponse Bias: A Meta-Analysis, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 72(2), pp. 167–189, <http://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfn011>

<sup>ii</sup> For more information about Fulcrum, see: Lucid, Fulcrum [web page], retrieved from <https://luc.id/fulcrum>

## ***Weighting Procedures***

Weighting is generally used in survey analysis to compensate for sample designs and patterns of non-response that might bias results. In this study, Braun Research balanced the sample demographics to population parameters.

Research provides evidence that participation in surveys tends to vary for different subgroups of the population. Subgroup participation and cooperation may also vary because of substantive interest regarding a survey's topics and questions. To compensate for these known and potential biases, the sample data were weighted for analysis.

For the General Population estimates, Braun Research first combined the initially completed phone sample (N=801) and online sample (N=1,002). The total sample (N=1,803) was first weighted to equalize by mode (50% phone, 50% online). The weighting procedure then matched current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones, based on the Center for Disease Control's Early Release of *Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), July–December 2017*.<sup>iii</sup> That total General Population sample was then weighted by using population parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), Five-year Estimates, for adults 18 years of age or older living in the United States and the District of Columbia, based on: Age, Census Division/Region, Gender, Ethnicity, Race, Education.<sup>iv</sup>

For the Current Public School Teachers estimates, Braun Research weighted the initially completed teachers sample (N=777) by using population parameters from the U.S. Department of Education's Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), based on: Age, Census Division/Region, Gender, Ethnicity, Race.<sup>v</sup>

Weighted and unweighted results are available on request.

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<sup>iii</sup> Stephen J. Blumberg and Julian V. Luke (2018), *Wireless Substitution: Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, July–December 2017* [National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program], National Center for Health Statistics, retrieved from CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhis/earlyrelease/wireless201806.pdf>;

<sup>iv</sup> United States Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey (ACS), Five-year Estimates [Data set], retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

<sup>v</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) [Data set], retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass>; National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey, retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps>

# APPENDIX 3

## Phone Call Dispositions and Response Rates

National General Population Phone Disposition (N = 801)					
SUMMARY			DETAIL		
	Landline	Cell Phone			
Total	31,700	21,200	Disconnected	3,117	2,640
Released	31,700	21,200	Fax	17	1
Est. Response	0.9%	3.1%	Government/Business	87	66
			Cell Phone	0	.
			Landline	.	0
			Unusable	3,221	2,707
			No Answer	3,291	418
			Busy	317	59
			Usability Unknown	3,608	2,707
			Complete	240	561
			Break-Off	21	37
			Usable/Eligible	261	477
			Refused	857	1,026
			Language Barrier	56	73
			Voice Mail	14,173	8,241
			Call Back-Retry	9,316	7,914
			Strong Refusal	48	59
			Privacy Manager	36	19
			Usable/Eligible Unknown	24,486	17,332
			Terminates	124	86
			Usable/Ineligible	124	86
			<b>RESPONSE RATE</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
			<b>COOPERATION RATE</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>36.6%</b>
			<b>REFUSAL RATE</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>

# APPENDIX 4

## Online Dispositions and Response Rate

General Population Online Disposition	
Description	Total
Full Completes	1,002
Email Bouncebacks	263
Emails Unopened After Reminders	19,932
Terminated Early/Breakoffs	411
Screened Out/Disqualified	130
Refusals	62
Total Contracts	21,800
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
<b>Cooperation Rate</b>	<b>67.9%</b>
<b>Refusal Rate</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Current Public School Teachers Online Disposition (N=777)	
Description	Total
Full Completes	777
Email Bouncebacks	209
Emails Unopened After Reminders	2,655
Terminated Early/Breakoffs	170
Screened Out/Disqualified	624
Refusals	65
Total Contracts	4,500
<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>27.9%</b>
<b>Cooperation Rate</b>	<b>76.8%</b>
<b>Refusal Rate</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

# APPENDIX 5

## Phone Call Introductions

### ***Cell Phone***

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am calling for BR Interviewing, a national market research firm.

We are not selling anything and will not be asking you for money, all your answers will be kept confidential. We are calling nationwide to ask questions about things that have been in the news and would like to include your opinions.

If you are driving or doing anything that requires your full attention, I will need to call you back.

Please know these calls are randomly monitored for quality and training purposes.

### ***Landline***

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am calling for BR Interviewing, a national market research firm.

We are not selling anything and will not be asking you for money, all your answers will be kept confidential. We are calling nationwide to ask questions about things that have been in the news and would like to include your opinions.

I'd like to ask a few questions of the youngest male age 18 years or older who is now at home?

[IF NO]

May I ask a few questions of the youngest female age 18 years or older who is now at home?

Please know these calls are randomly monitored for quality and training purposes.

# APPENDIX 6

## Screening Questions

### ***Phone***

**S1.** Are you under 18 years old, OR are you 18 or older?

- 1) Under 18 \* Thank, and terminate
- 2) 18 or older
- 9) (Refused) \* Thank, and terminate

**S2.** What is your ZIP Code?

**S3.** In what STATE do you currently live?

- 1)[Record U.S. State or District of Columbia]
- 2) Outside of USA \* Thank, and terminate
- 3) (Refused) \* Thank, and terminate

**D1.** What is your gender?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

### ***Online (General Population)***

**S1.** Are you under 18 years old, OR are you 18 or older?

- 1) Under 18 \* Thank, and terminate
- 2) 18 or older
- 9) (Refused) \* Thank, and terminate

**S2.** What is your ZIP Code?

**S3.** In what STATE do you currently live?

- 1)[Record U.S. State or District of Columbia]
- 2) Outside of USA \* Thank, and terminate
- 3) (Refused) \* Thank, and terminate

**D1.** What is your gender?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

## ***Online (Current Public School Teachers)***

**S1.** Are you under 18 years old, OR are you 18 or older?

- 1) Under 18 \* Thank, and terminate
- 2) 18 or older
- 9) (Refused) \* Thank, and terminate

**S2.** In what STATE do you currently live?

- 1) [Record U.S. State or District of Columbia]
- 2) Outside of USA \* Thank, and terminate
- 3) (Refused) \* Thank, and terminate

**T1.** Are you a current or former public school teacher, having taught in any grade from Kindergarten through High School for at least one school year?

- 1) Current Public School Teacher [CONTINUE]
- 2) Former Public School Teacher (including Retired) [TERMINATE]
- 3) Never a Public School Teacher [TERMINATE]

**T2.** Where do you teach? Single response [must teach at a public district school or else terminate]

- 1) Charter School (or Public Charter School) [TERMINATE]
- 2) Home School [TERMINATE]
- 3) Private School (or Independent School, Parochial School, Religious School) [TERMINATE]
- 4) Regular Public School (or Public District School) [CONTINUE]

**T3.** In this current school year, what grade level(s) do you teach? Please select all that apply.

- 12th Grade
- 11th Grade
- 10th Grade
- 9th Grade
- 8th Grade
- 7th Grade
- 6th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 4th Grade
- 3rd Grade
- 2nd Grade
- 1st Grade
- Kindergarten (KG)
- Preschool (PreK)
- Other [ALLOW TO FILL IN]

[IF ONLY “PRESCHOOL (PreK)” OR “OTHER” IS SELECTED, \*THANK AND TERMINATE]

# APPENDIX 7

## Views on National Direction in K–12 Education

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups

	Right Direction %	Wrong Track %	Margin (net)	N =
<b>GENERAL POPULATION</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>1,803</b>
Current Public School Teacher	42	58	-15	777
Current School Parent	41	53	-13	533
<b>AGE GROUP</b>				
18 to 34	35	56	-21	523
35 to 54	40	52	-12	597
55 and Over	31	58	-27	661
<b>GENERATION</b>				
Millennial	37	56	-19	571
Generation X	40	51	-12	461
Baby Boomer	30	61	-32	550
Silent	39	46	-7	132
<b>COMMUNITY</b>				
Urban	38	55	-17	442
Suburban	35	57	-22	735
Small Town/Rural	34	55	-22	606
<b>EDUCATION</b>				
< College Graduate	37	53	-16	1,143
≥ College Graduate	31	61	-30	653
<b>GENDER</b>				
Male	36	57	-22	935
Female	35	54	-19	868
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>				
< \$40,000	37	50	-13	706
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	32	61	-29	570
≥ \$80,000	37	58	-21	436
<b>PARTY ID</b>				
Democrat	33	56	-23	606
Republican	44	48	-4	512
Independent	33	60	-27	497
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>				
Asian/Pacific Islander	41	51	-10	42
Black/African American	35	55	-20	202
Hispanic/Latino	40	51	-11	189
White	34	57	-23	1,283
<b>REGION</b>				
Northeast	36	54	-18	342
Midwest	39	53	-14	394
South	35	55	-20	699
West	32	60	-28	368

Notes: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its adult population size in the United States and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. The subgroup sample sizes displayed in the far right column represent the unweighted number of interviews. All other statistical results reported in this table and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q1.

# APPENDIX 8

## Views on ESAs: Descriptive Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups

	Favor %	Opposed %	Margin (net)	Intensity (Strong net)	N =
<b>GENERAL POPULATION</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1,803</b>
Current Public School Teacher	78	22	57	24	777
Current School Parent	76	17	59	33	533
<b>AGE GROUP</b>					
18 to 34	74	18	56	32	523
35 to 54	78	17	61	29	597
55 and Over	69	19	50	20	661
<b>GENERATION</b>					
Millennial	76	17	59	33	571
Generation X	77	17	61	29	461
Baby Boomer	72	18	54	23	550
Silent	62	22	40	14	132
<b>COMMUNITY</b>					
Urban	77	18	60	29	442
Suburban	73	19	54	25	735
Small Town/Rural	74	17	57	29	606
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
< College Graduate	73	17	56	27	1,143
≥ College Graduate	74	19	55	28	653
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	76	18	58	24	935
Female	71	18	54	30	868
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>					
< \$40,000	72	19	54	27	706
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	76	16	60	27	570
≥ \$80,000	78	18	60	30	436
<b>PARTY ID</b>					
Democrat	72	19	53	25	606
Republican	75	19	57	28	512
Independent	77	16	61	30	497
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>					
Asian/Pacific Islander	78	13	65	27	42
Black/African American	79	15	64	31	202
Hispanic/Latino	70	21	49	32	189
White	74	17	57	26	1,283
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast	76	17	60	27	342
Midwest	73	16	57	24	394
South	74	18	56	31	699
West	71	20	51	23	368

Notes: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its adult population size in the United States and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. The subgroup sample sizes displayed in the far right column represent the unweighted number of interviews. All other statistical results reported in this table and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q23.

# APPENDIX 9

## Views on School Vouchers: Descriptive Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups

	Favor %	Opposed %	Margin (net)	Intensity (Strong net)	N =
<b>GENERAL POPULATION</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,803</b>
Current Public School Teacher	54	46	9	-1	777
Current School Parent	69	26	43	20	533
<b>AGE GROUP</b>					
18 to 34	68	26	43	17	523
35 to 54	69	26	42	18	597
55 and Over	55	38	17	<1	661
<b>GENERATION</b>					
Millennial	69	26	43	18	571
Generation X	69	26	43	16	461
Baby Boomer	59	35	24	4	550
Silent	44	47	-3	-10	132
<b>COMMUNITY</b>					
Urban	65	30	35	14	442
Suburban	61	33	28	7	735
Small Town/Rural	65	28	38	14	606
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
< College Graduate	67	27	40	15	1,143
≥ College Graduate	56	38	18	2	653
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	64	31	33	8	935
Female	63	29	34	15	868
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>					
< \$40,000	65	28	37	15	706
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	67	28	39	12	570
≥ \$80,000	61	35	26	7	436
<b>PARTY ID</b>					
Democrat	60	34	26	5	606
Republican	70	24	46	20	512
Independent	64	31	33	13	497
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>					
Asian/Pacific Islander	54	38	15	-8	42
Black/African American	70	25	44	23	202
Hispanic/Latino	67	26	42	14	189
White	62	31	31	10	1,283
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast	64	31	33	7	342
Midwest	63	29	34	10	394
South	66	28	38	17	699
West	59	34	26	6	368

Notes: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its adult population size in the United States and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. The subgroup sample sizes displayed in the far right column represent the unweighted number of interviews. All other statistical results reported in this table and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q21

# APPENDIX 10

## Views on Tax-Credit Scholarships: Descriptive Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups

	Favor %	Opposed %	Margin (net)	Intensity (Strong net)	N =
<b>GENERAL POPULATION</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1,803</b>
Current Public School Teacher	67	32	35	11	777
Current School Parent	67	24	43	22	533
<b>AGE GROUP</b>					
18 to 34	68	24	45	18	523
35 to 54	70	22	48	19	597
55 and Over	62	27	35	8	661
<b>GENERATION</b>					
Millennial	69	24	45	19	571
Generation X	70	20	50	20	461
Baby Boomer	63	26	37	10	550
Silent	59	29	30	1	132
<b>COMMUNITY</b>					
Urban	69	24	45	19	442
Suburban	68	24	44	15	735
Small Town/Rural	63	26	37	11	606
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
< College Graduate	66	23	43	16	1,143
≥ College Graduate	66	27	39	11	653
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	67	25	42	14	935
Female	66	24	42	15	868
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>					
< \$40,000	64	24	40	15	706
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	72	22	50	16	570
≥ \$80,000	66	27	39	14	436
<b>PARTY ID</b>					
Democrat	66	26	41	12	606
Republican	73	20	52	21	512
Independent	65	26	39	14	497
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>					
Asian/Pacific Islander	76	13	63	21	42
Black/African American	70	23	47	18	202
Hispanic/Latino	66	20	46	20	189
White	65	26	39	12	1,283
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast	72	21	51	19	342
Midwest	64	26	37	7	394
South	66	23	43	18	699
West	65	27	38	12	368

Notes: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its adult population size in the United States and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. The subgroup sample sizes displayed in the far right column represent the unweighted number of interviews. All other statistical results reported in this table and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q27.

# APPENDIX 11

## Views on Charter Schools: Descriptive Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (Strong net)	N =
<b>GENERAL POPULATION</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1,803</b>
Current Public School Teacher	57	42	15	1	777
Current School Parent	66	25	41	13	533
<b>AGE GROUP</b>					
18 to 34	61	30	30	6	523
35 to 54	65	27	38	11	597
55 and Over	59	30	29	5	661
<b>GENERATION</b>					
Millennial	61	32	29	5	571
Generation X	65	26	40	13	461
Baby Boomer	62	29	33	7	550
Silent	50	30	20	-2	132
<b>COMMUNITY</b>					
Urban	62	31	31	12	442
Suburban	63	30	33	6	735
Small Town/Rural	60	27	34	5	606
<b>EDUCATION</b>					
< College Graduate	62	27	35	6	1,143
≥ College Graduate	61	33	27	8	653
<b>GENDER</b>					
Male	63	28	36	9	935
Female	60	29	30	6	868
<b>HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>					
< \$40,000	60	29	31	7	706
\$40,000 to < \$80,000	65	29	36	6	570
≥ \$80,000	62	29	33	10	436
<b>PARTY ID</b>					
Democrat	59	31	27	4	606
Republican	64	28	36	12	512
Independent	64	28	36	8	497
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>					
Asian/Pacific Islander	64	28	36	15	42
Black/African American	71	22	49	14	202
Hispanic/Latino	61	31	30	5	189
White	60	30	31	6	1,283
<b>REGION</b>					
Northeast	57	31	26	3	342
Midwest	57	31	2	1	394
South	67	25	42	13	699
West	60	31	30	7	368

Notes: Please consider that each subgroup has a unique margin of error based on its adult population size in the United States and the sample size (N) obtained in this survey. We advise strong caution when interpreting results for subgroups with small sample sizes. The subgroup sample sizes displayed in the far right column represent the unweighted number of interviews. All other statistical results reported in this table and report reflect weighted data, a standard procedure to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, 2018 Schooling in America Survey (conducted September 25–October 7, 2018), Q19.









# ABOUT THE AUTHORS



## Paul DiPerna

Paul DiPerna is vice president of Research and Innovation for EdChoice. He joined the organization in 2006. Paul’s research interests include surveys and polling on K–12 education and school choice reforms. He oversees the research projects either produced or commissioned by the organization. EdChoice has published more than 95 reports, papers, and briefs during his tenure leading the research program. Paul presents survey research findings and discusses school choice politics and policies with audiences, including public officials, policy professionals, academics, and advocates. Paul’s professional memberships and activities include participation in the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP). Previously, Paul served as the assistant director for the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution. He was a research analyst for the first five issues of the Brown Center Report on American Education (2000–2004). He also managed and coordinated the activities of the National Working Commission on Choice in K–12 Education (2001–2005). A native of Pittsburgh, Paul earned an M.A. in political science from the University of Illinois (2000) and B.A. from the University of Dayton (1996). Paul currently lives in Zionsville, Indiana, with his wife and two daughters.



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The authors take responsibility for any errors, misrepresentations or omissions in this publication.

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The authors take responsibility for any errors, misrepresentations, or omissions in this publication.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY ORGANIZATION

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The work we accomplish for other research firms requires us to perform all work up to standards required by the various research organizations where we enjoy membership and, in some cases, participate actively. Paul Braun is recognized as a leader in the field by colleagues who asked him to serve on these committees. He is a member of the MRA/CMOR committees on response rate improvement and in launching a seal of quality for the industry. He has served as President of the New Jersey Chapter of AAPOR, and he is currently a member of the International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) in North America.

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If research adheres to proper scientific and methodological standards, its findings can be relied upon no matter who has conducted it. If rules and methods are neither specified nor followed, then the biases of the researcher or an organization may become relevant, because a lack of rigor opens the door for those biases to affect the results.

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