WHAT PARENTS WANT FROM EDUCATION
THE CASE FOR REAL CHOICES
This groundbreaking research helps us understand what parents want, align education with their goals, drive higher satisfaction and fully maximize the talent this country has in its young people.
An online survey among a cross section of 2,823 parents and voters conducted in Sept. 2017

An oversample survey among an additional 283 African Americans and 169 Hispanic parents was conducted in Dec. 2017 to result in a total of 500 Hispanic parents and 500 African American parents.

*This report is based primarily on the representative sample of parents (n=2021).*

- Observations by Hispanic and African American parents will be based on the combined sample for those populations; detailed findings by those populations is available in a separate report.

Parents of more than one child are assigned* one child to think about as they answer the survey questions, allowing even sub-sample sizes across student age groups.

### Distribution of Children (Under 18) in Household:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 0 – 5 years</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6 - 10 years</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 11-14 years</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 15-18 years</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assigned* Child Distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 0 – 5 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 6 - 10 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 11-14 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 15-18 years</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Child assignments to achieve even distribution*
### Parent demographic profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 21-24</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 25-34</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 35-44</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 45-54</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55-64</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65-75</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or trade school</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post graduate</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married or domestic partnership</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity*</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Caucasian Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/Spanish origin</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian American</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Residence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Household Income for 2016</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $35,000</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $74,999</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 to $99,999</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $149,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 to $199,999</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 or more</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Employment Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time homemaker</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Ownership Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adds to over 100% because multiple responses were allowed for race/ethnicity*
S17. Which of the following early childhood education or care experiences is this child participating in?

S18. Which of the following best describes your child’s current (2017-2018 school year) educational experience?

S19. Is your child’s current school an elementary, middle or high school?

S21. Is the school or early childhood educational program your child attends now a/an...?
EDUCATORS AND ADVOCATES ARE FOCUSED ON WHAT MAKES GOOD EDUCATION, BUT PARENTS ARE FOCUSED ON WHAT MAKES GOOD PEOPLE.
ACADEMICS, WHILE IMPORTANT, ARE NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH AN IDEAL EDUCATION—PARENTS SEE IDEAL EDUCATION AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH THAT DEVELOPS INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS.
Assuming high-quality academic preparation, parents identify elements of intellectual development (critical thinking, problem-solving and goal setting) as most important to prepare kids for future success; goal is well-rounded adults who are self-reliant and prepared for the real world.

**TOP RANK**

**IMPORTANT AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT**

**Rank in Top Three**

1. **Intellectual development:** critical thinking, problem-solving, set and pursue goals
   - Rank 1: 38%
   - Rank 2: 18%
   - Rank 3: 15%
   - Top 3: 72%

2. **Emotional development:** self-worth, identity, responsible, motivated, independent, empathy
   - Rank 1: 15%
   - Rank 2: 16%
   - Rank 3: 17%
   - Top 3: 47%

3. **Moral development:** know right from wrong, make good choices, select good friends
   - Rank 1: 15%
   - Rank 2: 14%
   - Rank 3: 15%
   - Top 3: 44%

4. **Social development:** comfortable, considerate, confident, respectful
   - Rank 1: 13%
   - Rank 2: 18%
   - Rank 3: 19%
   - Top 3: 51%

5. **Behavioral development:** pay attention, concentrate, follow instructions, keep going, work in groups, meet deadlines
   - Rank 1: 11%
   - Rank 2: 21%
   - Rank 3: 18%
   - Top 3: 50%

6. **Citizenship development:** accepts and cares about people/places around them, sense of fairness, accepting of differences
   - Rank 1: 8%
   - Rank 2: 13%
   - Rank 3: 16%
   - Top 3: 37%

**MOST IMPORTANT GOAL AS A PARENT**

- 31% To develop kids into balanced, well-rounded adults
- 30% To successfully prepare kids for the real world
- 26% To develop kids into responsible adults who can take care of themselves
- 12% To produce kids that will achieve great things
- 1% None of these

**MOST IMPORTANT OUTCOME OF K-12 EDUCATION TO COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY**

- 39% Fulfill a core responsibility of the community to its children and citizens
- 25% Prepare workers with the right skills for successful businesses
- 15% Create a more pleasant community in which to live
- 9% Reduce societal strife and crime
- 8% Build prosperity
- 4% None of these

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Base: All Parents (N=2,021)

Q2. Assuming your child gets (VOTERS: “local children get”) high quality academic preparation, what else should their school be providing to prepare them for future success? Select the top three in order of importance (#1, #2, #3).

Q3. In addition to core academics, thinking about the goals of education from kindergarten all the way through high school, which ONE of these is the most important outcome for you as a parent (VOTERS: “citizen”)?

Q4. What is the most important outcome of K-12 education to your community and our society?
The majority of parents want to produce capable individuals with the ability to contribute constructively to the world, who have independence of mind and spirit and a sense of purpose about their lives.
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
HIERARCHICAL BASE MAP

VALUES
- Connection
- Achievement
- Purpose
- Contribution
- Independence

EMOTIONS
- Enthused
- Comfortable
- Capable
- Successful

BENEFITS
- Respectfulness
- Real World Aptitude
- Self-Actualization
- Healthy Relationships
- Academic Achievement

ATTRIBUTES
- Civic Skills
- Adaptive Skills
- Life Skills
- Social Skills
- Academic Skills
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
HIERARCHICAL BASE MAP

VALUES
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ATTRIBUTES
- Civic Skills
- Adaptive Skills
- Life Skills
- Social Skills
- Academic Skills
54%

LIFE SKILLS PARENTS

focus more on developing a productive individual who contributes to society.

Life skills parents feel relatively well-served by traditional education, with the exception of wanting more social and emotional development.
“Life Skills” pathways are dominant for 54% of parents. There are three subpathways as shown on the following pages.

- Independence through Life Skills (26%)
- Connection through Life Skills (19%)
- Contribution through Life Skills (8%)
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
INDEPENDENCE THROUGH LIFE SKILLS (26%)

- Capable
  - Responsible
- Capable
  - Independent
- Life Skills
  - Function well in the real world
  - Use good judgement
  - Use common sense
  - Respect themselves and others
  - Take responsibility for their lives
  - Be a well-rounded individual
  - Demonstrate integrity
  - Demonstrate self-discipline
  - Become independent
  - Become independent thinkers
  - Be motivated to be successful
  - Have a sense of purpose

- Self-Actualization
  - Be inclusive and accepting of others
  - Build their sense of identity
  - Develop a strong sense of self
  - Contribute to community/society
  - Build their sense of self-worth
  - Be creative
  - Is honest and trustworthy
  - Takes responsibility for their actions
  - Is respectful
  - Is kind to others/is considerate of others
  - Has good judgment
  - Works hard
  - Has confidence in self
  - Is able follow instructions
  - Has empathy for others
  - Can communicate what they know, want and feel
  - Is able to understand, remember and complete tasks
  - Is able to set goals and complete them
  - Has a strong sense of who they are
  - Is internally motivated to learn
  - Is able to concentrate and focus
  - Can cooperate with peers and work in a group
  - Is aware and in control of own emotions
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
CONNECTION THROUGH LIFE SKILLS (19%)
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
CONTRIBUTION THROUGH LIFE SKILLS (8%)

Real World Aptitude
75%
6.3

Life Skills
77%
6.3

Capable
69%
6.2

Contribute to a better community
Contribute to a better world
Respected by the community
Productive citizen

Is honest and trustworthy
Takes responsibility for their actions
Is respectful
Is kind to others/Is considerate of others
Has good judgment
Works hard
Has confidence in self
Is able to follow instructions
Has empathy for others
Can communicate what they know, want and feel
Is able to understand, remember and complete tasks
Is able to set goals and complete them
Has a strong sense of who they are
Is internally motivated to learn
Is able to concentrate and focus
Can cooperate with peers and work in a group
Is aware and in control of own emotions

Contribution
68%
6.1

Capable
69%
6.2

Respected by the community
Productive citizen

Function well in the real world
Use good judgement
Use common sense
Respect themselves and others
Take responsibility for their lives
Be a well-rounded individual
Demonstrate integrity
Demonstrate self-discipline
Become independent
Become independent thinkers
Be motivated to be successful
Have a sense of purpose
LIFE SKILLS IS THE DOMINANT PATHWAY ACROSS ALL STAGES AND GROWS MORE PROMINENT AS CHILDREN AGE.

Primary Parent Pathways by Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Child</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Age 0-5</th>
<th>Age 6-10</th>
<th>Age 11-14</th>
<th>Age 15-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Skills</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Skills</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Skills</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Total (n=2021), Age 0-5 (n=507), Age 6-10 (n=506), Age 11-14 (n=507), Age 15-18 (n=501)
WHILE LIFE SKILLS REMAINS DOMINANT, SECONDARY PATHWAYS DIFFER SOMEWHAT BY ETHNICITY/RACE.

Primary Parent Pathways by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Core Rep Sample</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Asian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Skills</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Skills</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Skills</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Skills</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: Core Rep Sample (n=2021), African American (n=500), Hispanic (n=500), White Non-Hispanic (n=1346), Asian (n=100)
39%
SOCIAL/CITIZEN/ADAPTIVE SKILLS PARENTS

focus more on developing a fulfilled person who is connected to others and the world. Their aspirations are not fully aligned with traditional education and they are most apt to seek alternatives in a marketplace with few of them.
**IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE**

**CONNECTION THROUGH SOCIAL SKILLS (16%)**

- **Connection** 68%  6.2
  - Be in a loving relationship
  - Able to bond with others
  - Strong family
  - Inner peace
  - Have a sense of belonging
  - Fulfilled
  - Truly happy with themselves
  - Enjoy life
  - Emotionally secure

- **Enthused** 63%  6.1
  - Curious
  - Passionate
  - Enthusiastic
  - Excited
  - Hopeful
  - Optimistic
  - Happy
  - Appreciative

- **Self-Actualization** 68%  6.2
  - Be inclusive and accepting of others
  - Build their sense of identity
  - Develop a strong sense of self
  - Contribute to community/society
  - Build their sense of self-worth
  - Be creative

- **Social Skills** 57%  6.0
  - Is outgoing and friendly
  - Is at ease in social situations
  - Works well under pressure
  - Helps others learn
  - Is involved and engaged
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
CONTRIBUTION THROUGH CIVIC SKILLS (15%)

Civic Skills
- Cares for the environment in which they live
  - Is accepting of others
  - Is open-minded
  - Has a sense of justice/fairness

Healthy Relationships
- Handle failure and rejection
- Handle conflict and disagreements
- Develop healthy relationships
- Adapt to new situations easily
- Express themselves
- Choose and make good friends

Self-Actualization
- Contribute to a better community
- Contribute to a better world
- Respected by the community
- Productive citizen

Capable
- Resilient
- Responsible
- Competent
- Focused
- Confident
- Secure
- Smart
- Empowered

Enthused
- Curious
- Passionate
- Enthusiastic
- Excited
- Hopeful
- Optimistic
- Happy
- Appreciative

IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
CONTRIBUTION THROUGH CIVIC SKILLS (15%)
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
PURPOSE THROUGH ADAPTIVE SKILLS (8%)

- Function well in the real world
- Use good judgement
- Use common sense
- Respect themselves and others
- Take responsibility for their lives
- Be a well-rounded individual
- Demonstrate integrity
- Demonstrate self-discipline
- Become independent
- Become independent thinkers
- Be motivated to be successful
- Have a sense of purpose

- Purpose 72% 6.2
  - Leads a meaningful life
    - Well-rounded
    - Balanced
    - Purposeful
    - Has high self-esteem
    - Lifelong learner

- Capable 69% 6.2
  - Capable
  - Responsible
  - Competent
  - Focused
  - Confident
  - Secure
  - Smart
  - Empowered

- Real World Aptitude 75% 6.3
  - Function well in the real world
  - Use good judgement
  - Use common sense
  - Respect themselves and others
  - Take responsibility for their lives
  - Be a well-rounded individual
  - Demonstrate integrity
  - Demonstrate self-discipline
  - Become independent
  - Become independent thinkers
  - Be motivated to be successful
  - Have a sense of purpose

- Adaptive Skills 67% 6.2
  - Is resilient
  - Is resourceful
  - Is a critical thinker
  - Is a self-directed learner
  - Is adaptable
  - Has confidence to explore new ideas
  - Is able to sustain attention when shown something
Only 7% of parents focus on Academic Skills, Achievement, Success and Professional Achievement as an ideal pathway to actualizing their aspirations for their children.
IDEAL YOUNG ADULT: PARENT PERSPECTIVE
ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH ACADEMIC SKILLS (7%)

Achievement
62%
6.0

Academic Skills
48%
5.8

Academic Achievement
51%
5.8

Successful
55%
5.8

Competitive
Proud

Professionally successful
Financially secure
Leader
Accomplished
Good employee or professional
Rewarded for hard work

Do well on standardized tests
Be admitted to a good college or university
Be ahead of his/her peers
Be able to keep up with other students
Find a good job
Demonstrate leadership skills

Has strong math skills
Understands scientific concepts
Is a good writer
Excels academically
Knows a second language
Enjoys going to school
Is a good reader
Has a good grasp of history and current events
Is intelligent
Is adept with technology
PARENTS WANT A BALANCE BETWEEN ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THEY WANT DISTINCT CHOICES IN THAT BALANCE IN ORDER TO FIT THEIR ASPIRATIONS AND STUDENT NEEDS.
Parents want a combination of academic and social and emotional development; far fewer want a primary focus on academic achievement.

I want my child’s education to include a combination of academic and social-emotional development.

If my child is educated to become a self-motivated learner and problem solver, they will develop all the academic knowledge and skills they need even if the school's primary focus isn't on academic achievement.

My child will develop the social-emotional skills they need to be successful without their school trying to teach it.

I want my child’s school to focus primarily on academic achievement.

I want my child's school to focus primarily on social-emotional development so they can become a self-motivated learner and problem solver.

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q1. PARENTS: Still thinking of your child who is (ASSIGNED CHILD'S AGE), please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.
TEACHING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS WITH INTENTIONALITY IS WHAT IS MOST MISSING IN EDUCATION—AND THE DESIRE FOR IT IS A DRIVER FOR PARENTS TO SEEK OUT AND EMBRACE ALTERNATIVES.
CHOICE VS. REAL CHOICES
THE NEW DYNAMIC

Education should fit the child; the child shouldn’t have to fit the education.
Fitting the education approach to match the child’s natural learning style is uniformly important to parents, yet roughly three quarters also want their child to learn how to adapt to any/all educational approaches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Total Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Completely</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Completely</th>
<th>Total Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want an approach to education that fits my child rather than requiring my child to fit an approach.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools can achieve high standards for children without standardization.</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I want my child to learn to meet the demands of an approach to education, whether or not the approach matches their natural learning style.</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My child's learning style is a better fit with a non-traditional classroom setting.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q1. PARENTS: Still thinking of your child who is (ASSIGNED CHILD’S AGE), please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.
PARENTS SAY THEY HAVE CHOICES IN THEORY, BUT FEW SAY THEY HAVE A REAL CHOICE.
Seven in 10 considered at least one other school option but only three in 10 say they had a **real choice**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Choice in Selecting an Approach to Education</th>
<th>Number of Options Considered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No choice, it was the only approach to education realistically available to us</td>
<td>30% No other options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal of choice, many options available</td>
<td>22% One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A moderate level of choice, at least two realistic options</td>
<td>33% Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some choice, but all the realistic options were very similar</td>
<td>11% Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4% Four or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)

Q33. How many school options did you consider at that time?
Q34. How much choice in approaches to education did you have when selecting this school for your child? Please select the statement below that best describes the process.
Three in four parents feel most school districts only offer one approach to education and agree that a choice of schools offering the same thing is not a real choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree Completely</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Agree Completely</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most school districts only offer one approach to education, even if they offer a choice of schools.</td>
<td>23% 3% 19%</td>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a choice of schools offering the same thing is no choice at all for children.</td>
<td>26% 6% 20%</td>
<td></td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q1. PARENTS: Still thinking of your child who is [ASSIGNED CHILD'S AGE], please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.
AVAILABILITY, CONVENIENCE AND COST MAKE CHOICE MORE THEORETICAL FOR PARENTS—AND CREATE THE PARADOX OF SOMETHING THEY HAVE BUT DON’T.
Seven in 10 identify at least one factor restricting their opportunity to enroll in a school they might have otherwise attended; convenience and cost are the top restrictions to enrollment in another more desirable school.

**Restrictions to Enrollment**

- **Cost (more than can afford or more than it's worth):** 37%
- **Distance/transportation considerations limit options:** 31%
- **Selectivity of school or lottery process:** 20%
- **Safety considerations:** 17%
- **Issues in application process (difficulty/missed deadline):** 16%
- **Special needs of child/accommodates IEP:** 13%

28% say ‘None’

72% Identify at least one barrier

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)

Q35. Which, if any, of the following factors restricted your opportunity to enroll your child in a school you otherwise wanted them to attend? Select all that apply.
Satisfaction is a relatively low bar compared to parent aspirations—people are generally satisfied with what they choose, but not necessarily enthusiastic about their choices.
We are only halfway there in maximizing choice in education:

54% see reasonable alignment between schools and their aspirations.

39% don’t—and the vast majority of parents want more education choices to better fit their child.
STUDENT FIT
Regardless of pathway, parents want distinctly different education approaches that best fit how a student learns and succeeds—even those who are satisfied with traditional education.
THE STUDENT FIT MODEL

Putting real choice into education is the vehicle for actualizing our education goals and driving higher satisfaction.
Now, please read the following description of a model some communities use to provide education options for students and families:

When selecting schools, many families want to know the approach a school uses to educate students so they can fit the education to their child—not their child to the education.

Some local school districts only offer one approach to education, even if they offer a choice of schools. Parents can feel like having a choice of schools offering the same thing is no choice at all for their children. They feel they should have a variety of approaches in their local schools that fit the variety of individual needs and learning styles of their children.

Other local school districts might use a Student Fit model. This makes sure that families and students have the opportunity to match learning styles with the education approaches of their teachers, classrooms and schools. In some districts, some schools provide one approach to education and other schools provide different ones. In other districts, there are classrooms and teachers providing the different approaches within the same schools.

With the Student Fit model families can match the approach to education with the way their child learns best so that students are best prepared for success in college and career.
The Student Fit model holds stronger appeal for parents (and for their children) than current school models.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal of Student Fit model to a Parent</th>
<th>Not At All Appealing (7%)</th>
<th>Somewhat Unappealing (25%)</th>
<th>Somewhat Appealing (43%)</th>
<th>Extremely Appealing (50%)</th>
<th>Total Unappealing (Net)</th>
<th>Total Appealing (Net)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent perception of appeal of Student Fit model to a Student</td>
<td>Not At All Appealing (5%)</td>
<td>Somewhat Unappealing (14%)</td>
<td>Somewhat Appealing (44%)</td>
<td>Extremely Appealing (50%)</td>
<td>Total Unappealing (Net)</td>
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<td>Somewhat Appealing (50%)</td>
<td>Extremely Appealing (28%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Somewhat Appealing (49%)</td>
<td>Extremely Appealing (25%)</td>
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<td>Total Appealing (Net)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All parents (N=2,021)
Q13. How appealing is this Student Fit model to you as a parent (VOTER: "citizen")?
Q14. How appealing do you think this Student Fit model would be to students?
Q17. How appealing is the current model your local school district is using to you as a parent (VOTER: "citizen")?
Q18. How appealing do you think the current model your local school district is using to students?
Three distinct approaches:

TRADITIONAL
Prioritizing academic instruction and achievement. Social-emotional development takes place through academic work and natural interaction with teachers and peers.

BLENDING
Prioritizing traditional academic instruction along with intentional activities that teach and support social-emotional development.

STUDENT-CENTERED
Prioritizing social-emotional development. Academic strength is built through student interests, and knowledge is acquired through experiences in the classroom and community.
Half of parents find the Blended approach extremely appealing and a plurality say it would be the best fit for their child right now; a majority of those without a child in this environment think it is unavailable in their public schools or are unsure it’s available.

One way to think about the range of approaches to education is how they combine social-emotional learning and academic learning. Listed below are descriptions of three different approaches characterized by their combination of social-emotional and academic learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Approaches</th>
<th>Appeal</th>
<th>Best Describes Current Environment</th>
<th>Best Fit for Child Right Now</th>
<th>Approach Is Currently Available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRADITIONAL APPROACH</strong> prioritizing academic instruction and achievement. Social-emotional development takes place through academic work, interacting with teachers and peers.</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>77% Yes (n=1,304)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BLENDED APPROACH</strong> prioritizing traditional academic instruction along with intentional activities that teach and support social-emotional development.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46% Yes (n=1,413)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH</strong> prioritizing social-emotional development. Academic strength is built through student interests and knowledge is acquired through experiences in the classroom and the community.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37% Yes (n=1,556)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q9. How appealing is this approach to you as a (PARENT: parent/VOTER: citizen) in terms of fitting (PARENT: your child’s; VOTER: children’s) needs?
Base: Parents, Not Home Schooling (N=1,920)
Q10. Which ONE of these best describes your child’s current educational environment?
Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q11. If you had to choose, which ONE of these would be the best fit for your child right now?
*Base: Parents, Not Current Approach (bases vary)
Q12. Is this approach currently available for your child in your local K-12 public schools?
Parents most focused on Life Skills, Civic Skills and Adaptive Skills reflect the total population in finding the Blended approach most appealing. Parents on the Social Skills pathway find the Student-centered and Blended approaches equally appealing. Parents focused on Academic Skills find Traditional and Blended equally appealing.

One way to think about the range of approaches to education is how they combine social-emotional learning and academic learning. Listed below are descriptions of three different approaches characterized by their combination of social-emotional and academic learning.

### Appeal of Educational Approaches by Pathway

#### TRADITIONAL APPROACH
prioritizing academic instruction and achievement. Social-emotional development takes place through academic work, interacting with teachers and peers.

#### BLENDED APPROACH
prioritizing traditional academic instruction along with intentional activities that teach and support social-emotional development.

#### STUDENT-CENTERED APPROACH
prioritizing social-emotional development. Academic strength is built through student interests and knowledge is acquired through experiences in the classroom and the community.

Parents most focused on Life Skills, Civic Skills and Adaptive Skills reflect the total population in finding the Blended approach most appealing. Parents on the Social Skills pathway find the Student-centered and Blended approaches equally appealing. Parents focused on Academic Skills find Traditional and Blended equally appealing.
THE STUDENT FIT MODEL

is seen as furthering individual and societal actualization.
Assuming high-quality academic preparation, the Student Fit model is perceived to deliver on the most important additional school outcomes parents identified overall. While Intellectual development is still at the top, parents are more likely to rank Emotional development first when considering the impact of the Student Fit model.

### Important Areas of Development

**Top Rank**

- High Quality Education overall
- Student Fit Model

#### Intellectual development: critical thinking, problem solving, set and pursue goals

- 38%
- 33%

#### Emotional development: self-worth, identity, responsible, motivated, independent, empathy

- 19%
- 15%

#### Moral development: know right from wrong, make good choices, select good friends

- 14%
- 15%

#### Social development: comfortable, considerate, confident, respectful

- 13%
- 13%

#### Behavioral development: pay attention, concentrate, follow instructions, keep going, work in groups, meet deadline

- 12%
- 11%

#### Citizenship development: accepts & cares about people/places around them, sense of fairness, accepting of differences

- 10%
- 8%

---

### Most Important Goal as a Parent

**Goals Student Fit Model Will Most Help Foster**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Top 3 Parents</th>
<th>Student Fit Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To develop kids into balanced, well-rounded adults</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To successfully prepare kids for the real world</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop kids into responsible adults who can take care of themselves</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To produce kids that will achieve great things</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Most Important Outcome of K-12 Education to the Community and Society...

...Fostered by the Student Fit Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Top 3 Parents</th>
<th>Student Fit Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulfill a core responsibility of the community to children, citizens</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare workers with the right skills for successful businesses</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a more pleasant community in which to live</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce societal strife and crime</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build prosperity</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Base: All Parents (N=2,021)*

Q2. Assuming your child gets (VOTERS: “local children get”) high quality academic preparation, what else should their school be providing to prepare them for future success? Select the top three in order of importance (#1, #2, #3).

Q3. In addition to core academics, thinking about the goals of education from kindergarten all the way through high school, which ONE of these is the most important outcome for you as a parent (VOTERS: “citizen”)?

Q4. What is the most important outcome of K-12 education to your community and our society?

Q27. Assuming your child gets/VOTERS: “local children get) high quality academic preparation, what else would the student fit model provide to prepare them for future success? Select the top three in order of importance (#1, #2, #3).

Q28. In addition to core academics, thinking about the goals of education from kindergarten all the way through high school, which of these possible outcomes would the student fit model most foster? Select only one.

Q29. And last, what would the student fit model most affect in terms of the impact of K-12 education on community/society? Select only one.
Nearly half of parents say the Student Fit model is extremely important toward achieving the most important outcomes to the K-12 public school system—they are not confident their district would implement the model.

Importance of Student Fit model in Achieving K-12 Public School System Goals

- Extremely important: 48%
- Somewhat important: 44%
- Total Unimportant (Net): 8%

Likelihood Local School District Would Implement Student Fit model

- 28% Total Not Likely (Net)
- 29% Extremely likely
- 20% Somewhat likely
- 7% Not very likely
- 7% Not at all likely
- 8% Don't know

Likelihood of Advocating to School District to Adopt Student Fit model

Base: Have not implemented Student Fit model
- 25% Extremely likely
- 32% Somewhat likely
- 43% Total Not Likely (Net)

Likelihood of Advocating to School District to Keep Student Fit model

Base: Have implemented Student Fit model
- 5% Extremely likely
- 16% Somewhat likely
- 80% Total Not Likely (Net)

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q15. How important is this Student Fit model in terms of achieving the most important outcomes in the K-12 public school system?
Q16. How likely do you think your local school district would be to implement this Student Fit model?
Base: Parents, Have Not Implemented Student Fit model (N=1,860)
Q19. How likely are you personally to advocate for this student fit model to be adopted in your school district?
Q20. How likely are you personally to advocate for your school district to keep this Student Fit model?
Base: Parents, Have Implemented Student Fit model (N=161)
PARENTS WANT TO SEE NEARLY EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE THREE APPROACHES ACROSS A SCHOOL DISTRICT.
Most parents’ ideal mix would be nearly equal across the three educational approaches in a district, with some skew toward the Blended approach.
THE STUDENT FIT MODEL

is a surefire winner: 75% support its implementation, 95% would want to keep it in place and there is a high degree of willingness to advocate for it.
Nearly nine in 10 parents say they would take part in at least one activity to advocate for the Student Fit model, most common is attending a meeting or other event.

### Activities Would Consider Doing to Advocate for Student Fit model

- **Attend event (Net)**: 64%
- **Attend parent or school board meeting on the issue**: 47%
- **Attend a public meeting in your community on the issue**: 41%
- **Attend a public rally or a speech on the issue**: 22%
- **Talk with friends, neighbors or family about the issue**: 45%
- **Sign a petition**: 36%
- **Engage in an online forum about the issue**: 30%
- **Donate time or money**: 29%
- **Join a group that tries to raise the visibility of the issue**: 26%
- **Speak with or write to elected officials**: 26%

87% identify at least one activity

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)

Q31. In the past, you may have expressed your views on political or social issues important to you by getting involved in various ways. Which of those activities, if any, would you consider doing to advocate for this type of educational approach to be offered in your school district? Select all that apply.
THE STUDENT FIT MODEL

moves relative satisfaction with education to extreme satisfaction with education.
The Student Fit model holds stronger appeal for parents (and for their children) than current school models.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal of current model to a Parent</th>
<th>Not At All Appealing</th>
<th>Somewhat Unappealing</th>
<th>Somewhat Appealing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: All Parents (N=2,021)
Q13. How appealing is this Student Fit model to you as a parent (VOTER: "citizen")?
Q14. How appealing do you think this Student Fit model would be to students?
Base: Parents Who Have Not Implemented Student Fit Model (N=1,860)
Q17. How appealing is the current model your local school district is using to you as a parent (VOTER: "citizen")?
Q18. How appealing do you think the current model your local school district is using to students?
Providing a choice was the first step—the big leap forward is having a number of different education choices that better fit parent aspirations, the learning style of the child and overcome the barriers of cost and convenience.
THE BIG TAKEAWAYS
• Parents are more balanced in their ideal approach to education than the system that serves them.

• Education should fit the child, the child shouldn’t have to fit the education.

• Choice is having distinct and different education approaches that fit parental aspirations, the practicalities of daily living and how their child learns.

• Everyone supports more distinct choices of education approaches that fit the student—more choices don’t divide the marketplace, they unite it.

• Satisfaction with what they have is not synonymous with satisfaction for what they want—nearly all become more enthusiastic about education when they have different education approaches to fit the needs, interests and learning style of their children.

• Affordable and convenient access to Traditional, Blended and Student-centered education helps parents achieve their goals, drives up their satisfaction and produces a better society.
WHAT NEXT?
• **Be clear** about messaging the mission or the approach of your school.

• **Use this research** as you work with your own authorizers, policymakers, parents or teachers.

• **Visit realschoolchoices.org** to stay up-to-date with the latest materials related to this research.