

# New Year, New Schools

U.S. Parents View K-12 School Choice  
as the “New Normal” in 2024

JANUARY 2024 PARENT SURVEY



NATIONAL  
**SCHOOL CHOICE**  
AWARENESS FOUNDATION

**NAVIGATE**  
NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE RESOURCE CENTER

## INTRODUCTION

Imagine finding a school or learning environment where your child learns, thrives, succeeds, and is truly happy. In record numbers, moms and dads across the U.S. are doing more than just imagining. They are considering, searching for, and finding new schools that best meet their kids' needs.

Our January 2024 survey of 2,595 U.S. parents reveals that in a post-pandemic world, U.S. parents increasingly see **school choice** as a "new normal." Among moms and dads across America:

- 72% considered new schools for their children last year—a 35% increase over 2022.
- 50% talked about school choice with family or friends within the last month.
- Only 29% say that the same school type works well for all of their children in their home.

Learn more in this report about how, in a post-pandemic world, families are spending more time than ever finding the right educational fits for their children.

## WHAT IS SCHOOL CHOICE?

School choice means empowering parents to select the K–12 schools and learning environments that best meet their children's needs, interests, and talents. School choice options include traditional public schools, public charter schools, public magnet schools, private schools, online learning, homeschooling, and microschooling.

At the **National School Choice Awareness Foundation (NSCAF)** and the **National School Choice Resource Center (Navigate)**—we raise equal awareness of all K–12 education options that families have or want without promoting one option over another. We believe that parents know their children best and are uniquely qualified to make educational decisions for their kids.

## KEY FINDING: DEMAND FOR SCHOOL CHOICE SURGED LAST YEAR

When parents exercise their school choice options, they usually take three important steps: considering making a change, then searching for new schooling options, and finally, enrolling their child in a new school if they find the right fit. The percentage of parents who participated in these school choice steps surged this January, with **72%** of parents indicating that they'd at least considered new schools, compared to 54% of parents in 2023.



School Choice Steps	Considered a new school	Searched for a new school	Chose a new school
All parents	72%	63%	44%
Black parents	76%	67%	47%
Hispanic parents	66%	57%	38%
White parents	73%	64%	43%

**KEY FINDING: AMERICA’S PARENTS KNOW THAT SCHOOL CHOICE IS EXPANDING—AND THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT IT.**

Parents have not missed the news about recent school choice expansions. In fact, **58%** of moms and dads say their state now offers greater education options. Meanwhile, half of parents say that they have talked with friends or family about school choice within the last week or month. Awareness is leading to demand, both for school choice and for information—with **57%** of parents indicating they are likely to think about, consider, search for, or choose new schools for their children this year, and **65%** of parents saying they wish they had more information about education options for their children.

Race/Ethnicity	Aware of state-level school choice expansions	Recently talked about school choice with family and friends	Considering exercising school choice options in 2024	Want more information about school choice options.
All parents	58%	50%	57%	64%
Black parents	61%	50%	63%	68%
Hispanic parents	53%	46%	53%	70%
White parents	60%	55%	56%	61%

**KEY FINDING: PARENTS KNOW THAT IN EDUCATION, ONE SIZE DOESN’T FIT ALL.**

For families with more than one child, “multiple school choice” households—where parents send their children to different types of schools—are increasingly prevalent. Only **29%** of parents say that the same school type works well for all of their children. Meanwhile, **a majority** of U.S. parents send their children to different types of schools than the ones they attended when they were growing up.

Race/Ethnicity	Child attends different type of school than parent attended	Siblings in same household attend different types of schools.
All parents	59%	43%
Black parents	59%	39%
Hispanic parents	57%	39%
White parents	59%	43%

**OTHER FINDINGS**

- **Demand for school choice is growing among dads**, with **67%** indicating that they searched for a new school for at least one of their children last year, compared with 54% of fathers who searched for schools for their kids in 2023.
- **School choice is far from partisan**, at least when it comes to parents making choices. Parents who identified as Democrats chose new schools for their children last year at higher rates than Republican parents—**56% to 40%**.
- **Traditional public schools remain popular among school searching families**, with **51%** of parents who considered new schools indicating that they visited, inquired about, or researched their local public schools.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey was delivered to Survey Monkey's National Audience panel between January 2-4, 2024. This panel consists of millions of respondents who opt in to receive and complete online surveys. Survey respondents included 2,595 parents of school-aged children (defined as children between ages 5 and 18 years old) across two surveys. To prevent biasing of responses, the survey did not reference the NSCAF, Navigate, or the organizations' collaborative charitable programs. Totals have been weighted using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to reflect the demographic composition of the United States. The modeled error estimate for this survey is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

Q1a  At any point in the past year, did you consider a new or different school or learning environment for any of the school-aged children in your household?	Yes	72.3%
	No	25.5%
	Can't Remember	2.1%
Q1b  At any point in the past year, did you search for a new or different school or learning environment for any of the school-aged children in your household?	Yes	62.7%
	No	34.3%
	Can't Remember	3.0%
Q1c  At any point in the past year, did you choose a new or different school or learning environment for any of the school-aged children in your household?	Yes	43.6%
	No	53.1%
	Can't Remember	3.3%
Q2  Throughout the process of searching for a new or different school for your child, did you visit, inquire about, or research the following types of schools? Select all that apply.	Traditional public school(s) in your zone or neighborhood	51.3%
	Traditional public school(s) outside of your zone or neighborhood	29.2%
	Public charter school(s)	28.3%
	Public magnet school(s)	14.8%
	Private or faith-based school(s)	24.4%
	Full-time online school(s)	21.8%
	Homeschooling	19.9%
	Microschooling or mix-and-match learning	6.0%



<p>Q3</p> <p>Within the next 12 months, are you likely to think about, consider, search for, or choose a new or different school or learning environment for any of the school-aged children in your household?</p>	Likely (All)	56.7%
	Unlikely (All)	24.5%
<p>Q4</p> <p>Which of the following statements best describes your view of the different options that may be available for your children's education?</p>	I wish I had more information about the schooling options available for my children.	64.4%
	I have all the information I need about the schooling options for my children.	35.6%
<p>Q5</p> <p>When you purchased or rented your current residence, how important was it, if at all, for you to find a house, condo, apartment, etc. that was in a specific school district or zone?</p>	Important (ALL)	86.9%
	Not Important (ALL)	11.2%
<p>Q7</p> <p>Do you think that different children in your household would (or do) benefit from different types of schools (e.g. public traditional, public charter, religious), or would (does) the same type of school work for each of you children? <i>(Asked of parents who indicated in a demographic question, Q6, that they had more than one school-aged child. N=1,502)</i></p>	Yes, I've enrolled my children in different schools	42.7%
	Yes, but we haven't yet enrolled our children in different schools	23.6%
	No, the same type of school works well for each of them	28.6%
	Unsure/Don't know	5.1%

<p>Q8a</p> <p>Would you say that over the last year, your impression is that school choice opportunities for families have grown in your state?</p>	Yes	58.1%
	No	24.0%
	Can't Remember	17.9%

<p>Q8b</p> <p>Would you say that over the last year, your impression is that school choice opportunities for families have grown nationally?</p>	Yes	49.7%
	No	21.5%
	Can't Remember	28.8%

<p>Q9</p> <p>How often do you discuss school enrollment options or decisions with family or friends?</p>	Never	11.6%
	Rarely	38.0%
	Within the last month	35.8%
	Within the last week	14.6%

<p>Q10</p> <p>How likely would you be, if at all, to visit that website that provides comprehensive, easy-to-understand information about education options, supplemental programs, and tutoring for your child/children?</p>	Likely (All)	86.5%
	Unlikely (All)	10.9%

<p>Q11</p> <p>Do any of your kids attend a different type of school than you attended growing up?</p>	Yes	58.8%
	No	39.6%
	Unsure	1.5%



## OUR CHARITABLE PROGRAMS

NSCAF and Navigate are sister 501(c)(3) nonprofits that share a mission to inform, inspire, and empower parents to discover and navigate the K–12 education options available for their children. Our charitable programs include National School Choice Week, [schoolchoiceweek.com](http://schoolchoiceweek.com), and Conoce tus Opciones Escolares.

- **National School Choice Week** is America’s largest annual series of education events, from small open houses at tens of thousands of schools to huge school fairs and celebrations at state capitols. Held each January, it raises unparalleled awareness of the need for and benefits of school choice. According to Alphabet, Inc., more Americans searched for “school choice” on Google during National School Choice Week in January 2023 than during any other time over the previous six years.
- **schoolchoiceweek.com** provides information to parents to assist them in finding learning options that meet their children’s needs. The site’s 190 state school choice roadmaps, guides, and videos comprise the nation’s largest portfolio of school navigation resources. In 2023, 76% of parents who reviewed the site’s resources said that they helped make complex topics more understandable.
- **Conoce tus Opciones Escolares** (Know Your School Options or Conoce) is a Spanish-language school choice awareness program featuring 172 unique school search guides and videos for parents, strategic partnerships, special events, aggressive media outreach, and digital advertising. Launched in 2022, it served over 250,000 parents in just one year and generated 277 positive news stories, including two articles in USA Today.



### MEDIA CONTACT:

Lucía Matamoros  
[lucia@schoolchoiceweek.com](mailto:lucia@schoolchoiceweek.com)  
202-480-2927 x823

[schoolchoiceweek.com](http://schoolchoiceweek.com)

[opcionesescolares.com](http://opcionesescolares.com)

[schoolchoiceawareness.org](http://schoolchoiceawareness.org)

