

PENNSYLVANIA K–12 & SCHOOL CHOICE SURVEY

MAY 2020



- Nearly three-fourths of Pennsylvanians (71%) are in favor of the state’s largest tax-credit scholarship program, when provided with a definition of the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC), though more than half were unfamiliar with the program. Every demographic group supports the program with the highest support in Philadelphia (79%).
- When provided a definition of the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC), nearly three-fourths of Pennsylvanians (71%) are in favor of the state’s tax-credit scholarship program for students living in a “low-achieving” school zone. Philadelphia residents (79%) were the observed demographic group most likely to favor the OSTC.
- More than two-thirds of Pennsylvanians (69%) favor increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships. Residents of the City of Philadelphia (80%) were most likely to favor increasing the cap.
- More than 73 percent of Pennsylvanians are in favor of Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs) after being provided with a definition, though more than two-fifths of Pennsylvanians (42%) had never heard of ESAs.
- When asked their views on an ESA program for children of active duty military members and children of soldiers who were killed in action, more than four-fifths of Pennsylvanians (85%) are in favor. More than two out of five “strongly favor” such an ESA program.
- When given a description of charter schools, 66 percent of respondents expressed support. African Americans (78%) were more likely to favor charter schools than white respondents (67%); support was higher in Philadelphia (71%) and Dauphin County (69%) than other geographic areas.
- More than two out of five Pennsylvania parents (44%) said they would prefer to send their children to private school, whereas only 12 percent of Pennsylvania K–12 students are enrolled in a private school. Seventy-nine percent of Pennsylvania’s K–12 students attend a public district school; 40 percent of parents said they would select this type of school for their child if given other options.
- In a split-sample experiment, 46 percent of Pennsylvania current and former school parents said that if financial cost and transportation were of no concern, they would select private schooling to obtain the best education for their child.
- Pennsylvanians severely underestimate how much is spent per student in public schools. Half of respondents offering an answer said Pennsylvania spends \$5,000 or less per student, which is less than one-third of reported 2017–18 spending (\$17,582).¹ In total, 92 percent of respondents underestimated per-pupil public spending. When given the actual figure, a plurality (41%) say this is “too high.”

See the Survey Methodology and Data Sources, Screening Questions, and Questionnaire and Topline Results at www.commonwealthfoundation.org/2020educationpoll. For media inquiries, contact Michael Torres, mbt@commonwealthfoundation.org.

OVERVIEW

Pennsylvania awards the third-most tax-credit scholarships in the nation, behind Arizona and Florida. One of the state's two scholarship programs for students from low- to middle-income families is specifically for those who are zoned to attend a low-achieving school.

Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC) began in 2001 and is open to students from low- to middle-income families. In 2017–18, there were 37,725 scholarships awarded to students to attend private schools, with the average amount being \$1,816. Pennsylvania's Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program began in 2012 and is open to students from low- to middle-income families living in a "low-achieving" school zone, with low-achieving defined as the state's bottom 15 percent of public schools based on standardized tests. In 2017–18, there were 14,419 scholarships awarded to students to attend private schools, with the average amount being \$2,490. In total, there were more than 52,000 tax-credit scholarships awarded to Pennsylvania students in 2017-18.²

The purpose of the *Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey* is to measure public opinion on, and in some cases awareness or knowledge of, a range of K–12 education topics and school choice reforms. EdChoice and the Commonwealth Foundation developed this project in partnership with Braun Research, Inc., which conducted the online interviews and live phone call interviews, collected the survey data, and provided data quality control.

We explore the following topics and questions:

- In which direction do Pennsylvanians think K–12 education in the state is heading?
- Do they believe district schools are adequately funded?
- How would they rate the various types of schooling options in the state in general and in their area specifically?
- What sort of schooling options would they prefer for their own children?

- How supportive are Pennsylvanians of the various types of educational choice programs?
- And what are their views on Pennsylvania's current educational choice programs?

Methods and Data

The *Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey* project, funded and developed by EdChoice in partnership with the Commonwealth Foundation and conducted by Braun Research, Inc., interviewed a statistically representative statewide sample of Pennsylvania voters (age 18+). Data collection methods consisted of a non-probability-based opt-in online panel and probability sampling and random-digit dial for telephone. The unweighted statewide sample includes a total of 1,270 online interviews and 137 live phone interviews completed in English from February 23–March 11, 2020. The margin of sampling error for the total statewide sample is ± 2.61 percentage points.

The statewide sample was weighted using population parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Decennial Census for voters living in the state of Pennsylvania. Results were weighted on age, county, race, ethnicity, community type, income, gender, and party ID. Weighting based on income used data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Results were also weighted based on party affiliation data obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State, state records as of March 9, 2020.

Ground Rules

Before discussing the survey results, we want to provide some brief ground rules for reporting statewide sample and demographic subgroup responses in this brief. For each survey topic, there is a sequence for describing various analytical frames. We note the raw response levels for the statewide sample on a given question. Then we consider the statewide sample's margin, noting differences between positive and negative responses. If we detect statistical significance on a given item, then we briefly report demographic results and differences.

We do not infer causality with any of the observations in this brief. Aside from the demographic tables in the appendices, we do not use specific subgroup findings if there were fewer than 70 respondents.

Explicit subgroup comparisons/differences are statistically significant with 95 percent confidence, unless otherwise clarified in the narrative. We orient any listing of subgroups' margins around more/less "likely" to respond one way or the other, usually emphasizing the propensity to be more/less positive. Subgroup comparisons are meant to be suggestive for further exploration and research beyond this project.

FINDINGS

Tax-Credit Scholarships

Tax-credit scholarships allow taxpayers to receive full or partial tax credits when they donate to nonprofits that provide private school scholarships. Eligible taxpayers can include both individuals and businesses. In some states, scholarship-giving nonprofits also provide innovation grants to public schools and/or transportation assistance to students who choose alternative public schools. As of January 2020, there are 23 tax-credit scholarship programs in 18 states with nearly 300,000 scholarships awarded in the most recent school year.³

Of the current school parents who responded to the survey, 57 percent had never heard of Pennsylvania's tax-credit scholarship programs and 31 percent had heard of the programs but did not apply.

Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC)

Pennsylvanians are more than twice as likely to favor the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC), the state's original tax-credit scholarship program, than they are to oppose it. More than two-thirds of respondents (71%) said they supported the EITC program after being given a description, whereas 29 percent said they oppose. The margin is

+42 percentage points. Pennsylvanians are more likely to express an intensely positive response compared with a negative response (18% "strongly favor" vs. 10% "strongly oppose").

An initial question asked for an opinion of tax-credit scholarships without offering any description. On this baseline question, 34 percent of respondents said they favored tax-credit scholarships, and 15 percent said they opposed them. In the follow-up question, respondents were given a description of the EITC program. With this information, support increased 37 points to 71 percent, and opposition increased 14 points to 29 percent.

More than half of Pennsylvanians (51%) said they had never heard of tax-credit scholarships on the baseline item. The subgroups having the highest proportions saying they had never heard of tax-credit scholarships are: Generation Z (55%), Democrats (55%), residents of Philadelphia suburbs (55%), and females (58%).⁴

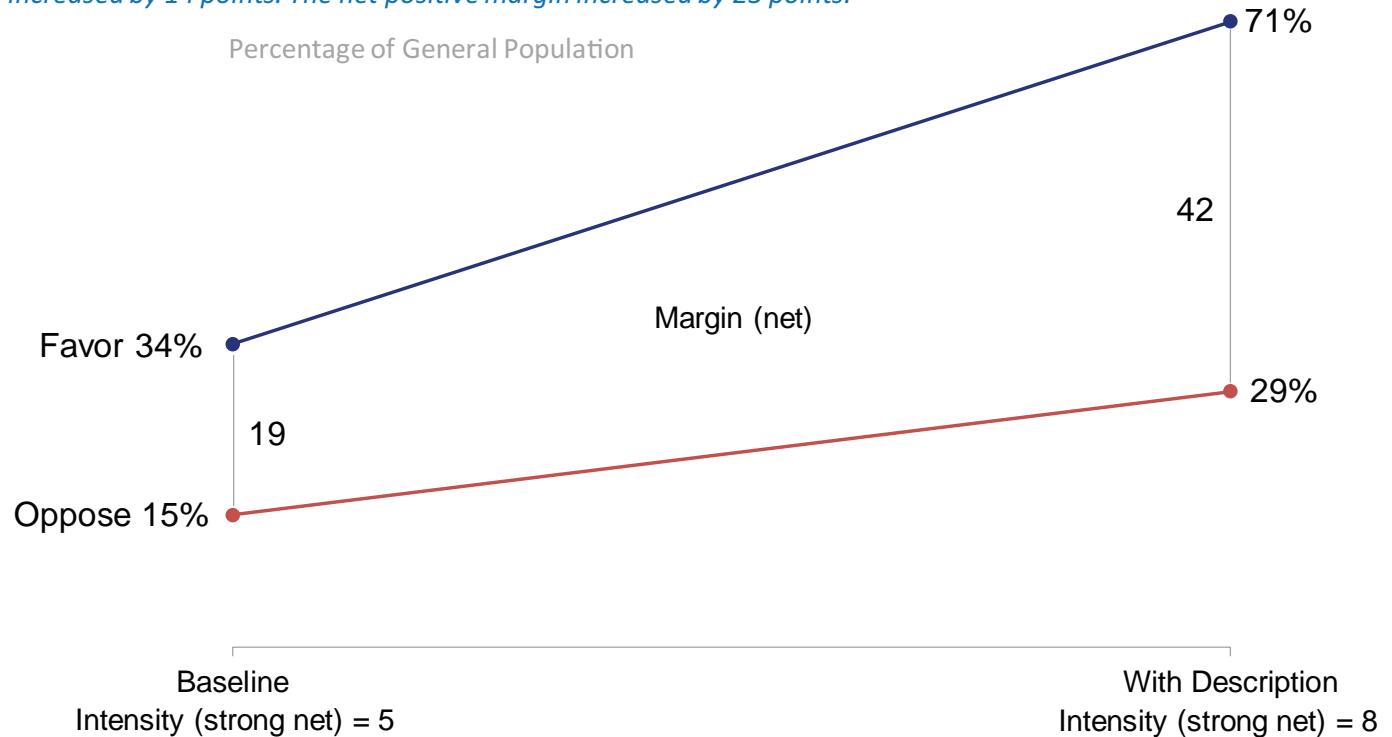
The margins of all subgroups observed are positive—and they all exceed +28 percentage points. The largest positive margins for the EITC program are among: residents of the City of Philadelphia (+58 points), African Americans (+56 points), Generation Z (+53 points), females (+51 points), and Republicans (+50 points). The subgroups exhibiting the lowest net positive margins for EITC program favorability include residents of Allegheny County (+28 points), males (+32 points), college graduates (+32 points), and high-income earners (+32 points).

In addition:

- Females (76%) were more likely to favor the EITC program than males (66%).
- Low-income earners (74%) were more likely to favor the EITC program than high-income earners (66%).
- Those without a college degree (74%) were more likely to favor the EITC program than college graduates (66%).

FIGURE 1. Pennsylvanians' Views on the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program: Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions

When given a description of Pennsylvania's EITC Program, support increased by 37 points and opposition increased by 14 points. The net positive margin increased by 23 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, *Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q25 and Q26

Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) Program

Pennsylvanians are much more likely to favor the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC) than they are to oppose it. More than two-thirds of respondents (71%) said they supported Pennsylvania’s tax-credit scholarship program for students living in a “low-achieving” school zone, whereas 30 percent said they oppose. The margin is +41 percentage points. Pennsylvanians are more likely to express an intensely positive response compared with a negative response (19% “strongly favor” vs. 9% “strongly oppose”).

An initial question asked for an opinion of tax-credit scholarships without offering any description. On this baseline question, 34 percent of respondents said they favored tax-credit scholarships, and 15 percent said they opposed them. In the follow-up question,

respondents were given a description of the OSTC program. With this information, support increased 36 points to 71 percent, and opposition increased 15 points to 30 percent.

The margins of all subgroups observed are positive—and they all exceed +28 percentage points. The largest positive margins for the OSTC program are among: residents of the City of Philadelphia (+58 points), residents of Dauphin County (+55 points), urbanites (+55 points), middle-income earners (+51 points), and females (+51 points). The subgroups exhibiting the lowest net positive margins for OSTC program favorability include high-income earners (+28 points), males (+31 points), and residents of Allegheny County (+35 points).

In addition:

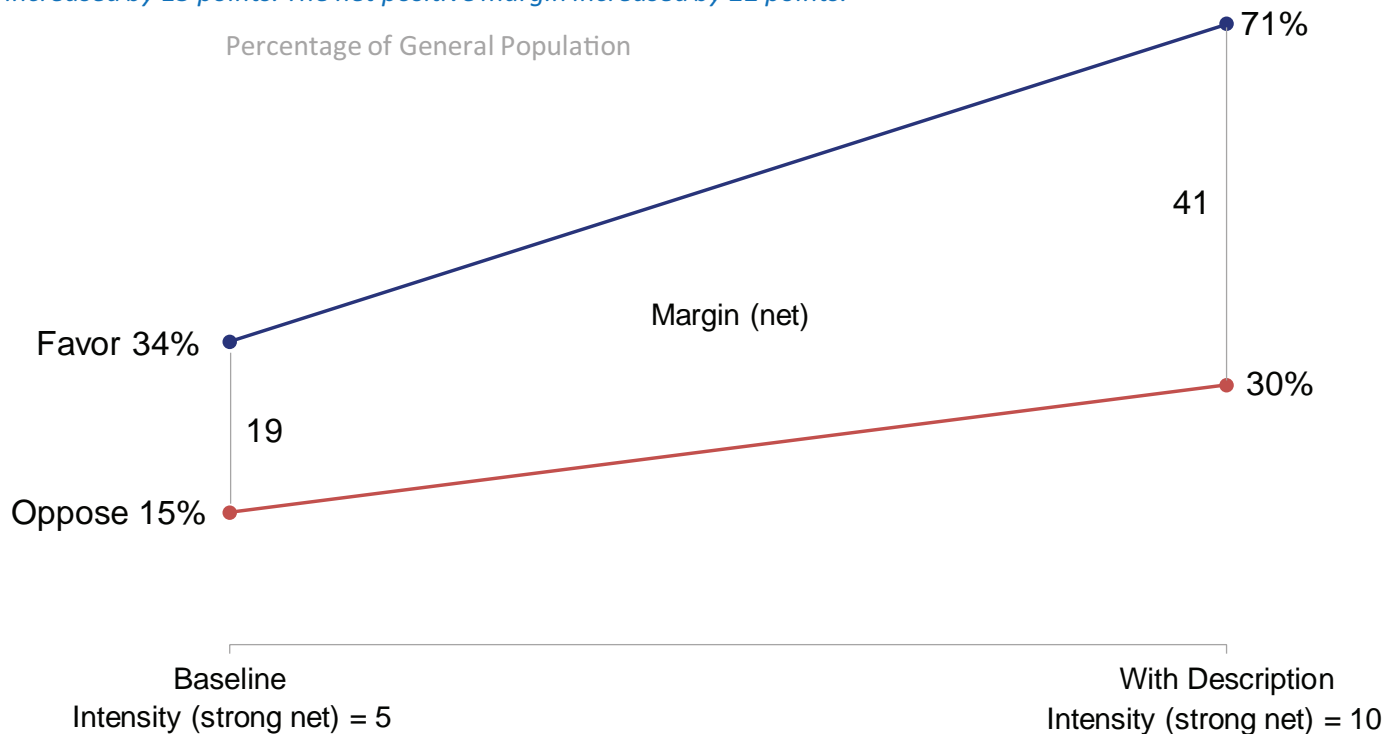
- Females (75%) were more likely to favor the OSTC program than males (65%).
- Urbanites (77%) were more likely to favor the OSTC program than suburbanites (68%).
- Middle-income earners (76%) and low-income earners (72%) were more likely to favor Opportunity Scholarships than high-income earners (64%).
- Those without a college degree (74%) were more likely to favor the OSTC program than college graduates (66%).

Tax-Credit Scholarship Cap Increase

Currently, there is a limit on the number of tax-credit scholarships available to Pennsylvania students. As a result, many children are currently on waiting lists to receive scholarships or have been denied to due to the cap.⁵ Pennsylvanians are much more likely to favor increasing the cap on these tax-credit scholarships so more children can participate in the programs than they are to oppose it. More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) said they supported increasing the cap on Pennsylvania’s tax-credit scholarship programs, whereas 31 percent said they oppose. The margin is +38 percentage points. Pennsylvanians are more likely to express an intensely positive response compared with a negative response (21% “strongly favor” vs. 9% “strongly oppose”).

FIGURE 2. Pennsylvanians' Views on the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) Program: Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions

When given a description of Pennsylvania's OSTC Program, support increased by 36 points and opposition increased by 15 points. The net positive margin increased by 22 points.



Note: Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q25 and Q27

The margins of all subgroups observed are positive—and they all exceed +25 percentage points. The largest positive margins for increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships are among: residents of the City of Philadelphia (+59 points), African Americans (+53 points), urbanites (+49 points), those without a college degree (+46 points), and low-income earners (+46 points). The subgroups exhibiting the lowest net positive margins for favorability of increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships include college graduates (+25 points), residents of Allegheny County (+25 points), high-income earners (+25 points), and suburbanites (+31 points).

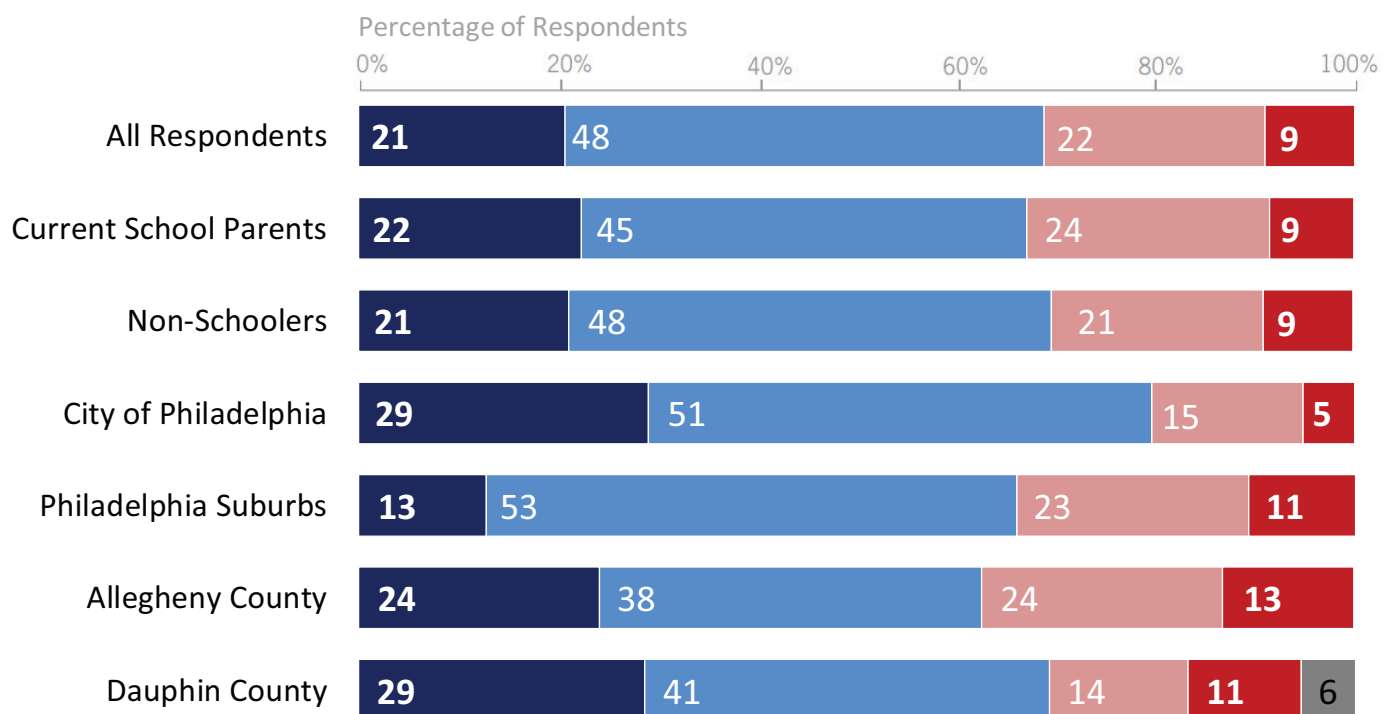
In addition:

- Urbanites (75%) were more likely to favor increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships than suburbanites (66%).
- Low-income earners (73%) and middle-income earners (72%) were more likely to favor increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships than high-income earners (63%).
- Those without a college degree (73%) were more likely to favor increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships than college graduates (62%).
- African American Pennsylvanians (77%) were more likely to favor increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships than white Pennsylvanians (67%).

FIGURE 3. Pennsylvanians' Views on Increasing Cap on Tax-Credit Scholarships

More than two out of three Pennsylvanians are in favor of increasing the cap on tax-credit scholarships.

STRONGLY FAVOR | **SOMEWHAT FAVOR** | **SOMEWHAT OPPOSE** | **STRONGLY OPPOSE** | (DK/REF)



Notes: "DK" means "Don't Know" and "Ref" means "Refused." Skips are not shown or reflected in the chart.

Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q28

Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs)

Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs) are currently active in five states and have been introduced in dozens more. ESAs allow parents to customize their child's education. With ESAs, a portion of the state's per-pupil education funding would be placed in a restricted-use account that parents control. The money could be used for things like private school tuition, online classes, curriculum, tutoring, and services for students with special needs.⁶

Pennsylvanians are nearly three times as likely to support ESAs as they are to oppose them. Almost three-fourths of respondents (73%) said they supported ESAs, whereas 27 percent said they oppose. The margin is +46 percentage points. Pennsylvanians are more likely to express an intensely positive response compared with a negative response (21% “strongly favor” vs. 8% “strongly oppose”).

An initial ESA question asked for an opinion without offering any description. On this baseline question, 44 percent of respondents said they favored an ESA system, and 14 percent said they opposed. In the next question, respondents were given a description of a general ESA program. With this program-specific information, support increased 29 points to 73 percent, and opposition increased 13 points to 27 percent.

More than two out of five Pennsylvanians (42%) said they had never heard of ESAs on the baseline item. The subgroups having the highest proportions saying they had never heard of ESAs are: seniors (50%), Baby Boomers (49%), Independents (47%), high-income earners (46%), college graduates (46%), residents of Philadelphia suburbs (45%).

The margins of all subgroups observed are positive—and they exceed +26 percentage points for all subgroups. The largest positive margins are among Generation Z (+76 points), residents of the City of Philadelphia (+64 points), urbanites (+62 points), younger Pennsylvanians (+62 points), and African Americans (+60 points). The subgroups exhibiting the lowest net positive margins for ESA favorability include Baby Boomers (+26 points), seniors (+28 points), and residents of Allegheny County (+33 points).

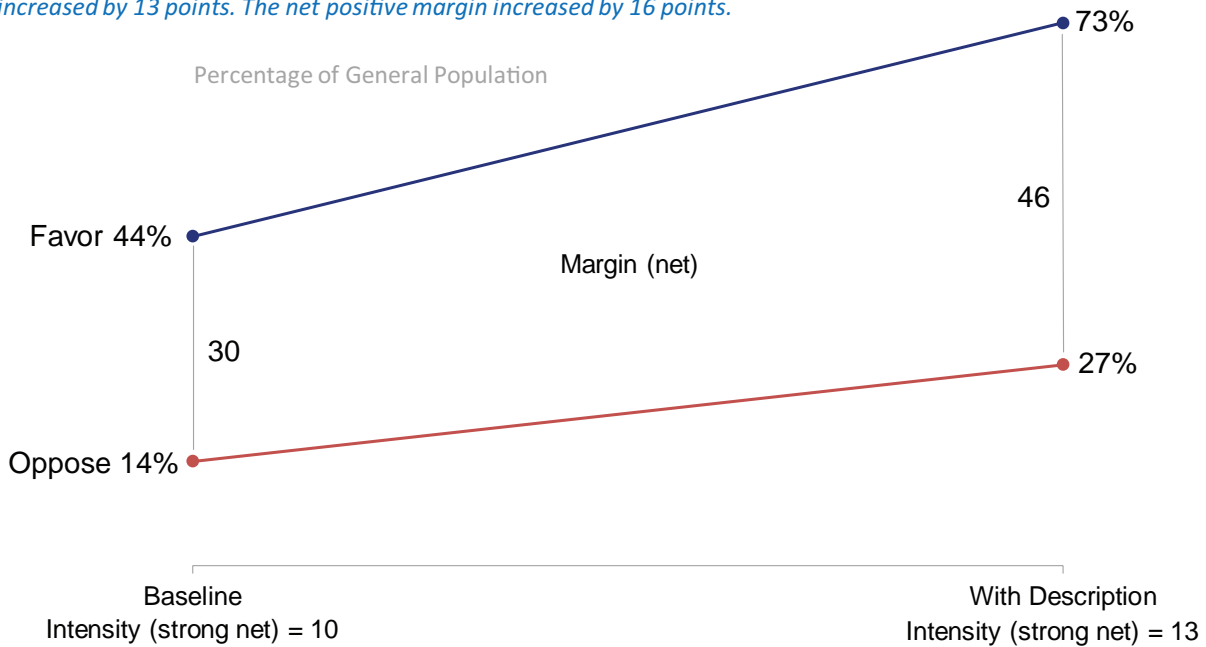
In addition:

- Younger Pennsylvanians (81%) and middle-age Pennsylvanians (78%) were more likely to favor ESAs than senior Pennsylvanians (64%).
- Generation Z (88%) were more likely than Millennials (78%) and Generation Xers (76%) to favor ESAs and all three generations were more likely to favor ESAs than Baby Boomers (63%).
- Urbanites (81%) were more likely to favor ESAs than small town and rural residents (72%) and suburbanites (70%).
- Females (78%) were more likely to favor ESAs than males (68%).
- Low-income earners (76%) were more likely to favor ESAs than high-income earners (68%).
- Those without a college degree (77%) were more likely to favor ESAs than college graduates (68%).
- African American Pennsylvanians (80%) were more likely to favor ESAs than white Pennsylvanians (71%).

In a follow-up item, we learned the most common reasons for supporting ESAs are: “access to better academic environment” (32%), “more freedom and flexibility for parents” (25%), and “focus on more individual attention” (24%). Respondents opposed to ESAs answered a similar follow-up question. By far the most common reason for opposing this policy is the belief it would “divert funding away from public schools” (46%).

FIGURE 4. Pennsylvanians' Views on Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs): Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions

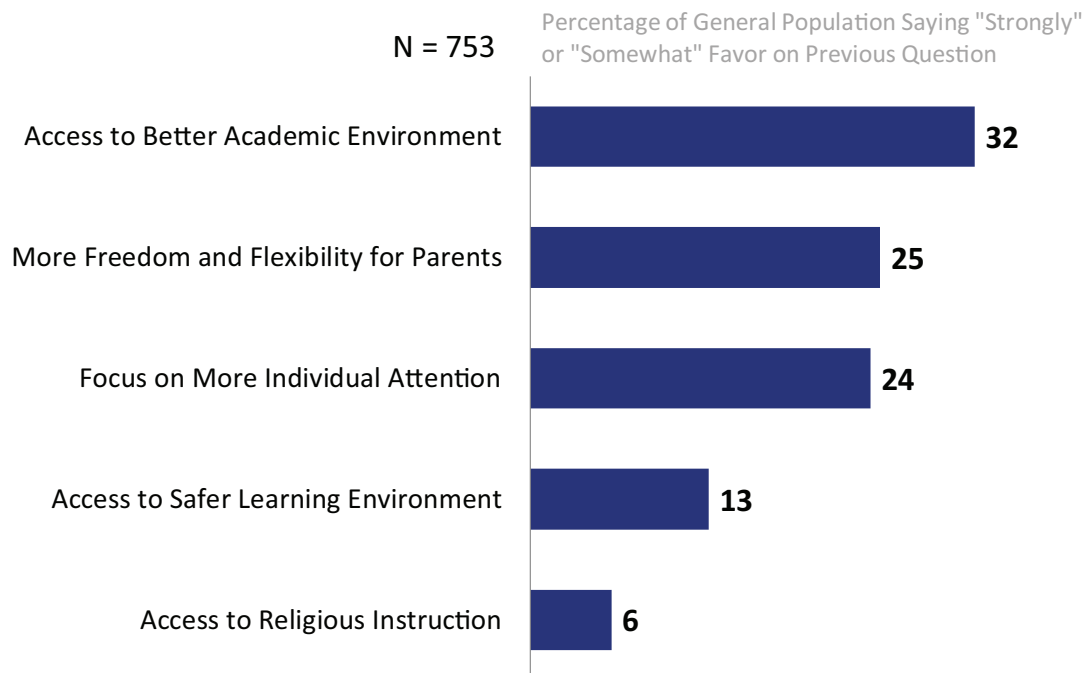
When given a description of an ESA program, support increased by 29 points and opposition increased by 13 points. The net positive margin increased by 16 points.



*Note: Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.
Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q19 and Q20*

FIGURE 5. The Most Important Reason for Supporting ESAs

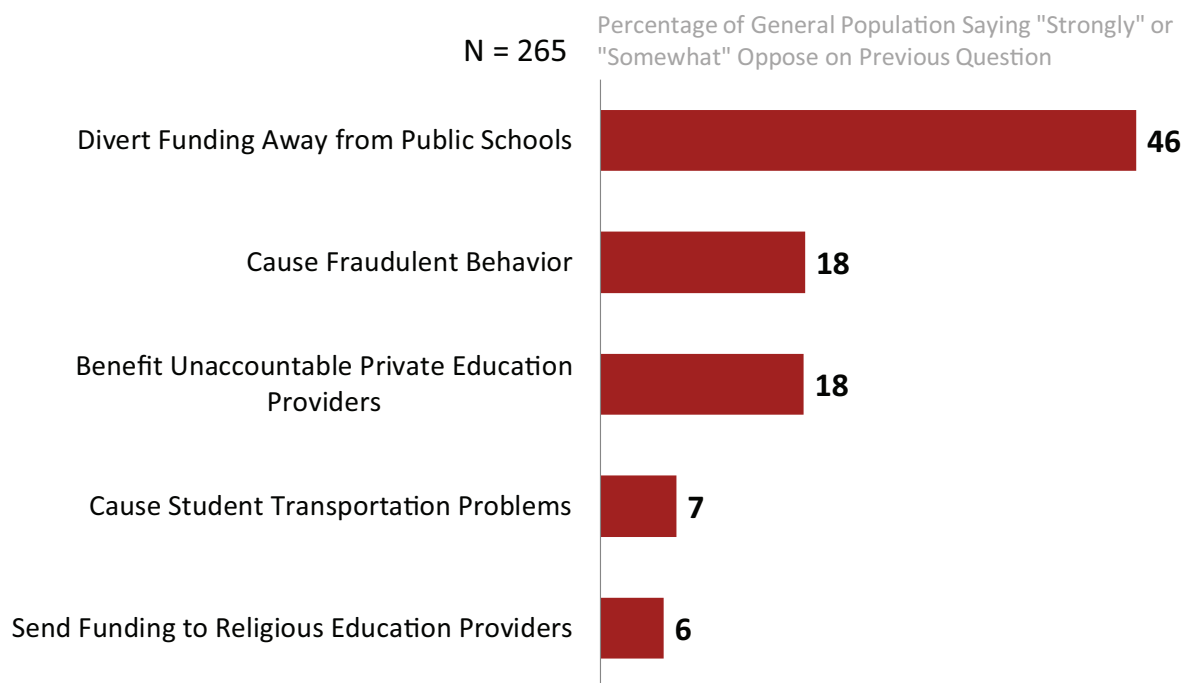
Nearly one-third of supporters said access to better academic environments was the most important reason they favor ESAs.



*Notes: Volunteered responses not shown. Skips not reflected in this chart.
Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q21*

FIGURE 6. The Most Important Reason for Opposing ESAs

Nearly half of those who oppose ESAs do so because they believe it would take funds away from public schools.

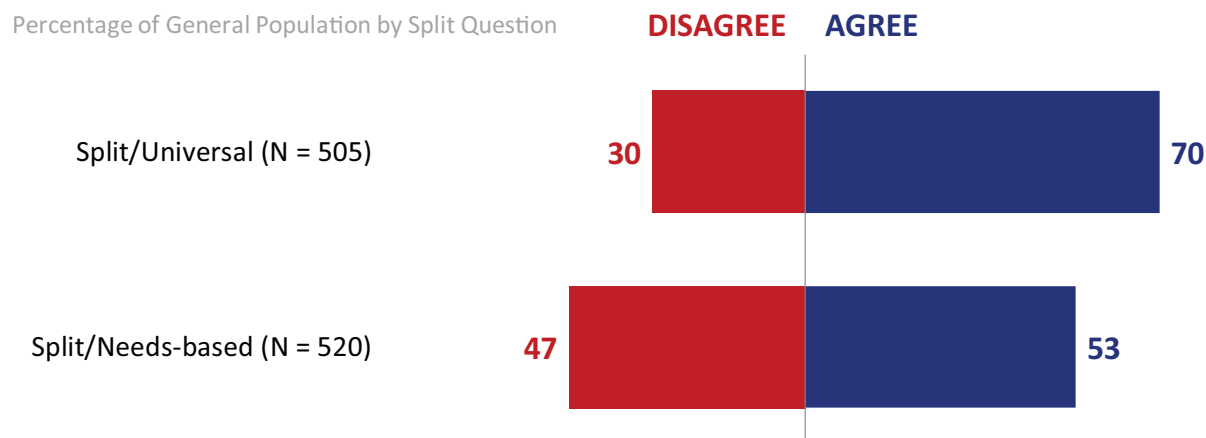


Notes: Volunteered responses not shown. Skips not reflected in this chart.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q22

FIGURE 7. Comparing Views for Different Approaches to ESA Eligibility

Our question wording experiment indicates Pennsylvanians are much more likely to favor universal ESA eligibility than limited, needs-based eligibility.



Q23-Split. 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?

Q23-Split. 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," "Refusal," nor skips reflected in this chart.

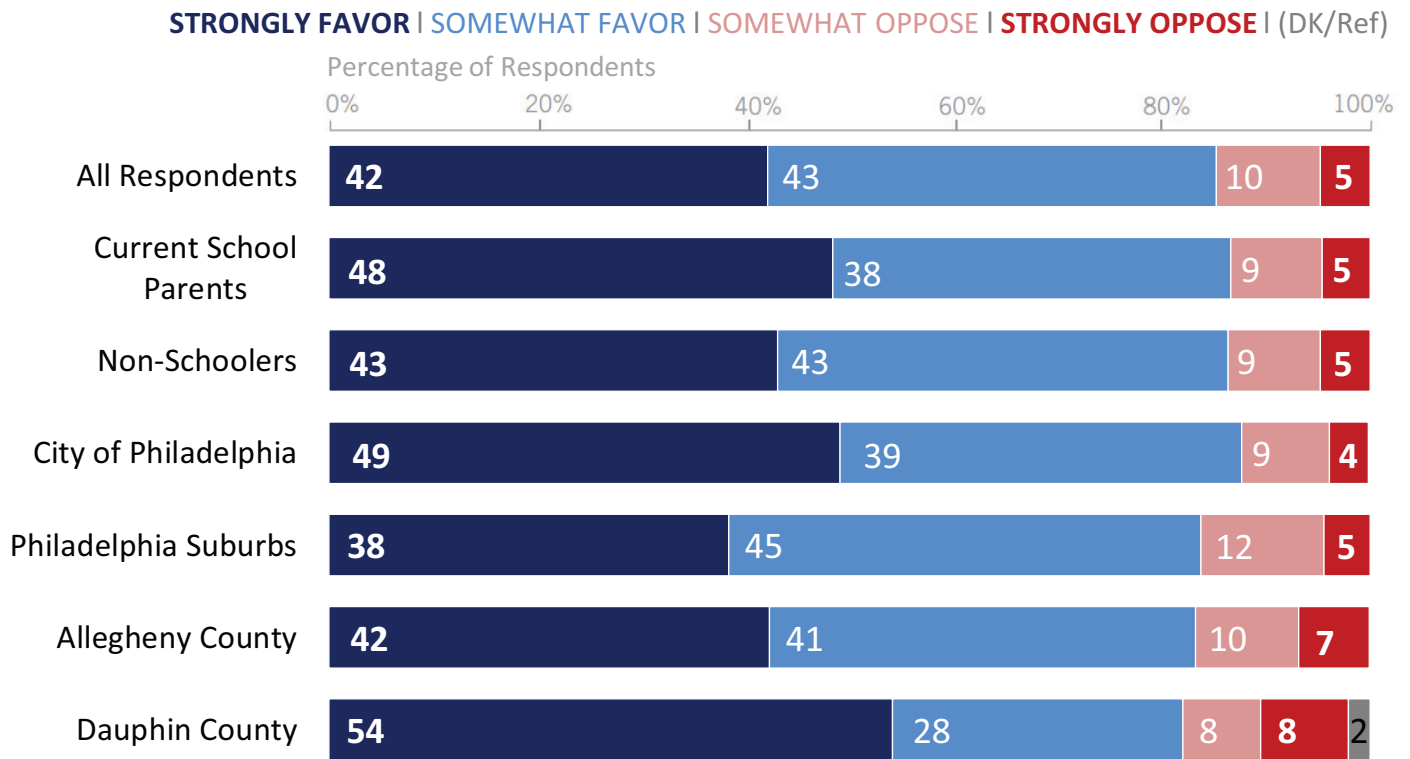
Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q23

A subsequent split-sample experiment shows Pennsylvanians are inclined toward universal eligibility for ESAs rather than means-tested eligibility based solely on financial need. In the universal split, 70 percent of respondents said they agree with the statement that “ESAs should be available to all families, regardless of income and special needs.” About 28 percent “strongly agree” with that statement. Nearly one-third of Pennsylvanians (30%) disagree with that statement; 11 percent said they “strongly disagree.” In the comparison sample, needs-based split, respondents were asked if they agree with the statement, “ESAs should only be available to families based on financial need.” Fifty-three percent agreed with that statement, while 12 percent said “strongly agree.” Nearly half of Pennsylvanians (47%) said they disagree with means-testing ESAs, and 17 percent said they “strongly disagree.” Three out of four current school parents (75%) agree that educational choice programs like ESAs should be available to *all* families, with nearly one-third (31%) saying they “strongly agree.”

Pennsylvanians are more than five times as likely to support ESAs for military-connected children than they are to oppose them. More than four-fifths of respondents (85%) said they supported ESAs for children of active duty military members and children of soldiers who were killed in action (KIA), whereas 15 percent said they oppose. The margin is +70 percentage points. Pennsylvanians are more likely to express an intensely positive response compared with a negative response (42% “strongly favor” vs. 5% “strongly oppose”).

FIGURE 8. Pennsylvanians' Views on ESAs for Children of Active Duty Military Members and Children of Soldiers Who Were Killed in Action

More than four out of five Pennsylvanians favor ESAs for military-connected children.



Notes: "DK" means "Don't Know" and "Ref" means "Refused." Skips are not shown or reflected in the chart.
 Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q24

The margins of all subgroups observed are positive—and they exceed +62 percentage points for all subgroups. The largest positive margins are among Generation Z (+80 points), females (+77 points), younger Pennsylvanians (+76 points), African Americans (+76 points), residents of the City of Philadelphia (+76 points), those without a college degree (+75 points), low-income earners (+75 points), and middle-income earners (+75 points). The subgroups exhibiting the lowest net positive margins for military-connected ESA favorability include high-income earners (+62 points), males (+64 points), and college graduates (+64 points).

In addition:

- Females (89%) were more likely to favor ESAs for military-connected children than males (82%).
- Low-income earners (87%) and middle-income earners (87%) were more likely to favor ESAs for military-connected children than high-income earners (81%).
- Those without a college degree (87%) were more likely to favor ESAs for military-connected children than college graduates (82%)

Public Charter Schools

Pennsylvania enacted its charter school law in 1997 and public charter schools in the state may not be operated by for-profit entities.⁷ Respondents were asked two questions about charter schools, and Pennsylvanians clearly support them, both before and after given a description.

Interviewers first asked for an opinion without offering any description. On this baseline question, 56 percent of respondents said they favored charters, and 33 percent said they opposed them. In the follow-up question, respondents were given a general description of a charter school. With that information, support increased 10 points to 66 percent, and opposition increased one point to 34 percent. The margin of support was large (+32 points).

Slightly more than one in 10 Pennsylvanians (11%) said they had never heard of charter schools on the baseline item. The subgroups having the highest proportions saying they had never heard of charter schools are Generation Z (20%), younger Pennsylvanians (18%), Republicans (16%), Millennials (15%), small town and rural residents (14%), and those without a college degree (14%).

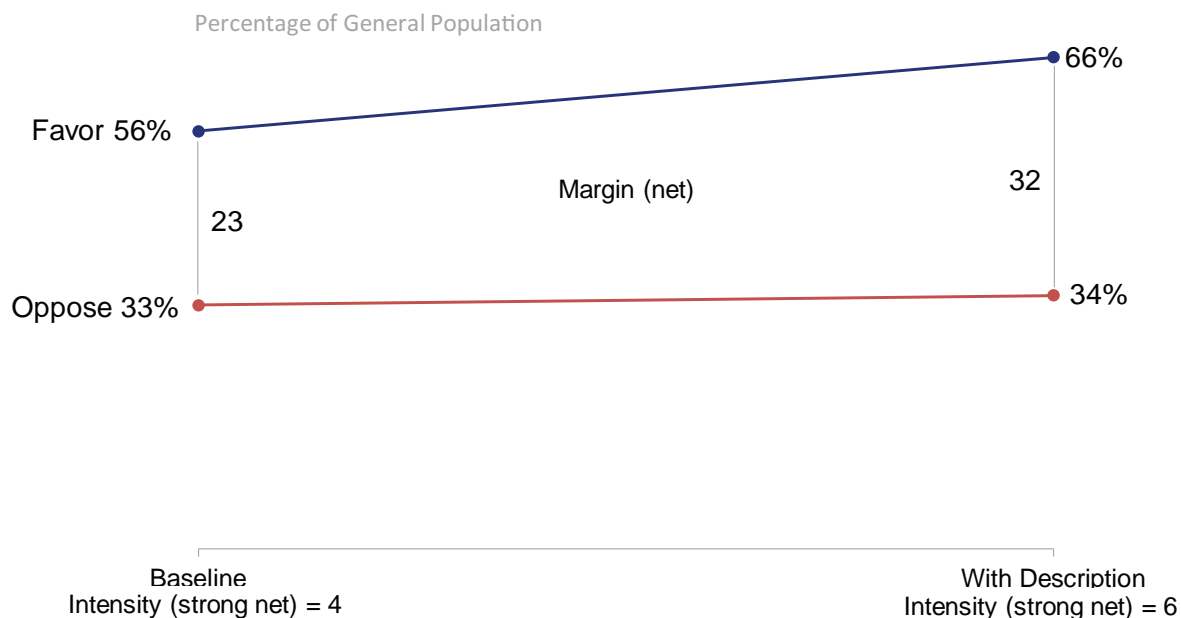
The margins of all subgroups observed are positive—and they exceed +17 percentage points for all subgroups. The largest positive margins are among African Americans (+56 points), Dauphin County residents (+46 points), low-income earners (+43 points), Republicans (+42 points), and those without a college degree (+42 points). The subgroups exhibiting the lowest net positive margins for charter school favorability include college graduates (+17 points), residents of Philadelphia Suburbs (+18 points), high-income earners (+20 points), and Democrats (+23 points).

In addition:

- Republicans (71%) were more likely to favor charter schools than Democrats (62%).
- Females (69%) were more likely to favor charter schools than males (63%).
- Low-income earners (71%) were more likely to favor charter schools than high-income earners (60%).
- Those without a college degree (71%) were more likely to favor charter schools than college graduates (59%) and the total statewide sample (66%).
- African American Pennsylvanians (78%) were more likely to favor charter schools than white Pennsylvanians (67%) and the total statewide sample.

FIGURE 9. Pennsylvanians' Views on Public Charter Schools: Baseline vs. Descriptive Versions

When given a description about charter schools, support increased by 10 points and opposition decreased by one point. The net positive margin increased by nine points.

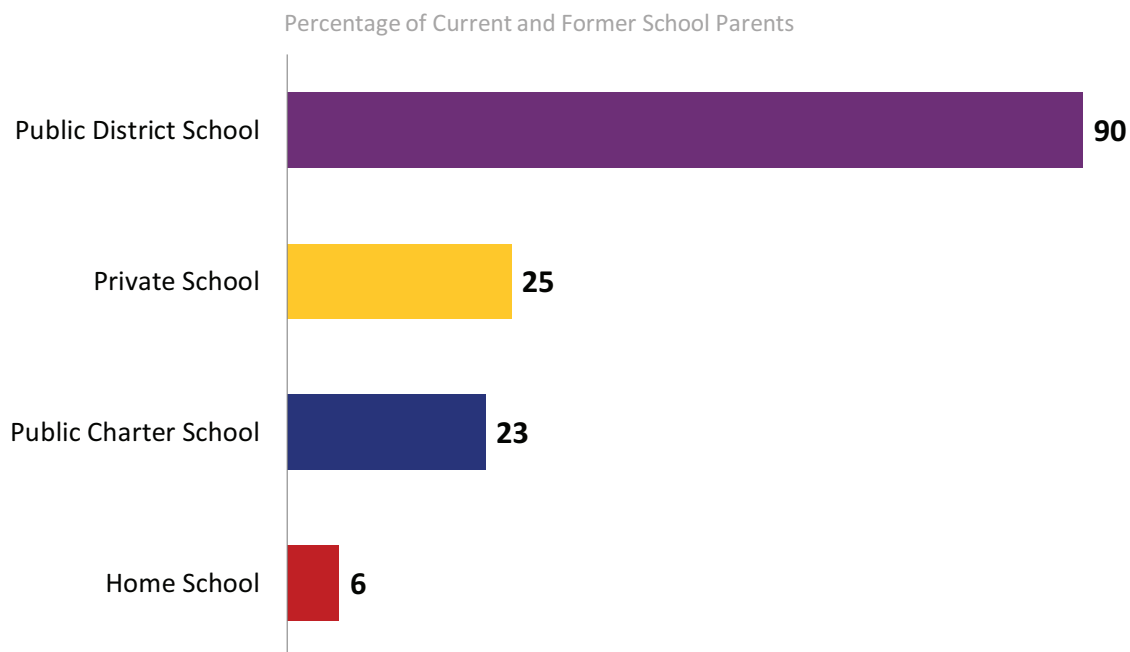


Note: Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q17 and Q18

FIGURE 10. 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, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q3, Q5, Q7, and Q9

School Type Enrollments and Satisfaction

The vast majority of parents' experiences occur in public district schools, with nine out of 10 parents surveyed (90%) having children who attended at least one year of public school. Figure 10 displays parents' schooling experiences by type based on survey responses.

Current and former school parents are more likely to say they have been satisfied than dissatisfied across all types of schools. More than four out of five parents who have homeschooled their children (86%) or sent their children to private school (83%) expressed they were satisfied, the highest levels of satisfaction among the four school types. The home school and private school satisfaction margins (+72 points and +67 points, respectively) were nearly twice the margin observed

for district schools (+37 points) and were far greater than the satisfaction margin for charter schools (+16 points). Parents were more likely to say they were "very satisfied" with homeschooling (52%) or private schools (42%) than district schools (27%) or public charter schools (24%).

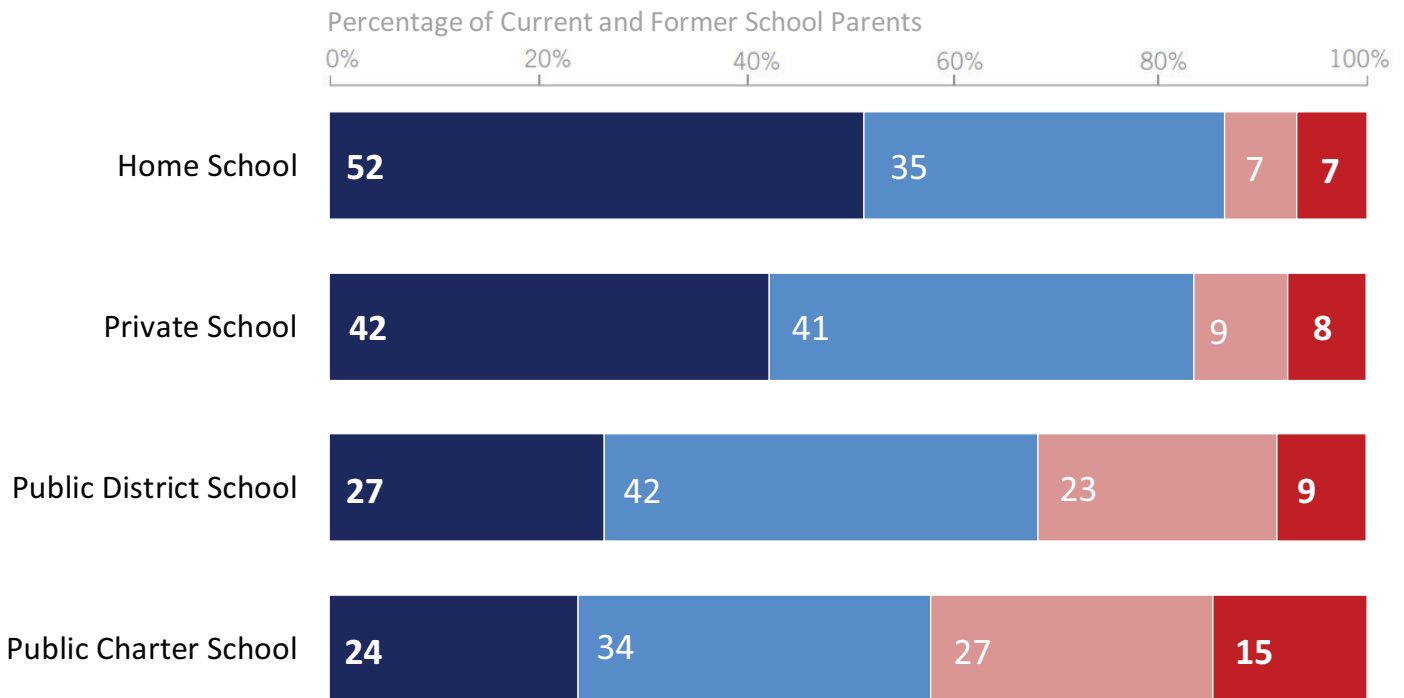
Grading Local Schools

Pennsylvanians are much more likely to give grades of "A" or "B" to private schools in their communities compared with their local public schools. When considering only those respondents with children in school, the local private schools (69% gave an "A" or "B") fare better than public charter schools (52% gave an "A" or "B") and regular public schools (49% gave an "A" or "B"). Only 7 percent of respondents give a "D" or

FIGURE 11. Parents' Satisfaction with Schools

Parent satisfaction is highest in home schools and private schools.

VERY SATISFIED | SOMEWHAT SATISFIED | SOMEWHAT DISSATISFIED | VERY DISSATISFIED



Note: Six respondents skipped the question, which is not shown or reflected in the chart.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q4, Q6, Q8, and Q10

“F” grade to private schools; 17 percent gave low grades to public charter schools; and 23 percent assign poor grades to area public district schools.

When considering all responses, we see approximately 60 percent of Pennsylvanians give an “A” or “B” to local private schools; 39 percent give an “A” or “B” to local public charter schools; and 42 percent giving those high grades to regular local public schools. Only 7 percent of respondents give a “D” or “F” grade to private schools; 24 percent give the same low grades to regular public schools; and 13 percent suggest low grades for public charter schools.

It is important to highlight that much higher proportions of respondents do not express any view for private schools (16%) or public charter schools (25%), compared with the proportion that do not grade regular public schools (3%).

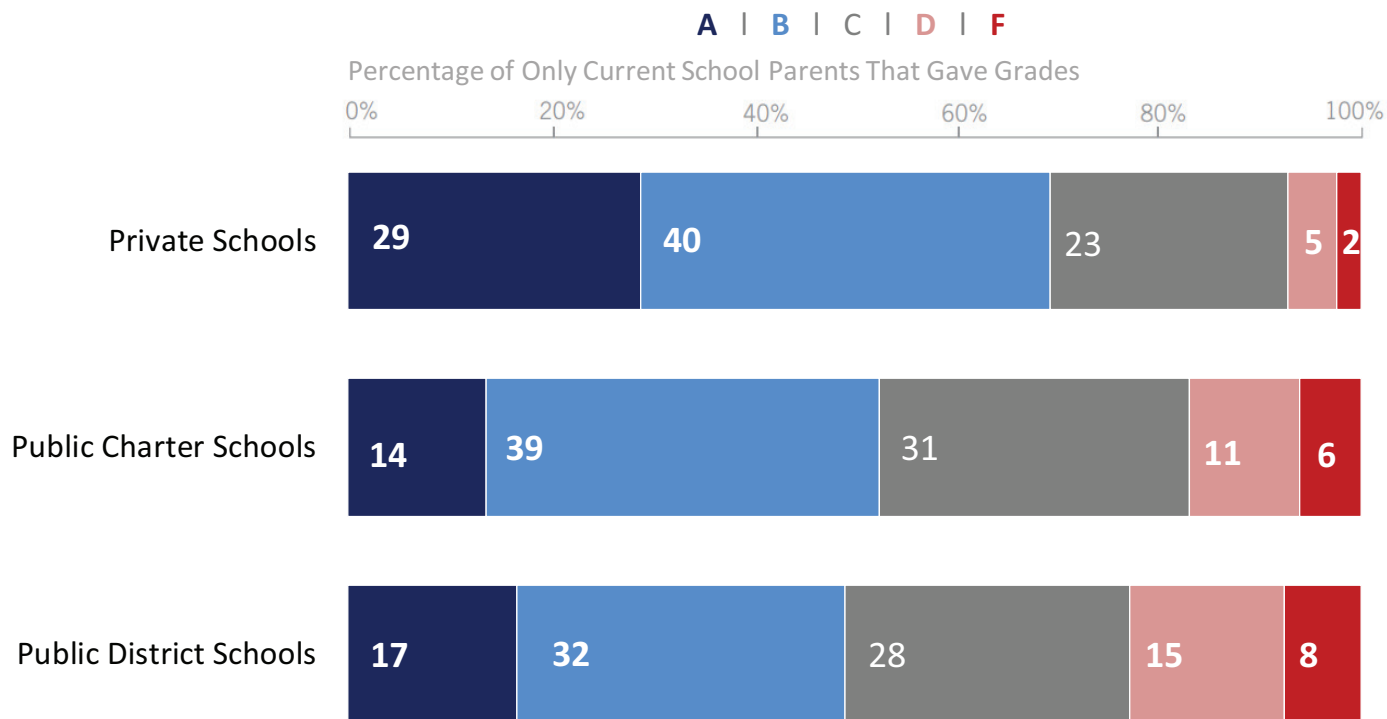
School Type Preferences

When asked for a preferred school type, more than two out of five Pennsylvania parents would choose a private school (44%) as a first option for their child. Two-fifths of respondents (40%) would select a public district school. Ten percent would choose a public charter school, and about one out of 12 would like to homeschool their child (8%).⁸

Private preferences signal a glaring disconnect with estimated school enrollment patterns in Pennsylvania. About 79 percent of K–12 students attend public district schools across the state. Roughly 7 percent of students currently go to public charter schools. About 12 percent of students enroll in private or parochial schools, including about 3 percent doing so through the state’s two tax-credit scholarship programs. And it is estimated about 3 percent of the state’s students are homeschooled.⁹

FIGURE 12. 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" (69%) compared to ratings of public charter schools (52%) or public district schools (49%).



Notes: Volunteered "Not Applicable" responses and skips not shown nor reflected in this chart. Sample sizes vary by school type: Private Schools (N = 166); Public Charter Schools (N = 147); Public District Schools (N = 210).

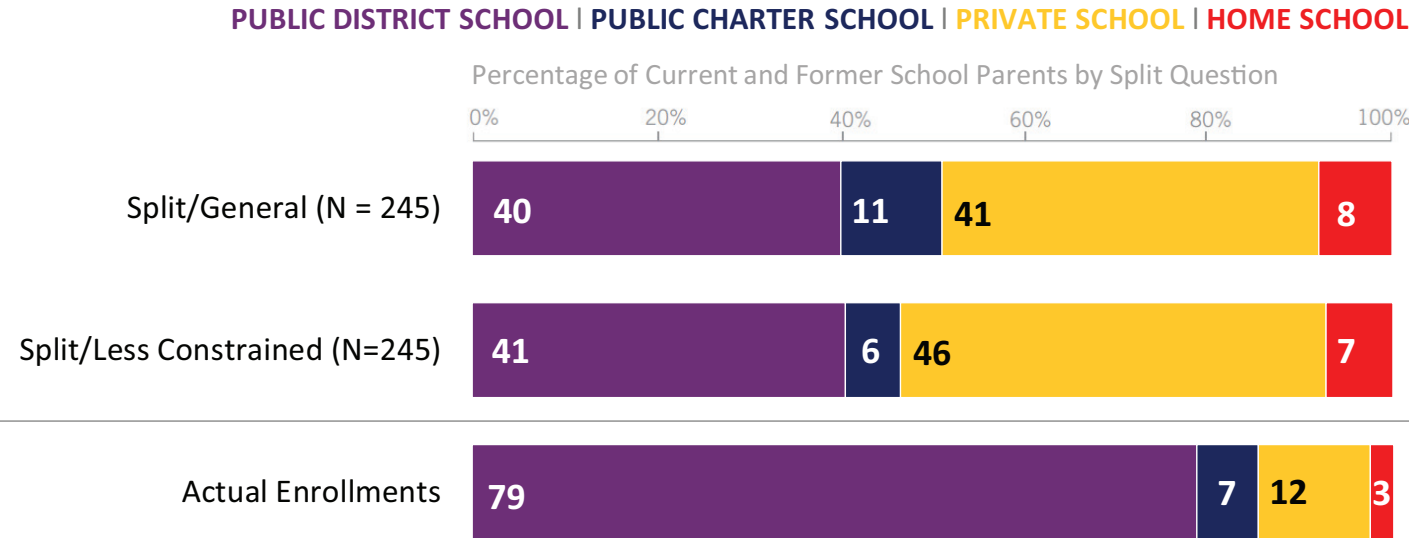
Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q14

In a split-sample experiment, interviewers asked a baseline question and an alternate version using a short phrase in addition to the baseline. When inserting the short phrase “... and financial costs and transportation were of no concern,” respondents are more likely to select private school compared to responses to the version without the phrase. The phrase’s effect appeared to increase the likelihood for parents choosing private schools (+5 point increase from baseline to alternate) or public district schools (+1 point increase). The phrasing effect depressed the likelihood of parents to choose a public charter school (-5 point decrease) or home school (-1 point decrease). The inserted language in the alternate version appears to be a clear signal that can increase the attraction toward private schools while decreasing the likelihood to choose a public charter school. Overall, 46 percent of Pennsylvanians said that if financial cost and transportation were of no concern, they would select private schooling to obtain the best education for their child.

We asked survey respondents a follow-up question to find out the main reason they chose a certain type of school. Respondents choosing private school or public charter school were more likely to prioritize “individual attention/one-on-one/customized” and “better education/quality” than those selecting public district school. Approximately one-third of private school choosers (35%) and charter school choosers (30%) gave those reasons. 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 respondents that chose charter schools or homeschooling.

FIGURE 13. Parents' Schooling Preferences by School Type

More than three out of four Pennsylvania students attend public district schools, but only about two-fifths of parents said they would prefer a district school.



Q15-Split. 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?

Q15-Split. 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: One respondent skipped the first split, which is not shown or reflected in the chart. For enrollment data sources, see note 8. Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q15

TABLE 1. Top Five Reasons for Choosing a Specific School Type

Percentage of General Population by Preferred School Type

Public District School (N = 381)	
Socialization / Peers / Other Kids	21%
Diversity / Variety	13%
Cost / Tuition / Affordability	13%
Better Education / Quality	13%
Teachers / Teaching/ Way They Teach	9%
Private School (N = 442)	
Better Education / Quality	24%
Class Size / Student-Teacher Ratio	17%
Individual Attention / One-on-One / Customized	12%
Academics / Curriculum / Standards / Results	11%
Discipline / Structure / Consistency	9%
Public Charter School (N = 105)	
Better Education / Quality	17%
Individual Attention / One-on-One / Customized	13%
Teachers / Teaching/ Way They Teach	10%
Class Size / Student-Teacher Ratio	9%
Discipline / Structure / Consistency	8%
Home School (N = 94)	
Safety / Less Drugs, Violence, Bullying	24%
Better Education / Quality	10%
Individual Attention / One-on-One / Customized	10%
Parental Involvement	7%
Less Political Influence	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, *Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q16

Perceived Direction of K–12 Education

More than half of Pennsylvanians (55%) say they think K–12 education in the state is on the “wrong track,” compared to 45 percent thinking it is going in the “right direction.” On balance, the mood for K–12 education tends to be negative, showcased by a negative margin of -11 points. Residents of the Philadelphia suburbs were the only observed demographic with a robust sample size to have a positive margin (+14 points).

In addition:

- Urbanites (64%) were more likely to say “wrong track” than suburbanites (52%) and small town and rural residents (55%).
- Low-income earners (61%) were more likely to say “wrong track” than middle-income earners (52%).

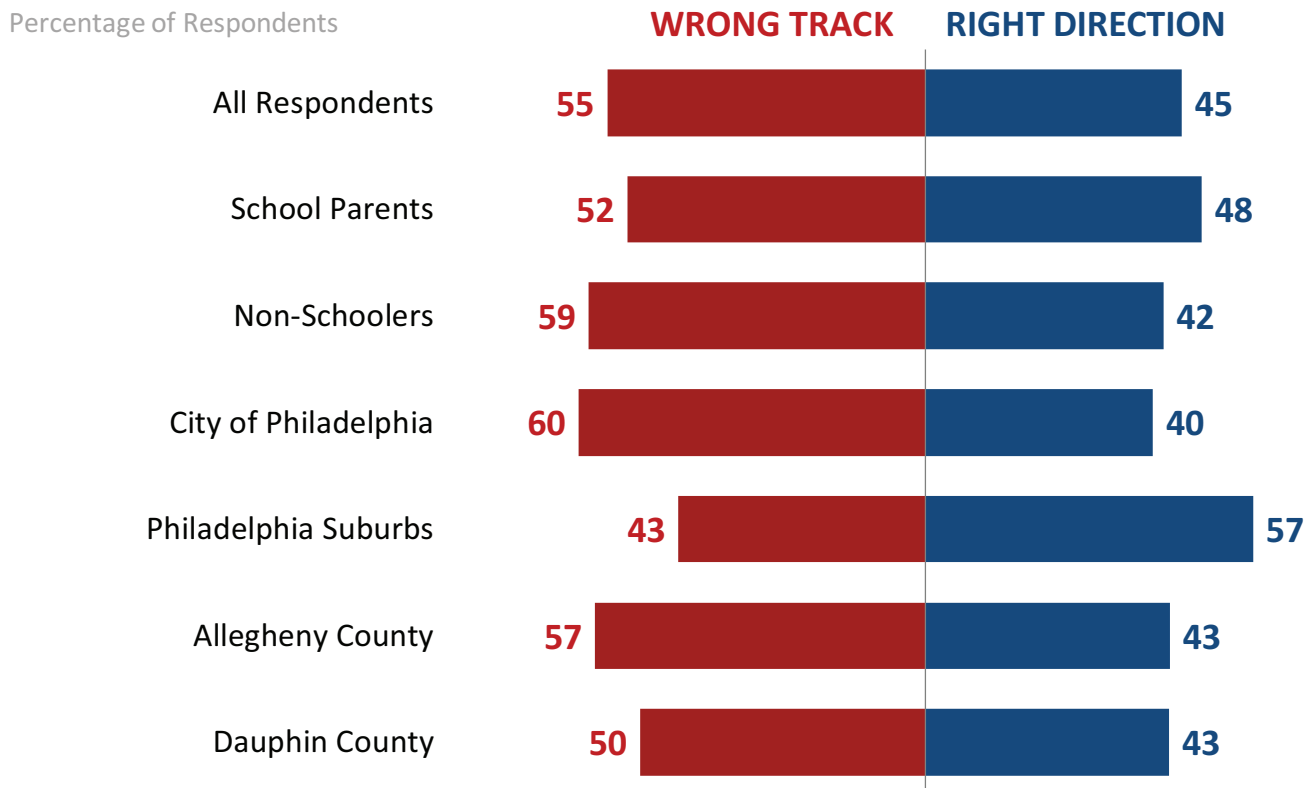
- Half of Republicans (50%) said “right direction” and were more likely to do so than Democrats (44%) and Independents (36%).

Views on Spending in K–12 Education

On average, according to Private School Review, Pennsylvania private schools charge approximately \$11,409 for tuition per student. Respondents were more likely to underestimate private school tuition (74%) than overestimate it (26%). Responses ranged from \$0 to \$50,000. The average response was \$10,009, while the median response was \$7,000. Nearly one-fourth of respondents (22%) provided an estimate of \$10,000 or more, while almost half (45%) provided an estimate of \$5,000 or less.¹⁰

FIGURE 14. Views on Pennsylvania's K–12 Education

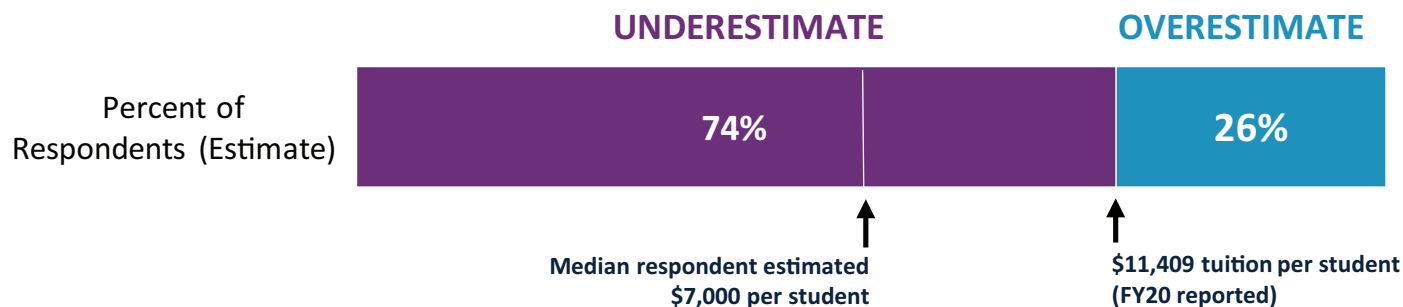
The majority of Pennsylvanians in our survey think K–12 education in the state has gotten off on the wrong track.



Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q1

Figure 15. Pennsylvanians' Awareness of Private K–12 Tuition

Pennsylvanians do not know how much private schools in their state charge on a per-student basis. Nearly half of respondents offering an answer said Pennsylvania private schools charge \$5,000 or less per student, which is less than half of reported 2019–20 average tuition (\$11,409 according to Private School Review).



Notes: Percentages based on unweighted responses. One respondent replied "Don't Know" and 31 respondents skipped the question, which is not shown.

Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q11

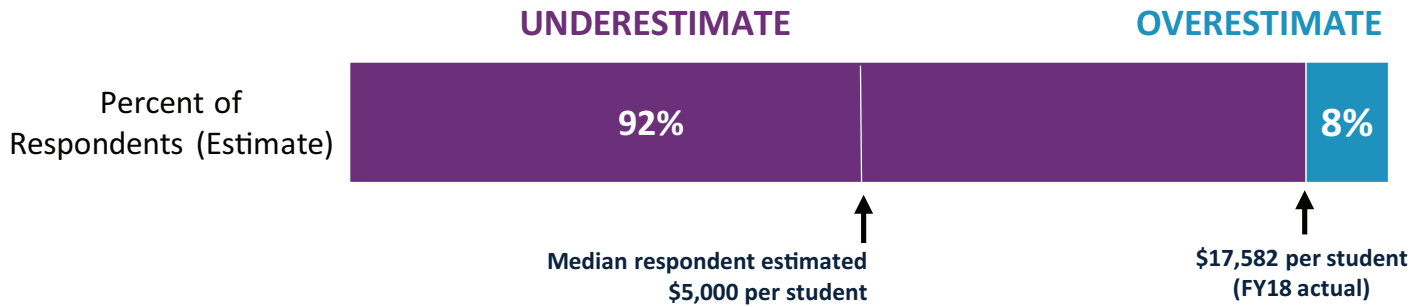
On average, Pennsylvania spends \$17,582 on each student in the state’s public schools, based on an expansive spending statistic termed “total expenditures.”¹¹ Respondents were much more likely to underestimate public per-pupil spending (92%) than overestimate it (8%). Responses ranged from \$0 to \$50,000. The average response was \$7,233, while the median response was \$5,000. Only five percent of respondents provided an estimate of \$10,000 or more, while nearly one-third of respondents (31%) provided an estimate of \$2,000 or less.

If instead of “total expenditures” we use “current expenditures” per student (\$15,710 in 2017–18)—a more cautious federal government definition for K–12 education spending that does not include capital costs and debt repayment—the proportion of Pennsylvanians likely to underestimate per-pupil spending only changes a single percentage point (91%).¹²

Given an actual per-student spending statistic, Pennsylvanians 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, 52 percent of respondents said public school funding was “too low.” However, on the version where we included a statistic for average public per-pupil spending in Pennsylvania (\$17,582 in 2017–18; the most recent statistic available when the survey was fielded), the proportion that said spending was “too low” shrank by 27 percentage points to 25 percent.¹³

Figure 16. Pennsylvanians' Awareness of Public K–12 Education Spending

Pennsylvanians do not know how much they spend in K–12 education on a per-student basis. Half of respondents offering an answer said Pennsylvania spends \$5,000 or less per student, which is less than one-third of reported 2017–18 spending (\$17,582).

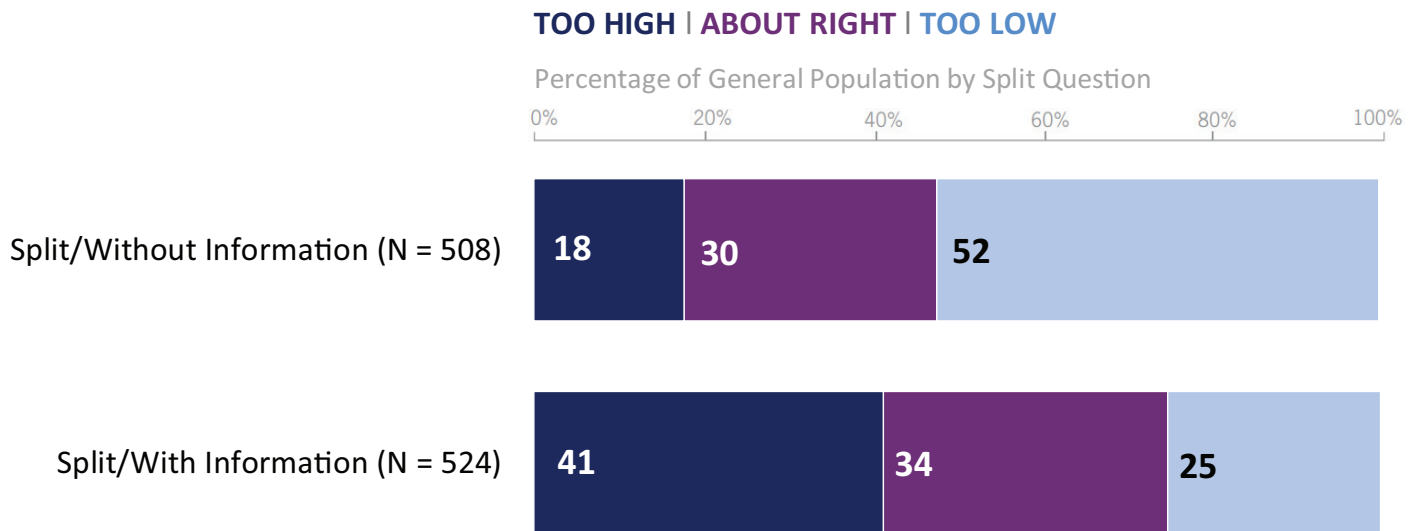


Notes: Percentages based on unweighted responses. One respondent replied "Don't Know" and 31 respondents skipped the question, which is not shown.

Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q12

FIGURE 17. How Information Affects Pennsylvanians' Views on K–12 Funding

When given an actual per-student spending statistic, Pennsylvanians are less likely to say public school funding is at a level that is "too low." The proportion giving that response shrinks from 52 percent to 25 percent between the two question versions—a decrease of 27 percentage points.



Q13-Split. Do you believe that public school funding in Pennsylvania is at a level that is:

Q13-Split. According to the most recent information available, on average \$17,582 is being spent per year on each student attending public schools in Pennsylvania. Do you believe that public school funding in the state is at a level that is:

Note: Three respondents did not answer each split.

Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q13

APPENDIX 1

Survey Project and Profile

Title: Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey

Survey Funder: EdChoice

Survey Data Collection

& Quality Control: Braun Research, Inc. (BRI)

Interview Dates: February 23–March 11, 2020

Sample Frame: Pennsylvania Registered Voters (age 18+)

Sampling Method: Online: Non-probability-based Opt-in Panel
Phone: Dual Frame, Probability-based, Random Digit Dial (RDD)

Language(s): English

Interview Method: Mixed Mode
Online, N = 1,270
Live Telephone, N = 137

- Landline = 55%
- Cell Phone = 45%

Interview Length: Online: 10.2 minutes (average)
Phone: 15.1 minutes (average)

Sample Size and Margin of Error: Total, with Oversamples (N = 1,407): ± 2.61 percentage points
Statewide without Oversamples (N = 1,032): ± 3.05 percentage points

Response Rate: Online: 37.8%
Phone: 0.9%

Weighting? Yes
Age, County, Gender, Ethnicity, Race, Community Type, Income, Party ID

Oversampling? Yes
Allegheny County (N = 201)
City of Philadelphia (N = 202)
Harrisburg/Dauphin County (N = 203)

Project Contact: Drew Catt, dcatt@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

Views on Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program: Descriptive Version Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Some Geographic Areas

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (strong net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	71	29	42	8	1,026
Current School Parent	72	28	45	14	223
Non-Parent	73	27	46	10	473
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	79	21	58	27	202
Philadelphia Suburbs	72	28	44	9	200
Allegheny County	64	36	28	5	199
Dauphin County	70	26	44	18	203
Rest of Pennsylvania	71	29	42	4	596
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	72	28	43	12	262
35 to 54	73	27	46	12	358
55 & Over	69	31	38	2	406
GENERATION					
Generation Z	77	23	53	19	72
Millennial	71	29	42	13	280
Generation X	71	29	43	7	295
Baby Boomer	70	31	39	3	325
Silent	69	31	38	4	54
COMMUNITY					
Urban	74	26	48	18	200
Suburban	70	31	39	5	456
Small Town/Rural	72	28	43	7	370
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	74	26	49	10	625
≥ College Degree	66	34	32	6	401
GENDER					
Female	76	24	51	13	515
Male	66	34	32	3	511
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	74	26	49	12	322
\$40,000 to \$79,999	73	27	45	11	378
\$80,000 & Over	66	34	32	1	322
PARTY ID					
Democrat	67	33	34	5	430
Republican	75	25	50	10	364
Independent	74	26	48	12	225
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	79	21	59	11	18
Black/African American	78	22	56	30	97
Hispanic/Latino	70	30	41	18	48
White	70	30	40	5	843

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q26

APPENDIX 3

Views on Pennsylvania’s Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) Program: Descriptive Version Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Some Geographic Areas

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (strong net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	71	30	41	10	1,019
Current School Parent	73	27	46	14	222
Non-Parent	71	29	43	12	469
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	79	21	58	19	202
Philadelphia Suburbs	70	30	39	9	198
Allegheny County	68	32	35	6	200
Dauphin County	75	20	55	20	202
Rest of Pennsylvania	71	29	41	7	591
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	72	28	44	13	262
35 to 54	71	29	41	15	356
55 & Over	69	31	39	3	401
GENERATION					
Generation Z	74	26	48	18	72
Millennial	72	28	45	63	280
Generation X	69	31	37	11	292
Baby Boomer	70	30	40	3	321
Silent	69	31	38	12	54
COMMUNITY					
Urban	77	23	55	19	199
Suburban	68	32	36	7	451
Small Town/Rural	70	30	40	9	369
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	74	26	48	14	622
≥ College Degree	66	35	31	4	397
GENDER					
Female	75	25	51	15	510
Male	65	35	31	5	509
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	75	28	47	15	320
\$40,000 to \$79,999	76	24	51	14	375
\$80,000 & Over	64	36	28	<1	320
PARTY ID					
Democrat	70	30	40	9	428
Republican	70	31	39	11	360
Independent	75	25	50	11	224
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	78	22	56	11	18
Black/African American	73	27	46	25	97
Hispanic/Latino	67	33	35	25	48
White	70	30	40	7	836

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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. Margins and intensities are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q27

APPENDIX 4

Views on Tax-Credit Scholarship Program Cap Increase

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Some Geographic Areas

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (strong net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	69	31	38	12	1,023
Current School Parent	67	33	34	14	223
Non-Parent	70	30	39	12	470
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	80	20	59	24	201
Philadelphia Suburbs	66	34	32	2	199
Allegheny County	63	38	25	11	199
Dauphin County	69	25	44	17	203
Rest of Pennsylvania	69	31	37	11	595
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	69	31	39	15	262
35 to 54	70	30	39	16	356
55 & Over	68	32	36	6	405
GENERATION					
Generation Z	71	29	42	21	72
Millennial	70	31	39	15	280
Generation X	70	30	40	14	292
Baby Boomer	67	34	33	5	325
Silent	70	30	39	8	54
COMMUNITY					
Urban	75	25	49	19	199
Suburban	66	34	31	9	454
Small Town/Rural	71	29	42	11	370
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	73	27	46	15	625
≥ College Degree	62	38	25	7	398
GENDER					
Female	71	29	42	16	513
Male	66	34	33	7	510
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	73	27	46	18	322
\$40,000 to \$79,999	72	28	43	15	376
\$80,000 & Over	63	37	25	3	321
PARTY ID					
Democrat	68	32	36	15	429
Republican	69	31	38	10	364
Independent	71	29	42	7	223
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	75	25	51	14	17
Black/African American	77	23	53	26	97
Hispanic/Latino	75	24	51	20	48
White	67	33	34	9	841

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q28

APPENDIX 5

Views on Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs): Descriptive Version Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Some Geographic Areas

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (strong net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	73	27	46	13	1,019
Current School Parent	78	22	56	19	223
Non-Parent	75	25	50	14	470
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	82	18	64	31	202
Philadelphia Suburbs	71	30	41	15	199
Allegheny County	67	34	33	14	198
Dauphin County	72	21	51	12	203
Rest of Pennsylvania	72	28	44	7	590
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	81	19	62	22	261
35 to 54	78	22	55	17	356
55 & Over	64	36	28	2	402
GENERATION					
Generation Z	88	12	76	24	71
Millennial	78	22	57	18	280
Generation X	76	24	52	18	293
Baby Boomer	63	37	26	3	322
Silent	67	33	34	-4	53
COMMUNITY					
Urban	81	19	62	26	200
Suburban	70	30	41	8	452
Small Town/Rural	72	28	44	9	367
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	77	23	54	16	621
≥ College Degree	68	32	35	8	398
GENDER					
Female	78	22	55	17	512
Male	68	32	37	8	507
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	76	24	53	16	318
\$40,000 to \$79,999	75	25	50	15	375
\$80,000 & Over	68	32	37	8	322
PARTY ID					
Democrat	71	29	42	13	428
Republican	74	26	49	11	361
Independent	76	24	52	17	223
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	84	16	67	24	18
Black/African American	80	20	60	30	97
Hispanic/Latino	88	12	76	24	48
White	71	29	42	10	836

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q20

APPENDIX 6

Views on Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs) for Military-Connected Children

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Some Geographic Areas

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (strong net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	85	15	71	37	1,019
Current School Parent	87	14	73	44	220
Non-Parent	86	14	73	38	472
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	88	12	76	45	201
Philadelphia Suburbs	84	16	68	34	198
Allegheny County	83	17	67	36	196
Dauphin County	82	16	66	46	203
Rest of Pennsylvania	86	14	72	38	592
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	88	12	76	39	261
35 to 54	85	15	70	39	357
55 & Over	84	16	67	35	401
GENERATION					
Generation Z	90	10	80	46	71
Millennial	87	13	73	39	280
Generation X	84	16	68	37	293
Baby Boomer	85	16	69	36	321
Silent	82	19	63	26	54
COMMUNITY					
Urban	87	13	74	43	201
Suburban	84	16	69	34	450
Small Town/Rural	85	14	71	41	368
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	87	13	75	40	622
≥ College Degree	82	18	64	34	397
GENDER					
Female	89	12	77	41	512
Male	82	18	64	33	507
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	87	13	75	42	320
\$40,000 to \$79,999	87	13	75	41	376
\$80,000 & Over	81	19	62	30	319
PARTY ID					
Democrat	83	17	66	36	427
Republican	87	13	74	36	362
Independent	87	13	74	45	223
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	100	0	100	55	18
Black/African American	88	12	76	41	96
Hispanic/Latino	82	17	65	44	48
White	84	16	69	36	837

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q24

APPENDIX 7

Views on Charter Schools: Descriptive Version Results

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Some Geographic Areas

	Favor %	Oppose %	Margin (net)	Intensity (strong net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	66	34	32	6	1,019
Current School Parent	67	33	35	9	222
Non-Parent	69	32	37	8	472
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	71	30	41	9	201
Philadelphia Suburbs	59	41	18	2	199
Allegheny County	64	36	29	3	199
Dauphin County	69	23	46	8	203
Rest of Pennsylvania	65	35	30	6	590
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	68	32	36	11	262
35 to 54	67	33	33	8	357
55 & Over	64	36	28	<1	400
GENERATION					
Generation Z	65	35	30	16	72
Millennial	69	31	38	9	281
Generation X	68	32	36	8	292
Baby Boomer	62	38	24	>-1	322
Silent	66	34	32	4	52
COMMUNITY					
Urban	70	30	40	4	200
Suburban	64	36	28	7	452
Small Town/Rural	67	33	34	6	367
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	71	29	42	11	618
≥ College Degree	59	42	17	>-1	401
GENDER					
Female	69	31	38	7	511
Male	63	37	25	5	508
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	71	29	43	9	321
\$40,000 to \$79,999	67	33	33	11	376
\$80,000 & Over	60	40	20	-2	318
PARTY ID					
Democrat	62	38	23	3	429
Republican	71	29	42	8	362
Independent	67	33	35	11	221
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	80	20	60	14	18
Black/African American	78	22	56	21	97
Hispanic/Latino	67	33	33	20	48
White	64	36	29	3	835

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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, Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q18

APPENDIX 8

Current School Parents' Schooling Preferences by School Type

Percentage of Current School Parents and Selected Demographic Groups

	Public District School	Public Charter School	Private School	Home School	N =
	%	%	%	%	
CURRENT SCHOOL PARENT	41	10	43	6	223
GEOGRAPHIC AREA					
City of Philadelphia	12	31	40	18	27
Philadelphia Suburbs	41	7	49	3	43
Allegheny County	47	23	24	6	15
Dauphin County	59	19	22	0	4
Rest of Pennsylvania	46	6	44	5	134
AGE GROUP					
18 to 34	44	8	43	6	54
35 to 54	43	13	39	5	143
55 & Over	29	0	61	10	26
GENERATION					
Generation Z	0	0	0	0	0
Millennial	42	9	44	5	87
Generation X	45	13	36	7	115
Baby Boomer	17	0	76	7	20
Silent	100	0	0	0	1
COMMUNITY					
Urban	26	22	43	9	40
Suburban	46	6	44	4	96
Small Town/Rural	43	10	40	8	87
EDUCATION					
< College Degree	31	13	48	8	129
≥ College Degree	53	7	37	3	94
GENDER					
Female	40	11	43	6	125
Male	43	10	42	6	98
HOUSEHOLD INCOME					
Under \$40,000	24	18	48	11	50
\$40,000 to \$79,999	26	13	52	9	38
\$80,000 & Over	51	7	39	4	135
PARTY ID					
Democrat	36	15	43	6	97
Republican	43	4	46	7	82
Independent	51	13	31	5	44
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Asian/Pacific Islander	76	24	0	0	4
Black/African American	10	38	41	11	22
Hispanic/Latino	33	17	44	6	15
White	44	7	45	5	178

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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.

Source: EdChoice, *Pennsylvania K-12 & School Choice Survey* (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q15 (composite)

APPENDIX 9

Views on Pennsylvania's Direction in K–12 Education

Percentage of General Population and Selected Demographic Groups with Oversamples of Specific Geographic Areas

	Right Direction %	Wrong Track %	Margin (net)	N =
GENERAL POPULATION	45	55	-11	1,017
Current School Parent	48	52	-4	223
Non-Parent	42	59	-17	469
GEOGRAPHIC AREA				
City of Philadelphia	40	60	-21	198
Philadelphia Suburbs	57	43	14	200
Allegheny County	43	57	-15	199
Dauphin County	43	50	-7	202
Rest of Pennsylvania	42	58	-16	589
AGE GROUP				
18 to 34	41	59	-18	259
35 to 54	44	56	-12	354
55 & Over	48	52	-5	404
GENERATION				
Generation Z	40	61	-21	71
Millennial	44	56	-12	279
Generation X	43	57	-14	290
Baby Boomer	46	54	-8	325
Silent	57	43	14	52
COMMUNITY				
Urban	36	64	-28	196
Suburban	48	52	-4	451
Small Town/Rural	45	55	-9	370
EDUCATION				
< College Degree	46	54	-8	618
≥ College Degree	42	58	-15	399
GENDER				
Female	45	55	-10	509
Male	45	56	-11	508
HOUSEHOLD INCOME				
Under \$40,000	39	61	-22	315
\$40,000 to \$79,999	48	52	-4	378
\$80,000 & Over	47	53	-6	321
PARTY ID				
Democrat	44	56	-12	426
Republican	50	50	>-1	362
Independent	36	64	-28	222
RACE/ETHNICITY				
Asian/Pacific Islander	62	38	25	18
Black/African American	38	62	-24	96
Hispanic/Latino	41	59	-18	48
White	45	55	-11	834

Notes: Bolding denotes statistically significant differences from General Population or from within-group comparison. 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 are calculated using percentages to the nearest tenth.

Source: EdChoice, Pennsylvania K–12 & School Choice Survey (conducted February 23–March 11, 2020), Q1

NOTES

1. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Expenditure Data 2017-2018 [Data file], accessed January 27, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Summary%20of%20AFR%20Data/AFR%20Data%20Summary%20Level/Finances%20AFR%20Expenditures%202017-2018.xlsx>

2. Authors' calculations; EdChoice (2020), *The ABCs of School Choice: The Comprehensive Guide to Every Private School Choice Program in America*, 2020 edition, retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2020-ABCs-of-School-Choice-WEB-OPTIMIZED-REVISED.pdf>

3. Ibid.

4. For terminology: We use the label “current school parents” to refer to those respondents who said they have one or more children in preschool through high school. We use the label “former school parents” for respondents who said their children are past high school age. We use the label “non-parents” for respondents without children. For terms regarding age groups: “younger” reflect respondents who are age 18 to 34; “middle-age” are 35 to 54; and “seniors” are 55 and older. Labels pertaining to income groups go as follows: “low-income earners” < \$40,000; “middle-income earners” ≥\$40,000 and < \$80,000; “high-income earners” ≥\$80,000. We adapt the Pew Research Center’s classifications of generational cohorts for this report: Generation Z (1997 or earlier) Millennial (1981–1996); Generation X (1965–1980); Baby Boomer (1946–1964); and Silent Generation (1928–1945). Pew Research Center, Generations and Age [Web page], accessed April 1, 2020, retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/generations-and-age>

5. Marc LeBlond (2019, June 5), Thousands of Scholarship Applications Denied, Again [Blog post], retrieved from Commonwealth Foundation website: <https://www.commonwealthfoundation.org/policyblog/detail/thousands-of-scholarship-applications-denied-again>

6. EdChoice (2020), What Is An Education Savings Account? [Web page], accessed April 21, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/types-of-school-choice/education-savings-account>

7. Center for Research on Education Outcomes (2019), *Charter School Performance in Pennsylvania*, retrieved from: https://credo.stanford.edu/sites/g/files/sbiybj6481/f/2019_pa_state_report_final_06052019.pdf; Education Commission of the States (2020), Charter Schools: State Profile - Pennsylvania [Web page], accessed April 3, 2020, retrieved from: <http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbstprofile?Rep=CSP20&st=Pennsylvania>

8. Unless otherwise noted, the results in this section reflect the composite average of split-sample responses of current and former school parents to both splits for question 15.

9. Authors' calculations; Andrew D. Catt (2020, April 15), U.S. States Ranked by Educational Choice Share, 2020 [Blog post], retrieved from EdChoice website: <https://www.edchoice.org/engage/u-s-states-ranked-by-educational-choice-share-2020>

10. Private School Review, Pennsylvania Private Schools by Tuition Cost [Web page], accessed April 6, 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/tuition-stats/pennsylvania>

11. Pennsylvania Department of Education, Expenditure Data 2017-2018 [Data file], accessed January 27, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Teachers-Administrators/School%20Finances/Finances/Summary%20of%20AFR%20Data/AFR%20Data%20Summary%20Level/Finances%20AFR%20Expenditures%202017-2018.xlsx>

12. Ibid.; “Current Expenditures” data include dollars spent on instruction, instruction-related support services, and other elementary/secondary current expenditures, but exclude expenditures on capital outlay, other programs, and interest on long-term debt. “Total Expenditures” includes the latter categories and sometimes others. Stephen Q. Cornman, Lei Zhou, Malia R. Howell, and Jumaane Young (2020), *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: FY 17* (NCES 2020-301), retrieved from National Center for Education Statistics website: <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020301.pdf>

13. U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data: Summary Tables [Data file], accessed January 7, 2020, retrieved from https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/school-finances/tables/2017/secondary-education-finance/elsec17_sumtables.xls

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Andrew D. Catt

Andrew D. Catt is the director of state research and special projects for EdChoice. In that role, Drew conducts analyses on private educational choice programs, conducts surveys of private school leaders and parents of school-aged children, and conducts geospatial analyses. Drew graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in Human and Organizational Development, specializing in Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness. During that time, he researched the effects of homeschooling on socialization. Drew received his Master of Public Affairs in Nonprofit Management at Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs in Indianapolis. He also received his Master of Arts in Philanthropic Studies through the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. While in graduate school, Drew's research focused on teacher performance incentives and cross-sector collaboration. Drew recently received a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Science (GIS) from IUPUI. Drew is a native of central Indiana and currently resides in downtown Indianapolis with his wife Elizabeth and their son Theodore.

Colleen Hroncich

Colleen Hroncich is a senior policy analyst at Commonwealth Foundation. Colleen graduated from the University of Maryland with a degree in economics. Following college, she interned at the American Enterprise Institute, worked as a research analyst at ICF Consulting in its energy division, and then joined the Allegheny Institute for Public Policy as a research associate. When her first child was born, Colleen chose to stay home and be a full-time mom. As a mother of four—whose children have experienced district, private, cyber, and home schooling—she lived school choice before she researched it. A graduate of the Koch Fellow Program, she also has studied health care policy, small business regulatory barriers, and public sector unions. Colleen lives in western Pennsylvania with her husband and children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are extremely grateful to the Pennsylvanians that took the time to respond to the survey online or via phone. We are also grateful to Braun Research, Inc. for administering our survey and for data collection and quality control. We deeply appreciate the work of Michael Davey for making these pages look more professional and Jen Wagner for correcting spelling and grammar mistakes.

Any remaining errors in this publication are solely those of the authors.