

Terminology and definitions used for this report:

Special Education Parents	Have at least one child, under the age of 18 that is currently enrolled in school, that has had a health or education professional determine they have a physical, learning or social/emotional disability. Additionally, that same child must also be apart of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or a similar special services plan
Non-Special Needs Parents	Do not have any children with a diagnosed physical, learning or social/emotional disability

KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Both special education parents and non-special needs parents have had similar levels of comfort with their child returning to school in the first months of the new school year.
- 2. A very large proportion of special education parents two out of three say they prefer having their child be schooled at home at least one day per week.
- 3. Compared to other school parents, special education parents are more likely to feel various resources such as individualized learning plans and access to mental health supports and counseling will be beneficial to their children.
- 4. Special education parents are much more likely than other parents to report they have a child in a learning pod or receiving tutoring outside of school.
- 5. Special education parents express very high levels of support for education savings accounts (ESAs), school vouchers, and charter schools. They are slightly more likely to be supportive than non-special needs parents.
- 6. Special education parents are more likely than other parents to believe the coronavirus has been disruptive to their personal and family/household routines as well as to their community.
- 7. Despite the impact of the coronavirus, special education parents are more likely than other parents to be optimistic about K-12 education in their home state as well as nationally.

Methodology:

Unless otherwise noted, data and charts are based on surveys conducted between July 14 and October 16, 2021 among a sample of 1,007 Special Education Parents and 3,648 Non-Special Needs Parents. The interviews were administered online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of Parents based on gender, educational attainment, age, race, and region. Results based on the full survey have a measure of precision of plus or minus 3.98 percentage points for special education parents and 2.12 percentage points for non-special needs parents.

AGENDA

COVID-19 AND SCHOOLING

VIEWS ON K-12 EDUCATION

SCHOOL CHOICE POLICIES

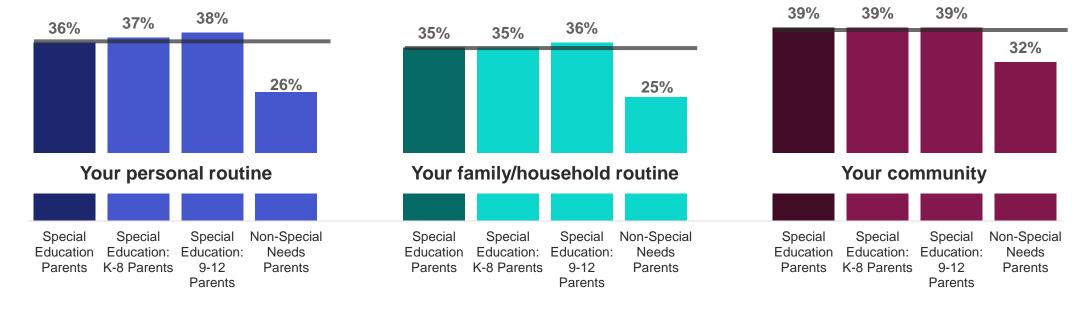
SURVEY PROFILE AND DEMOGRAPHICS



Special education parents are more likely to believe the coronavirus has been disruptive to their personal and family/household routines as well as to their community.

How disruptive has the coronavirus (also called COVID-19) been on each of the following?

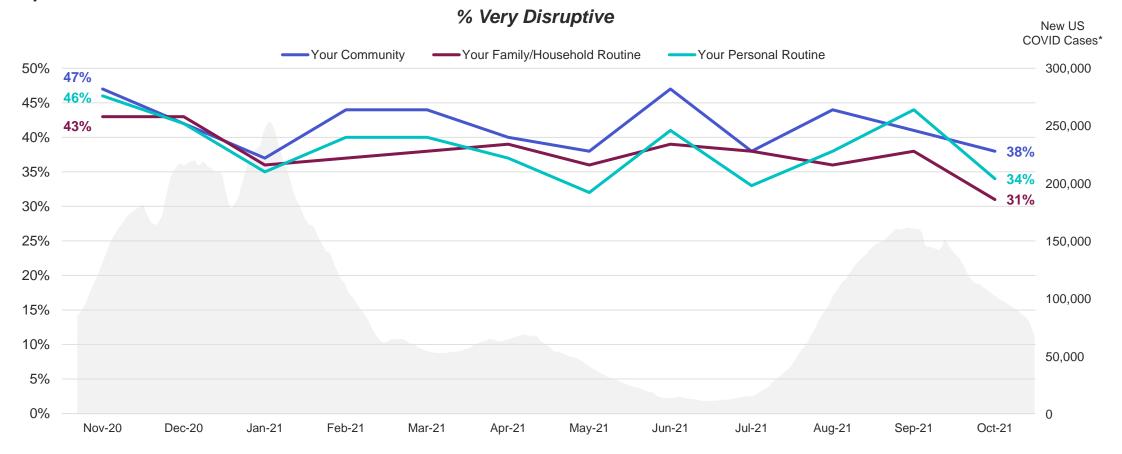
% Very Disruptive



Among special education parents, feelings of disruption have wobbled up and down over the course of the past year. However, those levels were lower in October compared to a year ago.

How disruptive has the coronavirus (also called COVID-19) been on each of the following?

Special Education Parents

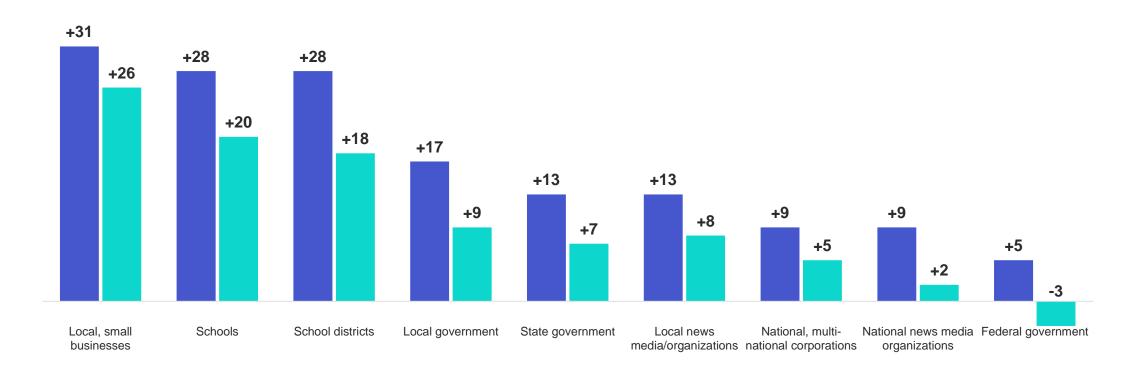


Note: Trending data for Special Education Parents has a measure of precision of +/- 6 points.

Compared to other parents, special education parents are more likely to give positive ratings to various institutional responses to the pandemic. That is especially true when it comes to their views on schools, school districts, and local government.

Based on what you have seen, read, or heard so far, how would you rate the following institutions on their response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

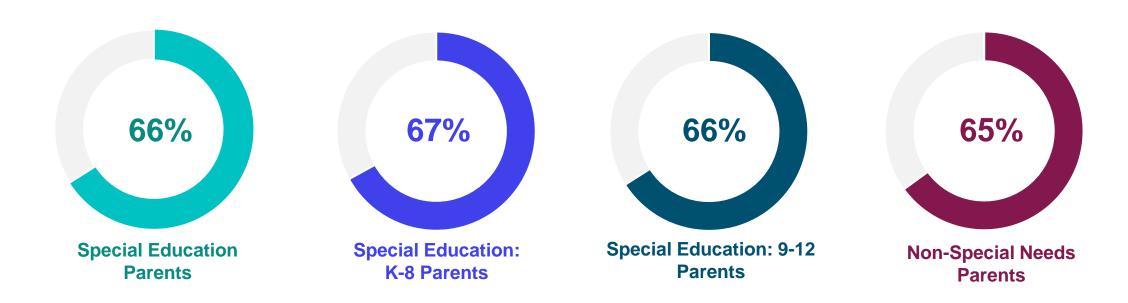




Both special education and non-special needs parents show similar levels of comfort with their children returning to school during the first few months of the new school year.

Based on what you have seen, read, or heard about the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak so far, how comfortable are you with your child/children returning to school right now?

% Comfortable (Very + Somewhat Comfortable)



ed CHOICE

Those who are comfortable with their children returning believe enough people have been vaccinated and that schools will take proper precautions. Those that are uncomfortable believe vaccination rates are low, precautions are not being taken, and have other uncertainties relating to their child's disability

Why do you feel comfortable/uncomfortable with your child/children returning to school right now?

Special Education Parents

COMFORTABLE

66

"We take proper precautions, and the school has been good about implementing

proper precautions."

"I know that the people at my daughter's school will do what's best for her."

"They need in-person school as last year was a complete nightmare."

UNCOMFORTABLE

"Because (my son) is non-verbal and can't tell me when or if he is sick."

"Cases are high and there is not enough safety within schools."

"Because the delta variant is not under control and people are not getting themselves or their children that are eligible vaccinated."

"Mask mandates are unfair to small children, especially children with special needs like autism or sensory processing disorders."

masks and is doing testing."

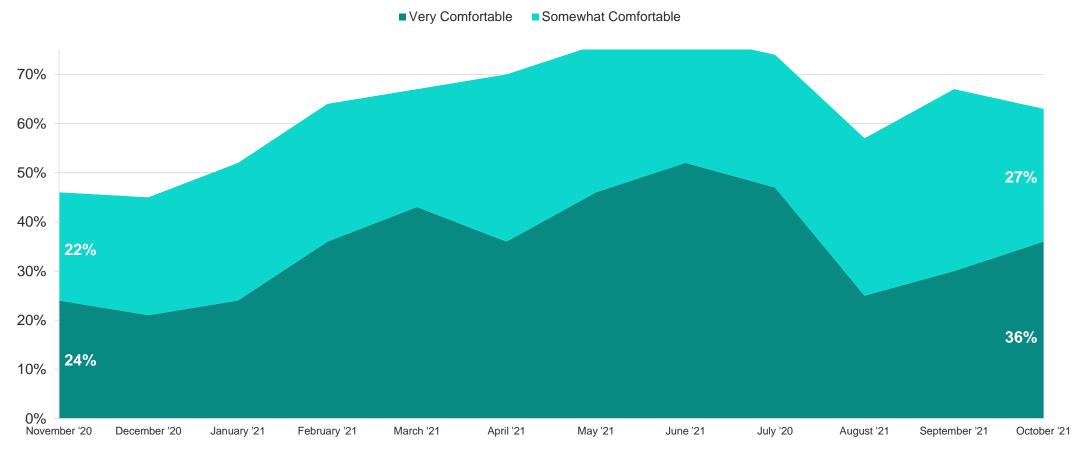
"They are vaccinated,

and the school requires



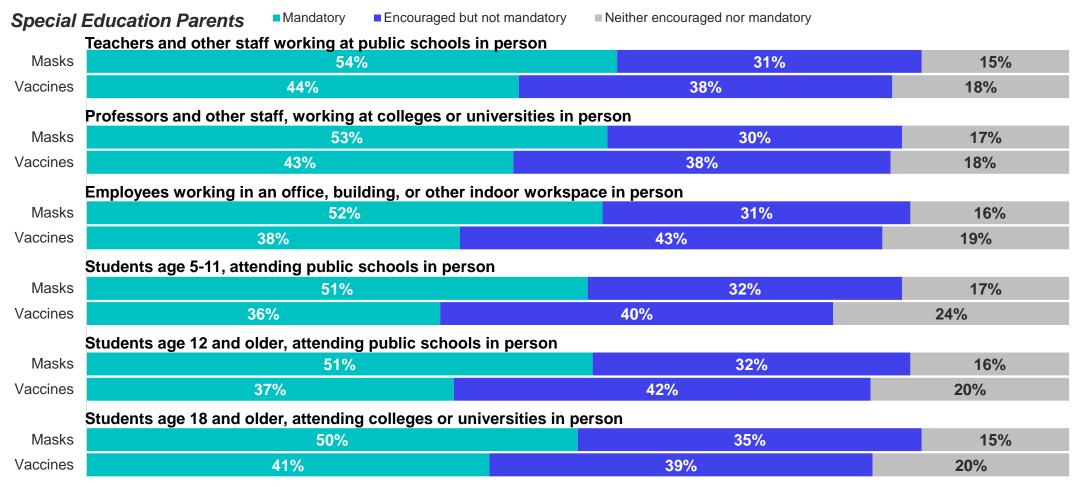
For special education parents, comfort with returning to school peaked in the early summer months before decreasing as the school year began.

Based on what you have seen, read, or heard about the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak so far, how comfortable are you with your child/children returning to school right now?



When thinking about masking and vaccines, more special education parents believe that masking should be mandatory compared to vaccines.

Now that an FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19 is available, do you think it should be mandatory or encouraged for the following groups? Do you think masking should be mandatory or encouraged for the following groups?



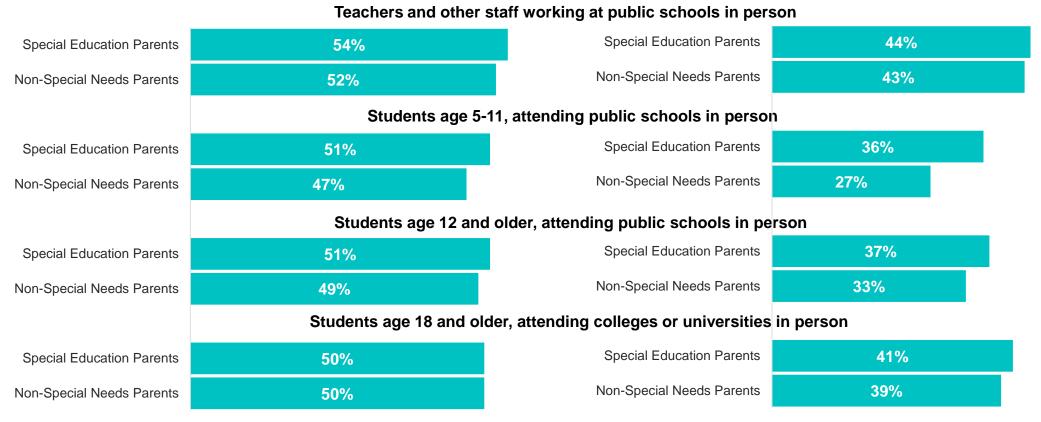
When compared to non-special needs parents, special education parents are more likely to believe that vaccines should be mandatory for students aged 5-11.

Do you think masking should be mandatory or encouraged for the following groups?

Now that an FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19 is available, do you think it should be mandatory or encouraged for the following groups?

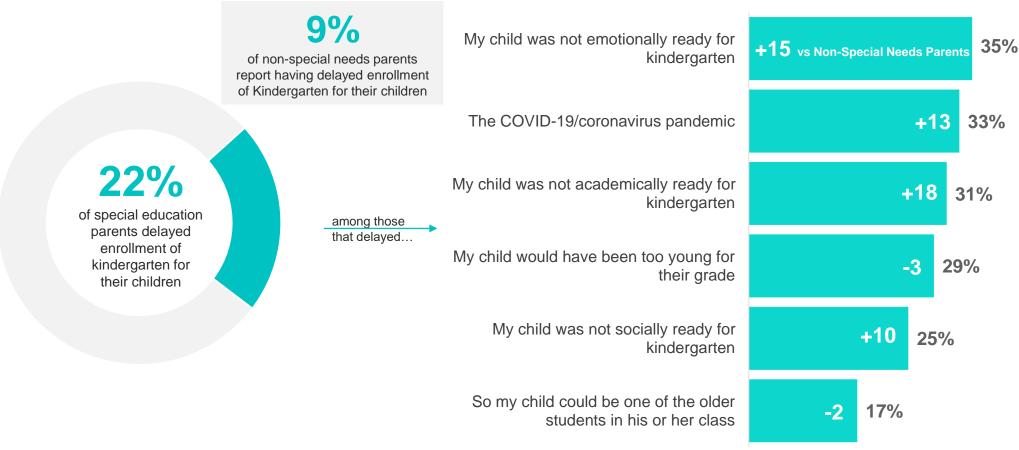
% Masks Mandatory

% Vaccines Mandatory



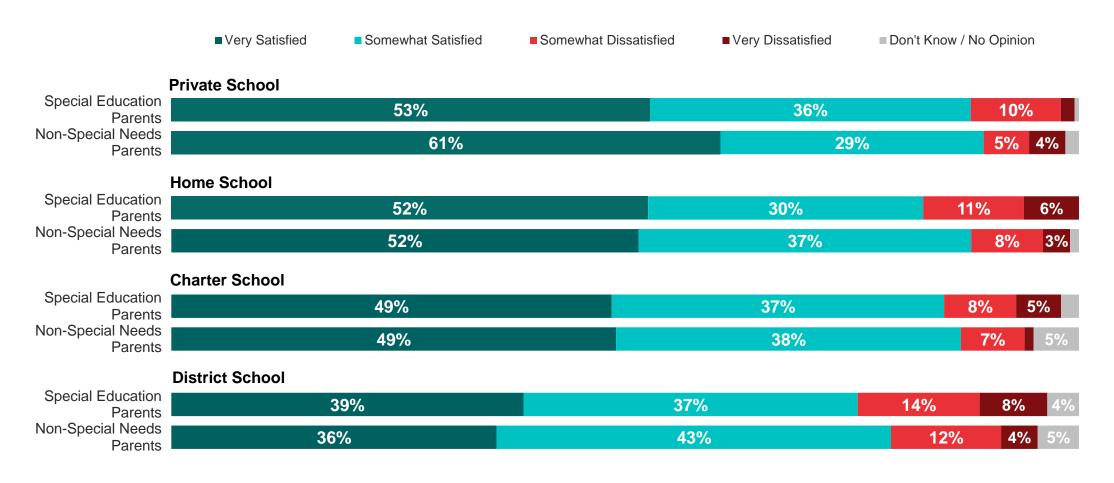
Special education parents are over twice as likely as non-special needs parents to have delayed enrollment of kindergarten for any of their children, especially for academic and emotional reasons.

Did you delay enrollment of kindergarten for any of your children? Which of the following are reasons you waited to enroll your child(ren) in Kindergarten?



Special education and non-special needs parents have similar levels of satisfaction with various types of schooling. Overall satisfaction is lowest with district schools.

To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your child's/children's experiences with the following types of schooling?



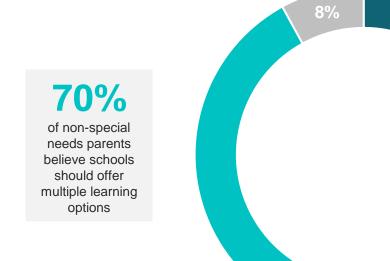
Much like non-special needs parents, Seven out of 10 special education parents believe that schools should provide multiple learning options for students.

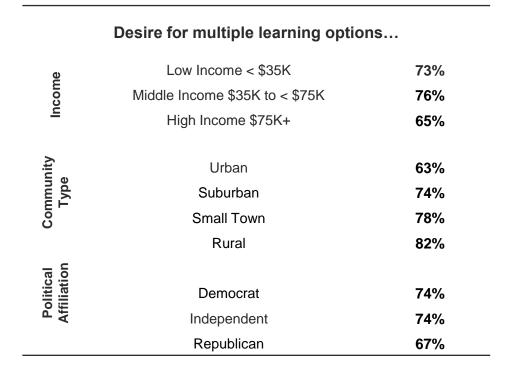
Do you think schools should offer only one approach to educating K-12 students in the fall or provide multiple learning options?

20%

Special Education Parents

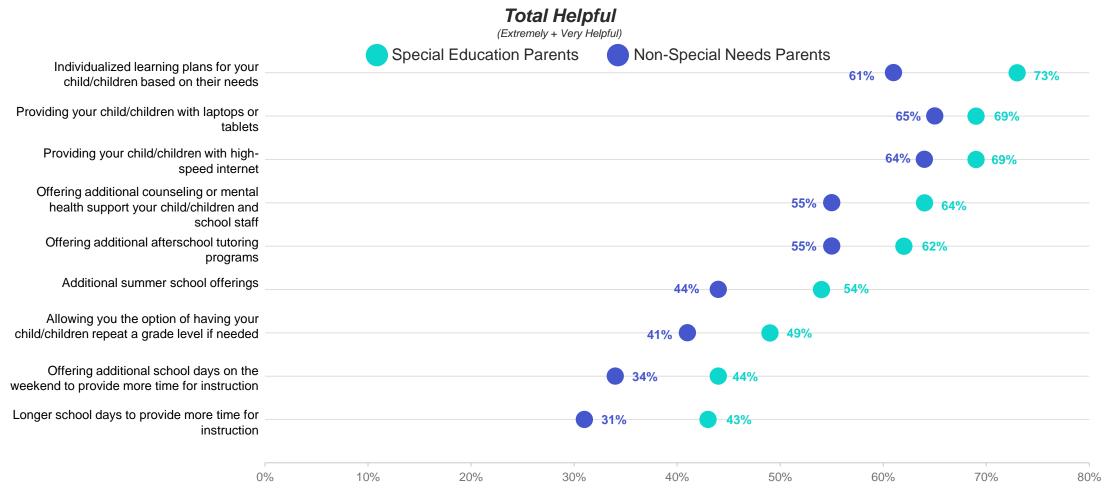
Offer One Approach
 Provide Multiple Learning Options
 Don't Know / No Opinion





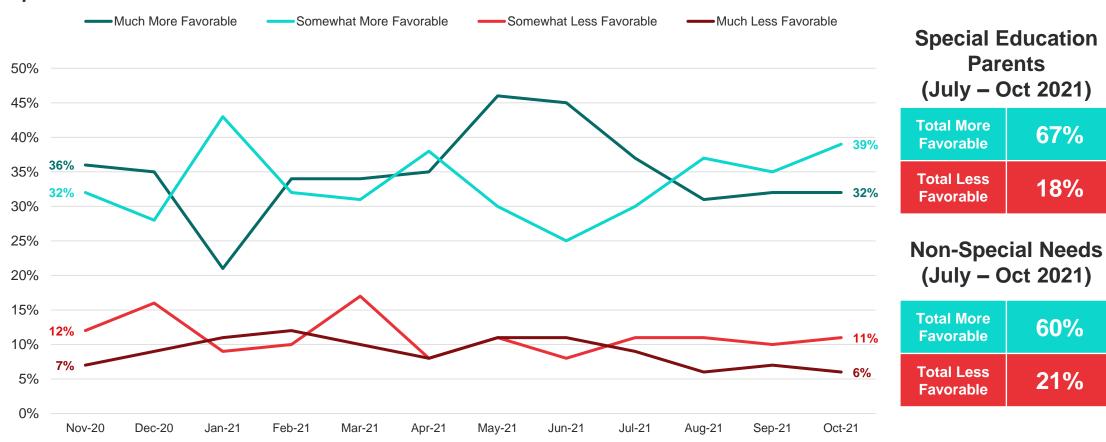
Compared to non-special needs parents, special education parents find much more value in resources aimed to help their child - especially individualized learning plans, additional summer school offerings, and additional school days on the weekend.

How helpful do you think each of the following will be in helping your child/children next school year following the COVID-19 outbreak?



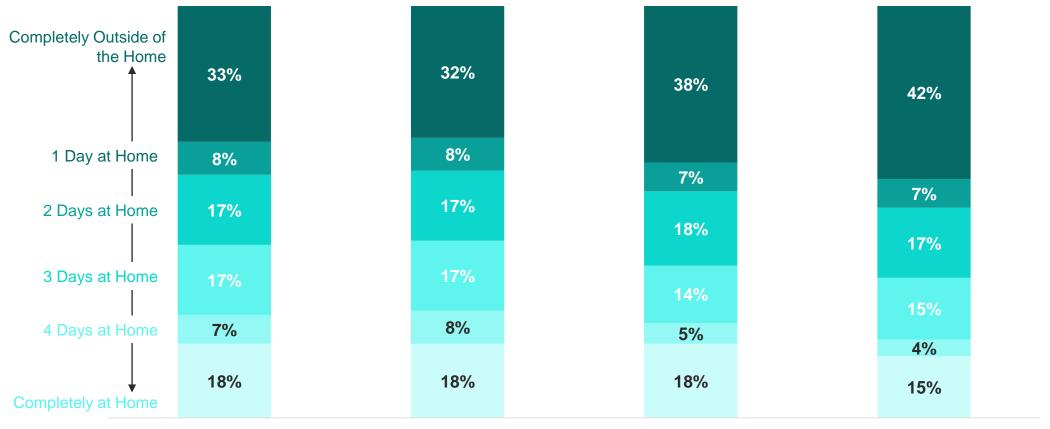
Throughout the pandemic, special education parents have maintained their positive views on homeschooling.

How have your opinions on homeschooling changed as a result of the coronavirus?



Two-thirds of special education parents would like to have their child be schooled at home at least one day per week.

After the pandemic, if given the option, to what extent would you prefer schooling to be scheduled each week at home with a parent or tutor to provide the best education for your child?



Special Education Parents

Special Education: K-8 Parents Special Education: 9-12 Parents

Non-Special Needs Parents

Compared to other parents, special education parents are much more likely to say they are currently participating in a learning pod.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, are you currently participating in a 'pod' with other families?



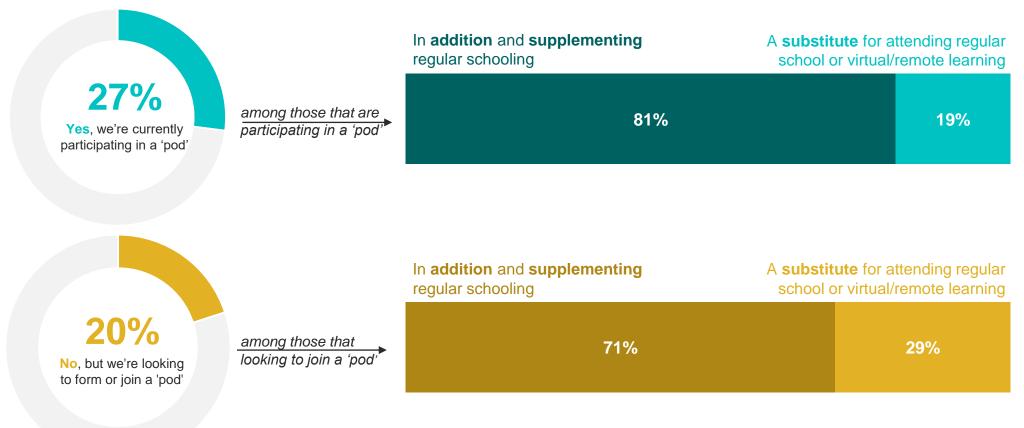
Interest in learning pods varies widely across demographic groups within the special education parents population.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, are you currently participating in a 'pod' with other families?

Most likely to participate in / form / join a pod		Moderately likely to participate in / form / join a Pod		Less likely to participate in / form / join a Pod	
Private School Parent	77%	Northeast	52%	District School Parent	39%
Home School Parent	69%	K-8 Parents	49%	Educ: < College	39%
Black	68%	South	49%	Midwest	38%
Urban	63%	West	47%	Non-Hispanic White	37%
Hispanic	63%	Middle Income \$35K- \$75K	46%	Low Income < \$35K	36%
Educ: Bachelors or Postgrad	62%	Suburban	46%	Independent	36%
High Income: \$75K+	62%	Republican	44%	Rural	27%
Democrat	58%	9-12 Parents	43%	Small Town	20%

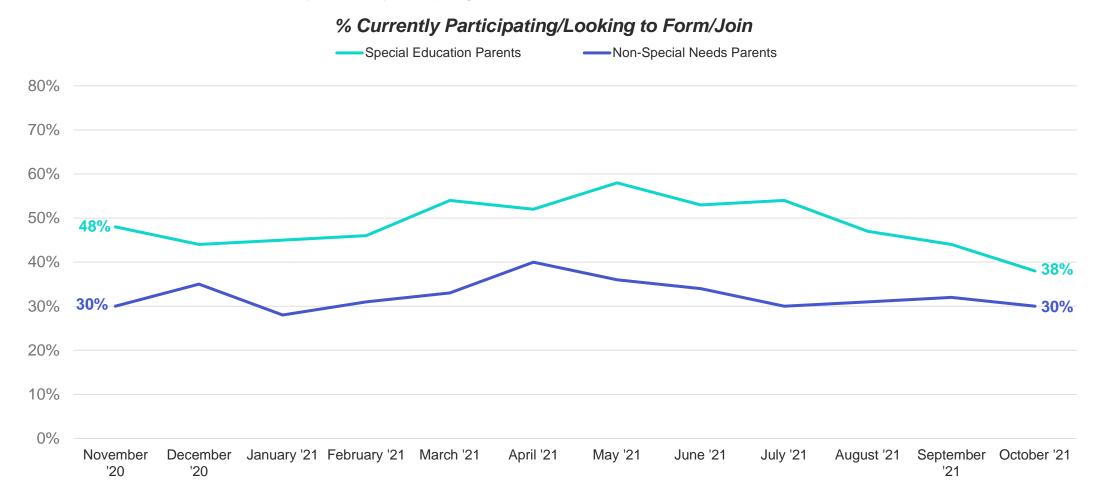
'Pods' are primarily used in addition to regular schooling and are less likely to be a substitute for regular school among special education parents.

You said you're currently participating in a 'pod', is that...? You said you're looking to form a 'pod', would that be...?



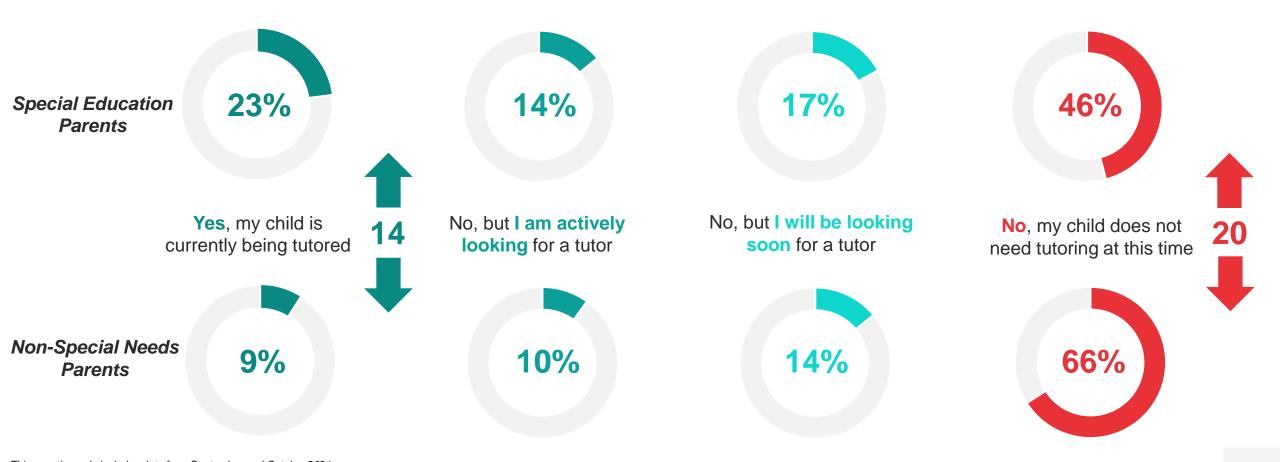
Over the past year, special education parents have been more interested in pods – compared to other parents – although their trendline has moved downward in recent months.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, are you currently participating in a 'pod' with other families?



Compared to other parents, special education parents are much more likely to say they have a child being tutored.

Is your child getting tutoring outside of regular school hours this school year?



Among special education parents, Democrats, urbanites, and those with a college degree or a high income are the most likely to show interest in tutoring for their child.

Is your child getting tutoring outside of regular school hours this school year?

Groups most likely to already being / looking to be tutored		Groups moderately likely to already being / looking to be tutored		Groups less likely to already being / looking to be tutored	
Democrat	62%	South	56%	Non-Hispanic White	51%
Educ: Bachelors or Postgrad	61%	Midwest	56%	Educ: < College	51%
		Middle Income \$35K- \$75K	56%	District School Parent	50%
High Income: \$75K+	60%	Suburban	55%	Low Income < \$35K	49%
Urban	60%	Republican	54%	Independent	47%
9-12 Parents	58%	K-8 Parents	53%	Rural	45%

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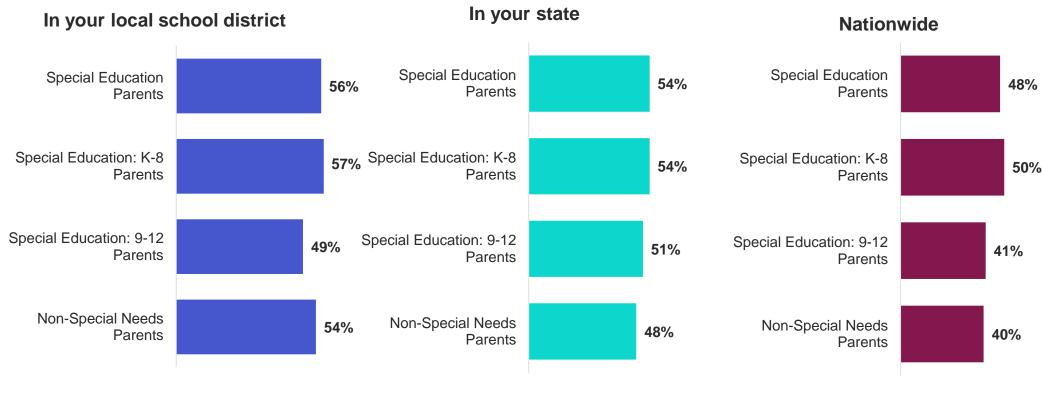
SURVEY PROFILE AND DEMOGRAPHICS



Special education parents – especially those with younger children – are more likely to believe K-12 education is heading in the right direction than other school parents.

Do you feel things in K-12 Education are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

% Right Direction

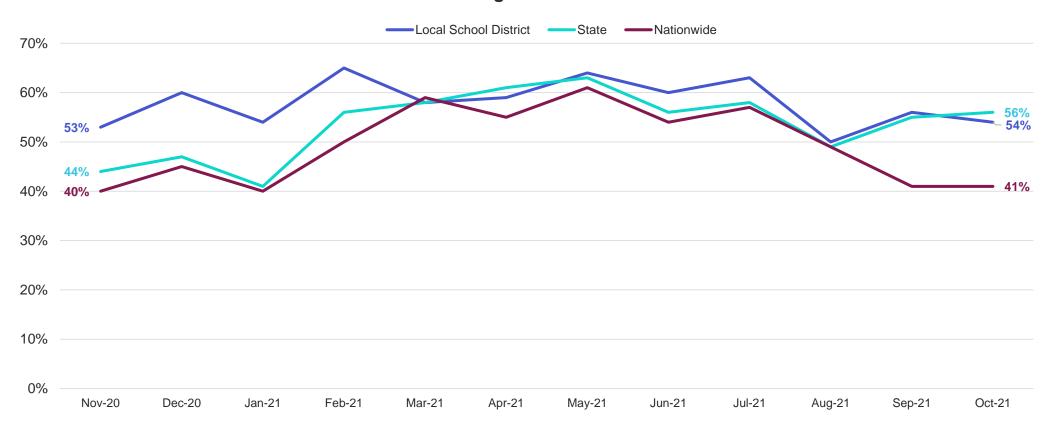


Special education parents' optimism for K-12 education appears to have elevated and stabilized by start of Spring 2021. But those positive views began to decrease again at the start of the current school year.

Do you feel things in K-12 Education are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things have generally gotten off on the wrong track?

Special Education Parents

% Right Direction



About half of special education parents prioritize independent thinking and academics for school. High school parents are most likely to value work skills. Special education parents are more likely to prioritize fixing social problems than other parents or the public.

What do you believe should be the main purpose of education during Kindergarten through 8th grade/High School? In your opinion, how important is it for students to learn...

Special Education Parents

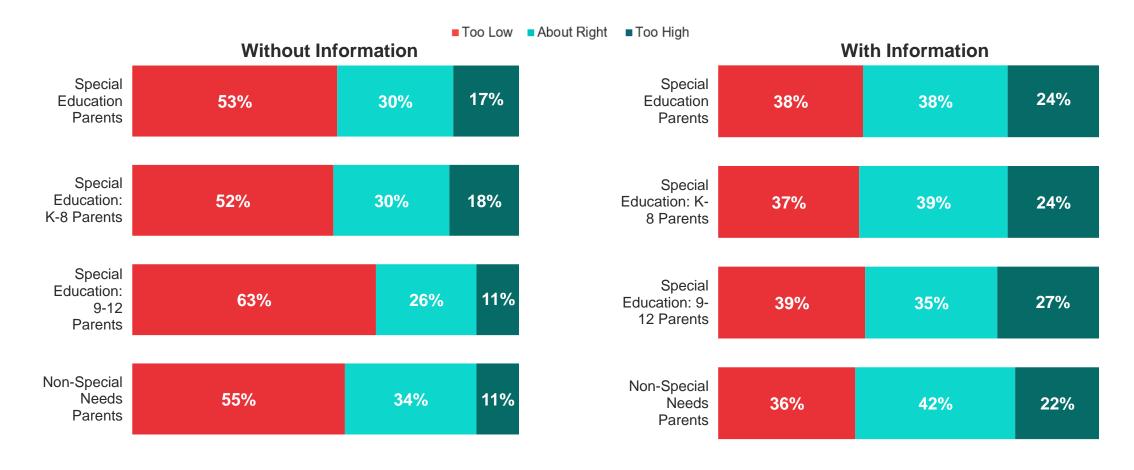
% Extremely Important

Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Average % selected Extremely Important 46%	Average % selected Extremely Important 50%
-`□́- Become independent thinkers (51%)	Skills for future employment (59%)
Core academic subjects (50%)	Core academic subjects (54%)
Socialization (49%)	- Decome independent thinkers (53%)
Skills for future employment (48%)	Socialization (52%) +6 vs All Adults +8 vs Non-Special Needs Parents
How to be good citizens (45%)	How to be good citizens (49%)
Values, moral character, religious virtues (42%)	Values, moral character, religious virtues (44%)
To fix social problems (36%) +12 vs All Adults +6 vs Non-Special Needs Parents	To fix social problems (38%) +9 vs All Adults +8 vs Non-Special Needs Parents

When given a publicly reported statistic, special education parents – especially those of older children – are less likely to say their state's per-student spending is "too low."

Do you believe public school funding in [STATE] is:

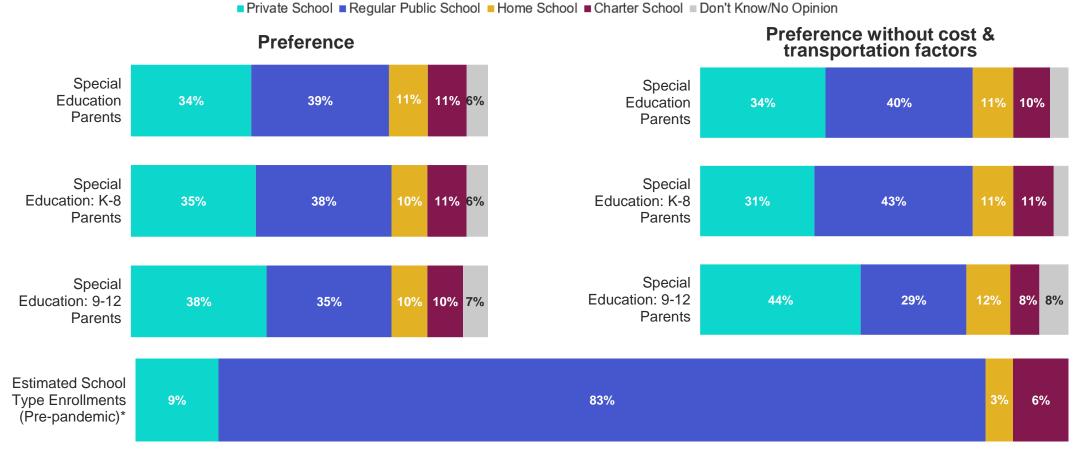
On average, [STATE] spends \$____ per student attending public school each year. Do you believe public school funding is:



Actual enrollment patterns do not reflect the diversity of schooling preferences among special education parents.

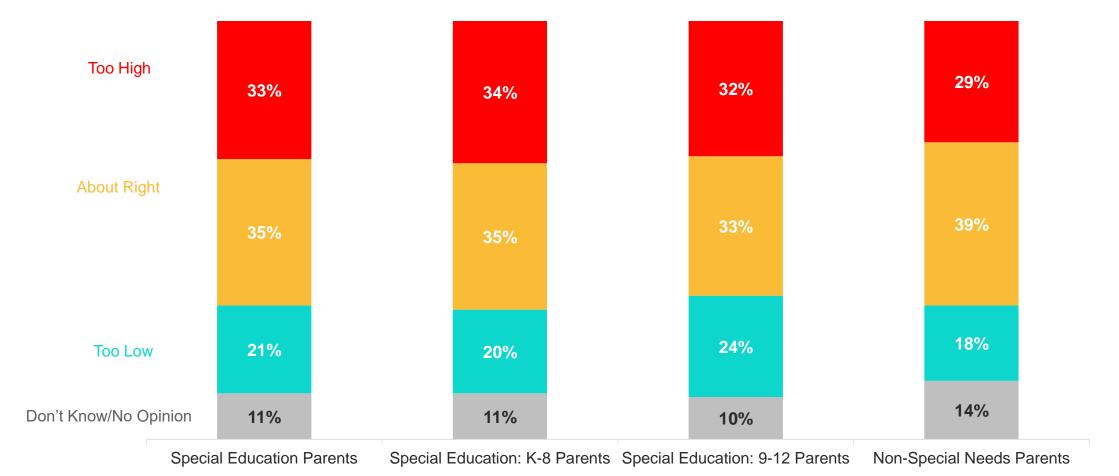
If given the option, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

If given the option, and neither financial costs nor transportation were factors, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?



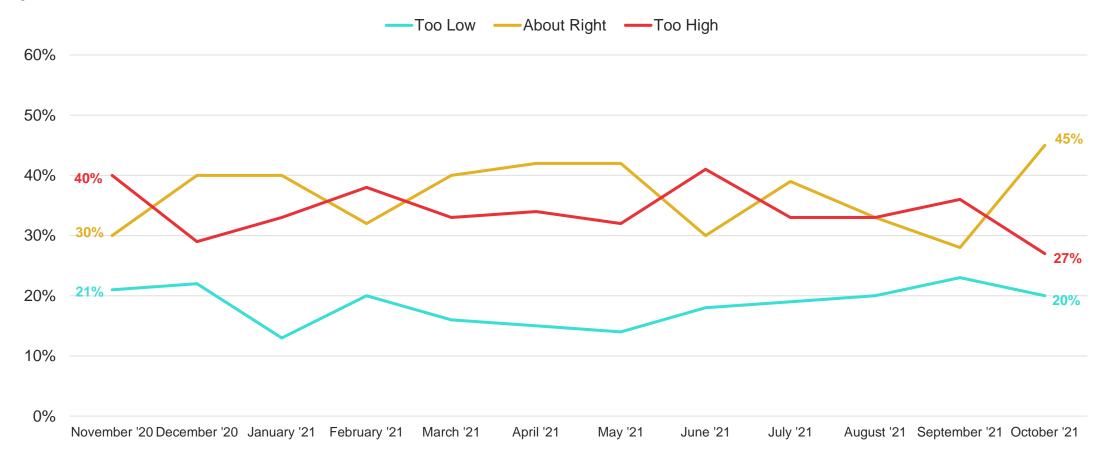
Both special education and non-special needs parents have similar mixed views when it comes to standardized testing in American schools.

All public schools and most private schools give their students standardized tests during the school year. When thinking about students preparing for and taking these tests, in general, do you believe the amount of time spent on standardized testing in American schools is:



Despite shifts among special education parents believing the amount of standardized testing is either 'about right' or 'too high', they are consistently less likely to say time spent is 'too low.'

All public schools and most private schools give their students standardized tests during the school year. When thinking about students preparing for and taking these tests, in general, do you believe the amount of time spent on standardized testing in American schools is:



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Descriptions Used:

Charter Schools

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

School Vouchers

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

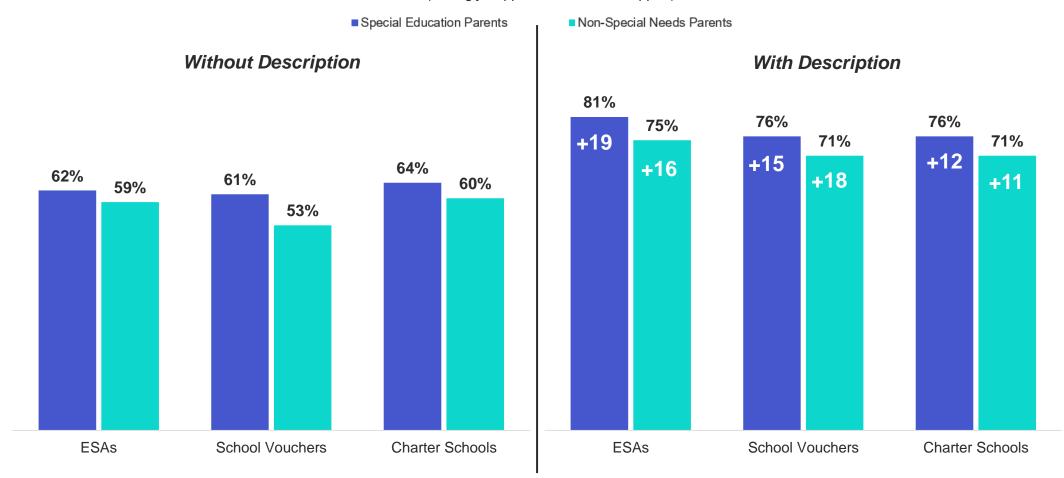
Education Savings Accounts

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

All school choice policies see a lift in support among both special education parents and non-special needs parents when a description is provided.

Total Support

(Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)



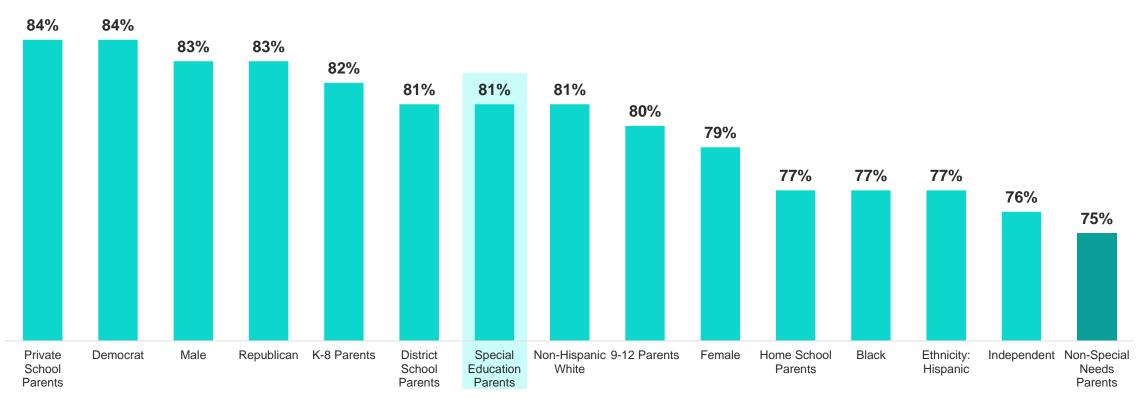
Roughly four out of five special education parents say they support ESAs. There is a wide range of support among all demographics within that group.

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

Special Education Parents

Total Support

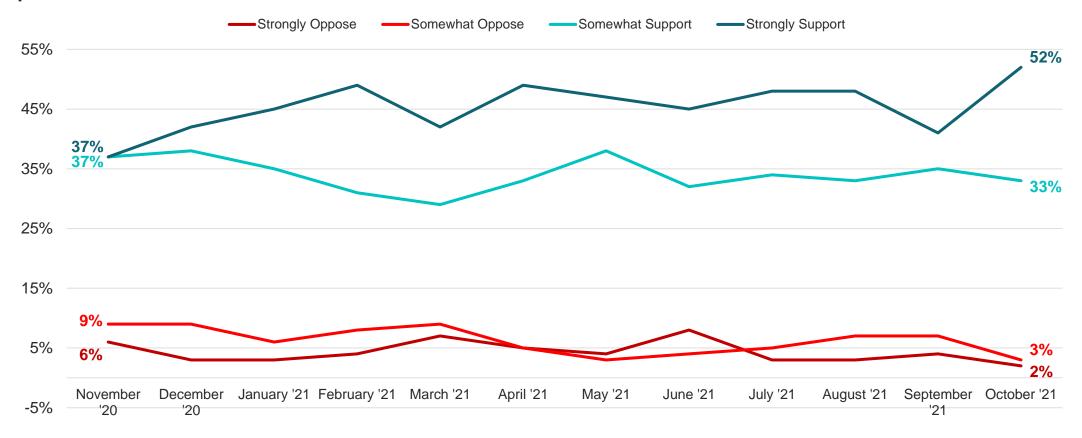
(Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)



Among special education parents, strong support for ESAs has grown by 15 percentage points over the past year.

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

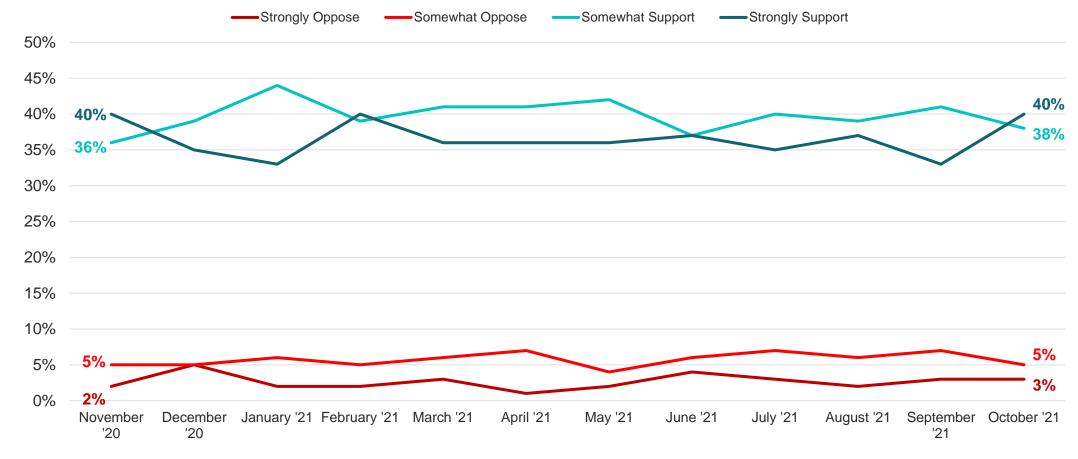
Special Education Parents



Among non-special needs parents, overall and strong support are at roughly the same levels as one year ago

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

Non-Special Needs Parents



Note: Don't know/no opinion responses are not shown.

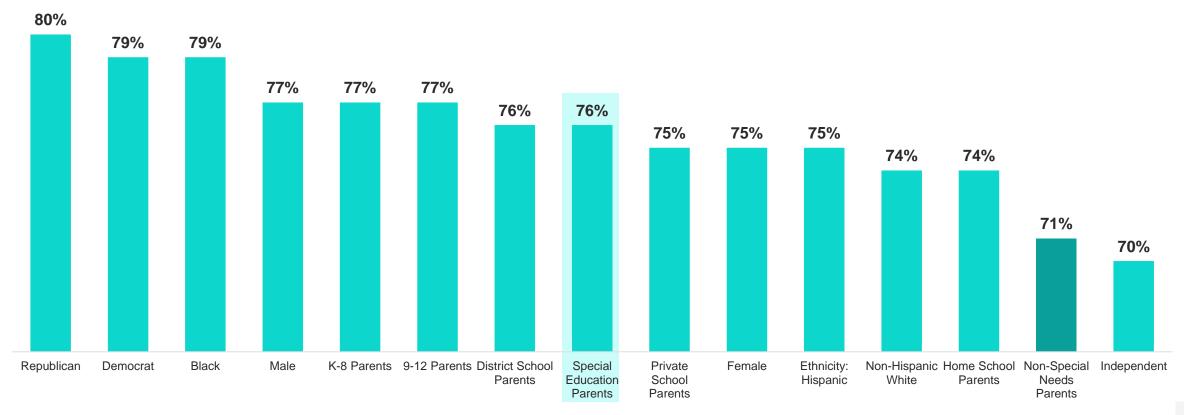
Just over three-fourths of special education parents say they support school vouchers. There is broad support across all demographics.

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

Special Education Parents

Total Support

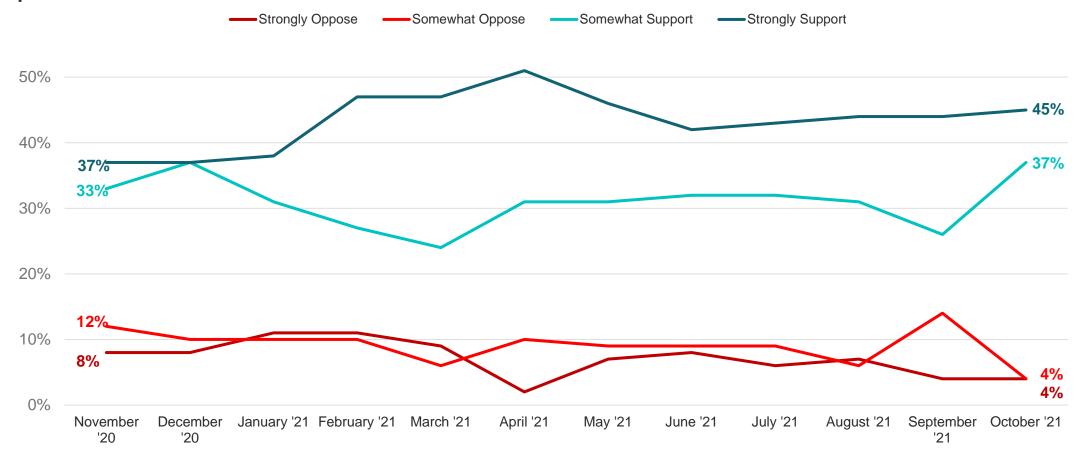
(Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)



Special education parents' strong support for school vouchers peaked in the Spring of 2021. That level has remained high throughout the Summer and Fall months.

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

Special Education Parents



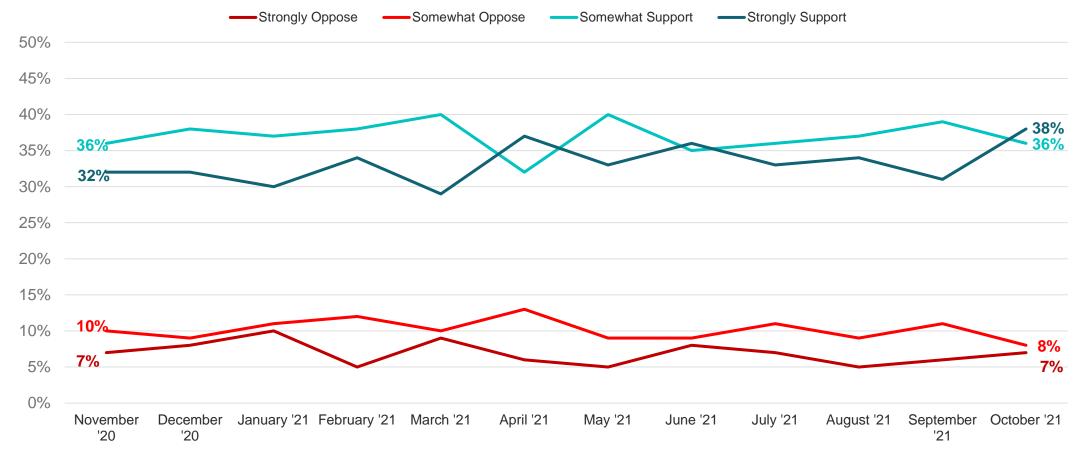
Note: Don't know/no opinion responses are not shown.

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Among non-special needs parents, strong support for school vouchers was at its highest level in October.

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

Non-Special Needs Parents



Just over three-fourths of special education parents say they support public charter schools. There continues to be widespread support across demographics.

Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, what is your opinion of public charter schools?

Special Education Parents

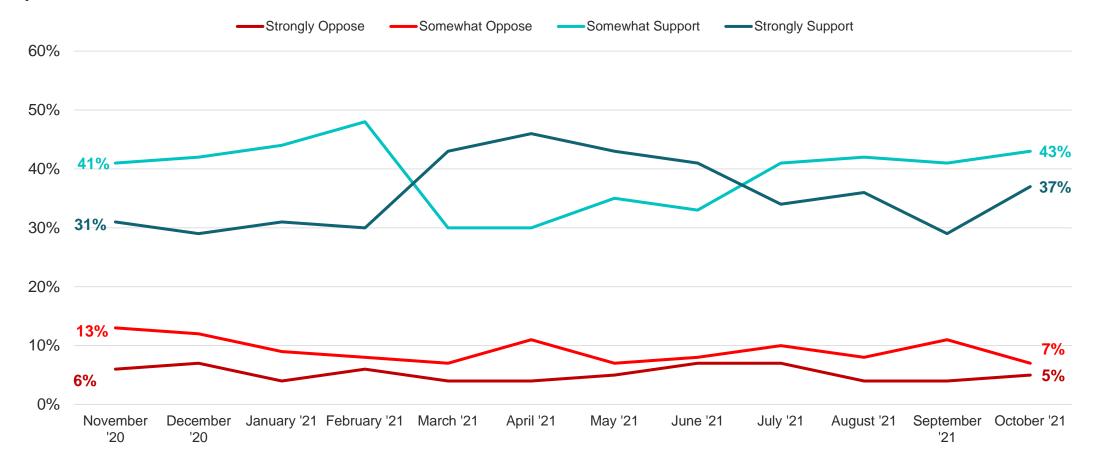
Total Support(Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)

81% 79% 78% 77% 76% 76% 76% 76% 76% **75%** 72% 71% 71% 68% 68% 9-12 Parents Non-Hispanic Republican Male Private K-8 Parents District School Special Independent Female Non-Special Home School Black Democrat Ethnicity: White School **Parents** Education Hispanic Needs Parents Parents **Parents** Parents

Special education parents' overall support of charter schools far outweighs the opposition.

Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, what is your opinion of public charter schools?

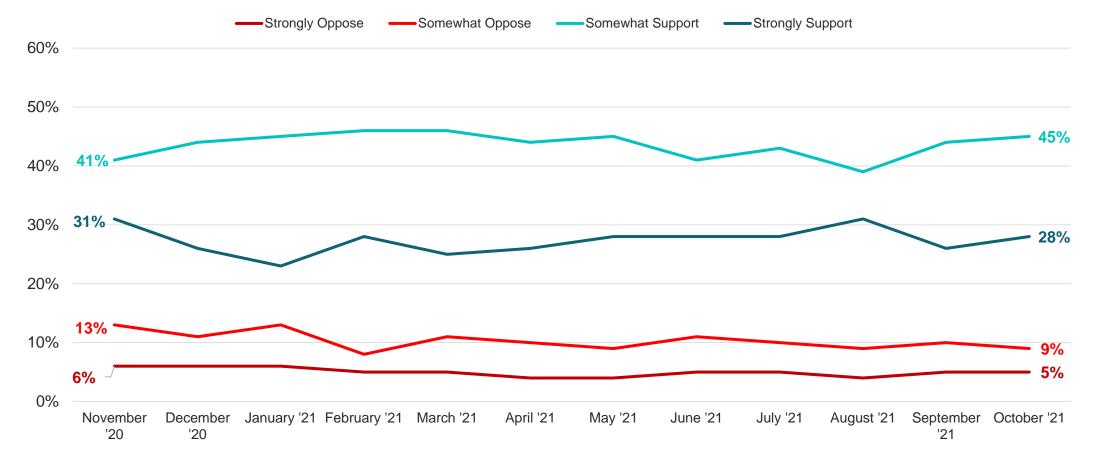
Special Education Parents



Among non-special needs parents, overall support for charter schools has been relatively stable over the past year.

Charter schools are public schools that have more control over their own budget, staff, and curriculum, and are exempt from many existing public school regulations. In general, what is your opinion of public charter schools?

Non-Special Needs Parents



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Survey Profile, 1

Dates July 14 – October 16, 2021

Survey Data Collection

& Quality Control Morning Consult

Survey Sponsor EdChoice

Population Special Education Parents

Sampling Frame National sample of adults (age 18+) living in the United States,

including the District of Columbia, with an oversample of school

parents

Sampling Method Non-Probability, Stratified (based on Age, Gender)

Mode Online Survey

Language English

Survey Profile, 2

Survey Time Special Education Parents Median = 12.75 minutes, Non-Special

Needs Parents Median = 13.00 minutes

Sample Size N = 1,007 Special Education Parents

N= 3,648 Non-Special Needs Parents

Quotas Age, Gender

Weighting Age, Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Education, Census Region

Measure of Precision

(adjusted for weighting) ± 3.98 percentage points (Special Education Parents), ± 2.12

percentage points (Non-Special Needs Parents)

Participation Rate 14.71% (July 2021 School Parents), 11.25% (August 2021 School

Parents), 15.31% (September 2021 School Parents), 20.03%

(October 2021 School Parents)

Methods Page https://edchoice.morningconsultintelligence.com/methodology/

Project Contact Paul DiPerna, paul@edchoice.org

Based on Special Education Parents Sample

Demographics	Unweighted (N =)
Hispanic	140
Non-Hispanic White	701
Black	132
Other	51
Urban	308
Suburban	390
Small Town	103
Rural	206
Male	270
Female	737
Northeast	173
Midwest	233
South	476
West	125

Demographics	Unweighted (N =)
Special Education Parents	1007
Special Education: K-8 Parents	859
Special Education: 9-12 Parents	350
*Non-Special Needs Parents	3648
2021-22: Charter School	70
2021-22: Home School	120
2021-22: Private School	112
2021-22: District School	793
Democrat	392
Independent	286
Republican	277
Low Income <\$35K	398
Middle Income \$35K to <\$75K	369
High Income \$75K+	240
< College	685
College +	322

Unweighted Sample Sizes Per Month

Demographics	Special Education Parents	Non-Special Needs Parents	
November 2020	309	891	
December 2020	329	923	
January 2021	232	883	
February 2021	228	836	
March 2021	254	882	
April 2021	277	816	
May 2021	277	849	
June 2021	296	900	
July 2021	275	924	
August 2021	305	920	
September 2021	220	938	
October 2021	207	866	

Special Education Parents Sample, Adjustments by Weighting

Demographics	Unweighted	Weighted	Target (%)
Hispanic	13%	22%	22%
White	78%	72%	72%
Non-Hispanic	87%	78%	78%
Black	12%	11%	11%
Other	10%	16%	16%
Age: 18-34	14%	18%	18%
Age: 35-44	60%	44%	44%
Age: 45-54	24%	31%	31%
Age: 65+	2%	6%	6%
Male	28%	46%	46%
Female	72%	54%	54%
High School or less	27%	33%	33%
Some College +	73%	67%	67%
Northeast	15%	17%	17%
Midwest	23%	22%	22%
South	48%	38%	38%
West	14%	24%	24%

^{*}Weighting is based on the 2018 American Community Survey among total school parents:



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