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Hispanic and Latino Parents, K-12 Education, and School Choice, September 2022 Survey Data

Selected questions and aggregate responses from Conoce tus Opciones Escolares’ September 2-3, 2022, survey of 1,228 self-identified Hispanic parents in the U.S.

Conoce tus Opciones Escolares (“Conoce”) surveyed Hispanic and Latino parents of school-aged children, in Spanish and in English, to explore these parents’ perceptions of K-12 education and their experiences, if any, exercising school choice options for their children.

Conoce is a charitable program of the National School Choice Awareness Foundation (NSCAF), a 501(c)(3) organization. The mission of NSCAF is to improve K-12 education in the U.S. and support the success of America’s students by raising equal awareness of the traditional public, public charter, public magnet, private, online, and home education options available to families. On an annual basis, NSCAF and its related charitable programs conduct public opinion surveys to determine parents’ interest in, and awareness of, K-12 school choice.

For more information, visit opcionesescolares.com or schoolchoiceawareness.org.

METHODOLOGY

This survey was delivered to Survey Monkey’s National Audience panel between September 2-3, 2022. This panel consists of millions of respondents who opt in to receive and complete online surveys. This survey’s respondents included 1,228 25- to 45-year-old parents of school-aged children (defined as children between ages 5 and 18 years old) who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino. To prevent biasing any responses, the survey did not reference Conoce, National School Choice Awareness Foundation, or National School Choice Week. The survey’s margin of error is +/- 3.1%.

Throughout the question summaries below, two groups of those surveyed are represented: one universal data set – all Hispanic or Latino parents surveyed – and a subset of that group, who are referred to as “School Searchers.” School Searchers are parents who indicated that they have considered within the last year, or are currently considering, finding a new or different school for a child in their household.

SUMMARY

Hispanic and Latino parents were more likely than their non-Hispanic and Latino peers to consider new schools for their children.

Amidst persistent achievement gaps and widespread pandemic-related disruptions to K-12 education, Hispanic and Latino parents in the U.S. were more likely than their non-Hispanic and Latino peers to exercise the school choice options available for their children. According to our survey, 59% of Hispanic and Latino parents considered finding a new or different school for at least one of the children in their household within the past twelve months. Comparatively, a January 2022 NSCAF survey included the same question, and 52% of all parents, including Hispanic and non-Hispanic respondents, had been or were considering new schools.

In exercising their school choice options, Hispanic and Latino parents were interested in a broad range of school types, including traditional public schools.

Debates over K-12 school choice policy too often reduce school choice to a simple proposition: public vs. private. In reality, the landscape of education options is much more diverse. According to our survey, Hispanic and Latino parents were willing to consider a variety of schooling options for their children. Specifically, 34% said they did or might choose a traditional public school in another school district, 35% expressed an interest in homeschooling, 30% would consider full-time online schooling or charter schools, 24% expressed interest in private schools, and 21% would consider magnet schools. The option with the broadest appeal was traditional public schools in the respondents' districts; 66% of parents expressed interest in their local district schools.

Despite strong interest in and demand for school choice, Hispanic and Latino parents wanted additional resources to help them navigate their options.

Over the past three decades, states have significantly expanded K-12 school choice options for families. In just the past two years, more than half of U.S. states have taken steps to enhance access to education options. According to our survey, 75% of Hispanic and Latino parents were familiar with the term, "school choice." However, one in five parents (20%) remained unsure of their options, and 16% indicated that they did not have options. Among "school searchers," 23% described the process of finding a new or different school for their children as "challenging," and 39% wanted more Spanish-language information about school choice.

INSIGHTS: Parent Experiences with K-12 Education and School Choice

Three quarters of Hispanic and Latino parents were familiar with the concept of “school choice,” but one in five were unsure what options were available.

- Three-quarters of parents (75%) had at least some familiarity with the term “school choice,” and more than one in five (21%) were extremely familiar.
- One in five parents (21%) were unsure of whether parents in their state had the option to choose a school other than the one to which their children had been assigned.

More than half of Hispanic and Latino parents searched for a new or different school for at least one of the children in their household within the past twelve months.

- Nearly three in five parents (59%) actively considered a different schooling option for at least one of their children in the past twelve months.
- Nearly one in four parents (24%) transferred one of their children to a new or different school within the past year, while 11% are still considering a switch.

Hispanic and Latino parents were more likely than their non-Hispanic peers to exercise their school choice options in advance of the 2023-2024 school year.

- Nearly half of parents (45%) were likely to consider a new or different school for their children for the 2023-2024 school year.
- Comparatively, 28% of all U.S. parents were likely to consider a new or different school for their children for the 2023-24 school year, according to NSCAF’s January 2022 survey.

Despite strong awareness of and interest in school choice options, Hispanic parents still faced challenges in navigating their options.

- 23% of “School Searchers” described the process of finding a school as somewhat or very challenging.
- More than a third of “School Searchers” (39%) preferred more Spanish-language information about school choice.

“Hispanic and Latino parents are smart, resilient, and focused on ensuring that their children have every opportunity to succeed and achieve. But parents still have many questions about how they can choose the right schools and learning environments for their children. Language should never be a barrier for parents to know and navigate their school choice options.”

Krissia Campos Spivey, director, [Conoce tus Opciones Escolares](#)

INSIGHTS: Aspirations for K-12 Education

Hispanic and Latino parents were primarily motivated to exercise their school choice options because they want higher quality academics and safer learning environments.

- While curriculum controversies have made national headlines, only one in five parents (24%) ranked curriculum as a main reason for exploring other schooling options.
- Comparatively, 56% of parents were motivated to search for new schools because of a desire for higher quality education, 49% had concerns over school safety and bullying, and 49% were motivated by the effects of the pandemic on their children's education.

When evaluating prospective schools for their children, Hispanic and Latino parents valued environments that prepare students with real-life skills.

- 72% of parents sought schools that “prepare students to succeed in the real world” and 59% prioritized schools with highly trained teachers.
- Less than 20% of respondents prioritized bilingual classes, after-school care, or flexible schedules as among their most important factors when choosing a school.

Hispanic and Latino parents expressed strong interest in traditional public school options, both in and outside of their school districts.

- When asked to select all the school options they would consider, the highest percentage of parents indicated traditional public schools in their district (66%).
- 34% of parents said they did or might choose a traditional public school in another school district, indicating a strong interest in public school open enrollment options.
- At least one in five respondents also selected each of the other main types of school choice options: Homeschooling; private schools; full-time online schools; public magnet schools; and public charter schools.

When asked to describe why education is important to their families, Hispanic and Latino parents said that greater educational opportunity meant greater life opportunities. In the words of our respondents, K-12 education is important to their families because:

“It gives my children a narrow path to escape poverty.”

“Education is the gateway to all things.”

“With education, many doors open, and it is easier to find a good job and thus have a happier, more comfortable life.”

“Strive to succeed with a good education.”

“Because through education you can live a better life.”

“It's the best heritage you can give your child.”

“When my family fled Cuba, they lost everything to communism. The only thing they took with them was their education and it allowed them to accomplish their dreams here in the US.”

“Because having an education opens up tons of opportunities to do whatever you want with your life.”

“Education is the great divide in which those with it lead more wholesome and reduced stress quality of life, and those without tend to live a limited and labor-intensive lifestyle with stress and illness that can greatly reduce lifespan and mental wellness.”

“The United States is a country of opportunities, to which many come to fulfill the famous ‘American dream.’ This is not just an abstract and romantic idea. All children are capable of fulfilling their dreams, and the Hispanic community knows that the right educational choices empower our children to learn, thrive, succeed, and be happy.”

Krissia Campos Spivey, director, Conoce tus Opciones Escolares

SELECTED QUESTION SUMMARIES: Experiences

How familiar are you with the term “school choice”?

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Familiar, very	20.82%	25.13%
Familiar, somewhat or slightly	54.64%	55.95%
Not familiar	24.54%	18.93%
TOTAL FAMILIAR	75.46%	81.08%

Do parents or guardians in your state have the option of choosing a school other than the one to which their children have been assigned?

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Yes	63.11%	68.62%
Unsure	20.65%	18.29%
No	16.24%	13.09%

At any point in the past year, did you consider finding a new or different school for any of the children in your household? (n=1,062)

Yes, and I chose a new or different school	24.36%
Yes, but I ultimately did not choose a new/different school	23.30%
Yes, I am currently considering it	11.37%
No, I have not considered it	40.97%
TOTAL YES	59.03%

Within the next 12 months, how likely is it that you will look for a new or different school for any of your children for the 2023-24 school year?

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Very likely	18.51%	27.65%
Likely	12.98%	19.54%
Somewhat likely	13.76%	17.05%
Not sure	15.41%	15.73%
Somewhat unlikely	5.43%	4.97%
Unlikely	14.44%	8.94%
Very unlikely	19.48%	6.13%
TOTAL LIKELY	45.25%	64.24%
TOTAL UNLIKELY	39.35%	20.04%

How would you describe the process of finding a school for your child?

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Very easy	45.36%	40.10%
Somewhat easy and straightforward	35.98%	37.18%
Challenging but doable	16.08%	18.99%
Very challenging and difficult	2.58%	3.73%
TOTAL EASY	81.34%	77.28%
TOTAL CHALLENGING	18.66%	22.72%

How would you describe the process of registering and/or enrolling your child in his/her school?

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Very easy	39.37%	34.15%
Somewhat easy and straightforward	44.06%	45.69%
Challenging but doable	14.56%	17.07%
Very challenging and difficult	2.01%	3.09%
TOTAL EASY	84.43%	79.84%
TOTAL CHALLENGING	22.72%	20.16%

Do you want more information to be available in Spanish about school choice?

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Yes (Definitely or Probably)	29.85%	38.70%
Unsure	18.69%	17.76%
No (Definitely or Probably)	51.47%	43.55%

SELECTED QUESTION SUMMARIES: Aspirations

Generally speaking, what were the primary reasons you considered finding a new or different school for your child? Select up to three responses. (n=608)

	School Searchers
Wanted a higher quality education	55.76%
Concerns about school safety or bullying	49.18%
Pandemic or school's COVID-19 policies disrupted child's learning	48.68%
Child isn't or wasn't happy at school	34.87%
Concerns about how behavior was managed at child's school	28.45%
Wanted more of a say in curriculum or what child is/was learning	24.01%
Moved to a different community	23.03%
To choose child's first kindergarten, elementary, middle or high school	18.59%
To better address child's special education or health needs	18.26%
Other reasons	14.31%

What factors are, or were, the most important to you in evaluating whether a school is/was the right fit for your child? Select up to five responses.

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
school prepares students to succeed in the real world	72.27%	72.18%
school has highly trained, qualified teachers	58.95%	58.79%
school has a track record of academic success	49.78%	50.92%
school prioritizes the safety of students and teachers	51.31%	49.34%
school is affordable or free	48.47%	49.08%
school is close to my home	48.91%	47.51%
school works hard to reduce bullying	40.61%	42.26%
school encourages meaningful parent involvement	28.38%	27.56%
school provides career and technical education	28.38%	27.56%
school provides services i.e. free breakfast, counseling, after-school care	28.17%	25.46%
school celebrates diversity and inclusion	23.14%	24.15%
school has a flexible schedule	19.00%	19.95%
school provides free transportation	18.56%	17.32%
school offers bilingual classes or services to English language learners	17.90%	16.80%
school shares my religious or moral values	12.45%	13.39%

What types of schools or learning environments did you, or might you, choose for your child? Select all that apply.

	All Hispanic Parents	School Searchers
Traditional public school in your school district	66.45%	63.83%
Full time homeschooling	35.12%	38.83%
Traditional public school in a different school district	34.22%	34.31%
Full-time online school (not run by your school district)	30.24%	33.24%
Public charter school	30.46%	30.85%
Private or faith-based school	24.50%	25.53%
Theme-based public magnet school	20.75%	20.74%
Other	2.87%	2.93%