

## 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. 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. This is a slightly higher proportion than that of non-special needs parents.
- 2. 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.
- 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 have a wide range of schooling preferences, regardless of financial costs or transportation factors.
- 5. Special education parents continue to express very high levels of support for education savings accounts (ESAs), school vouchers, and charter schools. They are much more likely to support such policies than oppose them.
- 6. More than half of special education parents prioritize independent thinking and core academic subjects for both K-8 grades and for high school education.
- 7. Both special education parents and non-special needs parents have had similar levels of comfort with their child returning to school during the fall and winter months.
- 8. 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.

#### Methodology:

Unless otherwise noted, data and charts are based on surveys conducted between October 12, 2021 and January 16, 2022 among a sample of 998 Special Education Parents and 3,716 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 4.11 percentage points for special education parents and 2.14 percentage points for non-special needs parents.

AGENDA

## **COVID-19 AND SCHOOLING**

**VIEWS ON K-12 EDUCATION** 

SCHOOL CHOICE POLICIES

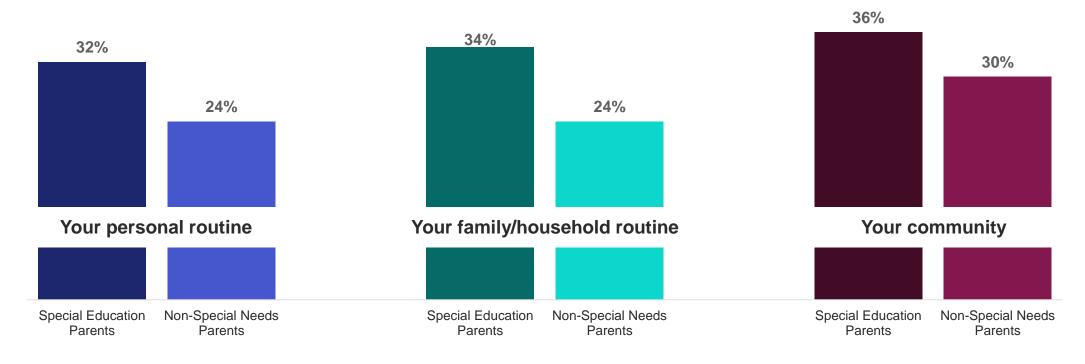
SURVEY PROFILE AND DEMOGRAPHICS



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.

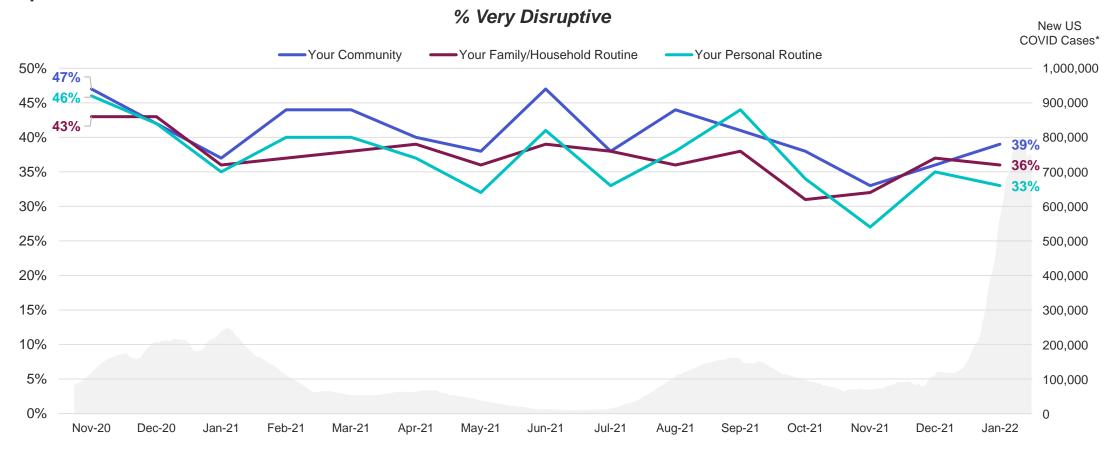
How disruptive has the coronavirus (also called COVID-19) been on each of the following?

### % Very Disruptive



Among special education parents, feelings of disruption have fluctuated over the course of the past year. However, levels remain similar to what they were about a year ago. Omicron appears to have increased disruptions.

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





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.

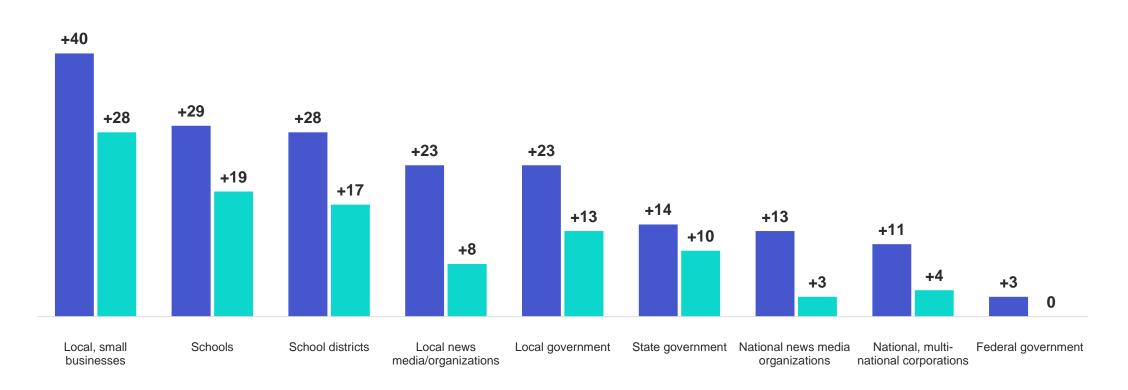
Based on what you have seen, read, or heard so far, how would you rate the following institutions on their response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?



(Excellent + Above Average) − (Below Average + Poor)

Special Education Parents

Non-Special Needs Parents



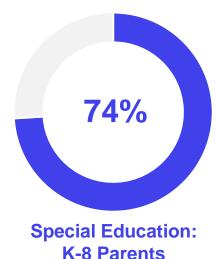
## Both special education and non-special needs parents show similar levels of comfort with their children returning to school during the fall and winter months.

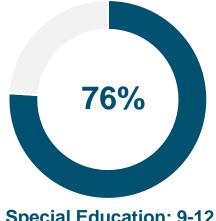
Based on what you have seen, read, or heard about the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak so far, how comfortable are you with your child/children attending school right now?\*

% Comfortable

(Very + Somewhat Comfortable)









**Special Education: 9-12 Parents** 

**Parents** 

Those who are comfortable with their children returning believe enough people have been vaccinated and that schools will take proper precautions. Those who are uncomfortable believe vaccination rates are low and precautions are not being taken.

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

#### Special Education Parents

#### **COMFORTABLE**

66

"I feel like he will be ok.
(The schools) are taking precautions and my child has all of his vaccinations."

66

"So (my children) can get back to feeling normal again. Also, extra precautions are in place for sanitizing and cleaning."

"Because there is still a good chance he can get COVID from school."

**UNCOMFORTABLE** 

"Because not everyone is vaccinated."

66

"They need in person education. The remote schooling last year was not beneficial."

66

"I think we are past the worst and kids need to be in school."

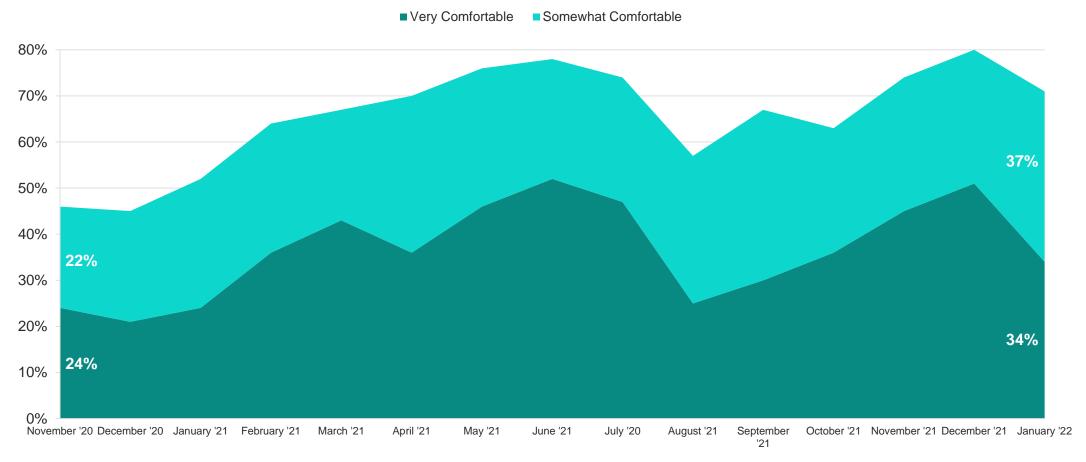
"My children's school is not doing much to prevent the spread of COVID. My children are vaccinated but the different variants makes me worried." 6

"It's just not safe for our children to be back in school."

# For special education parents, comfort with attending school began to dip once again in January – likely related to the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

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 attending school right now?\*

### Special Education Parents



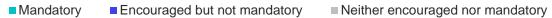


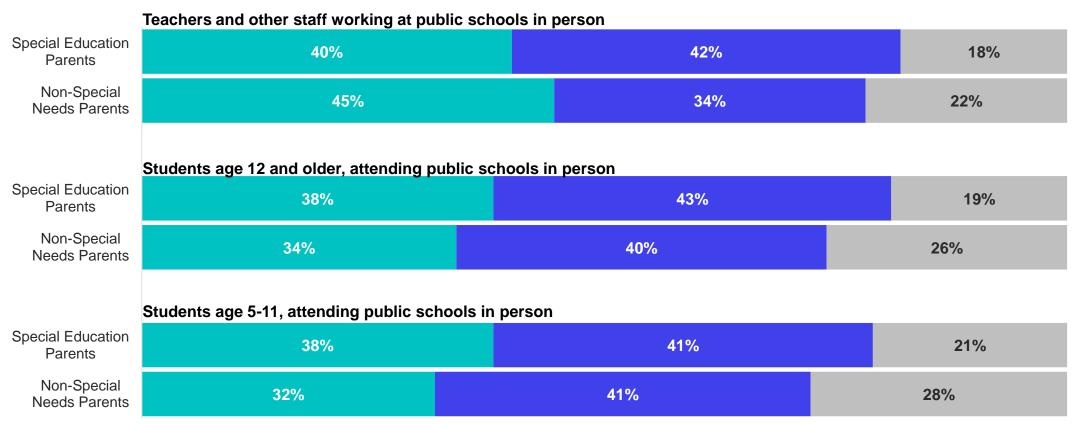


"attending school" in January 2022

# Less than half of special education parents indicated vaccines should be mandatory for both teachers and students, regardless of age.

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?

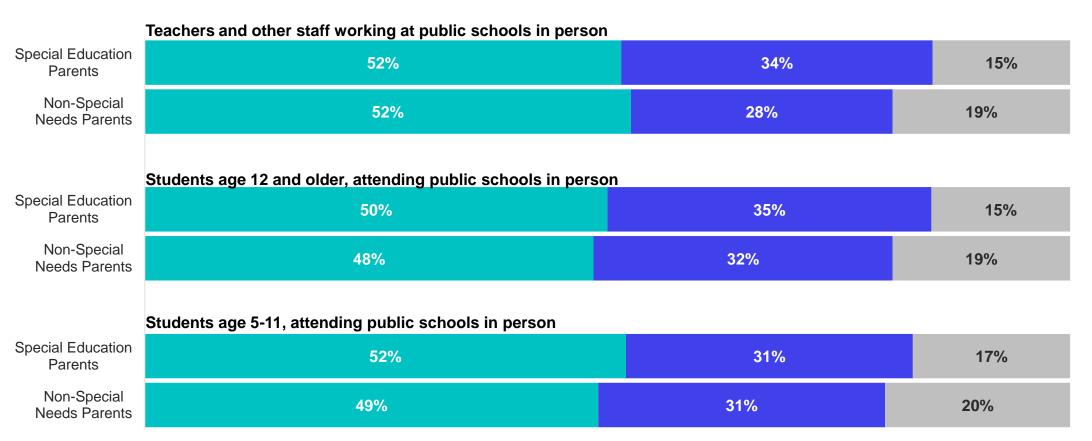




# Roughly half of both special education and non-special needs parents said they believe masking should be mandatory for teachers and students, regardless of age.

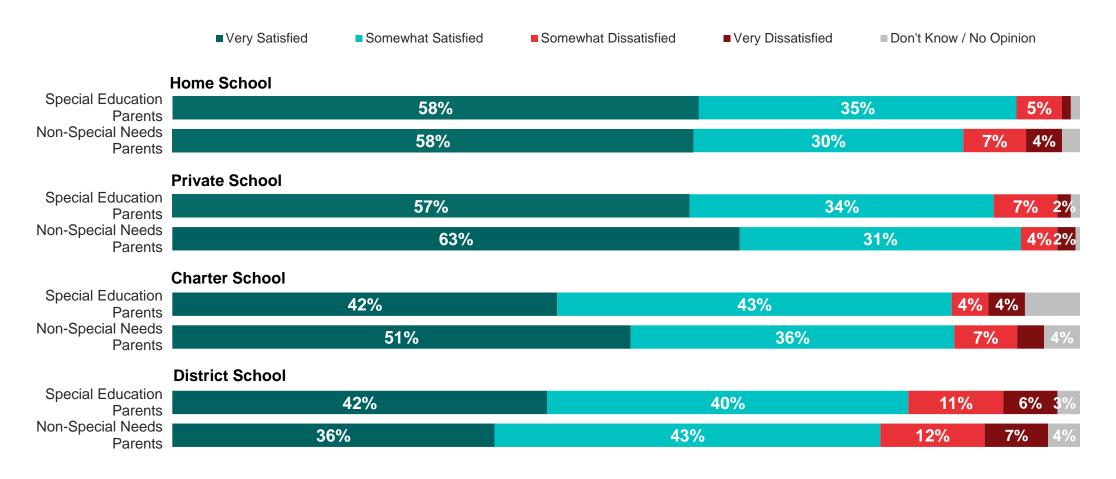
Do you think masking should be mandatory or encouraged for the following groups?





# 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?

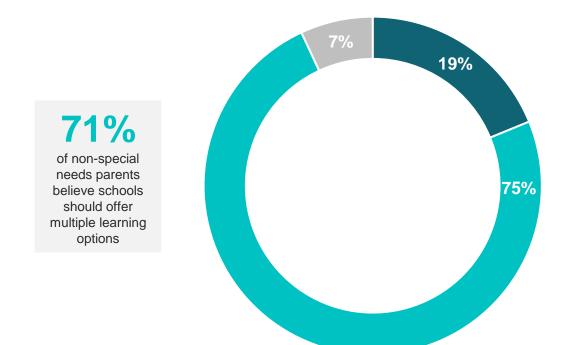


# Three out of four special education parents believe that schools should provide multiple learning options for students.

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

### Special Education Parents

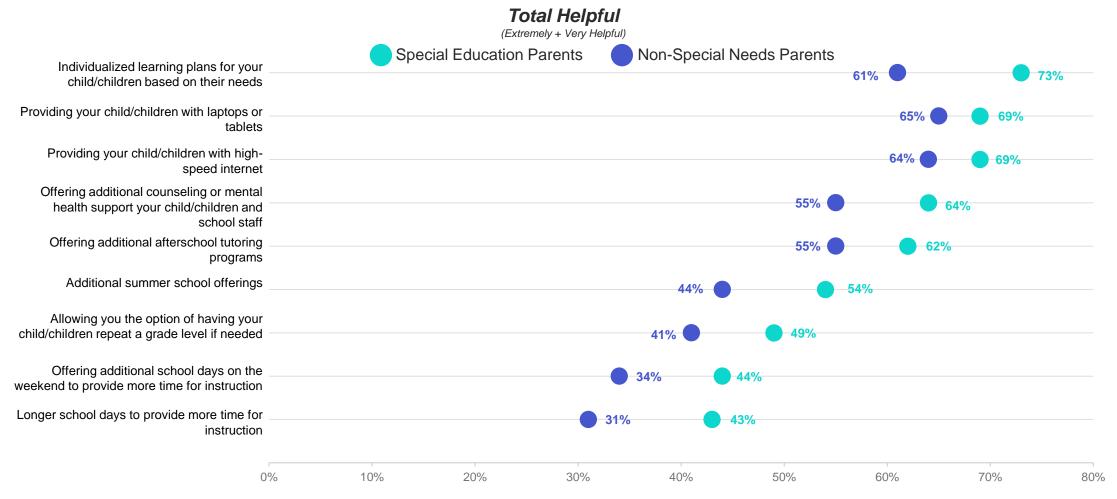
Offer One Approach
 Provide Multiple Learning Options
 Don't Know / No Opinion



	Desire for multiple learning option	าร
Income	Low Income < \$35K	73%
	Middle Income \$35K to < \$75K	75%
	High Income \$75K+	77%
Community Type	Urban	76%
mu Sype	Suburban	73%
Con	Small Town	75%
	Rural	76%
al on		
Political Affiliation	Democrat	74%
Pc	Independent	79%
	Republican	72%

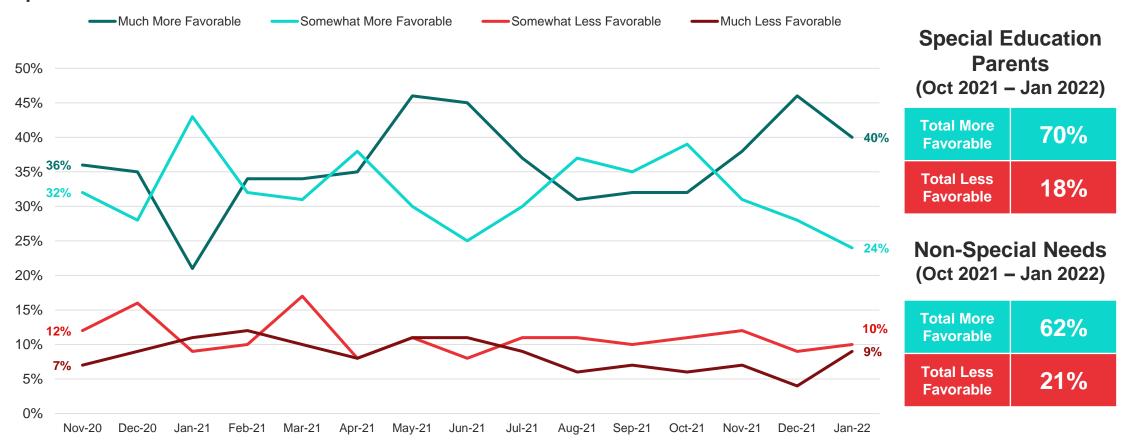
# Special education parents find more value in individualized learning plans, compared to other parents.

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



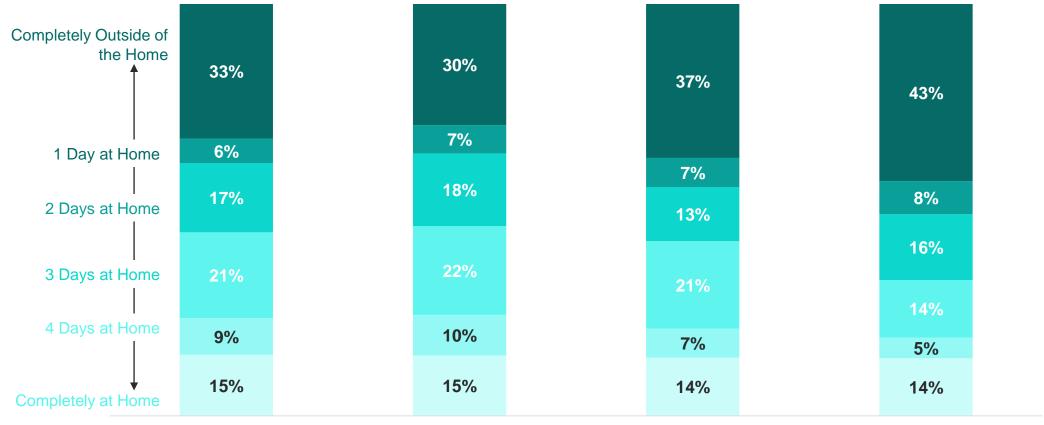
Throughout the pandemic, special education parents have maintained positive views of homeschooling. Strongly held favorable views have reached higher levels in late fall and winter.

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?



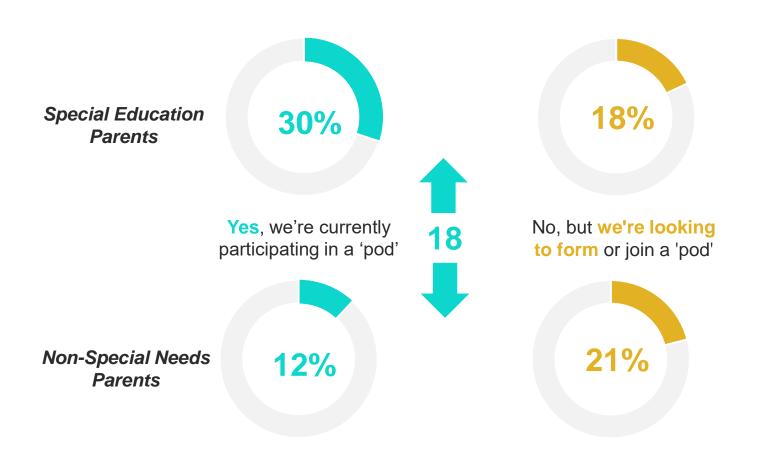
Special Education Parents

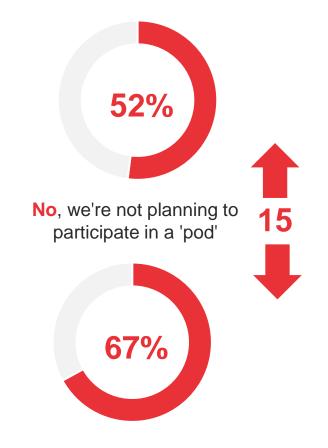
Special Education: K-8 Parents Special Education: 9-12 Parents

Non-Special Needs Parents

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

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





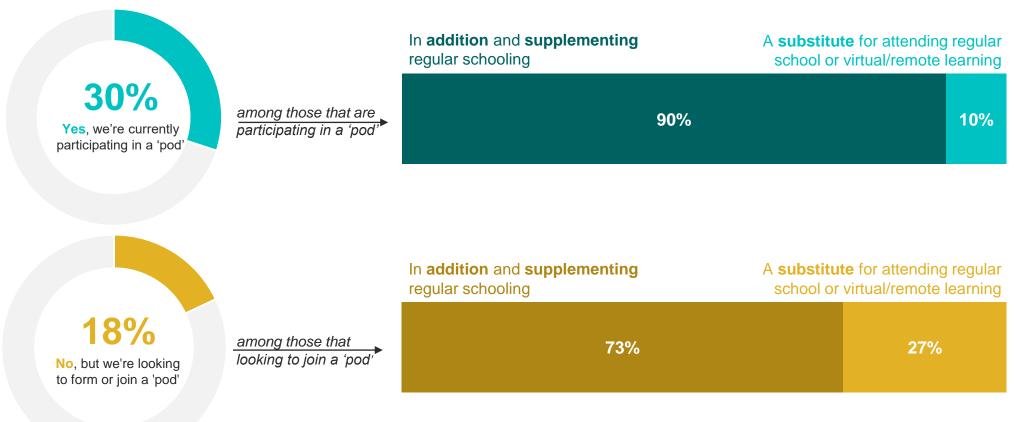
# Interest in learning pods varies widely across demographic groups within the special education parents population.

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

Most likely to particip form / join a poo		Moderately likely to par in / form / join a po	-	Less likely to pa form / join	•
Private School Parent	87%	West	57%	Educ: < College	39%
Home School Parent	69%	South	52%	Midwest	39%
Hispanic	69%	K-8 Parents	49%	District School Pare	ent <b>38%</b>
Urban	68%	Middle Income \$35K- \$75K	47%	Non-Hispanic White	e <b>38%</b>
High Income: \$75K+	65%	9-12 Parents	46%	Low Income < \$35h	32%
Democrat	<b>65</b> %	Suburban	44%	Independent	30%
Educ: Bachelors or Postgrad	64%	Northeast	43%	Rural	24%
Black	60%	Republican	40%	Small Town	24%

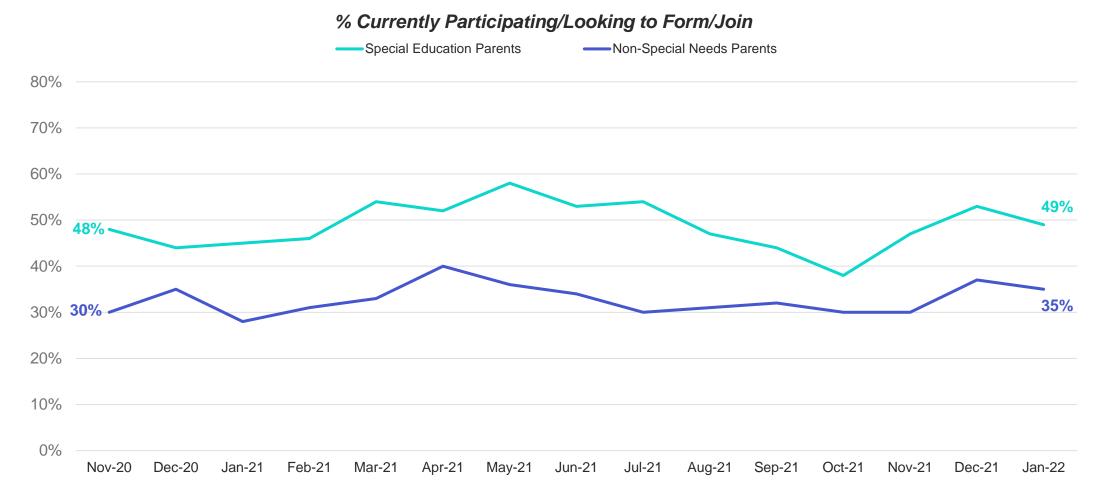
# 'Pods' are primarily used in addition to regular schooling and are less likely to be a substitute for regular school among special education parents.

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



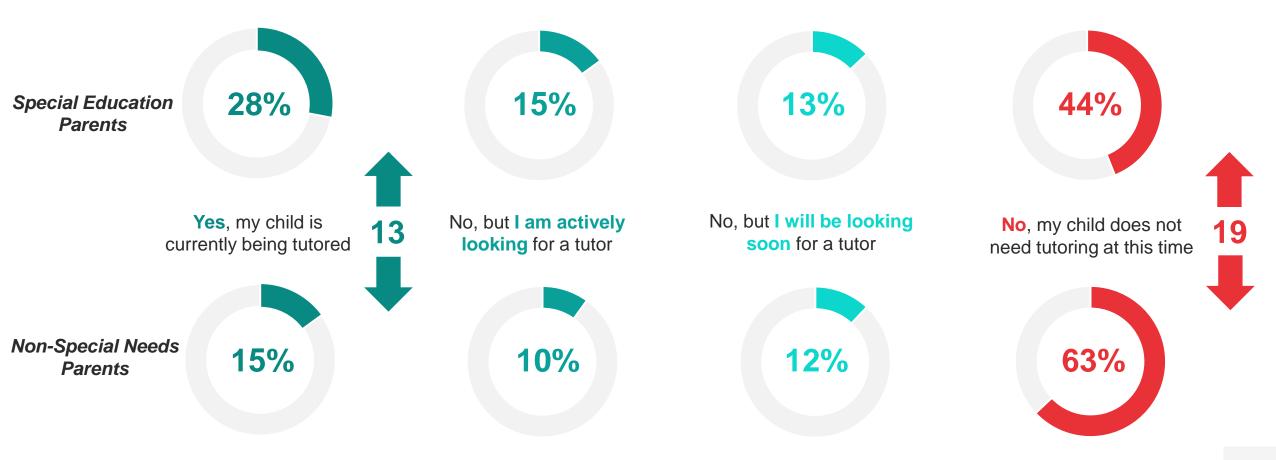
Special education parents have expressed more interest in learning pods, compared to other parents. Interest recently reached higher levels in late fall and winter.

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



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

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



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

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	
Private School Parent	84%	South	59%	Small Town	50%
Home School Parent	77%	K-8 Parents	58%	Educ: < College	47%
Educ: Bachelors or Postgrad	72%	Middle Income \$35K- \$75K	58%	Ç	
Urban	<b>72</b> %	9-12 Parents	56%	District School Parent	47%
Democrat	69%	5		Northeast	46%
High Income: \$75K+	66%	Republican	53%	Low Income < \$35K	44%
Hispanic	64%	Non-Hispanic White	52%	Low moonie < \$55K	4470
Black	64%	Midwest	51%	Independent	44%
West	64%	Suburban	51%	Rural	35%

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SCHOOL CHOICE POLICIES

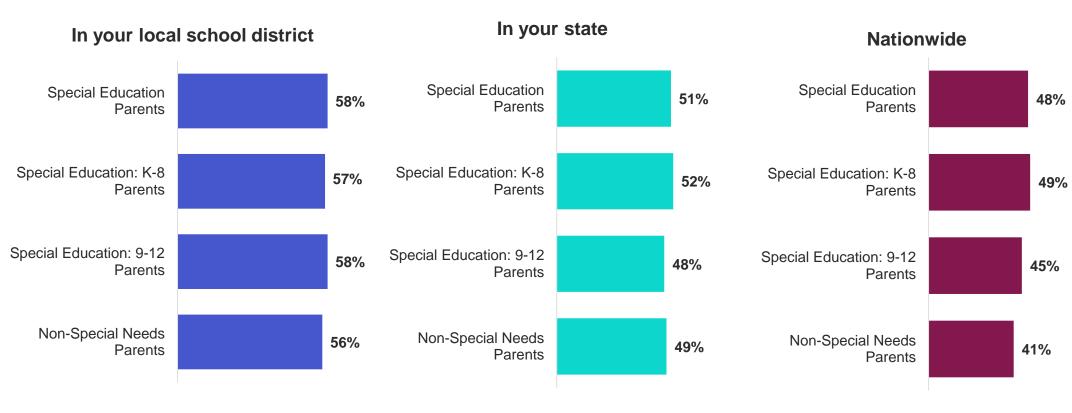
SURVEY PROFILE AND DEMOGRAPHICS



Special education parents – especially those with younger children – are more likely to believe K-12 education is heading in the right direction nationally, compared to 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

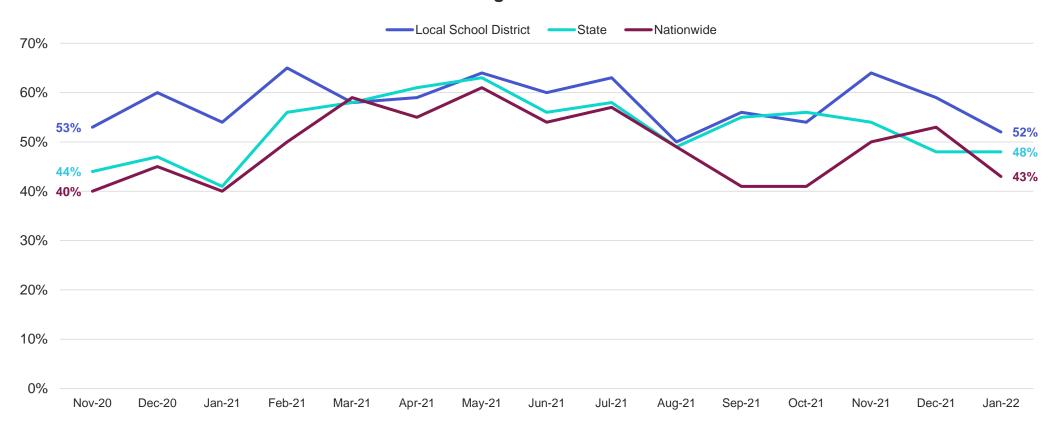


## Special education parents' optimism for K-12 education has decreased since the fall of 2021.

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



# More than half of special education parents prioritize independent thinking and core academic subjects for children in K-8 grades and high school.

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**

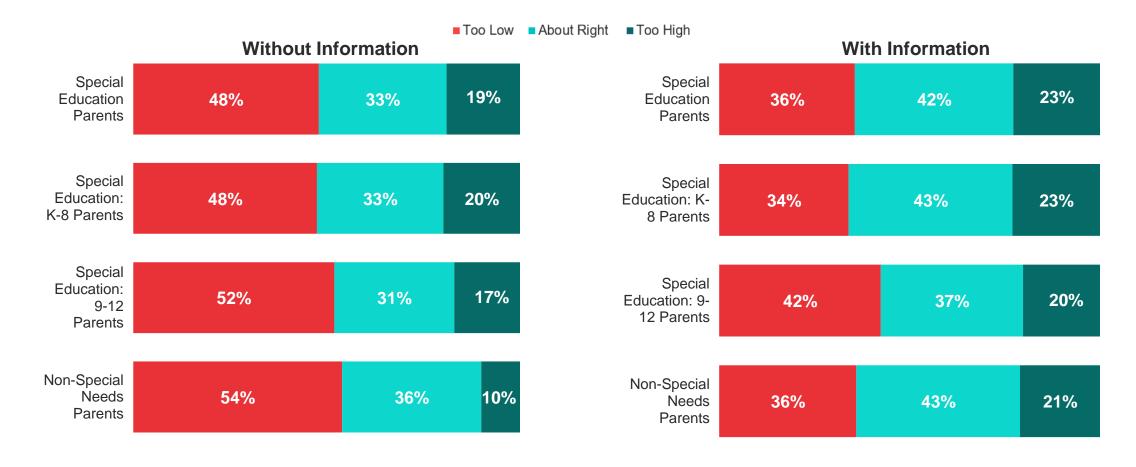
### % Extremely Important

Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Average % selected Extremely Important 46%	Average % selected Extremely Important 50%
-`ó- Become independent thinkers (53%) ← +7 vs All Adults	Skills for future employment (58%)   +6 vs All Adults
Core academic subjects (51%)	- Ġ- Become independent thinkers (57%) ← +9 vs All Adults
Socialization (51%)	Core academic subjects (55%)
How to be good citizens (49%)	Socialization (50%) +9 vs All Adults
Skills for future employment (46%)	How to be good citizens (50%) ← +6 vs All Adults
Values, moral character, religious virtues (44%)	Values, moral character, religious virtues (45%) ← +9 vs All Adults
To fix social problems (36%) ← +11 vs All Adults	To fix social problems (36%) ← +10 vs All Adults

# When given a publicly reported statistic, special education parents and other parents are less likely to say their state's per-student spending is "too low."

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

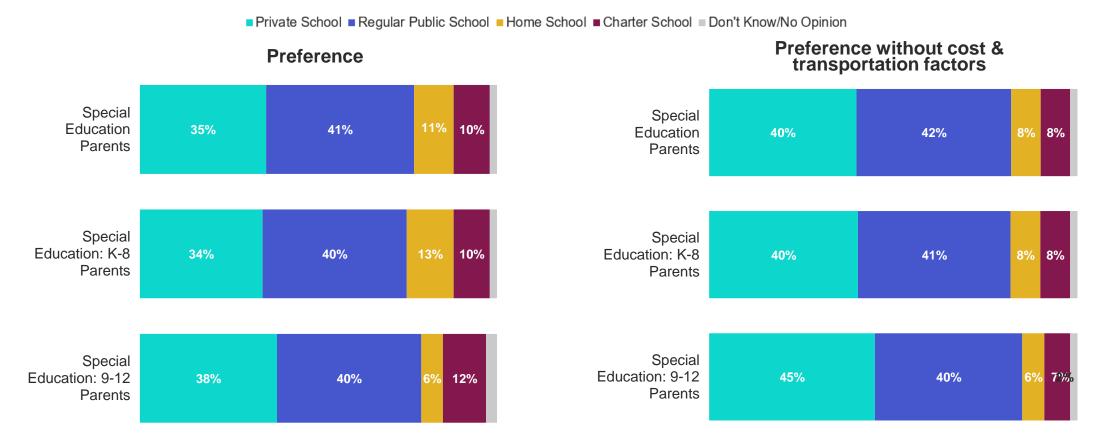
On average, [STATE] spends \$\_\_\_\_ per student attending public school each year. Do you believe public school funding is:



# Special education parents have a wide range of schooling preferences, regardless of financial costs or transportation factors.

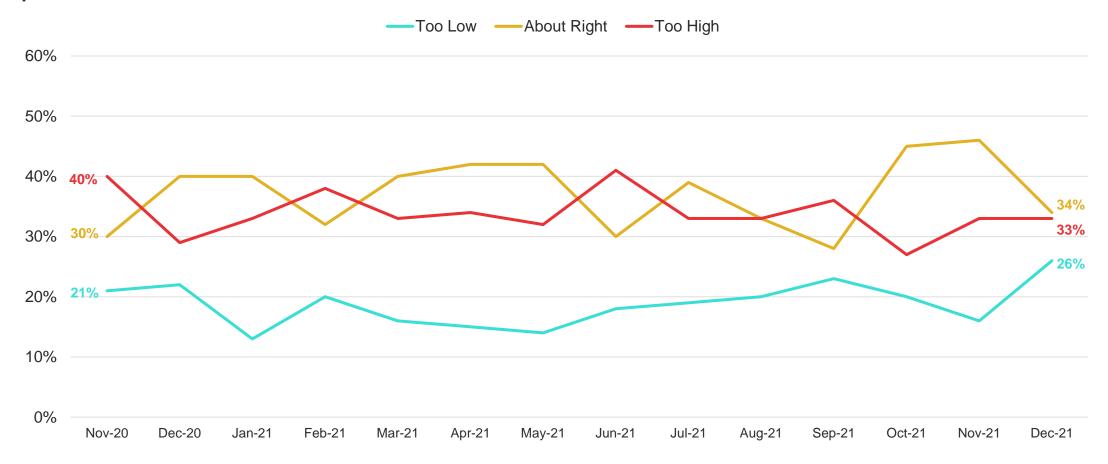
If given the option, what type of school would you select in order to obtain the best education for your child?

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?



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' although these has been an increase in recent months.

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:



AGENDA

## **COVID-19 AND SCHOOLING**

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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.

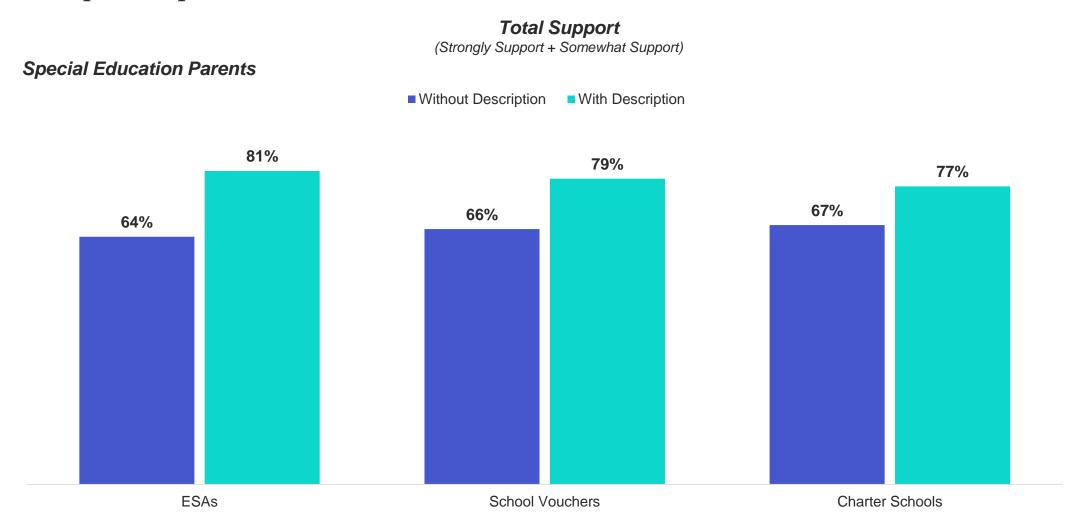
### **School Vouchers**

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 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.

All school choice policies see a lift in support among special education parents when a description is provided.



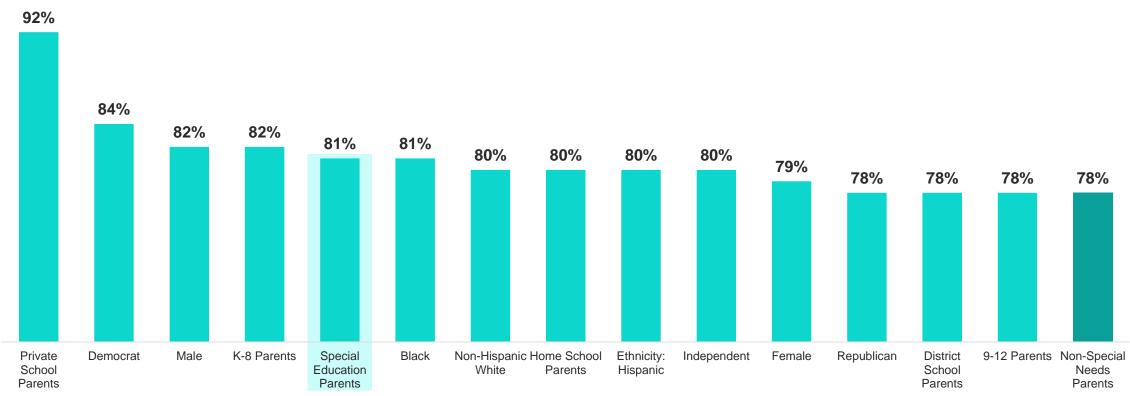
# Roughly four out of five special education parents say they support ESAs. There is a wide range of support among all demographics within that group.

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

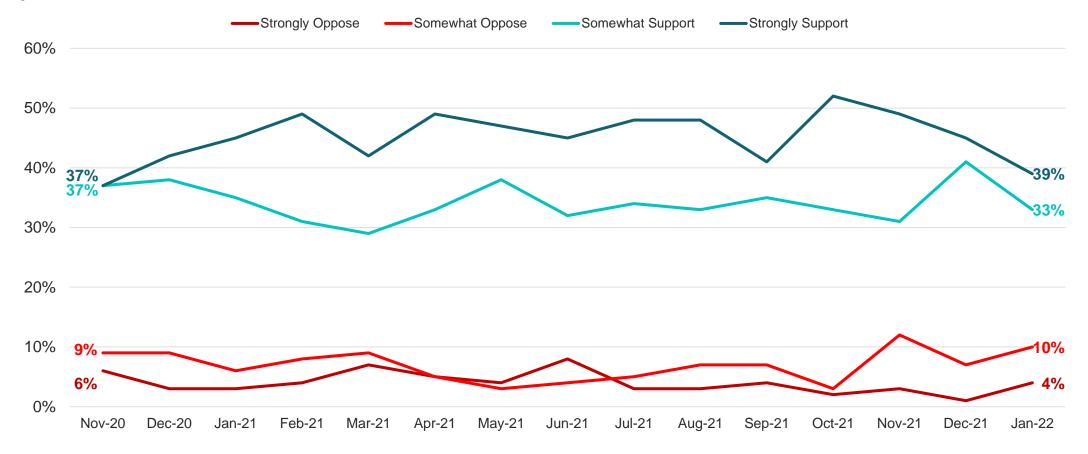
### **Total Support**

(Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)



# Special education parents have expressed very high levels of support for ESAs – much higher than those opposed. Though, support has dipped in recent months.

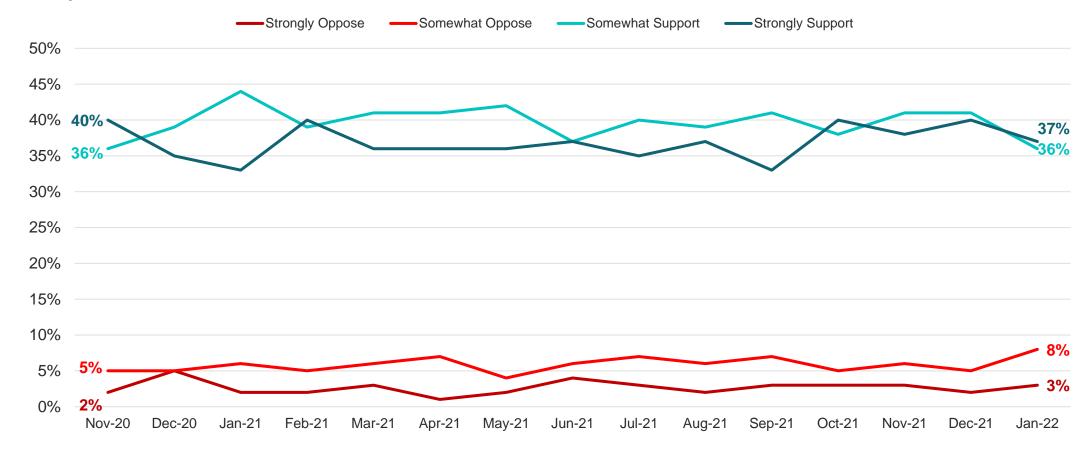
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# Among non-special needs parents, overall support is at roughly the same levels as one year ago.

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



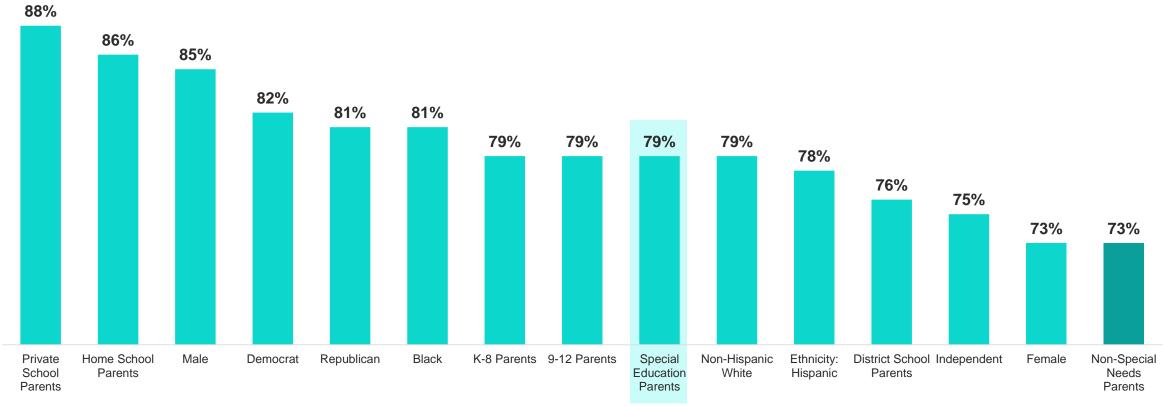
## Nearly four out of five special education parents say they support school vouchers. There is broad support across all demographics.

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

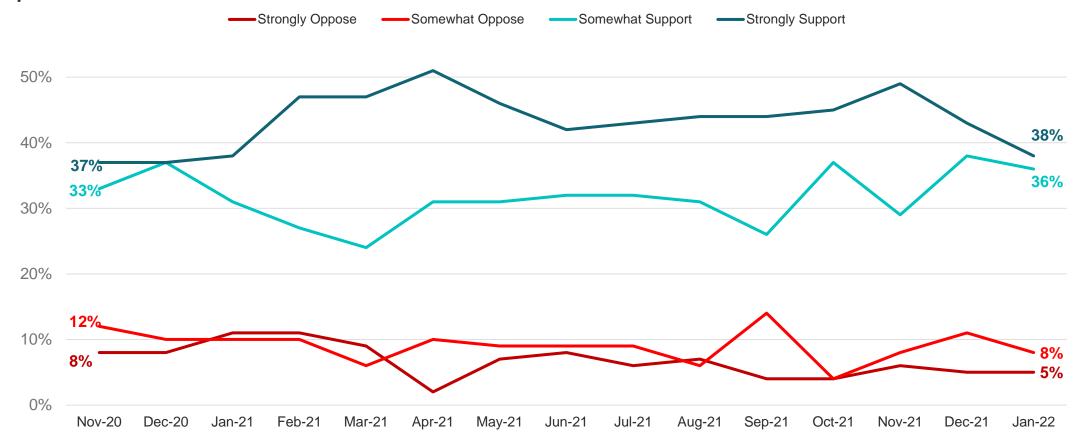
(Strongly Support + Somewhat Support)



## Special education parents have been much more likely to support school vouchers than oppose them. Support levels have slightly decreased in recent 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?

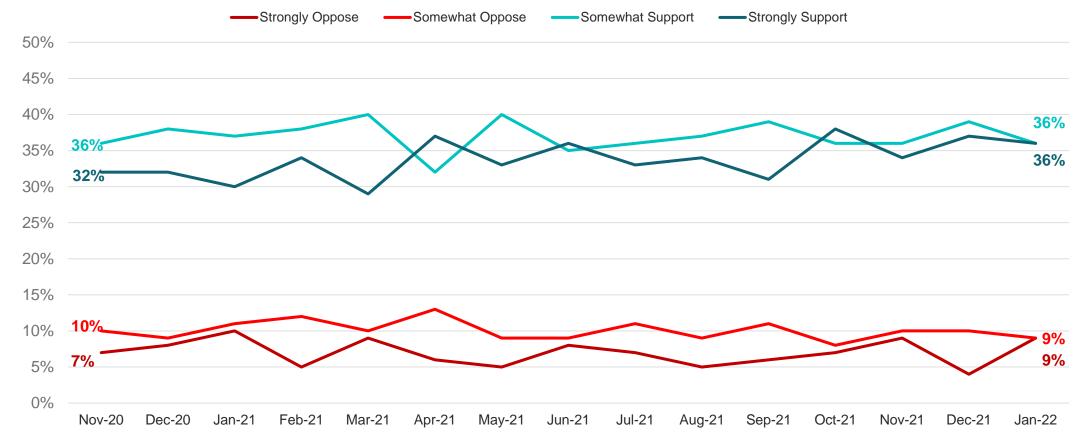
#### Special Education Parents



## Among non-special needs parents, overall support for school vouchers has held steady throughout the past year.

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?

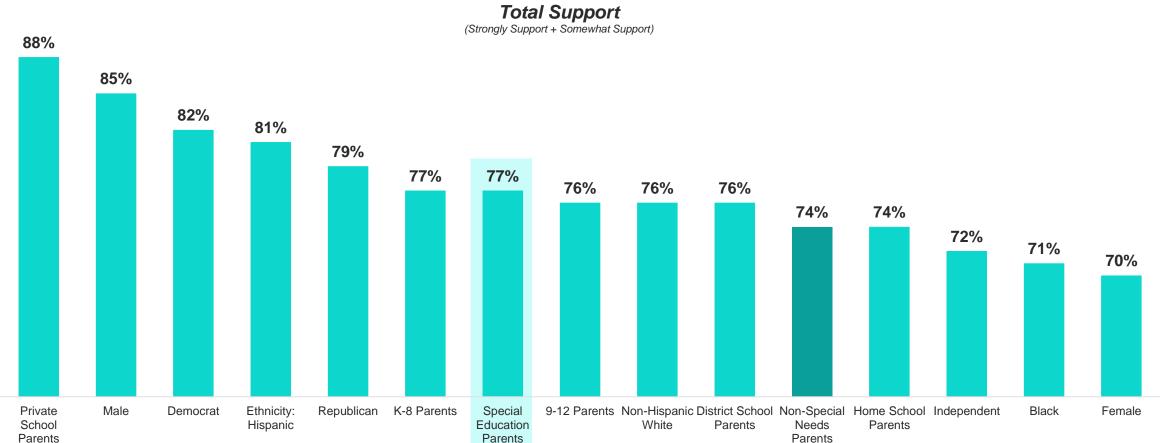
#### Non-Special Needs Parents



# About 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?

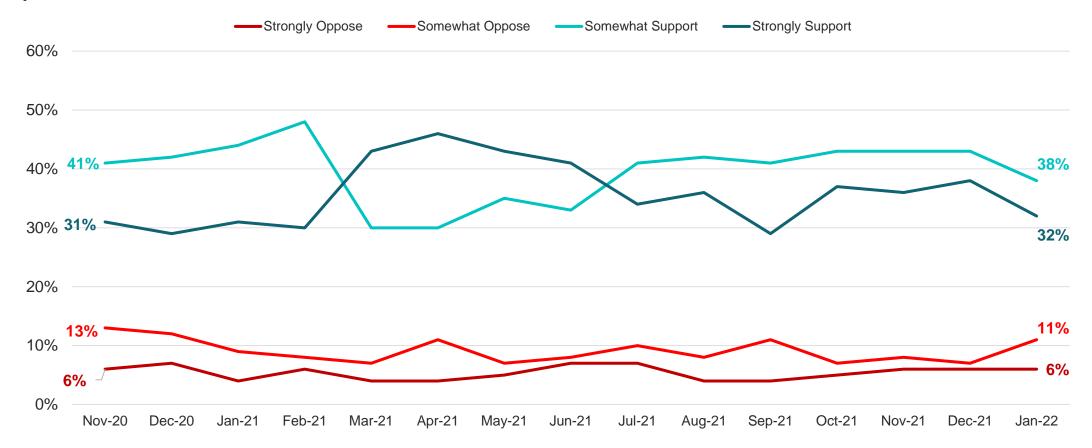
#### Special Education Parents



### 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

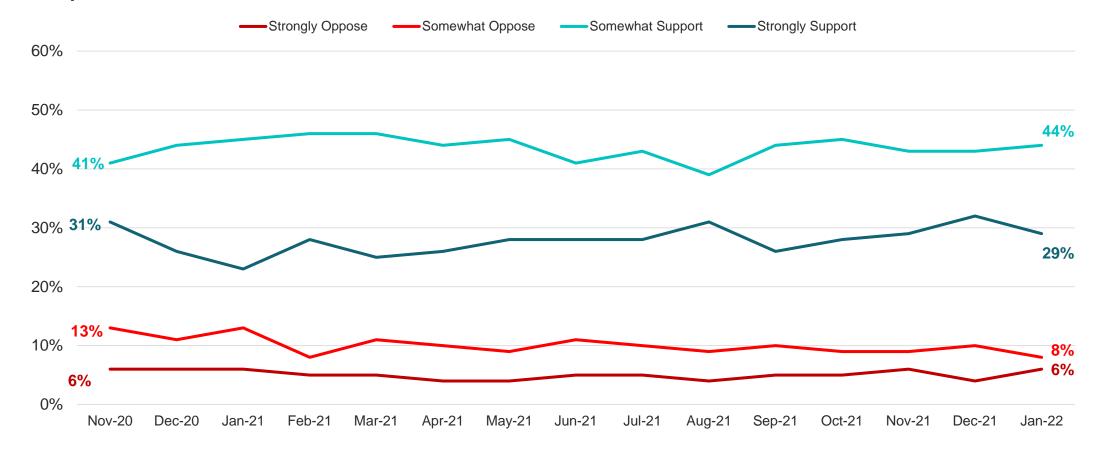


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## Among non-special needs parents, overall support for charter schools has been relatively stable over the past year.

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** October 12, 2021 – January 16, 2022

**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 = 12.95 minutes, Non-Special

Needs Parents Median = 13.23 minutes

Sample Size N = 998 Special Education Parents

N= 3,716 Non-Special Needs Parents

**Quotas** Age, Gender

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

Measure of Precision

(adjusted for weighting)  $\pm 4.11$  percentage points (Special Education Parents),  $\pm 2.14$ 

percentage points (Non-Special Needs Parents)

Participation Rate 20.03% (October 2021 School Parents), 9.65% (November 2021

School Parents), 13.78% (December 2021 School Parents), 5.64%

(January 2022 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	152
Non-Hispanic White	690
Black	120
Other	56
Urban	351
Suburban	373
Small Town	88
Rural	186
Male	341
Female	657
Northeast	222
Midwest	196
South	417
West	163

Demographics	Unweighted (N = )
Special Education Parents	998
Special Education: K-8 Parents	871
Special Education: 9-12 Parents	329
*Non-Special Needs Parents	3716
2021-22: Charter School	90
2021-22: Home School	136
2021-22: Private School	175
2021-22: District School	715
Democrat	424
Independent	264
Republican	266
Low Income <\$35K	318
Middle Income \$35K to <\$75K	333
High Income \$75K+	347
< College	587
College +	411

## **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
November 2021	258	898
December 2021	278	996
January 2022	255	956

### **Special Education Parents Sample, Adjustments by Weighting**

Demographics	Unweighted	Weighted	Target (%)
Hispanic	12%	22%	22%
White	79%	72%	72%
Non-Hispanic	88%	78%	78%
Black	11%	11%	11%
Other	10%	16%	16%
Age: 18-34	11%	18%	18%
Age: 35-44	64%	44%	44%
Age: 45-54	23%	31%	31%
Age: 65+	2%	6%	6%
Male	34%	46%	46%
Female	66%	54%	54%
High School or less	22%	33%	33%
Some College +	78%	67%	67%
Northeast	18%	17%	17%
Midwest	23%	22%	22%
South	43%	38%	38%
West	16%	24%	24%

<sup>\*</sup>Weighting is based on the 2018 American Community Survey among total school parents:



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EdChoice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. Our mission is to advance educational freedom and choice for all as a pathway to successful lives and a stronger society. We are committed to understanding and pursuing a K–12 education system that empowers every family to choose the schooling environment that fits their children's needs best.

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