WASHINGTON, D.C.

What is it like for parents to choose a public school in cities that provides multiple options? According to a survey of 4,000 public school parents in eight “high-choice” cities, including Washington, D.C., parents’ experiences vary widely. Parents in D.C. were more likely than parents in any other city to report that their city’s schools are getting better. Black and Hispanic parents, however, were significantly less optimistic in their outlook compared to white parents. Like other studied cities, approximately four out of ten parents reported difficulty finding a school that provided a good fit and almost half said they lack another good public school option besides their current school. For the full report comparing all eight cities, visit crpe.org.

HOW PARENTS CHOOSE A SCHOOL

What types of schools do parents choose?

- Parents with a high school diploma or less
  - 63% Choose a non-neighborhood public school
  - 55%

- Parents with a bachelor’s degree or more
  - 53%

What is most important to parents in choosing a school?

- 80% Academics
  - 63%

- 57% Location
  - 55%

- 55% Safety

HOW PARENTS PERCEIVE THEIR OPTIONS

- 65% Report the schools are getting better

- 53% Report that another good option was available to them

PARENTS’ TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN CITY LEADERS

How much trust and confidence do parents have in the school system to make sure all neighborhoods have great schools?

- 53% Report a great deal or a fair amount

  - Blacks 51%
  - Hispanics 56%
  - Whites 55%

How much trust and confidence do parents have in city leaders to address public problems?

- 53% Report a great deal or a fair amount

  - Blacks 51%
  - Hispanics 58%
  - Whites 55%
WASHINGTON, D.C.

COMMON BARRIERS TO CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Available schools weren’t a good fit
- 42% Report Difficulty
- 38% Report Difficulty
- 46% Report Difficulty

Understanding which schools their child was eligible to attend
- 25% Report Difficulty
- 35% Report Difficulty
- 17% Report Difficulty

Difficult or confusing paperwork
- 11% Report Difficulty
- 11% Report Difficulty
- 10% Report Difficulty

Number of applications
- 16% Report Difficulty
- 14% Report Difficulty
- 22% Report Difficulty

Different application deadlines
- 22% Report Difficulty
- 18% Report Difficulty
- 22% Report Difficulty

Finding transportation for their child to and from school
- 21% Report Difficulty
- 20% Report Difficulty
- 21% Report Difficulty

HOW PARENTS BECOME INFORMED ABOUT THEIR OPTIONS

Parents use on average 3 information sources

52% of parents say visiting the school is the most useful information source

25% Unable to get information needed to choose

HOW PARENTS GET THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL

44% of parents report driving their child to and from school

TRIP TIME (EACH WAY) FOR CHILDREN IN NON-NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

00:22:00

Children in non-neighborhood public schools traveled longer (10 minutes longer than those in neighborhood public schools).

CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL REPORT | crpe.org/publications/how-parents-experience-public-school-choice