What is it like for parents to choose a public school in cities that provide multiple options? According to a survey of 4,000 public school parents in eight “high-choice” cities, including Denver, parents’ experiences vary widely. A majority of Denver parents reported that schools are getting better (59%), that they have another good public school option besides their current school (60%), and that they have trust and confidence in the city’s school system (63%). At the same time, parents of children with special needs in Denver were significantly more likely to report trouble finding a school that provides a good fit compared to other parents. Parents with a high school diploma or less in Denver were far less likely to choose a non-neighborhood-based school for their child than parents with a bachelor’s degree or more, a gap that was among the largest observed across the eight cities surveyed. For the full report comparing all eight cities, visit crpe.org.
DENVER

COMMON BARRIERS TO CHOOSING A SCHOOL

- Parents with a high school diploma or less: 39%
- Parents with a bachelor's degree or more: 17%

Available schools weren't a good fit

- Difficulty: 33%
- Available schools: 43%

Understanding which schools their child was eligible to attend

- Difficulty: 28%
- Eligible schools: 24%

Difficult or confusing paperwork

- Difficulty: 11%
- Paperwork: 24%

Finding transportation for their child to and from school

- Difficulty: 29%
- Transportation: 31%

Number of applications

- Difficulty: 15%
- Applications: 18%

Different application deadlines

- Difficulty: 18%
- Deadlines: 21%

HOW PARENTS BECOME INFORMED ABOUT THEIR OPTIONS

Parents use on average 3 information sources

51% of parents say visiting the school is the most useful information source

17% Unable to get information needed to choose

HOW PARENTS GET THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL

64% of parents report driving their child to and from school

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

00:15:00

Children in non-neighborhood public schools traveled longer (7 minutes longer than those in neighborhood public schools).

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