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 Indianapolis, parents’ experiences vary widely. Indianapolis was among the few places where parents with a high school diploma or less were nearly as likely to choose a non-neighborhood-based public school as parents with a bachelor’s degree or more. Also compared to other cities, parents in Indianapolis were more likely to report that the available schools provided a good fit for their child and that they had another good public school option available to them besides their current school. But just 34% of parents reported that the city’s schools were getting better overall, a share that was smaller than Detroit’s. For the full report comparing all eight cities, visit crpe.org.

**HOW PARENTS CHOOSE A SCHOOL**

- **Parents with a high school diploma or less**
  - What types of schools do parents choose?
    - 35% Choose a non-neighborhood public school
    - 39%

- **Parents with a bachelor’s degree or more**
  - What is most important to parents in choosing a school?
    - 74% Academics
    - 65%
    - 79%

**HOW PARENTS PERCEIVE THEIR OPTIONS**

- 34% Report the schools are getting better
- 54% 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?

- Blacks 57%
- Hispanics 57%
- Whites 57%

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

- Blacks 48%
- Hispanics 49%
- Whites 58%

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COMMON BARRIERS TO CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Available schools weren't a good fit

- 36% Report Difficulty
- 34% Report Difficulty
- 36% Report Difficulty

Understanding which schools their child was eligible to attend

- 28% Report Difficulty
- 36% Report Difficulty
- 23% Report Difficulty

Difficult or confusing paperwork

- 10% Report Difficulty
- 13% Report Difficulty
- 9% Report Difficulty

Finding transportation for their child to and from school

- 23% Report Difficulty
- 27% Report Difficulty
- 21% Report Difficulty

Number of applications

- 8% Report Difficulty
- 12% Report Difficulty
- 8% Report Difficulty

Different application deadlines

- 14% Report Difficulty
- 17% Report Difficulty
- 14% Report Difficulty

HOW PARENTS BECOME INFORMED ABOUT THEIR OPTIONS

Parents use on average 3 information sources

44% of parents say visiting the school is the most useful information source

23% Unable to get information needed to choose

HOW PARENTS GET THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL

34% of parents report driving their child to and from school

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

00:19:00

Children in non-neighborhood public schools traveled longer (3 minutes longer than those in neighborhood public schools).

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