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 Philadelphia, parents’ experiences vary widely. Of all the cities surveyed, parents in Philadelphia were the least likely to report that their city’s schools were getting better. Philadelphia parents also reported the lowest levels of trust in the school system to provide all neighborhoods with great public schools. More than any other city, parents in Philadelphia reported struggling to find a school that provided a good fit for their child and were also the least likely to report that they have another good public school option besides their current school. And, parents with a high school diploma or less in Philadelphia 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.
PHILADELPHIA

COMMON BARRIERS TO CHOOSING A SCHOOL

- Parents with a high school diploma or less
- Parents with a bachelor’s degree or more

Available schools weren’t a good fit
- 45% Report Difficulty
- 40% 48%

Understanding which schools their child was eligible to attend
- 32% Report Difficulty
- 40% 26%

Difficult or confusing paperwork
- 15% Report Difficulty
- 20% 11%

Number of applications
- 18% Report Difficulty
- 25% 12%

Different application deadlines
- 23% Report Difficulty
- 30% 17%

Finding transportation for their child to and from school
- 23% Report Difficulty
- 26% 23%

HOW PARENTS BECOME INFORMED ABOUT THEIR OPTIONS

Parents use on average 3 information sources

49% of parents say visiting the school is the most useful information source

28% Unable to get information needed to choose

29% 29%

HOW PARENTS GET THEIR CHILD TO SCHOOL

33% 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 (11 minutes longer than those in neighborhood public schools).

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