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Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School

But majorities of both Republican and Democratic parents are satisfied with the quality of their children's education

BY Juliana Horowitz

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Kim Parker, Director, Social Trends Research

Juliana Horowitz, Associate Director, Research

Tanya Ardit, Communications Manager

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

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How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this study to better understand how parents with children in K-12 schools see their children's education. This analysis is based on 3,251 U.S. parents with children in elementary, middle or high school. The data was collected as part of a larger survey of parents with children younger than 18 conducted Sept. 20 to Oct. 2, 2022. Most of the parents who took part are members of the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP), an online survey panel that is recruited through national, random sampling of residential addresses. This survey also included an oversample of Black, Hispanic and Asian parents from Ipsos' KnowledgePanel, another probability-based online survey web panel recruited primarily through national, random sampling of residential addresses.

Address-based sampling ensures that nearly all U.S. adults have a chance of selection. The survey is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by gender, race, ethnicity, partisan affiliation, education and other categories. Read more about the [ATP's methodology](#).

Most questions in this report were asked only of K-12 parents who indicated that their child attends a public, private or charter school (this excludes 197 parents who said their child is being homeschooled and 15 parents who didn't provide an answer for the type of school their child attends).

Read more about the [questions](#) used for this report and the report's [methodology](#).

Terminology

References to White, Black and Asian adults include only those who are not Hispanic and identify as only one race. Hispanics are of any race.

All references to party affiliation include those who lean toward that party. Republicans include those who identify as Republicans and those who say they lean toward the Republican Party. Democrats include those who identify as Democrats and those who say they lean toward the Democratic Party.

“Middle income” is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual family income for panelists on the American Trends Panel. “Lower income” falls below that range; “upper income” falls above it. See the [methodology](#) for more details.

Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School

But majorities of both Republican and Democratic parents are satisfied with the quality of their children's education

As the midterm election approaches, issues related to K-12 schools have become [deeply polarized](#). Republican and Democratic parents of K-12 students have widely different views on what their children should learn at school about gender identity, slavery and other topics, according to a new Pew Research Center survey.

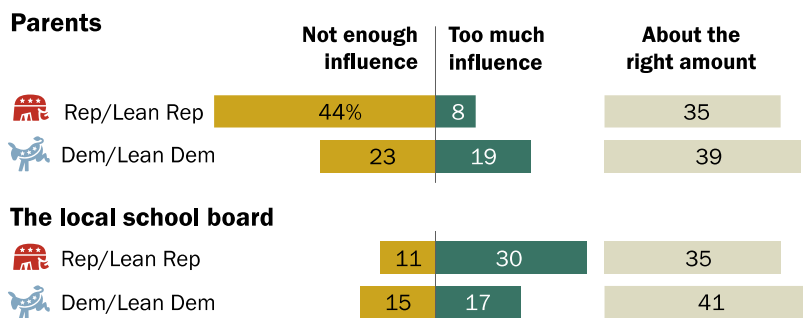
They also offer different assessments of the influence parents, local school boards and other key players have on what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching.

Republican parents with children in K-12 schools are about twice as likely as Democratic parents to say parents don't have enough influence (44% vs. 23%, including those who lean to each party). And Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say school boards have *too much* influence (30% vs. 17%). These parents also differ over the amount of input they personally have when it comes to what their own children are learning in school.

At the same time, Republican and Democratic parents – including those with children in public schools – are equally likely to say they are extremely or very satisfied with the quality of the education their children are receiving (58% each) and that the teachers and administrators at their children's schools have values that are similar to their own (54% each).

Republican parents are more likely than Democrats to say that parents have too little influence on what kids learn in school and school boards have too much

% of parents of K-12 students saying parents/the local school board have _____ when it comes to what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching



Note: Share of respondents who said they weren't sure or who didn't offer an answer not shown. The shares saying "not sure" range from 14% to 26%.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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A note about the sample

Most of the questions in this report were asked only of parents of K-12 students who are not homeschooled. These questions relate to what parents want their children to learn in school, assessments of the quality of education their children are receiving and other aspects that relate to their children's schools. Because parents with multiple children in K-12 schools may have different answers depending on the child or the school they attend, these parents were randomly assigned to think about their youngest or oldest child who is in grades K-12 when answering these questions. The data was weighted to account for each parent's probability of being assigned to a child in elementary, middle or high school and is representative of all parents of students at each of these stages. Please see the report's [Methodology](#) and [Topline](#) for details about the survey and how these questions were asked.

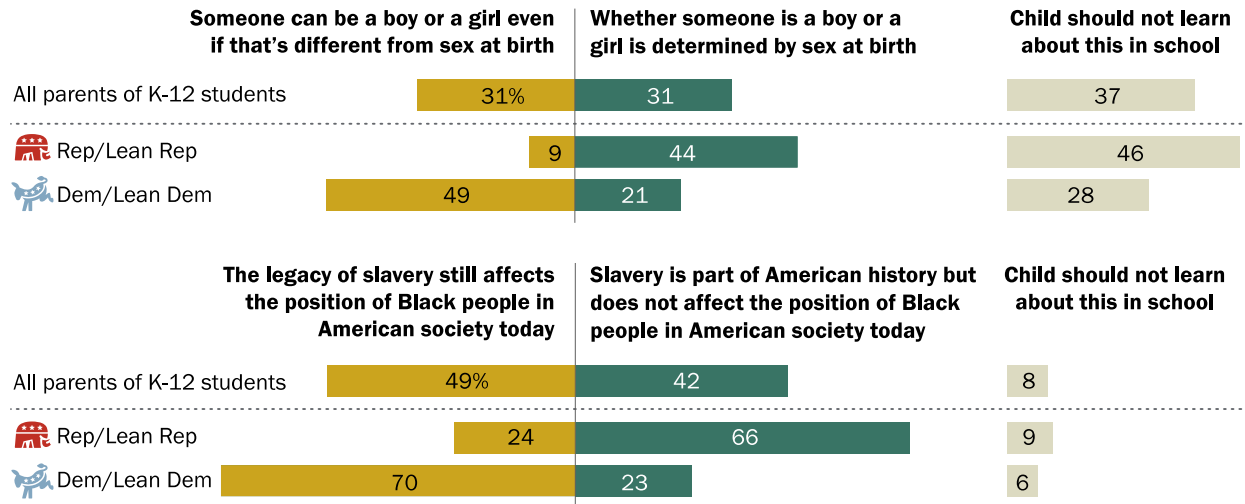
When it comes to what their children are learning in school, U.S. parents of K-12 students are divided over what they think their children should learn about gender identity: 31% say they would prefer that their children learn that whether someone is a boy or a girl is determined by the sex they were assigned at birth, and the same share say they'd rather their children learn that someone can be a boy or a girl even if that's different from their sex at birth. A 37% plurality say their children shouldn't learn about this in school.

There is also no consensus when it comes to what parents want their children to learn about slavery: 49% say they would prefer that their children learn that the legacy of slavery still affects the position of Black people in American society today, while a smaller but sizable share (42%) would prefer that their children learn that slavery is part of American history but doesn't affect the position of Black people in American society today.

On both gender identity and the legacy of slavery, there are differences ranging from 23 to 46 percentage points in what Republican and Democratic parents of K-12 students would prefer that their children learn in school. There are also large partisan differences when it comes to what parents want their K-12 children to learn about sex education and America's standing in the world.

Republican and Democratic parents have widely different views of what their K-12 children should learn about certain topics in school

% of parents of K-12 students saying they would prefer their children learn in school that ...



Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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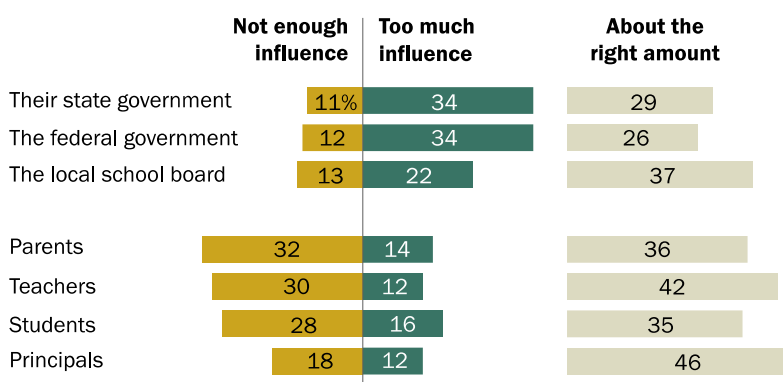
When asked to assess the quality of the education their children are receiving, a majority of U.S. parents of K-12 students (57%) say they are extremely or very satisfied. However, fewer than half (40%) express similar levels of satisfaction with the amount of input they have in what their children learn in school. Parents who are extremely or very satisfied with the amount of input they have express higher levels of satisfaction with the overall quality of their children's education than those who are somewhat satisfied or who are not too or not at all satisfied with how much say they have in what their children learn in school.

See also: [*Most K-12 parents in the U.S. say first year of pandemic had a negative effect on their children's education*](#)

In addition to asking parents about how much influence parents and the school board have on what’s being taught in their local schools, parents were asked about the influence of the federal and state government, teachers, principals and students. While many parents say each of these has the right amount of influence or that they aren’t sure, larger shares say their state government, the federal government and their local school board have too much influence than say they don’t have enough influence. Conversely, more say parents, teachers, students and principals don’t have enough influence than say they have too much.

Parents offer different assessments of the influence of government, school boards, parents, teachers, students and principals on what schools are teaching

% of parents of K-12 students saying each of the following has ___ when it comes to what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching



Note: Share of respondents who said they weren’t sure or who didn’t offer an answer not shown. The shares saying “not sure” range from 15% to 27%.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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The nationally representative survey of 3,251 U.S. parents of K-12 students was conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022, using the Center’s [American Trends Panel](#).¹ Among the other key findings:

Upper-income parents and parents answering about a child in private school express higher levels of satisfaction with the quality of their children’s education. About eight-in-ten parents answering about a student in a private K-12 school (79%) say they are extremely or very satisfied with the quality of the education their child is receiving, compared with 55% of those answering about a child in a public school.² About two-thirds of upper-income parents (66%) express high levels of satisfaction, compared with 58% of those with middle incomes and a smaller

¹ The survey includes an oversample of Black, Hispanic and Asian parents. For details, see the [Methodology](#) section of the report.

² The survey was not designed to be representative of all parents with children in public or private schools. Of all surveyed parents with at least one child in K-12 schools who is not homeschooled, 86% were asked about a child who is attending a public school, 9% were asked about a child in private school, and 5% were asked about a child who attends a charter school (too few parents answered about a child in charter school to allow for separate analysis of this group). According to the Current Population Survey, 91% of K-12 students were enrolled in public schools in the fall of 2021, the most recent data available (this figure includes those enrolled in charter schools) and 9% were enrolled in private schools.

share of those with lower incomes (52%).³ The difference between upper- and lower-income parents remains when looking only at those answering about a child in public school (the sample size for parents answering about private school children is too small to analyze separately).

One-in-five parents of K-12 students say their children’s school doesn’t spend enough time on core academic subjects like reading, math, science and social studies. The shares saying this are higher among fathers (24%) than mothers (17%) and among Republican and Republican-leaning parents (23%) than those who identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party (17%). But majorities of 70% or more say their children’s school spends about the right amount of time on these subjects.

About two-thirds of parents say it is extremely or very important to them that their children’s school teaches them to develop social and emotional skills. Parents of elementary school students (69%) are more likely than parents of high school students (59%) to say it’s at least very important to them that their children’s school teaches these skills (64% of parents of middle schoolers say the same). And while majorities of Democratic and Republican parents say this is extremely or very important to them, this is a more common view among Democrats (74% vs. 57% of Republican parents).

Parents of K-12 students have mixed views about whether public school teachers should be allowed to lead students in prayer. About half of parents (52%) say this shouldn’t be allowed in any form, while 27% say leading students in Christian prayers should only be allowed if prayers from other religions are also offered and 19% say it should be allowed even if prayers from other religions are not offered. Among Democratic parents, 63% say public school teachers shouldn’t be allowed to lead students in any type of prayers; 39% of Republican parents say the same.

³ Family incomes are based on 2021 earnings and adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and for household sizes. Middle income is defined here as two-thirds to double the median annual family income for panelists on the American Trends Panel. Lower income falls below that range; upper income falls above it. See the [methodology](#) for more details.

Elementary school parents express higher levels of satisfaction with the quality of their children's education than those with older children

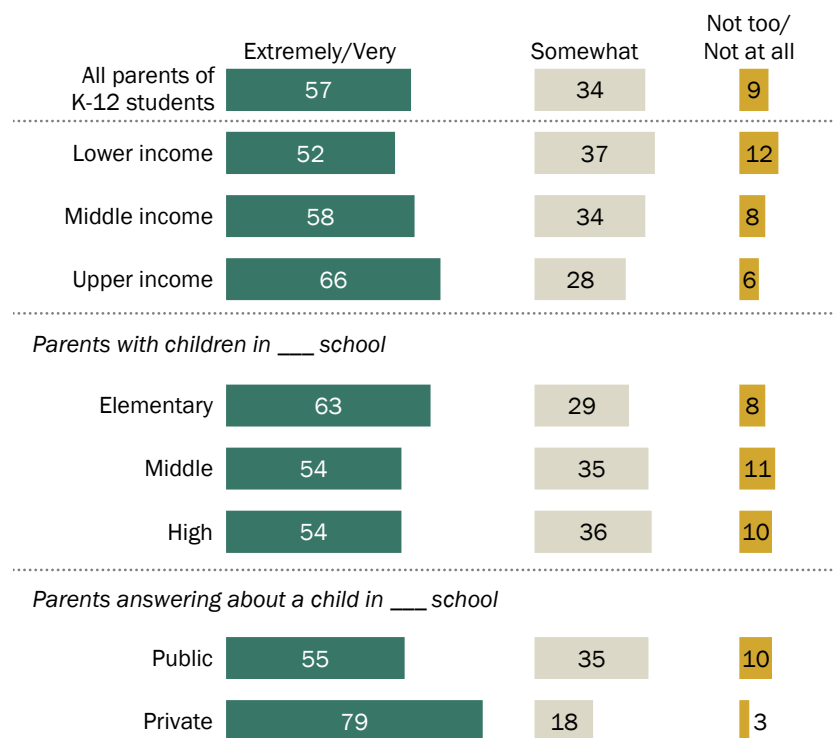
A majority of parents with children in K-12 schools (57%) say they are extremely or very satisfied with the overall quality of the education their children are receiving at school; another 34% are somewhat satisfied and 9% say they are not too or not at all satisfied. Parents of elementary school students (63%) are more likely than those with children in middle school or high school (54% each) to say they are extremely or very satisfied with the quality of their children's education.

Parents' assessments also vary widely depending on the type of school their children attend. About eight-in-ten parents answering about a child in private school (79%) express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of education their child is receiving, compared with a narrower majority (55%) of those answering about a child who is in public school.

Upper-income parents (66%) are more likely than those with middle (58%) and lower (52%) incomes to say they are extremely or very satisfied with the quality of their children's education. While these differences in part reflect the fact that parents with higher incomes are more likely to

A majority of parents of K-12 students are extremely or very satisfied with the quality of the education their children are receiving

% of parents of K-12 students saying they are ___ satisfied with the overall quality of the education their children are receiving at school



Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2021 earnings. Parents answering about a child attending a charter school are included in the total but not shown separately due to small sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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have children in private schools, a larger share of upper-income parents (61%) than lower-income parents (51%) answering about a child in public school express a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the education their child is receiving.

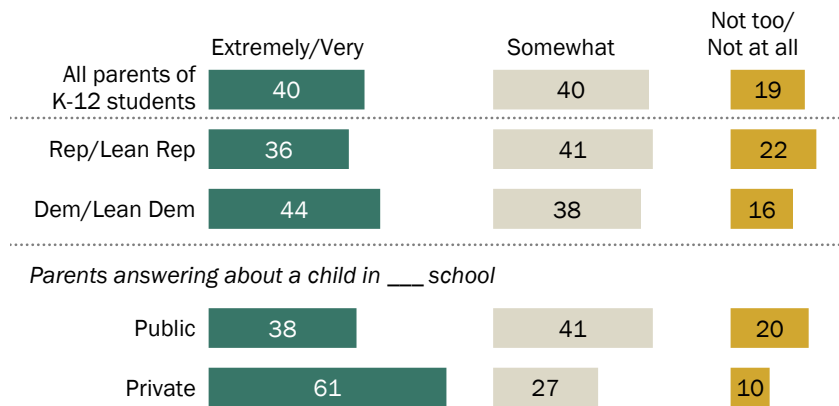
Overall, Democratic and Democratic-leaning and Republican and Republican-leaning parents are equally likely to say they are extremely or very satisfied with the quality of the education their children are receiving at school (58% each). There is also no statistical difference between Republicans and Democrats when looking only at those answering about a child who attends a public school.

Four-in-ten parents of K-12 students are extremely or very satisfied with how much say they have in what their children learn in school

While a majority of parents of K-12 students express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of their children’s education, fewer than half (40%) say they are extremely or very satisfied with the amount of input they personally have in what their children learn in school; the same share (40%) are somewhat satisfied, and 19% say they are not too or not at all satisfied with the amount of input they have.

Democratic parents are more likely than Republican parents to express high levels of satisfaction with how much say they have in what their children learn

% of parents of K-12 students saying they are ___ satisfied with the amount of input they have in what their children learn in school



Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown. Parents answering about a child attending a charter school are included in the total but not shown separately due to small sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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Parents answering about a child in private school are far more likely than those answering about a child in public school to say they are extremely or very satisfied

with how much input they have in what their child learns in school (61% vs. 38%, respectively). One-in-five parents answering about a public school student say they are not too or not at all satisfied, compared with one-in-ten parents of those answering about a child in private school.

Partisanship also factors into these views: 44% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning parents say they are extremely or very satisfied with the amount of input they have in what their children learn in school, compared with 36% of parents who identify with or lean toward the GOP. This difference persists when looking only at Democratic and Republican parents answering about a child in public school.

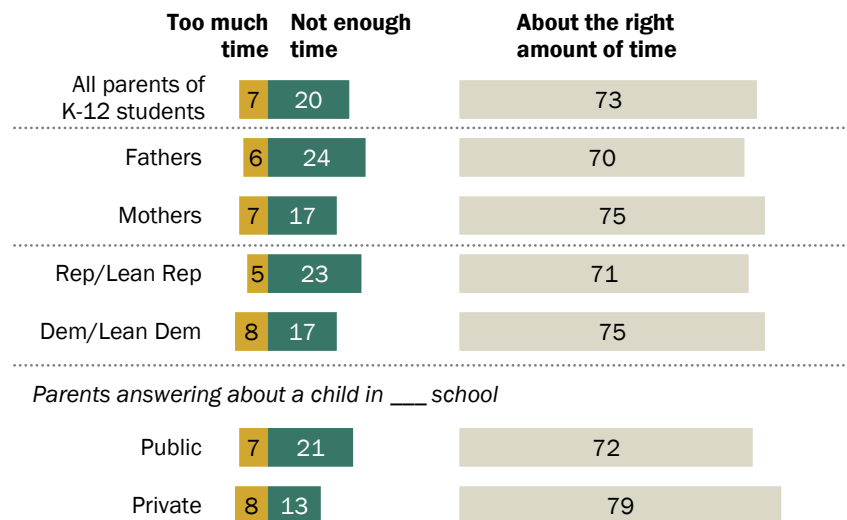
One-in-five parents of K-12 students say their children’s school doesn’t spend enough time on core academic subjects

For the most part, parents of K-12 students think their children’s school spends about the right amount of time on core academic subjects like reading, math, science and social studies (73% say this). Still, one-in-five say their children’s school doesn’t spend enough time on these subjects, while 7% say too much time is spent on core academic subjects.

These views largely reflect the opinions of parents answering about a child in public school: 21% of these parents say their child’s school doesn’t spend enough time on core academic subjects, compared with 13% of parents answering about a child in private school (private school parents are more likely to say it’s about right).

Most parents of K-12 students say their children’s school spends the right amount of time on core academic subjects

% of parents of K-12 students saying they feel their children’s schools spend ___ on core academic subjects like reading, math, science and social studies



Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown. Parents answering about a child attending a charter school are included in the total but not shown separately due to small sample size.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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Fathers (24%) and Republican parents (23%) are more likely than mothers (17%) and Democrats (17%) to say their children’s school doesn’t spend enough time on core academic subjects like

reading, math, science and social studies, but seven-in-ten or more across these groups say their children's school spends about the right amount of time on these subjects.

Most parents see value in their children learning social and emotional skills at school

About two-thirds of parents of K-12 students (66%) say it's extremely or very important to them that their children's school teaches them to develop social and emotional skills; another 27% say this is somewhat important and just 7% say it's not too or not at all important.

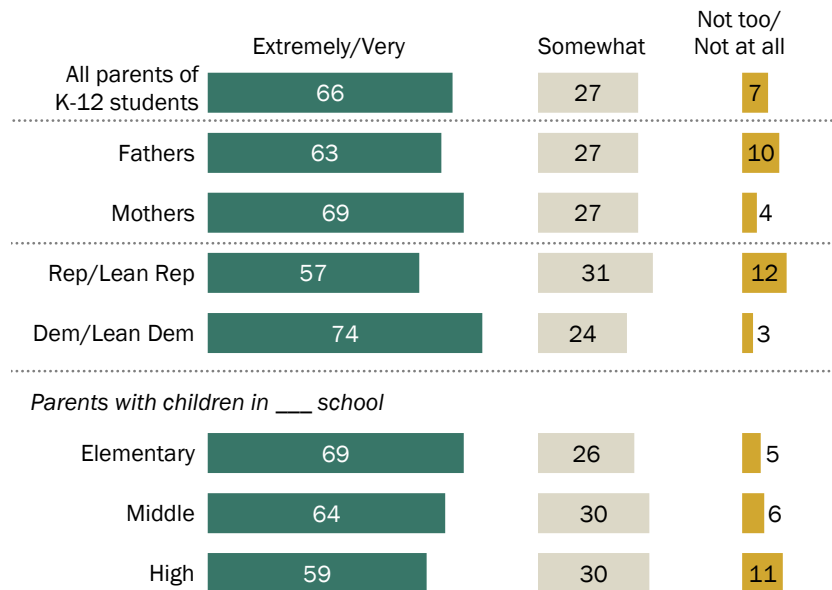
Parents with children in elementary school (69%) are more likely than parents of high school students (59%) to say it's extremely or very important for their children to learn social and emotional skills at school (64% of parents of middle schoolers say the same).

Majorities of mothers and fathers say it's extremely or very important to them that their children's schools teach

them to develop social and emotional skills, but mothers are more likely to say this (69% vs. 63% of fathers). And while about three-quarters of Democratic and Democratic-leaning parents (74%) place high value on social-emotional learning, a smaller majority of Republicans and Republican leaners (57%) share this view.

Majorities of Democratic and Republican K-12 parents say it's very or extremely important to them that their children learn social, emotional skills at school

% of parents of K-12 students saying it is ___ important to them that their children's schools teach them to develop social and emotional skills



Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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No consensus among parents about what they want their children to learn about gender identity or slavery

The survey asked parents of K-12 students what they would prefer that their children learn in school about some issues that have been at the center of [the national conversation about K-12 education](#). Parents are most divided when it comes to what their children should learn about gender identity, and there's no majority consensus about what children should learn about slavery.

In turn, majorities of parents say they would prefer that their children learn that there are safe and effective methods of contraception (rather than being taught abstinence-only sex education) and that there are countries that are as good as or better than the United States (rather than learning that the U.S. stands above all other countries). On each of these, views differ along partisan lines.

Republican moms and dads have different views about what, if anything, schools should teach about gender identity; among Democrats, views differ by race and ethnicity

About three-in-ten parents of K-12 students (31%) say they would prefer that their children learn in school that whether someone is a boy or a girl is determined by the sex they were assigned at birth; an equal share (31%) say they would rather their children learn that someone can be a boy or a girl even if that's *different* from their sex at birth. More – 37% – say their child shouldn't learn about this at school. Parents of elementary school students (45%) are more likely than those with children in middle school or high school (31% each) to say their children shouldn't learn about gender identity in school.

Views about what children should learn about gender identity in school vary considerably along party lines, although no position reaches a majority within either party. About half of Democratic and Democratic-leaning parents (49%) say they would prefer that their children learn that someone can be a boy or a girl even if that's different from the sex they were assigned at birth; just 9% of Republican parents and those who lean to the GOP say the same. In turn, Republican parents (44%) are about twice as likely as Democratic parents (21%) to say they would prefer that their children learn that whether someone is a boy or a girl is determined by their sex at birth. Republican parents are also more likely than Democratic parents to say their children shouldn't learn about this in school (46% vs. 28%).

Among Republicans, views differ by gender, with 53% of Republican fathers and 37% of Republican mothers saying they would prefer that their K-12 children learn that whether someone is a boy or a girl is determined by their sex at birth. Republican mothers are more likely

than their male counterparts to say their children shouldn't learn about this in school (51% vs. 39%).

There are no differences by gender among Democratic parents, but views among this group differ by race and ethnicity. A majority of White Democratic parents (64%) say they would prefer that their children learn that someone can be a boy or a girl even if that's different from the sex they were assigned at birth, compared with 30% of Black and 36% of Hispanic Democratic parents.⁴

Black and Hispanic Democratic parents are more likely than their White counterparts to say they would prefer that their children learn that a person's gender is determined by their sex at birth (31% and 32% vs. 11%, respectively). Black Democratic parents (37%) are more likely than those who are White or Hispanic (25% and 29%, respectively) to say their children shouldn't learn about this in school.

Views on what children should learn about gender identity in school differ by gender among Republicans and by race and ethnicity among Democrats

% of parents of K-12 students saying they would prefer their children learn in school that ...

	Someone can be a boy or a girl even if that's different from sex at birth	Whether someone is a boy or a girl is determined by sex at birth	Child should not learn about this in school
All parents of K-12 students	31	31	37
Rep/Lean Rep	9	44	46
Dem/Lean Dem	49	21	28
<i>Among Republican and Republican-leaning parents</i>			
Fathers	7	53	39
Mothers	12	37	51
<i>Among Democratic and Democratic-leaning parents</i>			
White	64	11	25
Black	30	31	37
Hispanic	36	32	29

Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White and Black parents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Data for Asian Democratic parents is included in the total but is not shown separately due to small sample size. Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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⁴ There aren't enough Asian Democratic parents in the sample to analyze their views separately.

Large shares of Black and Democratic parents would prefer that their children learn that the legacy of slavery still affects the position of Black people in American society today

About half of parents of K-12 students (49%) say they would prefer that their children learn that the legacy of slavery still affects the position of Black people in American society today. A smaller but substantial share (42%) would prefer that their children learn that slavery is part of American history but does not affect the position of Black people in American society today. Just 8% say their children shouldn't learn about this in school.

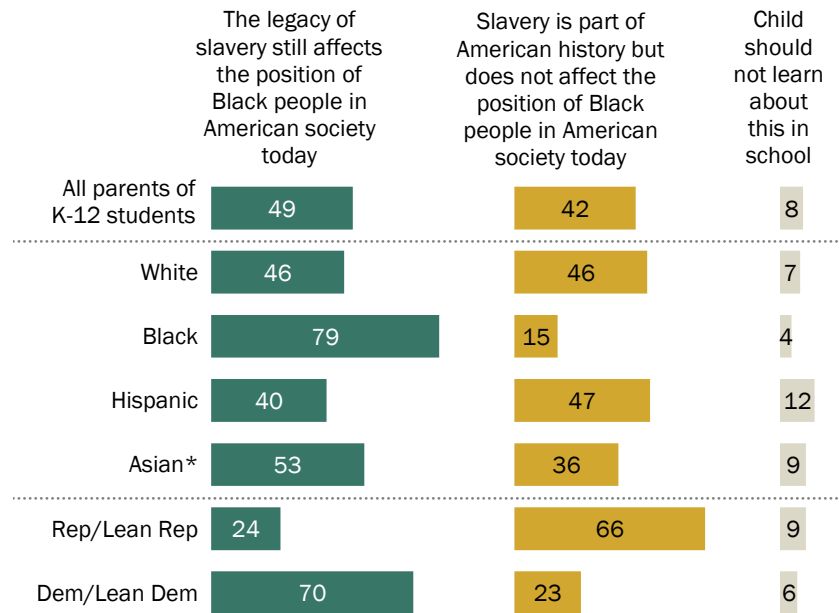
Seven-in-ten Democratic parents, but only about a quarter of Republican parents (24%), say they'd prefer that their children learn in school that the legacy of slavery still affects the position of Black people in American society today. For their part, 66% of Republican parents would

rather their children learn that slavery is part of American history but doesn't affect the position of Black people today; just 23% of Democratic parents say the same.

Black parents (79%) are far more likely than Asian (53%), White (46%) and Hispanic (40%) parents to say they'd prefer that their children learn that the legacy of slavery has had a lasting effect. Among Democrats, however, White and Black parents are equally likely to say they want their children to learn this in school (81% each). A smaller share of Hispanic Democratic parents (48%) hold this view.

Views about what children should learn about slavery vary widely by race and ethnicity, party

% of parents of K-12 students saying they would prefer their children learn in school that ...



* Estimates for Asian parents are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian parents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.

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Most Democratic parents – and a plurality of Republican parents – would prefer that their children learn that there are safe and effective methods of contraception

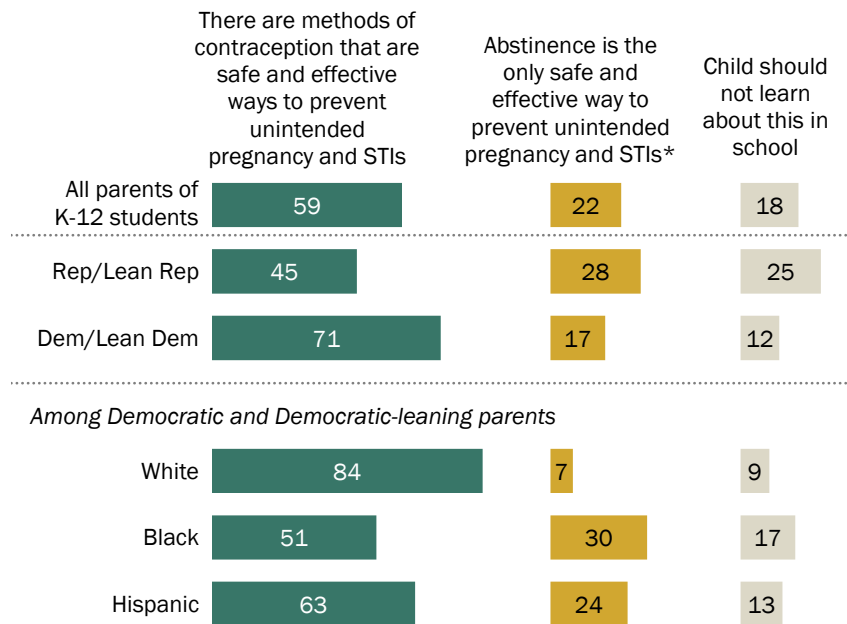
About six-in-ten parents of K-12 students (59%) say they would prefer that their children learn that there are methods of contraception that are safe and effective ways to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); 22% would rather their children learn that abstaining from sex is the only safe and effective method to prevent unintended pregnancy and STIs, and 18% say their children shouldn't learn about this in school (parents of elementary school children are the most likely to say this).

A large share of Democratic parents (71%) say they would like their children to learn in school that there are safe and effective methods of contraception, while 17% would prefer their children to learn that abstinence is the only safe and effective way to prevent unintended pregnancy and STIs and 12% don't think their children should learn about this in school.

Views are more divided among Republican parents, but a plurality (45%) say they would prefer that their children learn that there are methods of contraception that are safe and effective; 28% would rather their children learn abstinence is the only safe and effective way, and a quarter say their children shouldn't learn about this in school.

A majority of parents would prefer that their children learn that abstinence is not the only safe and effective method of contraception

% of parents of K-12 students saying they would prefer their children learn in school that ...



* Question asked about "sexually transmitted infections (STIs)"
 Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White and Black parents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Data for Asian Democratic parents is included in the total but is not shown separately due to small sample size.
 Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.
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Among Democrats, White parents (84%) are far more likely than Hispanic (63%) and Black (51%) parents to say they would prefer that their children learn that there are methods of contraception that are safe and effective in preventing unintended pregnancy and STIs. Still, majorities or pluralities across these groups say this. Only 7% of White Democratic parents would prefer that their children learn that abstinence is the only effective way, compared with 30% of Black Democratic parents and 24% of those who are Hispanic.

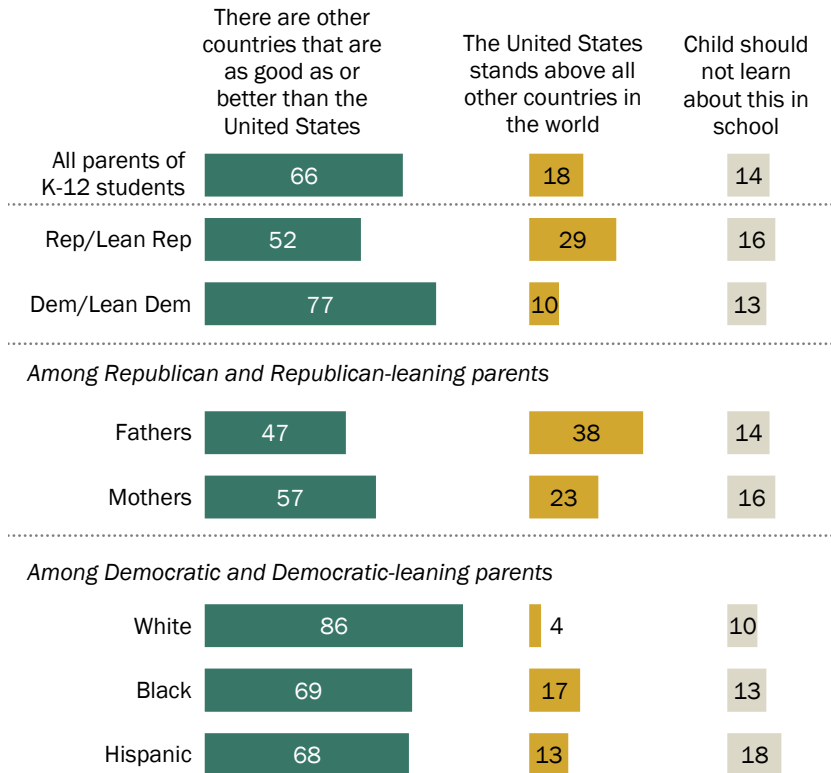
Fathers and Republican parents are more likely than mothers and Democrats to say they want their children to learn that the U.S. stands above all other countries in the world

About two-thirds of parents of K-12 students (66%) say they would prefer that their children’s school teach them that there are other countries in the world that are as good as or better than the United States; 18% would rather their children learn that the U.S. stands above all other countries in the world, and 14% don’t think their children should learn about this in school.

Views on this differ widely by party, with 77% of Democratic parents saying they would prefer that their children learn that there are other countries that are as good as or better than the U.S., compared with 52% of Republican parents.

Most Democratic parents and about half of Republican ones would prefer their children learn that some countries are as good as or better than the U.S.

% of parents of K-12 students saying they would prefer their children learn in school that ...



Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown. White and Black parents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Data for Asian Democratic parents is included in the total but is not shown separately due to small sample size. Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022. “Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School”

And while fewer than half of Republican and Democratic parents say they would prefer that their children learn that the U.S. stands above all other countries in the world, Republicans (29%) are more likely than Democrats (10%) to hold this view.

A larger share of fathers (24%) than mothers (13%) say they'd prefer that their children learn that the U.S. stands above all other countries, and this difference is particularly pronounced among Republicans. About four-in-ten Republican dads (38%) say this, compared with 23% of Republican moms. In turn, a majority of Republican moms say they would prefer that their children learn that there are other countries that are as good as or better than the U.S. (57% vs. 47% of Republican dads).

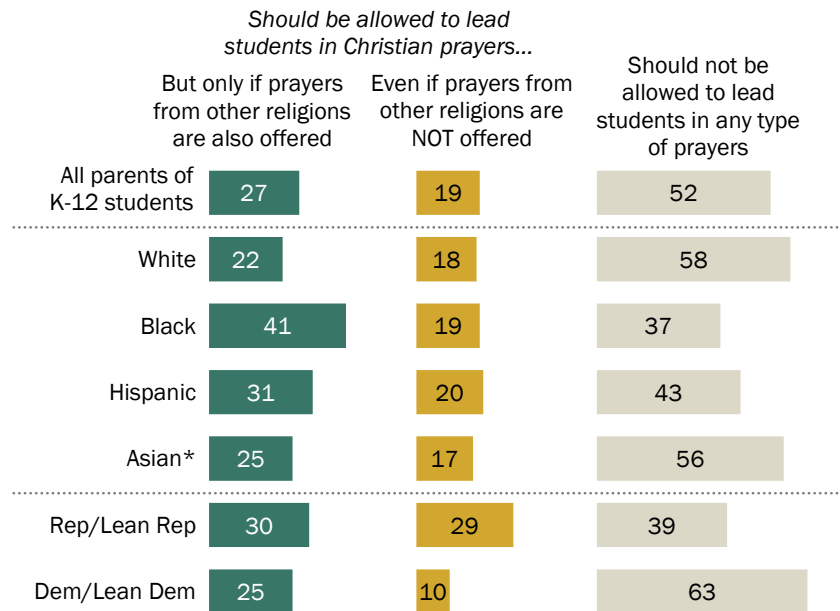
Among Democrats, Black (17%) and Hispanic (13%) parents are more likely than White parents (4%) to say they would prefer that their children learn that the U.S. stands above all other countries. But most White (86%), Black (69%) and Hispanic (68%) Democratic parents say they would prefer that their children learn that there are other countries that are as good as or better than the U.S.

Views about whether public school teachers should be allowed to lead students in prayer are somewhat mixed

About half of parents of K-12 students (52%) say public school teachers shouldn't be allowed to lead students in any type of prayers, but more than

White, Asian and Democratic parents are the most likely to say public school teachers should not be allowed to lead students in any type of prayers

% of parents of K-12 students saying teachers in public schools ...



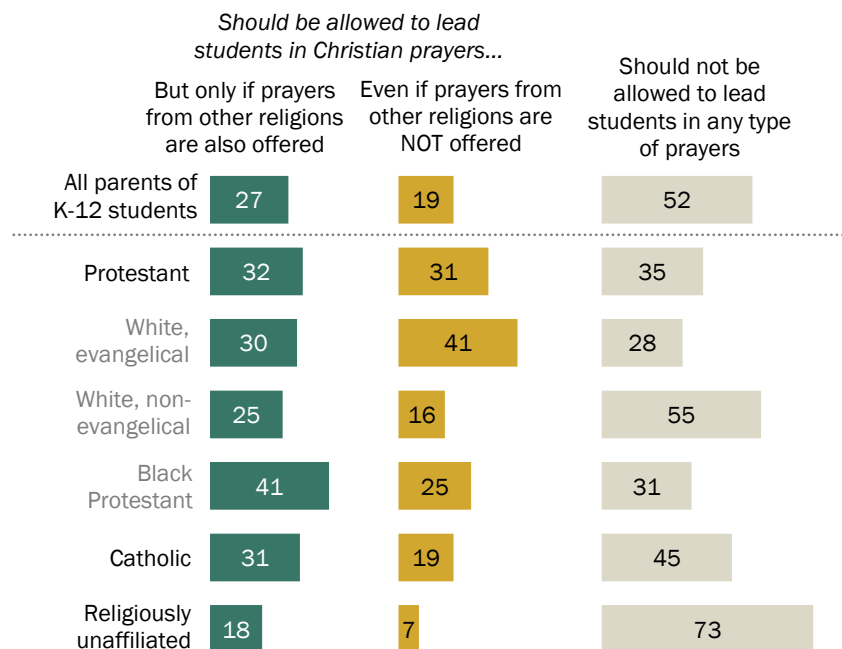
* Estimates for Asian parents are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian parents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.
 Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.
 "Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School"

four-in-ten say public school teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers, including 27% who say this should be allowed only if prayers from other religions are also offered and 19% who say this should be allowed even if prayers from other religions are *not* offered.

Similar shares of parents across racial and ethnic groups (between 17% and 20%) say public school teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers even if prayers from other religions are not offered. But Black parents are the most likely to say teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers as long as prayers from other religions are also offered (41% vs. 31% of Hispanic parents, 25% of Asian parents and 22% of White parents). Some 37% of Black parents and 43% of Hispanic parents say public school teachers shouldn't be allowed to lead students in any type of prayers, smaller than the share of White (58%) and Asian (56%) parents who say the same.

About four-in-ten White evangelical parents say public school teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers even if no other prayers offered

% of parents of K-12 students saying teachers in public schools ...



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.
 "Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School"

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Most Democratic parents (63%) say public school teachers shouldn't be allowed to lead students in any type of prayers, compared with 39% of Republican parents. Among Republican parents, 30% say teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers, but only if prayers from other religions are also offered (25% of Democrats agree), and 29% say teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers even if prayers from other religions are not offered (vs. 10% of Democratic parents).

Perhaps not surprisingly, these views vary considerably by religious affiliation. About four-in-ten White evangelical parents (41%) say public school teachers should be allowed to lead students in Christian prayers, even if prayers from other religions are not offered. A quarter (25%) of Black Protestant parents share this view, as do 19% of Catholic, 16% of White non-evangelical Protestant and 7% of unaffiliated parents.

Religiously unaffiliated parents are by far the most likely to say public school teachers shouldn't be allowed to lead students in any type of prayers: 73% say this, compared with 55% of White non-evangelical parents, 45% of Catholic parents, 31% of Black Protestant parents and 28% of White evangelical parents.

White parents are more likely than other major racial or ethnic groups to say teachers and administrators share their values

About half of parents of K-12 students (52%) say the teachers and administrators at their children's school have values that are at least somewhat similar to their own, with a relatively small share (14%) saying these teachers and administrators have values that are *very* similar to theirs. About a third of parents (32%) say the values of the teachers and administrators at their children's school are neither similar nor different, and 14% say they are very or somewhat different than their own values.

These views vary considerably by the type of school students attend. Some 46% of parents answering about a child in private school say the teachers and administrators at their child's school have values that are *very* similar to their own, compared with 11% of those answering about a child in public school (78% of those answering about a child in private school say the values are at least somewhat similar vs. 50% of those answering about a child in public school).

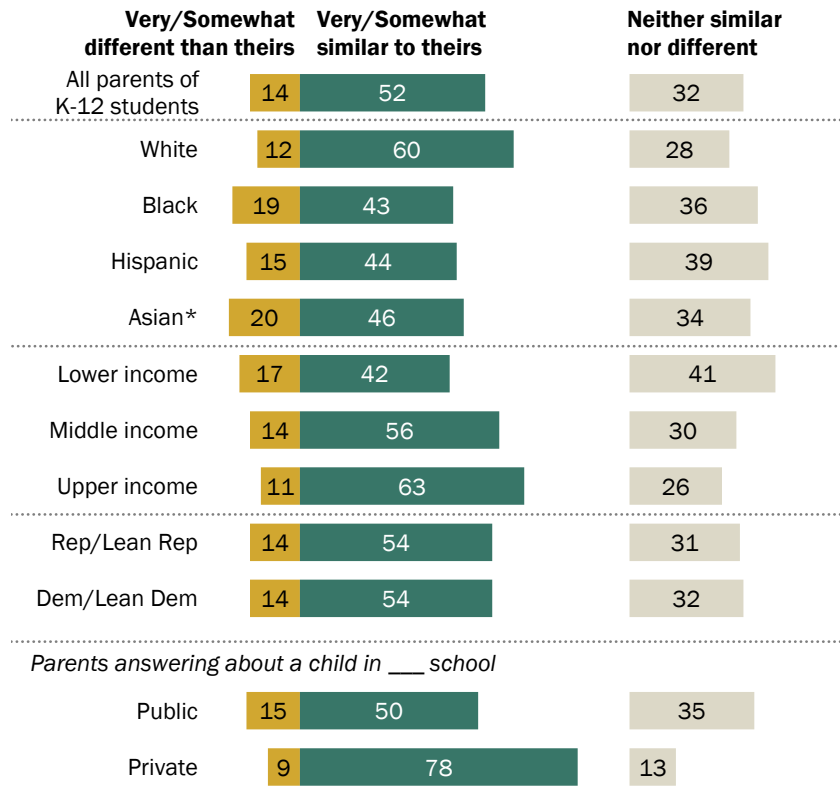
White parents are the most likely to say the teachers and administrators at their children’s school have values that are at least somewhat similar to their own. Six-in-ten White parents say this, compared with 46% of Asian parents, 44% of Hispanic parents and 43% of Black parents. These differences remain when looking only at parents answering about a child in public school.

Majorities of parents with upper (63%) and middle (56%) incomes say the teachers and administrators at their children’s school have values that are at least somewhat similar to their own, compared with 42% of those with lower incomes. These income differences remain when looking only at parents answering about a child who attends public school.

Republican and Democratic parents – including those answering about a child in a public K-12 school – are about equally likely to say the teachers and administrators at their children’s school have values that are very similar (10% and 12%, respectively) or somewhat similar (39% and 40%) to their own.

About half of parents say the teachers, administrators at their children’s school share their values

% of parents of K-12 students saying the teachers and administrators at their children’s school have values that are ...



* Estimates for Asian parents are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: Based on parents whose children are not homeschooled. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. White, Black and Asian parents include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2021 earnings. Parents answering about a child attending a charter school are included in the total but not shown separately due to small sample size.
 Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.
 "Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School"

Overall, parents who are less satisfied with the amount of input they have into what their children are learning at school are more likely to say the teachers and administrators at their children’s school don’t share their values: 29% of parents who say they are not too or not at all satisfied with how much input they have say this, compared with 11% of those who are extremely or very satisfied. Among those who express high levels of satisfaction with the amount of input they have, 63% say the teachers and administrators at their children’s school share their values (vs. 31% of those who are not too or not at all satisfied).

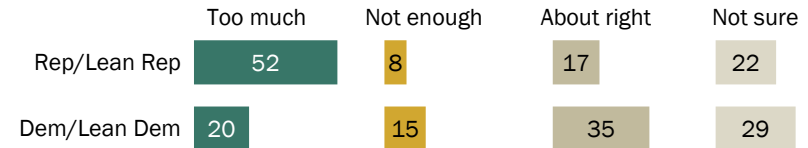
Wide partisan gaps in views of how much influence parents, school boards and governments have on what public K-12 schools teach

In addition to asking parents of K-12 students about their assessments of and experiences with their children’s education, the survey also asked more

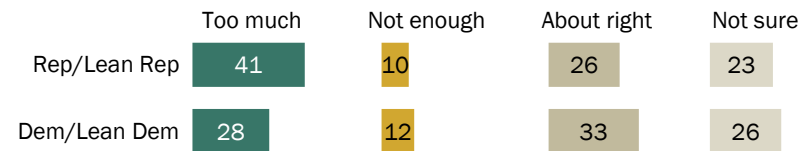
Republican and Democratic parents have different views of the influence government, school boards, parents and teachers have on what schools teach

% of parents of K-12 students saying each of the following has ___ influence when it comes to what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching

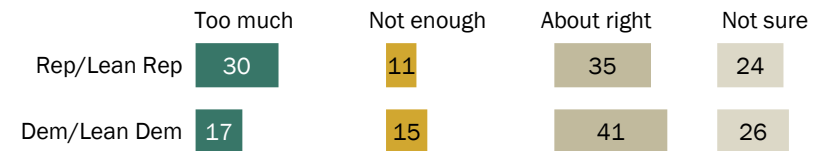
The federal government



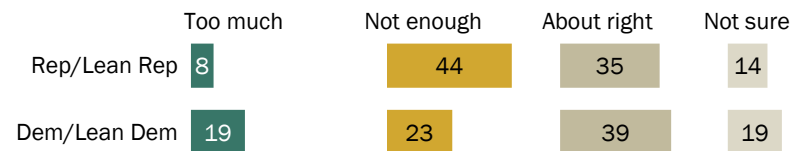
Their state government



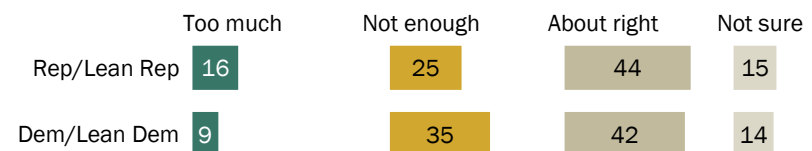
The local school board



Parents



Teachers



Note: Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown. The survey also asked about principals and students. Only items with a difference of 10 percentage points or more in shares of Republican and Democratic parents saying “too much” or “not enough” shown. Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022. “Parents Differ Sharply by Party Over What Their K-12 Children Should Learn in School”

generally about their views of how much influence each of the following have on what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching: the federal government, their state government, the local school board, parents, teachers, principals and students.

For the most part, parents of K-12 students either say that each of these actors has the right amount of influence or that they are not sure. But to the extent that parents see each of these as having too much or not enough influence on what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching, more say the local school board, their state government and the federal government have too much influence than say they don't have enough influence. In turn, larger shares say parents, teachers, principals and students don't have enough influence than say they have too much influence.

Republican parents (44%) are far more likely than Democratic parents (23%) to say parents in general don't have enough influence when it comes to what public K-12 schools in their area are teaching. And by double-digit margins, Republican parents are more likely than their Democratic counterparts to say the federal government (52% of Republicans vs. 20% of Democrats), their state government (41% vs. 28%) and their local school board (30% vs. 17%) have *too much* influence.

When it comes to how much influence they think teachers have on what public K-12 schools are teaching, Republican and Democratic parents alike are more likely to say teachers don't have enough influence than to say they have too much influence. But Democratic parents are more likely than Republican parents to say teachers don't have enough influence (35% vs. 25%, respectively). And while 16% of Republican parents say teachers have too much influence, a smaller share of Democratic parents (9%) say the same.

Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at [pewresearch.org/topic/other-topics/education](https://www.pewresearch.org/topic/other-topics/education)

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Anna Brown, *Research Associate*
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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

The American Trends Panel (ATP), created by Pew Research Center, is a nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. Panelists participate via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access at home are provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection. Interviews are conducted in both English and Spanish. The panel is being managed by Ipsos.

Data in this report is drawn from the panel wave conducted from Sept. 20 to Oct. 2, 2022, among a sample of U.S. adults who are parents of at least one child under the age of 18. A total of 3,757 panelists responded out of 5,293 who were sampled, for a response rate of 76% (AAPOR RR3). This included 2,987 respondents from the ATP and an oversample of 770 Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic Asian respondents from Ipsos' KnowledgePanel in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of these smaller demographic subgroups. These oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 2%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 2%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,757 respondents is plus or minus 2.2 percentage points.

Panel recruitment

The ATP was created in 2014, with the first cohort of panelists invited to join the panel at the end of a large, national, landline and cellphone random-digit-dial

American Trends Panel recruitment surveys

Recruitment dates	Mode	Invited	Joined	Active panelists remaining
Jan. 23 to March 16, 2014	Landline/ cell RDD	9,809	5,338	1,504
Aug. 27 to Oct. 4, 2015	Landline/ cell RDD	6,004	2,976	882
April 25 to June 4, 2017	Landline/ cell RDD	3,905	1,628	434
Aug. 8 to Oct. 31, 2018	ABS	9,396	8,778	4,121
Aug. 19 to Nov. 30, 2019	ABS	5,900	4,720	1,478
June 1 to July 19, 2020; Feb. 10 to March 31, 2021	ABS	3,197	2,812	1,543
May 29 to July 7, 2021				
Sept. 16 to Nov. 1, 2021	ABS	1,329	1,162	790
May 24 to July 6, 2022	ABS	2,724	2,324	1,390
	Total	42,264	29,738	12,142

Note: Approximately once per year, panelists who have not participated in multiple consecutive waves or who did not complete an annual profiling survey are removed from the panel. Panelists also become inactive if they ask to be removed from the panel. The 2022 recruitment survey was ongoing at the time W115 was conducted. The counts reflect completed recruitment interviews up through July 6, 2022.

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survey that was conducted in both English and Spanish. Two additional recruitments were conducted using the same method in 2015 and 2017, respectively. Across these three surveys, a total of 19,718 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 9,942 (50%) agreed to participate.

In August 2018, the ATP switched from telephone to address-based recruitment. Invitations were sent to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File. Sampled households receive mailings asking a randomly selected adult to complete a survey online. A question at the end of the survey asks if the respondent is willing to join the ATP. In 2020 and 2021 another stage was added to the recruitment. Households that did not respond to the online survey were sent a paper version of the questionnaire, \$5 and a postage-paid return envelope. A subset of the adults who returned the paper version of the survey were invited to join the ATP. This subset of adults received a follow-up mailing with a \$10 pre-incentive and invitation to join the ATP.

Across the five address-based recruitments, a total of 22,546 adults were invited to join the ATP, of whom 19,796 agreed to join the panel and completed an initial profile survey. In each household, one adult was selected and asked to go online to complete a survey, at the end of which they were invited to join the panel. Of the 29,738 individuals who have ever joined the ATP, 12,142 remained active panelists and continued to receive survey invitations at the time this survey was conducted.

The U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File has been estimated to cover as much as 98% of the population, although some studies suggest that the coverage could be in the low 90% range.⁵ The American Trends Panel never uses breakout routers or chains that direct respondents to additional surveys.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was non-institutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii, who are parents of at least one child under the age of 18. The ATP sample consisted of all current panel members who reported having at least one child under the age of 18 on the ATP's 2022 annual profile survey. The ATP was supplemented with an oversample of Hispanic, non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic Asian respondents from the KnowledgePanel who are parents of at least one child under the age of 18.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with Ipsos. The web program was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the Ipsos project management

⁵ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. "[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling.](#)"

team and Pew Research Center researchers. The Ipsos project management team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All ATP respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or a gift code to Amazon.com or could choose to decline the incentive. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$20 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Ipsos operates an ongoing modest incentive program for KnowledgePanel to encourage participation and create member loyalty. The incentive program includes special raffles and sweepstakes with both cash rewards and other prizes to be won. Typically, panel members are assigned no more than one survey per week. On average, panel members complete two to three surveys per month with durations of 10 to 15 minutes per survey. An additional incentive is usually provided for longer surveys. For this survey, during the last few days of data collection, KnowledgePanel members who self-identified as Asian or Asian American were offered 10,000 points (equivalent to \$10) in addition to the regular incentive program in an attempt to boost the number of responses from panel members who identified as Asian or Asian American.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was Sept. 20 to Oct. 2, 2022. Postcard notifications were mailed to all ATP panelists with a known residential address on Sept. 19.

Invitations were sent out in two separate launches: Soft Launch and Full Launch. Sixty ATP panelists and 609 KnowledgePanel panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on Sept. 20. The ATP panelists chosen for the initial soft launch were known responders who had completed previous ATP surveys within one day of receiving their invitation. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on Sept. 22.

All panelists with an email address received an email invitation and up to four email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. All ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages received an SMS invitation and up to four SMS reminders.

Invitation and reminder dates

	Soft Launch	Full Launch
Initial invitation	Sept. 20, 2022	Sept. 22, 2022
First reminder	Sept. 24, 2022	Sept. 24, 2022
Second reminder	Sept. 26, 2022	Sept. 26, 2022
Third reminder	Sept. 28, 2022	Sept. 28, 2022
Final reminder	Sept. 30, 2022	Sept. 30, 2022

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, the Center’s researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing clear patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for very high rates of leaving questions blank, as well as always selecting the first or last answer presented. After this checking, no respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The data is weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. These weights are then rescaled and adjusted to account for changes in the design of recruitment surveys from year to year, nonresponse to the recruitment survey and panel attrition. Weights for the KnowledgePanel respondents were also adjusted to account for their probability of being selected to participate in this survey. No such adjustment was made for ATP respondents because all eligible ATP members were invited to participate.

Next, respondents were placed into one of four sample groups: 1) non-Hispanic Black respondents, 2) non-Hispanic Asian respondents, 3) Hispanic respondents and 4) all other respondents. Separately within each group, the weights for ATP and KnowledgePanel respondents were scaled to be proportional to their effective sample size within that group. The ATP and KnowledgePanel respondents were then recombined and the weights were poststratified so that the weighted proportion of respondents in each of the four groups matched its share of all U.S. adults who are parents of at least one child under 18.

The weights were then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table which were calculated for the population of U.S. adults who are parents of at least one child under 18 that lives in their household. Finally, the weights were trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights.

For part of this survey, parents were asked a series of questions about either their oldest or youngest child in grades K-12 at random.

Additional sets of weights were created for parents who were asked about a child in elementary school, middle school or high school respectively to account for the possibility that for some parents, it would have been

possible for a child in a different grade level to have been randomly selected. These were created by adjusting each parent's full-sample weight based on the proportion of their children in the same grade level as the selected child.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	3,757	2.2 percentage points
Parents of at least one child in K-12	3,251	2.3 percentage points
Parents asked about a child in elementary school	1,474	3.8 percentage points
Parents asked about a child in middle school	662	5.6 percentage points
Parents asked about a child in high school	1,102	4.7 percentage points

Note: This survey was conducted only among parents of children under 18 and includes oversamples of non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian and Hispanic respondents. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2021 Current Population Survey
Age x Gender	March Supplement
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Census region x Metro/Non-metro	

Note: Population benchmarks used in weighted were calculated among adults who are parents of at least one child under 18 that lives in their household.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions	AAPOR code	ATP	KP	Total
Completed interview	1.1	2,987	770	3,757
Logged onto survey; broke off	2.12	18	42	60
Logged onto survey; did not complete any items	2.1121	11	31	42
Never logged on (implicit refusal)	2.11	166	1,008	1,174
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0	0	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.3	0	0	0
Screened out	4.7	131	129	260
Total panelists in the survey		3,313	1,980	5,293
Completed interviews	I	2,987	770	3,757
Partial interviews	P	0	0	0
Refusals	R	18	42	60
Non-contact	NC	0	0	0
Other	O	0	0	0
Unknown household	UH	0	0	0
Unknown other	UO	177	1,039	1,216
Not eligible	NE	0	0	0
Screen out	SO	131	129	260
Total		3,313	1,980	5,293
Est. eligibility rate among unscreened: $e = (I+R)/(I+R+SO)$		96%	86%	94%
AAPOR RR1 = $I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)$		94%	42%	75%
AAPOR RR3 = $I / (I+R+[e*UO])$		94%	45%	76%

Cumulative response rate	ATP	KP	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	10%	8%	9%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	70%	58%	66%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 115	41%	48%	44%
Response rate to Wave 115 survey	94%	45%	76%
Cumulative response rate	3%	1%	2%

Adjusting income and defining income tiers

To create upper-, middle- and lower-income tiers, respondents' 2021 family incomes were adjusted for differences in purchasing power by geographic region and household size. "Middle-income" adults live in families with annual incomes that are two-thirds to double the median family income in the panel (after incomes have been adjusted for the local cost of living and household size). The middle-income range for the American Trends Panel is about \$43,800 to \$131,500 annually for an average family of three. Lower-income families have incomes less than roughly \$43,800, and upper-income families have incomes greater than roughly \$131,500 (all figures expressed in 2021 dollars).

Based on these adjustments, 31% of respondents with children in K-12 schools in Wave 115 are lower income, 49% are middle income and 17% fall into the upper-income tier. An additional 3% either didn't offer a response to the income question or the household size question.

More information about how the income tiers were determined can be found [here](#).

A note about the Asian adult sample

This survey includes a total sample size of 268 Asian parents with children in K-12 schools. The sample primarily includes English-speaking Asian adults and, therefore, may not be representative of the overall Asian adult population. Despite this limitation, it is important to report the views of Asian adults on the topics in this study. As always, Asian adults' responses are incorporated into the general population figures throughout this report. Because of the relatively small sample size and a reduction in precision due to weighting, we are not able to analyze Asian adults separately when looking at specific categories, such as partisanship.

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