



Cowen Institute

ANNUAL POLL 2025

Parents' and Guardians'
Opinions on K-12 Public
Education in New Orleans

The Cowen Institute
October 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Cowen Institute has conducted annual polls on perceptions of public education in New Orleans since 2007. These polls analyze the sentiments of parents and guardians on many vital issues facing New Orleans public education and the City writ large. Typically, the polls are conducted near the start of the school year. Each year, we carry some questions over from previous years' polls, while others are new and focus on key topics that are contemporaneously relevant.

The previous two years, we've released the results in two briefs due to the length of the survey. This year, we are releasing all of the poll findings in a single brief as we asked fewer questions than in 2023 and 2024 to ensure we could publish before the fall elections. This report covers those results, including parents' and guardians' perceptions on the following issues:

- The overall direction of the City of New Orleans
- The upcoming New Orleans mayoral race
- The major concerns facing the City
- New Orleans Public Schools (NOLA-PS)
- The quality of public education
- Postsecondary outcomes

Since 2020, we have polled 1,000 parents and guardians who have at least one student in their household currently attending a public or private school in Orleans Parish, as well as a small number of those homeschooling their children, to capture a wide range of experiences and attitudes.

METHODOLOGY

This is the 16th opinion poll on public education in New Orleans published by the Cowen Institute since 2007. The survey items were developed by the Cowen Institute in consultation with LJR Custom Strategies, a strategic research and consulting firm led by Principal Jennifer Johnson. LJR has led our polling over the past seven years. Questions were created by the Cowen Institute in partnership with LJR and feedback from external stakeholders in the New Orleans education community.

This was a survey of 1,000 adults who reside in Orleans Parish and are the parent, guardian, or responsible party for one or more children who currently reside in their household and attend a K-12 school, or are homeschooled.

The poll was conducted from September 3–13, 2025 via landline and cell phone — 90% of respondents were reached by cell phone. Findings applying to the 1,000 sample are subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3.1%; subgroups of the sample are subject to an error of up to plus or minus 10%. Also, please note that in places percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding.

1,000 Parents and
Guardians

90% Were Reached by
Cell Phone

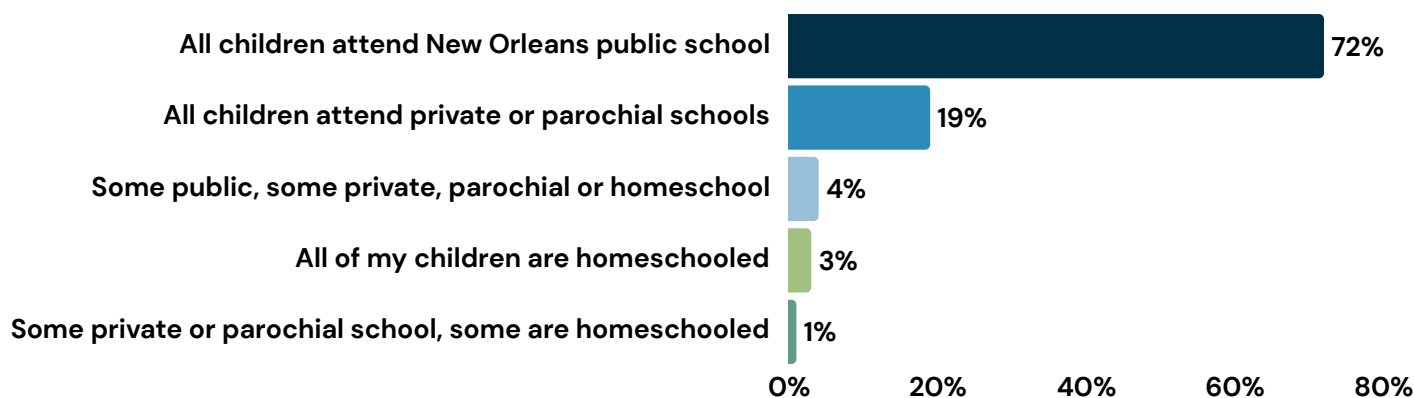
10% Were Reached by
Landline

**Polling Conducted:
September 3 - 13, 2025**

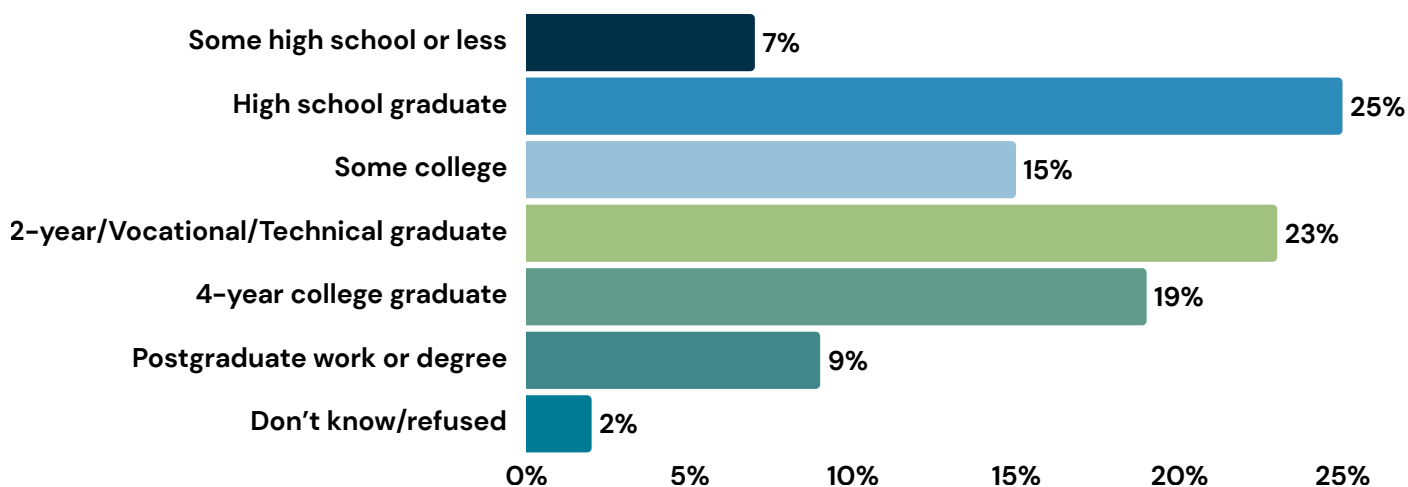
DEMOGRAPHICS

To offer more insight into the parents and guardians who responded to this poll, this section presents an overview of the demographics of poll respondents. LJR attempts to produce a sample of respondents that most closely aligns with the overall demographics of the K-12 child-age school population in New Orleans as possible. However, it is worth noting that in 2025, we had a higher percentage of parents whose children attend private or parochial schools than in previous years, which enabled us to more closely mirror the breakdown of city students attending non-public schools.

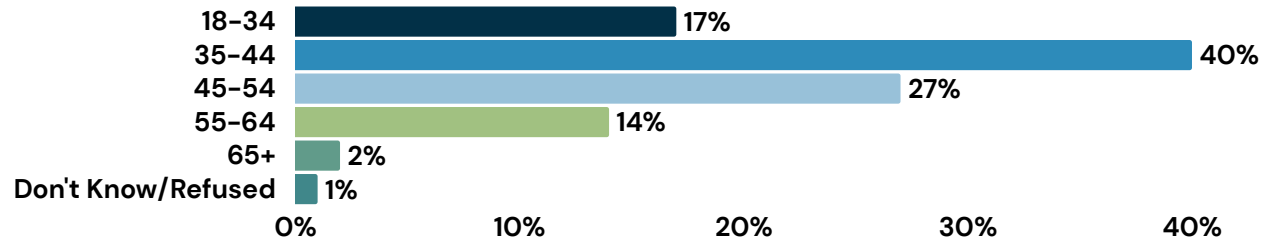
TYPE OF SCHOOL OF CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD



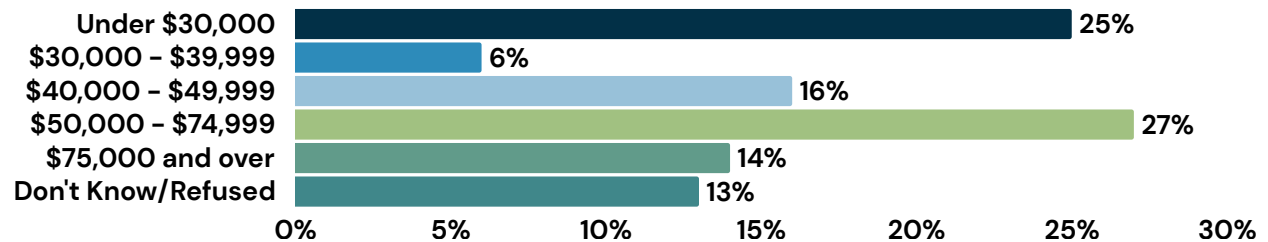
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED



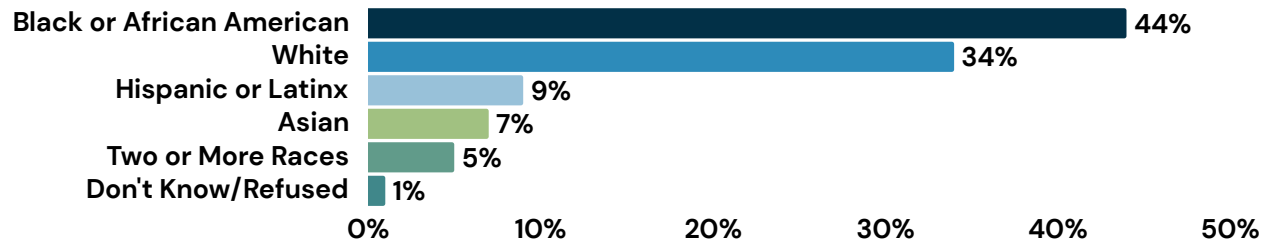
AGE



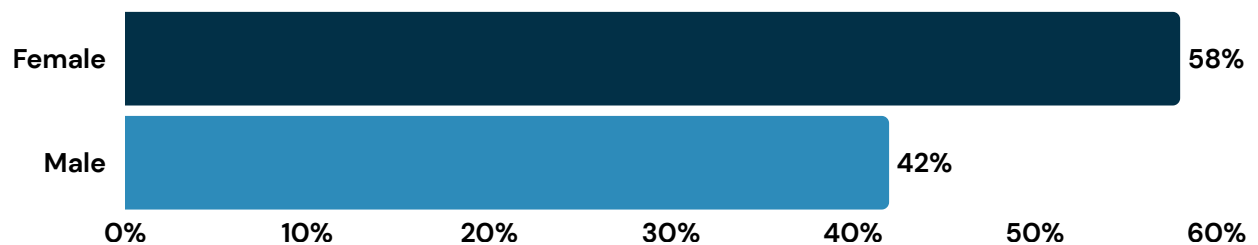
HOUSEHOLD INCOME



RACE



GENDER



KEY FINDINGS

The Future of New Orleans and Issues Facing the City

Key Issues Facing the City: As we have found consistently over the past five years, crime and violence remained respondents' top concern facing the city, followed by poverty, and the economy/jobs, and education, which were tied for third.

Direction of the City and Mayoral Race: A majority of respondents said they felt optimistic about the direction of the city under its new, incoming leadership. Of those who said they had decided on a candidate in the mayoral race, and volunteered an answer, Helena Moreno (25%) was the only candidate who received more than 3% of responses (59% said they were undecided).

Greater Support for Education: There was near universal agreement that city leaders, social services, and the justice system should do more to help New Orleans public schools on issues like truancy and transportation.

Public Education in New Orleans

Direction of Public Education: Respondents were slightly more negative than in 2024 about the direction of public education overall, with 22% stating it was getting better, compared to 43% who said it was staying the same, and 34% who said it was worse. In 2024, it was 31% better, 35% the same, and 31% worse.

Quality of Public Education: Parents' and guardians' perceptions about the quality of public education in the city remained consistent with recent years' polling, as 29% gave schools an A or B grade, 39% a C, and 31% a D or F. Yet, as we've seen consistently in our polls, parents' and guardians' ratings of the individual New Orleans public schools their children actually attend were more positive than their perceptions about the quality of public education as a whole.

New Orleans Public Schools: Negative perceptions about New Orleans Public Schools (NOLA-PS), the entity that oversees the majority of public schools in the city, increased this year, though the percentage of positive responses stayed largely unchanged from 2024.

Charter Schools: As in 2024, a plurality of parents (38%) were neutral about charter schools in New Orleans, while the percentage who were negative dropped significantly, from 29% in 2024 to 16% in 2025.

Tax for Teacher Salaries: A majority of respondents (50%) said they would support a new local tax to augment the salaries of public school teachers.

Federal Education Cuts: A majority of public school parents and guardians also said they were worried about the impact federal cuts to education would have on public education.

POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

Preparation for Life After High School: A majority of parents agreed that their children's schools were preparing them for both postsecondary education and careers after high school.

High School Coursework: The percentage of respondents in favor of students having access to both AP/honors courses and Career and Technical Education courses grew this year compared to 2024.

Planning for College: A majority of parents and guardians said they planned for their children to attend college or a university after graduating from high school, which was a significant increase from 2024. However, parents and guardians remained uncertain about how they would pay for postsecondary education.

TRENDS

There Were Significant Differences in Responses Based on Race: As we have consistently found in recent years, on nearly every measure, Black parents and guardians reported the most negative perceptions. White respondents, however, were more positive this year than in recent polls.

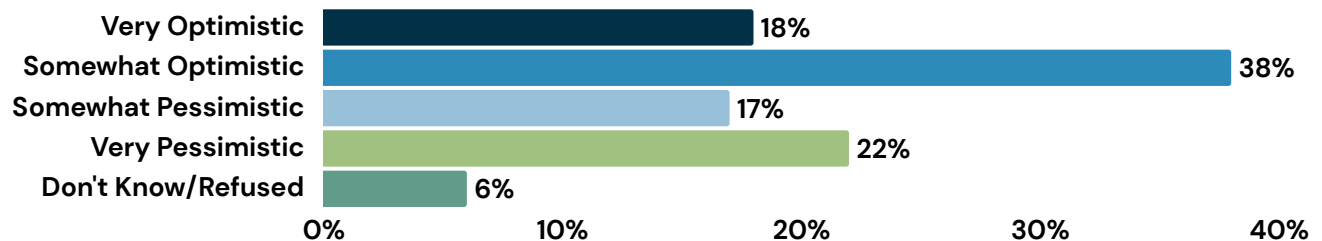
Socioeconomic Status Continues to Matter: The socioeconomic status of respondents remains a key factor in how they answered the poll questions. Parents and guardians from lower-income backgrounds offered lower ratings on almost all fronts than respondents from higher-income levels. Parents with higher educational attainment were also typically more positive and more likely to say their children intended to attend college than parents with lower levels of education.

THE FUTURE OF NEW ORLEANS

NEW LEADERSHIP

Thinking about the upcoming election for Mayor and City Council this fall, do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about the direction of New Orleans under new leadership?

Overall, parents and guardians were optimistic about the direction of New Orleans under new leadership: 56% said they were very or somewhat optimistic, while 39% said they were very or somewhat pessimistic. Respondents with higher levels of education (some college/a two-year, vocational or technical degree, and college graduates) were more optimistic than those with less education: 76% of college graduates were optimistic, compared to 13% of respondents with a high school degree or less. Responses were equally stratified when broken out by income: 78% of respondents making between \$40,000–\$74,999 and 72% of respondents making at least \$75,000 were optimistic compared to 13% of those making \$40,000 or less. 81% of White respondents expressed optimism, compared to 46% of Hispanic and 39% of Black respondents.



ISSUE CONCERNS

Which one of the following issues facing New Orleans concerns you the most? — The economy and jobs; Education; Poverty; Crime and Violence; Infrastructure like roads, drainage, and the sewer and water system; Housing and insurance costs; Climate change and extreme weather?

For the sixth straight year, crime rated as the top concern for respondents. A plurality of parents and guardians (37%) cited it as their top concern, which was aligned to responses from last year (41%). Poverty was once again the second-highest concern, increasing from 16% of responses in 2024 to 23% in 2025. Economy/jobs and education tied for third with 14% of responses.

Subgroups:

Race: Black respondents were the most likely to cite crime as their top concern (40%), compared to Hispanic (36%) and White (32%). 24% of White respondents stated education was their top concern compared to 9% of Black and 7% of Hispanic parents and guardians, respectively. Black, Hispanic, and other race respondents' concern about poverty was nearly double that of White respondents.

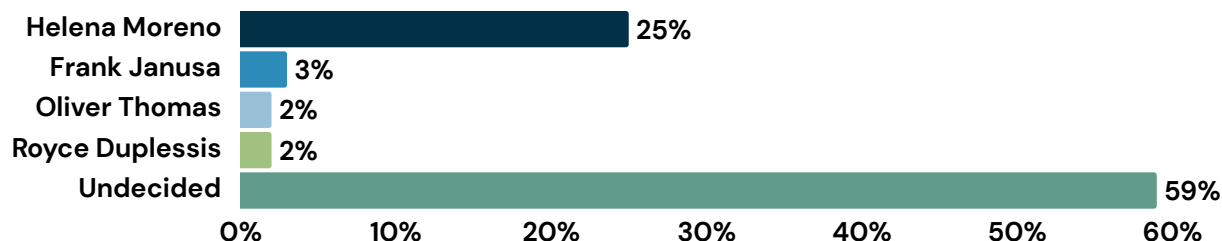
Socioeconomic Status: Concern about crime was highest amongst parents and guardians with lower incomes: 44% of respondents making under \$40,000 named it as their top concern, compared to 38% of respondents making \$40,000–\$74,999 and 36% of respondents making over \$75,000. Higher-income respondents named education as their second-highest concern.

MAYORAL ELECTION

If the election were today, who would you vote for in the Mayor's election?

Given the importance of the upcoming mayoral race, we also asked respondents about who they were intending to vote for in the election. 25% of respondents said they intended to vote for Helena Moreno; she was the only candidate to receive more than 3% of responses. The majority, 59% of parents and guardians, said they remained undecided. (Note: We did not screen for registered or likely voters on this question. Additionally, these responses were volunteered by parents and guardians, rather than being selected from a list.)

Moreno had strong support among respondents making \$40,000 or less: 44% said they intended to vote for her, compared to 16% of those making between \$40,000–\$74,999, and 18% of those making at least \$75,000 a year. When it came to race, Black respondents had the highest support for Moreno: 34% said they intended to vote for her, compared to 27% of Hispanic and 17% of White respondents, respectively.



Note: Renata Collins, Ricky Twiggs, Manny Chevrolet, and Gabrielle Thomas all received 1%. All other candidates received 2%.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEW ORLEANS

DIRECTION OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Would you say public education in New Orleans is getting better, getting worse, or staying about the same?

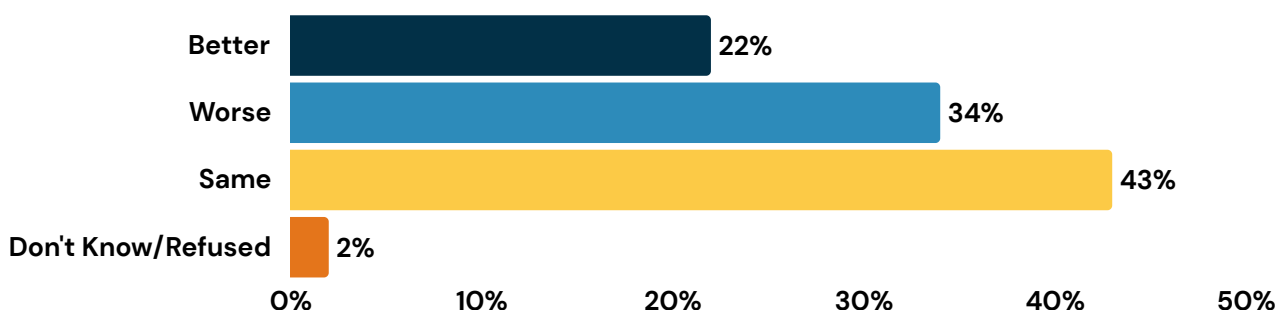
In 2024, respondents expressed higher levels of optimism about the direction of public education in New Orleans than in 2023. This year, respondents were more negative: 22% said public education was getting better and 34% said it was getting worse. A plurality of 43% said it was staying about the same.

Subgroups:

No Child in a NOLA-PS School: Parents and guardians without a child in a NOLA-PS school were noticeably more negative about the direction of public schools than those who did have a child enrolled. 53% of parents without a child in public schools said schools were getting worse, compared to 28% who did have a child in the public system.

Race: White parents and guardians were more positive than other races, with 31% saying schools were getting better, compared to 16% of Hispanic and 14% of Black parents.

Socioeconomic Status: Parents and guardians on the lowest end of the income spectrum had the highest negativity towards public education. 54% of respondents making \$40,000 or less said public education was getting worse (7% said they were getting better), while 28% of parents making \$75,000 or over said they were getting worse (23% said they were getting better). This continues trends from previous years in which low-income parents and guardians have more negative views about public education in the city than wealthier ones.



QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

What grade would you give the overall quality of education offered by the public schools in New Orleans – A, B, C, D, or F?

When asked about the letter grade they would give the quality of education offered by New Orleans' public schools, the responses from parents and guardians this year were remarkably similar to those from 2024. In 2025, 9% gave an A, 20% a B, 39% a C, 27% a D, and 4% an F. The percentage of respondents giving schools an A or a B (29%), was the highest it has been since 2021. Last year, 6% gave an A, 19% a B, 45% a C, 27% a D, and 2% an F.

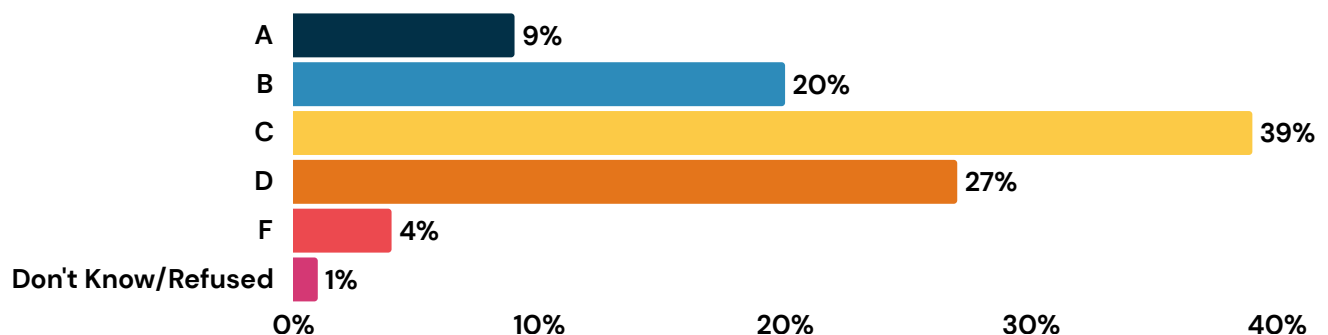
Respondents who have lived in New Orleans for at least 20 years were far more likely to give the schools a D or F (35%) than those who have lived here less than 10 years (21%), while those households who had a student in public school before Hurricane Katrina offered higher grades of schools than those who didn't have a student in schools at that time.

Subgroups:

Age: Younger respondents were far more positive in their assessments than older ones. 40% of respondents aged 18–34 and 31% of those aged 35–44 gave schools an A or B, while just 12% of those over 55 did so (and 49% gave schools an F or D).

Race: Similar to other questions, Black respondents had the most pessimistic views on this question. 42% of Black respondents gave schools a D or F, while 21% gave them an A or B. In contrast, 20% of White and 25% of Hispanic respondents gave schools a D or F, and 37% and 31% gave schools an A or B, respectively.

Socioeconomic Status: As we found in other questions, parents at the lowest income levels had the most negative responses on this question. 54% of respondents making \$40,000 or less gave schools a D, while only 11% gave them an A or B. Comparatively, 18% of parents making \$75,000 or more gave schools a D, while 26% gave them an A or B.



GRADE FOR CHILDREN'S SCHOOLS

What overall grade would you give the quality of education offered by your children's school or schools?

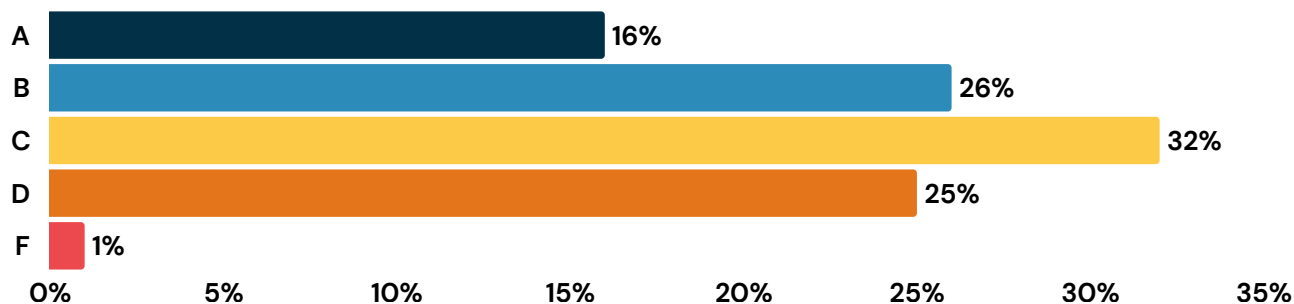
In recent years, we have asked a follow-up question to the grade respondents would give to the quality of public education in New Orleans that also focuses on the quality of the education at the public school their child(ren) actually attends. Consistently, public school parents and guardians have rated the quality of education at the school their child(ren) attend higher than that of the public education system as a whole.

This trend continued in 2025, as the number of parents giving their child(ren)'s school an A rose to 16%, up from 9% last year (this came with a corresponding drop in parents giving their child(ren)'s school a B, from 33% last year to 26% in 2025). Overall, there was a high correlation between the grade parents give the schools overall and what they give their children's schools. Additionally, as seen throughout this year's polling, respondents with children in lower grades were less satisfied with their children's schools and education offerings overall, than those with students in higher grades, particularly 9–12. Additionally, 64% of respondents who had a public school student in their household before Hurricane Katrina gave their children's schools an A or a B, continuing the trend that these parents and guardians felt more positive about public education than those who didn't have a student in schools at that time. Finally, parents and guardians who said their child planned to attend college were far more likely to give their child(ren)'s school an A or B (58%) than those who did not plan on their child(ren) attending college (39%) and those who were undecided (27%).

Subgroups:

Race: White respondents were more positive than Black and Hispanic parents and guardians. 65% of White parents and guardians gave their child(ren)'s school an A or B, compared to 46% of Hispanic and 27% of Black respondents.

Socioeconomic Status: Once again, higher-income respondents had far more positive responses than lower-income respondents on this question. 48% of parents and guardians making \$75,000 or above gave their child(ren)'s school an A or B, compared to 14% of those making \$40,000 or less.



CHARTER SCHOOLS

Please tell me whether you rate your feelings toward charter schools in New Orleans as very positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or very negative?

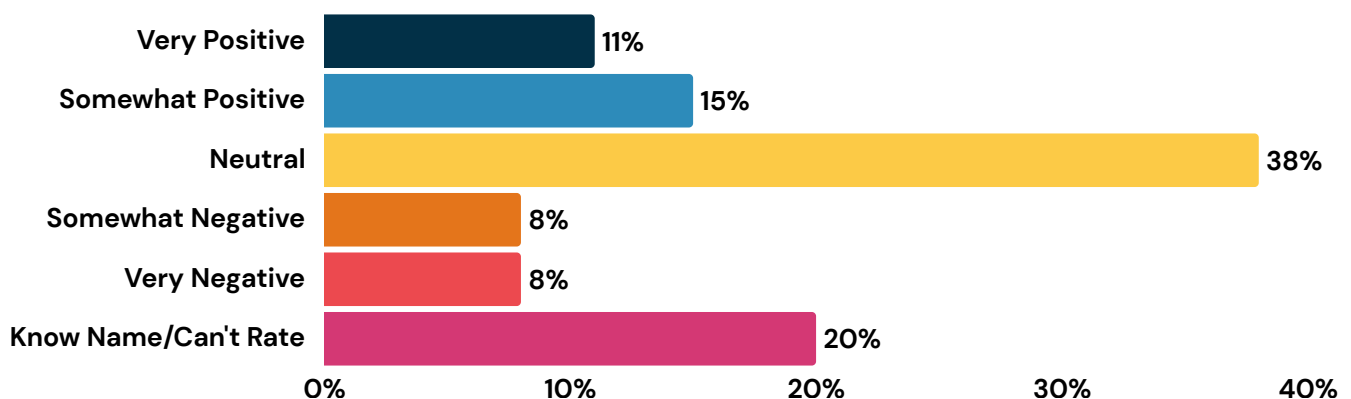
All but one public school in New Orleans is a charter school. This makes the city's education landscape uniquely decentralized compared to other public systems in the United States. We have consistently asked parents and guardians about their opinions of charter schools since we started administering polls in 2007. Perceptions about charter schools were similar in 2025 to those in 2024, with a plurality of respondents saying they felt neutral in both years (38% in 2025, 44% in 2024.) This year, 26% said they felt very or somewhat positive about charter schools (24% in 2024). Notably, negative perceptions of charter schools dropped significantly this year, going from 29% of respondents who felt very or somewhat negative in 2024 to 16% in 2025. The percentage of respondents who said they could not rate charter schools rose this year to 20%, from 3% last year.

Overall, out of all subgroups, charter schools in New Orleans received their best ratings from households with a student in grades 9–12 and those who had a student in public schools before Hurricane Katrina. Other notable findings were that respondents with a student in a New Orleans public school were less familiar with charter schools than those without a public school student at home. This was likely driven by the lack of familiarity about charter schools among income under \$40,000 respondents. Additionally, newer residents to the city were less positive toward charter schools than those who have been in New Orleans over 10 years.

Subgroups:

Race: White respondents were the most positive about charter schools, with 31% having very or positive views, compared to 24% of Hispanic and 19% of Black respondents.

Socioeconomic Status: Higher-income respondents viewed charter schools positively at more than twice the rate of respondents with lower incomes: 24% of those making \$75,000 or more had very or somewhat positive views, compared to 9% of those making \$40,000 or under.



COLLECTIVE IMPACT

91%

City leaders, social services, and the justice system should do more to help New Orleans public schools on issues like truancy and transportation.

The vast majority of respondents, 91% (55% of that strongly), agreed that city leaders, social services, and the justice system should do more to help New Orleans public schools on issues like truancy and transportation. This agreement was strong regardless of where parents' and guardians' children attended school, as well as their education, income, or race. This suggests parents and guardians would like city leaders outside of education to do more to support students and families.

FEDERAL EDUCATION FUNDING CUTS

83%

I am worried about the impact of recent federal cuts to public education funding.

There was also strong agreement from parents and guardians of public school students that they are worried about the impact of recent cuts to federal funding for public education in the U.S.: 83% agreed they were worried. The cuts were of concern to respondents of all education and income levels and races, although respondents with a high school degree or less, and those making under \$40,000 a year in income, were more likely to express that they were unsure or to not answer the question.

CELL PHONES

Students should be prohibited from using cell phones in public schools.

Notably, this year's respondents expressed far less agreement about banning cell phones in schools compared to those questioned in last year's poll. In 2025, 34% of respondents with a public school student agreed (and 65% disagreed) with the statement that students should be prohibited from using cell phones in school, which was a drastic change from the 68% who supported it in 2024. However, it is important to note that we changed the wording of the question this year. Last year, we asked whether parents and guardians supported "Prohibiting students from using cell phones in public schools." The difference in wording, though slight, could in part contribute to the significant change in response rates.

In 2025, there was a stark difference in responses to this question based on the race, educational attainment, and income level of respondents.

Subgroups:

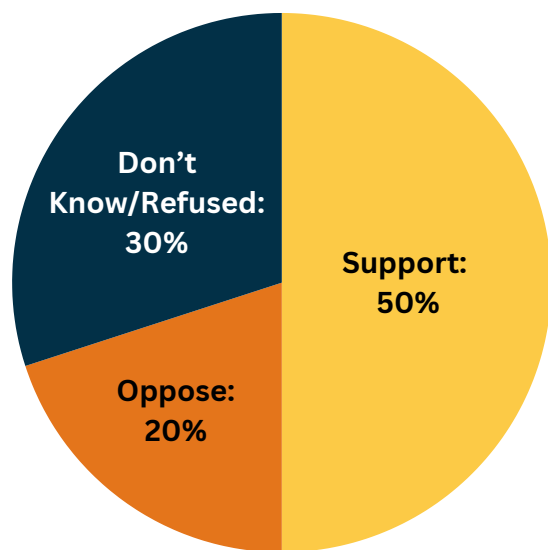
Educational Attainment: Respondents with the least amount of educational attainment expressed the greatest opposition to prohibiting students from using cell phones: 85% of respondents with a high school degree or less disagreed about the prohibition compared to 51% of respondents with a college degree of some kind.

Race: Black (79%) and Hispanic (69%) respondents disagreed that students should be prohibited from using cell phones, while a majority of White parents (63%) agreed that they should be.

Socioeconomic Status: Respondents making \$40,000 or less were the most likely to oppose prohibiting students from using cell phones: 89% of parents and guardians with incomes of \$40,000 or less disagreed with the prohibition, while 58% of parents making over \$75,000 agreed that cell phones should be banned. Parents making between \$40,000–\$74,999 were nearly split, with 50% disagreeing and 48% agreeing.

TEACHER SALARIES

Would you support or oppose a new local tax if the revenue was dedicated to raising public teacher salaries in New Orleans?



Like many public education systems across the country, New Orleans is facing a teacher shortage. Additionally, the state has not increased funding for public education for over a decade. The stagnation in salaries could contribute to the ongoing challenges in finding educators willing to work as teachers in public schools. To directly address this issue, this year we asked if respondents would support a tax increase to address teacher shortages at city schools. We found a majority of respondents, 50%, would support a new local tax to raise public teacher salaries in New Orleans public schools, while 20% were opposed. Support was highest among those who gave the public schools in New Orleans an A or B (83%), was moderate among those who offered a C grade (53%), and was quite low (15%) among those who gave schools a D or F grade.

Notably, support was far higher among respondents without a student in a public school currently (66%) than those who did have a public school student in their household (44%). Lower-income respondents were far less likely to support the new tax (16%) than middle (65%) and higher (54%) income respondents. A majority of White (71%) and Hispanic (50%) respondents also supported a new tax, while a minority of Black (33%) parents and guardians did. For context, we did not screen for registered or likely voters or include a millage or dollar amount associated with this new local tax.

NEW ORLEANS 20 YEARS AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements: Public education in New Orleans is better than it was before Hurricane Katrina.

August 2025 marked 20 years since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans due to the failure of the local levee system. Following that storm, New Orleans public education underwent a radical transformation that has led to the city's current system in which all but one school in the city is an independently run, non-profit charter school. We wanted to assess parents and guardians' perceptions of whether public education had improved over the past two decades.

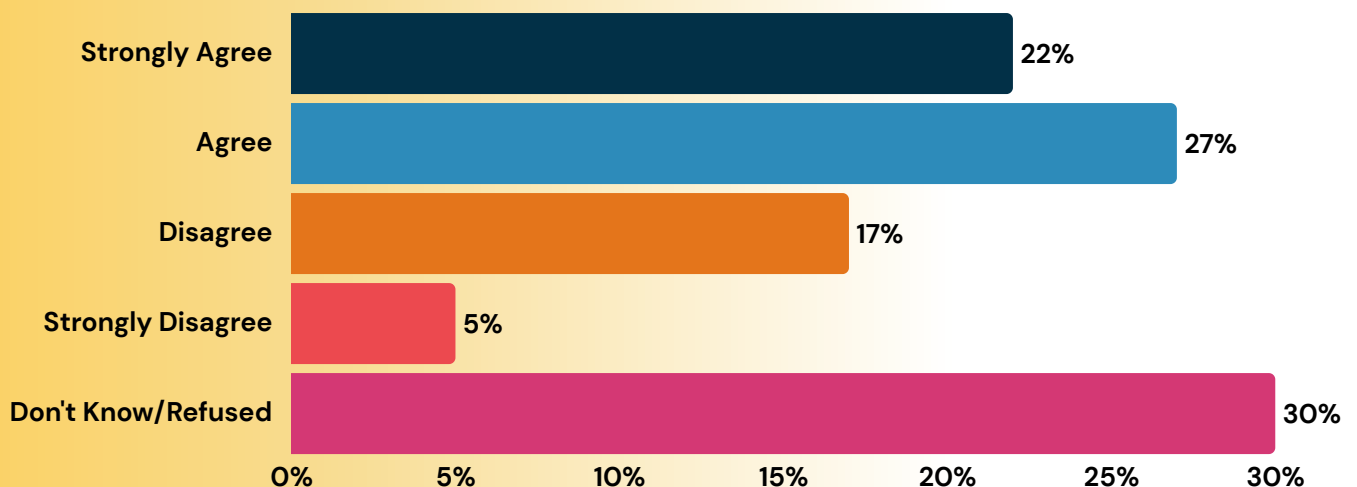
A near majority of all respondents, 49%, agreed that public education had improved since Hurricane Katrina, compared to 22% who disagreed, and 30% who didn't answer or were not sure. Interestingly, parents who had lived in New Orleans for ten years or less were least likely to agree education had improved (27%) compared to those who had lived here 11-20 years (45%) and more than 20 years (52%).

Subgroups:

Educational Attainment: Parents with a college degree were nearly five times as likely (70%) to agree that education had improved than those with a high school degree or less (15%).

Race: Majorities of White (59%) and Hispanic (58%) respondents agreed education had improved, while a plurality of Black (39% agreed, 24% disagreed) respondents did so.

Socioeconomic Status: Majorities of middle- and higher-income respondents agreed education had improved, while more lower-income respondents disagreed. 61% of respondents making \$40,000 to \$74,999 and 62% of those making \$75,000 or more agreed that education had improved, compared to 14% of those making \$40,000 or less (21% disagreed).



POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER

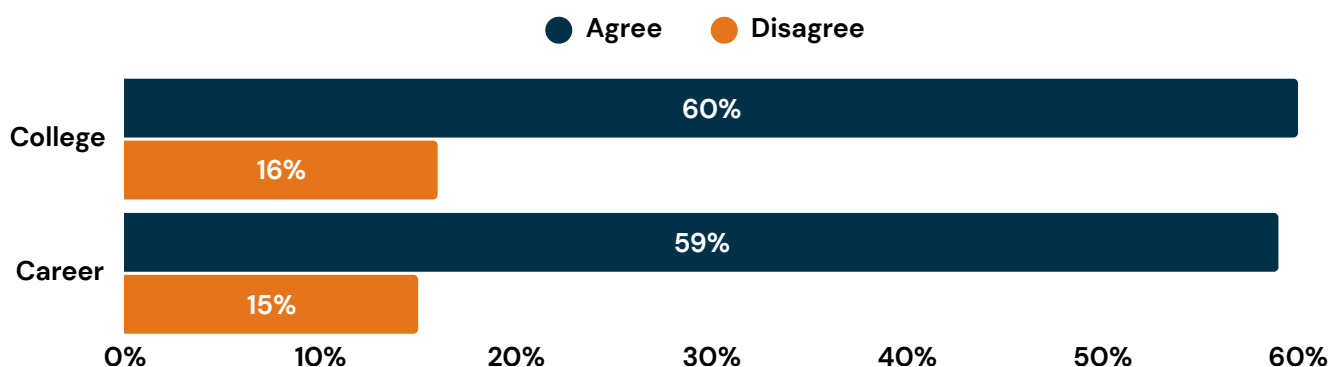
Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements:

- *I believe my children's schools are preparing them for college.*
- *I believe my children's schools are preparing them for a career.*

The majority of respondents agreed that their children's schools were preparing them for life after high school, whether that was for college or a career. Overall, 60% of respondents said they agreed that schools were preparing their children for college, and 59% agreed they were preparing them for a career.

College: Private and home-schooled respondents were more likely to agree their schools were preparing their children for college (69%) than those with a public school student (57%). Lower-income respondents and those with the lowest levels of educational attainment were the most negative, as 18% of respondents making \$40,000 or less and 22% of those with a high school degree or less agreed. Comparatively, 81% of college graduates and 78% of respondents making \$75,000 or more agreed. White (76%) and Hispanic (69%) respondents agreed at much higher rates than Black (46%) respondents.

Career: The same trends seen in the responses to the college question were seen in the one focused on career preparation. Private and home school respondents agreed 68% of the time, compared to 56% of respondents with a public school student. 17% of respondents making \$40,000 or less and 20% with a high school degree or less agreed their children's schools were preparing them for a career compared to 79% of those making \$75,000 or more and 82% of those with a college degree. Finally, White (76%) and Hispanic (69%) respondents agreed with the statement compared to much lower rates for Black respondents (45%).



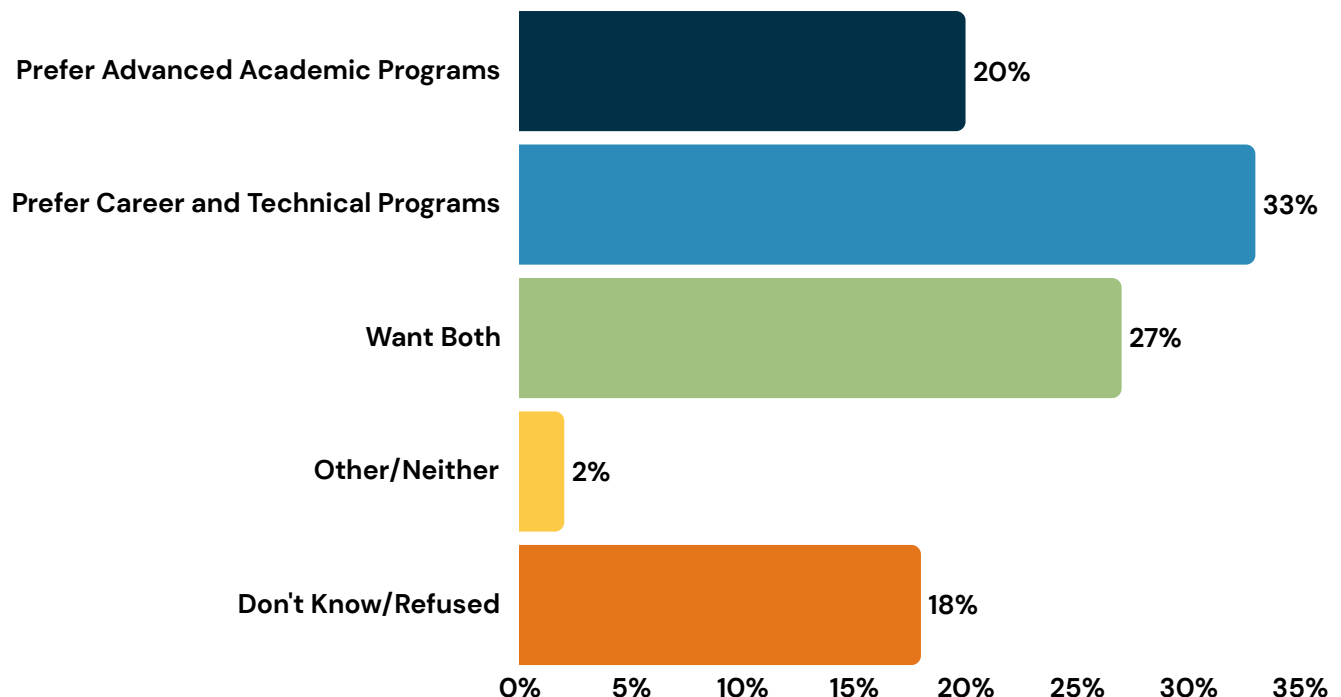
AP COURSEWORK AND CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Please tell me which one of the following statements you agree with more, even if neither is exactly right. But if you had to choose, which one would you say you agree with more?

- *I think it is more important for New Orleans high schools to offer advanced academic programs, like honors and A-P classes. OR*
- *I think it is more important for New Orleans high schools to offer career and technical programs.*

This year, fewer parents (20%) said that it is more important for New Orleans high schools to offer advanced academic programs, like honors and AP classes, than career and technical (CTE) programs, than last year (27%). Yet, the percentage who said it was more important to offer CTE programs was also significantly lower, falling from 53% in 2024 to 33% in 2025. The percentage who said it was important to offer both rose to 27% this year from 16% in 2024, as did the percentage who said they didn't know or refused to answer the questions, 18% in 2025 from 3% in 2024.

Of note is that out of all subgroups, parents who gave schools an A or B were the most likely to say schools should offer CTE programs (52%). Respondents who said their children planned to go to college (36%) or who had a college degree themselves (36%) were the most likely to say schools should offer AP programs. White respondents (32%) were almost twice as likely to answer AP courses as Hispanic (18%) and Black (16%) respondents.



POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PLANS

Do one or more of your children currently plan to attend a four-year college or university after they graduate from high school?

One of the biggest changes in responses from 2024 to 2025 was in the percentage of parents and guardians who said their children planned to attend a four-year college or university after graduating from high school. In 2024, just 32% of respondents said their children planned to attend college. This year, that rose to a majority, 56%. The percentage of “No” responses dropped from 34% to 5% this year, while those who didn’t know or refused to answer remained high at 39% this year (34% in 2024). This may be in part because in 2025, the percentage of respondents making \$75,000 or above in annual income was higher than in last year’s poll.

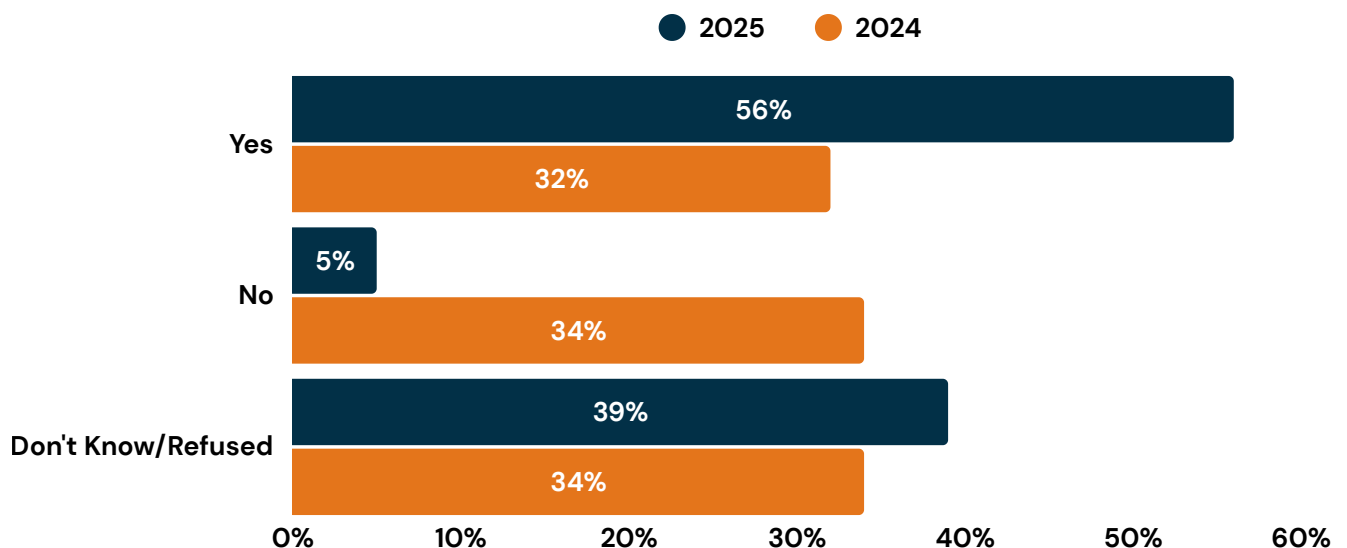
Private and homeschooled parents said their children planned to attend postsecondary education at more than twice the rate of those with a public school student, 95% to 44% respectively.

Subgroups:

Educational attainment: The variances in responses by education, income, and race were stark. Only 11% of respondents with a high school or degree said they had a child they planned to attend college, compared to 92% of those with a college degree themselves.

Race: White respondents (84%) were twice as likely to say they had a child planning to attend college as Hispanic (42%) and Black (39%) respondents.

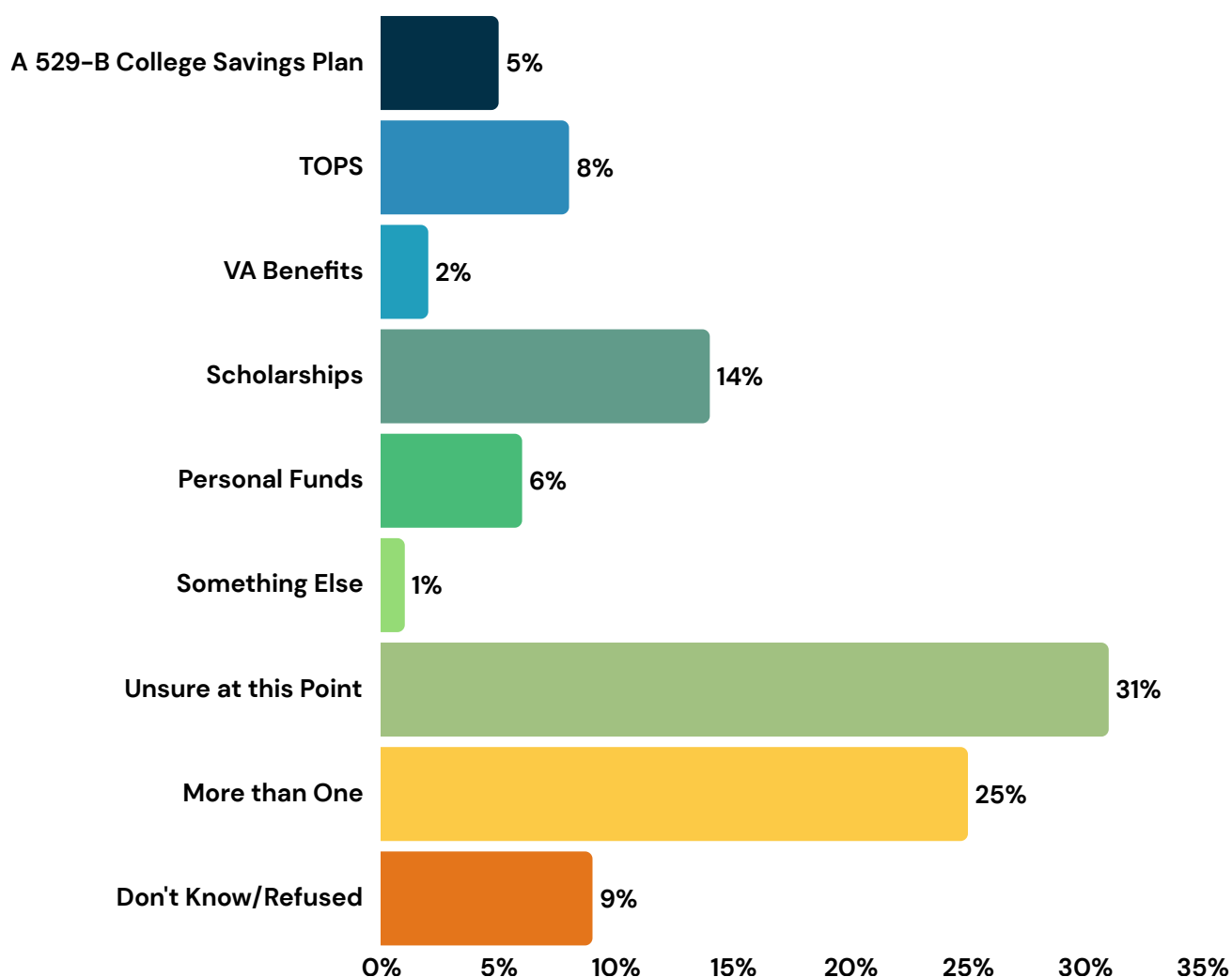
Socioeconomic Status: Only 12% of respondents with income under \$40,000 said their children intended to attend college, compared to 80% of respondents making \$40,000–\$74,999, and 89% of those making at least \$75,000.



PAYING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Which of the following is the main way you plan to pay for your child's or children's college education? A 529-B college savings plan; Tops; V-A benefits; Scholarships; Personal funds; Something else; OR Are you unsure at this point?

When it comes to paying for postsecondary education, responses in 2025 were similar to those in 2024. Overall, a plurality of parents (31% in 2025, 17% in 2024) were unsure of how they'd pay for it or planning to pay for it with a combination of options (25% in 2025, 29% in 2024). 14% of respondents cited scholarship this year, similar to the 16% who said so last year. Parents and guardians making \$75,000 or more (20%) were less likely to say they were unsure of how they'd pay than those making \$40,000 or less (33%). White parents (36%) were also more likely to say they were unsure than Hispanic (27%) and Black (24%) respondents.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The results from this year's poll echo findings from previous years, while also adding new context to the perceptions of parents and guardians of students in New Orleans. As we've seen consistently in recent years, the socioeconomic status, race, and educational attainment of respondents greatly impacts how they experience and perceive the public education system in the city. Lower income and Black respondents, along with those with lower levels of educational attainment themselves, had the most negative views about public education in the city, while higher income, White, and college graduates were more positive—especially about their children's own education and college and career prospects.

Collectively, based on this year's results, along with those of our previous polls, we recommend the following:

1

Increase city support for schools: With upcoming municipal elections, New Orleans is at a pivotal time. It is imperative that the new mayor and council members work to address many of the longstanding issues plaguing the city, such as improving city services and infrastructure. Additionally, we urge the new incoming leadership to do more to support New Orleans public schools on issues like truancy and transportation, which could help to address parents' ongoing concerns about crime and violence in the city. Respondents to this year's poll were optimistic about the new leaders for the city. These leaders have an opportunity to partner with education leaders to improve education in the years ahead.

2

Pursue a new local tax to raise teacher salaries: Though an initiative to pass a new tax to support teacher salaries would require extensive groundwork from city, education, and civic leaders, we recommend such an effort be undertaken. A majority of respondents to this year's poll supported such a tax, which could be used to augment salaries at a time when it is increasingly difficult for school leaders to recruit and hire qualified teachers. Given the ongoing uncertainty around continued federal funding for education and the impacts cuts could have on local budgets, along with the current legal dispute between the City and the Orleans Parish School Board over tax collections, a local tax dedicated to teacher salaries could help to ensure New Orleans public schools can weather future financial uncertainty.

3

Strengthen financial aid awareness and guidance: Given that 31% of parents reported being unsure of how they will finance postsecondary education, with uncertainty especially pronounced among families with lower incomes, it is important to expand efforts that improve awareness and understanding of available financial aid resources. Louisiana's financial literacy graduation requirement, which now includes a college financial aid literacy component, provides a platform for equipping students with this knowledge. Schools should continue to emphasize completion of the FAFSA and promote state-specific resources such as the TOPS scholarship program and Geaux Grants. Continued communication and outreach regarding scholarships, grants, and other financing options can help reduce uncertainty among families and support more equitable access to higher education.



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