

Stride Survey:

Texas Parental Attitudes Regarding Public Schools & Public Education

Since 2000, Stride K12 has been a leader in K–12 online education, putting quality hands-on and online curriculum directly into the homes of the students and families we support. Stride K12-powered learning offers a personalized approach for students through a variety of education experiences. Every family is unique and has different requirements for their child’s learning environment.

Stride K12 offers multiple resources for students and families: a vibrant online school community, academic support, and extracurricular activities help students connect, stay motivated, and succeed with online learning. With Stride, families can find answers, information, and inspiration to begin their learning journey or continue it.

This research report, commissioned by Stride and conducted by Pinkston, provides insights into parents’ priorities and concerns as they enter the new school year. Interviews for this research were conducted July 7-13, 2022, from a sample of 519 parents or guardians that have children in public school in the state of Texas, regarding their attitudes towards their child(ren)’s school/education.

Key Findings:

A majority of parents are concerned about their children’s safety and the threat of gun violence in their children’s school. 52 percent of Texas parents/guardians say they are “Concerned” or “Very concerned” about their child’s safety at school. Similarly, 56 percent of parents are “Concerned” or “Very concerned” about the threat of gun violence at their children’s school, slightly higher than the national average of 53 percent.

More than half of parents are concerned about the quality of their child(ren)’s education. 57 percent of Texas parents say they have concerns about the quality of the education their child receives in public school. This also is slightly higher than the national average of 54 percent.

A majority of parents cite teacher quality as the most important factor when choosing a school for their child (not accounting for financial cost). Texas parents rank the following as the top three most important features when selecting a school: Quality of teachers (71 percent), Safety (65 percent), and Learning support (62 percent).

There is strong support for virtual learning among Texas parents. A large majority (76 percent) of parents say they had children who were enrolled in virtual school in the past two years, and 45 percent report a positive experience with it. Half of parents (52 percent) say they would be likely to enroll their child in a virtual school program in the Fall if that was an option.

Texas Parents Survey - Results

About the Research: Pinkston conducted a survey of 519 parents (or guardians) in Texas who have kids in public school, grades K-12. The sample was recruited from a panel and is representative of Texas parents by market and demographically; surveys were conducted in English and administered online, July 7–13, 2022.

Overall, most (84%) parents are satisfied with their children’s public school (evenly divided between very and somewhat satisfied) with only one in 10 (9%) saying they are dissatisfied.

| How satisfied are you with your child(ren)’s public school? | |
|---|------------|
| Base: 519 | |
| Very satisfied | 43% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 41% |
| Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | 7% |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 7% |
| Very dissatisfied | 2% |

SECTION QUESTION: Do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Over half (57%) of parents are concerned about the quality of education their children receive in public school.

| I am concerned about the quality of education my kids get in public school. | |
|---|------------|
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 25% |
| Agree somewhat | 32% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 17% |
| Disagree somewhat | 17% |
| Disagree completely | 9% |

Almost half (42%) of parents would prefer to send their child(ren) to a private school.

| | |
|---|------------|
| I would prefer to send my child(ren) to a private school if I could. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 21% |
| Agree somewhat | 21% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 26% |
| Disagree somewhat | 16% |
| Disagree completely | 16% |

One-third of Texas parents have concerns about their child’s ability to function well in a public school environment.

| | |
|---|------------|
| My child(ren) finds it hard to function well in a typical public school setting. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 11% |
| Agree somewhat | 21% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 20% |
| Disagree somewhat | 27% |
| Disagree completely | 21% |

Three-quarters (72%) of parents believe their children learn better at their own pace.

| | |
|--|------------|
| My child(ren) learns better when working at their own pace. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 34% |
| Agree somewhat | 38% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 20% |
| Disagree somewhat | 7% |
| Disagree completely | 1% |

Eight in 10 (84%) parents want to know more about their children’s schooling. Texas parents are more eager to know about their kids’ education than the average parent, nationally.

| | |
|--|------------|
| I want to know more about what my child(ren) are doing in school. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 49% |
| Agree somewhat | 35% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 14% |
| Disagree somewhat | 2% |
| Disagree completely | 0% |

Two-thirds (67%) of parents believe their children are being prepared for success after graduation.

| | |
|---|------------|
| My child(ren)’s school is adequately preparing them to succeed after they graduate - in college or career. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 28% |
| Agree somewhat | 39% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 20% |
| Disagree somewhat | 9% |
| Disagree completely | 4% |

Three-quarters (76%) of parents believe their children get the support they need in public education.

| | |
|--|------------|
| My kid(s) can get the developmental support they need in public school. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 32% |
| Agree somewhat | 44% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 13% |
| Disagree somewhat | 8% |
| Disagree completely | 3% |

Two-thirds (67%) of parents support the decisions made by their children’s school district.

| | |
|---|------------|
| I support the policies and decisions my child(ren)’s school or district makes. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 24% |
| Agree somewhat | 43% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 21% |
| Disagree somewhat | 10% |
| Disagree completely | 2% |

More than half (59%) of parents believe in and support public education.

| | |
|--|------------|
| I am a proponent of public education. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 31% |
| Agree somewhat | 28% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 36% |
| Disagree somewhat | 3% |
| Disagree completely | 2% |

Seven in 10 (72%) parents are satisfied with their children’s school curriculum.

| | |
|---|------------|
| I am satisfied with the quality of my child(ren)’s curriculum at school. | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 29% |
| Agree somewhat | 43% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 13% |
| Disagree somewhat | 11% |
| Disagree completely | 4% |

More than half (58%) of parents feel heard in their children’s school system.

| | |
|---|------------|
| As a parent, I believe my voice is being heard in my child(ren)’s school/school system | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Agree completely | 23% |
| Agree somewhat | 35% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 25% |
| Disagree somewhat | 11% |
| Disagree completely | 7% |

For the following question, a “virtual school program” is defined as an individualized education experience with responsive, online curriculum that allows students to work at their own pace and is taught by state-certified teachers who differentiate instruction through live virtual sessions. This program is delivered online at home.

Interest in a virtual school program is very strong among Texas K-12 parents, with half (52%) of all parents saying they would be likely to enroll for the upcoming school year.

| | |
|--|------------|
| If you had access to a free, virtual school program, how likely would you be to enroll your child(ren) in the upcoming school year? | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Very likely | 23% |
| Somewhat likely | 29% |
| Not sure | 18% |
| Not very likely | 29% |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Did your child(ren) participate in virtual schooling over the past 2 years? | |
| Base: 519 | |
| Yes | 76% |
| No | 24% |

Most kids have some experience with virtual schooling, and nearly half (45%) had a positive experience with it.

| What was your impression of your child(ren)'s experience in virtual schooling? | |
|---|------------|
| Base: 390 (child(ren) experienced virtual schooling in past 2 years) | |
| Very positive | 16% |
| Somewhat positive | 29% |
| Neither positive nor negative | 17% |
| Somewhat negative | 28% |
| Very negative | 9% |

Knowing that a virtual school program has strong past experience can change parents' perceptions. Among those with negative experiences over the past two years, at least one-quarter say this would definitely make them more interested, and another quarter are willing to consider.

| If a virtual school program was designed and delivered by experienced educators who have been operating a virtual school for over a decade, would you be more interested in virtual school? | |
|--|------------|
| Base: 390 (child(ren) experienced virtual schooling in past 2 years) | |
| Yes, this would make me more interested | 47% |
| No, it wouldn't make a difference | 36% |
| I'm not sure | 17% |

Over half of parents say the most important features in choosing a school are quality of teachers, safety, learning support, academic excellence, and good community (top 5), then technology, class size, and quality of facilities.

| Which of the following features are most important in your choice of a school (assuming cost was not a factor)? (Select all that apply) | |
|--|------------|
| Base: 519 | |
| Quality of teachers | 71% |
| Safety | 65% |
| Learning support | 62% |
| Academic excellence | 60% |
| Good community (parents, kids) | 55% |
| Technology used / taught | 45% |
| Class size | 44% |
| Quality of facilities | 43% |
| Extracurricular activities | 42% |
| Location / accessibility | 41% |
| Shapes kids' character | 39% |
| Career prep | 37% |
| College prep | 36% |
| Alignment with my beliefs | 24% |

Half (52%) of parents are concerned about their children's safety in general at school.

| How concerned are you about your child(ren)'s safety at their school? | |
|--|------------|
| Base: 519 | |
| Very concerned | 35% |
| Concerned | 17% |
| Somewhat concerned | 29% |
| Not very concerned | 16% |
| Not at all concerned | 3% |

More than half (56%) of parents are concerned specifically about gun violence.

| How concerned are you about gun violence at your child(ren)'s school? | |
|--|------------|
| Base: 519 | |
| Very concerned | 38% |
| Concerned | 18% |
| Somewhat concerned | 21% |
| Not very concerned | 18% |
| Not at all concerned | 4% |

DEMOGRAPHICS / PROFILE QUESTIONS

Base for all questions: 519

| What grade(s) will your child(ren) be in for the upcoming school year? (Select all that apply) | |
|---|------------|
| Kindergarten - 5th grade | 59% |
| 6th - 8th grade | 36% |
| 9th - 12th grade | 39% |

| What type(s) of school do your child(ren) attend? (Select all that apply) | |
|--|-------------|
| Public school | 100% |
| Parents with at least one other child in these types of schools: | |
| Private school | 2% |
| Homeschool | 2% |

| At the end of the most recent school year, did your child(ren) attend school... (Select all that apply) | |
|--|------------|
| In-person | 92% |
| Online | 7% |
| Hybrid | 4% |
| Other | 2% |

| When you vote, which candidates do you tend to vote for? | |
|---|------------|
| Democratic party | 32% |
| Republican party | 32% |
| Other party | 5% |
| It's a mix | 14% |
| Don't typically vote in elections | 18% |

| City live closest to | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Amarillo | 2% |
| Austin | 11% |
| Brownsville / Corpus Christi | 4% |
| Dallas | 26% |
| El Paso | 2% |
| Ft. Worth | 11% |
| Houston / Galveston | 24% |
| Laredo | 2% |
| Lubbock | 2% |
| Midland / Odessa | 2% |
| San Antonio | 13% |

| Area where live is | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Suburban | 36% |
| Urban | 37% |
| Rural | 16% |
| Small town | 11% |

| Respondent's relationship to child(ren) | |
|--|------------|
| Mother | 55% |
| Father | 41% |
| Other | 4% |

| Marital status | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Married | 61% |
| Single, never married | 23% |
| Divorced or separated | 14% |
| Widowed | 1% |
| Prefer not to say | 1% |

| Race / ethnicity (respondents could select multiple): | |
|--|------------|
| White / European or Middle Eastern | 60% |
| Latino / Hispanic | 27% |
| African American / Black | 15% |
| Asian American / Asian / Pacific Islander | 2% |
| Native American | 2% |
| Other | 1% |

| Parent's Age | |
|---------------------|------------|
| 18 to 24 years old | 3% |
| 25 to 34 years old | 30% |
| 35 to 44 years old | 42% |
| 45 to 54 years old | 19% |
| 55+ | 7% |

| Highest degree or level of school completed | |
|--|------------|
| Some high school | 5% |
| High school diploma / GED | 28% |
| Associate's or technical degree | 13% |
| Some college | 20% |
| Bachelor's degree | 22% |
| Post-graduate degree | 12% |

| Total household income, before taxes | |
|---|------------|
| Less than \$25,000 | 17% |
| \$25,000 to \$49,999 | 28% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 21% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | 14% |
| \$100,000 to \$149,999 | 13% |
| \$150,000 or more | 6% |
| Prefer not to say | 2% |