

FORT WORTH PERCEPTIONS ON THE STATE OF EDUCATION

2025



ABOUT FWEP

At Fort Worth Education Partnership (FWEP), we believe that every Fort Worth student deserves access to a high-quality public education. In pursuit of that vision, we support, invest in, and coordinate opportunities that increase access to high-quality educational experiences.

FOREWORD

I recently listened to an interview with musician Scott Avett where he talked about creativity existing in the tension between the “is” and the “ought.” When we are being creative, we aren’t satisfied with what is, and we have a vision for what something could or ought to be.

That creative tension between the “is” and the “ought” drives our work at Fort Worth Education Partnership. Too many families, especially in historically underserved communities, don’t have access to the public education every child ought to have—the kind of education that opens doors, nurtures curiosity, and prepares students not just to graduate but to lead full, choice-filled lives.

Over the past few years, we’ve all seen how polarized the national conversation about education has become, and schools and students face real, challenging implications from those divisions. But here in Fort Worth, we are more united in what we want to be true for our children than our politics would suggest. Something hopeful is happening. That hope is reflected in the polling data you’ll find in this report.

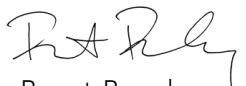
Across race, income, and political lines, Fort Worth residents are remarkably unified in what they want:

- Schools that prepare our kids for their future,
- Transparent, honest, and clear information about how students are doing,
- More public school options for families to choose from, especially when a neighborhood school isn’t meeting their child’s needs, and
- Strong support for teachers and school leaders who are making a difference.

That kind of alignment provides us a unique opportunity— to not just talk about what we want but to pursue it together.

These poll results are more than numbers on a page. They are a story about our community’s values.

Thank you for reading this report. Whether you’re a parent, a policymaker, an educator, or just someone who cares deeply about kids, your voice and your engagement matter. Let’s keep pushing forward toward the “ought.”


Brent Beasley
President and CEO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At Fort Worth Education Partnership, we believe every student in Fort Worth deserves access to a high-quality public education and that families should have both the tools and the options to make the best decisions for their children's futures. This poll, which surveyed 500 Tarrant County residents including a large number of parents, offers critical insights into how our community views education, access, and accountability in public schools.

Education is a Top Priority for Fort Worth Parents

When asked about their priorities, Fort Worth Parents ranked Education #4, after only (1) the cost of living, (2) jobs, and (3) affordable housing.

There Is Strong Support for Academic Accountability

There is broad agreement that schools should be accountable for student learning.

- 87% of Fort Worthians believe it is important that the State of Texas has a system to measure individual children's and overall school performance.
- 93% believe students should meet grade-level expectations before advancing.

Families Want Choices and Better Access

There is strong community support for expanding high-quality public school options.

- 89% of Fort Worth residents believe families should have multiple public school choices, a high level of support consistent among all demographic subgroups.
- At the same time, over one-third of Fort Worth Parents (38%) say it is difficult to find a school that truly fits their child's needs.

Academic Quality Shapes Family Choices

Parents are paying close attention to school quality, with academic performance emerging as the top reason they consider changing schools.

- "Strong Academics" are a top-three factor for parents in driving school quality, with "Good Teachers" and "Safe Schools" being the only other factors parents consider more important.
- Nearly half (47%) of Fort Worth parents have considered changing their child's school; among those, the primary reason cited by Parents (42%) is concern about academic quality.
- While most Tarrant County Parents still believe their child is performing at or above grade level (84%), those numbers have dropped significantly since Spring 2024 (96%). The *perception gap* between parents' beliefs and actual student outcomes is narrowing, but it remains a challenge.

The message from families is clear: they want a public education system that *centers academic achievement, provides transparent information, and offers genuine access to excellent schools.* As we continue our work, we remain committed to listening and responding with the urgency this moment requires.

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is walking down a set of concrete stairs. He is carrying a large black backpack. The background is slightly blurred, showing the exterior of a school building with yellow and grey walls.

METHODOLOGY

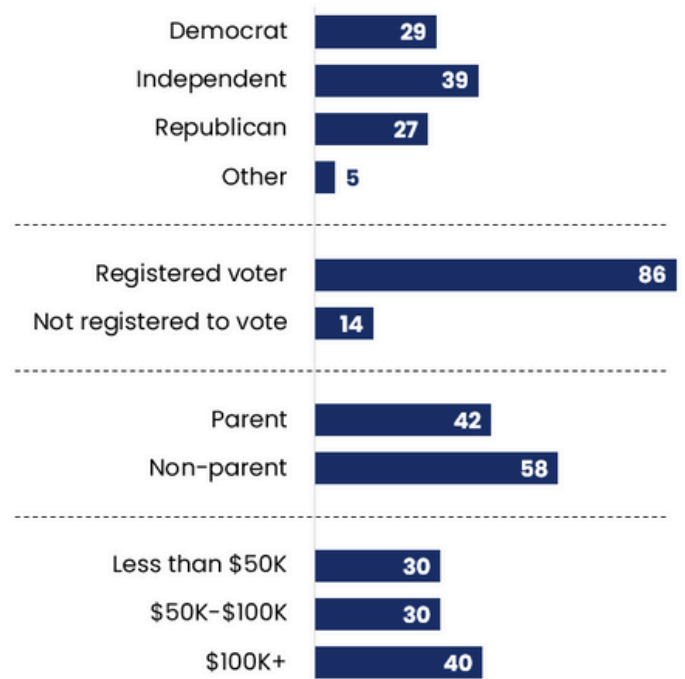
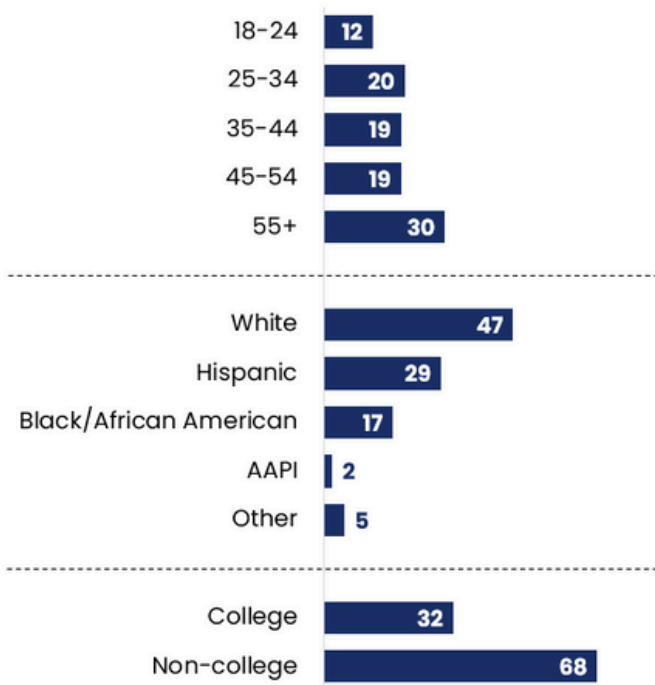
To assess perceptions of school quality in Tarrant County, Texas, Fort Worth Education Partnership partnered with national public affairs and opinion research firm, SKDK, to conduct a representative survey of 500 adults from May 12th to May 20th, 2025.

The survey was administered online in English and Spanish. It included an oversample of at least 300 Fort Worth residents and a substantial subsample of parents with children, spanning different school types and grade levels to ensure robust representation of key demographic and geographic subgroups. The demographic summary on page 4 includes a breakdown of the types of schools attended and the current grade level of those children.

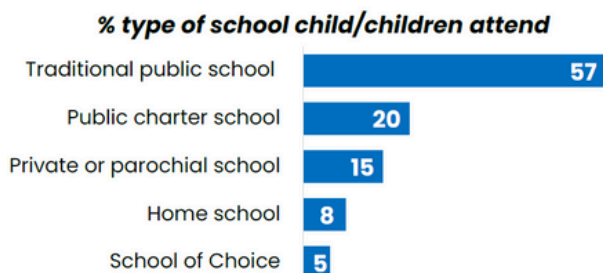
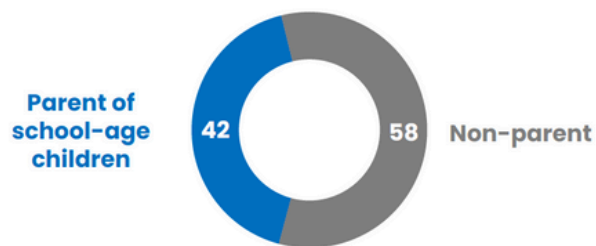
Survey results were weighted for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and income to U.S. Census data to align with proportions within the Tarrant County and Fort Worth populations.

The sampling margin of error is +/- 4.38%. Margin of error is larger among demographic breakouts.

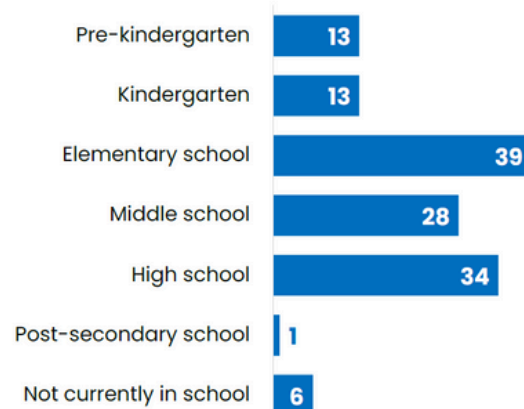
DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SURVEYED POPULATION (%)



Parent Demographics (%)



% current grade level of child/children

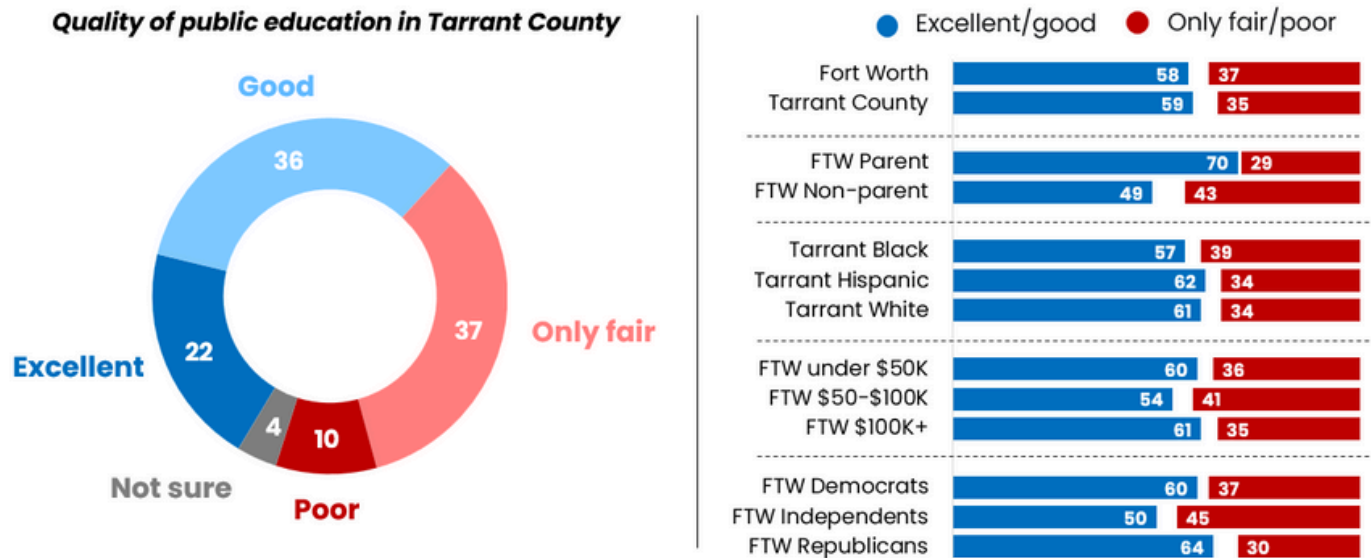


Q. How many children do you have in your household who are 18 years old or younger for whom you are the parent or guardian?
 Q. [AMONG PARENTS] What type of school does your child or children attend in Texas?

Q. [AMONG PARENTS] What grade level of school does your child or children currently attend?

ON UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

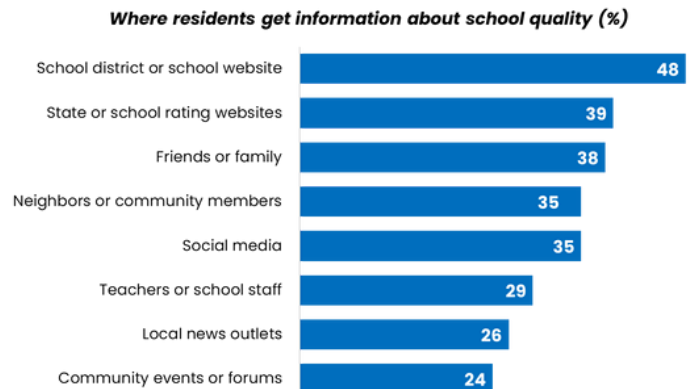
Perceptions of the quality of public education in Fort Worth vary: Parents (70%) rate the quality of public education in Tarrant County highly, while non-parents (43%) are more likely to view it as low quality or “only fair”.



Q. How would you rate the overall quality of public education in Tarrant County?

Residents overwhelmingly **rely on their school district’s website (48%) as their primary source for information on school quality.**

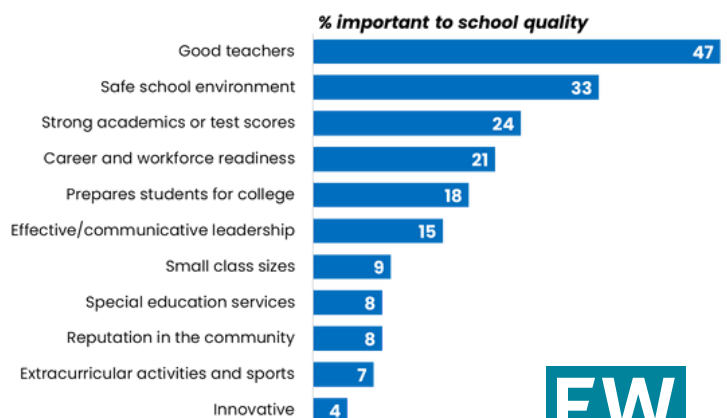
Just over **a third also look at state or school rating websites (39%),** while 38% rely on information from friends or family.



Q. When you want to learn about the quality of a school in your area, where do you typically get your information?

Good teachers and a safe environment are the most important factors to residents when evaluating the quality of a school. **Strong academics rank third,** ahead of career and workforce readiness.

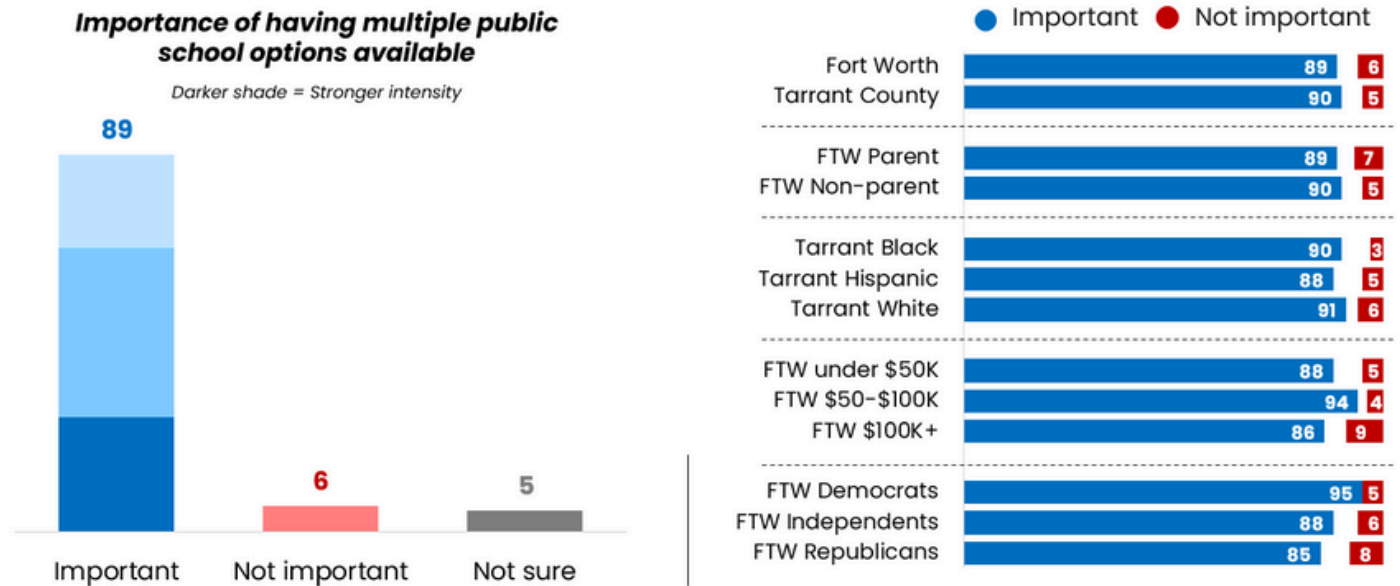
Class sizes, extracurriculars, reputation, and innovation were less important.



Q. In your opinion, what are the TWO most important factors that make a public school high quality?

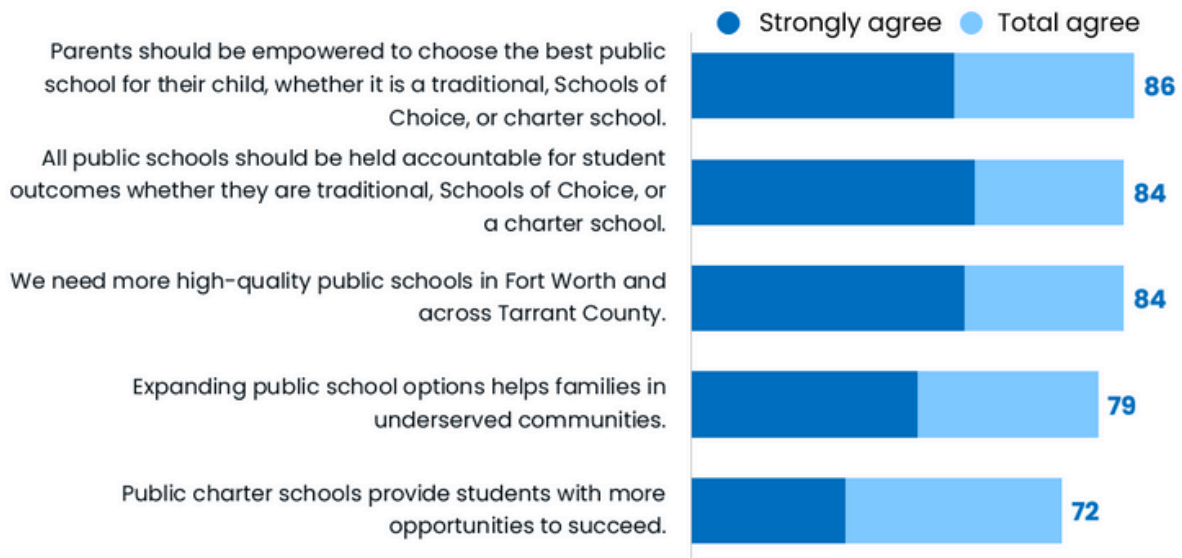
ON QUALITY SCHOOL OPTIONS

Across the board, **Fort Worth residents want families to have multiple public school options available (89%)**, including charter schools and Schools of Choice.



Q. How important is it for families to have multiple public school options available, including charter schools and Schools of Choice?

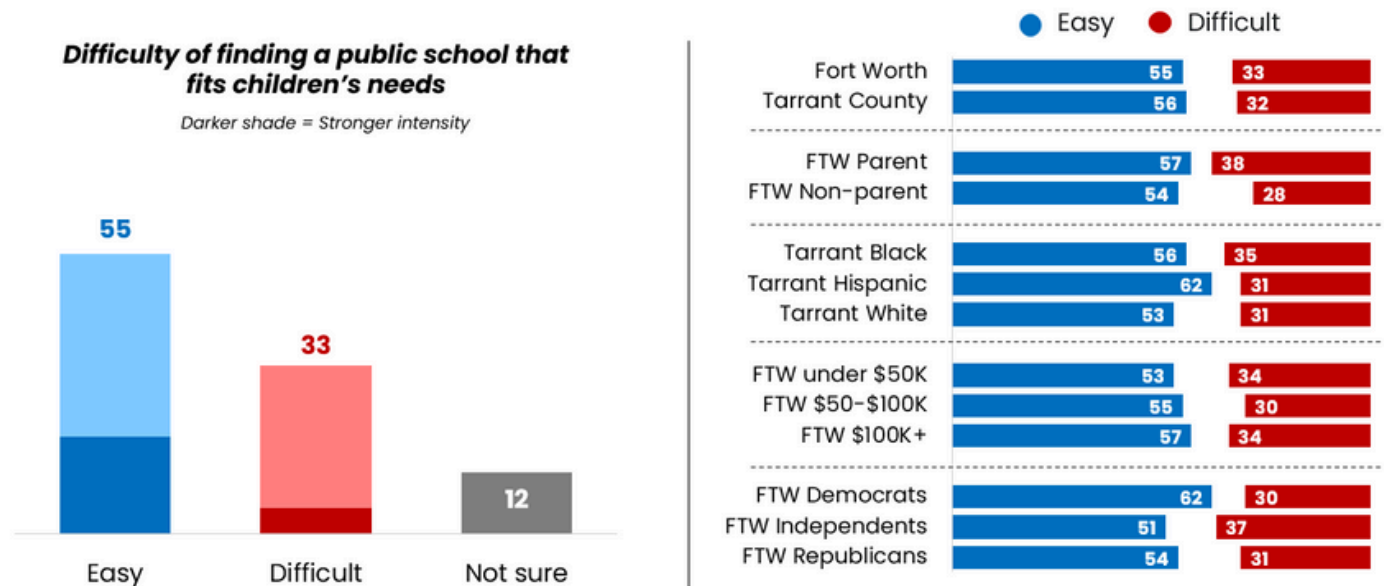
Fort Worth residents strongly agree that **more quality public schools are needed (84%)**. They also overwhelmingly believe parents should be able to choose the best school for their child (86%), that all public schools should be held accountable for student outcomes (84%).



Q. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about education and public schools in Tarrant County.

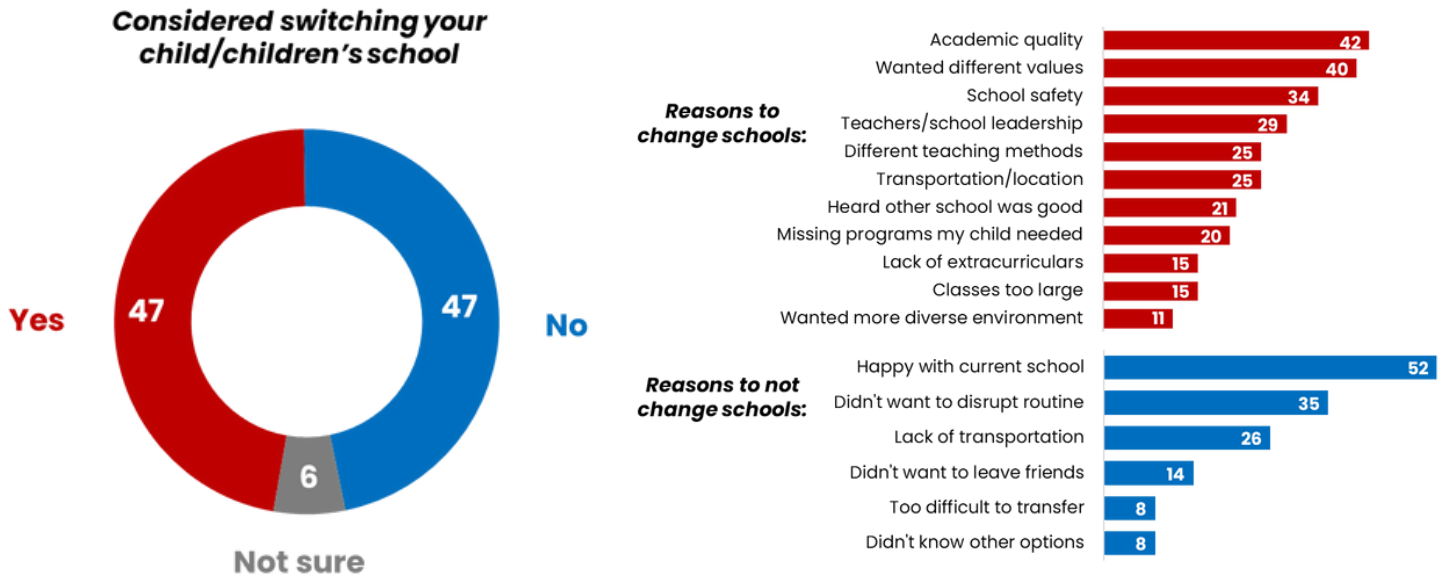
ON ACCESS TO QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION

Nearly a third of Fort Worth residents (33%) feel it is difficult for families in their area to find a high-quality public school that fits their child's needs, with parents (38%) finding it the most difficult.



Q. In your view, how easy or difficult is it for families in your area to find a high-quality public school that fits their child's needs?

Almost half of Fort Worth parents (47%) have considered changing their child's school, and academic quality (42%) is the #1 reason parents are looking to change.



Q. [IF YES/NO] What were the main reasons you considered/have not considered switching your child/children's school?

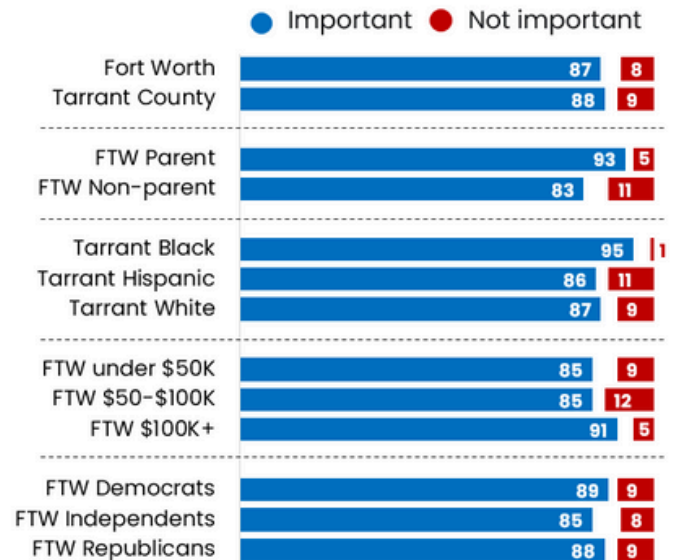
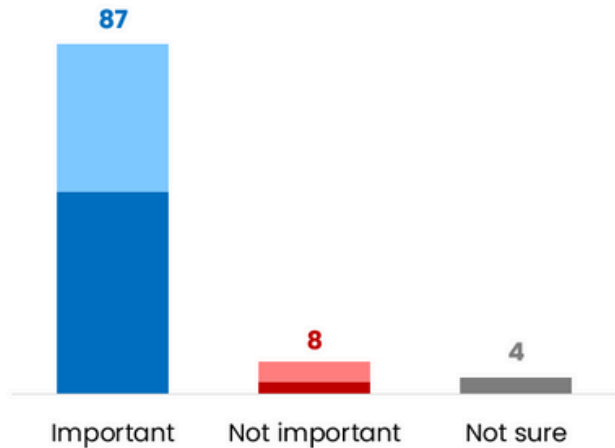
Q. [AMONG PARENTS] Have you ever considered switching your child/children to a different school?

ON HIGH STANDARDS, AND THE TOOLS USED TO MEASURE THEM

Fort Worth residents overwhelmingly agree (87%) that the state of Texas should have a system to measure individual children's and overall school performance, with more than half rating it as "Very Important."

Importance of Texas having a system to measure educational performance

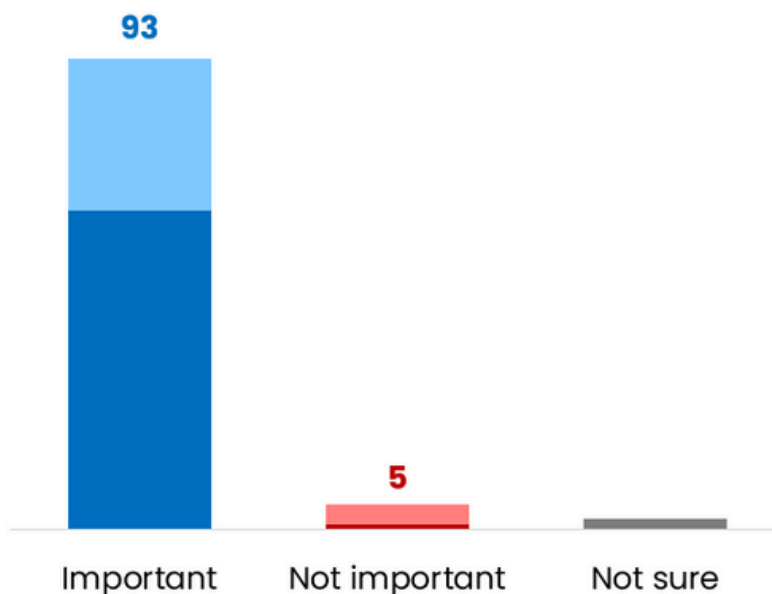
Darker shade = Stronger intensity



Q. How important is it to you that the state has a system to measure individual children's and overall schools' performances?

Importance of students achieving "meets grade level"

Darker shade = Stronger intensity

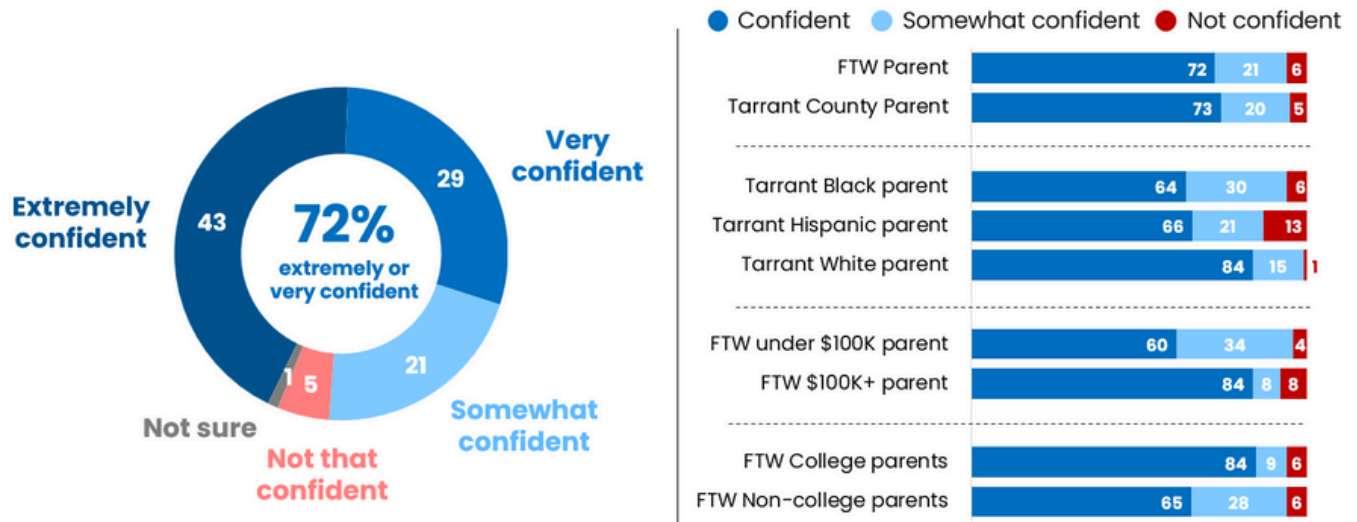


Ensuring students achieve "meets grade level" before moving on to the next grade level is critically important to 93% of Fort Worth residents.

Q. How important is it to you that students achieve the level of "meets grade level" before they move onto the next grade level?

ON UNDERSTANDING THEIR CHILD'S ACADEMIC READINESS

Parents are generally confident they understand how their child is achieving academically (72%), though Hispanic parents, lower-income parents, and non-college parents are more likely to be only somewhat confident.



Q. [AMONG PARENTS] How confident are you that you have a clear understanding of how well your child is achieving academically?

THE PARENT PERCEPTION GAP

While many parents remain confident in their child's academic progress, that confidence has declined since last year, highlighting a narrowing but ongoing gap between perception and reality regarding grade-level performance.

Percentage of Tarrant County Parents that Think Their Child is On Grade Level

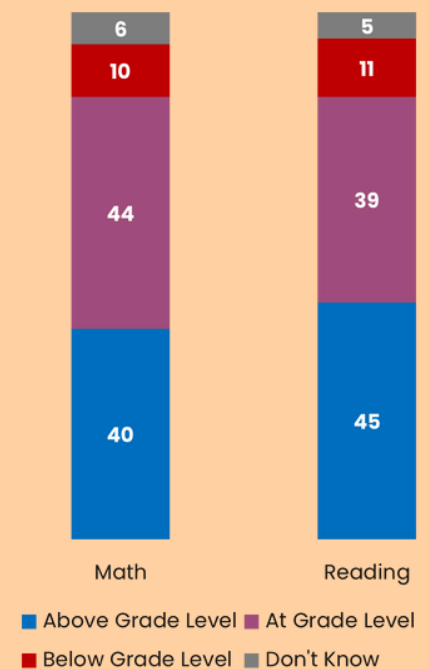
	Spring 2024	Spring 2025
Math	92%	84%
Reading	96%	84%

In reality, only 52% in Reading and 43% in Math are.*

Additionally, Spring 2025 polling indicated that 82% of parents reported their children getting A's and B's on their report card, the same percentage as Spring 2024.

*TAPR, 2024

Q. [AMONG PARENTS] When it comes to each of the areas listed below, is your child achieving...?



REPORT TOOLKIT AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find QR codes below to access this report digitally, share graphics from the report, and stay connected with future report releases from Fort Worth Education Partnership.



Fort Worth Perceptions on the State of Education Digital Toolkit

Scan or click the QR Code to get access to the Digital Toolkit to access and share the headlines and graphics from this report online.



City of Fort Worth Academic Performance Reports

The new FWEP City of Fort Worth Academic Performance Report goes live on August 12, 2025. Scan or click this QR code to see how your school performed in the 2024-2025 school year.



Tarrant County School Performance Tool

The new Tarrant County School Performance Tool goes live on August 12, 2025. Scan or click this QR code to see how your school performed in each testing category.



Learn If Your Child is On Grade Level

TEA released student academic performance on state exams for the 2024-2025 school year. If you have a child in 3-12 grade, log in to see how they did, relative to the academic expectations for their grade level. Scan or click the QR code to learn how to gain access to the Family Portal at texasassessment.gov.

**Every Fort Worth area student
deserves access to a high-quality
education.**



FORT WORTH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP