

Cowen Institute releases 2019 What Do Parents Think? poll

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The Cowen Institute has conducted the What Do Parents Think? poll annually since 2007. This year's survey tracks the opinions of parents and guardians of students currently enrolled in New Orleans public schools.

The Cowen Institute at Tulane University released [*What Do Parents Think?*](#), a survey that chronicles community perceptions of public education in New Orleans after the first academic year of charter school unification under the Orleans Parish School Board.

The poll, which has been conducted annually since 2007, features — for the first time —exclusively the opinions of parents and guardians of students currently enrolled in New Orleans public schools.

The report's findings and interactive infographics are available at cowendata.org.

Amid the city's changing educational landscape, the poll tracks evolving public opinions and priorities. Of the 500 parents surveyed, education was ranked as the most important issue facing city residents. A plurality of respondents feel neutral toward the Orleans Parish School Board (40%) and charter schools (35%), regardless of race, gender, age, socioeconomic status, or education. Overall, 46% of respondents believe the quality of public education in New Orleans is neither improving nor worsening, with a large plurality giving it a C grade. However, 82% of respondents agree that schools' performance scores should be based on more than student performance. Additionally, parents across the board (82%) would like a unified citywide school calendar.

The poll also focuses on how community members access information and understand key policies. Approximately 40% of respondents reported that word of mouth is their main source of school-related information, and disparities in understanding broaden based on socioeconomic status: only 22% of parents with a household income below \$40,000 know the letter grade of their child's school compared to 54% of parents with a household income above \$75,000.

Modes of transportation and transit times differ along socioeconomic and racial lines, as well: 40% of black families and 47% with household incomes less than \$40,000 take buses to school compared to 16% of white families and 22% with household incomes above \$75,000. Of these, bus riders have comparatively longer transit times (58 minutes compared to 43 minutes), illustrating a gap in access.

"With the changes of recent years, we at the Cowen Institute remain committed to engaging our community members and chronicling their top priorities and concerns," said Amanda Hill, executive director of the Cowen Institute. "The *What Do Parents Think?* poll gives a closer look at families' perceptions of how we as a city can improve and better serve families and young people."

The mission of the Cowen Institute at Tulane University is to advance public education and college and career success for the New Orleans community.