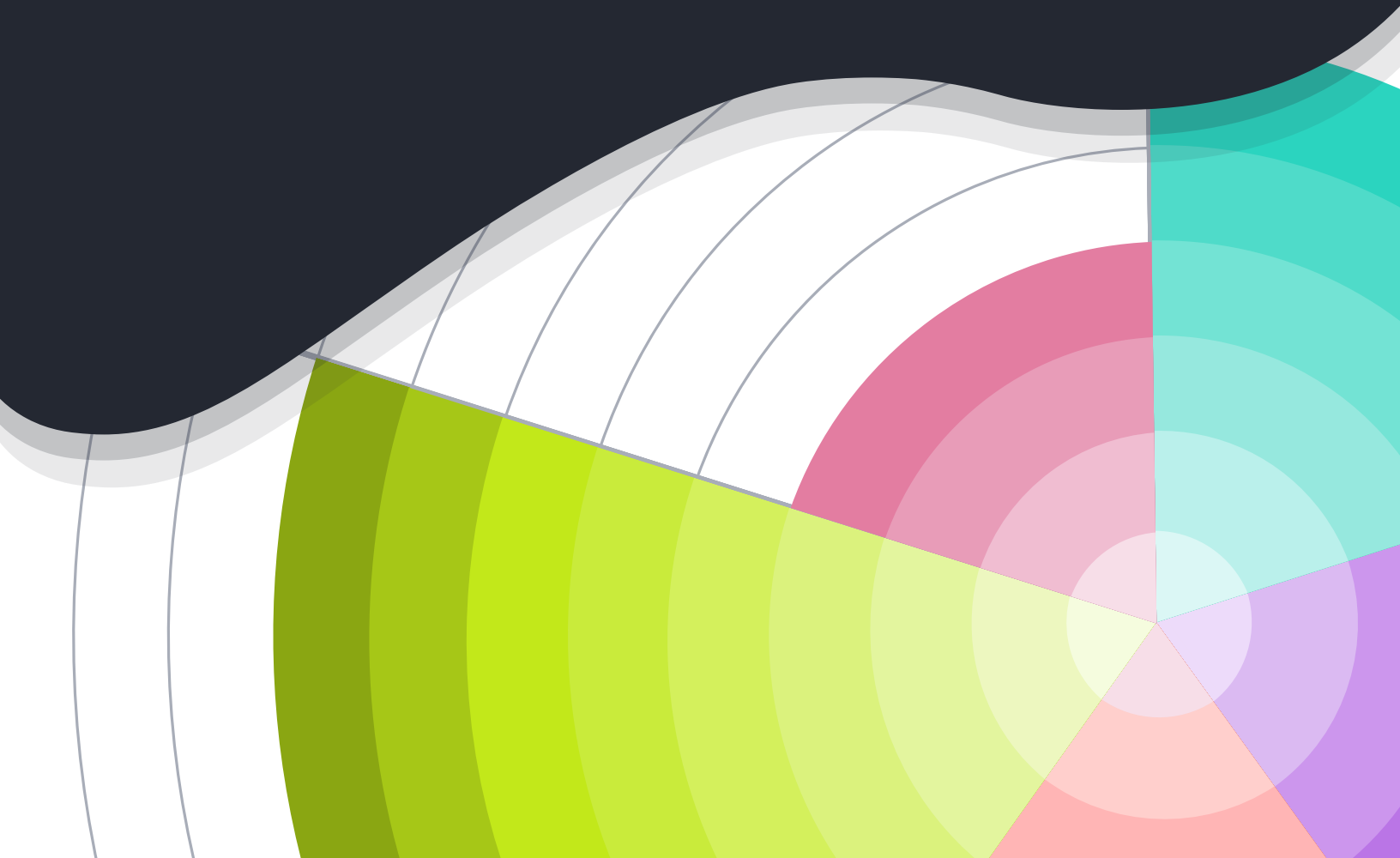




The State of Educational Opportunity in Virginia

A Survey of Virginia Parents

October 2024



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Dear Friends,

At the Virginia Institute for Public Policy (VIPP), we believe that every family deserves the genuine choice to find schooling which best fits their child's unique needs. Our education work is built on deep respect for families, who are the heart of our Commonwealth and the foundation of our nation's future. By listening to Virginia parents, we focus on what matters most to them and build solutions that bring their vision for a brighter future to life for all Virginia students. To gain a clear picture of what matters most to Virginia families, our national partner 50CAN conducted a survey with 410 parents and guardians of school-aged children in Virginia, as part of a nationwide study involving over 20,000 families.

I'm delighted to share insights with you from this new survey about the state of education in Virginia. This survey takes an honest look at the landscape of education in the Commonwealth today through the lens of parents and allows us to see how Virginia families' views line up with those across the country.

This survey dives into five key areas closest to parents' hearts: 1) school quality and opportunity, 2) tutoring, summer programs, and mental health support, 3) out-of-school activities, 4) information and engagement, and 5) college and career readiness.

In the survey, parents shed light on the areas they believe our education system needs the most improvement:



Parents do not feel they have education options:

Only 50 - 55% of Virginia parents feel they truly have a choice in their child's school; a full 10% lower than the national average.



Young Virginians are not participating in sports:

Students in Virginia's low-income households are more than 20% less likely to play sports than the national average, while students from middle to high-income households are close to matching the national average.



Confidence in workforce readiness is low nationwide and lower here at home:

Only 30 % of Virginian parents were extremely confident that their child would be prepared to succeed in the workforce, which is slightly lower than the national average. Virginia parents in lower income brackets were more confident that their students would be prepared for the workforce than parents in mid to high-income brackets.

These findings reveal a critical need for increased school choice options, sports opportunities, and an improved focus on career readiness.

In the pages that follow, you'll find:

- An outline of how these findings were gathered and how to read the results.
- A two-page summary covering Virginia's results across these five areas and fifteen questions.
- Visuals that show how Virginia compares with the national average on important questions.

You can find a digital version of this report at VirginiaInstitute.org and please visit our partners at 50can.org to see the full national report, survey questions, and the complete data set.

Sincerely,



Lynn Taylor

Virginia Institute for Public Policy

Methodology

Edge Research conducted a nationwide survey of 20,090 U.S. parents and guardians of school-aged children (K-12th grade) in each of the 50 states plus the District of Columbia. **In Virginia, 410 parents and guardians of K-12 children were surveyed.** Respondents could take the survey in either English or Spanish, based on their preference. The survey was in the field from July 8 to August 22, 2024.

DATA COLLECTION

The survey used a mixed-mode methodology to reach as many households as possible. First, survey respondents were recruited using online, non-probability samples obtained via national opt-in consumer research panels. These surveys were mobile-optimized (meaning participants can take the survey on a PC or mobile device, which helps reach those who do not have internet access but do have a mobile data plan). In states where Edge Research was not able to collect at least 300 surveys using this method, they obtained supplementary text-to-web interviews.

SURVEY REPRESENTATIVENESS

As respondents entered the survey, they submitted demographic information, and quotas were set to ensure the sample is proportionately distributed in accordance with the most recent U.S. Census¹ and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)² data on U.S. parents in each state. Quotas functioned by predetermining the number of desired respondents by gender identity, race, ethnicity, child’s grade and grade level in each state. Once the desired number was reached with each quota group, it closed, and additional respondents were turned away. After the survey came out of the field, Edge Research reviewed the data and applied additional weights by income, race/ethnicity, school level, and school type within states.

The following reflect the demographics among Virginia respondents after weighting, based on the latest Census and NCES data.

| RACE/ETHNICITY | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|---|---|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Hispanic/ Latino of Any Race | White Alone | Black/ African American Alone | Asian Alone | American Indian or Alaska Native Alone | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Alone | Some Other Race Alone | Two or More Races |
| 12% | 59% | 17% | 10% | – | – | 0.2% | 3% |

| INCOME DISTRIBUTION | | |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Low Income | Middle Income | High Income |
| 33% | 53% | 14% |

¹ Annual Social and Economic Supplements, United States Census, [Annual Social and Economic Supplements \(census.gov\)](#)

² Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), [Index \(ed.gov\)](#)

SCHOOL LEVEL

| K-5th | 6th-8th | 9th-12th |
|-------|---------|----------|
| 45% | 24% | 31% |

GRADE OF CHILD

| K | 1st Grade | 2nd Grade | 3rd Grade | 4th Grade | 5th Grade | 6th Grade | 7th Grade | 8th Grade | 9th Grade | 10th Grade | 11th Grade | 12th Grade |
|----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| 8% | 6% | 7% | 8% | 8% | 7% | 8% | 11% | 6% | 7% | 7% | 8% | 9% |

SCHOOL TYPE

| Local or Traditional Public School | Public Magnet School | Public Charter School | Private Independent School | Parochial/ Religious School | Virtual/ Online Public School | Homeschool | Microschool | Other Type of School |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|
| 72% | 6% | 3% | 7% | 2% | 4% | 5% | 0.7% | 0.2% |

INCOME DEFINITIONS

In the pages that follow, we provide results for low, middle and high-income parents. These income buckets were calculated using the Pew Research Center’s study “The State of the American Middle Class”³ and their category definitions:

- Middle-income households are defined as those with an income that is two-thirds to double that of the U.S. median household income, after being adjusted for household size.
- Lower-income households have incomes less than two-thirds of the median.
- High-income households have incomes that are more than double the median.

Following these definitions, Edge Research adjusted the incomes reported in the survey to reflect a 3-person household using the equivalence scales technique. Pulling from the U.S. Census 2023 Annual Social and Economic Supplements, they used the 3-person household income breaks of \$61,000 to \$183,000 as middle, and values above and below those thresholds as lower and upper income respectively.

DATA QUALITY CONTROL AND STANDARDS

Edge Research employed several practices to ensure data quality. The survey platform used reCAPTCHA to screen for bots. They also applied a third-party tool called Research Defender to screen out known bad actors and respondents with high survey-taking rates. In addition, data was monitored regularly while in the field. Once all responses were collected, they applied additional data cleaning processes, clearing data for cheating, speeding, inattentiveness, and AI-generated responses.

Edge Research follows the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Code of Professional Ethics and Practices⁴ to maintain the highest standards of competence, integrity, accountability, and transparency in public opinion and survey research work.

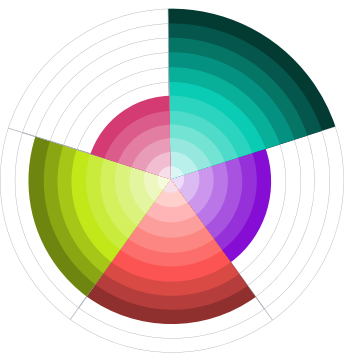
³ Kochhar, Rakesh, “The State of the American Middle Class,” [Pew Research Center](#), 5/31/24

⁴ Code of Professional Ethics and Practices, [American Association For Public Opinion Research \(AAPOR\)](#)

How to Read the Results

One challenge with a survey of this size was how to present the results in an accessible way that doesn’t sacrifice the depth of insights. We decided to present the answers in two ways: first with an overview of the results across 15 questions for our state and then with a more in-depth look at how our state compared to all the others states for a few key questions.

OUR STATE SUMMARY



To help make it easier to look at our state’s full results at a glance, we present the answers from our parents over two pages. At the top of the first page is the number of parents who participated in the survey.

We also provide a way to view our state’s **relative strengths and weaknesses through a circle with five wedges**, one for each of the five categories of the survey: 1) School quality and opportunity (**pink**), 2) Tutoring, summer, and mental health (**green**), 3) Out of school activities (**teal**), 4) Information and engagement (**purple**), and 5) College and career readiness (**orange**).

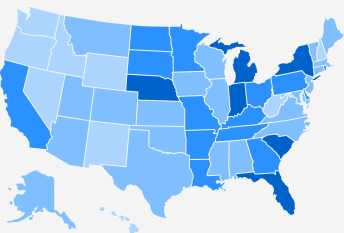
Each of the five categories is made up of three questions. These are presented below each category with **our state’s results compared to other states represented by a tier** shown to the right of each question, from low to high. These tiers are scored from 1 (low) to 4 (high) and the scores across the three questions determine how many rows are colored in for the wedge (up to a possible number of 12 rows).

The state results for each question are presented in four circles: low-income, middle and high income, state average and national average. For yes/no questions, the results are presented as the percentage who said yes, rounded to the nearest whole number. For questions about parents’ opinions and attitudes, we utilized a Likert scale and **reported out the percentage choosing the highest option**. For example, on question 1, which measures parents’ satisfaction with their child’s school, we present the percentage who answered that they were “very satisfied.” This helps ground the comparison discussion in a high bar for success.



OUR STATE IN CONTEXT

The second section of this report provides the results **for all 50 states plus D.C.**, one question at a time. For each of the questions, we provide the results either in the form of a map or an ordered list of states.



For the **maps**, a key provides the scale for the map and explains the numbers behind each of the four shades of blue. The darkest shade of blue is always the highest numbers and the lightest shade of blue is always the lowest numbers. Our state is outlined in red.

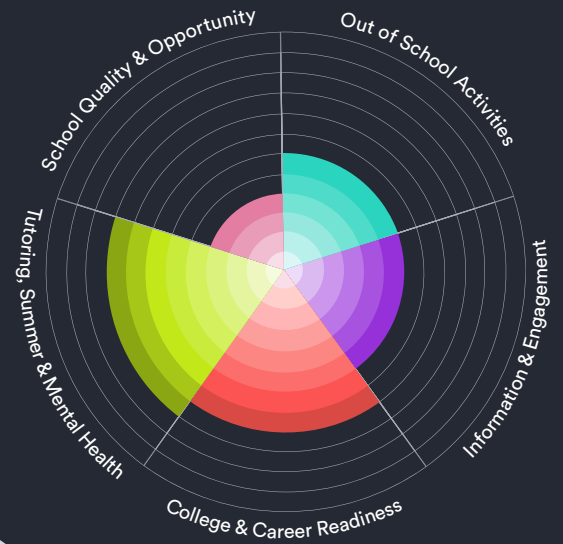
For the **lists**, states are ordered from highest performing states at the top to lowest performing states at the bottom. This list shows the state average as a dark blue dot and the results for low-income families in a light shade of the section color and the results for middle- and high-income families as a darker shade of that color. Our state is identified with a red box to make it easier to spot.

VIRGINIA



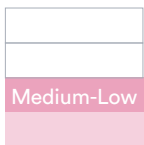
Surveyed July 8-August 22, 2024

Sample size (N) = 410 parents and guardians



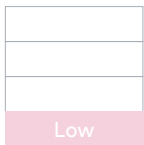
SCHOOL QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

State Tier



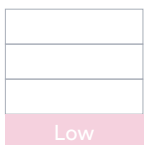
School Satisfaction

Percentage answering they are very satisfied with their child's school



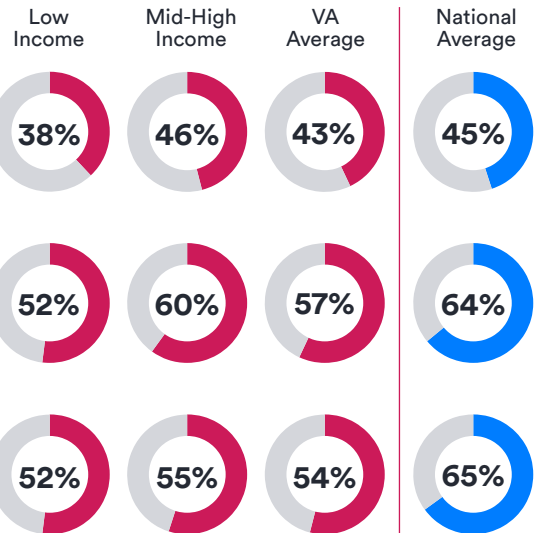
Would Make the Same Choice

Percentage answering that they would send their child to the school they go to today



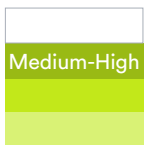
Feel They Have a Choice

Percentage answering they feel like they have a choice in what school their child attends



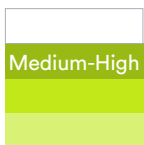
TUTORING, SUMMER AND MENTAL HEALTH

State Tier



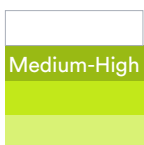
Tutoring Participation

Percentage of children who have received academic tutoring in this past school year



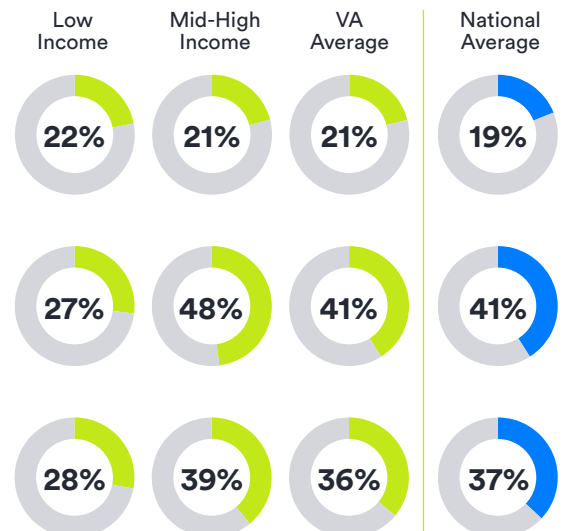
Summer Program Participation

Percentage of children who participated in a supervised summer program

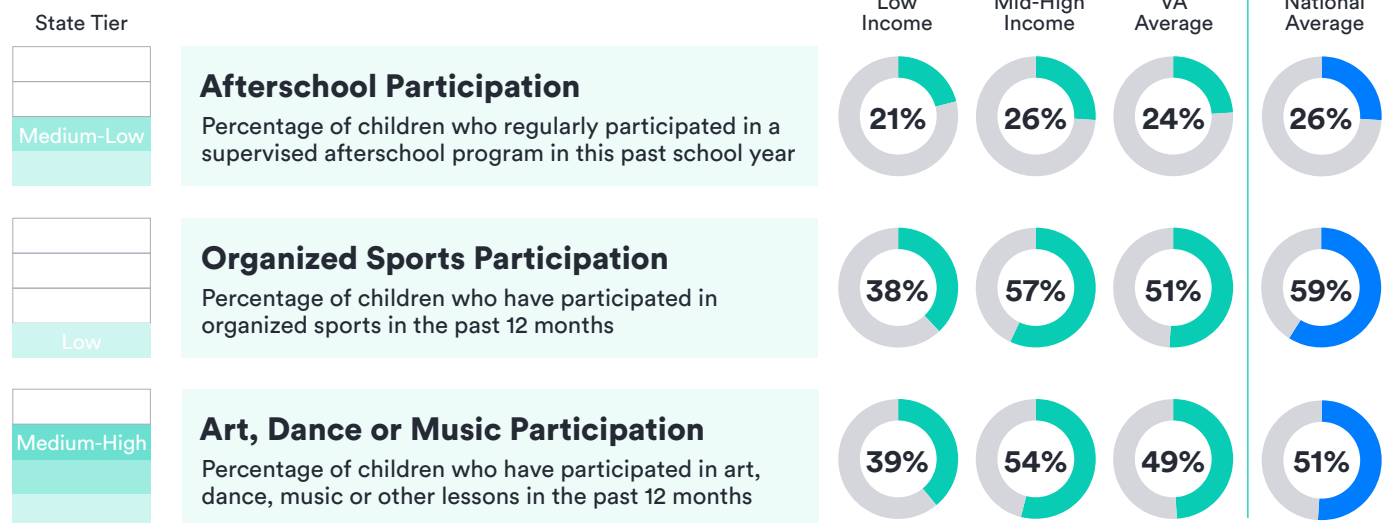


Mental Health Satisfaction

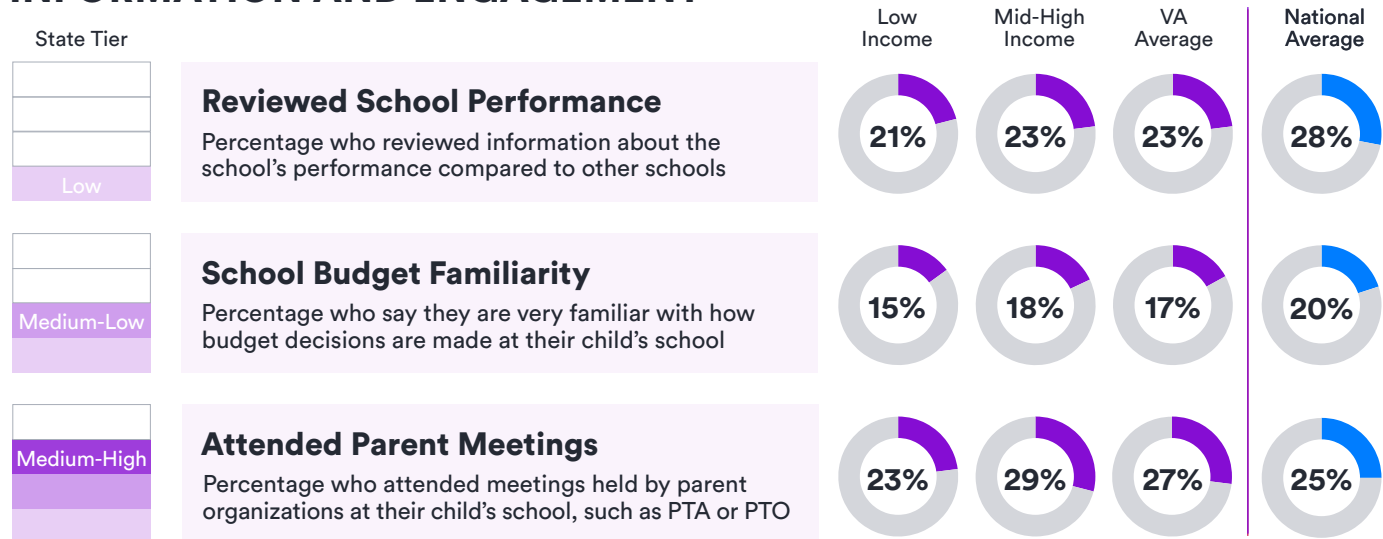
Percentage answering they are very satisfied with how the school supports their child's mental health needs



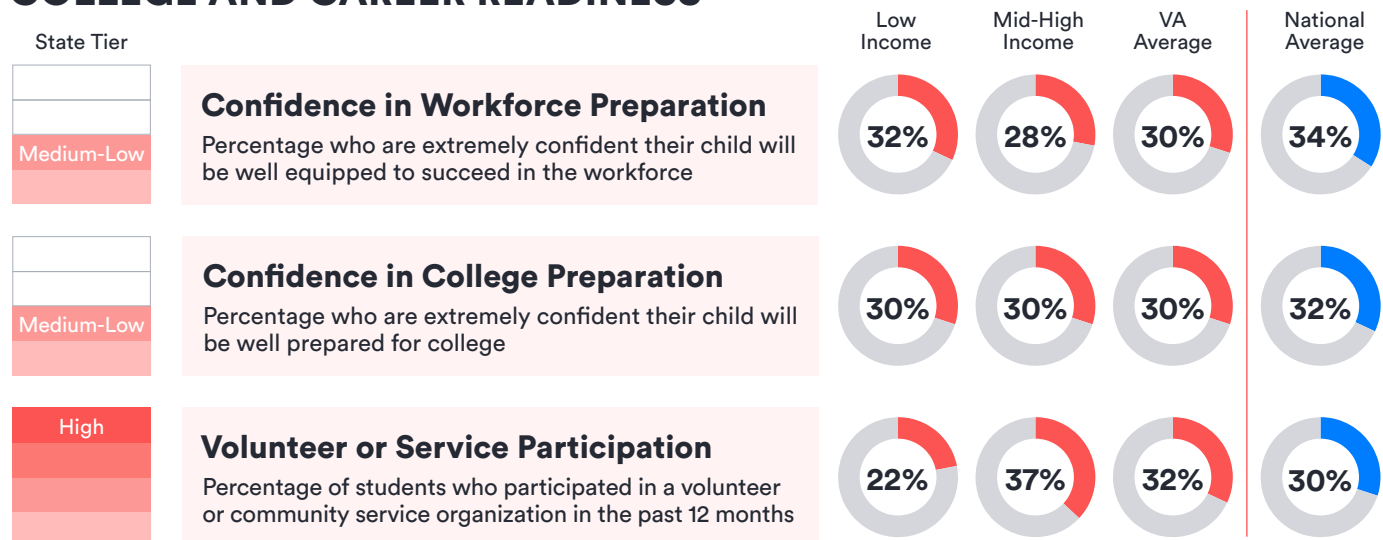
OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT



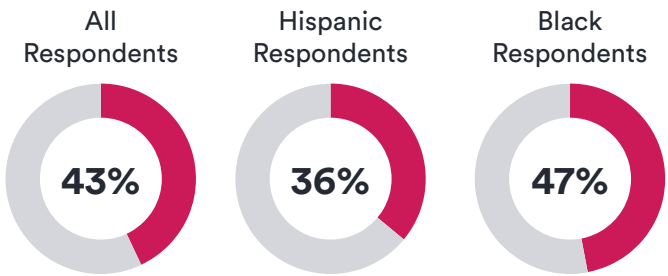
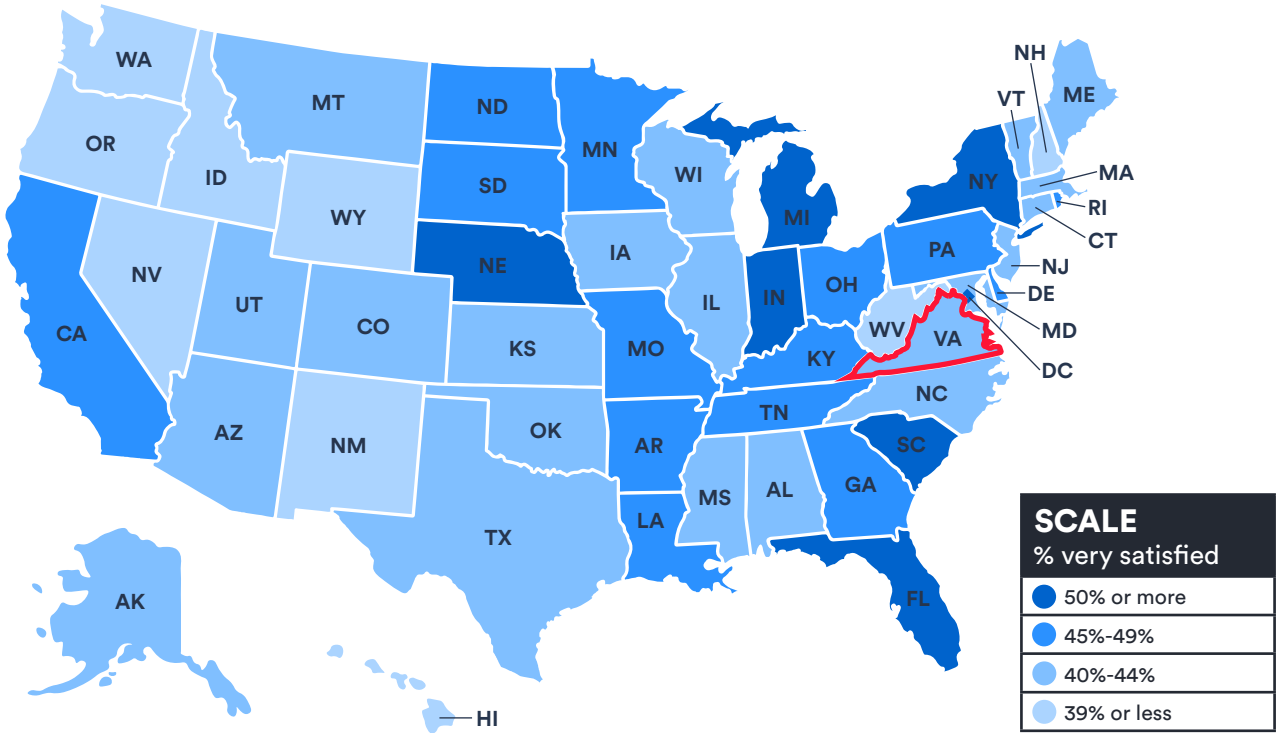
COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS



Virginia in Context: A 50-State Perspective

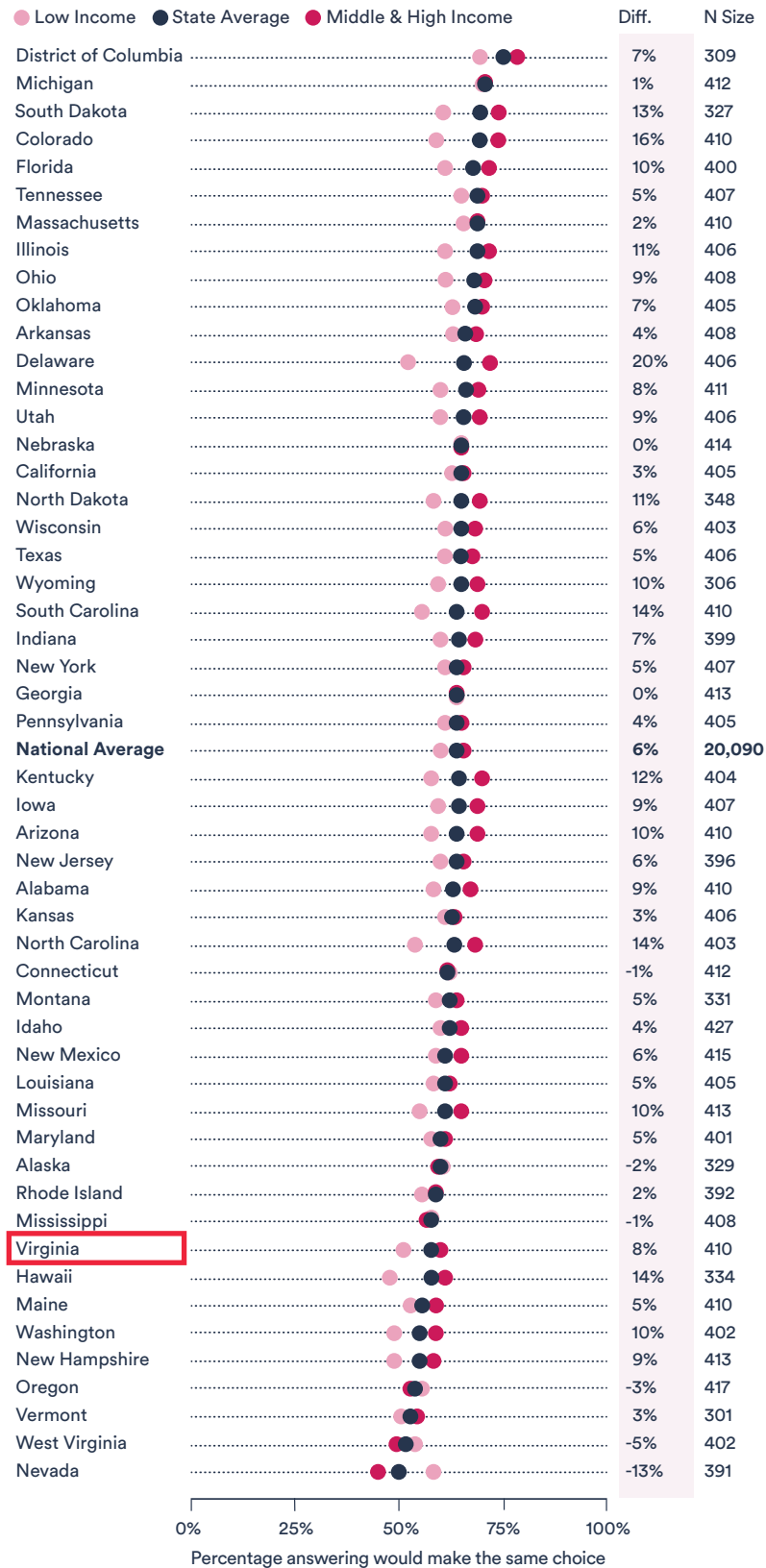
SCHOOL SATISFACTION BY STATE

Percentage answering they are very satisfied with their child's school

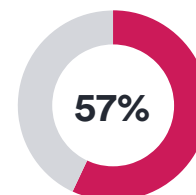


WOULD MAKE THE SAME CHOICE BY STATE & INCOME

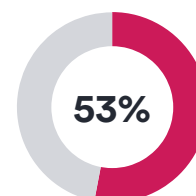
Percentage answering that if they could send their child to any school, they would send their child to the school they go to today



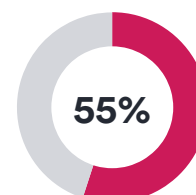
All Respondents



Hispanic Respondents

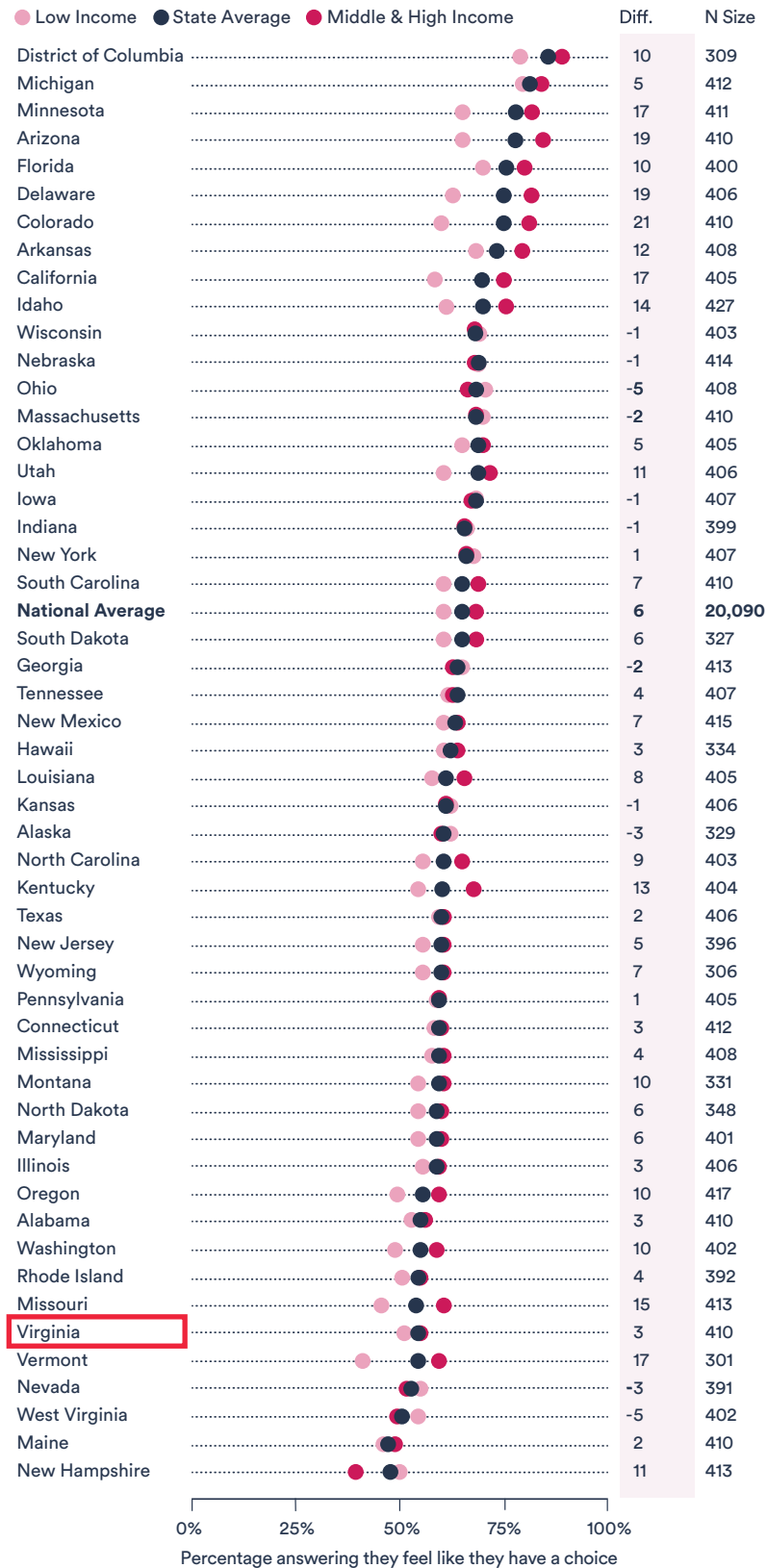


Black Respondents

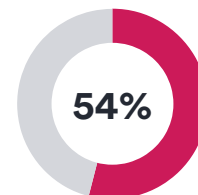


FEEL THEY HAVE A CHOICE BY STATE & INCOME

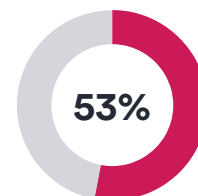
Percentage answering they feel like they have a choice in what school their child attends



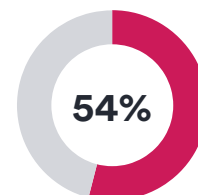
All
Respondents



Hispanic
Respondents



Black
Respondents



ABOUT THE VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** has been a center for conservative and free-market success in policy, education and action in the Commonwealth of Virginia for over 25 years. We work with policymakers and Virginians, conducting research, recommending policy solutions, and bringing stakeholders together to create and sustain coalitions that strengthen the Commonwealth. Our vision is to foster individual opportunity and economic growth for the benefit of every man, woman and child in Virginia.

ABOUT 50CAN

50CAN is an education advocacy organization focused on building the dynamic, student-centered education system of the future so that all kids, regardless of address, receive a high quality education. At the center of this work is our support for local education advocates who together have secured more than 250 transformative policy wins since our founding in 2011. This advocacy work is complemented by fellowships to spark and amplify the voices of changemakers, support for educational entrepreneurs as they build proof points of a better tomorrow, and efforts to help elected leaders better serve the public through a deeper understanding of education policy.

ABOUT EDGE RESEARCH

Edge Research tells data-driven stories that make our clients' programs, products, and brands successful. One of Edge's key verticals is education, which ranges from early childhood development, to K-12 and postsecondary education, to lifelong learning. We work for dozens of foundations, advocacy organizations, curriculum providers, associations, districts, schools and universities. Edge is constantly in the field talking to parents, students, teachers, administrators, and other education decision makers – getting the pulse on the issues that matter most.

