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PARENTS WANT MORE OF A SAY IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION

A new poll shows parents in Kansas are concerned about what their student is being taught

Wichita, KS – As communities in Kansas continue to grapple with decisions made by their local school districts throughout the pandemic, one issue that continues to remain on the forefront is parental concern about what their child is being taught.

A new poll shows that 88% of respondents agree that parents should have the primary say in their child's education, and 57% of respondents are concerned about what their child is learning in public school. The all-state polling was completed in [December 2021 by SurveyUSA](#).

Last year, the Kansas Legislature saw a need to expand educational opportunity – via Kansas' only [educational choice program](#) for kids due to extremely low student achievement, despite record-setting school funding. In Kansas, there are more high school students below grade level than are on track for college and career. The 2021 legislative session also saw changes implemented to drive certification of funding in education being tied to academic outcomes.

“Taxpayers have a right to know how their money is being spent. If parents are unhappy about what their child is being taught, or not being taught, they deserve the right to take the money they're already paying in taxes and find the right fit for their child,” says President of Kansas Policy Institute, James Franko.

Some states have created Education Savings Accounts for parents to use to pay for tutors, curriculum, private school tuition, and other educational expenses. In the new poll, respondents were asked a variety of questions about to whom these funds could be offered in Kansas. 75% wanted the ESAs offered if academic needs weren't being met, 64% wanted them offered if children were being exposed to objectionable material, and 61% wanted no limits on liability at all. Only 23% of respondents said “the [ESA] accounts shouldn't be offered at all.”

“Those closest to the kids should have the say in where or how that kid is educated – that's parents or other guardians. States with robust educational choice see the greatest gains in academic achievement, social integration, and parental satisfaction. We need to give each Kansas kid a fighting chance with the same kind of educational choice,” says Franko.

Current state law requires local school districts to conduct a "needs assessment" for each school building each year as part of their budget process. In the new poll 74% of the respondents believe that the school districts should be required to publish the process they use for their needs assessments and its results. And 73% believe that school districts should face consequences if their needs assessment process is not completed by required by state law.

“Parents, caregivers, and many teachers clearly just want increased accountability and transparency in K-12 education in Kansas,” says Franko.

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