

AS NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS DECIDE HOW TO SPEND FEDERAL FUNDS, VOTERS STATEWIDE DEMAND INCLUSIVE, TRANSPARENT PROCESS

Two-thirds of all parents would take advantage of tutoring services if offered; even higher for low-income parents at 83%

As the New Jersey Department of Education recently [announced grant amounts](#) to school districts from the American Rescue Plan, Newark-based non-profit Project Ready commissioned a poll by Change Research of 1,215 New Jersey voters to understand how residents want to see the funding used and how they'd like to see school districts engage community members to inform local decision making. By a large margin, parents want school districts to engage in an inclusive, transparent process.

“School districts across New Jersey have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to help our children make up for lost learning time and take our schools to the next level,” said Project Ready Executive Director Shennell McCloud. “It’s vital that school districts set up a transparent, accountable, easily accessible process for allocating this funding - one that gives parents a seat at the table.”

Key findings include:

- **Voters favor an inclusive, transparent process for deciding how funding is used.**
 - 74% say it’s important that “parents, teachers, employers, and non-profit leaders have a seat at the table and a voice in how this funding is used, so that all perspectives in the community are incorporated” vs 18% who say “individual school districts know best. They should make these spending decisions on their own.”
 - 55% say full transparency over how money is spent should be the top priority, compared with 36% accountability and 7% innovation.
- **63 percent of parents would take advantage of high quality tutoring for their children if it was made available to them.**
 - These numbers are highest among Black and Hispanic parents, both at 78%, and among lower income (<\$50k per year) parents, at 83%.
- Overall, the idea of giving parents with one-time grants of \$500 per child to be used for educational needs did not poll well, with 47% of parents saying it would have an impact compared with 49% who say it would not. **However, there is a sharp divide along racial lines and urban/suburban lines, with 60% of urban parents, 66% of Black parents, and 75% of Hispanic parents saying this would have an impact, compared with 38% of white parents.**

- Other priorities among voters are supporting emotional/mental health needs (29%), expanding free pre-K and childcare for all children (29%), special funding for students with greater learning needs (28%), and expanding broadband access to underserved areas (28%).

Newark Analysis:

- **Newarkers feel even more strongly than parents statewide that the process to distribute ARP funding should be transparent and accountable.** 85% say “it’s important that parents, teachers, employers, and non-profit leaders have a seat at the table and a voice in how this funding is used, so that all perspectives in the community are incorporated.”
- In Newark, **92% of parents would use tutoring services if they were provided**, compared with just 8% who would not. The percentage of parents who would use tutoring services for their children **is nearly 30% higher in Newark** than the state as a whole.
- Similarly, 85% of Newark parents say that a one time grant of \$500 for their children’s educations would have an impact, with **67% saying it would have a big impact.**
- Overall, **Newarkers broadly support nearly all of the education interventions tested**, including summer school, expanded learning time, increasing school options, expanding access to pre-k, and increasing access to mental health support and support for students with additional learning challenges.

Methodology

Polling was conducted online from May 15-20, 2021. Using its Dynamic Online Sampling technology and SMS text messaging to attain a sample reflective of registered voters, Change Research polled 1215 people in the state of New Jersey. This includes an oversample of 343 voters in the city of Newark. Post-stratification weights were made on age, gender, political region, education, 2020 vote, and race and ethnicity to reflect the distribution of voters statewide.

All polls are subject to errors caused by interviewing a sample of persons, rather than the entire population. In 95 cases out of 100, the responses to this survey should be within plus or minus 3.9 percentage points of those that would have been obtained from interviewing the entire population of likely voters. The sampling error for subgroups of the survey will be greater.