

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nashvillians' Perceptions of Public Schools Showing Improvement Over Last Year Particularly among Public School Parents

Nashville Public Education Foundation's annual education poll finds city residents divided on the state's new funding formula

NASHVILLE, TENN. – Sept. 20, 2022 – A recent poll conducted by [Impact Research](#) for the [Nashville Public Education Foundation](#) shows an improvement in Nashvillians' perception of the city's public schools. The results show an 11-point upswing in residents' perceptions of local public schools, from a 62% negative rating in 2021 to roughly half (51%) this year. The data further suggests that Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) families are more encouraged by recent improvements, as 50% of public school parents approve of the job the district is doing educating students – up 16 points from last year.

“Coupled with the recent announcement that MNPS has 48 Reward schools and fewer Priority Schools this year, district investments and strategies seem to be paying off,” said **Katie Cour, Nashville Public Education Foundation President & CEO**. “Given the turmoil of the last two years, we are encouraged to see improved opinions about our public schools and we know we need to double down on these investments to see the outcomes we all want for our kids.”

Residents are hopeful about the potential of public schools, with nearly two-thirds (65%) stating that they would prefer that their children attend local public schools. When asked about the progress of public schools over the last five years, results show an improvement from last year. This year, 39% of residents say Nashville's public schools have gotten worse, a decrease of six percentage points from last year when 45% said public schools had gotten worse. Thirty percent said they have stayed about the same and 13% report they have improved, up 3 percentage points from last year when 10% of respondents said the schools had gotten better.

“We are excited that MNPS families are seeing and experiencing the work being done across the district to accelerate the learning progress of our students and move the district forward to ensure every student is known,” said **Dr. Adrienne Battle, Director of Schools**. “I'm thankful for the support we've received from Mayor Cooper, the Metro Council, and our Board of Education through record investments in MNPS that have helped us achieve our level 5 TVAAS status and a record 48 Reward Schools in the last school year. We look forward to building on these foundations to create even greater support for public schools in Nashville.”

The poll also asked Nashvillians about a high-profile issue affecting public schools in the past year – the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA), the state's new school funding formula. While the overwhelming majority (69%) of Nashvillians have not heard about the state's new school funding formula, those who are aware of TISA are generally split on their support. Within the population who say they are aware of TISA, 41% support it while 46% oppose the funding formula. This split is particularly evident across partisan and age demographics: more



Democrats oppose TISA (58%), and more Republicans favor TISA (64%); younger voters are more supportive of TISA (49%) than middle-aged voters (35%).

Additionally, the poll asked Nashvillians about the city's role in supporting children and youth. Similar to last year, roughly 60% of Nashvillians say the city does not currently prioritize children and youth. A larger percentage of Nashvillians in this year's poll think the city is moving in the right direction compared to last year (28% in 2022 and 22% in 2021). However, public opinion about the trajectory of the city remains more negative than positive, with 38% of Nashvillians saying the city is moving in the wrong direction (compared to 35% in 2021). Another 30% of Nashvillians said they are mixed about the direction of the city. When considering race, the proportion of Black and white Nashvillians who think the city is moving in the wrong direction is similar (35% for Black Nashvillians and 38% for white), while Black Nashvillians are more likely to say the city is moving in the right direction (37%) than white Nashvillians (25%).

Notably, almost half (47%) of respondents with children in the household think the city is moving in the wrong direction, a 15-point increase from last year. The majority of Nashvillians recognize the link between city leadership and public schools, with 75% believing that decisions made by Metro Council and the Mayor's Office have an effect on local school success and student achievement.

"The results in Nashville this year are generally consistent with other metro areas nationwide, particularly considering the challenges presented during COVID," said **Kevin Akins, Partner at Impact Research**. "We have extensive history polling Nashville and other cities, and Nashville is consistently a city that values education and sees the potential of schools. Voters want more for the city's youth and believe good public schools are the solution."

The goal of NPEF's citywide survey on education is to benchmark public education perceptions and better understand voter attitudes toward education priorities and support for potential education policy changes. Polling was conducted by Impact Research (previously ALG Research) on behalf of NPEF in 2018, 2020, 2021 and again in 2022. Impact Research conducted this multi-modal telephone survey of 500 randomly sampled likely voters in Nashville between August 24 – 29, 2022. The sample includes responses collected utilizing landline, cellphone, and text-to-web interviews. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 4.4 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

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Supporting Metro Nashville Public Schools for 20 Years

For two decades, the Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) has consistently prioritized the needs of students and schools in a rapidly evolving city. With an unwavering focus on helping to shape a future where every student thrives, NPEF has proven that bold change is best achieved with an informed and united community of educators and business and civic leaders.

Since its founding in 2002, NPEF has fostered data-driven solutions that have led to tangible results in professional learning for teachers, school funding, teacher pay, principal quality, and more. To learn about the milestones of NPEF's support of Metro Nashville Public Schools and its students, visit nashvillepef.org/history.

About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works to remove the barriers to educational experiences by highlighting success, serving as a strategic thought partner to Metro Nashville Public Schools, convening

stakeholders, and advocating for change so all students can thrive in school. Since its founding in 2002, NPEF has fostered data-driven solutions that have led to tangible results in professional learning for teachers, teacher pay, principal quality, college access and success, and more. To learn about NPEF's support of Metro Nashville Public Schools and its students, visit nashvillepef.org.

About Impact Research

Impact Research is a full-service public opinion research and consulting firm that bridges the gap between data and action.

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Access to Summary Presentation of Survey Findings Available on Request