



Findings from EAB's 2020 **Parent Survey**

New Insight on How Parents of College-Bound Students Are
Evaluating Schools

Our 2020 Parent Survey in Brief

Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Total Respondents

2,530

individuals participated

Parents' Education Level

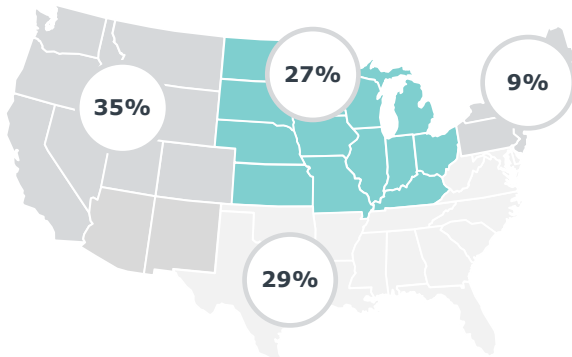
71%

of respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher

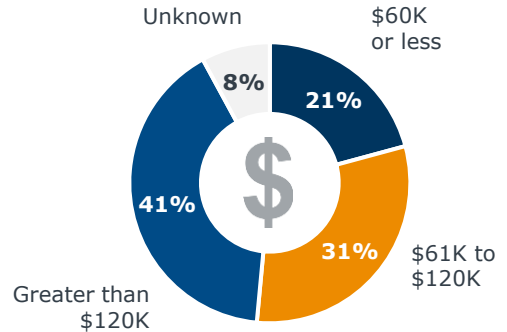
Student's Class Year at Time of Survey

- Freshman: **8%**
- Sophomore: **30%**
- Junior: **61%**
- Senior: **17%**

Location



Income



- 1 Parents and the Pandemic
- 2 Parents' Perspective on Value
- 3 Parents' Communication Preferences

COVID Concerns



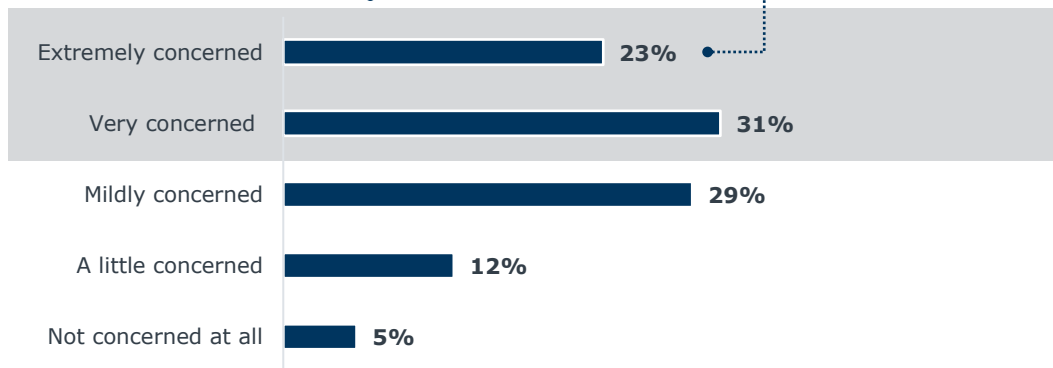
A Majority of Parents Are Very Worried

“How concerned are you about the coronavirus affecting your family?”

Percentage of Responding Parents

More than half of parents are extremely or very concerned

Parents with estimated household income of \$60K or less were 1.4x more likely to be extremely concerned than those in the \$120K+ band



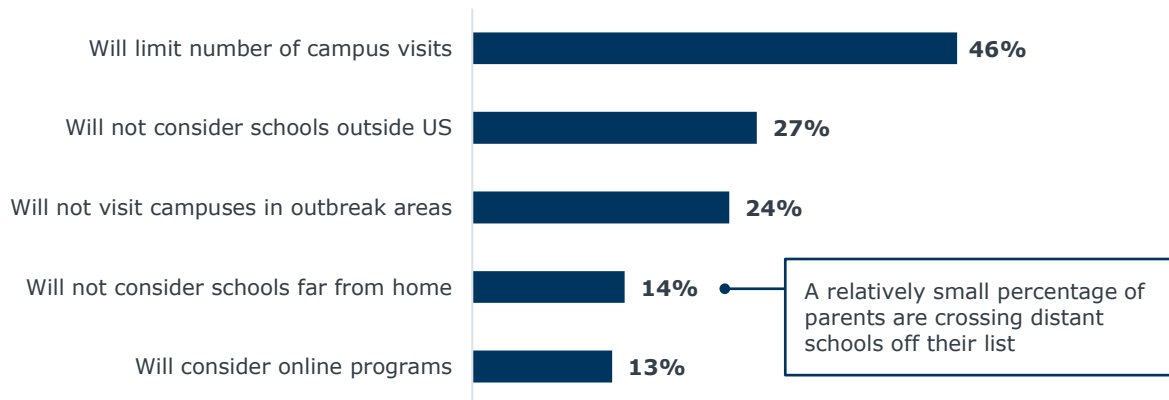
Altered Behavior



The Pandemic Is Impacting Parents' College-Search Approach

“Which of the following statements regarding the impact of the pandemic accurately reflect your plans?”

Percentage of Responding Parents



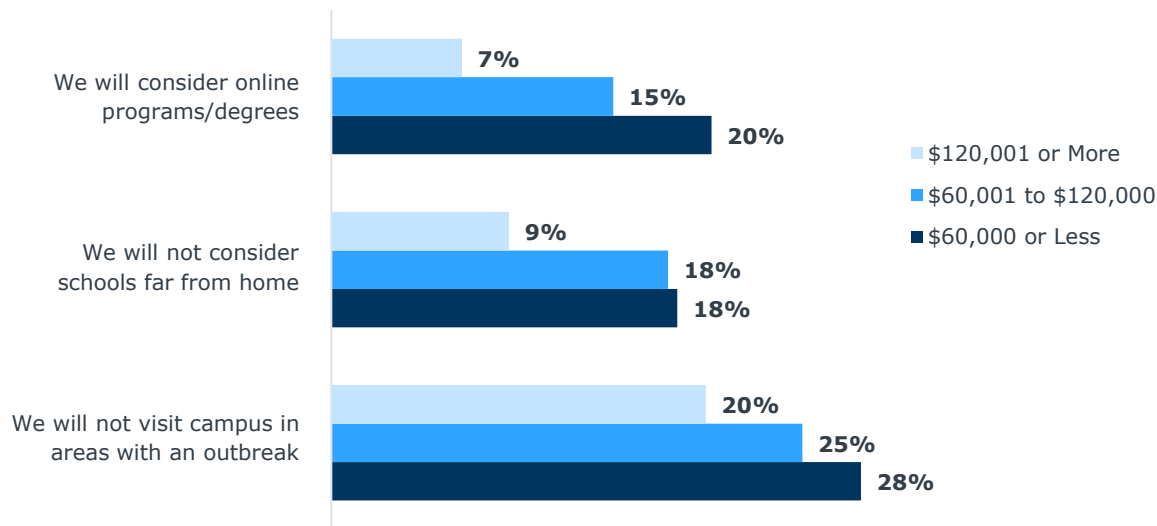
Differing Responses Across Income Bands



Least-Affluent Parents Most Likely to Be Altering Their Plans

“Which of the following statements regarding the impact of the pandemic accurately reflect your plans?”

Percentage of Responding Parents, by Estimated Household Income



Placing New Importance on Safety



Elevated Prominence Within an Otherwise Consistent Set of Priorities

“What school characteristics or outcomes would you pay more for?”

Top Five Characteristics, Percentage of Parents Citing Each

		<i>Rank in 2020</i>	<i>Rank vs. 2018</i>
Strong student-success support	65%	1	Same
Safe and secure campus environment	65%	2	+3
Successful job placement after college	64%	3	Same
Strong career preparation services	60%	4	Same
Excellence in teaching	59%	5	-3

Parents' top five concerns have not changed since 2018

Safety has risen to the #2 slot, presumably due to the pandemic

- 1 Parents and the Pandemic
- 2 **Parents' Perspective on Value**
- 3 Parents' Communication Preferences

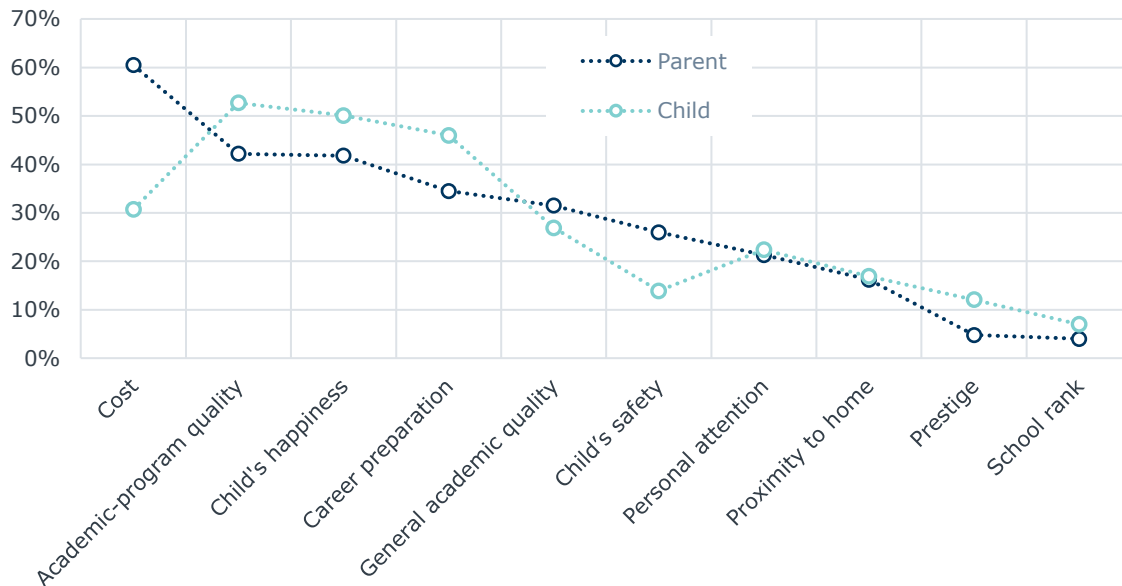
Which School Characteristics Matter Most?



Parents Differ from Students on Cost but Agree on Other Key Points

**“Which of the following school characteristics are most important to you?
Which are most important to your child?”**

Percentage of Responding Parents



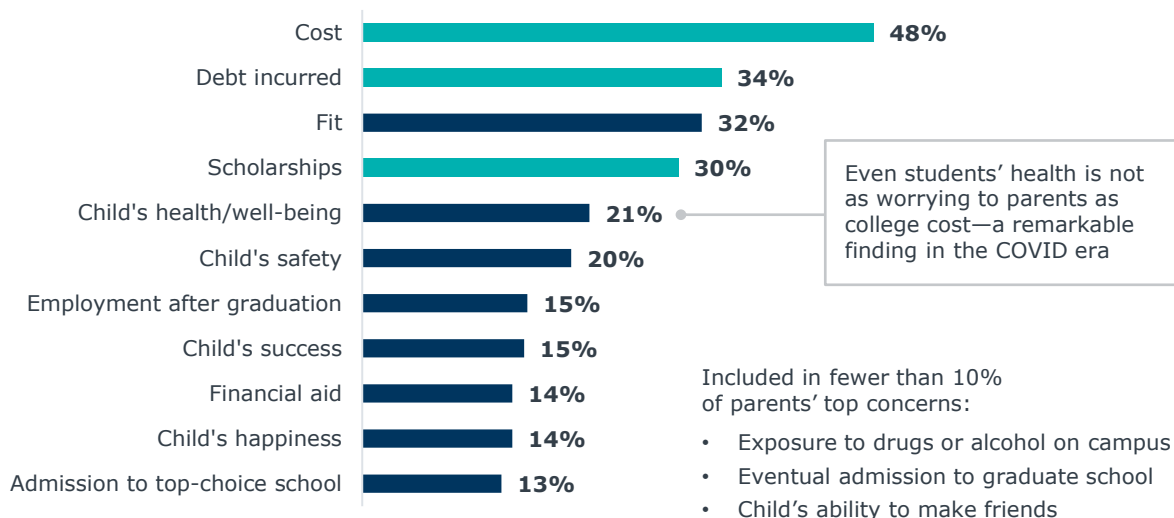
Affordability Tops Parents' List of Concerns



Cost Is by Far Parents' Biggest Source of Anxiety

“What makes you most anxious about your child’s future college experience?”

Categories Cited by More Than 10% of Survey Respondents¹



1) Parents were asked to select their top three concerns.

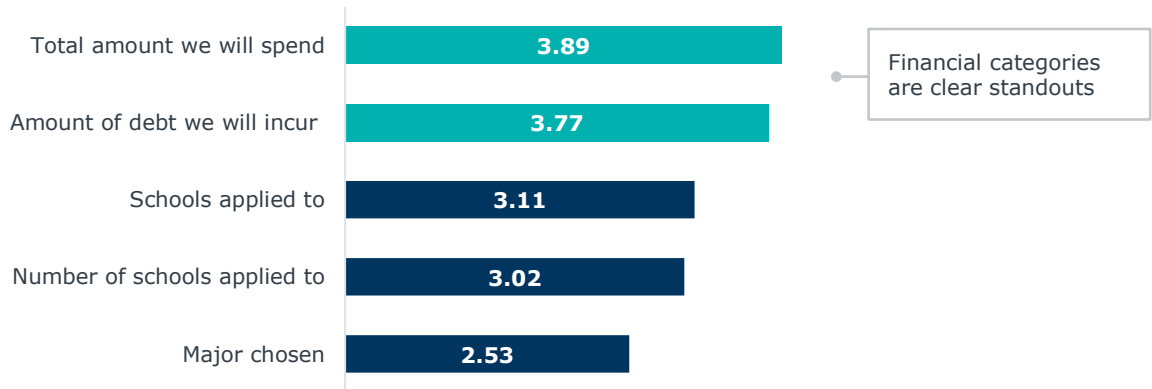
Parental Influence Focuses on Finances



Cost Tops the List of College-Related Decisions Parents Impact Most

“How much influence do you have on each of the following aspects of your child’s choice of school?”

*Average Score Across Responding Parents, by Decision Category
(1 = No Influence, 5 = A Great Deal of Influence)*



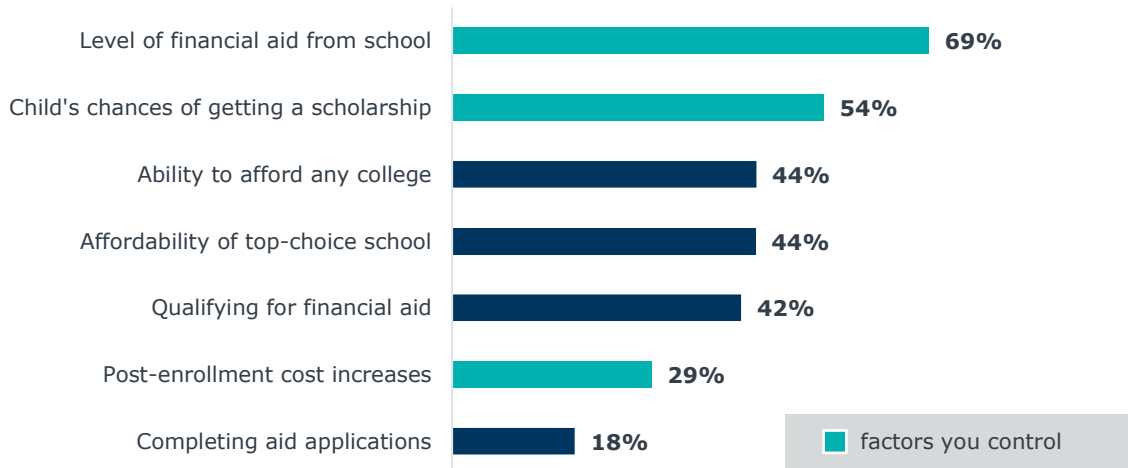
Parsing Parents' Cost Concerns



Much Parent Worry Hinges on Factors You Control

“What concerns you most about the cost of college?”

Percentage of Responding Parents



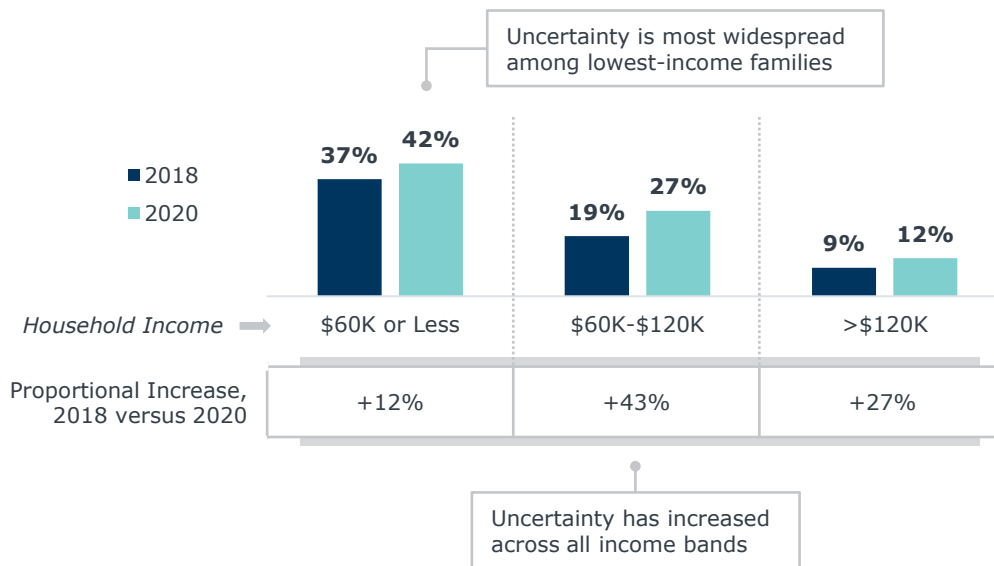
Increased Uncertainty



More Parents Are Less Confident When it Comes to Budgeting

Percentage of Parents Who Said They Were Unsure How Much to Spend on Their Student's College Education

2018 Versus 2020, by Household Income, Parents of High School Seniors



How Much Are Parents Willing to Pay?

More Lower-Income Parents Have a Lower Cost Ceiling in 2020

“What is the most you would pay for college annually?”

Parents of High School Seniors from Households with Income of \$60K or Less; Cost Includes Tuition, Fees, Housing, and Meals¹



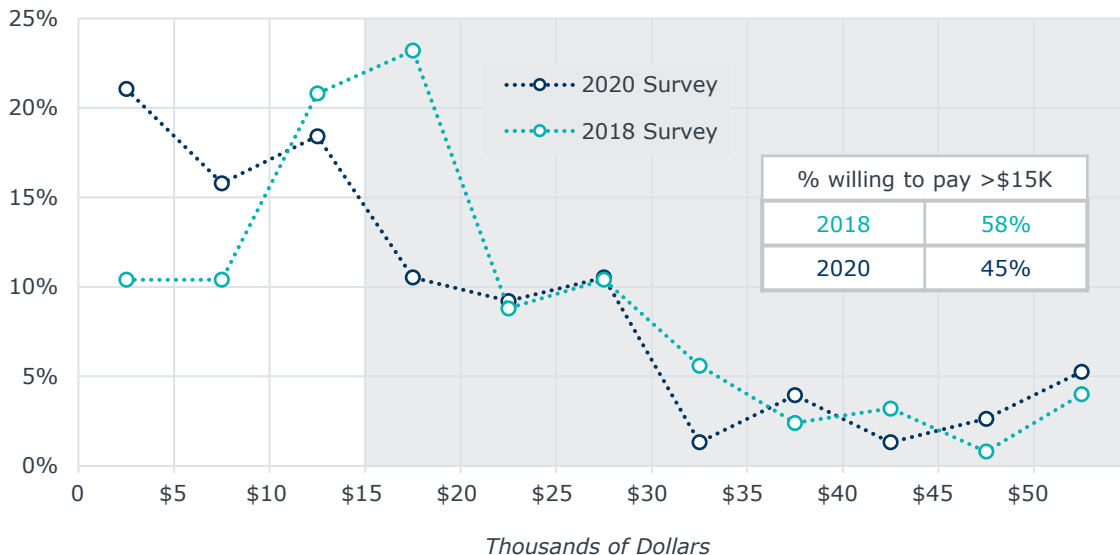
1) Denominator excludes parents who said they were unsure how much they'd be willing to pay. For data shown in this chart, n=54 for 2018 and n=45 for 2020 (n being the total number of responding households).

How Much Are Parents Willing to Pay?

More Middle-Income Parents Have a Lower Cost Ceiling in 2020

“What is the most you would pay for college annually?”

Parents of High School Seniors from Households with Income between \$60K and \$120K; Cost Includes Tuition, Fees, Housing, and Meals¹



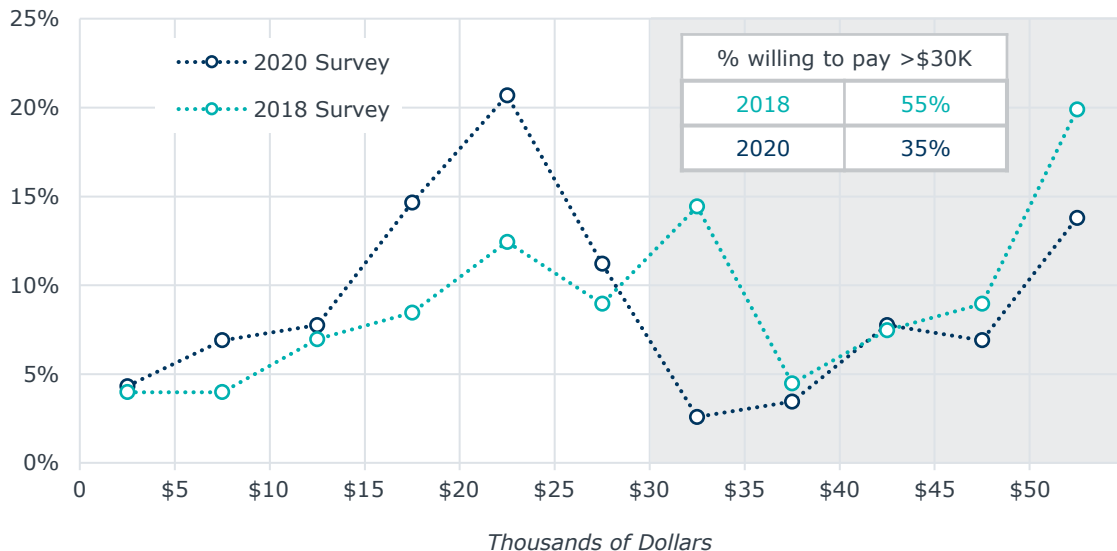
1) Denominator excludes parents who said they were unsure how much they'd be willing to pay. For data shown in this chart, n=125 for 2018 and n=76 for 2020 (n being the total number of responding households).

How Much Are Parents Willing to Pay?

More High-Income Parents Have a Lower Cost Ceiling in 2020

“What is the most you would pay for college annually?”

Parents of High School Seniors from Households with Income Greater than \$120K; Cost Includes Tuition, Fees, Housing, and Meals¹



1) Denominator excludes parents who said they were unsure how much they'd be willing to pay. For data shown in this chart, n=201 for 2018 and n=116 for 2020 (n being the total number of responding households).

- 1 Parents and the Pandemic
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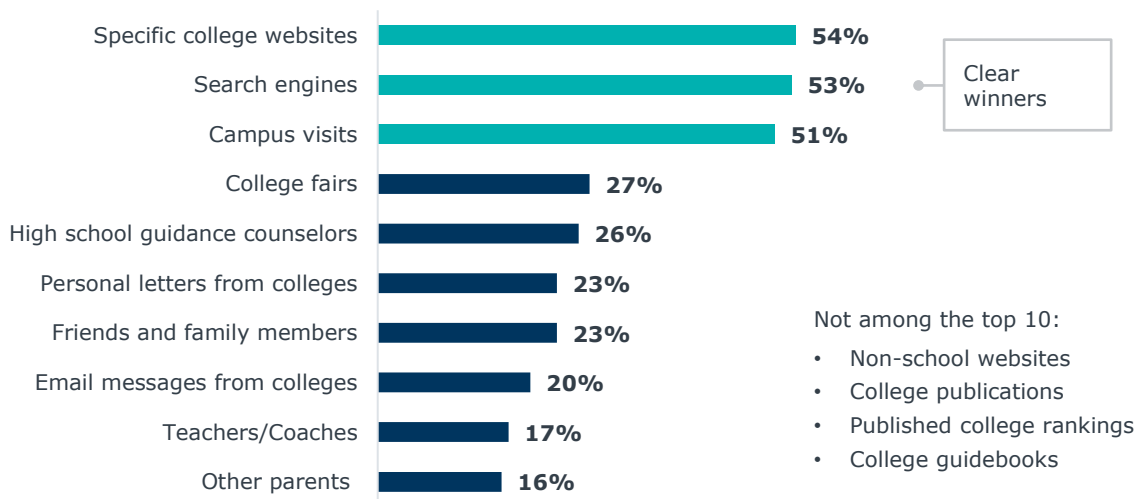
What Information Sources Do Parents Favor?



A Clear Division Within Parents' Top 10 Sources

“Which sources were most helpful to you in your search for information about schools?”

Percentage of Parents Citing Each Source (Top Ten Sources)



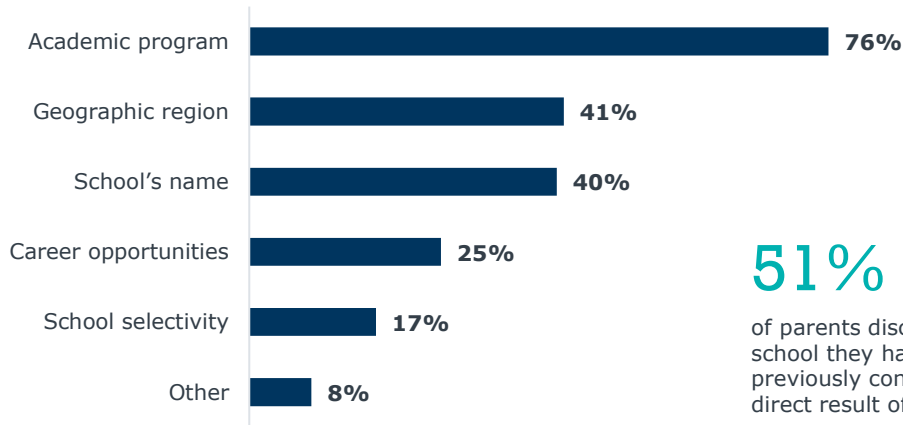
How Do Parents Find Schools Online?



Parents Most Often Search Based on Colleges' Academic Offerings

“When you searched for a college or university, what search criteria did you use?”

Percentage of Responding Parents



51%

of parents discovered a school they had not previously considered as a direct result of a web search

Do School Websites Impact Parent Opinion?



Parents Are Looking at Your Website—and Judging You by It

“Do you agree with the following statements regarding school websites?”

Percentage of Responding Parents

I make a point of visiting websites of schools that my child is considering	93%
A well-designed college website improves my opinion of a college	86%
A poorly designed website reduces my confidence in a college	81%
In general, it is easy to find the information I need on a college website	74%
I avoid college websites that are hard to use	65%
A college’s website helps me decide whether the school is right for my child	60%
All college websites are basically the same	23%

Additionally, almost a third of parents said school websites were the **single most important information source** when it came to helping them decide whether a school is right for their child

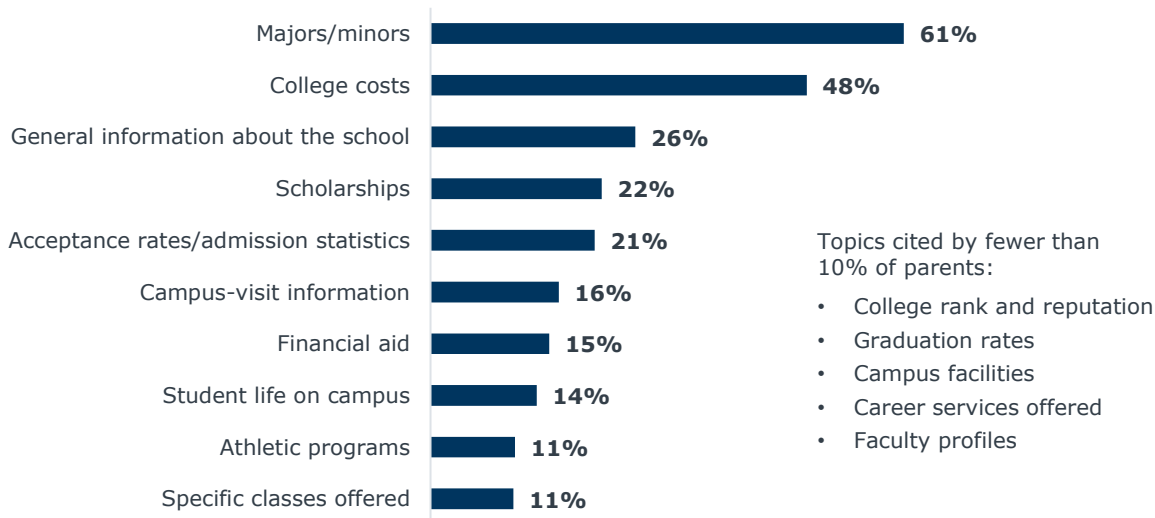
What Are Parents Looking for on Your Website?



Majors and Cost Top the List of Information Parents Are Seeking

“What information are you most often seeking on college websites?”

Percentage of Responding Parents, Topics Chosen by 10% or More Parents¹



1) Survey respondents were asked to choose three topics.

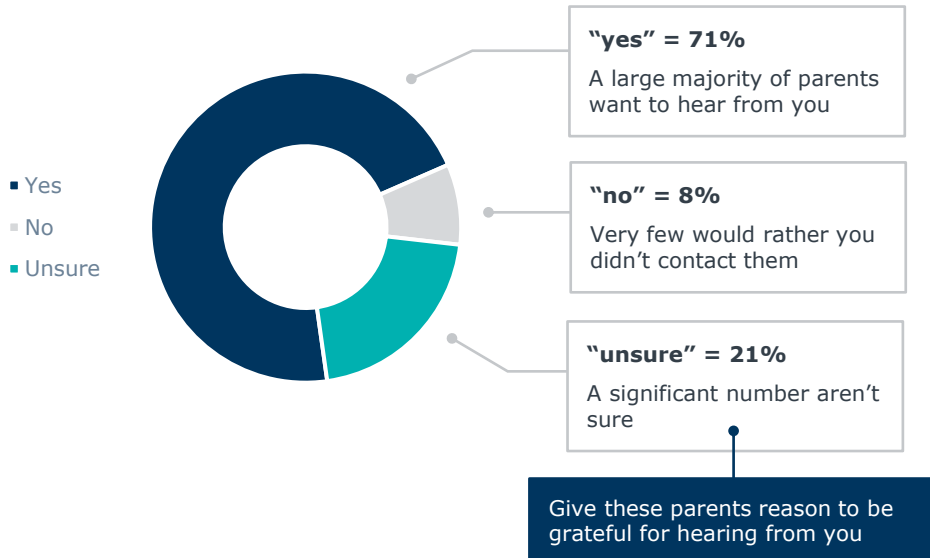
Parents Want to Hear from You



Few Parents Think Schools Should Not Communicate Directly with Them

“Do you think colleges and universities should communicate directly with parents of prospective students?”

Percentage of Responding Parents



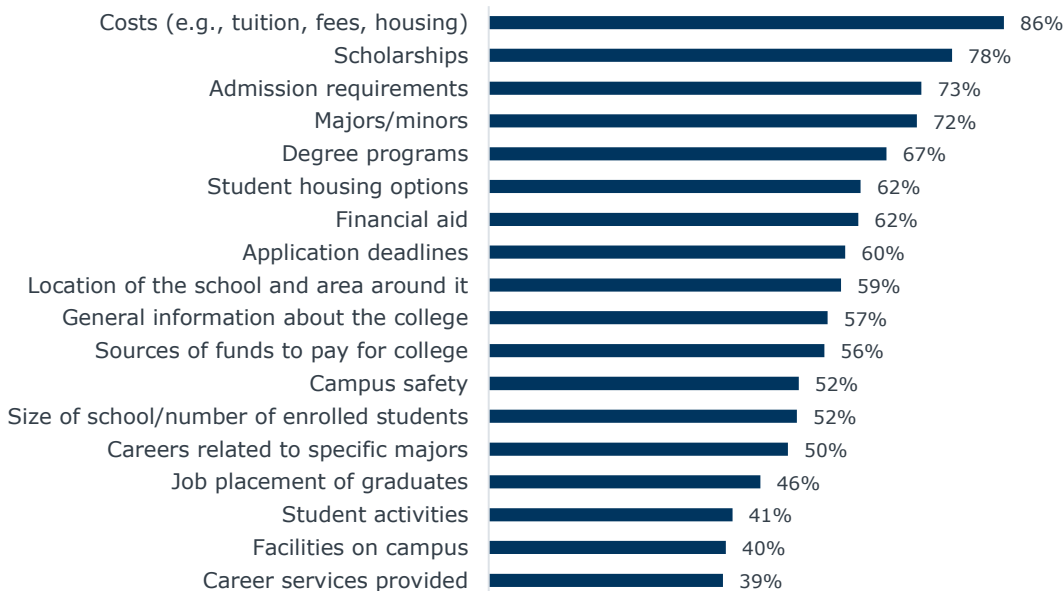
What Information Do Parents Want from You?



Parents Are Interested in Many Different Aspects of Prospective Schools

“What information would you like from schools your child is considering?”

Percentage of Surveyed Parents, Top 20 Topics

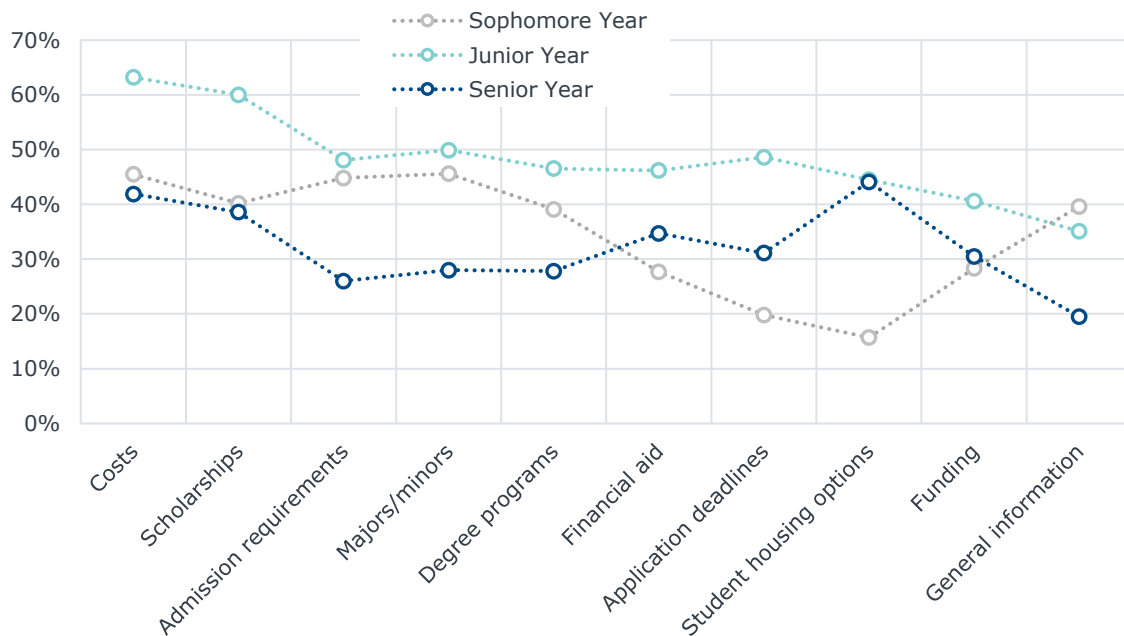


When Do Parents Want Which Information?

Topics Parents Are Most Interested In Vary by Funnel Stage

“When would you like to receive information on specific topics?”

By Student’s High School Year, Percentage of Responding Parents





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