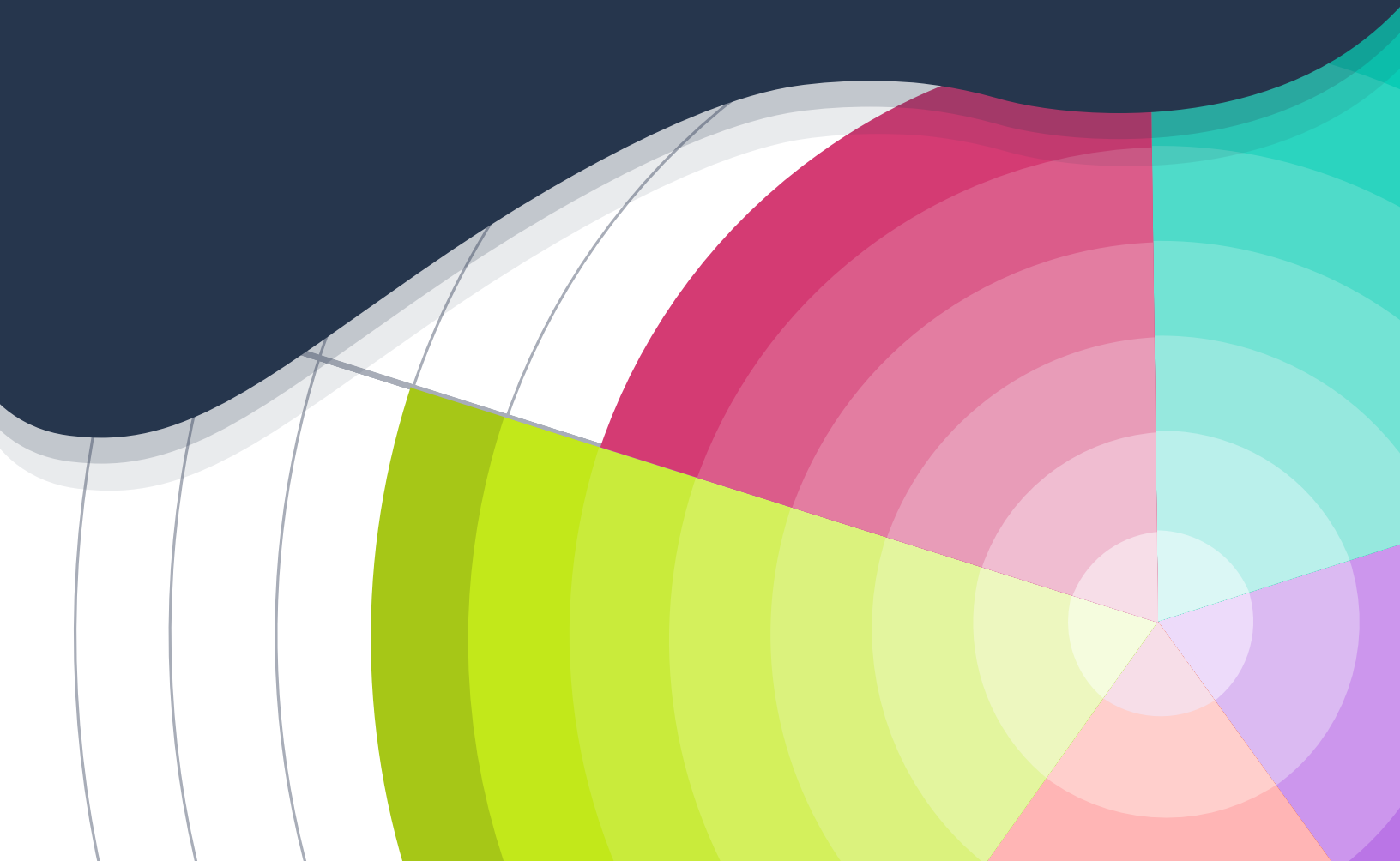




# The State of Educational Opportunity in North Carolina

A Survey of North Carolina Parents

October 2024



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Dear Friends,

Changing our world for the better starts by listening. By elevating the voices of parents across our state, we can ensure that we are focused on the problems most important to them and that the solutions we seek are grounded in their hopes and dreams for their children.

Our work at CarolinaCAN is founded on the idea that every child deserves a world class education and their parents must be partners at every step along that educational journey. That is why we are so excited to share a new survey on the state of educational opportunity in the Tar Heel state. Produced in partnership with 50CAN and Edge Research, this survey provides not only a unique window into the opportunities available to students in our state right now but also allows us to compare those answers to parents across our region and across the country.

The survey is organized into five categories of learning that families tell us are crucial for them and their children: 1) school quality and opportunity, 2) tutoring, summer and mental health, 3) out of school activities, 4) information and engagement, and 5) college and career readiness. A representative sample of 403 parents and guardians of school-aged children in our state were surveyed between July 8 and August 22, 2024 as part of a nationwide research effort that reached more than 20,000 respondents and is both representative of our local communities.

### Here is what North Carolina parents told us:



#### **School Satisfaction: More Work to Do**

Right now only 40 percent of North Carolina parents report being very satisfied with their child's school, which places us 40th out of 50 states and 11 points below South Carolina.



#### **Tutoring Access: A Clear Demand for More Support**

Tutoring has become a lifeline for many families seeking to provide additional academic support for their children. Today, 25 percent of students participate in tutoring in our state, the third highest percentage in the country. At the same time, an additional 18 percent of families in North Carolina whose children don't have a tutor report that they are very interested in tutoring. This gap underscores the urgent need for expanded tutoring programs, particularly for students who are falling behind in key subject areas.



#### **College and Career Readiness: Falling Behind Our Neighbors**

North Carolina parents' confidence their children are prepared for the workforce is both well below the national average and well below other southern states like Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina. The same is true for their confidence that their children are prepared for college.



#### **Faith-Based Programs: A Strength to Build Upon**

The percentage of North Carolina children who participated in a faith-based program or youth group is significantly above the national average. As we work to expand opportunities for children outside of school, these programs are an important source of community strength that can be leveraged throughout our state.

As we look ahead to 2025, it is clear that North Carolina is at a critical juncture. While we celebrate the progress we have made, we must remain focused on aiming higher to ensure our children are prepared for life beyond high school in a changing world.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the future of education in North Carolina. By working together, we can create an education system that serves all students and empowers the next generation of leaders.

Sincerely,



*K. B-L J.*

**Marcus Brandon**  
Executive Director  
CarolinaCAN

# 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 North Carolina, 403 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. Census<sup>1</sup> and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)<sup>2</sup> 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 tables provide the demographics of survey respondents in North Carolina after weighting.

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%	61%	19%	5%	0.9%	–	0.2%	2%

INCOME DISTRIBUTION		
Low Income	Middle Income	High Income
41%	50%	9%

<sup>1</sup> Annual Social and Economic Supplements, United States Census, [Annual Social and Economic Supplements \(census.gov\)](#)  
<sup>2</sup> 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
9%	7%	7%	7%	6%	8%	7%	9%	8%	7%	8%	8%	8%

## 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
67%	4%	11%	9%	1%	1%	5%	0.3%	0.5%

## 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”<sup>3</sup> 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 Practices<sup>4</sup> to maintain the highest standards of competence, integrity, accountability, and transparency in public opinion and survey research work.

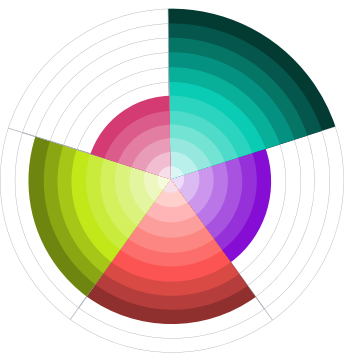
<sup>3</sup> Kochhar, Rakesh, “The State of the American Middle Class,” [Pew Research Center](#), 5/31/24

<sup>4</sup> 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 other 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**).

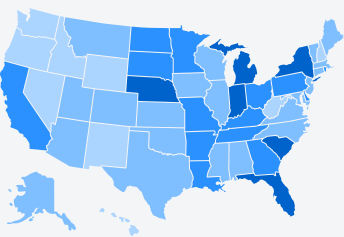
Each of the five categories is made up of three questions. These are presented below each category with **our state's results compared to other states represented by a tier** shown to the right of each question, from low to high. These tiers are scored from 1 (low) to 4 (high) and the scores across the 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 **list**, 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.

# NORTH CAROLINA



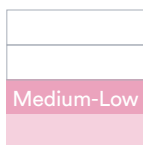
Surveyed July 8-August 22, 2024

Sample size (N) = 403 parents and guardians



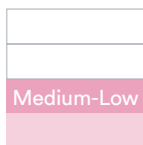
## SCHOOL QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

State Tier



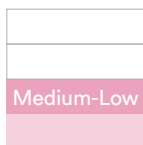
### School Satisfaction

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



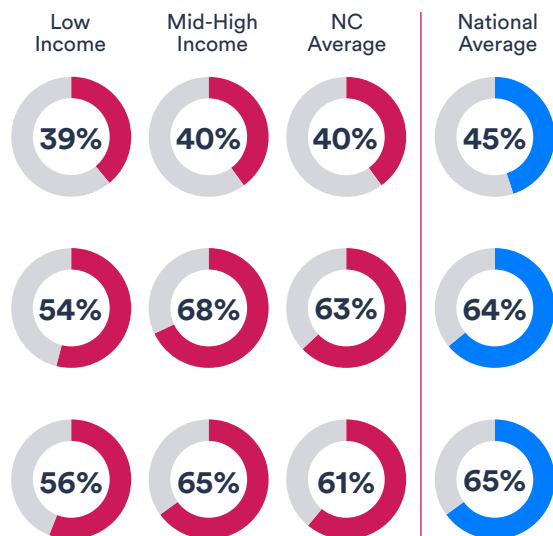
### Would Make the Same Choice

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



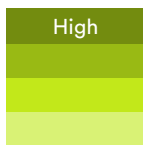
### Feel They Have a Choice

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



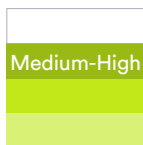
## TUTORING, SUMMER AND MENTAL HEALTH

State Tier



### Tutoring Participation

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



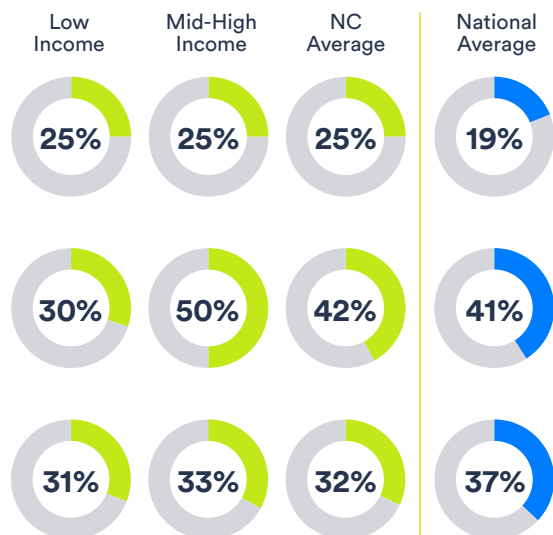
### Summer Program Participation

Percentage of children who participated in a supervised summer program

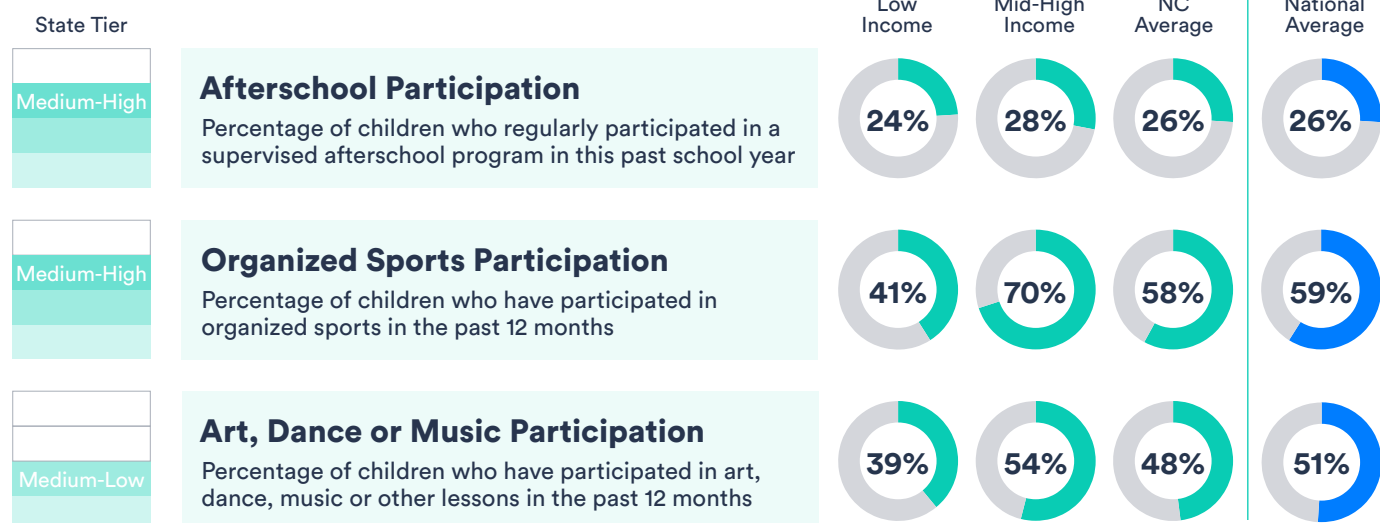


### Mental Health Satisfaction

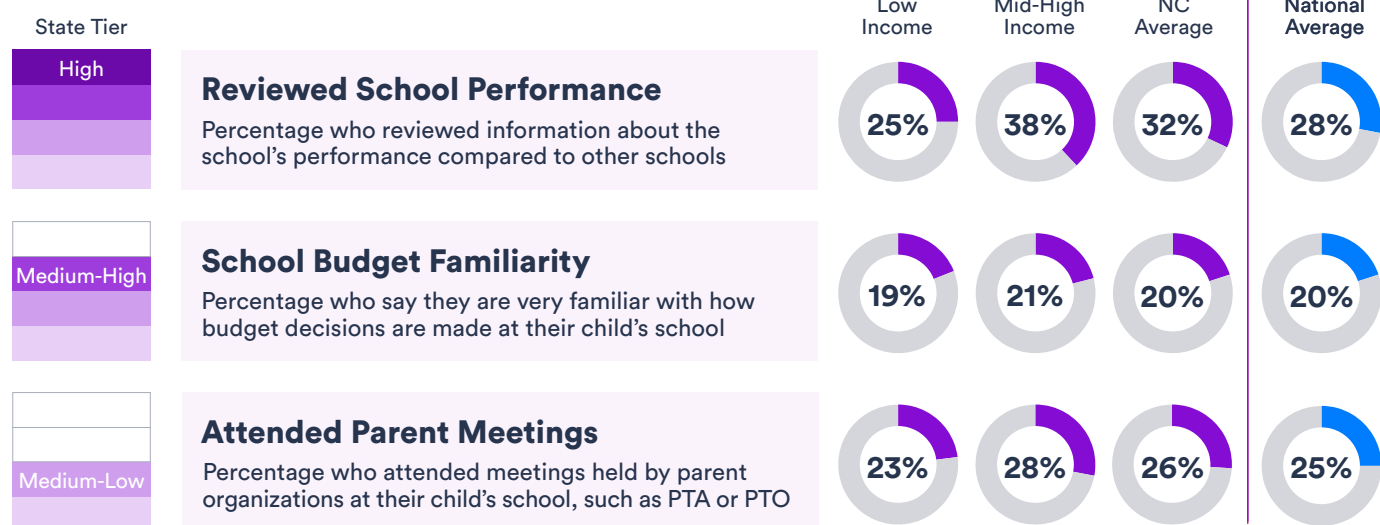
Percentage answering they are very satisfied with how the school supports their child's mental health needs



## OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



## INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT



## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

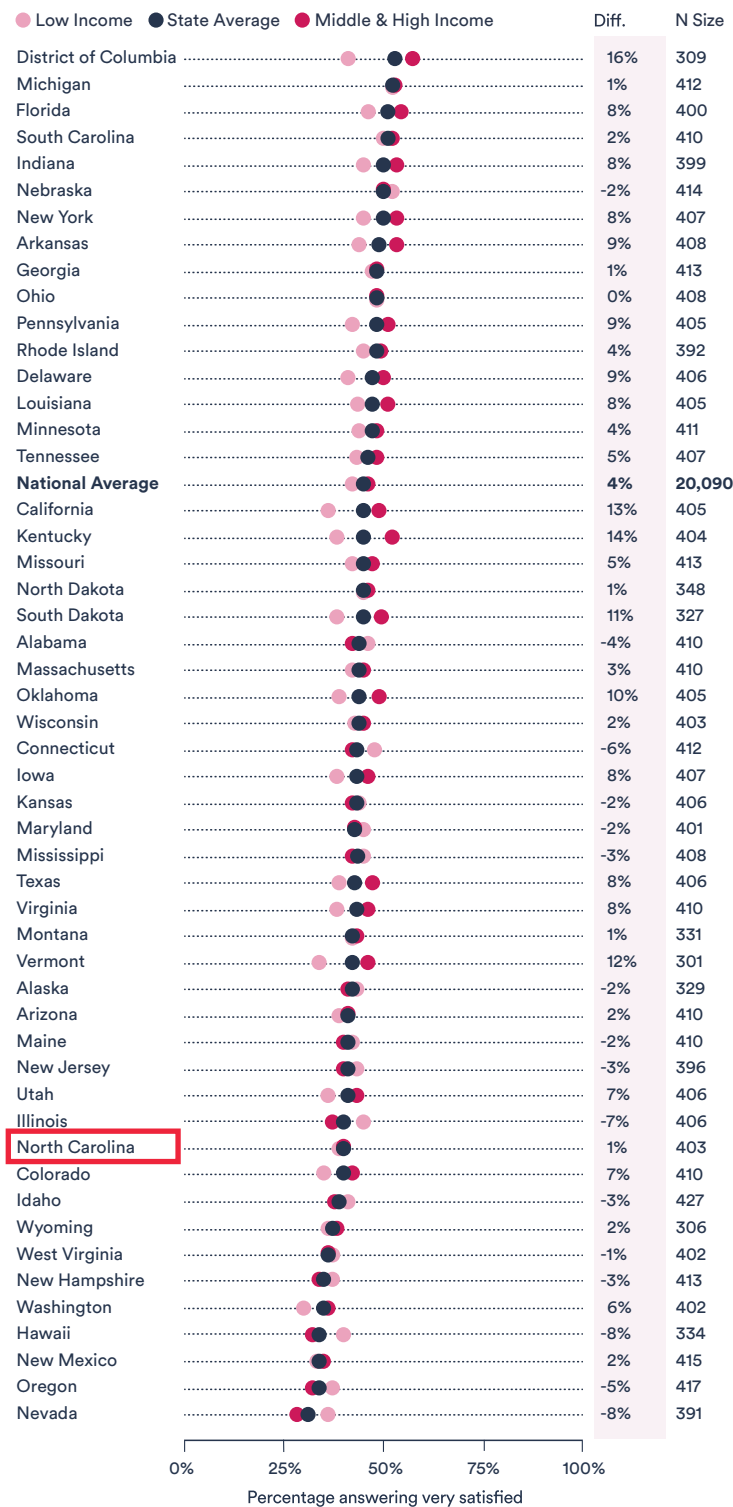




# North Carolina in Context: A 50-State Perspective

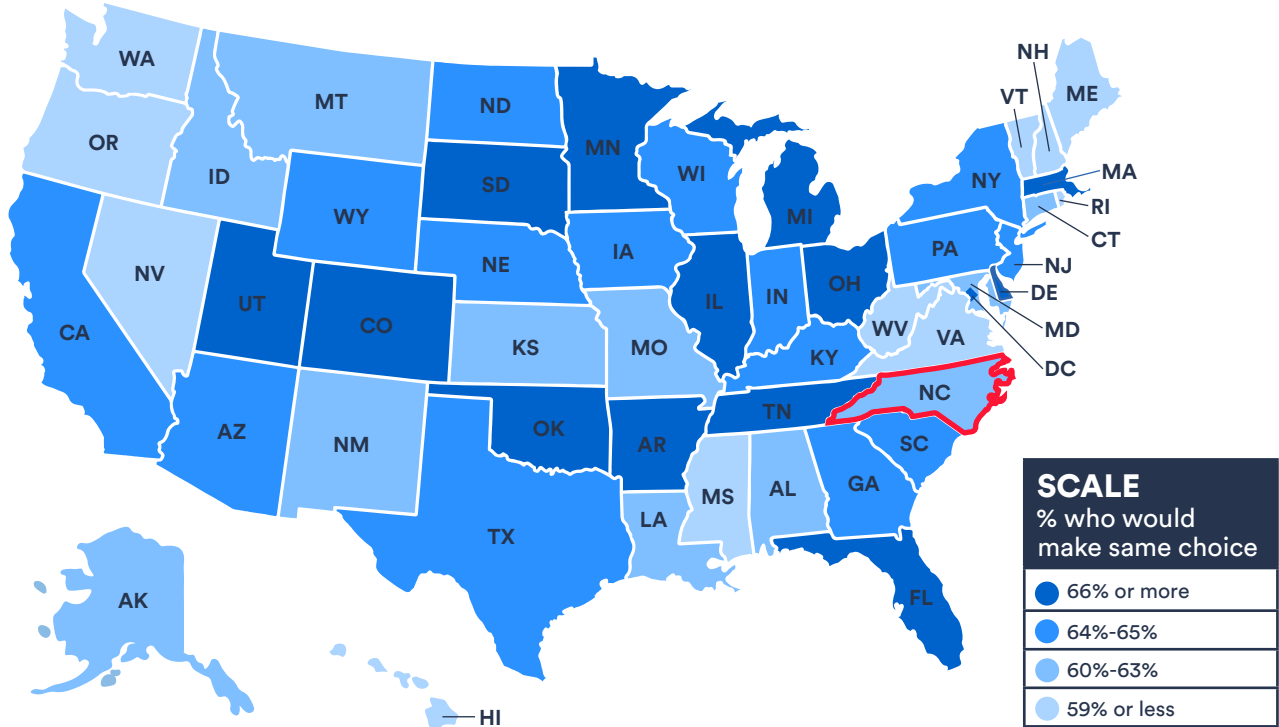
## SCHOOL SATISFACTION BY STATE & INCOME

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



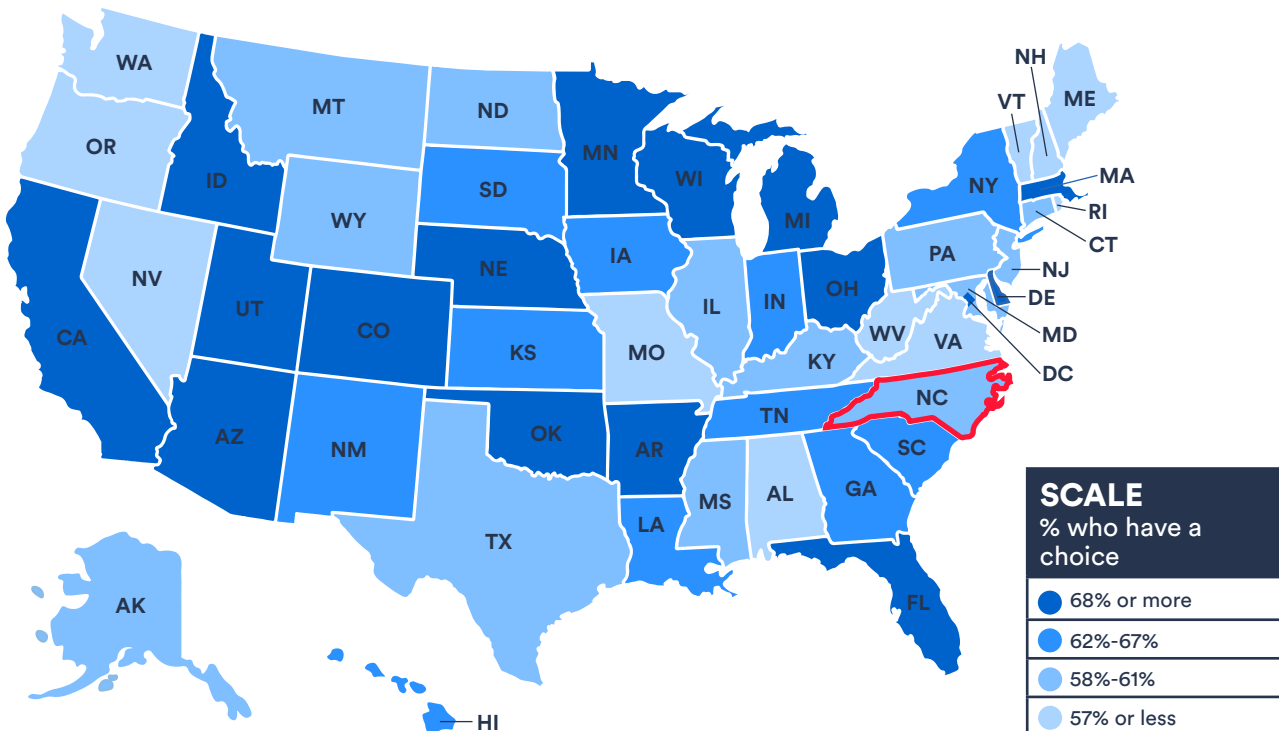
## WOULD MAKE THE SAME CHOICE BY STATE

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



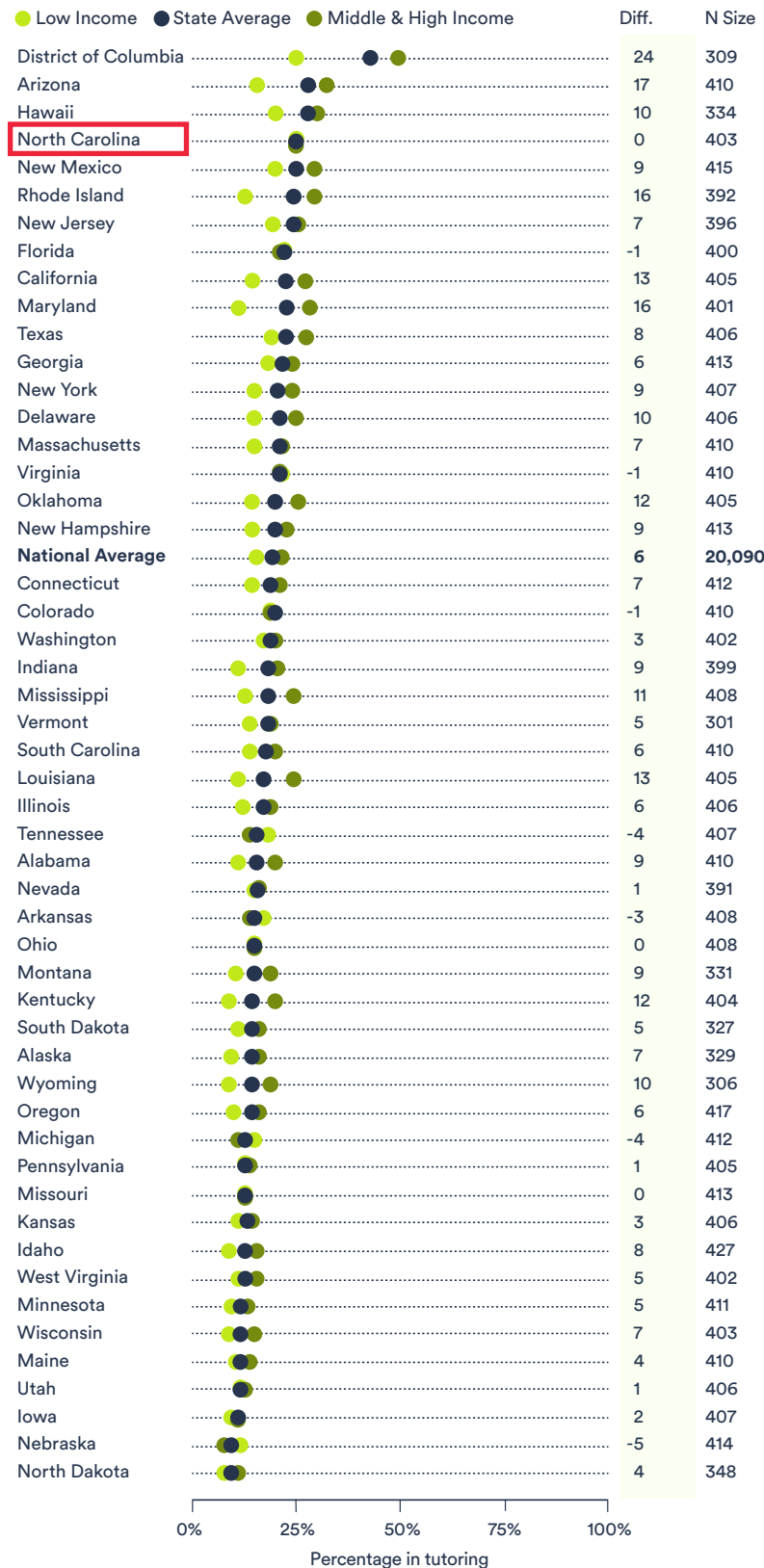
## FEEL THEY HAVE A CHOICE BY STATE

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



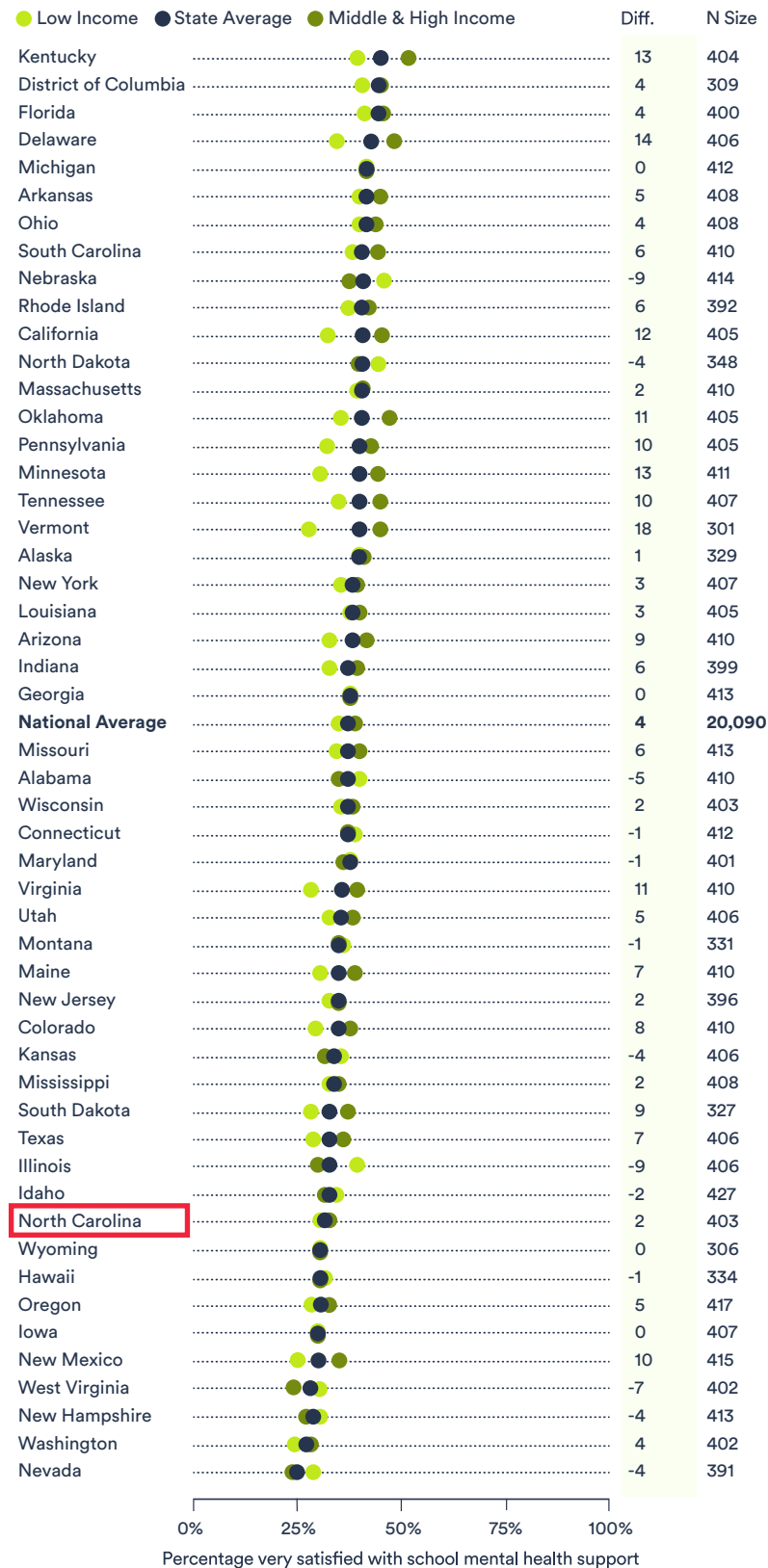
## PARTICIPATION IN TUTORING BY STATE & INCOME

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



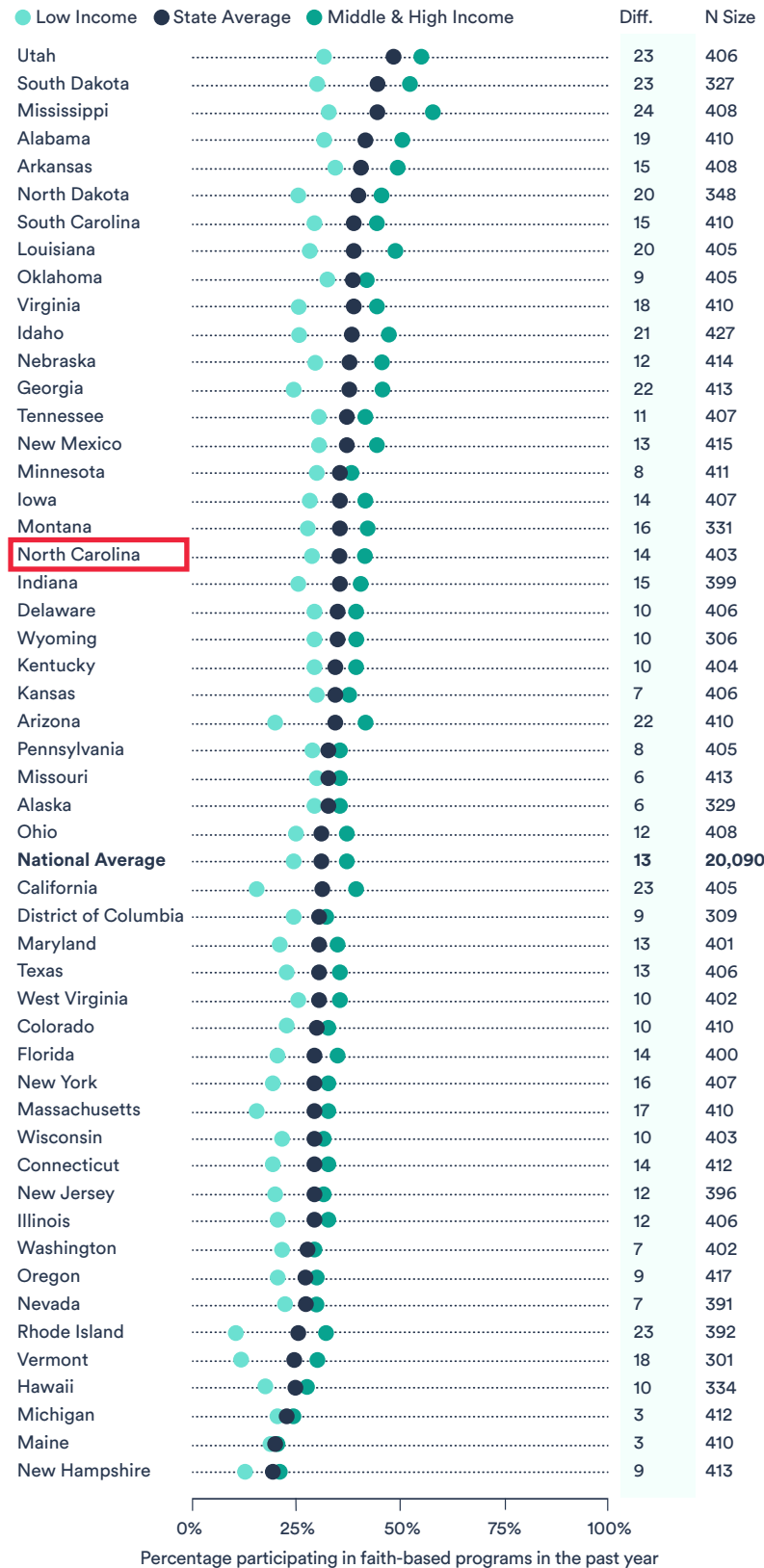
# EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH SATISFACTION BY STATE & INCOME

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



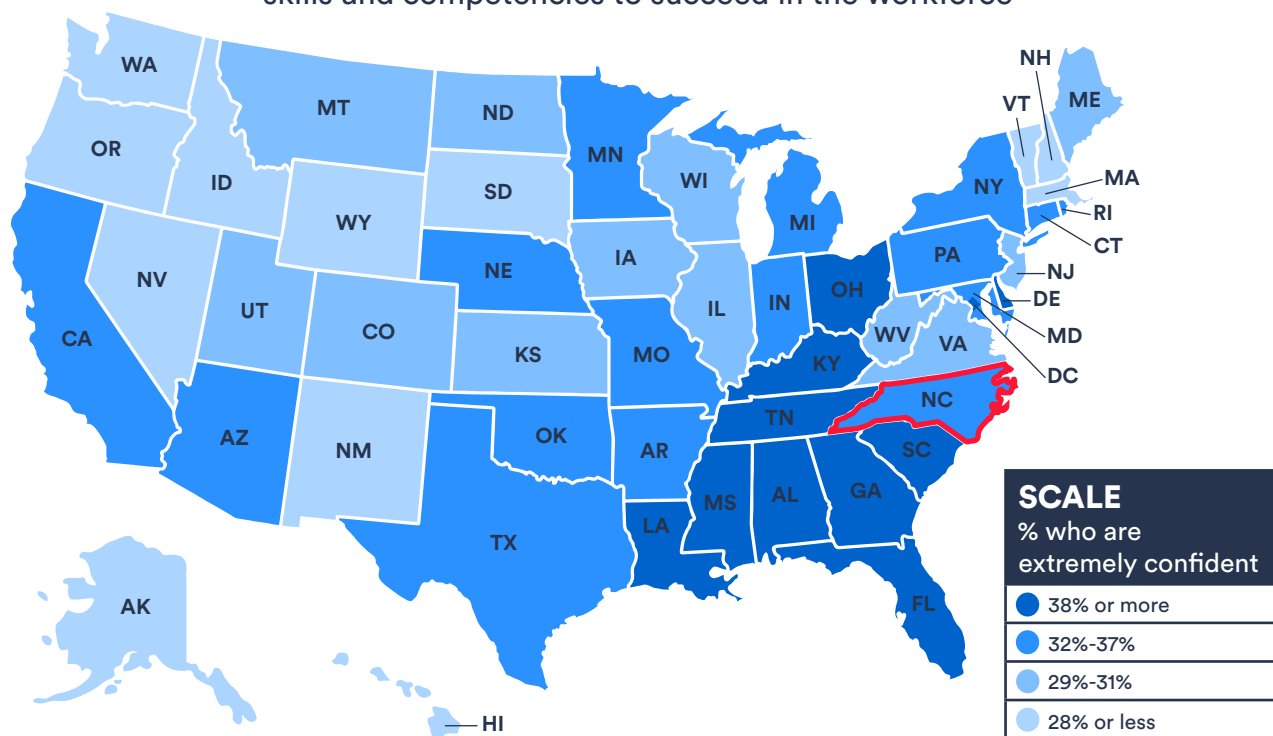
## FAITH-BASED PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY STATE

Percentage of children who have participated in religious instruction, youth group or faith-based program in the past 12 months



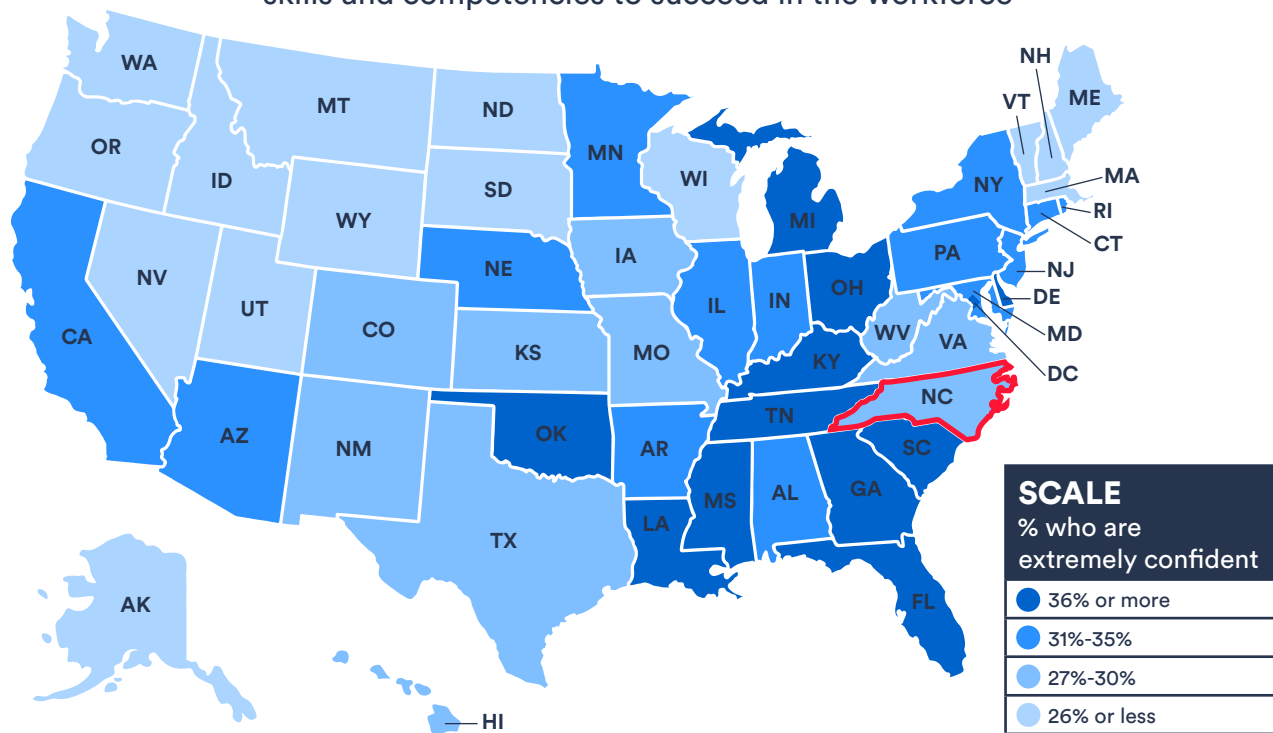
## CONFIDENCE IN WORKFORCE PREPARATION BY STATE

Percentage who are extremely confident their child will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and competencies to succeed in the workforce



## CONFIDENCE IN COLLEGE PREPARATION BY STATE

Percentage who are extremely confident their child will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and competencies to succeed in the workforce



## ABOUT CAROLINACAN

**CarolinaCAN** advocates for the success of every North Carolina student, from Pre-K through college and career. Our work is centered on empowering, mobilizing and collaborating with everyday North Carolinians to advocate for a high-quality education system. We use research and communications, grassroots organizing and government relations to ensure North Carolina's education system is excellent for every student.

## 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.

