

**The MassINC Polling Group  
The Education Trust  
2024 Spring K-12 Parent Survey**

Topline Results  
Statewide Survey of 1,559 K-12 Parents in Massachusetts  
Field dates: April 8 – May 2, 2024

What grade(s) is/are your child(ren) currently in? **ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. PROBE IF NEEDED:** and your other children?

Kindergarten	18%
First	10%
Second	13%
Third	13%
Fourth	12%
Fifth	12%
Sixth	12%
Seventh	12%
Eighth	12%
Ninth	13%
Tenth	12%
Eleventh	11%
Twelfth	13%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

Which of the following best describes the school where your child(ren) is/are enrolled this year? **ALLOW MULTIPLE RESPONSES, SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.**

A public school run by a school district	86%
A public charter school	8%
A parochial or Catholic school	5%
A non-Catholic private or independent school	5%
Home schooling	3%
Another format	2%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

**IF HAVE MORE THAN ONE CHILD READ THE FOLLOWING. OTHERWISE SKIP THIS DIRECTION AND DO NOT SPECIFY GRADE LEVEL IN THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.** You mentioned you had a child in **SELECT GRADE LEVEL FOR YOUNGEST CHILD.** The next several questions will be about this child's school.

First, which of the following best describes the school where your **GRADE LEVEL** child is enrolled this year?

A public school run by a school district	83%
A public charter school	6%
A parochial or Catholic school	3%
A non-Catholic private or independent school	3%
Home school	2%
Another format	1%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

When it comes to your **GRADE LEVEL** child's progress in reading this school year, would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

Very concerned	11%
Somewhat concerned	20%
Not too concerned	23%
Not at all concerned	45%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

To the best of your knowledge, is your **GRADE LEVEL** child reading at the level expected for students in their age group?

Yes, they are	80%
No, they are not	15%
Don't Know / Refused	5%

**ASK IF NOT READING AT EXPECTED LEVEL.**

You mentioned your **GRADE LEVEL** child is not at the expected reading level for children their age. When did you notice your child was not at the expected reading level?

This year	28%
Prior to this year	71%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

**ASK IF PARENT IS CONCERNED ABOUT READING PROGRESS.**

You mentioned you are concerned about your **GRADE LEVEL** child's reading. What concerns you about your child's progress? **OPEN-END. RECORD VERBATIM.**

Child is behind grade level	27%
Specific reading challenges (spelling, comprehension, etc.)	26%
Issues with teacher / school / curriculum	19%
Noting specific disability	9%
Child's academic challenges	9%
Lack of resources / support	6%
Child not interested in reading	6%
Future impact	3%
Other	9%
Nothing / IDK / None	7%

**ASK ALL**

Has your **GRADE LEVEL** child's pediatrician ever discussed with you how you can support your child's reading development at home?

Yes, they have	45%
No, they have not	51%
Don't Know / Refused	4%

**ASK IF PEDIATRICIAN DISCUSSED READING WITH PARENT.**

What kinds of activities or supports did your **GRADE LEVEL** child’s pediatrician recommend? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. ROTATE ORDER.**

Reading with your child	83%
Oral story time	38%
Introducing vocabulary	45%
Reciting nursery rhymes	25%
Singing songs	36%
Talking with your child	61%
Repeating your child’s sounds and encouraging them to repeat yours	33%
Other	8%
Don’t Know / Refused	2%

**ASK ALL**

What information do you use to understand your **GRADE LEVEL** child’s progress in reading and writing? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. ROTATE ORDER.**

Grades / report cards	71%
English Language Arts MCAS	33%
Literacy screeners (such as iReady, EarlyBird, DIBELS, STAR)	24%
Parent teacher conferences	67%
Information from my child’s teacher	60%
Conversations with my child	64%
Other	6%
Don’t Know / Refused	1%

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have received feedback about my **GRADE LEVEL** child’s reading progress this year from their school.

Strongly agree	53%
Somewhat agree	29%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	7%
Don’t Know / Refused	3%

Does your **GRADE LEVEL** child’s school provide any of the following resources to children who need help with reading? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. ROTATE ORDER.**

One on one instruction from a specialist	35%
Small group instruction	44%
Resources to use at home to help practice reading	46%
A specific diagnosis to help you understand what your child’s reading challenges are	28%
Access to an outside specialist	19%
Something else	6%
Don’t Know / Refused	21%

Have you ever looked for help outside of school to support your **GRADE LEVEL** child's reading progress? (For example, hired a tutor, enrolled in extra reading classes outside of school, got an outside assessment, etc.)

Yes	24%
No	74%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

**ASK FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS ONLY OF PARENTS WITH KIDS IN GRADES 6 OR BELOW.**

When your **GRADE LEVEL** child is reading at home, and they come across an unfamiliar word, which of the following best reflects their approach? **ROTATE ORDER OF TOP TWO.**

They sound out the letters in the word and try and say them together to make a word	58%
They try to guess the word based on context clues such as pictures or other words in the sentence	30%
Neither of these approaches	7%
Don't Know / Refused	5%

How effective do you think your child's school has been so far at teaching your **GRADE LEVEL** child to read?

Very effective	51%
Somewhat effective	38%
Not too effective	7%
Not at all effective	2%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

Do you know what curriculum is used in your **GRADE LEVEL** child's school for reading or English Language Arts classes? By curriculum we mean the types of instructional materials, methods, and classes the school uses to teach a specific subject.

Yes	51%
No	36%
Don't Know / Refused	14%

**ASK ALL**

Thinking about the tools and methods teachers use in the classroom to help kids learn how to read, how familiar are you with each of the following?

	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not too familiar	Not at all familiar	Don't know / Refused
<b>ROTATE ORDER</b>					
Sound it out	67%	19%	4%	6%	4%
Sight word lists or flashcards	64%	23%	5%	4%	4%
Phonics	51%	30%	9%	6%	5%
Guessing from context	40%	34%	10%	10%	7%
Whole language	30%	25%	16%	19%	10%
Reading Recovery	20%	25%	21%	23%	11%
Textbooks by Fountas and Pinnel	18%	17%	20%	32%	14%
Three cueing or cueing	14%	20%	22%	31%	13%

From what you know, what do you think research has shown is the best or most effective way to teach kids how to read? **ROTATE ORDER OF TOP TWO.**

Phonics: sounding out words	29%
Cueing: guessing words from context and sentence structure	6%
A combination of both	57%
Don't Know / Refused	8%

Research has found that cueing, which is asking children to guess words from context and sentence structure, does not effectively support reading progress. However, cueing is still a strategy used in many Massachusetts schools. Knowing this, would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned about the use of cueing in some schools?

Very concerned	15%
Somewhat concerned	34%
Not too concerned	31%
Not at all concerned	15%
Don't Know / Refused	6%

How much have you heard or read recently about students in Massachusetts scoring below grade level on reading tests?

A great deal	13%
A fair amount	24%
Just a little	27%
Nothing at all	31%
Don't Know / Refused	6%

**ASK IF HEARD OR READ ABOUT SCORES.**

You mentioned you have heard or read about students falling behind on reading. What have you heard?  
**OPEN-END. RECORD VERBATIM.**

Reading scores & levels are behind	52%
COVID impacts	16%
Parents cite sources (news, friend, reading, etc.)	11%
General issues with reading (vocab, comprehension, etc.)	10%
Teacher, district, state challenges	10%
General academic challenges	8%
Lack of resources (support, staffing, materials, etc.)	6%
Other	9%
NA / Nothing	6%

**ASK ALL**

As you may know, more than half of students in Massachusetts are not reading at expected levels by third grade. Knowing this, would you say you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned about students' overall reading levels in Massachusetts?

Very concerned	39%
Somewhat concerned	40%
Not too concerned	14%
Not at all concerned	5%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

To the best of your knowledge, are schools in Massachusetts required to use "evidence-based" reading curriculum; that is, curriculum that has proven to work in teaching students how to read, or not?

Yes, they are	41%
No, they are not	18%
Don't Know / Refused	40%

Do you think schools should be required to use evidence-based reading curriculum, which means curriculum materials that are proven to work in teaching students how to read, or not? **PROBE PHONE:** Is that definitely (yes/no) or just probably (yes/no)?

Definitely yes	46%
Probably yes	38%
Probably no	5%
Definitely no	3%
Don't Know / Refused	8%

Who do you think should be most responsible for ensuring students are reading at expected levels? **SELECT ALL THAT APPLY. ROTATE ORDER.**

School	56%
School districts	49%
Teachers	75%
State education officials	39%
Parents	76%
School administrations	44%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

Does your **GRADE LEVEL** child have dyslexia?

Yes	7%
No	91%
Don't Know / Refused	3%

**ASK FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS IF CHILD HAS DYSLEXIA**

From the time you noticed your **GRADE LEVEL** child was struggling to read, how long did it take you to get a diagnosis?

Less than 3 months	26%
3 to 6 months	32%
About a year	16%
More than a year	21%
Don't Know / Refused	5%

Does your **GRADE LEVEL** child receive any specific supports for dyslexia?

Yes	60%
No	34%
Don't Know / Refused	5%

**ASK IF CHILD RECEIVES SUPPORTS.**

Thinking about the supports your **GRADE LEVEL** child receives for dyslexia, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied or not all satisfied with the supports?

Very satisfied	32%
Somewhat satisfied	40%
Not too satisfied	16%
Not at all satisfied	9%
Don't Know / Refused	3%

**ASK ALL**

Does your **GRADE LEVEL** child have an Individualized Education Plan, sometimes called an IEP?  
**PRONOUNCE ACRONYM I-E-P.**

Yes	25%
No	72%
Don't Know / Refused	3%

Does your **GRADE LEVEL** child receive services for English Language Learners, sometimes called ELL?  
**PRONOUNCE ACRONYM E-L-L**

Yes	15%
No	83%
Don't Know / Refused	2%

To the best of your knowledge, does your **GRADE LEVEL** child identify as LGBTQIA+ or not?

Yes they do	7%
No, they do not	87%
Don't Know / Refused	6%



## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Age

18 to 34 years old	15%
35 to 39 years old	19%
40 to 44 years old	24%
45 to 49 years old	23%
50+	19%
Don't Know / Refused	<1%

### How do you describe your gender?

Man	44%
Woman	55%
Non-binary	<1%
Some other way: _____	<1%
Prefer not to say	1%

### Race

White	69%
Black / African-American	6%
Hispanic / Latino	13%
Asian	8%
Mixed race / Other	2%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

### Education

High school or less	26%
Some college, no degree	23%
College degree	27%
Advanced degree	23%
Don't Know / Refused	1%

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### About the Poll

These results are based on a survey of 1,559 parents of K-12 students in Massachusetts. Live telephone interviews and online interviewing were conducted in English and Spanish April 8 – May 2, 2024. Telephone respondents were reached by both landline and cell phone. Oversamples of Black, Latino, and Asian respondents were obtained to bring the total interview count up to at least 250 for each group for the base sample. Results within race and ethnicity were weighted to age, gender, geography, and education level for each group. Groups were then combined and weighted to the population parameters by race for the state as a whole. The credibility interval for this survey is +/- 3.0 percentage points for the entire sample, including the design effect. The poll was sponsored by The Education Trust.