

Leveling The Playing Field

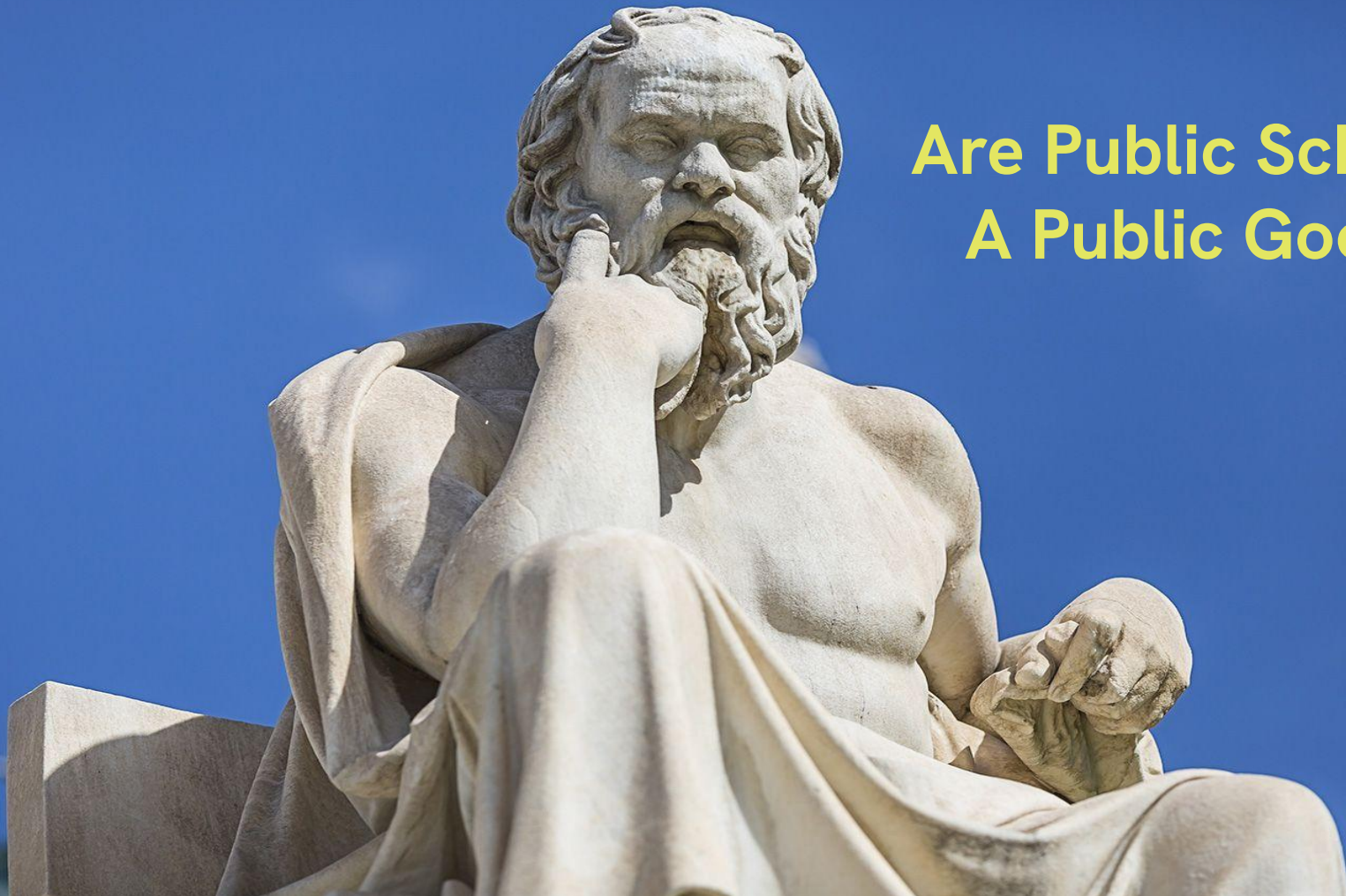
Ensuring Fair Competition for
Public Schools

Brian J. Stephens

Cal-saK12
We Recruit Students



Are Public Schools A Public Good?

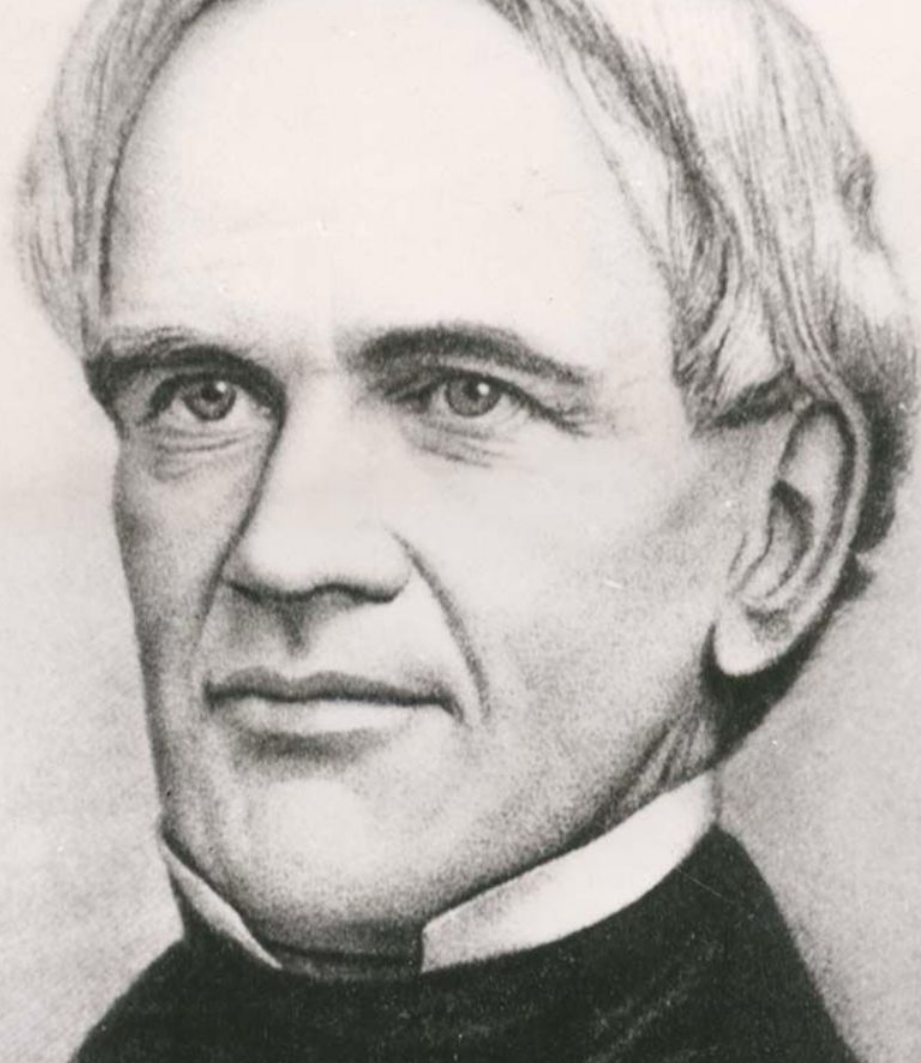






“An educated citizenry is not a luxury. It is the safeguard of democracy itself.”

THOMAS JEFFERSON







**As free public education
goes, so goes society.**



28

STATES

100+

DISTRICTS

30K+

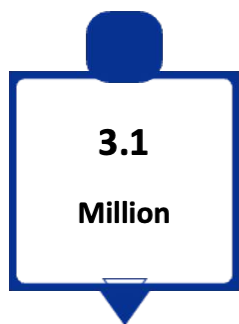
STUDENTS
RECRUITED

\$420M+

BUDGET
IMPACT

A New Reality

Competition is growing



Grade school children are not attending any school.



Charter
7,996 Schools*

Charter schools are public schools that are created by school districts, colleges, nonprofit organizations, or other entities. Charter schools are always public schools and are not allowed to charge tuition.*



Private
34,576 Schools*

Private schools charge tuition and may be faith-based or independent. Many private schools and nonprofit organizations offer scholarships for students.*



Home
N/A

Homeschooling is the process of parents educating children in the home, and many families choose to collaborate via tutorials, co-operatives, and extracurricular leagues to enhance the home education experience.*



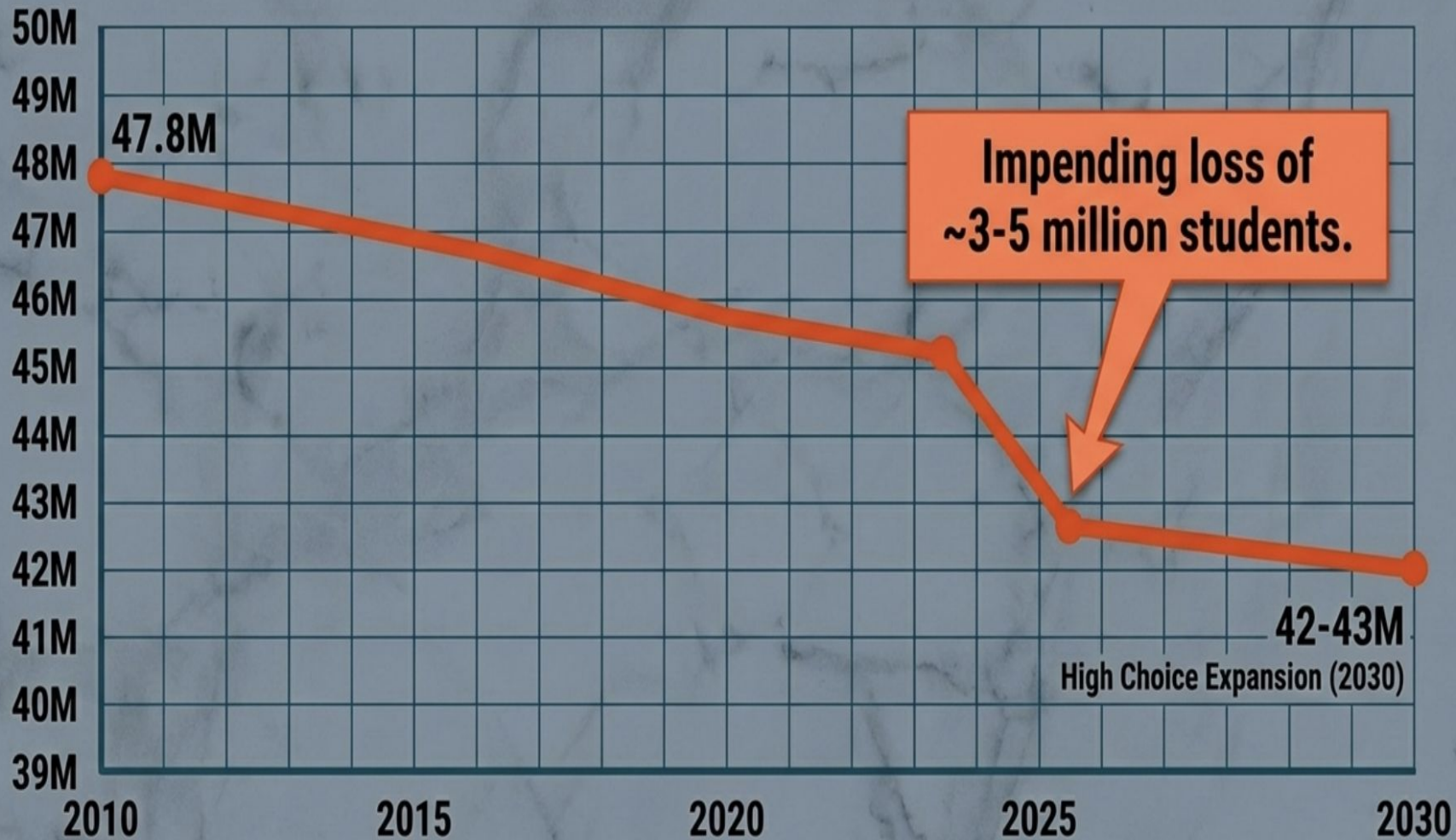
Magnet
4,340 Schools*

Magnet schools are public schools operated by school districts (or groups of school districts) that allow children to focus on a specific learning track. Magnet schools are free to attend.*



Online
N/A

Virtual academies instruct students through online or digital curricula.*



**Impending loss of
~3-5 million students.**

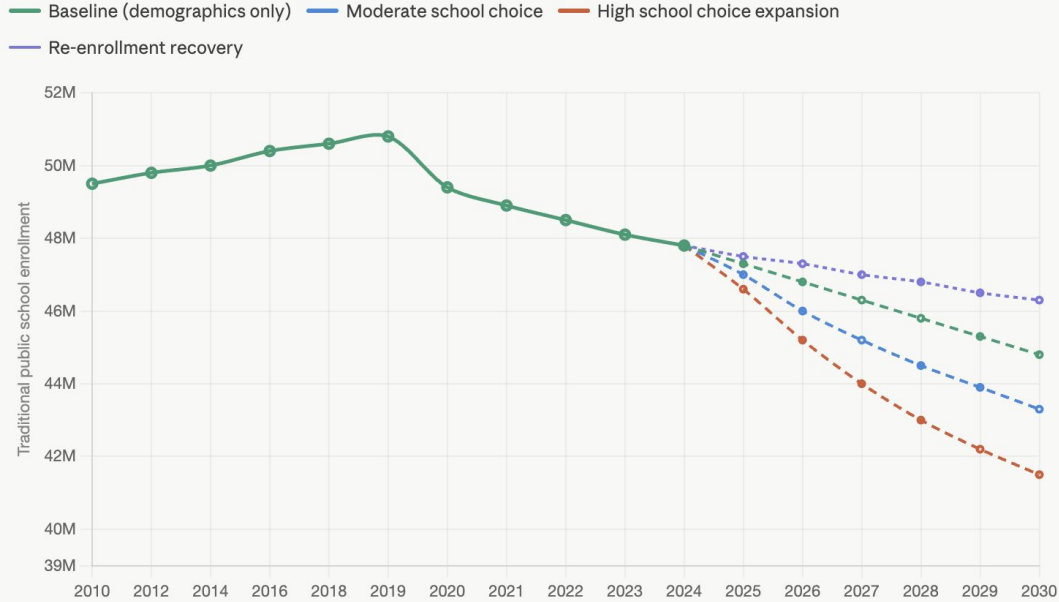
42-43M
High Choice Expansion (2030)

2024 public school
47.8M

States w/ universal choice
17+

Students in choice programs
1M+

Projected 2030 (high choice)
42-43M

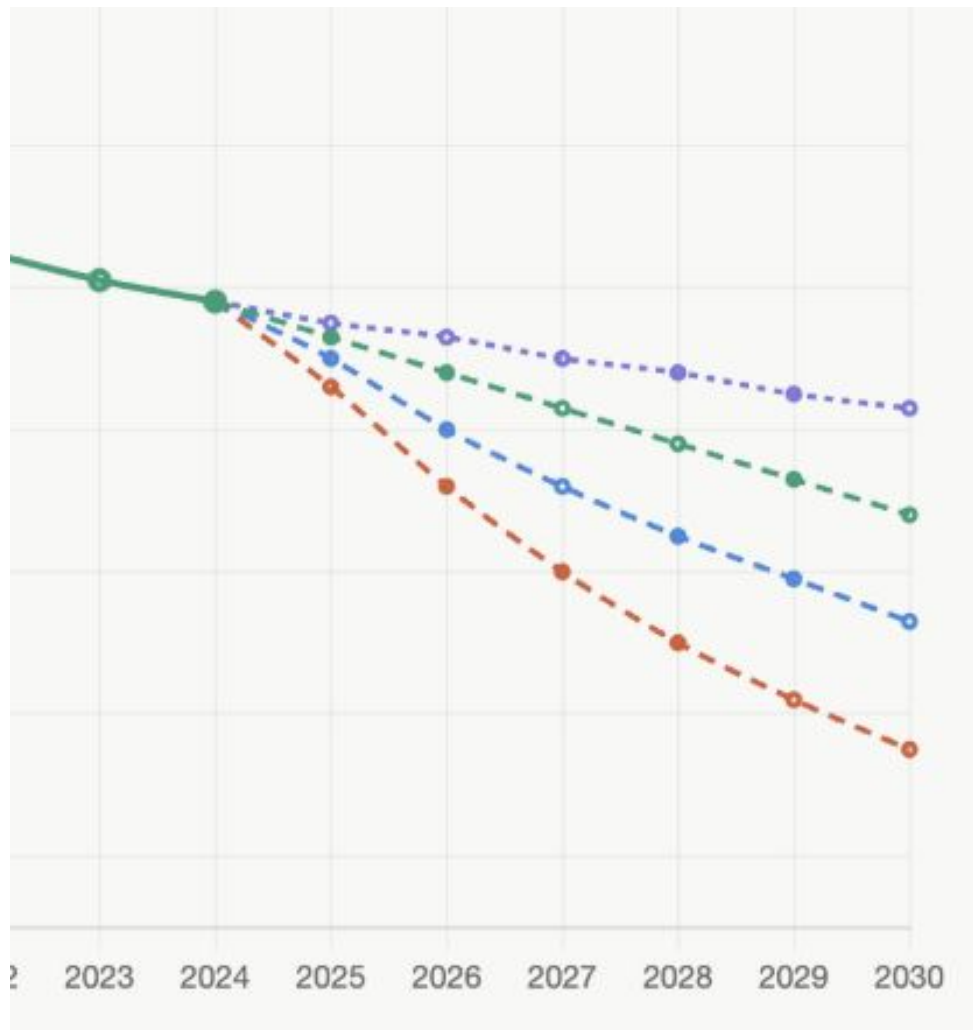


Baseline scenario
Demographics only — birth rate decline, no new policy shifts. Public schools lose ~3M students by 2030.

Moderate choice
Current state programs grow gradually. ~1-2M additional students exit public schools by 2030 via vouchers/ESAs.

High choice expansion
Federal program + 30+ universal state programs. Texas, Florida, and others fully ramp. Public schools could fall below 43M by 2030.

Re-enrollment recovery
If districts aggressively re-enroll missing/lapsed students — the market Caissak12 serves — losses are meaningfully offset.



STRATEGIES vs. Tactics

THE CUSTOMER IS
NOT ALWAYS
RIGHT!

BUT WE SURE DO NEED THEM.

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A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Strategies To Ensure
Public Schools' Success

A 2035 PREDICTION
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Blueprint for Success

1. Commit To A New Reality ✓
2. Advocacy
3. Data & Testing
4. Resource Allocation
5. Support Positive Mental Health
6. Focus On Culture
7. Local Autonomy
8. Leadership

Choosing to Compete = Advocacy



Unfair Competition?

Public Schools Are Regulated. Voucher Schools Are Not.

Florida 2024–25 — same public dollars, two entirely different sets of rules

Florida Public Schools	Florida Voucher Schools (FES-EO / FTC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must enroll all students, no exceptions 	<p><i>Can select or reject any applicant</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State-certified teachers required in every classroom 	<p><i>No teacher certification required</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual FAST state assessments — uniform, results published statewide 	<p><i>School-chosen norm-referenced test; results reported to SFO only — never published publicly</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full financial transparency — public records law applies 	<p><i>Aggregated financial reporting only, no public records</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full IDEA compliance — must serve every special needs student 	<p><i>Can limit or decline special education services</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual school grade calculated and published by state 	<p><i>No public accountability rating</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must meet Florida's detailed State Requirements for Educational Facilities (SREF) 	<p><i>Basic local health and fire inspection only — state educational facility standards do not apply</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot charge tuition — free to all enrolled students 	<p><i>Can charge additional tuition beyond the voucher</i></p>

Sources: Florida Statutes §1002.20, §1002.394, §1002.395, §1013 (SREF); Florida DOE 2024–25 accountability framework; Step Up For Students FES-EO FAQs (2024); Florida Dept. of Health school facility requirements

7 Responses To Conflict

Attack

Defend

Counter

Ignore

Deflect

Apologize

ADVOCATE

CHALLENGE:

Advocate for Fair Competition

Public schools must embrace competition and actively demonstrate to their communities why they are the best choice for educating children. It's not just a right to compete—it's a duty. A duty to their staff, their teachers, the community, and most importantly, to the children they serve. By competing, they ensure they provide the best possible education and opportunities, showing that public schools can rise to meet the demands and expectations of the future.

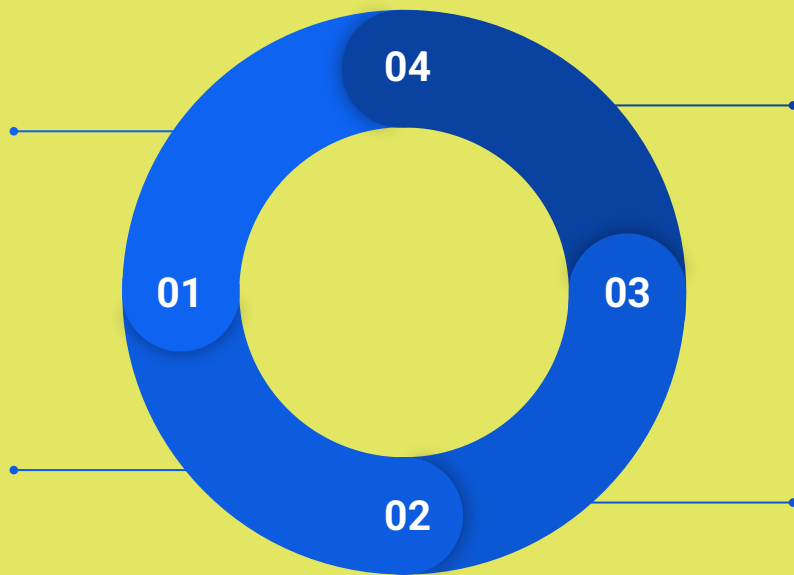
Message Consistency

Brevity

3-21 messaging requires you to develop no more than 3 initial message points, each of which have no more than 21 words each.

Analogies

Don't use numbers, use analogies to paint a picture for the listener.



Sizzle

Make sure you are selling the "sizzle", not the "steak".

K.I.S.S. Principle

Don't dumb your information down, but make sure everyone can understand it.

Message Discipline

15,000 +

Campaign
vs.
Marketing

7 to 21
Contacts

Vehicles

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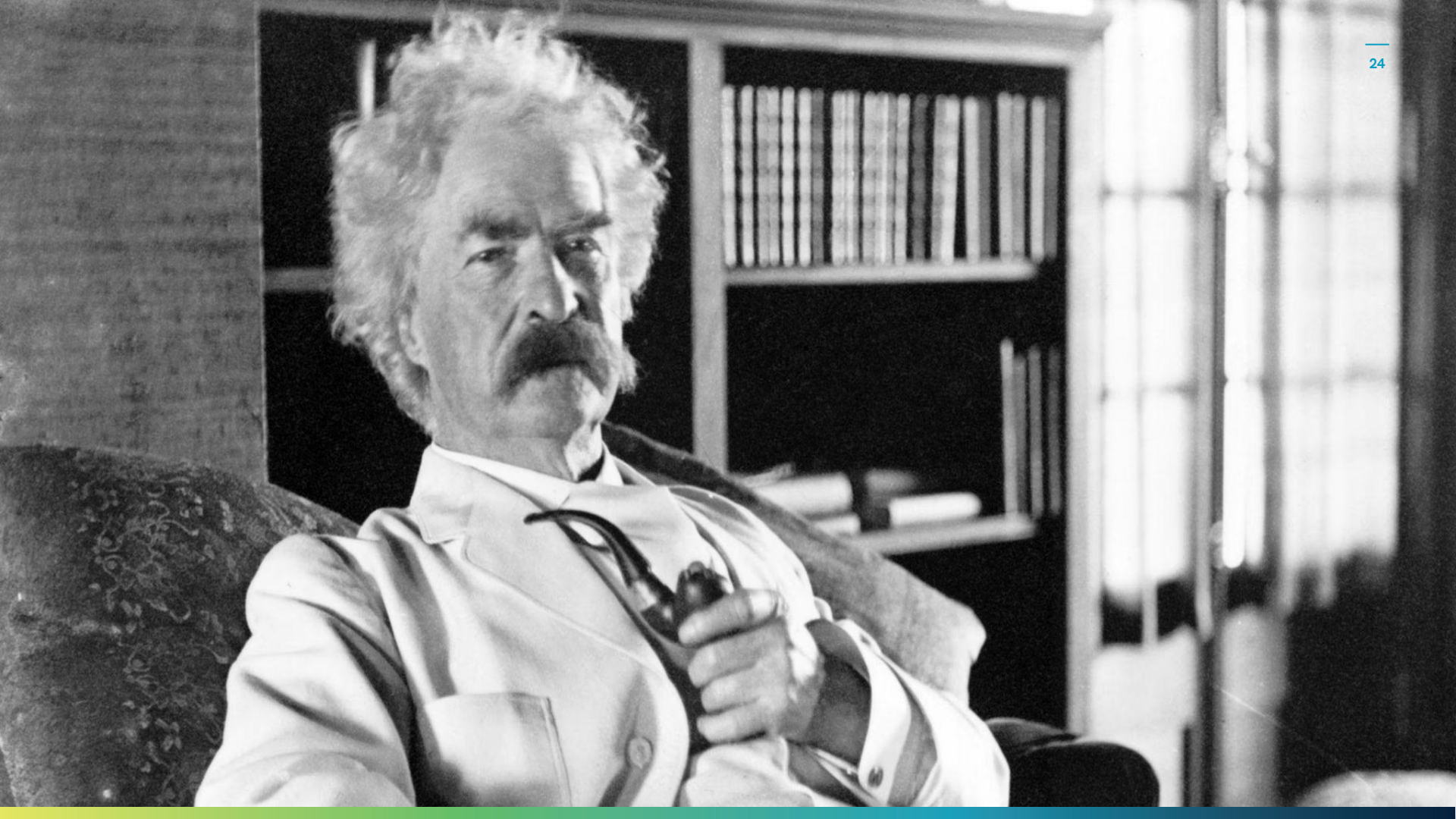
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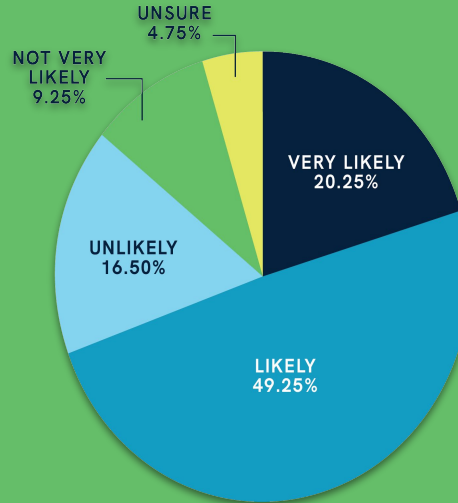
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Learn what your community values

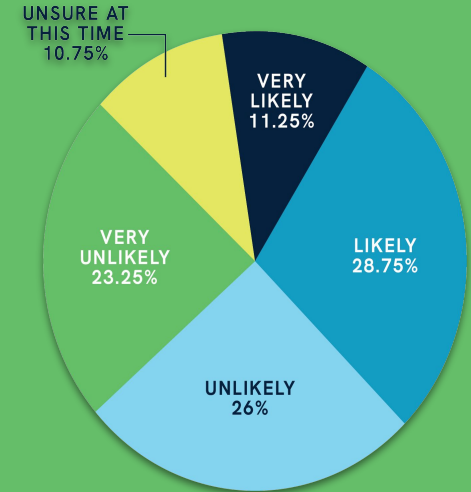
Based on our 8th Annual National Parent Poll, these are the **top three concerns** parents had when choosing a new school. School safety continues to be the main concern of parents since 2019.

School Safety - How the school ensures a secure and safe environment	72%
Student Success - The school's ability to prepare students for future academic and career opportunities	63%
Curriculum and Academic Programs - The variety and quality of academic programs, including gifted and special education services	54%



70% OF FAMILIES ARE SATISFIED BUT OPEN TO CHANGE

Q: If you learn about another school option for your child, how likely would you be to explore it?



40% OF FAMILIES ARE LIKELY TO SWITCH SCHOOLS

Q: How likely are you to consider switching your child's school in the next year?

What Does A Bad Survey Look Like?

Common Characteristics of Bad Survey Questions



Leading or Loaded Questions

These are the sneakiest of them all. They subtly push respondents toward a particular answer steering them away from genuine responses.



Double-Barreled Questions

It asks about two things at once, which confuses respondents and muddles your data. This dilutes the usefulness of the received feedback.



Ambiguity

Vague questions lead to vague answers. If a question is too broad or unclear, respondents might interpret it in different ways, leading to inconsistent data.



Using Absolutes

These can corner respondents into extreme answers. Life isn't black and white, and your survey questions shouldn't be either.



Overly Technical Jargon/Acronyms

Unless you're sure everyone will understand the term, steer clear. Jargon can confuse people, leading to inaccurate responses or, worse, no response at all.

Alternatives to Standardized Testing

Holistic Assessment

Evaluate multiple aspects of student, go beyond standardized tests.

Continuous Assessments

Measure quizzes, participation, observation, etc. for ongoing insights.

Community Involvement

Factors include other outside involvement in local activities.

Formative Assessments

Help identify areas in which students need additional support and adjust instruction.

Student-Teacher Portfolios

Showcase learning journey over time, collection on various works and assessment methods.

Peer or Self-Assessments

Encouraging self-reflection and self-rating of their own work to find additional areas for improvement.

Extracurricular Activities

Both school based and external activities, ranging from sports teams to other groups.

Other Qualitative Measures

Teacher evaluation, student or community surveys, parent feedback.

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Resource Allocation

CHALLENGE: **Advocate for new funding Models**

We need local, state, and federal legislators to provide funding for public schools that goes beyond the current data-driven system, allowing schools to implement more innovative approaches to teaching. Currently, most funding sources offer limited or no resources for breaking away from the traditional learning model.

By supporting more flexible and creative educational methods, legislators can help schools better prepare students for the future.

Alternative Funding Options

Weighted Student Funding

Allocates funds based on a combination of holistic and continuous assessment results.

Performance Based Grants

Financial awards given to districts that demonstrate significant improvements over a variety of metrics.

Equity Based Funding

Provide more financial resources to districts that face greater challenges serving high-need communities.

Leadership

A New Reality

Stay Connected!



FEATURED IN



SAMPLE OF OUR DISTRICT PARTNERS



901-522-1030

info@caissaps.com

CAISSAK12.COM

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