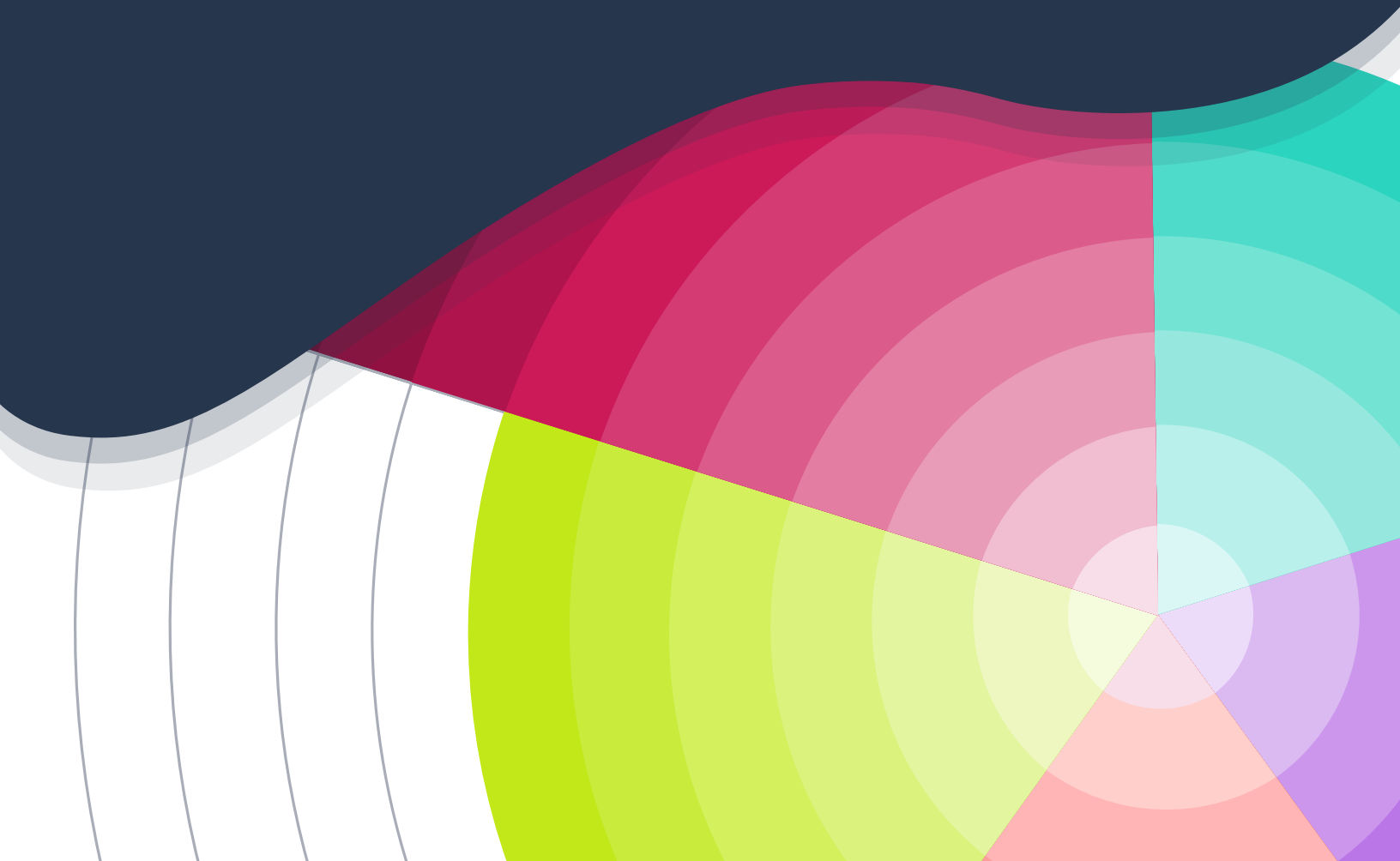




# The State of Educational Opportunity in Indiana

A Survey of Indiana Parents

October 2024



# The State of Educational Opportunity in Indiana

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Letter	2
Methodology	3
How to Read the Results	5
Our State Summary	6
Indiana in Context	8
About Us	16

To whom it may concern,

Actually, forget that salutation. K-12 education concerns all of us, especially as we try to improve the lives of students and their opportunities for success.

Empowering parents and students across Indiana to choose the best K-12 education for themselves is the cornerstone of our work at the Institute for Quality Education. By focusing on their needs, we help to ensure that we are focused on what is most important to them and that the solutions we seek are grounded in their hopes and dreams for their children.

Parental and student empowerment is core to our mission and why we are so excited to share with you a new survey on the state of educational opportunity in Indiana.

Produced in partnership with 50CAN and Edge Research, this survey provides a unique window into the opportunities available to Indiana students today and allows us to compare those answers to parents across the Midwest and 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 programs; 3) out-of-school activities; 4) information and engagement; and 5) college and career readiness.

A total of 399 parents and guardians of school-aged children across Indiana were surveyed between July 8 - August 22, 2024 as part of a nationwide research effort that reached more than 20,000 respondents.

#### Here is what parents told us:



**Overall, Hoosier parents feel they have options for their children's education.** Indiana has among the highest percentage of families who believe they have a choice in where they can send their children to school.

**But for families of all income levels, there is a big gap between the choices they have and school satisfaction.** While Indiana ranks highly for families feeling like they have a choice of schools, there is a nearly 15 percentage point difference on how satisfied they are with their chosen schools. Yet, they would make the same school choice in most cases – a phenomenon mirrored nationally.

**Why this seeming disconnect?** Perhaps because with the power to choose comes the pressure and responsibility to choose wisely, and Hoosier parents need more information on school performance and engagement. Just a minority of Hoosier parents are

familiar with their school's performance compared to others, and fewer still are familiar with school budgets.



**Career and workforce development initiatives are too new for parents to have confidence in them.** Despite a focus on college and career-readiness by Indiana policymakers in recent years, there's more work to be done. Parents, especially at lower income levels, do not feel their children will be adequately prepared for the next stage of life after graduation.

Over the following pages, you'll find:

- The **methodology** of the survey and an explanation of how the results are presented.
- A two-page summary of the **results** for Indiana.
- **Maps** of how Indiana compares to the rest of the nation on important questions.

A digital copy of this report is available for review at [www.i4qed.org](http://www.i4qed.org). Visit our partners at [50can.org](http://50can.org) to view the nationwide report and access the full data set.

Sincerely,



*Betsy Wiley*

**Betsy Wiley**  
President and CEO  
Institute for Quality Education

# 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 Indiana, 399 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 Indiana 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
9%	78%	8%	3%	–	–	0.2%	2%

INCOME DISTRIBUTION		
Low Income	Middle Income	High Income
40%	54%	6%

<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
7%	7%	7%	8%	7%	8%	7%	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	9%

## 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
76%	3%	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%	0.5%	0.8%

## 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.
- Upper-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.

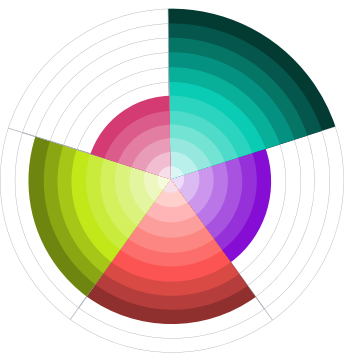
<sup>3</sup> Kochhar, Rakesh, “The State of the American Middle Class,” [Pew Research Center](#), 5/31/24

<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 others 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**).

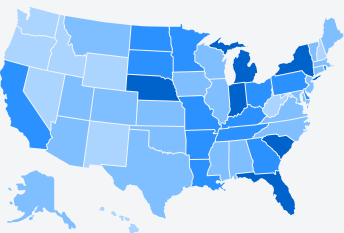
Each of the five categories is made up of three questions. These are presented below each category with **our state's results compared to other states represented by a tier** shown to the right of each question, from low to high. These tiers are scored from 1 (low) to 4 (high) and the scores across the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



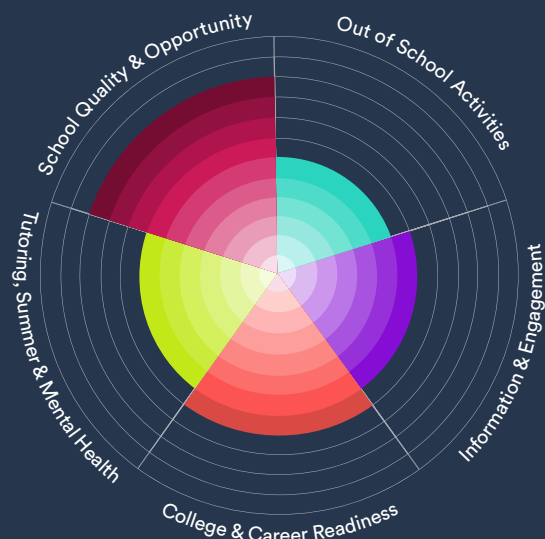
For the **maps**, a key provides the scale for the map and explains the numbers behind each of the four shades of blue. The darkest shade of blue is always the highest numbers and the lightest shade of blue is always the lowest numbers. Our state is outlined in red.

# INDIANA



Surveyed July 8-August 22, 2024

Sample size (N) = 399 parents and guardians



## SCHOOL QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

State Tier

High

### School Satisfaction

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



### Would Make the Same Choice

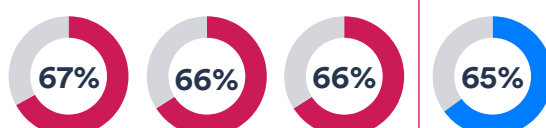
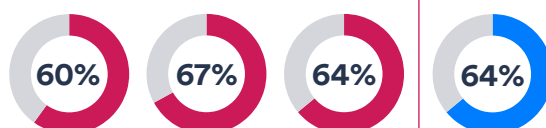
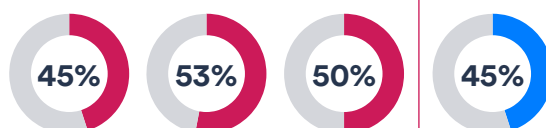
Percentage answering that they would send their child to the school they go to today



### Feel They Have a Choice

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

Low Income Mid-High Income IN Average National Average



## TUTORING, SUMMER AND MENTAL HEALTH

State Tier

Medium-High

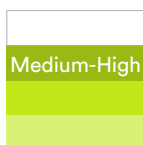
### Tutoring Participation

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



### Summer Program Participation

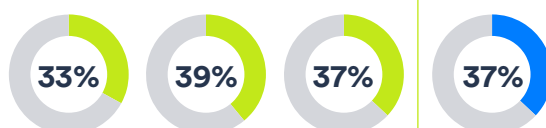
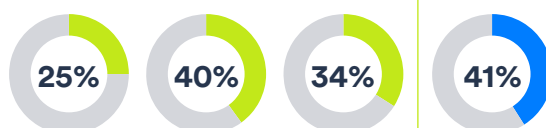
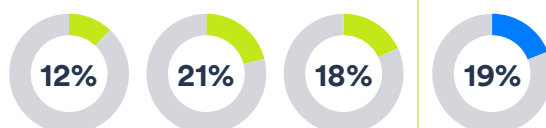
Percentage of children who participated in a supervised summer program



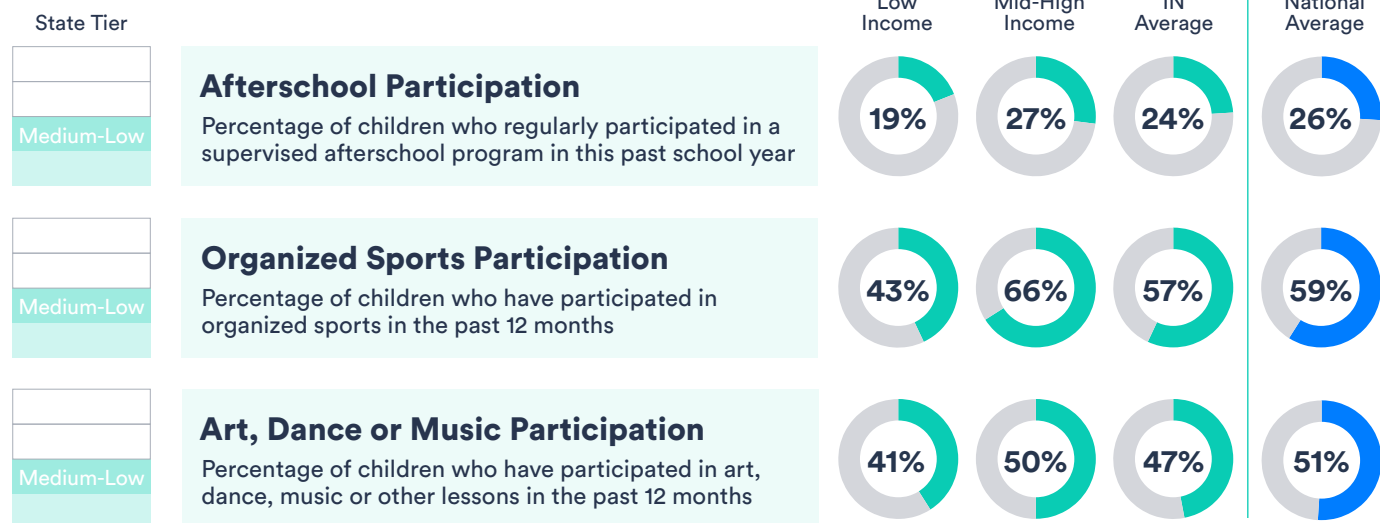
### Mental Health Satisfaction

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

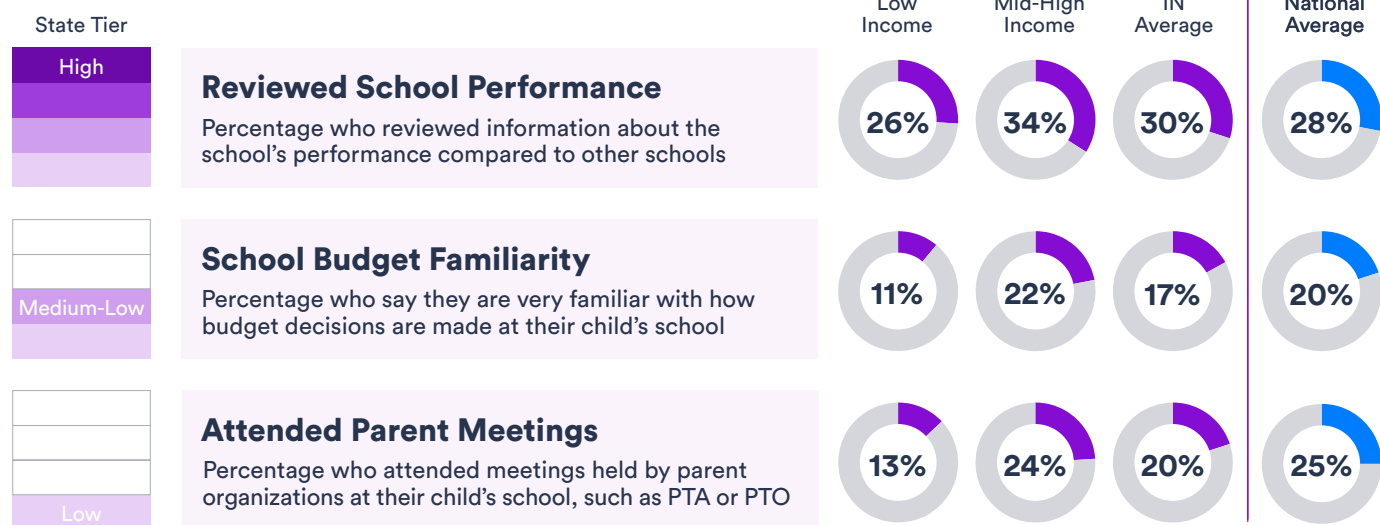
Low Income Mid-High Income IN Average National Average



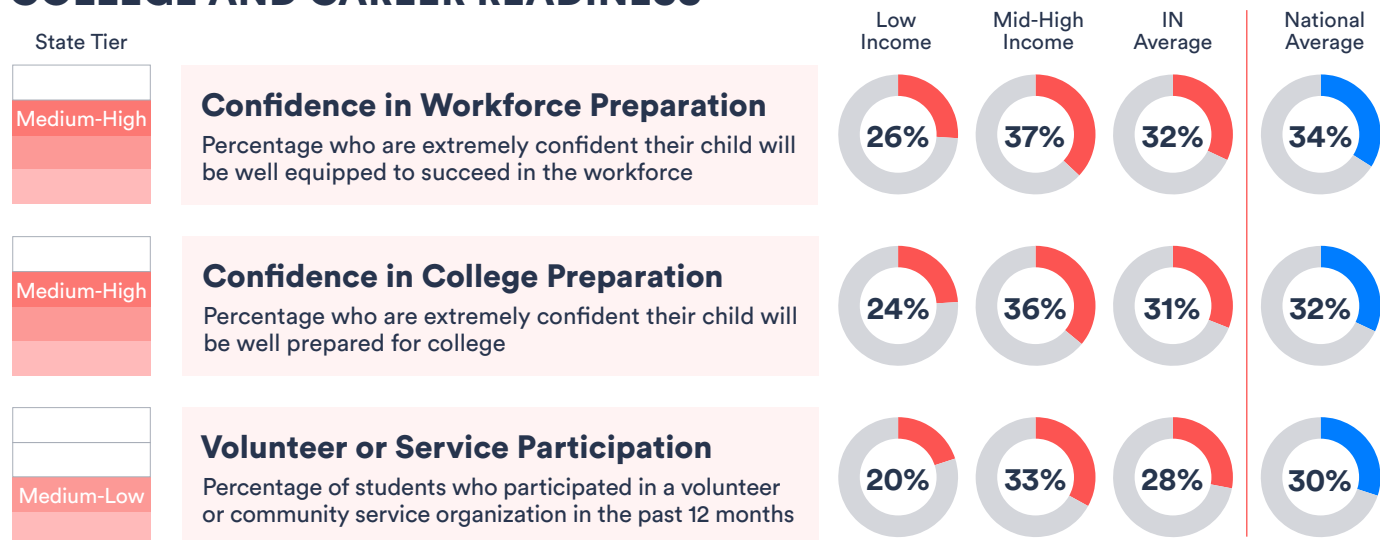
## OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



## INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT



## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

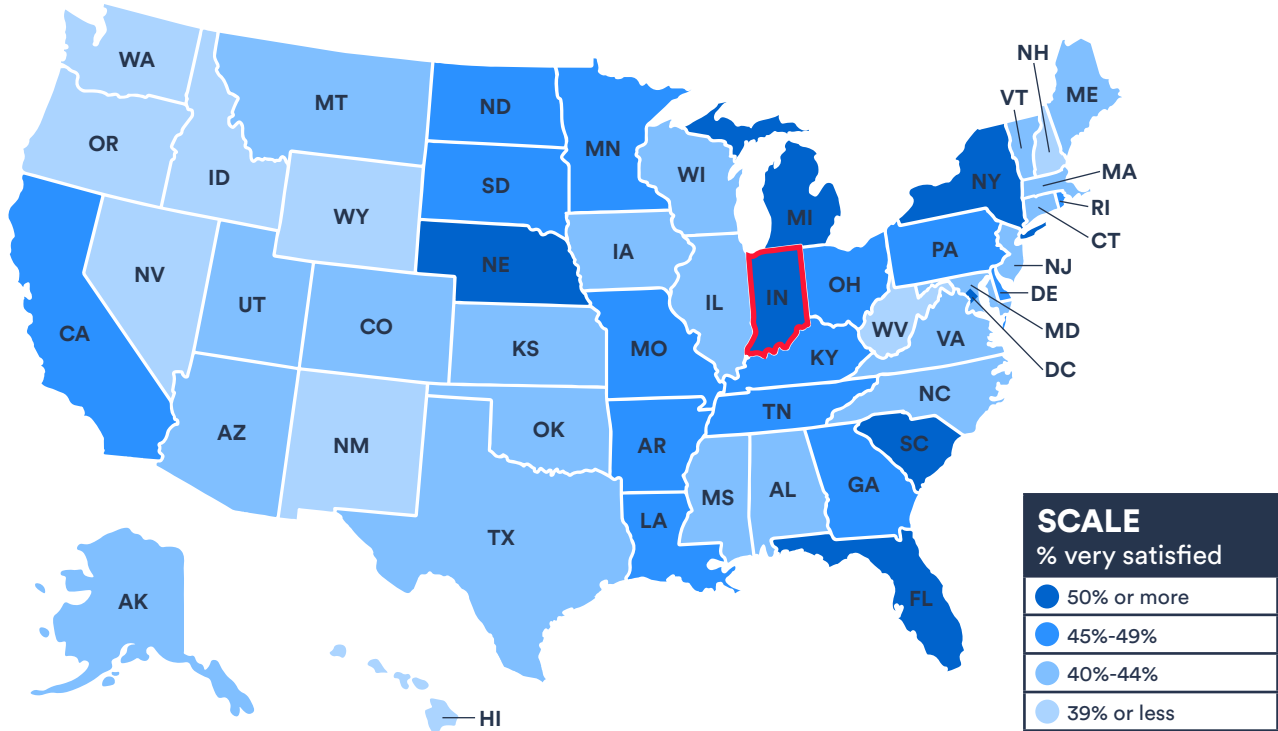




# Indiana in Context: A 50-State Perspective

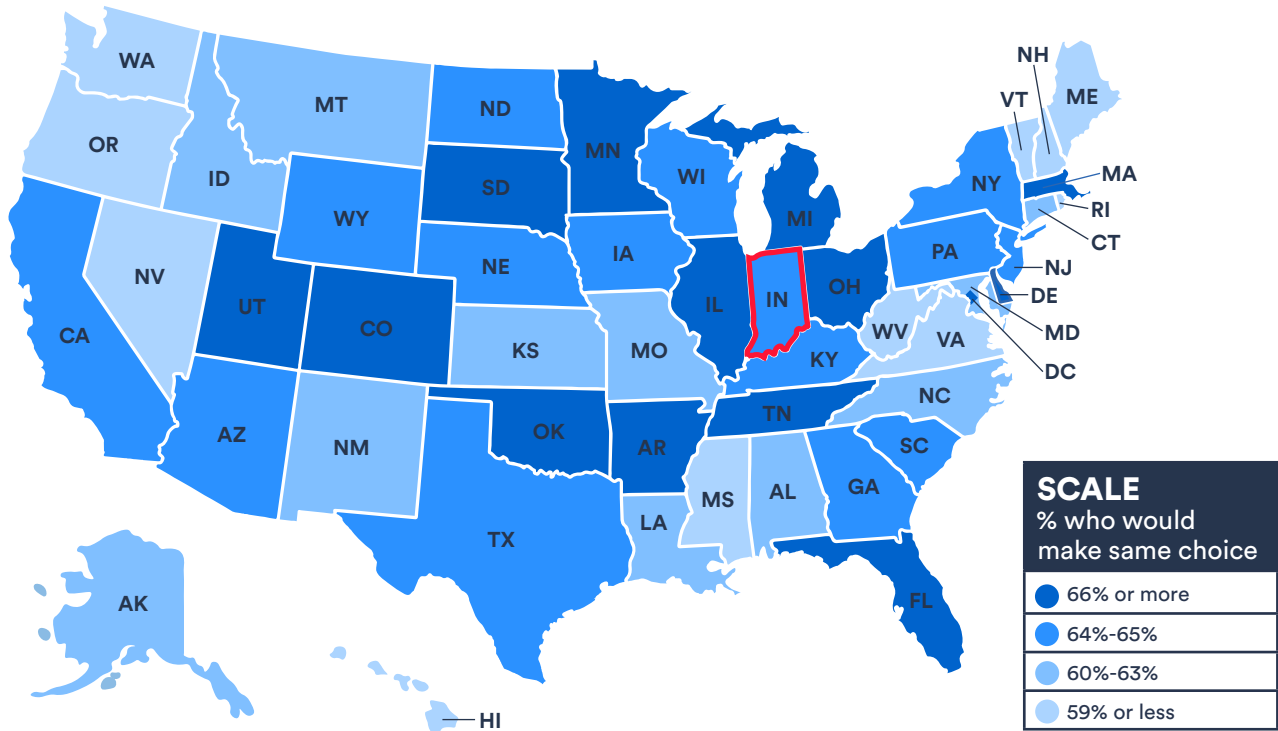
## SCHOOL SATISFACTION BY STATE

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



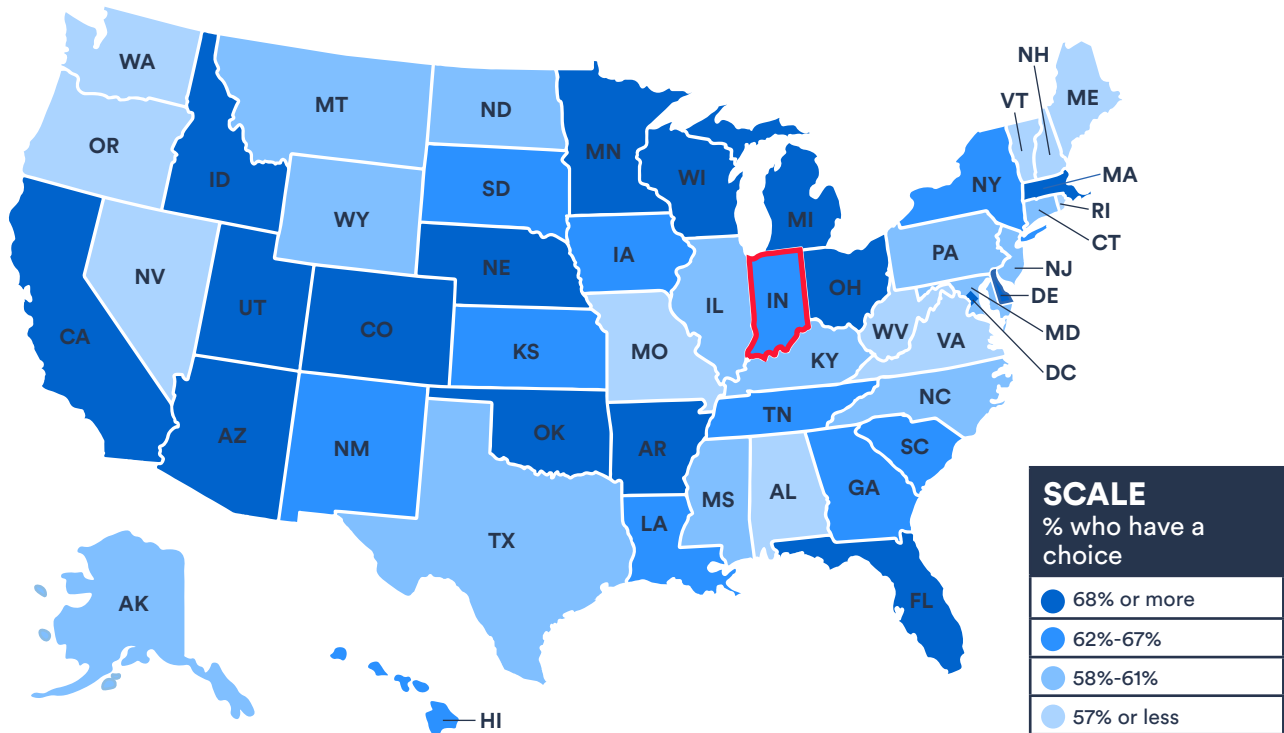
## WOULD MAKE THE SAME CHOICE BY STATE

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



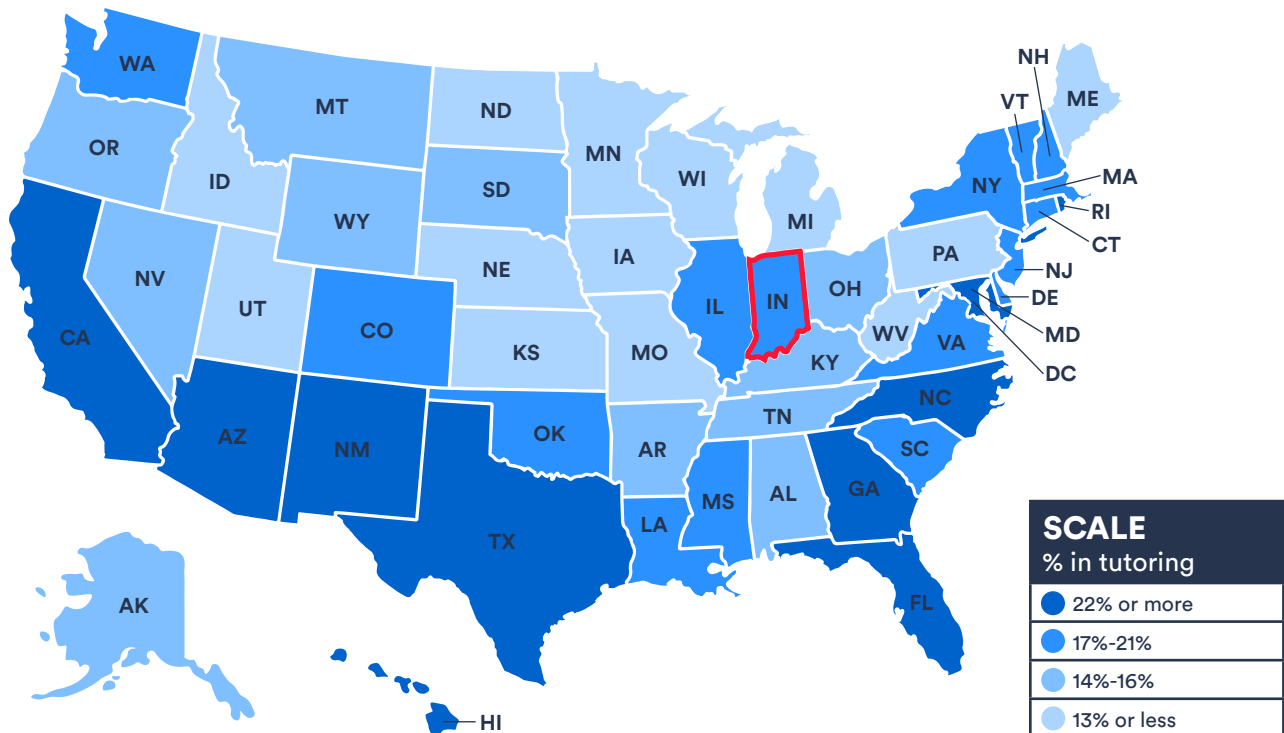
## FEEL THEY HAVE A CHOICE BY STATE

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



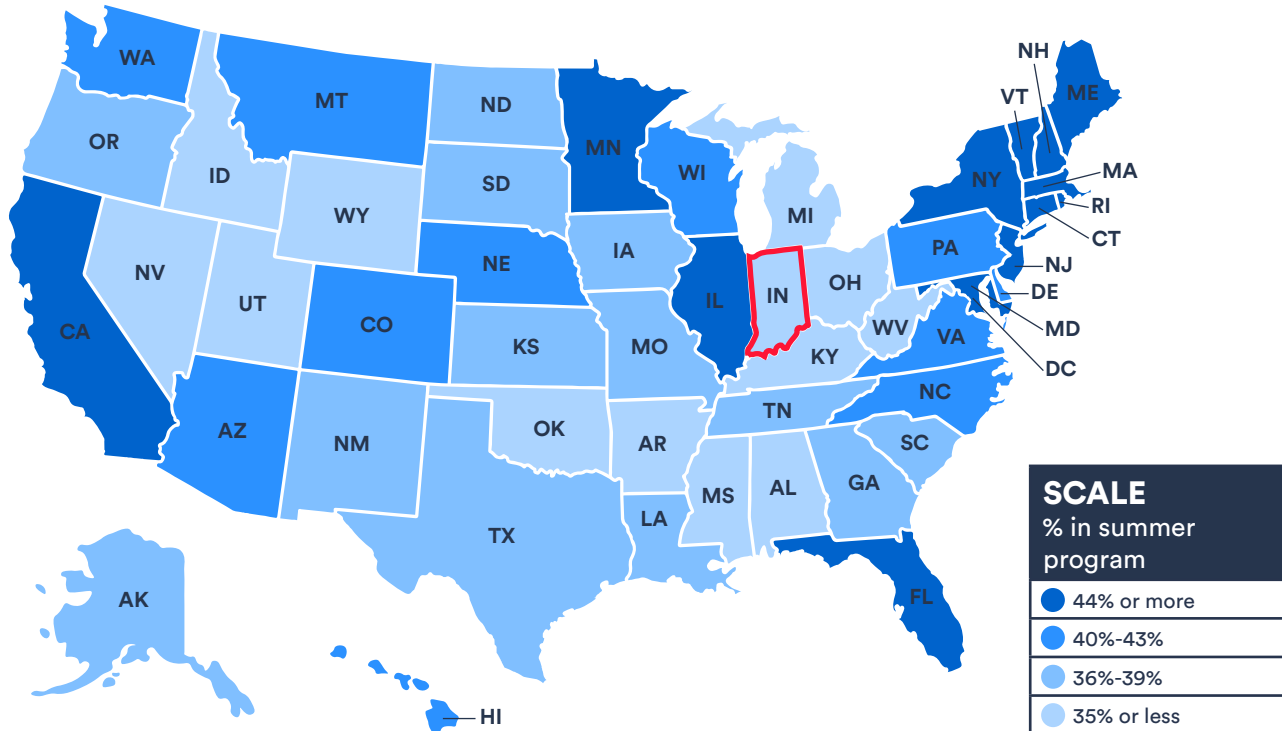
## PARTICIPATION IN TUTORING BY STATE

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



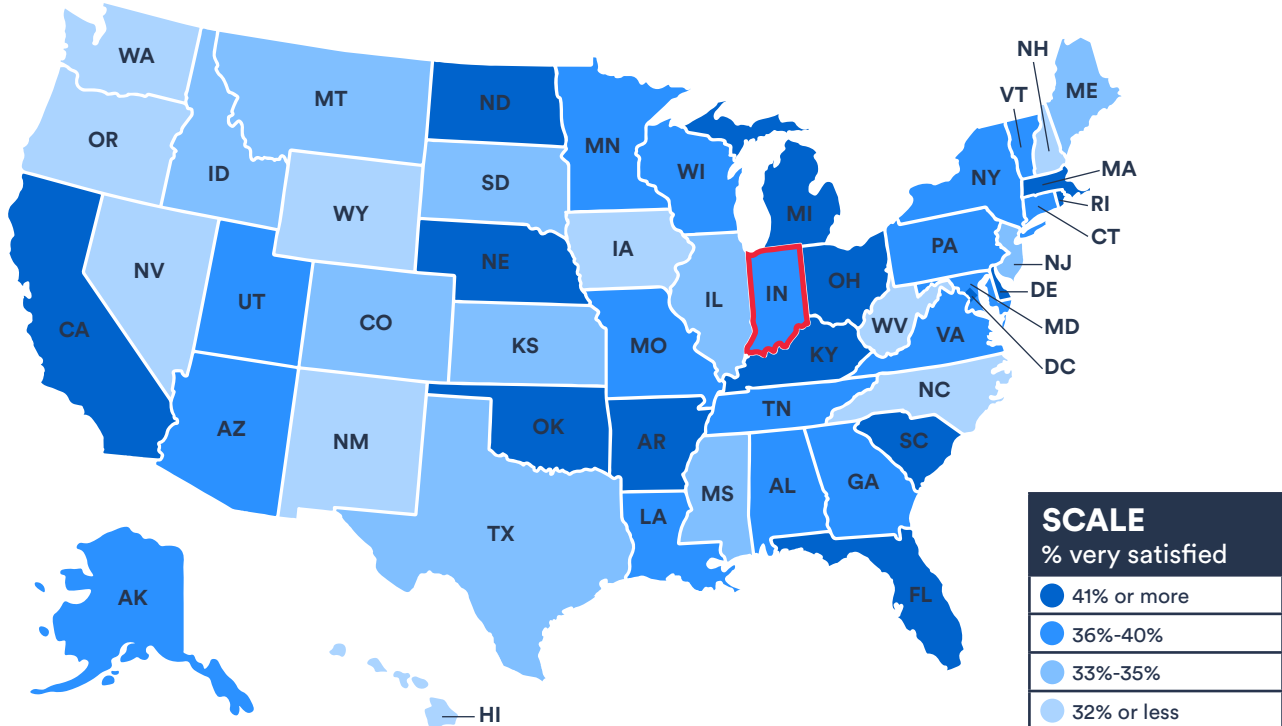
## SUMMER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY STATE

Percentage of children who participated in a supervised summer program



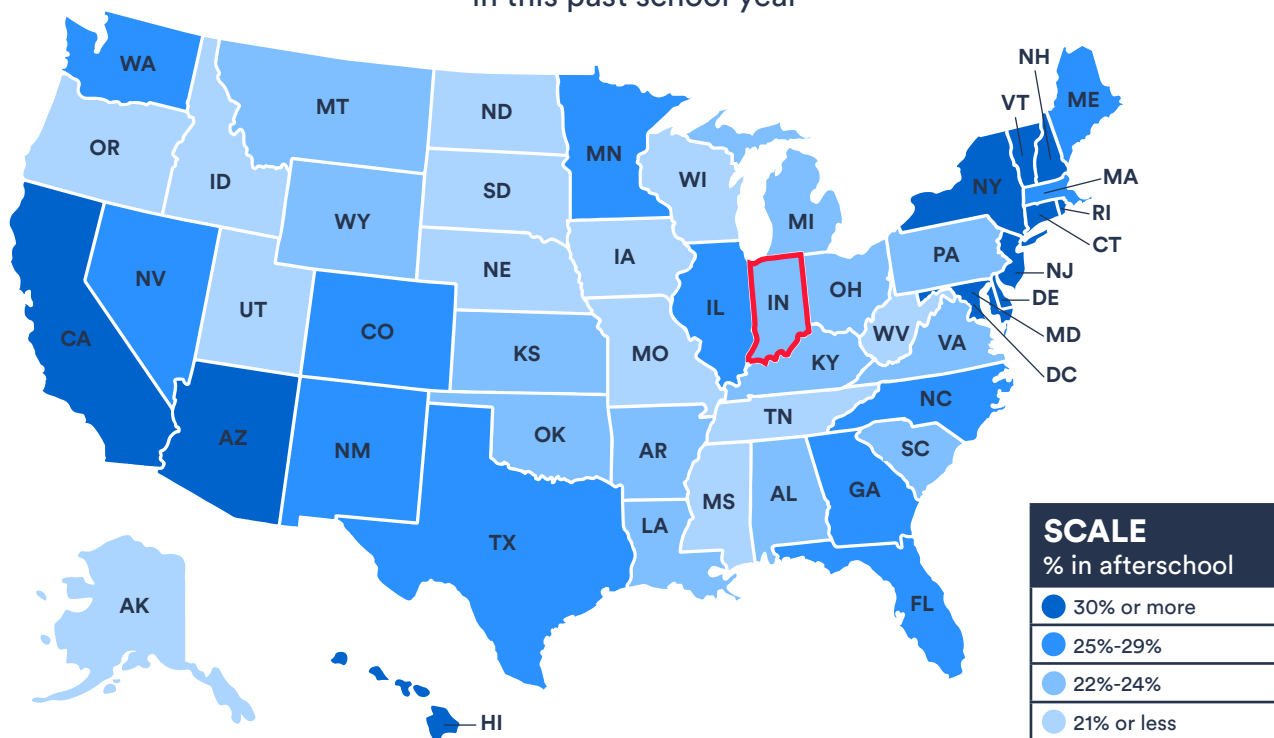
## MENTAL HEALTH SATISFACTION BY STATE & INCOME

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



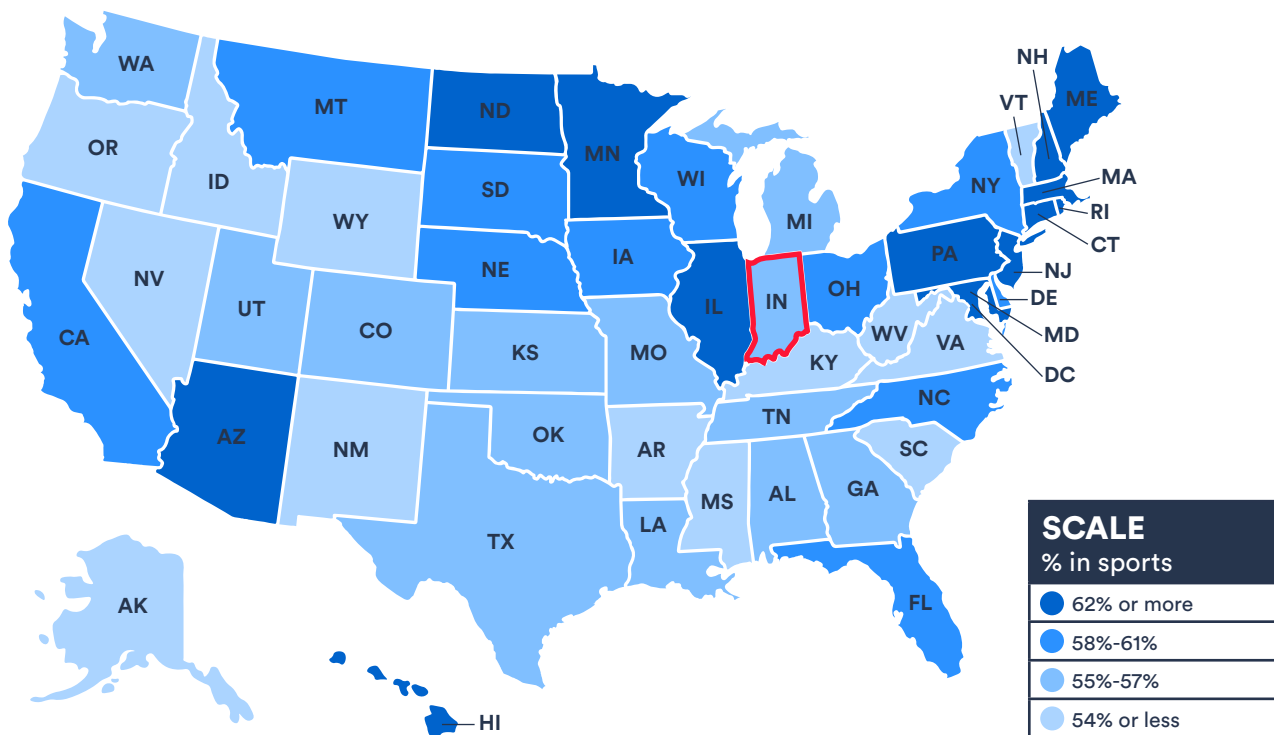
## AFTERSCHOOL PARTICIPATION BY STATE

Percentage of children who regularly participated in a supervised afterschool program in this past school year



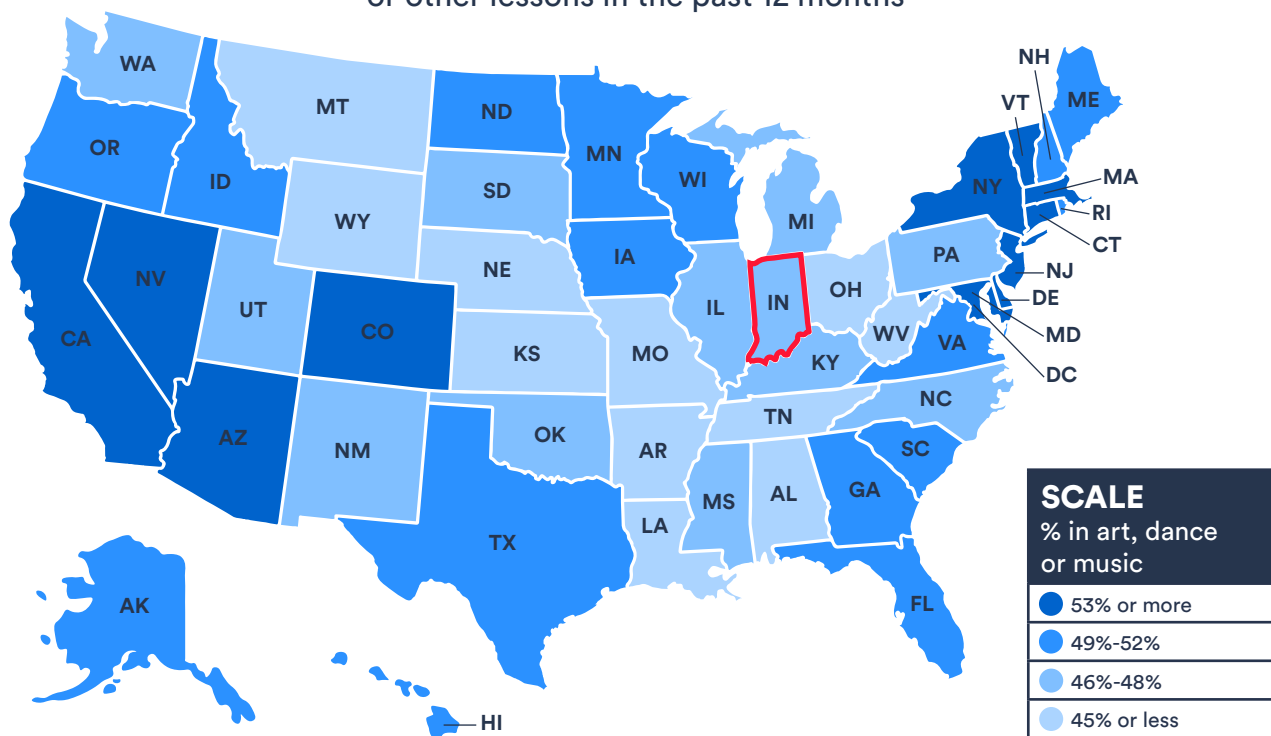
## ORGANIZED SPORTS PARTICIPATION BY STATE

Percentage of children who have participated in organized sports in the past 12 months



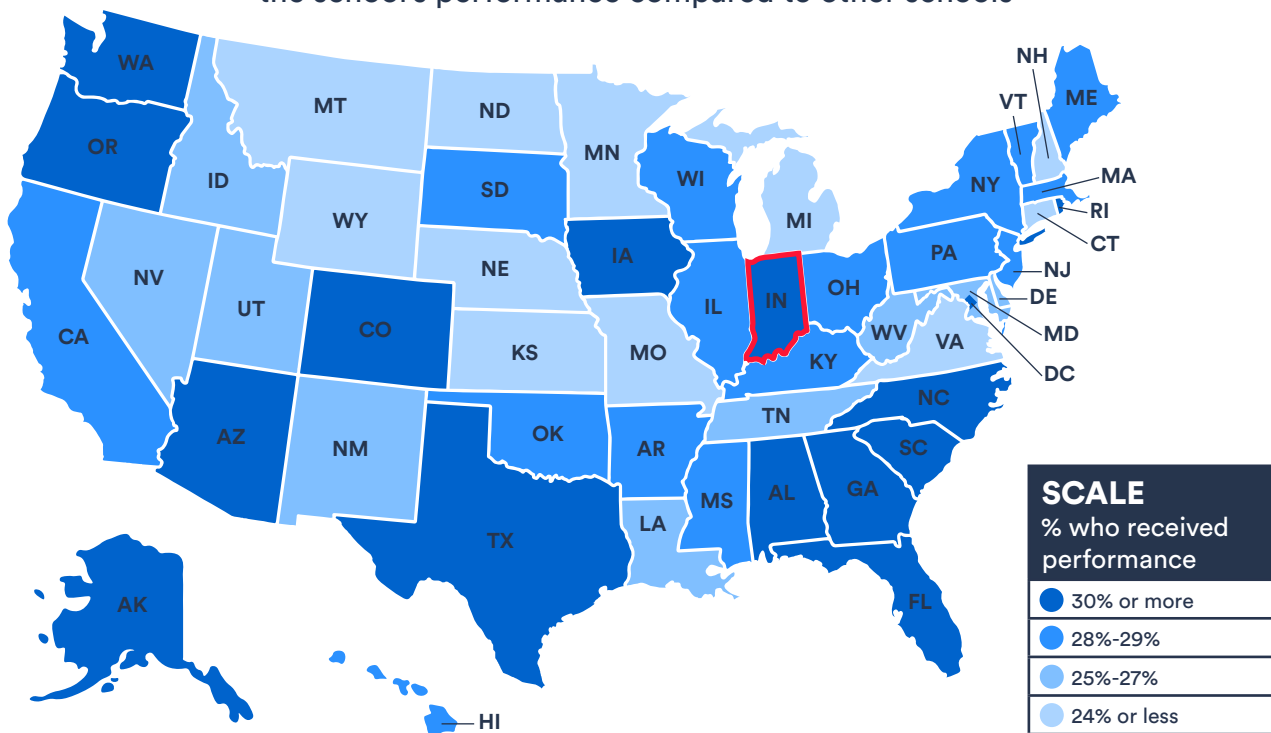
## ART, DANCE OR MUSIC PARTICIPATION BY STATE

Percentage of children who have participated in art, dance, music or other lessons in the past 12 months



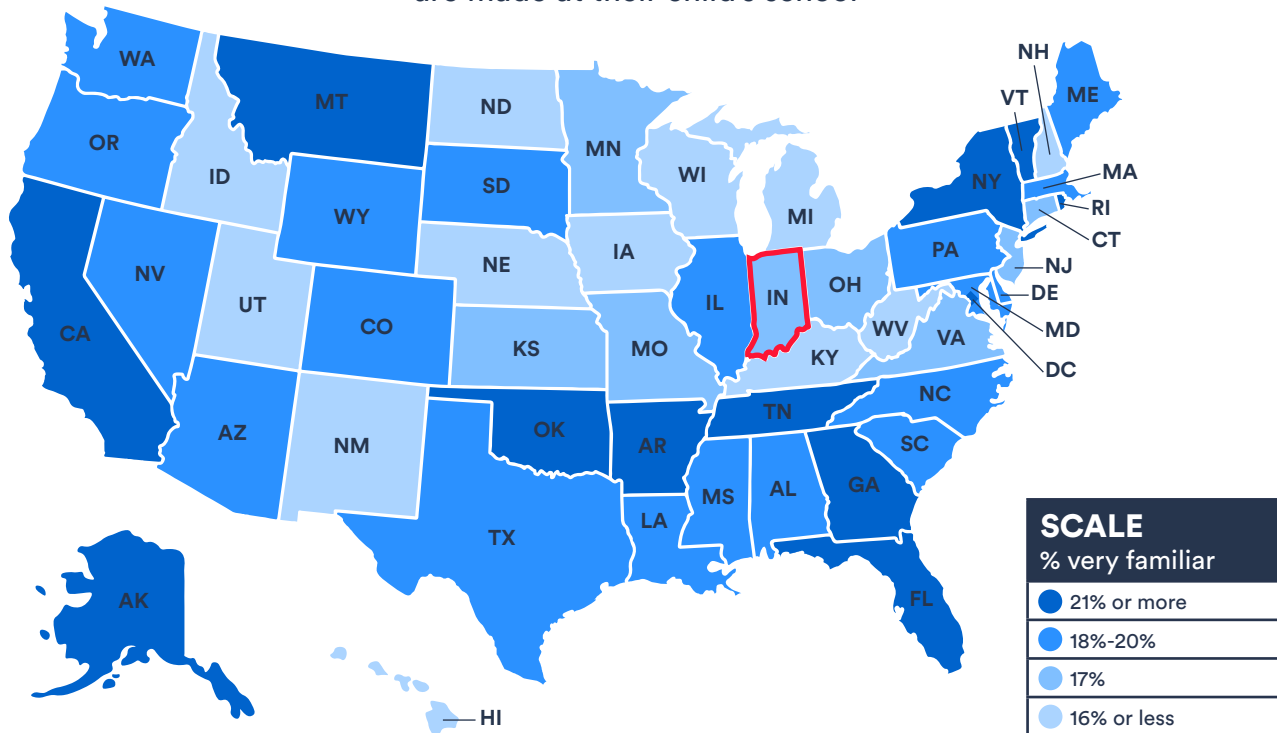
## REVIEWED SCHOOL PERFORMANCE BY STATE

Percentage who in the most recent school year reviewed information about the school's performance compared to other schools



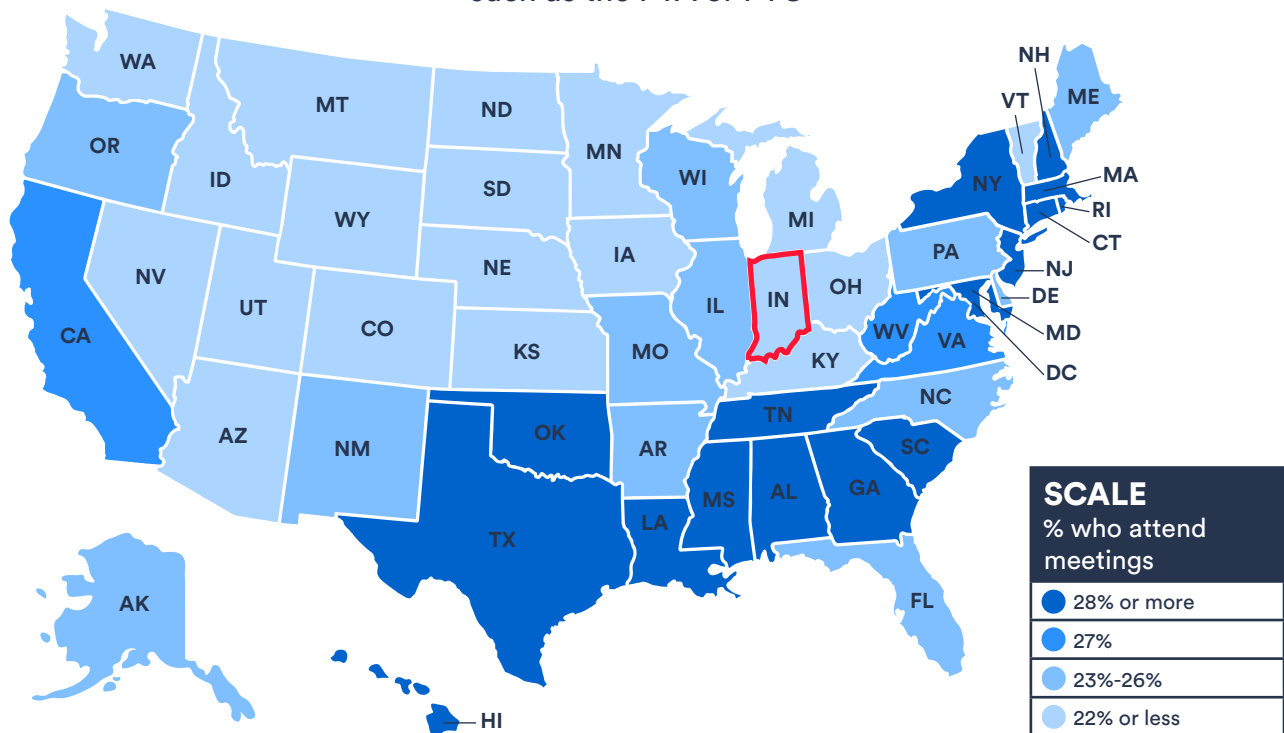
## SCHOOL BUDGET FAMILIARITY BY STATE

Percentage who say they are very familiar with how budget decisions are made at their child's school



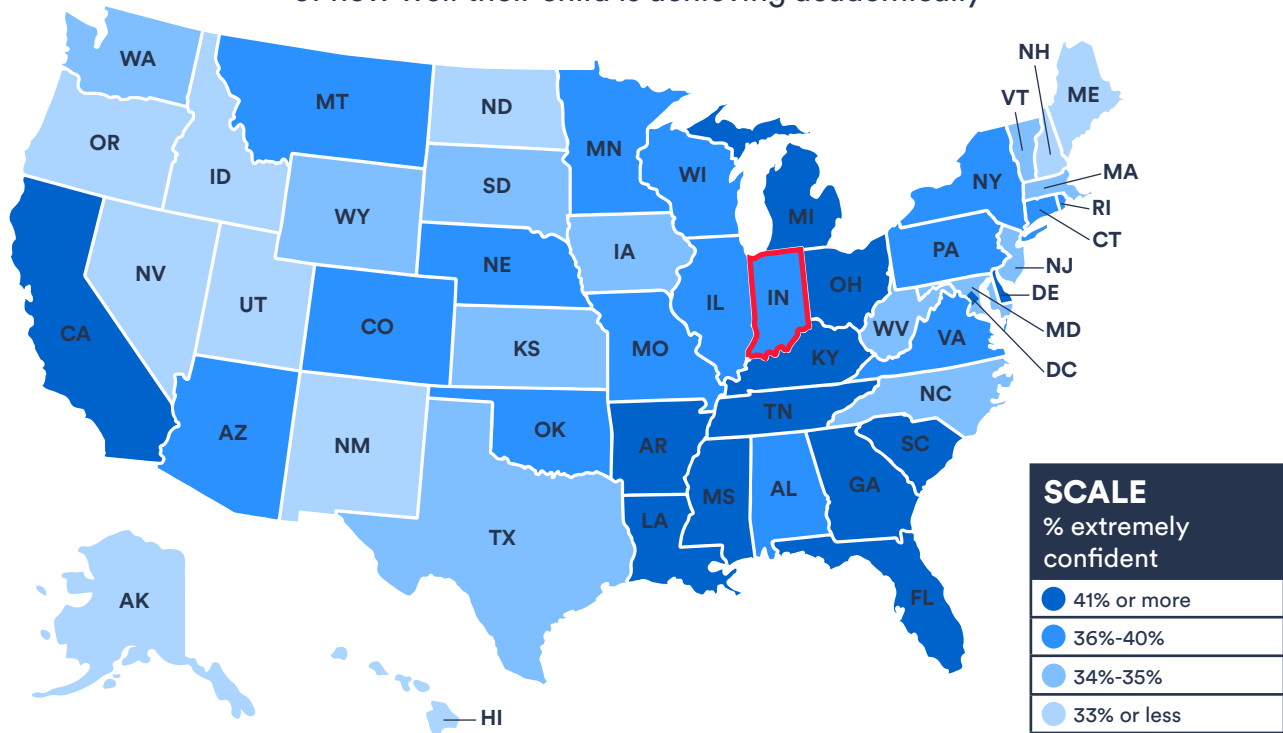
## ATTENDED PARENT MEETINGS BY STATE

Percentage who attended meetings held by parent organizations at their child's school, such as the PTA or PTO



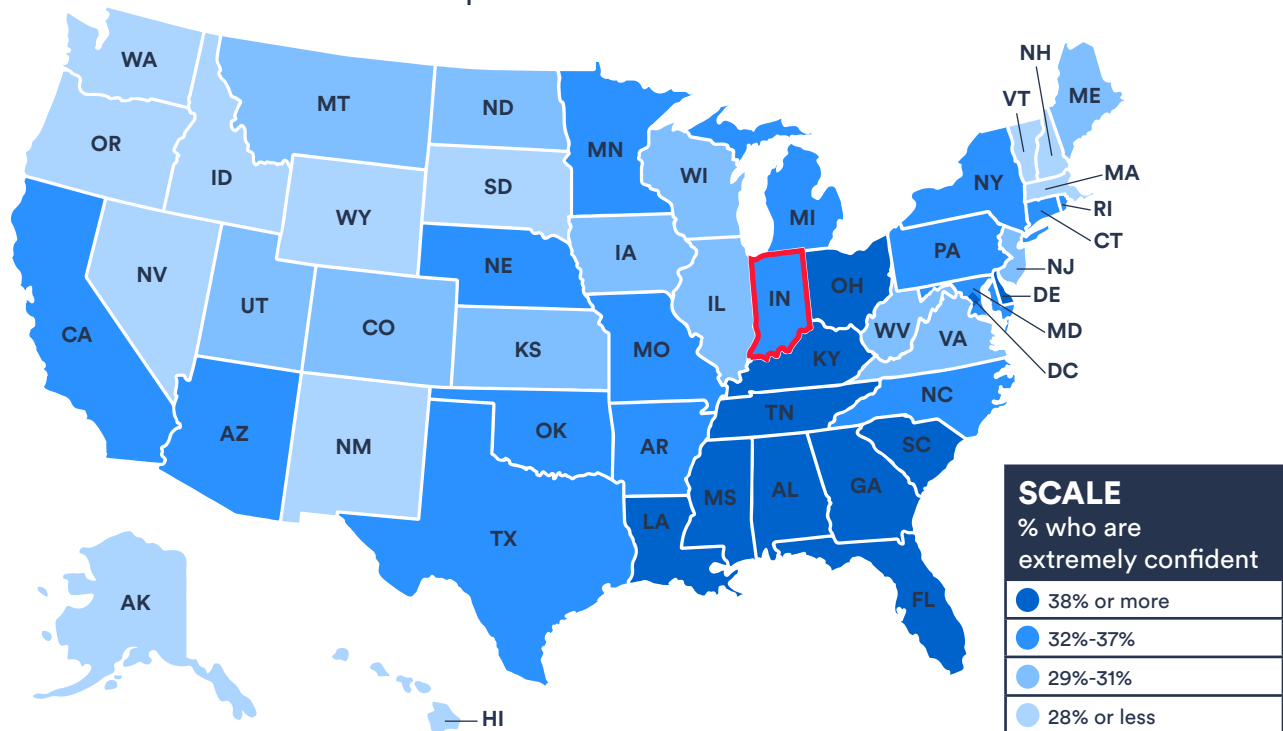
## CONFIDENCE IN UNDERSTANDING BY STATE

Percentage who are extremely confident they have a clear understanding of how well their child is achieving academically



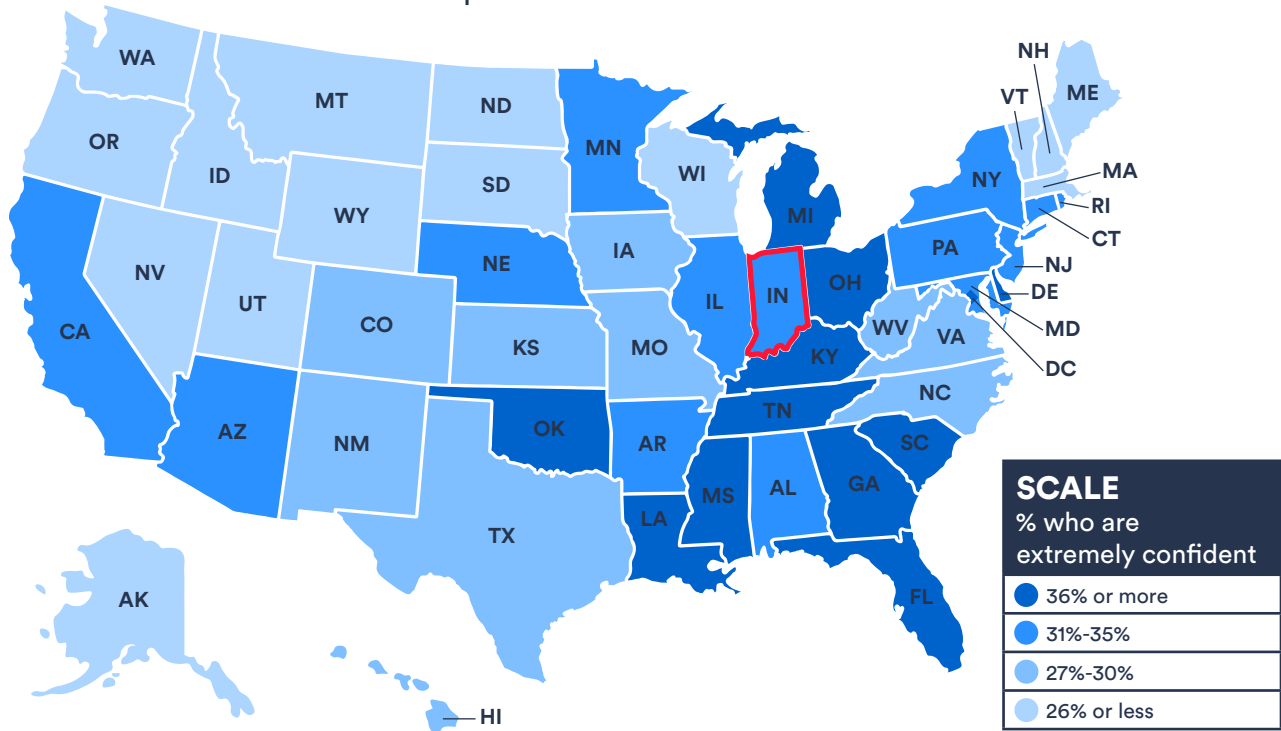
## CONFIDENCE IN WORKFORCE PREPARATION BY STATE

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 INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The **Institute for Quality Education (IQE)** empowers parents to choose the education that best fits their child's needs, believing the quality of instruction is far more important than the school model. We support student-centered policies that improve the quality of education for all children, whether they attend a traditional public school, public charter school, private school or use other delivery models. Our organization operates under four main pillars: recognizing and rewarding great teachers, equitable funding for all schools, strong accountability for student learning and quality options for all. Our team supports families navigating their school choice options by providing honest information and assessments about how schools are performing. If families can't afford the school of their choice, we direct them to programs that can help provide financial aid.

## 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.

