



Understanding School Shoppers in Detroit

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Prepared by:



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

For over fifteen years, we have been researching and assessing efforts to provide all families, particularly low wealth urban families, with expanded school options or what has been commonly referred to as “school choice.” The greatest shortcoming in most school reform efforts we have examined has been the lack of attention and effort devoted to understanding the demographic characteristics and the specific needs of the target population, as well as the best way to engage families before large-scale school reform efforts are designed and implemented. We were extremely pleased when Michigan Future, Inc. invited us to help them design and administer a research strategy that would thoughtfully solicit information from Detroit families to gain insight into how they think about and pursue school shopping.

The authors are nationally recognized authorities on various aspects of school choice, including how policy-makers, philanthropists and other school reformers can effectively engage urban families.

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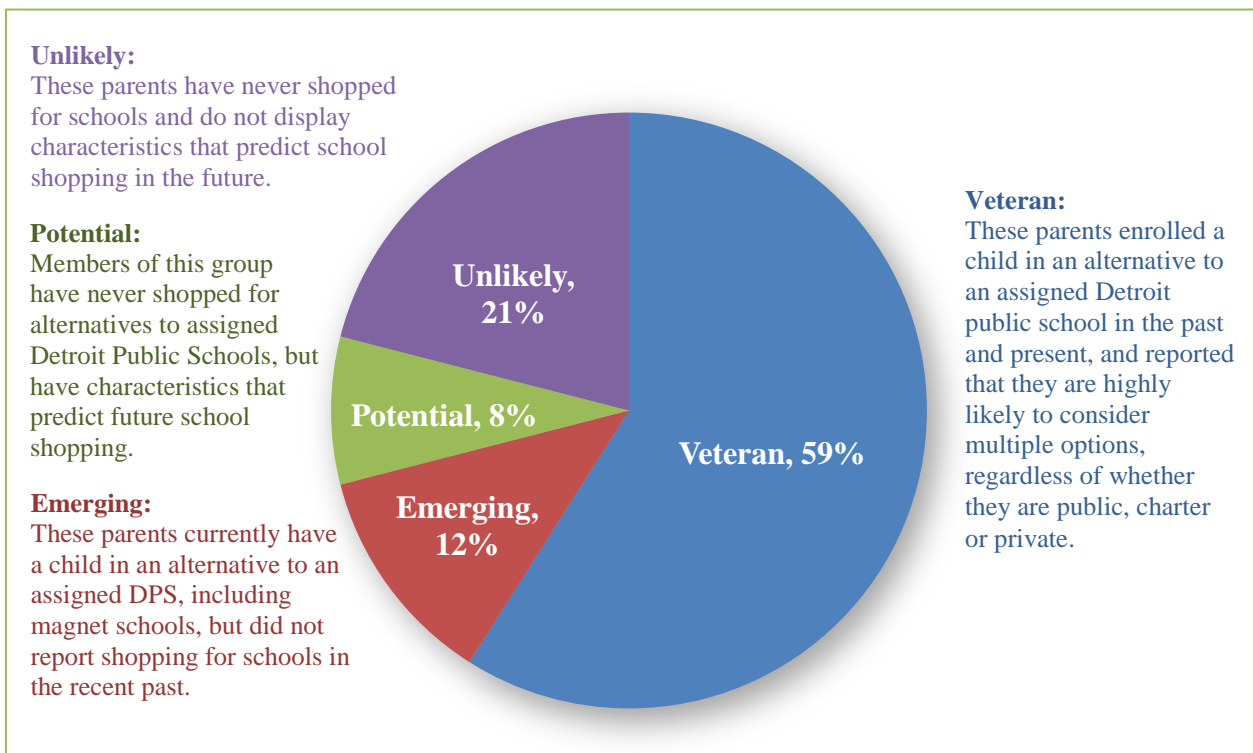
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a descriptive profile of the school shopping behavior of 1,073 Detroit households with 1,699 school-age children. Based on doorstep interviews and focus group discussions with these families, the report represents one of the most comprehensive and aggressive attempts to answer important questions about how parents, especially low-wealth families, think about and pursue school options within a major urban setting. The report also provides rich descriptions of how four different school shopper types approach the school search and selection processes. For example, Exhibit ES1 contains brief descriptions and breakouts of the four school shopper types we identified. Veteran and Unlikely shoppers define the opposite ends of the school shopping continuum. Emerging shoppers are feeling their way through the school shopping experience, most likely for the first time. Potential shoppers appear poised to make the leap to new schooling options, but have not yet done so.

Exhibit ES1. Definitions of the Four Types of School Shoppers



In addition to providing detailed information about the various school shoppers, the report also provides Michigan Future Schools (MFS) and other school operators with recommendations for engaging all shoppers. Based upon the doorstep survey and focus group findings, there are enormous opportunities to better serve Veteran, Emerging and Potential shoppers, as well as challenges and limitations to serving Unlikely shoppers. To illustrate, Exhibit ES2 provides a general description of the opportunities and challenges associated with each shopper type.

Exhibit ES2. School Shopper Opportunities and Challenges

	Opportunities	Challenges
Veteran 59%	These families are eager to find the best educational opportunities for their children. New school operators must help this group better understand quality schools.	
Emerging 12%	These families appear to be eager to shop, particularly for public schools. They conduct a limited school search and seek schools with characteristics that are commonly associated with private or high performing public schools – small class sizes, high academic standards and safety.	
Potential 8%	With better information about quality educational options for their children and adequate support to pursue them, these families are very likely to consider new school options.	
Unlikely 21%	For a variety of reasons, namely a lack of reliable information, transportation and family resources, and loyalty to DPS, most members of this group currently lack the motivation and wherewithal to pursue new school options for their children.	

The report concludes with a set of likely challenges reported by parents, as well as recommendations for MFS and potential new school operators about how they can engage and support all families. Following is a summary of key findings and suggestions:

Finding I: Are Detroit parents used to shopping already? Based on the survey responses, 71% of Detroit families have shopped for a school and 29% have not. We found that 59% of parents currently have enrolled their child in an alternative to the assigned Detroit public schools, or have done so in the past 5 years and say they are highly likely to consider multiple options in the future, whether they be public, charter or private. Another 12% of parents have children currently enrolled in an alternative to the assigned DPS schools, but said they have not been shopping for schools recently.

Suggestion for MFS and other school operators: Though relatively large numbers of Detroit parents have shopped or expressed an interest in shopping for schools due to the increased number of new schools, they will be challenged to sort through a variety of options. Reaching parents and raising their awareness about new schools will require an aggressive outreach campaign. New operators should strongly consider community canvassing, home visits and other strategies that will allow them to meet and establish rapport with prospective families and other members of communities surrounding the schools. Parents want to hear about specific programs, resources or services the school will provide their families.

Finding II: What schools are Detroit parents choosing for their children today? Among Detroit children, 45 percent are currently attending a school other than the Detroit public school they normally would be assigned to. The data shows 22.5 percent are in a public charter school, and 15.2 are attending a public school outside of Detroit (See Tables 2 and 3 for more detail).

Suggestion for MFS and other school operators: The demand for quality school options currently exceeds supply. Assuming the 35 schools MFS plans to open function as a network, the schools should emphasize the steps they will take to build and maintain high quality standards across all schools. This will be very attractive to parents with children in

grades K-8 who are interested in clear pathways to graduation, which gives them the confidence their children can move into academically rigorous programs at the high school level. Parents with high school students will especially be interested in schools that focus on both college preparation and career support/employment placement.

Finding III: Who, when and how do parents shop for schools? Mothers (58.4%) are most likely to make the final school choice, followed by fathers at 20.6%. At the high school level, 11.4% of students drove the school choice. Parents generally shop for schools between May and August. Most parents begin the school shopping process during the late spring and make their final decision during the summer. Potential and Unlikely shoppers begin the process a little later during the summer, and many of them do not make their final decision until just before the start of the school year. Parents rely on other parents and friends (61%) for information about schools, with school fairs (38%) being the second most popular way parents learn about schools.

Suggestion for MFS and other school operators: Target mothers, particularly those who are single heads of household, and provide them with opportunities to visit the school and observe the classrooms. Most schools begin the recruiting process in January and February. However, this is well before the time when most Detroit families shop. New operators should host events during dates and times that are most convenient for parents, which might include drop-in hours that do not require appointments.

Finding IV: What are the barriers to shopping for specific categories of families? Depending upon family structure, grade level of the student and other characteristics unique to different households, family resources will be one of the greatest barriers to school shopping for many Detroit families. Literacy, language, transportation, and time are the most salient factors that prevent parents from shopping or considering multiple school options.

Suggestion for MFS and other school operators: MFS should promote all the schools it sponsors as part of a network, and it should establish a user friendly one-stop school orientation process that allows parents to learn about and apply to multiple schools within

the network. For example, a parent who visits one school in the network could be informed about other schools of which they might not be aware. In addition, parents with literacy and language challenges could receive help with completing one application that could be used to apply to all schools in the network, helping fill schools that may not initially receive attention but are attractive to parents who could become aware of them through this process. Also, this would increase parent exposure to all schools in the network.

Finding V: What characteristics do parents value most in schools? Regardless of shopper type, Detroit parents want quality schools that adequately prepare their children for life after high school, and they seek a variety of features in a school with the primary emphasis on academics and secondary emphasis on safety/discipline, convenience, or extracurricular activities. Parents with children in grades K-8 place a greater value on safety, compared to high school parents who are more interested in extracurricular activities. The Veteran shoppers, who comprise 59% of our sample, stand out in their emphasis on academic performance.

Suggestion for MFS and other school operators: Schools should emphasize safety and other school characteristics that are most desired by parents from specific segments of the general target population. For example, though most parents place a high premium on safety, many of the K-8 parents do not like security guards, metal detectors and other signs that a school might have unmanageable student challenges. Also, most parents do not use or take test scores into consideration when assessing their schools options. Thus, new school operators should note that most parents use a variety of measures to assess their children's progress and school effectiveness.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Study

“The world has changed fundamentally. We either adjust to the changes or we will continue to get poorer compared to the nation The new path to prosperity is the broad knowledge-based economy.”¹

This study is motivated by Michigan Future Schools’ (MFS) desire to understand how parents in Detroit are reacting to an increasingly competitive school marketplace. While MFS is interested in establishing 35 small, high performing high schools, the door-to-door survey lent itself to examining attitudes of parents at all grade levels, and MSF collected the data for all parents and all students. The survey and focus groups sought answers to six key questions:

1. How many parents are shopping for schools in Detroit?
2. What are the socio-demographic characteristics of school shoppers?
3. When and how do parents shop for schools?
4. What do parents look for in a school?
5. What are the likely barriers to shopping for some families?
6. How can interested stakeholders better serve all school shoppers?

The answers to these questions are essential to the development of schools that marry the needs and preferences of Detroit families with the demands of a knowledge-based economy.

Using a mixed-method research approach, this report provides a descriptive profile of 1,073 respondents in a face-to-face administered doorstep survey. **Section 1** presents the methodology and overall descriptive statistics showing how we were able to obtain a highly representative sample of families living in Detroit, specifically low-income families who tend to be difficult to reach. **Section 2** closely examines the school choices parents are making today. It provides unique insights about the way Detroit parents experience school choice, at what grades, and what

¹ See “Michigan’s Transition to a Knowledge-Based Economy: Third Annual Progress Report” – <http://www.michiganfuture.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/MiFuture2010ExeSumFINAL.pdf>.

informs their decisions. **Section 3** highlights key characteristics broken out by respondent “shopper” classifications. We describe the four types of shoppers we have identified and provide important information about these groups.

1A. METHODOLOGY: DOORSTEP SURVEY

To collect the information necessary to answer the research questions, a mixed-method data collection strategy was used, featuring a doorstep survey administered to families in 292 census blocks that represented the population of families with school-age children in Detroit. Detroit consists of 15,000 individual census blocks. To achieve a representative sample of Detroit households containing school-age children, we drew a random sample of 500 census blocks then screened out 208 of them because they lacked children, containing only commercial buildings or institutional residences. Canvassers administered surveys in the remaining 292 census blocks that represented the population of school-aged families in Detroit.

Doorstep canvassing was used instead of more typical methods such as telephone or internet surveys because these survey methods are often ineffective at reaching a representative sample of low-income families. Surveying families at their front doors, as the U.S. Census does, permitted us to obtain city-wide information that is unprecedented in its ability to reveal the educational preferences and school shopping behavior of families in Detroit.

The survey questionnaire is reproduced, along with student-level response frequencies, in Appendix A. It includes a range of questions that explored the respondents’ awareness of and views on schools in Detroit; their experiences (or lack thereof) with school shopping; and the factors that influence their school choices. Socio-demographic information was also collected about the respondents and their households, enabling us to compare the experiences and views of different types of families.

In total, 1,004 families completed the doorstep survey, which is an excellent participation rate for this type of survey. These families provided information on 1,550 children attending school.

Upon review of the initial survey data, we determined that Latino families were under-represented. Working with Latino community organizations, we invited additional Latino families to attend a special session to fill out a slightly shorter questionnaire translated into Spanish, providing language assistance as needed. We then drew a random sample of 69 of the 125 additional Latino household surveys to integrate into our data set in order to provide a properly representative sample of the city. Since the additional 69 Latino families had 149 school-age children, this left us with a sample of 1,073 families with 1,699 students. Although the remaining 56 Latino household surveys are not included in the data presented here, they are available in the database to further explore the educational preferences and practices of people from that distinctive community.

Representativeness of the Survey

It is somewhat difficult to test the extent to which our survey accurately represents the population of Detroit families with school-age children because ours is the first survey administered only to Detroit households with children in school. The U.S. Census does not present breakdowns by school-aged children or their families. In general, the best comparisons we can make are to Census figures for the city of Detroit that are limited to households with children 17 and under, including young children not yet in school.

The data from our survey match the demographics of Detroit families with children quite closely on many relevant factors (Table 1). Fifty-one percent of the children in our sample are 6-11 years old, compared to 47% in the city of Detroit based on the 2010 Census. Our sample and the Census numbers also are a close match regarding parent education, parent employment status, housing type, and family income.

Table 1. Demographic Features of Our Survey Sample Compared to the Census

Detroit Survey		Census Data	
Item	%	Item [(#) refers to Census Sample]	%
Child age ⁱ		(1)	
6 to 11 years	51.0	6 to 11 years	46.6
12 to 17 years	49.0	12 to 17 years	53.4
Respondent race		(1)	
White	2.3	White, non-Hispanic	13.3
Black/African American	82.8	Black/African American	77.6
Hispanic/Latino	11.0	Hispanic/Latino	10.2
Biracial	3.1	Two or more races	2.7
Education		(2)	
Less than high school	27.2	Less than high school	21.4
At least high school	72.8	At least high school ⁱⁱⁱ	78.6
Less than 4-year college	89.8	Less than bachelor's degree ^{iv}	86.1
At least 4-year college	10.2	Bachelor's degree or higher	13.9
Current employment status ^v		(3)	
Respondent in labor force	75.1	At least one guardian in labor force	80.5
Respondent not in labor force	24.9	Neither guardian in labor force	19.5
Household description		(2)	
Two parents	34.0	Married-couple	32.0
Single mother only	41.1	Female householder, no husband	57.5
Single father only	7.5	Single father	10.5
Other ^{vi}	17.4	Other	---
House type		(2)	
Owner occupied ^{vii}	46.3	Owner occupied	53.8
Renter occupied	53.7	Renter occupied	46.2
Family income last year		(2)	
Less than \$10,000	26.2	Less than \$10,000	23.5
\$10,000 to \$49,999	63.3	\$10,000 to \$14,999	56.0
\$50,000 or more	10.4	\$50,000 or more	20.4

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, Detroit city, MI.

Census data categories: (1) Children under 18 years old in households, (2) Households, and (3) Employment characteristics, families with children under 18 years.

Notes: (i) Category is at the child-level. All other categories are at the family level; (ii): Undisplayed categories: "Asian," "Middle Eastern/Arab," and "Other," (iii): Sum of "High school graduate (includes equivalency)," "Some college or associate's degree," and "Bachelor's degree or higher;" (iv): Sum of "Less than high school graduate," "High school graduate (includes equivalency)," and "Some college or associate's degree;" (v): "Respondent in labor force" calculated as sum of "Employed 35 hours or more," "Employed less than 35 hours," "Self-employed," and "Not employed, available for work." "Respondent not in labor force" calculated as sum of "Not employed, unavailable for work," "Unable to work due to illness or disability," "Retired," and "Student;" (vi): Categories omitted: "Grandparent(s) only," "Grandparent(s) and one or two parents," and "Other;" (vii): Sum of "Owned with mortgage" and "Owned without mortgage."

Compared to the Census, white households are under-represented in our data and African American families are over-represented. This probably is at least partly because a disproportionate number of white families in Detroit only have children below the age of 6, as

research in other cities shows that white families tend to move out of urban areas once their oldest child reaches school age.² Household composition is another area where our survey results differ somewhat from the Census numbers, largely because of differences in how we define categories such as “single mother only.”

We are encouraged by the comparisons of the characteristics of the respondents to our survey with those of all households with children in Detroit. Our sample closely matches the Census figures on features that we would expect to be similar for households with children, regardless of their ages, and differs from the Census numbers on factors that distinguish urban households with school-age children from households with no or only younger children. As such, the figures that follow appear to be reflective of the characteristics, opinions, and behaviors of Detroit families with children in school.

1B. DOORSTEP CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS: NEW DEMAND EVIDENCE FROM DETROIT

A. Kinds of Schools Students are Attending

We asked parents to tell us which schools their children were attending. For each of the schools parents identified, we assigned students to five key categories (Appendix B): (1) assigned public school in Detroit, (2) Detroit magnet public school, (3) public charter school, (4) public school outside of Detroit, and (5) private/home school. We confirmed that about 55% of the school-age children of our respondents were attending assigned Detroit Public Schools (DPS) at the time of the survey (Table 2). About 5% of the students were in public magnet schools, 23% were attending public charter schools either inside or outside of the city, 15% were in public schools outside of Detroit, and less than 3% were in private or home schools.

² See Lisa Barrow, “School Choice through Relocation: Evidence from the Washington, DC Area,” *Journal of Public Economics* 86 (2002), Table 1, p. 163.

Table 2. Type of School Currently Attending – All Children in Sample

Current School Classification	N	%
Detroit public school	880	55.0
Detroit public magnet	83	5.1
Public charter	361	22.5
Public schools outside Detroit	244	15.2
Private or home school	40	2.5
Total	1608	100.0

Note: 91 student observations are excluded because insufficient information was provided to classify their school.

The proportion of students attending various types of schools in Detroit varies based on the schooling level of the child (Table 3). For the purposes of this report, we define “elementary school” as grades PreK-5, “middle school” as grades 6-8, and “high school” as grades 9-12. The assigned DPS category accounts for 55% of the total student enrollments but 60% of the market share of high school students and only 44% of all middle school students. Only 2% of elementary grade students are in Detroit magnet schools, while almost 9% of middle school and over 6% of high school students are in magnets. Charter schools enroll a much lower proportion of high school students (13% of market share) than they do elementary or middle school students (both 27%). Between 14% and 17% of Detroit students are attending public schools outside of Detroit at each of the three schooling levels. Less than 2% of elementary school and less than 4% of middle and high school students attend private or home schools.

Table 3. Type of School Currently Attending by Schooling Level

Grade Level	DPS		Magnet		Charter		TPS Non-Detroit		Private or Home		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PreK-5	412	55.2	18	2.4	204	27.3	102	13.7	10	1.3	746	412
6-8	142	44.1	30	9.3	86	26.7	53	16.5	11	3.4	322	142
9-12	311	60.4	34	6.6	66	12.8	87	16.9	17	3.3	515	311
Totals	869	54.9	78	4.9	356	22.5	242	15.3	39	2.5	1583	869

Note: 24 student observations are excluded from the table because data were missing regarding their current grade-level.

B. Characteristics of Students by Schooling Level and School Type

In Tables 4-6, we provide demographic details of students and families, broken down by school grades (elementary, middle and high school) and by where the families are choosing to send their children. Detroit students differ on a number of important characteristics depending on their level of schooling and the type of school they are attending.

Table 4. Characteristics of Survey Respondents by Type of School Child is Attending – Elementary Students

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
Parent race						
Black/African American	70.4	100.0	90.5	76.2	66.7	77.3
Hispanic/Latino	24.9	0.0	3.0	7.9	11.1	15.8
Other (including disability)	4.7	0.0	6.5	15.8	22.2	6.8
Child age						
3 or 4	5.6	--	3.0	2.9	10.0	4.4
5	10.5	11.1	9.9	5.9	10.0	9.7
6	14.1	11.1	13.4	8.8	10.0	13.1
7	17.8	16.7	17.8	12.7	10.0	17.0
8	17.8	22.2	15.3	17.6	30.0	17.4
9	17.3	22.2	18.3	22.5	20.0	18.4
10	14.1	--	15.8	24.5	10.0	15.6
11 or 12	2.9	16.7	6.4	4.9	--	4.4
Highest grade completed, any adult						
Up to 8th Grade	8.5	--	--	--	--	4.6
9th to 11th Grade	12.1	--	5.5	5.9	--	9.1
12th Grade but no diploma	7.2	--	3.0	--	--	5.0
High School Equivalent or GED	13.6	--	13.6	15.8	--	13.9
High School Diploma	18.0	16.7	20.6	25.7	--	19.5
Voc/Tech Program, but no Diploma	2.1	--	2.5	--	--	1.8
Voc/Tech Program, Degree	9.8	--	5.5	5.0	--	7.7
Some College, No Degree	14.7	38.9	22.6	20.8	--	18.1
Associate's Degree	8.2	16.7	14.1	16.8	--	11.4
Bachelor's Degree	4.1	--	8.0	5.0	40.0	5.7
Graduate School, Did not Complete	--	--	1.5	--	--	0.8
Master's Degree	0.8	--	2.0	3.0	--	1.5
Doctorate or Advanced Professional Degree	0.8	--	--	--	--	0.7
Parent current employment status						
Employed 35 hours or more	47.3	18.8	49.2	49.0	60.0	47.6
Employed less than 35 hours	17.6	50.0	12.4	19.0	10.0	17.0
Self-employed	5.9	18.8	6.2	7.0	0.0	6.4

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
Not employed, available for work	3.9	0.0	4.1	4.0	0.0	3.8
Unavailable for work (including disability)	18.6	12.5	15.5	19.0	30.0	17.8
Retired	3.4	0.0	8.3	2.0	0.0	4.4
Student or other	3.4	0.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	3.0
Household description						
Two parents	42.0	22.2	35.5	32.7	40.0	38.4
Single mother	37.2	16.7	38.5	37.6	10.0	36.7
Single father	5.1	38.9	6.0	5.9	0.0	6.2
Grandparent(s) only	4.3	16.7	5.0	5.9	10.0	5.1
Grandparent(s) and one or two parents	4.8	5.6	9.5	12.9	30.0	7.6
Other	6.6	0.0	5.5	5.0	10.0	5.9
Time at current address						
Less than six months	6.8	0.0	7.2	3.1	20.0	6.4
Six months to a year	6.1	0.0	6.7	6.1	10.0	6.1
A year to three years	26.3	38.9	21.6	28.6	20.0	25.6
Three years to five years	28.3	16.7	23.7	35.7	20.0	27.7
Five years or more	32.6	44.4	40.7	26.5	30.0	34.2
House type						
Owned with mortgage	27.0	44.4	28.2	27.7	40.0	28.1
Owned free and clear	17.3	22.2	19.0	12.9	20.0	17.3
Rented	52.8	33.3	49.2	58.4	40.0	52.0
Occupied without payment of rent	2.8	0.0	3.6	1.0	0.0	2.7
Car access						
All or nearly all the time	72.4	88.9	89.4	84.7	55.6	78.9
Sometimes	18.6	5.6	6.3	12.2	44.4	14.4
No	9.0	5.6	4.2	3.1	0.0	6.7
Farthest distance willing to travel						
Up to a mile	31.9	5.9	13.7	10.5	0.0	22.7
Up to three miles	32.4	35.3	21.6	32.6	22.2	29.4
Up to eight miles	17.7	35.3	35.3	16.8	11.1	22.9
Eight miles or more	17.2	23.5	29.5	36.8	66.7	24.2
Other	0.8	0.0	0.0	3.2	0.0	0.9
Family income last year						
Less than \$5,000	16.9	0.0	10.6	14.5	0.0	14.1
\$5,000 to \$9,999	18.6	0.0	7.3	14.5	0.0	14.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999	31.5	16.7	26.5	21.1	33.3	28.2
\$20,000 to \$29,999	10.2	27.8	19.2	15.8	0.0	13.9
\$30,000 to \$39,999	7.8	22.2	12.6	7.9	0.0	9.5
\$40,000 to \$49,999	6.1	22.2	11.9	19.7	0.0	10.1
\$50,000 or more	8.8	11.1	11.9	6.6	66.7	10.1

Notes: Some results needed to be suppressed to preserve respondent confidentiality. As a result, not all column totals add to 100%.

The most significant characteristics of Detroit students in the **elementary grades** PreK-5 in our sample differ somewhat depending on the type of school they attend, specifically:

- **Assigned DPS schools** are characterized by a larger population of Latino students (25%, compared to 3.5 percent for charter...etc.); higher concentrations of parents with less than a high school education (42%); fewer parents who are willing to drive over 3 miles to and from school (35%); and fewer families reporting incomes above \$30,000/year (23%);
- **DPS magnet schools** are distinctive in that the elementary students in our sample all were African American; more of their parents are employed less than full-time (50%) or self-employed (20%); far more of their households are headed by single fathers (39%); more of them had lived in the same house for over 5 years (44%); fewer of them are renting their residence (33%); nearly 60% are willing to travel over three miles to school; and 56% reported incomes above \$30,000/year;³
- **Public charter schools** are distinctive in that they enroll a higher percentage of African Americans (91%); nearly 12% of parents have a 4-year college degree or higher; nearly two-thirds of parents would drive over three miles to school; and 36% of families have incomes over \$30,000;
- **Public schools outside of Detroit** disproportionately attract elementary students from our sample who are older (52% of them age 9 or higher) and have parents with at least some access to a car (97%) and a willingness to drive over three miles to school (54%);
- **Private schools, including home schools**, draw a distinctive set of Detroit elementary students in that only two-thirds are African American; 40% of their parents have 4-year college degrees; 60% of their parents are employed full-time; 30% of them have grandparents helping in the household; two-thirds say they would drive over 8 miles to school, and two-thirds report income of \$50,000 or more.⁴

³ Only 16 parent respondents had elementary-grade children in magnet schools so readers should be cautious in interpreting the differences between the magnet and other groups based on such a small sample.

⁴ Only 10 parent respondents had elementary-grade children in private schools so readers should be cautious in interpreting the differences between the private and other groups based on such a small sample.

Detroit students in the middle grades 6-8 also have some distinctive characteristics in their own right and based on the type of school they attend.

Table 5. Characteristics of Survey Respondents by Type of School Child is Attending – Middle School Students

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
Respondent race						
Black/African American	87.7	63.3	93.8	88.7	55.6	86.2
Hispanic/Latino	9.4	30.0	2.5	0.0	33.3	8.7
Other (including white)	2.9	6.7	3.7	11.3	11.1	5.1
Child age						
9, 10, or 11	24.1	34.5	34.9	17.0	36.4	27.2
12	40.8	26.7	25.6	37.7	9.1	33.9
13	28.2	23.3	25.6	37.7	36.4	28.9
14 or 15	6.4	13.8	14.0	7.5	18.2	9.7
Highest grade completed, any adult						
Up to 8th Grade	6.0	10.7	--	--	--	4.0
9th to 11th Grade	3.8	--	3.7	5.7	--	4.3
12th Grade but no diploma	8.3	--	--	5.7	--	6.3
High School Equivalent or GED	17.3	17.9	9.9	9.4	--	13.5
High School Diploma	11.3	10.7	24.7	22.6	--	16.5
Voc/Tech Program, but no Diploma	3.0	--	--	--	--	2.0
Voc/Tech Program, Degree	5.3	10.7	--	5.7	--	5.3
Some College, No Degree	26.3	17.9	21.0	26.4	--	23.4
Associate's Degree	12.8	17.9	21.0	17.0	--	16.2
Bachelor's Degree	3.8	--	11.1	5.7	--	6.6
Graduate School, Did not Complete	--	--	--	--	--	--
Master's Degree	--	--	--	--	--	1.3
Doctorate or Advanced Professional Degree	--	--	--	--	--	--
Respondent current employment status						
Employed 35 hours or more	38.9	48.3	52.6	38.5	44.4	43.4
Employed less than 35 hours	15.3	27.6	7.9	11.5	11.1	13.8
Self-employed	7.6	3.4	9.2	15.4	0.0	8.8
Not employed, available for work	6.1	0.0	5.3	5.8	0.0	5.1
Unavailable (including disability)	16.8	17.2	14.5	21.2	22.2	17.2
Retired	9.2	3.4	7.9	7.7	22.2	8.4
Student or other	6.1	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	3.4
Household description						
Two parents	35.0	48.3	38.8	37.7	40.0	37.9
Single mother	39.4	27.6	45.0	34.0	20.0	38.2
Single father	4.4	10.3	5.0	5.7	0.0	5.2

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
Grandparent(s) only	8.0	3.4	2.5	9.4	0.0	6.1
Grandparent(s) and one or two parents	8.0	6.9	7.5	5.7	10.0	7.4
Other	5.1	3.4	1.3	7.5	30.0	5.2
Time at current address						
Less than six months	2.9	0.0	2.5	1.9	0.0	2.3
Six months to a year	5.9	3.3	5.0	3.8	10.0	5.2
A year to three years	25.0	26.7	16.3	30.8	0.0	23.1
Three years to five years	27.9	20.0	23.8	17.3	0.0	23.4
Five years or more	38.2	50.0	52.5	46.2	90.0	46.1
House type						
Owned with mortgage	28.1	51.7	30.8	35.8	30.0	32.5
Owned free and clear	14.1	3.4	20.5	9.4	20.0	14.1
Rented	53.3	41.4	46.2	52.8	40.0	49.8
Occupied without payment of rent	4.4	3.4	2.6	1.9	10.0	3.6
Car access						
All or nearly all the time	67.4	86.2	90.5	84.0	57.1	77.7
Sometimes	22.0	6.9	6.8	10.0	28.6	14.7
No	10.6	6.9	2.7	6.0	14.3	7.5
Farthest distance willing to travel						
Up to a mile	21.2	13.8	6.4	28.0	11.1	17.4
Up to three miles	28.8	41.4	12.8	14.0	22.2	23.2
Up to eight miles	27.3	10.3	29.5	12.0	33.3	23.8
Eight miles or more	22.7	34.5	47.4	46.0	33.3	34.6
Other	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.0	1.0
Family income last year						
Less than \$5,000	16.0	4.2	9.4	7.5	0.0	11.1
\$5,000 to \$9,999	10.0	12.5	15.6	22.5	16.7	14.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999	35.0	25.0	15.6	17.5	16.7	25.2
\$20,000 to \$29,999	13.0	29.2	18.8	20.0	0.0	17.1
\$30,000 to \$39,999	8.0	4.2	20.3	12.5	16.7	12.0
\$40,000 to \$49,999	9.0	20.8	7.8	5.0	16.7	9.4
\$50,000 or more	9.0	4.2	12.5	15.0	33.3	11.1

Notes: Some results needed to be suppressed to preserve respondent confidentiality. As a result, not all column totals add to 100%.

The most significant characteristics of Detroit students in the **middle school grades 6-8** in our sample include that students attending:

- **Assigned Detroit Public Schools** are distinctive in that their respondent parent is more likely than other Detroit parents to have less than a high school education and less likely to have a 4-year college degree; their parents are slightly less likely to be employed full-

time; they are less likely to have been at the same residence for more than five years; they are less likely to have regular access to a car and only half of their parents would drive over 3 miles to school; and they are somewhat less likely to report income above \$30,000/year;

- **DPS Magnet schools** are distinctive in that their respondent parents are 63% African American and 30% Latino; they report zero unemployment; with the exception of private school families they have more households earning over \$40,000/year; and they are more likely than other middle school families to own their home.
- **Public charter schools** also differ from middle schoolers attending other types of schools in that they are more likely to be African American and less likely to be Latino; less than 15% of their parents report having less than a complete high school education and over 11% say they obtained a 4-year college degree; their parents are more likely employed full-time and less likely employed part-time; their household is slightly more likely to be headed by a single mother; over half of them have lived at their current address for more than 5 years; over 97% of parents report access to a car, and 47% of them said they would be willing to drive their child 8 miles or more to and from school each day;
- **Public schools outside of Detroit** are distinctive in that over 11% of them have parents who are neither African American nor Latino; they are somewhat older; their parents are somewhat less likely to report less than a high school education; only 39% of their parents report being employed full-time (the lowest percentage among any group in the study; nearly all of them have lived in their current residence for a year or more); 46% of parents would drive over 8 miles to school; and their parents are less likely than any other category of middle school parents to report annual household income below \$5,000 and more likely than any other group to report income above \$50,000;

Table 6. Characteristics of Survey Respondents by Type of School Child is Attending – High School Students

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
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Respondent race

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
Black/African American	91.5	85.3	89.2	81.2	88.2	89.0
Hispanic/Latino	3.9	2.9	10.8	4.7	11.8	5.1
Other (including white)	4.6	11.8	0.0	14.1	0.0	5.9
Child age						
13 or 14	13.2	23.5	18.2	13.8	17.6	14.8
15	19.0	35.3	31.8	17.2	17.6	21.4
16	27.1	17.6	21.2	27.6	47.1	26.4
17	28.4	14.7	19.7	31.0	17.6	26.4
18 or older	12.3	8.8	9.1	10.3	0.0	10.9
Highest grade completed, any adult						
Up to 8th Grade	1.0	--	--	--	--	1.4
9th to 11th Grade	6.3	--	4.6	3.5	--	5.2
12th Grade but no diploma	3.6	--	10.8	7.1	--	4.8
High School Equivalent or GED	14.2	8.8	6.2	10.6	--	11.9
High School Diploma	19.5	20.6	15.4	22.4	23.5	19.6
Voc/Tech Program, but no Diploma	2.6	--	--	--	--	1.8
Voc/Tech Program, Degree	6.9	8.8	7.7	7.1	--	6.9
Some College, No Degree	20.5	11.8	24.6	20.0	--	19.8
Associate's Degree	17.5	26.5	12.3	14.1	17.6	16.9
Bachelor's Degree	5.6	--	10.8	10.6	23.5	7.7
Graduate School, Did not Complete	--	--	--	--	--	1.0
Master's Degree	1.7	8.8	--	--	--	2.6
Doctorate or Advanced Professional Degree	--	--	--	--	--	--
Respondent current employment status						
Employed 35 hours or more	43.9	55.9	46.9	47.6	53.3	46.0
Employed less than 35 hours	15.8	14.7	10.9	9.8	0.0	13.7
Self-employed	8.6	14.7	7.8	11.0	6.7	9.2
Not employed, available for work	5.3	2.9	6.3	6.1	6.7	5.4
Unavailable (including disability)	13.2	2.9	15.6	17.1	20.0	13.7
Retired	9.6	2.9	10.9	4.9	13.3	8.6
Student	3.6	5.9	1.6	3.7	0.0	3.4
Household description						
Two parents	29.7	39.4	35.9	44.0	52.9	34.3
Single mother	47.1	18.2	40.6	27.4	29.4	40.5
Single father	8.8	15.2	10.9	14.3	5.9	10.3
Grandparent(s) only	5.2	9.1	1.6	8.3	5.9	5.6
Grandparent(s) and one or two parents	3.6	6.1	7.8	2.4	5.9	4.2
Other	5.6	12.1	3.1	3.6	0.0	5.2
Time at current address						
Less than six months	2.7	0.0	3.1	3.5	0.0	2.6
Six months to a year	5.3	6.5	6.3	3.5	6.3	5.2
A year to three years	21.7	22.6	15.6	20.0	18.8	20.6
Three years to five years	32.7	19.4	29.7	20.0	31.3	29.2
Five years or more	37.7	51.6	45.3	52.9	43.8	42.3

Item	DPS %	Magnet %	Charter %	TPS Non- Detroit %	Private or Home %	Total %
House type						
Owned with mortgage	26.0	62.5	38.7	41.2	43.8	33.1
Owned free and clear	14.8	15.6	11.3	21.2	18.8	15.6
Rented	57.2	21.9	50.0	35.3	37.5	49.7
Occupied without payment of rent	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	1.6
Car access						
All or nearly all the time	80.2	93.3	85.7	86.4	87.5	83.0
Sometimes	11.4	3.3	4.8	9.9	12.5	9.8
No	8.4	3.3	9.5	3.7	0.0	7.2
Farthest distance willing to travel						
Up to a mile	19.6	0.0	11.3	6.1	12.5	14.6
Up to three miles	35.7	18.8	19.4	15.9	18.8	28.4
Up to eight miles	28.2	34.4	19.4	14.6	18.8	24.8
Eight miles or more	16.1	46.9	46.8	63.4	50.0	31.6
Family income last year						
Less than \$5,000	10.4	0.0	7.8	8.8	18.8	9.5
\$5,000 to \$9,999	18.0	5.0	9.8	13.2	25.0	15.6
\$10,000 to \$19,999	27.5	15.0	21.6	11.8	6.3	22.3
\$20,000 to \$29,999	15.3	15.0	13.7	20.6	12.5	15.9
\$30,000 to \$39,999	10.8	10.0	17.6	11.8	12.5	11.9
\$40,000 to \$49,999	9.9	25.0	13.7	17.6	0.0	12.2
\$50,000 or more	8.1	30.0	15.7	16.2	25.0	12.5

Notes: Some results needed to be suppressed to preserve respondent confidentiality. As a result, not all column totals add to 100%.

The most significant characteristics of Detroit students in the **high school grades 9-12** in our sample include that students attending:

- **Assigned DPS schools** are slightly less likely than the norm to live in a two-parent family; their residence is more likely to be rented; their parents report being less willing to drive long distances to school; and they are somewhat less likely to have parents with annual incomes above \$30,000;
- **Public magnet schools** disproportionately are of an “other” race (12%);⁵ have parents who are more highly educated than the norm and more likely to be employed full-time or self-employed; are less likely to live in a household headed by a single mother (18%); are

⁵ Note that “other race” includes 34 magnet school students, which includes 2 white students.

less likely to live in a rented residence (22%); and have more affluent families than the typical high school student in Detroit;

- **Public charter schools** (which enroll a disproportionately small high school population) are more likely to be Latino, which is not the case at the elementary and middle school levels; nearly 11% of their parents have a bachelor's degree; 91% of their parents report having at least some access to a car (the smallest percentage among high school groups); only 8% of their families have annual incomes below \$5,000, while nearly 16% of them have incomes above \$50,000;
- **Public schools outside of the city** are the least likely to be African American (81%) and the most likely to be of an "other" non-Latino ethnicity (13%); more likely to live in a two-parent family or with a single father and less likely to live with a single mother; more likely than any other high school group (53%) to have lived at their current residence for 5 years or more; less likely to live in a rented residence (35%); over 63% of their parents said they would drive 8 miles or more to and from school and presumably some of them do; and 16% of them live in households with annual incomes above \$50,000;
- **Private or home schools** have relatively advantaged backgrounds similar to those of public magnet school students but with a few distinctive characteristics, including that over 23% of them live with parents who have a 4-year college degree; 53% of them live in a two-parent family (the highest percentage of any group in the study); half of them have parents who say they would drive 8 miles or more to and from school; and, surprisingly, 19% of them live in a house with annual income below \$5,000, while 25% have household incomes above \$50,000.

C. When and How do Families Shop for Schools?

Many important questions surround the issues of if, when, and how Detroit families choose a school. The respondents to our survey provided crucial information about the seasonal nature and decision process involved in their school choices (Table 7). Overall, the last time one of their children changed schools, 58% of respondents said that the mother was most involved in the

decision, while 21% said the father most influenced the change. At the high school level, nearly 12% of parents said their children were the driving force behind selecting schools.

What sources of guidance did decision makers access when looking for a new school? Almost 63% said that they spoke with other parents about the change; 51% said they considered school performance; 39% reported attending a school fair; and 32% said they obtained information from some other source such as a website or school guide.

About 29% of our respondents reported never really thinking about finding a different school for their child. Nearly half of them, representing over 70% of all parents who think about it, said that their thoughts turn to schooling alternatives most frequently between May and August. Only 10 percent reported getting a jump on school shopping between January and April, and just 12 percent said they are most likely to look for educational alternatives from September to December. Finally, nearly 17 percent of parents said they enroll their children in more than one school at a time.

Table 7. Family Shopping Experiences by Grade-Level of Any Student in Their Family

Item	Pre K-5	6-8	9-12	Total
	%	%	%	%
Transfer decision maker				
Mother	59.6	61.2	55.2	58.4
Father	21.7	20.3	21.2	21.2
Other family member	11.2	9.5	9.8	10.3
Child	4.3	6.4	11.7	7.5
Staff of previous school	3.2	2.6	2.1	2.7
Considered school performance when transferring				
Yes	46.5	55.0	53.4	50.9
Spoke with other parents when transferring				
Yes	63.5	67.6	58.2	62.6
Attended school fairs when transferring				
Yes	35.7	43.5	41.0	39.3
Obtained info from other source				

Yes	31.2	33.2	32.3	32.0
When think about enrolling in other schools				
January/February	5.1	9.1	6.3	6.4
March/April	3.4	2.8	3.8	3.4
May/June	24.8	23.0	20.5	22.9
July/August	25.1	28.2	25.3	25.8
September/October	7.3	10.7	13.3	10.1
November/December	2.4	3.2	1.5	2.3
Never	31.9	23.0	29.5	29.1
Number of schools typically registered with				
Only one	77.4	71.5	72.5	74.3
More than one, make decision later	15.2	20.4	17.4	17.1
Not sure	7.5	8.1	10.2	8.6

The school shopping experience of Detroit families varies somewhat based on their children's level of schooling. Specifically:

- **Elementary school** students are least likely to have influenced a school-transfer decision (4% compared to 6% for middle and 12% for high school), also least likely to have school performance considered when transferring (47% compared to 55% for middle and 53% for high school); least likely to have a parent who attended a school fair (36% compared to nearly 43% for middle and 41% for high school); and least likely to have been registered at multiple schools (15% compared to 20% for middle and 17% for high school);
- **Middle school** families are most likely to have had a parent who accessed a parent network (68% compared to 64% for elementary and 58% for high school); most likely to have thought about schools early in the calendar (12% compared to less than 9% for elementary and 10% for high school); and most likely to be registered for multiple schools (over 20% compared to 15% for elementary and 17% for high school);
- **High school** students are more likely to have been the primary decision maker regarding choosing schools (12% compared to 6% for middle and 4% for elementary) and least likely to have received guidance from a parent network (58% compared to 68% for middle and 64% for elementary).

Nearly 11% of survey respondents said that they were “currently looking for a new school for a child” when we interviewed them in May or June of 2011. Given the timing of our interviews, the parents almost certainly were seeking new schools for their child in the coming fall, meaning schools for 6th grade for a child currently in 5th. Based on their responses, Detroit families appear to be more likely to shop for alternatives to an assigned DPS school when their children are transitioning to certain specific grades (Table 8). Parents were much more likely to say they were shopping for schools if they had a child completing one of the capstone grades PreK-K, 5th, or 8th. Parents were also more likely to say they were shopping for a new school if they had a child in 1st or 9th grade. Parents were least likely to be shopping for schools if they had a child in 7th or 11th grade.

Table 8. Currently Shopping for a School, Any Student in Specific Grades

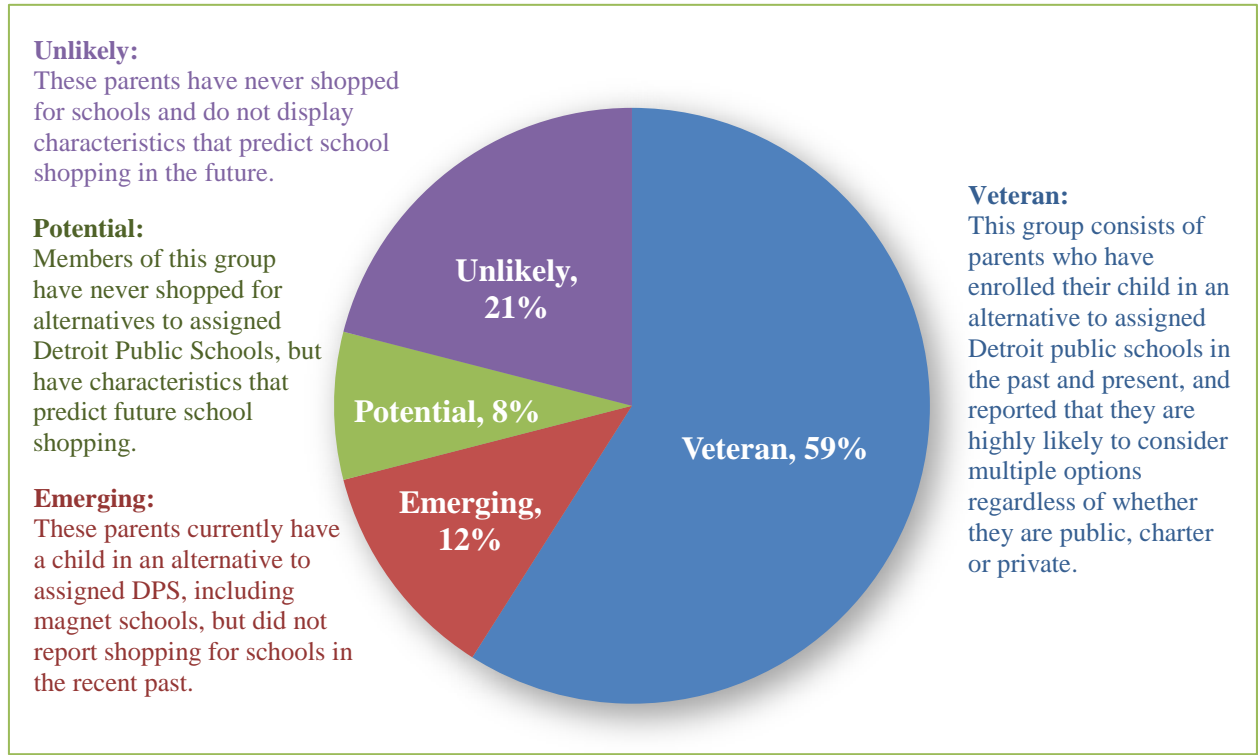
Any Child in Grade...	Currently Seeking New School
	%
PreK-K	30.0
1	16.3
2	9.8
3	10.5
4	9.0
5	14.9
6	10.0
7	5.9
8	16.4
9	13.8
10	11.1
11	5.6
12	8.3
Average	10.7

1C. FOUR TYPES OF DETROIT SCHOOL SHOPPERS

Based on our data, 71% of Detroit families have shopped for a school while 29% have not. Using information from the survey, we placed each family into one of four shopper categories

based on whether they were “**Veteran**,” “**Emerging**,” “**Potential**,” or “**Unlikely**” school shoppers (Exhibit 1). Veteran and Emerging shoppers have shopped for alternatives to assigned public schools for their children. Veteran shoppers, based on survey information, have more experience with school shopping, while Emerging shoppers, again based on their survey responses, are relatively new to the school shopping scene. Potential and Unlikely shoppers have, to the best of our knowledge, never shopped for schools. Potential shoppers have characteristics that predict they are likely to shop in the future, whereas Unlikely shoppers do not.

Exhibit 1. Definitions of the Four Types of School Shoppers



The parent respondents in our sample demonstrated some distinctive characteristics depending on their shopper classification (Appendix C, Tables C1-C7).

Veteran Shoppers comprised 59% of our sample of Detroit families. Veteran shoppers are distinct from other kinds of parents in that these more experienced school shoppers are more likely to:

- Be Latino (12% compared to 5% for Emerging, 1% for Potential, and 5% for Unlikely); in a two-parent household (39% compared to 34% for Emerging, 21% for Potential, and 26% for Unlikely); with annual income above \$50,000 (13% compared to 5% for Emerging, 7% for Potential and for Unlikely); and have a college degree (13% compared to 8% for Emerging and for Potential, 4% for Unlikely);
- List school performance as the single most important school feature (42% compared to 35% for Emerging, 40% for Potential, and 28% for Unlikely) and say they consider school performance when deciding whether to transfer their child to a new school (57% compared to 46% for Emerging, 43% for Potential, and 32% for Unlikely);
- Say they would consider various types of schools for their child in the future, including public magnet, public charter, non-DPS public, and private schools;
- Engage in an extensive school search involving speaking with other parents about schools (66% compared to 62% for Emerging, 52% for Potential, and 51% for Unlikely) and attending school fairs (42% compared to 38% for Emerging, 32% for Potential, and 30% for Unlikely);
- Report being very satisfied with their child's school (39% compared to 36% for Emerging, 17% for Potential, and 28% for Unlikely).

Emerging Shoppers comprised 12% of our sample of Detroit families. They are distinct from other types of parents in that they are:

- More likely to be male (30% compared to 23% for Veteran, 26% for Potential, and 28% for Unlikely); have lived in their current residence for less than 5 years (74% compared to 55% for Veteran, 67% for Potential, and 65% for Unlikely); and neither have a very low nor a very high household income;
- Least likely to say that a school should primarily prepare a child for work (only 1% compared to 4% for Veteran, 9% for Emerging, and 4% for Unlikely);
- More likely to be enrolling their children in public schools outside Detroit (41% compared to 19% for Veteran and 0% for Potential and Unlikely);

- Signal some uncertainty about future school shopping, as they rate at or below the sample average regarding their future interest in each of the alternatives to Detroit Public Schools;
- Likely to engage in a thorough school search and likely to report being very satisfied with the child's school (second only to Veteran shoppers for both).

Potential Shoppers comprised just 8% of our sample of Detroit families. They have never shopped for alternatives to assigned DPS schools in the past but have characteristics that predict future school shopping such as being “very likely” to consider various alternatives to assigned DPS schools; have shopped for student tutors in the past; or are “very dissatisfied” with their child's current school. In fact, after classifying the Potential shoppers in our data, we determined that 28% of them currently are shopping for schools, confirming the predictive power of our Potential shopper criteria. Potential shoppers are distinct from other parents in that they are:

- More likely to be African American (95% compared to 81% for Veteran, 87% for Emerging, and 91% for Unlikely); under age 24 (11% compared to 5% for Veteran and Emerging and 6% for Unlikely); a single mother (53% compared to 38% for Veteran, 44% for Emerging, and 43% for Unlikely); and report an annual household income below \$5,000 (21% compared to 12% for Veteran, 4% for Emerging, and 8% for Unlikely);
- Less likely to have access to a car (80% do compared to 94% for Veteran and 93% for Emerging and Unlikely);
- Second only to Veteran shoppers in saying they are familiar with public charter schools (61% compared to 73% for Veteran, 43% for Emerging and 41% for Unlikely).

Unlikely Shoppers comprised 21% of our sample of Detroit families. Unlikely shoppers have never shopped for schools and do not display characteristics that predict school shopping in the future. These non-shoppers are distinct from other types of parents in that they are:

- More likely to be only willing to drive up to a mile to and from school (32% compared to 16% for Veteran, 22% for Emerging, and 13% for Potential);

- Less likely to list academic performance as the most important feature of a school (28% compared to 42% for Veteran, 35% for Emerging, and 40% for Potential).

The four types of shoppers differ significantly in the extent to which they are very likely to consider certain types of schools in the future (Table 9). A high percentage (46%) of Potential shoppers expressed great interest in magnet schools, higher than the rate for Veteran shoppers (44%) and double the rates for Emerging (22%) and Unlikely (24%) shoppers. Veteran shoppers express future interest in charter schools at a high rate of 46%, more than twice the rates of Emerging and Potential (both 20%) and more than three times the rate of Unlikely shoppers (14%). Veteran and Potential shoppers express great interest in non-DPS public schools and private schools at rates about twice as high as Emerging and Unlikely shoppers. Only small percentages of shoppers of all categories are very likely to consider home schooling.

Table 9: Family “Very Likely” to Consider School Type in Future

School Type	Veteran		Emerging		Potential		Unlikely		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Public Magnet	273	43.8	28	21.7	38	46.3	52	23.5	391	37.1
Charter	284	46.0	26	20.2	16	19.5	30	13.6	356	33.9
Other TPS School	178	28.9	15	11.6	16	20.3	19	8.8	228	22.0
Private School	98	15.8	9	7.0	14	17.5	14	6.4	135	12.8
Home School	20	3.5	4	3.1	4	4.9	2	0.9	30	3.0

A. What Characteristics Parents Value in Schools

Prior studies of school choice have reported consistently that parents tend to value a mix of academic, safety, convenience, religion, and social network factors regarding the schools their children attend. Consistent with previous studies, academic performance, the academic program, and safety/discipline are the three school characteristics mentioned most often as among the top three concerns of parents with elementary school students (Table 10). A convenient location and extracurricular activities are among the next tier of important school characteristics, followed by school/class size and transportation. The remaining school features, grouped into the “Other” category – including “family or friends attended,” “recommended by others,” and “religion” –

register no more than a trivial number of responses even across all of the shopper classifications, suggesting that religion and social networks are not as influential in choosing schools in Detroit than in other U.S. cities.

Table 10: What Do They Look for in a School? Any Child in PK-5

Item	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
School characteristics named among “Top 3”					
Academic performance	58.6	58.3	42.4	44.8	54.9
Safety and discipline	48.6	59.7	72.7	51.7	52.6
Academic program	41.0	50.0	48.5	48.3	44.3
Convenient location	39.2	30.6	36.4	41.4	38.1
Extra-curricular activities	32.7	31.9	24.2	29.9	31.5
School and class size	24.5	18.1	36.4	14.9	22.6
Transportation	12.9	11.1	21.2	19.5	14.5
Other	35.3	38.9	18.2	36.8	34.9
School characteristics named most important					
Academic performance	38.7	33.3	39.4	22.4	35.2
Safety and discipline	16.1	18.7	15.2	18.8	16.9
Academic program	15.8	18.7	15.2	16.5	16.3
Convenient location	12.9	8.0	6.1	16.5	12.3
Extra-curricular activities	3.5	6.7	6.1	5.9	4.6
School and class size	5.5	9.3	6.1	3.5	5.8
Transportation	1.6	0.0	6.1	9.4	3.0
Other	5.8	5.3	6.1	7.1	6.0
School factors that will most likely help my child succeed					
None: Children are doing their best	12.9	6.7	6.1	12.3	11.4
Better quality teachers	16.3	20.9	20.2	18.0	17.5
Better quality school	13.6	21.5	21.1	19.0	16.2
Extra tutoring	11.7	16.0	14.0	12.3	12.5
Smaller class sizes	12.4	8.6	7.0	7.6	10.6
After school/extracurricular program	7.3	9.2	7.0	11.8	8.3
Improved discipline	7.7	6.7	11.4	7.1	7.8
Better school facilities	9.3	4.9	6.1	4.7	7.7
Language assistance	6.3	2.5	2.6	4.3	5.1
Other	2.6	3.1	4.4	2.8	2.8
Prefer school that prepares child for...					

For work	2.6	0.0	0.0	4.4	2.3
For college	24.0	26.6	23.1	17.6	23.1
Combination of both	70.4	73.4	76.9	75.8	72.5

Several specific results stand out for the parents of **elementary school students**:

- Veteran and Emerging shoppers are more likely to list “academic performance” as a top 3 concern (both around 58%) than are Potential (42%) and Unlikely (45%) shoppers;
- Potential shoppers are far more concerned about school/class size than are other types of school shoppers (36% rated it among the top 3, compared to 25% for Veteran, 18% for Emerging, and 15% for Unlikely);
- Both Potential and Unlikely shoppers are more concerned about transportation (around 20% rated it in the top 3) than are Veteran and Emerging shoppers (less than 13% rated it in the top 3).

When elementary school parents are asked to focus on the one most important factor in a school, academic and safety concerns remain paramount, though academic performance specifically stands out. The only change in the ordering of responses from “among the top 3” to “most important” is extracurricular activities, which falls below school and class size when parents are asked about the single most important factor in a school.

What change in the schools would likely help more children succeed? Over 11% of parents say that no change would improve outcomes – the children are doing as well as possible now. Better quality teachers and a better quality school are cited by about one-sixth of parents as a necessary improvement. Almost 13% of parents list extra tutoring, and nearly 11% say smaller class sizes would most help students succeed.

Across the shopper categories there are interesting response patterns regarding what additional factors students need to succeed. Specifically:

- Veteran and Unlikely shoppers are much more likely to say their children currently have all they need to succeed (over 12%) compared with Emerging and Potential shoppers (less than 7%);
- Veteran shoppers are less likely to say that better school quality is needed (14% compared to 22% for Emerging, 21% for Potential, and 19% for Unlikely) and more likely to request smaller class sizes or better facilities than other types of shoppers;
- Elementary school parents of all shopping types overwhelmingly think that schools have dual responsibilities to prepare students for both college and the workforce.

Very similar patterns held when the **parents of middle school students** provided answers to these same questions about what they seek and students require in a school (Table 11).

Table 11: What Do They Look for in a School? Any Child in 6-8

Item	Veteran	Emerging	Potential	Unlikely	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
School characteristics named among “Top 3”					
Academic performance	60.6	41.4	52.9	48.6	56.2
Safety and discipline	49.1	55.2	64.7	62.2	52.7
Academic program	47.4	55.2	58.8	56.8	50.4
Convenient location	32.0	51.7	29.4	45.9	36.0
Extra-curricular activities	33.1	27.6	17.6	18.9	29.5
School and class size	21.7	10.3	29.4	16.2	20.2
Transportation	12.0	13.8	23.5	16.2	13.6
Other	34.9	37.9	17.6	29.7	33.3
School characteristics named most important					
Academic performance	38.4	27.8	29.4	28.6	35.3
Safety and discipline	13.7	13.9	5.9	14.3	13.3
Academic program	18.4	19.4	23.5	28.6	20.1
Convenient location	10.5	16.7	5.9	5.7	10.4
Extra-curricular activities	4.2	5.6	5.9	2.9	4.3
School and class size	6.3	8.3	11.8	5.7	6.8
Transportation	2.1	5.6	5.9	5.7	3.2
Other	6.3	2.8	11.8	8.6	6.5
School factors that will most likely help my child succeed					
None: Children are doing their best	11.1	7.1	1.3	11.6	9.7

Better quality teachers	17.1	17.9	17.5	15.1	17.0
Better quality school	14.5	16.7	16.3	14.0	14.9
Extra tutoring	10.9	21.4	12.5	16.3	12.9
Smaller class sizes	11.7	7.1	10.0	12.8	11.2
After school/extracurricular program	7.6	14.3	8.8	12.8	9.0
Improved discipline	9.3	8.3	13.8	8.1	9.6
Better school facilities	9.7	4.8	7.5	4.7	8.4
Language assistance	5.6	0.0	6.3	2.3	4.6
Other	2.4	2.4	6.3	2.3	2.8
Prefer school that prepares child for...					
For work	3.4	0.0	5.6	2.8	3.0
For college	26.7	24.3	11.1	16.7	24.0
Combination of both	68.2	75.7	83.3	80.6	71.9

Specifically:

- Academic performance, safety and discipline, and the academic program again are most commonly listed among “the top 3” features of a school, followed by a convenient location, extracurricular activities, school/class size, and transportation;
- Academic performance stands out as “the single most important factor;”
- Potential and Unlikely shoppers are focused somewhat more on safety and transportation concerns than are Veteran and Emerging shoppers;
- Emerging shoppers are more interested in a convenient school location (52% listed it in their top 3) compared to Veteran (32%), Potential (29%) and Unlikely (46%) shoppers; Emerging shoppers also were much more likely to list a convenient location as their single most important school characteristic;
- Potential shoppers more highly value small school and class sizes (29% list it in the top 3 compared to 22% of Veteran, 10% of Emerging, and 16% of Unlikely);
- Better quality teachers, better schools, and extra tutoring are also the top three school features that parents overall think would help more students succeed;
- Middle school parents of all shopper types overwhelmingly think schools should prepare students for both college and the workforce, though Veteran (27%) and Emerging (24%) shoppers were more likely than Potential (11%) and Unlikely (17%) shoppers to say that college prep should be the sole focus of K-12 education.

Parents of middle school students do differ from elementary school parents somewhat in their responses to these questions. Specifically:

- When parents are asked about the most important feature in a school, as compared with just the top 3, academic program jumps ahead of safety/discipline in the minds of middle school parents;
- Regarding what changes are necessary for children to succeed, Veteran and Unlikely shoppers track closely on many factors except for tutoring and after school/extracurricular activities (higher for Unlikely shoppers), and better school facilities (higher for Veteran shoppers);
- The “what changes are required” response patterns for Emerging and Possible shoppers diverge from each other much more for middle school parents than for elementary parents in the areas of extra tutoring and extracurricular activities (Emerging higher), as well as smaller class sizes, discipline, school facilities, and language assistance (Potential higher).

Finally, the parents of **high school students** are similar to their elementary and middle school peers regarding some views of what they look for in a school, but different regarding others (Table 12).

Table 12: What Do They Look for in a School? Any Child in 9-12

Item	Veteran	Emerging	Potential	Unlikely	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
School characteristics named among “Top 3”					
Academic performance	65.6	56.4	61.8	52.6	61.3
Safety and discipline	50.6	43.6	58.8	47.4	49.9
Academic program	46.9	53.8	32.4	42.3	45.3
Convenient location	29.0	28.2	20.6	48.5	32.8
Extra-curricular activities	36.5	38.5	44.1	36.1	37.2
School and class size	19.1	7.7	23.5	9.3	16.1
Transportation	9.1	23.1	11.8	16.5	12.4
Other	30.7	41.0	41.2	34.0	33.3
School characteristics named most important					

Academic performance	43.8	34.2	43.2	30.2	39.8
Safety and discipline	14.5	10.5	16.2	16.7	14.8
Academic program	13.3	21.1	8.1	10.4	12.9
Convenient location	8.4	10.5	2.7	16.7	10.0
Extra-curricular activities	8.0	7.9	2.7	14.6	9.0
School and class size	6.4	7.9	13.5	0.0	5.7
Transportation	1.6	0.0	5.4	8.3	3.3
Other	4.0	7.9	8.1	3.1	4.5
School factors that will most likely help my child succeed					
None: Children are doing their best	13.4	8.6	4.9	9.3	11.0
Better quality teachers	14.9	17.1	20.4	21.2	17.2
Better quality school	13.4	17.1	22.5	17.4	15.8
Extra tutoring	12.9	20.0	13.4	19.5	14.9
Smaller class sizes	10.2	8.6	9.9	5.1	8.9
After school/extracurricular program	9.2	10.0	7.0	10.6	9.2
Improved discipline	9.8	10.0	9.2	7.2	9.2
Better school facilities	9.5	2.9	5.6	4.7	7.4
Language assistance	3.4	1.4	4.9	2.1	3.2
Other	3.4	4.3	2.1	3.0	3.2
Prefer school that prepares child for...					
For work	4.4	2.4	14.3	3.8	5.0
For college	26.8	22.0	19.0	19.0	23.7
Combination of both	67.2	75.6	66.7	77.1	70.3

The similarities include:

- Academic performance, safety/discipline, and academic program are the most commonly mentioned “top three” school features with academic performance as clearly the most commonly listed number one characteristic;
- Potential shoppers are focused somewhat more on safety concerns (59% in their top 3) than are Veteran (51%), Emerging (44%), and Unlikely (47%);
- Potential shoppers more highly value small school and class sizes (24% rate in top three compared with 19% of Veteran, 8% for Emerging, and 9% for Potential);
- Better quality teachers, better schools, and extra tutoring also are the top three school features that parents overall think would help more students succeed;

- High school parents of all shopper types overwhelmingly think schools should prepare students for both college and the workforce.

High school parents distinguish themselves from their peers at other schooling levels in that:

- Extracurricular activities is the fourth most commonly reported school characteristic in the top 3 (it was fifth for parents of elementary and middle school students) and the fifth most commonly selected single most important feature (it was sixth for elementary and middle), suggesting that high school parents are less likely than elementary or middle school parents to be willing to sacrifice extracurricular activities for school/class size improvements;
- Potential and Unlikely shoppers are somewhat more likely than Veteran and Emerging shoppers to list better quality teachers as needed at the high school level;
- Unlikely shoppers are the least likely to say that smaller class sizes are necessary to help students succeed;
- Potential shoppers with high school students stand out from all other shopper types in that far more of them say that school should primarily prepare children for work (14% compared to 4% for Veteran, 2% for Emerging, and 4% for Unlikely).

In summary, most Detroit parents seek a variety of features in a school with the primary emphasis on academics and secondary emphases on safety/discipline, convenience, or extracurricular activities. Parents appear to view a school's academic program as relatively more important at the middle school level than elementary or high school, and extracurricular activities as relatively more important in high school compared to earlier in a child's education. The Veteran shoppers who comprise 59% of our sample stand out in their emphasis on academic performance. Veteran and Unlikely shoppers are quite similar regarding whether or not they think children already are doing their best in school and what factor would most likely improve student outcomes. Veteran and Unlikely shoppers are the most satisfied with their schools. Veteran shoppers likely are satisfied because they completed successful school searches. It may be that Unlikely shoppers have not shopped for schools *because* they are satisfied. They also

might find their current school convenient or lack information about and the resources necessary to pursue alternatives.

2. FOCUS GROUP CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS: ADDITIONAL DEMAND EVIDENCE FROM DETROIT

In this section, we share the findings from the focus group discussions conducted with parents and students. The purpose of the focus groups was to confirm and clarify some of the findings from the survey and to engage key segments of the general target population in a deeper conversation about their school shopping experiences. Following the preliminary analysis of the survey data, parents who agreed to participate in the focus groups were randomly selected and categorized based on the grade level of their children (K-8 or 9-12), and whether they demonstrated one of three types of school shopping behaviors – “Ever,” “Potential,” or “Unlikely.” Partly as a result of the focus group discussions, we determined that our category of “Ever Shoppers” contained distinctive subgroups of “Veteran” and “Emerging” shoppers, as was discussed in the prior section. At the start of our focus group data collection, however, we grouped the parents into three classifications. “**Ever shoppers**” communicated through the survey that they had chosen alternatives to the neighborhood public schools for one or more of the children presently or in the recent past. “**Potential**” shoppers had chosen a supplemental service provider (e.g., tutor) for a child; responded that they thought about changing schools in the past or planned to in the future; or were simply highly dissatisfied with at least one of their children’s schools. “**Unlikely**” school shoppers reported that they had never selected an alternative to a public school; didn’t expect to in the future; were not very dissatisfied with their children’s public schools; and had not ever shopped for a supplemental service provider. If there were not at least six participants from a specific subgroup per grade strand, we combined participants to create a K-12 group within that shopping classification.

We also convened additional focus groups with Latino parents who were under-represented in the doorstep survey pool of parents, and one group of high school students who reported being actively involved in school shopping. Table 13 summarizes the eight groups of respondents.

In addition to the focus groups, most participants (Groups 1-5 in Table 13) were polled on a short list of closed-ended questions about a variety of issues that could provide further insights

into their shopping experiences. We combined the focus group and polling findings throughout this section to inform our understanding of Detroit school shoppers.

Table 13. Focus Groups by Segments

Group	Segment
1	Unlikely Shoppers K-12
2	Potential Shoppers K-8
3	Potential Shoppers 9-12
4	Ever Shoppers K-8
5	Ever Shoppers 9-12
6	Latino Ever Shoppers K-12
7	Latino Unlikely Shoppers K-12
8	High School Student Ever Shoppers 9-12

In each focus group, the participants were asked a consistent battery of general questions and a second battery that was customized for each subgroup. For example, safety and transportation did not appear to be pressing issues for Ever shopper families. However, the survey findings suggest that these might be major issues for Unlikely shoppers. Thus, the focus groups with these families explored what we called “potential barriers to shopping.” This section summarizes the responses to both the general and specific questions that were discussed during the focus groups, complemented by the polling findings when possible.

The polling responses indicated that all the participants in Groups 1-5 were African-American, with the exception of one Latino mother, and 95% of them were the individuals in their households who make the final decisions about schools. The vast majority of them were the people who completed the doorstep survey. Over two-thirds of the general focus groups (1-5) and all Latino participants were mothers. Half of the Ever shopper parents had children attending DPS, compared to two-thirds of the Potential and Unlikely shopper participants. The remaining parents had children attending public charter schools.

The student focus group included eight young people, seven of whom are currently enrolled in a variety of Detroit high schools and one student who lives in Detroit but attends a suburban high school. All the students reported being very involved in the school shopping experience. Ranging from 9th – 12th grades, these students represented most of the high school options available in Detroit, namely public, magnet, charter and private schools.

A. When and How do Families Shop?

We used the focus groups to better understand how parents define “smart school shoppers.” We polled participants for a response to the question: **“How many schools do you think a smart parent should consider when shopping for schools?”** Ten out of 12 Ever shopper parents said 3 or more, and 25 out of 31 Potential and Unlikely shoppers said 3 or more. However, when later polled on the question, **“How many schools did you last consider for your child?”** over 50% of parents across all groups reported 2 or less schools.

Among these parents, the school search and selection processes take place within a fairly short or three month timeframe overlapping with the summer vacation period. Ever school shoppers were most likely to begin the process early and reported that their search process started at the end of the school year (May/June), and that they made a final decision by August. The Potential and Unlikely shoppers typically began the process around June/July and often made their final decisions shortly before the start of the school year.⁶ Some of the K-8 parents noted, however, that popular schools generally have long waiting lists, and one should start researching pre-K schools when children are as young as two. Although many schools begin marketing and recruiting around January, the evidence suggests that only a very small percentage of parents begin this process before April.

When we explored the ways in which Ever shoppers made school choices, and the information or resources they used, we found that among parents native to or who have lived in Detroit for

⁶ This was consistent with the survey results, which reflected that the vast majority of parents shop between May and August (See Table 5).

an extended period of time, there was a tendency to make school choices largely on the basis of existing knowledge about the reputation of high-achieving schools. For example, one parent noted:

The school my daughter attends has been a traditionally very high achievement school. It's Renaissance High School in Detroit. When I was a child I wasn't able to get into Renaissance and I got into Cass. My brother went to Cass; my little sister went to Renaissance. So, we're very familiar with the schools and the curriculums. So, with the prior knowledge of it that was our aim, you know, for her to get into Renaissance. Also, it is closer to my house than Cass Tech so that was another factor in it.⁷

Another parent added:

I also happen to know several teachers that work there that I went to school with. So, I knew some of the teachers and actually even the principal to be – quality teachers, quality individuals. Like I said, most people in Detroit know there's a few high schools that we all know to be high achievement high schools and this is one of them.⁸

In addition to a school's reputation, several Ever shoppers referenced family, friends and other parents as sources of information and insights about schools. Access to this type of information and support gives Ever shoppers a clear advantage over other groups.

Ever shoppers who are not native or long-term residents of Detroit were more likely to cite school fairs and pamphlets as helpful sources of information. They were also particularly interested in school performance. For example:

⁷ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

⁸ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

*I'm not from Detroit so for me it was strictly academic standards and how well you're going to get to know my child. Are you going to know her better than I know her and are you going to push her when she doesn't want to be pushed?*⁹

When asked to explain what they look for, Ever shopper parents in the K-8 group shared responses ranging from test scores to extracurricular activities. They placed the greatest emphasis on teachers, specifically qualities like dedication, patience and commitment to their children. Unlike the high school parents who acknowledged their children might be receiving an education fundamentally different from the one they received; Ever shopper K-8 parents often cited their experiences as a basis for understanding their child's experience. These parents discussed at length the significance and meaning of homework. One parent shared a comment regarding the level of homework his child received in elementary compared to middle school:

*Elementary – it was pretty good. It was almost on a daily basis. So they would get – for a five-day school week, they would get a packet for Monday through Friday. By the time my son reached middle school – wow. I really was like disciplining. Because I thought he was fibbing about – ‘No homework. No homework. No homework’! Maybe like twice a month, we had homework in the middle school he was attending.*¹⁰

Homework gives parents a familiar yardstick to measure their children's progress and development, something they do not seem to receive from student grades or test scores.

In general, both Ever shopper groups of parents sought information from a variety of sources (internet, personal contacts, school visits, websites, pamphlets, etc.) when researching schools, but most of them expressed the view that the information currently available on schools in Detroit is inadequate. One parent offered this as evidence:

⁹ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

¹⁰ Focus group with Ever Shopper K-8 parents, August 2011.

Because when we were looking at charter schools before just for the elementary part of it, MAPSA [Michigan Association of Public School Academies] – which is the charter school organization – they put out this list, but it turns out the list isn't kept up to date, it's not accurate At the time, I was looking for a place [school] that had a really good green space and taught an integrated school curriculum where what you learn in math related to what you learn in history so that you could learn the relationships between things as opposed to just doing math and science. And MAPSA was like "I don't know" – so yeah, you're pretty much on your own.¹¹

As a follow-up to this comment, the focus group facilitator asked the group if they were familiar with “Excellent Schools Detroit,”¹² and several parents noted that they were aware of the report, and they thought it was a good example of the lack of reliable information about schools they feel is very important. For example, one parent provided this critique of Excellent Schools:

Right, but even with those things [Excellent Schools' report] they only base upon certain – you can't get the full scope on everything you want to see in a school. Either it's just the test scores or the graduation rates. But also – it was a concern for me like every other parent, the safety. I would like to see reports where they talk about some of the violence at the school or incidents of that nature. It hasn't been a problem for me but if it was a problem at that school, I would've liked to have known.¹³

This may explain why word-of-mouth between parents and support from family members were frequently reported as important sources of information by some parents.

B. How Do Parents Define Quality or High Performing Schools?

In the summary of the survey findings presented in Section 1, we answered the question: “What do parents look for when they shop?” We used the focus groups to explore this issue more

¹¹ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

¹² A publication about schools prepared by the Skillman Foundation.

¹³ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

deeply. Given the emphasis here on “quality” or “high performing” schools, all the focus group respondents were asked to define or provide examples of quality schools. Our analysis of the focus group’s responses revealed that the definition of quality was generally consistent across all groups of participants, regardless of shopping experiences, grade levels of their children, or ethnic backgrounds. Overall, the characteristics most frequently mentioned when defining quality schools across all groups were:

- A safe and secure environment, with good discipline;
- Active communication with and involvement of parents;
- Good teachers;
- Small class sizes and one-on-one attention to the needs of students;
- High academic standards and performance.

Although test scores were one of the indicators of a quality school mentioned by many participants, especially in the “Unlikely” and “Potential” shoppers groups, several participants – particularly the “Ever” shoppers – were skeptical about the value of this information when assessing quality. They noted that students can be “trained” by schools to pass tests, and the over-emphasis on tests can have a negative impact on student progress more generally.

As an extension of the discussion about quality, all the focus participants were also asked how they determine whether a school is “right” for their child. Here we attempted to make a distinction between a quality school and one that is a good fit for the student.

The characteristics parents reported looking for when searching for the right fit for their children were generally those they referenced when defining quality schools. Among the parents with children in grades K-8, safety and good facilities were the most important and frequently cited reasons. Safety appears to be important for two reasons. Firstly, parents feel most confident in school leaders who can maintain high levels of order and student discipline. However, it appears that some schools administrators believe that the presence of guards, metal detectors and other security measures communicates safety. For parents, this seems to symbolize a loss of control and cause for concern. Secondly, it appears that schools that exist in unsafe

environments prevent teachers and administrators from forming stronger relationships with the surrounding community. One parent noted that:

We need schools that are not afraid to – and, again, with the safety and security thing, maybe somebody with them to accompany – but we need schools that are not afraid to reach out to the community and say, ‘Hey, we’re here. Don’t just sit here and chill, like this Section 8 person over there. But don’t just sit here and believe that this is it. We’re here for you. Take my hand and come check this out.’¹⁴

Academic factors such as test scores, grade point averages, college prep, and class sizes were more important to those with children in grades 9-12. As one parent astutely expressed:

And real briefly, I think that question [about fit] blends in with the first question that you just asked. I believe it’s like the overall performance of that school, and it’s like the principal, teachers, the parents and just the overall performance of making sure that the child gets the academic progress in school. So I believe that those two questions, they blend together.¹⁵

There was one major difference between Ever and Potential compared to Never shopper parents. Ever and Potential shoppers’ definition of fit was determined before or during the school selection process, while Unlikely shoppers did so after the school was selected. A parent who expressed fit as a function of what she learned while school shopping, stated:

I went and toured the school, and I actually sat in on one of the classrooms, and the teachers were patient with the kids. They were doing one-on-one learning. Like it was nice so that’s how I determined for my son to go to the school he goes to now.¹⁶

A parent who did not shop for his child’s current school noted:

¹⁴ Parent focus group with Potential Shopper P-12 parents, August 2011.

¹⁵ Parent focus group with Never Shopper k-12 parents, August 2011.

¹⁶ Parent focus group with Potential Shopper K-8 parents, August 2011.

I think, you know, you have to be interested in a child and what's going on with your child and also have to make sure that the teacher has your child's best interests at heart, because this is the person that's teaching them when you're not. So you have to have some type of rapport, some type of relationship.... The principal – you also have to have a relationship with the principal and let the principal know.¹⁷

Parents who defined fit based on what they knew about a school often provided more specific details about subjects or extracurricular activities their children might like, and the diversity of the student population. Some participants, specifically the Latino parents, welcomed diversity (both racial and economic) as a way of preparing their children for the “real world.”

C. Why Doesn't Dissatisfaction and Underperformance Drive More Parents to Shop for Schools?

The doorstep survey captured parents' satisfaction with the schools their children attended, and that information was used to help understand how it influences shopping behavior. We assumed that parents who were dissatisfied with the schools their children attended would be great candidates for new and alternative school options. Based on the survey findings report in Tables 10-12, there was a clear need to better understand (1) why parents whose children are attending under-performing schools are satisfied with those schools; and (2) why parents who are dissatisfied with their children's school do not shop for better options. For example, based on the doorstep survey, Potential shoppers were three times more likely than Ever shoppers to be dissatisfied, and none of the Unlikely shoppers reported dissatisfaction. However, all the Never shopper parents who completed the survey reported having children enrolled in DPS, and 27.7% of them were very satisfied and none of them reported being very dissatisfied.

The Never and Potential shopper focus groups were used as an opportunity to explore these issues. With regard to under-performing schools, the facilitator asked them: **“We know from the test scores that have been released that most of the Detroit Public Schools are pretty**

¹⁷ Parent focus group with Never Shopper K-12 parents, August 2011.

low, but in our surveys, most of the families who responded, who had their children in [DPS], said that they were satisfied with the schools. Is there something we are missing? Is there something that many [DPS] schools are providing that you see as important and is a source of satisfaction for you?”

The parents were very receptive to this question, but as some parents explained, they struggle with the notion of high performing schools and high student achievement for many other reasons that help to explain why they are reluctant to pursue other school options. For example, one parent explained his personal dilemma with his son becoming a high achiever:

Actually, it was kind of like if I wanted to make my wife happy, I would have to let the kids go to this school, because I wasn't brought up with this kind of stuff. You know, I didn't have these tools in place. And because I didn't have a father, I ignored help from men. You know, I didn't want to hear nothing a man had to say. So I didn't have these type of things, so I was like, 'Oh, that's preppy. He going to be picked on. They're going to tease my son.' You know, they're going to bully him, because he goes to a good school. Because he's passionate about his studies, they're going to call him nerd and dork and pick on him. I'm like, 'I don't know. He should go to Detroit _____. He should go to this school or this. It's rough and he'll have respect.'

One partial explanation was provided during the polling session. Some parents appeared to have an allegiance to public schools, specifically teachers, who might explain in part the reasons why they are unlikely to consider other schools. For example, when asked **“How important is it to you that a union represents teachers?”** two-thirds (23 out 31) of the Potential and Unlikely shoppers who participated in the focus groups said “very important,” compared to only one-third of the Ever shoppers. It appears regardless of school performance, some non-shoppers place a high premium on schools with unionized teachers.

D. What Are the Likely Barriers to Shopping for Some Families?

We assumed that some families might experience resource and other challenges, not captured by the survey, that constrain their shopping behavior. We specifically explored this question with the non-shoppers, namely those who were classified as Potential and Unlikely. The responses they gave suggest there are two general types of non-shoppers:

1. Those who are unhappy with their children's schools but were not aware of or confident in the other options available to them. In particular, some K-8 parents exhibited very low levels of knowledge and understanding about charter schools and their eligibility to apply for them.

My daughter, she'll be a senior when she goes back, twelfth grade. I don't even know where to put her. When she came out of middle school, DPS was going downhill, okay. Put her in there [DPS high school]. She stayed there for three years. They closed on us, so I don't have – I'm like this. I don't know which way to go with public or charter.¹⁸

2. Those who are generally aware of other options and who are not particularly satisfied with their child's current school, but are either very loyal to DPS or face resource constraints that prohibit them from pursuing alternatives. For example:

I would like to keep my child in the Detroit public schools. It's not like I mind traveling, going outside of that, but it starts here with us and once again, to make all the schools a success in the Detroit Public School system, once again, it's about parents interacting with the staff and just making it an overall success with everything that the child needs from A to Z.¹⁹

We knew transportation was one major resource constraint, so we specifically asked these participants how far they would be prepared to travel to send their child to a quality school. The

¹⁸ Parent focus group with Potential Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

¹⁹ Parent focus group with Never Shopper K-12 parents, August 2011.

responses varied depending on whether parents owned or had access to a car. Some participants indicated that there was no limit to the distance they would be willing to travel for a quality school, while most specified distances ranging from 2 miles to upwards of 5 miles.

A considerable number of parents across all non-shopper groups stressed that a good public transportation system is crucial in order to support Detroit's school system. Some participants had concerns about the safety and security of their children (especially those in K-8) on public transport and indicated they would be very reluctant to allow their children to travel by public bus to school.

I have a daughter, like I said she's going to high school this year, but in my area, the school she was going to, she had to catch the bus, then the high schools in that area, she would have to catch the bus, okay? She would have to get on Detroit public buses because they don't provide the transportation. I worry about that because I live, in a, to me, [expletive] area, you got all different kinds of stuff.²⁰

Also, several parents voiced student safety as a deterrent to shopping for schools outside of their neighborhood. It appears that the decline in many Detroit neighborhoods is making it difficult to find a good quality school in a generally safe area, and parents are concerned about their children traveling to and from school. As one parent remarked:

They can have more security, 'cause you know, people's kids get up at 6:00 in the morning, walk to school. They need people guiding them, watching them, because you know, you hear about kids getting snatched coming home and all of that. I think they should have more security in schools.²¹

Clearly, transportation and security are the two major concerns for those Never and Potential shoppers who might be persuaded to consider other school options.

²⁰ Parent focus group with Never Shopper K-12 parents, August 2011.

²¹ Parent focus group with Never Shopper K-12 parents, August 2011.

E. What Resources are Most Helpful When Shopping for Schools?

Assuming that Ever shoppers have the greatest knowledge and experience with the resources that exist in Detroit to help parents find schools and assess them as options for their children, we asked them to identify the most useful resources. There was a general consensus among this group that relatively little objective information is publicly available to assist in this process, and the information they found on charters, in particular, was biased or outdated.

The internet was mentioned as a search tool some parents were interested in using, but it was evident that the availability of school-related information via this source had often failed to meet their needs. Some of the Ever shoppers with high-school age children expressed the desire for an online database with information they could use to compare schools across a range of factors, and links to people they could contact for answers to their questions about specific schools.

Although it was acknowledged that online resources would be useful, many of the parents, especially in the “Potential” shopper groups, stressed the importance of actually visiting schools and ideally sitting in classrooms to observe the teaching. However, some of the more experienced school shoppers had come up against obstacles when attempting to “drop-in” for school visits. It was reported that schools often require an appointment in advance, which some parents find problematic. Though it can be difficult for schools to allow parents to visit at any time, parents desire that schools at least provide more flexibility for visits within specified time ranges or make an administrator available to talk to parents who visit without an appointment.

F. What Makes Latino Parents Different from Other Shoppers?

In most respects, Latino parents are very similar to the general parent population described above, and their school shopping experiences are consistent with the typical Ever and Never shopper. However, there are a few differences that are worth noting here. First, several parents from the general focus groups referenced family, friends and other parents as people who are sometimes consulted for information and feedback about schools. However, among Latino

parents, friends and relatives are the main source of information about schools, and they rely on them heavily to provide support finding the right schools. As one Latino parent commented:

I ask friends, and they say it is a good school, and I send my children there. I rely on the opinions of my family and friends.²²

Also, during the discussion about defining a quality or high performing school, Latino parents emphasized a few characteristics that were different from those cited by other focus group parents:

- Bilingual teachers and bilingual education programs;
- A clean environment with basic supplies such as soap and toilet paper;
- A safe environment both inside the school and in the neighborhoods surrounding them;
- Personal attention to students who are behind academically and need extra support;
- After-school enrichment activities or tutoring;
- Sports and extracurricular activities;
- Support services for parents, like workshops.

Overall, the Latino parents were more likely to express a need for more support services, and they value the services their current schools provide (e.g., English classes, regular communications about issues of interest, and creation of support relevant to parent needs).

The most significant take-away from the Latino focus group discussions, both among the Ever and Unlikely shoppers, is what appears to be the deplorable conditions of some of the schools their children attend, and the poor relationships they have with some school staff members. Evidence was offered in both focus groups about these matters. For example:

Our kids have to bring their own soap and toilet paper to school. It's like inviting someone to your home and saying bring your own food. This is not good for the kids. Where is that money going?²³

²² Parent focus group with Latino Ever Shopper K-12 parents, October 2011.

She overheard a principal yelling at a child that she shouldn't speak Spanish at school. It is important that children speak both languages and can find good jobs because they are bilingual.²⁴

It is important that the teachers care about the kids. One of her children told her that every Friday the teacher says: 'I can't wait to go home.'²⁵

G. What can We Learn from Students about School Shopping?

As part of the original research design, we planned to conduct focus groups with students who lived in households that were classified as “Ever” shoppers. When the high school parents from these households were contacted and invited to participate in the focus groups, we encouraged them to bring their high school age children with them as well. Unfortunately, none of the students accompanied their parents on the day of the focus groups. However, during the parent focus groups, including Potential and Unlikely shoppers, several references were made to the role of students. For example, a parent from the Unlikely shopping group noted:

I personally, I mean, me, I talk to my child about the school. They tell you a lot, whether you want to hear it or not. The kids have a lot to say about the teachers, the teachers' attitudes, the principal, who they go to talk to if they have problems....²⁶

Another parent explained the role of her children in school shopping:

I'm a grandmother and my daughters now have – I have six kids, grand kids in high school and my daughter, they picked their high school because of the activities like the football and music, they have something like that. That was very important to them.²⁷

²³ Parent focus group with Latino Ever Shopper K-12 parents, October 2011.

²⁴ Parent focus group with Latino Never Shopper K-12 parents, October 2011.

²⁵ Parent focus group with Latino Never Shopper K-12 parents, October 2011.

²⁶ Parent focus group with Never Shopper K-12 parents, August 2011.

²⁷ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

These comments reinforced our hunch that some students are as involved in the school decision-making process as their parents, and a closer look at student involvement in school shopping was warranted.

The group of students who were assembled for the focus group reported being very actively involved in selecting the schools they now attend, and they provided a wealth of insights about various aspects of how students think about and participate in the school shopping process.²⁸ Most of the students reported that they decided which high school they would attend the summer before their freshmen year, and a much smaller number (2) decided in the 8th grade. The students who committed in the 8th grade attended middle schools that were direct feeders into a companion high school, but most other students reported considering several high schools before making their final decision.

In all but one of the reported cases, the students made the decision jointly with their parents, or they were allowed to make the final decision based on a short list of options their parents endorsed. The one student who was not involved noted:

*My mom really wanted me to go to this school, but I really didn't. I wanted to go to the school most of my friends are attending, but now I'm glad I'm not.*²⁹

Most other students suggested that the high school they are currently attending was a result of a very thoughtful process between them and their parents. In most cases, it was a compromise between several options.

A few students noted the exceptional support they received from middle school administrators. For example, one student noted the influence of her middle school Vice Principal:

²⁸ We were very fortunate to have gathered a very interactive and articulate group of high school students. Focus groups with this population can be very challenging; peer pressure in particular can make the young unresponsive. In this case, they were very receptive to and open about their educational experiences. These students represented a variety of schools: public (Oak Park High School), public theme (Benjamin Carson High School of Science and Medicine), public charter (Detroit Edison Early College of Excellence), and private (University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Detroit Cristo Ray).

²⁹ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 students, November 2011.

He would schedule all types of events and activities for 8th graders he thought were really serious about high school. He set us up to take the 'Cass, King Renaissance test.' He would arrange shadow activities [essentially allowing middle school students to attend a high school for a day]. He had a big influence on where I now go to school.³⁰

When students were asked what were the most important reasons they and their parents chose the high school they now attend, they frequently mentioned the following factors:

- The “theme” of the school (e.g., an emphasis on medicine or technology);
- Advanced placement courses and programs;
- A college-readiness focus;
- Internships or workplace visits;
- Safety.

Nearly all the students reported receiving high school brochures or other literature in the mail while in the 8th grade. For some, this information was very important to their final decision. Also, several of the students reported that they had attended high school open houses and had found these to be very helpful in their school selection process.

When asked what types of support they and their family would need in order for them to be successful in high school, the main factors cited were after-school tutoring, life and jobs skills programs, and guidance counselors.

The mood of the focus group discussion changed dramatically when the facilitator broached a subject that appeared to be very sensitive to most participants. The students were asked to explain the culture within their high performing schools, and their responses suggest that a serious problem exists among students that may undermine efforts to create schools with a high achievement orientation. Several students who expressed a strong commitment to academic excellence reported that they were feeling negative peer pressure within their school

³⁰ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 students, November 2011.

community, which was causing them discomfort, and in one case fear, about freely expressing their interest in high academic achievement. For instance:

Some students at my school are not as committed as they should be. They could go to a neighborhood high school if this all they want. They have the potential to be good students, but they just chose not to.³¹

Another student added this comment regarding uniforms as an example of some students being unwilling to honor high standards:

Some girls will wear their uniforms with the backs cut out or the sleeves cut on an angle. They just like breaking the rules, and the adults are not better because they just let them do it.³²

Related to this, and though only based on anecdotal evidence, it was reported that in one school, AP classes had been abolished because school administrators felt that these classes were creating divisions among students. The students also indicated that many of their peers were not interested in or committed to the academic mission or theme of their school (e.g., medicine).

It is worth noting that students mentioned the significance of reputation. Several of the high performing high schools were referenced. However, most students agreed that aside from the “hype” that is associated with sports and other extracurricular activities these schools are known for, they appreciate smaller and more theme-focused high schools. As one young lady who is enrolled at a new school stated:

I like being part of building the reputation of my school and helping to set a bar for others to reach.³³

³¹ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 students, November 2011.

³² Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 students, November 2011.

³³ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 students, November 2011.

Overall, the students provided strong evidence for the need to consider them in any communication, marketing and recruiting processes. Students prefer opportunities to visit and experience prospective high schools before making a final decision.

Unlike their parents, students were more likely to share examples of tangible information or experiences that gave them a true feel for a prospective high school. The early exposure helps them to prepare for what often is a new and challenging experience, which their parents may never fully understand, literally and figuratively. The transition to high school can be particularly daunting for students and parents who have no prior exposure to a new school. It seems that the most attractive high school options in Detroit involve technical courses and programs that might exceed the average parents' comprehension. For example, we learned that many of the Latino parents speak very little English compared to their children who are first generation residents of the United States and are fluent in English. One parent put it succinctly:

English language is not a problem for the older kids. For the younger kids, the only thing they know is Spanish, and the transition is very tough for them. They need to know what it is in Spanish and translate it into English. The older kids can help you translate it into English.³⁴

This is analogous to a low-income African American student who is the first person in her family to enter a program or high school that features advanced levels of science, math or engineering. In both cases, the parents need support with the transition as well, and they often must rely on their children to play an active role in the process.

³⁴ Parent focus group with Latino Ever Shopper K-12 parents, October 2011.

3. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report provides education reformers in Detroit with critical demographic and psychographic information about families that can inform strategies to develop new schools and create environments conducive to high performing school shopping.

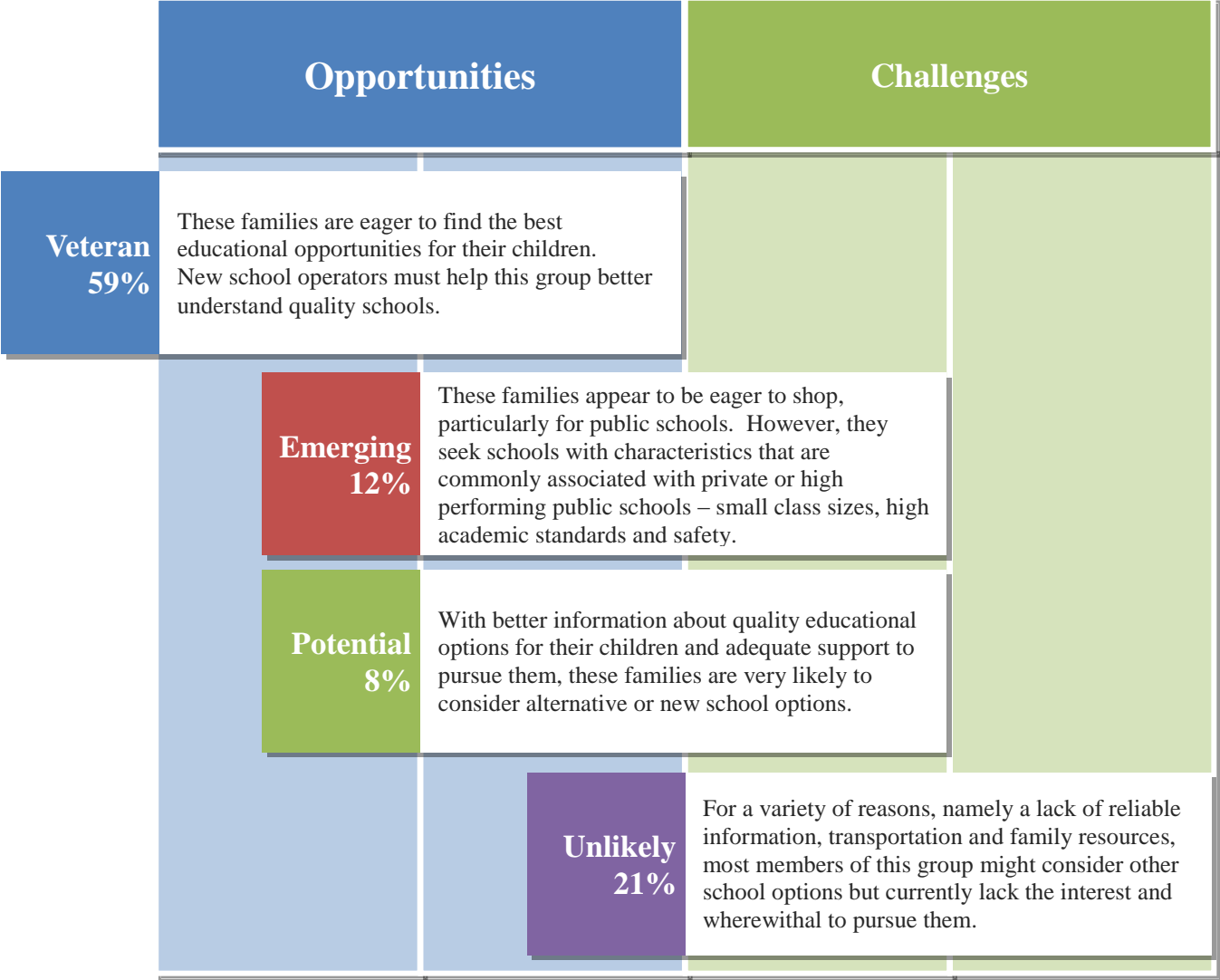
Like many cities across the country, Detroit must quickly transform its K-12 education system into schools that are preparing students for college and a knowledge-based economy. The 35 schools proposed by Michigan Future have the potential to dramatically accelerate this process for Detroit compared to other cities we have closely observed like Baltimore, Milwaukee, Newark and Washington, DC. It is very important to consider how Detroit stakeholders can learn from the examples of other cities. For example, the Newark Charter School Fund (NCSF) was created in 2006 by a group of local and national funders. NCSF was established to invest in the rapid growth and development of charter schools and the non-profit organizations that support them.³⁵ The CEO of the Fund noted that there was no formal information available to them about the specific parents who were more or less interested in alternatives to low performing public schools. This lack of information made it difficult to thoughtfully engage the broader community.³⁶

As noted in Exhibit 2, the findings here suggest that the vast majority of parents in Detroit are relatively aware that new and growing numbers of school options are available to them, and they are eager to shop. We estimate that although approximately 70 percent of Detroit families have shopped for schools, a substantial percentage of them do not necessarily select schools based on high quality or performance. Many families across all shopping categories require better information about quality school options, and other resources or supports necessary to effectively identify and secure placements in good schools. This section highlights those challenges and suggested recommendations for MFS and others interested in better serving all families in Detroit.

³⁵ The Renaissance Schools Fund in Chicago (RSF) is another example of a bold attempt to start new schools based on the need to meet the demands of a knowledge-based economy. For the last six years, RSF has poured enough startup money into new charter schools to triple their number in the Chicago Public Schools system. Earlier this year, it announced a new \$60 million venture fund to add 50 more charter schools.

³⁶ Telephone interview with Mashea Ashton, CEO of the Newark Charter School Fund, Friday, December 2, 2011.

Exhibit 2. School Shopper Opportunities and Challenges



A. How Can School Reformers Best Serve All Families in Detroit?

THE CHALLENGE:

The majority of families in Detroit send their children to assigned public schools, and these schools have two clear advantages that only a network or portfolio of schools, versus a set of independent schools, can overcome. First, the public school system offers parents a clear K-12 pathway. The average parent, particularly those who might be reluctant to consider alternatives to public schools, can see how their children may progress from one set of grades to the next – versus typical charter and private schools which are often standalone and lack clear feeder patterns. Secondly, as we heard repeatedly throughout the interviews and focus groups, new schools must compete with the “reputation” of existing public schools. A school’s reputation, particularly among high schools, appears to be a very potent recruitment strategy. New schools do not have the benefit of a reputation, which is typically born out of the experiences and successes of the alumni. One parent shared what influenced her family’s interest in a Detroit public high school:

I can’t give you a specific percentage – but most of those kids that graduate attend college every year is known. Even this year going to the programs, they’re sending their seniors out for a year to Michigan, for a year to Stanford, Yale, and Providence. I mean, you know the list goes on and on and most of those kids have a shot at scholarships and things of that nature at this particular school. That was – you know, it’s kind of known anyway but that was a big part of our decision to try to get her into this school.³⁷

Even among the parents who were less likely to shop, they emphasized the importance of reputation:

³⁷ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

For me, I guess, with my daughter's school, usually a lot has to do with reputation also. If you talk to certain other parents, other people and ask the people in the area about this particular school or look up the school on the internet – because I live on the internet – so you know, read reviews about the school or whatever, the class size, the teacher, how well your child is learning.³⁸

One parent offered the following suggestion to anyone interested in starting a new school in Detroit:

I guess some of the first things that I would look at would be the academic standards the school would set forth. Like if your child can't maintain a 2.0 or for instance a 2.5, whatever, they can't continue to go to school or some of the rules about their behavior; you know, fighting and things of those natures. If it's not going to be allowed. If I didn't know anything else about a school, those would be two things that I would look....³⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MFS AND NEW SCHOOL OPERATORS:

- ***Market Michigan Future Schools as “network” schools*** – This will signal to parents that all schools in the network share a commitment to high performance.
- ***Create a uniform or standardized admissions process*** – Schools within the network can play an important role in helping all parents by agreeing to a standard set of admissions practices and procedures. At present, parents appear to be deterred by schools that require them to complete multiple applications and provide proof of eligibility each time. This is particularly daunting when families consider two or more schools, and there is tremendous variance in the application forms and the supporting documentation requested by each individual school.
- ***Establish a shared database on all families that express an interest in MFS*** – Schools within the network should share a central database, including information about all

³⁸ Focus group with Never Shopper K-12 parents, August 2011.

³⁹ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

families seeking or applying to MFS (with the parents' permission). Parents could include specific information about their child's current academic interests, career goals, and other information that might help schools identify prospective students who might be interested in their particular theme or program.

- ***The network can provide and share resources many independent schools cannot afford*** – For example, Latino parents will need translators and other technical support to review information and complete the application process, especially if they are applying to multiple schools. Schools in the network can directly refer Spanish speaking and other parents with literacy challenges to a bilingual technical support person.
- ***Directly and aggressively market to students*** – Schools that are interested in enrolling students from the immediate neighborhoods surrounding them, specifically students from the non-shopper categories, must consider more proactive approaches to recruiting students. As we learned from research we conducted in Milwaukee, a competitive shopping environment challenges newer schools to market themselves differently than older schools with strong reputations. “Home visits,” for example, were an effective strategy school representatives used to introduce themselves to parents and prospective students; learn more about the students' interests; share information about the school; and answer any questions the family might have. In addition to being an effective recruiting strategy, this is a great way to build trust and rapport with residents of the surrounding communities.

B. What Information and Other Supports Will Families Need to Successfully For Shop Schools?

THE CHALLENGE:

There is a pressing need for a credible and up-to-date source of information about all school options in and around Detroit. As one parent suggested:

To help most parents, we would need some type of database where you could compare schools when you're shopping for a school and not just based upon the test scores. Because we touched on how those come about. The graduation rate, every now and then – every year in the paper so they put out – well they put out the information they want to put out about the schools, the graduation rates or the test scores. But if there was a database you could look at all these things; it may help some parents.⁴⁰

In addition, many non-shoppers confront multiple barriers to shopping and lack the basic resources to overcome them without additional support. Single mothers without strong support networks, Spanish speakers, and households that rely on public transportation – all are sub-segments of the non-shopping population who need support.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS MFS AND NEW SCHOOL OPERATORS:

- ***Enlist extended family and friends to provide support*** – Based on the survey findings, single women heads of household are in greatest need of support. Limited time and transportation are their two greatest resource constraints. These families will require support from extended family and friends who could be recruited to help them manage some aspects of the school shopping experience. There are distinct needs for marketing and communicating to supporters of this population of parents.
- ***Parents need programmatic supports*** – Parents repeatedly expressed a need for practical assistance to enable them to overcome the barriers involved with sending their children to schools outside the neighborhood. For example, some of the K-8 parents, in particular, noted that before and after school programs (perhaps run by parent volunteers) are just as important as improved transportation. Before and after school programs would allow these parents to successfully commute to and from home, school and their workplace each day without fear that their children would arrive too early for school or would lack safe and constructive experiences after school.

⁴⁰ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

- ***Create or fund an existing non-profit organization to collect and disseminate reliable information about schools*** – There appears to be a pressing need for an independent entity, perhaps an existing non-profit organization, responsible for gathering and reporting reliable information about schools in a user-friendly format. In addition, supports may be needed by some groups (e.g., Latino parents and parents with low levels of literacy) that will help them manage and comprehend the information.

C. How Can School Reformers Better Serve Non-shoppers, Namely Potential and Unlikely Shoppers?

THE CHALLENGE:

In three focus groups, participants said that school problems often begin at home. During a conversation about low performing schools, one parent interjected this comment:

It does have a lot to do with the school, but it's the parents also. It's a relationship. It's 50/50. So while they are really busy trying to find out what's wrong with the Detroit Public Schools or whatever, it's not just the schools too. What's wrong with the family? What's going on in the home?⁴¹

Some of the focus group participants acknowledged that low-income parents like themselves often lack the education necessary to support their children academically or to interact effectively with teachers. A focus group participant acknowledged that parents need more support with all the changes that are taking place in Detroit regarding expanded school options:

And so, as they try to move forward with charter schools and figure out what are the best schools for the system, how do you educate parents? I recommend it to ... [the Superintendent] that they do parenting classes. Nothing patronizing, nothing to demean people, but a lot of times people don't know. So, for instance you're sixteen, how much did you know about

⁴¹ Focus group with Never Shopper parents, August 2011.

parenting at sixteen versus what you know now? And so, you could actually run a parenting class just based on your experiences.⁴²

From a slightly different perspective, another parent explained that he needed help with supporting his daughter with math:

And at this point coming up, you know, her junior year, her twelfth grade year – while in high school, it's easy but when she goes to Wayne State on the weekends and in the summer during the week I can't help her. I mean she's far beyond me now and I can't – she doesn't even bring it in there to me anymore. And I'm by far the math whiz in the house up until now and I can't – my wife always says, she wasn't able to help her four years ago.⁴³

Participants identified a need for classes or workshops to provide parents with the skills and support in areas such as discipline, parent-teacher relations, conflict resolution and students needing academic support. One parent with an elementary school child explained her experience with a “parenting center” at her child’s school, noting it was more valuable than parent classes:

Parenting classes – I mean parenting centers. We just had the room in the school for us parents. We talked about a lot of things. We learned a lot of things; different teachers helped us to learn about stuff that was going on in the school, in the classroom. Things – I even learned a little bit about the computer. I now know that you press the enter [key] and things. I mean, I'm serious! I have learned things right along with my daughter. Okay? And I helped her to learn long division because she didn't know nothing about long division. Well, when I was going to school – it was a long time, nothing you might know about it – it was long division, now you just hit two, three times and you get an answer sitting up in front of you. You do boom and you ain't done no real thinking as far as I'm concerned but I've learned the computer business.⁴⁴

Although the parent’s point here goes beyond the school shopping process, it is relevant to raise awareness about the importance of high performing schools and providing parents with the

⁴² Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

⁴³ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

⁴⁴ Focus group with Ever Shopper 9-12 parents, August 2011.

support they will need to demand, recognize, and select them. Parents with low levels of education are unlikely to feel confident or competent enough to interact with teachers and school administrators, with the goal of getting the information and insight they need to support their children and the school.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MFS AND NEW SCHOOL OPERATORS:

- ***Showcase Veteran shoppers and potentially hire them to act as coaches for other parents*** – Veteran school shoppers should be profiled, particularly if they are single parents, and used as models for other types of shoppers. Awareness about quality schools must be likened to first aid – you learn about it not to save your own life, but someone else’s. Family members and friends must be encouraged to share information about not only the good, but also the bad, aspects of schools.
- ***Encourage parents, particularly households with middle and high school students, to involve their children in the school selection process*** – Students who are allowed to participate in the shopping and selection processes reported being more satisfied with and committed to their schools. Thus, marketing and communication strategies should promote “parent and student” activities. This might include information and tips about “why, when and how to include your child in the school selection process.”
- ***Specific support for Latino parents*** – Latino parents were more likely than other parents to request support with helping them understand school culture and the role of parents in U.S. schools. Many of them are first generation Americans who were not formally educated. They specifically requested workshops and other opportunities to learn about ways they can support the school and their children’s development.
- ***Create a safe environment in and around schools*** – For many parents who are reluctant to consider schools outside their neighborhoods, a safe school environment includes the surrounding area. Several parents, particularly the Latino families, are

most concerned about levels of safety in and out of school, and they see safety as a prerequisite for learning. This significantly constrains the range of school options they will consider, and they report a need to implement measures that will ensure high levels of safety in school and the surrounding neighborhoods in order to promote more effective school shopping among all groups.

D. How Can Non-Shoppers Help School Reformers Measure Success in Detroit?

As we have noted, there appear to be two general categories of non-shoppers – Potential and Unlikely. Potential shoppers will be easier to engage than Unlikely shoppers, and many of the above recommendations will help most of them to move into the shopper category. However, it is worth noting that most non-shopping parents are very satisfied with or loyal to DPS. For a variety of reasons ranging from satisfaction with a high performing magnet or theme schools, loyalty to unionized teachers, and the convenience of neighborhood schools, there are some parents who are unlikely to consider alternative schools in the very near future. This is an important group to monitor because they represent a litmus test for gauging the transformation of the entire education system in and around Detroit. To restate the quote at the beginning of this report: *“The world has changed fundamentally. We either adjust to the changes or we will continue to get poorer compared to the nation...The new path to prosperity is the broad knowledge-based economy.”*⁴⁵ These non-shopper parents need good schools too. Only an improved set of schools, from Detroit’s assigned public schools to DPS magnet schools to existing charters and planned new schools proposed by Michigan Future Schools, will be able to help all students make the transition from a post-industrial to a full-scale, knowledge-based, thriving metropolis.

⁴⁵ See “Michigan’s Transition to a Knowledge-Based Economy: Third Annual Progress Report” – <http://www.michiganfuture.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/MiFuture2010ExeSumFINAL.pdf>.

4. APPENDIX A: DOORSTEP SURVEY WITH RESPONSE FREQUENCIES

All frequencies are at the student level, meaning parent or family characteristics are repeated for multiple school-aged children in that family. Therefore, the percentages presented here will differ slightly from the parent-level percentages provided in some sections of the report. All percentages are based on the set of valid responses, excluding missing data. Rates of missing data are provided for all responses that did not generate a complete set of valid responses.

Child Age	N	%
3	11	0.7
4	37	2.2
5	79	4.7
6	106	6.3
7	135	8.0
8	139	8.2
9	144	8.5
10	125	7.4
11	117	6.9
12	122	7.2
13	116	6.9
14	96	5.7
15	117	6.9
16	142	8.4
17	142	8.4
18 or above	58	3.4
Did not respond	13	0.8

Child Grade	N	%
PK	32	1.9
K	89	5.3
1	121	7.3
2	143	8.6
3	140	8.4
4	125	7.5
5	140	8.4
6	130	7.8
7	108	6.5
8	104	6.3
9	102	6.1
10	134	8.1
11	164	9.9
12	132	7.9
Did not respond	35	2.1

Prefer School That Prepares Child For...	N	%
For work	47	2.8
For college	339	20.0
Combination of both	1,023	60.2
Not sure	17	1.0
Other	8	0.5
Did not respond	265	15.6

Child	N	%
First (oldest) child	1,072	63.1
Second child (in age)	424	25.0
Third child	135	7.9
Fourth child	41	2.4
Fifth child	17	1.0
Sixth or Seventh child	10	0.6

Child Current School Classification	N	%
Traditional public	880	55
Public magnet	83	4.9
Charter	361	22.5
Other TPS district	244	15.2
Private or homeschool	40	2.5
Did not respond	91	5.4

Child in Magnet in Last 5 Years*	N	%
Yes	495	29.1
No	1,204	70.9

* 185 missing values imputed

Child in Charter in Last 5 Years*	N	%
Yes	502	29.5
No	1,197	70.5

* 165 missing values imputed

Child in Private School in Last 5 Years*	N	%
Yes	120	7.1
No	1,579	92.9

* 166 missing values imputed

Child in Other TPS District in Last 5 Years*	N	%
Yes	341	20.1
No	1,358	79.9

* 39 missing values imputed

Child Homeschooled in Last 5 Years*	N	%
Yes	47	2.8
No	1,652	97.2

* 184 missing values imputed

Child in Charter School*	N	%
Yes	409	24.1
No	1,290	75.9

* 91 missing values imputed

Child in Magnet*	N	%
Yes	111	6.5
No	1,588	93.5

* 91 missing values imputed

Child in Private School*	N	%
Yes	54	3.2
No	1,645	96.8

* 91 missing values imputed

Child in Other TPS District*	N	%
Yes	280	16.5
No	1,419	83.5

* 91 missing values imputed

Child Homeschooled*	N	%
Yes	9	0.5
No	1,690	99.5

* 91 missing values imputed

Family Considered School Choice	N	%
Yes	306	20.9
No	1,157	79.1
Did not respond	236	13.89

Tried to Define Public Magnet	N	%
Yes	1,130	66.5
No	569	33.5

Child in Magnet in Last 5 Years	N	%
Yes	406	26.8
No	1,108	73.2
Did not respond	185	10.9

Likely to Consider Magnet in Future	N	%
Very likely	622	37.3
Somewhat likely	378	22.7
Not very likely	230	13.8
Not likely at all	436	26.2
Did not respond	33	1.9

Familiar with Charter School	N	%
Yes	956	63.5
No	550	36.5
Did not respond	193	11.4

Tried to Define Charter School	N	%
Yes	1,044	61.4
No	655	38.6

Child in Charter in Last 5 Years	N	%
Yes	457	42.5
No	1,075	100.0
Did not respond	167	9.8

Likely to Consider Charter in Future	N	%
Very likely	592	35.7
Somewhat likely	346	20.8
Not very likely	244	14.7
Not likely at all	478	28.8
Did not respond	39	2.3

Familiar with Private School	N	%
Yes	927	60.7
No	601	39.3
Did not respond	171	10.1

Tried to Define Private School	N	%
Yes	1,045	61.5
No	654	38.5

Child in Private School in Last 5 Years	N	%
Yes	83	5.4
No	1,450	94.6
Did not respond	166	9.8

Likely to Consider Private School in Future	N	%
Very likely	230	13.8
Somewhat likely	258	15.5
Not very likely	252	15.1
Not likely at all	926	55.6
Did not respond	33	1.9

Child in Other TPS District in Last 5 Years	N	%
Yes	324	19.5
No	1,336	80.5
Did not respond	39	2.3

Likely to Consider Other TPS District in Future	N	%
Very likely	384	23.5
Somewhat likely	266	16.3
Not very likely	221	13.5
Not likely at all	763	46.7
Did not respond	65	3.8

Child Homeschooled in Last 5 Years	N	%
Yes	28	1.8
No	1,487	98.2
Did not respond	184	10.8

Likely to Consider Homeschool in Future	N	%
Very likely	60	3.9
Somewhat likely	132	8.7
Not very likely	95	6.2
Not likely at all	1,238	81.2
Did not respond	174	10.2

Child in School “in Need of Improvement” in Last 5 Years	N	%
Yes	456	30.2
No	1,052	69.8
Did not respond	191	11.24

Family Offered Supplemental Services	N	%
Yes	477	55.0
No	391	45.0
Did not respond	831	48.9

Family Selected Supplemental Services Provider	N	%
No	470	62.7
Yes	280	37.3
Did not respond	949	55.9

Number of Supplemental Service Providers Considered	N	%
One	304	72.6
Two	90	21.5
Three or more	25	6.0
Did not respond	1,280	75.3

Family Shopping Desire	N	%
Currently looking for new school	195	12.9
Likely to be looking for new school in future	361	24.0
Not likely to be looking for new school	950	63.1
Did not respond	193	11.4

Time Since Last Child Transfer	N	%
Less than a month	43	3.1
One month to six months	40	2.9
Six months to one year	175	12.8
One year to two years	372	27.2
Two years to five years	485	35.5
Five or more years	251	18.4
Did not respond	333	19.6

Thought About School Performance When Considered Transfer	N	%
Yes	842	50.7
No	818	49.3
Did not respond	39	2.3

Spoke With Others When Considering Transfer	N	%
Yes	1,053	63.2
No	613	36.8
Did not respond	33	1.9

Attended School Fair When Considering Transfer	N	%
Yes	621	37.4
No	1,039	62.6
Did not respond	39	2.3

Sought Information from Other Source When Considered Transfer	N	%
Yes	522	31.8
No	1,122	68.2
Did not respond	55	3.2

Months When Family Considers Transfer	N	%
January or February	85	5.7
March or April	43	2.9
May or June	347	23.1
July or August	375	25.0
September or October	140	9.3
November or December	35	2.3
Never	475	31.7
Did not respond	199	11.7

Number of Schools Typically Registered With	N	%
Only one	1,131	74.2
More than one, make decision later	254	16.7
Not sure	139	9.1
Did not respond	175	10.3

Satisfaction with School in General	N	%
Very satisfied	571	34.9
Somewhat satisfied	847	51.8
Somewhat dissatisfied	125	7.6
Very dissatisfied	92	5.6
Did not respond	64	3.8

Satisfaction with Teacher Quality	N	%
Very satisfied	572	34.8
Somewhat satisfied	877	53.3
Somewhat dissatisfied	123	7.5
Very dissatisfied	72	4.4
Did not respond	55	3.2

Satisfaction with School Academic Performance	N	%
Very satisfied	623	38.0
Somewhat satisfied	800	48.8
Somewhat dissatisfied	154	9.4
Very dissatisfied	61	3.7
Did not respond	61	3.6

Satisfaction with School Safety	N	%
Very satisfied	602	36.8
Somewhat satisfied	725	44.3
Somewhat dissatisfied	178	10.9
Very dissatisfied	132	8.1
Did not respond	62	3.7

Satisfaction with School-Parent Interactions	N	%
Very satisfied	618	38.1
Somewhat satisfied	750	46.3
Somewhat dissatisfied	164	10.1
Very dissatisfied	88	5.4
Did not respond	79	4.7

Satisfaction with Accommodation of Student Needs	N	%
Very satisfied	571	35.0
Somewhat satisfied	799	49.0
Somewhat dissatisfied	170	10.4
Very dissatisfied	92	5.6
Did not respond	67	3.9

Satisfaction with School Extracurricular Activities	N	%
Very satisfied	573	35.4
Somewhat satisfied	771	47.7
Somewhat dissatisfied	169	10.5
Very dissatisfied	104	6.4
Did not respond	82	4.8

Satisfaction with School Location	N	%
Very satisfied	653	40.5
Somewhat satisfied	743	46.1
Somewhat dissatisfied	139	8.6
Very dissatisfied	77	4.8
Did not respond	87	5.1

Expected Educational Attainment of Oldest Child	N	%
Less than high school diploma	5	0.3
Graduate from high school	147	9.0
Attend two or more years of college	216	13.2
Finish a four year college degree	740	45.1
Earn a graduate or professional degree	533	32.5
Did not respond	58	3.4

Expected Educational Attainment of Youngest Child	N	%
Less than high school diploma	4	0.24
Graduate from high school	84	4.94
Attend two or more years of college	89	5.24
Finish a four year college degree	547	32.2
Earn a graduate or professional degree	408	24.01
Not applicable (if only 1 child)	567	32.84

Survey Respondent Gender	N	%
Male	432	25.9
Female	1,237	74.1
Did not respond	30	1.77

Survey Respondent Age	N	%
18-24	86	5.2
25-31	281	16.9
32-38	612	36.9
39-45	393	23.7
46-52	138	8.3
53 and over	150	9.0
Did not respond	39	2.3

Survey Respondent Race	N	%
White	38	2.3
Black/African American	1,376	82.8
Hispanic/Latino	183	11.0
Other*	64	3.9
Did not respond	38	2.2

* includes Asian, Middle Eastern, Biracial, and Other.

Parent Education	N	%
Up to 8th Grade	30	2.9
9th to 11th Grade	75	7.2
12th Grade but no diploma	54	5.2
High School Equivalent or GED	125	12.0
High School Diploma	184	17.7
Voc/Tech Program, but no Diploma	16	1.5
Voc/Tech Program, Degree	76	7.3
Some College, No Degree	211	20.3
Associate's Degree	158	15.2
Bachelor's Degree	75	7.2
Graduate School, Did not Complete	8	0.8
Master's Degree	20	1.9
Doctorate or Professional Degree	6	0.6
Total	1,038	

Survey Respondent Current Employment Status	N	%
Employed for 35 or more hours per week	741	46.1
Employed for less than 35 hours per week	239	14.9
Self-employed	134	8.3
Not employed and not available for work	78	4.9
Not employed but available for work	219	13.6
Unable to work due to illness or disability	42	2.6
Retired	100	6.2
Student	49	3.0
Other	5	0.3
Did not respond	92	5.4

Household Description	N	%
Two parents	617	37.5
Single mother	628	38.1
Single father	121	7.3
Grandparent(s) only	86	5.2
Grandparent(s) and one or two parents	108	6.6
Other	87	5.3
Did not respond	52	3.1

Time at Current Address	N	%
Less than six months	77	4.7
Six months to a year	91	5.6
A year to three years	389	23.9
Three years to five years	443	27.2
Five years or more	628	38.6
Did not respond	71	4.2

House Type	N	%
Owned with mortgage	482	29.5
Owned free and clear	269	16.5
Rented	842	51.6
Occupied without payment of rent	39	2.4
Did not respond	67	3.9

Car Access	N	%
All or nearly all the time	1,257	79.6
Sometimes	210	13.3
No	112	7.1
Did not respond	120	7.1

Farthest Distance Willing to Travel	N	%
Up to a mile	294	19.0
Up to three miles	422	27.3
Up to eight miles	371	24.0
Eight miles or more	448	28.9
Other	13	0.8
Did not respond	151	8.9

Family Income Last Year	N	%
Less than \$5,000	148	12.2
\$5,000 to \$9,999	186	15.3
\$10,000 to \$19,999	311	25.6
\$20,000 to \$29,999	184	15.1
\$30,000 to \$39,999	131	10.8
\$40,000 to \$49,999	125	10.3
\$50,000 to \$69,999	77	6.3
\$70,000 or more	55	4.5
Did not respond	482	28.37

School Characteristics Named Among "Top 3"	N	%
Academic performance	860	58.5
Academic program	663	45.1
Safety and discipline	756	51.4
Extra-curricular activities	502	34.1
Convenient location	522	35.5
Transportation	186	12.6
School and class size	299	20.3
Other*	493	33.5
Did not respond	228	13.4

* includes "Space available," "Family or friends attended," "Religion," "Cultural," "Recommended by others," "Special student needs," and "Other"

School Characteristics Named Most Important	N	%
Academic performance	581	37.5
Academic program	236	15.2
Safety and discipline	246	15.9
Extra-curricular activities	93	6.0
Convenient location	172	11.1

Transportation	43	2.8
School and class size	96	6.2
Other*	84	5.4
Did not respond	148	8.7

* includes "Space available," "Family or friends attended," "Religion," "Cultural," "Recommended by others," "Special student needs," and "Other"

Multi-child Family	N	%
Yes	1,050	61.8
No	649	38.2

Individuals Involved in Transfer Decision	N	%
Staff of previous school	59	2.7
Mother	1,259	57.5
Father	493	22.5
Child	161	7.3
Other family member or relative	140	6.4
Other legal guardian	35	1.6
Other	44	2.0
Did not respond	98	5.5

School Factors That Will Most Likely Help My Child Succeed	N	%
None: Children are doing their best	447	11.3
Better quality school	614	15.5
Better quality teachers	684	17.3
Extra tutoring	527	13.3
After school/extracurricular program	356	9.0
Improved discipline	334	8.4
Language assistance	172	4.3
Smaller class sizes	405	10.2
Better school facilities	301	7.6
Other	121	3.1
Did not respond	48	2.8

Reasons for Transferring Schools	N	%
Child graduated	586	39.1
Family moved to new area	346	23.1
Dissatisfaction with school in general	176	11.7
Dissatisfaction with child's performance	75	5.0
Dissatisfaction with teachers	61	4.1
Dissatisfaction with discipline	48	3.2
Child expelled	14	0.9
Child unhappy at school	60	4.0
Other public	133	8.9
Did not respond	409	24.1

Reason for Not Transferring Despite Dissatisfaction	N	%
Not aware of better schools	97	16.9
Transportation	93	16.2
No time to look for better schools	52	9.1
Don't want to disrupt child education	209	36.5

Want to keep child with friends/family	42	7.3
Other	80	14.0
Did not respond	1,200	70.63

Survey Respondent Relationship to Children in Household	N	%
Mother	982	58.0
Father	361	21.3
Brother	28	1.7
Sister	40	2.4
Grandmother	136	8.0
Grandfather	40	2.4
Aunt	52	3.1
Uncle	47	2.8
Other	8	0.5
Did not respond	67	3.9

Family Chooser Classification	N	%
Emerging	198	11.7
Possible	123	7.2
Unlikely	297	17.5
Veteran	1,081	63.6

5. APPENDIX B: CLASSIFICATION SCHEME FOR THE SCHOOLS STUDENTS ARE ATTENDING

Parents were asked the name of the school that each of their children attended. Misspellings, abbreviations, and nicknames posed challenges, but we were able to identify the type of school for all but a few dozen respondent students, using public data sources and basic judgment. All “close calls” regarding school classifications were made based on the consensus of multiple project personnel. All schools in the list below were mentioned by at least one parent respondent as a school that one or more of their children were attending.

Table B1: School Classifications

Detroit Public Schools	Detroit Public Schools (continued)
1. A.L. Holmes	33. DPS Foundation for Early Learners at Edmonson
2. Academy of the Americas	34. DPS Foundation for Early Learners at Glazer
3. Amelia Earhart Elementary	35. DPS Foundation for Early Learners at White
4. Bagley Elementary	36. Durfee Elementary
5. Barton Elementary School	37. Earhart Middle School
6. Bennett Elementary	38. Edison Elementary
7. Bethune Academy	39. Edward (Duke) Ellington Conservatory
8. Blackwell	40. Emerson Elementary
9. Bow Elementary	41. Finney High School
10. Brenda Scott Middle School	42. Fisher Magnet Lower Academy
11. Brewer Academy	43. Fisher Magnet Upper Academy
12. Bunche Elementary School	44. Gompers Elementary School
13. Burns Elementary	45. Harms
14. Burton International School	46. Heilmann Elementary School
15. Carleton Elementary	47. Henderson Academy
16. Carstens Elementary	48. Henry Ford Academy
17. Carver Elementary	49. Henry Ford High School
18. Central High School	50. Hutchinson Elementary
19. Chadsey High School	51. John R. King Academy
20. Charles Wright Elementary	52. John Trix Elementary School
21. Clara W. Rutherford Academy	53. Kettering High School
22. Clark Elementary	54. King High School
23. Cody High School	55. Langston Hughes Academy
24. Coleman A. Young Elementary	56. Law Elementary
25. Communication and Media Arts High School	57. Logan Elementary
26. Cooke Elementary	58. Loving Elementary School
27. Cooley High School	59. Ludington Academy
28. Crockett High School	60. Ludington Magnet Middle School
29. Denby	61. Mann Elementary
30. Detroit City High School	62. Mark Twain Elementary School
31. Detroit School of Arts	63. Marquette Elementary School
32. Dixon Elementary	64. Martin Luther King Elementary School

Detroit Public Schools (continued)

65. Mason Elementary
66. Maybury Elementary
67. Mumford High School
68. Murphy Elementary-Middle School
69. Neinas Elementary
70. Nichols Elementary
71. Noble Elementary School
72. Nolan Elementary School
73. Northwestern High School
74. O.W. Holmes Elementary-Middle School
75. Oakman Elementary
76. Osborn High School
77. Osborn Upper School of Global Comm.
78. Parker Elementary
79. Pasteur Elementary
80. Paul Robeson Academy
81. Pershing High School
82. Phoenix Academy
83. Priest
84. Pris
85. Pulaski Elementary School
86. Ralph J. Bunche Academy
87. Renaissance High School
88. Roberto Clemente Academy
89. Ronald Brown Academy
90. Rutherford Elementary School
91. Sampson Academy
92. Schulze Elementary
93. Southeastern High School
94. Southwestern High School
95. Spain Elementary
96. Stewart Elementary
97. Thirkell Elementary
98. Thurgood Marshall Elementary
99. Trix Elementary
100. Vernor Elementary
101. Vetat
102. Wayne Elementary
103. West Side Academy
104. Western International High School
105. William Beckham

Public Magnet

1. Ann Arbor Trail
2. Bates Academy
3. Brace-Lederle K-8 School
4. Brown Academy
5. Cass Technical High School
6. Chrysler Elementary
7. Clippert Academy
8. Detroit School of Arts
9. Frederick Douglass College Preparatory
10. Foreign Language Immersion and Cultural Studies
11. Golightly Education Center
12. International Academy
13. Malcolm X Academy
14. Palmer Park Preparatory Academy
15. Southwestern Academy

Charter

1. ABTE
2. Academy of Lathrup Village
3. Academy of Southfield
4. Academy of Westland
5. Aisha Shulae/ W.E.B. DuBoise Prep. Academy
6. Allen Academy
7. Ben Ross Academy
8. Best Academy
9. Bradford Academy
10. Casa Richard Academy
11. Cesar Chavez Academy Elementary
12. Cesar Chavez High School
13. Chandler Park Academy
14. Cherry Hill
15. Consortium
16. Consortium Prep
17. David Ellis Academy
18. Detroit Edison Public School Academy
19. Detroit Academy of Arts & Sciences
20. Detroit Community Schools - Elementary
21. Detroit Community Schools - High School
22. Detroit Enterprise Elementary
23. Detroit Merit Charter Academy
24. Detroit Premier
25. Detroit Service Learning Academy
26. Dove Academy of Detroit
27. Dr. Charles Drew Academy
28. Dr. Joseph F. Pollack Academic Center
29. Edison Public School Academy
30. Flagship Charter Academy

Charter (Continued)
31. George Crockett Academy
32. George Washington Carver Academy
33. Great Oaks Academy
34. Hamtramck Academy
35. Heart Academy
36. Hope Academy
37. Hope of Detroit Academy
38. Inkster Academy
39. Jemison School of Choice
40. Joy Preparatory Academy
41. Laurus Academy
42. Life Skills Center of Metropolitan Detroit
43. Lincoln King Academy
44. Mae C. Jemison Academy
45. Marvin L. Winans Academy
46. Metro Charter Academy
47. Michigan Health Academy
48. Michigan Technical Academy
49. Nataki Talibah Schoolhouse
50. National Heritage Academy
51. New Beginnings
52. Nsordma Institute
53. Old Redford Academy - Elementary
54. Old Redford Academy - High School
55. Old Redford Academy - Middle School
56. Plymouth Education Center
57. Plymouth Education Center-Youthville Site
58. Reach Academy
59. Regent Park Scholars
60. Riverside Academy
61. Ross/Hill Academy
62. Universal Academy
63. Universal Learning Academy
64. University Preparatory Academy
65. University Preparatory Academy - High School
66. University Preparatory Academy - Middle School
67. University Preparatory Science and Math
68. University YES Academy
69. Voyageur Academy
70. Warrendale Charter Academy
71. West Village Academy
72. Weston Preparatory Academy
73. Woodward Academy
74. YMCA Detroit Service Learning Academy

Other TPS District
1. Barber Focus School
2. Baylor Woodson Elementary
3. Bedford School
4. Blanchette Middle School
5. Bryant Middle
6. Campbell Elementary
7. Canton High School
8. Carson City Elementary School
9. Central Middle School
10. Clinton Middle School
11. Clintondale High School
12. Columbus Middle
13. Cooley Elementary School
14. Crestwood High School
15. East Detroit High School
16. Eureka Heights Elementary
17. Ferndale Alternative High School at Taft School
18. Ferndale High School
19. Ferndale Middle School
20. Fraser High School
21. Garvey Academy
22. George Defer Elementary
23. Hally Magnet School
24. Harper Woods High School
25. Hazel Park High School
26. Heilmann Park Middle School
27. Hilber Middle School
28. Hoben Elementary
29. Hoover School
30. Howe Elementary
31. Hutchins Elementary
32. Inkster Elementary
33. Inkster High School
34. Jefferson Elementary
35. John Glenn High School
36. John Marshall Middle
37. Lake Shore High School
38. Lincoln Elementary
39. Lincoln High
40. Lucile S. Patton Elementary School
41. MacArthur K-8 University Academy
42. Martin Luther King High School
43. McDowell Elementary School
44. McKenney Elementary

Other TPS District (continued)
45. Meek-Milton Elementary School
46. Melvindale High School
47. Monnier Elementary
48. Munger Middle School
45. Meek-Milton Elementary School
49. North Farmington High School
50. Oak Park Elementary
51. Oak Park High School
52. Oak Park Preparatory Academy
53. Oakwood Middle School
54. Pioneer Middle
55. Polk Elementary
56. Redford Union High School
57. River Oaks Elementary
58. River Rouge High School
59. Robichaud High School
60. Robinson Elementary-Middle School
61. Romulus
62. Roseville High School
63. Royal Oak High School
64. Sherrill Elementary
65. Southfield High School
66. Southfield Jr.
67. Southfield Middle
68. Southfield-Lathrup High School

Private School
1. Convent
2. Cornerstone
3. Christian
4. Cristo Rey
5. Dearborn Heights Montessori Center
6. Detroit Waldorf School
7. Eton Academy
8. Heritage Christian Academy
9. Holy Redeemer
10. Loyola High School
11. Mercy High School
12. Olney Friends
13. Palmer Woods Academy
14. Shrine Catholic
15. Southfield Christian
16. St. Peter
17. U of D Jesuit
18. Westside Christian Academy

6. APPENDIX C: SUPPLEMENTAL DESCRIPTIVE TABLES

Table C1: Survey Respondents – Individual Demographics

Respondent Characteristics	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Gender					
Male	23.5	30.8	25.6	27.1	25.3
Female	76.5	69.2	74.4	72.9	74.7
Race					
White	3.2	2.3	0.0	1.8	2.6
Black/African American	81.4	87.1	95.1	91.1	85.2
Hispanic/Latino	11.6	4.5	1.2	5.4	8.6
All other (including biracial)	3.7	6.1	3.7	1.8	3.6
Age					
18-24	4.7	4.5	11.0	5.9	5.4
25-31	16.2	22.0	13.4	17.6	17.0
32-38	32.7	40.9	29.3	36.9	34.3
39-45	25.4	17.4	26.8	20.7	23.5
56-52	9.9	8.3	11.0	9.5	9.7
53 and over	11.2	6.8	8.5	9.5	10.1
Education					
Less than high school	24.9	26.6	30.4	32.7	27.2
At least high school	75.1	73.4	69.6	67.3	72.8
Less than 4-year college	86.8	91.3	92.4	96.0	89.8
At least 4-year college	13.2	8.7	7.6	4.0	10.2
Current employment status					
Employed full or part-time	70.2	74.8	55.6	72.8	70.2
Not employed	26.4	24.4	38.3	24.0	26.6
Student	3.0	0.0	4.9	3.2	2.8
Other	0.3	0.8	1.2	0.0	0.4

Table C2: Survey Respondents – Household Demographics

Respondent Characteristics	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Household description					
Two parents	38.6	34.1	21.0	26.7	34.2
Single mother	38.1	44.2	53.1	42.5	41.0
Single father	6.4	10.9	6.2	9.0	7.5
Grandparent(s) only	5.5	6.2	3.7	7.7	5.9
Grandparent(s) and parents	7.5	0.8	7.4	4.1	5.9
Other	3.9	3.9	8.6	10.0	5.6
Time at current address					
Less than a year	9.0	13.1	14.5	5.5	9.2
A year to three years	18.9	33.8	22.4	29.7	23.3
Three years to five years	27.3	26.2	30.3	29.7	27.9
Five years or more	44.7	26.9	32.9	35.2	39.6
House type					
Owned with mortgage	32.7	28.8	23.5	22.3	29.3

Respondent Characteristics	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Owned free and clear	17.2	9.1	13.6	17.7	16.0
Rented	47.9	61.4	60.5	56.8	52.5
Occupied without payment	2.1	0.8	2.5	3.2	2.2
Family income last year					
Less than \$5,000	12.4	3.8	21.4	8.8	11.2
\$5,000 to \$9,999	12.0	24.0	14.3	18.8	15.1
\$10,000 to \$19,999	22.9	30.8	28.6	36.3	27.1
\$20,000 to \$29,999	16.9	11.5	8.9	13.8	15.0
\$30,000 to \$39,999	11.8	12.5	8.9	10.6	11.4
\$40,000 to \$49,999	10.7	11.5	10.7	5.0	9.7
Over \$50,000	13.3	5.8	7.1	6.9	10.5

Table C3: Survey Respondents – Transportation

Respondent Characteristics	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Car access					
All or nearly all the time	83.0	78.9	60.8	80.2	80.2
Sometimes	11.2	14.1	19.0	12.7	12.5
No	5.8	7.0	20.3	7.1	7.3
Farthest distance willing to travel					
Up to a mile	15.7	21.6	13.2	32.4	19.8
Up to three miles	22.5	25.6	36.8	29.5	25.3
Up to eight miles	25.6	29.6	29.4	27.5	26.7
Eight miles or more	35.3	22.4	19.1	10.6	27.4
Other	1.0	0.8	1.5	0.0	0.8

Table C4: When and How They Shop, by Shopper Classification

Item	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Individuals involved in decision					
Staff of previous school	2.2	1.9	5.2	2.3	2.4
Mother	57.0	62.8	58.3	60.2	58.4
Father	21.5	21.2	19.8	17.8	20.6
Child	9.7	4.5	2.1	6.9	8.0
Other family member or relative	5.8	8.3	6.3	8.1	6.6
Other legal guardian	2.0	0.6	4.2	1.9	2.0
Other	1.8	0.6	4.2	2.7	2.0
Considered school performance					
Yes	57.4	45.5	43.2	31.7	49.4
Spoke with other parents					
Yes	65.9	61.8	51.9	50.7	61.1
Attended school fairs					
Yes	41.5	38.6	32.1	29.5	37.9
Obtained info from other source					
Yes	33.6	36.2	21.8	20.2	30.2
When think about other schools					
January/February	8.0	3.9	10.7	3.3	6.6

Item	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
March/April	3.2	5.5	2.7	4.2	3.7
May/June	22.5	21.1	26.7	21.7	22.4
July/August	21.7	35.9	22.7	29.2	25.4
September/October	10.1	9.4	8.0	9.9	9.8
November/December	1.5	5.5	1.3	1.4	2.0
Never	33.0	18.8	28.0	30.2	30.0
Registered with multiple schools					
Yes	18.5	14.5	28.4	8.1	16.8

Table C5: What Parent Shoppers Are Buying, by Shopper Classification

Child Currently Enrolled in a:	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Charter	29.8	31.6	0.0	0.0	21.2
Home school	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Other public	18.5	41.0	0.0	0.0	15.6
Public magnet	6.5	12.0	0.0	0.0	5.2
Private school	3.8	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.4
Traditional public	41.2	13.7	100.0	100.0	55.6

Table C6: What Parents Look for in a School, by Shopper Classification

Most Important Characteristic	Veteran %	Emerging %	Potential %	Unlikely %	Total %
Academic performance	42.3	35.3	40.0	28.4	38.4
Academic program	14.3	17.6	12.9	14.7	14.7
Safety and discipline	14.4	14.3	14.3	17.8	15.1
Extracurricular activities	5.2	6.7	2.9	8.6	5.9
Convenient location	10.3	11.8	5.7	15.2	11.2
Transportation	1.7	1.7	4.3	7.6	3.1
School and class size	6.4	5.9	10.0	2.5	5.8
Space available	0.3	0.8	1.4	2.0	0.8
Family or friends attended	0.7	1.7	5.7	1.0	1.2
Religion	0.3	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.4
Cultural	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Recommended by others	0.9	0.8	0.0	1.0	0.8
Special student needs	1.5	0.8	0.0	1.0	1.2
Other	1.2	0.8	2.9	0.0	1.0
School factor most likely to help					
Better quality teachers	16.5	20.1	20.6	19.0	17.8
Better quality school	13.7	20.1	21.0	17.3	15.9
None: Children are doing their best	12.6	8.2	4.8	11.1	11.0
Extra tutoring	12.0	19.0	14.0	16.1	13.8
Smaller class sizes	11.1	7.5	9.2	7.1	9.7
Better school facilities	9.8	4.5	5.5	5.0	7.8
Improved discipline	9.0	6.0	11.0	7.3	8.6
After school/extracurricular program	7.8	10.8	7.4	11.1	8.7
Language assistance	5.0	1.9	3.7	3.2	4.1
Other	2.5	1.9	2.9	2.8	2.6

Most Important Characteristic	Veteran	Emerging	Potential	Unlikely	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Prefer school that prepares child for...					
For work	3.6	0.8	8.5	4.2	3.8
For college	24.4	23.3	22.0	18.7	22.8
Combination of both	69.6	76.0	69.5	76.2	71.9
Not sure	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.0
Other	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5

Table C7: Parent Satisfaction with Their Children's Schools by Shopper Classification

Item	Veteran	Emerging	Potential	Unlikely	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Satisfaction with school in general					
Very satisfied	39.2	35.6	17.1	27.6	34.6
Very dissatisfied	5.2	5.3	17.1	0.0	5.1
Satisfaction with teacher quality					
Very satisfied	37.6	40.2	20.7	30.0	35.0
Very dissatisfied	4.3	1.5	9.8	0.9	3.6
Satisfaction with school academic performance					
Very satisfied	42.0	36.4	19.5	33.2	37.6
Very dissatisfied	3.6	3.8	4.9	1.8	3.4
Satisfaction with school safety					
Very satisfied	41.8	35.1	18.5	33.9	37.5
Very dissatisfied	6.4	4.6	18.5	4.6	6.7
Satisfaction with school-parent interactions					
Very satisfied	41.3	40.2	23.2	33.8	38.2
Very dissatisfied	4.5	6.1	13.4	1.4	4.8
Satisfaction with accommodation of student needs					
Very satisfied	37.5	37.1	17.1	33.8	35.0
Very dissatisfied	5.1	3.8	12.2	2.3	4.9
Satisfaction with school extracurricular activities					
Very satisfied	38.2	32.1	21.0	35.9	35.6
Very dissatisfied	6.2	5.3	7.4	2.8	5.4
Satisfaction with school location					
Very satisfied	40.8	40.9	33.3	42.9	40.7
Very dissatisfied	5.7	3.0	1.2	1.8	4.2

7. APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR NEVER SHOPPERS

Focus group questions for all participants

1. **How do you define quality or a high performing school?** *(Or, what words would you use to describe a high performing school?)*
2. **How do you determine if a school is right for your child?** *(If necessary, go around the table and let each person share one response.)*

Focus group questions for Ever shoppers

1. **Most of you all have been very active school shoppers. What is it like shopping for schools in Detroit? What have you enjoyed most and least about your school options?** *(Did you attend school fairs? Were they useful? Did you talk to friends and family? Did you read about different schools in any publications? What kind? How about billboards? Do they help bring good schools to your attention?)*
2. **What factors do you consider when shopping for schools?** *(What strategies do you use to get into your top choices?)*
3. **Who are the people and organizations you find most helpful when considering the best school for your child?** *(If possible ask them what publications, newspapers, magazines, etc., if any, they use.)*

Focus group questions for Ever shopper students

1. **What role do you play in selecting the school you attend?** *(How is the decision made in your home? What are the most significant influences on your decision?)*
2. **What are the similarities and differences in the way you think about schools compared to your parents?** *(What happens when you and your parents disagree?)*
3. **How does your relationship with your friends influence the school you attend or might consider?** *(How open are you to attending a school where none of your friends attend?)*

Focus group questions for Potential shoppers

1. Most of you have only enrolled your children in public schools, but you have expressed openness to considering other schools. What other types of schools are you most interested? What characteristics are you most looking for?
2. How much is the lack of public transportation options a barrier to sending your child to a school that is beyond your neighborhood? *(How far are you willing to travel?)*

Focus group questions for Unlikely shoppers

1. Most of you reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the schools your children attend. However, many of these schools based on standardized test scores and graduation rates have been identified as “low performing or in need of improvement.” What explains your satisfaction with these schools? *(What kept you from changing? Is it too hard to find a good alternative? Do you think all schools are the same anyway?)*
2. How much is the lack of transportation options a barrier to sending your child to a school that is beyond your neighborhood? *(How far are you willing to travel?)*