

The School Choice Experience:

Findings of the Children First: School Choice Trust Parent Survey

A Project of
The Fraser Institute

Reasons for Choosing an Independent School

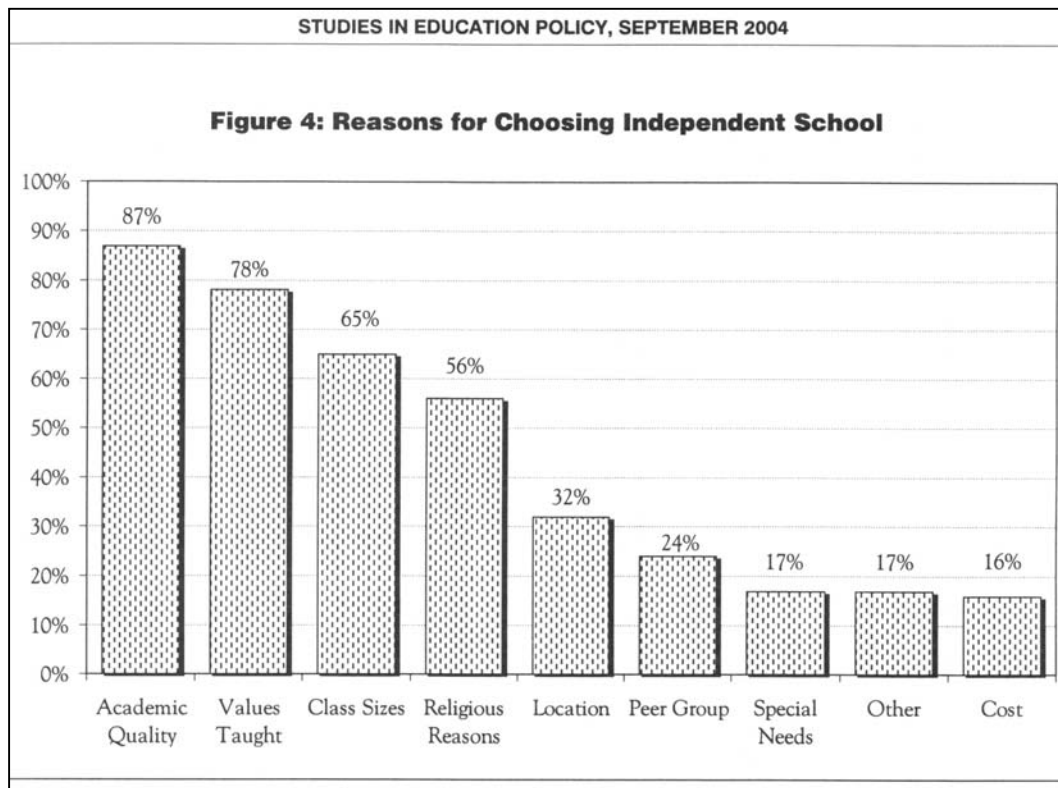
In January 2004 the Children First: School Choice Trust conducted a survey of parents who had received grants and transferred their children to independent schools in the Province of Ontario.

The survey results provide interesting information for parents who are considering sending their children to independent, faith-based schools.



Parent's main reasons for choosing independent schools were:

- academic quality
- values taught
- class sizes
- religious lessons



Parental Satisfaction

The survey suggests that parents were much more satisfied with their child's new independent school than with their previous public school. For each category (curriculum reflects values, teacher attention, academic quality, discipline, fosters parental involvement, and interaction with school) the vast majority of parents gave their independent schools an "A." A full 95% gave the schools an "A" or "B" overall.

In each category where parents rated their children's former public schools, the majority rated those schools "C," "D" or "F". The poorest marks were given for their public schools' curriculum reflecting values, discipline, and teacher attention to the child. (p. 7)



Parental Involvement

The survey showed that parents interacted with their child's teacher an average of 3.7 times per month in the public schools and 18.3 times per month in independent schools. (p.8)

Student Improvement Student Happiness

According to the report, parents claim significant improvement in their children's academic performance, social skills, and behavior since entering the independent school. An impressive 93% of parents responding to the survey witnessed some or significant improvement in their child's academic performance, while 88% observed an improvement in social skills and 85% saw improvement in their behavior. (p. 8)



When asked if their child showed any improvement in his or her happiness and enjoyment of school, 91% of parents responded that their child is happier in the independent school. (p. 8)



The information in this article was gleaned from *The School Choice Experience Report* prepared by Virginia Gentles for The Fraser Institute. To view the report in its entirety please visit: <http://www.childrenfirstgrants.ca/files/pdf/CFSurvey.pdf>