

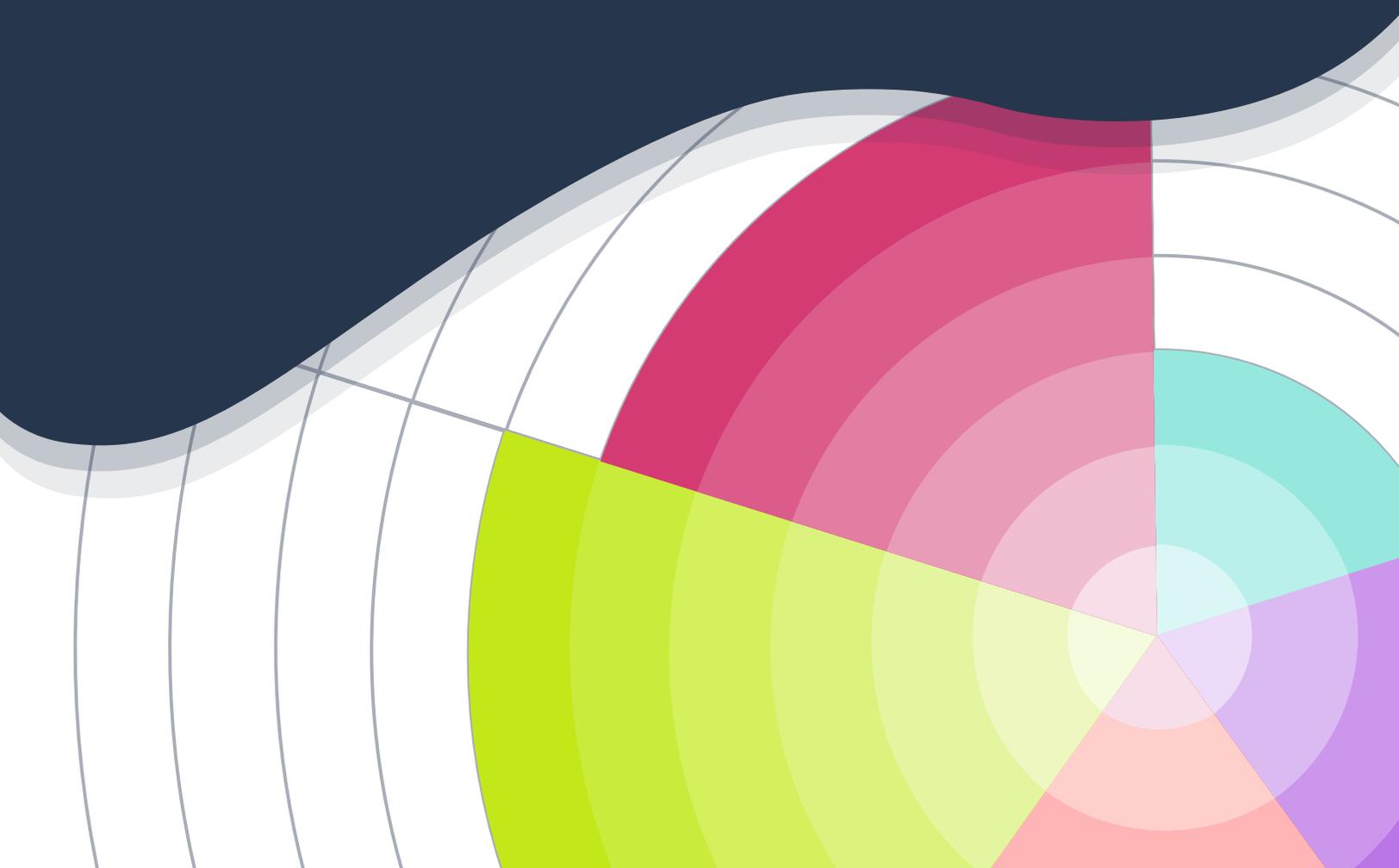


2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

# The State of Educational Opportunity in Kentucky

## A Survey of Kentucky Parents

February 2026



2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

# The State of Educational Opportunity in Kentucky

A Survey of Kentucky Parents

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Dear Friends,

At the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, we believe that building a stronger future for Kentucky begins with engaging families and communities. When parents and guardians speak clearly about what is working—and where gaps remain—we have both a responsibility and an opportunity to respond with urgency and purpose.

That is why we are proud to share the second edition of *The State of Educational Opportunity in Kentucky*, produced in partnership with 50CAN and Edge Research. This report reflects the voices of 411 Kentucky parents and guardians surveyed between September 30 and December 1, 2025, as part of a nationwide effort reaching more than 23,000 families. Together, their responses provide a clear-eyed look at how Kentucky compares nationally and where we must focus next.

The survey explores five areas families identify as essential to student success:

1. School quality and opportunity
2. Tutoring, summer, and mental health supports
3. Out-of-school activities
4. Information and engagement
5. College and career readiness

This year's findings offer both affirmation and challenge.



**Kentucky continues to stand out nationally for mental health support.** Forty-six percent of families report being very satisfied with how their school supports their child's mental health needs, placing our Commonwealth among the top-performing states on this measure. This reflects meaningful investments by schools and communities to address the whole child.



**Parents also express relatively strong confidence in preparation for life after high school.** Thirty-five percent say they are extremely confident their child will be prepared for the workforce, and 34 percent express the same level of confidence about college preparation. While these numbers compare favorably to many states, income-based gaps persist, reminding us that confidence is not yet equitably distributed.

At the same time, several indicators signal areas for urgent improvement.



**Tutoring participation remains low.** Only 21 percent of Kentucky students received academic tutoring this past school year—below the national average and far behind leading states. Summer program participation also lags, with just 27 percent of students engaged in supervised summer learning

opportunities. These are proven strategies for accelerating learning and preventing widening gaps, particularly for students from lower-income families.



**Family engagement presents another opportunity.** Only 18 percent of parents say they are very familiar with how school budget decisions are made, and just 22 percent report attending parent organization meetings. Strong schools require strong partnerships with families, built on transparency, communication, and shared leadership.



**Encouragingly, participation in arts, music, sports, and volunteer activities remains solid in many communities,** underscoring the importance of well-rounded educational experiences. Yet access to these opportunities is uneven and ensuring that every child can participate must remain a shared priority.

This report is not a verdict; it is a roadmap. It highlights where Kentucky is leading, where we are holding steady, and where bold action is required. It reinforces the need to expand access to high-quality tutoring, summer learning, and afterschool programs; deepen family engagement; and ensure that confidence in college and career readiness is matched by measurable preparation.

In the months ahead, the Prichard Committee will continue working alongside educators, policymakers, business leaders, and families to translate these findings into action. Our mission remains clear: to move Kentucky into the top tier of states for education excellence and equity—from early childhood through postsecondary success.

A digital copy of this report is available at [prichardcommittee.org](https://prichardcommittee.org). We also encourage you to visit [50can.org](https://50can.org) to explore the nationwide results, survey instrument, and full dataset.

Thank you for your continued partnership in strengthening educational opportunity for every Kentucky child.

Sincerely,



**Brigitte Blom**  
President and CEO  
The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence

# Methodology

Edge Research conducted a nationwide survey of 23,104 U.S. parents and guardians of school-aged children (K-12th grade) in each of the 50 states plus the District of Columbia. **In Kentucky, 411 parents and guardians of K-12 children were surveyed.** Respondents could take the survey in either English or Spanish, based on their preference. The survey was in the field from September 30, 2025, to December 1, 2025.

## DATA COLLECTION

The survey used a mixed-mode methodology to reach as many households as possible. First, survey respondents were recruited using online, non-probability samples obtained via national opt-in consumer research panels. These surveys were mobile-optimized (meaning participants can take the survey on a PC or mobile device, which helps reach those who do not have internet access but do have a mobile data plan). In states where Edge Research was not able to collect enough surveys using this method, they obtained supplementary text-to-web interviews.

## SURVEY REPRESENTATIVENESS

As respondents entered the survey, they submitted demographic information, and quotas were set to ensure the sample is proportionately distributed in accordance with the most recent U.S. Census and National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data on U.S. parents in each state. Quotas functioned by predetermining the number of desired respondents by gender identity, race, ethnicity, child’s grade, and grade level in each state. Once the desired number was reached with each quota group, it closed, and additional respondents were turned away. After the survey came out of the field, Edge Research reviewed the data and applied additional weights by income, marital status, parent gender, race/ethnicity, school type, and area (e.g., urban, suburban, small town, rural) within states.

The following tables provide the demographics of survey respondents in Kentucky after weighting.

RACE/ETHNICITY							
Hispanic/Latino of Any Race	White Alone	Black/African American Alone	American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	Asian Alone	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races
5%	85%	7%	0.2%	1%	0%	0.4%	2%

INCOME DISTRIBUTION		
Low Income	Middle Income	High Income
52%	44%	3%

SCHOOL LEVEL		
K-5th	6th-8th	9th-12th
46%	22%	32%

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/tableviewer/acsProfile/2021>

## GRADE OF CHILD

K	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
8%	7%	7%	9%	7%	8%	8%	8%	7%	7%	9%	8%	7%

## SCHOOL TYPE

Local or Traditional Public School	Public Magnet School	Public Charter School	Private Independent School	Parochial/Religious School	Virtual/Online Public School	Homeschool	Microschool	Other Type of School
67%	5%	5%	9%	4%	3%	7%	0.2%	0.2%

## INCOME DEFINITIONS

In the pages that follow, we provide results for low-, middle- and high-income parents. These income buckets were calculated using the Pew Research Center’s study on “The State of the American Middle Class” and their category definitions:

- Middle-income households are defined as those with an income that is two-thirds to double that of the U.S. median household income, after being adjusted for household size.
- Lower-income households have incomes less than two-thirds of the median
- High-income households have incomes that are more than double the median.

Following these definitions, Edge Research adjusted the incomes reported in the survey to reflect a three-person household using the equivalence scales technique. Pulling from the U.S. Census 2023 Annual Social and Economic Supplements, they used the three-person household income breaks of \$61,000 to \$183,000 as middle, and values above and below those thresholds as lower and upper income respectively. Edge Research also adjusted each household income using Regional Price Parities (RPPs)—indexes from the Bureau of Economic Analysis—that compare local prices to the national average. These tell whether an area is more or less expensive than the country overall. RPPs are applied differently based on what is known about the household’s location. If the exact metro area is known, the RPP is used for that metro area. If the household is in a non-metro (rural or small-town) area, the RPP for non-metro areas in that state is used.

## DATA QUALITY CONTROL AND STANDARDS

Edge Research employed several practices to ensure data quality. The survey platform used reCAPTCHA to screen for bots. They also applied a third-party tool called Research Defender to screen out known bad actors and respondents with high survey-taking rates. In addition, data was monitored regularly while in the field. Once all responses were collected, they applied additional data cleaning processes, clearing data for cheating, speeding, inattentiveness, and AI-generated responses.

Edge Research follows the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Code of Professional Ethics and Practices to maintain the highest standards of competence, integrity, accountability, and transparency in public opinion and survey research work.

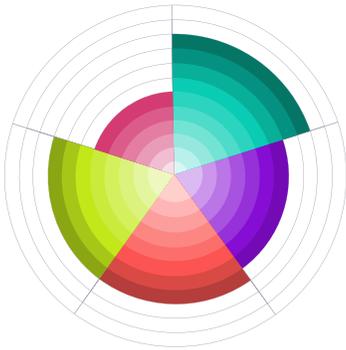
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-asec.2023.html#list-tab-165711867>

<sup>4</sup> [Standards and Ethics - AAPOR](#)

# How to Read the Results

One challenge with a survey of this size was how to present the results in an accessible way that doesn't sacrifice the depth of insights. We decided to present the answers in two ways: first with an overview of the results across 15 questions for our state and then with a more in-depth look at how our state compared to all the other states for a few key questions.

## OUR STATE SUMMARY



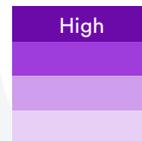
To help make it easier to look at our state's full results at a glance, we present the answers from our parents over two pages. At the top of the first page is the number of parents who participated in the survey.

We also provide a way to view our state's **relative strengths and weaknesses through a circle with five wedges**, one for each of the five categories of the survey: 1) School quality and opportunity (**pink**), 2) Tutoring, summer, and mental health (**green**), 3) Out of school activities (**teal**), 4) Information and engagement (**purple**), and 5) College and career readiness (**orange**).

Each of the five categories is made up of three questions. These are presented below each category with **our state's results compared to other states represented by a tier** shown to the right of each question, from low to high. These tiers are scored from 1 (low) to 4 (high) and the scores across the three questions determine how many rows are colored in for the wedge (up to a possible number of 12 rows).

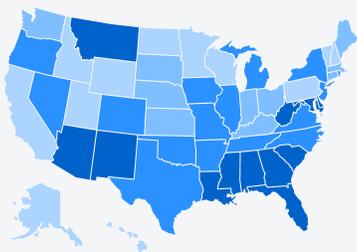
The state results for each question are presented in circles that offer a comparison of the state against the national average and the 2025 results compared to 2024. For yes/no questions, the results are presented as the percentage who said yes, rounded to the nearest whole number. For questions about parents' opinions and attitudes, we utilized a Likert scale and **reported out the percentage choosing the highest option**. For example, on question 1, which measures parents' satisfaction with their child's school, we present the percentage who answered that they were "very satisfied." This helps ground the comparison discussion in a high bar for success.

State Tier



## OUR STATE IN CONTEXT

The second section of this report provides comparative results for all 50 states plus D.C., one question at a time.



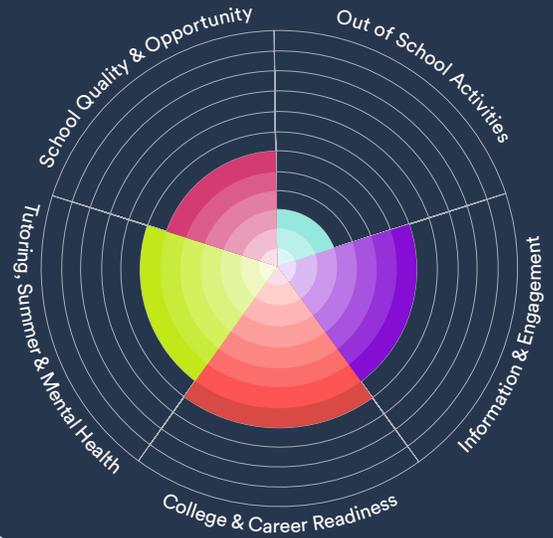
For the maps, a key provides the scale for the map and explains the numbers behind each of the four shades of blue. The darkest shade of blue is always the highest numbers and the lightest shade of blue is always the lowest numbers. Our state is outlined in red.

For the list, states are ordered from highest performing states at the top to lowest performing states at the bottom. This list shows the state average as a dark blue dot and the results for low-income families in a light shade of the section color and the results for middle- and high-income families as a darker shade of that color. Our state is identified with a red box to make it easier to spot.

# KENTUCKY

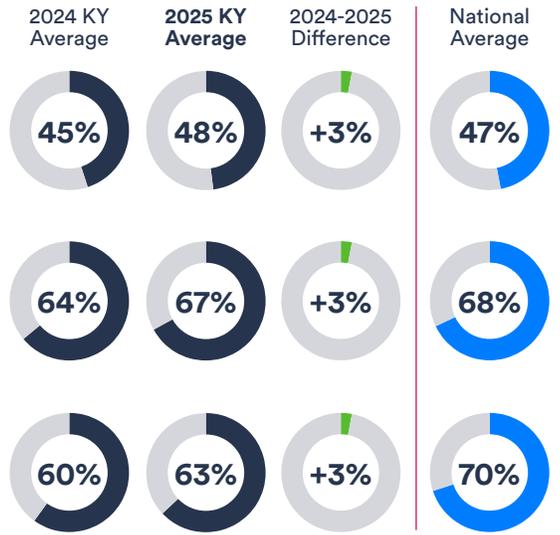


Surveyed September 30 - December 1, 2025  
 Sample size (N) = 411 parents and guardians



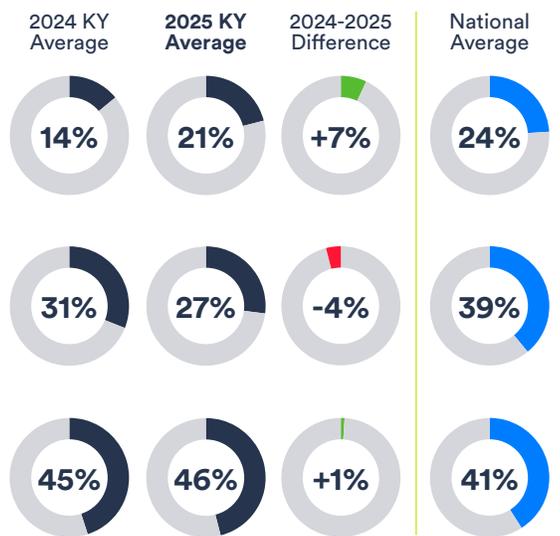
## SCHOOL QUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY

State Tier	Category	Description
Medium-High	<b>Very Satisfied with School</b>	Percentage answering they are very satisfied with their child's school
Medium-Low	<b>Would Make the Same Choice</b>	Percentage answering that they would send their child to the school they go to today
Low	<b>Feel They Have a Choice</b>	Percentage answering they feel like they have a choice in what school their child attends

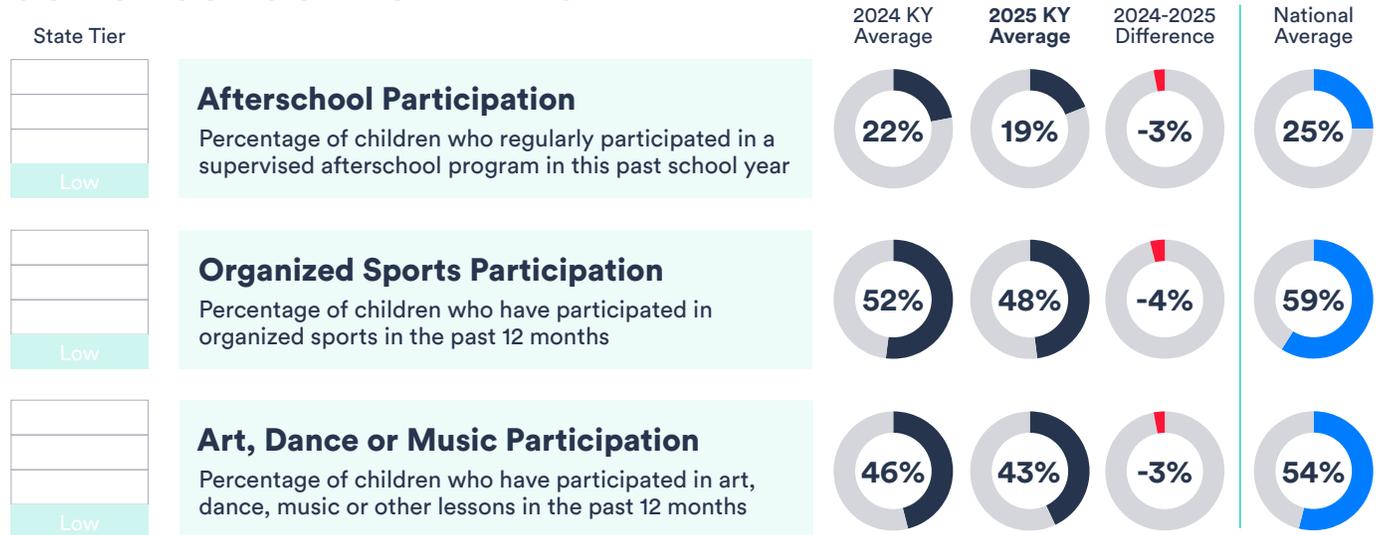


## TUTORING, SUMMER AND MENTAL HEALTH

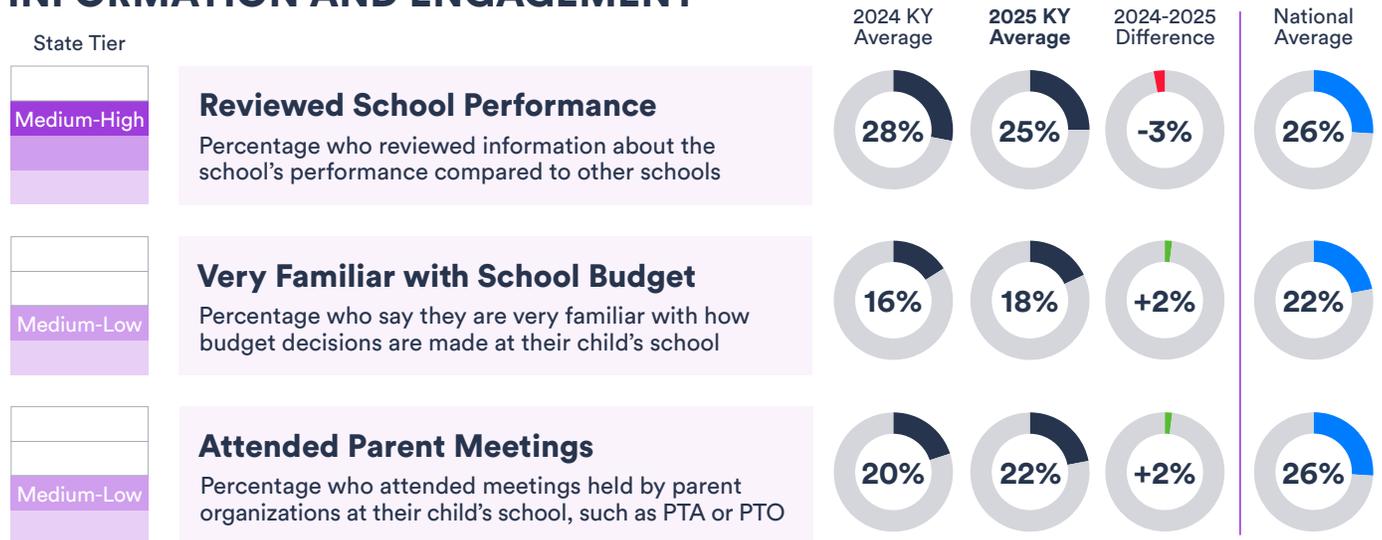
State Tier	Category	Description
Medium-Low	<b>Tutoring Participation</b>	Percentage of children who have received academic tutoring in this past school year
Low	<b>Summer Program Participation</b>	Percentage of children who participated in a supervised summer program
High	<b>Very Satisfied with Mental Health Support</b>	Percentage answering they are very satisfied with how the school supports their child's mental health needs



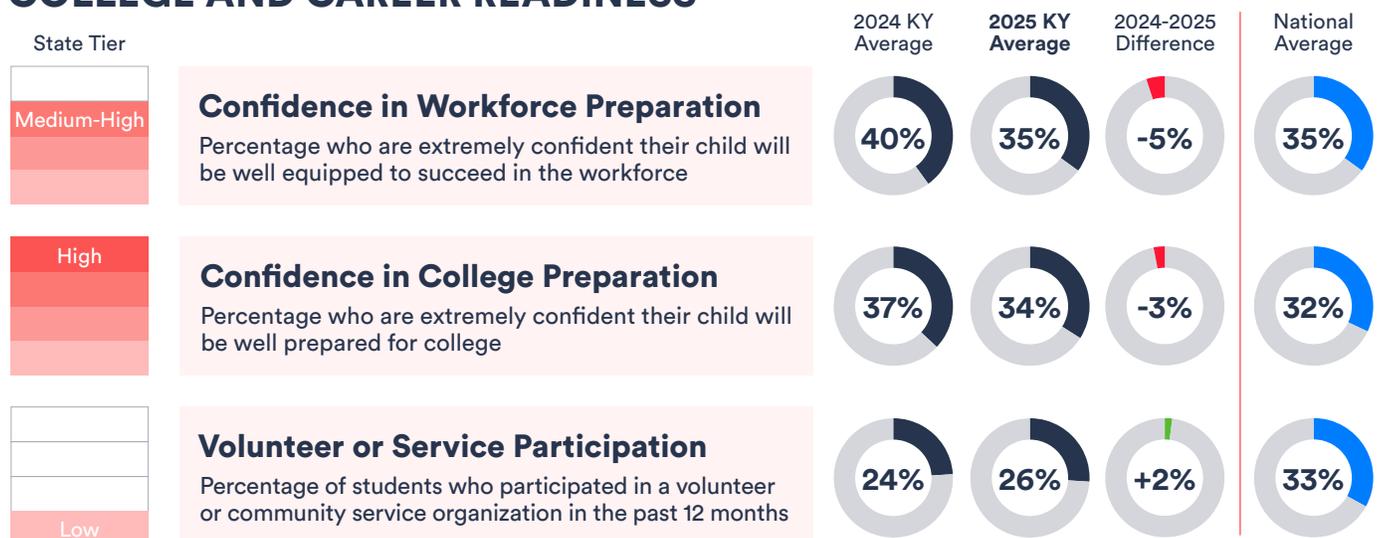
## OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES



## INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT



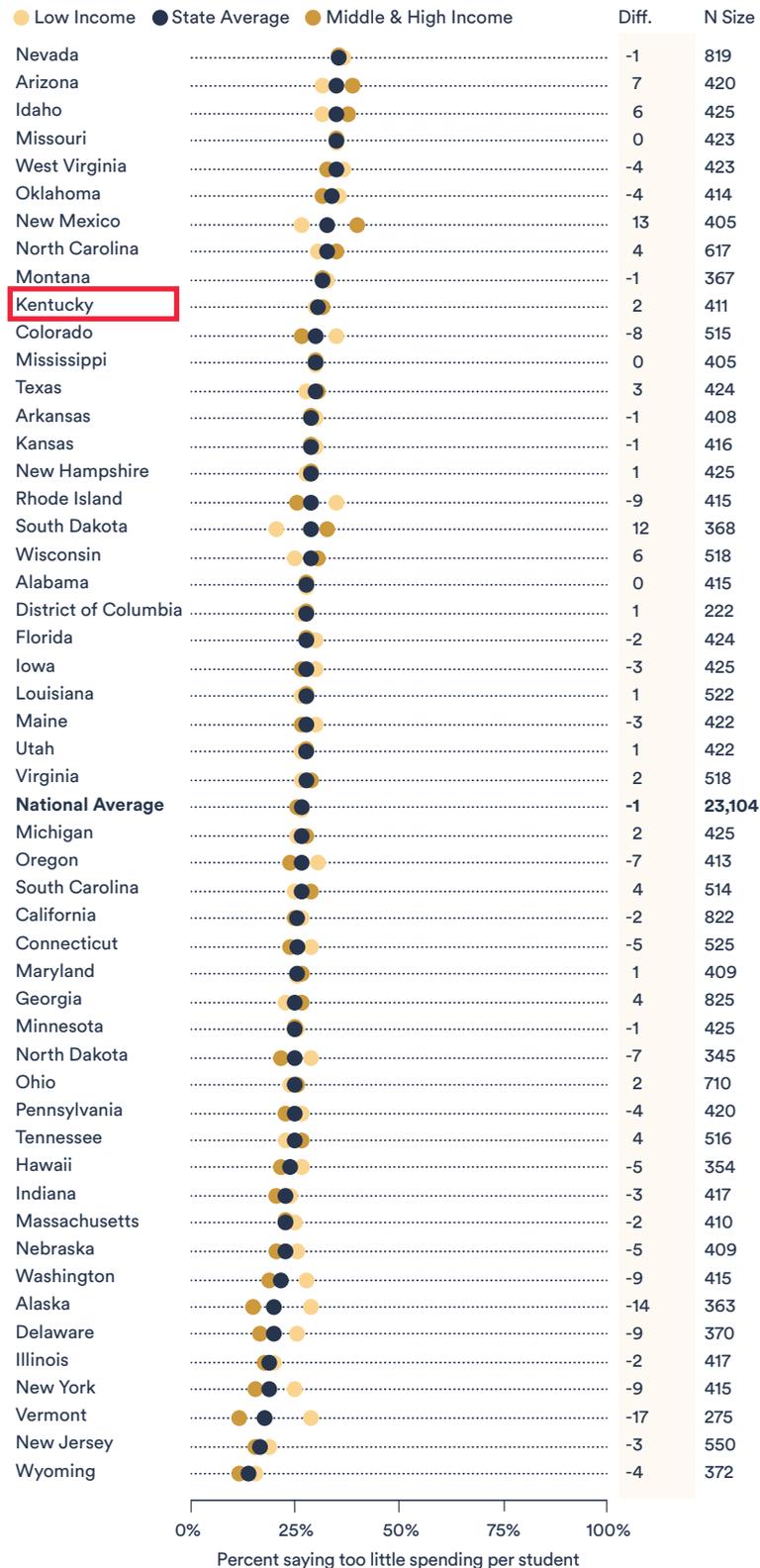
## COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS



# Kentucky in Context: A 50-State Perspective

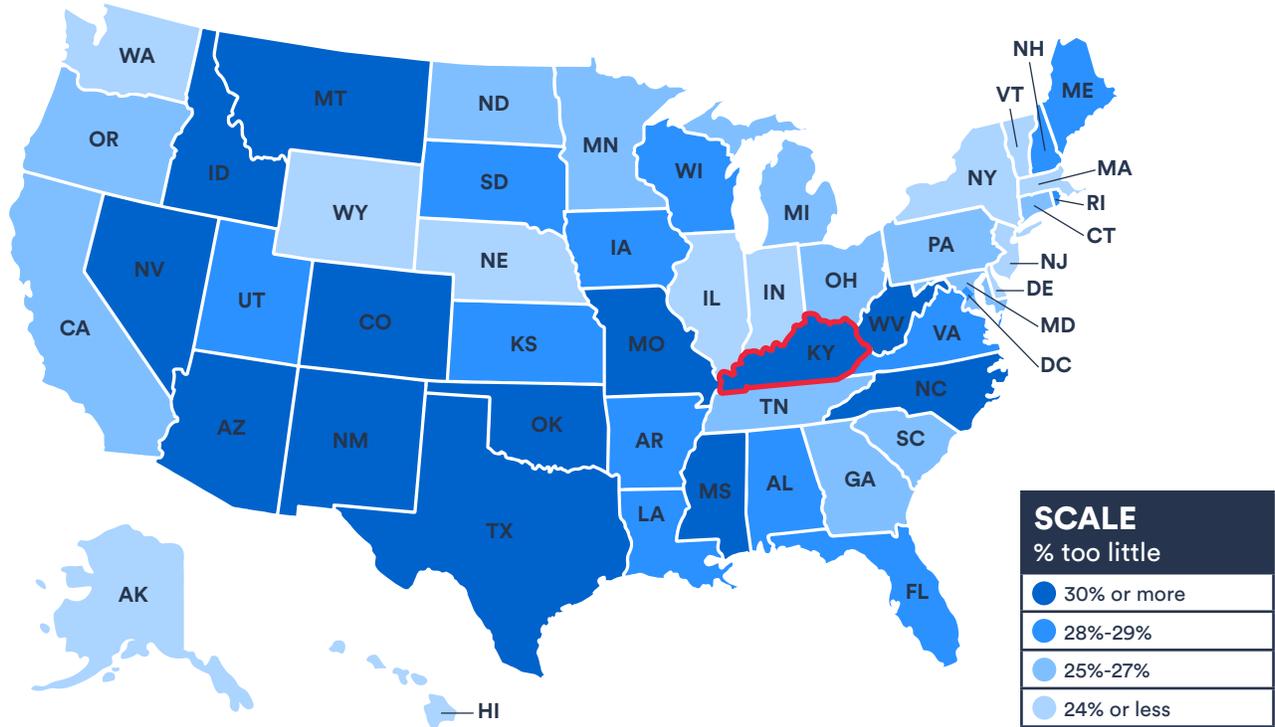
## SUPPORT MORE FUNDING BY STATE & INCOME

Percentage who think their state spends too little per public school student after being told how much their state spends per student



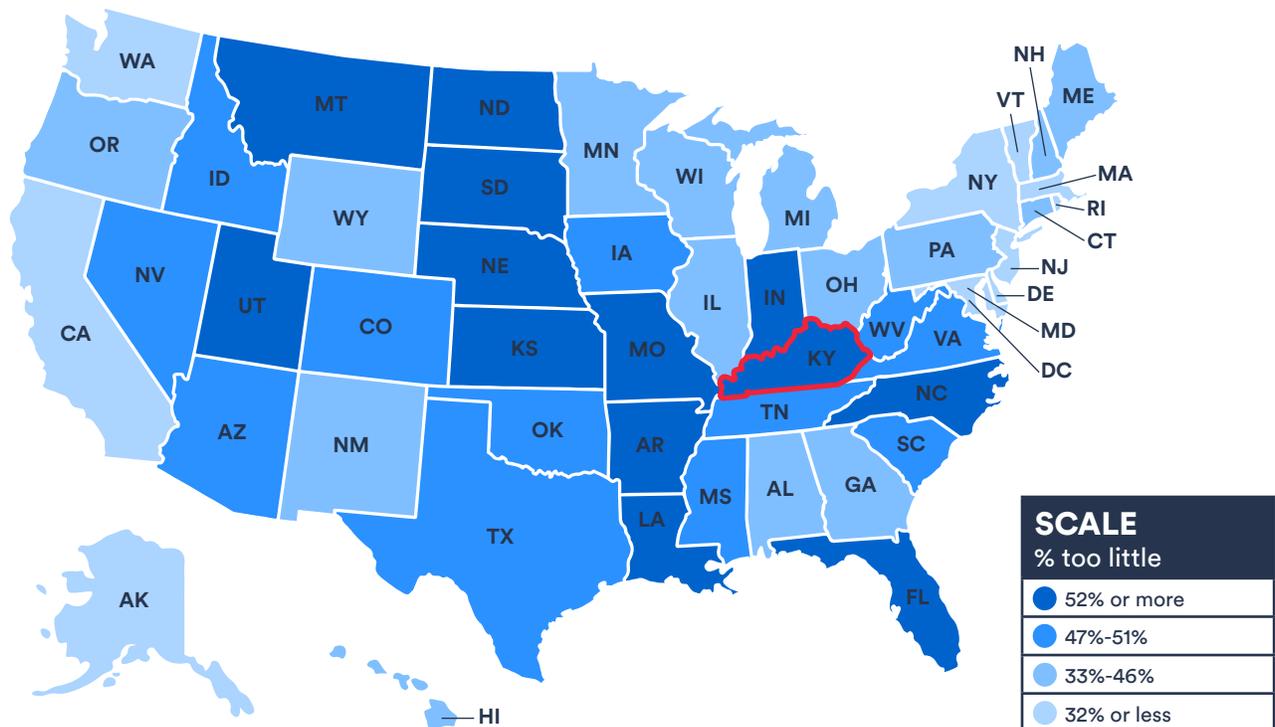
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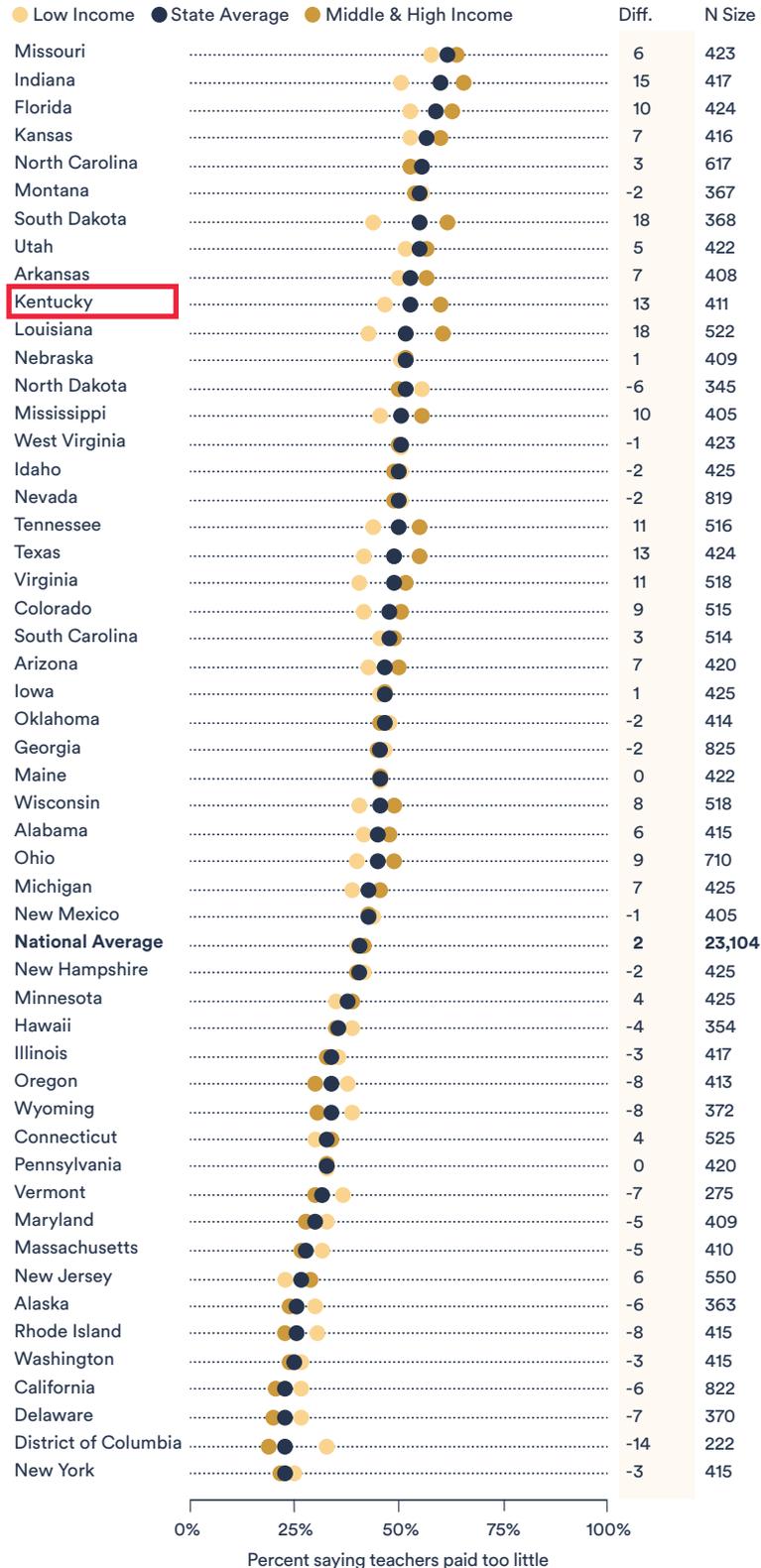
## SUPPORT FOR HIGHER SALARIES BY STATE

Percentage who think the average public school teacher in their state is paid too little after being told the average public school teacher salary in their state



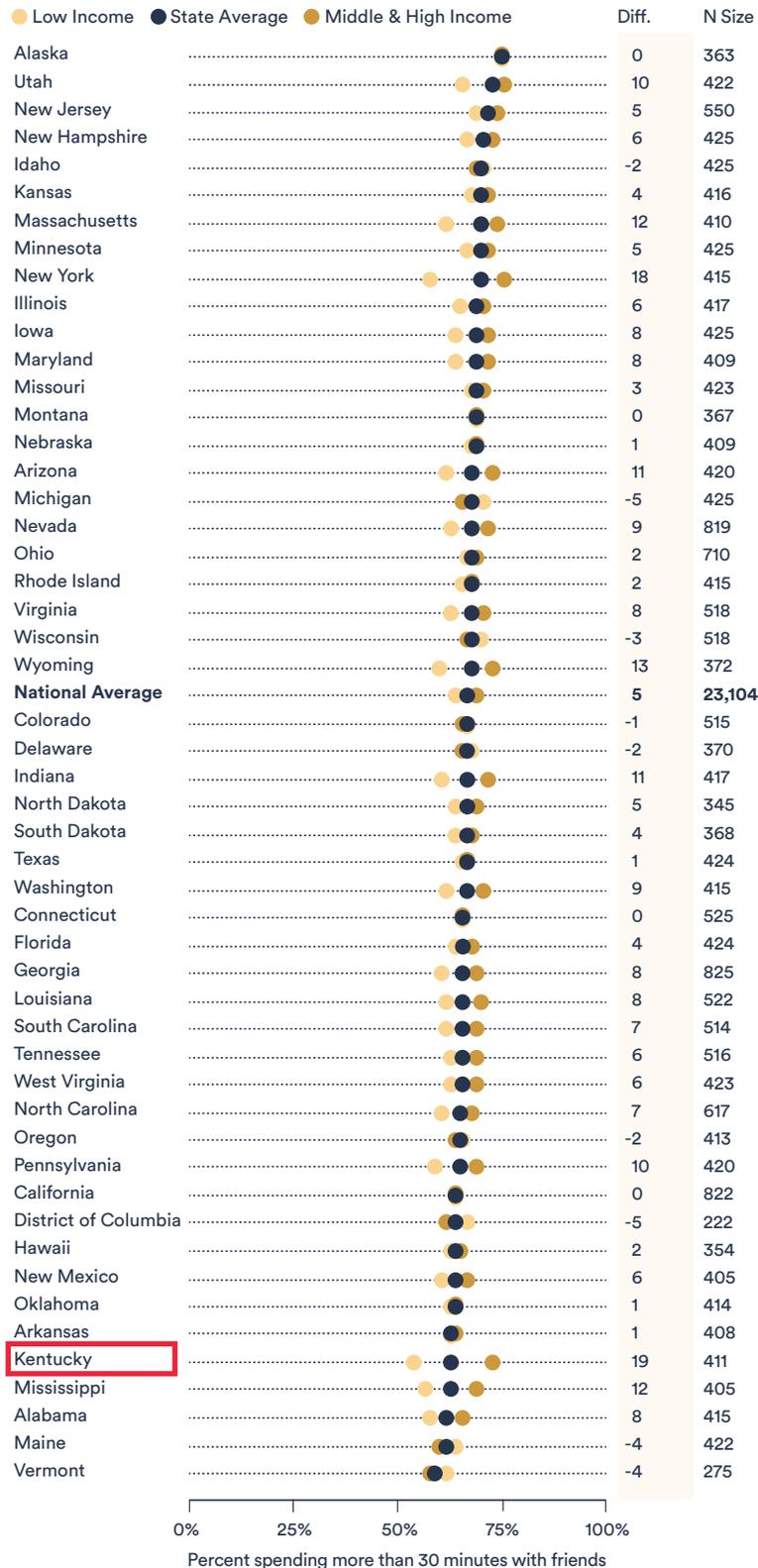
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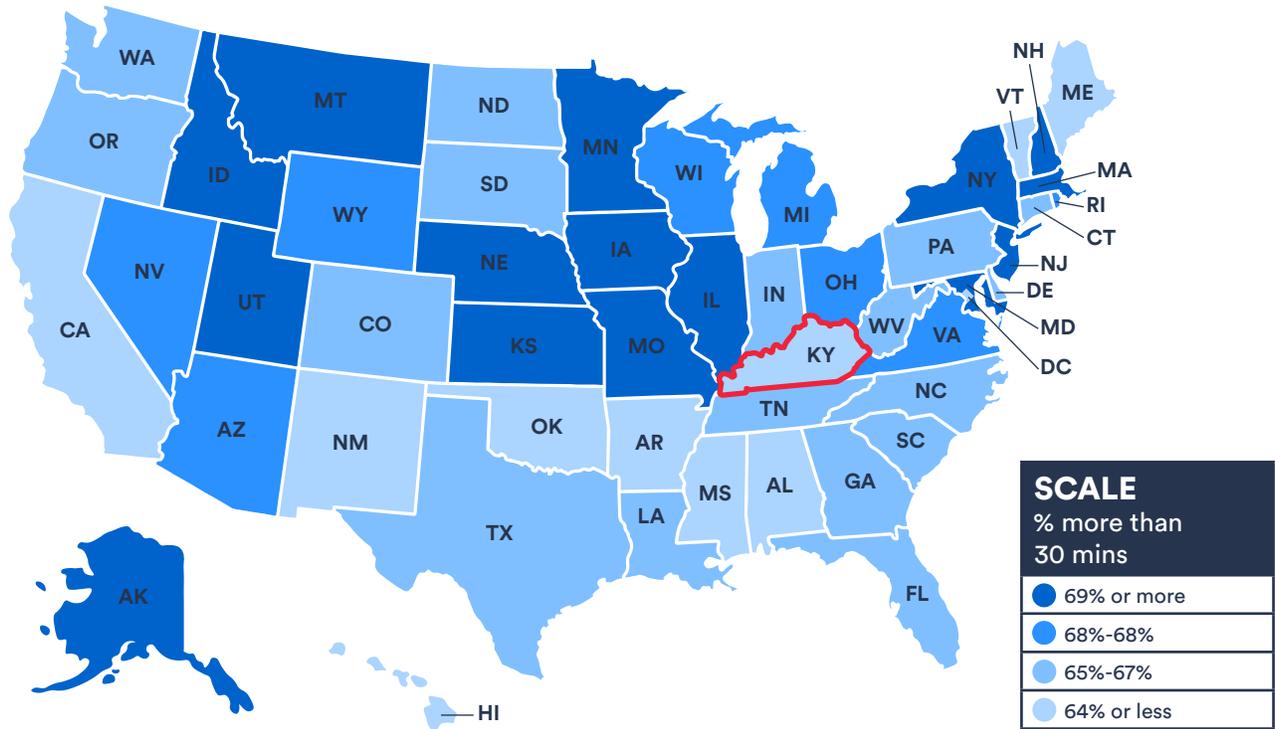
# IN-PERSON TIME WITH FRIENDS BY STATE & INCOME

Percentage answering their child spends more than 30 minutes with friends in-person per weekday



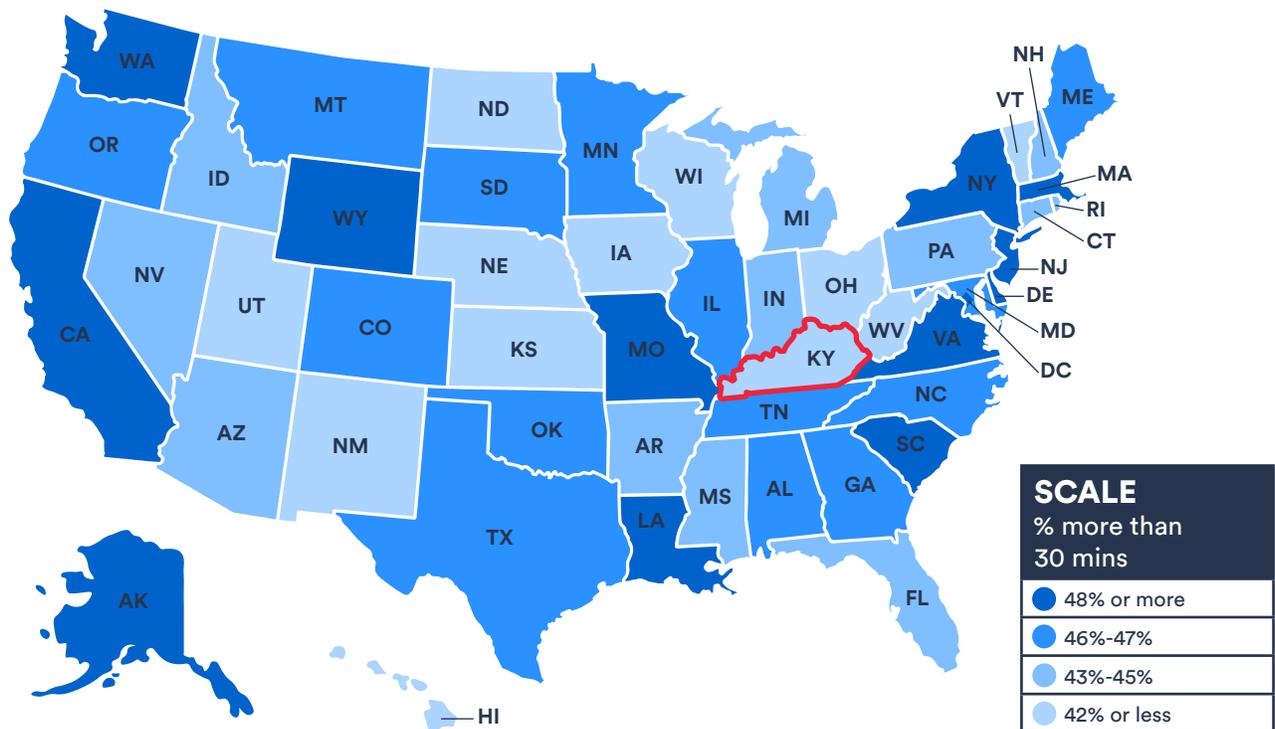
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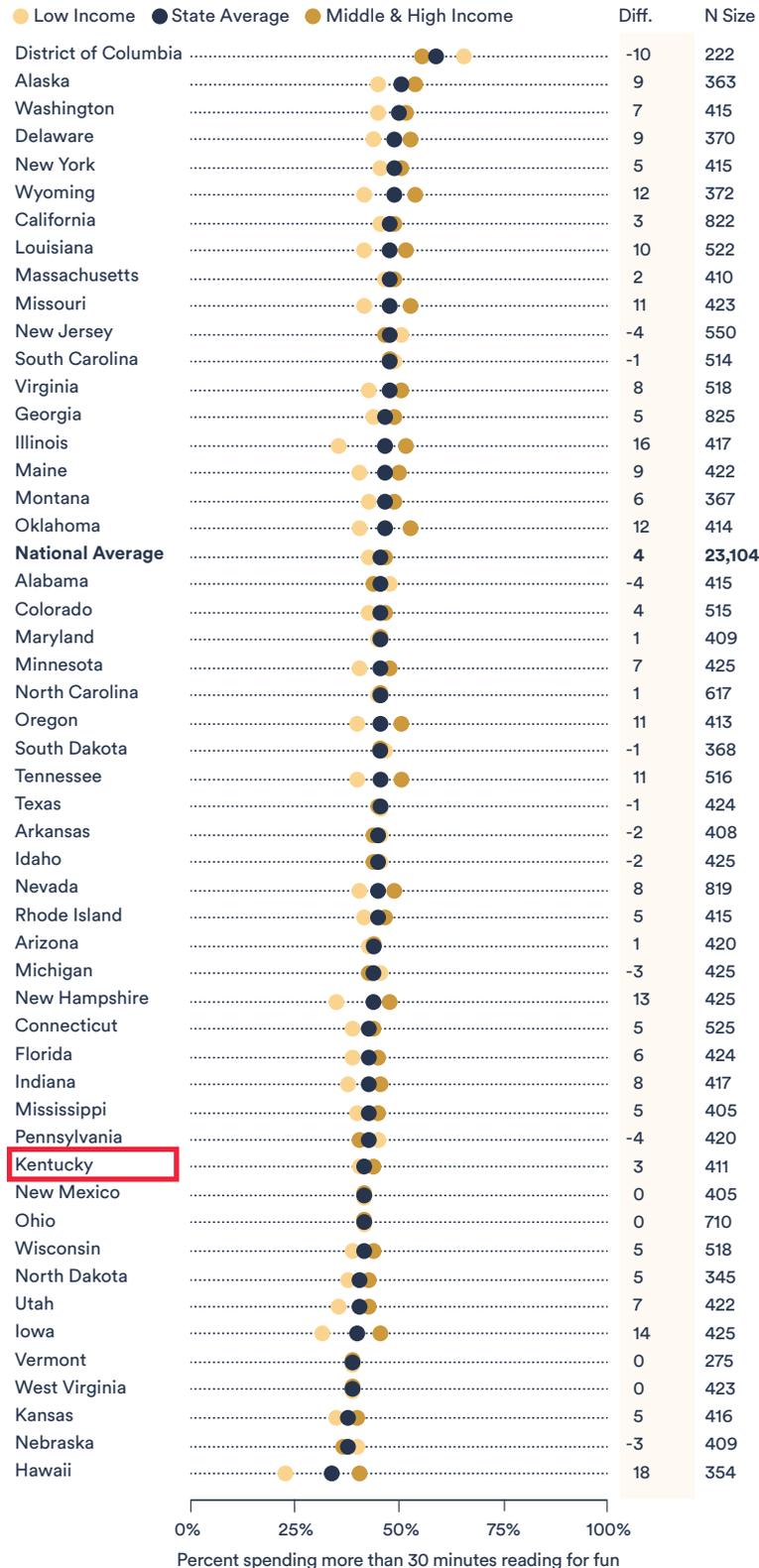
## READING FOR FUN TIME BY STATE

Percentage answering their child spends more than 30 minutes reading for fun per weekday



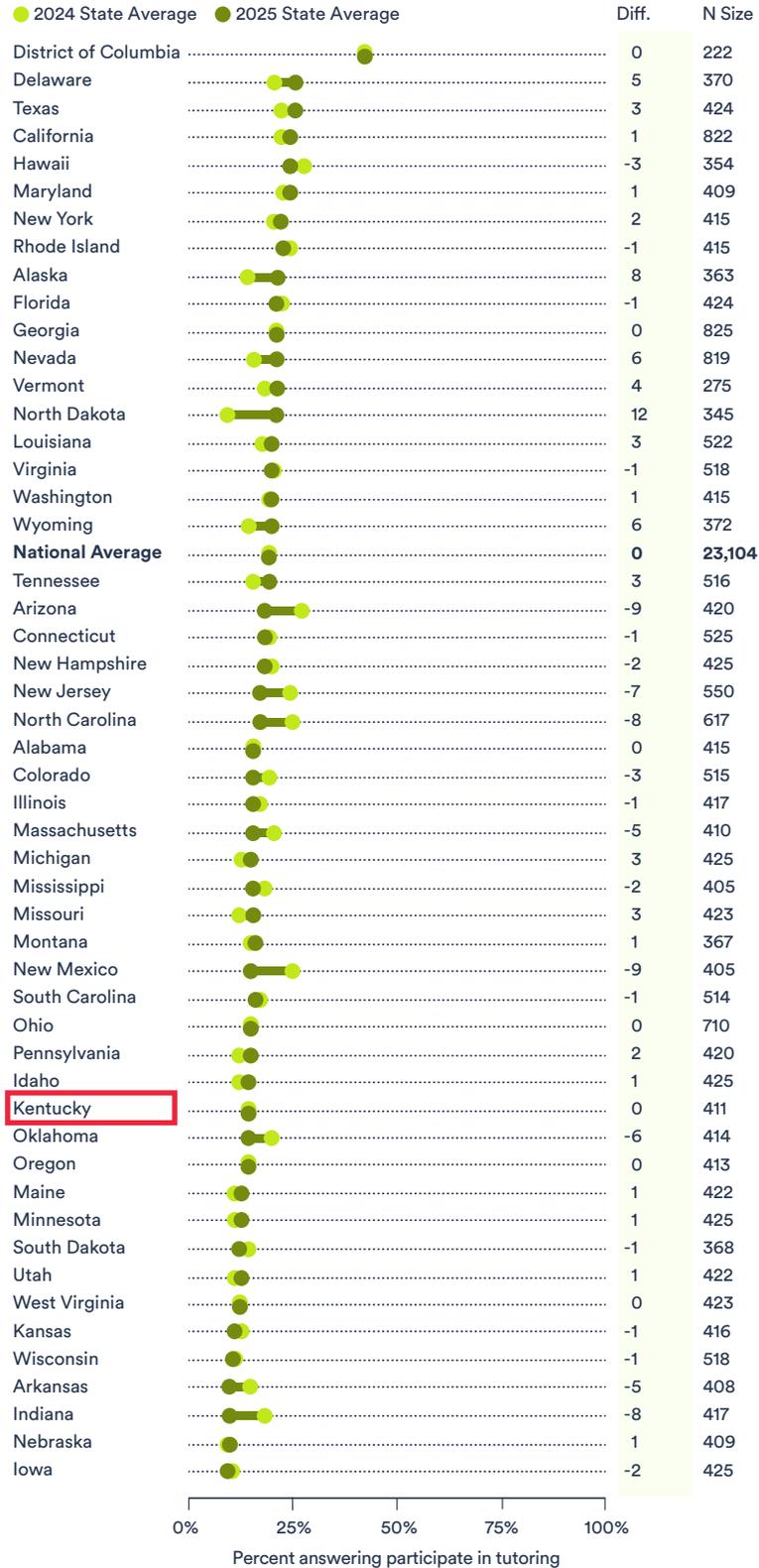
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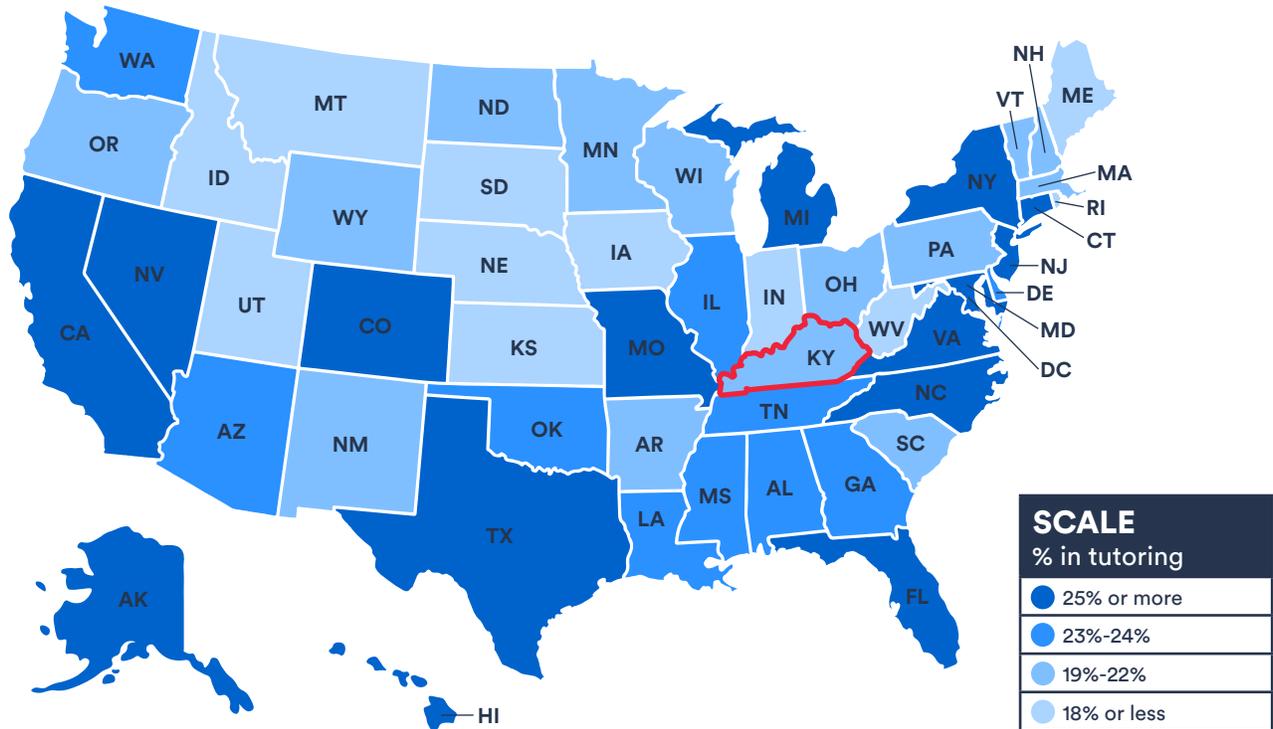
# TUTORING PARTICIPATION BY STATE & YEAR

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



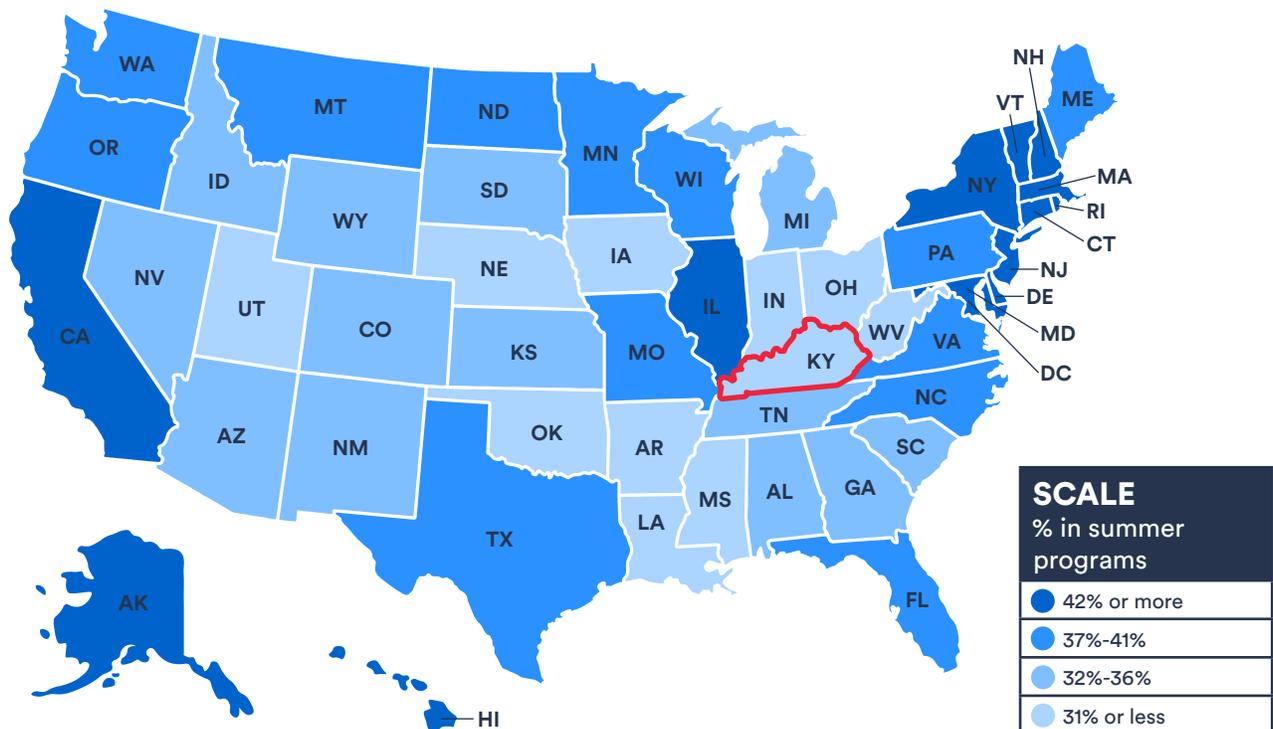
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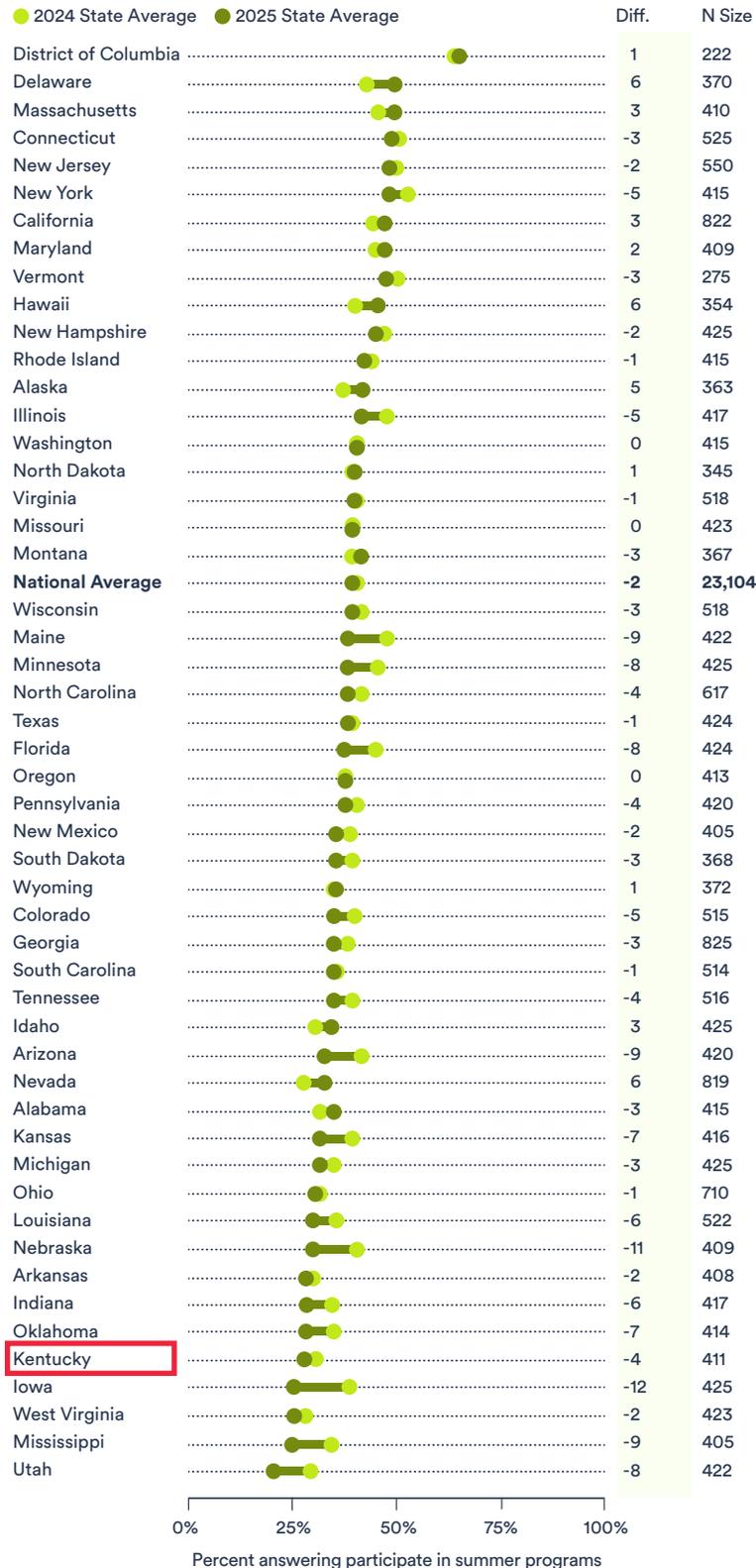
## SUMMER PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY STATE

Percentage of children who participated in a supervised summer program



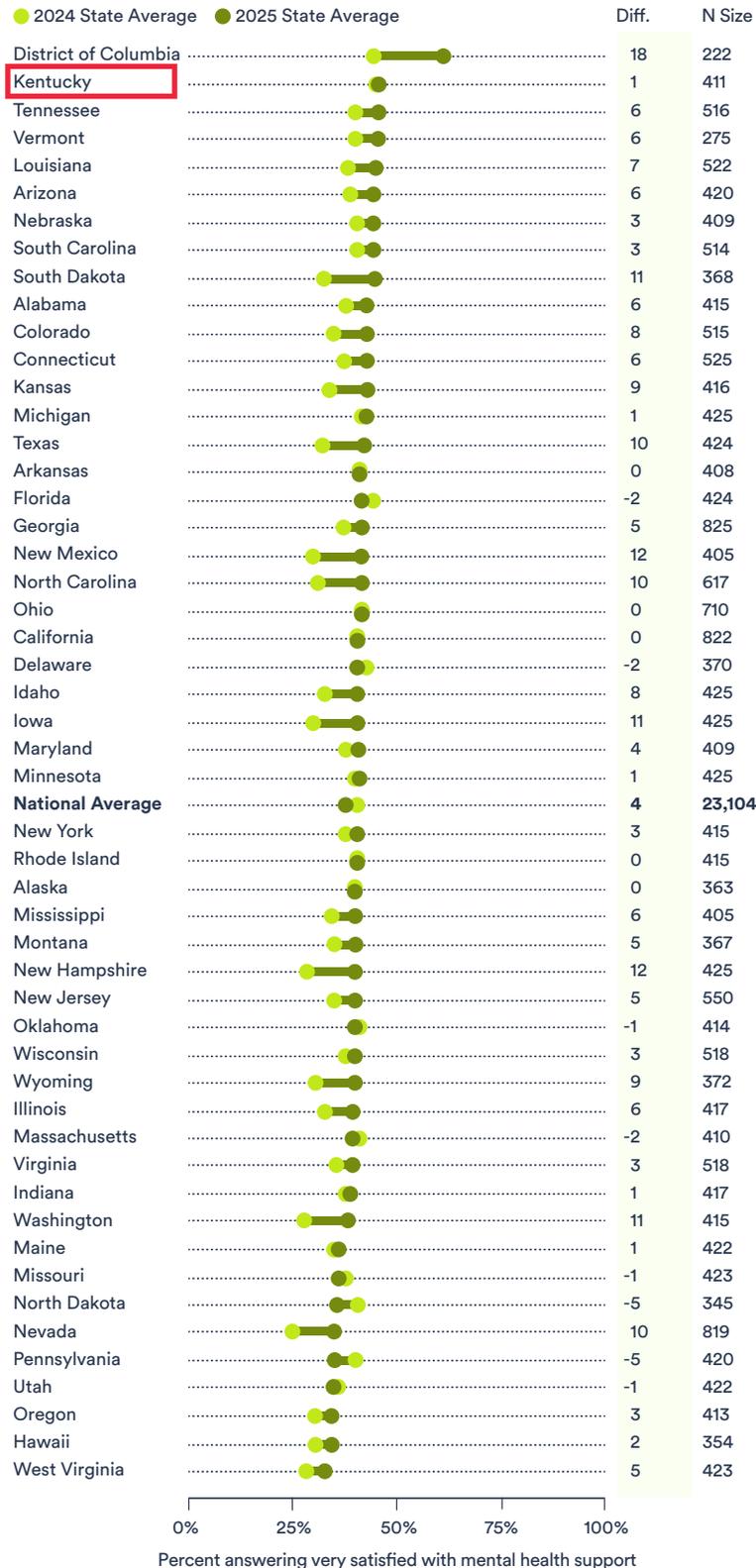
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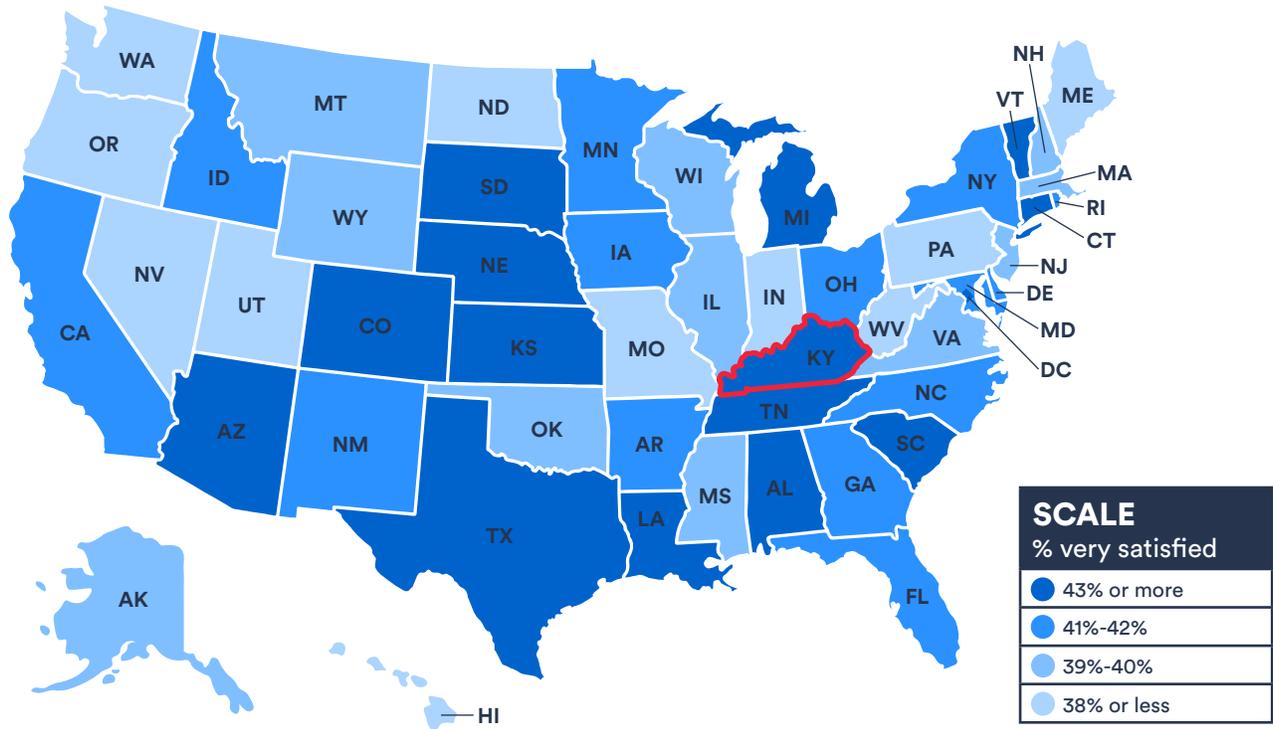
# VERY SATISFIED WITH MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT BY STATE & YEAR

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



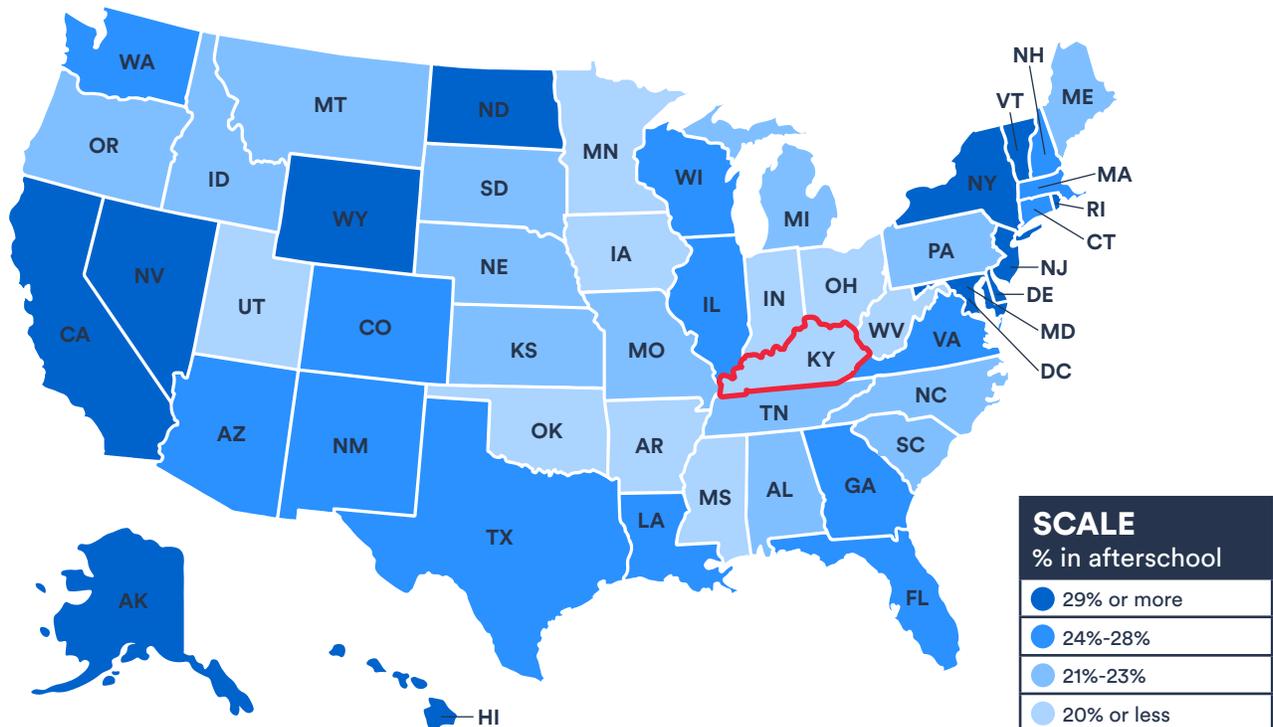
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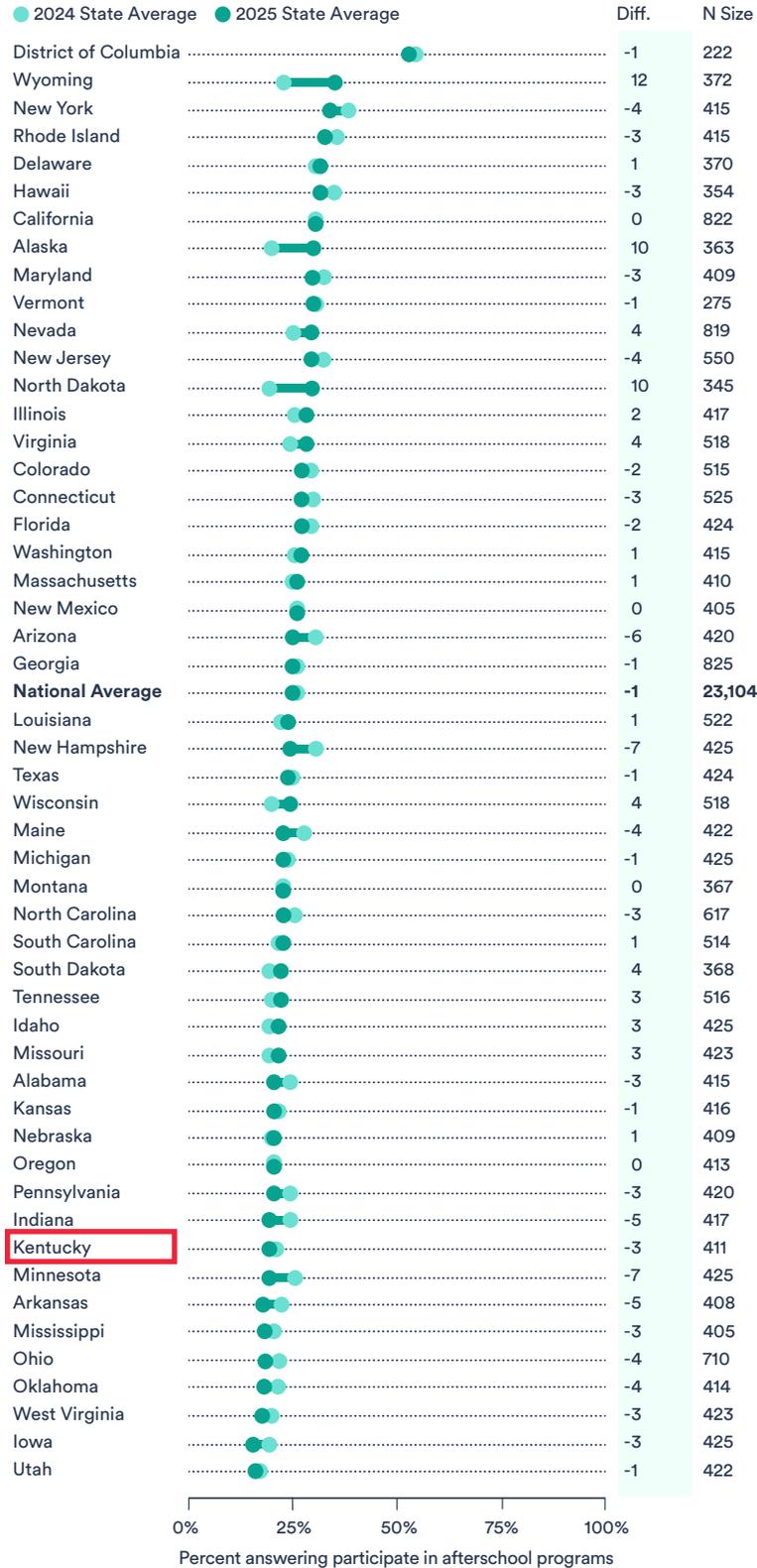
## AFTERSCHOOL PARTICIPATION BY STATE

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



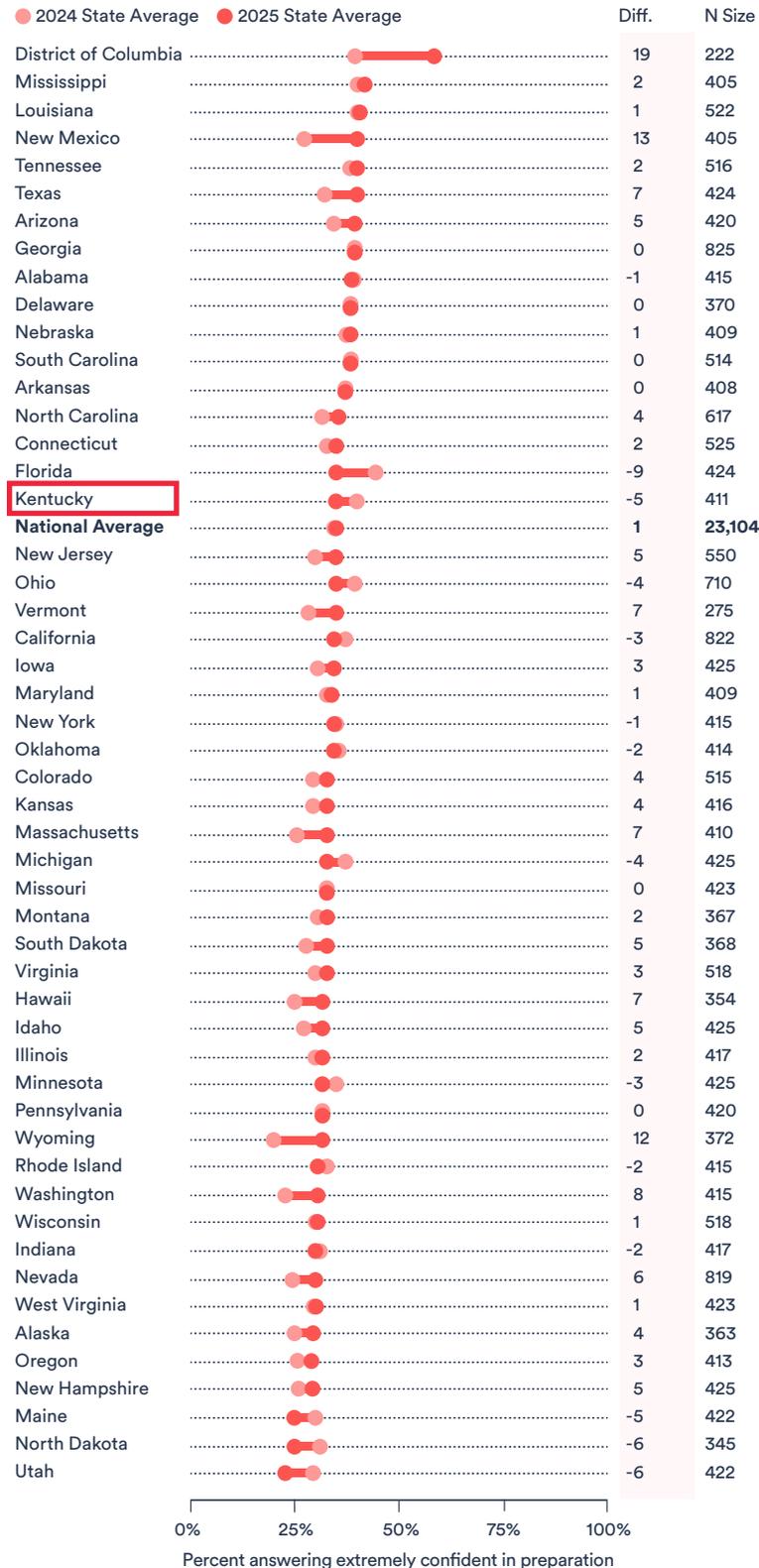
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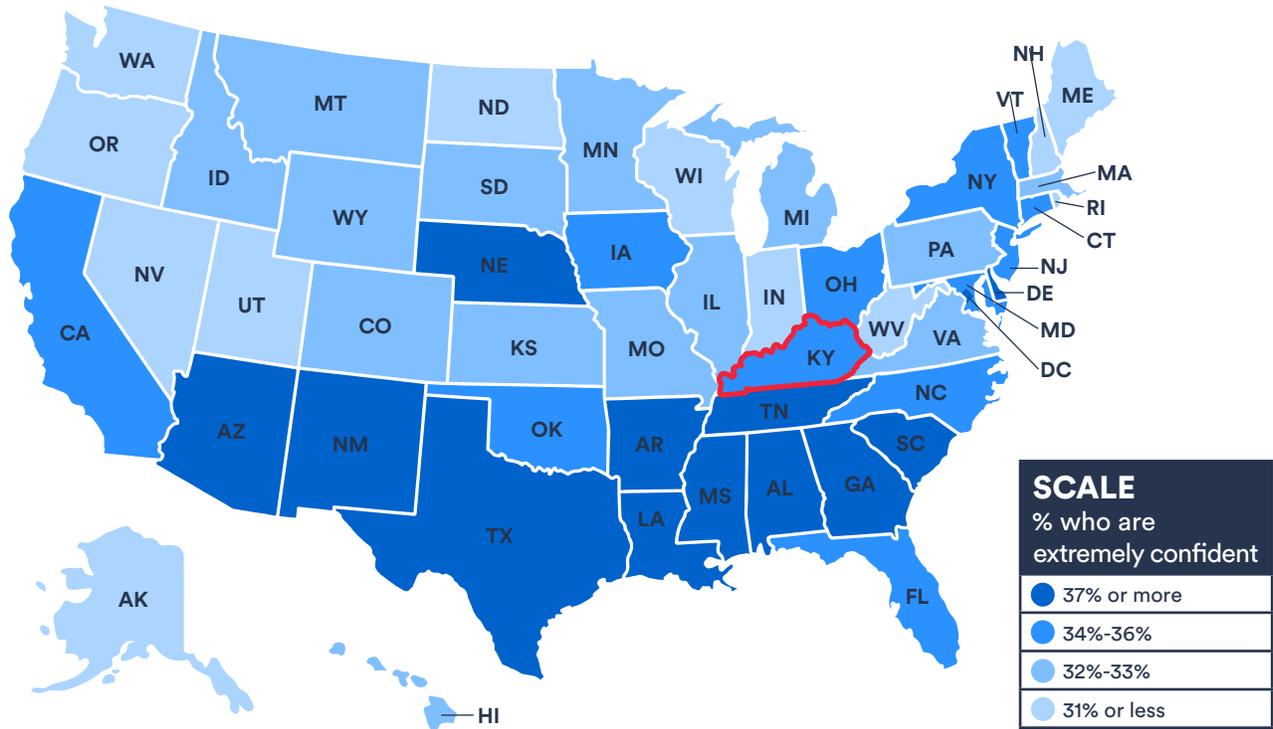
# CONFIDENCE IN WORKFORCE PREPARATION BY STATE & YEAR

Percentage who are extremely confident their child will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and competencies to succeed in the workforce



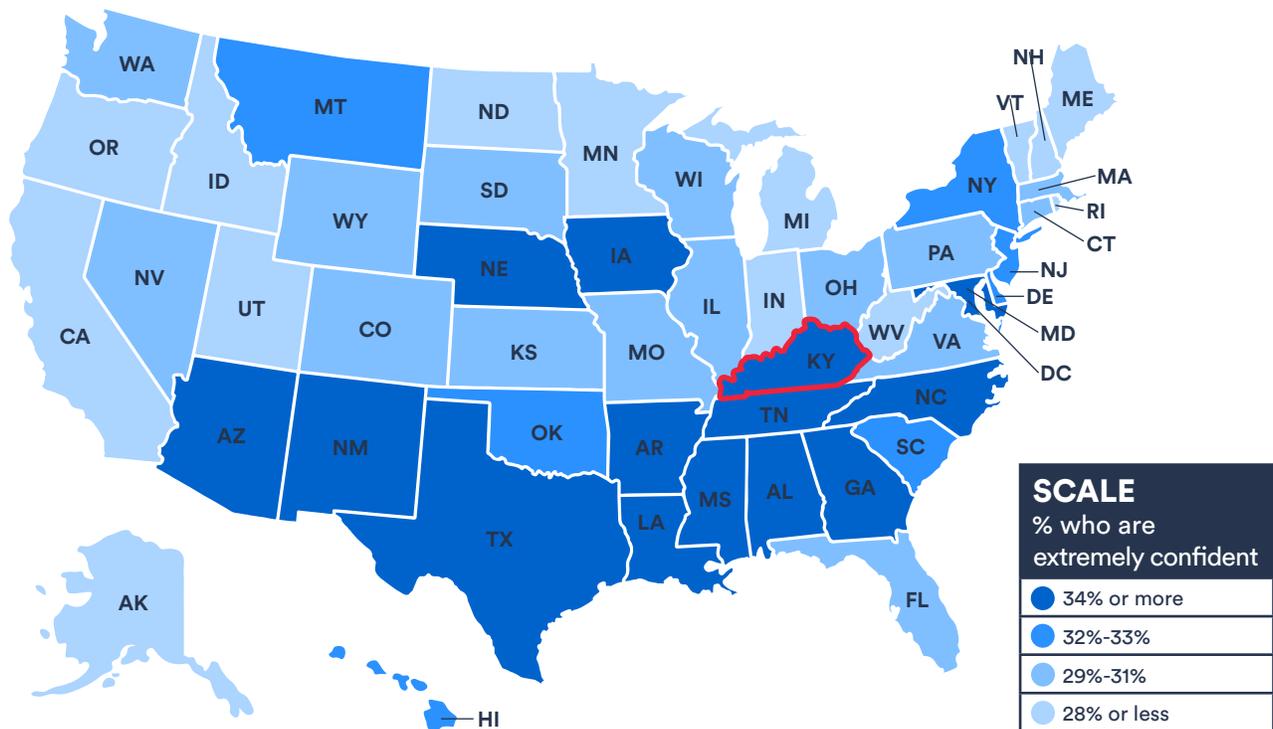
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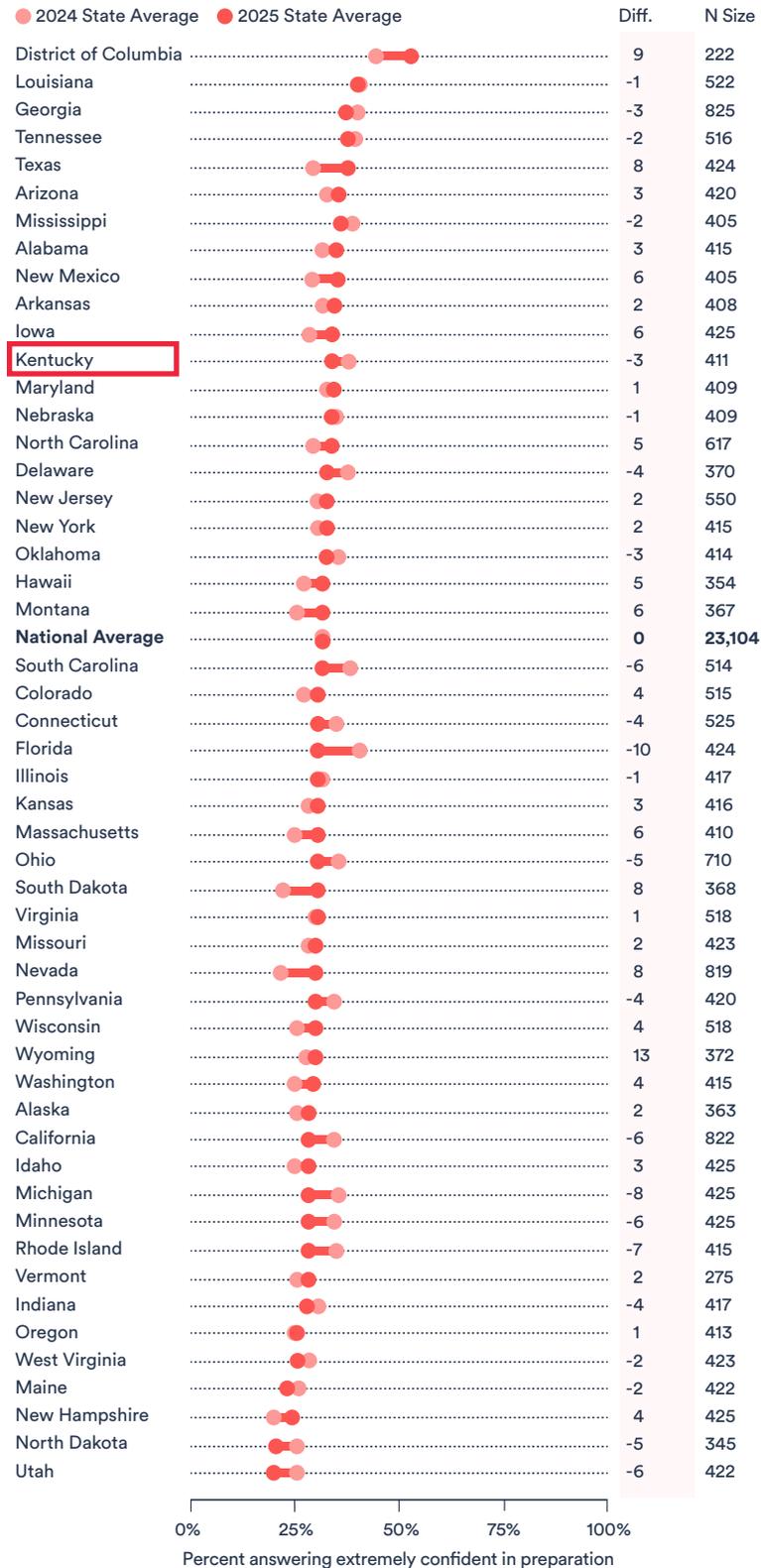
## CONFIDENCE IN COLLEGE PREPARATION BY STATE

Percentage who are extremely confident their child will be well prepared for entrance into and success in college upon graduation from high school



# CONFIDENCE IN COLLEGE PREPARATION BY STATE & YEAR

Percentage who are extremely confident their child will be well prepared for entrance into and success in college upon graduation from high school



## ABOUT THE PRICHARD COMMITTEE

Since 1983, the **Prichard Committee** has worked to study priority issues, inform the public and policy makers about best practices and mobilize citizens, business leaders, families, students, and other stakeholders in a shared mission to move Kentucky to the top tier of all states for education excellence and equity for all children, from their earliest years through postsecondary education.

## ABOUT 50CAN

**50CAN** is an education advocacy organization focused on building the dynamic, student-centered education system of the future so that all kids, regardless of address, receive a high quality education. At the center of this work is our support for local education advocates who together have secured more than 275 transformative policy wins since our founding in 2011. This advocacy work is complemented by fellowships to spark and amplify the voices of changemakers, support for educational entrepreneurs as they build proof points of a better tomorrow, and efforts to help elected leaders better serve the public through a deeper understanding of education policy.

## ABOUT EDGE RESEARCH

**Edge Research** tells data-driven stories that make our clients' programs, products, and brands successful. One of Edge's key verticals is education, which ranges from early childhood development, to K-12 and postsecondary education, to lifelong learning. We work for dozens of foundations, advocacy organizations, curriculum providers, associations, districts, schools and universities. Edge is constantly in the field talking to parents, students, teachers, administrators, and other education decision makers – getting the pulse on the issues that matter most.

