Parents, see themselves primarily responsible for their child’s success in school – more so than teachers, principals or their child. Of all parents, 63% say they understand the skills their child is expected to learn at their current grade level. 84% think they can make a fair amount or a lot of difference in their child’s academic progress.

Parents worry most about situations where their child has to make choices or face difficulties on their own. Parents who believe their child is performing at or above grade level in reading:

- 90% say their child is on track to meet learning goals and grade level expectations.
- Eighth graders reading at or above grade level, according to national data: 34%.

Parents’ perception of how kids are performing in school lags behind national data. Reading performance data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress 2015.

In today’s fractured world, parents have high expectations for their children. Across ethnicity, income and education levels, parents see getting to and through college as key.

Parents who say it is absolutely essential or very important that their child attend a 2- or 4-year college:

- Hispanic: 89%
- African American: 78%
- White: 88%

Current rates of college entrance and graduation (within six years):

- Hispanic: 42%
- African American: 37%
- White: 54%

The path to college isn’t always clear. 40% of parents say they would find most helpful:

1. College entrance/graduation data
2. College financial planning tools
3. Information on understanding what their child is learning and how to help with homework
4. Summer reading/math activities to avoid falling behind
5. Detailed learning goals by grade
6. Activities to improve student skills in English and math, sorted by need
7. Solutions on understanding where their child is in their education and how to help

Our new poll offers a glimpse into the hearts and minds of today’s public school parents. Parents 2016: Hearts and Minds of Parents in an Uncertain World was commissioned by Learning Heroes and conducted by Hart Research, in collaboration with Univision and in partnership with National PTA, National Urban League, NCLR and UNCF.