

SORA SCHOOLS RELEASES TIMELY TRENDS REPORT ON EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Disruptive Trends in Education are Highlighted by Sora Research & Analytics Labs' Parent Perspective Survey, December 2022



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[Sora Schools](#), along with a wide network of innovators and education experts, collaborated to round up what are the biggest forces shaping education in 2023. As an education company invested in students' success in the 21st century, [Sora](#) has launched a new research and analytics group - the Sora Learning Lab - to uncover important insights from parents, students and educators, and to help influence the future of school in a positive way.

As a result of their research, Sora has identified eight key trends in education today.

- Schools are – finally - being called to task on students' mental health.
- AI is completely rattling traditional school and reframing curricular opportunities.
- Families are embracing alternative school options like never before.
- Creative thinking (not technical skills) will be the future's most valuable ability.
- Teachers are facing an identity shift – from teaching to “coaching”.
- Gaming is now and will continue to be integral in education.
- Grading is entirely outdated, with mastery-based assessments taking center-stage.
- Online education is providing students with access to world-class private school education – at affordable prices.

Mental Health

- The Sora study found that 74% of parents are concerned their school is not doing enough to support student mental health. .
 - o There is an ongoing mental health crisis in the US currently, but schools are ill-equipped to handle students in crisis.
 - o At Sora, a student's purpose and meaning are at the center of their curriculum, giving the student ownership over what they are learning. When students are passionate about their school experience it enhances their well-being.

- o Sora advisors are equipped with a toolset to help them identify and address when a student needs support.

AI Will Transform Education

- Parents want schools to embrace new technology and cultural shifts. The Sora Learning Lab study found that up to 90% of parents believe at least one or more aspect of traditional schools are outdated.
 - o With the introduction of powerful and accessible new artificial intelligence tools, a profound societal impact is on the horizon, similar in scale to the introduction of the calculator or the world wide web.
 - o At Sora, instead of fighting against technology, the focus is on creating curricula that respect student interest. This is curricula that students WANT to do themselves for the sake of understanding more about the world.

Embracing Alternative School Options

- Sora discovered that 50% of parents would choose a different school for their child if cost and travel were no issue. The demand for more school choice is dramatically rising – and parents are taking action.
 - o The pandemic brought to light the fact that online education is a viable option for many students.
 - o Parents have learned that they can take control of their child's education and they do not need to settle for schools that don't serve them and their child.

Creative Thinking is Key

- A recent Gallup poll found 87% of teachers and 77% of parents agree that creativity in learning leads to more positive cognitive outcomes.
 - o Creative thinking is becoming the future's most valuable skill.
 - o Sora has addressed this shift in learning by tasking students at Sora to approach problems that they see in the real world, not in subjects. For example, in coastal engineering – a learning experience where students engineer solutions to protect cities from rising sea levels – they build foundational knowledge in environmental science, precalculus, and social sciences.

Teacher Identity Shift

- Sora's research found that only 37% of parents say their student has a mentor at school. Sora Schools aims to change that by having their advisors work with a maximum of ten students.
- The study also found that 88% of Sora students feel that they have at least one faculty member they feel comfortable talking to when they have a problem.

Gameplay is Encouraged

- A surprising finding of the Sora study is that 89% of parents believe that gaming has a role to play in education.
 - o 76% of American kids now regularly play video games. It is time to address how to utilize gaming skills in education models.

- o Research from one of the most [groundbreaking studies](#) happening now, the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study (supported by NIDA and NIH), children who regularly play video games are faster and more accurate on cognitive tasks than those who never play.
- o Playing video games could also enhance students' career prospects, primarily through improved skills in three areas: adaptability, communication, and resourcefulness.

Mastery-Based Assessment Instead of GPA

- The Sora study found that only 20% of parents believe testing effectively evaluates their children's learning.
- The research also found that just 36% of parents say that grades are an accurate representation of their student's knowledge or abilities.
- 67% of the parents surveyed said that standardized testing or one-size-fits-all curriculums are outdated.
- o Sora is eliminating the use of standardized tests and GPA. Instead, Sora evaluates students on something more important than grades: mastery.
- o This mastery model gives students the ability to demonstrate skills that employers or colleges are looking for and can translate students' mastery records into GPA-based transcripts when needed.

Learning Without Borders

- Sora discovered that at least 29% of parents are open to enrolling their student in an online school.
- o This finding reflects a number of cultural shifts: in particular, families wanting to continue the flexibility and mobility they discovered during the pandemic, and parents wanting to enroll their students in the best academic opportunities, regardless of where they live. Many parents also cited bullying and safety issues at their local in-person school for a reason they would consider an online school.
- o Sora provides students a global community without boundaries. Students are given the opportunity to develop a global perspective and can have peers in different states and/or different countries who they can engage, interact and learn from.

Sora is an online, project-based school offering student-centered learning.

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