

**2019  
Parent Perception Survey  
of Post-High School  
Career Options**

Kansas State Department of Education



# HIREPATHS

Your Kids. Endless Career Options.

A synopsis by  
Kristin Brighton and New Boston Creative Group, LLC,  
the team behind HirePaths

August 2019

# A Majority of Kansas Parents Hope Their Child Will Attend a Four-Year College or University

A spring 2019 Kansas Department of Education survey of nearly 19,000 Kansans found that a majority of parents hope their child attends a four-year college or university after high school graduation. Respondents were instructed to answer all the survey's questions about their oldest child who was on that day 18 years of age or younger.

Of the survey's 18,918 respondents, approximately 62.7% said they *hope their child attends a four-year college or university as their child's next step right after high school*.<sup>1</sup>

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

This study was created in partnership between the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) and New Boston Creative Group, LLC, of Manhattan. New Boston Creative Group is spearheading an industry-funded initiative called HirePaths to educate and inspire parents about the spectrum of career options for their children after high school. This survey will serve as benchmark data for that initiative, and may be repeated in 2022 to measure any changes in parent perceptions.<sup>2</sup>

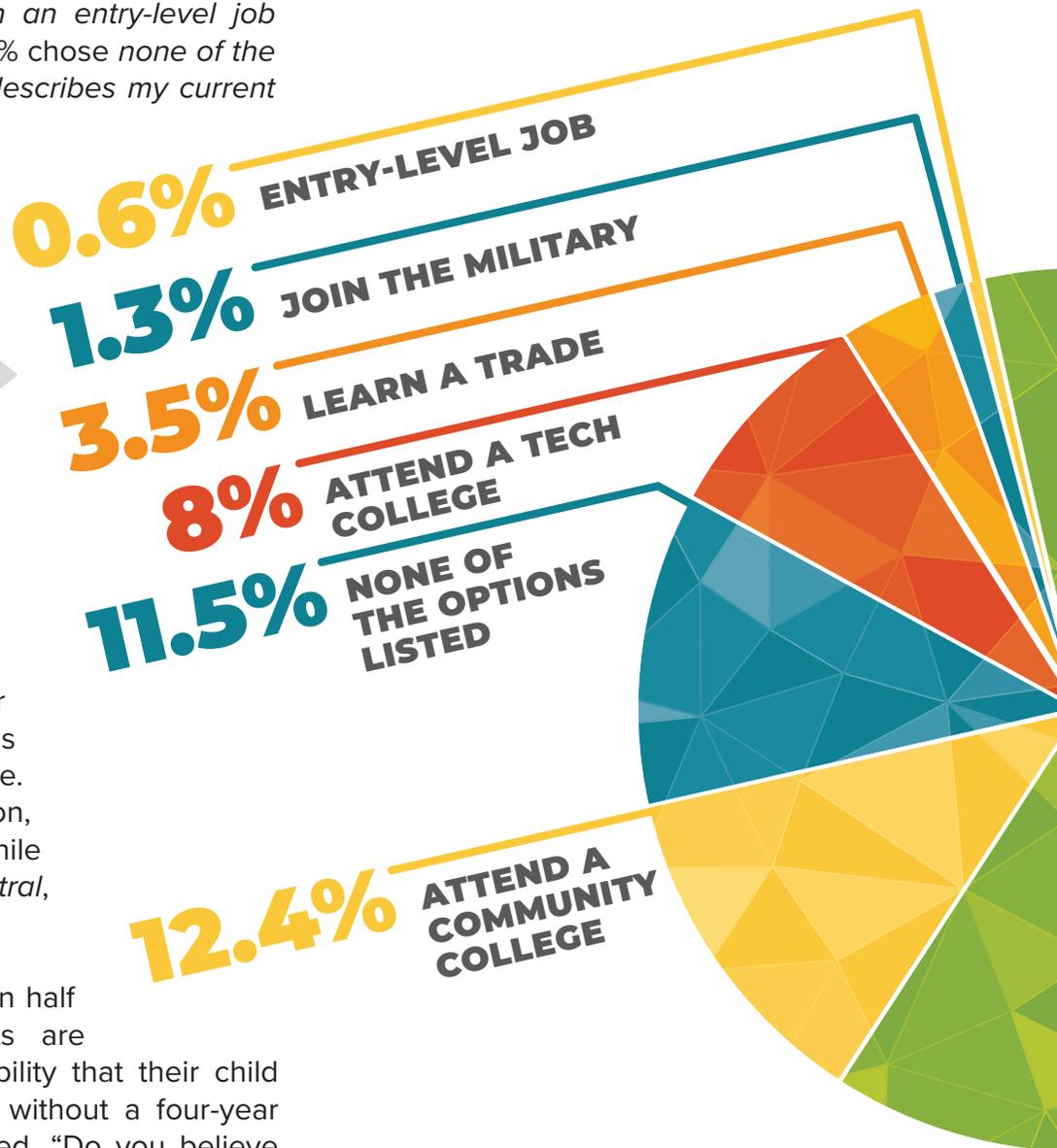
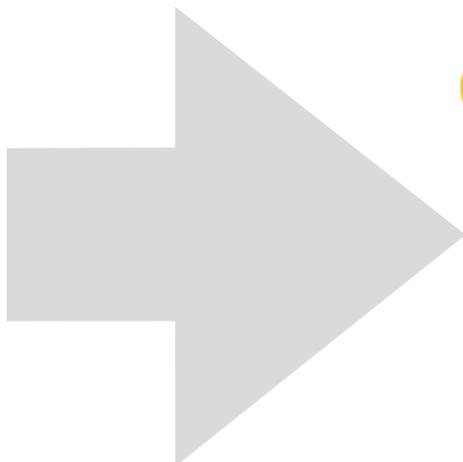


**62.7%**  
**HOPE THEIR CHILD  
ATTENDS A 4-YEAR  
COLLEGE**

<sup>1</sup>This percentage (54.5%) was lower among the small number of respondents (100) who completed the survey in Spanish.

<sup>2</sup>Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The survey gave participants other multiple-choice options as to what they hope their child does after high school, with 12.4% indicating they hope their child *attends a community college*, 8% hoping their child *attends a technical college*, and 3.5% hoping their child *can serve as an apprentice to learn a trade*. Other options parents were given include *entering the military* (1.3%), and *being hired in an entry-level job* (0.6%). Another 11.5% chose *none of the above accurately describes my current feelings*.



All respondents also were asked if they hope their child *someday* earns a bachelor's degree. For this question, 74.2% chose *yes*, while 24.9% chose *neutral*, and 1% chose *no*.

However, more than half of Kansas parents are open to the possibility that their child can be successful without a four-year degree. When asked, "Do you believe your child needs a bachelor's degree to be successful?" only 24.4% of the whole chose *yes*, 22.7% chose *neutral* and 52.9% *no*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that the results to this question were significantly different for respondents who completed the survey in Spanish, with 32.8% choosing *yes*, 37.1% *neutral*, and 30% *no*.

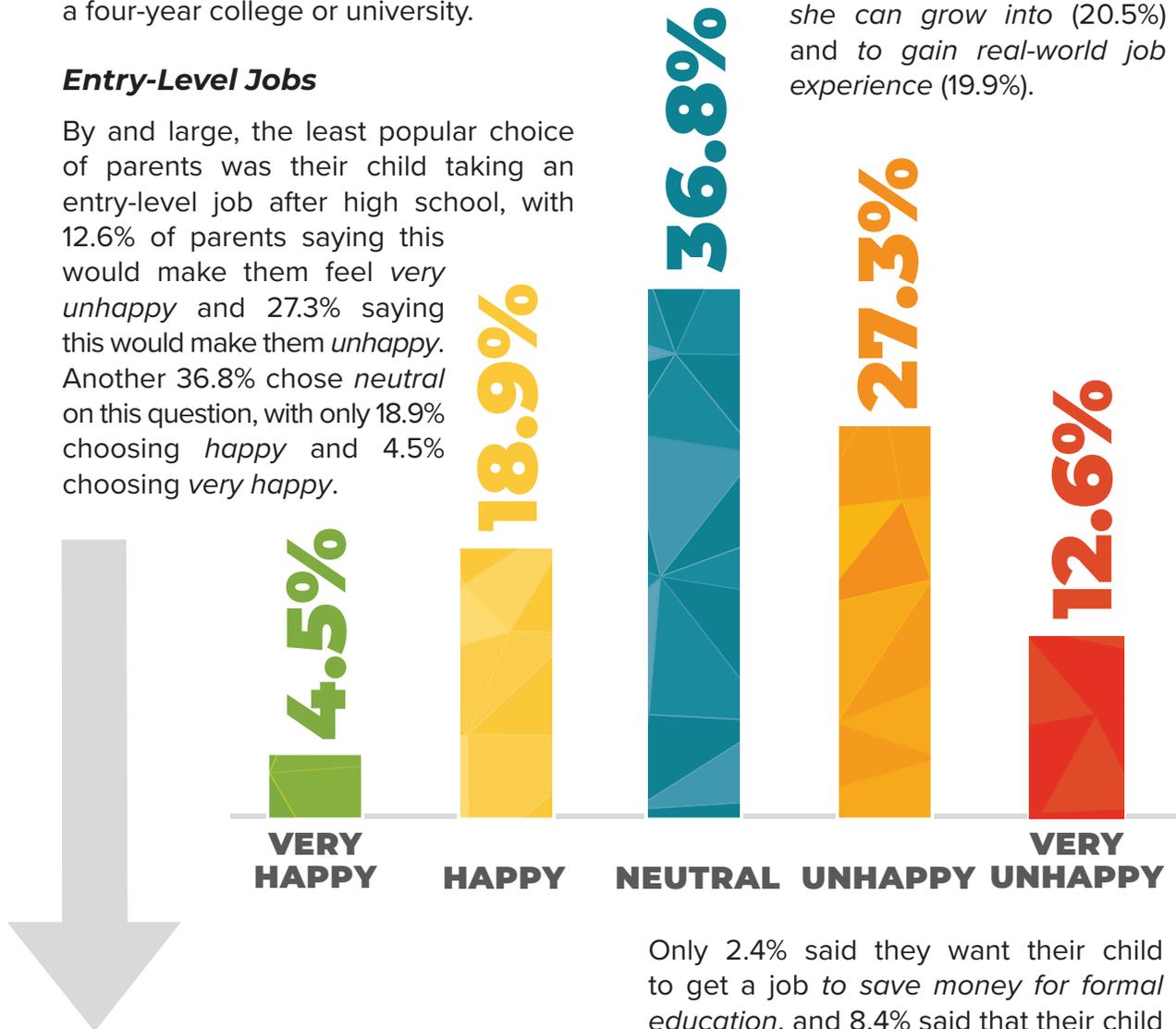
# An In-Depth Look at Parents' Feelings About Post-Graduation Options

The survey offered a series of questions that looked at parents' feelings about different options their child will have after high school, including going straight into the workforce in an entry-level job, becoming an apprentice, or attending a technical college, community college or a four-year college or university.

## Entry-Level Jobs

By and large, the least popular choice of parents was their child taking an entry-level job after high school, with 12.6% of parents saying this would make them feel *very unhappy* and 27.3% saying this would make them *unhappy*. Another 36.8% chose *neutral* on this question, with only 18.9% choosing *happy* and 4.5% choosing *very happy*.

On a later question that asked those who said they hope their child is hired for an entry-level job after high school why they feel this way, the top answers were *so that my child can financially support himself/herself* (30.7%), *to explore a career path he/she can grow into* (20.5%) and *to gain real-world job experience* (19.9%).



# ENTRY-LEVEL JOBS

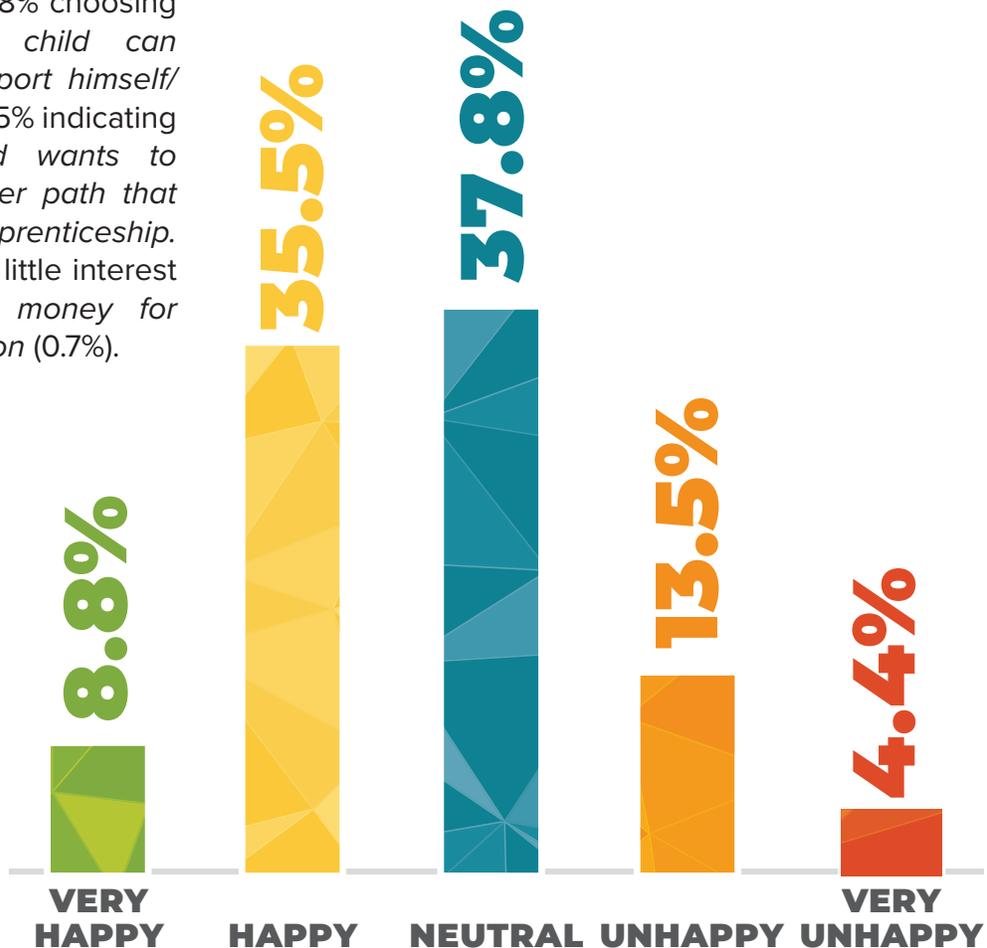
are the least popular choice of parents

Only 2.4% said they want their child to get a job *to save money for formal education*, and 8.4% said that their child wants *to pursue a career path that requires on-the-job experience*.

## Apprenticeships

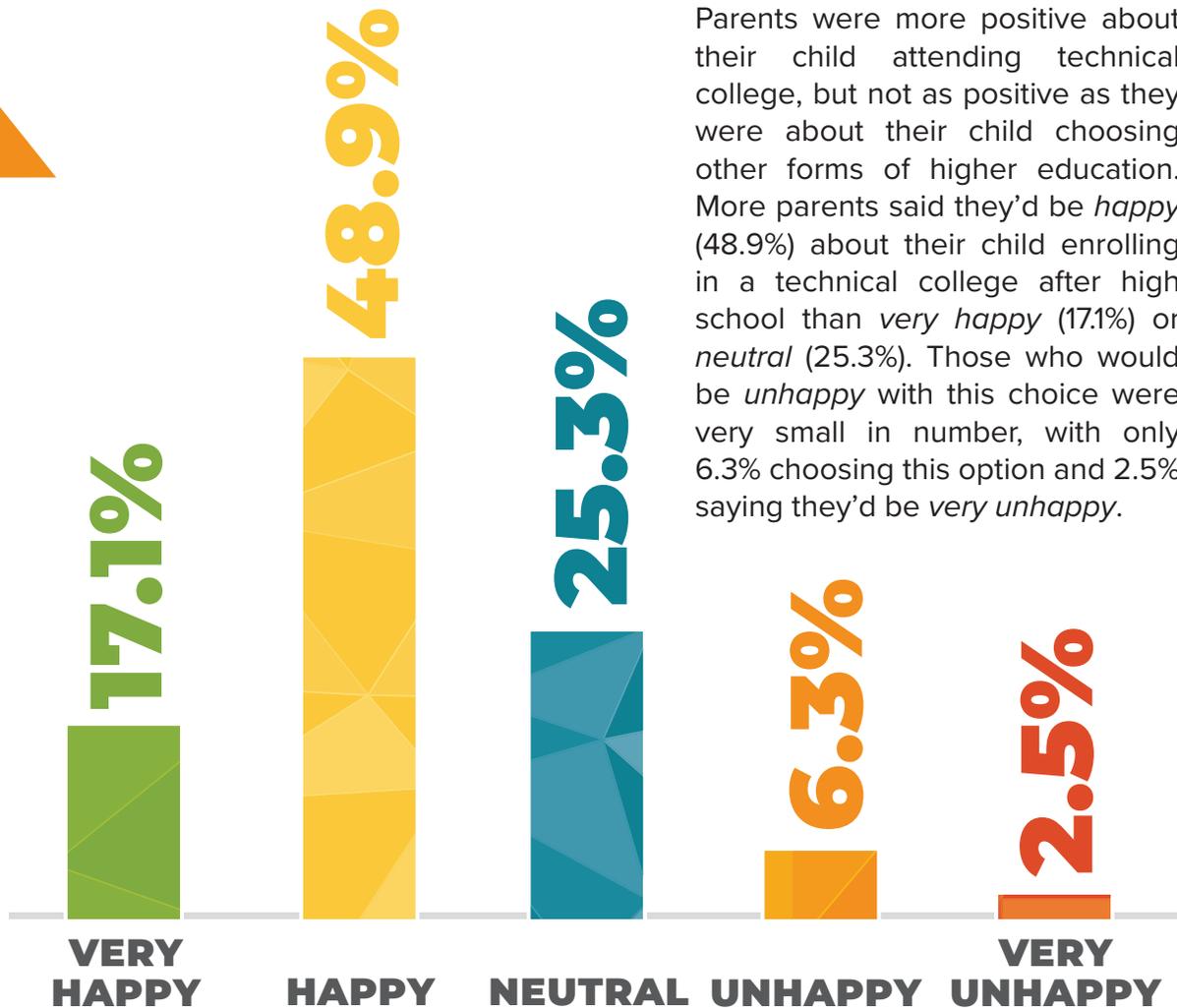
Kansas parents had mixed feelings about their children pursuing apprenticeships, with the largest percentage (37.8%) reporting they'd feel *neutral* if their child took this path, 35.5% choosing they'd be *happy* if their child became an apprentice and 8.8% indicating they'd be *very happy*. Of those who were less positive about apprenticeships, 13.5% said they'd be *unhappy* and 4.4% said they'd be *very unhappy* if their child chose this path.

Those who indicated they hope their child will serve as an apprentice after high school were later asked why they chose that option. The top reason selected was *to explore a career path he/she can grow into* (35.6%), with another 20.5% choosing *to gain real-world job experience*, 18.8% choosing *so that my child can financially support himself/herself*, and 12.5% indicating that *my child wants to pursue a career path that requires an apprenticeship*. Receiving very little interest was *to save money for formal education* (0.7%).



### Technical College

Parents were more positive about their child attending technical college, but not as positive as they were about their child choosing other forms of higher education. More parents said they'd be *happy* (48.9%) about their child enrolling in a technical college after high school than *very happy* (17.1%) or *neutral* (25.3%). Those who would be *unhappy* with this choice were very small in number, with only 6.3% choosing this option and 2.5% saying they'd be *very unhappy*.



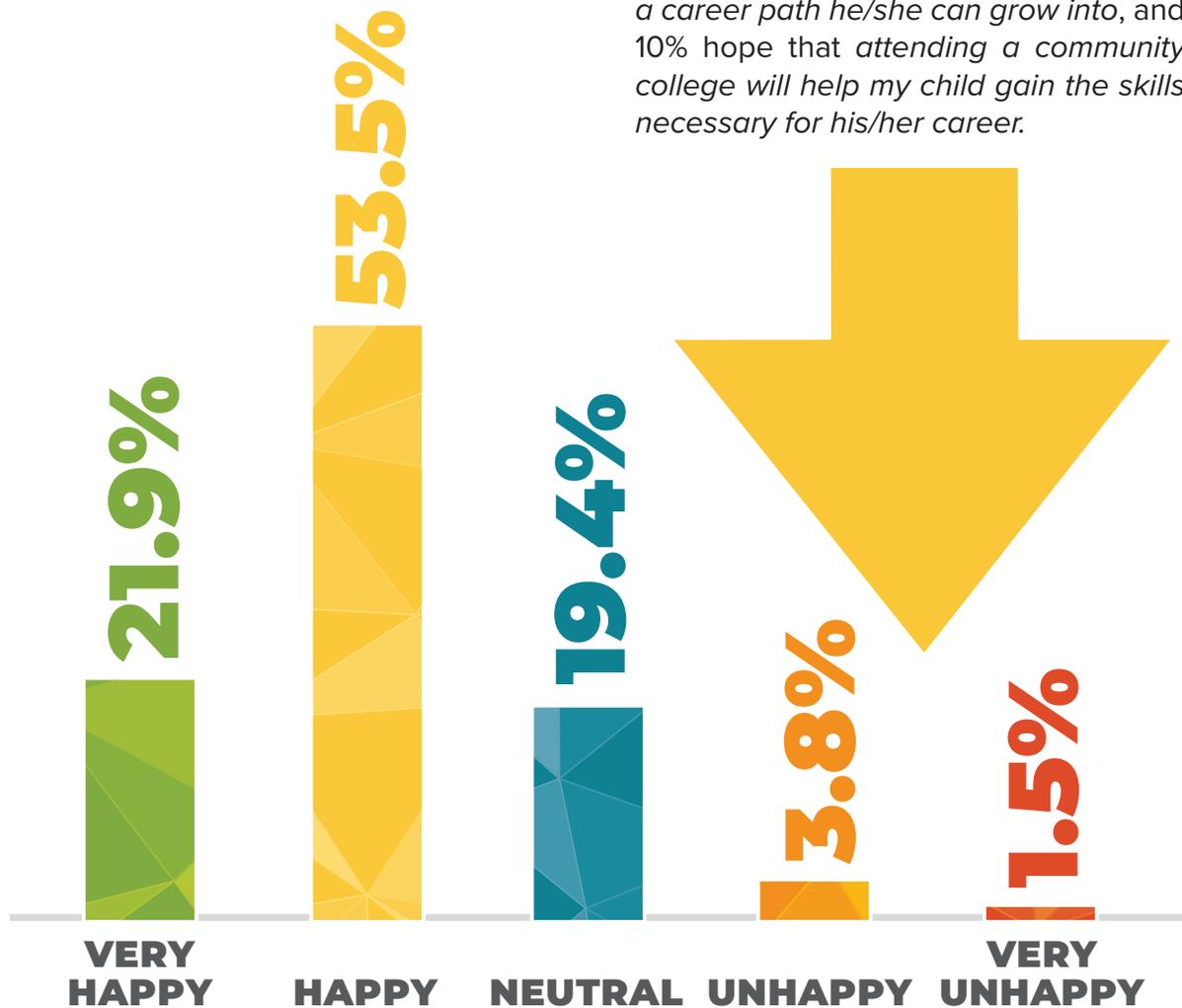
Nearly  
**70%** would be  
**PLEASED**  
if their child attended  
**TECHNICAL  
COLLEGE**

When those who said they hope their child will enroll in technical college after high school were later asked why they felt this way, the top response was *my child wants to pursue a career that requires the specialized training best provided at a technical college* (31%). Another 26.5% said that *attending a technical college will help my child gain the skills necessary for his/her career*, 15.5% chose so that *my child can financially support himself/herself* and 15.1% chose to *explore a career path he/she can grow into*.

## Community College

Kansas parents feel very positively about community colleges, with 53.5% indicating they'd be *happy* if their child went to a community college after high school, and 21.9% *very happy*. Another 19.4% said they'd be *neutral* about this choice, 3.8% would be *unhappy* and 1.5% *very unhappy*.

The most common reason parents hope their child will attend a community college is *to help my child later transfer to a four-year college/university* (45.6%), which indicates that many parents see community college as a stepping stone to a bachelor's degree. Another 20.4% see community college as a way to *explore a career path he/she can grow into*, and 10% hope that *attending a community college will help my child gain the skills necessary for his/her career*.



Parents feel very  
**POSITIVELY** about  
**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Almost

# 90%

of parents would be

# PLEASED



### Four-Year College or University

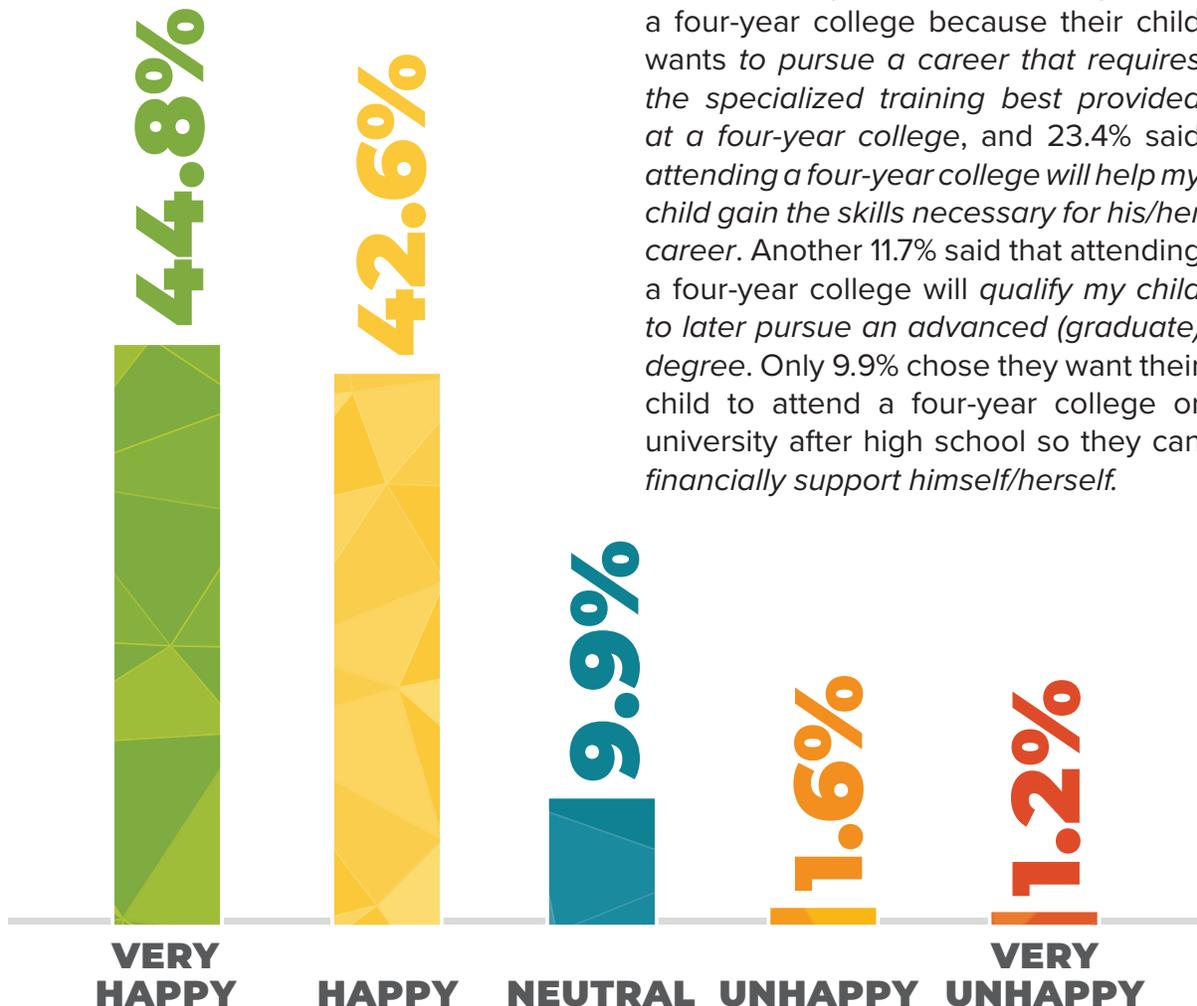
Their child's enrollment in a four-year college/university bachelor's degree program would please the largest percentage of Kansas parents, with 44.8% saying they'd be *very happy* if their child enrolled in a four-year college/university and 42.6% *happy*. Only 9.9% said they were *neutral* about this option, 1.6% would be *unhappy* and 1.2% very

if their child attended a

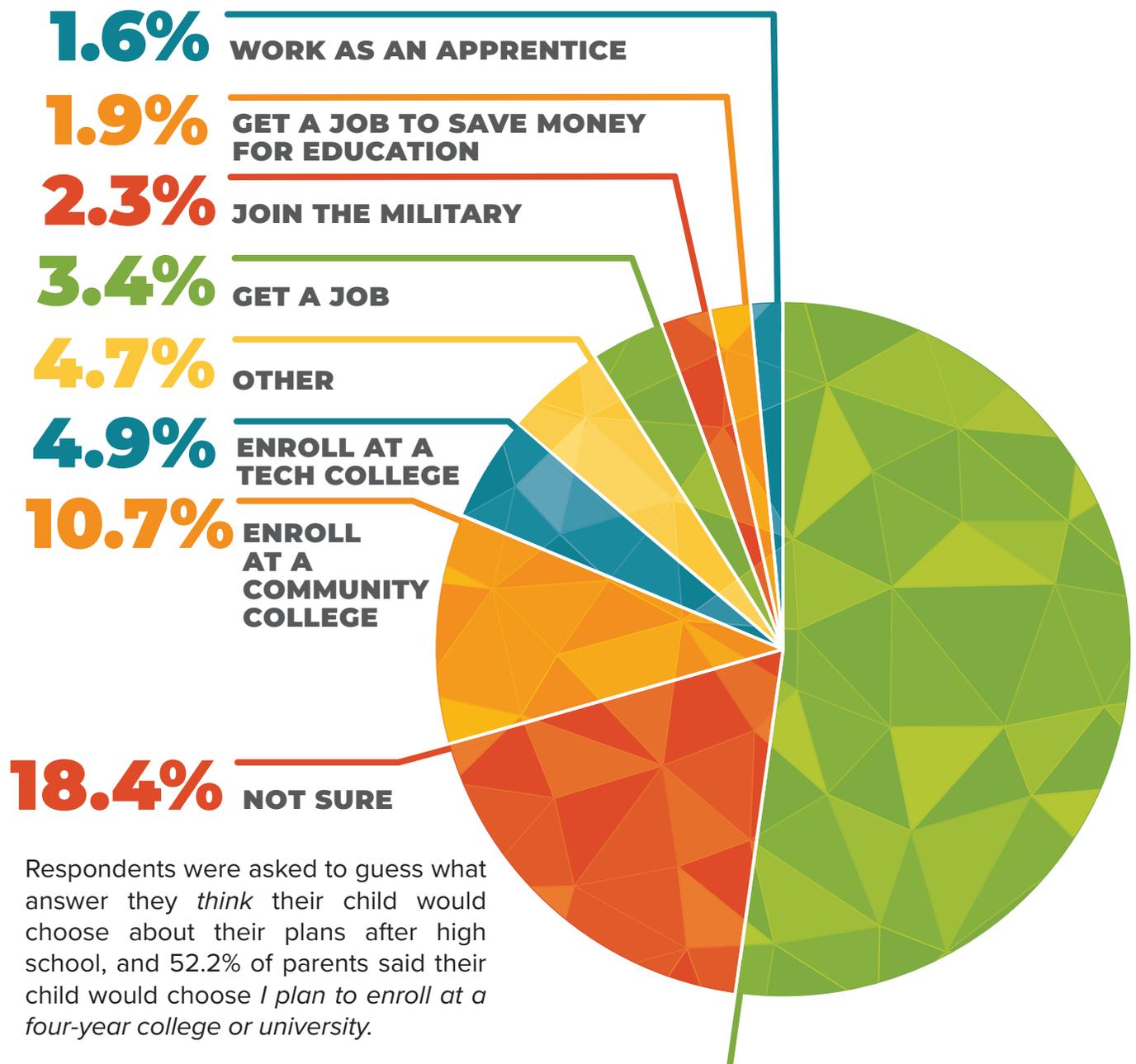
## FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

*unhappy* if their child enrolled in a four-year bachelor's degree program.

The reason why parents want their child to attend a four-year college? Their child's career interests. Slightly more than 30% said they hope their child goes to a four-year college because their child wants to pursue a career that requires the specialized training best provided at a four-year college, and 23.4% said attending a four-year college will help my child gain the skills necessary for his/her career. Another 11.7% said that attending a four-year college will qualify my child to later pursue an advanced (graduate) degree. Only 9.9% chose they want their child to attend a four-year college or university after high school so they can financially support himself/herself.



## What They Think Their Child Wants



Respondents were asked to guess what answer they *think* their child would choose about their plans after high school, and 52.2% of parents said their child would choose *I plan to enroll at a four-year college or university*.

The second most common answer was *not sure* (18.4%), and the third most common answer was *I plan to enroll at a community college* (10.7%). Only 4.9% chose *I plan to enroll at a technical college*, 3.4% chose *I plan to get a job*, 2.3% said *I plan to enlist in the military* and only 1.6% chose *I plan to work as an apprentice for a period of time to learn a skilled trade*.

**52.2%**  
**THINK THEIR CHILD WILL WANT TO ENROLL AT A 4-YEAR COLLEGE**

## Perceptions of High School Dual-Credit Programs

Parents greatly appreciate the opportunities students receive through career-training programs in high school that allow them to earn dual high school and college credit. When asked how they felt (or would feel) about their child pursuing such career training in high school, 53.5% responded

they were/would be *very happy*, 31.8% were/would be *happy*, and 11.4% chose *neutral*. Only a very small percentage of respondents said their child's choice of such programs made them *unhappy* (1.1%) or *very unhappy* (2.2%).

## Impact of Higher Education Tuition Costs

Respondents were asked, "Does the cost of higher education prevent you from wanting your child to enter a formal education program right after high school?" The results showed that slightly more than half of respondents aren't deterred by the price tag of higher education, with 52.5% choosing *no*, 26% *yes*, and 21.6% *neutral*.

However, this doesn't mean that parents are not worried about their child acquiring student loan debt. On the contrary, more than 71% chose *yes* to the question, "Are you concerned about your child acquiring student loan debt to attend a formal education program right after high school?" Nearly 10% (9.8%) chose the *neutral* response to this question, and only 19.1% chose *no*.

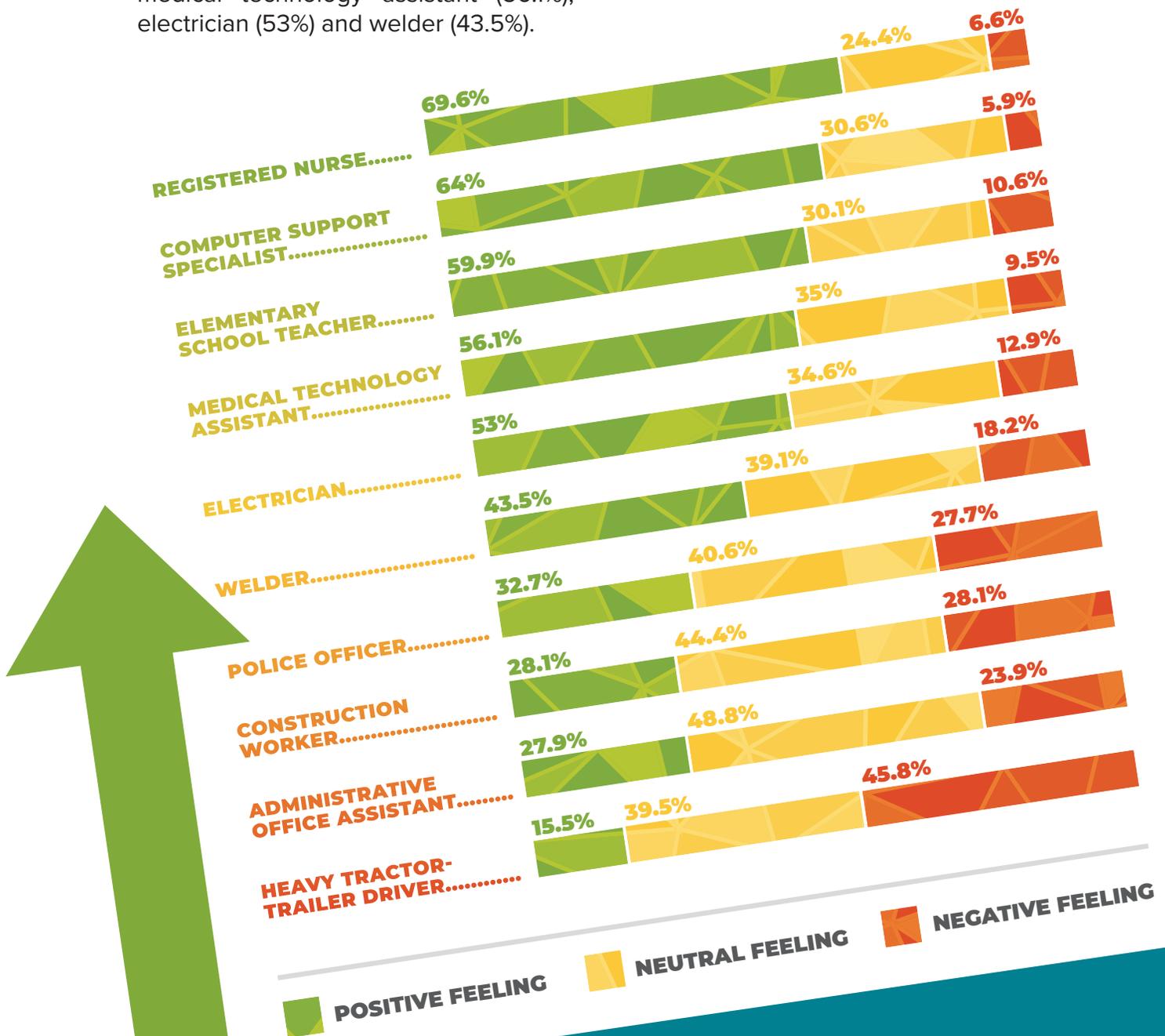


# Perceptions of Ten In-Demand Careers

The survey tested parents' perceptions of ten in-demand careers in the state of Kansas to see whether they have a *positive*, *neutral*, or *negative* feeling about their child pursuing employment in that field. Careers that received more *positive* responses than *neutral* or *negative* responses included registered nurse (69.6%), computer support specialist (64%), elementary school teacher (59.9%), medical technology assistant (56.1%), electrician (53%) and welder (43.5%).

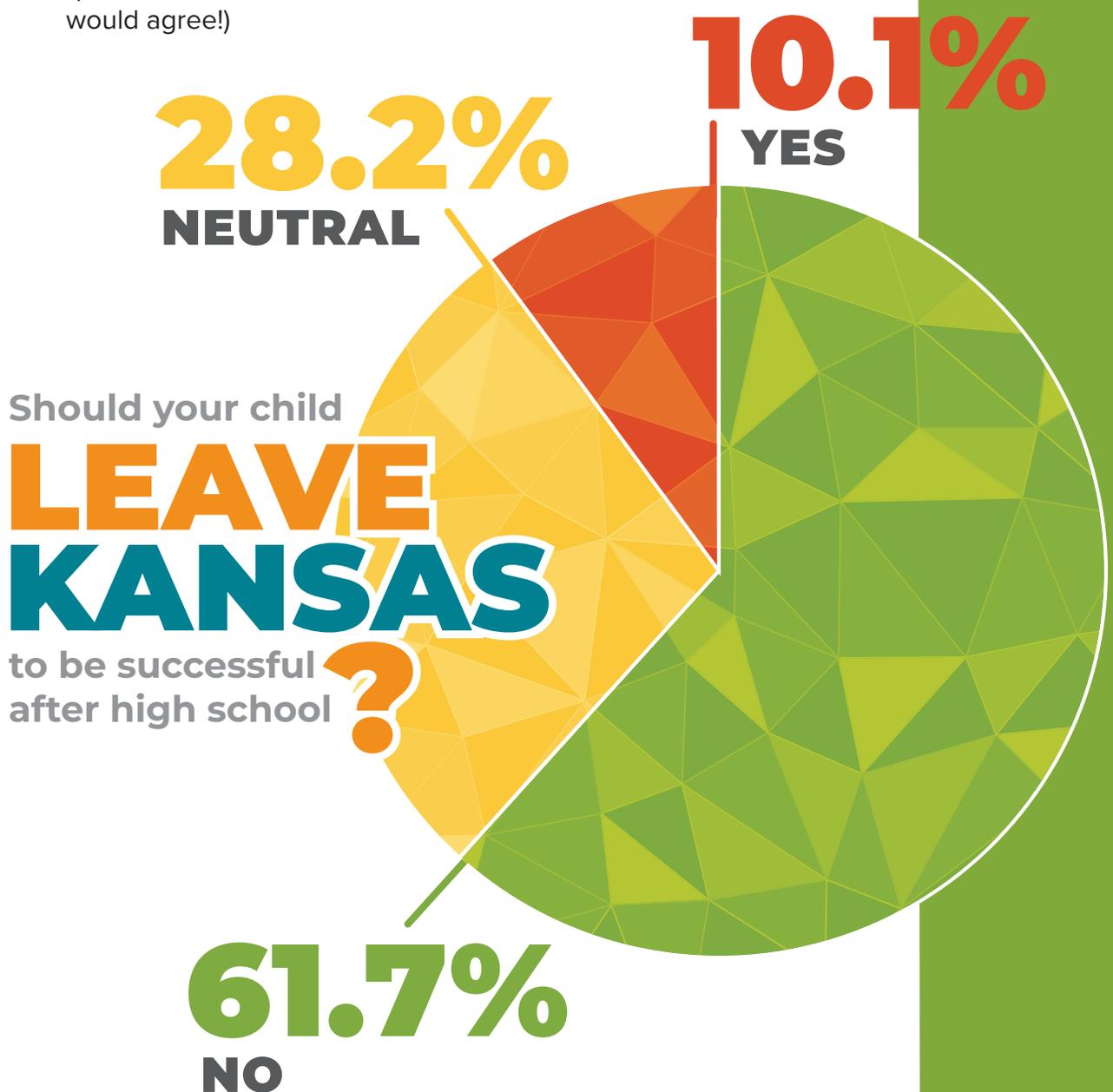
Careers that scored highest on *neutral* responses included police officer (40.6%), construction worker (44.4%), and administrative office assistant (48.8%).

The career that received more *negative* responses than *positive* or *neutral* was heavy tractor-trailer driver (45.8%).



## Staying in Kansas After Graduation

Parents were asked if they felt their child should leave the state of Kansas after high school to be successful, and the good news for the state is that only 10.1% of parents chose *yes* and 28.2% chose *neutral*. An overwhelming majority (61.7%) chose *no*, showing that most Kansas parents believe their children can establish successful lives and careers without leaving the state. (This begs the question as to whether their children would agree!)



## Details About the Survey and Its Participants

**METHODOLOGY** — The KSDE invited all school districts in the state to participate via email. The survey instrument was built in Survey Monkey. Districts that chose to participate shared links to the survey with parents either through email or social media. The survey included a cover letter from KSDE explaining the project's goals.

**PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS** — In total, 18,918 respondents participated, of which 97.5% reported having a child or children 18 years of age or younger. Nearly all respondents (99.7%) reported they live in Kansas.

**GENDER OF RESPONDENTS** — Of those who took the survey, 79.3% were female and only 18.1% were male, with 1.6% choosing *prefer not to answer* on the gender question.

**AGE** — Most of the participants were in their 30s or 40s, with 35.7% of respondents between the ages of 30-39 and 43.7% between the ages of 40-49.

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT** — When asked what their highest completed level of education was, the most common answer was a *bachelor's degree* at 32.1%, with 26.5% reporting a *graduate degree*. Another 11.7% had *some post-high school but no degree*, 8.3% had a *post-high school certification or had completed a training program for work in a specific industry*, and 12.5% reported an *associate degree*. Only 7.6% chose *GED or high school degree*, and 1.2% did not have a high school diploma.

**RACE/ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS** — Respondents primarily described themselves as *Caucasian/white* (86.8%), with 4.2% choosing *Hispanic or Latino/a*, 1.1% choosing *African American/black*, and 1.4% choosing *multiracial*. All other racial/ethnic groups accounted for less than 1% of the respondents, and 4.3% chose *prefer not to answer* on the question about race/ethnicity.

**AGE OF CHILD IN QUESTION.** Respondents were asked to answer questions specific to their oldest child who was age 18 or younger on the day the survey was taken. When the data was analyzed, researchers found most of the respondents answered questions in reference to a child age 11 or older. Only 26.5% reported they were answering questions in regard to a child age 10 or younger.

**GENDER OF CHILD IN QUESTION.** Parents answered questions about a female student 50.7% of the time and a male student 46.7% of the time. Another 2.5% chose *prefer not to answer* regarding the gender of their oldest child.

**RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILD IN QUESTION.** When describing their oldest child (age 18 or younger), 82% said the child would be best described as *Caucasian/white*, 4.7% *Hispanic or Latino/a*, 4.8% *multiracial*, and 4.3% chose *prefer not to answer*. Slightly more than 1% said their child would be best described as *African American/black* (1.4%) or *American Indian or Alaskan native* (1.2%).



Get Involved with  
**HIREPATHS**

**HirePaths** is an industry-funded campaign that features real-life stories to create a wider understanding and acceptance of the urgent need for young people to train for well-paying, in-demand skilled labor positions.

If your company or organization would like to become involved in our program, or if you'd like to share a story we could feature about a young person's path to success, please contact **Kristin Brighton** with HirePaths at 785-587-8185 or [kristin@newbostoncreative.com](mailto:kristin@newbostoncreative.com).



**HIREPATHS**  
Your Kids. Endless Career Options.

For more  
information  
about  
HirePaths, call  
**785-587-8185**



[hirepaths.com](http://hirepaths.com)