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Jill Buterbaugh  
Executive Vice President  
Krile Communications  
[jill@krilecommunications.com](mailto:jill@krilecommunications.com)  
614-326-9054

Shawn Salamone  
Director of Public Information, University  
Relations, Department of Communication  
Arts & Sciences, Baldwin Wallace University  
[ssalamon@bw.edu](mailto:ssalamon@bw.edu)  
440-826-2322 office | 440-829-0568 mobile

### **New Survey Shows Ohio Parents Overwhelmingly Support “Whole Child” Education**

*Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio partnered with Baldwin Wallace University’s Community Research Institute to capture the views of parents on the state’s educational framework*

**(COLUMBUS, OH)** – The first statewide survey to ask Ohio parents to weigh in on “whole child” approaches to education finds broad approval among K-12 parents.

“Finding Unity & Common Ground: What Ohio Parents Want for their Children’s Educations,” conducted by the [Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio \(CDF-Ohio\)](#) in partnership with the [Baldwin Wallace University Community Research Institute \(BW CRI\)](#), finds robust support among parents for free school nutrition services for all students, school-based mental health support, and the teaching of life skills and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools.

The results of the poll find that parents back comprehensive, “whole child” approaches in education that prioritize strong school district, family, and community partnerships to meet the needs of students.

#### **Understanding SEL**

The report details that Ohio parents may not necessarily be familiar with or fully understand the term social emotional learning (SEL) as the process through which people acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy behaviors, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, show empathy and work successfully with others.

Parents broadly support teaching these skills in schools, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship, and responsible decision-making, but survey respondents were slightly less supportive if they were less familiar with the term.

#### **Parents as Partners**

“As Ohio works to meet our children’s developmental needs, especially in the wake of the pandemic’s impact, continued parent support and partnership with schools is key, and this means raising awareness of

what the Whole Child Framework includes,” said Alison Paxson, Senior Policy Associate for CDF-Ohio.

“These survey results give us hope that there is more unity and common ground among us than we might realize and that this means schools and families are aligned on the importance of continuing to work together to strengthen, not counter, the supports children rely on both at home and in school.”



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Ohio's [Whole Child Framework](#) is aimed at meeting students' social-emotional, physical and safety needs, in addition to academics. The comprehensive approach relies on parents to partner with their school district and community to ensure every student in Ohio graduates with the skills needed to succeed in life.

"This comprehensive statewide survey captures the voice of Ohio parents who broadly approve of the specific methods and strategies within the Whole Child Framework, regardless of their geographic region, how much money they make, race, religion, political affiliation, gender, education, or age," said Tom Sutton, Director of BW CRI. "Bottom line, Ohio parents overwhelmingly support whole child approaches and trust educators."

**Survey highlights:**

- Ohio parents support free school meals for all students – making sure that all children have the nutrition they need to be healthy and learn.
- Ohio parents support mental health priorities in schools and want increased funding to support more on-site school-based services for students.
- Ohio parents support the Whole Child Framework and approaches to support the whole child in schools that prioritize equity in education.
- Ohio parents trust their child's classroom teachers to teach age-appropriate content and be good role models.
- Ohio parents support the teaching of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in schools to set their children up for future success.

[View the executive summary and full report.](#)

**About Baldwin Wallace University's Community Research Institute**

The BW CRI provides research and analysis services to community nonprofit and government organizations in Ohio while engaging BW students in opportunities for applied research.

**About the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio**

The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

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