



NATIONAL HYBRID SCHOOLS SURVEY 2022

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01 Introduction

This is the first annual report of the National Hybrid Schools Project at Kennesaw State University. The purpose of this first-of-its-kind report is to share the information we have collected this year on hybrid schools around the United States

02 What are “Hybrid Schools”?

The schools this report explores go by a variety of names: “hybrid schools,” “hybrid homeschools,” “collegiate model schools,” and others. Some of these entities identify as “schools,” shunning the “homeschool” label, while others think of themselves as collections of homeschoolers who come together as organized groups several times per week – they may not think of themselves as “schools” at all¹. Our task for this report has been to try to define this set of hybrid institutions with some kind of operational consistency. The defining characteristics of these entities for our purposes are that 1. most or all of the curriculum is decided by the school (though varying levels of instruction and grading may be done by parents), and 2. students attend live classes fewer than 5 days per week in a physical building, and are “homeschooled” the rest of the week². They may offer a la carte classes, but we excluded organizations that seemed to only offer a la carte classes. Our definition excludes 5-day schools, but in some cases 5-day schools also operate hybrid-style programs, and we included examples of such arrangements in our survey. Full time conventional schools and homeschool co-ops (and full time homeschooling) are all arrangements we respect and which meet the needs of many students, but in this report we sought to include true hybrid schools, not full time schools which allowed homeschoolers to take a few classes, but also not homeschool co-ops which operate too loosely to meet most people’s common conception of a “school.”

One can imagine the policy and regulatory issues that may arise from a set of schools who custom-design themselves in ways that may make them impossible for states and localities to categorize consistently³. This may pose problems for policymakers, but for these schools, this bespoke nature is a feature, not a bug. These schools tend to avoid the political battles involved in startup charter schools, and are less of a financial lift to create compared to five-day, conventional private schools⁴. Still, to learn about the regulatory situations these schools face in the states, we asked questions in this survey to help define the policy environment in which hybrid schools operate around the country.

¹ Wearne (2021)

² Wearne (2020). For additional discussion, see for example: McShane, M. Q. (2021).

³ *Ibid.* See Chapter 7: Policy Implications

⁴ <https://lawliberty.org/bespoke-platoons/>

03 Quick Facts

- ◆ Hybrid School growth seems to be concentrated in suburban areas, but is still present in urban and rural locales
- ◆ The average Hybrid School enrolls approximately 227 students, with the majority of this enrollment being concentrated in Kindergarten through 5th grade
- ◆ The majority of hybrid schools identify themselves as being religiously affiliated, with 83% of respondents indicating a religious affiliation.
- ◆ Most hybrid schools employ a fairly low number of teachers, and rely primarily on part-time staff; 50% of respondents reported employing 19 or fewer teachers, and 79% of respondents reported having no full time teachers.
- ◆ The average annual tuition for a Hybrid School is \$4,158.

04 Methods and Data

As full-time homeschoolers are difficult to sample for research purposes⁵, hybrid schools as a category also pose problems for research attempting gain a clear picture of the landscape. Hybrid schools which fully consider themselves to be private schools might possibly show up in a dataset like the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Private School Universe Survey.⁶ But not nearly all hybrid schools classify themselves this way, as will be discussed below. Hybrid schools which consider their students to be collections of homeschoolers may have some of their families appear in the National Household Education Survey⁷, and some recent research has had some success locating hybrid schoolers using this dataset⁸. Neither of these, however, would provide a full picture of hybrid schools around the country. To complicate matters further, some hybrid schools are organized as charter schools⁹. These might possibly appear in the NCES Common Core of Data¹⁰. Yet more hybrid schools are set up as programs within existing private or public schools, in which case they would likely not show up clearly in any existing large-scale dataset. Even when these schools show up in existing datasets, they likely have no clear marker to identify themselves specifically as “hybrid schools.” Creating a dataset focused on these schools, then, becomes an ongoing effort of communication with hybrid schools

⁵ Kunzman and Gaither (2020)

⁶ NCES (c)

⁷ NCES (b)

⁸ Cheng, A., & Hamlin, D. (2021). *Contemporary Homeschooling Arrangements: An analysis of three waves of nationally representative data.*

⁹ Wearne (2019)

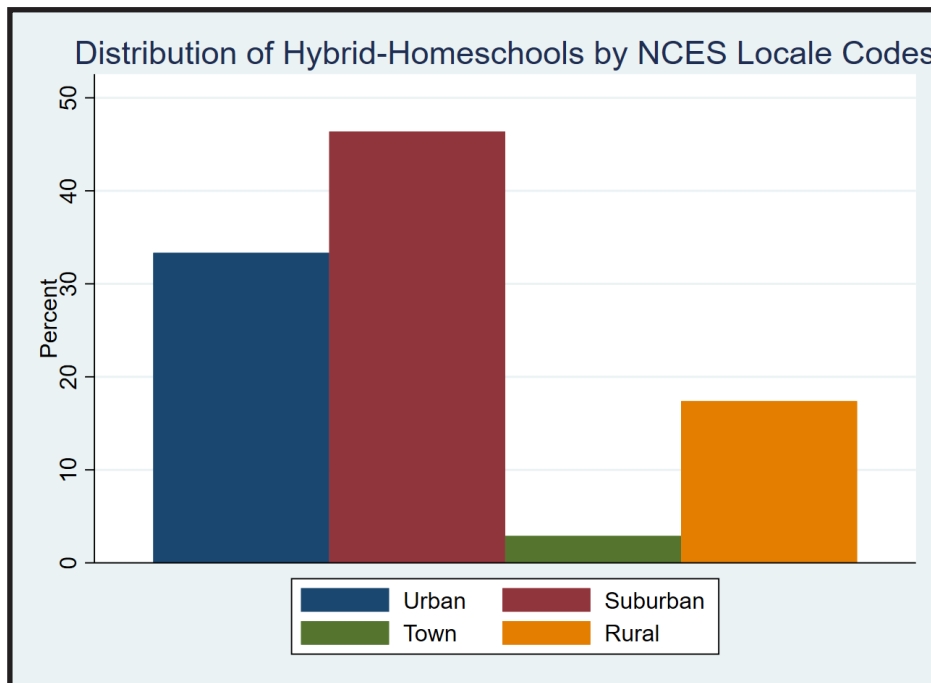
¹⁰ NCES (a)

and school networks to find peer/member schools, online research, and fieldwork to find and curate the universe of schools. This project is an attempt to locate hybrid schools, within the parameters described above, and to report on data they provide back to us as a defined group. The data discussed in this report are drawn from an electronic survey sent to hybrid school leaders. Those leaders were asked to complete it themselves, or to designate the task to someone employed at their school who is knowledgeable about their school's operations. The survey was open from October 11, 2021 through November 5, 2021 (four weeks total), and in part follows questions similar to some in the NCES Private School Universe Survey. 73 schools responded to our survey, representing 28 states (including Washington, D.C.). Some of these schools belong to networks of hybrid schools, while many of them are independent startups. Most are privately-run, though a number of them are public charter schools or programs started by public school systems. We know there are hybrid schools in other states, and possibly in every state; we hope to identify them and to gain their participation as well as more of our non-respondent schools' participation, in future editions of this report.

06 Urbanicity

Hybrid schools seem to be a mostly suburban/urban phenomenon. Based on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definitions, nearly 50 percent of responding schools were located in “suburban” areas, with just over 30 percent in “urban” areas, and just under 20 percent in “rural” areas.

Figure 2: Hybrid School Distribution by NCES Locale Codes



Notes:

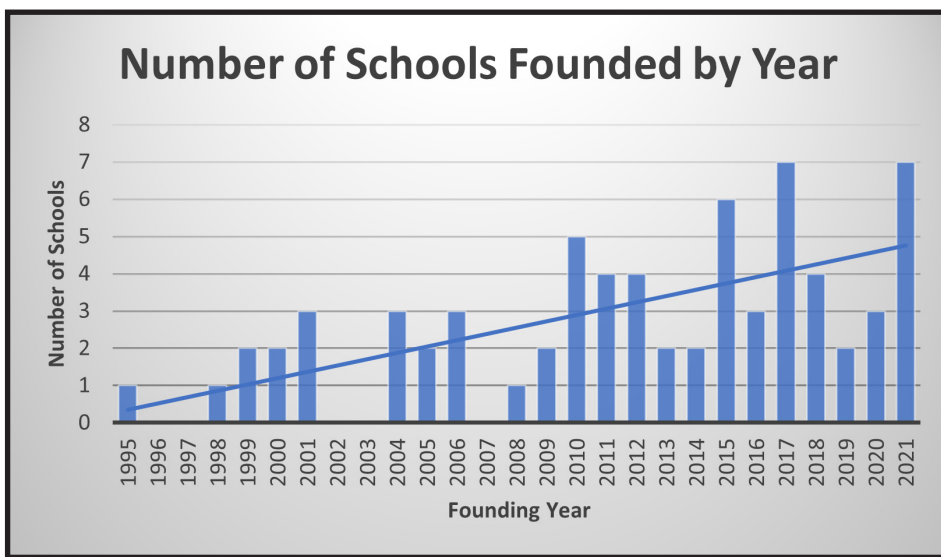
- a. Categories are based on NCES Locale Codes, with all “City” codes grouped together, all “Suburban” codes grouped together, all “Town” codes grouped together, and all “Rural” codes grouped together.
- b. See Gevert (2015) for a discussion of NCES Locale Codes and their definitions.
- c. For the purposes of this report, schools were assigned to a locale code based on their self-reported address information.

07 Characteristics

7.1 School Ages

Founding dates for respondents range from 1995 all the way through 2021. The mean start year for schools is 2012. A noticeable trend of accelerating school openings is apparent - over the last decade or so, interest in starting these schools appears to be growing.

Figure 3: Hybrid School Founding Frequencies



Notes:

- a. This figure was generated from a sample of 71 survey responses and produced by averaging within each state all responses to the question “In what academic year did your school begin operation?”.
- b. The trend line in the above figure represents a line of best fit for the average number of hybrid schools which opened per year from respondents to this survey.

7.2 Enrollments

Table 1: Hybrid School Enrollments by

	Overall	K-5	6-8	9-12
Mean	226.6	99.4	47.5	47.4
Min	7	0	0	0
Max	1960	929	578	430

^a The K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 categories do not fully encompass the span of grades contained in the Overall category, exclude students enrolled in Pre-K classes. Pre-K students are included in the Overall column.

^b The minimum number of students enrolled in the non Overall category is 0 because not all hybrid schools enroll students from all grades.

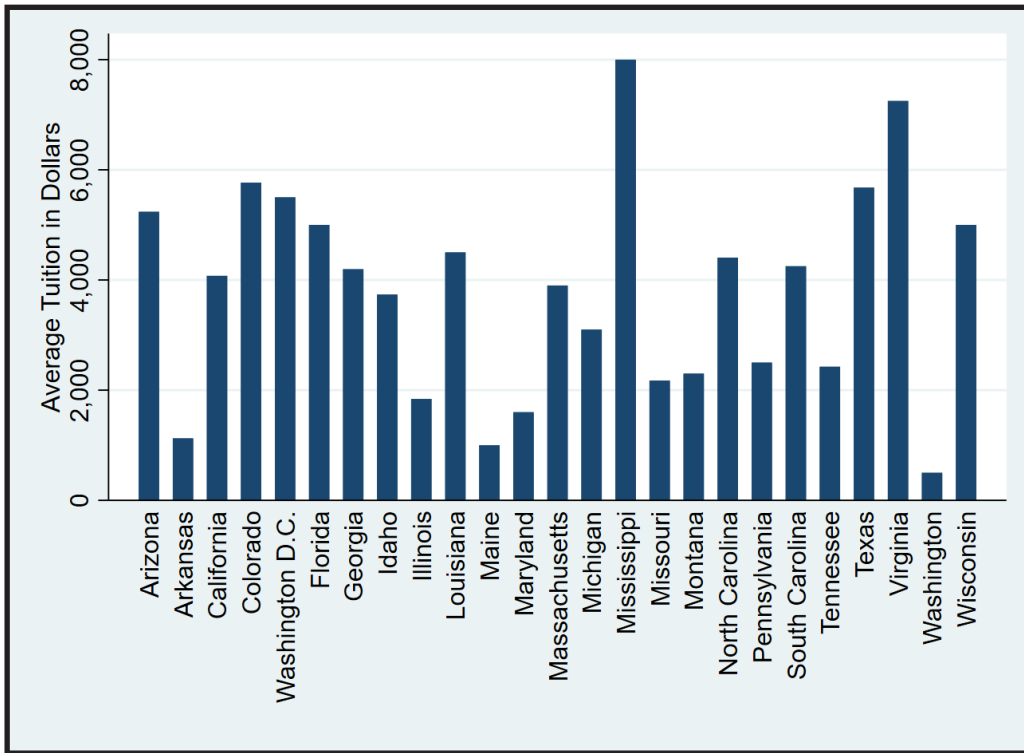
Enrollments at these schools averaged 226.6 across all grades, with a low of 7 and a high of 1,960. Enrollments in Kindergarten through 5th grade averaged approximately 99.4 with a low of 0 and a high of 929, while enrollments in 6th through 8th grade averaged around 47.5 with a low of 0 and a high of 578, and 9th through 12th grade enrollments averaged around 47.4, with a low of 0 and a high of 430.

Note that many schools are K-5 or K-8. Most of the K-5 schools actually serve K-8 (7 are K-5 only, whereas 55 are K-8)

7.3 Tuition

Tuitions also vary quite a bit, from a low of \$500 to a high of \$8,500 with an average annual tuition of \$4,158. (These data include only schools which actually charge tuition; some respondents to this survey are charter schools or public school programs, which do not charge families tuition). Within schools, tuition amounts can vary as well, with schools typically charging the least for elementary grades, then more for middle grades and more for high school. Many of the schools offer a la carte services, and many also offer discounts for additional siblings attending the school.

Figure 4: Hybrid School Average Tuition by State



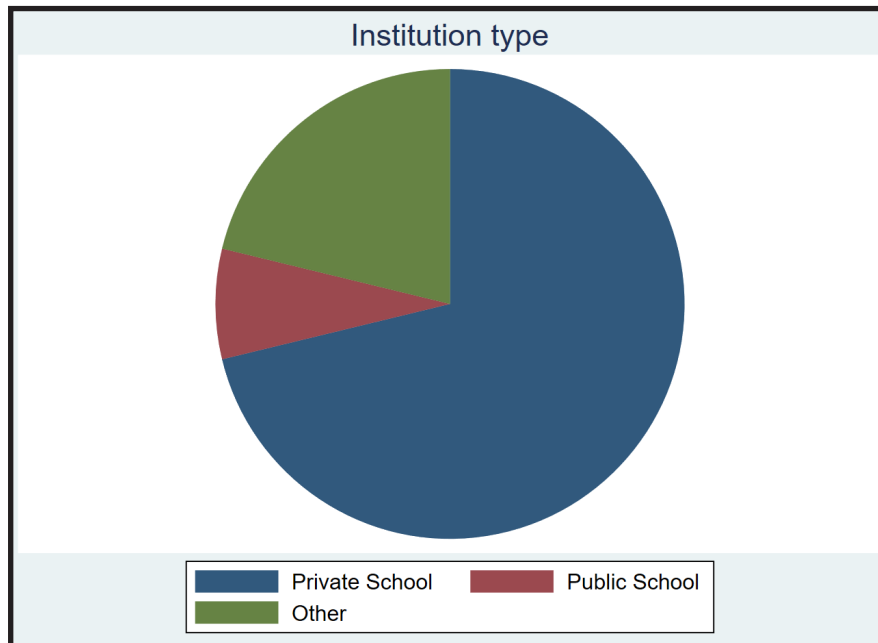
Notes:

- This figure was generated from a sample of 60 survey responses and produced by averaging within each state all responses to the question “What was your average 2021-22 tuition?”.
- The following states only has a single response to the above question: Arkansas, Washington D.C., Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin.

08 School Models

8.1 Private and Public

Figure 5: Hybrid School Institution Classification



Notes:

- This figure was generated from a sample of 66 survey responses to the question “Which of the following best describes your school?”.
- The majority of respondents who selected the “Other” category here indicated that they would describe their school as some form of homeschool, hybrid home- school, or public/private partnership.

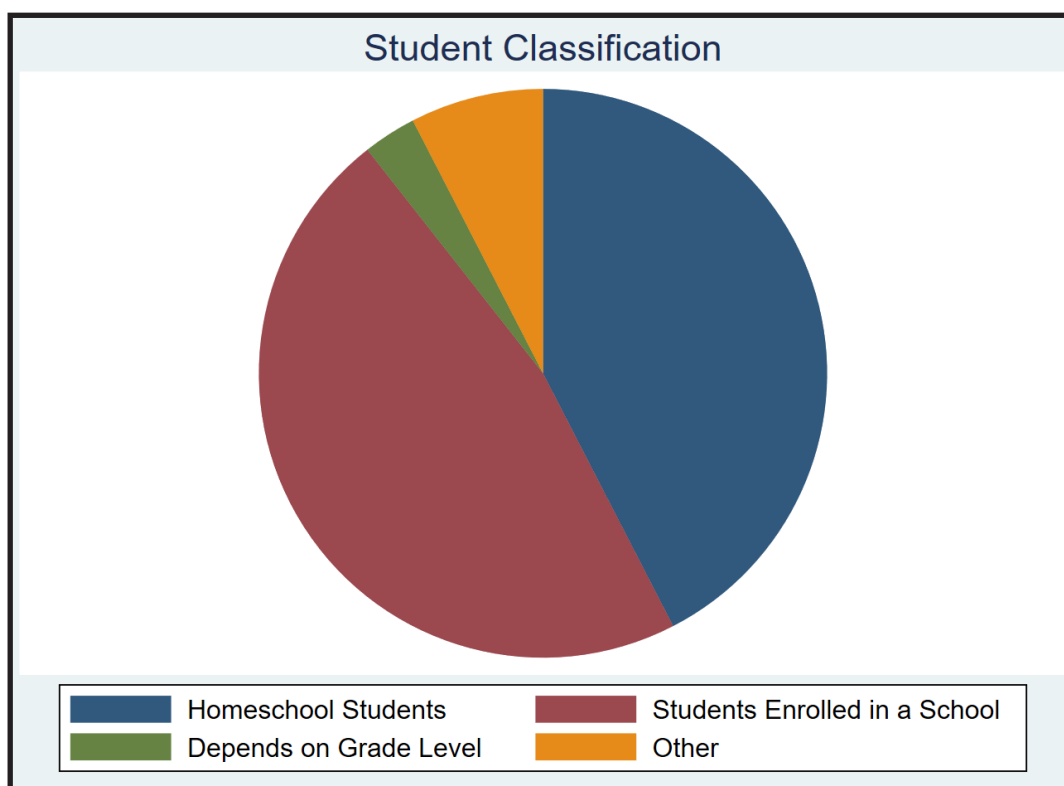
Just over 71 percent of responding schools identified themselves as private institutions, and 7.5 percent called themselves public schools. Approximately 21 percent said they were something else, which includes a school that is a public-private partnership.

8.2 Homeschool or Private School?

As these schools go by several names, they also classify their students in a variety of ways. Approximately 43 percent in this survey classify their students as home-schoolers with their states, while about 47 percent classify students as being enrolled in private school.

Around 3 percent said “it depends on the grade level,” which is likely true in more cases; anecdotally it seems that high schoolers are more likely to be classified as being enrolled in a school, while students in lower grades are usually classified as homeschoolers, although both situations can occur, even within the same school. If a school spans K-12, they might report that “it depends on the grade level,” but in practice many of these schools only range from K-5 or K-8. Families attending hybrid schools tend to arrive at them from a variety of settings: from full time homeschooling, or from full time private or public schools. Increasingly, families are starting at hybrid schools and remaining there. This homeschool vs. private school distinction is one of the most important differentiators among these institutions, as classification as a homeschooler or as a private school student can have important policy implications, depending on the state.

Figure 6: Hybrid School Student Classification



Notes:

- a. This figure was generated from a sample of 66 survey responses to the question “Are the students at this school formally registered as homeschool students, private school students, or something else”.
- b. The majority of respondents who selected the “Other” category here indicated that their students were a mixture of homeschooled students, hybrid home- schooled students, and students enrolled in a traditional school¹¹.

¹¹ Around 8% of survey respondents classify their students as *Other*

8.3 Curriculum Model

Table 2: Hybrid School Curriculum Models

Curriculum Model	Frequency	Avg. Student Enrollment
Regular / Comprehensive	20	328.3
STEM	1	75
Classical	31	151.5
Alternative / Other	14	253.1

^a Here a Regular/Comprehensive school is a school that does not focus primarily on vocational, special, or alternative education.

^b Here a STEM school is a school that focuses on providing technical education focused in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

^c Here a Classical school is a school which focuses on teaching students in a style which aligns with a classical education.

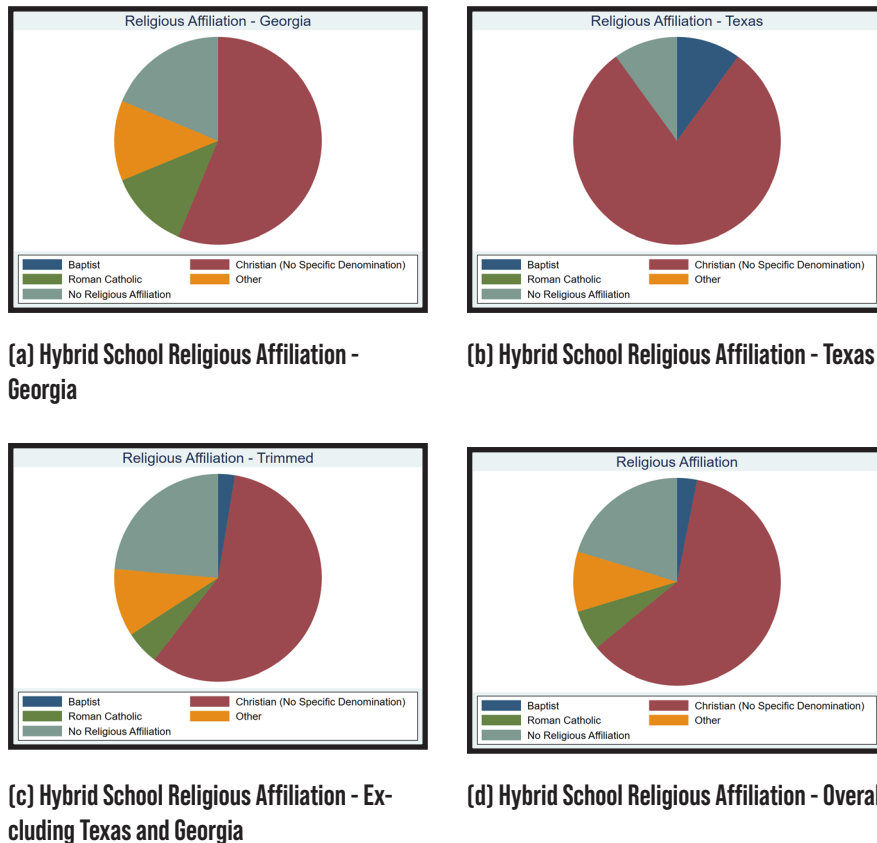
^d Here an Alternative school is a school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, or provides nontraditional education.

Most hybrid schools who define their curriculum as classical, with around 47% of schools responding to our survey indicating this. A Regular/Comprehensive curriculum was the next most popular, with around 30% of respondents selecting this option, while approximately 21% of schools indicated that their curriculum was best defined as Alternative/Other. In the Regular/Comprehensive curriculum model schools, student enrollment was the highest, average around 328 students per school, whereas average student enrollment in Classical curriculum schools (the largest category of schools) was only around 152 students per school.

8.4 Religion

Most of the schools in this report are private, religious schools, but not all of them. This is an area where the differences in survey results across Georgia, Texas, and the rest of the nation varied. Texas appears to have a higher percentage nondenominational Christian schools compared to either Georgia or the rest of the nation, for example.

Figure 7: Hybrid School Religious Affiliations



(a) Hybrid School Religious Affiliation - Georgia

(b) Hybrid School Religious Affiliation - Texas

(c) Hybrid School Religious Affiliation - Excluding Texas and Georgia

(d) Hybrid School Religious Affiliation - Overall

Notes:

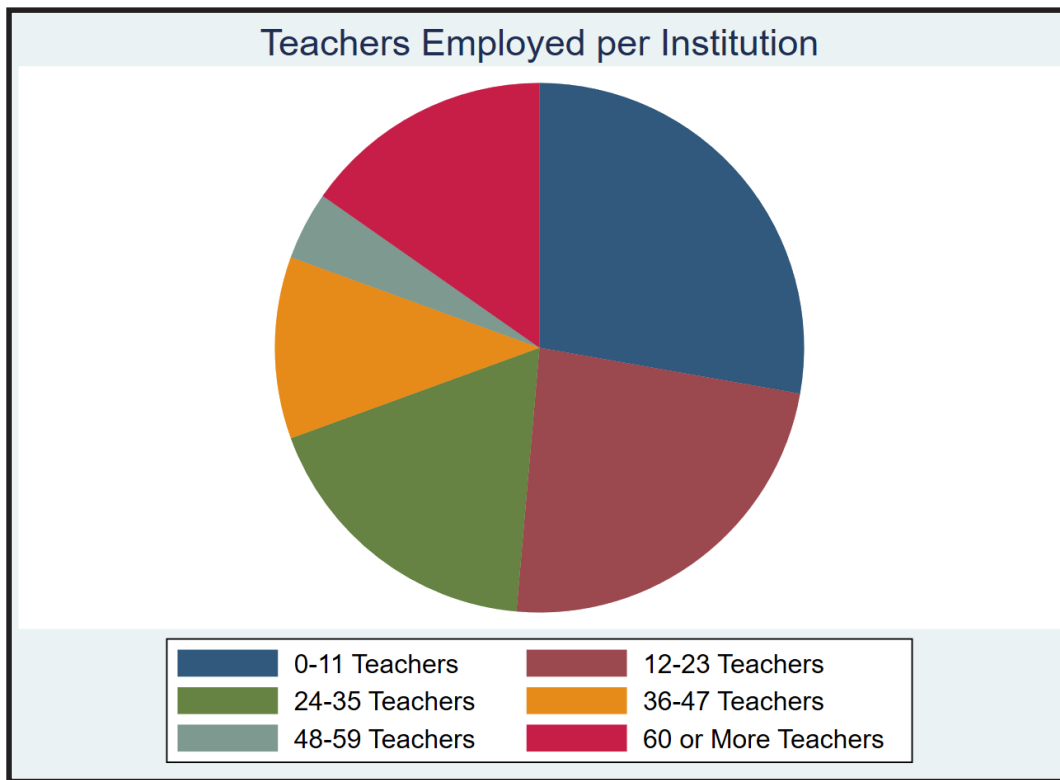
- This figure was generated from a sample (and sub-samples) of 64 survey responses to the question “What is your school’s religious orientation or affiliation?”.
- Figure 7(a.) is composed of the 16 schools in Georgia who responded to the question above.
- Figure 7(b.) is composed of the 10 schools in Texas who responded to the question above.
- Figure 7(c.) is composed of the 38 schools not located in either Georgia or Texas who responded to the question above.

09 Teachers

9.1 Number of Teachers

Just over half of the schools reported having 23 or fewer teachers, with over one quarter having 11 or fewer. These teachers tend to be very part time: schools reported an average of 2.2 full time teachers, and 79 percent of schools reported having 0 full time teachers (only 4 percent reported having more than 10 full time teachers). These results align with previous research on hybrid schools¹², and are one important reason why hybrid schools' tuitions can be low compared to other private options: because relatively few of their teachers are full time or earn benefits (retirement contributions from the schools or health insurance, for example), their personnel costs are lower than many nearby conventional schools.

Figure 8: Hybrid School Teacher Employment



Notes:

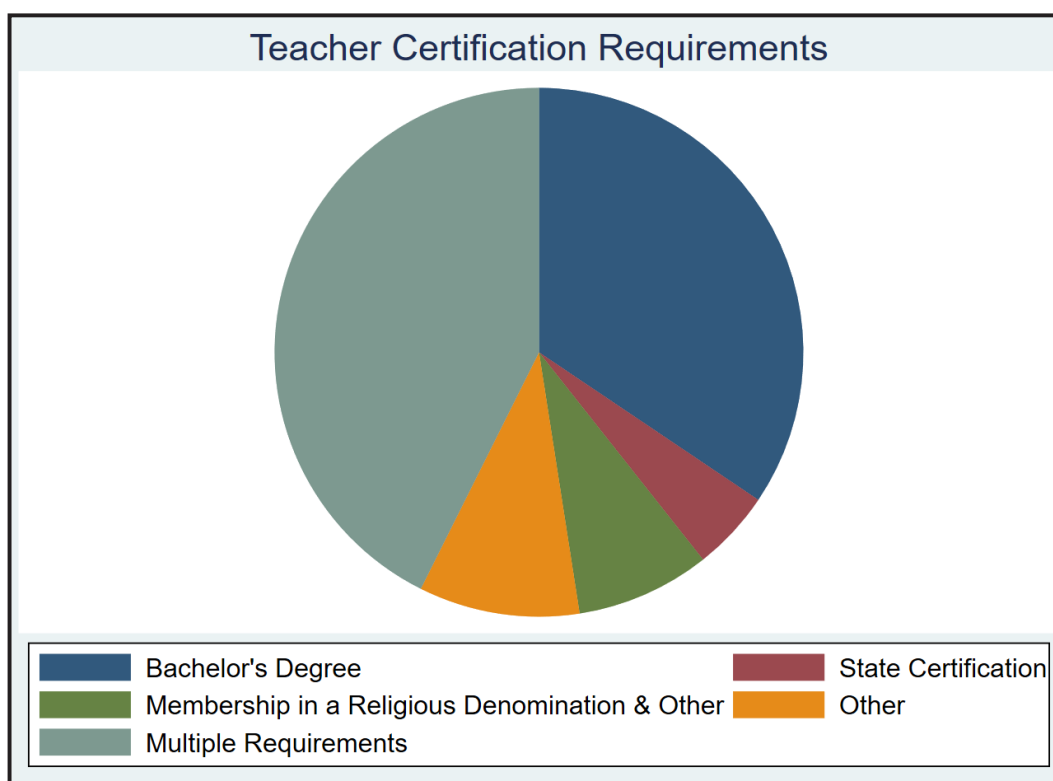
- a. This figure was generated from a sample of 66 survey responses to the question "How many teachers (both full time and part time) does your school employ?".

¹² Wearne (2021)

9.2 Teacher Hiring Requirements

A Bachelor's degree is a typical requirement for hybrid schools, required by around 23 percent of them across the country. But state teacher certification is rarely required; just 5 percent of hybrid schools listed that as a condition of hiring. A large percentage of schools had multiple requirements; this usually included a Bachelor's degree and membership in a particular denomination. Very few schools reported that formal state certification was required by their states.

Figure 9: Hybrid School Teacher Employment Requirements



Notes:

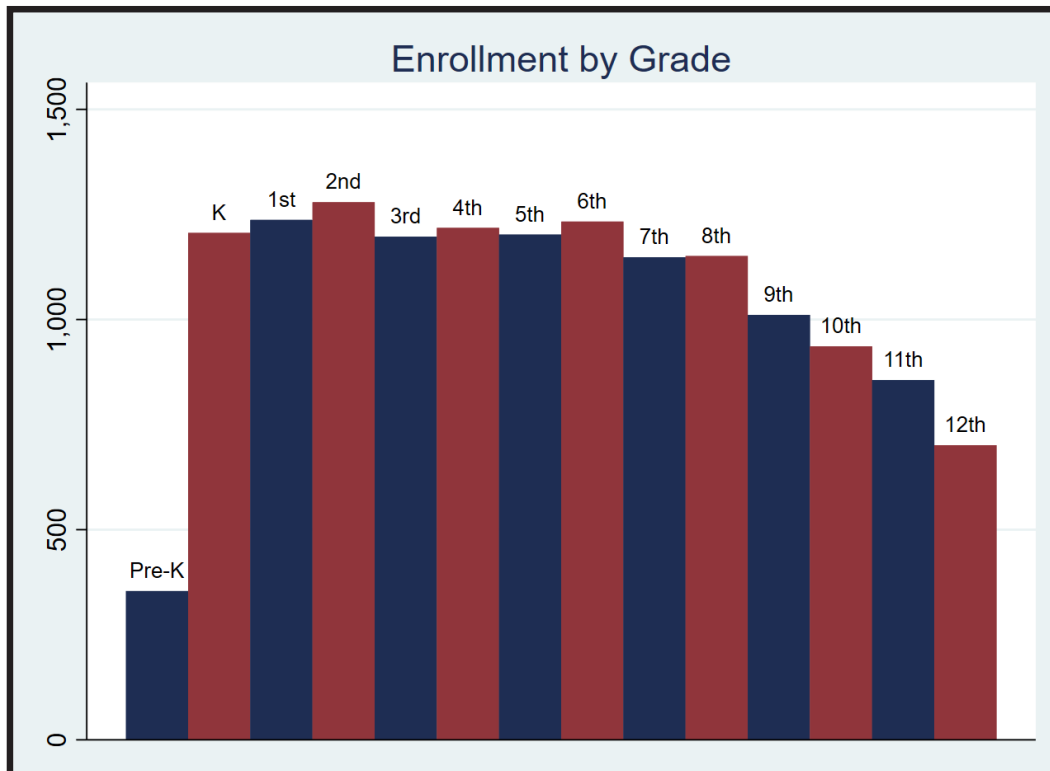
- This figure was generated from a sample of 61 survey responses to the question "Which of these do you require for teacher hiring".
- Here, respondents who selected "Other" primarily indicated the requirement of subject matter expertise as a requirement for teacher hiring.

10 Operations

10.1 Grades Served

The schools in this survey span PK-12, with more students served in elementary and middle school than in high school or preschool.

Figure 10: Hybrid School Grade Level Enrollment



Notes:

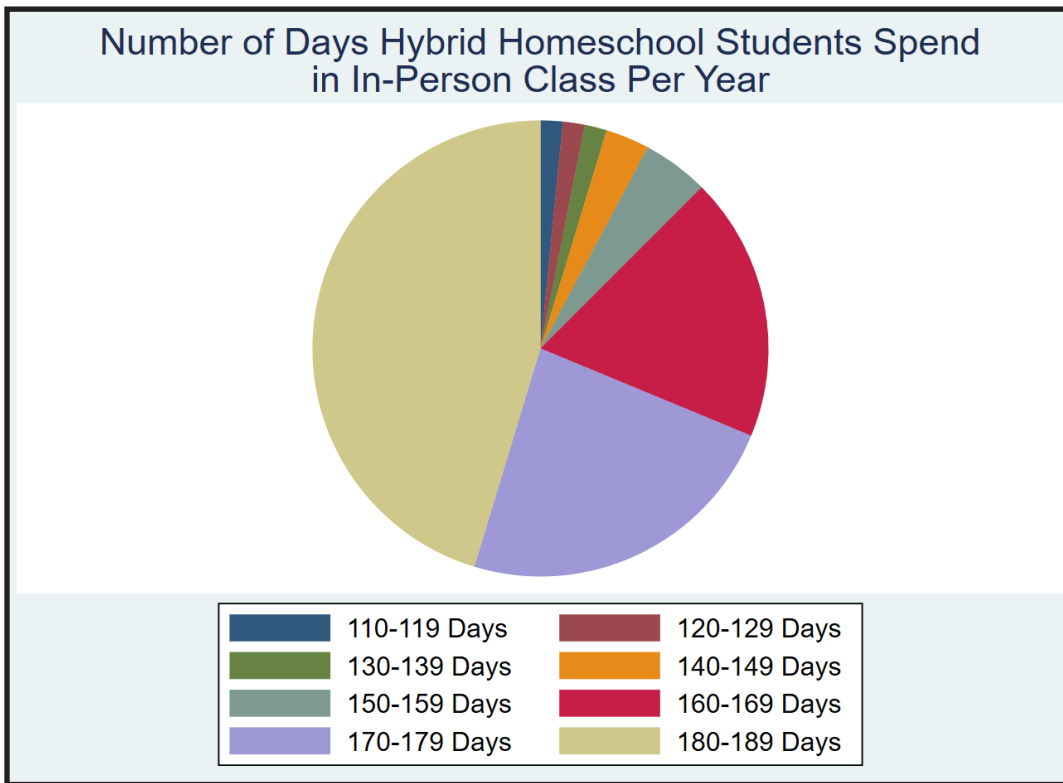
- a. This figure was generated from survey responses to the question “How many students were enrolled around the first of October.”
- b. These bars represent the average enrollment within each grade across all hybrid schools.

10.2 Days per week/per Year

Most elementary schools hold physical classes two days per week. In middle and high school, the schools tend to shift to more days of in-person instruction. Respondents who selected “Other” gave additional information including:

- ◆ Their school offers Mon/Wed and Tues/Thurs session, so is typically open 4 days, but students do not attend all of those days;
- ◆ Their school is a hybrid but either offers some a la carte classes or is part of a larger conventional school;
- ◆ They noted that their weekly schedule varies by grade or by program in some other way;
- ◆ They had some additional program, such as an online component.

Figure 11: Hybrid School Days per Year that Students Attend Classes

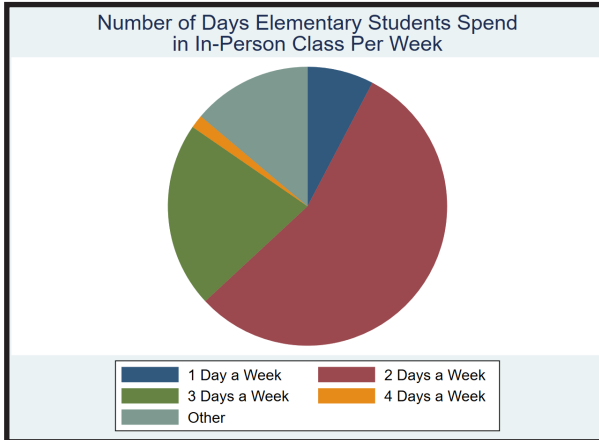


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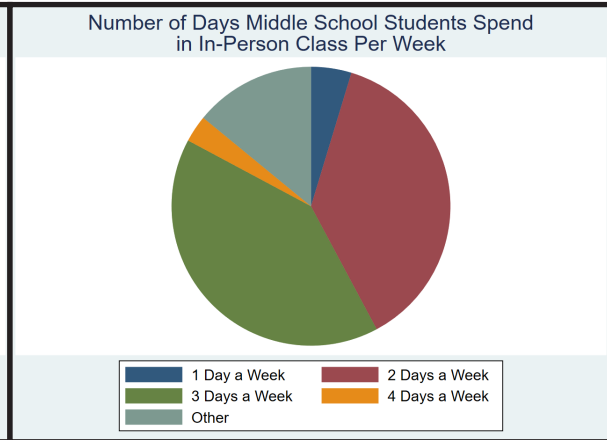
- This figure was generated from survey responses to the question “How many days are in the school YEAR for students in your school? (include BOTH home and campus days)”.

Figure 12: Hybrid School Days per Week that Students Attend Classes

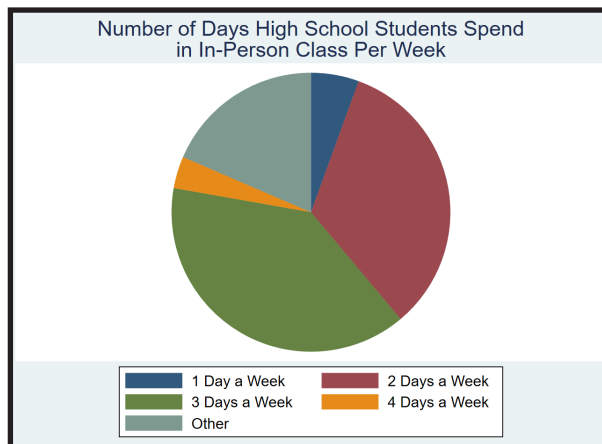
(a) Days Per Week - Elementary School



(b) Days Per Week - Middle School



(c) Days Per Week - High School



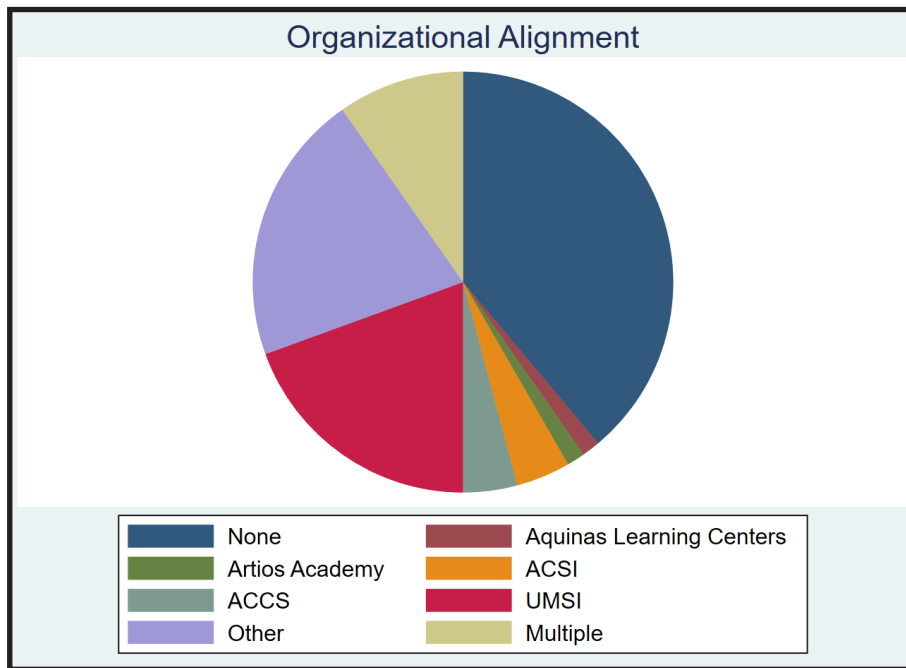
Notes:

- This figure was generated from a sample (and sub-samples) of 64 survey responses to the question “How many days per week do students physically attend your school?”.
- Figure 7(a.) is composed of the 65 schools serving elementary school grades.
- Figure 7(b.) is composed of the 64 schools serving middle school grades.
- Figure 7(c.) is composed of the 54 schools serving high school grades.

11 Accreditation, Testing, and School Choice Policies

11.1 Affiliations and Accreditations

Figure 13: Hybrid School Affiliations



Notes:

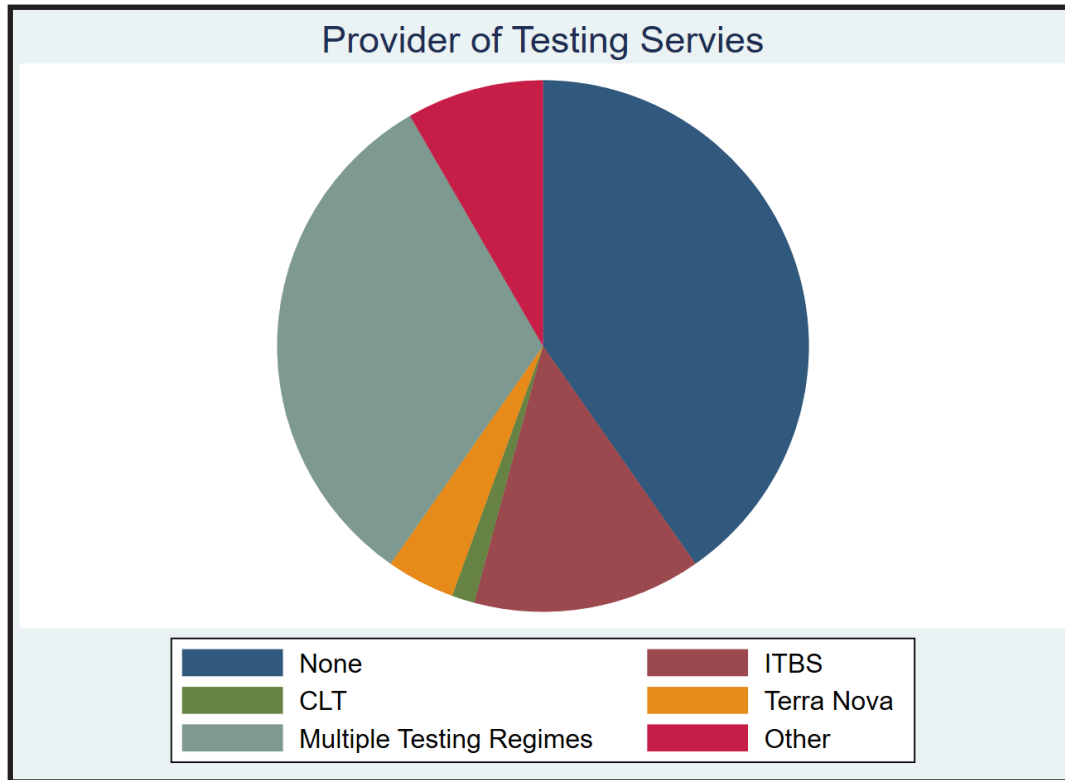
- This figure was generated from survey responses to the question “To which of the following associations or organizations does your school belong”.
- ACCS - The Association of Classical Christian Schools
- ACSI - The Association of Christian Schools International
- UMSI - University-Model Schools International
- Other - Responses to this category primarily consisted of “None”, “NAUMS” (National association of University Model Schools), “GAC” (Georgia Accrediting Commission), or “ Association of Christian Schools International”
- Multiple - Indicates that a school selected multiple affiliations in response to the above question.

Hybrid schools span the spectrum of being affiliated with various bodies, ranging from no affiliations, with around 39 percent of schools responding as having no affiliations with any of these groups, to affiliations with a variety of groups, with 27 percent indicated membership in UMSI, 4 percent in ACCS, around 4 percent in ACSI, 1 percent in Artios Academy, 1 percent in Aquinas Learning Centers, and 14 percent in other groups. 10 percent of survey respondents indicating membership in multiple groups.

11.2 Tests Offered

While a large percentage (approximately 40 percent) of responding hybrid schools offered no standardized tests at all on their campuses, a majority of schools said they did. The most common was the ITBS test, but schools listed a wide variety of others including Terra Nova, and the Classic Learning Test.

Figure 14: Hybrid School Testing Providers

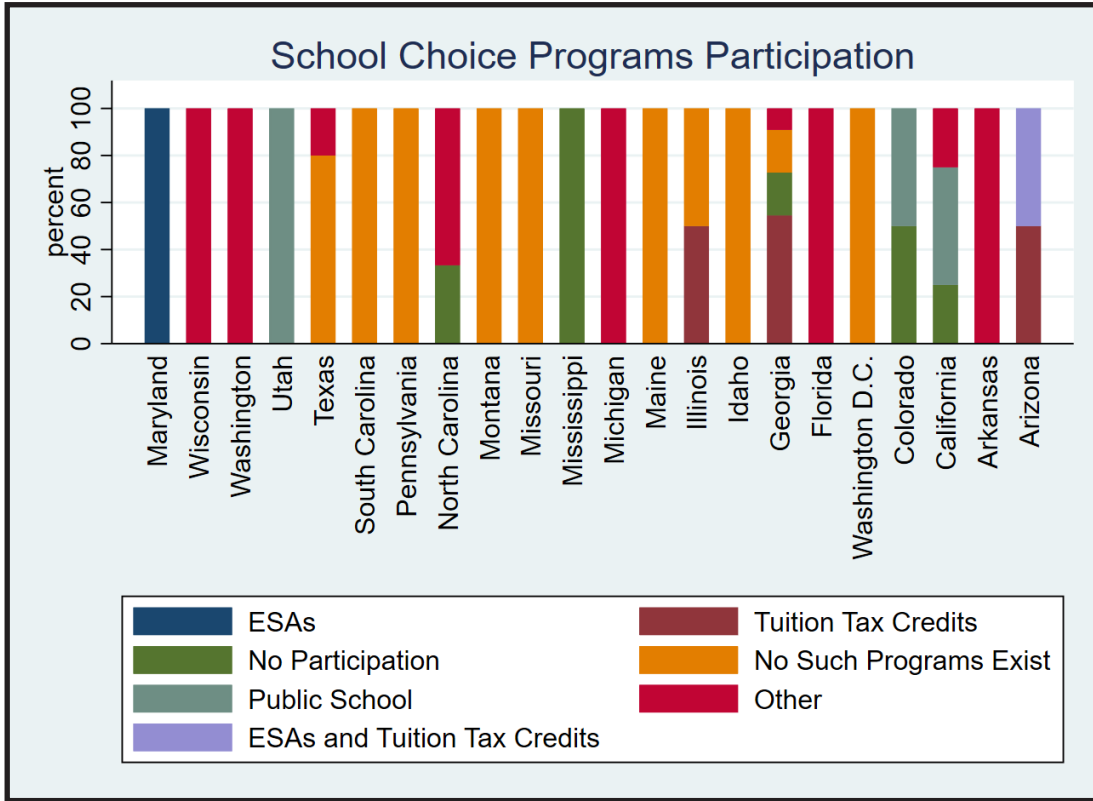


Notes:

- This figure was generated from survey responses to the question "What type of standardized testing do you offer at your school".
- CLT - Classic Learning Test
- ITBS - Iowa Test of Basic Skills
- Multiple - Most commonly these included the PSAT, SAT, or ACT as well as the above testing providers
- Other - Responses included testing providers such as MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) and ERB (Educational Records Bureau)

11.3 Participation in School Choice Programs

Figure 15: Hybrid School School Choice Program Participation



Notes:

- This figure was generated from survey responses to the question “Does your school participate in any state- or local-level school choice programs”.
- These bars represent the percent of schools within each state who responded as having participated within the respective school choice programs.
- The following states only had a single school who responded to the above question: Arkansas, Washington D.C. Florida, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin

Less than half of survey participants indicated that they participate in any state or local level school choice programs, with around 2% of schools who responded making use of Education Savings Accounts, around 17% using Tuition Tax Credits, around 2% using both Education Savings Accounts and Tuition Tax Credits, and around 23% using some other form of school choice programs. around 34% of respondents indicated that no school choice programs existed within their state, while around 13% were aware of state-level school choice programs, but did not participate in them. Around 9% of respondents identified themselves as Public Schools.

12 Future Efforts

The National Hybrid Schools Project will conduct this survey again in the Fall of 2022. We hope to increase our sample size each year, to more accurately and completely depict the characteristics and values of these schools in different places. Similarly, knowing more about the variety of state- and local-level policies in which these schools operate would be useful to aid our understanding of the hybrid schooling landscape. This could help shine light on why these schools are more or less likely to be founded in different locales, and with different structures. We also intend to conduct follow-up surveys to subsets of hybrid schools on a variety of topics. Future surveys of this nature will focus on hybrid schools' teachers and leaders, on facilities and other operations issues, on special education services, on extracurricular activities, and on other areas.

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