

# EXPLORING NEW HAMPSHIRE'S PRIVATE EDUCATION SECTOR

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## OVERVIEW

*Exploring New Hampshire's Private Education Sector* is the 10th entry in the *School Survey Series*.<sup>1</sup> This brief synthesizes information about New Hampshire's private schools from a survey conducted by EdChoice.

The Granite State currently has two school choice programs—a tax-credit scholarship and town tuitioning<sup>2</sup>—but recent legislative pushes have brought these and other types of educational choice options, such as education savings accounts (ESAs), into the spotlight.<sup>3</sup> The characteristics of New Hampshire's private school sector can inform policy debates surrounding the potential expansion of school choice.

From January 24 to April 12, 2018, EdChoice administered a first-of-its-kind survey to New Hampshire private school leaders in all 10 counties. This brief provides a descriptive analysis of the results of that survey, including tuition and fees, the number of open seats, regulatory concerns, and interest in educational choice programs.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Private schools in New Hampshire have at least 2,063 open seats with a projected estimate closer to 10,500 open seats for K–12 students
- Slightly more than half of schools are already familiar with education savings accounts (ESAs)
  - 71 percent would or probably would participate in a general ESA program
  - 63 percent would or probably would have participated in the Freedom Savings Accounts program, which did not pass this year
- Nearly half of schools are familiar with tax-credit scholarships
  - 77 percent of schools not participating in the state's tax-credit scholarship program would consider participating
- Schools are mostly concerned with regulations regarding curriculum and instruction, paperwork and reporting, teacher certification and licensure, and testing and accountability
- 70 percent of private schools serve students with special needs
- 82 percent of private schools provide some form of financial assistance to students

See the Survey Project and Profile, Survey Methodology and Data Sources, and the New Hampshire Private School Survey Questionnaire at [www.edchoice.org/NHSchoolSurvey](http://www.edchoice.org/NHSchoolSurvey).

## Do New Hampshire's private schools have available seats for new students?

Of the schools taking part in the EdChoice survey, cautious estimates show the state's private schools have at least 2,063 open seats across K–12. This is an estimate provided directly by the 36 private schools in this survey that responded to enrollment questions. The projected estimate for New Hampshire's total private school sector is closer to 10,500 open seats for K–12 students.

### T1 Open Seats in Respondent New Hampshire Private Schools (2017–18)

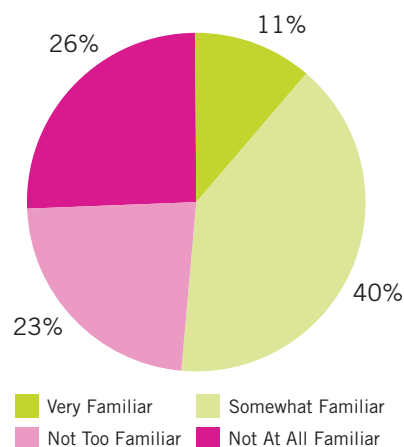
Private School Grade Level	Number of Open Seats
<b>K–12 TOTAL</b>	<b>2,063</b>
Prekindergarten	102
Kindergarten	177
Elementary School	698
Middle School	676
High School	451
Ungraded	61

number of respondent schools = 36; item response rate = 26%

## Are schools familiar with the concept of education savings accounts?

New Hampshire private schools were asked how familiar they are with the concept of ESAs for K–12 education. Slightly more than half of the private schools (51 percent; 18 of 35 schools) indicated they were already familiar with ESAs. Slightly more than one-fourth of New Hampshire private schools (26 percent; 9 of 35 schools) said they were “not at all familiar” with ESAs, meaning they may not have heard of such programs prior to taking the survey.

### F1 New Hampshire Private Schools' Familiarity with Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)



number of respondent schools = 35; item response rate = 26%

## If enacted, would schools participate in an ESA program?

When provided with the previous ESA definition (See note 3) and asked if they would participate in an ESA program open to public school students, nearly three out of four respondent private schools (71 percent; 25 of 35 schools) said “yes” or “probably yes.” Another 20 percent of schools (7 of 35 schools) said “maybe.” One school (3 percent) said they probably would not participate, and two schools (6 percent) said they would not participate.

Interest in ESA participation was high in general, but New Hampshire schools were also asked about their potential interest in participating in a proposed ESA program in the state. Senate Bill 193 is an ESA bill introduced during 2017 legislative session and amended in the 2018 New Hampshire General Court. The bill, if enacted in a future session, would create the Freedom Savings Accounts program, an ESA that would be available for certain students with special needs, low- and middle-income students, students in low-performing schools, and students who are unable to enroll in a charter school or obtain a tax-credit scholarship.<sup>4</sup> Twenty-two schools (63 percent) said they would or probably would participate in the proposed Freedom Savings Accounts program.<sup>5</sup> Nine schools (26 percent) said they would “maybe” participate, and four schools (11 percent) said they would not or probably would not participate.

**T2** New Hampshire Private School Responses to Potential ESA Program Participation

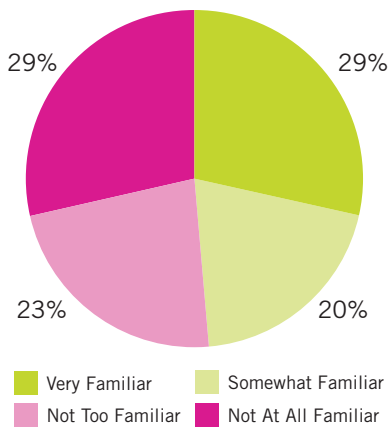
Response	General ESA	Proposed ESA
Yes	54%	51%
Probably Yes	17%	11%
Maybe	20%	26%
Probably Not	3%	6%
No	6%	6%
Number of Respondents	35	35

item response rate = 26%

## Are schools familiar with the concept of tax-credit scholarships?

Low- and middle-income families in New Hampshire have been using tax-credit scholarships to pay for private school tuition and home school expenses since 2013.<sup>6</sup> Nearly half of private schools (49 percent; 17 of 35 schools) indicated they were already “very” or “somewhat” familiar with tax-credit scholarships. Nearly one-third of New Hampshire private schools (29 percent; 10 of 35 schools) said they were “not at all familiar” with tax-credit scholarships, meaning they may not have heard of the concept prior to the survey.

**F2** New Hampshire Private Schools’ Familiarity with Tax-Credit Scholarships



number of respondent schools = 35; item response rate = 26%

## Do schools participate in New Hampshire’s tax-credit scholarship program? If not, would they?

When asked if they currently enroll students participating in New Hampshire’s Education Tax Credit program, nearly half (49 percent; 17 of 35 schools) said they participate in the program. Slightly more than one-third of the private schools surveyed (34 percent; 12 of 35 schools) do not currently enroll students participating in the program, while six of the schools (17 percent) were unsure whether or not they currently enrolled tax-credit scholarship students.

**T3** Private Schools Participating in New Hampshire's Education Tax Credit Program

Response	Percent of Private Schools
Yes	49%
No	34%
Don't Know/Not Sure	17%

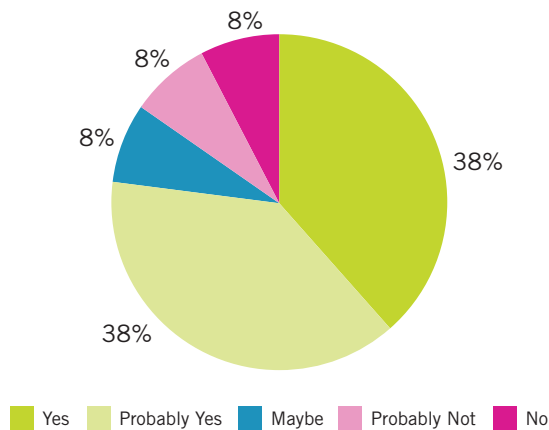
number of respondent schools = 35; item response rate = 26%

There were 20 schools that responded with the number of tax-credit scholarship students they enroll. Respondent private schools enrolled a total of 169 tax-credit scholarship students in 2017–18, with an average tax-credit scholarship enrollment of 8.5 students. Based on the most recent data, respondent schools that enroll tax-credit scholarship students represent 67 percent of the tax-credit scholarship-participating school population and enroll 51 percent of the state’s tax-credit scholarship student population.<sup>7</sup>

Schools without currently-enrolled tax-credit scholarship students and those that were unsure were then asked if they would be interested in participating in this existing tax-credit scholarship program. More than three-fourths of the schools (77 percent; 10 of 13 responding schools) said they would or probably would participate. One school (8 percent) said “maybe,” while two schools (15 percent) said they would not or probably would not participate. In 2017–18, 51 schools participated in the program, per the most recent data available.<sup>8</sup>

F3

### Private School Responses to New Hampshire's Education Tax Credit Program Participation



## Which private school choice program rules and regulations concern schools most?

More than nine out of 10 schools that responded to the survey (92 percent; 33 of 36 schools) shared their concerns about potential rules and regulations from state government for at least one of the categories listed. On average, respondent schools were most concerned with rules pertaining to:

- curriculum and instruction,
- paperwork and reporting,
- teacher/staff certification and licensure,
- testing and accountability,
- school admissions and enrollment guidelines, and
- accommodations for students with special needs.

Approximately three-fifths of the schools that responded to that question said they would have “very high” or “somewhat high” concerns with regulations regarding curriculum and instruction (61 percent; 20 of 33 schools), paperwork and reporting (58 percent; 19 of 33 schools), and teacher/staff certification and licensure (58 percent; 19 of 33 schools). Nearly half of the schools (48 percent; 16 of 33 schools) expressed “very high” or “somewhat high” concerns about regulations concerning testing and accountability.

T4

### New Hampshire Private Schools' Average Concern Level for Specific Rules and Regulations (1 = Very Low, 5 = Very High)

Rule/Regulation	Average Concern Level
Curriculum and Instruction	3.6
Paperwork and Reporting	3.6
Teacher/Staff Certification and Licensure	3.6
Testing and Accountability	3.5
School Admissions and Enrollment Guidelines	3.3
Accommodations for Students with Special Needs	3.3
School Eligibility for Program (e.g. register with state)	2.9
Tuition and Fees	2.9
Building Safety and Security	2.7
Student Eligibility for Program (e.g. income limit)	2.7
Financial Reporting and Disclosure	2.4

number of respondent schools = 33; item response rate = 24%

T5

### Number of New Hampshire Private Schools with Somewhat High or Very High Concern for Specific Rules and Regulations

Rule/Regulation	Number of Private Schools
Curriculum and Instruction	20
Paperwork and Reporting	19
Teacher/Staff Certification and Licensure	19
Testing and Accountability	16
School Admissions and Enrollment Guidelines	14
School Eligibility for Program (e.g. register with state)	14
Accommodations for Students with Special Needs	12
Tuition and Fees	10
Building Safety and Security	8
Student Eligibility for Program (e.g. income limit)	8
Financial Reporting and Disclosure	7

number of respondent schools = 33; item response rate = 24%

# Which geographic areas have the most open seats in New Hampshire’s private schools?

Of the private schools that responded to the survey, Hillsborough County had the most open K–12 private school seats during the 2017–18 school year. One of two county seats of that county and the most populous city in the state, Manchester, also had more open K–12 private school seats than any other city in the state based on responses.<sup>9</sup> In addition:

- The top three cities with the largest number of open private school seats were located in New Hampshire’s Merrimack Valley region, including Manchester (368 open seats), Concord (312 open seats), and Nashua (293 open seats)
- Merrimack County had 42 percent as many open seats as Hillsborough County
- New Hampshire’s least-populated county, Coös County, had the least amount of open seats (4)

**T6** Top 10 New Hampshire Cities with the Largest Number of Open K–12 Seats in Respondent Private Schools

City	Number of Open K–12 Seats
Manchester	368
Concord	312
Nashua	293
Laconia	148
Claremont	118
Ossipee	114
Rochester	109
Antrim	95
Keene	94
Hampstead	87

number of respondent schools = 36; item response rate = 26%

**T7** New Hampshire Counties by Number of Open K–12 Seats in Respondent Private Schools

County	Number of Open Seats
Hillsborough	772
Merrimack	325
Cheshire	211
Strafford	179
Sullivan	171
Belknap	148
Carroll	133
Rockingham	103
Grafton	17
Coös	4

number of respondent schools = 36; item response rate = 26%

# Which geographic areas have the most respondent private schools?

At least one school from each of New Hampshire’s 10 counties responded to the survey. Almost a third (31 percent) of respondent private schools are located in Hillsborough County, which is home to two of the top three cities with the largest number of respondent private schools (Manchester and Nashua).

Cities in New Hampshire’s Lakes region accounted for three of the top 10 cities with the most open seats, with Laconia (148 open seats), Ossipee (114), and Rochester (109) accounting for 17 percent of all respondent private school open seats in the state.

**T8** Top Six New Hampshire Cities with the Largest Number of Respondent Private Schools

City	Number of Private Schools
Manchester	5
Concord	4
Nashua	3
Claremont	2
Laconia	2
Rochester	2

number of respondent schools = 36; item response rate = 26%

**T9** Top Eight New Hampshire Counties with the Largest Number of Respondent Private Schools

County	Number of Private Schools
Hillsborough	11
Merrimack	5
Rockingham	4
Sullivan	4
Cheshire	3
Strafford	3
Belknap	2
Carroll	2

number of respondent schools = 36; item response rate = 26%

picture of New Hampshire private schools while minimizing outlier effects.

More than half of New Hampshire private schools (56 percent) charge less than \$6,000 for prekindergarten, more than those that charge the same range for kindergarten and elementary school grades (55 percent and 48 percent, respectively). Two-fifths of New Hampshire private schools (40 percent) charge the same range for middle school grades and a much smaller proportion of New Hampshire private schools (24 percent) charge the same rate for high school grades.

# What is the cost of combined tuition and fees among private schools?

Half of private schools for which combined tuition and fee data are available charge \$6,000 or less for elementary, \$6,500 or less for middle school grades, and \$8,590 or less for high school grades.

At all levels there are some especially expensive schools that create substantial gaps between “average” and “median” private school tuition and fee rates. The minimum combined tuition and fees charged at any level is \$1,800 and the maximum combined tuition and fees charged at any level is \$43,000. Focusing on the median amounts may offer a more representative

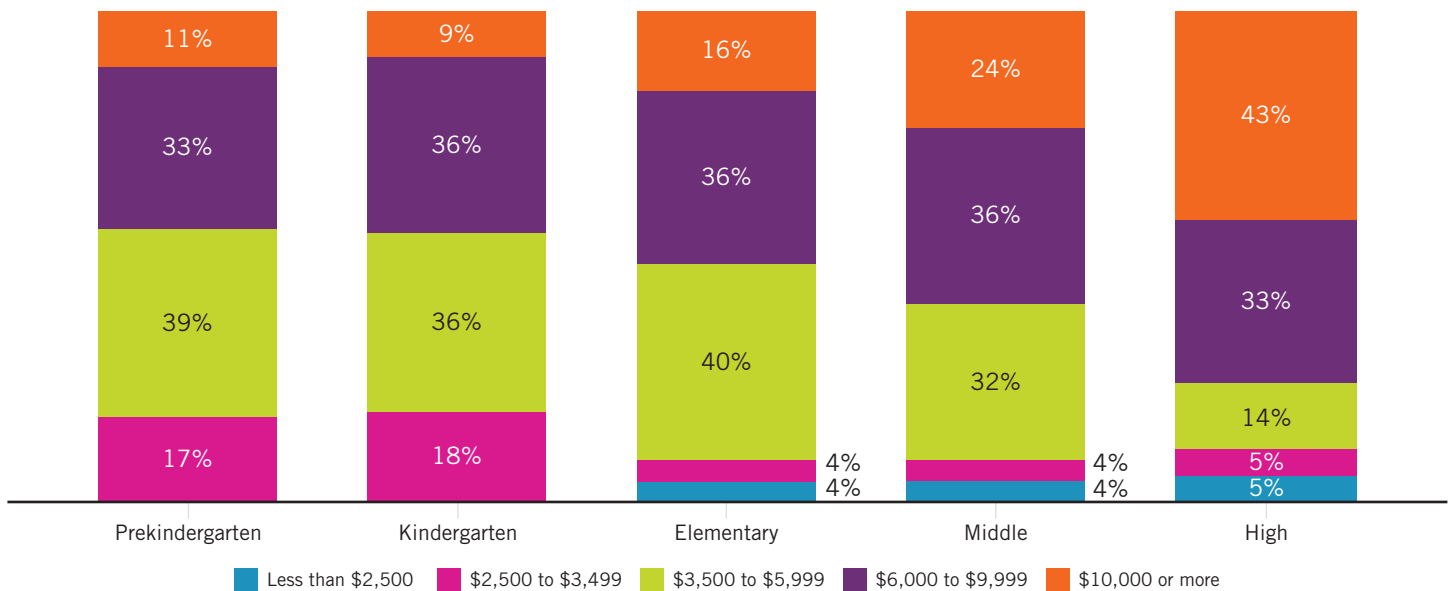
**T10** Combined Tuition and Fees Amounts for New Hampshire Private Schools (2017–18)

Grade(s)	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>\$10,108</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>	<b>\$43,000</b>
Prekindergarten	\$6,100	\$5,500	\$2,500	\$16,500
Kindergarten	\$6,211	\$5,750	\$2,500	\$16,500
Elementary School	\$8,047	\$6,000	\$1,800	\$43,000
Middle School	\$9,350	\$6,500	\$1,800	\$43,000
High School	\$11,419	\$8,590	\$1,800	\$43,000

number of respondent schools = 33; item response rate = 24%

# F4

## New Hampshire Private Schools' Combined Tuition and Fees Ranges by Grade Level



## What do private schools charge in fees?

Half of schools for which fee data were collected charge \$393 or less, and the New Hampshire private schools for which fee data are available charge a range of \$50 to \$2,850 in total fees. Those fees are in addition to the tuition that schools charge students. The fee category in which New Hampshire schools charge the highest rates, on average, is for transportation. Fees related to technology were, on average, the least-expensive category of New Hampshire private schools.

## What proportion of New Hampshire private schools offers some form of financial assistance, and how much do they offer?

More than four-fifths of the state's private schools for which tuition data are available (82 percent; 27 of 33 schools) provide some form of tuition assistance. Half of those schools provide financial assistance to nearly one-fourth of their students (24 percent), and half of those schools provide \$2,200 or more in financial assistance per student.

# T11

## Fee Amounts for New Hampshire Private Schools

Fee Category	Average Fee	Median Fee	Minimum Fee	Maximum Fee
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$538</b>	<b>\$393</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$2,850</b>
Registration/Application	\$133	\$100	\$25	\$400
Textbooks	\$270	\$300	\$100	\$400
Technology	\$83	\$100	\$50	\$100
Transportation	\$2,400	\$2,400	\$2,000	\$2,800
Uniforms	\$275	\$275	\$200	\$350
Other	\$127	\$55	\$5	\$625

number of respondent schools = 24; item response rate = 18%



**T12** Tuition Assistance Provided by New Hampshire Private Schools

	Average	Median
Percentage of Students Receiving Financial Assistance (Including Discounts)	38%	24%
Tuition Assistance Per Student	\$14,188	\$2,200

number of respondent schools = 27; item response rate = 20%

# What proportion of New Hampshire's private schools' students have special needs?

For the schools that responded to this question, estimates show, on average, nearly one out of six students who attended New Hampshire private schools (16 percent) had special needs in 2017–18.<sup>10</sup> This is comparable to the proportion of New Hampshire's public school students (16 percent in 2013–14).<sup>11</sup>

However, it is important to note that one of the respondent schools' entire student body is made up of students with special needs, so the median proportion of students (8 percent) may be more useful. A median of that data point could not be found for New Hampshire public school students.

**T13** New Hampshire Private Schools' Percentage of Students with Special Needs

Student Profile	Average Percent of Private Schools' Students	Median Percent of Private Schools' Students
With Special Needs	16%	8%
Without Special Needs	84%	92%

number of respondent schools= 23; item response rate = 17%

# What proportion of the state's private schools enrolls students with special needs?

Of those schools that responded to the question, seven of 10 (70 percent; 23 of 33 schools) enrolled at least one student with special needs in 2017–18.

**T14** New Hampshire Private Schools Enrolling Students with Special Needs

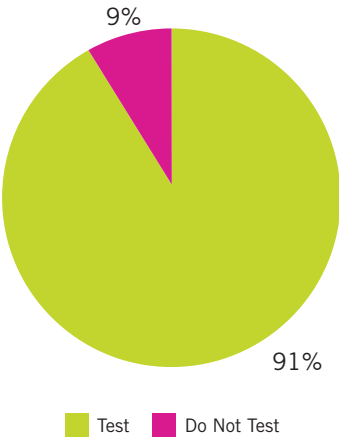
Enrolled Student(s) with Special Needs	Number of Private Schools	Percent of State's Private Schools
Yes	23	70%
No	10	30%

number of respondent schools = 33; item response rate = 24%

# Do New Hampshire private schools test their students annually?

More than nine out of 10 New Hampshire private schools (91 percent) require their students to take a norm-referenced test to measure student academic performance. Of those schools, nearly two-fifths (39 percent; 12 of 31 schools) reported they administered the SAT. Only three private schools said they administer the New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System (NH SAS).

**F5** New Hampshire Private Schools Administering Norm-Referenced Test(s)



number of respondent schools = 34; item response rate = 25%



Standardized Test	Number of Testing Schools	Percentage of State's Testing Schools
SAT	12	39%
MAP	7	23%
Iowa Assessments	6	19%
TerraNova	5	16%
New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System (NH SAS)	3	10%
PSAT	2	6%
Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)	1	3%
MCAS	1	3%

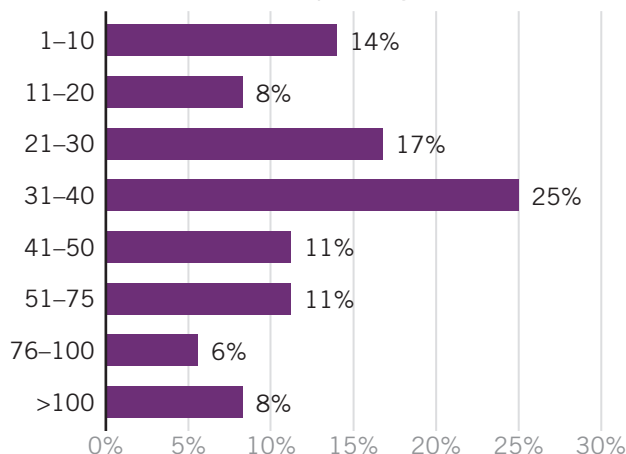
number of respondent schools = 31; item response rate = 23%

## How many years have the schools been operating?

Based on survey responses, New Hampshire private schools have been operating for an average of 42 years, with a median operating length of 34 years. The newest school has been operating for less than one year, while the oldest school responding has been open and operating for more than 120 years, according to survey responses.

Approximately two-thirds of schools (64 percent; 23 of 36 schools) have been operating between 21 and 75 years, meaning they opened during the middle or late 20th century. Only 14 percent of schools (5 of 36 schools) have been operating for 10 years or fewer.

### Number of Years New Hampshire Private Schools Have Been Operating



number of respondent schools = 36; item response rate = 26%

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Seven of the previous surveys in the *School Survey Series* were administered under the banner of the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice. The organization changed its name on July 29, 2016, to EdChoice.

<sup>2</sup>EdChoice (2018), *The ABCs of School Choice: The Comprehensive Guide to Every Private School Choice Program in America, 2018 Edition*, p. 51 and p. 111, retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ABCs-of-School-Choice-2018-Edition-1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>ESAs allow parents to withdraw their children from public district or charter schools and receive a deposit of public funds into government-authorized savings accounts with restricted, but multiple, uses. Those funds—often distributed to families via debit card—can cover private school tuition and fees, online learning programs, private tutoring, community college costs, higher education expenses and other approved customized learning services and materials. Some ESAs, but not all, even allow students to use their funds to pay for a combination of public school courses and private services. Six states have ESA programs, although one of those state programs is currently inactive. EdChoice (2018), “What Is an Education Savings Account?” [web page], accessed June 11, 2018, retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/types-of-school-choice/education-savings-account>

<sup>4</sup>The described eligibility comes from a version of the bill passed by the House Education Committee during the 2018 General Court. This House Education Committee bill was the version school leaders were asked about in the survey and the one being considered at the time it was conducted. A universal ESA was also introduced in the Senate, and a more-restrictive ESA reserved for low-income families became the final version passed by the House Education Committee. See Education Freedom Savings Account Act, SB 193, 2017 Session of the New Hampshire General Court, 2017, retrieved from [http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill\\_status/billText.aspx?sy=2017&id=914&txtFormat=html](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/bill_status/billText.aspx?sy=2017&id=914&txtFormat=html)

<sup>5</sup>An error in the survey instrument indicated the income eligibility level to be greater than 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, as opposed to the actual less than 300 percent FPL listed in the bill. While the listed income in the question (\$73,800 for a family of four), extensive media coverage of the proposal, and open-ended responses from school leaders (one respondent stated the program would allow the school to serve more low-income students, and several stated they wished the program be open to all New Hampshire families—like the Senate version of the bill allowed—as opposed to only low- and middle-income ones) point toward respondents’ knowledge of the actual nature of the bill, we advise caution when interpreting these results.

<sup>6</sup>EdChoice (2018), *The ABCs of School Choice: The Comprehensive Guide to Every Private School Choice Program in America, 2018 Edition*, p. 111, retrieved from <https://www.edchoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ABCs-of-School-Choice-2018-Edition-1.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Nashua is the other county seat of Hillsborough County.

<sup>10</sup>Students with special needs were defined on the survey as those having autism, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, serious emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, or other health impairments.

<sup>11</sup>As of this writing, U.S. Department of Education, New Hampshire’s public school Individualized Education Program (IEP) enrollment data did not meet federal reporting standards for the past two years. The 2013–14 school year was the most recent year for which these data were reported. Author’s calculations; National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Local Education Agency (School District) Universe Survey Special ED Data”, 2015-16 v.1a; “State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey Directory Data”, 2014-15 v.1a; “State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey

Membership Data", 2015-16 v.1a, accessed May 17, 2018  
via ELSi *table*Generator, [http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/  
tableGenerator.aspx](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/elsi/tableGenerator.aspx)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## COMMITMENT TO METHODS & TRANSPARENCY

EdChoice is committed to research that adheres to high scientific standards, and matters of methodology and transparency are taken seriously at all levels of our organization. We are dedicated to providing high-quality information in a transparent and efficient manner.

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) welcomed EdChoice to its AAPOR Transparency Initiative (TI) in September of 2015. The TI is designed to acknowledge those organizations that pledge to practice transparency in their reporting of survey-based research findings and abide by AAPOR's disclosure standards as stated in the Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.

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The authors welcome any and all questions related to methods and findings.



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