

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

From April 7 to May 31, 2016, EdChoice (formerly the Friedman Foundation) administered a first-of-its-kind survey of Texas’s private K–12 schools in collaboration with the Texas Catholic Conference and the Texas Private Schools Association. The purpose of that assessment was seven-fold: (1) forecast a count of currently available seats and capacities to enroll additional students, (2) measure the familiarity with and potential interest in various private school choice programs, (3) determine the rules and regulations that concern schools the most, (4) estimate the average and median private school tuition, (5) document how many schools provide tuition assistance, (6) determine the current testing programs, if any, in effect for those schools, and (7) document how many schools serve students with special needs.

According to the USDOE, there were 1,738 private schools serving 245,915 students overall in 2013–14.¹ The EdChoice survey received responses from 429 private schools operating in Texas serving at least 86,831 K–12 and ungraded students.² Based on the USDOE’s total number of Texas private school students, this represents more than one-third (35 percent) of the state’s private school population; based on the USDOE’s total number of Texas K–12 private schools, this represents one-fourth (25 percent) of the state’s private schools. There were 1,164 private schools on the survey contact list that met at least two conditions:

- (1) the school had a working email address or phone number; and
- (2) the school was not part of a residential treatment facility, such as an in-patient mental health hospital.

Therefore, the EdChoice survey had a 33 percent school-level response rate for enrollment and capacity and equal or lower response rates for the other data points, except

for contact information. Complete responses were received from 308 private schools, which equates to a 26 percent complete response rate.³

To minimize coverage bias, the author took the following steps:

- compiled private school email list from association membership searches and the Texas Department of Revenue and added schools from PSS;
- called schools to collect missing email addresses;
- contacted all 1,164 schools at least three times directing them to the SurveyMonkey link containing the survey;
- verified school email addresses through school websites, where possible; and
- called remaining non-respondents to ensure email was received and to further encourage participation.⁴

EdChoice’s survey sample should provide a meaningful representation of the state’s private school sector.

¹Stephen P. Broughman and Nancy L. Swaim, *Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2013–14 Private School Universe Survey*, NCES 2016-243 (Washington, DC: US Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics), table 15, p. 21, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016243.pdf>.

²This is the number of both accredited and unaccredited respondents that entered at least enrollment and capacity data. There were 368 accredited private schools serving at least 82,563 K–12 and ungraded students that responded to the survey.

³EdChoice incentivized schools to complete the survey by entering them into a randomized drawing to win a \$1,000 gift card or one of five \$200 gift cards.

⁴Along with the Texas Catholic Conference, Steinhauer Strategies assisted with missing email address collection and calling remaining non-respondents to ensure email was received and to further encourage participation.