

# APPENDIX 2: SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

From September 20 to December 19, 2017, EdChoice administered a first-of-its-kind survey of South Carolina's private K–12 schools. 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 375 private schools serving 48,393 students overall in South Carolina during 2015–16.<sup>1</sup> The EdChoice survey received responses from 115 private schools operating in South Carolina serving approximately 18,718 K–12 and ungraded students. Based on the USDOE's total number of South Carolina private school students, this represents about two-fifths (39%) of the state's private school population; based on the USDOE's total number of South Carolina K–12 private schools, this represents almost a third (31%) of the state's private schools.

There were 354 private schools on the survey contact list that met at least the following three 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.
- (3) the school taught at least one grade within the K–12 grade level range

Six of the schools refused, the South Carolina Catholic Conference provided EdChoice with 34 survey responses from the Diocese of Charleston's parochial schools, and 81 responses were received via SurveyMonkey – resulting in 115 private school responses. Therefore, the EdChoice survey had a 30 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 99 private schools, which equates to a 28 percent complete response rate.<sup>2</sup>

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

- compiled private school email list from Exceptional SC and the South Carolina Department of Revenue;
- called schools to collect missing email addresses;
- contacted all 320 non-Catholic 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen P. Broughman, Adam Rettig, and Jennifer Peterson (2017), *Characteristics of Private Schools in the United States: Results From the 2015–16 Private School Universe Survey* (NCES 2017-073), table 15, p. 21, retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017073.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> EdChoice 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.

<sup>3</sup> Braun Research, Inc., assisted with list compilation.