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# A Brief Profile of America's Private Schools



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# Schools



## Introduction

The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) is the nation's most extensive sample survey of elementary and secondary schools and the teachers and administrators who staff them. Sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), SASS has been conducted five times: in school years 1987-88, 1990-91, 1993-94, 1999-2000, and 2003-04 by the United States Census Bureau. This brochure displays some of the private school data results from the 2003-04 SASS.

SASS covers both public and private schools. On the private side, SASS provides data about schools, principals or school heads and teachers. In 2003-04, SASS questionnaires were sent out to about 3,600 private schools and principals or school heads, and 9,900 teachers. The private school sample is large enough to provide good data for private school affiliation groups, as well as for the nation as a whole.

The SASS survey design for private schools starts with a sample of schools. Then, the principal or school head is included, along with about three to eight teachers. This design provides policymakers, researchers, educators, and the general public with a broad range of information on the conditions of schools and staffing in the United States.



The illustrative statistics presented below are taken from the 2003-04 SASS report, *Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey*, available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006313>.

- In the 2003-04 school year, there were an estimated 28,384 private schools educating 5,059,400 private school students in grades K-12. About 467,400 full-time and part-time teachers taught in private schools (table 1).

**Table 1. Number of private school students, teachers, schools, and principals, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Students	Teachers <sup>1</sup>	Schools	Principals <sup>1</sup>
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>5,059,400</b>	<b>467,400</b>	<b>28,384</b>	<b>27,690</b>
School classification				
Catholic	2,320,000	164,000	7,919	7,900
Other religious	1,746,500	178,300	13,659	13,092
Nonsectarian	992,900	125,100	6,806	6,698
School level				
Elementary	2,676,000	222,900	17,331	16,748
Secondary	832,300	76,700	2,657	2,514
Combined	1,551,200	167,800	8,397	8,427

<sup>1</sup> Includes full- and part-time head counts.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding. The table numbers (e.g., table 4) in this brochure are not always the same as those used in the full report; the original report numbers are included in the source note for each table.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 1.

## Schools

- Of students enrolled in private schools, the racial and ethnic origin composition was 77 percent non-Hispanic White, 9 percent non-Hispanic Black, 8 percent Hispanic (of any race),

5 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1 percent American Indian or Alaska Native (table 2).

**Table 2. Percentage distribution of private school students, by sex, race/ethnicity, percentage minority, and selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Sex		Race/ethnicity					
	Male	Female	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	Hispanic, regardless of race	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian/Pacific Islander	Minority <sup>1</sup>
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>49.8</b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>23.5</b>
School classification								
Catholic	48.5	51.5	74.1	8.5	11.3	0.9	5.1	25.9
Other religious	49.7	50.3	80.0	10.3	5.5	0.7	3.5	20.0
Nonsectarian	53.0	47.0	75.9	9.4	6.1	0.9	7.7	24.1
School level								
Elementary	50.4	49.6	74.3	10.3	9.1	1.1	5.2	25.7
Secondary	48.5	51.5	76.4	7.9	9.7	0.6	5.4	23.6
Combined	49.5	50.5	80.4	8.4	6.1	0.6	4.5	19.6

<sup>1</sup>Minority includes Black, non-Hispanic; Hispanic, regardless of race; American Indian/Alaska Native; and Asian/Pacific Islander.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2007-313, Table 2.

- Forty-three percent of private schools had one or more students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Among private schools, about 4 percent of students, on average, had an IEP.

The smallest schools were more likely to have students with an IEP (13 percent), compared to students in private schools in each of the other enrollment categories (table 3).

**Table 3. Number and percentage of private schools that had students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and percentage of enrolled students who had an IEP, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Number of schools that had any students with an IEP	Percent of all schools that had any students with an IEP	Percent of enrolled students who had an IEP
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>12,108</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>
School classification			
Catholic	4,864	61.4	2.3
Other religious	3,911	28.6	2.6
Nonsectarian	3,333	49.0	10.4
Student enrollment			
Less than 100	4,541	33.7	12.6
100-199	3,325	53.1	5.5
200-499	3,406	51.3	2.4
500-749	556	45.3	2.8
750 or more	279	37.0	1.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 3.



- Fifty-five percent of private schools reported having before-school or after-school day care programs. Private schools located in central city locations were more likely to have these programs (69 percent) than schools located elsewhere (table 4).

**Table 4. Percentage of private schools that offered particular programs or services at the school for students, regardless of funding source, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Programs or services available during the 2003-04 school year				Summer school activities or academic intersessions available during the summer of 2003 or the previous school year (2002-03) <sup>a</sup>		
	A separate, self-contained program for students with discipline or adjustment problems	Medical health care services beyond those provided by a school nurse	Extended day program providing instruction beyond the normal school day for students who need academic assistance	Before-school or after-school day care programs	Providing academic assistance for enrolled students	Providing academic advancement or enrichment for enrolled students	
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>55.3</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>27.2</b>	
School classification							
Catholic	0.9	2.1	19.0	65.0	30.8	22.6	
Other religious	3.7	2.1	20.7	48.5	30.8	22.8	
Nonsectarian	15.0	10.2	23.7	57.5	46.2	41.4	
Community type							
Central city	5.6	3.4	24.1	69.3	39.8	31.5	
Urban fringe/large town	5.9	3.7	20.2	53.7	33.2	27.7	
Rural/small town	4.7	6.5	16.5	29.7	27.1	16.3	

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 11.

## Teachers

- Among private school teachers, 88 percent were non-Hispanic White, 5 percent were Hispanic, 4 percent were non-Hispanic Black, about 2 percent were non-Hispanic Asian, less than 1

percent were non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native, and less than 1 percent were non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (table 5).

**Table 5. Percentage distribution of private school teachers by race/ethnicity and selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Race/ethnicity						
	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	Asian, non-Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	Hispanic, single or multiple races	Multiple races, non-Hispanic <sup>1</sup>
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>88.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>
School classification							
Catholic	88.6	3.0	0.2	1.6	0.2	6.2	0.3
Other religious	88.7	5.0	0.5	1.4	0.1	3.8	0.5
Nonsectarian	86.5	3.9	0.6	2.8	0.4	4.5	1.2
Community type							
Central city	83.7	6.1	0.5	2.6	0.4	5.9	0.8
Urban fringe/large town	90.0	2.9	0.3	1.5	0.1	4.6	0.6
Rural/small town	94.8	1.4	1.0	0.4	0.1	1.9	0.3

<sup>1</sup> Multiple races, non-Hispanic includes all non-Hispanic respondents who selected more than one race.

NOTE: Teachers include both full-time and part-time teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 18.

- Thirty-two percent of private school teachers had 3 or fewer years of full-time teaching experience, and 68 percent reported having 4 or more years of full-time teaching experience. There was no measurable difference between the percentage of teachers

with 3 or fewer years experience teaching in urban fringe/large towns (33 percent) compared to those with the same amount of teaching experience who were teaching elsewhere (table 6).

**Table 6. Percentage distribution of private school teachers by total years of full-time teaching experience, years teaching at current school, and selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Full-time teaching experience		Years teaching at current school	
	3 or fewer years	4 or more years	3 or fewer years	4 or more years
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>68.3</b>	<b>49.4</b>	<b>50.6</b>
School classification				
Catholic	26.1	73.9	44.5	55.5
Other religious	37.6	62.4	53.4	46.6
Nonsectarian	30.6	69.4	50.0	50.0
Community type				
Central city	29.2	70.8	47.4	52.6
Urban fringe/large town	32.9	67.1	49.5	50.5
Rural/small town	35.1	64.9	56.1	43.9

NOTE: Teachers include both full-time and part-time teachers. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 21.

- The average academic year base teaching salary for regular full-time teachers in private schools was \$31,700. Twenty-three percent of private school regular full-time teachers reported earning additional compensation from the same school for work involving extracurricular activities. On average, they earned \$2,400 for this work (table 7).

**Table 7. Average base salary and earnings from salary supplements during the current school year for regular full-time private school teachers, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Average academic year base teaching salary of regular full-time teachers	Salary Supplements					
		Extracurricular activities in same school		Other school sources (merit pay bonus, state supplement, other)		Job outside the school	
		Percent	Average amount	Percent	Average amount	Percent	Average amount
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>\$31,700</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>\$2,400</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>\$1,800</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>\$5,400</b>
School classification							
Catholic	31,900	27.4	2,200	4.9	2,100	20.2	5,000
Other religious	27,100	18.2	2,600	5.9	1,700	19.5	6,300
Nonsectarian	36,900	23.5	2,500	7.7	1,600	21.7	5,000
School level							
Elementary	29,800	15.3	2,200	5.0	1,400	17.6	5,000
Secondary	37,000	46.0	2,300	7.2	2,700	27.0	6,000
Combined	31,700	23.1	2,600	6.9	1,700	21.1	5,600

NOTE: A regular full-time teacher is any teacher whose primary position in a school is not an itinerant teacher, a long-term substitute, a short-term substitute, a student teacher, a teacher aide, an administrator, a library media specialist or librarian, another type of professional staff (e.g., counselor, curriculum coordinator, social worker) or support staff (e.g., secretary), or a part-time teacher.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 23.

- Regular full-time teachers in private schools reported that they were required to work an average of 38 hours to receive their base pay during a typical full week. On average, regular full-time private school teachers spent 29 hours per week on delivering instruction to a class of students. In total, they reported spending 52 hours on all teaching and other school-related activities during a typical full week (table 8).

**Table 8. Average number of hours per week that regular full-time private school teachers spent on selected activities during a typical full week, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Average hours per week		
	Total hours spent on all teaching and other school-related activities during a typical full week	Required to work to receive base pay during a typical full week	Spent delivering instruction to a class of students
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>38.4</b>	<b>28.9</b>
School classification			
Catholic	53.2	37.7	29.2
Other religious	51.8	38.5	29.4
Nonsectarian	52.3	39.2	27.9
Community type			
Central city	52.5	38.3	28.7
Urban fringe/large town	52.5	38.4	28.8
Rural/small town	52.3	38.8	29.8

NOTE: A regular full-time teacher is any teacher whose primary position in a school is not an itinerant teacher, a long-term substitute, a short-term substitute, a student teacher, a teacher aide, an administrator, a library media specialist or librarian, another type of professional staff (e.g., counselor, curriculum coordinator, social worker) or support staff (e.g., secretary), or a part-time teacher.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 26.

## Private School Heads

- Among all private school heads, 90 percent were non-Hispanic White, 5 percent were non-Hispanic Black, 3 percent were Hispanic, about 1 percent were non-Hispanic Asian, less than 1

percent were non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native, and less than 1 percent were non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (table 9).

**Table 9. Percentage distribution of private school principals by race/ethnicity and selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Race/ethnicity						
	White, non-Hispanic	Black, non-Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaska Native, non-Hispanic	Asian, non-Hispanic	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	Hispanic, single or multiple races	Multiple races, non-Hispanic <sup>1</sup>
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>89.8</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.2</b>
School classification							
Catholic	93.1	2.0	#	0.6	#	4.2	0.1
Other religious	89.3	6.9	1.0	0.8	#	1.6	0.4
Nonsectarian	86.8	5.6	0.3	2.6	0.4	4.2	0.1
Community type							
Central city	84.0	9.4	0.3	2.3	0.1	3.6	0.3
Urban fringe/large town	91.9	3.4	0.4	0.8	0.1	3.3	0.2
Rural/small town	96.0	1.5	2.0	#	#	0.3	0.2

# Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Multiple races, non-Hispanic includes all non-Hispanic respondents who selected more than one race.

NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 27.

- The average annual salary for private school heads was \$48,000. Private school heads in secondary schools had salaries (\$63,700) that were higher than those in elementary (\$45,700)

and combined schools (\$48,100). The average salaries of private school heads in elementary schools and combined schools were not measurably different (table 10).

**Table 10. Average annual salary for private school principals and average annual salary by years of experience as a principal, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Average annual salary	Average annual salary for principals by years of experience		
		Fewer than 3 years	3-9 years	10 years or more
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>	<b>\$39,800</b>	<b>\$46,800</b>	<b>\$53,700</b>
School classification				
Catholic	48,800	45,600	49,000	50,300
Other religious	38,800	31,500	36,500	45,500
Nonsectarian	65,200	51,400	66,800	71,800
School level				
Elementary	45,700	38,400	44,300	51,100
Secondary	63,700	54,500	62,900	69,700
Combined	48,100	38,600	45,900	54,700

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 30.

- Private school heads spent an average of 55 hours per week on all school-related activities which included an average of 22 hours per week interacting with students (table 11).

**Table 11. Average hours per week that private school principals spend on all school related activities and interacting with students, by selected school characteristics: 2003-04**

Selected school characteristic	Average hours per week	
	Total hours spent on all school-related activities	Interacting with students
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>54.6</b>	<b>22.1</b>
School classification		
Catholic	58.8	20.6
Other religious	52.0	23.7
Nonsectarian	54.7	21.0
Community type		
Central city	55.8	21.2
Urban fringe/large town	54.9	22.2
Rural/small town	51.2	24.3

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 31.



- Sixty-one percent of all private schools reported having a salary schedule for teachers. Among private schools that had salary schedules, the average yearly base teaching salary for teachers

with a bachelor's degree and no teaching experience was \$23,300. The average yearly salary at the highest step on the salary schedule was \$39,300 (table 12).

**Table 12. Percentage of private schools that had salary schedules for teachers and among those that had salary schedules, the average yearly base teacher salary, by various levels of degrees and experience and community type: 2003-04**

Community type	Among private schools that had salary schedules, average yearly base teacher salary for:					
	Percent with salary schedules for teachers	Bachelor's degree and no teaching experience	Bachelor's degree and 10 years of teaching experience	Master's degree <sup>1</sup> and no teaching experience	Master's degree <sup>2</sup> and 10 years of teaching experience	Highest possible step on the salary schedule
<b>All private schools</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>\$23,300</b>	<b>\$29,200</b>	<b>\$26,300</b>	<b>\$32,300</b>	<b>\$39,300</b>
School classification						
Catholic	91.5	23,900	29,400	26,300	32,200	41,600
Other religious	52.0	21,400	26,800	24,600	29,900	35,000
Nonsectarian	43.9	26,400	34,600	30,700	38,300	44,100
Community type						
Central city	66.7	24,100	30,200	27,200	33,400	41,000
Urban fringe/large town	59.9	23,500	29,400	26,400	32,600	40,200
Rural/small town	52.5	20,300	25,100	23,200	27,800	31,400

<sup>1</sup> A teacher with a master's degree or its equivalent in credit hours beyond a bachelor's degree.

<sup>2</sup> A teacher with a master's degree or its equivalent in credit hours.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, "Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey," NCES 2006-313, Table 33.

## Notes

The 2003-04 SASS covered three school sectors: public, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and private. Public schools include traditional public schools and public charter schools. Traditional public schools are defined as institutions that provide educational services for at least one of grades 1-12 (or comparable ungraded levels), have one or more teachers to give instruction, are located in one or more buildings, receive public funds as primary support, and are operated by an education agency. They include regular, special education, vocational/technical, and alternative schools. They also include schools in juvenile detention centers, and domestic schools located on military bases and operated by the Department of Defense. Public charter schools are public schools that, in accordance with an enabling state statute, have been granted a charter exempting them from selected state or local rules and regulations. BIA-funded schools are schools that are funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and may be operated by the BIA, a local tribe, or private contractor. Private schools are schools not in the public system that provide instruction for any of grades 1-12 (or comparable ungraded levels). The instruction must be given in a building that is not used primarily as a private home.

If you have specific questions about SASS, e-mail [sassdata@ed.gov](mailto:sassdata@ed.gov) or call 1-800-221-1204 toll-free (Eastern time).

The SASS website (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sass>) provides a complete list of publications that report findings from SASS. Reports can be downloaded or a paper copy can be ordered at no cost, while supplies last, from ED PUBS at 1-877-4ED-PUBS, or online at <http://www.edpubs.org>.

## Reference

- U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Characteristics of Schools, Districts, Teachers, Principals, and School Libraries in the United States, 2003-04 Schools and Staffing Survey*, NCES 2006-313 REVISED.

