

AUTONOMY OR REGULATION OF SCHOOLS

Most countries allow both public and private schools to provide compulsory education. Out of the 28 OECD countries for which data are available, four out of five allow government-dependent and independent institutions to provide such schooling. Over 70 percent of OECD countries also report that home schooling may be allowed.

In practice, however, most compulsory schooling is provided by public institutions. Enrolments in government-dependent private schools exceed 10 percent in only seven countries – Belgium, Chile, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Spain. For independent private schools they exceed 10 percent only in Mexico and Portugal. Half of countries reported figures for home schooling; on average, it accounts for just 0.4 percent of total enrolments (Figure).

The autonomy of schools is examined here across five areas (Table):

Requirement to follow standardised curriculum: At the lower secondary level, 93 percent of OECD countries reported a standard or partially standardised curriculum in public schools. For government-dependent private schools, the percentage was 91 percent; for independent private schools 59 percent; and for home schooling 61 percent. The picture is similar at the primary level.

Requirements for students to sit national exams: At the lower secondary level, 36 percent of OECD coun-

tries had mandatory national exams for public schools. For government-dependent private schools, the percentage was 32 percent; for independent private schools 30 percent; and for home schooling 18 percent. Such exams are less prevalent at the primary level, ranging from 14 percent of OECD countries for public schools to 5 percent for families that home school.

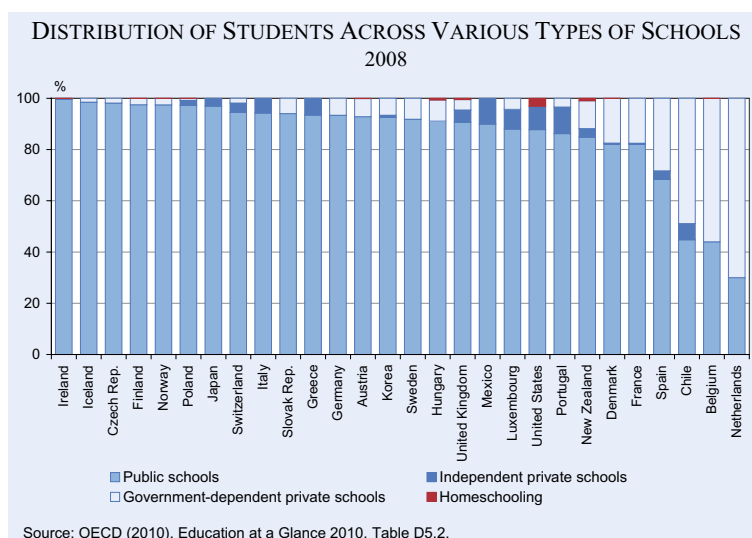
Promotion of religion or religious practices: The religious profile of schools is an important driver of school choice. At the lower secondary level, 46 percent of OECD countries allowed public schools to promote religion or religious practices. But for government-dependent private schools, this proportion rose to 83 percent; for independent private schools it was 95 percent; for home schooling 83 percent. The picture is similar at the primary level.

Employment and certification standards: With the exception of Chile, all countries reported having employment and certification standards for personnel working in public schools at primary level; all but Denmark reported that this also applied to government-dependent private schools. These standards were less often obligatory for independent private schools – ranging from 14 out of 20 at the lower secondary level. Of the countries that permitted home schooling, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland also had standards for personnel who instructed students in the home.

Restrictions on staffing and class size: These exist in around 70 percent of OECD countries for public schools compared with around half for government-dependent private schools and around a third for independent private schools. Only Switzerland reported such restrictions for home schooling. Restrictions were slightly more prevalent for primary than for lower secondary schools.

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Figure



Reference

OECD (2010), *Highlights from Education at a Glance 2010*, Paris, 82–85.

Table

Government regulation of schools at the lower secondary level, 2008

	A standard curriculum or partially standardised curriculum is required				Mandatory national examination is required				Schools can promote religion or religious practices				Personnel must meet employment and certification standards				There are restrictions on staffing and class size			
	P.S.	G.P.S.	I.P.S.	H.	P.S.	G.P.S.	I.P.S.	H.	P.S.	G.P.S.	I.P.S.	H.	P.S.	G.P.S.	I.P.S.	H.	P.S.	G.P.S.	I.P.S.	H.
Austria	√	√	x	√	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	√	√	x	x
Belgium (Fl.)	√	√	m	a	x	x	m	a	x	x	m	a	√	√	m	a	√	√	m	a
Belgium (Fr.)	√	√	m	a	x	x	x	x	x	√	m	a	√	√	m	a	√	√	m	a
Chile	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	
Czech Rep.	√	√	a	a	x	x	a	a	√	√	a	a	√	√	a	a	m	m	a	a
Denmark	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	x
England	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Finland	√	√	a	√	a	a	a	a	√	√	a	√	√	√	a	x	x	x	a	x
France	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	√	a	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Germany	√	√	m	a	√	√	m	a	x	√	m	a	√	√	m	a	√	√	m	a
Greece	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	m	a	m	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a
Hungary	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	m	a	√	√	m	a	√	x	m	a
Iceland	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x
Ireland	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	x	a	√	a	x	a
Italy	√	a	√	a	x	a	√	a	x	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a
Japan	√	a	√	a	x	a	x	a	x	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a	√	a
Korea	√	√	a	a	x	x	a	a	x	x	a	a	√	√	a	a	√	√	a	a
Luxembourg	√	√	x	√	√	√	x	a	√	√	√	a	√	√	√	a	√	x	x	a
Mexico	√	a	√	a	x	a	x	a	x	a	x	a	√	a	√	a	x	a	x	a
Netherlands	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	a	√	√	√	a	x	x	x	a
New Zealand	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	x
Norway	√	x	x	√	√	√	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	x
Poland	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	a	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	x
Portugal	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	a	√	√	√	a	√	√	m	a
Scotland	m	m	x	x	m	m	x	x	m	m	√	√	√	m	√	x	√	m	x	x
Slovak Rep.	√	√	a	a	x	x	a	a	√	√	a	a	√	√	a	a	√	x	a	a
Spain	√	√	√	a	x	x	x	a	x	√	√	a	√	√	√	a	√	√	√	a
Sweden	√	√	a	√	x	x	a	x	x	x	a	x	√	√	a	x	x	x	a	x
Switzerland	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	a
United States	x	a	x	x	x	a	x	x	x	a	√	√	√	a	m	x	√	a	x	x

P.S. = Public schools; - G.P.S. = Government-dependent private schools; - I.P.S. = Independent private schools;
H. = Homeschooling.
a = not applicable; - m = not available; - √ = yes; - x = no.

Source: OECD (2010), Education at a Glance 2010, Table D5.4.