

A report from the Swedish Association of Independent Schools

The independent school sector

2023

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✓ A report from the Swedish Association of Independent Schools
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The independent school sector

The Swedish Association of Independent Schools is a trade association that organises about 70% of the independent preschools, preschool classes, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools in Sweden. Many people want to know more about our sector. How many pupils go to independent schools and how well do they perform? Who owns the independent schools and who works there? How are the schools financed? How many pupils have a foreign background?

We have compiled answers to the most frequently asked questions in this booklet. The statistics have been obtained from several sources, primarily the National Agency for Education, Statistics Sweden and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. We have also included tips on reports related to the municipal vs. independent school choice debate. If you would like more information about independent schools or the association, please contact us or visit our website www.friskola.se. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

Happy reading!

Ulla Hamilton

CEO, Swedish Association of Independent Schools

Stockholm, spring 2023

What is an independent school?

An independent school is a school that is run by a proprietor other than a municipality, region or the state. This could be, for example, a foundation, a company, an association, a private person, a co-operative or a religious group. An independent school operates under the framework of the Swedish Education Act (2010), and compulsory and upper-secondary schools are inspected by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. Independent preschools are inspected by the municipality in which they are located. A more correct term for an independent school is a private school, or a school run by an independent proprietor.

The independent school system includes preschools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools. Independent schools must be open to all pupils – they are not permitted to select pupils – but some selection principles, which must be public and clearly formulated, may be applied when the number of applicants exceeds the number of places. Sibling priority, school waiting lists and requiring proximity to the school, certain educational connections (i.e. from preschool to school) and, in special cases, skill tests for schools with a cultural specialisation (music, dance or art) are the only selection criteria permitted for admission to compulsory schools.¹

¹ Swedish Education Act, chapter 10, sections 9–9a and Swedish Education Ordinance, chapter 9, sections 25–27. Some profile classes have prerequisites such as dance, music and physical education and health. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has therefore approved the use of skill tests from Year 4. When skill tests are used as a basis for selection to a certain school unit, no other selection criteria may be applied.

/ Our system ensures that independent schools follow the same Education Act and curricula as municipal schools, are tax-funded with school vouchers, and are not allowed to charge fees.

In contrast to many other countries, Sweden has a uniform school system. Our system ensures that independent schools follow the same Education Act and curricula as municipal schools, are tax-funded with school vouchers, and are not allowed to charge fees. Some independent compulsory schools adjust their timetables within the framework of the Education Act, or use the timetable's "school specialisation" hours to focus on their own specialism by devoting extra time to one or more subjects.

In March 1992 the Government presented the proposition of freedom of choice and independent schools that is generally referred to as the independent school reform.²

The independent school reform placed greater emphasis on the individual's right to choose. The goal of the reform was to provide the greatest possible freedom for children and parents to choose schools. To enable this, independent schools were given essentially the same terms and financial conditions as municipal schools. The proposition described the right to choose as important in a free society. But the Government also saw other reasons for increasing freedom of choice. Freedom of choice could:

- » vitalise school and create greater engagement
- » promote diversity in school
- » stimulate quality-enhancing competition
- » create incentive for cost-effectiveness and the development of new, more efficient working methods that could spread.

² Prop. 1991/92:95 Valfrihet och fristående skolor (Freedom of choice and independent schools)

No two independent school operators are alike

Most independent schools have a general focus – they do not have a religious affiliation nor apply the Waldorf method of teaching.³ However, many independent school proprietors have their own specialism, which is aimed at promoting what they are good at or their own specific way of working, in order to offer alternatives to the more or less uniform municipal school system. You could therefore say that all independent school operators have their own niche.

The special focus of an independent school can be described as the environment, language, culture, internationalism, global issues or a cultural specialisation. The focus might also be a specific way of working/method of teaching (Waldorf, Freinet or Montessori), certain core values, including religious⁴, a special learning environment, a location, or the fact that the school is small and can therefore offer a safe environment. Some independent schools have limited their intake to pupils who need extensive support (schools for children with special educational needs). These schools are therefore permitted to only admit these pupils.

Independent preschools and upper-secondary schools profile themselves similarly. In other words, independent school operators are quite different from each other.⁵

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- 3 Independent schools with a special pedagogical focus may under the Swedish Education Act be exempted from certain regulations regarding teacher certification, subjects, timetables and grading. "Special pedagogical focus" here refers to the Waldorf method.
 - 4 Teaching in preschools and schools with a religious affiliation must be non-religious. Otherwise, the education at independent schools, independent preschools and independent leisure-time centres may have a religious affiliation, but participation in religious activities may only be voluntary (Swedish Education Act, Chap.1, Sections 6–7).
 - 5 The Swedish Schools Inspectorate only specifies three types of focus – no focus (general), Waldorf or religious.

The former concept of private schools referred to schools that were privately operated before the independent school reform and the introduction of the school voucher system. They were mainly located in major cities and funded by school fees paid by parents. There were also boarding schools. There are still a few boarding schools, but teaching is covered by the school voucher system and follows the national curriculum. However, boarding and extra after-school activities are not covered by the school voucher system and are funded by school fees.

What is a proprietor and what does that mean for an independent school?

Every school, both independent and municipal, must have someone who is responsible for the management of the school. The organisation is the actual proprietor, i.e. an association, municipality, foundation or limited liability company. When the school's proprietor is a municipality, the proprietor is represented by the board responsible for the control of schools and ultimately by the municipal council.

For independent preschools, compulsory and upper-secondary schools, an organisation is the proprietor and submits an application to provide education to the municipality (for preschools) or the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (compulsory and upper-secondary schools) to be approved to carry out education. The proprietor is represented by the organisation's board of directors. The permit to carry out the operations is linked to the organisation's company registration number and cannot be transferred to another organisation without permission from the authority that issued the permit. A physical person can also receive a permit to run a school, but this is extremely unusual.

For independent schools, proprietorship entails a right – approval/registration – to set up a preschool, compulsory or upper-secondary school and leisure-time centre. The approval applies to the type of school or the year groups and programmes granted by the supervisory body, and governance of the school is mainly determined by the education ordinances. Proprietorship may also involve the exercise of authority, by setting grades for example, even though an independent school is not an authority.

We usually call the organisation that has been granted approval as a proprietor the “owner”, which might be a limited liability company, an association or even a religious group, even though it sounds strange that a group of people can “own” a school.

An owner may also have several registrations – proprietorships – since each individual school unit (the premises, adjacent buildings and outdoor areas) must be registered separately. In turn, an owner can be a corporate group with several companies, with one or more approvals per company, or a parent company with approvals for several individual school units.

The responsibilities of a proprietor are set out in the Swedish Education Act. The Act also sets out the responsibilities of the principal (compulsory and upper-secondary school). Many proprietors are only responsible for one school. In these schools, the principal is usually the owner of the limited liability company that has been registered, i.e. the proprietor. Thus, a proprietor wears three different hats. In large independent schools with several owners, several individual school units and several proprietorships, the actual ownership is exercised by the parent company’s board and CEO, the proprietorship in practice by the board of directors, CEO and joint staffs, despite the fact that the formal proprietorship rests with the subsidiaries who have been registered, and the principals of the same types of school are managed jointly across the proprietorships.

Owners with several individual school units and/or proprietorships also differ in terms of how centralised/decentralised they exercise their proprietorship over the schools. Many owners have clear governance, a joint systematic approach to quality and coherent communication, where central management works together with the principals, and sometimes with the teachers as well. Others structure their school in such a way that the board of directors remains the proprietor, but there is no extensive central organisation and each school unit is responsible for development instead. In its 2015 report “Hur huvudmännen styr grundskolan” (How proprietors govern compulsory schools), the Swedish Schools Inspectorate examines the differences between different proprietors. It suggests that the private ownership of independent schools leads to stronger engagement, clearer governance, closer monitoring, higher quality and better results than municipal ownership.

Independent schools open to everyone

According to the Swedish Education Act, every independent compulsory school must be open to all pupils who have the right to compulsory school education. It is not permitted to select certain pupils and deny others or to break the waiting list order.⁶ The education can be limited to certain years, pupils who need specific support (schools for children with special educational needs), or pupils for whom the education is specifically adapted.⁷ Similar regulations exist for independent preschool class, independent upper-secondary school and independent special-needs compulsory and upper-secondary schools.⁸

6 Independent preschool, Swedish Education Act, chapter 8, section 18, Independent preschool class, chapter 9, section 17 and compulsory school chapter 10, section 35

7 Swedish Education Act, chapter 10, section 35, paragraph 1.

8 Swedish Education Act chapter 9, section 17, paragraph 1, chapter 15, section 33, paragraph 1, and chapter 11, section 34, paragraph 1. As of 2 July 2023, special-needs compulsory school will be called adapted compulsory school and special-needs upper-secondary school will be called adapted upper-secondary school in Swedish. The English terms have yet to be determined by the National Agency for Education.

In June 2022 the Riksdag adopted new rules for schools for children with special educational needs. The designation “schools for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities” is being added to the Swedish Education Act for municipal schools for children with special educational needs in compulsory schools. It is also being included for schools with individual proprietors that limit their instruction to pupils in need of special support in preschool class, compulsory school, special-needs compulsory school and upper-secondary school.

Independent schools can turn away pupils with extensive needs for special support if the pupil’s home municipality is not willing to pay for additional support for the pupil. According to the Swedish Education Act, a municipality is not required to pay an additional sum if this leads to significant organisational or financial difficulties for the municipality.⁹ If the municipality decides not to provide additional funding for such reasons, the individual proprietor is therefore not required to accept or provide continued education to the pupil.¹⁰

The ability to turn away a pupil is thus extremely limited and applies only in cases where the municipality denies an application for additional funding because it creates excessive organisational or financial difficulties. However, it almost never happens that the municipality denies applications with this formulation. Rather, the municipality usually states that the pupil’s need for support should be covered within the framework of the regular school voucher, i.e. the standard amount. Thus, the pupil should be offered a space and is also entitled to the support the pupil needs for his or her instruction.

⁹ Chapter 9, section 21, paragraph 2, chapter 10, section 39, paragraph 3, chapter 11, section 38, paragraph 2 and chapter 17.

¹⁰ Swedish Education Act, chapter 10, section 35, paragraph 2, Chapter 9, section 17, paragraph 2, Chapter 15, section 33, paragraph 3, and chapter 11, section 34, paragraph 2.

Waiting lists for independent preschools

Admission to preschools takes place by registering the child on the waiting list of the respective preschool. Sometimes the independent preschools and the municipality agree on a joint waiting list system where everyone can register their children. Parents are offered a place for their child in waiting list order, and siblings are given priority. Sometimes the proximity principle is also applied. Independent preschools may also accept children from other municipalities; there are no catchment areas. Independent and municipal preschools may have the same selection criteria. Since the municipality grants approval for an independent preschool, the municipality also approves the selection criteria that may be applied if there are more children than places at the independent preschool.

Waiting lists for independent compulsory schools

Admission to independent compulsory schools takes place by registering the child on the waiting list of the desired independent school. The school decides how long the waiting list stays open. The child can be registered as soon as they receive a personal identity number. However, more and more independent schools are opening their waiting lists later. For example, large independent school proprietors have set 1 February of the year the child turns one as the earliest date. As the beginning of the child's first school year approaches, the children are offered a place according to their position on the waiting list, but those who already have a sibling at the school are given priority. The admission process is usually digital. Since most parents place their children on the waiting lists of several independent schools, many may already have taken up an offer at another school, so the waiting list is often much shorter than expected considering the number of children on the list.

A waiting list system means that the children/pupils are admitted according to their position on the list. The fact that an independent school has a waiting list system does not mean that no places will be available. There can even be more places than children/pupils on the waiting list.

Independent schools may also decide to base admissions wholly or partly on the proximity principle, i.e. in the same manner as municipal schools.

Admission to municipal compulsory schools is based on a combination of parents' choice¹¹ of (any municipal) school and the municipality's obligation to offer a school place close to where the child lives. In practice, this also enables the possibility of giving priority to siblings at municipal schools through school choice and/or proximity to the home.¹² According to the municipality's school placement principles, anyone who does not choose a school must be offered a place in a school within a reasonable distance from their home.

In some municipalities, admissions to independent and municipal schools take place simultaneously in a coordinated admission system. A small number of compulsory schools with specialist classes – music, dance, etc. – are permitted to use skill tests¹³ for admissions instead.

11 School choice is mandatory in some municipalities, i.e. all guardians must choose a school, but choosing a school is optional in most municipalities (Swedish Education Act 9: 12 and 15, 10:24 and 30, 11: 24 and 29).

12 Neither choosing a municipal school nor sibling priority is a right in municipal schools. It is a possibility that presumes that all children in each municipal school can be placed in a school close to where they live. If this is not possible, the right to be placed in a school close to where they live overrules the right to choose a school, also for siblings, in municipal schools. The above sources.

13 See note 1 on page 4.

Joint admission to upper-secondary school

Almost without exception, admission to upper-secondary school takes place in a joint regional or municipal admission system for independent and municipal schools. Upper-secondary school places are offered on the basis of the pupil's ranked selection and their results from compulsory school, as well as the availability and demand for each programme and school.

What is required to set up an independent school?

Applications for approval to set up or expand an independent school must be submitted to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate by 31 January in order to open the school in the autumn term of the following year. As of 1 January 2023, an application for new establishment of an independent school costs SEK 75,000 per application; an application to expand an existing school unit costs SEK 65,000 and an application to expand an existing school unit with a deviation from the national programmes costs SEK 20,000.¹⁴

To be approved as a proprietor, the applicant must possess, through experience or otherwise, the knowledge of the regulations that apply to the operations, have the financial means to follow the regulations that apply to the operations and otherwise have the necessary prospects to follow the regulations that apply to education.¹⁵

¹⁴ skolinspektionen.se/tillstand/ovriga-ansokningar-och-anmalningar/starta-eller-utoka-en-fristaende-skola/

¹⁵ Swedish Education Act, Chapter 2, Section 5.

The application must contain the information that is required to show there is a sufficient pupil population for the school in relation to the proposed number of places, how the number of pupils is intended to increase, that funding – school vouchers – will cover the school’s costs, the required number of teachers, other staff, premises, educational materials and so forth. Proprietors must show they have long-term economic viability, and how the school will be run in accordance with the applicable governing documents.

The owners and management of the independent schools are also carefully assessed. When lodging the application, documentation for an ownership and management suitability assessment must also be provided. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate must ensure that the board of directors and the school’s managers have the appropriate expertise in education law, labour law, health and safety at work and finance. These people are also checked by obtaining extracts from the criminal records registry, the Swedish Tax Agency and the Swedish Enforcement Agency. The ownership and management suitability assessment was implemented in 2019 to reduce the risk of non-bona fide actors taking advantage of public funding.¹⁶ The regulations ensure even stricter conditions for starting and running a school.

During the spring, the information provided in the application is reviewed and supplementary information is often requested. In addition, the applications are sent to the relevant municipalities for their views on whether the proposed school will have significant negative consequences in the long term for the pupils or for the public school system in the municipality.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate announces its decision by 30 September.

¹⁶ Prop. 2017/18:158 Ökade tillståndskrav och särskilda regler för upphandling inom välfärden (Increased permit requirements and special regulations for procurements in public institutions).

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate inspects independent schools in the same way as it does public schools.¹⁷ But there are special types of inspections linked to the independent schools' registrations.

Before the school opens, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate performs a pre-registration inspection of the operations a proprietor intends to carry out.¹⁸ Independent schools and individual proprietors also have an inspection during their first year of operation. The purpose of this inspection is to ensure that the school and the proprietor are following the plans set out in the registration.

The same rules apply to setting up an independent preschool, except that the municipality approves the application.

Fewer applications for independent schools

The number of applications to set up an independent school has fallen sharply over the past decade, from nearly 500 in 2011 to just over 80 in recent years. In 2021, the number of applications was 123.

/ Since 2013, the vast majority of all granted applications have come from existing proprietors.

17 Swedish Education Act, Chapter 26, Section 3.

18 Swedish Education Act, Chapter 26, Section 9.

Between 2010 and 2018, just over 25% of the applications were approved by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, about 35 applications per year to set up a new school. The number of applications has been falling since 2019, which is why the number of approvals has risen to just over 40%. In 2022, 35% were approved.

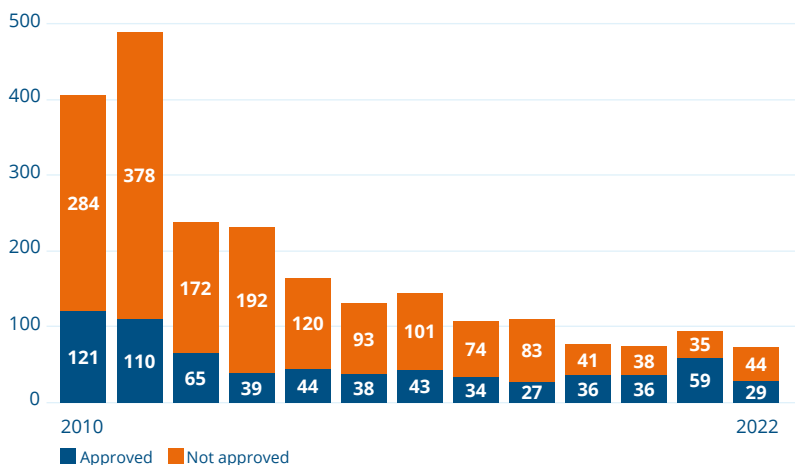


Fig. 1. Number of successful and unsuccessful applications to set up a new independent school between 2010 and 2022 (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2022)

The large number of applications in 2010–2011 is due to a change in legislation which led to all proprietors who were registered prior to 2010 having to apply again. But even compared with the period before 2010, the number of applications has decreased by 60%.

Since 2013, the vast majority (between 73 and 97%) of all granted applications have come from existing proprietors.¹⁹ A large proportion of the growth on the independent school market can thus be explained by the fact that already established actors have grown.

The most common reason for unsuccessful applications for both expansions and new establishments for academic year 2021/22 was “Forecast pupils and financial conditions”.²⁰

The number of applications to expand existing operations with more years in compulsory school and more programmes in upper-secondary schools has been about 125 each year. The number of approved applications to expand increased from 50% in 2019 to 66% in 2022.

Only 29 approved new schools in 2022

Only 29 applications for new schools were approved in 2022. This is the lowest number of approved applications since 2010, when statistics began being collected. Eighteen of the applications were for compulsory schools and 11 were for upper-secondary schools.

19 Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2020): Decisions on applications to start or expand independent schools – academic year 2021/22

20 Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2020): Decisions on applications to start or expand independent schools – academic year 2021/22

Greater need for school places

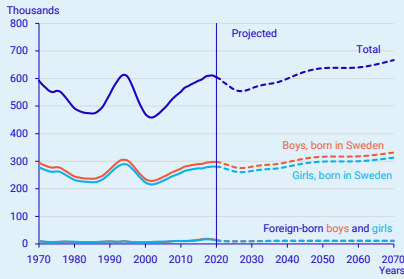
At the same time, there is a greater need for places, because the number of school-age children is increasing. Many municipalities have tight finances. Premises are the second-greatest expense for schools, and just building the premises to meet the need for school places would cost the municipalities many billions of kronor.²¹ The question is whether independent schools will be able to help to solve the school shortage in the municipalities, considering that many have their applications to start new schools and increase the number of spaces rejected.

Statistics Sweden's population forecast for 2021–2070 estimates a 17% increase in infants, an 11% increase in 1–5-year-olds and an 8% increase in 6–15-year-olds.²²

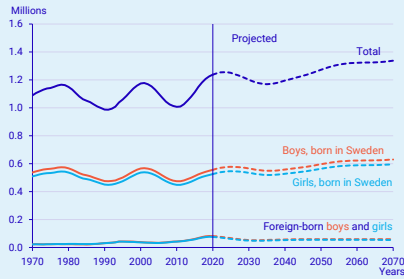
21 Klarar Sverige skolbristen? Om hinder för fristående skolors etablering i skuggan av den växande skolbristen (Can Sweden manage the school shortage? (Swedish Association of Independent Schools, January 2020).

22 Statistics Sweden's Population Forecast 2021–2070, pp. 22–24 (Statistics Sweden, 2021).

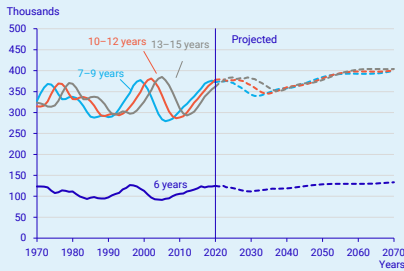
About independent schools / What is an independent school?



Number aged 1–5 years by sex and born in/outside of Sweden in 1970–2020 and projected 2021–2070



Number aged 6–15 years by sex and born in/outside of Sweden in 1970–2020 and projected 2021–2070



Number aged 6 years, 7–9 years, 10–12 years and 13–15 years in 1970–2020 and projected 2021–2070

Fig. 2. Statistics Sweden's population forecast for 2070

Management and governing capacity varies with size

The independent proprietors vary in size and organisation, as do their prospects and capacity to pursue good quality school operations. For example, a small independent school proprietor has fewer resources for management and administration. This becomes obvious when we look at the proprietors' willingness to apply for national grants: small, individual proprietors are usually the ones that refrain from applying.²³

At the same time, there are individual proprietors with extremely high administrative capacity. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate's review of governance towards the goals found that the individual proprietors in a larger company often – but not always – had excellent knowledge of their schools' results and well-developed quality measures that were supported at all levels of the organisation.²⁴

In extreme cases, lack of competence and capacity lead to the proprietors not being permitted to continue their operations. Since 2010, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has been able to revoke the approval of individual proprietors with independent schools that have serious flaws. This means that the school is closed. In the 2010–2019 period, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate rescinded the approval in about thirty cases, which led to the closure of 23 active schools and one leisure-time centre. The independent schools that have been closed have mainly been small and the proprietors have often only had one school.²⁵

23 See e.g. the Swedish Agency for Public Management (2021): *Olika vägar till likvärdig skola. Utvärdering av likvärdighetsbidraget till skolan. Slutrapport. (Different routes to equivalent schools. Evaluation of the equity contribution to schools. Final report.)* 2021:2

24 Swedish Schools Inspectorate: 2014 Annual Report

25 Swedish Schools Inspectorate: *Årsrapport 2019. Skillnader i skolors arbetsätt och huvudmäns ansvarstagande (2019 Annual report. Differences in schools' working methods and proprietors' taking of responsibility)*

Independent schools have a more direct chain of command than municipal schools

In contrast to municipal schools, independent schools do not have local political goals or any local political governance to follow. School operations do not need to compete with other operations for resources as they do in a municipality. Independent schools have a simpler chain of command.

In its review of the proprietors' governance of compulsory schools, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate pointed out that large individual proprietors often had a more well-considered dialogue with their operating managers and principals than the municipalities, in which everyone understood the working process for management and governance.²⁶

When the Swedish Teachers' Union and the Swedish Association of School Leaders asked 700 lower-secondary principals about their working situation, the independent-school principals felt that they were closer to their proprietors than their municipal colleagues were, in terms of resource management and long-term conditions in general. The associations concluded that principals at independent schools often had shorter decision pathways and a clearer mandate.²⁷

26 Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2015): The proprietors' governance of compulsory schools

27 Swedish Teachers' Union and Swedish Association of School Leaders (2021): Rektorernas olika förutsättningar. 700 högstadierektorer om en alltmer uppdelad skola (Principals' different conditions. 700 lower-secondary principals on increasingly divided schools).

Transparency principle instead of disclosure principle for independent schools

The question of whether the principle of the disclosure of public documents should apply to independent schools as well has been discussed for a long time.

The job of the School Information Inquiry is to find a permanent solution to how the Swedish National Agency for Education is to manage the collection of information on independent schools. It was also to investigate the question of the principle of the disclosure of public documents, but the Government has changed the directive of the inquiry as to this question, to developing a new “transparency principle” instead.²⁸ This is mentioned in the Tidö Agreement.

According to the Minister for Education, the Government wants to enhance transparency in the independent school sector and individual independent schools by allowing the public sector to look at their financial conditions, by stipulating that the schools must report certain information that is not primarily about individuals, but is linked to how the school works. However, the Swedish principle of the disclosure of public documents would be difficult to apply to a small school, says Minister for Education Lotta Edholm.

The principle of the disclosure of public documents means that public documents received by or generated by a government agency must always be registered. Qualified assessments must be made as to whether the information in these documents is classified, and if so, how much must be redacted. Documents that are not classified under the Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act must be made accessible to the public in a timely manner and any appeal of decisions not to make information public must be

²⁸ Government press release dated 6 March 2023. <https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2023/03/regeringen-vill-oka-insynen-i-fristaende-skolor/>

managed. This requires legal expertise, which smaller schools do not have, as their primary activity is and should be education, the Minister for Education says. The concept “in a timely manner” means the same day, which creates difficulties for smaller operations during school holidays. The principle of the disclosure of public documents also means that everyone should have the right to participate in court proceedings and decision-making political meetings.

Independent schools have been under state supervision for a long time. In the independent school reform of the 1990s, it was decided that independent schools must be approved and inspected by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate. In their inspections, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has the right to visit the school and request all the information they need for the inspection. The municipality also has the right to information about the operations, which means they are entitled to visit the school and receive information the municipality needs in order to carry out their responsibilities under the Swedish Education Act.

Independent schools and segregation

Free school choice and independent schools are often accused of contributing to school segregation. The segregation of schools, interpreted as a uniform pupil composition, is mainly due to a highly segregated housing market and the fact that municipalities apply a proximity principle for admission to their municipal schools, so most pupils go to a municipal school close to where they live.²⁹

²⁹ Read more under Research and report tips in this booklet.

Independent schools and grade inflation

Independent schools are also accused of causing or contributing to grade inflation. Grade inflation means that teachers give higher grades than the pupils' knowledge corresponds to on national tests, in the subjects where these are given, or that pupils receive higher grades on their leaving certificates than the results they achieved in one or more of the subjects they took final grade national tests in. It can also mean that the pupils get higher grades in subjects that are not included in national tests.

The problem is based in the design of the grading system, unclear knowledge criteria that allow teachers to make different interpretations of how to make their assessments. Thus, grade inflation is not a question of school proprietorship, but about the design of the grading system. The Swedish National Agency for Education has found³⁰ that there is a fundamental problem with the modern grading system. There is a great variation in grading in relation to the national tests between different municipal schools as well as between different independent schools.

The flaws in the current grading system affect equivalency. When pupils' performance is graded based on an interpretation of the knowledge requirements of the curricula and the value words used to distinguish between the grade levels, it opens up for the possibility of teachers making different interpretations, which leads to the potential for great differences between schools. The results of the maths test are considered to be the most reliable, because they had the least room for interpretation of how the problems were solved.

30 Analyser av likvärdig betygssättning mellan elevgrupper och skolor. Jämförelser mellan betyg och nationella prov i årskurs 9, Rapport 475 (Analyses of equivalent grading between pupil groups and schools. Comparisons between grades and national tests in year 9, Report 475) (National Agency for Education 2019)

The National Agency for Education also emphasises the need for student teachers to be given solid knowledge of grading and assessing.³¹ However, the study shows that the effect of grade inflation was small and the differences between municipal schools and independent schools are “negligible” regarding how generous the teachers are in their grading. Other studies³² claim that grade inflation can be found in independent upper-secondary schools.

The solutions that have been proposed to prevent pupils getting too high grades on national tests involve a more complete system of centrally graded national tests. At the same time, international studies indicate that this is not an entirely problem-free path.³³ The part of grade inflation that involves pupils receiving higher grades in their leaving certificate than they did on their national tests is harder to evaluate, because the purpose of national tests is to identify weak subjects that the pupil needs to work on in their remaining time in school.

For several years now, the Swedish National Agency for Education has been tasked with digitalising the national tests.

As yet the national tests do not cover all parts of the national curriculum either, and the leaving certificates are meant to reflect the pupils’ knowledge in relation to all subjects in the curriculum.

Grade inflation is not a new phenomenon in Swedish schools. It also existed when Sweden had a relative grading system.

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- 31 Betygens värde: En analys av hur konkurrens påverkar betygsättningen vid svenska skolor (The value of grades: An analysis of how competition affects grading in Swedish schools), Swedish Competition Authority (2010) www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/forskning-och-utvarderingar/artiklar-om-forskning/skolkonkurrens-skapar-betygsinflation
- 32 www.sns.se/artiklar/sns-analys-88-resultat-och-betygsattning-i-gymnasiefriskolor/ and <https://skolvarden.se/artiklar/ny-rapport-pek-ut-betygsinflation-pa-friskolor-snedvridning> claim that grade inflation can be more clearly linked to independent schools in upper-secondary school
- 33 Betygens värde: En analys av hur konkurrens påverkar betygsättningen vid svenska skolor (The value of grades: An analysis of how competition affects grading in Swedish schools), Swedish Competition Authority (2010) www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/forskning-och-utvarderingar/artiklar-om-forskning/skolkonkurrens-skapar-betygsinflation

Independent schools and pupil-teacher ratio

Independent schools are said to have a higher pupil-teacher ratio. A low pupil-teacher ratio – few pupils per teacher – is considered good. In practice, it should be adapted to the pupils' needs and varies at school level, at both independent and municipal schools.

	Independent	Municipal
Preschool	5.1	5.1
P-class	18.0	1.1
1–3	15.1	13.9
4–6	13.8	11.9
7–9	12.5	11.2

Fig. 3. Number of pupils per teacher (pupil-teacher ratio) at schools with different combinations of years in the 2021/22 academic year (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

As the table shows, the pupil-teacher ratio is the same in independent and municipal schools in preschool and preschool class. Starting with Year 1, the pupil-teacher ratio is about 10% higher in independent schools.

In an international perspective, Sweden has the same pupil-teacher ratio in compulsory school as the OECD average. In primary school Sweden had 14.8 pupils per teacher in 2021, while the OECD average was 15. For lower secondary school Sweden had 13,0 pupils per teacher and the OECD average was 13.³⁴

³⁴ Primary school – Pupil statistics, Academic Year 2020/21 and Primary School – Staff Statistics with Qualification – per subject and category, Academic year 2020/21 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021).

Schools and pupils

All municipalities have pupils who go to independent schools

There are independent preschools in 242 of the nation's 290 municipalities. There are independent compulsory schools in 185 municipalities, and independent upper-secondary schools in 98 municipalities. There are municipal preschools and compulsory schools in all 290 municipalities. 254 municipalities have upper-secondary schools run by the municipality or region. Even municipalities without an independent school can have pupils who go to an independent school in another municipality.³⁵

	Independent	Municipal
Preschools	242	290
Compulsory schools	185	290
Upper-secondary schools	98	254

Fig. 4. Number of municipalities with independent and public schools.

The data on the number of preschools are uncertain – this applies to the entire chapter. There is no national listing of preschools because they are municipal. The Swedish National Agency for Education is working to create a complete listing. Each preschool was assigned a unique code in 2022, and in 2023 the next step will be taken to secure the preschools' names, which have previously been reported individually by the preschools themselves, with varied results from year to year. Preschools that belong to the same "proprietor"/owner have sometimes been given designations that make them indistinguishable from each other.

35 Table 1: Preschool and school units/leisure-time centres. Children/pupils, 2021/22 academic year (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

There are 4,077 independent preschools and schools in Sweden. This represents 26% of all 15,461 preschools and schools in the country. 2,789 (30%) of the 9,452 preschools are independent. 828 (18%) of the 4,725 compulsory schools, and 460 (36%) of the 1,284 upper-secondary schools, are independent.³⁶

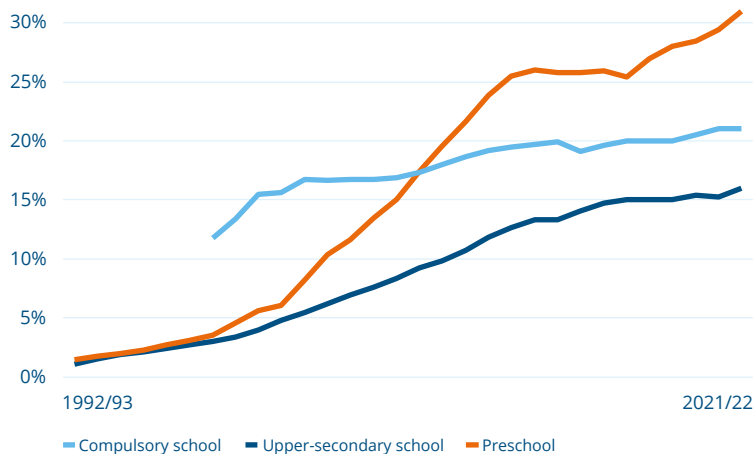


Fig. 5. Percentage of children/pupils in independent schools (National Agency for Education, 2022).³⁷

³⁶ Table 1: Preschool and school units/leisure-time centres. Children/pupils, 2021/22 academic year (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

³⁷ Compulsory school – Pupil statistics, Academic Year 21/22, Upper-secondary school – Pupil statistics, Academic Year 21/22 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022) and Preschool – Children, proportion (%) in independent schools (Swedish National Agency for Education comparative figures, 2021)

Independent schools are often small. Nearly one in three independent compulsory schools (31%) has fewer than 100 pupils. Of the independent upper-secondary schools, just over one in five (21%) has fewer than 100 pupils. Independent compulsory schools have an average of 234 pupils per school unit, while municipal schools have 264. Independent upper-secondary schools have an average of 240 pupils per school unit, while municipal schools have 305^{38, 39}

Breakdown of children and pupils – 1 in 5 go to an independent school

More than 410,000 children and pupils go to an independent preschool, compulsory school or upper-secondary school, representing 19.6% of just over 2 million children and pupils in Swedish preschools and schools.

In preschools, 21%, 108,488 children, go to an independent school (of a total of 513,406 children). The corresponding figure for compulsory schools⁴⁰ is 15.8%, 192,713 pupils (of a total of 1,221,627 pupils), and 31% for upper-secondary schools, 110,461 pupils (of a total of 361,673 pupils).⁴¹

Both the number and percentage of pupils in independent schools have increased over the past 20 years, from 6% to 16%.

38 Compulsory school – Number of pupils per year group 2021/22 academic year (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

39 Upper-secondary school – Number of pupils, 2021/22 academic year (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).
40 Including preschool class.

41 All types of schools and leisure-time centres – Children/pupils – National level, Table 1: Preschool and school units/leisure-time centres. Children/pupils, 2021/22 academic year (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

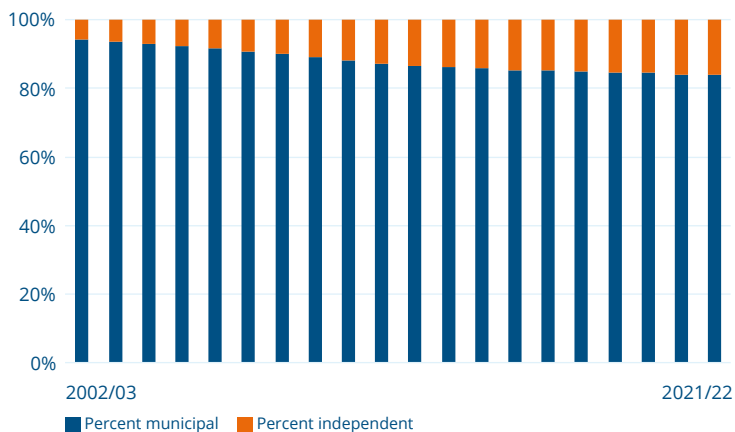


Fig. 6. Percentage of pupils in municipal and independent compulsory schools (National Agency for Education, 2022).⁴²

At the same time, as many as 20% of the compulsory school pupils who completed Year 9 in 2022 went to an independent school. The closest school, which is usually municipal, is a more natural choice for younger children. As a pupil grows older, the range of possible school alternatives broadens.⁴³

⁴² Table 2 A: School units and pupils, academic years 2016/17–2021/22 (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

⁴³ Number of pupils per year group 2021/22 academic year (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

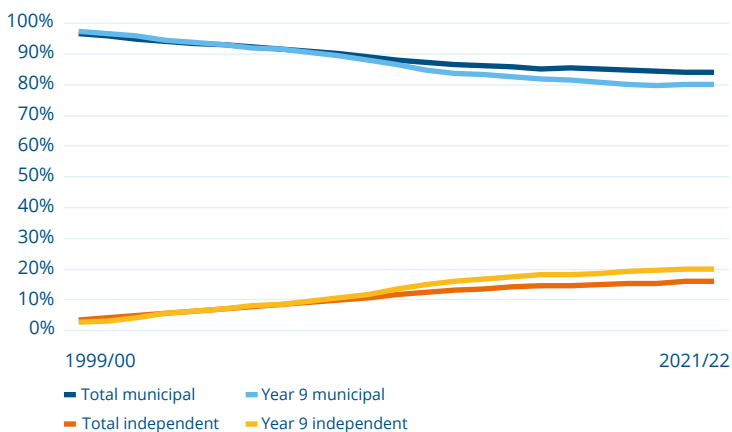


Fig. 7. Total percentage of pupils in compulsory school and percentage of Year 9 (National Agency for Education, 2022).⁴⁴

In the 2021/22 academic year, 92% of the pupils in independent compulsory schools went to schools with a general focus.⁴⁵ 5% went to religious schools, and 3% to Waldorf schools.⁴⁶ There are 58 compulsory schools and six upper-secondary schools in Sweden with a religious affiliation, of which 58 are Christian, two are Jewish and four are Muslim.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Table 1: Preschool and school units/leisure-time centres. Children/pupils, 2021/22 academic year (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022) and Compulsory school – Number of pupils per year group (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

⁴⁵ This includes schools with a specialism, such as teaching method, language or subject area.

⁴⁶ Table 2 G: School units and pupils, 2021/22 academic year, independent school units (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

⁴⁷ School Unit Register, Dec 2022. The information about religious affiliation was previously voluntary. Independent schools that carry out operations with religious affiliation must now report this to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate no later than 1 July 2023. (skolinspektionen.se/tilstand/ovriga-ansokningar-och-anmalningar/anmalan-om-konfessionell-inriktning/)

Tuition – what occurs during lessons – in all schools must be non-religious. This applies to both public and independent schools. The education otherwise at independent schools may have a religious affiliation, but participation in religious activities must be voluntary.⁴⁸



Fig. 8. Breakdown of pupils in independent compulsory schools per school focus.⁴⁹

In the independent upper-secondary schools, 64% of pupils were enrolled in a university preparatory programme, 30% in a vocational programme and 6% in an introductory programme.⁵⁰ The corresponding figures for municipal upper-secondary schools were 59% in a higher education preparatory programme, 28% in a vocational programme and 12% in an introductory programme.⁵¹

48 Swedish Education Act, Chapter 1, Sections 6–7.

49 Table 2 G: School units and pupils, 2021/22 academic year, independent school units (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

50 Upper-secondary schools – Pupil statistics, 2021/22 academic year, independent proprietor (National Agency for Education, 2022).

51 Upper-secondary schools – Pupil statistics, 2021/22 academic year, municipal proprietor (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Size and type of company – most proprietors have one or two units

The vast majority of proprietors that run independent preschools, compulsory schools or upper-secondary schools have only one or two units. 98% of preschool proprietors have only one or two units, 95% of compulsory school proprietors have one or two units, and 84% of upper-secondary school proprietors have one or two units.

Number of units	Number of proprietors		
	Preschools	Compulsory schools	Upper-secondary schools
1	2,029	501	155
2	61	36	19
3	21	12	9
4	12	8	6
5	3	2	3
6	0	1	2
7	1	1	3
8	2	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	1	0	0
11–20	4	3	7
21–30	1	2	1
31–40	1	0	1
41–50	0	2	0
>50	4	0	0
Total	2,140	568	206

Fig. 9. The number of proprietors⁵² that run each type of school, listed by the number of units they have (National Agency for Education, 2022).⁵³

52 The concept of “proprietor” is not used in preschools; here it indicates the number of brands/owners and should be considered as uncertain.

53 Information about preschools 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021), Compulsory School – Number of pupils per year group (Swedish National Agency for Education, 21/22) and Upper-secondary school – Number of pupils

Please note that this list of proprietors **cannot** be compared with the Largest Owners section at the end of this booklet, as one owner can own several proprietors – both large and small. Thus, a single owner can own several proprietors, who in turn can own one, two or more units, which is explained in the section The Largest Owners.

Fourteen proprietors with more than five preschool units (0.7% of all preschool “proprietors”) own 18.9% of all preschool units; nine proprietors with more than five compulsory school units (1.6% of all compulsory school proprietors) own 22.5% of the total number of compulsory schools and 14 proprietors with more than five upper-secondary school units (6.8% of the total number of upper-secondary proprietors) own 43.7% of upper-secondary schools. In other words, the ownership concentration is highest for upper-secondary schools and lowest for preschools. For the distinction between an owner and a proprietor, refer to the introductory section: What is a proprietor and what does that mean for an independent school?

	Preschools	Compulsory schools	Upper-secondary schools
No. of proprietors with more than five units	14	9	14
Percentage of proprietors with more than five units	0.7%	1.6%	6.8%
Percentage of units owned by proprietors with more than five units	18.9%	22.5%	43.7%

Fig. 10. The number of independent proprietors in each type of school with more than five units, their share of the number of proprietors and number of units.⁵⁴

(Swedish National Agency for Education, 21/22).

54 Information about preschools 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021), Compulsory School – Number of pupils per year group (Swedish National Agency for Education, 21/22) and Upper-secondary school – Number of pupils (Swedish National Agency for Education, 21/22).

/ The ownership concentration is highest for upper-secondary schools and lowest for preschools.

45% of the independent preschools are run as a company and attended by 59% of the preschool children.⁵⁵

	Preschool			
	Children		Units	
Companies*	63,689	59%	1,264	45%
Sole proprietorship	226	0.2%	10	0.4%
Others**	44,610	41%	1,515	54%

Fig. 11. Number of preschool units and enrolled children per operational and legal form, 2014–2021 (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

* Limited liability companies, partnerships, general partnerships, limited partnerships

** Economic associations, non-profit associations and registered religious groups

For compulsory schools, 62% of independent schools are run as a limited liability company and 73% of the pupils in independent compulsory schools go to a school that is run as a company.

	Compulsory schools			
	Pupils		Schools	
Limited liability companies	129,314	73%	511	62%
Associations*	29,306	16%	223	27%
Foundations	18,709	10%	86	10%
Others**	878	0%	8	1%

Fig. 12. School units and pupils, academic years 2016/17–2021/22 (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

* Economic and non-profit

** General partnerships and religious groups

⁵⁵ Table 3: Number of preschool units and enrolled children per operational and legal form, 2014–2021 (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

Upper-secondary schools account for the highest share of limited liability companies. 88% of these schools are run as a limited liability company. 87% of the pupils in independent schools go to these schools.

	Upper-secondary schools			
	Pupils		Schools	
Limited liability companies	95,553	87%	404	88%
Associations*	2,311	2%	13	3%
Foundations	11,656	11%	36	8%
Others**	941	1%	7	2%

Fig. 13. Schools and pupils in independent upper-secondary schools per form of legal entity (National Agency for Education, 2022)

* Non-profit

** General partnerships and religious groups

Of all compulsory and upper-secondary schools, 72% are run as limited companies, and 81% of pupils attended them.⁵⁶

	Compulsory and upper-secondary schools	
	Pupils	Schools
Limited liability companies	81%	72%
Associations	11%	19%
Foundations	11%	10%
Others*	1%	1%

Fig. 14. Schools and pupils in independent compulsory and upper-secondary schools per form of legal entity (National Agency for Education, 2022. 2021/22 academic year).

*general partnerships, limited partnerships and religious groups

56 Table 2 A: School units and pupils, academic years 2016/17–2021/22 (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

Pupil background – higher percentage of pupils with a foreign background in independent schools

In 2021/22, 28% of the pupils in independent compulsory schools had a foreign background. The corresponding figure for municipal compulsory schools was 26%.⁵⁷ 32% of the pupils in independent upper-secondary schools had a foreign background, and 28% in municipal upper-secondary schools.⁵⁸ The corresponding figure for region-operated upper-secondary schools is 4%.⁵⁹

The differences in the socio-economic backgrounds of pupils in independent and municipal compulsory schools is gradually decreasing. More and more pupils have at least one parent with post-secondary education.⁶⁰ In compulsory schools, 71% of the pupils in independent schools have parents with post-secondary education. In municipal compulsory schools, the corresponding figure is 60%.⁶¹ In upper-secondary schools, 57% of the pupils who go to both independent and municipal schools have parents with post-secondary education.⁶² In region-operated upper-secondary schools, 48% of the pupils have parents with post-secondary education.⁶³

57 Compulsory schools – Pupil statistics (National Agency for Education, 2022).

58 Upper-secondary schools – Pupil statistics (National Agency for Education, 2022).

59 Upper-secondary schools – Pupil statistics, 2021/22 academic year (National Agency for Education, 2022).

60 Compulsory schools – Pupil statistics (National Agency for Education, 2022).

61 Compulsory schools – Pupil statistics (National Agency for Education, 2022).

62 Upper-secondary schools – Pupil statistics (National Agency for Education, 2022).

63 Upper-secondary schools – Pupil statistics, 2021/22 academic year (National Agency for Education, 2022).

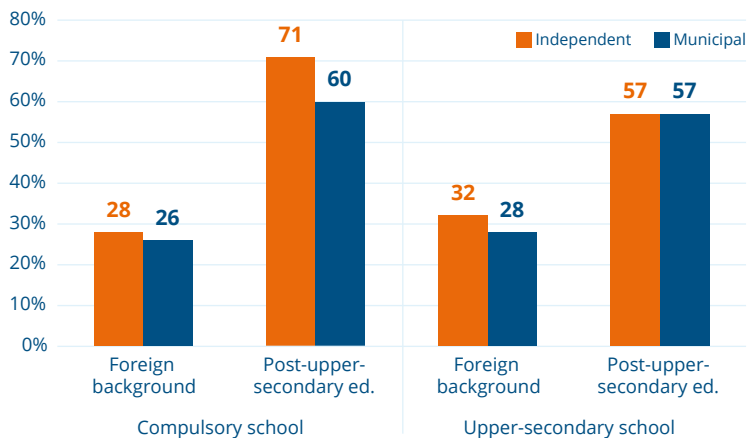


Fig. 15. The socio-economic background of pupils in 2021/22 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

The percentage of pupils with a foreign background in municipal upper-secondary schools has fallen by 5 percentage points over the past four years, and the percentage of pupils whose parents have post-secondary education has increased by 3 percentage points more in municipal upper-secondary schools than in independent ones.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The socio-economic background of pupils in 2021/22 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

	Foreign background				Post-secondary education			
	Compulsory school		Upper-secondary school		Compulsory school		Upper-secondary school	
	Independent	Municipal	Independent	Municipal	Independent	Municipal	Independent	Municipal
21/22	28%	26%	32%	28%	71%	60%	57%	57%
20/21	27%	26%	32%	29%	71%	59%	55%	54%
19/20	27%	26%	32%	31%	70%	58%	54%	52%
18/19	26%	25%	32%	33%	69%	57%	52%	49%

Fig. 16. The socio-economic background of pupils in 2021/22 compared with earlier (National Agency for Education, 2022).

During the 2000s, the percentage of pupils with a foreign background in compulsory schools has risen from 15% to 26%.

For the group of pupils with a foreign background, the percentage who immigrated to Sweden after having started school accounted for the biggest increase in compulsory schools during the 2000s. In recent years, this group has accounted for about 40% of the pupils with a foreign background in Year 9.

/ The age of foreign-born children when they arrive in Sweden is highly significant for their academic performance. The later a pupil arrives in Sweden, the fewer years they have to achieve the results.

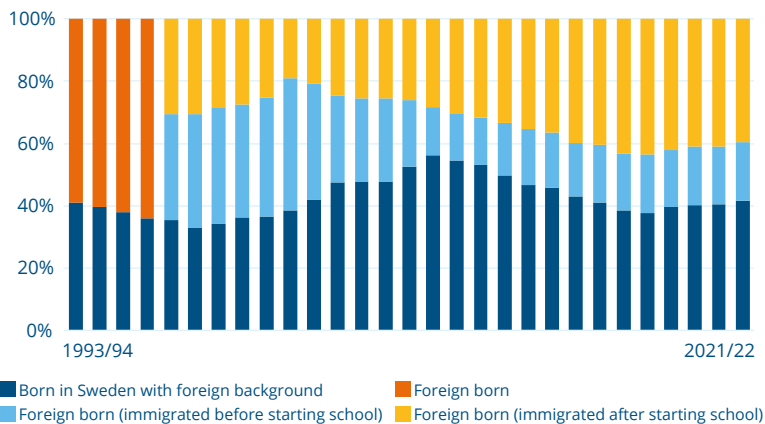


Fig. 17. Pupils with a foreign background in compulsory schools per country of birth, Year 9, 1993–2022 (Official Statistics of Sweden; Table 1A: Pupils who have completed Year 9, academic years 2017/18–2021/22, 2022).

The age of foreign-born children when they arrive in Sweden is highly significant for their academic performance. The later a pupil arrives in Sweden, the fewer years they have to achieve the results. The average age of immigration increased until 2016, but has decreased since then, and in 2022 was still at 8.3, i.e. when the pupil is in Year 2.

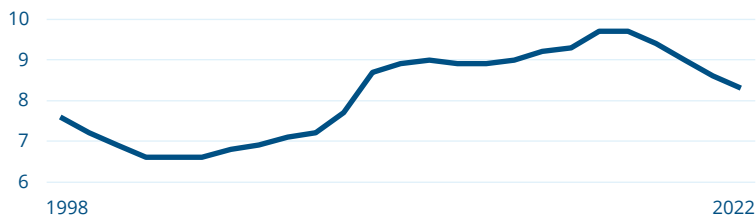


Fig. 18. Average ages of immigration for foreign-born Year 9 pupils, 1998–2022 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Percentage of pupils entitled to home-language tuition and percentage of pupils with special educational needs

In independent compulsory schools, 28% of the pupils are entitled to home-language tuition. In municipal compulsory schools, the figure is 29%. 18.7% of the pupils in independent compulsory schools participate in home-language tuition, representing 66% of those who are entitled. In municipal schools, 16.4% of the pupils participate, corresponding to 57% of those who are entitled.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (and an action plan) in independent schools is 5.1%, and 5.9% in municipal schools. At the same time, a higher percentage of pupils in independent schools receive individual tuition.⁶⁵

	Independent	Municipal
With action plan	5.1%	5.9%
Receive individual tuition	1.5%	0.8%
In special needs group	1.1%	1.2%
Individually adapted study programme	1.2%	1.2%
With study guidance in home language	0.7%	3.1%
Entitled to home-language tuition	28.3%	28.7%
Participants in home-language tuition	18.7%	16.4%

Fig. 19. Percentage of pupils entitled to home-language tuition and percentage of pupils with special educational needs (National Agency for Education, 2022)

⁶⁵ Tables 8A, 9B and 9C (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

Academic achievement

Proficiency achievement – 9 percentage points higher in independent schools

In independent compulsory schools, 83.1% of Year 9 pupils (excluding newly arrived immigrant pupils and pupils with an unknown background) achieved the proficiency requirements in all subjects in 2021/22. The national figure is 75.9% and 74.0% for municipal schools.

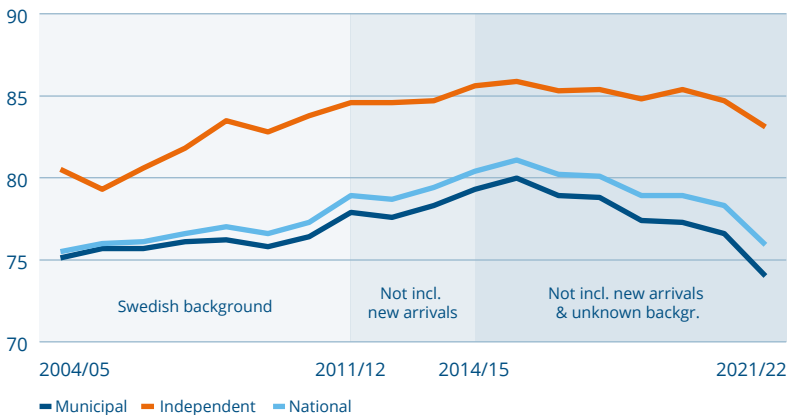


Fig. 20. Percentage of Year 9 pupils who achieved the proficiency requirements in all subjects. Separate reporting of newly arrived immigrant pupils began in 2011/12 and these pupils are subsequently excluded from the total. After 2014/2015, both newly arrived immigrant pupils and pupils with an unknown background were excluded from the total. Compulsory schools – Final grades, Year 9 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

The presentation of parental educational level shows that a higher proportion of Year 9 pupils in independent schools achieved the proficiency requirements in all subjects, regardless of parental educational level or the pupil's country of origin.⁶⁶

	Independent	Municipal
Post-secondary	88% (15%)	83% (47%)
Pre-secondary or secondary	69% (6%)	58% (33%)

Fig. 21. Percentage of Year 9 pupils who achieved the goals in all subjects per parental educational level, 2021/22 academic year. Each group's share of all Year 9 pupils is shown in brackets.

	Independent	Municipal
Swedish background	86% (74%)	78% (74%)
Foreign background, born in Sweden	75% (15%)	66% (10%)
Foreign background, foreign-born	74% (11%)	49% (16%)

Fig. 22. Percentage of pupils who achieved the goals in all subjects per country of origin, 2021/22 academic year. Each group's total share of all Year 9 pupils is shown in brackets. Compulsory schools – Final grades, Year 9. (National Agency for Education, 2022).

⁶⁶ Compulsory schools – Final grades, Year 9 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Eligibility for upper-secondary school – 8 percentage points higher in independent schools

The percentage of Year 9 pupils who became eligible for upper-secondary school in 2021/22 was highest in independent schools. 91.6% of the pupils in independent schools became eligible for vocational programmes. The corresponding figure for municipal schools was 83.3%.

	Vocational programmes	University preparatory programmes		
		Aesthetics	Economics, Humanities, Civics	Science, Technology
Independent	91.6%	90.8%	89.3%	88.3%
Municipal	83.3%	82.0%	80.1%	78.6%

Fig. 23. Percentage of pupils who became eligible for upper-secondary school programmes in 2021/22. Compulsory schools – Grades and Tests – National level, Official Statistics of Sweden (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Merit rating – 10% higher in independent schools

In independent compulsory schools, the average merit rating for a pupil in Year 9 for the 2021/22 academic year was 249.2 points (excluding newly arrived immigrant pupils and pupils with an unknown background). The national average was 232.3, and 227.8 for municipal schools. In upper-secondary schools for the 2021/22 academic year, the average grade points for pupils with a school leaving certificate from an independent school was 15.1, and 14.9 from a municipal school.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Upper-secondary schools – Graduating pupils, national programmes (National Agency for Education, 2022).

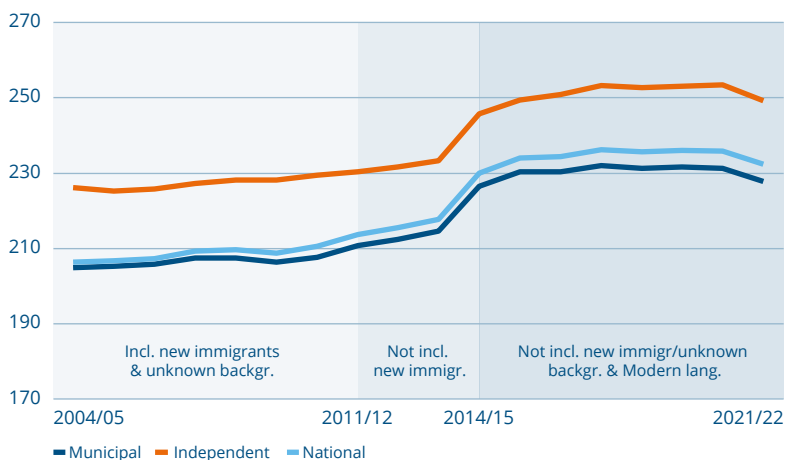


Fig. 24. Average merit rating Year 9, 2004/05–2021/22. Separate reporting of newly arrived immigrant pupils began in 2011/12 and these pupils are subsequently excluded from the total. After 2014/2015, both newly arrived immigrant pupils and pupils with an unknown background were excluded from the total. Compulsory schools – Final grades, Year 9 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Pupils in independent schools perform better in subject tests and PISA

The national tests could once again be taken in the 20/21 academic year after the pause caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the English test in Year 9 in 2021/22, 98.8% of pupils in independent schools achieved passing grades. In municipal schools, 96.5% received a passing grade and the national average was 97.0%. In the Swedish test, 96.4% of pupils in independent schools received a passing grade. The corresponding figures for municipal schools was 94.0% and the national average was 94.5%. In the maths test, 89.6% of pupils in independent schools received a passing grade. The corresponding figure for municipal schools was 82.9% and the national average was 84.3%.⁶⁸

68 Compulsory schools – Results of subject tests, Year 9 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022)

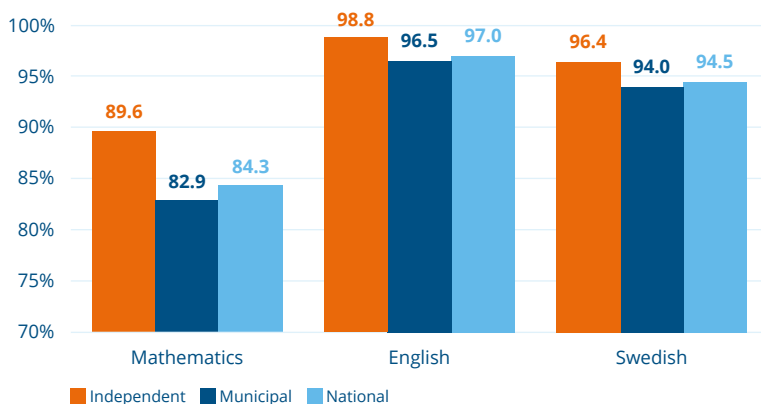


Fig. 25. Percentage of pupils who received a passing test grade (A–E) on the subject tests in Year 9 in 2021/22 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

Year 6 pupils in independent schools also did best in 2021/22.⁶⁹

	Mathematics	English	Swedish
Independent	91.2%	97.2%	95.0%
Municipal	88.3%	93.8%	92.9%
National	88.8%	94.4%	93.3%

Fig. 26. Percentage of pupils who received a passing test grade (A–E) on the subject tests in Year 6 in 2021/22 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

There are no compiled test results to compare for the tests in Year 3.

Pisa 2022 was conducted in March–April 2022, but the results and primary report will not be published until December 2023.⁷⁰

69 Compulsory schools – Results of subject tests, Year 6 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022)

70 <https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/forskning-och-utvarderingar/internationella-jamforande-studier-pa-utbildningsomradet/pisa-internationell-studie-om-15-aringars-kunskaper-i-matematik-naturvetenskap-och-lasforstaelse#h-PISA2022> (Swedish National Agency for Education, 19 October 2022)

In PISA 2018, the Swedish results continued to rise. 67% of the deterioration in test scores since PISA 2000 has now been erased. Among pupils with at least one parent born in Sweden, the entire deterioration has been reversed.

In PISA 2018, all Year 9 pupils in independent schools performed better in all subject tests. The difference was 17 points for science, 17 points for mathematics and 21 points for reading comprehension.⁷¹

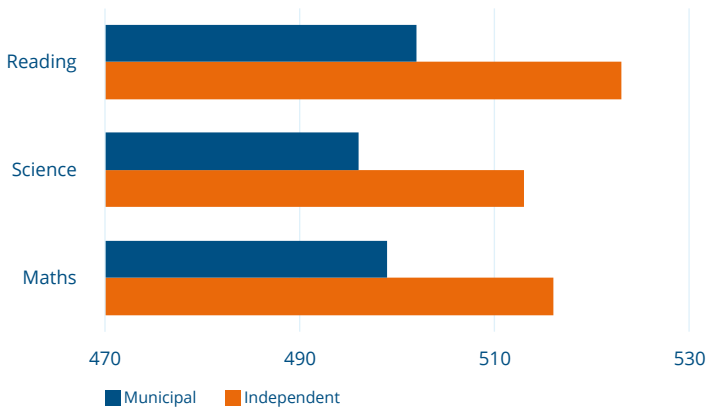


Fig. 27. Points per test in PISA 2018.⁷²

By adjusting the PISA measure of socio-economic status (ESCS)⁷³ and foreign background – which the National Agency for Education usually includes as control variables in its analyses – the difference is reduced, but

71 What can we learn from PISA 2018? Factors affecting the results of Swedish pupils, p. 15 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2021).
 72 What can we learn from PISA 2018? Factors affecting the results of Swedish pupils (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, November 2021).
 73 This is derived from three variables: indices of household possessions, parental educational achievement and parental occupational status. PISA 2018 can also be adjusted for the educational achievement and occupational status of both parents. Vad kan vi lära av PISA 2018 – faktorer bakom svenska elevers resultat (What can we learn from PISA 2018? Factors affecting the results of Swedish pupils), p. 15 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2021).

remains statistically significant for all three subjects. If all control variables⁷⁴ are adjusted, the difference is further decreased, but only marginally, and remains statistically significant. The difference in favour of independent schools with all control variables included is 11 points for reading comprehension and 10 points for both mathematics and science. This corresponds roughly to the learning that takes place during one-third of an academic year.

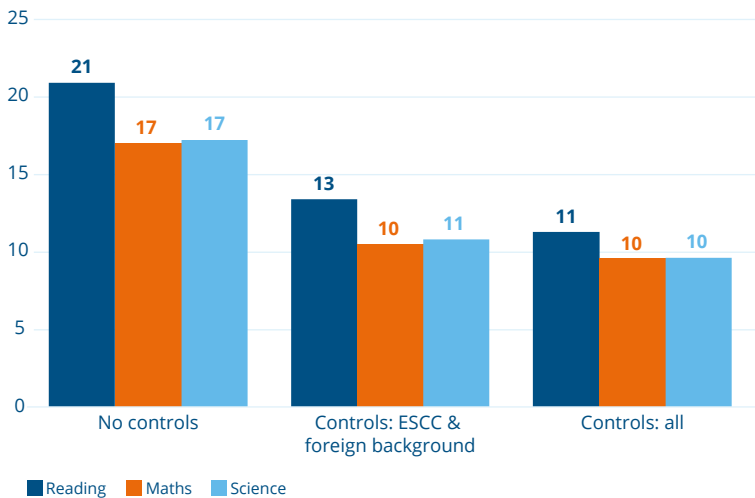


Fig. 28. Differences between independent and municipal schools in PISA 2018. The scale shows the difference in points between independent and municipal schools.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ These include pupils' sex, age and age on arrival in Sweden, the languages that pupils speak at home, how many years the pupils went to preschool, digital resources in the home, and the emotional support offered by parents, based on how the pupils respond to these three statements. "What can we learn from PISA 2018? Factors affecting the results of Swedish pupils", p. 15 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2021).

⁷⁵ What can we learn from PISA 2018? Factors affecting the results of Swedish pupils, p. 17 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2021).

Reasons for the differences could be that the independent schools differ from municipal schools in that the pupils receive more adapted teaching than pupils in municipal schools, receive more feedback, and have a better study climate and more often digital aids in the classroom, a rough total of 5 score points (40%) of their advantage over municipal schools. They also receive more teacher support, but this difference is not statistically significant.⁷⁶

At the same time, pupils in independent schools also report higher values for several variables with a negative correlation to the results. They more often use subject-related IT outside the classroom, are more often late for school and more often skip a whole day of school than pupils in municipal schools, a rough total of 4–5 score points, where independent schools could further improve their PISA results. They also use more IT in school generally and more often skip individual classes, but these differences are not statistically significant.

Upper-secondary grades – somewhat higher in independent schools

It is difficult to compare knowledge results in independent and municipal upper-secondary schools because of the mixture of programmes and the fact that the socio-economic differences are not reported for upper-secondary schools. University-preparatory programmes are easiest to compare. Both the percentage of pupils who receive final grade and their average grade points are similar.

⁷⁶ What can we learn from PISA 2018? Factors affecting the results of Swedish pupils, p. 21–22 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2021).

	Independent		Municipal	
	Percentage school leavers	Grade points of pupils with school-leaving certificates	Percentage school leavers	Grade points of pupils with school-leaving certificates
National programmes	91.3	15.1	90.9	14.9
Vocational programmes	90.5	13.9	89.2	13.2
University preparatory programmes	91.7	15.6	91.6	15.5
Vocational programmes	90.5	13.9	8.2	13.2
University preparatory programmes	91.7	15.6	9.6	15.5

Fig. 29. Upper-secondary schools – Graduating pupils, national programmes 2021/22 (Swedish National Agency for Education 2022)

/ It is difficult to compare knowledge results in independent and municipal upper-secondary schools because of the mixture of programmes and the fact that the socio-economic differences are not reported for upper-secondary schools.

Upper-secondary throughput – 8 percentage points higher in independent schools

75.2% of pupils in independent upper-secondary schools completed their education after three years in 2022.⁷⁷ In municipal upper-secondary schools, 67.1% of pupils completed their studies after three years.

	Starting academic year		
	2019	2018	2017
	3 years	4 years	5 years
Independent	75.2%	79.2%	77.9%
Municipal	67.1%	71.6%	70.9%

Fig. 30. Percentage of pupils who finished in 2022 who completed upper-secondary school in 3, 4 or 5 years. Upper-secondary schools – Throughput (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

⁷⁷ Pupils who completed upper-secondary school are those pupils with a school leaving certificate, or a study certificate for graded courses of 2,500 points or more.

Satisfaction

Every year, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate sends out a School Survey to guardians of pupils in compulsory schools, to Year 5 and 8 pupils⁷⁸, pupils in the second year of upper-secondary school and teaching staff in compulsory and upper-secondary schools. The results are used in the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's risk assessment as a basis for determining the schools that should be prioritised in inspections.

For example, in the spring term of 2022, a survey for Year 8 was sent out to 235 independent schools with 9,152 pupils and to 604 municipal schools with 48,558 pupils.

The survey comprised a large number of questions. In the National Agency for Education's database, five of them are summarised for pupils and guardians and five for teaching staff. The mean value is presented on a scale of one to ten in diagrams 33–38.

More satisfied parents in independent schools

For the five selected questions, parents with children in independent schools are more satisfied than parents with children in municipal schools. The greatest difference was noted for satisfaction with the school (+1.4). The difference in perceived calm classroom environment is also high (+1.1).

78 The change of respondent group from Year 9 pupils to Year 8 pupils is one of the changes in the 2022 School Survey. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate motivates this with: "When the survey is answered in Year 8, the pupils have a greater opportunity to take advantage of improvement efforts based on survey results." (Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2022 School Survey Results, 2022)

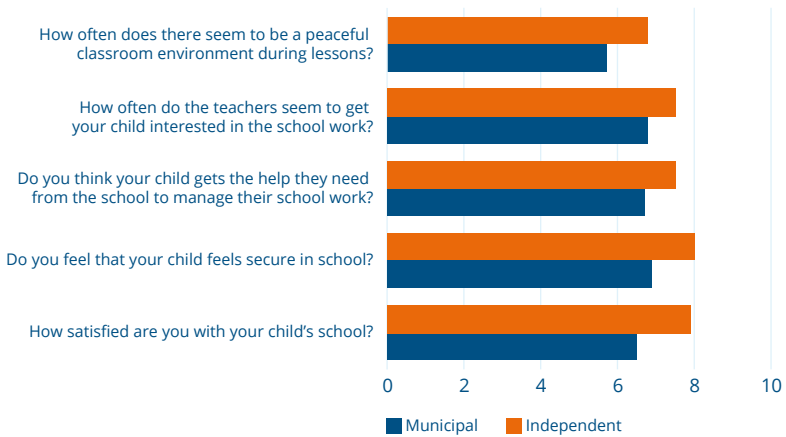


Fig. 31 Guardians of pupils in Years 1–9, spring term 2021 (National Agency for Education, 2021). Swedish Schools Inspectorate, School Survey 2022 results

The least difference was noted for the perception of how often the teachers get the child interested in the school work (+0.7).

Studies have shown that the foremost reasons that parents choose an independent school are:

- » **Absence of violence/bullying** is valued higher by parents who have chosen an independent school than those with children in a municipal school. Absence of violence/bullying and presence of order in the classroom are the most important things that motivate parents in their school choice⁷⁹
- » **The teaching method** is highly significant for parents with children in an independent school, and that the school cares about the children/pupils and offers support for problems.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Obligatoriskt skolval (Compulsory school choice) (Swedish Association of Independent Schools, Almega, 2018, page 4).

⁸⁰ Så nöjda är föräldrar och elever med skolan 2016 och 2019 (How satisfied are parents and pupils with their school, 2016 and 2019) (Swedish Quality Index, 2020).

- » The statement *The school's **style of teaching** suits the way my child learns* gets a clearly higher score from the parents of children in independent schools (8.0 compared with 7.0 for municipal schools on a scale of 1 to 10).⁸¹
- » **Small group teaching** is valued higher by parents of children in independent schools than parents who have chosen a municipal school – despite the fact that independent schools have larger groups of pupils on average.⁸²
- » **Communication** between the preschool and the parent about the child's development is perceived as better in independent schools than municipal schools.⁸³
- » Parents with children in independent schools do not value **proximity to the school** as highly as parents with children in municipal schools. They also attach less importance to the school chosen by their child's friends than parents with children in municipal schools.⁸⁴
- » According to international research, parents with a weak socio-economic background place more value on **academic quality** over factors such as well-being in their school choice, while more highly paid parents are more likely to prioritise soft factors such as how the pupils treat each other, well-being and so forth.⁸⁵

/ Year 8 pupils in independent schools are more satisfied than pupils in the same year group in municipal schools.

81 Kommunala vs. Fristående skolor – så tycker föräldrar och lärare om sin grundskola. En sammanställning av Skolinspektionens skolenkät, HT 2016 (Municipal vs. Independent schools – what parents and teachers think about their compulsory school. A summary of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's school survey, autumn term 2016) (Swedish Association of Independent Schools, 2017).

82 Obligatoriskt skolval (Compulsory school choice), page 4.

83 Så nöjda är föräldrar och elever med skolan 2016 och 2019 (How satisfied are parents and pupils with their school, 2016 and 2019) (Swedish Quality Index, 15 January 2020).

84 Obligatoriskt skolval (Compulsory school choice), page 4.

85 Obligatoriskt skolval (Compulsory school choice), page 4.

More satisfied Year 8 pupils in independent schools

Year 8 pupils in independent schools are also more satisfied than pupils in the same year group in municipal schools for the five selected questions. The greatest difference was noted in satisfaction (+0.5). The independent school pupils also feel more secure (+0.3).

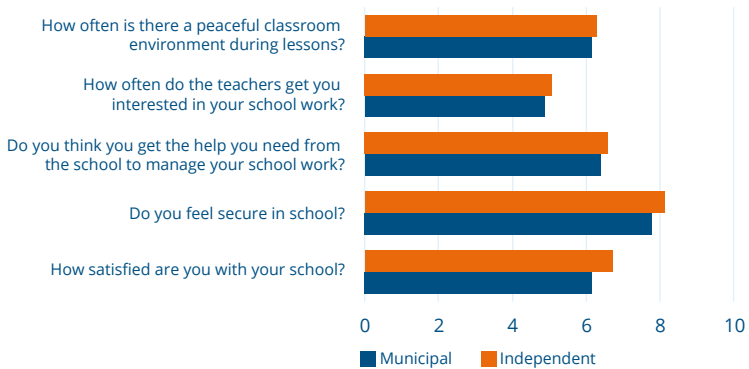


Fig. 32. Year 8 pupils, spring term 2022 (National Agency for Education, 2022). The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, School Survey 2022 results

The least difference is in perceived calm classroom environment (+0.1) and stimulating school work (+0.2).

Also slightly more satisfied Year 5 pupils in independent schools

Year 5 pupils in independent schools are also more satisfied than pupils in the same year group in municipal schools for three of the five questions summarised by the National Agency for Education. The greatest difference was noted for overall satisfaction with the school (+0.4). Year 5 pupils in independent schools also feel more secure (+0.1).

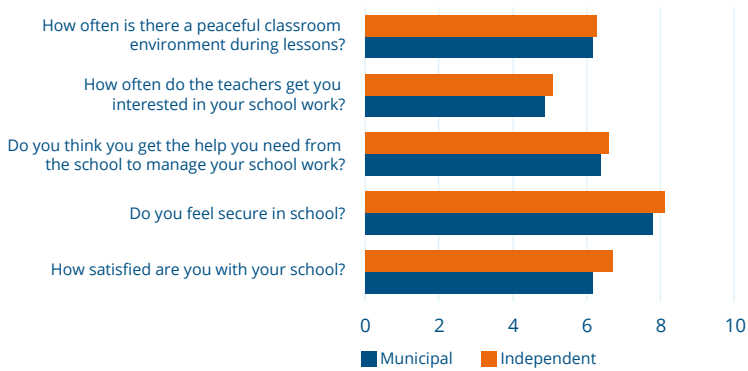


Fig. 33. Year 5 pupils, spring term 2022 (National Agency for Education, 2022). Swedish Schools Inspectorate, School Survey 2022 results

However, the difference between independent schools and municipal schools is smaller for Year 5 pupils than for Year 8 pupils. Pupils in municipal schools perceive that they receive a bit more help from their teachers in their school work, while their experience of peace in the classroom environment is the same.

Also more satisfied pupils in independent upper-secondary schools

Second-year pupils in independent upper-secondary schools are more satisfied than their counterparts in municipal schools for four of the five selected questions. The greatest difference was noted in satisfaction (+0.3). Second-year pupils in independent upper-secondary schools also feel that their teachers motivate them to learn more (+0.2).

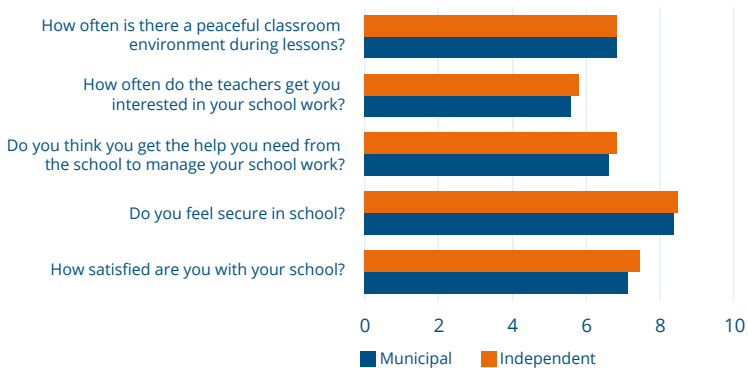


Fig. 34. Second-year pupils in upper-secondary school, spring term 2022 (National Agency for Education, 2022). Swedish Schools Inspectorate, School Survey 2022 results

The least difference is in perceived security at school (+0.1) and the perceived classroom peace is the same in municipal and independent schools.

The older they get, the more children can influence the choice of their school. When moving from primary school up to intermediate school, it becomes important that parents and children agree on their choice of school, and even more important when moving up to lower-secondary school. The roles are reversed when choosing an upper-secondary school – the pupils choose their school, while parents play an important role by offering advice.

The reasons given by pupils for choosing an independent school are:

- » the school has a **special focus or working method**
- » the **classroom environment**, more modern, smaller, calmer and nicer/younger teachers
- » new/social relationships

Soft values such as a peaceful classroom environment, stimulation and challenges are rated higher by pupils in independent schools compared with pupils in municipal schools.⁸⁶

For upper-secondary school, many pupils choose independent schools because they are smaller, and municipal schools because they have more pupils and often have more traditions and social activities.

Far more satisfied compulsory school teachers in independent schools

Teachers in independent compulsory schools are far more satisfied than teachers in municipal schools for the six selected questions.⁸⁷ The greatest difference was noted for the perception that the pupils get the support they need to succeed in their schoolwork (+1.3). The school management's knowledge of the school's operations is also perceived as greater in independent schools (+1.2).

86 Friskolornas elever är mer nöjda med skolmiljön (Pupils at independent schools are more satisfied with their classroom environment) (*Svenska Dagbladet*, 2018).

87 The Swedish National Agency for Education has not summarised the teaching staff's responses to the School Surveys in the past two years. Four of the questions correspond to four in the summary of guardians and pupils. The satisfaction question is not posed to teachers. For this reason, the results of two other important questions were included – school management and equivalent assessment.

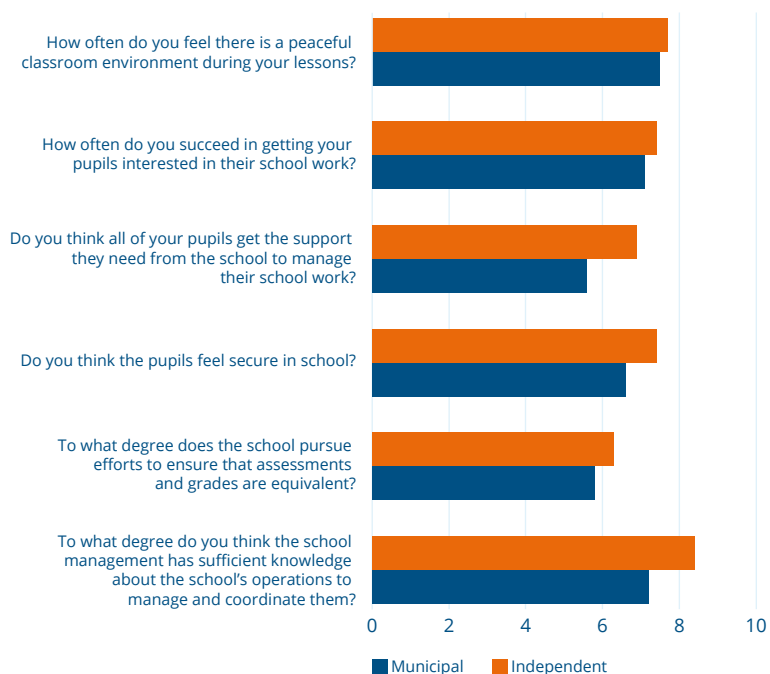


Fig. 35. Compulsory school teaching staff, spring term 2022 (National Agency for Education, 2022). Swedish Schools Inspectorate, School Survey 2022 results

The least difference was noted for the perception of a calm classroom environment for the pupils (+0.2).

More satisfied upper-secondary school teachers in independent schools

Teachers in independent upper-secondary schools are also more satisfied than teachers in municipal schools for the same six questions. The greatest difference was in the perception of the school management’s insight into the daily operations (+1.2). The next-greatest is the difference in the perception of pupils’ security (+0.9).

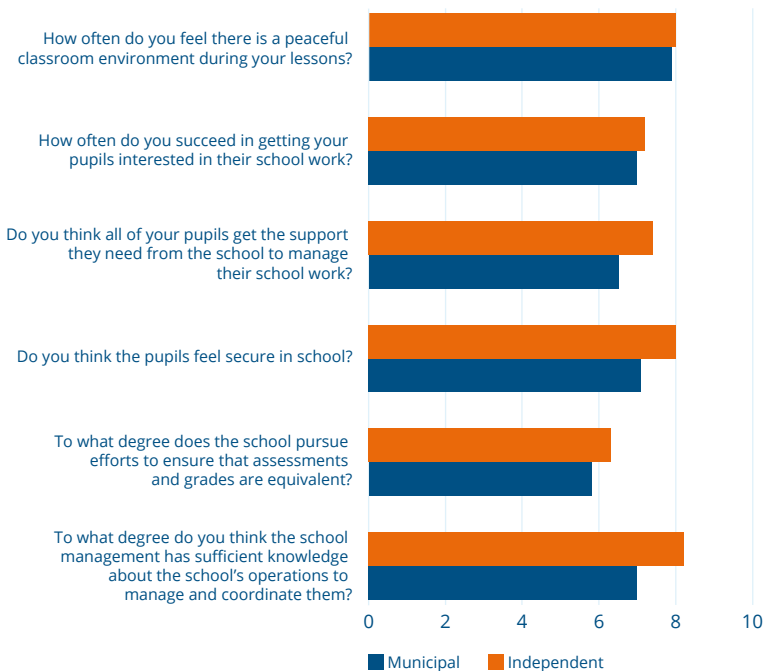


Fig. 36. Upper-secondary school teaching staff, spring term 2022 (National Agency for Education, 2022).

The least difference was noted for the perception of a peaceful classroom environment for the pupils (+0.1).

Why teachers choose independent schools

Teachers in independent schools are more satisfied than teachers in municipal schools in all questions asked by the Swedish Quality Index survey's Job Health Index⁸⁸ below. The greatest difference was noted for the question of whether sickness absence is low at the workplace (25 percentage points).

The difference for *The immediate manager's ability to provide feedback on your performance* and *It is possible to receive support and assistance for managing a heavy workload* is also high (18 and 17 percentage points, respectively).

Workplace pride

Teachers in independent schools feel a greater sense of **pride** when telling others about where they work than teachers in municipal schools, and are more likely to recommend their school as a good place to work. The difference is 14 percentage points.

88 Swedish Quality Index survey, Job Health Index 2021. 548 teachers in municipal schools and 351 teachers in independent schools responded to a total of 73 questions

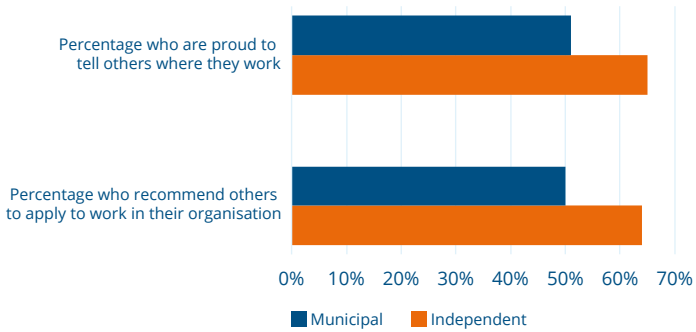


Fig. 37. Workplace pride (Job Health Index 2021)

Ability to influence

Teachers in independent schools feel they are more able to influence how their work should be carried out than teachers in municipal schools. The difference is 14 percentage points.

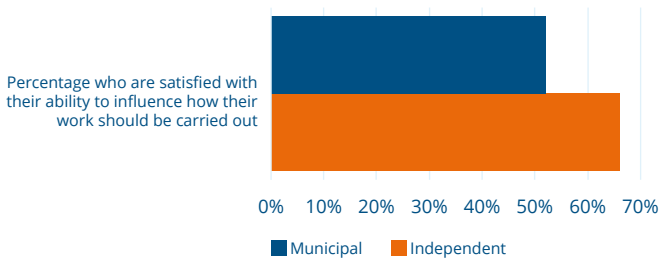


Fig. 38. Ability to influence (Job Health Index 2021)

Leadership/occupational health and safety (OHS)

Teachers in independent schools feel that senior management is more able to lead and develop the school than is perceived by teachers in municipal schools. They more often feel fairly treated by their employer and that the ability of their immediate manager to deal with bullying, harassment and similar workplace problems is better than in municipal schools. The difference is 14, 12 and 12 percentage points, respectively.

Teachers in independent schools more often feel that the immediate manager's ability to provide feedback on their performance is good and that it is possible to receive support and assistance for managing a heavy workload than teachers in municipal schools. The difference is 18 and 17 percentage points, respectively. The question about support and assistance for managing a heavy workload has the highest percentage of respondents who do not agree.

The greatest difference between teachers in independent schools and teachers in municipal schools was related to sickness absence. 57% of the teachers in independent schools feel that sickness absence is low, compared with only 32% of municipal employees, a difference of 25 percentage points.

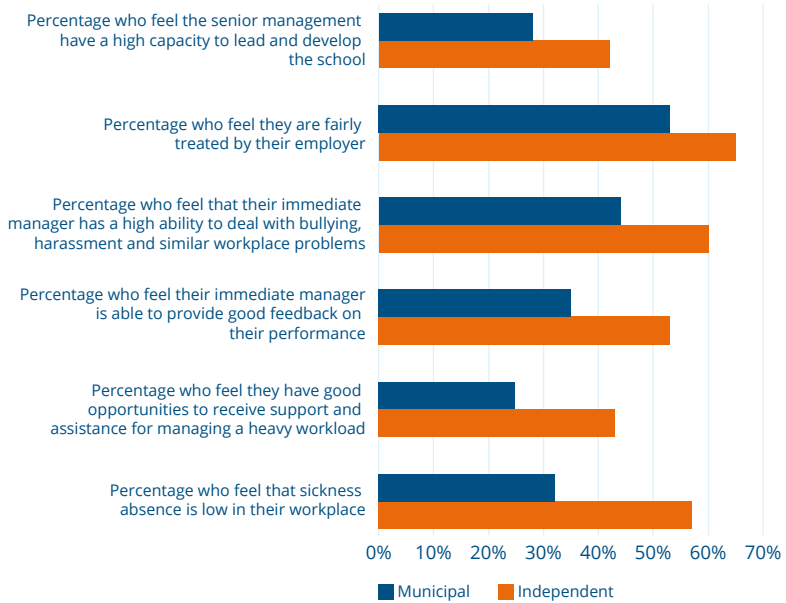


Fig. 39. Leadership/OHS (Job Health Index 2021)

/ Teachers in independent schools feel that senior management is more able to lead and develop the school than is perceived by teachers in municipal schools.

Employees

Gainfully employed – 19% work at independent schools

In 2021, 236,414 people worked at schools and preschools in Sweden. Of all gainfully employed people at the various types of schools, 44,437 (19%) work at independent schools.⁸⁹

Type of school	Independent	Public
Preschools	21,457	78,940
Preschool class	808	5,906
Compulsory schools	13,924	79,901
Special-needs compulsory schools	164	3,385
Upper-secondary schools	7,947	22,222
Special-needs upper-secondary schools	137	1,623
Total	44,437	191,977

Fig. 40. Number of gainfully employed people in schools in 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

⁸⁹ Number of gainfully employed people in schools in 2020 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

Teacher shortage

There are too few people who want to become teachers. The estimated shortage has been revised downwards by the National Agency for Education due to Statistics Sweden's estimates that the number of pupils will decrease slightly in the coming years before rising again. The National Agency for Education estimates a shortage of approximately 12,000 (full-time) qualified teachers and preschool teachers by 2035.⁹⁰ This equates to nearly one in 13 teachers of the estimated need for 153,000 teachers.⁹¹

Vocational teachers in upper-secondary schools and subject teachers for Years 7–9 of compulsory schools are expected to account for the greatest shortage. A certain shortage of preschool teachers, as well as compulsory school teachers for Years 4–6, is also expected by 2035. For subject teachers in upper-secondary schools, the total number of qualified teachers is expected to exceed the need.

In 2020, the proportion of qualified teachers was 72%, excluding preschools and leisure-time centres. Another 12% had a teaching diploma, but were not qualified to teach in the specific type of school or subject. The remaining 16% had either no, or only some, post-secondary education.

To reduce the shortage of qualified teachers, the status of the teaching profession needs to be raised, the quality of teacher training needs to improve, the competence of unqualified teachers needs to be developed and schools need to be organised so that unqualified teachers can continue working, according to *Läraryrprognosen* (the Teacher Forecast).

⁹⁰ *Läraryrprognos 2021*. The estimates are based on the teacher situation in 2020 (National Agency for Education, 2021).

⁹¹ *Läraryrprognos 2021*. According to *Läraryrprognos 2019*, there will be a shortage of 45,000 qualified teachers by 2033 (National Agency for Education, 2021).

Unqualified teachers

In compulsory schools, there are more than 17,200 unqualified teachers in all subjects. However, 7% are qualified for a type of school other than compulsory schools, 5% have a teaching diploma but are not certified, 25% have some form of post-secondary teaching training, and the remaining 63% have no post-secondary teacher training at all.⁹²

Those with no post-secondary teacher training are not a homogeneous group.

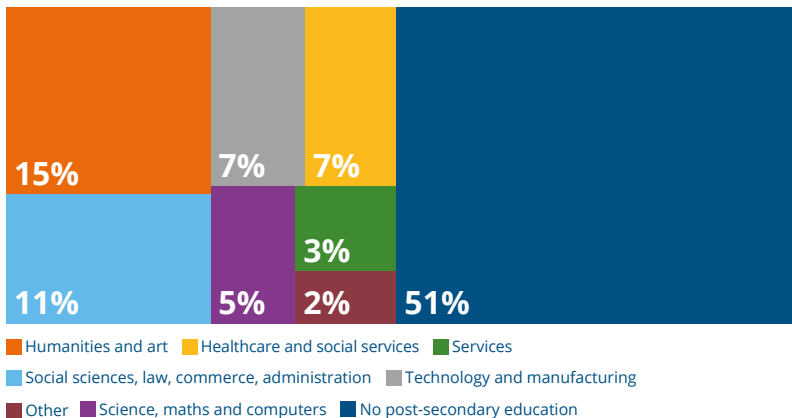


Fig. 41 Background of unqualified teachers.⁹³

In many subjects, a large proportion of the unqualified teachers are teachers who are qualified to teach in compulsory schools, but not in the specific subject. The greatest proportion of unqualified teachers who are qualified for compulsory school, but not for the subject, are in the subjects of art (40%), technology (39%) and music (34%).

⁹² Lärarprognos 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021).

⁹³ Obehöriga lärare i grundskolan ingen homogen grupp (Unqualified teachers in compulsory schools are not a homogeneous group) (National Agency for Education, 2021).

In home and consumer studies, physical education and health, music, modern languages and crafts, between 1/4 and 1/10 of teachers have no post-secondary education at all.⁹⁴

Teachers change jobs every four years

Staff turnover has increased in Swedish schools. This can impact continuity and development at a school. Considering the lack of trained teachers, it can lead to pupils having to change teachers too often. A high turnover of principals also leads to a lack of continuity in leadership at the school, which risks impeding systematic efforts towards improving quality.⁹⁵

The average employment period for lower-secondary school teachers in 2019 in Sweden was five years, compared with eight years on average in the OECD. In primary and intermediate school it was four years, in upper-secondary six.⁹⁶ Principals worked an average of three years in lower-secondary schools, compared with an average of five years in the OECD. In primary and intermediate schools, principals worked an average of two years, and in upper-secondary the figure was three years.⁹⁷ In other words, many change jobs every year.

94 Obehöriga lärare i grundskolan ingen homogen grupp (Unqualified teachers in compulsory schools are not a homogeneous group) (National Agency for Education, 2021).

95 Talis 2018. En studie om lärares och rektorers arbete i grund- och gymnasieskolan. Delrapport 1. (A study on teachers' and principals' work in compulsory and upper-secondary school. Sub-report 1) Report 481. Swedish National Agency for Education (2019)

96 This applies to both permanently and project-employed staff. The groups are not weighted to be representative.

97 Talis 2018. En studie om lärares och rektorers arbete i grund- och gymnasieskolan. Delrapport 1. (A study on teachers' and principals' work in compulsory and upper-secondary school. Sub-report 1) Report 481. Swedish National Agency for Education (2019)

Lower percentage of qualified teachers at independent schools, but the range is diverse

The percentage of teachers with a teaching diploma was 70.7% at independent compulsory schools in the 2021/22 academic year, compared to 84.8% in municipal compulsory schools.⁹⁸ The difference between independent and municipal proprietors has decreased by nearly 1/3 since 2006/07. The proportion of teachers with a teaching diploma in independent compulsory schools is higher in reality than the Swedish National Agency for Education's statistics, because teachers with a teaching diploma from another country, who have not validated their degree in Sweden and are working at schools with permits to teach in English⁹⁹, teachers at Waldorf schools and international schools¹⁰⁰ are not included in the statistics of teachers with a teaching diploma.¹⁰¹

At independent compulsory schools, the proportion of (full-time) teachers with teaching diplomas varied from 6 to 100%. Economic associations had a higher proportion of teachers with teaching diplomas than proprietors with a different legal form. They also had a higher proportion of teachers with a teaching certificate and qualification in at least one subject.¹⁰²

In upper-secondary schools, 73.4% of teachers in independent schools have teaching diplomas, 83.9% in municipal schools and 66.4% in regionally run schools.¹⁰³ Among independent proprietors for upper-secondary schools, the proportion of teachers with teaching diplomas varied from 11% to 100%.

98 Compulsory schools – Staff statistics, academic year 2021/22 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021).

99 Internationella Engelska Skolan states that 85% of their teachers have a teaching diploma, 45% foreign and 38% Swedish. (<https://engelska.se/faq-and-contact/teaching-and-learning/>)

100 International schools do not follow the Swedish curriculum

101 Swedish Education Act, Chapter 24, Section 2.

102 SOU 2022: Statens ansvar för skolan (Swedish Government Official Reports 2022: The state's responsibility for schools).

103 Upper-secondary schools – Staff statistics, 2021/22 academic year (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

On average, large proprietors had a higher proportion of teachers with teaching diplomas than small proprietors. Similarly, non-profit associations and foundations had a higher proportion of teachers with teaching diplomas than proprietors that are run as limited companies.¹⁰⁴

/ On average, large proprietors had a higher proportion of teachers with teaching diplomas than small proprietors.

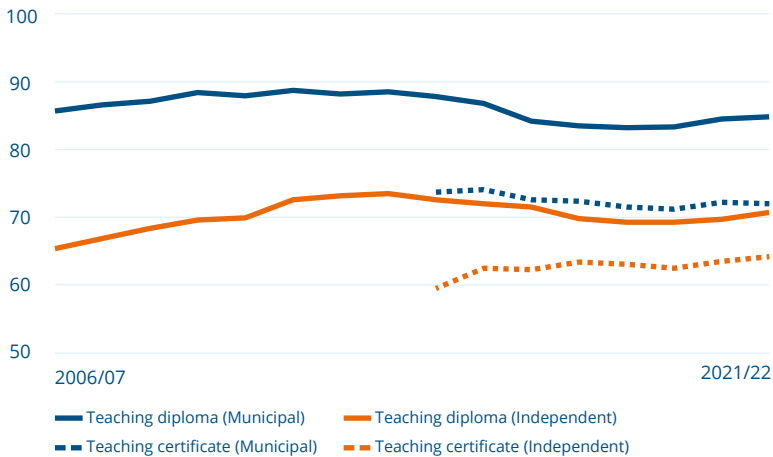


Fig. 42. Percentage of teachers with a teaching diploma in compulsory schools (National Agency for Education, 2022) – the long curves – and Percentage of teachers with certification and qualified to teach in at least one subject (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022) – short curves.

104 SOU 2022: Statens ansvar för skolan (Swedish Government Official Reports 2022: The state's responsibility for schools).

The statistics of certified and qualified teachers include those who teach in subjects that require certification. This means that this is another population than the proportion of teachers with teaching diplomas. Teacher categories that are excepted from the certification requirement for permanent employment are mother tongue teachers, teachers who pursue other tuition in English than language instruction and teachers in Waldorf schools. This goes some way in explaining why teacher qualifications are lower in independent schools than in municipal schools. Teachers with teaching diplomas from other countries, who do not validate their degrees in Sweden, cannot apply for a teaching certificate either.

In general, teacher qualifications are lower at compulsory schools with independent proprietors than at municipal compulsory schools. 64.2% of the compulsory school teachers (converted to full-time equivalents) in independent schools had a teaching certificate and qualification in at least one subject. The corresponding figure in municipal schools was 72.2 percent.¹⁰⁵ The difference between independent and municipal proprietors has decreased by 50% in eight years.

Teacher qualifications in general were higher in upper-secondary school. 75.0% of the teachers in independent schools had a teaching certificate and qualification in at least one subject compared with 86.9% in municipal schools.¹⁰⁶ However, independent proprietors vary greatly.

¹⁰⁵ Teaching staff in schools and adult education in the 2021/22 academic year. (2022) The Swedish National Agency for Education's information on qualified teachers only comprises the teacher categories that require certification.

¹⁰⁶ Teaching staff in schools and adult education in the 2021/22 academic year. (2022).

Age of teachers – younger teachers in independent schools

Independent preschools and schools have younger teachers than municipal schools. In the preschool teacher/compulsory school teacher/recreation instructor group, 40% of the employees in independent schools are under the age of 40. In municipal schools, the figure is 31%. In independent upper-secondary schools, 40% of the teachers are under the age of 40, and 21% in municipal schools.¹⁰⁷

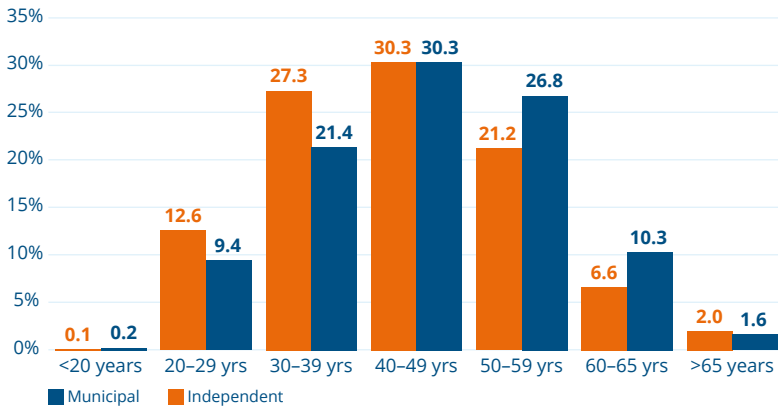


Fig. 43. Proportion of employees in the preschool teacher/compulsory school teacher/recreation instructor group per age group (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

/ The difference between independent and municipal proprietors has decreased by 50% in eight years.

107 Table 1C: Åldersfördelning lärare och rektorer, per skolform 2021/22. (Official Statistics of Sweden, 2022).

Teacher salaries – the differences are evening out

Teachers in independent preschools and compulsory schools have long had higher salaries than those in municipal schools. However, the differences have evened out in recent years and in 2022 only preschool teachers up to age 45 and over 60 and compulsory school teachers aged 30–34 have higher salaries in independent schools.¹⁰⁸

Age	Preschool teachers		Compulsory school teachers		Upper-secondary school teachers	
	Independent	Municipal	Independent	Municipal	Independent	Municipal
18–24	n.d.	24,000	24,000	24,700	n.d.	26,700
25–29	32,700	30,400	32,100	32,500	n.d.	33,900
30–34	33,000	31,600	34,900	34,600	n.d.	36,400
35–39	33,400	32,500	36,100	36,100	n.d.	38,500
40–44	34,000	33,200	37,700	37,700	37,700	39,900
45–49	33,300	34,100	38,600	38,900	38,500	40,900
50–54	32,700	34,500	38,500	39,000	38,800	41,200
55–59	34,700	34,800	38,200	39,000	37,800	41,600
60–64	35,200	35,100	38,000	39,300	n.d.	42,100
65–66	n.d.	34,300	n.d.	38,800	n.d.	42,000

Fig. 44. Average monthly salary in 2022 per occupation and age (Salary structure statistics, Statistics Sweden, 2022). n.d. = no data available

/ Independent preschools and schools have younger teachers than municipal schools.

¹⁰⁸ Average monthly salary in municipalities per Swedish Standard Classification of Occupations 2012 (SSYK 2012), age, sex and year, and Average monthly salary (total salary), private sector individuals (SLP), kronor per occupation (SSYK 2012), age, sex and year (Statistics Sweden, 2021).

Finance

Independent school funding

Swedish independent schools are financed by municipal school vouchers and state funding. It is not permitted to charge school fees or application/registration/waiting list fees. Education must be free of charge.

Independent schools are mainly funded by school vouchers, which are contributions paid by the municipalities in which the pupils live. The vouchers are calculated on a per pupil basis and correspond to the municipality's own budgeted costs per pupil – the “basic amount” – for teaching, educational materials, meals, facilities, pupil health and so forth. In many municipalities, some of the budget is earmarked for socio-economic redistribution (a structural fund) and for pupils with special educational needs – in normal schools, or in schools for children with special educational needs (additional funding).

In 2021, total municipal costs for the 15.8% of pupils who go to independent compulsory schools was just over SEK 19.4 billion, corresponding to 14.7% of total costs for compulsory schools.¹⁰⁹ Independent compulsory schools received funding of SEK 100,500 per pupil from the municipalities.¹¹⁰ The municipalities' costs per pupil varied from SEK 102,700 to SEK 179,100.¹¹¹

The schools also receive various forms of state funding, which has increased in recent years. Several forms of state funding are available for various

109 Kostnader för skolväsendet och annan pedagogisk verksamhet 2021 (Costs for schools and other educational activities in 2021), page 10 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

110 Kostnader för skolväsendet och annan pedagogisk verksamhet 2021 (Costs for schools and other educational activities in 2021), page 13 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

111 Compulsory schools – costs per municipality 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022)

extra-curricular activities and pilot projects. In 2022 the Government earmarked SEK 6.6 billion to a government grant, the equity contribution, available to all compulsory schools, based on pupils' socio-economic background factors.

According to the National Agency for Education, municipal school vouchers fund 90% of the costs for independent compulsory schools.¹¹² This means that state funding accounts for 10% of the SEK 114,111 an independent school receives for each pupil.¹¹³

Socio-economic redistribution of school voucher funding

Early in the 2010s, municipalities began setting aside part of their school voucher funding for a socio-economic structural fund for schools with pupils considered to need greater financial resources.¹¹⁴

Large cities are usually more heterogeneous with a higher degree of residential segregation which, in itself, affects the pupil population of the schools. There are also more schools to choose from in large municipalities which, in turn, can create different pupil compositions in different schools. Rural municipalities rarely have a range of schools to choose from and also have fewer schools in total. In 2018, three quarters of big-city and big-city-adjacent municipalities redistributed part of their school vouchers in the form of a socio-economic structural fund. Somewhat more than half of the small municipalities and rural communities did, too. Almost half of the

112 Kostnader för skolväsendet och annan pedagogisk verksamhet 2021 (Costs for schools and other educational activities in 2021), page 13 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

113 Statsbidrag för likvärdig skola 2022 (State grants for equivalent schools 2022) (<https://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/statsbidrag/statsbidrag-for-likvardig-skola-2022>) (Swedish National Agency for Education, 27 December 2022)

114 Swedish Education Act, Chapter 2, which went into effect on 1 July 2014

municipalities that apply socio-economic distribution redistributed up to 5% of school voucher funding. One-third redistributed 6–10%, one-sixth 11–15% and the remaining municipalities more than 20%.¹¹⁵

The Swedish National Agency for Education distributes the equity contribution according to a socio-economic index per school calculated on each pupil's:¹¹⁶

- » guardians' educational level
- » year of immigration to Sweden
- » guardians' income
- » gender
- » financial assistance to the guardians
- » residential address (higher index if guardians have separate addresses)
- » number of siblings registered at the address
- » socio-economic status of the residential area where the pupil is registered

The index is calculated by Statistics Sweden and is described in a memo entitled Socioekonomiskt Index HT21, which is available from Statistics Sweden. It was produced on request of the Swedish Government Official Investigation on Schools in 2015. The basic idea behind the model is that pupils with a high probability of not achieving eligibility to upper-secondary school have a greater need of (financial) support than pupils who have a low probability of not achieving this eligibility.

115 Socioekonomiskresursfördelning i skola och förskola (Socio-economic resource distribution in schools and preschools) (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2018).

116 Statsbidrag för likvärdig skola 2022 (State grants for equivalent schools 2021) (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2021)

This means that schools and municipalities with a high proportion of pupils who risk not achieving eligibility for upper-secondary school will have a greater need of (financial) support. Historical data of the results from the years 2017–2021 have been used as a basis for modelling.

Municipalities that redistribute part of their school voucher funding on socio-economic factors use the same or similar distribution principles.

Independent schools receive less funding than municipal schools

The issue of whether school voucher funding is calculated equally for independent and municipal schools is a constantly recurring discussion and has been raised by the Equity Inquiry.¹¹⁷ According to the Inquiry, independent schools are over-funded in relation to municipal schools, since they do not have the same responsibility as municipalities to ensure participation in compulsory schooling and must also maintain an even capacity across demographic cycles. The Inquiry proposes that municipalities should be able to deduct these costs when school voucher funding for independent schools is determined.¹¹⁸

Unfortunately, the Equity Inquiry did not investigate whether independent schools receive the funding they are entitled to, but only assessed the municipalities' presumed added costs for their greater responsibilities at 8.4%. School researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren has calculated that total public funding of independent schools in 2018 was just over SEK 105,000 per pupil, and that municipal resources, excluding school transport, amounted

117 En mer likvärdig skola (A more equitable school system) (Swedish Government Official Report, 2020:28).

118 En mer likvärdig skola (A more equitable school system), 9.2.3 p. 528 (Swedish Government Official Report, 2028:28).

to SEK 113,400 per pupil in those municipalities with independent schools. This means that in 2018, independent schools received SEK 8,300–8,500 less funding per pupil than municipal schools, or about 8% less.¹¹⁹ This means that independent schools have already had about 8% lower funding than municipal schools for several years.

/ This means that independent schools have already had about 8% lower funding than municipal schools for several years.

The difference in funding between municipal and independent schools is growing

Heller-Sahlgren's report shows a significant increase in state funding of schools as of 2014,¹²⁰ illustrated by the light-blue curve in figure 45, SEK 8,300 per pupil. The higher proportion of state funding of the municipal production cost (dark-blue curve in diagram 45) has made it possible for municipalities to reduce their own school funding during the same period by SEK 4,940 per pupil (orange curve in diagram 45).¹²¹

119 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), p. 33 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020). This applies despite the fact that the additional costs allegedly incurred by municipalities for complying with their regulatory responsibilities, such as compulsory schooling and the reception of newly arrived immigrants, according to "En mer likvärdig skola" (A more equitable school system) (Swedish Government Official Report 2020:28), section 3.3.2, page 122 ff, were credited to the municipalities. Municipal costs for school transport were also deducted.

120 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs) (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020).

121 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), p. 37, figure 8 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020). The information shown in diagram 45 may overstate the state funding to – and understate the municipal funding of – municipal schools somewhat, since some state funding is channelled to the independent schools via the municipalities. However, proprietors apply for most of the state funding individually (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, 2020).

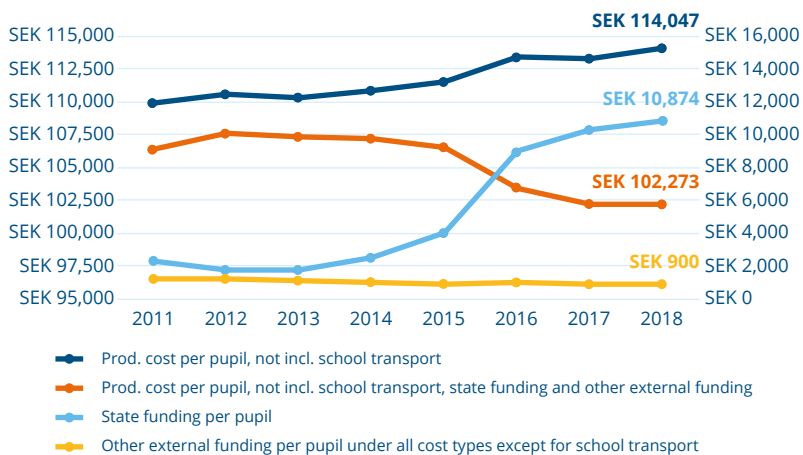


Fig. 45. Independent schools and school costs.¹²²

Since the municipalities' costs are reported net, the net-reported cost decreases (orange curve), and with it the school voucher to the independent schools, even though the actual production cost (dark blue curve) has increased. As long as the orange and light blue curves diverge, the difference in funding between municipal and independent schools will continue to increase because of the municipalities' net cost accounting.

Heller-Sahlgren also shows that independent schools' total funding – from municipalities plus the state – decreased between 2015 and 2018 by almost the exact same amount (SEK 4,776 per pupil, the blue curve in figure 46) as the decrease in the net-accounted production cost in the municipal operations (the orange curve in figure 45), on which the school voucher to independent schools is to be calculated. As a result of net accounting, the municipalities' costs are not increasing and thereby neither is the funding

122 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), p. 37 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020).

to independent schools, which is why the difference in funding between municipal and independent schools is increasing.

Thus, the state grants have both compensated the decrease in the municipalities' own funding and created space for the total cost increase in municipal schools (dark blue curve in figure 45) instead of adding resources to schools in their entirety.

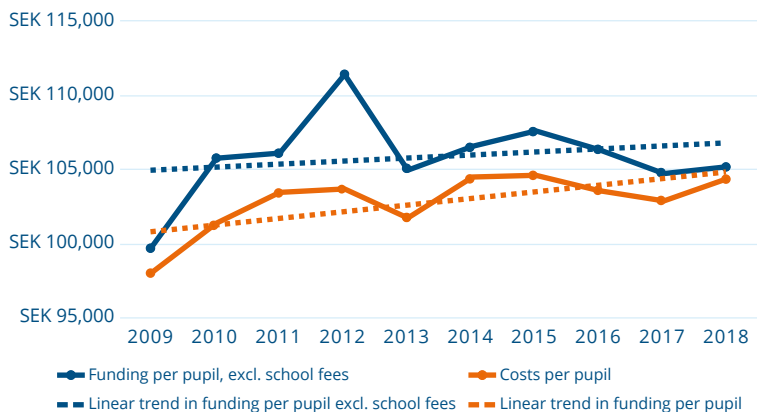


Fig. 46. Independent schools and school costs.¹²³

123 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), p. 36 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020).

Independent schools have lower costs per pupil

The proprietors' costs and their composition are based on information that they themselves have submitted to the National Agency for Education.¹²⁴ In 2021, the cost per pupil in municipal compulsory schools was SEK 121,800, according to the municipalities.¹²⁵ Independent compulsory schools state that their cost per pupil was SEK 111,500.¹²⁶

According to the reported costs, independent compulsory schools had higher average costs per pupil for premises and equipment, school meals and teaching aids in 2021, a total of SEK 1,700 per pupil. This is partly due to the fact that independent schools, unlike municipal schools, are not entitled to full VAT recovery.¹²⁷ This is one important explanation for why independent schools have higher premises costs. Costs for pupil health and teaching are higher in municipal schools, a total of SEK 6,460 per pupil. The 'Other' cost type is therefore SEK 5,600 higher per pupil in municipal schools.¹²⁸ The 'Other' cost type, which makes up 13.9% of the municipalities' average costs per pupil, includes administrative costs. Independent schools receive a standard 3% payment for administrative costs.

124 Kostnader för skolväsendet och annan pedagogisk verksamhet 2021 (Costs for schools and other educational activities in 2021), p. 5. The National Agency for Education requests information from municipal and private proprietors via Statistics Sweden (National Agency for Education, 2021).

125 Compulsory schools – Costs – National level, Table 2A, Proprietors' costs 2021) (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

126 Compulsory schools – Costs – National level, Table 2A, Proprietors' costs 2021) (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

127 Independent schools recover VAT via a flat-rate refund of 6% of school vouchers.

128 Kostnader för skolväsendet och annan pedagogisk verksamhet 2021 (Costs for schools and other educational activities in 2020), p. 12. 'Other' costs include all costs not included in other cost types, such as vocational guidance, administration and costs for professional development (National Agency for Education, 2022).

/ Thus, the state grants have both compensated the decrease in the municipalities' own funding and created space for the total cost increase in municipal schools instead of adding resources to schools in their entirety.

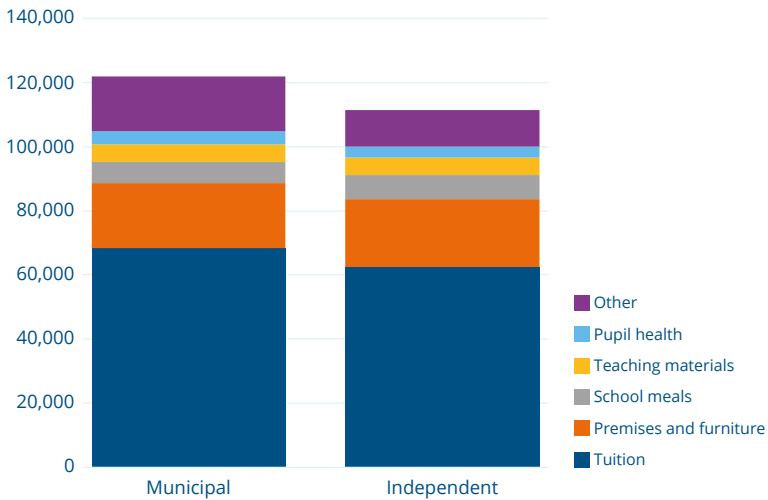


Fig. 47. Costs per pupil in compulsory school in 2021, table 2 A: Proprietors' costs 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

At the same time, according to Heller-Sahlgren, municipalities report their costs net under all cost types except 'Other,' which means that the costs are presented as lower than they actually are because some costs are offset by external income.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), pp. 28–29 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020). Examples of external income include contributions not classified as state funding, rent for premises and income from regions. This income is therefore deducted from the school municipality's costs under each individual cost type, except for those specified under the 'Other' cost type. In addition to the presentation of costs as lower than

In 2021, the average cost of a pupil in a municipal upper-secondary school was SEK 130,200. The average cost per pupil in an independent upper-secondary school was SEK 113,200. However, the costs are not comparable because they are heavily impacted by the mix of programmes offered by the proprietors. The regions, which mainly offer costly agricultural programmes, had an average cost per pupil of SEK 216,300.¹³⁰

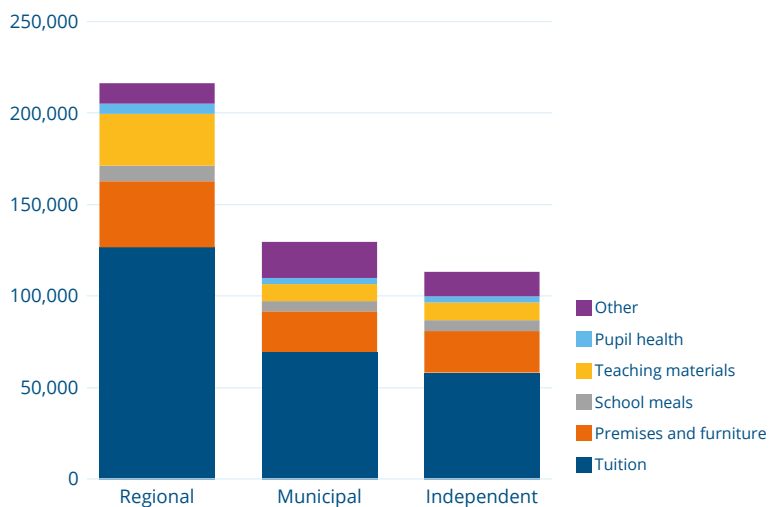


Fig. 48. Upper-secondary school costs in 2021, table 2 A: Proprietors' costs in 2021 (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2022).

they actually are, this also affects how the costs are allocated depending on the cost type under which the actual external income is reported. The lower the proportion of this income that is reported under the 'Other' cost type, the smaller the proportion of the total costs that are captured in the real costs.

130 Upper-secondary schools – Costs – National level, Table 2A, Proprietors' costs 2021. 'Other' costs include all costs not included in other cost types, such as vocational guidance, administration and costs for professional development (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Operating (EBIT) margin only 3.4%

A figure in Heller-Sahlgren's report shows¹³¹ how the funding and costs of independent schools have developed over time. The EBIT margin (the difference between the blue and orange curves in figure 46) is decreasing and in 2018, with the funding and costs he calculated as described above, was only 0.8% for the **entire** independent school sector.¹³²

The average EBIT margin for a **limited liability company** that runs independent preschools or schools is 3.4%. That is less than the average for a service company in other parts of the business sector. Operating profit (EBIT) is a company's total earnings before the deduction of financial expenses and tax. Net profit is therefore lower.

Companies often decide to retain profit in a limited liability company in order to finance investments or expansion with their own funds, for example. In recent years, shareholder dividends are estimated to be in the order of SEK 200–300 million per year, corresponding to less than 1% of the costs for **all** independent schools, including those run by associations, cooperatives, and so forth.¹³³ In 2021, total costs for all independent preschools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools amounted to SEK 47 billion.¹³⁴

131 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), p. 36, figure 6 (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020).

132 Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), p. 36. In the explanatory text, "school fees" refers to the funding/school fees that Swedish boarding schools and international schools – which are counted as independent schools – often have. They are not public resources and should not be included in comparisons of whether the public funding of municipal and independent operators is equal. (Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, 2020). Adjusted in January 2023.

133 Refers to those companies that run preschools, compulsory schools or upper-secondary schools according to Statistics Sweden's Standard Industrial Classification. Some of these also run adult education, which is why profit from these activities is also included. EBIT statistics for the most recently reported financial year from independent school companies was obtained from Bisnis Analys. A summary of Dividends from Education Companies was compiled by Valuation Branschfakta i Sverige AB, 2020.

134 Costs for schools and other educational activities in 2021, pp. 8, 9, 10 and 14 (National Agency for Education, 2022)

Public perception of profit-making by independent schools

One of the myths about independent schools is that they make high profits. According to a survey conducted by Demoskop,¹³⁵ more than half the population believes that independent schools generate average profits of more than 10% of their income. Almost a third of the respondents believe the profit level is more than 20%. The real figure for the EBIT margin has been about 3% for many years. That leaves about 2.5% after amortisation/depreciation and tax.

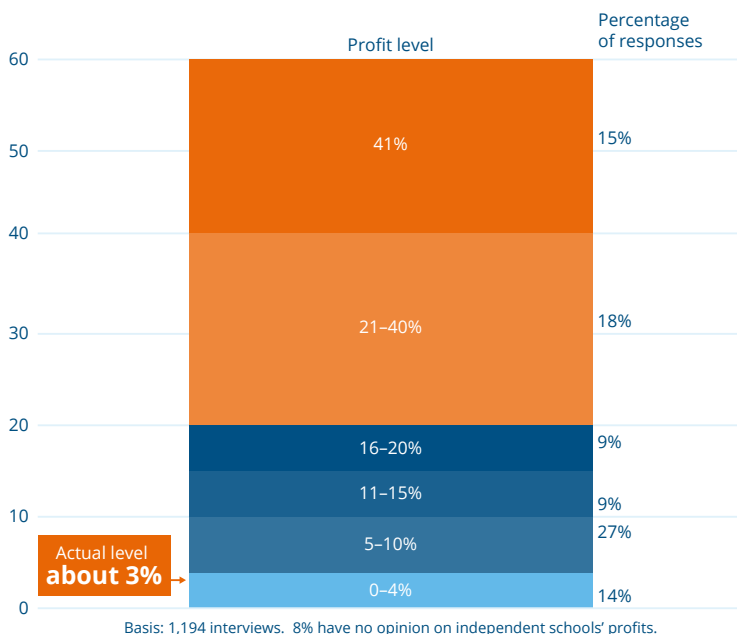


Fig. 49. Roughly how much profit do you think that independent schools make from their total income?¹³⁶

135 Allmänheten om vinstnivåer för friskoleföretag (Public perception of profits generated by independent school companies) (Demoskop, 2021).

136 Demoskop, 2021.

73% of the general public believes it is reasonable that independent schools need to generate a profit in order to run their business. To the question about how much profit a school company should be able to make, the average answer is 7%. That is nearly three times as much as the real figure of about 2.5%.

27% believe that independent schools should not be run for profit.

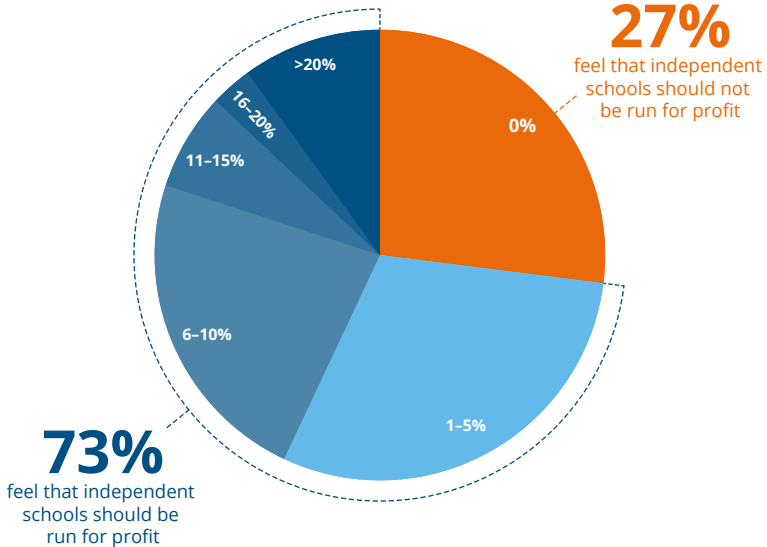


Fig. 50. How much do you think that a school company that is publicly funded should be able to make in profit as a percentage of its total income?²¹³⁷

137 Demoskop, 2021.

The largest independent school owners

Below is a summary of the ownership structure in February 2023 for those independent schools that, according to the National Agency for Education's unit register, had five or more compulsory and upper-secondary school units (schools for pupils with special educational needs are included). Among the 21 owners of five or more compulsory and upper-secondary school units, ten schools are owned by private individuals, two by foundations, two by employees, one by a religious group and five are listed.¹³⁸

AcadeMedia AB

Listed. Largest owner is family company Mellby Gård AB. Second-largest owner is Nordea. Runs 78 compulsory schools (of which 68 have a preschool class and one is a school for pupils with special educational needs) with about 25,200 pupils, and 152 upper-secondary schools with about 44,400 pupils.

Ansgarskolorna

Run by a religious group. Runs five compulsory schools (of which two have a preschool class and one is a special-needs school) with about 700 pupils, and two upper-secondary schools (of which one is a school for pupils with special educational needs) with about 100 pupils.

¹³⁸ Data for each organisation in January 2022.

Aprendere Skolor AB

Listed on the First North Growth Market. The largest owners are Bellissima Holding AB and Netsom AB. Runs seven primary schools and seven secondary schools with 1,272 students. Three schools are combined primary and secondary School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities, two are schools for pupils with special educational needs and one is both for pupils with intellectual disabilities and pupils with special educational needs.

Atvexa AB

Owner is Alteria Holding AB. Runs 39 compulsory schools (of which 26 with a preschool class and one elementary school for pupils with special educational needs) with approximately 7,300 students.

Cedergrenska AB

Listed on Nasdaq First North Growth Market. The largest owners are Niklas Pålsson and Håkan Söderström. Runs 10 compulsory schools (of which seven with a preschool class and two are schools for children with special educational needs) with 2,450 pupils and five secondary schools with 3,400 pupils.

Dibber AB

Privately owned family business. Runs 14 compulsory schools (of which three are School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities) with about 2,300 pupils.

Fridaskolorna AB

Employee-owned company. The largest owners are Malin Stjernman and Birgitta Arosenius. Runs six compulsory schools with about 3,220 pupils, and two upper-secondary schools with about 470 pupils.

Futuraskolan AB

Owned by Tisenhult Gruppen AB. Runs seven compulsory schools (of which one international compulsory school) with 2,340 pupils.

Internationella Engelska Skolan AB

Privately owned company. The largest owners are Paradigm Value Fund Sicav and Paradigm Capital LP. The second largest is the Hans and Barbara Bergström Foundation. Runs 45 compulsory schools (of which 12 with a preschool class) with about 31,000 pupils, and one upper-secondary school with about 700 pupils.

Jensen Education AB

Privately owned family company. Runs 13 compulsory schools (of which five with a preschool class) with about 3,700 pupils, and 16 upper-secondary schools with 4,400 pupils.

Kunskapsskolan i Sverige AB

Privately owned family company. Runs 29 compulsory schools (of which one is a school for children with special educational needs) with about 12,200 pupils, and seven upper-secondary schools with about 2,400 pupils.

Lärandegruppen i Sverige AB

Privately owned company. Runs eight compulsory schools (of which seven with a preschool class and one is a school for children with special educational needs) with about 1,000 pupils, of which six have a preschool class (including the school for children with special educational needs), and 20 upper-secondary schools with about 3,700 pupils.

Magelungen Utveckling AB*

Employee-owned company. Runs 11 compulsory schools with about 270 pupils, and six upper-secondary schools with about 600 pupils. All schools are for pupils with special educational needs.

Nytida AB*

Owned by Ambea, a listed company. Runs five compulsory for pupils with special educational needs schools (of which two are combined with therapy) and seven compulsory and upper-secondary School for Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities with about 400 pupils.

Raoul Wallenbergskolorna AB

Privately owned company. Runs six compulsory schools with about 2,700 pupils.

Stadsmissionens Skolstiftelse

Foundation-owned operation. Runs six upper-secondary schools with about 2,360 pupils.

Stiftelsen Viktor Rydbergs Skola

Foundation-owned operation. Runs four compulsory schools (of which one has a preschool class) with about 1,690 pupils, and four upper-secondary schools with about 2,360 pupils.

Tellusgruppen AB

Listed on Nasdaq First North Growth Market. Largest owner is Bina Holding AB. Runs seven compulsory schools (of which four have a preschool class) with about 890 pupils.

Thorénggruppen AB

Privately owned company. Runs 16 compulsory schools (of which 11 with a preschool class) with about 3,700 pupils, and 39 upper-secondary schools with about 9,500 pupils.

Utvecklingspedagogik Sverige AB*

Privately owned family business. Runs four compulsory for pupils with special educational needs (of which one with a preschool class) with 341 pupils, and three upper-secondary schools with about 270 pupils.

Watma Education AB

Privately owned company. Runs eight compulsory schools with 2,300 pupils and eight upper-secondary schools with about 2,500 pupils.

**The main focus is schools for children with special educational needs, which means they have a limited intake.*

Other relevant research and reports

The following summary is not intended to be complete, but it contains aspects of relevance to independent schools.

2022

Vårda friskolereformen – konkreta förslag i stället för slag i luften (Caring for the independent school reform – concrete proposals instead of wasted effort)

Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

Anders Morin, senior policy manager, welfare policy at the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, and other report authors examine the school funding system and show that there is no obvious transparency regarding the actual costs to municipalities regarding schools, on which the school vouchers to independent schools are based. The rules are unclear and the lack of transparency regarding such aspects as costs for premises and administration risk favouring municipal schools at the detriment of independent schools.

https://www.svensktnaringsliv.se/sakomraden/utbildning/varda-friskolereformen-konkreta-forslag-i-stallet-for-slag-i-luft_1191388.html

Friskolornas roll i det svenska utbildningssystemet (The role of independent schools in the Swedish education system)

Mikael Sandström, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

This study provides an overview of the current research as to how freedom of choice affects school results, segregation and equality. The report also looks at the issue of grades and the broader discussion of whether independent schools have a positive or negative effect on Swedish schools as a whole. It concludes with a number of suggestions, for example to secure the value of grades by correcting grades centrally and setting a norm for how much final grades can deviate from the results of the national tests. The report also suggests more informed school choices and limited waiting lists, and giving municipalities the right to procure services in the school sector.

https://www.svensktnaringsliv.se/sakomraden/utbildning/friskolor-nas-roll-i-det-svenska-utbildningssystemet_1186425.html

Stora skillnader i skolkvalitet (Major differences in school quality)

School researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

This report analyses the results of Swedish pupils on the national tests in mathematics in year 9 the last year the national test was conducted – 2019. The results are assessed in relation to the same pupils' results on the national test in Year 6, and various background variables. The results of the analysis become an “added value” that can be said to represent the schools' contribution to the pupils' knowledge development.

The study shows highly significant differences in quality between Swedish schools. The pupils' own qualities play an important role in the results, but the quality of the teaching is also of key importance.

There are major differences between big-city schools and those in smaller towns. The study also shows that independent schools on average perform better than municipal ones.

https://www.svensktnaringsliv.se/sakomraden/utbildning/stora-skillnader-i-skolkvalitet_1183736.html

Skattenytta i skolan (What taxes pay for in schools)

Professor Henrik Jordahl, school researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, Kommissionen för skattenytta (Commission on value for taxes)

Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren and Professor Henrik Jordahl further develop the work of the previously mentioned study in a report for Kommissionen för skattenytta (the Commission on value for taxes), finding that one-seventh of Swedish taxes go to education. But the effect of this SEK 357 billion is unclear.

Jordahl and Heller-Sahlgren estimate the added value for schools based on the mathematics grades in Years 6 and 9 as a measure of the schools' contribution to the pupils' knowledge development. A high added value is an indication that a school has contributed significantly to the pupils' increasing their grades in Year 9 over their grades in Year 6.

The researchers also find that good results on international knowledge tests have been shown to lead to greater economic growth. If Swedish pupils increased their PISA results by 100 score points (corresponding to one standard deviation), this could increase Sweden's annual financial growth by about 1.3 percentage points.

The report shows that there are great differences in quality in maths between different municipal schools in the City of Stockholm. The schools with the highest and lowest added value in maths differed by 5.3 points. That corresponds to 5.3 years of teaching at lower-secondary level.

The financial resources also differ significantly, but the researchers see no correlation between financial resources and results. The school with the highest added value has almost exactly the same amount of financial resources per pupil as the school with the second-lowest added value.

The researchers also analysed the independent schools' influence on how well tax funding was used and found that independent schools reduce the municipalities' costs per compulsory school pupil. Having ten percentage points more compulsory school pupils in independent schools reduces the municipality's costs by about 1.5%.

<https://skattenytta.se/rappporter/skattenytta-i-skolan>

Skolpengen – effektivitet och konsekvenser (School vouchers – effectiveness and consequences)

Swedish National Audit Office

In this report, the Swedish National Audit Office examines whether the regulations regarding school vouchers to independent schools contribute to an equivalent education. The Swedish National Audit Office's review shows that the system has some drawbacks, and recommends that the government ensure that a nationally determined standard payment to independent schools be instituted. The agency writes that the independent proprietors in the current system have difficulty assessing whether they receive the right payment, as a result of the municipalities' lack of transparency regarding the

costs for premises and other factors. It also writes that different proprietors have different responsibilities and that the school voucher system does not account for this.

<https://www.riksrevisionen.se/rapporter/granskningsrapporter/2022/skolpengen---effektivitet-och-konsekvenser.html>

Statens insatser för likvärdig betygssättning – skillnaden mellan betyg och resultat på nationella prov (The state's initiatives for equivalent grading – the difference between grades and results on national tests)

Swedish National Audit Office

The Swedish National Audit Office has also tackled the issue of grades and in this report discusses how the state's initiatives to create greater equivalence in grading have failed.

The National Audit Office's assessment is that the change in the Swedish Education Act – to particularly consider the results on the national test in grading – and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate's regular inspections and quality reviews have so far had little effect on equivalency in grading, as regards the deviation between grades and results on national tests. The report finds that there are still major differences between grades and results on national tests. Therefore, the National Audit Office finds that the Government needs to do more to increase equivalency in grading.

<https://www.riksrevisionen.se/rapporter/granskningsrapporter/2022/statens-insatser-for-likvardig-betygssattning---skillnaden-mellan-betyg-och-resultat-pa-nationella-prov.html>

Skolverkets statistikuppdrag – information, uppföljning och utvärdering (The Swedish National Agency for Education’s statistical mission – information, follow-up and assessment)

Swedish National Audit Office

The Swedish National Audit Office has also examined how the Swedish National Agency for Education is handling its job of collecting and evaluating statistics from the schools. There are criticisms that “parts of the National Agency for Education’s statistics are not high enough quality”. This applies above all to the statistics that are intended to help pupils choose a school, but also to the statistics used when allocating resources to school proprietors to increase equivalency between schools. “The National Agency for Education’s statistics are important to allow pupils and their guardians to make informed school choices,” writes the National Audit Office, and draws the general conclusion that the National Agency for Education’s work can be improved in order to better meet the needs of various users for quality-assured statistics.

<https://www.riksrevisionen.se/rapporter/granskningsrapporter/2022/skolverkets-statistikuppdrag---information-uppfoljning-och-utvardering.html>

2021

Segregation i Sverige (Segregation in Sweden) – 2021 annual report on the development of socio-economic residential segregation

In this report, the Delegation Against Segregation (Delmos) responds to an assignment from the government on the development of a key aspect of segregation in Sweden, socio-economic residential segregation. Segregation is when groups of people live and work separately from each other. This separation means that people with similar characteristics are concentrated

in certain residential areas, schools and parts of the labour market. There are different types of segregation. This report describes socio-economic residential segregation.

Socio-economic residential segregation is when people are separated into various residential areas based on educational level, occupational group or access to financial resources. Since where an individual lives affects their life chances, such as a child's access to education or an adult's opportunities to find work, the location is highly significant for the impacts of segregation.

What can we learn from PISA 2018?

School researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, the Research Institute of Industrial Economics

The Swedish test scores continued upwards in PISA 2018 and 67% of the deterioration since PISA 2000 has now been erased. Among pupils with at least one parent born in Sweden, the entire deterioration has been reversed. In PISA 2018, pupils in independent schools performed better than pupils in municipal schools with a statistically significant margin, both before and after adjustment for the background of the pupils. After adjustment for a number of background variables, the difference was 10–13 score points, roughly corresponding to the learning that takes place during one-third of an academic year.

The report analyses factors that could possibly have influenced the test score differences in PISA 2018 in Sweden. They include a comparison between independent and municipal proprietorship, teaching methods, study climate, use of digital aids, lateness and truancy.

Bra skolor i hela landet – skillnader i resultat mellan stad och land (Good schools all over Sweden – differences in results between urban and rural areas) in TIMSS 2019

School researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, the Research Institute of Industrial Economics

This is not a comparison between independent schools and municipal schools. The report analyses the differences in test results between Year 8 pupils in urban and rural areas in TIMSS 2019. TIMSS tests are marked externally and since data from surveys on how the schools function is also collected, this enables analyses of the underlying mechanisms for any differences in test results. The results show that pupils in rural areas and small towns significantly underperform in TIMSS compared with their peers in large cities and nearby suburbs, when keeping the background variables of the pupils constant. Pupils in other cities perform roughly midway between the other two groups. The lower academic achievement of pupils in rural areas and small towns is not because they are underachievers on average, but primarily because they do not achieve average or higher standards of proficiency. For example, the probability of a pupil in a rural area or small town achieving an advanced level of mathematics is only half as great compared with pupils in major city and suburban schools, or in schools in other cities. The analysis presents several possible explanations for the lower academic achievement of schools in rural areas and small towns. Since resources are already greater in rural areas and small towns compared with cities, and since this relative resource advantage has gradually increased, it seems unlikely that the solution mainly involves more money.

2020

Friskolorna och skolkostnaderna (Independent schools and school costs), no. 2020:21

School researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, London School of Economics and the Research Institute of Industrial Economics

Since the independent school reform in 1992, the debate on its effects have been intensive. Recently, a new perspective on the issue of relative funding for independent and municipal schools has become increasingly important. While some argue that the system disadvantages independent schools, others insist that municipal operators receive less money than independent operators, because the demand for equal treatment ignores the fact that the assignments vary for each of the proprietors.

Skolvalet, kunskaperna och likvärdigheten (School choice, knowledge and equity)

Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, London School of Economics and the Research Institute of Industrial Economics

What effects do school choice and independent schools really have on the quality, equity, segregation and grade setting of Swedish schools? In this report from 2020, school researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren summarises the empirical research in this area.

The Value Added of Internationella Engelska Skolan, Policy Paper No. 89, 2020

School researcher Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, London School of Economics and the Research Institute of Industrial Economics, and Professor Henrik Jordahl, the Research Institute of Industrial Economics

The report is the first step of a research project to estimate the value added for as many proprietors and schools as possible.

Similar studies to analyse other proprietors and schools, both independent and municipal, will also be carried out in the future.

The project is financed with funds from the Economics of the Service Sector Research Programme, and by the proprietors taking part in the project, including IES and Kunskapsskolan.

2019

Bostadsmarknaden – ett instrument för att välja grundskola? (The housing market – an instrument for choosing a compulsory school?) Economic debate no. 5, 2019

Fredrik W Andersson, PhD in Economics

The article studies the relocation behaviour of families when their first child starts school. The results indicate that families with small children tend to relocate before preschool class starts. Moreover, there are signs that the families who relocate place their children in schools where the pupils have a higher socio-economic status. Families with small children in Sweden show a similar pattern of behaviour to US families with small children – they seem to use the housing market to help their children achieve more in school.

Does school segregation lead to poor educational outcomes? Evidence from fifteen cohorts of Swedish ninth graders

Maria Brandén, Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University and Department of Sociology, Stockholm University. Gunn Elisabeth Birkelund, Institute for Analytical Sociology, Linköping University and Department of Sociology and Human Geography, Oslo University. Ryszard Szulkin, Department of Sociology, Stockholm University

The researchers have studied whether the ethnic composition of compulsory schools affects the performance of the pupils. Does it play any role in a pupil's chances of getting good grades if they go to a school with 50% foreign-born pupils, for example, compared with a school with 5% foreign-born pupils? Their findings show that the effect of ethnic school segregation is considerably overestimated in the political debate and by the media.

They used data that included all pupils who completed Year 9 in 1998–2012. In order to separate the effect of growing up in families with lower status in terms of income and education from the effect of the school's ethnic composition, they compare the outcomes for siblings who had different school situations. The results show that the impact on final grades in Year 9 that can be linked to the percentage of foreign-born pupils in the school is more or less zero. This means that the sibling who goes to a school with many foreign-born children does not have worse grades than the sibling who goes to a school with fewer immigrants. There is some effect on eligibility for upper-secondary school, but this is limited to a few percentage points.

The fact that the high level of ethnic segregation in Swedish schools does not have the negative consequences that are often assumed does not mean that schools with a diverse ethnic and socio-economic composition should not be pursued. For the children, especially those from less privileged home environments, early interventions that support cognitive development are

particularly important. They have a clear impact on future educational outcomes. This means that a high-quality preschool and school are key social resources for equal life chances. Their ethnic composition probably plays a minor role.

Jämlikhet i möjligheter och utfall i den svenska skolan (Equality of opportunities and outcome in Swedish schools). Appendix 7 of the Long-term Survey,

SOU 2019:40, Stockholm Holmlund, H., Sjögren, A., & Öckert, B. (2019)

The report studies equity in compulsory and upper-secondary schools in Sweden. Focus lies on quantitative analyses that contribute to an understanding of the school's compensatory mission, especially for knowledge and academic performance. Differences in performance between pupils and schools, and changes over time, may be due to pupil background factors, such as parental educational level, country of birth and age of immigration, as well as the school's resources and quality.

The school's performance can thus be related to the pupil composition, but also to the availability and allocation of resources and teaching skills, and to the school's ability to manage its teaching resources and equalise conditions between various pupil cohorts. We refer to these two factors – conditions for pupils and the school's resources – as the school's input factors. The report studies firstly how various input factors are allocated over time from an equity perspective. The school's outcome is then analysed in terms of performance and quality. These analyses are focused on differences in performance and quality between schools, on how school quality varies between pupils with different conditions, and on the development of the family background's significance for pupils' academic performance.

Lika för alla? (Equity for all?) An ESO report on educational equity

Robert Erikson and Lena Unemo (eds.) Anders Böhlmark, Camilla Brørup Dyssegaard, Niels Egelund, Sigrun K. Ertesvåg, Jan O. Jonsson, Mikael Lindahl, Anders Stenberg and Georg Treuter Expert Group on Public Economics (ESO) Report 2019:1

Both Swedish and international experts maintain that educational equity has deteriorated in recent decades. How can this trend be reversed? This question was studied by a number of researchers in the new ESO report “Equity for all?”

In their report, the authors maintain that the concept of equity is imprecise, but they also make several suggestions for how pupils could achieve better results at school.

Equity therefore presumes that all pupils receive good quality education in good schools. One of the editors, Robert Erikson, shows in his chapter how the measures used to assess equity say very little about the conditions that exist in different schools, and he also questions the opportunities that are actually available to schools to help reduce differences in the performance of pupils from different backgrounds. Other issues raised by the report include the need for studies that produce more reliable results for learning interventions, especially for pupils who receive less support at home. The significance of vocational guidance for pupils’ educational choices and opportunities for later employment, the importance of strong leadership in schools, and the ability for teachers to adapt their teaching styles to the needs of pupils are other issues that are highlighted. There is no universal solution to the problem of inequity or that some schools provide poorer quality education.

Segregation – Final report from a research programme

Peter Hedström, Professor of Analytical Sociology at Linköping University, senior research fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, and others.

According to researchers, the recent debate on school segregation has been somewhat misguided. Many people seem to believe that schools have become far more segregated in recent years and that the free school choice has been a key driving factor. However, their research shows that school segregation has remained surprisingly stable and that free school choice has had a fairly marginal effect on the extent of school segregation. School segregation is more likely due to the combination of a highly segregated housing market and the fact that most pupils choose a school that is close to where they live.

<https://www.riksrevisionen.se/rapporter/granskningsrapporter/2019/skolinspektionens-uppfoljning-av-brister-i-skolor---ett-viktigt-arbete-som-kan-forbattas.html>

2018

Lönsamma kunskaper – Sambandet mellan vinst och kvalitet i svenska grundskolor (Profitable knowledge – The relationship between profit and quality in Swedish compulsory schools)

Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren, London School of Economics and the Research Institute of Industrial Economics, and Henrik Jordahl, Research Institute of Industrial Economics.

In this report from 2018, the researchers study the relationship between the profitability of schools and educational quality. The analysis is based on a limited liability company, which is the dominant form of organisation

for independent schools. The findings indicate that profit and quality go hand-in-hand at Swedish compulsory schools. The applies to both academic quality indicators based on the academic performance of the pupils, and to softer indicators based on the attitudes of the pupils. To determine whether the relationships are due to grade inflation, the final grades of the pupils are compared with their national test scores. There is nothing to suggest that the profitability of independent schools and the academic performance of their pupils could be due to grade inflation. Nor do the authors find any evidence that profitable independent schools have a more favourable pupil composition. Contrary to such concerns, there is almost no difference in the pupil composition between independent schools with varying levels of profit. According to the authors, high-quality education thus appears profitable for school companies, as can also be expected in other markets.

<https://www.riksrevisionen.se/rapporter/granskningsrapporter/2018/langsiktiga-effekter-av-utokade-valmojligheter-till-gymnasieskolan---fran-narhet-sprincip-till-betygsprincip.html>

2017

Vitsen med vinsten - fyra exempel på företag inom vård och skola som genom hög kvalitet ger uthållig vinst (The purpose of profit – four examples of companies in healthcare and schools that provide sustainable profit through high quality)

Henrik Jordahl and Bo Edvardsson, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise

This report gets to the bottom of why private companies in public welfare services can deliver as good or better quality for the same pay as their publicly owned competitors and still make a profit.

The conclusion is that the profit interest in itself leads to quality improvements in each operation. The report takes an in-depth look at four companies in the welfare sector, including the independent school group Internationella Engelska Skolan, IES.

The school company IES has decentralised financial responsibility and its employees who know the business best make most of the decisions about the school – without central bureaucracy, the authors say. Regular follow-ups are provided and the pupils give feedback on the school's quality in surveys. Recruiting is an important focus, thanks to the decentralised structure, and the principals have strict requirements to live up to.

https://www.svensktnaringsliv.se/sakomraden/valfard-och-offentlig-sektor/vitsen-med-vinsten-fyra-exempel-pa-foretag-inom-var-d-och-skola-so_1002394.html

Ankomst och härkomst (Arrival and country of origin) – an ESO report on academic performance and background

Hans Grönqvist and Susan Niknami, Expert Group on Public Economics (ESO) Report 2017:3

To increase the chances of foreign-born pupils succeeding in school, efforts must also be focused on the pupils' parents and the residential segregation. This is one of the ESO report's conclusions. In recent years, Sweden has received a record-high number of refugee children, many between 13 and 17 years old. Since completed upper-secondary education is key to finding work for young people in Sweden, it is also important that newly arrived young people do well at school. Unfortunately, the performance gap between Swedish-born and foreign-born pupils has been steadily increasing since the end of the 1980s. While the age of the children when they arrive in Sweden and where they come from play a major role in academic performance, the overriding factor is the socio-economic situation of their parents.

Att organisera för skolframgång – strategier för en likvärdig skola (Organising for success at school – strategies for educational equity)

Maria Jarl, Ulf Blossing and Klas Andersson, Natur & Kultur 2017

How can there be such huge differences between the performance of pupils in different schools? Why are some schools more successful than others? Organising for school success refers to thinking about schools as a local organisation and how the activities in a school can be organised to create the best conditions for learning.

The book presents a comparative study of four successful and four unsuccessful schools. The schools selected by the study enable an understanding of what does and doesn't work, and why. The authors work at the Department of Education and Special Education at Gothenburg University and have extensive experience in teacher and school principal training courses.

2016

När skolan själv får välja (When schools can decide) – an ESO report on the establishment pattern of independent schools

Nikolay Angelov and Karin Edmark, Expert Group on Public Economics (ESO) Report 2016:3

This ESO report shows that independent schools are more frequently established in areas with more highly educated people – but also in immigrant-dense areas. Independent schools are also more frequently established in areas where incomes are expected to be higher and the cost of premises lower. But surprisingly enough, financial conditions do not seem to affect the location decisions of for-profit independent schools. The report also shows that expectations of high incomes and low premises costs seem to play a role in the location decisions of non-profit independent schools. For the for-profit schools, however, financial conditions do not seem to affect their location decision.

Friskolorna och Pisa (Independent schools and PISA) (2016)

According to a report from the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR): “The analysis indicates that pupils in independent schools perform about 18 score points higher in reading comprehension, 10 score points higher in mathematics and 14 score points higher in science compared with pupils in municipal schools, holding the background variables constant. This means that pupils in independent schools, when controlling background variables, lie just over two months ahead in mathematics, three months ahead in science and four months ahead in reading comprehension compared with their peers in municipal schools.”

2015

Independent Schools and Long-run Educational Outcomes: Evidence from Sweden’s Large-scale Voucher Reform, *Economica*, Vol. 82, p. 508–551, 2015

Anders Böhlmark, Stockholm University and Mikael Lindahl, Uppsala University

In their analysis of the effects of independent schools on compulsory schools, Böhlmark and Lindahl (2015) find that having a higher percentage of pupils in independent schools – regardless of whether they are for-profit or non-profit – improves the performance of the pupils. The effects are similar for final grades, and for the long-term academic outcome of the pupils in upper-secondary school and at university. The authors also show that the positive effects increase over time – and are not, in fact, statistically clear until 11 years after the independent school reform – indicating that it takes a certain amount of time before the competition has a positive effect on knowledge, and that a certain level of competition is required before the effects become clear.

2014

Decentralisering, skolval och fristående skolor: resultat och likvärdighet i svensk skola (Decentralisation, school choice and independent schools: performance and equity in Swedish schools).

Holmlund, H., Häggblom, J., Lindahl, E., Martinson, S., Sjögren, A., Vikman, U., et al. (2014). Report 2014:25, The Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU), Uppsala.

The authors study how the major school reforms of the 1990s – municipalisation, free school choice and independent schools – affected pupil performance and equity in education. The report shows that the performance of pupils in Swedish schools had already begun to deteriorate before the school reforms of the 1990s. However, the grade gaps between schools have not increased and are due to the fact that pupils with the same background often go to the same school. But the significance of family background for compulsory school grades remains unchanged.

Other

Ifous

Ifous is an independent research and development (R&D) institute that works to create value for Swedish schools and preschools. The institute coordinates practice-oriented research and development activities, where teachers and school leaders are involved in the research process. Particular focus is placed on areas of development with a major impact on learning.

Confederation of Swedish Enterprise's Ekonomifakta

This page provides information about schools and education in Sweden.

The Swedish Association of Independent Schools' reports

2022

Behörighet till gymnasiet – om skolorna som misslyckats och lyckats (Eligibility for upper-secondary school – on the schools that have failed and succeeded)

Annika Westh, Swedish Association of Independent Schools

Based on the Swedish National Agency for Education's statistics, this report lists which compulsory schools succeed and fail at the task of guiding Year 9 pupils to eligibility for upper-secondary school. Fifteen per cent of Swedish pupils do not achieve eligibility to upper-secondary school after Year 9. That's 18,000 pupils who risk being alienated from the labour market each year before they have even finished school.

The report shows significant differences between municipal and independent lower-secondary schools. Fully 113 municipal compulsory schools saw more than 30% of their pupils leaving without being eligible for upper-secondary school. Most schools with private proprietors have nearly 100% eligibility for upper-secondary school. Among independent schools that have many pupils who do not achieve eligibility, most of them are schools for pupils with special educational needs.

There are also significant differences between municipalities. For example, there are striking differences between Stockholm and Gothenburg. In Gothenburg there are 15 municipal schools in which more than 30% of pupils lack eligibility for upper-secondary school. In contrast, there are only four municipal schools in Stockholm where over 30% of pupils leave

compulsory school ineligible for upper-secondary school. This is despite the fact that 2,536 more pupils completed municipal compulsory school in Stockholm in spring 2022.

<https://www.friskola.se/2022/12/01/skolorna-som-misslyckas/>

2020

Se skolans verkliga utmaningar – låt alla goda krafter bidra (See the real challenges facing schools – let all positive forces contribute)

This report describes the challenges facing Swedish schools due to the major changes in the pupil population over the past decade. Sweden needs a debate on how all schools can become good schools.

Time and time again, the discussion reverts to the issue of proprietorship. On one day, it's focused on profits and proprietors, the next day, on segregation and proprietors. But the challenges facing Swedish schools are far greater. It is unacceptable that proprietors, year after year, deliver comprehensive school pupils who are ineligible for upper-secondary school. When it comes to the success factors, the research is clear. The quality gap between schools in Sweden has increased. The subsequent conclusion cannot be to "stop the top," but to ensure that those pupils who are at risk of falling behind can catch up. Because the absolute most important work with equity is to ensure that all pupils – regardless of their background – acquire good understanding and knowledge in compulsory school. The successful schools can teach us how to achieve that goal.

2019

Sveriges bästa och sämsta grundskolor (The best and worst compulsory schools in Sweden)

A report with a list of the schools that produce the highest and lowest Year 9 results, according to the National Agency for Education's SALSA statistics. Since SALSA accounts for the background factors of pupils, it becomes clear that schools with essentially the same conditions can achieve very different levels of success.

2018

Granskning av lika villkorsprincipen och ersättning till kommunala och enskilda skolor (Review of the equal-terms principle and funding for municipal and independent schools)

A review by Deloitte shows that it is not possible to determine whether funding for municipal and independent preschools and schools complies with the equal-terms principle. Deloitte proposes several areas to focus on to facilitate the review of whether municipalities comply with this legal requirement.

Jobbhälsindex Skola 2018 – anställdas syn på jobbet inom utbildningssektorn (Job Health Index, Schools 2018 – insight into the health and well-being of education staff)

The Job Health Index (formerly the Job Health Barometer, and a survey conducted by the Swedish Quality Index) shows private employees in the education sector are more satisfied with their conditions and workplace than municipal employees. This includes the physical workplace, opportunities for assistance to manage a heavy workload and the ability of management to lead the school effectively.

Compulsory school choice

Proximity is important for parents when choosing a school, especially for those with young children. But the school choice is based on a wide range of factors. Parents with a weak socio-economic background place more value on academic quality over factors such as well-being, while more highly paid parents are more likely to prioritise soft factors. This was shown by the report, which studied active school choices in seven municipalities.

Om den snabba tillväxten av unga åldersklasser och framtida behov av friskoleplatser (About the rapid growth of young age groups and future needs for individual school places)

The Swedish population is growing at a historic rate, and the birth rate has reached a level unseen since the early 1900s. This is obviously a positive trend, but also presents a welfare challenge. The report analyses the trend for the number of children and young people aged 0–19, both nationally and for the 17 municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The results show that the increase in people aged 0–19 exceeds the number of people aged 65 and over in 2017–2027.

The Swedish Association of Independent Schools is the sector association for independent preschools and schools.

Those who operate or is planning to set up an independent preschool or school can apply to become a member of the Swedish Association of Independent Schools. We have more than 500 members all over Sweden, comprising associations, cooperatives, foundations and limited liability companies.

In total, our members run more than 1,200 schools of various sizes, with a range of teaching methods and ways of working.
