

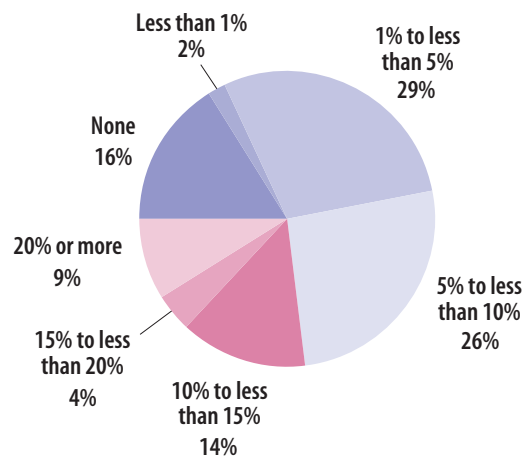
## Chapter 4. Profile of the High Schools

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The surveys conducted in this study provide an opportunity to profile the activities of high schools across the country, vis-à-vis the journalism curriculum, First Amendment instruction and media-related student activities. This chapter highlights some of these high school profile findings.

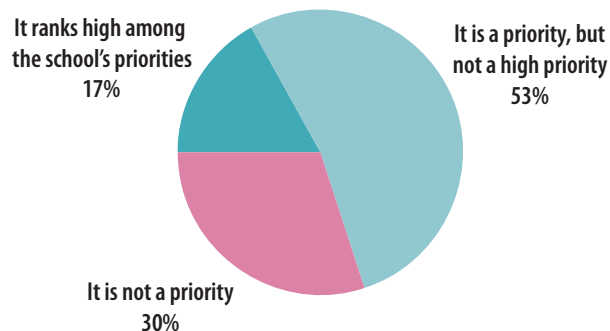
Student journalism has not yet become a staple of most high school curriculums. Less than 1 in 10 (9 percent) administrators of the 544 schools initially profiled in this study indicated that 20 percent or more of their students are currently enrolled in classes primarily dedicated to teaching journalism skills. And 16 percent of the administrators indicated that none of the students in their schools are currently enrolled in such classes.

### Enrollment in journalism skills courses



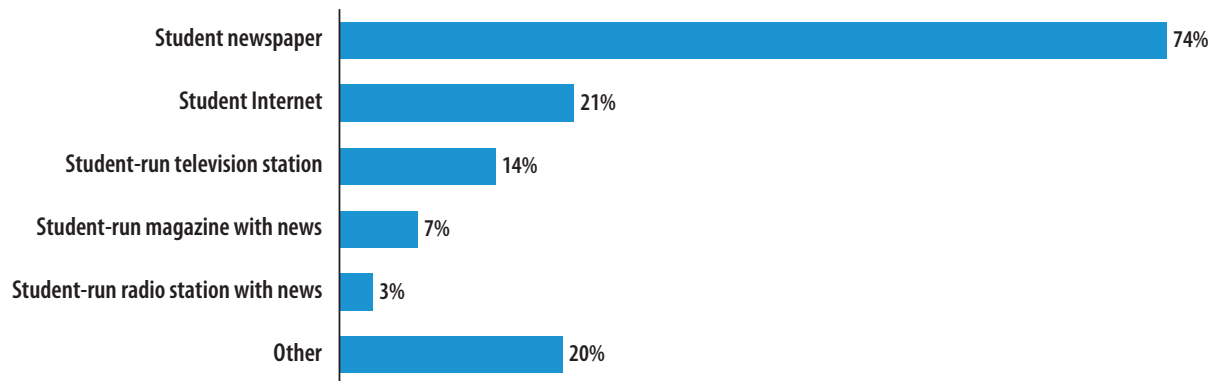
Most schools (70 percent) indicated that student learning about media and journalism is a priority. Yet just 17 percent of those saying it was a priority identified it as a high priority. And nearly a third (30 percent) of the high schools profiled said that student learning about media and journalism was not a priority for their school.

### Priority of student learning about media and journalism



Of those schools that do offer some type of student media activity, by far the most commonly offered type of journalism club or activity is the student-run newspaper. In fact, three quarters (74 percent) of all the high schools in the United States indicated that they currently offer a student newspaper. By contrast, other types of media activities are offered by significantly fewer schools; less than a quarter offer any of the other activities.

### Journalism activities and clubs currently offered in high schools



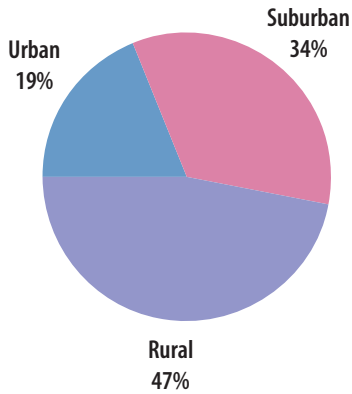
Of the schools that do not currently offer student newspapers, a substantial percentage (40 percent) say they have eliminated their student papers within the past five years. Further, among the 40 percent of schools that have dropped their student newspapers in the past five years, the majority (68 percent) now offer no student media activities at their school. The remaining third of those schools that have eliminated student newspapers in the past five years still have at least one student media activity offered and several of these schools have added different types of media activities since 1998:

- 19 percent have Internet media (13 percent added since 1998)
- 12 percent have television (8 percent added since 1998)
- 3 percent have radio station (2 percent added since 1998)
- 5 percent have magazine (2 percent added since 1998)

As might be expected, a larger drop in school newspapers was found in lower-income schools over the past five years; a 16-percent decrease was found among upper income schools, as compared to a 28-percent decrease among middle income schools and a 37-percent decrease among lower middle income schools. Although just a 19-percent decrease in school newspapers occurred among the most socio-economically disadvantaged schools, many of this latter category represent schools that most likely did not even have a newspaper to begin with. Additionally, suburban schools felt the drop to a significantly lesser degree than either the urban or the rural schools.

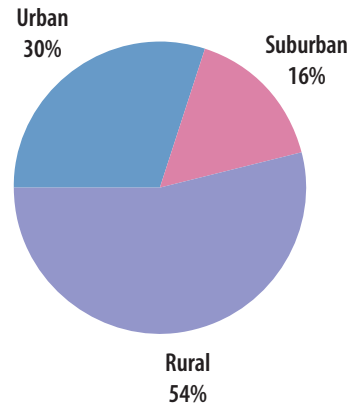
Overall percentage of schools

School setting



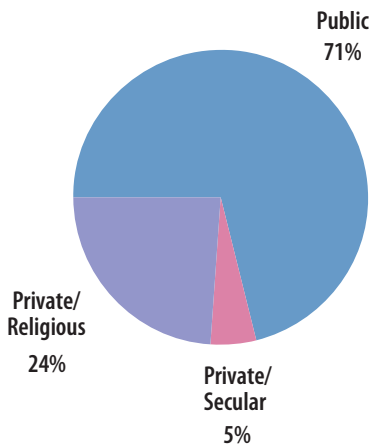
Percentage that dropped student newspaper in past five years

School type

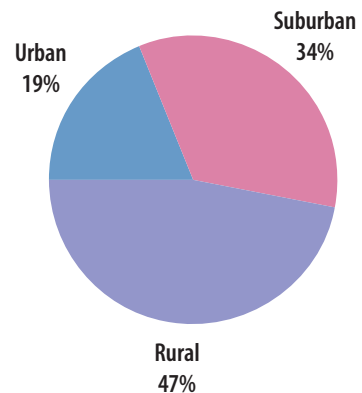


The high schools that were included in this study are representative of the national high school demographic. The charts below show the percentage breakdown of the schools in the study across types of schools and types of communities.

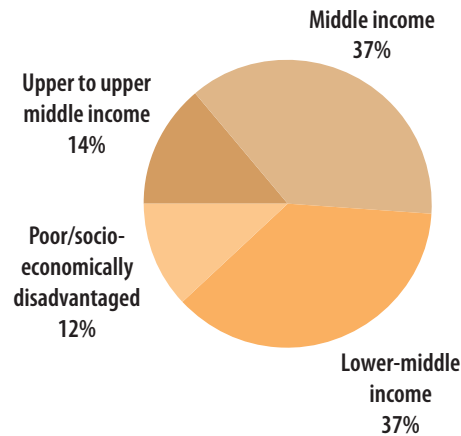
Type of school



Type of community



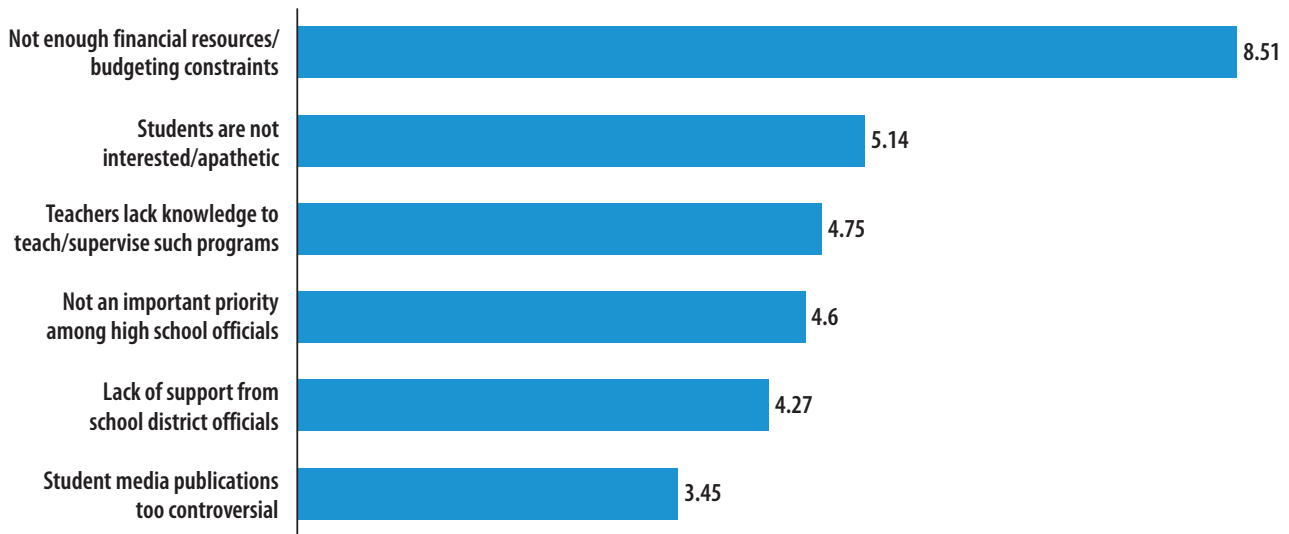
### Student body income demographics



The majority (85 percent) of high school administrators say they would like to see their school expand its existing student media programs. However, several obstacles cited by these administrators stand in the way of these types of expansions. By far, the greatest obstacle currently faced by the schools is the lack of financial resources or budgeting constraints. Another main obstacle, according to administrators, is student apathy or lack of interest in participating in media programs.

### Current obstacles preventing expansion of student media programs

Based on 0–10 scale, 0 = not an obstacle and 10 = major obstacle, average rank shown)



Half (49 percent) of high school students in this study say they are not at all likely to pursue a career in journalism upon completion of their formal schooling. Ten percent don't know if they will pursue a journalism career or not. Out of the remaining 41 percent, 5 percent say they are very likely, 12 percent say they are somewhat likely and 24 percent say they are not too likely to pursue a career in journalism.

#### Likelihood of students pursuing a career in journalism

