

NAIS-Institute for Global Learning

Global Engagement Report

2024-25 School-Year Data

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National Association
of *Independent* Schools



Institute for
Global Learning

NAIS – Institute for Global Learning

Global Engagement Data Report

Introduction

Through a multi-year partnership designed to better understand the state of global learning in K-12 education, the Institute for Global Learning (formerly GEBG) and the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) collected and analyzed data from over 500 participating schools across North America and beyond from October to December 2025. The data reported by schools is for the 2024-2025 school year, the last completed school year at the time of data collection.

This data report benefits from having the largest number (510) of participating schools that either organization has seen for a global engagement survey. It also benefits from using a data collection tool that included many of the same questions as the survey from 2023 in which close to 500 schools participated. This allows both for general observations between the two sets of results and, more importantly, for direct comparison between the data points from 2023 and 2025 for the 260 schools that participated in both. With 51% of participating schools submitting data to both surveys, this report is able to include accurate analysis of any changes, and these have been included in the report where they are notable. This report also provides some further analysis and breakdown of the data when there were differences of interest, specifically by school size and geographic region.

Participating School Demographics

schools
participated

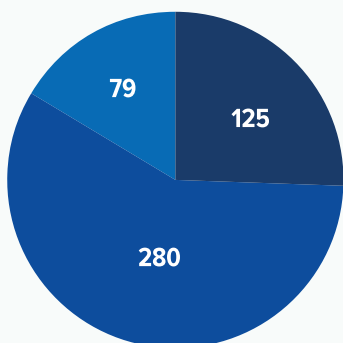
53% IGL members or **7%** IGL members only,

92% NAIS members only,

46% Members of both NAIS and IGL

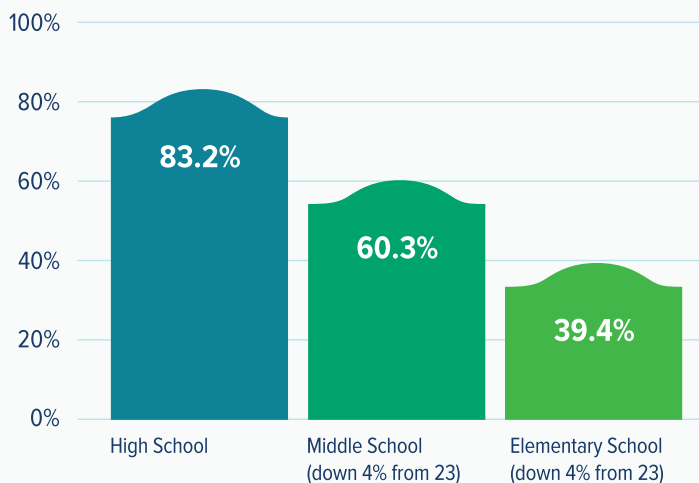
It's important to note that the membership is self-reported in this survey by participating schools, and may not illustrate the exact number of members of either or both organizations.

Division

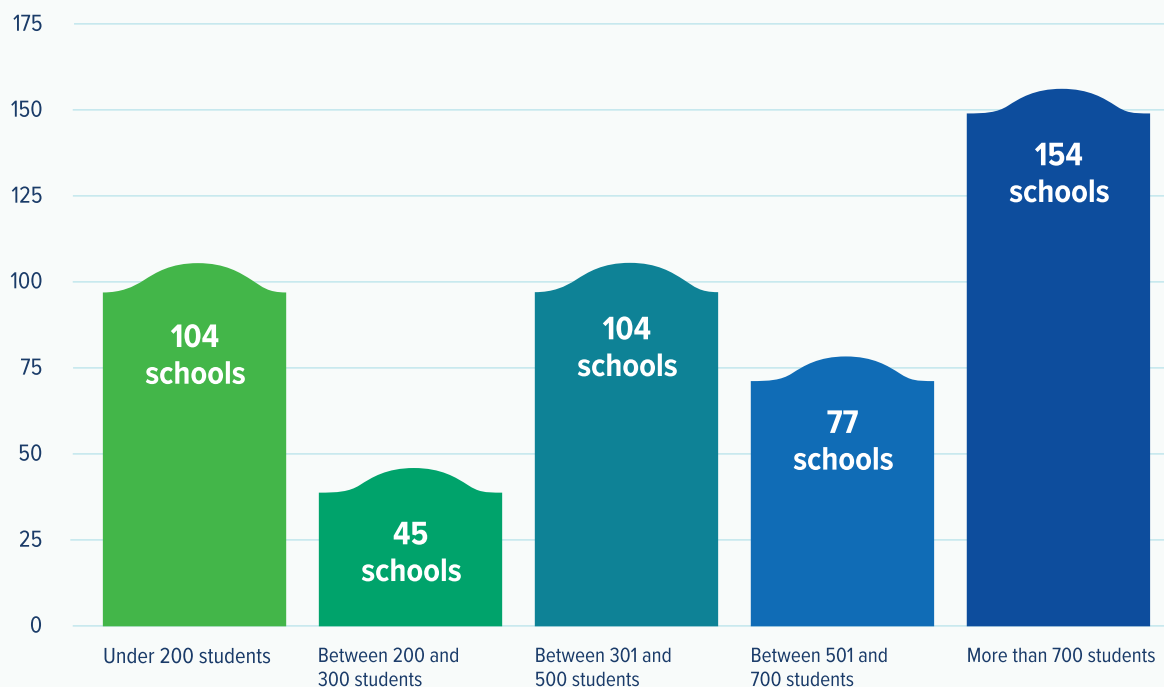


■ Elementary only
■ Elementary-Secondary
■ Secondary only

Global Engagement by Division



School Size



School Type

81%

day schools

84%

coeducational

96%

from the United States or Canada

15

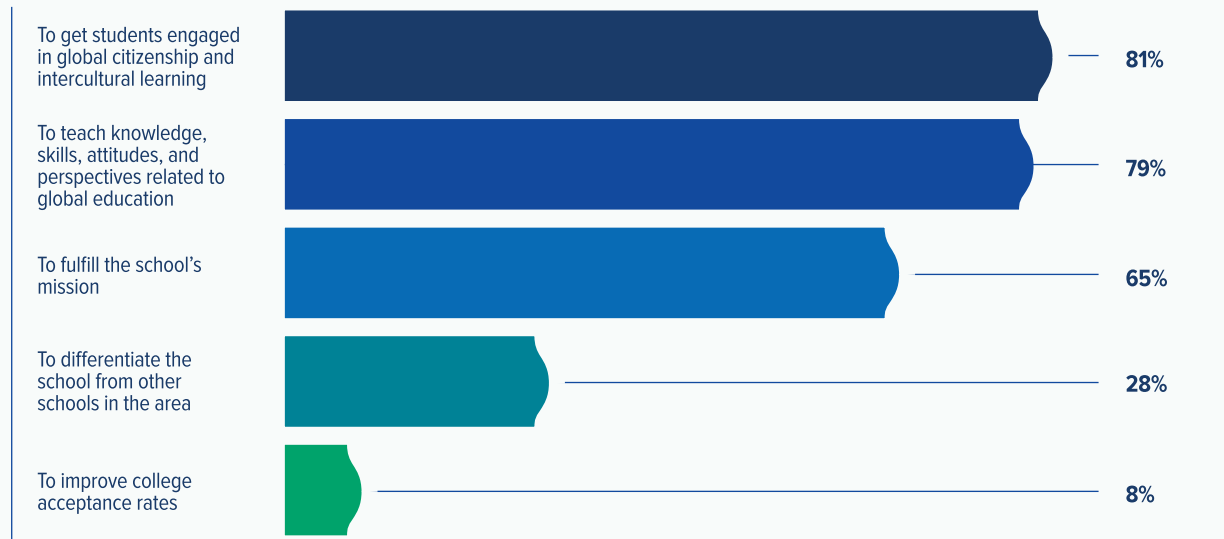
countries represented

Why Schools Offer Global Learning

The primary reasons for schools to offer global learning opportunities, in the classroom and beyond, continue to be helping them develop as engaged citizens and to do so with the needed knowledge and skills. Over 64% directly relate this work to their mission-fulfillment, demonstrating that global learning is mission-critical for a majority of participating schools. This would suggest that schools dedicate the appropriate resources, of time and funding, to ensure this aspect of their mission-delivery is implemented with the same professionalism and quality as other areas of school life. In addition, about 30% of participating schools see this work as directly differentiating them from peer schools, perhaps giving them a distinct advantage in admissions and enrollment.

Primary Reasons for Offering Global Learning

n = 366

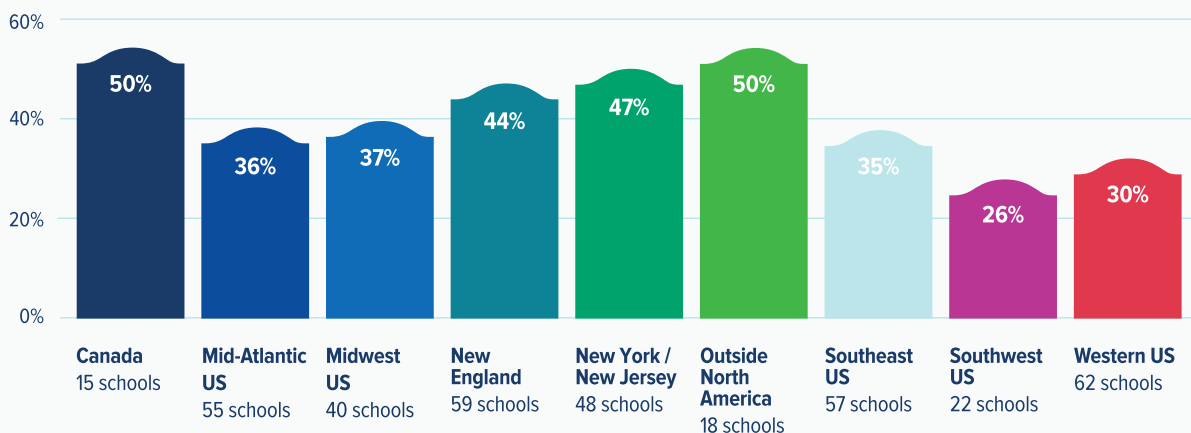


Mission and Vision

School boards and senior administrative leadership support global learning through the mission and vision in their schools. About half of reporting schools report having a school mission statement or other board/district level guiding document with an expressed commitment to global education or global citizenship. Similarly, about half of reporting schools report that they have a current strategic plan with an expressed commitment to global education or global citizenship. This is an area that showed some variation by geographic region (with schools outside the US reporting higher levels), and so we have included regional data below.

Schools With Mission Statement or Other Board/District Document That Includes Global Education or Global Citizenship

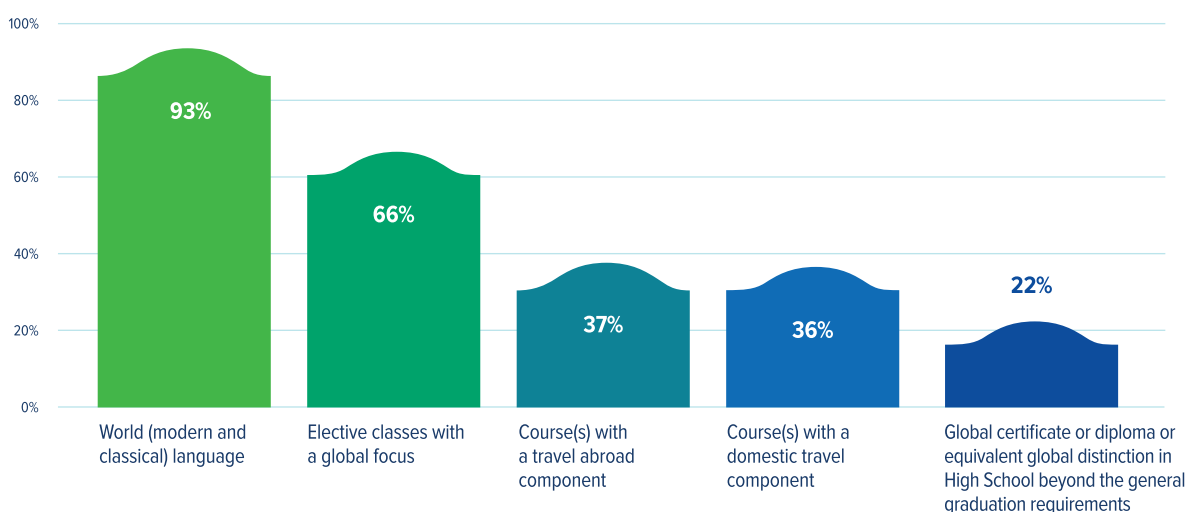
(by geographic region)



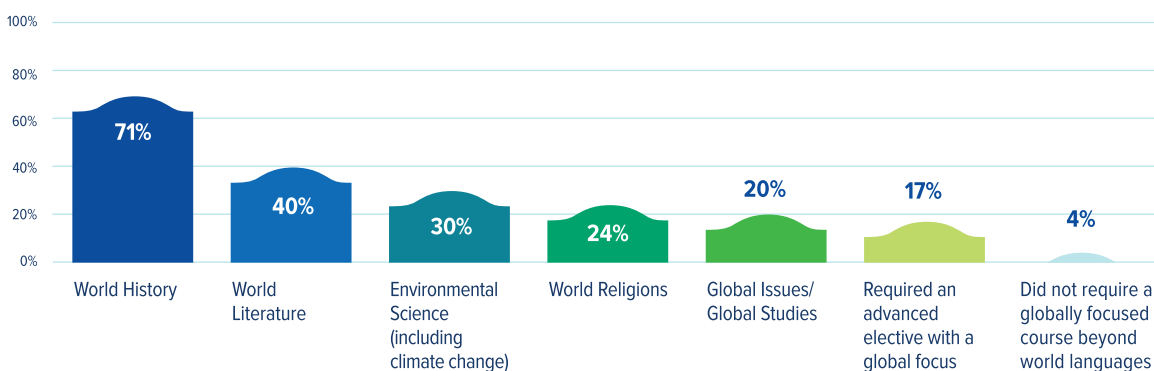
Types of Global Learning and Engagement

Schools are offering a wide variety of opportunities for students to engage in global learning across the curriculum. While world languages and world history courses remain the most common required courses, many schools are recognizing the importance of global learning beyond one or two disciplines. With 66% of schools offering high school electives with a global focus (and 17% even requiring students to choose one), students are engaging in global learning in many different fields. Some students are able to earn academic recognition for the learning taking place beyond the classroom, with over 35% of schools offering courses with a travel component. While student clubs continue to be the most common way students engage with global issues beyond academic courses and travel programs, more than half of schools (56%) are providing opportunities for local action and learning around global issues through community partnerships. In addition, 41% of schools reported offering a space and place for students to discuss global issues and current events despite ongoing challenges in navigating how to do this successfully.

Most Common Academic Offerings n = 383



High School Global Course Requirements Beyond World Languages n = 221



Most Common Global Learning Offerings Beyond Academics

n = 376 (all divisions, not including travel programs)

74% Globally focused student clubs (*Model UN, etc.*)

72% Assemblies or speakers on global current events or issues

38% Student leadership positions or opportunities related to global education

33% Information provided to students interested in a gap year

67% Opportunities provided to students to engage locally with global issues with community partners

41% School provides a meeting place for students to discuss global issues and events

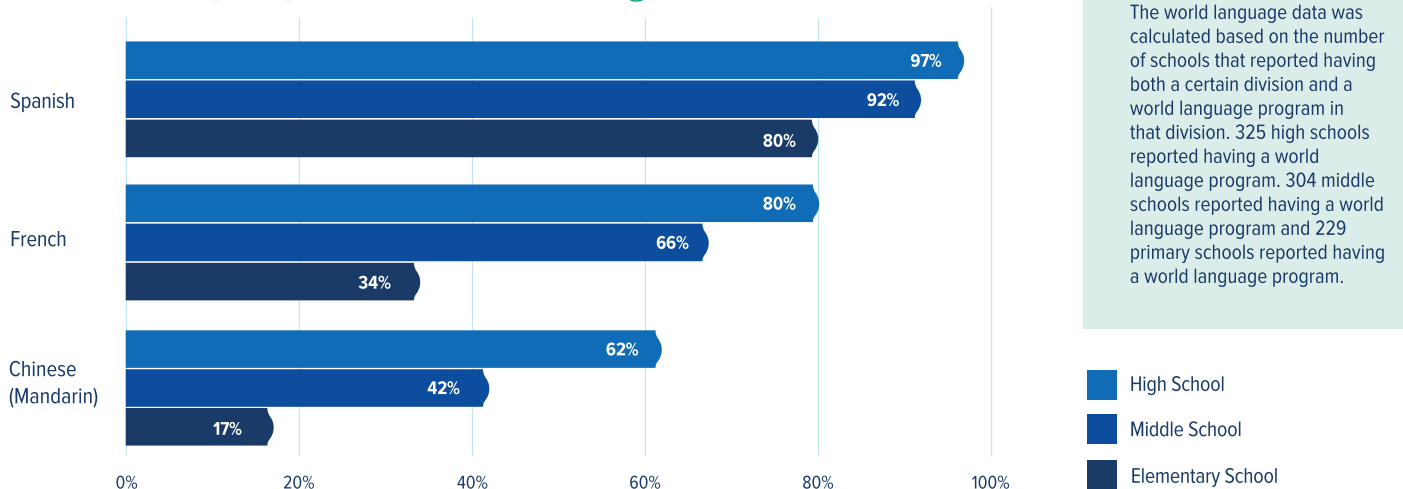
32% Partnered program with other schools for student virtual conversations or dialogues

World Language Offerings

Although we continue to hear of schools having conversations about their language offerings, the data indicates that all numbers were very consistent among the 260 schools that completed the survey in 2023 and 2025. Meaning that there were no significant changes in the languages being offered across schools at this time. One change, however, was an increase in the number of schools offering American Sign Language (often through an online course) as an option within the world language requirements. The graph below visualizes the data from the three languages that are by far the most commonly taught, with Latin, English language for non-English speakers, Greek, German, Italian, and Arabic being the next most common languages across divisions.

World language offerings are another area where there was significant difference by geographic region including 100% of the participating Canadian schools offering French (usually a provincial requirement). Chinese (Mandarin) is the second most common 83% language offered (after Spanish) in the Western United States, while New England has the highest rate of offering Greek (30%) and NY/NJ has the highest rate of offering Italian (18%). For schools outside of North America, English as an additional language (93%) is the most common language offering followed by French (73%), Spanish (53%) and German (40%).

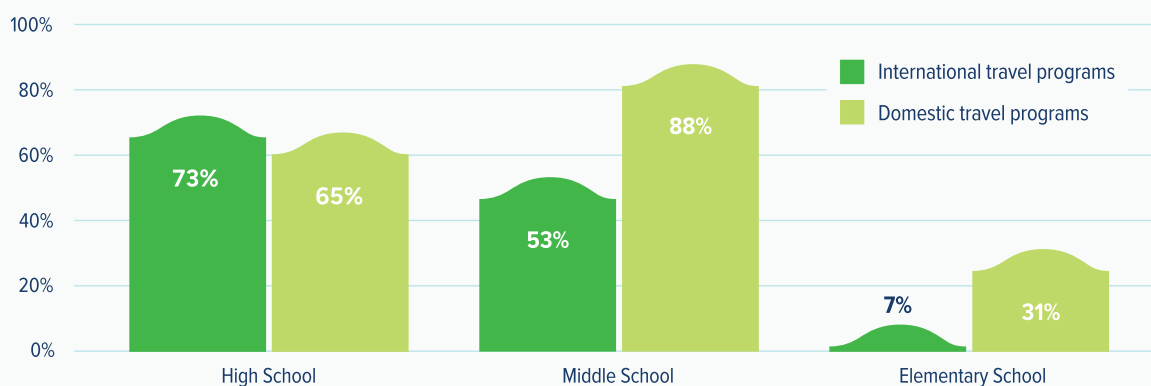
World Languages Offered During 2024-2025



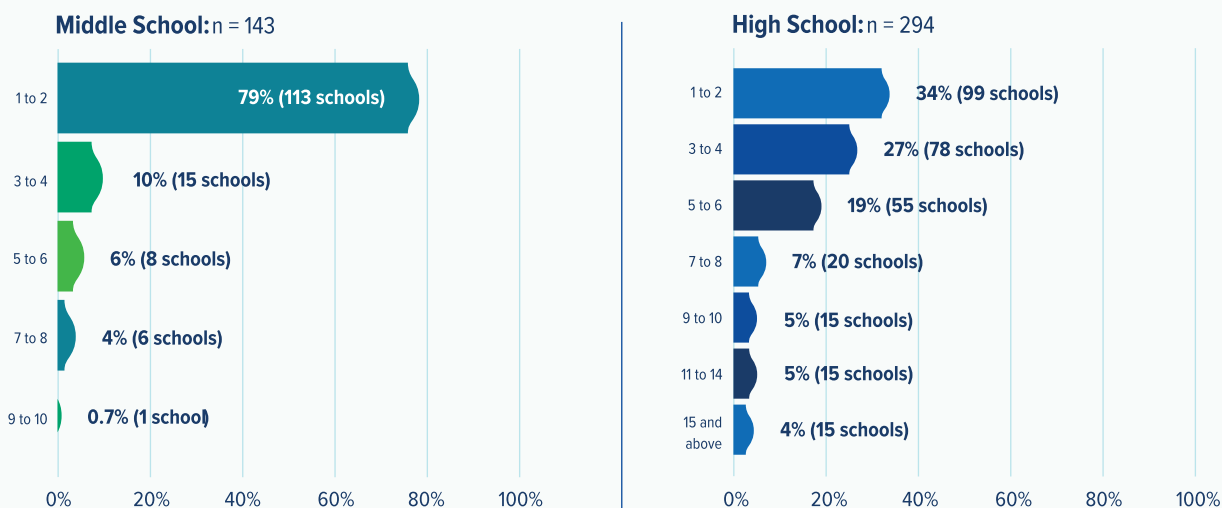
Student Travel Programs for Learning Beyond the Classroom

Of the over 500 participating schools, there continues to be an extremely strong commitment to engaging students in immersive learning experiences beyond the classroom with 93% of all schools reporting that they offered overnight travel programs, either domestically or internationally (roughly equal to 2023 data), during the school year 2024-2025. Notably, the same group of over 250 schools participating in both 2023 and 2025 saw an increase in the number of schools offering international travel programs from 88% in 2023 to 92% in 2025. A majority of all middle schools reporting in 2025 report offering both domestic (88%) and international programs (53%), and over 30% of primary schools reported organizing overnight programs for their students. The number of programs offered ranges, with 61% of high schools offering between 1 and 4 international programs and 14% of high schools reporting that they offered 9 or more international programs in 2024-2025. The data reported on travel programs indicates a strong commitment to the value of offering overnight off-campus learning, including international programs through the school, despite increasing costs and changing geo-political dynamics.

Types of Travel Offered by Division n = 398



Number of School-Sponsored International Travel Programs in 2024-2025



Travel Program Components

Following research-informed model practices, schools continue to make time and space for pre-travel and post-travel curriculum on campus. Over 90% of schools reported offering pre-departure curriculum and meetings with students (up for 83% in 2023), and 68% offer post travel meetings or gatherings with students to process the learning. Looking more broadly at travel program design, all component figures below remain relatively consistent between 2023 and 2025 within the same school sample set except for language enrichment which was up 10% over two years, from 51% in 2023 to 61% in 2025.

Rank	Travel Program Component	Percent
1	Cultural learning opportunity	86%
2	Language enrichment	61%
3	Community engagement or service-learning	60%
4	School Visits/Exchange	60%
5	Outdoor/Adventure	59%
6	Academic Work or Research	47%
7	Arts Performance	38%
8	Water-sports/Boating activities	36%
9	Construction projects	34%
10	Sporting activities or organized athletic events	33%
11	Field research	31%

n = 362

Generally Observed Enrollment Concerns

n = 398

A few schools reported that they generally observed disproportionately low participation of certain student demographic groups.

1.5% Disproportionately low participation of students who identify as female

12.3% Disproportionately low participation of students who identify as male

8.9% Disproportionately low participation of students who identify as students of color

Most Visited States and Provinces

(for North American schools' domestic travel programs)

Rank	State/Province	Schools Visited
1	District of Columbia	131
2	New York	102
3	California	82
4	Massachusetts	65
5	Florida	63
6	Georgia	45
7	Alabama	39
8	Pennsylvania	35
9	North Carolina	35
10	Arizona	31

Most Visited Countries

(excluding U.S. and Canada)

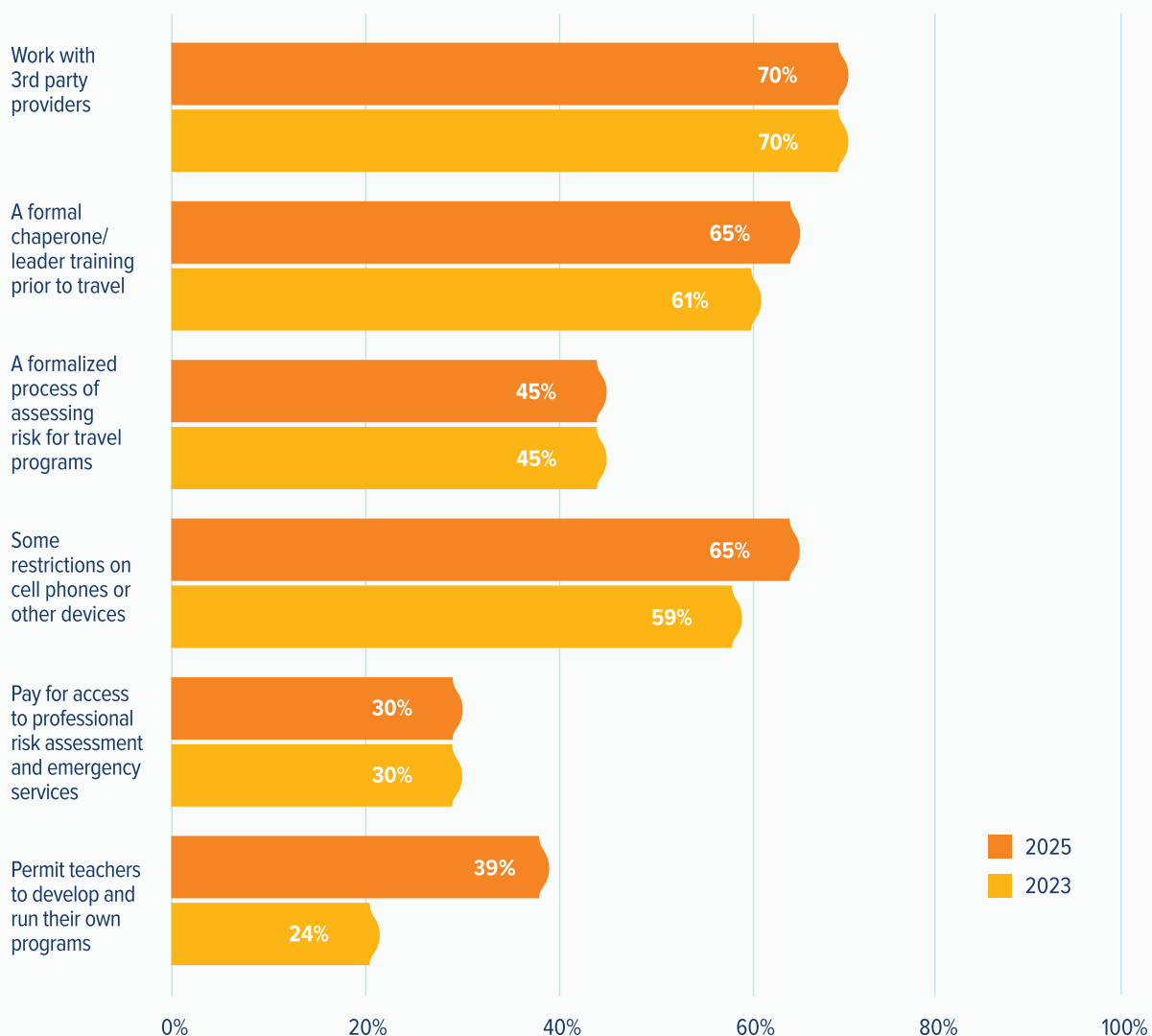
Rank	Country	Schools Visited
1	Spain	139
2	France	135
3	Costa Rica	100
4	Italy	89
5	United Kingdom	81
6	Germany	53
7	Japan	43
8	Iceland	37
9	Greece	35
10	China	29

Travel Program Policies and Practices

There are a huge number of variables that schools consider when they decide how to manage their travel programs. The policies and practices discussed below represent some of the most common amongst the 353 schools reporting on this topic. While some policies remained consistent in the number of schools using them, other aspects saw several changes between 2023 and 2025 including an increase in the number of schools requiring formal faculty leader training prior to travel (now 65%). In addition, there was also an increase in the number of schools with policies putting some restrictions on cell phones or other devices for travel programs, now at 65% of schools up from 59% in 2023. This is no surprise given the number of schools that have put new and more restrictive cell phone policies in place on campus in recent years, and is an example of how many schools are working to create alignment between their on-campus and off-campus policies.

Common Travel Program Policies and Practices

n = 388



Hot Topics: Faculty Compensation and Homestays

Schools frequently ask about the data regarding a number of topics to help inform their practices. One is how faculty are compensated and recognized for leading multi-day overnight programs with students. Schools are getting more creative in the ways they are recognizing the significant amount of challenging work and time leading these programs, demands of faculty members, including writing into their contract or having it count as a required responsibility beyond the classroom in place of things like supervising a study hall, serving as an advisor, or coaching a sport. However, there was only a slight increase in the number of schools reporting that they financially compensated faculty members for leading travel programs (in addition to covering all expenses), with 38% of the schools reporting that they compensated faculty leaders in 2025 versus 34% in 2023. About 33% of these schools report that they fund faculty compensation through travel program budgets and include the compensation in the total costs of the program, usually paid by student families.

Homestays are another topic related to travel programs about which schools are often seeking more information. The primary reason for these inquiries is that schools understand that homestay components of travel programs both provide increased learning opportunities as well as the possibility of increased risk factors. A majority of schools reporting data in both 2023 and 2025 offered homestays as part of some or all of their travel programs and there was even a slight increase in the rate with 54% offering them in 2023 and 56% offering them in 2025. This indicates that schools believe they are finding ways to navigate the risks related to homestays and determine the learning outcomes often available through homestays to be mission-aligned.

Leadership and Administration

How schools structure and oversee the administration of global engagement in schools varies. Despite a significant number of schools reporting increased challenges in the logistics of managing off-campus programs, especially those abroad, schools have remained constant (all within plus or minus two percent since 2023) in how they staff and structure their oversight of these programs, with a majority of schools (55%) reporting that they centralize this oversight through a particular position or department. There was a slight increase of three percentage points amongst the schools reporting in both 2023 and 2025 that the lead administrator for global programs was a member of senior administration (21%). The percentage of schools reporting offering faculty professional development specifically on bringing global learning into the curriculum (48%) also increased five percentage points since 2023.

Structure of Administration of Global Education Programs and Initiatives

n = 388



Ways Schools Supported Global Learning

n = 388

74%

assessed global education initiatives for impact

48%

provided professional learning on bringing global learning into the curriculum

40%

assessed student learning in global programs

48%

engaged in strategic planning process for global education

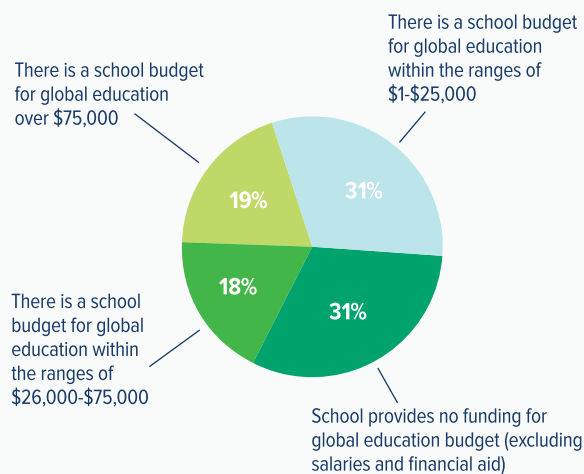
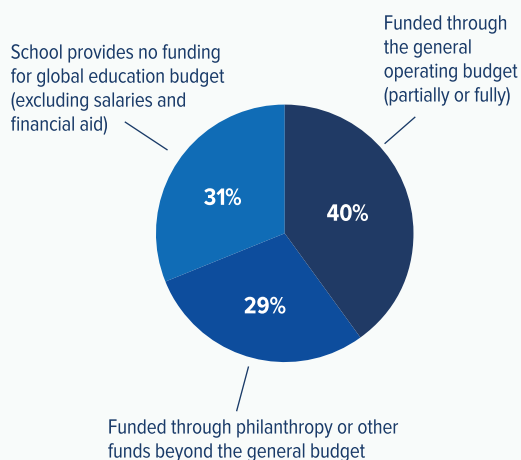
Financial Structures and Budgets

Only 29 schools (or 7% of schools) reporting have a specific global education endowment. This means that schools are deciding each year how to structure the finances and budgets of global education programs and departments. While 31% of schools report having no central budget for global education, a majority of schools are providing a general budget for global learning beyond any salaries and financial assistance. There was some variation on the topic of budgeting by geographic region, which is included below. While schools located in Canada report higher levels of having no general budget for global learning beyond salaries and financial assistance, this could be because they have significant staffing dedicated to global and experiential education which usually indicates a significant financial commitment of school resources.

When it comes to the budgets of travel programs, most schools continue to budget individual travel programs with their own individual budget. A majority of schools (64%) still rely on student families paying for the full cost of the travel program. However, 32% of the 350 reporting schools about their finances and budgets include the costs of at least one travel program for students into their tuition or otherwise substantially subsidize these costs, often through philanthropy. While the increasing costs related to travel (especially airfare and accommodation) has been well-covered in the media, the median price being charged by schools to families has not changed significantly in the past two years.

Funding for General Global Education Budget

n = 350 (excluding salaries and financial aid)



No General Budget

(beyond salaries and financial assistance)

School Location	Number of Schools Reporting	Percentage of Schools Reporting
Canada	6 out of 15	40%
NY/NJ	11 out of 48	23%
Mid-Atlantic US	12 out of 55	22%
Midwest US	11 out of 40	28%
New England	5 out of 59	8%
Outside North America	3 out of 18	17%
Southeast US	14 out of 57	25%
Western US	4 out of 62	6%

Challenges and Opportunities

Of the 385 schools reporting on the challenges they face in engaging their students with the world, competing school priorities continues to be the most common (57%) challenge reported. Data analysis showed some interesting differences between large schools and small schools regarding the challenges they face. For example, large schools report higher levels of increasing logistical requirements of overseeing travel programs and not having enough staffing, while small schools report higher levels of limited financial resources. Both small and large schools report strong levels of school leadership buy-in for global engagement (92% of large schools and 98% of small schools).

While the following data shows the most common challenges reported, many schools described additional challenges through an optional write-in section—the two most common in this area were the rising cost of travel programs and the challenge of operating travel programs in an era of political instability.

Top Three Most Common Challenges

n = 385

57%

reported competing school priorities

51%

reported a lack of financial resources

41%

reported not enough time

Travel Program Financial Structures

n = 350

64%

Students pay the full cost of the program

32%

Travel program costs included in tuition or substantially subsidized by the school

33%

Travel program leader compensation built into the travel program budget

n = 394

16%

The school meets all need for financial aid for travel programs

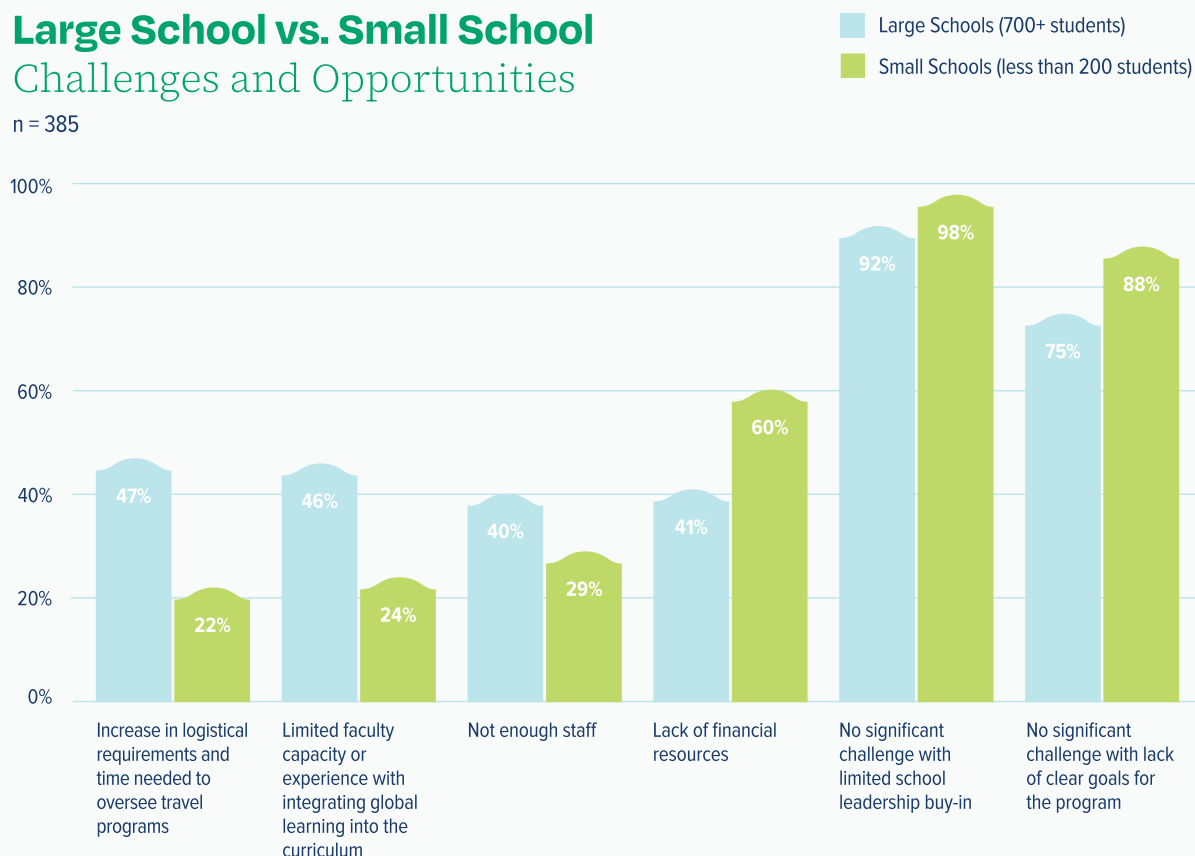
46%

The school provides a limited amount of financial aid for travel programs

The median average individual student cost of International programs in middle and high school (excluding flight) is in the range of \$3,000 to \$4,000 USD.

Large School vs. Small School Challenges and Opportunities

n = 385



Conclusion

Across more than 500 Institute for Global Learning and NAIS member schools, the data suggest that global engagement is both widespread and deeply mission-driven. Schools are increasingly embedding global learning across disciplines, with strong classroom offerings with robust experiential components such as travel and community partnerships. Trends toward greater faculty training, clearer policies, and expanded language enrichment point to growing professionalization of this work. For schools, the findings highlight several practical takeaways based on the practices of peer schools:

- **Align global learning explicitly with mission and strategy.**
- **Invest in faculty capacity and coordination.**
- **Attend intentionally to equity of access and participation.**
- **Balance enthusiasm for immersive experiences with sustainable staffing and financial models.**

These patterns indicate a field that is mature, resilient, and evolving, yet still ripe for thoughtful innovation, particularly in ways to ensure that all students can participate meaningfully in global programs.

This report and corresponding survey were written by Danny Schiff and Clare Sisisky from the Institute for Global Learning, and Ioana Wheeler and Amada Torres from NAIS.