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# SURVEYING EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS

The Headwinds and Tailwinds to Building New  
Educational Enterprises

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Michael Q. McShane, Ph.D.



## ABOUT EDCHOICE

EdChoice is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advancing full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society. EdChoice believes that families, not bureaucrats, are best equipped to make K-12 schooling decisions for their children. The organization works at the state level to educate diverse audiences, train advocates and engage policymakers on the benefits of high-quality school choice programs. EdChoice is the intellectual legacy of Milton and Rose D. Friedman, who founded the organization in 1996 as the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice.

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# INTRODUCTION

The term “entrepreneur” was popularized by the French economist Jean-Baptiste Say around the year 1800. An entrepreneur, to Say, “shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield.”<sup>1</sup> The world is full of resources. The ocean full of fish. The ground full of metal. The field full of arable soil. But it takes someone to harness those resources and put them to use. That person is the entrepreneur.

The world of education is full of resources as well. Teachers and their near-limitless capacity to devise ways to educate children are a resource. So too are families and their love for and support of their children. Government funding, levied for the purpose of creating a more educated populace and improving a community’s economy and democracy, is a resource. So too are private sources of funding, spent by families to try and improve their children’s lot in life.

Educational entrepreneurs compile and recompile these resources into ventures set on educating students. In the clearest example, they start new schools. New schools take resources that were less productive (that is, were less effective in advancing the goals of educating students) and try to make them more productive by better educating students. Educational entrepreneurs also try to build new tools for schools and teachers to use while teaching students. Many of these are in the technology space, with entrepreneurs creating new curricula, assessments, and learning materials that can leverage computers, tablets, or smartphones to deliver instruction. Others are creating learning management systems that schools and districts can use to keep schools organized. Other entrepreneurs work with teachers themselves, changing how we recruit or prepare teachers, or helping create professional development resources that existing teachers can use to improve their practices.

It has been more than two centuries since Say’s time, but something that he would be familiar with sent shockwaves through the educational entrepreneurship community in the last few years: A pandemic.

Entrepreneurship is the task of breaking out of established routines. These routines and norms develop as a result of both wisdom and folly and entrepreneurs look at areas where processes, organizations, and

institutions are not working as well as they could and propose alternatives. The problem is that there is a huge bias to the status quo. Entrenched interests become captive to maintaining the way things are because they benefit from the current organization. It can be hard to dislodge them.

What’s more, as we will see in the survey results shortly, entrepreneurs must be willing to shoulder risk and uncertainty, two powerful barriers to the resources and legitimacy they desperately need to attract students to serve. If that isn’t tough enough, the more innovative or different the venture is, the more entrepreneurs have to combat this liability of newness.

It was Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman who said, “Only a crisis - actual or perceived - produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around.” Crises have a way of shaking up the status quo and creating space for new thinking. When shocked out of their familiarity, people start to ask questions as to why things are the way that they are and brainstorm ways to make them better.

Enter entrepreneurs. They are the people who take those ideas that are lying around and attempt to create solutions to the problems blasted open by crises.

The pandemic was a crisis for American education. On the National Assessment for Educational Progress, the average fourth and eighth grade reading scores between the last pre-pandemic administration in 2019 and the first post-pandemic in 2022 dropped 3 scale score points, landing at the same place that they were back in 1992. Frustratingly, since 1992, American students have made progress in mathematics, but the pandemic represented a massive setback. From 2019 to 2022 the average fourth grade math score dropped 5 scale score points, falling to the lowest level since 2005. In eighth grade, the average math score dropped 8 points, the lowest they have been since 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Entrepreneurs responded to the pandemic with gusto. The Prenda microscool network started in 2013 but tripled in size during the pandemic.<sup>3</sup> Parents looking for smaller, more responsive education environments met a platform that was ready for them. “We saw exponential growth before the pandemic, and then we saw even more exponential growth during the pandemic,” Prenda founder Kelly Smith told a local radio station.<sup>4</sup>

The Art of Problem Solving, a content provider known originally for its high-level math courses, leaned into the pandemic, flooding their website with resources for parents and building out the functionality of their products. They realized that the disparities driven by the pandemic will also affect students at the top of the performance spectrum, who will suffer if they have to go back to classrooms that will teach as if the last two years didn't happen. Founder Richard Rusczyk said on the organization's blog, "We have to get more creative about how we are serving those students who were able to continue their education fruitfully throughout the pandemic."<sup>5</sup>

Labster bills itself as the "world's leading platform for virtual labs and science simulations."<sup>6</sup> Usually used by universities to give students more time in labs, which are expensive and even sometimes dangerous to operate, Labster created a free K-12 product for students during the pandemic. Students were able to access more than 100 simulations in 18 subject matter areas using only a basic laptop or Chromebook with an internet connection. According to reporting by *The 74* in the first two months alone, more than 30,000 K-12 teachers signed up.<sup>7</sup> With an additional infusion of \$47 million in venture capital in early 2022, Labster is continuing to build out its K-12 offerings.<sup>8</sup>

As we emerge from the pandemic, it is an opportune time to take stock of exactly where the world of educational entrepreneurship stands. What are the headwinds and what are the tailwinds? Where is entrepreneurship succeeding and where it is struggling?

To answer these questions, we partnered with Hanover Research to survey 59 educational entrepreneurs working today to find out about their experiences. The rest of this paper shares the results of that survey.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Hanover Research administered the survey, which was in the field from August 10 to December 4, 2022. To qualify for the survey, respondents must be an entrepreneur who has developed a project related to education.

Participants were recruited in four ways. First, the VELA Education Fund shared an anonymous link to

the survey to its more than 1,300 grantees, most, if not all, who would qualify as educational entrepreneurs. Second, Hanover gathered available contact information for educational entrepreneurs listed in 4.0 Schools' (an educational entrepreneurship incubator) database of entrepreneurial fellows. Third, Hanover searched social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter to identify individuals who describe themselves as educational entrepreneurs or edtech founders. They used the following search terms: "edtech founder," "edtech fellowships," and "ed entrepreneur." Fourth, Hanover gathered contact information for microscool, homeschool, private school, and charter school founders via school and district websites and blogs. The second, third, and fourth phases yielded a list of 151 contacts with valid email addresses who were then contacted by Hanover researchers.

We received 59 responses in total. Thirty-nine responded to the anonymous link, and 20 responded to Hanover's outreach emails.

## RESULTS

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the survey's respondents. Two things are worth noting at the outset. First, respondents to this survey differ from the demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs in America. According to research by the Kauffman Foundation,<sup>9</sup> 59.5 percent of Entrepreneurs are men, while only 40.5 percent are women. We saw far more women respond than men. Entrepreneurs tend to be evenly spread across age profiles, with 25.7 percent between the ages of 20 and 34, 23 percent between the ages of 35 and 44, 26.7 percent between the ages of 45 and 54, and 24.5 percent between the ages of 55 and 64. Given the stated work experience of our respondents, it appears that our sample skewed much older than the general entrepreneur profile. Also, while 55.6 percent of entrepreneurs identify as white, 13.1 percent identify as Black, and 6.7 percent identify as Asian (roughly in line with respondents to this survey), 21.7 percent identify as Latino, a much larger percentage than what we saw from our respondents. According to indeed.com, the average salary of an entrepreneur is \$93,803 per year, with a range of \$46,483 at the low end and \$189,293 at the high end.<sup>10</sup> Our sample features far more respondents from the low end than we see in the general entrepreneurial population.

**TABLE 1**

## Respondent Demographics and Venture Types

<b>What is the Nature of Your Entrepreneurial Project?</b>	<b>n=58</b>	
Establishing a new learning model (e.g., private school, microschool, hybrid homeschool)	41	69%
Creating educational tools or curriculum (e.g., online teaching resources and tools)	8	14%
Recruiting talent to either start a new school or create a new educational tool	1	2%
Other	9	15%
<b>What is the highest level of education that you have completed?</b>	<b>n=58</b>	
Less than high school	0	0%
High school	0	0%
Some college	2	3%
Associate's degree	2	3%
Bachelor's degree	20	34%
Master's degree	22	38%
Professional degree	4	7%
Doctorate degree	8	14%
<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>n=58</b>	
1–3 years	3	5%
4–6 years	2	3%
7–10 years	6	10%
11–14 years	12	21%
15–20 years	11	19%
20 + years	24	41%
<b>In what areas did you earn your degree?</b>	<b>n=56</b>	
Education and Child Development	31	55%
Business	9	16%
STEM	9	16%
Humanities (e.g., English, History, etc.)	9	16%
Social Science	9	16%
Other	14	25%
Prefer not to respond	0	0%
<b>With which of the following gender identities do you most identify?</b>	<b>n=58</b>	
Female	44	76%
Male	8	14%
Non-binary/Gender non-conforming	0	0%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	0	0%
Prefer not to respond	6	10%
<b>With which of the following categories do you identify? Please select all that apply.</b>	<b>n=58</b>	
White	34	59%
Black or African-American	9	16%
Asian	3	5%
Hispanic or Latin(o/a/x)	2	3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%
Middle Eastern or North African	0	0%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	3	5%
Prefer not to respond	9	16%
<b>Annual Income</b>	<b>n=58</b>	
Under \$25,000	9	16%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	4	7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	9	16%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	8	14%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8	14%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3	5%
\$200,000 or more	0	0%
Not sure	1	2%
Prefer not to respond	16	28%

What is the nature of the ventures that our respondents have created? Figure one breaks down the categories. We offered four potential areas for entrepreneurs to select when describing their ventures. The first is probably the most straightforward—they are starting a new school or learning model like a microschool or hybrid homeschool. The second wasn't much more complicated—they are building some kind of educational tool, like curriculum or an online resource. The third group tried to capture entrepreneurs who are shaping the talent pipeline into education. Are they sourcing teachers and matching them to families looking to start a microschool or learning pod? Are they preparing them to teach in an online environment? The last and final group was a catchall for everyone else.

The largest proportion of respondents are in the process of or have established new schools or new learning models. The next most popular was the “other” category, followed by creating new educational tools or curricula, and only one respondent said that they were finding new ways to get talent into education.

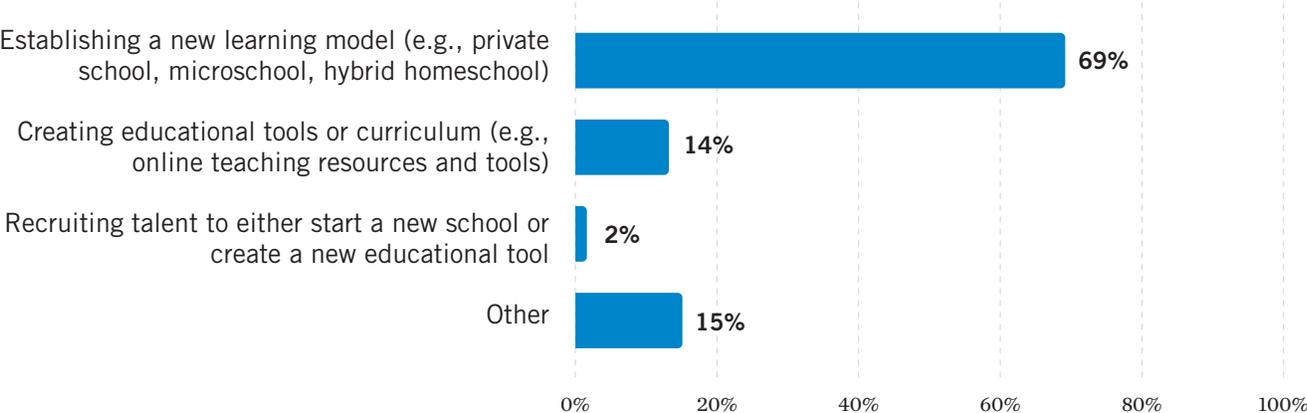
Where are these ventures getting their funding? Figure 2 and Table 2 dive into funding sources. Respondents were allowed to selected multiple funding sources from a prepopulated list, and the most popular, by

far, was personal funds, with more than two-thirds of entrepreneurs selecting it. Given that many of the entrepreneurs were starting new schools, it is perhaps not surprising that the next most popular funding source was private tuition. There was a cluster of responses around the one-third mark including funds from friends and family, philanthropic funding, accelerator support, and earned revenue. (Accelerators are programs that entrepreneurs enter to hone and improve their ventures, usually with a mix of mentorship and workshopping of their ideas.)

Funding sources varied based on respondent income. Lower-income respondents (those earning less than \$50,000 per year) were more likely to say that they received funds from friends and family, from philanthropies, and from accelerators than higher income respondents. They were also more likely to get grassroots or community funding as well as crowdfunding. Higher-income respondents (those earning more than \$100,000 per year) were more likely to say that they received funding from partnerships with corporations, corporate sponsorships, venture capital firms, and business loans. (One caution, make note of the small n size of the groups when interpreting the results, even one or two respondents in one direction or the other could change the results.)

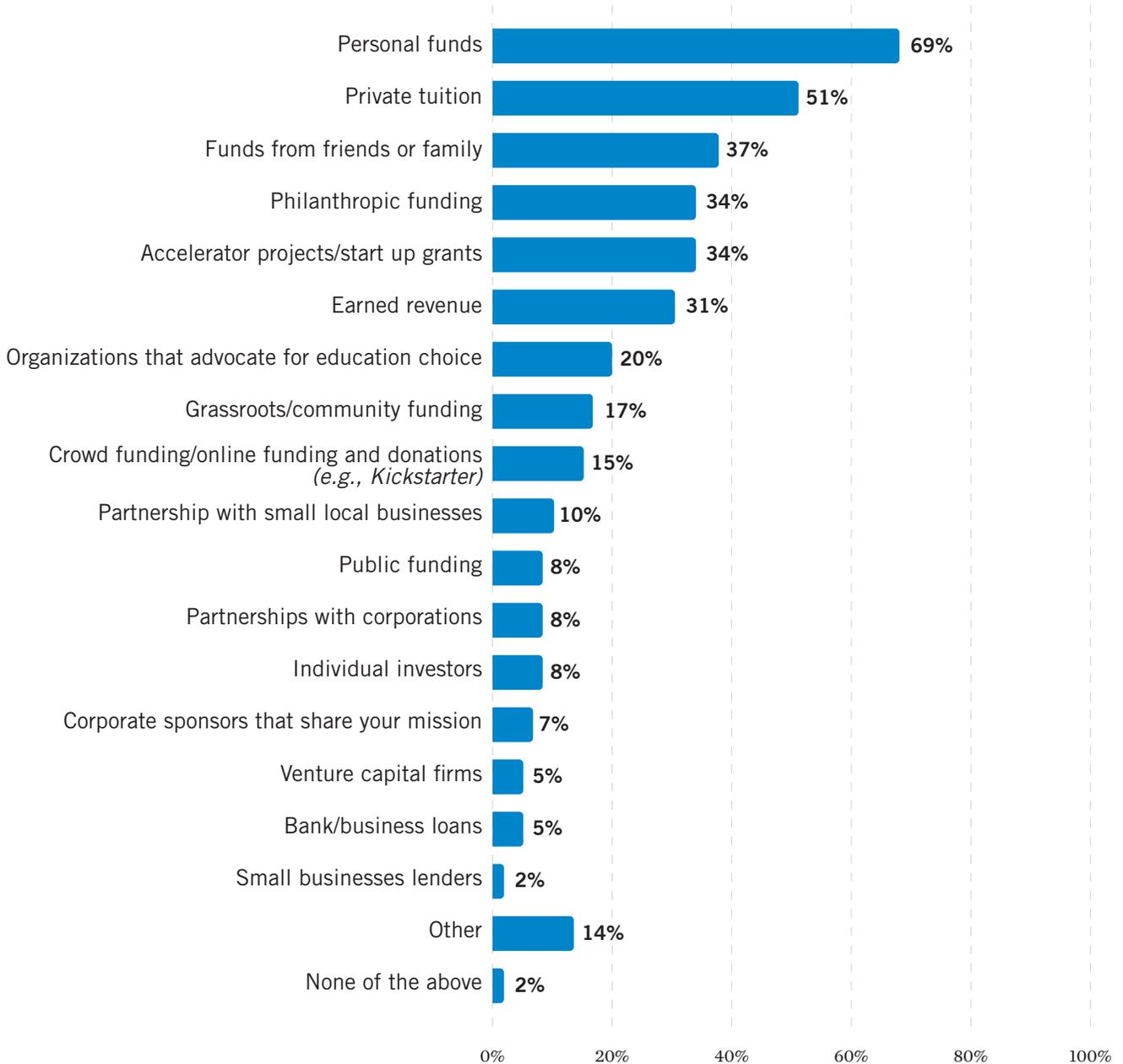
**FIGURE 1** Projects by Type

*What is the nature of your entrepreneurial project?*



**FIGURE 2****Funding Sources**

*What types of funding do you access for your project? Please select all that apply. (n=59)*



Given the different tax, regulatory, and educational environments across the country, it was worth asking why entrepreneurs chose to locate their projects where they did. Do entrepreneurs take a location's regulatory environment into account? Does a state making public funds for educational options available attract more entrepreneurs? Figure 3 presents the

answers to those questions. By far, the top reason that ventures locate where they do is because that is where their team members live. A not-so-close second reason is the location of target consumers. Some ventures did take into account the regulatory environment or the availability of public funds, but those appear to be far down the priority list.

**TABLE 2**

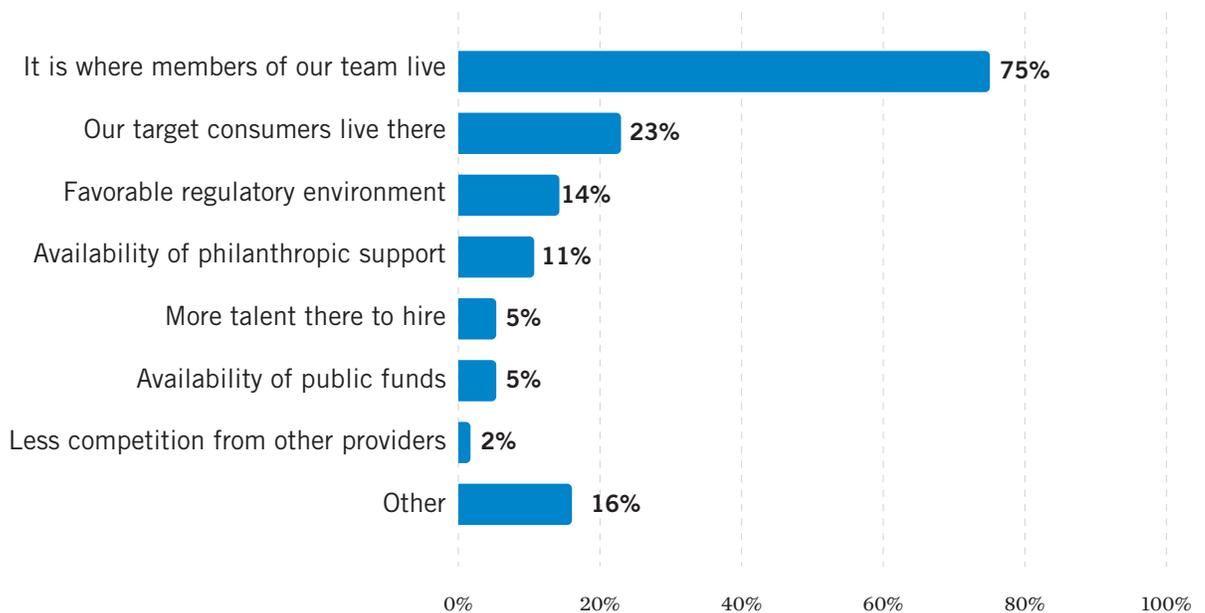
Projects and Funding by Income

	Lower Income Less than \$50,000	Middle Income \$50,001 to \$99,999	Higher Income More than \$100,000	No Response
<b>What is the nature of your entrepreneurial Project?</b>				
Establishing a new learning model (e.g., private school, microschool, hybrid homeschool)	77%	65%	<b>82%</b>	59%
Creating educational tools or curriculum (e.g., online teaching resources and tools)	0%	18%	<b>0%</b>	29%
Recruiting talent to either start a new school or create a new educational tool	0%	6%	<b>0%</b>	0%
Other	23%	12%	<b>18%</b>	12%
<b>What types of funding do you access for your project? Please select all that apply.</b>				
Personal funds	69%	59%	<b>64%</b>	76%
Private tuition	54%	47%	<b>45%</b>	53%
Funds from friends or family	69%	35%	<b>45%</b>	6%
Philanthropic funding	62%	47%	<b>18%</b>	12%
Accelerator projects/start-up grants	54%	29%	<b>9%</b>	41%
Earned revenue	31%	35%	<b>27%</b>	24%
Organizations that advocate for education choice	23%	24%	<b>27%</b>	12%
Grassroots/community funding	31%	6%	<b>18%</b>	12%
Crowd funding/online funding and donations (e.g., Kickstarter)	31%	18%	<b>9%</b>	0%
Partnerships with small local businesses	15%	12%	<b>18%</b>	0%
Individual investors	0%	18%	<b>9%</b>	6%
Public funding	15%	12%	<b>0%</b>	6%
Partnerships with corporations	0%	12%	<b>18%</b>	0%
Corporate sponsors that share your mission	8%	6%	<b>18%</b>	0%
Venture capital firms	0%	6%	<b>9%</b>	6%
Bank/business loans	0%	6%	<b>9%</b>	0%
Small businesses lenders	0%	0%	<b>0%</b>	0%
Other	8%	6%	<b>18%</b>	24%
None of the Above	0%	6%	<b>0%</b>	0%
	<b>n=13</b>	<b>n=17</b>	<b>n=17</b>	<b>n=17</b>

**FIGURE 3**

Project Location

*Why did you chose the state selected above to operate in? Please select all that apply. (N=56)*



What barriers do entrepreneurs face? We dove deep into the question, asking about barriers from a couple of different angles. Figure 4 presents the general findings. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the role that personal funds play in launching ventures and the economic profile of respondents to the survey, the most popular response was “lack of funding and resources.” Almost three in four respondents said that this was a barrier that they faced. There were other concerns, like public

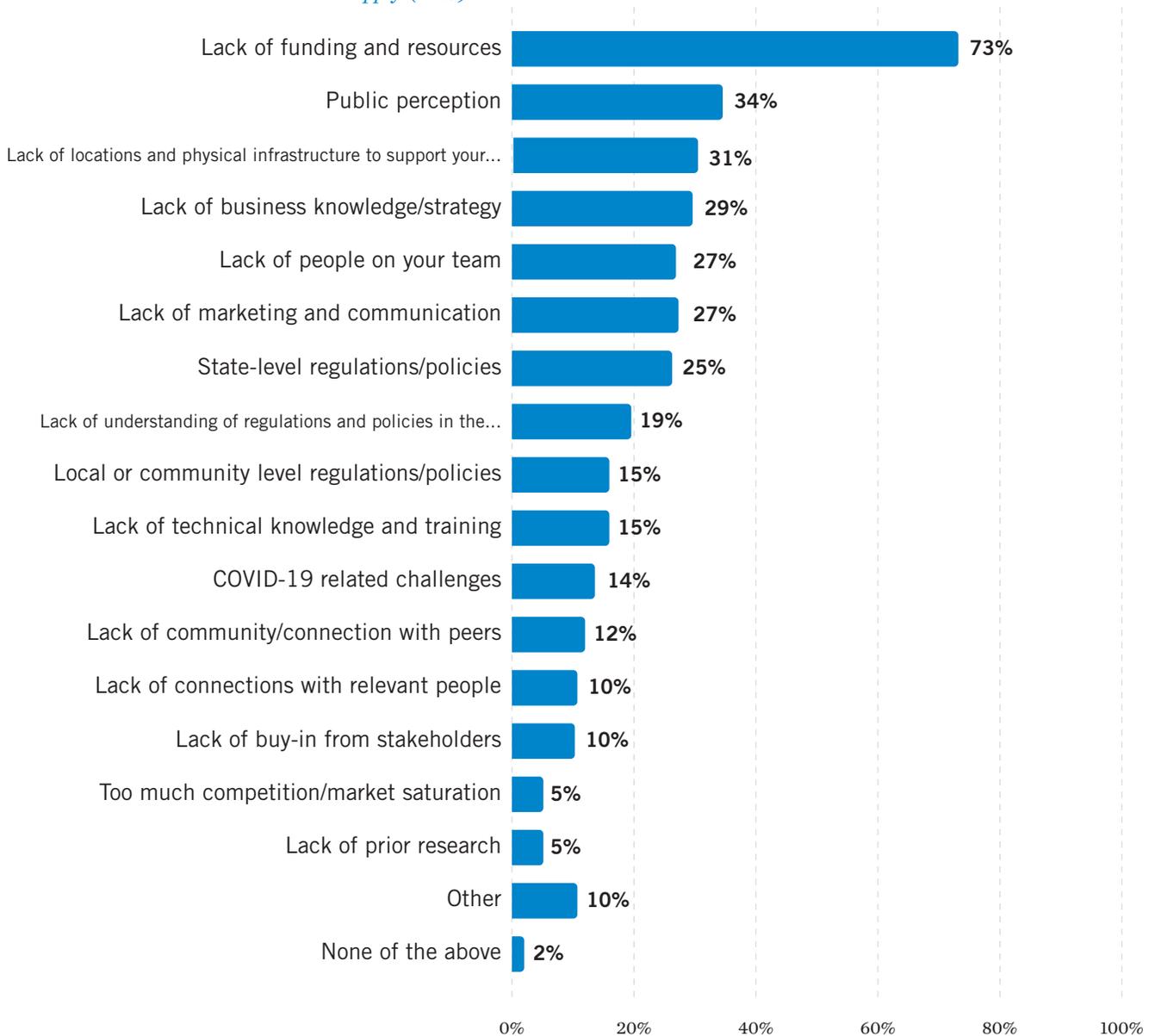
perception of their venture, lack of infrastructure, lack of business knowledge, team members, marketing, and regulations, but they followed far behind concerns about funding and resources.

To go deeper, Figure 5 presents an intensity question, where we followed up with respondents who selected a particular barrier and asked how much of an issue that particular barrier was. For those who said that

**FIGURE 4**

Barriers

*Which of the following [do you/did you] consider to be barriers in your entrepreneurial career  
Please select all that apply. (n=59)*



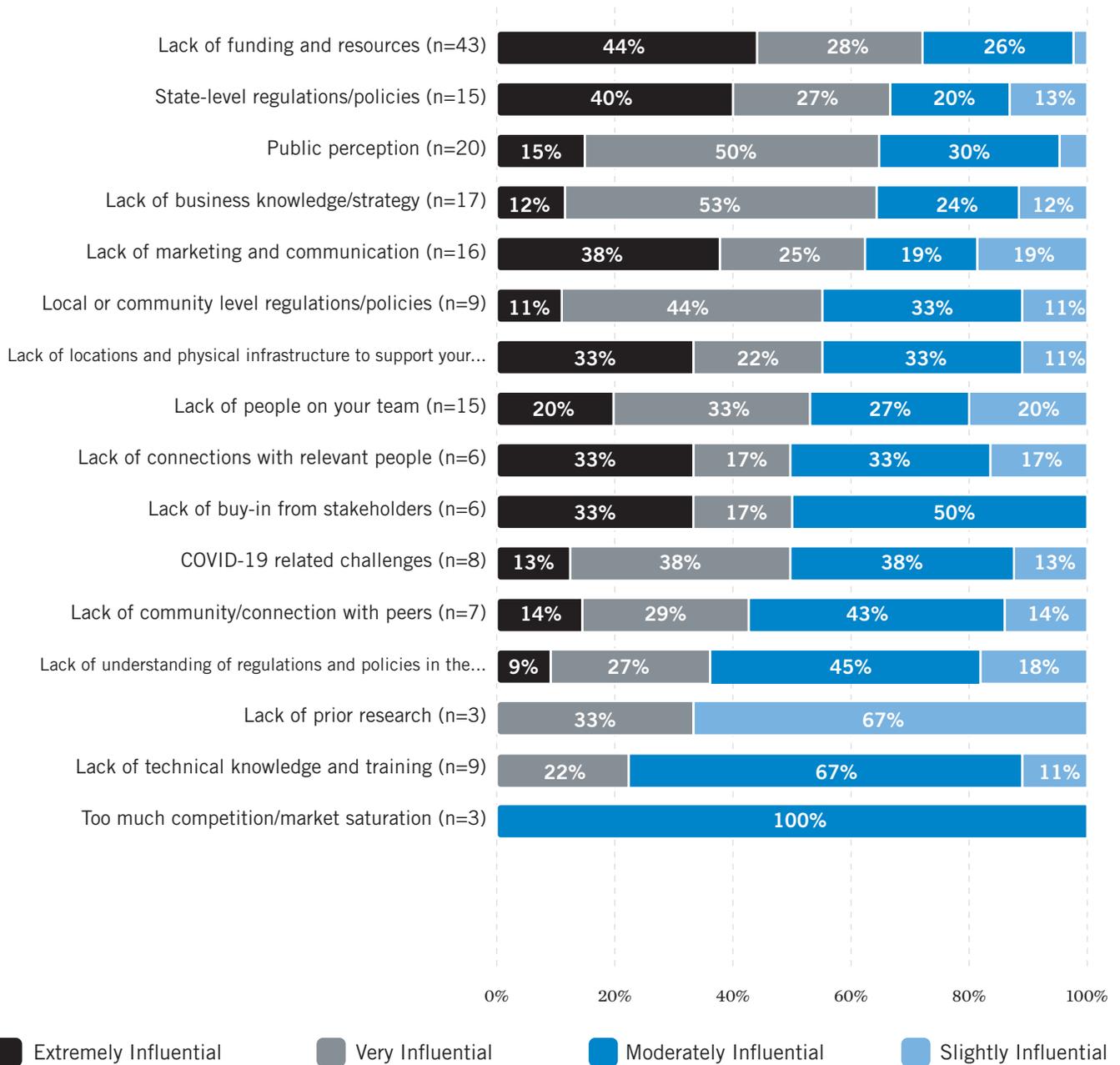
funding was a barrier, 44 percent said that it was “extremely” influential, and 28 percent said that it was “very” influential. Interestingly, a smaller percentage of respondents selected state-level regulations or policies as a barrier. For those who selected it, 67 percent said that they were either “very” or “extremely” influential.

Perhaps barriers vary by venture type. Maybe if you are building a school, there are different hurdles to clear than if you are building a tool to use in the classroom. Before presenting the results, it is worth reiterating that the samples get quite small when we cut the data into the four potential answers to venture type (new school or learning environment, educational tools, new

**FIGURE 5**

Intensity of Barriers

*How would you describe how influential each of these barriers are in the success of your project?*



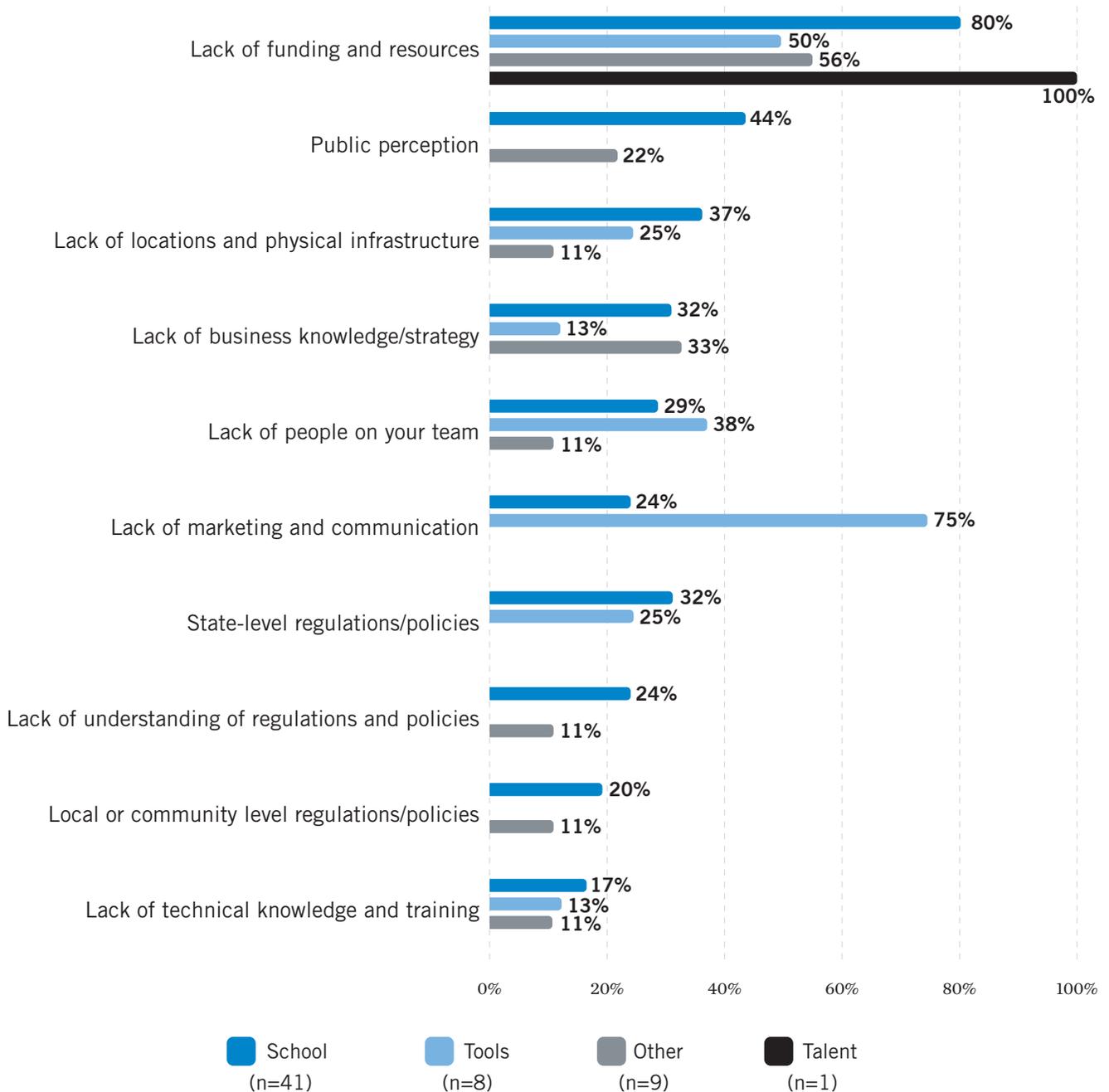
talent pipelines, or “other”). Differences might be due to genuine differences between these groups. They might also simply be idiosyncratic differences between the small numbers of respondents that don’t have enough other data points to even them out. In short, interpret with caution.

Some of the variation is predictable, with those starting schools more concerned about a lack of physical infrastructure than others. Some were less predictable, like those building tools struggling with marketing and communication. But across most categories there was not substantial difference between different venture types.

**FIGURE 6**

Barriers by Venture Type

*Which of the following [do you/did you] consider to be barriers in your entrepreneurial career? Please select all that apply.*



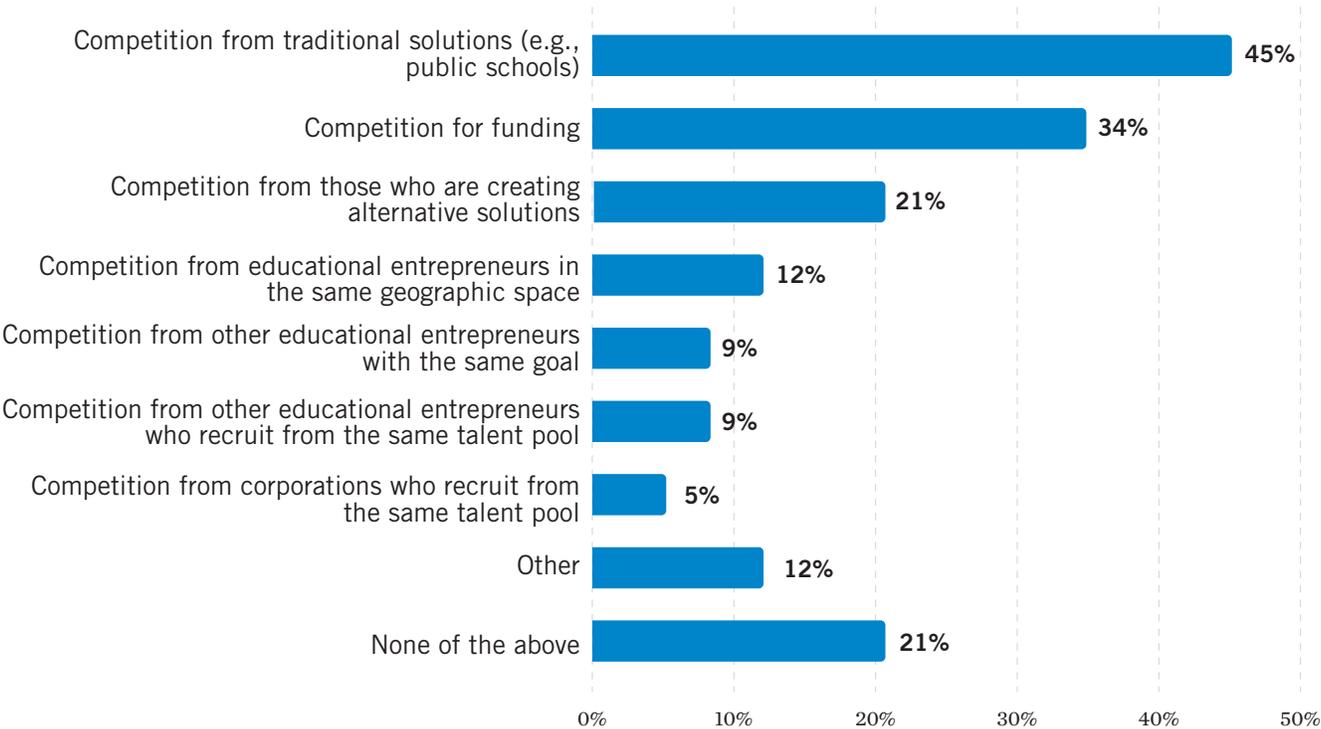
Competition is another barrier. Figure 7 highlights the types of competition that entrepreneurs face. Entrepreneurs see competition from traditional solutions like existing public and private schools, but they also face competition for funding, from other entrepreneurs in the same region, pursuing the same goals, or recruiting from the same talent pool.

But just how much of a concern is that competition? According to the responses displayed in Figure 8, not all that much. Sixty percent of respondents said that they were “not at all concerned” with the competition in their space. Only 4 percent said that they were “very” concerned, and none said that they were “extremely” concerned.

**FIGURE 7**

Competition by Type

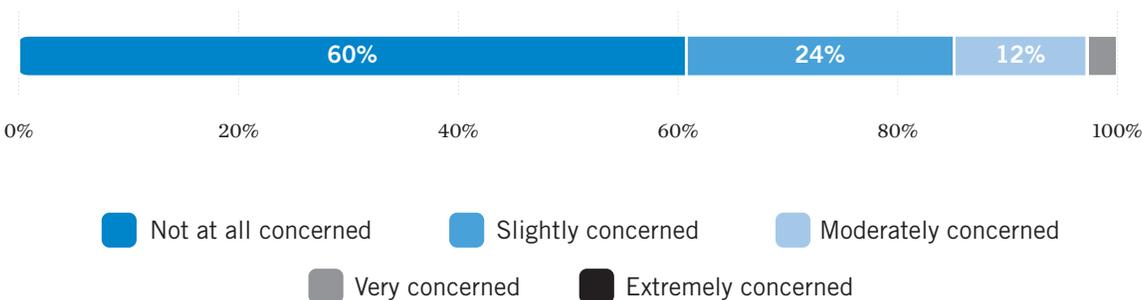
*What types of competition have impacted your success? Please select all that apply. (n=58)*



**FIGURE 8**

Concerns about Competition

*How concerned are you about competition in your entrepreneurial sapce? (n=58)*



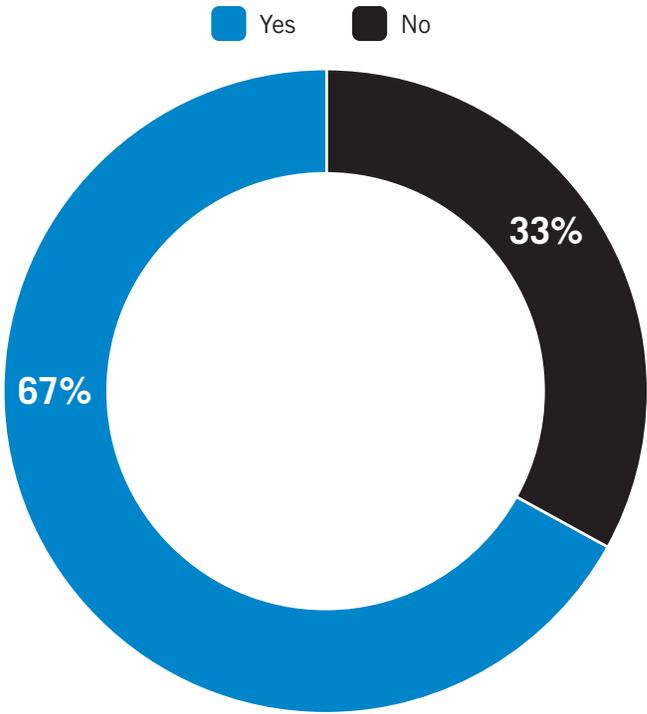
One final barrier that we wanted to investigate was the role of regulation. Figure 9 shows the proportion of respondents that said that they had to interact with regulations and Figure 10 shows what kinds of regulations they have to comply with.

Two-thirds of respondents said that they had to deal with regulations in some way. The most common were safety, fire, and health regulations, followed by school registration regulations. Land use, teacher licensing, and school choice regulations were the next three most popular.

While there were many types of regulations mentioned, it is worth glancing back to Figures 4 and 5 to see how many entrepreneurs identified these as barriers and how intense of a barrier they see them. To not leave you, dear reader, in suspense, around a quarter of entrepreneurs highlighted regulations as barriers, but of those respondents, more than two-thirds said that they were substantial impediments.

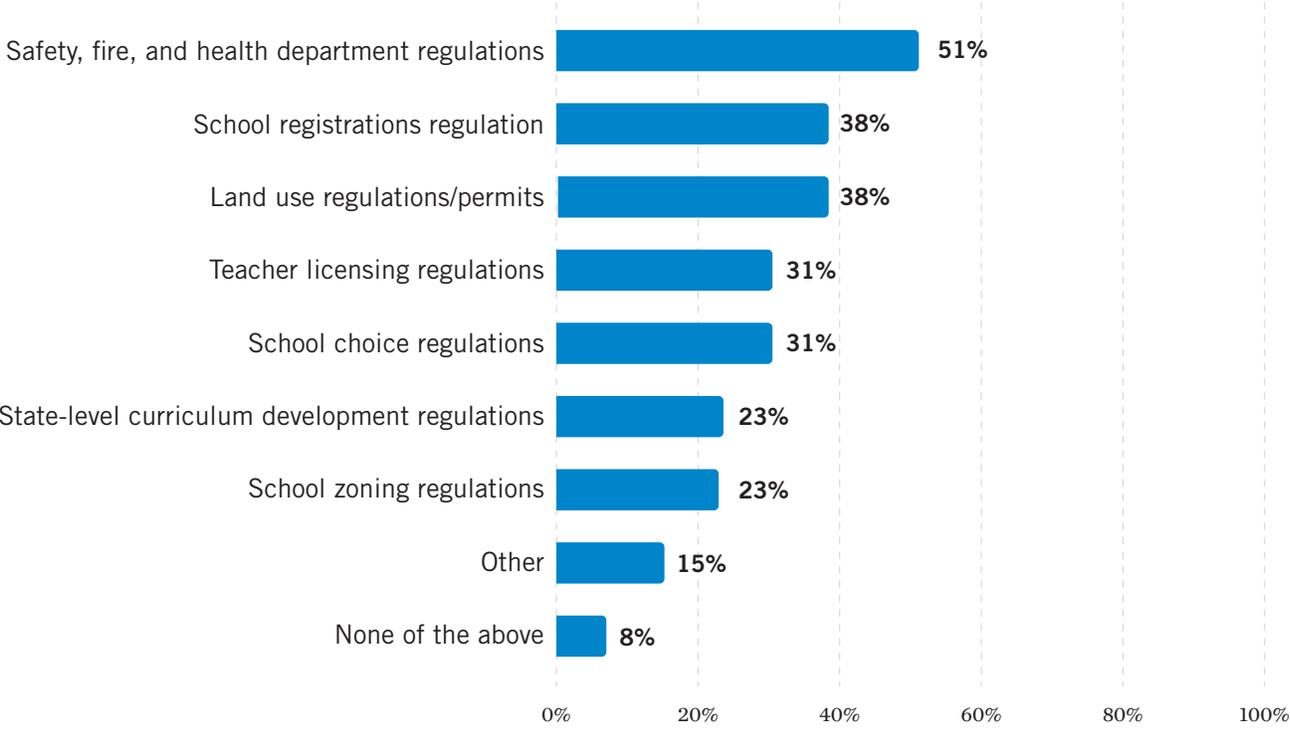
**FIGURE 9** Prevalance of Regulations

*Have you navigated regulations or policy constraints in the execution of your entrepreneurial project? (n=58)*



**FIGURE 10** Types of Regulations

*Which of the following regulations or policy constraints have you navigated? Please select all that apply. (n=39)*



## DISCUSSION

Different observers might take different things away from the data presented thus far. Those in the philanthropy space who are looking to support educational entrepreneurs might see need for more outreach or simply more need for their funding and technical assistance. Those in the policy space might look at the regulatory environment of their state and ask whether or not it is hospitable to educational entrepreneurs. And potential educational entrepreneurs might look to the experiences of those that have gone before them and realized that they too can get into the game (or maybe that they don't want to!).

Three largescale takeaways are worth noting. First, it is hard to miss the central role that money plays in these entrepreneurs' stories. Second, we need to think about the barriers that educational entrepreneurs face, but not just the what or where of those barriers, but also the when. Third and finally, we need to think about the sample of this survey, both for good and for ill.

### Money Makes the World Go 'Round

One of the key lessons of this survey is the central role that funding plays for educational entrepreneurs. This should not surprise us. Every venture needs capital to get off the ground. As it matures and grows, it needs money for staff, facilities, technology, legal consultation, and much more. We knew this before the survey was put into the field.

What is interesting about this survey is the information about the sources and challenges of funding. It was surprising to see that the number one response when describing the sources of funding for these ventures was personal funds. Private tuition in second place made sense, as many of these ventures are schools or innovative learning environments. But friends and families being the third most popular was unexpected.

When broken down by the income of the entrepreneurs, even more interesting results emerged. While 69 percent of lower-income entrepreneurs said that they had received funds from friends and families, only 35 percent of middle-income entrepreneurs said so, and only 18 percent of high-income entrepreneurs said so. Given that higher-income people tend to have other high-income friends, it would stand to reason that they might be more prone to tapping into those social networks for financial support for their ventures. While that certainly does occur, it appears to occur even more often with lower-income entrepreneurs. Lower-income entrepreneurs were also more likely to access philanthropic funding, and participate in accelerators. The difference between the lowest- and highest-income entrepreneurs on these two responses is stark. Only 18 percent of high-income entrepreneurs received philanthropic support while 62 percent of low-income entrepreneurs did. Only 9 percent of high-income entrepreneurs received funding from accelerators, while 54 percent of low-income entrepreneurs did. Insofar as both of these groups are trying to reach out more to lower-income entrepreneurs, this survey offers some tentative evidence for their success.

Higher-income entrepreneurs differed in their sources of funding in interesting ways as well. They were much more likely to partner with corporations (18% of high-income entrepreneurs said that they had done so while zero low-income entrepreneurs did). They were also more likely to have corporate sponsors (18% to 8%) and to avail themselves of bank or business loans, with 9 percent of higher-income entrepreneurs leverage these, while zero low-income entrepreneurs did.

### Barriers and the Life Cycle

Perhaps one of the more interesting results of this survey was in what didn't bother educational entrepreneurs as opposed to what did. When asked about competition, 60 percent of respondents said that they were not concerned about competition at all. Not one entrepreneur said that they were extremely concerned about it and only 4

percent were very concerned. When asked about barriers, only a quarter of respondents considered regulations to be a barrier at the state level, and only 15 percent said regulations were a barrier at the local level. And this isn't because they haven't run into regulations, fully two-thirds of respondents said that they have. They simply haven't been barriers.

Pair this with the fact that the primary reason that ventures are locating where they are is because that is where their team members are, not for favorable regulatory, tax, or even public policy conditions, and we can start to see where barriers stack up in the Maslow's Hierarchy of Educational Entrepreneurship Needs. Funding is most important and people are most important, and entrepreneurs have to secure those first before they start thinking about regulations and public policy. It is worth remembering for those looking to support entrepreneurial ventures in education that most entrepreneurial action is not driven by opportunities detected via some elaborate scanning process, but from local and practical observations. People see problems in their city or neighborhood and want to solve them. This is something we need to discuss with rigor and focus when seeking to stimulate more entrepreneurial efforts at the policy or funder-levels.

There is one wrinkle, though. When looking at measures of intensity, it is clear that for some entrepreneurs, the regulatory and public policy situation matters a great deal. While it is true that only a quarter of respondents said that state-level regulations were a barrier, of those respondents, 40 percent said that they were "extremely influential" to their success, and another 27 percent said that they were "very influential." While only 11 percent of those who had identified local regulations as a barrier said that they were "extremely influential," a full 44 percent said that they were "very influential." That is more than half of those who see local regulations as a barrier seeing them as a large one.

Perhaps this is due to the kinds of ventures that are operating, but it is also important to think about where ventures are in their life cycle. Some ventures in this sample are in their early phases and might not be as concerned with regulatory issues, they are too busy trying to get the plane off of the ground. Once they are more established, and potentially want to grow, that is when those issues come into play. So it might be that regulations will begin to matter more in the future for these ventures. Time will tell.

## The Sample

We do need to include one note of caution. This survey had a low response rate and produced a non-representative sample of respondents. There are lots of perfectly reasonable reasons why busy entrepreneurs might not want to take the time to answer a survey and worries that those who did answer might have an axe to grind or a perspective that does not represent the field as a whole. That makes generalizing findings from the survey quite challenging. No one should assume that the experiences of the entrepreneurs that responded to this survey are representative of educational entrepreneurs writ large.

And, of course it must be noted that this a survey of existing entrepreneurs, that is, people who have looked at the barriers to entry and decided to enter anyway. That is not the whole universe of potential entrepreneurs. There are likely people who looked at the field and decided not to enter or took their talents elsewhere because of barriers they perceived. They are not captured in the sample of this survey, and it is always important to keep that in mind.

That said, this survey did produce an interesting sample of respondents. Women were more likely to respond. Older entrepreneurs were more likely to respond. Lower income respondents were more likely to respond. This survey does tell us interesting things about their experiences. There has been a concerted effort to try and diversify

the pool of entrepreneurs in America, both inside and outside of education. This survey could help with those efforts. Rather than looking at the barriers and challenges of the typical educational entrepreneur, this survey tells the story of many non-traditional entrepreneurs and the hurdles that they face.

Again, the hurdles of the entrepreneurs in this sample should not be generalized to educational entrepreneurs as a whole, but they can help us understand this subset of entrepreneurs. If we want to have more women become educational entrepreneurs and more low-income people to get into educational entrepreneurship, there are lessons to learn here.

## CONCLUSION

The pandemic was an inflection point for educational entrepreneurs. Families and educators were asked, many for the first time, to rethink the fundamental assumptions about education. Where should education take place? When should it take place? Who should guide it? To what end? Clearly, as we return to a post-pandemic normal, many families and educators answer these questions the same way they did before the pandemic. They want schools to go back to the way that they were.

But for many families and educators, the old, pre-pandemic ways are not fit for purpose. Families want a different curriculum. They want a school of a different size. They want flexibility with schedules and calendars. They want more technology. They want less technology. They want students to learn cutting-edge ideas. They want students to study the classics. Different families are looking for different things—the key word being different.

The same is true for educators. It is hard to open an education periodical without being bombarded with a winter of discontent on the part of teachers and administrators. They too are frustrated by schools and how they operate and what they teach. Many, many teachers want to do something

different. Without giving them pathways within the education system to experiment and innovate, we risk losing them to other fields.

Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship can help solve both of these groups' problems. For families, it can help create the types of environments in which they want their children educated, aligned to their priorities and values and in tune with the rhythms of their life. For educators, it can provide the space to create the types of schools that they are excited to go and teach in every day. For both groups it can create tools and attract new talent that can make schools and other learning environments work better.

Those trying to improve the ecosystem of entrepreneurs in education are doing good and important work. The results from this survey can help improve those efforts by highlighting the challenges that entrepreneurs face (and those issues that might be interesting to people outside of the world of entrepreneurship, but don't affect entrepreneurs as much as they might think). If we want to see more entrepreneurial solutions emerge from lower-income communities, the results of this survey can help us understand how to do that. If we want to see more women entrepreneurs, this survey can help as well.

I'll leave you with some wisdom from the Simpsons, parodying an oft-mistranslated bit of Mandarin. Lisa says to Homer, "Look on the bright side, Dad. Did you know that the Chinese use the same word for 'crisis' as they do for 'opportunity'?" To which Homer responds, "Yes. 'Crisitunity!' You're right." Perhaps the pandemic was the crisitunity needed to infuse more life in the nation's education system. If due to lack of support or a misunderstanding of the needs of entrepreneurs, better solutions don't materialize D'oh-n't say you weren't informed.

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