

Before- and After-School Programming Offered by School Districts in Connecticut

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Issue

This report discusses the results of a survey of the current landscape of before- and after-school activities throughout Connecticut's school districts.

Summary

The Office of Legislative Research conducted an anonymous survey of superintendents, in cooperation with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS). 53 superintendents voluntarily completed the survey.

The survey consisted of mostly multiple choice questions, along with a few optional open-ended questions, regarding before- and after-school activities offered throughout each respondent's district. Survey topics centered around the availability of extracurriculars, including detailed questions about the types and number of extracurriculars offered. For example, regarding the number of student clubs a district offers, the survey choices were: (1) 0-10, (2) 11-20, (3) 21-30, (4) 31 or more, and (5) not sure. Other associated questions involved the district's characteristics, before/after-care, fees, transportation, program participation, and perceived challenges.

This report provides a general overview of the survey results and highlights some specific examples.

General Overview

Demographic Information

Out of the 53 responding superintendents, 16 were from alliance districts. Furthermore, 21 identified their district as rural, 21 suburban, and 11 urban.

Extracurriculars

The majority of respondents, 89%, answered that they offer after-school district-sponsored clubs at the middle and high school levels within their district. Regarding the number of clubs offered, the most common range chosen was between 11-20 (28% of respondents), followed by 21-30 (26%). The most common range for how many students participate in at least one club was 25-50% (46% of respondents), followed by 50-75 (24%).

The survey asked respondents if they charge students a fee to participate in any of the after-school clubs offered, 83% responded that they do not charge and 17% answered that they charge for at least one of their offered clubs.

Our last set of questions involving extracurriculars was about art-based activities. Almost all respondents that offer after-school extracurriculars offer at least one that is art-based. The survey asked respondents to go into more detail about what type of art-based extracurriculars they offer, dividing the options into three categories: visual arts (painting, drawing, etc.), musical arts (band, orchestra, choir, etc.), and performing arts (theater, dance, etc.). The most offered categories were a tie between musical arts and performing arts (92%), with visual arts somewhat behind (63%).

Before and After Care

Slightly more than half of respondents answered that they offer before and/or after care at the elementary and middle school levels.

The survey asked respondents if they charge guardians a fee to enroll their children into before and/or after care: 30% answered yes, 52% answered no, and 18% answered that it depends on the guardian's income. The most common price range chosen by districts that offer either before or after care was more than \$100 but less than \$200 per month, followed by less than \$100 per month. The most common price range for districts that offer both before and after-care was more than \$200 but less than \$300 per month, followed by a tie between less than \$200 and more than \$200 but less than \$400.

Our final question regarding before and after care centered around the percentage of the student body participating in these programs; the most common range chosen by respondents was 0-25% (chosen by 78% of the districts that offer these programs).

Transportation

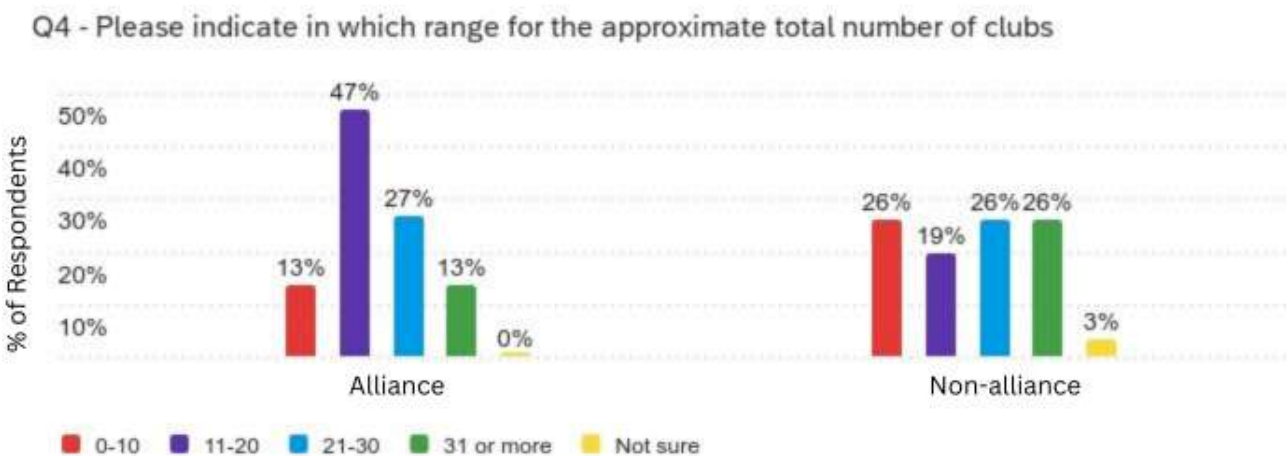
The survey also asked whether there is district-sponsored transportation available for students who participate in an activity or care program before or after the school day. The most common answer was that there is no transportation available, with 47% of respondents choosing this answer, followed by 36% answering yes and 17% answering that it depends. For those that answered, “it depends,” they were given an optional follow-up question to elaborate further. Those that chose to elaborate cited different reasons, including transportation being offered only on certain days as well as only for certain grades and/or schools.

District Comparisons

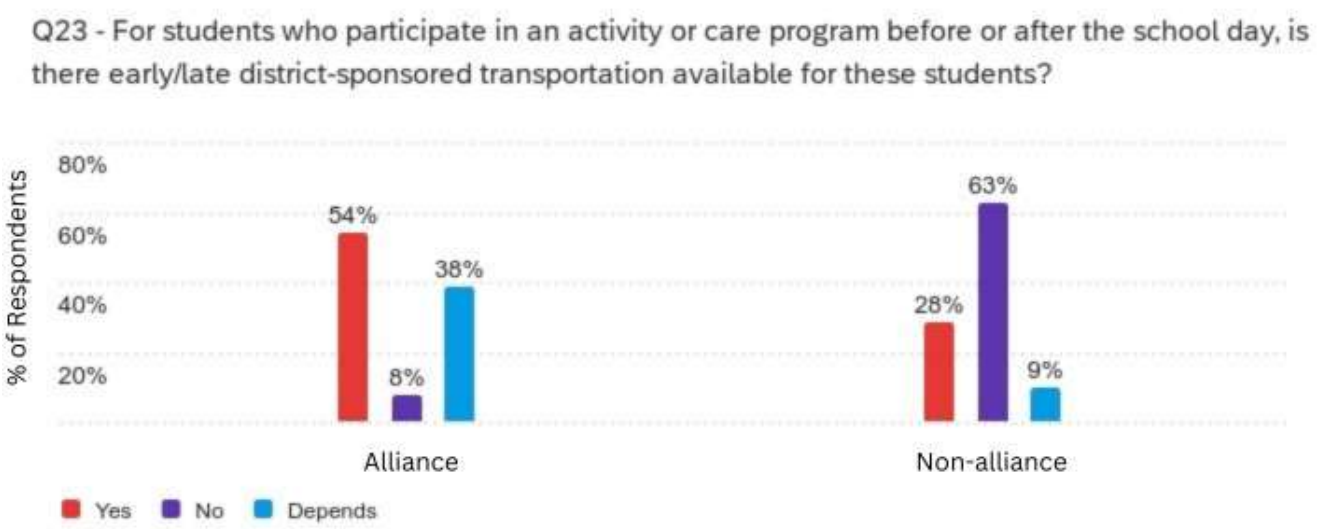
Additionally, we grouped survey data by certain demographic characteristics and compared answers between the groups. Below, we highlight some of the significant findings; specifically, information regarding the number of clubs offered and transportation availability.

Alliance vs. Non-Alliance Comparison

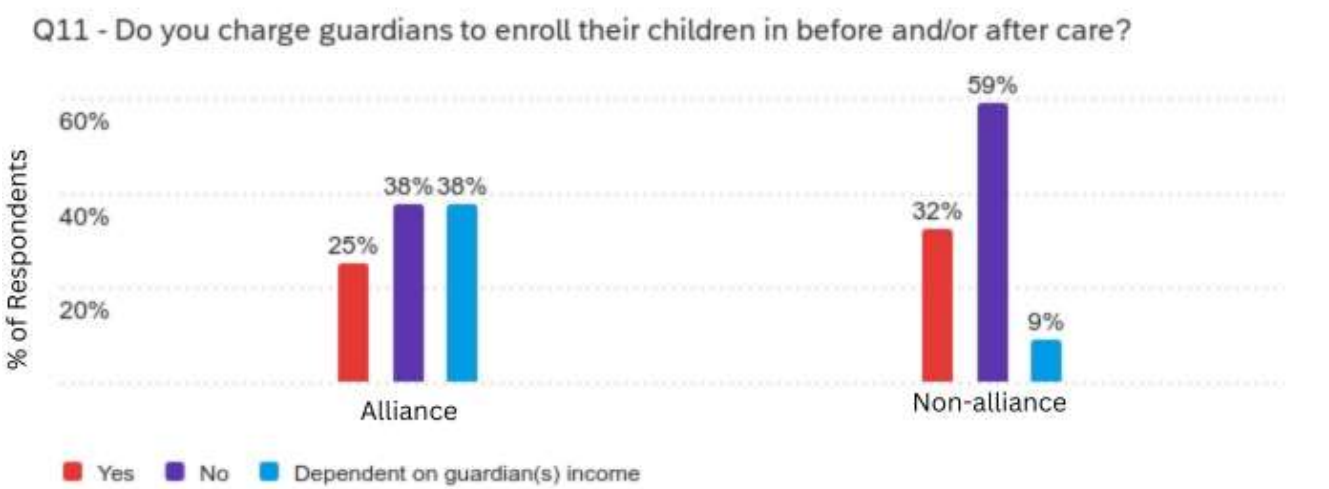
The graph below compares the number of clubs that are offered at alliance districts vs. non-alliance districts. ([Alliance districts](#) are low-performing school districts based on certain metrics.) For alliance districts, 40% offer at least 21 clubs, while for non-alliance districts 52% offer at least 21 clubs (i.e., selected the 21-30 or 31 or more ranges in the survey).



The next graph compares alliance districts to non-alliance districts on whether they provide early/late transportation for students who participate in an activity or care program before or after the school day. A majority of respondents from alliance districts answered that they do provide this type of transportation, while a majority of respondents from non-alliance districts answered that they do not.

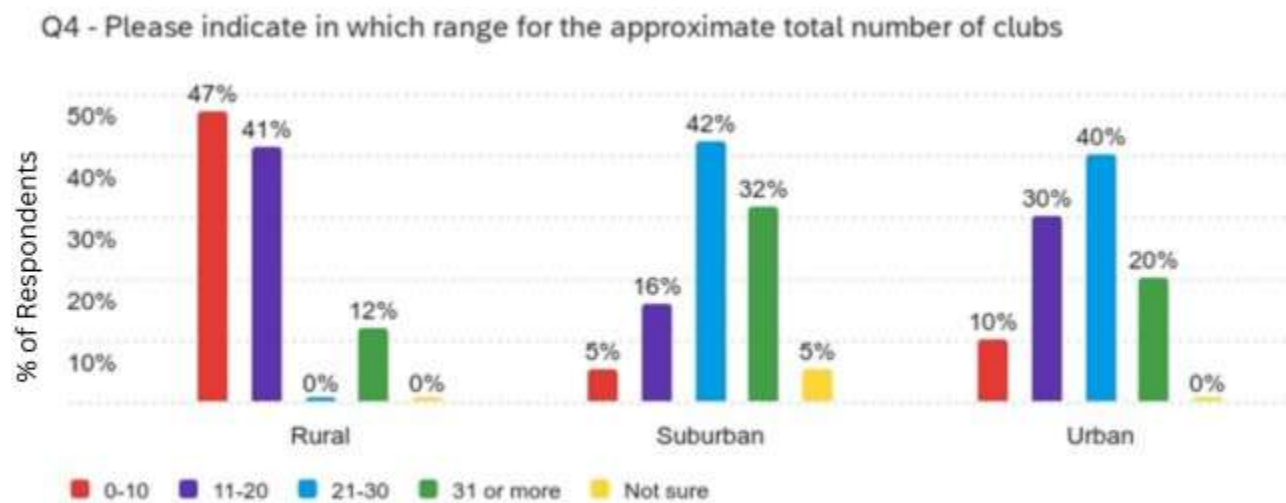


The third graph below compares alliance districts to non-alliance districts on whether they charge guardians a fee to enroll their children into before and/or after care. Non-alliance districts are more likely than alliance districts to not charge for before and/or after care, while alliance districts are more likely to charge a fee based on the guardians' income.

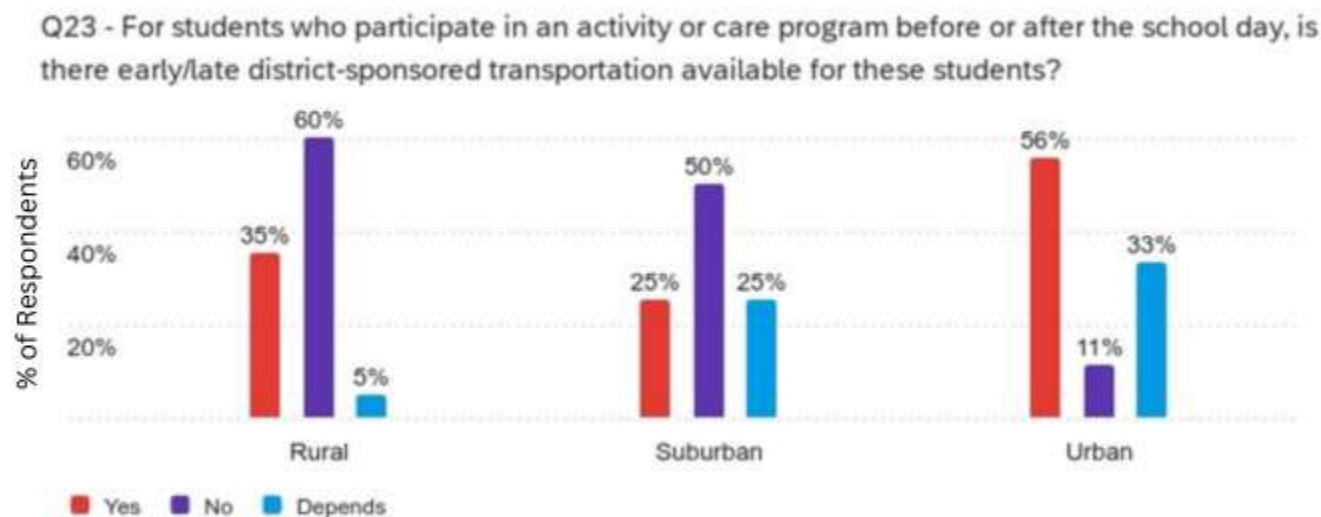


Rural vs. Suburban vs. Urban Comparison

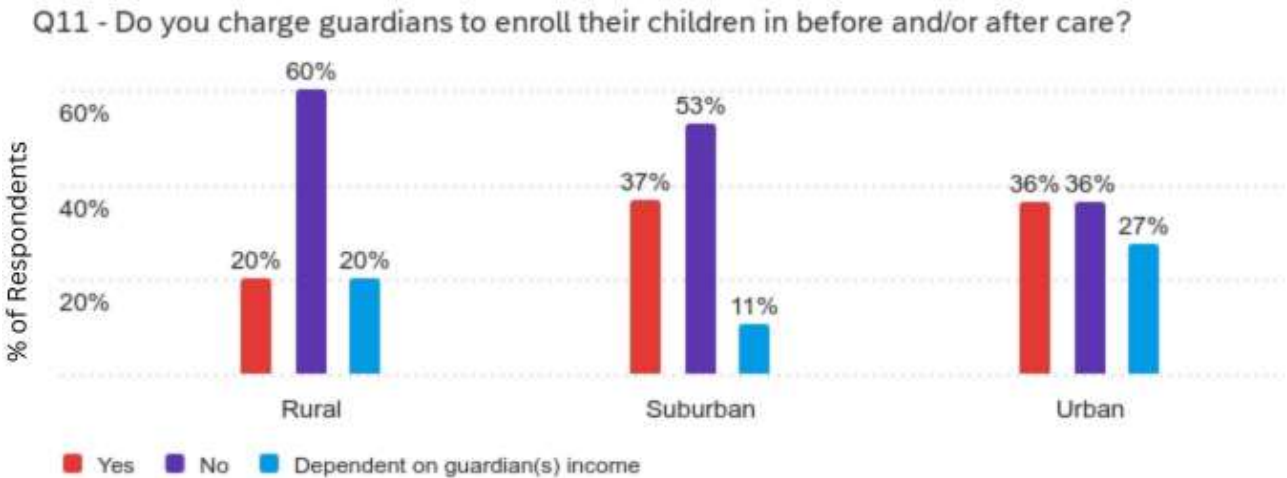
The next graph compares the number of clubs that are offered at rural, suburban, and urban school districts. The survey responses indicate that suburban and urban districts offer a wider range of clubs than do rural districts. Of rural districts, 88% said they offer 20 or fewer clubs. 74% of suburban districts and 60% of urban districts offer at least 21 clubs.



The graph below compares rural, suburban, and urban districts on whether they provide early/late transportation for students who participate in an activity or care program before or after the school day. A majority of respondents from urban districts answered that they do provide this type of transportation, while a majority of respondents from rural and suburban districts answered that they do not.



The next graph compares rural, suburban, and urban districts on whether they charge guardians a fee to enroll their children into before and/or after care. Rural and suburban districts are more likely than urban districts to not charge for before and/or after care, while urban districts are more likely to charge a fee based on the guardians' income.



Perceived Challenges

Although the focus of our survey was collecting quantitative data through multiple choice questions, we did include a few optional open-ended questions where superintendents could share additional comments, including a question on “What is the biggest challenge you face regarding providing a sufficient level of before and after school programing?”

Out of the 55 participants, 20 chose to answer this question. Through these responses, the most commonly cited reasons were funding/budget constraints (13) and lack of staffing (8), with multiple citing transportation specifically as an area of high cost.

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