

CHOOSE TO LEARN

2026

K-12 PUBLIC SYSTEMS UNDER PRESSURE
HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN AS A CATALYST
TO RETENTION AND (RE)ENROLLMENT

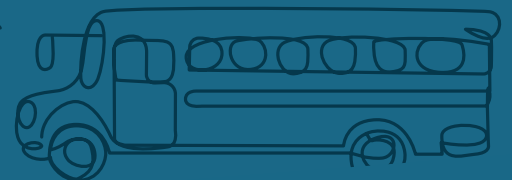


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public education is entering a decisive moment. Across the country, district and charter high schools are facing a convergence of systemic forces:

- Declining student populations
- Acceleration of school choice and funding portability (e.g., Educational Savings Accounts)
- Growing demand for programs and pathways aligned to student interest and need
- Rapidly changing expectations for technology use and workforce readiness

Together, these forces are reshaping how families make schooling decisions and placing pressure on public districts and charters to respond. At the same time, rigid policy, accountability, and funding structures often constrain the very flexibility systems need to redesign the school experience. What results is a pivotal moment for K-12 education: districts must rethink the high school experience in ways that are both ambitious *and* operationally grounded if they hope to retain students and achieve better outcomes.

Since 2022, Tyton Partners' *Choose to Learn* series has documented this shift in our K-12 landscape. Prior research reveals that 70% of families are open to or already pursuing alternatives to public education, intensifying competition for enrollment in ways most public systems were not designed to withstand. As one superintendent in Illinois put it, "The movement towards school choice represents a profound threat to enrollment in our district."

In response, districts and public charter networks have spent the past decade experimenting with high school redesign: flexible learning environments, non-traditional schedules, and structured pathways aligned to student interests have moved from the margins to the mainstream. Today, the vast majority of public systems offer at least one redesigned high school experience. And yet, enrollment declines continue.

This disconnect points to a critical—and often misunderstood—reality: **The effectiveness of high school redesign depends more on execution than new ideas.** After years of experimenting with new models, the challenge facing public systems is now implementing these models consistently at scale.

At the same time, a small but growing set of school districts and charter networks has begun to demonstrate a different trajectory. By treating redesign as system-level work—grounded in local demand and supported by strong operational capacity—these districts and charter networks are starting to stabilize or even reverse enrollment declines.

In this insights brief, we discuss what distinguishes successful redesign efforts from the rest. We explore how high school redesign has evolved in the public K-12 sector, where it is falling short, and what it will take to translate promising models into durable, systemwide impact. The findings point to a clear conclusion: **The next phase of K-12 redesign will be won through better execution, requiring aligned partners who can help systems deliver on what families increasingly desire.**

METHODOLOGY

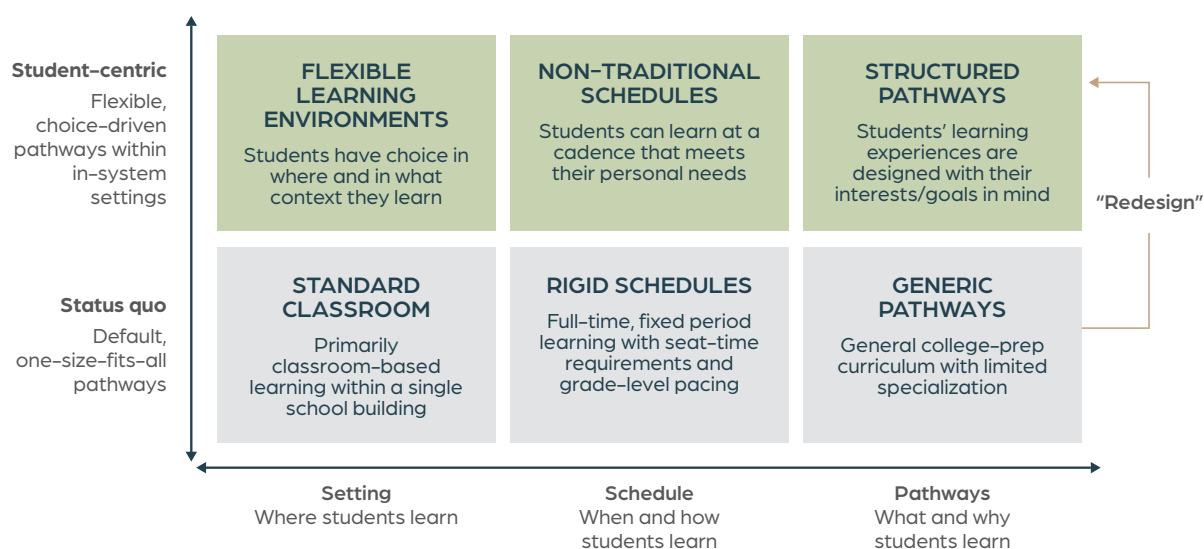
This analysis builds on Tyton Partners' *Choose to Learn* research series and draws on multiple sources to understand how high school redesign is unfolding across the public sector—and what distinguishes efforts that are gaining traction from those that are not.

For the purposes of this work, we define **high school redesign** as deliberate changes to where, when, and what students learn, aimed at better aligning the high school experience with student needs. Specifically, our framework examines redesign across three core dimensions:

- **Setting:** where learning takes place (e.g., virtual, hybrid, community-based)
- **Schedule:** when learning occurs and how students progress (e.g., part-time, mastery-based)
- **Pathways:** what students learn and why (e.g., career-aligned, thematic, early college)

Figure 1:

Scope of redesigned high school programs and experiences



Our findings are grounded in a **mixed-methods approach** that pairs national quantitative data with qualitative insights from the field:

- **National survey of more than 250 district and public charter administrators** with decision-making authority for high school program design and implementation
- **In-depth case studies of 25 district and public charter networks** pursuing redesign in varied local contexts, selected to reflect differences in scale, geography, and enrollment outcomes
- **Expert interviews** with organizations and leaders focused on K-12 system transformation

Together, these inputs allow us to move beyond *whether* redesign is occurring to examine *how* it is being executed, at what scale, and with what implications for student retention and (re)enrollment.

WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT PUBLIC K-12 REDESIGN

The insights that follow trace how high school redesign has progressed over time, why its impact has been uneven, and what must change to deliver better results—for students and the health of K-12 public school systems. This is not a story of stalled innovation, but of redesign efforts that now demand more disciplined, strategic execution.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN: HIGH ACTIVITY, LIMITED TRACTION.

- In the past decade, public systems have significantly expanded high school redesign, introducing flexible learning models, non-traditional schedules, and structured academic and career pathways.
- Despite this growth in activity, student participation has lagged availability and is slow to mature.
- As a result, redesign has remained fragmented and peripheral, limiting its ability to influence systemwide outcomes such as student retention and enrollment.

WHERE WE ARE: PARTICIPATION, NOT AVAILABILITY, DRIVES ENROLLMENT BENEFIT.

- Limited participation—not program count or type—poses a bottleneck to system-wide impact.
- Systems with high participation in redesigned programs are more likely to see stable or improving enrollment; those with low participation are more likely to continue losing students.
- Scaling the impact of high school redesign depends less on whether new models exist and more on whether students and families meaningfully engage with them in a sustained way.

WHERE WE'RE HEADED: STRONGER EXECUTION WILL CATALYZE RESULTS.

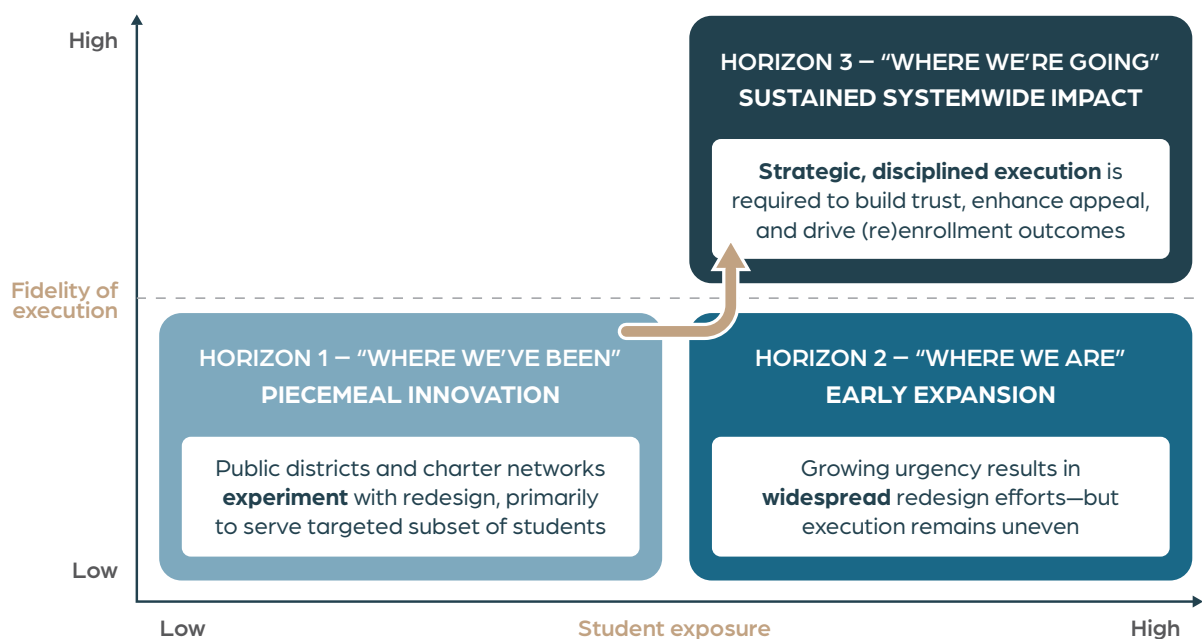
- District and charter leaders plan to expand the scope of redesign efforts over the next three years, introducing more programs based on student preference and need.
- Without stronger execution, broader adoption risks spreading resources and attention across fragmented programs, rather than driving meaningful participation and, in turn, outcomes.
- Going forward, districts and charter networks will see stronger outcomes—for individual students and overall enrollment—by focusing on student engagement and disciplined execution, not more programs.

Taken together, these dynamics reflect the broader trajectory of high school redesign. Over the past decade, most systems have begun to undertake this work (“Horizon 1”). Now, as districts face pressure to double down on and expand these efforts (“Horizon 2”), the next phase will require a shift from widespread adoption to stronger execution at scale (“Horizon 3”).

High school redesign delivers its greatest impact when programs are executed well and engage a large portion of students, not by simply increasing the amount of available options. When participation reaches a meaningful scale, redesigned experiences will generate stronger outcomes for students while supporting district enrollment and long-term sustainability.

Figure 2:

Conceptual overview of high school redesign market evolution



Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners analysis

WHERE WE’VE BEEN: HIGH ACTIVITY, LIMITED TRACTION

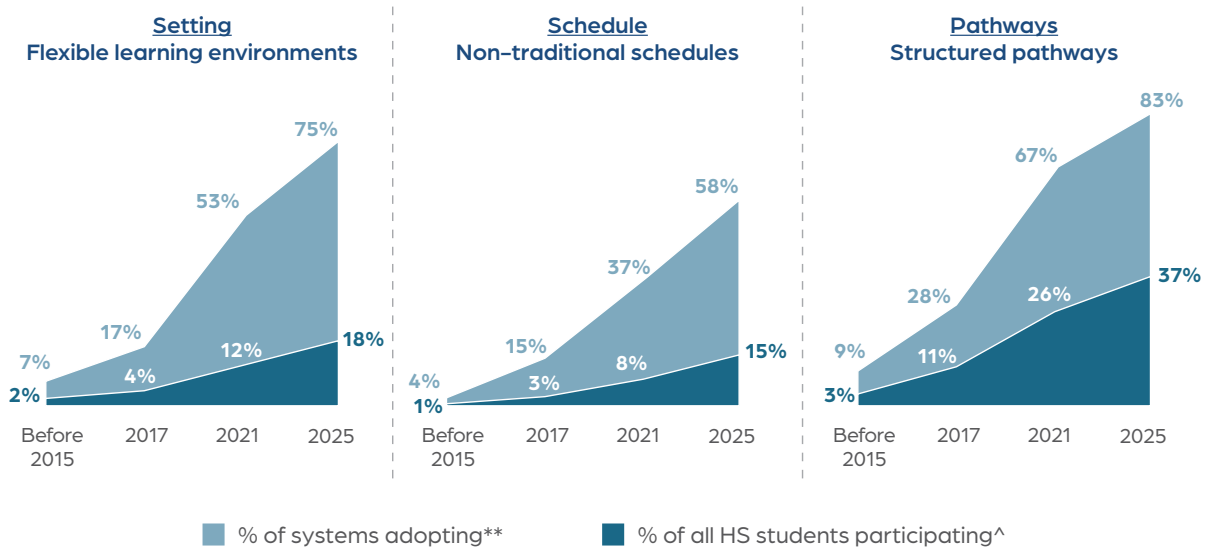
Over the past decade, public systems have dramatically expanded the menu of high school offerings available to students. Redesigned programs and pathways are now common features across the district and charter school landscape, rather than exceptions.

Notably, flexible learning environments—from virtual and hybrid models to community-based satellite campuses—are now available in 75% of systems, up from just 7% prior to 2015. Non-traditional schedules—such as part-time or mastery-based structures—have followed a similar trajectory, rising from 4% to 58% adoption. And availability of structured pathways—including career-focused, STEM, arts, or early college programs—has become nearly universal, climbing from 9% to 83% of systems nationwide.

However, availability alone has not translated into broad student uptake. Across redesign categories, a small percentage of students are generally participating in these programs.

Figure 3:

Public system adoption of redesigned high school models and student participation over time*



Notes: *93% of district and charter leaders surveyed report adopting some form of redesign; **Survey questions: “How long has each redesigned high school program in your [System] been in place?”, program ages averaged for each respondent by redesign type (i.e., Setting, Schedule, Pathways); ^“What portion of high school students in your [System] currently participate in the redesigned program categories below?”, Flexible learning environments n=192, Non-traditional schedules n=149, Structured pathways n=212 (all split by program age)

Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners analysis

This gap between program availability and student adoption and engagement underscores a central challenge: High school redesign is not gaining the traction needed to deliver meaningful outcomes, rebuild trust with families, and ultimately drive system-wide enrollment benefit.

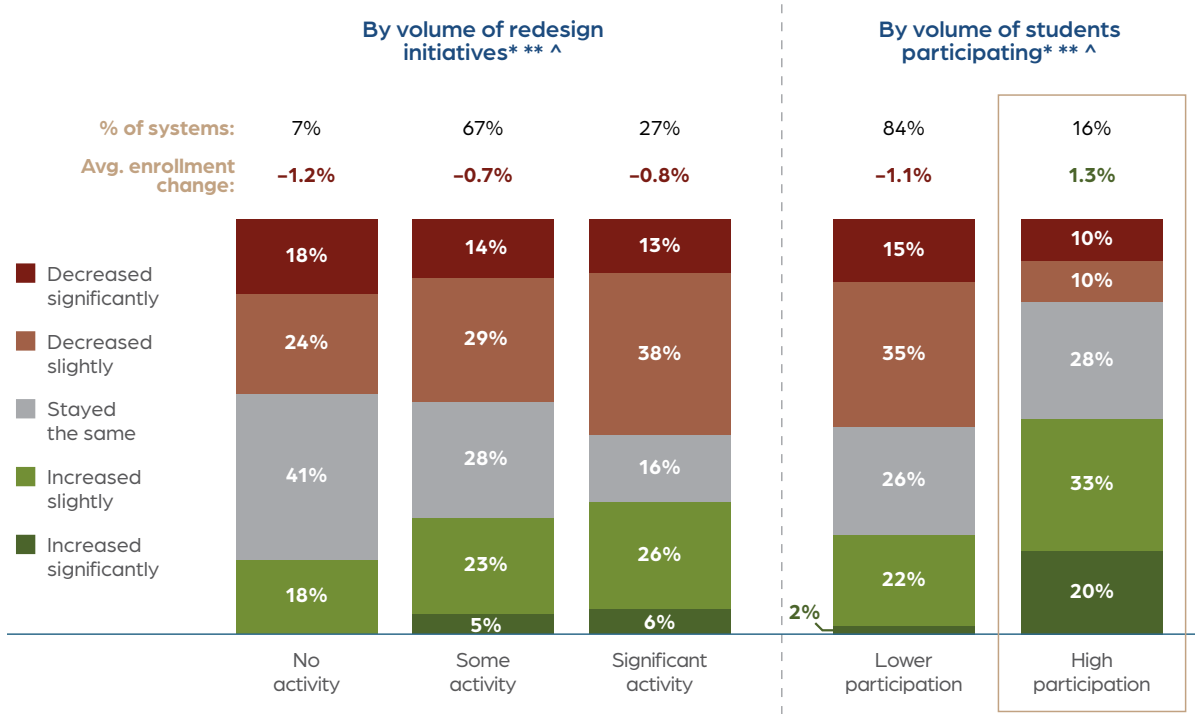
WHERE WE ARE: PARTICIPATION, NOT AVAILABILITY, DRIVES ENROLLMENT BENEFIT

Viewed through the lens of enrollment impact, the defining factor is the level of student participation. Surprisingly, the type and amount of redesigned program(s) offered have had little impact on enrollment. Districts and charter networks see the greatest enrollment benefit when redesigned programs engage a significant portion of their student body.

From 2022 to 2025, more than half of districts and charters with high participation in redesigned programs experienced enrollment growth, while only 20% experienced a decline. By contrast, half of districts and charters with low participation lost students over the same period. Notably, stronger enrollment cannot be traced to the amount or variety of redesigned programs offered: More than half of districts and charters reporting significant investment in redesign activity still experienced overall enrollment decreases.

Figure 4:

Change in high school enrollment by redesign activity and participation, AY2023-2025



Notes: *Survey question: "How has overall high school enrollment in your [System] changed over the last three years?", n=255 overall, segmented by number of redesigned program types offered or participation in them; **"Significantly" denotes a change of greater than 5%, "Stayed the same" within 1%, and a hidden "Slightly" segment is 1-5% change (positive or negative); ^"Significant" activity indicates more than five redesigned program types are available in the system, "Some" 1-5, "High" vs. "Lower" participation cutoff is 50%

Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners analysis

In other words, depth matters more than breadth. A small number of well-executed programs reaching a large share of students is likely more impactful than a broad but fragmented portfolio serving relatively few. This dynamic helps explain why many systems have struggled to translate redesign activity into enrollment gains. Too often, redesigned programs are standalone from core instruction rather than integrated into a coherent vision for the high school experience. Without participation at scale, innovation remains visible but inconsequential to a district or charter network's enrollment health.

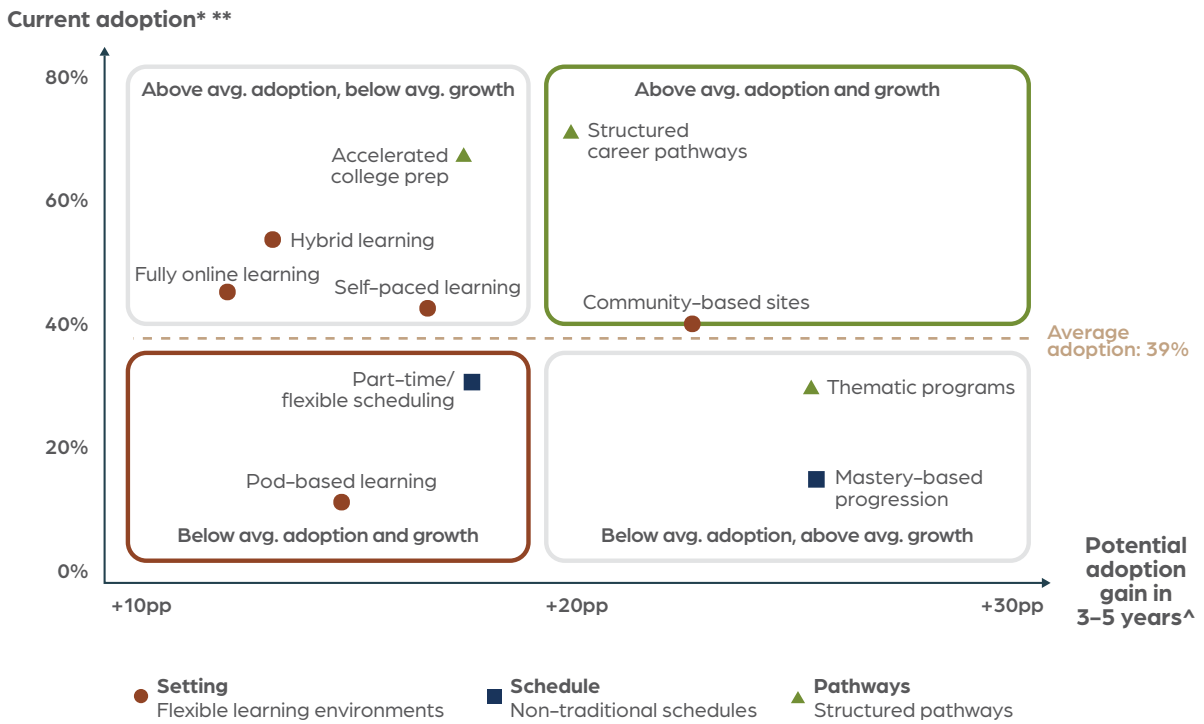
WHERE WE'RE HEADED: STRONGER EXECUTION WILL CATALYZE RESULTS

As competitive pressure on public systems intensifies, districts and charter networks plan to invest further in redesign and launch more programs. Most districts are grappling with pressures that require a response, including shifting demographics, rising family expectations, and increased momentum around school choice (e.g., Education Savings Accounts). In this context, system leaders continue to consider ways to deliver better outcomes to students and families while sustaining the appeal and long-term viability of their district or network.

Looking across the public K-12 sector, there is strong appetite for the launch of new initiatives. Over the next three to five years, nearly one-third of district respondents report plans to launch community-based satellite campuses, thematic academic pathways (e.g., arts, STEM), and mastery-based progression. Several other redesigned models are already offered in more than 40% of districts and charter networks, including fully virtual options, accelerated college prep, or structured career pathways.

Figure 5:

Current and future adoption of redesigned high school programs, by type



Notes: *Survey question(s): "Which types of [Attribute] options does your [System] currently offer high school students? Select all that apply. Please respond for all high school programs currently offered, even if they are not yet offered at scale.", n=255, repeated across Setting, Schedule, and Pathways; **Presence of traditional models (e.g., in-person, in-school, grade-level progression, traditional college/career prep) also tested, averaging 97% current uptake; ^Survey question(s): "Which types of [Attribute] options do you anticipate your [System] may begin offering to high school students in the next five years?"; Survey question(s): "Which types of [Attribute] options do you anticipate your [System] may begin offering to high school students in the next five years?", n=255, repeated across Setting, Schedule, and Pathways (potential adoption gain is the share of respondents indicating they are "Actively developing" the program plus half of the share of respondents who are "Considering implementing")

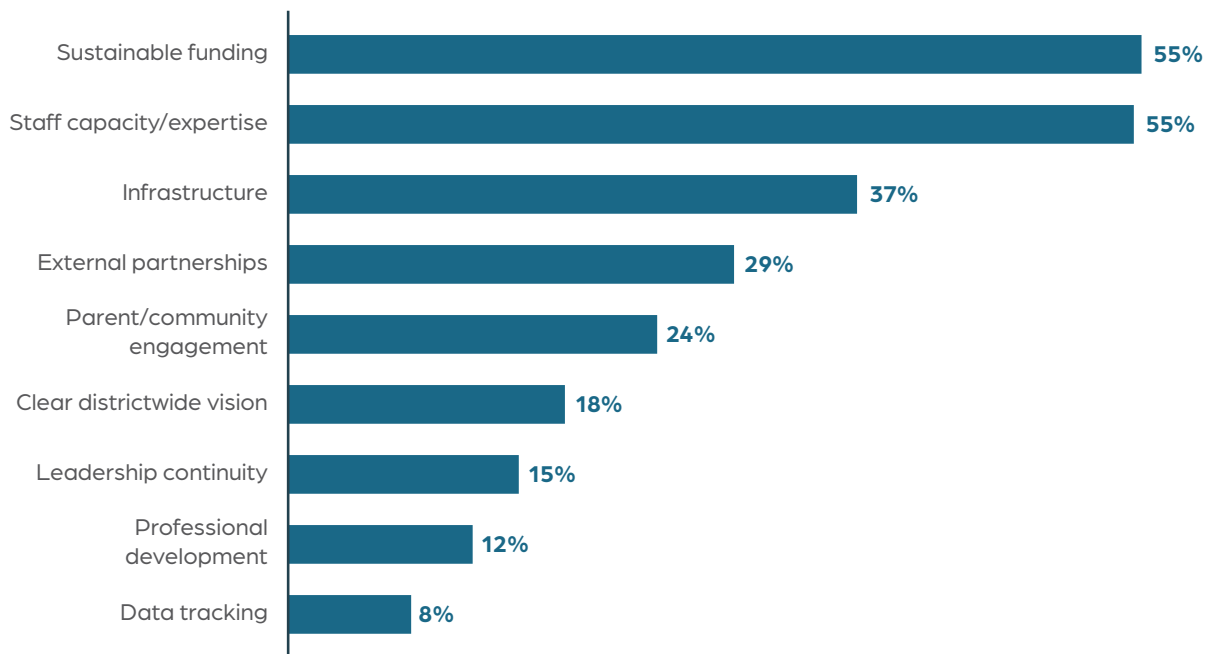
Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners analysis

As public systems add new programs, the stakes for execution are rising. When redesign efforts scale faster than a system’s ability to integrate them, as has often occurred over the past decade, it becomes difficult to drive meaningful student engagement and outcomes. Instead, district and charter leaders must focus on fewer, better-executed programs capable of reaching more students.

Doing so requires them to confront a set of persistent financial, operational, and technical challenges that pose barriers to participation and scale (Figure 6). In many cases, these challenges are interdependent: Redesigned programs often require new schedules, specialized staff, additional advising supports, and investment in external partners. When redesign expands but participation remains low, these costs are spread across too few students. Unless they are able to benefit from dedicated public grants (e.g., Perkins funds for CTE), districts end up layering new line items onto existing cost structures instead of replacing or consolidating them. Engaging a large portion of students early allows costs to shift rather than accumulate, making it a prerequisite for sustainability and scale.

Figure 6:

Greatest barriers to scaling enrollment in redesigned high school offerings



Notes: Survey question: "What are the biggest barriers to growing enrollment across redesigned high school programs? Select up to three." n=238

Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners analysis

The outcomes of this next phase of high school redesign will depend on how well districts and charter networks navigate the financial and operational challenges of scaling participation. Success will require integrating redesigned programs into existing staffing models, schedules, and facilities in ways that shift capacity rather than add complexity and cost. Leaders who execute with discipline and leverage trusted partners will be best positioned to translate redesign into meaningful student outcomes and long-term enrollment stability and growth.

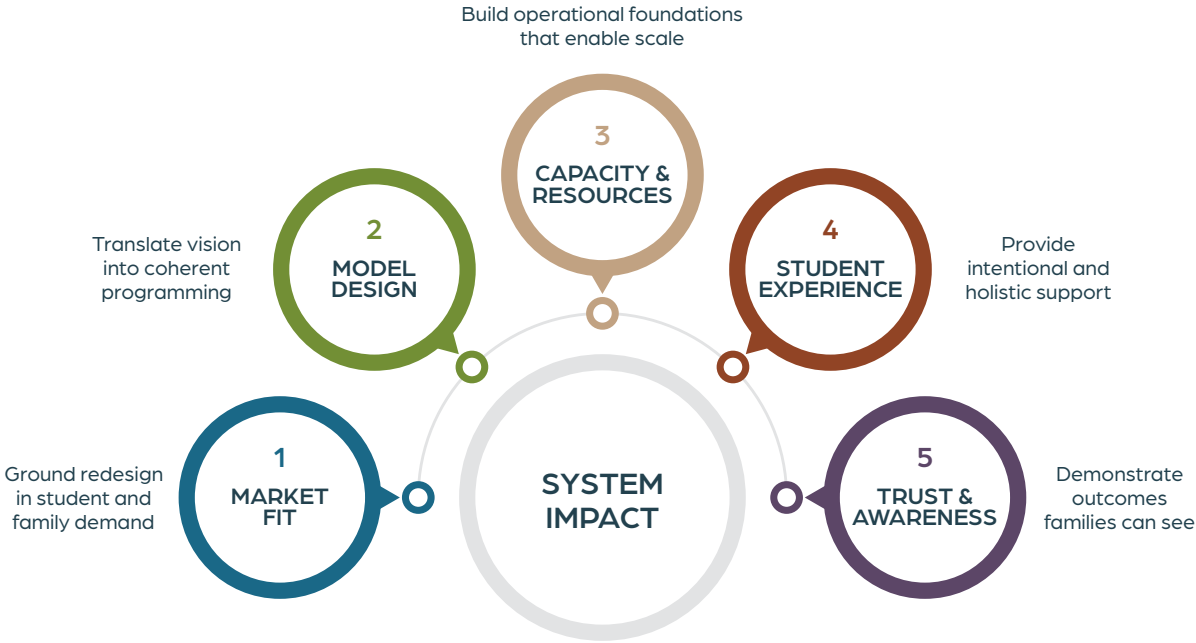
WHEN REDESIGN WORKS

While execution challenges are widespread, they are not insurmountable. Our examination of districts and charter networks with vibrant programs, strong student outcomes, and enrollment gains, as well as those experiencing setbacks, clarifies what it takes for redesign to deliver results.

Systems seeing enrollment, academic, and social-emotional benefit from redesign efforts approach high school redesign not as a collection of programs but as system-level work anchored in disciplined execution. While the redesign models vary, successful initiatives support high levels of participation and sustained engagement; eventually, they result in gains for system-wide enrollment. Together, the examples highlighted below show that execution is not an abstract ideal but a set of concrete, learnable practices.

Notably, these practices are rarely achieved by systems acting alone. They are often accelerated through targeted investment and strategic partnerships that strengthen capacity where districts and charter networks face the greatest constraint.

Figure 7:
Execution success factors for sustained systemwide impact



Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners case study analysis

1. GROUND REDESIGN IN STUDENT AND FAMILY DEMAND

Systems that gain traction start by understanding what students, families, and local partners want and design from there. Rather than assuming that flexibility or specialization alone will drive participation, these systems actively engage families to surface priorities, test demand, and refine offerings over time. As one national charter school leader explains, “There’s a lot of variability in how well systems keep their finger on the pulse of family demand. Most are only redesigning reactively, if they’re underperforming academically, and they don’t always bring families in proactively.”

Newark Public Schools (NJ) embedded this principle systemwide by pairing redesign with a universal enrollment platform (*Newark Enrolls*). By collecting feedback and making options both transparent and easier to navigate, the district engaged and reduced friction for families. This approach ensured that redesigned programs were visible, comparable, and accessible—an essential step in translating demand into participation and the positive enrollment momentum that has followed.

Tomball ISD (TX) grounded its redesign strategy in direct engagement with students and families, identifying strong interest in flexible pathways tied to postsecondary readiness and career exploration. The district responded by expanding course choices, blended learning options, and career-aligned experiences, while ensuring that those offerings were visible, navigable, and clearly connected to student goals. As a result, redesigned programs were positioned as compelling options families actively chose—not as alternatives on the margins—and enrollment is up significantly in the past decade.

These systems demonstrate that redesign gains traction when it begins with listening and family input continues to shape program evolution.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	NEWARK, NJ	TOMBALL, TX
REDESIGNED OFFERINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: Offers a broad array of specialized schools (e.g., data science, fashion) accessible through universal enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: Standalone specialized high schools/P-TECH programs (e.g., healthcare, education)
CAGR (AY2018-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: +6.2%• HS-aged population: +2.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: +7.4%• HS-aged population: +1.4%
EXECUTION INSIGHTS	<p>Market fit: The district hosted community meetings with families to understand why many were leaving for charter schools; parents cited poor academic outcomes and raised concerns about inequities in the charter lottery process. In response to this feedback, the district developed the One Newark plan to create in-district choice and improve enrollment fairness</p>	<p>Market fit: The district partnered with the local economic development council to design P-TECH programs aligned with regional high-wage workforce needs, ensuring clear connections between high school pathways and local career opportunities</p>





2. TRANSLATE VISION INTO COHERENT PROGRAMMING

Successful systems move beyond isolated pilots to articulate a clear, coherent vision for the high school experience, then align programs and pathways around that vision. In these environments, families encounter a set of offerings that fit together, rather than a fragmented menu of options.

Alexandria City Public Schools (VA) exemplifies coherent design by grounding its entire high school experience in structured pathways, student choice, and real-world relevance. That vision informed the development of four distinct campuses—coined the “connected network”—bonded through shared leadership, support staff, and external partners. For families, this redesigned experience feels both intentional and navigable across schools, resulting in enrollment gains at a time when high school demographics in Alexandria have been in steep decline.

Phoenix Union High School District (AZ) pursued redesign at scale by creating a clear, systemwide framework for pathways, personalization, and postsecondary alignment. The district embedded redesigned experiences into its core high school operating model and anchored these changes in a new hub, PXU City, which enables students to move seamlessly across pathways while maintaining consistency in expectations and supports. This coherence helps families connect with the optionality and flexibility available within the district and stem the tide of attrition as ESA programs in Arizona have proliferated.

In both cases, coherence strengthened credibility, making redesigned models easier for families to choose and for systems to sustain.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	ALEXANDRIA, VA	PHOENIX, AZ
		
	REDESIGNED OFFERINGS	PHOENIX PXU UNION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: Emerging academies model provides a school-within-a-school experience at large high schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: The district offers a range of schools with distinct focus areas (e.g., coding, bioscience) or approaches (e.g., microschool, advanced pacing)• Setting: Students have the flexibility to take classes across different campuses, including online
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: +2.7%• HS-aged population: -6.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: -0.6%• HS-aged population: +1.1%
CAGR (AY2018-23)		
EXECUTION INSIGHTS	<p>Model design: Since 2019, the district has operated a single comprehensive high school as a “connected network” of four campuses; in 2024, the district launched academy-based pathways to offer a more personalized experience within a larger setting</p>	<p>Model design: To accommodate students with family and work commitments, the district built PXU City to expand course access and flexibility, enabling students to curate their schedules and attend classes across multiple campuses and in alternative settings (e.g., workplaces)</p>


3. BUILD OPERATIONAL FOUNDATIONS THAT ENABLE SCALE

Redesigned programs only deliver impact when operational systems—staffing, schedules, funding, and data—are aligned to support them. Many redesign efforts stall because operations cannot keep pace or create unsustainable cost structures, not because the model is weak.

NOLA Public Schools (LA) paired redesign with investments in coordination, accountability, and shared infrastructure, which helps schools sustain learner-centered models across a decentralized landscape. NOLA's redesign has focused on independently operated charters with structures in place to ensure continuous improvement. As a result, schools maintain an outcomes-driven—not compliance-driven—mindset, and public school enrollment has increased amidst demographic declines.

St. Johns County School District (FL) aligned staffing, scheduling, and resource allocation to support career academies and pathway-based redesign, ensuring that programs could function reliably year over year rather than relying on short-term fixes. Notably, it has unlocked a sustainable revenue stream from state funding for each industry credential earned by students, helping to cover the cost of delivery, and its enrollment growth has increased at a rate four times higher than population growth.

These examples highlight a core lesson: Operational strength is not ancillary to redesign, but a prerequisite for scale.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	NEW ORLEANS, LA	ST. JOHN'S, FL	
			
	REDESIGNED OFFERINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting: The district has one internally run school and 70 charter schools operated by 29 nonprofit CMOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: 29 career academies covering 40 pathways• Setting: Standalone virtual school
	CAGR (AY2018-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: +2.5%• HS-aged population: -0.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: +5.4%• HS-aged population: +1.5%
EXECUTION INSIGHTS	<p>▼</p> <p>Capacity and resources: The city's post-Katrina charter system built a culture of accountability through regular performance reviews, renewal cycles, and transparent public scorecards. These mechanisms embedded continuous improvement into everyday operations and ensured that redesign efforts remained outcome-driven rather than compliance-driven</p>	<p>▼</p> <p>Capacity and resources: The district receives compensation from the state for each industry certificate students earn (\$1M cycled back to the district from 2011-16), helping to balance the cost of delivery</p>	


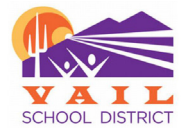
4. PROVIDE INTENTIONAL AND HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Systems seeing sustained participation recognize that student engagement depends on relationships, guidance, and belonging, not simply choice. Redesign efforts that prioritize the full learner experience invest intentionally in advisory structures and adult support. As a K-12 education researcher from a national think tank explains, “Redesign efforts focus too much on process, at the expense of the student experience. There’s lots of rhetoric around purpose, but kids don’t discover their purpose on a special electives block. It takes a complete system of support.”

Norris School District (WI) serves rural populations, focusing on at-risk students who have struggled in or dropped out of their local district. Its campuses are learner-centered environments with strong advisory structures, personalized pacing, and consistent adult support, ensuring that students are guided and not left to navigate complexity alone. Families from surrounding counties have flocked to the district to take advantage of these supports, resulting in significant district-wide enrollment growth.

Vail School District (AZ) has redesigned its high school experience to emphasize belonging, relevance, and interest-aligned pathways, helping students feel connected and supported even as learning becomes more flexible. For example, it embeds internships into its high school experience and pairs students with a mentor. In a state with significant policy momentum around school choice, Vail has been able to witness enrollment growth that outpaces the growth of its high school population.

Across these cases, redesigned programs succeed when students feel known, supported, and guided.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	NORRIS SCHOOL DISTRICT, WI	VAIL, AZ
		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: Learner-centric model that leverages educational, behavioral health, and community services to provide a holistic education, often to disadvantaged learners• District enrollment: +11.5%• HS-aged population: -0.7% <p>▼</p> <p>Student experience: In this trauma-informed district, rural students have access to counseling, wraparound supports, and flexible learning plans tailored to individual needs, helping re-engage those who have struggled in traditional settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: Early college and career pathways embedded within HS• Setting: Standalone options for flexible settings, including online course offerings• Schedules: Self-paced programs available• District enrollment: +4.3%• HS-aged population: +1.0% <p>▼</p> <p>Student experience: Through its internship program, Vail pairs students with mentors and offers training on communication, time management, and other professional skills. The program integrates reflection and feedback sessions, helping students build confidence, persistence, and strong adult connections beyond the classroom</p>

5. DEMONSTRATE OUTCOMES FAMILIES CAN SEE

Finally, systems that secure enrollment benefits track and communicate outcomes that families value, using data to rebuild trust and reinforce the value of redesigned experiences. District administrators who cite effective parent and community engagement as a critical success factor are 26 percentage points more likely to report enrollment gains from their redesigned programs than leaders who do not (66% vs. 40%). Program design, capacity-building, and student supports are essential to drive participation; enrollment benefit, however, arises when the impact of these programs is made transparent to the community.

St. Johns County School District (FL) takes a public-facing approach through its annual high school showcase, where career academies highlight student work and outcomes directly to families and community partners. This emphasis on visibility and proof helps sustain demand and drive enrollment.

Anaheim Union High School District (CA) has developed transparent communication around goals, outcomes, and student experiences, reinforcing confidence among families and community members. By clearly articulating how redesigned pathways align with postsecondary success—and by sharing evidence of progress—the district strengthens trust and articulates the value of its redesigned offerings. This visibility positions redesign as a credible, long-term strategy connected to students' post-secondary aspirations and opportunities.

These systems show that outcomes matter most when they are made visible, credible, and meaningful to families' decision-making.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	ST. JOHN'S, FL	ANAHEIM, CA
REDESIGNED OFFERINGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: 29 career academies covering 40 pathways• Setting: Standalone virtual school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structured pathways: Multiple career pathways per HS• Schedule: Standalone opt-in independent study program offering self-paced scheduling
CAGR (AY2018-23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: +5.4%• HS-aged population: +1.5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District enrollment: -1.7%• HS-aged population: +0.2%
EXECUTION INSIGHTS	<p>Trust and awareness: Digital marketing materials are highly accessible and user-friendly for families to learn about career academies and specialty programs of interest; the annual high school showcase enables 8th and 9th grade students and parents to see first-hand the impact of programming</p>	<p>Trust and awareness: Beyond measurement, Anaheim actively engages families and businesses through digital communications, community events, and family education sessions explaining the district's goals and progress</p>

WHAT THESE CASES HAVE IN COMMON

While contexts differ, the examples highlighted above share a common approach: They treat redesign as coordinated, execution-driven work rather than a series of isolated innovations. They focus on aligning to market needs, building coherence across initiatives, preparing operations for change, improving and nurturing the student experience, and making outcomes visible and measurable.

Importantly, they do not do this alone. Successful efforts often rely on partners—including employers and industry groups, community-based organizations, and vendors—to provide funding, technical assistance, or operational and delivery support. While an appetite for innovation is a crucial first step to redesign, sustained commitment to execution, backed by leadership and the capacity to follow through, drives enduring impact over both student outcomes and system-wide enrollment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTNERS

This research points to a clear shift in what public schools, districts, and charter networks need from their partners. There is no shortage of ideas or pilots. Instead, the challenge facing public systems is executing redesign efforts well enough to reach meaningful scale. As districts and charter networks work to translate redesign into stronger outcomes, the role of external partners—funders, intermediaries, and solution providers—becomes increasingly important. The recommendations below highlight how these partners can help schools and networks move from fragmented innovation to durable impact.

FUNDERS

For foundations, impact investors, and other funders, this moment calls for a rebalancing of investment strategies.

- Move beyond pilots. While early-stage innovation remains important, many systems now need support to operationalize, integrate, and scale redesigned models that already exist.
- Directly fund execution capacity. Investments in staffing, data systems, coordination, and implementation support can accelerate time to impact more than additional program launches.
- Increase standards for participation. Enrollment and retention benefits depend on reaching a critical mass of students—not simply proving that a model can work.
- Be patient. Durable redesign takes time to mature, rebuild trust with families, and unlock systemwide competitive and enrollment benefits.

In short, funders have an opportunity to help shift redesign from expanding scope of experimentation to durable system change by underwriting the often-invisible work of execution.

K-12 SOLUTION PROVIDERS

Content, technology, and service providers have an opportunity to differentiate as strategic partners in helping districts strengthen enrollment. At a time when system leaders are seeking greater clarity on how to adapt, companies that support the effective implementation of redesign—advancing ambitions while operating within operational constraints—will stand apart in a landscape that increasingly needs to deliver better student results at scale.

- Support delivery, not just design. Helping systems drive consistency, measure outcomes, and sustain participation is increasingly where value is created.
- Build for integration. Ensure that products and services fit seamlessly into redesigned models and can evolve with customers as those models mature and scale.

- Reframe offerings around enrollment and sustainability. Providers that connect instructional and back office solutions to enrollment, participation, and family choice will better position themselves as strategic partners, transcending the fatigue of too many point solutions.

Companies that capture the attention and meet the needs of system leaders will be those that enable systems to deliver on their promises to students and families—not just articulate them in theory.

A SHARED OPPORTUNITY

High school redesign is complex, system-level work. No single actor—districts, funders, or providers—can carry it alone. But when roles are aligned around execution, the opportunity for individual and system-wide impact is significant.

By pairing innovation with disciplined delivery, and by strengthening the partnerships that make scale possible, the field can move beyond fragmented efforts toward redesigned high school experiences that families can see, feel, and trust.

That shift—from innovation to execution—must define the next chapter of public education.

APPENDIX

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ABOUT TYTON PARTNERS

Tyton Partners is the leading provider of strategy consulting and investment banking services to the global knowledge and information services sector. With offices in New York City and Boston, the firm has an experienced team of bankers and consultants who deliver a unique spectrum of services from mergers and acquisitions and capital markets access to strategy development that helps companies, organizations, and investors navigate the complexities of the education, media, and information markets. Tyton Partners leverages a deep foundation of transactional and advisory experience and an unparalleled level of global relationships to make its clients' aspirations a reality and to catalyze innovation in the sector. Learn more at tytonpartners.com.

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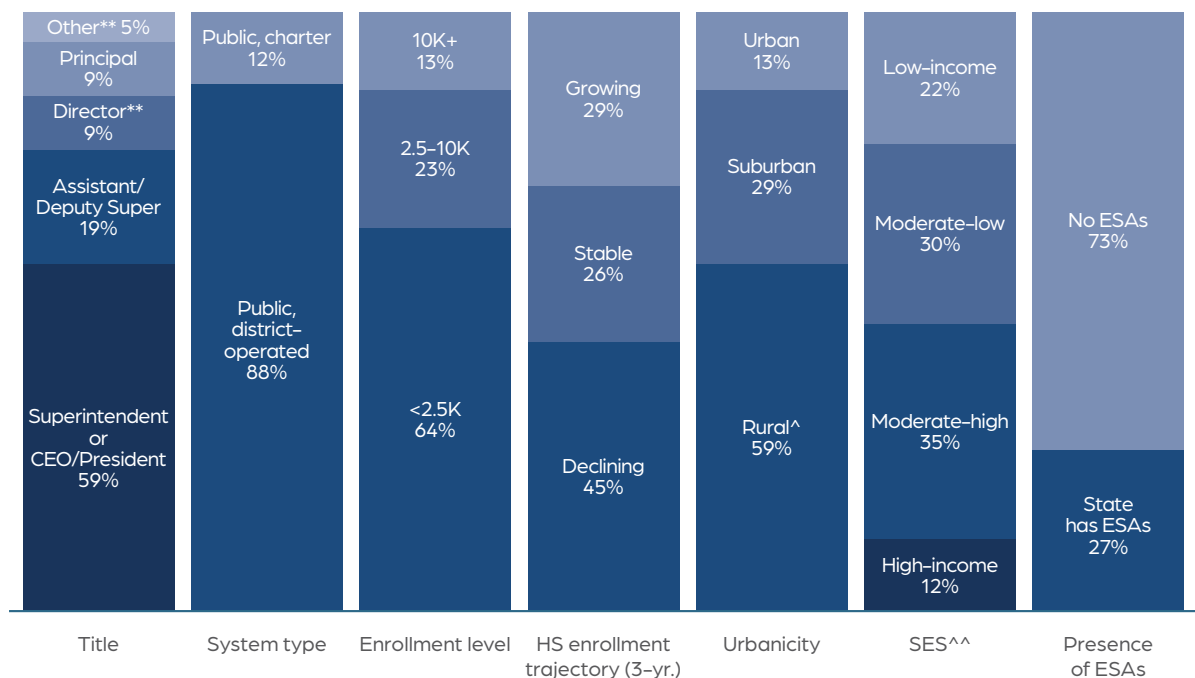
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SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Tyton Partners surveyed more than 250 K-12 administrators with decision-making authority over high school program design and implementation, with demographics broadly representative of the national landscape. This survey, combined with expert interviews with organizations and leaders focused on K-12 system transformation and in-depth case studies of 25 district and public charter networks, provided firsthand insight into current and planned redesign efforts and the factors that enable them to succeed.

Survey demographics*



Notes: *Total survey n=255; ***Other" includes Chief Academic Officers, Chief Technology Officers, and respondents selecting "Other", and "Director" includes Directors of Teaching & Learning, Curriculum/Instruction, and Special Projects, as examples; ^Includes non-suburban "Towns"; ^^% FRL used as proxy, High-income = 0-25% FRL, Moderate-high = 26-50% FRL, Moderate-low = 51-75% FRL, Low-income = 76-100% FRL

Sources: Tyton Partners High School Redesign Survey Fall 2025, Tyton Partners analysis

CASE STUDIES CONSIDERED

Tyton Partners' district and public charter case studies were curated to capture variation across program models in use, depth of redesign initiatives, enrollment trends, broader population trends, policy contexts, and district demographics. Selection was further informed by input from national and state education nonprofits, research organizations, and sector advisors, which helped identify credible and representative redesign efforts underway across the field.

School System	Setting	Approach	Program(s) overview
Alexandria City PS, VA	Urban	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging academies model to provide school-within-a-school experience at large comprehensive high schools
Anaheim Union HSD, CA	Urban	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple career pathways per HS Standalone opt-in independent study and virtual academies
Baldwin County PS, AL	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual HS with hybrid option New standalone career academy
Blue Valley USD, KS	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAPS program for career pathways
Butler Area SD, PA	Suburban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive career pathways in partnership with local community colleges
Cleveland Metropolitan SD, OH	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standalone schools with distinct focus areas (e.g., aerospace, architecture) and approaches (e.g., microschool, virtual)
Conejo Valley USD, CA	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual HS with independent study option Homeschool option
Dallas ISD, TX	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust public school choice program districtwide Wide range of specialized programs (e.g., P-TECH, STEM)
Design Tech High, CA	Urban	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design thinking, project- and competency-based learning Extensive employer partnership
Francis W. Parker Charter Essential, MA	Suburban	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mastery-based progression Emphasis on whole child
High Tech High, CA	Varied	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project-based approach
Jackson Public SD, MS	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialized standalone schools (e.g., early college, performing arts)

Kettle Moraine SD, WI	Suburban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency-based education • Main HS offers apprenticeships; specialized charters (e.g. arts, global innovation)
Limestone County Schools, AL	Rural	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual HS open to students statewide • Districtwide CTE center
MET Career and Tech, RI	Urban	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network of six school in RI with fully personalized curriculum • Students spend partial weeks off-campus at internships
Newark PS, NJ	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide array of specialized schools (e.g., data science, fashion) through universal enrollment
Norris County PS, WI	Rural	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic education that leverages academic, behavioral health, and community services
Orleans Parish/ NOLA PS, LA	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70 charter schools operated by 29 CMOs • Range of more traditional and pathways-focused schools
Phoenix Union HSD, AZ	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools with distinct focus areas (e.g., coding, bioscience) or approaches (e.g., Montessori)
Seminole County PS, FL	Suburban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-based learning with real-world applications
St. Johns County SD, FL	Suburban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 career academies covering 40 pathways • Standalone virtual school
Stockton USD, CA	Urban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of pathways, including early college, independent study, and CTE • Emerging career-connected learning program in partnership with SJA+
Tomball ISD, TX	Suburban	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone specialized high schools/ P-TECH programs (e.g., healthcare, education)
Township HSD 214, IL	Suburban	Fully reinvented HS model systemwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive career pathways at all HS • Early college program launching in 2026
Vail USD, AZ	Rural	Alternative opt-in programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early college and career pathways embedded within HS • Standalone options for flexible settings and schedules