

The Fair Education Project

Tutoring and Selective School Access in Western Australia

Survey Data Release

August 2026

Important Note: This is an independent, student-led survey. It is not a survey conducted, commissioned, endorsed or published by Perth Modern School or the WA Department of Education. Perth Modern School is identified only because the majority of respondents attended WA's only selective school. The findings of this survey should not be interpreted as representing the views of Perth Modern School, its staff, students, leadership or the WA Department of Education.

Important: This survey is not representative of all Western Australian students. Respondents were predominantly students attending Perth Modern School.

Survey Overview

This survey was conducted throughout August. We received 330 responses, the majority of which attended Perth's only fully academically selective school, Perth Modern School. Years 7-11 had a fairly consistent number of respondents, with a slight dropoff for Year 12's.

Important Note: This survey is not representative of all Western Australian students. The respondent population was predominantly students attending Perth Modern School.

Respondent profile

Year level

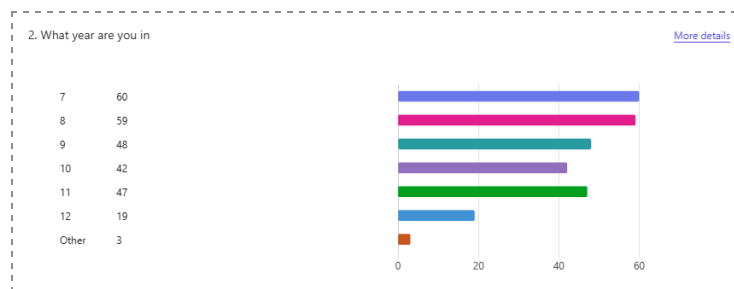


Figure 1. Respondents Year Levels.

School type

321 (97%) of respondents reported attending a selective school. One student reported attending a private school, one student reported being homeschooled, and seven respondents did not answer this question.

Location



Figure 2. Area of respondents.

DATA

GATE PREPARATION

Among respondents who attend a selective school, 75% reported having used external preparation for the GATE test.

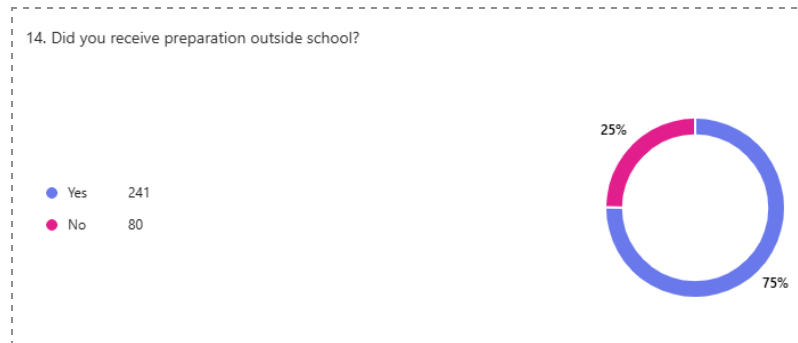


Figure 3. Prevalence of preparation.

The most common methods were:

- Tutoring Centre: 82% (197 students)
- Official Practise Tests: 44% (106 students)
- Help from Family/Friends: 31% (74 students)
- Paid Online Resources: 22% (54 students)

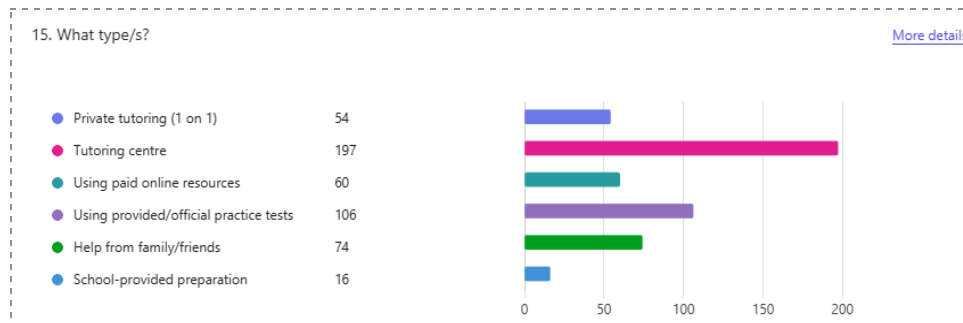


Figure 4: Methods of preparation.

COST OF PREPARATION

Respondents were asked how much they spent on preparation for the GATE test.

- 18% of students reported spending less than \$500 on GATE Prep.
- 22% reported spending between \$500-\$1,000.
- 35% reported spending between \$1,000 - \$5,000.
- 17% reported spending between \$5,000 - \$10,000.
- 4% reported spending more than \$10,000 on GATE Prep.

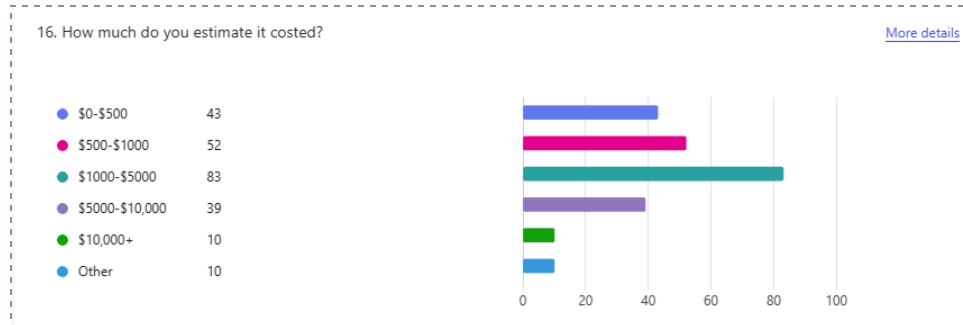


Figure 5: Reported expenditure.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

Respondents were asked if they believe "students from wealthier families have greater access to academic opportunities"

- 47% of participants responded "definitely yes".
- 40% of participants responded "probably yes".
- 7% of participants responded "unsure".
- 4% of participants responded "probably no".
- 2% of participants responded "definitely no".

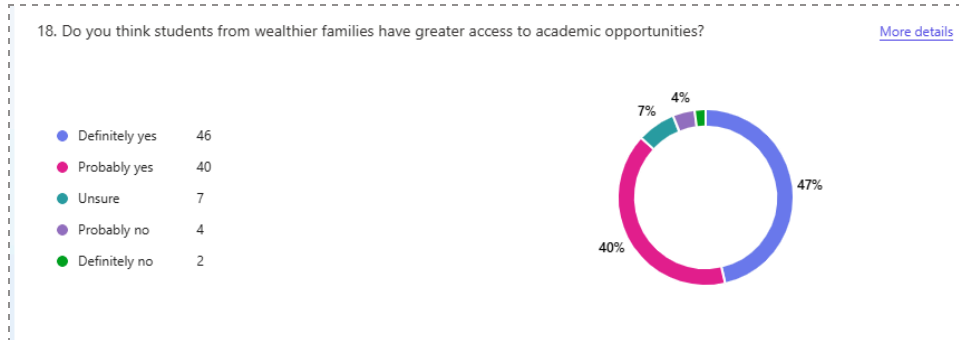


Figure 6: Perceived access to academic opportunities.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

At the end of the survey, participants were asked if there was "Anything else you'd like to say about tutoring, wealth and selective school access."

Important Note: The responses below are reproduced as submitted by survey participants, with minor edits made only to shorten some quotations for length. These omissions are indicated by ellipses (...). No other substantive changes have been made to the wording of the responses. Spelling, grammar and other wording have otherwise been retained as submitted.

Interpretation of open-ended response: The following quotations represent the views and experiences of individual respondents. They are not presented as findings representative of all respondents or Western Australian students and do not constitute findings of the Fair Education Project, or views shared by Perth Modern School. The Fair Education Project has not independently verified claims made within individual responses.

Selected responses are below.

On preparation and perceived impact.

- "Private tutoring manufactured my success by teaching me exactly how to beat the GATE exam for Perth Modern... Selective schools are technically public, but access is heavily driven by wealth."
- "Tutoring for the GATE gives too much of an advantage. If I did not have GATE tutoring, I would not have made it into my current school."
- "The GATE test is supposed to assess your potential, but since many students do tutoring, it kind of defeats the purpose."
- "Tutoring gives people an unfair advantage to students preparing for the GATE test. It removes the talent and hardwork aspect of selection"
- "The tutoring had lots of homework although it did help me prepare for GATE."

On access and affordability

- "I think that selective schools and selective programs are largely unfair. I would say that in my year I only know of two other kids that didn't do gate tutoring to get into mod."
- "What was meant to be a way for public school students to get access to proportional education just became a way for rich people to spend what would've been private school fees on external support."
- "selective schools are pay to win ... coming to a highschool where... i'm one of the few people that did absolutely zero study or preparation to get in..."
- "Highly based on how much money you can spend to afford tutoring and resources. Very selective and not easily accessible to people who are financially disadvantaged. Limited to those with high socioeconomic status, and begins a domino effect where entry gets harder later down the line."
- "system favours those with higher socioeconomic background who can afford more specialised and higher quality resources and tutoring, while those who cannot afford must rely on free, lower-quality, and just overall less help and resources in order to do the same test"
- "Selective schools are a lot more accessible for people living in more expensive metro areas, and to get into more prestigious schools, you need more access to learning and education, and if you're poor, you won't get those opportunities"
- "Selective schools are technically public, but access is heavily driven by wealth. High-income families can easily buy the competitive edge that lower-income students miss out on"
- "I think its ridiculous the amount of money charged for simple practice questions, the cheapest an average of a dollar a question. It creates such divide in those with access to advanced education as to those who don't so in the end those with less money get less opportunity"

On perceived effectiveness of tutoring.

- "I would not have gotten into my selective school without my parents support and tutoring and at the same time, my friends who all had tutoring... did not get the marks to get to selective schools. So I am not sure if the tutoring makes a difference if we do not have the inherent skills needed to pass."
- "I didn't do that much tutoring for selective school access... when I did that, I didn't get that high of a score in GATE. Last year, I did the test again, without any tuition, preparation, just a fresh mindset and got much higher score."
- "honestly, a couple of question banks did it for me and i managed to get a score guaranteeing my gate school for perth mod, but people who had done tutoring for longer years... scored lower..."

On motivation, effort and inherent ability being more important than tutoring.

- "For me, I find wealth and more tuition doesn't equal to good results, it's the effort and how much the individual wants it."
- "Tutoring is only beneficial if the work is put in, its not an automatic method to great grades, It is just another support pipeline and not necessary at all."

On tutoring being highly positive.

- "Tutoring is hard but it works, selective schools are good because you get to go to school with other people of your intelligence."
- "Tutoring is very helpful for selective schools"

On solutions and calls for support

- "I think students with regional and economical disadvantages should be given chances at tutoring to try equalise the competition."
- "It would be amazing if we could try and bridge this socioeconomic gap to access quality educational resources."

Methodology

Survey Period

9th of August 2026 to the 17th of August 2026

Total Responses

330

Respondent Population

Predominantly students attending Perth Modern School.

Survey Format

Anonymous online questionnaire.

Response Handling

The survey received 330 responses in total. The number of valid responses for individual questions may be below 330 because some questions were optional and respondents were able to leave them unanswered.

For questions allowing multiple responses, respondents could select more than one option. As a result, percentages for these questions may sum to over 100%.

Recruitment

The survey was distributed to students through email. Students were invited to participate voluntarily in the anonymous online questionnaire.

As an incentive, respondents were given the opportunity to enter a random draw to receive a \$20 gift card.

Limitations

The survey was conducted as a student-led survey and was not designed to produce a sample representative of Western Australian students. The respondent population primarily attended Perth Modern School. Therefore the results should not be used as estimates of broader WA student opinion.