

2026 EDUCATIONAL ADEQUACY STUDY

SUPERINTENDENT SURVEY REPORT



PREPARED FOR THE SENATE AND HOUSE INTERIM
COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 3, 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Background	2
Adequacy Funding: Matrix and Categorical	2
School-Based Mental Health and Nurses.....	5
Substitutes.....	6
Alternative Learning Environment (ALE).....	7
Career and Technical Education	8
School Safety	9
School Facilities.....	11
District Operations	15
Technology and Digital Learning	18
Preschool Program	19
School Choice	20
Comments	20





INTRODUCTION

Three surveys of Arkansas educators (one each for superintendents, principals and teachers) provide one category of evidence for the Arkansas Senate and House Education Committees' biennial educational adequacy study. These data are considered in conjunction with school- and district-level data provided by local education associations and the Arkansas Department of Education; related data from other states and the nation; and secondary research into educational topics and best practices.

In December, the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) asked the state's public school superintendents to select one of three windows of dates during the spring semester that would be most convenient for them to complete the survey. As a result, surveys were distributed to Arkansas's 258 public school district and public charter system superintendents on April 7, 2025. Superintendents were asked to submit completed surveys by April 18, 2025, with at least eight subsequent emails and five subsequent phone calls through June 16, 2025, asking them to complete and submit the survey. The final survey was received on June 16, 2025. A total of 256 superintendents submitted completed surveys for a response rate of 99.2%. The margin of error is less than $\pm 1\%$ at a 95 percent confidence level.¹

Superintendents Survey Information in a Glance:

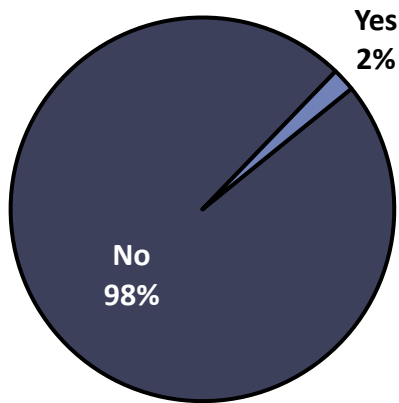
Survey Distributed:	April 7	258
Survey Due:	April 18	
Final submittal:	June 16	256
Response Rate:	99.2%	

Each survey question appears below with the response options and the percent of superintendents responding to each option. Unless otherwise noted, 256 superintendents responded to each question.

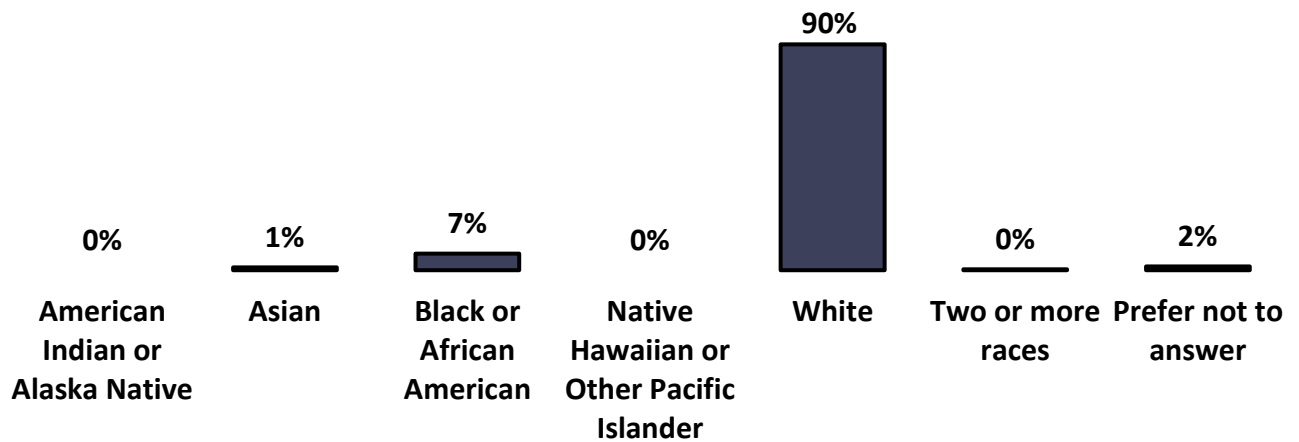
¹ The margin of error calculation incorporated a "finite population correction" (FPC) applied to the standard error (SE) calculation for a confidence level of 95% because the population of superintendents was 258.

BACKGROUND

1. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?

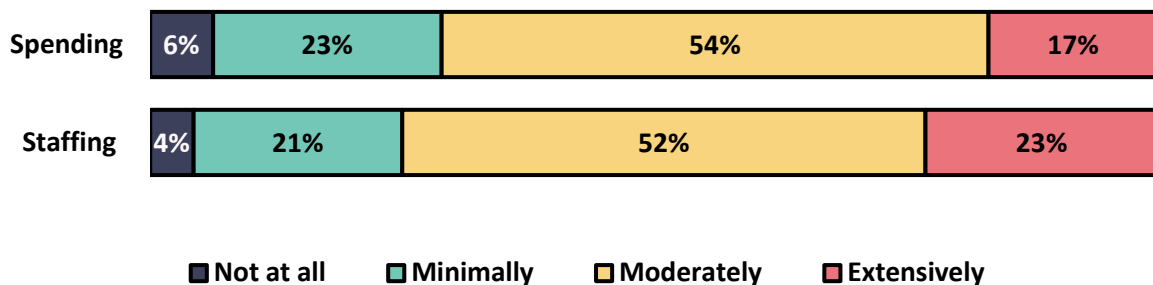


2. How would you describe yourself?

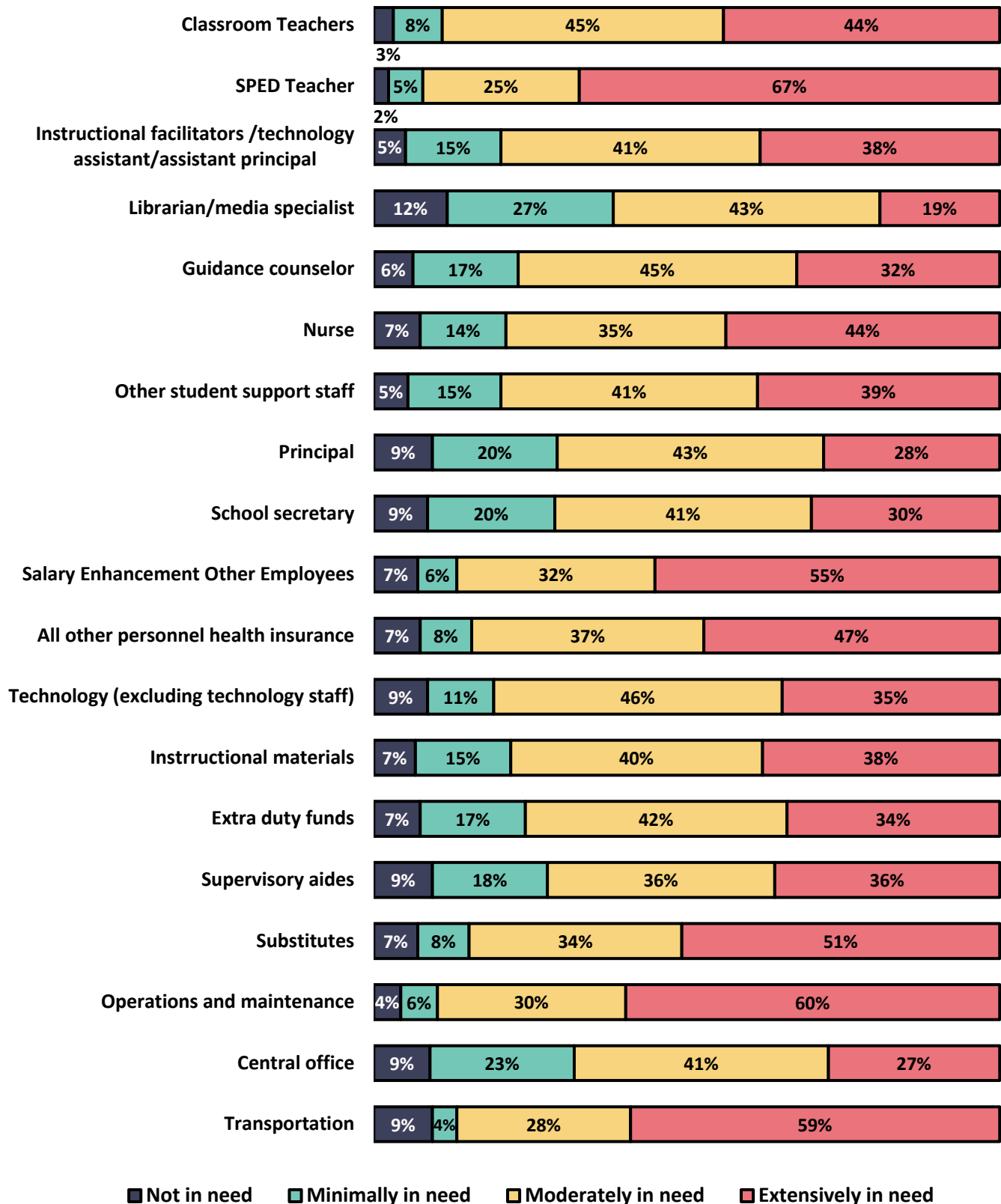


ADEQUACY FUNDING: MATRIX AND CATEGORICAL

3. For the current (2024-2025) school year, to what extent have you used the matrix to guide your district's spending and staffing levels?



4. For each of the following resources in the MATRIX, please indicate **if** your school district/charter school system needs additional funding **during the 2024-2025 school year**. Refer to the provided details and funding amounts to identify **the extent to which** additional funding per student is needed for each matrix line.

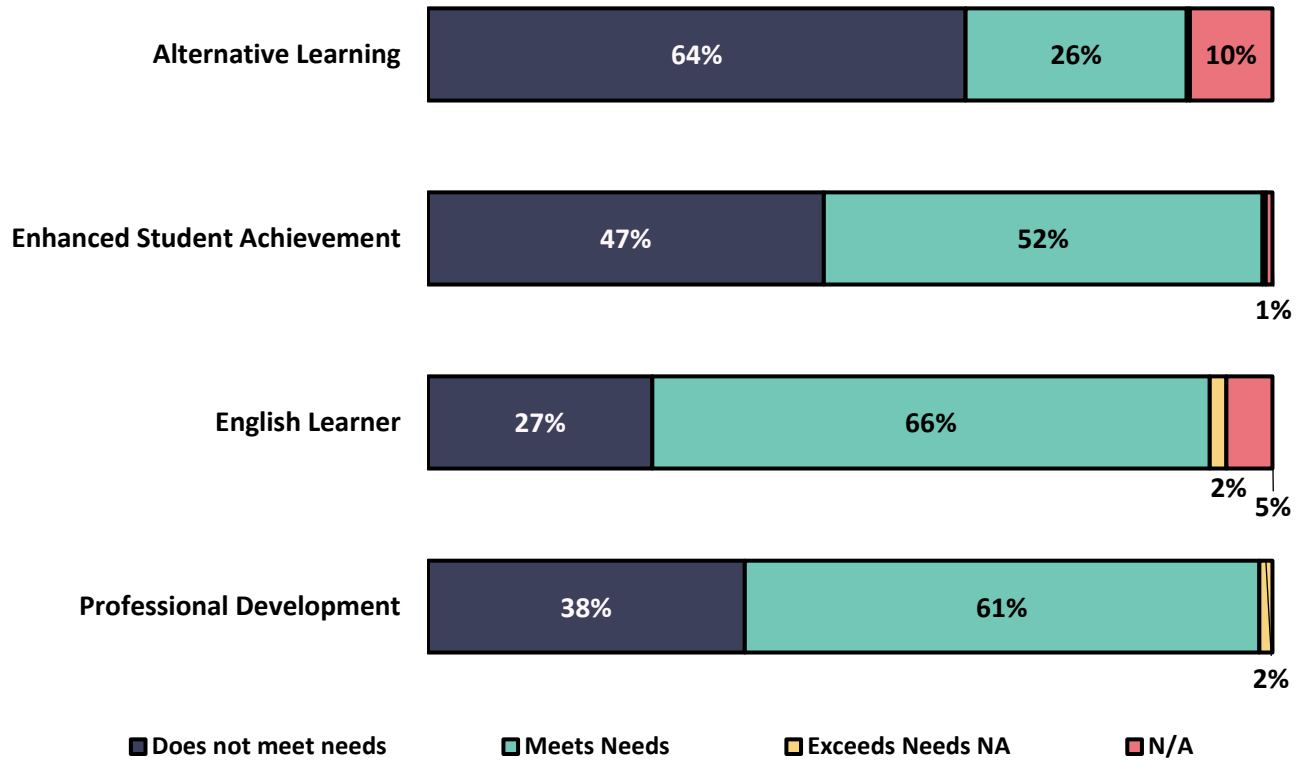


5. Please share if there is anything NOT included in the MATRIX that you believe is an important part of providing an adequate education:

The three most commonly cited resources currently not in the matrix were:

- Safety/Safety Resource Officers
- Social/Mental Health Workers
- Dyslexia Services

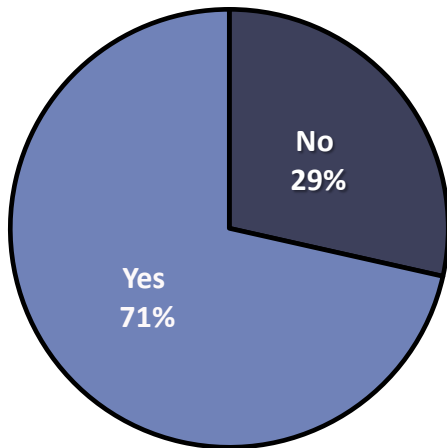
6. Please RATE the extent to which the following categorical funds meet your district's needs during the 2024-2025 school year:



7. **MATRIX AND CATEGORICAL FUNDING:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND NURSES

8. In the 2024-2025 school year, does your district have mental health therapists, including both employee and non-employee therapists, working in your schools to provide mental health therapy services directly to students.



9. In the 2024-2025 school year, how many mental health therapist FTEs are **employed directly by the district?** (183 superintendents responding)
- Range: 0 – 11 FTEs
 - 40% or 73 of the 183 districts directly employ therapists
 - Average: 2.1 FTEs
10. In the 2024-2025 school year, how many mental health therapist FTEs are **employed by an agency or other organization?** (183 superintendents responding)
- Range: 0 – 39 FTEs
 - 85% or 155 of the 183 districts have therapists on campus that are employed by an agency or other organization
 - Average: 4.2 FTEs
 - Districts can have both directly employed therapists and other organizations' therapists on their campuses at the same time, and 54 districts report both directly employing therapists and having therapists on their campuses that are employed by an agency or other organization.
11. In the 2024-2025 school year, please provide the number of FTE nurses **employed directly by the district.**
- Range: 0 – 40 FTEs
 - 96% or 245 of districts directly employ nurses
 - Average: 4.0 FTEs

12. In the 2024-2025 school year, please provide the number of FTE nurses **hired through purchased services**.

- Range: 0 – 27 FTEs
- 10% or 26 districts use nurses provided through purchased services
- Average: 2.2 FTEs
- Districts can both directly employ nurses and have nurses hired through purchased services at the same time, and 23 districts report both directly employing nurses and having nurses hired through purchased services.

13. **SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND NURSES:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

SUBSTITUTES

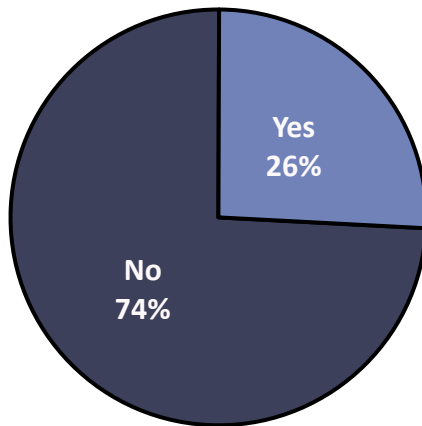
14. What is your district's **average DAILY RATE of pay** for each of the following types of short-term and long-term substitutes. **DO NOT enter an annual salary.** *(Please enter "-" where the number is zero and/or not applicable.)*

	Short-term substitutes average daily pay	Long-term substitutes average daily pay
Certified teachers	\$101.61	\$171.76
Non-certified substitutes with a B.A. degree	\$96.77	\$128.78
Non-certified substitutes without a B.A. degree	\$93.50	\$103.47

15. **SUBSTITUTES:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (ALE)

16. During the 2024-2025 school year, does your district pay **another district** or **education cooperative** to provide alternative learning environment (ALE) services (educational or full ALE services) to any of your students (e.g., through a consortia arrangement or education service cooperative program)? Do not include contractors you pay solely for mental or behavioral health services.



(If no, skip to question 18.)

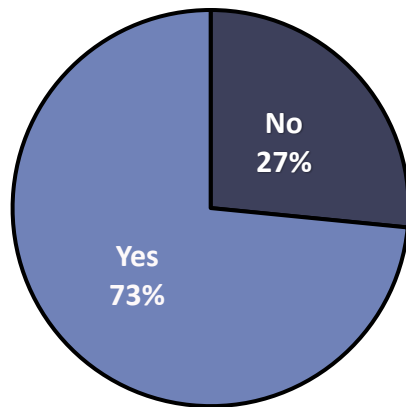
17. Please specify the district or education service cooperative your district pays for the ALE program, the total amount your district will have paid to the district or cooperative in 2024-2025 for the ALE program, and the total number of **FTE** ALE students your district has sent to the district or cooperative in 2024-2025. *(58 superintendents responding)*

- Total Paid: \$21,132,325.52
- Total FTEs: 1,368.4
- Average paid per FTE: \$15,443.43

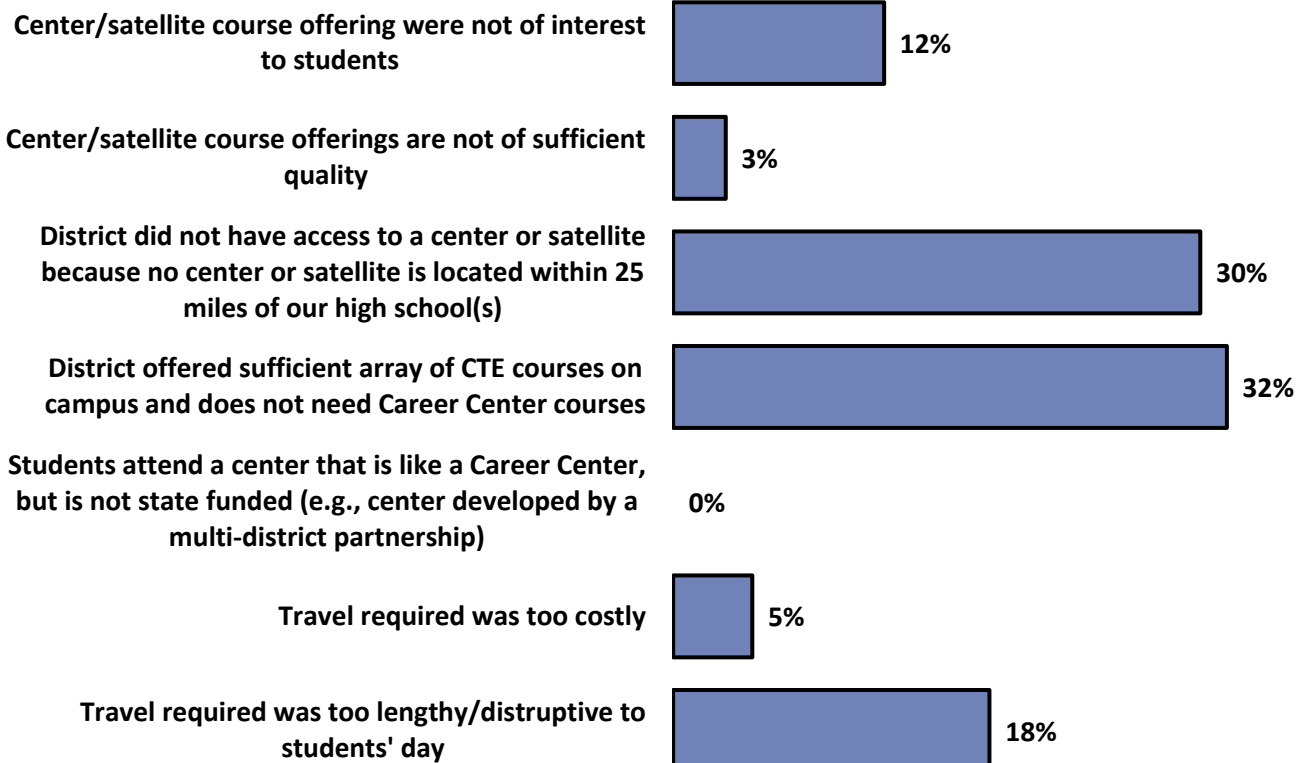
18. **ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (ALE):** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

19. Do any of your district's students attend a state-funded Secondary Career Center or satellite during the 2024-2025 school year? (If yes, skip to question 21.)



20. Please select the primary reason your district **did not send** any students to a state-funded Secondary Career Center or satellite during 2024-2025.*

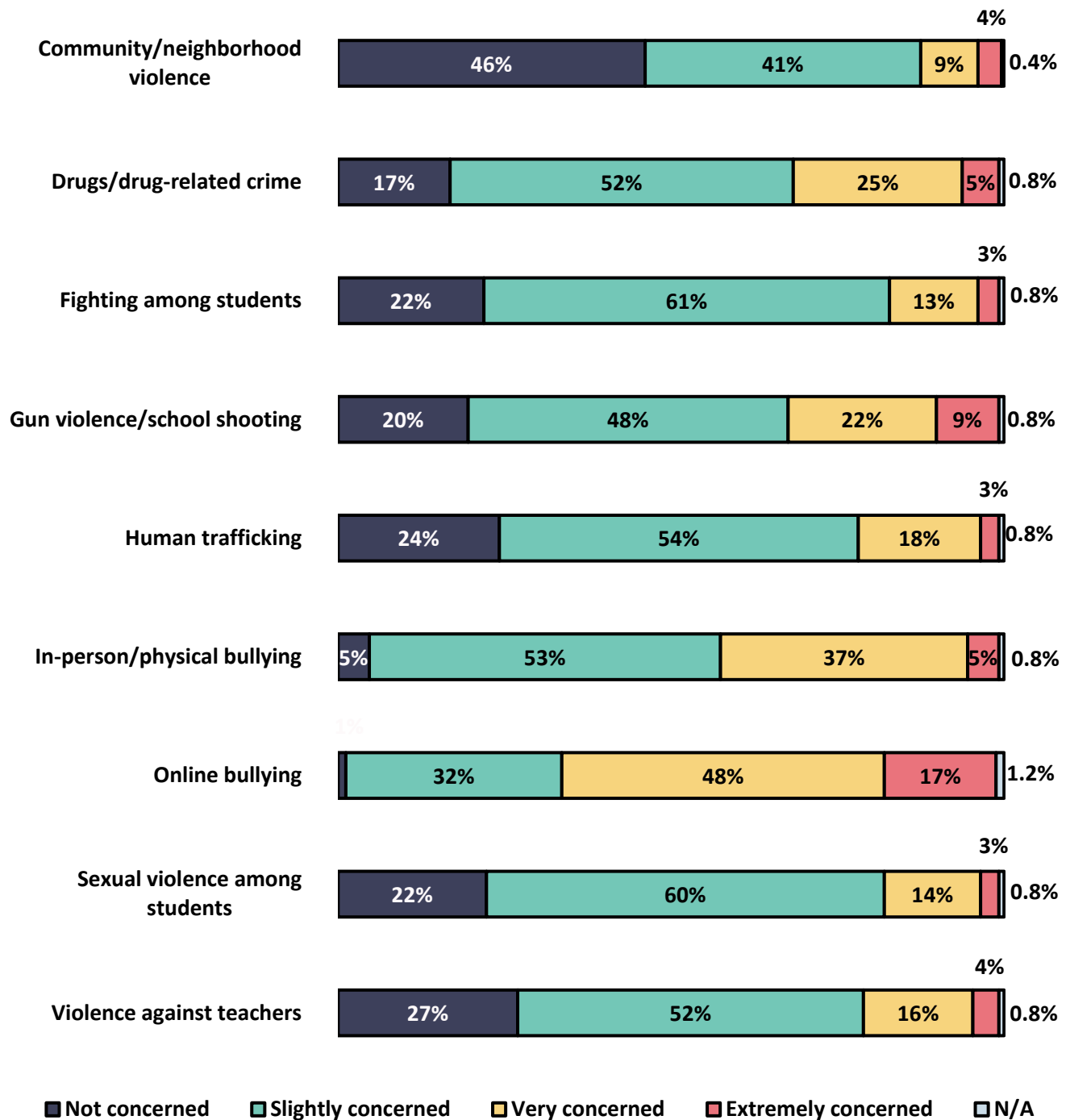


**68 superintendents responding*

21. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

SCHOOL SAFETY

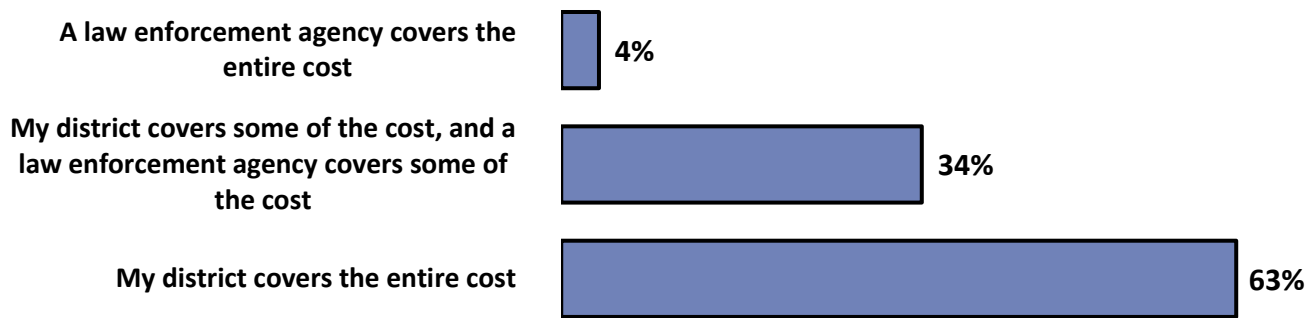
22. Please RATE the extent to which you are **concerned** in the 2024-2025 school year with the following **safety issues** in your district.



23. In how many of your district's schools are the following security areas in place AND in satisfactory operational condition for the 2024-2025 school year?



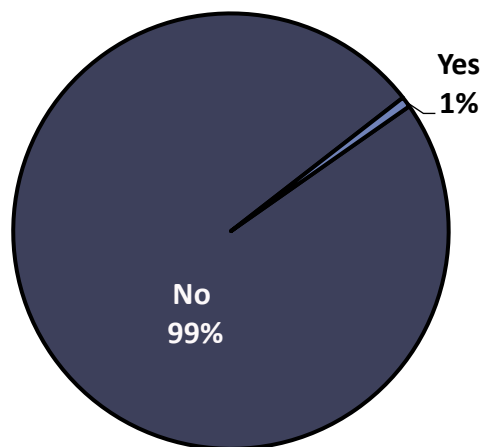
24. How are school safety personnel, commonly referred to as school resource officers, funded within your district?



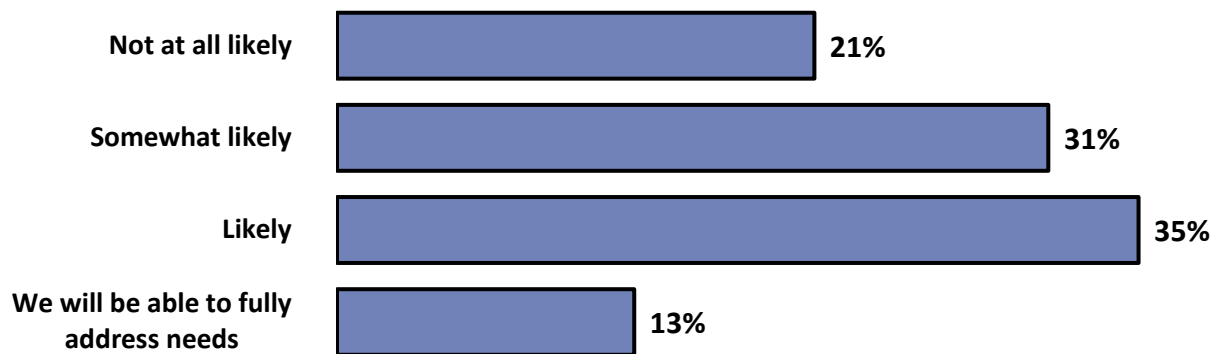
25. **SCHOOL SAFETY:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

26. Is your district virtual only? (If yes, skip to question 34.)

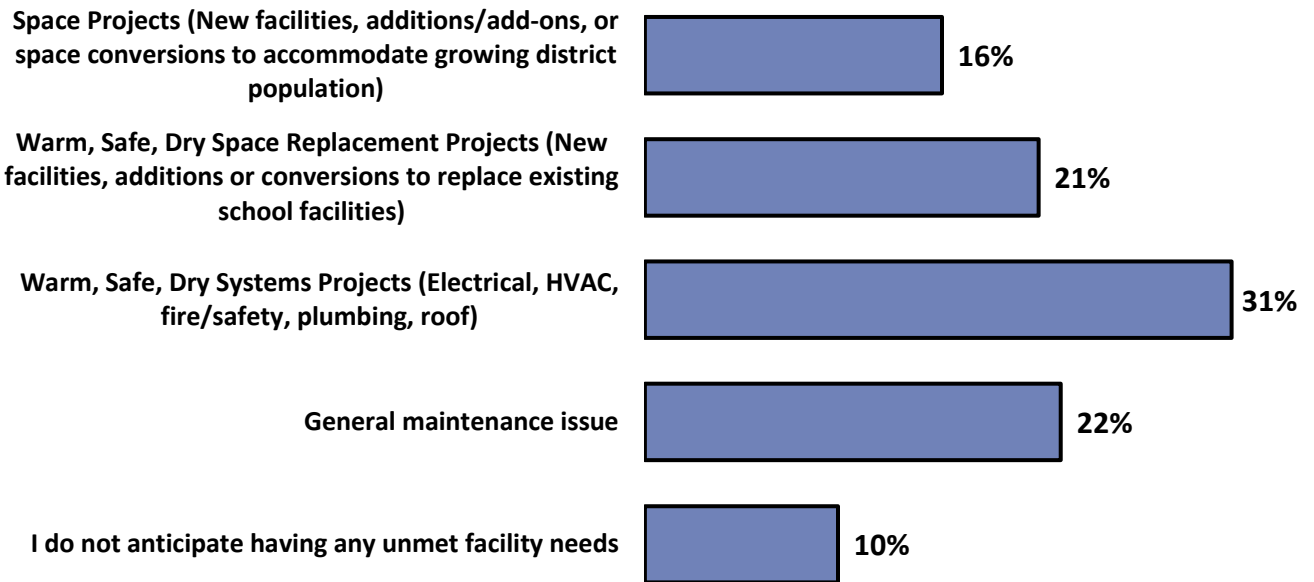


27. What is the likelihood that your school district will be able to fully address identified facility needs requiring **IMMEDIATE ATTENTION** in the 2024-2025 school year?*



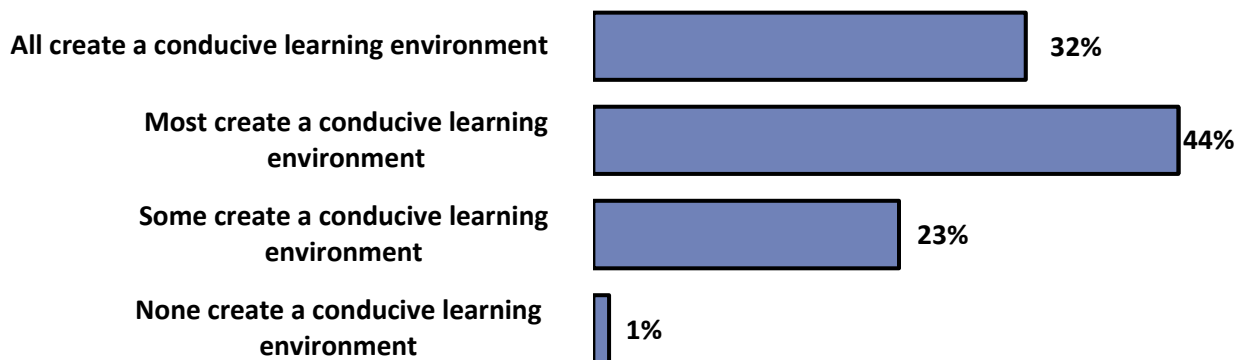
*254 superintendents responding

28. What do you anticipate being the greatest unmet facility need?



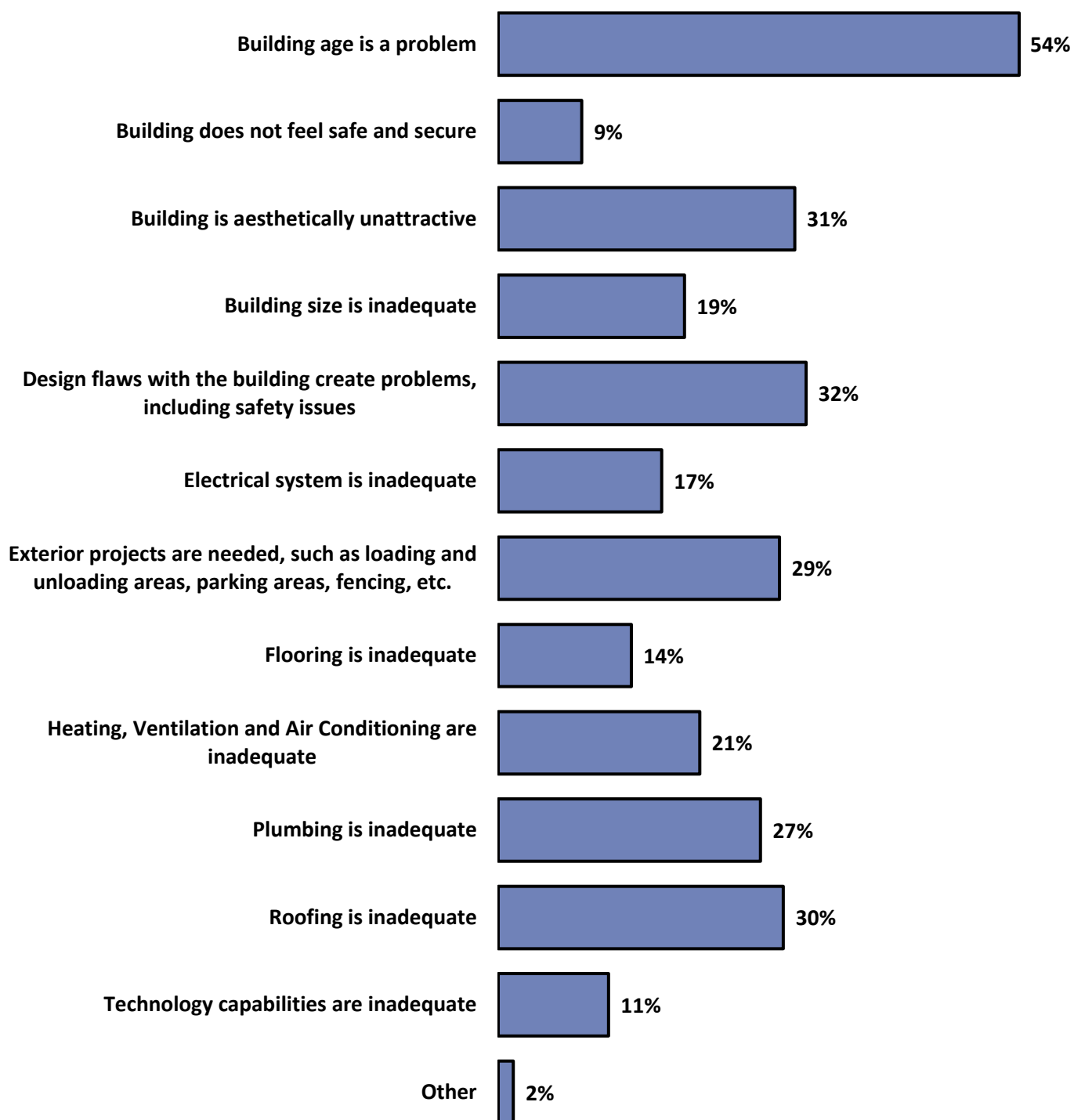
** 254 superintendents responding*

29. How would you describe the physical condition **of the school buildings in your district in 2024-2025?** (Please refer to the list in question 32 below to see factors considered in a “conductive learning environment.”)* (If all, skip to question 31.)



**254 superintendents responding*

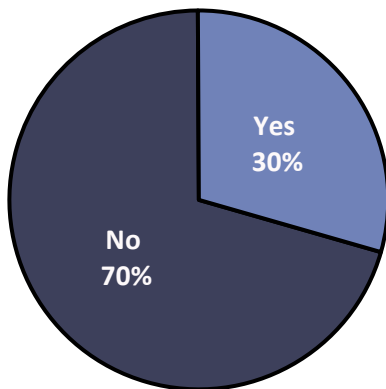
30. If you responded that **most, some or none** of your school buildings create a conducive learning environment, please identify the types of building problems below. (Please check all that apply.)



**Multiple responses from 172 superintendent*

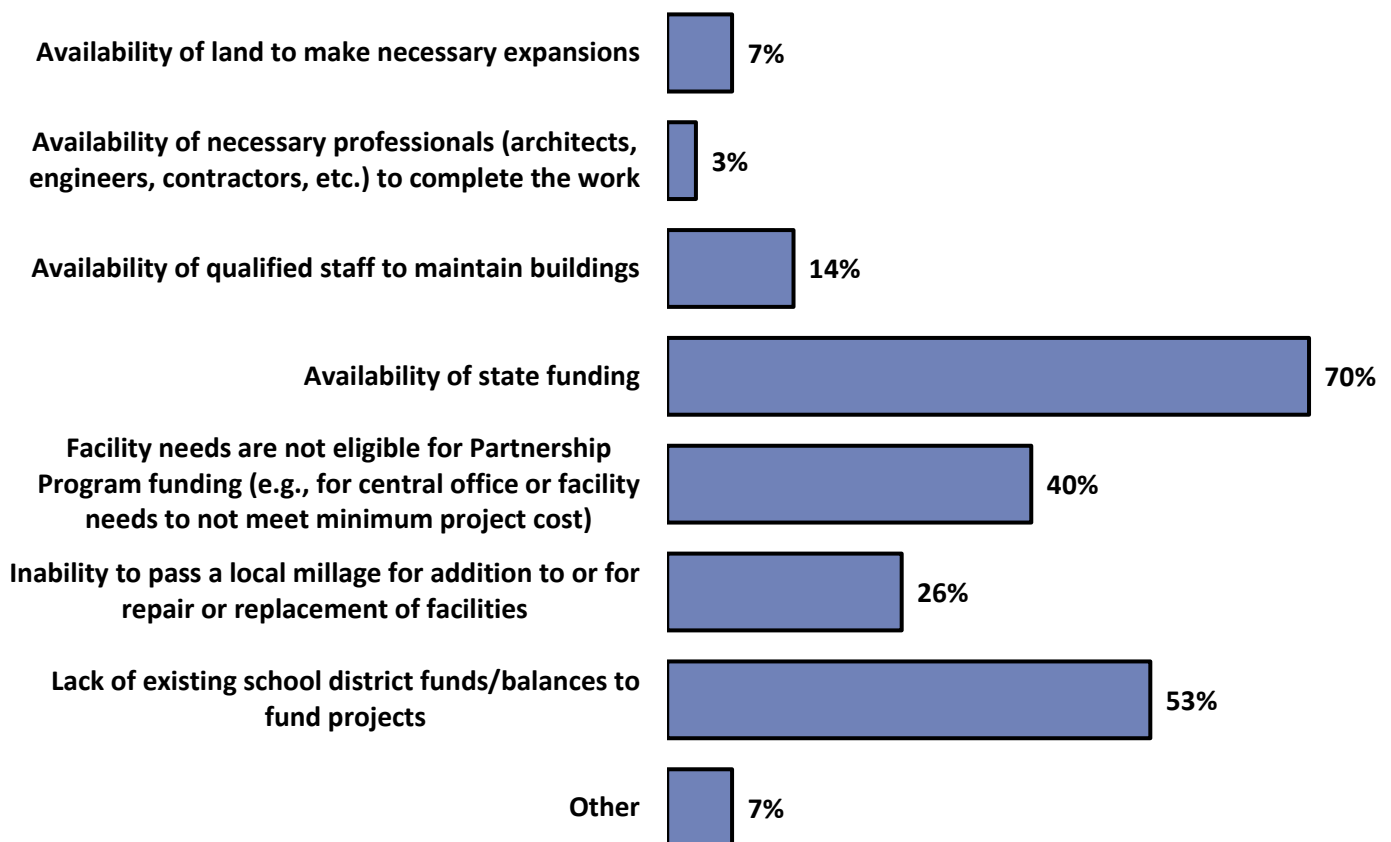
“Other” responses include concerns about the school building design, foundation, flooring, plumbing, sewer system, and needed security updates.

31. Are there any additional State supports and/or oversight that you think are needed to assist your district as you seek to provide and maintain adequate facilities for students?*



**Of those districts responding “yes”, the desired support most often mentioned was funding support.*

32. What is the greatest impediment(s) to correcting any school facility deficiencies you identified above? (Please check all that apply.)



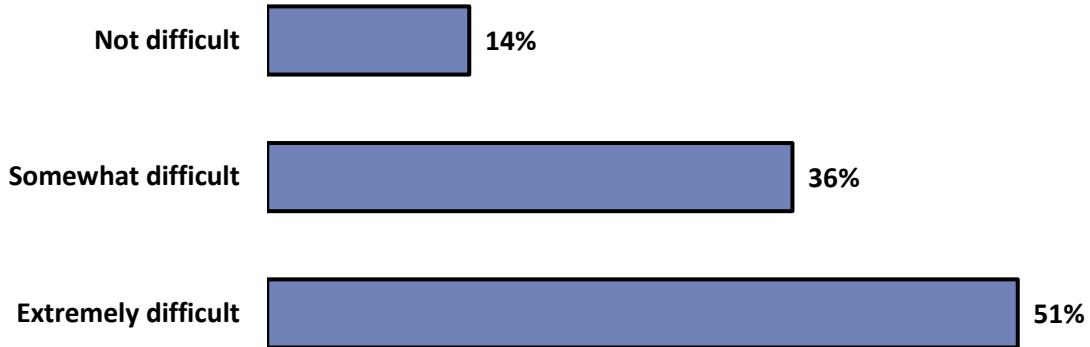
“Other” responses include concerns about the rising costs of construction, difficulty receiving school board approval for projects, possibility of a millage election failing, need for additional facility funding for charter schools, challenges faced by small/rural districts and consolidated districts, factors impacting district eligibility for Partnership funds, such as declining enrollment and proper documentation in the statewide maintenance management system.

** Multiple responses from 254 superintendents*

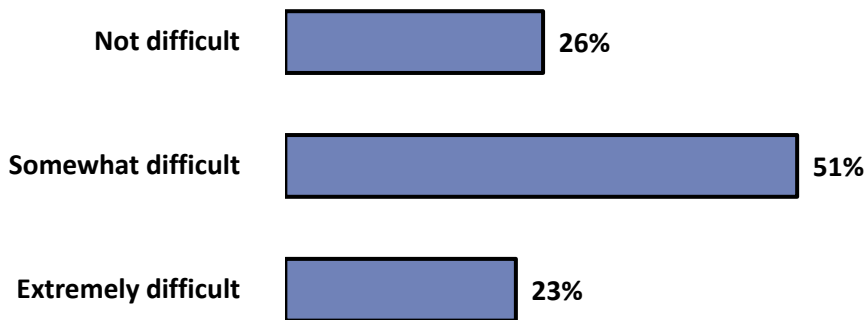
33. SCHOOL FACILITIES: Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

34. How difficult has it been in the 2024-2025 school year to recruit school bus drivers for your academic transportation routes?



35. How difficult has it been in 2024-2025 to retain school bus drivers for your academic transportation routes?



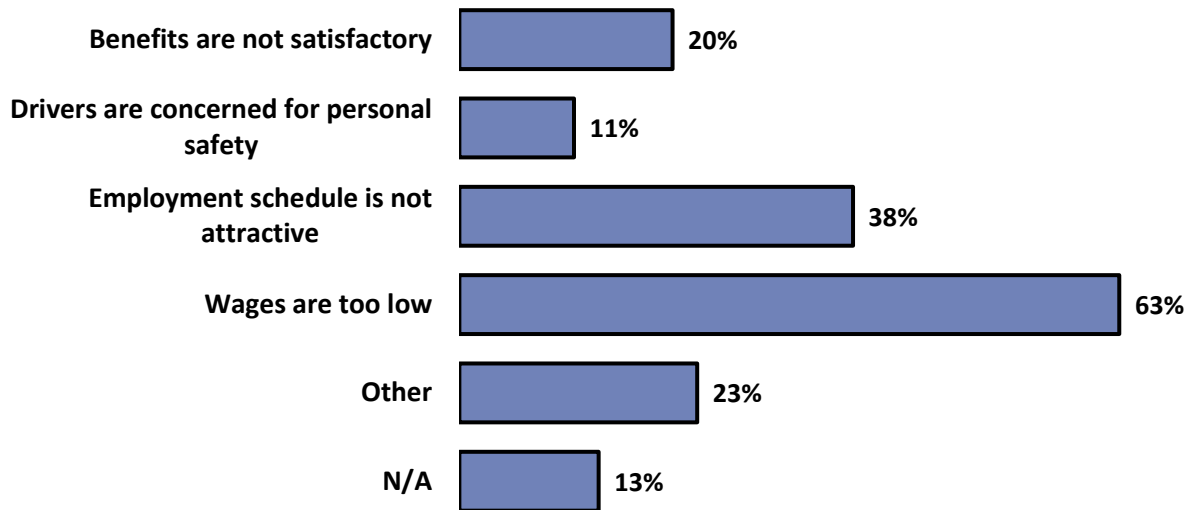
36. How many positions do you have for school bus drivers (including vacant positions) in the 2024-2025 school year? (234 superintendents responding)

- Range: 0 – 140 positions
- 91% or 234 districts report having at least one bus driver position
- Average: 15.7 positions
- 9% or 22 districts report they do not employ bus drivers

37. How many of those school bus driver positions are currently vacant? (234 superintendents responding)

- Range: 0 – 40 vacant positions
- 65% or 153 of the 234 districts report having vacant positions
- Average: 2.8 vacant positions
- 35% or 81 of the 234 districts report no vacant positions

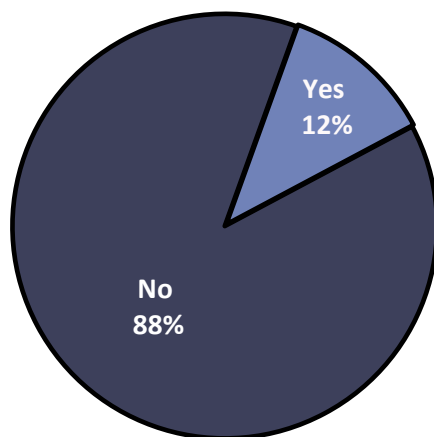
38. Please identify the greatest barrier(s) to recruiting individuals to fill school bus driver positions?
(Please check all that apply.)*



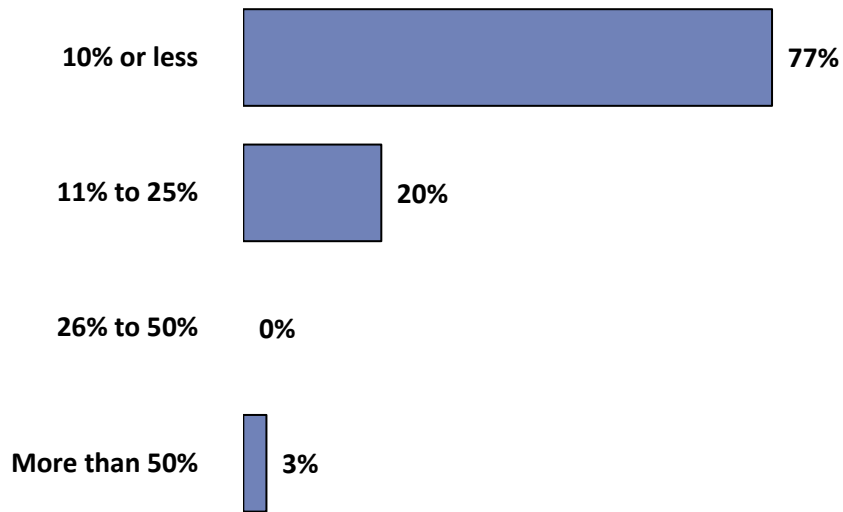
**Multiple responses from 256 superintendents*

“Other” responses include challenges of the licensure and certification requirements and student behavior.

39. Have any students missed instructional time due to bus driver staffing problems?
(If yes, skip to question 42.)

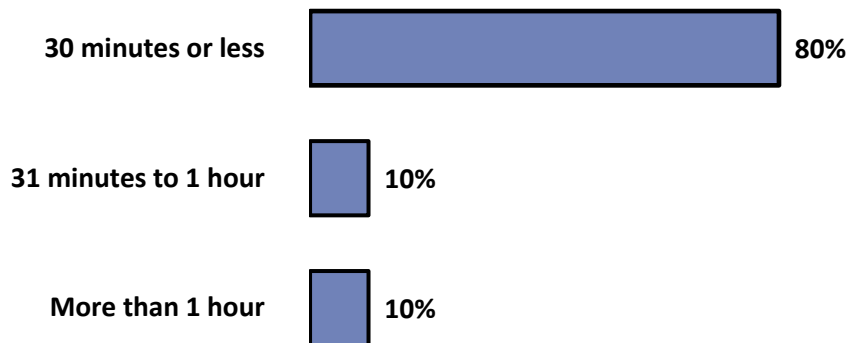


40. What percentage of your student body has lost instructional time due to bus driver staffing problems?*



**30 superintendents responding*

41. On average, how much instructional time was lost?*

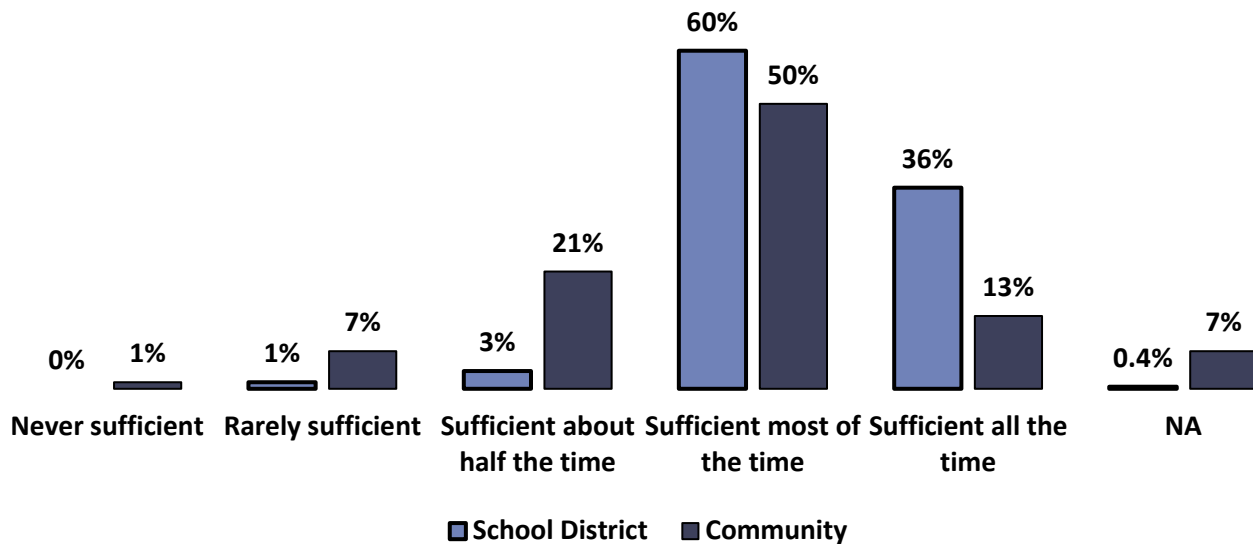


**30 superintendents responding*

42. **DISTRICT OPERATIONS:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LEARNING

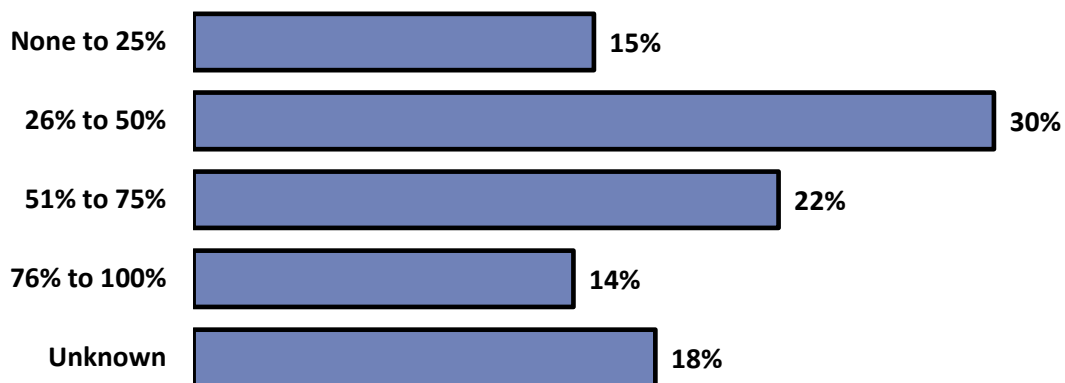
43. How sufficient is your **school district's broadband** and **your community's broadband** in allowing for smooth operations of all instructional and administrative functions?



44. What percentage of your district's students are **allowed to take home a school-owned computer/tablet** during the 2024-2025 school year?

- Range: 0% - 100%
- Average: 53%
- 30 districts/charter systems allowed **0%** of its students to take home a school-owned computer
- 49 districts/charter systems allowed **100%** of its students to take home a school-owned computer

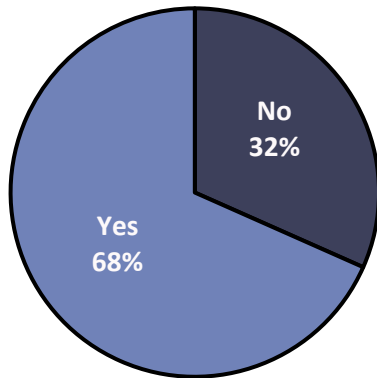
45. What percentage of your district's students **already have access to a computer at home** so do not need a school computer (**include students even if they do take home a school computer**)?



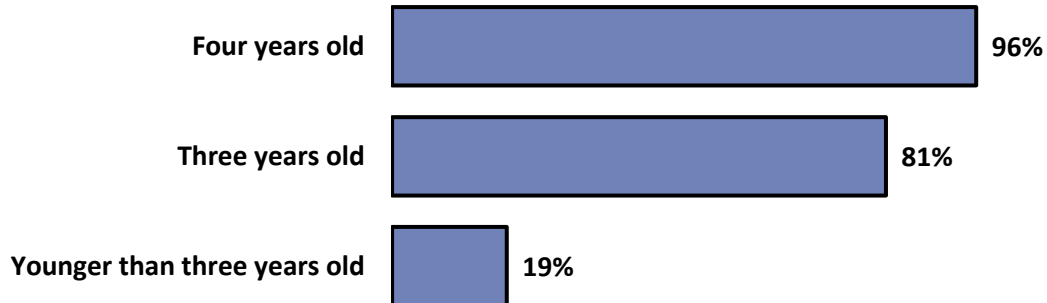
46. **TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL LEARNING:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

47. Does your district operate a preschool program during the 2024-2025 school year?

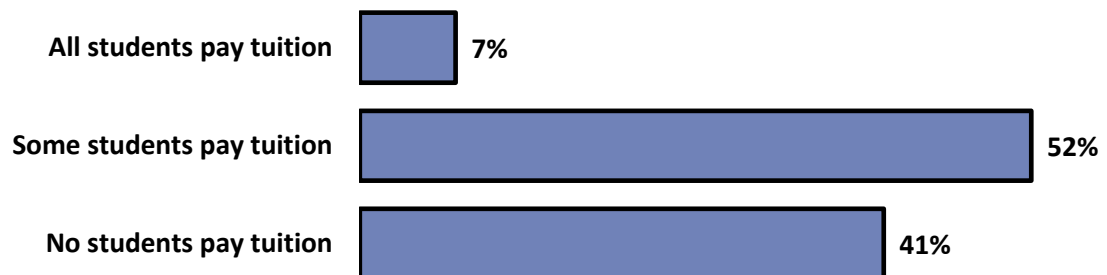


48. What ages does your preschool program serve during the 2024-2025 school year? (Check all that apply.)*



**175 superintendents responding*

49. Do preschool students in your district pay tuition to the district to attend during the 2024-2025 school year?*



**175 superintendents responding*

50. **PRESCHOOL PROGRAM:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

SCHOOL CHOICE

51. How many students who attended your district in the 2023-2024 school year utilized the School Choice option allowed in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-1901 *et seq.* to attend school in another district in the current (2024-2025) school year?
- 7 school districts (charters not included in answer because they by definition are “choice” schools) had **no students** leaving their district under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-1901 *et seq.*
 - 228 school districts had **at least one student** leaving their district under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-1901 *et seq.*
 - Of those 228 districts, the average number of students utilizing school choice to attend another district was 37.
 - Of those 228 districts, the range of students utilizing school choice to attend another district was 1 to 470.
52. **SCHOOL CHOICE:** Respondents were allowed to make comments about the preceding topic.

COMMENTS

53. Please feel free to provide any additional comments or clarification not otherwise addressed. Respondents were allowed to make overall comments.