

# Educator Voice Survey Results





**West Virginia Board of Education  
2018-2019**

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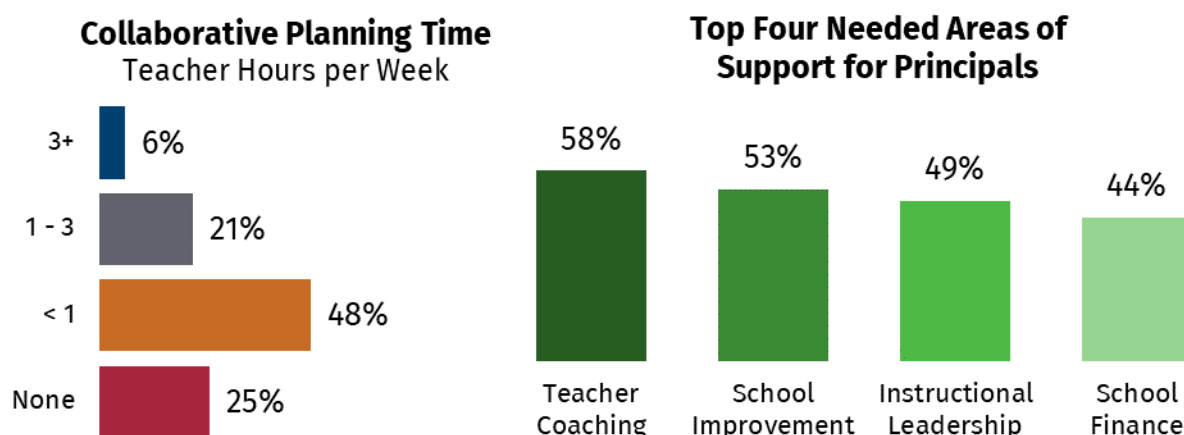
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## Executive Summary

The West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) *Educator Voice Survey* received an impressive number of responses. Over 7,000 classroom teachers and counselors and nearly 500 principals and assistant principals responded to the survey, representing response rates of 34% and 41% respectively. While the survey covers a wide range of topics from Facilities and Resources to Teacher Leadership, a unifying theme emerges. **West Virginia schools dutifully attempt myriad strategies aimed at achieving continuous improvement and better student outcomes but too often need sustained support and greater flexibility to effectively implement and fulfill the potential of these activities.**

This theme appears across numerous topic areas. Principals believe they are involving teachers in leadership, but most teachers feel they have a limited role in shaping their school. Sufficient time and resources are generally put into professional development, but most teachers do not find it aimed at their specific needs. Teachers have the flexibility to shape their instructional practices, but they lack the time to collaborate with colleagues.



Addressing underdeveloped practices requires further investigation of the root causes of these failures. The survey results point towards some **promising areas for further investigation** by the WVBE and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), in partnership with county districts:

- Teachers need **tailored professional development (PD)** to meet their specific needs and more time with their peers to sustain the learning from PD.
- Principals need **sustained leadership training** aimed at building their capacity to coach teachers, develop improvement plans, and empower teacher leaders.
- Schools need more **professional support staff** to ensure teachers have the time to focus on instruction and collaborative professional growth.
- Districts need guidance and support to **empower principals** by reducing administrative burden and involving them in making district-level decisions.

The report that follows summarizes survey results that support these avenues for exploration. It does not comprehensively cover all results due to the extensive nature of the survey. Instead, by highlighting key findings, this report aims to guide the WVBE and the WVDE in their efforts to improve outcomes for the children of West Virginia.

## Background

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) administered the *Educator Voice Survey* on behalf of the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE). The purpose of the survey is to inform the WVBE about the state of education in West Virginia and assist the Board in its future decisions. The survey includes items adapted from the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Survey, which was originally developed by the New Teacher Center.

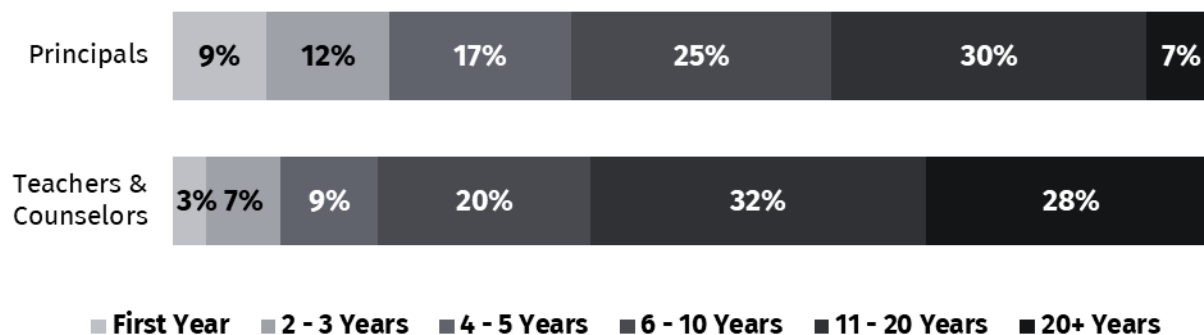
The WVDE conducted the *Educator Voice Survey* online using SurveyMonkey. Potential respondents included principals, assistant principals, counselors, and classroom teachers identified via the Certified Staff List. Identified educators received invitations to their department email addresses\* via SurveyMonkey. During the survey period—March 13 through March 29, 2019—the WVDE collected responses from 486 principals and assistant principals and 7,211 teachers and counselors.

## Demographics

Principals, classroom teachers, and counselors reported their years of experience. Teachers and counselors also provided additional information about their position.

- Most respondents are **veteran educators**.
  - Six in ten (60%) teacher and counselor respondents have 11+ years of experience.
  - Six in ten (62%) principal and assistant principal respondents have 6+ years of experience in administrative positions.
  - Of respondents to the teacher and counselor survey, 4,946 (69%) are general education teachers, 1,341 (19%) are special education teachers, 293 (4%) are counselors, 615 (9%) identified as being in other positions, and 16 did not respond to the question (0.2%).

### Experience Level of Respondents

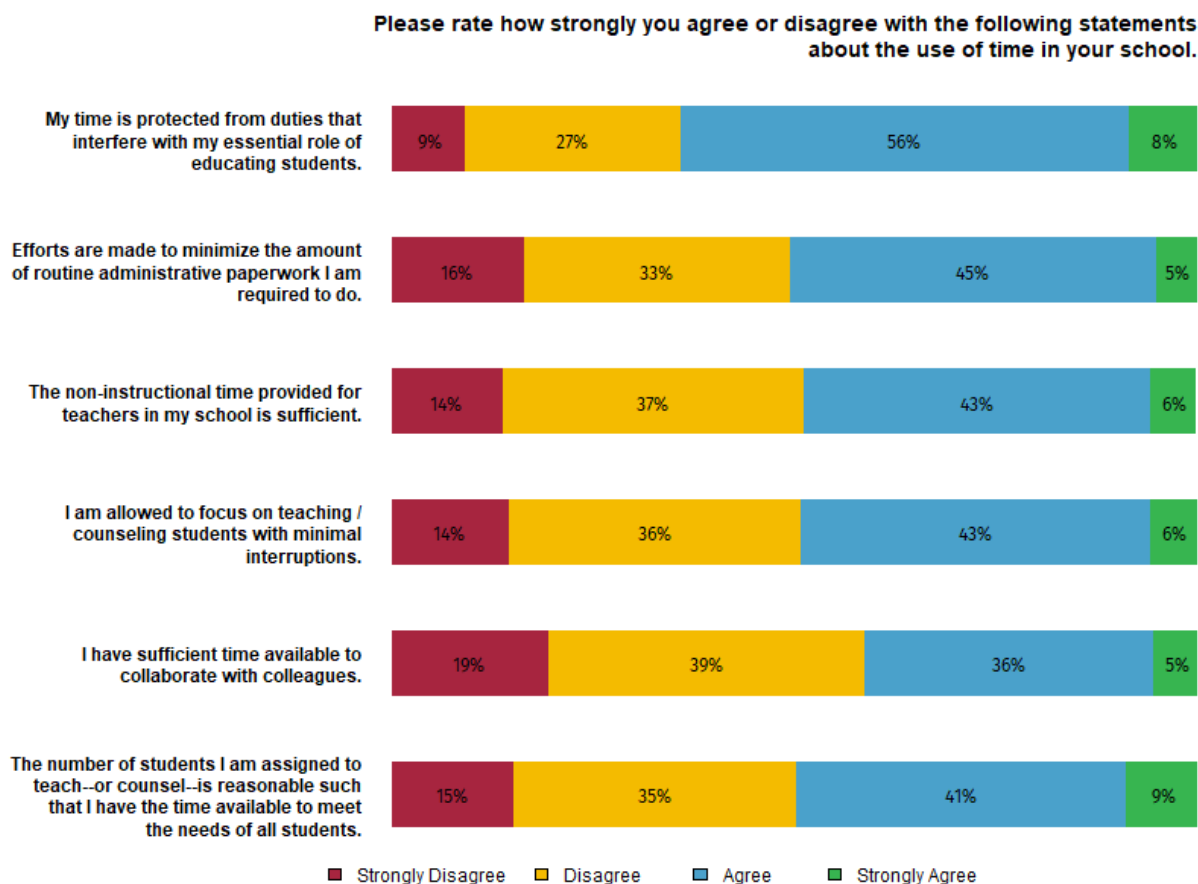


\*Educators in Kanawha County Schools received emails at their Kanawha County email addresses.

## Time

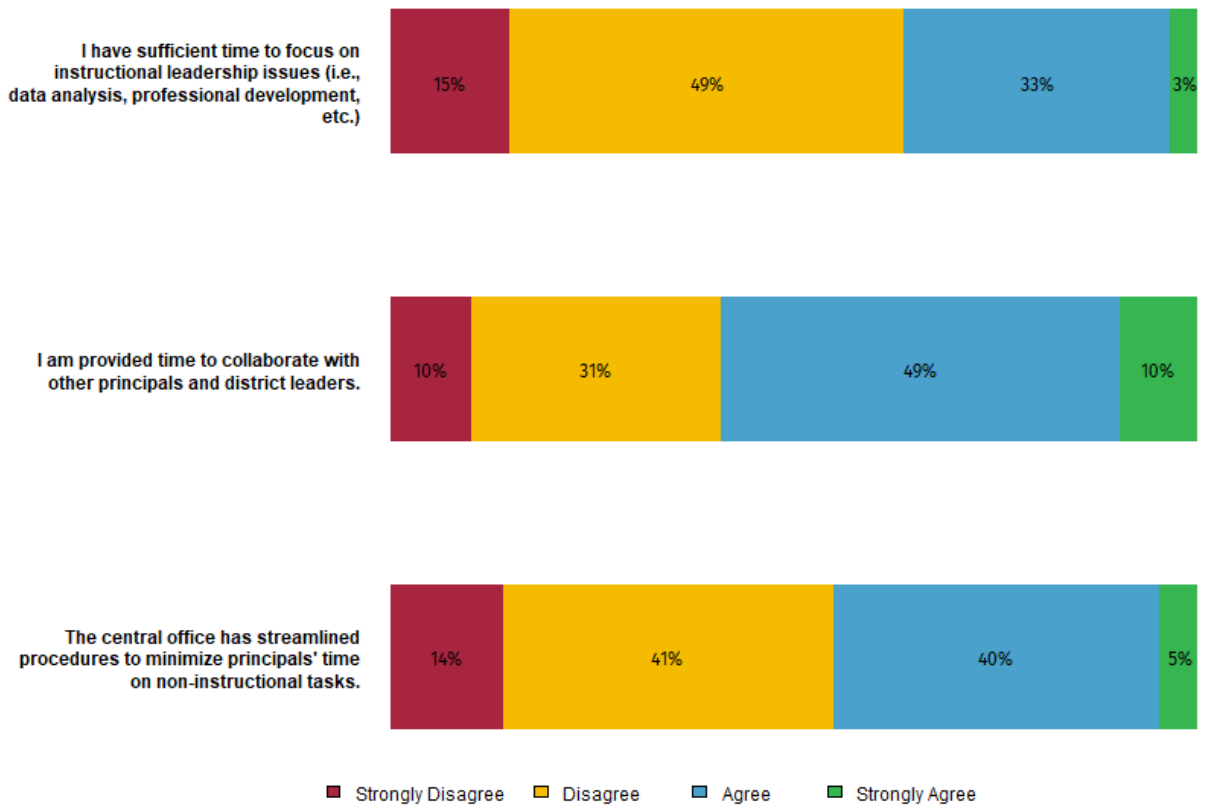
Principals, classroom teachers, and counselors reported the amount of time they spend on different tasks as well as provide their perceptions of the extent to which adequate time is available for certain key activities. The key findings are summarized below:

- Across a number of measures, teachers report being **pressed for time** given their student load.
  - Half of teachers and counselors feel they are assigned too many students (50%) and cannot work with students without being interrupted (50%).
  - Additionally, a majority of teachers feel they have insufficient non-instructional and collaborative time. In fact, three in four (73%) report spending less than one hour per week engaged in collaborative planning.
  - Teachers are working beyond their contract hours. More than four in ten (44%) teachers spend more than five hours per week working on school-related activities outside of contract hours. One in five (19%) work more than ten hours per week beyond their contract while less than one in ten (8%) report working less than one hour per week beyond their contract.



- Principals (including assistant principals) struggle finding time to **focus on instructional leadership**.
  - More than six out of every ten (64%) principals do not believe they have sufficient time to focus on instructional leadership.
  - Over half (55%) of principals do not believe central offices have streamlined procedures to allow them focus on instructional tasks.
  - Four of ten (40%) principals report spending 10 or more hours per week on administrative, operational, and paperwork tasks, compared to 3% who report spending that much time observing and coaching teachers.
  - More than three quarters (77%) of principals report working more than 50 hours per week. More than a third (36%) report working more than 60 hours per week.

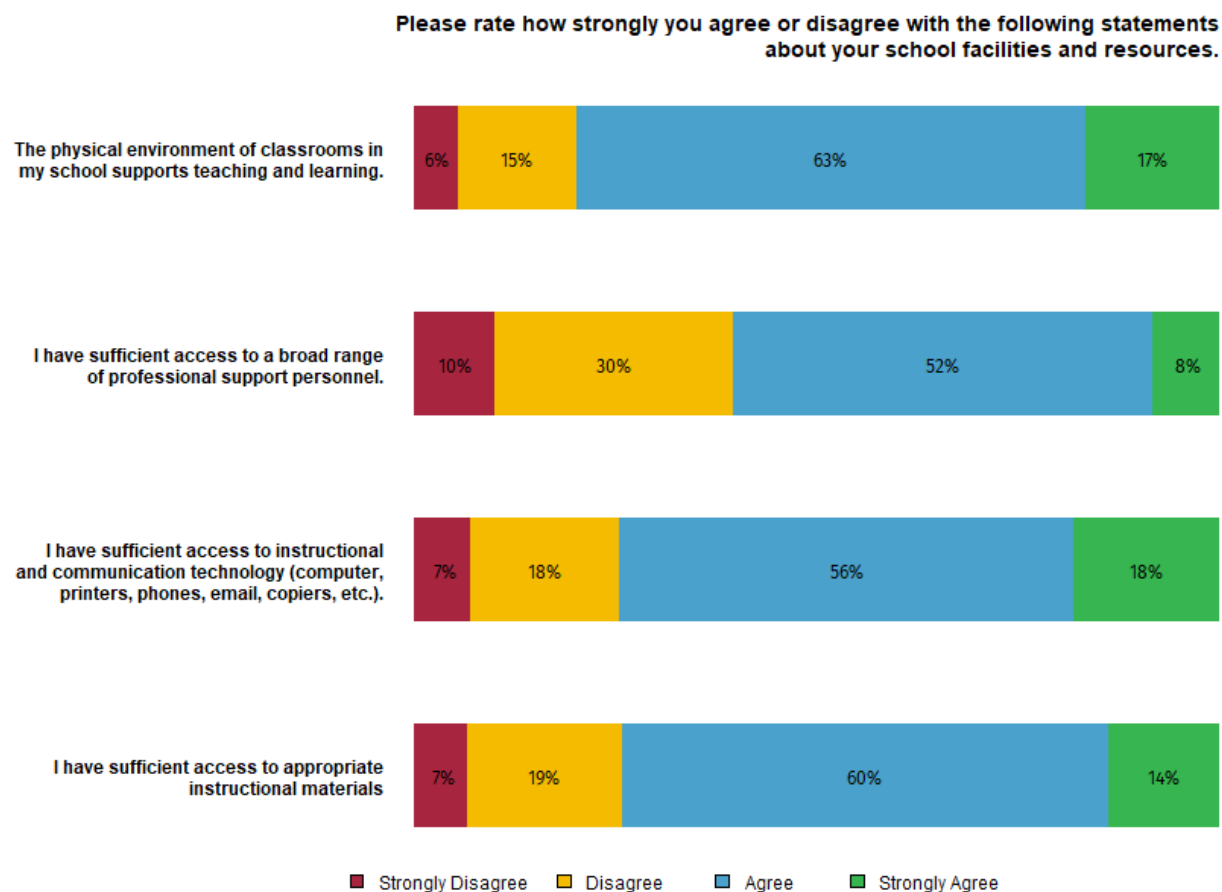
Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of time in your school and district.



## Facilities and Resources

Principals, classroom teachers, and counselors reported their beliefs about whether staff, facilities, and materials are adequate to meet student needs. The key findings are summarized below:

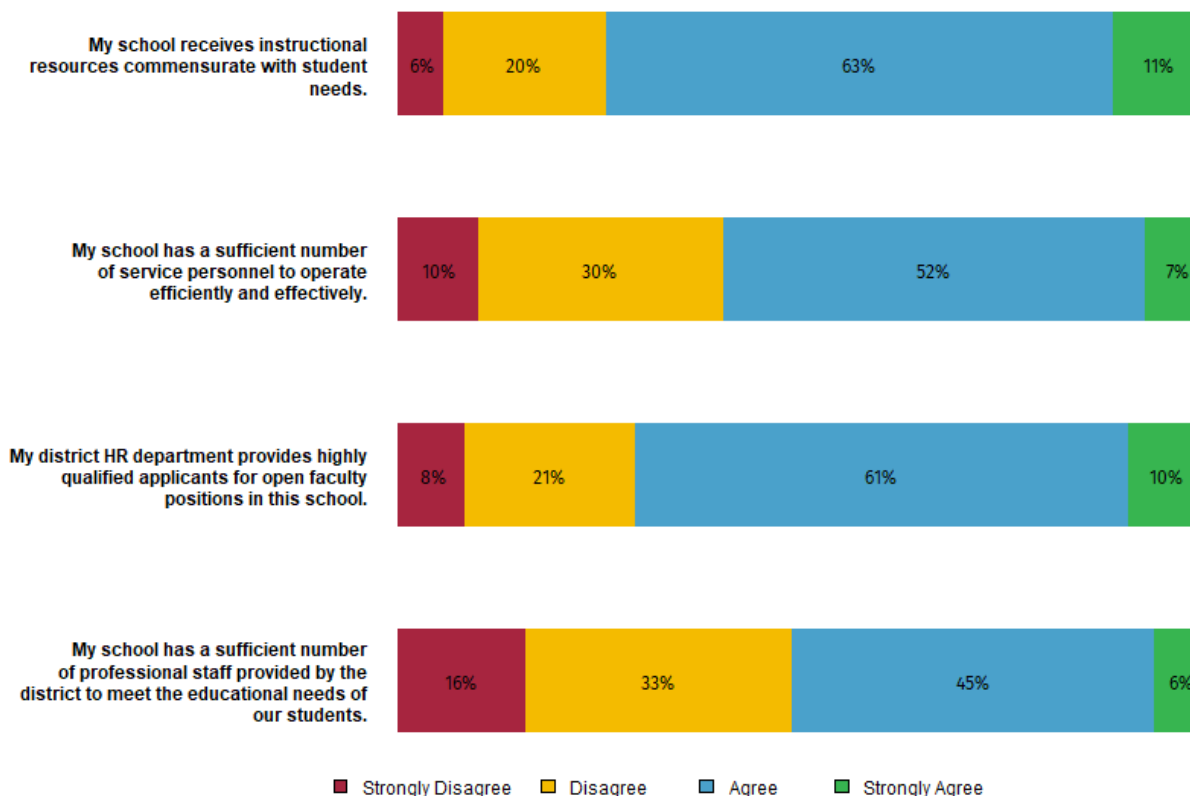
- Educators are more concerned with **increasing the number of professional support staff** than improving material or physical resources (e.g., buildings, technology, etc.).
  - Substantial majorities of teachers and counselors agree that material resources (74%) and physical spaces (80%) are adequate to support learning.
  - Four in ten (40%) teachers and counselors disagree they have adequate access to professional support personnel such as social workers or librarians.



- Nearly half (49%) of principals do not believe their school has an adequate number of professional staff to meet student needs while nearly three in four (74%) do believe they receive the necessary instructional resources.



Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school facilities and resources.

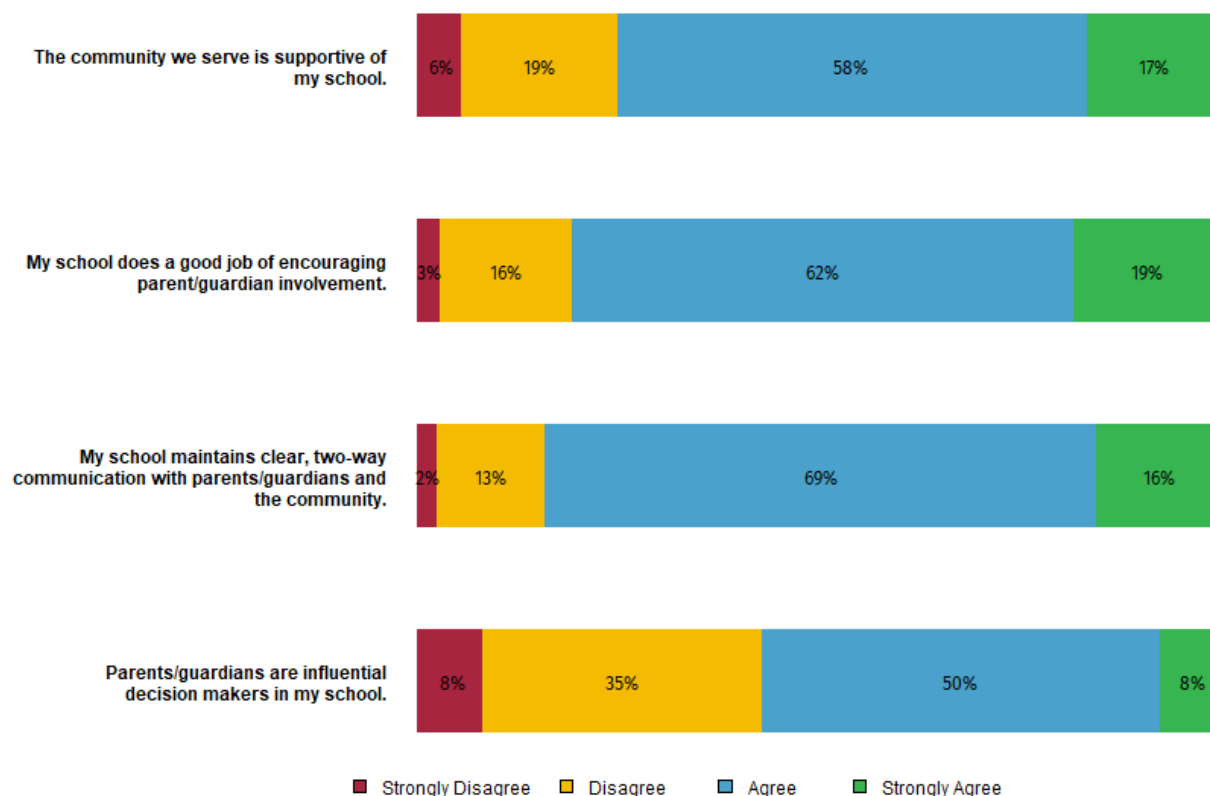


## Community Support and Involvement

Classroom teachers and counselors reported their perceptions of the relationship between parents/guardians, the community, and the school. The key findings are summarized below:

- Schools engage parents and the community, but there is some evidence that **parent involvement has a limited impact on school decisions.**
  - Three in four (75%) teachers and counselors agree that the community supports their schools.
  - Eight in ten (81%) teachers and counselors believe their schools do a good job encouraging parental involvement, but only 8% strongly agree that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in their schools. About four in ten (43%) disagree or strongly disagree with that statement.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about community support and involvement in your school.

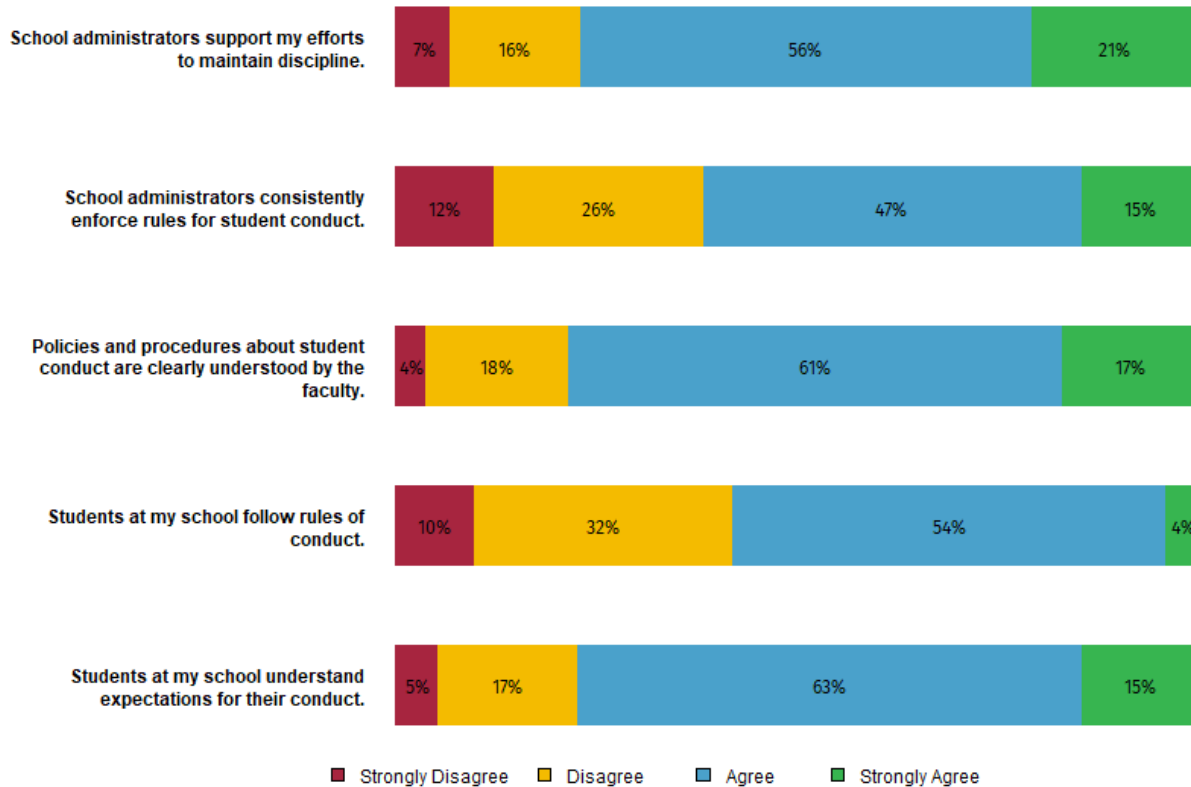


## Managing Student Conduct

Classroom teachers and counselors reported their perceptions of student behavior, the school guidelines governing behavior, and the actions of administrators in relation to behavior. The key findings are summarized below:

- Expectations for student behavior are clear, and students and educators generally follow rules of conduct. However, many educators report **concerns about student behavior and inconsistent application of discipline policies**.
  - Overwhelming majorities of teachers and counselors feel supported in their disciplinary efforts (77%) and believe behavioral rules are clear to staff (78%) and students (78%).
  - While rules are clear, and a majority of teachers believe students follow the rules of conduct, fewer than one in twenty (4%) teachers and counselors strongly agree that students follow these rules. In comparison, one in ten (10%) strongly disagree that students follow these rules.
  - About four in ten (38%) teachers and counselors do not believe administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct in your school.

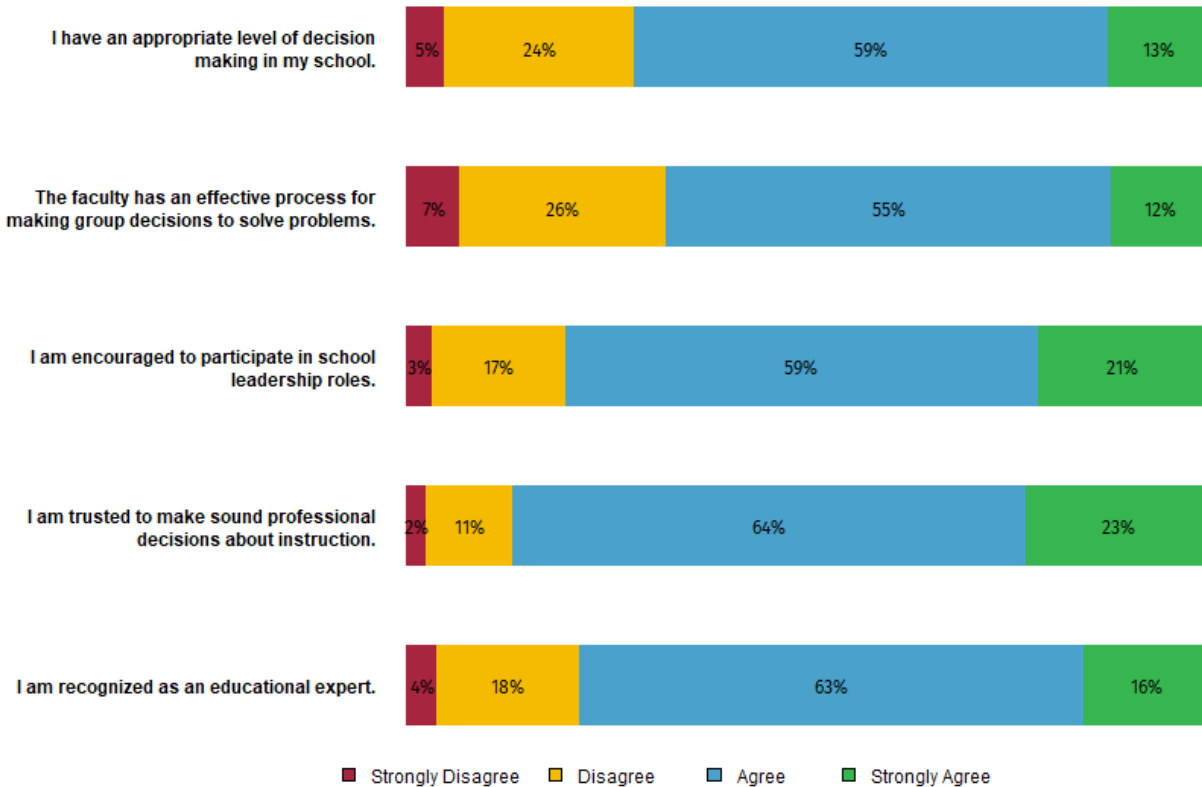


## Teacher Leadership

Principals, classroom teachers, and counselors reported their perceptions of the role that teachers have in a number of leadership areas from strategic planning to choosing professional development. The key findings are summarized below:

- Schools recognize the importance of teacher leadership, but **few are effectively engaging teachers in decision making** beyond their classrooms.
  - Most teachers report feeling trusted to make instructional decisions (87%), encouraged to take part in leadership (80%), and that they have an appropriate role in decision making (72%).
  - However, a majority of teachers report having no role or a small role in ten of eleven leadership activities. The only area where a majority report a greater role is devising teaching techniques (59%).
  - Only around one-quarter (24%) of teachers report having more than a small role in strategic planning or establishing school mission/vision.
  - Only one in five (20%) teachers and counselors report having a moderate or large role in determining the content of in-service professional development.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about teacher leadership in your school.

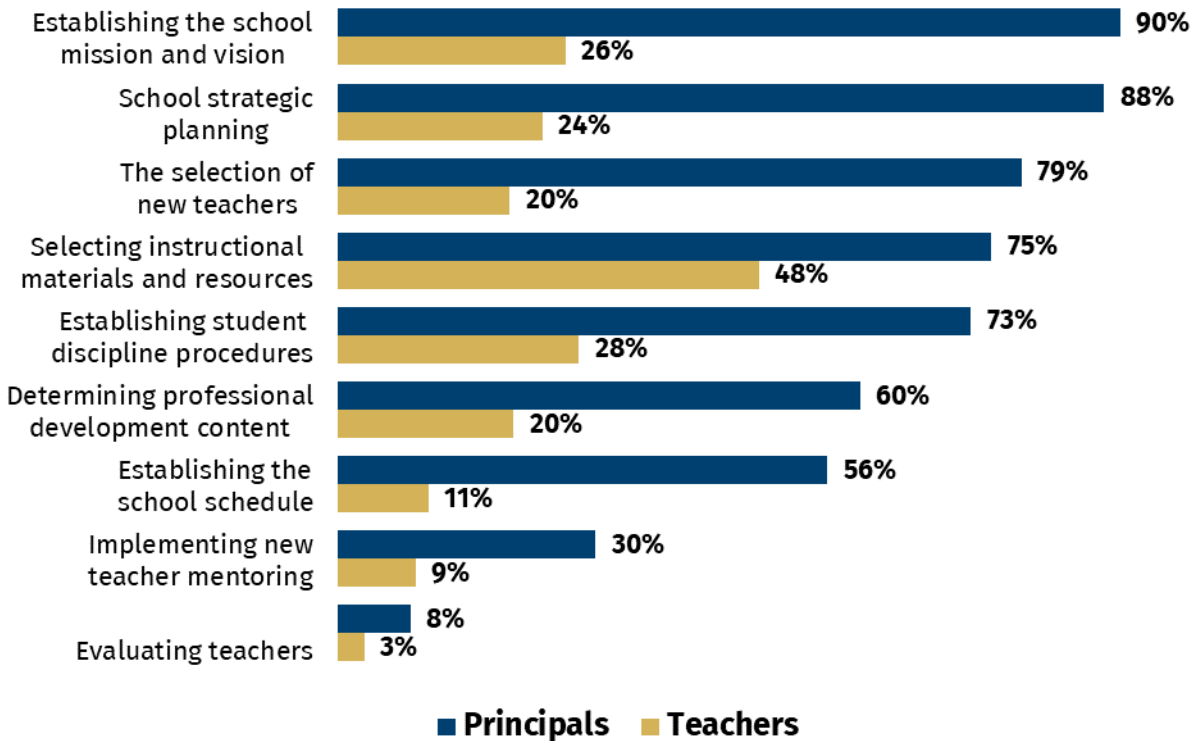


- Principal and teacher views diverge sharply on many aspects of teacher leadership.**

Teachers consistently see themselves as playing a smaller role in leadership than principals see teachers playing overall. This difference may indicate that teacher leadership is concentrated among a few teachers at each school, leaving most teachers disconnected from school-level decision making.

- More than half of principals (53%) see teachers playing a large role in strategic planning while only 6% of teachers see themselves playing such a role.
  - When it comes to setting the mission and vision of the school, six in ten principals (62%) report teachers as having a large role while only 7% of teachers report having a large role themselves.
  - Other topics where principals report moderate or large roles for teachers at far higher rates than individual teachers include:
    - Selection of new teachers (79% vs. 20%)
    - Establishing student discipline procedures (73% vs. 28%)
    - Determining professional development content (60% vs. 20%)
    - Scheduling (56% vs. 11%)

## % of Principals/Teachers who See a Moderate or Large Role for Teachers/Themselves in Decision Making

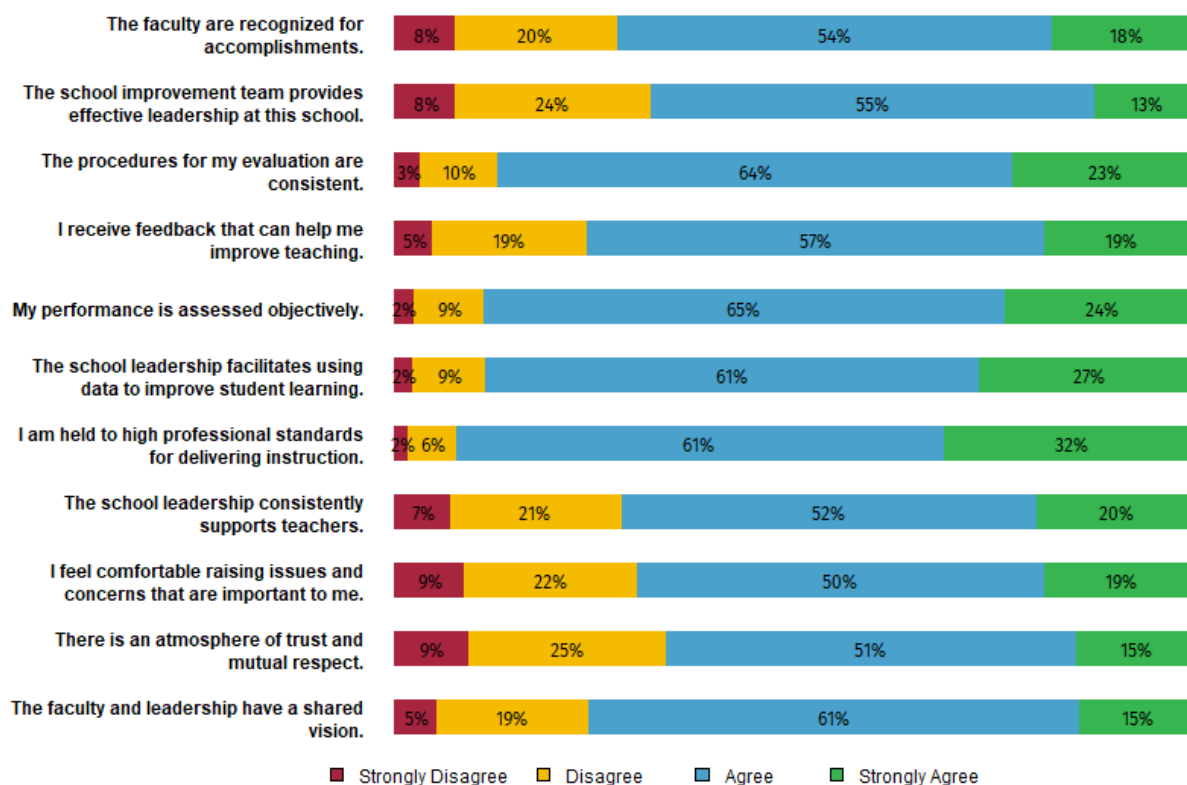


### School Leadership

Classroom teachers and counselors reported their perceptions of school leadership overall. Topics ranged from setting a vision for the school to addressing concerns of educators. The key findings are summarized below:

- Educators are **generally positive about school leadership**, though there is room for improvement. Few educators have strong positive perceptions of school leadership.
  - Nine in ten (92%) teachers and counselors feel they are held to a high standard by their school leadership while almost as many (89%) believe school leadership facilitates using data to improve student learning.
  - On the other hand, about one in three (34%) teachers and counselors do not believe there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in their school.
  - About three in ten teachers and counselors do not believe school leaders address teacher concerns regarding new teacher support (33%), managing student conduct (33%), and general leadership issues (35%).

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about school leadership in your school.

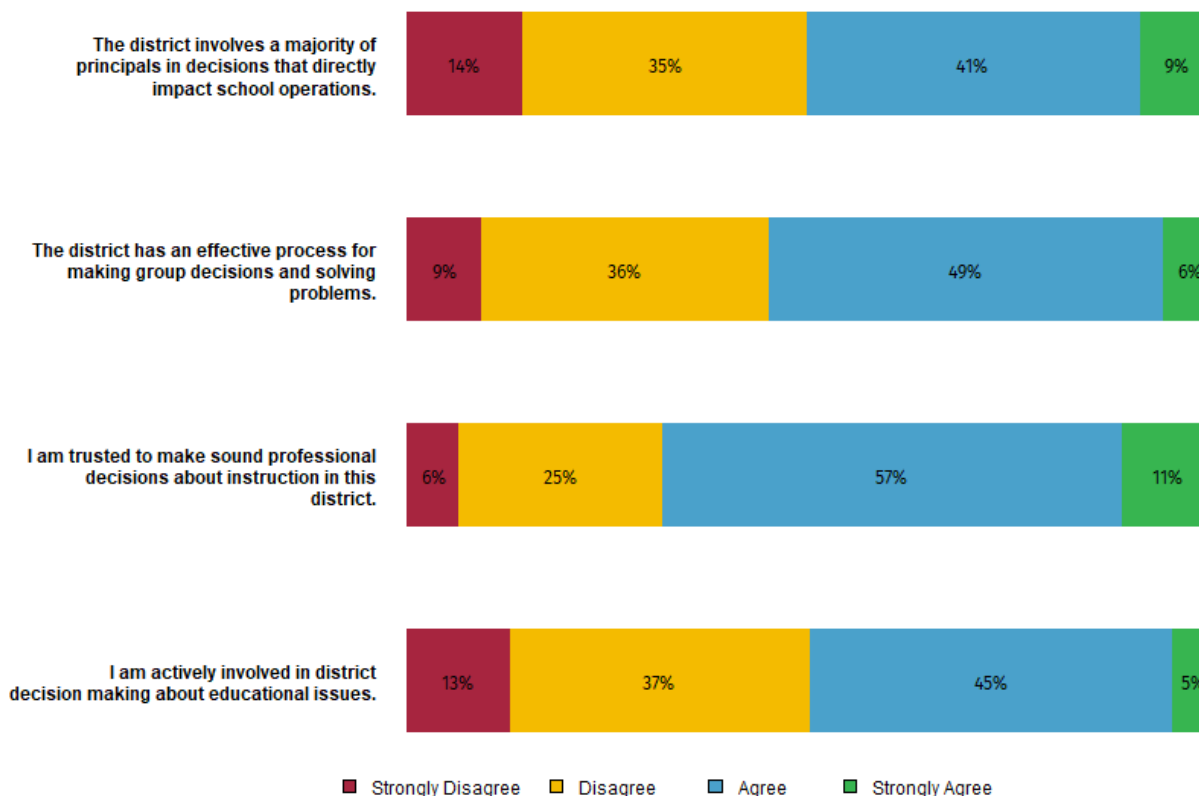


## District Leadership

Principals reported their perceptions of district leadership on topics ranging from the support provided to schools to principals' input into district-level decisions. The key findings are summarized below:

- Principals generally believe they are trusted to make instructional decisions, but **around half do not believe** they are included in **district-level decision making**.
  - Half (50%) of principals do not believe they are actively involved in educational decision making at the district level. Only one in twenty (5%) strongly agree they are actively involved.
  - Nearly half (45%) of principals do not believe their districts have an effective process for group decision making and problem solving.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about decision making in your district.

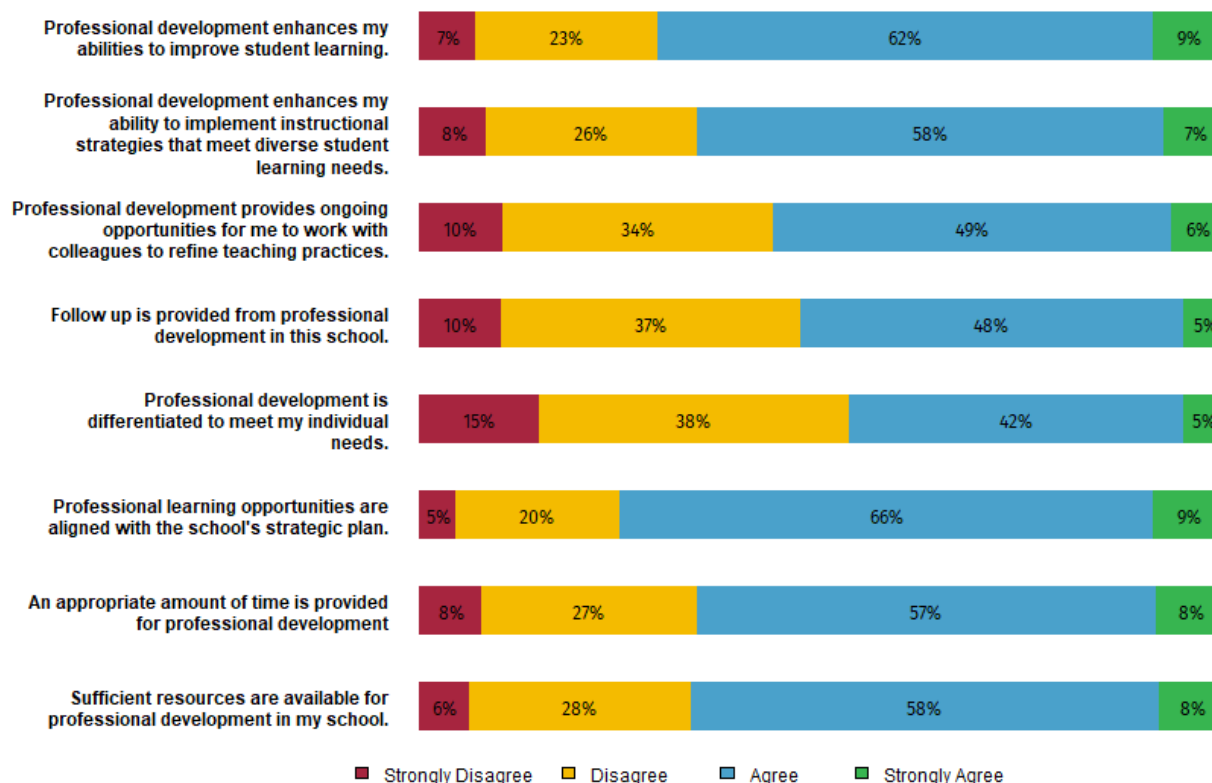


## Professional Development

Principals, classroom teachers, and counselors reported the amount of time spent on professional development, as well as their perceptions of whether professional development is adequate. Principals identified areas where they need additional professional development. The key findings are summarized below:

- While teachers and counselors respond positively about professional development (PD) overall, there is **room for improvement in meeting their needs as educators**.
  - A majority (54%) of teachers and counselors do not believe PD is differentiated to meet their individual needs.
  - Nearly half (47%) report a lack of follow up to PD, and more teachers strongly disagree than strongly agree (8% vs. 7%) that PD helps them implement strategies to meet diverse student learning needs.
  - Nearly half (45%) of teachers and counselors report participating in PD during instructional hours on at least five days so far during the 2018-19 school year.
  - More than one in three (34%) teachers and counselors report not being paid for PD that occurred outside of contract hours.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about professional development in your school.



- A majority of principals report needing **additional support around teacher coaching and school improvement planning** to lead their schools more effectively.
  - Nearly six in ten principals (58%) need more support coaching teachers.
  - Over half the principals (53%) who responded report needing additional professional development to help them plan for school improvement.
  - Nearly half of principals want support to improve their instructional leadership (49%) and management of school finance (44%).



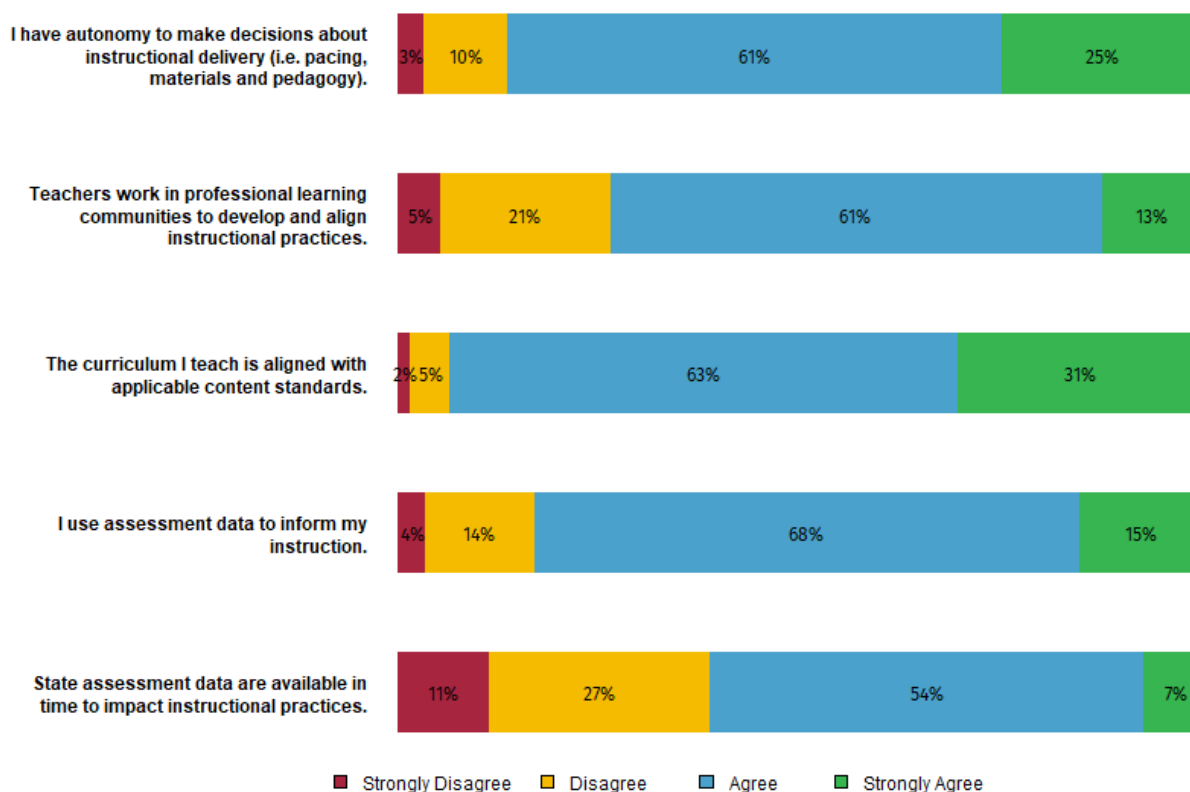


### Instructional Practices and Support

Classroom teachers and counselors reported their perceptions about the processes that shape instruction in their schools, from standards-aligned curriculum to professional learning communities. The key findings are summarized below:

- Teachers and counselors provide broadly positive responses on a range of instructional practices in their schools. The implementation of **professional learning communities (PLCs) is a potential area for improvement.**
  - Nearly 95% of teachers and counselors believe their curriculum is aligned to standards. Over 85% believe they have autonomy over instructional decisions.
  - Eight in ten (83%) educators use assessments to inform their instruction.
  - About one quarter of educators (26%) do not work in PLCs to develop and align practices and only one in ten (13%) strongly agree that they do.

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about instructional practices and support in your school.

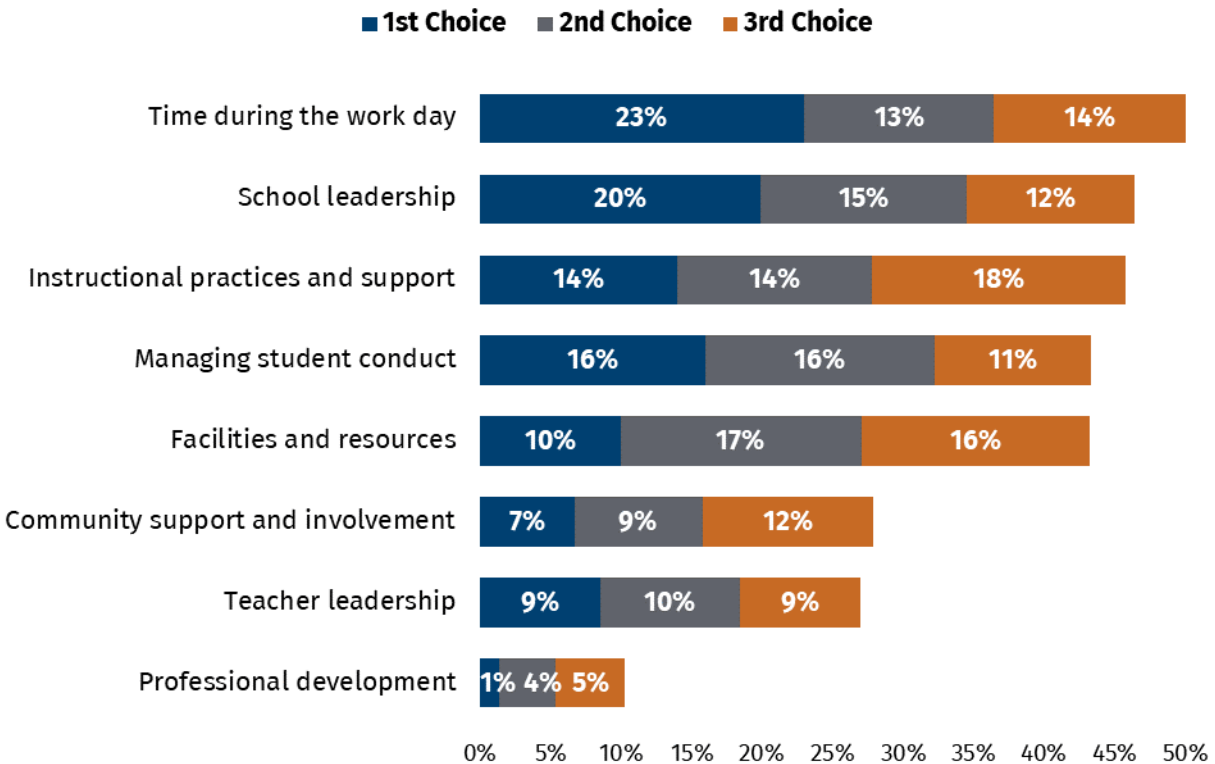


## Retention

Principals, classroom teachers, and counselors reported on their professional plans for next year and the factors influencing their decisions. The key findings are summarized below:

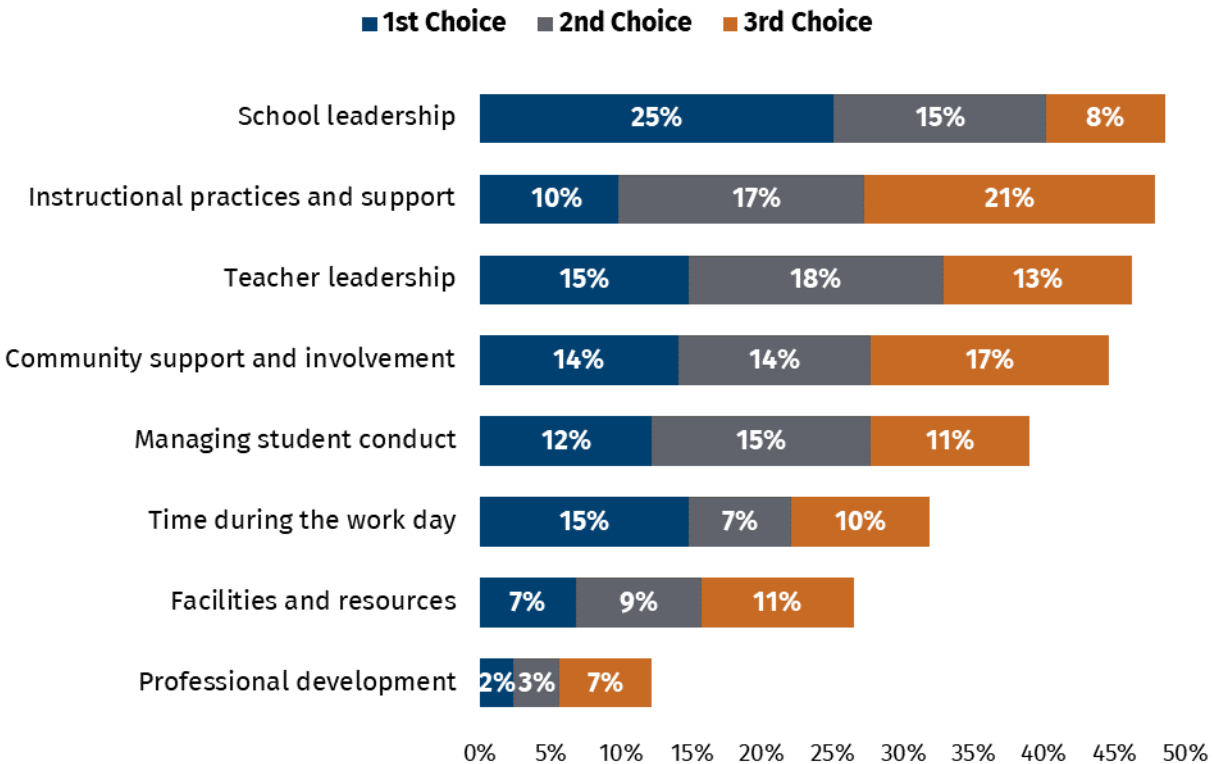
- Many teachers and counselors plan to change jobs next year with a substantial portion planning to leave education. **Time during the work day** is the biggest factor that teachers weigh when deciding whether to continue teaching.
  - While three quarters (75%) of teachers and counselors plan to stay at their school next year, nearly one out of ten (9%) teachers and counselors plan to leave education entirely next year.
  - Half (50%) of respondents rank time during their work day as a top three factor (out of eight), though they do not indicate if factors are positive or negative.
  - School leadership is the next most important factor (46%). Only one in ten (10%) teachers and counselors list professional development in the top three.

## Which aspect of your teaching conditions most affects your willingness to stay in teaching? (Rank your top 3.)



- The most important factors influencing whether principals remain in their positions are **overall school leadership and the leadership displayed by teachers** at the school.
  - Three in four (75%) principals plan to remain at their current school.
  - About one in ten (12%) principals plan to pursue other administrative or teaching positions while a tenth of (10%) principals plan to retire or leave the principalship for other reasons.
  - About half (49%) of principals name school leadership as a top three factor influencing their plans. One quarter (25%) name it as the top factor.

## Which aspects of your job most affect your willingness to remain as principal in your school? (Rank top 3.)

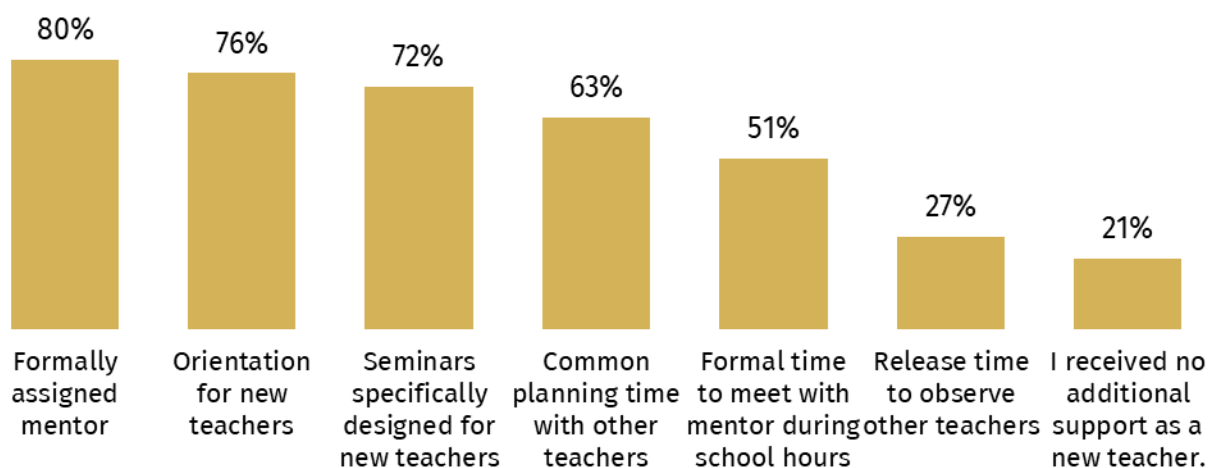


### New Teacher Support

Early career teachers reported what supports they receive with particular attention paid to their relationships with mentor teachers. The key findings are summarized below:

- New teacher support focuses largely on one-off activities. Most new teachers **do not have additional time** granted to help them **learn from other teachers**. New teacher mentorship displays mixed success.
  - Substantial majorities of new teachers and counselors report having a mentor (80%), receiving orientation (76%), and attending specifically tailored seminars (72%), but one in five (20%) report receiving no additional support.
  - Additionally, new teachers are frequently not granted additional time to observe other teachers (over seven in ten, 73%, do not) or to meet with their mentor during school hours (nearly half, 49%, do not).
  - Nearly half (46%) of new teachers are not in the same school as their mentors, and two in three (66%) new teachers never observe their mentors teach.
  - New teachers and their mentors engage more in discussion of classroom management/addressing student behavior than in other activities. In all other activities, at least three in ten new teachers report being “not at all” or “hardly at all” influenced by their mentor.

## % of New Teachers who Receive Formal Supports



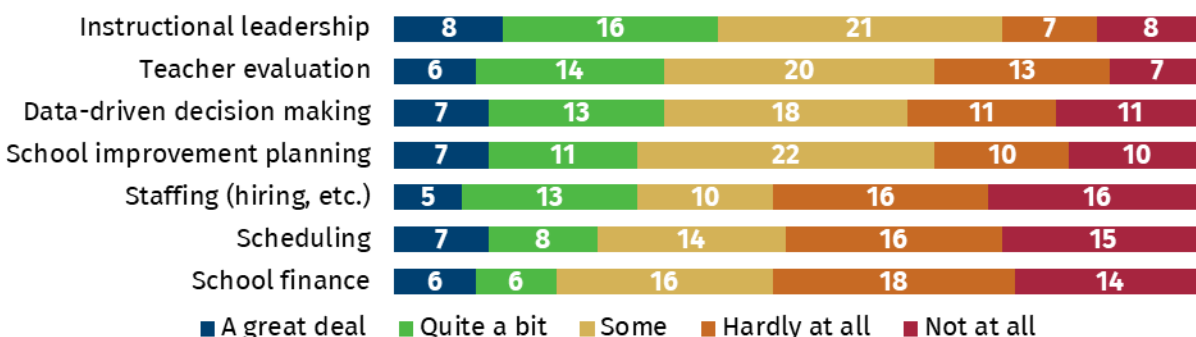
### Principal Mentoring

New principals reported on their experience with mentor principals and their perceptions of the effects of principal mentoring on their professional practices. The key findings are summarized below:

- Since only early career principals received these questions, there are relatively few respondents and results should be interpreted cautiously.
- Most new principals had a formal mentor, but new principals feel their mentors **rarely provide extensive support** across a range of topics.
  - Seven of ten early career principals (71%) report having a formal mentor.
  - No more than two in five principals felt they receive “Quite a bit” or “A Great Deal” of support from their mentors in any of the topics surveyed. These ranged from Instructional Leadership (40% at those levels of support) to School Finance (20%).
  - Majorities of principals felt they receive no or hardly any support in School Finance (53%), Staffing (53%), and Scheduling (52%) from their mentors.

### Amount of Mentor Support Received by New Principals

(Count of Responses; Total = 60)









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