SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
Perspectives from America's Schools

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RESEARCH CENTER

ABOUT EDITORIAL PROJECTS IN EDUCATION

Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization based in Bethesda, Md. Its primary mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of important issues in American education. EPE covers local, state, national, and international news and issues from preschool through the 12th grade. Editorial Projects in Education publishes *Education Week*, America's newspaper of record for precollegiate education, the online *Teacher*, *Digital Directions*, and *Industry & Innovation* channels, and the TopSchoolJobs employment resource. It also produces periodic special reports on issues ranging from technology to textbooks, as well as books of special interest to educators.

The Education Week Research Center conducts policy surveys, collects data, and performs analyses that appear in *Education Week* and its special reports—*Quality Counts*, *Technology Counts*, and *Diplomas Count*. The center also conducts independent research studies and maintains the Education Counts online data resource.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Dustin Franz for Education Week

Social and Emotional Learning:
Perspectives from America's Schools

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INTRODUCTION

In this era of educational standards and accountability, cognitive skills related to literacy and mathematics often take center stage. As a result, it can be all too easy to overlook other important dimensions of schooling and student learning. These factors include the cultivation of such desirable traits as the ability to set and reach goals, the capacity to maintain positive relationships, and the foresight to make responsible decisions. Developmentally valuable unto themselves, such social and emotional skills are also integral to the acquisition of skills and knowledge related to academic achievement. It is, arguably, difficult to master academic content if one consistently chooses to play video games rather than study, or explodes in anger when offered assistance with schoolwork.

Social and emotional learning is a broad term that may mean different things to different actors in the K-12 world. For the purposes of this study, the Education Week Research Center adopted the definition of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a Chicago-based nonprofit organization. This definition encompasses five inter-related components:

- **Self-awareness** is the ability to recognize one's own emotions and their influence, accurately assessing weaknesses and strengths.

- **Self-management** consists of regulating emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in diverse situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, and setting and achieving goals.

- **Social awareness** entails adopting the perspective of those with different backgrounds, understanding social and cultural norms, and recognizing available resources and supports.

- **Relationship skills** include establishing relationships with different kinds of people, communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate peer pressure, negotiating conflict, and seeking help when necessary.

- **Responsible decision-making** is the capacity to make choices based on realistic evaluations of consequences, well-being, ethics, safety, and social norms.

This report on social and emotional learning (SEL) presents findings from an original survey administered to more than 500 registered users of edweek.org, *Education Week*'s flagship website. The Education Week Research Center—with support from the Atlantic Philanthropies, the California Endowment, the NoVo Foundation, and the Raikes Foundation—conducted the study in April 2015 to gain a better understanding of how teachers and school-based administrators view social and emotional learning. The survey asked about educators' perspectives, conditions and contexts of their schools, preparation and training, and their strategies and solutions related to SEL. It also included questions related to other closely-related aspects of education. As context, respondents were presented with a concise explanation of SEL based on the definition above.

The survey included several questions that mirror items from two previous Education Week Research Center studies, which respectively focused on issues related to school climate and discipline and student engagement. This report includes trend data based on those results.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- To better understand educators' views of social and emotional learning, the Education Week Research Center invited users of edweek.org—*Education Week*'s flagship website—to participate in an online survey in April 2015.

- A total of 709 people participated, with 562 deemed qualified based on self-identification as a K-12 teacher or school-based administrator.

- Although the sample is not statistically representative of the nation's educators, the respondents were a diverse group of teachers and administrators representing a wide range of grade levels, experience, and school settings.

- The survey addressed a range of topics related to social and emotional learning, including educator perspectives, school conditions and context, preparation and training, and strategies and solutions.

- Slightly more than one in three respondents reported that they were very familiar with social and emotional learning.

- Self-management was the social and emotional trait rated most important for students to learn, while respondents perceived that responsible decision-making was the trait that was most important for teachers to possess.

- Fourteen percent of respondents indicated that more than three-quarters of students in their schools had strong social and emotional skills.

- Half of educators said social and emotional learning received about the right amount of attention in their schools, while just under half said it received too little attention.

- Among survey respondents whose schools were implementing the Common Core State Standards, the majority (59 percent) said the amount of attention paid to students' social and emotional learning had remained the same since the implementation of the standards.

- The mot prevalent social and emotional learning challenge facing educators was that other issues often take priority, leaving limited time to focus on this area.

- Most respondents (57 percent) indicated that their educator preparation programs had not adequately prepared them to address students' social and emotional learning. However, most (63 percent) also indicated that they had received sufficient training and professional development after obtaining certification as an educator.

- More than two-thirds of educators have had some training on social and emotional learning and want more.

- Classroom observations were the most common means of measuring social and emotional learning. The results of social and emotional learning measurements were most frequently used to refer students to specific interventions.

- When asked which social and emotional learning strategies were most effective, educators were most likely to mention approaches that integrated instruction into existing curriculum and school activities.

TRENDS

- In September 2012 and April 2014, the Education Week Research Center fielded surveys that included questions about social and emotional learning and other closely related issues, such as school climate, discipline and safety, and student engagement and motivation.

- The perceived importance of social and emotional learning as a driver of student achievement has grown over time, according to survey results from 2014 and 2015. However, in both years, multiple factors—including student engagement and teaching quality—were ranked higher than social and emotional learning.

- Respondents to the 2015 survey were substantially more likely to report that SEL is very important to student achievement (67 percent), compared with educators in 2014 (54 percent).

- From 2012 to 2015, increasing shares of teachers and school administrators reported strongly agreeing that teaching social and emotional skills to students is an effective way to reduce discipline problems while improving school climate and student achievement.

- Compared with 2012 survey respondents, educators in 2015 had more negative perceptions of student behavior and the safety of students and staff.

- Respondents in 2015 were also less likely to strongly agree that their school climates were conducive to teaching and learning and to the social and emotional well-being of students and staff.

- Fewer than half of 2012 and 2015 respondents strongly agreed that their students were well-behaved and that their schools' climates fostered social and emotional well-being.

- Just one in five respondents strongly agreed that student-on-student bullying rarely occurred, with little change from 2012 to 2015.

- Schoolwide behavioral-management programs such as PBIS were the approaches most frequently used to improve student behavior. In both 2012 and 2015, roughly one-third of educators indicated that their schools used social and emotional learning as a behavioral improvement strategy for students.

METHODOLOGY

The research featured in this report is based on a survey developed by the Education Week Research Center and administered to a national sample of teachers and school administrators. Support for the study was provided by the Atlantic Philanthropies, the California Endowment, the NoVo Foundation, and the Raikes Foundation, which underwrite coverage of social and emotional learning, student engagement, school climate, and related issues in *Education Week*. The survey was distributed in the spring of 2015 to a randomly selected sample of registrants of edweek.org, the *Education Week* website. The survey was designed to assess multiple aspects of social and emotional learning, including educators' perspectives, professional experience and training, and school conditions.

Survey details are provided below:

- On April 21, 2015, an online survey was fielded to a random sample of edweek.org registrants who had previously identified themselves as classroom teachers, instructional specialists, or school-based administrators.

- The Education Week Research Center received 709 total survey responses. Of those responses, 562 qualified for inclusion in the study based on self-identification as a teacher or school-based administrator. Respondents excluded from the analysis include educators who do not work at the school level (e.g., district-level officials).

- The Education Week Research Center analyzed the raw responses and did not use weighted adjustments to account for geography, respondent demographics, school characteristics, or other factors.

- Throughout this report, survey results are presented in whole percentage-point values and, therefore, may not sum to 100 percent.

- The trend analyses included in the report are based on 2015 survey questions comparable to items from previous surveys (April 2014 and September 2012) administered to similar samples of teachers and school-based administrators who were registered users of edweek.org.

- More than 1,000 educators participated in the 2012 survey, which focused on school climate, discipline, and safety. About 500 educators participated in the 2014 survey on student engagement and motivation.

- The teachers and administrators who took one survey did not necessarily take the others.

The survey instrument appears in the Appendix to this report.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

More than 500 registered users of the *Education Week* website responded to the Education Week Research Center's survey examining educators' attitudes and opinions related to social and emotional learning. Although the sample for the study is not statistically representative of the nation's educators, respondents include a diverse group of teachers—including department heads and instructional specialists, such as curriculum coordinators and instructional coaches—and school-based administrators.

PROFESSIONAL ROLES

Respondents to the survey have firsthand experience in a variety of roles within schools and classrooms. A total of 46 percent are K-12 classroom teachers; another 13 percent work as instructional specialists. One in five respondents serve as school principals and 17 percent are employed in other school-administration roles.

"Which of the following best describes your current professional role?"

Percent of respondents

Teacher 46%

School principal 22%

School-based department leader or specialist 13%

Assistant principal 11%

Other school-based admin. 6%
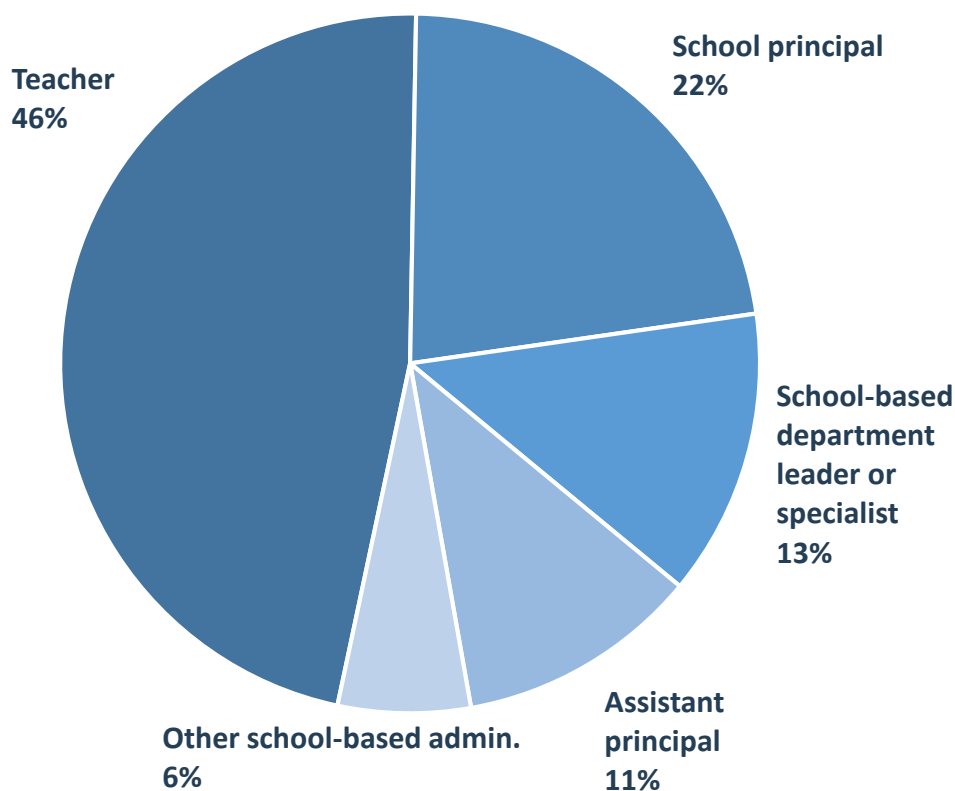
n = 562

EXPERIENCE

The teachers and administrators responding to the survey vary with respect to years of service in the field. About 16 percent have worked in K-12 schools for 10 years or less. At the other end of the spectrum, 17 percent are long-time veterans, having worked in K-12 education for more than 30 years.

"How long have you worked in K-12 education?"

Percent of respondents

Category	Percent
Less than 3 years	1%
3 to 5 years	3%
6 to 10 years	12%
11 to 15 years	19%
16 to 20 years	19%
21 to 25 years	15%
26 to 30 years	13%
More than 30 years	17%
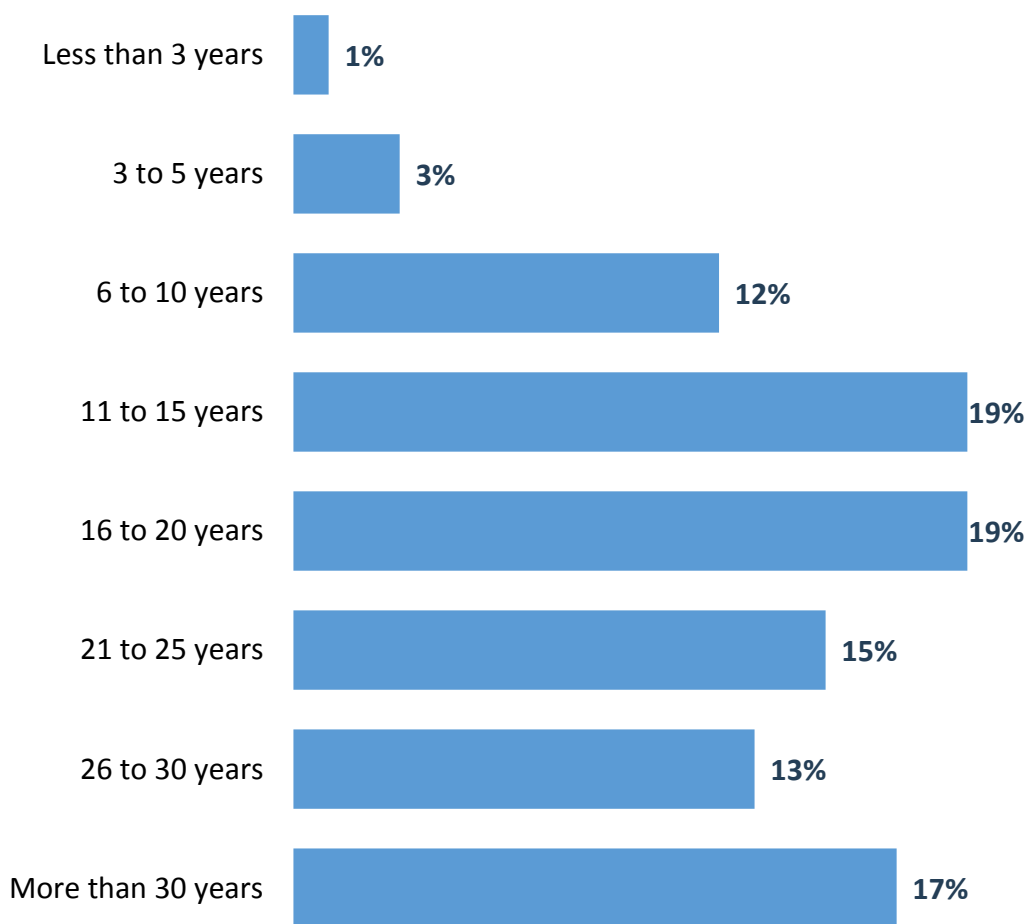
n = 557

GRADE LEVELS

The teachers and school administrators who participated in the survey were well distributed across a range of grade levels within elementary and secondary education. Roughly equal numbers work in the high school, middle school, late elementary, and early elementary grade spans. A given respondent may work at multiple grade levels.

**"At which grade level(s) do you teach
or serve as a school administrator?"**

Percent of respondents

Grade Level	Percent
Grades 9-12	42%
Grades 6-8	41%
Grades 3-5	41%
Kindergarten-Grade 2	37%
Other	8%
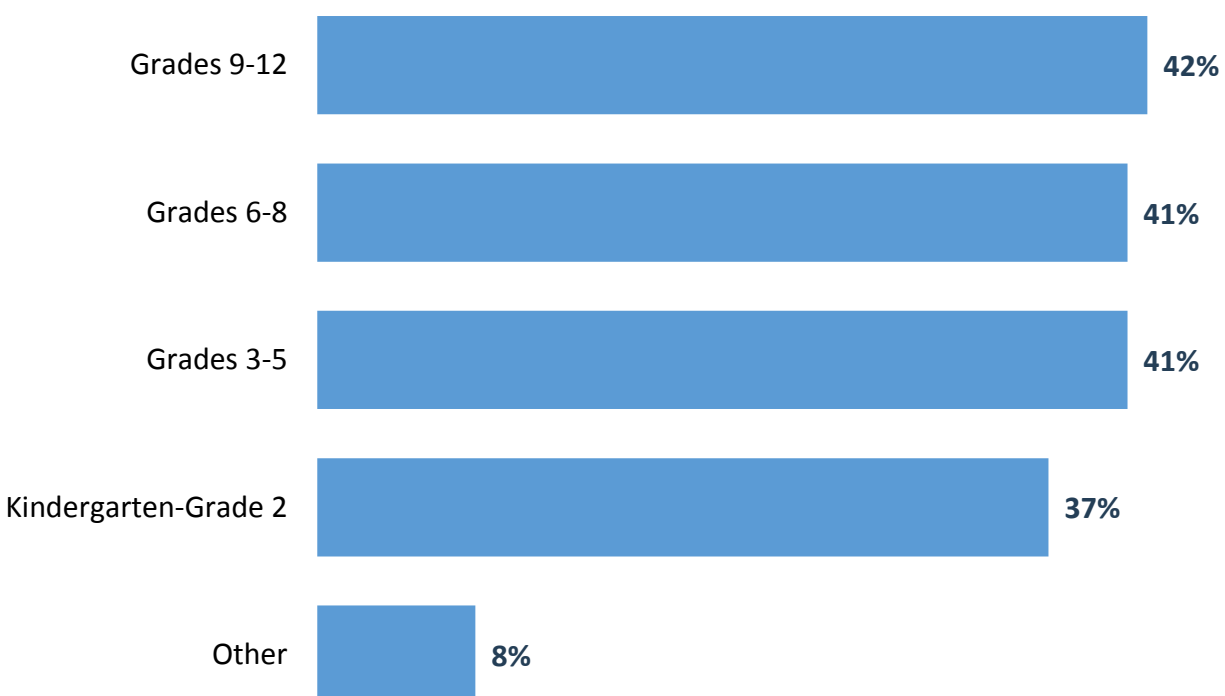
n = 554
Note: Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent.

SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

Survey respondents are employed in a diverse set of schools that differ by locale, sector, size, and poverty level.

SCHOOL LOCALE

The largest share of respondents (36 percent) serves in suburban schools, with another 34 percent working in urban communities. About 17 percent work in schools located in rural areas, with the remaining respondents (13 percent) working in towns.

**"Which of the following best describes
the location of your school?"**

Percent of respondents
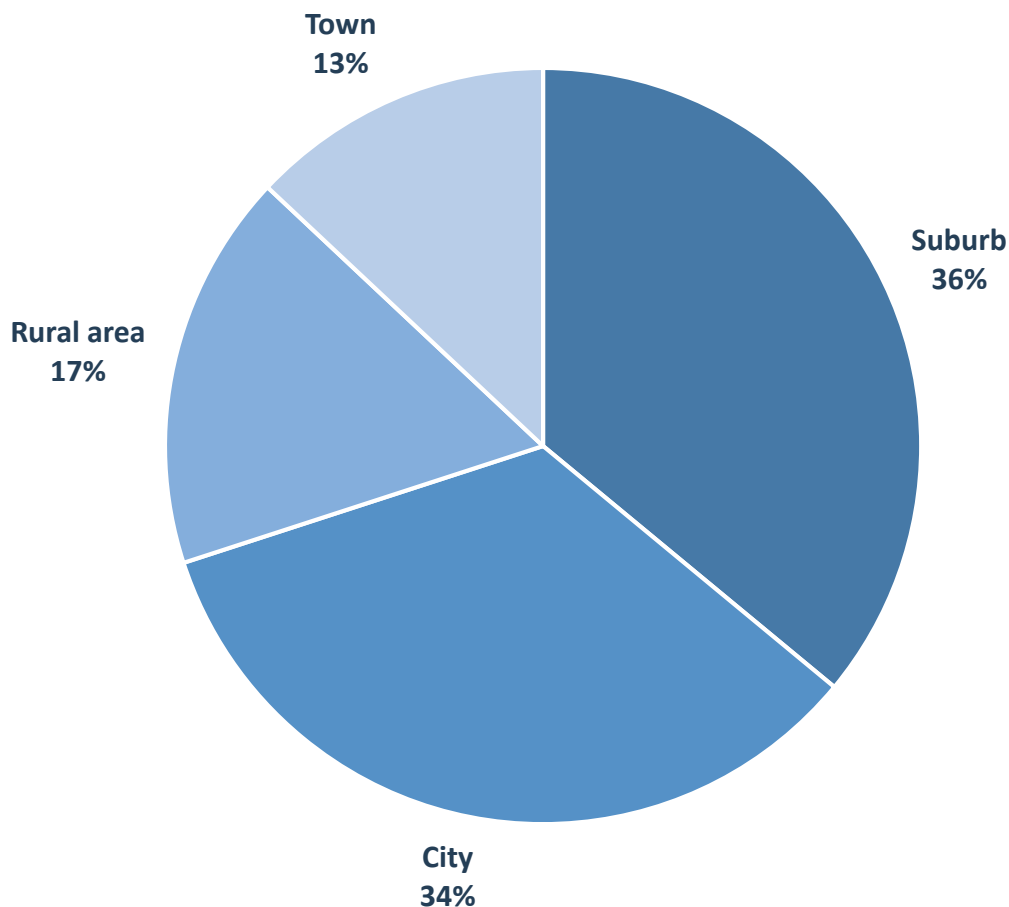
n = 508

SCHOOL SECTOR

Most survey respondents (78 percent) work in traditional public schools, with another 8 percent working in public charter schools. The remainder (15 percent) work in the private sector.

"Which of the following best describes your school?"

Percent of respondents
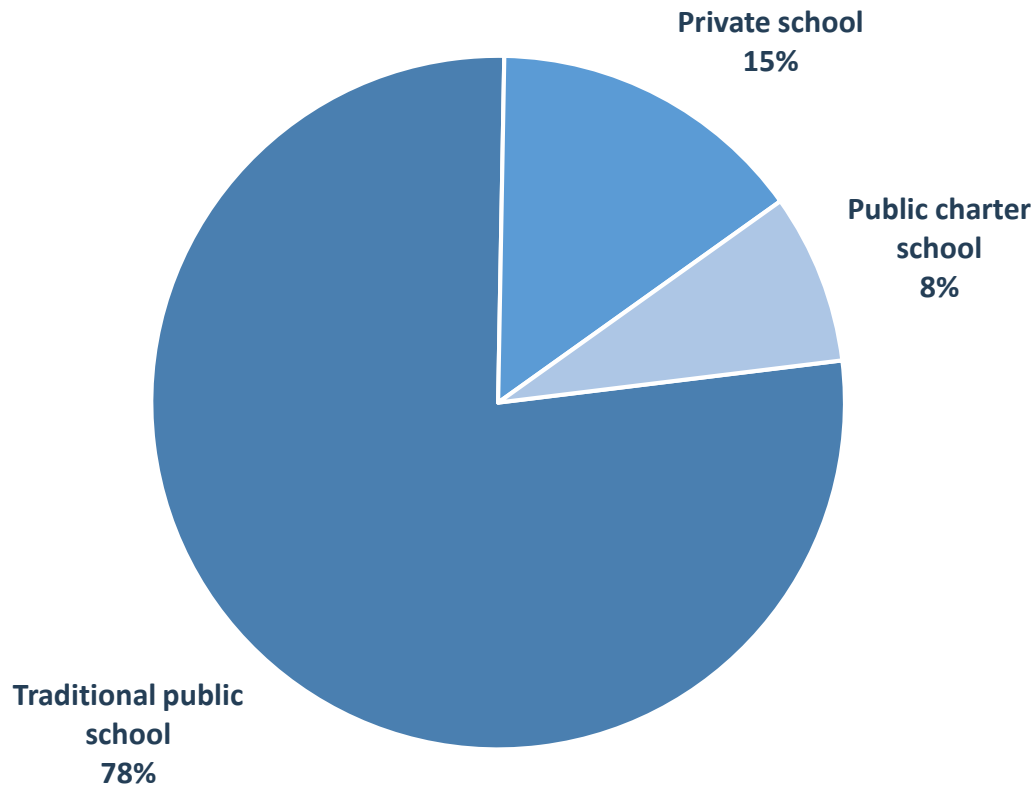
n = 510

SCHOOL SIZE

Teachers and school administrators who responded to the survey are employed in both small and large schools. Thirty-eight percent work in schools with 500 or fewer students. One-quarter of respondents serve in schools educating more than 1,000 students.

"Approximately how many students are enrolled at your school?"

Percent of respondents

250 students or fewer
14%

251-500 students
24%

501-750 students
25%

751-1,000 students
13%

More than 1,000 students
25%
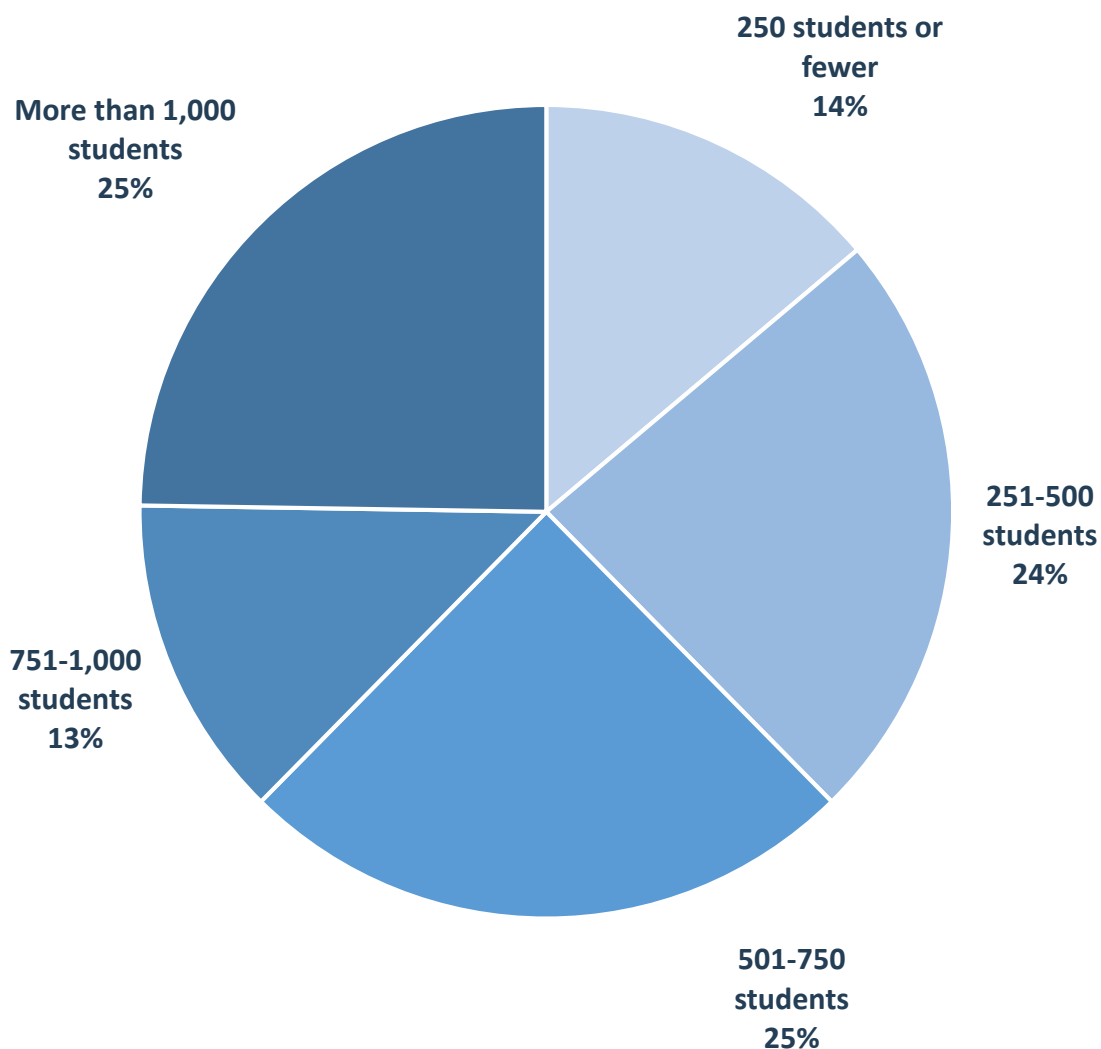
n = 507

SCHOOL POVERTY

Respondents reported which of four poverty ranges most accurately describes the percentage of low-income students attending their schools. Nearly one in three report working in more affluent schools, where one-quarter or fewer students are from low-income backgrounds. Twenty-three percent of educators participating in the survey work in schools where low-income students make up more than 75 percent of the student body.

**"Which of the following best describes
the poverty level at your school?"**

Percent of respondents

**More than 75%
low-income
students
23%**

**25% or fewer
low-income
students
31%**

**51 to 75%
low-income
students
20%**

**26 to 50%
low-income
students
26%**
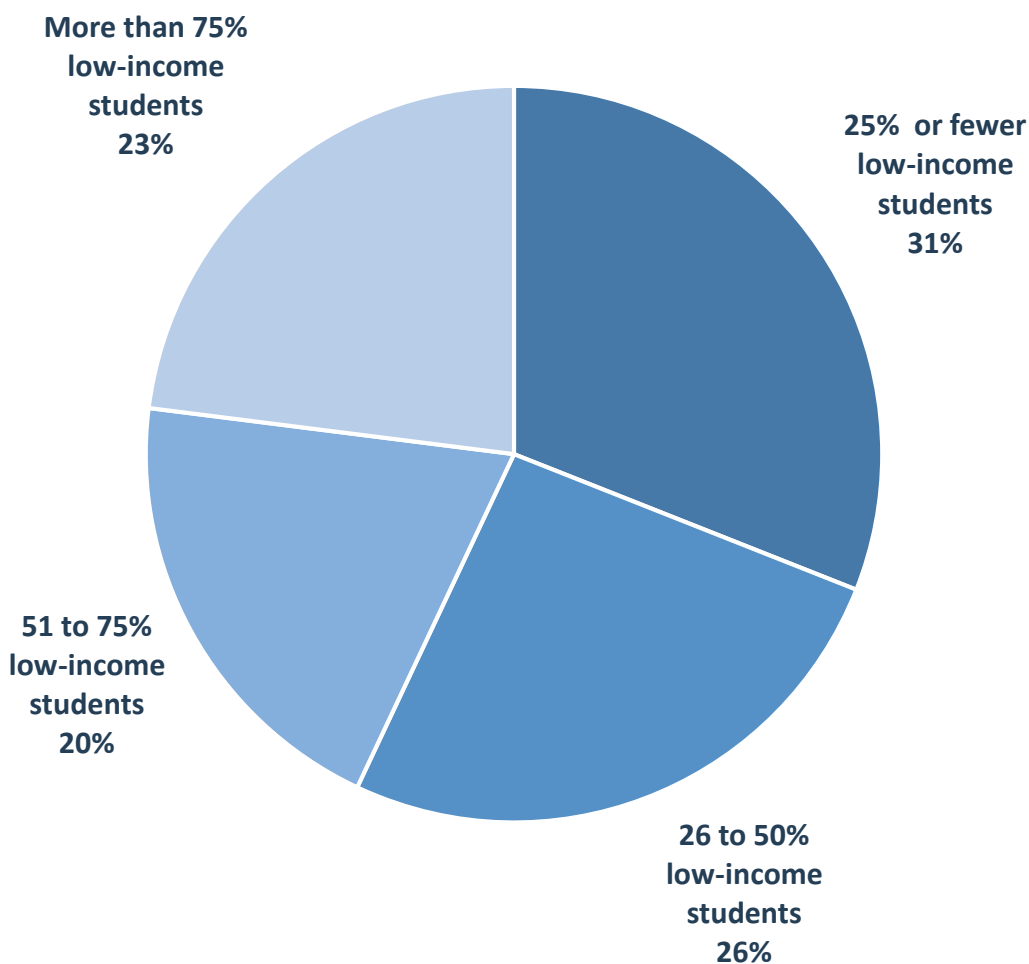
n = 502

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

A wide array of factors—both within and beyond the classroom—can influence student achievement. In recent years, social and emotional learning has become an increasingly prominent part of conversations about academic success. Survey participants were asked to share their perspectives on a range of issues pertaining to SEL, including: their level of familiarity with social and emotional learning; the extent to which SEL and other influences shape academic achievement; the importance of various social and emotional skills both for students and for teachers; and the potential of social and emotional learning to improve school climate, reduce school discipline problems, and increase student achievement.

FAMILIARITY WITH SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Respondents were asked to indicate their familiarity with social and emotional learning on a five-point scale, where 1 is "not at all familiar" and 5 is "very familiar." For the purposes of the survey, social and emotional learning was defined as follows:

> *In this survey, social and emotional learning refers to management of emotions, relationships, and decision-making.*

More than a third of respondents (36 percent) reported that they were "very familiar" with social and emotional learning (as defined above), while only 3 percent said they were "not at all familiar" with it.

"How familiar are you with social and emotional learning in K-12 schools?"

KEY					
1 Not at all familiar	2	3	4	Very familiar 5	

3%	5%	20%	37%	36%
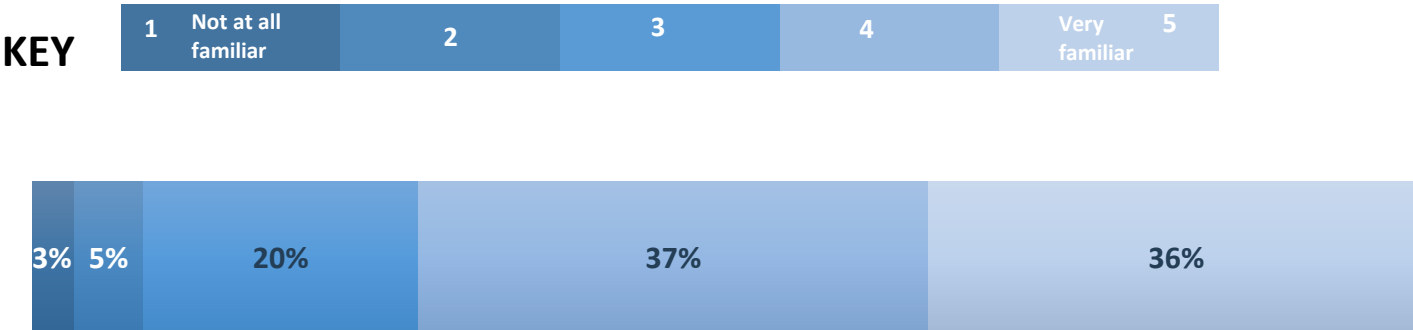
n = 555

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Educators were asked to rate the importance of a range of factors to student achievement on a five-point scale, where 1 is "not at all important" and 5 is "very important." Two-thirds of respondents (67 percent) reported that social and emotional learning was very important. Respondents ranked social and emotional learning in the middle of the pack of eight factors examined, with an average score of 4.61 points out of five. Student engagement and motivation received the highest rating (4.89) while family background received the lowest rating (3.84).

"How important do you feel the following factors are to student achievement?"

KEY

1 Not at all important	2	3	4	Very important 5

RESPONSE AVERAGE

Factor	Distribution	Response Average
Student engagement and motivation	11% / 89%	4.89
Teaching quality	1% / 15% / 84%	4.82
School climate	2% / 21% / 78%	4.75
School safety	4% / 26% / 70%	4.67
Social and emotional learning	5% / 27% / 67%	4.61
Parental support and engagement	6% / 28% / 65%	4.58
School discipline policies	2% / 13% / 41% / 44%	4.26
Family background	1% / 9% / 24% / 37% / 29%	3.84
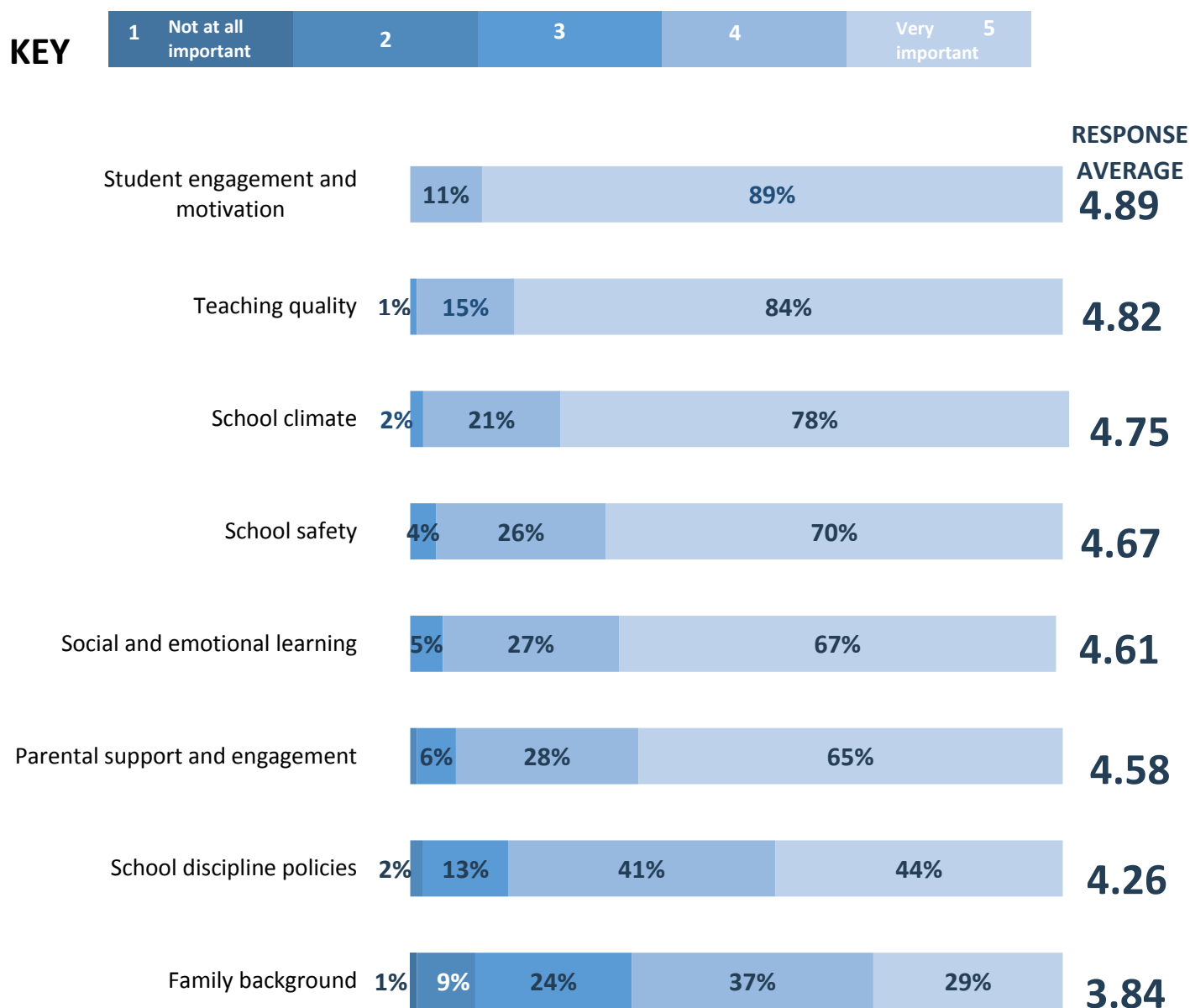
n = 543 to 547

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS—PRIORITIES FOR STUDENTS

Social and emotional learning is a broad concept that encompasses many different traits and skills. To gain a better understanding of the particular SEL factors educators might emphasize, the survey asked respondents to rate the importance of five different aspects of social and emotional learning. Educators gave self-management the top rating, with 87 percent of respondents reporting that the trait was "very important" for students to learn. The survey, however, revealed strong support for a range of SEL traits; each of the five skills was rated "very important" by at least three-quarters of respondents.

"How important do you feel it is for students to learn about the following aspects of social and emotional learning at your school?"

KEY	1 Not at all important	2	3	4	5 Very important

RESPONSE AVERAGE

Self management	2% 11% 87%		**4.86**
Responsible decisionmaking	3% 13% 84%		**4.81**
Relationship skills	5% 18% 77%		**4.72**
Self awareness	4% 20% 75%		**4.70**
Ability to empathize with others	4% 21% 75%		**4.69**
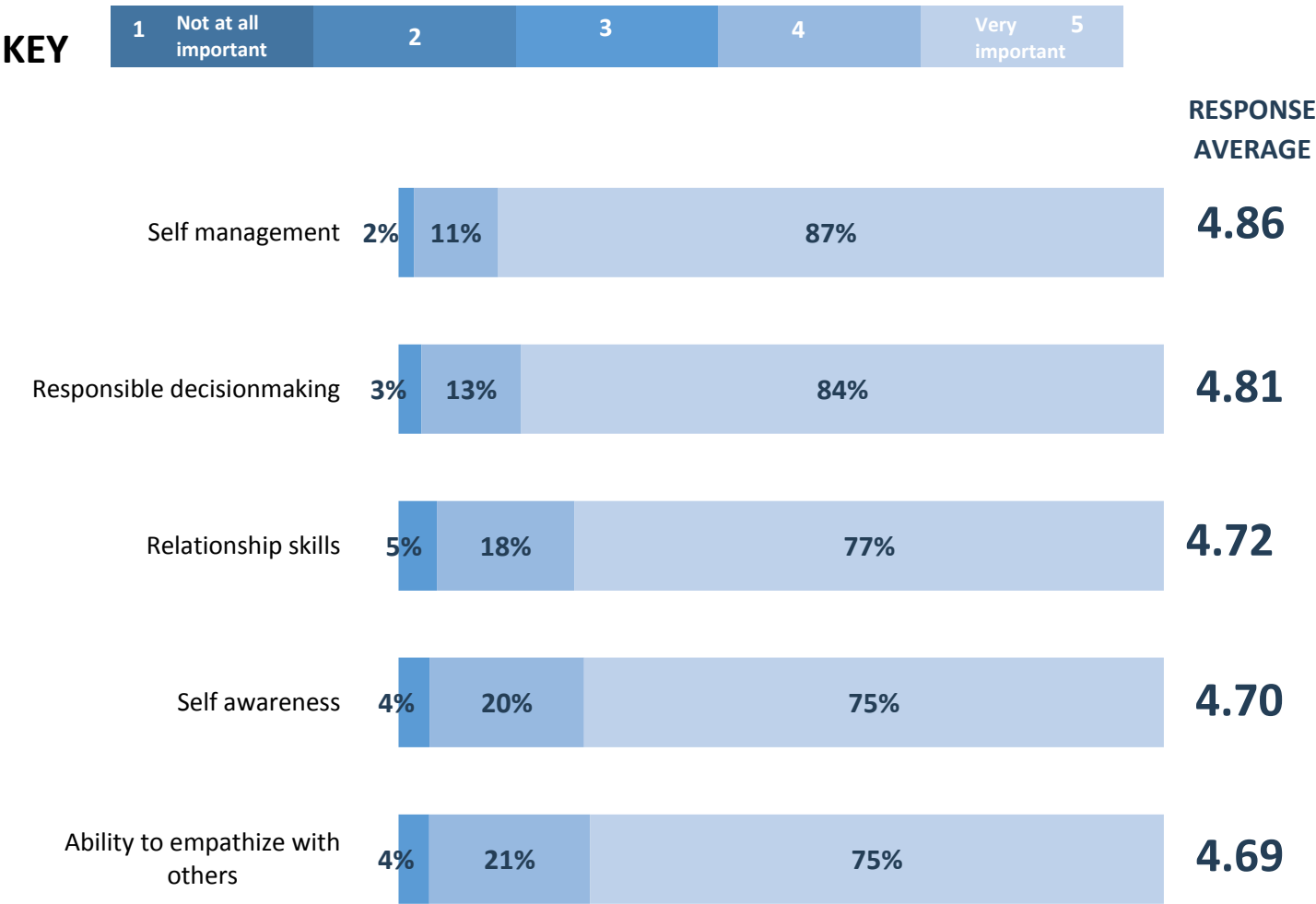
n = 544 to 546

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS—PRIORITIES FOR TEACHERS

Survey participants felt that the same five social and emotional traits that were important for students to learn were also needed by teachers. More than 80 percent of respondents rated each of these traits "very important" for teachers to possess. Educators were most likely to report that responsible decision-making was crucial for teachers, with 91 percent reporting the trait was "very important." Self-management—the trait believed to be most important for students—was rated "very important" for teachers by 89 percent of respondents.

"How important do you feel it is for teachers to possess the following qualities or skills?"

KEY

1 Not at all important	2	3	4	Very 5 important

RESPONSE AVERAGE

Responsible decisionmaking	1%	8%	91%	**4.90**
Self management		11%	89%	**4.88**
Relationship skills	2%	8%	90%	**4.87**
Ability to empathize with others	1%	10%	88%	**4.86**
Self awareness	2%	16%	81%	**4.78**
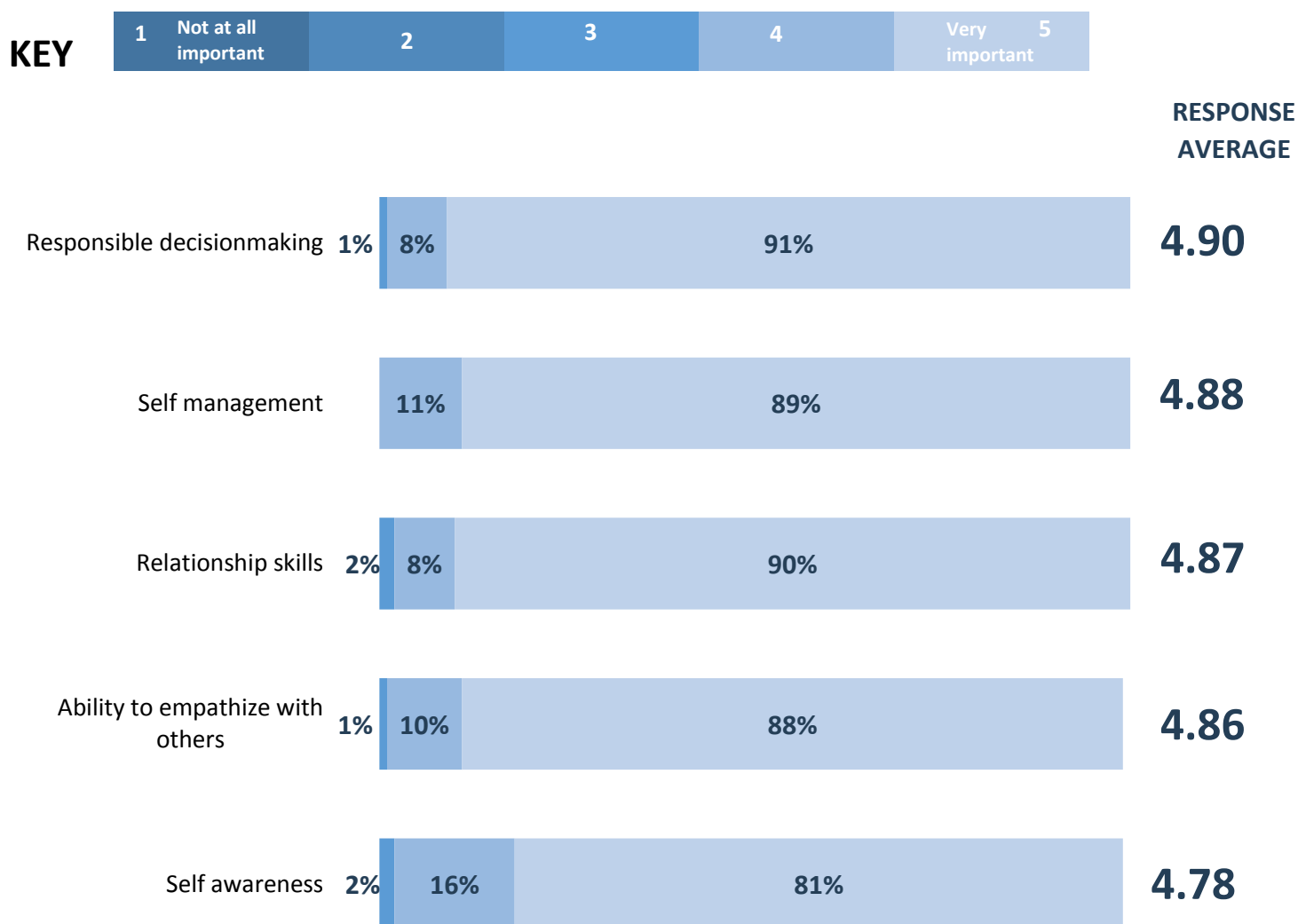
n = 534 to 537

OUTCOMES OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

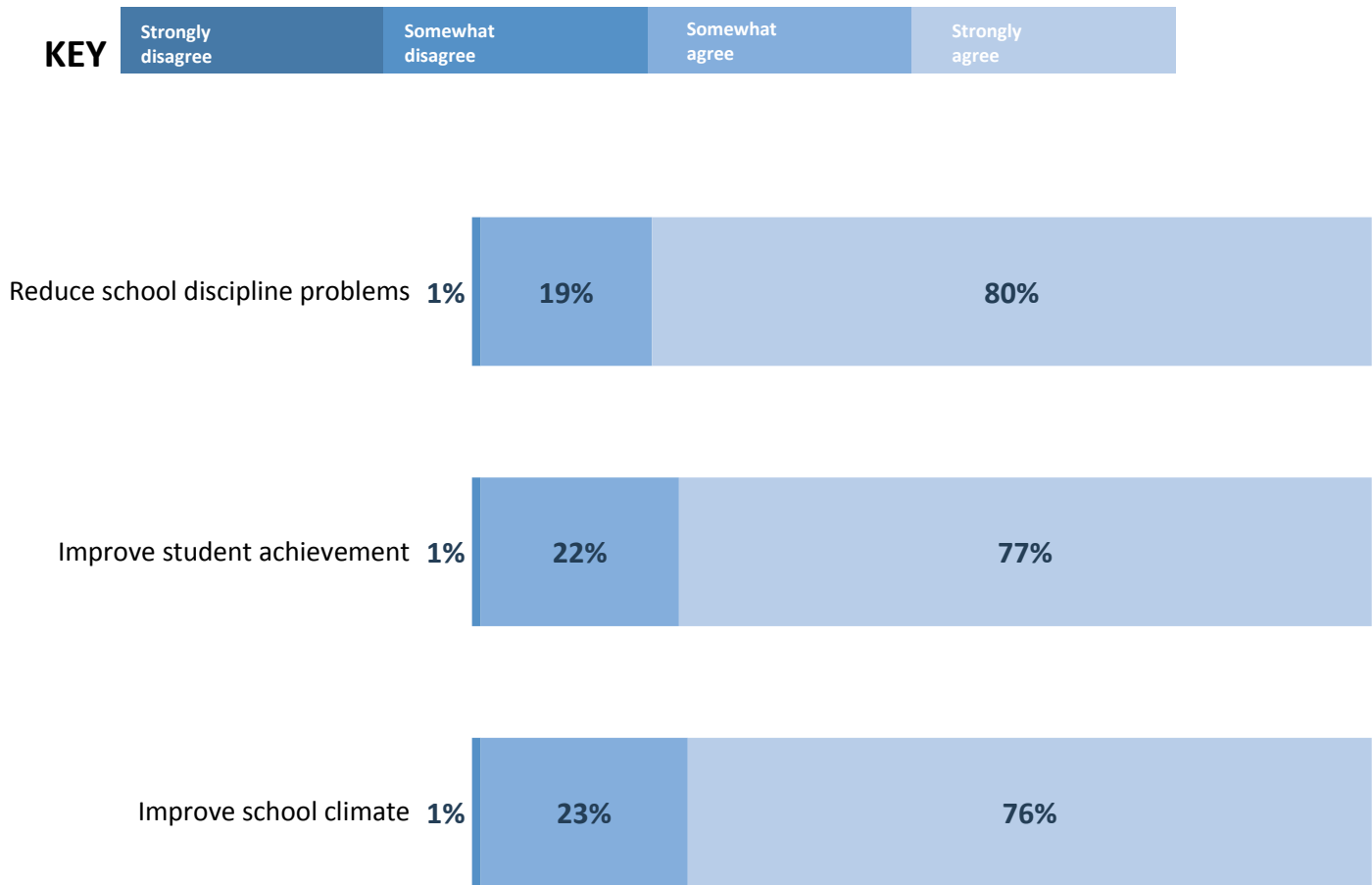School climate, school discipline rates, and student achievement are three frequently-cited aspects of educational quality. More than three-quarters of survey respondents reported strongly agreeing that teaching social and emotional skills is an effective way to improve outcomes in each of these areas. For instance, 80 percent of respondents "strongly agree" that social and emotional learning can help reduce school discipline problems.

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Teaching social and emotional skills to students is an effective way to…"

KEY	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat/Strongly agree
Reduce school discipline problems	1%	19%	80%
Improve student achievement	1%	22%	77%
Improve school climate	1%	23%	76%

n = 542 to 544

Note: This question appeared on previous years' surveys. See the Trends section for more information.

SCHOOL CONDITIONS AND CONTEXT

This section examines educators' views about school climate and other related aspects of the school environment. The section also explores respondents' perceptions of their students' social and emotional skills, along with their assessments of the amount of attention their schools devote to SEL.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Respondents were asked to rate six key aspects of their schools' climates. Sixty percent of respondents "strongly agree" that their schools are places where students and staff feel safe; nearly half (47 percent) "strongly agree" that their school's climate is conducive to teaching and learning. About one-third report strongly agreeing that students are well-behaved (32 percent) and that their schools' climate fosters social and emotional well-being for students and staff (34 percent). Only one in five educators "strongly agree" that their students are engaged and motivated (22 percent) and that bullying of students rarely occurs (20 percent).

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?"

KEY	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	TOTAL AGREE
Students and staff feel safe	1%	5%	34%	60%	**94%**
My school's climate is conducive to teaching and learning	2%	10%	41%	47%	**88%**
Students are well-behaved	3%	14%	52%	32%	**84%**
My school's climate fosters social and emotional wellbeing for students and staff	3%	14%	48%	34%	**82%**
Students are engaged and motivated	2%	18%	58%	22%	**80%**
Bullying of students rarely occurs	5%	30%	45%	20%	**65%**
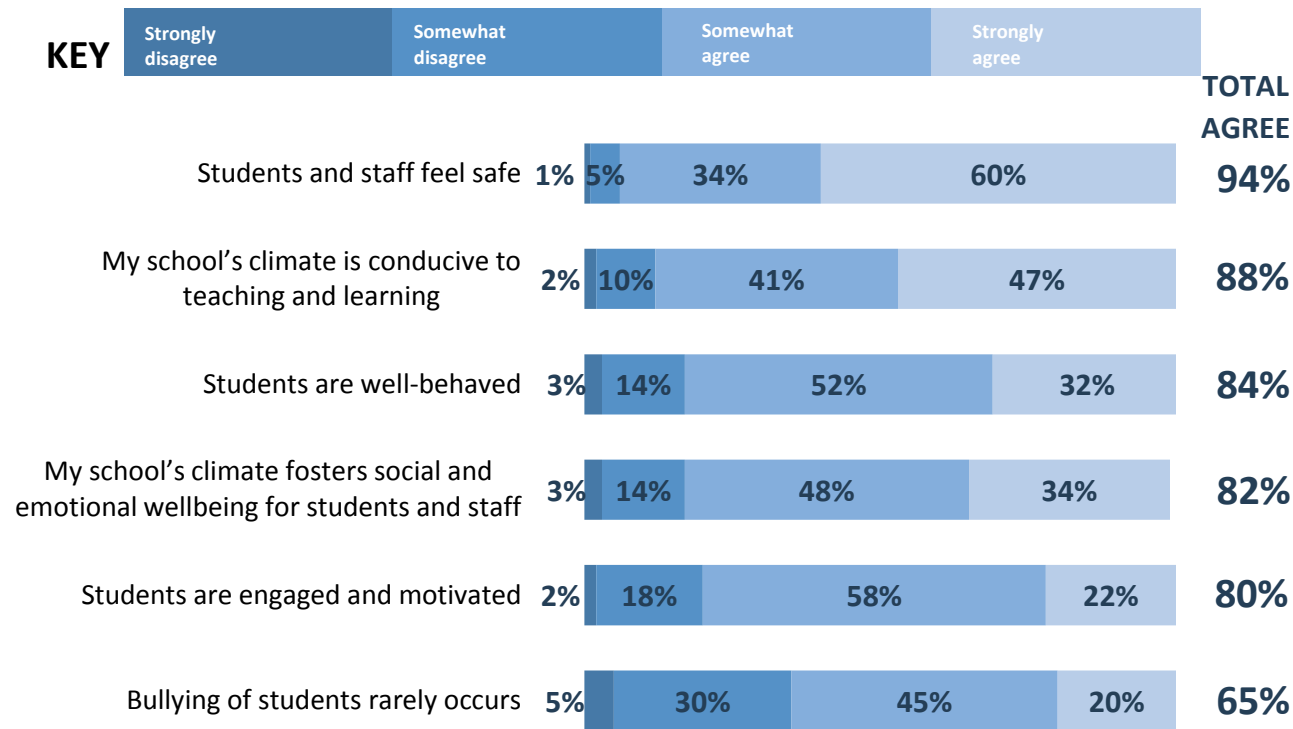
n = 535 to 538
Note: This question appeared on previous years' surveys. See the Trends section for more information.
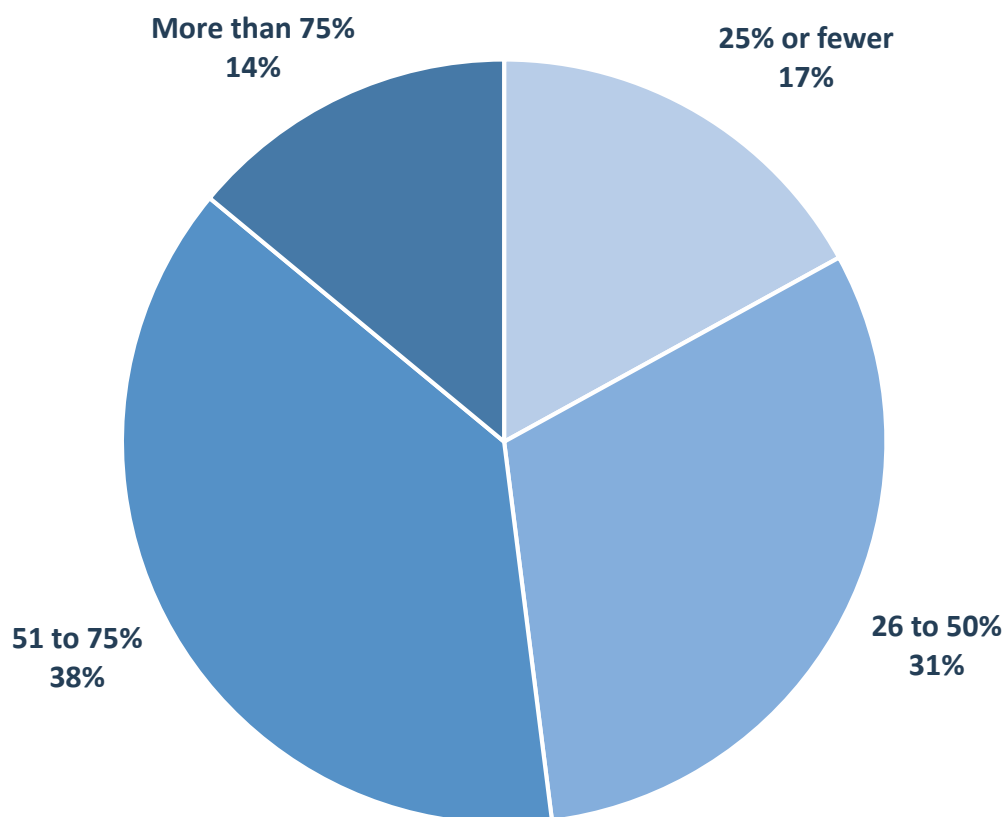
STRENGTH OF STUDENTS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

A majority of respondents (52 percent) report that most of the students in their schools have strong social and emotional skills. Just 14 percent, however, said more than three-quarters of their students have a strong command of these skills.

"What percentage of the students at your current school have strong social and emotional skills?"

Percent of respondents

- More than 75% — 14%
- 25% or fewer — 17%
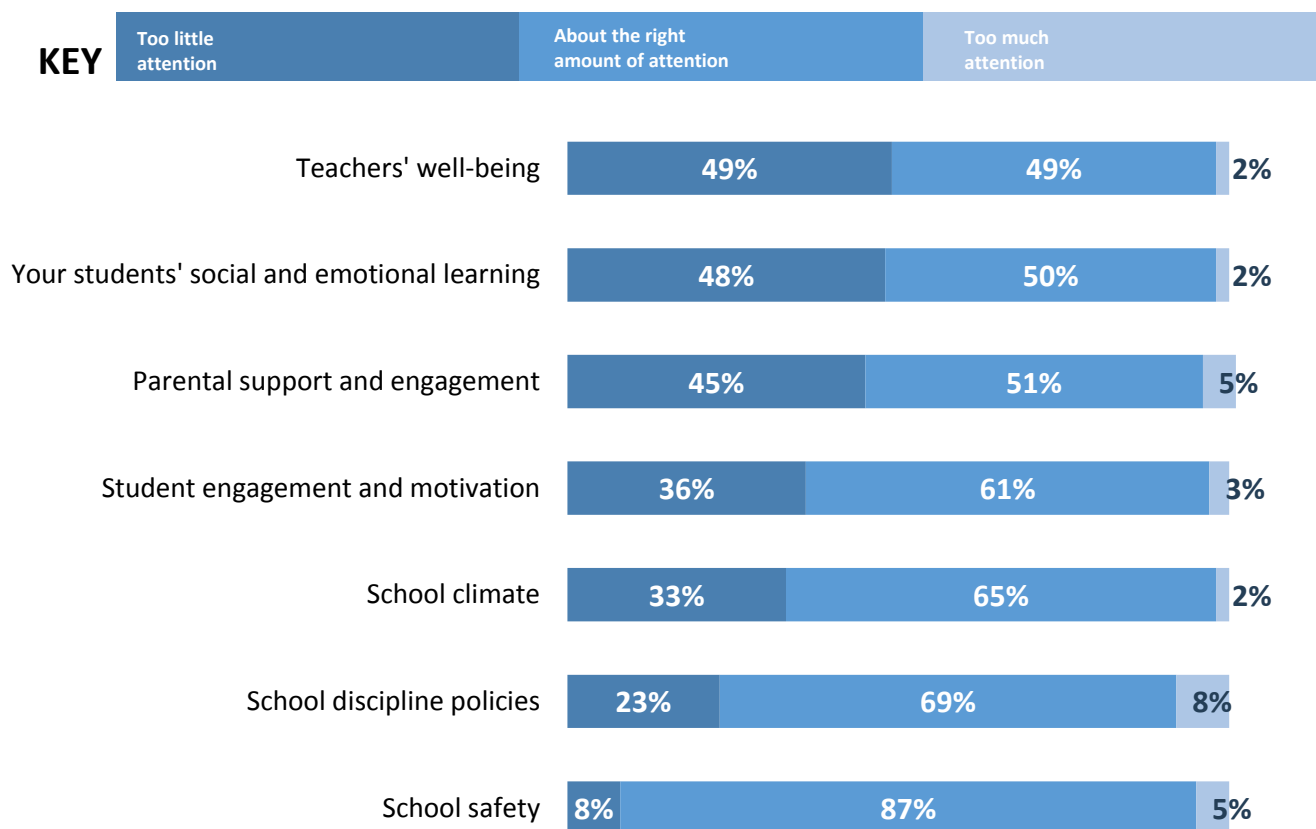- 26 to 50% — 31%
- 51 to 75% — 38%

n = 537

GAUGING ATTENTION

Compared with the amount of attention afforded to developing academic skills and content knowledge, nearly half of educators (48 percent) feel that "too little attention" is given to students' social and emotional learning. Half (50 percent) report that SEL receives "about the right amount of attention." Only two percent feel too much focus is placed on SEL.

Educators voiced similar views when asked about the attention paid to teachers' well-being and parental support and engagement. At least two-thirds of respondents report that "about the right amount of attention" is devoted to: school climate, discipline policies, and school safety.

"How would you describe the amount of attention given to the following factors at your current school, as compared with the development of academic skills and content knowledge?"

KEY	Too little attention	About the right amount of attention	Too much attention

| Factor	Too little attention	About the right amount of attention	Too much attention
Teachers' well-being	49%	49%	2%
Your students' social and emotional learning	48%	50%	2%
Parental support and engagement	45%	51%	5%
Student engagement and motivation	36%	61%	3%
School climate	33%	65%	2%
School discipline policies	23%	69%	8%
School safety	8%	87%	5%

n = 532 to 534
Note: This question appeared on previous years' surveys. See the Trends section for more information.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND THE COMMON CORE

Among survey respondents whose schools were implementing the Common Core State Standards, the majority (59 percent) said the amount of attention paid to students' social and emotional development had remained the same since implementation of the common core. Twelve percent reported that attention to these areas had increased, while three in ten educators said it had decreased.

"Has the amount of attention given to your students' social and emotional development changed since the implementation of the Common Core State Standards?"

Percent of respondents

Increased
12%

Decreased
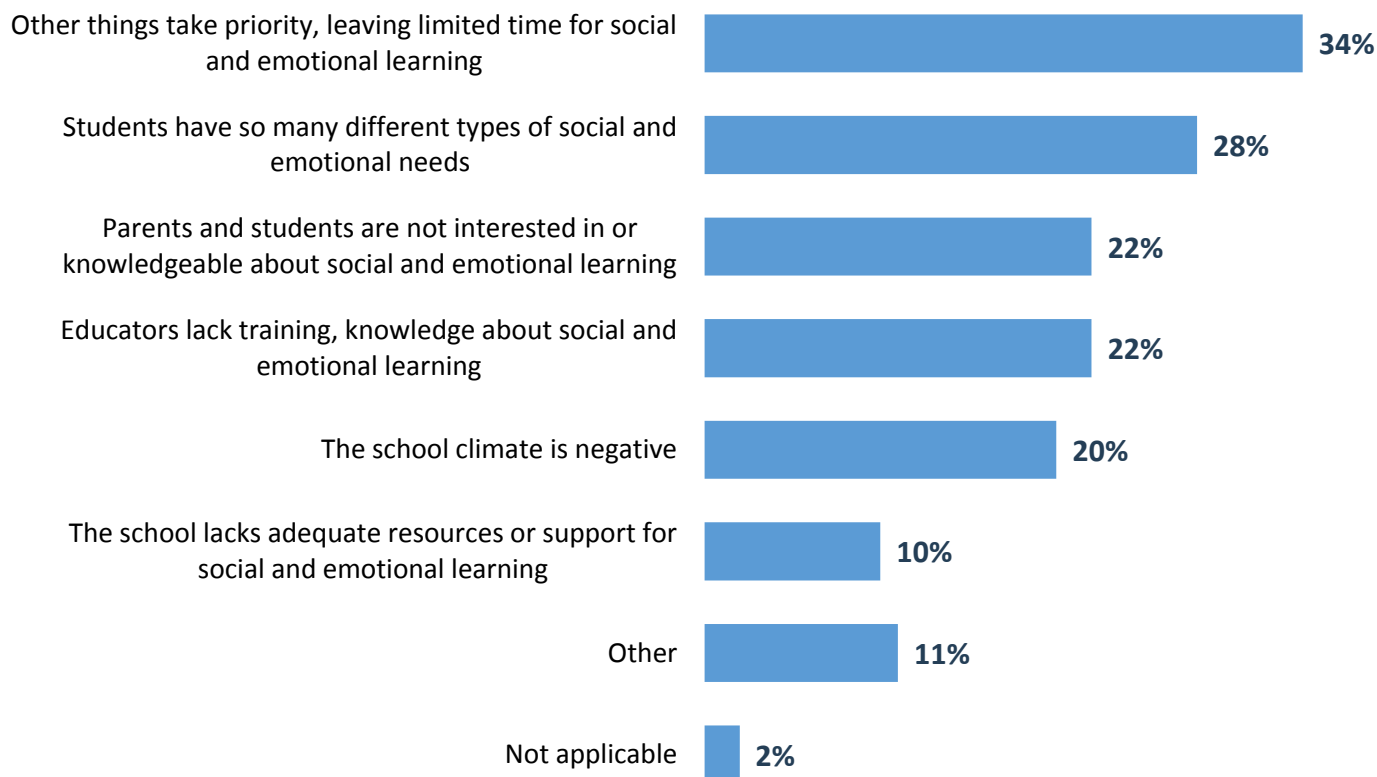30%

No change
59%
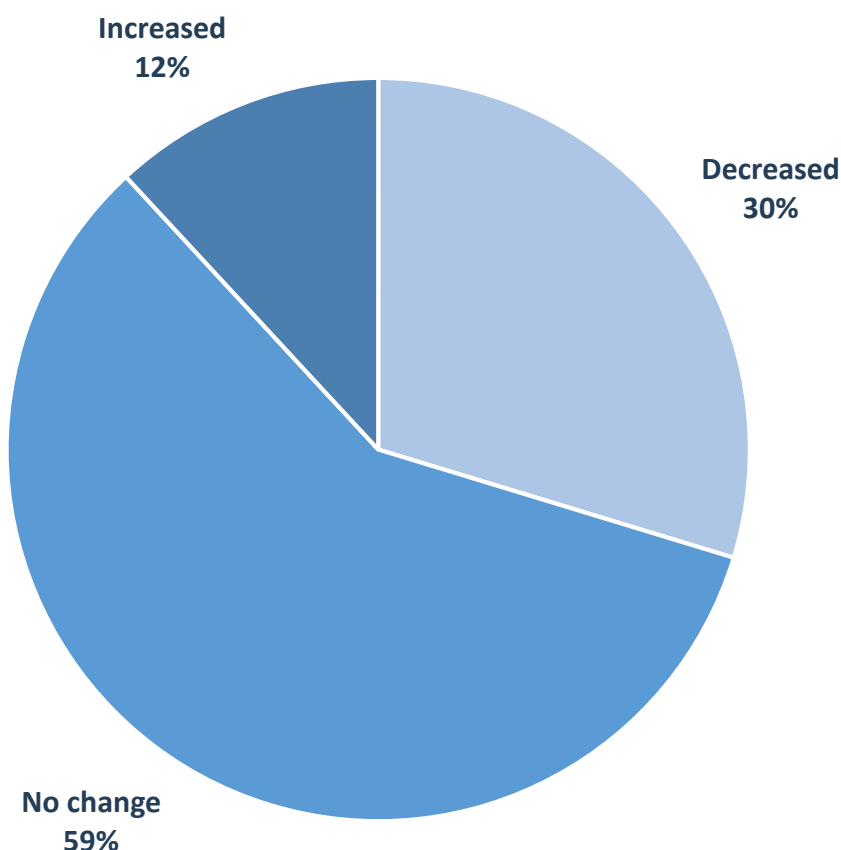
n = 384
Note: The results reported for this question do not include respondents who selected I don't know (n= 41) or reported that their schools were not implementing the common core (n = 105).

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING CHALLENGES

In an open-ended survey question, educators were asked to identify the greatest challenges they face with respect to students' social and emotional learning. The most-frequently reported challenge—cited by about one-third of respondents—was having limited time for social and emotional learning because other issues took priority. Twenty-eight percent of educators also reported that addressing their students' many different social and emotional needs posed a challenge. More than one-fifth of respondents also cited a lack of awareness about SEL among parents and students, as well as insufficient SEL training for educators.

"Overall, what are the greatest challenges you face with respect to students' social and emotional learning?"

Percent of respondents

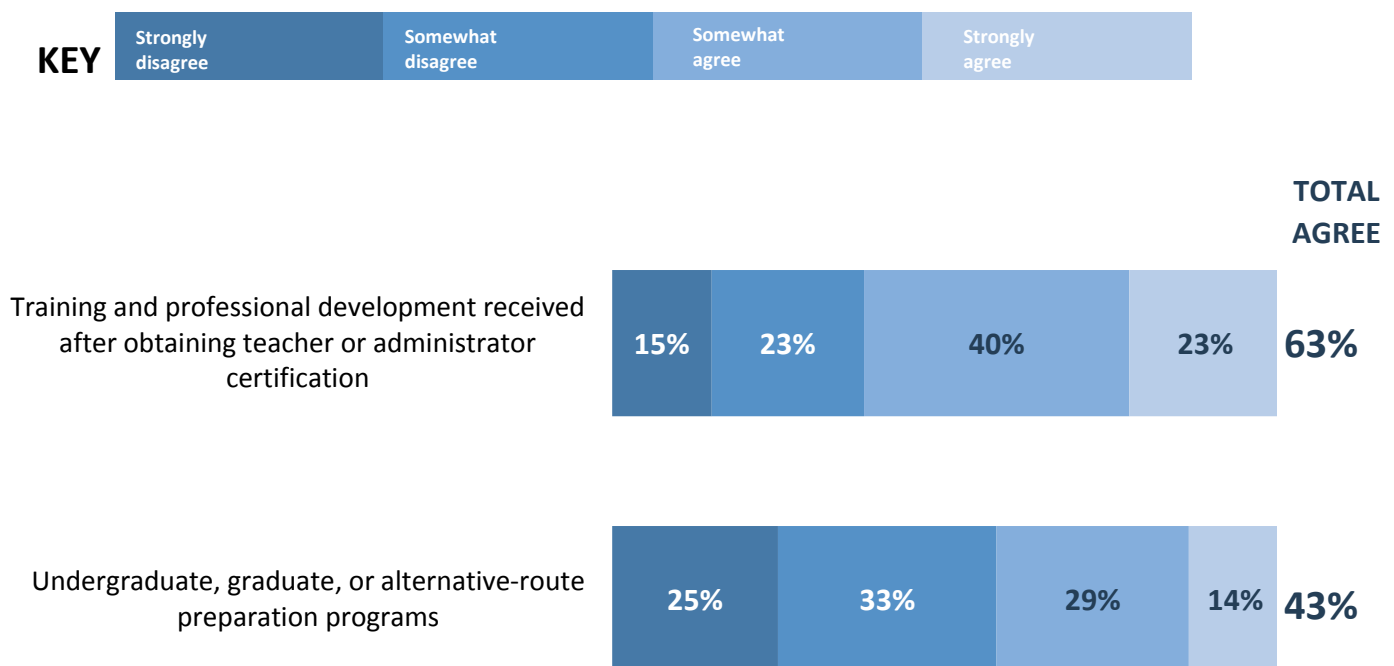| Challenge	Percent
Other things take priority, leaving limited time for social and emotional learning	34%
Students have so many different types of social and emotional needs	28%
Parents and students are not interested in or knowledgeable about social and emotional learning	22%
Educators lack training, knowledge about social and emotional learning	22%
The school climate is negative	20%
The school lacks adequate resources or support for social and emotional learning	10%
Other	11%
Not applicable	2%

n = 446
Note: Responses were coded into all applicable answer categories. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent.

PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Training and preparation may influence the level of confidence educators feel about implementing certain instructional practices. Less than half of respondents (43 percent) indicated that their pre-service preparation programs had adequately prepared them to address students' social and emotional learning. However, most (63 percent) reported that they had received sufficient training and professional development on SEL after they had been certified as an educator.

"To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My training adequately prepared me to address students' social and emotional learning."

KEY	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

TOTAL AGREE

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	TOTAL AGREE
Training and professional development received after obtaining teacher or administrator certification	15%	23%	40%	23%	**63%**
Undergraduate, graduate, or alternative-route preparation programs	25%	33%	29%	14%	**43%**

n = 514

The results do not include respondents who reported the questions related to pre-service programs and post-certification training were not applicable (11 and nine respondents respectively).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

More than two-thirds of respondents (68 percent) had received some training related to students' social and emotional learning and wanted even more. Another 16 percent had not received training in this area, but wanted some. In all, 18 percent of educators reported no training related to SEL. Educators were equally hungry for professional development on student engagement and motivation, with 83 percent wanting more training.

The majority of respondents also desired additional training on school climate, parental support and engagement, and students' academic skills and content knowledge. Most respondents, however, felt they had sufficient training on school safety and school discipline policies.

"Which of the following best describes your experience with professional development and training related to the specified factors?"
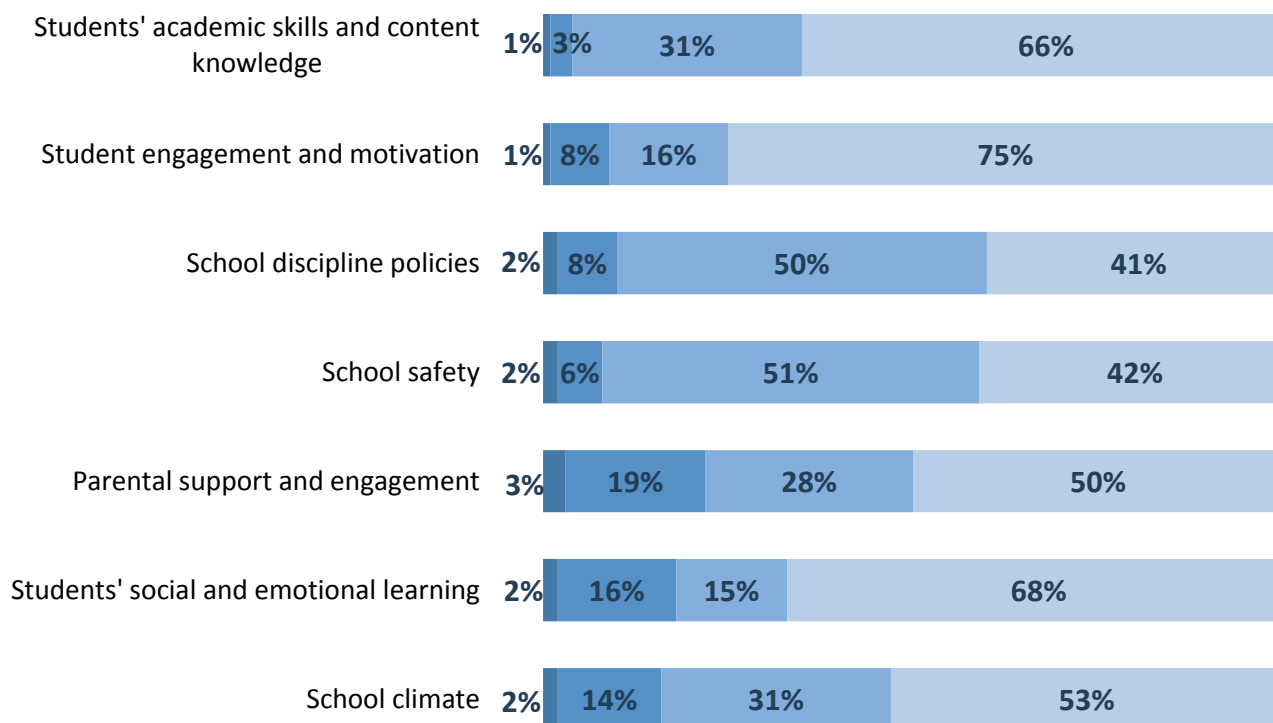
KEY	I have had no training and do not want any	I have had no training and want some	I have had some training and do not want more	I have had some training and want more

Students' academic skills and content knowledge	1%	3%	31%	66%
Student engagement and motivation	1%	8%	16%	75%
School discipline policies	2%	8%	50%	41%
School safety	2%	6%	51%	42%
Parental support and engagement	3%	19%	28%	50%
Students' social and emotional learning	2%	16%	15%	68%
School climate	2%	14%	31%	53%

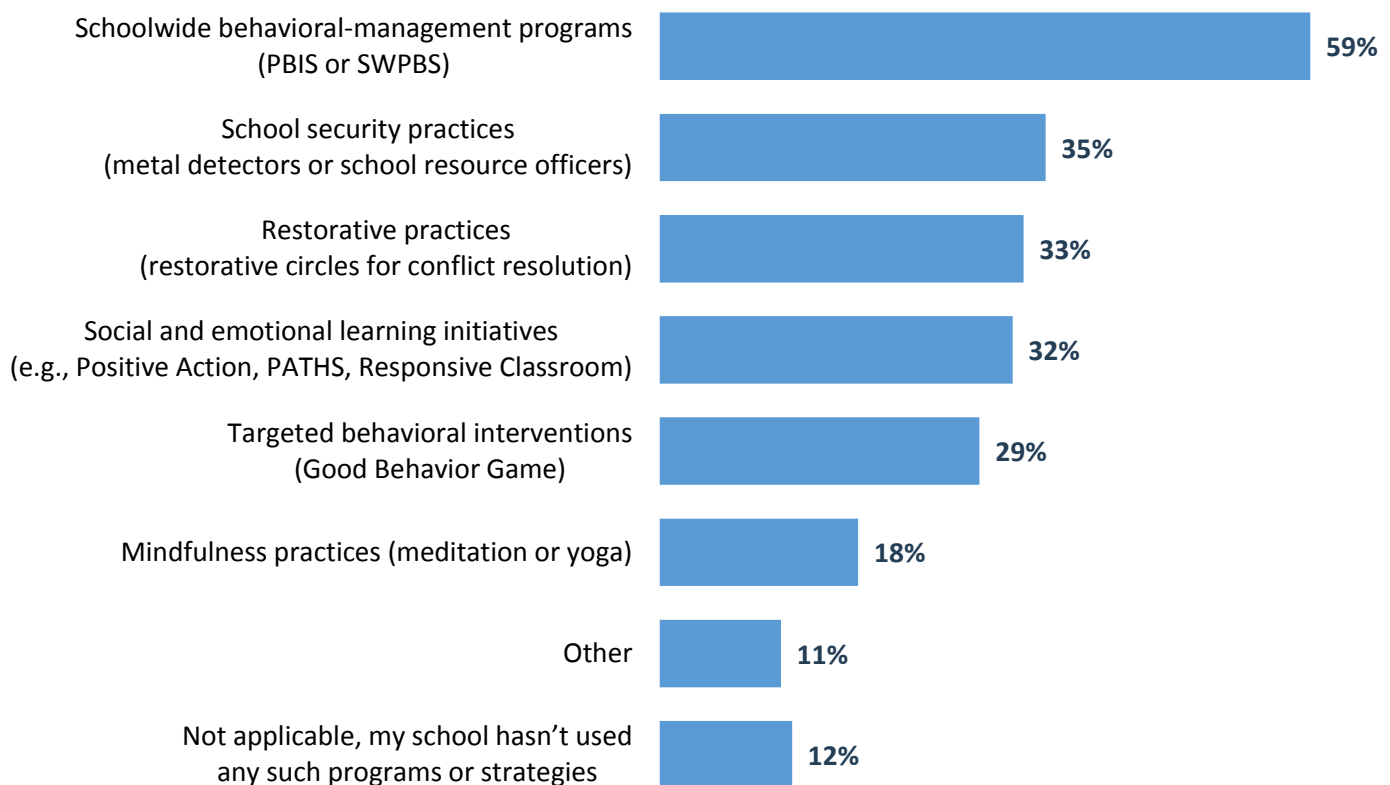n = 508 to 515

STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

The survey examined a range of strategies and solutions for addressing student behavior and social and emotional learning. Respondents reported using a variety of approaches to enhance students' social and emotional skills, including: implementing specific programs and strategies, measuring student progress on SEL, and using the results of these measurements for various purposes.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The survey asked respondents whether their schools used six different approaches to improve student behavior. Schoolwide behavioral-management programs, such as PBIS were most commonly cited, with a majority of respondents (59 percent) reporting that their schools used such strategies. Just 12 percent said their schools had implemented no such program or strategy to improve student behavior.

"Which, if any, of the following approaches has your school used to improve student behavior?"

Percent of respondents

Approach	Percent
Schoolwide behavioral-management programs (PBIS or SWPBS)	59%
School security practices (metal detectors or school resource officers)	35%
Restorative practices (restorative circles for conflict resolution)	33%
Social and emotional learning initiatives (e.g., Positive Action, PATHS, Responsive Classroom)	32%
Targeted behavioral interventions (Good Behavior Game)	29%
Mindfulness practices (meditation or yoga)	18%
Other	11%
Not applicable, my school hasn't used any such programs or strategies	12%

n = 495

Note: This question appeared on previous years' surveys. See the Trends section for more information. Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent. Results exclude 19 respondents who selected "I don't know."
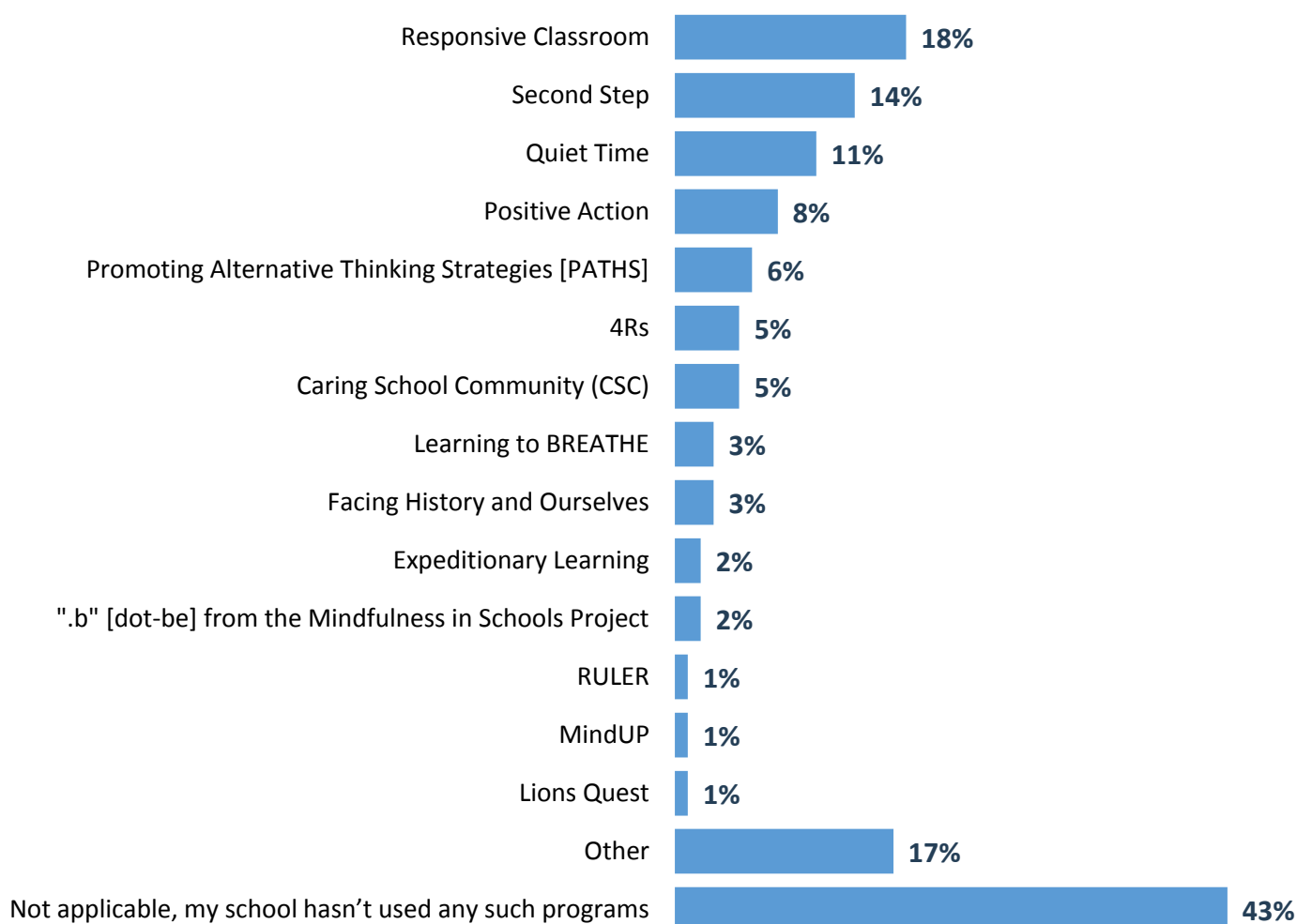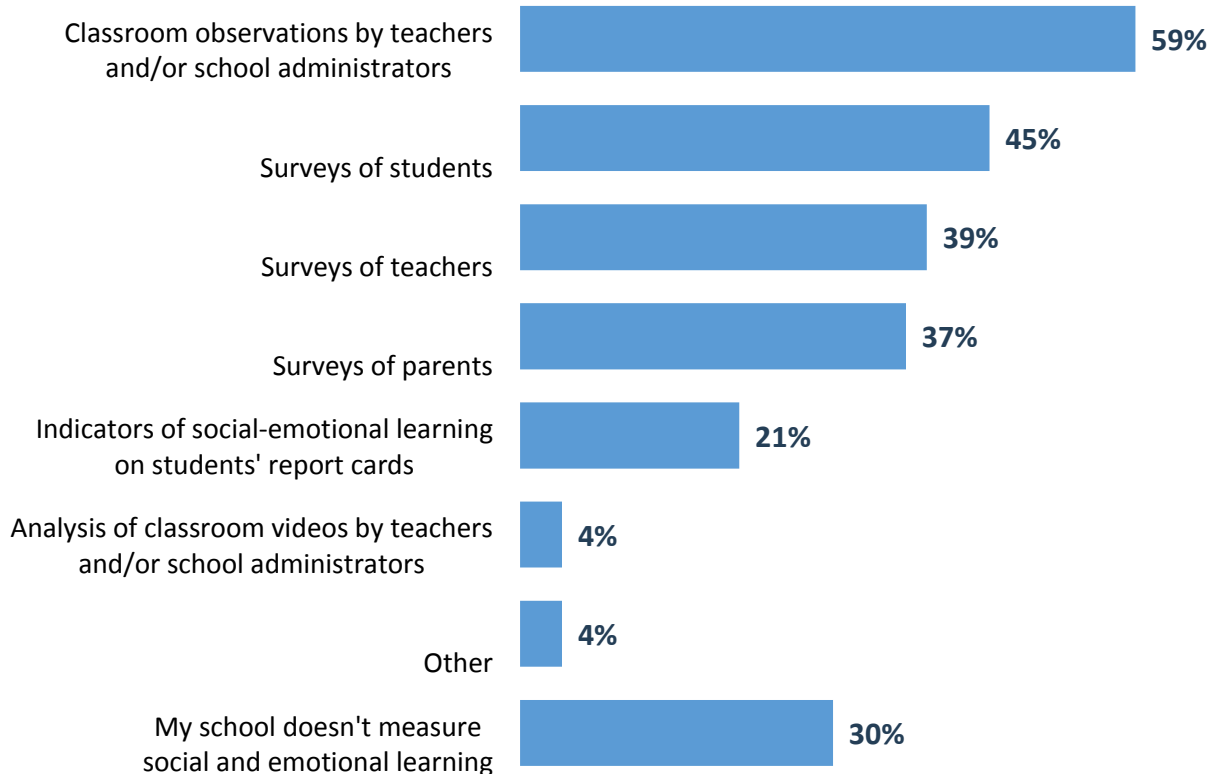
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING STRATEGIES

Educators may elect to use off-the-shelf programs to address social and emotional learning in their schools. For this survey question, the Education Week Research Center identified 15 such programs and asked educators which (if any) their schools employed.

Eighteen percent of educators reported that their schools had used Responsive Classroom, the specific program most frequently cited by respondents. Approaches other than the 15 programs listed on the survey were reported by 17 percent of respondents. Forty-three percent of educators indicated that their schools had not used any SEL program.

"Which (if any) of the following initiatives has your school used to address students' social and emotional learning?"

Percent of respondents

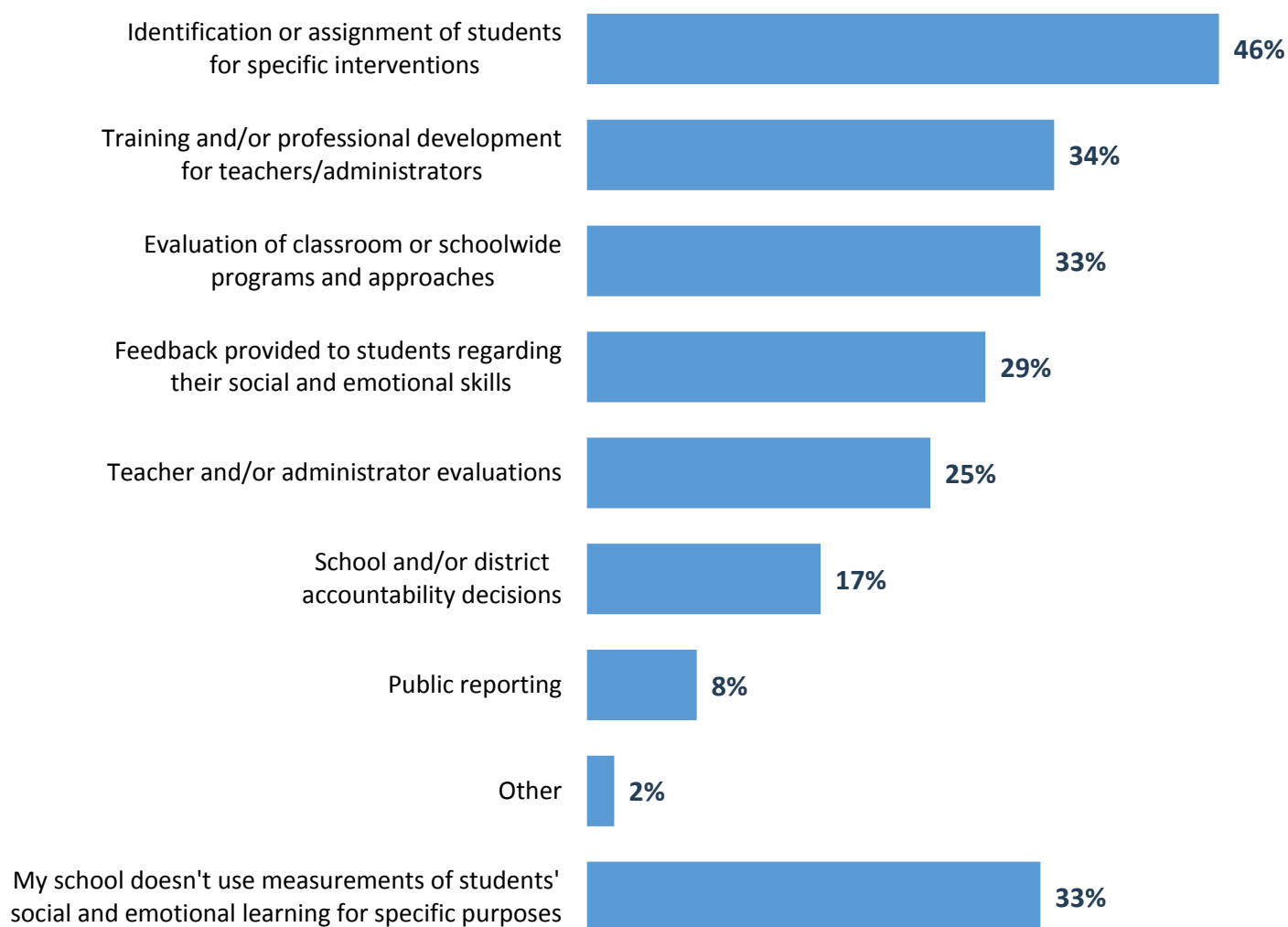| Initiative	Percent
Responsive Classroom	18%
Second Step	14%
Quiet Time	11%
Positive Action	8%
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies [PATHS]	6%
4Rs	5%
Caring School Community (CSC)	5%
Learning to BREATHE	3%
Facing History and Ourselves	3%
Expeditionary Learning	2%
".b" [dot-be] from the Mindfulness in Schools Project	2%
RULER	1%
MindUP	1%
Lions Quest	1%
Other	17%
Not applicable, my school hasn't used any such programs	43%

n = 424
Note: Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent. Results exclude 66 respondents who selected "I don't know." Less than 1 percent of respondents selected Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST).

MEASURING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Respondents were asked what methods or approaches they used to collected information about social and emotional learning. More than half (59 percent) reported that their schools used classroom observations by teachers or school administrators to measure students' social and emotional learning. Student surveys were the second most frequent means of assessment, followed by surveys of teachers and parents. Thirty percent of survey respondents said that their schools did not measure social and emotional learning.

"Which (if any) of the following approaches does your school use to measure students' social and emotional learning?"

Percent of respondents

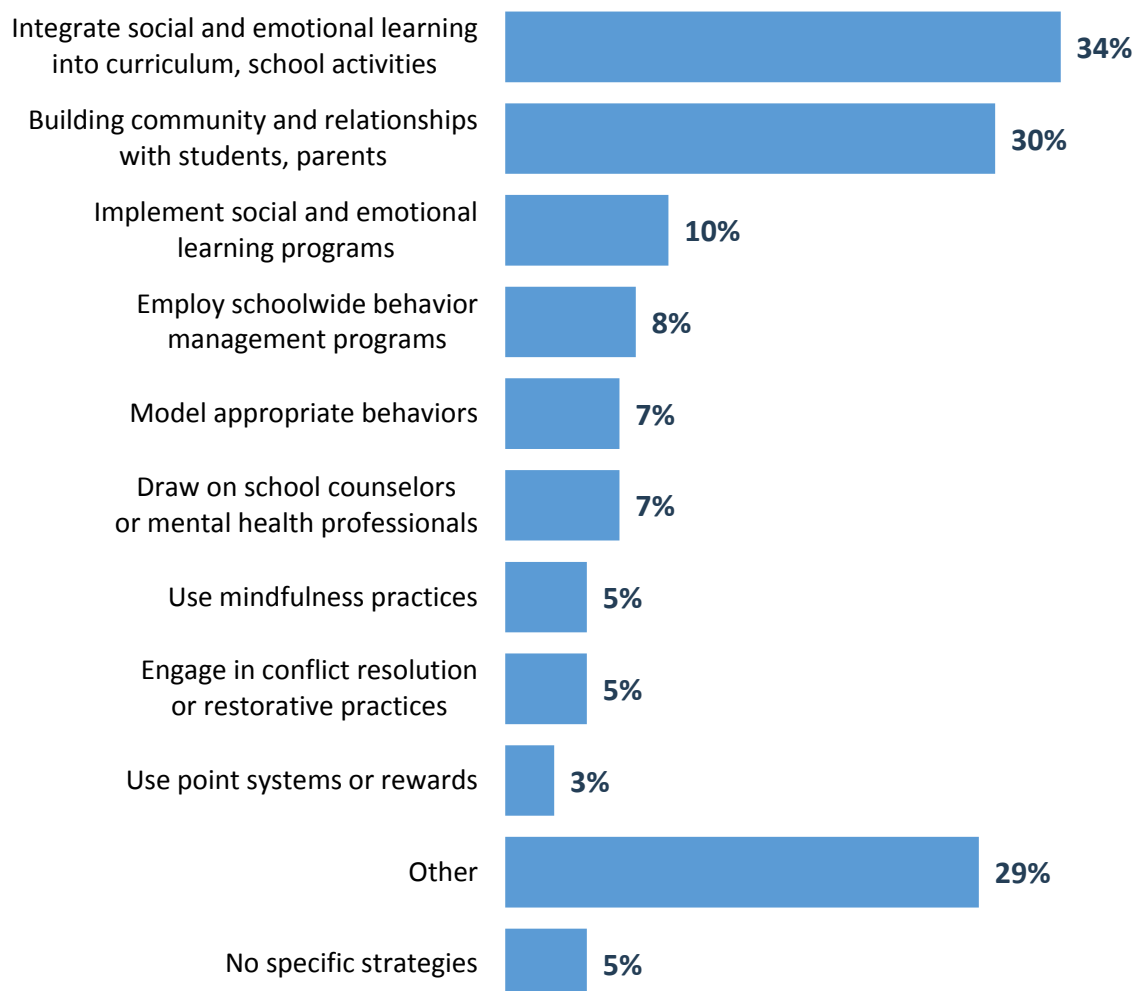| Approach	Percent
Classroom observations by teachers and/or school administrators	59%
Surveys of students	45%
Surveys of teachers	39%
Surveys of parents	37%
Indicators of social-emotional learning on students' report cards	21%
Analysis of classroom videos by teachers and/or school administrators	4%
Other	4%
My school doesn't measure social and emotional learning	30%

n = 484
Note: Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent. Results exclude 28 respondents who selected "I don't know."

MEASUREMENT USES

Nearly half of respondents (46 percent) reported that their schools used the data they collected on social and emotional learning to identify students who needed assistance or to assign them to interventions. Other frequent uses of SEL measures included program evaluation and professional development for teachers and administrators, each cited by about one-third of respondents.

"For which (if any) of the following purposes are measurements of students' social and emotional learning used at your school?"

Percent of respondents

Category	Percent
Identification or assignment of students for specific interventions	46%
Training and/or professional development for teachers/administrators	34%
Evaluation of classroom or schoolwide programs and approaches	33%
Feedback provided to students regarding their social and emotional skills	29%
Teacher and/or administrator evaluations	25%
School and/or district accountability decisions	17%
Public reporting	8%
Other	2%
My school doesn't use measurements of students' social and emotional learning for specific purposes	33%

n = 455
Note: Respondents were asked to select all answers that apply. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent. Results exclude 52 respondents who selected "I don't know."

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

In an open-ended survey question, respondents were asked to identify their most effective strategies for improving students' social and emotional learning. The most commonly cited approach—used by one-third of respondents—was integrating social and emotional learning into the curriculum and a range of school activities. Thirty percent of educators noted efforts to build personal relationships with students or their parents. One in ten mentioned the role of social and emotional learning programs, such as Responsive Classroom or Second Step.

"What are the most effective strategies you use to improve students' social and emotional learning?"

Percent of respondents

Strategy	Percent
Integrate social and emotional learning into curriculum, school activities	34%
Building community and relationships with students, parents	30%
Implement social and emotional learning programs	10%
Employ schoolwide behavior management programs	8%
Model appropriate behaviors	7%
Draw on school counselors or mental health professionals	7%
Use mindfulness practices	5%
Engage in conflict resolution or restorative practices	5%
Use point systems or rewards	3%
Other	29%
No specific strategies	5%

n = 346
Note: Responses were coded into all applicable answer categories. Individual items do not sum to 100 percent.

TRENDS

The new findings featured in this report represent the Education Week Research Center's third effort since 2012 to survey teachers and school-based administrators about social and emotional learning, school climate, student engagement, and other related issues. All three surveys drew on national samples of teachers and school-level administrators who are registered users of *Education Week*'s website, although different individuals participated in each survey. This section of the report presents trend data gleaned from four items that also appeared on previous questionnaires.

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The series of studies have examined key factors affecting student achievement, with five topics included on all three waves: family background, school discipline policies, school safety, school climate, and teaching quality. Social and emotional learning, student engagement, and parental support and engagement were not included in the 2012 survey wave.

Compared with a year earlier, educators in 2015 were considerably more likely to report that social and emotional learning is "very important" to student achievement (67 percent in 2015, versus 54 percent in 2014). The perceived importance of a number of other factors declined between 2012 and 2014, but rebounded in 2015.

Percent of respondents reporting that the specified factors are "very important" to student achievement

Factor	2012	2014	2015
Student engagement*		87%	89%
Teaching quality	92%	81%	84%
School climate	74%	68%	78%
School safety	63%	59%	70%
Social and emotional learning*		54%	67%
Parental support and engagement*		62%	65%
School discipline policies	53%	43%	44%
Family background	38%	27%	29%
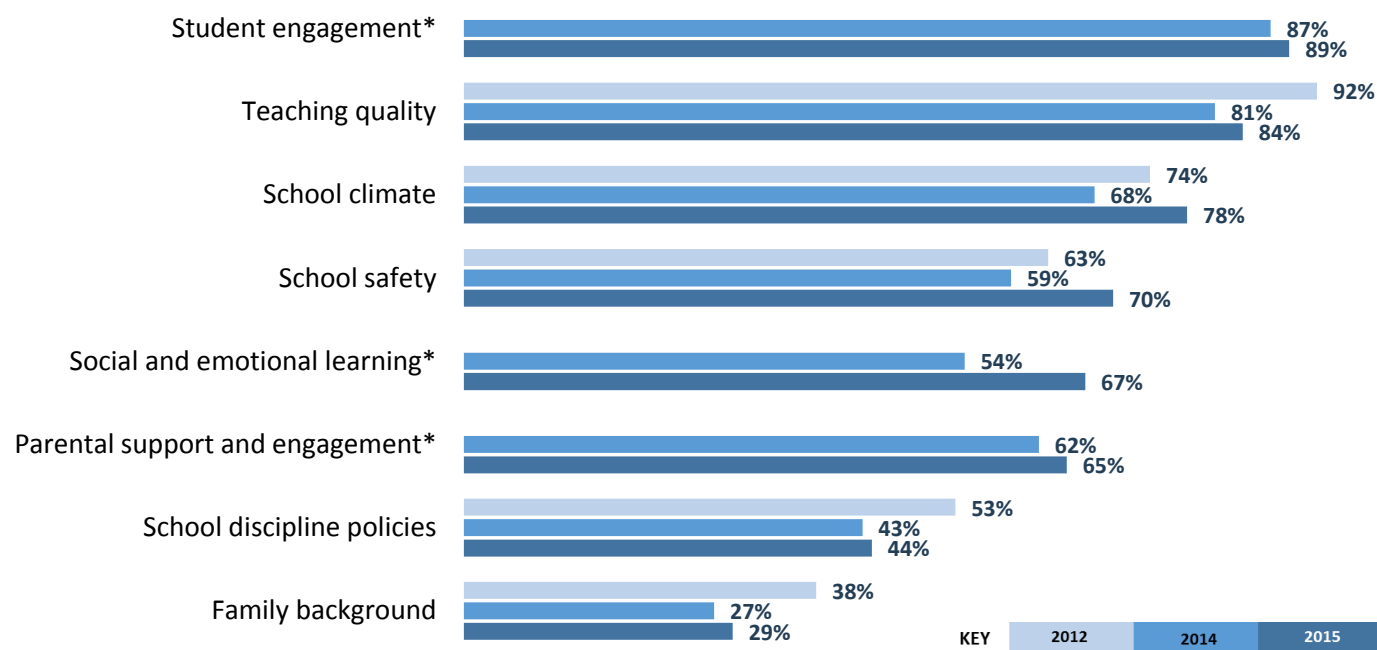
n = 493 to 1,049

* The 2012 survey did not include this question.

OUTCOMES OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Compared with 2012 survey respondents, educators in 2015 were more likely to "strongly agree" that social and emotional learning is an effective way to reduce discipline problems, improve achievement, and improve school climate. Endorsements of the effectiveness of social and emotional learning increased over this period by a margin ranging from 7 percentage points (for school climate) to 11 percentage points (for student achievement). This question was not included on the 2014 survey.

Percent of respondents who "strongly agree" that teaching social and emotional skills to students is an effective way to improve the specified school conditions

KEY | 2012 | 2015

Reduce discipline problems
70%
80%

Improve school climate
69%
76%

Improve student achievement
66%
77%
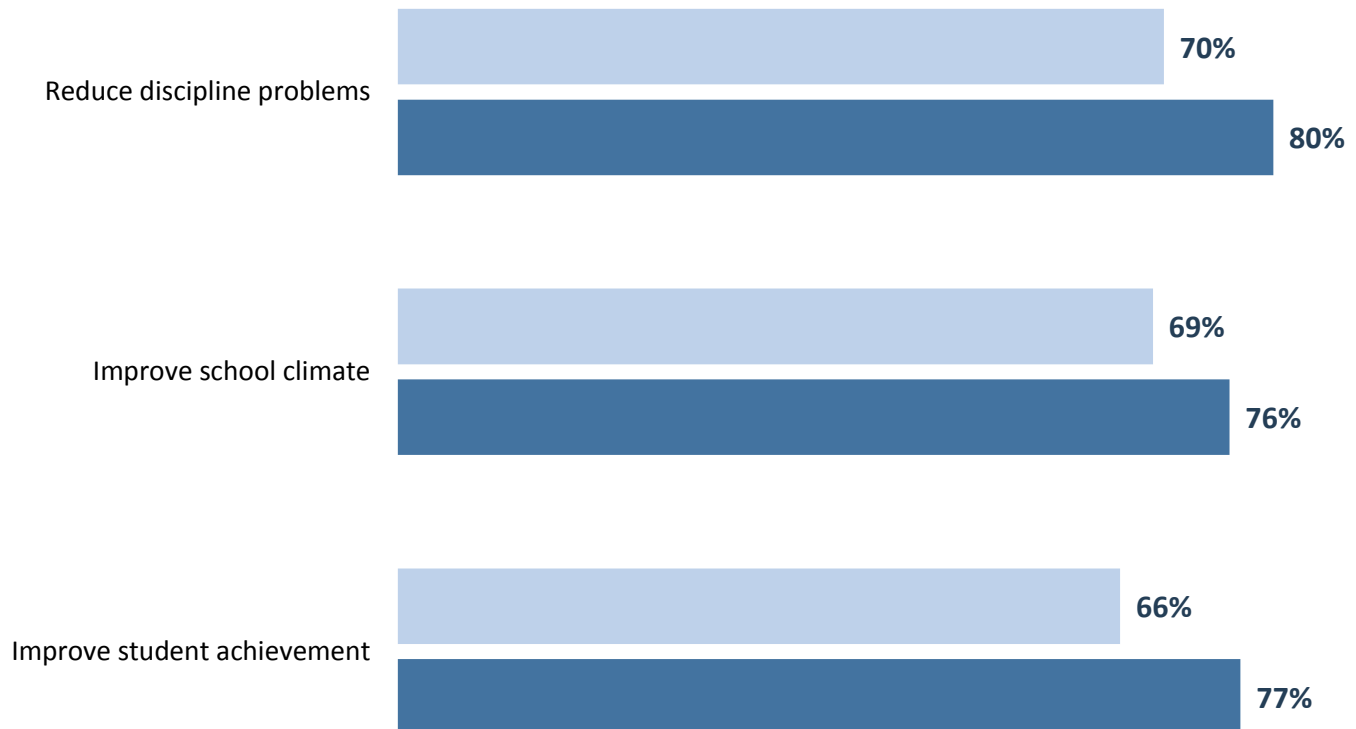
n = 542 to 1,027

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Respondents' assessments of school climate were consistently more positive in 2012 than in 2015. The percent of educators reporting positive conditions in their schools declined in four of the five aspects of school climate examined over time. These declines ranged from two percentage points (students are well-behaved) to 11 percentage points (fostering social and emotional well-being).

Percent of respondents who "strongly agree" with the specified statements about their schools

KEY 2012 2015

Statement	2012	2015
Students and staff feel safe	65%	60%
My school's climate is conducive to teaching and learning	54%	47%
Students are well-behaved	34%	32%
My school's climate fosters social and emotional well-being for students and staff	45%	34%
Students are engaged and motivated*		22%
Bullying of students rarely occurs	19%	20%
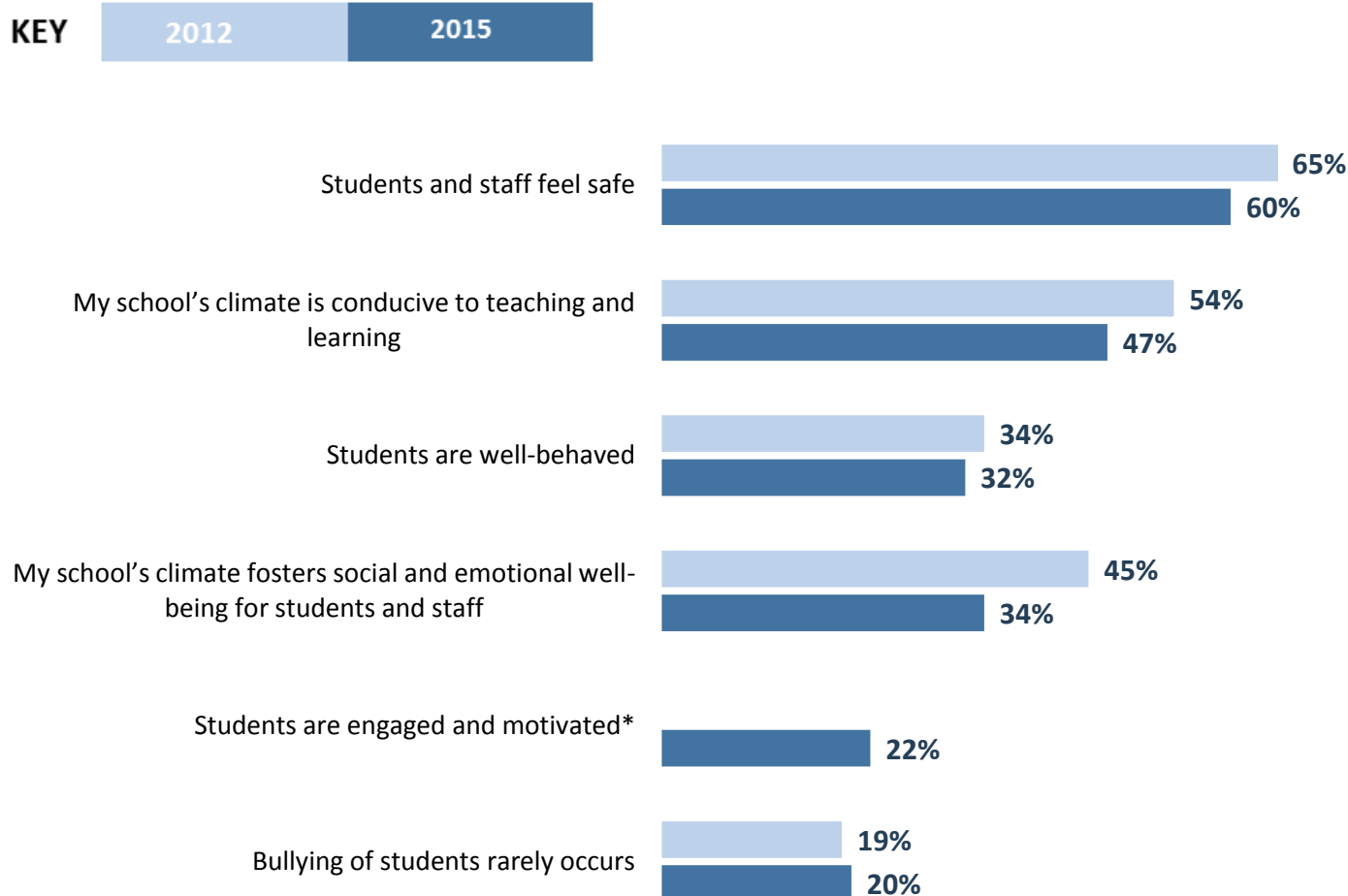
n = 535 to 1,043
* The 2012 survey did not include this question.

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The surveys in 2012 and 2015 asked educators about the strategies their schools used to address student behavior. In both years, behavioral-management programs (e.g., PBIS) were the most commonly used approach, cited by more than half of respondents. Initiatives related to social and emotional learning were mentioned by roughly a third of educators. In most cases, prevalence of the five approaches referenced in both surveys increased over time, with a particularly large expansion in the use of restorative practices.

"Which, if any, of the following approaches has your school used to improve student behavior?"

KEY 2012 2015

Approach	2012	2015
Schoolwide behavioral-management programs (PBIS or SWPBS)	53%	59%
School security practices (metal detectors or school resource officers)	33%	35%
Restorative practices (restorative circles for conflict resolution)	21%	33%
Social and emotional learning initiatives (e.g., Positive Action, PATHS, Responsive Classroom, Second Step)	35%	32%
Targeted behavioral interventions (Good Behavior Game)	27%	29%
Mindfulness practices (meditation or yoga)*		18%
Not applicable, my school hasn't used any such programs or strategies	13%	12%
Other	9%	11%

n = 495 to 1,034

* The 2012 survey did not include this question. Results exclude respondents who selected "I don't know" (19 in 2015 and 46 in 2012).

APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

*1. Which of the following best describes your current professional role?

- ( ) Teacher in a K-12 public school (including special education)
- ( ) School-based department leader, content specialist, curriculum coordinator, or instructional coach
- ( ) School-based special education coordinator
- ( ) School principal
- ( ) Assistant principal
- ( ) Other school-based administrator
- ( ) Other

2. If "Other," please specify.

[   ]

3. How long have you worked in K-12 education?

- ( ) Less than 1 year
- ( ) 1 – 2 years
- ( ) 3 – 5 years
- ( ) 6 – 10 years
- ( ) 11 – 15 years
- ( ) 16 – 20 years
- ( ) 21 – 25 years
- ( ) 26 – 30 years
- ( ) More than 30 years

4. At what grade level(s) do you teach or serve as a school administrator? *Select all that apply.*

- [ ] Kindergarten – grade 2
- [ ] Grades 3 – 5
- [ ] Grades 6 – 8
- [ ] Grades 9 – 12
- [ ] Other

In this survey, social and emotional learning refers to management of emotions, relationships, and decisionmaking.

5. On a five-point scale (where 5 is "very familiar" and 1 is "not at all familiar"), how familiar are you with social and emotional learning in K-12 schools?

Very Familiar 5	4	3	2	Not At All Familiar 1
( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

6. On a five-point scale (where 5 is "very important" and 1 is "not at all important"), how important do you feel the following factors are to student achievement?

	Very Important 5	4	3	2	Not At All Important 1
School safety	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Social and emotional learning	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Parental support and engagement	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Family background	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
School climate	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Teaching quality	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
School discipline policies	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Student engagement and motivation	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

7. On a five-point scale (where 5 is "very important" and 1 is "not at all important"), how important do you feel it is for <u>students</u> to learn about the following aspects of social and emotional learning at your school?

	Very Important 5	4	3	2	Not At All Important 1
Responsible decisionmaking	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Relationship skills	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Self awareness	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ability to empathize with others	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Self management	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

8. On a five-point scale (where 5 is "very important" and 1 is "not at all important"), how important do you feel it is for <u>teachers</u> to possess the following qualities or skills?

	Very Important 5	4	3	2	Not At All Important 1
Responsible decisionmaking	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ability to empathize with others	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Self management	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Self awareness	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Relationship skills	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Teaching social and emotional skills to students is an effective way to:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Improve school climate	( )	( )	( )	( )
Reduce discipline problems	( )	( )	( )	( )
Improve student achievement	( )	( )	( )	( )

In this survey, social and emotional learning refers to management of emotions, relationships, and decisionmaking.

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My school's climate is conducive to teaching and learning	( )	( )	( )	( )
My school's climate fosters social and emotional well-being for students and staff	( )	( )	( )	( )
Students and staff feel safe	( )	( )	( )	( )
Students are well-behaved	( )	( )	( )	( )
Students are engaged and motivated	( )	( )	( )	( )
Bullying of students rarely occurs	( )	( )	( )	( )

11. In your opinion, what percentage of the students at your current school have strong social and emotional skills?

- ( ) 25% or fewer
- ( ) 26 to 50%
- ( ) 51 to 75%
- ( ) More than 75%

12. How would you describe the amount of attention given to the following factors at your current school, as compared with the development of academic skills and content knowledge?

	Too much attention	About the right amount of attention	Too little attention
School climate	○	○	○
Your students' social and emotional learning	○	○	○
Parental support and engagement	○	○	○
School safety	○	○	○
School discipline policies	○	○	○
Student engagement and motivation	○	○	○
Teachers' well-being	○	○	○

13. Has the amount of attention given to your students' social and emotional development changed since the implementation of the Common Core State Standards?

○ The amount of attention given to social and emotional development has increased

○ The amount of attention has decreased

○ No change

○ My school is not implementing the Common Core

○ I don't know

14. Overall, what are the greatest challenges you face with respect to students' social and emotional learning? Please describe in the space below.

[text box]

In this survey, social and emotional learning refers to management of emotions, relationships, and decisionmaking.

15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

My training adequately prepared me to address students' social and emotional learning.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Undergraduate, graduate, or alternative-route preparation programs	○	○	○	○	○
Training and professional development received after obtaining teacher or administrator certification	○	○	○	○	○

16. Which of the following best describes your experience with professional development and training related to the specified factors?

	I have had some training and want more	I have had some training and do not want more	I have had no training and want some	I have had no training and do not want any
School climate	○	○	○	○
Students' social and emotional learning	○	○	○	○
Parental support and engagement	○	○	○	○
School safety	○	○	○	○
School discipline policies	○	○	○	○
Student engagement and motivation	○	○	○	○
Students' academic skills and content knowledge	○	○	○	○

In this survey, social and emotional learning refers to management of emotions, relationships, and decisionmaking.

17. Which, if any, of the following approaches has your school used to improve student behavior? *Select all that apply.*

☐ Mindfulness practices (such as meditation or yoga)

☐ Restorative practices (such as restorative circles for conflict resolution)

☐ School security practices (such as metal detectors or school resource officers)

☐ Schoolwide behavioral-management programs (such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [PBIS] or Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports [SWPBS])

☐ Social and emotional learning initiatives (such as Positive Action, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies [PATHS], Responsive Classroom, or Second Step)

☐ Targeted behavioral interventions (such as the Good Behavior Game)

☐ Not applicable, my school hasn't used any such programs or strategies

☐ I don't know

☐ Other

18. Which (if any) of the following initiatives has your school used to address students' social and emotional learning? *Select all that apply.*

☐ .b from the Mindfulness in Schools Project

☐ Botvin LifeSkills Training (LST)

☐ Caring School Community (CSC)

☐ Expeditionary Learning

☐ Facing History and Ourselves

☐ 4Rs

☐ Learning to BREATHE

☐ Lions Quest

☐ MindUP

☐ Positive Action

☐ Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies [PATHS]

☐ Quiet Time

☐ Responsive Classroom

☐ RULER

☐ Second Step

☐ Not applicable, my school hasn't used any such programs or strategies

☐ I don't know

☐ Other

19. If "Other," please specify.

[text box]

20. Which (if any) of the following approaches does your school use to measure students' social and emotional learning? *Select all that apply.*

- [ ] Classroom observations by teachers and/or school administrators
- [ ] Analysis of classroom videos by teachers and/or school administrators
- [ ] Surveys of students
- [ ] Surveys of teachers
- [ ] Surveys of parents
- [ ] Indicators of social-emotional learning on students' report cards
- [ ] Other
- [ ] My school doesn't measure social and emotional learning
- [ ] I don't know

21. For which (if any) of the following purposes are measurements of students' social and emotional learning used at your school? *Select all that apply.*

- [ ] Identification or assignment of students for specific interventions
- [ ] Evaluation of classroom or schoolwide programs and approaches
- [ ] Feedback provided to students regarding their social and emotional skills
- [ ] Training and/or professional development for teachers/administrators
- [ ] Teacher and/or administrator evaluations
- [ ] Public reporting
- [ ] School and/or district accountability decisions
- [ ] Other
- [ ] My school doesn't use measurements of students' social and emotional learning for specific purposes
- [ ] I don't know

22. What are the most effective strategies you use to improve students' social and emotional learning? Please describe in the space below.

23. Which of the following best describes your school?

- ( ) Traditional public school
- ( ) Public charter school
- ( ) Private school

24. Which of the following best describes the location of your school?

- ( ) City
- ( ) Suburb
- ( ) Town
- ( ) Rural area

25. Approximately how many students are enrolled at your school?

- ( ) 250 students or fewer
- ( ) 251 – 500 students
- ( ) 501 – 750 students
- ( ) 751 – 1,000 students
- ( ) More than 1,000 students

26. Which of the following best describes the poverty level at your school?

- ( ) 25% or fewer low-income students
- ( ) 26 to 50% low-income students
- ( ) 51 to 75% low-income students
- ( ) More than 75% low-income students

27. Occasionally it is helpful to follow-up on the results from surveys to gain deeper insight and inform analysis and reporting. If you are willing to be contacted by an *Education Week* reporter or researcher for follow-up questions or interviews, please provide your contact information below.

Name:
Phone:
Email:

28. To enter a drawing to win one of two $250 American Express gift cards, please provide your contact information in the fields below. Your contact information will only be used for the purpose of this drawing.

Name:
Phone:
Email: