

Voices from the Classroom: Developing a Strategy for Teacher Retention and Recruitment

Key findings from a survey of TK-12 teachers in California and in-depth interviews with aspiring and former teachers in California

Conducted by Hart Research Associates on behalf of the California Teachers Association and UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools

Job Satisfaction and Future Outlook

The background of the slide features two diagonal stripes. A light blue stripe runs from the bottom-left towards the top-right. A darker blue stripe runs parallel to it, slightly offset, also from the bottom-left towards the top-right. The stripes divide the background into three main triangular sections: a light blue one at the top-left, a white one in the middle, and a dark blue one at the bottom-right.

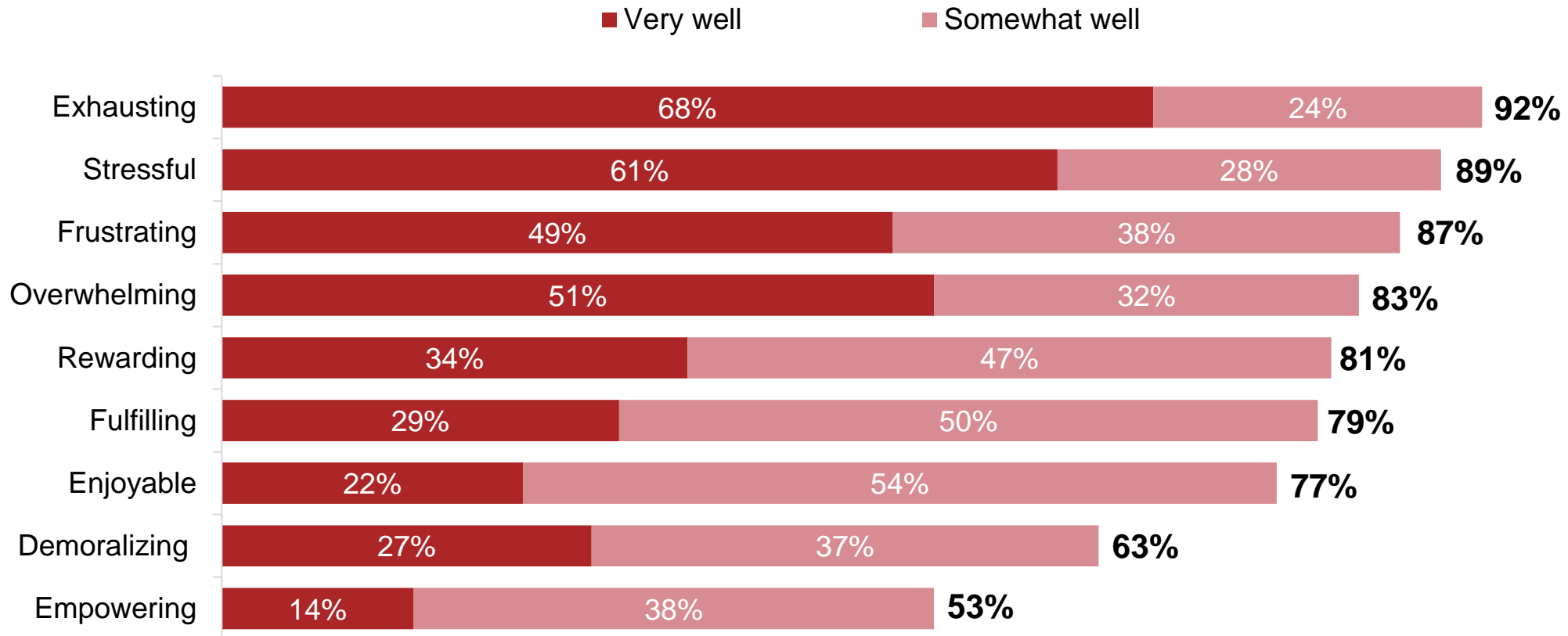
Teachers' primary motivations for entering and staying in the profession are to help students and make a positive difference.

Reasons for becoming a teacher/continuing to teach.

		Been teaching more than 5 years %	Been teaching 5 years or less %
Particularly important to younger teachers.	Helping students	66	80
	Making a positive difference in our world today	56	80
	Job security	33	20
	A work schedule that includes summers off	32	30
Particularly important to newer teachers.	Health and retirement benefits	30	11
	The opportunity to teach a subject you are interested in or care about	28	29
	Interesting and engaging work	21	22
	The salary	11	4
	The opportunity to collaborate with colleagues	8	2
	Having family members who are/were teachers	4	13

Teachers express a range of emotions regarding their position, but exhaustion and stress are the most commonly felt.

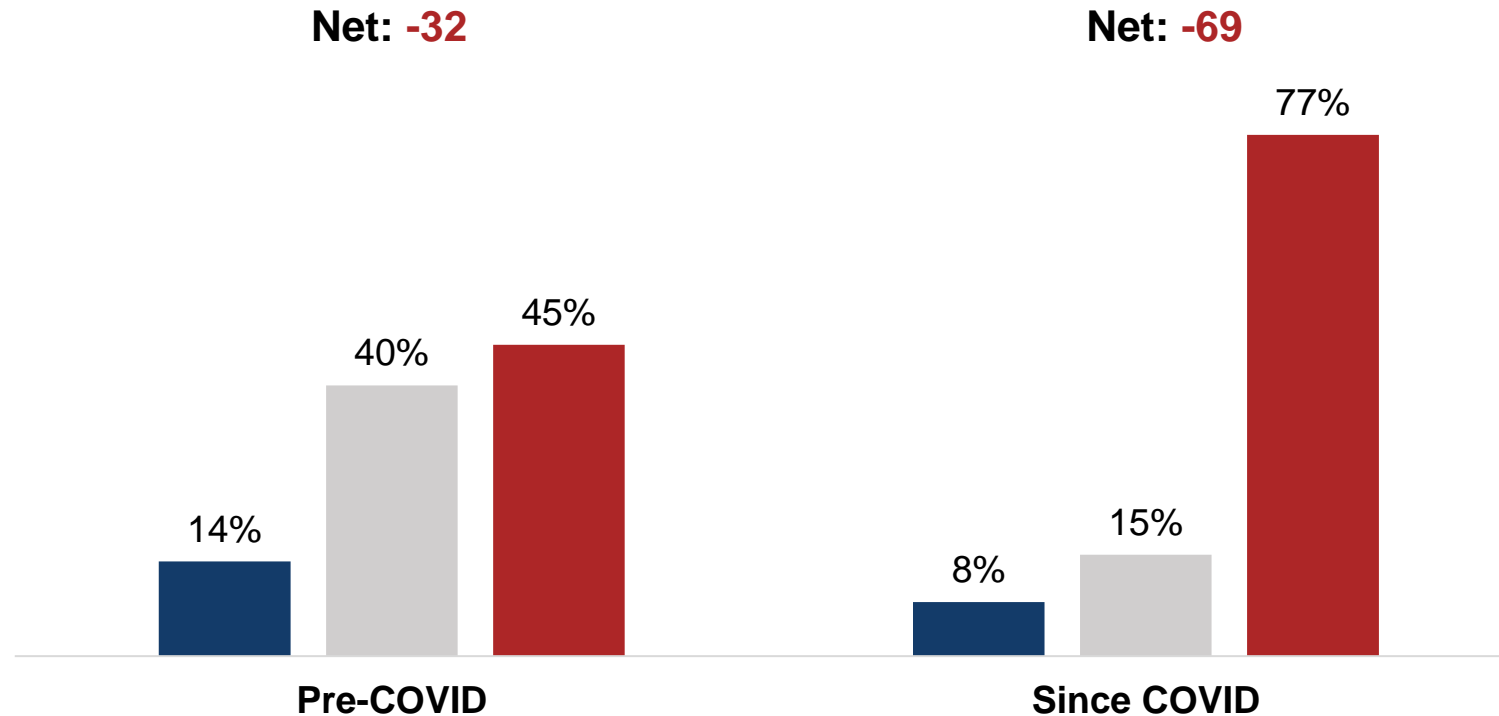
% describes the work of teachers.



Teachers' outlook for the profession has become more negative since COVID.

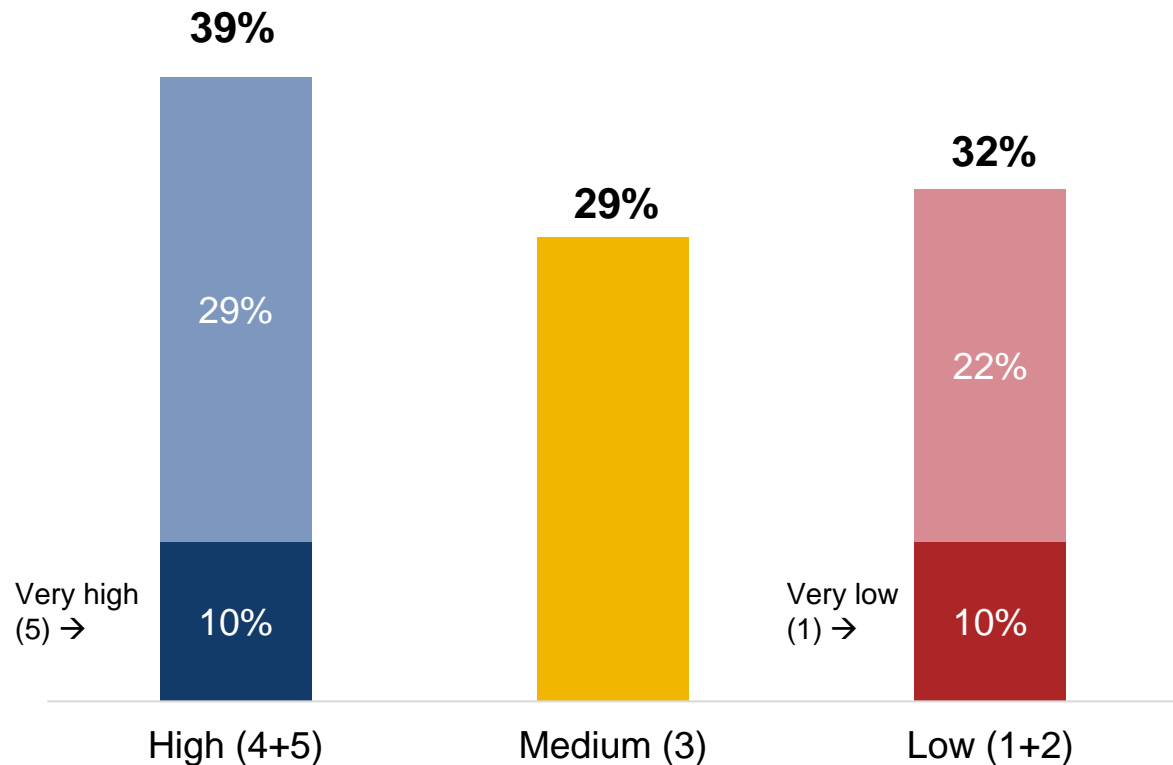
Views on the conditions in the teaching field.

■ Changing for the better ■ No change ■ Changing for the worse



Job satisfaction varies, with older and high school teachers being more satisfied.

Satisfaction with teacher position % (on a 1-5 scale)



High satisfaction (4+5) %

White teachers	38
Hispanic teachers	40
AAPI teachers	44
Black teachers	43
AI/AN teachers	24
Under age 35	34
Age 35 to 44	34
Age 45 to 54	41
Age 55 and older	46
10 years/less teaching	31
11 to 20 years teaching	38
21 to 25 years teaching	42
More than 25 years teaching	43
Elementary	34
Middle	39
High	45
TK-8 or TK-12	42

Students are a key factor in both teachers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with their current position.

What are some of the things you like the most about your current position as a teacher? What aspects of your current teaching job are the most satisfying?

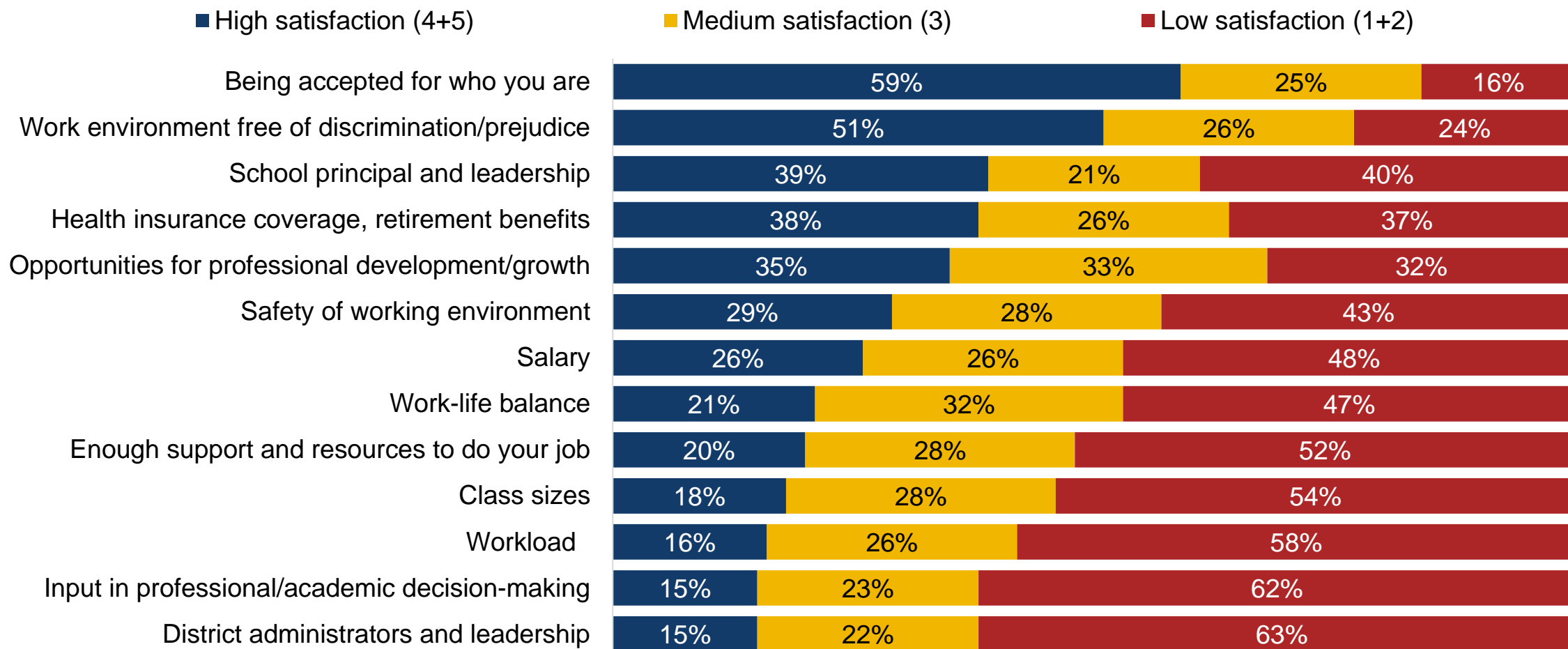
	%
Helping students grow, develop, mature, learn new things	43
The students, love my students, connecting with students	42
The staff, supportive colleagues, teaching team	21
The subject matter, opportunity to teach an interesting subject	20
Not being micromanaged, having input, freedom to adjust curriculum	11
Good administration, principal	10
Supportive parents, building a relationship with their families	10

What are some of the things you like the least about your current position as a teacher? What aspects of your current teaching job are you most dissatisfied with?

	%
Student attitude, apathy, discipline, behavioral problems, truancy	32
Workload, too many responsibilities, long hours	27
No support, recognition from administration, principal	23
Low pay, salary, not keeping up with inflation	18
Lack of parental support, uncooperative, demanding parents	18
Lack of mental health support, services for students	14
Poor district leadership, no support	12

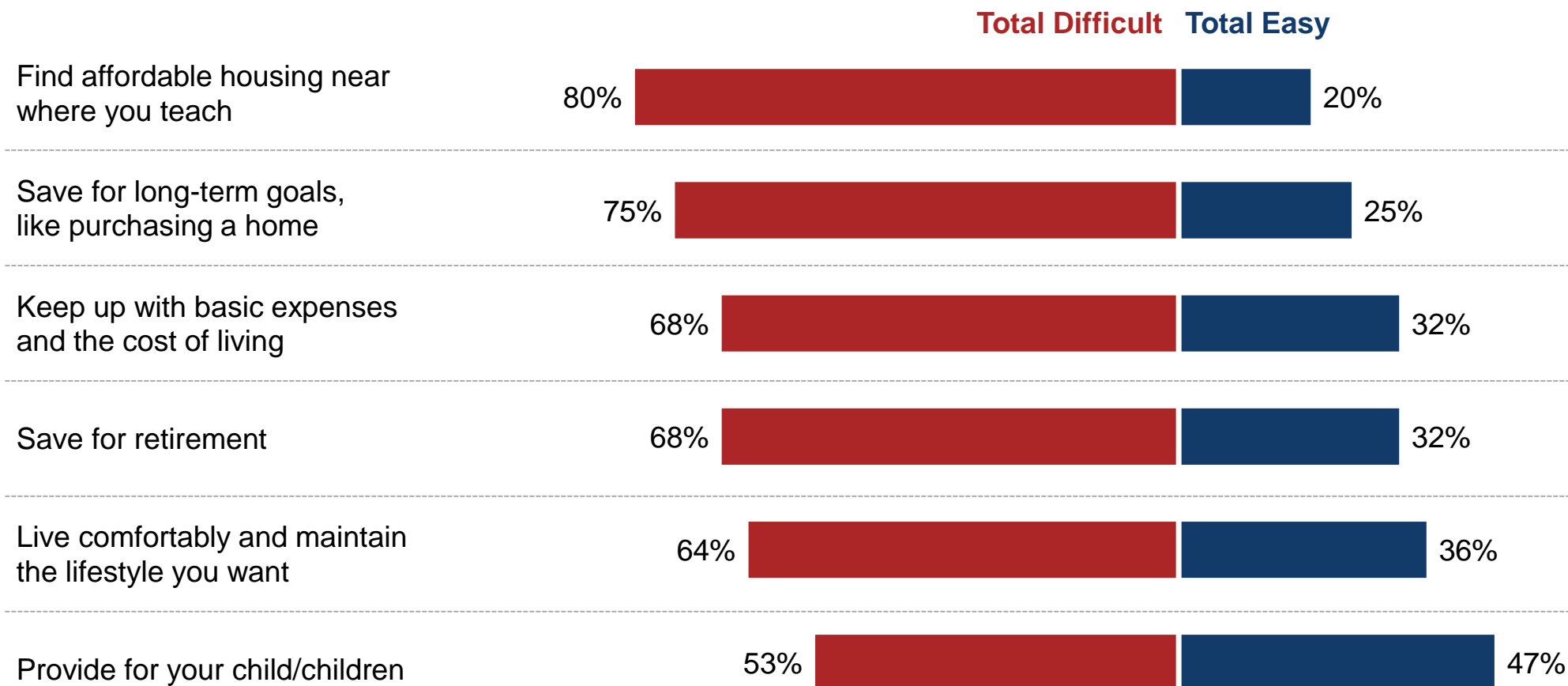
Satisfaction with specific aspects of teaching vary notably.

Satisfaction with aspects of teacher position % (on a 1-5 scale)



Teachers indicate that they are experiencing financial stress.

Is it easy or difficult for you to do each of the following?



Qualitative Findings: Compensation is a major source of frustration and dissatisfaction for former teachers.

- Salaries are not commensurate with the demands of teaching.
- Teachers are not fairly compensated for the work, time, effort, and emotional commitment they give to the job.
- The many hours teachers work outside the classroom are essentially “unpaid.”
- Younger, newer teachers take on other paying positions at their schools, to make ends meet in cities where the cost of living is high.



“Someone did the math and figured out that if you had this X number of students in your class and you had them for this number of hours, this is what you would make as a babysitter. It turned out to be so much more than what we were getting paid as teachers.” **(Female, 38, White, 6-12)**

“When I was teaching in San Francisco, I had to do every additional extracurricular. I coached volleyball just so I could pay rent. I joined the instructional leadership team to get the extra stipend.” **(Male, 32, White, TK-5)**

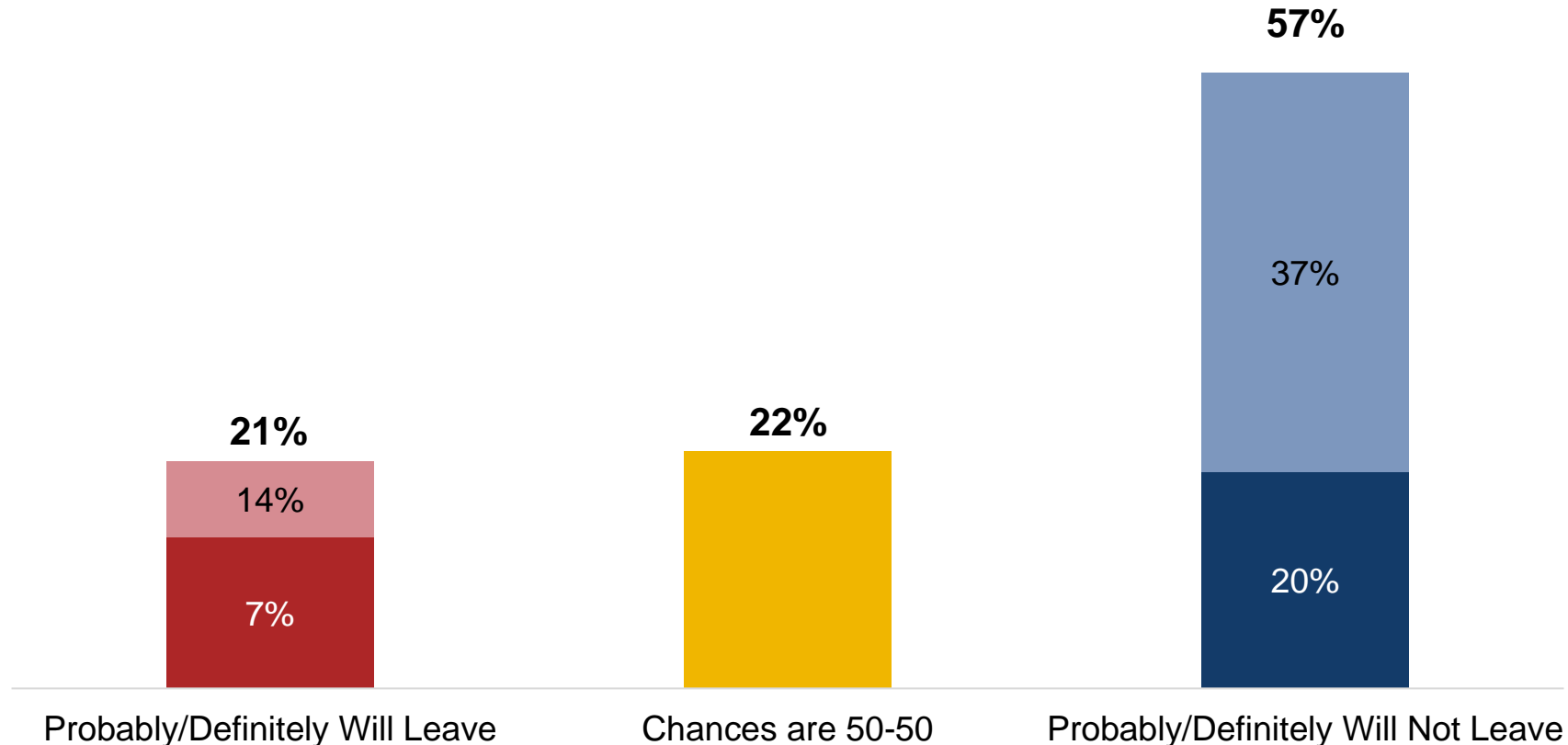
“Only being paid during school hours—a.k.a., when we have students— is the most INSANE aspect of teaching. Essentially being paid for about 50 to 60% of the workload we have.” **(Female, 37, White, 9-12)**

“I actually liked teaching, a noble profession, but unfortunately the extreme high cost of living in L.A. and slave wages LAUSD paid were just no longer worth the effort.” **(Male, 42, Hispanic, TK-5)**

Teacher Retention

One in five teachers expect to leave the profession within the next three years.

Realistically speaking, what are the chances you will leave the teaching profession within the next three years?

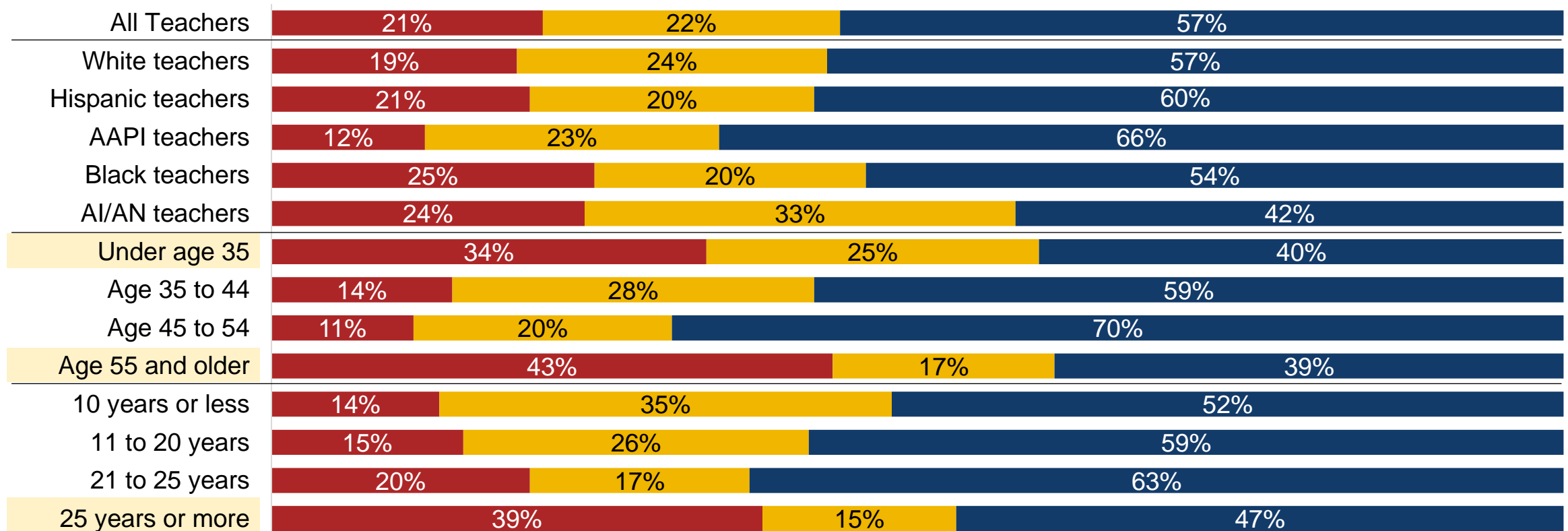


41% have considered AND looked into leaving the classroom (either for another position in education or leave the field)

Older teachers are most likely to say they will leave, but one-third of teachers under age 35 express similar intentions.

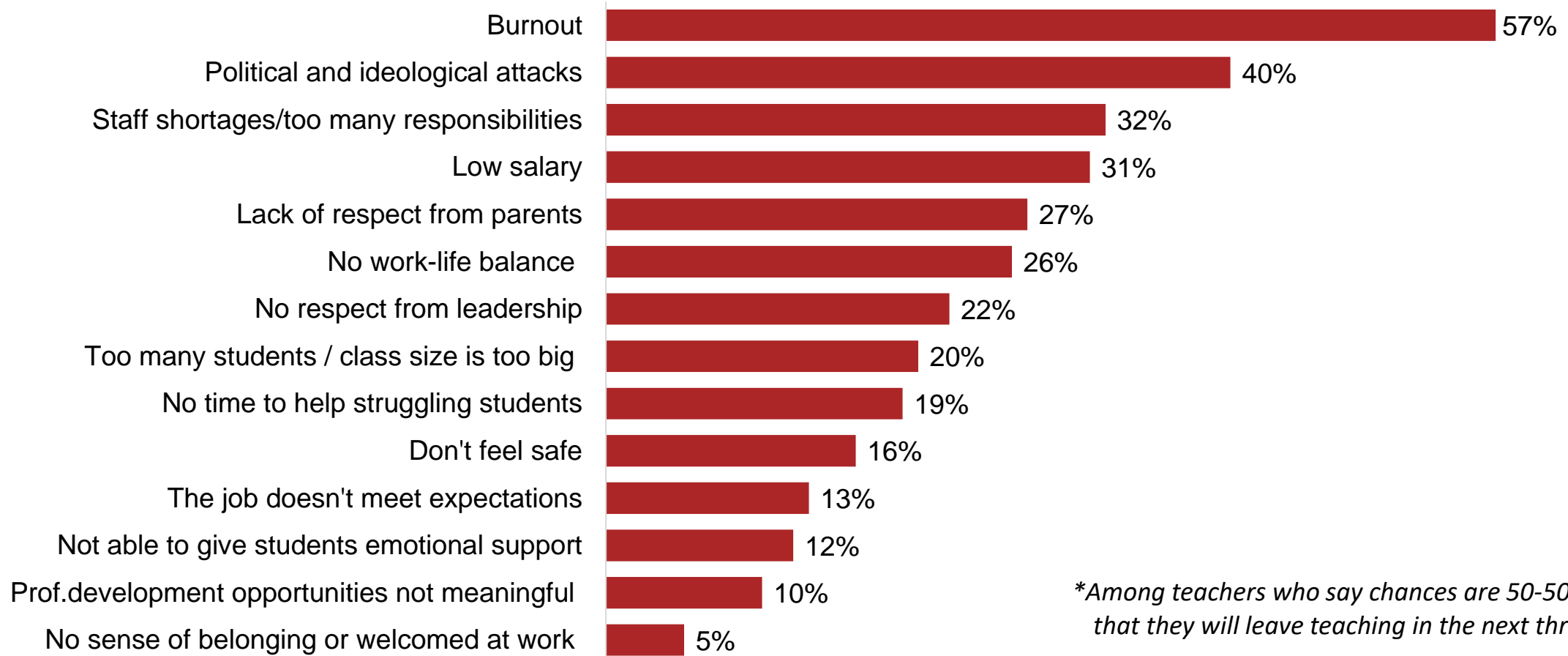
Realistically speaking, what are the chances you will leave the teaching profession within the next three years?

■ Probably/definitely will leave ■ Chances are 50-50 ■ Probably/definitely will NOT leave



Burnout is the top reason teachers might leave; political/ideological attacks are also a top factor for many.

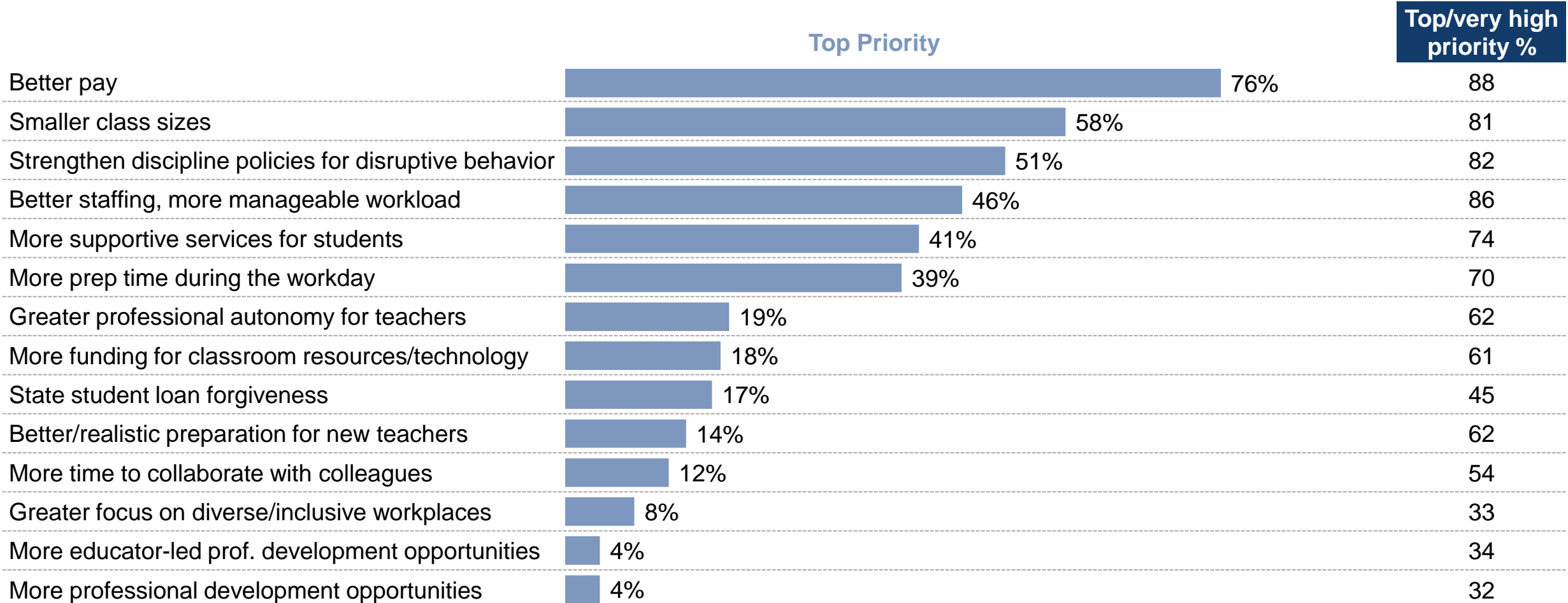
*Top three reasons why teachers are considering leaving the profession.**



**Among teachers who say chances are 50-50 or greater that they will leave teaching in the next three years.*

Better pay, smaller class sizes, and enhanced discipline are the top changes teachers say would improve retention.

Top four changes that state and local officials should prioritize in order to improve teacher retention.



Teachers who definitely plan to leave the profession place a higher priority on enhanced discipline.

*Top four changes that state and local officials should prioritize in order to improve teacher retention
(by likelihood they will leave the profession in three years)*

	Definitely will leave %	Probably will leave %	50-50 chance will leave %	Unlikely/will not leave %
Better pay	73	65	75	78
Smaller class sizes	40	50	63	60
Strengthen discipline policies for students who behave disruptively	66	49	50	47
Better staffing and a more manageable workload	58	49	49	42
More supportive services for students	35	49	38	43

Qualitative Findings: Former teachers indicate that easing the financial stress on teachers will be critical to improving retention.

Compensation

- Increasing salaries
- Creating affordable housing
- Instituting student loan forgiveness programs
- Providing financial literacy programs
- Providing better benefits

“

“A significant raise of at least 25%. The work is hell, but there is a financial tipping point that helps deal with the organizational trauma.” **(Female, 49, Hispanic, TK-5)**

“Like I said, more training opportunities and higher pay. Even for like different resources, where it can be, like, housing resources or resources for teachers to sign up for extra classes for professional development. Maybe some budgeting for, like, financial literacy classes. Things like that. And also, incentives.” **(Female, 38, Black, TK-5)**

“If teachers are important, it's a matter of putting our money where our mouth is, to be frank. We have to get back to the basics of making sure that education is important and that we're putting more funding into that. You know teachers are having to take up second jobs, having to work summer school, having to do a lot of things that they shouldn't have to and they're finding money and other places to support their families, but if they can really lock in and stay within one school and that school helps them, or the school district helps them to pay their bills in a big way, I think that will help keep teachers where they are at because it would be a lucrative choice for them.” **(Female, 37, Black, TK-8)**

Qualitative Findings: Aspiring teachers indicate that the cost of tuition and assessments is a major financial burden.

- 18 of the 25 aspiring teachers reported that cost was a factor.
- Several indicated that had they not had financial support from a spouse or partner or received some form of financial assistance or a scholarship, they likely would not have pursued a career in teaching.

Compensation

- Paying student teachers was suggested as an important policy change that will alleviate financial stress during the preparation process.



“I don't know if I would have trained to be a teacher, if I had to go into debt to do it.” **(Female, 41, White, TK-8)**

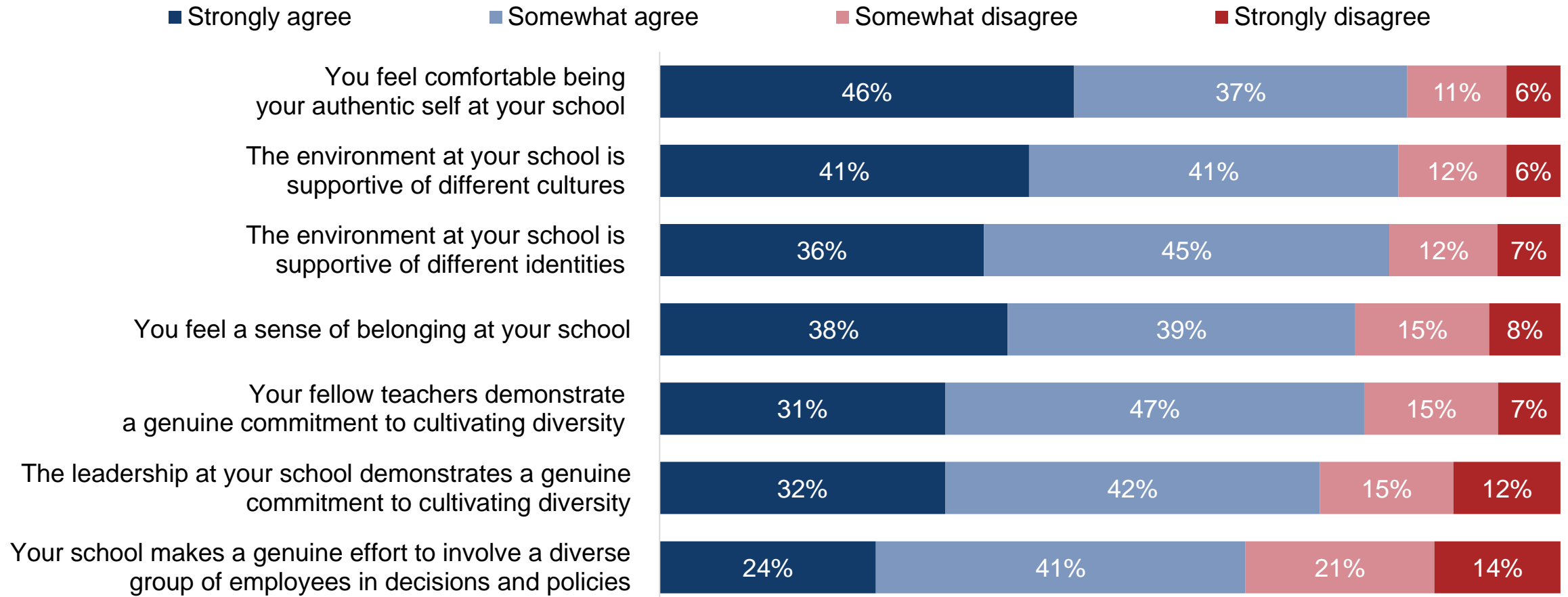
“I was lucky enough to get a fellowship to pay for tuition, but I had to take out living expense loans for my rent, etc.,...that put me over the edge in debt.” **(Female, 45, Black, 9-12)**

“I was and am willing to do whatever it takes to be a teacher. However, the cost of tuition, compared to how much teachers make, is very sad. This was a con for me when considering being a teacher. The cost of student-teaching was 10 grand and has been a huge challenge for me.” **(Female, 23, White, 6-12)**

Diversity and Inclusion within the School Work Environment

The background of the slide features two diagonal stripes. A light blue stripe runs from the bottom-left towards the top-right. A darker blue stripe runs parallel to it, slightly offset to the right, also from the bottom-left towards the top-right.

Teachers are more likely to agree than disagree that their school environment is supportive of diversity. However, less than half are resolute that their schools embody these values.



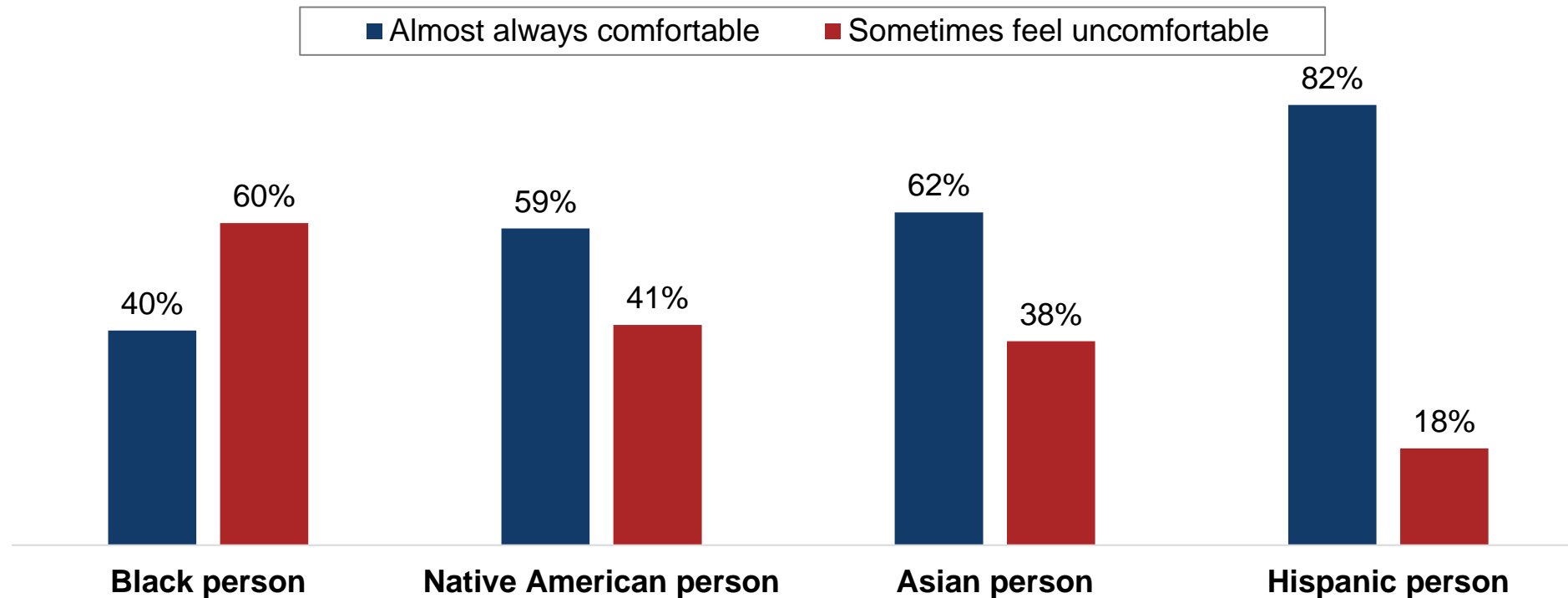
Teachers of color are less likely to strongly concur that their school environment is supportive of diversity and inclusion.

% Strongly Agree

	White teachers %	Hispanic teachers %	AAPI teachers %	AI/AN teachers %	Black teachers %
You feel comfortable being your authentic self at your school	49	46	32	34	31
The environment at your school is supportive of different cultures	46	40	34	24	28
The environment at your school is supportive of different identities	38	36	33	27	33
You feel a sense of belonging at your school	41	41	31	29	30
Your fellow teachers demonstrate a genuine commitment to cultivating diversity	33	29	34	24	20
The leadership at your school demonstrates a genuine commitment to cultivating diversity	34	34	20	32	26
Your school makes a genuine effort to involve a diverse group of employees in decisions and policies	26	26	16	24	19

A majority of Black teachers and significant proportions of AAPI, AI/AN, and Hispanic teachers sometimes feel uncomfortable expressing themselves due to their racial identities.

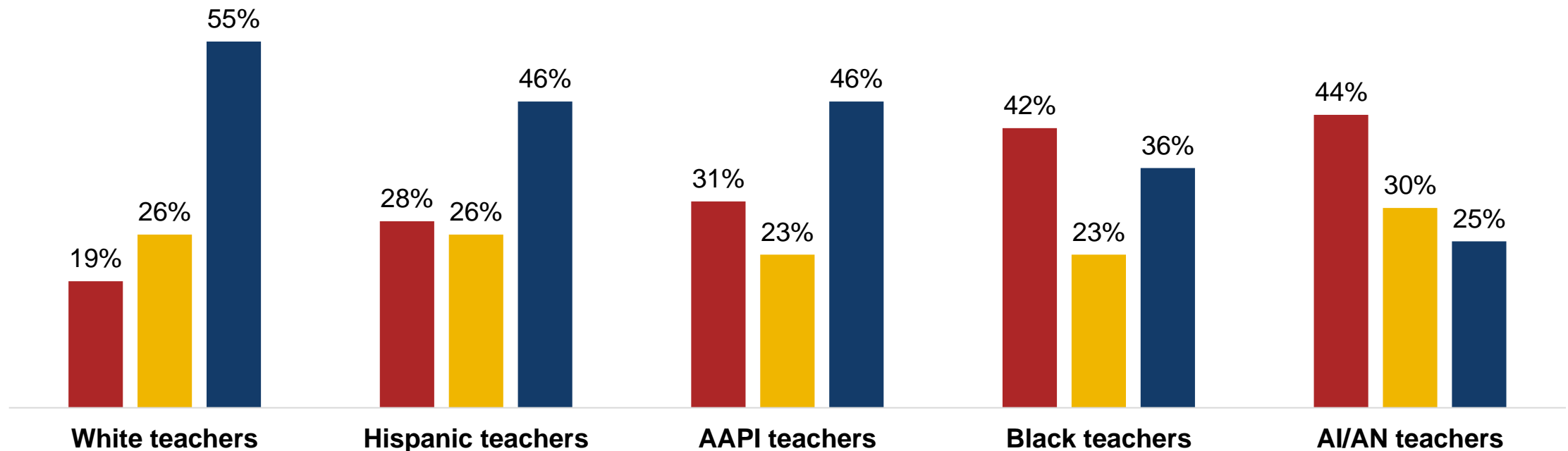
In your school, do you almost always feel comfortable expressing yourself as a ____ person, or are there times when you feel uncomfortable?



Teachers of color are much less satisfied than are white teachers that their work environment is free of discrimination and prejudice.

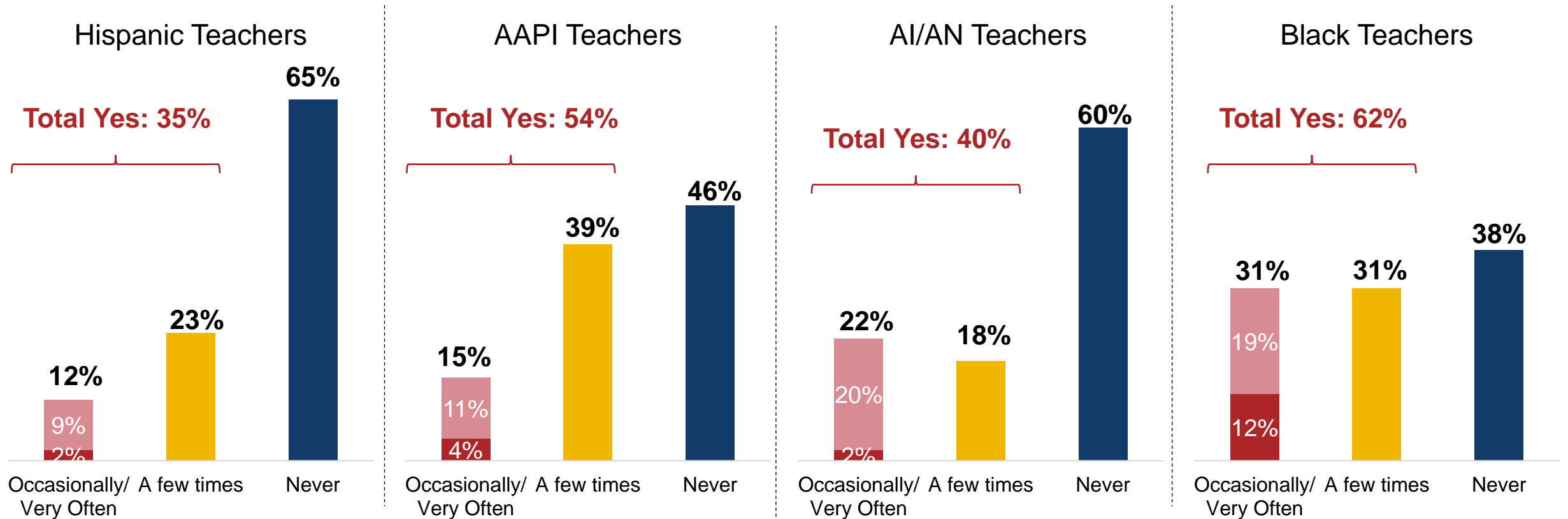
*Satisfaction with “having a work environment free of discrimination and prejudice”
% (on a 1-5 scale)*

■ Low Satisfaction (1+2) ■ Medium Satisfaction (3) ■ High Satisfaction (4+5)



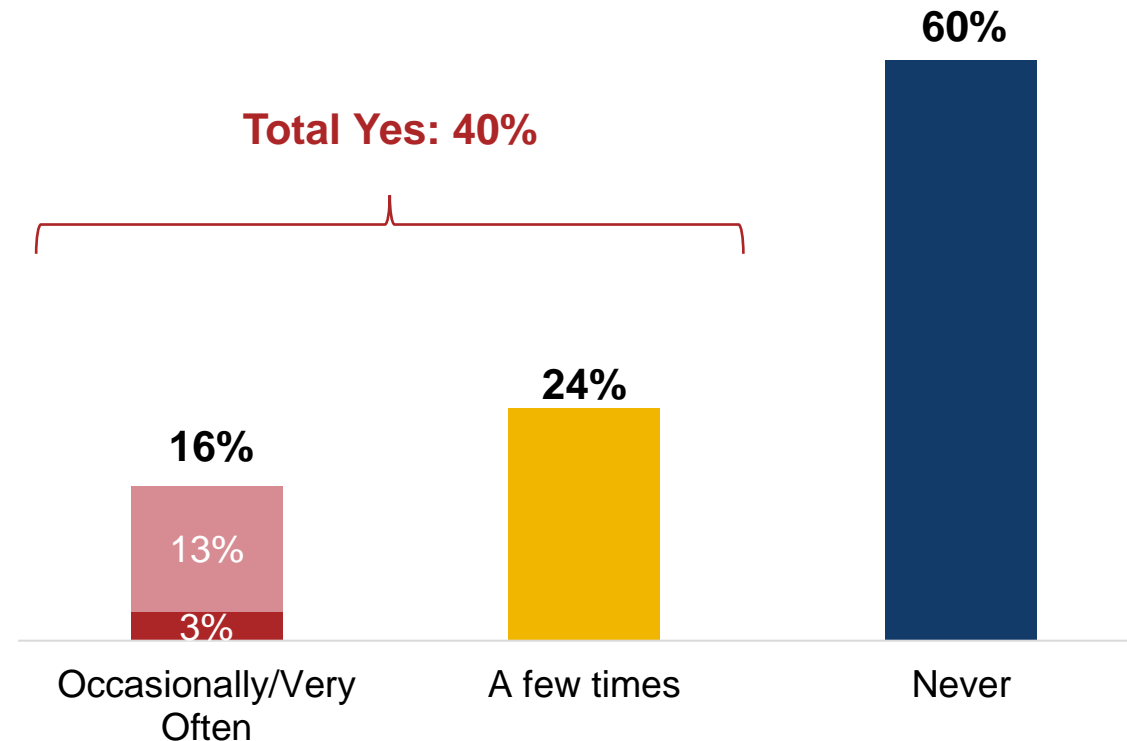
Majorities of Black and AAPI teachers have experienced racial discrimination in their current teaching position.

Do you ever experience racial discrimination at your current teaching position?



Four in 10 LGBTQ+ teachers have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation in their current teaching position.

Do you ever experience discrimination based on your sexual orientation at your current teaching position?



Appendix

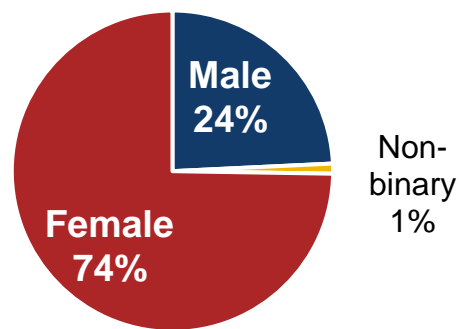
Methodology and Profile of Survey Respondents



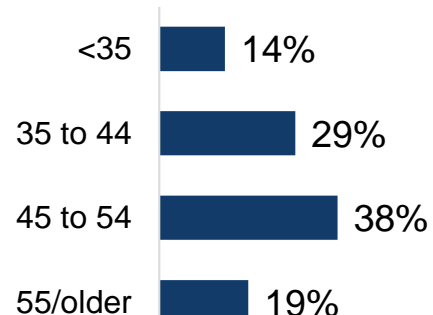
Online survey of **4,632 teachers** who are members of the California Teachers Association

Conducted May 24 to June 6, 2022

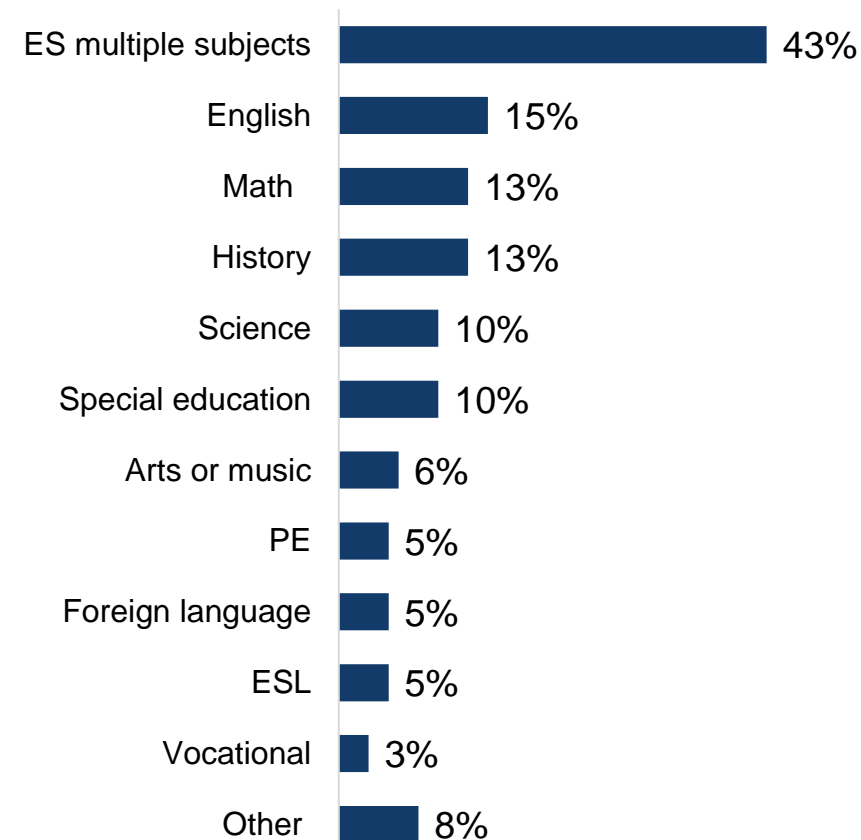
Gender



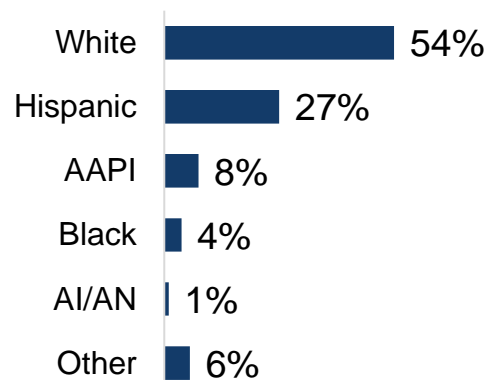
Age



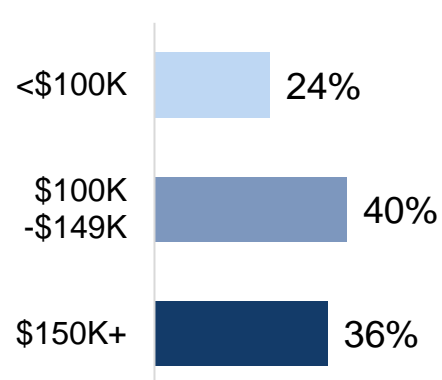
Subject teach



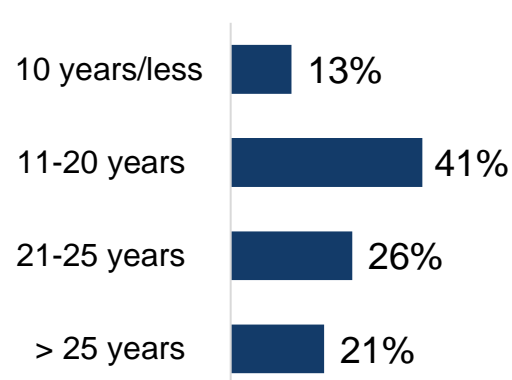
Race/ethnicity



HH income

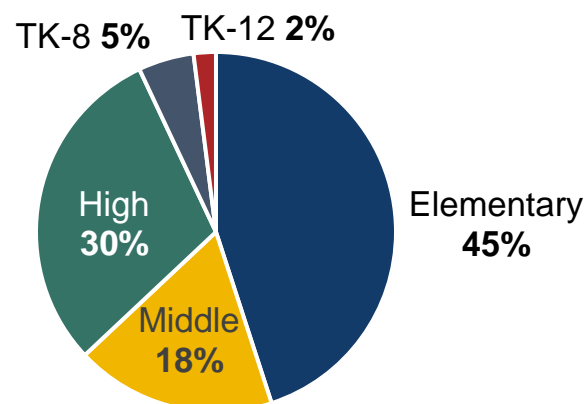


Years teaching

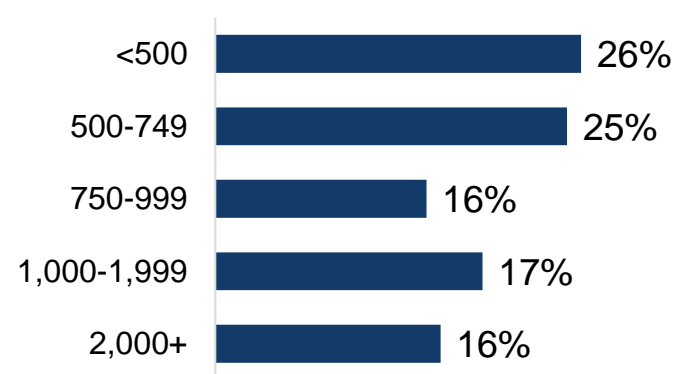


Profile of Respondents – School Characteristics

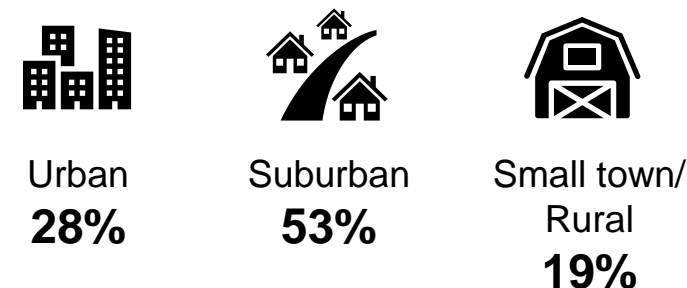
School level



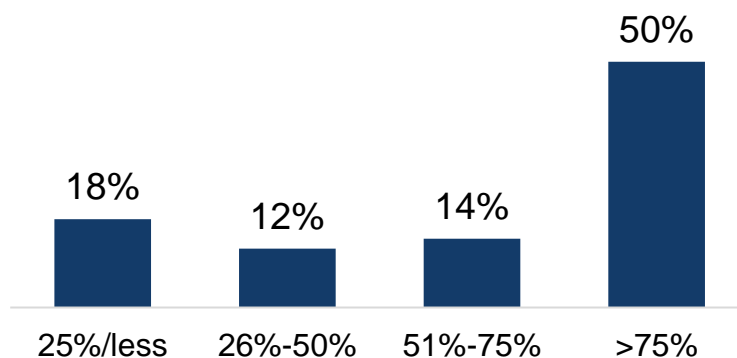
School enrollment



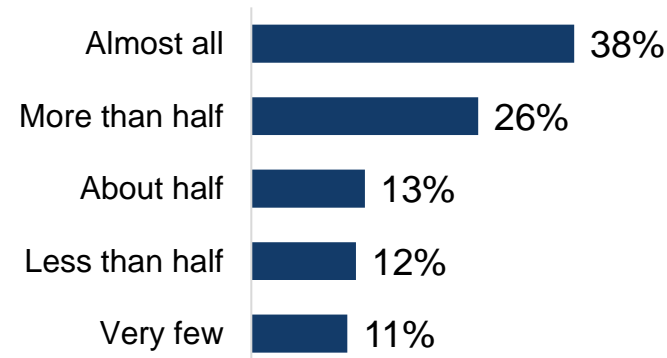
Area type



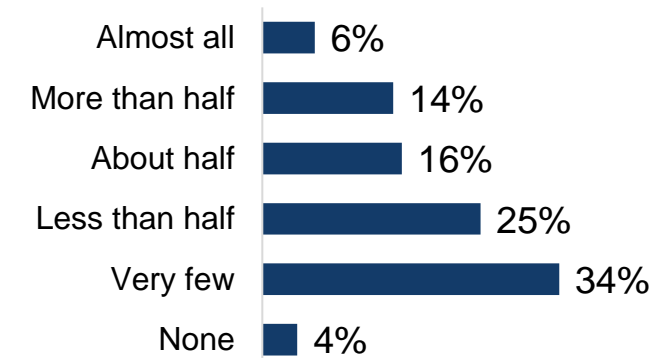
Students receiving free/reduced lunch



Students of color



Teachers of color

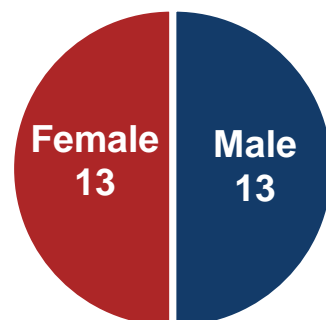


Methodology & Profile of IDI Participants: Former Teachers

In-depth interviews with **26 former California teachers** who left the classroom within the past five years.

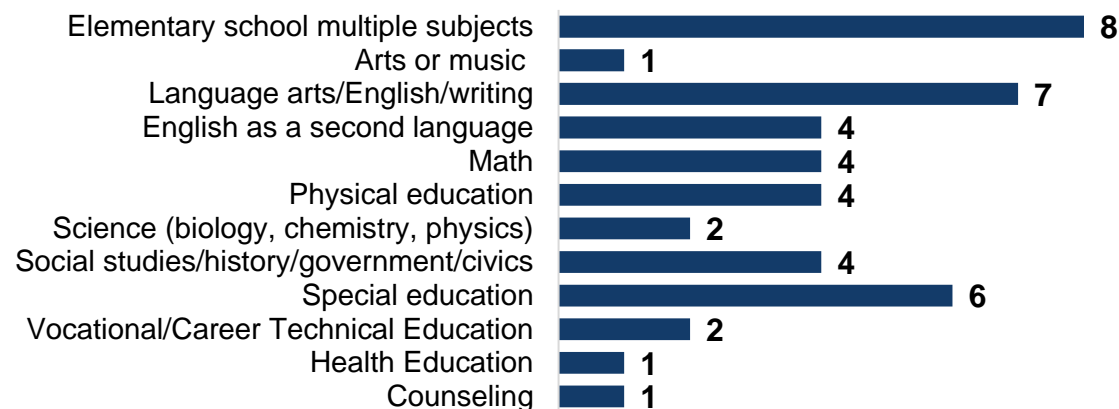
Conducted June 22 to July 16, 2022.

Gender

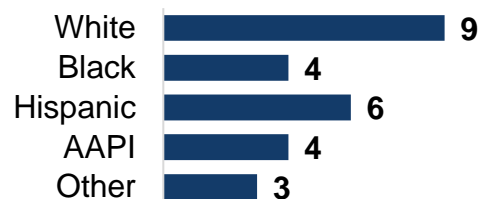


Subjects taught

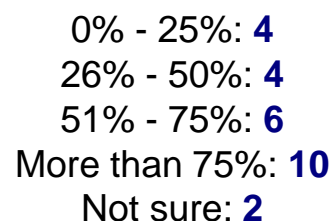
Multiple selected (each out of 26)



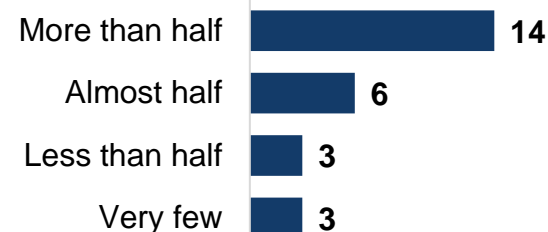
Race



% Free/reduced lunch at last school

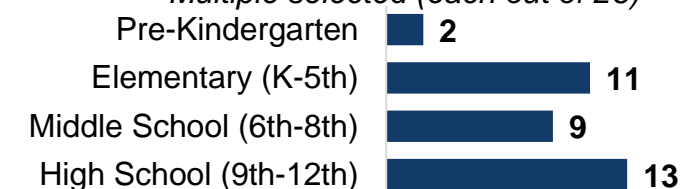


Students of color at last school



Grades taught

Multiple selected (each out of 26)

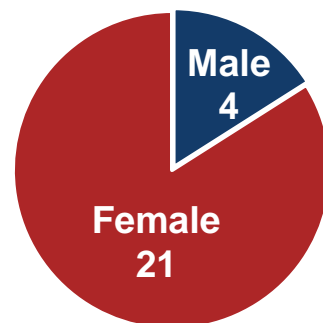


Methodology & Profile of IDI Participants: Aspiring Teachers

In-depth interviews with **25 aspiring teachers** enrolled in or recently graduated from California teacher preparation programs.

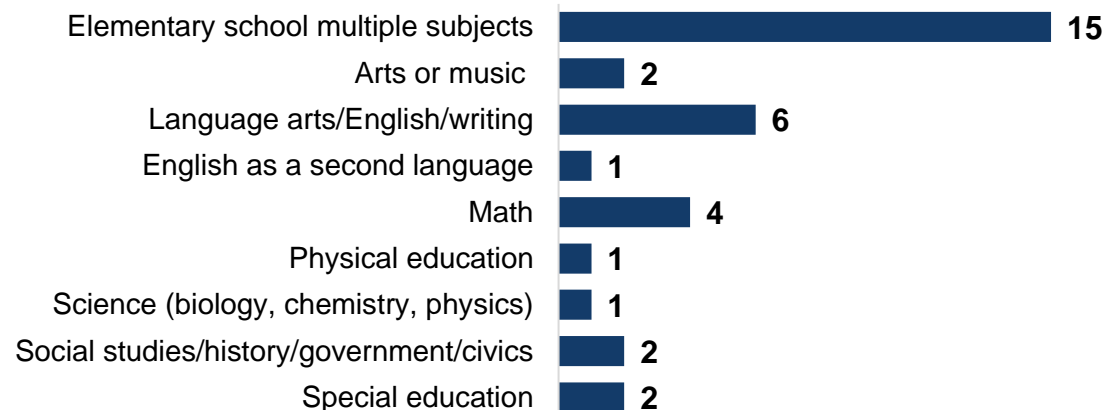
Conducted June 22 to July 16, 2022.

Gender

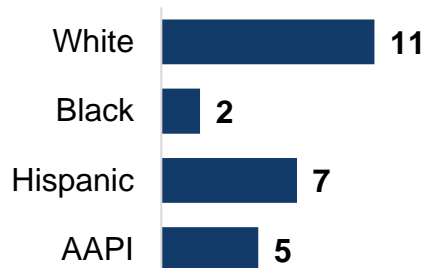


Subjects to teach

Multiple selected (each out of 25)



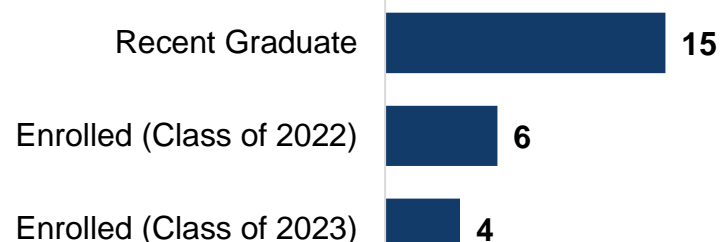
Race



Secured Teaching Position

Yes: **8**
No: **17**

Enrollment Status



Grades to teach

Multiple selected (each out of 25)

