

A TENNESSEECAN STATEWIDE POLL

# School Leaders Survey 2018



**1,828 surveys were administered in August 2018 via emailed survey to all current Tennessee school principals, including public charter school principals.**

**512 respondents (28.01%) +2.07%\* answered the survey: 1,828 email addresses found, 31 bounce-back, 23 opt-out.**

1. Most principals believe that the state funding formula, the BEP, needs to be altered or overhauled completely, though many respondents were unsure whether changes were needed. A majority of principals would support a state funding formula that was weighted based on student needs.

2. While most school leaders still perceive the state of education in Tennessee as positive, the percentage decreased in 2018.

3. While Budget and Staffing continue to be the greatest perceived constraints for principals in student success, Scheduling and Curriculum Quality were also believed to be major constraints.

4. Only 40% of principals stated that their district provided them finance and budgetary training.

5. 71% of principals feel that their leadership preparation program prepared them to be an effective principal, and nearly 80% believe that teachers in their district are prepared to be effective teachers.

6. Character/personality demonstrated in an interview and prior experience are the most important considerations for principals when hiring new teachers.

7. Most principals believe that parental involvement at their schools needs to improve.

How many years have you been a school leader?\*

Years

1	6.25%	11	5.47%
2	4.88%	12	4.49%
3	7.03%	13	3.91%
4	5.66%	14	3.71%
5	7.42%	15	4.49%
6	6.84%	16	1.76%
7	5.86%	17	2.34%
8	7.23%	18	2.15%
9	3.91%	19	1.56%
10	7.03%	20+	8.01%

\* Most distributions held steady since 2017, but we did see an increase in 1st year principals.

What type of school do you lead?

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Traditional District Run School	88.67%	(+0.79%)
Charter School	2.93%	(-0.97%)
Alternative School	2.54%	(-1.79%)
Magnet School	2.34%	(+1.26%)
Optional School	1.76%	(+0.46%)
Turnaround School	1.76%	(+0.24%)

How many years did you teach prior to leading a school?

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1-4	1.95%	(-0.86%)
4-7	16.60%	(-0.93%)
7-10	23.05%	(+5.52%)
11-15	26.95%	(-0.97%)
16-20	18.95%	(-0.53%)
20+	12.50%	(-2.22%)

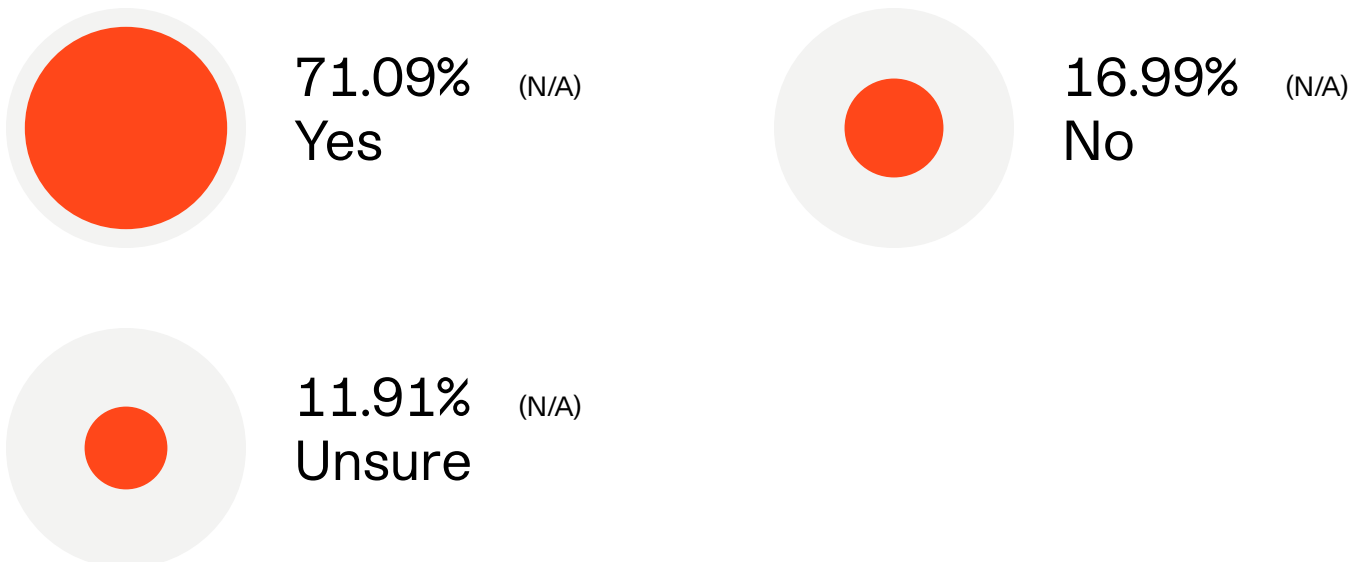
Were you educated and trained in a traditional or alternative preparation program?

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Do you feel that your leadership preparation program prepared you to be an effective school principal?\*

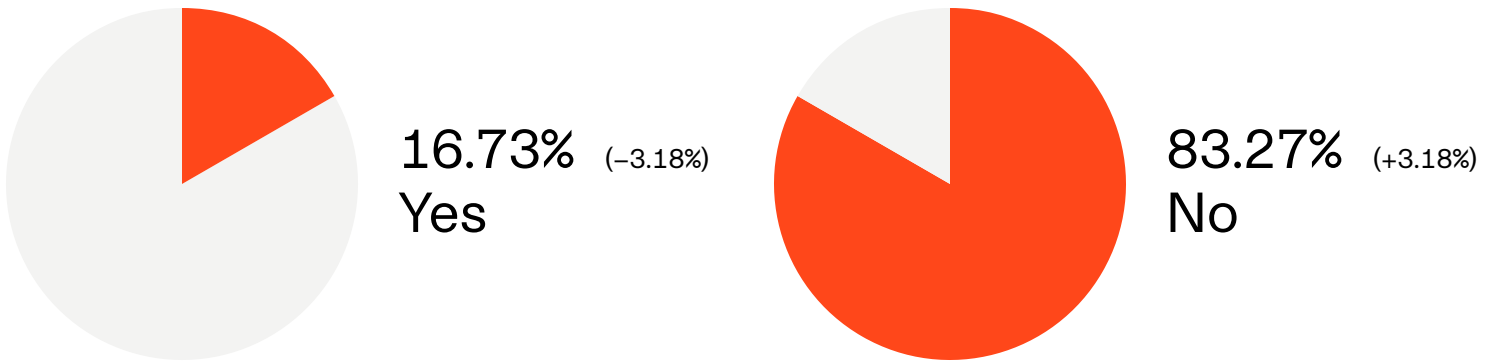
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\* This question was not asked in the 2017 survey

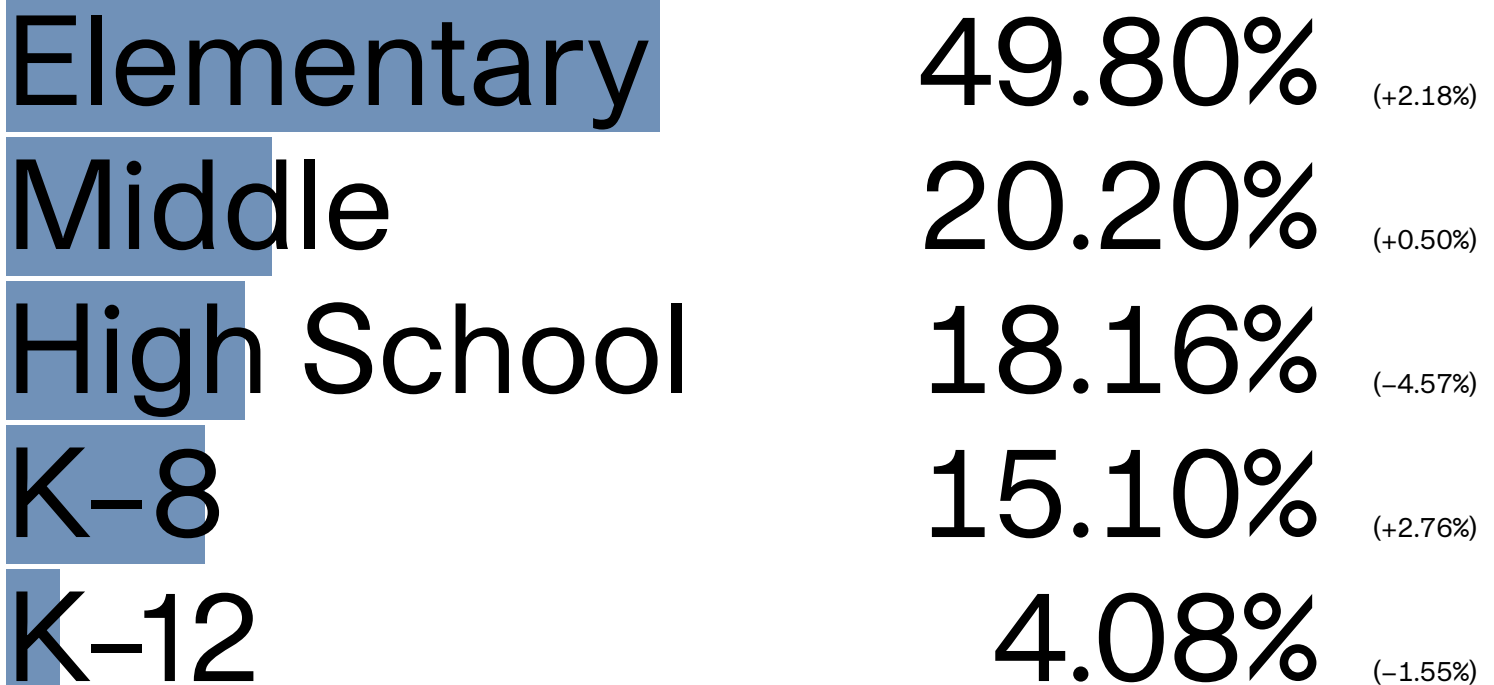
Have you ever taught or been a school leader in another state?

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What grade levels does your school currently serve?

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What is your current perception of the state of education in your school district?

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Excellent	19.37%	(-2.08%)
Good	50.45%	(-0.45%)
Neutral	3.15%	(-1.76%)
Needs some improvement	21.62%	(+3.02%)
Needs dramatic improvement	5.18%	(+1.30%)
Unsure	0.23%	(-0.03%)

What is your current perception of the state of education in Tennessee as a whole?

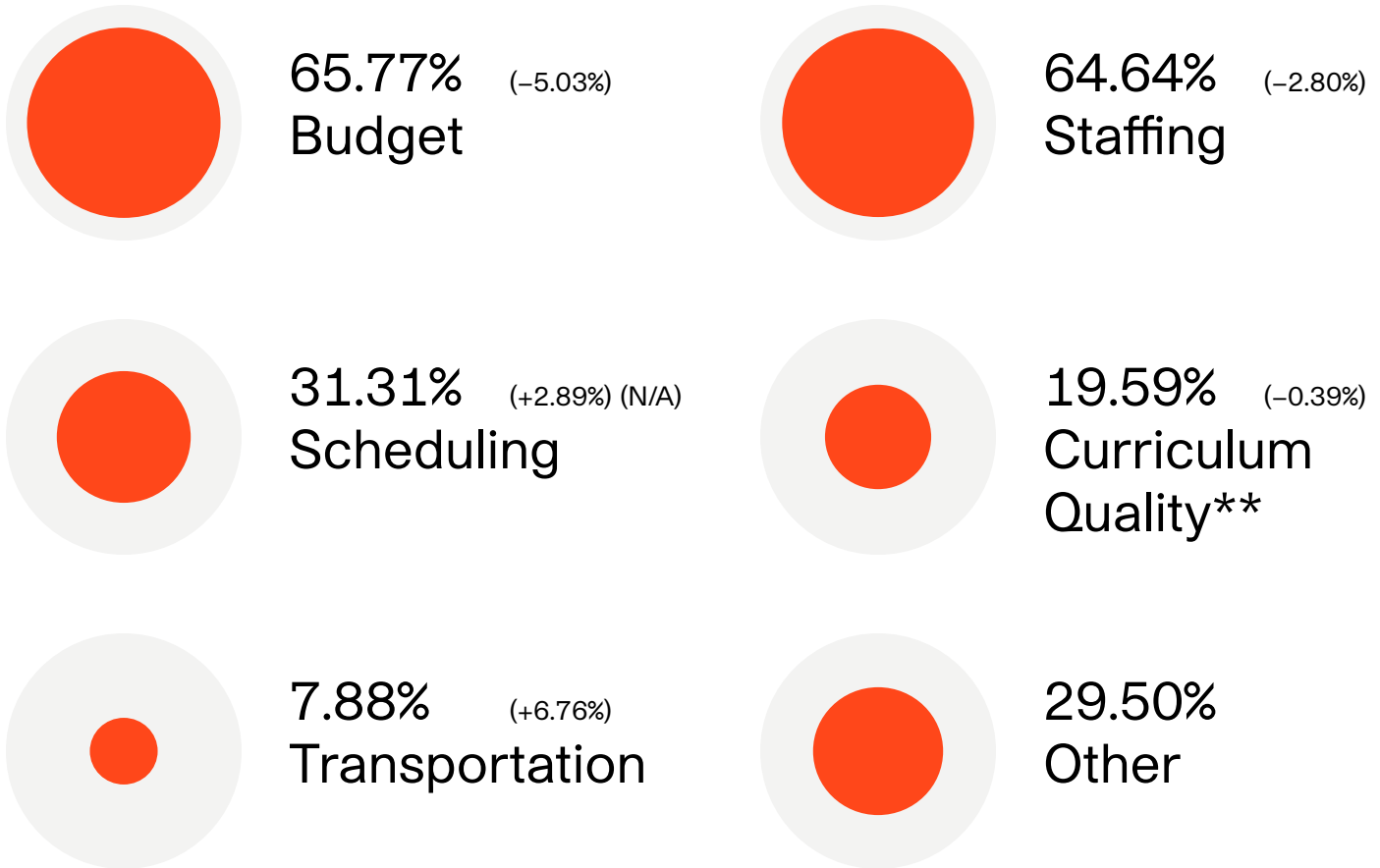
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Excellent	1.13%	(-1.20%)
Good	38.74%	(-5.70%)
Neutral	9.91%	(-3.01%)
Needs some improvement	36.71%	(+2.60%)
Needs dramatic improvement	12.84%	(+7.67%)
Unsure	0.68%	(-0.35%)



What limitations or constraints do you feel hinder your ability to improve student outcomes?\*

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Some of the most common “Other” responses included:

1. Constant changes in curriculum, standards, and testing
2. Chronically absent students
3. Retaining teachers
4. Lack of time
5. State mandates
6. Parental support

\* Survey participants asked to select all that apply.

\*\* Curriculum quality was added as a response category for the 2018 survey.

Which levels of policymaking do you feel are outside your influence?\*

State-level policy and law	94.37%	(+0.83%)
State-level programming	80.63%	(+4.92%)
District-level policy	25.68%	(+6.82%)
District-level programming	20.27%	(+6.06%)
Other	4.28%	(+1.44%)

Some of the most common “Other” responses included:

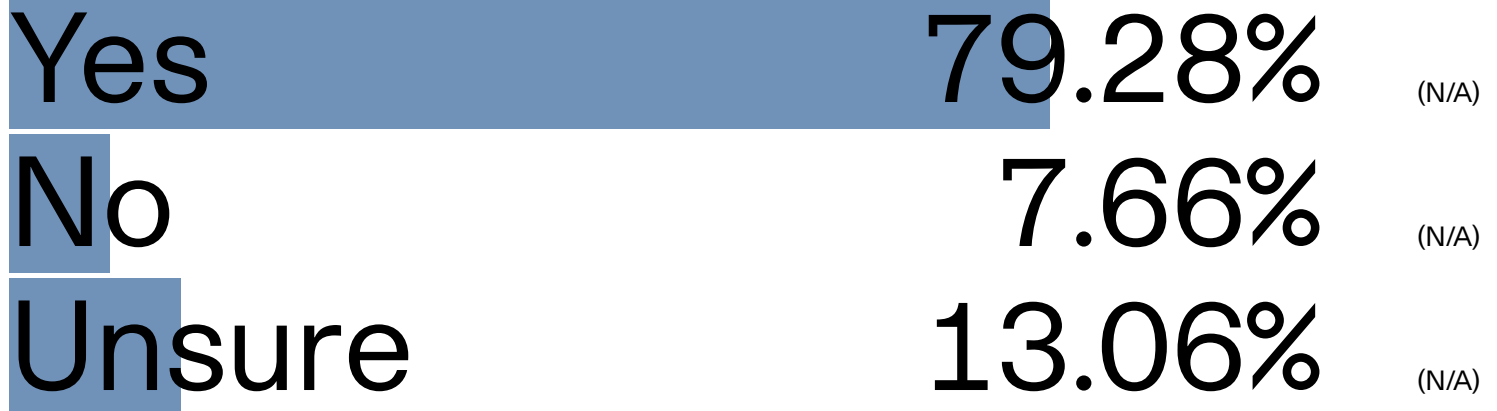
1. Federal law and policy
2. Allocation of funding

How often do you contact or interact with elected officials?

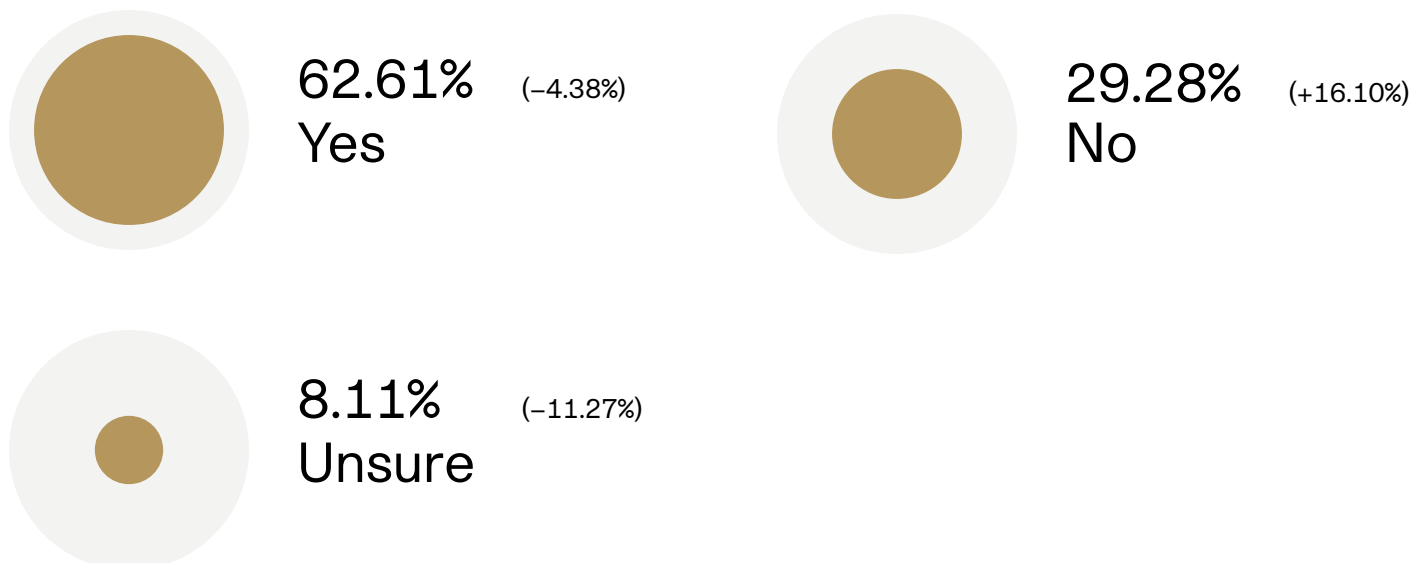
Never	15.77%	(-1.03%)
Once or twice a year	56.98%	(-2.19%)
Once a month	17.34%	(+2.61%)
Multiple times per month	9.91%	(+0.61%)

\* Survey participants asked to select all that apply.

Do you feel that teachers in your district are prepared to be effective teachers?\*



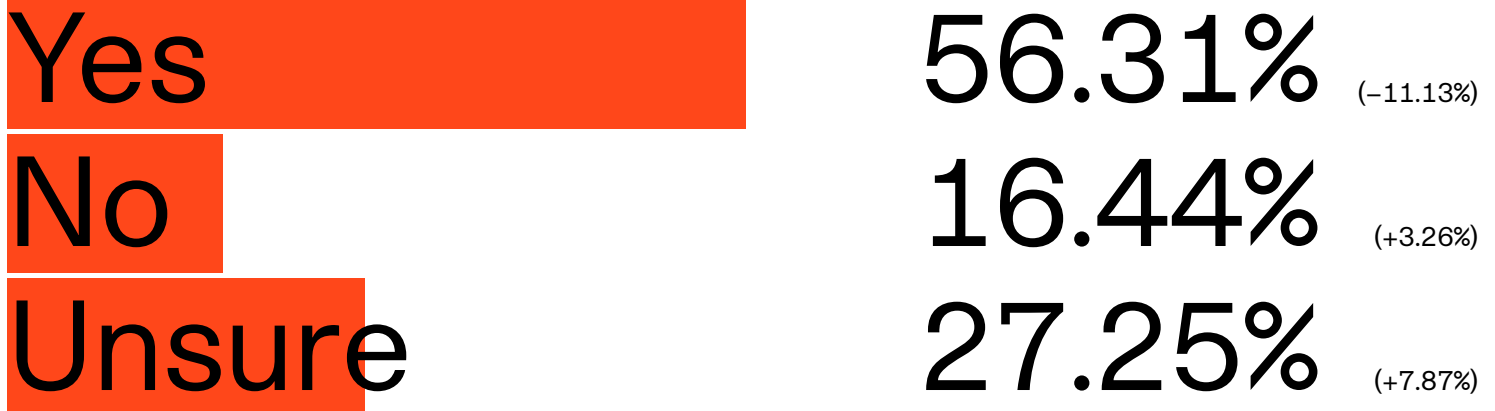
Do you have the capacity and resources to recruit, hire, and support teachers? \*\*



\* This question was not asked in the 2017 survey.  
 \*\* Question slightly reworded from 2017 survey.

Do you have the resources and support to get quality materials and equipment?

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If known, what is the approximate level of deferred maintenance funding for your current school building?\*

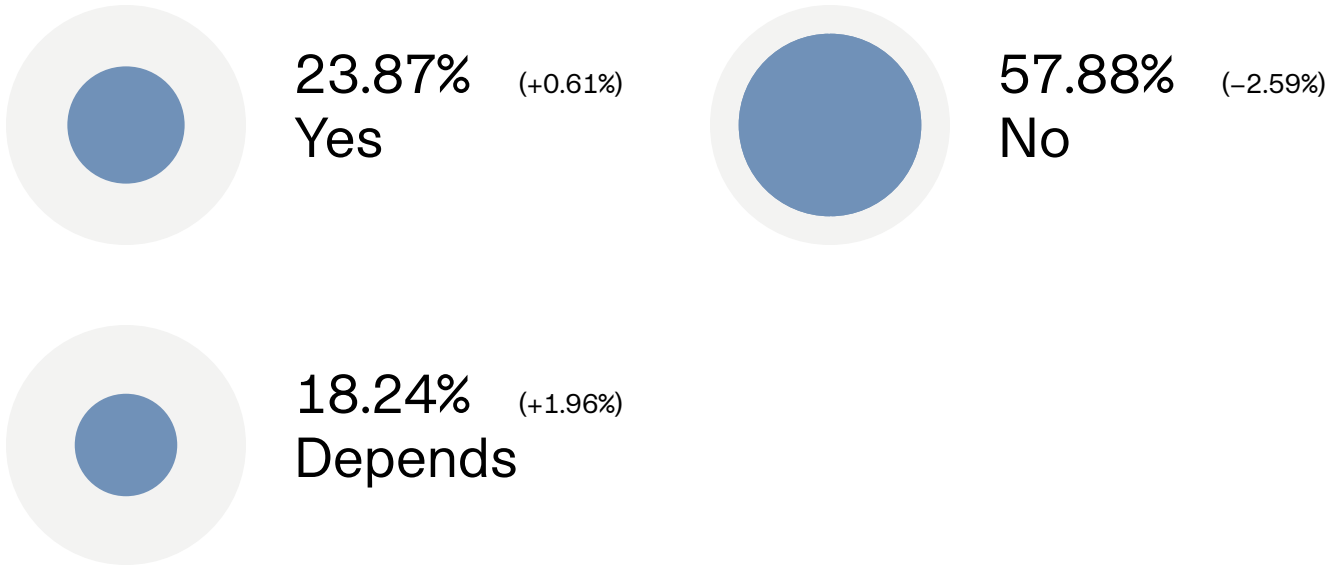
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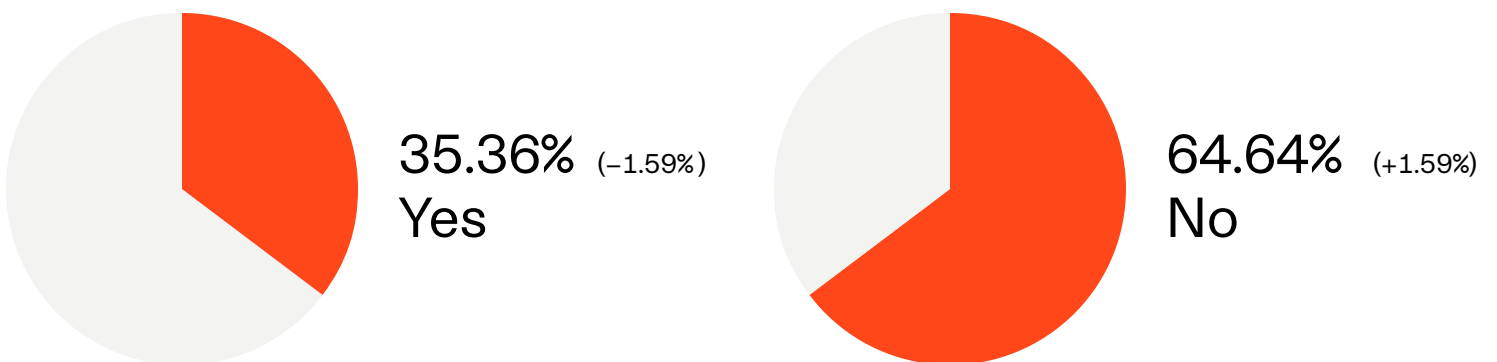
Would you support removing class-size mandates in order to receive more funding flexibility?

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Do you agree that teachers and schools have enough time in their day to meet the needs of our students?

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Do you agree that teachers and schools have enough time in the school year to meet the needs of your students?

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48.65% (+2.14%)  
Yes

51.35% (-2.14%)  
No

Would you support an extended school year or school day given the necessary resources and state support?

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57.43% (-1.23%)  
Yes

42.57% (+1.23%)  
No

When hiring new instructional staff, which primary factors do you consider to determine qualification?\*

Character and personality shown during interview:

1	41.67%	(-0.71%)
2	23.87%	(+2.68%)
3	13.51%	(-1.74%)
4	14.86%	(+1.94%)
5	6.08%	(-2.19%)

Prior experience in relevant grade/subject area:

1	34.91%	(+6.23%)
2	32.21%	(+3.01%)
3	16.89%	(-3.01%)
4	9.46%	(-6.04%)
5	6.53%	(-0.19%)

Prior performance on standardized assessments:

1	9.91%	(-0.68%)
2	11.94%	(-5.63%)
3	20.95%	(+0.28%)
4	26.35%	(-2.07%)
5	30.86%	(+8.12%)

\* Survey participants asked to rank in order with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

### Prior performance on evaluations/observations:

1	8.56%	(-3.07%)
2	20.50%	(-1.21%)
3	31.98%	(+1.49%)
4	28.15%	(+2.83%)
5	10.81%	(-0.04%)

### Shared attributes with student population (e.g. similar demographics):

1	4.95%	(-1.77%)
2	11.49%	(+1.15%)
3	16.67%	(+2.97%)
4	21.17%	(+3.34%)
5	45.72%	(-5.70%)



When assigning students to classrooms for the upcoming school year, do you consider the effectiveness of the teacher/classroom the student had the previous school year relative to the effectiveness of the teacher/classroom you would place them in for the coming school year?

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Yes	73.68%	(-3.12%)
No	18.31%	(+2.58%)
Not applicable (I do not make student assignment decisions)	8.01%	(+0.54%)

Alternatively, when assigning students to classrooms, do you give consideration to the student's individual achievement levels from the previous year relative to the teacher/classroom performance where they will be assigned? (Ex: Student X is somewhat behind from the past school year so they should be placed in one of your higher performing classrooms in the coming school year.)

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Yes	73.68%	(-6.05%)
No	18.54%	(+4.41%)
Not applicable (I do not make student assignment decisions)	7.78%	(+1.65%)

I think parent involvement in my school...

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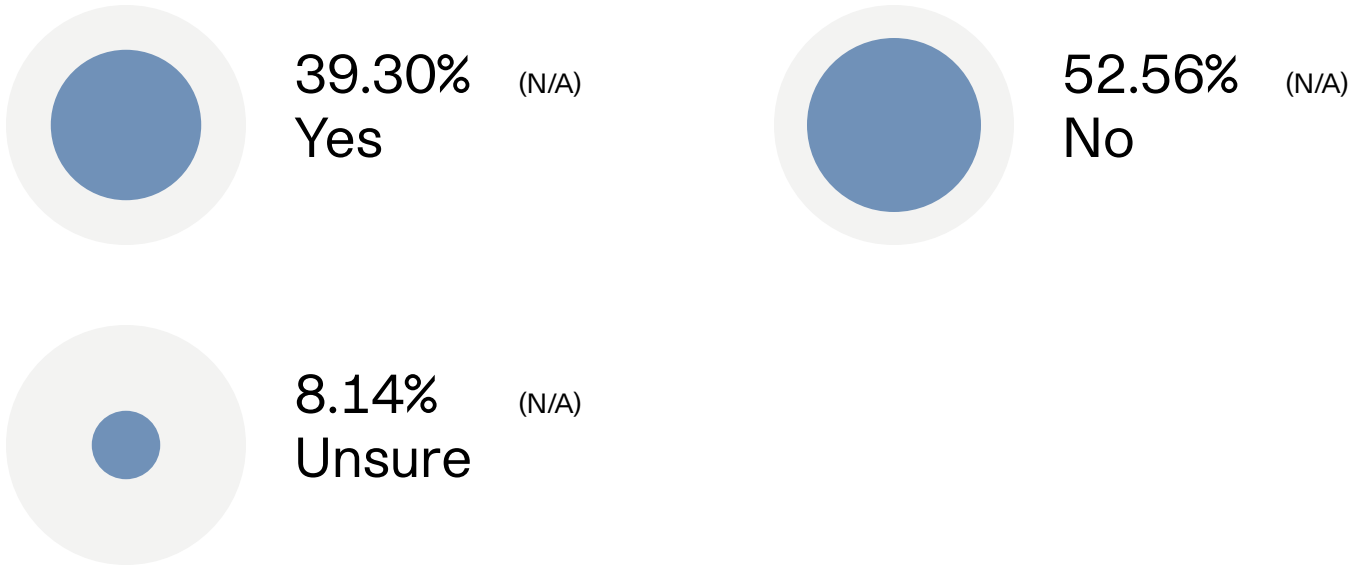
Needs Dramatic Improvement	10.32%	(+2.33%)
Needs Improvement	45.18%	(-0.27%)
Is Adequate	25.69%	(-1.58%)
Is Above Expectations	18.58%	(-0.70%)
Is Overly Involved/Negatively Affects School	0.23%	(+0.23%)

What control (as a %) do you have over your school operating budget?

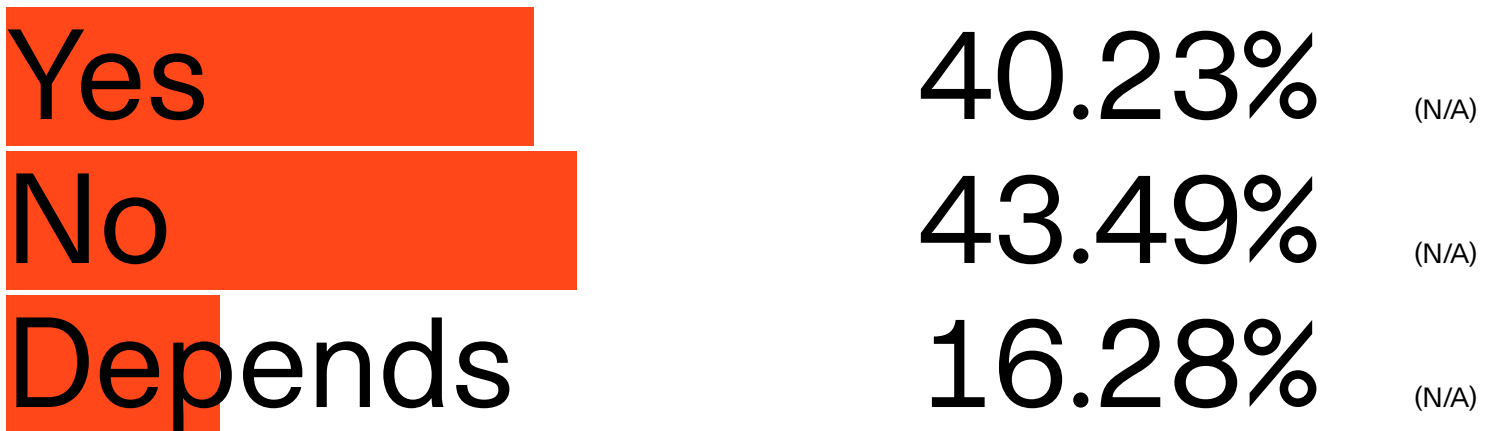
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0% (I do not have any control over my school operating budget)	9.30%	(+1.86%)
< 5%	6.51%	(-0.10%)
5-15%	9.30%	(-0.34%)
16-25%	8.37%	(+1.76%)
26-50%	17.67%	(-0.24%)
> 50%	48.84%	(-2.95%)

Has your district provided school finance and budgetary training to you?\*



Do you receive an adequate amount of school funding?\*

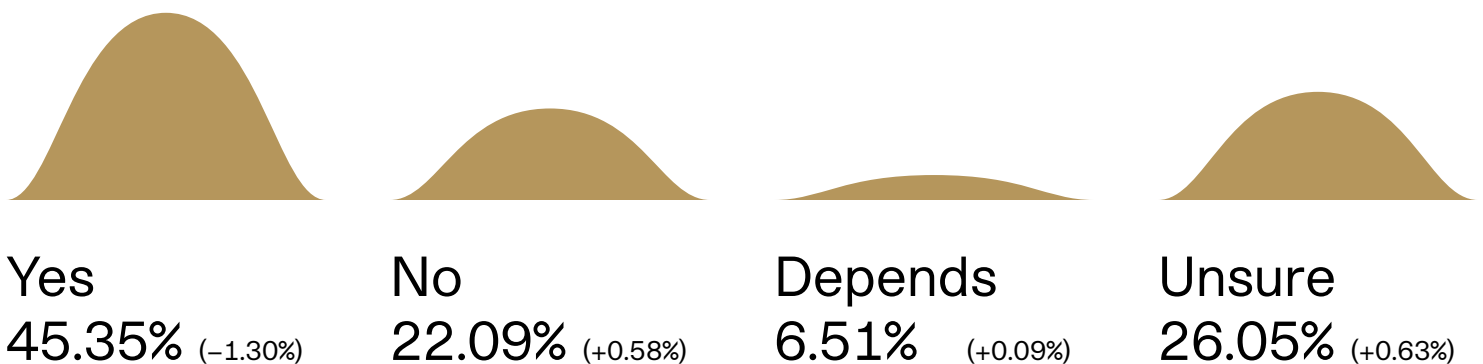


\* This question was not asked in the 2017 survey.

Do you receive an equitable amount of school funding based on the population of students you serve? (Ex. economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, special education students, etc.)\*

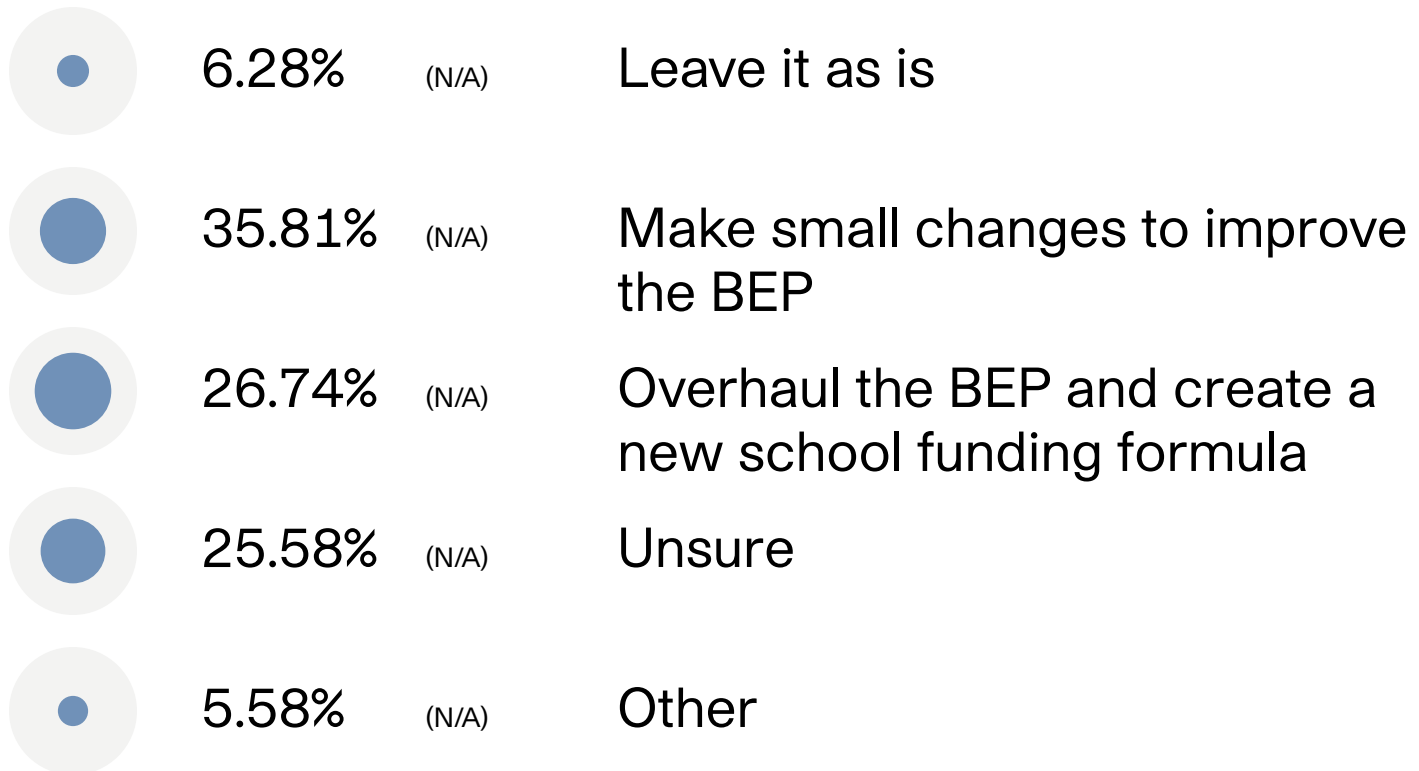
Yes	56.05%	(N/A)
No	34.19%	(N/A)
Depends	9.77%	(N/A)

Would you support the state weighting per pupil funding based on student need (ex. economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, special education students, etc.) rather than dispersing an average per pupil amount regardless of individual student needs? \*\*



\* This question was not asked in the 2017 survey.  
 \*\* Question slightly reworded from the 2017 survey.

As you may have heard, several of the 2018 Gubernatorial candidates have stressed the need to reform our state's school funding formula, the BEP. How should our state handle the BEP funding formula going forward?\*



Some of the most common “Other” responses included:

1. Counties experiencing growth need more funding
2. Fully fund the current BEP funding formula
3. Dramatically increase teacher salaries
4. Increase funding for rural/small districts
5. Only allow one school district per county; multiple districts within a county creates inequity

\*This question was not asked in the 2017 survey.