



# Enrollment Study Survey Findings

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# Enrollment Study Survey Findings

Representative Survey Of Adults With School-Aged Children  
in the Seattle Public Schools District, Washington

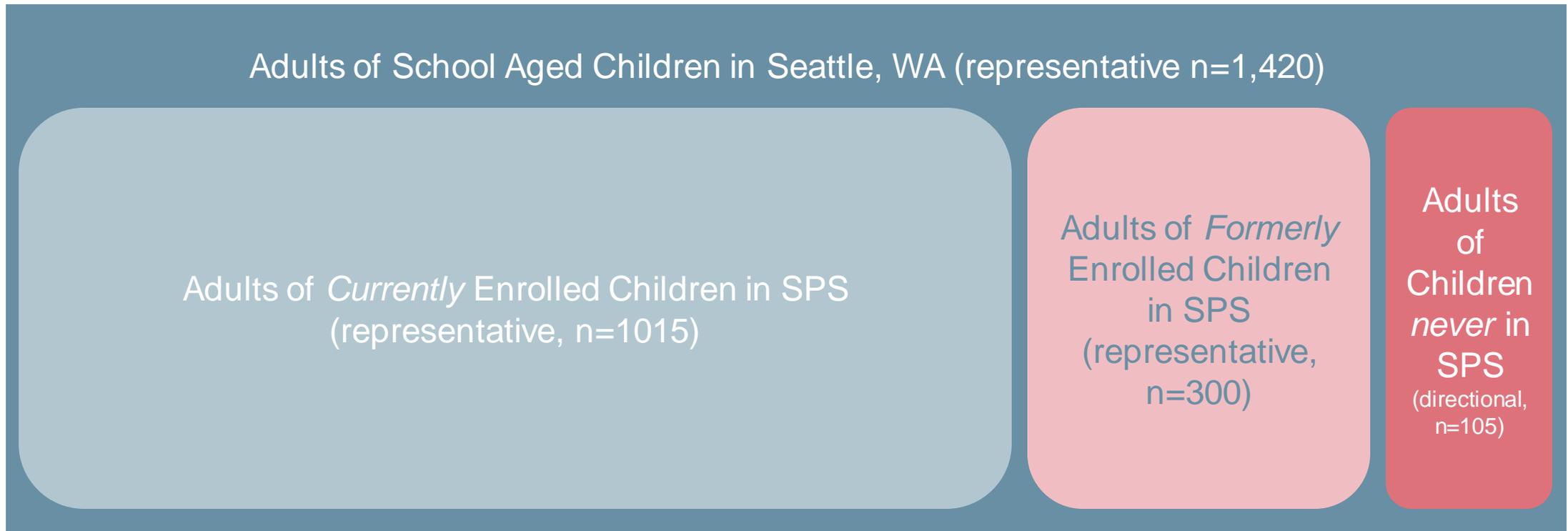
January 2025

# Survey Methodology – Sample Population

The overall sample consists of 1,420 adults (e.g., caretakers) of school-aged children, as of 2024, within Seattle Public Schools (SPS) district boundaries.

This overall sample is representative of adults of school-aged children and includes additional representative sub-samples by geography and race/ethnicity of 300 interviews with adults of former SPS students (21%) and 1,015 interviews with adults of current SPS students (71%). **These sub-groups by student enrollment status were weighed to be proportionally representative of how much each group makes up of the adult population.** This proportional distribution was calculated in collaboration with SPS staff and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) graduate researchers.

There is an additional sub-sample of 105 interviews with adults of students who have never attended the SPS system (8%) – this sub-sample by itself is descriptive and non-representative. This study is made up of concentric circles of survey populations. Certain metrics, derived from a combination of SPS household data and proprietary L2 data, were tracked and evaluated during all phases and weighed to be representative after data collection.



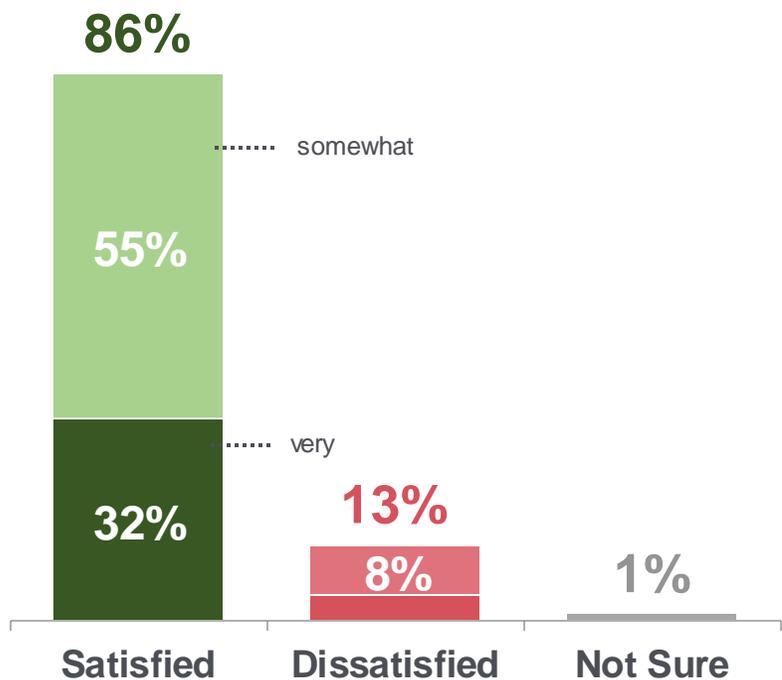


# Why Do Caretakers' Students Remain Enrolled in SPS?

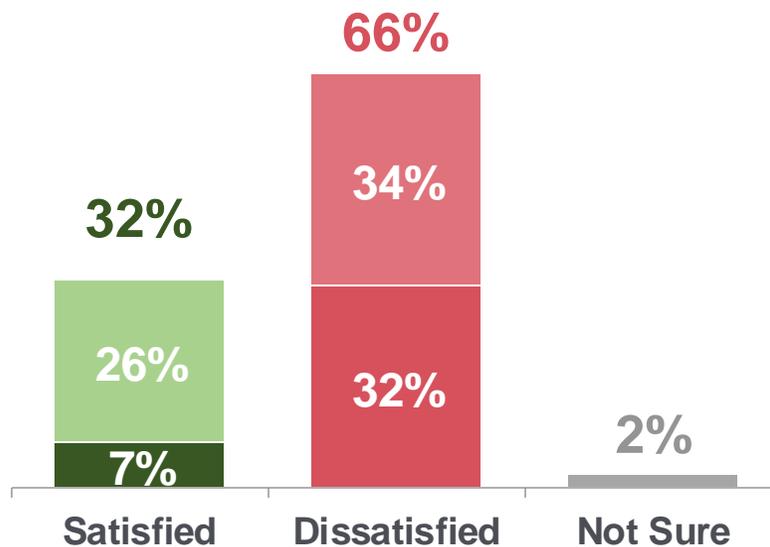
Caretakers of current students have a positive view, or overwhelming satisfaction, of Seattle Public Schools.

### Satisfaction with the quality of SPS's education

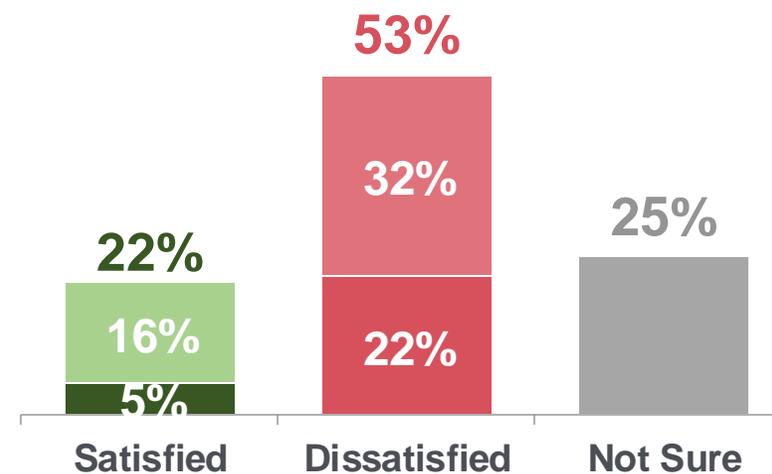
Among current students\*



Among former students\*\*



Among never students\*\*\*



\*Would you say you are generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of education your student(s) receives at Seattle Public Schools? Is that very <satisfied/dissatisfied> or only somewhat?

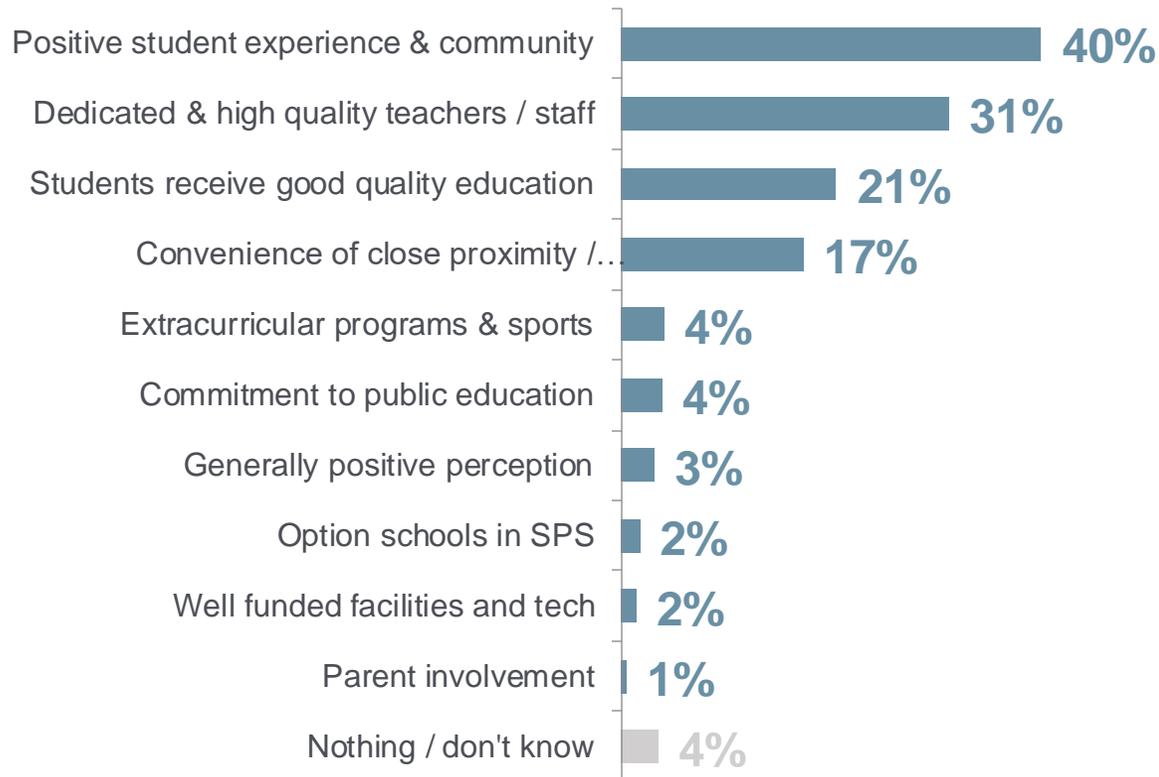
\*\*Would you say you are generally satisfied or dissatisfied with the quality of education your student(s) received at Seattle Public Schools? Is that very <satisfied/dissatisfied> or only somewhat?

\*\*\*For each of the following, please indicate if you believe the school district is doing an excellent job, a good job, only a fair job, or a poor job on that item.... The overall performance of your neighborhood schools

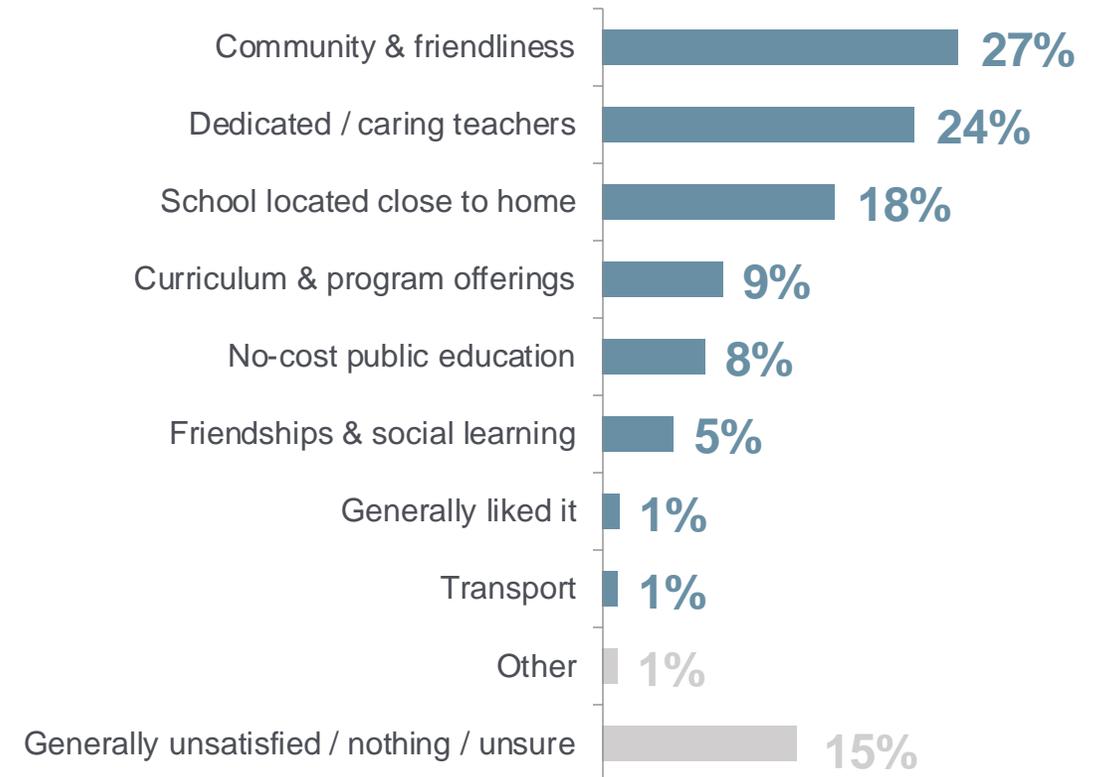
Both caretakers of current and former students, say they like Seattle Public Schools' community, friendliness, caring and dedicated teachers, and convenience and close proximity to their homes – “a sense of belonging”.

### What do people like about SPS?

#### (among current students)\*



#### (among former students)\*\*



\*"What do you LIKE the most about your student(s) attending Seattle Public Schools?"

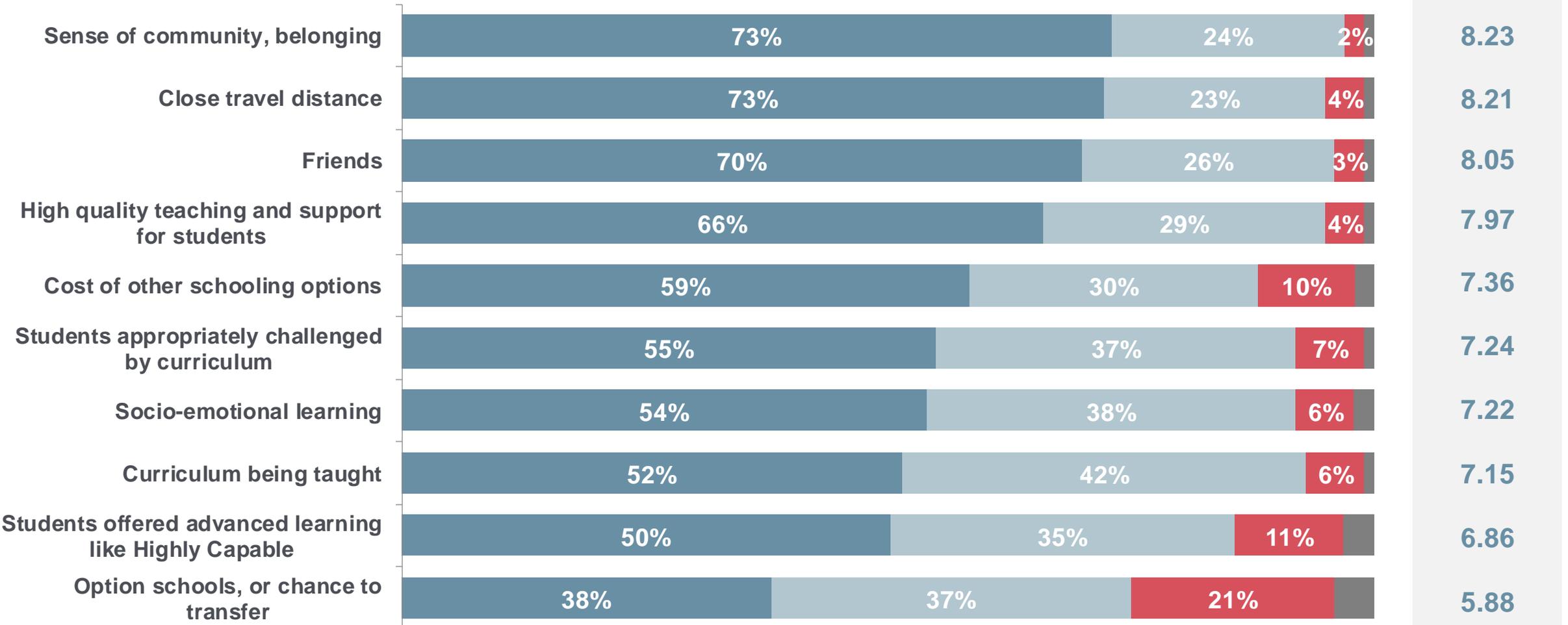
\*\*"What did you LIKE the most about Seattle Public Schools when your student(s) attended?"

\*Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%

Caretakers of current students say they are most motivated to stay enrolled in SPS due to the sense of community and belonging, close travel distance, high quality teachers, and friends.

### Reasons for remaining in SPS\*

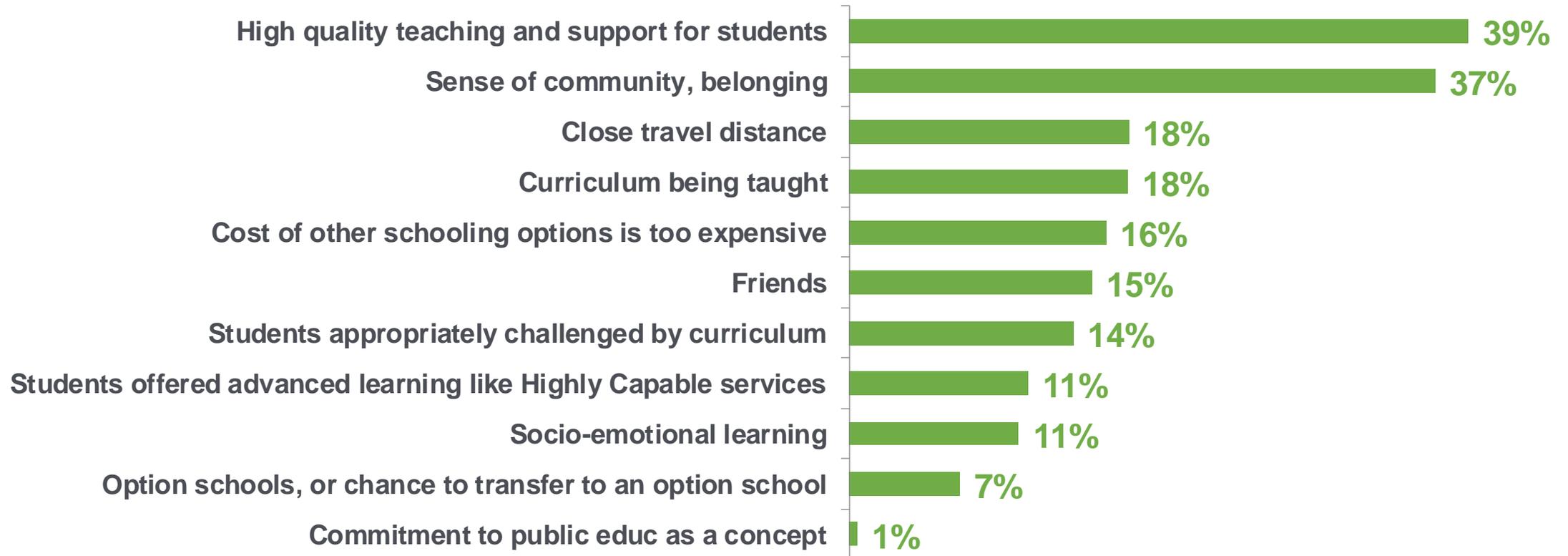
Highly motivating (8-10) | somewhat motivating (3-7) | not motivating (0-2) | no opinion



The top reasons mentioned by caretakers to remain enrolled in SPS were related to the quality teaching, a sense of belonging, and the close proximity to SPS schools.

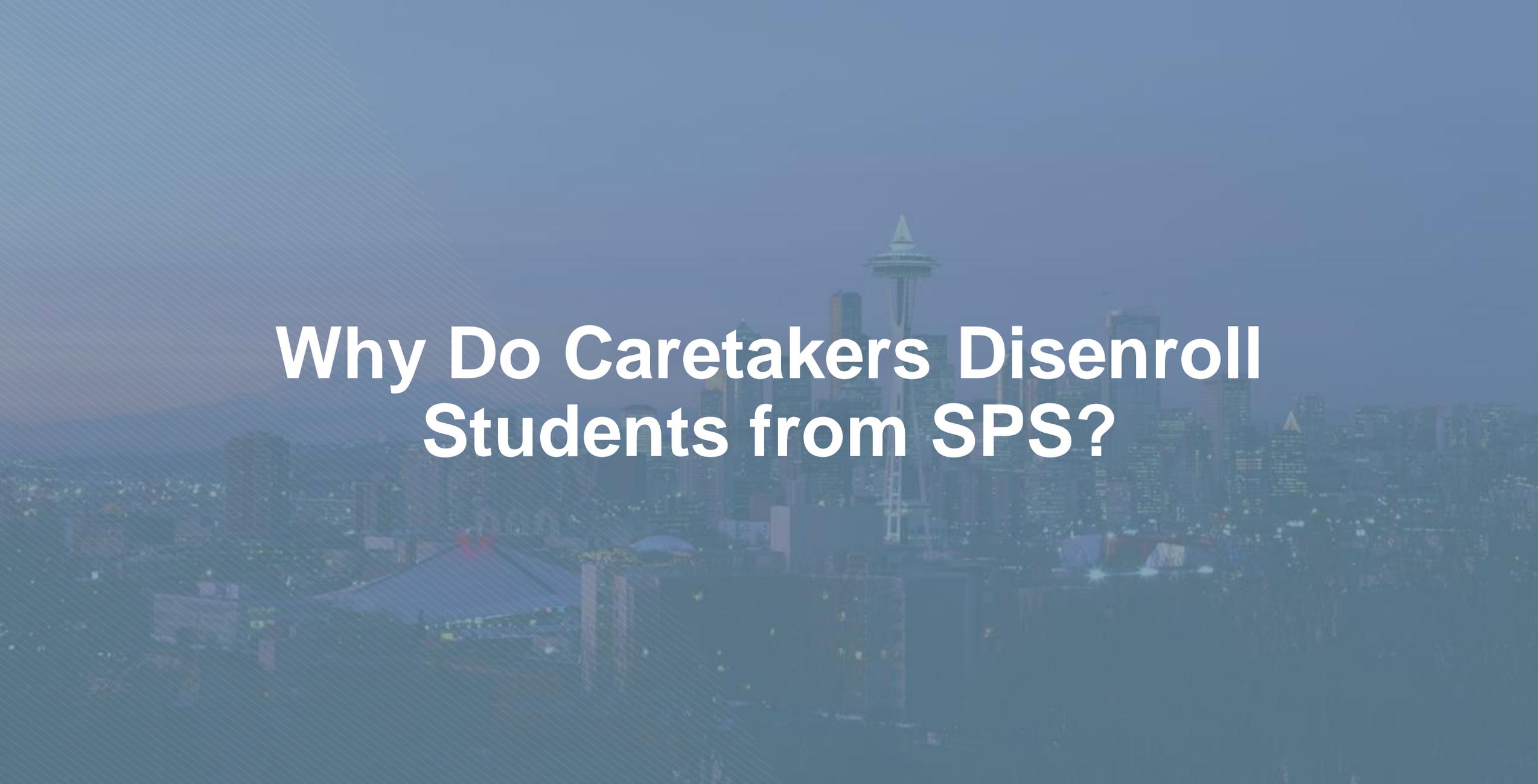
## Top Reasons to Remain Enrolled

(among current students)\*



\*"Which of those reasons you read are the MOST important to you and your family, if you had to pick two?"

\*Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%

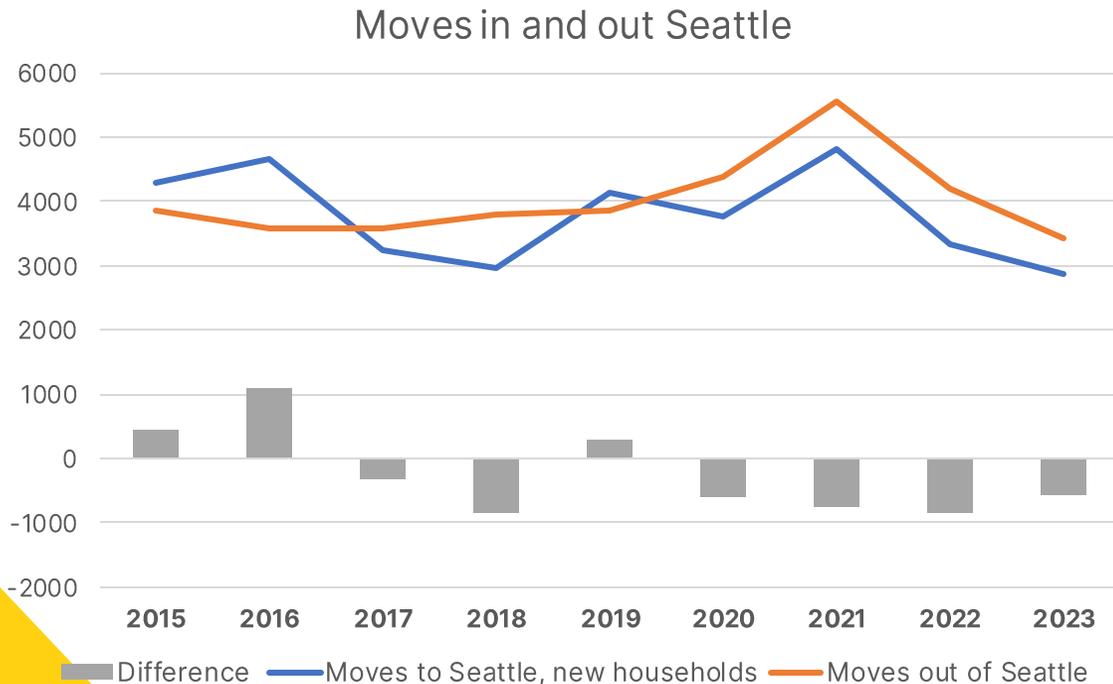


# Why Do Caretakers Disenroll Students from SPS?

# Cause of enrollment decline

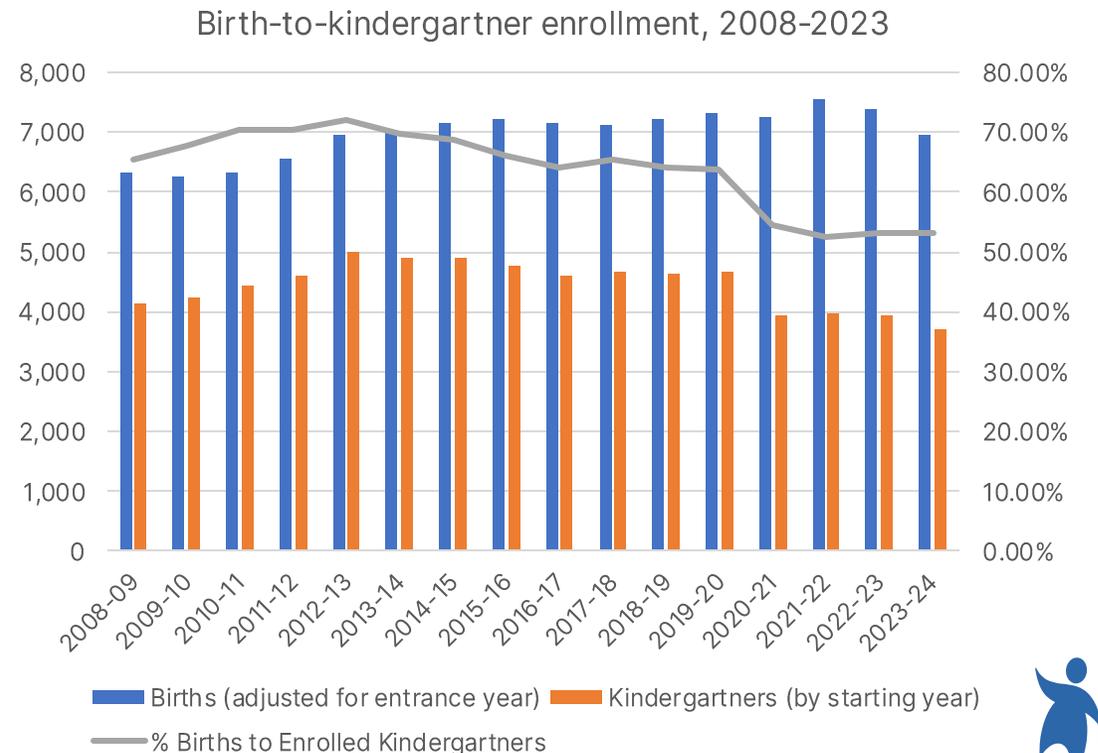
## Decline in households with children since 2017

There has been a 16% decline in households with children between 2017 and 2023.



## Shrinking kindergarten classes.

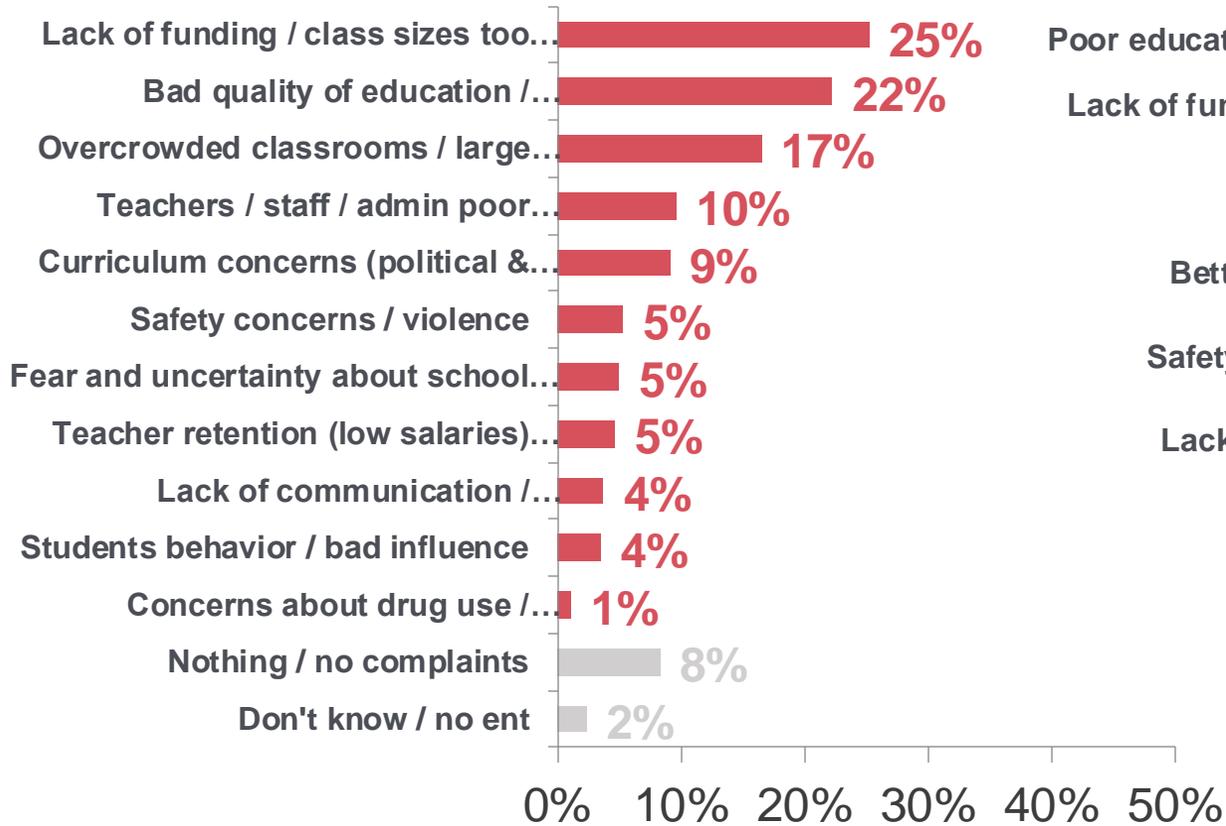
Kindergarten cohort sizes have declined.



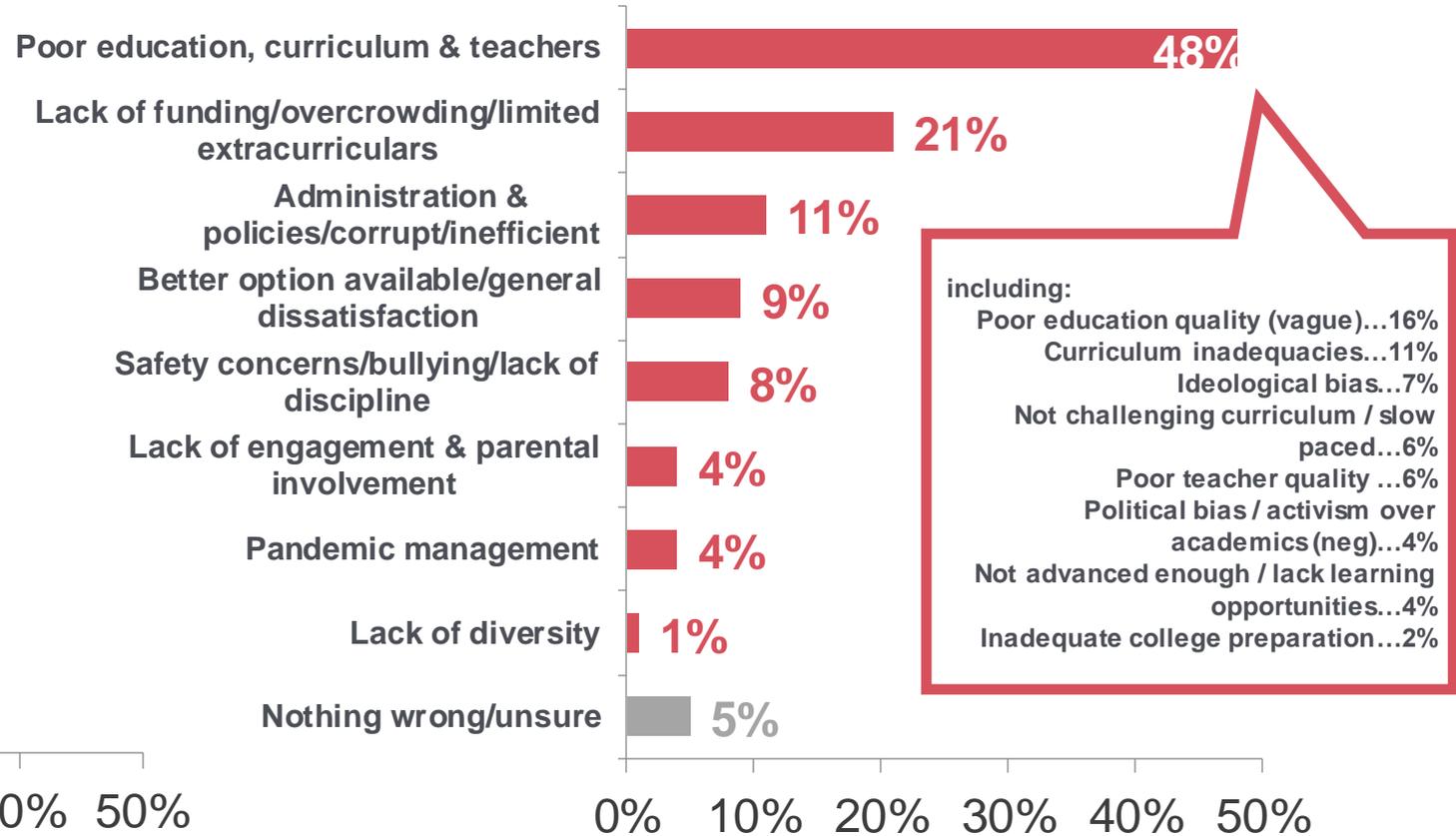
Both caretakers of current and former students, people say they disliked Seattle Public Schools' overcrowded classrooms, lack of challenge and extracurriculars for their students, lack of funding, and curriculum.

### What do people dislike about SPS?

(among current students)\*



(among former students)\*\*



\*"What do you DISLIKE the most about your student(s) attending Seattle Public Schools?"

\*\*"What did you DISLIKE the most about Seattle Public Schools when your student(s) attended?"

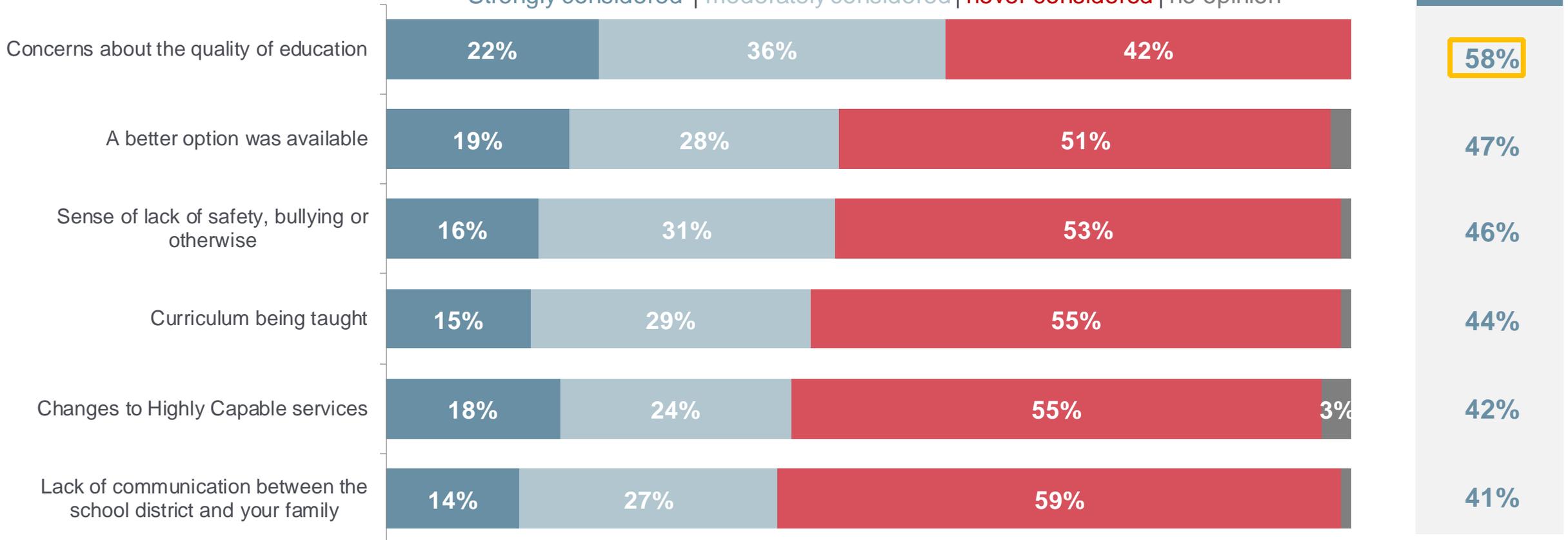
\*\*\*Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%

A majority of adults of current students have considered disenrolling their students over concerns about the quality of education.

## Top reasons considered to disenroll children from SPS\*

Among current students

Strongly considered | moderately considered | never considered | no opinion

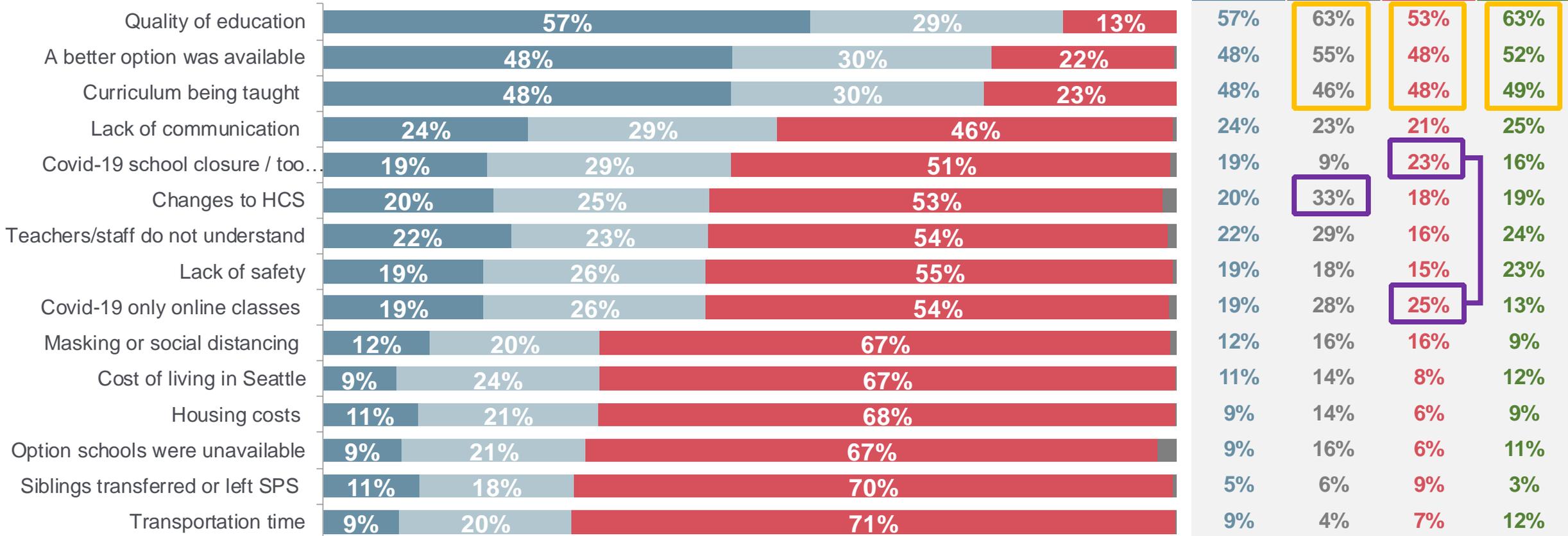


\*"Next I'm going to read you some reasons why some families choose to leave the Seattle Public Schools system. For each reason I read, please tell me whether you have or have not considered that as a reason to disenroll your student from the Seattle Public School system. Have you ever strongly considered disenrolling because of that reason, moderately considered disenrolling, or never considered disenrolling your student because of that reason?"

Among caretakers of former SPS students, top three reason motivating them to disenroll from SPS are “quality of education”, perception of a “better option”, and “curriculum”.

### What made you leave (among former students)\*

Motivated a GREAT deal | motivated somewhat | did NOT motivate | no opinion

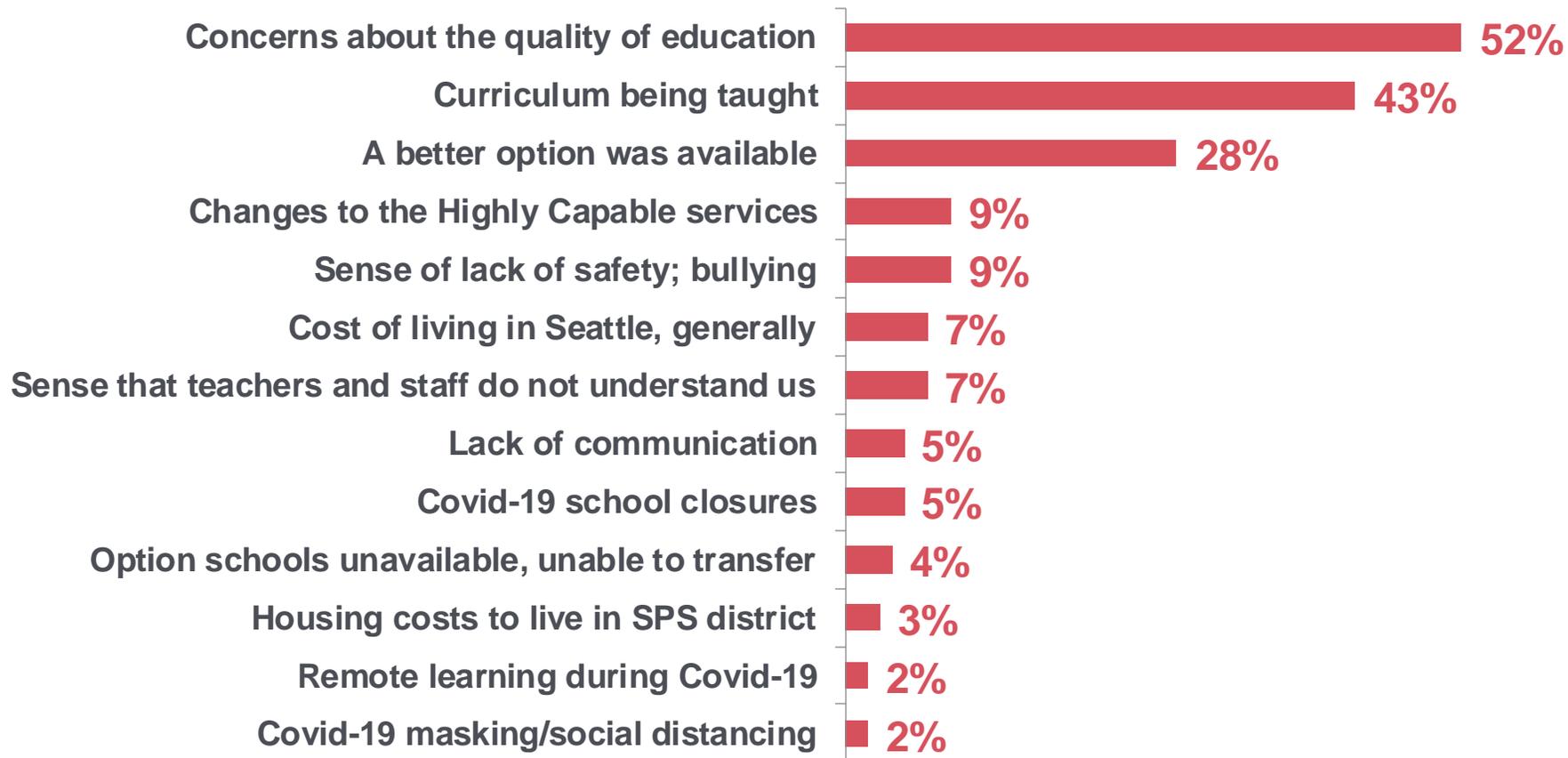


\*Next I'm going to read you some reasons why some families choose to leave the Seattle Public Schools system. For each reason I read, please tell me whether you have or have not considered that as a reason to disenroll your student from the Seattle Public School system. Have you ever strongly considered disenrolling because of that reason, moderately considered disenrolling, or never considered disenrolling your student because of that reason?"

Caretakers who disenrolled their students from SPS overwhelmingly cited concerns about the quality of education and the curriculum as top reasons—and the availability of a better option.

## Top motivating reasons to leave SPS

among former students\*



\*Which of those reasons were the MOST motivating to you and your family when deciding to leave the school system, if you had to pick two?

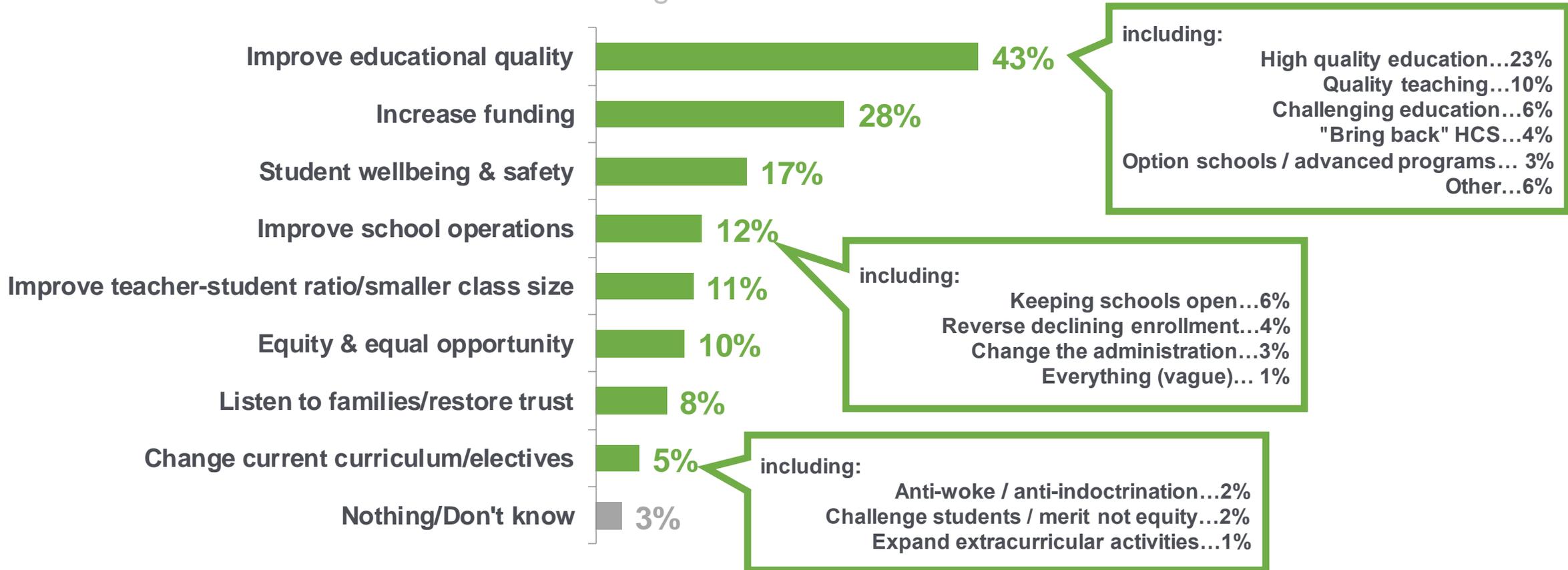
\*Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%

\*Only responses over 1% shown; 3% refused

In open-ended responses, caretakers of current students want to see SPS prioritize improvements to educational quality and increase funding while reducing class size and improving school operations.

### Most important priority for SPS in the near future

among current students\*



\*"What should be the most important priority for Seattle Public Schools in the near future?"

\*Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%



## AREAS FOR EXPLORATION

- ❑ Focus on **engagement with early learners**, meaning caretakers of pre-K students as well as Pre-K and childcare partners, to increase the percentage of children who enroll in Seattle Public Schools for kindergarten and beyond.
- ❑ Engagement with the SPS community around **curriculum and instruction**.
- ❑ **Finding “unaccounted for” students** and reengaging them (Dee, 2023).
- ❑ Creating a **task force** which includes students, families, and community members for specific groups of **students of color** and why they leave SPS at higher rates
- ❑ Continuing to partner with city agencies to share data to support planning for **affordable housing** for families



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