

Boundary Study Report

Fairfax County Public Schools

December 14, 2021

Presentation Outline

- Project Timeline
- Project Goals
- Best Practices
- Community Feedback
- Recommendations



2019

- **July 2019:** School Board work session next step: Direct the Superintendent to Hire an outside consultant to work with the Board to identify best practices in boundary policy and engage the community in the discussion.
- **December 2019:** Review, Negotiation, and Contract Acceptance

2020

- **January 15, 2020:** Kick off with MGT Consulting
- **Jan. to Mar 2020:** Existing Conditions Analysis and Survey Development
- **May – June 2020:** Work with School Board regarding 2020 Community Survey and Engagement

2021

- **September 2021:** MGT Community webinars and survey

Original engagement scheduled to end March 31, 2020

Best Practices

Briefing paper – 3 to 5 pages with best practices, research, and factors for consideration on school boundary policy

Community Engagement

Survey approved by FCPS and distributed by email

3 community webinars

Final Report

20-30 page report with details of above work and recommendations for boundary policy revisions



Project Goals

- Review FCPS work and provide recommendations on best practices related to school boundary policies to date
- Facilitate community engagement on school boundary policy and factors for FCPS to consider when addressing school boundary policy.

Best Practice Considerations for Reviewing School Boundaries

Boundary policy must be grounded in:

Equity

- Ensure that boundary policy provides equitable access to high-quality schools for all students.

Stability

- Ensure that boundary policy causes the least disruption for students and families.

Efficacy

- Ensure that boundary policy is grounded in educational and operational best practices and simply not an efficiency exercise.

Hanover Research. 2015. Best Practices in District Rezoning. Retrieved on April 8, 2020. From: [https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/207/Best Practices in District Rezoning - Portland Public Schools.pdf](https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/207/Best_Practices_in_District_Rezoning_-_Portland_Public_Schools.pdf)

Prioritization

Must determine what factors carry the most weight.

Fidelity

Must implement with:

- **Transparency** – making the community aware of boundary policy and boundary changes
- **Clarity** – the policy and its associated procedures are simple, well-articulated, and easy to understand
- **Consistency** – The policy is carried out through procedures that are uniform and unwavering

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Enrollment

Increased Enrollment

- District enrollment is growing or projected to grow.

Decreased Enrollment

- District enrollment is declining or projected to decline.

Uneven Enrollment

- Enrollment at schools across the district is unbalanced with both over and under enrolled schools.



Educational Data Systems. September 4, 2018. Common practices in changing school attendance zone boundaries. Retrieved on April 8, 2020. From: <https://eddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/common-practices-in-changing-school-attendance-zone-boundaries.pdf>

Facilities

Aging Facilities

- Building or buildings that are unable to be fully utilized due to poor conditions.

New Facilities

- The addition of a new school or schools within existing boundaries.



Educational Data Systems. September 4, 2018. Common practices in changing school attendance zone boundaries. Retrieved on April 8, 2020. From: <https://eddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/common-practices-in-changing-school-attendance-zone-boundaries.pdf>

Financial or Regulatory

- Closing schools due to low enrollment, budget constraints, program “failures,” or natural disasters.
- Change in education regulations or policies (for example, mandatory Pre-K, all-day K, and class size requirements).

Transportation

- Transportation issues / logistics necessitate the redrawing of boundary lines for efficiency and effectiveness.



Educational Data Systems. September 4, 2018. Common practices in changing school attendance zone boundaries. Retrieved on April 8, 2020. From: <https://eddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/common-practices-in-changing-school-attendance-zone-boundaries.pdf>

Feeder Pattern Alignment

Matriculation patterns are not consistent.

Elementary to middle to high school boundaries do not create “nesting dolls.”



Programming Change

School grade configurations are modified (e.g., move from K – 5 to K – 8).

A school with an attendance boundary becomes a magnet school necessitating moving of boundary lines to accommodate students living in its former boundaries.

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Boundary Adjustments and Implementation

Review of Current FCPS Policy 8130

Authority

Code of Virginia: Section 22.1-79(4): “Provide for the consolidation of schools or redistricting of school boundaries or adopt pupil assignment plans whenever such procedure will contribute to the efficiency of the school division.”

Assignment of Students

Assign pupils to the schools and programs that serve their areas of residences.

Reasons for considering boundary adjustments

The School Board may close a school, change a school boundary, or adjust a program assignment or location in order to maintain or improve operating efficiency and/or instructional effectiveness. In general, such adjustments may:

1. relieve facility crowding
2. make effective use of new or existing space
3. avoid underuse of buildings
4. better relate program resources to needs, and/or
5. reduce operating costs
6. input from Facilities Advisory Council (FPAC)

Review of Current FCPS Policy 8130

Types of boundary adjustments:

1. Administrative
 - A. An emergency;
 - B. New unoccupied housing; or
 - C. Less than 5% of the enrollment of each school affectedDivision Superintendent is directed to report changes to the School Board
2. Expedited
 - A. An emergency;
 - B. Less than 15% of the enrollment of each school affected
3. Standard

Fifteen (15%) percent or more

Review of Current FCPS Policy 8130

Implementing Consideration (Factors). Policy states not in priority order.

- The proximity of schools to student residences
- Projected school enrollment and capacity
- Walking distances
- Busing times and costs
- Walking and busing safety
- Natural and man-made geographic features
- The impact on neighborhoods
- School feeder alignments
- Contiguous school attendance areas
- Long-range capital plans
- The socioeconomic characteristics of school populations
- The distribution of programs and resources
- The overall impact on families and student
- Comparative long-term costs
- Adjustments shall be made without respect to magisterial districts or postal addresses and, whenever possible, shall not affect the same occupied dwellings any more often than once in three years

Review of Current FCPS Policy 8130

Public Notice

“Obtain public comment through a public hearing not less than ten days after reasonable notice to the public in a newspaper of general circulation in the school division prior to providing (i) for the consolidation of schools...(iii)...for redistricting of school boundaries or adopting any pupil assignment plan affecting the assignment of fifteen percent or more of the pupils in average daily membership in the affected school.” [Code of Virginia: Section 22.1-79 (8)]

Phasing

When possible, adjustments under this policy shall be implemented through attrition and phasing.

The School Board may adopt other phasing plans as appropriate to the individual boundary study

Types of boundary adjustments to be considered

Standard

- Regular adjustments on an established schedule based on trends, projections, and capacity.

Administrative

- Exceptions and exemptions that are granted by district administration.

Temporary

- Real-time, non-permanent responses to environmental factors.

Emergency

- Immediate change to one or more school boundaries prompted by unforeseen and significant situations that occur outside of scheduled review of boundaries.

Implementation considerations

Student continuity / phasing

- It must be determined when new boundaries take effect.
- Will current students be “grandfathered?”
- What exemptions will be allowed? See administrative adjustment.

Policy Review and Capacity Analysis

- Annual monitoring of current enrollment trends should be reported to the board.
- Adjustments should be made on a 5-year cycle based upon past trends and future projections.



Hanover Research. 2015. Best Practices in District Rezoning. Retrieved on April 8, 2020. From: [https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/207/Best Practices in District Rezoning - Portland Public Schools.pdf](https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/207/Best%20Practices%20in%20District%20Rezoning%20-%20Portland%20Public%20Schools.pdf)

Community Feedback

OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- ✓ Survey was successfully sent to 125,531 parent and guardian emails.
- ✓ Parents/guardians were asked to respond to the survey once for each child they had within the school system. The data presented in this report should be considered through that lens.
- ✓ 11,607 respondents are included in the analysis which follows.
- ✓ Every school within FCPS was represented in this survey with at least one survey response.
- ✓ See the full report for individual school participation.

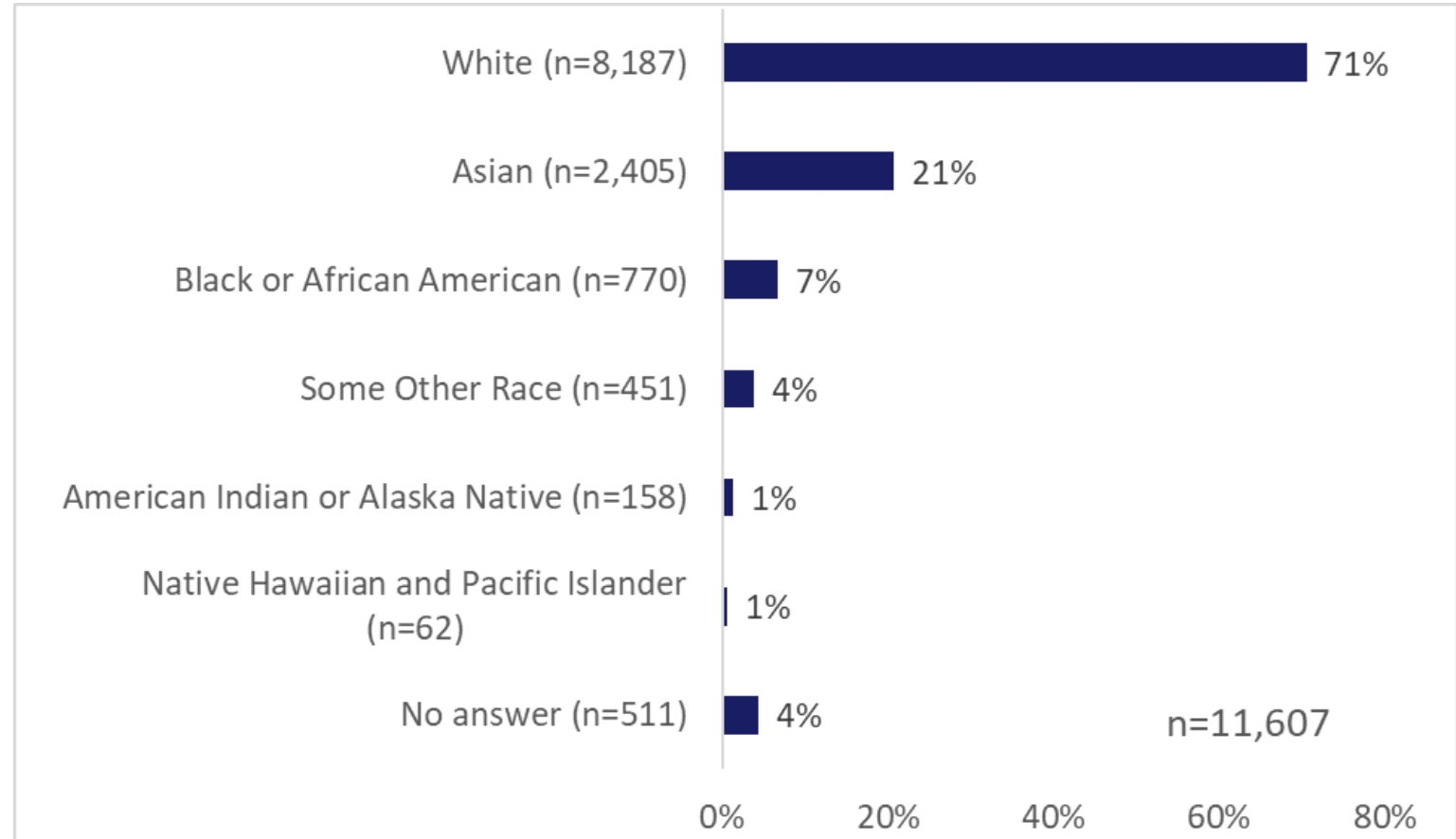
DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your race? (Select all that apply.)

SY 2020-21 FCPS Membership Race & Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	SY 2020-21 (Certified)
White (Non-Hispanic)	66,366 (37%)
Asian	35,617 (20%)
Black	18,020 (10%)
Multiple Groups	11,294 (6%)
Hispanic	48,854 (27%)

The race and ethnicity of survey respondents are representative of FCPS



- Since respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers, response frequencies total more than 100%.
- Survey question asked the race of the respondent, not the student in FCPS.

Sources:

1. FCPS, Certified Membership, September 2020.

Notes:

1. Membership includes general education, special education, AAP, FCPS PreK, preschool, special education centers, preschool resource centers, alternative school programs, alternative court programs, adult education, multi-agency, and home school and private school special education services.

2. Membership includes students that attend an FCPS school and reside outside Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax.

3. Percentages may not add up due to rounding.

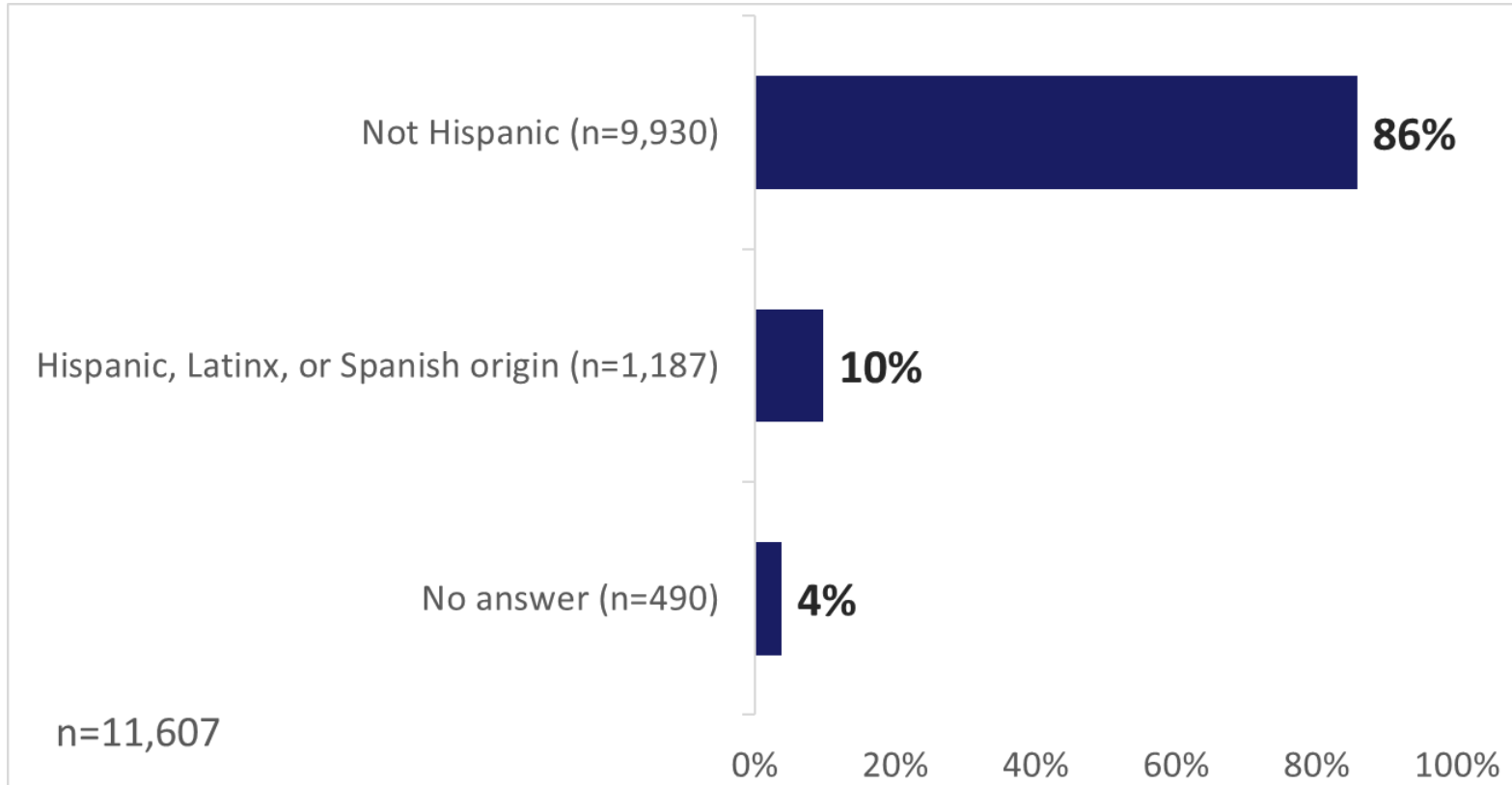
DEMOGRAPHICS

Are you of Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin?

SY 2020-21 FCPS Membership Race & Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	SY 2020-21 (Certified)
Non-Hispanic	66,366 (73%)
Hispanic	48,854 (27%)

The race and ethnicity of survey respondents are representative of FCPS



Sources:

1. FCPS, Certified Membership, September 2020.

Notes:

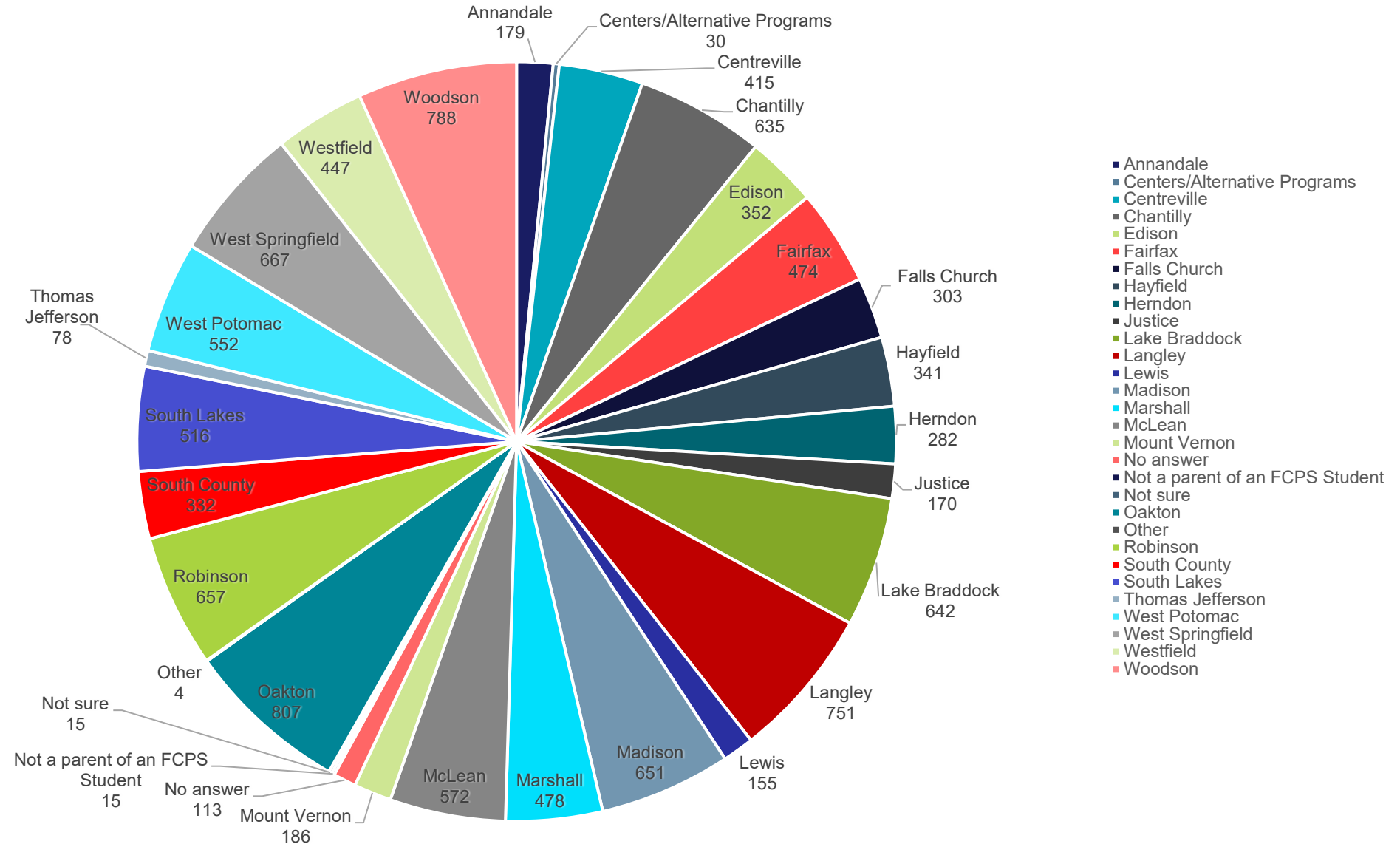
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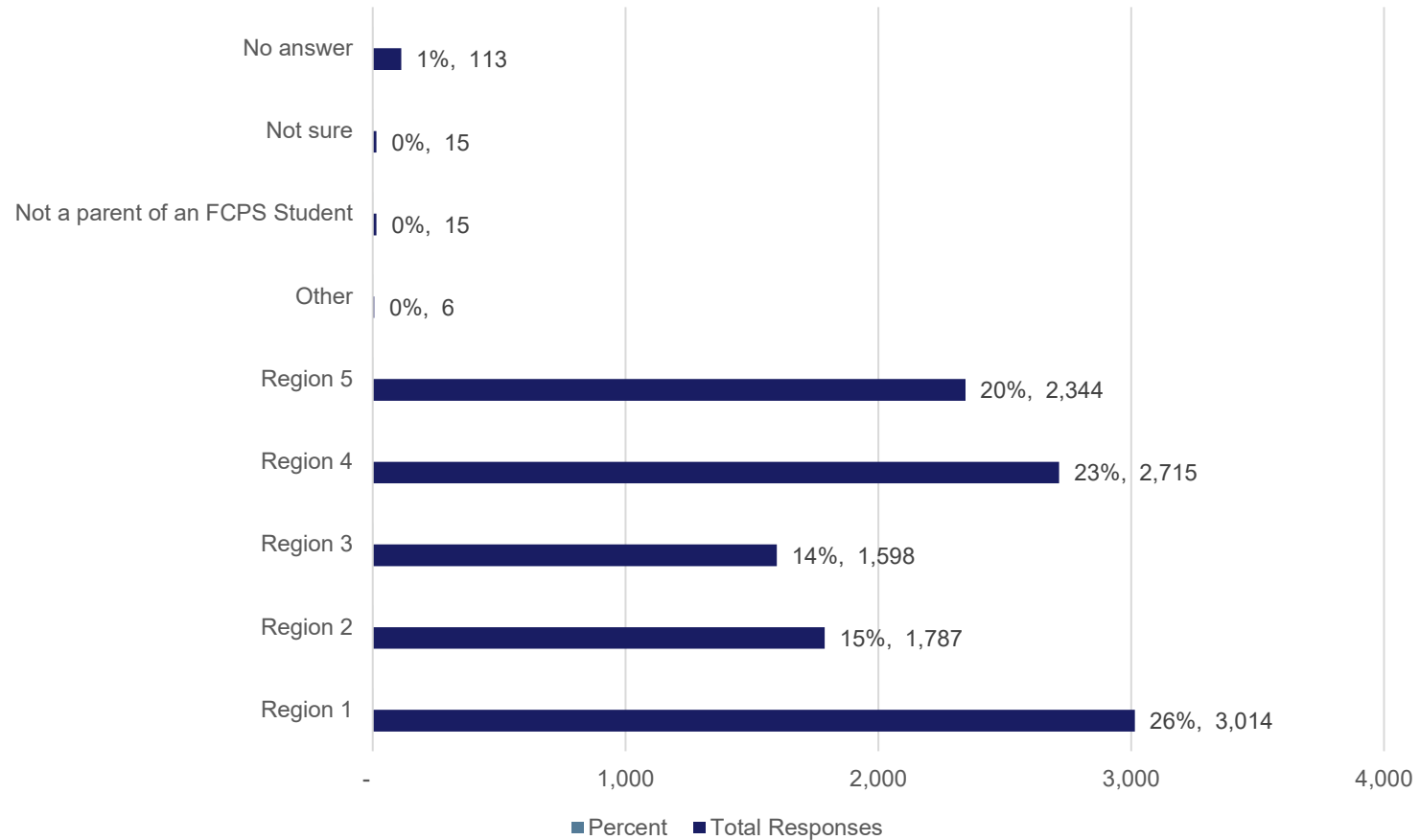
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Responses by High School Pyramid



Responses by Region



DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your annual household income?

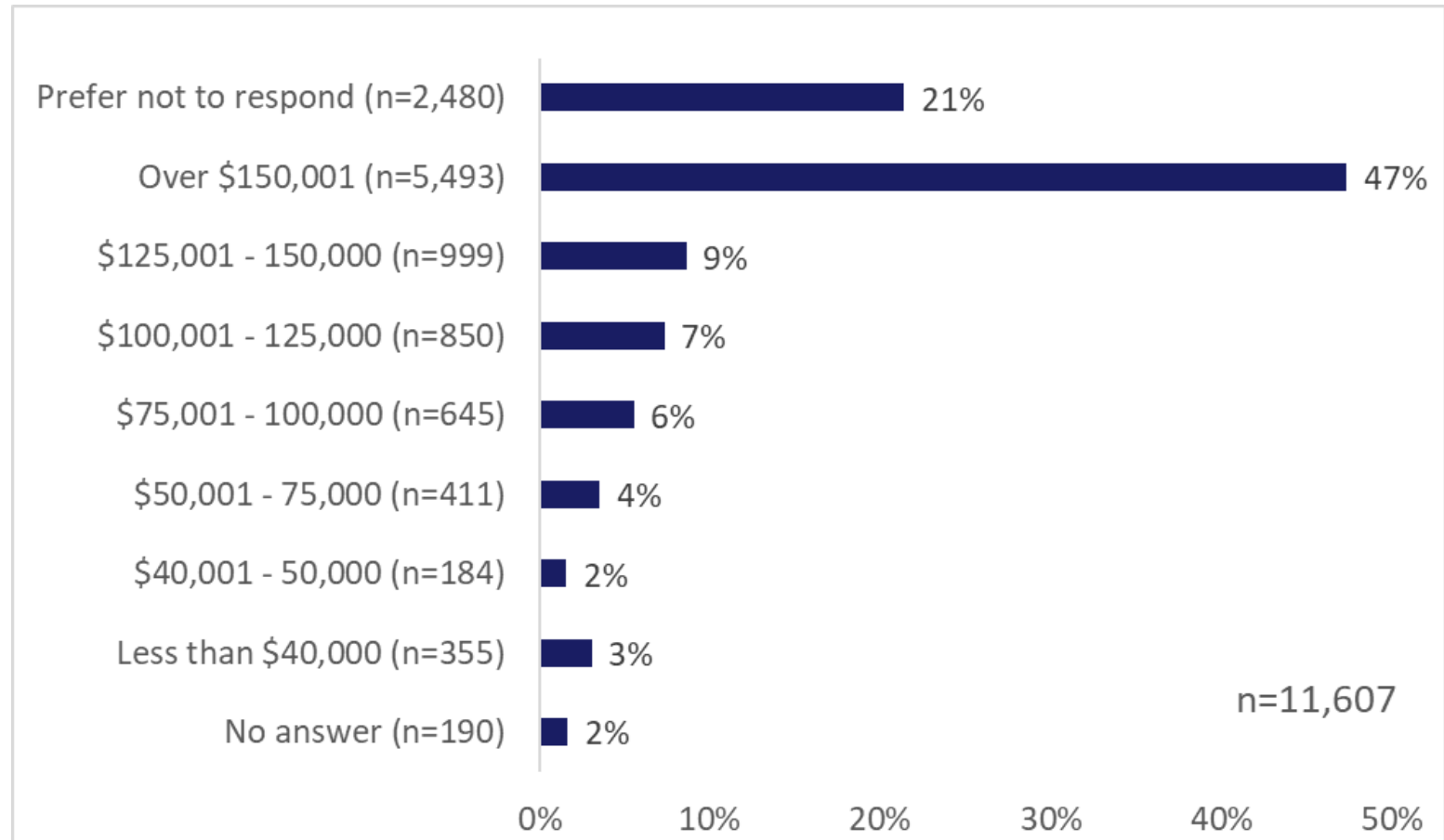
Fairfax County Median household income (in 2019):

\$124,831

Of the respondents who provided household income, the survey responses are representative of the Fairfax community.

Source:

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fairfaxcountyvirginia>



DEMOGRAPHICS

What language is spoken in your home?

SY 2020-21 FCPS Membership by Home Language

Home Language	SY 2020-21 (Certified)
English	90,550 (51%)
Other	25,221 (14%)
Spanish	40,528 (22%)
Chinese/Mandarin	3,793 (2%)
Korean	4,313 (2%)
Arabic	6,047 (3%)
Vietnamese	4,499 (2%)
Urdu	3,036 (2%)
Amharic	3,209 (2%)

Most responses are representative of FCPS. Those who speak Spanish in the home are underrepresented in the survey.

Language spoken in the home	Number of responses	% of responses
English	9,842	85%
Other	653	6%
Spanish	279	2%
Chinese	165	1%
Korean	137	1%
Arabic	84	1%
Vietnamese	68	1%
Urdu	56	0%
Farsi	51	0%
Amharic	28	0%
No answer	244	2%
Total	11,607	100%

- Sixty-nine additional languages were noted by survey respondents as “other” languages spoken in the home.

Sources:

1. FCPS, Certified Membership, September 2020.

Notes:

1. Membership includes general education, special education, AAP, FCPS PreK, preschool, special education centers, preschool resource centers, alternative school programs, alternative court programs, adult education, multi-agency, and home school and private school special education services.

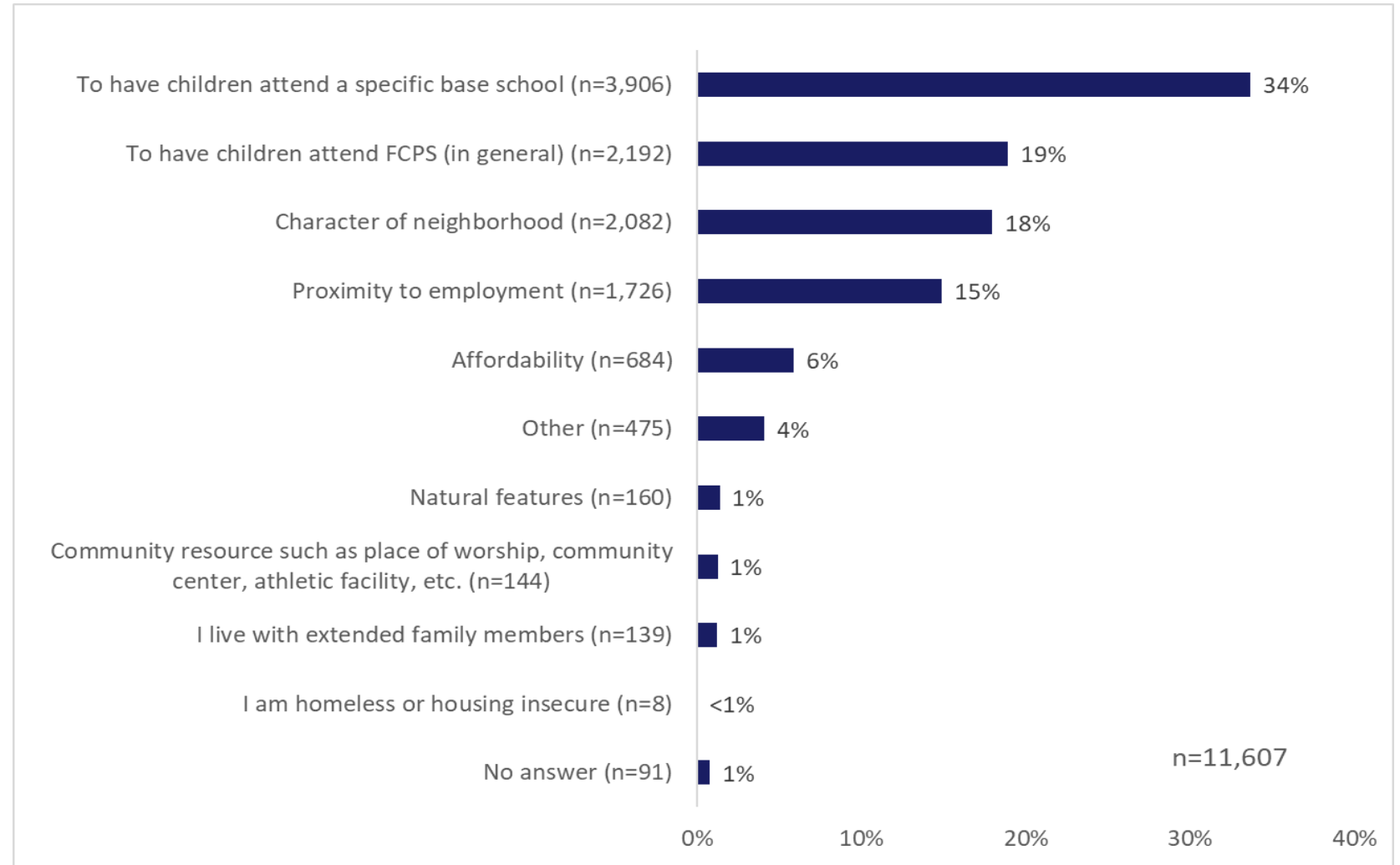
2. Membership includes students that attend an FCPS school and reside outside Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax.

3. Percentages may not add up due to rounding.

REASON FOR CHOOSING RESIDENCE

What is the number one reason you choose to live in your current residence?

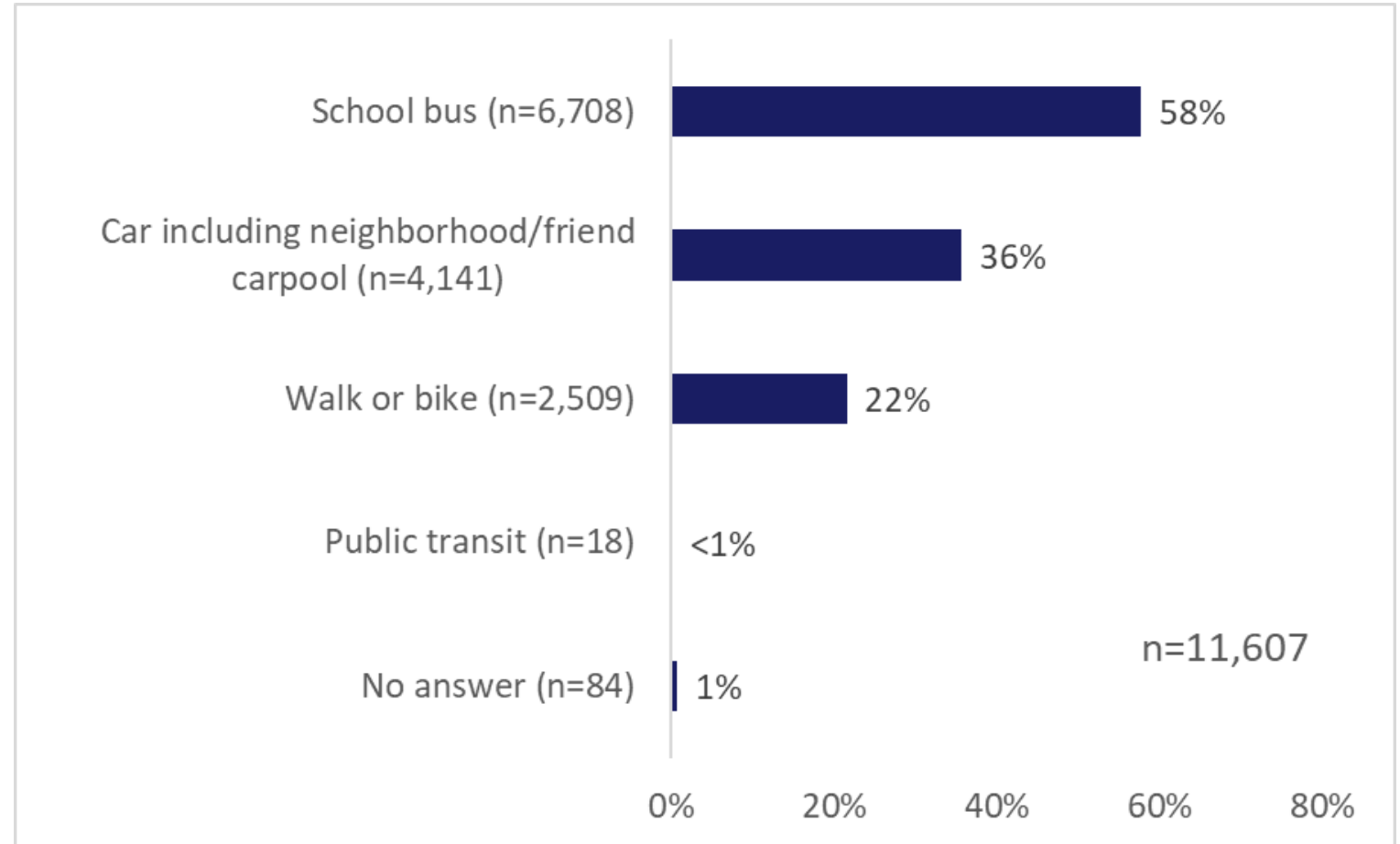
Most families choose their residence in order to have children attend a specific base school, to have children attend FCPS (in general), or based on the character of the neighborhood.



TRANSPORTATION

Describe your student's method of travel to and from school. (Check all that apply)

As of October 2021, there were 82,200 or 65% of FCPS Students that rode the bus.

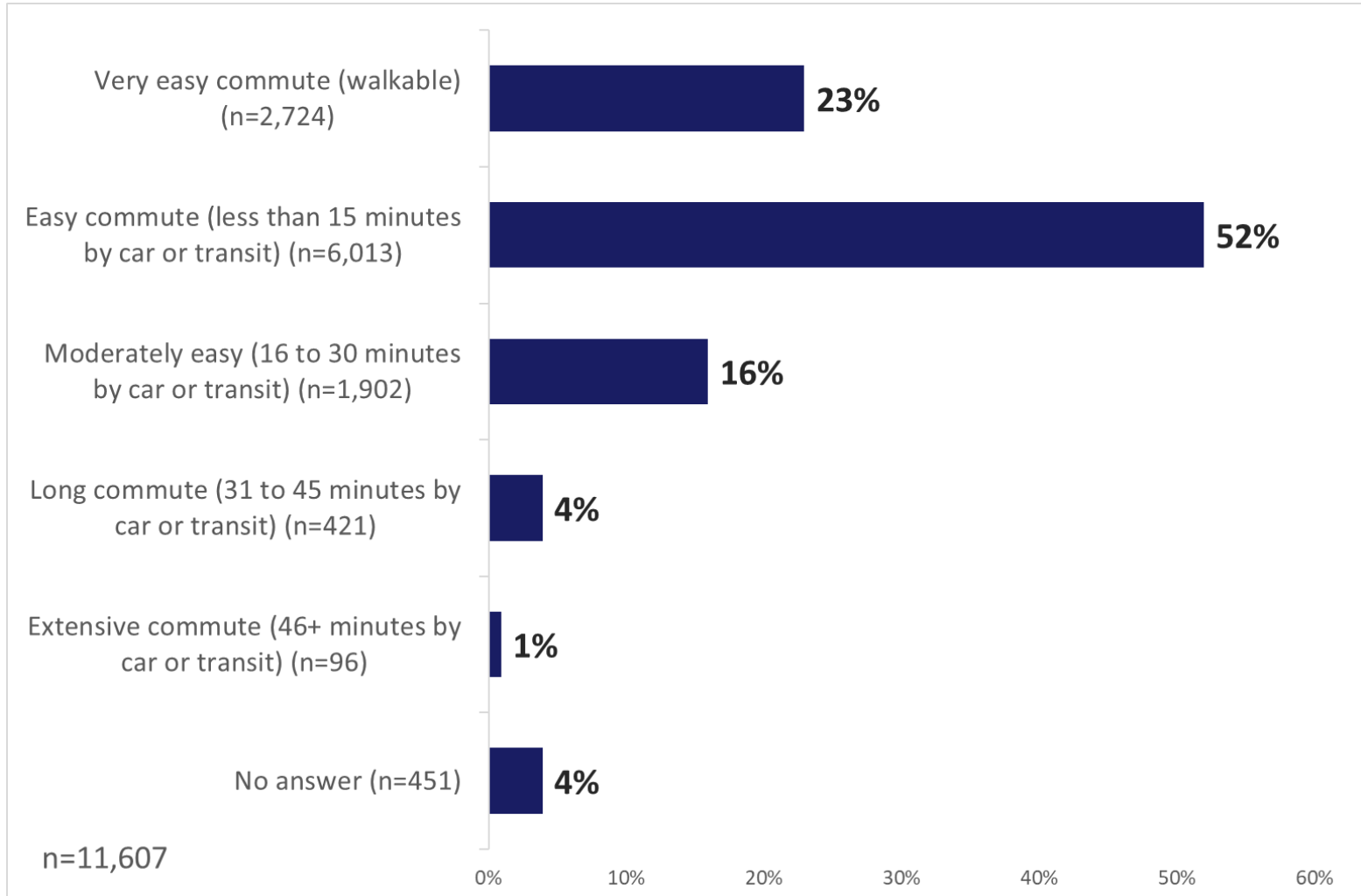


- Since respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers, response frequencies total more than 100%.

TRANSPORTATION

On a typical day, how easy is it for your student to travel to your attending school?

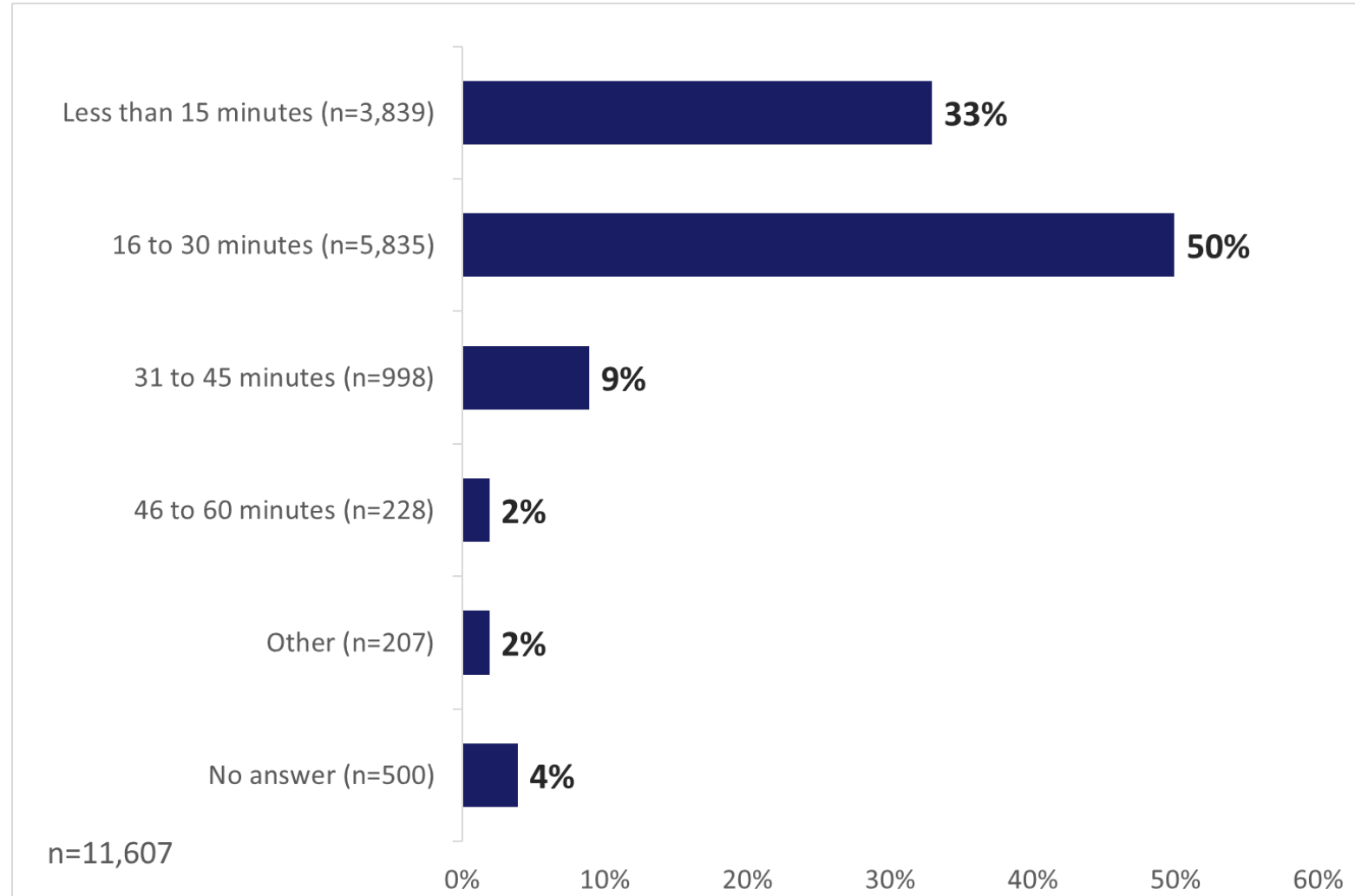
Most families have a commute that is 15 minutes or less.



TRANSPORTATION

What is the greatest amount of time that a student should travel on a school bus (one way)?

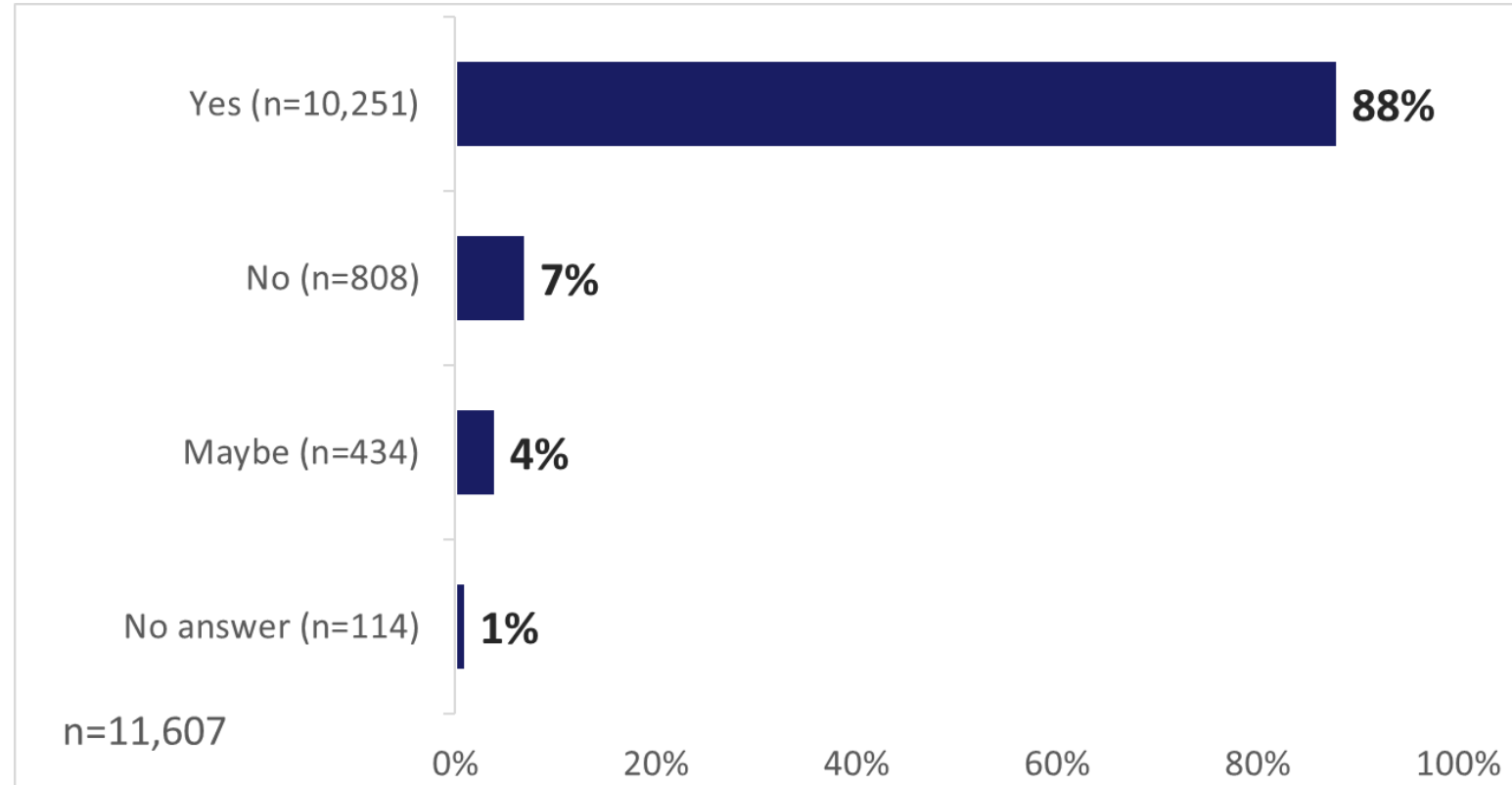
83% of respondents believe that a student should be on a bus less than 30 minutes.



BASE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Does your student attend or plan to attend your assigned base school?

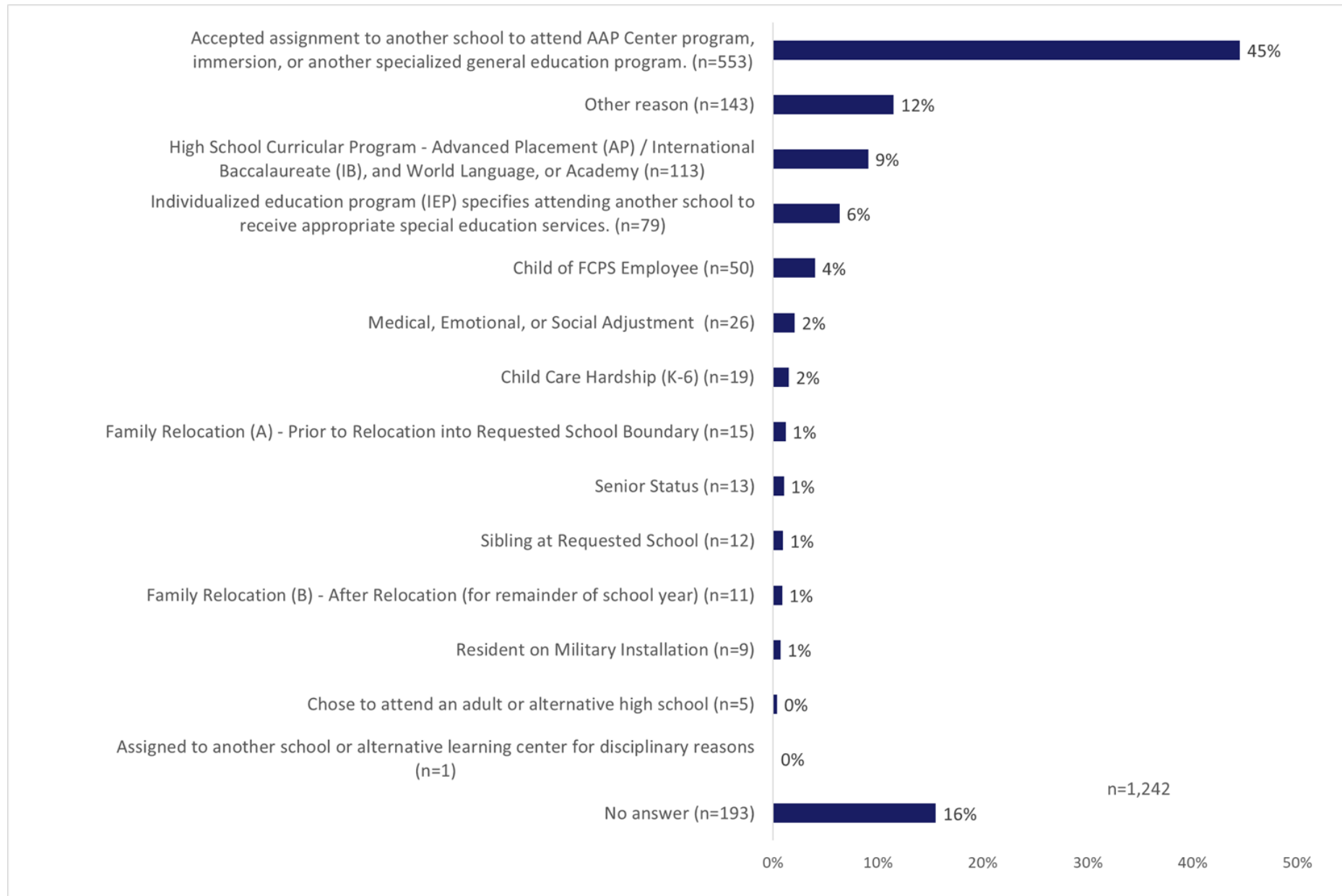
88% of respondents indicate that their child plans to attend their base school.



BASE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PLANS

Why will your student not attend your base school?

54% of respondents indicate that their student does not attend their base school because they were accepted into school with a specialized program.

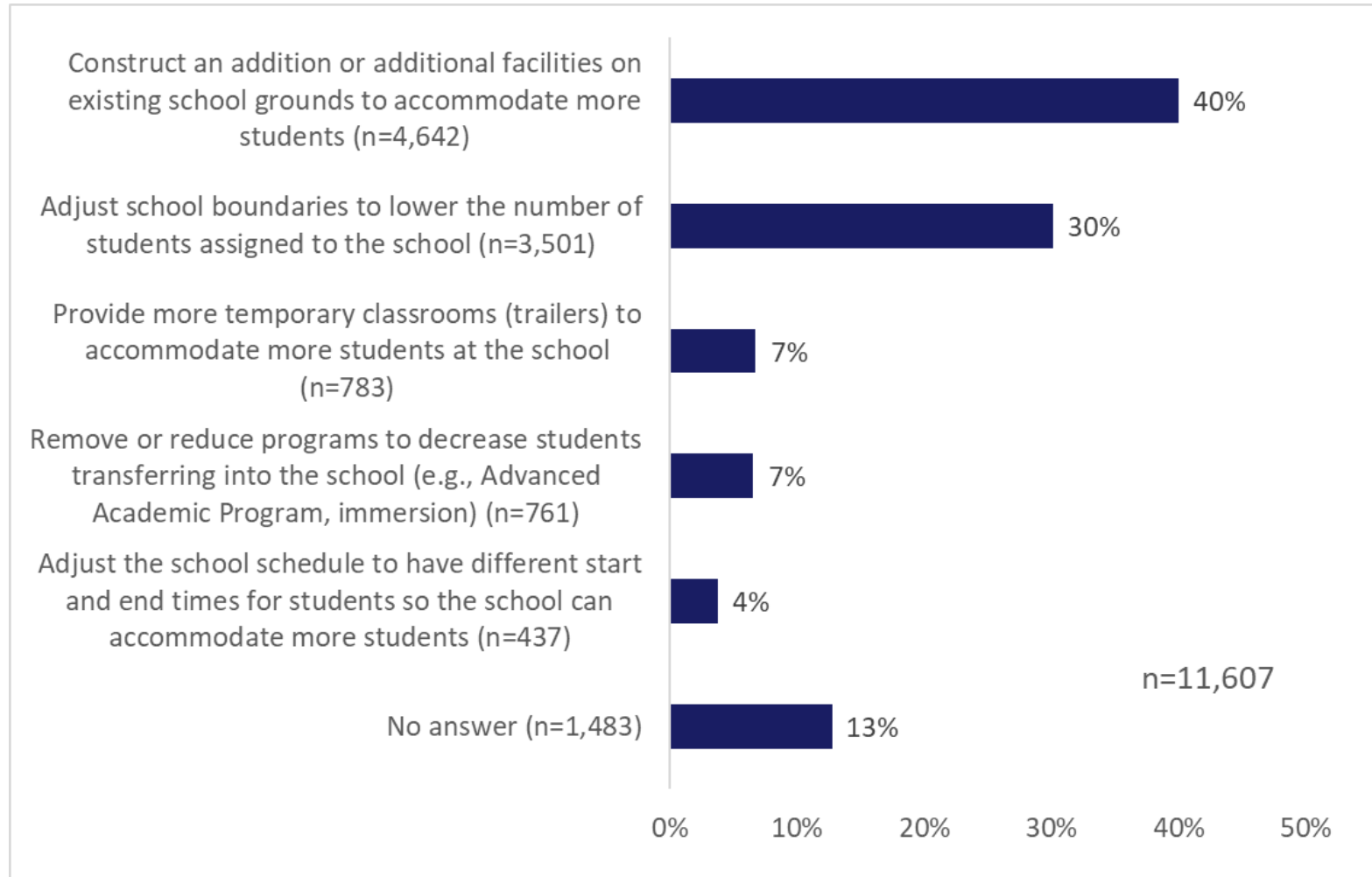


- Only those respondents who did not plan for their child to attend the base school received this question (n=1,242).

HIGHEST PRIORITY

What should be the highest priority to address schools that are overcrowded?

30% of respondents believe that the number one priority to address overcrowding is boundary adjustment.



HIGHEST PRIORITY

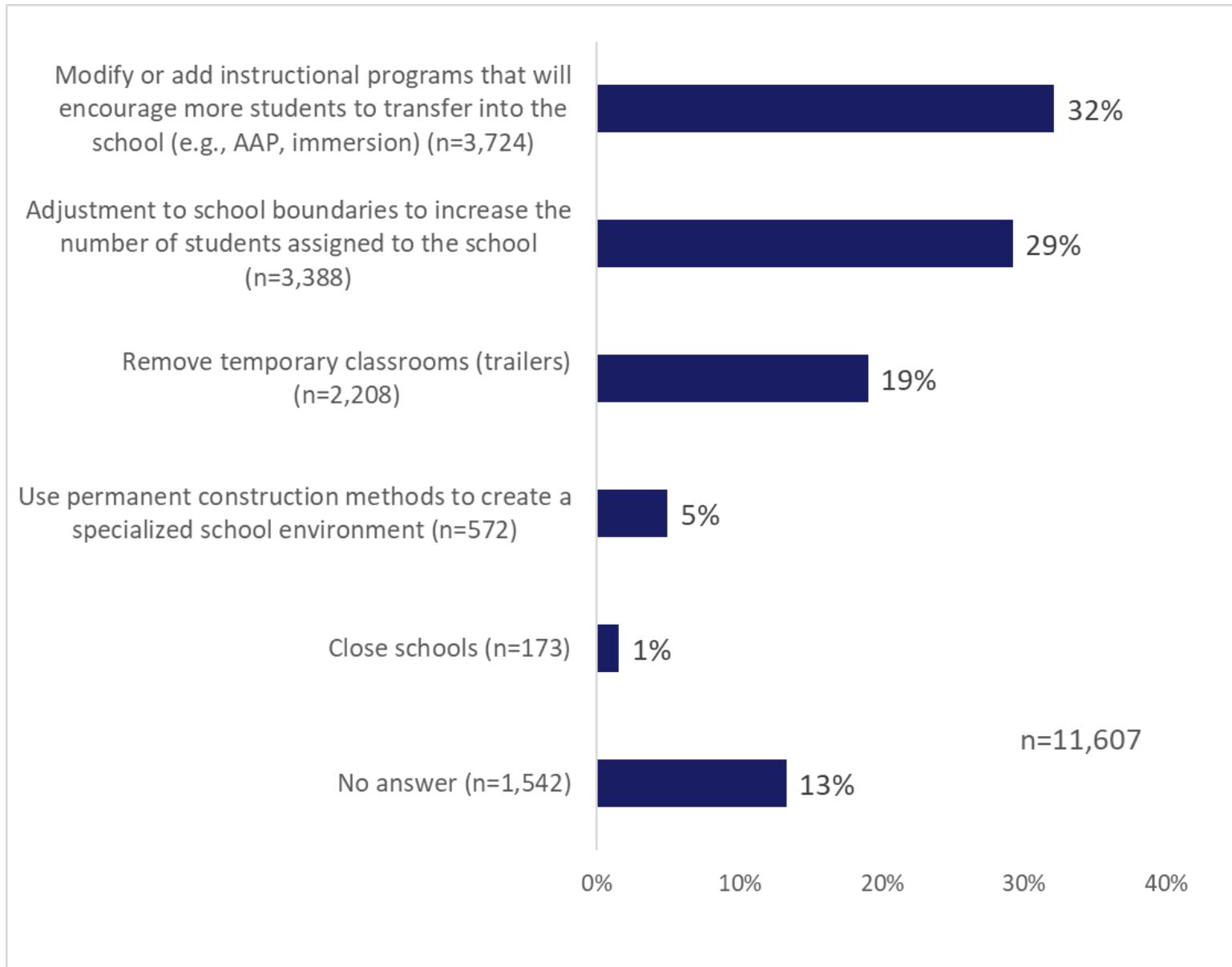
What should be the highest priority to address schools that do not have enough students to fill all classrooms?

31%

Make the school more attractive through programmatic changes.

29%

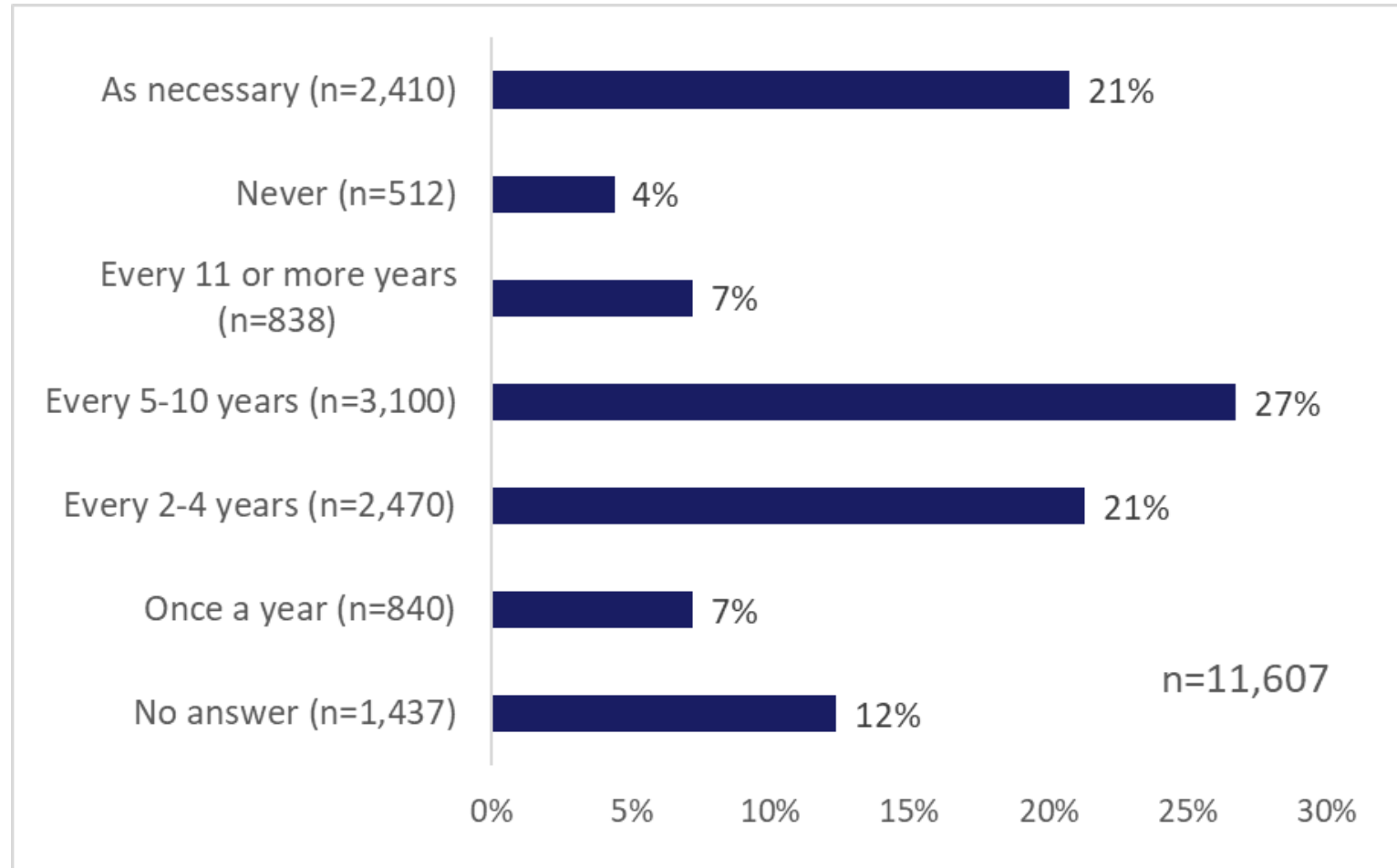
Increase the number of students assigned to the school.



BOUNDARY CHANGE TIMING

How often should a school boundary be changed?

*With what frequency should
boundaries be changed?*



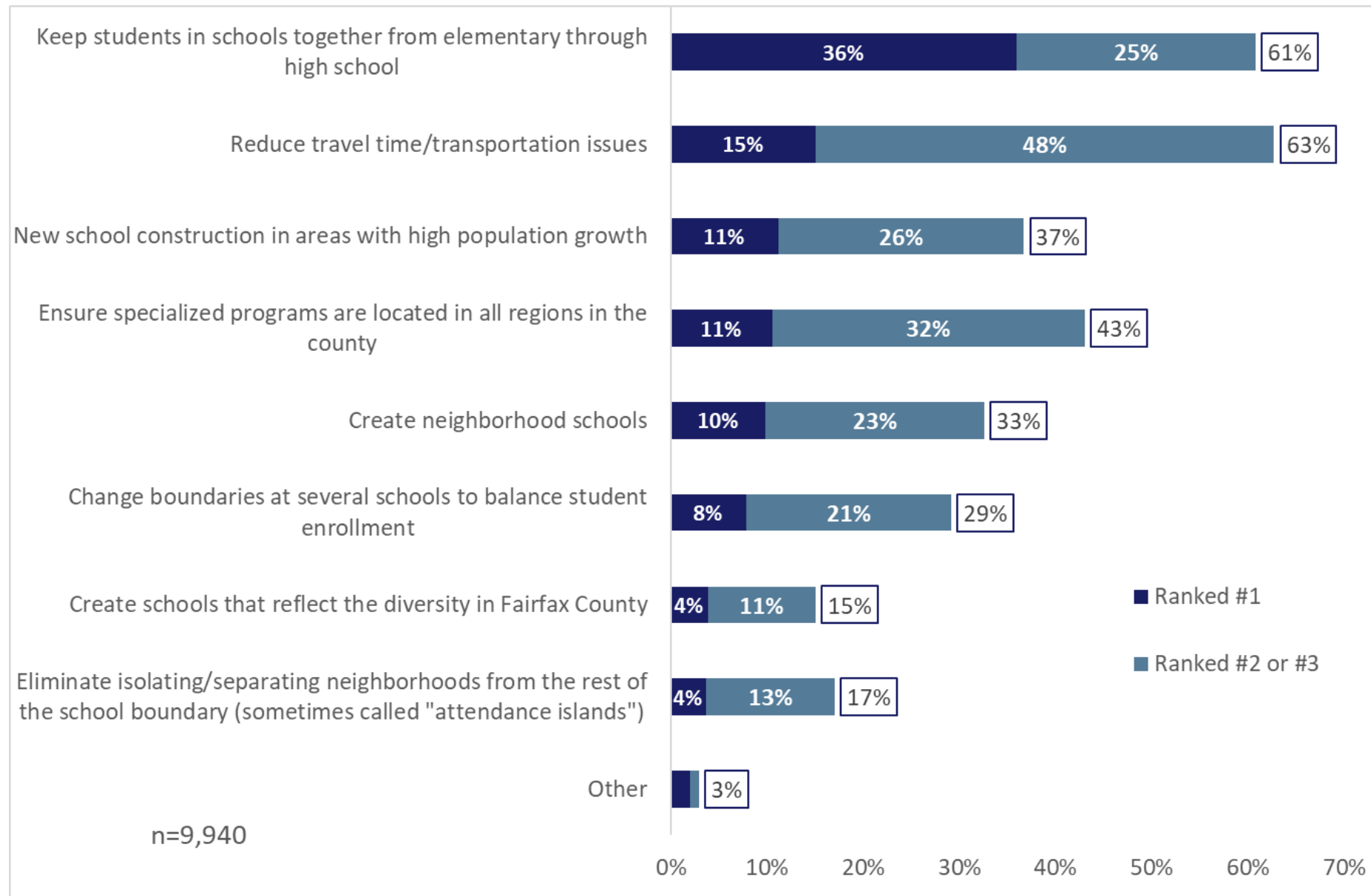
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

Rank order items that should be considered for boundary changes from most important to least important.

Keep students together

Reduce travel time

Equity

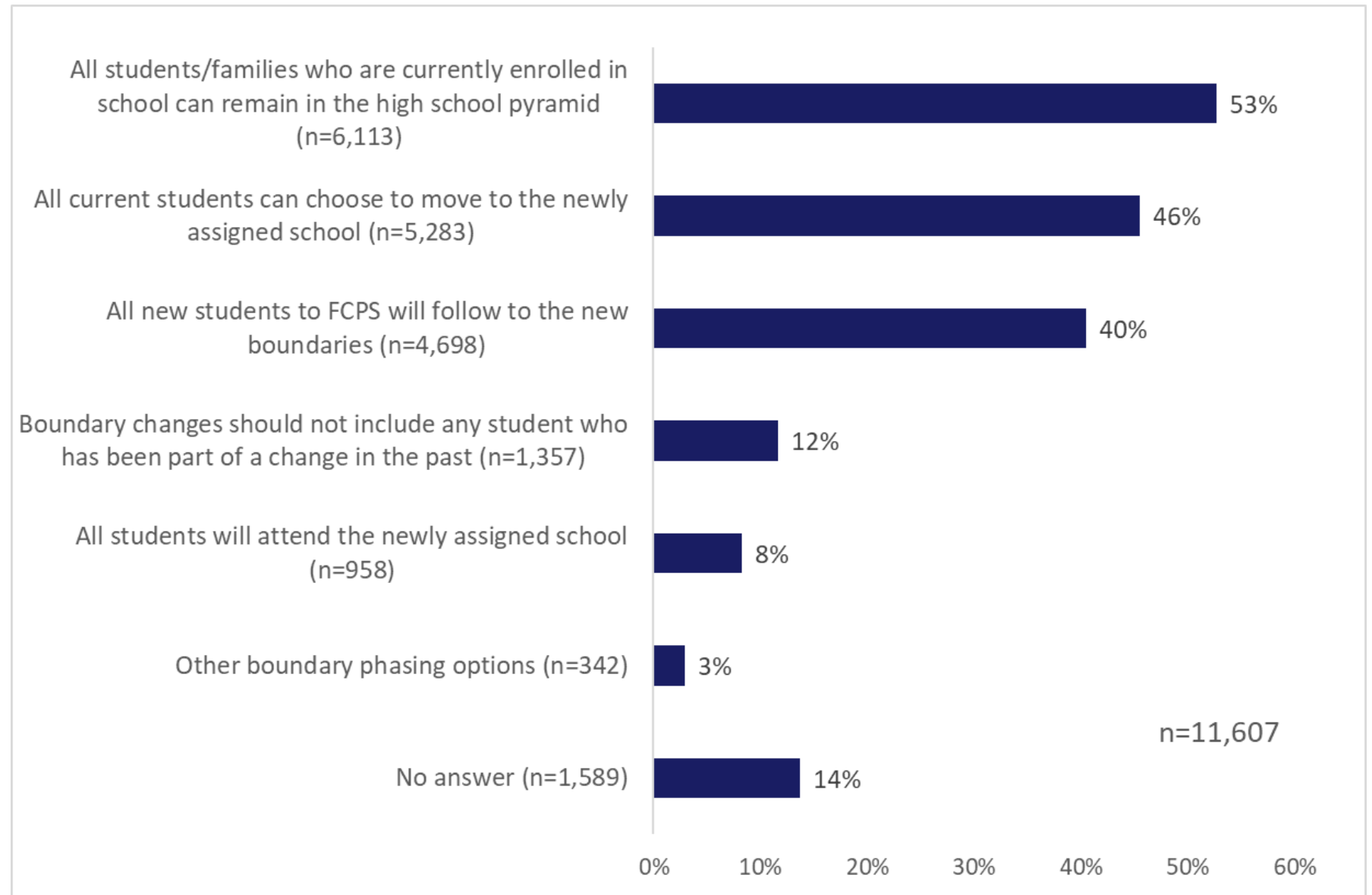


- Note: 1,667 respondents skipped this question and did not rank order the items.

METHOD OF CHANGE

When a boundary change should occur, how should the change happen? (Select all that apply.)

Respondents want stability and choice when a boundary change occurs.



• Respondents were allowed to choose multiple answers, response frequencies total more than 100%.



Boundary Policy Community Meeting Data

September 13, 2021

- 1,227 registered
- 222 attended

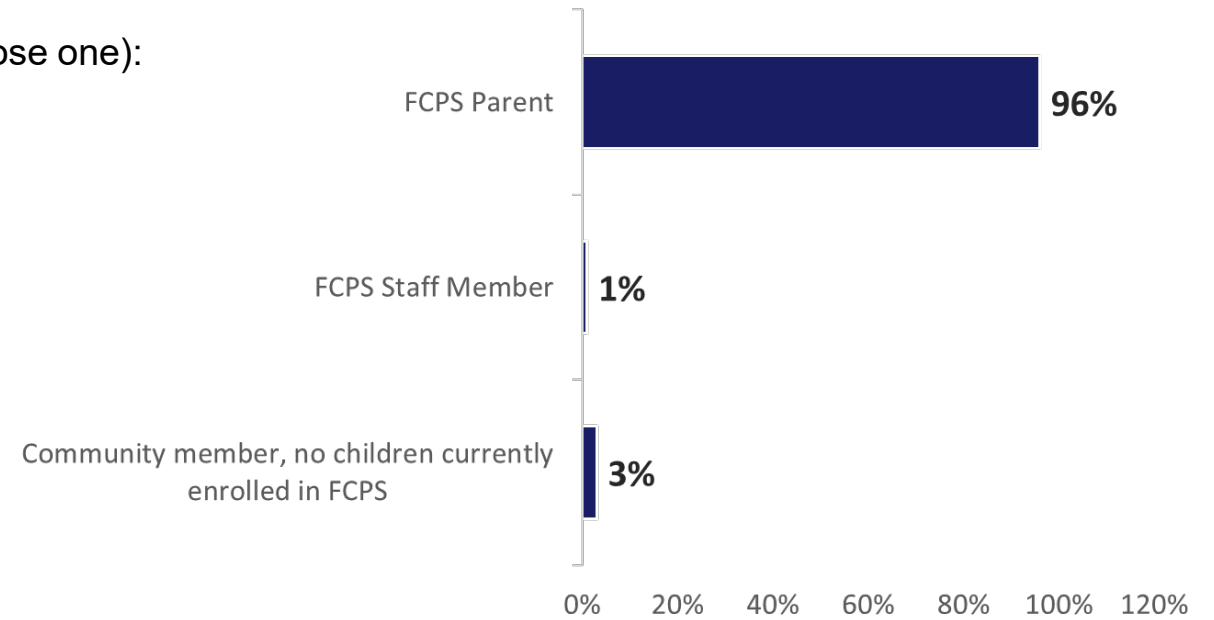
September 14, 2021

- 635 registered
- 136 attended

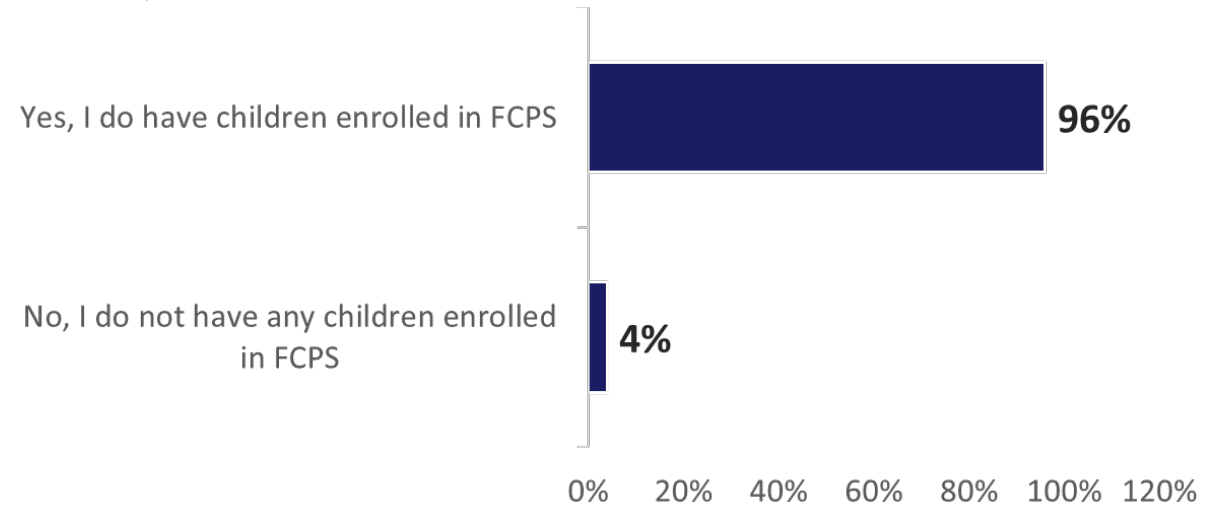
September 20, 2021

- 448 registered
- 150 attended

Please select your primary role (choose one):
2,310 responses



Do you have children attending Fairfax County Public Schools?
2,310 responses

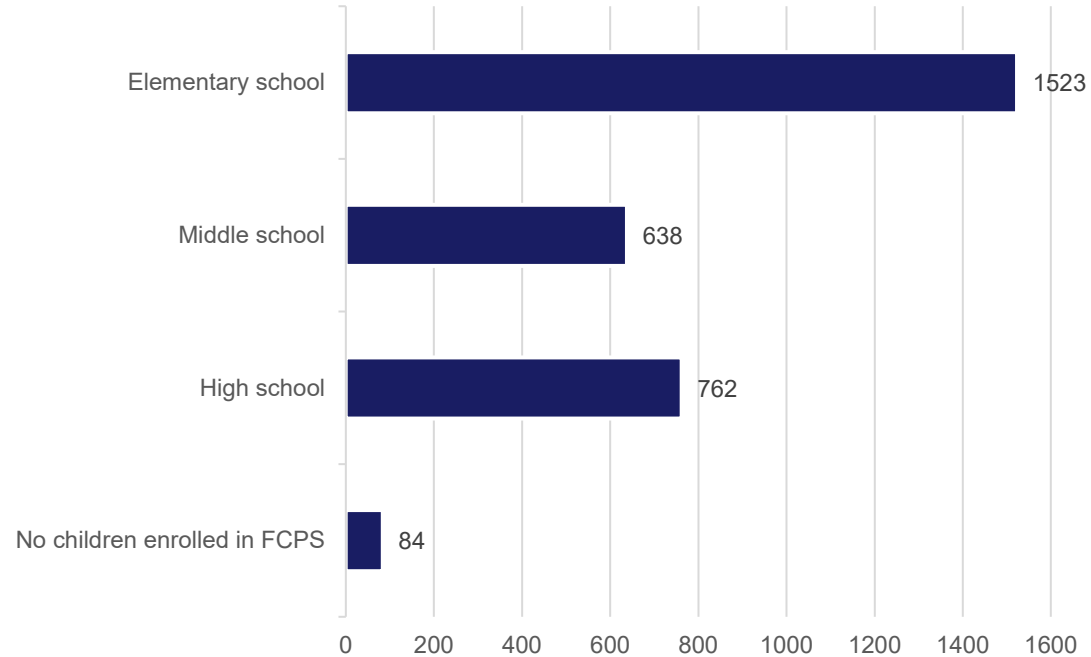


Boundary Policy Community Meeting Data

Interpretation
requested in following
languages:

- Spanish 144
- Arabic 18
- Amharic 16
- Urdu 13
- Korean 10
- Chinese 7
- Farsi 6
- Vietnamese 6

If you do have children enrolled in FCPS, what grade level?
2,310 responses



Recommendations

Recommendations

1. Prioritize factors determining boundary adjustments focusing on equity, stability, and efficacy.
2. Define school and program capacity to ensure consistency across the division.
3. Establish boundary adjustments based on balancing the number of schools and students for efficient use of buildings.
4. Centralize or regionalize programs with great demand in schools across the district to ensure equitable access for all families.
5. Limit time students are on busses and create efficient transportation networks.
6. Create an established and well-articulated exemption process.
7. Formally evaluate school boundaries every five years.

Recommendation #1

Prioritize factors determining boundary adjustments focusing on equity, stability, and efficacy.

**If all priorities are equal, nothing is a priority.
This is a decision made community by community.**



Recommendation #2

Define school and program capacity to ensure consistency across the division.

There must be a clear and agreed upon definition of each school's capacity, with the articulation that schools may have reduced capacity due to the programs or grade levels housed within them.

Recommendation #3

Establish boundary adjustments based on balancing the number of schools and students for efficient use of buildings.

Districts must live within their means. It is unsustainable to continue to maintain and operate schools that are critically under-enrolled.

Recommendation #4

Centralize or regionalize programs with great demand in schools across the district to ensure equitable access for all families.

Creating magnet or specialized programs in under-enrolled schools can help balance enrollment.

Recommendation #5

Limit time students are on busses and create efficient transportation networks.

There was overwhelming sentiment by the respondents that students should have a short commute to and from school. This is also a serious financial consideration.

Recommendation #6

Create an established and well-articulated exemption process.

Exemptions should support families in an equitable way and must be implemented with fidelity.

Recommendation #7

Formally evaluate school boundaries every five years.

This does not necessarily mean all boundaries must be adjusted every five years, but if slight adjustments are made on an established, regular basis, larger and more disruptive adjustments can be avoided.

THANK YOU

Impact Communities. For Good.