

New Hanover County Schools Staff Climate Survey

May 2024

Presentations of Findings

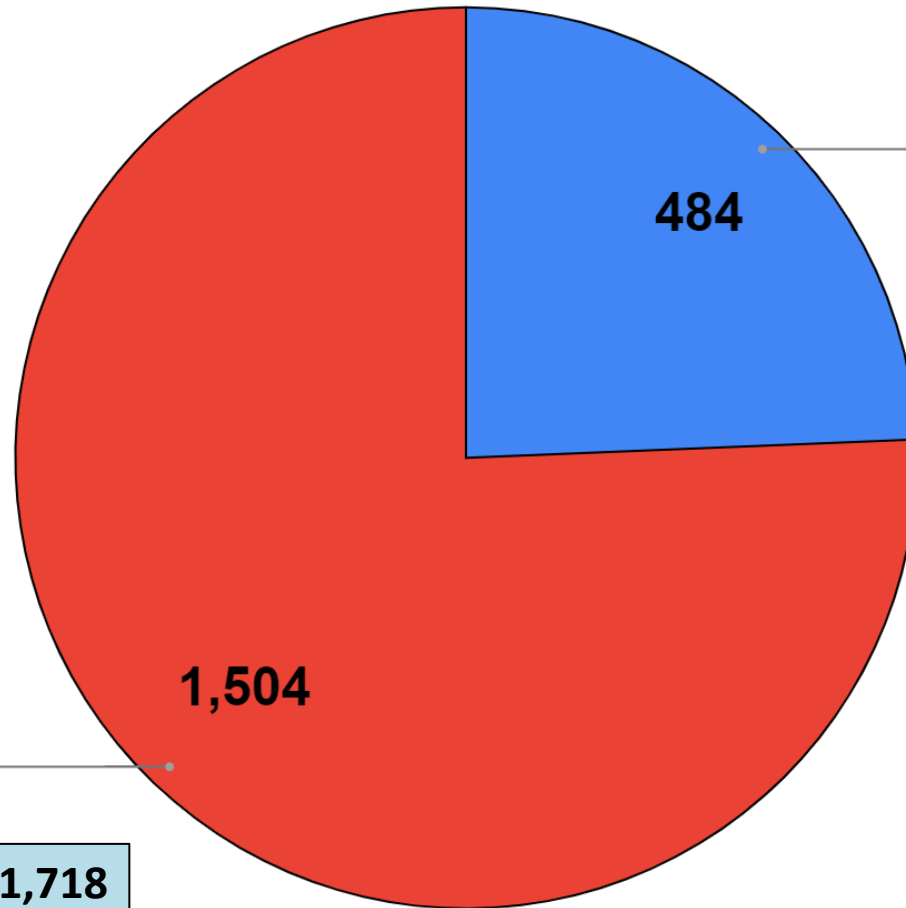
The Survey Timeline & Logistics

- **APRIL 2024 Regular Board Meeting** – The Board of Education Approved the implementation of a Staff Climate Survey
- **April – May 2024** – The Board submitted questions for the survey.
- **May 14th – May 31st** – Survey was sent out to staff at 46 NHCS Schools on May 14th. Reminders were sent out 4 times - weekly, the Wednesday before it closed, and on the final day, May 31st.
- Survey was facilitated in coordination with the UNCW Watson School of Education and rooted in Bolman and Deal's conceptual framework, aiming at systematically identifying areas for improvement within NHCS. The survey provided a comprehensive understanding of the district's strengths and weaknesses, enabling targeted actions to enhance the educational environment for both staff and students.

Please indicate whether you are a
Classified or Certified Staff Member

Answer	%	Count
Classified Staff	24.35%	484
Certified Staff	75.65%	1,504
Total	100%	1,988

Please indicate whether you are a Classified or Certified Staff Member



Classified Staff
24.4%

TOTAL: 1,988

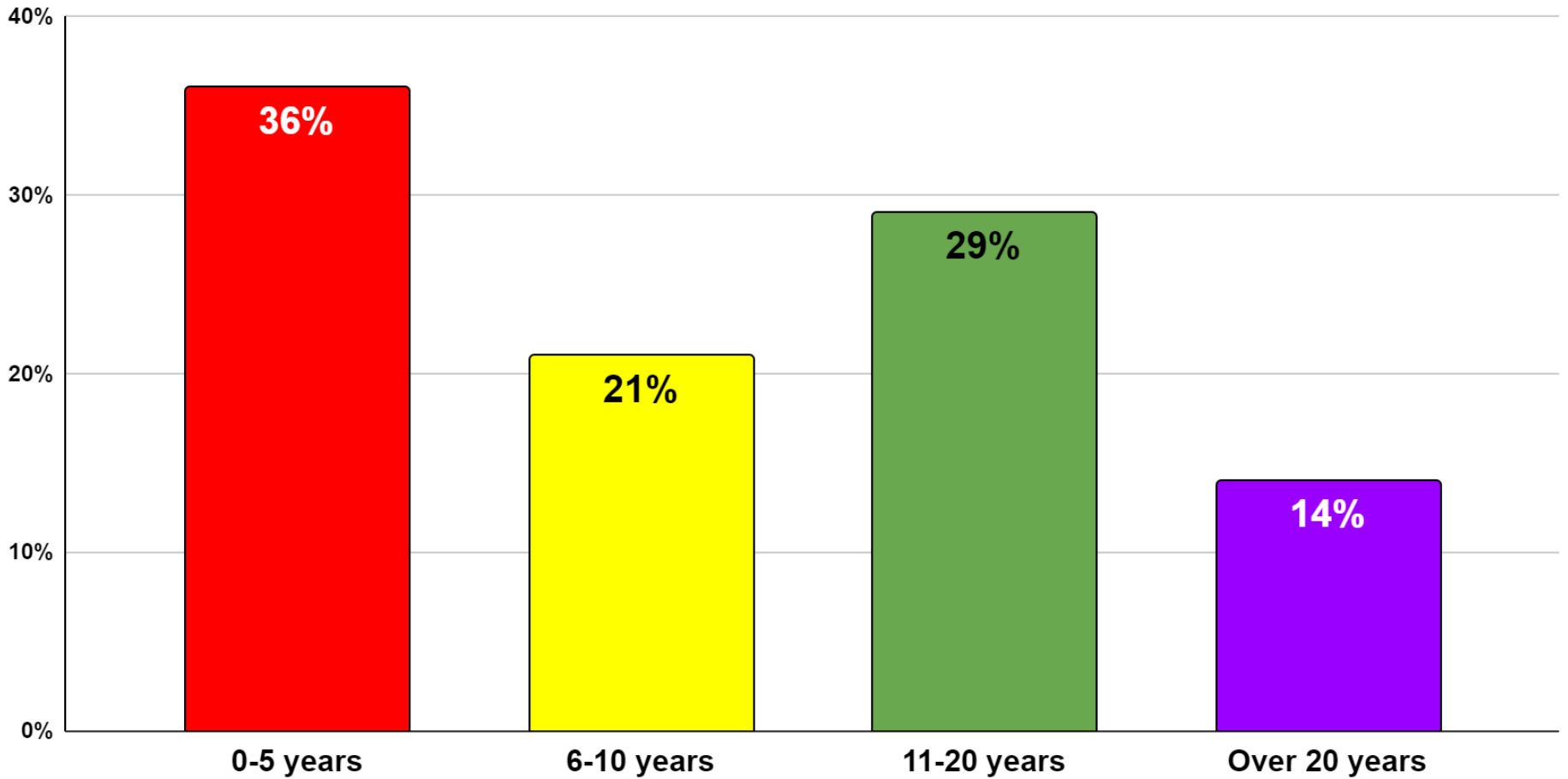
Certified Staff
75.7%

2023 Teacher Total = 1,718
Response Rate
1,504/1,718 = **87.54%**

How many total years have you been working for the district?

Answer	%	Count
0-5 years	36.12%	718
6-10 years	20.77%	413
11-15 years	12.83%	255
16-20 years	15.69%	312
Over 20 years	14.59%	290
Total	100%	1,988

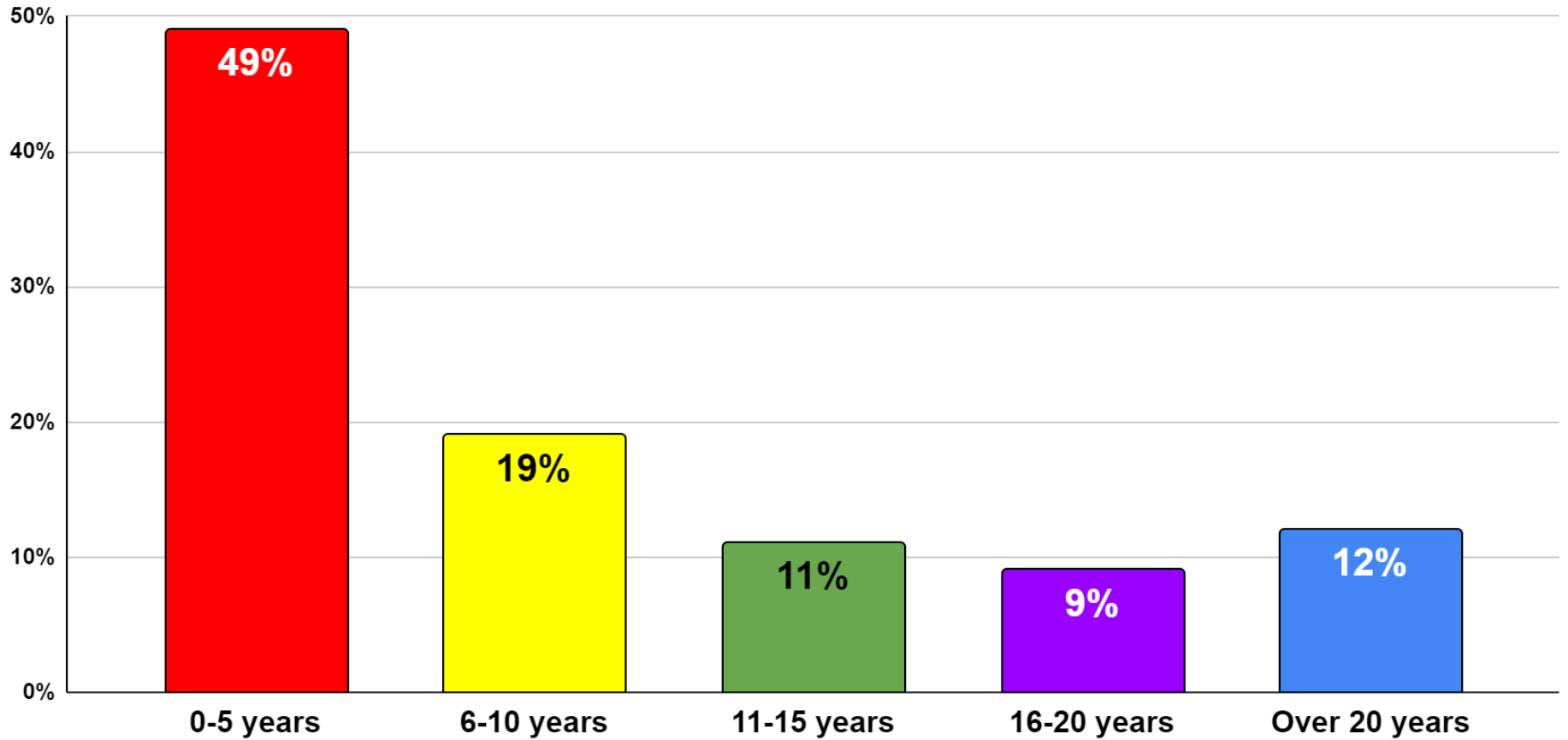
How many total years have you been working for the district?



How many years have you been employed in the school where you are currently working?

Answer	%	Count
0-5 years	48.69%	968
6-10 years	19.16%	381
11-15 years	10.87%	216
16-20 years	9.61%	191
Over 20 years	11.67%	232
Total	100%	1,988

How many years have you been employed in the school where you are currently working?



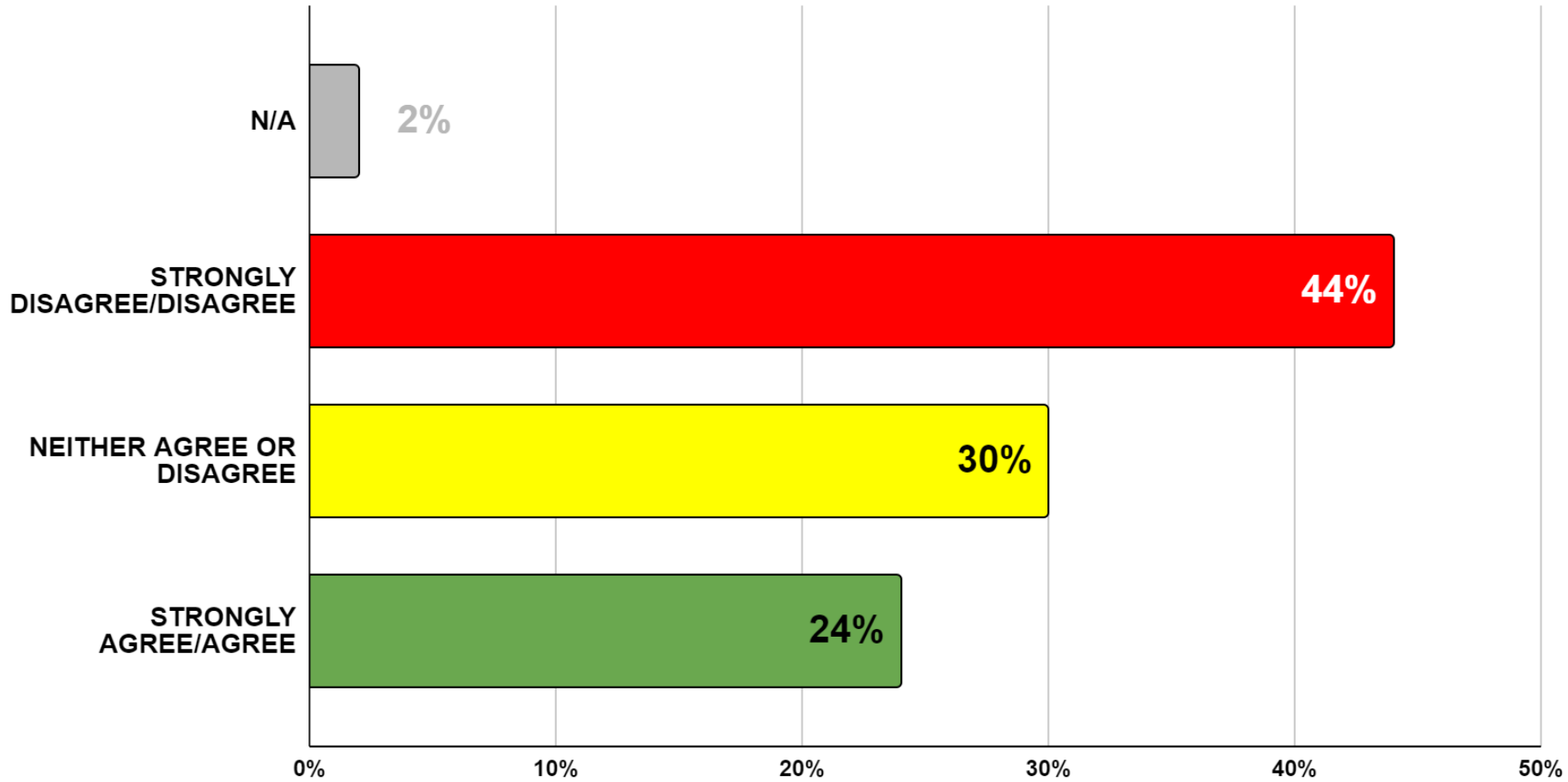
District Leadership

Percentage of respondents indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

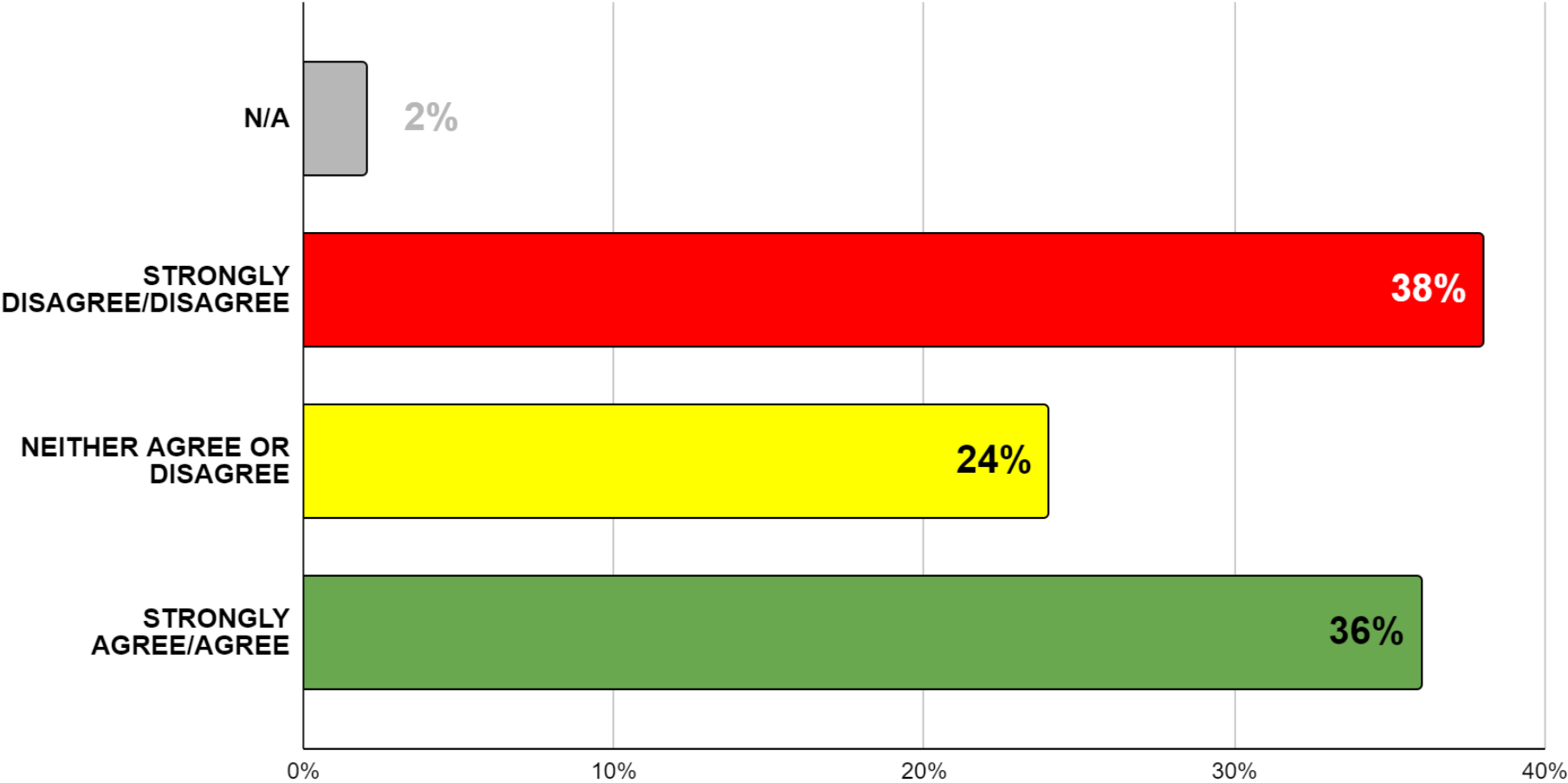
NA = Not Applicable, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Question	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
On teacher workdays, I am able to prepare and plan rather than being occupied with district requests for my time.	9%	18%	22%	18%	24%	9%
I am provided with adequate resources to achieve success.	2%	13%	25%	24%	28%	8%
I feel supported by our district leadership.	2%	44%	22%	19%	10%	3%
I feel supported by the school district with student discipline.	6%	40%	22%	18%	10%	4%
I have autonomy over my job.	3%	20%	21%	28%	23%	5%
I feel valued by district leadership for my contributions to the district's success.	2%	43%	24%	18%	9%	4%

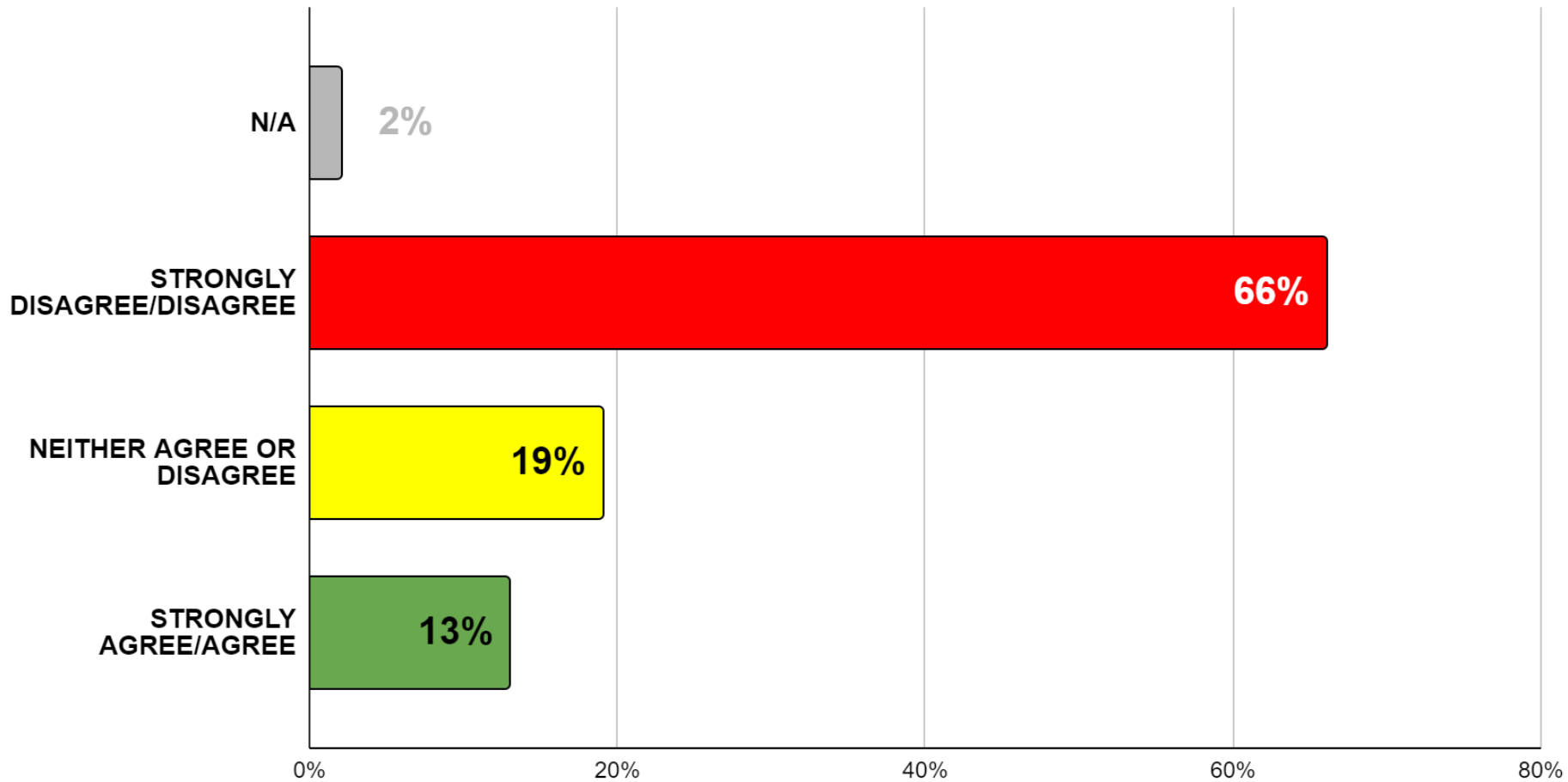
Overall, my district is a good place to work and learn.



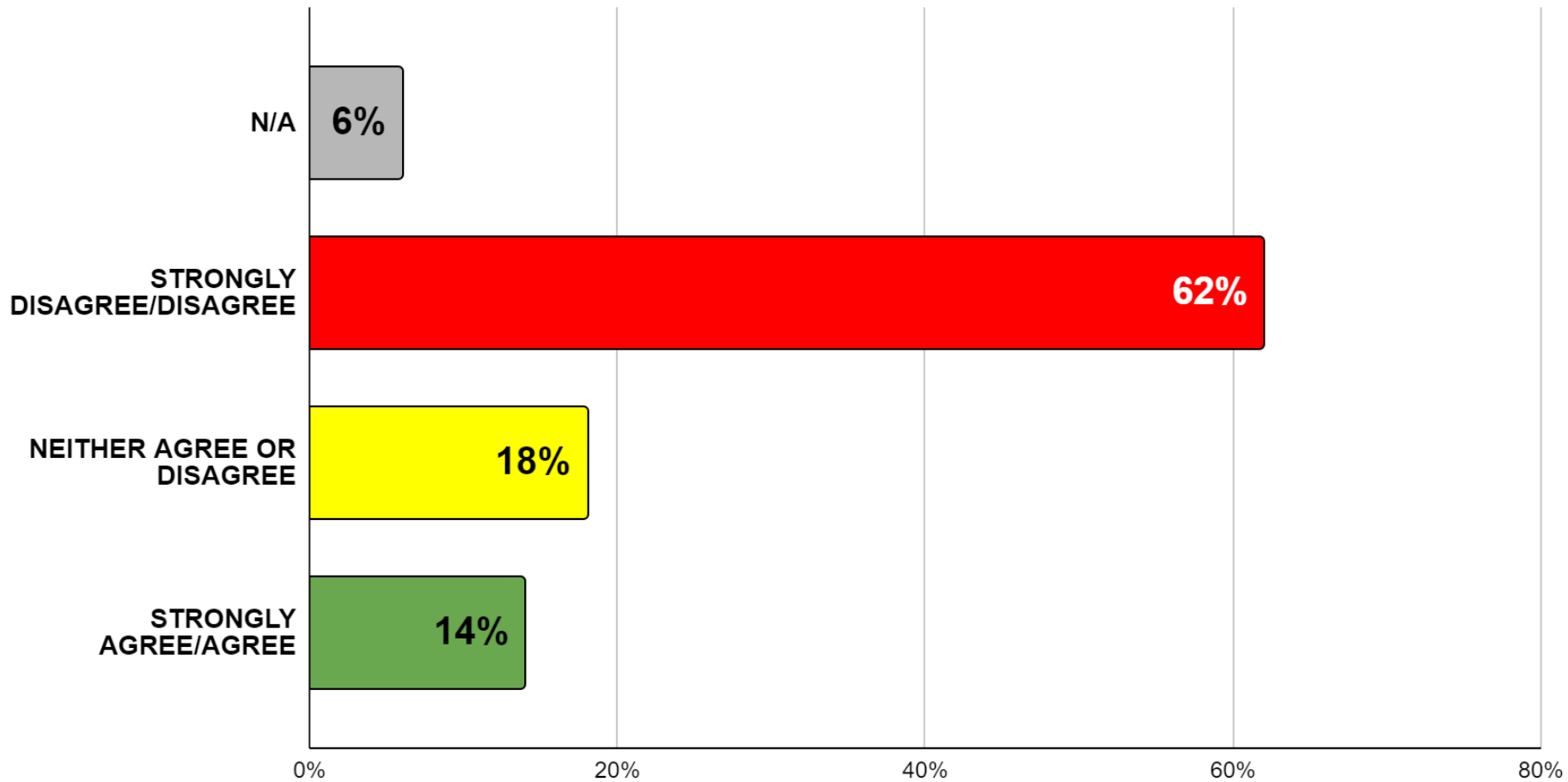
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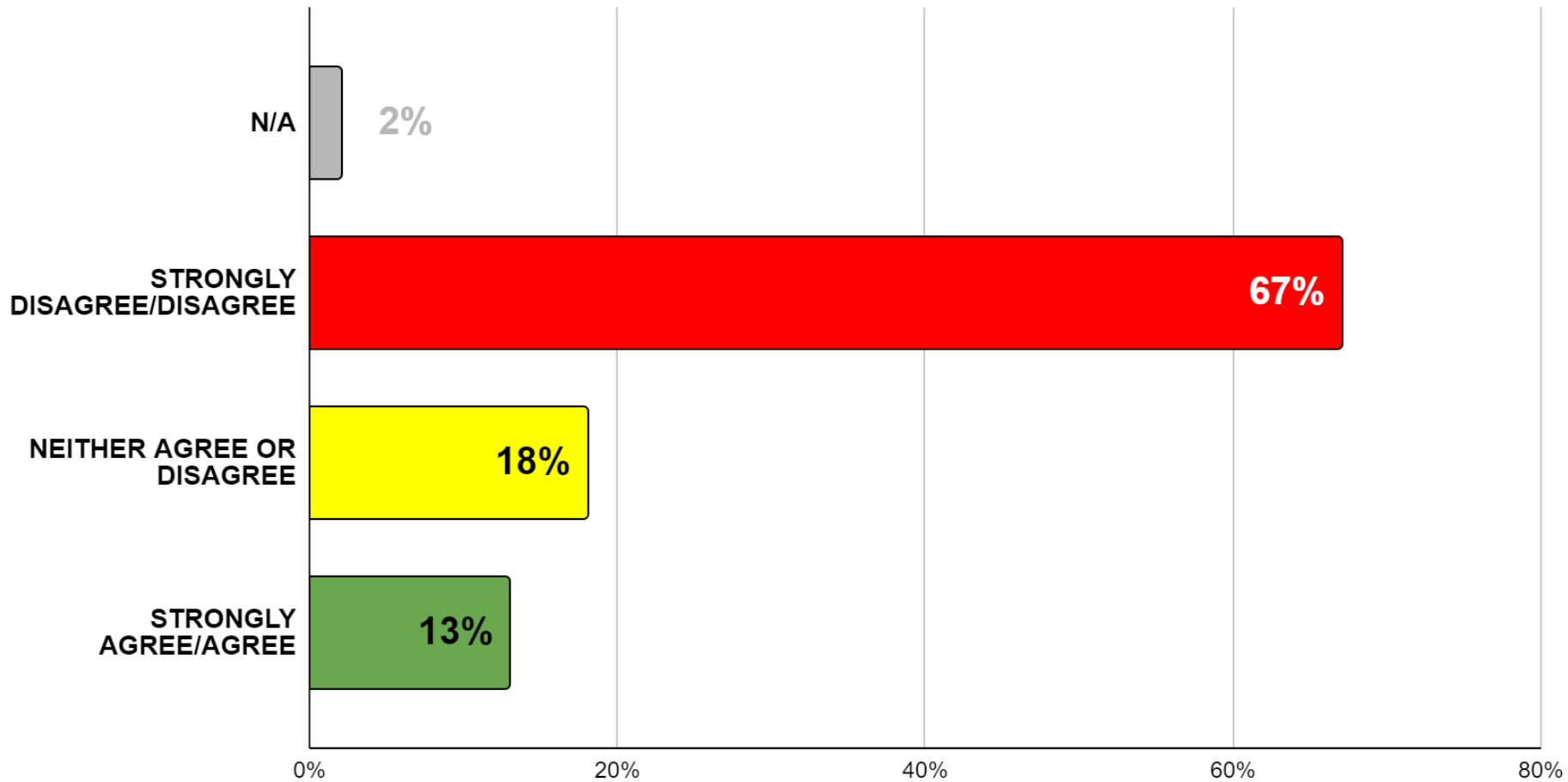
I feel supported by our district leadership.



I feel supported by the school district with student discipline.



I feel valued by district leadership for my contributions to the district's success.

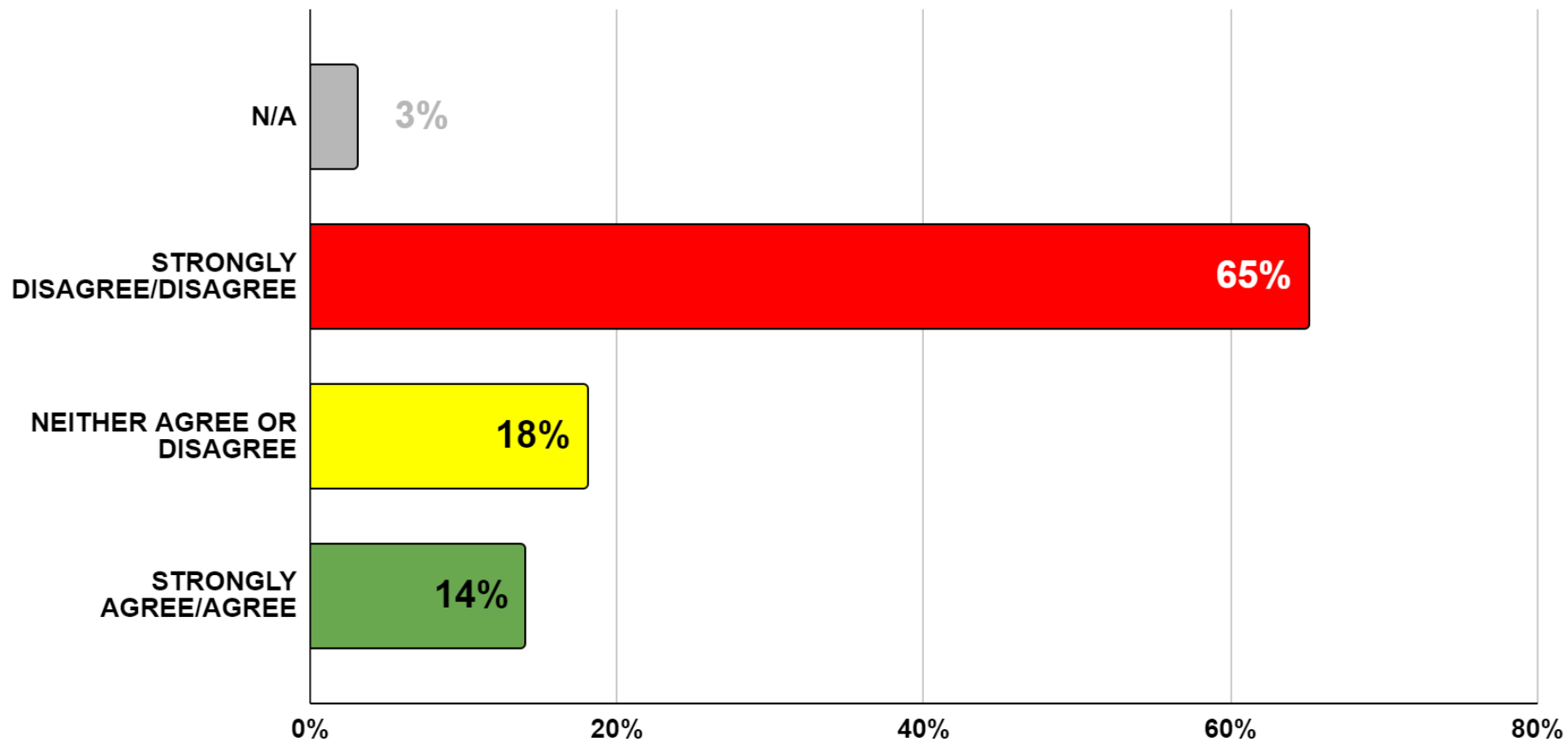


District Leadership

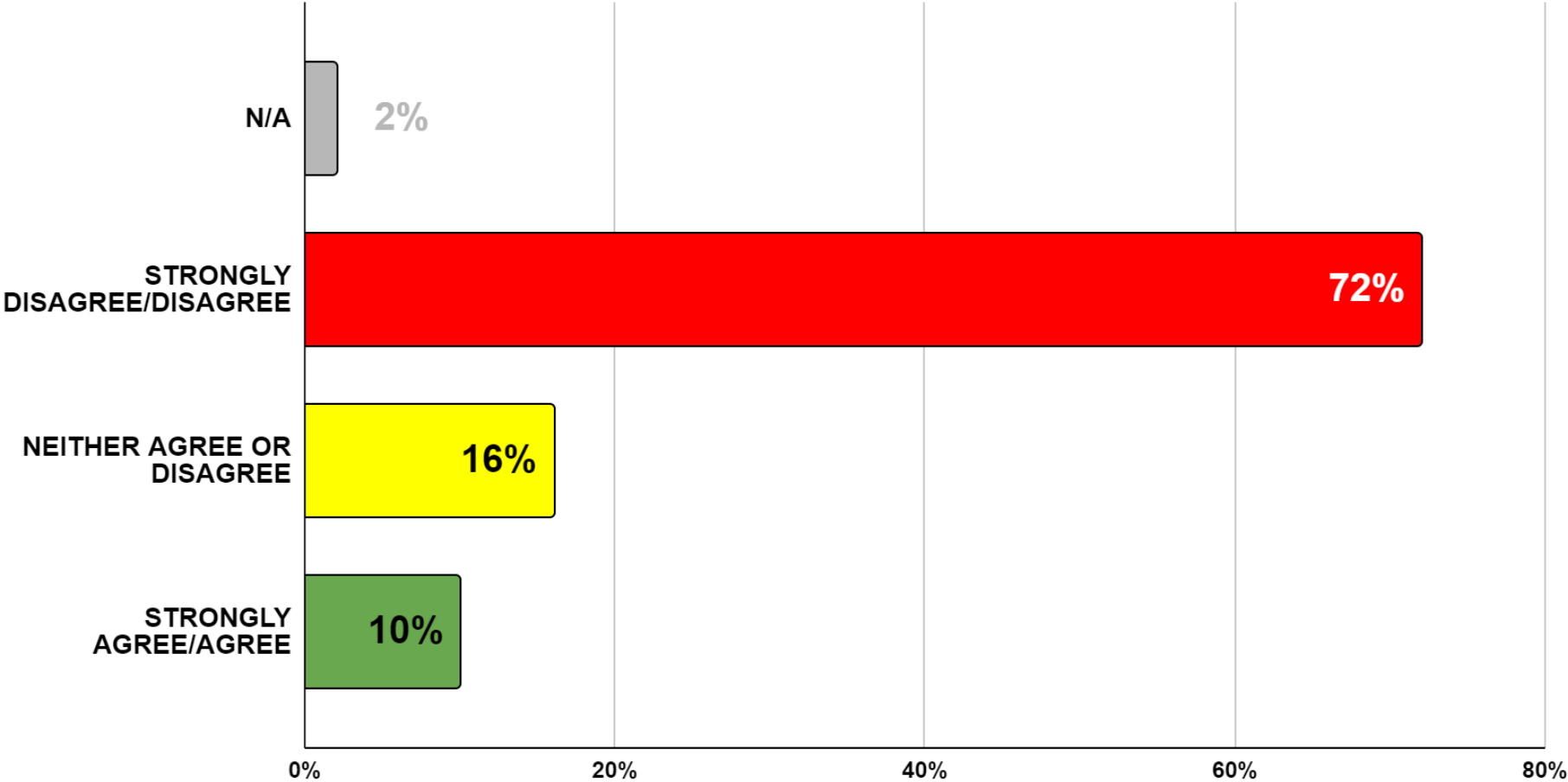
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Question	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the leadership provided by our district.	2%	45%	25%	16%	9%	3%
My responsibilities as a staff member are manageable.	1%	19%	22%	22%	28%	8%
I am comfortable raising issues and concerns regarding district policies, procedures, and curriculum that are important to me without fear of retaliation.	3%	41%	24%	18%	10%	4%
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this district.	2%	48%	24%	16%	8%	2%
I am asked for my professional opinion when it comes to my professional development needs.	3%	26%	22%	21%	23%	5%
I am asked for my professional opinion when it comes to student discipline procedures.	8%	37%	24%	18%	10%	3%

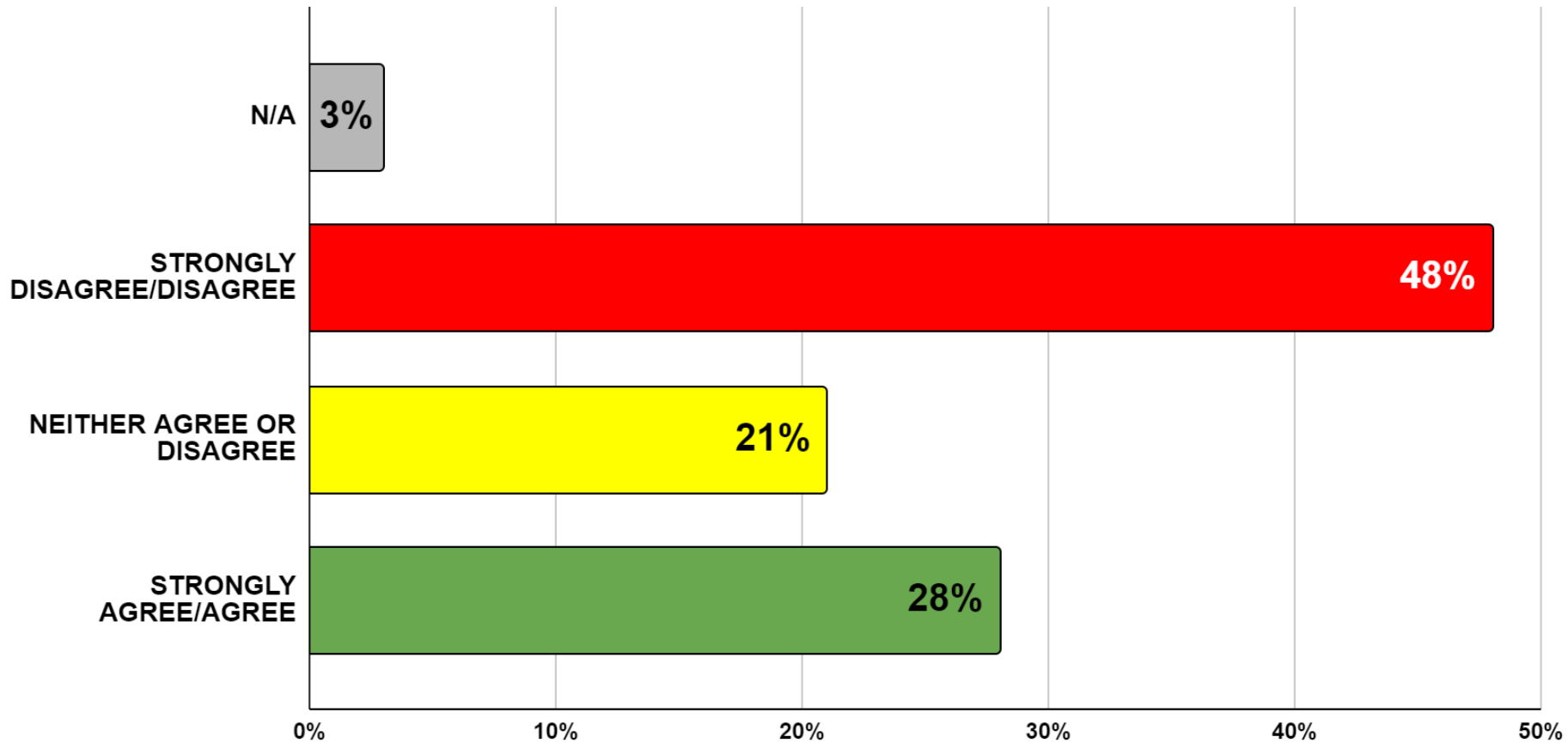
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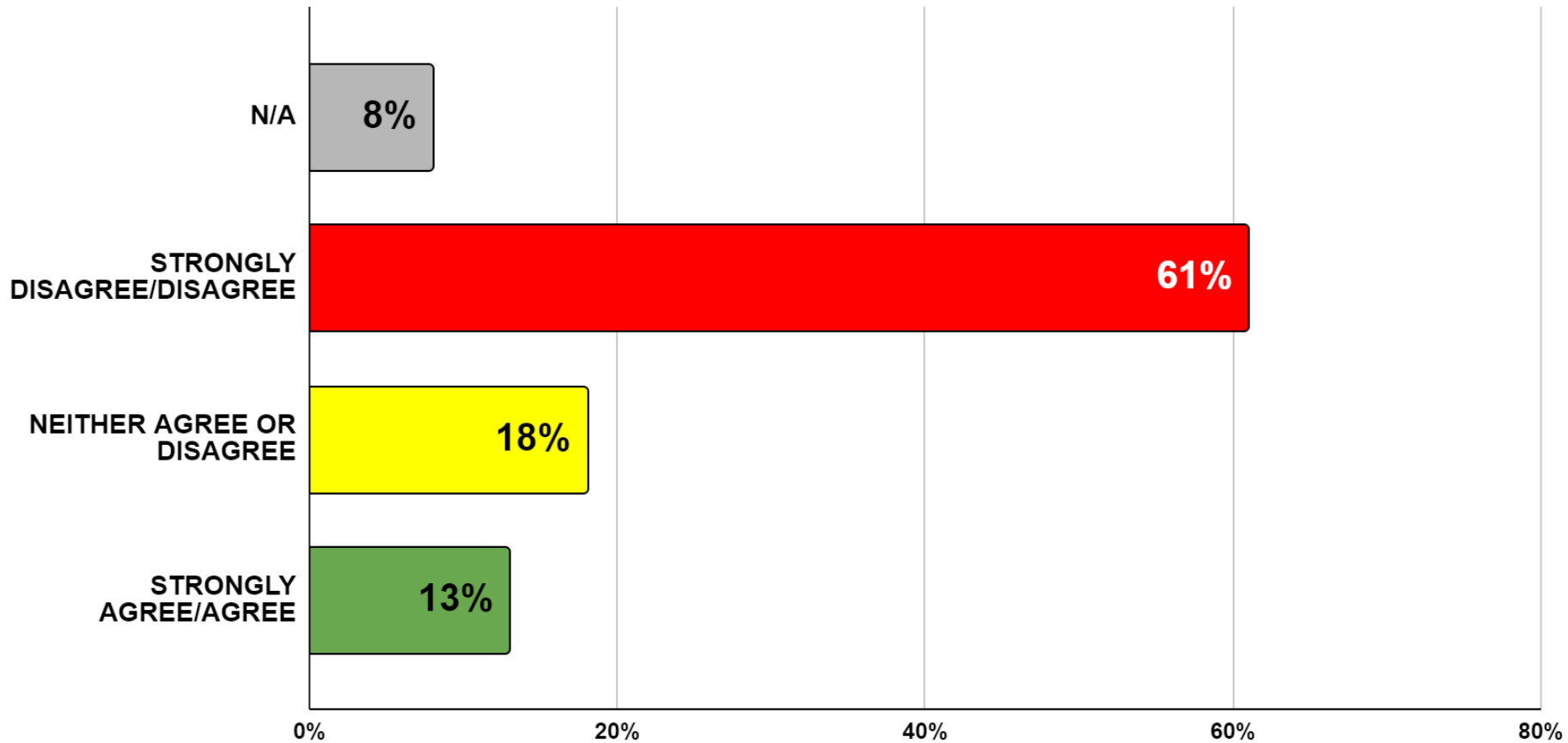
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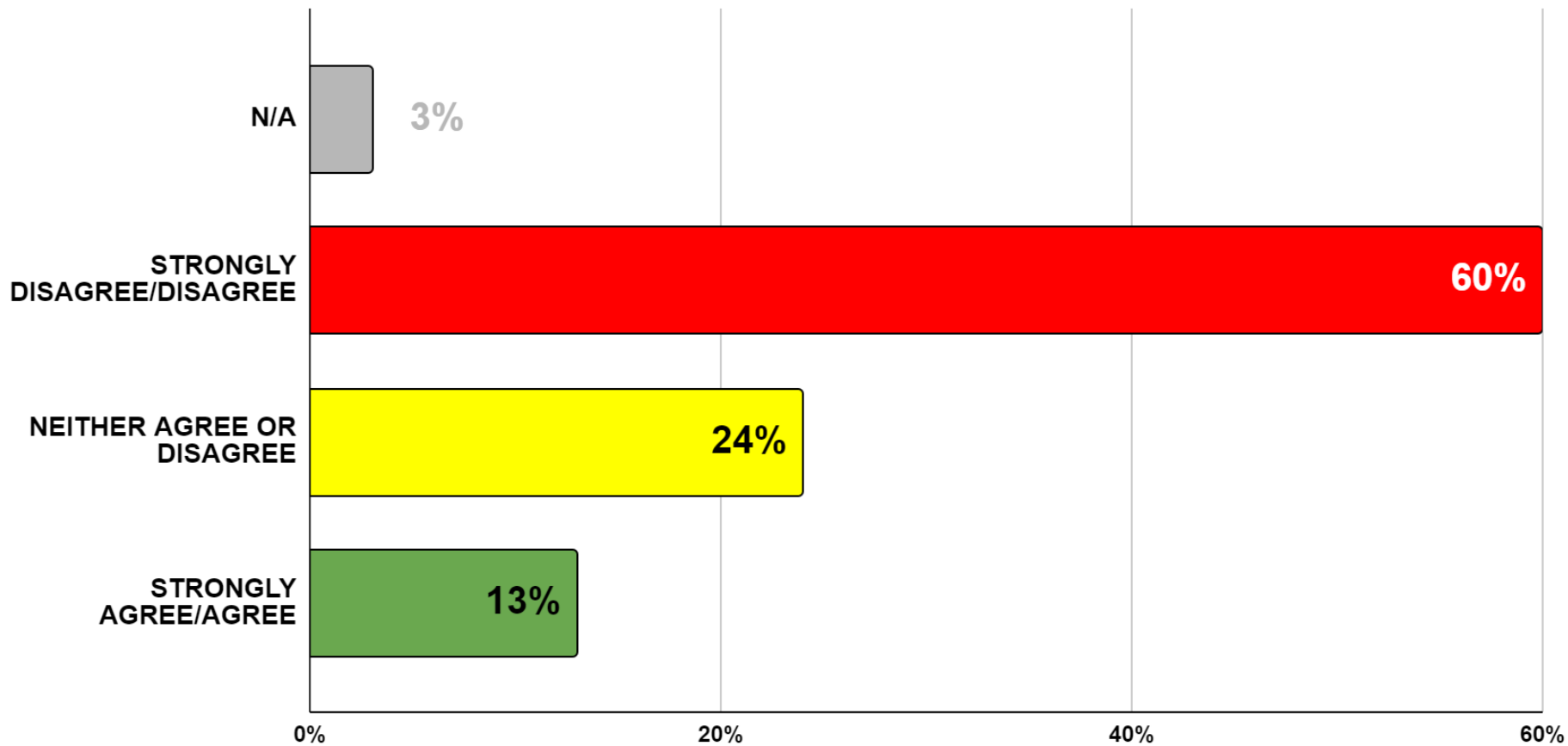


District Leadership

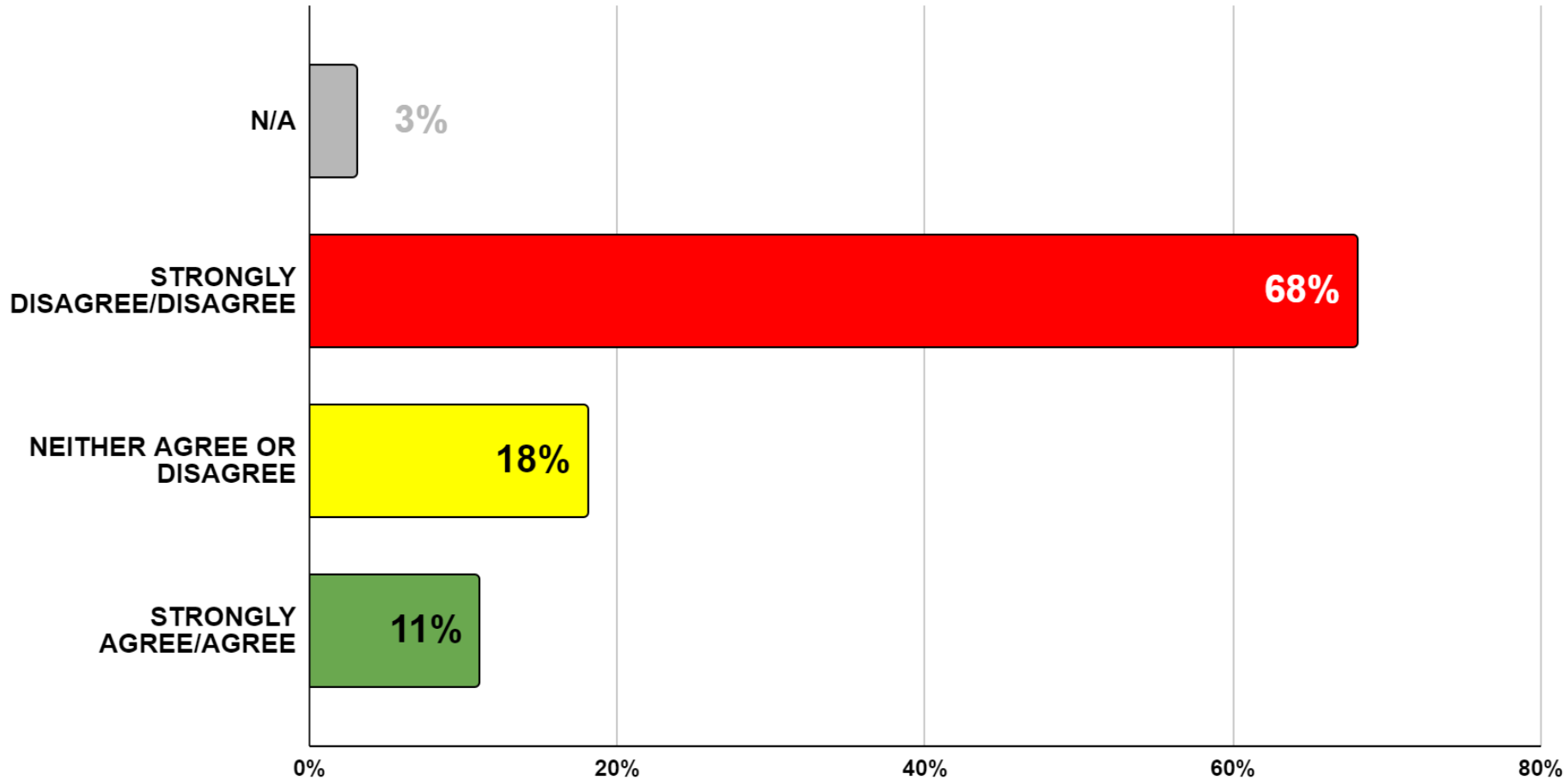
N/A = Not Applicable, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Question	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
My classes are created such that the students and I will be set up for success.	12%	18%	22%	24%	19%	5%
District leadership communicates clearly and consistently with staff and school administrators.	3%	33%	27%	24%	11%	2%
Overall, my district is a good place to work and learn.	2%	18%	26%	30%	21%	3%
District leadership is effective in fostering a positive work culture for our district.	3%	40%	28%	18%	9%	2%
District leadership demonstrates a commitment to professional development and growth opportunities for staff.	4%	19%	24%	28%	21%	4%
The district's hiring practices are fair.	10%	13%	12%	35%	24%	6%

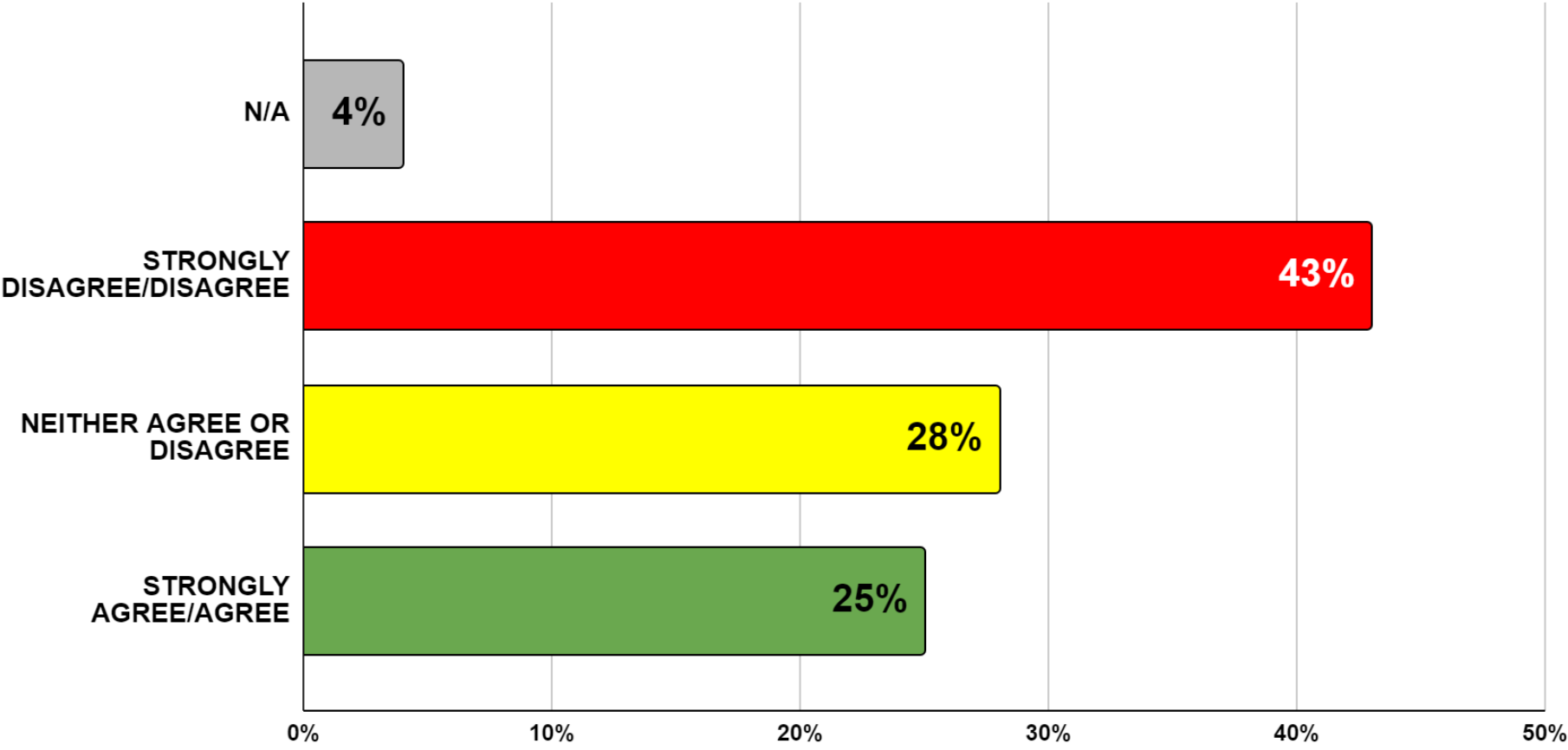
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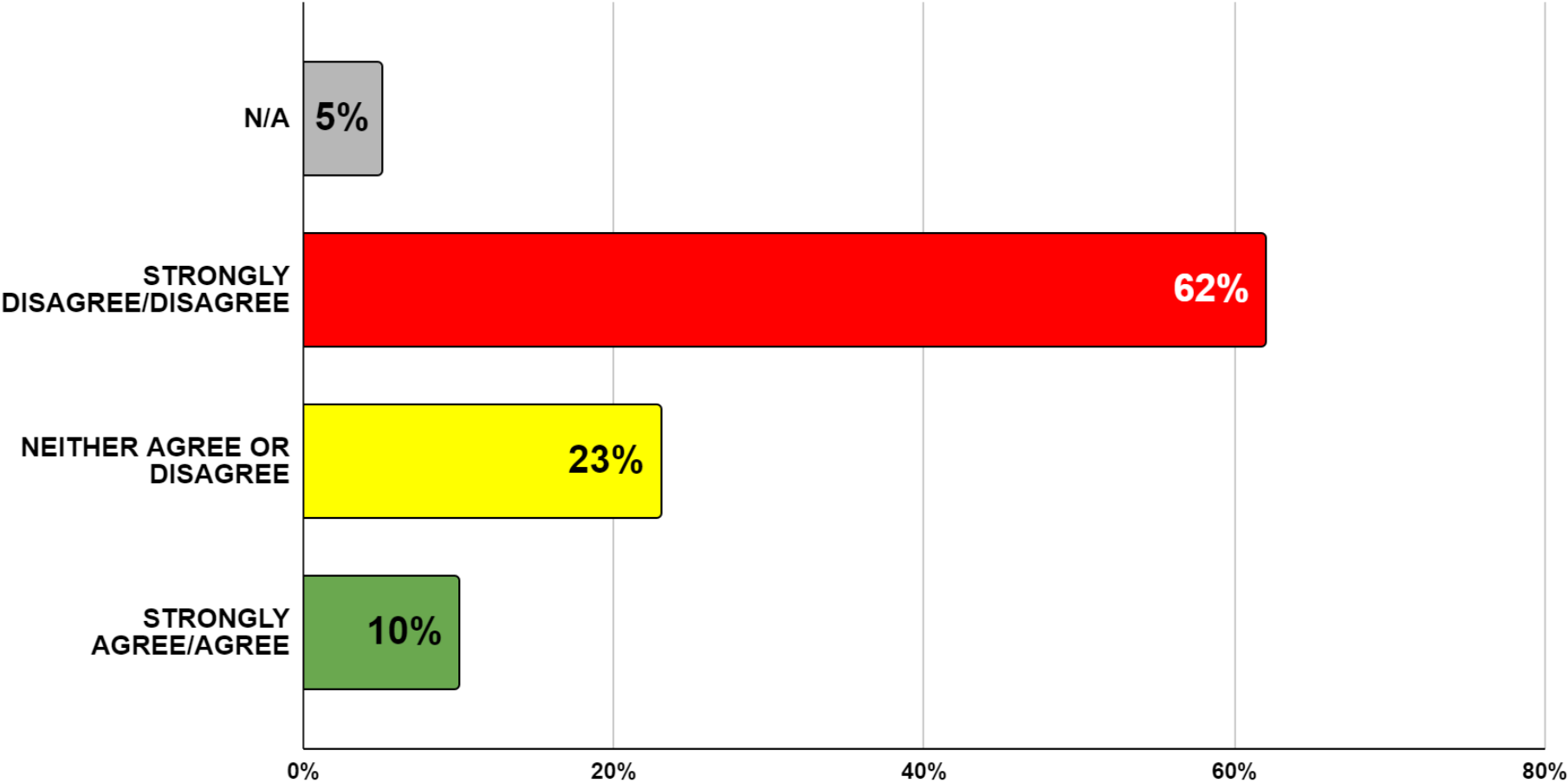


District Leadership

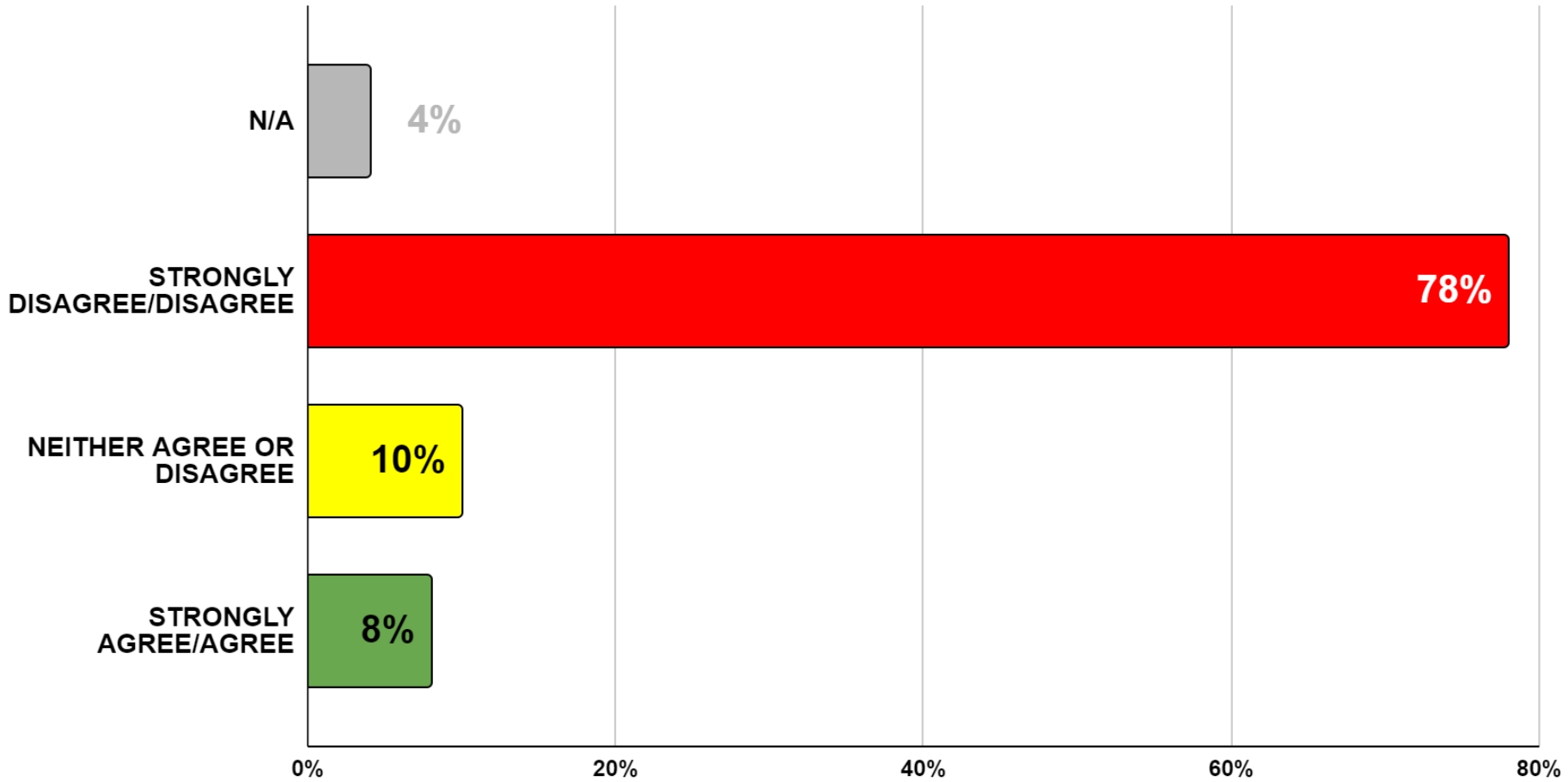
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Question	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
The district's educational expenditures are transparent.	5%	37%	25%	23%	8%	2%
District leadership are aware of what goes on in the classrooms.	4%	58%	20%	10%	6%	2%
District leadership actively seeks, and values input from staff at all levels.	4%	53%	23%	12%	6%	2%
The district tagline "Start Here. Grow Here," is a realistic expectation for me.	7%	25%	19%	28%	17%	4%
District leadership effectively communicates the district's vision, goals, and expectations to staff members.	3%	26%	25%	27%	16%	3%

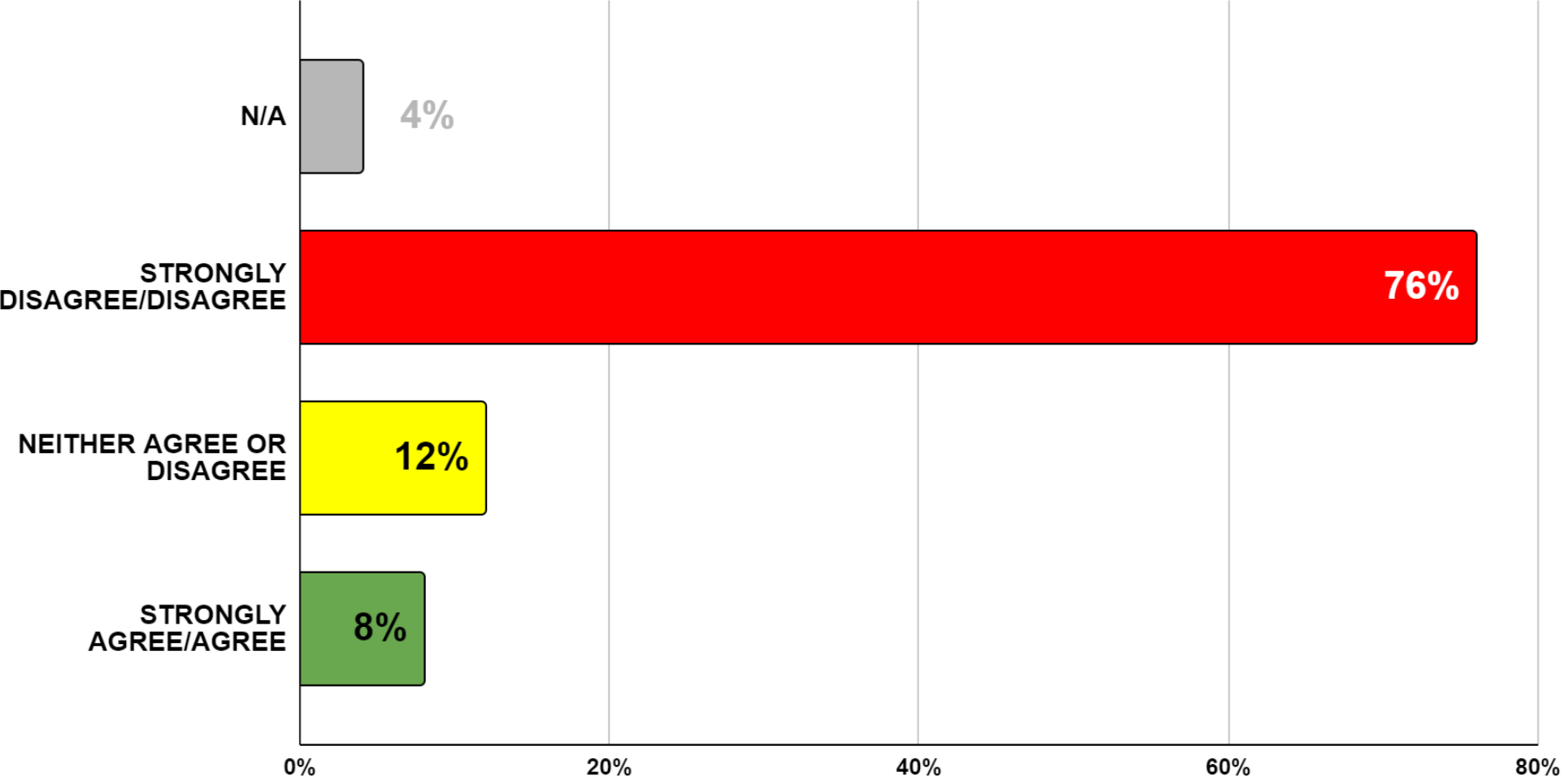
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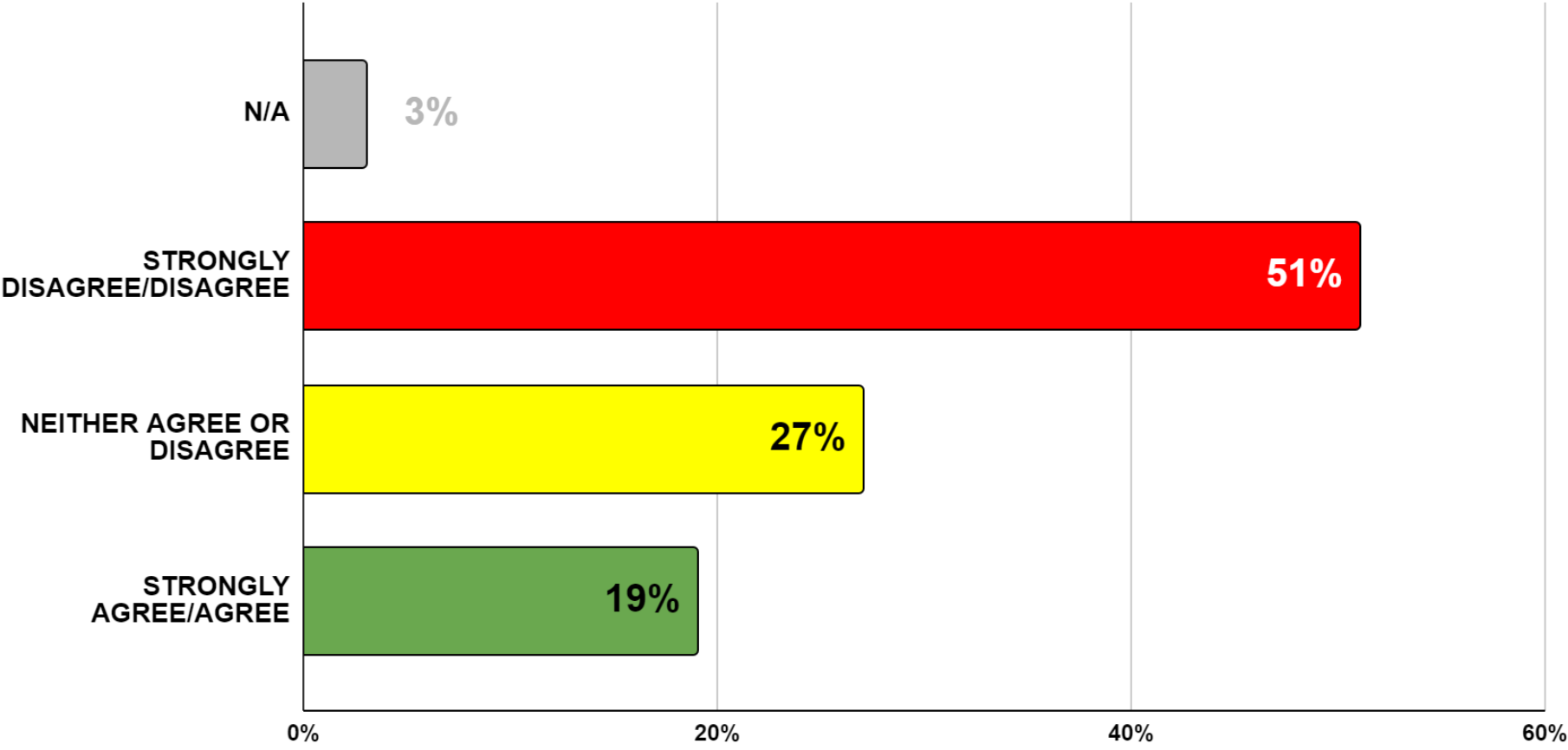
District leadership are aware of what goes on in the classrooms.



District leadership actively seeks, and values input from staff at all levels.



District leadership effectively communicates the district's vision, goals, and expectations to staff members.



District Leadership (590 comments)

Main Themes:

**out of touch, disconnect, lack of support, lack of respect
and not feeling valued**

Example Comments:

“A pervasive atmosphere of distrust of professional skills has been here since this administration began...”

“There are several policies from central office that are poor for students and staff: policy 3400 academic contracts should be eliminated immediately. It undermines teachers and the goal of accountability and academic expectations. There should also be a cap on the number of credits achieved through online "credit recovery". There needs to be a real attendance policy as well. Students should not be able to have 30-50 absences excused for no good reason at all with a parent note. That is ridiculous. Though laudable, 95% graduation is not realistic. We are graduating kids that are at an elementary level and don't bother to come to school.”

District Leadership (590 comments)

Main Themes:

out of touch, disconnect, lack of support, lack of respect and not feeling valued

“The lead teachers (Math, ELA, ML, AIG, & Specials) in the district are very present in schools, instructional practices, and make a positive impact with students and staff.”

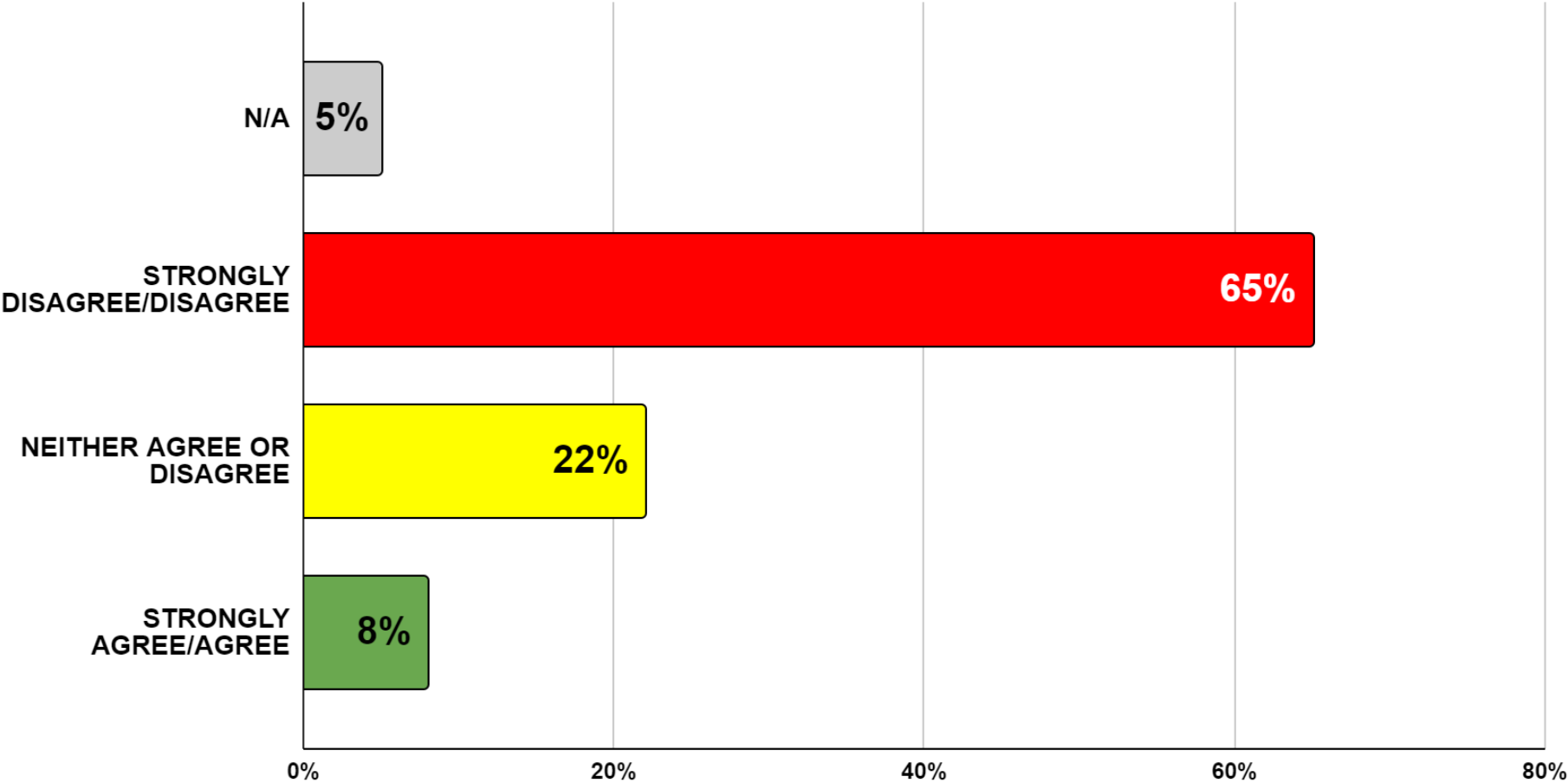
“I have worked in the district for 24 years and I feel the least valued, trusted, and supported this year by our superintendent and instructional leadership than I ever have. Our superintendent seems to show up for the camera but isn't here with us knowing what we face every day in the high schools yet puts more and more on our plates while taking away more and more from our resources and supports. We are not valued for our instructional decisions, and we may be "surveyed" on issues, but all know that is to check a box.”

Board of Education

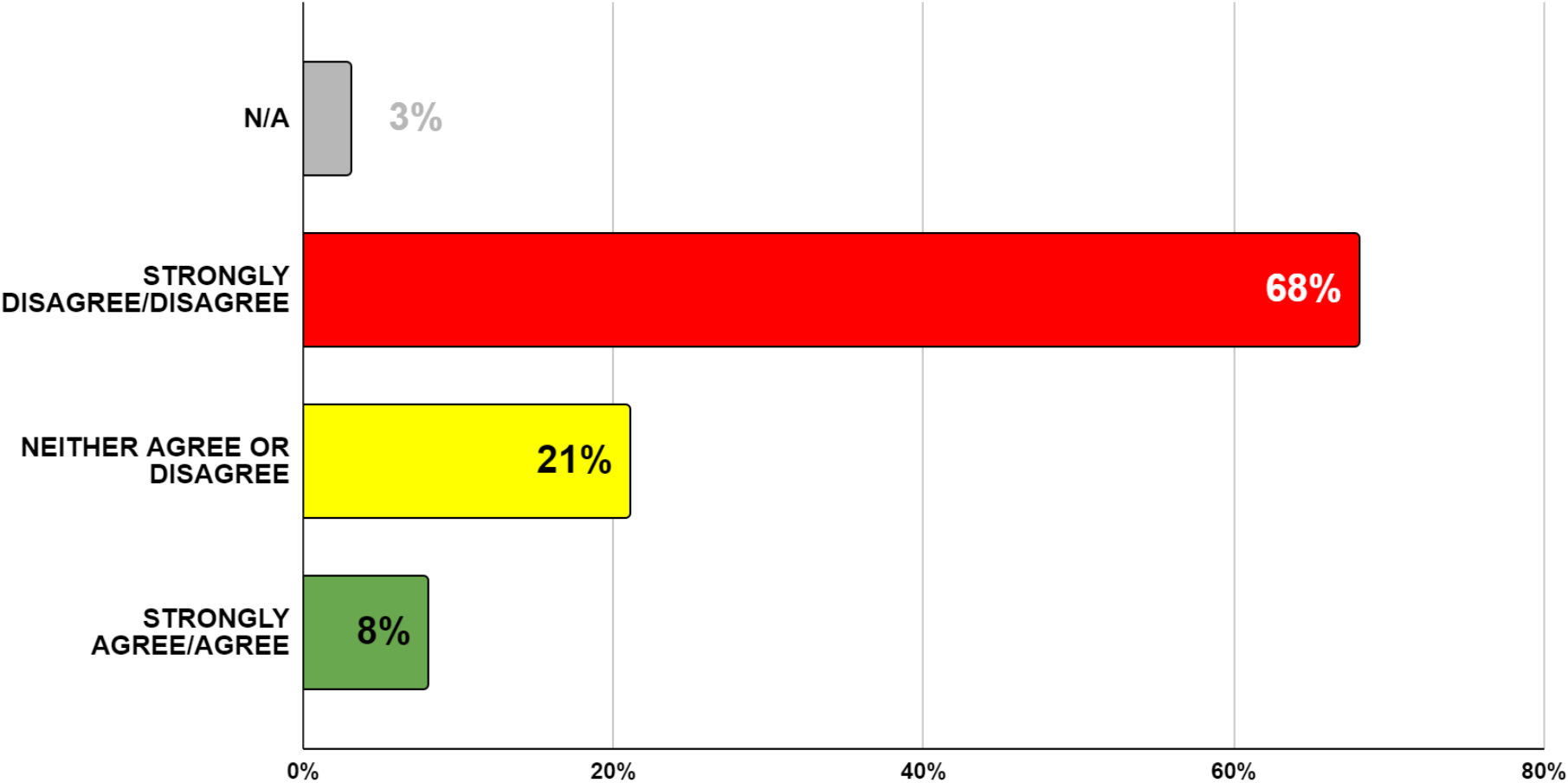
N/A = Not Applicable, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Question	N/A	1	2	3	4	5
The BoE values my expertise as an education professional.	5%	44%	21%	22%	7%	1%
The BoE positively impacts my work and the climate of my school.	3%	44%	24%	21%	6%	2%
The BoE is in touch with the realities and challenges that teachers and public schools face.	2%	58%	22%	11%	5%	2%
The BoE works effectively to improve public schools in NHC.	2%	46%	23%	19%	8%	2%
The BoE adopts policies that are inclusive of all children.	4%	48%	17%	19%	10%	2%
The BoE works to create a positive educational climate to attract and retain teachers.	3%	52%	22%	16%	6%	1%
I feel supported with student discipline by the BoE.	9%	46%	17%	22%	5%	1%

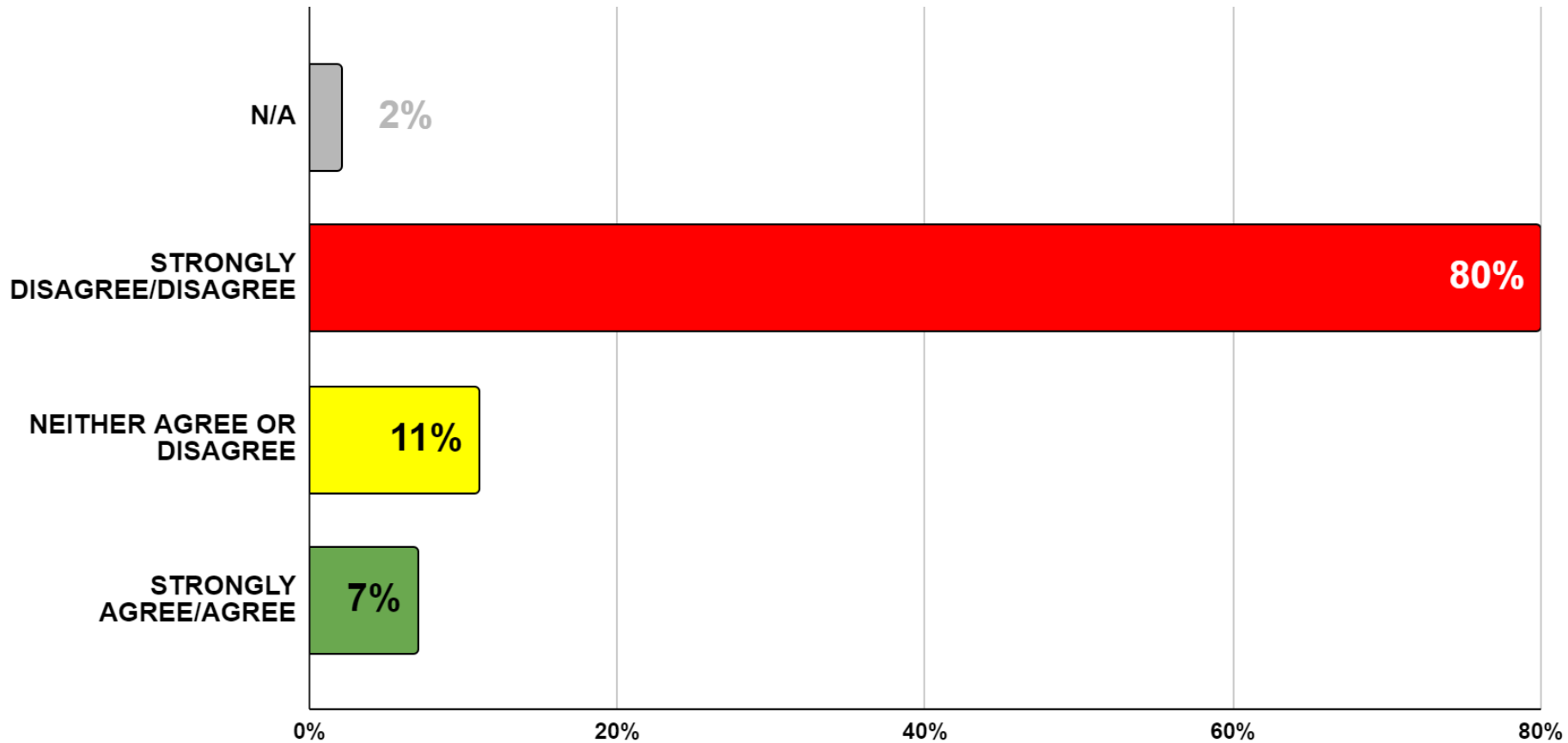
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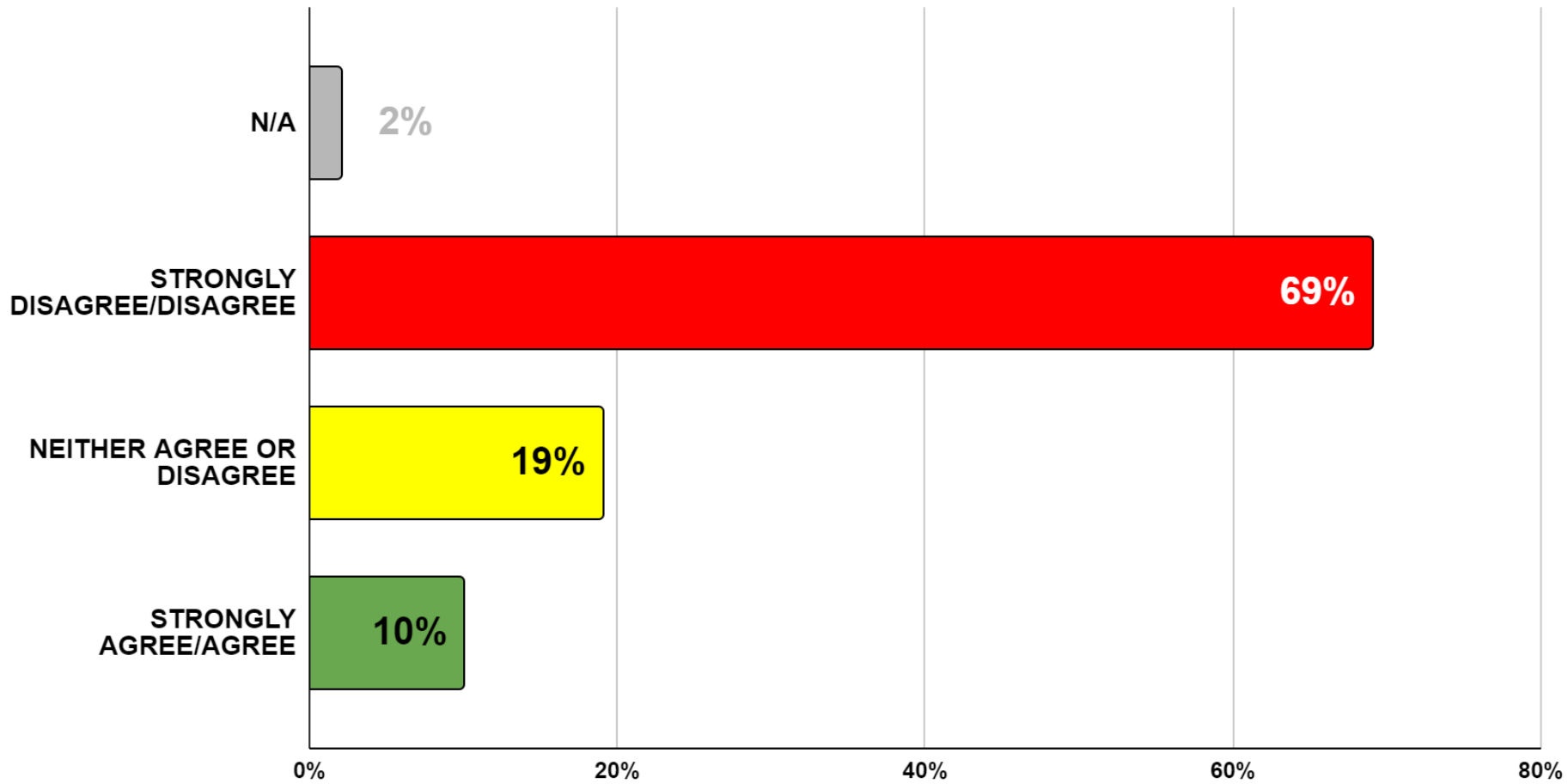
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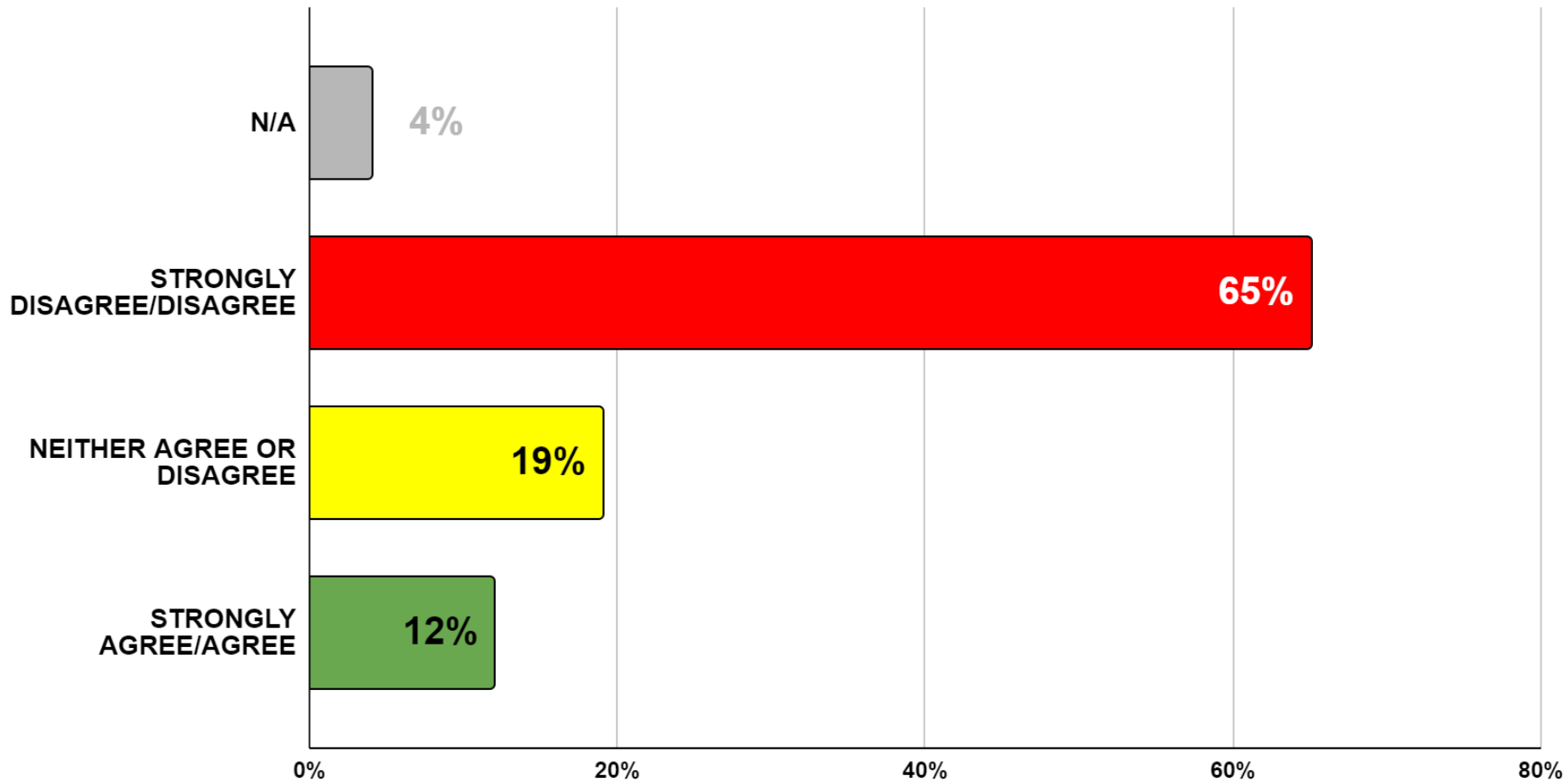
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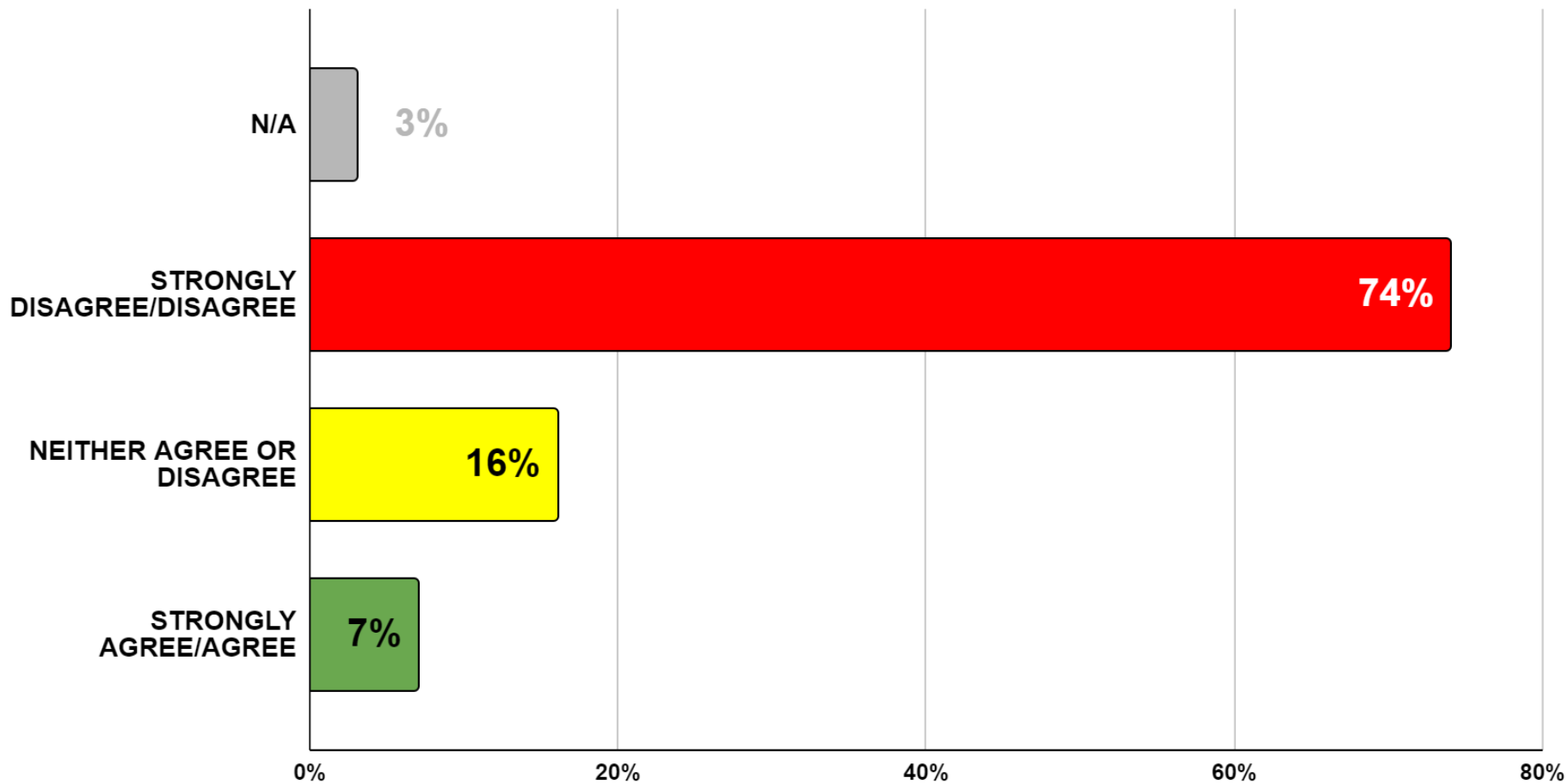
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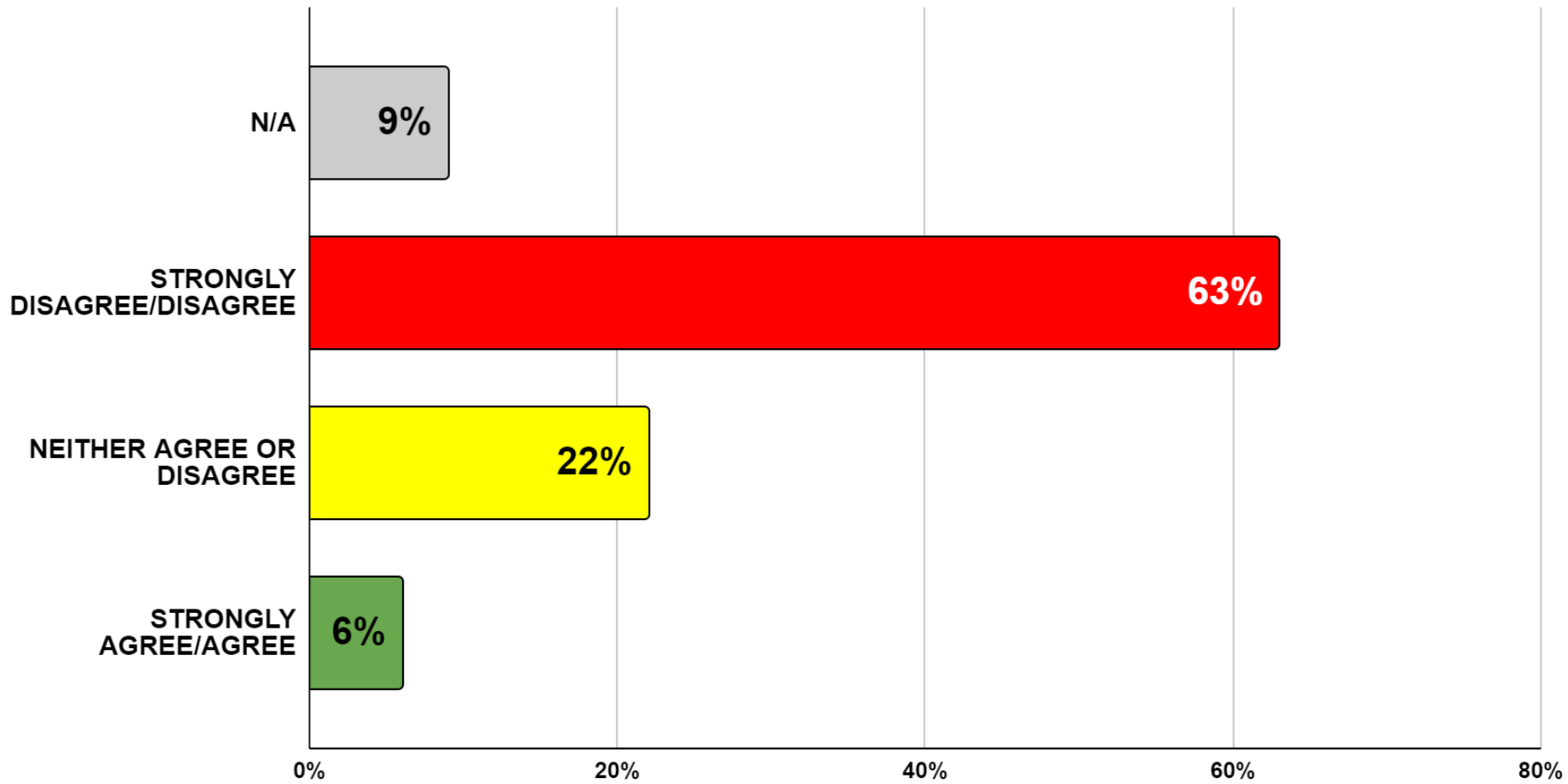
The BoE adopts policies that are inclusive of all children.



The BoE works to create a positive educational climate to attract and retain teachers.



I feel supported with student discipline by the BoE.



Board of Education (525 comments)

Main Themes:

**leave the politics out, attend to major educational issues,
support educators, out of touch, include all students**

Example Comments:

“The BoE has no respect for teachers’ professional knowledge, best practices, or student inclusivity. I am leaving the district and going to work in another because of the board of education policies.”

“Ask teachers!!! There are so many policies that just don't make sense, but no one asks how these things might logistically look in a school. Teachers have the experience in the know how if we could be involved in the decision making at all.”

Board of Education (525 comments)

Main Themes:

**leave the politics out, attend to major educational issues,
support educators, out of touch, include all students**

“Often, it feels that the board is very disconnected from what is actually going on in the classroom. They are passing bills saying that they are looking out for what is best for the students, but they don't know anything about the students or a classroom in 2024. They are focusing on banning books in our classrooms and limiting what we put up on the wall while our main issues are phone use, tardiness, skipping, behavior referrals, student apathy, etc. These topics are not being addressed and so students are continuing to slip through the cracks with no repercussions or support.”

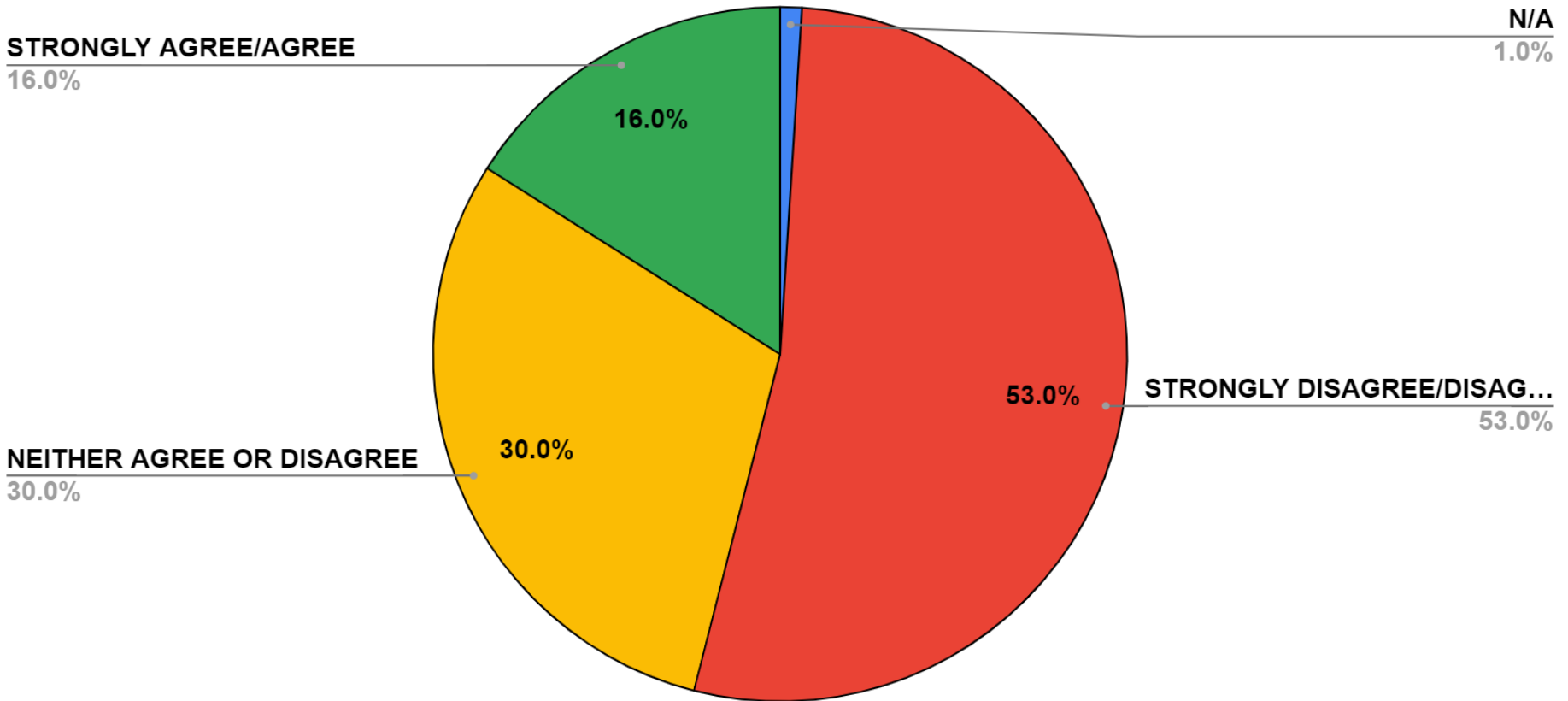
“I wish the board was more functional and listened to teachers more. This survey is very much appreciated because it is the first time in almost 2 decades that I have been asked my opinion by the BOE.”

The BoE plays a significant role in helping the district achieve its mission:

“to provide a superior education in a safe and positive learning environment where students are prepared with the skills to succeed.”

Answer	%	Count
Strongly Disagree	20.97%	303
Disagree	32.18%	465
Neither Agree/Disagree	29.83%	431
Agree	12.66%	183
Strongly Agree	3.32%	48
N/A	1.04%	15
Total	100%	1445

The BoE plays a significant role in helping the district achieve its mission: “to provide a superior education in a safe and positive learning environment where students are prepared with the skills to succeed.”



If you don't feel supported, how can the BOE help support with student discipline? (655 comments)

Main Themes:

Need for consequences, listen to teachers, spend time in schools, create consistent policies

Example Comments

“Currently, “our hands are tied” (by the district) seems to be the feeling at the school level in regard to lack of consequences for toxic student behaviors. There is not nearly enough staff or time to manage behavior in the way the district expects and there are no options when it comes to discipline and the intense behavioral needs of students. It takes a mountain of time and documentation to have a student temporarily moved to an alternative setting. There is a huge lack of accountability when it comes to student behavior and this is having a severely negative impact on the culture of our schools and the majority of our students.”

If you don't feel supported, how can the BOE help support with student discipline? (655 comments)

Main Themes:

Need for consequences, listen to teachers, spend time in schools, create consistent policies

“We need to regain control of our learning environment, there is nothing inviting about it. First, ban cell phones. Teachers cannot compete with them and they are also used to set up vicious attacks, then videoed and sent schoolwide in a matter of minutes. Second, make [it the] 10 day absence and not receive credit, REAL. Students (and parents) know that we won't hold up that end of the bargain. Third, bring back vocational options so the students that are uninterested in a traditional classroom setting and bored/disruptive have options. Last, we need more support in our classrooms. One teacher in certain types of classrooms is not enough to handle behavior issues.”

If you don't feel supported, how can the BOE help support with student discipline? (655 comments)

Main Themes:

Need for consequences, listen to teachers, spend time in schools, create consistent policies

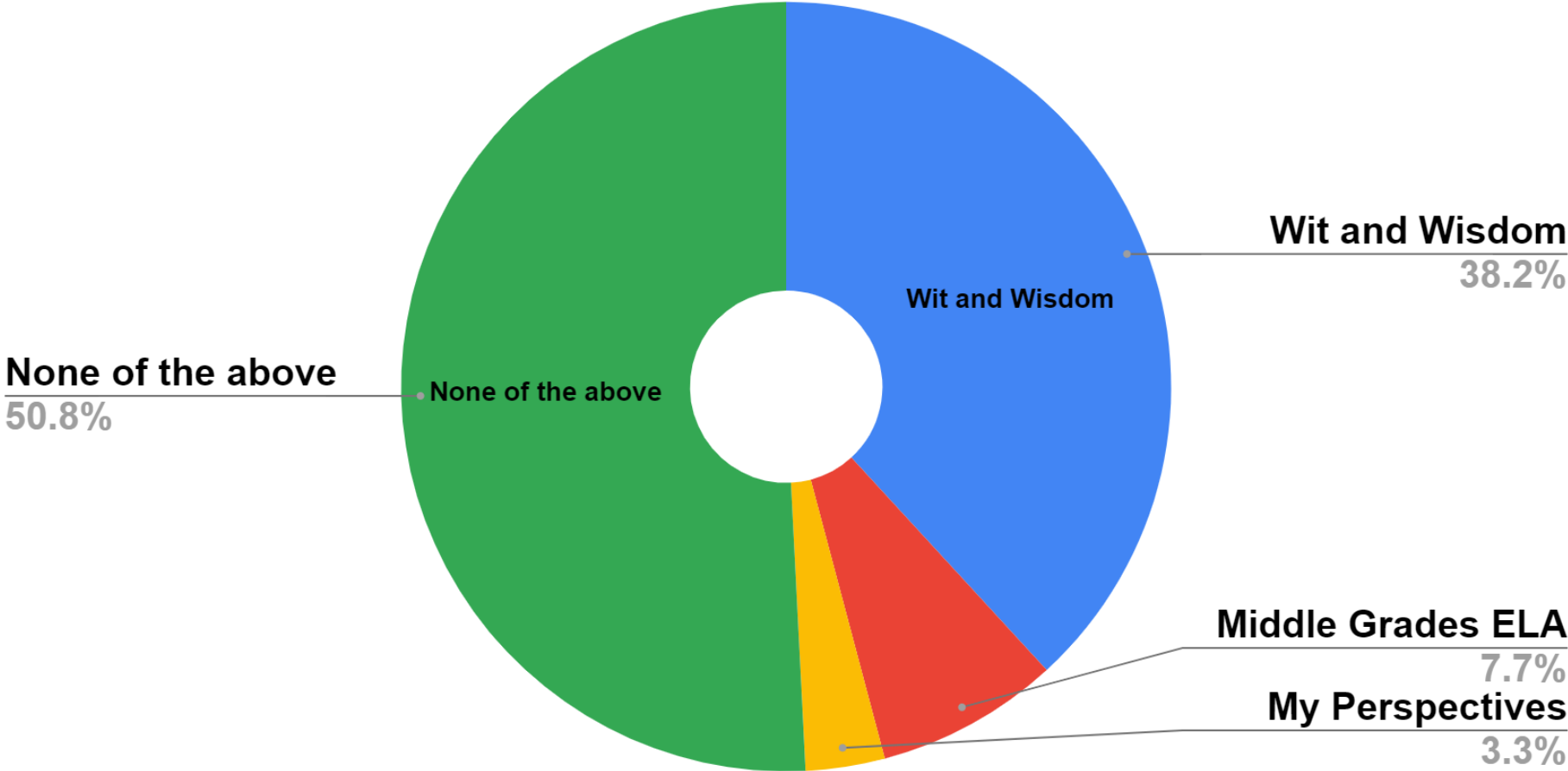
“Spend more time in our schools and see the student discipline issues that teachers are facing. Talk with teachers at individual schools with higher student discipline issues to see what they need and work together to come up with better solutions, understanding that all schools are going to be different.”

“Create more consistent policies for actually harmful behaviors like smoking/vaping, fighting, disruption of classroom spaces with aggression and violence, and work with the community to provide actual supports to students from underfunded communities to allow them to better focus on school.”

Please check the ELA Curriculum you are involved with.

Answer	%	Count
Wit and Wisdom	38.17%	550
Middle Grades ELA	7.70%	111
My Perspectives	3.33%	48
None of the above	50.80%	732
Total	100%	1441

ELA Curriculum

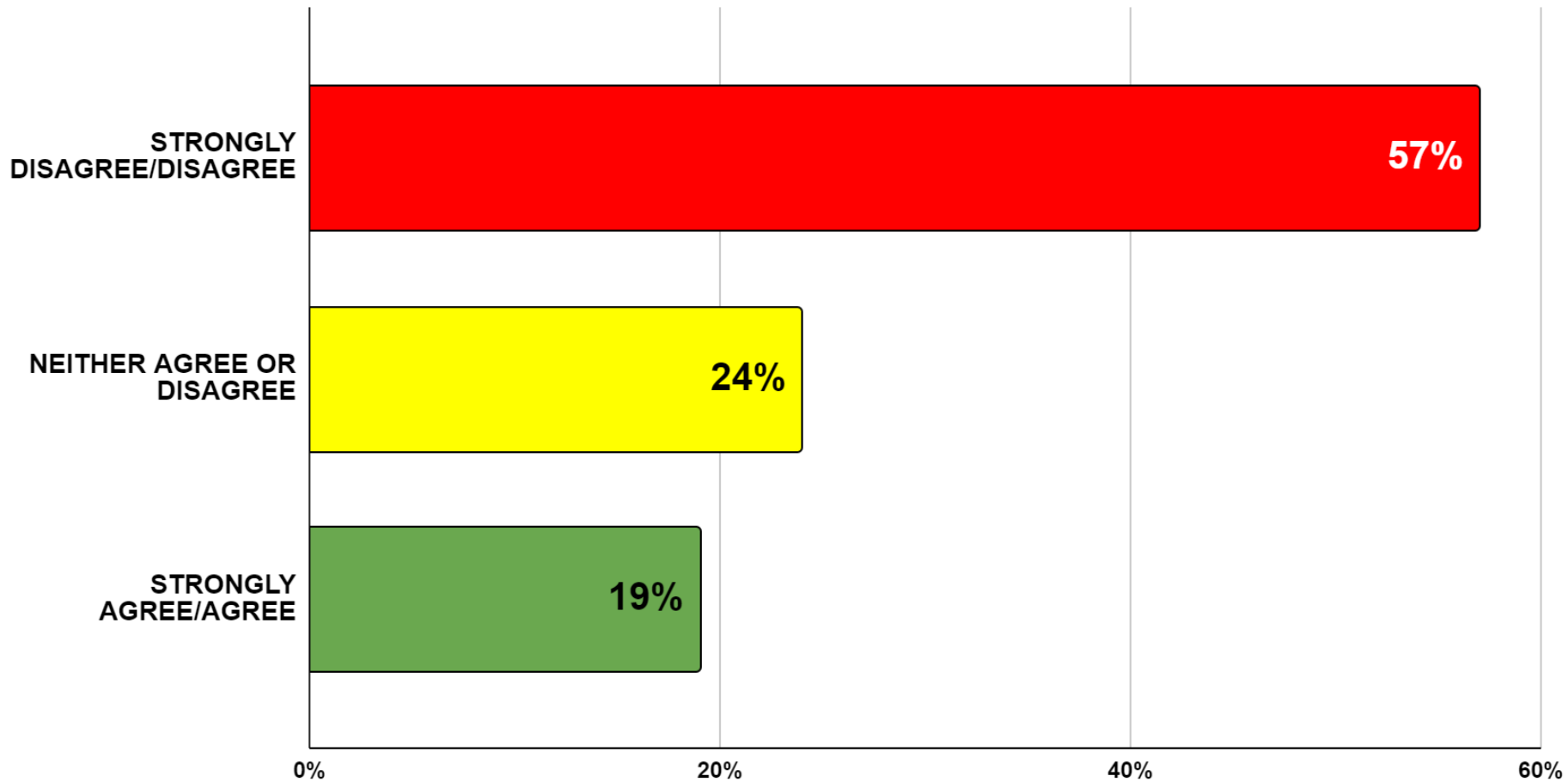


ELA - Percentage of respondents indicating extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

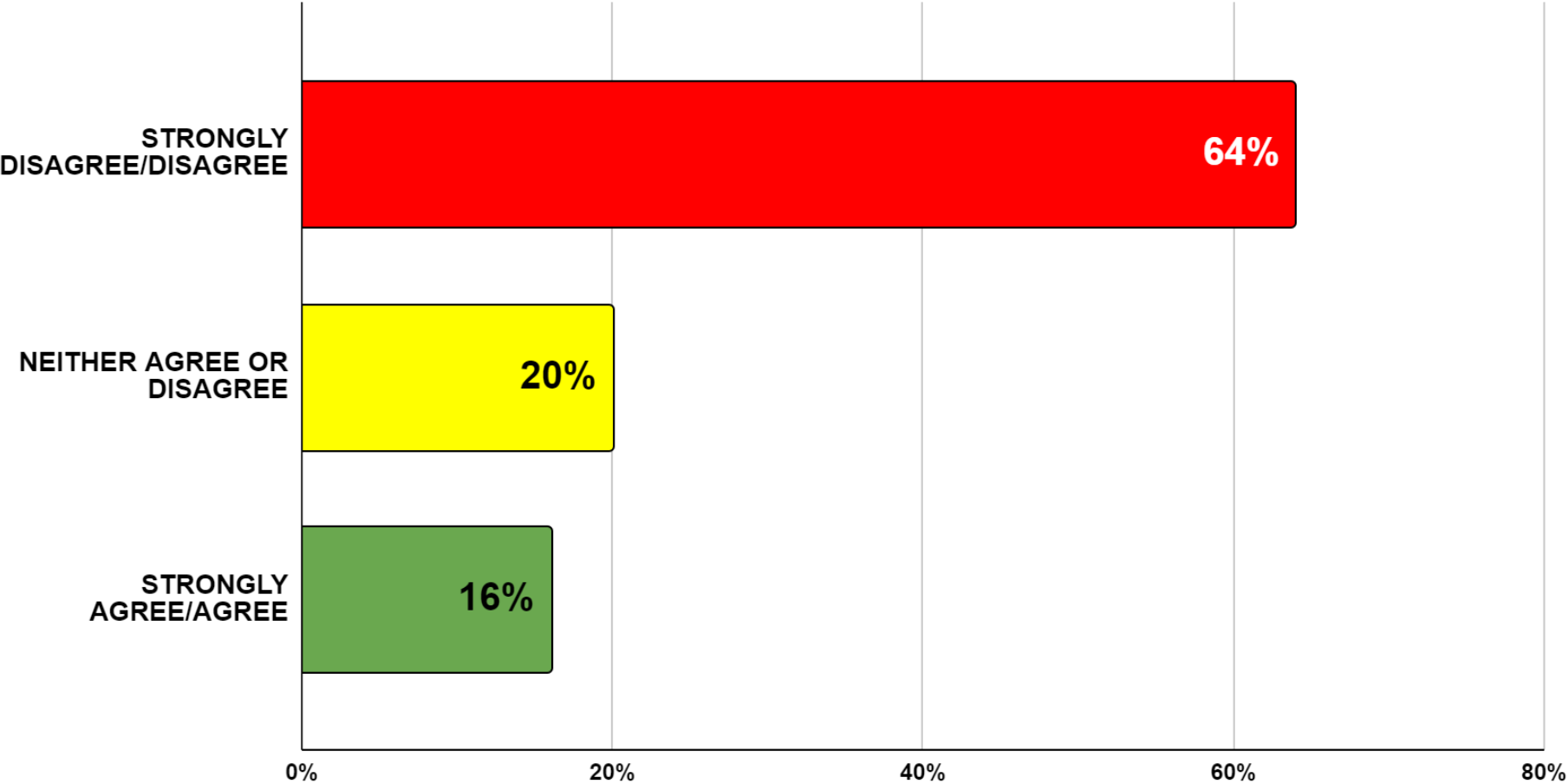
1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Question	1	2	3	4	5
The Curriculum aligns with the appropriate grade-level standards in the North Carolina State Standard Course of Study. (693)	16%	19%	23%	33%	8%
The Curriculum allows for teacher autonomy.	37%	28%	20%	13%	2%
The Curriculum has positively impacted my teaching.	28%	23%	27%	17%	5%
The Curriculum allows for experiential and hands-on learning experiences.	28%	29%	24%	16%	3%
The Curriculum is flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students.	36%	28%	20%	13%	3%
Teachers were involved in the selection process for this Curriculum, and their views were respected.	23%	19%	29%	21%	8%

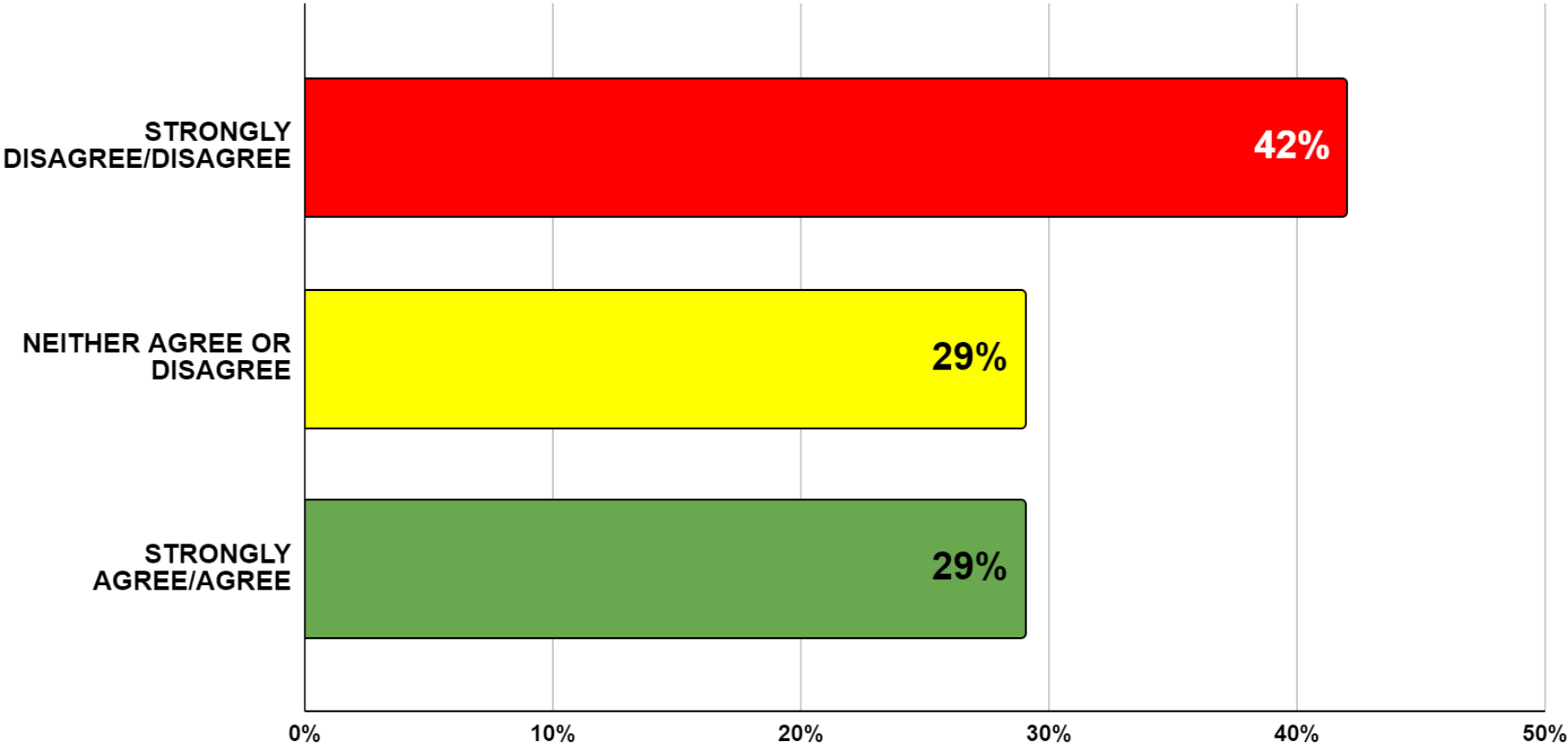
The Curriculum allows for experiential and hands-on learning experiences.



The Curriculum is flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students.



Teachers were involved in the selection process for this Curriculum, and their views were respected.



ELA Curriculum (395 comments)

Main Themes:

Teacher Frustration Over Curriculum Selection Process, Curriculum Appropriateness, Teacher Autonomy and Flexibility, Engagement and Interest, Alignment with Standards, Implementation and Support, Cultural Relevance and Sensitivity

1. Teacher Frustration Over Curriculum Selection Process:

Teachers are frustrated by their lack of input in curriculum selection. Initially favoring McGraw-Hill's Wonders curriculum, they were forced to choose between two less preferred options when Wonders was removed. Despite this, the central office selected the Wit and Wisdom curriculum, misrepresenting it as the teachers' choice to the Board of Education, which contradicts survey results. This has left teachers feeling manipulated and disrespected.

2. Curriculum Appropriateness:

A significant number of teachers feel that the Wit and Wisdom curriculum is not developmentally appropriate for younger students. They find the content too advanced and unsuitable for the attention spans and comprehension levels of early elementary students. K-2 teachers are particularly frustrated because the curriculum focuses on building knowledge rather than teaching reading skills. As a result, it does not support their goal of teaching students how to read, leaving them feeling unable to meet the foundational reading needs of their students effectively.

ELA Curriculum (395 comments)

Main Themes:

Teacher Frustration Over Curriculum Selection Process, Curriculum Appropriateness, Teacher Autonomy and Flexibility, Engagement and Interest, Alignment with Standards, Implementation and Support, Cultural Relevance and Sensitivity

3. Teacher Autonomy and Flexibility:

Teachers feel that the curriculum severely restricts their autonomy and flexibility. They express a need to adapt lessons to meet the diverse needs of their students but feel constrained by the requirement to follow the curriculum strictly. This limitation hinders their ability to exercise professional judgment and creativity in their teaching.

4. Engagement and Interest:

The curriculum is often described as boring and unengaging by both teachers and students. Teachers report that the lessons are lengthy and repetitive, which leads to students losing interest and disengaging from the material.

5. Alignment with Standards:

There is concern about the alignment of the curriculum with state standards. Some teachers feel that the curriculum does not adequately cover all necessary standards and requires significant supplementation to meet educational requirements.

ELA Curriculum (395 comments)

Main Themes:

Teacher Frustration Over Curriculum Selection Process, Curriculum Appropriateness, Teacher Autonomy and Flexibility, Engagement and Interest, Alignment with Standards, Implementation and Support, Cultural Relevance and Sensitivity

6. Implementation and Support:

The implementation process has been challenging, with many teachers feeling that they did not receive adequate training and support. There is also frustration with the workbooks included, as they do not align with the materials needed for the lessons. Teachers are forced to use their own copies to print necessary sheets from the curriculum website. Teachers are frustrated by restrictions on using their professional judgment on how best to present the curriculum.

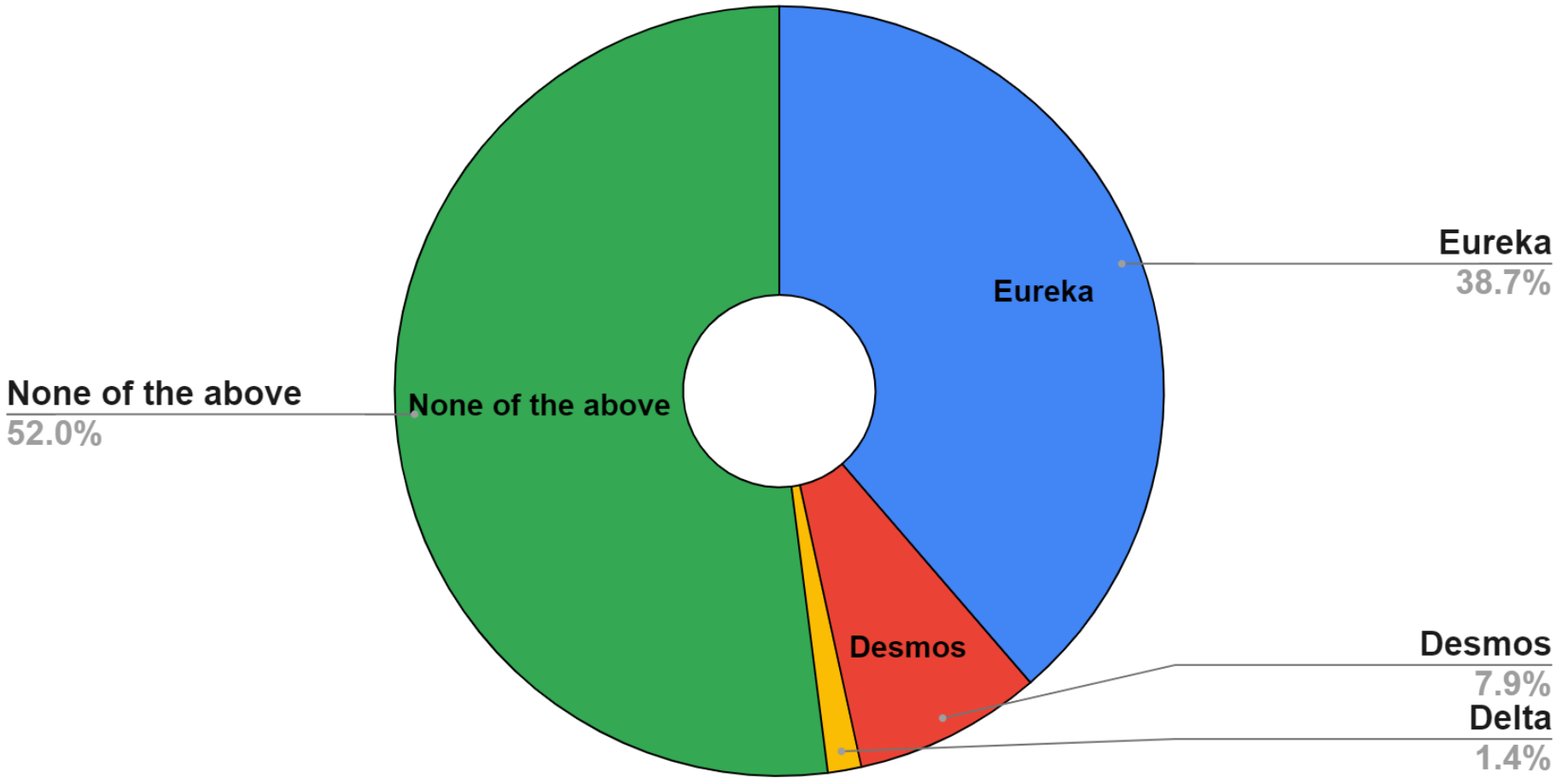
7. Cultural Relevance and Sensitivity:

Some teachers noted that the curriculum includes content that is culturally insensitive or inappropriate for the grade level. They also mentioned a lack of diversity in the materials, which does not reflect the backgrounds and experiences of all students.

Please check the Math Curriculum you are involved with.

Answer	%	Count
Eureka	38.67%	548
Desmos	7.90%	112
Delta	1.41%	20
None of the above	52.01%	737
Total	100%	1417

Math Curriculum



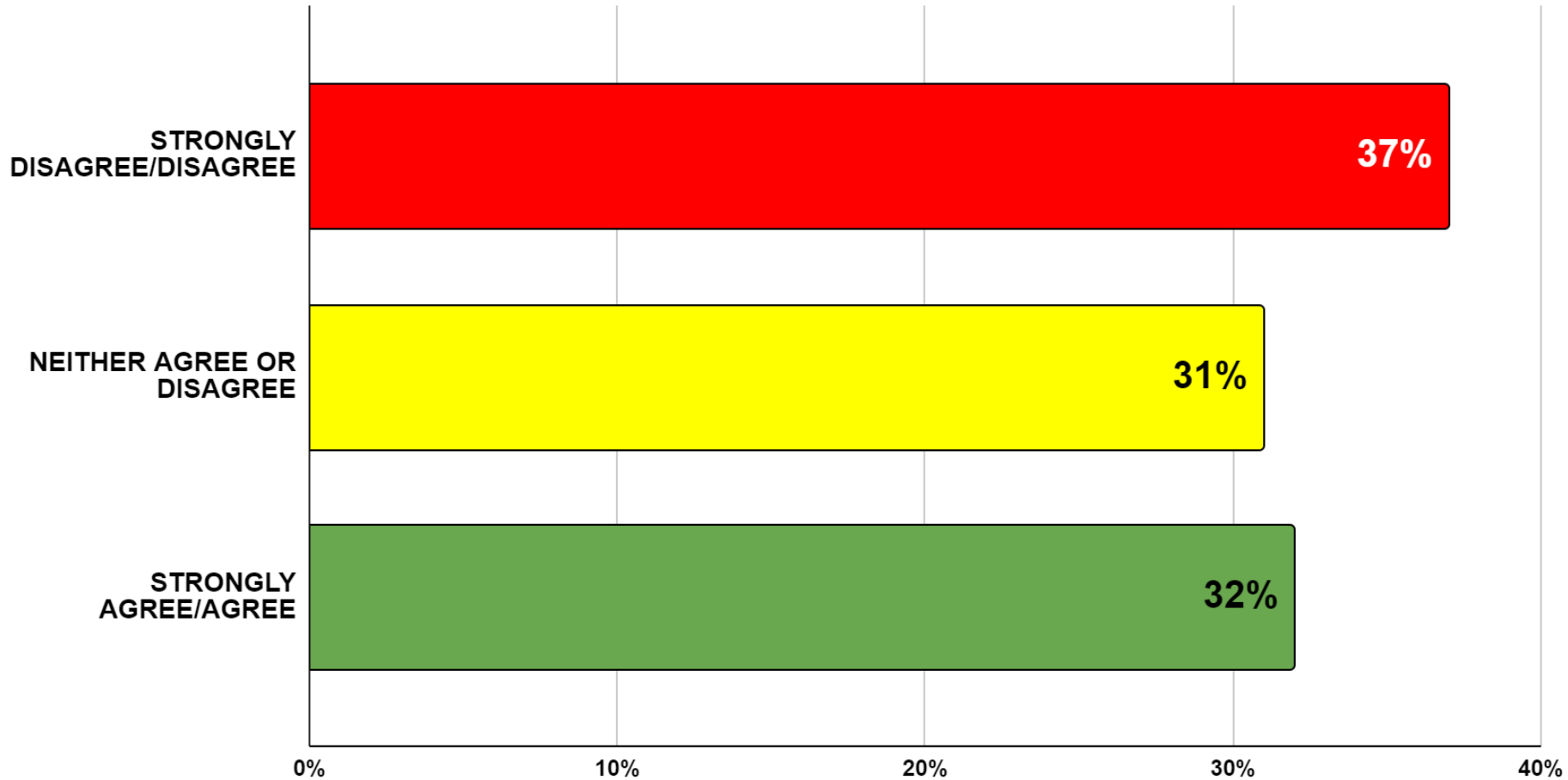
Math Curriculum

Percentage of respondents indicating extent to which they agree or disagree with the following statements:

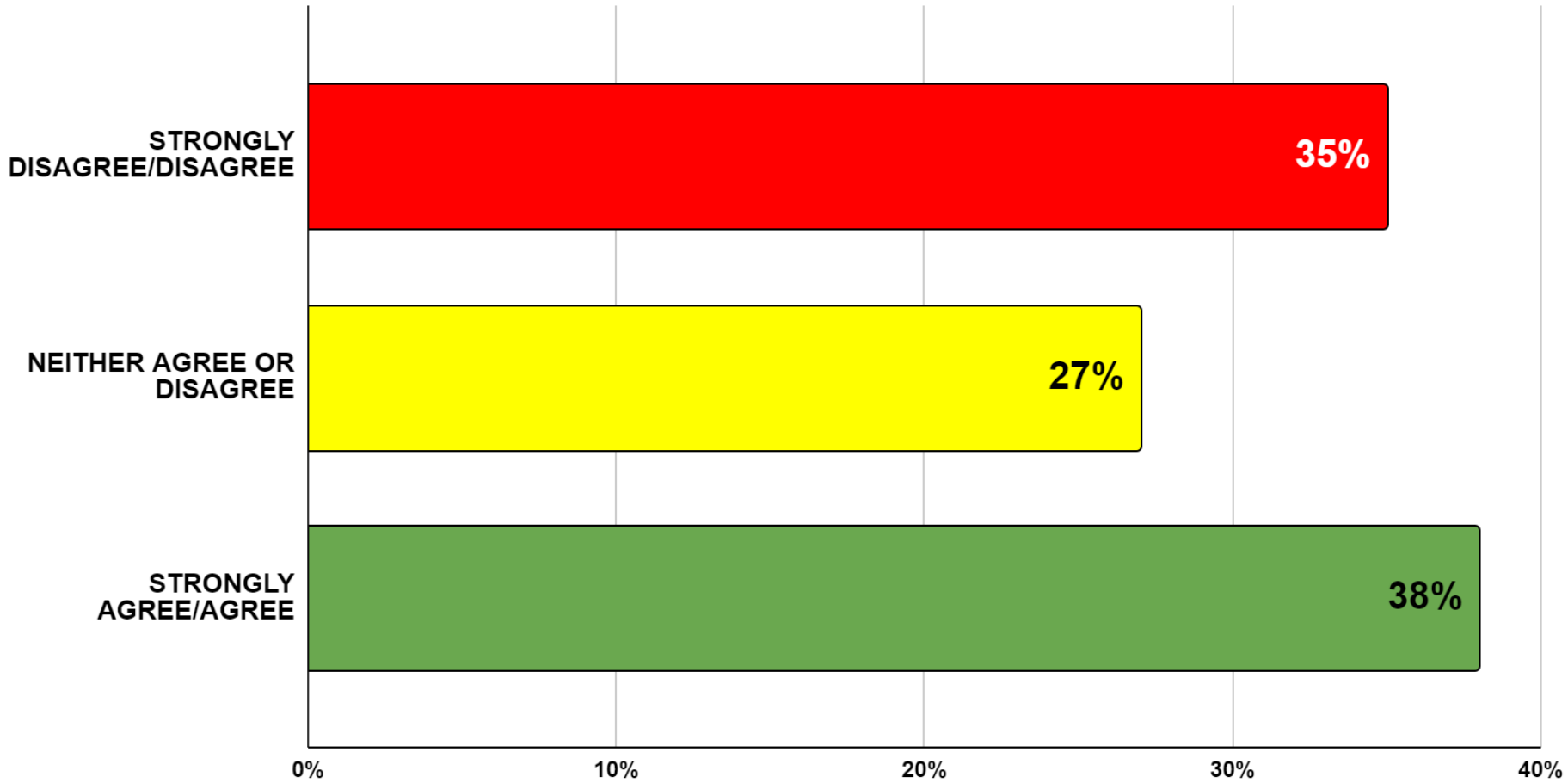
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Question	1	2	3	4	5
The Curriculum aligns with the appropriate grade-level standards in the North Carolina State Standard Course of Study. (675)	4%	11%	26%	47%	12%
The Curriculum allows for teacher autonomy.	14%	23%	31%	27%	5%
The Curriculum has positively impacted my teaching.	9%	13%	34%	33%	10%
The Curriculum allows for experiential and hands-on learning experiences.	8%	12%	27%	43%	11%
The Curriculum is flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students.	12%	23%	27%	31%	7%
Teachers were involved in the selection process for this Curriculum, and their views were respected.	18%	18%	39%	19%	6%

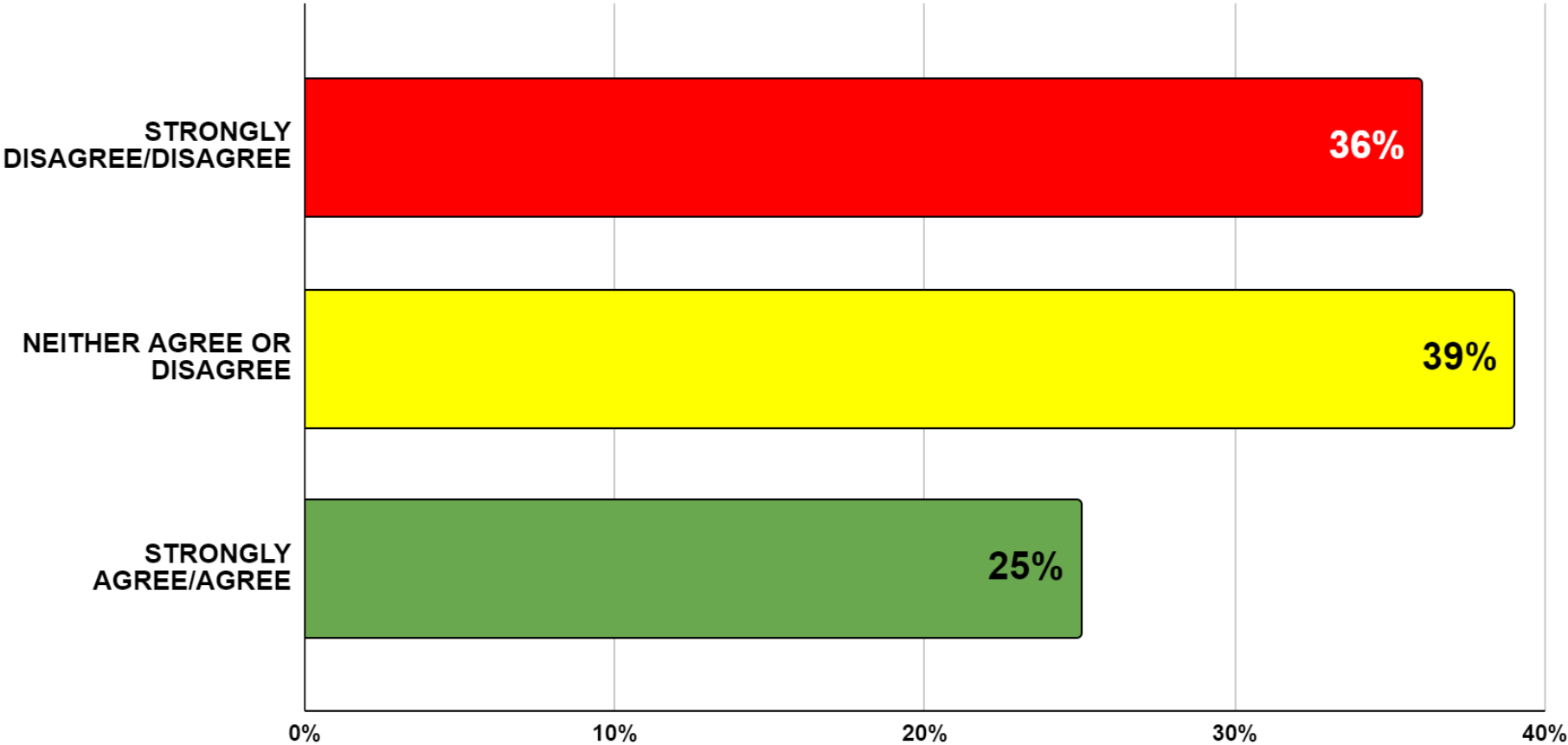
The Curriculum allows for teacher autonomy.



The Curriculum is flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students.



Teachers were involved in the selection process for this Curriculum, and their views were respected.



Math Curriculum

Main Themes:

Alignment with standards, effectiveness and rigor, teacher autonomy, support and training, time constraints, diverse needs.

1. Curriculum Preferences and Usage:

The majority of teachers are not using a specific curriculum, with 52.01% selecting "None of the above." Eureka (38.67%) and Desmos (7.90%) are the most commonly used among those who do use one.

2. Alignment with Standards:

Teachers are divided on whether the curricula align with North Carolina State Standards, with 47.11% agreeing, but a notable percentage (14.96%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

3. Teacher Autonomy:

Many teachers feel the curriculum does not allow for enough autonomy, with 36.15% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

4. Experiential and Hands-on Learning:

While 53.04% of teachers agree or strongly agree that the curriculum allows for hands-on learning, a significant portion (20.45%) disagree or strongly disagree.

5. Teacher Involvement in Selection:

A large number of teachers feel they were not involved in the selection process, with 35.86% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that their views were respected.

Math Curriculum

Main Themes:

Alignment with standards, effectiveness and rigor, teacher autonomy, support and training, time constraints, student mastery and engagement

Additional Feedback:

- These themes indicate a need for more teacher involvement in curriculum decisions, greater flexibility and alignment with state standards, and sufficient professional development and support for effective implementation.
- Teachers highlight the need for better alignment with state standards, fewer strategies to reduce confusion, more time for small group instruction, and concerns over the curriculum's rigor and relevance. They also stress the importance of proper professional development and support for effective curriculum implementation.

Math Curriculum Comments (249 comments)

Main Themes:

Alignment with standards, effectiveness and rigor, teacher autonomy, support and training, time constraints, student mastery and engagement

Example Comments

“Eureka math is not aligned to how our students are tested in North Carolina. I find it very frustrating to be forced to teach this curriculum when I know what students need to be successful on their end of grade test.”

“I have been impressed with Eureka Math as a curriculum that reflects NC math standards. The material was written to challenge and engage students at all levels.”

“Eureka math is too advanced for the low achieving students. Even some on and above grade level students struggle.”

“Eureka is another scripted curriculum... We do not need to teach math by rigidly following a script.”

Math Curriculum Comments

Main Themes:

Alignment with standards, effectiveness and rigor, teacher autonomy, support and training, time constraints, student mastery and engagement

Example Comments

“We were not involved in the process; we were just told that was what we were using.”

“Teachers need ample time and training to incorporate new curriculums.”

“The lessons are sometimes near to impossible to finish in a timely manner with all of the activities that are expected to be done.”

“Desmos is ok for students who have mastered the content already. It does not teach students who are below grade level.”

Conclusion and Takeaways

District Leadership

Key Takeaways:

1. **Disconnect and Distrust**: Many staff members feel that district leadership is out of touch with classroom realities and does not trust teachers' professional judgment.
2. **Top-Down Mandates**: There are complaints about numerous directives from leadership without teacher input, making teachers feel controlled rather than supported.
3. **Lack of Training and Support**: Teachers report insufficient training, particularly for teaching assistants, and a lack of ongoing professional development opportunities for all staff.
4. **Leadership Issues**: There is a perception that district leadership is more focused on politics and self-preservation than on genuine educational leadership.
5. **Resource Mismanagement**: Financial mismanagement and subsequent job cuts are significant concerns, as they directly impact classroom support and teacher morale.

Conclusion and Takeaways

District Leadership

Suggestions:

- 1. Increased Engagement:** Leadership should spend more time in classrooms to understand teachers' day-to-day challenges and successes.
- 2. Empowerment and Trust:** Provide teachers with more autonomy and involve them in decision-making processes to rebuild trust.
- 3. Comprehensive Training:** Implement regular and relevant professional development for all staff, including teaching assistants.
- 4. Transparency and Communication:** Improve transparency in financial decisions and ensure consistent, clear communication regarding policies and changes.
- 5. Focus on Education, Not Politics:** Prioritize educational outcomes and support over political agendas to create a more supportive environment for teachers and students.

Conclusion and Takeaways

Board of Education (BOE)

Key Takeaways:

- 1. Political Influence:** There is a strong sentiment that the BOE is heavily influenced by political agendas, which negatively impacts educational decisions.
- 2. Lack of Support:** Teachers feel unsupported by the BOE, particularly regarding student discipline and resource allocation.
- 3. Poor Decision-Making:** The BOE is criticized for decisions that seem out of touch with classroom needs and for not adequately considering teacher feedback.

Conclusion and Takeaways

Board of Education (BOE)

Suggestions:

- 1. Reduce Political Agendas:** Focus on educational policies and decisions that directly benefit students and teachers rather than political issues.
- 2. Enhance Support Systems:** Develop better support systems for teachers, especially concerning student discipline and classroom management.
- 3. Involve Teachers in Decision-Making:** Include teachers in the policy-making process to ensure that their insights and experiences inform BOE decisions.

Conclusion and Takeaways

ELA Curriculum

Key Takeaways:

- 1. Scripted Curriculum Issues:** Teachers feel that the scripted ELA curriculum limits their ability to tailor instruction to their students' needs.
- 2. Inadequate Resources and Support:** There are complaints about a lack of resources and support for effectively implementing the ELA curriculum.

Conclusion and Takeaways

ELA Curriculum

Suggestions:

1. **Flexibility in Curriculum:** Allow teachers more flexibility to adapt the ELA curriculum based on their professional judgment and students' needs.
2. **Provide Adequate Resources:** Ensure that teachers have access to the necessary resources and support to implement the ELA curriculum effectively.
3. **Ongoing Feedback and Adjustment:** Create a system for regular feedback from teachers to continuously improve and adjust the ELA curriculum based on classroom experiences.

Conclusion and Takeaways

Math Curriculum

Key Takeaways:

1. **Lack of Effective Implementation:** Teachers feel that the math curriculum is not being implemented effectively, with inadequate training and resources.

2. **Disconnect from Classroom Realities:** There is a perception that the math curriculum does not align well with the day-to-day realities of classroom teaching.

Conclusion and Takeaways

Math Curriculum

Suggestions:

- 1. Effective Training Programs:** Implement comprehensive training programs for teachers to ensure they are well-prepared to teach the math curriculum.
- 2. Alignment with Classroom Needs:** Adjust the math curriculum to better align with the practical needs and challenges teachers face in the classroom.
- 3. Continuous Improvement:** Establish a feedback loop where teachers can share their experiences and suggest improvements for the math curriculum to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

Conclusion and Takeaways

Overall:

These are deeply troubling findings with implications for the leadership and direction of both the BOE and District Leadership.

Specific Takeaways:

- **Include educators in important decisions**
- **Curriculum**
 - Educators need to be meaningfully included in curriculum decisions.
 - Curriculum changes should first be piloted and assessed.
 - Data should be gathered and reviewed from students and teachers (eg achievement data)
- **Make this climate survey of District Leadership, the BOE, and Curriculum an annual occurrence.**