



Summary of Responses

Miami-Dade County Public Schools 2008 Survey of Principals

**Eileen Lai Horng
Susanna Loeb**

December 2009



Notes about Stanford Survey of M-DCPS Principals

In May and June of 2008, IREPP administered a survey to Miami-Dade County Public Schools principals. This survey asked principals about their school, how leadership responsibilities are distributed at their school, how effective they believe they are at particular tasks, how they use informal classroom observations, and their preferences for different types of schools.

All of the principals in the district were emailed links to the online survey. We received survey responses from 314 principals in M-DCPS (representing an 89 percent response rate). This report highlights some of the aggregated responses of these principals. Completing the survey was voluntary, as was answering each of the individual questions. The responses presented in this report represent the sum or proportion of the responses for each question (i.e., missing responses are omitted). We have a low rate of non-response (less than five percent) for most questions. Combined with our 89 percent response rate overall, we are quite confident that the aggregated responses reported here are representative of the population of principals in M-DCPS.

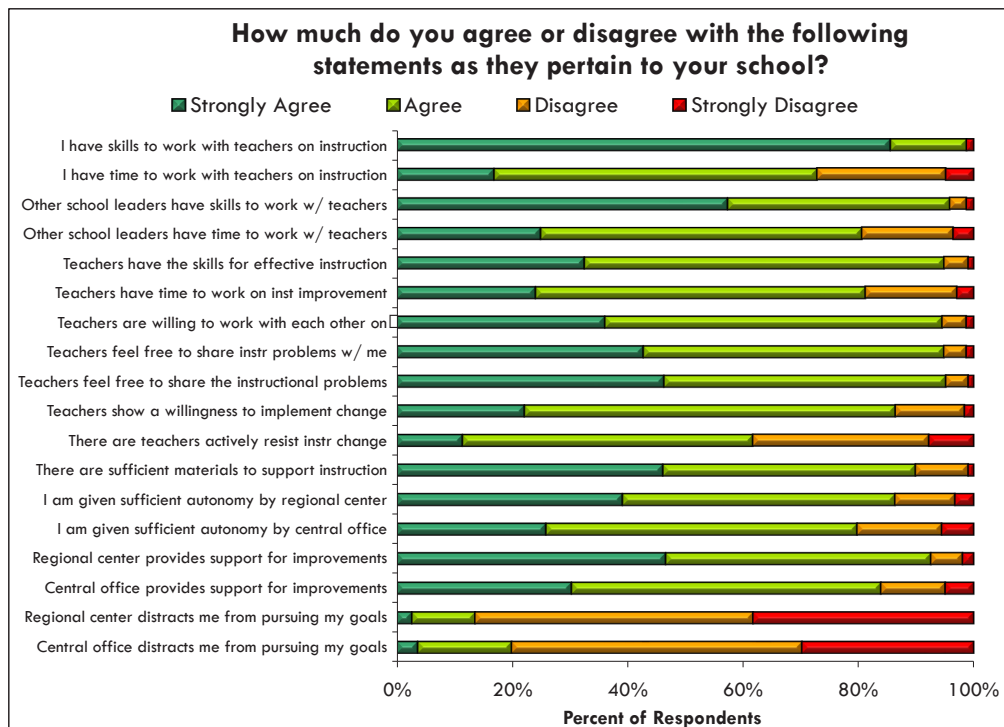
This survey is part of IREPP's School Leadership Research (SLR) project, which examines the career paths of principals and teachers, district policies that affect the distribution of human resources across schools, and the impact of educator characteristics and mobility patterns on student outcomes. The research is funded by organizations interested in evaluating existing education policies in order to identify ways to improve those policies or develop new policies as needed. We have received financial support from The Spencer Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, and the Stanford University K-12 Education Initiative. More information about this project can be found at: www.schoolleadershipresearch.org



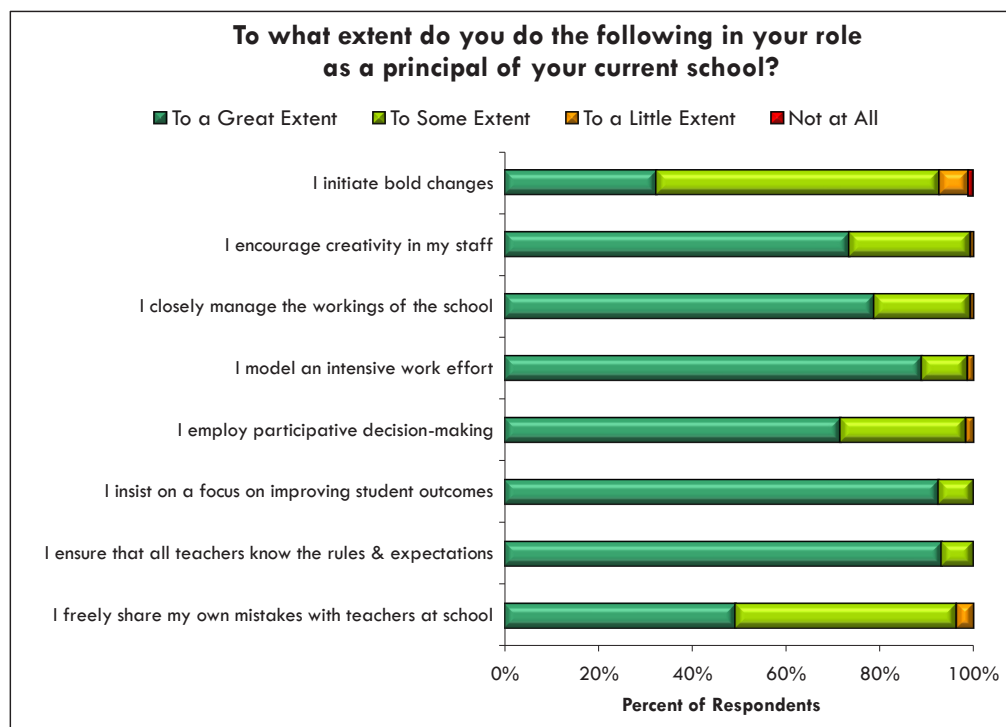
School Leadership Research Project
Institute for Research on Education Policy and Practice

520 Galvez Mall, CERAS Bldg.
Stanford, CA 94305

www.schoolleadershipresearch.org



Most of the respondents are confident that teachers at their school have the skills and knowledge for effective instruction. Additionally, most of the respondents believe that the school leadership has the skills and knowledge to work with teachers on instruction, however less feel that they have the time to do so. Most of the respondents also feel that the regional and central offices support them and do not distract them from pursuing their goals.



Almost all the respondents feel that they do the following to a great extent: insist on a focus on improving student outcomes; ensure that all teachers know the rules and expectations; and model an intensive work effort. (APs and teachers concur.)

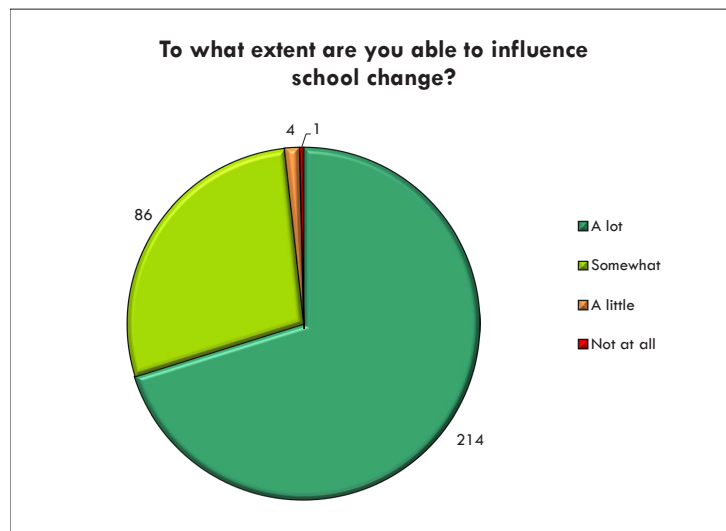
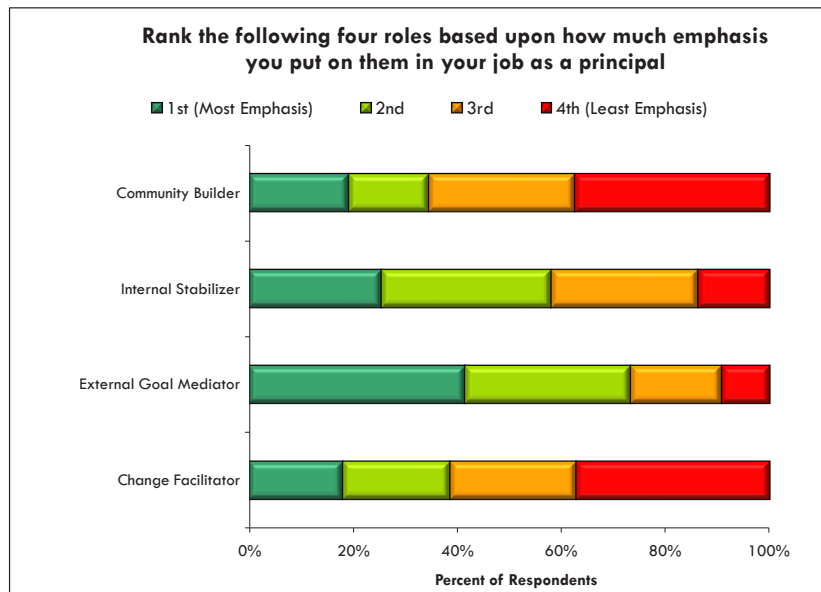
Respondents were asked to rank the emphasis they place on the following four roles:

COMMUNITY BUILDER - Focuses on creating a positive community within the school by emphasizing human interactions.

INTERNAL STABILIZER - Focuses on stabilizing internal school operations so the school functions well.

EXTERNAL GOAL MEDIATOR - Focuses on student outcomes and external accountability in a structured, well-organized manner.

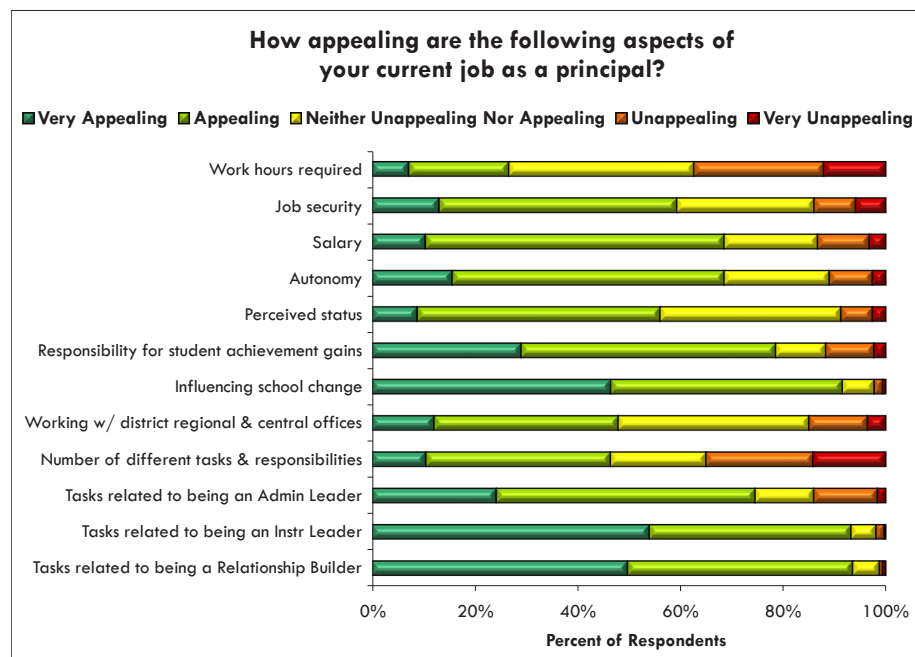
CHANGE FACILITATOR - Focuses on envisioning and facilitating innovation and change.



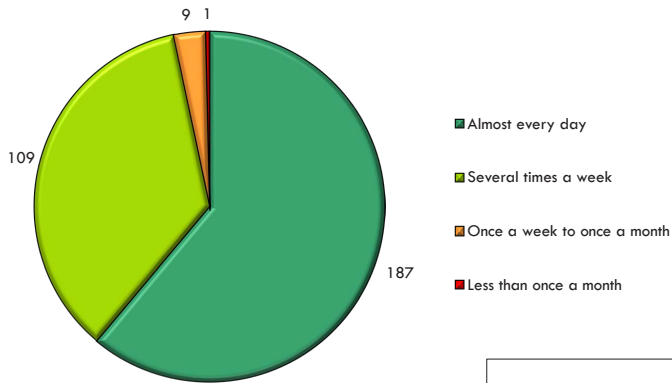
The respondents report that they are able to influence school change. Seventy percent of them believe they can do so a lot.

Almost all the principals find the following aspects of their job to be appealing: being an instructional leader, being a relationship builder, and influencing school change.

In contrast, more than a third find the following to be unappealing: the number of different tasks and responsibilities and the work hours required.



On average, how often do you INFORMALLY observe classrooms?



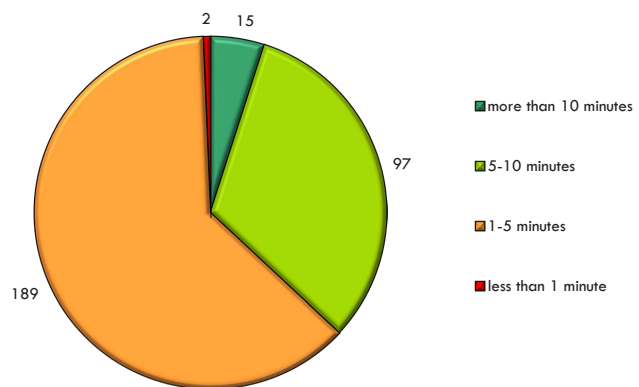
Almost all of the respondents informally observe classrooms at least several times a week. None report that they never informally observe classrooms.

However, less than 40 percent of them report spending more than five minutes per observation.

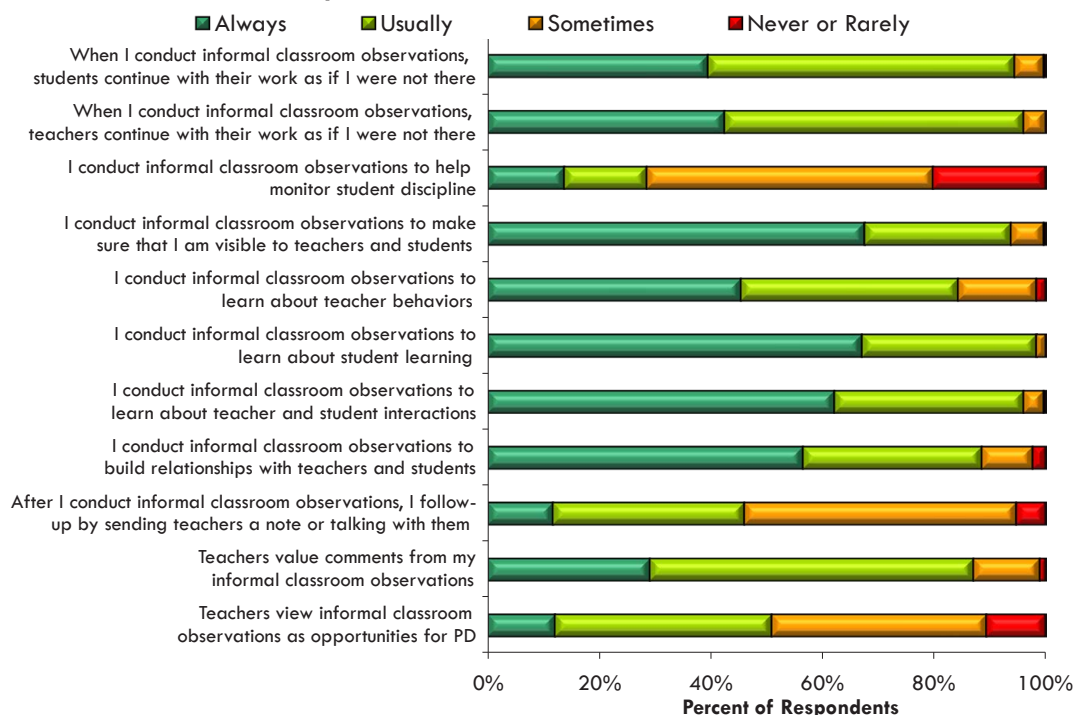
Most of the respondents conduct informal classroom visits to observe teacher-student interactions, to learn about student learning, and to make sure they are visible to teachers and students.

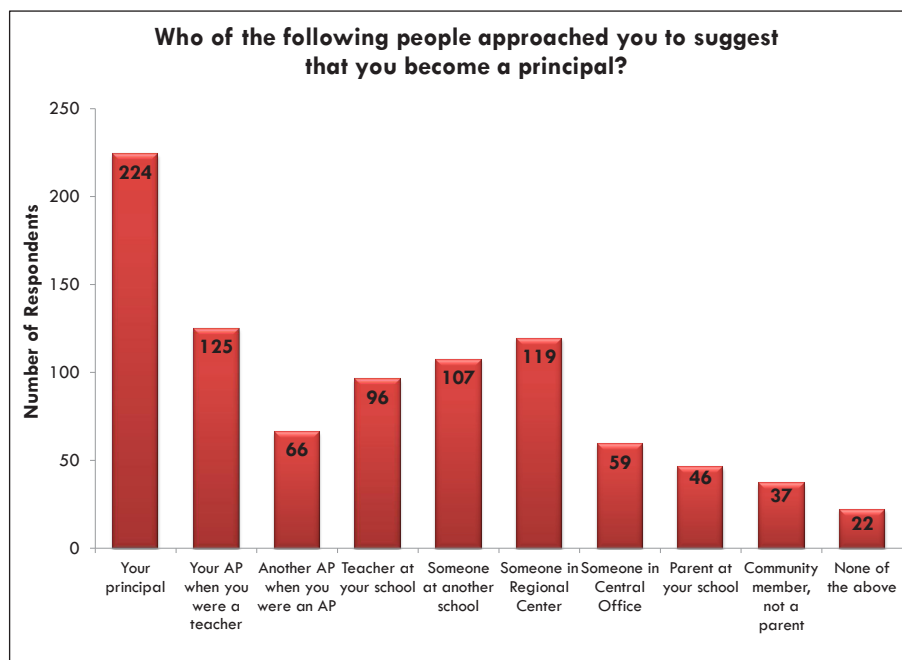
Most also feel that their visits do not interrupt classroom activities, but only half believe that teachers usually or always view these visits as opportunities for professional development.

How long do you usually spend in a classroom for these INFORMAL observations?

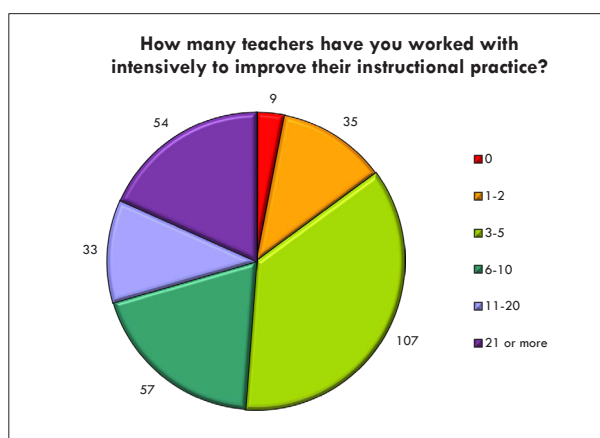


How often do the following statements characterize your INFORMAL classroom observations?

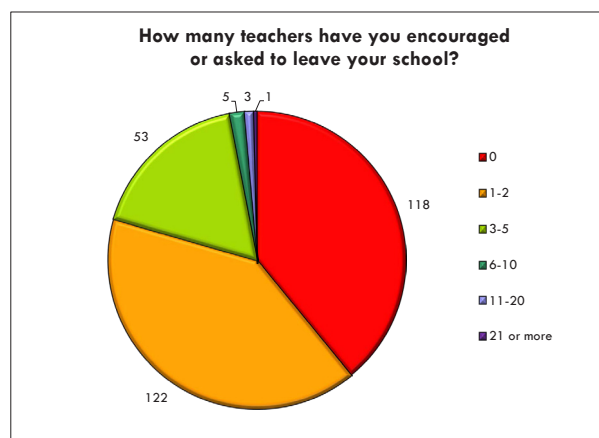




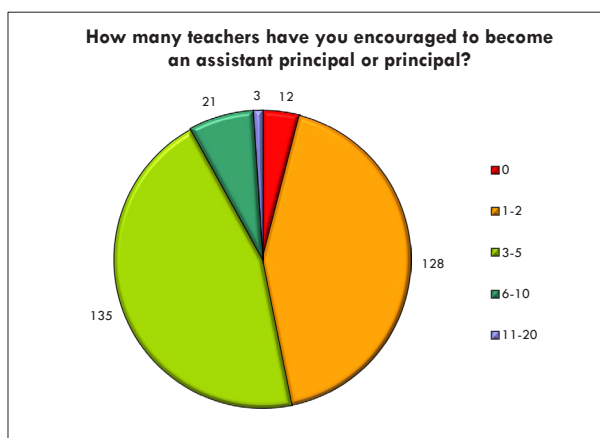
The respondents were most likely to have been “tapped” for the principalship when they were a teacher by their principal.



During the 2007-08 school year, about half the respondents worked with either three to five or six to ten teachers intensively to improve instructional practice. A fifth of them report that they worked intensively with over 20 teachers during the school year.



Almost 40 percent of the respondents did not attempt to counsel out any teachers in 2007-08, but another 40 percent of them did encourage one or two teachers to leave their school.



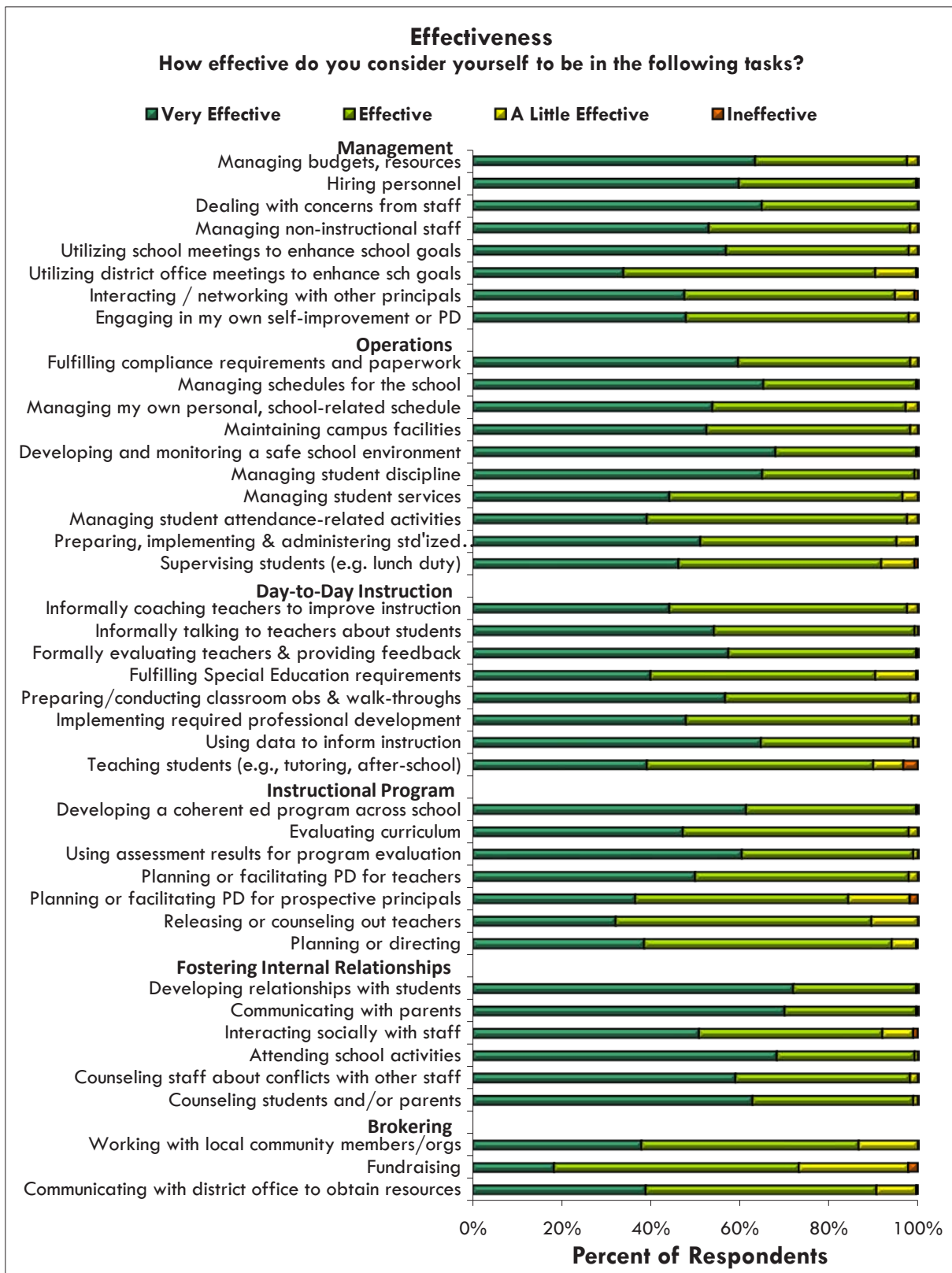
Principals generally encourage some of their teachers to become school leaders. During the 2007-08 school year, 43 percent of the respondents encouraged one or two teachers (and 45 percent encouraged three to five teachers) to become a principal or assistant principal.

Distribution of Responsibility

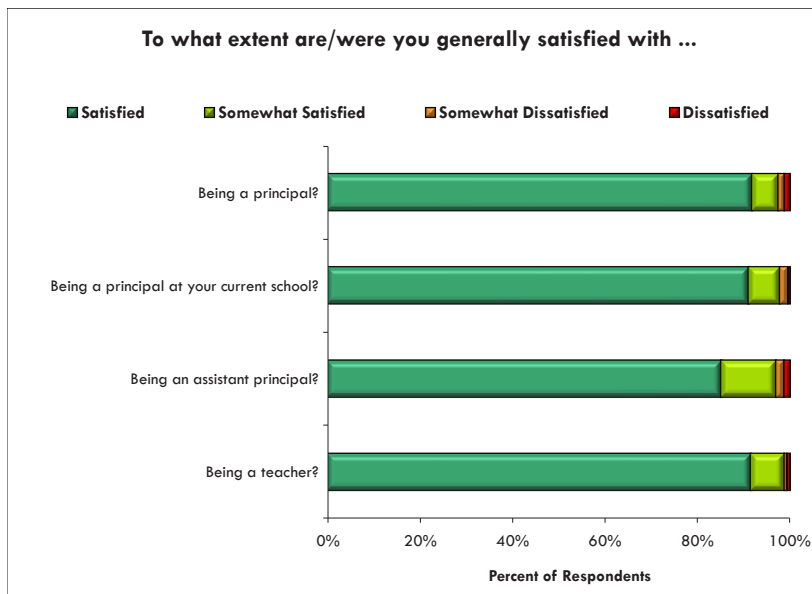
Of what goes on in your school, how much of the following tasks are your responsibility as opposed to the responsibility of other leaders in your school?



While principals and other school leaders share most of the leadership tasks, principals are more likely to be solely responsible for: managing budgets; releasing or counseling out teachers; counseling staff; and communicating with the district office. In contrast, the following tasks are more likely to be solely completed by other schools leaders: preparing, implementing and administering standardized tests; supervising students; and fulfilling Special Education requirements.



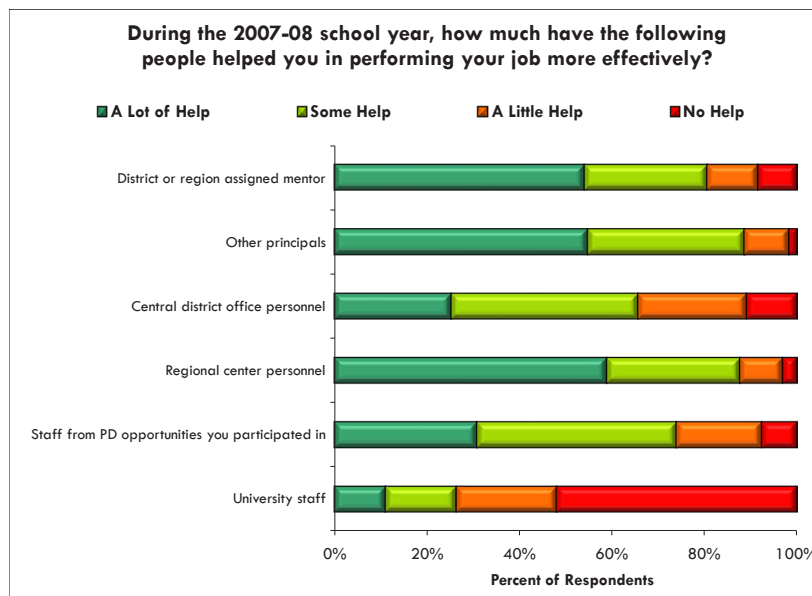
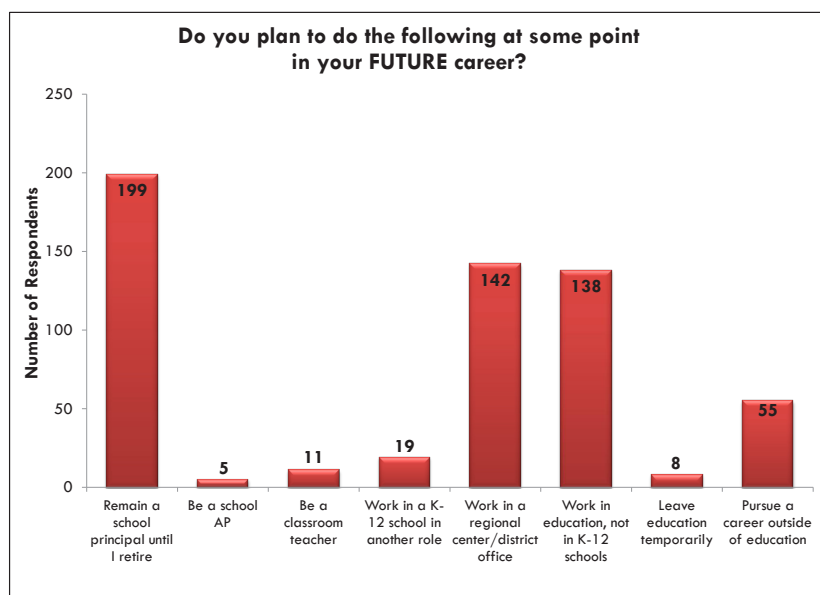
The respondents generally rate themselves as effective or very effective on most school leadership tasks. However, some of them believe they are less effective at tasks related to: fundraising; planning or facilitating PD for prospective principals; and working with local community members or organizations.



The respondents express a high level of satisfaction with being a principal in general and being a principal at their current school. Most were also satisfied when they were an assistant principal and/or teacher.

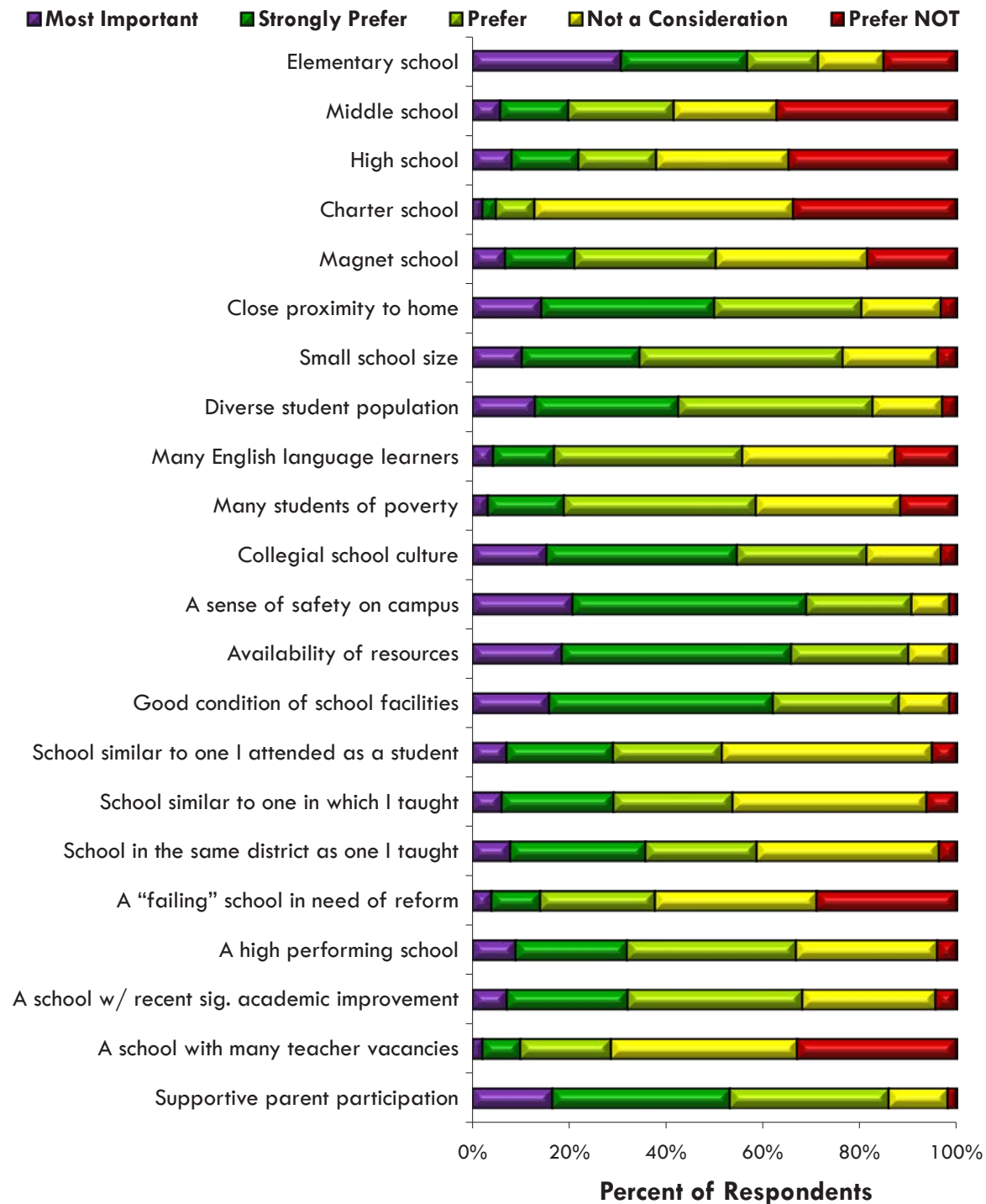
Two-thirds of the respondents plan to remain a school principal until they retire. Almost half plan to work in a regional center/district office or in education outside of K-12 schools at some point in the future.

Note that these were not presented as mutually-exclusive options. In other words, a respondent can be represented in more than one category.



Over half of the respondents report that they receive a lot of help from a district-assigned mentor, other principals, and regional center personnel. An additional 30 percent of them feel they receive at least some help from these sources of support.

In considering the type of school in which you would prefer to be a principal, how do you view the following school characteristics?



Most of the respondents would prefer or strongly prefer to work in schools with the following qualities: a sense of safety on campus; availability of resources; good condition of school facilities; supportive parent participation; diverse student population; and close proximity to home. In contrast, many prefer NOT to work in a "failing" school or one with many teacher vacancies. Additionally, over 10 percent of them would rather NOT be a principal at a school with many ELLs or poor students.