

Delaware Educators' Experience of Student Behavior Challenges



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for



Methodology

N=1,009 active DSEA members (including teachers, specialists/certified staff, and support staff) working in Delaware, conducted online from July 10-15, 2024.

The data have been weighted to match the population of members and potential members by member type, gender, age, county, race, and party registration.

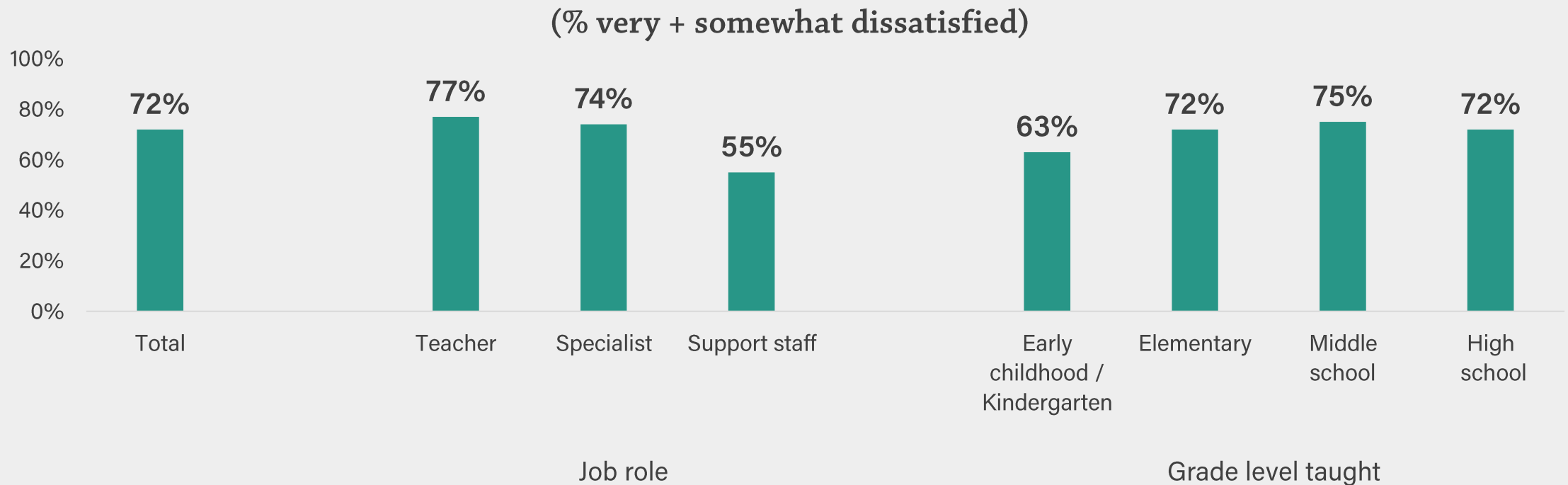


Job satisfaction



A majority are dissatisfied with conditions in education. Teachers and specialists are more likely to be dissatisfied.

And generally speaking, how satisfied are you overall with conditions facing educators like you these days?

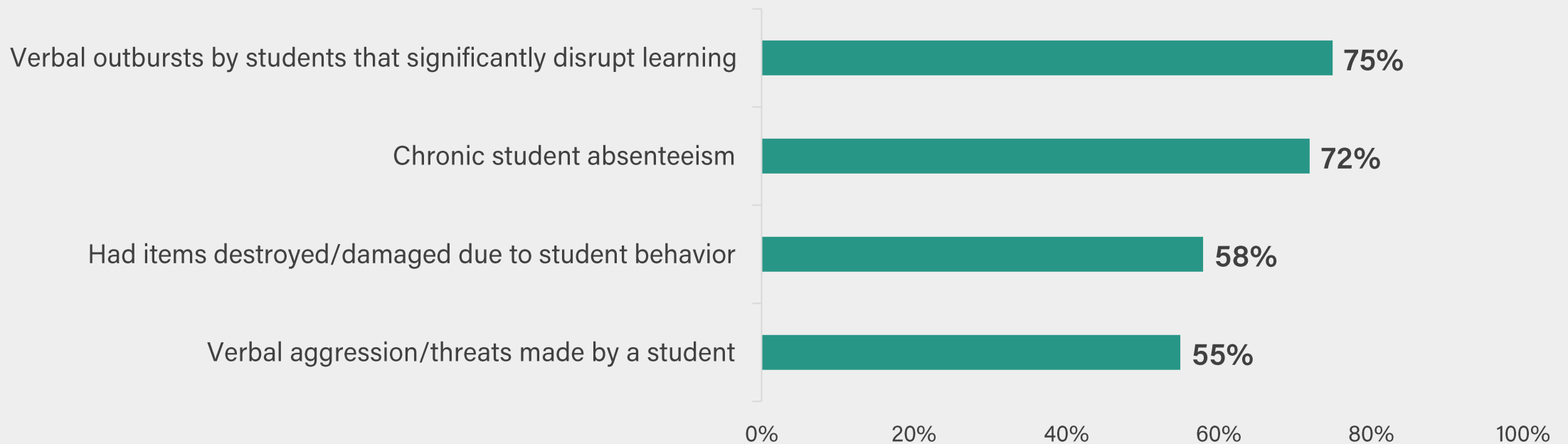


Student behavior incidents and concerns at workplace



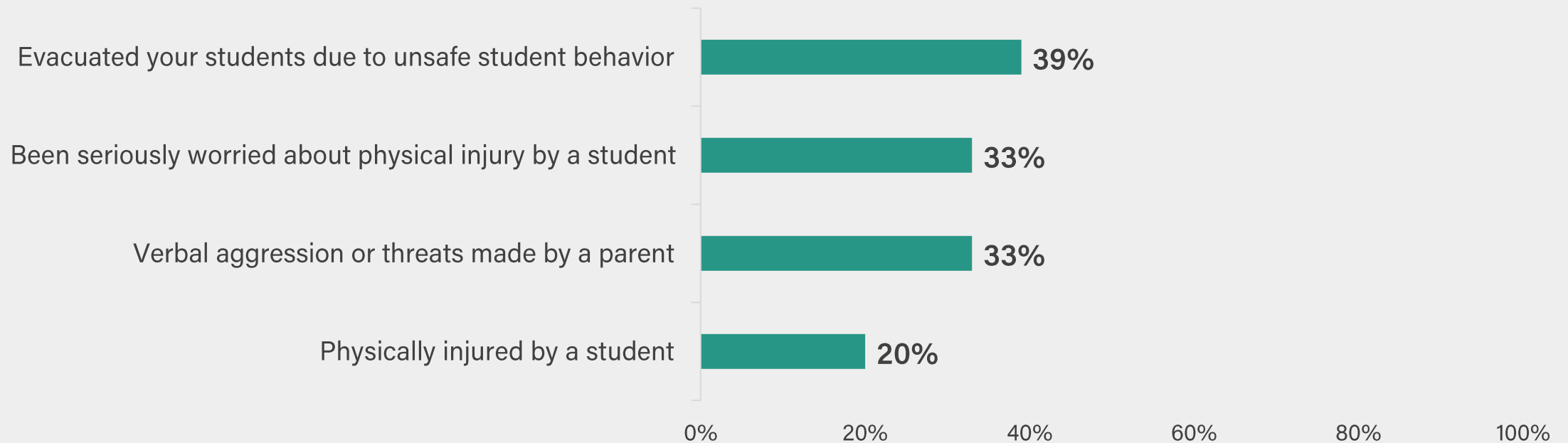
Majorities say they have experienced verbal outbursts, chronic absenteeism, destruction of property, and verbal threats within the last three years.

Have you experienced any of the following at your job within the last three years? Select all that apply.



About 1 in 3 educators has worried about physical injury by a student, while 1 in 5 has been injured.

Have you experienced any of the following at your job within the last three years? Select all that apply.

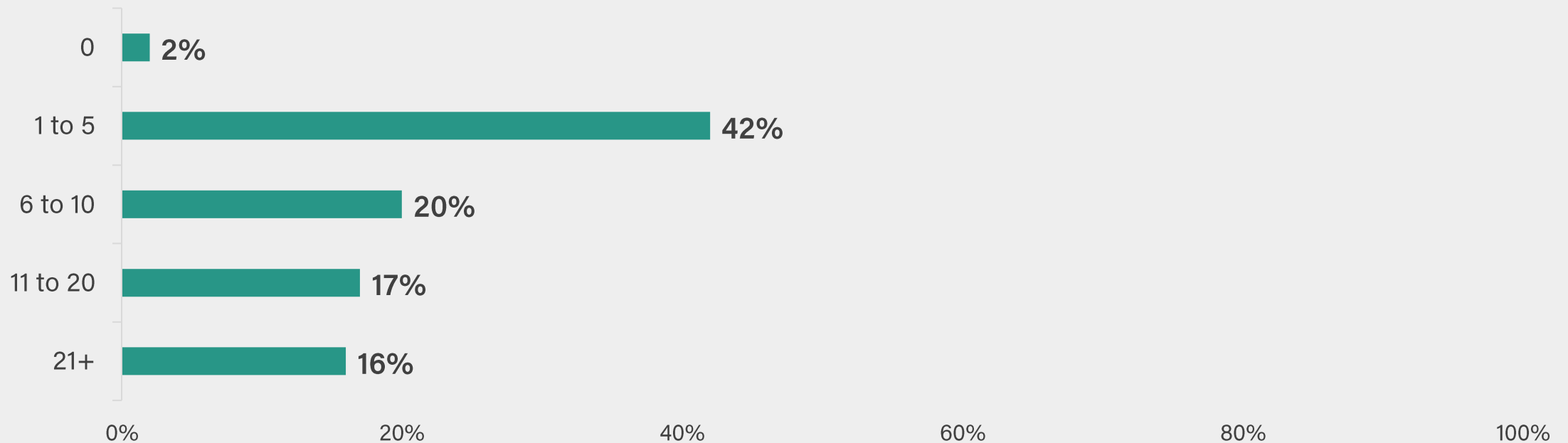


Instruction time lost



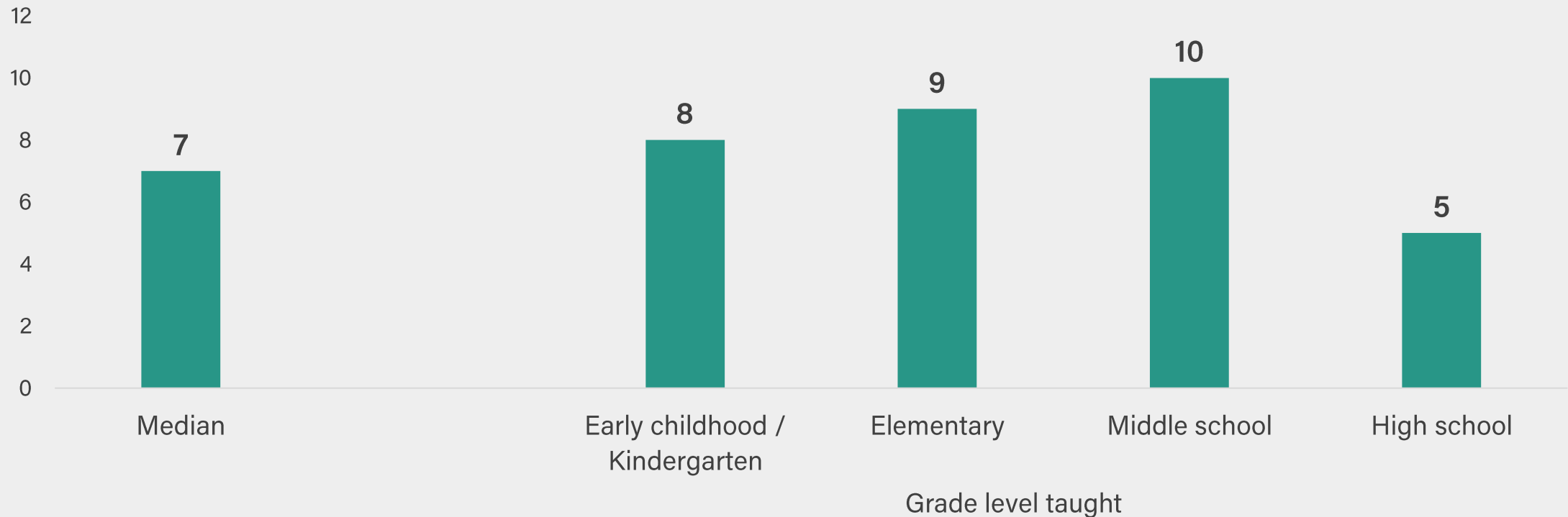
A majority of classroom teachers say they are losing at least six hours a month of direct instruction time.

In your best estimate, how many hours of direct instruction time are lost each month in your classroom due to disruptive student behaviors? (Classroom teachers, N=646)



The median number of hours classroom teachers report lost to behavior is 7, with the highest for middle school at 10 hours.

In your best estimate, how many hours of direct instruction time are lost each month in your classroom due to disruptive student behaviors? (Classroom teachers, N=646)

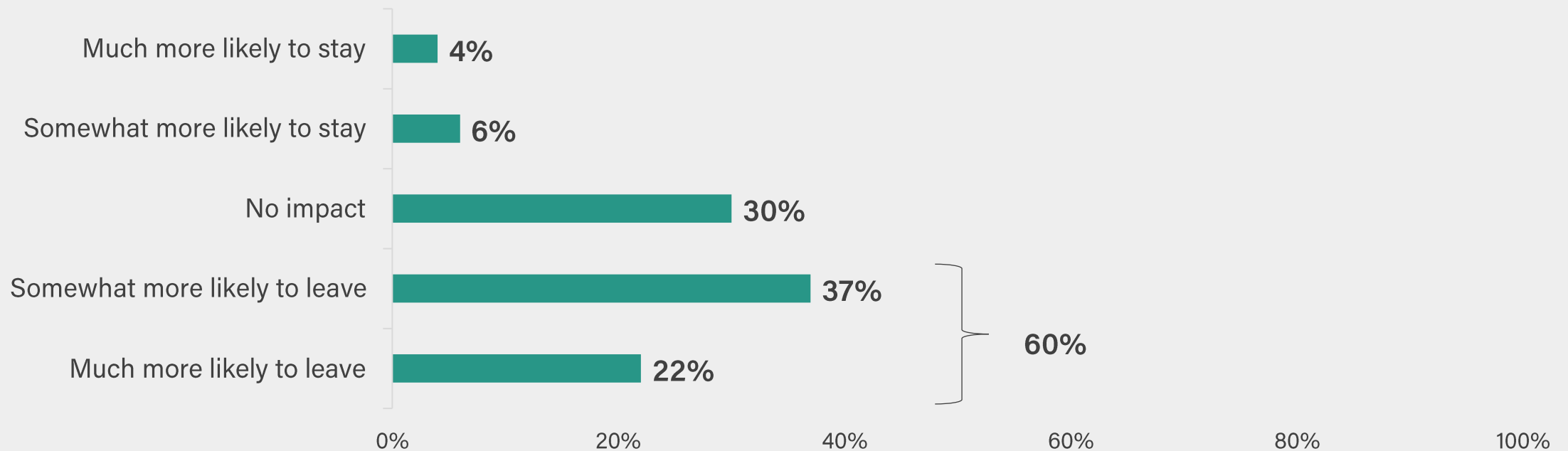


Impact on career decisions



Six in ten say student behavioral challenges make them more likely to leave education.

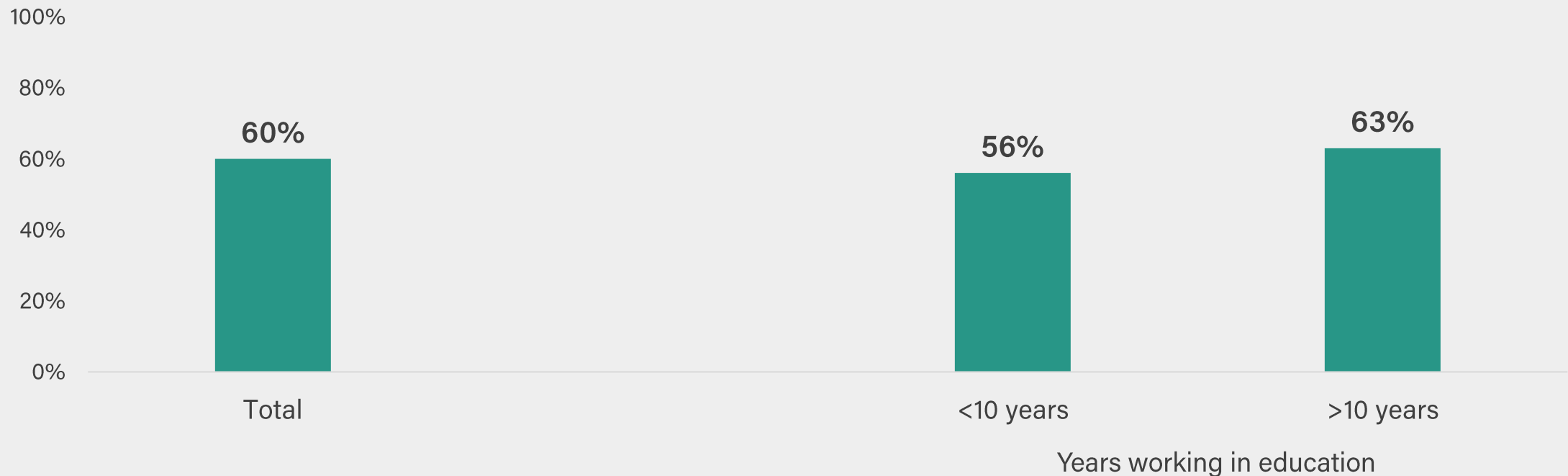
How, if at all, do student behavioral challenges impact your likelihood to continue working in education?



Educators who have been in the field 10+ years report a higher likelihood of considering leaving the field due to student behavioral challenges.

How, if at all, do student behavioral challenges impact your likelihood to continue working in education?

% more likely to leave

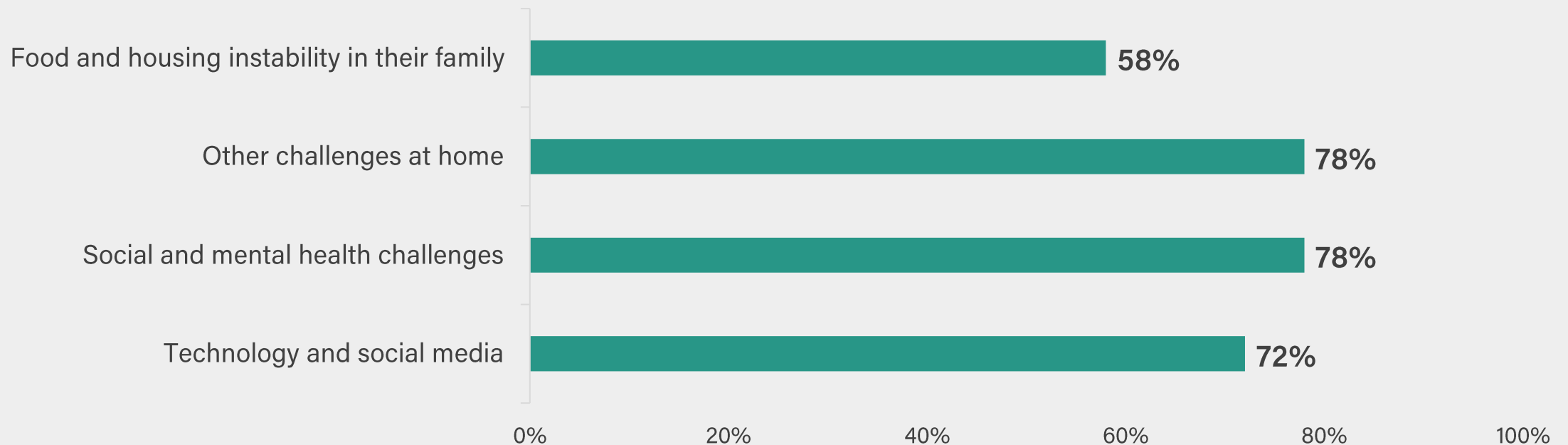


Contributing factors and management strategies



Educators identify social and mental health challenges, along with other home-related issues, as the primary contributors to students' behavioral challenges in school.

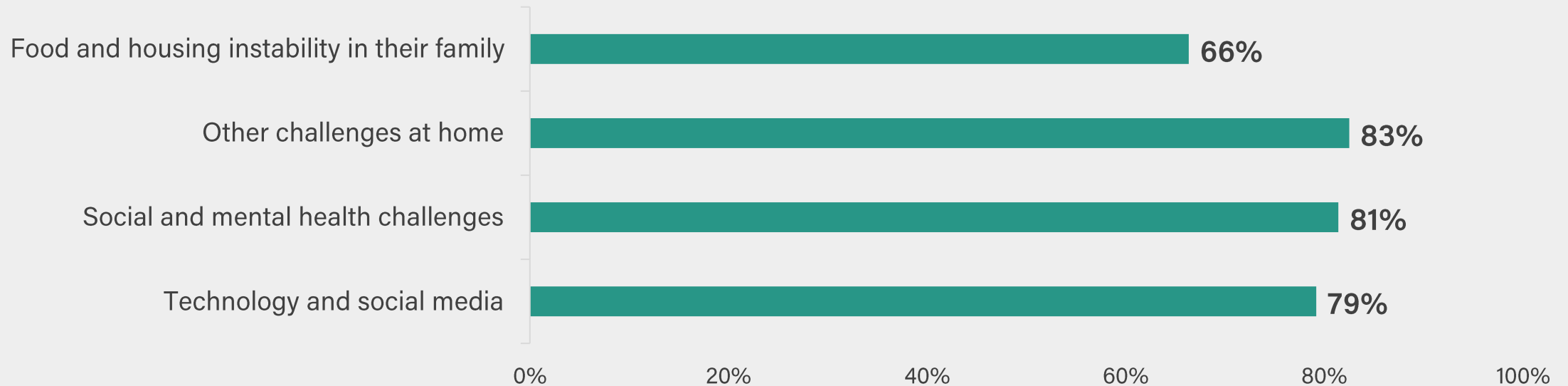
Which of the following factors do you think contribute to students' behavioral challenges in school? Select all that apply.



Educators witnessing the highest number of behavioral issues report slightly higher perceptions that social media and food and housing instability are contributors.

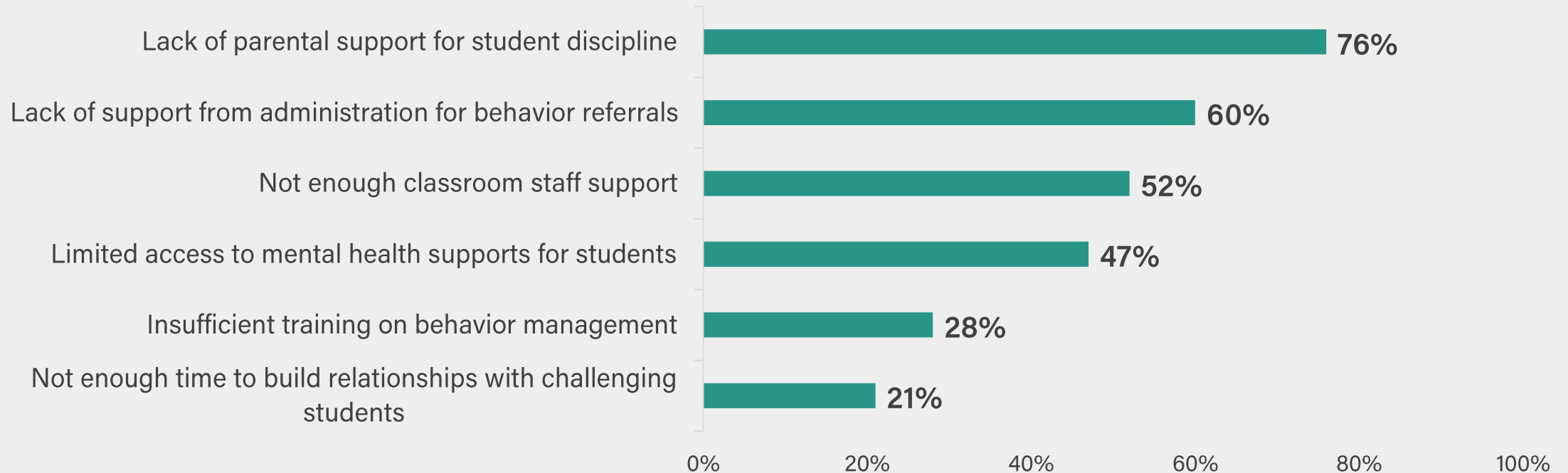
Which of the following factors do you think contribute to students' behavioral challenges in school? Select all that apply.

Among those who experienced 7-8 behavioral issues



Educators say top barriers to behavior management are lack of support from parents and administration.

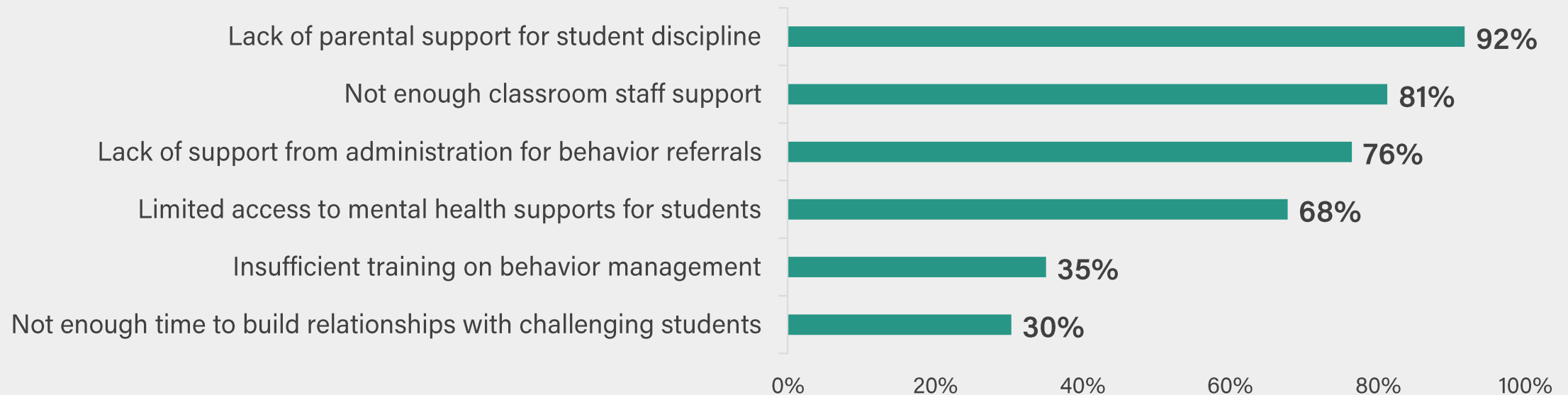
Over the last three years, what barriers have you faced when managing student behavior?
Select all that apply.



Educators facing the most behavioral issues are also more likely to have faced barriers to managing it. In particular they are more likely to cite a lack of classroom staff support.

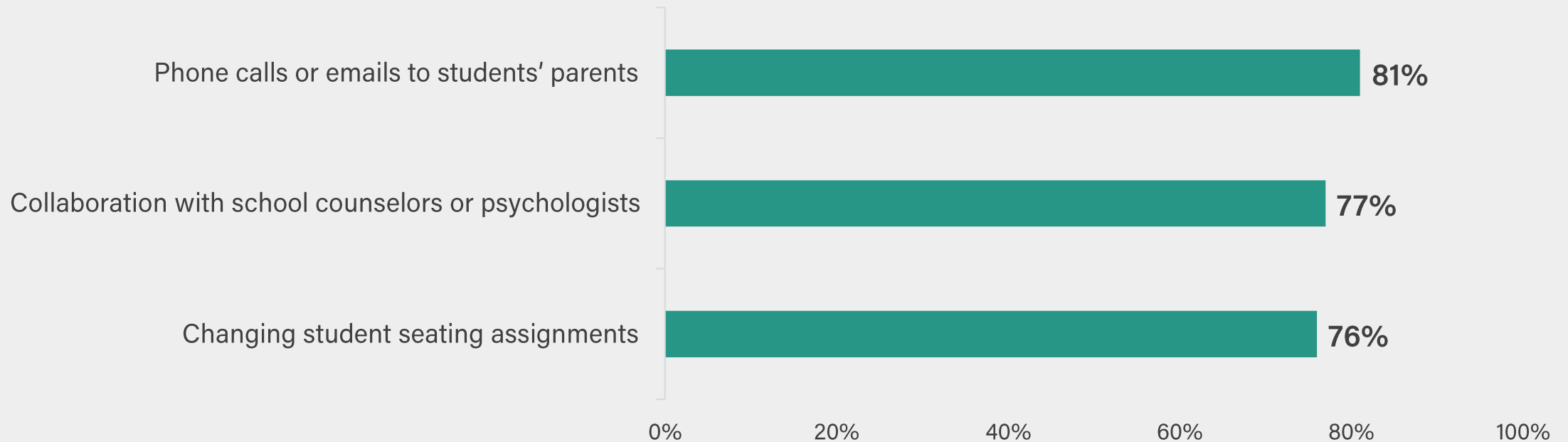
Over the last three years, what barriers have you faced when managing student behavior?
Select all that apply.

Among those who experienced 7-8 behavioral issues



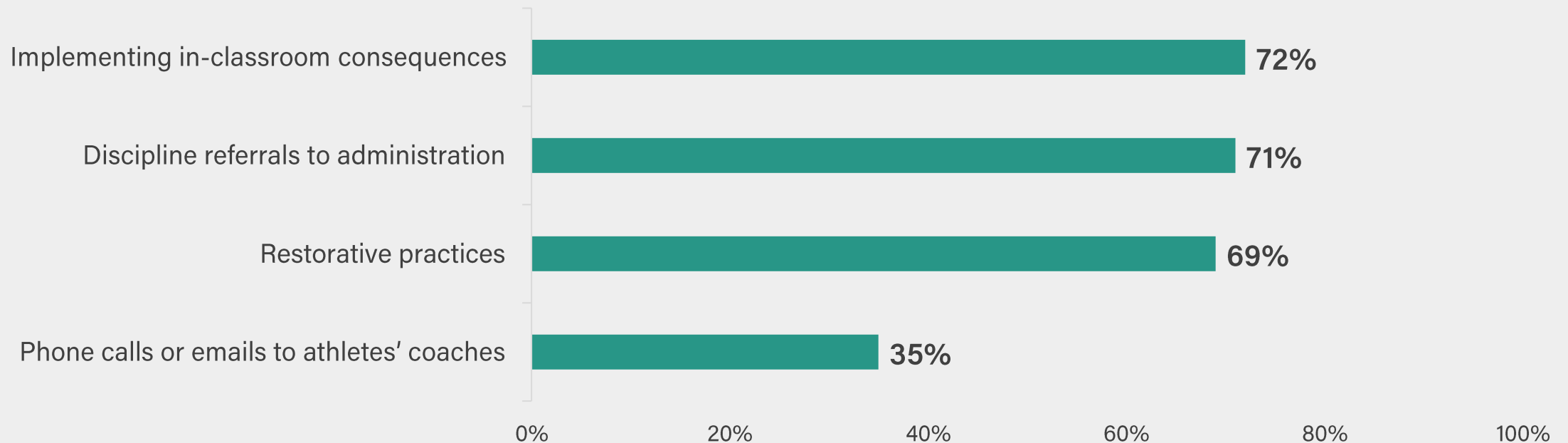
Most educators have tried to manage student behavior through outreach to parents, collaboration with school counselors or psychologists, and changing student seating assignments.

What strategies have you tried to manage student behavior? Select all that apply.



Majorities have also tried in-classroom consequences, referring students to administration for discipline, and restorative practices.

What strategies have you tried to manage student behavior? Select all that apply.



Effectiveness of potential solutions



Majorities say a variety of strategies would be very effective changes, including smaller class sizes, improved administrative support, cell phone policies, and co-teaching requirements.

| Next are some potential ideas to address challenges regarding student behavior. For each, please indicate how effective you think each would be: | % very effective | % very/somewhat |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Smaller class sizes to allow more time for teachers to develop strong relationships with students | 75% | 95% |
| Improving support from administration in managing disciplinary situations | 65% | 93% |
| Better support from administration in communicating behavioral expectations and consequences to parents | 61% | 90% |
| Implementing policies on cell phone usage that apply at the district or building level | 61% | 81% |
| Co-teaching requirements based on the number of students, and/or number of students with IEPs in each classroom | 60% | 91% |
| Freeing up the time of mental health professionals to provide direct and indirect services to students | 53% | 86% |
| Hiring more school-based mental health professionals | 51% | 83% |



Majorities say hiring more paraeducators, providing additional support services, and restorative practices training would be very or somewhat effective as well.

| Next are some potential ideas to address challenges regarding student behavior. For each, please indicate how effective you think each would be: | % very effective | % very/somewhat |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Hiring more paraeducators | 45% | 83% |
| Providing free breakfast and lunch for all students | 38% | 69% |
| Expanding services such as housing support and parental counseling provided through the schools | 34% | 74% |
| Increasing training for educators about using restorative practices effectively | 30% | 65% |



Conclusions



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1. Many DSEA members are experiencing serious behavior challenges from their students, and most are losing hours of direct instruction time.
2. This is affecting their job satisfaction and likelihood of staying in the profession.
3. Members say that there are societal factors contributing to students' behavior problems, such as problems at home, and social media and other technology.
4. They have attempted many management strategies including calling parents and pulling in administration – and they identify lack of support from families and administrators as key barriers to improvement.



The path to improvement

To address the high levels of dissatisfaction and intent to leave, the data show DSEA members believe the most effective changes would be:

1. Reducing class sizes
2. Increasing administrative support for discipline
3. Building or district-level cell phone policies
4. Co-teaching requirements based on the number of students with IEPs
5. Hiring more mental health professionals and freeing up their time to support students

