

The State of School Transportation 2024



HopSkipDrive



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INTRODUCTION

The way kids get to and from school has an impact not only on our children but also on our families, our schools, and our communities. Today, as discussions about student attendance, insufficient transportation options, and the critical importance of providing equitable transport for all students have become more urgent, understanding the current state of school transportation is more important than ever.

Providing reliable school transportation for every student — regardless of their socioeconomic background, geographic location, individual needs, or living situation — ensures equal access to education. But as society and the communities we live in have evolved and student needs have diversified, the work involved in safely and efficiently getting all students to and from school has become increasingly more complex.

With a growing emphasis on addressing inequities in transportation services and improving access for underserved communities and students with unique needs, schools are being asked to do more with less. Hardworking school transportation teams are being stretched to the max, doing everything they can to meet the diverse needs and expectations of the students and families they serve to ensure that no student gets left behind.

To better understand these complexities and the impacts they're having on our schools, families, and communities, we've gone straight to the source. For the fourth year in a row, we've surveyed school district leaders and transportation staff to gather their opinions on the state of school transportation. This year's survey touched on a number of essential considerations that affect school transportation operations, including funding and resources, individualized student transportation needs, and, of course, the bus driver shortage. For the second year in a row, we've also surveyed parents to learn more about their experiences with, and thoughts about, getting their children to and from school.

This report provides an analysis of the findings from HopSkipDrive's 2024 State of School Transportation survey. By exploring and understanding the perspectives of those directly involved in the current realities of school transportation, we can identify potential solutions and work together toward more efficient, safe, and equitable transportation for all students.



SURVEY AUDIENCES AND METHODOLOGY

At HopSkipDrive, we are focused on solving some of the biggest transportation challenges facing schools and districts around the country. As part of this work, we proactively engage with schools and districts to make sure we fully understand the challenges district and school leaders, and transportation teams, are encountering.

To this end, we are publishing the results of our fourth annual survey about the state of school transportation today. Respondents to our 2024 State of School Transportation survey include over 400 district and school leaders, administrators, and transportation staff from school districts across the country.

Education and transportation staff who responded to our survey include:

- Superintendents and principals
- Operations directors and supervisors
- Transportation directors and supervisors
- Transportation managers, dispatchers, routers, coordinators, trainers, and secretaries
- Bus drivers and mechanics

For the second year in a row, we also surveyed parents to gain insight into what they're thinking and how they're feeling about school transportation right now. Almost 500 parents from across the country responded to this year's survey, sharing information about how their kids are getting to school and their experiences with the school transportation system.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The results of this year's survey shed light on some of the persistent issues and shifting priorities school districts face today when it comes to the complicated logistics and management of student transportation. A few key takeaways:

The bus driver shortage has not improved

Schools are still struggling to address the chronic bus driver shortage, which shows no signs of improvement over the last year — **91% of respondents to this year's survey reported their district is being impacted by a driver shortage.** This holds steady from 2023 (92%) and is elevated over 2022 numbers (88%), showing a continued exacerbation of the issue.

The driver shortage is disrupting school transportation services and operations

The bus driver shortage has forced schools to cut back on bus services, and is also causing significant strain on existing resources. **Sixty percent of school leaders say they've been forced to cut or shorten bus routes this year, compared to 40% last year who said they made those route changes due to a bus driver shortage.** More than a third (38%) of school leaders say their staff is taking time away from core responsibilities or education hours to drive school buses or vans.

91%

of school leaders reported their district is being impacted by a driver shortage

60%

of school leaders say they've been forced to reduce services by cutting or shortening bus routes

38%

of school leaders say their staff is taking time away from core responsibilities or education hours to drive school buses or vans

21%

of school leaders believe transportation challenges are the biggest contributor to chronic absenteeism

74%

of school leaders say that electrifying their school bus fleet is either not very important or not at all important

Chronic absenteeism persists – and transportation plays a key role

Schools continue to see high rates of chronic absenteeism, and district and school leaders acknowledge there are many factors that contribute to this issue. **More than one in five (21%) school leaders believe transportation challenges are the biggest contributor to chronic absenteeism in their schools, more than student health.**

Sustainability and climate goals are distant concerns in school transportation right now

Despite growing environmental concerns, billions in federal funding, and discussion among industry leaders, electrifying school bus systems is not currently a top area of focus for school leaders. **Only about a quarter (26%) of school leaders say that electrifying their school bus fleet is either somewhat or very important, and only a third (33%) say they're even aware of their district having state or local sustainability mandates, goals, or reporting requirements. Among those aware of state or local electric school bus mandates, only 18% feel confident they'll meet them by set deadlines.**



79%

of families are managing school transportation on their own

30%

of parents say coordinating school transportation is the most stressful part of the back-to-school season

Parents and families are being impacted by the lack of school transportation services

More parents than ever are driving their kids to and from school every day, partly due to bus services being eliminated or reduced

- **79%** of families are managing school transportation on their own¹
- **62%** of parents drive their kids themselves
- **42%** of parents rely on their partner/spouse or another family member to do so

Reduced school transportation services are causing significant stress for families

- **64%** of parents say they worry about their child's transportation weekly
- **29%** of parents stress about it daily
- **30%** of parents say coordinating school transportation is the most stressful part of the back-to-school season

¹ The 79% figure was calculated by adding the number of respondents who selected "parent/spouse or another family member drives them" with the number of respondents who selected "I drive them." That total was divided by the total number of respondents to this question.

Needing to drive their children to and from school each day is forcing parents to miss work, or not pursue certain work opportunities

- **62%** of parents say driving their children to and from school or activities has caused them to miss work
- **56%** of parents say driving their children to and from school has negatively impacted their professional life

Parents see a connection between access to transportation and absenteeism

- **63%** of parents say their children would miss less school if more convenient school transportation options were available
- **38%** of parents say their children, on average, missed more than 10 days of school last year
- **53%** of parents consider chronic absenteeism to be a major issue

Read on to learn more about these and other important findings from this year's survey.

62%

of parents say driving their children to and from school or activities has caused them to miss work

63%

of parents say their children would miss less school if more convenient school transportation options were available



THE ONGOING SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SHORTAGE

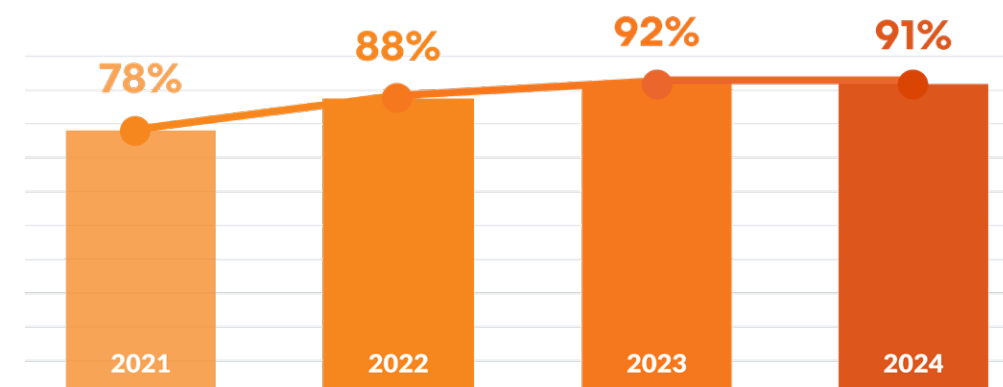
As we dive in and begin to examine the statistics showing the state of school transportation today, it makes sense to start with a critical issue that is having far-reaching implications — not only for districts and schools but also for many families and children: the nationwide school bus driver shortage.

“[There are] no applications, no matter how hard we try.”

Districts and schools not having enough qualified school bus drivers is not a new problem, but it is one that has soared to new heights in recent years. In 2021, 78% of respondents to our State of School Transportation survey reported their transportation operations were constrained by bus driver shortages; in 2022, that number rose to 88%. Last year, it climbed even higher, to 92% — and that number has remained steady this year, with 91% of respondents reporting their transportation operations are severely or somewhat constrained.

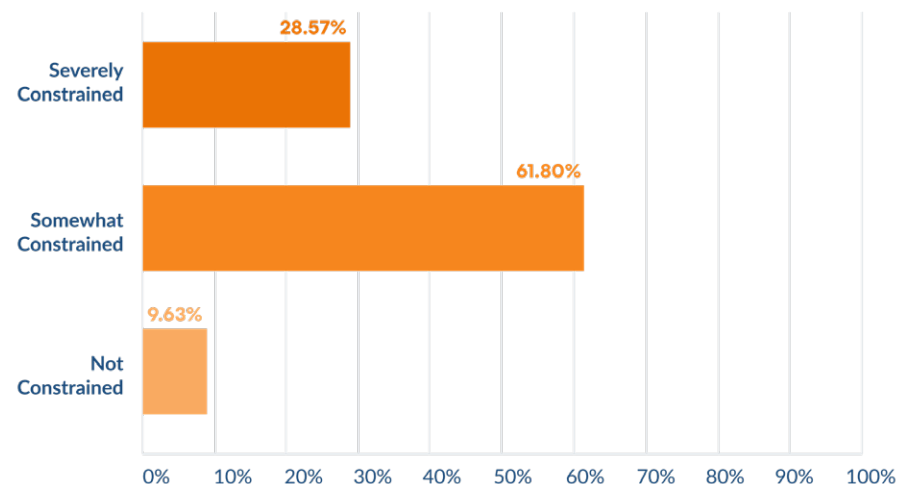
Despite herculean efforts to address this complicated issue (some of which are outlined in this report), it is likely that the bus driver shortage will continue to plague schools and districts.

Contributing factors related to the bus driver shortage are many and varied. According to respondents to this year’s survey, difficulty recruiting new bus drivers is the most pressing issue (65%), followed by driver pay (59%), student behavior or safety concerns (54%), driver retirement (41%), and losing drivers to private industry (24%). Other relevant factors specifically mentioned by survey respondents: the seasonality of the work (i.e. no work in the summer); the consistency and frequency of the pay; the lack of health insurance and benefits; the part-time, split-shift hours; the need for applicants to pay for driver training; lack of communication; management issues; and parent behavior.

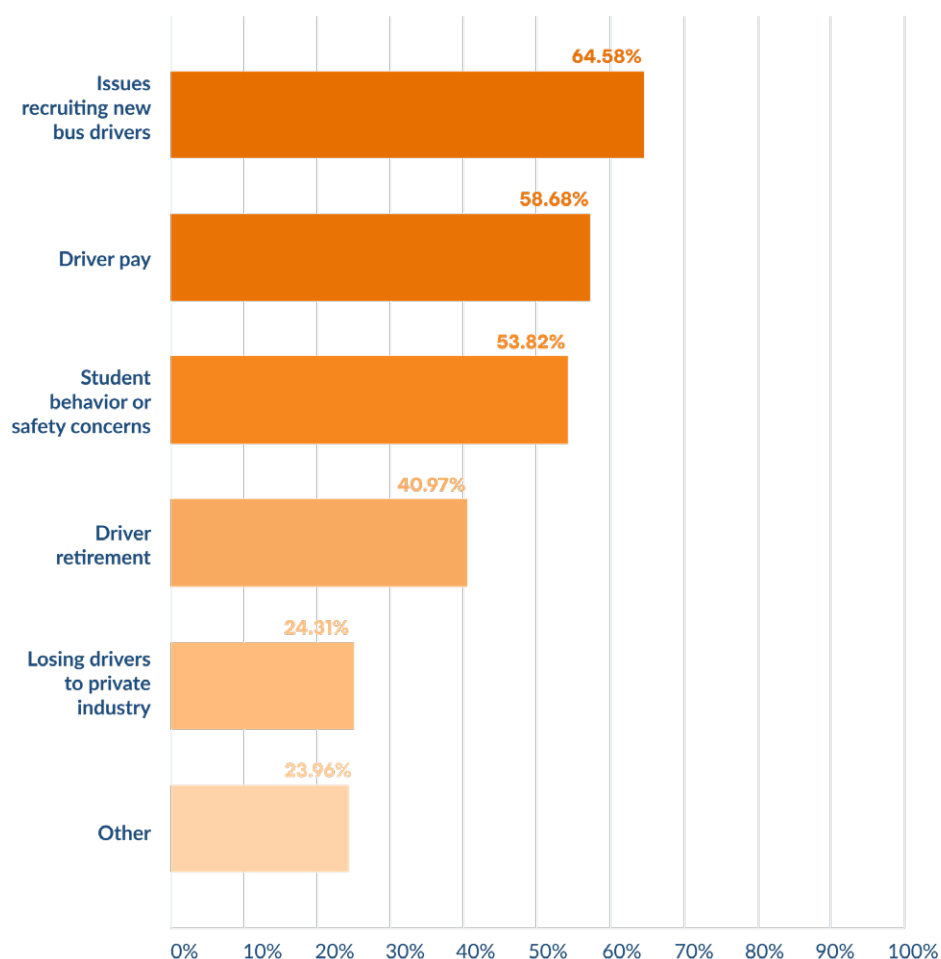


% of school leaders who said their operations were constrained by a bus driver shortage

Are your school transportation operations constrained by school bus driver shortages?



What are the main reasons for the school bus driver shortage in your district?



District and school transportation staff are nothing if not resourceful. They are coming to the table with creative solutions aimed at alleviating not only the driver shortage but also the impacts on school staff, students, and families.

The most frequently employed tactic is cutting or reducing bus routes, a difficult decision the majority (60%) of school leaders we surveyed say they've been forced to make. Nationwide, stories about school bus routes being consolidated or cut due to the driver shortage² — and students being left with no way to get to school — have, unfortunately, become a regular part of the news cycle at the start of each school year, with the 2023–2024 school year being no exception.

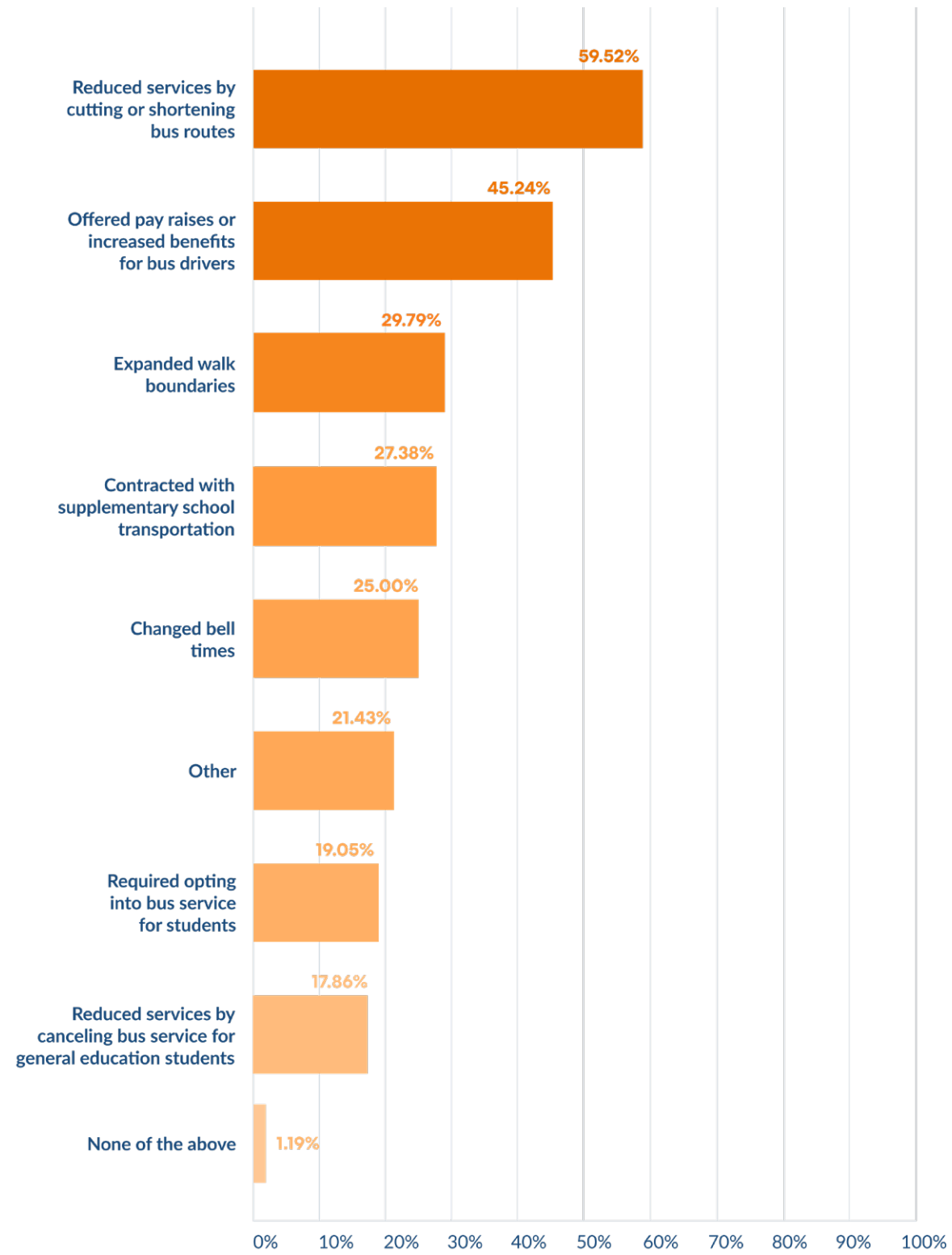
Forty-five percent of survey respondents report their district has tried a more targeted approach to addressing the driver shortage: increasing driver pay and benefits. Expanding school walk boundaries for students is the next most frequently cited (30%) approach used, followed by contracting with supplementary school transportation providers (27%), changing bell times (25%), and more.

“[We] hired an optimization service to help reduce routes.”

Additional strategies described by survey respondents aimed at tackling the bus driver shortage include providing public transit passes to students, consolidating and optimizing bus routes, and using vans and other vehicle types that do not require a CDL driver.

² Economic Policy Institute, Working Economics Blog. “The school bus driver shortage remains severe,” by Sebastian Martinez Hickey and David Cooper. November 14, 2023.

In what ways has your district tried to address bus driver shortages?





55%

of school leaders say staff in their district are being pulled away to manage school car lines at drop-off and pickup

38%

of school leaders say their staff is taking time away from their core responsibilities to drive school buses or vans

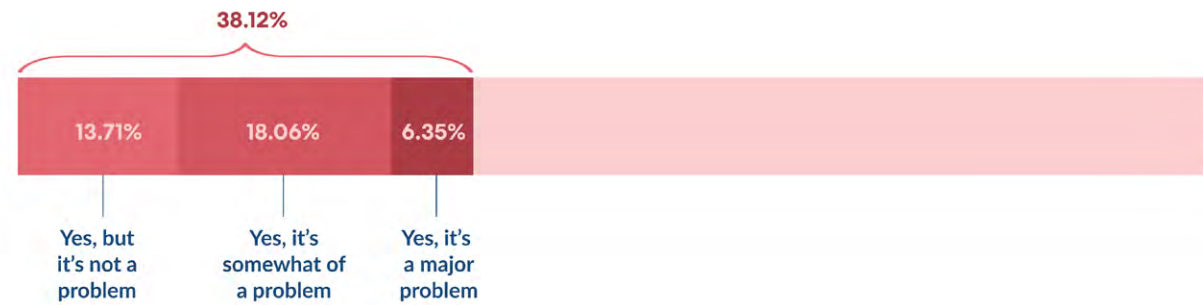
HOW THE DRIVER SHORTAGE IS DISRUPTING THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

The driver shortage is significantly impacting district, school, and transportation staff — as well as students and families. With bus routes and transportation services being cut or reduced due to the driver shortage, school staff and transportation teams are often left working to keep things running as smoothly as possible day in and day out. And the driver shortage and the resulting decrease in transportation services means many families are being left to figure out how to get their kids to school on their own.

In addition to reducing transportation services, school leaders are, out of necessity, redirecting resources from other areas to address urgent, day-to-day transportation challenges. Roughly 55% of survey respondents say staff in their district are being pulled away to manage school car lines at drop-off and pickup. With more parents than ever driving their kids to and from school each day (due at least partly to bus services being reduced and limited carpool options), school car lines can become congested, causing delays and frustration for both parents and staff.

More than a third (38%) of survey respondents say their staff is taking time away from core responsibilities or education hours to drive school buses or vans. This less than ideal but necessary shift in resource utilization can affect other school programs and services while also adding pressure to staff, potentially increasing stress and lowering morale.

Are school staff in your district taking time away from core responsibilities or education hours to drive school buses or vans? If so, how much of a problem has this been?



Although the school bus driver shortage was chosen by survey respondents as the number one factor (87%) negatively impacting school transportation operations today, it is not the only area of focus. Also top of mind is meeting the individualized transportation needs of students (46%), which can require special accommodations for students with disabilities and flexible scheduling options for highly mobile populations such as students living in foster care or youth experiencing homelessness. Not surprisingly, 41% of survey respondents report that funding constraints continue to pose a significant hurdle when it comes to effectively managing school transportation operations.

Routing difficulties are also complicating matters — an issue that is becoming even more pressing for districts as they struggle to optimize routes to reduce travel time for students, decrease costs, and maximize bus utilization. **This year, 27% of survey respondents indicated that routing difficulties are negatively impacting district transportation operations, up from 16% last year.**

“We are short sub-drivers that can take over when a driver takes an activity trip. We now just combine routes or run one late.”

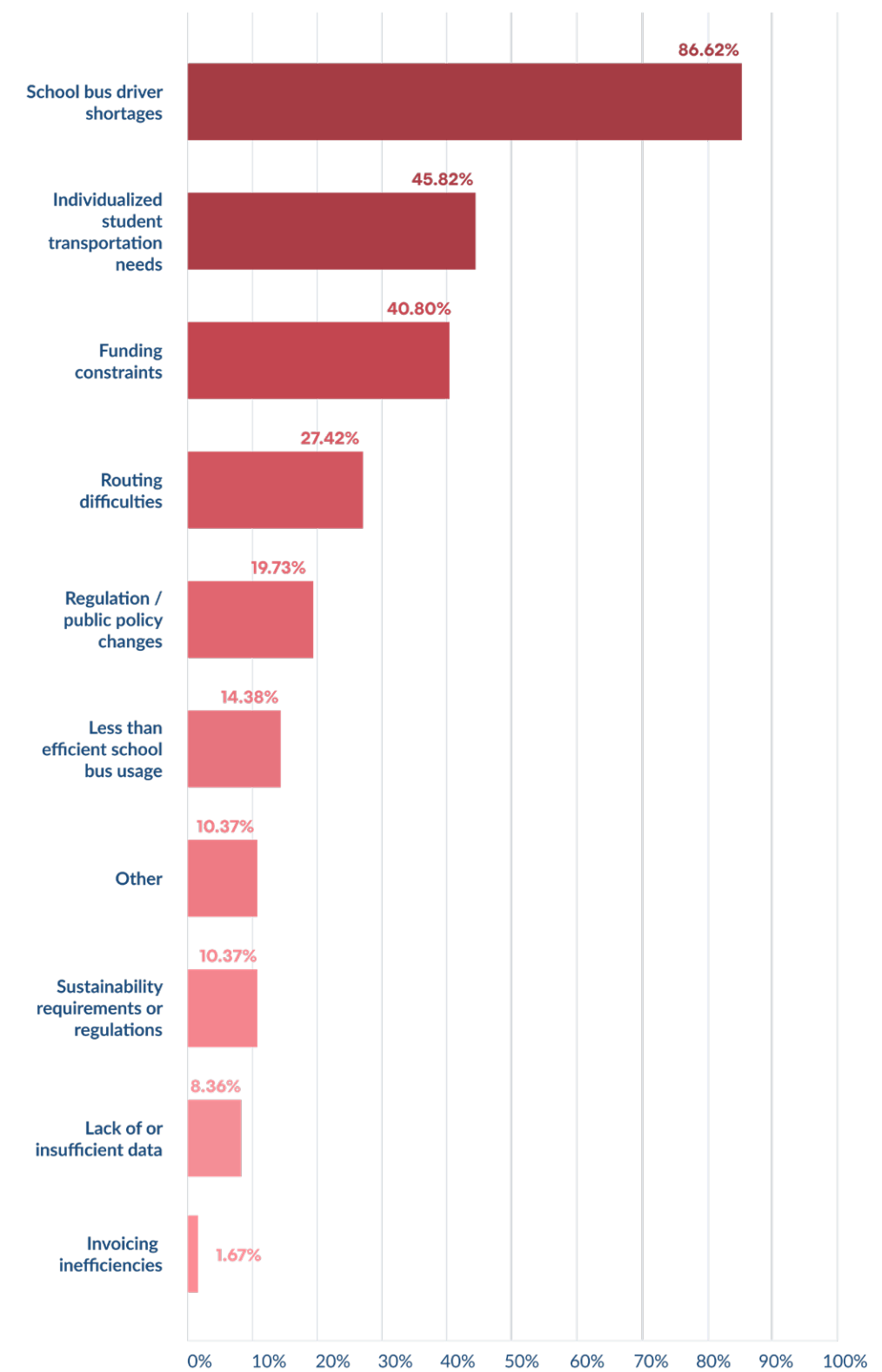
87%

of school leaders say the school bus driver shortage is the number one factor negatively impacting school transportation

27%

of school leaders indicated routing difficulties are negatively impacting district transportation operations, up from 16% last year

Please mark all the factors that you believe have had a negative impact on your district’s transportation operations.





TRANSPORTATION FOR VULNERABLE STUDENT POPULATIONS

Access to reliable transportation to and from school is the cornerstone to educational equity, as it enables every student to attend school regularly. To that end, district and school leaders and transportation staff are focused on supporting all students, including those who have unique needs such as children experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, or with disabilities. Of course, schools are legally required to provide transportation for these populations, but doing so consistently and cost-effectively can be challenging, especially with the current pressures on the entire school transportation system.

According to this year's survey, more than four out of five (83%) respondents are concerned that transportation challenges, such as the bus driver shortage and budget cuts, will hinder their ability to provide dependable transport for vulnerable students who have specialized needs — with 40% being very concerned. Additionally, over two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents believe that students with higher rates of chronic absenteeism — especially those in vulnerable situations — will miss more school if access to reliable transportation is harder to come by.

“If these kids actually get a ride to and from school, they are in a safe location, with food and people who care about them.”

83%

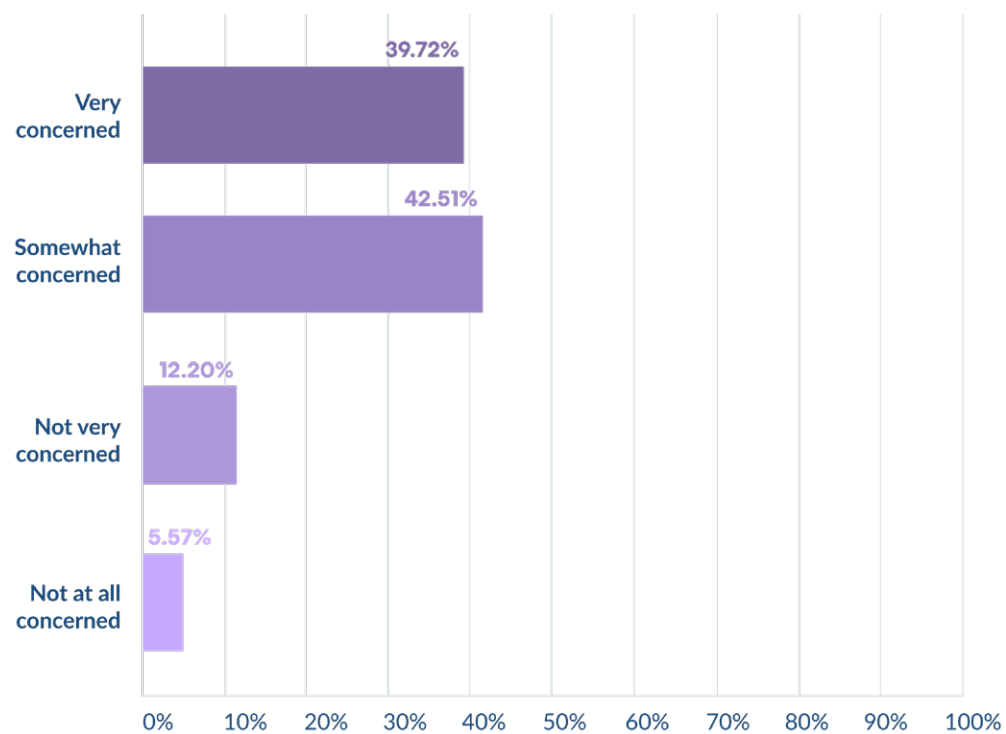
of school leaders are concerned that bus driver shortages and budget cuts will hinder their ability to provide dependable transportation for vulnerable students

68%

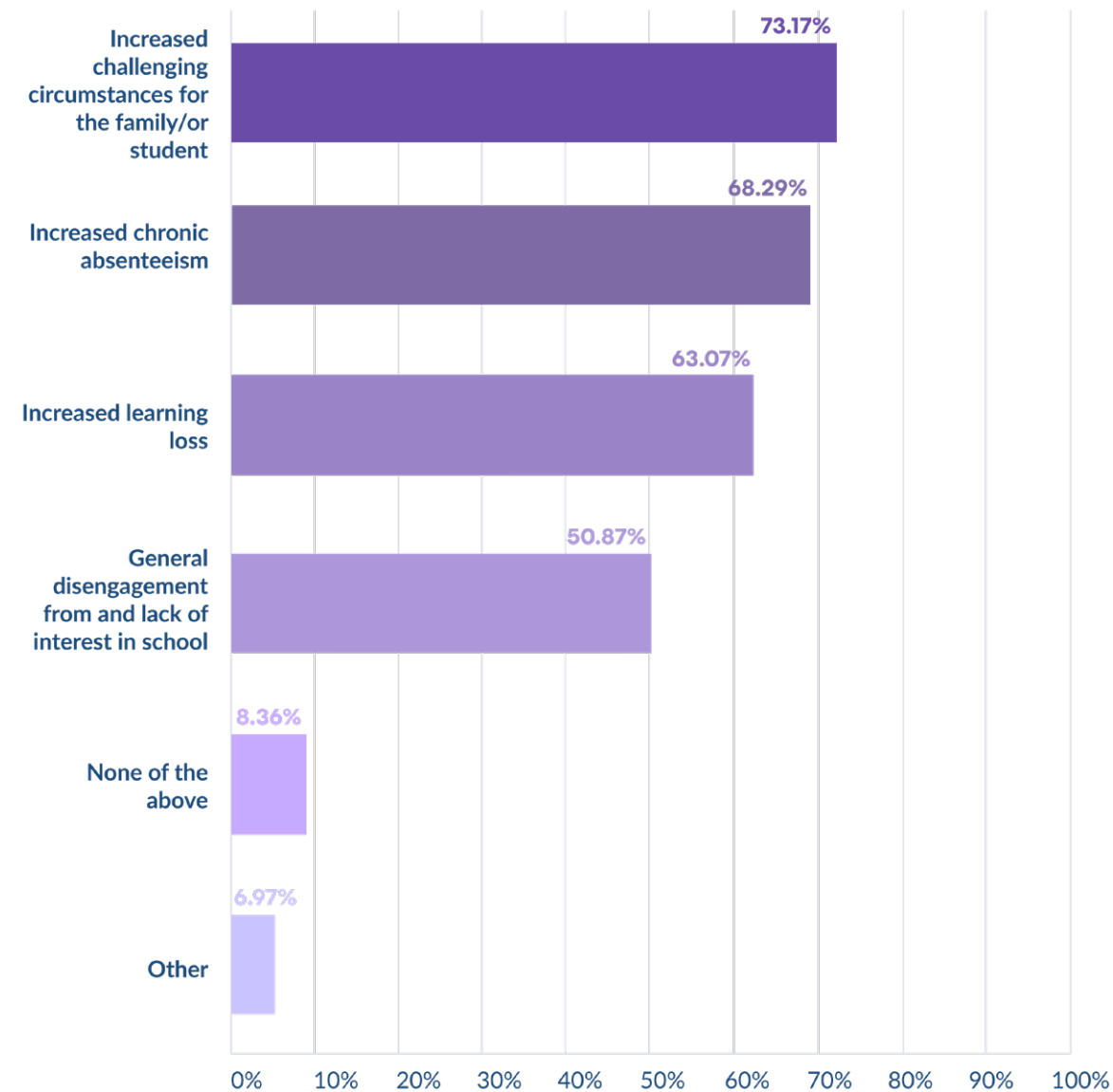
of school leaders believe students with higher rates of chronic absenteeism will miss more school if access to reliable transportation is harder to come by

Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents (73%) report that issues providing reliable school transportation for children experiencing homelessness, living in foster care, or with disabilities could further complicate the already tough situations faced by these students and their families. A significant majority (68%) confirmed reduced transportation services could lead to higher rates of chronic absenteeism among vulnerable students. Additionally, 63% of school leaders are concerned that transportation issues for these students could lead to learning loss, while 51% note a potential negative impact on student motivation and academic engagement.

What is your level of concern re: school transportation challenges (i.e. bus driver shortages, budget cuts, etc.) making it more difficult to provide reliable rides to and from school for children experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or with disabilities?



If it becomes more difficult to provide reliable rides to and from school for children experiencing homelessness, in foster care, or with disabilities, what negative impacts do you think could occur?





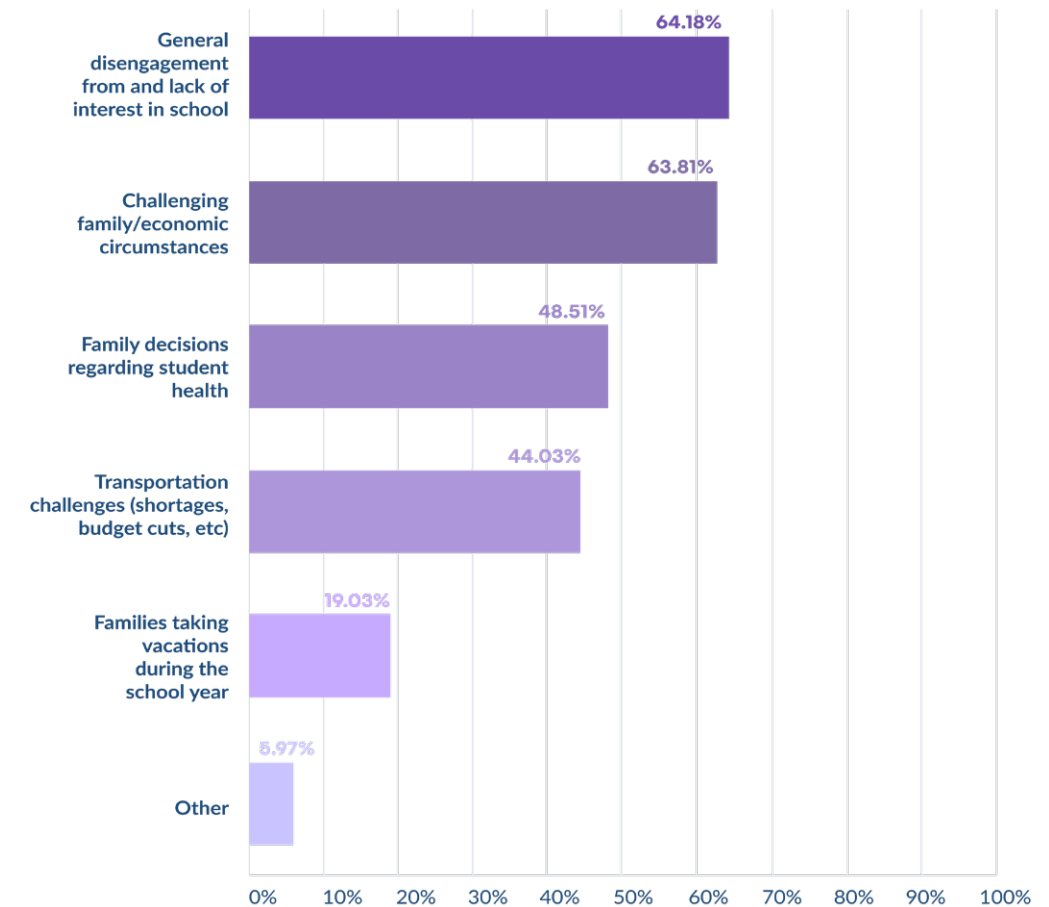
Detroit Public Schools Community District saw a 14 percentage point reduction in chronic absenteeism by combining [HopSkipDrive](#) with other solutions to improve attendance rates.

TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES LINKED TO CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Since the pandemic, schools and districts across the country have been facing high rates of chronic absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of the school year.³ More than one in five (21%) respondents to this year’s State of School Transportation survey reported that transportation challenges are the biggest contributor to chronic absenteeism in their schools.

Survey respondents ranked a number of factors they believe are contributing to the current chronic absenteeism crisis, with 64% of respondents putting student disengagement and a lack of interest in school at the top of the list. Challenging family and economic circumstances also ranked high (64%), followed by family decisions about student health (49%), and transportation challenges (44%).

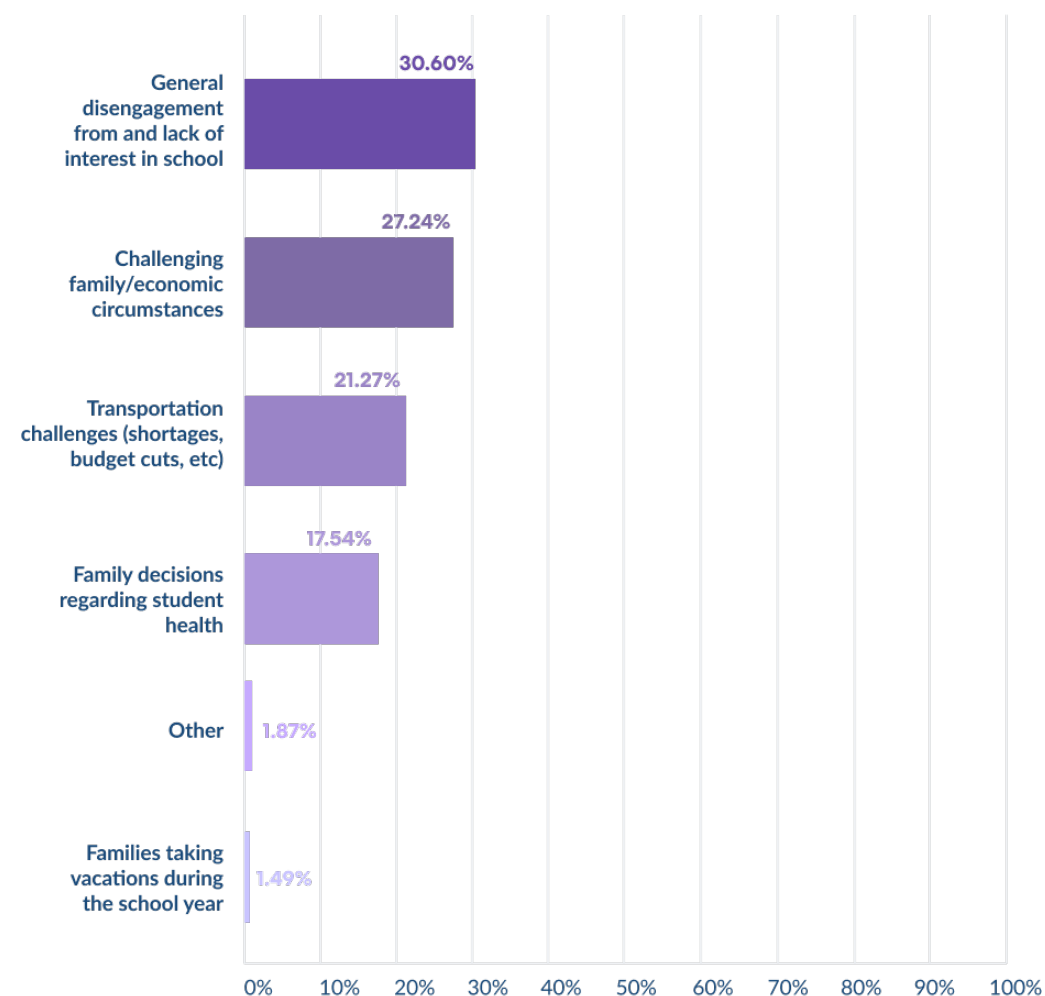
As you know, many school districts are facing higher rates of chronic absenteeism compared to before the pandemic. Which of the following factors do you believe contributes to chronic absenteeism?



³ The New York Times, “Why School Absences Have ‘Exploded’ Almost Everywhere,” by Sarah Mervosh and Francesca Paris. March 29, 2024.



Which of the same factors do you believe contributes the most to chronic absenteeism?



As indicated by this year’s survey results, school districts are utilizing a wide range of approaches in an attempt to improve attendance. From providing extra services to families such as proactive parent and caregiver outreach and expanded in-school health offerings, to taking disciplinary actions against students, and adjusting school schedules, many districts are striving to find the right mix of strategies to effectively combat absenteeism.

Transportation can be a highly effective strategy for addressing chronic absenteeism, as highlighted by The White House⁴ and other experts. According to this year’s survey, 26% of respondents have increased their transportation capacity by expanding bus routes and operations in an attempt to combat absenteeism in their districts.

⁴ The White House, “Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions and Resources for Increasing Student Attendance and Engagement as Part of the White House Every Day Counts Summit.” May 15, 2024.

By using this approach, school districts are ensuring that more students have reliable access to transportation, which is crucial for consistent attendance. However, expanding bus operations is not always an option for districts facing driver or budgetary constraints.

“Parents not finding other ways to get their children to school [causes chronic absenteeism].”

While many districts already utilize supplemental transportation solutions like HopSkipDrive to address gaps and cater to specialized populations, 13% of respondents to this year’s survey revealed they are turning to these flexible transportation solutions specifically to combat absenteeism.



SUSTAINABILITY AND BUS ELECTRIFICATION

Environmental initiatives, such as investing in electric and alternative-fuel buses, are gaining traction in school transportation, but efforts to transition to sustainable transit are still in the very early stages. Despite billions in federal grant programs and increased media attention, electrifying school bus systems is not — according to this year's survey results — currently top of mind for school and district leaders, who are instead focused on meeting the individual needs of all students to ensure they can get to and from school safely each and every day.

In fact, only 33% of school leaders and transportation staff who were surveyed are even aware of their district having state or local sustainability mandates, goals, or reporting requirements. Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents say that electrifying their bus fleet is not very, or not at all, important.

The unfortunate reality is that electrifying school buses is a high-cost and resource-intensive endeavor, and it will therefore take years to fully transition an entire bus fleet to electric vehicles. Instead, many districts have been able to meet climate goals by optimizing their routes and supplementing with sedan-based transportation, which is easier to electrify. In fact, based on HopSkipDrive's work with one district, partnering with HopSkipDrive can be equivalent to electrifying 40% of a district's fleet.

Only

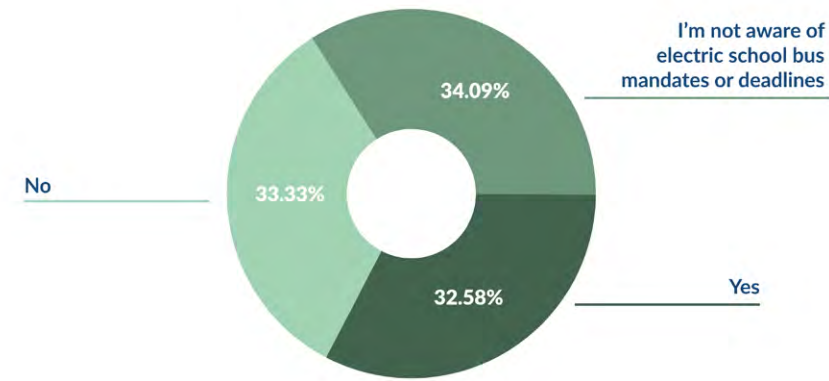
33%

of school leaders and transportation staff are even aware of their district having state or local sustainability mandates, goals, or reporting requirements

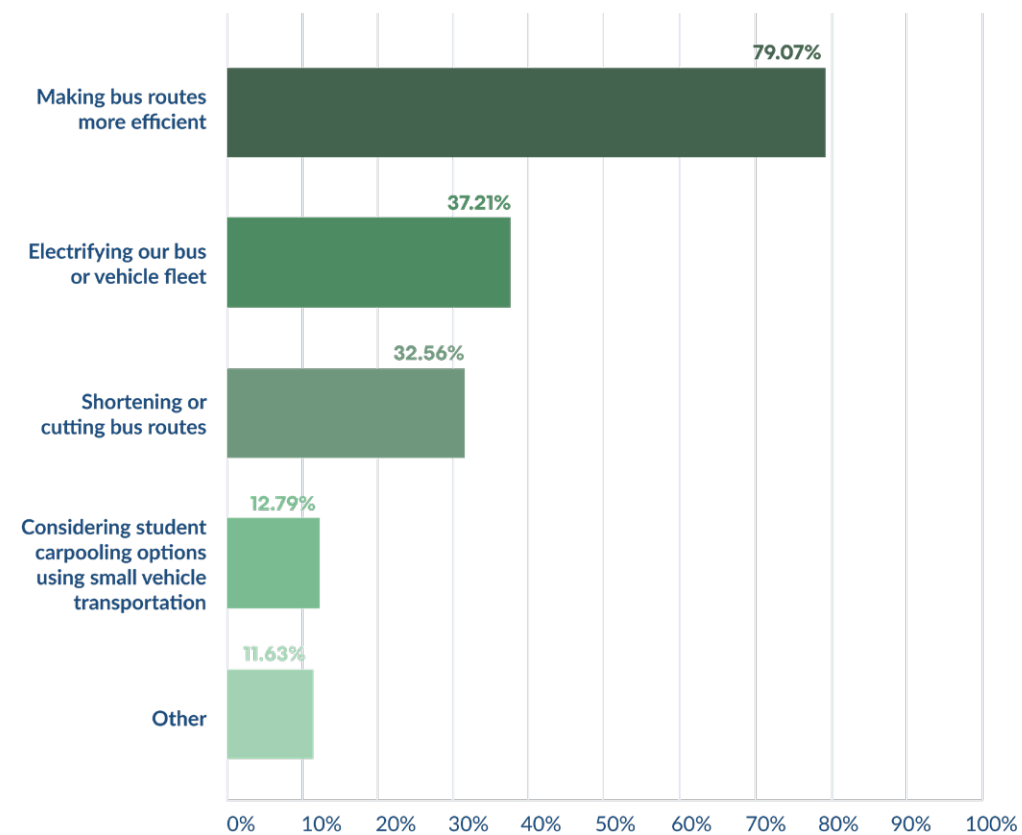
73%

of school leaders say that electrifying their bus fleet is not very, or not at all, important

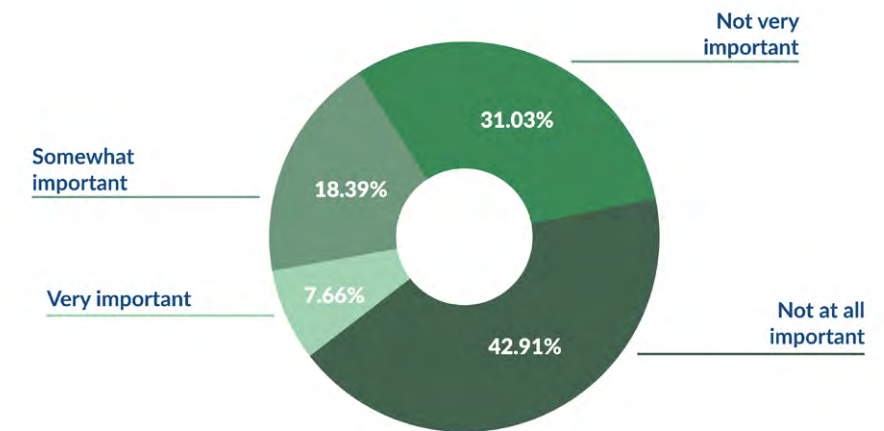
Does your district have state or local sustainability mandates, goals, or reporting requirements (i.e. reduction in carbon emissions, increase in electric mileage, bus or vehicle usage, etc.)?



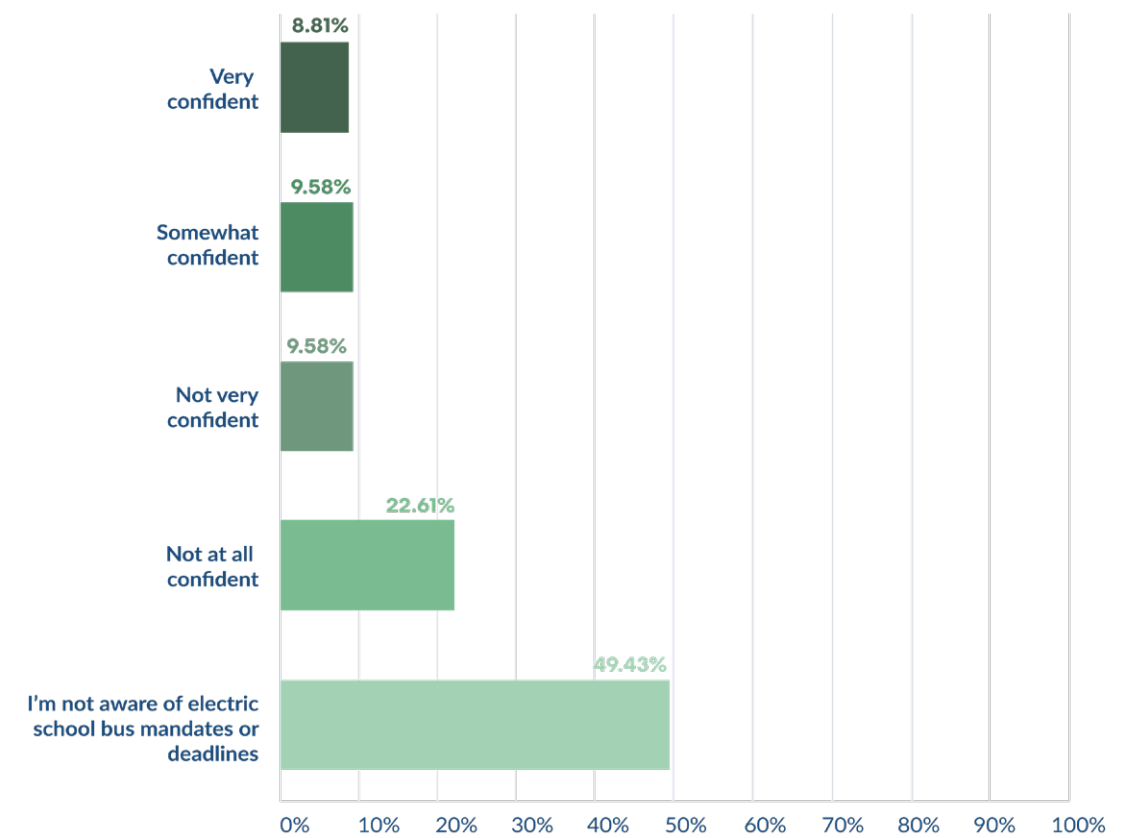
Please mark all the elements you have used to respond to sustainability mandates or reporting for transportation.



How important to you and your district leaders is electrifying your school bus fleet?



If electric school bus mandates exist for your district, how confident are you that your school or district will be able to meet them by set deadlines?





PARENTS WEIGH IN ON SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION TODAY

School transportation is a vital part of the education system that provides convenience and peace of mind for parents and families. When the school transportation system is working well, children arrive safely and on time to school, leaving parents to focus on work and other responsibilities. When transportation services become limited due to bus driver shortages, budgetary constraints, and other factors, however, it can cause significant disruption in the lives of families.

In recent years, the way kids are getting to and from school has undergone significant changes. The traditional reliance on the yellow school bus is diminishing — a trend backed up by data from this year’s parents’ survey, as well as the National Household Travel Survey.⁵ This shift is having a very real impact on parents,

who are increasingly burdened with the responsibility of arranging alternative transportation. With fewer school buses in operation, parents are facing new challenges in ensuring their children arrive at school safely and on time.

In the diverse landscape of school transportation, it’s important to recognize the varied experiences of all families. A number of parents we surveyed report having no transportation issues and being satisfied with the services provided by their child’s district or school. Other parents indicated they don’t require transportation support because they drive their children to school themselves (62%), they live close enough to the school for their children to walk or bike (15%), their children are old enough to drive on their own (7%), or their children are homeschooled.

⁵ Axios, “How dropping the kids off at school became the norm,” by Shauneen Miranda. February 19, 2024.

15%

of parents say they live close enough to the school for their children to walk or bike

62%

of parents indicated they don’t require transportation support because they drive their children to school themselves

7%

of parents indicated their children are old enough to drive on their own

79%

of parents either drive their children to and from school themselves or say their partner/spouse or another family member does

45%

of parents indicated that longer commute times are affecting their children's experience getting to and from school

In the coming pages, we'll outline data from the survey that explains the high frequency of parents driving their children themselves, how often students are taking the bus or other methods, the impact this has on parents' professional opportunities, and how arranging transportation at back to school stacks up to other stressors.

How Kids Are Getting to School

This year's survey shows that parents are using diverse and often multiple methods to get their kids to school. **Almost 80 percent (79%) of parents either drive their children to and from school themselves or say their partner/spouse or another family member does.**⁶ This is at least in part due to the reduced transportation services being offered; 41% of parents say their school district has eliminated or reduced school bus services. And when the school bus isn't available, many parents may struggle to find alternative transportation.

Of the parents we surveyed, **45% indicated that longer commute times are affecting their children's experience getting to and from school**, as are changing bell schedules (33%) and expanded walk boundaries (19%). All of these issues place additional pressure on parents to find reliable and safe transportation for their children.

⁶ The 79% figure was calculated by adding the number of respondents who selected "parent/spouse or another family member drives them" with the number of respondents who selected "I drive them." That total was divided by the total number of respondents to this question.



While 82% of parents say their child has taken the bus to school at some point in time, only 31% of parents report having a child who currently takes the school bus. Other options parents are using to get their kids to school include carpooling with friends or another parent (21%), school-arranged supplemental transportation services like HopSkipDrive (14%), walking or riding a bike (15%), and public transit (11%).

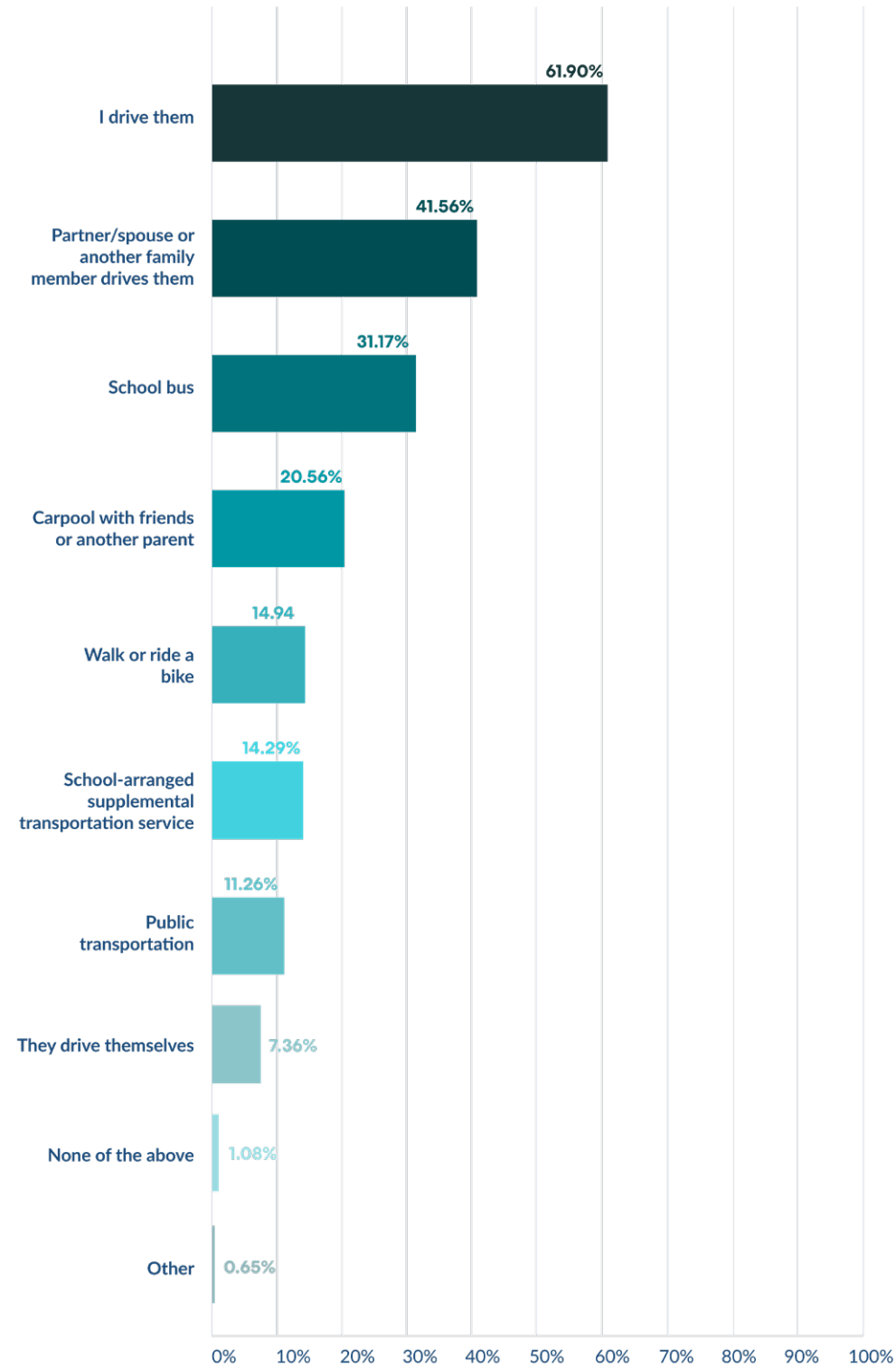
82%

of parents say their child has taken the bus to school at some point in time

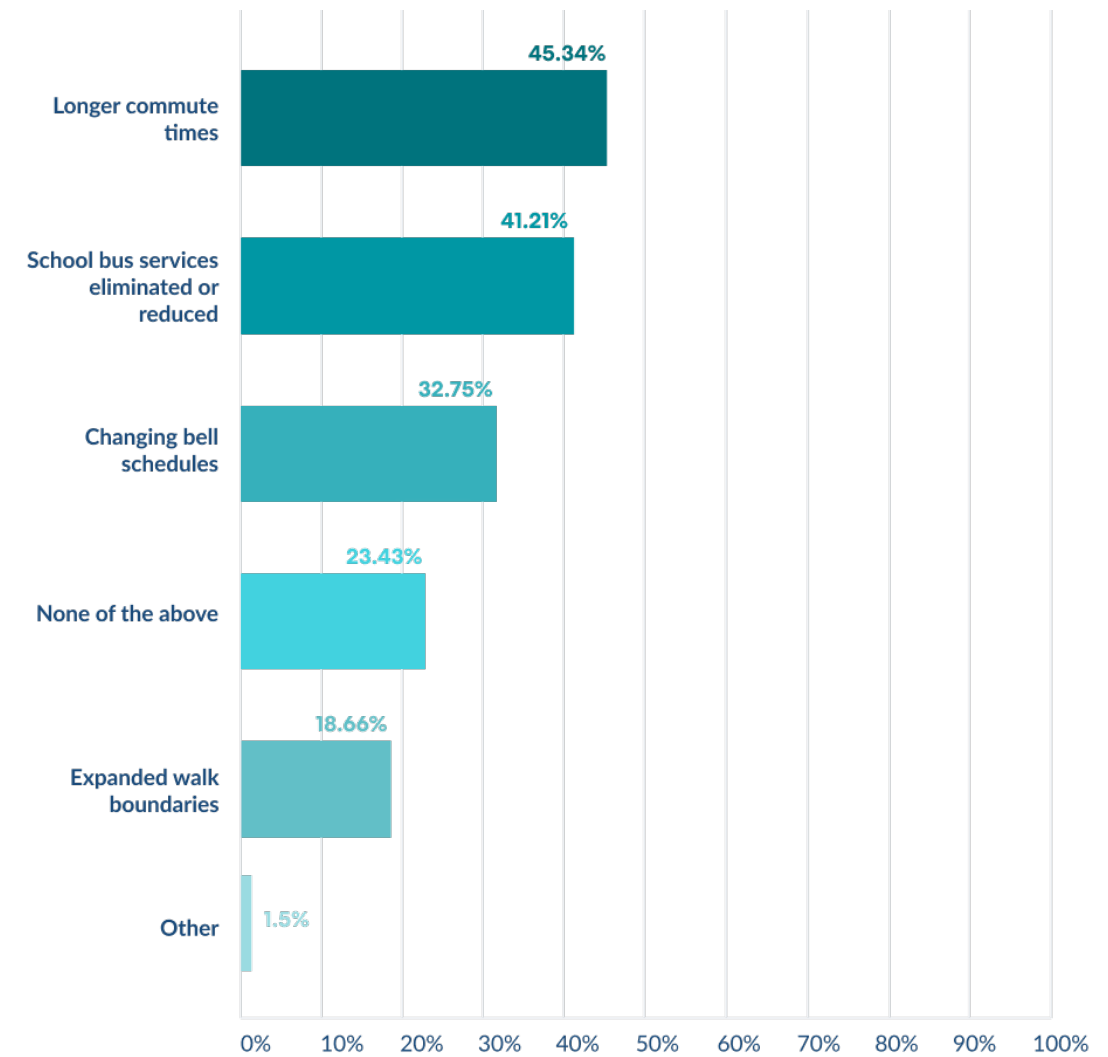
31%

of parents report having a child who currently takes the school bus

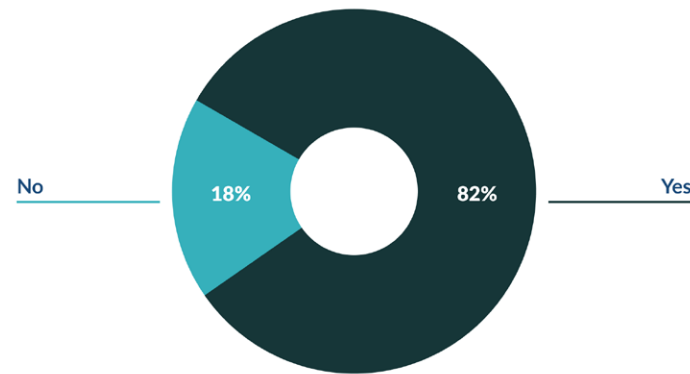
How do your children typically get to and from school? If your children commute using multiple different methods, please select all that apply.



Have any of the following things affected your children's commutes to school?



Have your children ever taken a school bus to or from school?



The Impact of School Transportation on Families

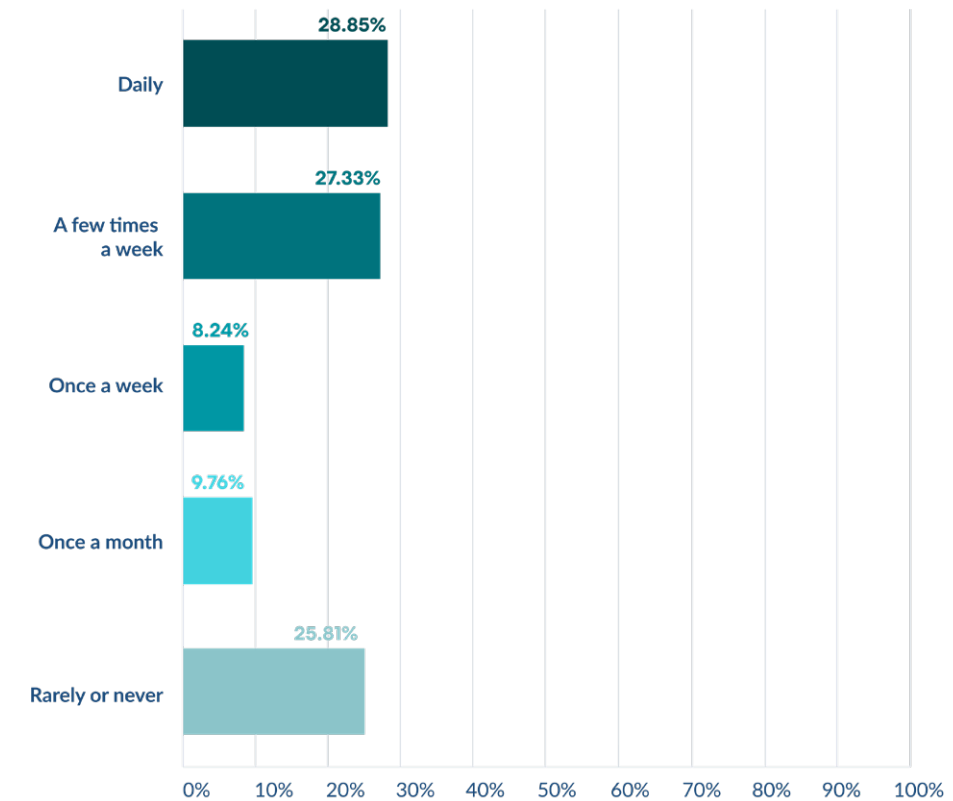
The lack of school transportation services is impacting both parents and children in numerous ways. More than half of parents (64%) say they stress about their child’s transportation needs at least once a week, with 29% reporting they worry about it daily. During the back-to-school season, **30% of parents find organizing school transport to be the most stressful part, second only to purchasing new clothes or school supplies (37%).**

Nearly a third (29%) of parents who are driving their kids to and from school say they spend more than 30 minutes on average each day doing so. Additionally, 41% of parents who transport their kids to school report they are spending more than 10 minutes on average each day navigating and waiting in the pickup or drop-off lane — an experience that 64% of them say is one of the most stressful parts of their day.

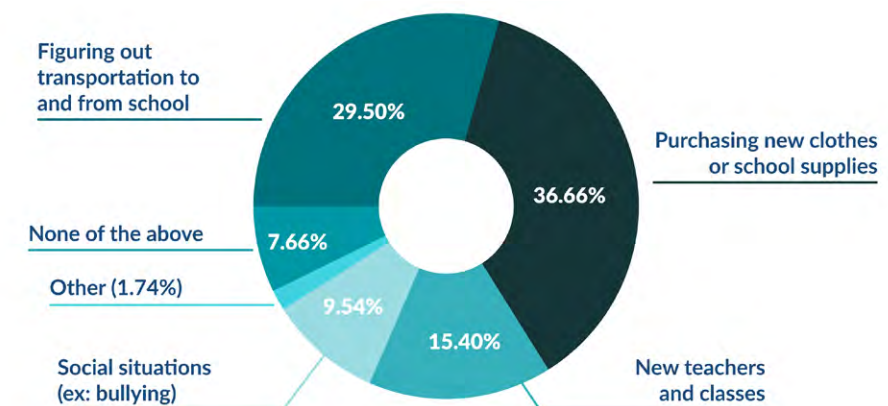
Not surprisingly, **78% of parents wish their school district offered more transportation options.** Without reliable transportation, children can (and unfortunately, sometimes do) miss out on valuable opportunities. **Almost three-fourths (72%) of parents say they would consider sending their children to a different school if easier transportation options were available, while 78% would sign their children up for tutoring programs if their school provided transportation.**

It’s not only educational opportunities that are impacted by access to transportation; **80% of parents surveyed say they would enroll their children in more extracurricular activities** if transportation was available. These data points highlight how crucial transportation is for children’s overall well-being and development.

How often do you find yourself stressing about your child’s transportation needs in general?

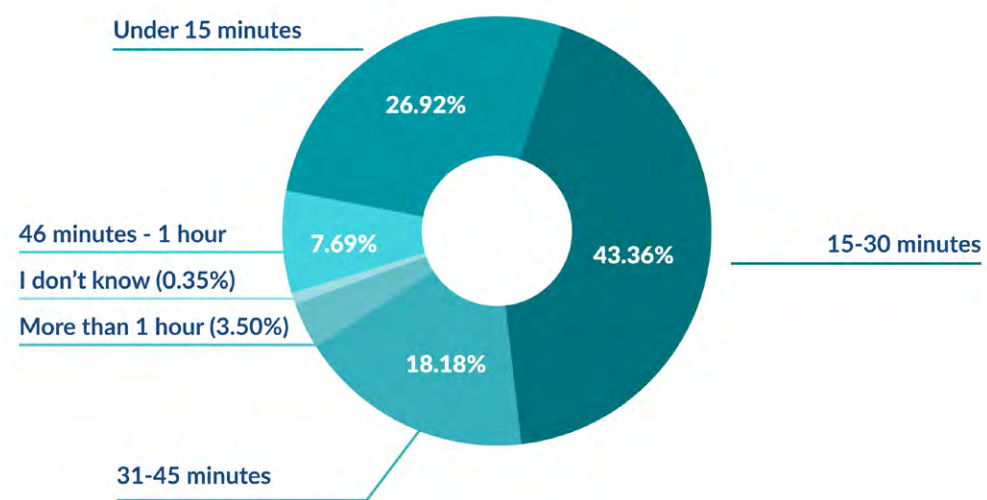


What is the most stressful part of the back-to-school season for you?





When you drive your children to and/or from school, how much time do you typically spend in the car per day (total roundtrip time)?



Tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements by selecting one of the following answers for each of the below questions:

■ Agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Disagree

I'd consider sending my children to a different school if easier transportation options were available



I'd sign my children up for more extracurricular activities if there were transportation options offered by the school district



I'd sign my children up for tutoring if there were transportation options offered by the school district



I wish that my school district offered more transportation options



I would consider paying for school transportation myself if there was a safe, affordable option organized by my school



62%

of parents report that needing to drive their children to and from school or activities has caused them to miss work

56%

of parents say that having to drive their children to and from school has negatively impacted their professional lives

Working Parents Are Disproportionately Affected by Student Transportation Issues

Based on the data we gathered, it's clear that the competing demands of working and having to manage family transportation needs are significantly disrupting the professional lives of parents, leading to missed work and limited career opportunities. **A notable 62% of parents report that needing to drive their children to and from school or activities has caused them to miss work**, while more than half (60%) say these demands have interfered with the ability to seek out or accept new job opportunities.

A significant amount of parents (56%) surveyed say having to drive their children to and from school has negatively impacted their professional life. This responsibility often conflicts with work schedules, forcing parents to arrive late, leave early, or take time off, which can hinder productivity and strain relationships with employers.

“Thankfully, my child can walk and only has three years left.”

Tell us if you agree or disagree or disagree with the following statements by selecting one of the following answers for each of the below questions

Agree
 Somewhat agree
 Disagree

Needing to drive my children to and from school or activities has caused me to miss work



Needing to drive my children to and from school has negatively impacted my professional life



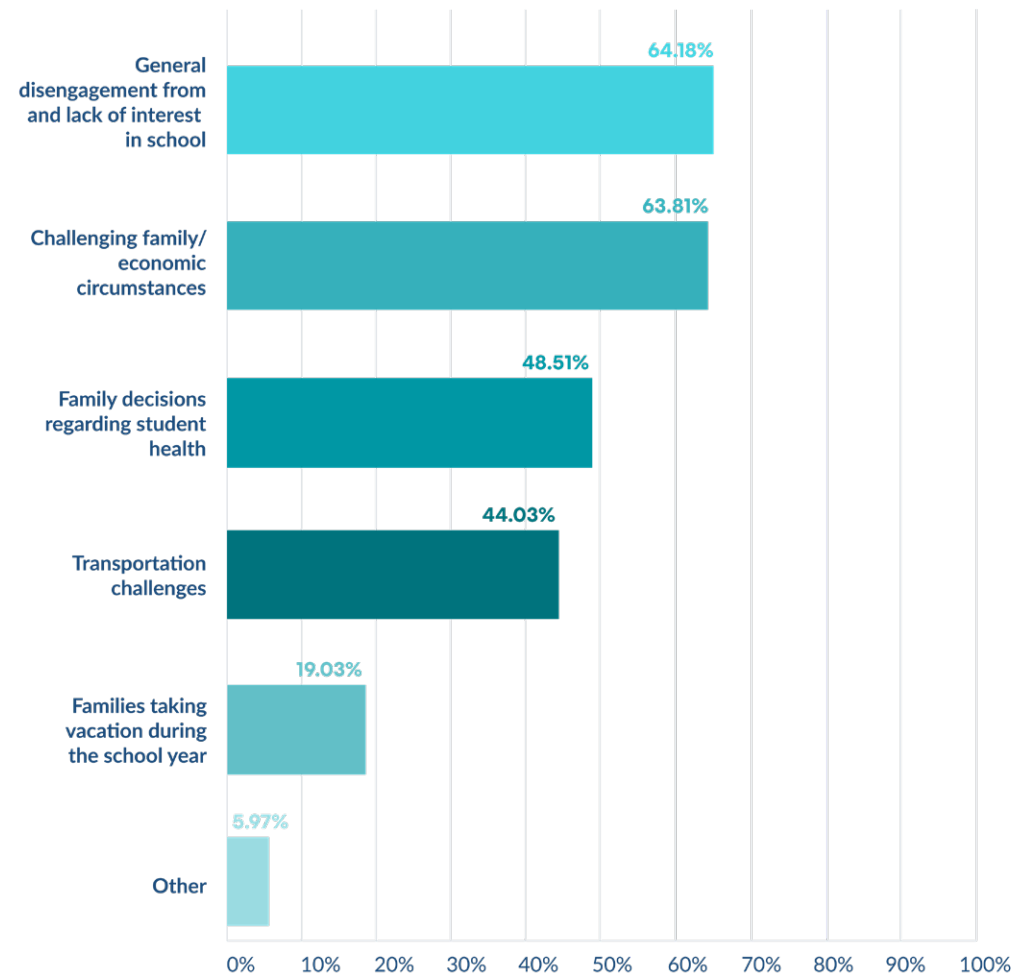
Needing to drive my children to and from school has prevented me from seeking or taking on work opportunities



Navigating the drop-off or pick-up lane when driving my children to or from school is one of the most stressful parts of the day



Which of the following factors do you believe contributes to chronic absenteeism?



Parents Recognize Key Role of Transportation in School Attendance

Parents are increasingly aware of how crucial accessible transportation is to regular school attendance. The majority of parents we surveyed — 63% — believe that if more convenient transportation options were available, their children would miss fewer school days. And 38% report their children missed more than 10 school days on average this past school year.

Survey results indicate widespread concern about chronic absenteeism among parents. A significant 53% of parents say they consider chronic absenteeism a major issue — though only 34% of respondents correctly define chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of school days, indicating a potential gap in understanding this critical topic.

The factors that contributed to children missing school last year, as reported by survey respondents, illustrate the complex challenges families face. Primary reasons parents indicated for student absence include illnesses with fevers (60%); contagious diseases like COVID-19, norovirus, and pink eye (57%), general illness with no fever (38%), safety concerns (31%), mental health issues (22%), family travel outside designated breaks (18%), religious observances (16%), incidents of bullying (13%), and difficulties accessing transportation (10%).

These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of school absenteeism, and emphasize the need for comprehensive support systems to ensure consistent school attendance for all children. Reliable transportation could significantly boost attendance, as it remains a factor behind kids missing school. When students have consistent access to safe and dependable rides to and from school, it removes a major barrier to getting to class. This can be especially beneficial for students who face other challenges that might keep them from attending regularly.

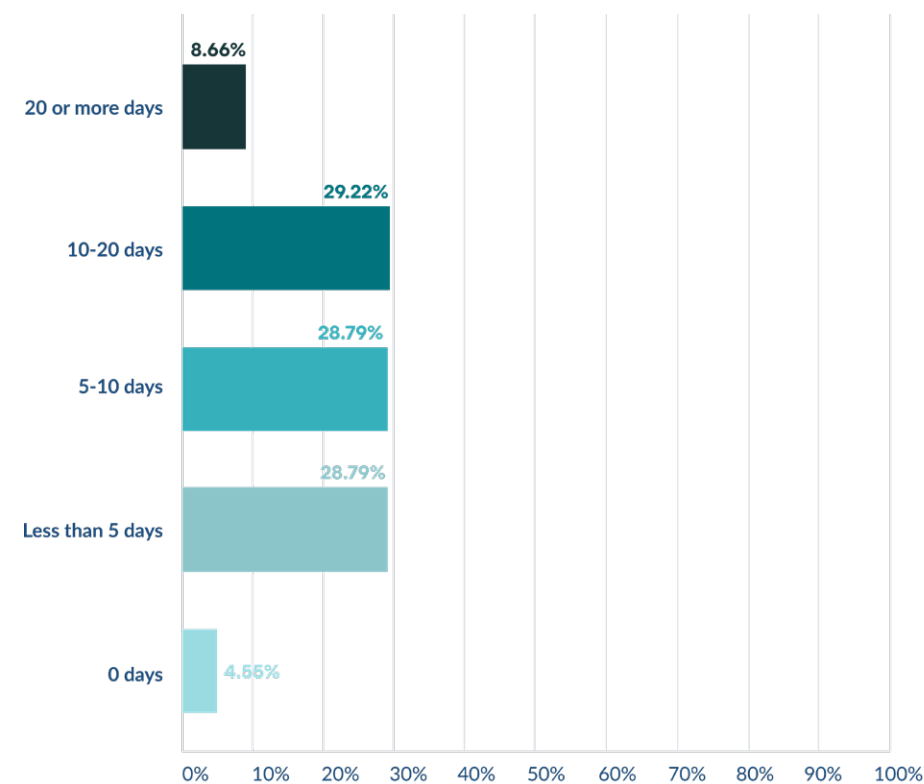
63%

of parents believe that if more convenient transportation options were available, their children would miss fewer school days

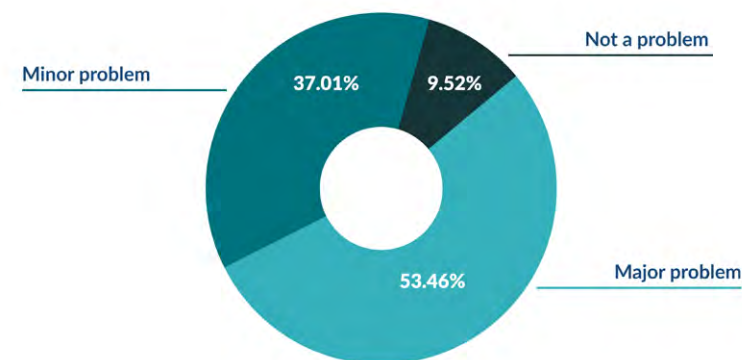
38%

of parents report their children missed more than 10 school days on average this past school year

How many days do you estimate your child missed school this past school year, including excused absences?



Based on what you may know or feel, how much of a problem is chronic absenteeism in schools?



Which of the following, if any, are reasons why you kept your child home from school during the last school year?

- 60%** Illnesses with fevers
- 57%** Contagious diseases like COVID-19, norovirus, and pink eye
- 38%** General illness with no fever
- 31%** Safety concerns
- 22%** Mental health issues
- 18%** Family travel outside designated breaks
- 16%** Religious observances
- 13%** Incidents of bullying
- 10%** Difficulties accessing transportation

Parents were asked to select from a list of 16 reasons, which also included “they ask to stay home,” “relationship or friendship problems,” “need to watch other child(ren) in the household,” “need to work a job,” “other,” “none of the above,” or “housing instability.”

CONCLUSION

On behalf of HopSkipDrive, we want to thank every district or school leader, transportation professional, and parent who took the time to complete our survey and provide unique insights into the current state of school transportation.

Every year, these insights help us better understand the challenges school districts face, the decisions parents must make, and the far-reaching impacts that the way our children get to school has on students, families, schools, and communities.

We look forward to continuing the work we're doing to help districts and schools solve complex transportation challenges so that every student can have access to the education they deserve.





ABOUT HOPSKIPDRIVE

HopSkipDrive is a technology company that solves complex transportation challenges where there is a heightened need for safety, equity, and care.

HopSkipDrive's marketplace arranges care-centered transportation, supplementing other transportation options by connecting kids, older adults, or anyone needing extra support to highly vetted caregivers on wheels, such as grandparents, babysitters, and nurses.

HopSkipDrive also builds software and offers advisory services that solve the biggest transportation challenges facing schools and school districts around the country, including budget cuts, bus driver shortages, and reaching climate goals.

HopSkipDrive partners with school districts, government agencies, and nonprofits including supporting more than 10,000 schools across 13 states. More than 3.3 million rides over 61 million miles have been completed through HopSkipDrive since the company was founded in 2014 by three working mothers.



HopSkipDrive

