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DR. JO WATTS WILLIAMS
School of
Education

North Carolina Opinion Poll

K-12 education

Poll dates: November 19-December 1, 2025

KEY FINDINGS

Poll dates: November 19-December 1, 2025

Margin of error: +/- 4.24%

Grading North Carolina K-12 schools

	<u>A-B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>D-F</u>
Traditional public schools	36%	26%	24%
Private schools	51%	14%	6%
Charter schools	41%	18%	10%
Home schools	40%	13%	14%

“A lot” of the blame for poor school performance

State government	46%
Local school boards	44%
Parents	30%
Principals	23%
Teachers	19%

Fairness of NC school funding distribution

Very/somewhat unfairly	48%
Very/somewhat fairly	26%
Not sure	26%

Top factors contributing to school underperformance

Insufficient funding and resources	60%
Lack of parental involvement	52%
Weak school management	38%
Student challenges outside of school	30%

Average North Carolina teacher salary

Average best guess	\$42,257
Actual	\$58,292

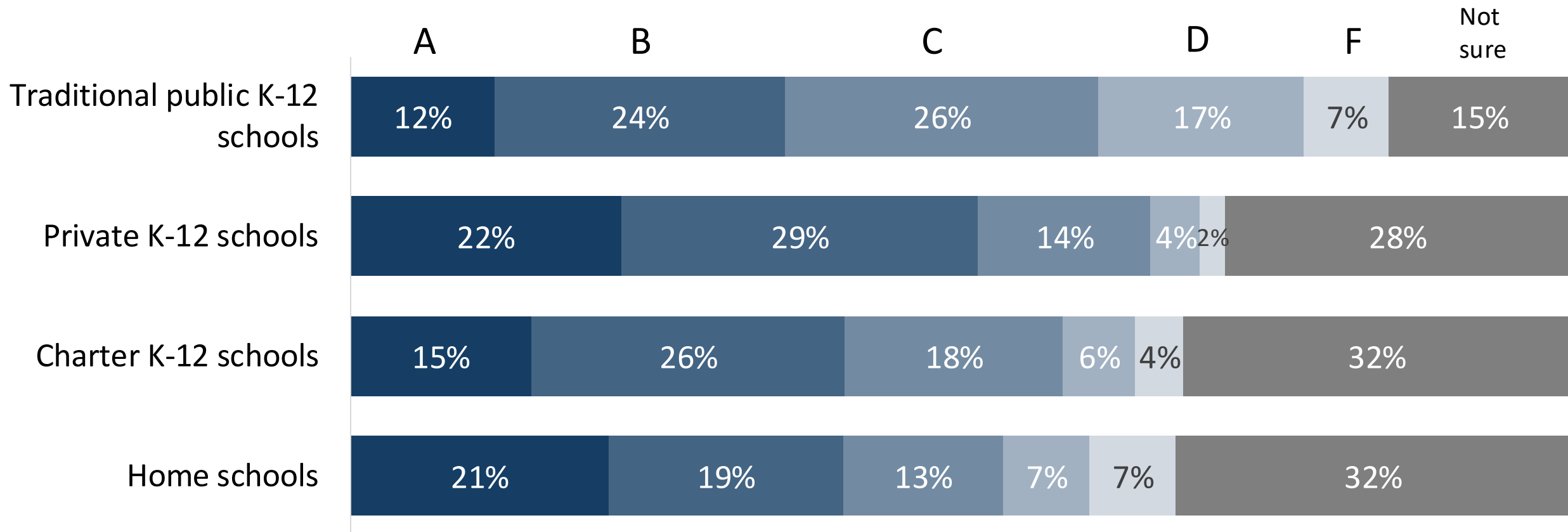
How much respect do K-12 teachers receive from the public?

Great deal/fair amount of respect	48%
Not much/no respect	41%
Not sure	11%



TOPIC: Perception of NC

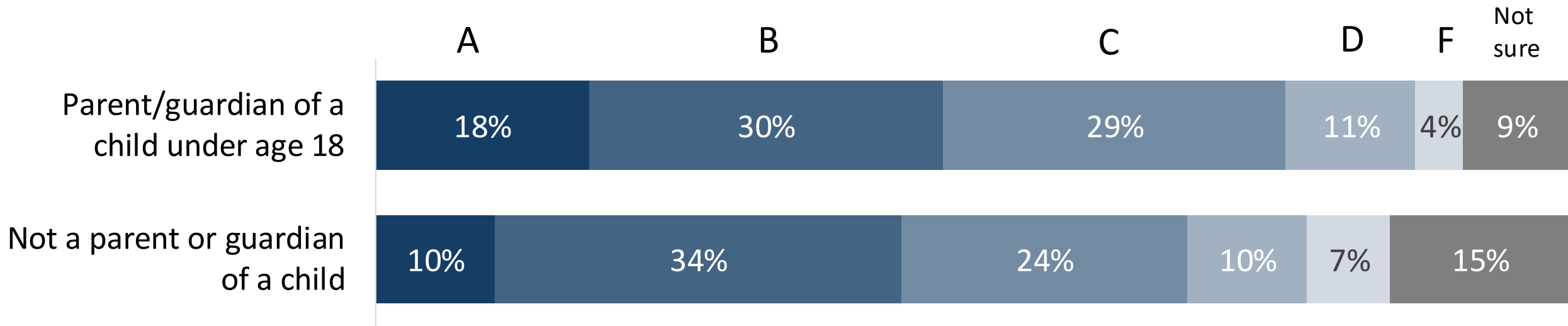
What letter grade would you give to each of the following types of schools in North Carolina?





TOPIC: Perception of NC

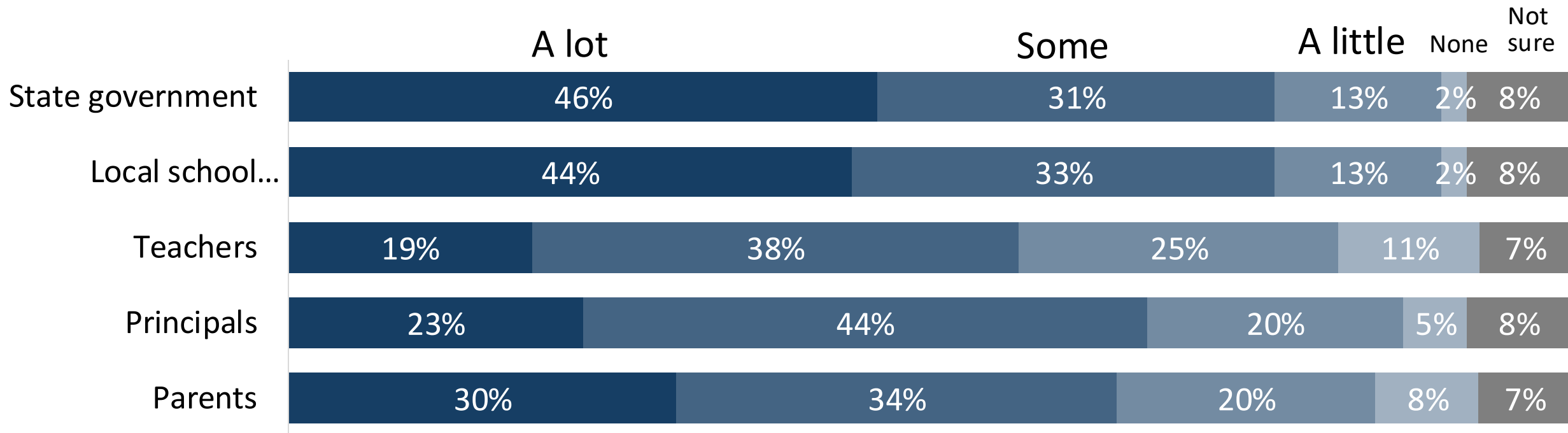
What letter grade would you give the public schools in your local area — the schools a child in your household would attend if you had a child at home?





TOPIC: Perception of NC

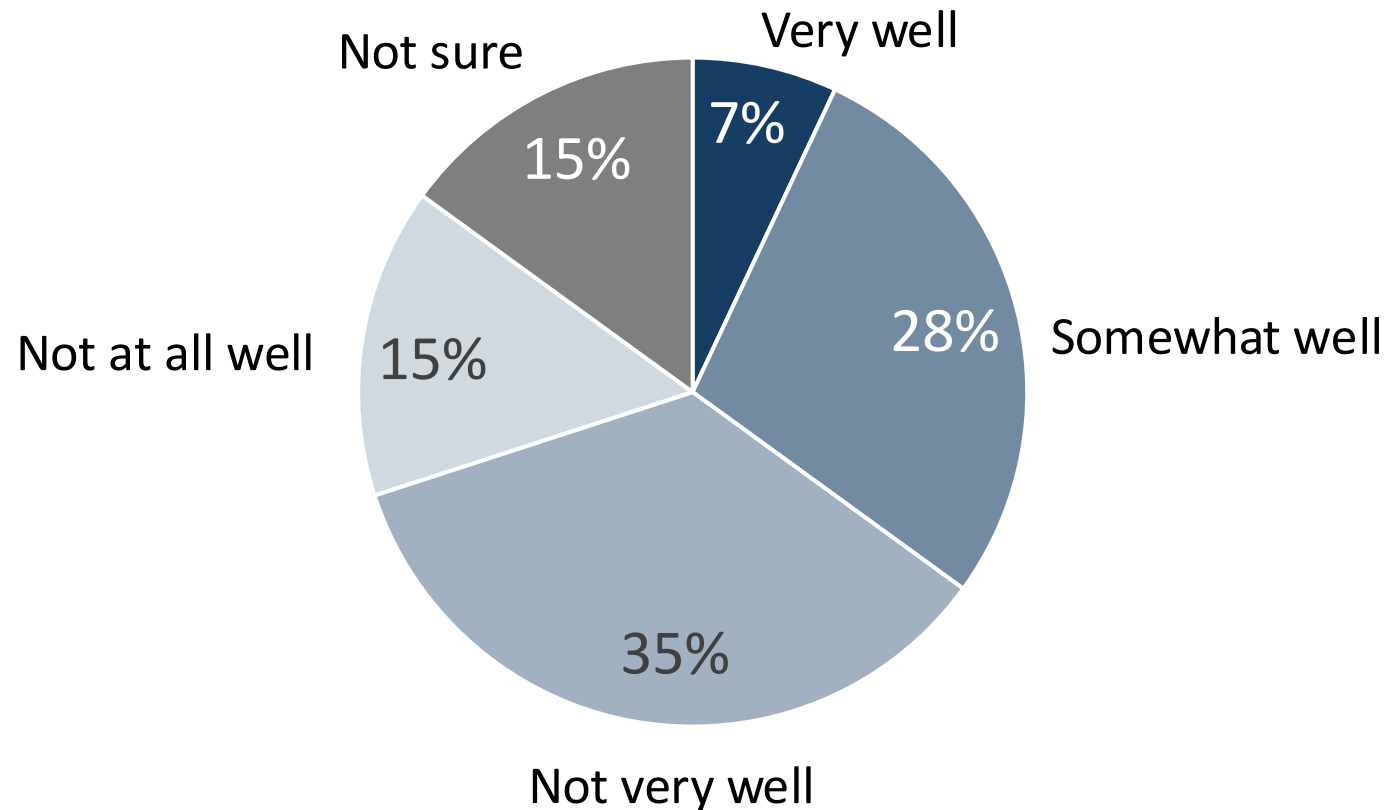
When local public schools in your area perform poorly, how much blame do you think each of the following deserves?





TOPIC: Perception of NC

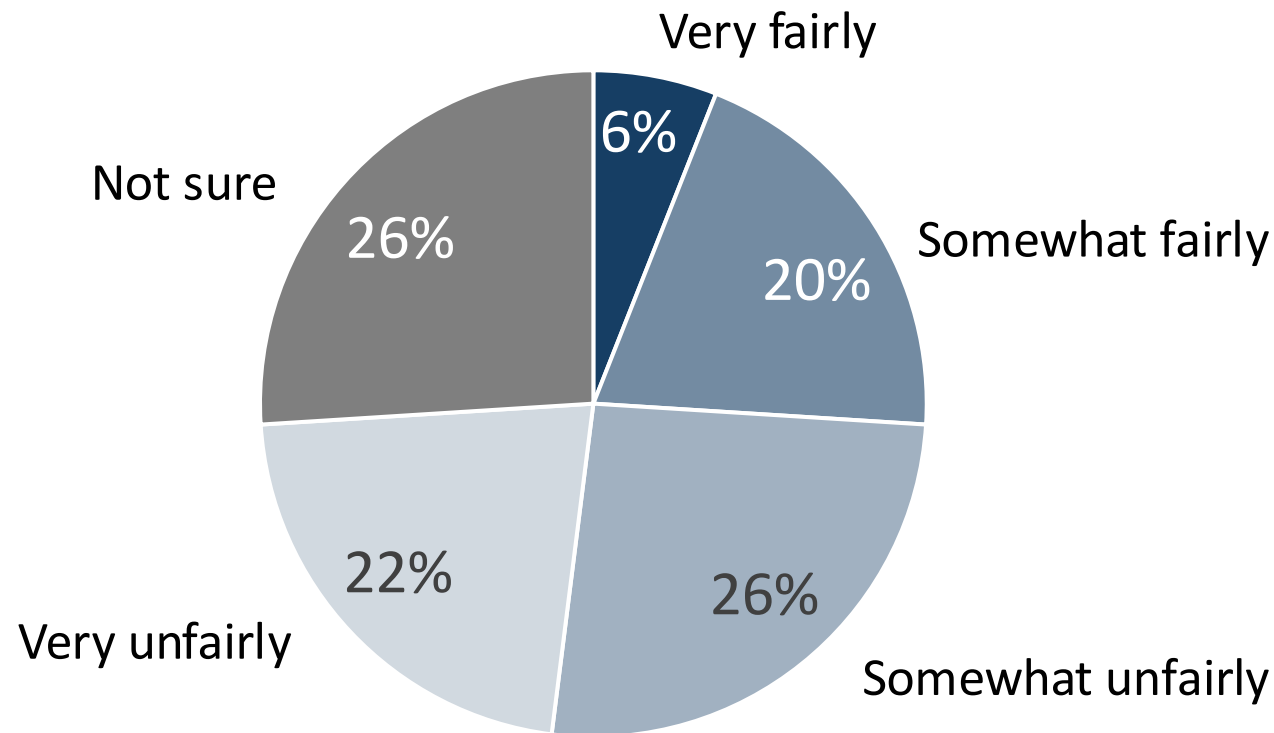
Thinking about North Carolina's K–12 education system overall — how well do you think the state's top education and political leaders work together to improve schools?





TOPIC: Perception of NC

How fairly or unfairly is public school funding in North Carolina distributed across wealthier and less wealthy counties?





TOPIC: Perception of NC

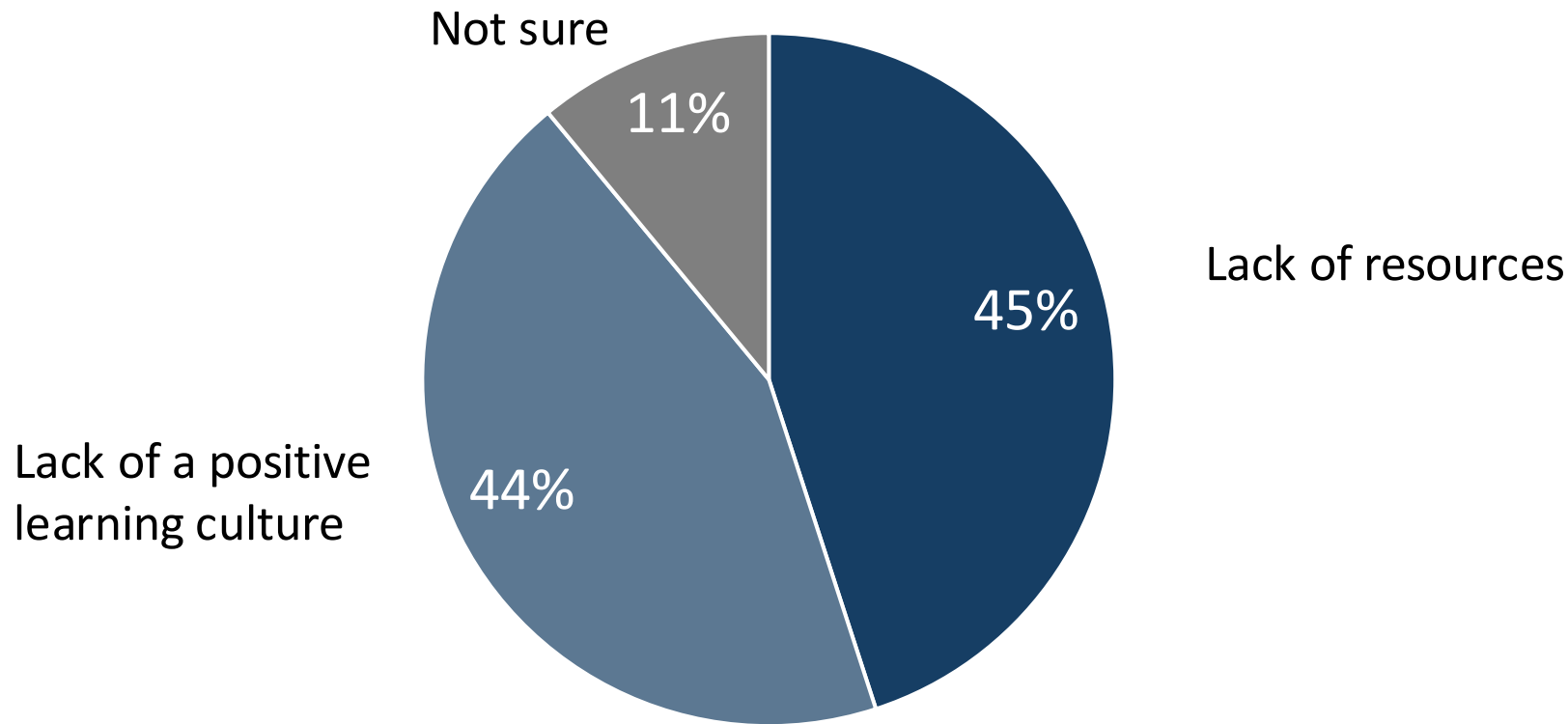
Many factors can contribute to schools underperforming. Please choose up to three that you think are the most common reasons.

Reason for underperformance	Percent choosing this option
Insufficient funding and resources	60%
Lack of parental involvement	52%
Weak school management	38%
Student challenges outside of school	30%
Poorly prepared teachers	26%
Political conflict among leaders	24%
Technological distractions	22%
Broader community or crime problems	18%
None of these issues	5%



TOPIC: Perception of NC

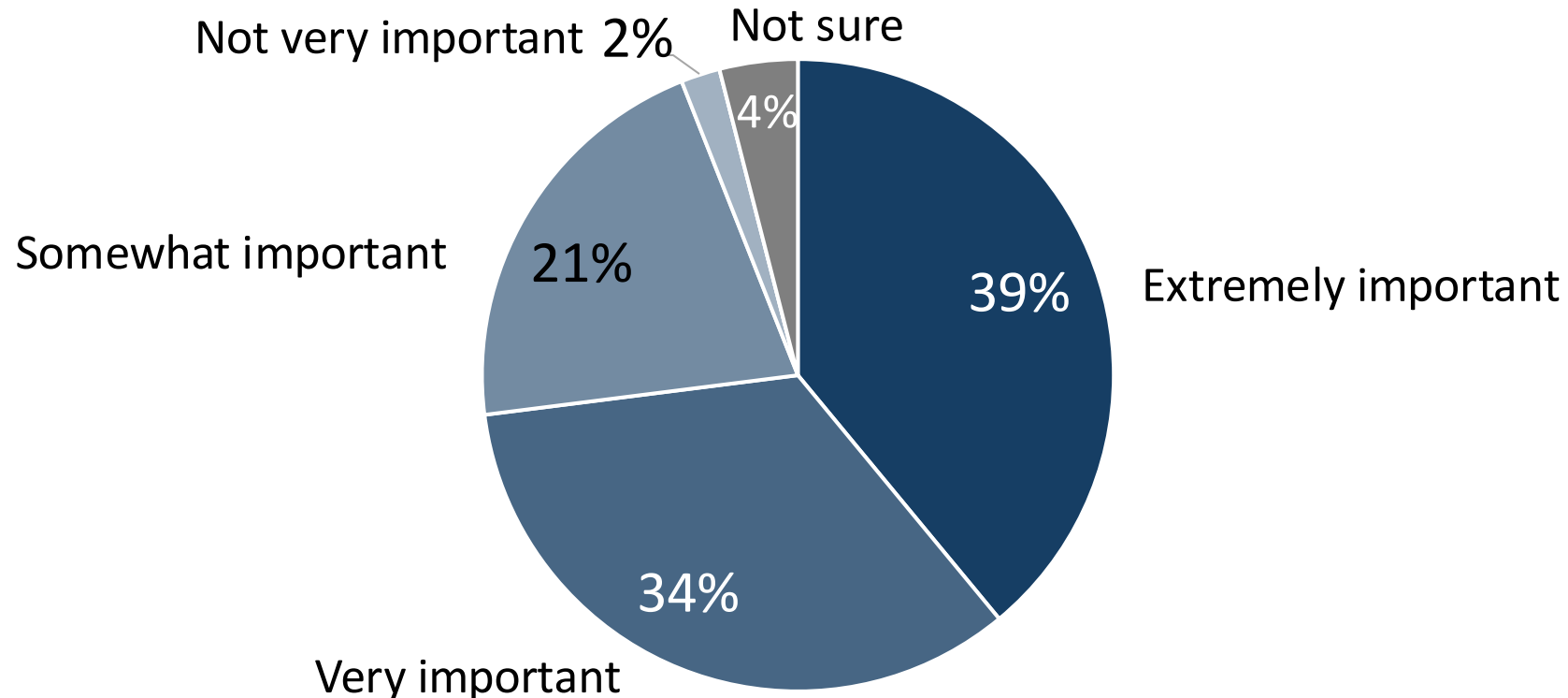
Which of the following is a bigger challenge for struggling schools: A lack of resources (funding, materials or staff)] OR a lack of a positive learning culture (discipline, motivation and community support)?





TOPIC: Perception of NC

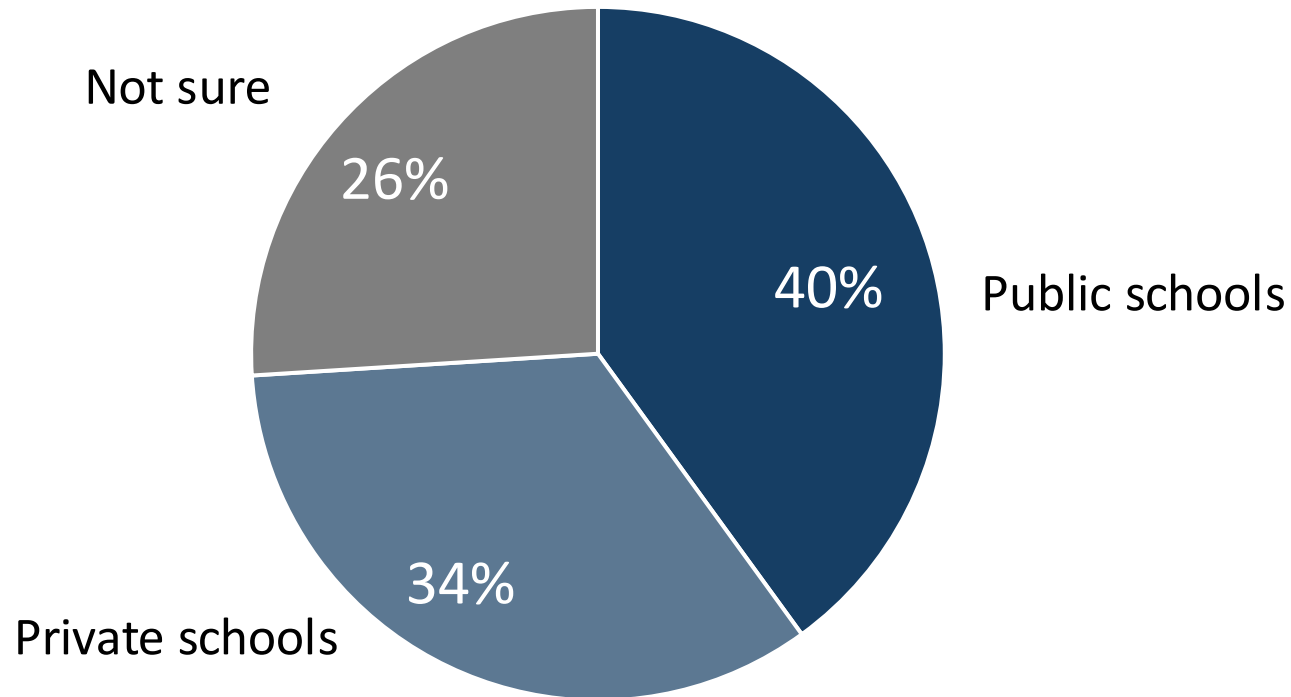
How important are factors outside the classroom — such as poverty, neighborhood safety or family stability — in explaining why some schools underperform?





TOPIC: K-12 schools

As far as you know, are charter schools in North Carolina considered public schools or private schools?

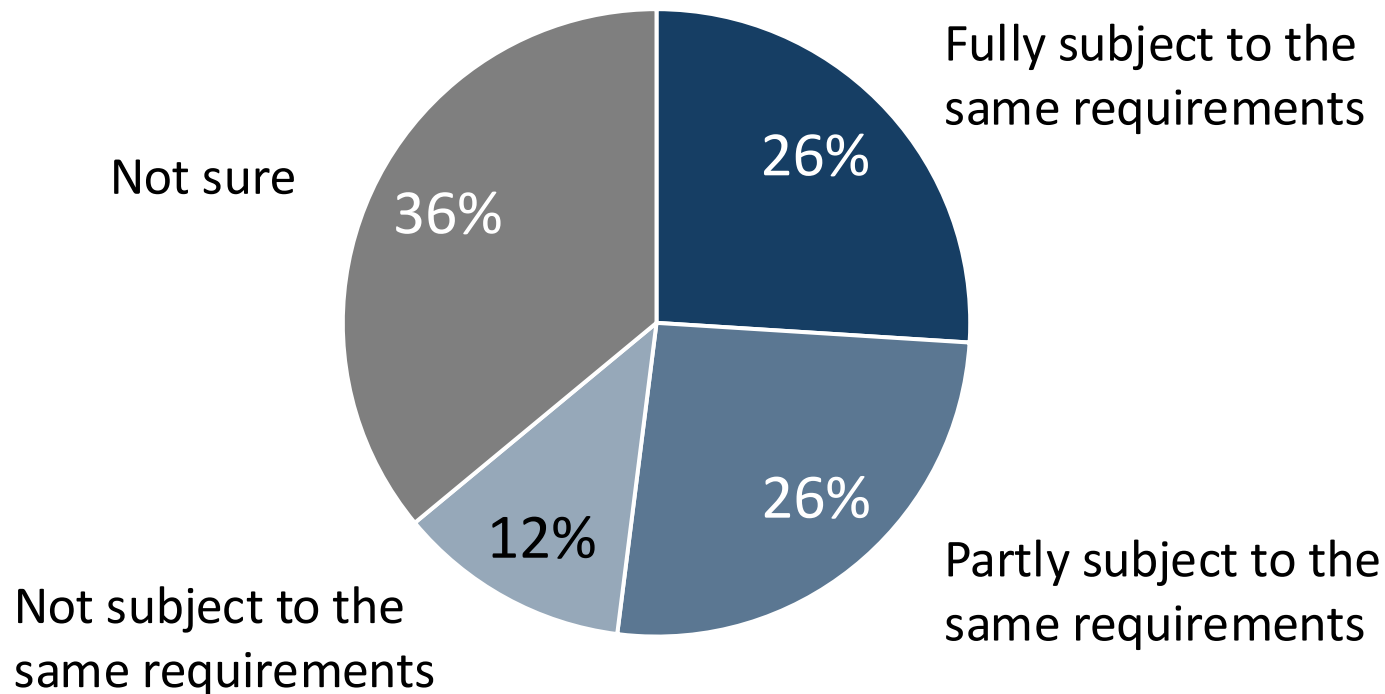


NOTE: Charter schools in North Carolina are considered public schools and funded by state and local tax dollars, just like traditional schools.



TOPIC: K-12 schools

To what extent are charter schools and private schools that receive public voucher funds subject to the same testing and reporting requirements as traditional public schools in North Carolina?

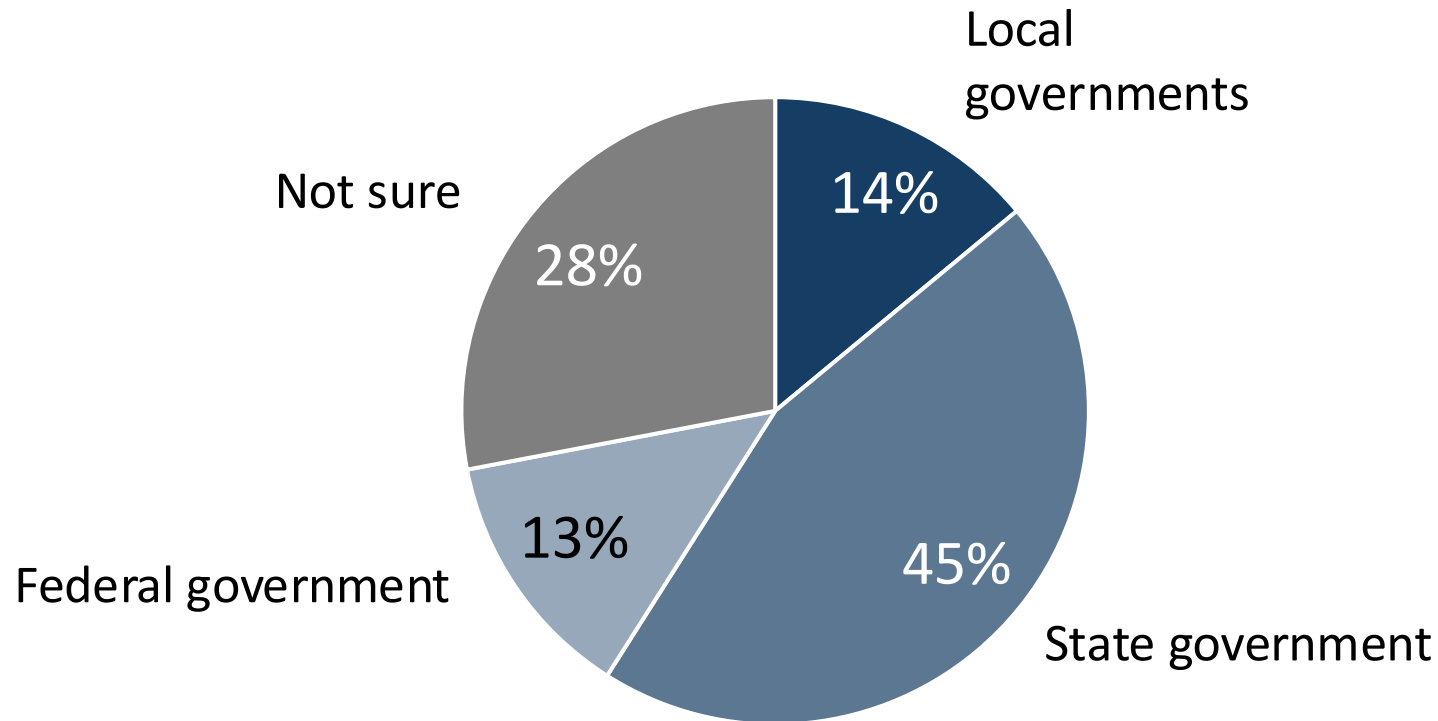


NOTE: Charter schools in North Carolina generally mirror traditional public schools in testing and reporting, whereas private schools taking voucher funds face only partial testing rules and less accountability



TOPIC: K-12 schools

Thinking about how public schools in North Carolina are funded, which level of government provides the largest share of funding for K–12 schools?



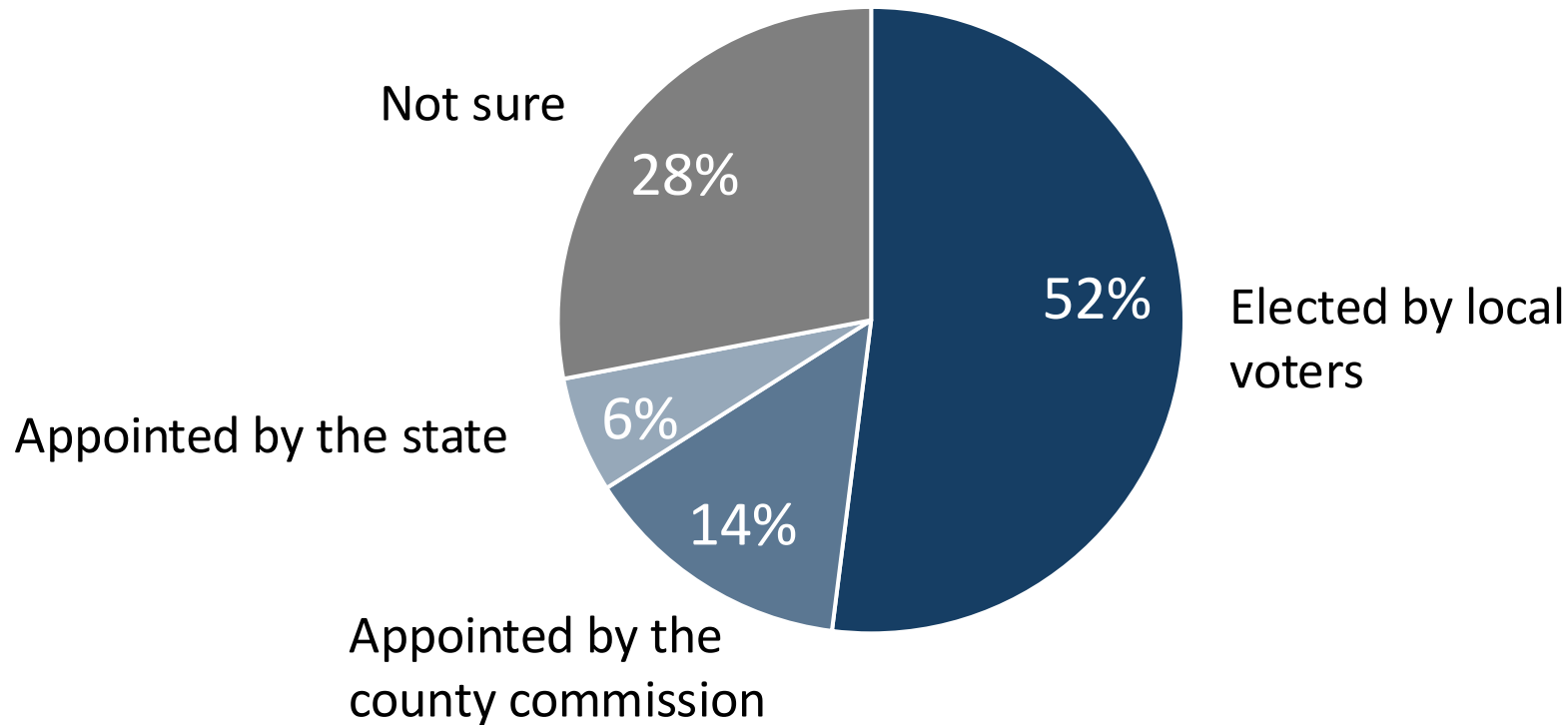
NOTE: For 2022-23, the state funded 61% of instructional expenses, local sources funded 22% and the federal government funded 17%. Local sources funded 99% of capital expenses.

(Source: [Public School Forum](#))



TOPIC: K-12 schools

In general, are most North Carolina local school board members elected by local voters, appointed by the county commission, or appointed by the state?

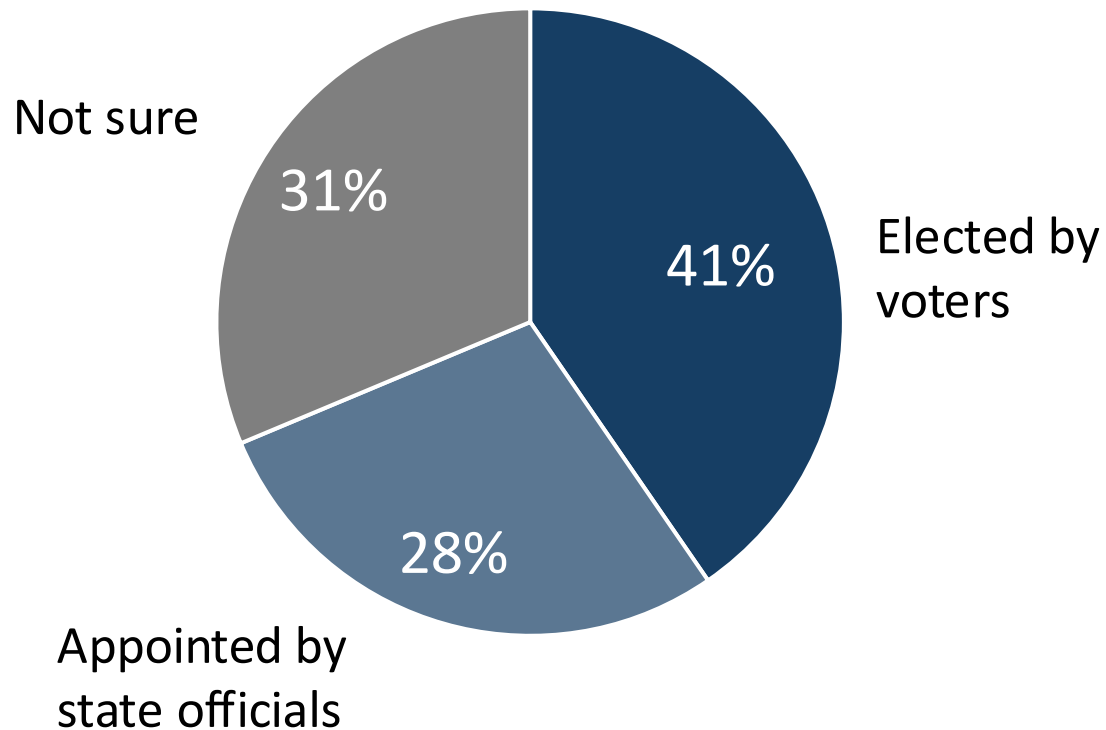


NOTE: With only a few exceptions, in North Carolina, local school board members are elected by voters, not appointed.



TOPIC: K-12 schools

As far as you know, is the state's Superintendent of Public Instruction elected by voters or appointed by state officials?

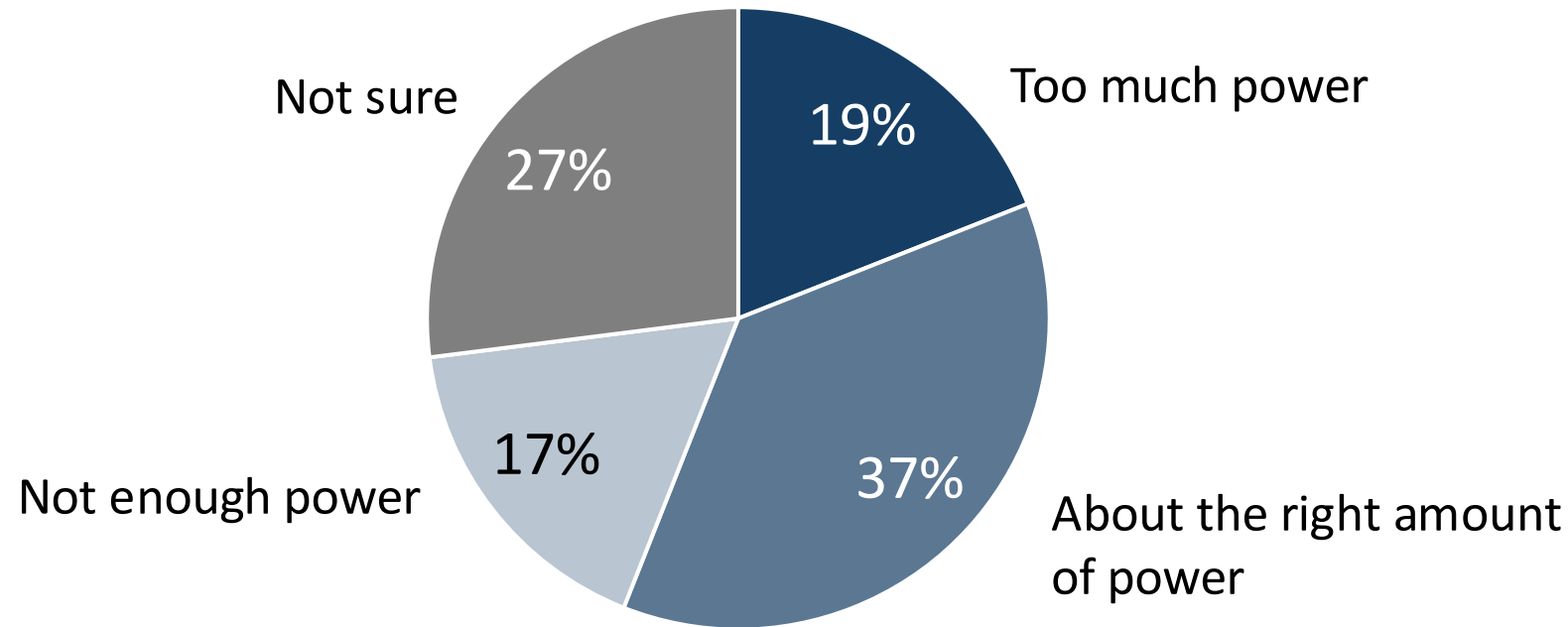


NOTE: The North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction is elected by voters. If the office becomes vacant, the governor may appoint an interim superintendent to serve until the next election.



TOPIC: K-12 schools

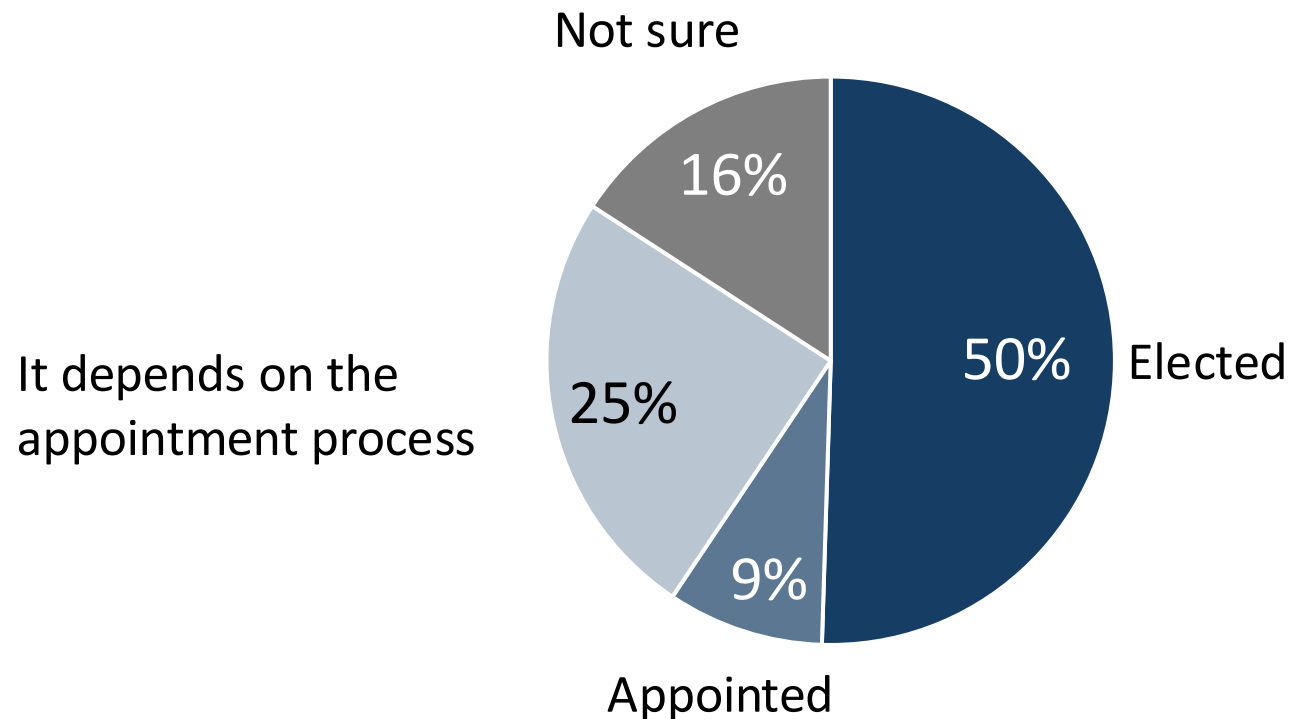
When it comes to shaping public education in the state, do Governors of North Carolina have too much power, about the right amount of power, or not enough power?





TOPIC: K-12 schools

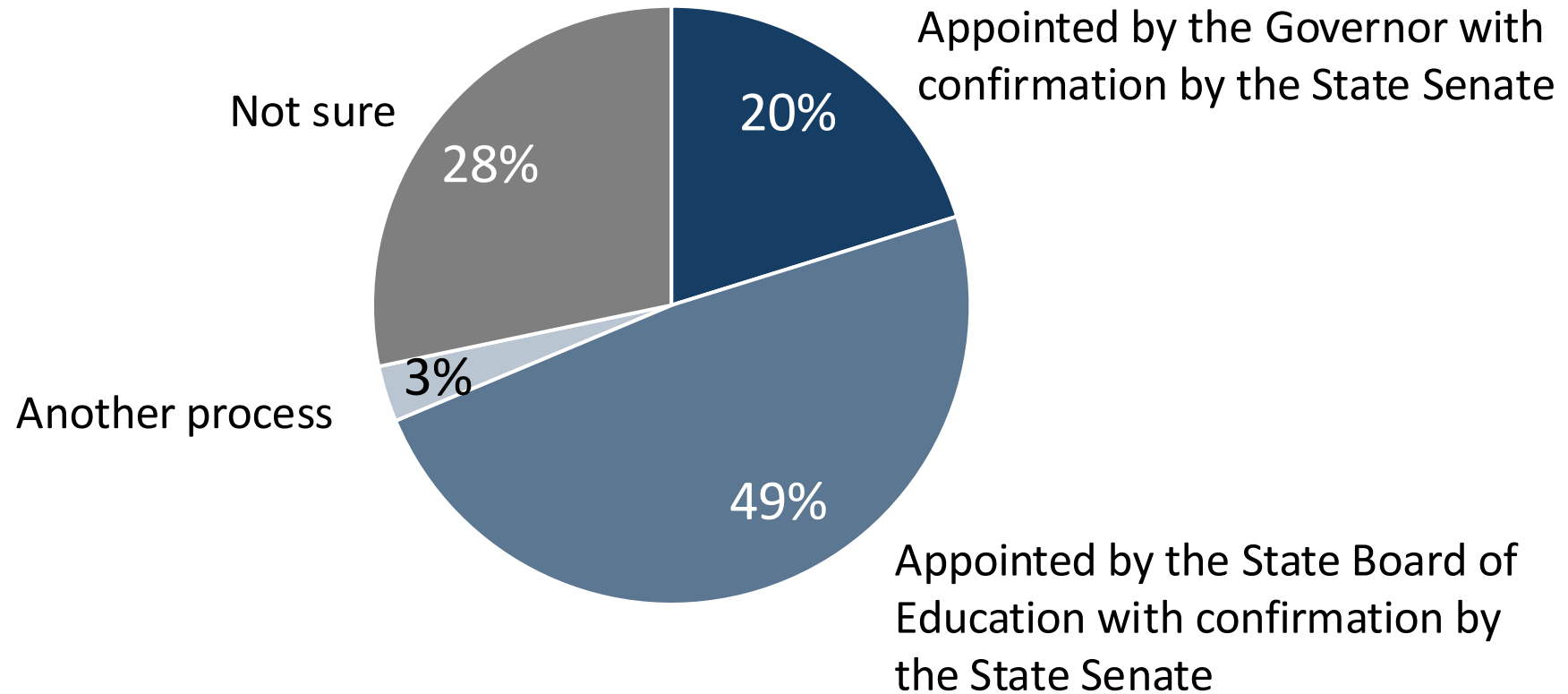
Currently, North Carolina's State Superintendent of Public Instruction is elected by voters. Some people say the Superintendent should instead be appointed to improve coordination with state leaders. Others say it should remain elected so the decision stays with voters. In the future, how would you like to see the Superintendent position filled?





TOPIC: K-12 schools

If the State Superintendent of Public Instruction were appointed, how should the appointment be handled?





TOPIC: K-12 schools

For each of the following positions in North Carolina, should the position be elected by voters or appointed by other elected officials?

Position	Elected	Appointed	Not sure
County sheriffs	80%	10%	10%
Local school boards	78%	11%	11%
Local District Court judges	73%	16%	11%
State Supreme Court justices	70%	18%	12%
State Superintendent of Public Instruction	69%	17%	15%
Court of Appeals judges	67%	20%	13%
Local Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisors	50%	32%	18%



TOPIC: K-12 schools

What is your best guess for the average salary overall of public K–12 teachers in North Carolina (in dollars per year)? If unsure, please make your best guess.

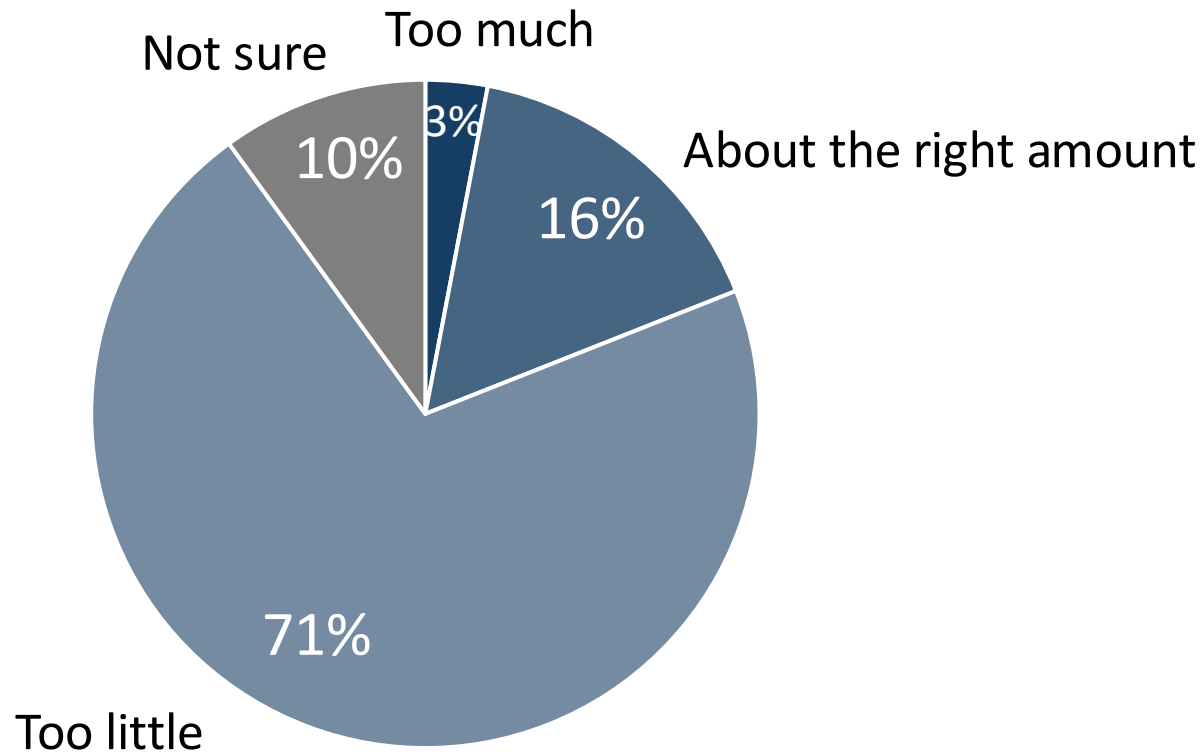
Average (mean) guess in this survey	\$42,257
Median guess in this survey	\$40,000
Actual (all teachers)	\$58,292*
Actual (starting teachers)	\$42,542*

*The most recent [report by the National Education Association](#) lists the average salary for all North Carolina teachers at \$58,292 and the average starting teacher salary at \$42,542. The national average teacher salary is \$72,030.



TOPIC: Teachers

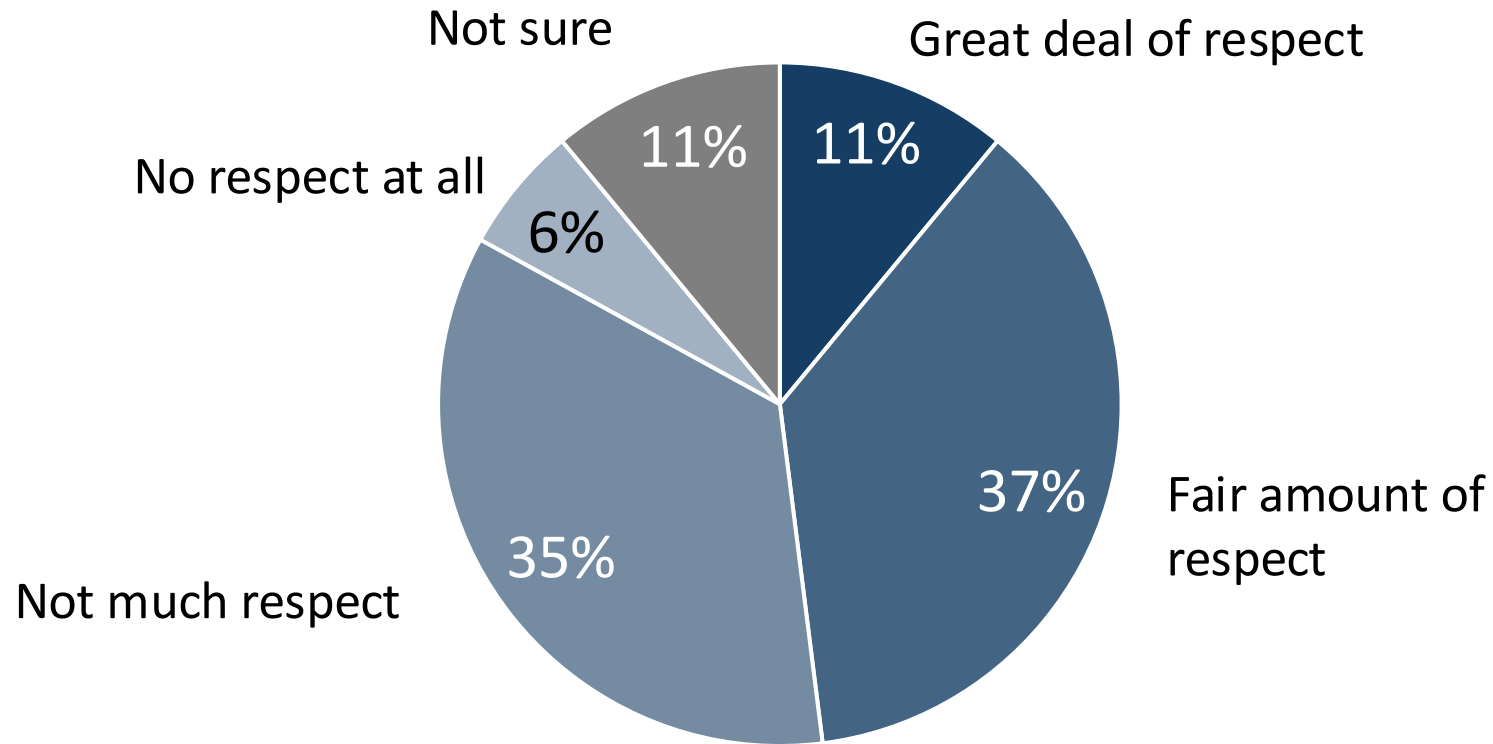
Do you think public K–12 teachers in North Carolina are paid too much, about the right amount, or too little for the work they do?





TOPIC: Teachers

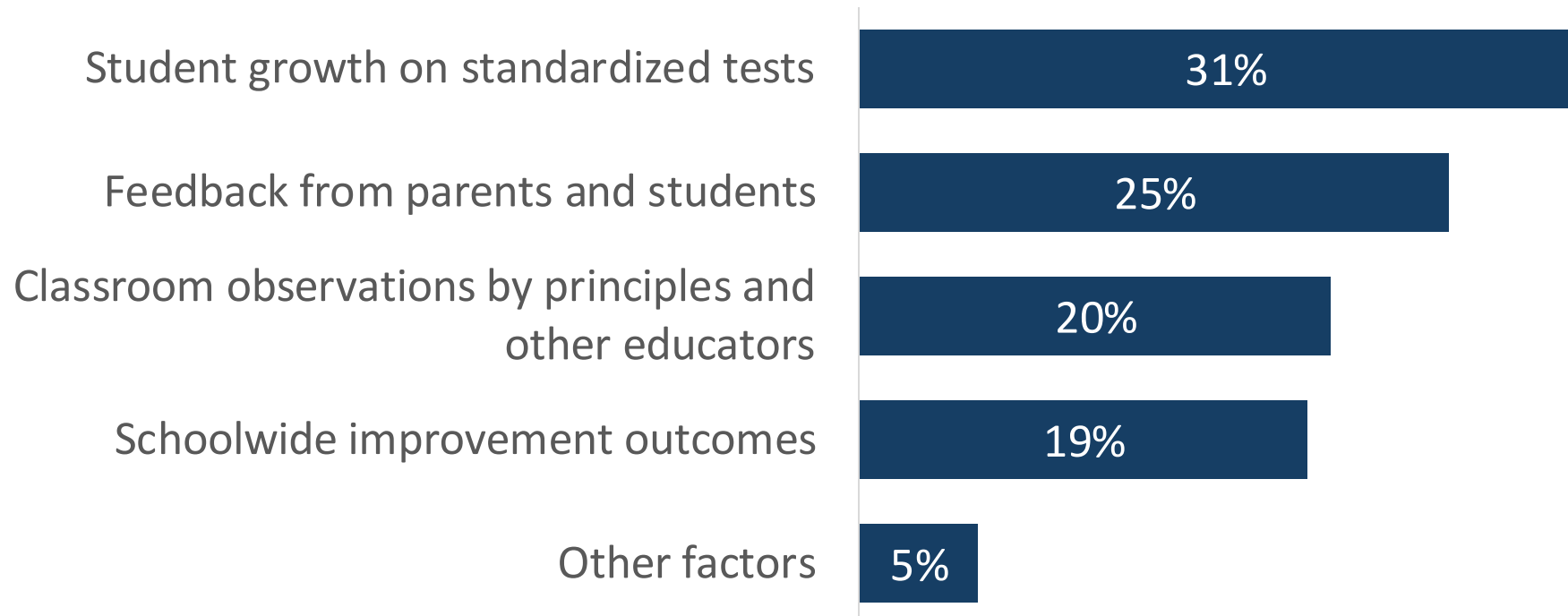
How much respect do public K–12 teachers in North Carolina receive from the public?





TOPIC: Teachers

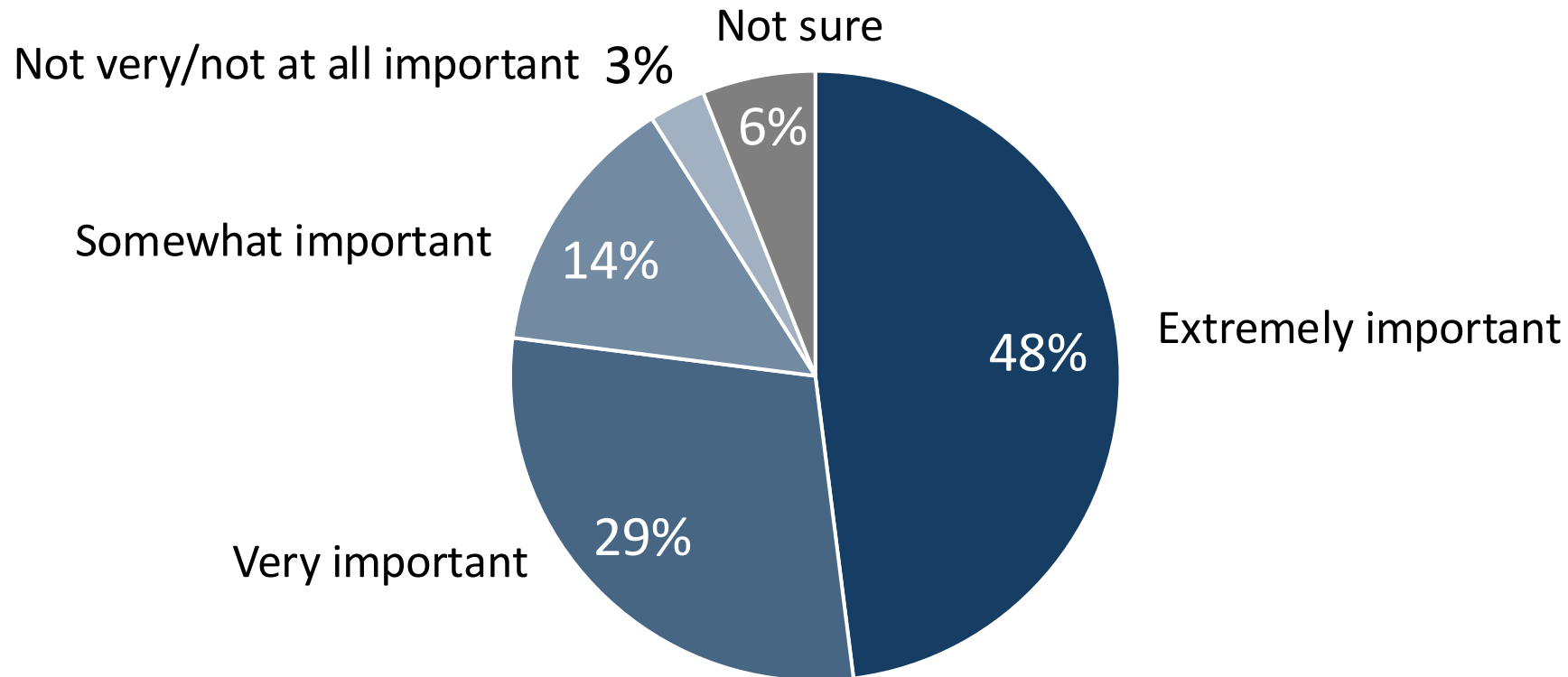
When evaluating a teacher's performance, which should count the most?





TOPIC: Teachers

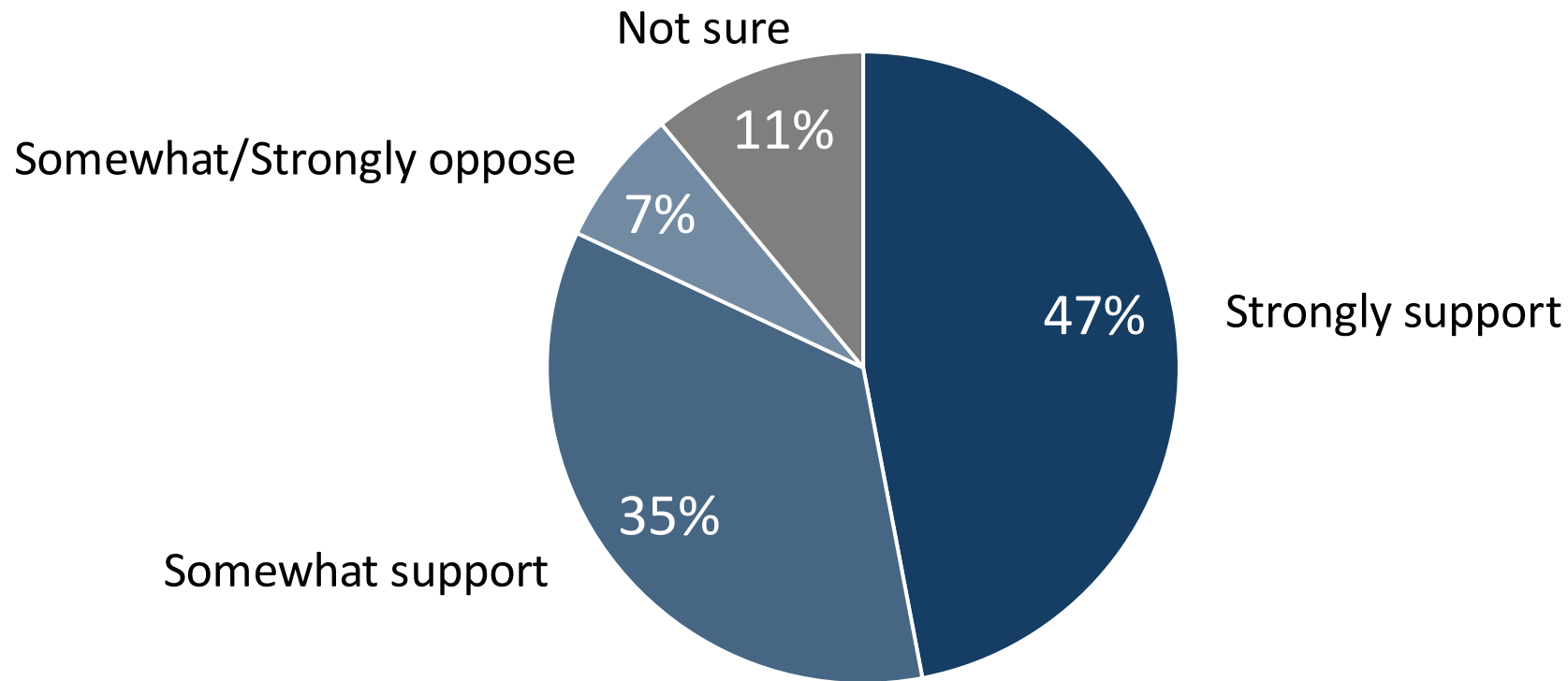
How important do you believe it is for each K–12 teacher to hold a state-issued teaching license showing they completed a teacher-prep program, passed required exams, and were approved by the state to teach?





TOPIC: Teachers

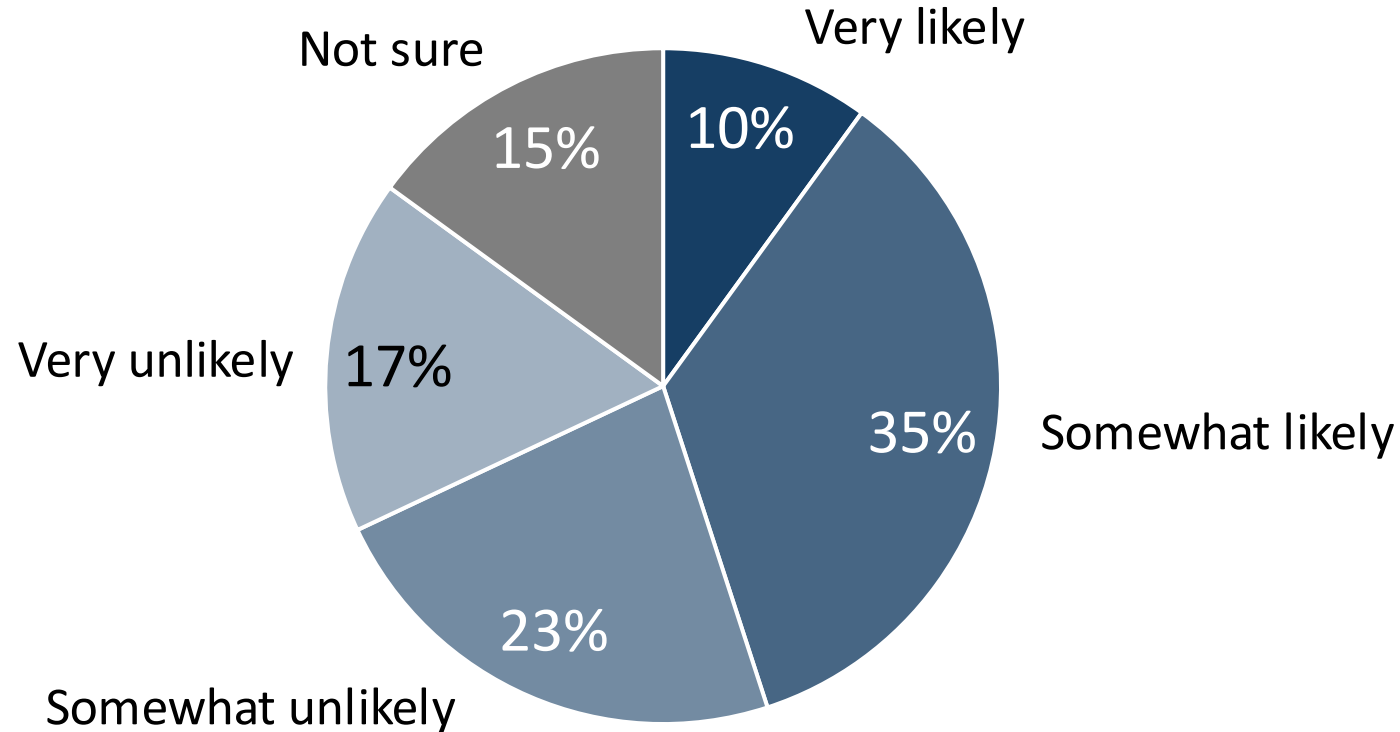
Would you support or oppose a new state-funded teacher education program that gives high school graduates an opportunity to earn a debt-free college degree with intensive teacher and leadership training, in exchange for working as a K–12 teacher in North Carolina for several years?





TOPIC: Teachers

Thinking about both the challenges and rewards of the profession — including factors such as pay, work environment, and the sense of purpose that comes with teaching—how likely would you be to encourage your child or close family member to become a K–12 teacher in North Carolina?





TOPIC: Key skills and learning

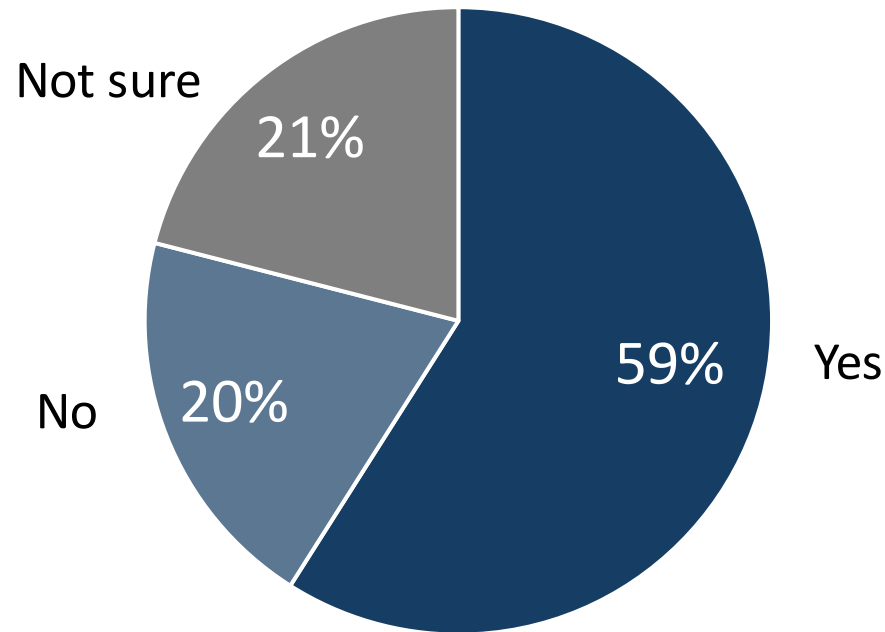
How important do you think it is for K–12 students to learn and master each of the following areas through their school coursework to prepare for future success?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not sure
Writing and composition	77%	15%	3%	5%
Financial literacy and money management	77%	16%	2%	5%
Human-centered skills (e.g., communication, empathy)	72%	20%	3%	6%
Basic scientific concepts and reasoning	70%	23%	2%	5%
Nutrition, health and wellness	67%	26%	2%	5%
U.S. history and civics	61%	29%	4%	6%
Household management and practical maintenance	58%	31%	6%	6%
Technical skills (e.g. coding, data analysis)	57%	32%	5%	6%
Literature and the arts	47%	38%	10%	5%
Spiritual or moral values and ideas	44%	33%	16%	7%



TOPIC: Artificial intelligence

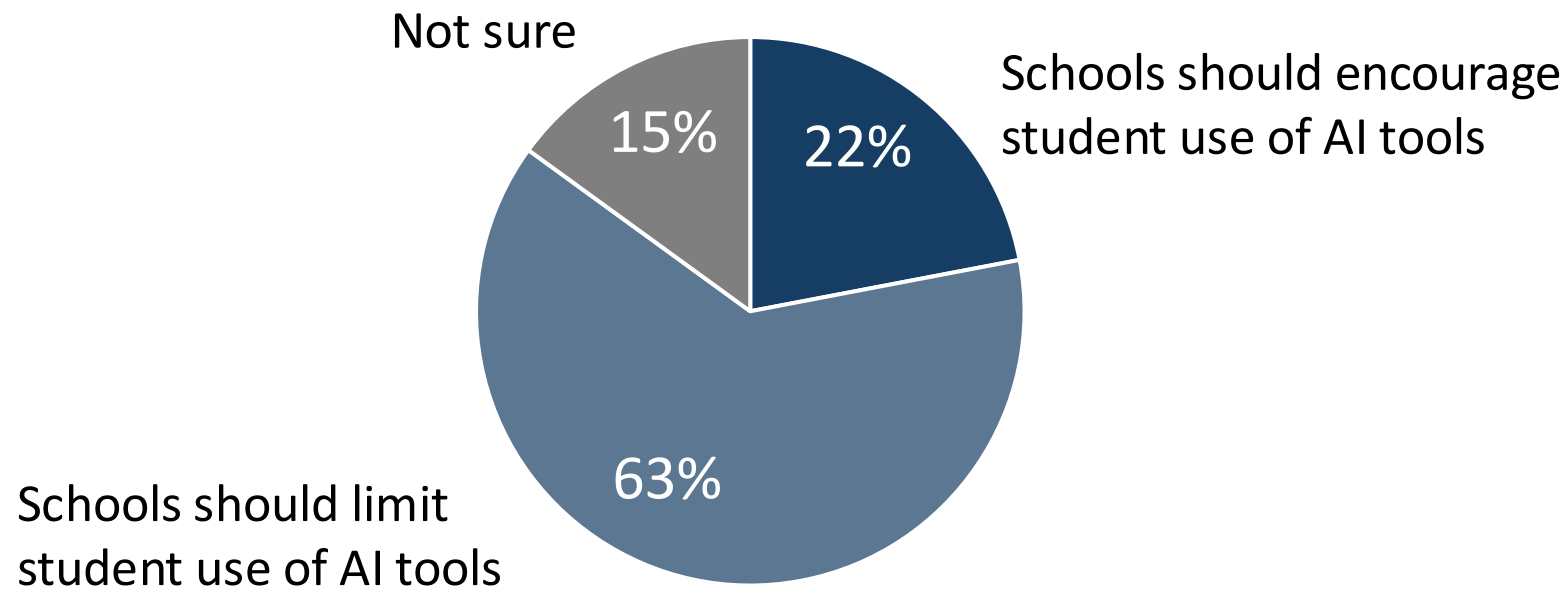
Should understanding how artificial intelligence (AI) works as well as its benefits, risks and ethical issues be a required part of what North Carolina students learn before graduating high school?





TOPIC: Artificial intelligence

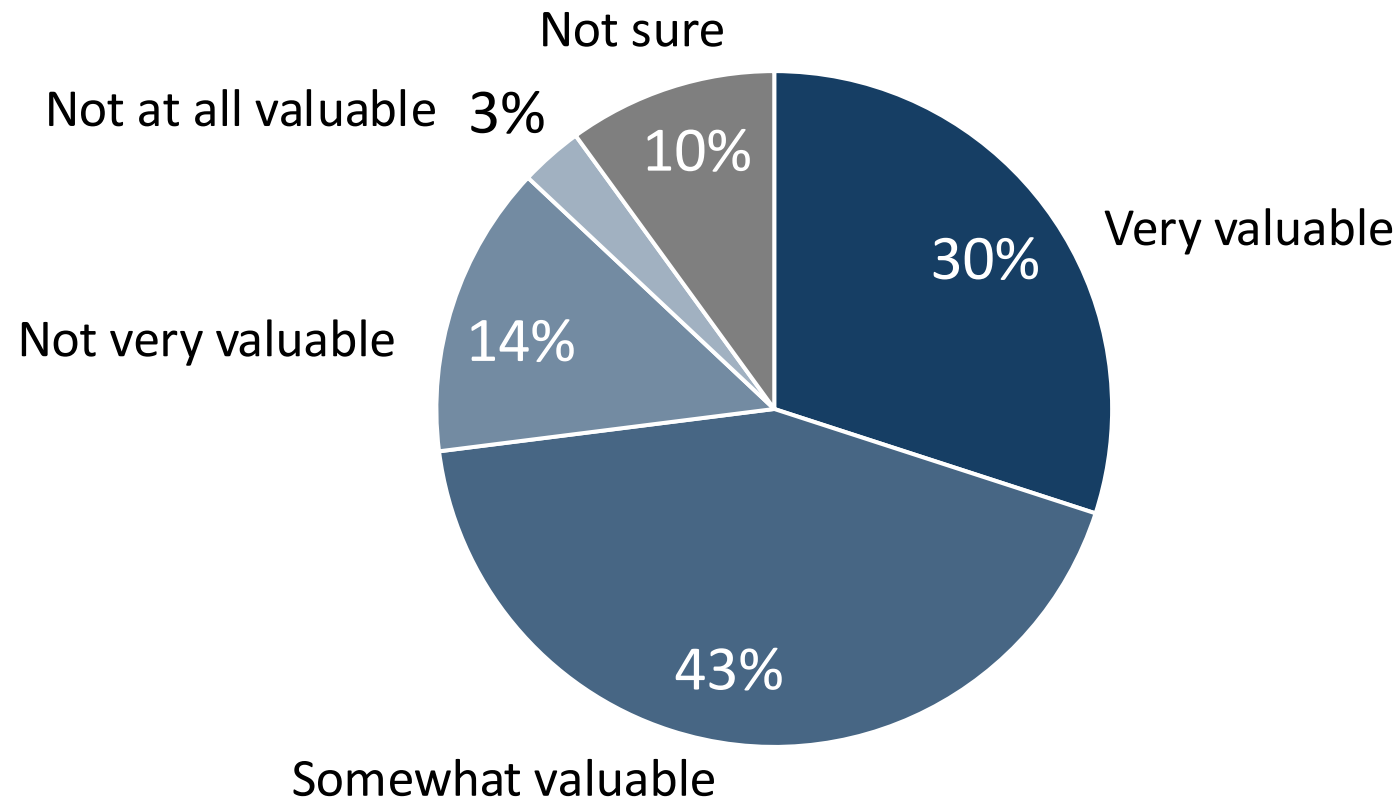
Some people say K–12 schools should encourage students to learn to use AI tools such as ChatGPT so they become familiar with an important new technology that could help them in the future. Others say schools should limit student use of AI tools because of potential problems such as overreliance, bias, misinformation, and privacy risks. Which comes closer to your view?





TOPIC: Value of college

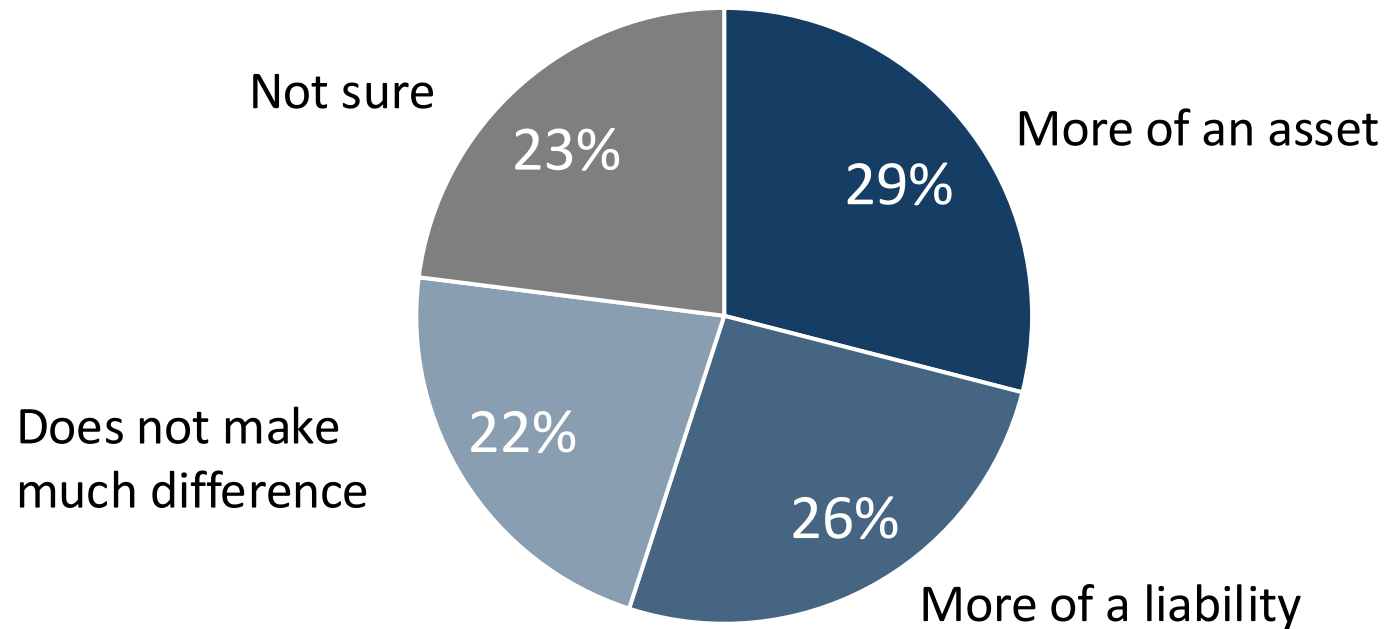
Thinking about the future of today's K–12 students, how valuable will it be for the typical student to complete a college degree?





TOPIC: Business in the state

Thinking about the future of North Carolina's economy and business climate, would you say that the current overall quality of public K–12 education in the state is more of an asset, more of a liability, or does it not make much difference?





METHODOLOGY

Sponsoring organization and questionnaire design: Elon University Poll and the Elon University Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education

Fieldwork: YouGov

Interview dates: Nov. 19-Dec. 1, 2025

Target population: North Carolina adults, age 18 and older

Sample size: 800

Margin of error: +/-4.24 % (adjusted for weights)

Survey mode: Online, web-based survey, self-administered with online panels

Panelists: This poll utilizes a non-probability sample. All YouGov panelists have been active panelists for 30 days or longer.

YouGov interviewed 1,164 18+ year-old residents of North Carolina who were then matched down to a sample of 800 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were

matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The sampling frame

was constructed by stratified sampling from a North Carolina subset of the 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file).

The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores.

The

matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated

for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and home ownership. The propensity scores were

grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

The weights were then post-stratified on home ownership, 2020 and 2024 presidential

vote choice, and further stratified by gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories), to produce the final weight.

Data Quality checks: We used three attention checks, one open end, one grid item and one multiple select. We used all three in combination when cleaning the data removing anyone who failed two or more attention checks. We also removed the top 2% of speeders and skippers from the data.

Critical Mass for Crosstabs: All crosstabs must have at least 60 unweighted respondents per column in order to report their results. Every crosstab result reported in the release appears in the crosstabs.

Transparency: The Elon University Poll is a charter member of the Transparency Initiative, a program created by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 2014 to educate polling firms on ways to better share how they collect and interpret their information. The Elon Poll's voluntary participation in this initiative signifies a willingness to clearly state in its reports how questions were asked, in what order, who funded the poll and then conducted it, and a definition of the population under study, among other details.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional methodology and poll topline information is available on the Elon Poll website:

www.elon.edu/elonpoll



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