

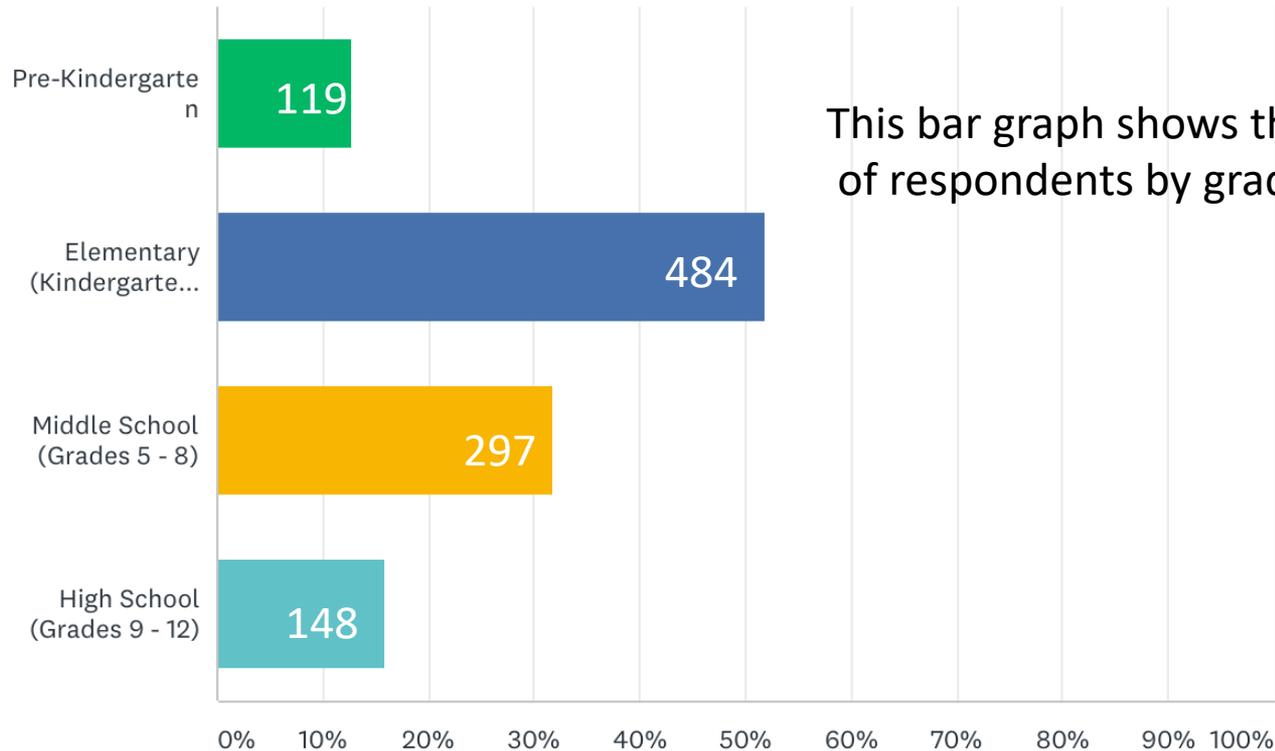
# The Analysis from the Survey of UTL Educators

Presentation to the Lowell School  
Committee

March 4, 2020

# Demographics: Respondents

	Total Members	Number Respondents
Teachers	1103	771 (70%)
Paraprofessionals	407	162 (40%)



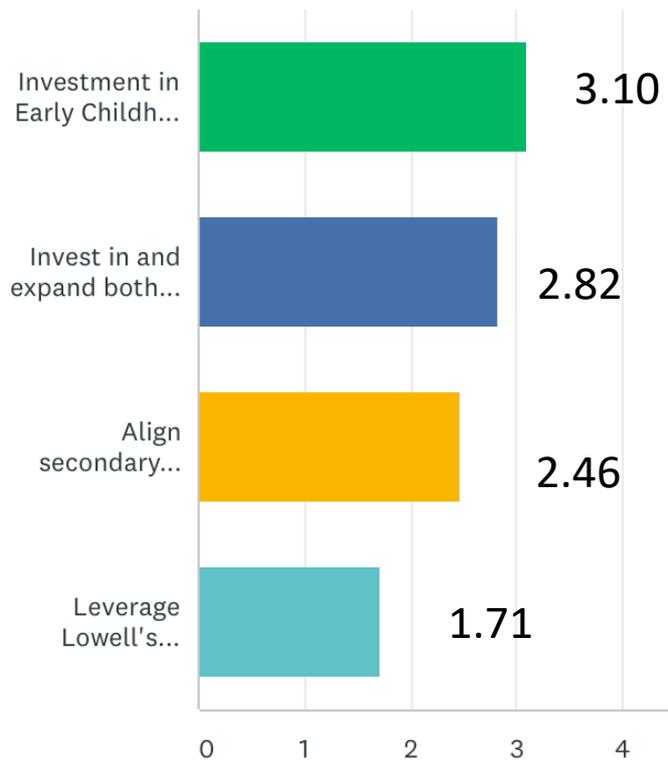
This bar graph shows the distribution of respondents by grade level.

# District Proposed Priorities

- Investment in Early Childhood education (Ages Birth to 5) to encompass First 2000 Days and include Universal Pre-K through work/partnerships with community partners. This investment closes opportunity gaps and ensures every child is ready for Kindergarten on Day 1.
- Invest in and expand both high performing and high demand programming by increasing the number of available seats. Invest in and target intense support for chronically underperforming schools (Currently identified as the 7 LPS Renaissance schools: Bartlett, Butler, Greenhalge, LHS, Robinson, Stoklosa & Sullivan).
- Align secondary school programs (middle/high school) to better prepare students for college or careers in the 21st Century (explore including access to programs at Greater Lowell Vocational Technical High School to LHS students).
- Leverage Lowell's greatest asset - diversity - and invest in and take advantage of the opportunity to become a global community through a renewed commitment to equity.

# District Proposed Priorities

## Q4 Results



**Q5** Do you agree that these four statements reflect current priority needs in the Lowell Public Schools.

43% replied YES

57% replied NO

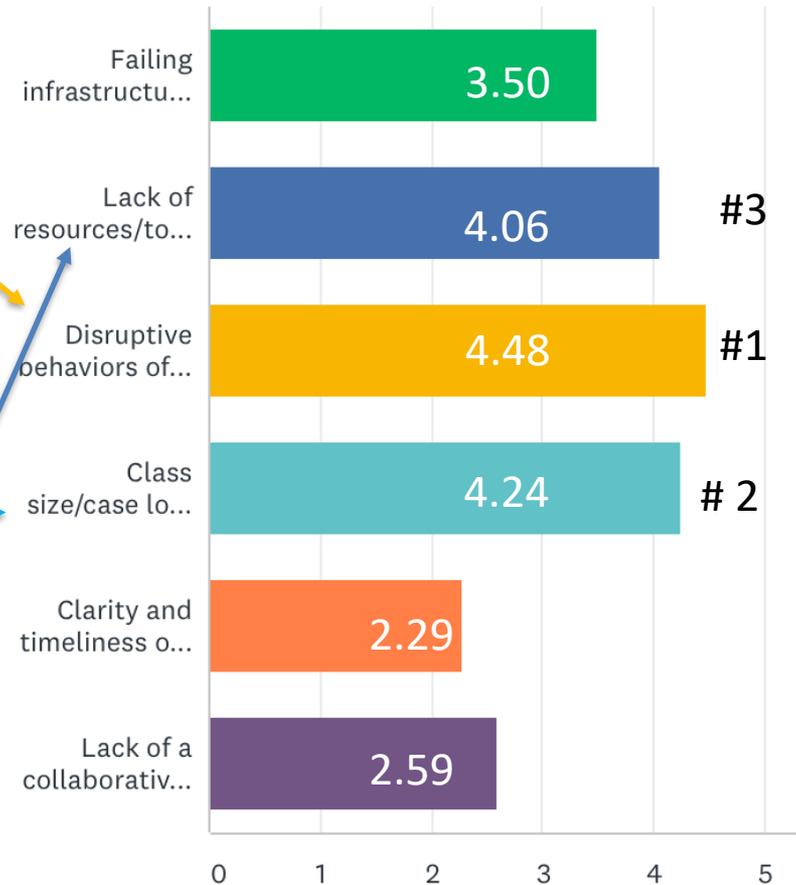
# Q6: Identifying Impediments to Students Learning and Teachers Teaching

Thinking about your classroom and school, rank the following as possible impediments to teachers teaching and students learning. Rank the choices from 1-6 with 1 being the greatest impediment.

- Failing infrastructure
- Lack of resources/tools needed on a daily basis for teaching
- Disruptive behaviors of students
- Class size/case loads and lack of personnel supporting students in your classroom
- Clarity and timeliness of school and district communications
- Lack of a collaborative environment which includes staff and teachers decision-making

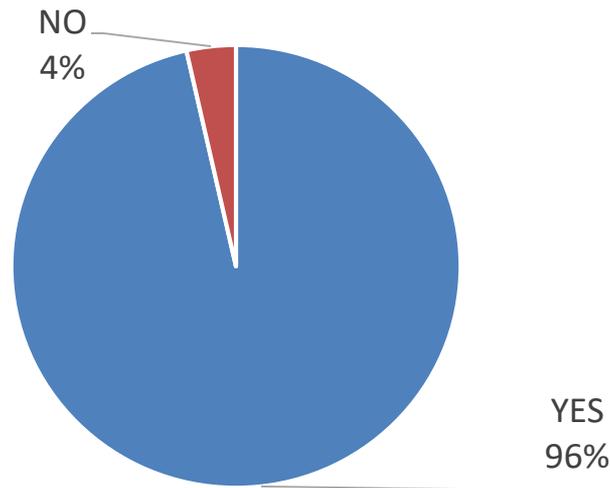
# Q6: Identified Impediments to Students Learning and Teachers Teaching

1. Disruptive behavior of students
2. Class size, caseload and lack of personnel supporting students in the classroom
3. Lack of resources/tools for the classrooms on a daily basis



# Disruptive Behaviors & Social-Emotional Support

Q22: Would a lack of social-emotional services and supports be a critical factor in addressing the social-emotional health of our students, especially those students who are in crisis?



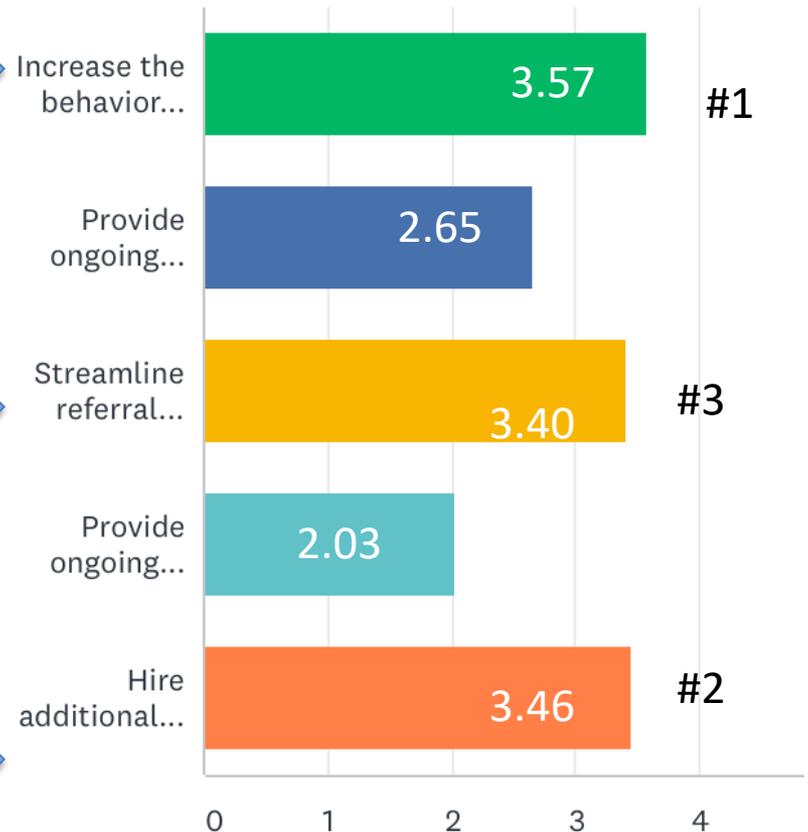
# Disruptive Behaviors & Social-Emotional Support

**Q23: Thinking about Social Emotional Learning (SEL) supports for your students, please rank the following items 1-5 (1 most important).**

- Increase the behavior teams/support staff available to address students who are in crisis
- Provide ongoing professional development to all staff in the area of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) based on the program in use in our school (Restorative Justice, PBIS, etc.)
- Streamline referral process for students who need critical support, particularly in terms of placements in alternative programs inside or outside of your school
- Provide ongoing professional development for paraprofessional staff in the areas of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and/or behavior management
- Hire additional social workers, behavior specialists (decrease current caseloads and increase access to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) support specialists both inside and outside of your school)

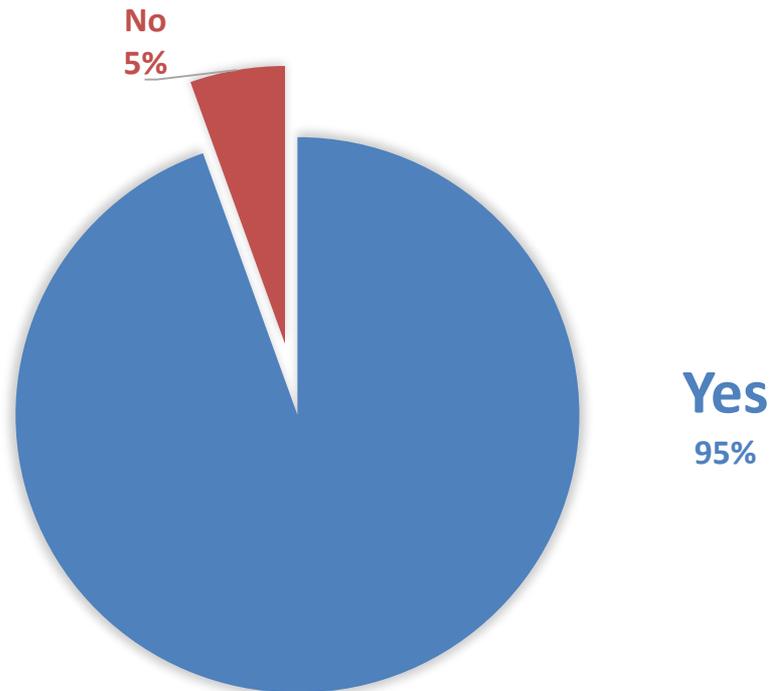
# Disruptive Behaviors & Social-Emotional Support

- **Increase behavior/support teams** →
- Ongoing PD for behavior program/SEL used in each school
- **Streamline referral process** →
- Provide PD in SEL for paras & other staff
- **Hire additional SW, Behavior staff** →



# Disruptive Behaviors & Social-Emotional Support

Q24: Would expansion of alternative placements in a program inside or outside of your school be a benefit to the students with whom you come in contact?



# Disruptive Behaviors & Social-Emotional Support

Q29: I would like more professional development on the following topics:

- Social-Emotional Learning
- Cultures of Families in Lowell
- Differentiating Instruction to accommodate special needs
- Management of classroom behaviors
- Curriculum practices and content practices
- Building collaborative cultures and a collaborative approach to decision-making

# Disruptive Behaviors & Social-Emotional Support



Identified by staff as top priority for PD

# In their own words:

- We need programs for students who are in crisis and disrupt the learning of others in the school.
- PBIS does not address students in crisis or students with atypical behavior problems.
- We only have one part-time social worker. This does not come close to being adequate.
- Educators are not trained social workers/therapists. We need more staff who are licensed in these areas to deal with social-emotional issues

# In their own words:

- I don't believe that alternative placement is right for most disruptive students. I would love to see support staff push IN and support them in the regular classroom. That way, they get the experience of the regular classroom without shutting it down every time there's a problem.
- Too many students are misplaced in the regular ed. classroom when they need to be in an adjustment class or mental health facility.

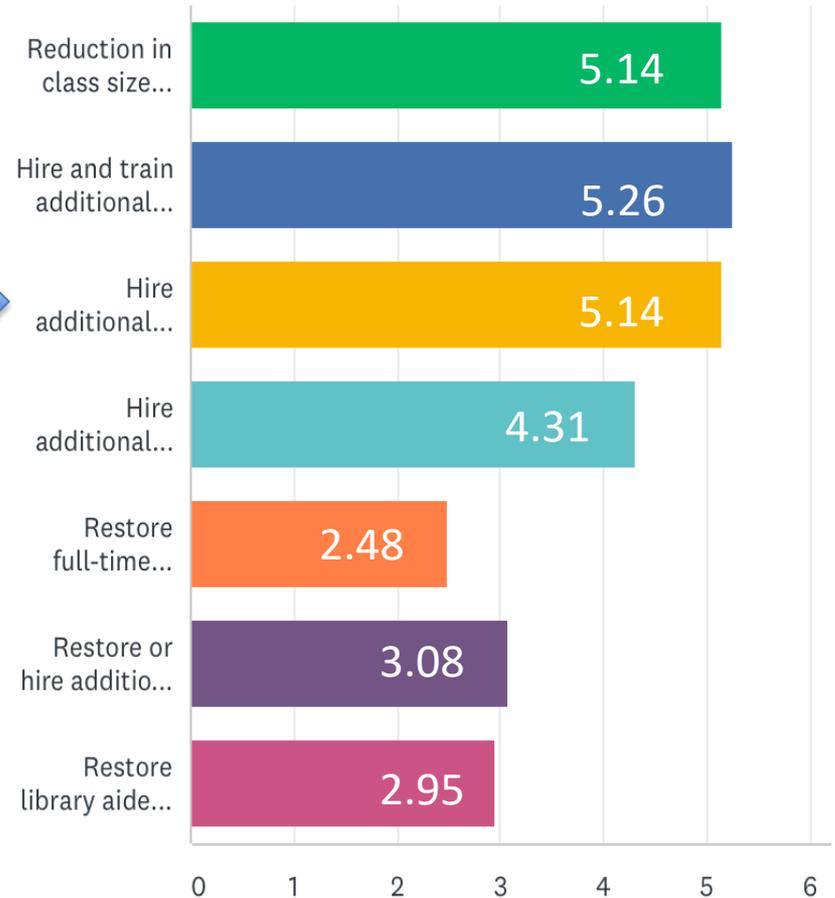
# Staffing Needs

**Q13:** Rank the following items. Rank the items 1-7 with 1 being the most important. Thinking about staffing needed to support your students, please rank the following items 1-7 (1 most important).

- Reduction in class size achieved by hiring additional teachers
- Hire and train additional classroom paraprofessionals and 1:1/SpED paraprofessionals
- Hire additional Special Education teachers and Allied Health staff (SLP, OT/PT. etc.)
- Hire additional English Language Learner (ELL) teachers to support ELLs
- Restore full-time parent liaisons/community engagement staff
- Restore or hire additional allied arts instructors, instructional technology specialists, or curriculum/content coaches
- Restore library aide positions

# Responses to Staffing Questions

- Hire more teachers (reduce class size) →
- Hire more paras →
- Hire more SpED/Allied Health →
- Hire more ELL teachers
- Restore parent liaisons
- Restore/hire Allied Arts, Content, ITS
- Restore Library aides



# Responses to Staffing Questions

Q17: As Allied Health or as a Special Educator do you feel the caseload in your current situation is

- Too high/large
- Just about right
- Too small/few

Q17 Allied Health and SpED Staffing Results

	Number of Responses	Percentage
Too High/large	203	77%
Just Right	61	22%
Too Small/few	1	1%

# Responses to Staffing Questions

Q18: The ratio of Special Education staff is adequate to meet the needs of students as outlined on IEP's.

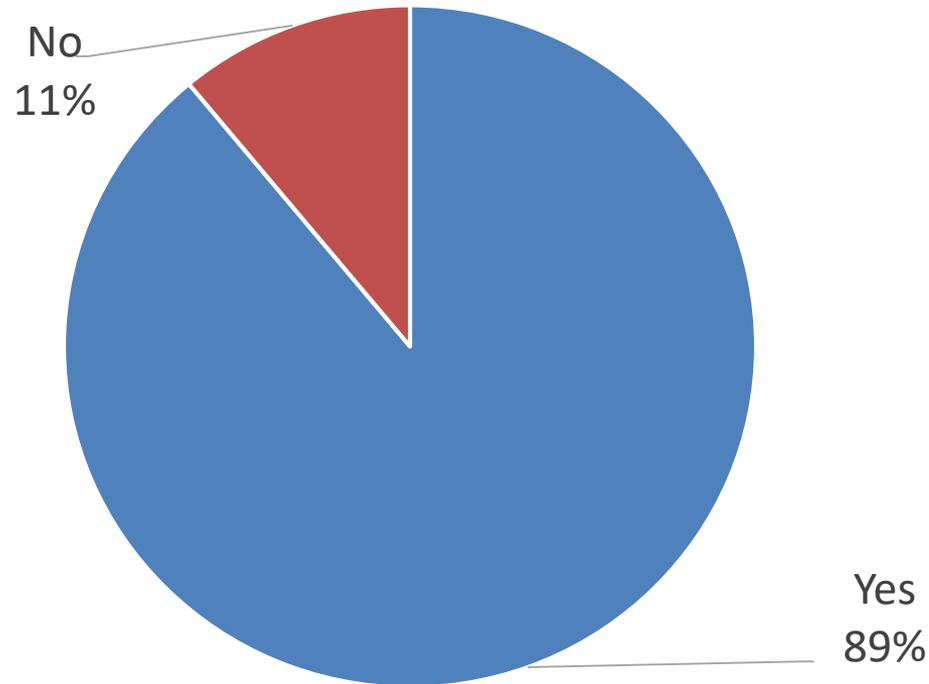
**92%** say Ratio of sped staff is inadequate to meet the needs of students as outlined on IEPs

# Restoring Previously Eliminated Programs

- About 84% identified staffing **Alternative school settings** as a top priority (*Example: McHugh School*)
- Over 65% identified restoring fully staffed and functioning **School Libraries** as a priority

# Restoring Newcomer Classrooms

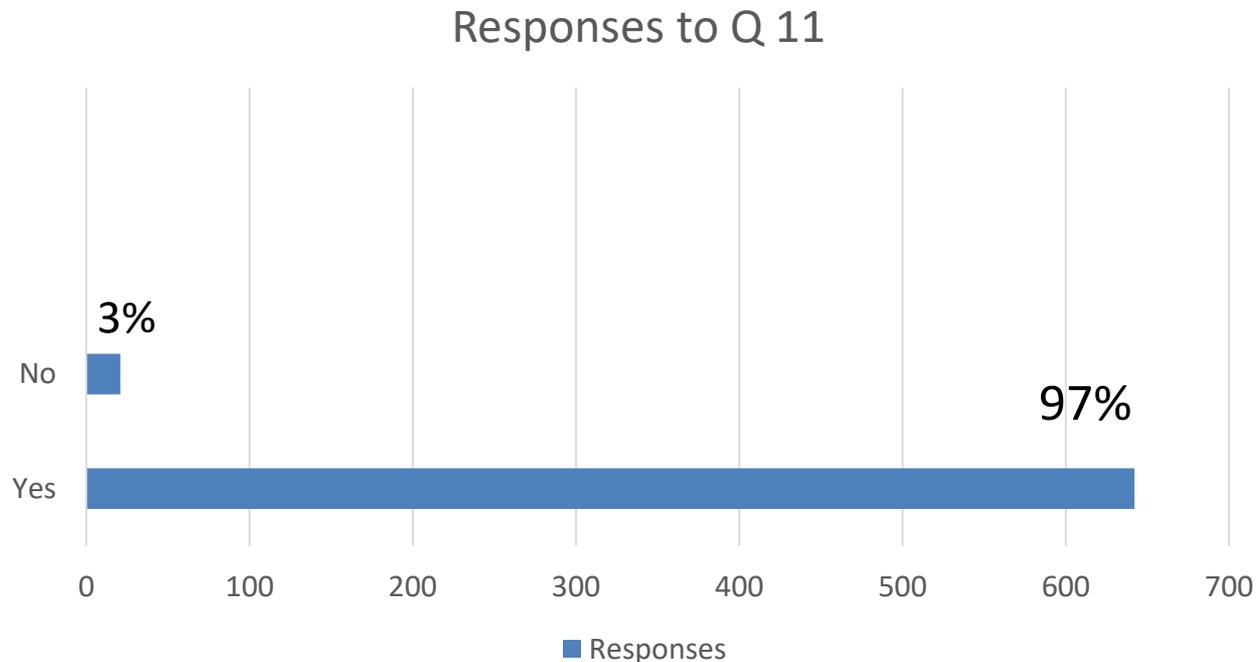
Q19: Is it important to increase and establish more newcomer classrooms in the Lowell Public Schools?



# Resources:

## Personal Monies to Fund Classrooms

Q11: Do you spend your own money to provide supplies for students in your school building?



# Other Issues That Were Identified Through The Survey

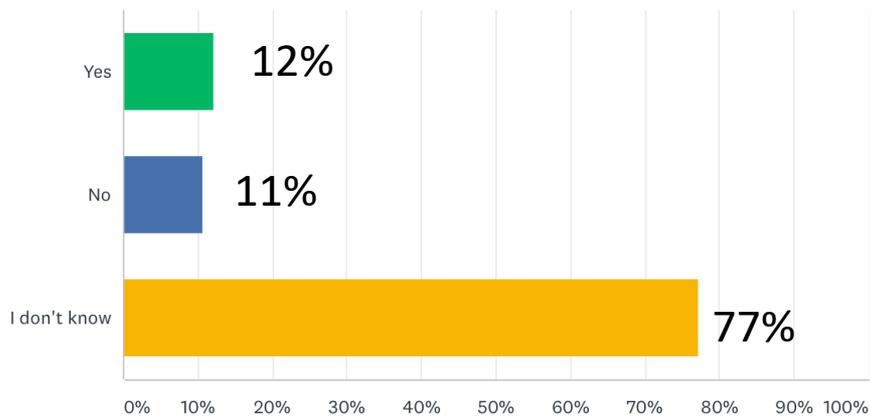
We also gathered information about:

- School Site Councils
- Determining Professional Development Needs
- Standardized Testing
- Conditions of buildings
- How Improving Conditions Impact Educator Perceptions

# Understanding School Site Councils

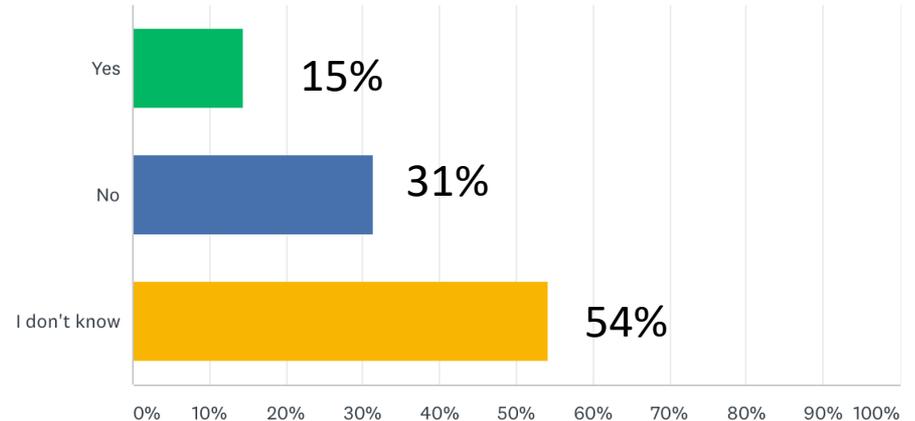
Parity in SSC Membership (12% were aware of this requirement)

Question 38



Teacher Members are elected by peers (15% were aware of this requirement)

Question 36



# Educator Voice:

## How PD Needs Are Best Determined

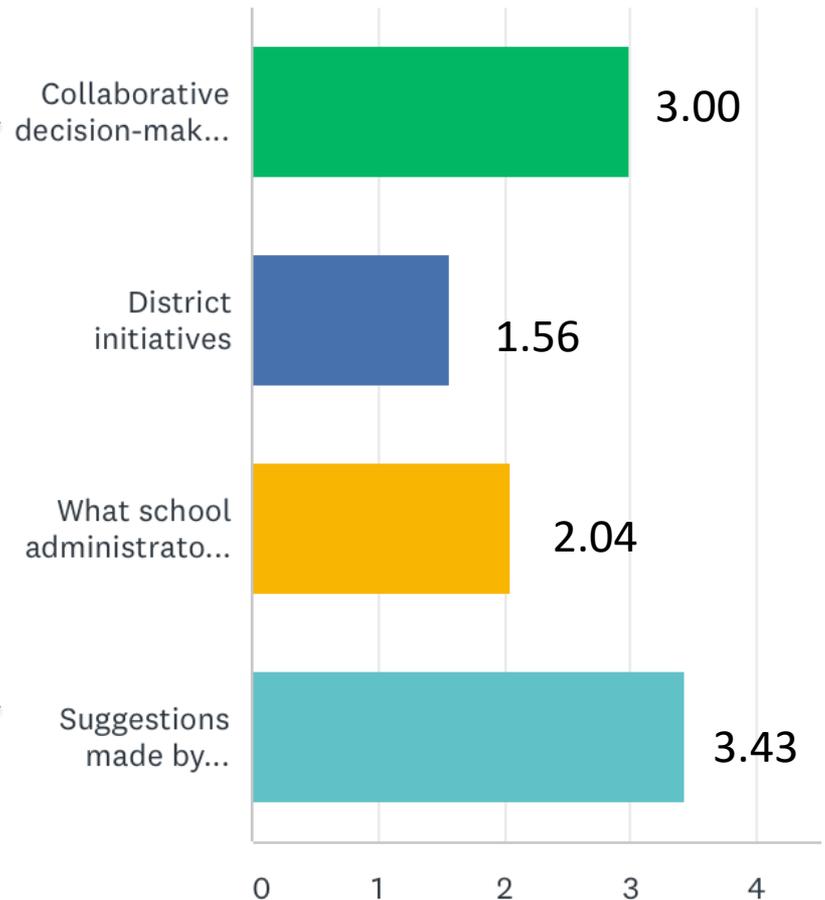
Q31: Thinking about professional development opportunities available during early release days, rank the items 1-4 with 1 being the most important. *I would like more professional development/training that is based on*

- Collaborative decision-making within my school
- District initiatives
- What school administrators believe is important in our school
- Suggestions made by teachers at the school level

# Educator Voice:

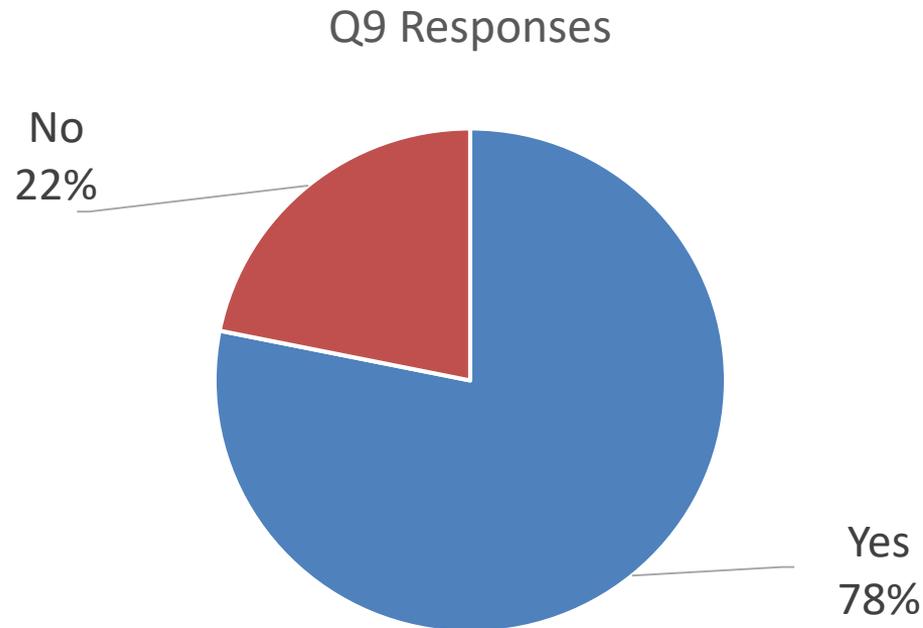
## How PD Needs Are Best Determined

- **Collaborative decision-making within my school** →
- District initiatives
- What school administrators believe is important in our school
- **Suggestions made by teachers at the school level** →



# Time and Focus on Standardized Testing

Q9: Please respond to the following statement:  
*There is too much focus and time committed to standardized testing in my school.*



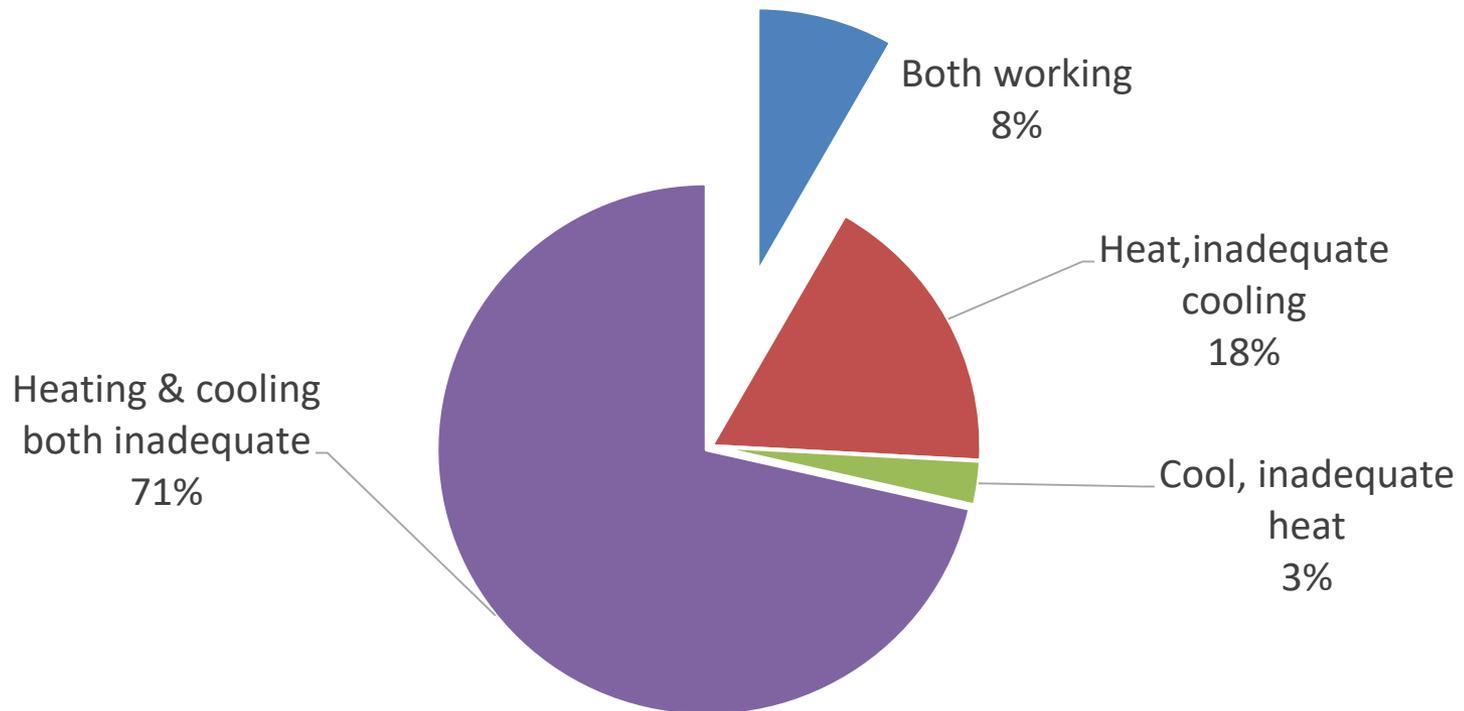
# Conditions of Buildings

Q33: Building and facility issues are, in general, funded through MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) and not through Chapter 70, regarding the HVAC (heating, cooling, ventilation) system in the building in which you work:

- The HVAC System in my workspace seems to be working consistently for both heating and cooling.
- The HVAC System in my workspace heats the area adequately, but cooling is a problem.
- The HVAC System in my workspace cools the area adequately, but heating is a problem.
- Both heating and cooling in my workspace are problems.

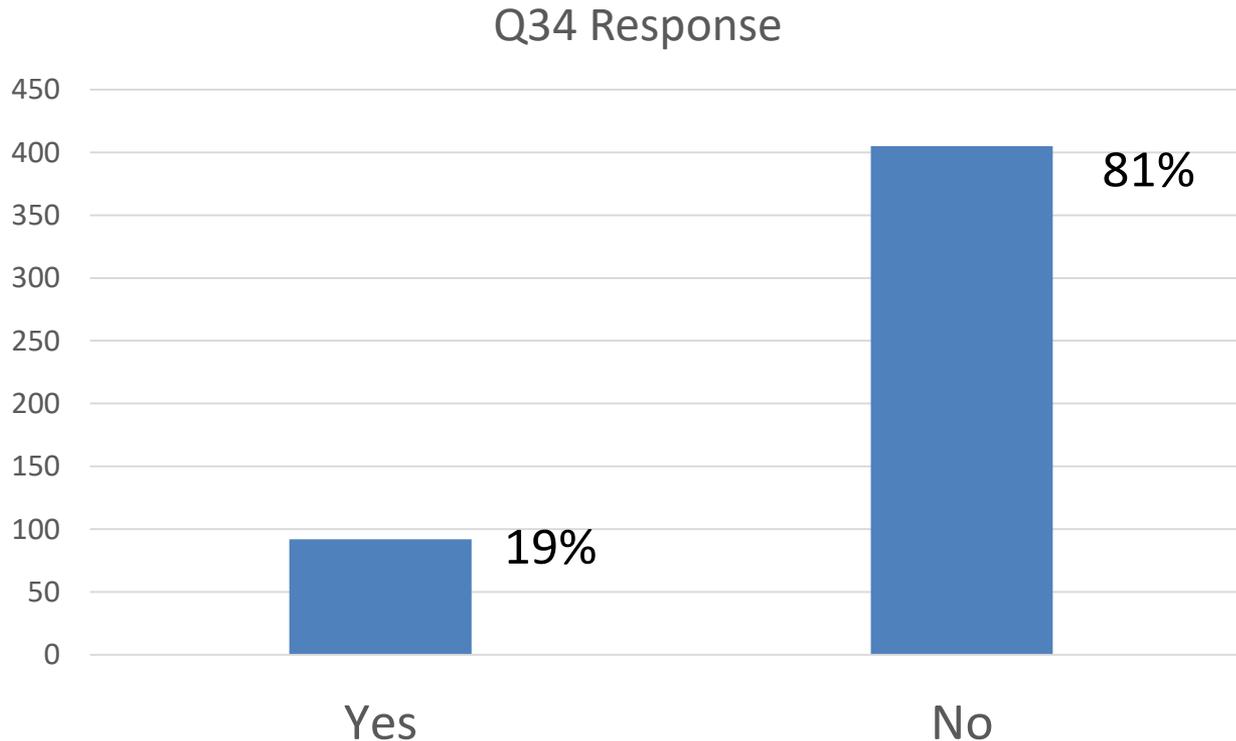
# Conditions of Buildings

**92%** of staff identified heating issues, cooling issues or both within their building as ongoing problems.



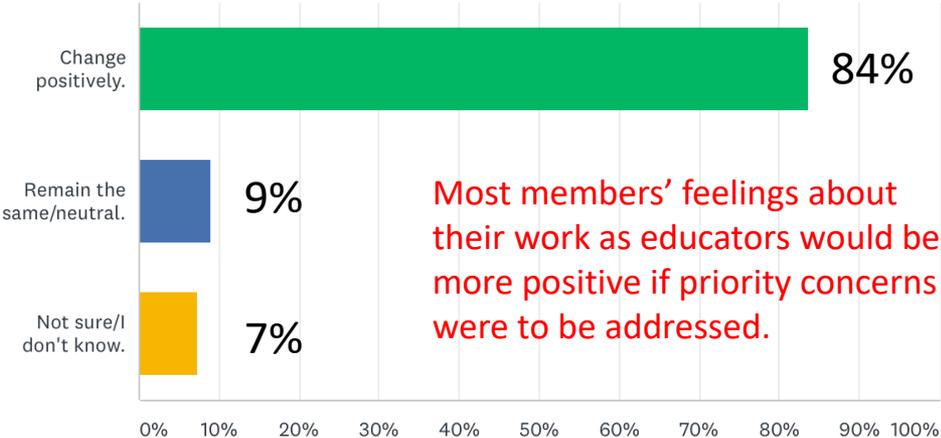
# Conditions of Buildings

Q34: In the case of a classroom space that is too cold or too warm, I have an option to move to another available space within my building.



# Students Learning and Teachers Teaching: Impact of Addressing Concerns

Q44: If my areas of concern were addressed or improved upon, my feelings about job satisfaction would:



# In Their Own Words

Lowell as a city has lost the universal buy-in to education commitment between teacher student and parents. All 3 must be on the same page and we are far from as a whole city. Until that improves nothing will significantly

I love my students, I love my team, and I love teaching. Overly large classes and lack of support and resources makes it difficult to love my job. I feel like as a classroom teacher, I am given all of the responsibility but none of the power.

If I were able to decrease the number of students on my caseload, and decrease the workload that comes with it, I would better be able to service the students on my caseload who really NEED my professional expertise and consistent support

# In Their Own Words

The emotional workload of a teacher has exponentially increased since I began about 13 years ago. In the course of one school day we are behavioral specialists, social workers, nurses, psychologists, parents, custodians, differentiators of curriculum - and somewhere in the day between dodging a chair being kicked at us, drying the tears of multiple students, getting screamed at, pushed, kicked, bitten, or hit we must also find the time to teach.

We must find the time to inspire a love of learning, foster curiosity, and support every child in making at least a year worth of growth. The emotional toll is heavy and not a day goes by that I don't go home and feel the weight of it all. I wonder every day, what more could I have done today? How could I have better supported my students? I am grasping at straws trying to support the individual needs of every student. I love these children dearly and want the best for them. With every year that passes, I feel less able to provide that for them. It is soul crushing. This school year, we have not made it one day without tears, screaming, a tantrum, or other emotional outburst.