

# **M-PAC Exploratory Survey: A Report**

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# Overview

- Survey Design
- Participants
- Findings
- Themes

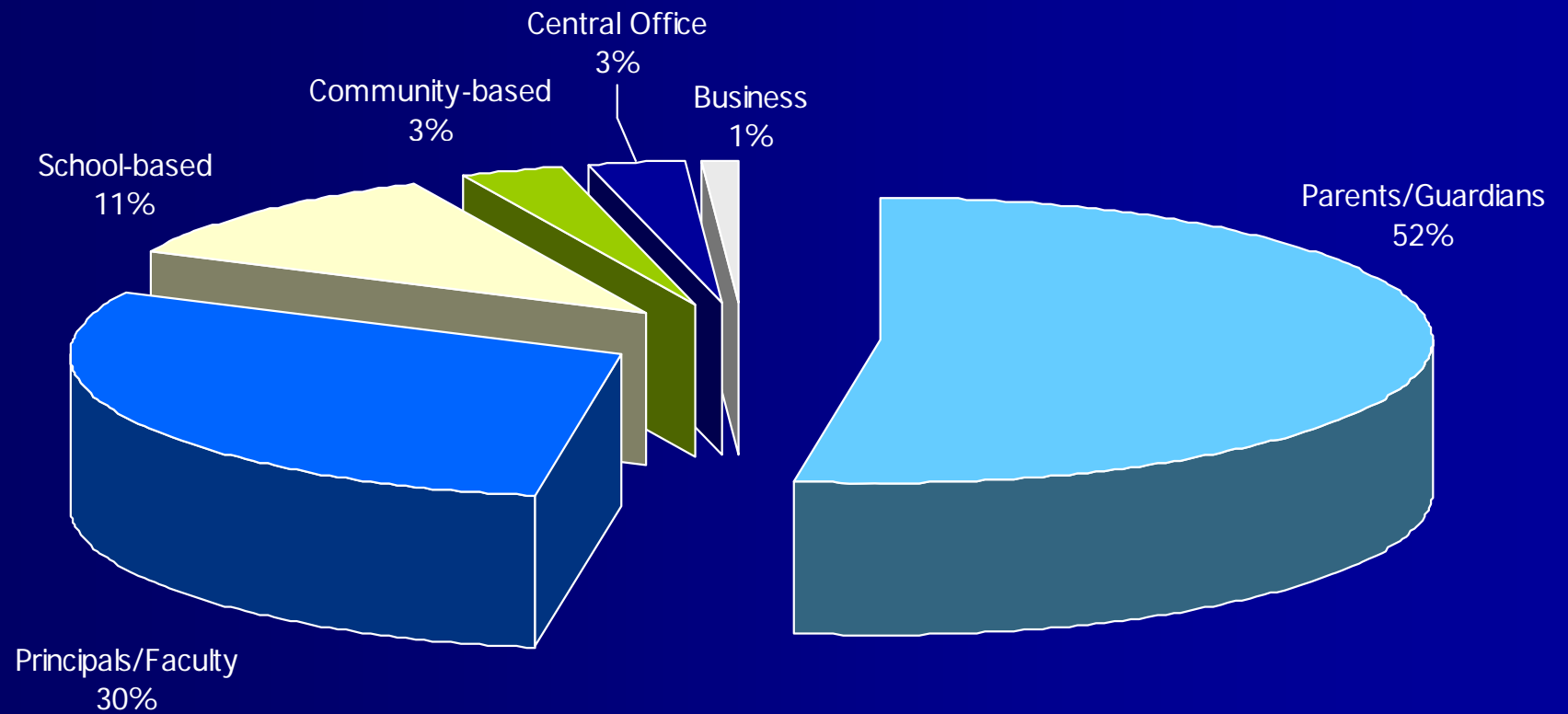
# Survey Characteristics

- 13 Questions
- Distributed Statewide
- Available in Print and Online
- 1,684 Surveys Returned
- A Starting Point

# Survey Content

- Parent Involvement—Overview
- Diversity
- Outreach and Communication
- Parent Support
- Changes in Involvement
- Success and Vision

# Survey Participants



# Parent Involvement

Levels of Involvement

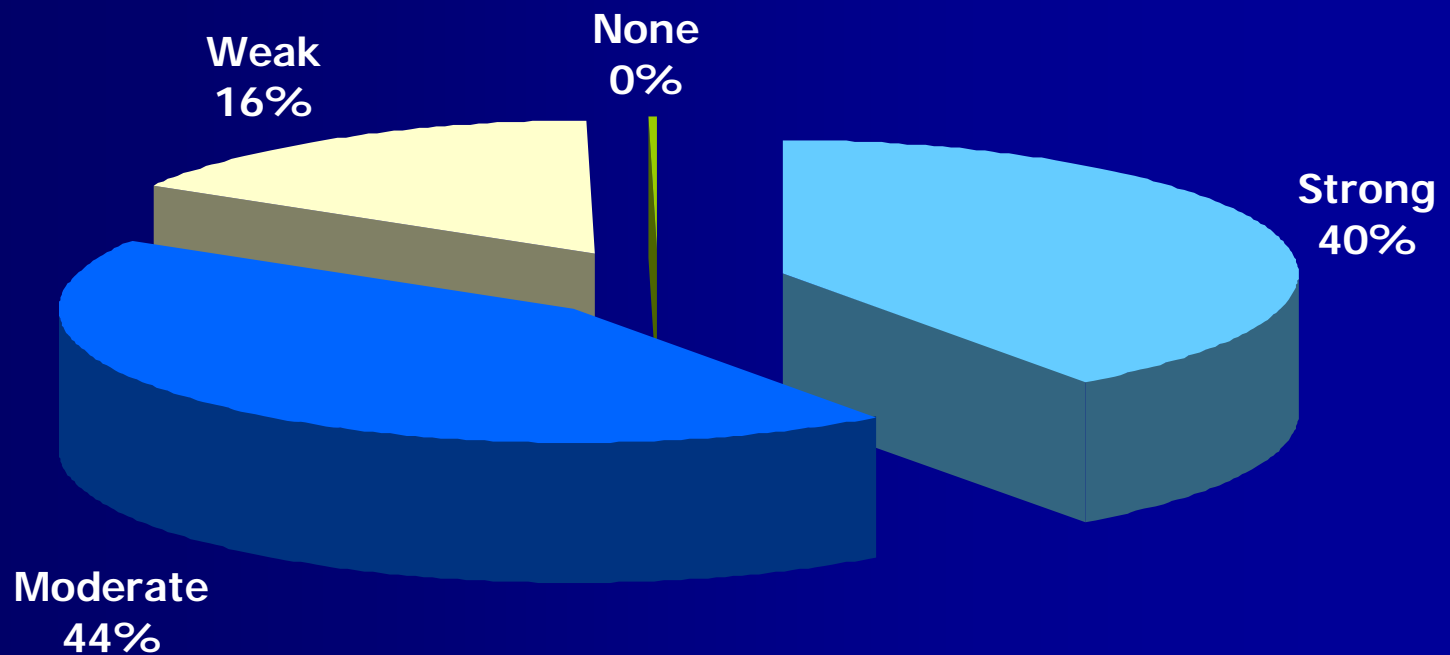
# Question 1

*How would you describe parent involvement in your school community?*

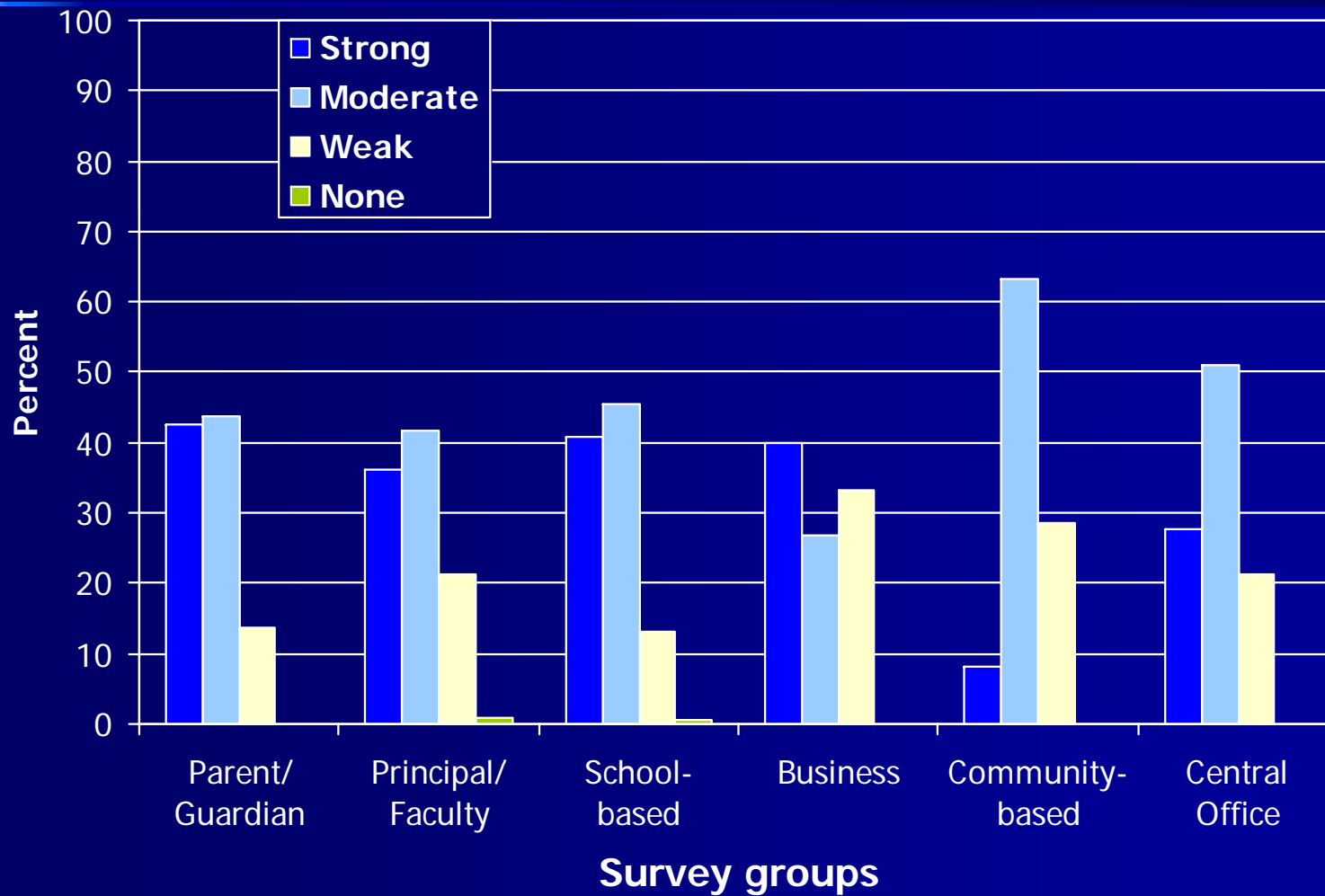
# Responses

- Strong
- Moderate
- Weak
- None

# Levels of Parent Involvement



# Parent Involvement Levels by Survey Groups



# Parent Involvement

Types of Parent Participation

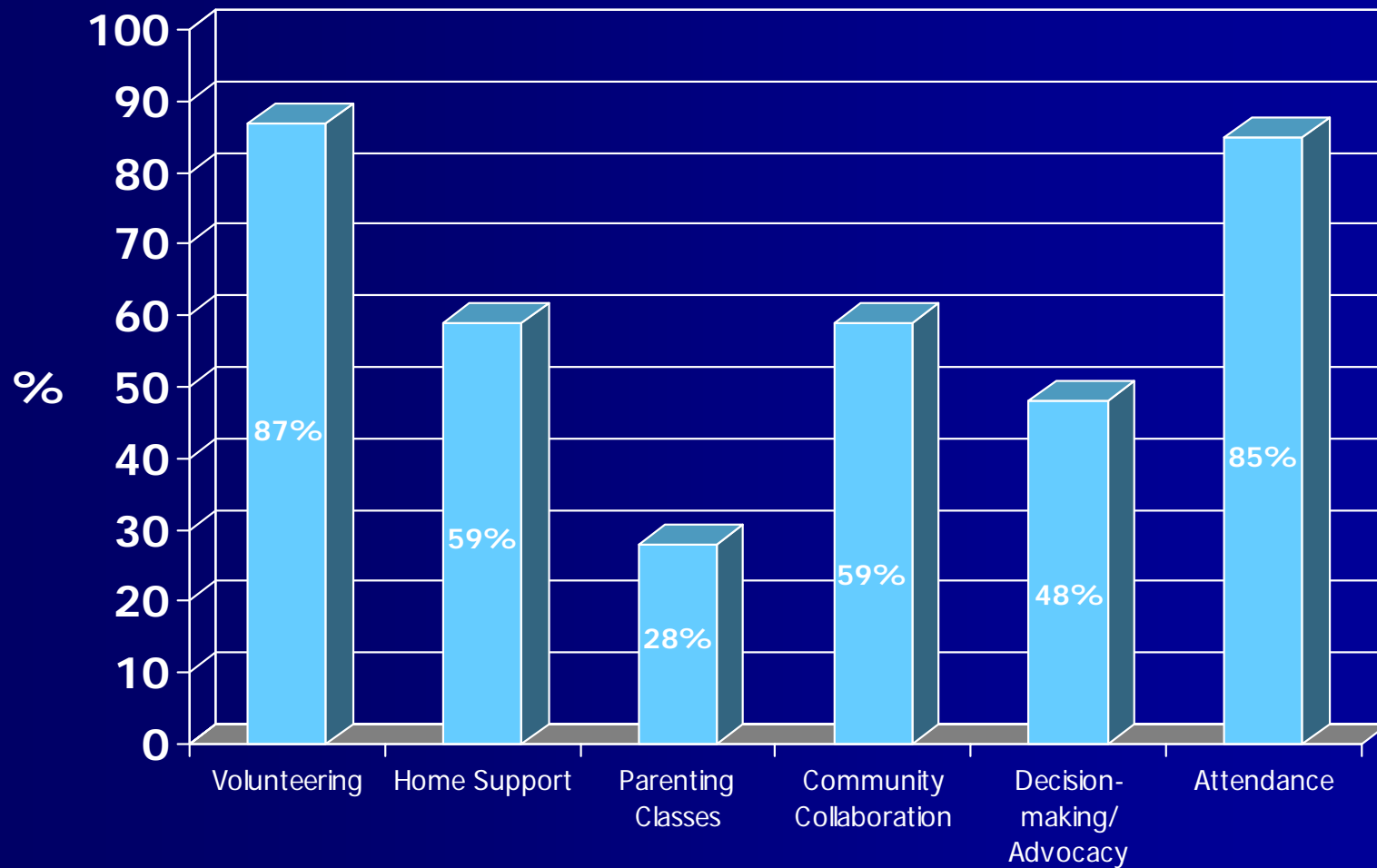
## Question 2

*Which of the following statements  
about your school community are  
true?*

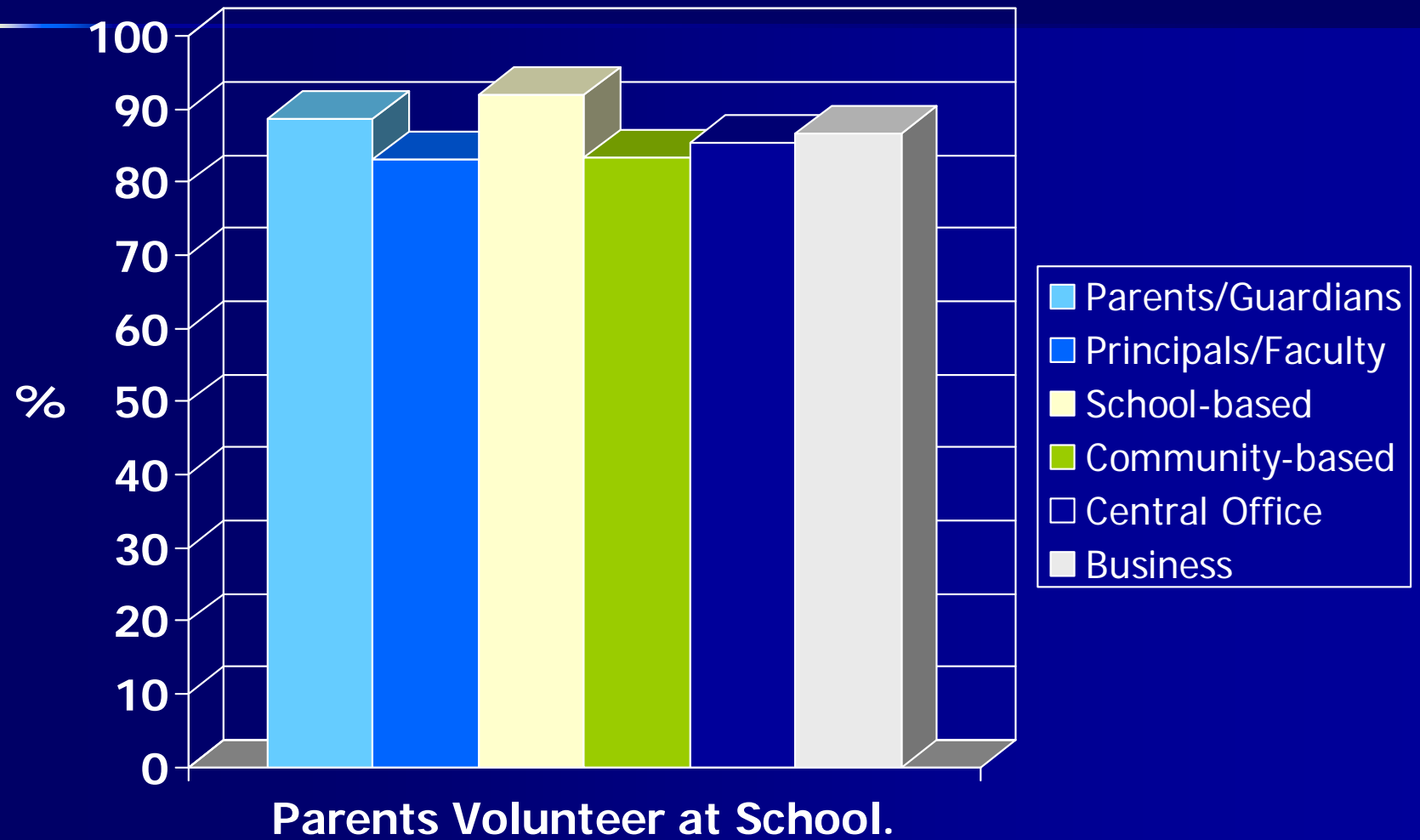
# Responses

- Parents volunteer at school.
- Student learning is supported at home.
- Parent/family literacy classes are offered.
- The school works with the community.
- Parents are engaged in school decision-making and advocacy.
- Parent attendance at school events is encouraged.

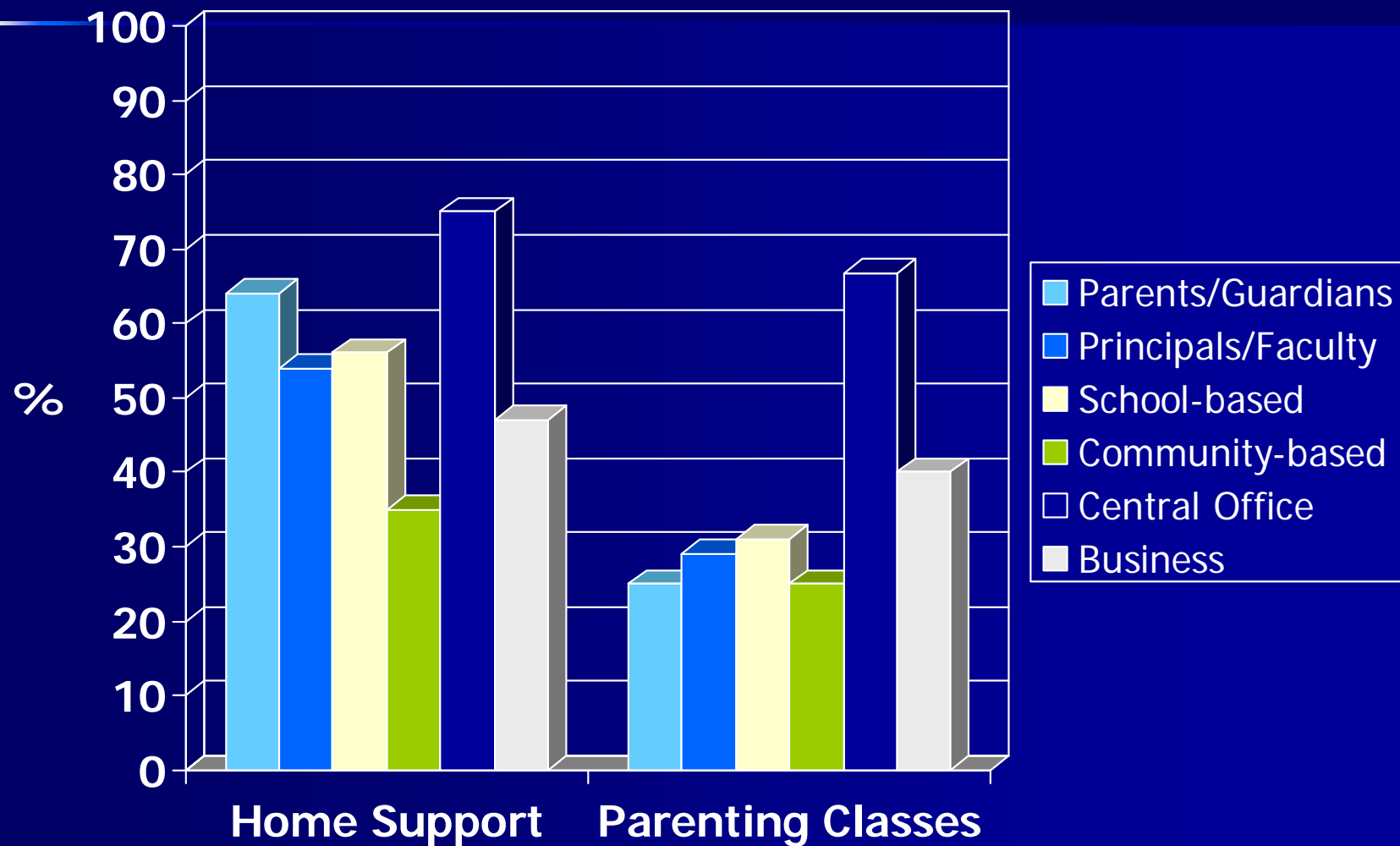
# Types of Parent Involvement



## Group Comparison: Statement 1



## Group Comparison: Statements 2 and 3



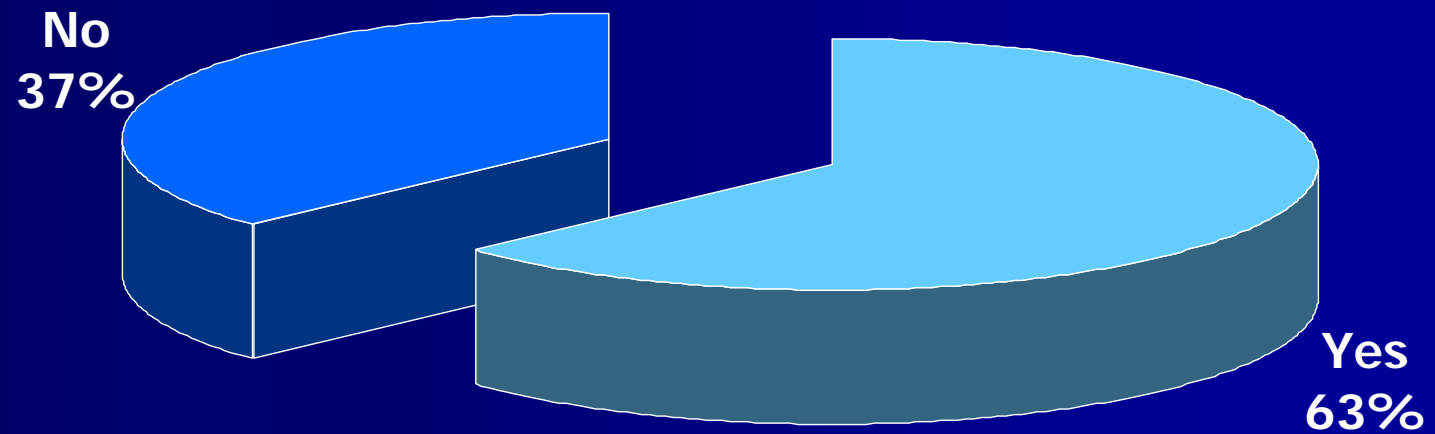
# Parental Involvement

Barriers to Parent Participation

# Question 3

*Does your school community face barriers to greater parent involvement?*

# Barriers to Parent Involvement?



## Question 4

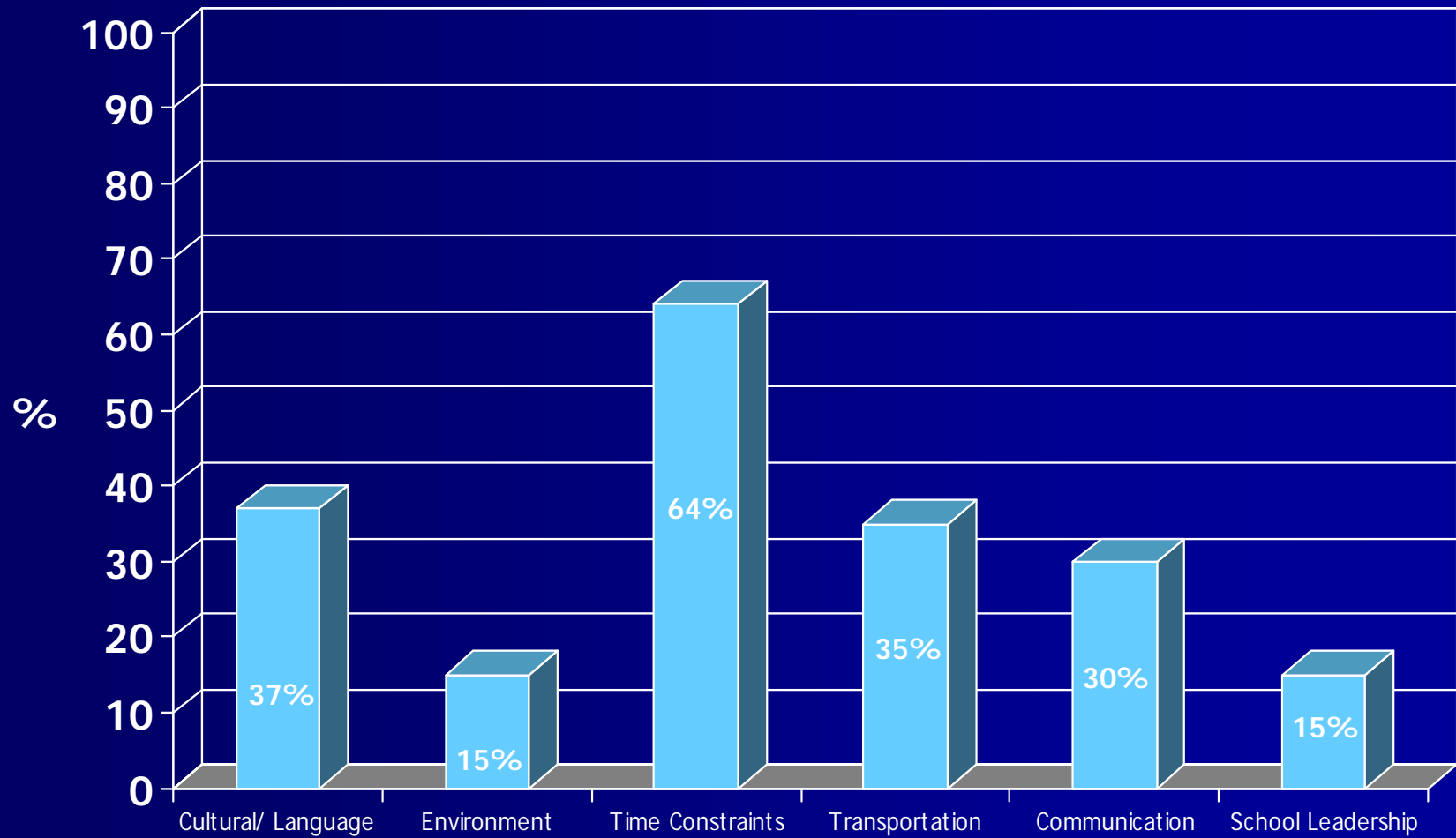
*Does your school community face barriers to greater parent involvement?*

*If so, what kinds of barriers does your school community face?*

# Responses

- Cultural/Language Differences
- Environmental
- Time Constraints
- Transportation
- Communication
- School Leadership

# Barriers to Parent Involvement



# Additional Barriers Reported

- Economic Conditions
- Relationships between Schools and Families
- Attitudes and Experiences of Parents
- Lack of Childcare
- Working Parent(s)

# Diversity

Parent Leadership

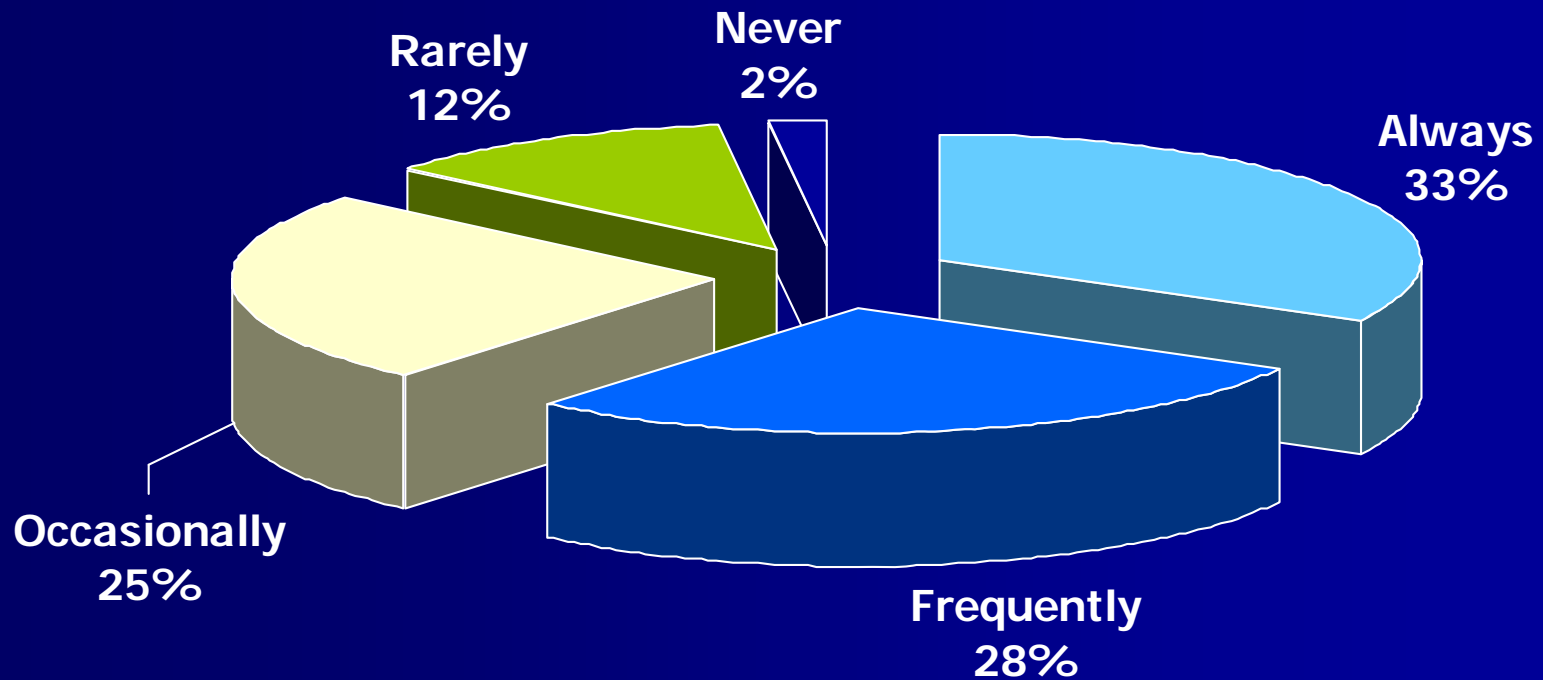
# Question 5

*Are parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups included in your school community?*

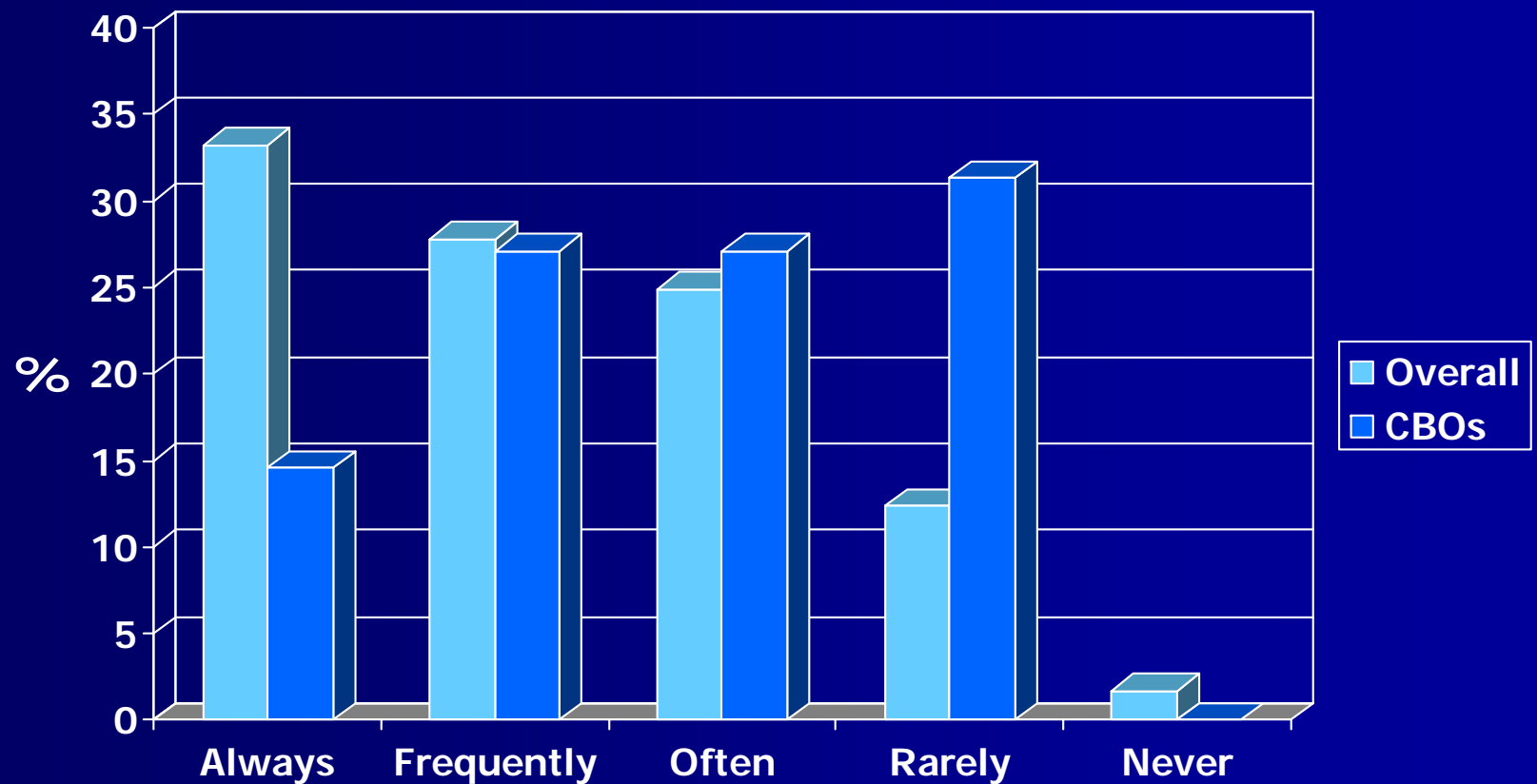
# Responses

- Always
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never\*

# Diverse representation among parent leaders?



# Comparison: Overall and Community Responses



# Lack of Diversity: Explanations

- All *invited* to participate
- Lack of community-wide diversity
- White, upper/middle class leadership
- Same parents year to year, even as community demographics change
- Exclusive participation

# Outreach and Communication

Connecting Schools with Families  
and Communities

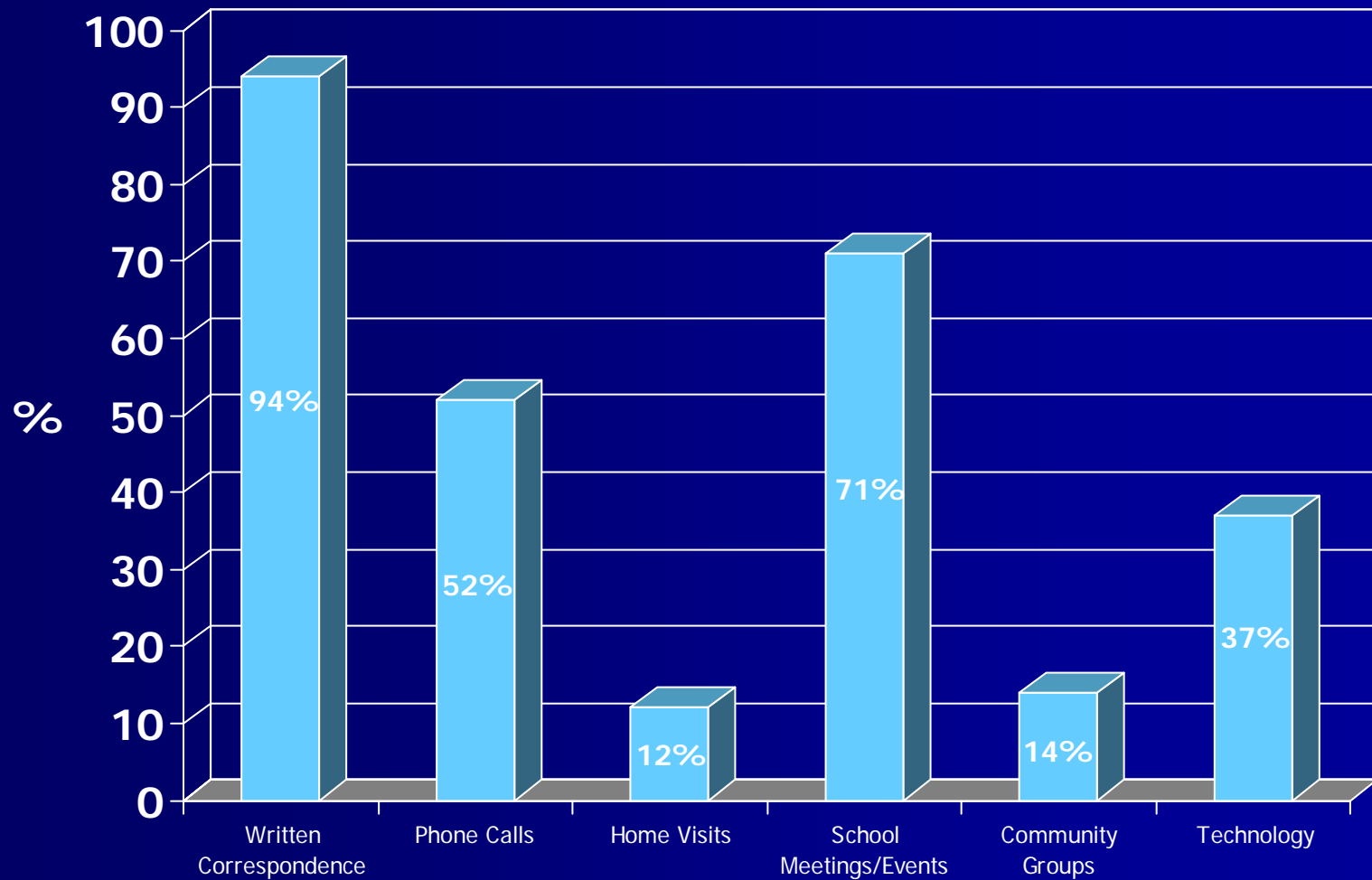
# Question 6

*What methods does your school community most frequently use to communicate with parents?*

# Responses

- Written Correspondence
- Phone Calls
- Home Visits
- School Meetings, Conferences, Events
- Community Group Collaboration
- Technology

## Methods of Communicating with Parents



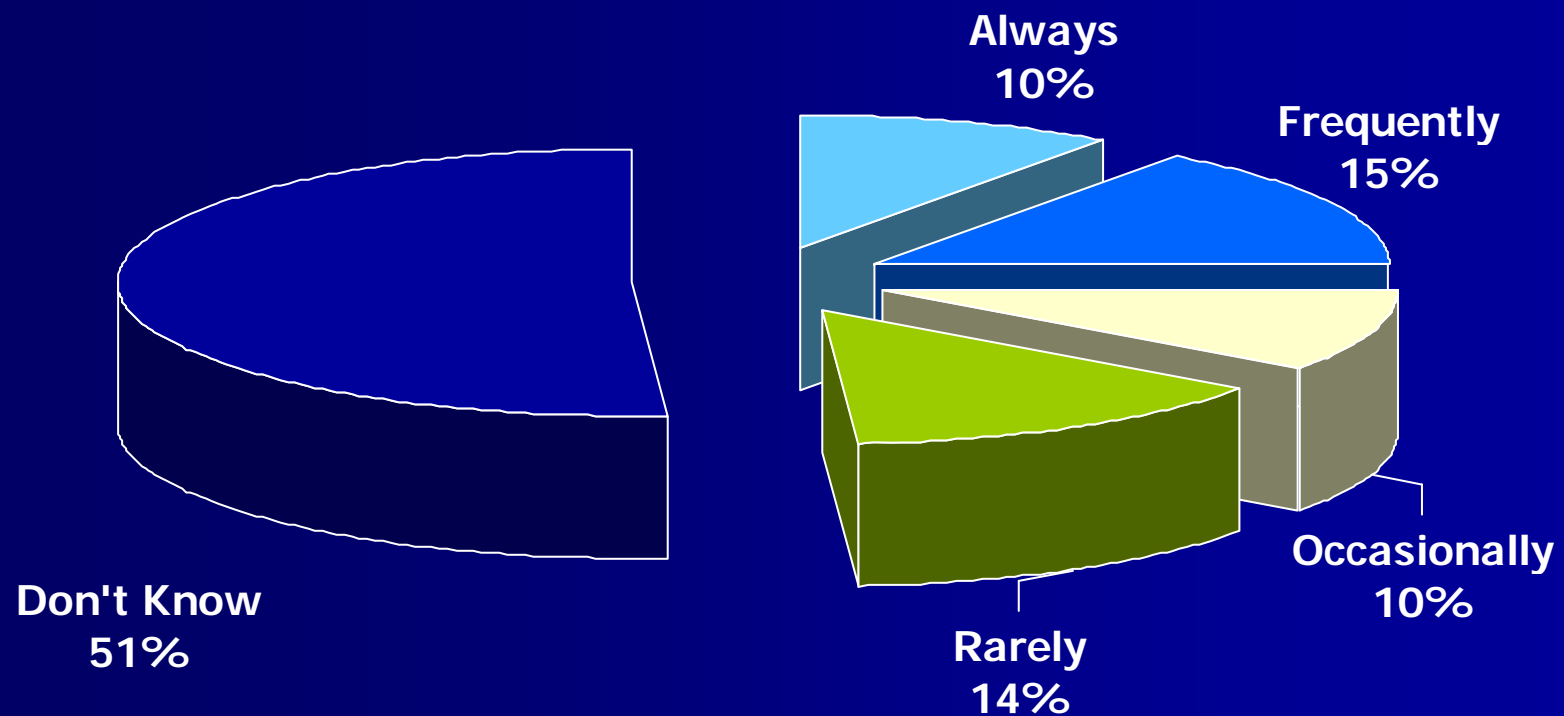
# Communication Trends

- Desire for more personal contact
- Newsletters most commonly reported communication method
- Move towards greater technology use in schools
- Limited availability of technology for some parents

# Question 7

*How often does your school community develop communication for parents who do not read or speak English well?*

# Communication in Other Languages?



# **Outreach and Communication**

Community Collaboration

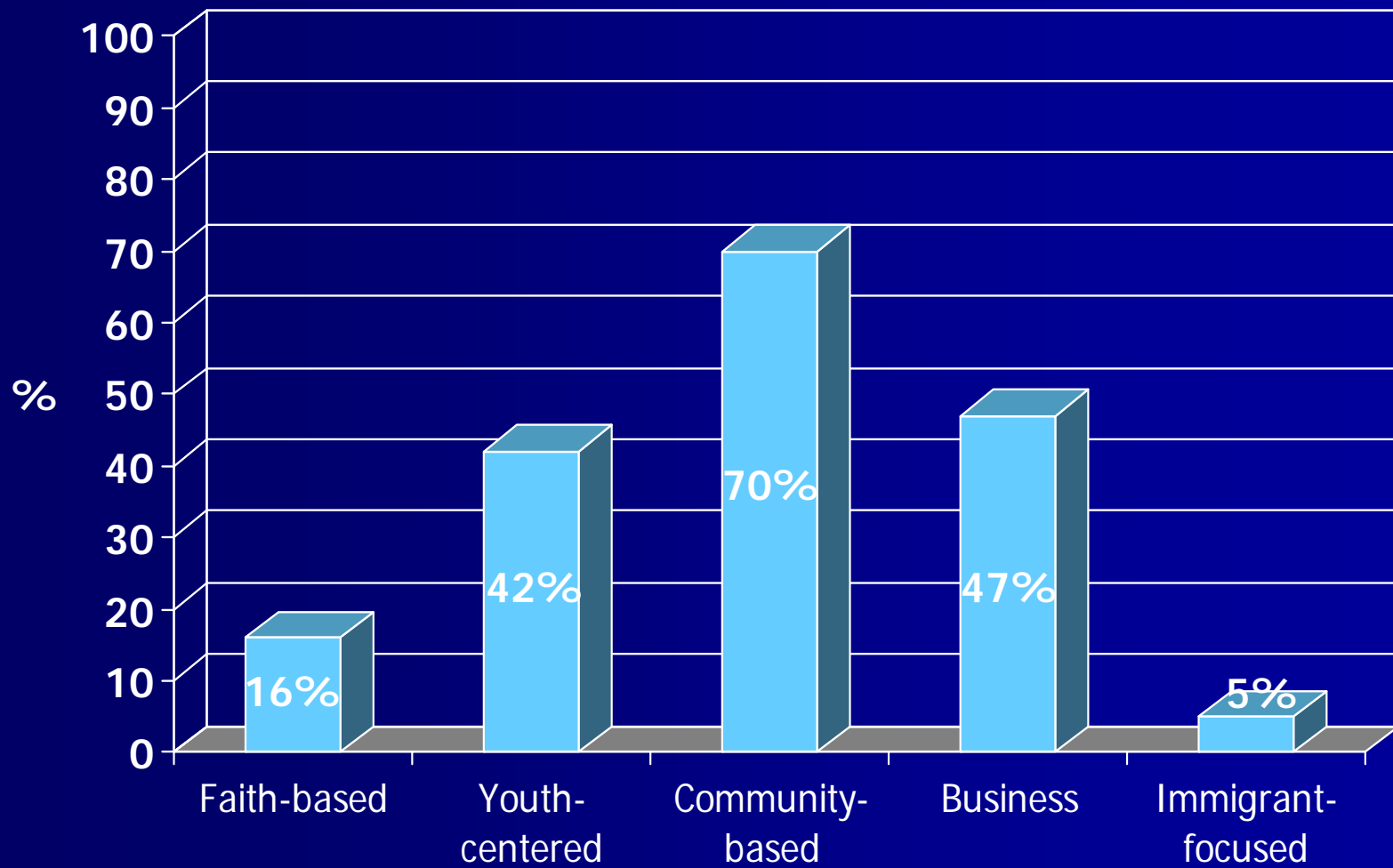
## Question 8

*What kinds of local groups does your school community regularly collaborate with to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development?*

# Responses

- Faith-based
- Youth-centered
- Community-based
- Business and industry
- Immigrant-focused

# Community Collaborations



# Other Collaborations

- University Partnerships
- Senior Citizens Groups
- Police Department
- After-School Programs
  
- "Don't Know"

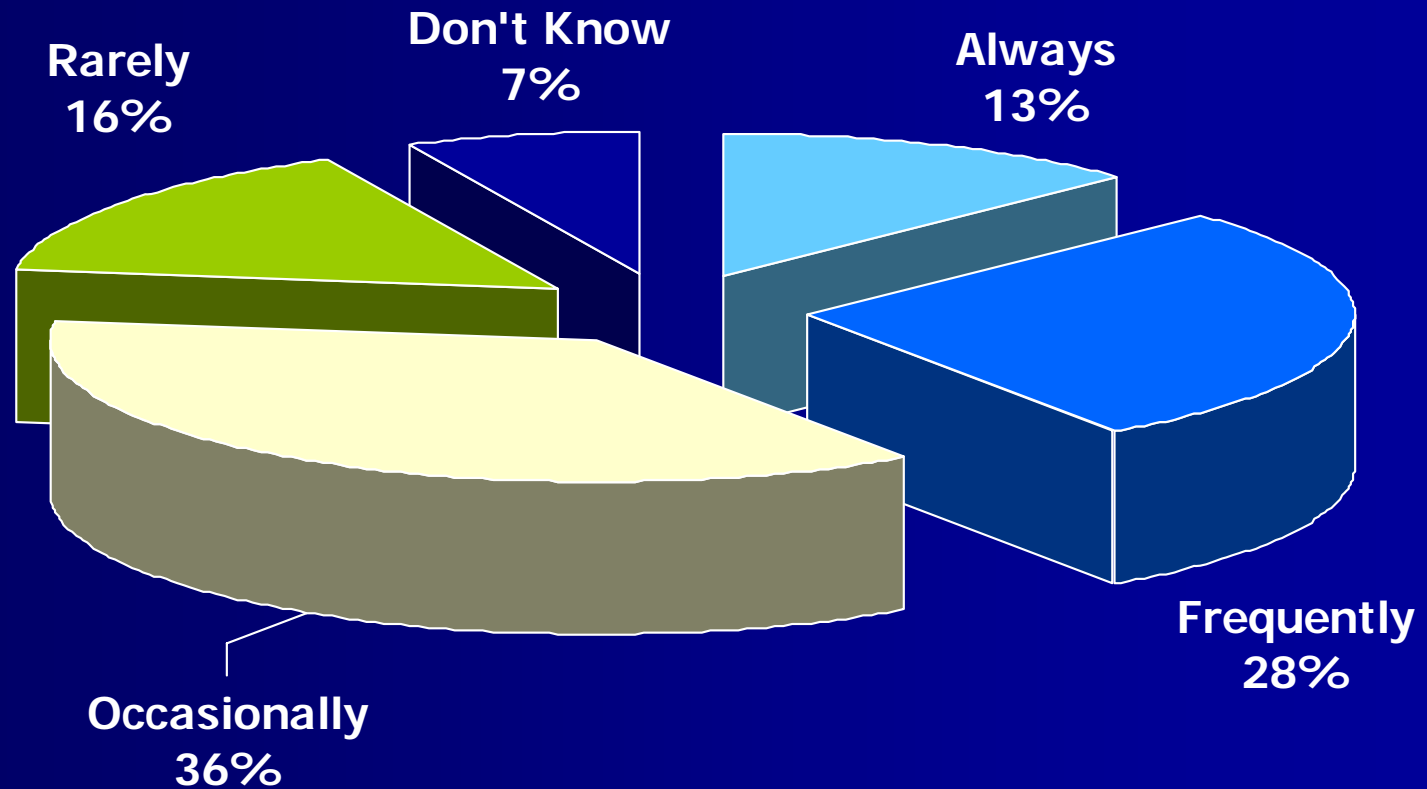
# Parent Support

Academic Achievement

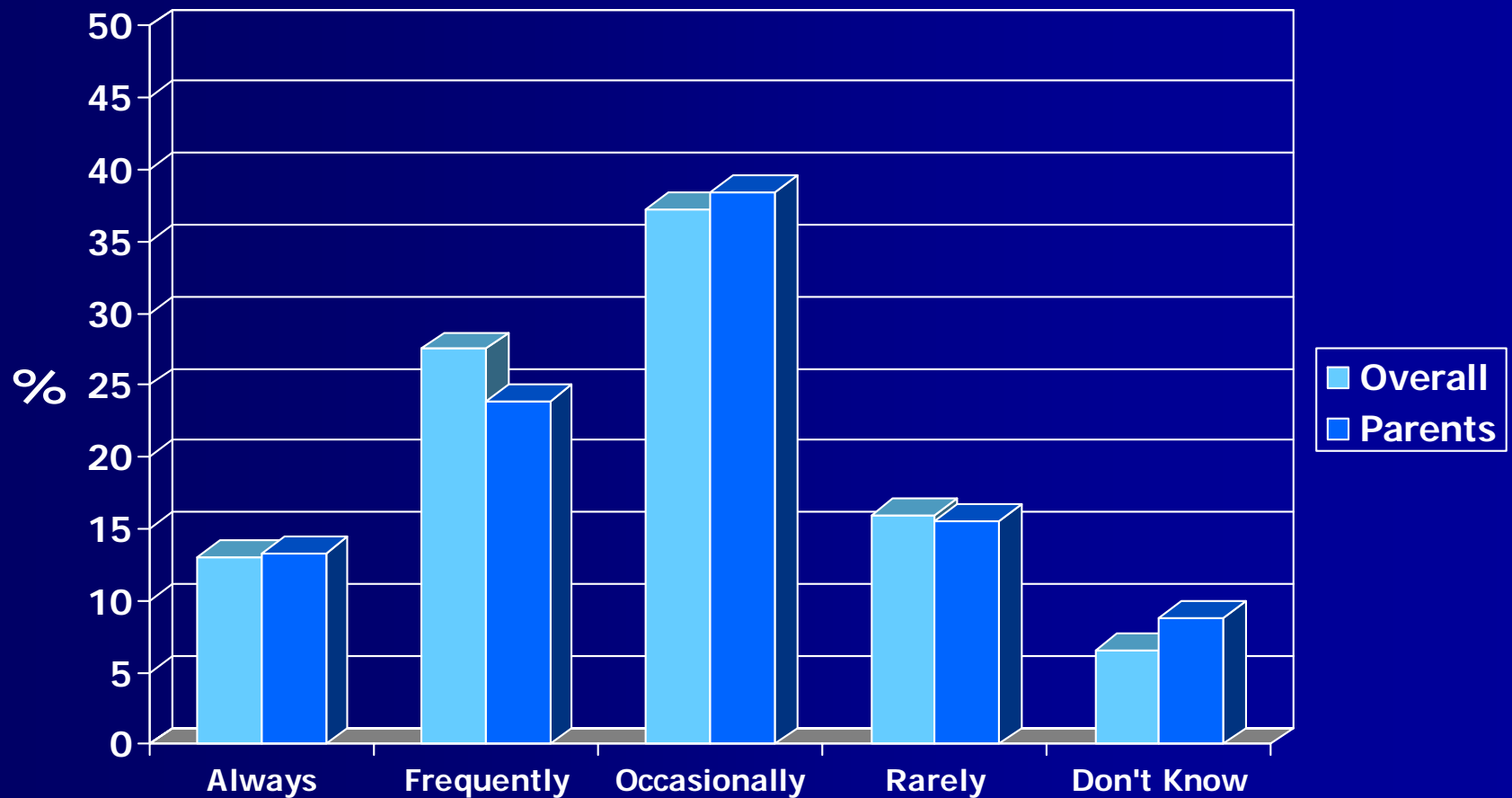
# Question 9

*Does your school community provide support (training, workshops, programs) to parents for encouraging their child's academic achievement at home?*

# Parent Support for Academic Achievement?



# Comparison: Overall and Parent Responses



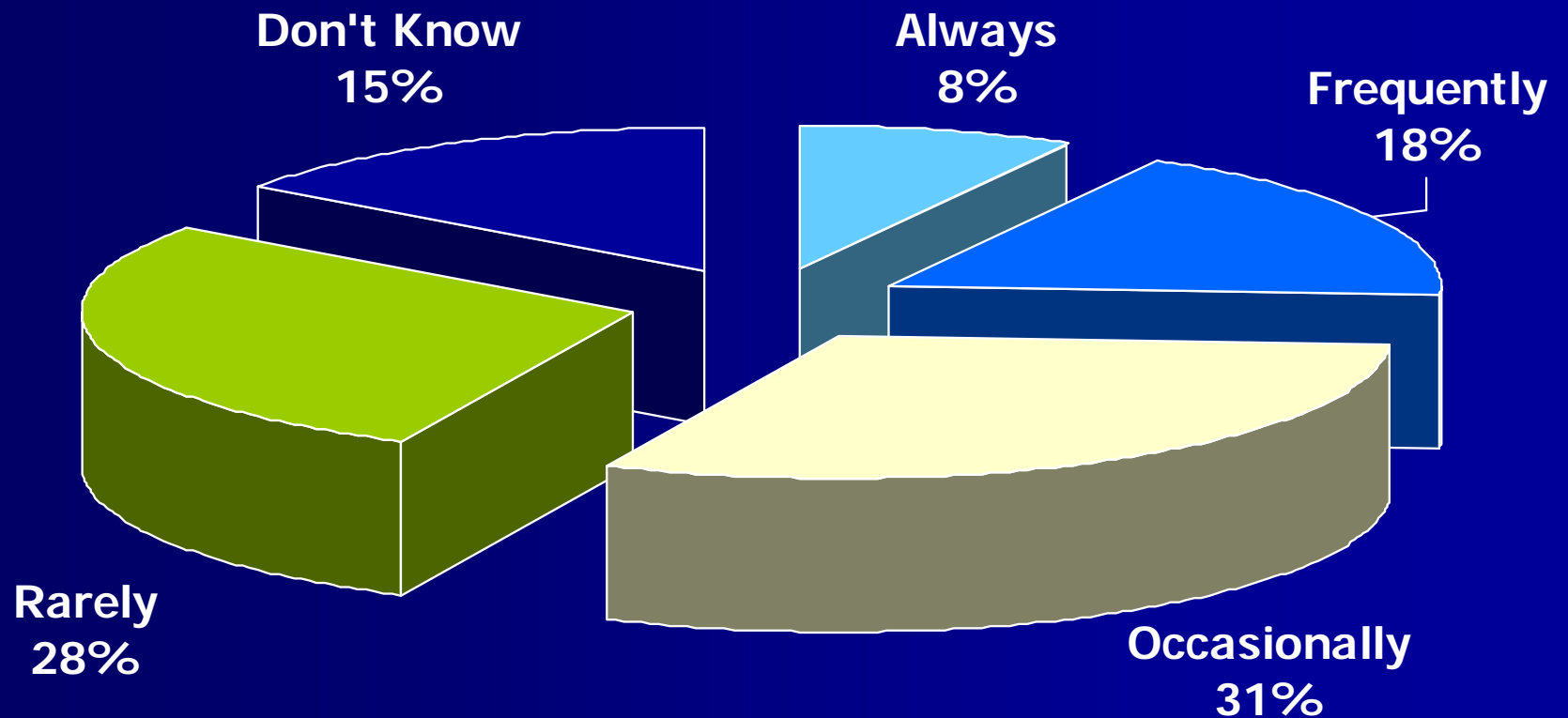
# Parent Support

Policy Development and  
Decision-Making

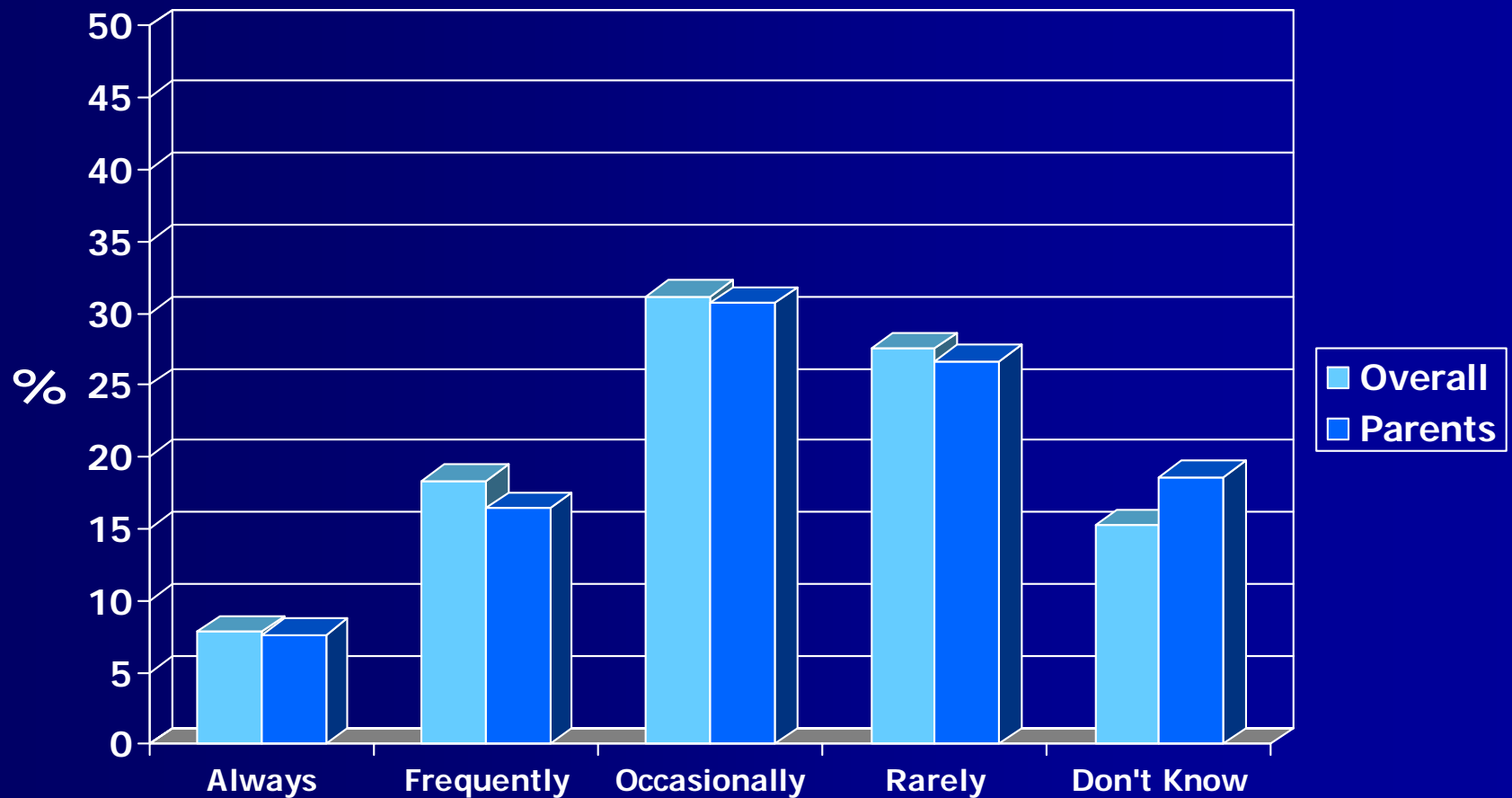
## Question 10

*Does your school community provide support (training, workshops, programs) to assist parents in assuming roles related to policy development and decision-making?*

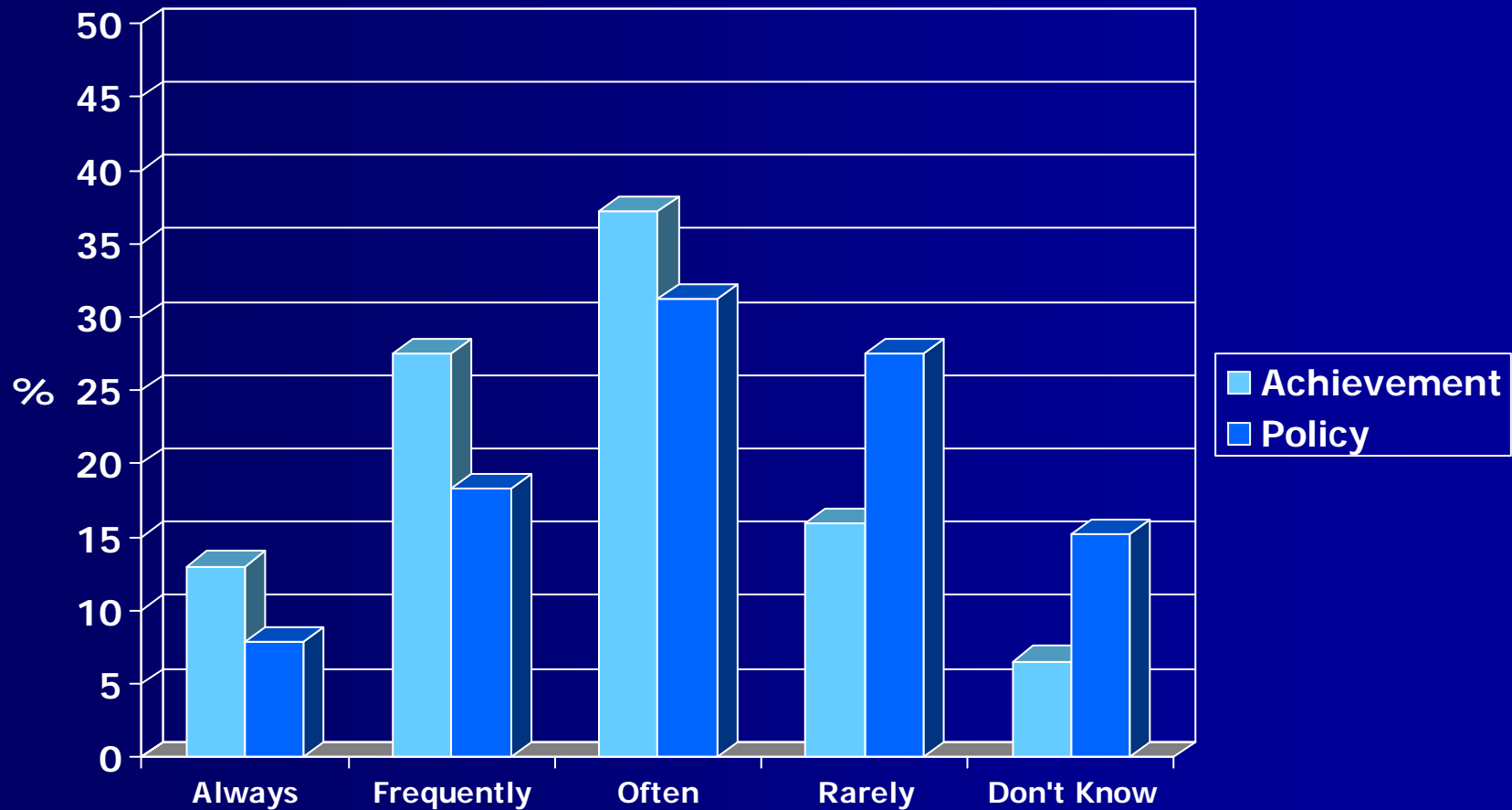
# Parent Support for Decision-making and Policy Development?



# Comparison: Overall and Parent Responses



# Comparison: Parent Support for Achievement and Policy Development



# Changes in Involvement

Movement through Phases of  
Schooling

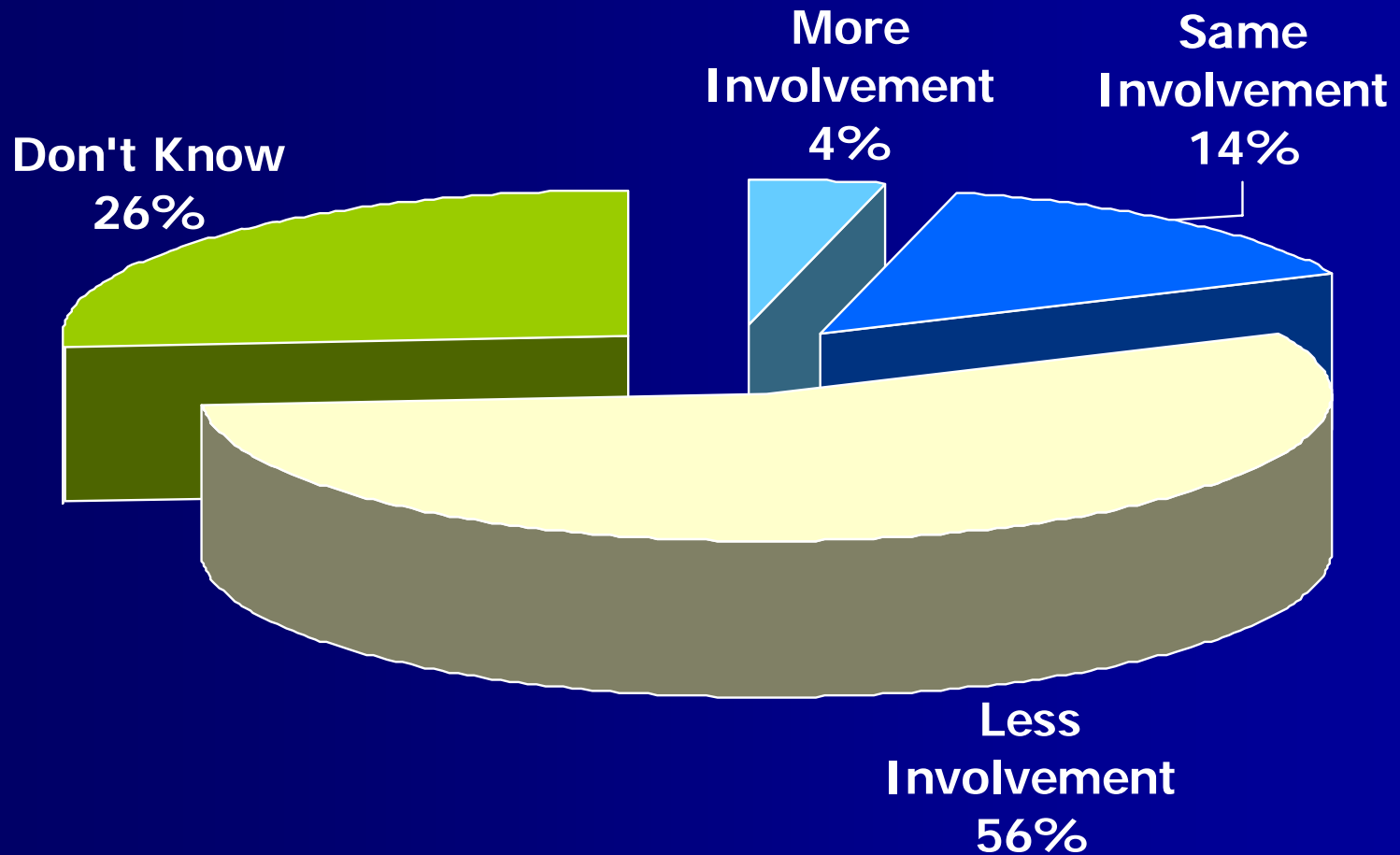
# Question 11

*Does the level of parent involvement in education change as your child moves from elementary to middle to high school?*

# Responses

- More Involved
- Same Amount of Involvement
- Less Involved
- Don't Know

# Changes in Parent Involvement over Time?



# Explanations

- Children's Attitudes
- Different *Kinds* of Involvement
- Varying School Environments
- Student Maturity
- Intensification of Social and Academic Roles

# Parents' Voices

Involvement as a Pathway to  
Success and a New Vision

# Question 12

*Past successes are just as important as future changes. Please take a moment to tell us how family involvement has shaped greater success in your school community.*

# Pathways to Success

- Academic and Social Success of Children
- Resources, Programs, Improvements
- Relationships and Trust
- Support for Teachers

# Academic Success and Social Support for Children

- Most Common Response
- "Greater self-esteem in children"
- Children "tend to work harder"
- "The more I know and understand about what is expected of my child, the more growth will take place for him/her."
- "Less behavioral issues...and they can be dealt with"

# Resources, Programs, Improvements

- "improved conditions at school"
- "band uniforms, new playground"
- "rallied to ensure continued funding for important curriculum"
- "Math Day, Spring Fair, Book Fair, and Craft Night"

# Relationships and Trust

- “Opens up lines of communication”
- “Builds trust”
- “Mostly, it has created a closer community ‘family’”
- “It has brought families together—in education and socially—that would have never gotten together outside of school.”

# Support for Teachers

- "Frees up time for teachers"
- "Allows teachers to spend more time with each child"
- "Gives teacher a chance to take a break or do something else"

# Question 13

*Please take a moment to share your vision for improved parent involvement.*

# A New Vision

- Parent Recognition and Empowerment
- Involving All Parents
- Positive Communication

# Parent Recognition and Empowerment

- "Parents need to understand how important they are ."
- "Need to feel empowered"
- "I would love for all of the adults to understand that they are part of the education team."
- "Teachers giving true acknowledgement to the primary role of the parent in educating the child"

# Involving All Parents

- “Reach out to new and minority parents”
- “Celebrate diversity and changing school populations”
- “Broader participation”
- “All socioeconomic levels”

# Positive Communication

- "Open communication between parents and the school"
- "Need to personally ask parents to get involved"
- "Need encouragement from principals"
- "Try to create a working relationship with parents instead of an adversarial one"

# Conclusion

Themes for Consideration

# Recurring Survey Themes

- Need to move beyond traditional forms of involvement
- Increased flexibility and diversity
- Parent participation vs. parent engagement (passive vs. active)
- Discrepancies between school- and community-based reports
- Which parents are we hearing from?

*"Family involvement creates enthusiasm  
that is 'catchy.'"*