

Keys to Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment on Our Nation's School Buses

presented by

Michael J. Martin

Executive Director

National Association for Pupil Transportation

What Do We Know?

- Bullying is a significant problem among our children.
- The School Bus is fertile ground for bullying.
- Well-thought policies can make a difference in the lives of our children.

In Our Ideal World...

- School transportation leaders would be at the table with other school leaders.
- School bus drivers and teams would be consulted and trained in line with other staff.
- Lines of authority and responsibility for school bus behavioral issues would be clearly defined.
- Training of administrators and drivers would be diverse and broad-based.

Our Effort to Assess the Real World

- **Who?** NAPT members surveyed
 - * 70% identified themselves as the “transportation director or equivalent”
- **What?** appraise, canvass, gauge
- **When?** May 2011
- **Where?** Online via Survey Monkey
- **How many?** >25% response rate

About What Did We Learn?

In a survey of NAPT members, we learned about:

- The extent of bullying on school buses and at school bus stops
- The role transportation officials play in shaping policy and practice
- The extent to which school bus drivers are engaged in shaping and executing policies and practices

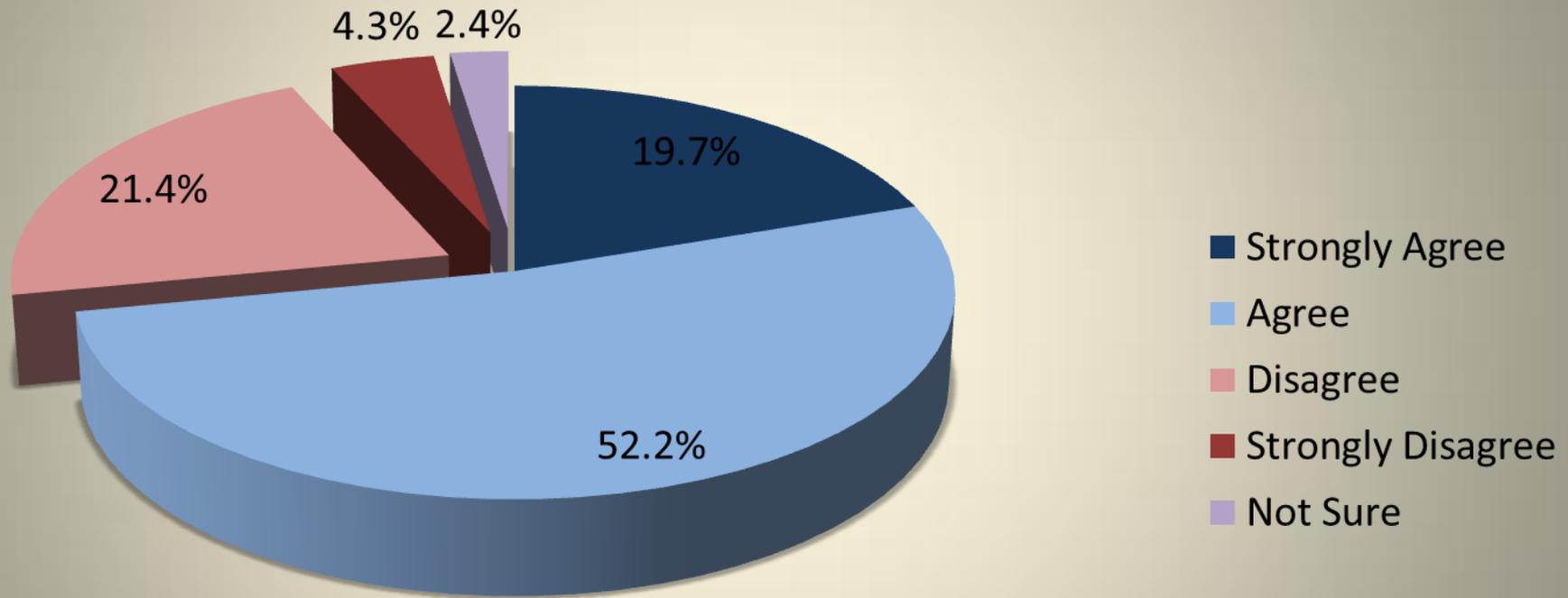
What Did We Learn?

We learned that:

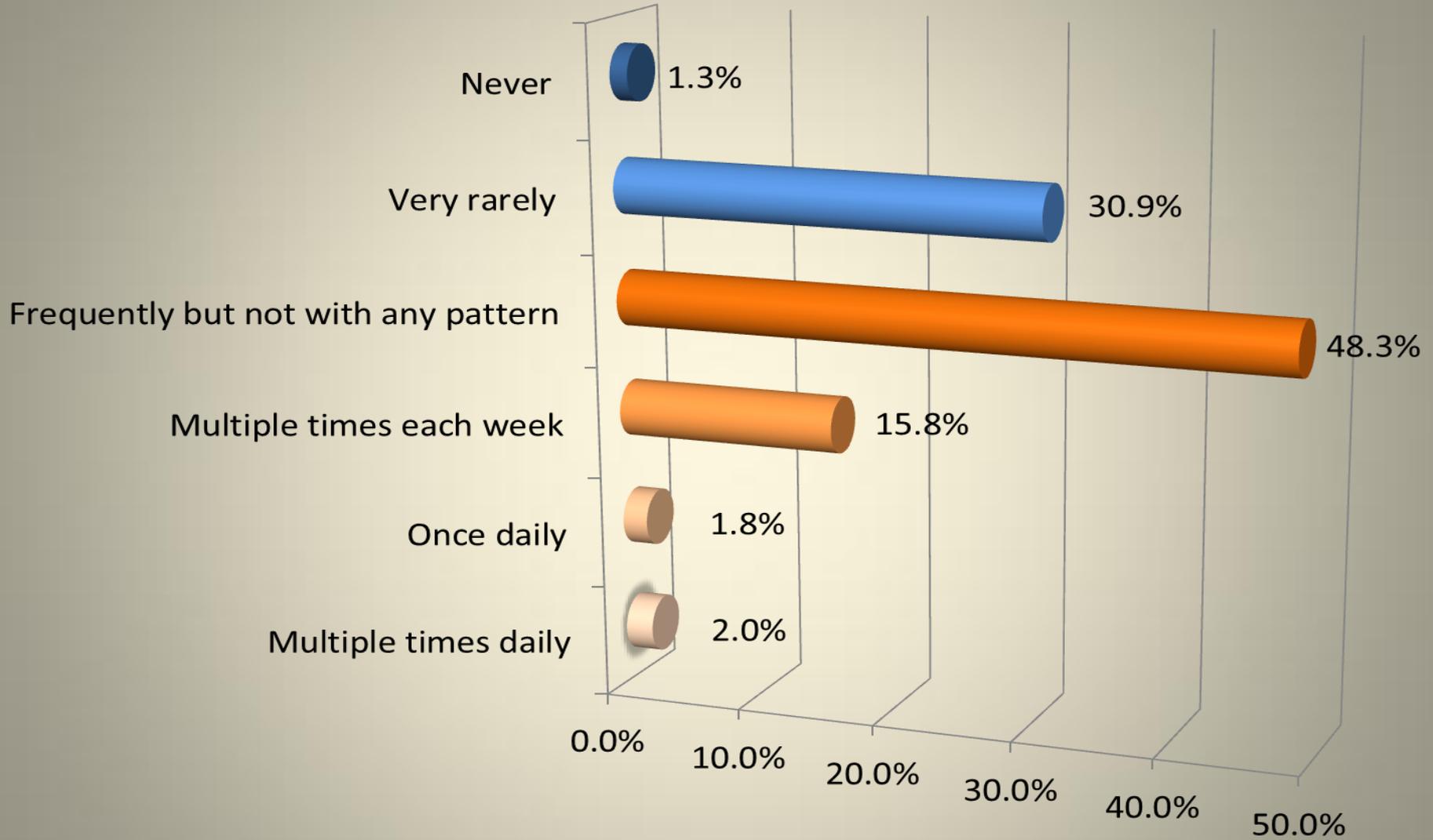
- 52.2% believe that bullying is a serious problem on their school buses
- Two-thirds receive complaints frequently or multiple times per week
- Plus research tells us that most (2/3) bullying goes unreported

National Center for Education, Evaluation and Regional Assistance – Petrosino, A., Guckenberger, S., De Voe, J., and Harrison, T. (2010)

To what degree do you agree with this statement: bullying is a serious problem on my school buses?



How often do you receive complaints or concerns that children are being bullied on your school buses?

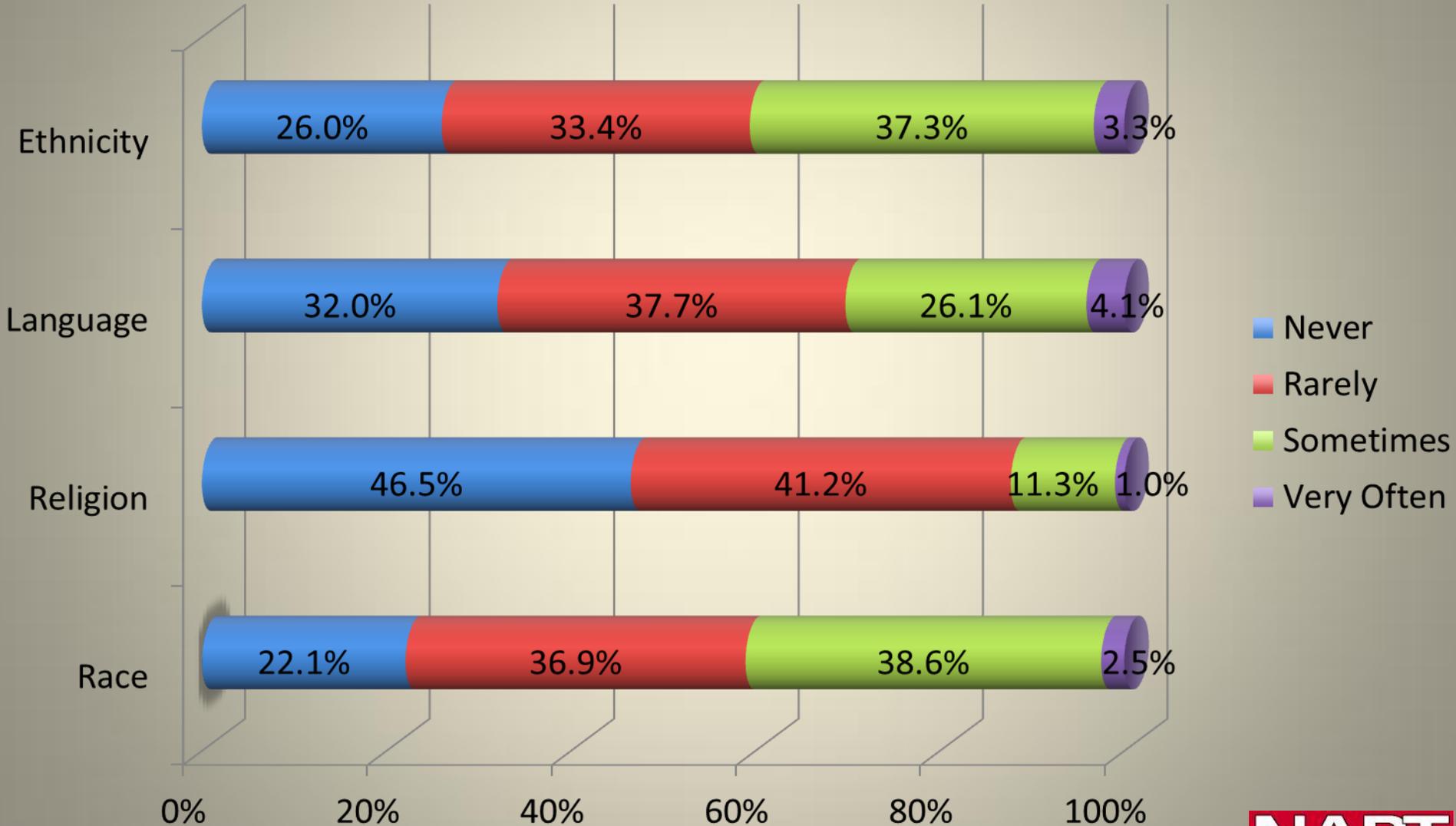


What Did We Learn about Why Students Bully?

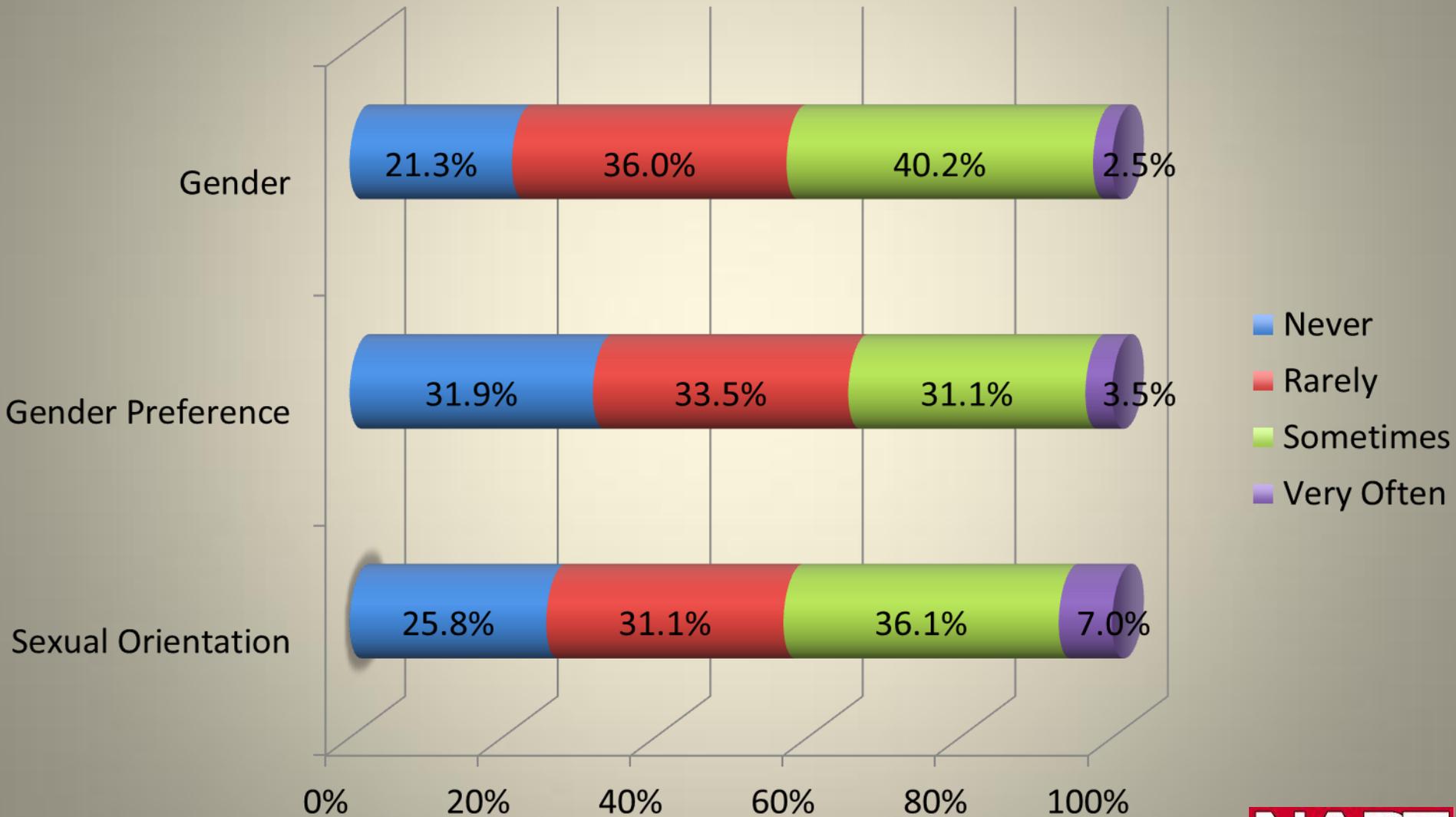
We learned that “bullies bullied” for many “reasons” with the most frequent being:

- Ethnicity and race
- Gender or gender preference
- Weight and physical appearance (#1 @ 72%)
- Disability or the appearance of being disabled

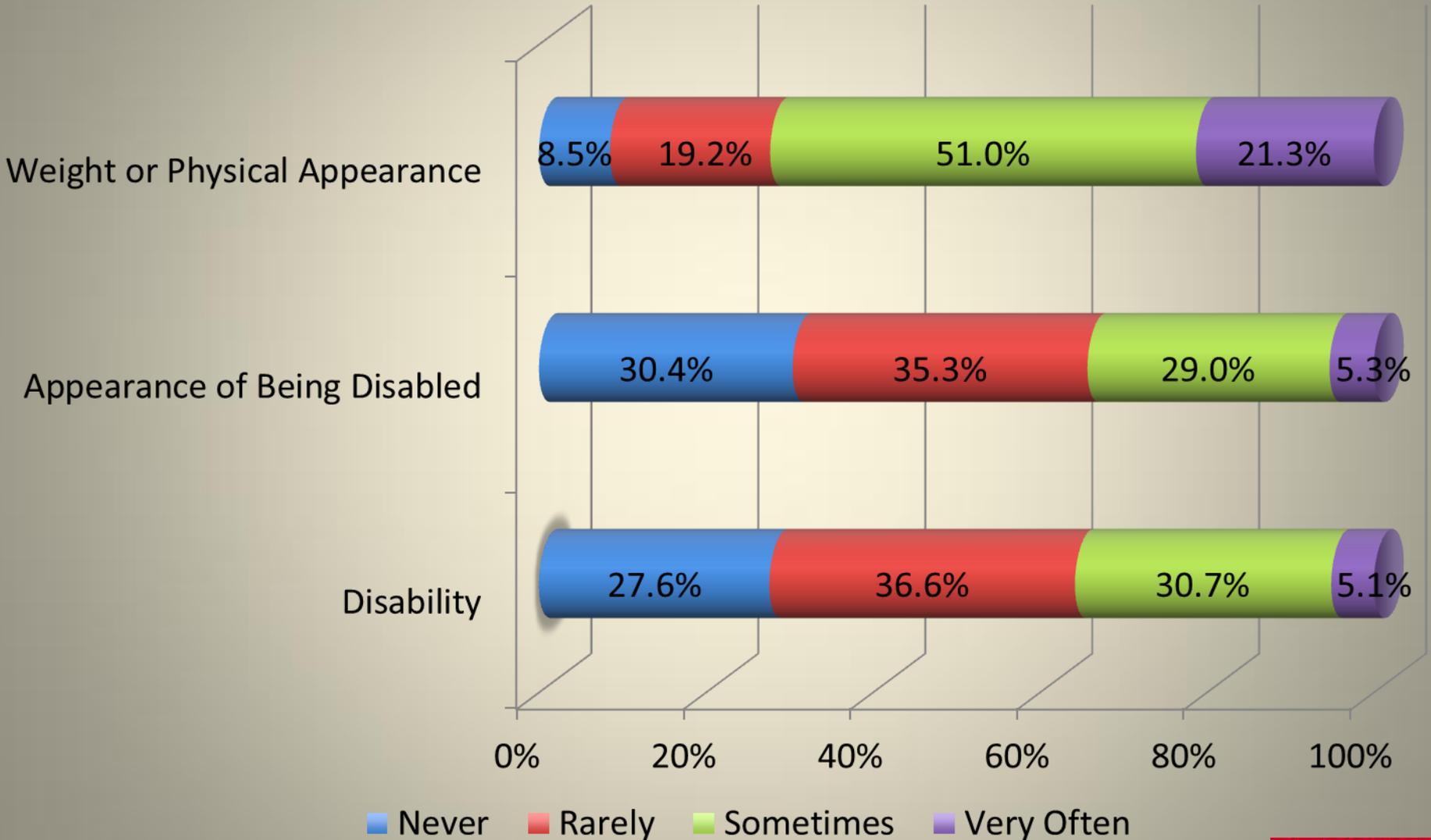
“Reason” or “Premise” for Bullying



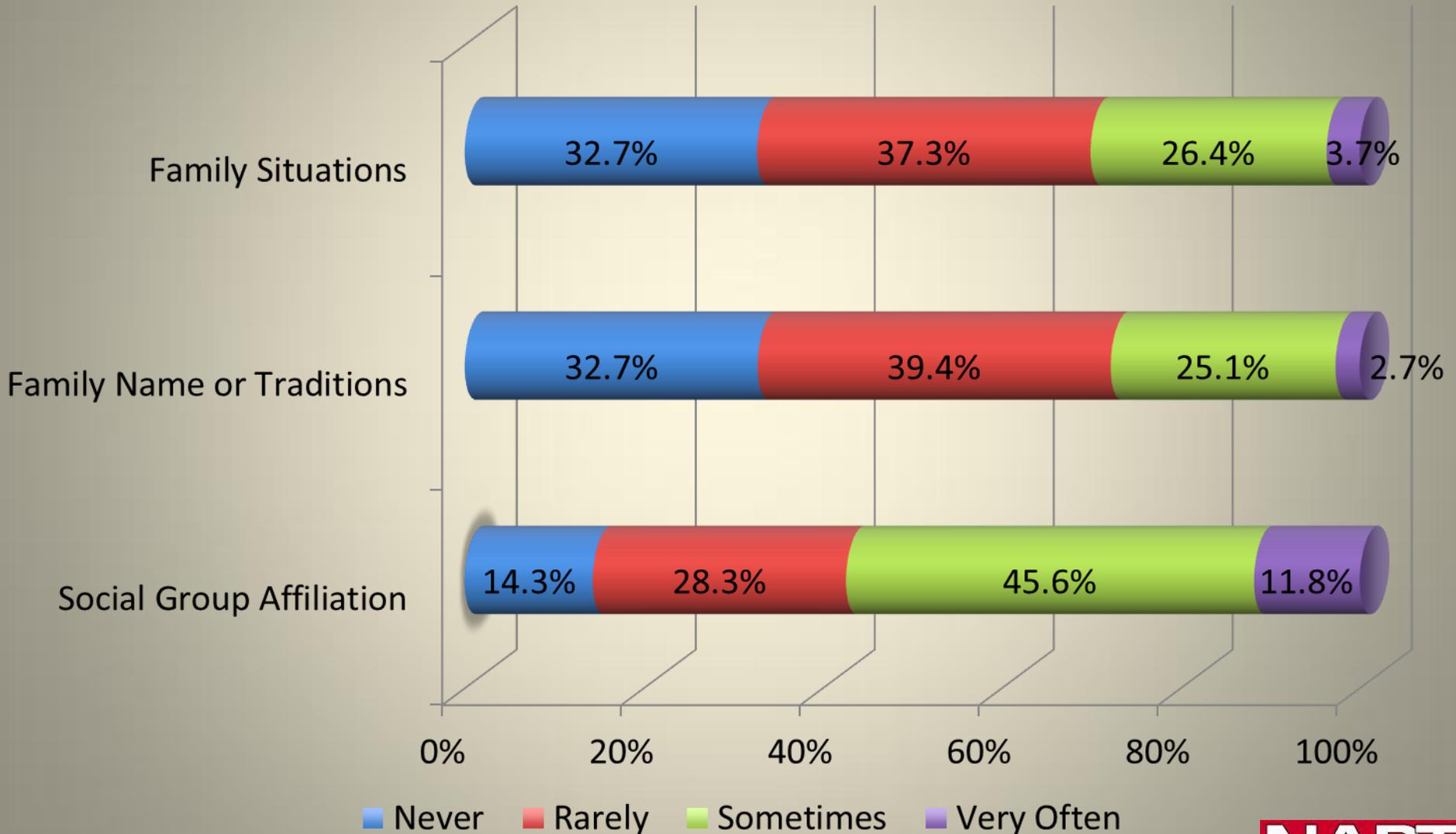
“Reason” or “Premise” for Bullying



“Reason” or “Premise” for Bullying



“Reason” or “Premise” for Bullying



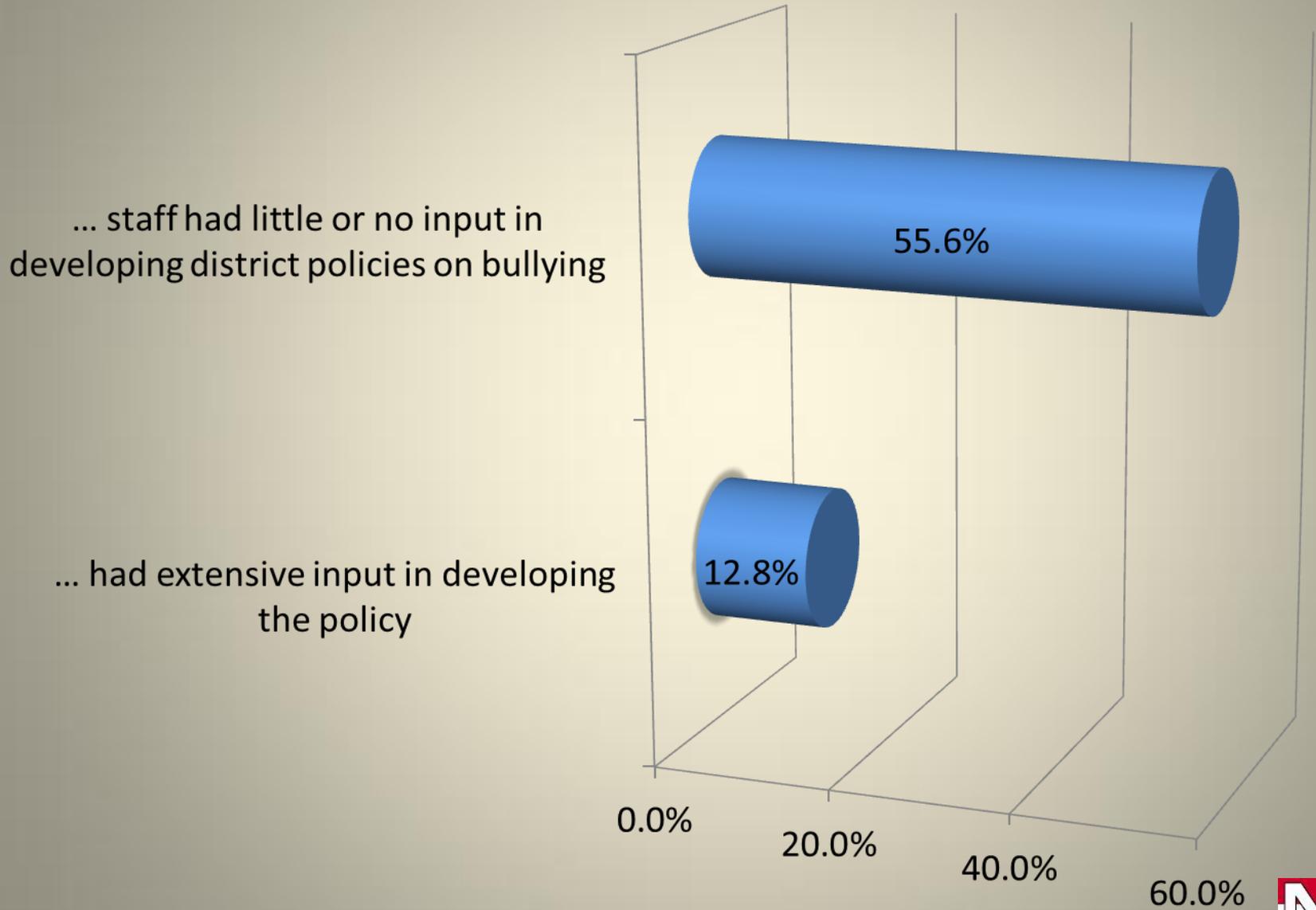
What Does This Tell Us?

- The range of training for school bus drivers is wide with a need for emerging social as well as traditional issues being covered.
- Policies must address tolerance and positive, respectful school and learning environments – to help children to embrace their differences.

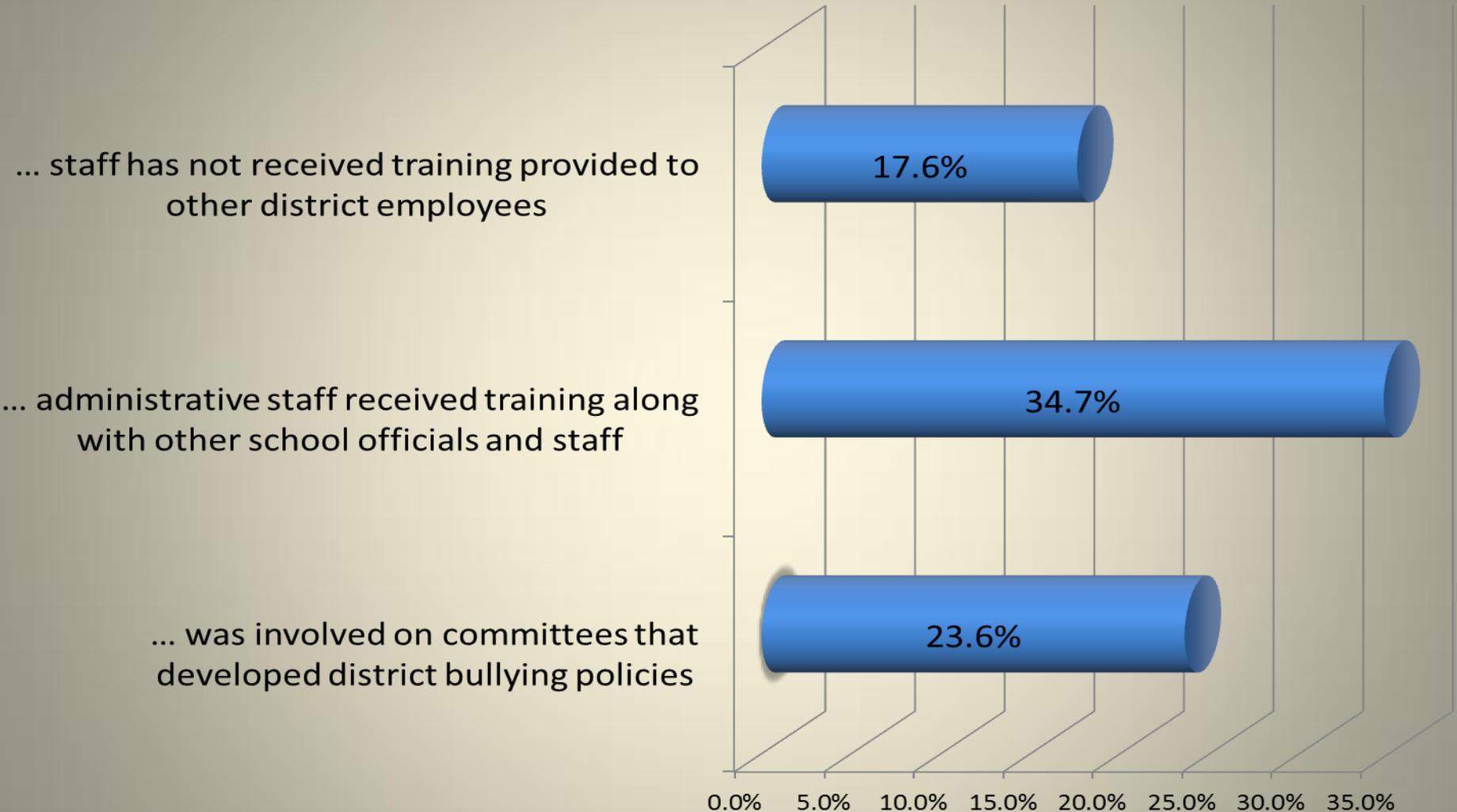
What Did We Learn about Policy?

- Most districts have clearly defined policies that involve bullying on school buses.
- BUT most transportation staff (55.6%) were not involved in developing those.
- As a result, the policies do not address the role of the bus driver or the cooperation between the driver and a school principal.

In Developing Your Districts' Bullying/Behavior Policy, the Transportation Department...



Districts' Bullying/Behavior Policy, the Transportation Department

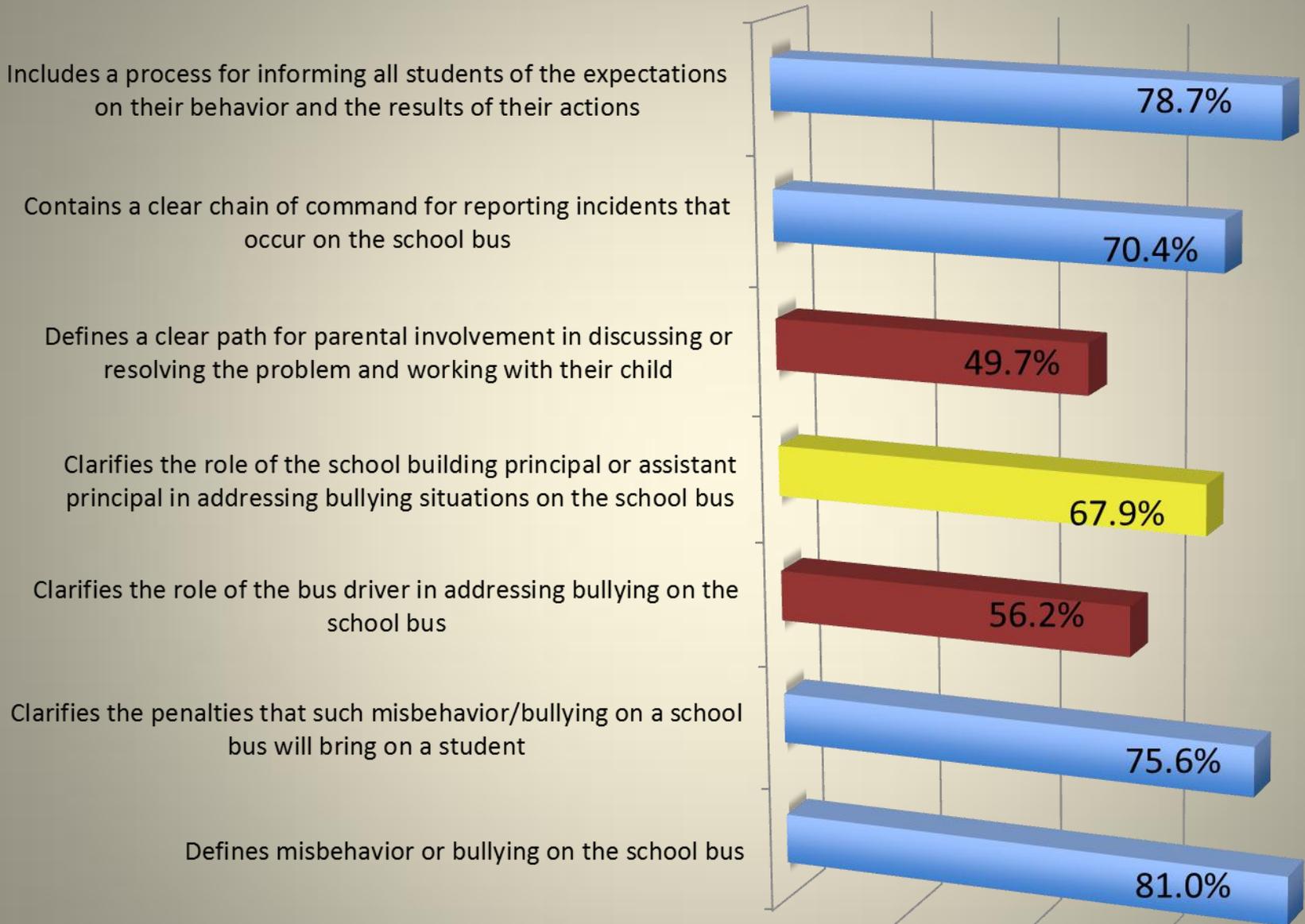


What Did We Learn About Policy?

We learned that most districts (97.2%):

- had key elements of a sound policy framework, role definition for school administrators and clearly defined penalties
- did NOT clarify the role of a school bus driver in addressing bullying (43.8%)
- did NOT clarify role of parents in resolving the problem and working with the child (51.3%)

What elements are included in your district policy?



And What About the Drivers?

The survey showed us that:

- 80% of school bus drivers have received some form of training about bullying
- Only 19% trained drivers together with other school employees
- Only 42% provided drivers with training about disabilities
- Only 16% provided drivers with training about sexual orientation and gender preferences

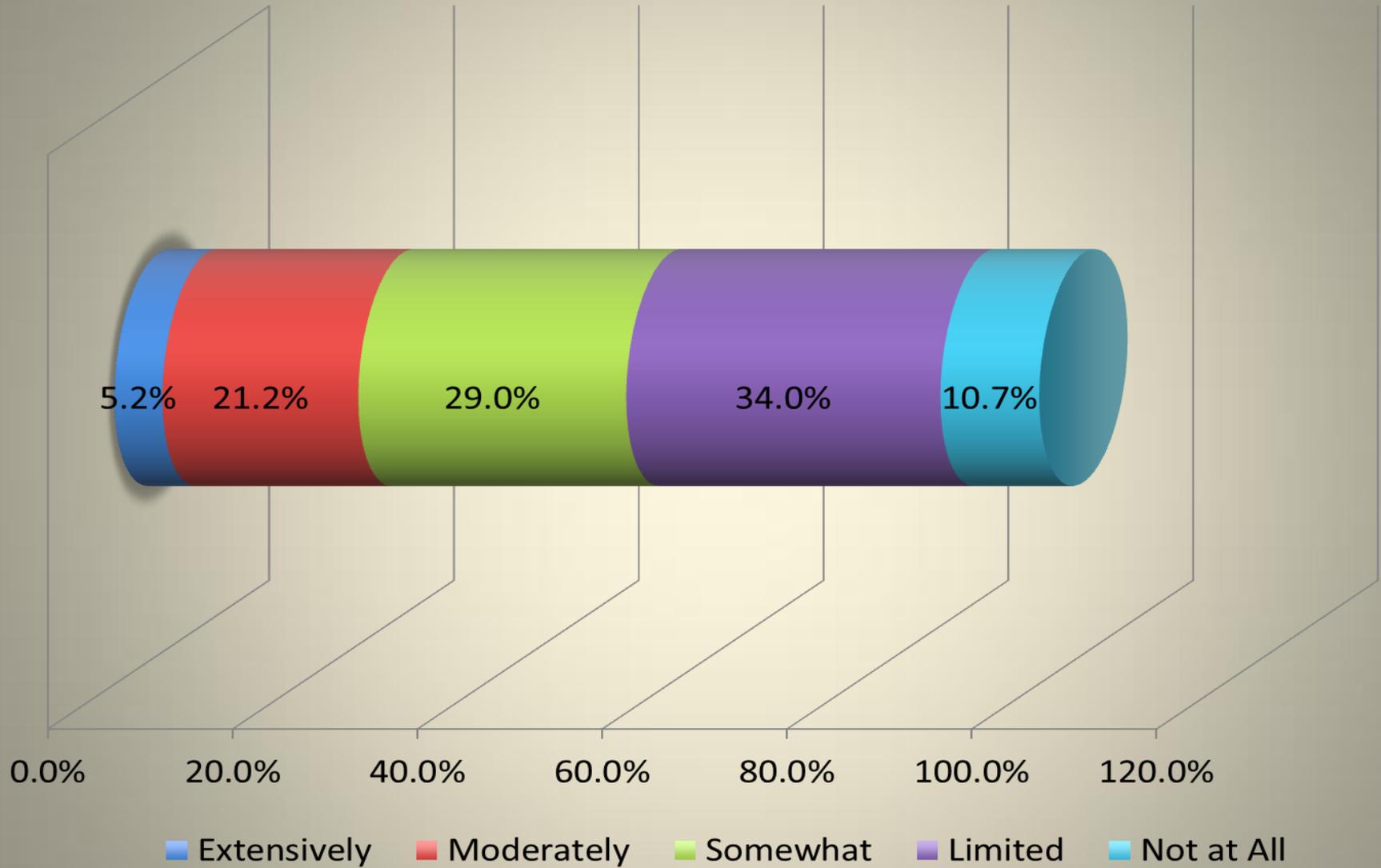
Most Requested Training Topics

- Ideas to help bus drivers defuse crisis situations (92%)
- Best Practices in student management & behavior (78.5%)
- Reporting responsibilities, especially when an incident involves bullying or other unacceptable behavior
- Information about the children and their problems
- Understanding social and community issues
- Understanding and awareness of disabilities

Other Findings

- While training in disability issues is high (81%), there is a corresponding need for more training in disability issues (47%).
- Need to build respect for school bus drivers and their value in the school system
- Need for greater cooperation between school principals and school transportation/drivers
- Need for parental awareness and involvement in supporting codes of conduct (< 1/3 involved)

To what degree have you had parents involved in school bus-related student behavior management efforts?



The Importance of Reporting

- Reporting is an important precursor to school response to bullying.
- Kazdin & Rotella (2009): Teachers observe only the most flagrant and frequent bullying.
- Teacher observation occurs in only 4% of incidents, even though 85% of incidents occur in front of others, usually peers.
- School bus drivers – by nature of their roles – hear and see students in ways teachers cannot; that makes them an asset to us.

Probability? Or Chance?



Why Are We Here Today?

- The U.S. Department of Education has developed bullying prevention and intervention training for school bus drivers.
- We'd like everyone, including other administrative decision-makers and especially education policy-makers, to know about, support and promote the implementation of this training.

Why Are We Here Today?

- We'd also like everyone, including other administrative decision-makers and especially education policy-makers, to know about, and help us address strong demand for additional training.

What Can Be Done?

NAPT would like to move forward with the U.S. Education Department and our partners to:

- Share model policies for behavior and bullying management on school buses
- Encourage and empower transportation officials to become more involved and proactive
- Establish lines of communication with School Boards and Principals and Teachers and Parents
- Advance training programs for administrators and school bus drivers

NAPT Believes...

At NAPT, “we have no tolerance for bullying and stopping it is one of our national public policy priorities.”

(from NAPT statement, see www.napt.org)