

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

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presented by

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# What Do We Know?

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- 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...

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- 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

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- **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?

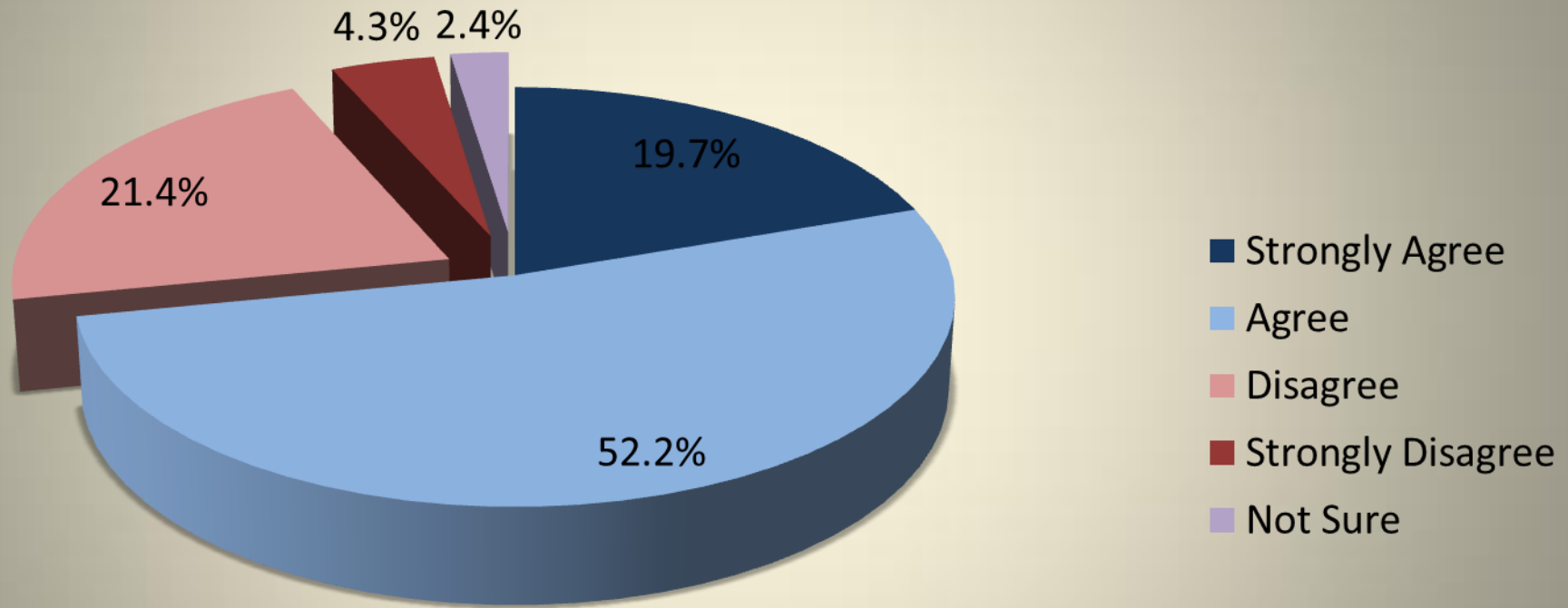
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We learned that:

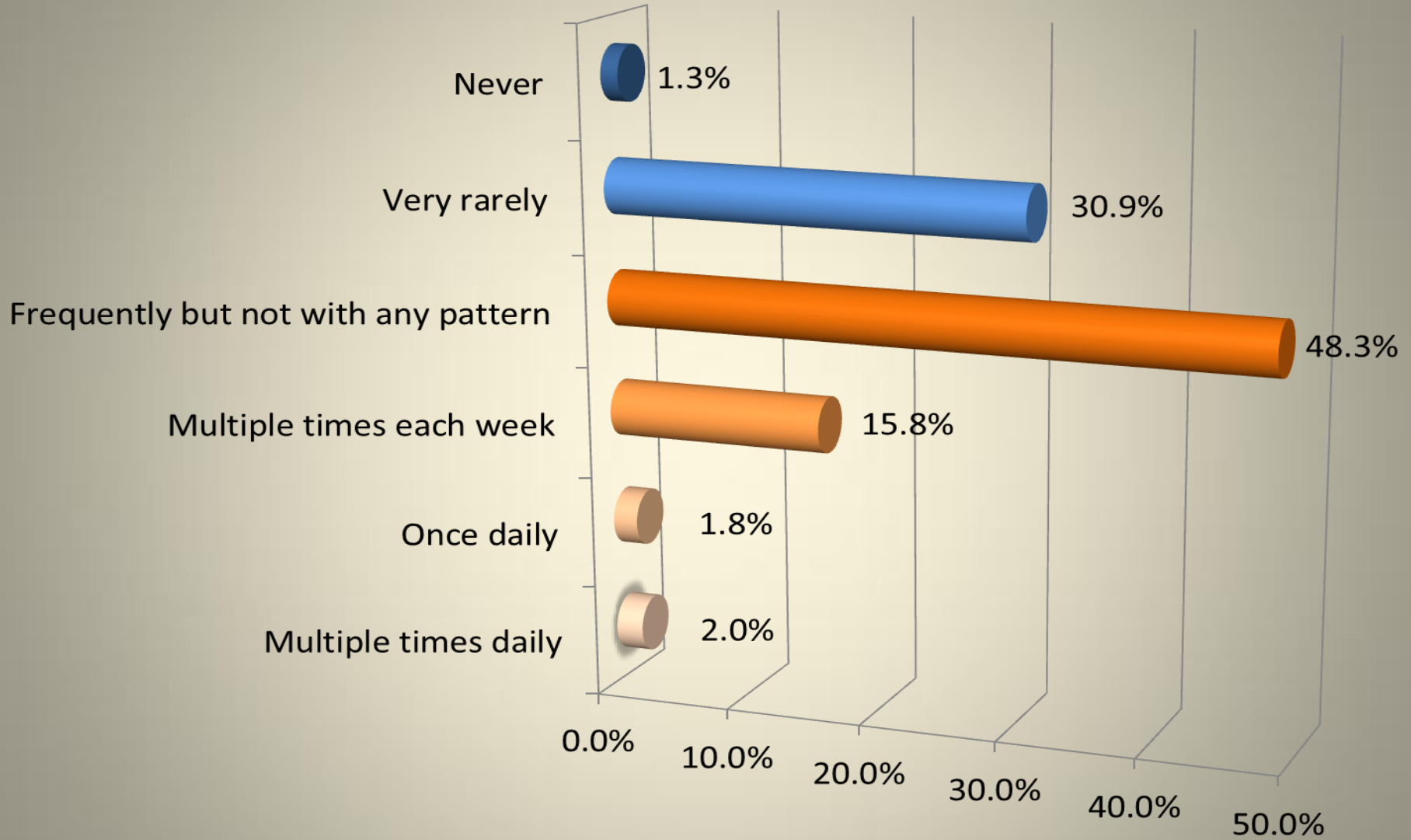
- 52.2% believe that bullying is a serious problem on their school buses
- Two-thirds receive complaints frequently or multiple times per week
- Plus research tells us that most (2/3) bullying goes unreported

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?





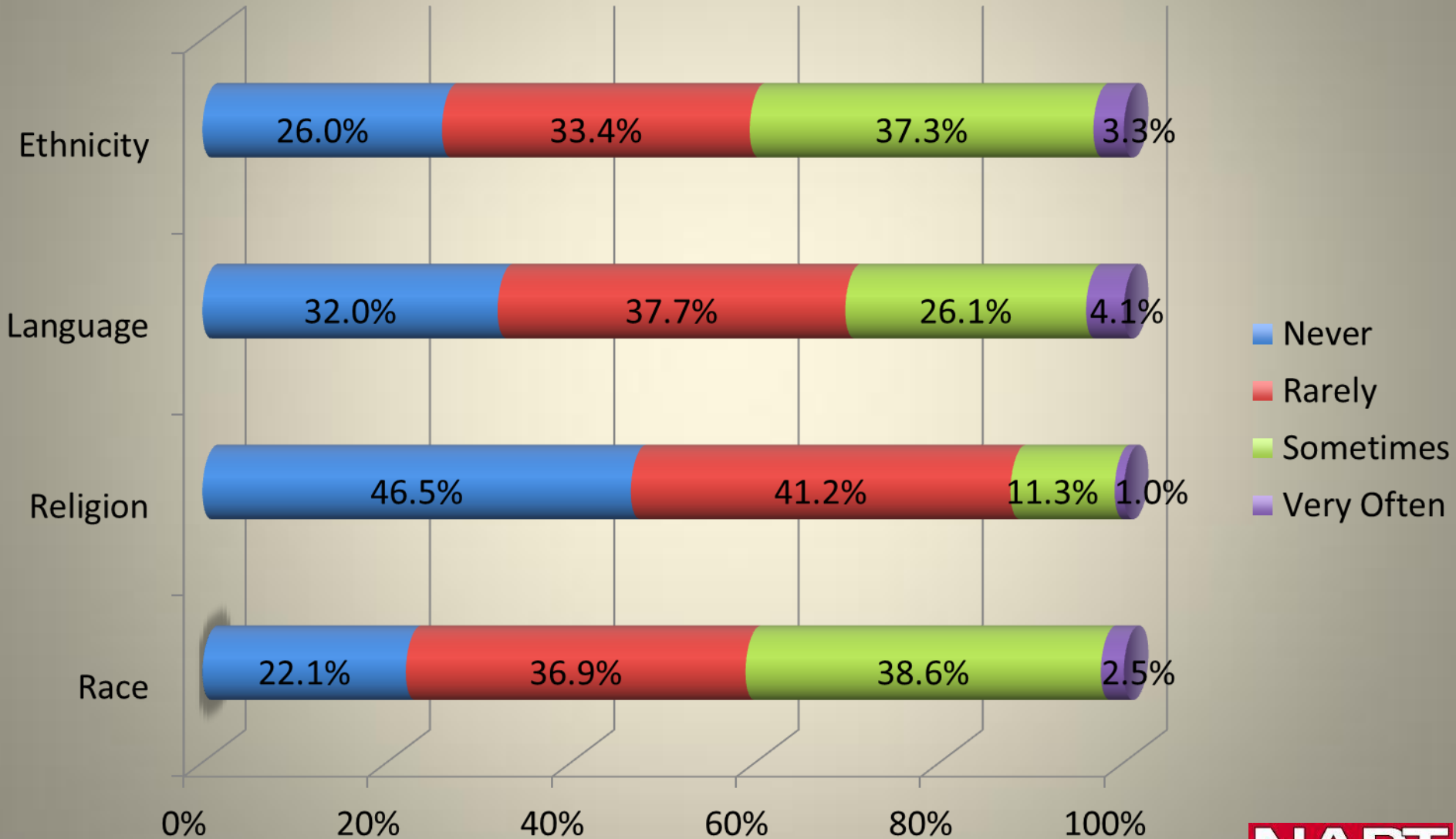
# What Did We Learn about Why Students Bully?

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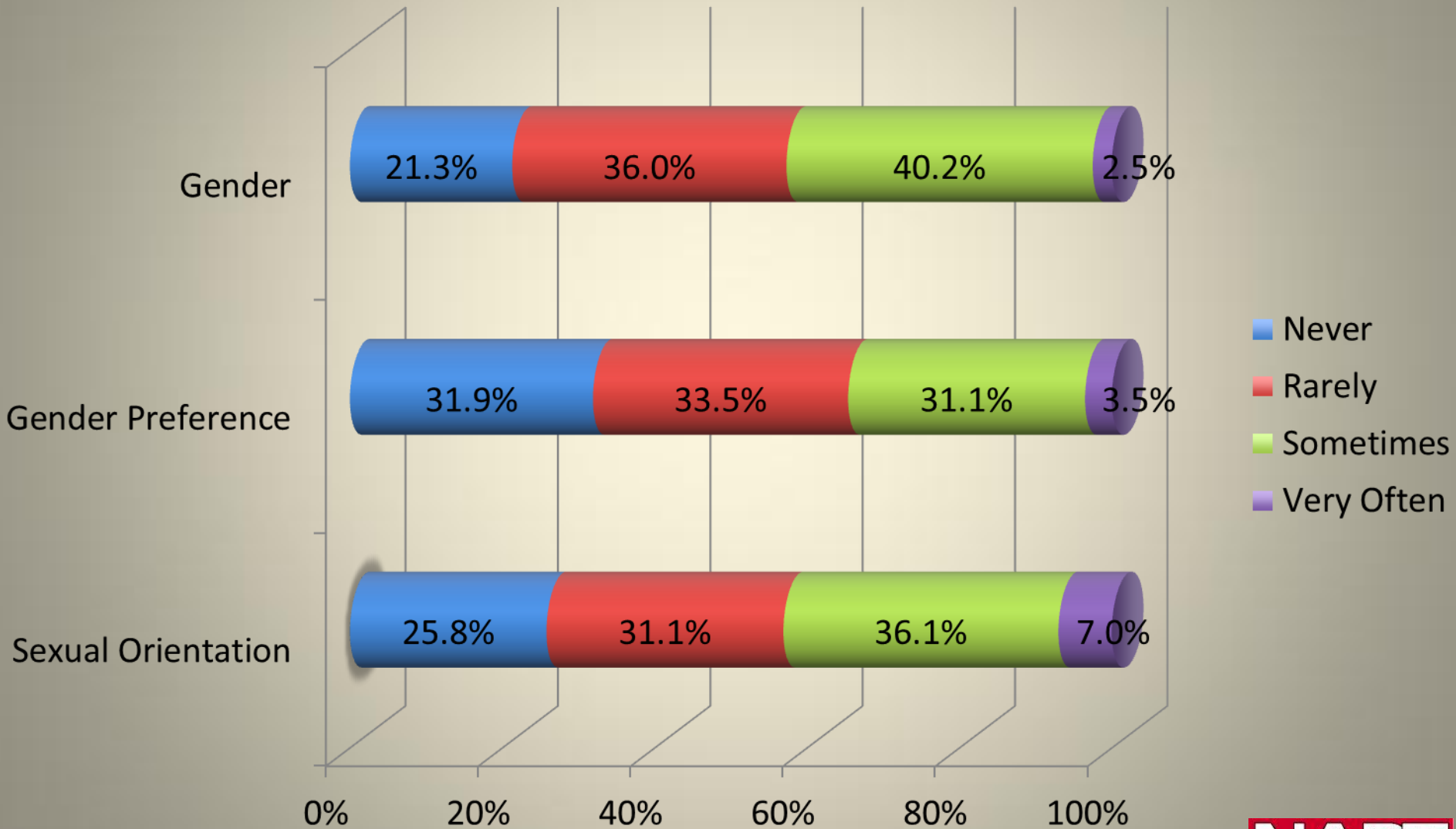
We learned that “bullies bullied” for many “reasons” with the most frequent being:

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

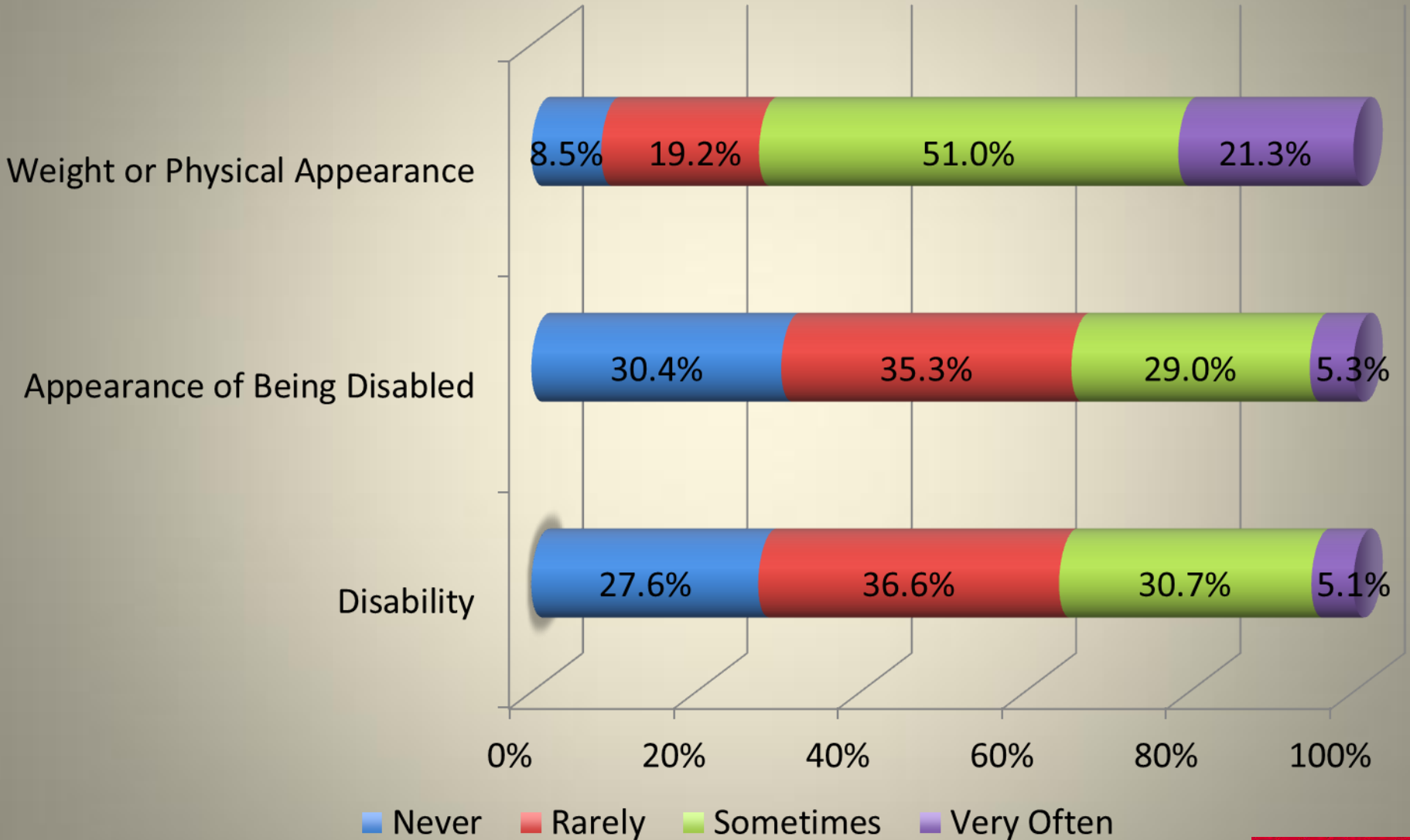
# “Reason” or “Premise” for Bullying



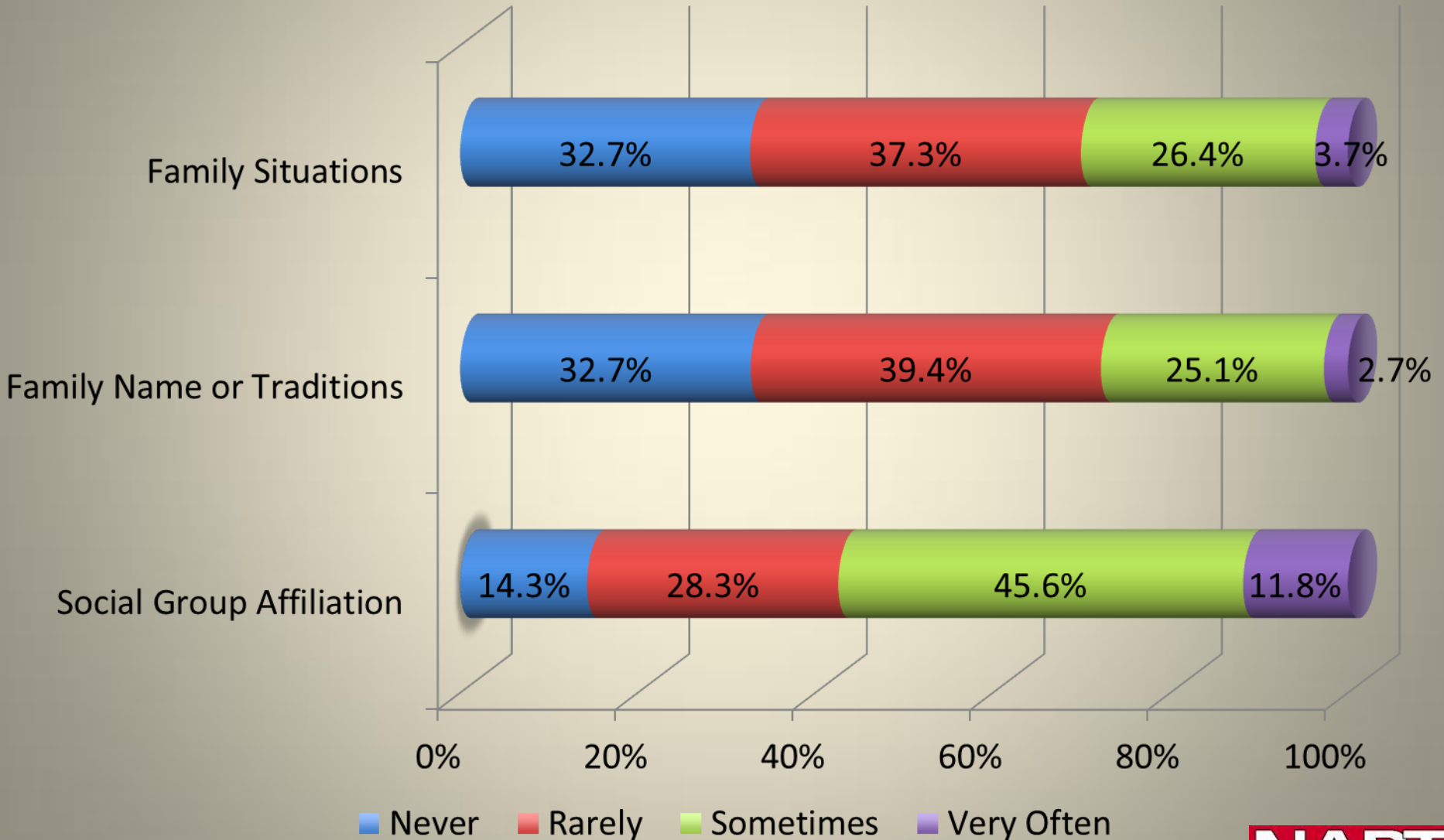
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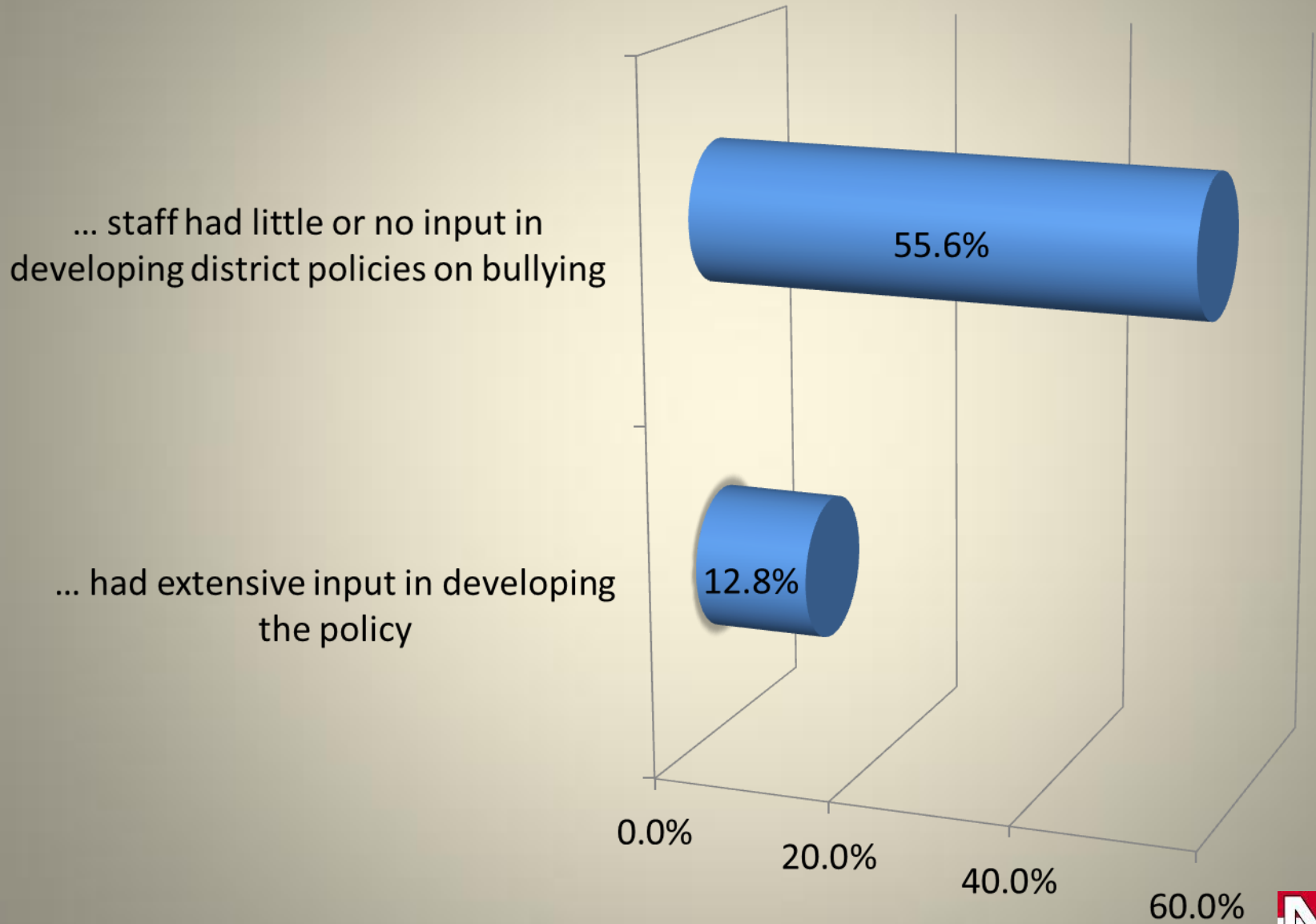
# What Does This Tell Us?

- 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?

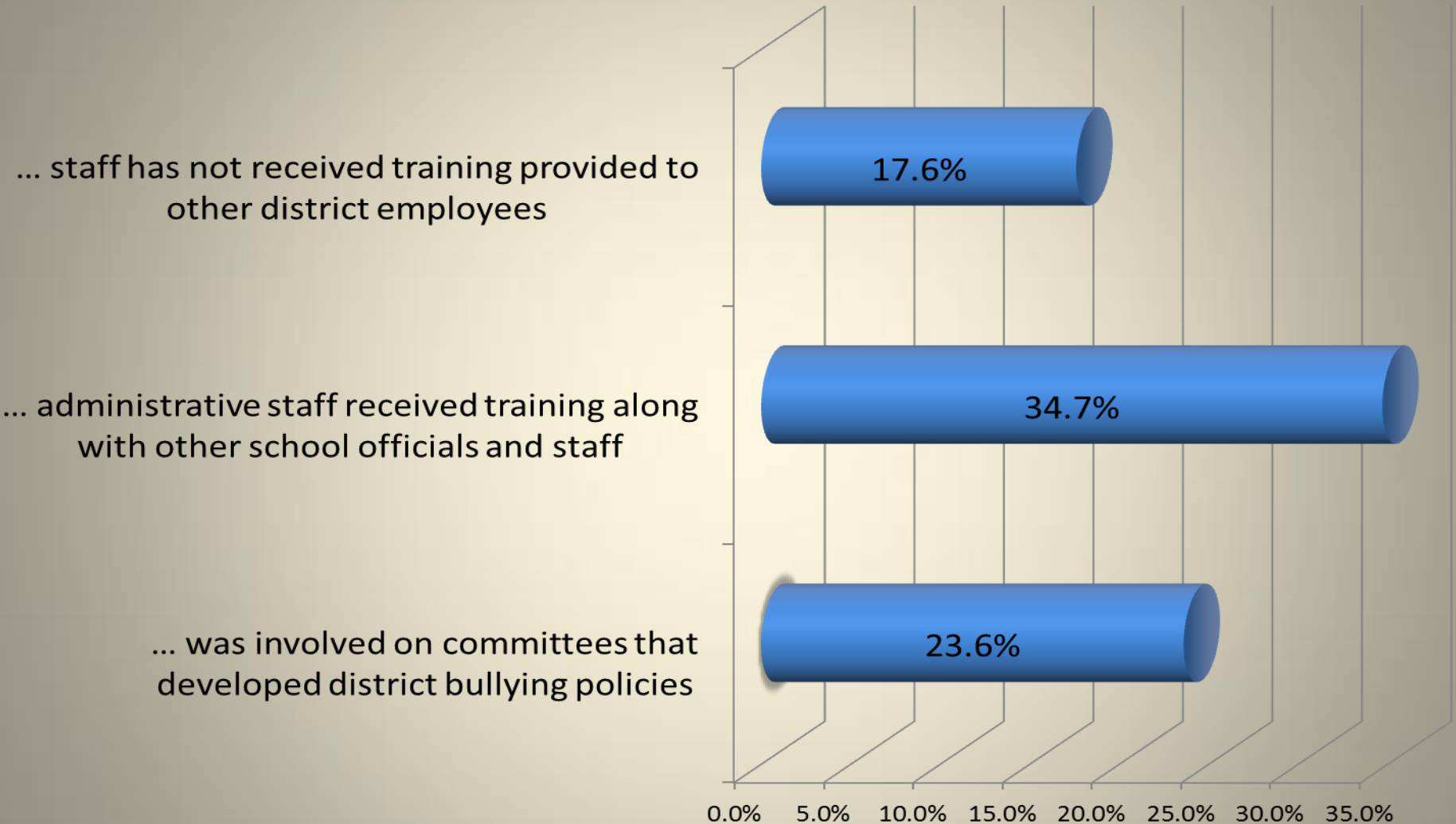
- Most districts have clearly defined policies that involve bullying on school buses.
- BUT most transportation staff (55.6%) were not involved in developing those.
- As a result, the policies do not address the role of the bus driver or the cooperation between the driver and a school principal.

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





# Districts' Bullying/Behavior Policy, the Transportation Department

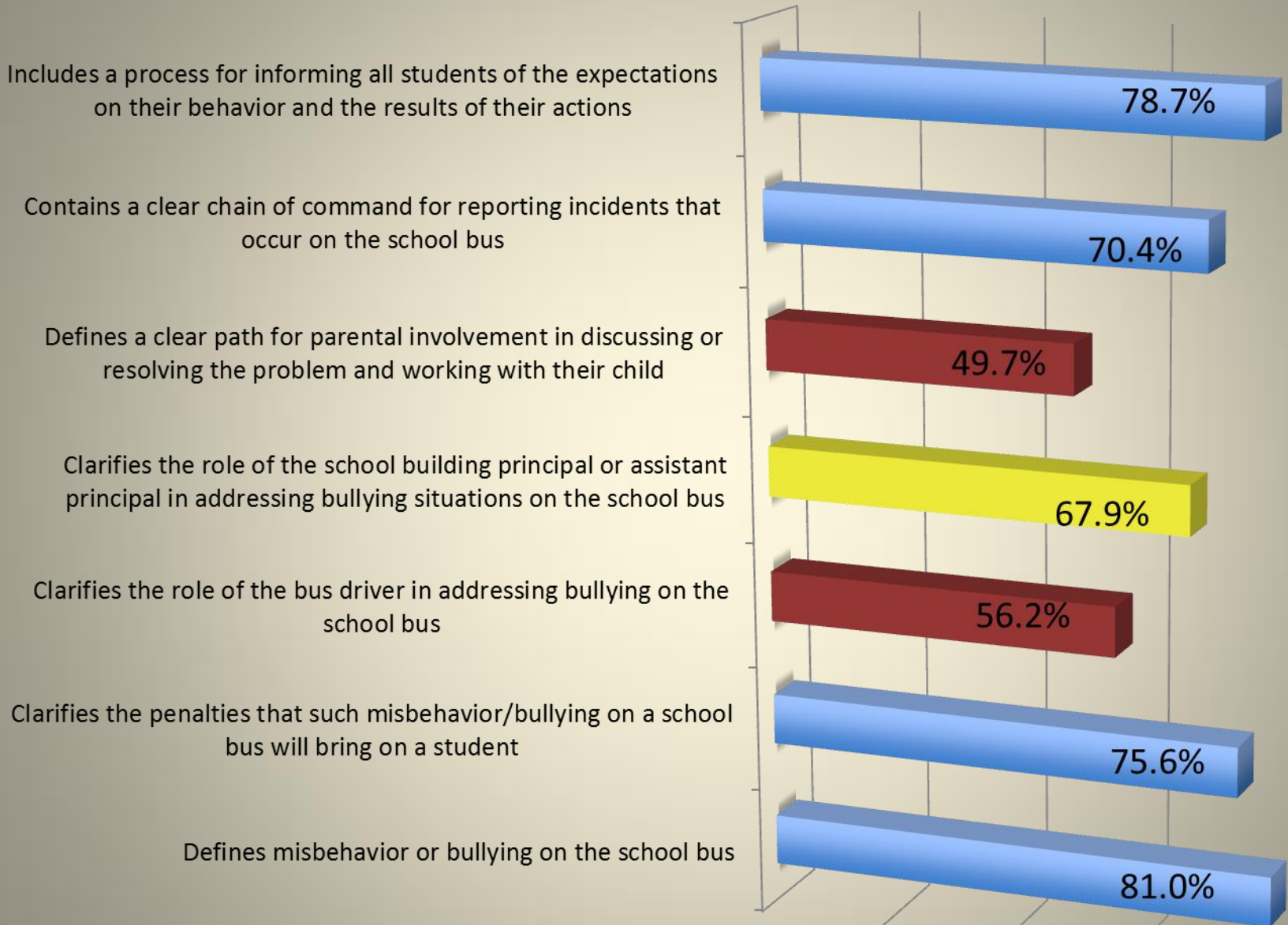


# What Did We Learn About Policy?

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

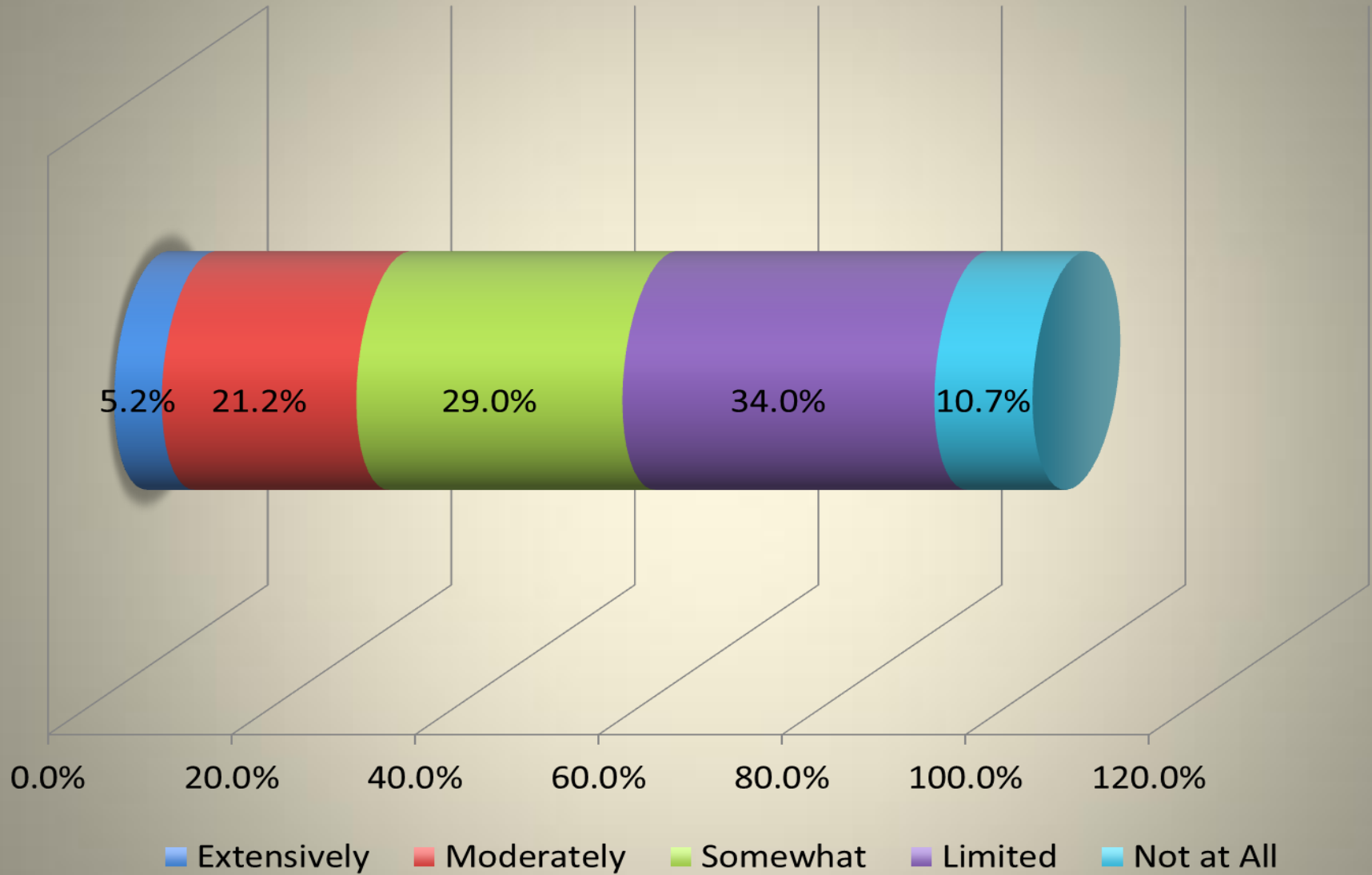
- Ideas to help bus drivers defuse crisis situations (92%)
- Best Practices in student management & behavior (78.5%)
- Reporting responsibilities, especially when an incident involves bullying or other unacceptable behavior
- Information about the children and their problems
- Understanding social and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

# Other Findings

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- 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?

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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...

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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](http://www.napt.org))