



March 2024

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Priorities Survey Results

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THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
PHILADELPHIA



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Survey Background

Survey context and administration procedures

Context

- In January 2024, the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) Office of Finance, in partnership with the Office of Evaluation, Research and Accountability, conducted the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025) Budget Priorities Survey, as part of an array of [stakeholder engagement activities](#) aimed at informing the annual budget.
- The FY 2025 Budget Priorities Survey was designed to:
 - Capture stakeholders' priorities for the FY 2025 operating budget and inform decision-making, especially given the projected budget deficit due to historic underfunding and the end of the federal COVID-19 relief grants.
 - Improve transparency and collaboration in the annual operating budget process, in alignment with *Accelerate Philly* [Strategic Action 5.8](#), by ensuring all stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input.

Administration procedures

- The survey was distributed via a public online survey link from January 22nd to February 5th, 2024.
- The survey link was posted to the banner of the SDP main website and distributed by email to school leaders, staff, and parent/guardian email lists. The link was also shared on SDP social media accounts.
- The survey was available in nine languages in addition to English: Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, French, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Respondents represented a wide range of backgrounds

- 3,641 total stakeholders responded to the survey, representing 229 District schools/programs.
- All key stakeholder groups were represented in the sample: students, parents/guardians, school and non-school based staff, and community partners.
- 52% of respondents identified themselves as school-based staff, and 38% identified themselves as parents/guardians. Seven percent of respondents identified with multiple roles (e.g., parent and teacher).*



165
students

5%



1,373
parents/guardians

38%



1,099
teachers

30%



188
principals/
assistant principals

5%



577
other school
staff

16%



328
Central Office/
non-school staff

9%



108
community
partners

3%

*The percentage in each group totals to more than 100% because some respondents selected multiple roles.

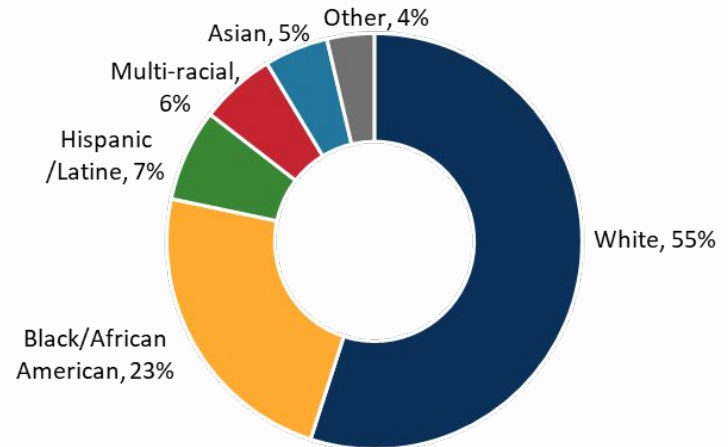
Despite diversity, sample demographics did not fully reflect the population

- Although respondents identified themselves with an array of racial/ethnic backgrounds, the sample was not proportional to the broader population for some respondent groups.
- 24% of District school-based staff in the sample were Black/African American, compared to 46%* in the population. Just 35% of student respondents were Black/African American or Hispanic/Latine, compared to 71%** of District students.

All respondents by reported household income (n=2,877)

Household income	% of respondents
Less than \$24,999	8%
Between \$25,000 and \$49,999	13%
Between \$50,000 and \$99,999	32%
Between \$100,000 and \$149,999	22%
Over \$150,000	25%

All respondents by reported race/ethnicity (n=2,966)



*Source: QlikBAM School Employee Information App, March 7 2024

**Source: QlikBAM Enrollment- Oct 1 Snapshot App, March 7 2024

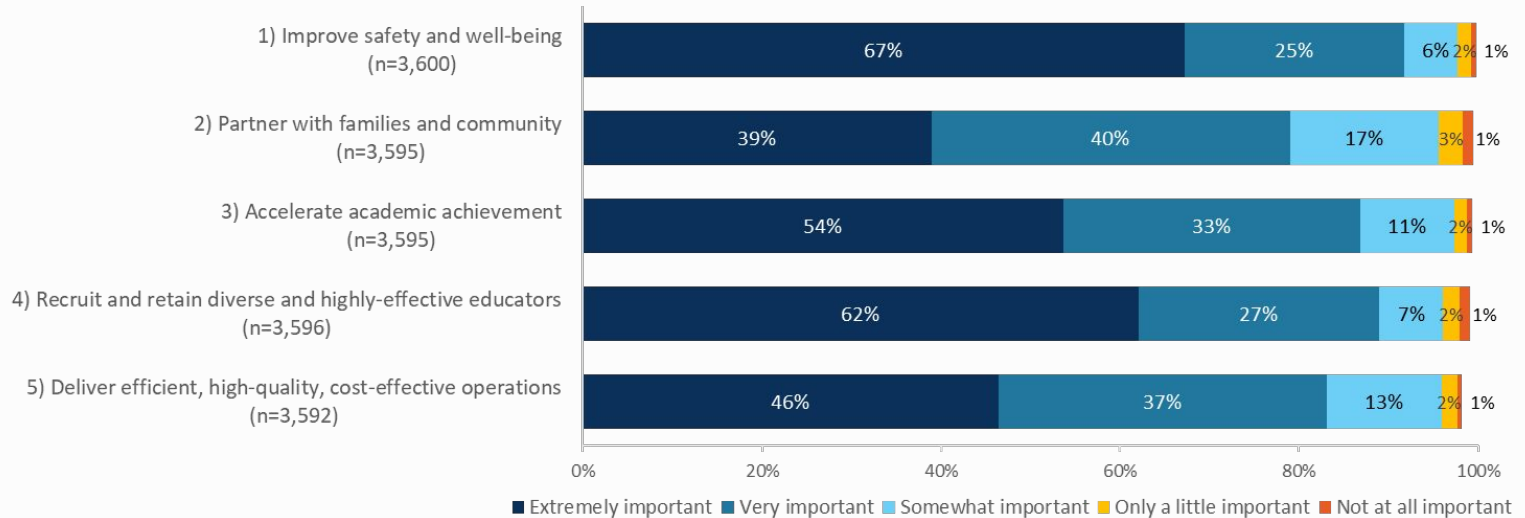


Overall Budget Priorities

Stakeholders affirmed the importance of all *Accelerate Philly* priority areas

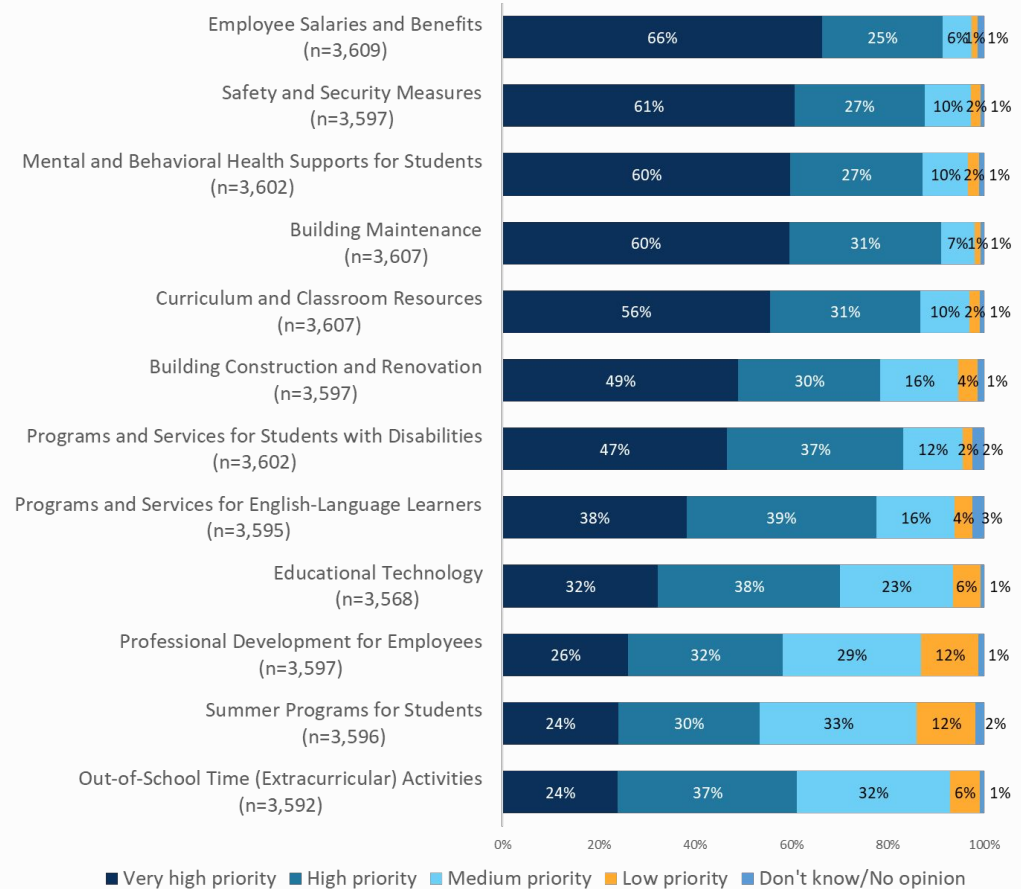
- More than 95% of respondents said all of the priority areas were “somewhat,” “very,” or “extremely” important.
- Priority Area 1 (“Improve safety and well-being”) received the highest ratings, with 67% of respondents rating it “extremely important.”

Perceived importance of the five *Accelerate Philly* Priority Areas



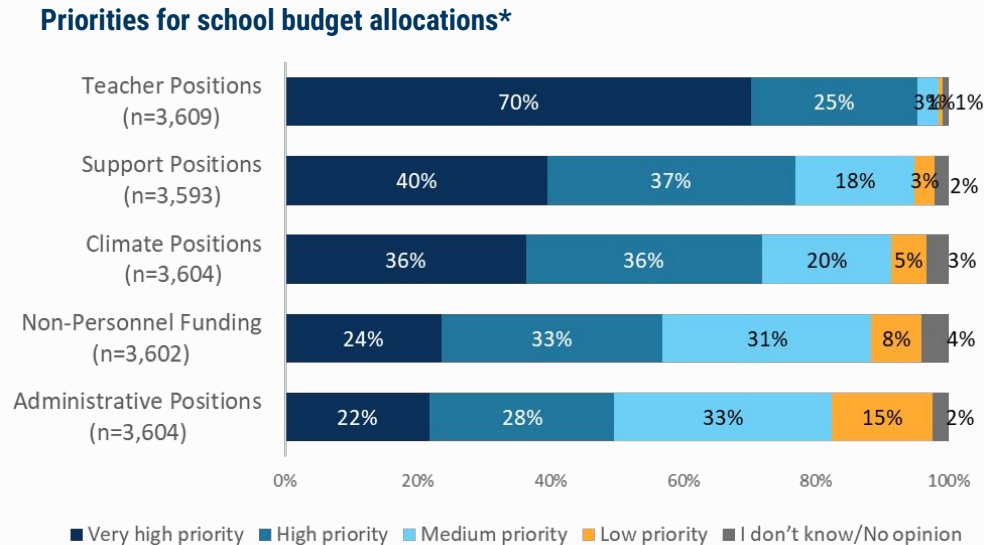
Some investments were prioritized more highly than others

- The following were all rated “very high priority” by more than 50% of respondents:
 - Employee salaries and benefits
 - Safety and security measures
 - Mental and behavioral health supports
 - Building maintenance
 - Curriculum/classroom resources
- Out-of-school and summer programming received the lowest percentage of “very high” priority ratings, although more than half of respondents still rated these as “high” or “very high” priorities.



Teachers were viewed as the highest priority investment for schools

- Most respondents rated teaching positions as the most important priority for schools: 70% of respondents rated teacher positions as “very high” priorities, compared to an average of 30% for the other four positions in the survey question.
- Support and Climate positions were the second highest priorities for schools, according to respondents, with 40% and 36% of respondents rating these positions as “very high” priorities, respectively.



*Question: “To what level should schools prioritize each of the following areas with their budget allocations?”

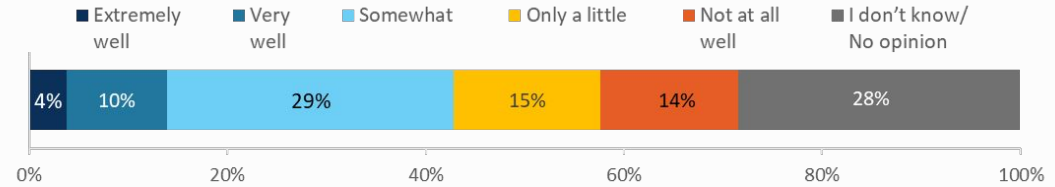


Budget Development Process

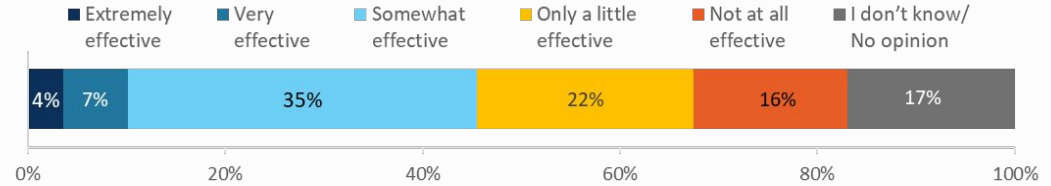
Respondents had mixed views on effectiveness and equity considerations in District budget allocations

- Nearly a third (28%) of respondents did not know or had no opinion about how well the District prioritizes equity considerations in the budget. Out of those who provided an opinion, the most common response was “somewhat” well.
- Similarly, the most common view of District effectiveness in using its limited budget was “somewhat” effective (35%).
- Only a small proportion of respondents gave the District one of the top two ratings for prioritizing equity considerations or using its limited budget effectively.

How well the District prioritizes equity considerations in its budget allocations (n=3,442)



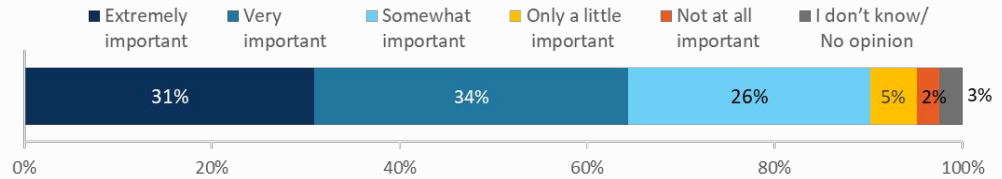
District effectiveness in using its limited budget resources (n=3,441)



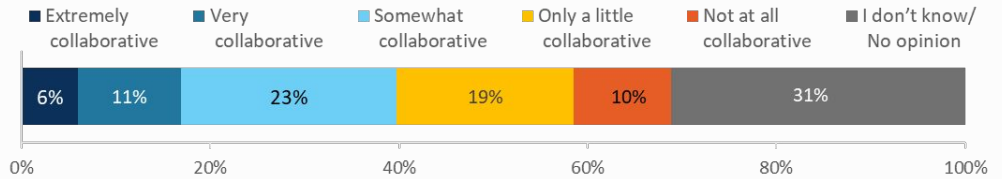
Respondents reported challenges with collaboration and transparency in the budget development process

- Most respondents (65%) said it was “very” or “extremely” important for the community to be involved in finding solutions to the School District’s financial challenges.
- Only 17% of respondents said the District is “very” or “extremely” collaborative with stakeholders in development of the budget. Nearly a third (31%) said they did not know or had no opinion.
- Only 16% of respondents said the District is “very” or “extremely” transparent when it communicates financial challenges and proposed solutions.

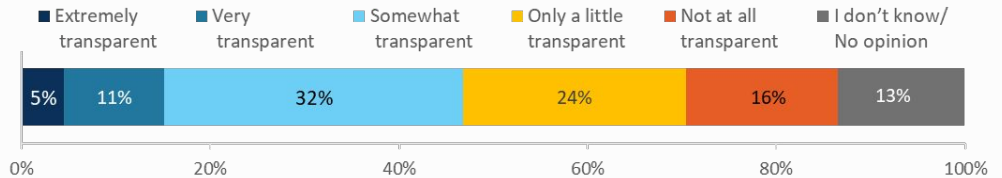
Importance of community involvement in finding solutions to financial challenges (n=3,448)



District collaboration with stakeholders when developing the annual budget (n=3,445)



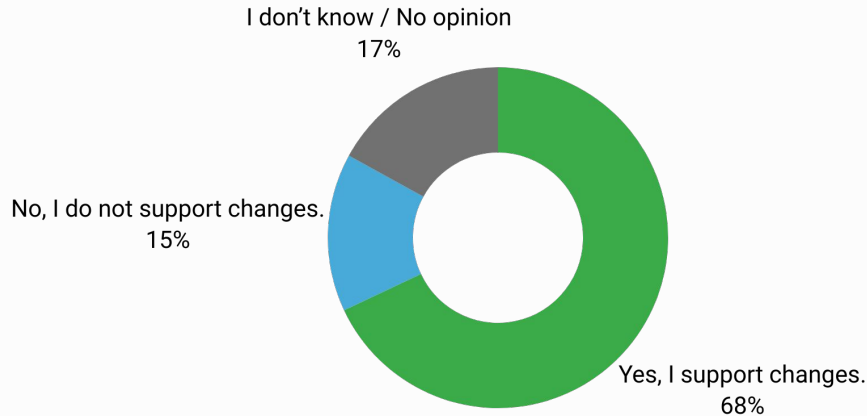
District transparency in communicating financial challenges and proposed solutions (n=3,445)



Most respondents supported changes to the “leveling” process

- “Leveling” is a process early in the school year where teachers are moved from schools where actual enrollment was lower than anticipated to schools where enrollment was higher than anticipated. The survey noted that “this historical practice has occurred after classes have started and the late changes have negatively impacted some schools, teachers and students,” and asked respondents whether they would support changes to this process.
- More than two-thirds of respondents (68%) said they would support changes aimed at minimizing the disruption to schools.

Responses to “Do you support changes to the leveling process aimed at minimizing the disruption to schools?” (n=3,446)



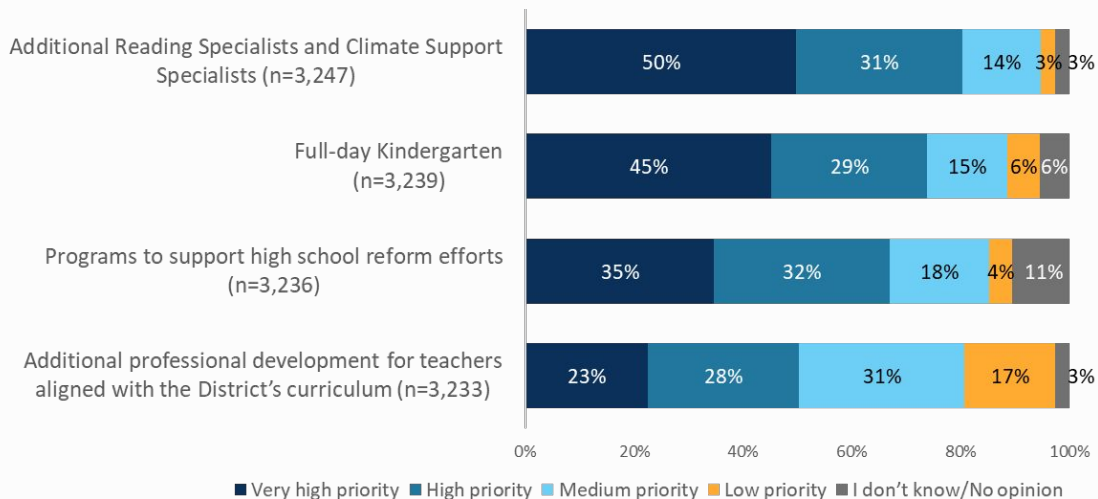


Priorities for Title Grants

Reading and Climate Support Specialists were the highest Title I priorities

- The highest reported priorities for Title I funds to promote academic achievement were reading specialists and climate support specialists, followed by full-day kindergarten.
- Although 50% of respondents said curriculum-aligned professional development (PD) for teachers was “very” or “extremely” important, PD investments had the lowest percentages of “very high” ratings across the Title I, II, and III questions (see slides 17-19).

Respondents’ priorities for Title I funds to promote academic achievement



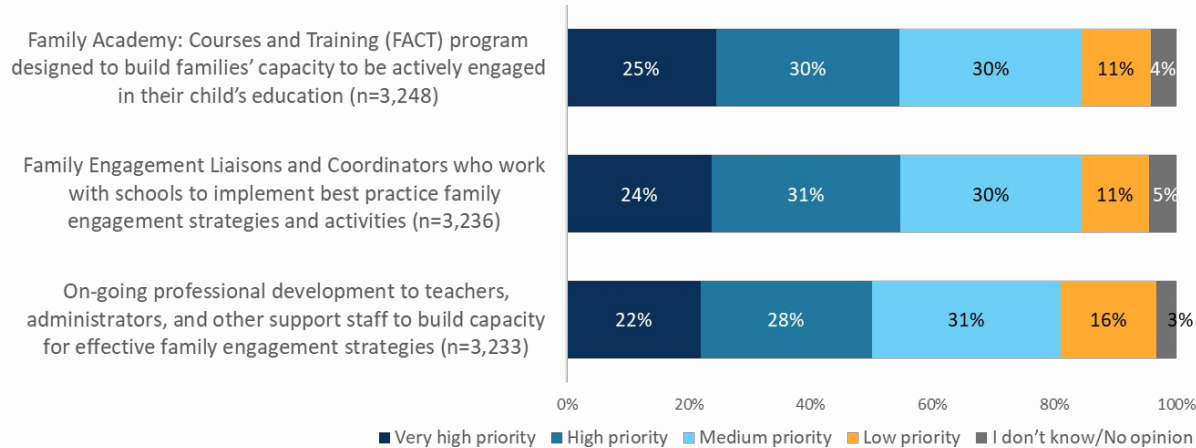
Title I

Title I provides supplementary financial assistance to districts and schools with high levels of poverty. Title I programs are designed to help children meet challenging state academic standards and provide a well-rounded education.

Respondents rated the priority level for different Title I family engagement investments similarly

- Although they were rated as somewhat lower priorities than funds for promoting academic achievement and other areas, at least half of respondents rated all three avenues of investment for family engagement as “very” or “extremely” important.

Respondents’ priorities for Title I funds to promote parent/family engagement



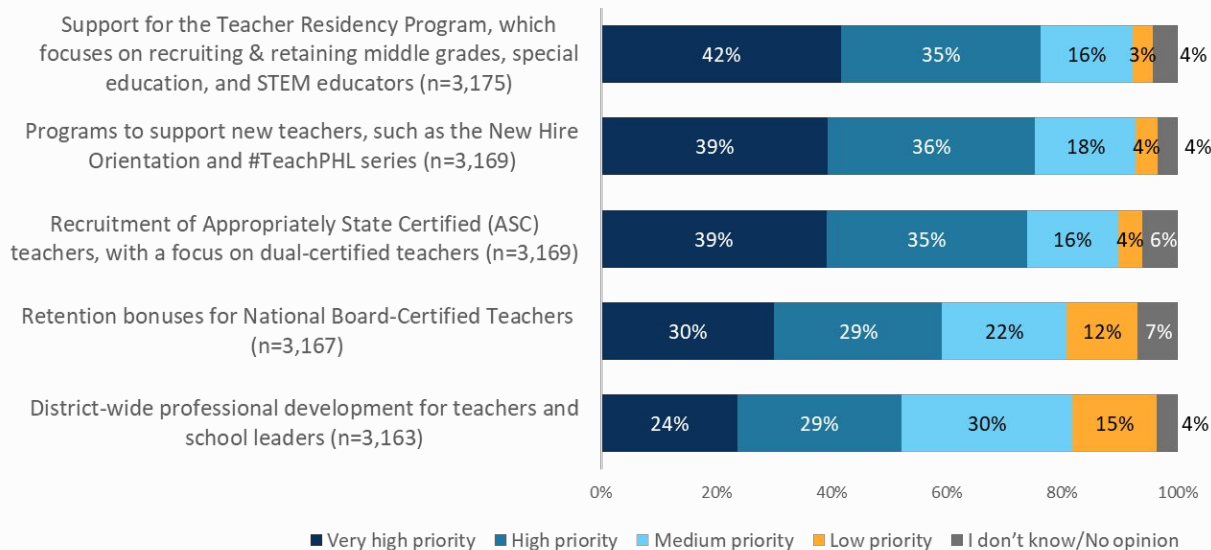
Title I

Title I provides supplementary financial assistance to districts and schools with high levels of poverty. In addition to funds to support student achievement, Title I funding also provides programs and activities to promote parent and family engagement in schools.

Respondents priorities for Title II funds

- Most respondents viewed recruitment efforts and supports for new teachers as higher priorities than retention bonuses or District-wide professional development.

Respondents' priorities for Title II funds to promote recruitment, retention and training for teachers and school leaders



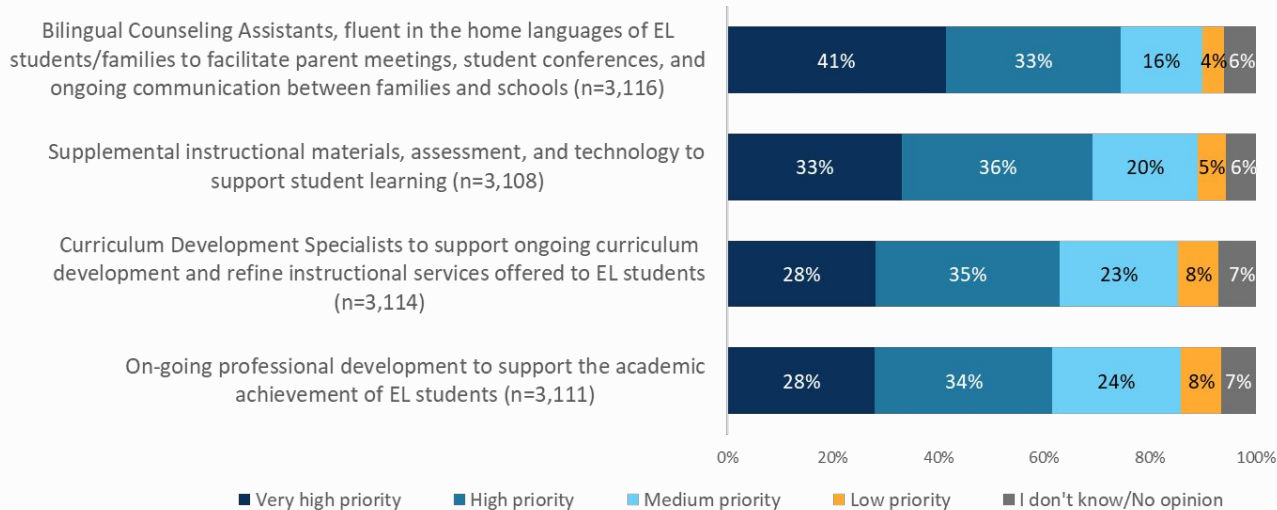
Title II

Title II provides supplementary financial assistance to improve the skills of teachers and school leaders, and the quality of instruction in core academic subjects. Title II funding is also used to support the major areas outlined in the District's Equity Plan.

Respondents priorities for Title III funds

- Bilingual Counseling Assistants (BCAs) were rated as the highest priority among Title III supports for academic achievement of English Learner (EL) students.

Respondents' priorities for Title III funds to support the academic achievement of EL students



Title III

Title III provides supplementary language instruction educational programs for EL students, including immigrant children and youth. Title III programs are designed to ensure these students attain English language proficiency and meet challenging state academic standards.



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More resources:

- Office of Management & Budget: [Public Information page](#)
- Previous Budget Survey report: [Budget Priorities for the 2022-23 School Year: Survey Results](#)
- FY 2025 Budget Priorities Survey: [pdf version](#)