

In Their Own Words: What School Leaders Say They Need to Succeed

Key Findings from Principal Survey

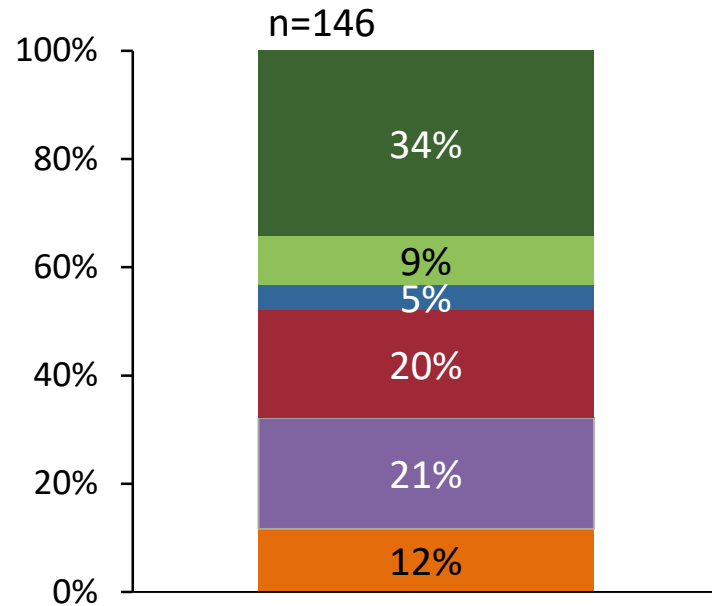
OCTOBER 23, 2018



We received 146 responses from principals representing a variety of school types; this represents a 42% response rate....

Respondent Type

% of all respondents

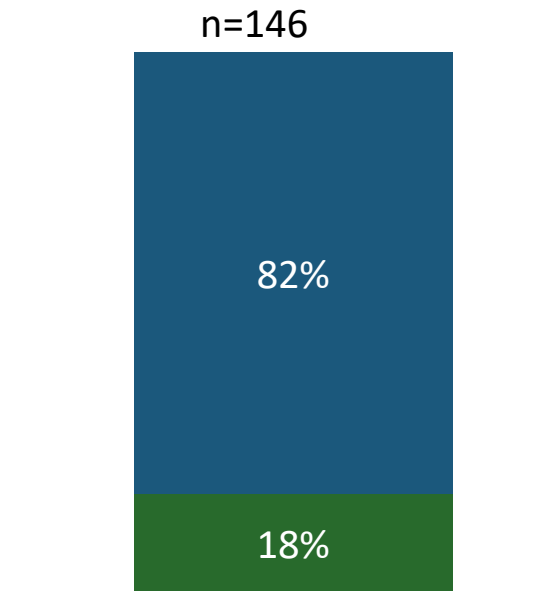


Total Respondents

- Traditional district (Boston & Other)
- Autonomous BPS (i.e., pilot, innovation, Horace Mann)
- Commonwealth Charter (part of network)
- Diocesan/Parish Catholic
- Private Catholic
- Standalone Commonwealth charter

Full v. Partial Respondents

% of all respondents

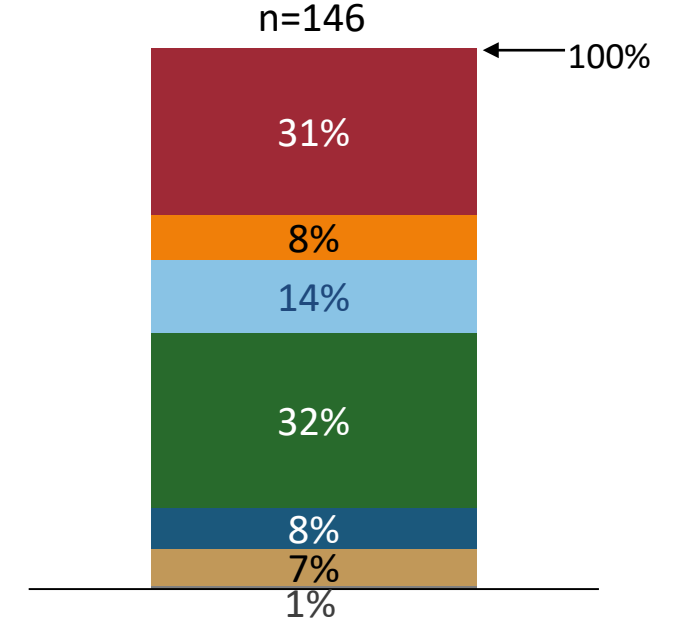


Total Respondents

- Fully completed survey
- Partially completed survey

Respondent School Type

% of all respondents



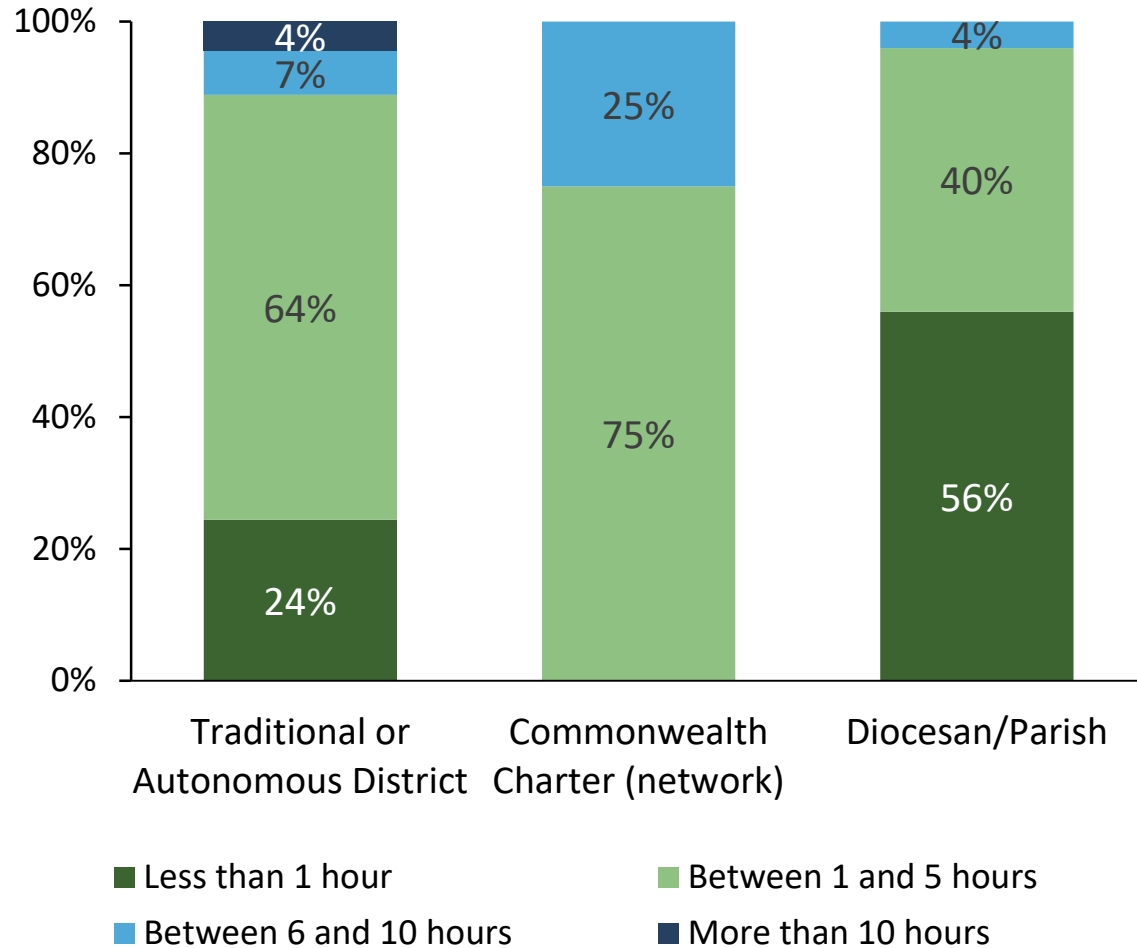
Total Respondents

- Elementary
- Middle
- High
- Elementary and Middle
- Middle and High
- Elementary, Middle, and High
- Unknown

Principals spend significant time working with the Central office; productivity varies....

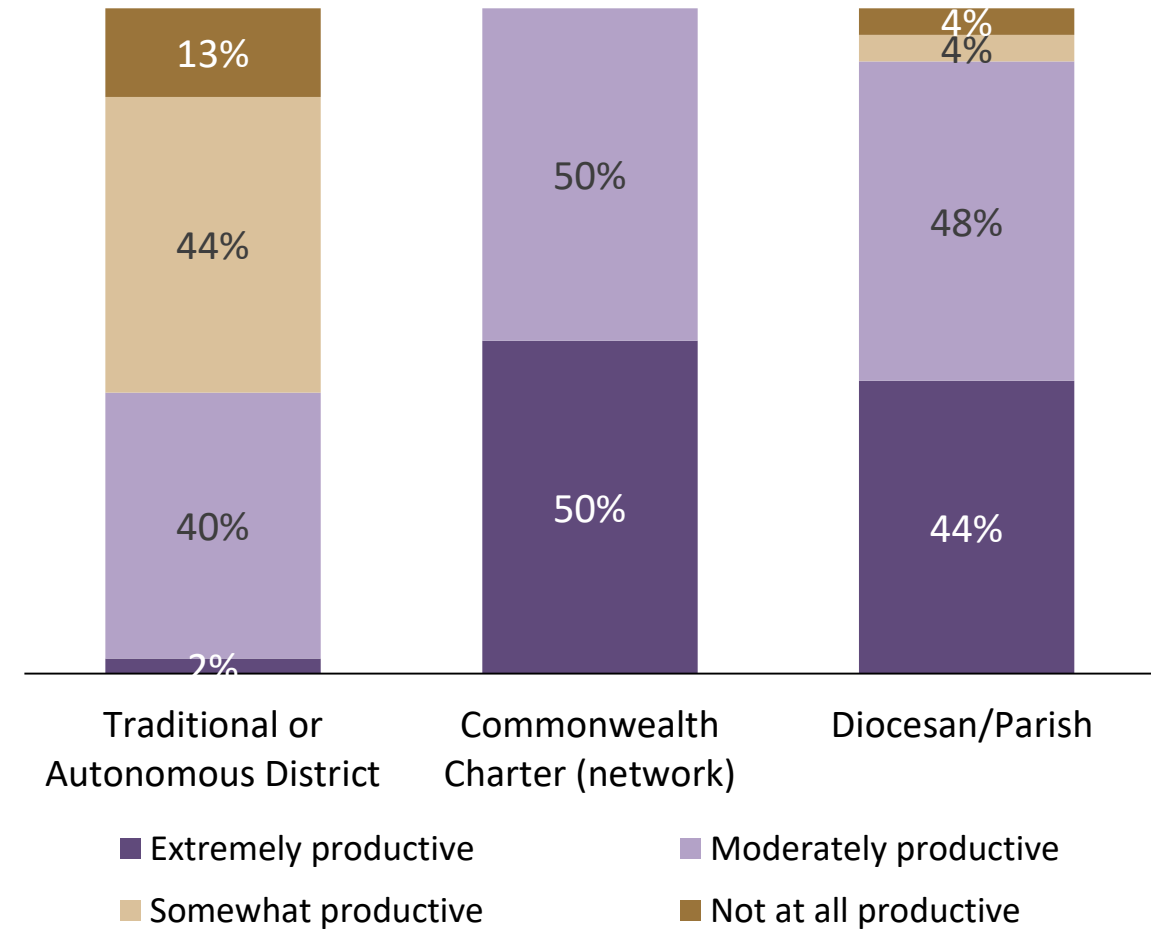
Q: How much time per week do you spend interacting with the Central/Network office?

% of all respondents



Q: How productive are your interactions with the Central/Network office?

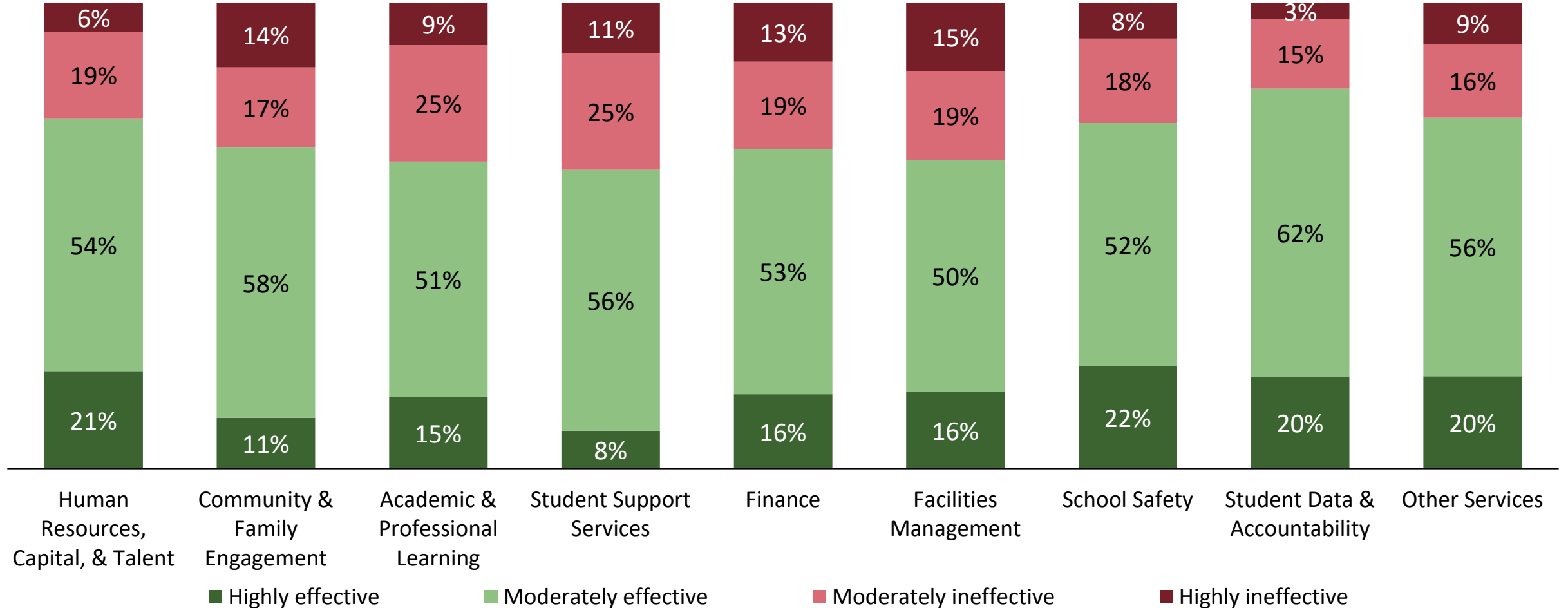
% of all respondents



Schools experience mixed quality of critical services....

Q: How effective or ineffective is the current provider?

% of all respondents



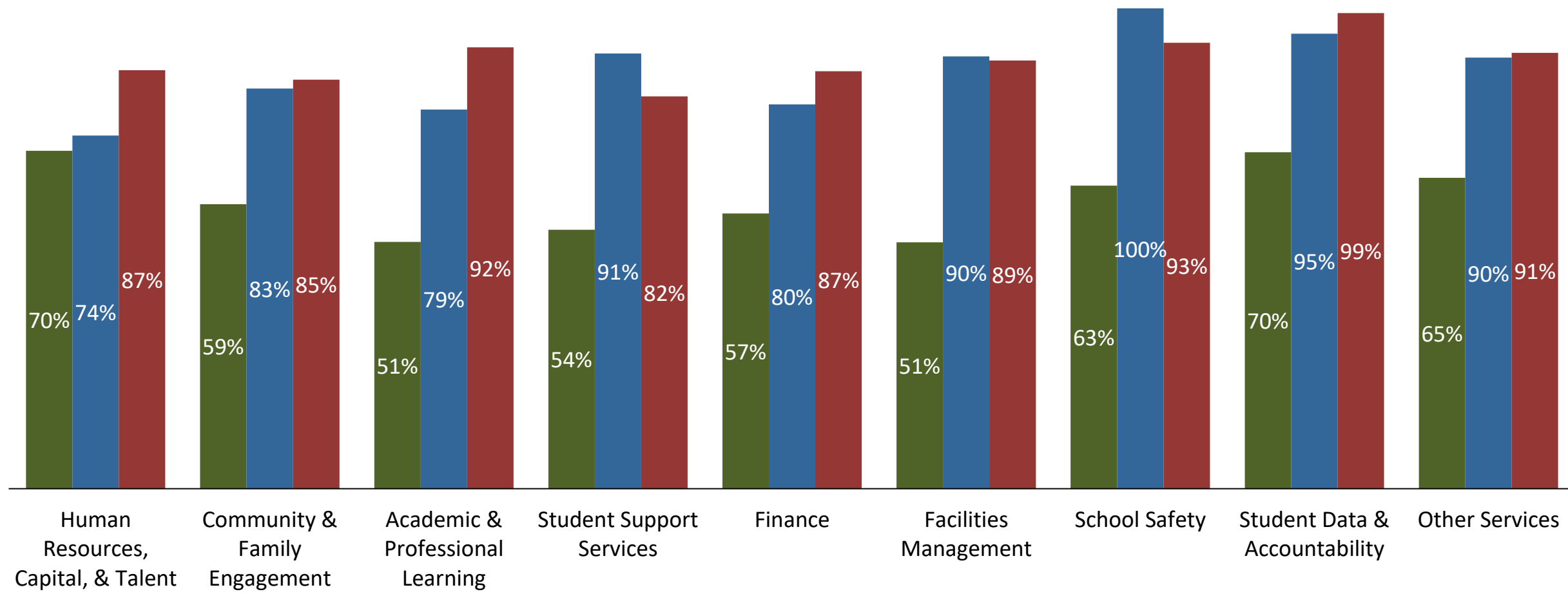
Note: Percentages are averages across all surveyed sub-categories. Respondents who said "not applicable" are excluded.

There is variation in quality of service by school type; principals from traditional district (Boston and other) and autonomous BPS schools are less likely to rate their service provider as “highly” or “moderately” effective....

Q: How effective or ineffective is the current service provider?

% of all respondents who respond “Highly Effective” or “Moderately Effective”

- Traditional or Autonomous District
- Commonwealth Charter (network)
- Diocesan/Parish



Note: Percentages are averages across all surveyed sub-categories.

The quality and effectiveness of Central office services varied by school type....

School type

Qualitative commentary

Traditional and Autonomous District Schools

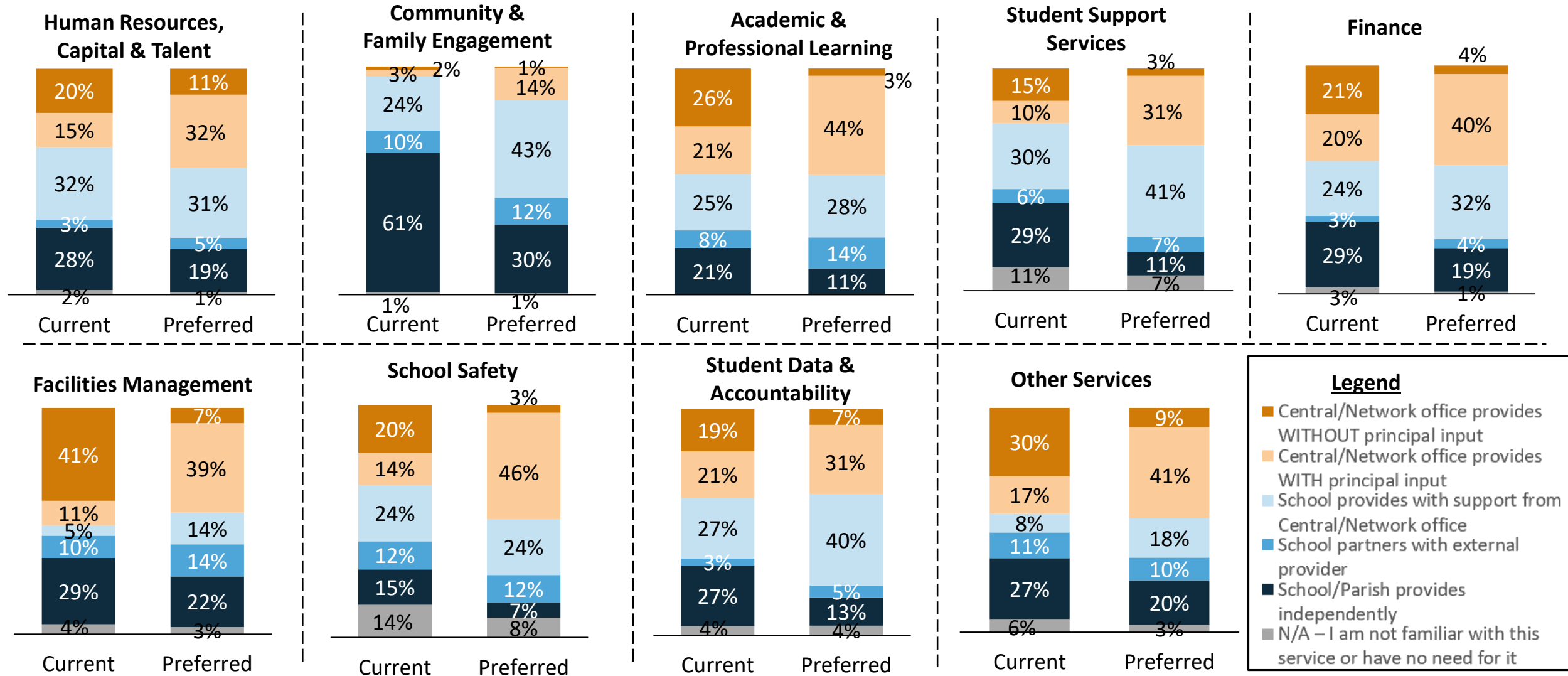
- “It’s just too hard to get the folks at central to understand what it's really like in the schools...[t]oo many problems...and not enough support.”
- “Every school is different and there are some schools that have extensive needs and limited resources and supports..[w]e need to look at schools individually to see what resources are needed for each school.”
- “Centralizing...workers who are supposed to be serving the schools makes for a bottle neck; [m]ore would be accomplished if central office was spread out across the city to serve schools.”
- “Not that I want to be fully responsible for items such as transportation or food services or athletics, but it would be nice for central office to at least listen to schools, or ask our opinions before making decisions.”

Diocesan/ Parish Catholic Schools

- “The central office has always been a tremendous resource.”
- “Have a wonderful working relationship and interactions with the Catholic School Office.”
- “Everyone at the CSO works diligently to assist RCAB [Roman Catholic Archdioceses of Boston] schools to the best of their ability.”
- “When ever needed the central office / RCAB OFFICES are very helpful.”
- “Central Office is limited by their lack of autonomy over the schools.”

School principals want more input regarding key school services—especially Facilities Management; they would also like more support from the Central office for Community and Family Engagement....

Q: Please indicate your current and preferred service provider? % of all respondents



Principal comments reflected both frustration with facilities and ideas for improving community and family engagement....

Many principals expressed frustration with the state of their buildings; one stated that “our schools are a mess” and that “the right resources [are not] provided to maintain respectable school yards or facilities.”



Several principals suggested “[i]t would be really helpful for [the] central office to provide some more direct assistance and guidance on best family and engagement practices and supports.”

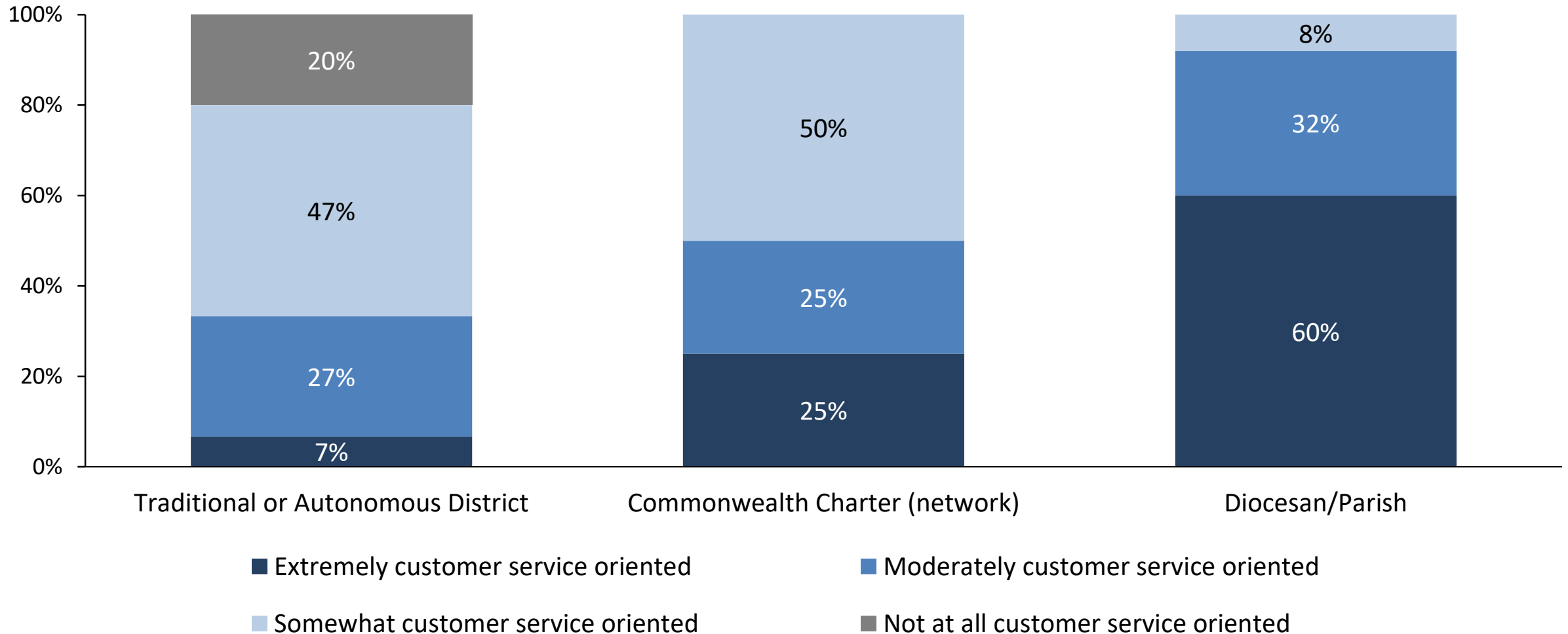
Note: Photo Source: <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/2301/Opportunity%20Portfolio%20Catalog%202017-2018.pdf>

Some principals suggested putting in place “school based staff [to] manage the community and family engagement pieces” and others expressed a desire to work with service providers to help with community and family based engagement.

Principals from traditional district (Boston and other districts) or autonomous BPS district schools are least likely to report that their Central office is “extremely” or “moderately” customer service oriented....

Q: How customer service-oriented is the Central/Network office to your school's needs?

% of all respondents



Principals of traditional district schools noted inconsistency in the customer service orientation from the Central office....

ON QUALITY OF SERVICE:

“Central office staff do not view that their work is to support schools.”

“It really depends on the department. Some are really trying. Others just don't get it that they are supposed to be supports for us.”

“Certain offices are more effective than others and often times success is determined by personal relationships.”



“Depends on who we are working with.”

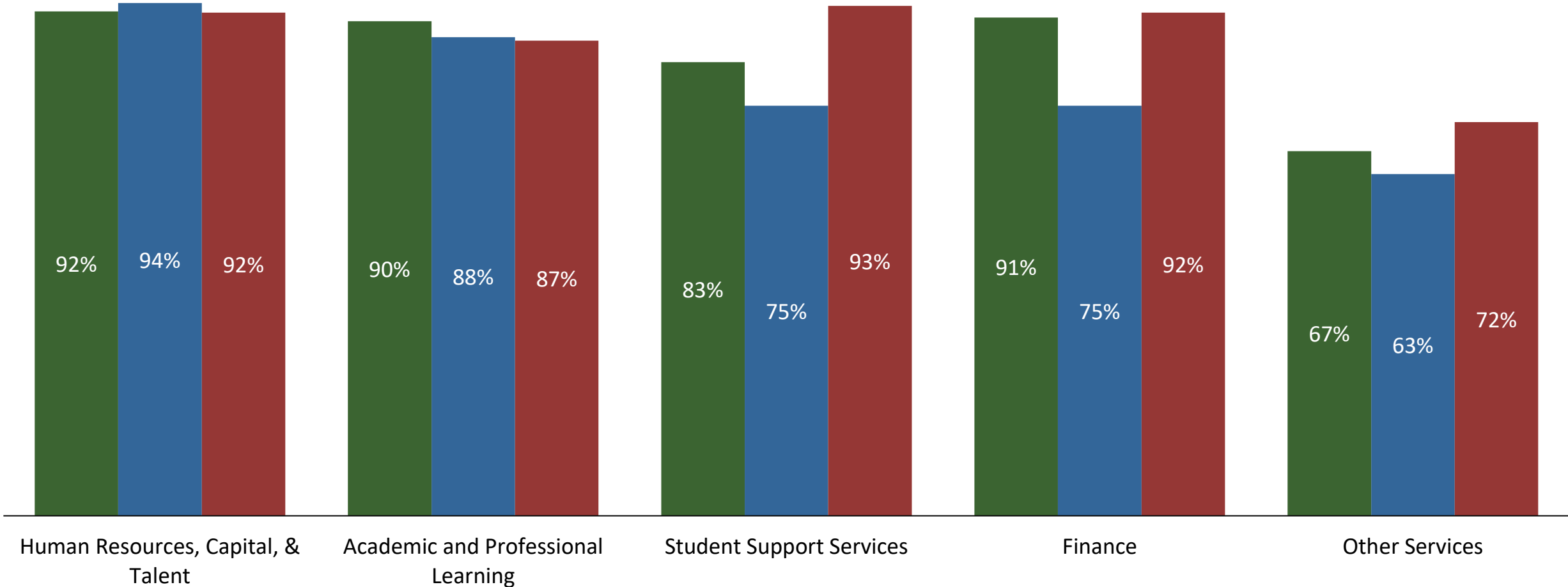
“[E]verything at scale across the 120 schools...compromise[s] quality. Also, depending on who you know at central office, you get different degrees of service.”

Autonomy for key school services is very important to principals....

Q: How important is it to have autonomy in the following areas?

% of all respondents responding "Extremely Important" or "Very Important"

- Traditional or Autonomous District
- Commonwealth Charter (network)
- Diocesan/Parish

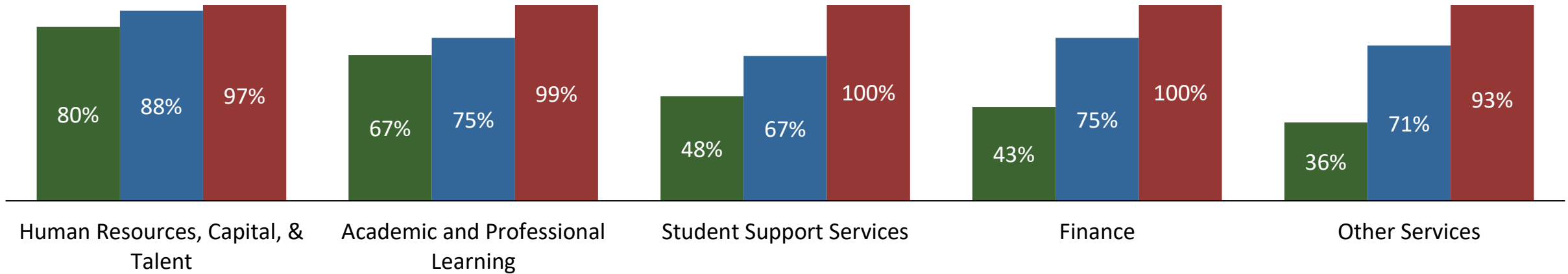


However, there is a gap between where principals—especially those at traditional district (Boston or other) and autonomous BPS schools—have autonomy and where it is desired....

Q: How much autonomy do you have currently?

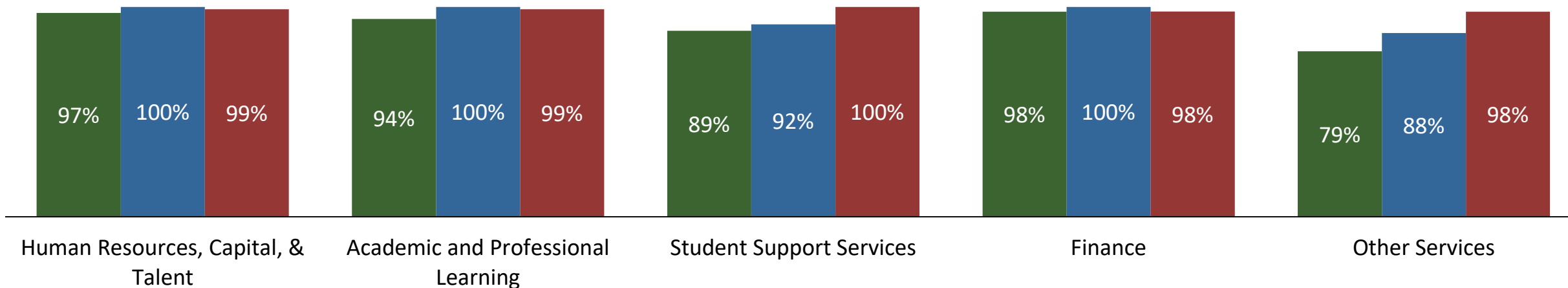
% of all respondents responding "Total" or "Some" Autonomy

■ Traditional or Autonomous District ■ Commonwealth Charter (network) ■ Diocesan/Parish



Q: How much autonomy would you ideally have?

% of all respondents responding "Total" or "Some" Autonomy



This gap between ideal levels and current levels of “total” and “some” autonomy tends to be larger for traditional or autonomous district school principals....

Difference Between Principals’ Ideal and Current Levels of “Total” or “Some” Autonomy:

(% Total/Some Ideal - % Total/Some Current)

