TOGETHER, WE RISE

Community Budget Priorities Survey

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) for the Distribution of Donations for Staffing

February 26, 2025

Survey Participation

3,929 Responses

Survey open October 21 to November 30, 2024

Participants included:

- Parents - 70%
- PPS Staff (administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff) - 20%
- Students - 3%
- Community Members - 2%
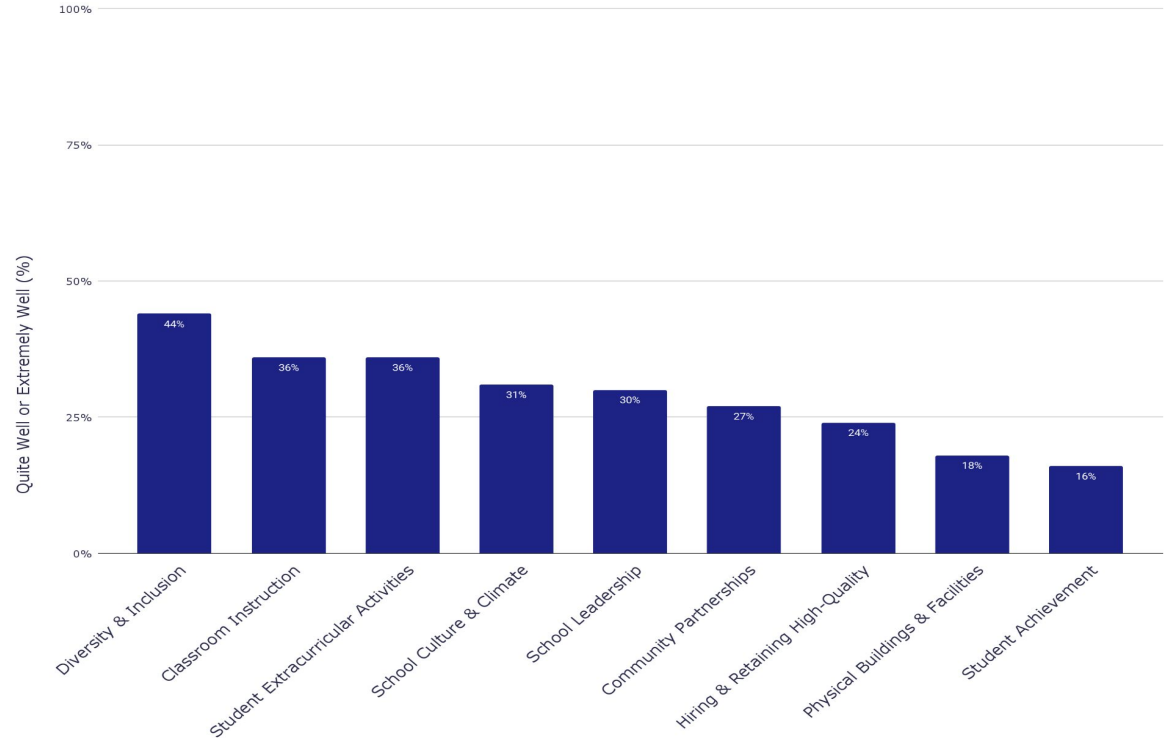
Key Findings

Findings

- Participants recommend that PPS eliminate a few programs vs reduce services across programs
- Participants emphasized the importance of classroom instruction, teaching, and learning over community partnerships or extracurricular activities
- 48% of participants would recommend PPS to a friend or colleague looking for a school or district

Relative Strengths

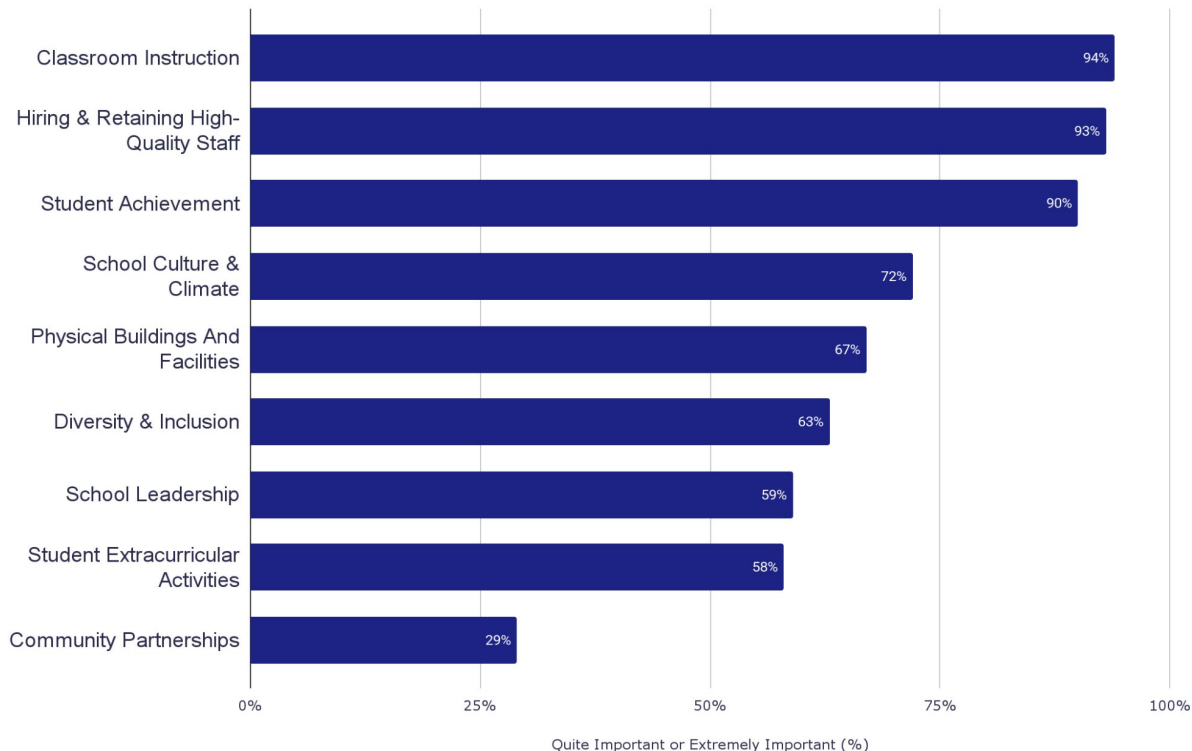"How well do you feel PPS is currently doing in the following areas?"

- **Student Achievement (lowest rated)**
- **Diversity & Inclusion (highest rated)**
- Classroom Instruction
- Hiring & Retaining High Quality-Staff
- School Culture & Climate
- Physical Buildings & Facilities
- Community Partnerships
- School Leadership
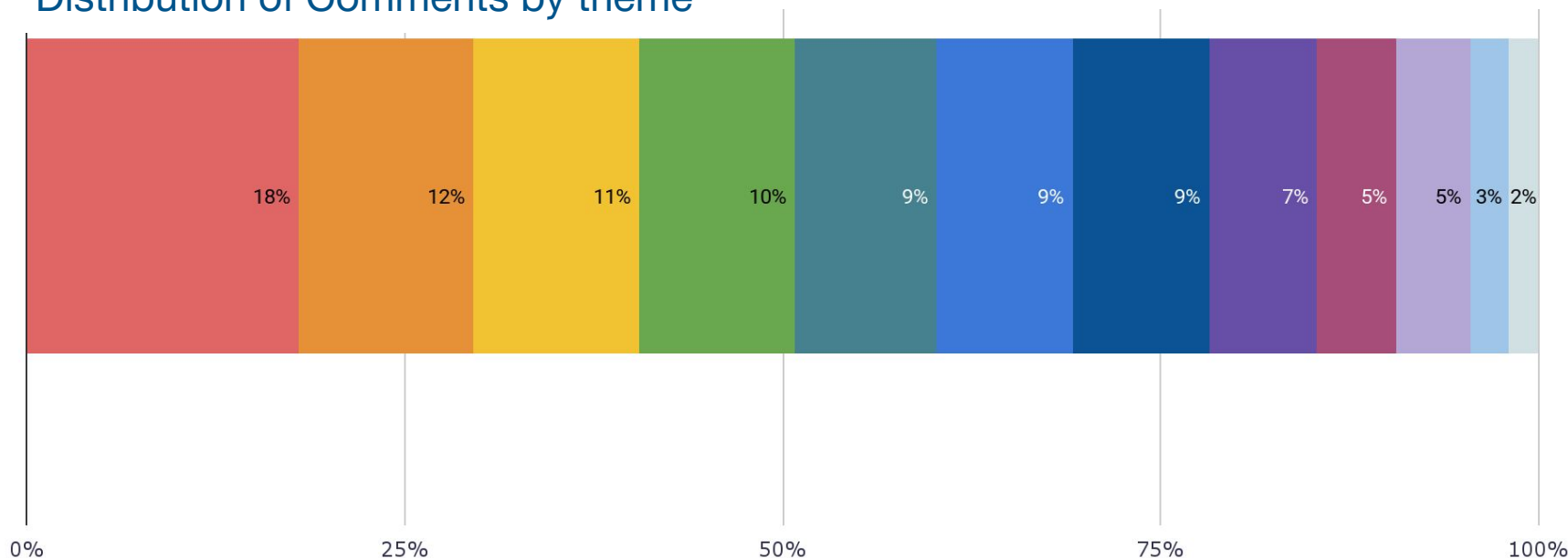- Student Extracurricular Activities

Relative Importance

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…

- Student Achievement
- Diversity & Inclusion
- **Classroom Instruction (highest rated)**
- Hiring & Retaining High Quality-Staff
- School Culture & Climate
- Physical Buildings & Facilities
- **Community Partnerships (lowest rated)**
- School Leadership
- Student Extracurricular Activities

	Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)
Classroom Instruction	94%
Hiring & Retaining High-Quality Staff	93%
Student Achievement	90%
School Culture & Climate	72%
Physical Buildings And Facilities	67%
Diversity & Inclusion	63%
School Leadership	59%
Student Extracurricular Activities	58%
Community Partnerships	29%

Open-ended Comments

Distribution of Comments by theme

Percent of Open-ended Comments by Theme

- Hiring & Retaining High-quality Staff — 18%
- Classroom Instruction — 12%
- Diversity & Inclusion — 11%
- Student Achievement — 10%
- Budget Concerns — 9%
- Visual & Performing Arts — 9%
- Special Education — 9%
- Physical Buildings & Facilities — 7%
- Student Extracurricular Activities — 5%
- School Culture & Climate — 5%
- School Leadership — 3%
- Community Partnerships — 2%

Community Recommendations

"If you could change one thing about this school or district, what would it be?"

★ Reduce class sizes (188 comments)
★ Hire and support quality personnel, like classroom teachers, support staff, and paraeducators (62 comments)
★ Fully fund and prioritize special education (40 comments)

"What is the single most positive aspect of this school or district?"

★ Caring teachers (233 comments) and staff (125 comments)
★ Strong and supportive school communities (138 comments)
★ Access to special programs, e.g., language immersion, arts, music, culture, and sports (66 comments)
★ Diversity in our district (58 comments)

Questions

Appendix

Deeper Dive
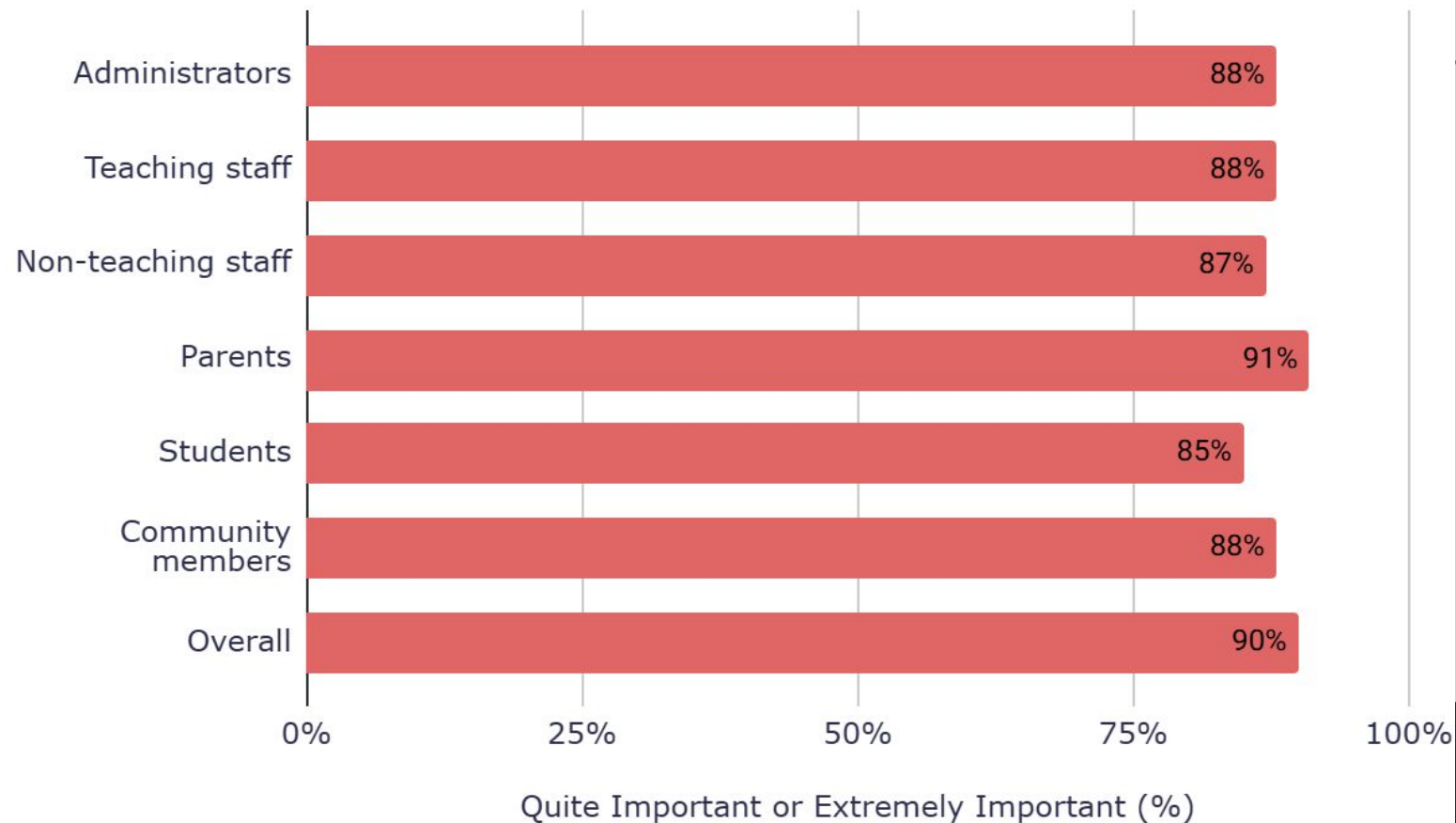
Community Survey Participation

3,929 Community Members

Approximately 50% white parents

Connection to PPS	People of Color	White	Did not answer	Overall
Administrators	0.38%	0.66%	0.05%	1.09%
Teaching staff	2.72%	9.52%	0.66%	12.90%
Non-teaching staff	1.93%	5.24%	0.41%	7.58%
Parents	14.28%	50.24%	5.75%	70.27%
Students	1.09%	2.14%	0.18%	3.41%
Community members	1.25%	1.50%	0.15%	2.90%
Did not answer	0.15%	0.33%	1.35%	1.83%
Overall	**21.81%**	**69.64%**	**8.55%**	**100.00%**

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…
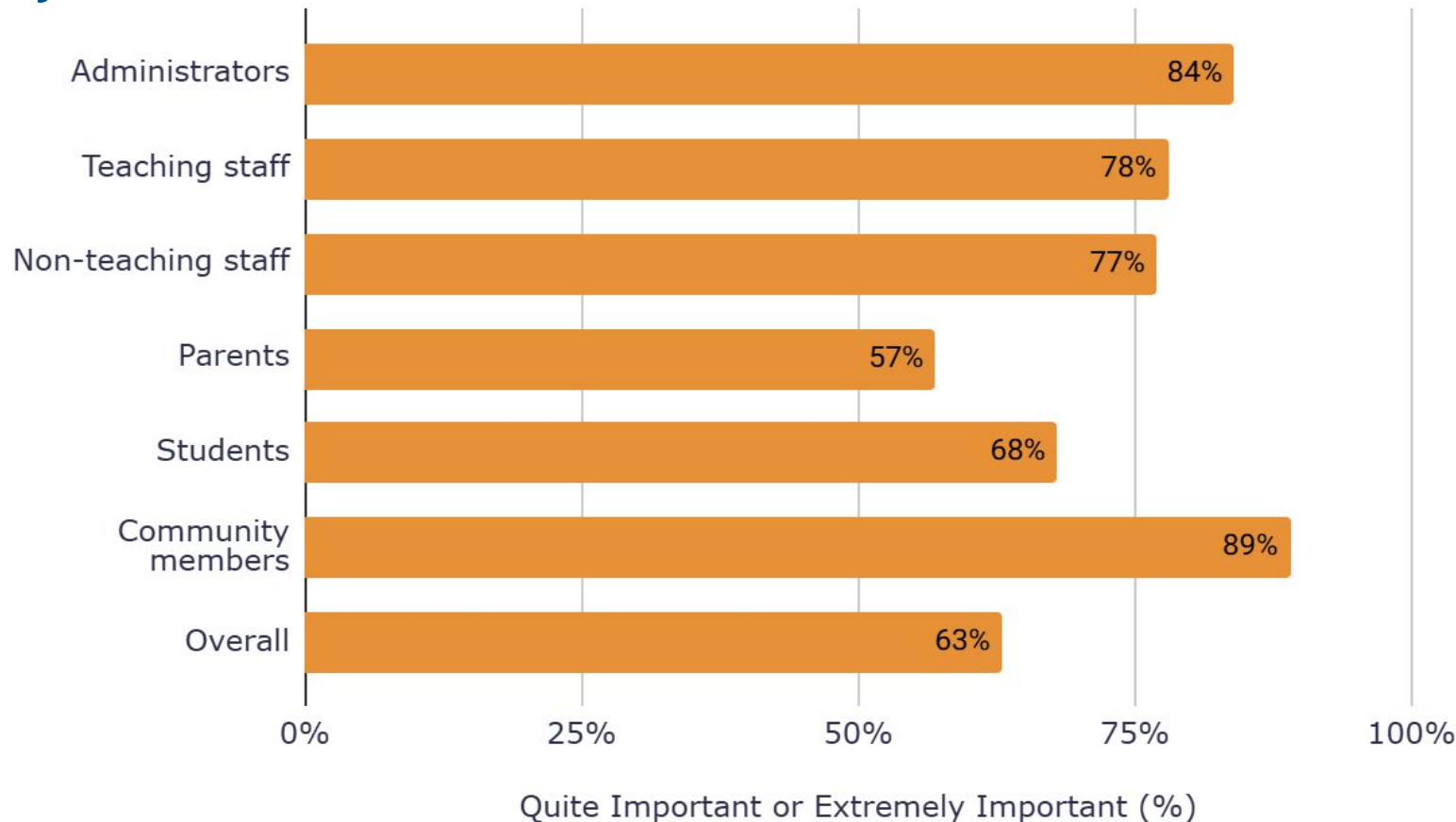
Student Achievement

Student Achievement

Of 1,789 open ended-comments, 184 (or 10%) were around Student Achievement.

★ We heard an emphasis on prioritizing "the basics" and returning to the core purpose of education.
★ Some respondents pointed out the importance of college preparation and maintaining high academic standards.
★ Respondents mentioned the importance of Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs, while some expressed concerns about fairness in accessing DLI in the District.
★ Many responses (167 comments or 9%) emphasized the visual and performing arts (e.g., music, art, theatre), pointing out that the arts are inseparable from core academic achievement and should not be deemphasized or excluded.

"The music and arts programs, an incredibly high percentage of successful students in life tend to have some sort of musical/artistic background. Music has been scientifically proven to activate nearly all areas of the brain through playing an instrument/singing. It is incredibly important towards child development." (Student of Color)

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…

Diversity & Inclusion

Group	Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)
Administrators	84%
Teaching staff	78%
Non-teaching staff	77%
Parents	57%
Students	68%
Community members	89%
Overall	63%

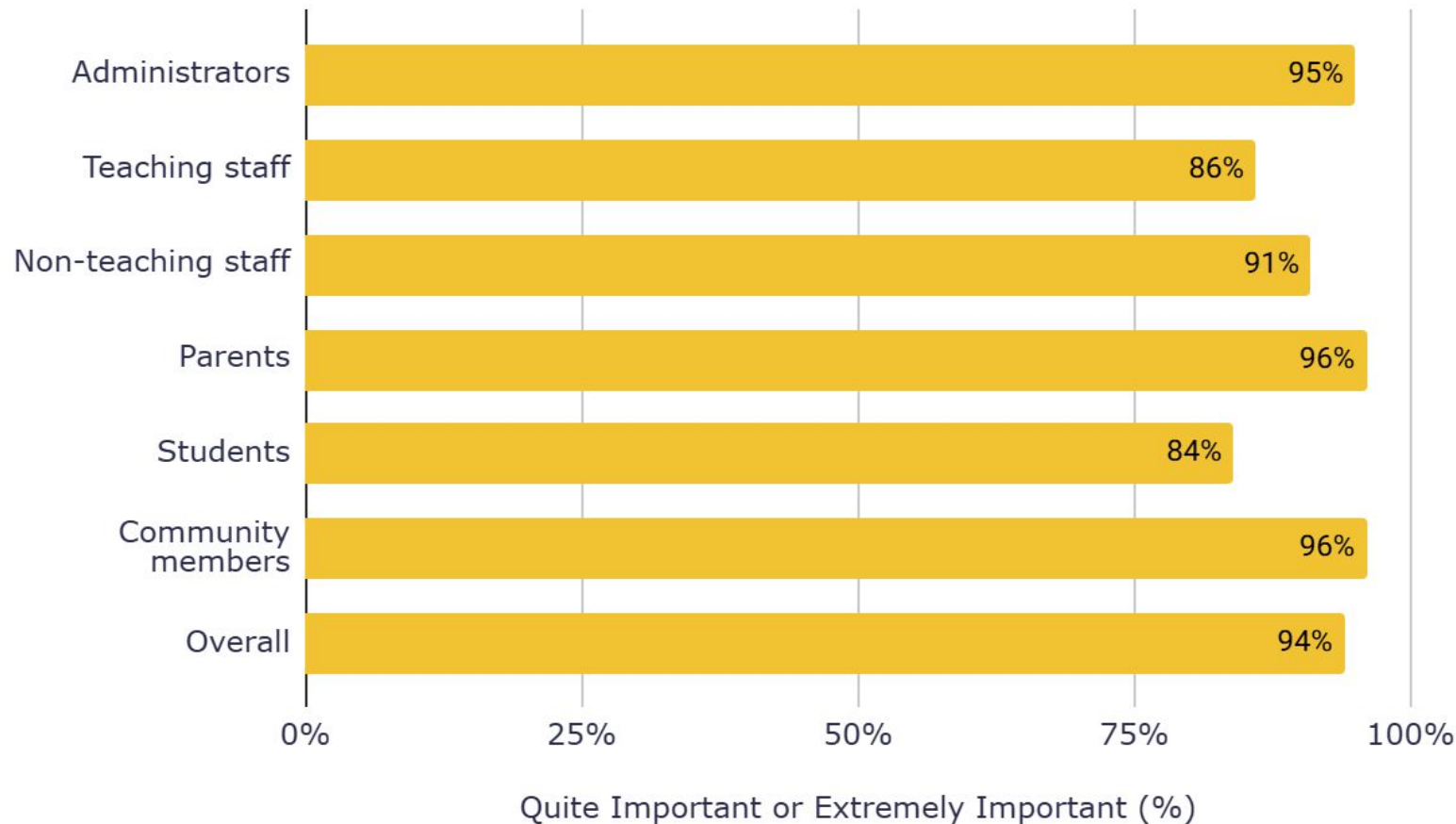Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)

Diversity & Inclusion

Eleven percent of open-ended comments referred to Diversity & Inclusion (196 comments).

★ Some respondents raised concerns over shortcomings and limitations with Talented and Gifted (TAG) programming.

★ Respondents pointed out the importance of resources for quality Special Education programming and support and others shared their concerns about adequate Social Emotional Learning resources.

★ Some respondents stressed the importance of free and healthy school meal services, emphasizing students in economic need.

"There is a commitment to diversity and inclusion, and people really do want to disrupt predictable patterns of achievement and belonging" (Teaching Staff of Color).

Classroom Instruction

Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)

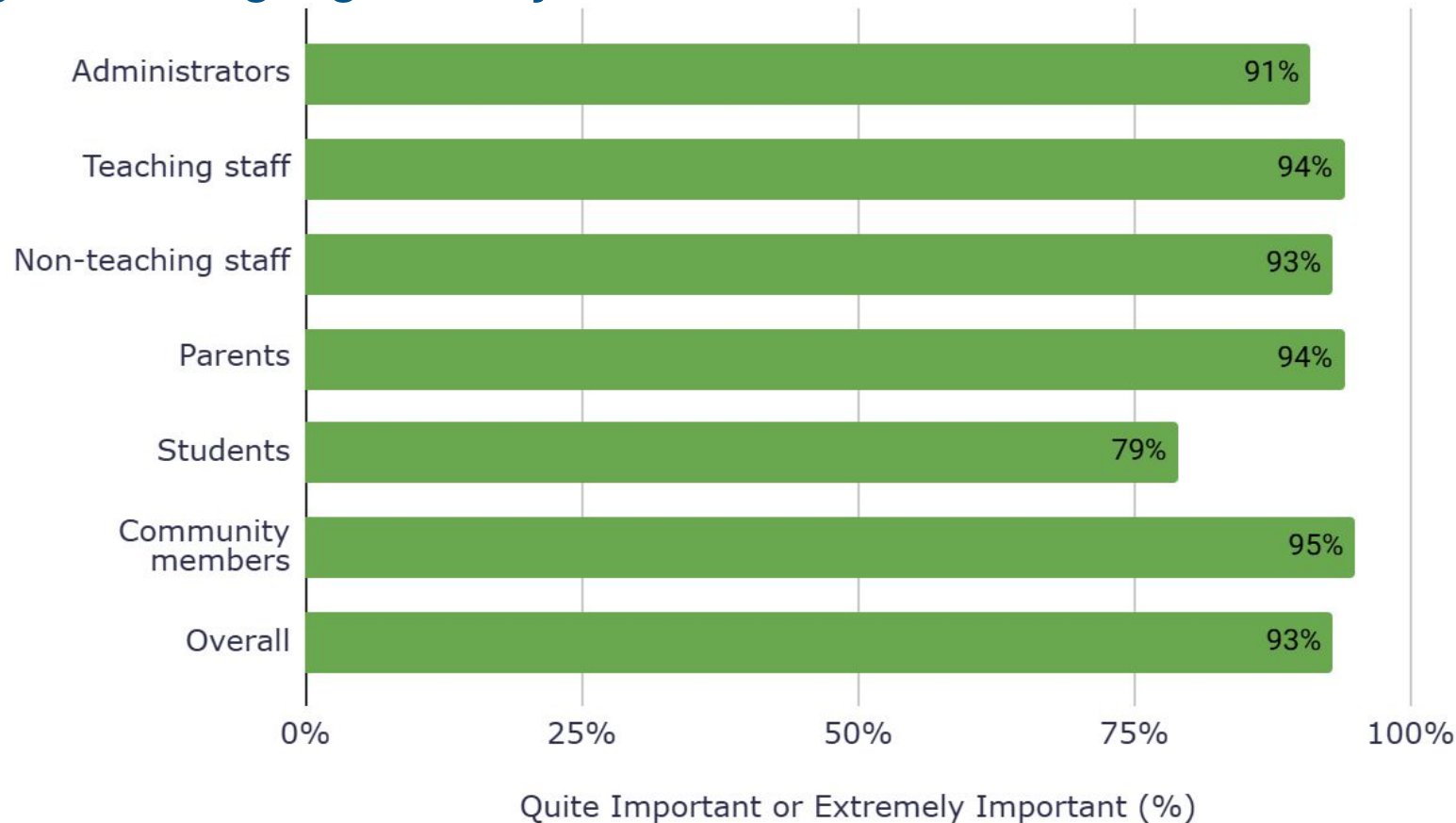| Group	%
Administrators	95%
Teaching staff	86%
Non-teaching staff	91%
Parents	96%
Students	84%
Community members	96%
Overall	94%

Classroom Instruction

Twelve percent of comments (207 comments) on the Community Survey discussed Classroom Instruction.

★ We heard concerns about classroom management support, respondents described how behavioral issues among students can interfere with learning opportunities in class.

★ Special education and behavioral and emotional support services are highly valued.

★ Technology use was frequently mentioned, some respondents pointed out limitations with viewing educational technology as a panacea, while others expressed support for technology in the classroom. We heard concerns regarding personal electronic devices interfering with student learning and interpersonal socialization.

★ Class size was a common concern.

"Making sure class size does not grow. Arts instruction, electives and other specials classes are EXTREMELY IMPORTANT and happen during school- it should not be cut before athletics or any other programs that happen AFTER SCHOOL." (Parent of Color)

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…

Hiring & Retaining High-Quality Staff

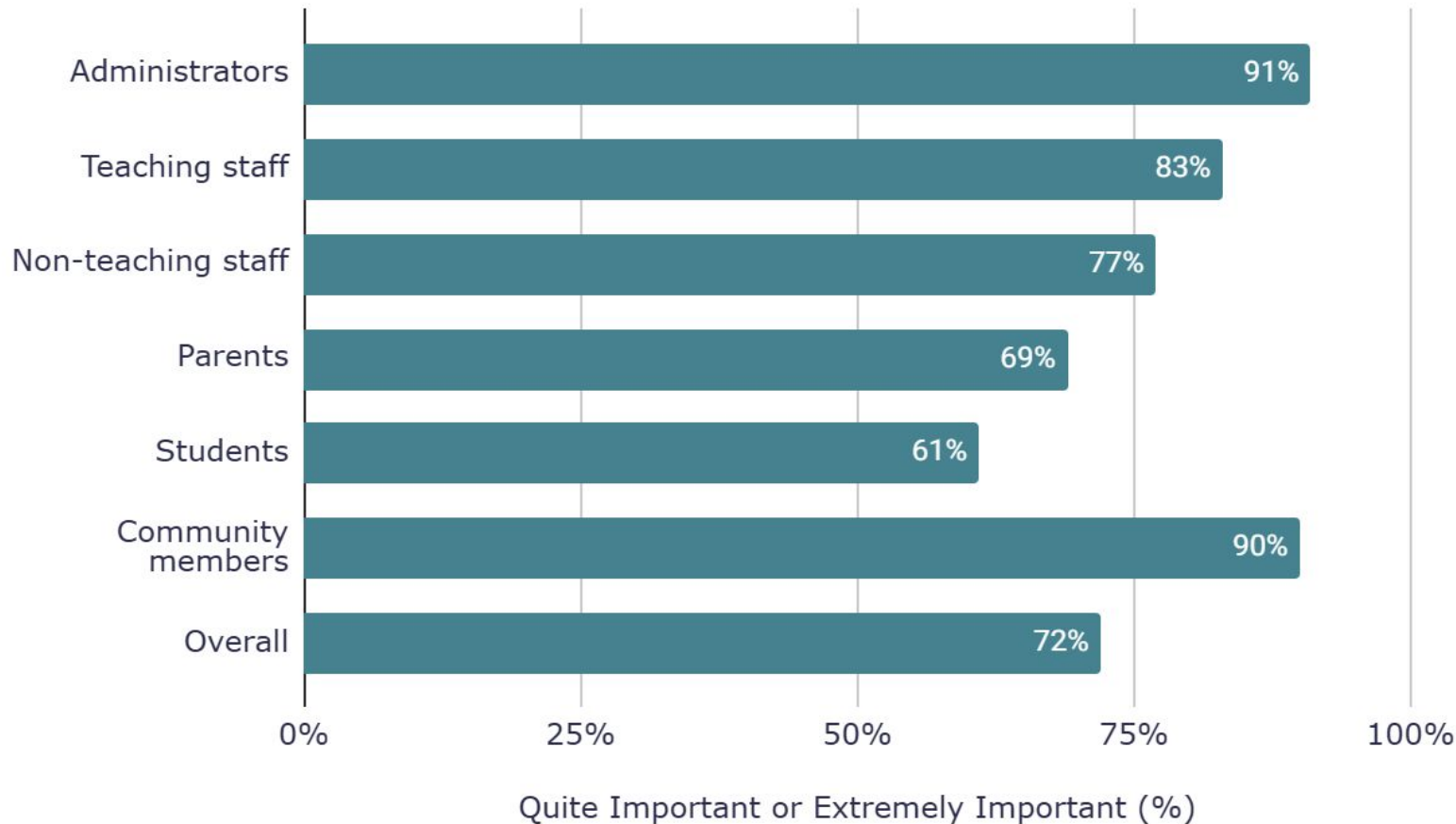| Group	Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)
Administrators	91%
Teaching staff	94%
Non-teaching staff	93%
Parents	94%
Students	79%
Community members	95%
Overall	93%

Hiring & Retaining High-Quality Staff

Hiring and retaining staff was the most frequently mentioned topic mentioned in open-ended comments on the Community Survey: 322 comments (18%) mentioned the theme.

★ We heard about the need for racially diverse, high-quality teachers who love students–and we heard about the need for disciplinary action and removal for underperforming teachers.

★ We heard requests for more special education support staff in buildings to support with student behaviors (e.g., paraeducators).

★ Community members also recommended reducing the number of staff in the district office and reducing or eliminating the use of contractors.

"We need to stop hiring outside contractors for menial tasks. This applies to office, maintenance, and IT. Costs of outsourcing any work that can be done in house must be expensive." (Parent of Color)

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…

School Culture & Climate

Chart: Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)
- Administrators: 91%
- Teaching staff: 83%
- Non-teaching staff: 77%
- Parents: 69%
- Students: 61%
- Community members: 90%
- Overall: 72%

School Culture & Climate

Five percent of comments (88 comments) related to School Culture & Climate.

★ Many comments from students about School Culture & Climate were positive. *"I love our school community. :D"* (Student of Color)
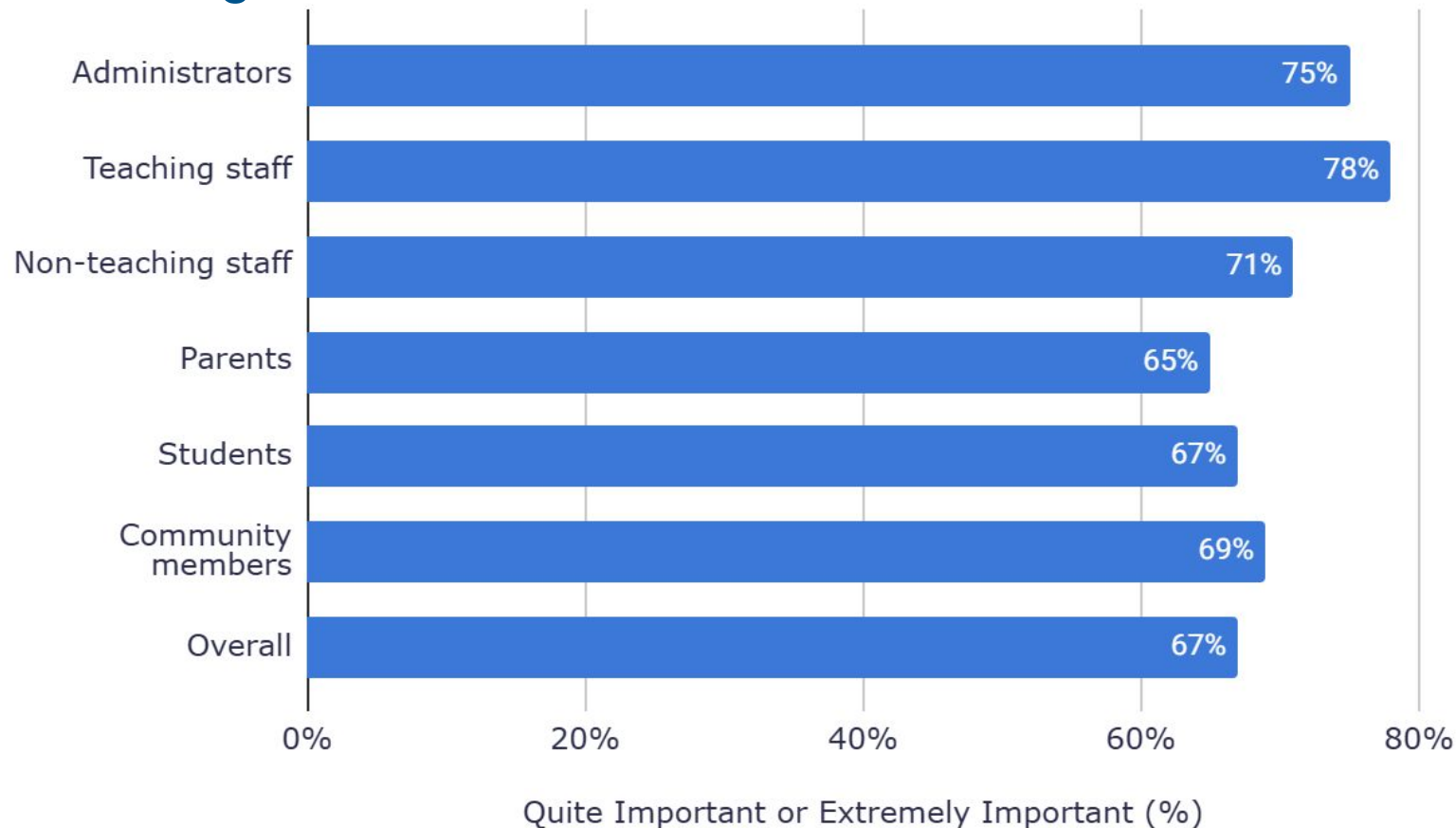
"Very diverse and inclusive. Woke." (Student of Color)

★ Some respondents expressed concerns about safety, discipline, student behavior, and bullying. Students mentioned the importance of feeling safe.

"Protecting queer kids and giving them a safe space [is important]." (White Student)

"I would want the security to actually try and protect us." (Student of Color)

Physical Buildings & Facilities

Group	Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)
Administrators	75%
Teaching staff	78%
Non-teaching staff	71%
Parents	65%
Students	67%
Community members	69%
Overall	67%

Physical Buildings & Facilities

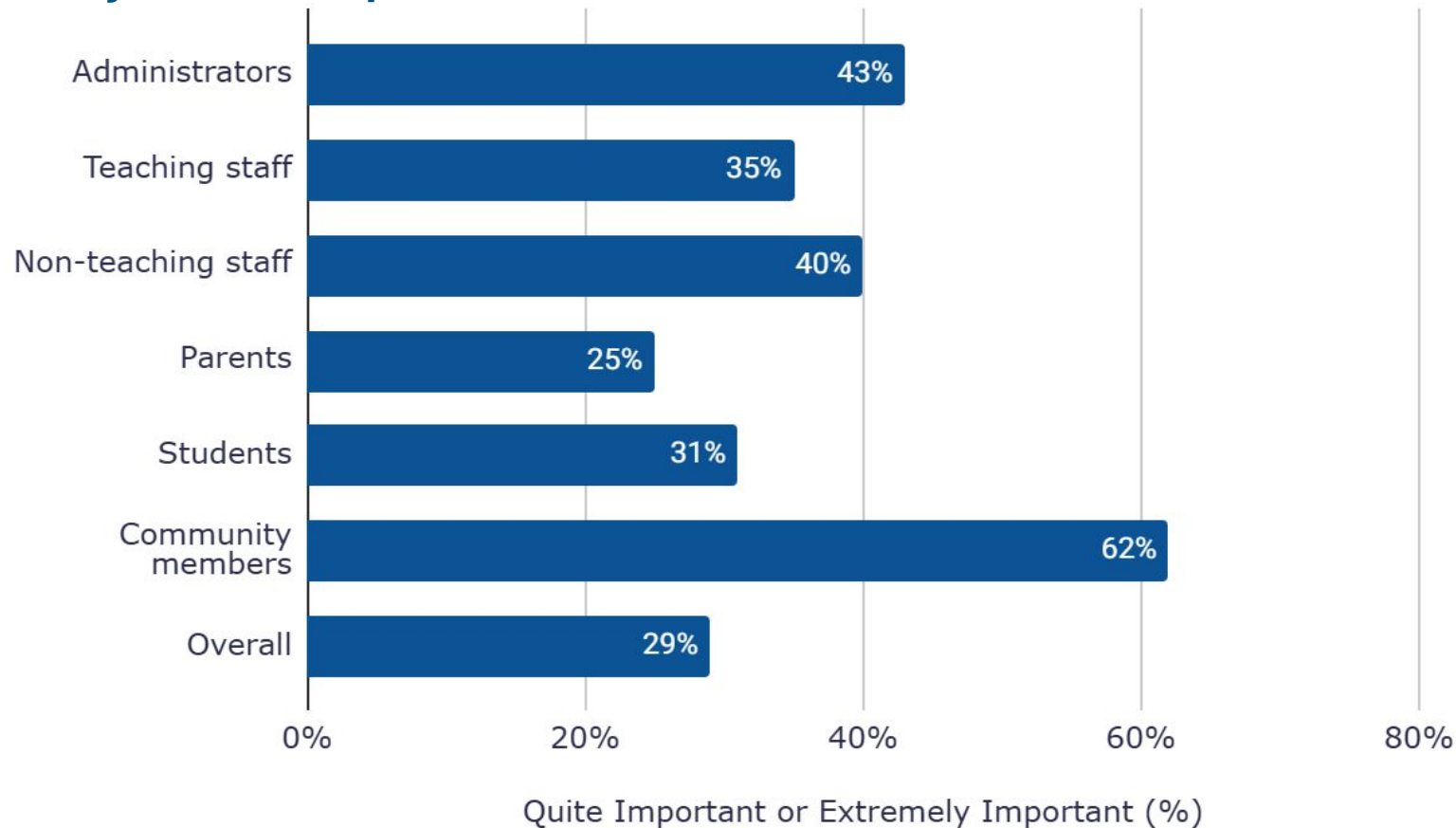Survey participants mentioned Physical Buildings & Facilities in 7% of comments (128 comments).

★ We heard concerns about building conditions, particularly at Cleveland High School.
★ More generally, respondents mentioned uncomfortable temperatures contributing to poor learning environments, and push for more air conditioning and better heat in buildings.

"PPS needs to address the lack of air conditioning in most buildings as well as the outdated heating systems and technology. The ancient projectors are embarrassing. Every teacher should have access to a smart monitor/tv." (White Teaching Staff)

"As long as schools are safe and functional, it's fine if buildings are outdated. Culture and community is more important than fancy things. Retaining high quality, engaging, and nurturing teachers and staff are very important to creating that culture though." (White Community Member)

Community Partnerships

Administrators — 43%
Teaching staff — 35%
Non-teaching staff — 40%
Parents — 25%
Students — 31%
Community members — 62%
Overall — 29%

Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)

Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships was the least frequently mentioned theme in open ended responses on the community survey. Just two percent of comments (37 comments) mentioned Community Partnerships.
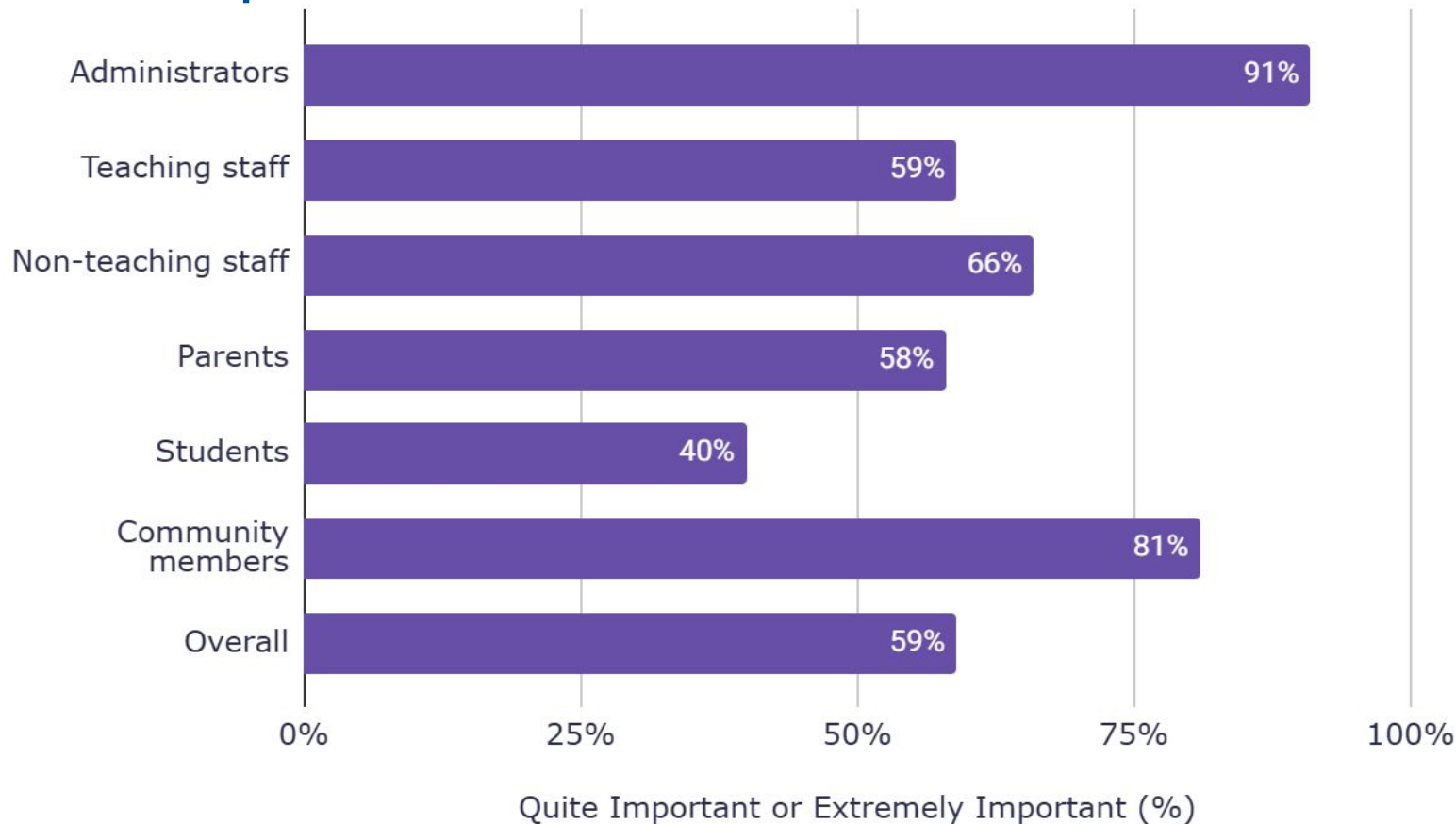
★ Some respondents emphasized the importance of community relationships without discussing explicit partnerships. These respondents valued clear communication from PPS about Community Partnerships, including well designed and user-friendly information sources on the PPS website.

★ Staff members stressed the importance of meaningful partnerships.

"*Mental health supports for our students and culturally specific community partnerships.*" (Non-teaching Staff of Color)

"*Purposeful partnership with home/communities in being part of the education system - NOT simply use of the system*" (Teacher of Color)

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…

School Leadership

Chart: "Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)"

Category	Percentage
Administrators	91%
Teaching staff	59%
Non-teaching staff	66%
Parents	58%
Students	40%
Community members	81%
Overall	59%

School Leadership

School Leadership was also infrequently mentioned in comments, just three percent of comments (45) mentioned the theme.

★   In those comments, school (site) Leadership was described as important and appreciated.

"Leadership! Leadership! Leadership! Successful schools have successful principals and leadership teams." (Parent of Color)
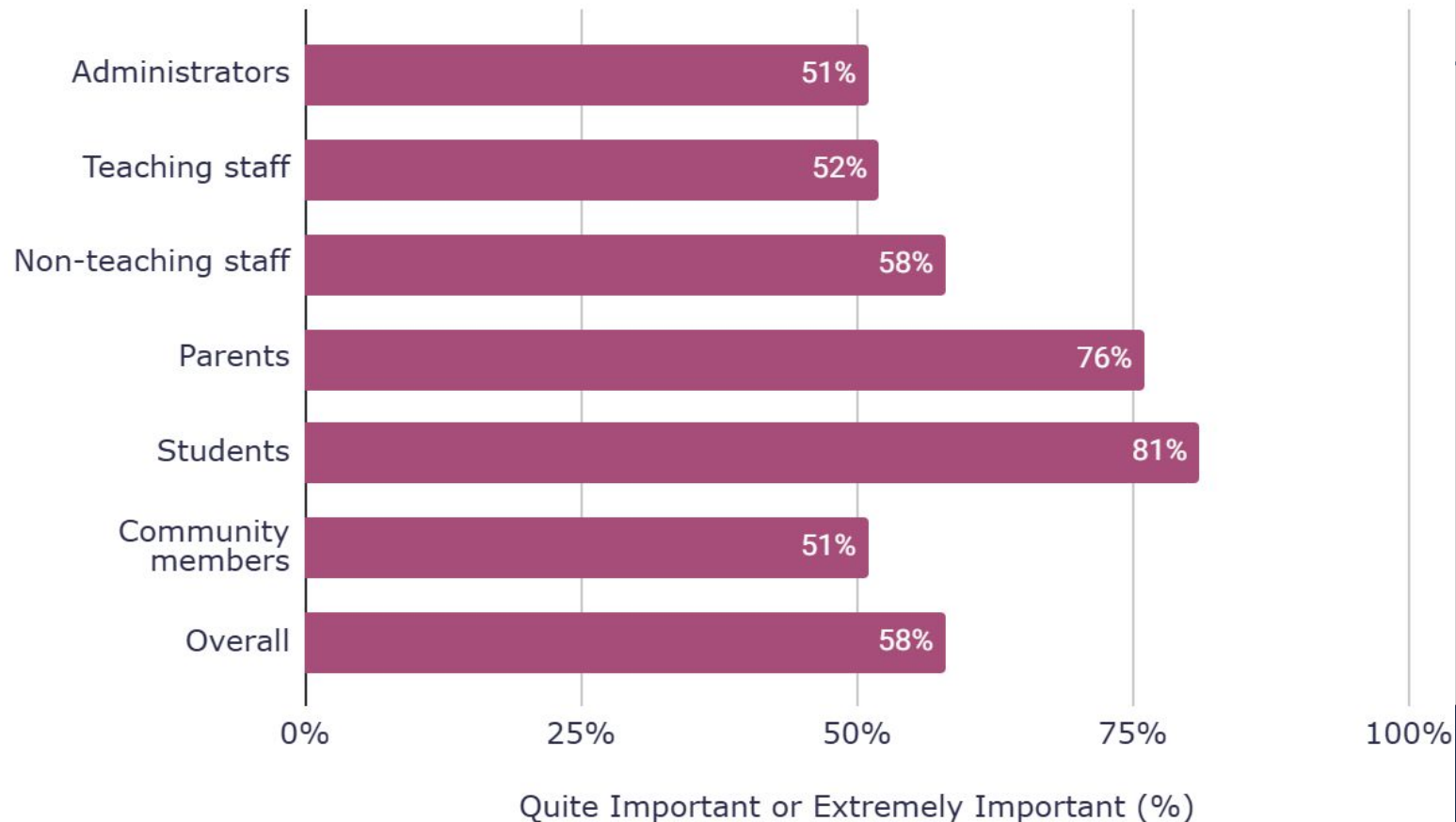
"I really like the community at my school and the leadership at the school has been good." (White Parent)

★   Respondents also discussed their views on district leadership. Generally, respondents who brought up district leadership expressed concern about the effectiveness, utility, and value of those positions. For example when asked, "If you could change one thing about this school or district, what would it be?"

"Poor district-level leadership and budgeting skills." (White Parent)

For PPS to be successful over the next three years, how important is it for us to focus on…

Student Extracurricular Activities

Administrators — 51%
Teaching staff — 52%
Non-teaching staff — 58%
Parents — 76%
Students — 81%
Community members — 51%
Overall — 58%

Quite Important or Extremely Important (%)

Student Extracurricular Activities

Student Extracurricular Activities were mentioned in 5% of comments (93 comments).

★ Respondents who prioritized extracurricular activities often specified programs pertaining to fine arts (e.g., band, orchestra, theatre) as being particularly important.

"Me encantan todos los programas extraescolares para niños pequeños." (*"I love all the extracurricular programs for young children."* - Community Member of Color)

"Band is very important to me, it is the ONLY thing that keeps me excited about coming to school. I hope you would never dream about cutting music education. Also, there are NEVER enough calories in my lunch to sustain me through the day. It would help me if we were able to have snacks through the day in our class, but we are not allowed to eat in class." (White Student)

Other Comments

- ★ We heard concerns about depleting funds and the ongoing reports of budget shortfalls in 9% of comments (168 comments)
- ★ Participants mentioned the visual and performing arts in 9% of comments (167 comments).
- ★ Retaining funding for special education in 8% of open-ended comments (139 comments).

"Influence state legislation to improve funding for schools in Oregon. Surprising how quiet the superintendent and school board leadership is when funding is state controlled. The school district is good at budget management, but not strategic to influence change at the state level." (White Parent)