

## Studies demonstrate<sup>1</sup> that schools with more effective principals have:

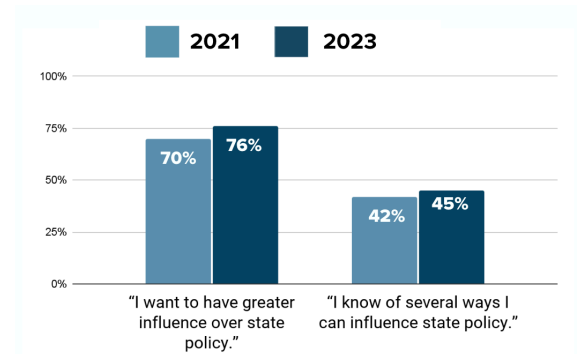
- Lower student absenteeism and chronic absenteeism.
- Higher teacher job satisfaction.
- Reduced teacher turnover, particularly of effective teachers.
- Better academic achievement among students.
  - Replacing a below average elementary principal with an above average principal would result in an additional 2.9 months of math learning and 2.7 months of reading learning for students.

1. Grissom, J. A., Egalite, A. J., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). *How principals affect students and schools*. Wallace Foundation

## About the Minnesota Principals Survey:

- Survey collaboratively developed with large group of stakeholders to elevate principal voice
- First administered in Fall 2021
  - Report published spring 2022
  - Focus groups Fall 2022
  - Practice & Policy Briefs published Spring 2023
- Second administration of survey: Fall 2023
  - Report to be published March 2024

## Policy Influence:



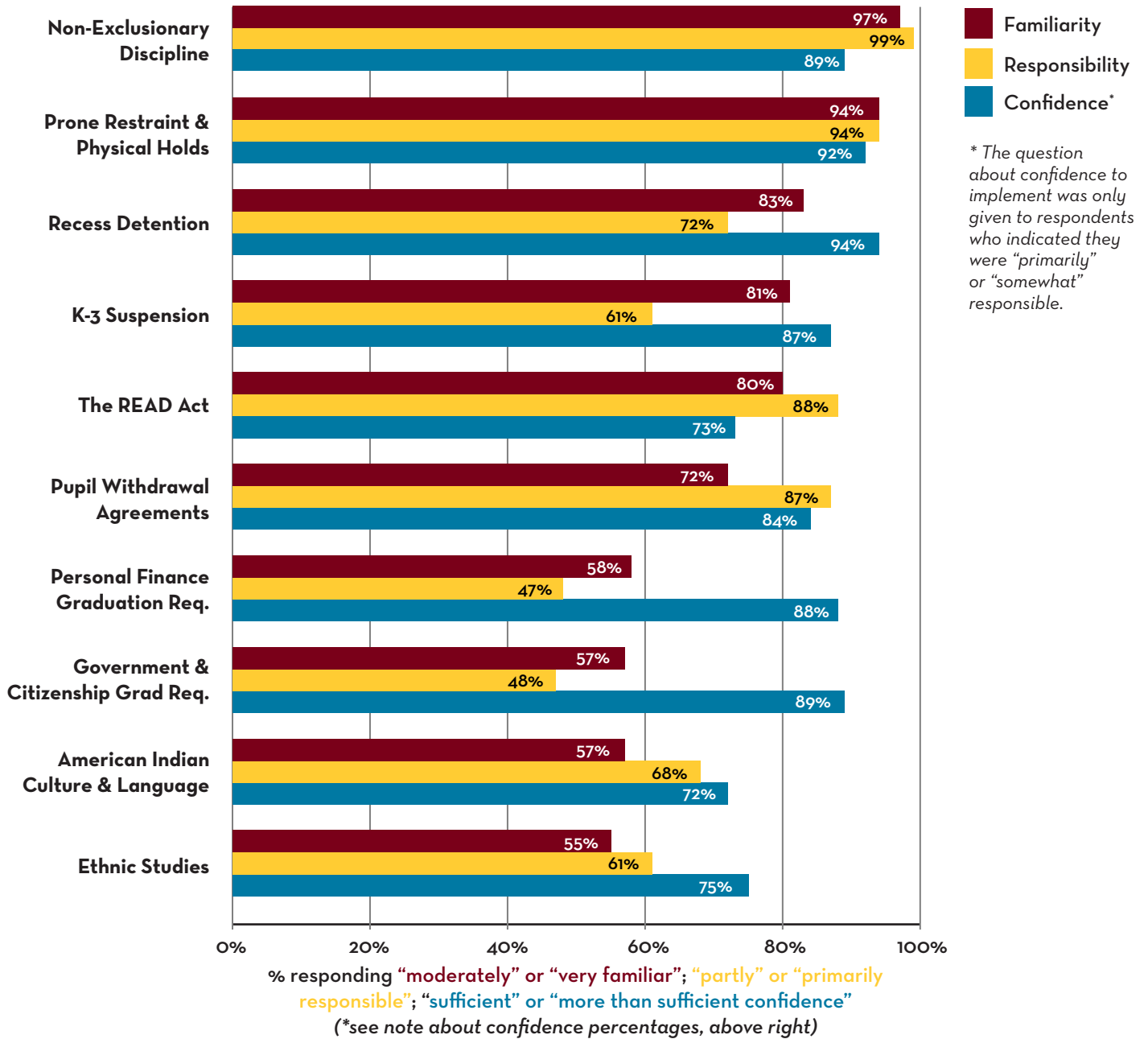
## 2023 Respondents

- 41% response rate: 991 / 2401 principals, assistant principals, charter school directors.
  - This is an increase from a 34% response rate in 2021.
- Split 50/50 between Greater MN and Metro Area respondents (496 & 491, respectively).
- Fairly representative of principals serving in MN relative to geography, level, gender, and race.

## What types of questions can data from the Minnesota Principals Survey answer?

- What do MN principals view as their greatest challenges?
- How do the perceptions of charter leaders compare to those leading district schools?
- How do MN principals from different regions of the state perceive state accountability measures?
- How do the experiences of school leaders of color differ from those of white leaders?
- What are the most frequent barriers to principal professional development?
- How are principals' work demands changing over time?
- What barriers do school leaders identify to influencing state policy?
- What do school leaders need to implement new legislation?
- What do school leaders view as the root causes of student mental health challenges?

## Familiarity, Responsibility, and Confidence Regarding State Policy Changes



*"We need the state and MDE to actually be clear about what the expectations are. It seems that much of the legislation passed last year is vague and not defined. The result is confusion about what to do."*

—2023 survey respondent

## The READ Act

80% familiar, 88% responsible ~ 73%\* confident

**Overview:** Respondents are in general agreement with the Act's intent but are very concerned about implementation timelines and if there will be enough funds.

### Selected responses

- “We need more time and resources to deliver the required literacy trainings.”
- “I foresee staff development being a huge hurdle for all districts to accomplish. There needs to be some statewide PD options that are widely accessible and allow teachers to get paid for their time and effort. We need teacher preparation programs ready to pivot with us, and meet the PD requirements for the Read Act. This will help sustain our efforts at the district level, as we continue to hire new teachers.”
- “The READ Act is terrifying. I understand the principles, and believe they have positive intent and are working in the best interests of students. However, the managerial piece of fulfilling requirements is daunting. Nobody seems to be fully prepared and many questions fall on deaf ears. All the pressure is on the district to meet compliance with little guidance and few answers to “difficult” questions. This could cause many educators to leave the profession.”
- “The READ Act: Based on what I know as of this date, I do not see a pathway to success for our district.”
- “I appreciate what the state is doing with the READ Act. I think it's a positive step. There are several questions that remain to be answered - be open and honest about them.
- Understand MN is a big state and can't be lumped into the metro area with policies. We are bigger than what happens in the TC. We need money to fully fund Special Education - it is DRAINING us and my staff!!!”

## Non-Exclusionary Discipline

97% familiar, 99% responsible ~ 89%\* confident

**Overview:** Principals seem to overwhelmingly be seeking guidance, specifically from MDE, on how to comply with this legislation. They want student handbook language, examples, and professional development.

### Selected responses

- “We are complying with the Non-Exclusionary Discipline, but would love MDE and our state legislature to send communication to families in regards to the changes”
- Actual, developmentally appropriate examples of NED; approved ways of documenting NED; projected case studies that help us apply the requirements to a fictional case.
- “I mostly need those that are making the recommendations to understand what it's like to be an elementary principal on a Tuesday. Some of the changes feel unrealistic at times, and the recommendations given thus far are so broad and vague that it's more frustrating than helpful. (mostly around NED, Recess Detention and K-3 suspensions)”
- “Increased clarity on balancing the tension between Non-Exclusionary Discipline, teacher right to have a student removed and supporting safety and security in the classroom.”
- “Non Exclusionary Discipline: More guidance around what this looks like given the span of behavior issues that we see”
- “NED- This is a mess/nightmare- what information am I going to need to report to MDE/DIRS etc. How to implement some of these without enough staff and training for staff. What to do with students who refuse.”
- “Also need additional information regarding NED and some specific language that can be placed into the handbooks regarding potential options for discipline. Other options for recess detention.”

\* The survey question about confidence to implement was only given to respondents who indicated they were “primarily” or “somewhat” responsible. Reported here are the percentages of respondents who reported “sufficient” or “more than sufficient” confidence.

## K-3 Suspension

81% familiar, 98%/15% responsible (elem/sec) ~ 87%\* confident

**Overview:** Principals acknowledge suspension should be used sparingly, but feel frustrated this mandate does not acknowledge what some say is rare use for this tool.

### Selected responses

- “Sometimes K-3 suspensions need to happen and our hands have been tied.”
- “The K-3 Suspension legislative change has us pondering how to support the student while also supporting the peers and staff impacted by the behavior and the feedback from other families. Space and staff are limited, and when suspension is off the table for most circumstances, this creates challenges. This legislation also has impacted our means to hold a conversation and make a purposeful plan to support the child, moving forward, while not having additional incidents in the meantime.”

## Prone Restraint and Physical Holds

94% familiar, 94% responsible ~ 92% confident\*

**Overview:** Principals indicate a need for this legislative language to be cleaned up and a frustration that it became a source of tension for them and SROs.

### Selected responses

- “Prone Hold Language--clean it up so our SROs are able to work at full capacity in our schools”
- “Prone Restraint and Physical Holds: A clearer policy.”
- “Clarification for schools and police departments around the prone restraint and physical holds legislation. It is hindering our ability to make restorative justice decisions and build relationships with students rather than ticketing and adding kids to the juvenile justice system.”

## Recess Detention

83% familiar, 72% responsible ~ 94%\* confident

**Overview:** Respondents seem frustrated that legislators are pre-determining what should or should not be available to principals with regards to discipline.

### Selected responses

- “When there is a recess issue, we also provide MANY non-exclusionary discipline practices, but we need to be able to take recess away when there has been a big issue at recess. Would you prefer we meet with students during reading or math to resolve a recess issue?”
- “To provide non-exclusionary discipline, avoid K-3 suspensions and refrain from recess detention, we need to have creative thinking and like minded people to work together in schools to work through discipline issues. This will help to think of a variety of opportunities to get to the root of a behavior and match the supports. We need to also involve guardians in partnership.”

## Pupil Withdrawal Agreements

72% familiar, 87% responsible ~ 84% confident\*

**Overview:** There seems to be a lack of understanding of the rationale for this policy.

### Selected responses

- “I feel I need a better understanding of why Pupil Withdrawal Agreements are to be limited. I am not clear whether it is to promote the furthering of expulsion hearings or to lessen withdrawal and expulsion consideration.”
- “Withdrawal agreements; How many reasonable steps need to take place prior to withdrawal?”

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## New Curricular and High School Graduation Requirements Overall

**Overview:** There seem to be overarching concerns about implementing legislation that affects curriculum and largely high schools (Ethnic Studies, American Indian Culture and Language, Government and Citizenship, and Personal Finance), specifically questions regarding “how,” rather than “why.” Principals are looking for guidance on standards, curricular resources, scheduling, and staffing of these new requirements.

### Selected responses

- “As a school we need a high quality PD training from legal and implementation perspective for the school Admins first, school board, and school staff. also we need a drafted policies so the board adopt for the implementation of these new polices. The content of the classes needed for Ethnic studies, personal finance, government and citizenship must be developed. We need guidance on these courses.”
- “Ethnic Studies, Personal Finance Graduation Requirement, Government and Citizenship Graduation Requirement [were] well intentioned but dropped on us with little support and no understanding of the unintended consequences to HS scheduling.”
- “Examples of how small schools are added the PF, Government, and AI requirements when they is a lack to staffing and time in the day.”

## Ethnic Studies

55% familiar, 61% responsible ~ 75%\* confident

### Selected responses

- “Ethnic Studies - Community Frustration with this requirement will be difficult.”
- “Guidance and clarity on the requirement of ethnic studies. Also, resources for curriculum to meet the requirements.”
- “More information on Ethnic Studies and how this will be incorporated into the school day with the time demands on other content areas.”
- “Clarification from MDE as to what exactly will constitute Ethnic Studies.”
- “Ethnic Studies we would love support with providing an accurate job description for this position.”
- “Ethnic Studies guidelines, standards, curriculum development, and where to deliver the course.”

## American Indian Language & Culture

72% familiar, 87% responsible ~ 84%\* confident

### Selected responses

- “We need more American Indian teachers or liaisons who can share their experiences and expertise of their own culture and language.”
- “Trainings, that are research-based and approved by our American Indian Leaders in our State for our instructional teams.”
- “...honest and respectful teacher resources for addressing the teaching of American Indian culture and Language. The development of some state sponsored relationships with tribal bands in areas that lack this dimension of diversity in their community.”
- “Specific to our district, [district name], we need significant funding to comply with the state mandate to remove Native American nicknames and imagery from our campus. We were formerly the [name]. The change will cost us 1-2 million dollars of our 12 million dollar budget. The State has yet to allocate any funding to comply with the mandate.”

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## Personal Finance

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58% familiar, 47% responsible ~ 88%\* confident

### Selected responses

- “Finance-classes titled personal finance are offered via career and tech at centers (and regular high schools are not supposed to offer classes that would compete with CTE classes), so it is unclear to me what my school is meant to provide.”
- [We need] “curriculum options that fulfill personal finance graduation requirement.”
- “Time for myself and teachers to prepare and adapt curriculum for personal finance course.”
- “worried about the impact on our learning culture for both kids and staff...the addition of personal finance as a required course will shift of FTE (need to partner with teachers to determine who teaches Personal Finance) and the impact on kids having one less elective. Also need to make sure all these new courses and/or outcomes are relevant and meaningful. This will be critical.”
- “Personal Finance decision has not given specifics on implementation and how it can be embedded in other courses.”

## Government & Citizenship

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57% familiar, 48% responsible ~ 89%\* confident

### Selected responses

- “[I need] curriculum options that [fulfill] government and citizenship graduation requirement”

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