



HopSkipDrive

The Associated Press-NORC  
Center for Public Affairs Research

# 2025 STATE OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION REPORT

As students return to schools across the country this fall, a new pair of surveys conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in partnership with HopSkipDrive, examines the current experiences of school administrators and parents when it comes to student transportation. In the context of increased [nationwide bus driver shortages](#) and [shifting transportation needs and responsibilities](#), this study reveals the common experiences and problems that school administrators and parents face, and highlights potential solutions to these issues that both groups identify.



© 2017 AP Photo / Robert F. Bukaty

## Six Things You Should Know About the 2025 State of School Transportation Surveys:

1. 83% of school administrator respondents report that staff in their school or district take time away from job duties to help with school transportation, with 54% doing so at least weekly.
2. 35% of parents have missed work due to their children's transportation needs, and about 3 in 10 have been prevented from taking personal or work opportunities. Eleven percent have lost a job.
3. 44% of school administrator respondents report the number of students who qualify for free school-provided transportation in their school or district has increased in the last 5 years, and 45% expect it to increase again over the next 5 years.
4. 8 in 10 school administrator respondents say school bus driver shortages are a problem in their school or district, including 46% who say it is a major problem.
5. 73% of school administrator respondents say budget shortages have impacted their school or district's transportation operations.
6. 78% of parents say transportation would be at least a somewhat important factor if they could send their children to any school in their area.

Both school administrators and parents express significant – and growing – challenges with student transportation. The surveys show many school administrator respondents face an increased demand for transportation services while grappling with constrained resources and labor shortages. Responses

from parents of K-12 children show the impact of these transportation challenges, with many parents noting the connection between transportation and academic outcomes for their children. Students are missing out on educational opportunities or facing tardiness and absenteeism due to transportation challenges. Many parents, especially mothers, have suffered personal and professional impacts due to their children's school transportation needs. And nearly all school administrator respondents report teachers and staff have to take time away from their core duties to cover transportation needs.

Nine in 10 school administrator respondents say the number of students who qualify for free, school-provided transportation is either growing (44%) or has stayed the same (46%) in the last 5 years, and 45% expect the need to keep increasing over the next 5 years.

As need increases, however, transportation operations of the schools or districts of school administrator respondents are struggling to keep up. Most have been impacted by bus driver shortages (80%) or budget shortages (73%). And most respondents say transportation access impacts many of the key issues their school or district faced in the last year, such as chronic absenteeism or tardiness.

Looking at the bus driver shortages, 81% of the school administrator respondents say school bus driver shortages are a problem in their school or district, including 46% who say it is a major problem. A quarter (26%) of respondents report that their school or district has addressed these shortages by cutting or shortening bus routes.

Furthermore, 83% of school administrator respondents say staff in their school or district have taken time away from their core job duties at least a few times a year to help with school transportation, such as managing school car lines or driving school buses or vans. Fifty-four percent do so weekly.

As [schools struggle to keep up with transportation needs](#), student transportation is largely reliant on families driving. Ninety-one percent of school administrator respondents say at least some of their students are eligible for free, school-provided transportation, but 89% of students in their school or district are driven to school, and 78% of parents of K12 students say their children are typically driven in some way. Both parents (70%) and school administrator respondents (81%) agree that traffic congestion during pick up and drop off times is a problem.

Forty-three percent of parents say the school bus is part of their children's typical school commutes, in addition to being driven. Among those who don't typically ride the bus, 32% of parents say it's because it's not available in their area and 20% say it's easier to get to school some other way.

Most parents experience some stress about their children's transportation to school. Fifty-six percent of parents report feeling stressed about their children's transportation at least a few times a year, with a quarter who are stressed at least monthly. About 3 in 10 have missed work (35%), been prevented from taking personal opportunities (31%) or work opportunities (28%), and 11% have lost a job due to needing to take their children to and from school or other activities. Women are significantly more likely than men to report being prevented from pursuing work opportunities (33% vs. 23%) or personal opportunities (37% vs. 23%) because of child transportation responsibilities. And 20% of women without a college degree report having lost a job due to transportation responsibilities, more than college educated women (2%).

Many parents also identify missed opportunities for their children because of issues with transportation, including 26% whose child has missed extracurricular activities in the last school year, 21% whose child has missed school services like school meals or counseling, and 17% whose child has

missed tutoring or academic help. Forty-four percent report that their child has been late to school at least a few times in the last year due to issues with transportation.

If easier transportation options were available, about half of parents would be at least somewhat likely to sign their children up for more extracurricular activities (53%) or school services (48%). And 78% say transportation would be at least a somewhat important consideration if they could send their children to any school in their area.

There are areas of common ground between parents and school administrator respondents regarding potential solutions for the transportation issues they are facing. Among school administrator respondents, a majority favor organizing centralized pick-up and drop-off locations for students using school buses (73%), improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in areas near schools (70%), and allowing school or districts to use school-arranged supplemental school transportation services such as cars and vans (65%).

About 4 in 10 parents agree that offering school-arranged supplemental transportation services, such as cars or vans, and improving pedestrian and bike infrastructure would make getting to school easier for their family, and a third say the same about organizing centralized pick-up and drop-off locations for students. About half say it wouldn't make much difference to them.

The report provides a deep dive into school administrator and parent experiences with [school transportation](#), the [widespread impacts of transportation challenges](#), and [attitudes toward potential solutions](#) to improve school transportation across the country.

## **CURRENT EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION**

Most parents and school administrator respondents say students are mostly driven to school, by a parent, other family member, or via carpool. Parents (70%) and school administrator respondents (81%) agree that traffic congestion around school during pick up and drop off times is a problem.

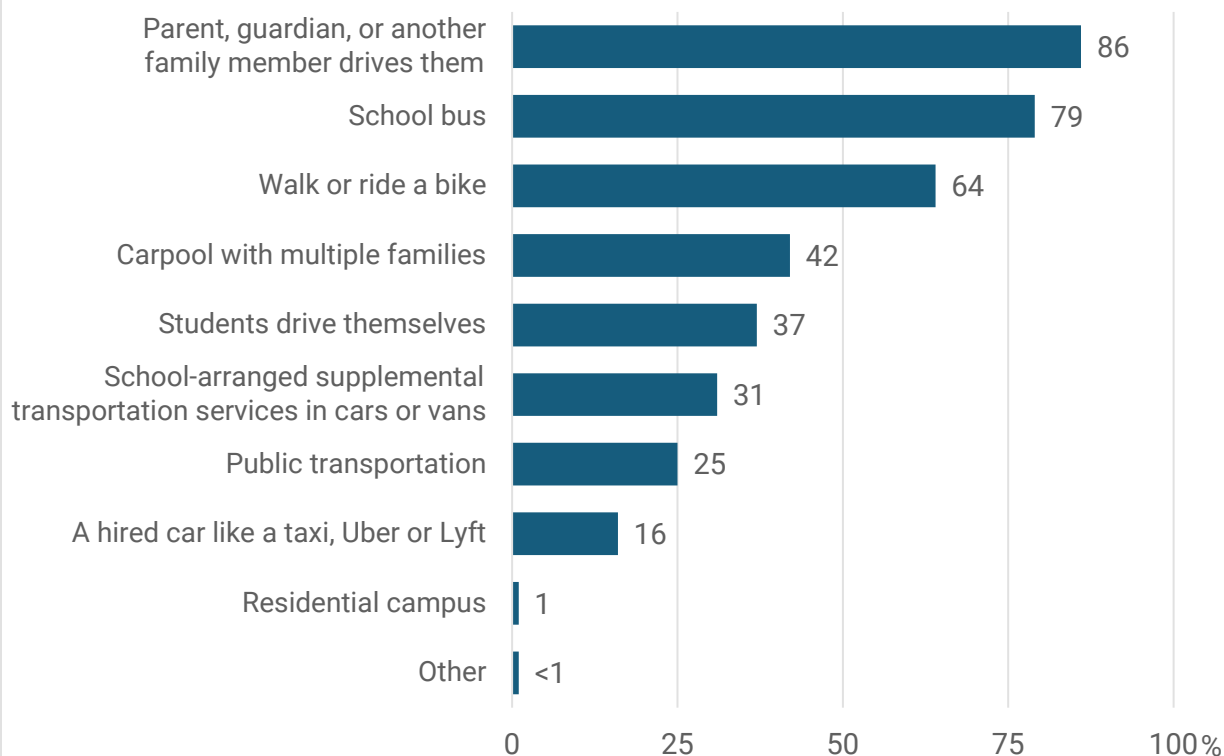
### **School administrators**

According to school administrator respondents, students in their schools or districts use a variety of transportation options to get to and from school. Overall, 89% say students rely on cars either driven by a parent, guardian, or family member (86%), in a carpool (42%), or driving themselves (37%).

Taking a school bus (79%) and walking or biking (64%) are also common methods. Some also use school-arranged supplemental transportation services, such as cars or vans, public transportation, or hired car services like taxis, Ubers or Lyfts.

## A majority of school administrator respondents report students being driven to school.

Percent of school administrator respondents



**Question:** How do children in your school district/school typically get to and from school? If students commute using multiple different methods, please select all that apply.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



APNORC.org

A large majority of respondents (82%) report that their school or district provides transportation services to school, with nearly half (45%) reporting that all students qualify for free, school-provided transportation. In addition, many report that students with disabilities and students experiencing homelessness specifically qualify for free, school-provided transportation.

In addition to transportation to school, support also extends to other needs. Ninety-five percent offer transportation for field trips, 76% for extracurricular activities, and 74% for individualized student transportation, such as for students with special needs or who are experiencing homelessness.

And when it comes to how transportation is provided, 84% use school buses. About half (53%) use school-arranged supplemental transportation services in cars or vans, 28% offer vouchers or reimbursement for public transportation, and 22% provide mileage or gas reimbursement to families.

Overall, 45% of respondents say all students in their districts or schools qualify for free, school-provided transportation. Looking at specific groups, a third of respondents say students with

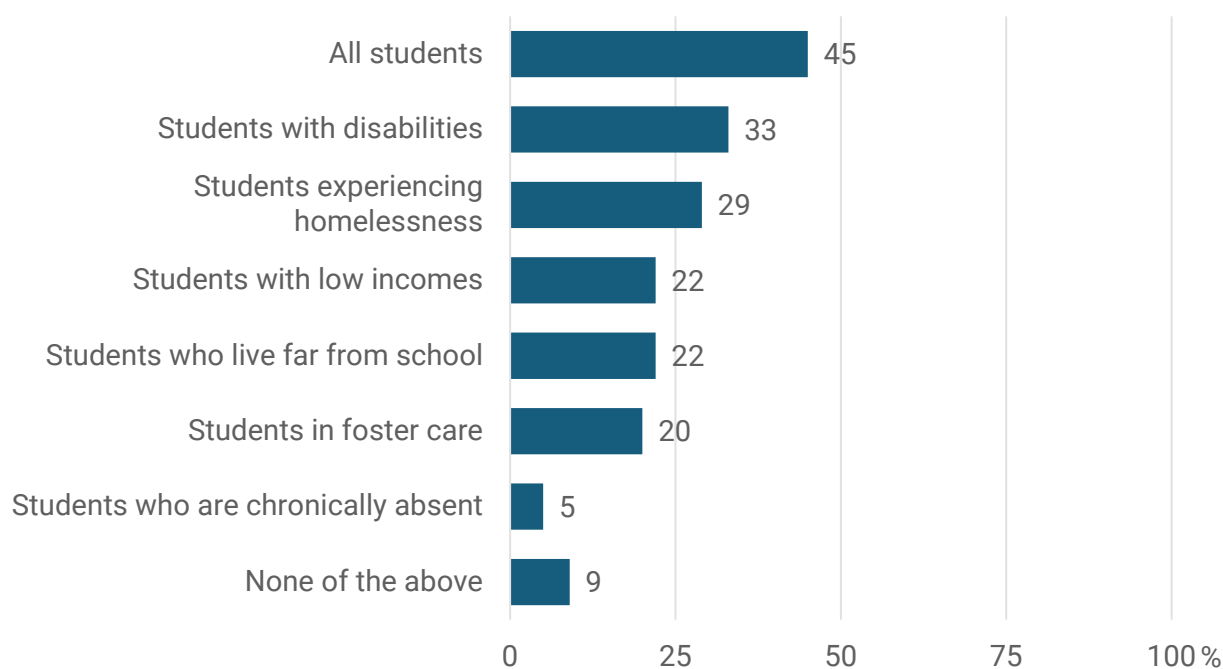
disabilities and students experiencing homelessness qualify for free transportation in their school or district. About 2 in 10 say the same about students from low-income families, students who live far from school, and students in foster care.

A smaller share report that students who are chronically absent qualify for free school-provided transportation, despite the fact that 75% of school administrator respondents say access to transportation has an impact on their school or district's problems with chronic absenteeism.

Respondents working for schools in rural areas (63%) are more likely than those in suburban (42%) and urban (38%) areas to report that all students in their districts or schools qualify for free transportation.

### Nearly half of school administrator respondents report all students qualify for free, school-provided transportation.

Percent of school administrator respondents



**Question:** Which of the following students qualify for free, school-provided transportation in your school district or school? Please select all that apply.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.

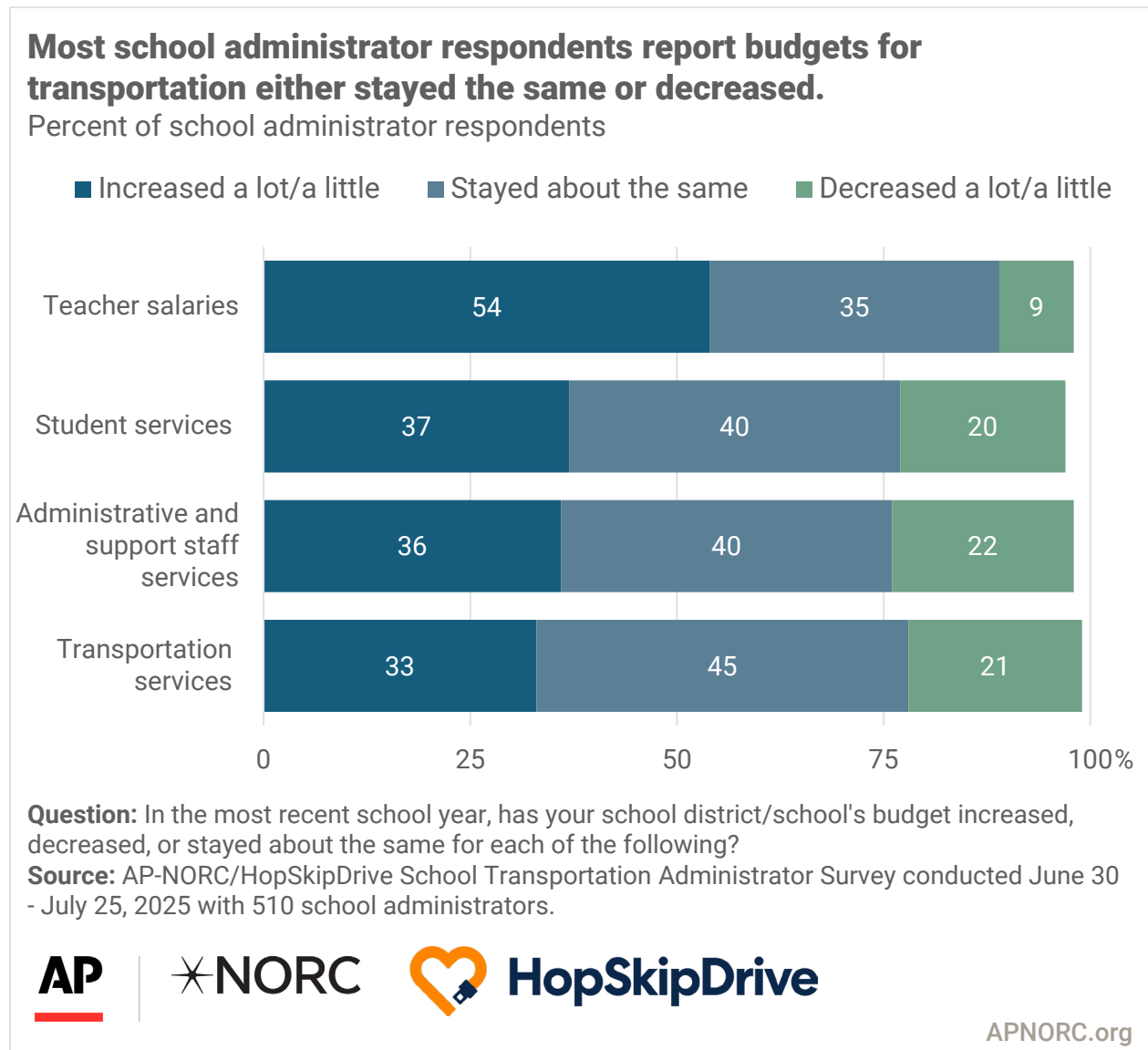


APNORC.org

According to respondents, the number of students who qualify for free, school-provided transportation has changed over the past five years. Forty-four percent say the number has increased, while 46% report it has remained the same. Only 8% have seen a decrease. And looking ahead, respondents expect the next five years will see more growth. Forty-five percent expect the number of eligible students to grow over the next five years, 43% believe it will stay the same, and just 8% anticipate a decline.

When it comes to school budgets, 54% of respondents report that the budget for teacher salaries has increased in the most recent school year. Another 35% say it remained the same, while just 9% saw a decrease. In contrast, only about a third of respondents report increases in the budgets for administrative and support staff services, student services, or transportation services, while about 2 in 10 saw decreases in budgeting for these areas.

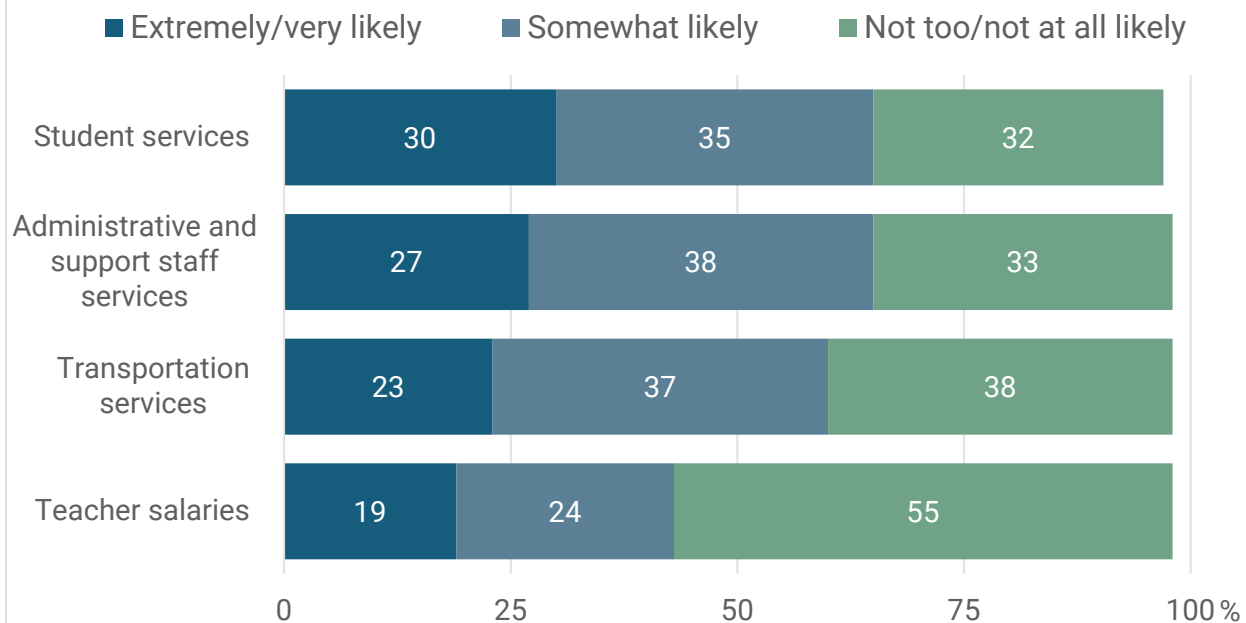
And overall, 18% report their school or district has reduced transportation services in the past year.



Half of respondents say teacher salaries are unlikely to be reduced, even if their school or district needs to cut costs. Respondents are less certain about the funding for administrative and support staff services, student services, or transportation services.

### Most school administrator respondents are uncertain about the stability of transportation, student or administrative services budgets if their district needs to reduce costs.

Percent of school administrator respondents



**Question:** If your school district/school had to reduce costs in its next budget, how likely do you think it is that spending in each of the following areas would be eliminated or reduced?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



**HopSkipDrive**

APNORC.org

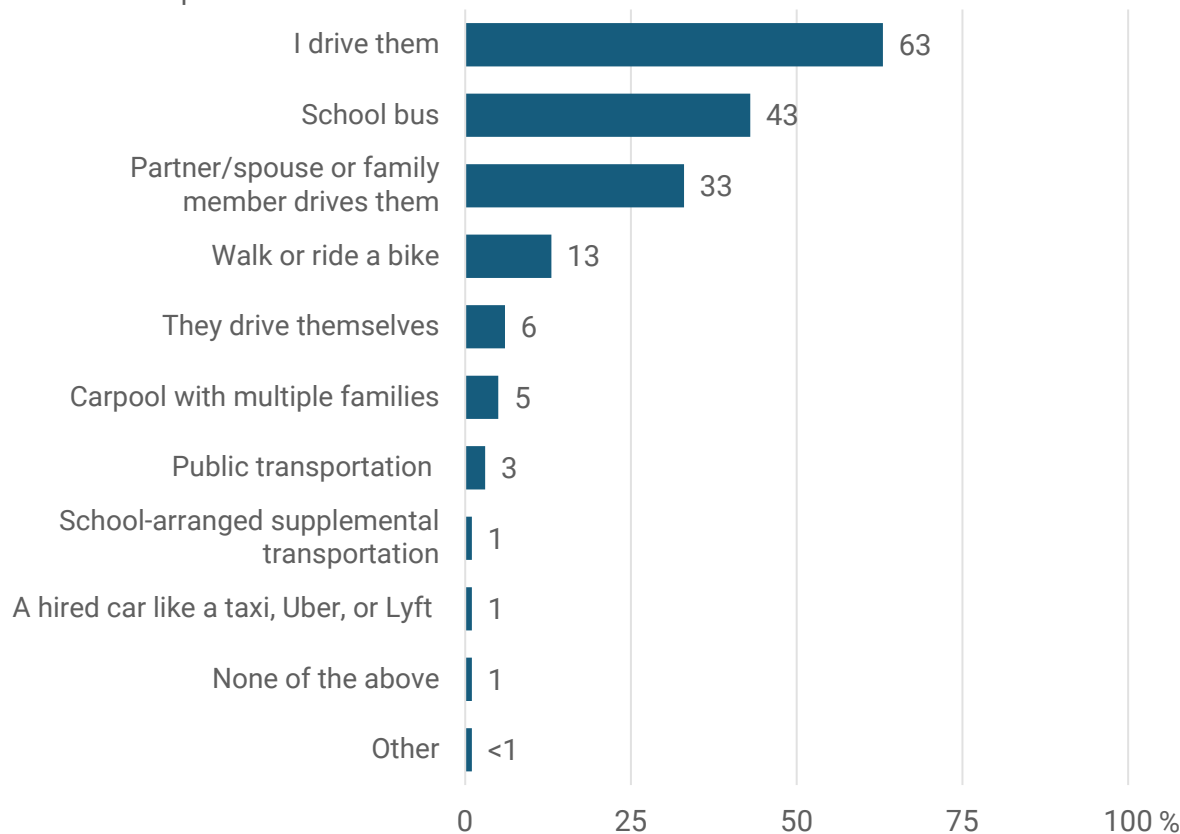
### Parents

Overall, most parents of K-12 students rely on cars for school commutes, with 78% typically driving to and from school. Sixty-three percent of parents drive their children to school as part of their typical commute, and a third say their partner, spouse, or other family member drives them.

In addition to driving, 43% say their children depend on the school bus to get to and from school, and 13% say their children walk or ride their bike. Fewer than 1 in 10 use other methods, including 1% who use school-arranged supplemental transportation services.

## Most parents say their children are driven to and from school.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How do your children typically get to and from school? If they commute using multiple different methods, please select all that apply.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



HopSkipDrive

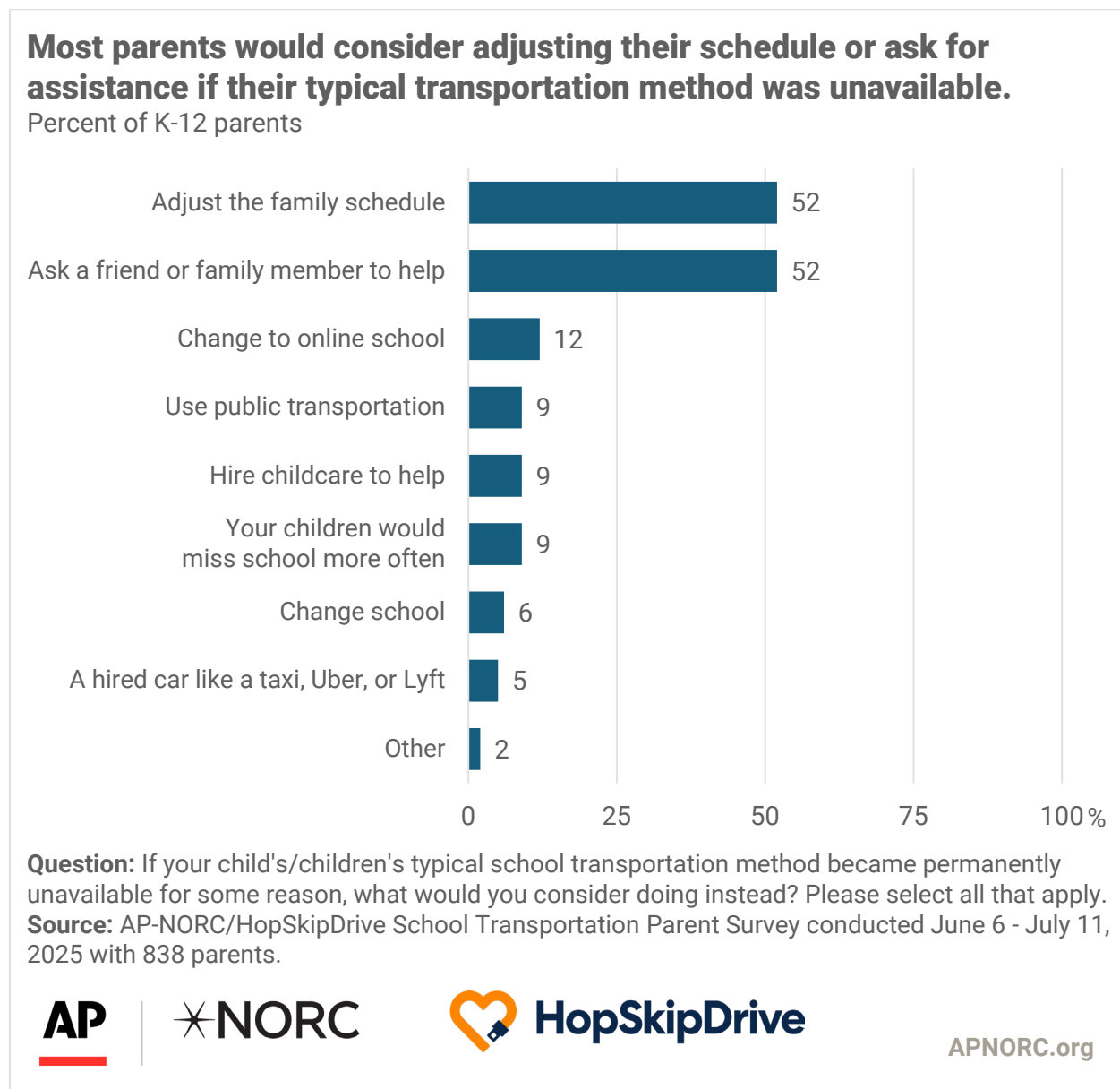
APNORC.org

When it comes to getting their children to school, the burden doesn't fall evenly in households. Mothers are more likely than fathers say they drive the children (68% vs. 57%), while fathers are more likely to say they rely on a partner or family member to handle transporting their children to school (39% vs. 27%).

There are also differences across racial groups, with Black parents more likely than white parents to drive their children to school (71% vs. 58%).

When asked how they would manage if their usual method of getting their children to school became permanently unavailable, about half of parents said they would either adjust their family schedule (52%) or ask a friend or family member for help (52%). A smaller share (12%) said they would switch their children to online or remote learning. Less than 1 in 10 would use public transportation, hire additional childcare, allow their children to miss school more often, change schools, or use a hired car service.

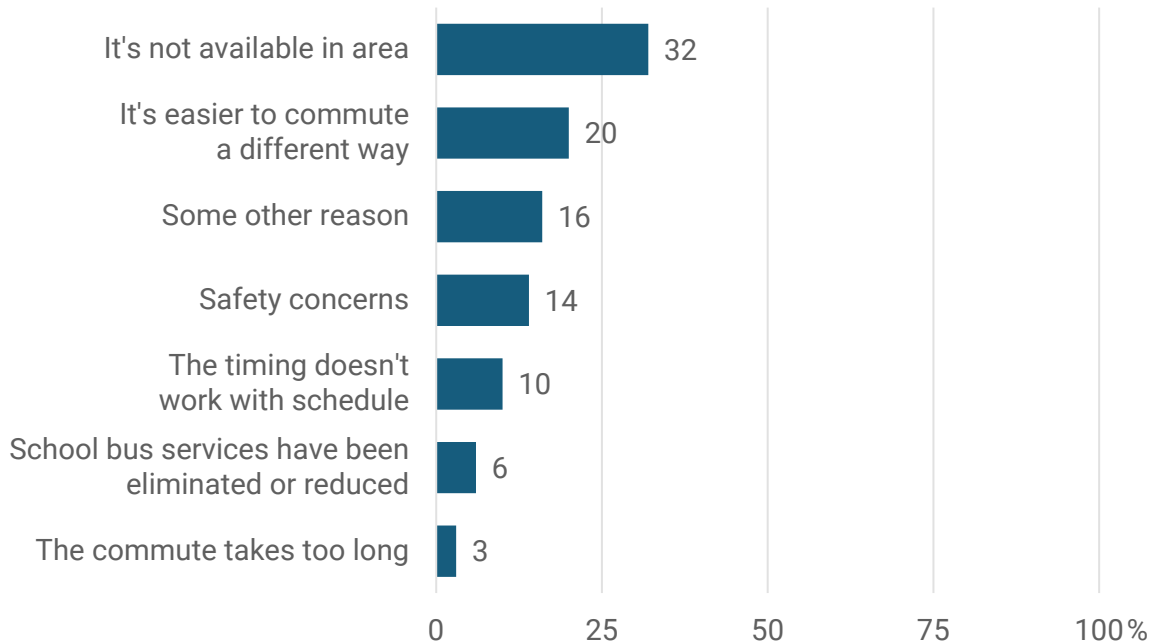
Parents who already rely on a partner or spouse for school transportation are more likely to adjust the family schedule (61%) compared with those who do not (48%).



Only 43% of parents say their children use the school bus for transportation. Among those who don't ride the school bus, 32% say it's because it's not available in their area, and 20% say it's easier to commute a different way.

## A third cite lack of availability as the primary reason for not typically taking the school bus.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** What is the main reason your children don't typically take the school bus to or from school?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



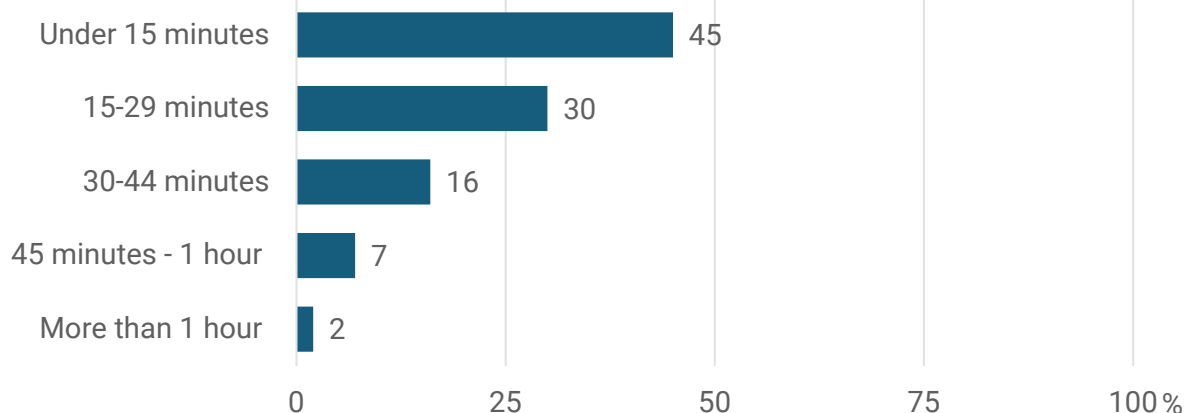
APNORC.org

Race plays a significant role when it comes to riding the school bus. While roughly 1 in 3 white and non-white parents cite lack of availability in their area, non-white parents are twice as likely as white parents to say their children don't ride the bus because of safety concerns (20% vs. 8%).

Forty-five percent of parents say their children typically commute for under 15 minutes roundtrip getting to and from school, 30% say it takes anywhere from 15 to 29 minutes. A quarter say their children's roundtrip commute is 30 minutes or longer.

## Most parents say their children commute for thirty minutes or less.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How long do your children typically spend getting to and from school every day? Please estimate total roundtrip time, and if you have multiple children, please answer for the child whose commute time is the longest.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

For many parents, their daily commute prioritizes their children's school transportation. A majority (61%) of parents whose children are driven say getting to and from school is the only reason for that commute. Meanwhile, 39% of parents say the drive is a combined commute, using it to get to school, as well as to go to work, run errands, or handle other responsibilities.

This trend is even more pronounced among parents who are not employed. Seventy-two percent of parents who are not employed report that the sole purpose of their drive is to transport their child, compared to 58% of those who are working.

With most parents driving their children to school, traffic congestion around schools is a common frustration. Seventy percent of parents say traffic is a problem at drop-off and pick-up times. Nearly a quarter (22%) describe it as a major problem, while 48% say it's a minor one. The problem is especially acute in urban areas, where 79% of parents report traffic challenges, compared with 63% of parents in small towns or rural communities.

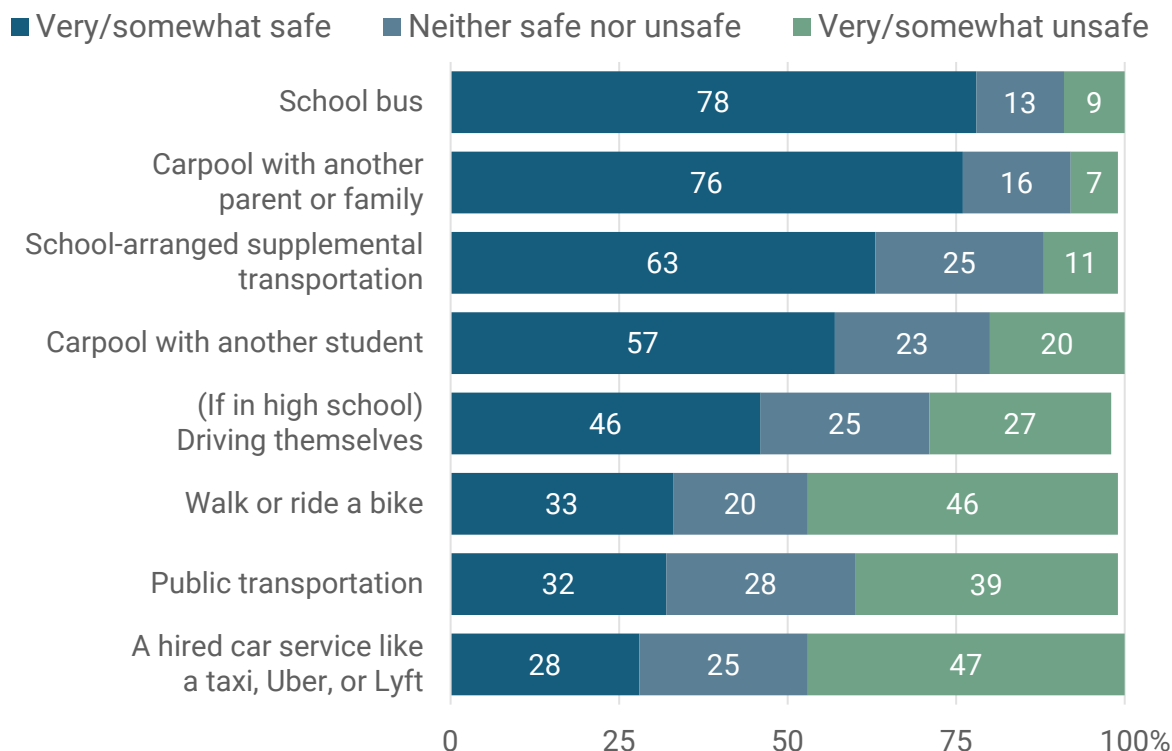
While 78% of parents consider school buses a safe way for their children to commute, less than half (43%) rely on them as the primary mode of transportation. Other options arranged by schools, such as cars or vans, are viewed positively, with 63% saying they are safe.

Seventy-six percent of parents consider carpools safe with another student's parent or family member. Confidence drops significantly when the driver of the carpool is another student, with only 57% considering it safe. Even fewer parents feel comfortable with their children getting to school by walking or biking (33%), using public transit (32%), or riding with a hired car service like a taxi, Uber or Lyft (28%).

Among parents of high-school aged students, 46% say children driving themselves is safe.

## Most parents believe the school bus, carpools, and school-arranged supplemental transportation is safe.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How safe do you think each of the following types of transportation is for your children to use when commuting to and from school?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

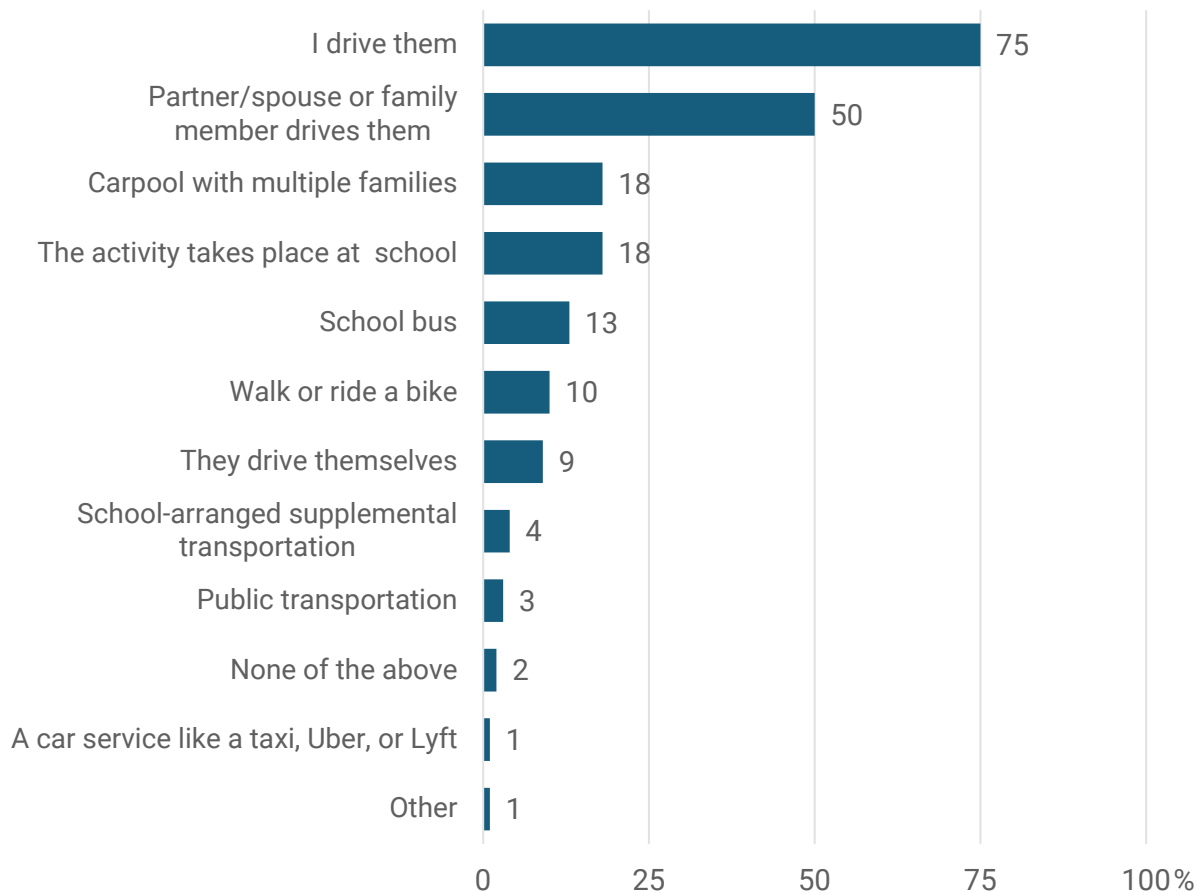
Two in three parents say their children participate in extracurricular activities. More than half (55%) are involved in after-school activities like sports or clubs, while 17% participate in similar programs before school. Additionally, 18% of students attend after-school care, and 8% are in care programs before the school day begins.

Among parents whose children participate in extracurricular activities, most personally handle their transportation. Three in four say they drive their children themselves, and half say a partner, spouse, or other family member helps with the driving.

Fewer families rely on alternatives for extracurricular activities. About 2 in 10 carpool with other families or have activities that take place at school. Thirteen percent say their children take the school bus to activities, and 10% report their children walk or bike. Fewer use other methods, including 4% who rely on school-arranged supplemental transportation for extracurricular activities.

### Most parents drive their children to extracurricular activities.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How do your children typically get to and from their extracurricular activities or before or after-care organized by their school? If they commute using multiple different methods, please select all that apply.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



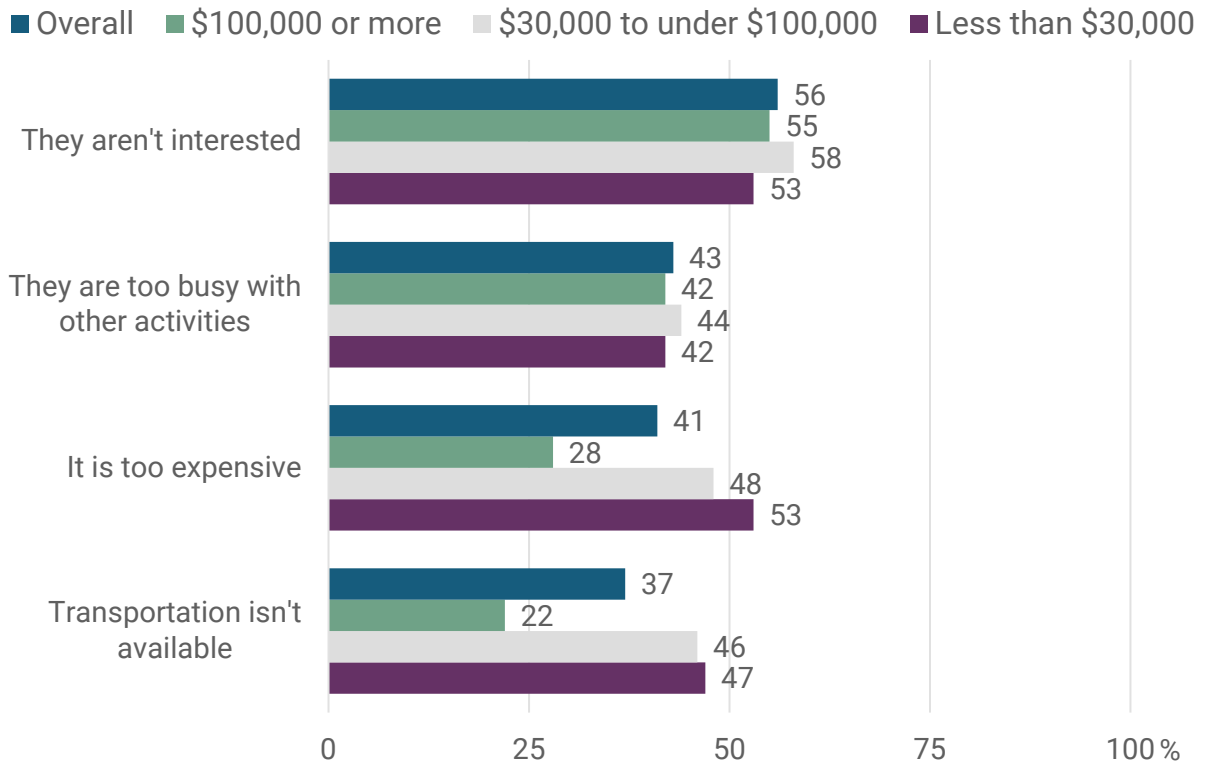
APNORC.org

Among parents whose children don't participate in extracurricular activities, a third (37%) say a major reason is lack of available transportation. Fifty-six percent of parents say their children are just not interested, 43% say their children are busy with other activities, and 41% say it is too expensive.

Among parents whose children do not take part in extracurricular activities, households making less than \$100,000 are more likely to cite financial reasons or lack of transportation as barriers.

### Lower and middle income parents more likely to cite expenses and transportation availability as reasons children don't participate in extracurriculars.

Percent of K-12 parents not participating in extracurriculars who say the following are major or minor reasons



**Question:** Is each of the following a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason that your children do not participate in extracurricular activities or before or after-care organized by their school?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



APNORC.org

Transportation plays a key role in whether children can consistently participate in extracurricular activities. Twenty-six percent of parents report that their children have missed extracurricular activities due to transportation issues. And about half (53%) say they would enroll their children in more activities if transportation was easier.

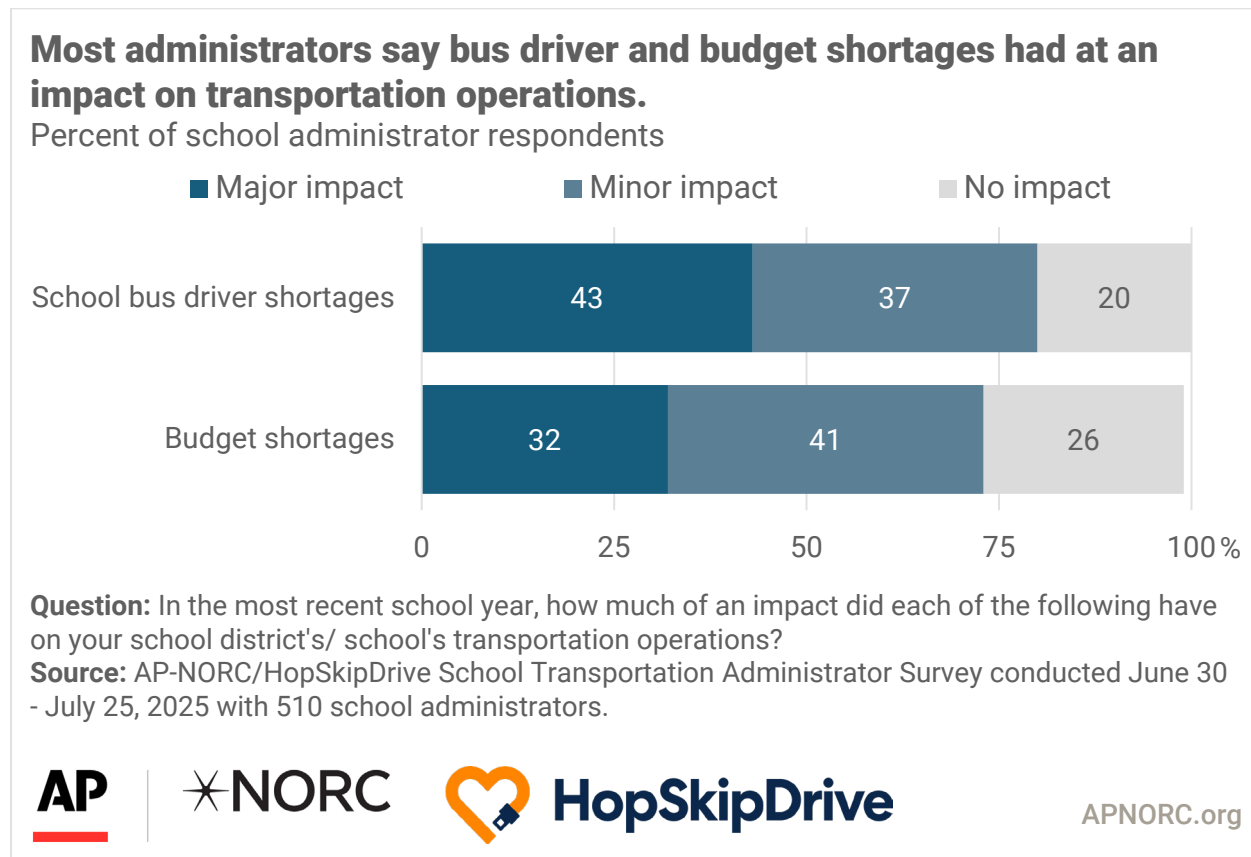
### IMPACTS OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Both parents and school administrator respondents face serious impacts when it comes to student transportation challenges. Most parents stress about their children’s transportation needs, and nearly a quarter face conflicts with their own responsibilities at least monthly. At the same time, nearly 3 in 4 school administration respondents say access to transportation, including bus driver shortages, impacts many of the key issues their school or district has faced in the last year.

### School administrators

Eighty percent of respondents say that bus driver shortages impacted their school or district’s transportation operations, including 43% who report a major impact. And 73% say budget shortages have affected their transportation operations

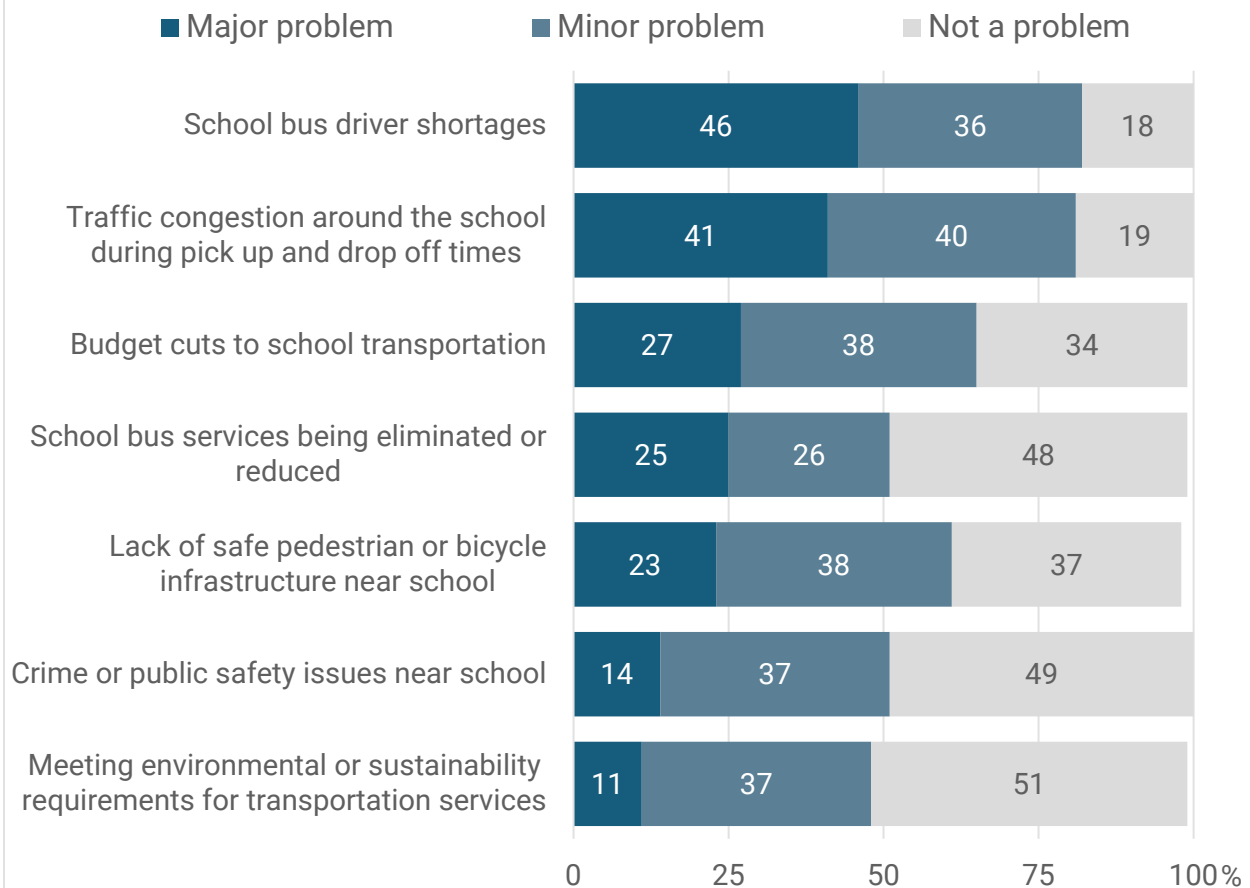
Respondents employed by public schools or districts are more likely than those in other types of schools to report that bus driver shortages and budget shortages have impacted their transportation operations.



And a large majority of respondents –81%– say that school bus driver shortages and traffic congestion are problems in their schools or districts. About two-thirds also identify budget cuts to school transportation (65%) and a lack of safe pedestrian or bike infrastructure near schools (62%) as concerns. Half say that crime or public safety issues near schools (51%), the elimination of school bus services (51%), and challenges meeting environmental or sustainability requirements (48%) are problems in their school or district.

## A majority of administrators identify school bus driver shortages as a problem at their school or district.

Percent of school administrator respondents



**Question:** How much of a problem is each of the following in your school district/school?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



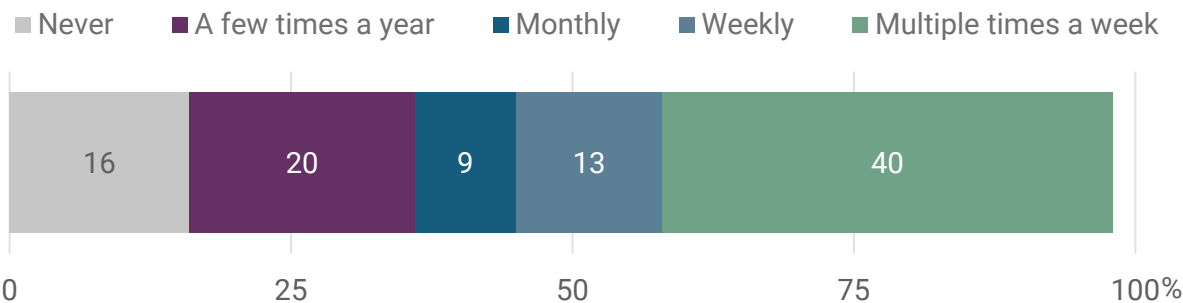
**HopSkipDrive**

APNORC.org

And 83% percent of school administrator respondents say that staff in their school or district take time away from their core job duties to help with school transportation, including half (54%) who report staff do so weekly or more.

## School staff often take time out of their core job duties to assist with school transportation.

Percent of school administrator respondents



**Question:** How often do staff in your school district/school take time away from core job duties to help with school transportation, such as managing school car lines at drop-off and pick-up or driving school buses or vans?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



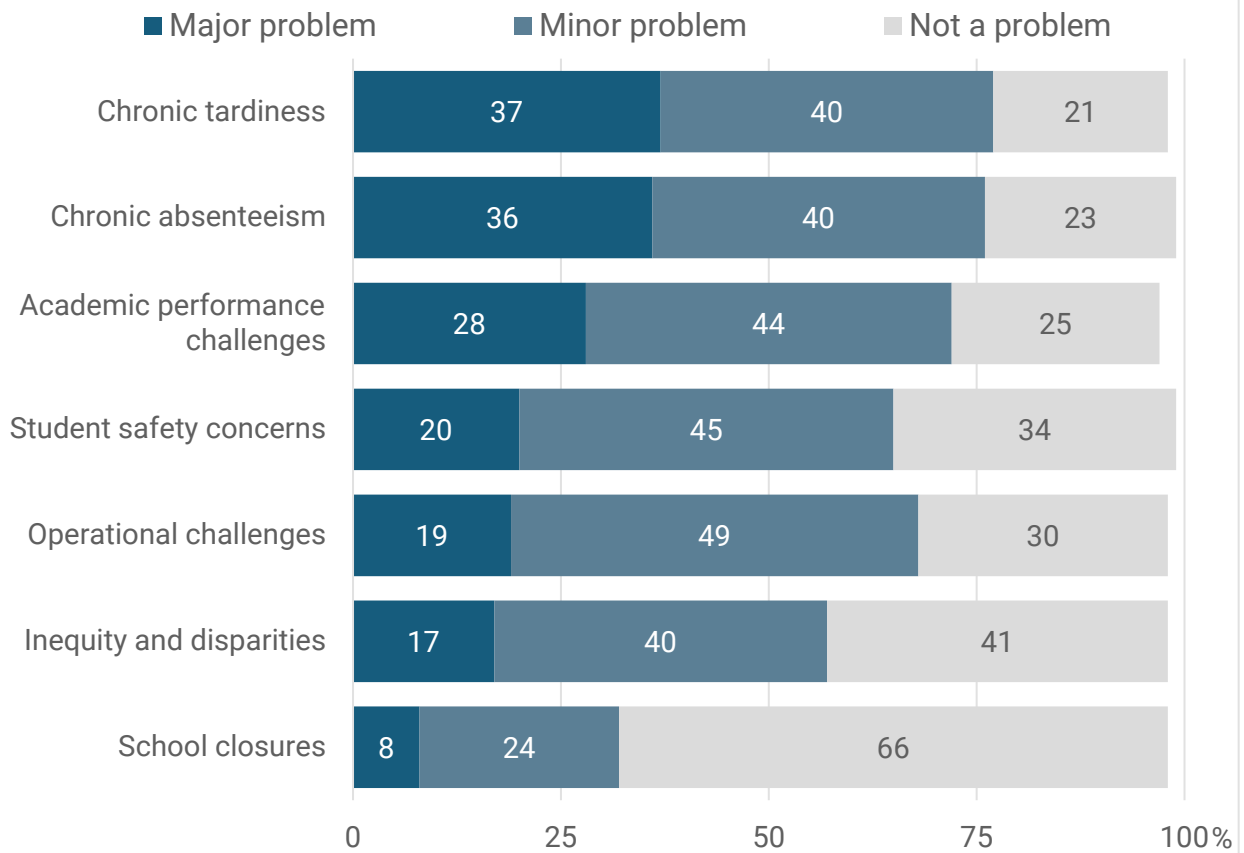
**HopSkipDrive**

APNORC.org

A majority of respondents have faced a range of challenges during the most recent school year. The most common problems were chronic tardiness (77%), chronic absenteeism (75%) and academic performance challenges (72%). About two thirds cited operational challenges and concerns related to student safety, and 57% noted inequity and disparities in their school or district. Fewer said school closures were a problem (32%). Among respondents who identified specific challenges in their schools or districts, about 3 in 4 said that access to transportation was a contributing factor. Slightly fewer say access to transportation contributes to academic performance compared with other challenges.

### Most administrator respondents face a range of problems such as chronic tardiness and absenteeism in their school or district.

Percent of school administrator respondents



**Question:** How much of a problem was each of the following in your school district/school during the most recent school year?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.

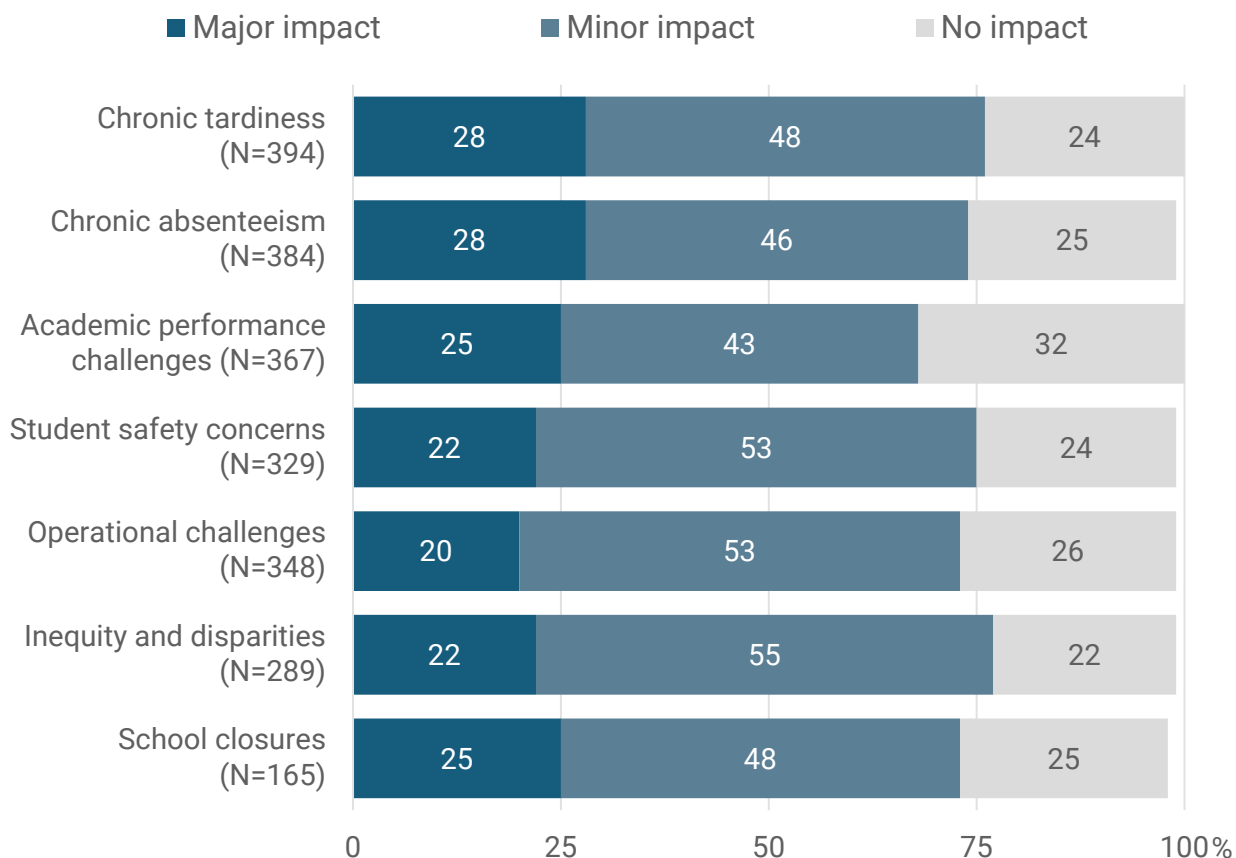


**HopSkipDrive**

APNORC.org

## About 3 in 4 school administrator respondents report access to transportation has an impact on the challenges they face.

Percent of school administrator respondents facing each challenge



**Question:** How much of an impact did access to transportation have on each of the following issues experienced by your school district/school?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



**HopSkipDrive**

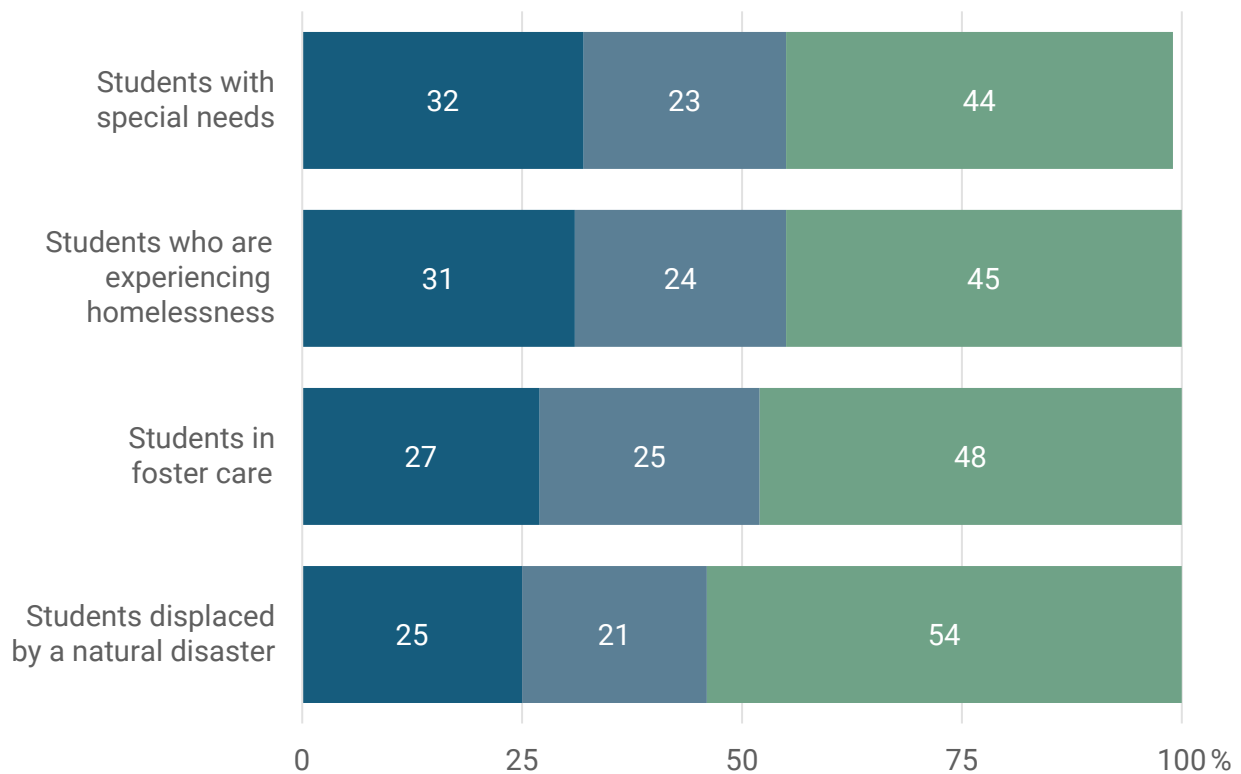
APNORC.org

Roughly 3 in 10 respondents express serious concerns about their school or district’s ability to meet the transportation needs of vulnerable student populations. Thirty-two percent are extremely or very concerned about meeting obligations for transporting students with special needs, and 31% express the same level of concern for students experiencing homelessness. About a quarter of respondents are extremely or very concerned about handling the transportation needs of students in foster care (27%) or those displaced by natural disasters (25%).

## About half of administrators are concerned about being able to provide reliable transportation for students with individual needs.

Percent of school administrator respondents

■ Extremely/very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not very/not at all concerned



**Question:** How concerned are you about your school district's/school's ability to provide reliable rides to and from schools for the following groups?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



**HopSkipDrive**

APNORC.org

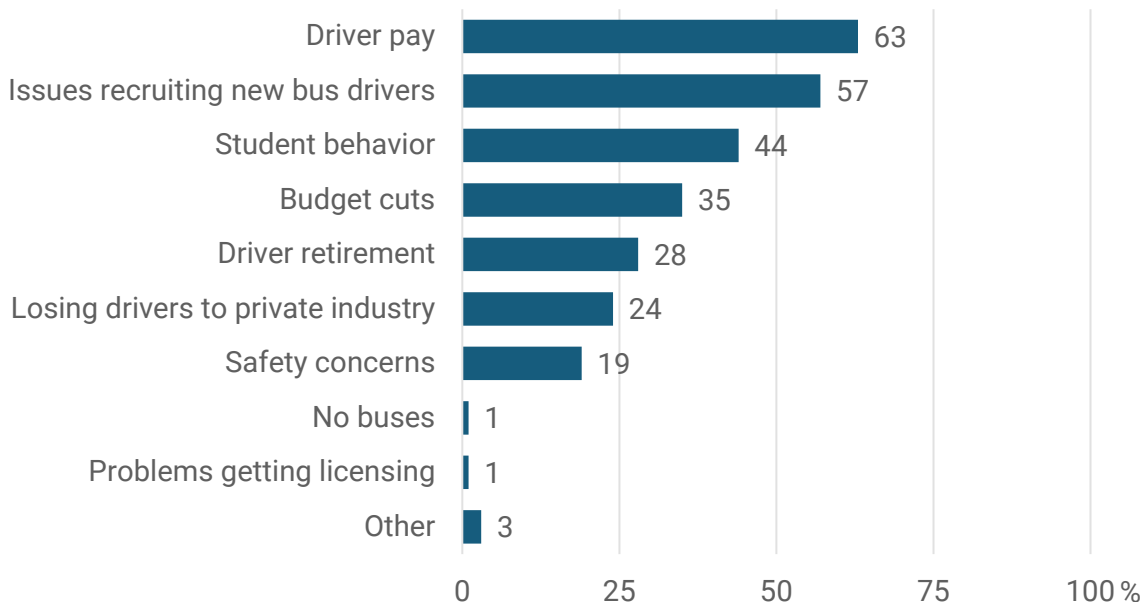
A particular issue facing respondents is the ongoing shortage of school bus drivers. Eighty-one percent report that school bus driver shortages are a problem in their school or district, including 46% who say it is a major problem.

Respondents employed by public schools or districts are more likely to report that school bus driver shortages are a problem in their school or district. They are more likely to report this issue than respondents who are employed by other types of schools or districts.

Among those who are facing a shortage of school bus drivers, more than half cite driver pay (63%) and issues recruiting new drivers (57%) as main reasons behind the shortage. A significant number also report issues with student behavior (44%) and budget cuts (35%). A quarter report issues with driver retirement (28%) and losing drivers to private industry (24%), while 19% cite safety concerns.

## School administrator respondents cite driver pay and issues recruiting new drivers as top reasons behind their bus driver shortage.

Percent of school administrator respondents who said school bus driver shortages were a problem



**Question:** What are the main reasons for the school bus driver shortage in your school district/school? Select all that apply.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 415 school administrators.



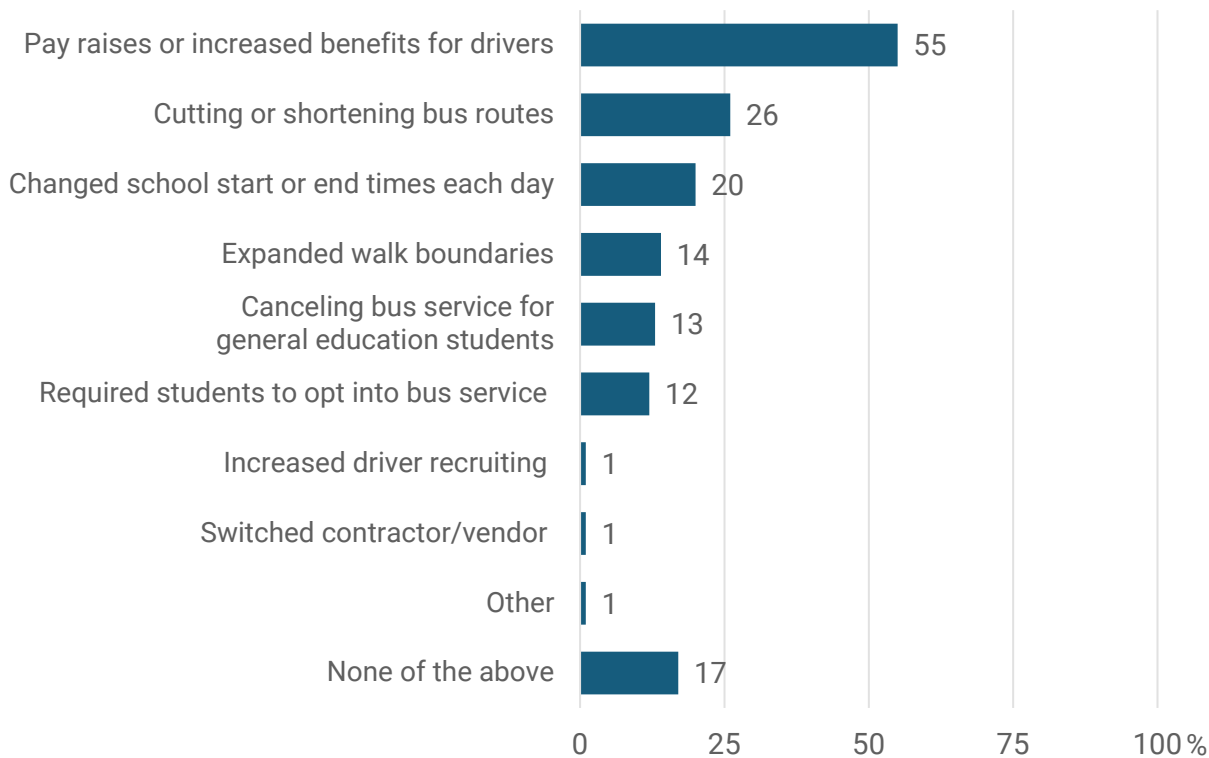
HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

Respondents have tried to address these shortages in many ways. Among those facing this issue, 55% have offered pay raises or increased benefits for bus drivers. Twenty-six percent have reduced services or cut or shortened routes, and 20% have changed school start or end times. Fewer respondents report other methods, such as expanding walk boundaries (14%), reducing services by canceling bus service for general education students (13%) or requiring opting into bus service for students (12%).

## Half of school administrator respondents facing school bus driver shortages have offered pay raises or increased benefits.

Percent of school administrator respondents who said school bus driver shortages were a problem



**Question:** In what ways has your school district/school tried to address bus driver shortages? Select all that apply.

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 415 school administrators.



**HopSkipDrive**

APNORC.org

### Parents

About half of K-12 parents report that transportation interferes with their work or other responsibilities at least a few times a year, including nearly a quarter who experience conflicts at least monthly.

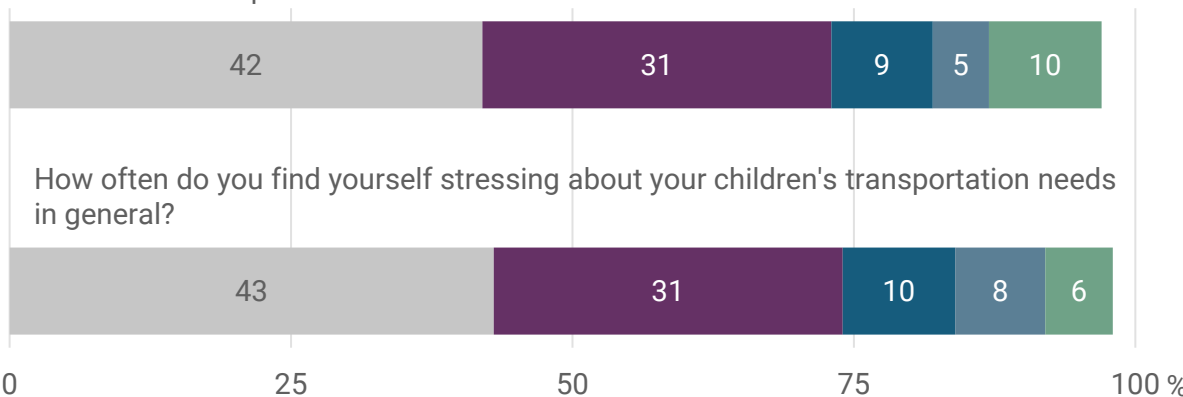
Similarly, half of parents feel stressed about their children’s transportation to school at least a few times a year, and a quarter are stressed at least monthly.

## Most parents have experienced stress and schedule conflicts due to their children's transportation needs.

Percent of K-12 parents

■ Never ■ A few times a year ■ Monthly ■ Weekly ■ Multiple times a week

How often does your children's school transportation schedule conflict with your work or other responsibilities?



**Question:** [Q10] How often does your children's school transportation schedule conflict with your work or other responsibilities? [Q11] How often do you find yourself stressing about your children's transportation needs in general?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

These challenges are more common among working parents. Fifty-nine percent of employed parents say they've experienced some kind of transportation-related conflict, compared to just 38% of non-working parents.

Transportation responsibilities can take a significant toll on parents' personal and professional lives. Thirty-five percent of parents say they have missed work due to transporting their children to or from school. About 3 in 10 say they have been prevented from pursuing personal opportunities (31%) or work opportunities (28%), and 11% have lost a job as a result.

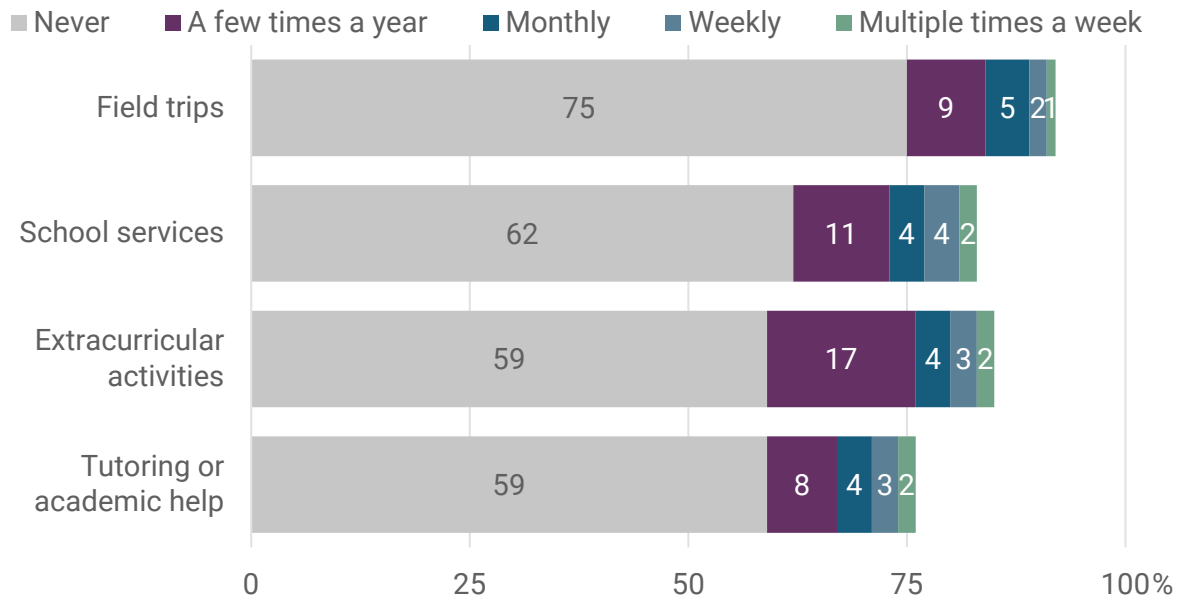
Mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to report being prevented from pursuing work opportunities (33% vs. 23%) or personal opportunities (37% vs. 23%) due to child transportation responsibilities. And 20% of mothers without a college degree report having lost a job due to transportation responsibilities, more than mothers (2%). College education does not significantly impact the likelihood of fathers having lost their job.

In addition to the challenges faced by parents, transportation issues are limiting students' access to important educational experiences. Twenty-six percent of parents say their children missed extracurricular activities during the past school year due to transportation issues. Additionally, 21%

say their children missed essential school services, 17% say they missed tutoring or academic help, and 16% say they missed field trips.

### Few parents say their children have missed field trips, school services, or extracurriculars due to transportation issues.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How often have your children missed each of the following in the last school year because of issues with transportation?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.

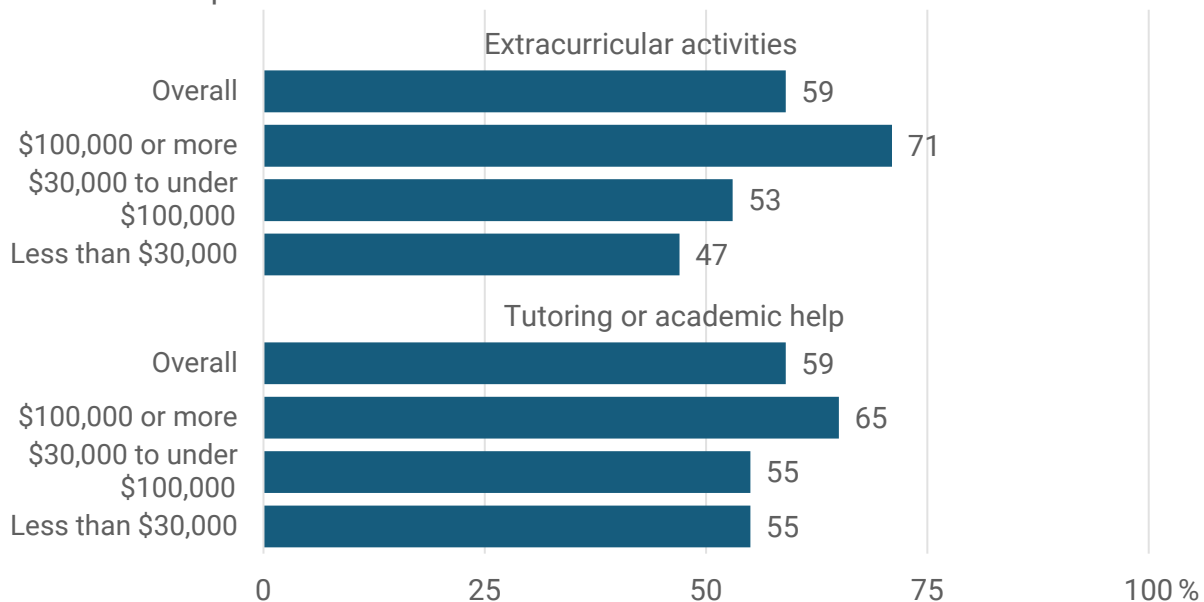


APNORC.org

Income plays a significant role in whether students experience these disruptions. Families with household incomes of \$100,000 or more are more likely to say their children never missed out on extracurricular activities and tutoring or academic help. There was no significant difference by income in access to field trips or school services such as meals or counseling.

## Higher income families are less likely to have been impacted by transportation issues when it comes to tutoring or extracurriculars.

Percent of K-12 parents whose kids have never missed...



**Question:** How often have your children missed each of the following in the last school year because of issues with transportation?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 6 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents.



HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

Transportation issues also contribute to school tardiness for a significant number of students. One in ten parents say their children are late to school at least once a month due to transportation challenges. An additional 34% say their children are late a few times per year, while 55% are never late because of transportation.

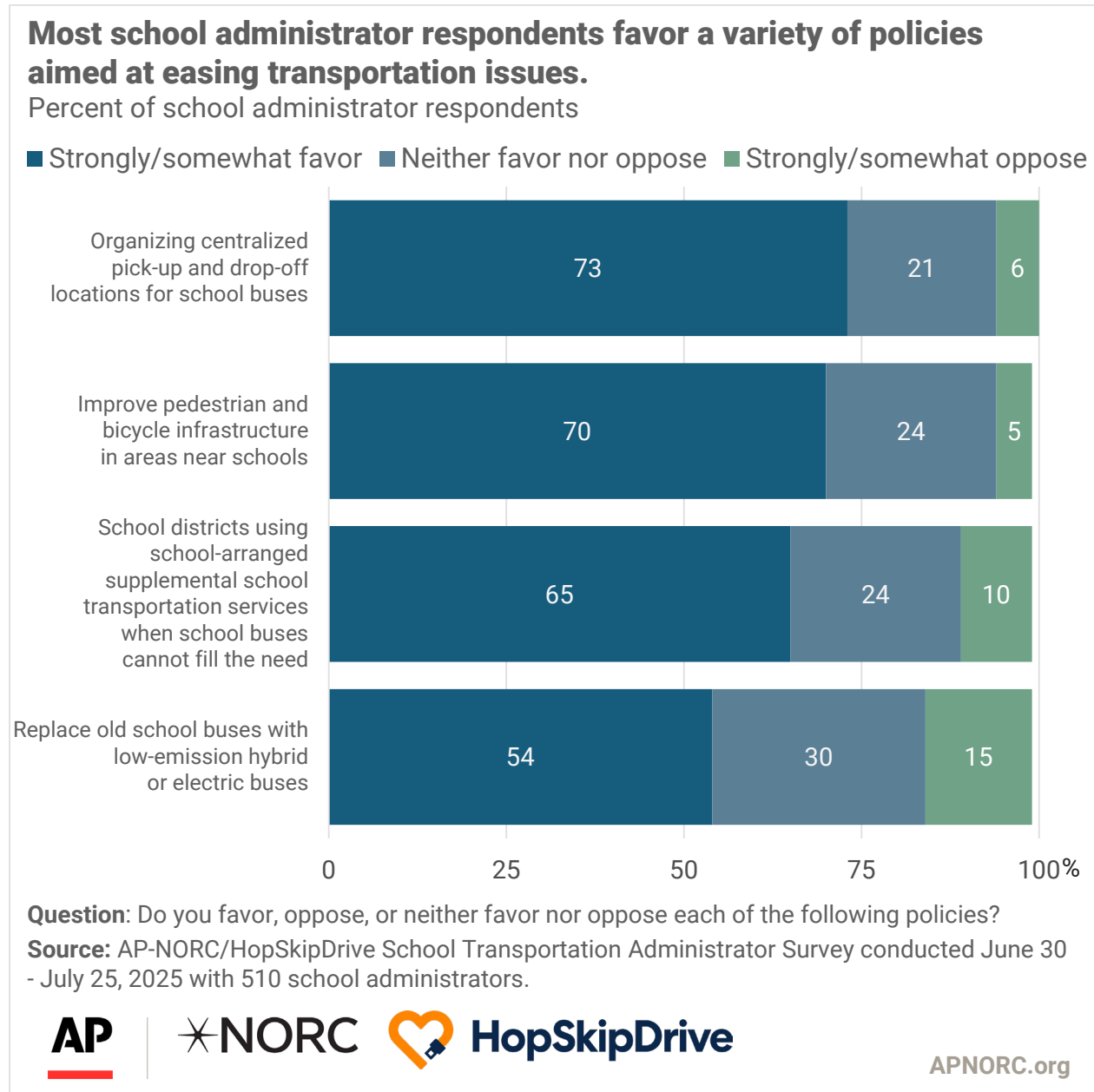
Tardiness varies by mode of transportation. Half of parents whose children primarily take the school bus report they are late at least a few times per year, compared with 39% of parents whose children use other forms of transportation.

## PREFERRED SOLUTIONS FOR SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

School administrator respondents are open to a variety of potential solutions for student transportation issues, including a majority who favor organizing centralized pick-up and drop-off locations for students using school buses, improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in areas near schools, or allowing schools and districts to use school-arranged supplemental school transportation services. And parents are optimistic about the benefits of easier transportation. If easier transportation options were available, about half of parents would be at least somewhat likely to sign their children up for more extracurriculars or more school services.

## School administrators

When it comes to policies surrounding school transportation issues, about 7 in 10 school administrators respondents favor organizing centralized pick-up and drop-off locations for students using school buses (73%) or improving pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in areas near schools (70%). Sixty-five percent support school-arranged supplemental transportation services, and 54% favor replacing old school buses with low-emission hybrid or electric buses.

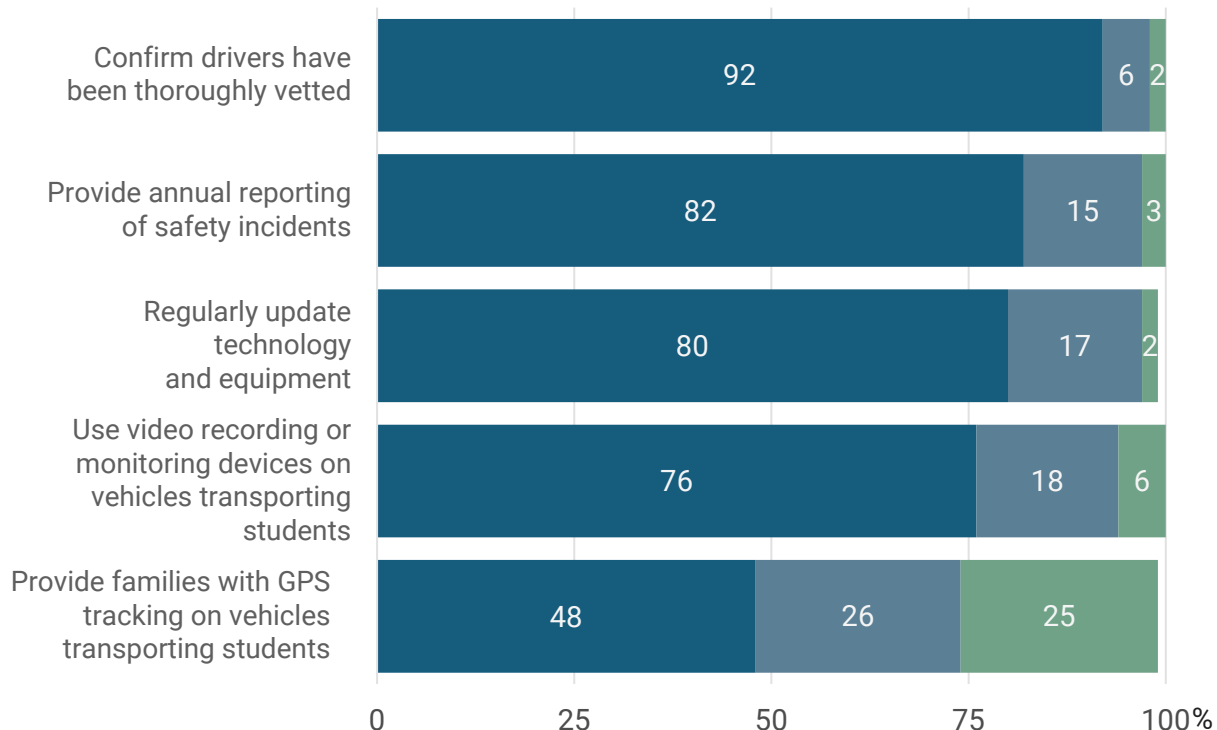


And when looking specifically at school-provided transportation, respondents are even more aligned. Ninety-two percent agree it is extremely or very important to confirm drivers have been thoroughly vetted and about 8 in 10 say the same about providing annual reporting of safety incidents (82%), regularly updating technology and equipment (80%), and using video recording or monitoring devices on vehicles transporting students (76%). Views are more mixed when it comes to providing families with GPS tracking on vehicles transporting students.

## Most school administrator respondents think various safety measures are important for school-provided transportation.

Percent of school administrator respondents

■ Extremely/very important   ■ Somewhat important   ■ Not too/not at all important



**Question:** How important do you think it is for school-provided transportation to do each of the following?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Administrator Survey conducted June 30 - July 25, 2025 with 510 school administrators.



**HopSkipDrive**

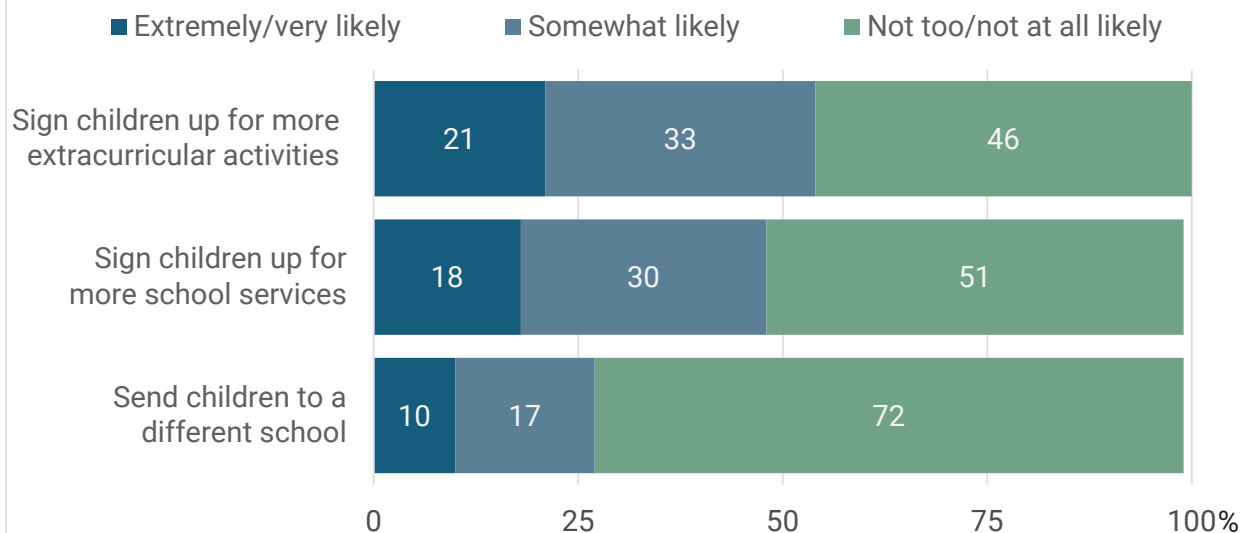
APNORC.org

## Parents

There is a link between easier transportation options and more opportunities for their children for many K-12 parents. If easier transportation options were available, about half of parents would be at least somewhat likely to sign their children up for more extracurriculars (53%) and to sign up for more school services (48%). And about 3 in 10 would be likely to send their children to a different school with easier transportation.

## Many parents would sign their children up for more services if easier transportation options were available.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How likely would you be to do each of the following if easier transportation options were available?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 30 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents nationwide.



HopSkipDrive

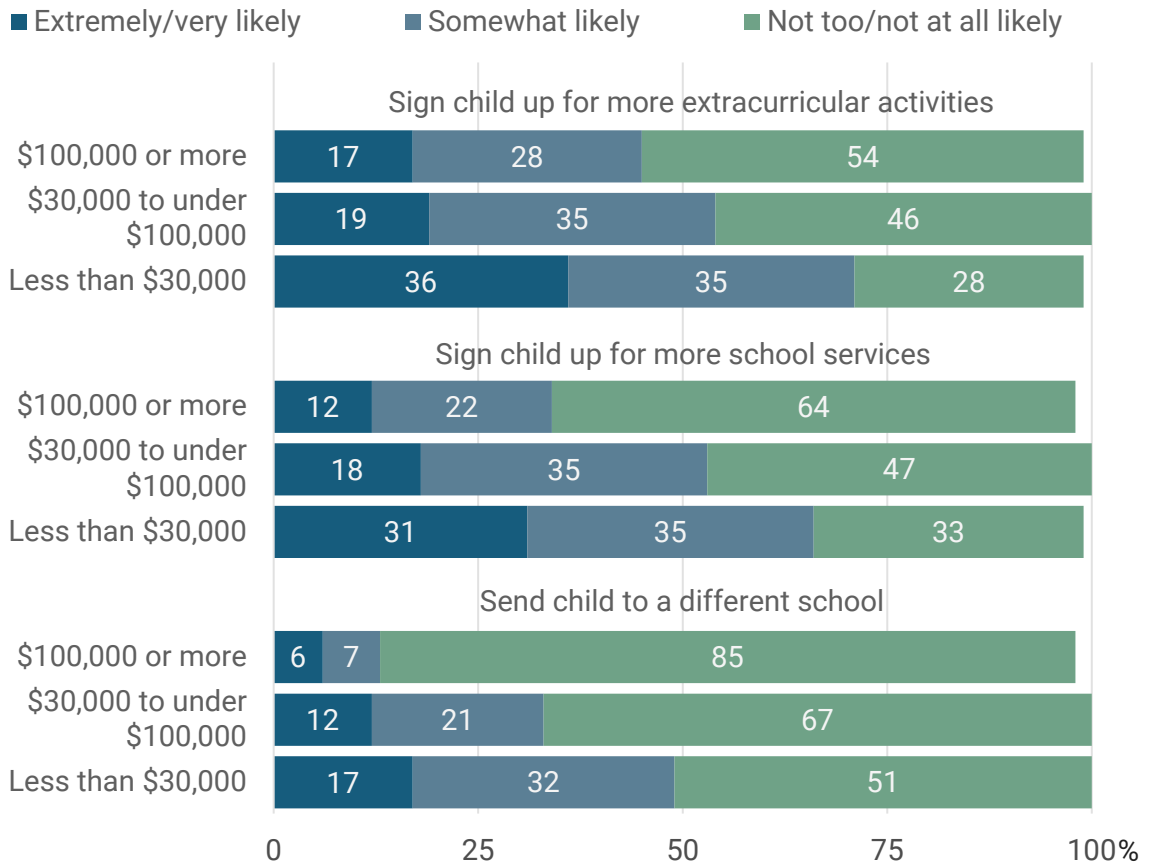
APNORC.org

Fifty-six percent of non-white parents say they would be at least somewhat likely to sign their children up for more services if easier transportation was available, compared with 40% of white parents.

Lower income parents are more likely than higher income parents to say they would sign up for more extracurriculars and school services or send their children to a different school.

## Lower income parents are more likely to sign up for extracurriculars, school services, and send children to a different school with easier transportation options.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How likely would you be to do each of the following if easier transportation options were available?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 30 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents nationwide.



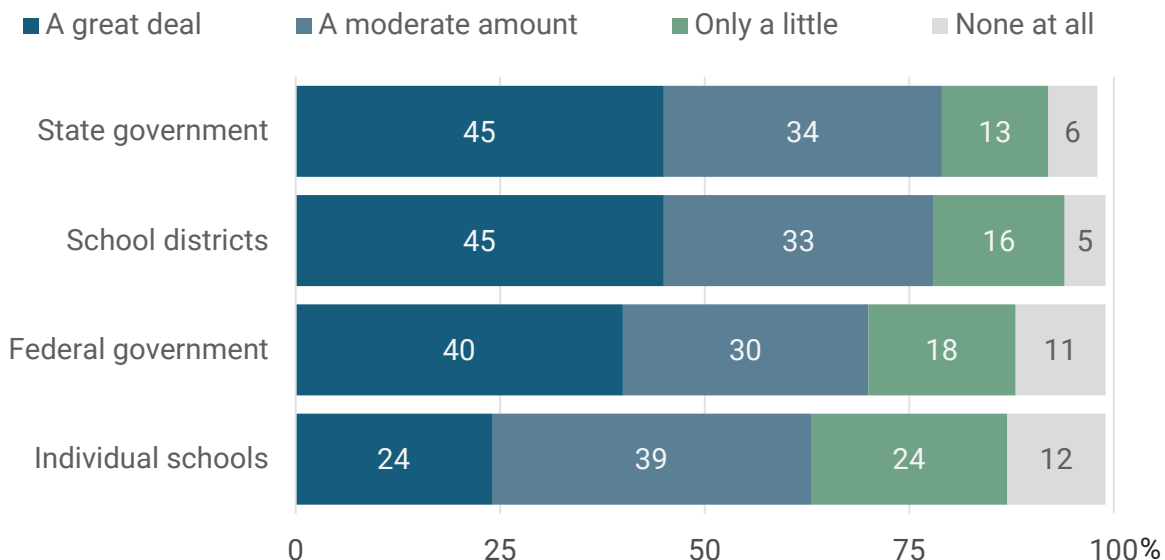
HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

Most parents agree that state government (80%), and school districts (78%) have a great deal or a moderate amount of responsibility to fund reliable school transportation for students with individual needs. Seventy percent say the federal government and 62% say individual schools also have responsibility.

## Fewer parents believe individual schools should be responsible for funding reliable school transportation.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** How much responsibility should each of the following have to fund reliable school transportation for students with individual needs, such as students with special needs or who are experiencing homelessness?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 30 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents nationwide.



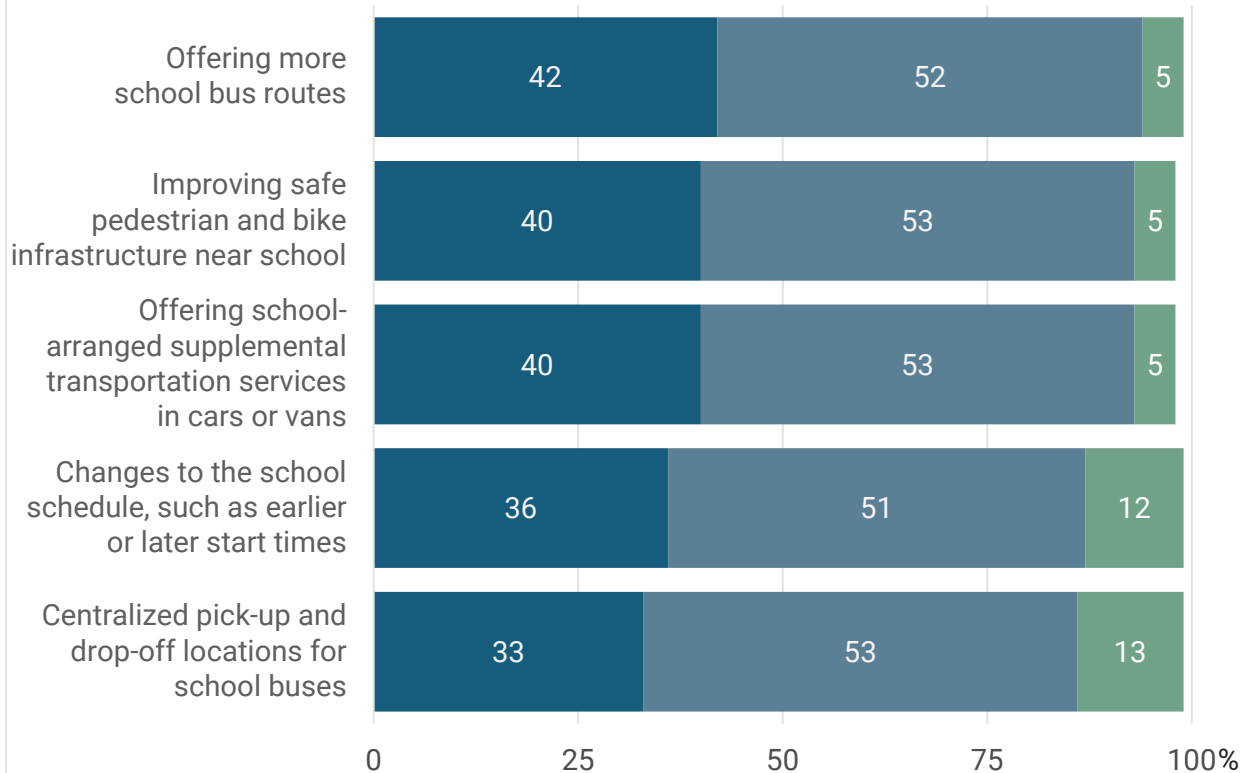
APNORC.org

However, many parents do not see clear solutions to their transportation needs. About 4 in 10 say more school bus routes, offering school-arranged supplemental transportation services, and improving safe pedestrian and bike infrastructure would make getting to school easier for their family, and about a third say the same about changes to the school schedule and centralized pick up and drop off for school buses. But about half say each of the suggested solutions would not make things easier or more difficult for their family.

## Many parents do not see clear solutions to their school transportation needs.

Percent of K-12 parents

■ Much/somewhat easier ■ Neither easier nor more difficult ■ Much/somewhat more difficult



**Question:** How likely would you be to do each of the following if easier transportation options were available?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 30 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents nationwide.



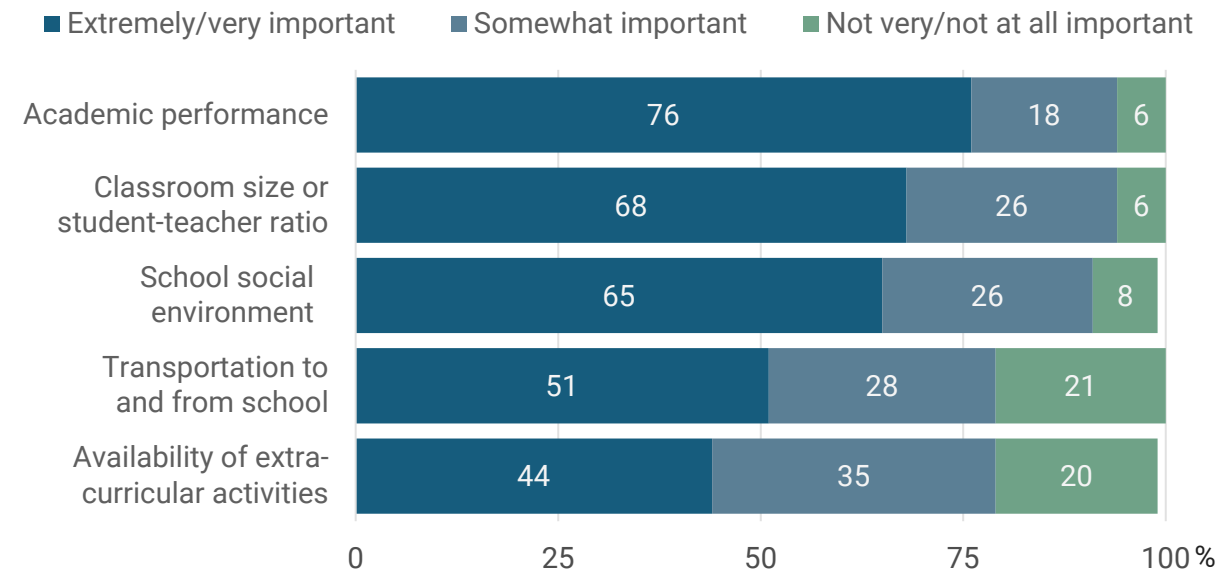
HopSkipDrive

APNORC.org

When asked if they were able to send their children to any school in their area, academic and social factors are the top priorities, with parents identifying each as an extremely or very important factor. But half of parents cite transportation as an extremely or very important factor and another 28% say transportation options are somewhat important.

## Most parents prioritize academic performance and school environment when it comes to their children's education.

Percent of K-12 parents



**Question:** If you were able to send your children to any school in your area, how important would each of the following factors be in deciding which school to choose?

**Source:** AP-NORC/HopSkipDrive School Transportation Parent Survey conducted June 30 - July 11, 2025 with 838 parents nationwide.



APNORC.org

Sixty-three percent of parents making less than \$30,000 a year say that transportation is extremely or very important, compared with 41% of parents making \$100,000 a year or more.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in partnership with HopSkipDrive. The study was funded by HopSkipDrive. Staff from NORC at the University of Chicago, The Associated Press, and HopSkipDrive collaborated on all aspects of this study.

### Parent Survey

Data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Panel®, which is NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. During the initial recruitment phase of the panel, randomly selected U.S. households were sampled with a known, non-zero probability of selection from the NORC National Sample Frame and then contacted by U.S. mail, email, telephone, and field interviewers (face-to-face). The panel provides sample coverage of approximately 97 percent of the U.S. household population. Those excluded from the sample include people with P.O. Box only addresses, some addresses not listed in the USPS Delivery Sequence File, and some newly constructed dwellings.

Interviews for this survey were conducted between June 30 through July 11, 2025, with adults aged 18 and over with school-aged children representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Panel members with school-aged children (children age 5-17) were randomly drawn from AmeriSpeak and then screened for eligibility, and 838 completed the survey via the web. Panel members were invited by email or text message. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents were offered a small monetary incentive (\$3) for completing the survey.

The final stage completion rate is 23.8 percent, the weighted household panel response rate is 26.1 percent, and the weighted household panel retention rate is 77.8 percent, for a cumulative response rate of 4.8 percent. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.6 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. The margin of sampling error may be higher for subgroups.

Sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error and there may be other unmeasured error in this or any other survey.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 27 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them. These interviews were excluded from the data file prior to weighting.

Once the sample has been selected and fielded, and all the study data have been collected and made final, a poststratification process is used to adjust for any survey nonresponse as well as any noncoverage or under and oversampling resulting from the study specific sample design.

Poststratification variables included age, sex, census division, race/ethnicity, and education. Weighting variables were obtained from the 2025 Current Population Survey. The weighted data reflect the U.S. population of adults age 18 and over with school-aged children.

Complete questions and results are available at: [apnorc.org](https://apnorc.org).

Additional information on the AmeriSpeak Panel methodology is available at: <https://amerispeak.norc.org/about-amerispeak/Pages/Panel-Design.aspx>.

For more information, email [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).

## School Administrator Survey

Interviews for this survey were conducted between June 30 through July 25, 2025, with adults aged 18 and over representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia who are employed by a school or school district with at least some responsibility for student transportation options, policies, and procedures at their job.

The sample was sourced from a non-probability list from a marketing database and from Dynata's non-probability panel. 510 school administrators completed the survey. Interviews were conducted in English and via the web only.

Sample lists provided by HopSkipDrive included all contacts from a marketing database across all 50 states, with titles that typically include transportation responsibilities. All valid contacts were invited by email and respondents were offered a small monetary incentive (\$10) for completing the survey.

Dynata provided 321 interviews with school administrators. For panel recruitment, Dynata uses invitations of all types including email invitations, phone alerts, banners, and messaging on panel community sites to include people with a diversity of motivations to take part in research.

Both samples screened respondents to confirm they are currently employed at a K12 school or district and that they have knowledge of school transportation. Because non-probability panels do not start with a frame where there is known probability of selection, standard measures of sampling error and response rates cannot be calculated.

Quality assurance checks were conducted to ensure data quality. In total, 6 interviews were removed for nonresponse to at least 50% of the questions asked of them, for completing the survey in less than one-third the median interview time for the full sample, or for straight-lining all grid questions asked of them.

The school administrator data and findings are unweighted.

Complete questions and results are available at: [apnorc.org](https://apnorc.org).

For more information, email [info@apnorc.org](mailto:info@apnorc.org).

## ABOUT THE ASSOCIATED PRESS-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taps into the power of social science research and the highest-quality journalism to bring key information to people across the nation and throughout the world.

- The Associated Press (AP) is an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. Founded in 1846, AP today remains the most trusted source of fast, accurate, unbiased news in all formats and the essential provider of the technology and services vital to the news business. More than half the world's population sees AP journalism every day. [www.ap.org](https://www.ap.org)
- NORC at the University of Chicago is one of the oldest objective and nonpartisan research institutions in the world. [www.norc.org](https://www.norc.org)

The two organizations have established The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research to conduct, analyze, and distribute social science research in the public interest on newsworthy topics, and to use the power of journalism to tell the stories that research reveals. Learn more at [www.apnorc.org](https://www.apnorc.org).

## ABOUT HOPSKIPDRIVE

HopSkipDrive is a technology company that solves complex transportation challenges where there is a heightened need for safety, access, and care. HopSkipDrive is modernizing the \$30 billion school transportation industry through two core solutions: a care-centered transportation marketplace and industry-leading transportation intelligence platform, RouteWise AI™. HopSkipDrive's marketplace supplements school buses and existing transportation options by connecting kids to highly vetted caregivers on wheels, such as grandparents, babysitters, and nurses in local communities. RouteWise AI helps schools and districts address critical challenges, including budget cuts, bus driver shortages, and reaching climate goals. HopSkipDrive has supported over 13,500 schools across 17 states, with nearly 1,300 school districts, government agencies, and nonprofit partners. More than 5 million rides over 95 million miles have been completed through HopSkipDrive since the company was founded in 2014 by three working mothers.