

Special Education Time Study Report

Special Education Department

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Introduction

In July 2024, as a result of collective bargaining between Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) and Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed that instructed MPS to review and collect information around special education workload, caseload, and due process paperwork time for all birth-22 special educators and related service providers during the school years of 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24. MPS will present study results to the Special Education Labor-Management (SELM) Committee no later than December 2024.

As part of this request, MPS has reviewed records from a variety of data sources for the identified school years for birth-22 special educators and related service providers. However, MPS acknowledges that a review of these records does not fully capture the workload demands that special educators experience, which is why a survey was written jointly between MPS and MFT to gather additional data from birth-22 special educators and related support providers during the 2024-25 school year. It is critical for the reader to understand that this review of records is not a time study, which is planned and implemented in the present. The findings contained in this report are based on past available documentation and can only provide *an estimate* of time and workload for special education teachers and related service providers.

In addition to a review of internal records and surveyed educators, a comprehensive review of professional organizations, neighboring districts and guidelines developed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) was conducted. Members of the MDE Workload Considerations for Effective Special Education Workload were interviewed

regarding the process and methods for collecting data and producing the workload analysis formula. The Office of the Legislative Auditors was consulted regarding due process paperwork and procedures for Minnesota special educators and input was gathered on how to complete the time study and record review to fulfill the MOA.

When IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, provisions were included to reduce administrative tasks and paperwork requirements to address concerns related to burden. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) completed a study in 2016 that reviewed special education processes and identified three IDEA requirements that become burdensome for teachers; reporting IDEA performance indicators, processing IEPs, and transitioning students into school-age programs from infant and toddler programs (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2016).

The Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditors (OLA) also completed a report in 2013 documenting how special education is operating in Minnesota. A portion of this report recognizes that special educators are obligated to comply with state law that exceeds the federal compliance requirements, which generates a higher workload. A few of these requirements include the circumstances that IEP team meetings must be held, timelines, student eligibility, and transition services. The report further describes the significant amount of paperwork required to meet special education requirements and the length of evaluations, IEPs, and prior written notices has greatly increased. Several educators note that evaluation reports are redundant, and information found in different parts of the evaluation report is duplicative, which adds to workload and does not affect services provided to students (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2013).

The GAO study provides available research statistics about special education administrative burden, specifically:

The 2002 Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE) found that elementary and secondary special education teachers reported spending an average of 1 hour per day completing forms and paperwork, the same amount of time spent preparing lessons. A 2008 time-use study found that special education teachers in five Texas school districts spent an average of almost 2 hours per day on administrative tasks- more time than they or their principals thought they were spending. In an American Speech-Language-Hearing Association survey of school-based speech/language pathologists, respondents listed paperwork as their top challenge from 2004-2014 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2016).

Consistent with this research, participants from the GAO educator focus groups estimate they spend between 2-3 hours per day on administrative tasks, or roughly 20 to 35 percent of their time, which takes away from academic planning and performing assessments (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2016).

The working conditions for special educators have been studied by state universities as well. A study conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022 was designed and reported to address the research gap at the intersection of everyday classroom disruptions, the working conditions of special education teachers, and educators' instruction and practice.

“Special education teachers increasingly are called upon to manage individualized education provisions and the demands of general education environments for students with disabilities in the United States.”

Miesner further reports that special education teachers face disruptions to their work with students. Disruptions include staff absences, scheduling conflicts, and student’s emotional dysregulation which creates constant fluctuation in the educational environment (Miesner, 2022).

This background and review of literature is critical to providing context for the time study report.

The following is a report of the operational definitions, considerations, methods, and time study results.

Definitions

The following language and terminology will be used throughout this report.

Caseload: Student count - the number of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for which a special educator is responsible.

Workload: The district defines workload as all of the responsibilities required of special educators which shall be based upon the student's needs. Workload includes but is not limited to specially designed instruction, evaluations and reevaluations, due process procedures and IEP Management Responsibilities. Preparation Time, Directing Work of Paraprofessionals. and Other Assignments

Specially designed instruction: Instruction to meet the unique needs of a student with a Disability. 34 C.F.R. §300.39

Direct Service: Special education or related services are provided directly to the student by a licensed special education teacher, a related services professional, or a paraprofessional supervised by a licensed staff member.

Indirect Service: Special education or related services that pertain to the student but are not directly provided to the student. This can include time spent for ongoing progress reviews, cooperative planning, and consultation; demonstration teaching; modifications and adaptations of the environment, curriculum, materials, or equipment; and monitoring and observing the student.

Evaluation: Initial comprehensive evaluation that includes all suspected areas of need, including, when appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general

intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and Moreot abilities. (IDEA Regulations 34 C.F.R. §300.532{f})

Re-Evaluation: A comprehensive evaluation conducted on a student already in special education, every three years. Assessments are used to determine whether the student continues to have a disability and the educational needs of the student.

Due Process Procedures: Procedures designed “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” — IDEA 601(d)(1) (PACER Center, n.d.)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) Management Responsibilities: Coordinating due process for individual students, including re/evaluations prior written notices and reports, IEPs, progress reports, manifestation determinations, changes in placement, and exits from service. Writing and/or compiling documents related to activities listed above. Conduct re/evaluations and provide services as required by the student’s IEP. Enter date and method of sending document to family in EdPlan Due Process Contacts. Enter other contacts with family or others in EdPlan Due Process Contacts. Document in EdPlan Due Process Contacts the reasons for “late” due process activities, if necessary. Coordinate with general education teachers and monitor that IEP accommodations and modifications are being done. Participate in evaluation process, conducting re/evaluation, writing reports, participating in team meetings to determine eligibility and student needs. Document student levels of performance, needs, goals, objectives and progress at required intervals.

Provide direct and indirect services to students. Design and implement specialized instruction. Design and implement data collection for progress monitoring of goals and objectives. Document in EdPlan Due Process Contacts communication with parents regarding due process updates or concerns.

Preparation Time: Design and implement specialized instruction. Design and implement data collection for progress monitoring of goals and objectives. All teachers are entitled to a preparation time every day within the defined student day. This time is for individual teachers to use as needed for instructional planning, reflecting on student performance, to plan, prepare, and resource the next steps needed with students (Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, 2023).

Related Services: Transportation and developmental, corrective, and other supportive services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education. 34 C.F.R. §300.34. Deaf/Hard of Hearing, DAPE, Speech Pathology, Audiology. Interpreting Services, Psychological services, Physical and occupational therapy, Counseling, including rehabilitation counseling, Orientation and Mobility services

Speech/Language Services: Students receiving speech and language services are frequently seen fewer than 4 days per week for a period of 20 to 30 minutes per session putting the students into a mild service level category. Speech and language providers deliver direct and indirect services, conduct assessment and frequently write and manage student IEP's.

Resource Level Services (Federal Setting I [FSI] & Federal Setting II[FSII]): Students receiving resource services are frequently seen daily but require a mild to moderate level of

service. A small number may require specialized services up to 60% of the day, but the vast majority of students receiving resource level services require specialized services less than 20% of their day. Resource level providers deliver direct and indirect services, write the IEP's and are most frequently identified as the case manager of the students they serve.

Self-Contained Programs and/or Federal Setting III (FSIII): Students receiving center-based services require programming or adaptations in their educational environment more than 60% of the total school day. Providers of center-based services deliver direct and indirect services, write the IEPs and are most frequently identified as the case manager of the students they serve.

Instructional Day/Minutes: The exact number of minutes a teacher is available during the student day to provide specially designed instruction and to conduct evaluations (does not include duty free lunch, preparation time, due process period, or other assignments).

Early Childhood Special Education Services (ECSE): Students ages birth through 2 years of age receive services in the home 1 to 8 times per month. Students ages 3 to 6 years of age receive programming within the preschool environment or in pull-out settings for periods ranging from 2 to 4 days per week. ECSE service providers deliver direct and indirect services, write the IEPs and are most frequently identified as the case manager of the students they serve.

Travel: This includes time for staff to travel between buildings when assigned to more than one school site. Also includes travel to students' homes for service provision provided by Early Childhood staff serving students Birth through age 2.

Other Assignments: These are regularly and intermittently scheduled non-special education assignments, such as daily supervision, study hall supervision, homeroom duty, advisories, bus duty, field trips, etc.

Understanding Workload Analysis Formula

A comprehensive review of professional organizations, neighboring districts and guidelines developed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) were reviewed. In each of the models examined the emphasis was to go beyond child count or a simple allocation of staff according to student disability. The common language suggested the development of a workload model as opposed to a caseload model which would more accurately reflect the amount of professional service time necessary for working effectively with assigned students. The major differences between caseload and workload are summed up by understanding that caseload refers to the number of students with IEPs for whom the teacher is the IEP case manager.

Workload refers to all activities required of the special education position, and it more accurately reflects the relatively reasonable or unreasonable nature of an individual special educator's assignment. The workload analysis model is based on the severity of the student's needs or the time required and documented to meet the identified needs of the students related to their disability. Workload values can be inflated based on concurrent minutes served on IEPs, often times for students receiving special education services for 60% or more of their instructional day. It is essential that any method of determining workload be responsive to the circumstances of the individual special education teacher and the students with the IEP for whom the teacher is responsible. An effective workload analysis model identifies excessive workload when it occurs and as it is documented. Similar to caseload only showing the number of students with IEPs managed by one teacher, one teacher's workload can be affected by school site variables; staffing,

service delivery models, and how case managers are determined. It is important to note that amount of time spent on required compliance procedures will vary based on the needs of the students served by the special educator.

While workload was defined in many different ways; based on comprehensive reviews, the following variables were used to analyze workload using the formula from MDE (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015).

- Amount of Direct and Indirect Services Provided (contact minutes)
 - Includes direct instruction to meet the individual needs of students related to IEP goals/objectives.
 - Includes indirect service, such as consultation with general education teachers, modification/adaptation of curriculum, demonstration teaching, planning with related service staff, etc.
- Number of Evaluations and Re-evaluations Required
 - Initial and re-evaluations average at least 6 hours per evaluation for a special education teacher, to complete only student related activities.
- Due Process Procedures and IEP Management
 - IEP management includes all aspects of program development and coordination of services, parent communication related to the IEP, annual review, progress monitoring, progress reporting, functional behavioral assessments, manifestation determinations, and behavior intervention plans.

- Preparation Time
 - This is time provided within the instructional day to prepare instruction and includes finding materials related to students' needs, revising/creating specific materials, etc.
- Instructional Day/Minutes
 - The exact number of minutes a teacher is available during the student day to provide specially designed instruction and to conduct evaluations (does not include duty free lunch, preparation time, or other assignments).
- Travel
 - This includes time for staff to travel between buildings when assigned to more than one school site. Also includes travel to students' homes for service provision provided by Early Childhood staff serving students Birth through age 2.
- Other Assignments
 - These are regularly and intermittently scheduled non-special education assignments, such as daily supervision, study hall supervision, homeroom duty, advisories, bus duty, field trips, etc.

Workload was analyzed for special education teachers using the IEP Manager workload analysis formula from the Minnesota Department of Education. The number derived from this model represents the ratio of the total contact minutes for the caseload to the actual service minutes and actual availability during the instructional day.

IEP Manager Workload Analysis Formula

Before workload can be analyzed, a few steps need to be completed first.

First, the number of contact minutes needs to be tabulated using two components that contain three pieces of data.

1. Specially Designed Instruction
 - a. Direct Service Minutes
 - b. Indirect Service Minutes
2. Number of Evaluations & Re-Evaluations completed
3. The number of students IEPs managed by the teacher

Total special education service minutes (direct & indirect) reflected on the IEPs that the teacher manages, divided by the total number of minutes available for instruction ***equals*** contact minutes. Additionally, the number of evaluations or re-evaluations is taken into the equation and added to numerator. The contact minute value represents a ratio for how many students must be served every minute, to serve all minutes within the available instructional day.

Evaluation hours are calculated by averaging the number of hours per week spent conducting evaluations during the instructional day. Total the number of initial evaluations completed by the identified case manager and the number of re-evaluations. The average number of evaluation hours per week is added to the total number of minutes of specially designed instruction. Total evaluation hours are not used in the formula because it is expected that teachers complete some due process paperwork during the duty day. Some components of special education evaluations can only be completed during the student instructional day. The model for analyzing workload is only based on the available minutes of the instructional day – only those specific components of the evaluation are

incorporated into the workload analysis. The specific components include conducting student observations, conducting assessments or tests with the student, and conducting student interviews. Below are the steps to calculate average evaluation hours:

1. Estimate the time needed during the student day to complete typical evaluation or re-evaluation activities.
2. Multiply the hours needed for each evaluation by the total number of evaluations that were completed.
3. Calculate the weeks of school in which evaluations can occur. Subtract the first and last weeks of school to arrive at the final number.

Divide total evaluation hours by the total weeks of school to arrive at the average number of hours per week spent completing evaluation procedures during the instructional week – this number was added to contact minutes in the numerator

The combined numerator is the total number of special education service minutes, per week, for all students under that case manager plus the number of evaluations/re-evaluations conducted per year and divided by the denominator, which is the exact number of minutes a teacher is available during the student day to provide specialist designed instruction and to conduct evaluations (duty free lunch, preparation time, and any other assignment time is subtracted). The combined numerator (direct minutes, indirect minutes, and average weekly evaluation hours) is divided by the denominator, the available instructional day. This value represents the contact minutes ratio. The contact minutes ratio is then added to the number of IEPs managed by the teacher. The IEPs managed includes the due process procedures, writing and implementing the IEP. The workload

value derived from this model represents the special educator's workload based on actual service minutes and actual availability to serve those minutes during the instructional day. For example, a special educator currently case manages 10 students. Using the workload analysis formula, the amount of service in those IEPs and availability of the teacher, the number derived is 14. This would represent the workload is equivalent to 14 students.

Workload Analysis Formula

Numerator	Contact Minutes	Direct Minutes Indirect Minutes Evaluation hours	+ Number of IEPs Managed	= Workload
Denominator	Instructional Day	Start of student day End of student day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty free lunch • Preparation time • Other assignments • Travel (providers) 		

MPS Workload Sample Groups

To run an effective and efficient workload analysis, a sample of teachers were selected to identify workload across the grade bands (K-5, 6-8, 9-12, 18-22) and by position type. In order to generate a sample that represents the various positions across the birth - 22 special educators were identified by teacher type: Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT), Program Teachers, Federal Setting IV teachers. Five teachers selected at random, from across the district were identified for each of the grade bands. Five teachers were identified across all Federal Setting IV sites (Riverbend, Harrison, and Transition Plus), for a

total of 35 different special education classroom case managers from across the district.

ECSE providers were identified by their workload was not analyzed using the workload analysis formula described above. ECSE providers have analyzed their workload in a way that would not be accurately captured using the above formula. Similar to ECSE providers, Speech/Language provider's caseloads and workloads were not analyzed using the workload formula, on account of an existing workload model used and described below.

EdPlan Direct and Indirect Service Report

Direct service minutes and indirect service minutes for workload sample groups must be identified and a report generated to complete the workload analysis formula. This information was generated from EdPlan using the December 1 Child Count reporting for each identified school year. The data includes direct minutes, indirect minutes, the number of evaluations completed, and the number of IEPs managed by each teacher from the workload sample groupings.

Instructional Day Calculations

Each school has varying bell-to-bell times. Based on an average calculation, schools have 397 minutes where students are expected to be present. To calculate workload analysis available instructional minutes cannot include teacher preparation time and duty-free lunch time. Elementary, middle, and high school all have varying weekly instructional availability times on account of some teachers have one preparation period and one due process period per day and some only have one preparation period. To calculate the instructional day, 55 minutes was used as the preparation period, due

process period, and 30 minutes was used for duty-free lunch. These times were subtracted from the bell-to-bell times (397 minutes).

Elementary schools have 1,560 instructional minutes available per week (312 minutes/day). Middle schools have 1,422 instructional minutes available per week (285 minutes/day). High schools have 1,285 instructional minutes available per week (257 minutes/day).

Understanding MPS Staffing Allocation

SERT Staffing

The District shall require buildings to staff special education resource teachers at a ratio of 1:20 but no greater than 1:23 students during the spring budget allocation staffing process. The Special Education Department shall enforce this ratio through the budget tie-out process. The District will work toward the reduction of maximum recommended caseloads for Special Education Resource Teachers from 1:23 to 1:20 as budget constraints allow (Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, 2023).

Program Teacher Staffing

Students receiving 60% or more of their day receiving special education services are allocated staff at a 1:3 to 1:5 ratio based on the disability and paraprofessional assignment (Minnesota Revisor, 2015). Early childhood programs are adjusted based on student disability, travel time necessary, or if additional agencies are involved. For students ages birth-two years, 12 students per teacher. Students ages three-six years, 16 students per teacher (Minnesota Revisor, 2015).

Early Childhood Special Education Staffing

ECSE is comprised of early intervention (EI) services (Part C) and special education services (Part B). As a whole ECSE determines workload and allocation using a weighted caseload model. One 45-minute visit which takes place at a single site is assigned a base weight of 1.0. Weights are adjusted for when a provider is serving multiple students at one site (no travel), conducting an evaluation, and/or participating in required teaming. An EI caseload weight of 21.0 is considered full and at 100% capacity. An ECSE caseload weight of 22.0 is full and at 100% capacity. The difference between EI and ECSE full capacity is due to the due process requirement of holding a 90-minute Evidenced Based Quality Intervention Practices (EQIP) meeting in EI. If there the student requires an initial evaluation, then an additional 1.0 value is added. Additionally, if the provider directs special education assistants (SEAs) or co-teaches with a hi-5 teacher, or teams with a secondary service person (SSP) or serves as a SSP then an additional 0.125 is added to their weight.

One student receiving direct service at home or community site	Multiple students receiving direct service at home or community site	Initial evaluation	Additional duties: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct SEAs • Co-teach • Team with or serve as SSP
45 min. > 1x/week = 1.00	45 min. > 1x/week = .75	1.0	0.125
45 min. 2x/month =0.5	45 min. 2x/month =0.5		
45 min. 1x/month =0.25	45 min. 1x/month =0.25		
45 min.< 1x/month =0.125	45 min.< 1x/month =0.125		

Related Service Providers (RSPs)

RSPs have a different workload model based on the different ways that they program and provide special education service to students. Although a workload formula exists as created by MDE for RSPs, this formula was not used for this workload analysis study because RSP leaders felt this formula does not adequately account the workload for the providers they manage in MPS. Related service provider managers have existing workload distribution models that have been created and used to manage workload for their providers. Managers were interviewed and the workload models are described further.

Speech/Language Pathologist. Speech/language pathologists (SLPs) are allocated based on student eligibility and the service minutes documented in student IEPs. SLPs are allocated using a base number and then additional considerations taken into account, which include the ELL student body, multilingual sites, enrollment growth, LRE diversity, AAC users, and the percent of free and reduced lunch recipients. Base caseloads for pre-kindergarten to 5th grade are 1:40 and for middle or high school caseloads 1:45.

School Psychologists. School psychologists are allocated according to a general rule of 1:180 IEPs because they are funded by federal Special Education dollars. In the MFT teacher contract, the allocation is recommended a ratio of 1:1000 enrolled students. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) advocates for 1:500. The Department of Special Education attempted to staff kindergarten-8th grade schools with one psychologist for 850 students during the 2024-25 school year; however, this was not feasible due to a significant shortage of school psychologists. School psychologists

complete a large portion of the initial evaluations for special education services and complete significant sections of re-evaluations for students already identified.

Occupational and Physical Therapists. Occupational and Physical therapists (OT/PT) determine caseload assignments based on minutes documented in student's IEPs. OTs and PTs aim to provide 4 hours of direct face-to-face service with students daily. The remaining time in the duty day is used to conduct evaluations, provide indirect service, attend IEP meetings, preparation time, and lunch. Travel between sites is considered in the allocation model, since OTs and PTs are itinerant citywide staff. Assignments are subject to changes based on student needs. To determine assignments and allocations, data is pulled during the spring to make predictions for the following school year. The target number of students served by an OT/PT would be 20 students. Often occupational therapists will travel between 4-5 different school sites and physical therapists are traveling to up to 15 different sites to meet student needs.

School Social Workers. School social worker allocations are often funded using building funds and funds from special education. Using a predictive staffing model one school social worker would serve 600-700 students. Every school in MPS is required to have one full-time school social worker. A portion of a school social workers responsibilities may include providing support to citywide programs. When a school site contains a citywide program then a .20 FTE school social worker allocation is also provided to that site. School social workers often case manage students with 504 plans, complete portions of initial/re-evaluation reports, complete conference summary notes, review releases of information, complete new releases of information as needed, add/remove

school members in EdPlan, serve as the administrative designee for IEP meetings, transfer due process files when needed, and submit special education transportation changes.

Music Therapists. Music therapists provide specialized instruction to students identified who demonstrate that music is an effective tool for supporting their access to learning, particularly in the social, emotional, or behavioral domains. Services are provided in a direct service model as written in the student's IEP. Services are also provided in a programmatic format, which may or may not include students with music therapy documented on their IEP, often embedded as a part of the school's special education programming model. Music therapists occasionally work with students who receive ECSE. The primary focus for music therapists is focus on social and emotional learning using music, and to help the student generalize skills across settings. Music therapists do work with speech/language pathologists to co-create CORE word of the week groups and embedding music into those lessons. Music therapists determine workload using an FTE ratio to the number of sessions per week.

FTE	Sessions/Week
.20	4-8
.40	8-12
.60	12-16
.80	16-20
1.0	20-24

Developmental Adaptive Physical Education (DAPE) Providers. DAPE providers are staffed to provide special education services at a recommended 1:40 caseload ratio, per the MFT contract. Additional factors to consider are the number of initial evaluations,

medically complex evaluations, ECSE DAPE classes, secondary DAPE classes, travel time between schools, and equipment preparation, assembly, and take-down in gymnasiums.

Understanding Caseload Calculations

Average caseloads were calculated using the sample working groups over each school year, using the child count data that is reported on December 1. Caseloads often fluctuate throughout the year for various reasons; students moving in and out of the district, students being found eligible for special education services, students no-longer being found eligible for special education services, and guardians revoking consent for special education services. Child count does not accurately reflect the fluctuations that occur. Child count is required by the state of Minnesota and is used to determine and predict funding for the future school years.

Additionally, district wide caseloads were determined using Least Restrictive Environment identifications and averaged across the number of SERTs and Program teachers across the district in the identified school years.

Understanding Due Process Procedures

Generating an Annual IEP Hourly Value

Individualized Education Program (IEP) writing is unique for each student. The IEP team must meet one time per calendar year to review and review each student's IEP. The time it takes special education teachers (licensed or unlicensed) to write an annual IEP varies between teachers and the individual student's needs. Using the same sample group of teachers across schools and grade bands over three years, a report was generated from EdPlan that reports user actions for that individual student and corresponding case

manager over the course of the school year. EdPlan shows all user actions with a time stamp. These actions were disaggregated and analyzed to generate an hourly representation of the time it takes to write an IEP for a student case managed by a SERT, Federal Setting III teacher, and Federal Setting IV teacher. One hundred and twenty-three user actions were analyzed by grade band and position type for teachers across school years 2021-2024 to create an average representation of the time spent in EdPlan to write an annual IEP. Additionally, a 30 second buffer time was reported for each user action line item to account for time spent reading and to account of user actions that were reported to be less than 60 seconds.

Generating an Evaluation Report Hourly Value

Students receiving special education services must be evaluated every three years. The purpose a re-evaluation every three years is to determine if the student demonstrates continuing need for special education services, ***not*** to determine if the student is still meets initial evaluation eligibility criteria. In 2020, the Minnesota Department of Education allowed school districts to complete non-evaluations. Non-Evaluations allow IEP teams to consider whether the student's present levels are sufficient to determine the continuing need for special education services. When a non-evaluation is determined to be appropriate for the student, no evaluation report is written, only a Prior Written Notice (PWN) is generated and sent to the guardians, possibly eliminating 10-20 hours of additional assessment, testing, and reporting for an IEP team.

For this workload analysis, evaluation hours were calculated by determining an estimated amount of time it takes a special education case manager to complete

evaluation components that can only take place during the instructional day; this includes student observations, administering assessments, and conducting student interviews.

MPS recognizes that special education evaluations require a team of professionals to collaborate to complete an initial or a re-evaluation, which may take a combined time of between 10-20 hours to complete (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). The workload analysis formula uses 6 hours as an estimate to complete student-centered evaluation components during the instructional day.

Generating Progress Reports

Progress must be reported to the family four times in a calendar year, with the exception of students receiving ECSE services and students receiving transition services, where progress is reported two times a year.

Administrative Duties

Special educators are required to complete a number of administrative tasks for each student on their caseload to maintain compliance. These duties typically include; contacting parents to set date and time of meetings, generating Notice of Team Meetings, completing Out-of-District verifications, mailing Notices of Team Meeting, mailing IEPs and PWNs, mailing progress reports, mailing evaluation plans, mailing evaluation reports, recording responses from PWNs, completing restrictive procedures forms, notifying special education team of behavior incidents, preparing meeting agendas and notifying team members including the general education teacher of the meeting, getting signed documents to the due process office specialist, determining if an interpreter is needed and schedule with them to attend IEP meetings, having PWNs translated within the required

time of the completing the IEP, distributing IEP documents to community team members with parent consent, and scheduling re-evaluation results meetings. Additionally, most of these required administrative duties require educators to make a Due Process Contact in EdPlan and usually require multiple contact attempts with members of the IEP team, resulting in additional time spent documenting required compliance procedures.

Administrative duties described above include the minimum due process responsibilities. Administrative duties that require additional documentation, collaboration, and scheduling arise when a student is not making adequate progress towards their annual IEP goals, encounters discipline procedures or has significant suspensions which may require IEP teams to consider Extended School Year (ESY) services, schedule and hold multiple Manifestation Determination meetings, complete manifestation determination documents, send manifestation determination paperwork to guardians, propose and complete a standalone Functional Behavior Assessments within the required 30-day timeline, document parent contact attempts, write ESY plans, amend the IEP and write an amended PWN. Although IEP teams now have the option to send special education documents electronically instead of through the United States Postal System, this requires documented consent from parents/guardians, and not all families have given consent for documents to be sent electronically. The default expectation is that special education due process documents be mailed unless otherwise consented to and documented in EdPlan.

Preparation Time

Special education teachers are required to provide specially designed instruction, complete and implement required due process. Specially designed instruction means creating many individualized lessons to address individual goals and objectives for each student served by the special education teacher or special education team. Given one instructional period, this could mean planning and delivering several different individualized lessons for students to be taught during that period. Preparation time for special education teachers is qualitatively different than for general education teachers, as there is often little curriculum prepared. (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015)

Survey Description and Purpose

MFT and MPS jointly constructed a survey to be sent to all special educators birth-22. The survey contains 19 questions intended to gather responses related to IEP caseload, due process procedures and requirements, evaluations, and planning. MFT Special Education Labor Management committee submitted approximately 15 questions to include in the survey. All questions submitted were included in the survey sent out to special education staff. The survey was sent out using the special education listserv on Wednesday November 20, 2024, and closed on December 6, 2024. RSP managers were contacted to send the survey out to their RSP team listservs incase other special educators did not receive the survey link from the all special education listserv. The purpose of the survey is to ensure that the workload analysis being conducted accurately confirms and reflects the challenges faced by special educations and their workload realities.

Results

Child Count and Caseload Results

Using the child count report from each school the table below shows the number of students served by Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), early Childhood, and speech only students.

Child Count

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Resource	2694	2228	2487
Federal Setting III/Program	749	740	777
Federal Setting IV	342	320	368
ECSE	662	761	930
Speech/Language	471	499	509

In school year 2021-2022, MPS employed 213 staff members that were identified as being a SERT, and 252 staff members that were identified as program teachers (who serve students with federal setting III and IV IEPs). MPS employed 115 speech/language pathologists, 51 psychologists, 136 school social workers, 19 DAPE providers, 82 ECSE providers, 14 physical therapists, 37 occupational therapists, 10 music therapists, 8 BVI itinerants, 10 D/HH itinerants, and 5 audiologists.

In the 2022-2023 school year, MPS employed 209 staff members that were identified as being a SERT, and 217 staff members that were identified as program teachers (who serve students with federal setting III and IV IEPs). MPS employed 109 speech/language

pathologists, 51 psychologists, 129 school social workers, 18 DAPE providers, 76 ECSE providers, 13 physical therapists, 37 occupational therapists, 7 music therapists, 8 BVI itinerants, 10 D/HH itinerants, and 4 audiologists.

In the 2023-2024 school year, MPS employed 192 staff members that were identified as being a SERT, and 224 staff members that were identified as program teachers (who serve students with federal setting III and IV IEPs). MPS employed 107 speech/language pathologists, 53 psychologists, 128 school social workers, 17 DAPE providers, 80 ECSE providers, 14 physical therapists, 39 occupational therapists, 10 music therapists, 8 BVI itinerants, and 10 D/HH itinerants.

Staff Count by Position

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
SERT	213	209	192
Program Teachers (FSIII&IV)	252	217	224
ECSE	82	76	80
Speech/Language	115	109	107
School Social Workers	136	129	128
Psychologists	51	51	53
Occupational Therapists	37	37	39
Physical Therapists	14	13	14
Music Therapists	10	7	10
DAPE Providers	19	18	17
SpEd Itinerant Staff (DHH, BVI,POHI)	24	23	19

Workload Sample Group Caseload Results

Average Caseload Comparison

Comparison	Position	2021-22	2022-23	2023-34	2021-2024
Sample Group	SERT	12	13	13	13
	Program Teacher	7	8	8	8
	ECSE Provider	7	8	10	8
District Wide	SERT	13	11	13	12
	Program Teacher	4	5	5	5
	ECSE Provider	8	10	12	10

SERT Caseload Averages by Grade Band 2021-2024. Based on the sample group data, elementary SERTs have an average caseload of 10 students. Middle school SERTs have an average caseload of 13 students. High school SERTs have an average caseload of 15 students.

Program Teacher Caseload Averages by Grade Band 2021-2024. Based on sample group data, elementary program teachers have an average caseload of 7 students. Middle schools program teachers have an average caseload of 9 students. High school program teachers have an average caseload of 9 students.

Related Service Providers. Related service providers occasionally case manage students, primarily Speech/Language Pathologists.

Average Caseloads by Grade Band 2021-2024

	2021-2024
Elementary SERT	10
Middle School SERT	13
High School SERT	15
Elementary Program Teacher	7
Middle School Program Teacher	9
High School Program Teacher	9

District-Wide Caseload Results

Year 2021-2022

SERTS. The average caseload, based on the total number of students identified as resource, divided by the number of staff members identified as a SERT, is 13 students.

Program Teachers. The average caseload, based on the number of students identified as receiving federal setting 3 services or being identified as being in a citywide program, or federal setting IV, divided by the number of staff members identified as program teachers, is 4 students.

ECSE Teachers. The average caseload, based on the number of students identified as Early Childhood, divided by the number of staff members identified as ECSE providers, is 8.

Year 2022-2023

SERTS. The average caseload, based on the total number of students identified as resource, divided by the number of staff members identified as a SERT, is 11 students.

Program Teachers. The average caseload, based on the number of students identified as receiving federal setting 3 services or being identified as being in a citywide program, or federal setting IV, divided by the number of staff members identified as program teachers, is 5 students.

ECSE Teachers. The average caseload, based on the number of students identified as Early Childhood, divided by the number of staff members identified as ECSE providers, is 10.

Year 2023-2024

SERTS. The average caseload, based on the total number of students identified as resource, divided by the number of staff members identified as a SERT, is 13 students.

Program Teacher. The average caseload, based on the number of students identified as receiving federal setting 3 services or being identified as being in a citywide program, or federal setting IV, divided by the number of staff members identified as program teachers, is 5 students.

ECSE Teachers. The average caseload, based on the number of students identified as Early Childhood, divided by the number of staff members identified as ECSE providers, is 12.

Workload Formula Results

SERT Workload

Based on the workload sample groups, elementary SERTs average a caseload of 10, with the mode being 12, and using the workload formula, their workload is that of 13 students. Middle school SERTS average a caseload of 13, with a mode of 13, and using the workload formula their workload is for 19 students. High school SERTS have an average caseload of 15, with a mode of 15, and using the workload formula their workload is for 22 students.

Program Teacher Workload

Based on the workload sample groups, elementary program teachers average a caseload of 7 and using the workload formula, their workload is that of 12 students. Middle school program teachers average a caseload of 9 students, and their workload is that of 16 students. High school program teachers average a caseload of 9 students, and their workload is that of 16 students. Students receiving special education services in a self-contained setting often have minutes being served concurrently due to the severity of their needs, which can cause an inflated workload value.

Caseload and Workload Comparison 2021-2024

Position Type	Average Caseload	Workload
Elem. SERT	10	13
M.S. SERT	13	19
H.S. SERT	15	22
Elem. Program Teacher	7	12
M.S. Program Teacher	9	16
H.S. Program Teacher	9	16

Number of Evaluations

The number of evaluations a special educator does is factored into the workload formula. Using data pulled from EdPlan for the workload sample group, the table below represents the average number of evaluations completed by special education teachers by grade bands per year. These numbers represent the average of the workload sample group's caseloads and the number evaluations they completed for each school year.

Average Evaluations Completed by Special Education Teachers by Grade & Year

	2021-22			2022-23			2023-24		
Position/Gr. Band	Initial	Re-Eval.	Total	Initial	Re-Eval.	Total	Initial	Re-Eval.	Total
Elem. SERT	3.4	3.8	7	1.8	3.4	5	5	2.4	7
M.S. SERT	1.2	4.6	6	1	3.8	5	3	5.25	8
H.S. SERT	.4	7.8	8	.2	4.8	5	0.4	5.8	6
Elem. Program Teacher	.8	2.8	3.6	1	3.2	4.2	2.2	1	3.2
M.S. Program Teacher	.2	3.4	3.6	.2	3.2	3.4	0	3.4	3.4
H.S. Program Teacher	.16	3	3.16	0	3.2	3.2	0	2.3	2.3

Due Process Procedures Results

EdPlan User Actions Analysis

Individualized Education Program Writing

SERT. Using the User Action analysis procedure to calculate time spent writing an annual IEP, the results report that on average an elementary SERT takes an estimated 5 hours to write an annual IEP. A middle school SERT takes an estimated average of 3 hours

to write an annual IEP. A high school SERT takes an average of 4 hours to write an annual IEP.

Program Teacher. Using the User Action analysis procedure to calculate time spent writing an annual IEP, elementary program teachers take an estimated average of 5 hours to write one annual IEP. A middle school program teacher takes an estimated average of 4 hours to write one annual IEP. A high school program teacher takes an estimated average of 4 hours to write one annual IEP.

Evaluation Writing

Using the User Action analysis procedure to calculate time spent writing evaluations (initial or re-evaluation), from the workload sample group, special education teachers take an estimated average of between 4-5 hours to write an evaluation report. This does not include administering assessments, conducting interviews, or completing student observations.

Evaluation Eligibility Events

The table below shows the number of initial eligibility events, re-evaluation eligibility events, and non-evaluation eligibility events for the identified school years, district wide.

Evaluation Totals by Year

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Initial Eligibility Events	1323	1371	1701
Re-Evaluation Eligibility Events	1653	1340	1646
Non-Evaluation Eligibility Events	306	283	434
Total Eligibility Events	3282	2994	3781

Survey Results

Survey Participants

A survey was sent to all birth-22 special educators and related service providers. The survey included 19 questions about special educators and related service providers' caseload, workload, evaluations, planning/workload activities, and due process paperwork. The Appendix at the end of this document includes tables and figures representing results from the survey questions.

Overall, a total of 309 special educators and related service providers responded to the survey (See Appendix/Table 1 for more demographic details). The highest response rates by position type were seen from Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs; N=76), Federal Setting III (FSIII)/program teachers (N=73), and speech/language providers (N=64). Other positions that responded to the survey included occupational Therapists, Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) providers, school psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, music therapists, school social workers, Federal Setting IV (FSIV) teachers, deaf/hard of hearing itinerants, and a Developmental Adapted Physical Education (DAPE) Provider. The highest rate of responses based on licensure type was from those who hold Tier 4 (N=160) and Tier 3 (N=65) licensures. We also heard the most from educators and service providers at elementary schools (N=144), high schools (N=40), early childhood programs (N=33), alternative programs (N=32), and middle schools (N=28).

Survey Question Results

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Workload

Average IEP Caseloads, Additional Students Serviced, and SEAs Directed

IEP Caseload. Overall, respondents reported an average of 25.39 students on their IEP caseloads (Appendix, Table 3). Caseloads looked different based on position and licensure, summarized below.

The highest reported caseload averages were from nurses (102.38 students), school social workers (86 students), and school psychologists (75.75 students) (Appendix, Table 4/Figure1). However, the results to this question should be interpreted cautiously, as there was likely a misinterpretation across respondents on how to answer this question. Many related service providers reported higher than expected caseload numbers, which may be due to them interpreting the question to be asking how many student IEPs they are included on. The question was meant to gauge how many students they were IEP case *managers* for.

When looking at how special educators responded (SERTs, FSIII teachers, FSIV/program teachers, ECSE providers), the highest reported IEP caseload average was from SERTs (18.71 students), followed by ECSE providers (17.06 students), FSIII/Program Teachers (8.38 students), and FSIV teachers (5 students).

Differences in IEP caseloads were also seen by licensure type (Appendix, Table 5/Figure 2), with Tier 3 reporting the highest average caseload (29.75 students), followed by Tier 2 (24.13 students), Tier 4 (20.57 students), and Tier 3 (20.57 students).

Additional Students Serviced. Overall, respondents reported the average number of students they service outside of those they case managed to be 24.20 students (Appendix, Table 7). The average number of students serviced outside of those case managed looked different based on position and licensure, summarized below.

The highest average reported was from nurses (178.31 students), followed by school psychologists (144.71 students), music therapists (60.57 students), and school social workers (42.51 students) (Appendix, Table 8/Figure 3).

When looking at how special educators responded (SERTs, FSIII teachers, FSIV/program teachers, ECSE providers), the highest average number of students serviced reported was from FSIII/program teachers (10.18 students), followed by SERTs (9.57 students), ECSE providers (2.56), and FSIV teachers (0.67 students) (Appendix, Table 8/Figure 3).

Differences in additional students serviced were also seen by licensure type (Appendix, Table 9/Figure 4), with Tier 3 reporting the highest average number (50.63 students), followed by Tier 4 (16.85 students), Tier 1 (8.06 students), and Tier 2 (7.38).

Special Education Assistants (SEAs) Directed. Overall, respondents reported an average of directed 1.13 SEAs (Appendix, Table 11). The average number of SEAs directed looked different based on position and licensure, summarized below.

The highest average reported for the number of SEAs directed was from FSIII/program teachers (3.06 SEAs), followed FSIV teachers (2.67 SEAs), and SERTs (1.15 SEAs) (Appendix, Table 12/Figure 5). Some of the related service providers reported that they directed SEAs, however, the results should be evaluated cautiously due to a likely

misinterpretation of the question. The question was meant to gauge how many SEAs an educator or service provider directed/supervised, but some may have interpreted it as how many SEAs they work with.

Differences in the average number of SEAs directed were also seen by licensure type (Appendix, Table 13/Figure 6), with Tier 3 reporting the highest average number (1.73 SEAs), followed by Tier 1 (1.56 SEAs), Tier 4 (1.06 SEAs), and Tier 3 (1.06 SEAs).

Average Time and Manageability to Complete IEP Reports

Average Time to Complete an IEP Report. The highest number of respondents reported that the average time to write an IEP (including generating the Notice of Team Meeting and Prior Written Notice) takes between 3-4 hours (35.74% of responses) (Appendix, Table 14/Figure 7). Following 3-4 hours, respondents reported that it takes an average time of less than 3 hours (27.87%) to write an IEP, followed by 5-6 hours (18.03%), 7-8 hours (5.57%), 9-10 hours (4.93%), and 11+ hours (0.33%).

Manageability of Completing an IEP Report. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “The amount of time I spend on writing IEPs is manageable for my current role.” Overall, most respondents somewhat agreed with this statement (35.08% of respondents), while 28.20% somewhat disagreed, 17.05% strongly disagreed, and 13.11% strongly agreed (Appendix, Table 15/Figure 8).

Evaluations

Average Time and Manageability of Completing Evaluations

Initial Evaluation. Most respondents surveyed report that on average, an initial evaluation can take 11 hours or more to conduct and complete the evaluation results reporting (23.68% of respondents). The rest reported that it can take less than 1 hour (1.32%), 1-2 hours (2.96%), 3-4 hours (9.87%), 5-6 hours (15.13%), 7-8 hours (15.46%), and 9-10 hours (16.12%) (Appendix, Table 16/Figure 9).

Re-Evaluation. Most respondents surveyed report that on average, a re-evaluation can take 5-6 hours (22.37% of respondents) to conduct and complete the evaluation results reporting. The rest reported that it can take less than 1 hour (1.64%), 1-2 hours (9.54%), 3-4 hours (21.71%), 7-8 hours (17.11%), and 9-10 hours (8.55%), and 11+ hours (12.17%) (Appendix, Table 16/Figure 9).

Manageability of Completing Evaluations. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “The amount of time I spend completing evaluations is manageable for my current role.” Overall, most respondents somewhat disagreed (33.11%) or strongly disagreed (29.84%), while others somewhat agreed (28.52%) or strongly agreed (4.59%) (Appendix, Table 17/Figure 11).

Planning

Time to Complete Progress Reports

Most respondents reported that completing a progress report, on average, takes between 15-30 minutes (43.93%). Others reported that it can take 0-15 minutes (20.33%) or 30+ minutes (24.26%) (Appendix, Table 18/Figure 12).

Time for Prep/Planning and Duty-Free Lunch

Prep Time. Most respondents reported that in general, they get to take their allocated prep time every day (34.90%) or 3-4 times/week (34.23%). However, some reported they get their prep time 1-2 times/week (23.25%) or they never get their prep time (7.72%) (Appendix, Table 19/Figure 13).

Duty-Free Lunch. Most respondents reported that in general, they get their allocated duty-free lunch every day (36.88% of respondents). However, some reported they get their duty-free lunch only 3-4 times/week (26.25%), 1-2 times/week (25.25%), or never (11.63%) (Appendix, Table 20/Figure 14).

Meeting with General Education Colleagues. Most respondents reported that in general, they meet with General Education colleagues 1-2 times/week (45.85% of respondents). Others reported meeting with General Education colleagues every day (14.29%), 3-4 times/week (8.64%), or never (31.23%) (Appendix, Table 21/Figure 15).

Time and Manageability of Planning/Preparing Specialized Instruction and Adjusting Workload to Accommodate Shifts in Student Needs.

Planning and Preparing Specialized Instruction. Most respondents reported that average, it takes them 3-4 hours (27.67% of respondents) to plan and prepare specialized instruction. Others reported that it takes them less than 1 hour (2.33%), 1-2 hours (16.67%), 5-6 hours (21.33%), 7-8 hours (10%), 9-10 hours (6.33%), and 11+ hours (4.33%) (Appendix, Table 22, Figure 16).

Planning and Adjusting Workload to Accommodate Shifts in Student Needs Due to Transfers. Most respondents reported that on average, it takes them 1-2 hours (38.67% of respondents) to plan and adjust workload to accommodate shifts in students needs due to students transferring into and out of school. Others reported it takes them less than 1 hour (22.33%), 3-4 hours (15%), 5-6 hours (5%), 7-8 hours (3.33%), 9-10 hours (1.67%), and 11+ hours (1.33%) (Appendix, Table 22/Figure 17).

Manageability of Adjusting Workload. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “The amount of time I spend on adjusting workload is manageable in my current role.” Overall, most respondents somewhat agreed (34.12%) or somewhat disagreed (27.70%), while others strongly disagreed (14.19%) or strongly agreed (12.84%) (Appendix, Table 23/Figure 18).

Due Process Paperwork

Allocated Time & Manageability for Due Process Paperwork

Allocated Due Process Paperwork Time. Overall, respondents reported being allocated an average of 47.02 minutes daily for due process time (Appendix, Table 25). Time allocated for due process paperwork looked different based on position and licensure, summarized below.

The highest reported average due process time was from school psychologists (269.33 minutes), physical therapists (75 minutes), and occupational therapists (60 minutes) (Appendix, Table 26/Figure 19).

When looking at how special educators responded (SERTs, FSIII teachers, FSIV/program teachers, ECSE providers), the highest reported due process time was from ECSE providers (51 minutes), followed by FSIII/program teachers (45.81 minutes), FSIV teachers (38.33 minutes), and SERTs (32.91 minutes) (Appendix, Table 26/Figure 19).

Differences in allocated due process time were also seen by licensure type (Appendix, Table 27/Figure 20), with Tier 3 reporting the highest average time (55.63 minutes), followed by Tier 4 (45.86 minutes), Tier 2 (40 minutes), and Tier 1 (35 minutes).

Utilization of Allocated Due Process Time. When asked whether they are able to utilize their allocated due process time to complete due process paperwork, most respondents reported “No” (53.47%) (Appendix, Table 28/Figure 21).

For respondents that reported “Yes” (46.53%), they were then asked, “Does allocated due process time in your schedule decrease the time spent completing due process paperwork outside of duty hours”? Most respondents then responded “Yes” (79.41%) it does decrease the time spent completing due process paperwork outside of the duty day (Appendix, Table 29/Figure 22).

For respondents that reported “No” (53.47%), they were then asked the open-ended question, “If applicable, what prevents you from being able to utilize your allocated due process time?”. A random sample of 20 open-ended responses to this question was qualitatively analyzed to identify initial themes that emerged from responses. Emerging themes, descriptions, and how many times they occurred in the responses (instances) are shown in Appendix, Table 30. The most common reason for not being able to utilize allocated due process time were due to unpredictable instances, such as needing to cover

classrooms, dealing with equipment issues, and attending to various student needs. The next most common reason was that respondents reported needing to use due process time to complete other job duties, including emailing/calling staff and parents, completing evaluations, and attending meetings.

Completing Due Process Paperwork Outside of the Duty Day. Most respondents reported that on average, they are spending 1-2 hours (30.87%) outside of their duty day to complete due process paperwork. Others reported spending less than 1 hour (21.48%), 2-4 hours (22.48%), 5-6 hours (9.06%), 7-8 hours (4.03%), 9-10 hours (4.03%), and 11+ hours (2.35%) on due process paperwork outside of their duty day (Appendix, Table 31/Figure 23).

Manageability of Due Process Paperwork. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “The amount of time I spend on due process paperwork is manageable in my current role.”. Overall, most respondents strongly disagreed (34.23%) or somewhat disagreed (31.54%). Some reported that they somewhat agreed (24.50%) or strongly agreed (8.05%) (Appendix, Table 32/Figure 24).

What would lead to a more balanced workload?

Lastly, respondents were asked the question “If one thing could be taken off your plate to have a more balanced workload, what would it be?” They were then asked to select from a list of options.

Most respondents indicated that their workload would be more balanced if clerical due process work (meeting notices, sending progress reports, PWNs, etc.) were taken off their plate (31.67% of respondents) (Appendix, Table 33/Figure 25). The second most

selected option was the “Other (please describe)” option, in which respondents were able to fill in their own answers in an open-ended way, which you can find summarized below. In addition to clerical due process work, respondents also reported other things that could be taken off their plate, which included completing evaluations (21%), being the default behavior dean for students on their caseload (11.74%), SEA management (2.49%), and bus duty (2.49%).

For respondents that chose to fill in their own option for what could be taken off their plate to create a more balanced workload, a random sample of 20 open-ended responses to this question was qualitatively analyzed to identify initial themes that emerged from responses. Emerging themes, descriptions, and how many times they occurred in the responses (instances) are shown in Appendix, Table 34. The most common option that emerged from the open-ended responses was reducing the number of students on caseloads, followed by evaluations, paperwork, and being given additional prep time.

Conclusions

Special educators birth-22 are required to complete a significant amount of paperwork to maintain compliance. The Minnesota Department of Education and current research emphasizes the need for staffing and resource allocation to extend beyond caseload, and to analyze workload for special educators. Minnesota law requires schools and educators to exceed the federal IDEA guidelines, which statewide, results in an increased workload across a caseload. Based on research and staff reports the number of administrative duties or clerical work associated with due process policy and procedures creates a significant burden on special educators.

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Appendix

2024 Special Education Time Study Survey Tables and Figures

Prepared by Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

12/6/2024

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Survey Participants

Table 1. Demographics of Survey Respondents.

Position	Participants	
	N	%
SERT	76	24.59%
FSIII/Program Teacher	73	23.62%
Speech/Language Provider	64	20.71%
Occupational Therapist	23	7.44%
ECSE Provider	17	5.50%
School Psychologist	13	4.21%
Nurse	13	4.21%
Physical Therapist	9	2.91%
Music Therapist	7	2.27%
School Social Worker	6	1.94%
FSIV Teacher	3	0.97%
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerant	2	0.65%
DAPE Provider	1	0.32%
Other	2	0.65%
Total	309	-

Licensure Type	Participants	
	N	%
Tier 1	19	6.15%
Tier 2	17	5.50%
Tier 3	65	21.04%
Tier 4	160	51.78%
No Response	48	15.53%
Total	309	-
School Level/Program		
	N	%
Early Childhood	33	10.68%
Elementary School	144	46.60%
Middle School	28	9.06%
High School	40	12.94%
Alternative School	32	10.36%
Central Office	6	1.94%
Other	18	5.83%
No Response	8	2.59%
Total	309	-

Survey Questions

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Workload

Question 1. How many students are on your caseload this school year? Enter a whole digit (Example: 10).

Table 2. Overall Responses. Number of students on each caseload, represented within a range. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Number of Students (Range)		
0	14	4.59%
1-10	105	34.43%
11-20	88	28.85%
21-30	34	11.15%
31-40	16	5.25%
41-50	15	4.92%
51-60	10	3.28%
61-70	8	2.62%
71-80	1	0.33%
81-90	3	0.98%
91-100	1	0.33%
101-200	7	2.30%
201-300	3	0.98%
Total	305	-

Table 3. Overall Responses. Descriptive statistics of caseloads. (N=305)

	Mean	Min	Max	Mode
Number of Students	25.39	0	300	8

Table 4. Position. Descriptive statistics of caseloads disaggregated by position (ordered from highest to lowest mean). (N=298)

Position	Mean	Min	Max
Nurse	102.38	0	270
School Social Worker	86.00	30	300
School Psychologist	75.75	0	180
Occupational Therapist	48.48	11	74
Other	34.50	23	46
Physical Therapist	31.29	14	44

	Mean	Min	Max
Music Therapist	24.29	0	87
DAPE Provider	22.00	22	22
Speech/Language Provider	18.97	0	57
SERT	18.71	5	150
ECSE Provider	17.06	8	40
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerant	16.00	14	18
FSIII/Program Teacher	8.38	2	19
FSIV Teacher	5.00	4	6

Figure 1. Position. Average caseload number disaggregated by position. (N=298)

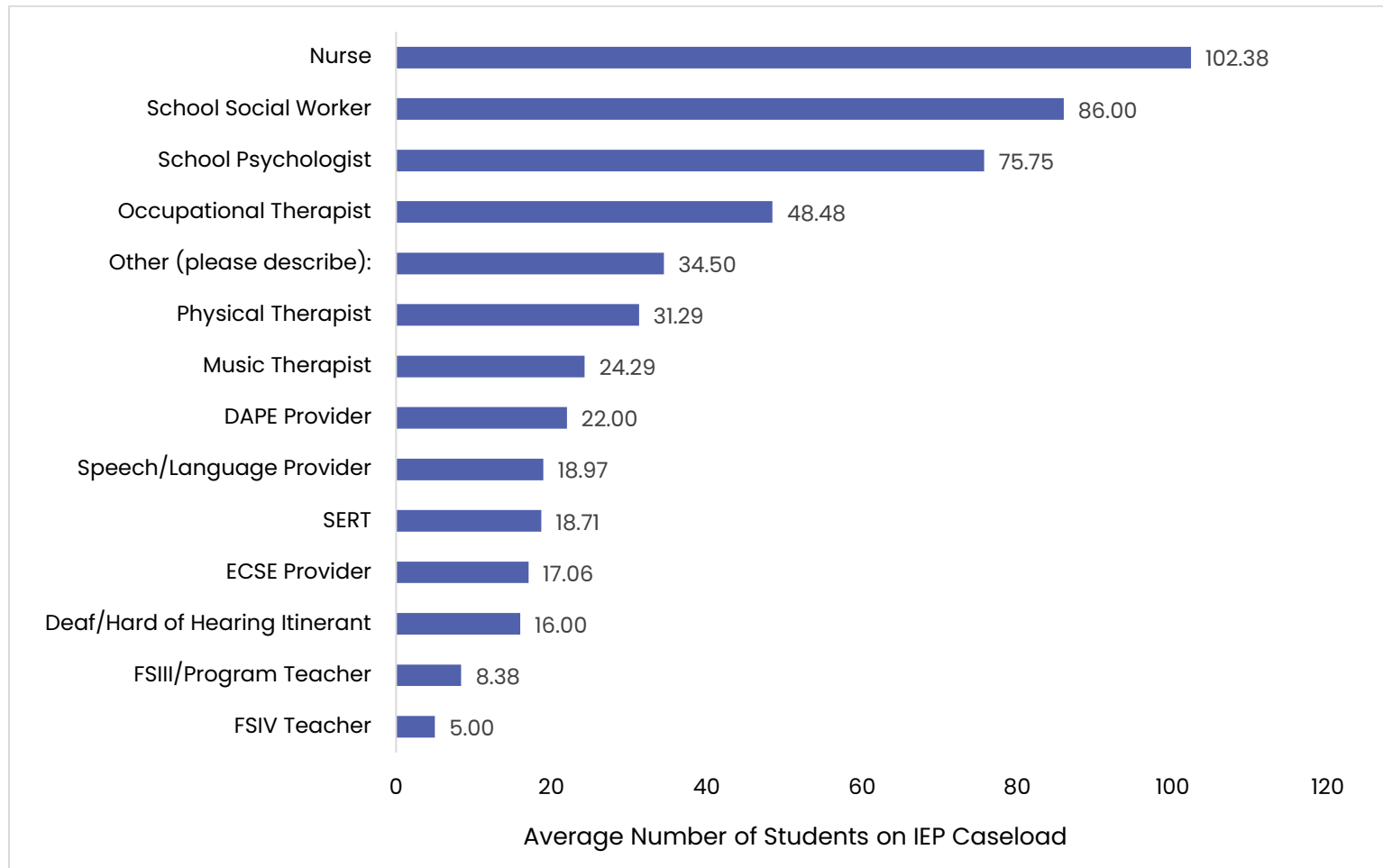
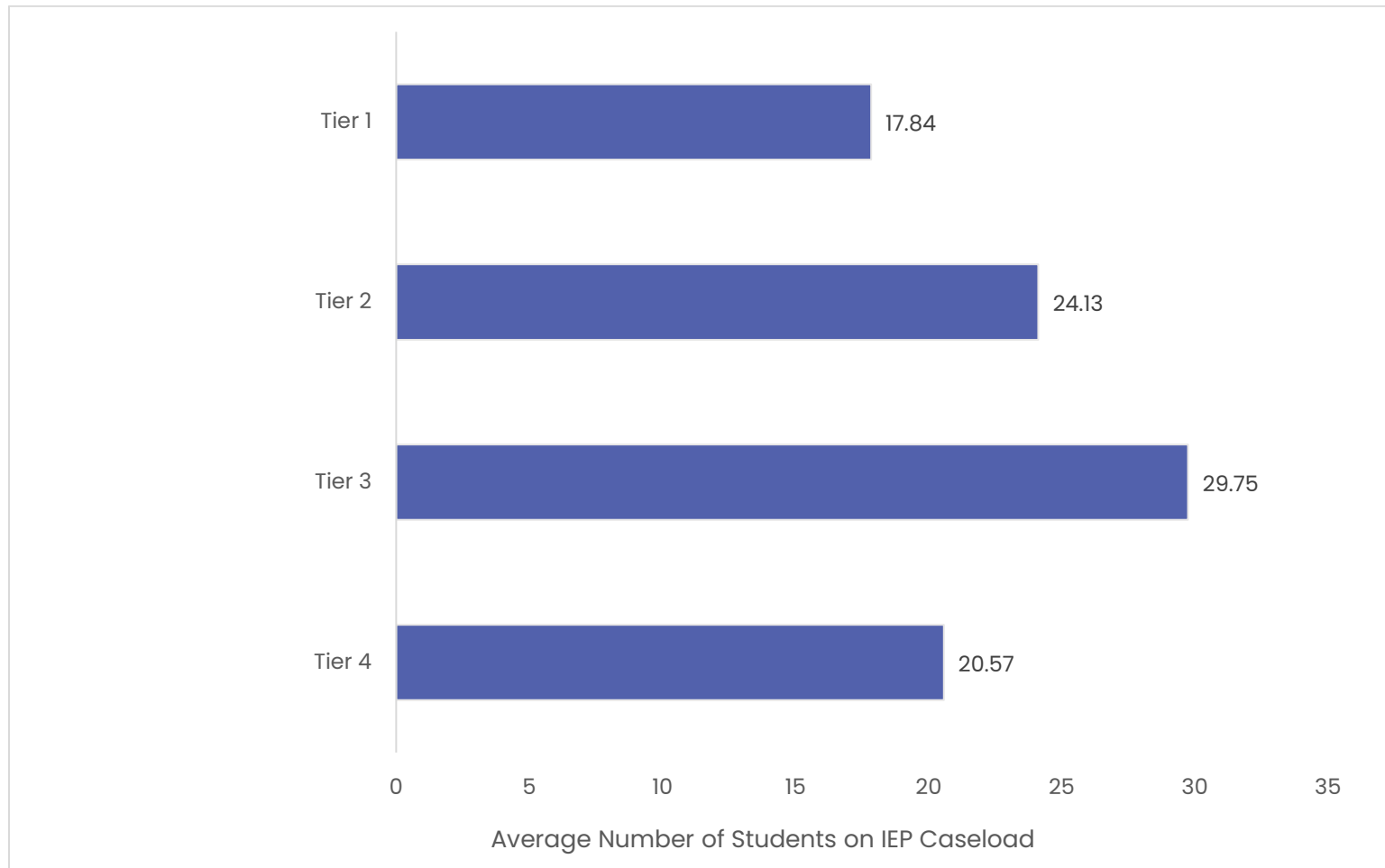


Table 5. Licensure. Descriptive statistics of caseloads disaggregated by licensure. (N=254)

	Mean	Min	Max
Licensure			
Tier 1	17.84	0	57
Tier 2	24.13	2	154
Tier 3	29.75	0	270
Tier 4	20.57	0	300

Figure 2. Licensure. Average caseload number disaggregated by licensure. (N=254)



Question 2. How many additional students are you servicing, excluding those you case manage? Enter a whole digit (Example: 10).

Table 6. Overall Responses. Number of additional students serviced by educator or provider outside of those they case manage, represented within a range. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Number of Students (Range)		
0	84	27.54%
1-10	112	36.72%
11-20	37	12.13%
21-30	24	7.87%
31-40	23	7.54%
41-50	10	3.28%
51-60	3	0.98%
61-70	3	0.98%
71-80	1	0.33%
81-90	0	0.00%
91-100	0	0.00%
101-200	3	0.98%
201-300	1	0.33%
401-500	1	0.33%
501-1000	3	0.98%
Total	305	-

Table 7. Overall Responses. Descriptive statistics of additional students services. (N=305)

	Mean	Min	Max	Mode
Number of Students	24.20	0	1000	0

Table 8. Position. Descriptive statistics of additional students services disaggregated by position (ordered from highest to lowest mean). (N=288)

Position	Mean	Min	Max
Nurse	178.31	0	1000
School Psychologist	144.71	0	920
Music Therapist	80.57	42	195
School Social Worker	42.50	0	140
Speech/Language Provider	19.92	0	52
FSIII/Program Teacher	10.18	0	50

	Mean	Min	Max
SERT	9.57	0	50
Occupational Therapist	8.00	0	74
Physical Therapist	6.25	0	24
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerant	5.00	0	10
DAPE Provider	3.00	3	3
ECSE Provider	2.56	0	17
FSIV Teacher	0.67	0	2
Other	0	0	0

Figure 3. Position. Average number of additional students service disaggregated by position. (N=288)

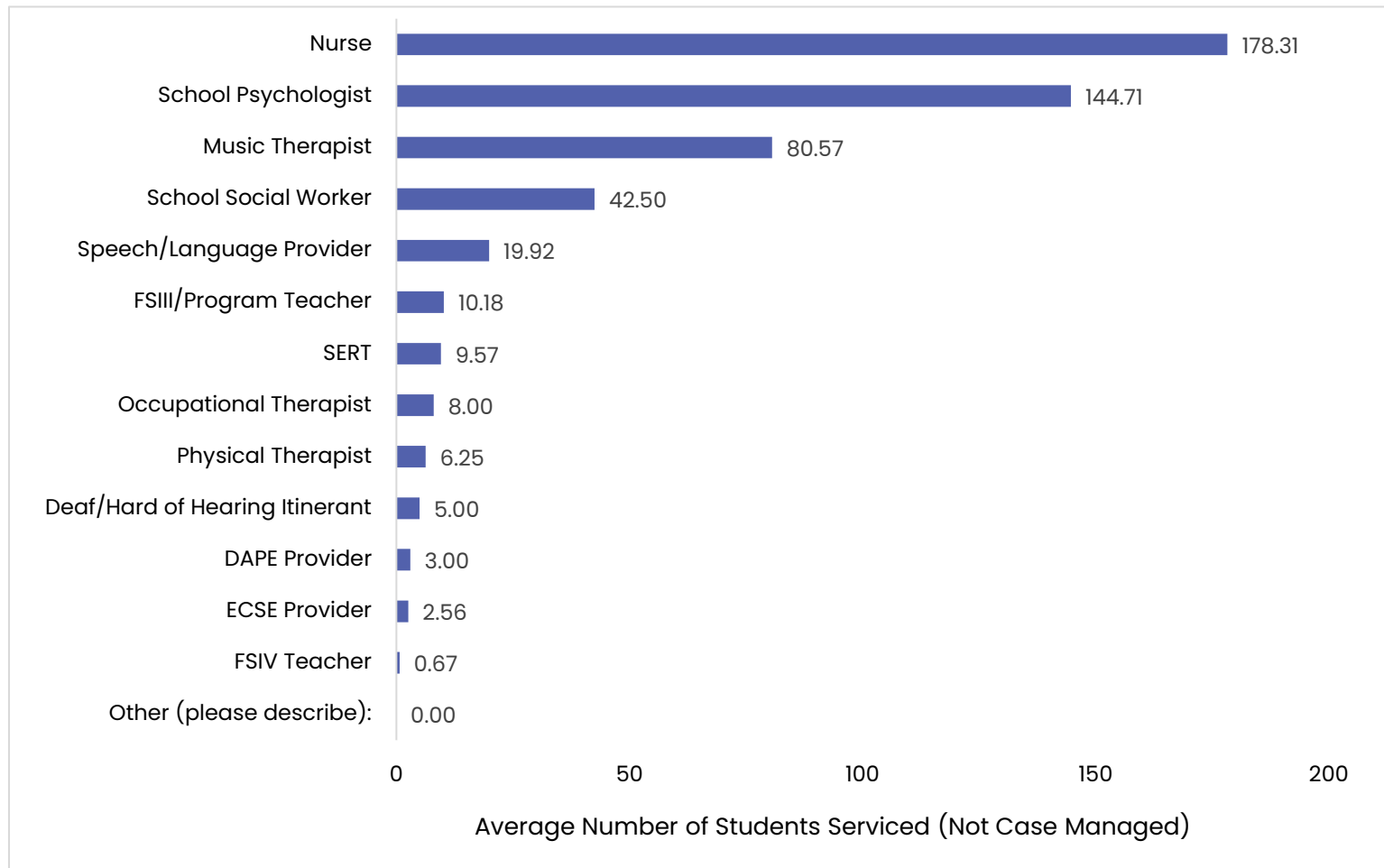
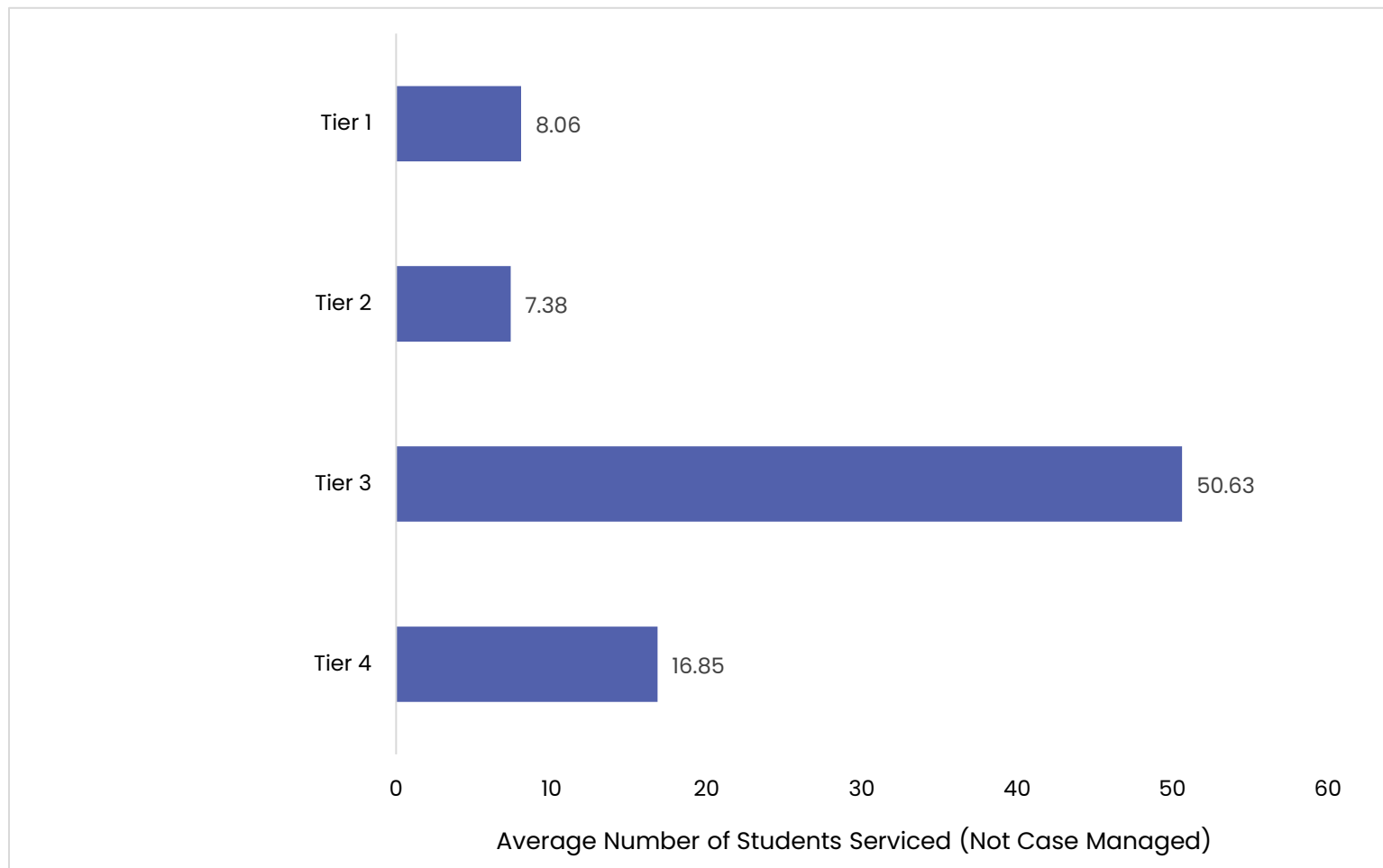


Table 9. Licensure. Descriptive statistics of additional students services disaggregated by licensure.
(N=250)

	Mean	Min	Max
Licensure			
Tier 1	8.06	0	42
Tier 2	7.38	0	34
Tier 3	50.63	0	1000
Tier 4	16.85	0	437

Figure 4. Licensure. Average number of additional students service disaggregated by licensure. (N=250)



Question 3. How many Special Education Assistants (SEAs) do you direct currently? Enter a whole digit (Example: 10).

Table 10. Overall Responses. Number of SEAs directed by each educator or service provider, represented within a range. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Number of SEAs (Range)		
0-5	296	97.05%
6-10	6	1.97%
11-15	3	0.98%
Total	305	-

Table 11. Overall Responses. Descriptive statistics of the number of SEAs directed by each educator or service provider. (N=305)

	Mean	Min	Max	Mode
Number of SEAs	1.13	0	13	0

Table 12. Position. Number of additional students serviced by educator or provider outside of those they case manage disaggregated by position type (ordered from highest to lowest mean). (N=293)

Position	Mean	Min	Max
FSIII/Program Teacher	3.06	0	13.00
FSIV Teacher	2.67	2.00	4.00
SERT	1.15	0	6.00
ECSE Provider	0.88	0	2.00
Nurse	0.15	0	2.00
Physical Therapist	0.14	0	1.00

	Mean	Min	Max
Speech/Language Provider	0.06	0	1.00
Occupational Therapist	0.05	0	1.00
School Psychologist	0	0	0
School Social Worker	0	0	0
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerant	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
DAPE Provider	0	0	0
Music Therapist	0	0	0

Figure 5. Position. Average number of SEAs directed by each educator or service provider disaggregated by position.- (N=293)

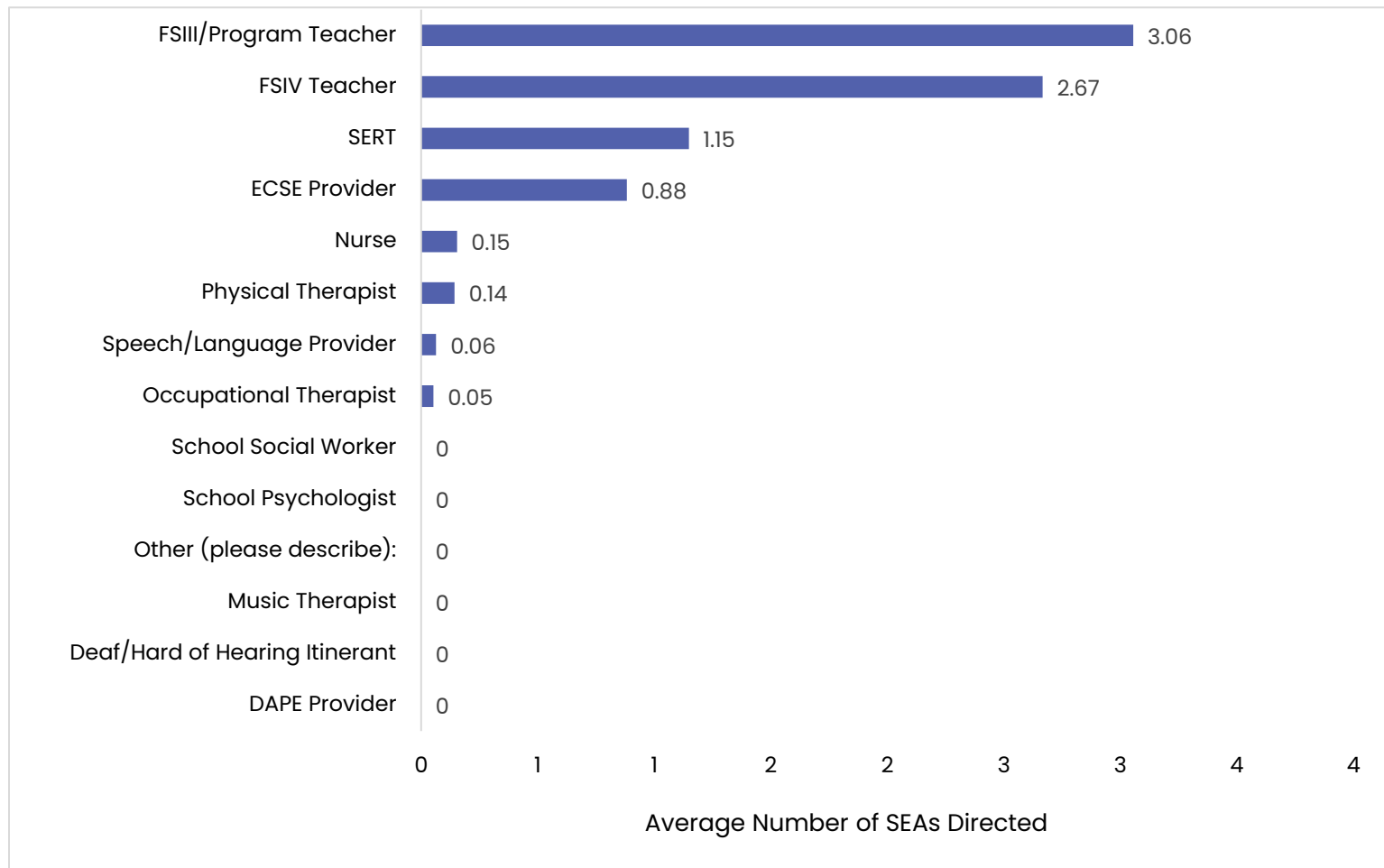
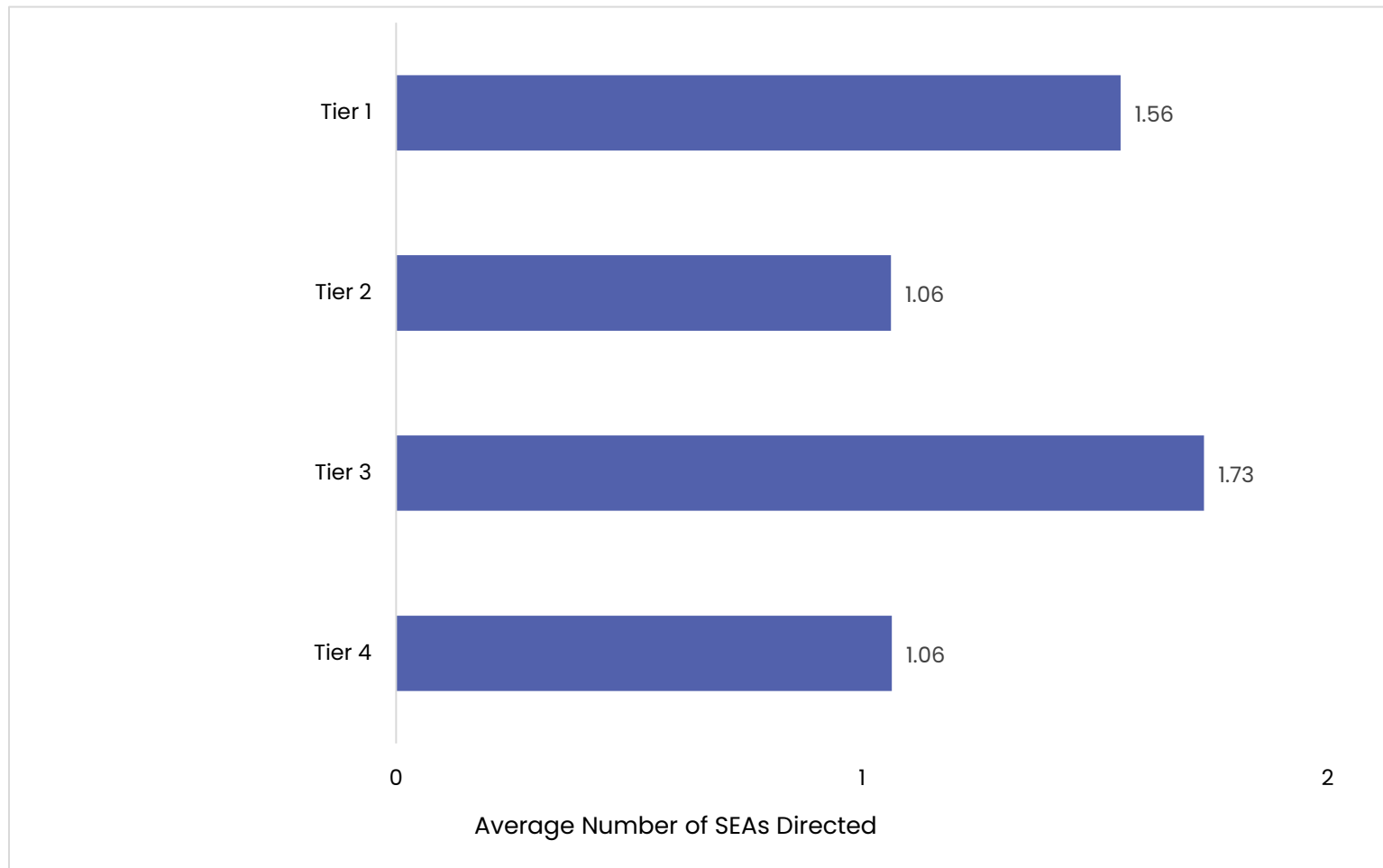


Table 13. Licensure. Descriptive statistics of the number of SEAs directed by each educator or service provider disaggregated by licensure. (N=253)

	Mean	Min	Max
Licensure			
Tier 1	1.56	0	8.00
Tier 2	1.06	0	4.00
Tier 3	1.73	0	13.00
Tier 4	1.06	0	13.00

Figure 6. Licensure. Average number of SEAs directed by each educator or service provider disaggregated by licensure. (N=253)

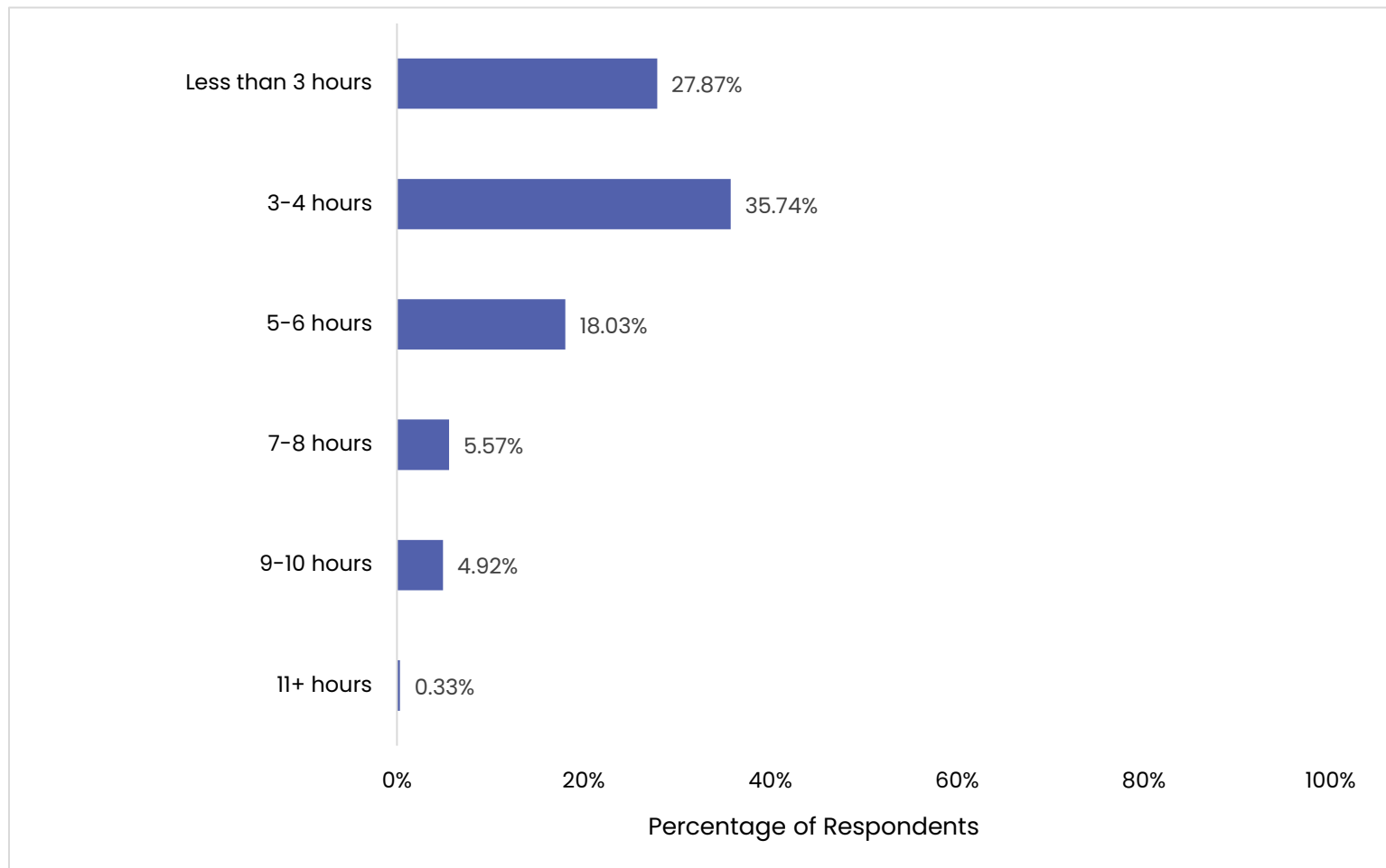


Question 4. How many hours does it take you to complete an average IEP (including the meeting notice, PWN, etc.)?

Table 14. Overall Responses. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete an average IEP. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Time (Hours)		
Less than 3 hours	85	27.87%
3-4 hours	109	35.74%
5-6 hours	55	18.03%
7-8 hours	17	5.57%
9-10 hours	15	4.92%
11+ hours	1	0.33%
Not applicable	23	7.54%
Total	305	-

Figure 7. Overall Responses. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete an average IEP. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=305)

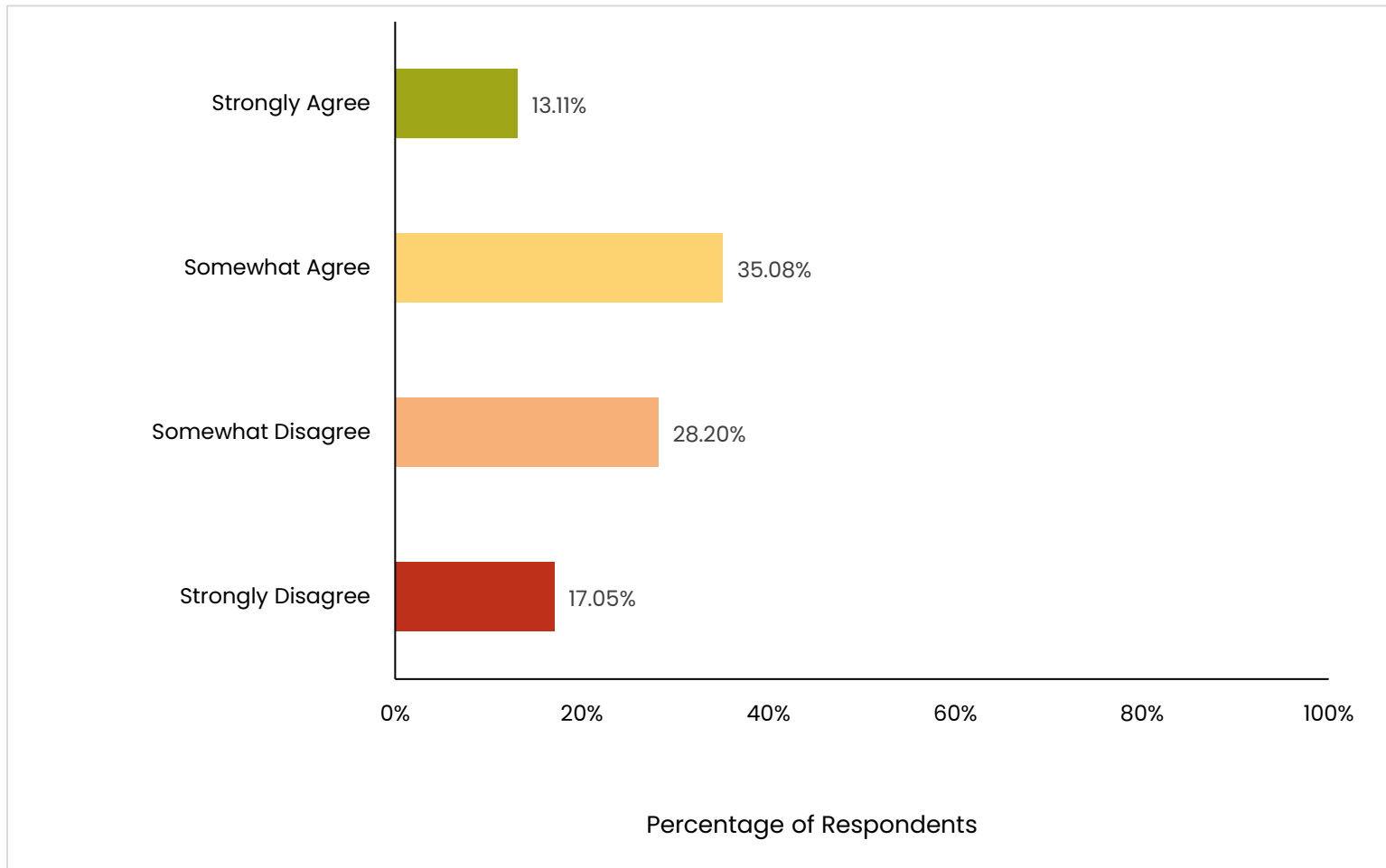


Question 5. Select how much you agree with the following statement: The amount of time I spend on writing IEPs is manageable for my current role.

Table 15. Overall Responses. Agreement ratings to the statement *“The amount of time I spend on writing IEPs is manageable for my current role.”* Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Strongly Agree	40	13.11%
Somewhat Agree	107	35.08%
Somewhat Disagree	86	28.20%
Strongly Disagree	52	17.05%
Not applicable	20	6.56%
Total	305	-

Figure 8. Overall Responses. Agreement ratings to the statement *“The amount of time I spend on writing IEPs is manageable for my current role.”* Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=305)



Evaluations

Question 6. For the following statements, select how many hours, on average, you spend per student on evaluations during the current school year:

a. Average time to complete an initial evaluation.

b. Average time to complete a re-evaluation.

Table 16. Overall Responses. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete initial and re-evaluations. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	Initial Evaluation		Re-Evaluation	
	N	%	N	%
Time (Hours)				
Less than 1 hour	4	1.32%	5	1.64%
1-2 hours	9	2.96%	29	9.54%
3-4 hours	30	9.87%	66	21.71%
5-6 hours	46	15.13%	68	22.37%
7-8 hours	47	15.46%	52	17.11%
9-10 hours	49	16.12%	26	8.55%
11+ Hours	72	23.68%	37	12.17%
Not Applicable	47	15.46%	21	6.91%
Total	304	-	304	-

Figure 9. Initial Evaluation. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete *initial evaluations*. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=304)

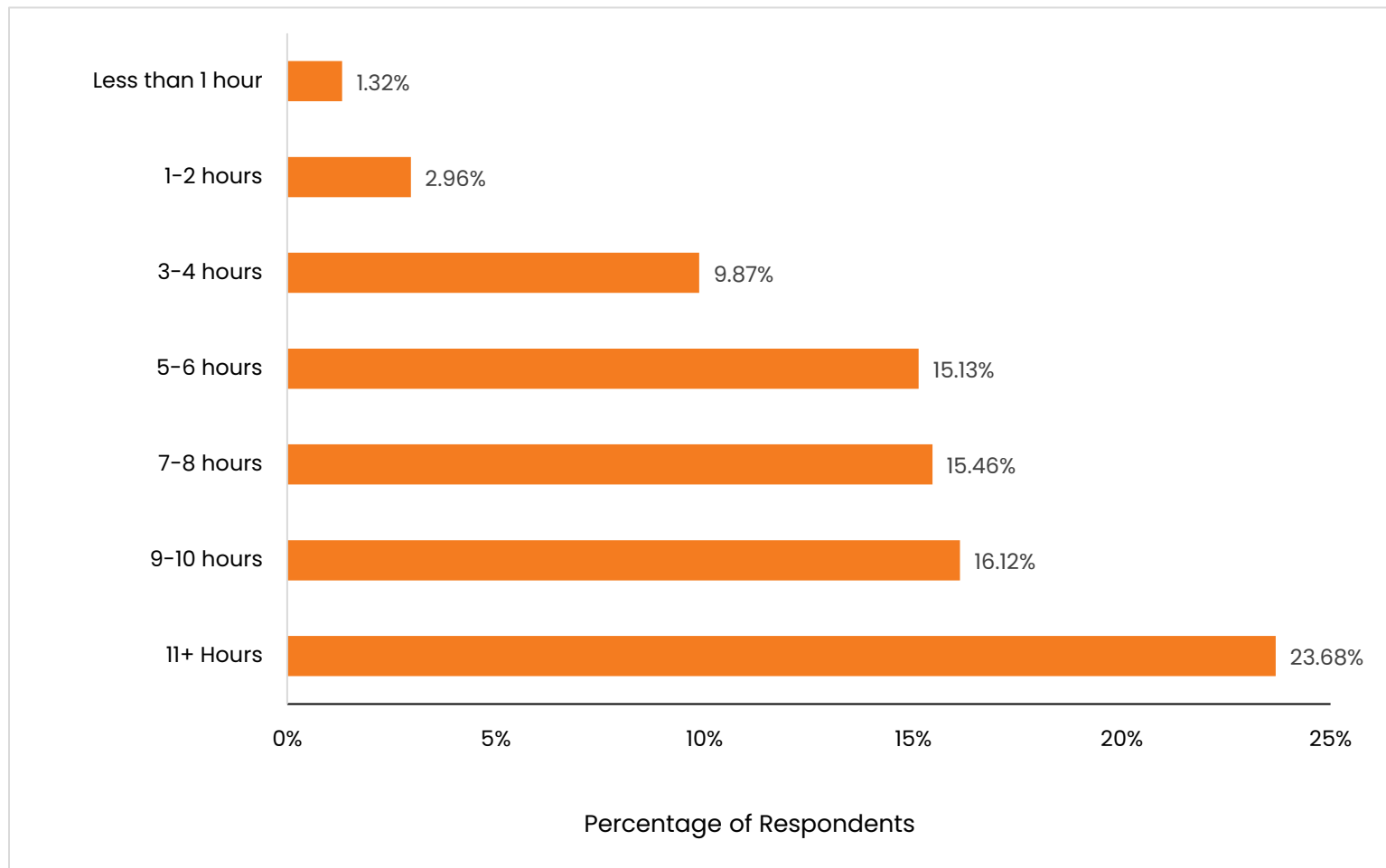
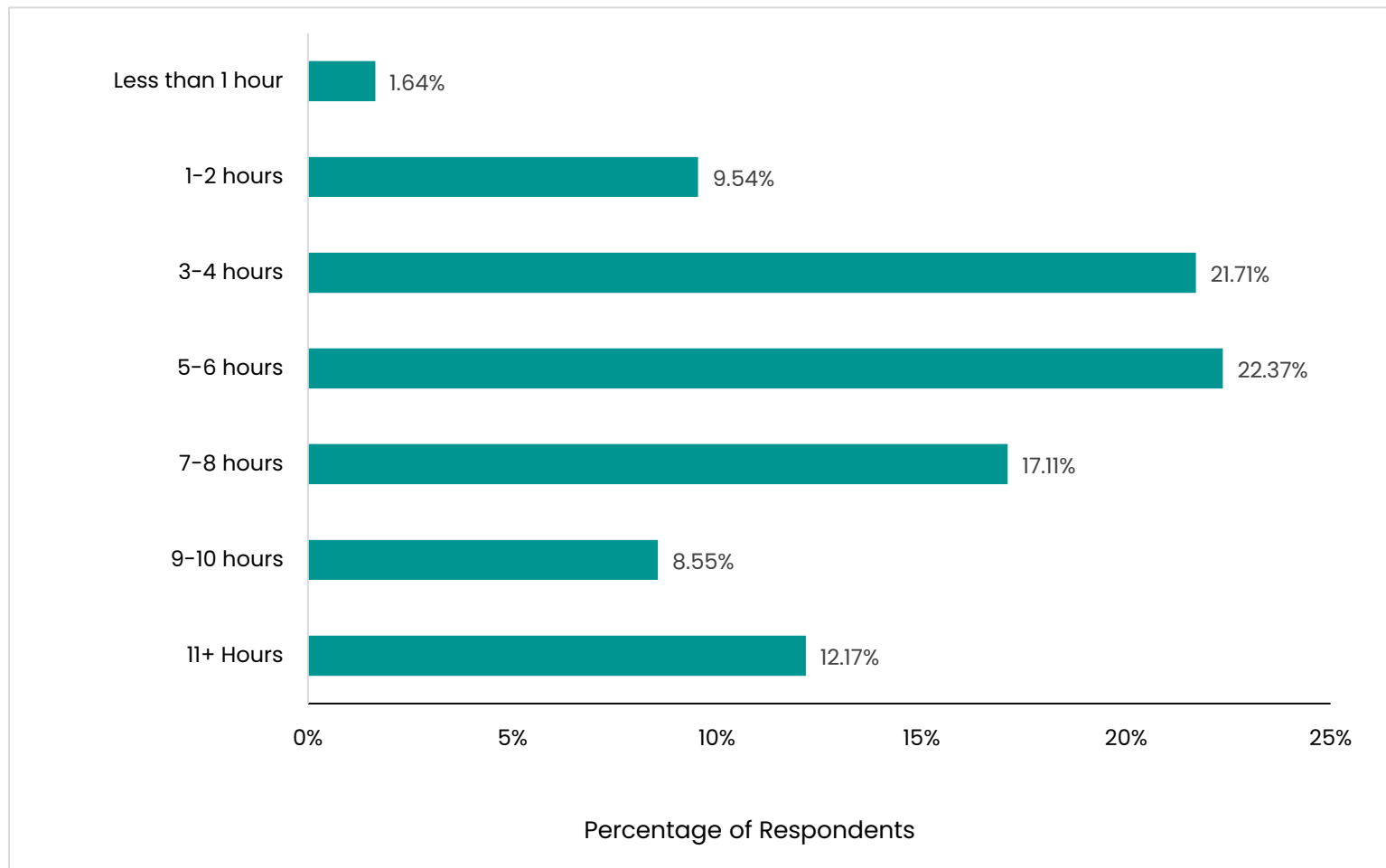


Figure 10. Re-Evaluation. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete re-evaluations. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=304)

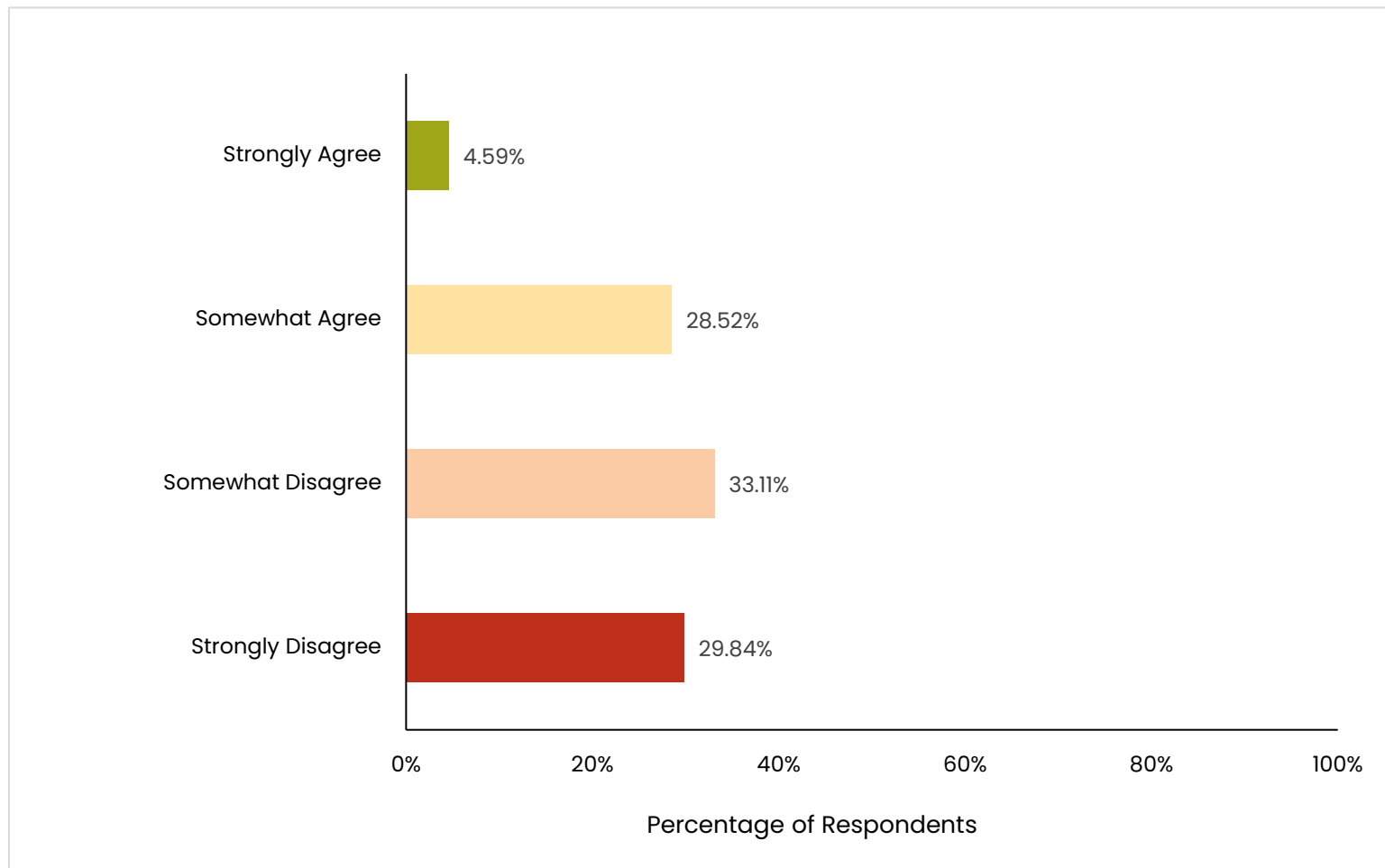


Question 7. Select how much you agree to the following statement: *The amount of time I spend completing evaluations is manageable for my current role.*

Table 17. Overall Responses. Agreement ratings for the statement “*The amount of time I spend completing evaluations is manageable for my current role.*” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Strongly Agree	14	4.59%
Somewhat Agree	87	28.52%
Somewhat Disagree	101	33.11%
Strongly Disagree	91	29.84%
Not applicable	12	3.93%
Total	305	-

Figure 11. Overall Responses. Agreement ratings for the statement, *“The amount of time I spend completing evaluations is manageable for my current role.”* Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=305)



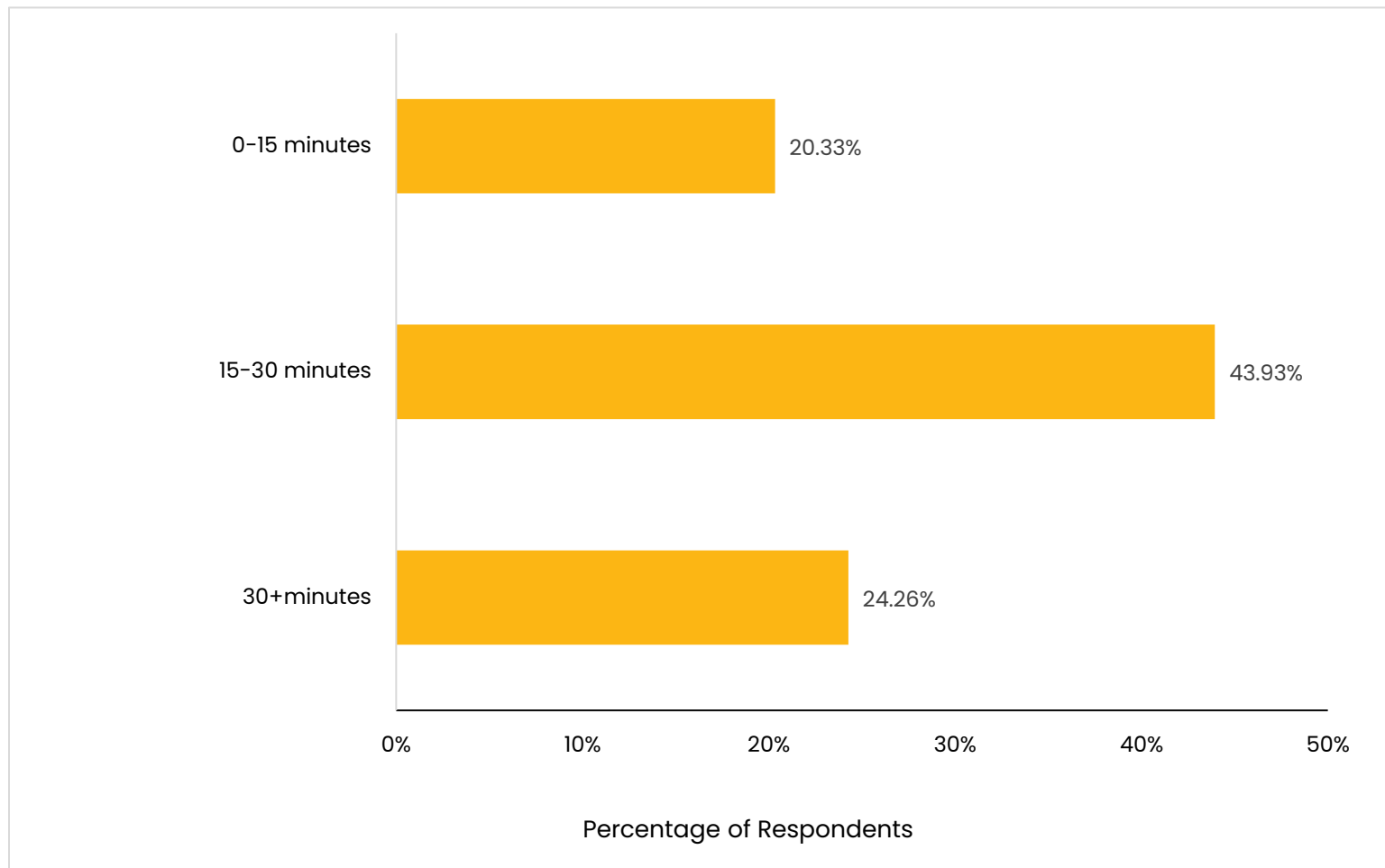
Planning

Question 8. How many minutes does it take you to complete an average progress report?

Table 18. Overall Responses. Time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete an average progress report. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Time (Minutes)		
0-15 min	62	20.33%
15-30 min	134	43.93%
30+ min	74	24.26%
Not Applicable	35	11.48%
Total	305	-

Figure 12. Overall Responses. Time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported it takes to complete an average progress report. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=305)

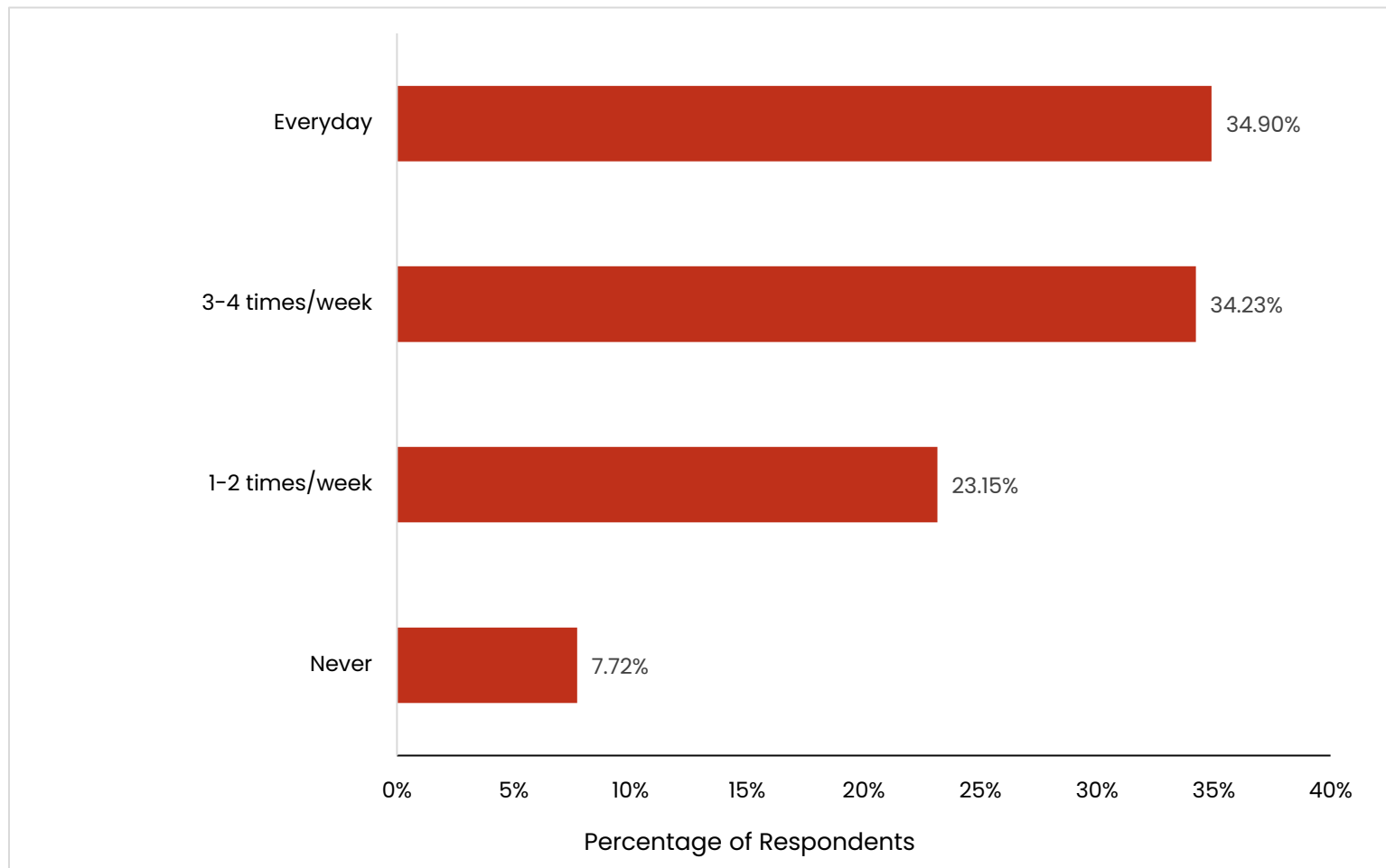


Question 9. In general, how often do you get your prep time?

Table 19. Overall Responses. Frequency of *prep time* educators and service providers reported receiving. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Frequency		
Everyday	104	34.90%
3-4 times/week	102	34.23%
1-2 times/week	69	23.15%
Never	23	7.72%
Total	298	-

Figure 13. Overall Responses. Frequency of *prep time* educators and service providers reported receiving.
 Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the
 question. (N=298)

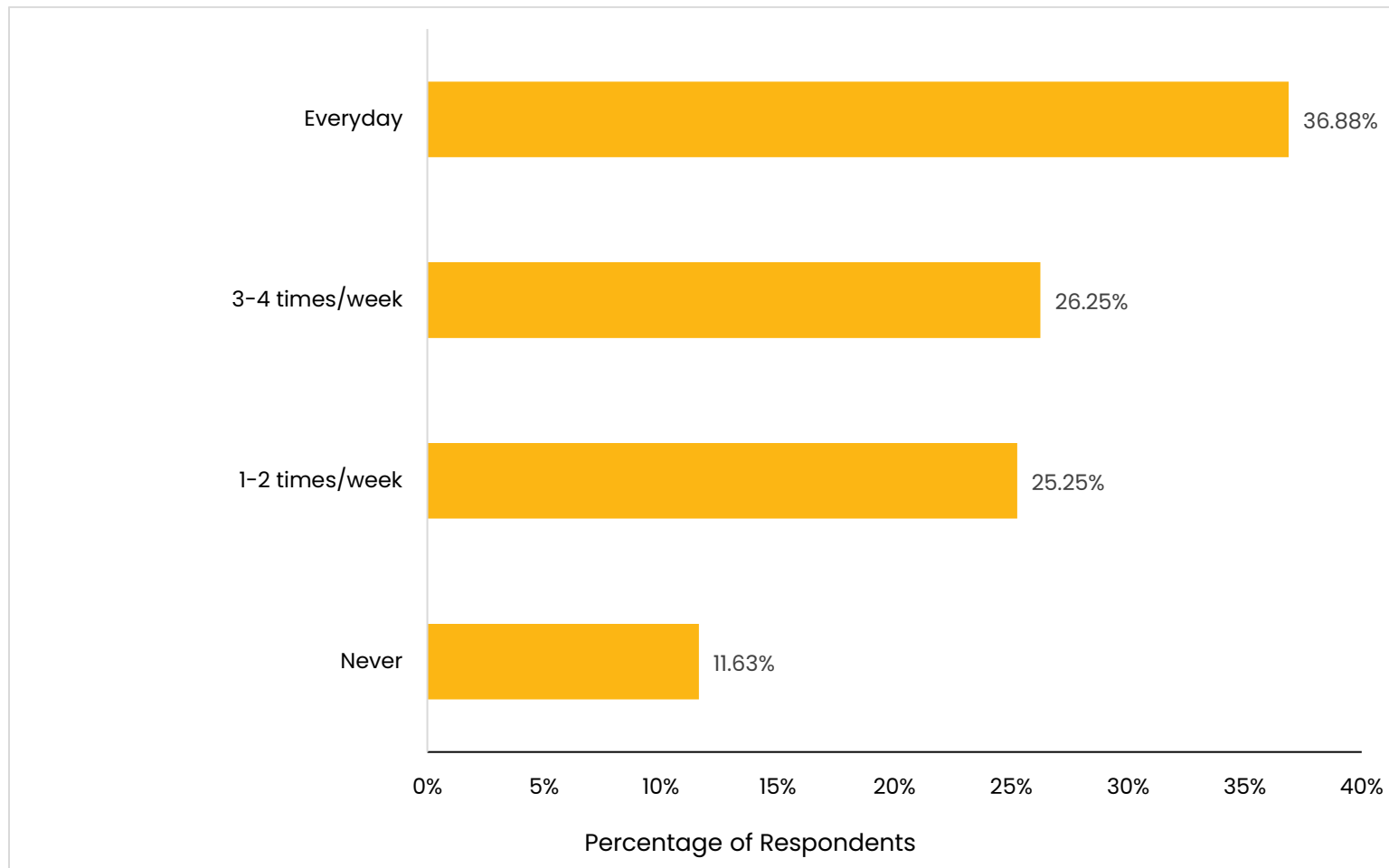


Question 10. In general, how often do you get your duty-free lunch?

Table 20. Overall Responses. Frequency of *duty-free lunch* educators and service providers reported receiving. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Frequency		
Everyday	111	36.88%
3-4 times/week	79	26.25%
1-2 times/week	76	25.25%
Never	35	11.63%
Total	301	-

Figure 14. Overall Responses. Frequency of duty-free lunch educators and service providers reported receiving. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=301)

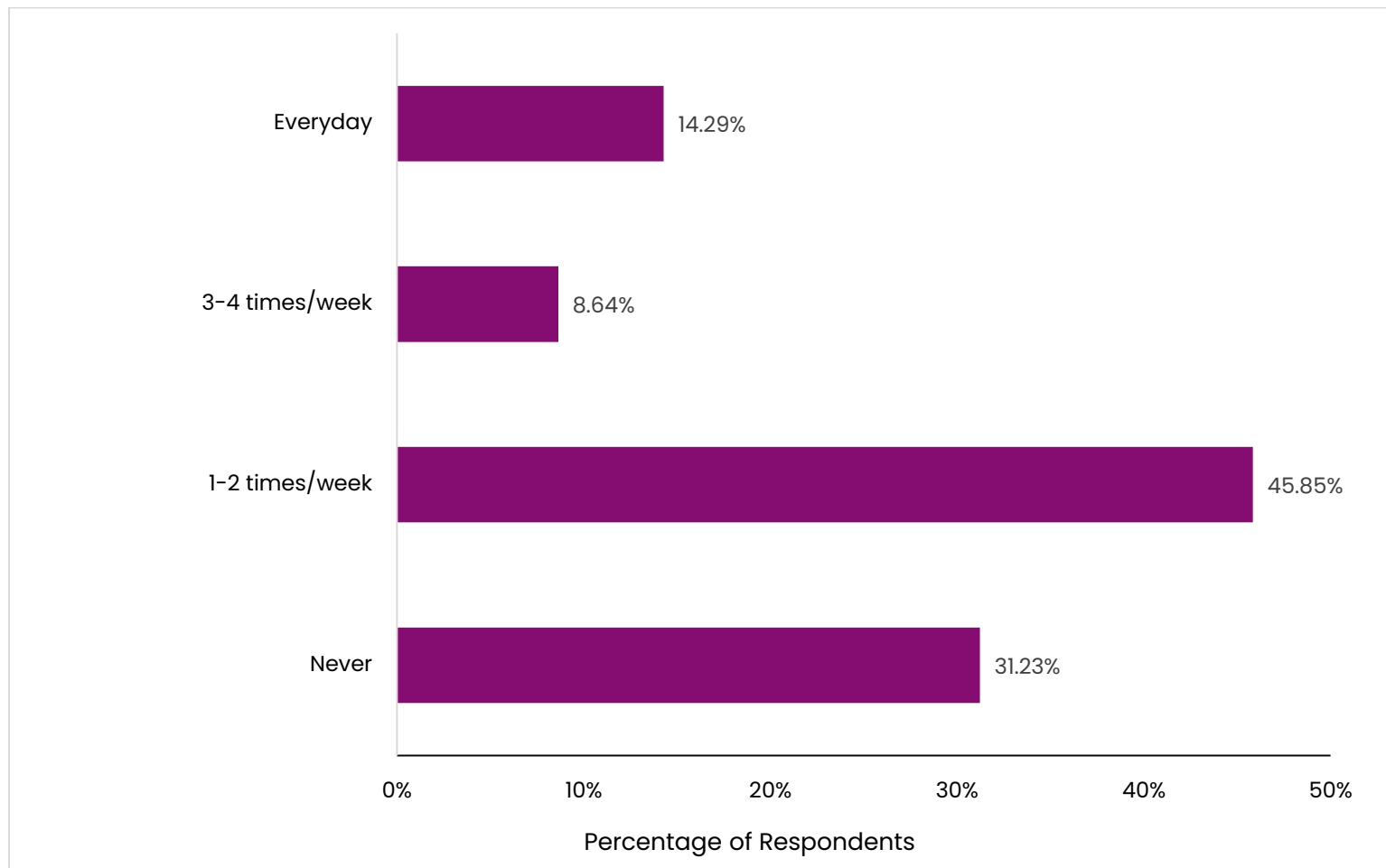


Question 11. How often do you meet with General Education colleagues?

Table 21. Overall Responses. Frequency that educators and service providers reported they meet with General Education colleagues. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Frequency		
Everyday	43	14.29%
3-4 times/week	26	8.64%
1-2 times/week	138	45.85%
Never	94	31.23%
Total	301	-

Figure 15. Overall Responses. Frequency that educators and service providers reported they meet with General Education colleagues. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=301)



Question 12. For the following statements, select how many hours in general you spend doing each activity in an average week:

- a. Planning and preparing specialized instruction.***
- b. Planning or adjusting workload to accommodate shifts in student needs due to students transferring into and out of school.***

Table 22. Overall Responses. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes for (a) planning and prepping specialized instruction and (b) planning and adjusting workload to accommodate shifts in student needs due to transferring into and out of schools. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	Planning/Prep Specialized Instruction		Planning/Adjusting Workload	
	N	%	N	%
Time (Hours)				
Less than 1 hour	7	2.33%	67	22.33%
1-2 hours	50	16.67%	116	38.67%
3-4 hours	83	27.67%	45	15.00%
5-6 hours	64	21.33%	15	5.00%
7-8 hours	30	10.00%	10	3.33%
9-10 hours	19	6.33%	5	1.67%
11+ Hours	13	4.33%	4	1.33%
Not Applicable	34	11.33%	38	12.67%
Total	300	-	300	-

Figure 16. Planning and preparing specialized instruction. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes for *planning and prepping specialized instruction*. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=300)

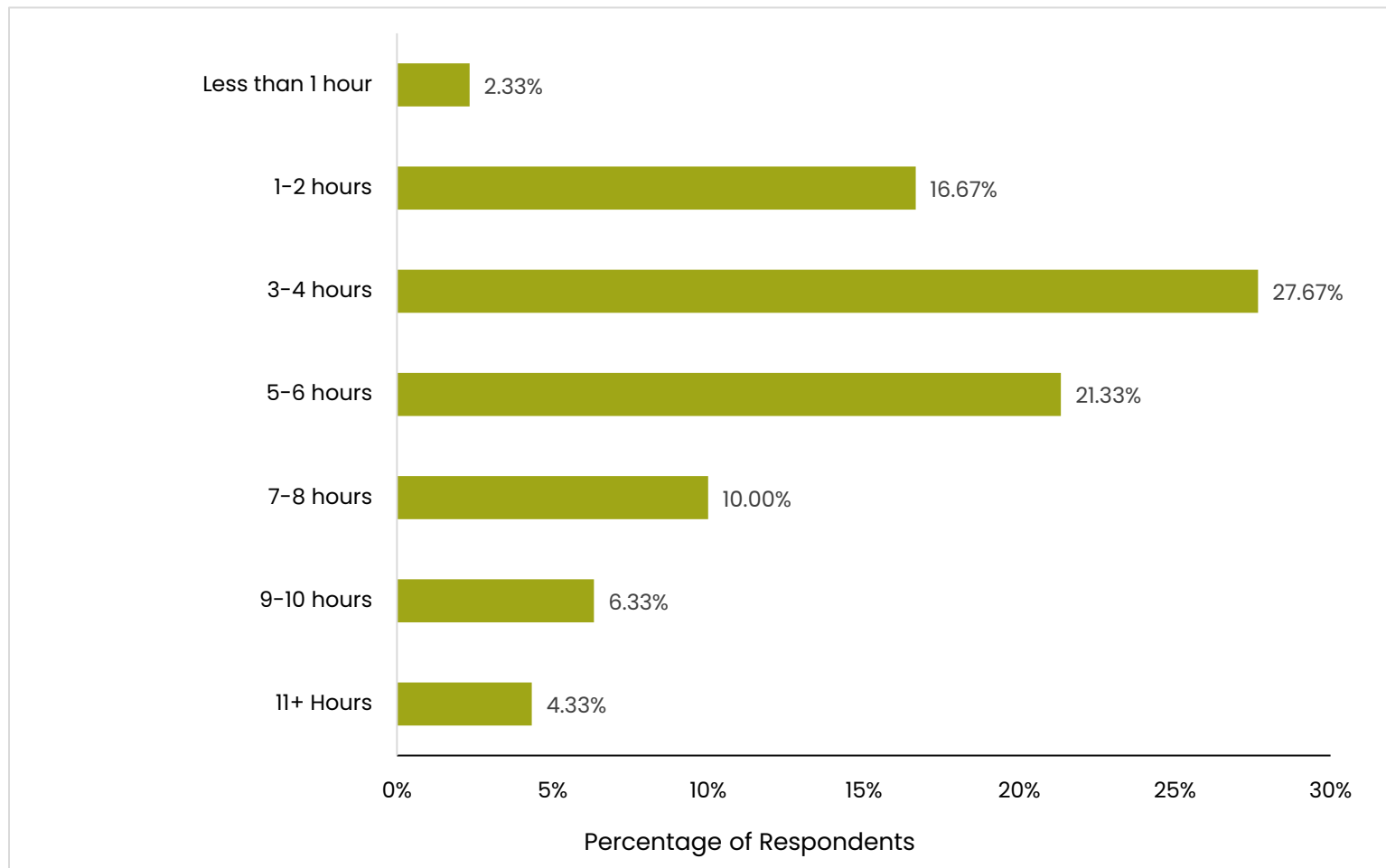
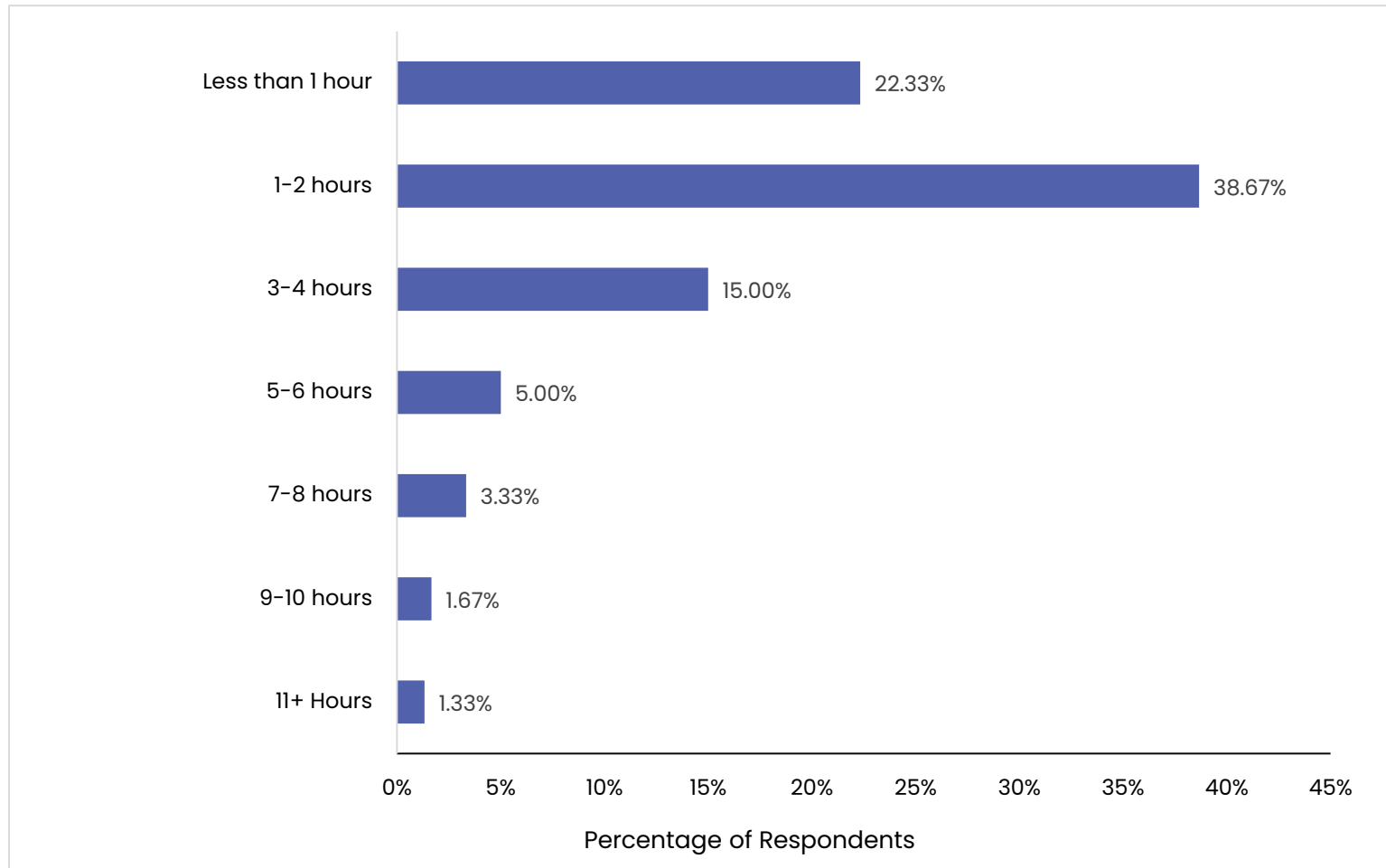


Figure 17. Planning or adjusting workload to accommodate shifts in student needs due to students transferring into and out of school. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported it takes for planning or adjusting workload to accommodate shifts in student needs. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=300)

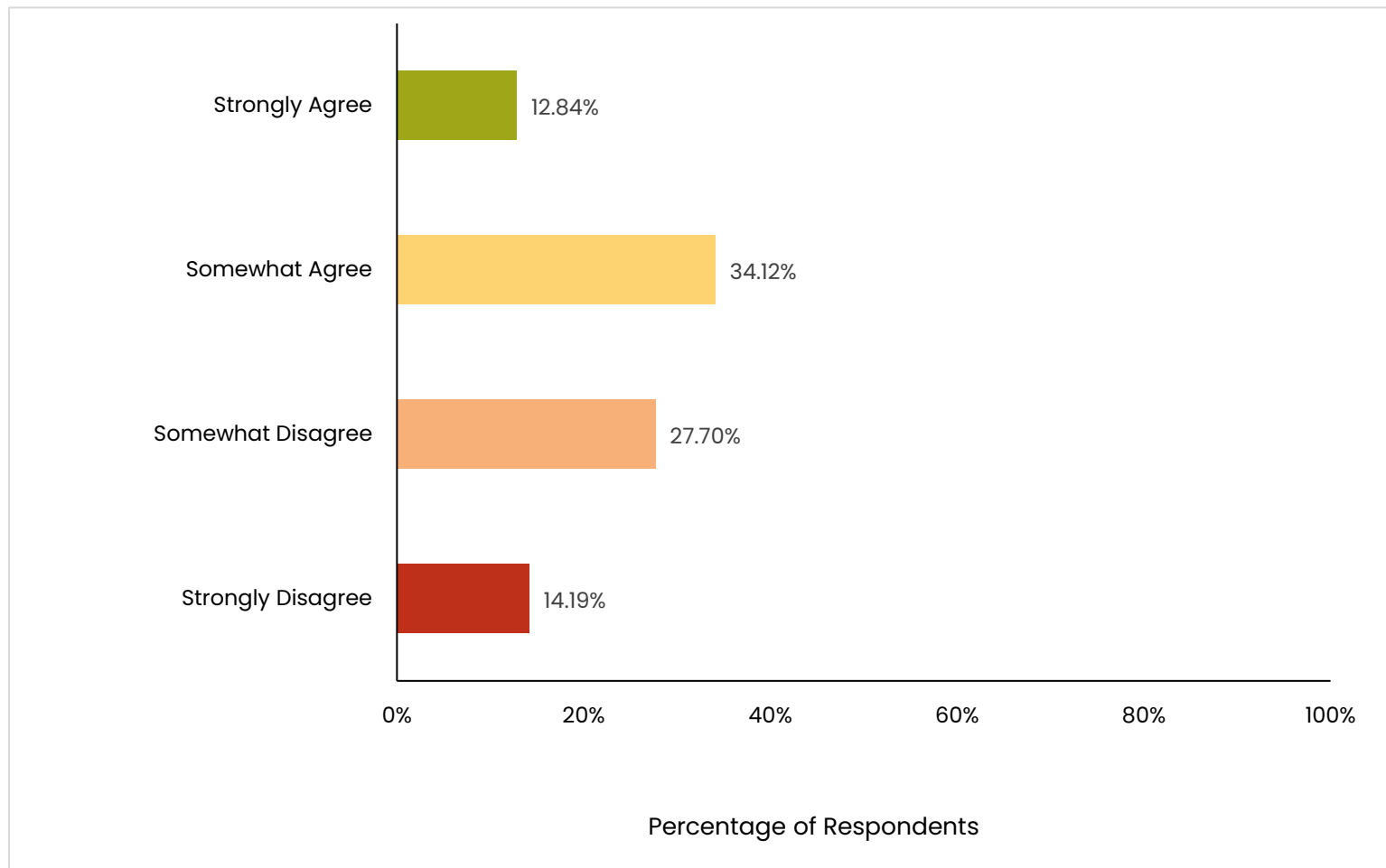


Question 13. How much do you agree with the following statement: *The amount of time I spend on adjusting workload is manageable in my current role.*

Table 23. Overall Responses. Agreement rating for the statement “*The amount of time I spend on adjusting workload is manageable in my current role.*” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Strongly Agree	38	12.84%
Somewhat Agree	101	34.12%
Somewhat Disagree	82	27.70%
Strongly Disagree	42	14.19%
Not applicable	33	11.15%
Total	296	-

Figure 18. Overall Responses. Agreement rating for the statement “*The amount of time I spend on adjusting workload is manageable in my current role.*” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=296)



Due Process Paperwork

Question 14. Daily, how much time is currently allocated in your schedule for due process time?

Table 24. Overall Responses. Time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported they are allocated for due process. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Time (Minutes)		
0	111	36.51%
1-30	65	21.38%
31-60	99	32.57%
61-90	4	1.32%
91-120	7	2.30%
121-150	2	0.66%
151-180	6	1.97%
181-210	1	0.33%
211-240	2	0.66%
241-270	0	0.00%
271-300	2	0.66%
301-330	1	0.33%
331-360	2	0.66%
361-390	2	0.66%
Total	304	-

Table 25. Overall Responses. Descriptive statistics for the time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported they are allocated for due process. (N=304)

	Mean	Min	Max	Mode
Time (Minutes)	47.02	0	390	0

Table 26. Position. Descriptive statistics for the time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported they are allocated for due process disaggregated by position (ordered from highest to lowest mean) (N=285)

Position	Mean	Min	Max
School Psychologist	269.33	1	390
Physical Therapist	75.00	0	240
Occupational Therapist	60.00	0	180
ECSE Provider	51.00	0	360
Speech/Language Provider	50.41	0	360
FSIII/Program Teacher	45.81	0	275

	Mean	Min	Max
Deaf/Hard of Hearing Itinerant	45.00	30	60
DAPE Provider	30.00	30	30
Other	30.00	0	60
Nurse	23.85	0	180
Music Therapist	19.29	0	45
School Social Worker	1.67	0	10
SERT	32.91	0	150

Figure 19. Position. Average time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported they are allocated for due process disaggregated by position. (N=285)

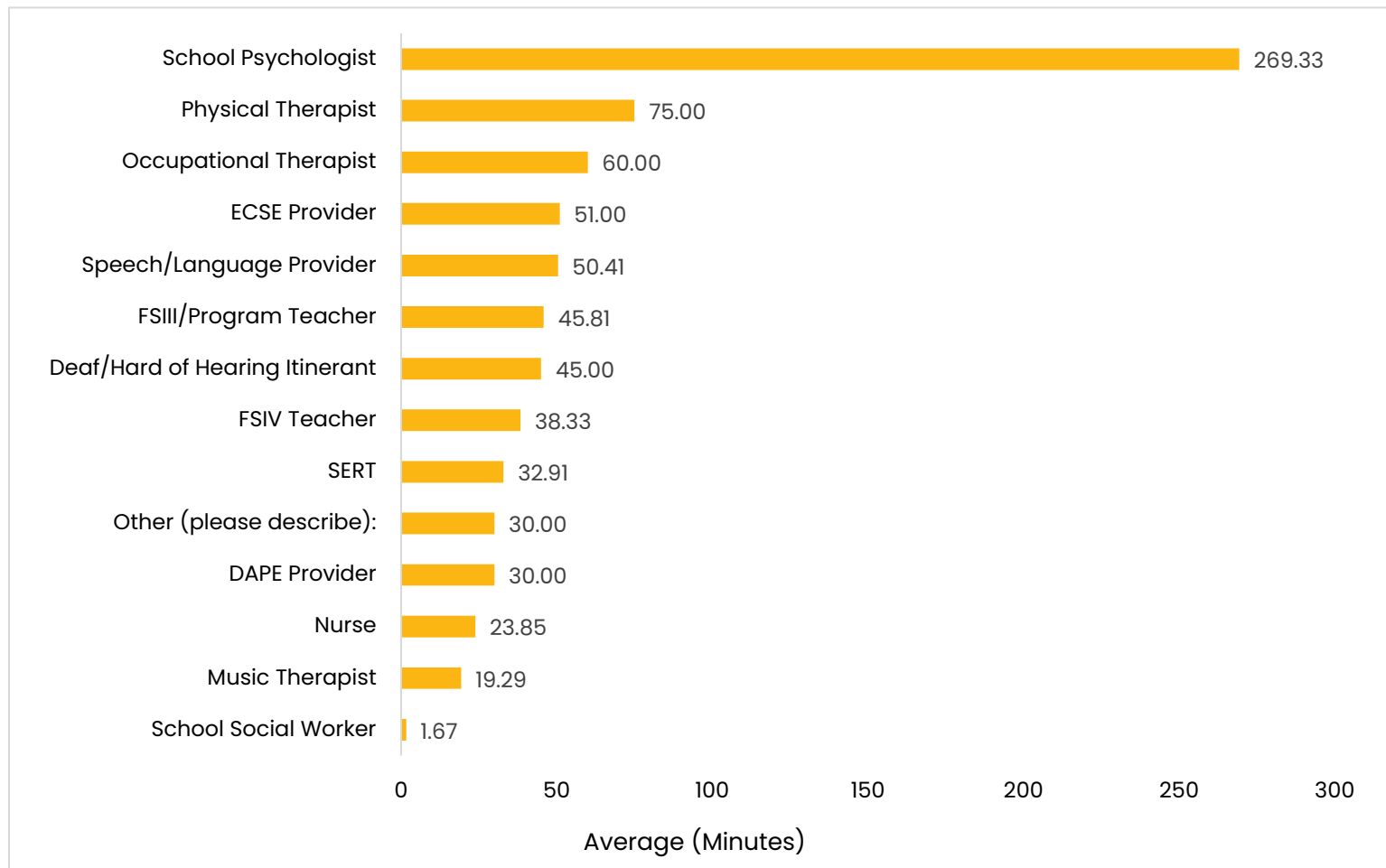
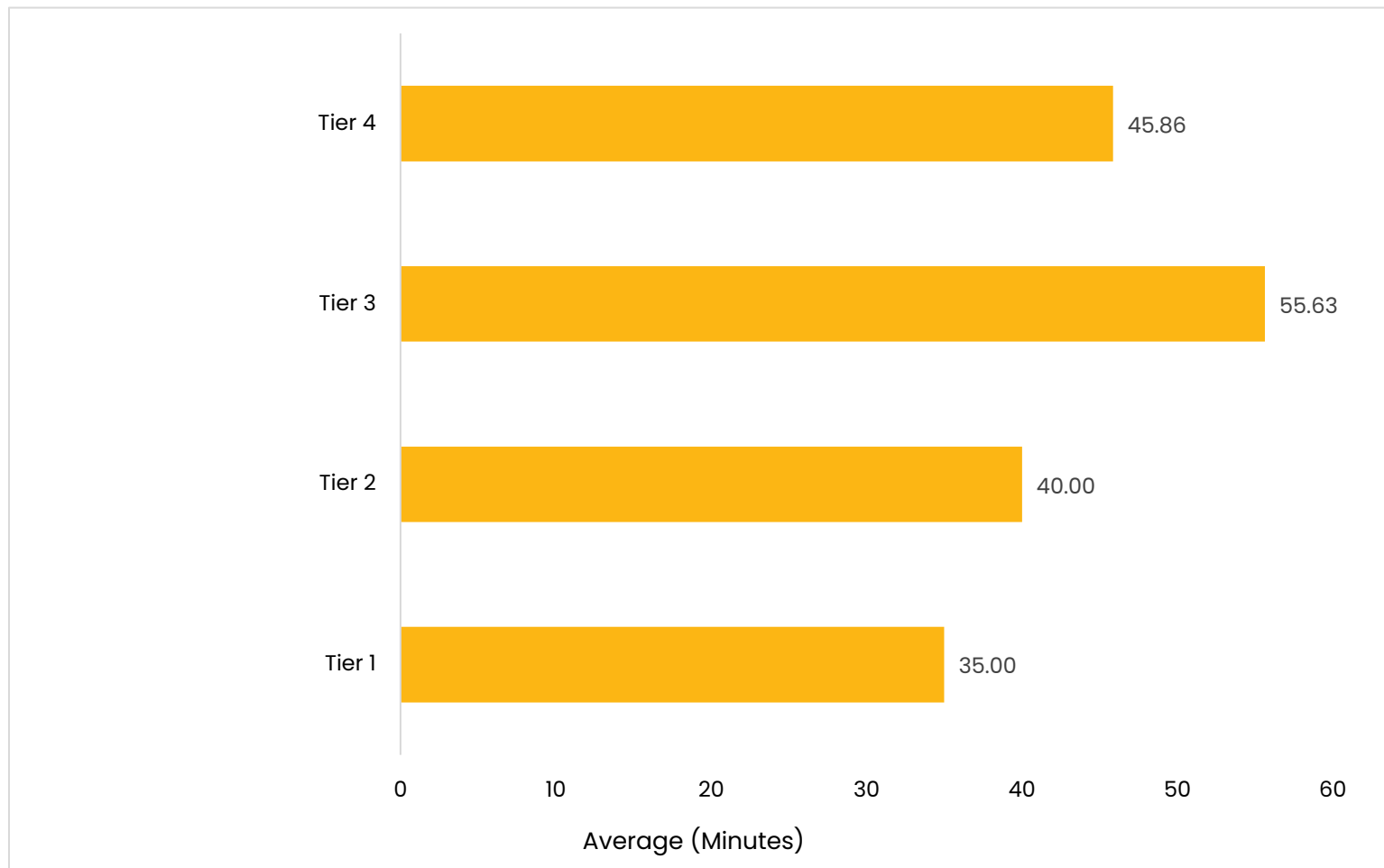


Table 27. Licensure. Descriptive statistics for the time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported they are allocated for due process disaggregated by licensure. (N=247)

	Mean	Min	Max
Licensure			
Tier 1	35.00	0	120
Tier 2	40.00	0	365
Tier 3	55.63	0	390
Tier 4	45.86	0	360

Figure 20. Licensure. Average time (in minutes) that educators and service providers reported they are allocated for due process disaggregated by licensure. (N=247)

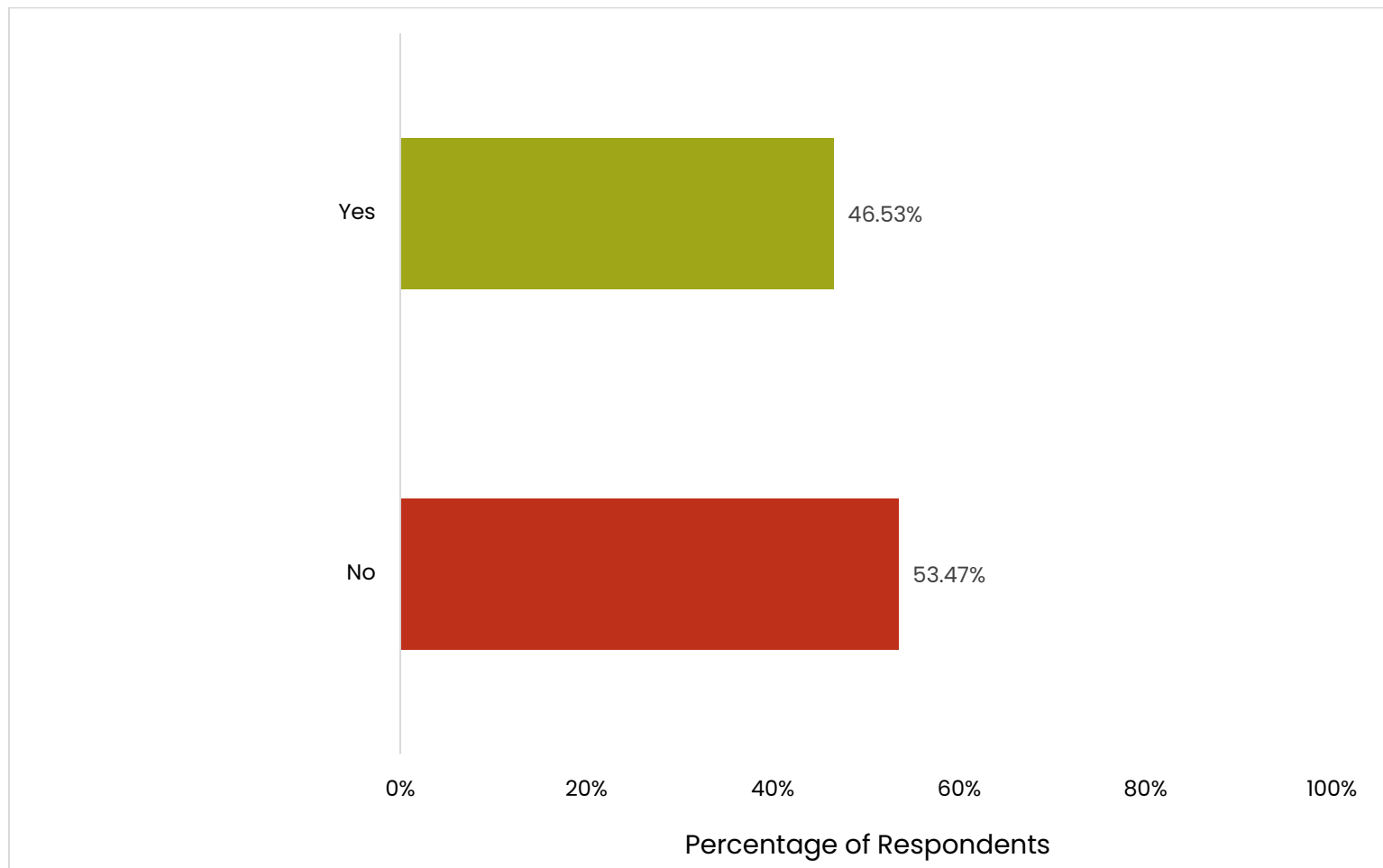


Question 15. Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?

Table 28. Overall Responses. Responses (Yes/No) to the question “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Yes	134	46.53 %
No	154	53.47 %
Total	288	-

Figure 21. Responses (Yes/No) to the question “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=288)

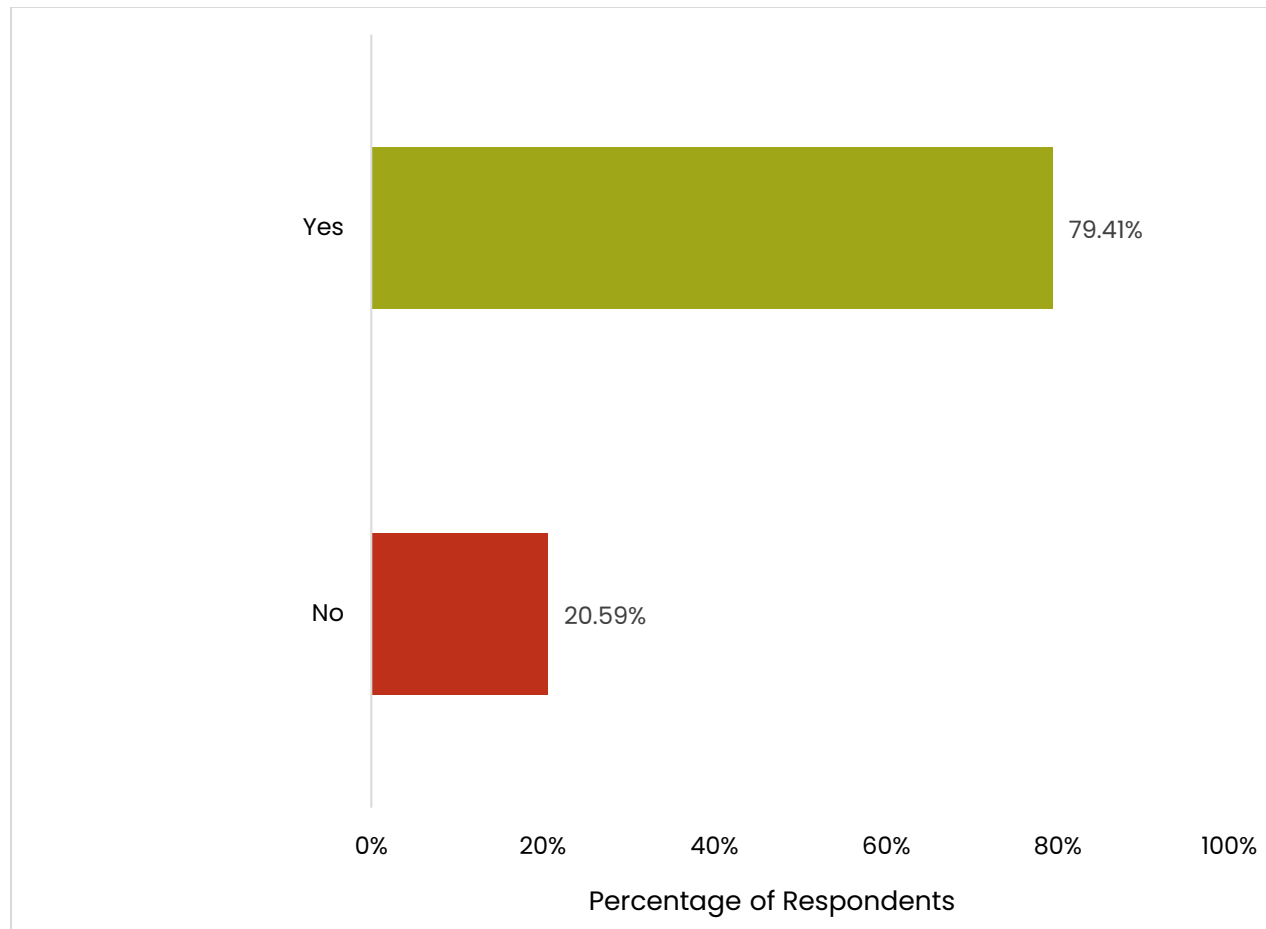


a. If they selected “Yes” → Does allocated due process time in your schedule decrease the time spent completing due process paperwork outside of duty hours?

Table 29. Overall Responses for those who selected “Yes” for Question 15. For respondents that selected “Yes” to question 15, “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?”, they were then asked, “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?”. Responses (Yes/No) are shown in the table below. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Yes	108	79.41%
No	28	20.59%
Total	136	-

Figure 22. Overall Responses for those who selected “Yes” for Question 15. For respondents that selected “Yes” to question 15, “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?”, they were then asked, “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?”. Responses (Yes/No) are shown in the graph below. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=136)



b. If they selected “No” → If applicable, what prevents you from being able to utilize your allocated due process time?

Table 30. Overall Responses for those who selected “No” for Question 15. For respondents that selected “No” to question 15, “Are you able to utilize this time to complete due process paperwork?”, they were then asked, “If applicable, what prevents you from being able to utilize your allocated due process time?” The table below shows emerging themes from a random sample of 20 responses around what prevents staff from utilizing allocated due process time (N=20).

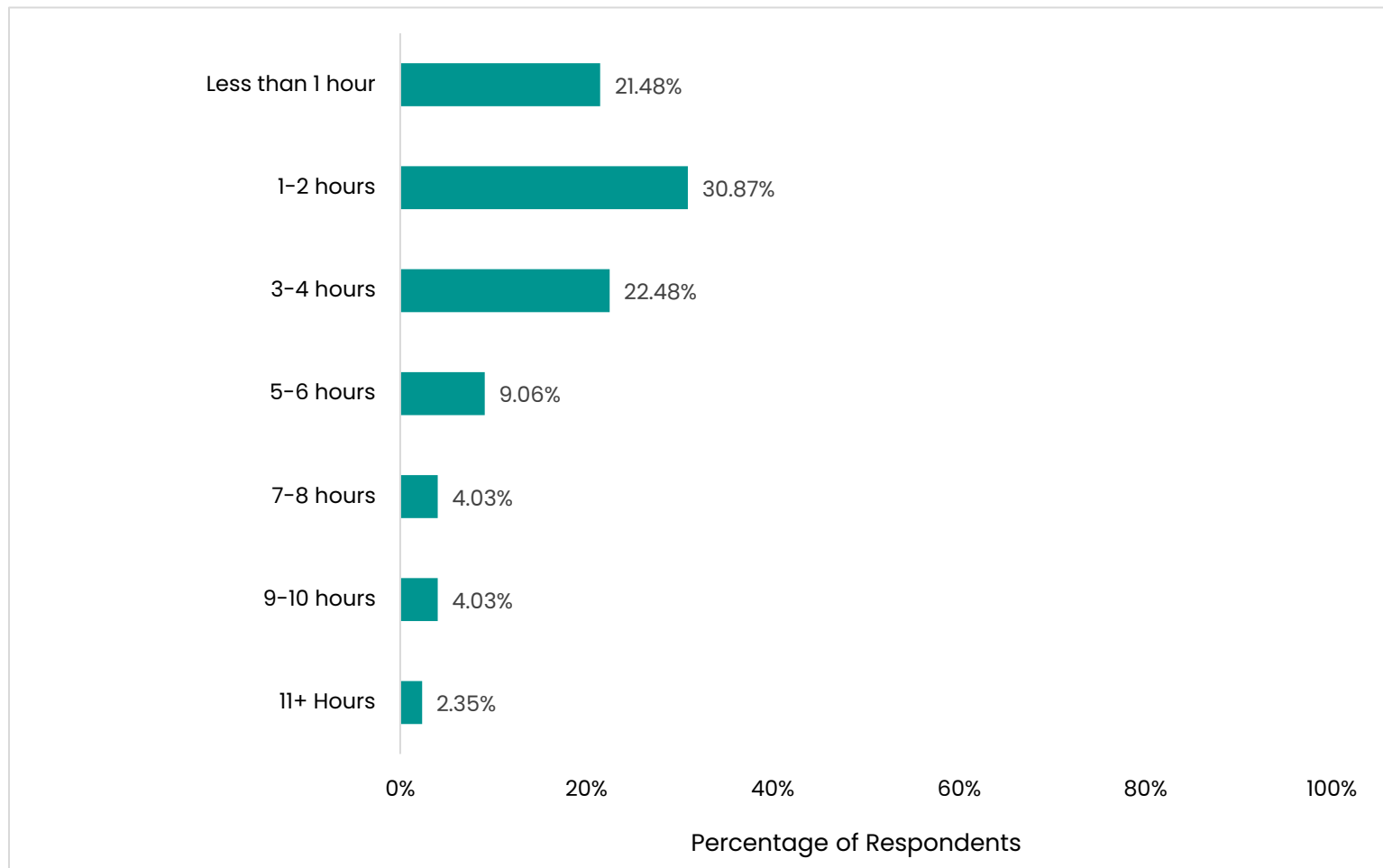
Theme/Subtheme	Theme Description	Instances
Unpredictable Instances	Instances that come up unplanned during due process time.	12
Class Coverage	Needing to cover a classroom that is low staffed	2
Equipment Issues	Addressing equipment and technology issues that arise	2
Student Needs	Attending to various student needs	8
Other Job Duties	Other job duties/expectations that take up time allocated for due process time.	13
Emails/Phone Calls	Emailing/calling staff, parents, etc.	3
Evaluations	Initial and re-evaluations for students	3
Meetings	Meetings with other staff, students, and/or caregivers	7
Other Prep Needs	Need to prep for other job duties, such as curriculum development, printing, etc.	4
Not Provided Time for Due Process	Are not allocated time for due process.	3
Commuting/Travel Time	Commuting/traveling to multiple sites or home visits during due process time.	2
Other	Anything else that prevents staff from utilizing due process time.	2

Question 16. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on due process paperwork outside of the duty day?

Table 31. Overall Responses. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported they are spending on due process paperwork outside of the duty day. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Time (Hours)		
Less than 1 hour	64	21.48%
1-2 hours	92	30.87%
3-4 hours	67	22.48%
5-6 hours	27	9.06%
7-8 hours	12	4.03%
9-10 hours	12	4.03%
11+ Hours	7	2.35%
Not applicable	17	5.70%
Total	298	-

Figure 23. Overall Responses. Time (in hours) that educators and service providers reported they are spending on due process paperwork outside of the duty day. Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=298)

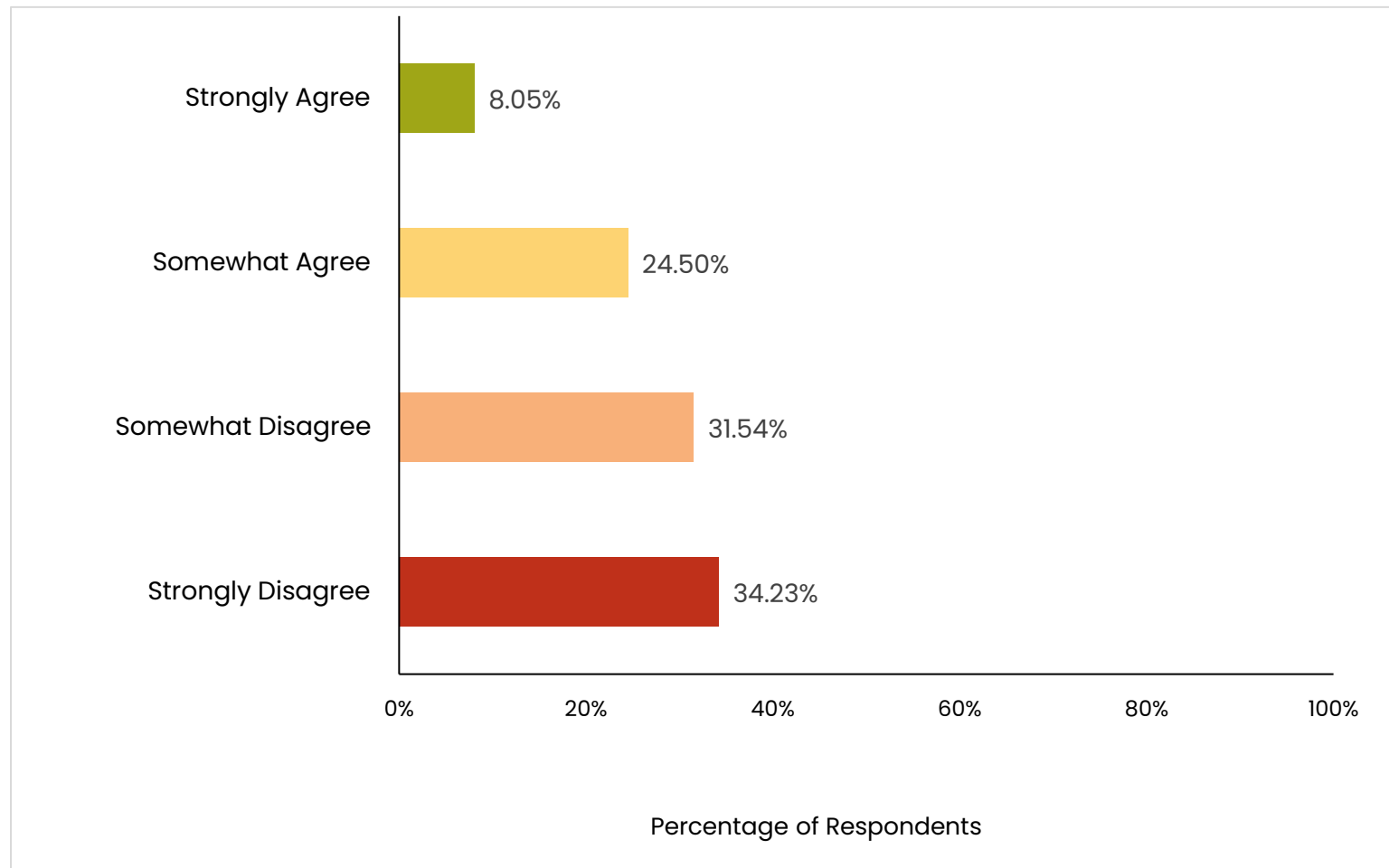


Question 17. How much do you agree with the following statement: *The amount of time I spend on due process paperwork is manageable in my current role.*

Table 32. Overall Responses. Agreement ratings to the statement “*The amount of time I spend on due process paperwork is manageable in my current role.*” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Strongly Agree	24	8.05%
Somewhat Agree	73	24.50%
Somewhat Disagree	94	31.54%
Strongly Disagree	102	34.23%
Not applicable	5	1.68%
Total	298	-

Figure 24. Overall Responses. Agreement ratings to the statement “*The amount of time I spend on due process paperwork is manageable in my current role.*” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=298)



Summary

Question 18. If one thing could be taken off your plate to have a more balanced workload, what would it be?

Table 33. Overall Responses. Response selections to the question “If one thing could be taken off your plate to have a more balanced workload, what would it be?” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question.

	N	%
Selections		
Clerical due process work (meeting notices, sending progress reports, PWNs, etc.)	89	31.67%
Other (please describe):	86	30.60%
Completing initial evaluations	59	21.00%
Being the default behaviors dean for students on your caseload	33	11.74%
SEA management	7	2.49%
Bus duty	7	2.49%
Total	281	-

Figure 25. Overall Responses. Response selections to the question “If one thing could be taken off your plate to have a more balanced workload, what would it be?” Percentage (%) represents the proportion of responses to each option out of the total responses to the question. (N=281)

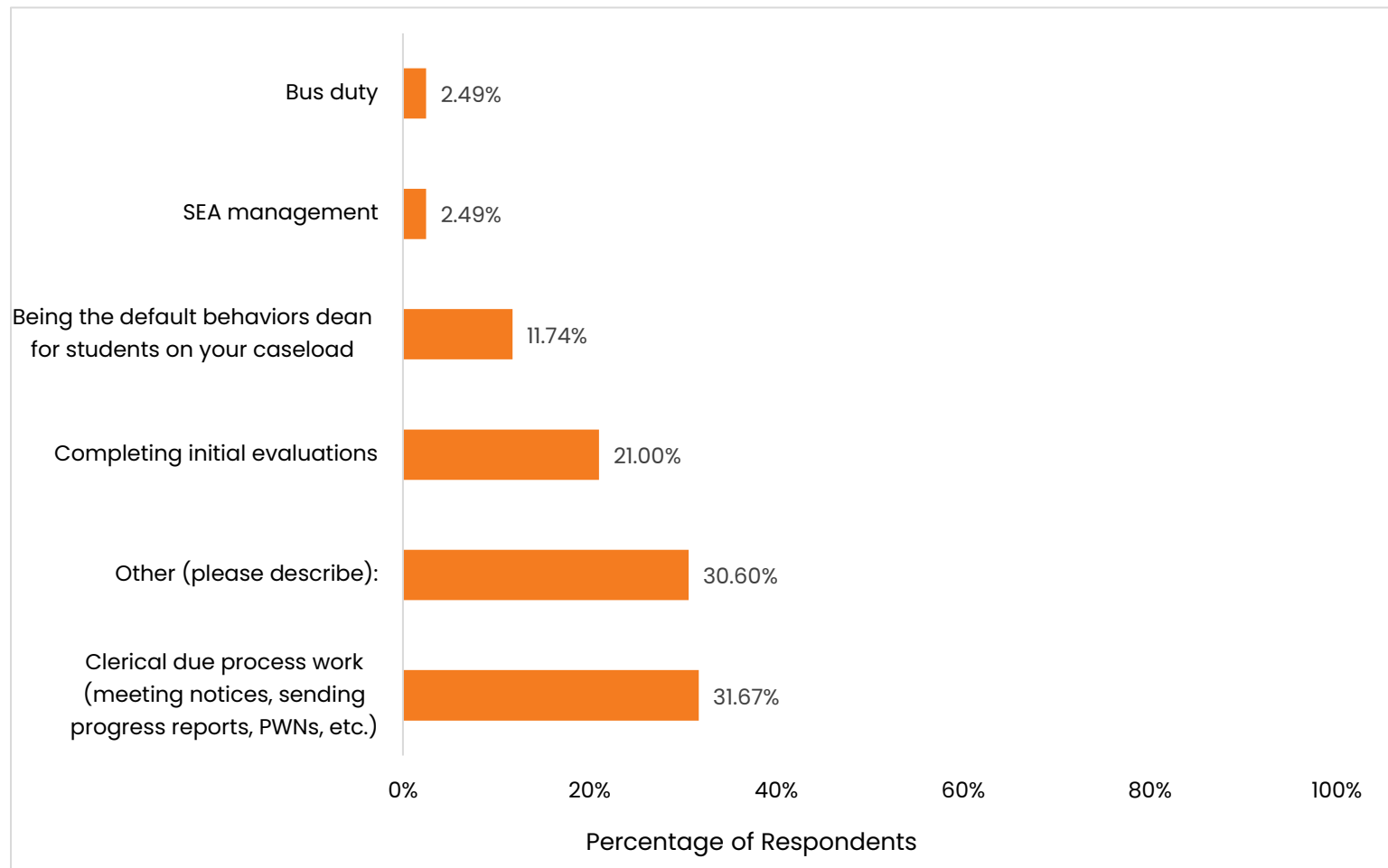


Table 34. Other (Please Describe) Text Responses. Emerging themes from a random sample of 20 open-ended responses around what could be taken off their plate to make their workload more balanced (N=20)

Theme/Subtheme	Theme Description	Instances
Reducing Caseload	Reducing number of students on caseloads.	9
Evaluations	Reducing the number of evaluations conducted.	4
Paperwork	Reducing amount and complications of paperwork.	4
Additional prep time	Would like additional prep time for workload.	4
Curriculum Planning	Reduce the amount of curriculum planning work.	2
Clerical work	Reduce the amount of clerical work (phone calls/emails, scheduling meetings, etc.).	1
Additional Support Staff	Would like additional support staff to support them in the classroom.	1
Non-Public Services	Reduce amount of time spent on non-public services.	1
Staff/Class Coverage	Reduce the time they spend covering for classrooms and staff.	1
Nothing	Nothing needs to be taken off plate.	1
Not Applicable	Not applicable for their current role.	1