

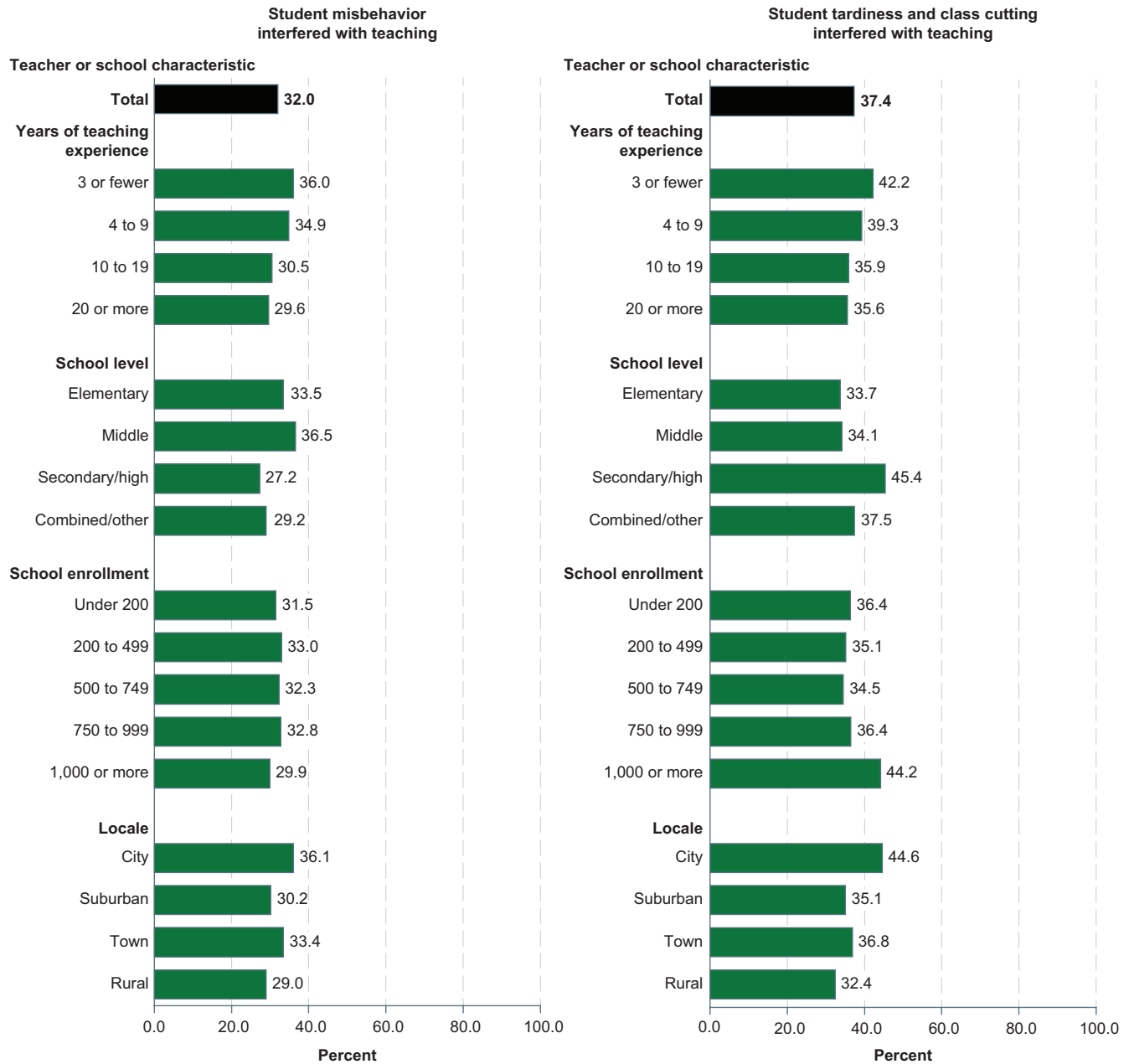
## Teachers' Reports of Disruptive Student Behaviors and Staff Rule Enforcement

*During the 2020–21 school year, 32 percent of public school teachers agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching, and 37 percent agreed that student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching.*

Managing inappropriate behaviors and classroom disruptions is time-consuming and takes away from instructional time and student engagement in academic behaviors.<sup>1</sup> In the 2015-16 and 2020-21 administrations of the National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), public school teachers were asked the extent to which they agreed that student misbehavior and student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching and the extent to which they agreed that school rules for student

behavior were enforced by other teachers and by the principal at their school. These questions were also asked in previous administrations of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) in 2011-12. The NTPS was designed to allow comparisons with SASS data. However, because the 2015-16 NTPS was only administered to public school teachers, whereas SASS and the 2020-21 NTPS were administered to both public and private school teachers, this indicator focuses on public school teachers only.

**Figure 1. Percentage of public school teachers who agreed that student misbehavior and student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching, by selected teacher and school characteristics: School year 2020–21**



NOTE: Teachers who taught only prekindergarten students are excluded. Percentages represent both teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed that student misbehavior or student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching.  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 230.90.

## Teachers' Reports of Disruptive Student Behaviors and Staff Rule Enforcement

During the 2020-21 school year, 32 percent of public school teachers agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching, and 37 percent agreed that student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching.<sup>2</sup> These percentages varied by teacher and school characteristics.

In this indicator, teachers are categorized into four groups based on years of experience. During the 2020-21 school year, the percentages of teachers who agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching were lower for the two groups with at least 10 years of teaching experience than for the two groups with fewer years of teaching experience. Specifically, the percentages were lower for teachers with 10-19 years of teaching experience (31 percent) or 20 or more years of teaching experience (30 percent) than for teachers with 3 or fewer years of teaching experience (36 percent) or 4-9 years of teaching experience (35 percent).

The percentage of teachers who agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching was also

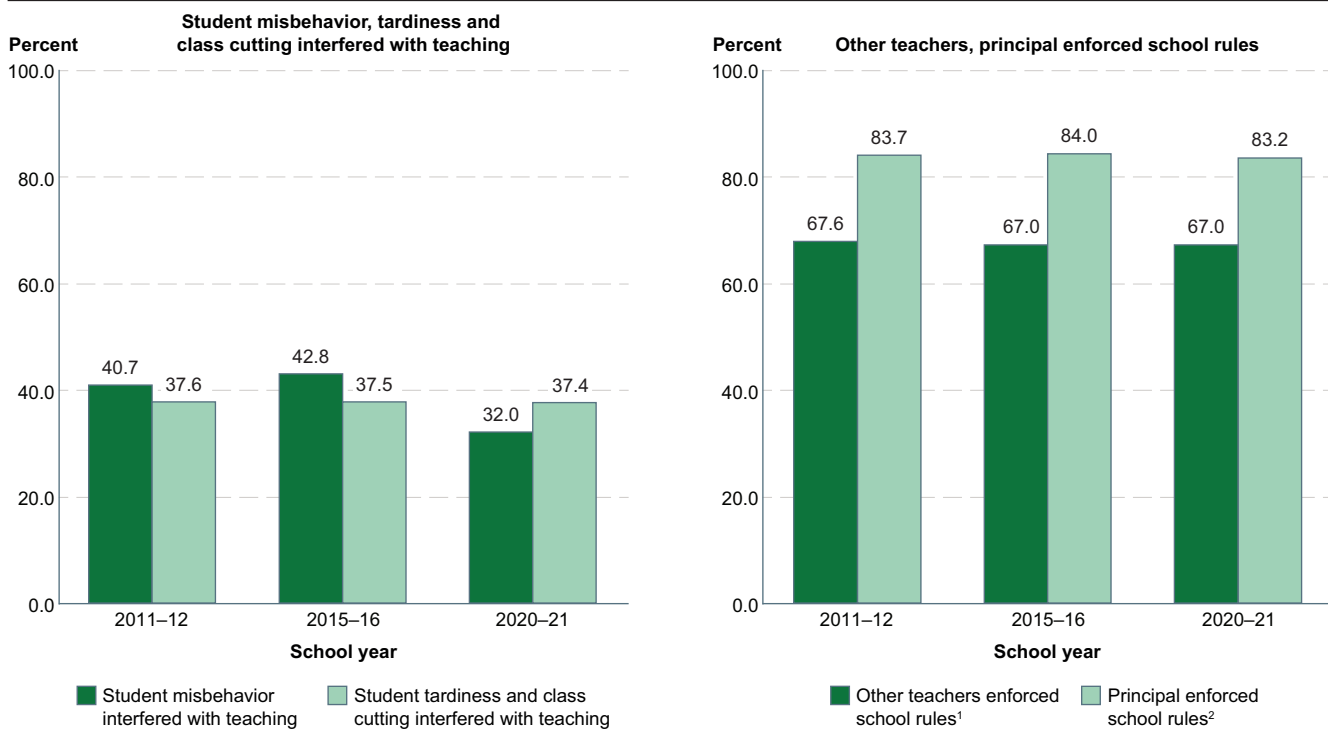
- higher for teachers in middle schools (37 percent) and elementary schools (33 percent) than in combined/other schools (29 percent) and secondary/high schools (27 percent);
- lower for teachers in schools with 1,000 or more students enrolled (30 percent) than in schools with 200 to 499 students (33 percent), 500 to 749 students (32 percent), or 750 to 999 students (33 percent); and
- higher for teachers in cities (36 percent) than for those in other locales (ranging from 29 to 33 percent).

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As noted above, 37 percent of public school teachers agreed that student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching in 2020-21. In general, patterns by teacher experience and school locale for these teachers were similar to those who agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching. However, patterns differed for school size and school level. Specifically, the percentage of teachers who agreed that student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching was

- lower for teachers in elementary and middle schools (34 percent each) than in combined/other schools (38 percent) and secondary/high schools (45 percent); and
- higher for teachers in schools with 1,000 or more students enrolled (44 percent) than in schools with smaller enrollment sizes (ranging from 35 to 36 percent).

**Figure 2. Percentage of public school teachers who agreed that student misbehavior and student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching, and percentage who agreed that other teachers and the principal enforced school rules: School years 2011–12, 2015–16, and 2020–21**



<sup>1</sup> Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes.”

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “my principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.”

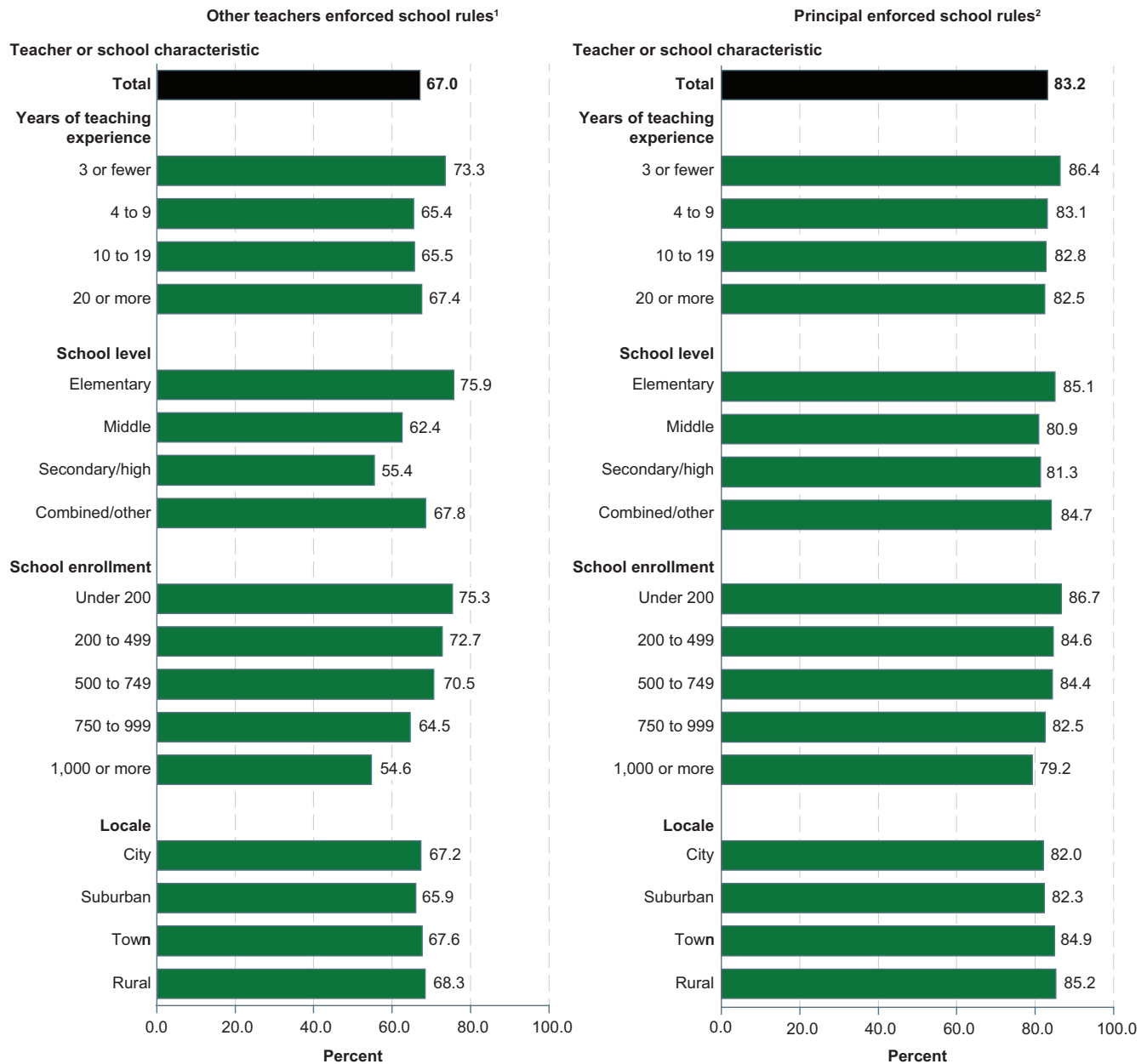
NOTE: Teachers who taught only prekindergarten students are excluded. Percentages represent both teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed that student misbehavior and student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching, as well as teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed that school rules were enforced by other teachers and the principal.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2011–12; and National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2015–16 and 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 230.90 and 230.92.

The percentage of public school teachers who agreed that student misbehavior interfered with their teaching was lower in 2020-21 (32 percent) than in 2011-12 and 2015-16 (41 and 43 percent, respectively). There were no measurable differences in the percentages of public school teachers who agreed that student tardiness and class cutting interfered with their teaching across these years (ranging from 37 to 38 percent).

It should be noted that the 2020 calendar year was the first year of the coronavirus pandemic, and many schools shifted instruction from in-person classes to online-only or hybrid education. Thus, in-person interactions between students and teachers may have been limited.

**Figure 3. Percentage of public school teachers who agreed that other teachers and the principal enforced school rules, by selected teacher and school characteristics: School year 2020–21**



<sup>1</sup> Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “rules for student behavior are consistently enforced by teachers in this school, even for students who are not in their classes.”

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement “my principal enforces school rules for student conduct and backs me up when I need it.”

NOTE: Teachers who taught only prekindergarten students are excluded. Percentages represent both teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed that school rules were enforced by other teachers and the principal.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Teacher Data File,” 2020–21. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, table 230.92.

## Teachers' Reports of Disruptive Student Behaviors and Staff Rule Enforcement

During the 2020-21 school year, 67 percent of public school teachers agreed that other teachers at their school enforced the school rules, and 83 percent agreed that the principal enforced the school rules. The following patterns were consistently observed for teachers' perceptions of rule enforcement by both other teachers and the principal:

- A higher percentage of teachers with 3 or fewer years of experience than of those with more years of experience agreed that rules were enforced.
- Higher percentages of teachers in elementary schools and combined/other schools than of teachers in middle schools and secondary/high schools agreed that rules were enforced.

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- The percentages of teachers who agreed that rules were enforced were generally higher for those in smaller schools than for those in larger schools.
- A higher percentage of teachers in rural schools than of those in suburban schools agreed that rules were enforced.

The percentage of public school teachers who agreed that school rules were enforced by other teachers was not measurably different in 2020-21 compared to 2011-12 or 2015-16. The percentage who agreed that rules were enforced by the principal was lower in 2020-21 (83 percent) than in 2015-16 (84 percent).

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### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Riley, J.L., McKeivitt, B.C., Shriver, M.D., and Allen, K.D. (2011). Increasing On-Task Behavior Using Teacher Attention Delivered on a Fixed-Time Schedule. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 20(3): 149-162.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages represent both teachers who “strongly” agreed and those who “somewhat” agreed with the statement.

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**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2022*, tables 230.90 and 230.92

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**Glossary:** Lower secondary teachers (Teaching and Learning International Survey); Private school; Public school or institution

**Related indicators and resources:** [School Pulse Panel \(SPP\)](#); [School Survey on Crime and Safety \(SSOCS\)](#); [Teachers Threatened With Injury or Physically Attacked by Students](#)