

Public School Principals' Perceptions of Influence by School Level and Community Type

The Principal Questionnaire was administered as part of the 2015–16 National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), which is a nationally representative sample survey of public K–12 schools, principals, and teachers in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This Data Point examines the relationship between public school principals' perceived influence and their school level¹ and community type.²

How do public school principals perceive their influence over their school's curriculum, and how does this vary by school level and community type?

Public school principals were asked, "How much ACTUAL influence do you think you have as a principal on decisions concerning establishing curriculum at this school?" (No influence; minor influence; moderate influence; major influence; not applicable). For principals for whom this was relevant (i.e., did not select

"not applicable"), 40 percent reported having major influence.

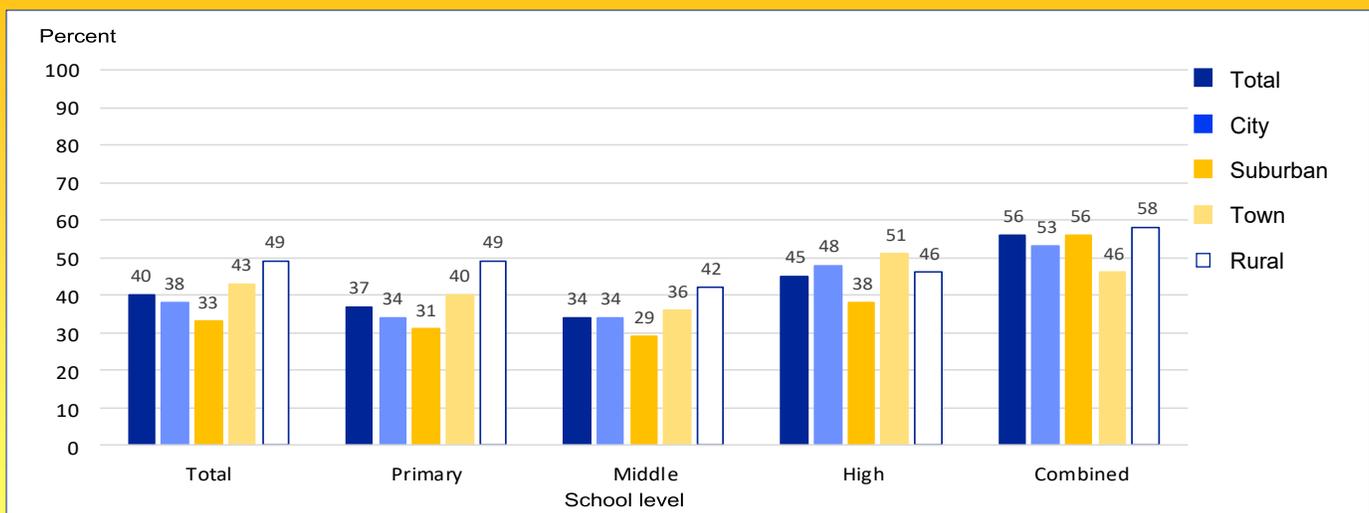
The percentages of high school and combined school principals (45 and 56 percent, respectively) who felt they had major influence over establishing curriculum was higher than the percentages of primary and middle school principals (37 and 34 percent, respectively) who felt they had major influence (**figure 1**).

Higher percentages of principals of schools in town (43 percent) and rural

communities (49 percent) responded that they have major influence on curriculum than those in city and suburban communities (38 and 33 percent, respectively). This relationship among community types also held for principals in primary schools.

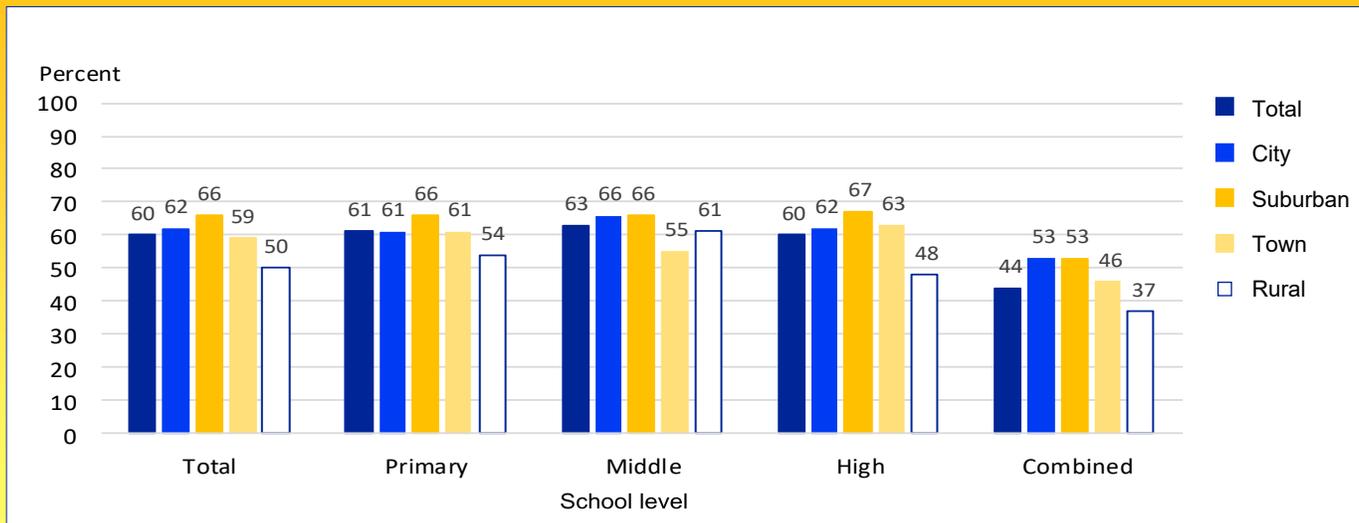
Among high school principals, a lower percentage in suburban communities (38 percent) felt they had major influence on curriculum than principals in city, town, and rural communities (48, 51, and 46 percent, respectively).

FIGURE 1. Percentage of public school principals who believe they have major influence on establishing curriculum, by school level and community type: 2015–16



NOTE: Response options included "no influence," "minor influence," "moderate influence," "major influence," and "not applicable." Principals who reported "not applicable" are excluded.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), "Public School Principal Data File," 2015–16.

FIGURE 2. Percentage of public school principals who believe they have major influence on deciding how their school budget is spent, by school level and community type: 2015–16



NOTE: Response options included “no influence,” “minor influence,” “moderate influence,” “major influence,” and “not applicable.” Principals who reported “not applicable” are excluded.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS), “Public School Principal Data File,” 2015–16.

How do public school principals perceive their influence over their school’s budget, and how does this vary by school level and community type?

Public school principals were asked, “How much ACTUAL influence do you think you have as a principal on decisions concerning how your school budget will be spent?” (No influence; minor influence; moderate influence; major influence; not applicable). For principals for whom this was relevant (i.e., did not select “not applicable”), 60 percent reported having major influence.

Higher percentages of principals of primary, middle, and high schools (61, 63, and 60 percent, respectively) felt they had major influence on deciding how the budget will be spent than principals of combined schools (44 percent) (figure 2).

A higher percentage of principals of schools in suburban communities (66 percent) responded that they had major influence on how their budget is spent than principals of schools in city, town, and rural communities (62, 59, and 50 percent, respectively). A lower percentage of principals of schools in rural communities responded that they had major influence than the other three community types.

At primary schools, a lower percentage of principals of schools in rural communities (54 percent) responded that they had major influence compared to principals at schools in city, suburban, and town communities (61, 66, and 61 percent, respectively). This pattern held at high schools; a lower percentage of principals of schools in rural communities indicated they had major influence (48 percent) than principals of schools in city, suburban, and town communities (62, 67, and 63 percent, respectively).

At middle schools, higher percentages of principals of schools in city and suburban communities (both 66 percent) responded that they had major influence compared to principals of schools in town communities (55 percent).

At combined schools, higher percentages of principals of schools in city and suburban communities (both 53 percent) responded that they had major influence compared to principals of schools in rural communities (37 percent).

Endnotes

¹ Primary schools are those with at least one grade lower than 5, and no grade higher than 8. Middle schools have no grade lower than 5 and no grade higher than 9. High schools have no grade lower than 7 and at least one grade higher than 8. Combined schools are those with at least one grade lower than 7 and at least one grade higher than 8, or with all students in ungraded classrooms.

² Community type is defined by the urban-centric school locale code based on the 2010 Decennial Census data, collapsed into four categories: city, suburban, town, and rural.

This National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data Point presents information on education topics of current interest. It was authored by Abigail Quirk of the American Institutes for Research and Maura Spiegelman of NCES. Estimates based on samples are subject to sampling variability, and apparent differences may not

be statistically significant. All stated differences are statistically significant at the .05 level. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.