Spring 2020 Remote Learning Survey Results

BrightBytes® + ISTE

Introduction

As the reality of COVID-19 sunk in and school districts across the country shifted to remote learning, the number of factors impacting a student's ability to succeed grew significantly. So many of which were out of the teachers' and schools' purview, that educators were left in the dark with regard to the unique circumstances of each student's at-home learning environment. The intent of the Remote Learning Survey was to allow districts to quickly gather information on the most critical aspects of remote teaching and learning in order to respond to the rapidly changing needs of their community. In an effort to help districts ensure equitable opportunity and access, the survey gathered important information from teachers, students, parents, and principals on topics such as access to devices and support for them, the at-home work environment for students and teachers, modes of communication between teachers, students, and parents, the types of tools being used for instruction, as well as how students were adapting to the transition.

In partnership with ISTE, BrightBytes analyzed the data collected in school districts across the US between April 15, 2020 and June 15, 2020. The lens through which we analyzed the data was the digital divide: how prevalent is it and what is its impact on teaching and learning? The following set of results highlight the key takeaways from our analysis.

Key Findings

1. Although students in urban schools are fairly likely to have district-issued devices overall, students in districts with substantial Title I funding are more likely to need to obtain assignments via their phone.

2. Students who use their phone to obtain assignments are more likely to have difficulty obtaining assignments. In general, around a fifth of students are struggling to obtain assignments.

3. Students in districts with substantial title I funding are spending fewer hours working on school work each week than students in districts with a lower amount of Title I funding.

4. Parents overestimate how often their students have a quiet place to work, and students in rural areas have a quiet place to work more often than other students.

5. Up to a third of students report that they only sometimes or never have technical support for learning remotely.

6. Less than half of teachers usually or always use educational applications in their remote teaching. Learning management systems are far more common.
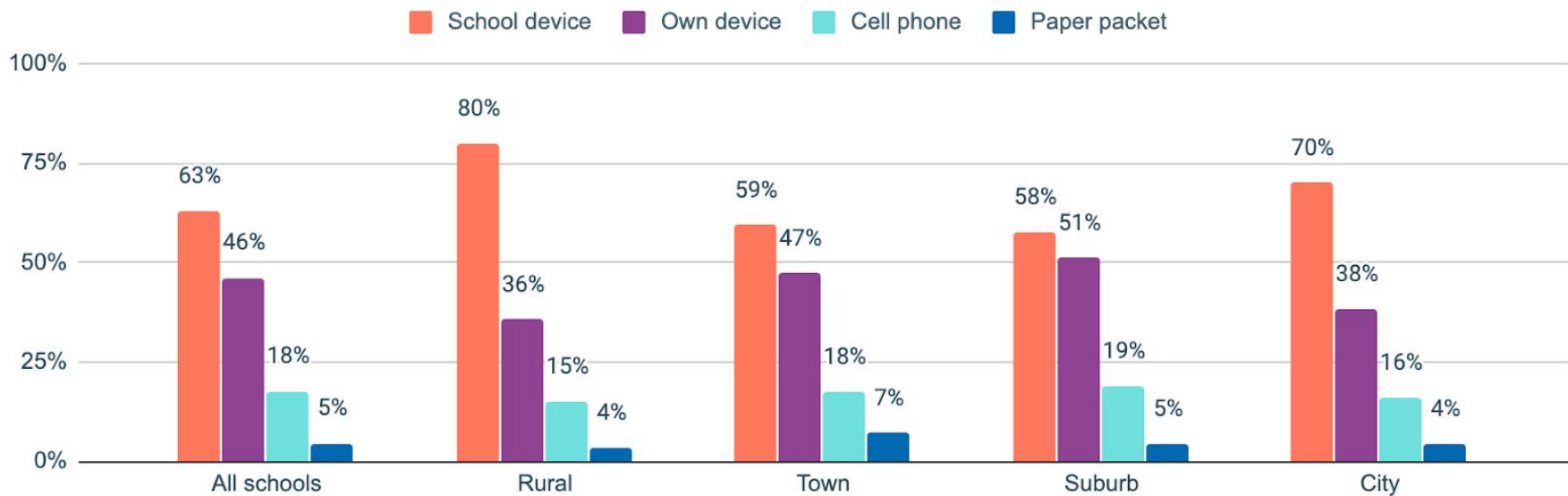
Internet Deserts and Gaps in Access to Technology
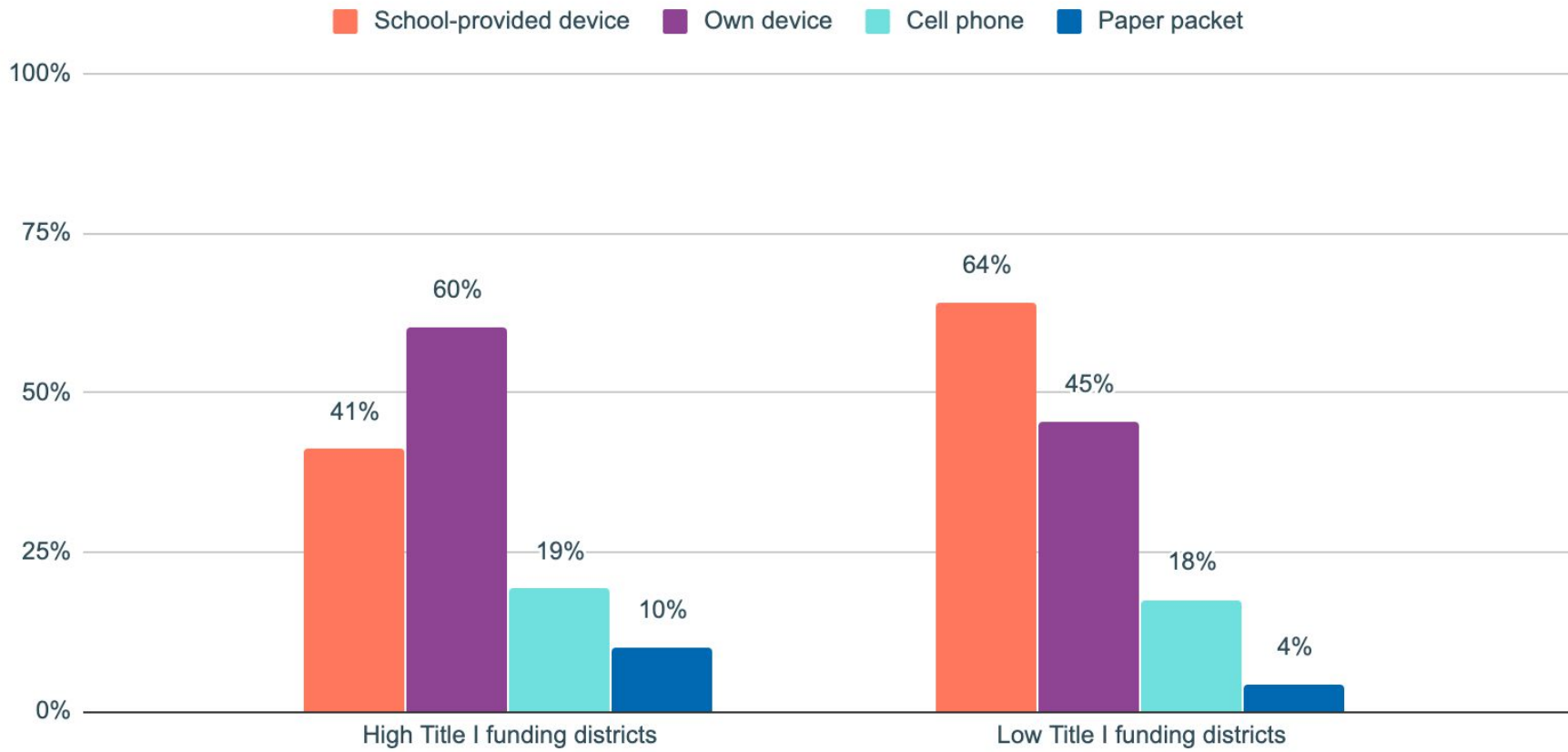
"How are you currently learning remotely?"

Main Takeaway: Most often, students use a device provided by their school to engage in remote learning, and this is especially true for students at rural or urban schools. Students in high-Title I districts are more likely to be using their own device, rather than a school-provided device.

How does the use of each type of learning device vary by Title I funding? By urbanicity?

Percent of students who use each type of learning device, by Title I funding

Percent of students who use each type of learning device, by urbanicity

Legend: ■ School-provided device ■ Own device ■ Cell phone ■ Paper packet

Chart data:

High Title I funding districts:
- School-provided device: 41%
- Own device: 60%
- Cell phone: 19%
- Paper packet: 10%

Low Title I funding districts:
- School-provided device: 64%
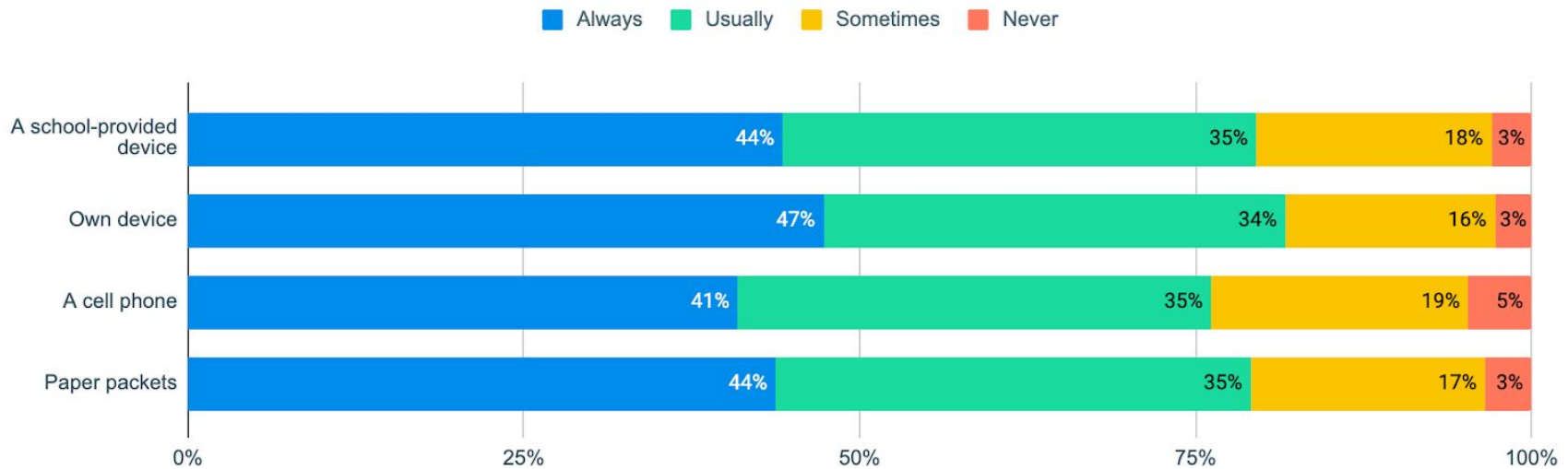- Own device: 45%
- Cell phone: 18%
- Paper packet: 4%

Mobile devices vs. Other remote learning devices

"It is easy to get my assignments and classwork."

Main Takeaway: About 1 in 5 students finds it "sometimes" or "never" easy to get their assignments and classwork. Students who use a cell phone for remote learning appear to have the most difficult time getting their assignments and classwork, by a small margin.

How do students' responses vary by the device they use to learn remotely?

Students' responses to "It is easy to get my assignments and classwork" by device used for remote learning

Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Device	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
A school-provided device	44%	35%	18%	3%
Own device	47%	34%	16%	3%
A cell phone	41%	35%	19%	5%
Paper packets	44%	35%	17%	3%

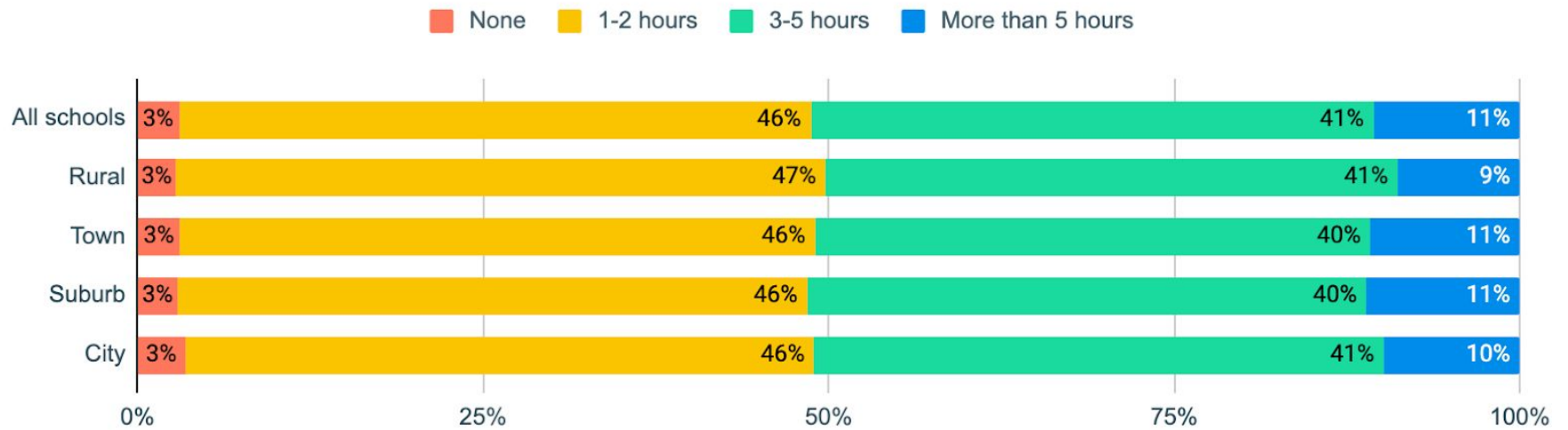**BrightBytes®**

KEY FINDING 3:

The Online Engagement Gap

Main Takeaway: The vast majority of students spend between 1 and 5 hours per day on remote learning, whereas 4 in 10 teachers say they spend more than 5 hours teaching every day. Students in high-Title I districts appear more likely to spend fewer hours learning per day than those in low-Title I districts -- the percentage of students in high-Title I districts spending 3-5 hours a day learning is 5 percentage points lower than in low-Title I districts, and the percentage of students in high-Title I districts spending 1-2 hours a day learning is 5.96 percentage points higher than in low-Title I districts.

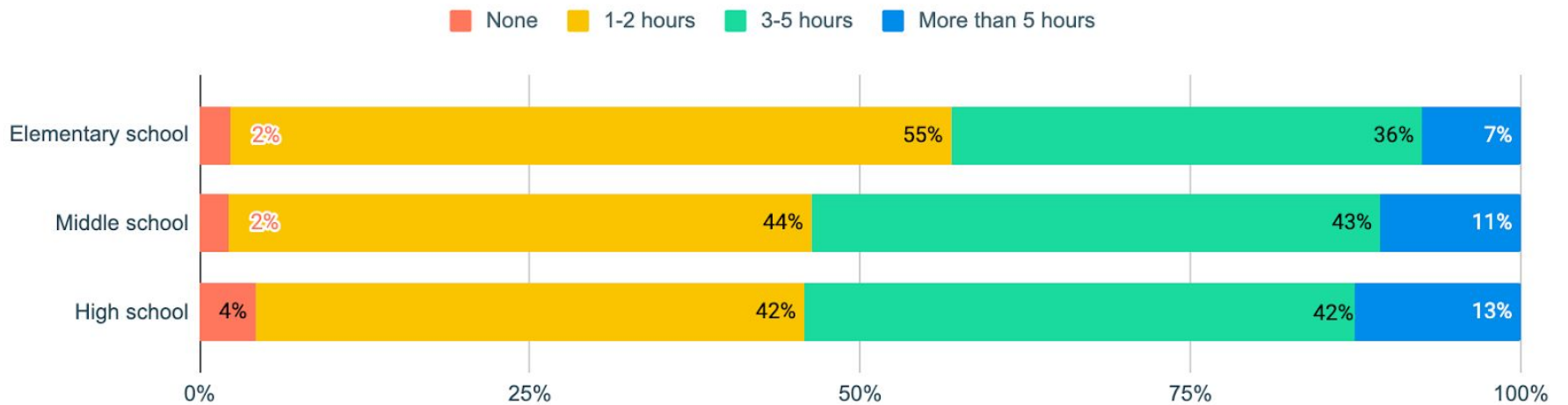Responses to "About how many hours every day do you (or your child) work?"
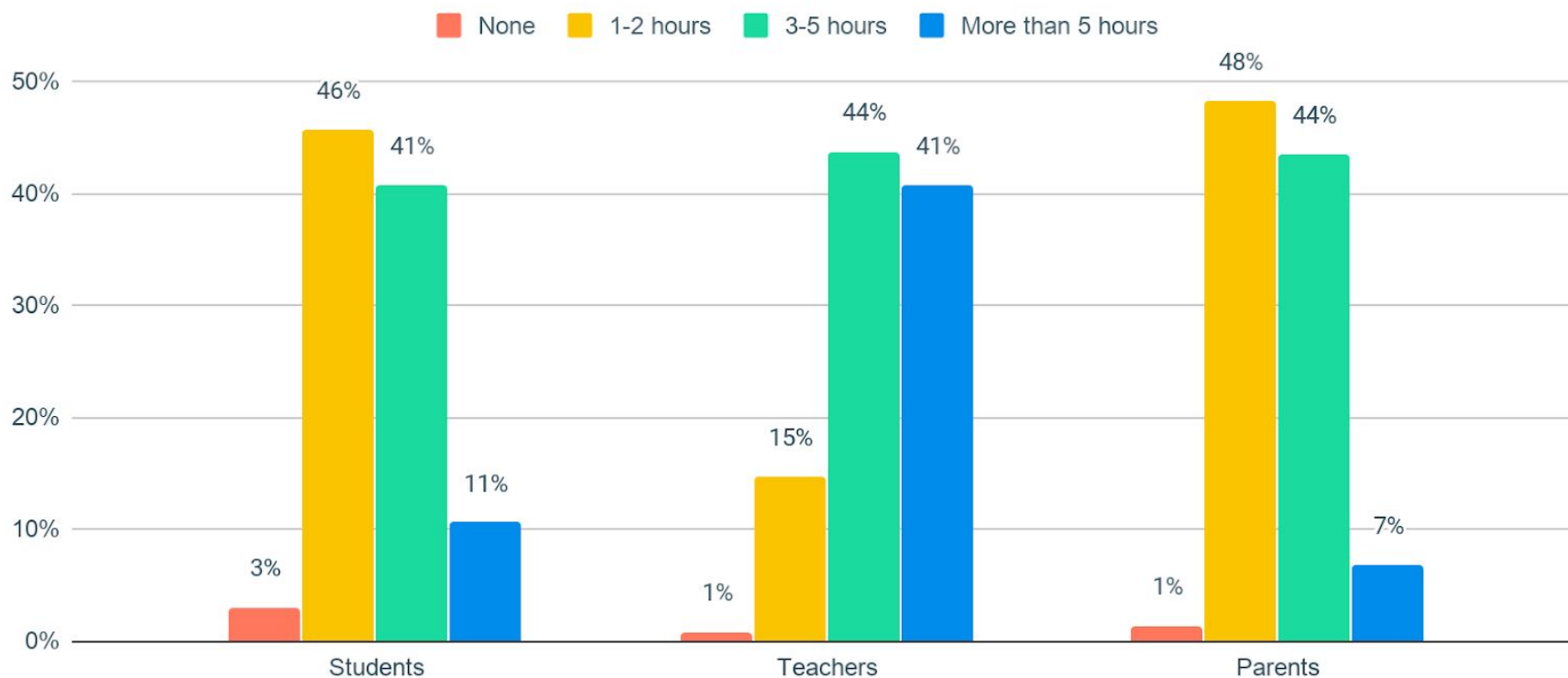
How does the amount of time students spend every day on remote learning vary by urbanicity? By grade? By whether English is spoken in the home? By device used for remote learning?

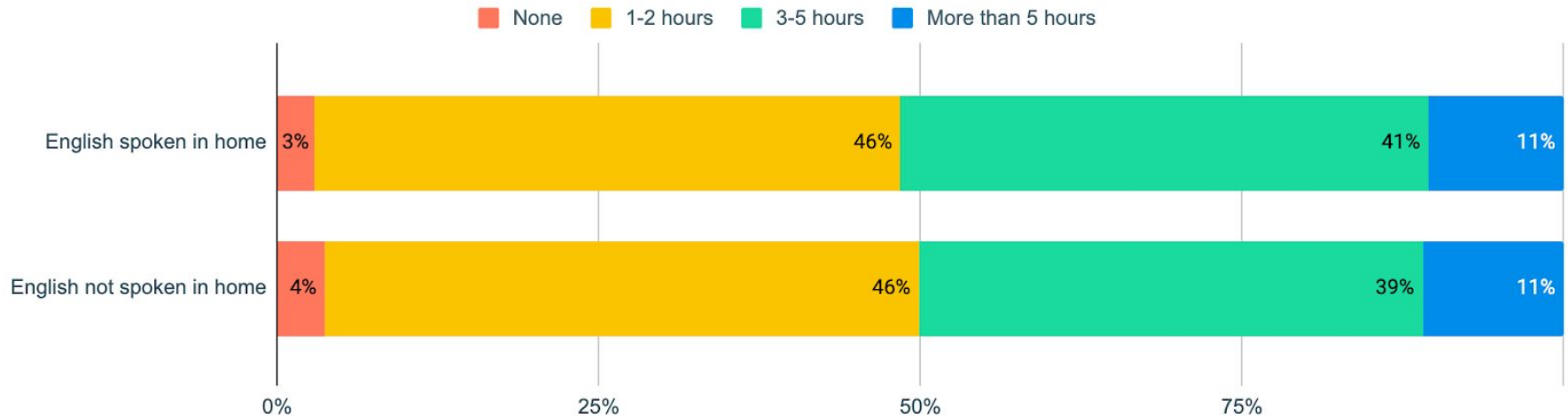Students' hours spent per day on remote learning, by urbanicity

Legend: ■ None ■ 1-2 hours ■ 3-5 hours ■ More than 5 hours

	None	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	More than 5 hours
All schools	3%	46%	41%	11%
Rural	3%	47%	41%	9%
Town	3%	46%	40%	11%
Suburb	3%	46%	40%	11%
City	3%	46%	41%	10%

Students' hours spent per day on remote learning, by grade level

Legend: ■ None ■ 1-2 hours ■ 3-5 hours ■ More than 5 hours

	None	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	More than 5 hours
Elementary school	2%	55%	36%	7%
Middle school	2%	44%	43%	11%
High school	4%	42%	42%	13%

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Students' hours spent per day on remote learning: English spoken in home vs. English not spoken

Legend: **None** | **1-2 hours** | **3-5 hours** | **More than 5 hours**

	None	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	More than 5 hours
English spoken in home	3%	46%	41%	11%
English not spoken in home	4%	46%	39%	11%

Students' hours per day spent on remote learning, by device used for remote learning

Legend: **None** | **1-2 hours** | **3-5 hours** | **More than 5 hours**

	None	1-2 hours	3-5 hours	More than 5 hours
A school-provided device	3%	43%	43%	11%
Own device	3%	47%	40%	11%
A cell phone	4%	45%	40%	11%
Paper packets	3%	46%	41%	11%
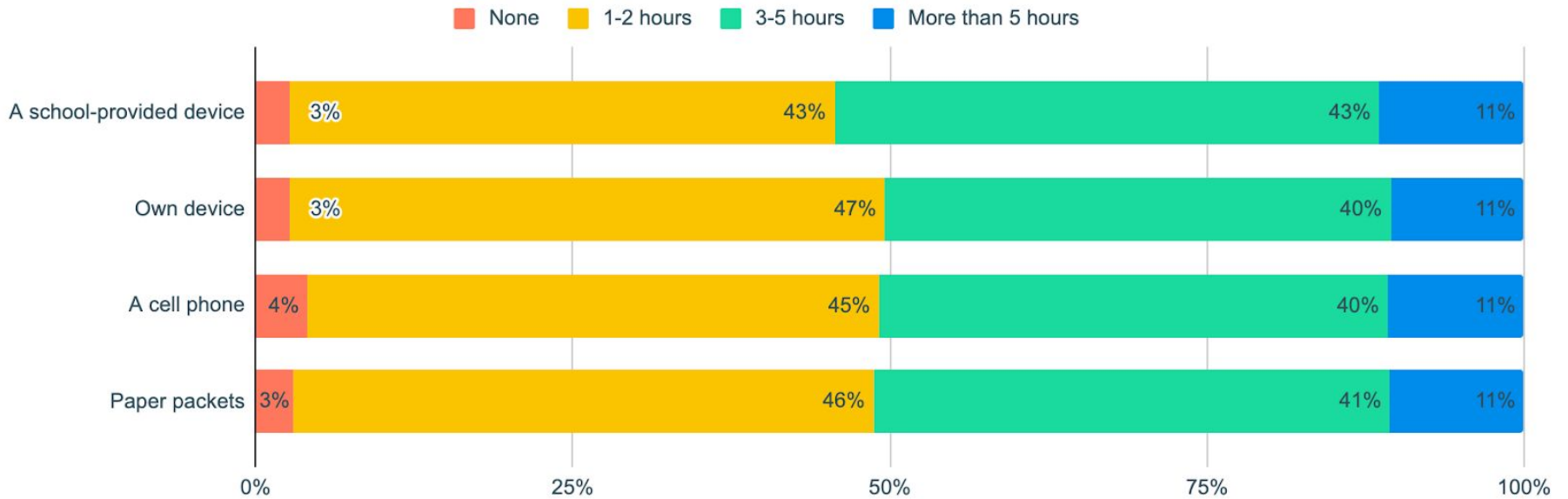
How does the amount of time students spend every day on remote learning vary by Title I funding?

Students' hours per day spent on remote learning, by Title I funding

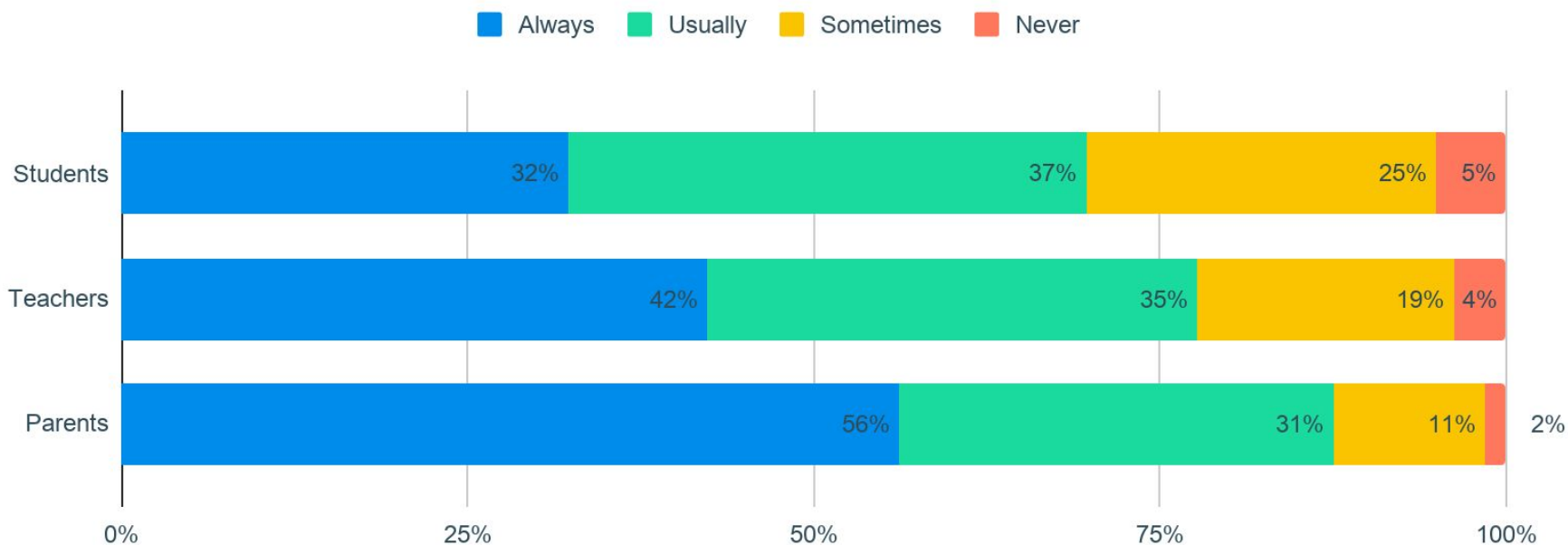Legend: ■ None ■ 1-2 hours ■ 3-5 hours ■ More than 5 hours

High Title I funding districts: 3% | 51% | 36% | 10%

Low Title I funding districts: 3% | 45% | 41% | 11%

X-axis: 0% | 25% | 50% | 75%
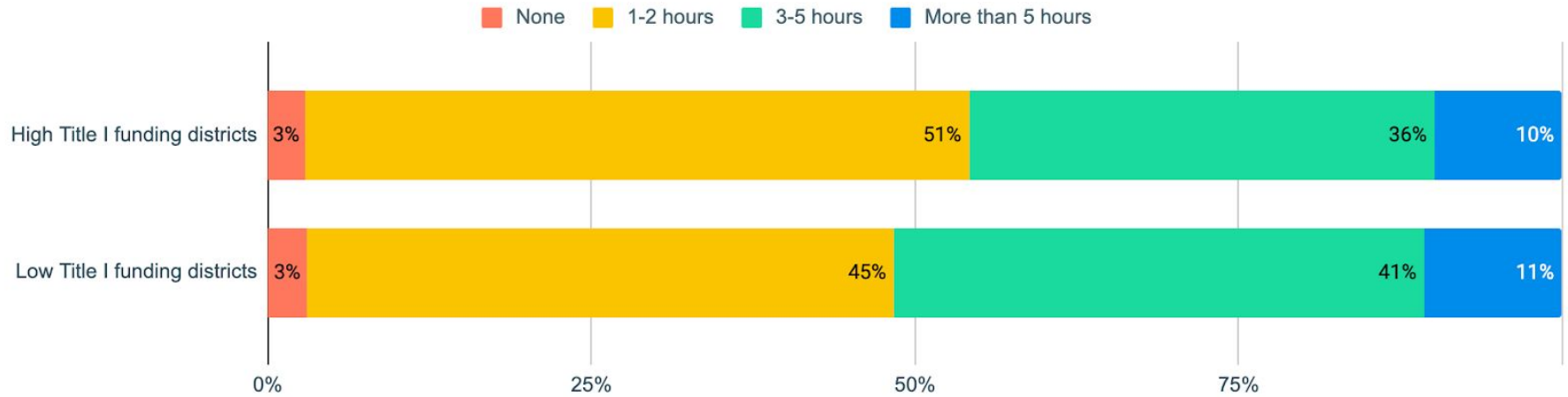
Gaps in Learning and Teaching Environments

"I have (or my child has) a quiet space to work at home."

Note: parents were asked whether their child has a quiet place to work at home, not the parent themselves.

Main Takeaway: Students are less likely than teachers to have a consistently quiet place to work, and students in more rural areas appear somewhat more likely to have a consistently quiet place than others. Relative to their children, parents are much more likely to say their child has access to a quiet space.

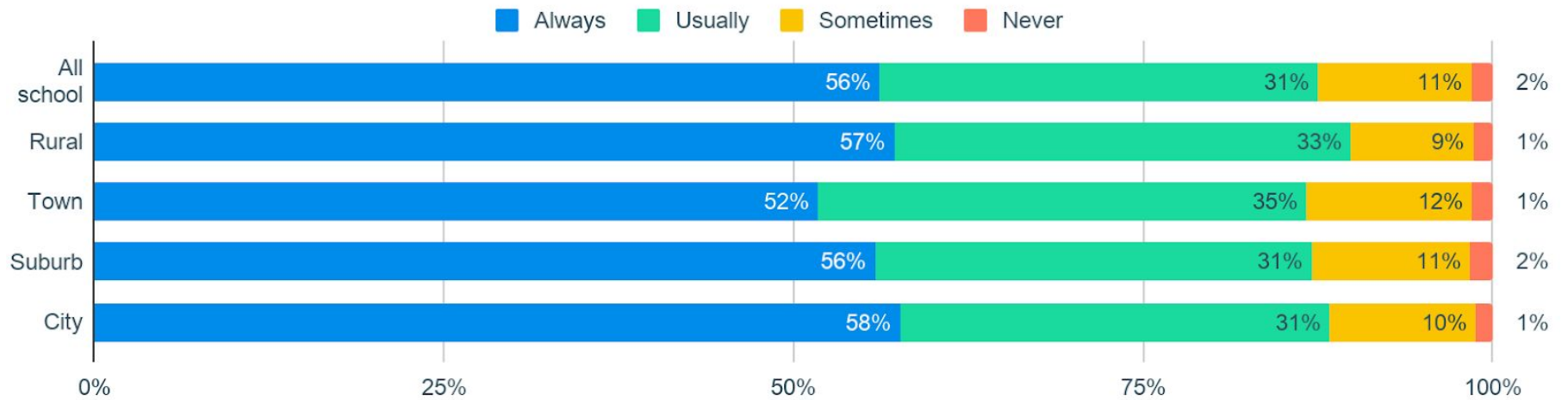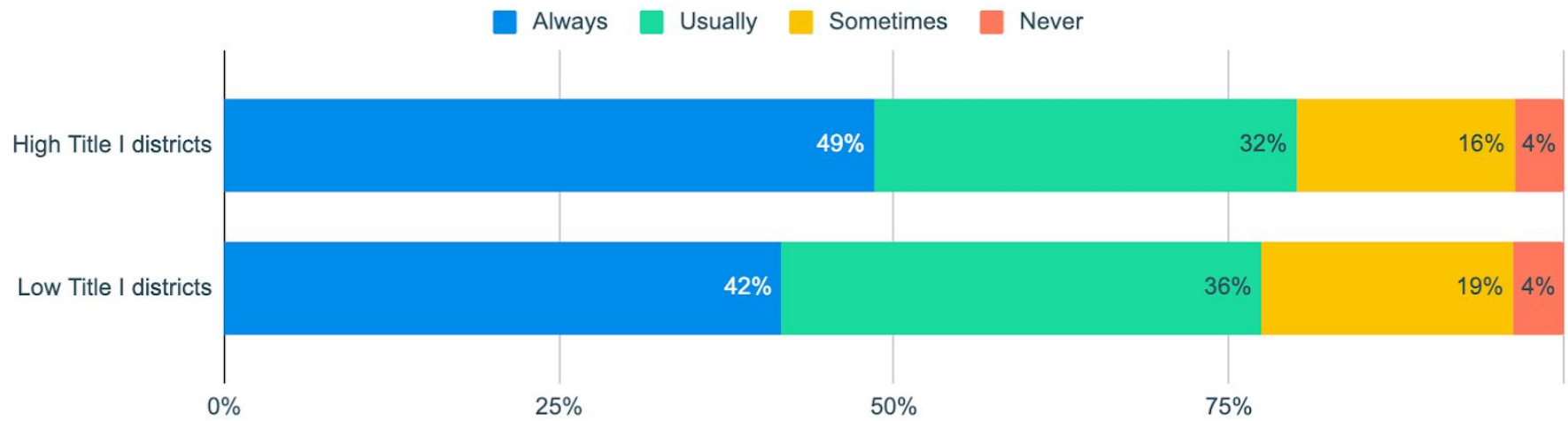Responses to "I have (or my child has) a quiet space to work"

Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Students	32%	37%	25%	5%
Teachers	42%	35%	19%	4%
Parents	56%	31%	11%	2%

How do responses vary by urbanicity?

Students responding to "I have a quiet space to work at home" by urbanicity
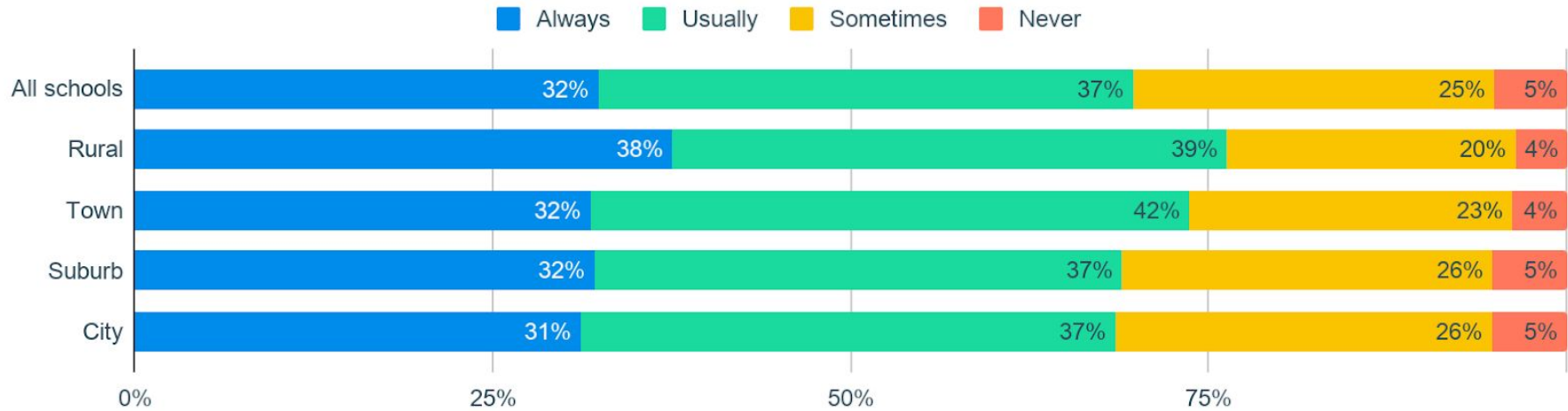
Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All schools	32%	37%	25%	5%
Rural	38%	39%	20%	4%
Town	32%	42%	23%	4%
Suburb	32%	37%	26%	5%
City	31%	37%	26%	5%

Parents' responses to "My child has a quiet space to work" by urbanicity

Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All school	56%	31%	11%	2%
Rural	57%	33%	9%	1%
Town	52%	35%	12%	1%
Suburb	56%	31%	11%	2%
City	58%	31%	10%	1%

Teachers' responses to "I have a quiet space to work" by urbanicity

Legend: Always (blue), Usually (green), Sometimes (yellow), Never (red)

District	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
High Title I districts	49%	32%	16%	4%
Low Title I districts	42%	36%	19%	4%

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How do responses vary based on Title I funding?

Students' responses to "I have a quiet space to work at home" by Title I funding
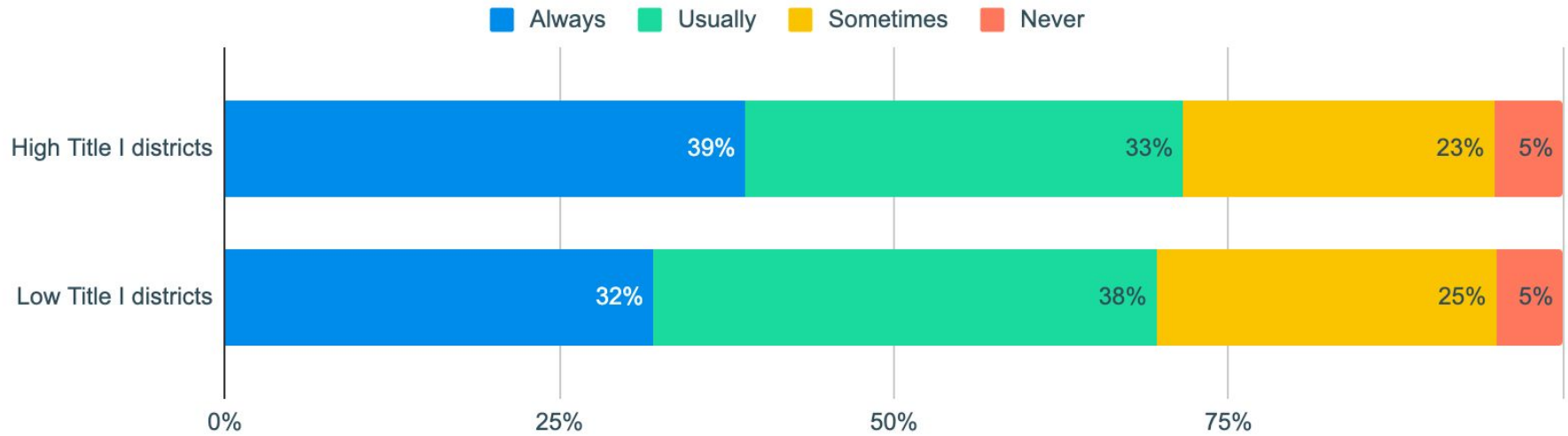
Parents' responses to "My child has a quiet space to work" by Title I funding

Teachers' responses to "I have a quiet space to work" by Title I funding

Legend: Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never

High Title I districts: Always 49%, Usually 32%, Sometimes 16%, Never 4%

Low Title I districts: Always 42%, Usually 36%, Sometimes 19%, Never 4%
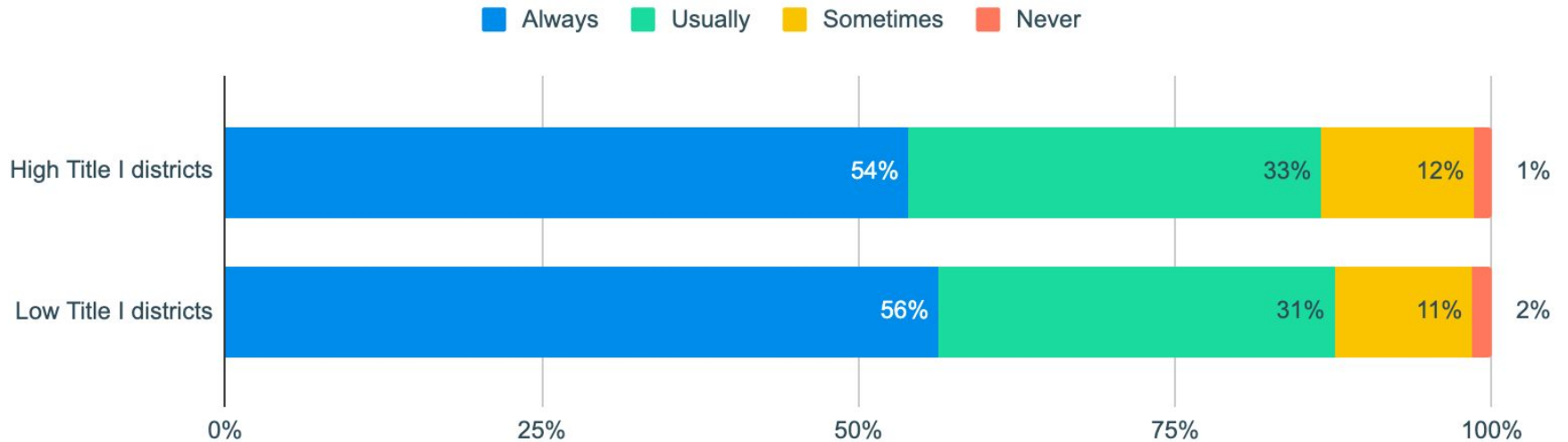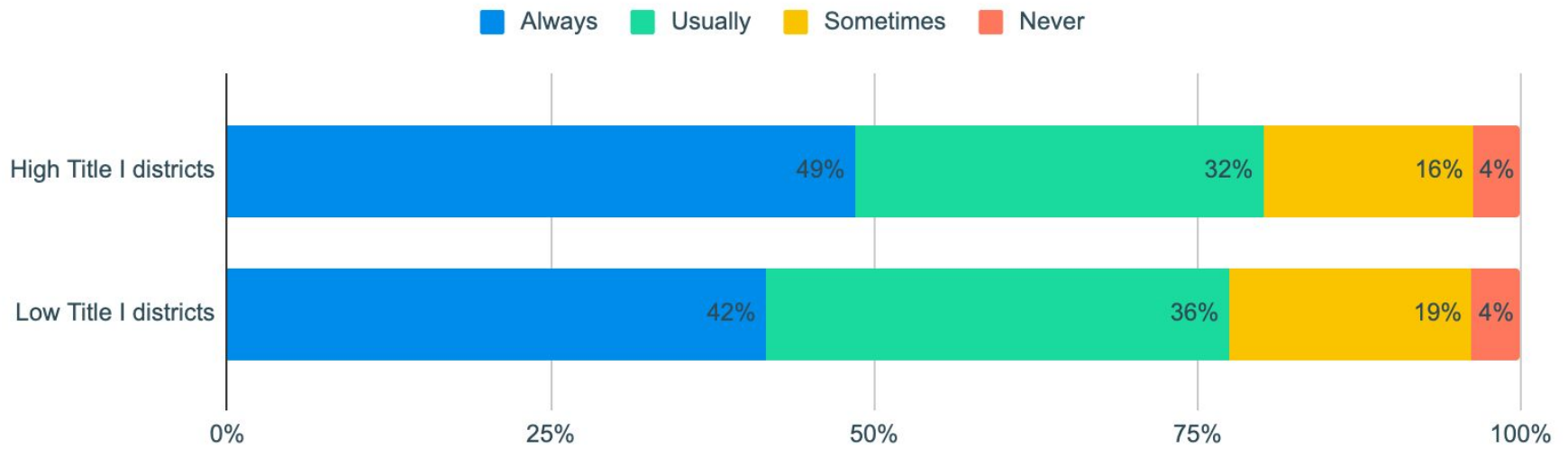
Gaps in Support Systems to Learn and Teach

"I have access to technical support from someone at school to help me with my device when needed."

Note: parents were asked if their child has technical support, not the parent themselves.

Main Takeaway: Students report having less access to technical support than teachers, and nearly 1 in 3 students has access either "sometimes" or "never."

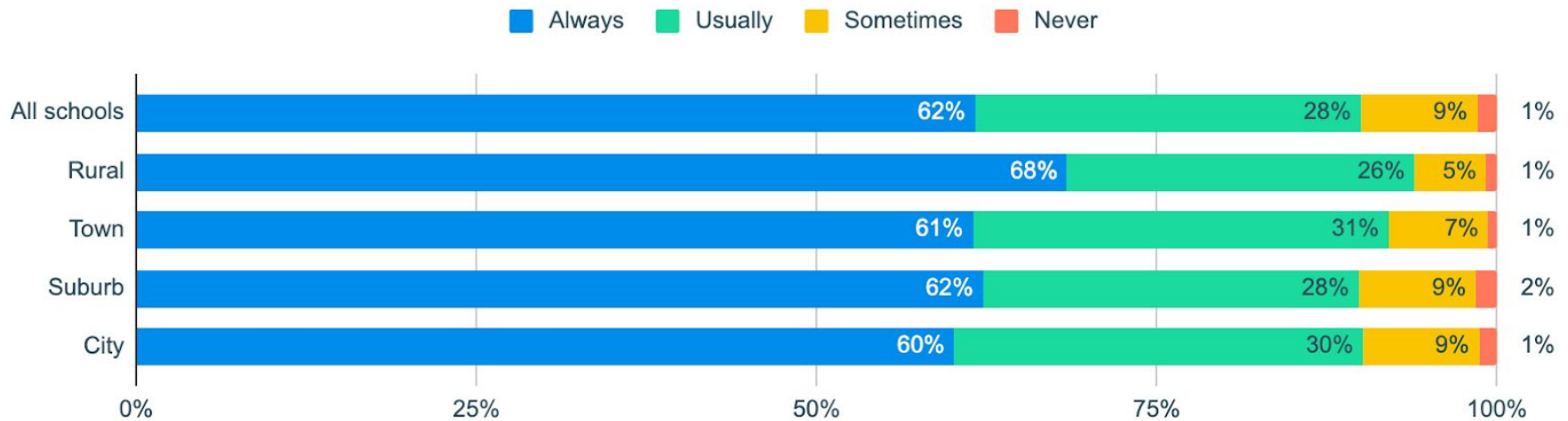Comparison of technical support access: Students, Teachers, Parents

■ Students   ■ Teachers   ■ Parents

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Students	44%	26%	16%	14%
Teachers	62%	28%	9%	1%
Parents	53%	29%	13%	5%
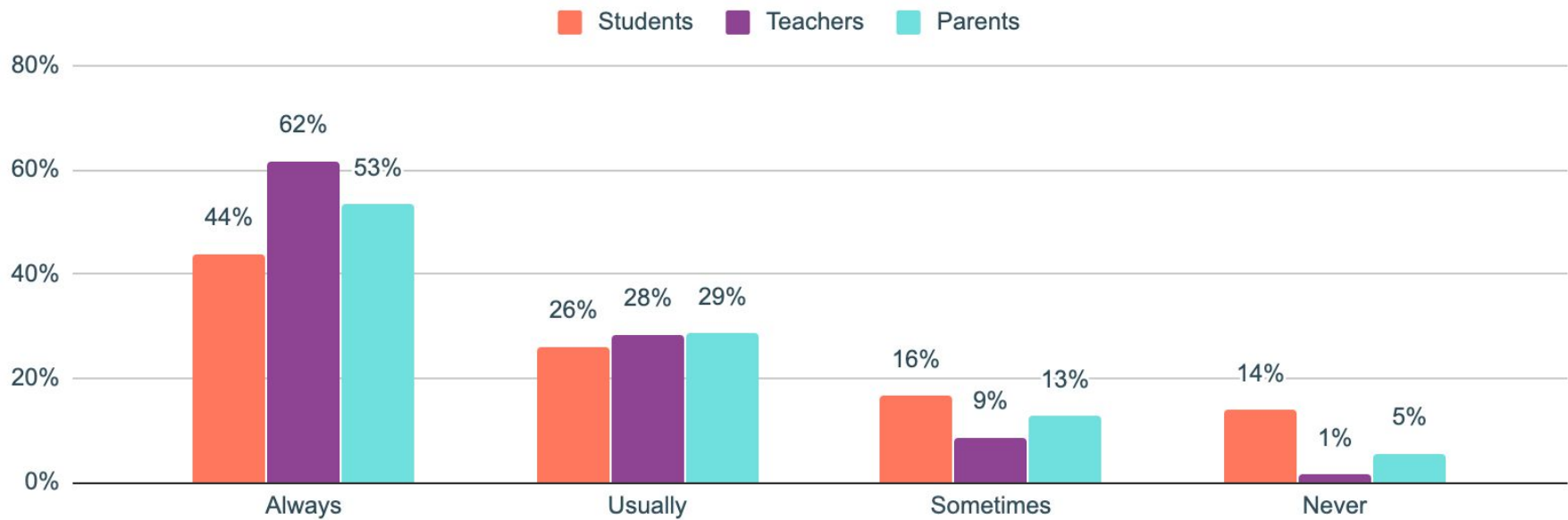
How does access to technical support vary by urbanicity?
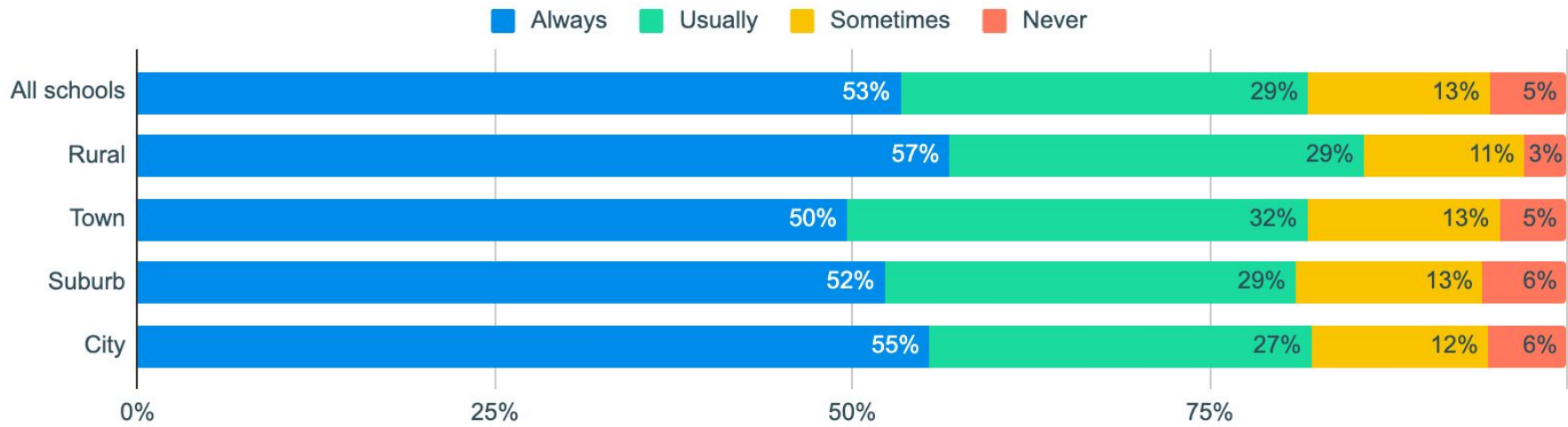
Student responses to "I have access to technical support from someone at school to help me with my device when needed" by urbanicity
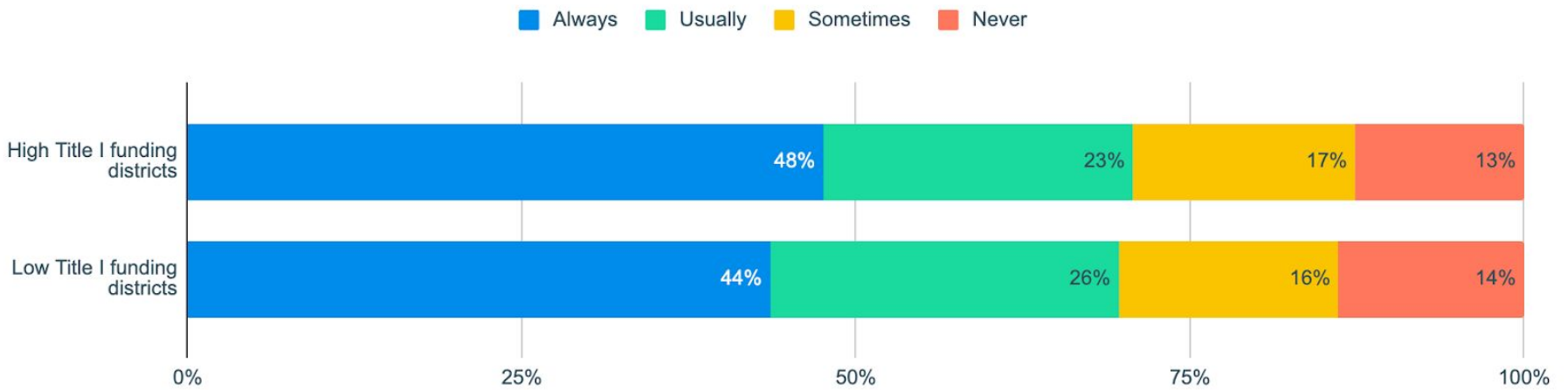
Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All schools	44%	26%	16%	14%
Rural	48%	28%	14%	10%
Town	46%	29%	14%	11%
Suburb	43%	25%	17%	16%
City	44%	27%	17%	11%
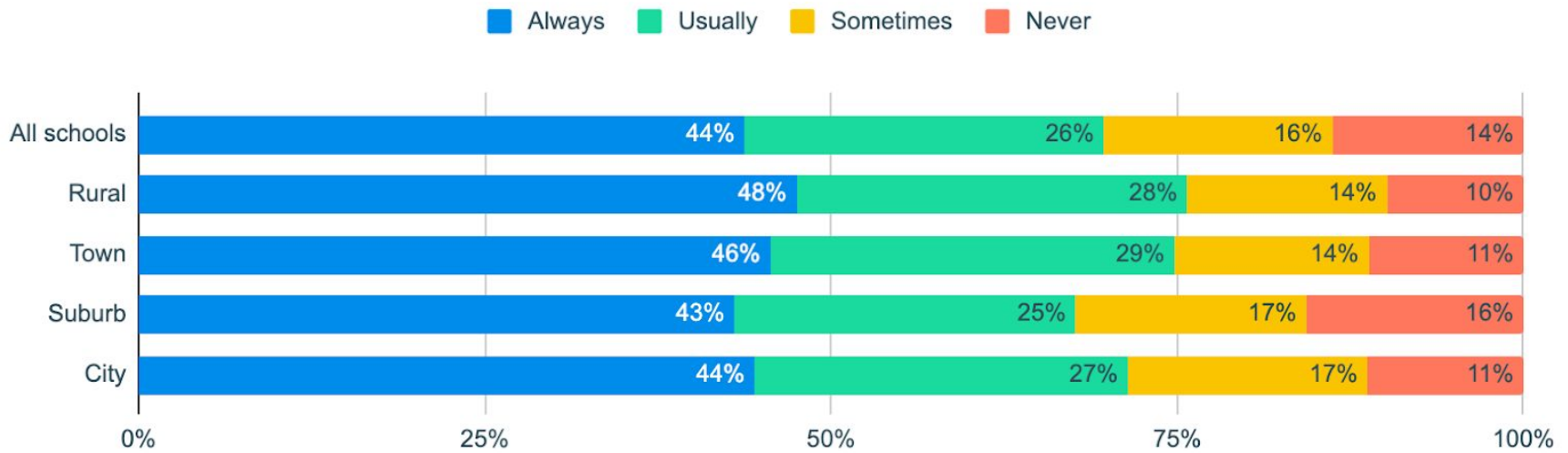
Teacher responses to "I have access to technical support from a school staff person to help me with my device(s) when I need it" by urbanicity

Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All schools	62%	28%	9%	1%
Rural	68%	26%	5%	1%
Town	61%	31%	7%	1%
Suburb	62%	28%	9%	2%
City	60%	30%	9%	1%

Parents' responses to "My child has access to technical support from a teacher or someone else at school to help with their device when needed" by urbanicity
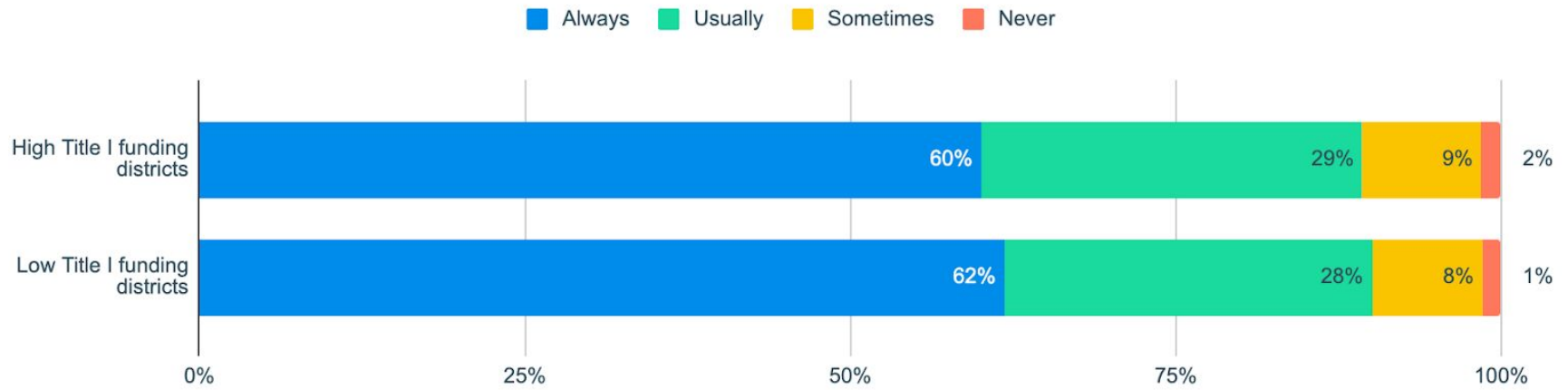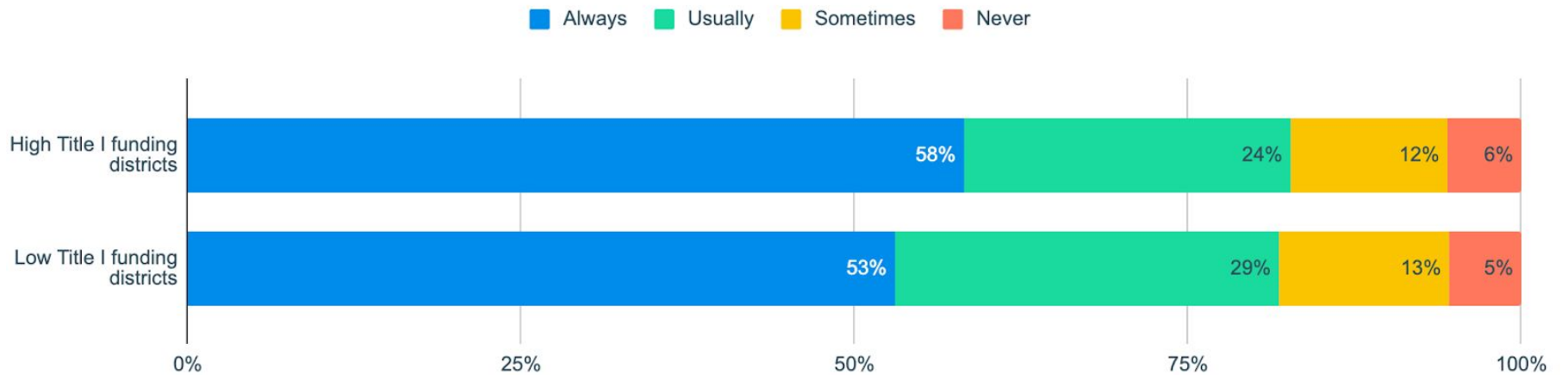
|	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All schools	53%	29%	13%	5%
Rural	57%	29%	11%	3%
Town	50%	32%	13%	5%
Suburb	52%	29%	13%	6%
City	55%	27%	12%	6%

How do responses vary based on Title I funding?

Student responses to "I have access to technical support from someone at school to help me with my device when needed" by Title I funding

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
High Title I funding districts	48%	23%	17%	13%
Low Title I funding districts	44%	26%	16%	14%

Teachers' responses to "I have access to technical support from a school staff person to help me with my device(s) when I need it" by Title I funding

Always ■   **Usually** ■   **Sometimes** ■   **Never** ■

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
High Title I funding districts	60%	29%	9%	2%
Low Title I funding districts	62%	28%	8%	1%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Parents' responses to "My child has access to technical support from a teacher or someone else at school to help with their device when needed", by Title I funding

Always ■   **Usually** ■   **Sometimes** ■   **Never** ■

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
High Title I funding districts	58%	24%	12%	6%
Low Title I funding districts	53%	29%	13%	5%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Impact of Remote Learning on Teacher-Student Interactions

"What methods do you use to teach?"

Main Takeaway: Teachers most often report using a learning management system. Teachers appear to use other methods such as video conferencing with highly variable frequency: for example, roughly the same number of teachers said they "always" use educational applications as those who say they "never" do.

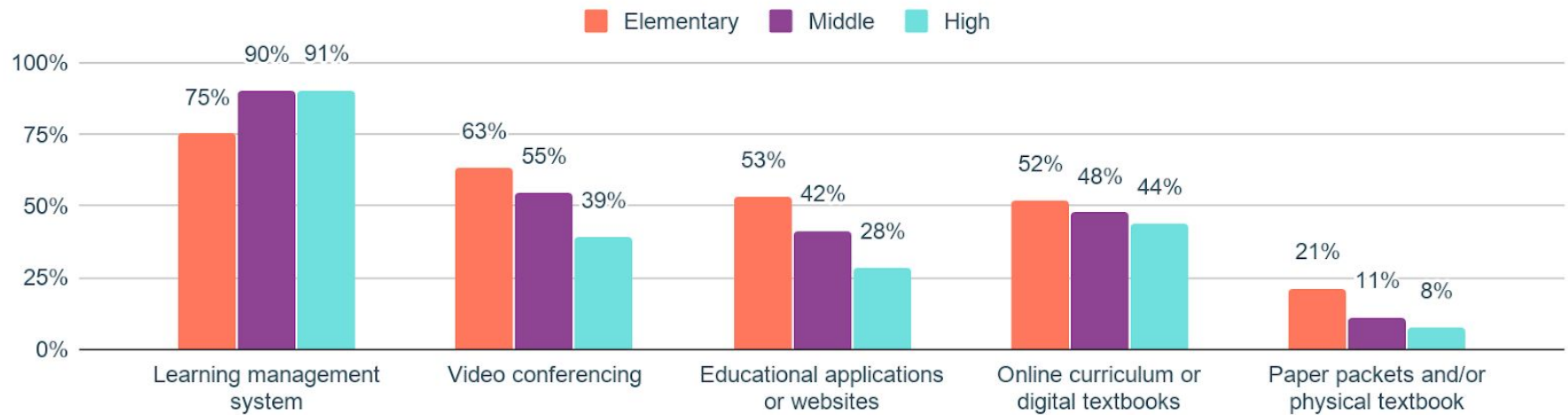Percent of teachers who use each mode of remote teaching, by frequency of use

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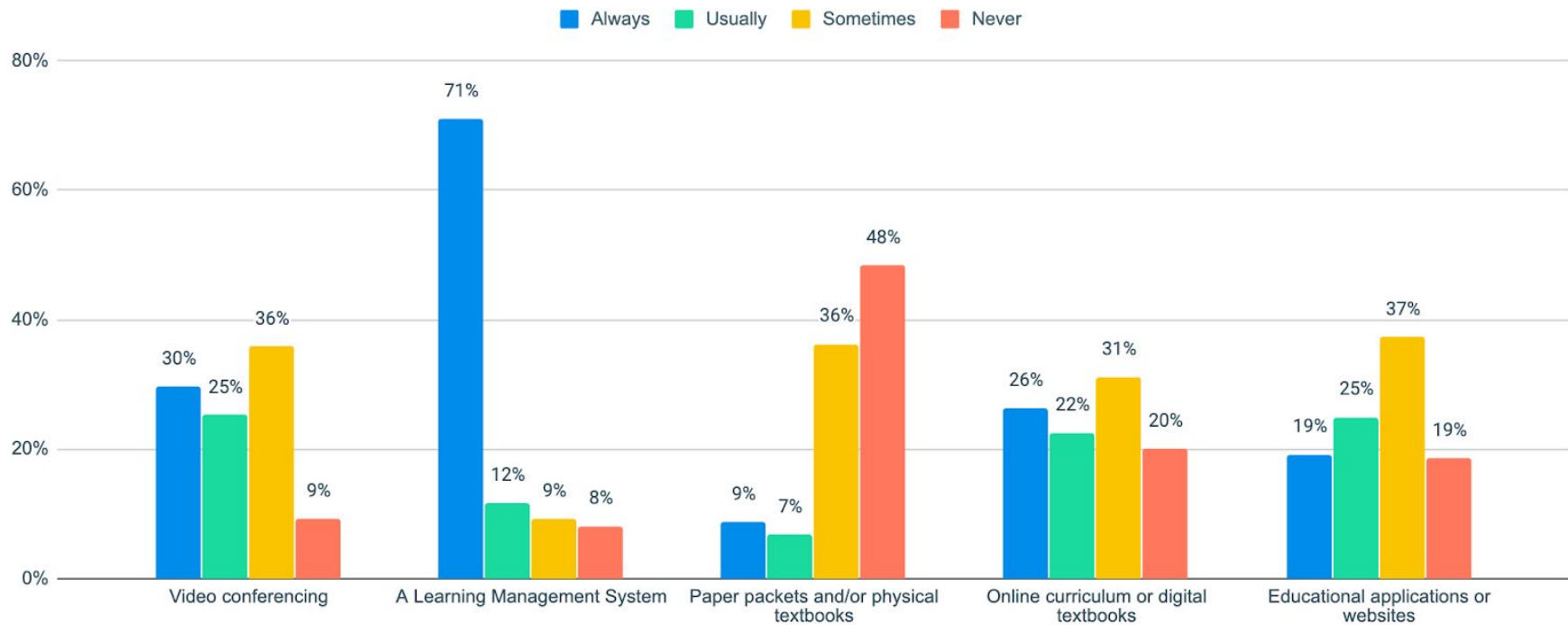
How does the use of each mode of teaching vary by urbanicity? By grade level?

Percent of teachers who use each mode of remote instruction "always" or "usually," by urbanicity
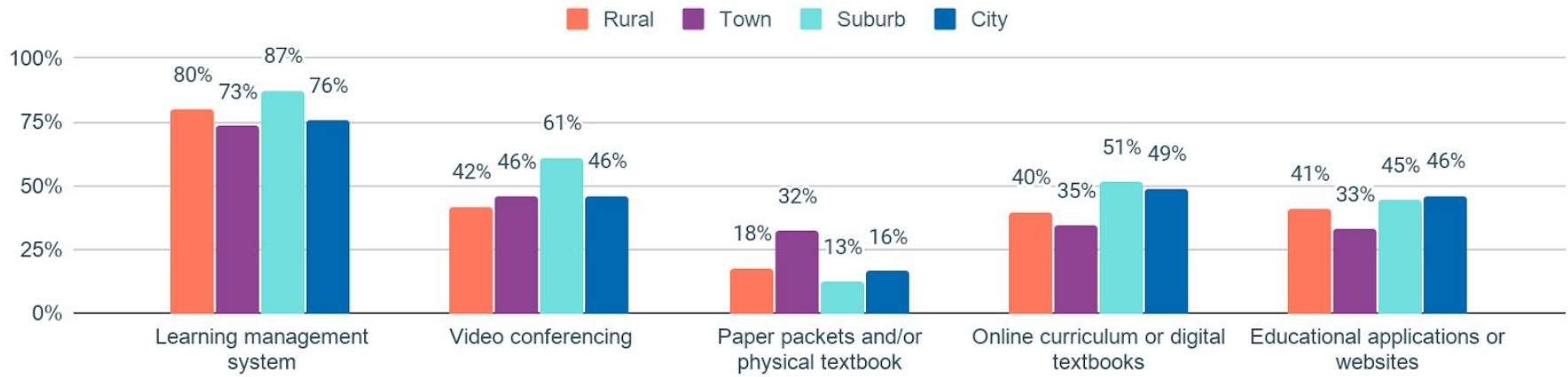
Percent of teachers who use each mode of remote instruction "always" or "usually," by grade level

"I feel safe participating in my remote learning environment."

Note: Teachers were asked if their students feel safe, not the teachers themselves. Parents were asked if they feel safe having their child participating.

Main Takeaway: Teachers appear to be the most concerned about students' safety online, whereas 70% of students and parents "always" feel safe. Students and teachers in more urban areas appear to be more concerned than those in more rural areas.

How often respondents feel safe with remote learning environment
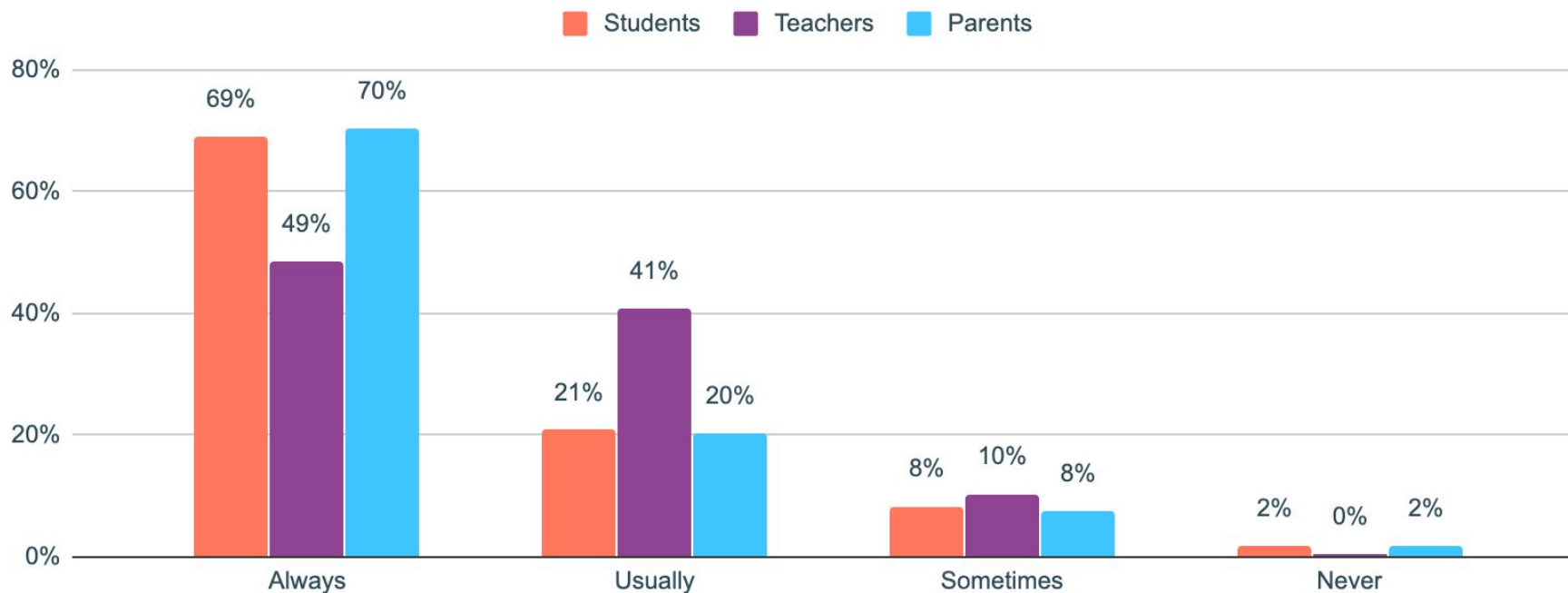
■ Students   ■ Teachers   ■ Parents

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Students	69%	21%	8%	2%
Teachers	49%	41%	10%	0%
Parents	70%	20%	8%	2%

How do responses vary by urbanicity?

Students' responses to "I feel safe participating in my remote learning environment" by urbanicity
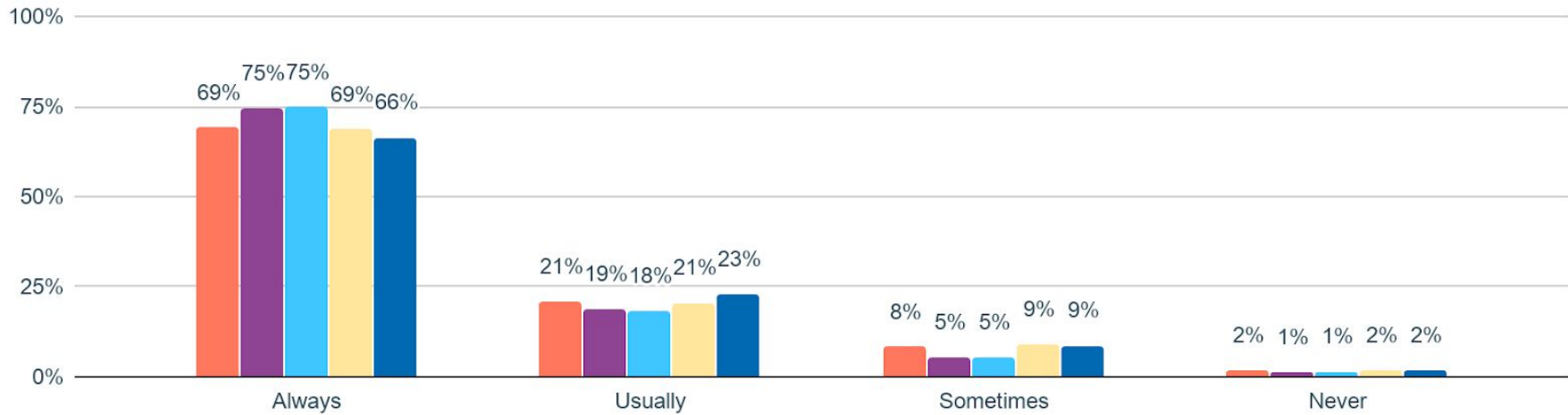
Teachers' responses to "Students feel safe participating in our remote learning environment" by urbanicity
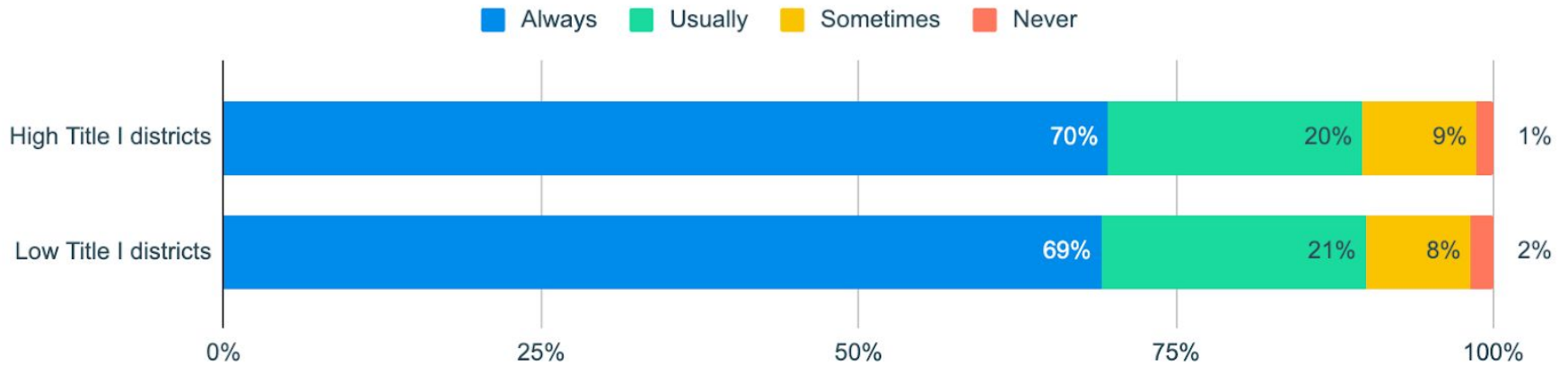
Parents' responses to "I feel safe having my child participate in a remote learning environment" by urbanicity
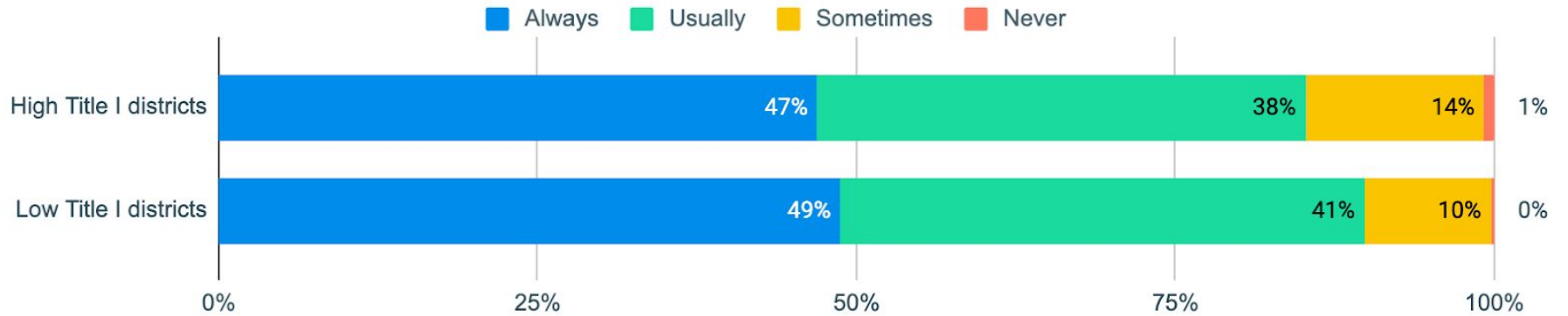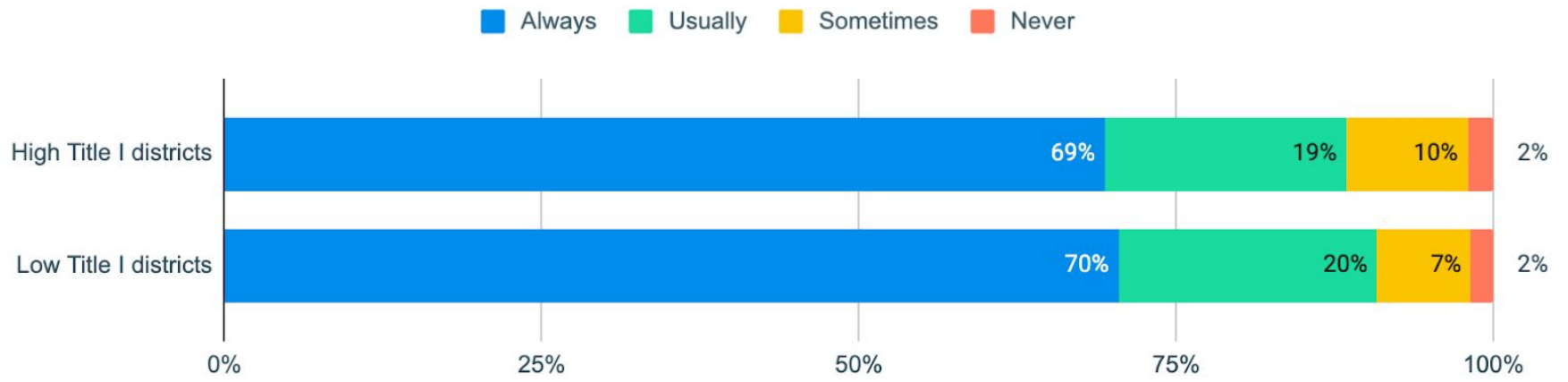

Legend: All schools, Rural, Town, Suburb, City

Always: 70% 73% 68% 70% 71%
Usually: 20% 20% 22% 21% 19%
Sometimes: 8% 6% 8% 8% 8%
Never: 2% 1% 1% 2% 2%

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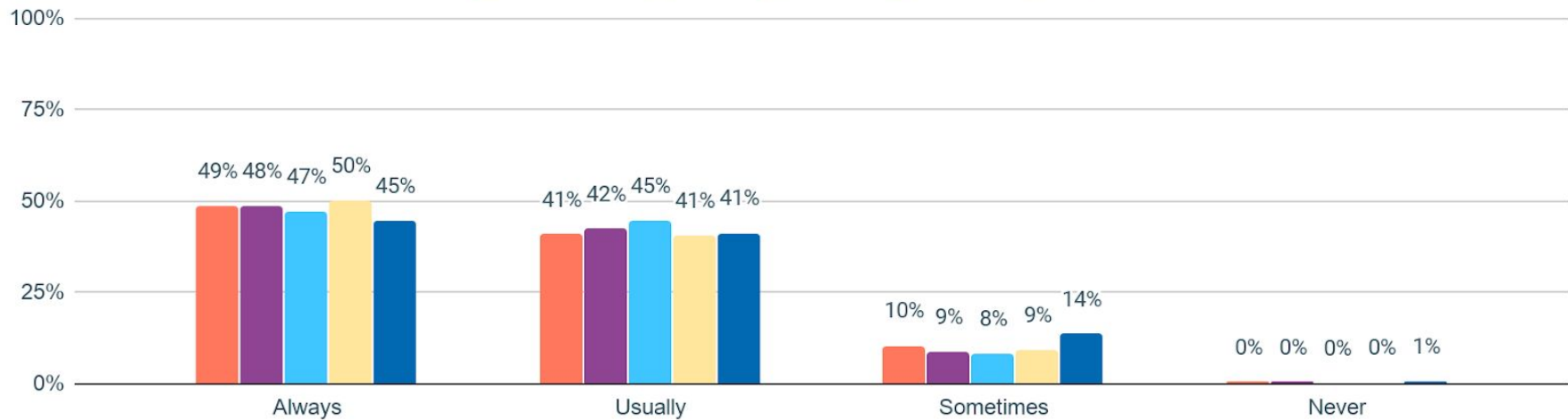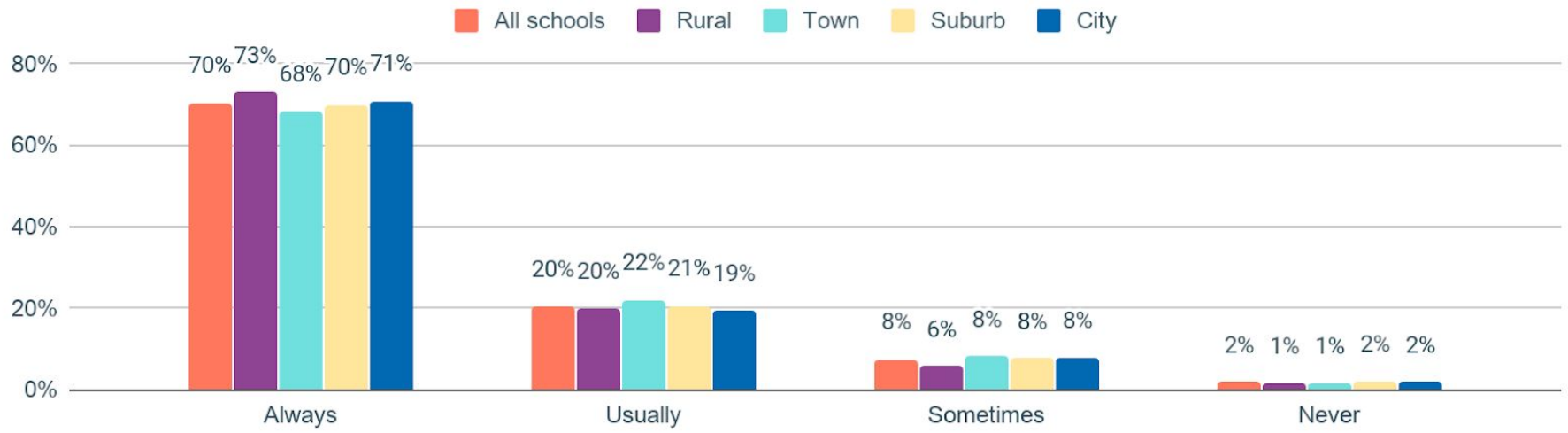
How do responses vary by districts' Title I funding?

Students' responses to "I feel safe participating in my remote learning environment" by Title I funding

Teachers' responses to "Students feel safe participating in our remote learning environment" by Title I funding

Parents' responses to "I feel safe having my child participate in a remote learning environment" by Title I funding


Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

High Title I districts: 69% | 19% | 10% | 2%
Low Title I districts: 70% | 20% | 7% | 2%

x-axis: 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

"I feel safe facilitating a remote learning environment for my students."

Main Takeaway:
Only about 6 in 10 teachers say they always feel safe facilitating remote learning.

How do teachers' responses vary by urbanicity? By Title I funding?

Teachers' responses to "I feel safe facilitating a remote learning environment for my students" by urbanicity
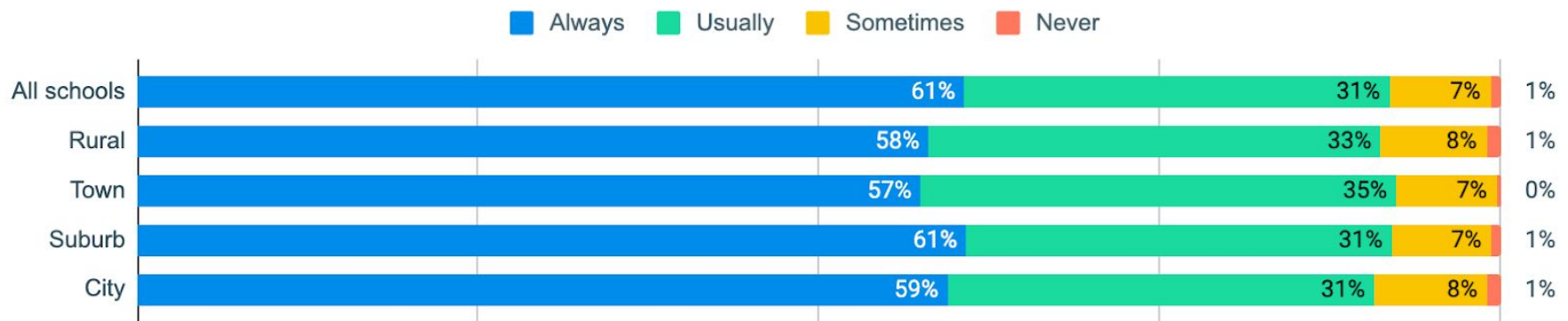
Teachers' responses to "I feel safe facilitating a remote learning environment for my students" by Title I funding
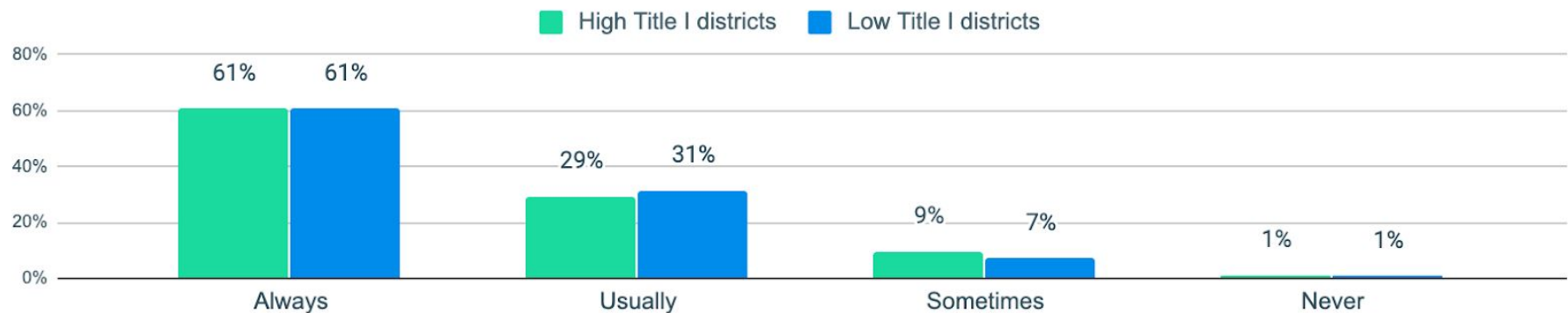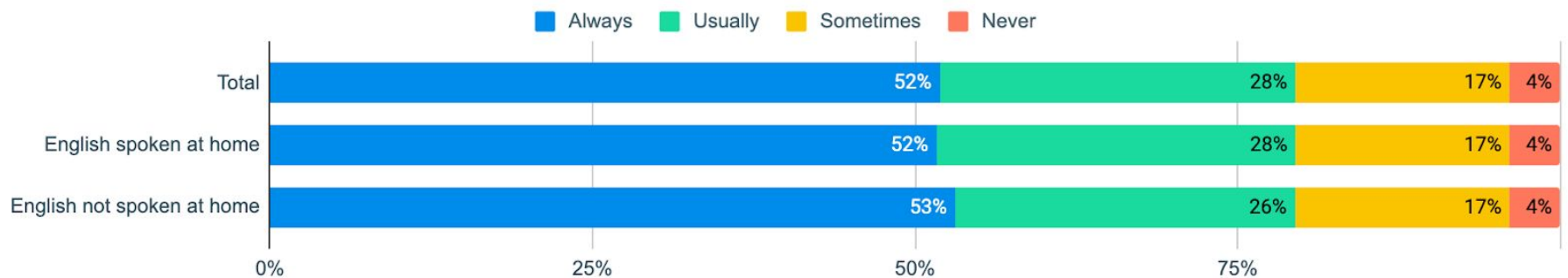
# "I am receiving the support I need from my teachers to be successful while learning remotely."

Main Takeaway: Only a slim majority of students say they consistently receive the support they need, and about 1 in 5 students either "sometimes" or "never" receives this help.

How does agreement with the statement vary according to whether English is spoken in the student's home? By Title I funding?

Students responding to the statement, "I am receiving the support I need from my teachers to be successful while learning remotely."

Students' responses to "I am receiving the support I need from my teachers to be successful while learning remotely" by Title I funding
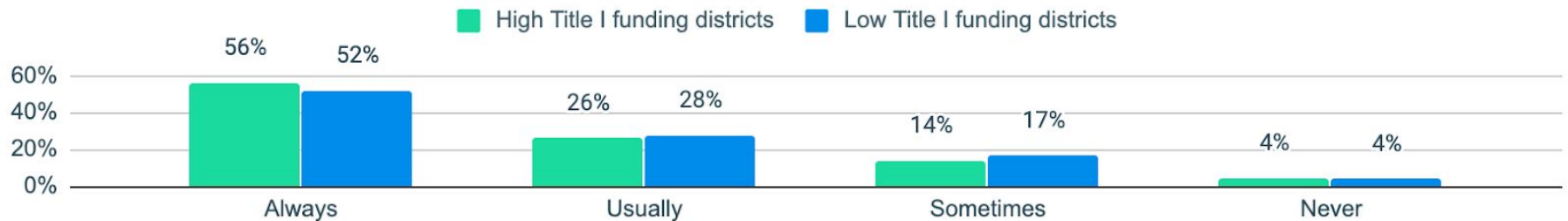
"What method(s) do you use to communicate?"

Main Takeaway: Teachers and students use a diverse array of methods to communicate, most often email and video conferencing. Urban schools appear to be the least likely to use learning management systems and video conferencing. With the exception of email and video conferencing, teachers report using each method at much higher rates than students do. Use of a phone/texting appears to be more prominent in high-Title I districts, and other methods, particularly email and video conferencing, are less prominent.

Reported methods used for remote teaching/learning: Students vs. teachers
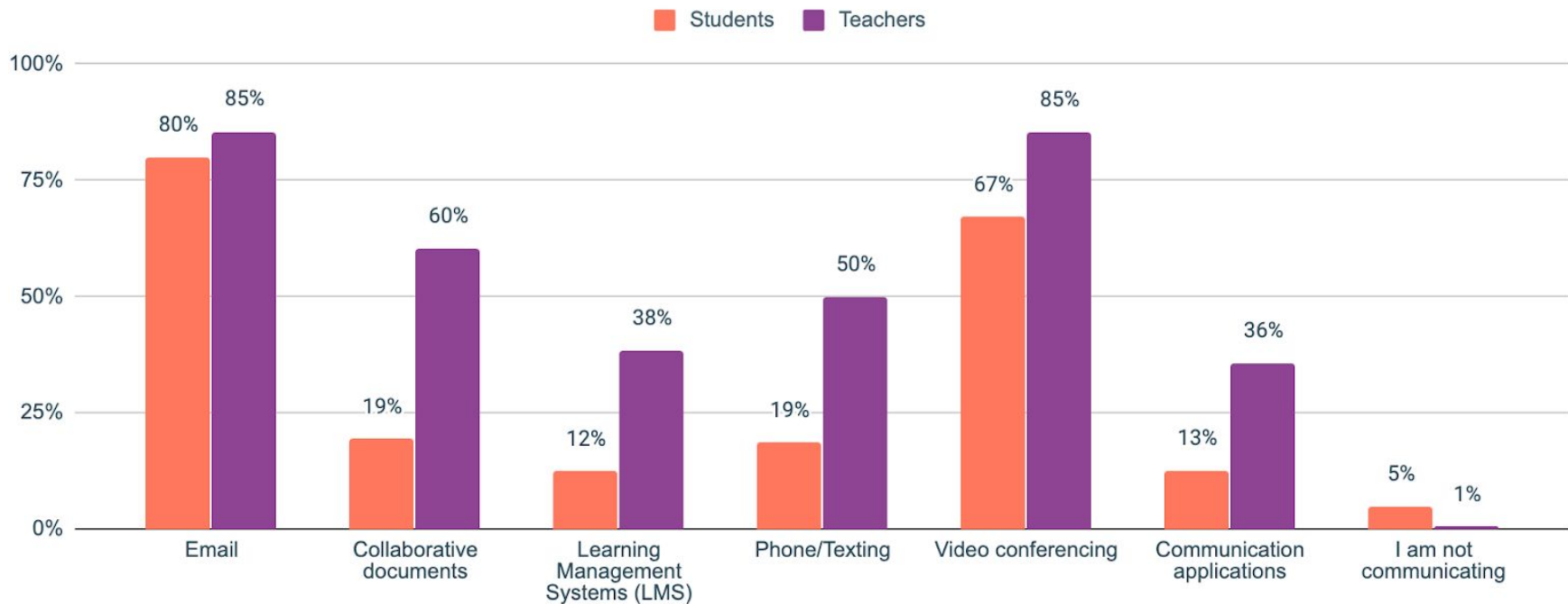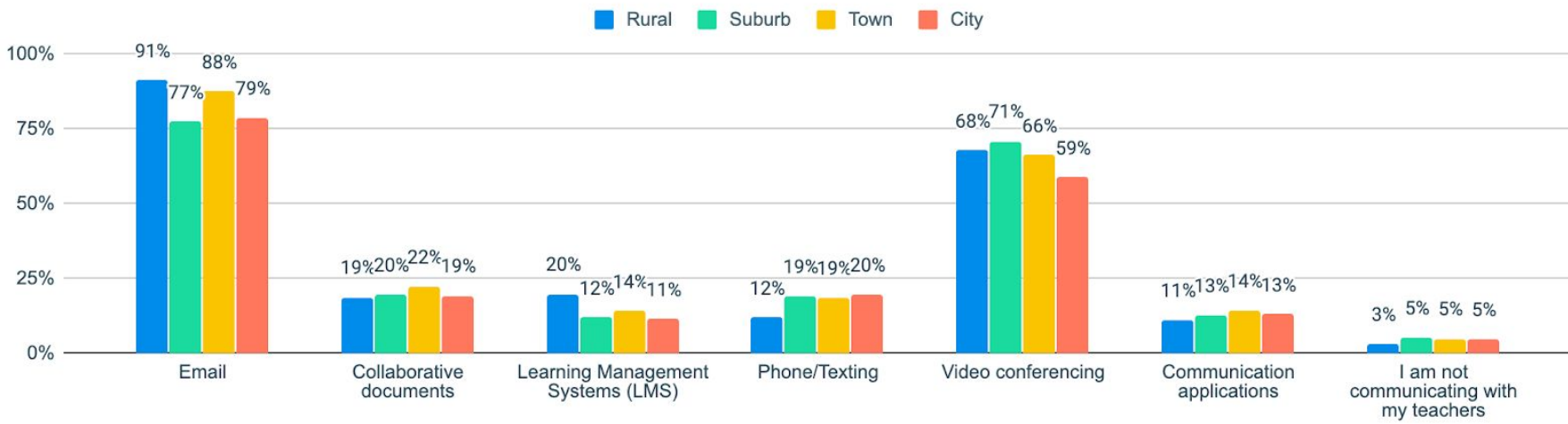
How do students' communication methods vary by grade level? By urbanicity?

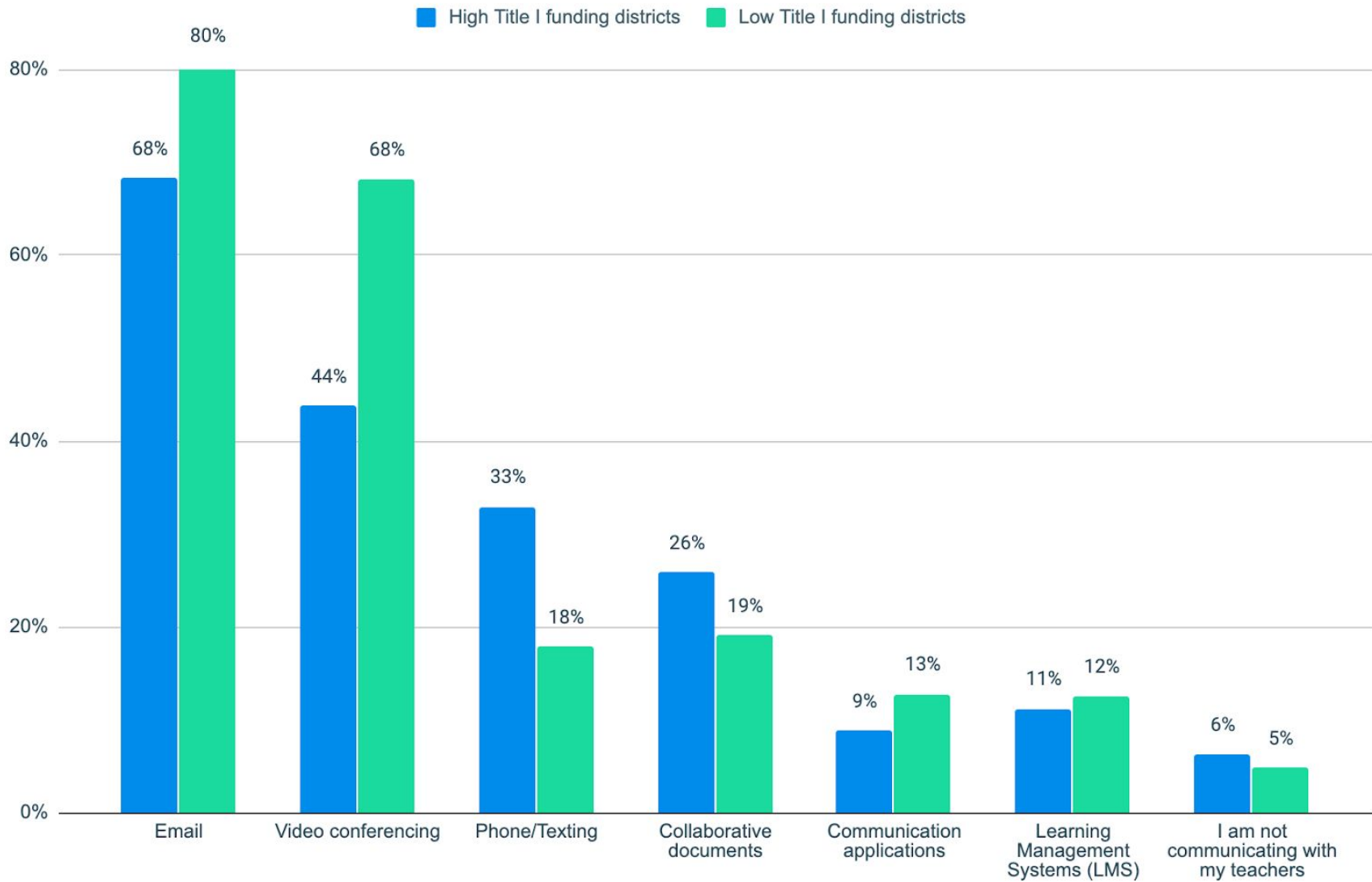Percent of students using each form of communication, by grade bracket
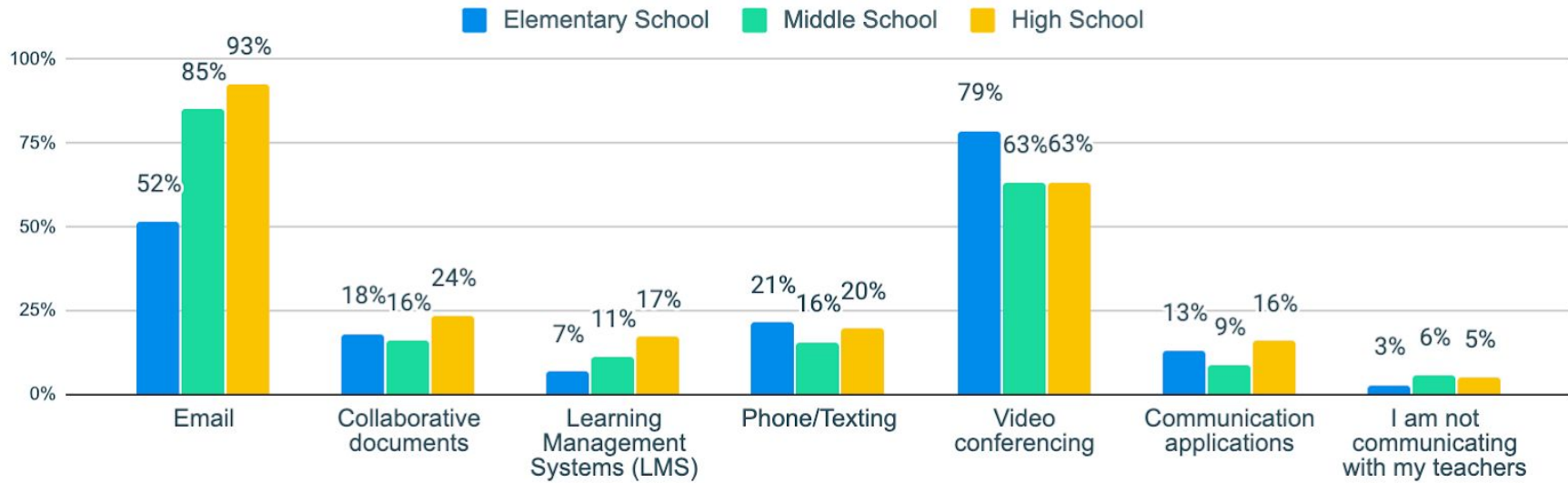
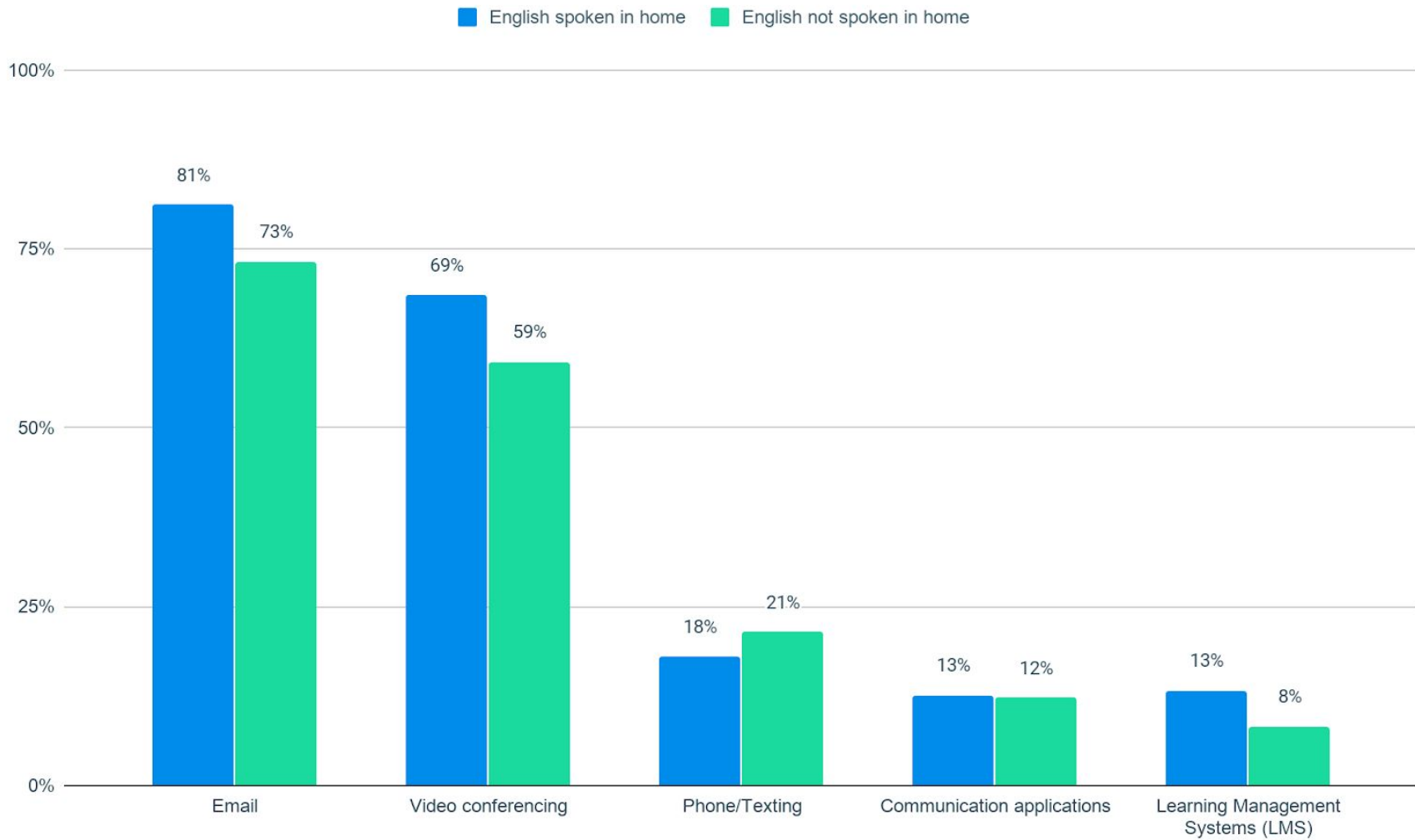Percent of students using each form of communication, by urbanicity

How do students' communication methods vary by Title I funding?

Percent of students using each form of communication, by Title I funding

Legend: ■ High Title I funding districts ■ Low Title I funding districts

Method	High Title I funding districts	Low Title I funding districts
Email	68%	80%
Video conferencing	44%	68%
Phone/Texting	33%	18%
Collaborative documents	26%	19%
Communication applications	9%	13%
Learning Management Systems (LMS)	11%	12%
I am not communicating with my teachers	6%	5%

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How do students' communication methods vary by whether English is spoken at home?

Percent of students using each form of communication, by whether English spoken at home

■ English spoken in home   ■ English not spoken in home

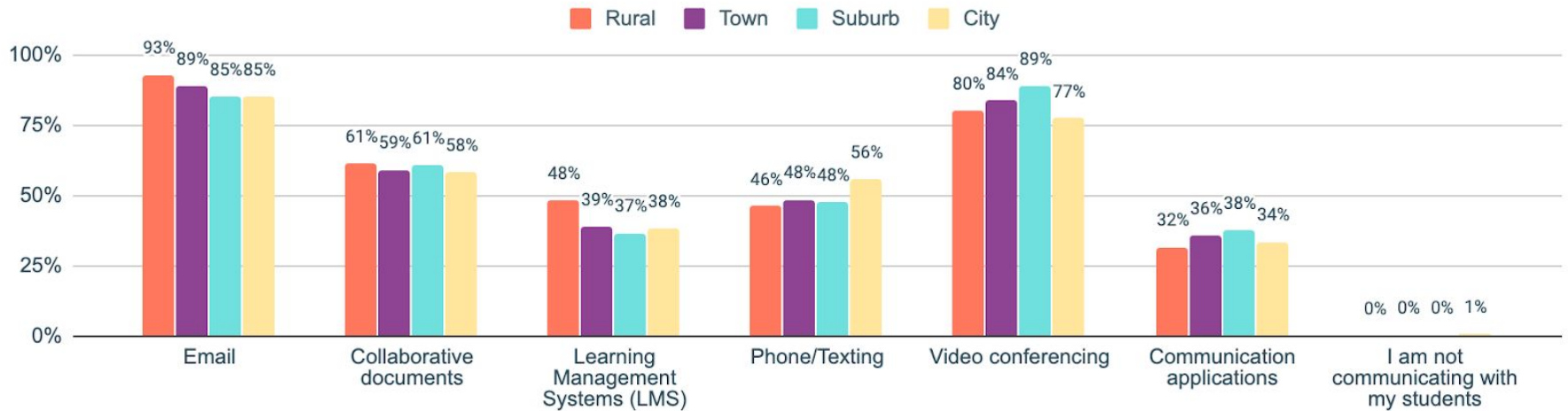|	Email	Video conferencing	Phone/Texting	Communication applications	Learning Management Systems (LMS)
English spoken in home	81%	69%	18%	13%	13%
English not spoken in home	73%	59%	21%	12%	8%

How do teachers' communication methods vary by grade level? By urbanicity?

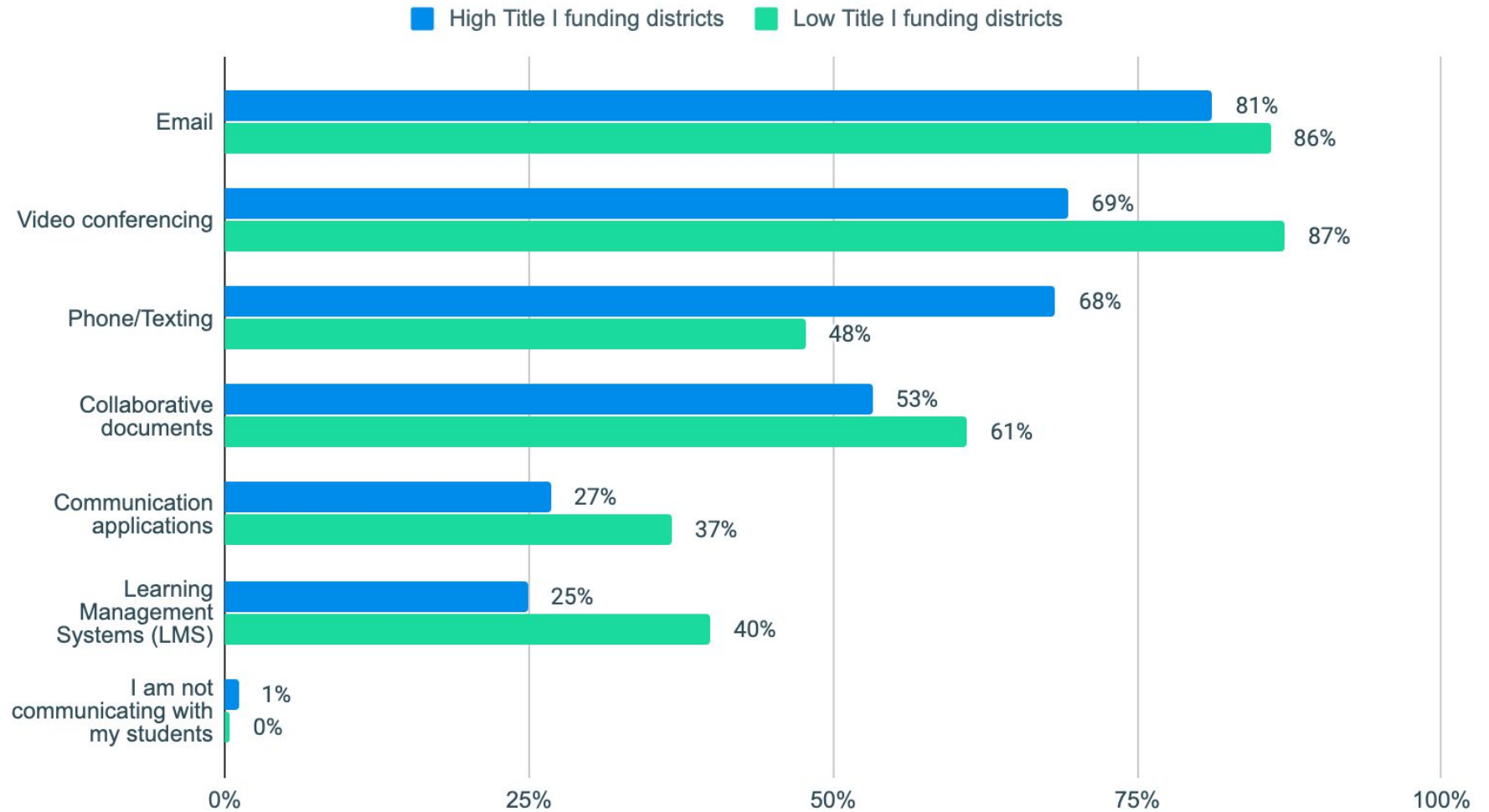Percent of teachers using each communication method, by grade level

Legend: Rural, Town, Suburb, City

	Rural	Town	Suburb	City
Email	93%	89%	85%	85%
Video conferencing	80%	84%	89%	77%
Phone/Texting	46%	48%	48%	56%
Collaborative documents	61%	59%	61%	58%
Learning Management Systems (LMS)	48%	39%	37%	38%
Communication applications	32%	36%	38%	34%
I am not communicating with my students	0%	0%	0%	1%
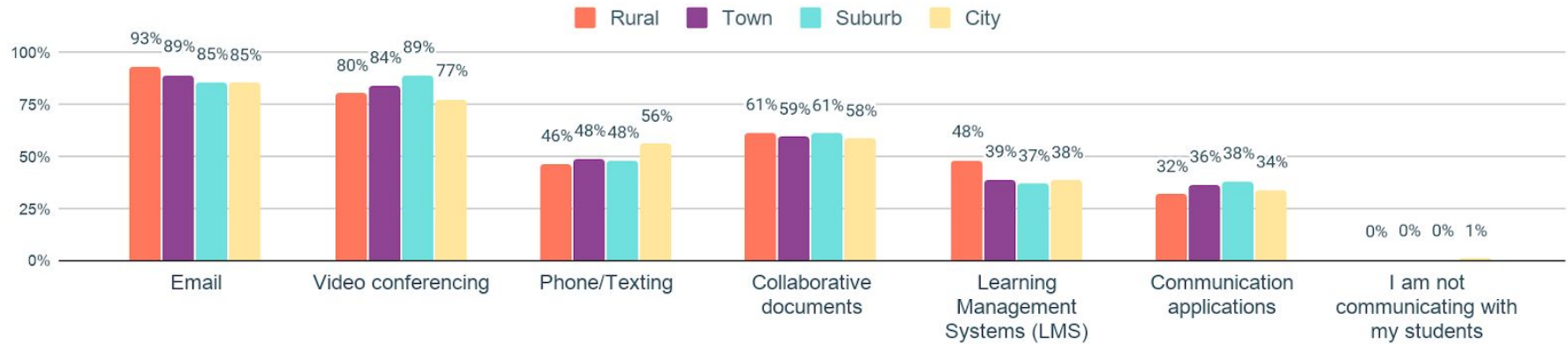
Percent of teachers using each communication method, by urbanicity

Legend: Rural, Town, Suburb, City

	Rural	Town	Suburb	City
Email	93%	89%	85%	85%
Collaborative documents	61%	59%	61%	58%
Learning Management Systems (LMS)	48%	39%	37%	38%
Phone/Texting	46%	48%	48%	56%
Video conferencing	80%	84%	89%	77%
Communication applications	32%	36%	38%	34%
I am not communicating with my students	0%	0%	0%	1%

How do teachers' communication methods vary by Title I funding?

Percent of teachers using each communication method, by Title I funding

■ High Title I funding districts   ■ Low Title I funding districts

Method	High Title I funding districts	Low Title I funding districts
Email	81%	86%
Video conferencing	69%	87%
Phone/Texting	68%	48%
Collaborative documents	53%	61%
Communication applications	27%	37%
Learning Management Systems (LMS)	25%	40%
I am not communicating with my students	1%	0%

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"Can you access the Internet for remote learning?"

Main Takeaway: At least among survey respondents, nearly 9 in 10 students have consistent access to the Internet, and an even higher percentage of teachers do. More rural teachers are slightly less likely to have consistent internet access than more urban teachers.

Students' and teachers' responses to "Can you access the internet for remote teaching/learning?"
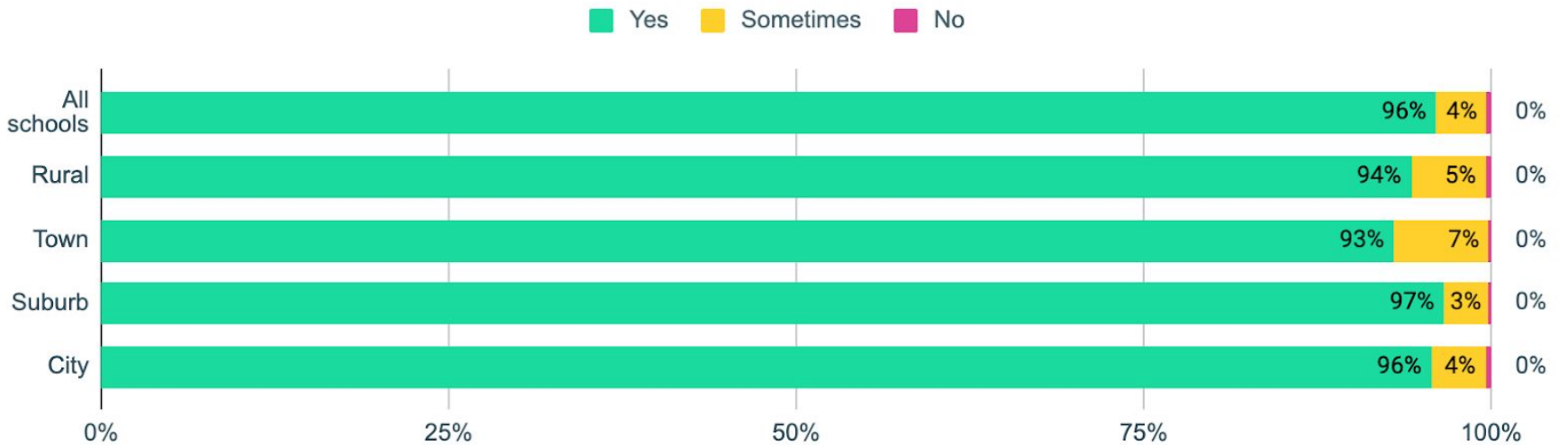
■ Yes　■ Sometimes　■ No

	Yes	Sometimes	No
Students	89%	10%	1%
Teachers	96%	4%	0%
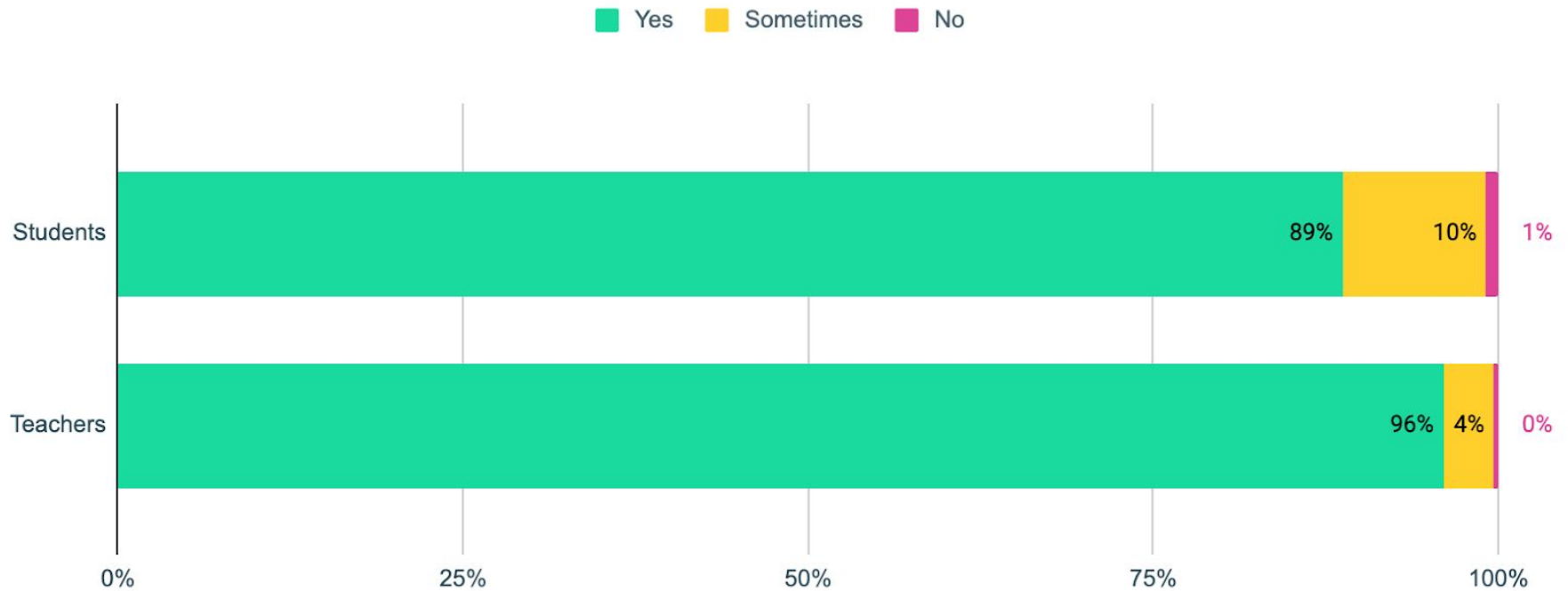
How does access to the Internet vary by urbanicity?

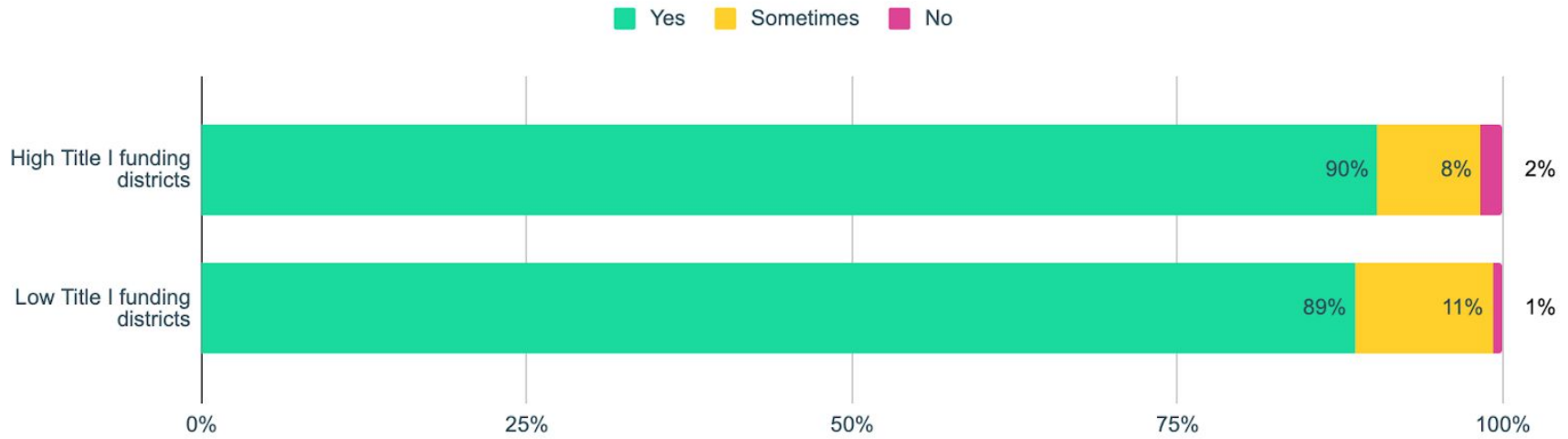Student responses to "Can you access the internet for remote learning?" by urbanicity

Yes   Sometimes   No

	Yes	Sometimes	No
All schools	89%	10%	1%
Rural	90%	10%	1%
Town	88%	11%	0%
Suburb	89%	10%	1%
City	87%	12%	1%
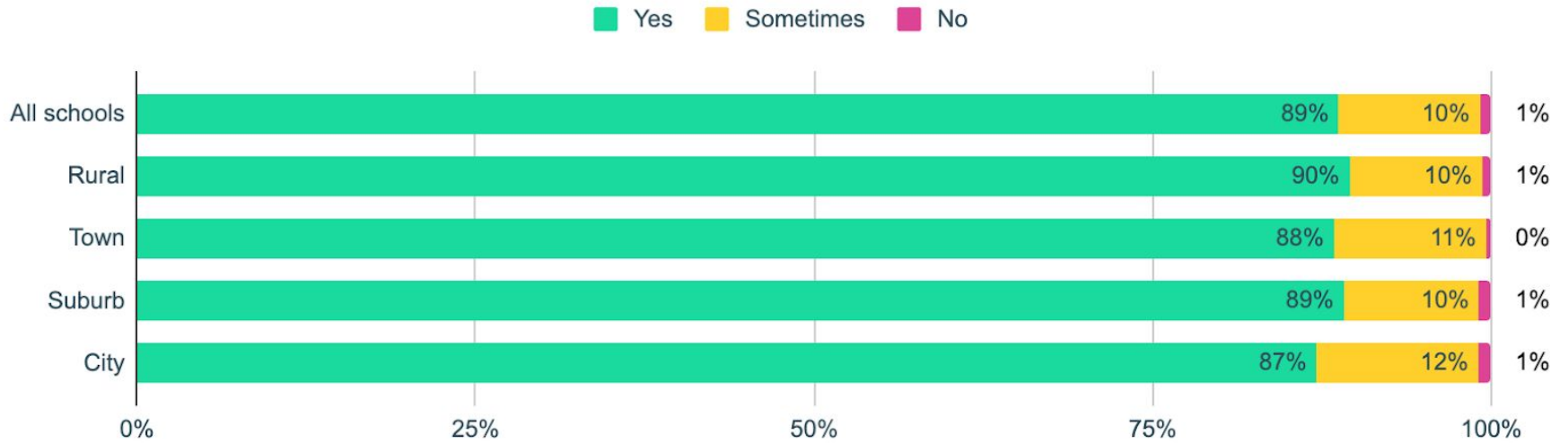
Teacher responses to "Can you access the internet to deliver remote instruction?" by urbanicity

Yes   Sometimes   No

	Yes	Sometimes	No
All schools	96%	4%	0%
Rural	94%	5%	0%
Town	93%	7%	0%
Suburb	97%	3%	0%
City	96%	4%	0%

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How do responses vary by Title I funding?

Students' responses to "Can you access the internet for remote learning?" by Title I funding

■ Yes   ■ Sometimes   ■ No

High Title I funding districts: 90% | 8% | 2%

Low Title I funding districts: 89% | 11% | 1%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Teachers' responses to "Can you access the internet to deliver remote instruction?" by Title I funding
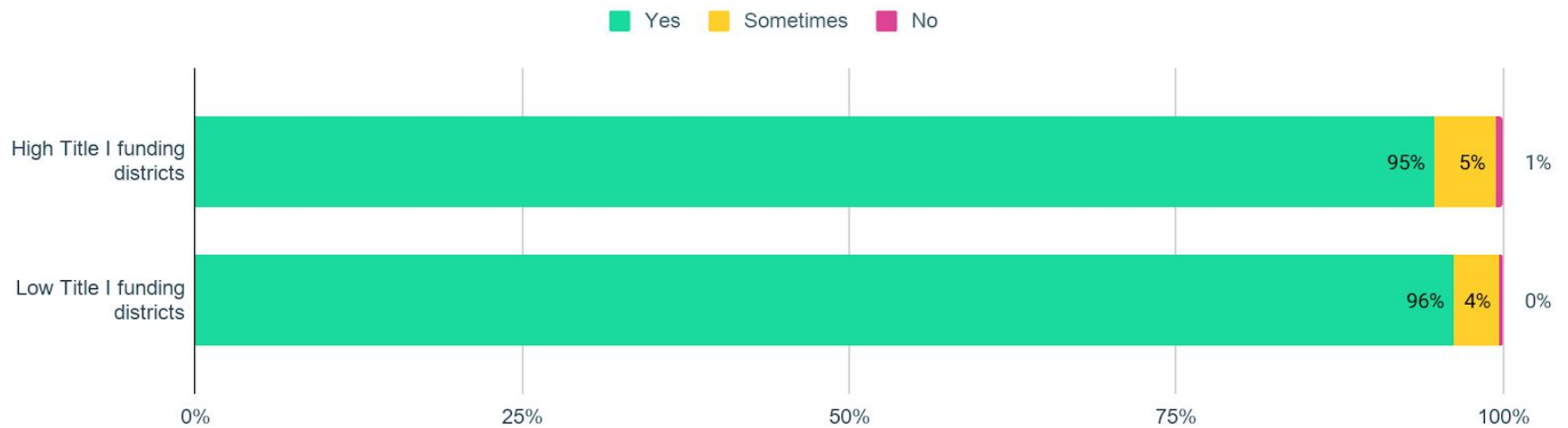
■ Yes   ■ Sometimes   ■ No

High Title I funding districts: 95% | 5% | 1%

Low Title I funding districts: 96% | 4% | 0%

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

"Do you have enough access to a device to complete your remote learning work?"

Main Takeaway: Only about 7 in 10 students and 8 in 10 teachers always have consistent access to a device to engage in remote learning.

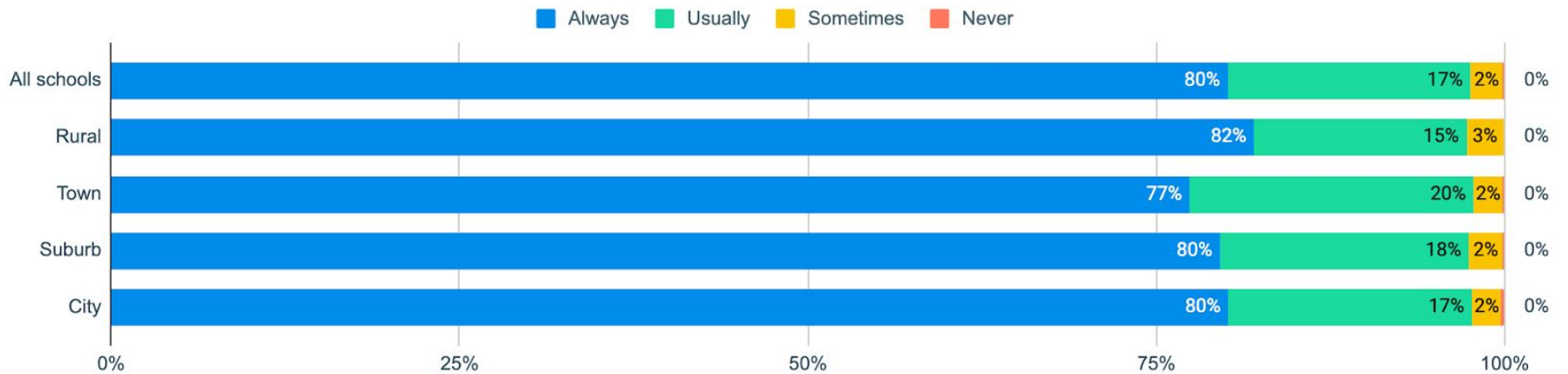Responses to "Do you have enough access to a device to complete your remote learning work?"

Legend: ■ Always ■ Usually ■ Sometimes ■ Never

Students: 70% | 23% | 7% | 0%

Teachers: 80% | 17% | 2% | 0%

X-axis: 0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%
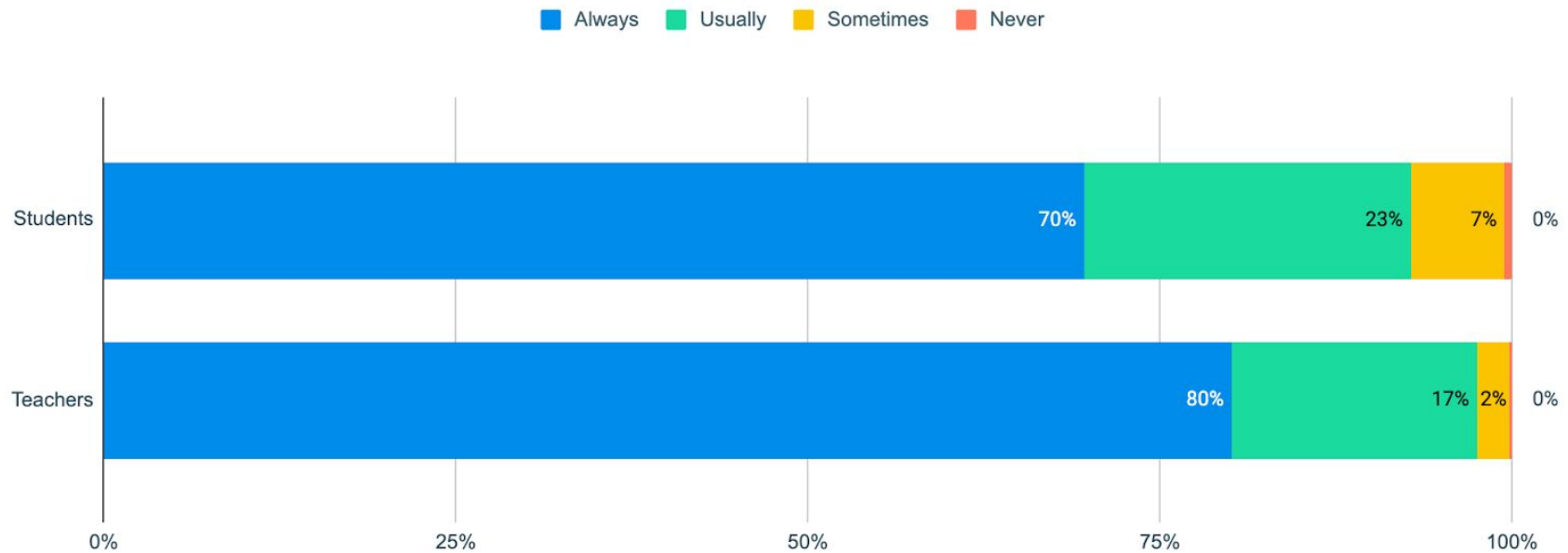
How does remote learning device access vary by urbanicity?

Student responses to "Do you have enough access to a device to complete your remote learning work?" by urbanicity


Chart legend: Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All schools	70%	23%	7%	0%
Rural	74%	22%	4%	0%
Town	68%	27%	5%	0%
Suburb	70%	23%	7%	1%
City	68%	24%	7%	0%
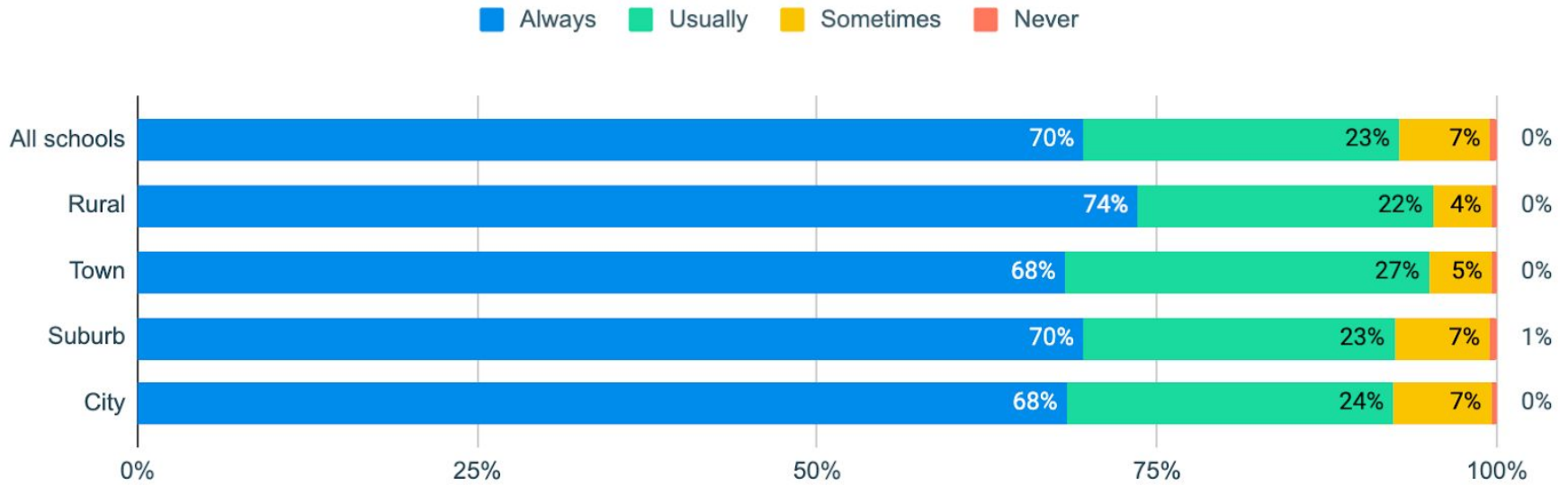
Teachers' responses to "Do you have enough access to a device to accomplish your work?" by urbanicity

Chart legend: Always, Usually, Sometimes, Never

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
All schools	80%	17%	2%	0%
Rural	82%	15%	3%	0%
Town	77%	20%	2%	0%
Suburb	80%	18%	2%	0%
City	80%	17%	2%	0%

How does remote learning device access vary by Title I funding?

Students' responses to "Do you have enough access to a device to complete your remote learning work?" by Title I funding
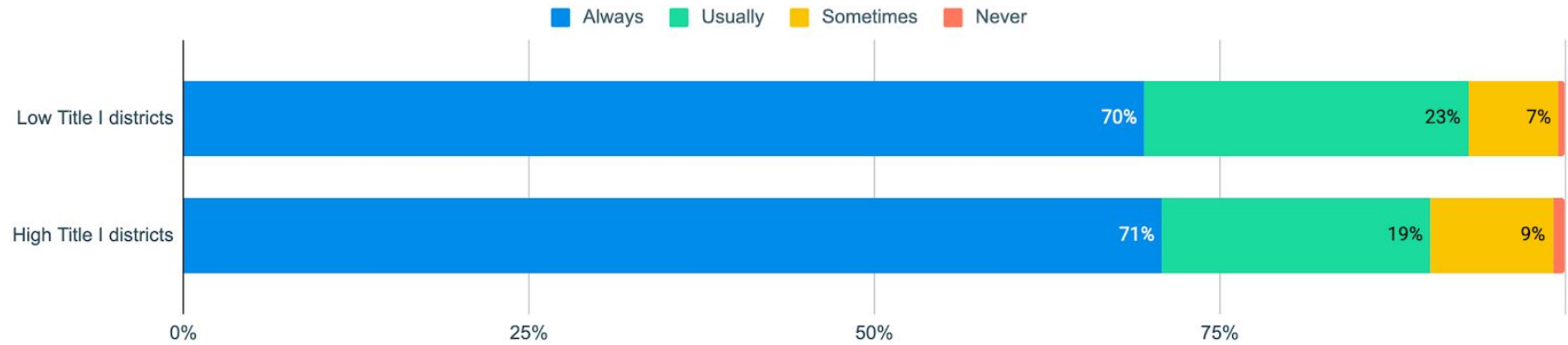
Teachers' responses to "Do you have enough access to a device to accomplish your work?" by Title I funding
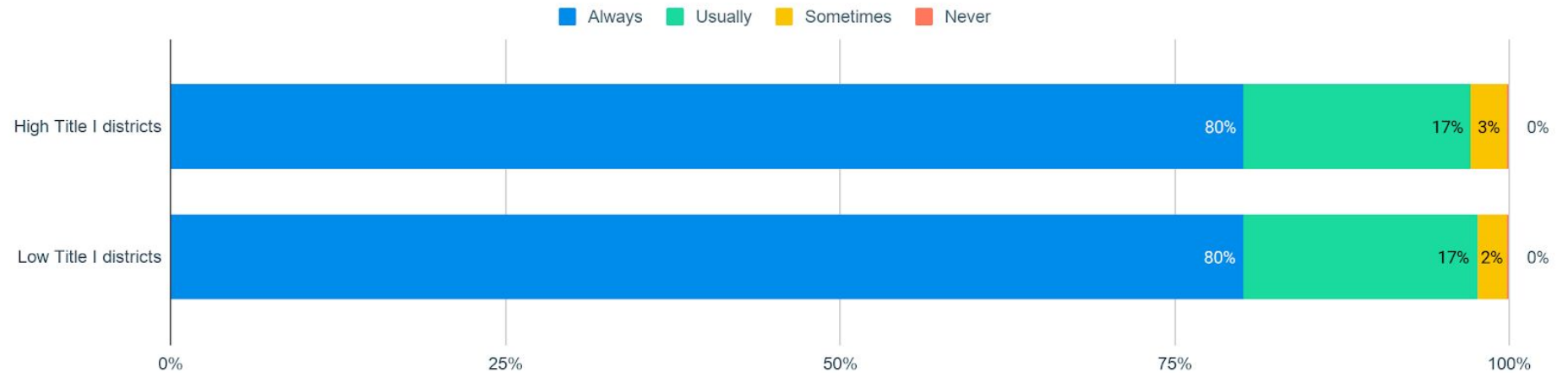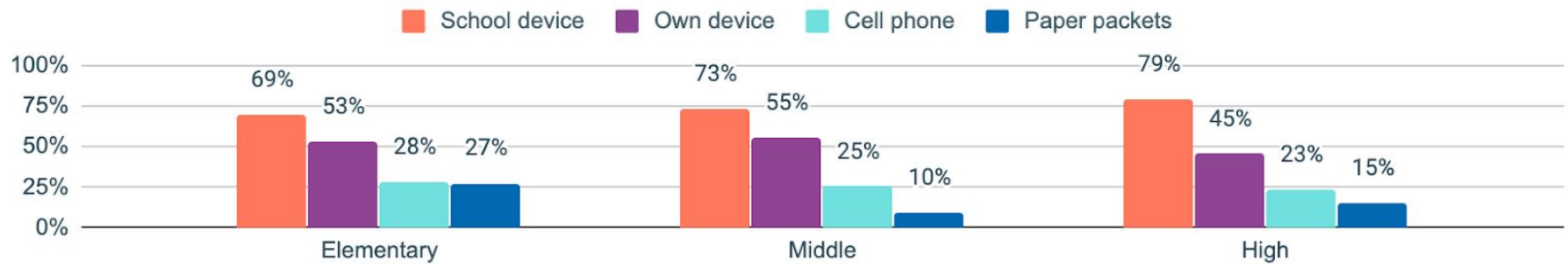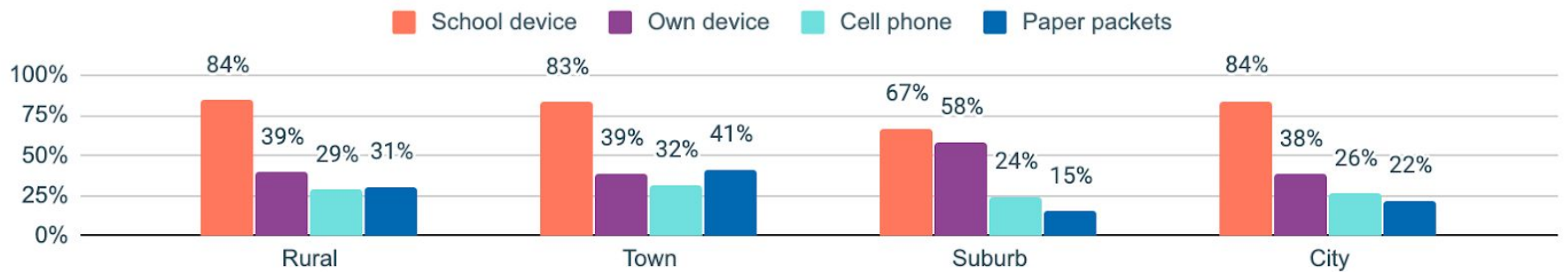
"How do you deliver remote instruction?"

Main Takeaway: teachers most often use a device provided by their school, but their grade level and urbanicity make a difference: for example, elementary school teachers are the most likely to use paper packets, and suburban teachers are more likely to use their own device.

How does the use of each device vary by teachers' grade bracket? By urbanicity?

Percent of teachers using each instructional delivery device, by grade bracket

■ School device ■ Own device ■ Cell phone ■ Paper packets

Elementary: 69%, 53%, 28%, 27%
Middle: 73%, 55%, 25%, 10%
High: 79%, 45%, 23%, 15%

Percent of teachers using each instructional delivery device, by urbanicity

■ School device ■ Own device ■ Cell phone ■ Paper packets

Rural: 84%, 39%, 29%, 31%
**Town:** 83%, 39%, 32%, 41%
Suburb: 67%, 58%, 24%, 15%
City: 84%, 38%, 26%, 22%

The Impact of School Leadership on the Ability to Narrow the Digital Divide

Main Takeaway: For both scheduling and parental expectations, about 1 in 4 parents said their school either "sometimes" or "never" provides this support. About 8% of parents say that they are not communicating with their children's teachers.

"My child's school provides a schedule for my child to follow for remote learning."
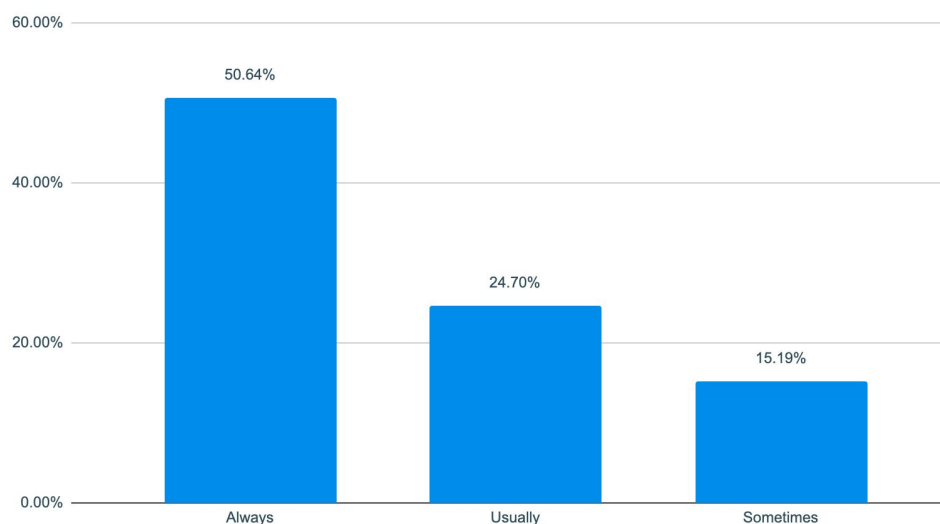
Parents' responses to "My child's school provides a schedule for my child to follow for remote learning."

"The school has provided me clear expectations for how to support my child's remote learning."
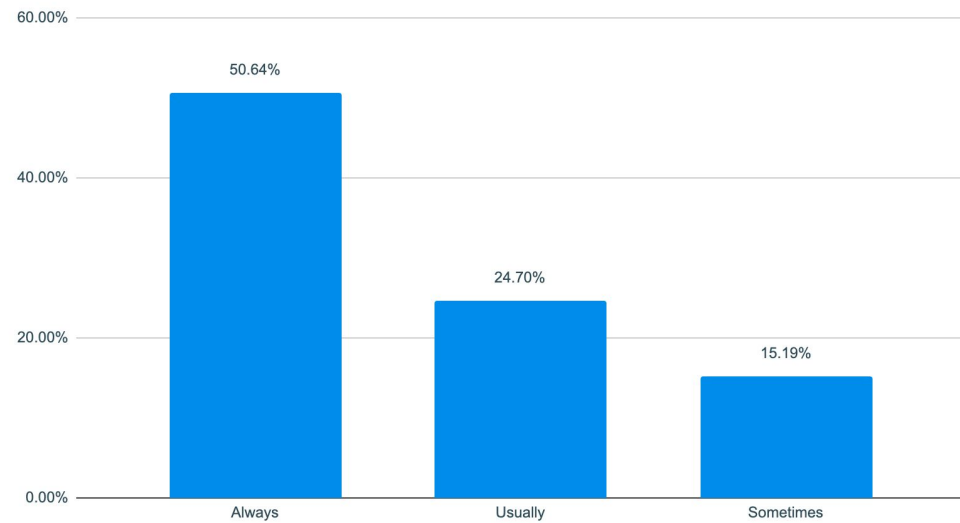
Parents' responses to "My child's school provides a schedule for my child to follow for remote learning."

Chart values:
- Always: 50.64%
- Usually: 24.70%
- Sometimes: 15.19%

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Appendix

Table of respondent counts

When interpreting the results of the survey in this document, bear in mind that the pool of respondents has large shares of middle/high school students, elementary school parents, suburban respondents, and students who speak English at home. Additionally, some results may exceed 100% since some students, teachers, parents and principals may respond to multiple categories.

Respondent counts	Student total	Student total when excluding students who always answered "always"	Teacher total	Parent total	Principal total
Total	51,266	49,429	11,889	33,182	580
Elementary school	12,415	11,899	6,043	18,117	257
Middle school	19,581	18,874	2,659	6,898	122
High school	19,270	18,656	3,117	7,835	141
Rural	5,940	5,708	1,023	3,731	41
Town	2,705	2,611	628	2,171	30
Suburb	29,180	28,157	6,827	20,279	335
City	10,110	9,723	2,547	5,211	116
No urbanicity entry	3,331	3,230	864	1,790	57
Speaks English at home	42,647	41,027	---	---	---
Doesn't speak English at home	8,619	8,402	---	---	---
High Title I funding[1]	2,525	2,369	1,249	2,005	60
Low Title I funding	48,741	47,060	10,642	31,177	520

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[1] A district is considered to have high Title I funding if its Title I funding per student exceeds $500.