# Community Technology Survey

FEBRUARY 25, 2016

# Purpose of Community Technology Survey

- To help the district plan how to use funding from the NYS Smart Schools Bonds Act, the community was surveyed about how it uses technology.

- In 2014, Governor Cuomo established The Smart Schools Commission to conduct a review of all NY State schools to determine their ability to:

  - Expand online learning and expand connectivity
  - Utilize technology for instruction and professional development

- The Smart Schools Commission recommended targeted funding to schools to eliminate gaps in technology. The Smart Schools Bond Act was approved by voters an authorized the release of $2 billion statewide for all public schools to finance educational technology and infrastructure to improve learning opportunities.

- Schodack was allocated $623,090
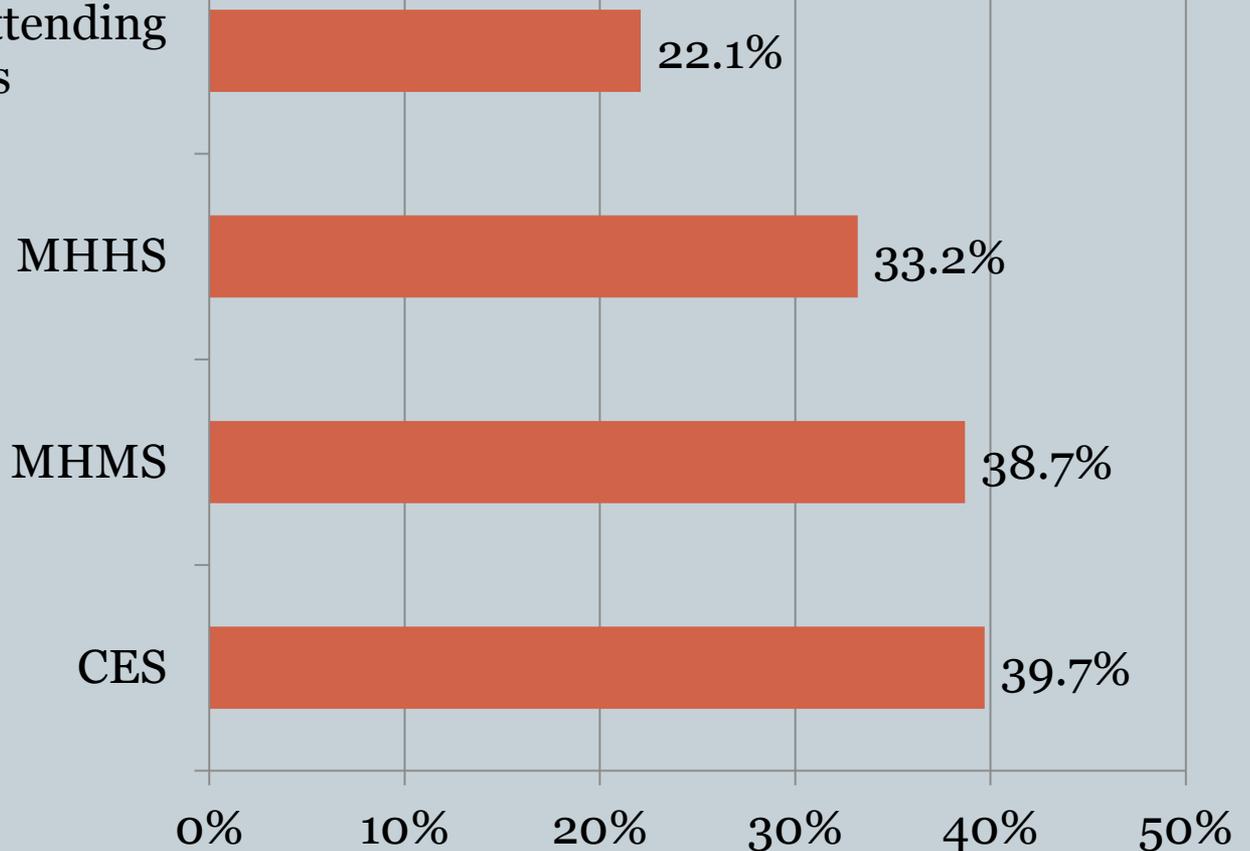
# Survey Overview

- Online survey was open from Jan. 25 to Feb. 8, 2016

- 200 responses

- Promoted through:
  - Website
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - eNews
  - Parent fliers
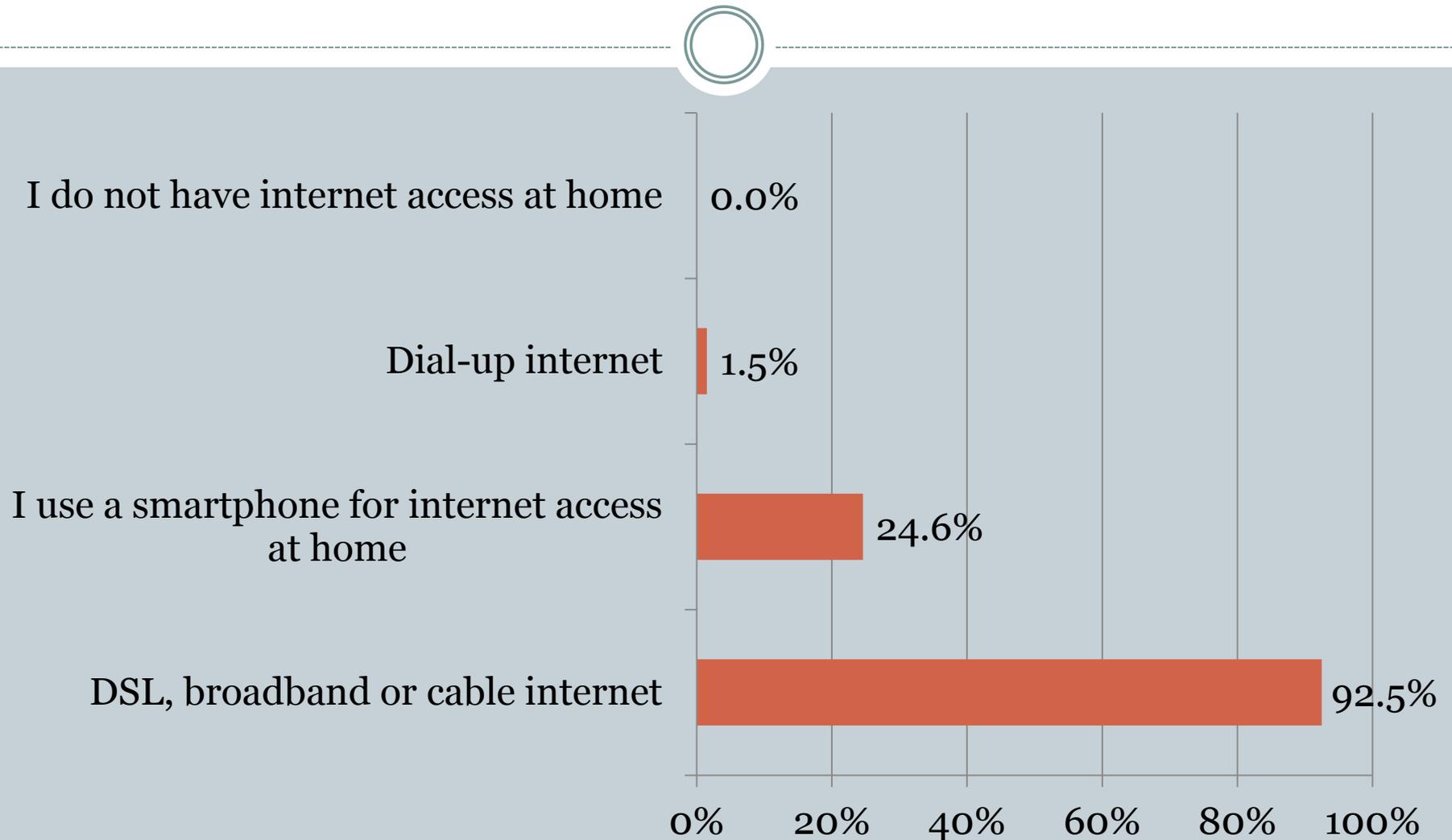  - Automated phone call to parents

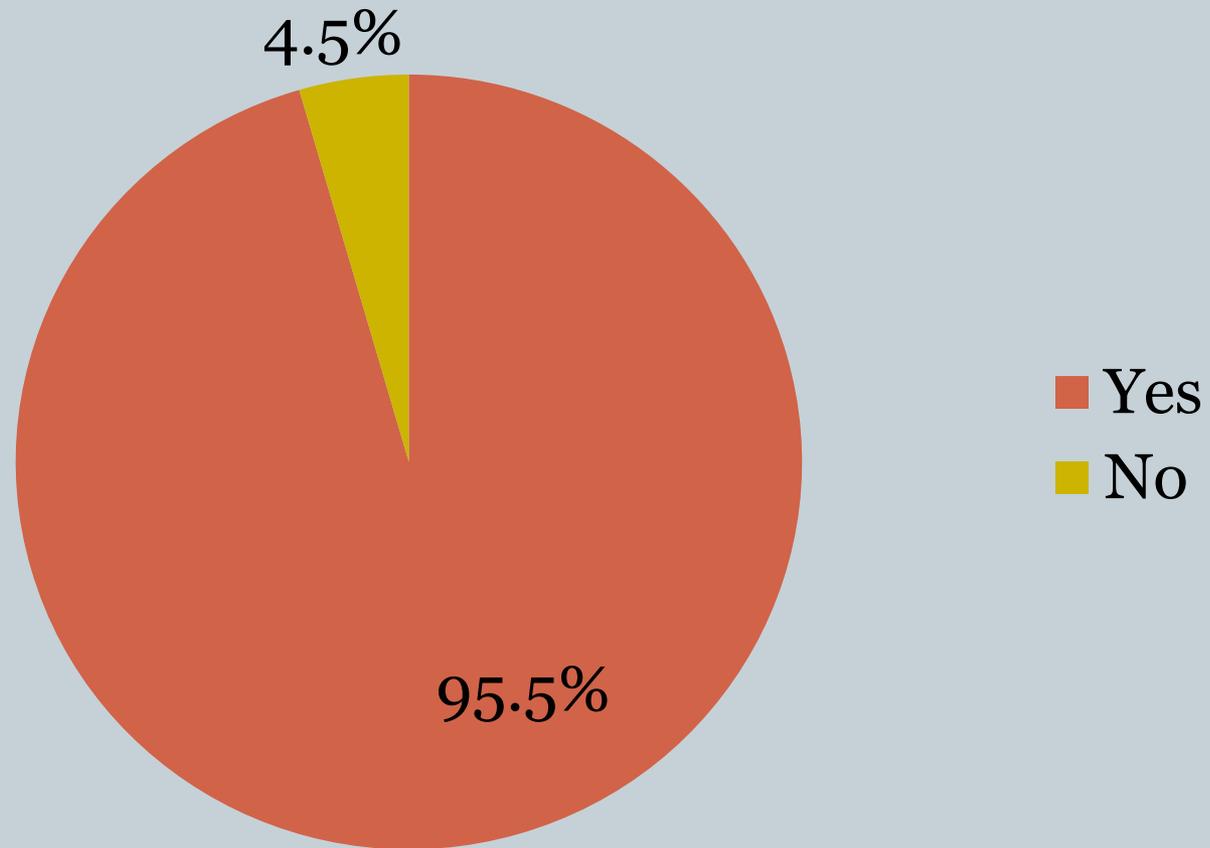# 1. What schools do your children attend?



| School | Percentage |
|---|---|
| I do not have children attending Schodack schools | 22.1% |
| MHHS | 33.2% |
| MHMS | 38.7% |
| CES | 39.7% |

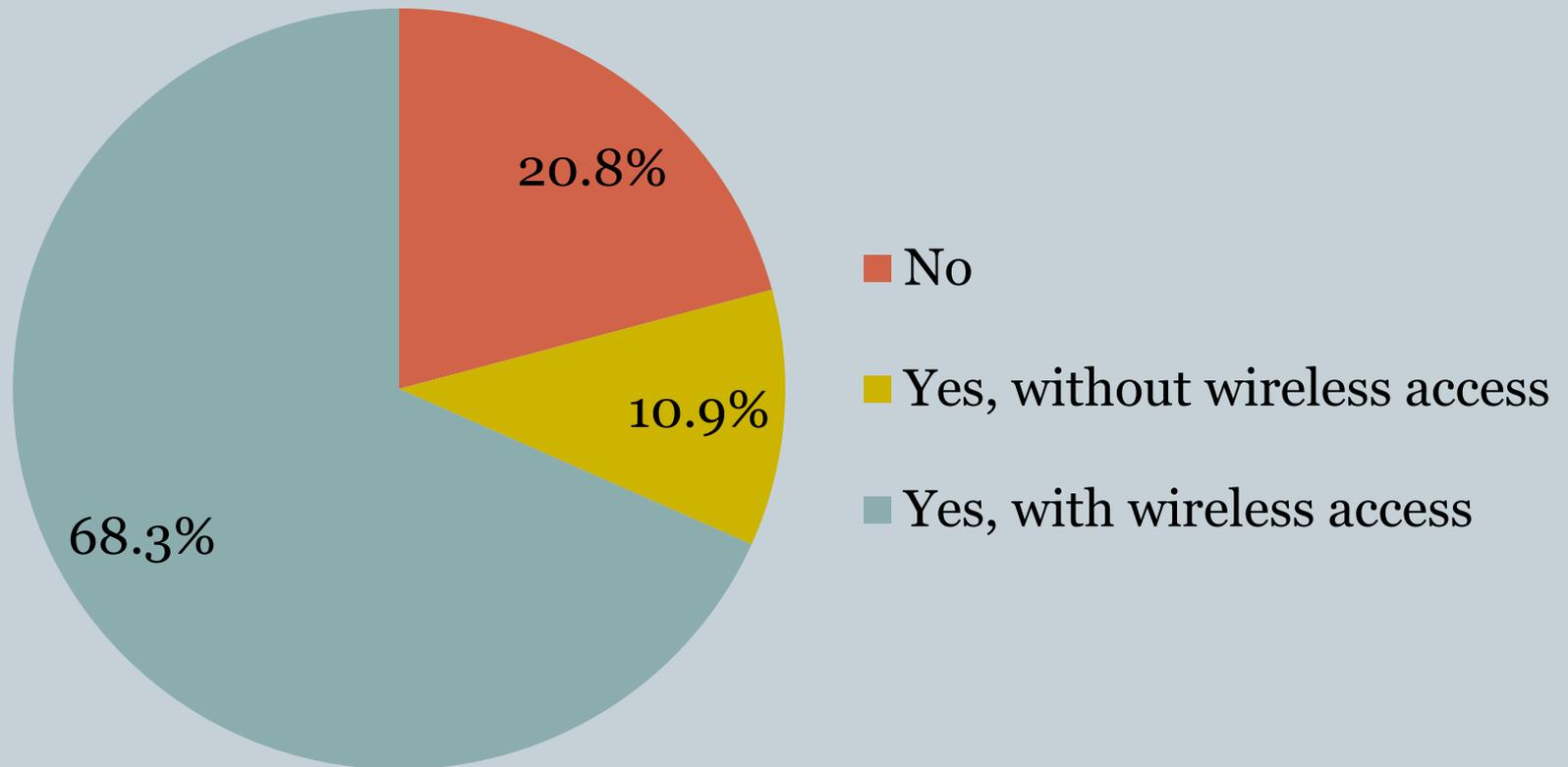# 2. What type of internet access do you have at home?

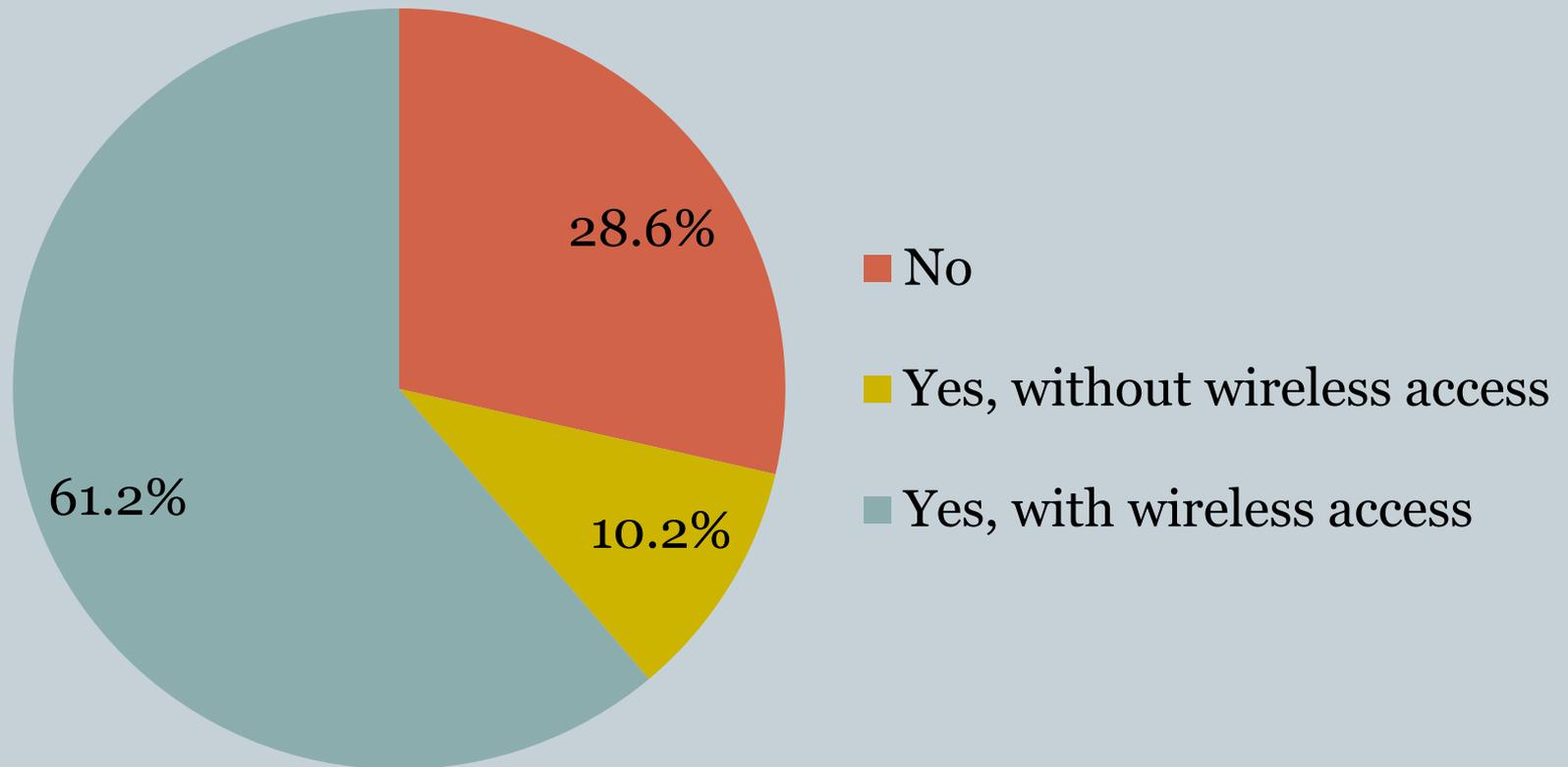# 3. Do you have wireless internet at home?

# 4. If your child attends MHHS, do they have access to a mobile device during school?

# 5. If your child attends MHMS, do they have access to a mobile device during school?



- No
- Yes, without wireless access
- Yes, with wireless access

28.6%

10.2%

61.2%

# 6. If your child attends CES, do they have access to a mobile device during school?



Legend:
- No — 67.3%
- Yes, without wireless access — 6.1%
- Yes, with wireless access — 26.5%
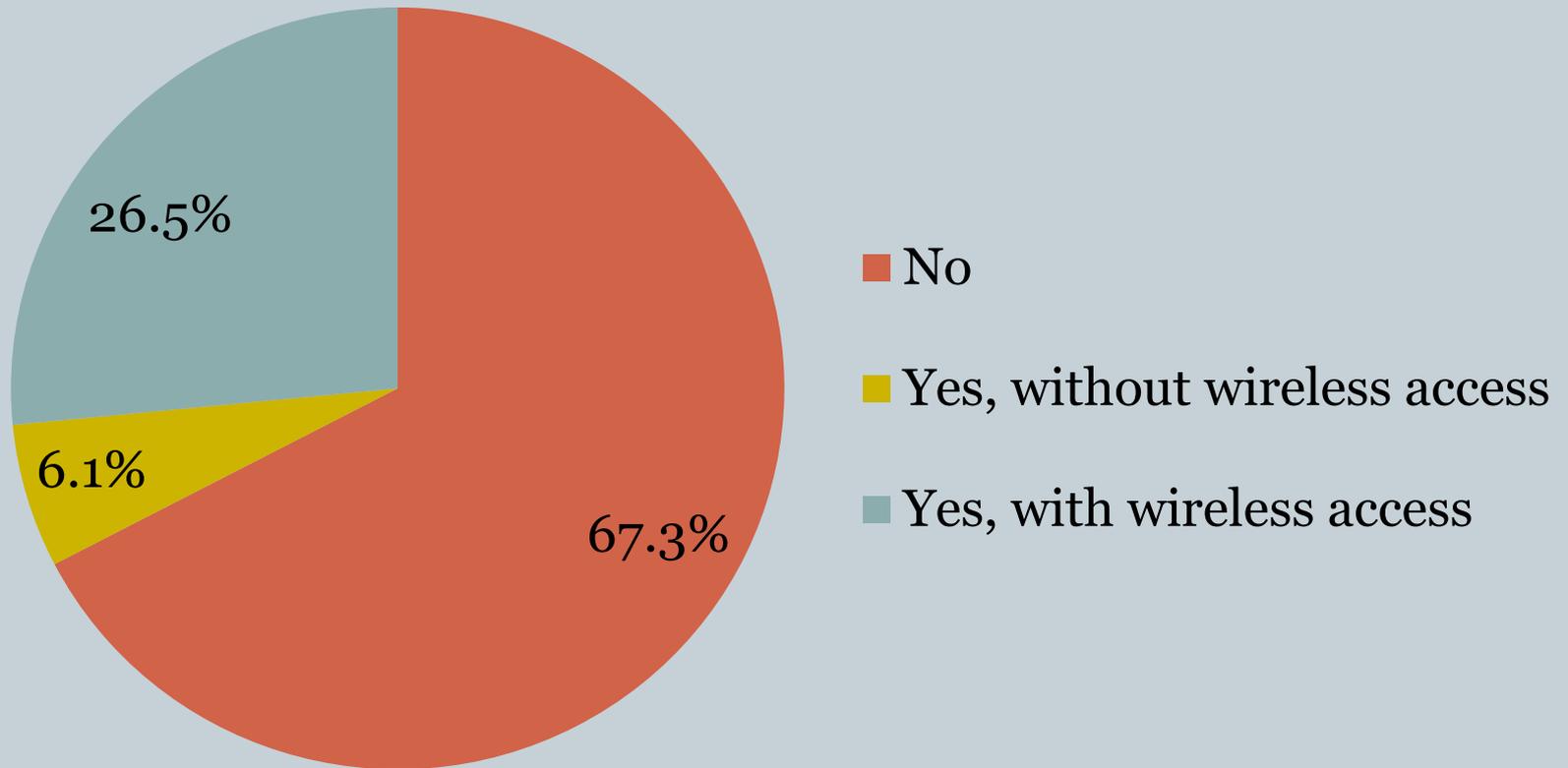
# 7. Which of the following forms of technology does your child(ren) have access to at home?



| Technology | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Laptop computer | 76.2% |
| Tablet | 72.7% |
| Smartphone | 72.1% |
| Desktop computer | 54.7% |
| Digital Camera/Videocamera | 48.3% |
| E-Reader | 44.2% |
| MP3 Player (iPod, etc.) | 39.5% |
| Other | 2.3% |
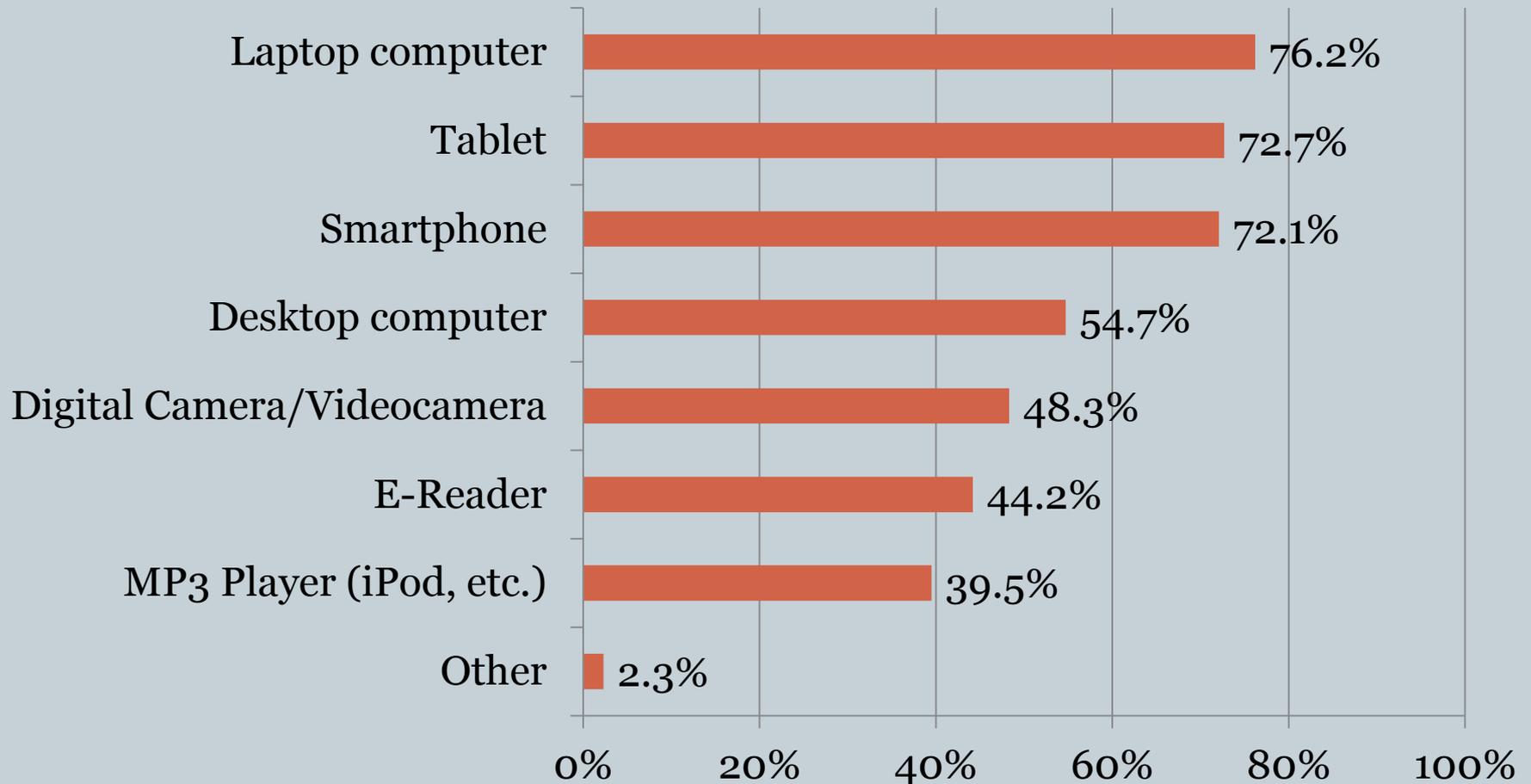
# 8. Allowing students to use their mobile devices at school
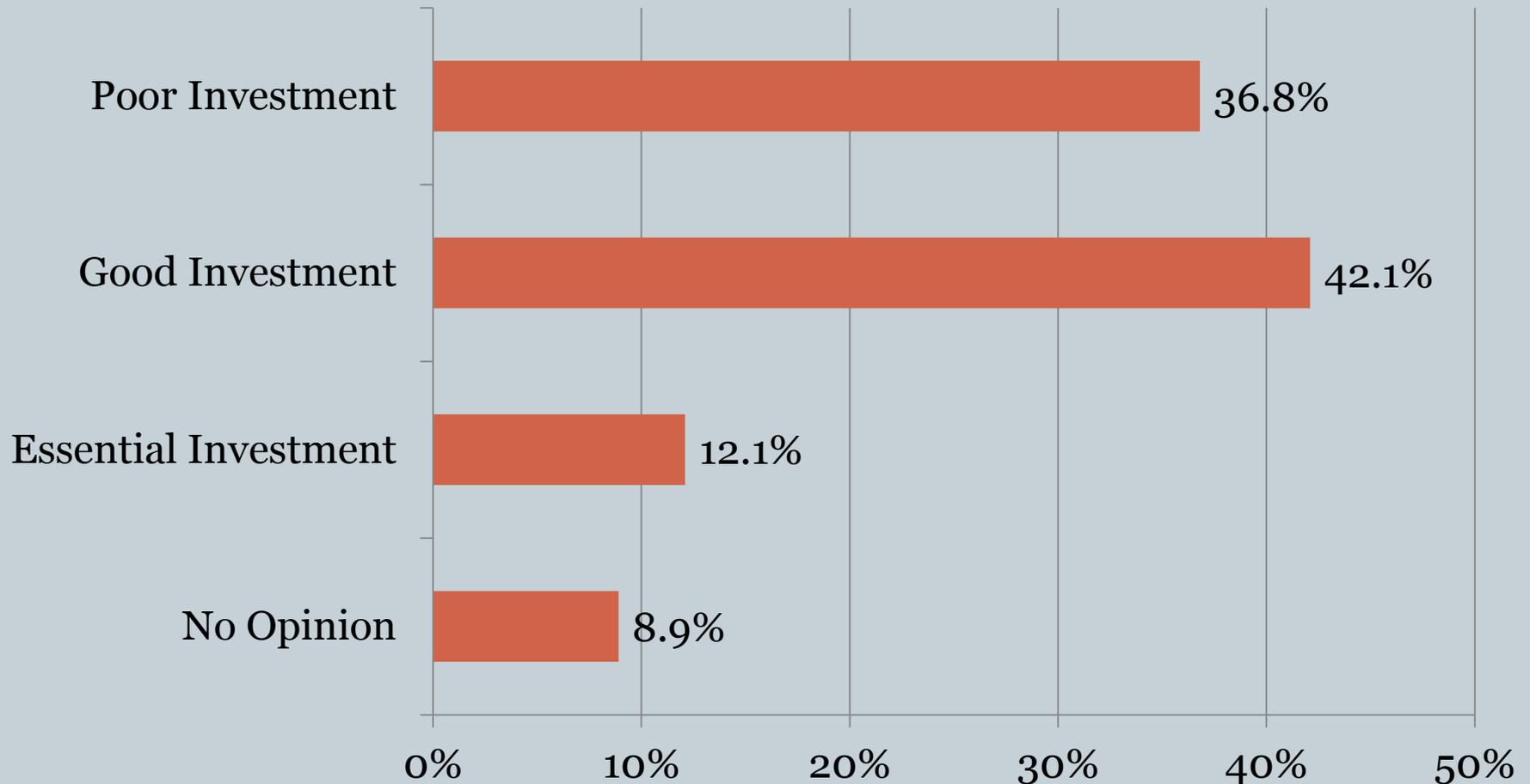
# 8. Mobile laptops for computers



Poor Investment — 4.7%
Good Investment — 55.4%
Essential Investment — 36.8%
No Opinion — 3.1%
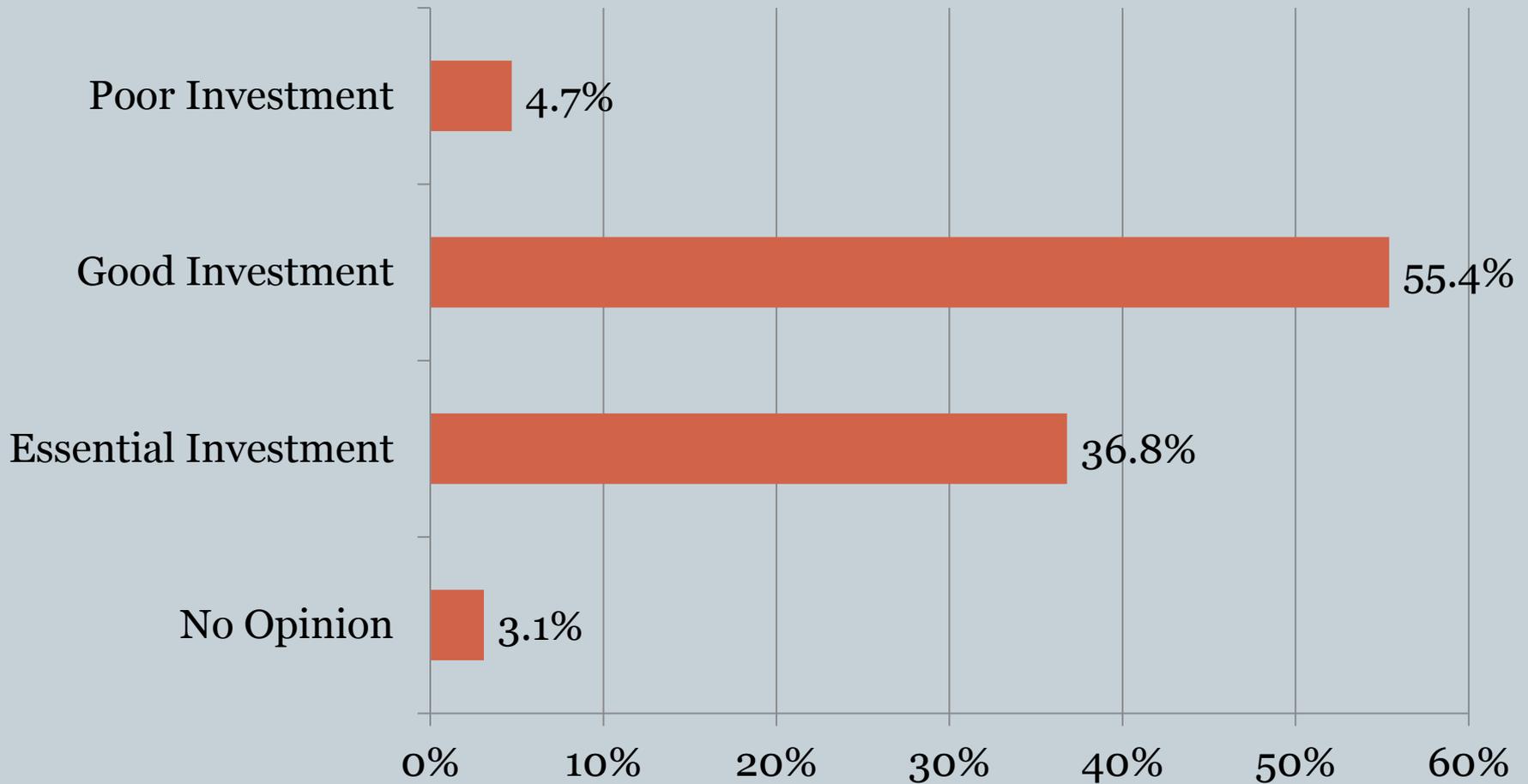
# 8. One-to-one digital device for each student (laptop, tablet or e-reader)
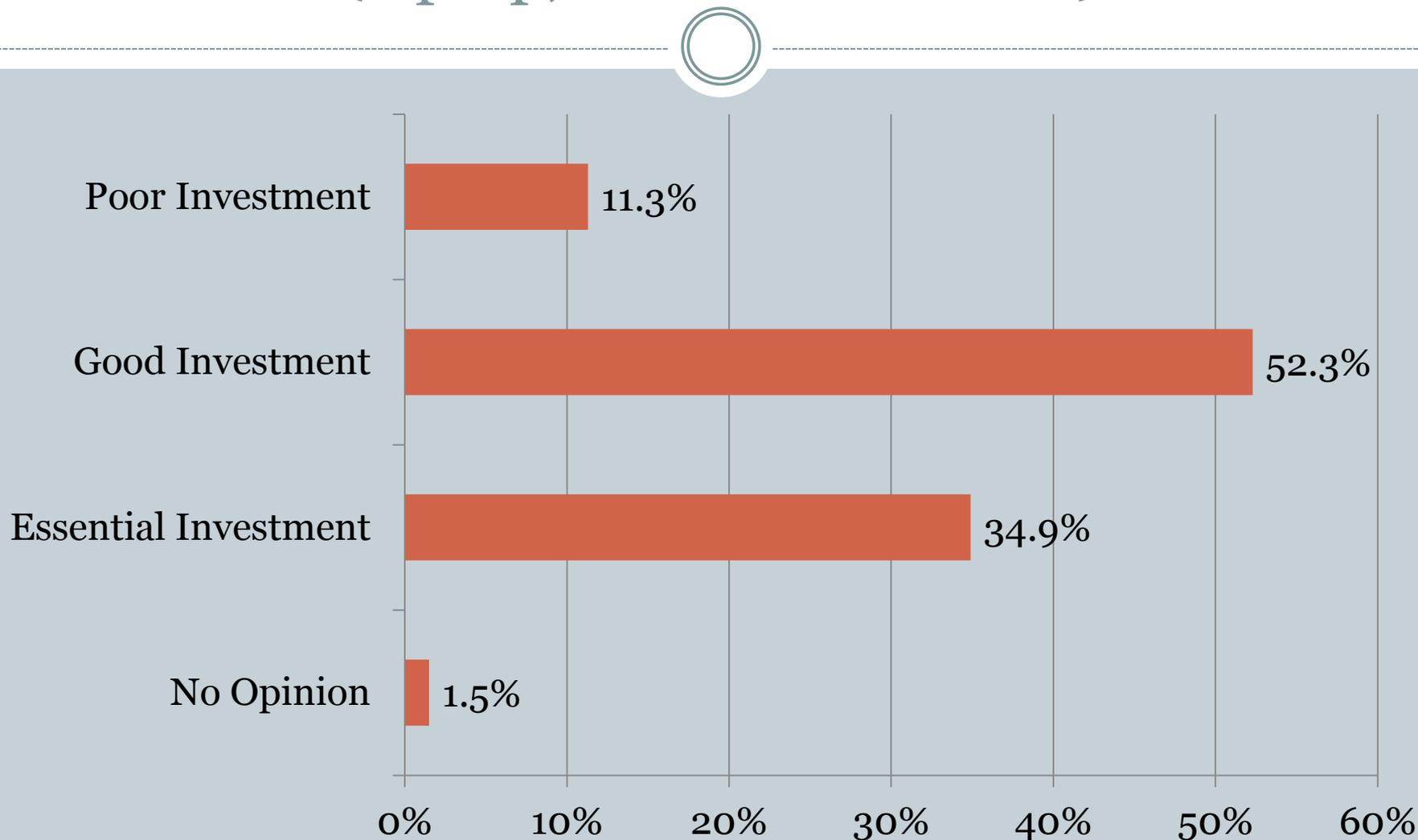
# 8. Interactive whiteboards (SmartBoards)

# 8. Collaboration tools (wikis, blogs)

| Category | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|
| Poor Investment | 14.1% |
| Good Investment | 47.6% |
| Essential Investment | 22.5% |
| No Opinion | 15.7% |

# 8. Social networking sites
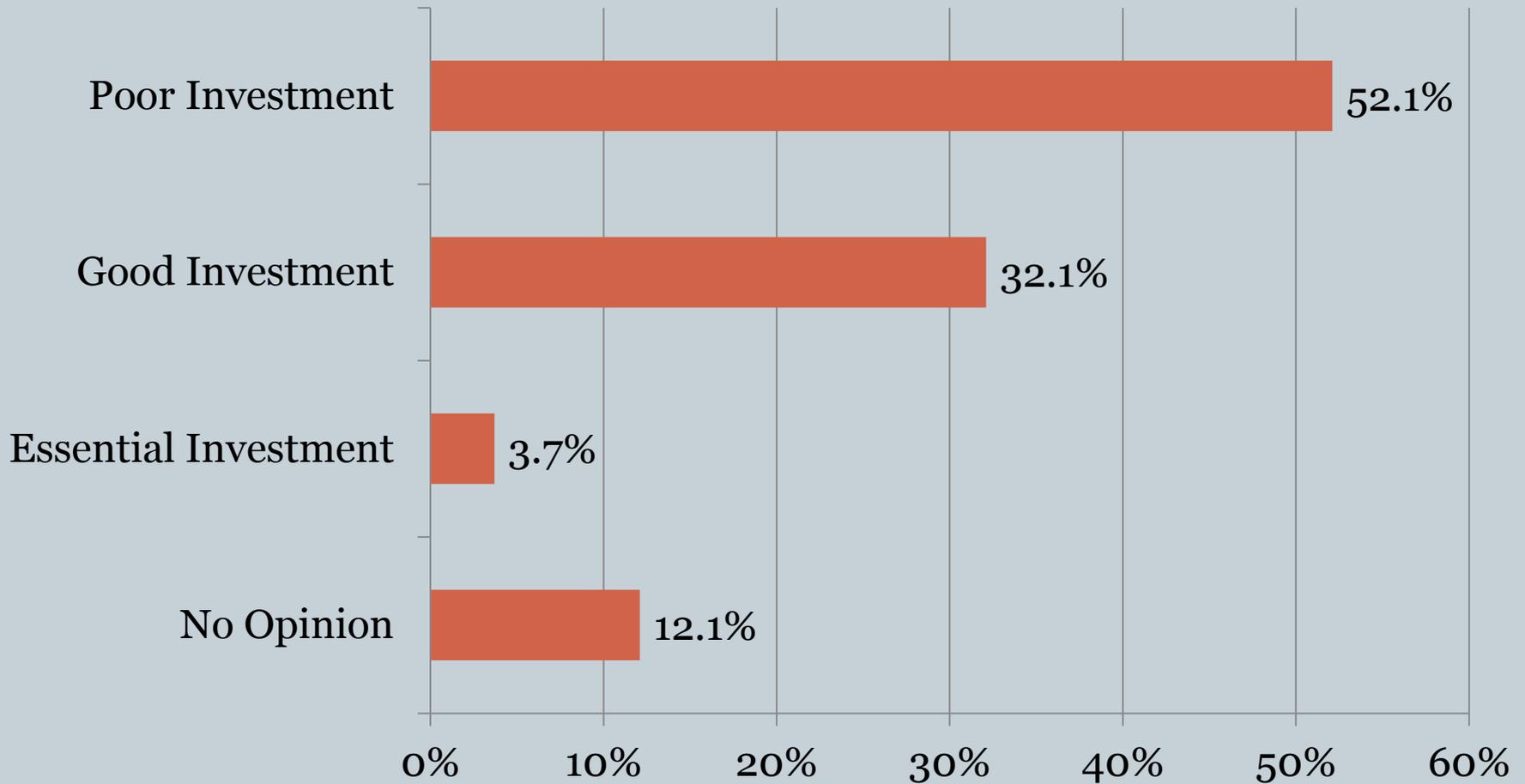
# 8. Other

- Skype with authors or experts that support the curriculum.
- I do not know enough about how wikis or blogs or mobile laptops would be used to have an opinion.
- Help push internet access to every house in school district.
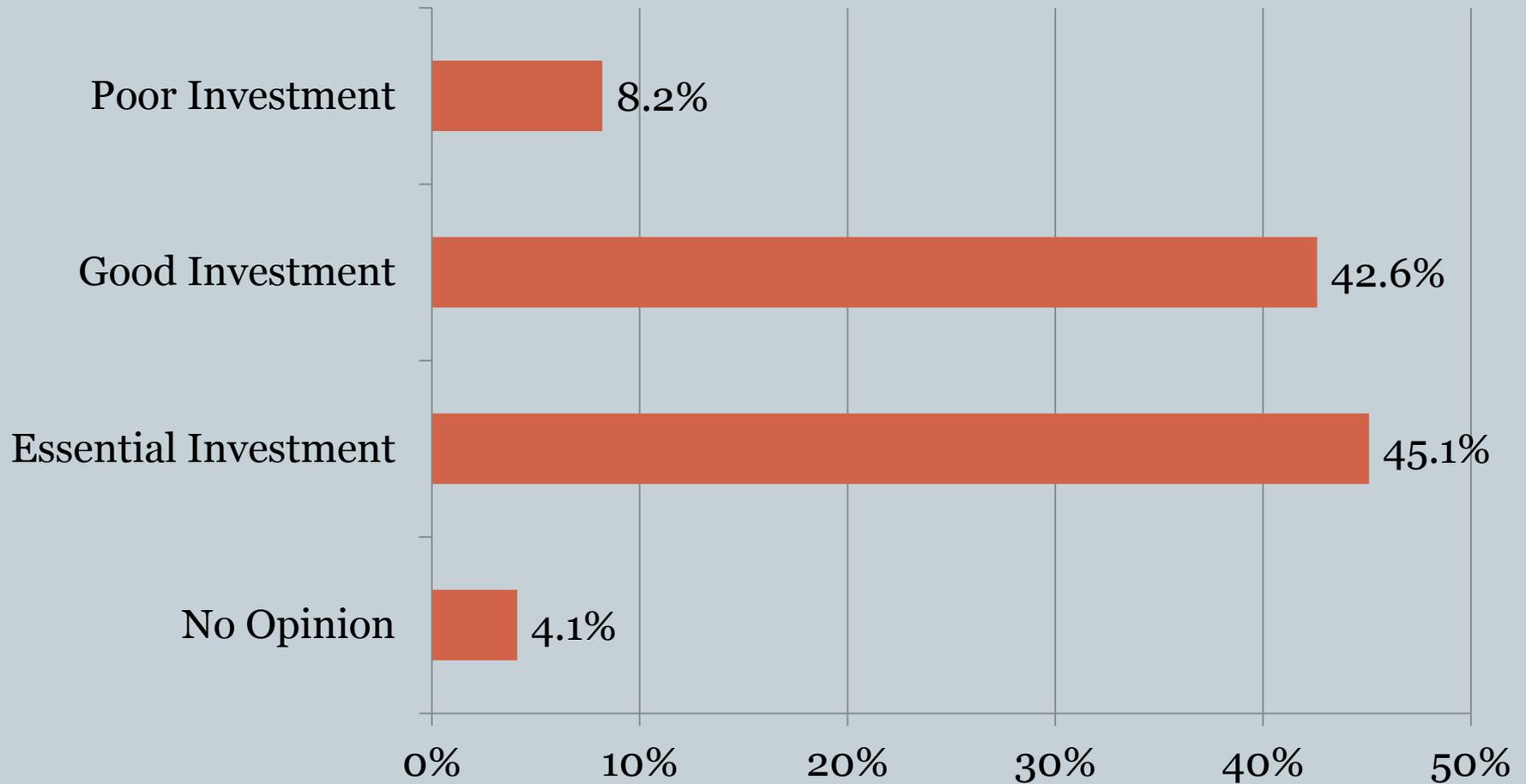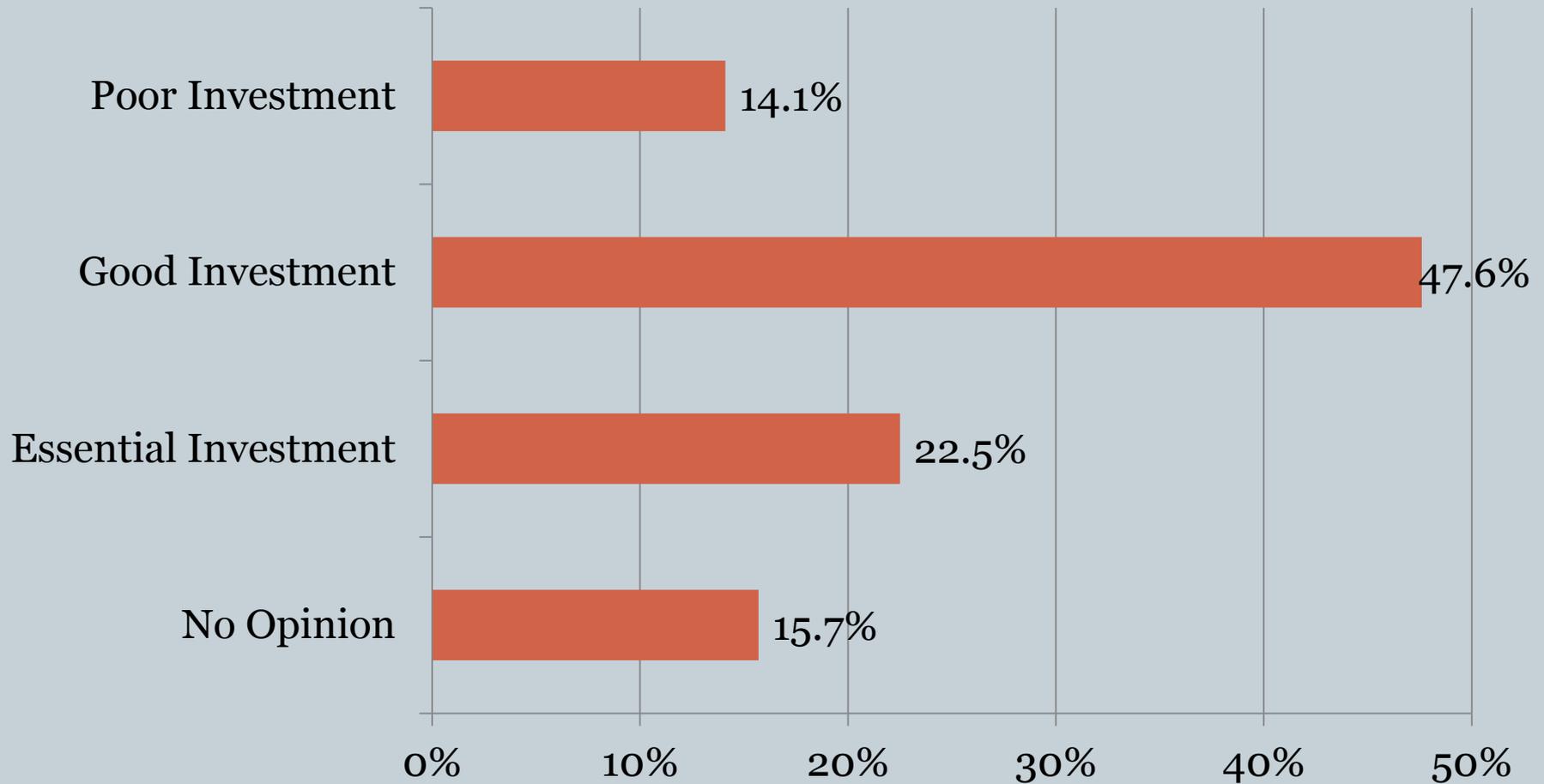- Books?
- Whatever is decided for use at school if it is expected at home there should be no DSL blackout areas. It is so unfair that some students are handicapped in this way.
- Laptops with wireless access for all students.
- SharePoint type internal Intranet.
- Not sure if social networking sites really is necessary for education. Maybe for tracking students and potential bullying.
- Increase distant learning capability.
- Webinar training connecting to other schools, open forums, sharing learning experience via web meetings.
- Don't know how I feel about smart phones at school, leaning on it being a no.

# 9. If the district offered evening technology courses to our community, what would you be interested in?



| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Google Applications | 38.9% |
| Digital Photography | 36.3% |
| I Would Not Be Interested | 32.6% |
| Apple Products | 32.1% |
| Microsoft Office | 30.5% |
| Other | 5.8% |
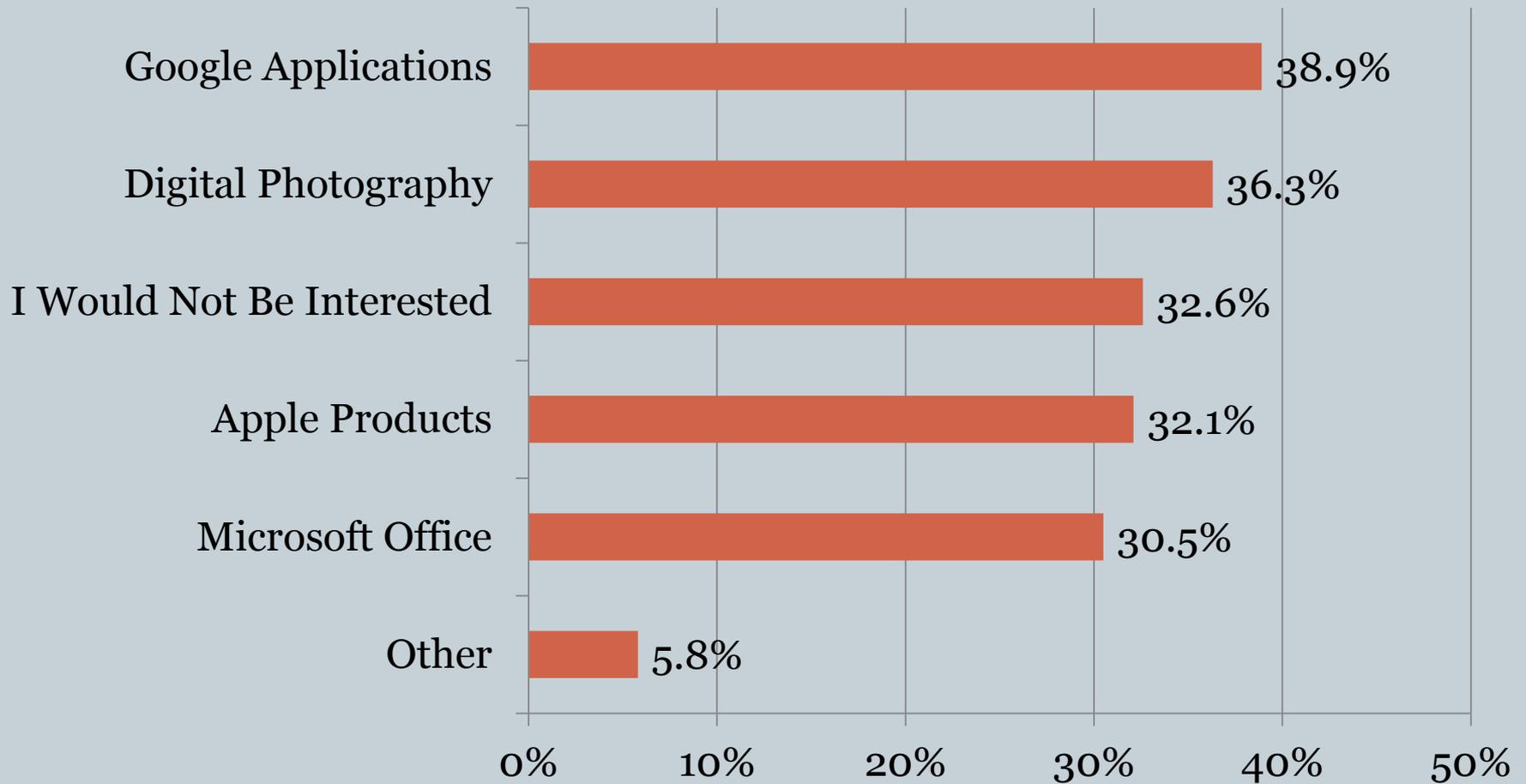
# 10. How do you get information about Schodack schools?
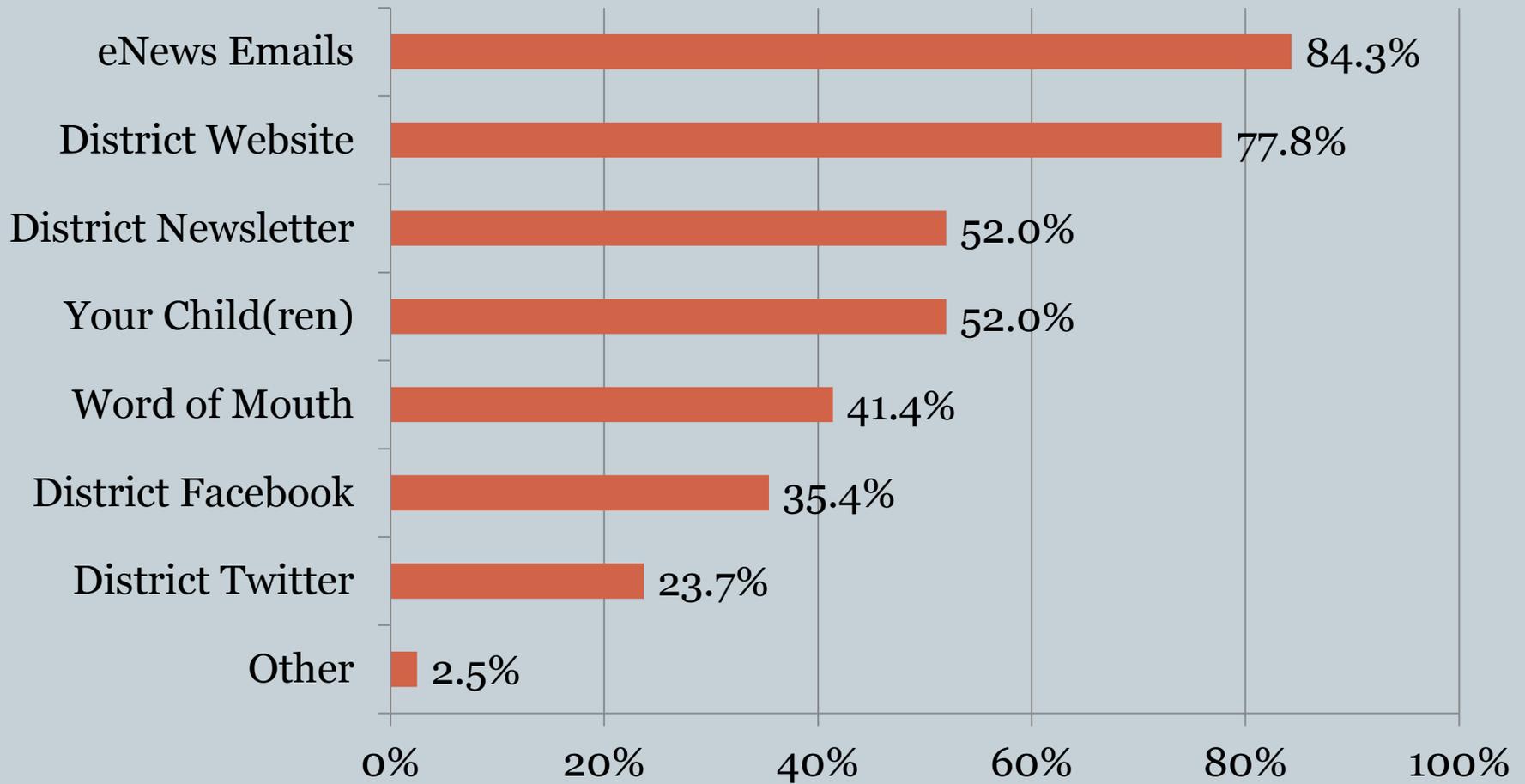
# 11. Are there other ways you would like the district to get information to you?

- Texting for emergency info (i.e. closings, etc.)
- All school closings/delays should be texted to parents.
- No way!!
- No thank you
- A text would be nice for early dismissals, closings, bus running late etc.
- Digital is better, keep saving trees and piles of paper in my house.
- No, I get enough info, thank you!
- Text
- Will this be for Questar students too?
- Texts
- I think blanket texting would be great! People aren't always anchored to a desk to access desktops or laptops and tablets aren't always carried around but I think you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone without their cell phone. Something along the same lines as the blanket phone calls that go out in emergency situations...only a text instead of a phone call.
- The district is doing a great job communicating information.
- No I feel you do a great job of this!

# 11. Are there other ways you would like the district to get information to you (continued)?

- SMS-Texting brief messages would be great. I've been in the Technology Information Service career for 20 years and the path to brief messages on cell seems to be most effective this day and age. (short, direct), then you can entice that addition information is available by a link within the text message.

- Texts from the school would be useful. Even if the text just said to check your email or voicemail.

- Text messages would be valuable.

- Can't think of any.

- N/A

- Mobile text messages

- No

- Mobile device push notifications.

- Blast emails is the best way.

- Phone calls if can be

- I do look at the website occasionally - and I print the annual calendar - but feel very much out of the loop on what is going on at school - academics, sports, clubs, extra curricula activity. As we are newer to the district I don't have the social network with other families - wherein I might know of school events, etc. or just know historically what the events are each year. I am old school - I read paper/fliers and actual bulletin boards - - but I realize that is no longer a viable/efficient way to disseminate info. I DO read the school Enews bulletins that are sent - something in my e-mail box would be best. Even if just a weekly/monthly note to check the website for this and that.

# 12. Any other comments or suggestions?

- Not at this time.
- Teachers all using the same way to communicate, either all use Google Classroom, teacher webpages parent portal or blast text/emails. Teachers each have their own communication method, and some hardly at all. If they are all using something different it is difficult to keep track of what is expected of your children, especially with multiple children and multiple teachers per student the higher they advance in grade level.
- Please recognize that not everyone in the district has internet access (without having to use data from a cellular plan to complete assignments) at their home.
- I believe it is critical for students to have guided experience using technology and social media tools, beginning at a young age - with an expert. I believe an investment in an instructor or consultant to educate staff on how to use these tools is a very important idea to consider that was not addressed in the survey.
- Be consistent. If a change occurs in a sports schedule for instance, make sure it is changed on all information access points you make available. Thinking all teachers should email students HW assignments, reminders, etc. As a parent it is difficult to coach/inspect my child's tasks. If I could say, pull up the emails from your teachers, that would be great. The portal could be that, but again, not consistently used. Pick an approach and make sure all teachers comply. Simple. Sites have too much clicking to get to certain locations. Perform review and simplify.

# 12. Any other comments or suggestions?

- The school should advocate with the Town of Schodack and our elected county, state and federal reps to push for viable broadband for 100% of homes. We are limited to satellite or smartphone/hotspot access. The former is only modestly better than dial-up in actual results (despite the promises in the commercials) and the latter is extremely expensive. This limits educational opportunities for children and adults and hampers the development of small businesses that might contribute to the tax base.

- My children are former Maple Hill students. All my grandchildren attend MH schools.

- Less "cyber world" more "real world". And no, they are not the same.

- I love parent portal I just wish each teacher used it.

- Investment in security technology to keep the children safe at all times should be included as well.

- Although challenging with the limited time they have, if teachers could utilize class blogs/websites better and if ALL teachers used the portal. Some are great, but others don't put grades in or assignments and students check to see how they are doing and have nothing in there. Many start the year strong, but by February are no longer uploading worksheets, which is challenging for kids who think they can get a paper they forgot and find they can't.

- There are some many places to check now because it's not a uniform process. Facebook is a bad place to get information other than maybe a school closing. Could you put something on your website so we could self sign up for texts for school closings, specific sporting events (by sport), school events, this way the parent could elect or deselect themselves from the list.

- Any help with getting Verizon to supply the southern end of the district with DSL would be a huge help.

- I don't think the teachers, have the ability to teach students!! Good student are easy. Slow or problem students, they can't handle .

# 12. Any other comments or suggestions?

- It is wonderful that you are receiving these funds to update much needed infrastructure and to put technology in the hands of students. I am worried that the new purchases will take away from future year operating budgets - people are what make the school be successful and are the most necessary investments we can make for our children.

- Allowing community use of internet at school would be helpful to those without access to high speed internet at residence.

- Kids shouldn't have to use technology to learn. What ever happened to bringing home a text book. The world depends too much on technology that people forget how to pick up a pencil and actually hand write something to someone. Just like having to take a survey on my smart phone. Everyone is just expected to have some form of technology but maybe there are those that don't have it and I take it their opinion doesn't count because I didn't see a paper form get sent home so people can pick up that pencil.

- I really wish there was some way to limit students' use of their personal phones during school hours. I know they are powerful mini-computers in their hands - but it is distracting and out of control. The kids do not have a good sense of "a time and place for learning" vs socializing - b/c it is all in one for them. If there were designated laptops/devices - perhaps this would help create boundaries or some sort of 'zones' of use.

- Absolutely no mobile devices in classrooms - middle school or high school. Much too disruptive. They should leave them at the door. Everyone is not on Facebook, Twitter, etc. Flat out website notifications, and in the case of emergencies, telephone calls are still best.

- I would like to see a solution to help students who have poor internet connections at home and who pay for and have limited data.

# 12. Any other comments or suggestions?

- My son is in middle school and I have been pleased that he is allowed to bring his device to school. To me, it is more beneficial (and realistic) to emphasize responsible use of personal technology instead of prohibiting its use. My son's class recently Skyped with an author who they were studying, and I was pleased to see this technology used in the classroom. Please encourage teachers to put more homework assignments and supporting materials on the parent portal or elsewhere where parents can access them. It helps when I know when assignments are due. Keep up the good work!

- There are many areas in the district which do not have high speed internet access and many families who can not afford it or the devices. This access is generally required for information and homework. There needs to be easily accessible workarounds so these students and families are not unfairly handicapped. Even finding out about this survey and completing it proved difficult.

- Be decisive, don't take "no" for an answer, don't let naysayers drive complacency. Too often we see analysis paralysis (not necessarily at Maple Hill but in society) that results in inaction which leads to being left behind or behind the curve or always catching up, choose your euphemism, which ultimately hurts our kids and handcuffs our educators. We have an opportunity here to lead the way, something we're good at in Schodack, we should seize the opportunity and make sure our kids at the front, where they belong. Our educators probably know better than anyone what they could most leverage for the benefit of the kids but a few things that come to mind include establishment of shared services via the web, whether it be with other schools (distance learning) or administration (shared support services) or emergency preparedness or college interface or remote attendance of conferences, the tools are there and we must take advantage of them. Though our children are out of school for 4+ years now we still take a great deal of pride in Castleton/Maple Hill, the education you provided to me and to my kids, and our school leaders. I'm sure you'll do what's best for us.

# 12. Any other comments or suggestions?

- Just remember, some of us live just off the grid of unlimited data and only have 10 Gigs of data available to us each month. Requiring streaming at home would take up about 3 gigs for every 2 hours of stream time.

- Any hesitation by the district to not only use, but get ahead of, technology puts students at a disadvantage. Available tech is an integral part of higher ed and work "these days." our kids know how to use these technologies & can benefit from seeing all the ways they're capable of expanding our horizons (tech as a partner to learning & imagination) vs. simply playing games & texting.

- N/A

- Provide information about how the electronic devices could be used in schools to benefit students. I am skeptical of the benefits. I believe that children spend too much time on devices, for social purposes, and to increase their time using them in school is the wrong way to go. Interacting directly with teachers and classmates is more important than "interacting" with devices.

- Make a change in the lunch time oversite and TA personnel in middle school.

- No

- I love the idea of one-to-one technology -- as long as they still get to hold books too. It makes sense to me to have text books and research available to all students on a tablet of some sort, but not at the cost of all books. Literature books, for example, don't change or need to be updated, so are great options to keep as real books.

# 12. Any other comments or suggestions?

- Please help push internet to all houses in the district. Internet nor cable come down my road (Schodack Landing Rd) so our only options for internet access is our smart phones and I've now purchased a hotspot so my 5th grader can do her school work, however it's limited and expensive. Luckily my youngest doesn't need the internet in 2nd grade too much. I can see we will probably need to adjust that as he is getting older and my daughter will be entering 6th grade in September so I imagine her usage will go up as well. I know there are other families in our district and nearby my house that also have this issue. It's frustrating in this day & age. We are told by teachers to "check" their websites but for a family that does not have unlimited access it's not always convenient to do, unless I remember before I leave my place of employment and use my work computer.

- Keep up the good work. I appreciate that this district does not use Apple, and the use of Google is a great choice for sharing. Keeping costs down while pushing into the future of cloud based computing is good for students and the district.

- Having the technology for wireless internet is great...for computers, laptops, tablets, and smart phones but the schools intranet is very sluggish. I've been in classrooms (as a substitute teacher) where it can take nearly five minutes (sometimes way longer) for the students to log onto the computers. It would be amazing if something could be done to fix that.

- Lower income families do not have computers and printers. All children need to have a laptop and wireless access.

- This is a BIG mistake!! Kids can't handle common core...