

Boundaries and Articulation Area Analysis Project Update



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Agenda

1. Purpose of the Project
2. Project Reports and Deliverables
3. FLO Reports and Findings:
 - A. Enrollment Trends, Boundary Alignment, and Enrollment Analysis
 - B. School Choice Analysis
 - C. Current Enrollment and Enrollment Projections Analysis
4. GBSM Fall School Enrollment Survey Process and Results



Purpose of the Project

Why we are doing this work

- Since 2001, Jeffco has experienced a shift in demographics, which has led to declining enrollment.
- Birth rates have slowed, and the affordability and availability of housing has resulted in fewer families with school-age children in Jeffco.
- As the school-age population has shrunk, some District schools have become significantly under-enrolled, and buildings underutilized.

Project objectives

FLO is conducting a comprehensive study to increase Jeffco's understanding of its current school boundaries, articulation patterns, and enrollment patterns.

GBSM is engaging the community to understand what matters most to families when choosing a school.

Analysis and Deliverables

FLO Analytics

- September 14, 2023: Enrollment Trends, Boundary Alignment, and Enrollment Analysis
- February 15, 2024: School Choice Analysis
- February 15, 2024: Current Enrollment and Enrollment Projections Analysis
- In Progress: School Program Analysis



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- Fall 2023 School Enrollment Survey
- Upcoming: Spring 2024 Focus Groups

Enrollment Trends and Boundary Alignment and Enrollment Reporting Memo

Published September 14, 2023



To: Jefferson County Public Schools **Date:** September 13, 2023

From: Kate Doiron
Senior GIS Analyst **Project No.:** F2466.01.001

Rebecca Wright
Project Planner

Re: Enrollment Trends and Boundary Alignment and Enrollment Reporting

FLO worked with Jefferson County Public Schools (Jeffco) to analyze historical student enrollment, demographic characteristics, residential development, and prior changes to school boundaries and articulation areas. This memo shows how the 2022-23 school year elementary, middle, and high school boundary lines and articulation patterns align with enrollment patterns and trends and how these have evolved over time. The results of this analysis provide a historical understanding of enrollment trends. This analysis will serve as a foundation for future analyses to understand current enrollment across the district (including special program access and school choice) and identification of potential boundary changes to align with Jeffco's goals of equitable access and sustainable school capacity utilization.

Executive Summary

Analysis was conducted on Jeffco enrollment trends from 2013-14 to 2022-23, using historical enrollment counts by school; and from 2017-18 to 2022-23, using the more detailed student information system (SIS) data. This report consists of a student enrollment assessment (reviewing historical enrollment, demographics, density, grade progression ratios [GPRs], transfer rates, and residence versus attendance [residence/attendance] statistics), a review of the Jeffco Membership Projections Report (Projections Report), and an analysis of attendance area boundary and utilization changes over time. Key findings included in this report are as follows:

School-Age Population

The decline in school-age population in the last ten years (4.1 percent) was even greater than the decline in enrollment in the district, suggesting that membership decline was attributable to population loss, not to enrollment in private schools or net transfers.

- Jeffco enrollment declined by 10.4 percent since 2013-14, with enrollment by grade peaking between 2015-16 and 2019-20.

Major Findings to Date

Articulation Area	Enrollment					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Alameda	2,982	2,962	2,850	2,569	2,541	2,587
Arvada	3,856	3,700	3,448	3,184	3,036	3,052
Arvada West	4,407	4,425	4,302	4,305	4,472	4,516
Bear Creek	5,250	5,139	4,971	4,792	4,619	4,651
Chatfield	6,143	6,121	5,759	5,579	5,455	5,612
Columbine	4,142	4,180	3,961	3,912	3,841	4,015
Conifer	2,342	2,342	2,205	2,162	2,190	2,275
Dakota Ridge	4,339	4,370	4,196	4,058	3,936	3,868
Evergreen	2,967	2,934	2,672	2,514	2,479	2,498
Golden	4,302	4,303	4,134	3,985	3,997	4,173
Green Mountain	3,749	3,776	3,664	3,499	3,512	3,564
Jefferson	1,805	1,658	1,520	1,393	1,357	1,496
Lakewood	4,458	4,303	4,210	3,942	3,794	3,837
Pomona	3,154	3,080	2,874	2,689	2,464	2,386
Ralston Valley	5,390	5,616	5,454	5,390	5,463	5,734
Standley Lake	4,433	4,319	4,116	3,799	3,690	3,648
Wheat Ridge	3,886	3,829	3,690	3,581	3,527	3,473

- Jeffco enrollment declined by 10.4 percent since 2013–14, with enrollment peaking between 2015–16 and 2019–20.
- Enrollment declines have occurred throughout the district in nearly all 17 articulation areas, with a decline in student density across the district since 2017–18.
- **90.6% of Jefferson County children enrolled in K-12 schools attended Jeffco.**

School Choice Analysis (2022-23)

FLO worked with Jeffco to analyze student enrollment patterns in each school and articulation area with a specific focus on how many students attend their zoned school (designated neighborhood school) or choose another school.

This memo describes intradistrict school choice patterns in Jeffco and details numbers and rates of students attending or not attending their residing school, choice rates into nonattendance area schools, and capture rates for each attendance area.



Key Findings

- There are **74,783** K-12 students enrolled in Jeffco in 2022-23 (including out-of-district students).
- There are **68,045** students in grades K-12 residing in the District.
- There are **40,986** students who attend their public school of residence.
- The **overall capture rate** district-wide for students attending their resident school is **60.23%**, which per grade band is: 56.04% ES, 64.73% K-8, 61.03% MS, 65.2% HS
- There are 29 charter schools with a combined enrollment of **8,624** students, 11.53% of Jeffco.

Survey overview

The Jeffco team collected **8,807 surveys** in digital and print formats from **October 10 to November 17, 2023**.

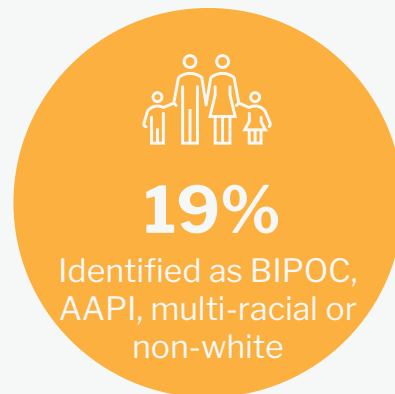
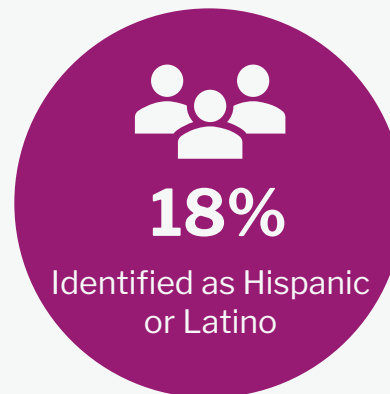
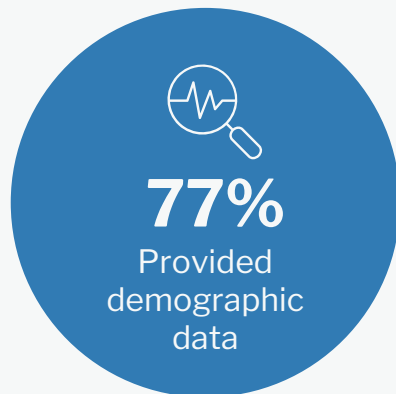
Outreach and promotion was conducted through:

- Districtwide and school emails, newsletters and social media
- Promotional flyers/QR codes
- Family Engagement Liaisons

The survey was available online and in print in four languages: **English, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese**. It was also available in print in Dari, French, and Simplified Chinese.

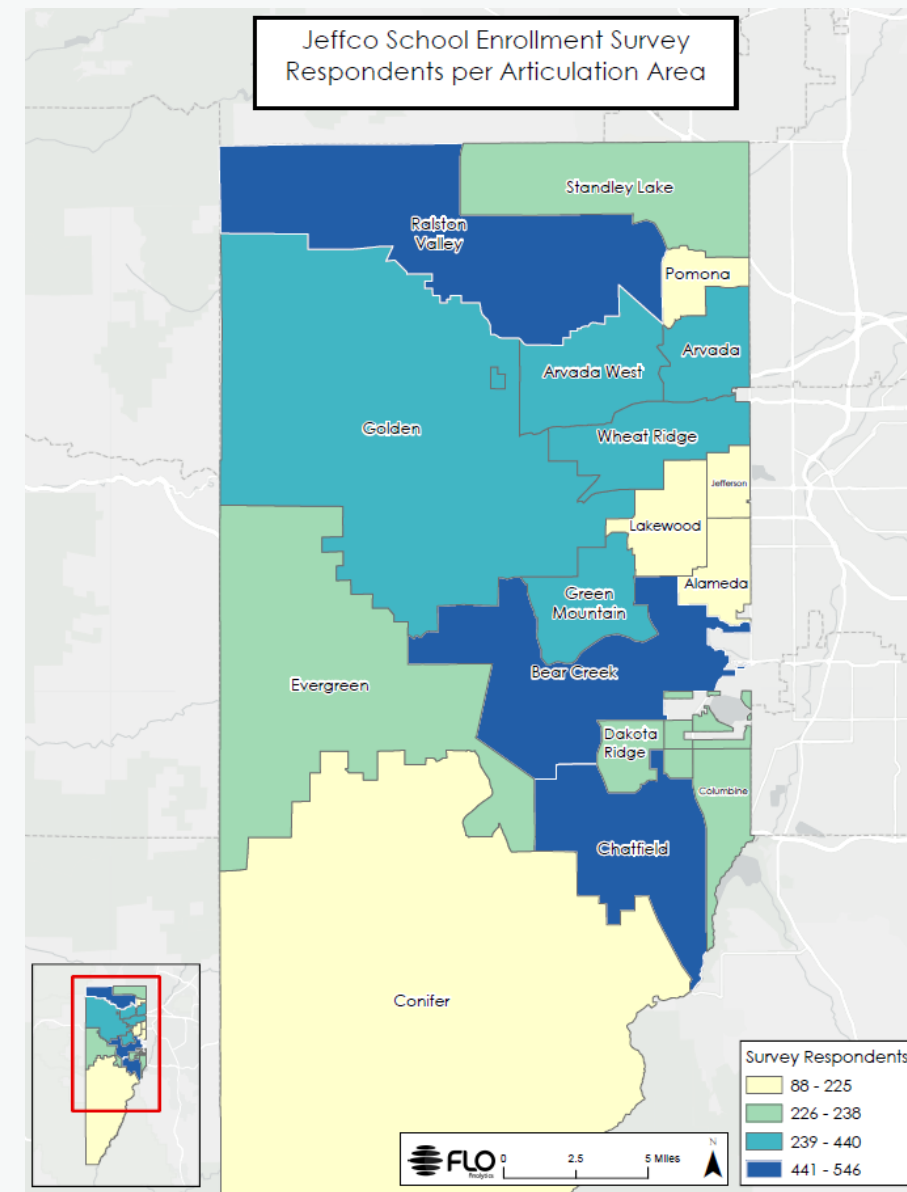
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Survey respondents at-a-glance



15,302
Jeffco students represented

20.5%
Of the student population



Families shared insights on four key elements that often influence school enrollment choices:



School Design & Programming



School Climate

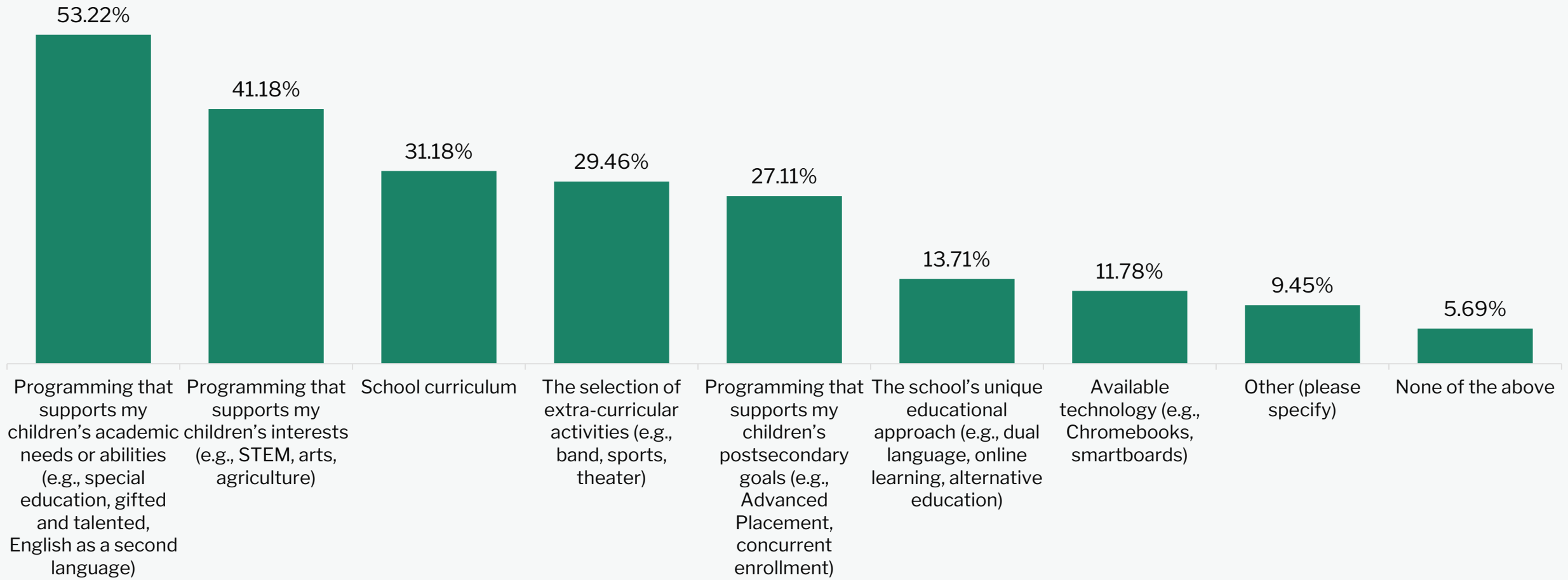


School Reputation

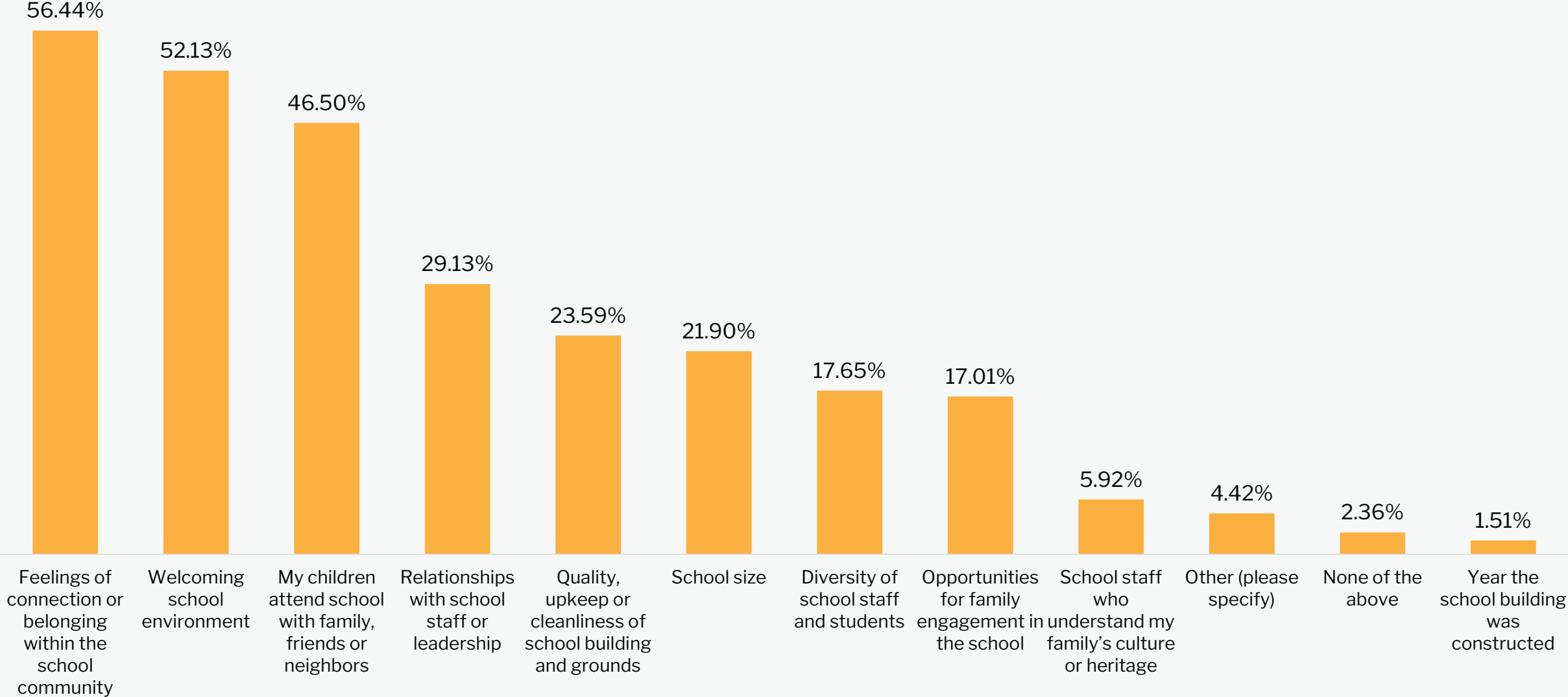


Logistics

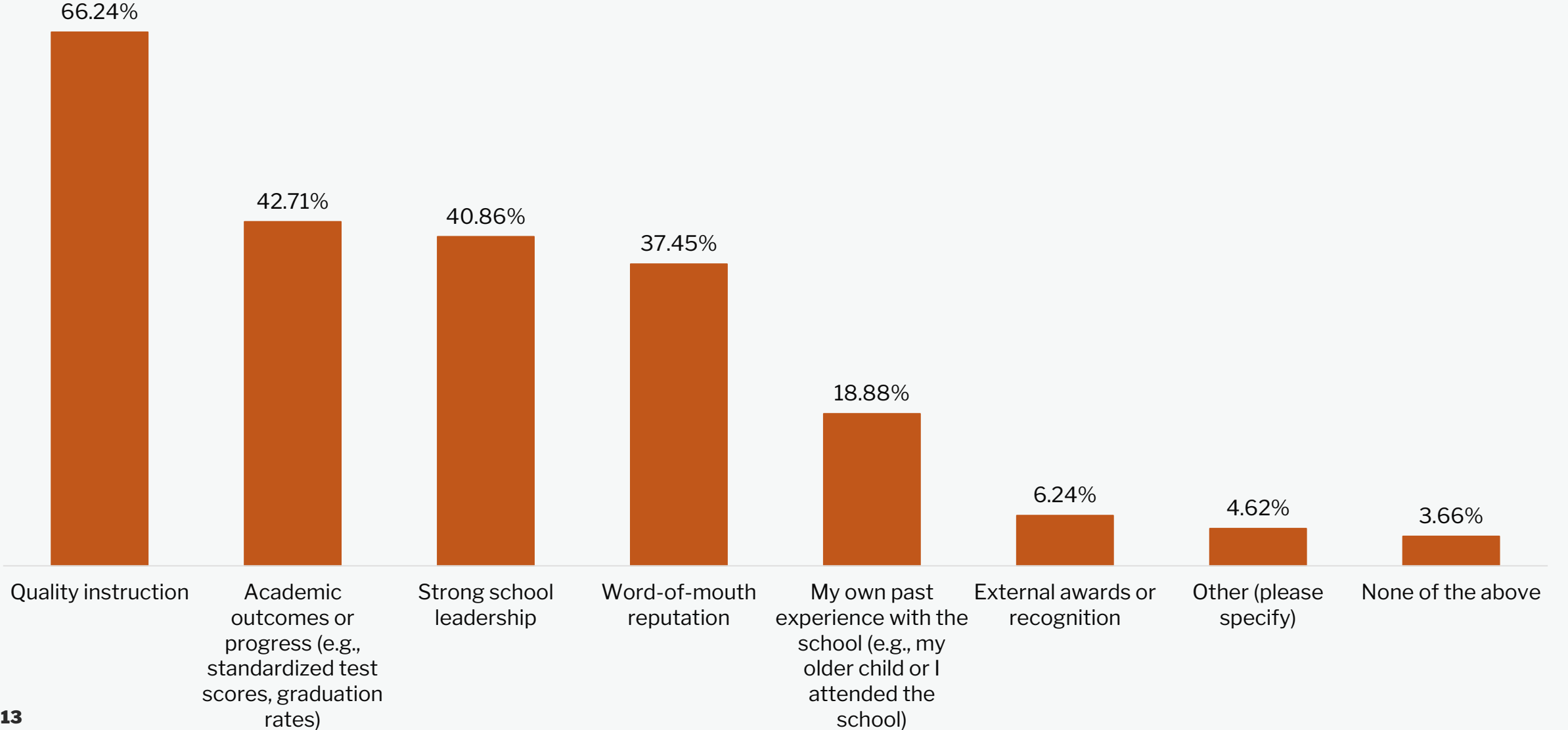
When thinking about School Design and Programming, which factors were most important when deciding what schools your children would attend?



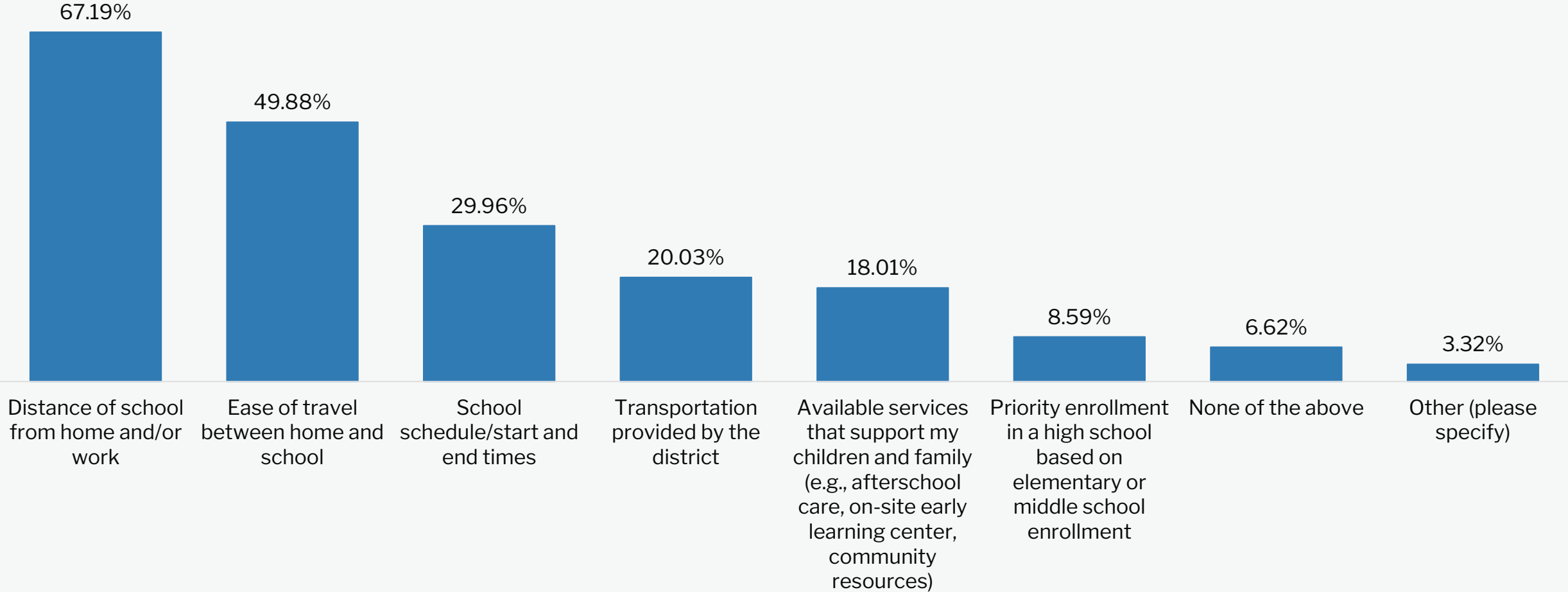
When thinking about School Climate, which factors were the most important when deciding what schools your children would attend?



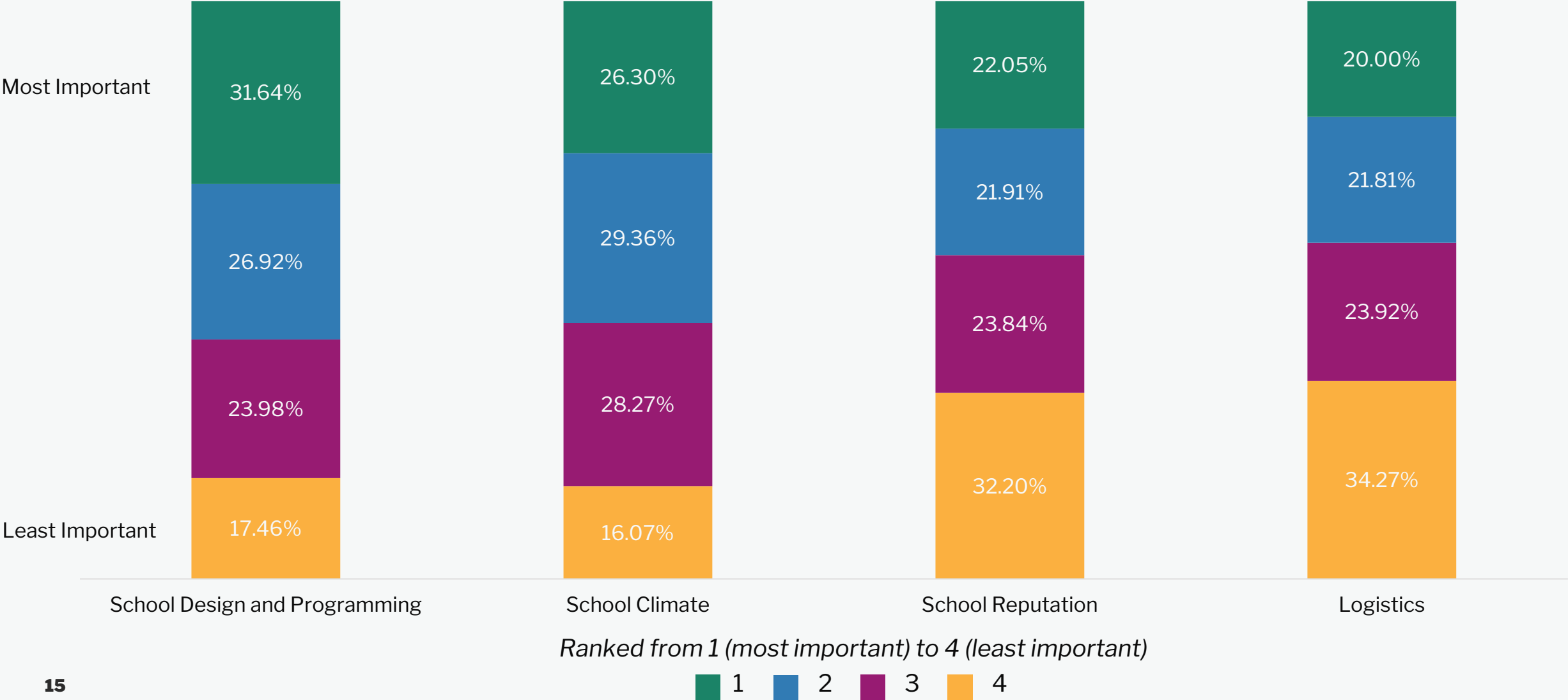
When thinking about School Reputation, which factors were the most important when deciding what schools your children would attend?



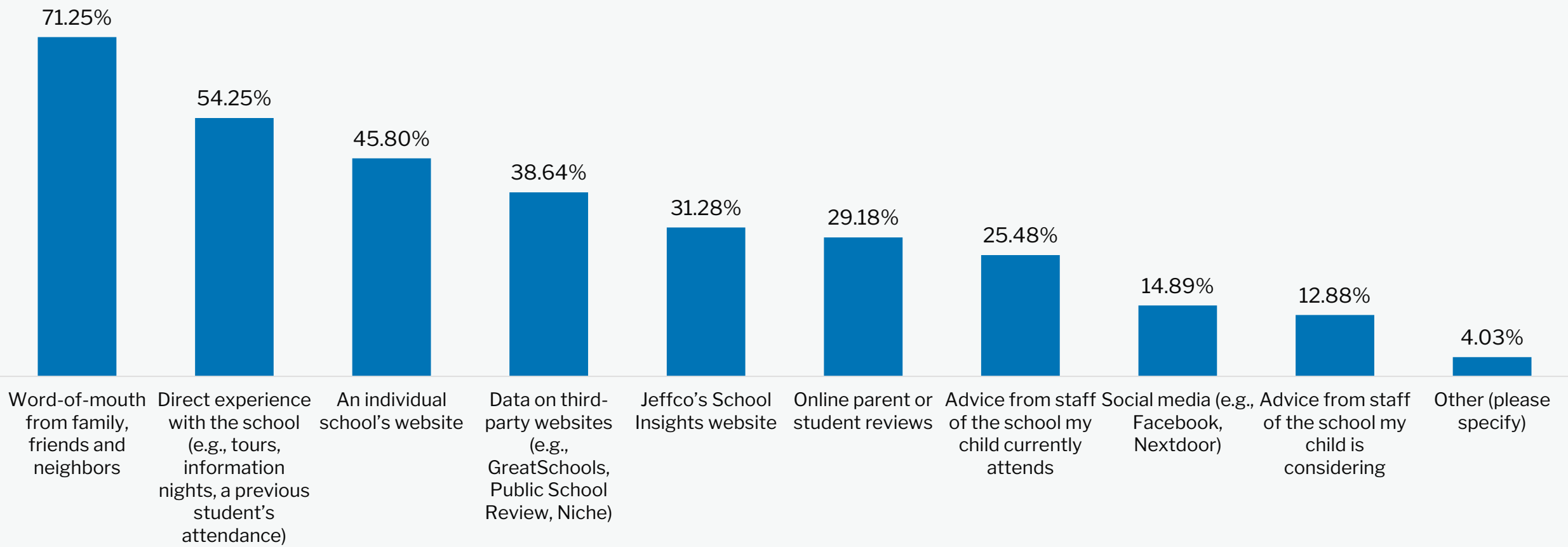
When thinking about Logistics, which factors were the most important when deciding what schools your children would attend?



How important were each of these categories when deciding what schools your children should attend?



Where do you get information to help you make decisions about school enrollment?



QUALITATIVE STORIES

We received 7,838 responses to the open-ended question “In your own words, why did you select the schools your children are attending this year?” A few key themes emerged.



Top 10 themes among respondents: Why did you select the schools your children are attending this year?

01. Academic Quality & Reputation

02. Proximity, Logistics & Convenience

03. Neighborhood School

04. Special Programs & Curriculum

05. Social Connections or Child's Preference

06. Teacher and Staff Quality

07. School Community & Facilities

08. Safety & Environment

09. Values & Culture

10. Support Services

The most prevalent factor influencing school choice among survey respondents was academic quality and school reputation with less than one-third indicating this as a consideration. Key aspects include:

- Word-of-mouth reputation
- Recommendations from friends and family
- School ratings and reviews
- Educational performance including test scores

“The school has a good reputation, high test scores, the principal is known to be great with kids, and the environment feels good – has lots of windows and is bright and welcoming.”

“We initially picked our schools based on its GreatSchool.org ratings. We have continued to stay because we are familiar with the school and our kids have made good friends.”

ACADEMIC QUALITY & REPUTATION

PROXIMITY, LOGISTICS & CONVENIENCE

Many families choose schools that are close to their home or work making it easier to manage pick-ups and drop-offs. Relevant themes include:

- Ease of daily commute
- Walkability
- Provided transportation
- Relevant location to family commitments
- Accessibility for families with mobility challenges
- School start and end times relevant to work schedules

“[Our school] is a great school and is physically the closest to our home and accessible by bike path - a safety priority!”

“I selected our neighborhood school based on proximity. We are a two-income household so driving kids more than a few minutes to/from school each day is simply not possible. Evergreen has some other great choices but the location just wasn't convenient for us.”

Parents often select schools based on their neighborhood or community for numerous reasons. Relevant trends include:

- Community and peer connection
- Residential decisions (families choosing where to live based on schools)
- Support for local schools
- Convenience
- Continuity of schools

“It is our neighborhood school and they have a great reputation with our neighbors. They have a Pre-K so both of my kids are able to attend the same school.”

“Our school-aged child attends his neighborhood school because it has been a warm and welcoming place with supportive academics and we like supporting our neighborhood school. We like that our child can go to school with kids who he can also play with in the neighborhood.”

NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

SPECIAL PROGRAMS & CURRICULUM

Less than a quarter of parents prioritize specific programs and curricular offerings in school selection, valuing the quality and diversity of educational opportunities. The top 5 programs mentioned were:

1. Gifted & Talented
2. Arts Programming
3. International Baccalaureate
4. Special Education
5. Montessori

Outside of specified programs, extracurricular activities were mentioned as a significant factor in school choice.

“We chose our school because we loved the curriculum and the emphasis on being an independent person. We also love the mixed ages and that we have the same teacher for three years.”

“We selected our child's high school based on academic opportunities (specifically the IB program), extracurricular programs (band and theater), location, and overall school quality.”

A child's preference and social connections are key factors in parents' decision-making process when choosing schools. This includes:

- Child's choice or inclination towards a school
- Existing friendships
- Family legacy
- Continuity of education
- Stable social environment

"It is the same school I attended as a kid. [This school] made such an impression on me I had to come back and have never thought about leaving again."

"This is our community school and our children have established relationships with peers. The academic opportunities for both an IEP and ALP student were second. Programming at other high schools was tempting but in the end the relationships for our children was the biggest part of our decision."

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

TEACHER AND STAFF QUALITY

The quality and characteristics of teachers and staff are pivotal in school choice decisions, as reflected in responses about faculty and school environment:

- Quality of teachers and staff
- Community atmosphere and familiarity with staff
- School leadership impact
- Effective communication from schools
- Student and family relationships with staff

“My son attended [a Jeffco school], and we loved the teachers and staff. When it was time for my daughter to go to middle school, she had formed a relationship with the band teacher (both kids are in band), and she asked to attend this school as well. We are very happy with that choice.”

“We love the staff, the way they all know our daughter (even those teachers who don't have her in the classroom know who she is), and we love the sense of community at [our school]. It's important to us that our daughter be in a classroom with diversity that mirrors the community, and we see that in her classes at [the school]. The staff and principal are all exceptionally caring and we never worry about our daughter when she is at school.”

Parents value a strong sense of community and excellent resources in school, emphasizing the importance of neighborhood, school involvement by families and staff and small class sizes.

Other themes include:

- Small schools that foster identity and belonging
- Quality of schools and resources including technology
- Neighborhood integration
- Continuity of schools
- Facility access including sport fields

“Great environments, strong and positive communities, awesome values, great teachers, high achieving, standing for something in addition to achievement, kept up facilities, nearby..”

“Proximity (closer than our neighborhood school), smaller school and class sizes, STEM lab, and very involved/connected community.”

SCHOOL COMMUNITY & FACILITIES

SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

Families prioritize a safe and nurturing school environment, emphasizing both physical and emotional well-being including:

- Prevention of bullying and violence
- Secure facilities with on-site security measures
- Psychological safety with a focus on mental health
- Social-emotional learning curriculums
- Positive school climate that fosters inclusivity
- Safe transportation and accessibility

“We wanted a school that has consistent and followed safety protocol. Especially building safety and background checking volunteers.”

“We liked the safety, classes, staff, and layout of the building - in that order of importance.”

Families who select schools based on their alignment with personal or cultural beliefs emphasize the importance of diversity, social-emotional learning and school climate.

Specifics may include:

- Cultural diversity and inclusivity
- Alignment with family values
- Emphasis on teaching empathy, kindness and social awareness
- Innovative educational approach
- Positive school climate

“We selected [this school] because of its inclusive community feel and the differentiation offered to all students not just GT enrolled students. It is a warm and welcoming environment that supports students of all abilities.”

“I wanted a "whole child" approach where the social/emotional skills were as emphasized as much as academic. Lots of extra-curricular activities. Diversity amongst students and inclusivity in the school culture are important.”

VALUES & CULTURE

SUPPORT SERVICES

Some families with children who have special needs or educational requirements often choose schools based on availability and quality of support services including:

- Adaptable and varied learning approaches
- Academic support and staff able to cater to diverse needs
- Specific programs for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or twice exceptional (2e)/Gifted and Talented education
- Supportive school environment

“Three out of my four children have ASD, so it was crucial for me to choose a school with well-trained staff and a dedicated ASD program in case we needed additional support. I prioritized a smaller school environment with reduced class sizes and a cohesive staff, aiming to create a more personalized and supportive learning experience for my children.”

“[Our school] offered a new experience for our son who has struggled with school since middle school. We like the 6-week classes, the curriculum format (on site visits, hikes, etc.) and the grading system. All have reengaged our son academically, emotionally, and developmentally.”

Discussion

